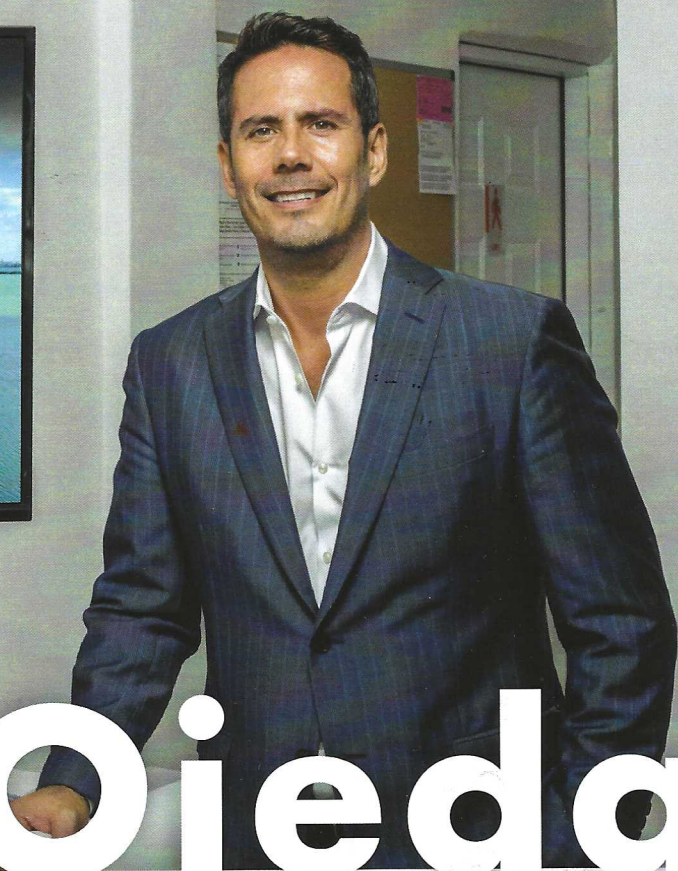


Meet Mario Ojeda of Ojeda Lazar Real Estate in Upper East Side



Mario Ojeda

August 2018

VoyageMIA

Today
we'd
like
to
introduce
you
to
Mario
Ojeda

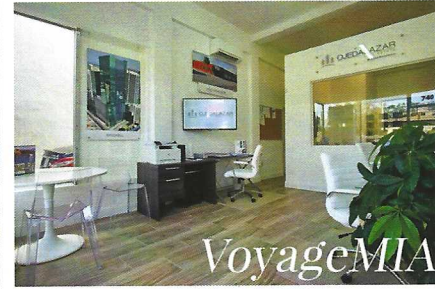
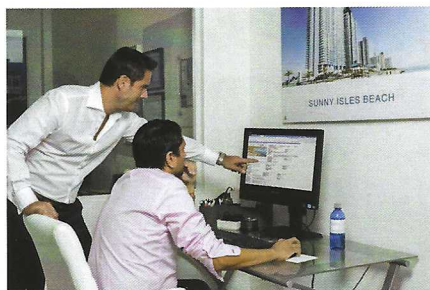
So, before we jump into specific questions about the business, why don't you give us some details about you and your story.

I started my career in real estate in 2004 as an end user/investor buying a property in Miami Beach for my family. Growing up in Ecuador, my dad was a civil engineer who also studied architecture so he would design and build our homes and then wanted to see how much he could get for them. So I grew up at construction sites and learned early on that you can make money selling properties. My Realtor for that first purchase in Miami Beach was Carlo Gambino who I had become friends with and he convinced me to join his firm Carson Realty Group along with his partner Bill Carson.

After the great experience with him and the whole buying process I decided I wanted to do real estate as a career so I got licensed and started working full time as a Realtor in 2005. I learned the business quickly at Carson and within a couple years I became the Director of Sales for the company's flagship project City 24. I was lucky to learn the business in a boutique firm environment and Carlo and Bill were always helpful and I thank them for giving me my start.

Working at Carson allowed me to explore my talents and gain the necessary knowledge to get to the next level. I remember I would stay in the office some times all day and until 8-9pm researching properties, learning about contracts and how to put deals together and simply working as much as possible. I didn't really have a mentor and learned mostly everything on my own.





