

<https://www.wsj.com/real-estate/luxury-homes/ultra-wealthy-luxury-real-estate-market-e2ba71b6>

REAL ESTATE | LUXURY HOMES

The Ultra Wealthy Are Riding Out the Market Chaos in Luxury Real Estate

Despite broader economic uncertainty, major markets like New York, Miami and Aspen have seen a surge in sales for homes priced at \$10 million and up

By *E.B. Solomont* [Follow](#) and *Katherine Clarke* [Follow](#)

May 15, 2025 8:00 pm ET

A year ago, entrepreneur Dan Herbatschek was just another New Yorker hunting for a larger apartment for his family. But since March, he has signed contracts to buy four Manhattan condos despite the economic turmoil spurred by global tariffs. Now Herbatschek is part of another group: affluent buyers investing in ultraluxury real estate amid the uncertainty.

“The chance of taking a hit in the stock market is a bit too high for the reward, especially when we consider inflation,” said Herbatschek, an applied mathematician and tech-company founder. “Real estate is safer, less volatile.”

In early May, he signed a \$12.25 million contract on a five-bedroom Upper East Side condo for himself, his wife and three children. He is also buying three investment properties priced between \$2 million and roughly \$5.5 million. “We’ve deployed more than \$20 million so far,” said Wendy Chang Lee of [Douglas Elliman](#), Herbatschek’s real-estate agent.



David MacNeil signed a \$55.5 million contract to buy a lot next door to a property he owns in Manalapan, Fla.

PHOTOS FROM LEFT: EAGLEVIEW; STACEY WESCOTT/TNS/ZUMA PRESS

Herbatschek's thinking is far from unusual. Despite a chill in the overall housing market, ultraluxury home sales in areas like New York, South Florida and Los Angeles are accelerating as the wealthy buyers bet on real estate's long-term value. Since February, the number of homes sold for \$10 million or more has surged in major markets nationwide, according to an exclusive analysis by The Wall Street Journal. Between Feb. 1 and May 1, sales at that price point in Palm Beach, Fla., surged 50% from the same period last year, while sales in Miami-Dade County jumped 48.5% year-over-year, according to public records and local multiple listing service data. In the luxury ski destination of [Aspen](#), Colo., sales jumped 43.75% in that same period, followed by Los Angeles County at 29% and Manhattan at 21%.

Palm Beach real-estate agent Dana Koch of the Corcoran Group, who has brokered two roughly \$50 million deals in the last month, said buyers are turning to real estate because it's a tangible asset. "It's just a safe place to put your money to ride out this wave and see what transpires," he said.

A Sales Boom at the High End

Home sales of \$10 million and up have surged since February.

CITY	HOMES SOLD (2024)	HOMES SOLD (2025)	PERCENT CHANGE
Manhattan	124	150	21%
Miami-Dade County	33	49	48%
Los Angeles County	124	160	29%
Aspen	16	23	44%
Palm Beach	12	18	50%
Beverly Hills	12	16	33%

*Deals for 2024 and 2025 took place between Feb. 1 and May 1.
Miller Samuel; Aspen Snowmass Sotheby’s International Realty; the Corcoran Group; Westside Estate Agency

When President Trump’s tariffs were first announced, some wealthy buyers [tapped the brakes and backed out of deals](#). In recent weeks, however, real-estate observers have been surprised to see a wave of big-ticket sales across the country.

The largest was the \$225 million sale of a residential compound in Naples, Fla., in late April, the country’s second-most expensive home sale ever recorded. The seller was tied to the DeGroote family of Canada, property records show. The same week, billionaire David Hoffmann paid \$85 million for a waterfront property nearby.



Bren Simon bought a Mediterranean-style house in Palm Beach, Fla., for \$51.42 million in late April. PHOTO: JONAH HEINL/NEXT LISTING STUDIOS



Seller Andrew Farkas listed the home for \$60 million in December. PHOTO: JONAH HEINL/NEXT LISTING STUDIOS



Simon's new home has outdoor patios and a lanai. PHOTO: JONAH HEINL/NEXT LISTING STUDIOS

In Los Angeles, Australian billionaire James Packer paid \$110 million for a lavish mansion, while in the San Francisco Bay Area, an Atherton mansion sold in April for \$51.5 million, one of the highest prices ever recorded in the area. In New York, British property developer Christian Candy and his wife, Emily Crompton-Candy, paid \$46.9 million for a four-bedroom triplex at 111 West 57th Street, one of Midtown's new supertall condominiums. And hotelier Vladislav Doronin sold his home on Miami Beach's Star Island for \$125 million in March.

