

Trevor Davis

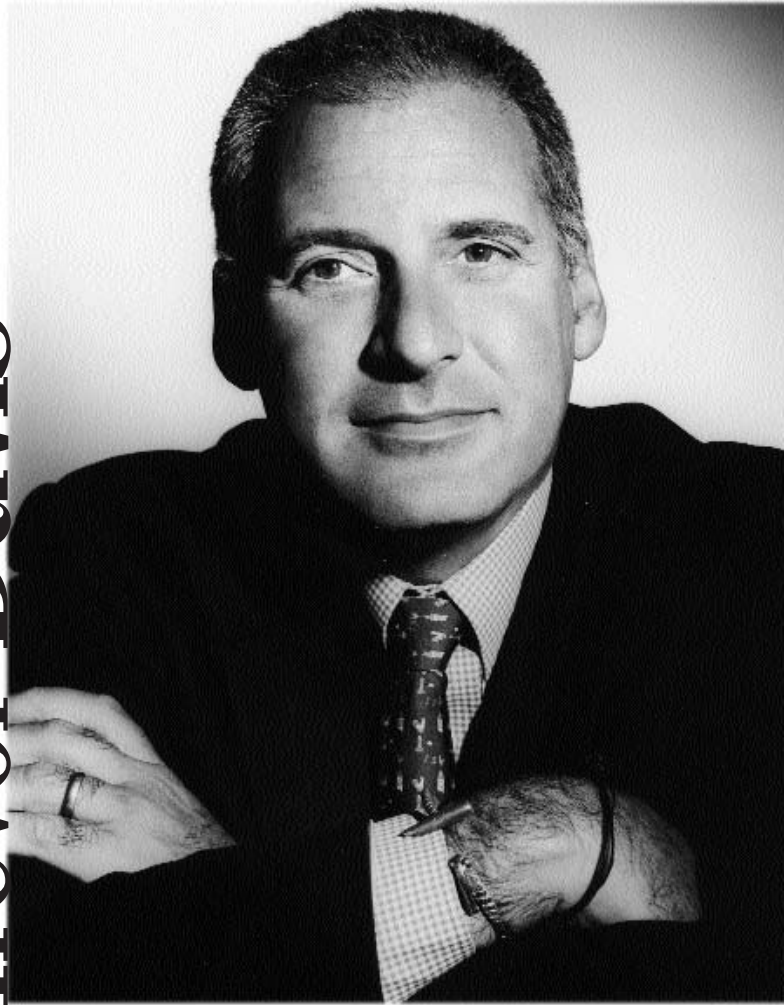


Photo by Gideon Lewin

by Aliza Davidovitz

the dream builder

South Africa is known for its unique flora and fauna—its rare plants, birds, animals, insects, fish and of course, its precious diamonds. It is thus not surprising that the soil that nurtured these natural splendors, could rear a man as special as Trevor Davis.

Davis is very much a product of his native homeland. “I am fortunate to have grown up in a colonial country with old fashioned ideals, ethics and morals,” he says. “It is very different than the way young people grow up in the States. And though he touts his birthplace today, when he was a young man studying at MIT he would tell people he was born in Australia. “Whenever I said I was from South Africa I became a target because people were ill-informed about what was really going on in South Africa,” Davis says. “But being outside the country, I also learned how unjust apartheid was.”

After graduating, he opened an architectural practice in Boston and negotiated commercial real estate deals in San Diego. He eventually made his way to New York. And though he still has love and loyalty for South Africa, “My home is now America,” he says.

Even as Trevor Davis has found his home in America, he has also provided many homes for Americans. Trevor Davis, of Davis & Partners LLC, is one of New York City’s preeminent residential developers. But, in 1993, there may have been those who thought Davis was a little “wacko” when he looked up at the empty sky on the corner of 64th Street and Second Avenue and asked a gathering crowd, “Can you see the building?” When they told him that in fact, there was no building standing there, he answered, “Give me 14 months and it’ll be here.”

Where the whole world sees nothing, Trevor sees potential and profit. “I relegated myself to capitalistic development in a capitalistic country,” Davis says. In conjunction with RFR holdings, he has since erected 11 luxury condos. He also builds commercial and retail facilities. Being a true connoisseur of life’s finer things himself, Trevor’s residential properties all include first class amenities such as state-of-the-art Techno gyms and business centers, wine cellars, cinema rooms and other tempting attractions.

His “creations” are but a reflection of the man himself, substantial and classy. When the 6’4” Trevor Davis walks into a room, his

presence is as illuminating as the diamonds that characterize his homeland. Whomever he meets, without discrimination, he greets with a big, ingratiating smile, sparkling eyes, and a jovial handshake. It appears that the most important person in the world to him is whoever he happens to be talking to at the time, even if it is the waiter or maitre d'. He behaves in this remarkable fashion, even though as a very, very wealthy man, he frankly, doesn't have to extend himself in this way if he doesn't want to.

