

TOP AGENT MAGAZINE

THE JM TEAM



How did two individuals born and raised in some of the most remote places on Earth, become two of LA's most sought-after agents? For Jay and Gil from the JM team, it's precisely this atypical childhood and background they can attribute their success to. Both born in far-away lands, both having traveled extensively at a young age, Jay and

Gil developed a strong understanding for different worlds and cultures, which translated into a great acumen for understanding people - a key asset in the people-driven business that is real estate.

This deep desire to understand their clients' needs and motivations acts as the very fuel powering their real estate goals — from selling homes at record highs, to negotiating the best possible price tags for their buyers' dream homes.

Born on the tiny South Pacific island of New Caledonia, Jay Martinez became a rising real estate star his first year in the profession and rapidly joined the ranks of LA's top 10% most successful agents. However, getting from his original birthplace of New Caledonia — a tiny rock in the South Pacific — to where he is today has been more than a skip and a hop, featuring many exotics stops along the way, and eventually culminating with an ultra-synergistic partnership with Certified Public Accountant Gilbert Dirige in 2012.

Jay spent most of his childhood in other French islands in the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean, eventually finding his way to Florida with his family at the age of nine, where he learned English and got to know America for the first time. He displayed an interest for real estate and architecture from an early age, always wanting to look at homes with his mother whenever it was time to relocate again. Although his family moved back to France in the early 90s, Jay always knew he would make his way back to the land of opportunity, and in 1999, he did just that when he attended college in Hawaii, opting to remain in the US permanently and eventually starting his real estate career in Los Angeles in 2011.

Like Jay, Gil Dirige also hails humbly from an island in the Pacific, one of the 7,641 islands in the Philippines. Having dabbled in investment accounting for several years, he obtained his Certified Public Accountant license in 2011. He partnered up with Jay in 2012 to co-found the JM Team, deciding to officially end his corporate career. "I was always intrigued by the real estate profession, and delivering a win-win situation to all parties is the best feeling," Gil explains. Today, the two are focusing on West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Hollywood Hills, and recently Sherman Oaks. At the John Aaroe Group in Sunset Strip, they're within minutes to the city's hot spots. And with about 70 percent of their business made up of referrals and repeat clients, they're planning on continuing to expand every year.

"Our clients know people who are Realtors, but they choose to come to us because we're honest, persistent and deliver record results," Jay explains. With Jay's undergraduate degree in engineering and finance, and Gil's CPA and investment backgrounds, the two make for a well-rounded real estate duo. "It's this mix of powerful analysis, business acumen and aggressive negotiation skills that our clients keep coming back for." Jay and Gil round this off with a lot of listening and patient understanding. "We make sure that our clients are happy, that's the only way we can continue in this business," Gil explains. "We are dedicated to providing them with excellent service, every step of the way."

When it comes to negotiating, both agents won't take 'no' for an answer, helping their clients overcome even the most challenging situations. "If there seems to be a roadblock in a transaction, we power through it. We close every escrow we open," Jay proudly states. From negotiating a pet policy through a homeowner's association allowing their buyers to move in with their beloved pets, to ensuring the successful sale of a home with a pool which seemingly was 'falling down a hill,' they stop at nothing, truly set on delivering for their clients.

Over the next two years, Jay and Gil hope to reach \$40 million in sales. And no matter how large their business grows, they will never stop loving every minute of their work. As they declare at the end of their interview with dashing smiles, referring to their team motto: "Your Home is Our Passion."



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