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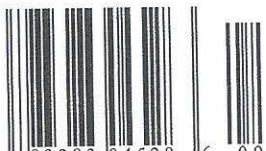
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Kristen Kirchner is Cool in California

By Shamerra T. Brown

At first glance, Kirsten Kirchner's life mimics the classic tale of a young woman moving from the small town to California – suitcase packed with the requisite dreams of superstardom, of course. But focus your lens and you'll find that her mission to California had nothing to do with the glitz and glamour of Hollywood. Kristen had her drive on 'real' ground.

"Conservative people, or people who live in fear, can't make it in this business. You're dealing with millions of dollars, but you have to look at it like it's nothing."

Kristen Kirchner

She went from life as an 11-year-old real estate apprentice to working million-dollar investment deals. Kristen is the top producer at a prestigious Los Angeles brokerage firm, First Financial Bancorp, and also a former contestant on *"The Apprentice 3."*

It Began at the Dinner Table

Kristen recollects on the days when her parents schooled her on the dos and don'ts of real estate investing. Back in Virginia, they'd been involved in real estate for as long as she could recall. Her father bought 57 acres of land, divided it into five acres, and the family lived and worked at the development. Her parents kept her occupied, delegating to Kristen simple, yet necessary tasks. She was assigned to type appraisals on a typewriter, and other hands-on duties. Kristen emphasizes the impact this had on her business development skills.

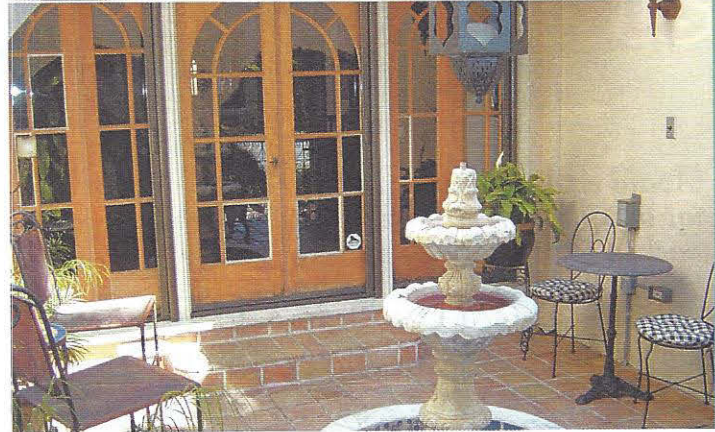
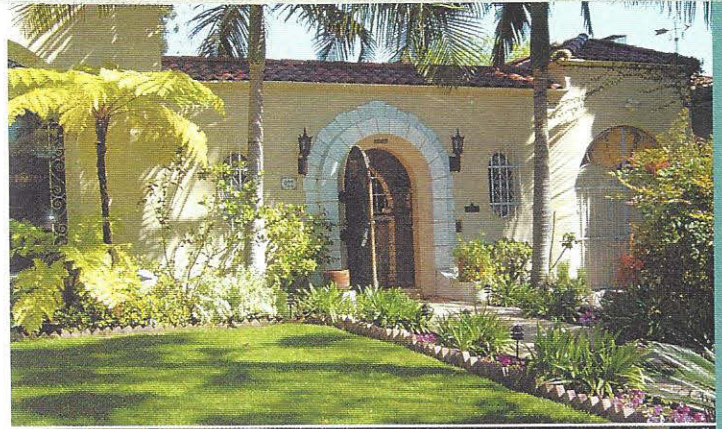
"Every 12-year-old wants to be an adult, so I loved to do the work. Parents don't know how important it is to talk business at the dinner table and teach their kids. Major work ethics were instilled in me during this time," she explained.

With all her youthful business savvy, Kristen took that energy to college. However, once she was informed that she'd have to spend at least eight years in school to get a law degree, there went the end of that journey. She opted to trade the classroom for on-the-job experience in her late teens.

