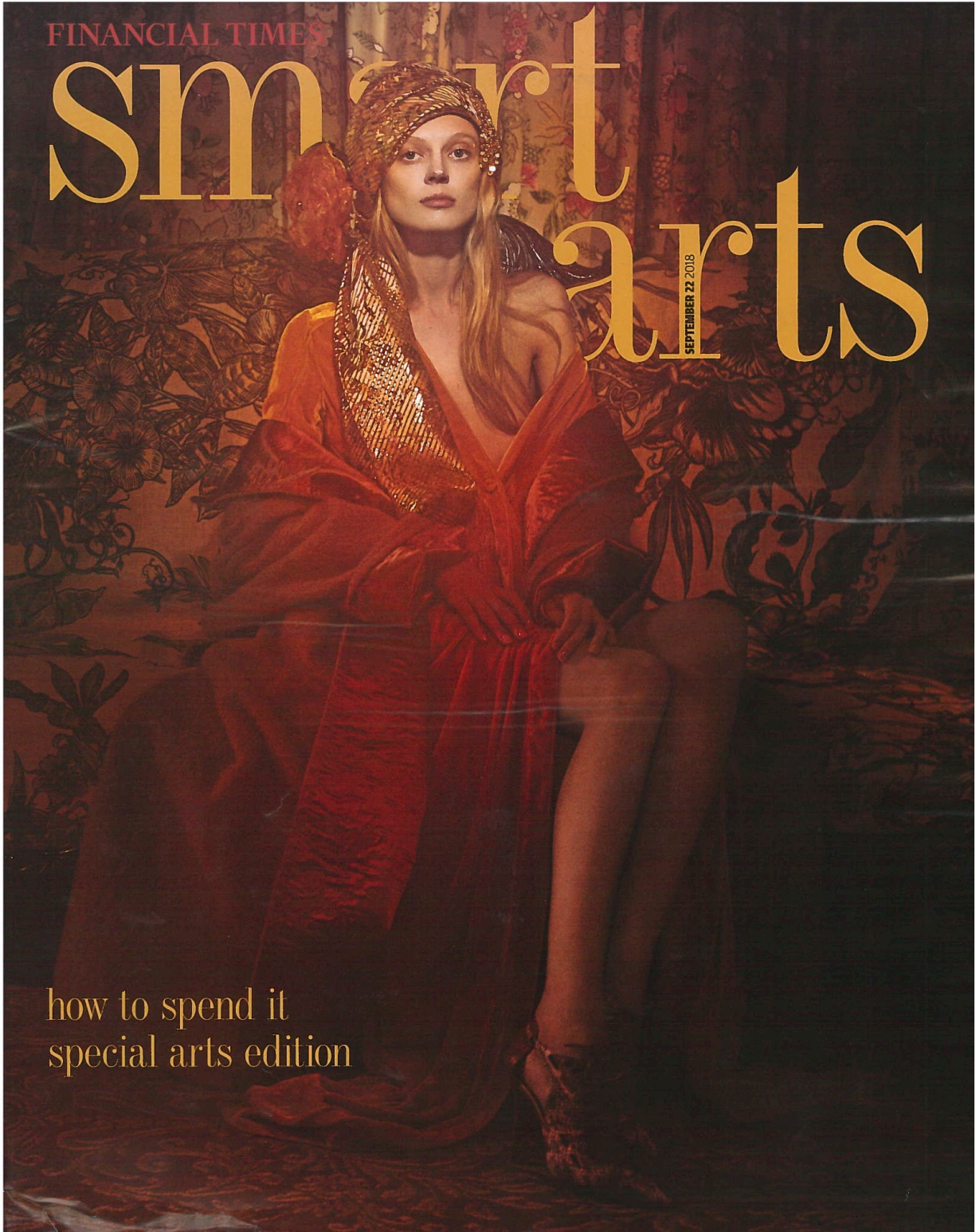


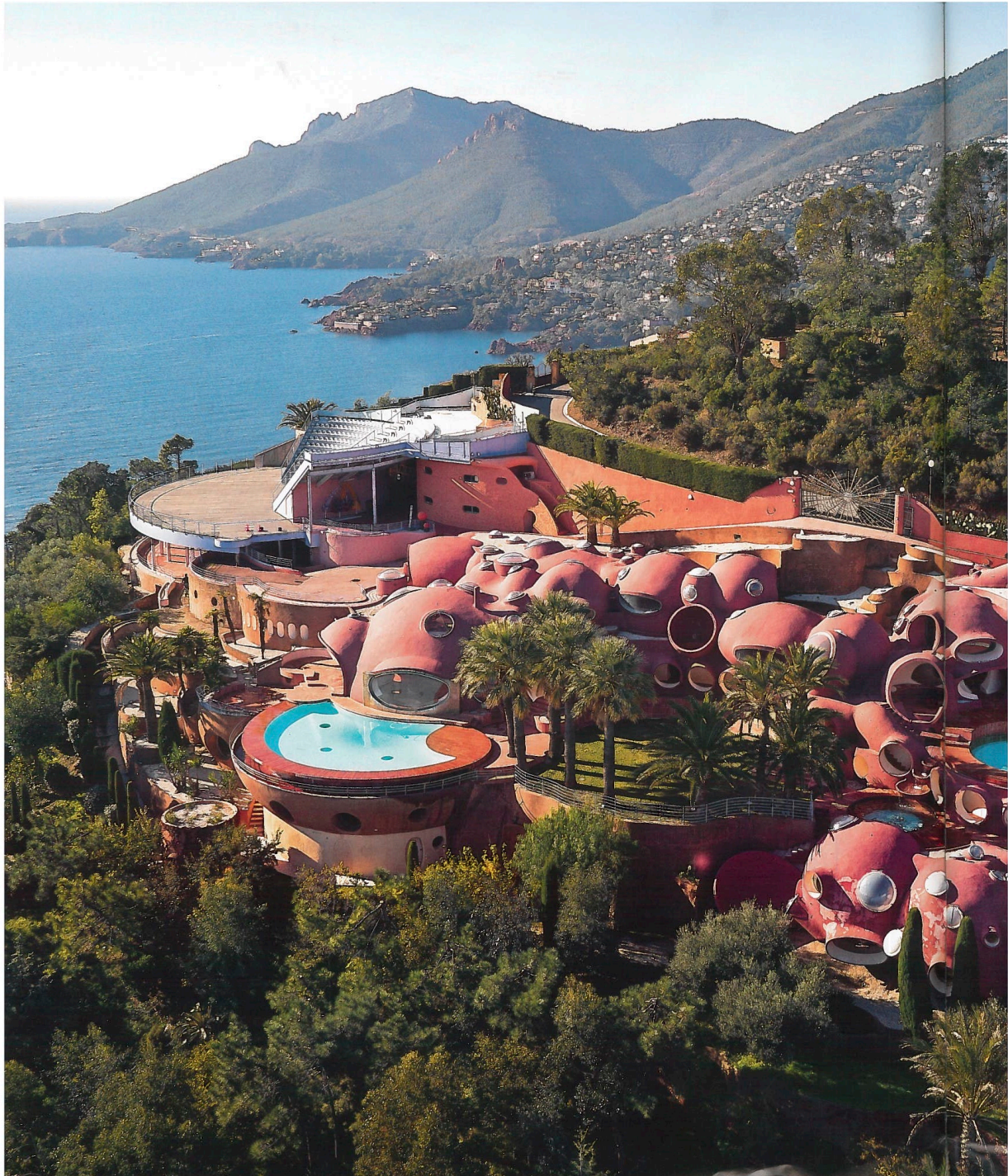
