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Jokes flow at Power Brokers event for top Miami and Palm Beach agents

The Jills, Alexander brothers, Dora Puig, Julian Johnston, Nelson Gonzalez were among attendees



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It was comedy hour at The Hollywood Reporter's Power Broker Awards on Tuesday evening, where 30 of Miami and Palm Beach's top residential agents were nominated in a handful of categories.

Emcee Fredrik Eklund, of "Million Dollar Listing New York" fame and Douglas Elliman's Eklund-Gomes Team, was ready with the jabs, though he called it a tough crowd.

In his opening remarks, he quipped that if they all put their bank accounts together, maybe they could afford a one-bedroom at [The Raleigh](#). (Michael Shvo and his partners plan to redevelop the Miami Beach hotel into a Rosewood-branded luxury hotel and condo.)

Eklund referred to Miami, Los Angeles and New York as “three evil sister markets.”

L.A. is a “tired old thing.” Miami, he added, is younger, more attractive, has more freedom and gets more attention.

“Even the gays have moved on. Look at Tom Ford,” he said. The fashion designer recently paid [\\$51 million](#) for a home in Palm Beach. “Oh, but I’m not allowed to say gay here,” Eklund added, referring to Gov. Ron DeSantis’ “Don’t Say Gay” law.

The inaugural Miami event, sponsored by public relations firm The Society Group and [Real Messenger](#), brought the Who’s Who of real estate down from Palm Beach, including Corcoran’s Dana and Paulette Koch (who won the agents of historic architecture award) and Douglas Elliman’s Chris Leavitt. It was held at the Faena Hotel in Miami Beach.

Top Miami brokers in attendance included Corcoran’s Julian Johnston, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices [EWM Realty’s Ashley Cusack](#) and Nelson Gonzalez, Elliman’s Senada Adzem, Compass’ Liz Hogan and Nancy Batchelor, Corcoran’s Mick Duchon and Eloy Carmenate, and Coldwell Banker’s Jill Hertzberg, Jill Eber and Judy Zeder.

The atmosphere felt less cutthroat than at other industry events, in part likely due to the nature of the awards. It wasn’t about who brought in the most money last year. Instead, the award categories covered accolades in philanthropy, media savviness and more.

Kobi and Nancy Karp were there with their son, [Jordan Karp](#), who was nominated for the rising star award. Spencer Schlager, an Elliman agent in Palm Beach, won the award.

When presenting the celebrity property portfolio award, Tal Alexander, of Official, joked from the audience that Eklund can’t give the award to himself. [Carl Gambino](#) from Compass won the category. Gambino referred to his humble beginnings as a dog walker, “picking up dog shit for \$15 an hour,” and thanking The Hollywood Reporter for this “nice award for a Guido from New York.”

There were mixups. Eklund’s mispronunciation confused Dora (Puig) of Luxe Living Realty with Dina (Goldentayer, who was absent). But Puig’s sense of humor was on display. When Goldentayer was announced as the winner of the media maven award, Puig jokingly asked if Oren Alexander would like to accept the award on Goldentayer’s behalf, as the two have [jabbed publicly before](#).

And when Isaac Lustgarten, with the Alexander brothers’ firm Official, helped Puig up the stairs to accept her award for new development condo sale of the year, she said: “Wow, Oren, thank you for lending me Isaac for a minute. I thought he’d trip me over. Dina wants to thank all of you.”

The Alexanders, who [left Elliman last year](#) to start their Side-backed brokerage, were nominated in the same category.

In addition to Goldentayer, Chad Carroll from Compass, and independent brokers Christian Angle and [Lawrence Moens](#) were also nominated in different categories, but did not make it to the event.

Before the awards, the nominees and their plus-ones mingled at Faena, talking shop, including about the slowing market. Once Eklund finished doling out awards, he and his business partner John Gomes had to leave. They were hosting a second awards ceremony for their 100-agent plus super team at a nearby hotel.

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