
REAL ESTATE WEEKEND



Tony Sacco

Realtor has the Midas touch with Singer Island sales

By Janis Fontaine

Special to The Palm Beach Post

Tony Sacco is the Midas of real estate: “Everything I list turns to sold!” is his catch-phrase.

It’s true. “One of my proudest accomplishments is that, since I joined Illustrated Properties in

2015, I have been a platinum Realtor for three of the last four years, and I’ve been the top sales agent at the Singer Island Office for three years, with double-digit million-dollar sales.”

But Sacco started out as a buyer.

As the last century evaporated into history,

the New York City-native was ready for a change, so he and Tina (his high school sweetheart; they’ve been married for 56 years) headed south to the Sunshine State in search of a winter abode. They explored the west coast of Florida, but the vibe wasn’t right, so they checked out Miami and

Fort Lauderdale, but those popular playgrounds were disappointing.

“I wanted a place I could look out at the ocean with no buildings in my face,” Sacco said. Just an unobstructed vista of the mighty Atlantic. Someone suggested Singer

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Island, so he and Tina headed north.

As soon as he reached the top of the bridge and saw the vibrant green of the foliage against the azure blue water, he was sold. He bought a luxury condo at Water Glades for the asking price (\$245,000). The man who loves to negotiate didn't even bother.

"It was absolutely perfect," Sacco said. That was 1998, and he loves Singer Island even more than he did when he first crossed the Blue Heron bridge. Today, about 30,000 people live on Singer Island, three miles long and no more than four blocks at its widest point.

It's a long way from his "humble upbringing" in Astoria, N.Y. His father was a sanitation worker and his mother took in sewing to keep food on the table and Sacco and his two sisters warm and safe in the family's one-bedroom apartment. "I never knew we were poor until I went to school and someone told me," Sacco said.

His parents made sure he got an education, and they were proud when he graduated from Flushing High School and went on to college. He earned an associate degree in business administration from Long Island University's Post College, but says, "I really got most of my education on the streets of the city."

Sacco learned the meaning of hard work at his first job, cleaning the bathrooms and washing

dishes at his uncle's pizzeria. But he first tasted success years later by building a business — a chain of floor covering stores in New York, Connecticut and New Jersey. As that company grew, Sacco used his profits to buy distressed real estate in Long Beach and Freeport, N.Y. By 1997, Sacco had accumulated more than 100 properties. A year later, he was 58, unencumbered and retired in paradise.

Sacco loved Singer Island so much he convinced his five best friends from Flushing and their wives to relocate there. But he still missed work.

"I missed the challenge," Sacco said. He longed for the thrill of finding someone the perfect home and the challenge of selling someone's home for the best price. Making deals gets his blood flowing. But more than that, he loves using his knowledge and his skills as a negotiator to get them a fair deal. He doesn't consider what he does "work" — it was never about the money — because he believes making a deal is an art.

"It is a little ironic that my main function as a Realtor is to get the highest price for my sellers and the lowest price for my buyers," Sacco said. "Either way you must serve your clients' best needs."

Where were you when the Great Recession hit?

In 2007, when the Great Recession hit, I started buying properties on Singer Island, in Hobe Sound and Stuart. It was a sad

time for many, but I felt the recession was not permanent.

How have things changed in the last decade?

My clients are more educated now. They have so much more information available to them.

Best part of your job?

I love meeting people from all over the world. Looking back, I've remained friends with many clients over the years. My referrals are extremely high because of the relationships I have with my clients and friends.

What's the worst part?

The paperwork. Real estate is becoming known as a paperless industry, but we are far from it. The paperwork is beyond belief.

Your best advice to someone buying or selling?

Don't try to out-think the market. Do it now.

What advice would you give your younger self?

Don't be afraid of failure! Show me a person who says he has never failed, and I will show you a liar.

Do you have a motto?

If you believe it, you will achieve it.

What's your personal philosophy?

Don't "sell." The consumers will sell themselves. My job is to point out features and pitfalls.