

Prominent Properties' Joshua Baris sells homes by the numbers

Published 12:00 a.m. ET Jan. 15, 2016

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Realtor Joshua Baris, at the Prominent Properties Sotheby's International Realty office in Tenafly, had a unique suggestion recently when a client asked what they could do to create more activity from potential buyers.



Photo courtesy of Prominent Properties Sotheby's International Realty
Joshua Baris

94 Sherwood in Norwood was listed on and off the market for over four years, at different price points. Baris re-listed it in May for \$1,688,000. One month later, the sellers asked, "what else can we do to sell our property?" His answer was surprising — change the address of the property.

He advised them to go to the town and change the address — there was no 88 on their street — right down to the numbers on their mailbox. "They thought I was crazy," he said, as he related the story. But after eight days on the market as 88 Sherwood, they received multiple strong offers. A Chinese buyer went by the home within days and made an all-cash offer. Second, third and fourth interested buyers subsequently approached Baris with offers and in September, 88 Sherwood successfully sold for \$1,660,000.

"We just accepted the best offer from the Chinese buyers. Yeah 88!" exclaimed Baris.

So why the sudden shift?

In Chinese culture, 8s are lucky, signifying wealth and desirable outcomes. Smart Realtors understand how to appeal to Chinese buyers; things like house number, open house dates and asking prices can make or break a sale.

Baris continues this practice on other properties he offers his clients. For example, the listing at 2 Canterbury — also in Norwood — is new construction previously listed with another company in July 2014. Over the one-year time period on the market it had been reduced to \$1,399,000. Once Baris received the listing, he requested the homeowners change the address to "8" Canterbury and reduce the listing to \$1,398,888 — thereby using more "8's." Four days later, 8 Canterbury received and accepted an offer. They expect to close near full asking price.

Baris has been using this strategy successfully for over five years. And where did this fascinating plan come from? A family connection.

Sixty years ago, Baris' uncle married a Chinese woman, and they were amongst his first clients. When he found them a desirable property, they declined because it had the number "4" in the address. They requested properties with an "8" in the address or price, and the explanation spurred Baris to do some research. He soon discovered how "8's" are considered lucky in several cultures, religions, disciplines, including Buddhism, Feng Shui and Russian cultures, among many others. He makes the effort to list his homes on dates that include an "8", like the 8th, 18th, or 28th of the month.

"It's not the sole reason I'm successful, but we have a tremendous number of buyers from overseas and it hasn't hurt to expand my knowledge of what people might be considering beyond the obvious. I've learned not only about the direction a house faces in Feng Shui, but also how the location of large trees can make or break a home for numerous buyers. Most of my homes come on the market priced with "8's" in it."

It can't hurt — and it certainly has helped Baris sell homes.

The Tenafly office of Prominent Properties Sotheby's International Realty is located at 90 County Road. To contact Baris or for more information, call 201-741-4999 or 201-568-5668, or visit www.NJLux.com.