

The New York Times

A Conversation With Jane Gol



Jane Gol, the president of Continental Ventures, a developer.
EARL WILSON / THE NEW YORK TIMES

FEBRUARY 23, 2016

The 30-Minute Interview

By VIVIAN
MARINO

Q. *Tell me a little about your company.*

A. We do all of our development under the Continental Ventures umbrella. And then we launched, at the end of 2011, a division with a builder on [Long Island](#), called [Continental Pinewood](#). The third company is [Bayport Funding](#), which we also launched at the end of 2011. Being developers, we realized there's a lack of funding for the one- to four-family niche. Banks don't usually lend in that niche. It's too small for them actually, so we saw the need for that, and we knew a lot of those local developers, mostly in [Brooklyn](#) and [Queens](#), which, as you know, has exploded.

Q. *So you're the president of all these operations?*

A. I'm president or co-president across the platform.

Q. *How do your responsibilities differ from those of Amir Chaluts, the company's chief executive?*

A. We make all our decisions jointly. We're partners. Amir is a very strong strategic planner and direction person. I'm involved with the financing, the planning. I work closely with the architects and the designers and then the marketing team.

Q. *I see you've been involved in real estate investment development for more than 25 years. How did you get started?*

A. My first job, I worked for a woman who was negotiating rather large leases and started to do co-op development in the city. And then I segued into my own company. I partnered up with people.

Q. *Were you always interested in real estate?*

A. Actually my background is not coming from that. I studied child development at Cornell University and then I went for a master's in dance therapy at New York University.

Q. *Why did you shift to real estate?*

A. Somewhere along the way, friends diverted me. They had a dream of opening a chain of retail stores, and I went off to work with them on that dream and vision, and we started to buy the real estate. And I found my passion, and I guess the rest is history. Because once I found real estate, I said, "That's really what I want to do."

Q. *How is business at the moment?*

A. Business is excellent. We have several projects that we're delivering — homes and apartments — and finalizing planning stages.

Twenty-fifteen was a great year. We finished first phases of the planned projects, and we finished planning and executing and delivering units. I think there'll be a lot of opportunity in '16.

Q. How many projects are you working on right now?

A. We're working on several. Our largest project, which is actually composed of 11 buildings, is 2.5 million square feet on the waterfront in downtown Toronto. It's a mixed-use development, 1.9 million square feet of residential and 450,000 square feet of retail and an office building and a cultural building.

We haven't broken ground yet.

Q. How is the marketing going at [52 Wooster](#), the boutique condominium in SoHo?

A. There are four units. We have two units currently being negotiated.

Q. What are you getting per square foot?

A. We start at \$2,600 a square foot to north of \$3,000. Penthouse pricing has not yet been established.

Q. How far along are you with construction?

A. We're pouring our roof, and then we start to close the building in, and we'll be delivering it in late summer, early fall.

Q. This building will have very few amenities.

A. I like to think of it as a series of private homes, one on top of each other. It's urban private homes.

Q. Have you sold out yet on your [Barn & Vine](#) residential development in Bridgehampton?

A. It's a phased development with 37 homes. Phase I, which consisted of 21 homes, is sold out.

Many of our clients buy from plans and then they customize. Others buy completed homes.

We have just launched Phase II with delivery slated for summer/fall 2016.

Q. *What kind of prices are you getting?*

A. There, our prices range from \$3 million to \$4 million, and it's five to six bedrooms with a full lower level, 9.5-foot ceilings. Every home comes with a 40-foot pool. Those homes are great. In fact, I like them so much I'm getting one myself. I'll be in the second phase, delivering next spring. I hope it'll be a weekend home.

Q. *And you have another luxury housing development in Dix Hills, with 23 houses?*

A. Yes, yes.

We are going to start delivering homes in April. Again, it's a phased project. We will launch our model home — actually we just set the date, April 15. There, our prices range from \$2 million to \$3 million, and they're 5,000-plus square feet.

Q. *Are you working on anything else?*

A. We're in the planning stages of a project that would be a 31-story rental building in [Manhattan](#), which I can't elaborate on more.

Q. *You served on the New York City Planning Commission under Mayor Michael Bloomberg. Did that help you in business?*

A. Oh, that was a life-changing experience! It was an opportunity, first of all, to hear how New Yorkers think about their neighborhoods and how they care about their neighborhoods. People are very, very passionate about their neighborhoods.