

# Owners of beachfront mansion swap homes with their buyers

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This sprawling mansion on Atlanta Avenue in New Smyrna Beach sold for \$7.5 million in early December. (Premier Sotheby's International Realty)

A conversation between real estate agents during a home inspection turned out to be very serendipitous.

Two couples ended up buying each other's houses.

It all began when a couple became interested in an oceanfront house on North Atlantic Avenue in New Smyrna Beach, which when it closed recently for \$7.5 million, became the highest-priced sale of the year in that zip code.

“It's situated on five lots, which in this day and age is completely unheard of because you'd never be able to secure five lots contiguous to one another on oceanfront property,” explained buyer's agent Cynde Velez with Premier Sotheby's International Realty.

The 6,126-square-foot, six-bedroom home had recently gone through a multi-million dollar renovation.

“It’s just beautiful. The first thing that piqued [the buyers’] interest and attention was the uniqueness and layout of the property,” Velez told GrowthSpotter. “The house has a beautiful and elegant feel, but it’s very livable. It’s very warm. Sometimes you can walk into homes that are palatial and they feel a little sterile and cold and they can be so big that they lose that homey feeling. This property didn’t.”

According to public records, the buyers are Andre and Deena Biewend and the sellers were Richard and Michele Zahn. Both couples are involved in real estate development. Andre Biewend is vice president of Eric Adams Realty/Construction. The Zahns are chairman and CEO/President of Prospect Real Estate Group, which has new apartment communities in development in Palm Bay, Kissimmee and Orlando.

The home sits back off the beach a bit with a boardwalk connecting the two, keeping any noise from cars or beachgoers from getting to the house while keeping the views.

“The bedroom is almost like a rotunda and you just have a whole semicircle of nothing but floor-to-ceiling windows that give you the view of the ocean directly. It’s just gorgeous,” Velez said.

The fact this property has a main house and separate and fully functioning guest house was perfect for the buyer’s multigenerational family.

Velez said a conversation she had with listing agent Amy Almester with Collado Real Estate during the home inspection led to what ended up being a type of home swap.

“The sellers of this property we’re looking for something to move back closer to town because at the beach, they were too far away from their grandkids,” Velez said. “I asked her where [the sellers] were going to go and she mentioned an area, and I said wait, that’s where [the buyers’] house is!”

Velez told Almester when she was ready to list the property.

“They were the first showing and they bought it,” Velez said. “The sellers of this property actually purchased my buyers’ home.”

That home was a 7,177-square-foot, six-bedroom home on the golf course in Alaqu Lakes. It sold for \$2.625 million.

“Both closed on the same day, so it was one good day,” Velez said with a laugh. “They bought each other’s homes. I’ve never had that happen before.”

Throughout the transactions, Valez said both parties became friends and realized they actually already knew each other through their children's sporting activities many years ago.

Even though both sales closed on December 1, nobody is moving yet.

“We made arrangements for leasebacks so that nobody would have to move during the holidays and everybody is enjoying the holidays in their respective residences and moving in January.”

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