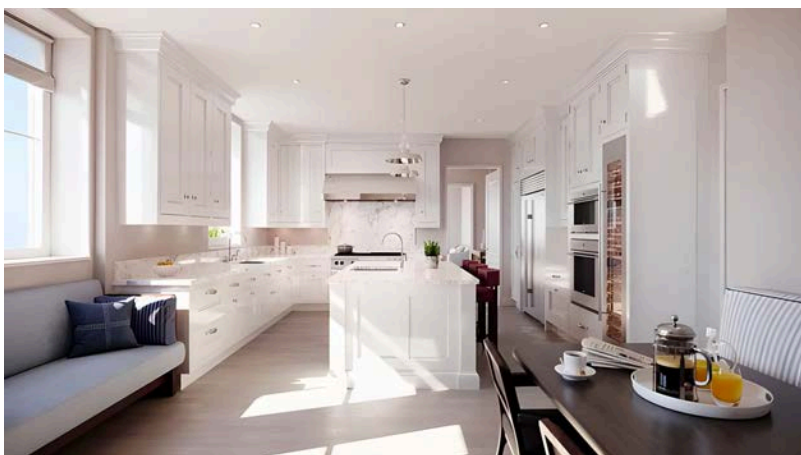
"For my clients, it's business as usual," said Coldwell Banker Realty agent Jade Mills, who is in the midst of negotiating a deal for more than \$30 million in Beverly Hills, Calif. "If anything, we're seeing people taking money out of the stock market at a loss and buying real estate."



The DeGroote family sold a roughly 15-acre estate in Naples for \$225 million. PHOTO: EAGLEVIEW

Palm Beach has seen a number of megadeals, including investor Andrew Farkas's \$51.42 million sale to Bren Simon, the widow of [Simon Property Group](#) founder Mel Simon. Billionaire Red Ventures co-founder Ric Elias sold his waterfront mansion to real-estate investor Mark Paley for \$73 million in March. That same month, billionaire manufacturing executive David MacNeil inked a contract to pay \$55.5 million for property adjacent to a site he already owns in the nearby town of Manalapan. He has plans to raze a partially completed home on the site to make way for a new estate.

MacNeil would actually have been willing to pay up to \$75 million for the site, he said in an email. "The sellers obviously left the casino way too early. Lucky for me!" he quipped.



A rendering of a unit in the Upper East Side building where Dan Herbatschek is in contract to buy a five-bedroom condo. PHOTO: DOUGLAS ELLIMAN DEVELOPMENT MARKETING (RENDERING)

The deal will bring his total spend in Manalapan to roughly \$94 million over the past year. "There's really no bad time to buy great properties," he said. "No one ever regretted buying the very best, whether it is a premium collector car or a piece of premium real estate. Scared money chases bargains, and smart money chases excellence."

Florida-based entrepreneur Todd Green closed May 8 on a slopeside vacation home in Vail, Colo., for \$17.8 million after going into contract in April. The five-bedroom penthouse is substantially larger than one he already owned in the area. Green, who owns a string of car dealerships in Illinois and

various other businesses, said he has a substantial amount of money in equities, but isn't worried about temporary swings in the market.



Christian Candy and Emily Crompton-Candy are pictured in 2019. Hotelier Vladislav Doronin, shown in 2019, recently sold his home on Star Island.

PHOTOS FROM LEFT: IAN WEST/PA WIRE/ZUMA PRESS; DOROTHY HONG FOR WSJ

“It’s like [Warren Buffett](#) always said: If you’re thinking about the stock market over a period of a day or a week, you shouldn’t be in it,” Green said. “I don’t plan on ever selling my stocks, so this is a little blip on the radar.”

A hit to the stock market doesn’t take the same toll on a “\$100 million guy” as it does on the merely wealthy, noted Chadd Ziegler of Christiania Realty in Vail, who represented Green in his purchase. “That person doesn’t need to sell their third home to buy Cheerios for breakfast the next morning.”



