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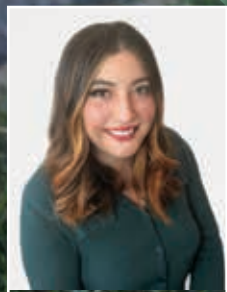
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TABLE OF CONTENTS



08
Index of Preferred Partners



10
Meet the DC Metro Real Producers Team



12
Publisher's Note: Lead with Love!



14
2023 By the Numbers: What DC Metro's Top 500 Agents Sold



18
Marketing Matters: Closing Congrats



22
Agent Spotlight: Molly Branson



28
Rising Star: Michael Musarra



34
Cover Story: Carmen Fontecilla



44
Top 250 Standings



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Cover photo courtesy of **Ryan Corvello Photography**.



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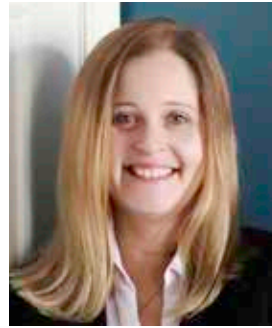
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FAQ

By Kristin Brindley, Publisher

ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE



Ever since we launched *DC Metro Real Producers* seven years ago, I have heard some of

the same questions from many of you. I figured it would be most efficient to publish the answers here in case more of you had the same questions. Remember, my door is always open to discuss anything regarding this community — this publication is 100 percent designed to be your voice!

Q: WHO RECEIVES THIS MAGAZINE?

A: The top 500 agents in the D.C. metro area. We pull the MLS numbers each year (by volume) in the greater D.C. metro area: Washington, D.C.; Montgomery County, Maryland; FCAAR; and PGCAAR. We cut off the list at number 500, and the next year's distribution is born. We did this again in January, based on the new top 500 agents in sales volume for 2023. Based on 2023's list, the minimum production level for our group is \$13.1 million. The list will reset again at the end of 2024 for the following year and continue to update annually.

Q: WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THIS MAGAZINE?

A: We believe that we are better together. When we surround ourselves with other successful, like-minded people, we grow to new heights. Real Producers is a platform that brings together the most elite individuals. We take the top 500 real estate agents and our preferred partners and we build an exclusive community around that group. We share their stories, successes, and upcoming events — really, anything that will connect, inform, and inspire, we put in our monthly publication.

Q: DOES REAL PRODUCERS HAVE EVENTS?

A: Yes! We will have specific networking events throughout the year.

Q: WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR BEING FEATURED IN THIS MAGAZINE?

A: It's really simple — every feature you see has first been nominated. You can nominate other REALTORS® (or yourselves!), affiliates, brokers, owners, and office leaders can nominate Realtors as well. We will consider anyone brought to our attention because we don't know everyone's stories, so we need your help to learn about them. A nomination currently looks like this: you email us at wendy@kristinbrindley.com with the subject "Nomination: (Name of Nominee)." Please explain why you are nominating them to be featured. It could be that they have an amazing story that needs to be told — perhaps they overcame extreme obstacles, they are an exceptional leader, have the best customer service, or they give back to the community in a big way. The next step is an interview with us to ensure it's a good fit. If all works out, then we put the wheels in motion for our team to write the article and for our photographer to schedule a photo shoot.

Q: WHAT DOES IT COST A REALTOR/TEAM TO BE FEATURED?

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. It costs nothing, my friends, so nominate away! The only small fee you may incur would be for professional lifestyle photos for the article.

Q: WHO ARE THE PREFERRED PARTNERS?

A: Anyone listed as a "preferred partner" in the front of the magazine is part of this community. They will have an ad in every issue of the magazine, attend our events, and be part of our online community. We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. One or many of you have personally referred every single preferred partner you see in this publication. Our partners hold a special piece to this puzzle since their partnership helps support our monthly publication. Without them, we wouldn't be able to feature our top agents or host our social events.

Q: HOW CAN I REFER A PREFERRED PARTNER?

A: If you know and want to recommend a local business that works with top Realtors, please email Lexy@kristinbrindley.com, and let us know!



Lead with Love!

▶▶ publisher's note

Dear D.C. Metro Real Producers,

February is synonymous with love, and it's the perfect opportunity to examine the connections we cherish in our daily lives. Considering our nation and industry are navigating considerable upheaval, the importance of nurturing relationships has never been more paramount. **Now** is the time to step up by offering encouragement and support in every way we can. In the good times, leading with love is a powerful practice, and in challenging times, it becomes even more impactful!!