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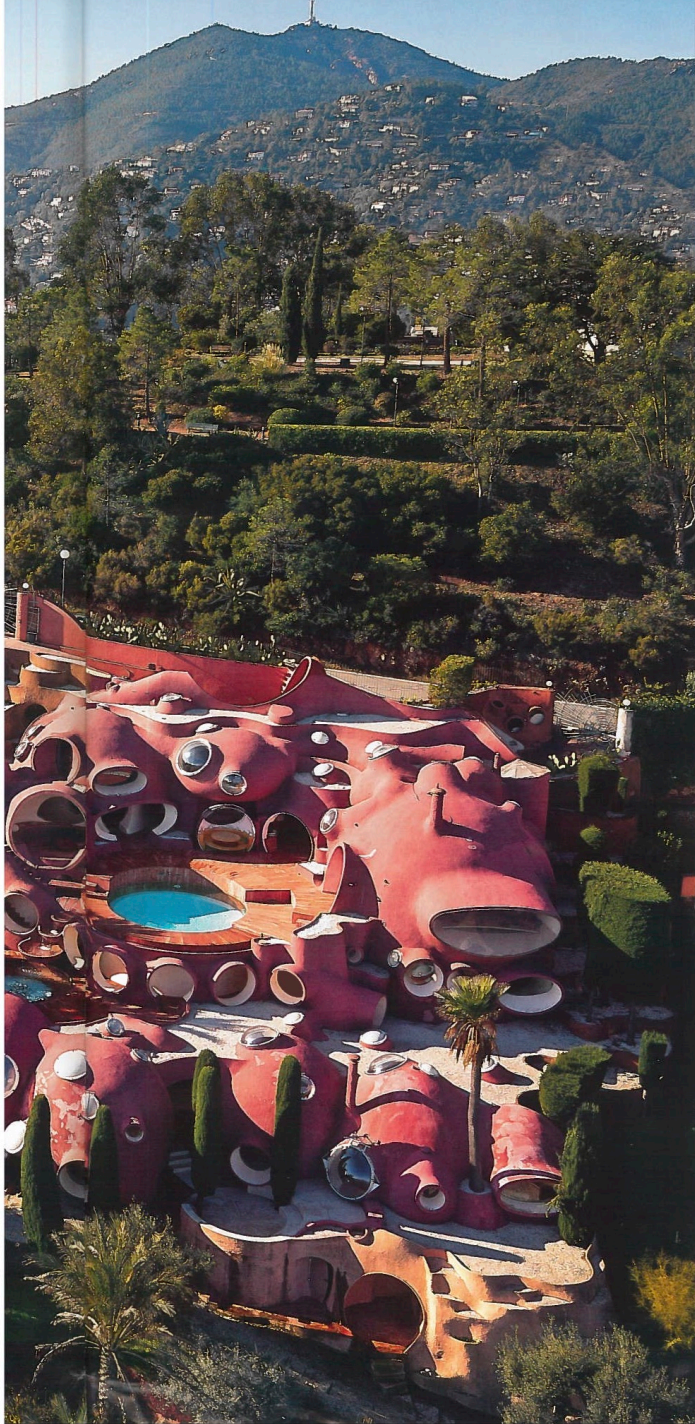
# smart arts

