

# Jo Rutstein: You're Home Now

By Lalaena Gonzalez-Figueroa | Photography by Chad Spencer

Before Jo joined Signature Sotheby's International Realty she was a highly successful businesswoman based in New York City. Then on one terribly unbelievable day, everything changed. After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Jo Rutstein reevaluated the merits of her thriving career in the retail fashion industry and began an introspective examination of her own life. At the time she was juggling a professional vocation in the city while commuting to Sarasota during her downtime. "It was a wake up call for many of us," she acknowledges. "My priorities changed."

Jo was passionate about the Sarasota lifestyle and chose to focus on building a career in the town that offered an exciting cultural and arts scene, the region's most beautiful beaches and golf courses, and an opportunity to commune with residents from around the world. Her best friend and husband, Stan Rutstein, a commercial real estate agent, suggested that Jo's exceptional business and interpersonal skills were ideal traits for a career in the real estate industry. She didn't hesitate to capitalize upon the opportunity; "I left New York on a Friday and began real estate school the next Monday," she recalls.

Her forward-thinking attitude has propelled Jo in business, and her personable nature tempers her professionalism. A strong negotiator with exceptional market knowledge, she is not only an excellent resource of information for her clients, but also a caring advocate who works to help them achieve their real estate goals.

"People are drawn to Jo," remarks her assistant Jean Lejnar, a computer specialist who spent over 20 years working as a contractor in various U.S. government agencies in Washington, D.C. "She is a fantastic agent, very intelligent and driven. Jo's focus is on building and maintaining strong client relationships, and she takes every measure possible to facilitate successful transactions for them. Her clients are consistently happy with Jo's representation."

Achieving client satisfaction means working closely with each client to identify individual wants, needs and motivation factors. Jo tailors her approach with every client, cultivating personal connections in order to offer the highest level of service. "When I work with sellers, I want to know what they love about their homes," she explains. "This helps me to focus on the specific elements that may appeal to prospective buyers." Her thorough market knowledge enables Jo to provide realistic price points for each property, maximizing opportunities for her sellers and buyers. Though she works throughout

Sarasota, Jo specializes in waterfront homes and condominiums on Bird Key and Longboat Key.

As a listing agent, Jo is committed to exploring innovative and effective marketing methods for the homes she represents. She incorporates technology into her repertoire, including a popular e-newsletter with an open ratio that consistently doubles the industry standard. "People want to read what Jo sends out," observes Jean, who tracks Internet activity in order to maximize efficacy. "She provides real, pertinent information on the market and community."

Her efforts have earned Jo the respect and loyalty of a growing clientele, along with a number of professional accolades. She has earned the FIVE STAR Best in Client Satisfaction Award for six consecutive years, an indication of her successful efforts to meet and exceed her clients' expectations. In 2010 Jo ranked among the top 1% of real estate professionals in Sarasota and Manatee Counties in sales, and was among the top ten sales performers within the Signature Sotheby's organization.

Jo's passion for real estate extends into her involvement with the community at large. A civic-minded resident, she has served on the Boards of Directors for numerous organizations including Children First, the Water Club, and the Sarasota Rotary Foundation as well as a Chair on the AJC's recent honoring of Matt and Lisa Walsh. She continues to maintain an active presence within local community organizations, giving her time and talents to help improve the lives of those around her.

Though it has been years since the fateful events that led her to real estate, Jo remains grateful for the opportunity to work with the outstanding team at Signature Sotheby's International Realty and to representing the enviable Sarasota lifestyle.



Jo Rutstein | Sales Associate  
 Signature Sotheby's International Realty  
 50 Central Avenue | Suite 110 | Sarasota, FL 34236  
 (941) 587.9156 | jo.rutstein@sothebysrealty.com  
 www.JoRutstein.com