

# UNIQUE

## PERSONALITIES

## DRIVING LUXURY

### CHESROWN HITS ALL THE RIGHT NOTES

Kanye West isn't the only college dropout capable of producing a string of hits. **Marshall Chesrown**, a saxophone player who turned his back on a scholarship to become a car salesman, has managed to create his own sweet music in the worlds of business and real estate.

Chesrown parlayed his start as a salesman into becoming the youngest Toyota dealer in the nation and eventually created the Chesrown Automotive Group, which consisted of 11 companies. In 1997, he sold his dealerships to Wayne Huizinga's Republic Industries, now known as AutoNation, the world's largest automotive retailer.

With time and money on his hands, Chesrown returned to his native Spokane, Wash., and bought 650 acres around neighboring Lake Coeur d'Alene in Idaho, where he spent time during his youth. He planned to build a ranch, but when friends saw the land, they had another idea—a golf course.



Marshall Chesrown

"I don't golf," Chesrown said. "But everyone that looked at the place thought it would be great. I looked at the high-end private clubs, and it was something they didn't have in this market."

The result was The Club at Black Rock, a residential golf community that opened in 2003.

"We're a second-home community, not a vacation-home community," Chesrown said. "I think that's a big difference between us and some other areas. Golfers are pretty social people. There's a difference between the point of being exclusive and the point of being empty."

Chesrown's company, Black Rock Development, of which he is the CEO and sole owner, is working on six other projects, including Kendall Yards—a mixed residential and retail development along the Spokane River in downtown Spokane.

"The fundamentals of business are the same whether you're flipping burgers, selling cars or selling real estate," Chesrown said. "It's about taking care of your customers and positioning your product in a way that's different than the competition."

—Ken Weingartner

**The Club at Black Rock** offers custom home lots from one-quarter of an acre to more than 4 acres, ranging from \$375,000 to \$2 million. Furnished cottages and cabins are priced from \$975,000 to \$1.395 million. The golf course has been named the best private course in America. For more, visit [BlackRockIdaho.com](http://BlackRockIdaho.com).

## TAKING INVENTORY

**1** Cristina Condon  
Sotheby's International Realty  
\$125 million  
[www.SothebysHomes.com/PalmBeach](http://www.SothebysHomes.com/PalmBeach)  
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**2** Andie Richardson  
Romac Sotheby's International Realty  
\$50.834 million  
[www.RomacSothebysRealty.com](http://www.RomacSothebysRealty.com)  
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**3** Meera Gupta  
Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage  
\$28.850 million  
[www.MeeraGupta.com](http://www.MeeraGupta.com)  
Page 145 (CB 17)

**4** John Christie  
H.G. Christie LTD  
\$28 million  
[www.HGChristie.com](http://www.HGChristie.com)  
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**5** Maxine & Marti Gellens, Greg Noonan  
Prudential California Realty  
\$25.95 million  
[www.Gellens.com](http://www.Gellens.com), [www.LaJollaHomes.com](http://www.LaJollaHomes.com)  
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Taking Inventory ranks the five agents with the highest-priced listings in each issue.



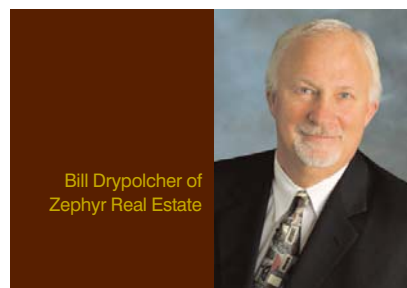
## BEHIND THE SCENES

**The Luxury Portfolio Collection**, the luxury component of the Leading Real Estate Companies of the World network, gathered agents from some of the most powerful independent brokerages recently for the group's first Summit. Held at the Peninsula Hotel in Chicago, the gathering, which Paul Boomsma, president of Luxury Portfolio, describes as a "boutique event," was small enough to foster great networking, yet large enough to attract several of Unique Homes' 35 Most Influential, including Audrey Ross from Esslinger-Wooten-Maxwell in Coral Gables, Fla., and Patricia Choi from Choi International in Honolulu.

—Camilla McLaughlin



Boomsma (left) stands with Dave Perry-Miller and Randall Graham at the Summit.



Bill Drypolcher of Zephyr Real Estate

For six years, San Francisco's largest independent real estate firm, **Zephyr Real Estate**, has been donating to the Bay Area's Meritus College Fund, which awards four-year college scholarships to students with financial need and B averages (targeting students who would miss out on most other awards). Bill Drypolcher, the firm's president, estimates that Zephyr Real Estate contributes between \$100,000 and \$200,000 per year to different charities. "We have found that the best way to lead people into charity work, rather than to tell them what our charity is, is to ask what theirs is—we do either a 1-for-1 or a 2-for-1 match."

—Sarah Binder

# GROUND BREAKERS

In the past year, more than 100 experienced agents have left their prior companies to join California's largest single-owned real estate firm, **Rodeo Realty Inc.** The company, spearheaded by owner/president Syd Leibovitch, attributes this mass influx of talent to its agent-friendly approach as "a boutique-like agency that has all the resources available to even the largest companies," according to a recent press release. As of the third quarter of 2007, the company has 900 licensed agents and 12 branches throughout Southern California.

—Sarah Binder

## DESIGN AWARD

Noted Italian interior designer Piero Lissoni (Boffi, Kartell, et cetera) has been selected to design the interiors of the first U.S.-based Shangri-La Residences. The approximately 100 one- to four-bedroom luxury fractionals will be in the new Shangri-La Hotel at Miami's upcoming waterfront development, **Island Gardens**. Each fully furnished residence will feature extensive terraces boasting skyline and water views and will range from the low \$200,000s to more than \$800,000 per fraction, according to a press release. On track to revolutionize the waterfront, Island Gardens will feature North America's only super-yacht harbor; a fish market reminiscent of Venice; a waterfront promenade and a maritime gallery.



—Sarah Binder

California and Florida are strongholds of luxury real estate. On **UniqueHomes.com** there are almost 5,000 luxe properties from these two states alone.

For more, visit: **luxuryportfolio.com**, **zephyr-re.com**, **rodeore.com** and **shangri-la.com**.

**Piero Lissoni** is also working on a resort in the Turks & Caicos Islands, a 5-star hotel in Jerusalem and interiors for a 50-meter private yacht.