With Valentine's Day on our radar, let's seize the chance to elevate our expressions of love. Beyond romantic gestures, consider creative ways to bring smiles to the faces of your loved ones and your professional network. Is it the right moment to send notes of appreciation to past and prospective clients? Perhaps it's time to break the digital mold and pick up the phone for a heartfelt conversation, a simple yet exceptional act in today's tech-driven society.

As top producers, you hold a special place in the community, and many of you are already giving back in various ways. It doesn't have to be a massive time commitment; find a cause you're passionate about and contribute in a way that feels genuinely good for you and makes a significant impact for others.

Speaking of genuine connections, we encourage you to attend our upcoming Real Producers events! These gatherings are a celebration of your achievements — a chance to

let your hair down, have fun, and network with the best of the best in our local real estate market!

Looking ahead, mark your calendars for the Industry Insights Masterclass on March 6th! It's not just another panel — it's an opportunity to learn valuable information while rubbing elbows with leaders in the industry. Keep an eye on your inbox for your exclusive invitation!

Wishing you a February filled with love ... and we can't wait to see you soon!!

With gratitude,



Kristin Brindley
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KRISTIN BRINDLEY
 ENTREPRENEUR, CONNECTOR, PUBLISHER

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▶▶ marketing matters

By Todd Lebowitz

CLOSING CONGRATS

5 Ways to Show Love to Clients at the End of Their Journey

Closing on a real estate deal is not just a transaction; it's a milestone event in many clients' lives that you have the privilege of sharing in! To make this moment even more memorable and foster lasting relationships, be sure to infuse a touch of love and appreciation into this time, at signing and thereafter. Here are five heartwarming ideas for showing love to your clients at closing.

1. Personalized Closing Gifts: A thoughtful, personalized closing gift goes a long way in expressing gratitude. Consider the client's tastes and preferences when selecting a gift. It could be something related to their new home, such as a custom-made welcome mat, a personalized key holder, or a local artisanal gift that captures the spirit of the community. In a time crunch? You can't go wrong with a home improvement gift card or gift certificate to a neighborhood restaurant.

2. Handwritten Notes: In the age of digital communication, a handwritten note stands out as a sincere and personal gesture. Take the time to write a heartfelt note expressing gratitude for the client's trust and highlighting the positive aspects of their home-buying journey. This small touch can leave a lasting impression and create a sense of connection.

3. Closing Day Surprises: Surprise your clients on closing day with a small celebration. It could be as simple as bringing a bouquet of flowers, champagne, or a box of chocolates to commemorate the occasion.

4. Capture the Moment: Consider investing in giant real estate-themed props or backdrops where you can snap commemorative photos. As a bonus, these serve as great testimonial images on your social media pages.

5. Post-Closing Follow-Up: The relationship between a real estate agent and a client doesn't

end at the closing table. Follow up with clients a few weeks after the closing to ensure they are settling into their new home comfortably. This thoughtful gesture shows genuine care for their well-being and reinforces your commitment to their satisfaction.

Remember, real estate closings are more than business deals; they're significant life events. As agents, you have the opportunity to turn these moments into lasting memories. Your appreciation and attentiveness will also encourage positive feelings from your client that can translate into great reviews, testimonials, and the potential to work together in the future!



With more than 25 years of experience, Todd Lebowitz is CEO and owner of My Marketing Matters, which he runs with his business partner Ram Devaguptapu. Together, they have grown the company to be a recognized leader in real estate marketing with more than 20,000 clients locally, regionally, and nationwide.

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➔ agent spotlight

Photos by Ryan Corvello



GETTING STARTED

Armed with a psychology degree from High Point University, Molly's initial aspirations leaned towards nursing. However, accrued student loan debt led her to reassess her path shortly after graduation, ultimately drawing her into real estate in 2015.

"I decided to become a real estate agent for many reasons, but really, I was excited to think that I could be a part of someone's journey to homeownership," Molly reflects.

She adds that her decision was rooted in cherished memories of open houses with her dad and the profound significance of her parents owning a home — a sentiment that laid the groundwork for her career.

