

los angeles edition

BROKER★AGENT™

magazine



company profile:

L to R back row standing, Cory Sterling, Margaret Gazey, Melissa Kojan, Kris Mardirossian, Alyssa Garey, K. Marie Lim, Kelli Urode, Jodi Dirk, Liz Cooke, Heather Bergdahl, Shelly Smith, Peter Gragnani.
L to R front row sitting, Opel Barnes, Dan Urbach, Anthony Marguleas, Rick Lombardo, Mary Kay Shaefer.



A.M. Realty Flies High to Find Homes... for Buyers Only

A.M. Realty knows how challenging it is to find a home in Los Angeles. With local inventories at their lowest in 20 years, the agents at California's leading exclusive buyer's agency, A.M. Realty rely on innovation, technology and education to hunt out the most ideal properties for their clients. This independent real estate firm recently stretched to extreme heights (literally) to find the most desirable lot for a family in Pacific Palisades.

"The client had already identified the street where they wanted to build a home — in the Chautauqua bluffs — where they knew the lots were 100 percent larger than neighboring streets," recalls Anthony Marguleas, owner of A.M. Realty. "But they also knew that the backyards of the homes in this particular area varied considerably in size and usable area."

Marguleas spearheaded the research effort as he looked into the tax records and plat map of the entire street. Although the plat map clearly showed which lots were the largest, it did not reveal topography — whether the lots were flat or whether there was enough usable backyard space for a swimming pool. Once he narrowed down the search to 20 potential properties, Marguleas came up with a unique solution: aerial photography.

"It cost a little under \$1,000 to undertake

the aerial survey and obtain all of the photographs we needed," says Marguleas, who has individually sold more than \$100 million in properties and is regarded as one of the top buyers' agents in the nation. "Once I sat down with my clients to review the photos on CD, we could instantly see the differences in each lot. There were six lots that matched their criteria. In the end, Marguleas found and negotiated the perfect lot for his clients to build their new home.

"You need to know the market very well, and know what you really want. Anthony did all of the legwork. He came up with all of the creative and pro-active approaches to make sure that we got what we wanted. He is good at going out and getting a result for his clients," note the couple.

That is exactly what Marguleas set out to do in 1995 when he founded A.M. Realty. Tired of watching buyers' interests being overlooked by real estate brokers who were primarily devoted to getting the seller the best price or even working both sides of the transaction, he set out to start a real estate business devoted to buyers only that did not have "a conflict of interest."

"How can a real estate company effectively negotiate the highest price for the seller and then turn around to negotiate the lowest price for the buyer?" asks Marguleas. "A.M. Realty works on one side of the transaction, which makes us twice as

A client pulling up homes on the computer outside the A.M. Realty office.

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effective. It has been proven that using an exclusive buyer's agent can save the buyer up to five percent off the asking price, and save a week in the buying process."

Marguleas cites numerous studies to back up his award-winning approach to customer service, which has already caught the attention of ABC News, HG TV and the Los Angeles Times. For example, in 1999 the Oklahoma Supreme Court found that "a buyer who relies on the seller's agent or on dual agency does not receive the same degree of legal protection as that afforded by an agent acting solely on behalf of the buyer."

Other well-known publications such as U.S. News, Money magazine and the Wall Street Journal have printed similar findings. Despite the public's increasing awareness of this discrepancy in the real estate market, Marguleas estimates firms like A.M. Realty "make up less than 1 percent of all real estate agencies in the State."

He hopes to change all of that. In the last eighteen months, the firm has grown from one office employing seven people to 22 people in two offices (Pacific Palisades and Toluca Lake). Voted "Best New Business for 1998" by the Pacific Palisades Chamber of Commerce, the company now sees as many as 200 homes per month and serves more than 175 clients from Malibu to Manhattan Beach and Calabasas to Hollywood Hills. The firm's growth has pushed Marguleas to hire a PR consultant to spread the word about his company, which has already resulted in Marguleas being interviewed for a new program on the "Fine Living" channel, part of the HG TV network.

"All of this growth has been accomplished without taking listings," Marguleas says proudly. Not only has A.M. Realty made a name for itself in the robust real estate industry over the last few years, but it has also earned the distinction of being one of the most technologically advanced real estate firms in Los Angeles.