It wasn't long after that, that she heard destiny calling. At age 22, Kristen packed her bags, without a penny in her pocket, and moved 3,000 miles across the country to pursue her dream of being a real estate mogul and business entrepreneur. Unfortunately, after arriving in Los Angeles, reality set in and she was forced to work as a waitress to make ends meet. After a few years of waiting tables, Kristen hit rock bottom and decided to make the leap into the business world. She taught herself everything she needed to know, by asking questions and reading books on real estate. Fast forward eight years and Kristen, who says she has always seen herself having a lot of money, has turned her dream into reality.

With Financial Bancorp and her own investing firm, Xanthus Enterprises, Kristen keeps busy with the sales, financing and flipping of residential property.

"I mostly enjoy the risks involved with real estate investing. I'm a gambler. I also like the creative aspect. On a single project, I can capitalize on all my skills," she said. "I get bored easily...I don't want easy money."



Kristen Kirchner's million dollar investment.

Investor Wit

She also learned early on that she should keep a careful eye on local government and remain knowledgeable on city planning and zoning.

"My parents taught me that I should know the future plans of the city [where investing] – roads, buildings, corporations and jobs coming in. If you know what's going on, you can make more money."

A sharp shooter who rarely misses a beat, Kristen takes this business to heart.. "I wake up every morning and look at CNBC. I have to know what's going on. The job market is important in L.A. and New York," she said, full of vigilance.

According to Kristen, investing in areas where there is a vast amount of vacant land is a bad idea. She says it's the first

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thing to go down if the market crashes. She also says that the return on the dollar is not as good when investing in commercial property. In California, Kristen usually invests within a 30-mile radius of her residence. "A good place to buy in L.A. is where they've had fires or landslides."

She suggests - with confidence - that real estate is the only secured business since the land was settled. If her claim is right, then Kristen's record backs it up. When asked to tell the story of her worst deal, she quickly responded, "I never had that situation. This is my calling."

Look Smart

Kristen believes that there's a difference between a homeowner and an investor. She admits that it's difficult to live in a house and see it as the home she'll leave for her grandchildren. "You can't have your heart in your home, even the one you live in. Real estate is always on my mind, that's the one bad part. I make decisions on [changes in] my house based on potential buyers."

Her show-and-tell investment is a single family home she purchased in 2003 for \$685,000. She found it in a lesser-known neighborhood, 10 minutes from downtown Los Angeles, near the Kodak Theatre (a well-known venue for award shows). "Hollywood is getting a facelift, so I knew it would be a good move. You have to find

