

# A Real Estate Brokerage and Real Estate School Both Under One Roof, A Unique Combination, Right Here in Jacksonville

Real estate education, though essential, is not typically provided by brokerage firms. Real estate professionals, traditionally, practice under one company and fulfill their licensing requirements through a separate institution. But welcome to a new era. Enter Pier 21 Realty, LLC. Family-owned-and-operated by Broker Philip Simonetta and his Realtor son, Aiden, Pier 21 is a unique combination of brokerage and school, an independent non-franchised company headquartered on Cassat Avenue.

Phil Simonetta has over two decades of expertise in Florida's real estate, having been involved in consulting, financing, and structuring businesses in the entertainment and restaurant fields. He draws on knowledge from this broad background that average agents just don't have. He has seen real estate professionals through a variety of trials and tribulations.

"The national statistic is 80% of people who are in this business now will not be in it in two years," Simonetta said. He believes the reason for that is no one truly trains and mentors them through the practical application of the theories and principles they are mandated to learn. "A book can teach you how to get a real estate license but not how to deal with a client on a personal level during a transaction," he said.

Simonetta's goal is not only to help clients find their dream homes and acquire their investment properties but also to empower real estate professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive, thereby improving the industry success rate. That's why he and his son operate Pier 21 Realty, LLC as both a real estate brokerage and a real estate school.

## BROKERAGE

Pier 21 is a full-service brokerage that represents buyers as well as sellers. The firm handles both residential and commercial transactions, including but not limited to strip malls and development communities. Simonetta has access to available programs and grants, and he taps into creative solutions that address auctions, short sales, and foreclosures.

"Most real estate agents enter a property into the MLS and pray that buyers will come and see it," Simonetta said. He's different. He takes a more personal and proactive approach, and his reach extends much farther. Pier 21 advertises properties in 140 countries and in 18 different languages, catering to foreign investors as well as people searching the nationwide MLS listings.

Pier 21 clients also benefit from a bit of complimentary consultation, which comes naturally to a man like Simonetta, who himself has owned a variety of businesses. He's happy to offer hints and tips to his clients on how they might make their establishments more profitable. "I've literally turned empty fields into homes. I've started cigar lounges from nothing and sold them to major

corporations," he said. One of Simonetta's restaurant successes is that a sandwich shop he owned earned the 2009 Best of Philly Cheesesteak Award from Fox 29 News Philadelphia. He is no stranger to successfully turning properties.

"Real estate is a simple business. From the back end, there are 23 steps to closing a deal, 12 pages to a contract, 4 pages in a listing agreement, and there are addendums. But it's a hard job," Simonetta said. The paperwork is the same no matter the size of the deal. It's the connection that's established, the communication between the parties, and the expertise brought by the professional that make all the difference. That's the difficult part. And that's where Simonetta stands out.

"Every client I have ends up being a friend," he said. He sees the industry from a different perspective than most. For Simonetta, it's not only about making money and closing deals. It's more about empathy for him. He values relationships and puts his clients above himself, but it's never his intention to solicit property owners already listed with other brokerage firms. It's a philosophy of integrity that he's passing on to his son and to their Pier 21 agents.

## SCHOOL

In addition to offering a broad spectrum of brokerage services, Pier 21 Realty, LLC is authorized by the Florida Real Estate Commission (FREC) to provide a comprehensive suite of professional education options meant to meet state requirements.

As a qualified real estate school, Pier 21 is an optimal choice for pre-licensing classes, ones intended for those aspiring to become certified agents. Once the state test is passed, Pier 21 educates agents to advance toward broker status. The school then provides the required continuing education classes for both agents and brokers to maintain their credentials. Pier 21 also offers the post-licensing enrichment that is mandatory for license renewals.

Classes are available in multiple formats to suit participants' learning styles and scheduling needs. The Florida Real Estate School by Pier 21 Realty, LLC brings one of the highest quality distance education programs available with on-demand virtual modules if traditional classroom courses and live Zoom sessions are not preferred.

There's also the convenience of a virtual store on Pier 21's school website. It carries study materials that are specifically designed to help advance a real estate career. Available are textbooks written by industry experts and published by preeminent names such as Dearborn. Also find there a list of links to a wealth of other real estate resources, whether you're an enrolled student or not.

Because Simonetta is such a proponent of quality relationships, he offers paired pricing at The Florida Real Estate School.



That means couples desiring to pursue their real estate education together at Pier 21 are granted tuition discounts. At Pier 21, a couple might mean a military member and spouse, a brother and sister, two friends, or business partners. Students decide whom to pair and enroll with.

## FUTURE

A visionary, Simonetta already has his sights set on what the future holds for himself, his son, and others who are passionate about the real estate industry. Though he chose Jacksonville to launch this unique realty concept of brokering and educating within the same firm, he plans to establish Pier 21 satellite offices by the end of next year in Fort Lauderdale, Orlando, and Naples.

Beyond the FREC-approved curriculum, Simonetta also intends to organize weekend workshops as part of a mentorship and apprenticeship program with topics like 'Walking through Contracts' and 'Acquiring and Relating to Clients.' Though Simonetta is currently licensed in Florida and North Carolina, these general classes applicable to all states will be held nationwide online and locally in person. They will be open to all real estate professionals, no matter whose company they work for.

Simonetta is eager to engage with other real estate brokerages and support the industry at large because he has a heart to help people. As good as Simonetta thinks the real estate business is today, "I want it to be better tomorrow," he said.



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