

Elise Kalles's influence, footprint and position of prominence in the luxury real estate market are dominant and without question, now selling some of the world's most prestigious properties

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

From seeing the worst in humanity to the finest in life, legendary broker Elise Kalles of Harvey Kalles Real Estate has used both experiences to shape her character, philanthropy and strong family values

PHOTO BY JESSE MILNS

In every major city, there always seem to be people who are recognized as sitting at the top of their chosen profession. When it comes to high-end luxury real estate in Toronto, that person is the much-admired and venerable Elise Kalles of Harvey Kalles Real Estate Ltd.

In North America's fourth largest city, her influence and footprint in the luxury real estate market are dominant and without question. Her position of prominence in her profession is even more impressive when you discover that she was not born into a life of privilege. Old-school values and hard work still shape her determination and work ethic after 40 years at the top of her craft.

Elise Kalles' remarkable life story begins with her birth in Poland as the Second World War broke out, as harsh an environment as anyone can imagine. Following the war, together with her mother and two brothers, the family settled in France before immigrating to Toronto in 1951 when she was just 13 years old. Being a child and survivor of the Holocaust instils an inner drive and passion to survive unlike any other. With steely determination, she quickly learned the language and thrived in school. Eight years later, she met the love of her life, her cherished Harvey, at a wedding reception.

She and Harvey married, and in a few short years were the proud parents to Corinne, Shawna and Michael. Harvey continued to work at the small but growing real estate company that still bears his name. While staying at home raising their children, Elise began to design maternity clothes, which she sold to many of Toronto's socialites. This was a very busy enterprise during the baby boom of the 1960s, when beautiful-looking maternity wear was hard to come by.

During this time, Elise began to establish some lifelong friendships with the clients who purchased her clothing. When she later joined Harvey and started selling real estate, these relationships helped build her early client base. Her first sale was a mansion in prestigious Forest Hill that sold for more than \$1 million. This was an unheard-of amount in those days, causing a newspaper reporter to call Elise and ask, "Was it an entire building or just a house?"

In Toronto's premium neighbourhoods of Forest Hill, Rosedale, Yorkville, the Annex or the Bridle Path, there is a certain cachet associated with having a listing with Harvey Kalles Real Estate. Prospective purchasers know immediately that the home will be of the finest quality in design, features and location.

It is also considered prestigious to have Elise Kalles' name associated with your listing. Over the

years, she has become synonymous with luxury and quality. She has been a multi-million-dollar producer for more than 40 years with ongoing referrals and repeat business. Her stellar reputation has attracted clients from around the world, with some homes being listed at more than \$20 million.

"I've been selling homes for three generations and it feels great to have my clients still trust me. It's important to nurture these relationships over the years. You have to really care and show respect for people's decisions. Buying a house is a very big step and usually the largest investment someone will make. It's not like buying an airline ticket online. This year is a perfect example of why it is important to be guided by someone with expertise and knowledge. The real estate market goes in cycles. This [volatile market] too, shall pass."

"I care greatly about my clients, especially the younger generation who must grapple with

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AS IN OTHER SERVICE INDUSTRIES, REAL ESTATE IS A PROFESSION THAT RUNS ON RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST. I AM HONoured THAT I AM NOW ENTRUSTED IN BUYING AND SELLING HOMES FOR THE THIRD GENERATION OF MY CLIENTS' FAMILIES

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high interest rates and a changing market. I now work with many of my clients' children and grandchildren, and I am very aware that every dollar counts. It's more of a responsibility selling a home to a first-time buyer than selling a



PHOTO BY BRIAN MOSOFF

Just eight years after immigrating from France, Elise met and married the love of her life, her beloved Harvey

20-million-dollar home to a client who is trading up and buying his "forever" home."

Over the decades, the real estate company that Elise and Harvey started has grown to new heights guided by the strong, charismatic leadership of their son, Michael. His industry knowledge, integrity and brilliant business expertise has ensured that the company continues to excel as an industry leader. Now with seven offices in southern Ontario and 300 sales agents, the numbers from 2021 are staggering ... a sales volume of \$4.5 billion with an average sales price of \$1.83 million.

