

SPEAR'S

Revealed: Britain's top 50 property agents

20TH FEBRUARY 2017 by MATTHEW HARDEMAN



Spear's unveils the biggest names in prime property in 2017, after a bruising year of survival of the fittest, says Matthew Hardeman

The latest *Spear's* Property Index is out — profiling the top 50 buying and selling agents, lawyers, financiers and management specialists working with UK HNWs today, from Belgravia and 'Billionaire's Row' to Berlin.

Prime Purchase star performer Guy Meacock maintains his place in the top five London buying agents, as does previous Property Adviser of the Year award winner Nathalie Hirst. Super-savvy and hard-working Alex Stroud meanwhile makes the top five for the first time, as does Lichfield's Ed Tryon, brimming with enthusiasm after

sealing some of the capital's chunkiest residential deals. Roarie Scarisbrick carries the baton for heavyweights Property Vision — a firm with no shortage of buying talent.

For London sales, the Savills juggernaut continues to be well-represented by its head of London residential Jonathan Hewlett, while the 'pathologically persistent' omnipresence of Beauchamp Estates' Gary Hershman, a long-time favourite of London's Russian oligarchy, continues to hold his own. Mayfair guru Peter Wetherell maintained his agency's top spot in the Index and 'the village' (it can't hurt that a chunk of his rivals dropped out of the market from 2015 to 2016, as he told *Spear's*). Property sage Alan Russell also continues to impress peers and clients, representing his family firm in the top five for London sales (his son Jake, is also featured as a rising guru). Meanwhile, Glentree International founder Trevor Abrahmsohn continues to enjoy a virtual monopoly on Bishop's Avenue in East Finchley — and a top spot in the *Spear's* top five for London sales, thanks to big-ticket Chinese buyers taking the place of the Eastern-bloc plutocrat, from north London to the M25, filling the gap left by under-funded developers.

Out in the country, familiar faces dominate a landscape that's harder than ever to discern. Jonathan Harington, Ed Heaton, Charlie Wells and Tom Hudson were all recognised for their superior boutique buying services — set apart by their granular local knowledge and superior personal service ethos. The bigger agencies dominate the sales front, however, led by the sage-like Clive Hopkins and renowned countryman Rupert Sweeting at Knight Frank, and Crispin Holborow at Savills Private Office.

For your seafront villa in Bali or full-service chalet in the Austrian Alps, we've included a handful of select names on the international front: Knight Frank International head Paddy Dring is a headliner in his own right, as is long-term favourite Hugo Thistlethwaite at Savills. The fast-expanding Quintessentially Estates completes the quartet of global go-tos for first time with CEO Penny Mosgrove, along with Langton Waltzdorf and its CEO, Harry Langton.

Whatever their niche, all witnessed a year as tough as any in recent memory for the super-prime market (Stamp Duty, most notoriously — which achieved the remarkable feat of killing the upper end of the market).

The year may have been bleak for the most part — even for our gilded 50 - but for some of them, Spring came early: September saw familiar levels of market interest return, as buyers shrugged off the uncertainty (and a heavy bout of 'Osborne-itis') following the referendum.

While London still seems bulletproof, at least according to our sources — outside the capital the picture is much murkier, leaving experienced country hands like Clive Hopkins in the dark for the very first time: 'For the first time in my 30 year career, there are no trends,' he tells us. 'You can't say the market is rising here by 'X' per cent, or that land prices are doing this or that. They will do one thing in one area and

another thing in another area. There's no trend either to type or nationality of purchaser, or what the market is doing — it's extraordinary.'

Spear's is wary of forecasts for 2017 — instead, reach for the granular wisdom gleaned from the best in the business, in whatever corner of their world they choose to shine a light. Each of those we have chosen to feature is worth hearing — so perhaps the best you can hope to do now is follow your gut — and give one of them a call (only after you've read the Index, of course).

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