



wtm interview

Ivana Trump

more than meets the eye

Bestselling author, real estate mogul, professional athlete, mother; it seems there's very little in life that Ivana Trump hasn't succeeded in. Her list of accomplishments seems almost superhuman: novels that have been translated into 25 languages (she's also written a very successful non-fiction book); three accomplished children; competing in the Olympics; her own reality TV show, mega real estate projects around the world. These are only a few of her ventures. If you think being divorced from Donald Trump is all there's to Ivana, think again!

BY CHRISTINA FERNANDES

As the property market in Bahrain heats up, Ivana Trump, one of the most high-profile real estate moguls in the world, has decided to get in on the game. She has visited the island to announce that *Le Diamond Ivana Trump Tower Bahrain*, one of ten such projects she's developing in partnership with the Darvesh Group, will break ground at Bahrain Bay early next year.

Ivana sees the kingdom as a good place to invest. "Bahrain has everything going for itself," she says. "There's oil, there's money and there are banks from all over the world here."

She says women shouldn't be scared afraid of going for their slice of the real estate pie. "It can be intimidating when you first start out," she says. "But just do your homework and know what you want for yourself, what fits your lifestyle."

It's worth it to educate yourself about the property market, she says. "Real estate, in my opinion, is the best investment you can make," she comments. "I own properties all over the world and in the last ten years, they've all probably tripled in value."

Ivana knows a thing or two about the industry: she was vice president of interior design for the Trump organisation and was responsible for the interior design of all the group's real estate, including Trump Tower, Trump Plaza and the Grand Hyatt Hotel. She was also CEO and president of Trump's Castle Hotel and Casino,

followed by a stint as CEO and president of the Plaza Hotel. Under her leadership, the Plaza was recognised as the best luxury hotel in the USA and Ivana was named hotelier of the year in 1990.

Her partner Ahsan Hassan Darvesh, managing director of the Darvesh Group, points out: "Forbes magazine has said that the best thing that ever happened to Donald is Ivana." She listens to this with a smile. "I'm sure he doesn't like hearing that," she says contemplatively. Then she bursts out laughing: "But I don't care what that son of a gun thinks! I fought him tooth and nail!"

Ivana has been incredibly successful in the numerous career paths she's walked and she is keen to share her secrets to success. "I'm working on a book for women about how to start a small business," she says. "You can take a hobby and turn it into something profitable. It's always good to have a passion for something, it helps you succeed."

She places determination and initiative above everything else. "Fulfil your dreams. Set yourself a goal and go after it. Even if you don't succeed, at least you've tried," she says.

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Bahrain Bay will be home to Ivana's prestigious tower.



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Ivana attributes a lot of her drive to being a competitive athlete from the age of six (she was a member of Czechoslovakia's Olympic ski team). She says this has helped her not only in her career but also other aspects of her life. "As an athlete, you have to be tremendously disciplined. You have to set goals and be competitive; those values carry through the rest of your life."

In addition to real estate and writing, she also runs a cosmetics company (Ivana Haute Couture), gives inspirational speeches, sells a hugely successful product range on a shopping channel in Canada and even starred in a reality

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TV show last spring. The programme involved Ivana helping an older rich woman to find a younger boyfriend and was called *Ivana Young Man* (a play on words on slang for 'I want a young man'). "It was so much fun, but so much work," she says. "I prefer writing a novel or building a tower; it's easier!"

Although she's very successful professionally, Ivana sees motherhood and family as being important above anything else and she says it's a great challenge for women today to reconcile their professional and personal lives. "It's difficult. The toughest task for women in the 21st century is to be a mother, a wife and an executive and also find time for yourself. You are always torn between these roles, always juggling these tasks."

At this point, she certainly has no financial need to work, but she wants to. "I love to work," she says. "I can't just sit down at home; I need to be creative. You

have to be competitive and set yourself goals."

Personally, these are happy times for Ivana - this month she's getting married to her boyfriend of six years, Rossano Rubicondi (who is more than two decades her junior). She smiles when I ask her if she's nervous about walking down the aisle for the fourth time. "No, I've been there, done that," she says. "Actually, I'm just very excited. Many of our friends are coming from all over the world to celebrate with us."

Admired by many for her beauty, Ivana says that good looks are not always a physical matter. "What makes a woman beautiful is confidence and her personality, not necessarily a beautiful face or long legs."

Ivana believes that to look good, you need to feel good about yourself. "The most important thing is self-confidence, then you can wear almost anything," she says. "You should also know your body. Know what's right for you and what's not. And I'm always aware of trends, although I don't necessarily follow them."

In her free time, Ivana stays true to her athletic roots. "I like to do sports" she says. "I ski, play tennis and scuba dive. I also like arranging flowers."

Ivana Trump is a woman of many interests. She's a mother and grandmother. She's an icon of style, beauty and real estate. She's setting an example for women all around the world - and through it all she has managed to stay funny, charming and approachable.



Ivana chats with the WTM team.



Ivana and Rossano are getting married this month.