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# artist in residence

Why stop at hanging art on your walls when your entire home could be a work of art?

**Cathy Hawker** reports

It's 21 years this October since King Juan Carlos I of Spain officially inaugurated the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, marking the northern Spanish city's transformation from a place of run-down dockyards and abandoned factories into an artistic heavyweight. That visionary stance, accompanied by significant investment along the River Nervión, has paid off handsomely. Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum Bilbao is a sculptural splendour – its glass, stone and undulating titanium structure garnering as much positive publicity as the magnificent art inside. But it's not just the Guggenheim that's come of age – the "Bilbao effect" is a byword for the transformative powers of outstanding architecture for cities and their citizens in commercial and residential buildings. After all, why pay attention only to what you hang on the walls when the property itself could be a work of art?

The 19th-century American poet and educator Henry Wadsworth Longfellow once said: "Ah, to build, to build! That is the noblest art of all arts." Chris Lépine, London-based associate director at Zaha Hadid Architects, is emphatic about this point: "What distinguishes architecture from the buildings themselves is the deep care taken over how to best frame views, how people will live in the homes and how they will look from every angle. That is artistic."

The late Zaha Hadid designed the incredible One Thousand Museum (pictured overleaf) in Miami – her studio's only residential tower in the western hemisphere – 62 storeys with 83 super-luxury homes (from \$5.65m through Sotheby's International Realty) opposite Museum Park that's due for completion this winter. Bestowed with Hadid's curvaceous signature, the building conveys the architect's desire to incorporate art and architecture into the lives of residents. "For One Thousand Museum we took all the basic elements of residential Miami towers and reconfigured them to

provide fantastic space in interesting and unusual ways. And that is what art is," says Lépine. "It makes you think; it's a different way of looking at things."

