

...independents

MARCUS
PARFITT

In 2013, Marcus Parfitt will celebrate the tenth anniversary of his eponymous agency. Here, the man behind the brand opens up about his business, his beach house and being chased by the paparazzi. Natasha Higgins meets him in his Hampstead office.

Marcus Parfitt has never been to Rome. He's been to other parts of Italy but not Rome. He's just had his tenth wedding anniversary and, much to his wife's dismay, they still didn't go: "It would have been too predictable," he says with a grin.

As Marcus sits opposite me in his large wooden panelled office on Heath Street, you'd be forgiven for thinking he'd spent all summer sunning himself along the Italian Riviera. When I ask about his tan which brings out a pair of striking green eyes, he simply shrugs his shoulders and says, "just Sussex".

"Just Sussex" is where Marcus grew up. Today he owns a beach house by the water a three minute walk away from his old primary school in the village of Ferring near Worthing. He spends most of his weekends there with his wife, Heidi, two young daughters, Sophia and Darcey and Cocker-Spaniel, Bentley. "We call it the hide-away", he says, "and until last Christmas we had no television – it's about family time, conversation, swimming in the sea and searching for crabs in rock pools with the girls."

Sophia, 9, Marcus's eldest, was born the year he set up his own agency Marcus Parfitt. "It was a busy year," he says, eyes widening. He remembers working at home for the first three months, tripping over pushchairs and getting roped into child minding. "It soon became important to find an actual office," he adds laughing.

Thanks to Marcus's strong industry contacts and years of experience, the business took off almost immediately and has been going well for almost ten years. In 2013 the company will not only celebrate

its tenth anniversary, Marcus will also look back on 25 years of being in the industry. "It will be a year to remember," he says knowingly.

Marcus has certainly enjoyed 25 exhilarating years as an estate agent so far, selling houses to leading business figures, countless celebrities, actors and musicians. This comes with a small price, however – he admits having been chased by the paparazzi on the odd occasion, when out with clients!

Marcus believes it's his experience and knowledge of the local market that keeps people coming back as well as the bespoke, luxury service he offers: "We specialise in a specific market where we take on properties at £2m and above, and offer an almost hand-held buying and selling process, matching people with their dream homes." The analogy he offers is that of the service one would receive at a tailors on Savile Row, as opposed to a high street department store.

The root of this hugely successful career choice? Marcus's mother. In 1985 she spotted an advert in the West Sussex Gazette advertising a junior negotiator role at local estate agency Patchings and suggested Marcus apply for it. "I got the job and enjoyed property from the start," he says. Not long after, he moved to London where his sister was working as a model and he got a job in Temple Fortune working for Druce & Co.

One thing led to another and after being head hunted in 1988 he began working as a senior negotiator for one of London's most prominent estate agencies where he spent 14 years and created a name for himself in the big city – an impressive feat. Marcus describes himself as methodical,

says he always employs logic and remains level headed and unbiased in any sale or transaction which undoubtedly contributes to his success. "They say moving home is one of the most stressful experiences that people go through so it's important to keep a level head," he asserts.

When discussing the recent downturn in the economy that has affected the London property market making people reluctant to sell and move on, Marcus, in his calm manner, says he's fortunate in that the north London property market he deals with which includes areas such as Hampstead, Belsize Park, Hampstead Garden Suburb, Highgate and Kenwood is part of its own micro bubble and isn't affected by what's going on in the rest of the world.

Marcus, however, whether at his 'hide-away' in Sussex or his home in Hendon, is always in touch with rest of the world and says he takes calls from clients no matter what time of day or where he is. He says some of his best deals have happened while he has been on holiday. One such deal happened on the way to France in the car: "It happened on loudspeaker so the girls understood to be quiet but enjoyed listening in."

So, what exactly lies ahead for the family man who likes making a roast on a Sunday, taking his daughters to school and cooks a mean Spaghetti Bolognese? "We are looking at expanding the office and taking on some new members in the not too distant future," he affirms.

For now, it's the 10th and 25th year anniversary that will mark 2013 for Marcus and his family and they certainly have reason to celebrate – perhaps a trip to Rome is in store?



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Photo credit: Rowan Hunn

Example of Historic Sales: Hampstead Village, POA

A beautiful Grade II Listed five storey Georgian villa with magnificent Heath views.



Example of Historic Sales: The Grove, Highgate Village, POA

An exquisitely refurbished and outstanding Grade II Listed, double fronted Georgian house.



For Sale: Wedderburn Road, Price on Application

A fabulous Grade II listed mansion built circa 1886 by the celebrated Victorian architect Horace Field.



For Sale: 'Silverlea' Willoughby Road, Price on Application

A magnificent and rare detached house located in the heart of Hampstead Village.

