

Trusted and flexible

Nik Stylianou and Louise Nicholson of **Chesterton Humberts Islington** talk to **Natasha Higgins**

Chesterton Humberts is a brand synonymous with heritage, fine property and excellent customer service. They have been serving the London property market for more than 150 years and today are key players not only in London's residential and commercial markets, but across their 75 offices worldwide.

Nik Stylianou (below) who runs Chesterton Humberts' Islington office on Upper Street and was recently voted 'Employee of the Year' at their annual awards ceremony, explains that the company's success is partly down to their trusted and flexible approach in dealing with clients, always looking for new ways to enhance the customer's experience and their

strategy in extracting maximum value from a property.



Stylianou, who joined the company in 2010, has turned the Islington office into Chesterton Humberts' highest grossing branch: "When the opportunity to run Chesterton Humberts Islington office arose, I was really interested in the role. I was born and bred in the area and instinctively knew how much it had to offer."

"When buyers look to upscale in areas such as Marylebone, Knightsbridge, Notting Hill and Chelsea, they often realise they've been priced out of the residential market. That's when Islington suddenly pops up on people's radars as a sensible alternative within easy reach of central London and with fantastic amenities including excellent transport links, schools, cafe culture, garden squares and fabulous architecture yet prices are still lower than in other pockets of prime London," says Stylianou.

The knock-on effect of London's ever-rising property prices has meant that Islington is now attracting a record number of people. "It is becoming quite densely populated and the competition is fierce. Over the past 24 months, property prices in Islington have risen more than in any other London borough."

Stylianou further explains that in the good parts of Islington, Barnsbury and Canonbury you'll achieve around £1,000 per square ft and those figures are continuing to rise.

Stylianou is proud of his achievements at the branch and the results he and his team are achieving. He is honest about not conceding to what he terms 'fluffy management' and describes himself as 'vocal and direct'. "I try to lead by example and make sure my staff are switched on, tuned in and maintaining an excruciatingly high standard at all times – it's very

important we get our style and approach right and it's something I'm always looking to improve on."

In addition to high levels of customer service, Chesterton Humberts are constantly marketing and advertising their properties be it in national newspapers, glossy magazines or online; "Our marketing spend is high and it's very important to us that our customers get excellent value from having chosen us".

Lettings

Chesterton Humberts' Lettings division was voted 'Lettings Agency of The Year' at this year's RESI Awards. "I was delighted," says Louise Nicholson (right), Lettings Director, who has been running the branch for the past five-and-a-half years.



Nicholson, who came from Chesterton Humberts' London Bridge office, says she was reluctant to move to Islington at first: "I loved the warehouse conversions by the river and wasn't aware how much Islington had to offer." Over time, however, Louise has come to like the area so much that she now lives just two streets away from the office.

"Many young couples come to the area to rent to see if they like it. In almost every case they go on to buy if they can afford it. Usually once they're here, they stay."

As well as young couples, the Islington rental market attracts City workers, internationals and students. It stretches as far as the City and Clerkenwell but also covers Barnsbury, Finsbury and Hackney.

How's the rental market looking in Islington? There's currently a high level of stock and the prices are holding, which is usual for this time of year. Our market is very seasonal and June and July are when it really takes off.

Popular developments in the area include the Packington Estate, which will be fully completed in 2018 although some parts of it have already sold and, according to Nicholson, those properties went very quickly. There are also other new developments in progress dotted around the City, on City Road and Old Street.

"At Chesterton Humberts we deal with a very wide range of property. From contemporary penthouses marketed at £3,000 per week in Clerkenwell, to studio flat towards Holloway which start at around £250 per week. We have a range of luxury new builds and period houses – there really is something for everyone," concludes Nicholson.



FOR SALE: Barnsbury, Islington N1 £849,950

A stunning two bedroom garden maisonette situated over the ground and lower-ground floor of this handsome period terrace house in Barnsbury.



TO LET: Clerkenwell Road, EC1M £1,800 pw

An exquisite three bedroom penthouse apartment in the heart of Clerkenwell. This immaculate property benefits from direct lift access to the apartment and a concierge service.