The 213m tower was one of the world's most challenging builds. Its 52m foundations are the deepest in Miami, while the unique curved exoskeleton winding up the glass façade is composed

**Left: the 1,200sq m Palais Bulles on the Côte d'Azur has 10 bedrooms and a 500-seat open-air amphitheatre overlooking the Mediterranean, €350m through Christie's International Real Estate**



From top: the 62-storey One Thousand Museum in Miami, designed by the late Zaha Hadid, residences from \$5.65m through Sotheby's International Realty. Six-bedroom White Star, set in five acres in Old Westbury on Long Island, \$3.995m through Knight Frank

of 5,000 pieces of lightweight glass-fibre-reinforced concrete, serving to maximise the open space internally. "The architecture and the structure are carefully synthesised so that part of the exoskeleton comes across your apartment when you look out on the balconies," says Lépine. "Residents will perceive they are part of the architecture."

Appreciating architecture is, of course, a major appeal of living in iconic buildings: "knowing that it is a singular property, knowing that someone has put immense thought into the design, agonised over the space and made it the best it can be," Lépine continues. "The best architects have an intensity of thought about aesthetics. It goes far beyond the simply practical."

Joan Spector is the current owner of White Star – a beguiling, contemporary six-bedroom home built c1972 (now on the market for \$3.995m through Knight Frank, pictured right) in Old Westbury on Long Island. Her late husband Michael founded Spector Group Architects and had worked with the original architect. When he read in his morning newspaper that White Star was for sale, he immediately jumped in his car to see it before persuading Joan to return with him that same evening. "The prettiest elevation is from the front, with the house reflected in the pond – and that was my first view of the property," Joan recalls. "The house was lit up, all white under a black, black sky. It looked like a spaceship had landed."

That was in 1999. The couple's three children had left home, their contemporaries were downsizing and they had spent a "fortune" creating an English country garden at their nearby home, yet it was a *coup de foudre*. They bought White Star and spent nine months renovating it internally – raising ceilings, replacing the kitchen and reducing the number of bedrooms. Michael designed most of the furniture and his extensive contemporary art collection covered the walls: vast Gilbert & George panels and Anish Kapoor sculptures. "The art and the architecture in this house couldn't be separated," says Joan. "I never felt that we truly owned the place or the art in it, but rather that we were the keepers. To live here made me feel immensely blessed. Although it is large, we used every room. Everything was in perfect scale, which is important to make you feel cosy, that you belong



"The architecture and structure are synthesised... The best architects have an intensity of thought about aesthetics. It goes far beyond the simply practical"

in a home. We wanted to share the house, so we hosted many parties and charity events."

The Palais Bulles – Bubble Palace – has also hosted some memorable parties. The unique property in Théoule-sur-Mer on the light-drenched Côte d'Azur is a highly visible work of artistic architecture – its terracotta curves, domes and circular windows cascade down the hillside towards the Mediterranean Sea. Individual round mesh shells of various sizes were secured with metal pods and then covered in concrete to create its 28 "bubble" rooms. Designed by Antti Lovag in

the 1970s, it later caught the eye of fashion designer Pierre Cardin, who presumably saw amusing echoes of his own iconic bubble dress in its space-age curves. It is now back on the market at €350m (through Christie's International Real Estate, pictured on previous pages). "It is magical, suspended between the sky and the sea in wonderful harmony with nature, but it is much more a piece of art than a home," says Angie Delattre, head of prestige at Michaël Zingraf Real Estate, a Christie's International Real Estate affiliate. "Pierre Cardin bought it for fun, holding wonderful parties and fashion shoots



Clockwise from bottom left:  
a walkway in New York's  
56 Leonard Street, four-  
bedroom apartment \$29.5m  
through Corcoran Sunshine  
Marketing Group. Frances  
Macià 10 is a listed 1960s  
building in Barcelona,  
apartments from €8m  
through Knight Frank

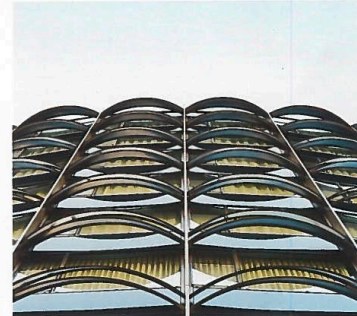


there, but he never slept in it because he has a waterfront property nearby that is much more his home. The Bubble Palace is an architectural folly."

