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A penthouse flat tells the world you've made it to the top – and they're getting ever more lavish. **Zoe Dare Hall** finds five of the finest

The world's best penthouses are reaching ever-more stratospheric heights – not just in altitude, but in the level of luxury and their dizzying prices. New York has a current fad for needle-thin towers: One57, where duplexes on the 90th floor have sold for \$90m; 432 Park Avenue, the tallest residential tower in the western hemisphere (for now) at 96 storeys and 1,396ft, where penthouses cost up to \$95m; and the “skinniest skyscraper in the world”, 111 West 57th Street, right, now under construction, which requires the tallest crane in the history of New York to create its \$100m sky pads 80 storeys up.

And these aren't the most expensive in town. The one at 220 Central Park South could cost \$175m, for instance. But it's Europe that has the world's most expensive penthouse: the 35,500 sq ft, five-floor show stopper at Tour Odéon in Monaco is on the market for an undisclosed price, but its current worth is said to stand at about £350m.

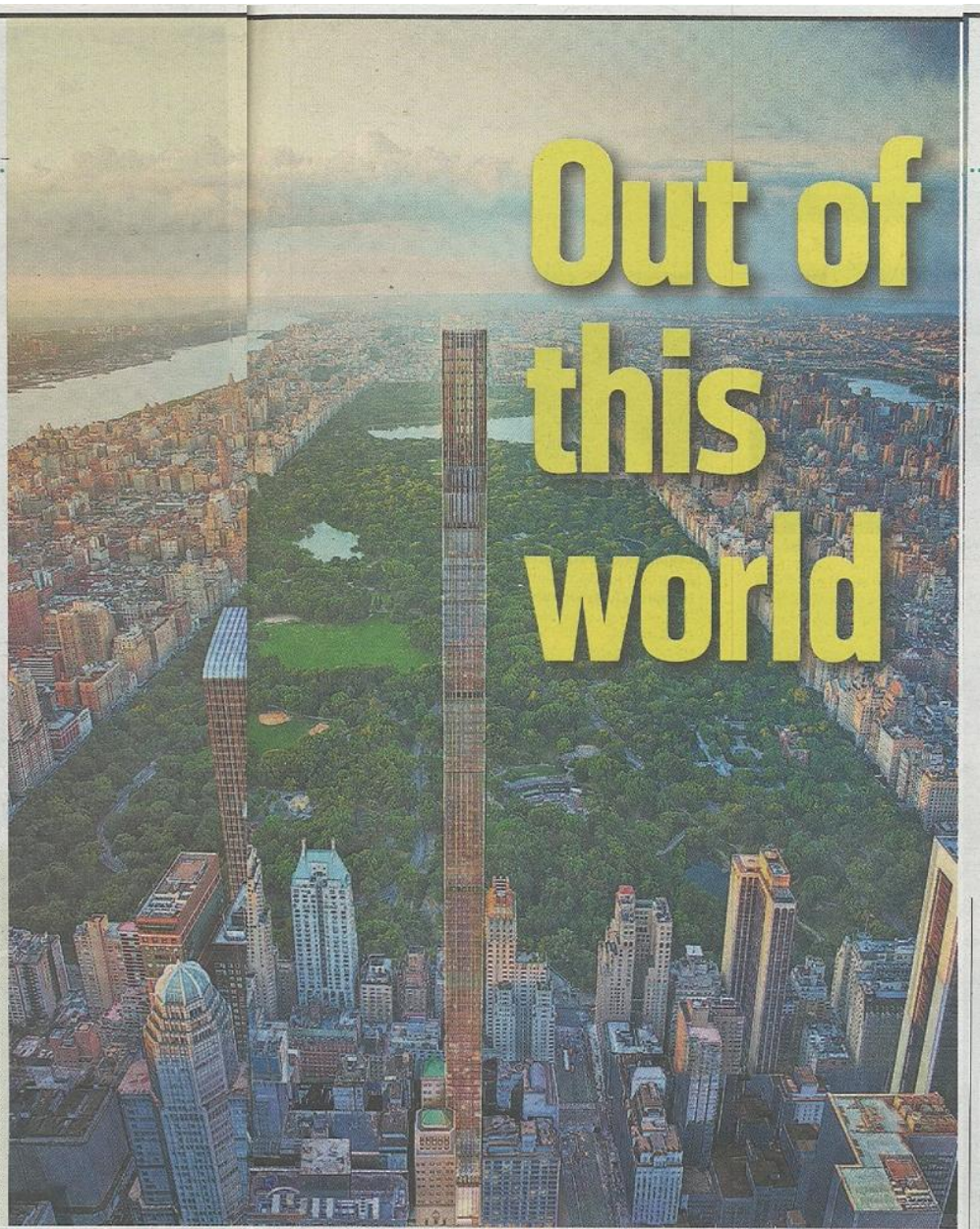
London is holding its own, with ostentatious new penthouses cropping up on the booming south side of the river. One Tower Bridge's top trump is the Prospero

penthouse – a duplex with a wraparound terrace and postcard views – for £31.25m (onetowerbridge.co.uk). Nearby, at Neo Bankside, is a 7,080 sq ft duplex (£15m; themodernhouse.net) with double-height receptions and two winter gardens with views of St Paul's Cathedral, the Shard and beyond.

“The bar for penthouses is constantly being raised, and buyers will be truly global individuals – not just billionaires but significant billionaires,” says Edward de Mallet Morgan, associate partner at Knight Frank. “Buyers want the height, the views and exceptional quality. In short, they want the best.”

▶ **NEW YORK \$100m**

The supermodel of skyscrapers, 111 West 57th will be 1,428ft high but a slender 80ft wide at the base – let's hope the engineers know their stuff. It's stepped on one side, so “it gets more delicate as it rises, almost disappearing into the sky”, according to Vanity Fair. Due for completion in 2017, it will have only one flat per floor, so all will have 360-degree views. The money shot is the north side: Central Park. Prices start at \$14m, rising to \$100m for the penthouse. 111w57.com



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