



In the blue corner...

Natasha Higgins meets **Marc Schneiderman** owner and founder of **Arlington Residential** and keen boxer

One Friday evening, about three years ago, Marc was getting ready to leave the office. Just as he was switching off the last light, he heard the buzzer. He peeped out to see who it was. An old car was parked up and a young man in a pair of casual shorts, flip flops and a baseball cap stood waiting. Marc hesitated. He was keen to get home. Nonetheless, he opened the door and in the way that life sometimes surprises you, this willowy looking chap, an IT-millionaire, went on to buy one of Arlington's most exclusive properties.

"I've learnt that in life one must be very mindful about making assumptions – everyone should be treated with the same level of respect," Marc explains from behind his large mahogany desk with a single lit candle and several photographs of his wife and children. "I've sold houses to people for huge sums of money whose appearances were completely understated and who gave no clue to their wealth – money talks and wealth whispers".

Multi-million pound houses, wealthy buyers and one of London's most sought after neighbourhoods is the glamorous game Marc has been involved in for 20 years. Since setting up independent estate agency, Arlington Residential, in 1993, he has seen the St John's Wood, Regent's Park and Hampstead property market snowball and catapult into oblivion gaining worldwide recognition: "In the past two years we've sold to 35 different nationalities and in the course of my time at Arlington, property prices in prime London areas have gone up ten-fold".

"This line of business is a fickle one," he says, carefully choosing his words. "You may have a great relationship with a buyer but if they see another house with another agent that they prefer, they'll go for it instead. It's an instruction led business."

Marc remembers some of Arlington's very

first instructions in the early nineties and the company's first sale – an apartment in Belsize Park. "I wrote the letter of appointment by hand and the seller had to sign it. At the time it was just me working from empty ground-floor office – I get quite sentimental thinking about it!"

From a one man operation to an office which today comprises eight employees with a sales and lettings team, the boutique business – which specialises in the middle to top end of the market – has proved a success. Marc, not one to rest on his laurels, however, is careful to assert that "it could have failed just as easily as it succeeded".

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The question beckons – what's the key to Marc's success? "Discipline, organisation and energy are crucial and I'm confident in what I do," he states affirmatively. "These are the attributes I look for in the people I employ who are also a key asset to the business's success. Running your own business is extremely demanding and I've always worked hard, but for Arlington I work harder than I ever have."

Much of Arlington's business comes through word of mouth and recommendations: "We're a fairly small market in terms of geography but I've built up some very good relationships over

a long period of time," he continues, "I also have good overseas contacts in West Africa and Eastern Europe – more than 60 percent of our buyers are from abroad".

Marc left school in St Albans near to where he grew up, after completing his O-Levels at 15. Academia wasn't for him and was eager to work. "I was young, energetic and enthusiastic to learn so I started as a junior at an agency in the West End". One thing led to another and in 1993, after ten years in the industry, Marc felt he'd acquired a mine of knowledge at the top end of the property market, and was ready to embark on a solo career.

Looking back, would he have done it all again? His answer is a quiet 'no'. "If I'd found boxing at 16, I would have tried to become a professional boxer. I follow and practice the sport with a passion but only discovered it ten years ago."

Travelling is also a hobby Marc enjoys. Later this year he and his wife and three children will venture out to Sri Lanka for what Marc describes as an 'adventure holiday'. "One can easily become immersed in the 'London bubble' and it's important to recognise there's a whole world out there and we want to show that to our kids."

Home for Marc is a period property in Hampstead where he resides with his family and their Lurcher who they rescued from Battersea Dogs home three years ago. Marc enjoys taking their dog out for walks on Hampstead Heath at the weekend: "It's an opportunity for me to unwind and collect my thoughts."

After the weekend, coming into work on a Monday morning is still something Marc looks forward to. "After 30 years of being an estate agent, there's still something lovely about shaping people's future," he admits. You never know when another IT-millionaire might be lurking round the corner!

TO LET: Chester Terrace, Regent's Park, NW1 £9,000 Per Week

A magnificent Nash house overlooking Regent's Park. Recently refurbished, it is a wonderful classic period home designed with luxurious contemporary finishes.



TO LET: Elsworthy Road, Primrose Hill, NW3, £3,150 Per Week

A magnificent, converted ground floor apartment of some 3,425 sq ft, offers a substantial and characterful home with a large private garden.



FOR SALE: Carrick Villa, St Katharine's Orchard, Regent's Park, NW1 £7,250,000

A newly built, detached house set behind a shared-gated driveway and accessed from Albany Street, providing 3,355 sq ft/311 sq m of accommodation.



FOR SALE: Harley House, Marylebone Road, NW1 £5,250,000

A third floor apartment offering 3,309 sq ft/307 sq m of accommodation including three impressive reception rooms and a large kitchen/breakfast room.