FINDING SUCCESS

Fast forward to today, Molly is dominating her real estate niche as the leader of the District Residential Group. Last year alone, she achieved a remarkable volume of over \$25.3 million across 35 transactions, which, along with her character, reputation, and involvement with the

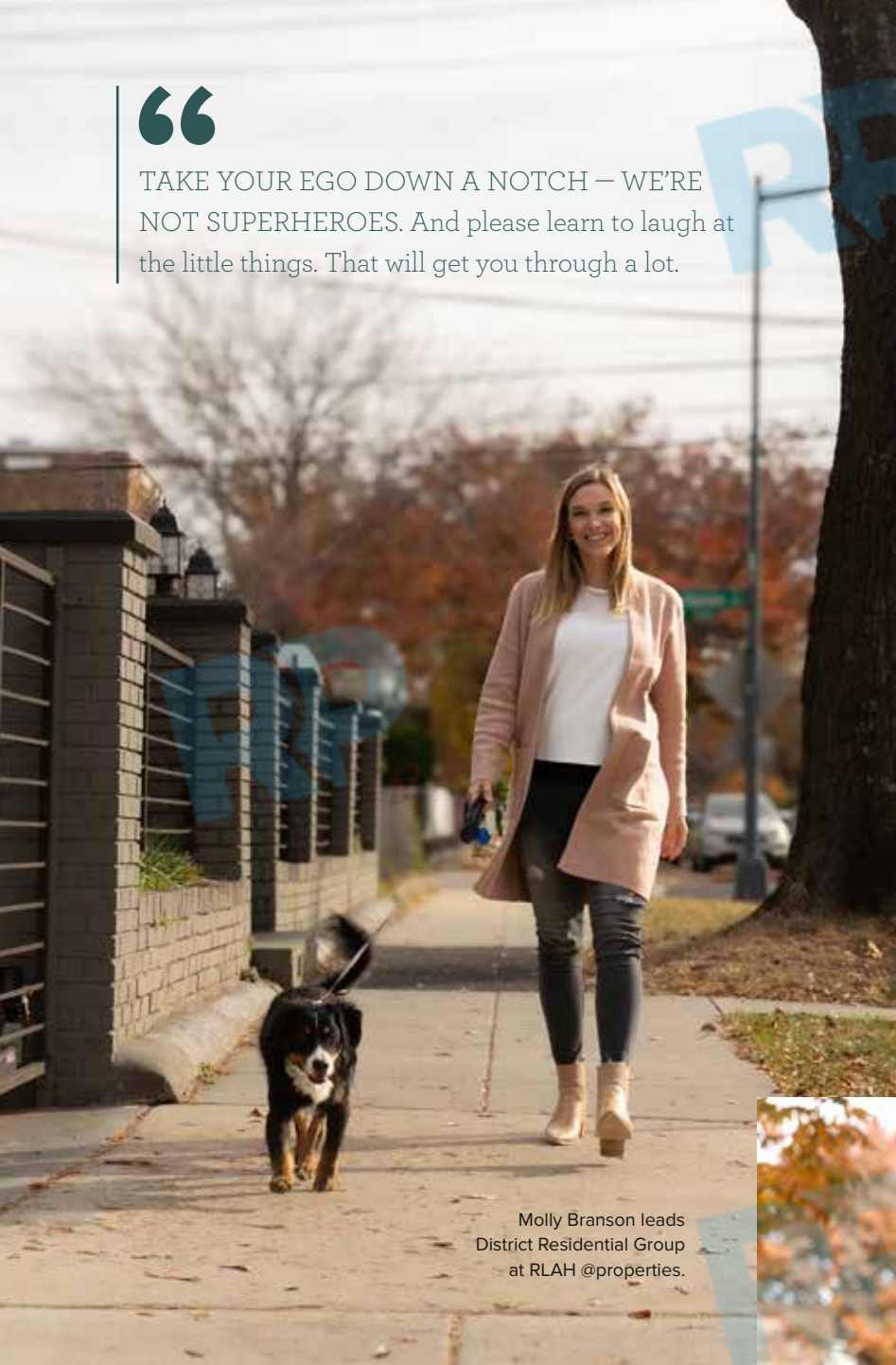
community, earned her a coveted spot in the National Association of REALTORS®' 30 under 30.

Molly's unique approach sets her apart, balancing her business evenly between buyer and seller transactions and specializing in working with investors and developers. "I truly am split down the middle between the number of buyer and seller transactions, and I like it that way," Molly asserts. "It gives me insights to share with each side that I wouldn't know without being on the front lines with both parties. "I also work with more investors and developers than the average agent," she adds. "While I do work with a lot of your typical sellers, the majority of my listings come from the development side, and pretty much all of my business is referral-based."

Molly's accomplishments extend beyond the quantitative, encompassing the fulfillment derived from working with first-time homebuyers and contributing to the creative process with developers as well. "It has been really fun and rewarding to see some visions come to life," Molly shares.