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Kristen Kirchner

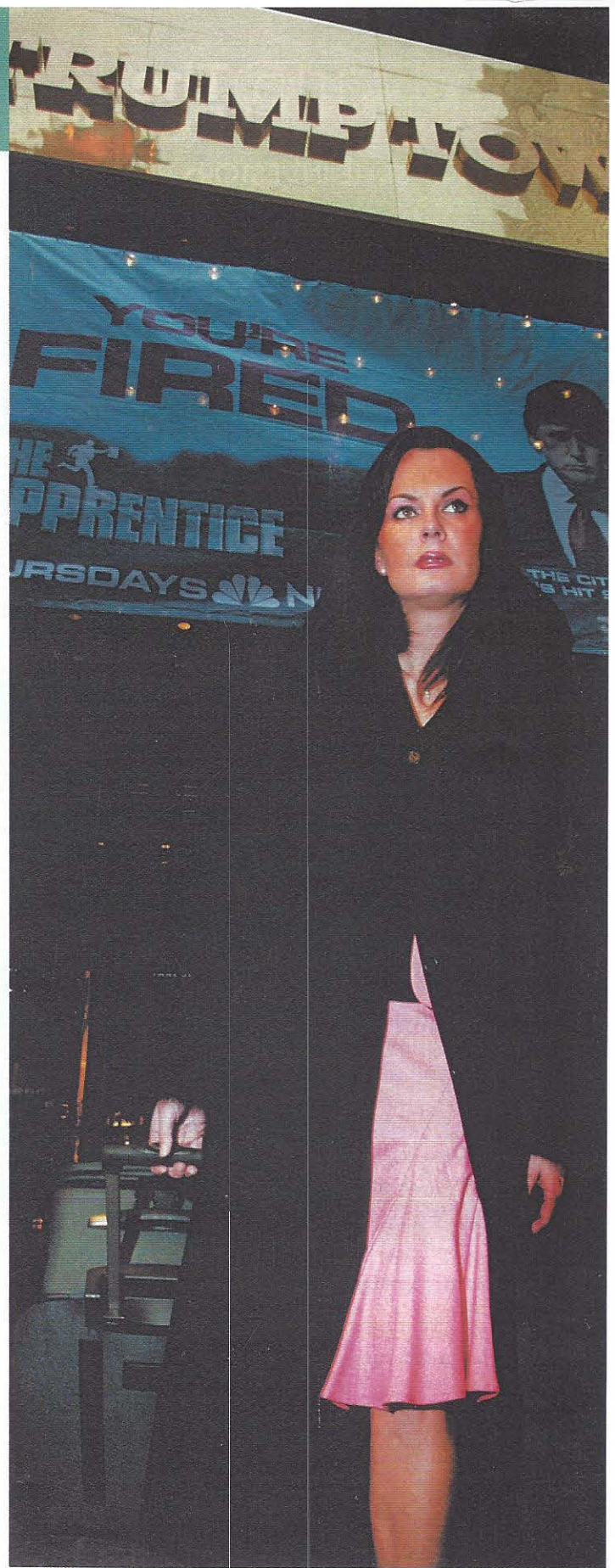
pockets in neighborhoods that people don't really know about," she offered. The home she purchased, and is still holds, is now worth \$1.5 million.

Kristen says the most important thing she's learned in this industry is patience. "I'm very impatient, but I've learned in this business to relax and chill."

Brush with Fame

Earlier this year, Kristen took her street smarts back across the country to New York, where she was invited to compete on the third season of NBC's hit reality series, "The Apprentice." On the program, real estate mogul,

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Donald Trump, guides 16 hopeful candidates in a 16-week job interview. Contestants are challenged to outshine each other on various business and management related tasks, to win a one-year, six-figure salary job with the Trump Organization. Each week, one applicant hears The Donald's dreaded words, "You're Fired!" Kristen was the fourth to go during season three.

She discloses that her experience was less than joyous. "You're thrown in and it's incompetent people versus competent people for TV drama. Most successful people don't make it far on the show. If I were looking for an employee, I wouldn't hire me – I have a strong personality - so I can see why Donald Trump wouldn't hire me. I didn't go on the show to win, I went on for marketing purposes."

There were, however, some benefits to being on the show. Kristen has appeared as a guest real estate expert on other television programs. And, she says, being on the show helped her realize she could do more creatively. During one task, both teams had to renovate a small hotel. She

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describes the challenge: "There was one Target, one Home Depot and two teams. We had to be the first into the stores, before the other team. I had to think of little things. I realized I was more creative than I thought. I gained a lot more arrogance, which I need in the business. I also learned I rather be myself than anyone else."

To all investors, she offers this advice: "Invest, invest, invest! Fear doesn't work. It's a huge gamble and you having to be willing to lose...if not, you won't be able to make it. Conservative people, or people who live in fear, can't make it in this business. You're dealing with millions of dollars, but you have to look at it like it's nothing."

Kristen, who loves horse back riding, traveling, shopping and dining out has declared that she has reached the status of financial freedom. "It's being able to buy what I want, when I want, [with] no restraints. I don't consider my houses to be debts."

Congratulations Kristen Kirchner, on being our investor of the month!!!