Of all art, architecture is the most publicly accessible – and free to view, at least externally. Creating a work of wonder on any scale has long been the inspiration for architects, but it is crucial that the internal experience matches the external splendour. The 60-storey, 145-home 56 Leonard Street (pictured above and left; a four-bedroom apartment is available for \$29.5m through Corcoran Sunshine Marketing Group) is a skyscraper in Tribeca, transforming the Manhattan skyline. Glass walls, cantilevered balconies and a vast Anish Kapoor sculpture at the base make this so-called "Jenga Tower" of stacked apartments in the sky a dramatic new landmark.

Nonetheless, architects Herzog & de Meuron started from the inside out – by considering the individual apartments, says senior partner Ascan Mergenthaler. "With future owners in mind, the ambition of 56 Leonard Street was to achieve, despite its size, a character that is personal. One of our goals was to break up the tendency towards repetition and anonymity that you see in many high-rise buildings. Thus, the project began with individual rooms, which we treated as 'elementary particles' grouped together on a floor-by-floor basis. These come together to directly inform the volume, and the shape of the outside of the tower."

As such, despite the relatively small footprint, no two floors or homes are identical. Tribeca is a district of cast-iron buildings, so to live in a 60-storey home with outdoor space for every residence and 1,580sq m of amenities designed by one of the world's premier architectural practices is special, says Elizabeth Unger, vice president of sales at Corcoran Sunshine Marketing Group. "We've had buyers come in saying 'I want to live



Creating a work of wonder has long been the inspiration for architects, but it is crucial that the internal experience matches the external splendour



Left and below: the Royal Atlantis Dubai comprises a hotel and 231 two- to five-bedroom private residences, from Dh6.995m (about £1.44m) through Knight Frank



*"By their very nature, iconic homes have ardent followers and over time should maintain a premium over the rest of the market"*

in a Herzog & de Meuron building'. Iconic architecture adds to the value of a property. On average, 56 Leonard Street has sold at over \$3,200 per sq ft, while Tribeca condominiums traded around \$2,100 last year."

Like Manhattan, Dubai has numerous über-modern skyscrapers, yet Royal Atlantis Dubai (pictured top and above) on The Palm stands out. Due for completion at the end of 2019 (including a hotel and 231 two-to-five-bedroom residences, from Dh6.995m, about £1.44m,

through Knight Frank), it has a sweeping aspect – a breathtaking series of cantilevered bridges and lifts submerged in waterfalls. But here, too, the internal experience was the design starting point. "Dubai is synonymous with ever taller, shinier, newer buildings, and while Royal Atlantis is extraordinary – even by that standard – it was crucial to consider how people will live there," says Maria Morris, partner at Knight Frank. "The design team worked closely to fuse the experience of the

amenities, interior design, layout and pools. It's not enough to simply appoint a star architect."

Taking on a significant building to create something fresh and outstanding is testing for any architect. In Barcelona, developer Squirle Capital is transforming Francesc Macià 10 (pictured on previous page) – a listed 1960s Bauhaus-style structure close to Turó Park – into eight apartments (600sq m full-floor apartments from €8m through Knight Frank). "The building has a unique beauty, not an obvious one," says Marcio Kogan, the Brazilian architect who worked on the show apartment. "It took a while to discover the true beauty – like a blind date. The objective was not to have something new, but to make a sophisticated home in an elegant city – to mix old and new."

Trophy buyers are driven by signature design, rarity and a belief that certain buildings will always command global recognition, acknowledges Mark Harvey, head of European sales at Knight Frank, making them better investments. "By their very nature these iconic homes have ardent followers, and over time that should maintain a premium over the rest of the market," he says.

Jason Dubowski, associate partner at Hill West Architects, worked with Herzog & de Meuron on 56 Leonard Street. He has no doubt that architecture is an art form. In his city, New York, residents are becoming more design conscious. "What is driving this increased awareness can be partly attributed to the financial gains of the real-estate market over the past decade," says Dubowski. "What better way to benefit from your investment than to live in it? We are seeing architects pushing the envelope on design and creating property that didn't previously exist." ♦

#### ART FOUNDATION

Christie's International Real Estate, [christiesrealestate.com](http://christiesrealestate.com).  
Corcoran Sunshine Marketing Group, [corcoransunshine.com](http://corcoransunshine.com).  
Knight Frank, [knightfrank.com](http://knightfrank.com). Sotheby's International Realty, [sothebysrealty.com](http://sothebysrealty.com).

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