An oceanfront Palm Beach estate with a nearly 13,000-square-foot, European-style villa sold for \$48.5 million in May.

PHOTOS: ED BUTERA/IBI DESIGNS

Home buyers at lower price points, by contrast, are holding off on buying and selling amid the chaos, agents said. For Miami homes below \$20 million, for example, listing prices have dropped 10% to 20% since the start of the trade war, said agent Danny Hertzberg of Coldwell Banker.

“The most bullish buyers seem to be the highest-net worth buyers,” said Hertzberg, who knows of at least three Miami homes in contract to sell for \$40 million or more. “The rest of the market is soft—frozen in some aspects—whereas the top of the market is accelerating in the number of sales and prices.”



Todd Green, a Florida-based entrepreneur, closed May 8 on a slopeside vacation home in Vail, Colo. PHOTO: BJORN BAUER

Many of Hertzberg's high-net-worth clients want to buy now because they think construction will become more expensive as the effect of the tariffs becomes clear, Hertzberg added.

Hoffmann, [an activist investor](#), already owned a smaller home in Naples but was searching for a larger compound in the area for five years. "This wasn't a spur of the moment thing," he said. The \$85 million house, which measures about 17,200 square feet with eight bedrooms, ticked all the boxes in terms of design, size, quality and location. He is also in contract to buy the adjacent property with a guesthouse, bringing the total purchase price to just over \$100 million. The two properties had been listed for a combined \$125 million.



Green's new penthouse has five bedrooms, expansive vaulted ceilings and views of Vail Mountain. PHOTO: BJORN BAUER

Hoffmann said he has diverse investments, including a “significant” amount of money in the stock market, but isn’t worried about short-term fluctuations. Moreover, he felt he got a good deal on the Naples home, since it would cost about \$110 million to build today.

“It sounds crazy to spend \$85 million for a house and say it’s a great value, but it was,” Hoffmann said.



The Candys paid about \$46.9 million for a triplex at the supertall condominium 111 West 57th Street.

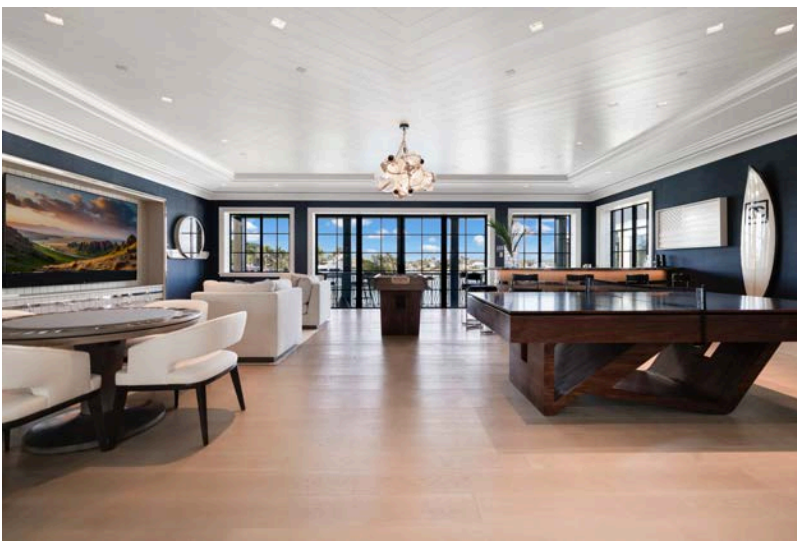
PHOTO: MEDIA DRUM WORLD/ZUMA PRESS

For his part, MacNeil said he wasn’t spooked by the tariffs or the stock market turmoil, in part because he is a supporter of Trump’s trade policies.

“The President’s tariffs are absolutely a good thing,” MacNeil said. “People have to be patient with his plan and allow him to work his magic and soon the economy will be on fire.” He added a flame emoji.



Hoffman's new house is roughly 17,200 square feet with eight bedrooms. PHOTO: LEGENDARY PRODUCTIONS



The house has a game room with a bar as well as a theater, gym, wine cellar and two offices. PHOTO: LEGENDARY PRODUCTIONS

Write to E.B. Solomont at eb.solomont@wsj.com and Katherine Clarke at Katherine.Clarke@wsj.com

Appeared in the May 16, 2025, print edition as 'What Trade War? The Rich Are Buying Even More Homes'.