“

TAKE YOUR EGO DOWN A NOTCH — WE'RE NOT SUPERHEROES. And please learn to laugh at the little things. That will get you through a lot.



Molly Branson leads District Residential Group at RLAH @properties.

“I’m pregnant with my first — we have a baby boy due in February,” Molly beams. Her familial bonds run deep, with her sister’s return to D.C. promising the fulfillment of childhood dreams of watching their children play together.

Molly is committed to her local community as well. Her team actively collaborates with Asylum Works, embodying the belief that success is intricately intertwined with giving back.

Looking ahead, Molly envisions a bright future. Drawing insights from her experiences with developers and investors, she plans to embark on her first condo conversion in 2024. But she notes her professional goals extend beyond metrics — it’s about continuous learning and demystifying the attainability of homeownership for others while having fun along the way.

“I think we’re all a little too serious,” she concludes with a grin. “Take your ego down a notch — we’re not superheroes. And please learn to laugh at the little things. That will get you through a lot.”



Molly’s success strategy is as straightforward as it is impactful: “Never stop networking,” she advises.

Her other suggestion to up-and-coming top producers emphasizes the value of connecting with others to share and gain knowledge. “We’ve all been through a variety of struggles and

achieved success in different ways,” she points out.

BEYOND REAL ESTATE
Outside the office, Molly finds solace and joy in her family. Married to Mike Worden, founder of a youth sports league, Molly and Mike share a love for laughter, concerts, and exploration. Their latest adventure? Parenthood.



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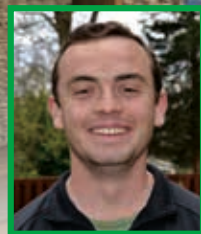
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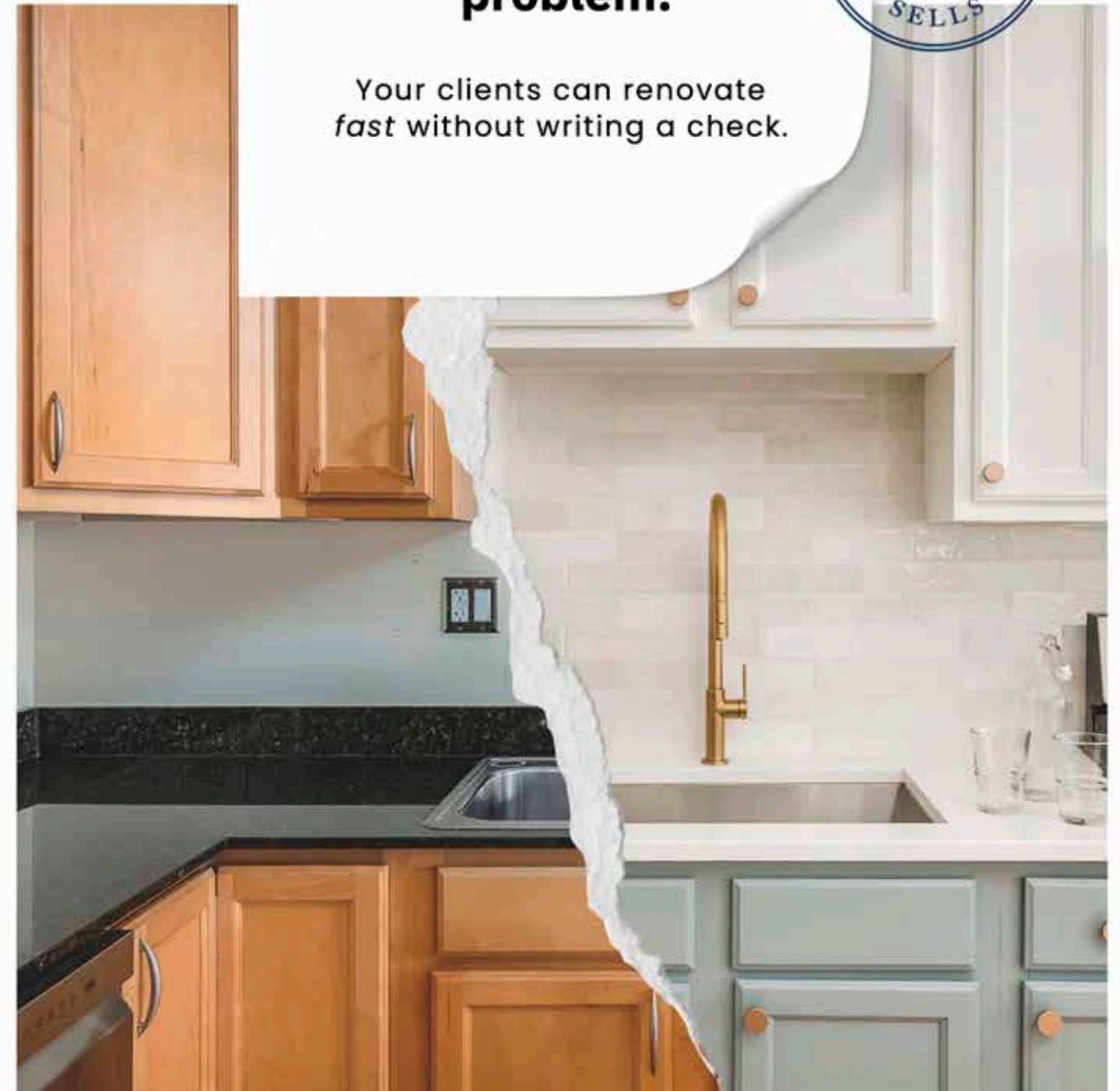
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MICHAEL MUSARRA

