

# THE **REAL** DEAL

## Top agent Aaron Kirman leaving Compass to launch Christie's-powered shop

*Power broker will have luxury brand's rights to LA, Ventura, Santa Barbara counties*

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By Hiten Samtani



**UPDATED, Nov. 15, 12:36 p.m.:** Aaron Kirman, a top-ranked Los Angeles luxury agent, is leaving Compass, *The Real Deal* has learned. He is launching his own shop, Aaron Kirman Group, in partnership with Christie's International Real Estate.

At Compass, Kirman headed L.A.'s top-ranked residential team by on-market deals, which did over 400 transactions and over \$1.35 billion in sales volume between April 2021 and April 2022, according to *TRD*'s most recent

ranking. He has represented some of the city's more notable trophy homes, including Nile Niami's controversial "The One" and the Danny Thomas Estate.

"We have been wanting to have AKG be a standalone firm for a while," Kirman said in an interview with *TRD* Tuesday. "We have a brand, the staff, the marketing, but we wanted the duality of a powerhouse brand behind us so that we have the ability to market all over." Kirman said his firm will have rights to the Christie's brand for all of L.A. County, Ventura County and Santa Barbara County, and he hopes to build out multiple offices through the region. "We have our fee structure [with Christie's] wrapped into our commissions," he added.

Kirman is taking over the bulk of his 160-agent team to his new shop, which will be headquartered at 433 N Camden Dr. The goal, he said, is to be a \$5 billion company by 2025.

In a statement, Compass said it looked forward to working with Kirman "through our Compass agents across Southern California." Christie's, whose real estate brand [Chicago-based @properties took control of in a long-term licensing agreement late last year](#), has a 10-year exclusive agreement with Kirman, according to Thad Wong, co-founder of @properties.

In late 2020, @properties, headed by Wong and Mike Golden, [moved to franchise its brand](#). The brokerage's parent company, At World Properties, is backed by private-equity firm Quad-C.

"It's really difficult for brokerages to succeed [in national expansion] if they don't have locally-owned operators," Wong said in an interview with *TRD* Tuesday afternoon. "We were looking for either brokerages that are set up, or teams that have the ability to become a brokerage. Aaron is looking to build talent — he's looking to find those \$50 million, \$150 million, \$200 million producers and help them grow."



@properties co-CEOs Thad Wong and Mike Golden (Photo via @properties)

Speaking broadly about the Christie's brand, best known for its luxury auction house, Wong said that L.A. was a key market for them, given the number of art buyers located in the city. Christie's, he said, knew Kirman from his time at Hilton

& Hyland, and that connection was a factor in Wong's decision to approach Kirman this summer.

Last week, Compass reported a \$154 million net loss in the third quarter, but its revenues of \$1.49 billion beat Wall Street estimates. Its stock has surged more than 90 percent over the past week. It also said it added to its agent count in the quarter, despite ending sweeteners such as equity and cash incentives for new agents. Kirman was a star agent and minority owner at John Aaroe Group, which was absorbed by San Francisco-based Pacific Union in late 2016. Pacific Union, in turn, was acquired by Compass in 2018.

“Those agents that were absorbed in it never chose it,” Wong said of Compass. “Usually what happens in California sets across the country, whether it’s fashion or, in this case, agent departures.”

Kirman said that the spotlight on Compass’ financial troubles – the brokerage has lost close to \$1 billion since 2021 and has engaged in multiple rounds of layoffs – was a “minor contributor” to his decision to leave.

“I think they’ll make it through,” he said of Compass, “but who knows. I just don’t know what it looks like.”

*This story was updated with comments from Kirman, Compass and @properties’ Thad Wong.*

[https://therealdeal.com/la/2022/11/15/superstar-agent-aaron-kirman-leaving-compass-for-christies/?utm\\_source=internal&utm\\_medium=widget&utm\\_campaign=feature\\_posts](https://therealdeal.com/la/2022/11/15/superstar-agent-aaron-kirman-leaving-compass-for-christies/?utm_source=internal&utm_medium=widget&utm_campaign=feature_posts)