

Californian oligarchs are the new uber clients buying in London today... who would have 'thunk' it?



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At Glentree we have traversed the residential property market from the dark days of 1976 to the present.

We have presided over the transformation of London from a souvenir city, rich in culture and heritage (as Paris is today), into a financial colossus, and Brexit and the Non-Dom fiscal changes will not serve to diminish this trend.

Rich bees fly to London

Whenever there has been a financial or political upheaval over the last 50 years, the 'rich bees' have always flown to the honeypot of London. It started in the early 70s with the Greek King and his entourage being ousted from Greece.

Then, the oil rich Arabs in the mid 70s, followed by the wealthy Iranians after the Shah was expelled.

The oil explosion provided Nigerians with a new largesse and Indians made money in that part of the world as well.

It was then the turn of the Eastern Europeans after the Cold War ended and more recently, the Chinese have been hoovering up a significant part of the London residential and commercial property trophies.

After the sanctions were imposed on Russia, buyers from this part of the world have become an extinct breed and more recently there are some examples of certain Chinese buyers having had issues getting their money out of Hong Kong.

Who fills gap left by marauding investors?

Which nationality then will fill the gap left by these marauding investors? Answer: no less than Californian billionaires who have become greatly disillusioned with the rise of crime, drugs, and penal taxes in their home State, which they believe is being destroyed by the democratically fixated government.

These new oligarchs are not just from the IT world, but they transcend many industries and collectively feel that when they leave California there is nowhere else in America which would spiritually 'tick the boxes' for them, other than 'good old London town'.

Unrequited love affair

There has been an unrequited love affair between wealthy American entrepreneurs and the UK for many years now and Michael Bloomberg and Ken Griffen are but two examples of this trend. Glentree are nursing three enquiries at the moment, up to £100million, where clients are looking for trophy properties in London (preferably Hampstead) to house their families in their new British guise.

The films, Notting Hill and Four Weddings and a Funeral, not forgetting Downton Abbey, resonates in their minds and this is despite the new fiscal changes to Non-Dom's, which the government have recently introduced.

All Americans pay worldwide tax anyway and therefore, these changes have no effect on them.

London: the 'happening place'

London is, for them, the 'happening place', rich in culture, eclectic cuisine and is the mecca for insurance and financial services in the world. It has 45% green, open spaces and as such, they love the leafy parts of the city i.e., Hampstead and Highgate, which gives them the soulful ambiance which they crave for themselves and their families.

These Americans love this country for what it offers, and we are very fortunate to have them part with their bounty to enrich this country.

They tend to be highly intelligent, cultured and to date, a pleasure to deal with. Long may this trend continue.