A Natural TALENT

Rising star Michael Musarra is delivering proven results for buyers, sellers, and housing developers alike. A global sales advisor with The Kimberly Casey Team at TTR Sotheby's International Realty, Michael's initiation into real estate began during the summer after his sophomore year in college. A proposition from his brother-in-law to shadow him on their successful family-run team in San Diego gave him a taste of a fast-paced job in the housing market.

"That summer was incredibly eye-opening," Michael recalls fondly. "I got a first-hand look at the ins and outs of such a fascinating career — it really resonated with my personality."

AN EARLY LIFE IN TRANSIT

Michael was born in Lyon, France, moving to the United States when he was 2 years old. Since his father

worked in hospitality, the family moved around quite a bit: Boston, San Diego, San Francisco, and Dallas provided short-term homes and communities during his childhood. Michael eventually settled in the D.C. area to study international business and marketing at American University.

"Moving around so frequently had a huge impact on who I am today," Michael explains. "It gave me a deep desire to make wherever I am a home. I was raised to find commonality in all different types of communities and to never treat anyone like a stranger."

FINDING SUCCESS

Michael obtained his real estate license in 2020 and hit the ground running. He recorded a personal sales volume of over \$11 million with 19 transactions in 2022, earning him the

DC Metro Real Producers Rising Star Award. By year-end 2023, Michael had increased his sales volume to over \$16 million.

Michael's definition of accomplishment is not merely about reaching a numeric goal, though; it is about the relationship with oneself, and the work undertaken.

"For me, success isn't defined by one end goal, but rather a feeling of fulfillment," he asserts. "I believe that if you're always driven by genuine purpose, then success is inevitable."

According to Michael, opportunity is everywhere. While the real estate industry is brimming with networking events, he believes that the most profound connections are forged in the everyday moments of life. Turning



“ ”

IF YOU'RE ALWAYS DRIVEN BY GENUINE PURPOSE, THEN SUCCESS IS INEVITABLE.

Rising Star Michael Musarra is a Realtor on The Kimberly Casey Team at TTR Sotheby's International Realty.



routine experiences into opportunities for new perspectives and connections, he emphasizes the importance of living authentically and building genuine relationships while enjoying the ride.

“For so many people, navigating the home-buying experience is a rollercoaster of emotion — excitement of course, but the stress, anxiety, confusion, and doubt — that’s all very real,” Michael points out. “Being a homeowner is life changing, and I love knowing that my clients trust me to be along for the journey with them.”

“My goal, beyond seeing my clients taking the keys to their new home, is to make the home-buying experience as enjoyable, stress-free, and fun as possible. When I’m able to make that happen, it’s a great day!” he smiles.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Beyond real estate, Michael and his partner, Emily, enjoy exploring the city, especially around the Navy Yard neighborhood. They savor the city’s vibrant culinary scene and love to embark on weekend getaways to Great Falls or Shenandoah National Park.

A self-described adrenaline addict, Michael is passionate about health and wellness, and stays active by playing

basketball, sand volleyball, tennis, and golf. He also practices cold water therapy as a recovery method after a day of physical activity. When visiting family in California, he relaxes by going for long surf sessions, cooking big meals with his family, and spending as much time as possible with his nephew and niece.

Michael’s long-term vision involves growing his family in the D.C. area and buying a boat someday. He also isn’t wasting any time holding himself accountable as he seeks to lay a solid, disciplined foundation for a lifelong career in real estate.

