





**The most influential, successful, respected & connected
prime residential property acquisition specialists in Britain**



operating right at the heart of the prime property market, but often under the radar, the best acquisition specialists will keep their clients streaks ahead of the competition and well away from costly mistakes; indeed, buyers approaching the current market without expert representation are looking braver by the day.

Advising clients on high-stakes decisions in a complex and shifting landscape requires a rare combination of skill, tenacity and – above all – experience.

There are no shortcuts, and the most accomplished players are always in demand, especially in a downturn.

To make sense of this fascinating but often misunderstood sector, *PrimeResi's* Prime Movers index, updated for 2019, profiles the 50 most influential, successful and respected residential property buying agencies in Britain.

The last twelve months have seen a number of notable new agencies enter the field, led by some formidably-experienced players. The sector continues to be highly competitive in this challenging market, and the bar continues to be raised.

Criteria. Companies in this index should be:

- A firm dealing primarily with residential property acquisitions, either to buy or to rent, in the UK;
- representing private buyers or tenants — not vendors nor institutional-grade investors — in the majority of cases.

N.B. Some firms offer additional services, including property sales; we have endeavoured to flag these instances with the “#Sales”.

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Top Residential Property Buying Agencies

01 Property Vision



Excelling at sourcing outstanding properties before they reach the open market, and in negotiating highly favourable terms for their clients, PV has set the benchmark for buyer representation in the UK since the early 1980s. A steady hand at the tiller through booms, busts and a couple of recessions, the 22-strong team retains its position as our Number One buying agency. 2018 brought a major change at the top, as Peter Mackie stepped down as Senior Partner in January after 24 years with the business – 11 of which were spent in the big chair. The firm benefits from a particularly deep bench, however, and Philip Harvey took the reins as Senior Partner, having first joined over 17 years ago. Based in London, Harvey is now in control of the whole operation, overseeing 12 partners across offices in London, Ascot and Hungerford. Consistently achieving deal volumes of around £400m per annum, the UK's most successful and influential acquisition firm is respected by competitors and clients alike, and remains the industry's gold standard.

#Independent #Acquisitions #Commercial #London #Country #HomeCounties

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02 The Buying Solution



Founded in 2005, Knight Frank's independent acquisition arm has maintained a dominant presence in the UK buying agency sector. Run by the seasoned line-up of Philip Eastwood, Jonathan Bramwell and Mark Lawson, clients know they are in safe hands and in pole position for when that dream property comes up. Locations covered stretch across London, the Home and Southern Counties, to the Cotswolds and West Country, as well as farm and estate deals across the UK. Despite brisk market headwinds, October of last year proved to be one of the most active months in the firm's history, with ten deals secured on property worth a combined £78m. Three of the sales were in excess of £10m, and a further two over £5m, while 70% were described as "truly" off-market opportunities, demonstrating the real value of a top-notch search agency. TBS Head Jonathan Bramwell, described by clients as "a walking encyclopedia", sums up what's been happening on the ground over the last 12 months: *"Market conditions remain challenging but when the right properties become available, clients are willing to go for it. There remains a shortage of supply when it comes to 'best in class' property, both in London and the Country. The Cotswolds has been one of the most active markets for us this year in general, with the area around Daylesford and Sobo Farmhouse proving especially popular. The main difference when you compare this market to the previous year is the time it takes to close on deals for clients. In the past it might have been days and weeks and now it is weeks or months. In the past the urgency may have resulted in buyers taking views on minor issues – now clients understandably are more selective and want solutions to problems before committing. This is exactly where our role becomes important. Savvy buyers do want expert advice and guidance through this more difficult climate. The uncertainty has created an opportunity for the truly professional buying agencies; it's also important to say it's not just about finding but making sure we do the right deal for them."*

