

Real estate Auctioneer, realtor team up to set South African residential auction record



This rendering depicts the Clifton mansion in South Africa, which sold via auction to one of the world's 300 richest individuals. NAA member Joff van Reenen, CAI, teamed up with Sotheby's International Realty South Africa to sell the property and set a new country record in the process.

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa – Specialist real estate auctioneers and realtors don't by nature play well together, but a recent record-smashing residential sale demonstrates how strange bedfellows can reap extremely profitable rewards.

There is an art to getting it right, though, which boils down to a combination of finding the correct brand partner, the perfect property and carefully coordinating the marketing to reach the widest possible pre-sale target audience.

That's according to NAA member and SAIA (South African Institute of Auctioneers Board) Director Joff van Reenen, CAI, Director and Lead Auctioneer of The High Street Auction Company in South Africa, who recently knocked down a super-luxury mansion in Cape Town for a record 96 million – nearly doubling the country's previous residential auction record achieved on a property in Johannesburg.

The sale of the Clifton mansion means Van Reenen now holds the record for the highest auction price achieved for a residential property, as well as the highest ever bid on a single auction lot in South Africa when he knocked down the former Kyalami Grand Prix Race Track to Porsche in 2014 for 205 million rand.

"An accelerated pre-sale marketing campaign in conjunction with Sotheby's International Realty South Africa provoked 'live responses' from 29 countries, with more than 5 000 views of

the house on our company website alone prior to the sale," Van Reenen said. "This is just counting the serious viewers; people who spent several minutes on the web page or downloaded the full prospectus. General views were in the hundreds of thousands."

Van Reenen says while approximately 20 percent of The High Street Auction Company's referrals come from realtors, it's not often that the firm will join forces with one to publicly market a property.

"But, in this instance, it was the right property and

Sotheby's International Realty was clearly a brand partner of the right caliber to make a sale of this nature happen," Van Reenen said. "This sale demonstrates how well the auction model works for unique homes that might not move as quickly on a realtor's books.

"We look for the exceptional properties, but, perhaps most importantly, auctions quickly separate the men from the boys. If you're not a serious bidder with cash or a preapproved mortgage, you won't be on the auction floor, so our success rate tends to be high."

Lew Geffen, Chairman of Sotheby's International Realty South Africa, said identifying homes that sell best under the hammer can be lucrative for all parties.

"Our intense joint marketing drive on this sale achieved in just a couple of weeks what the previous owner was unable to do in more than a year – got the house sold. We don't usually work with auction houses, but on trophy homes or unique properties of this nature you can make magic in minutes if you have the marketing reach."

The Clifton property was bought by the family of South African retail billionaire Christo Wiese, who, according to Forbes Magazine, is among the world's 300 richest individuals. ❖