Trevor Davis says that he loves people. He gets tremendous enjoyment from relating to different kinds of people. But, he admits to being very selective about the people whom he really lets into his heart and mind. "You can achieve the most when people know little about you," he philosophizes. Many people would in fact say that he is, indeed, something of a mystery man. But while Davis accrues his own achievements, he doesn't begrudge those around him. He is delighted when the people around him succeed. "I love to see people figure out solutions and strive for excellence," he says. "I like to help people achieve their potential and show them they have the ability to go the extra mile."

He himself is constantly driven in the search for excellence. He admits that he learned a lot from Paul and Albert Reichmann. "If there is a true teacher in development, it is the Reichmanns and their 'soldiers,'" Davis says of the owners of Olympia & York whom he worked for in the mid-'80s. "I have never worked for a company where they paid people so little but earned so much respect and loyalty." The Reichmanns also taught him to return every single phone call he gets no matter who calls him.

Perhaps Davis was also inspired by the Reichmann's reputed philanthropy. Davis, in conjunction with his partners at RFR-Aby Rosen and Michael Fuchs-donated an entire building to the Council on Jewish Poverty. "It is a wonderful way to give back," he told one reporter. "Too many Americans don't realize what they have

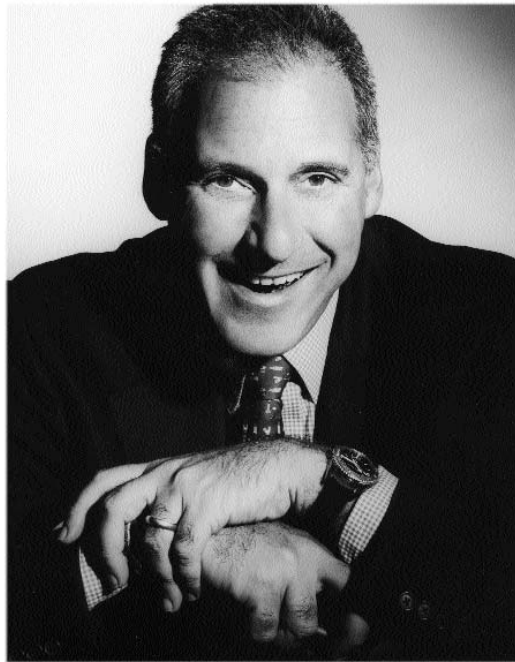


Photo by Gidon Levin

During his most recent visit home, where his parents still live, he hunted the second largest rhinoceros. He is now teaching his two sons how to hunt as well. And though his wife Diane is not thrilled at the danger involved, she nonetheless understands that South African men have a different way of expressing themselves.

Davis, whose Hebrew name is Tevye, admits that his hazardous hobbies are not considered very Jewish. But Davis' Jewish identity is very important to him. He remembers as a child that every Friday night he and his family would make Kiddush and the family would be together until 9pm. After that it was okay to go out with friends. Davis attended a Methodist school for 11 years and though he missed class during the Jewish holidays, no one ever knew he was Jewish.

"With a name like Davis one assimilates very well," says Davis, who believes that one's religion shouldn't be worn on one's sleeve. As he attempts to instill Jewish values in his own four children, he doesn't believe in forcing it upon them.

Davis also commends the State of Israel when it comes to not using force. "The forbearance of Israelis up to this moment has been embarrassingly commendable," Davis feels. "Israel's tolerance, patience and cheek-biting will pay off eventually," he hopes. He would advise Sharon with a South African expression, "Walk very gently over the rocks," he says. He adds that it is all a question of honor and that Sharon will know what to do, when he has to.

Today at the age of 48, Trevor Davis admits that he has already accomplished everything he ever dreamed of and that to some degree it is a bit of a downer-like a hunter who has already trapped a challenging prey. "Life to me is somewhat fanciful and fickle," Davis says. But this lover of life keeps aspiring not only for himself, but for other young dreamers out there. "There are many opportunities for young aspiring developers out there, but they have to take the step to fulfill their dreams," Davis says. "I love to 'convert' people not to my way of thinking but to what I aspire to." And for this sky-scraping developer—the sky is the limit. lifestyle

here. America is a great country and there are a lot of things you don't have to be concerned about here—you don't have to worry about your assets being confiscated one day or having your home attacked at night, or having to contend with such bigotry [as exists in South Africa]." Davis feels the greatest gift in life is the ability to give, not necessarily money, but also giving of oneself. "It's not just a measure of how much you give but also one's desire to give." (Even as a young man, Davis, whose family ran a construction business in Johannesburg, always wanted to build low income housing. He built 14 such complexes in South Africa before he left.)

Being the charitable man that he is, he likes the man who looks back at him in the mirror. Davis says that he walks through the streets of life with his head up high and his shoulders back. "Deep down in my heart I mean no ill to any man," Davis says. "I really do care about people and the underprivileged. There is no person that I hate. I will even forgive my biggest enemy because I will never give up my quest to trust in people."

Davis is also a lover of South Africa's wildlife. He is an avid hunter with quite the game room to display his conquests. "I love to ride and hunt," Davis admits. "I love the danger and excitement."