“I’m a very goal-oriented, driven person — I always set monthly, quarterly, yearly goals to make sure I’m constantly striving towards new levels,” he concludes. “Right now, I’m using my short-term goals to inspire my long-term ones. I have the privilege of having an early start in this



industry, and I want to make the most of my years as a younger agent doing as much as possible to help propel my future career forward.”

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CARMEN FONTECILLA

INTEGRITY AND
LEADERSHIP

Recognized for her integrity, attention to detail, and brilliant negotiation skills, Carmen Fontecilla has earned her place as a prominent figure in the D.C. metro real estate industry. Formerly a civil engineer, Carmen is now an executive vice president at Compass and team leader of the Carmen Fontecilla Group.

Carmen made the bold transition into real estate in 2005 upon realizing her true passion for helping people find their dream homes.

“As an engineer, I always enjoyed the design and structure of homes,” she explains. “I started investing in real estate and then became an agent. I realized then that I most enjoyed helping people buy homes.”

A Different Perspective

An engineering background gives Carmen a unique, analytical approach in the real estate industry. She is a firm believer in implementing structures in every area, something that has been pivotal in shaping her success.

“I have a system for everything in my business,” she shares. “Writing offers, listing homes, ratifying contracts ... everything.”

Carmen and her team’s accolades are a testament to her unyielding work ethic. In 2022, she orchestrated an impressive 149 transactions with a total volume of nearly \$96





This ethical approach isn't just a slogan; it is a guiding principle that has not only brought Carmen immense success but also forged her path as a trusted advisor in the real estate industry.

Whether her clients are purchasing their first home, downsizing or upgrading, moving in or out of the state, Carmen is devoted to helping them improve their style of living. She pledges to make the home-selling and buying experience gratifying and enjoyable.

"I am very passionate about helping people move to the next stage in their life and find the place where they will build lasting memories," she asserts.

Beyond Real Estate

Born and raised in Caracas, Venezuela, Carmen moved to the United States to earn

Originally from Venezuela, Carmen Fontecilla moved to the U.S. to obtain a master's degree in civil engineering from Rice University.

million. At the time of this writing in late 2023, she was expected to exceed \$100 million by year's end. Her remarkable achievements include being named one of *Washingtonian's* Top 100 Agents for the last two years, alongside her team consistently earning recognition as among the magazine's 'Best Agents' for an impressive eight years running.

The Carmen Fontecilla Group is based in Chevy Chase, Maryland,

and includes 10 agents, as well as three staff members, covering D.C., Maryland, Virginia, and Florida. Their amazing accomplishments are a showcase of Carmen's ability to lead and inspire a thriving team. Operating with honesty and integrity is what sets Carmen and her team apart in the competitive world of real estate.

"I take my fiduciary duty very seriously," she affirms.



I am very passionate about helping people move to the next stage in their life and find the place where they will build lasting memories.



Top producer Carmen Fontecilla is an executive vice president at Compass and team leader of the Carmen Fontecilla Group.

her master's degree in civil engineering from Rice University. She now resides in Bethesda, Maryland, where she enjoys beach outings, family dinners, and holiday celebrations with her three grown children and three grandchildren. Adding to the familial tapestry is her beloved dog, Apolo.

Carmen cares deeply about the community and future generations. She regularly donates to charities and causes such as Operation Smile, an organization that funds surgeries for children born with cleft palates.

Carmen's vision for the future goes beyond personal success. She sees herself as a leader and a mentor to her team and others looking to get into the real estate industry. She hopes to inspire personal growth in each of her team members, helping them achieve financial stability and independence.

"Always be honest. Whatever you sell, do it for the benefit of your clients, the person you are serving. It will always pay off and bring you success," she concludes with a smile.

Always be honest. Whatever you sell, do it for the benefit of your clients, the person you are serving. It will always pay off and bring you success.



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RANK	NAME	OFFICE	SELLING #	SELLING \$	BUYING #	BUYING \$	SALES	TOTAL \$
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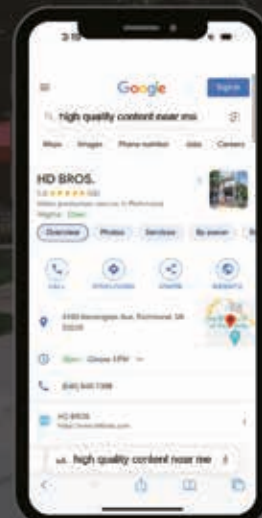
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