#Corporate #Acquisitions #London #Country

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03 Prime Purchase

Prime
Purchase
PROPERTY ACQUISITION

The independent buying arm of Savills is hard to beat in terms of expertise and sheer firepower. Its five directors have over a hundred years' experience between them and more than £2bn of property has been acquired across London and the country on behalf of clients since 2002. The premium service doesn't stop when the deal is done; clients are offered access to top architects, interior designers, tax specialists and solicitors well after the keys have been handed over. Above and beyond is the approach – the team have made beds, hosted drinks parties and even found a dog breeder for previous clients. Prime Purchase deals across London and the English counties, while a specialist team manages farm and estate searches. Acquisitions totalling £192m were completed in 2018, with highlights including a particularly hard-won result in PCL, as the team explains: "We acquired a landmark flat which had sat on the market for over two years at an excessive price. Faced with a dogmatic vendor and an enthusiastic client, expectations required management on both sides and at times the negotiation became fraught. We were delighted our clients took our advice to hold their position, and were able to save £4m on their behalf as a result." In another notable deal, the firm bought a residential and agricultural estate in the Cotswolds for a longstanding client who had been searching for the perfect property for four whole years. The team made a private approach, and the property never even got near the market. Clients describe the operation as "extremely professional" and "superb to deal with", with "industry leading knowledge of the best country properties". "A first class outfit at the very pinnacle of their game", summarised another.

#Corporate #Acquisitions #London #Country #Agricultural

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04 Black Brick Property Solutions



Cutting a huge swathe through the industry, Camilla Dell founded Black Brick in 2007 and has since demonstrated how to create a recognisable – and formidable – brand within the buying sector. The roster of services now offered by the Mayfair-based consultancy includes acquisition (buying and investing), managed sales, hotel acquisition, property development, vacant care, rental search, property negotiation, property management and property concierge. The 14 deals tucked away by the eight-strong team in 2018 added up to a combined value of £81.5m and contained examples of world-class dealmaking prowess. The £15m acquisition of a mansion on Waverton Street, £10m below its 2013 guide price and at a rate of under £1,750 per square foot, proved one of the standout transactions of year, and the best possible advertisement for having a skilled buying agent on your side. The firm "represents the very best the industry has to offer", according to one client; others mentioned "exceptional levels of service", "a genuinely personal touch", and "driving a hard bargain" amongst their many reasons for nominating.

#Independent #Acquisitions #Sales #Rentals #PropertyManagement #London #International

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05 Robert Bailey Property



The first port of call for seriously high-profile HNWs, Bailey is a skilled networker and keeper of one of the most envied black books in the business. PCL development expert Will Hollest came on board in 2014 to help clients make the most of their prize acquisition, followed by high-flying former Knight Frank man, John Waters. “Under the radar is where they feel most comfortable”, said one insider, “but those who dig a little deeper will generally find Robert Bailey Property is behind some of the most prestigious property sales that take place in Prime Central London. “A responsive, supremely polished offering”, concluded another.

#Independent #Acquisitions #Rentals #London

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06 RFR



Founded by husband and wife team Richard and Sophie Rogerson – both former lawyers at Macfarlanes – this fiercely independent full-service offering hails from an impressive range of professional backgrounds and counts William Drake, co-founder of legendary private investment office Lord North Street, as its Chairman. The 14-strong team, recently bolstered by the hire of former Strutt & Parker man Charlie Naughten, handles searches right across London from its Chelsea HQ, and provides ongoing design, advisory and project management solutions to complete the circle. Getting a deal over the line in under six hours proved one of the highlights of another successful year for this highly-regarded firm, which bridges the gap between the private client industry and the unpredictable world of residential property in some style.

#Independent #Acquisitions #Rentals #PropertyManagement #Design #London

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07 Aykroyd & Co

New Entry



When VanHan founders Rory Penn and Thomas van Straubenzee joined Knight Frank's Global Wealth Advisory team in 2018, former director Hannah Aykroyd teamed up with fellow alumnus Sophie Bonsor to launch their own Mayfair-based operation. A ready-made roster of heavyweight clients followed, and the now four-strong agency got off to a flyer, chalking up deals worth nearly £60m in its first eight months. Notable acquisitions have included a 10,000 square foot mansion in W1, bought at the lowest per square foot rate seen on the road for seven years, and a ready-made development project in NW1 - involving four mews houses - for a Hong Kong investor. “Always a delight to deal with” and “a breath of fresh air” remarked one happy client, while peers praised the team for “knowing the market inside out”. A welcome addition to the scene, already giving the big names a run for their money.

#Acquisitions #Sales #Rentals #London

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08 GLP Fine Properties



The husband and wife team of Giuliana La Pera Davies and James Davies operate well below the radar and have a loyal following of UHNW clients. Established players, they each have over 20 years' experience in the upper echelons of resi and cover the very best parts of central London, as well as making forays out of the capital to secure larger properties in the Home Counties and South of France. Amongst a notable selection of transactions in 2018, they sourced, negotiated and acquired "one of the finest development plots in prime London", entirely off-market; the extraordinary site came with consent to build a single 25,000 square foot lateral villa set in almost an acre, close to Regent's Park. A "spectacular" contemporary home overlooking the Bay of St Tropez was another highlight, and marked the fifth acquisition for a long-standing British client. Those in the know describe the pair as "ultra-discreet", with a "well-established" client base.

