

COMING TO AMERICA

An interview with **Ruert Peters**, President/CEO of Engel & Völkers Northeast Master License



Please tell us about your personal and career history.

RP: Well, I was born and raised on the isle of Foehr in the North Sea, went to boarding school and had a three year apprenticeship at BMW/ Germany. I studied in Boston, Paris, France and San Francisco where I got my MA in International Relations and Business from San Francisco State University. I worked at SFSU as a Graduate Assistant, and that is where and how I met my wife.

After working with comps.com (now part of costar) in San Diego, I moved back to Germany and had a commercial development company and worked in Hamburg/Germany. There I came in business contact with E&V: they rented and sold our properties in and around Hamburg. My wife and I eventually sold our house in Hamburg through E&V and right then and there I knew the E&V concept was for me. We purchased the licenses for the island that I am from and its neighbor as license partner 37(globally) a few years back.

When E&V had the Franchise Disclosure Documents for the US drafted and approved, Mr. Völkers, Mr. Buchen and I started talking about me going to the US - actually at a LiPa meeting in Hamburg in '06 I learned about the developments in the States and was deeply intrigued. We negotiated, agreed and my family and I moved to the states in '07. In November of '08 we had a board meeting in Germany where we had a performance check. There we discovered that we might be more efficient and competitive by moving all entrepreneurial responsibilities over to the Master License Partners. Conclusively my job in NYC became obsolete. Since I started this process I pitched the proposal of me purchasing the Master License for the North East. Again, we negotiated, agreed and I became sole owner of the MLP NE.

Why did you have an interest in Lake Placid as a destination in the Northeast and what do you think the Lake Placid property market will add to the E&V global network of property shops.

RP: The answer has two perspectives: We chose Lake Placid as much as Lake Placid chose us. Obviously, from the start we targeted certain areas in the NE, that promised to be of special value to the network. These special values are: global recognition of the particular

location, interesting properties and potential for great network traffic. Obviously LP is one of the locations globally with a perfect fit for all three of the criteria. It was from the get go in the top 10 list of desired locations for our rollout and we expect great results from travel patterns in the NE. Particularly in conjunction with areas like the Cape, Boston, Westchester and Fairfield County and last but not least NYC once the latter is developed.

What were the deciding factors for signing a licensing agreement with the Lake Placid Real Estate team.

RP: "Converting" an existing office is always a challenge. However, in the case of LP we were convinced that the existing team had a great package of abilities and capabilities to fit the E&V System which were the deciding factors: great leadership, thorough local market expertise, a history of success and the understanding for the advantages of a global brand.

What differentiates E&V from its competitors and what is the value proposition to clients in Lake Placid who are interested in selling or buying real estate.

RP: The difference lies in the clearly defined pillars of our system: Brand, Network, Standardized Service System and IT. Every aspect of the four pillars is an integral part of our service offered to our customers. Benefits can be derived for different customers from different aspects of our service. Some of the benefits for sellers are instant global exposure and great network broadcast of listed properties. For buyers the advantages lie in the expertise of our local license partners paired with the E&V service tools based on our 30 year experience and combination of service advisories collected from 27 countries globally. At the end of the day, there is no buyer that does not like thorough, transparent and reliable service. We, E&V in conjunction with our Licensees supply just that: good service.

How did you personally decided to buy the North East license and what are your plans for expansion.

RP: Simple: New York/ New England is the most potent, interesting, promising Real Estate market globally. We have everything in the NE, from the Big Apple to the most eastern spot in the US: Lubec, ME with its famous lighthouse; the Hamptons and Newport for sailing and Lake Placid and others with great skiing, simply a great place for business, family and life in general. There are roughly 35 million people in the northeast and we plan to establish up to 150 offices in the NE in the next 5 years, keeping in mind that we would be satisfied with half as many shops, as long as they are the right partners.

Where do you see E&V in five years in the global market and in the U.S. market.

RP: E&V USA will probably have roughly 300 to 500 offices in the 5 Master License Partners. Globally we will have 1,500 offices. It is safe to assume that we will be one, if not the global specialist, for local and global Real Estate concerns.