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CALGARY SOUTH EDITION

***The
Condo
Queen***

The Condo Queen

By: Maj Khan

Laura Schewchenko has built a career on her ability to determine a property's potential. She has focused her skills and talents converting existing properties into luxury apartment-style condominiums with open, functional layouts. Laura works with creative and talented experts to create spaces that are beautifully finished, equipped with all the amenities, and perfect for young professionals. It is how she sees fit to redefine the real estate landscape ... literally.

For the past eight years, Laura has focused her attention on the conversion market and deals with properties in the inner city, specifically Mission, Cliff Bungalow, Lower Mount Royal, Mount Royal, Connaught, Bankview and Marda Loop. Highly experienced and skilled, there is no one else in Calgary who understands condominiums and their impact on the market.

When purchasing a condominium, it is crucial to have the right representation, like Laura who has

the comprehensive knowledge of all areas of condominium living, which offers a different kind of lifestyle compared to buying a home. There are significant factors to consider. To live in a condominium is to understand the rules and guidelines that govern such properties, including its by-laws, reserve



fund studies, budgets, mechanicals and management. To date, Laura has marketed and successfully completed 20 condominium conversions and new developments; this is why she is aptly nicknamed 'The Condo Queen'.

The Condo Queen is consistently ranked in the top 10 in RE/MAX Real

Estate Central, a company Laura has been proud to be associated with ever since she acquired her license in 1998. Her impressive list of credentials include being a member of the President's Club, the Executive Club, the 100% Club, the Platinum Club, the MLS Million Dollar Club, and has been inducted into the RE/MAX Hall of Fame.

Currently, Laura has a strong working relationship and business partnership with Brian O'Kane, the owner of Red Trout Inc., which is one of the dominant participants in the conversion market. Brian recalls the first time he met Laura. "I remember Laura coming in to the suite and asking for me. She was unaware of who

I was, and assumed I was the general contractor. She immediately cast an appraising eye over the work I was doing in the unit, and began to ask pointed questions about the walls, the floors, the materials used, storage and a number of other detailed questions. She made it clear the work had to be flawless and the



workers reliable, or else. ... Laura also emphasized 'trouble' was her middle name and, if her name was going to be used, the quality had to be exceptional. I thought she was perfect, as she was demanding and was not afraid to come onto the job site and ask questions. She is blunt and determined to sell a product she would be proud of."

Laura and Brian have successfully converted six condo projects together. They are currently working on the seventh project: 'The Jewel' is the Athlone on 19th Avenue SW. It is a 46-unit 1940s heritage building in the heart of Mission, and a project Laura wanted to convert the first time she saw it. The wide corridors and Art Deco accents inside are reminiscent of an old cruise ship. The descent into the belly of the building to the coal chute and an old furnace, which was once filled with coal, is impressive. Once restored, the beauty and grandeur of this majestic property will once again establish itself as the premier residence in the Mission area.

Laura worked tirelessly with Brian selecting the materials for the project. She insisted that interior designer Camille Coupal be brought in, to ensure the selection of wall colours, tiles and cabinets would allow the building to retain its character and set it apart from the other conversion projects that have been done in the area.

When Brian was asked about the future of Red Trout, he answered that as long as Laura was there to drive sales, he will continue to manage the organization and they will search for buildings to convert. Laura is an integral part of Red Trout Inc.

Driving sales is something Laura has a flair for. Her marketing strategy is comprehensive, aggressive and simple. Location! Location! Location! And lots of show suite open houses! Laura is keenly aware of the power of technology, and utilizes the Internet as extensively as she can.

Hard work and determination has propelled Laura's business success

beyond her expectations. As a result, she has created a 'Family' to allow her the time to fully service her clients' needs. This 'Family' consists of Office Manager Leona Mirosnikov, and Buyer Agent Shannon Brown. Shannon is ambitious and hard working, and determined to make her mark. She has a background in condominium sales, and a family history in real estate and construction. Laura is Shannon's mentor and, under her guidance, Shannon has learned invaluable techniques and gained great insight into the real estate business. In Shannon's words, "Laura has taken me in and made me feel like family. She has been very generous. She is not out for just herself and she wants us all to succeed. Her knowledge, charisma and giving nature have made a huge impact on my life. Laura is a very unique person - a high profile woman, a woman of true character - and it is not often you find someone so successful whose priority is not only for her success but for others as well."

Leona Mirosnikov is Laura's right hand and her Office Manager. Leona was previously a licensed realtor in Calgary, and is knowledgeable about the industry. She is able to professionally and delicately handle the many and varied issues that occur, in a timely manner. Leona works within the inner city in a satellite office, allowing clients to speak directly to a person and have any questions, comments or concerns dealt with immediately.

Success is hard work and something this realtor/developer can attest to. Years of building name recognition and acquiring the bulk of the inner city condominium market, coupled with prime locations, are key to her achievements. However, there are other factors that have contributed to her professional success. Laura is a warm and personable character. Her integrity is unquestionable, and she is reliable and knowledgeable. She is scrupulously

honest, and does not hesitate to tell the unvarnished truth. Her generosity, the strength of her character, and her ability to listen to her clients' needs are all reasons why the majority of her business is based on repeat clientele and referrals. It is a significant honor for Laura, and it reflects that her hard work is well appreciated and respected. Being responsible, patient and not taking things personally has served Laura well, and it is sage advice she gives to others who would like to do what she does

Clearly, Laura loves what she does. She relishes her independence, the variety, the people and the challenges. As for balance, in her words, "You don't come first in real estate, everyone comes before you." To keep her grounded, Laura resides in a spectacular contemporary-style home in the Slopes of Springbank. "It is my serenity." 'Urban Country' is what she calls it. This is a gated community with amazing views of the majestic Rocky Mountains

and breathtaking sunsets. It is also only 15 minutes to downtown Calgary where her business is concentrated.

Laura, Leona and Shannon take time to give back to the community and their clients. They support the Children's Miracle Network, World Vision, CKUA (Alberta's local and independent radio station), STARS air ambulance, breast cancer awareness, the Lupus Foundation, the Heart and Stroke Foundation and various other charities.

The future is bright for this confident and competent professional. Laura sees herself continuing to buy and sell real estate. She is grateful to her parents, Elizabeth and Morris Schewchenko, for believing in her at such a young age, and giving her the necessary funds to pay the loan to the bank for the new car she bought. They were unaware that the money was actually being used for the down payment for her very first property (at a whopping 18 percent interest rate), giving Laura her jump-start into the

real estate market. Laura also wants to say 'thank-you' to her friends for their encouragement and support, and looks forward to spending more time with her husband Craig, who works overseas.

If you are looking for that perfect condo to fit your lifestyle, or thinking of selling your condo, please call The Condo Queen for results you will love. Let Laura Schewchenko put her name to work for you.

Laura Schewchenko

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