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Realtor Enzo Ricciardelli will help you find your dream house in L.A.



Realtor Enzo Ricciardelli

VALERIO VIALE

As Carlo Levi himself declared, in reference to the origins of his well-known memoir's title, *Christ Stopped at Eboli* (1945): "The title of the book comes from an expression by the people of 'Gagliano' who say of themselves, 'Christ stopped short of here, at Eboli' which means, in effect, that they feel they have been bypassed by Christianity, by morality, by history itself - that they have somehow been excluded from the full human experience."

Despite several elements, including the name of the place "Gagliano", are mere products of fiction, Levi perfectly captured how those people felt.

However, like every great novelist, or any other artist, their genius resides in being able to transcend both geographical and time boundaries.

Therefore, with no big stretch of imagination, I can say here that, Enzo Ricciardelli's family must have felt in the same way as the people from "Gagliano" in the aftermath of WWII, when it took a courageous leap into the unknown and emigrated from Eboli to Southern California in the 1970s, in pursuit of the American dream.

Today, realtor Enzo Ricciardelli has accomplished that dream and gives himself one hundred percent to match everybody with their dream house in the greater Los Angeles area.

Please, introduce yourself. What's your cultural background?

I was born in Eboli, a small town in the province of Salerno (Campania, southern region of Italy) and grew up there. My family and I left for Los Angeles in 1976 when I was 11.

I learned English from Spanish speakers in my classes translating the lessons for me in those early years. Luckily you learn languages fast when you are young.

I pursued my studies and, eventually, graduated with a BA in International Business from *California State University, Northridge (CSUN)*.

How was your adjustment to L.A.?

It was difficult for the whole family. Not one among the five of us could speak any English.

However, we got adjusted quickly. In my case, for instance, I started attending the fifth grade in a local Catholic school, called San Sebastian, and by the eighth grade I was elected school's president.

I'll be eternally grateful to my parents who, heedless of the risks involved, ventured into a new life in Los Angeles in the pursuit of opening up more opportunities to my brother, sister and me.

What made you choose a career in real estate? What are the essential skills to become a realtor?

Before starting out in that career path, I tried out the most diverse range of jobs, some while I was still in school. Just to mention one, at 12, I worked as a busboy at *Giovanni's Salerno* beach restaurant in Playa Del Rey.

After college, attracted by the idea of employing my knowledge of English and Italian in an international setting, I started working at *Dino De Laurentiis* company's finance department.

After a few months, I asked Dino to move me to the international distribution department, but he told me to be patient because there was nothing available in that side of business at that time.

However, being young and impatient, I took time off from Dino's company and focused on what I really wanted to do in life.

Since I enjoy working with people, and I love architecture and real estate in general, real estate was a natural career path.

In 1992, I started attending to job interviews with several real estate agencies in L.A. It was a period of crisis and lots of people, even experienced ones, were leaving the business.

Despite people trying to dissuade me from starting out in that business, I felt the urgency to try it first-hand. In just three months I graduated from the training program. Not an easy task considering how lots of colleagues had tried for over a year to get their careers started and were unable to graduate from the training program.

My business has been multiplying year after year. Now I'm celebrating my twenty-fifth year in the business.

As far as the second part of the question, no matter which job you're doing, passion is the number one element.

You need to give one hundred percent in your work and be completely honest. That builds up your reputation in the community of real estate agents and with clients.

It's essential to build trust between you and your clients. As they realize you're working in their best interests, they will

obviously refer you to others.

Throughout your successful career, you dealt with a long series of properties. Is there any that impressed you or struck your imagination more than others?

I've been dealing with a wide spectrum of properties, from large estates to small condos and everything in between.

A few years ago, I closed a deal involving a twenty-million-dollar property in Brentwood. For seven years, I had been trying to find the perfect property for my client and I was very gratified when I finally found something he was happy about.

Another source of satisfaction has come more recently from the sale of a thirteen-million-dollar property in Bel Air to a buyer from Miami, Florida. My client had been turning to several agents before choosing me to represent him in the purchase.

Celebrity clients are another big source of excitement to me. I have been able to meet A-list actors and singers who I would have never met if I were still living in Eboli.

What changes have you experienced in the real estate market in your twenty-five years of activity?

The cycle was at a very low point when I started out in 1992. Each cycle usually lasts between 7 to 10 years.

Thus, I've been facing the ups and downs of the market several times throughout my career. One cycle could be a seller's market and the other could be a buyer's market. Since I work with both sides I adjust to what the market of the moment dictates.

If it's a buyer's market, buyers end up striking very good deals, and vice versa in a seller's market.

Last year, I represented one of my celebrity clients in the purchase of a condo for 3.2 million. This year, I resold it, gaining one million out of the transaction. Since he didn't remodel at all, our profit came merely out of my marketing efforts and the current conditions of the market. It was a record sale per square foot in the building.

What's your typical day-to-day schedule?

My business changes by the minute. For that reason, I don't have a set schedule.

E-mails are a large portion of my day to day life. Sometimes, I have showings or I have to preview something for a client. Other times, I have lunch meetings.

I also like to travel a lot,

which presents its own challenges in this unstructured business, but also offers opportunities to meet new clients (like the Miami client I previously mentioned) and interact with fellow agents.

Recently I was a panelist at a real estate seminar held in Florida representing *Sotheby's International Realty*. There I made connections which may provide for referrals in the future.

With all that, I try to keep fit by squeezing in some gym time between appointments.

You're very active in giving back to the community. Tell us more about your charitable activities?

I'm a Community Steward of an out-of-state foundation looking for new charities in need in my area.

I'm also a big believer in helping people to get back on their feet and, eventually, help themselves. There is a charity, called *Chrysalis*, that helps homeless people.

It is non-profit, which I have been supporting, that strives to reinsert homeless back into our society by training them and helping them find a job.

I've been supporting other charities as well, the likes of *Heifer International* - whose noble mission is to work with local communities to end hunger and poverty all over the world - or *Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy*, that aims to achieve significant advances in research, clinical care and treatments for this diffuse and devastating childhood's genetic disease.

In conclusion, are you in contact with the local Italian-American community? Are you member of any Italian-American organization?

I have plenty of Italian friends here and I often hold dinner parties at my home, or they invite me to theirs.

Whenever I can I try to help fellow Italian artists reach their goals. Recently, I had several paintings by an extremely talented artist featured in a condo in West Hollywood. My seller needed art on the walls and my friend wanted to sell his art. That way the artwork got photographed and marketed as well. Eventually, the buyer of the condo ended up buying all the art pieces.

In addition, early on in my career my father worked at the *Italian Trade Commission (ICE)* here in Los Angeles, and I made some connections with Italians in the community through him.