#Independent #Acquisitions #London #Country #International

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09 Henry Pryor



Pretty much the spokesman for the entire property industry, Pryor's engaging tone and vast experience make him a dynamic frontman and one of the best acquisition specialists in the business. Regular appearances on breakfast TV sofas and a wildly popular Twitter account have made him an instantly recognisable figure wherever a search takes him. His search zone extends across England & Wales – "half in London, half outside" – with occasional forays out to Tuscany and the Riviera. Pryor has an enterprising approach to the business, offering a realm of services – including £600 "Pocket Agent" and £100 "Quick Check" packages – alongside bespoke search briefs (and media appearances). His prodigious work rate enabled him to put through 37 deals in 2018, with a combined value of £68m.

#Independent #Acquisitions #London #National #International #PocketAgent

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10 Turnbull Property



Described by his peers as "one of the nicest people in the business", Johnny Turnbull has spent most of his working life acquiring an unsurpassed knowledge of what he calls "the most elegant parts of London". A super-prime specialist, he's seen every market phase and clients often retain his services over a period of many years. Fellow Partner Samantha Blomfield-Smith caught the property bug over 14 years ago at Aylesford International and went on to join Turnbull in 2011 after highly successful stints at Cluttons and Brodie Crammond. Together they continue to set new standards in PCL.

#Independent #Acquisitions #PCL

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11 Nathalie Hirst



Having cut her teeth relocating senior executives from Goldman Sachs, J P Morgan, UBS and Citibank, Nathalie Hirst went on to do great things at Property Vision and Savills (heading the firm's London buying department from 2006-10), before setting up her own consultancy in 2010. An authority on every element of Prime Central London property, her services are highly sought after and leading law firms often send their very best clients her way. 2018's successes included "the clichéd perfect purchase that every buying agent wishes to achieve", which involved a genuinely off-market transaction secured at significantly below asking. Hirst also remains "one of the relatively few buying agents to have a solid grasp of the lettings market", according to one super-prime insider.

#Independent #Acquisitions #Rentals #London

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12 Charles McDowell Property Consultants



A titan of the HNW scene, Charles McDowell is prime through and through. Chelsea, Belgravia, Mayfair, Kensington and Knightsbridge are very much his patch, whilst his contact book is the envy of everyone in the industry. Now based in the super-prime mixer on Beauchamp Place, this boutique firm was involved in over half of the deals over £10m in Chelsea last year, along with the second biggest deal in Notting Hill, and the third biggest in Kensington. One of McDowell's former clients described him simply as "a brilliant agent...I trust him implicitly".

#Independent #Acquisitions #Sales #London

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13 Haringtons



In an industry where experience really counts, Haringtons has the benefit of two of its most established and respected personalities. Jonathan Harington set up Lane Fox's buying arm in 1986, while Saul Empson began his career in the London resi property market in 1985. It's said that what they don't know about prime residential property probably isn't worth knowing. 2018 was a £120m year for the firm, with a number of notable deals.

#Independent #Acquisitions #Rentals #London #Country

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14 Garrington



Founded by TV's Phil Spencer in 1996, Garrington remains right at the forefront of the industry, with comprehensive coverage and one of the largest client (and staff) rosters on our list. Over 100 house-hunters were represented by the ten-office firm last year, and few are doing more to bring buying agency into the mainstream. MD Jonathan Hopper is a leading player in setting buying agency industry standards, as a board member of The Property Ombudsman, representing buying agents, and a council member of the Association of Residential Property Finders. The firm's insightful research and analysis should be on every serious buyer's radar.

#Independent #Acquisitions #National #London #Country #International

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15 Alex Stroud Property Consultants



Nine years after striking out on his own, former Savills man Stroud has just completed his 150th transaction. Renowned for giving a highly personal and attentive service, he relies solely on referrals from previous clients. The mark of a great buying agent, he remains extremely active during downturns in the market. The majority of his acquisitions are between £3m and £10m, and he averages between 12-15 of them a year, making him one of the most active buying agents in Prime Central London. Aside from the impressive deal milestone, notable recent acquisitions have included an "incredible" flat in Marylebone, sourced off-market and agreed at "considerably less" than the £7m guide price, and a "fabulous" home in South Ken - secured within a month for clients who had been searching on their own for over a year.

