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<http://therealdeal.com/blog/2013/09/04/rock-stars-of-real-estate-glam-up-for-details-party/>

“Rock stars of real estate” glam up for Details party: PHOTOS



By Katherine Clarke

Real estate brokerage, long known as the last professional refuge of divorcees and retirees, has a new image these days, thanks in part to the rise of real estate-themed reality television, which showcase dramatic, multi-million dollar properties and the agents responsible for selling them. Regular folks — a.k.a. the viewership of shows like “Million Dollar Listing New York” and “Selling New York” — have turned the mega-brokers doing the deals, especially those with the highest cheekbones, into veritable celebrities, with commission checks and designer wardrobes to match.

Details Magazine recently dubbed these high-rolling, Armani-clad agents the “new rock stars of real estate” in a feature published in its September issue. Last night the glossy men’s rag threw a party at the penthouse at the Whitman condominiums on Madison Square Park, inviting the “rock stars.”

The party, a cocktail evening with a panel event followed by a dinner on the apartment’s terrace, drew tanned, lithe young professionals who had the air of having recently disembarked a private jet hailing from a far-flung paradise.

The “rock star” panel included Douglas Elliman brokers Melanie Lazenby and brothers Oren and Tal Alexander; the Corcoran Group star broker Noble Black; and Town Residential newcomer Clayton Orrigo. Michael Gross, the author of acclaimed novel “740 Park: The Story of the World’s Richest Apartment Building,” and a forthcoming tell-all on 15 Central Park West, was also featured.

Details editor-in-chief Dan Peres did not look out of place amongst the dealmakers and moderated a discussion with them on the realities of reality TV and the market for high-end properties in cities like New York, Miami and Los Angeles.

Also in attendance were industry heavy hitters like Town CEO Andrew Heiberger, Elliman President Dottie Herman and Chairman Howard Lorber, high-end broker Frances Katzen, as well as celebrity broker Luis D. Ortiz of “Million Dollar Listing New York.” Notably absent was Marcos Cohen, Elliman’s No. 1 agent, and Fredrik Eklund, both of whom were featured in the Details spread. The spread also showcased Los Angeles-based brokers Branden Williams and Josh Altman.

High-profile guests from outside the industry included interior designer and television personality Nate Berkus, his romantic partner Jeremiah Brent and Calvin Klein creative director Italo Zucchelli.

“You guys are doing for real estate what Ari Gold did for the movie business,” Peres quipped, referencing the neurotic Hollywood agent character played by Jeremy Piven in “Entourage.” “That’s a compliment and an insult.”

The 6,500-square-foot penthouse, at 21 East 26th Street between Fifth Avenue and Broadway, done up in sleek white surfaces and light woods, made the ideal backdrop for the event. The apartment directly below was recently purchased by Chelsea Clinton, who was hopefully forewarned of the sudden increase in footfall. The \$25 million unit is the last remaining apartment for sale in the building, which is being marketed by Lazenby and her partner Dina Lewis, the latter of whom was also in attendance.

“If anything is said or done tonight that leads to the sale of this home, I want [a taste,]” Peres joked.

While the broker panelists bantered back and forth on the dog-eat-dog nature of the business and whether or not shows like “Million Dollar Listing” portrayed it accurately – “My deal [on “Million Dollar Listing”] was real. It just didn’t happen when we shot it,” Oren Alexander revealed – Gross interjected with some insightful comments on the changing profile of an “it” building in New York.

“[We’re seeing a] shift not only in the way [the wealthy] live but in the type of apartments they buy,” he said. “The ultimate prize [used to be] a co-op in a building described by Tom Wolfe as one of the ‘Good Buildings,’ most of which were Central Park-facing co-ops with the strictest of boards. Now, buyers are after palatial spreads in mammoth glass towers with loose condo rules.

Gross was plugging his new book, “The House of Outrageous Fortune: Fifteen Central Park West, the World’s Most Powerful Address,” which will be published next spring. Another juicy tidbit provided by the author: Despite selling his 15 Central Park West penthouse for \$88 million in 2011, former Citi Group Chairman Sanford Weill still lives at the building, albeit in his former home’s staff quarters.

Following the panel, Lazenby, clad in a hot pink bandage dress and killer stilettos, returned to the arms of her new beau, real estate heir Winston Fisher, a partner at development company Fisher Brothers. Asked if the two were an item, Fisher joked: “No, I kiss all the girls like this.”

Fisher, formerly notorious for his party boy antics – he reportedly competed with Malaysian billionaire Zhen Low in a champagne ordering contest in St. Tropez in 2010 – said he started dating Lazenby in May and is currently training for an Iron Man triathlon in Arizona. Lazenby said she will happily support him from the sidelines.