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## Windermere agent receives Christie's honor

By Zak Kerr on July 16, 2015

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Katherine Bordelon, of Regal Real Estate Professionals, is among the top luxury real-estate Realtors in the U.S. Courtesy photo.

WINDERMERE — Among hundreds of offices and affiliates with 32,000 real-estate professionals in 47 nations, only 120 agents received special designation as 2015 Christie's International Real Estate Luxury Specialists, and just one was from Central Florida.

That was Katherine Bordelon, a Windermere Realtor with Regal Real Estate Professionals, who became the first woman from Central Florida to receive that designation, based on being among the top 10% in sales volume for her brokerage.

"It was an incredible honor," Bordelon said. "My broker contacted me and told me he had chosen me from our office."

Along with this recognition, Bordelon attended the two-day Top Agents Conference June 8 and 9 at Trump International Hotel in Chicago. This exclusive event included expert seminars on the global luxury market, art trends and other marketing topics.

"You have to be invited to be part of this network and have to meet their criteria to be even considered," she said. "You have to meet market share and be sort of proven in that area as a

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luxury brand with that reputation."

That reputation in this network includes Fortune 100 and Fortune 500 companies for relocation, as well as the 350 wealthiest people in the world as the client base, a parallel of homes to fine art, wine, jewels and designer handbags, Bordelon said.

"That broker has to meet that lifestyle criteria," she said. "They look at your customer base, who you're doing business with. It wouldn't necessarily be quantity as it would be quality. I don't know that they're necessarily looking at who we're doing business with but the properties and average price point sold."

As to why she won, Bordelon pointed to her experience in Atlanta, where she learned while working with another Christie's affiliate and increasing her exposure to that lifestyle. She has a marketing and communications background that involved CEOs and celebrities, too, which helped her step into that niche for real estate, she said.

Perhaps paramount are the mediation licenses she holds in multiple states, which she said has helped her negotiate and understand nuances without being intimidated.

But it always comes back to the network.

"Through what I have done in a corporate setting, I understood how I need to structure and approach my business," Bordelon said. "I worked hard to establish a network all over the world ... of agents trained just like me, top agents, cream of the crop, in all corners of the world. I maintain relationships and contacts with them in an effort to share business. Maybe they have a client (nearby) who they're looking at property with. Working that strategic network and then my overall corporate connections and events I attend when I meet them, I'm able to learn about what their needs are and just help."

A focal point of the conference was how buyers from around the world have been flocking to the U.S. This is especially true of Central Florida, which has influxes of buyers from Brazil, Mexico and China, among other nations of the Americas and Asia.

Bordelon often deals with buyers from Canada and the United Kingdom, she said.

These international buyers create wealth elsewhere — especially China — and then relocate here for superior education, food, safety, climate and general lifestyles, she said.

"It's a great place to have property," Bordelon said. "They come over and can invest in businesses. It's very financially sound for them. It's a great value to buy beautiful properties here."

At the conference, Bordelon learned most from the Hurun Report, a monthly magazine best known for its "China Rich List." China has more than 1,200 billionaires, and many like to collect unique trophy properties around the world for their location, architecture or special features, including one with a museum.

"We also are seeing properties that are purchased and collected simply to either house or display their artwork," she said. "Sometimes it's commissioned artwork that sort of becomes part of the landscape — tens of millions of dollars spent on structures by named artists."

With the luxury market continuing to trend upward here and interest rate increases likely coming, purchases and bidding wars have abounded, Bordelon said.

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