#Independent #Acquisitions #National #London #Sales

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16 SP Property Group



Masterminded by its high-profile MD, Jo Eccles, SP Property Group has evolved from a boutique acquisition outfit into a major player on the property management scene, looking after a whopping £1bn worth of residential rental property for its landlord clients. In one of 2018's big wins, the block management team was appointed by super-prime developer Lodha UK to handle the building management of its Lincoln Square scheme, and we hear SP is in talks with other developments of a similar calibre. The search and acquisition team, which doubled in size in 2018, successfully exchanged on 14 properties for buying clients over the last 12 months, at a combined value of £36m (with ongoing searches totalling a further £14m). Showing the breadth of the firm's appeal, 2018's client roster included a well-known reality TV star, the CEOs of listed global companies, and a senior member of the Saudi royal family. The rental and relocation team, meanwhile, exchanged on 16 properties, three of which went through in the £20k pcm range. An in-demand commentator, Eccles herself is the weekly property columnist for London's most read newspaper, *Metro*, and sits on the *Sunday Times*' "Ask The Experts" panel.

#Acquisitions #Rentals #PropertyManagement #Independent #London

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17 The Collection LLP



Caroline Takla's multi-award winning operation looks after HNW clients from 41 different countries, including royalty, Forbes-listed billionaires and Bollywood stars. The Mayfair-based firm offers an in-house Vastu Shastra consultancy to cater to Indian buyers, and Takla herself is fluent in Arabic. 80% of new business is referred in by previous clients. A very successful final quarter brought the total value of property exchanged deals before the end of 2018 to more than £45m, with over £26m in the pipeline; impressively, the team managed to secure a house on Wycombe Square in Holland Park for 33% less than the seller paid for it in 2008. "True experts" proclaimed one former client, describing the offering as "the best agency for overseas buyers who don't know where to start".

#Independent #Acquisitions #Sales #Development #PropertyManagement #London #International

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18 Lichfields



While many firms tend to gravitate towards the capital's plentiful period stock, Lichfields has shrewdly carved a niche in the off-plan sphere, and talented director Ed Tryon is said to have acquired more off-plan real estate in central London than any other agent.

#Independent #Acquisitions #Rentals #PCL

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19 Heaton & Partners



The top-end consultancy set up in 2013 by the vastly experienced Ed Heaton – formerly of Property Vision, Savills and Beauchamp Estates – has expanded rapidly to become a purchasing powerhouse covering London and all Southern counties. A strong buying team includes alumni from Property Vision, Savills, Strutt & Parker, Chesterfields – and the Grenadier Guards. The 22 deals completed in 2018 included a "particularly pleasing" acquisition in Wiltshire, secured after a lot of fast-paced legwork against competing buyers over the Easter Weekend. "Immediately before we exchanged one of the other parties tried to gazump us," says Ed Heaton. "Their buying agent then approached us after exchange offering to buy the contract off our client for a 25% premium over and above the price we had paid. Our client declined and is now very happily ensconced in their new home." The firm also deserves special mention for pulling off a rare "double deal", securing an off-market house for a client, and sorting the vendors' onward purchase within the given two-week window. "A wealth of industry experience and nice people too," gushed a long-standing collaborator.

#Independent #Acquisitions #London #Country #National

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20 Middleton Advisors

MIDDLETON
ADVISORS

Mark Parkinson and Tom Hudson founded their firm on five watch-words: focus, independence, trust, diligence and knowledge. On these admirable aims has been built a highly-respected, 13-strong operation, perhaps best known for its encyclopedic knowledge of the country market, but now also establishing itself as a key player in the capital. 2018 marked a record year for Middleton in terms of transactions completed, the combined value of which added up to an impressive £168m. The rental offering has also been gaining momentum, as increasing numbers of buyers look to keep their options open. "Middleton always goes that extra mile to find the best property to suit the needs of every client," said one happy customer; "simply the best in class"; "a safe pair of hands"; "pleasant, personable and charming", remarked others.

#Independent #Acquisitions #Rentals #London #Country

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21 Quintessentially Estates

QUINTESSENTIALLY ESTATES

The sister company of concierge pioneer Quintessentially promises clients "access to the inaccessible" and manages high value searches in the most glamorous of destinations, including New York, LA, Hong Kong, Portugal, Monaco Switzerland and Dubai. With over 150 employees operating from eight international offices, Quintessentially Estates is taking on the world, without losing focus on what's important to clients. "They've always provided an outstanding service and were able to source incredible properties", remarked one long-term collaborator. 2018 saw the firm open a new heritage-themed office in Belgravia, offering buying, selling, renting, lettings and property management/concierge services, which is designed to "transcend property norms". "We sell a lifestyle, not just a property", goes the mantra.

