

THE NEW YORK OBSERVER
Real Estate

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Meet the Neighbors! Frances Katzen *Pliés* for Prudential

Welcome to the latest installment of [our ongoing interview series](#), Meet the Neighbors! A managing director at Prudential Douglas Elliman, Fran Katzen leads one of the firm's most successful teams. Once a professional ballerina, she now dances her way into deals all over town and around the world—she was born in South Africa and raised in Sydney before coming to New York, after all.

Where do you live?

In the West Village, in a beautiful Beaux Arts limestone townhouse. The whole front is cut open with floor to ceiling glass.

How is work these days? What is your latest deal?

Extremely busy. I'm seeing lots of cash buyers, lots of high-end high energy deals, very intense negotiations, and a lot of motion behind the deals. I currently have 8 deals out - including a deal on 1045 Fifth Ave, 468 West 23rd St. condo townhouse with multiple bids, and a bid occurring at 845 United Nations Plaza (also home to Derek Jeter) for two separate apartments to be combined.

What was the best meal you've ever eaten in New York?

L'absinthe—they have an incredible beef Wellington with fois gras, it's ridiculous.

What was your first apartment like?

It was a pre-war on the Upper West Side. At the time, I was studying to become a professional ballerina and was training in that area.

What is your recession war story?

Potential buyers pulling out of deals at the 11th hour, after months of negotiations. One after the other. It was terrible.

How do you get around town?

I live in cabs because it allows me to be on the phone all the time.

What is your favorite building in the city?

The Beaux Arts pre-war buildings, like 141 Fifth Ave, but also the Frank Gehry building along the West Side Highway, the IAC Building.

If you weren't a broker, what would you be?

I was a professional ballet dancer, so I would probably look to be the director of ballet company or coach.

What is your dream home?

To have a house right on the ocean back in Sydney, or a farmhouse in South Africa in the most rural part, on the plains. A home in Nappa Valley would be quite nice, as well.

You just won the lottery. What store do you stop by and what do you buy?

Bergdorf Goodman to buy a little classic suit from Yves Saint Laurent, a few thousand outfits from Gucci and a fantastic long gown from Jane Mendel with a twist of Louboutin for effect.

If there was one thing you could change about New York, what would it be?

Apathy and ignoring the homeless.