

Local Savvy, International Flair

*Elena Bluntzer has traveled the world,
speaks three languages
and knows exactly what her clients want.*

BY CHRIS NEGELEIN

Leather, wood, sand and marble are the elements that accent Elena Bluntzer's home in South Miami. They are also the elements that seem to fill her life as one of the top real estate brokers on the recently-sold Fisher Island.

Rumors still circulate on the final cost for the private enclave, \$70 million was the last unconfirmed number that Euro Fund Properties is said to have paid the Melk family for the island. Bluntzer said residents are excited about the purchase, anticipating the company will invest in capital improvements for the 20-year-old community.

Bluntzer herself can be secretive when it comes to real estate. She refuses to divulge who paid \$8.7 million for the most expensive condo resale on the isle at 7274 Fisher Island Dr. She represented both the buyer and seller in the deal last November. According to public records, a resident of the island, Matias Garfunkel, is the new owner. Bluntzer doesn't expect the sale to hold the record for long, however, in part because Euro Fund Properties has already begun to raise prices.

Thanks to her personal philosophy in life and work, she won't mourn the loss of her record-holding title.

"You can't stand still in real estate," Bluntzer affirms. "If you sleep late, you just gave yourself a demotion. You always have to be moving."

And as she moves, she says she's keeping an open mind and looking for an adventure. That quest has taken her around the world—from the Caribbean to Africa and Europe. The 2,900 square foot home that she and her husband, Chris, own is filled with mementos from their trips. Sands from beach-

es worldwide sit on their desk, and a mounted gazelle head hangs on the wall.

"I learned to hunt from my husband. When I met him I was just a city slicker," she said. "I learned the sport is about respect and caution. You should only kill what you can eat."

The couple's love of hunting and travel prompted them to go with a jungle theme for the landscaping surrounding their home, Bluntzer added. Despite the outdoor theme and the hunting trophies on the wall, the house is uncluttered and elegant.

"I like simple, clean with clear lines," she disclosed. "I'm into quality, not quantity. In 19 years of real estate, I've seen a lot of large houses but only two really said 'home' to me."

Bluntzer came to real estate from the international private banking business. She wanted more opportunities, yet to keep her toes in the international business scene. She was well prepared for that arena, with fluency in Spanish, English and French.

"I've always been fascinated with languages," she said, adding, "I went to a girls' school and we had students from all over the world."

She gave herself a year to either make it or break it. Some of her first clients 18 years ago are repeat customers today.

Success in the luxury real estate market is one part ed-



Photos by Luis Travieso

Views of the \$8.7 million home at 7274 Fisher Island that Bluntzer recently brokered.

ucation and one part customer service, she asserts. "Knowledge is power. If you can walk into a house and show that you appreciate how a Monroe is lit and arranged in a room, then your clients will trust you. They know you understand their tastes and style."

The secret to her success includes a solid understanding of the details of architecture, art, investment strategies, legal contracts and local communities. With much of her business being repeat clients, Bluntzer said customer service still demands 110 percent.

"Your relationships are always evolving," she states. "Clients become friends and it obligates you to do your best. I have clients call me and ask 'Do you remember where the pipes were in the wall?'"



Elena Bluntzer at Fisher Island