#Acquisitions #Rentals #Sales #Lettings #PropertyManagement #London #International

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22 Banda Property

BANDA
PROPERTY

Founded by the dynamic Edoardo Mapelli Mozzi in 2007, Banda Property has evolved into a key player on both the development and acquisition scenes. This means clients have the immeasurable benefit of an in-house development arm, responsible for delivering some of London's best new boutique schemes. After starting her career at Savills, Head of Private Clients Louisa Brodie went on to roles at Kaye & Carey, Brodie Crammond and Turnbull, before joining Banda to head up the property search division. With over 15 years experience, she has a wealth of knowledge and a detailed understanding of the machinations of London's prime property market.

#Independent #Acquisitions #Development #Design #London

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23 Sterling Private Office

New Entry



Founded in 2017 by three former Knight Frank buying agents (Jonathan Mount, Sam McArdle, and Rachel Thompson) this impressive new outfit has already built up a strong presence in London – handling £75m-worth of transactions over the last 12 months and advising clients with budgets ranging from £1m to over £100m (one of the standout deals of 2018 saw the team negotiate a whopping £9m saving on a £26m purchase). Prime country acquisitions have since been added to the menu of services, via a new office run by another TBS alumnus, Nick Mead, and we can expect big things from this challenger agency in the year ahead. Clients describe the founders as “absolute perfectionists” and their firm as a “top class outfit”.

#Acquisitions #Rentals #Sales

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24 Stacks Property Search



After 34 years of trading at all levels of the market and thousands of happy clients, Stacks remains a major-league player, offering genuine national reach and a wealth of experience amid its ranks. The firm believes that buying agency is a “force for good” and claims a successful transaction rate of 97%, with an average saving of 9.2% off the asking price. The service “makes finding and buying a property a breeze”, according to one former client.

#Independent #Acquisitions #Rentals #National

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25 Cliff Gardiner Property



After starting off – as many of the best search agents do – on the sales side of the fence, Cliff Gardiner has spent the last decade sourcing prime properties for private clients, with a great deal of success. 2018 was a good year for Gardiner – his best to date – with acquisitions and sales adding up to a combined £52m and some chunky rental deals to boot (including four at over £5,000 per week).

#Independent #Acquisitions #London

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26 London Central Portfolio



Going far beyond the remit of a traditional buying agency, London Central Portfolio provides clients with a “holistic approach” to asset management, including property sourcing, renovation, interior design, letting and management – all underpinned by sophisticated financial modelling and handled under one roof. The firm acts for individual investors, as well as offering “highly tax-efficient” conventional and Sharia-compliant property funds, and currently has \$1bn of assets under management. No more than half a dozen clients are represented each month, and one recent deal demonstrates why the end-to-end offering is in such high demand... Having sourced a large mixed-use building on behalf of an overseas client, the team brought the “multiple” parties into alignment and secured the purchase at a “very competitive price”, whilst warding off the competition; LCP went on to secure planning to boost the number of resi units, and all elements were let out immediately after the refurbishment had been completed, “exceeding the client’s yield expectations”.

#Independent #Acquisitions #Lettings #Investment #Refurbishment #PropertyManagement #London

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27 DS Churchill



After a short stint in estate agency, Dominic Spencer-Churchill joined forces with Kirstie Allsopp to set up a consultancy finding properties in and around London for private clients. Allsopp famously went on to sign a contract with Channel 4, and Spencer-Churchill set up DS Churchill in 2002. The business has grown steadily ever since, moving into sales and establishing an office in Oxford, and 2018 saw the addition of a lettings and management division, which has been “well received by past and present clients”. £89m-worth of property was sold and bought between January and November, underlining the firm’s reputation as a significant force in the PCL market. One super-prime insider described Spencer-Churchill as “well-connected to some of London’s highest profile players”.

#Independent #Acquisitions #Sales #Rentals #London

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28 Pereds



Lots of agencies claim to be experienced, but 2017 marked the 50th anniversary of the founding of Pereds – the first property consultancy in the UK to specialise in residential acquisition. Perry Press and Ross Ward’s legendary firm continues to quietly buy – and occasionally sell – some of the best homes in London and the country. Amongst other successes, the firm helped a client acquire an actual castle in 2018, “which was fun”, according to the team.

