

Written by David M. Brown

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One of the premiere brands in high-end Valley real estate is now also making a name in Hamburg, Cannes and Newport Beach.



In 2013, Scottsdale-based Sandra Wilken Luxury Properties merged with Engel & Völkers, a global leader in luxury realty with a network of brokerages in select high-end markets. As a designated broker for Engel & Völkers Sandra Wilken Partners, she will continue to represent owners of luxury condominiums and multi-million-dollar estates in Scottsdale, Paradise Valley, The Biltmore, Arcadia, Fountain Hills and other niche markets in the Phoenix area. At the same time, she will showcase these Valley communities to world buyers.

“International buyers from Europa, Asia Canada and Mexico buy properties in Arizona for the climate, the beautiful scenery, the properties and the Arizona lifestyle,” says Anthony Hitt, chief operating officer for the New York City-based Engel & Völkers U.S. “Engel & Völkers helps increase the exposure of these benefits to the international audience.”



“Engel & Völkers found me,” says Wilken, who opened her company in 1995 and established its reputation as a premium Arizona real estate firm, now with 22 agents. “I had gotten to a point in my career where I wanted to expand, and we both felt that by combining as Engel & Völkers Sandra Wilken Partners we could benefit our highly discriminating customers.”

In her, Engel & Völkers found their best candidate for a local relationship, Hitt says.

“We interviewed five outstanding candidates, and Sandra offered us the experience and expertise that are central to our mission and branding. With her more than 39 years of experience in the Valley, breaking sales records in the most affluent areas, she elegantly mixes executive insight and unmatched market knowledge that will attract buyers and sellers locally, nationally and internationally.”

Says Hitt: “There are markets in Arizona that match the profile of having a national and international reputation as an upscale market—places like Scottsdale, Phoenix, Paradise Valley and Arcadia, for example. It’s also important to us that we find the right match for our brand.”

Since its Hamburg debut in 1977, Engel & Völkers has offered specialty boutique services for buyers and sellers of residential and commercial properties and yachts. Comprising real estate professionals with diverse backgrounds in sales, marketing, banking and financial investments, the company operates globally with 4,200-plus real estate advisors in 513 residential brokerages and 44 commercial offices in 37 countries, serving both private and institutional clients. Most recently, Engel & Völkers opened brokerages in the Dominican Republic and Los Cabos, Mexico.

The first U.S. brokerage was opened in 2006 in Florida. Each, under a franchise agreement, is independently owned and operated. Today, there are 36 residential brokerages in California, New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Florida, and, now, Arizona. Engel & Völkers Sandra Wilken Partners will reaffirm the global company’s “areas of specialization” approach to sales, Hitt says. “I think one of our founders, Christian Völkers, said it best: ‘We are where our clients are in the world’s best locations.’” Völkers is the company’s president and CEO; co-founder Dirk Engel’s name remains in his memory.

The parent company and the local brokerage equally benefit. Engel & Völkers supports its advisors with branding; high-quality business services; marketing programs and tools; mobile, social and web technologies; and access to its global network of real estate professionals and data. At the same time, Wilken and her team offer years of relationship-building in a world-destination metroplex that is a new area for Engel & Völkers.

Because Wilken is already known for her concierge-style service and high-tech marketing strategies like social media, networking, blogging and online marketing, the fit with Engel & Völkers was tailored off the rack. In the ‘90s, Hitt says, Engel & Völkers recognized that because of its unique clientele and the stellar homes being offered, a storefront approach was appropriate. “Our original office was a traditional villa located in a high-end area in Hamburg,” Hitt says. “The look of all of our shops worldwide is designed to resemble that villa, and they are often located in locations with high pedestrian traffic and offer a storefront visibility of the interior, which is meant to reflect white-glove service at its best. Each shop is as much a lounge as it is an office for discerning people who

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always expect the best.”

As a result, Wilken will open her Engel & Völkers shop in the Scottsdale area in 2014. “We are still looking at locations at high-end centers downtown and uptown,” she says. “The right place will be one where clients visiting here from all over the world for their third, fourth or fifth homes will be comfortable—a place where they will feel right at home.”

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