Harvey and Elise's esteemed position in the industry was recognized by winning a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 22nd Annual Who's Who in Luxury Real Estate Conference. The honour is given to members who set an example for the global real estate industry and display excellence throughout their career.

Elise was also the company's first inductee in Who's Who is Luxury Real Estate Billionaire's Club, recognizing the remarkable achievement of having sold over a billion dollars of real estate over the years. This is truly an award-winning career!

Harvey Kalles Real Estate is a multi-generational family business with two of Harvey and Elise's children, Corinne and Michael, and their grandson Jake, working within the company.



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1. Harvey Kalles Real Estate has expert knowledge of the high-end luxury condominium market, which makes up a significant portion of the Toronto market. 2. Some of Elise Kalles listings include higher-end estate homes worth as much as \$20 million. 3. In Toronto's finer neighbourhoods such as Forest Hill and Rosedale there is a certain cachet to having a Harvey Kalles Real Estate sign on your property. 4. Harvey and Elise Kalles stand proudly and happily with children (left to right) Corinne, Shawna and Michael.



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Elise never really expected that to happen, but as she looks back, says she should have seen it coming.

“Michael was a natural,” recalls Elise. “As the youngest, I would drive him to school in the morning and then head to a listing. As I would put him to bed, he would ask me, ‘Are you going out on a showing or an offer?’ And the following morning as I made him breakfast, he would always ask, ‘Well, what happened?’”

Elise’s daughter Corinne followed in her mother’s footsteps and is committed to continuing the Kalles legacy in real estate. Elise recalls a recent event where she and Corinne met a mutual client from a shared listing. Elise asked him how things were going, and before she could say another word, the client replied, “Elise, I’ve always liked you and I trust you, but I LOVE Corinne!” Elise and Harvey’s other daughter, Shawna, chose not to enter the real estate field but instead became a successful psychometrist. As I said to Harvey the other day, “I don’t remember being such great parents that we deserve such great kids.”

Real estate seems to be one of those industries where success is solely defined by numbers. While average sales prices, number of sales or listings are important, they certainly do not define success in the lives of Elise and Harvey Kalles. The family is widely respected and recognized for their considerable philanthropic work. It is a core value within the entire company that giving back to the community is a priority. The Kalles family and the entire sales team are committed to helping others.

Amongst the many organizations they support are Save A Child’s Heart, Out of the Cold, Daily Bread Food Bank, UJA, Starlight Children’s Foundation, CAMH, Covenant House, Habitat for Humanity, as well as a number of health care facilities such as: Sunnybrook Hospital, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, Mount Sinai Hospital, Baycrest Centre and SickKids Foundation.

“We feel it is our duty to give back to the community and we hold many charities close to our heart, especially Sick Kids Hospital,” she says. “Providing funds for cancer research is also very important to us, as my son-in-law died from pancreatic cancer.” Such commitment, support and involvement in charitable works is a testament to the strength of character and generosity of both Elise and Harvey Kalles.

Life’s experiences shape us all. From arriving as a war-traumatized youth in a strange country, to listing and selling some of the city’s most prestigious properties, Elise Kalles is the very definition of perseverance, diligence, dignity and a strength of character that the rest of us can only watch with admiration.

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CONGRATULATIONS HARVEY & ELISE KALLES

WHO'S WHO IN LUXURY REAL ESTATE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS



AT THE WHO'S WHO IN LUXURY REAL ESTATE'S 22ND ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE, HUNDREDS OF LUXURY BROKERS FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE CONVENED UPON TORONTO'S ROYAL YORK HOTEL TO RECOGNIZE THE INDUSTRY'S BEST.

THE EVENT CULMINATED WITH A LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD PRESENTED TO ELISE AND HARVEY KALLES. THIS HONOUR IS GIVEN TO MEMBERS WHO SET AN EXAMPLE FOR THE GLOBAL REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY AND DISPLAY EXCELLENCE THROUGHOUT THEIR CAREER.