Those first few years were not easy especially because of the crash but those who worked hard and kept their heads up survived. I always believed I would make it and I would "imagine" or visualize myself making the \$100K per year (or more) which top producers made and eventually it happened. As Einstein said, "Imagination is everything, it is the preview of life's coming attractions."

In 2010, Carson got bought out by Douglas Elliman which at the time was managed by Vanessa Grout. Many of the original Carson agents left but I stayed with them and learned the business in a way that helped me flourish. I became a top producing realtor at the firm until I left at the end of 2012 when I was sought after by Engel & Völkers, the world renowned German luxury real estate company, I got the title of Executive Vice President and I was the top Realtor for the Miami Beach office for the two years I was there. I decided I wanted to go on my own and in 2015 I started Ojeda Lazar Real Estate but it was a one man show with a virtual office in South Beach. I hired my first agent Cristian Caceres at the end of the year and started building my presence as a small boutique firm. Last year I opened my first storefront across from Mina's Mediterranean restaurant on the Upper East Side and it has been great but I know I still have a long way to go. We are now a group of 5 agents and growing slowly but surely focusing primarily on the Upper East Side, North Bay Village and North Beach, the 33138 and 33141 zip codes.

We are small by design and my goal is to maintain a boutique style firm with a few top producing agents. I strongly believe in "quality over quantity" and I won't become one of those firms who hires just anyone or as many agents as possible just to say "we're a big firm". I know the difference a Broker's availability and assistance to his/her agents can make having worked in those "big firms". We work as a team and I help my agents personally with everything from contracts and listings to showing them how to do listing presentations, open houses, show properties and become a real professional.

Great, so let's dig a little deeper into the story – has it been an easy path overall and if not, what were the challenges you've had to overcome?

It has definitely not been a smooth road. Real estate is not easy and finding the buyers and getting the listings is the hardest part, most people that get into real estate think that they will make \$100K the first year, they are in for a big surprise! The crash affected me like it did everyone else and 2006-2008 were rough years but I got by with a few sales and a lot of rentals! It taught me to think outside the box and to never give up. Those years were crucial to my success as many of the renters I helped eventually became home owners and because of the service, I gave them they used me as their Realtor. You have to be patient in real estate and be willing to go through some hardship in order to reap the rewards later on. I've also made some big mistakes along the way but it has made me a much better person and professional. I'm still learning every day and every day poses a new challenge, it's how you tackle obstacles and deal with adversity that makes the difference in your success. I think I've achieved some success but still have a long way to go to get to the top and that's OK because I'm patient. I know we will be one of Miami's top boutique firms in a few years and that's our goal.

OJEDA LAZAR REAL ESTATE – what should we know? What do you guys do best? What sets you apart from the competition?

We are mainly a residential and luxury residential firm but we also do commercial and specialize mostly in multi-family properties. We do sales and rentals and represent both Buyers and Sellers. I am also renovating and selling homes with a European group focusing strictly on single family homes. I am proud to have received the CLHMS designation (Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist) from the Institute of Luxury Home Marketing for achieving sales in the top tier of our market so we know the luxury market very well. As a company, I'm proud to be a small firm that delivers big results. So far this year we've closed nearly \$6mill. and it's only half of the year. For a big firm that might not be much but for a 3-5 agent firm, it's not bad. And we're just getting started!

The difference between Ojeda Lazar and other firms is that we do everything in a very personal manner and with excellence. Our marketing materials rival those of the biggest companies and in many cases are better. For our sellers, we have a full page in the Biscayne Times and do direct mail marketing. We are also in the top 3-5 agents in the 33138 and 33141 zip codes on Zillow which benefits our sellers giving their properties immense exposure. We pick up our clients for showings and assist them in every way possible.

We're a one stop shop and provide our clients with financing assistance, title company and attorneys, inspectors and even handymen. We also offer our clients quarterly detailed and analytical market reports on the market which they find very useful and which most smaller firms don't provide.

Simply put, we pay attention to detail, are always on time and respond quickly to our clients. We give all our clients white glove service whether it's for a \$150K purchase or for a \$1mill. purchase and go that extra mile to make our clients happy. We know that by doing so we will earn our client's repeat and referral business.

What moment in your career do you look back most fondly on?

I've had a few but I think my proudest moment was when I opened my storefront location last year and I could finally say "I have my own brokerage". Having people recognize my name and my sign makes me feel very proud and happy with what I've accomplished. I know I have a ways to go but I'm up for the challenge and blessed to have the support of my family, friends, and clients. With their support, the sky is the limit!