

CULTURED

CULTURED.MAG.COM

DESIGN | ART | ARCHITECTURE

THOUGHT LEADERS

THELMA GOLDEN
ALEJANDRO ARAVENA
FRANK GEHRY
EDWINA VON GAL
ELIZABETH DILLER
MARTIN BOYCE
MAYA LIN



Thelma Golden

FALL 2015

\$12.00US

53>



0 74470 29178 7

House Call

Oren and Tal Alexander mine the connection between architects, developers and the art-loving billionaires they call clients.

BY MIEKE TEN HAVE

Oren Alexander cuts a confident demeanor wearing a suit and tie as he strides into the Mercer Hotel, undeterred by the sweltering New York morning.

Accompanied by his older brother and partner, Tal, the duo—known as Douglas Elliman Real Estate’s The Alexander Team—focuses on luxury properties in New York and South Florida that garner headlines like “Broker Brothers to Break \$100 Million NYC Sales Barrier” and “20-Something Power Brokers,” in the *New York Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*, respectively.

As we settle into the Mercer lobby—which felt more like a private club as a number of well-dressed, high-powered looking men made their way over to say hello to the brothers—it’s clear that the Miami natives have found their niche in a growing group of well-connected millennial brokers finding success in the world of high-end real estate.

In 2008, at age 21, Oren was personally recruited by Howard Lorber, the chairman of Douglas Elliman. At that time the real estate market was in a slump, hit hard by the recession. In March 2009, after struggling to make rent for a few months, Oren sold his first property: an \$8.175 million penthouse at the Park Imperial in New York. Realizing that he wanted to focus on the trophy market, he went on to sell luxury properties in Miami, New York, Aspen and the Hamptons. “If that’s all you know, you make it happen,” he says of his tumultuously timed introduction into New York real estate. “The rough markets determine if you’re good in this business.”

In 2012, the Alexanders represented more than \$175 million in property, including a \$95 million residence in Alpine, New Jersey. It was also

the year they sold the most expensive home on record in Miami, a \$47 million estate on Indian Creek that their father, luxury developer Shlomi Alexander, built. That deal proved to be significant beyond its price tag: it solidified their position as a bridge between developers, high-end architects and the art-loving hedge fund buyers looking for trophy properties. “The one common denominator among all of our clients is that they are major collectors of art,” says Oren. “They are the record breakers. I’m not naming names, but our clients are the ones making headlines. If I want to succeed in that market, I have to speak their language.”

With art and real estate in a dizzying, lockstep ascent, Oren thinks the tone of the conversation has changed with architects leading the way. Tapped by Argentine developer Alan Faena, the brothers are currently heading up sales for Faena House, the 5-star luxury oceanfront residences in Miami Beach. Designed by architects Foster + Partners, the building is the first phase of a district Faena is creating, which also includes a hotel and cultural center. “Faena really is the first project to have a true art component, and not just, ‘Hey, contemporary art helps sell real estate, let’s put a Julian Schnabel in the lobby,’” Oren says.

While indubitably precipitated by Art Basel, Miami seems to have grown up overnight, as evidenced by their first Faena House buyers: art dealer Larry Gagosian, businessman Leon Black and Lloyd Blankfein, CEO and chairman of Goldman Sachs. “You might associate these guys with Palm Beach, but we gave them a product to consider,” he says.

Great cities around the world have their time



Oren Alexander, left, and his brother Tal helped Danish architect Bjarke Ingels secure his Brooklyn apartment.

when star architects decide to plant a seed. When that starts to happen, people pay attention. For Miami, that means Frank Gehry, Foster + Partners, Herzog & de Meuron and Zaha Hadid—among a rapidly expanding list. For the brothers, that means cultivating relationships accordingly. “I’m working on two projects now with Renzo Piano, including 87 Park in Miami. He is a legend. I record him every time I meet with him,” Oren says, “It blows people away that he is working on residential buildings. Usually architects of his stature never return to it.”

Other visionaries Oren perceives to be reshaping urban relevance include Rem Koolhaas, Thom Mayne, Peter Marino and Bjarke Ingels, to whom he recently sold a Brooklyn apartment. “Bjarke will be able to watch his projects reshape Downtown Manhattan from his terrace,” Alexander marvels of Two World Trade Center and the Big U, a 10-mile system to protect lower Manhattan from storm surges and natural disasters.

So with this much success already under their designer belts, what’s the duo’s goal? Oren will tell you without missing a beat: “To be the Larry Gagosian of real estate.”