

# Connector, Collaborator, Real Estate Matchmaker

BY LESLEY MARLO | PHOTOS BY KRISTIAN AVELLANET - HUMBERTO MEDIA

You might not know her yet, but chances are, if you’ve set foot in Delray Beach, you’ve crossed paths with connector, collaborator, and real estate matchmaker, Lefore Zausner.

A long-time Delray local and one of the area’s busiest real estate professionals, Lefore embodies quintessential Delray. Dressed head to toe in coastal chic from local boutiques like Morley and the shops at Seagate, she shuttles clients around town in her street-legal golf cart, supports and hosts local charity events alongside her three daughters, Lia, Eden, and Ava, and even walked the catwalk during Delray’s annual Fashion Week this year.

## HOME-FIELD ADVANTAGE

Her love of all things local has put Lefore on a first-name basis with most shop owners and restaurateurs up and down Atlantic Avenue, as well as the entire Gold Coast, connections she shares freely with her clients.

“I want them to experience life as a local,” says Zausner, “So I set them up with hard-to-get reservations at the hottest restaurants,



tickets to community events, and personal services, like fitness memberships, training sessions, cleaning services, and more.”

While her title centers on real estate, Lefore sees her job as far more than selling homes. She is, to an extent, a matchmaker – matching people to the places they will feel most at home.

“I don’t just make clients; I make friends,” she shares over al fresco salads at her fav lunch locale–Brulé Bistro in Pineapple Grove. “I can meet people and know where they will be happiest based on what they like and don’t like.”

## NAVIGATING HAPPILY EVER AFTER

A New York native who spent her childhood wintering in Miami, Lefore made Delray home over 20 years ago and knows the lay of the land well. Throughout Palm Beach County, golfers are spoiled with scores of courses in every direction, while “clubbing” takes a different beat when dusk arrives in the Sunshine State. Nightlife abounds countywide, but few spots rival the revelry of Delray’s highly walkable downtown with its numerous restaurants and live music venues.

Tennis enthusiasts with their sights set on “America’s Most Fun Small Town” also love being within walking distance to the Delray Beach Tennis Center, the full-service, public tennis facility that also hosts national tournaments and events, like the Delray Beach Open, USTA championship tournaments, and the Chris Evert Pro-Celebrity Classic. And of course, there are always the sand seekers dreaming of castles close to one of the pristine beaches that grace our entire eastern border.

In Delray alone, Lefore points out, there are several distinct, diversified pockets for prospective buyers to choose from.

“Although Delray is considered a small town, it still offers a wide variety of lifestyles. From Palm Trail to Seagate Country Club, each area has its own unique flair and its own pluses,” says Lefore. “Understanding who you are and how you fit here best is a big part of what I do,” she adds.

It is also a big part of what she aims to capture with her approach to preparing and marketing her listings. Lefore, a former award-winning photographer, uses her artistic eye to stage the homes she lists for sale when needed, collaborating with Our Boat House, a coastal



home furnishings dealer (which is local, of course!). Check out her Instagram feed, and you will find a catalogue of lifestyle videos and photos framed around the properties she is featuring.

It’s a fresh, 360° approach, complete with flip flops, straw hats, and beach cruisers... and, most importantly, it works.

“We are witnessing a lot of people moving from the northeast and Midwest. They see us living this really good quality of life and enjoying the outdoors year-round. They get FOMO and want that for themselves and their family.”

Which is exactly what Lefore aims to provide, whether the buyers are here for a weekend or a season. “Clients who come down in search of their own slice of paradise get my immersion treatment, which gives them a tempting taste of what living here would be like. Inevitably, they don’t want to leave.”

## ABOVE AND BEYOND

Capturing the essence of the place is also what she strives for when connecting and collaborating with agents at other Engel & Völkers locations around the world. This past summer, traveling meant touring skyscrapers in Tel Aviv to castles in France. The global reach is invaluable to clients shopping for second and third homes in faraway locales, as well as international clients who are seeking property stateside.

Back in South Florida, Lefore has some advice for people considering moving here but who aren’t sure yet.

“Come, visit, spend time here, and get the lay of the land. See what’s out there and consider whether you are willing to invest in substantial upgrades, buy in a neighborhood that will take time to be fully developed, or want a turn-key home in area that already has the echelon you desire.”

While Lefore acknowledges that buyers are taking it slower due to the recent rise in mortgage rates, she recommends being proactive to be competitive when you do find a home you want.

“If you can afford it, buy now and refinance later, otherwise, you will be fighting the rush when rates drop,” she advises.

What about the rumors that the spike in home values post COVID will self-correct and become more affordable?

“The bottom line is that we live in a highly desirable area. Inventory is tight. Things may not be moving as quickly, but prices are not dropping either. I think it’s safe to say that we are not going to experience the kind of market correction that other areas of the country may have.”

She has also witnessed a trend that seemingly fuels itself: As more people move from those areas to improve their quality of life, more people want to follow in pursuit of the same.

“Following the wave helps reduce the fear factor,” Lefore shares. “And once you are here, you will be so happy you made the move.”

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