

# Next level

Whether skyscraper, penthouse or eighteenth-century mansion, billionaires know how to live. We visit the world's most extravagant homes: Antilia Mumbai, Villa Leopolda Belgium, Tour Odeon Penthouse Monaco, Four Fairfield Pond NY and Witanhurst London

## FRENCH RIVIERA

Welcome to Lily Safra's Villa Leopolda in the French commune Villefranche-sur-mer.

Set on 20 acres, the residence was valued at €500m euros (\$567m today), when Russian billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov tried to buy it in 2008. Safra accepted his offer of €370m (\$420m today) plus €19.5m (\$22m today) for the furniture, but Prokhorov eventually backed out of deal in the wake of the GFC, losing his €50m (\$57m today) deposit. Safra subsequently announced that she would donate his deposit to various global charities.

The villa has had several notable owners including Fiat President Gianni and Marella Agnelli, Izaak and Dorothy J. Killam (a Canadian philanthropist), and, since 1987, Brazilian banker

Edmond (who died in 1999) and Lily Safra, who inherited the villa after her husband's death.

The Safras held large parties at the villa, and, at a 1988 party, female guests were given an enamel box with a portrait of the Villa Leopolda. The party was described by author John Fairchild as the "ultimate in conspicuous consumption".

In its current incarnation, Villa La Leopolda was designed and completed in 1931 by American architect, Ogden Codman, Jr., on an estate once owned by King Leopold II of Belgium. The estate was originally reported to be one of several water-side homes that the King built for his many mistresses.

After Leopold's death, his mistress Blanche Delacroix was evicted, and his nephew, King Albert I, became its owner.



## MONACO

Long-held hopes for the sale of the five-level penthouse atop the Tour Odeon continue, with the \$400m unlikely to budge. The near-3,000 sq.m hillside space beginning, on the 45th floor, has its own rooftop deck and pool, with a water slide that descends one storey from the dance floor directly into the infinity pool.

The 50-storey, 170m tower opened in 2015 as Monaco's first skyscraper in 30 years, with its

sky penthouse spread over the top five floors. Until then, London's One Hyde Park was home to the most expensive penthouse in the world, (sold in 2015 for \$240m). It also features a cinema, a marble disco, a bedroom the size of two tennis courts – and tables upholstered in stingray skin. ➤

**Above: Monaco's Tour Odeon penthouse is still on the market**  
**Below: The stunning Villa Leopolda Belgium**







**Left: The classic redbrick Witanhurst in North London**  
**Below left: Mukesh Ambani's controversial tower in Mumbai by day and by night below**

#### LONDON

London's biggest private property aside from Buckingham Palace is Witanhurst in Highgate, which boasts 65 rooms spread across three floors, including 25 bedrooms, a 21-metre ballroom, and two mega-basements. Owned by the family of Putin associate and fertiliser baron, Andrey Guryev, Witanhurst is a large Grade II listed early 20th-century Georgian Revival mansion located on five acres. The house has had several prominent owners since being rebuilt by the soap magnate Sir Arthur Crosfield, and after several decades of increasing dilapidation it underwent substantial refurbishment after its 2008 sale.

The original estate, dating from 1774, was known as Parkfield, but in 2007 the Assads (ruling family in Syria) sold the mansion to the British property developer Marcus Cooper for £32.5m (\$41m today). He subsequently repaired Witanhurst to satisfy Camden council's previous complaints, and put the property up for sale for £75m (\$95m today) through the estate agents Glentree Estates and Knight Frank. Guryev purchased the property through an offshore company called Safran Holdings, located in the British Virgin Islands for £50m (\$63.5m today) in 2008.



Witanhurst has been used as a filming location by various production companies, including the BBC, to shoot films and television programmes such as *The Lost Prince*, *Tipping the Velvet*, and *Fame Academy*.

#### NEW YORK

A power plant, 29 bedrooms, 39 bathrooms, three swimming pools, a synagogue, two courtyards, an orangery, a 164-seat home theatre, basketball court, two bowling alleys, two tennis courts, two squash courts and a 100-car garage. This is the Long Island home of billionaire investor Ira Rennert.

The 19,500 sq.m mansion is located in the Hamptons, New York and valued at \$249 million. Rennert commissioned the mansion in 1999 but lawsuits and the local community stalled his move until 2004.

Due to the lawsuit, local town council passed a by law that limited the size of any newly constructed

homes in Southampton. Now Southampton homes cannot be more than 6,000 sq. m in size.

#### MUMBAI

Named after the mythic island Antilas, Antilla, in South Mumbai, is the world's most expensive residential property after Buckingham Palace, which is designated as a crown property.

Owned by Mukesh Ambani, chairman of resources conglomerate holding company, Reliance Industries, the

property – which has a live-in staff 600-strong to maintain the residence 24 hours a day – cost almost \$2bn to build. To compare, 7 World Trade Center, the 52-story tower that stands just north of Ground Zero in Manhattan with more than 500,000 sq. m of office space, cost a reported \$2bn to build.

Completed in 2010, Ambani's 400,000 sq.ft skyscraper home includes six stories of underground parking, three helicopter pads and 10 elevators.

The 27-floor 173-metre home was built in consultation with US architecture firms Perkins and Will & Hirsch Bedner Associates, with the Australian-based construction company Leighton Holdings taking charge of its initial construction. ■