"All agents are given a computer with a flat screen monitor at their desk," says Marguleas. "We also set up a computer monitor outside the Pacific Palisades office, which allows customers to access the multiple listing service 24 hours a day."



Anthony Marguleas, Broker and Owner of A.M. Realty.



The company's award winning Website, www.homebuyeronly.com, is one of the only real estate sites with access to every property for sale in L.A. County — a unique benefit to buyers since most firms only advertise their own properties. Consumers can also download the most current real estate contracts from their site.

"Our ultimate goal is to empower consumers and give them access to every home on the market," Marguleas says of his clients who get automatic email notifications of new properties, including foreclosures and for sale-by-owner properties.

"Our entire company is founded on the question, 'Is it in the best interest of the client?' If the answer is 'yes,' then we know we are providing them with the best possible service."

As Marguleas urges each of his agents to treat every home purchase like they were buying it for themselves, customers seem pleased with the outcome. About 70 percent of A.M. Realty's business comes from referrals of past clients, like Josh Resnick.

"Because of my recent experience with Anthony, I have recommended his services to over a dozen of my coworkers and friends," says Resnick. "Anthony successfully negotiated terms of the purchase which exceeded our expectations. He expertly guided us through all the complexities of the paperwork, and eliminated all other hassles associated with the purchase of a home. Anthony's attention to detail, thorough research methods, expertise and most importantly, honesty and

integrity, are most impressive qualities."

Other clients like Jay and Beth Piggot have also experienced similar results at A.M. Realty. Although they were expecting the home buying process to be "quite unpleasant," their agent at A.M. Realty, Dan Urbach, "seemed to pull a few rabbits out of his hat."

"We are so happy with our new home and we look forward to having Dan over to see some additions," wrote the couple in a recent email.

Beyond the extensive benefits offered to buyers, A.M. Realty readily arms its agents with an array of advantages. For example, the average rookie agent at the firm is given approximately 100 real estate leads from the company. While a new agent at a typical firm may close one or two homes a year, new agents at A.M. Realty close an average of nine to ten homes in their first year. Thanks to A.M. Realty's great customer service and client referrals, A.M. agents generally make 50 percent more than a real estate agent at a traditional firm.

"It is my goal that each and every one of our agents be financially successful and in turn, give back to the community," adds Marguleas. "I also want to make sure that they're putting money away for retirement and savings. We are one of the only real estate companies that offers a retirement plan for our agents."

Education also plays an important role for agents at A.M. Realty. Since the market is changing so drastically, Marguleas makes sure that his agents attend at least one annual State and National Association of Realtors convention. In addition, he hired a real estate business coach that meets with each of the agents every two weeks for an hour to help support them in their real estate and personal goals.

"It is very important to be educated on the most current real estate contracts, as well as changes in real estate laws," he says. "I try to give the agents incentives and subsidize them to take additional real estate classes above and beyond obtaining their real estate license."

Yet even without stellar educational opportunities, retirement



From left to right, Anthony Marguleas, Jodi Dirk and Dan Urbach with their electric car.



plans, and higher income potential, the agents at A.M. Realty may still be the happiest in the business. If they are not taking clients out in one of the company's three bright yellow, environmentally-friendly electric cars, they can be found at one of the company's regular social activities like beach trips and bowling excursions to keep the work atmosphere fun and entertaining. They also contribute a percentage of their profits to the Lili Claire Foundation, which aids children with genetic abnormalities, as well as the local schools.

"I truly believe that as much as we give is as much as we get," says Marguleas, who currently resides in Pacific Palisades with his wife and four children. "The more we help our buyers, the more we help our agents and the more we help our community."

Whether it's giving back to their community, renting a helicopter with a photographer to locate a hidden lot or being equipped with the latest in computer technology, A.M. Realty tries to "think outside the box" for its exclusive buyer-clients. This motto is precisely what drove Marguleas to establish the company nine years ago and it is what continues to drive this growing Los Angeles firm today.

"It's our passion to represent the buyer's best interest that drives us," adds the entrepreneur. "And the unshakable belief in the right of the purchaser to be well-informed." ★

**For more information on A.M. Realty,
please call (310) 573-4245 ex. 100 or
log onto their award winning
website www.homebuyersonly.com.**