#Independent #Sales #Rentals #Acquisitions #London #Country

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29 Jess Simpson Property Search

New Entry

JESS SIMPSON

Few know the prime country market better than former Savills director and head of Strutt & Parker's buying arm, Jess Simpson, who decided to set up an independent buying service in early 2018. Driven by the desire to offer a "completely impartial and bespoke advice... without the one size fits all solution offered by buying agencies associated with larger corporations", the Chartered Surveyor put through an impressive £80m-worth deals in her first 12 months, including a particularly large off-market rural estate purchase – said to be the biggest of the year. "The country market is having a renaissance", according to Simpson, arguing that proper advice has never been more in demand while values are difficult to assess and fewer properties are reaching the market.

#Acquisitions #Rentals #Country

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30 Warnerheath

WARNERHEATH

With over 20 years' experience and an impressive network of partnerships, Chris Jones' well-regarded boutique advisory has a strong track record in sourcing property across prime London and internationally. 2018 was a year of low volumes, he reports – a familiar story for many – but with the launch of a specialist new homes search desk, and deals struck with two overseas investment firms looking to source long-term opportunities, it was by no means spent treading water.

#Acquisitions #London #Independent

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31 H. Barnes & Co

H.
BARNES
& CO

Simon Barnes has been in business since 1997, but 2014 saw him team up with Australian-born fellow PCL specialist Joshua Buckley and rebrand to H.Barnes & Co. The pair now offer intricate knowledge of the streets of Mayfair, Belgravia, Knightsbridge, Kensington and Notting Hill – and a superb eye for the best properties on them – to a select group of extremely affluent clients.

#Independent #Acquisitions #Sales #London #International

Who to know Simon Barnes (Founder)
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32 Huntly Hooper



Huntly Hooper was set up in 2007 by Chartered Surveyor Ollie Hooper, laying claim to being the first regulated prime acquisition agency in the UK. £3m+ properties in Prime Central London are the speciality, with distinct services for owner-occupiers and investment buyers, although the firm also acquires country houses and estates. Impressively, Hooper managed to fit some dealmaking in around his studies at Stanford University over the Summer, acquiring a notable super-prime property for a long-standing client (the fourth acquisition for the same family). We're told the house was "completely" off-market and the transaction took less than a month. Elsewhere, an apartment was secured at a £psf rate 47% below that of direct comparable on another floor, saving the client "several millions of pounds".

#Independent #Acquisitions #London

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33 Crown Mayfair



High-flying Hamptons alumnus Kate Bond set up her impressive operation in 2008, and was joined three years later by Alex Dawkins. Clients are offered a top-drawer acquisition service and post-purchase peace of mind thanks to an inclusive concierge service. Ten acquisitions were made in 2018, including a "trophy" asset in the Boltons for an international client, while a recent tie-up with an institutional bank bodes well for 2019.

#Independent #Acquisitions #London #International

Who to know Kate Bond (Founder & CEO)
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34 BDI Home Finders



Shrewd, witty and downright hilarious, BDI founder Tracy Kellett's musings on her often eccentric clients – published on blogs, in newspapers, in PrimeResi, and even turned into a book – have made her famous, but as a thoroughbred buying agent, there are few that can hold a candle to her. From a Wiltshire base, Kellett and her consultants take on searches for a broad spectrum of international clients across London, South East England and the Cotswolds.

#Independent #Acquisitions #Rentals #London #Country

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35 Colombo Hirst

New Entry



Two of Prime Central London's top sales agents, Lucie Hirst and Delphine Colombo, made the move over to the buying side in 2018, launching as Colombo Hirst. Hirst, formerly of Knight Frank and Savills (and daughter of acquisitions guru Nathalie), and Colombo, who spent 12 years with Winkworth in Knightsbridge and Hamptons International in Sloane Square, now source prime properties for private clients across the capital. Their first deal was notched up within eight weeks of launch, setting the tone for a very bright future indeed.

#Acquisitions #London #Independent #Rentals

Who to know	Lucie Hirst (Director); Delphine Colombo (Director)	Principal Address
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36 Timothy James Property Advice & Search



Backed by Timothy James & Partners, one of the UK's Top 100 independent financial advisers, this well-regarded operation works on a flat salary policy, with "no commission, bonus or financial incentive to advise clients on a particular solution". The team – described by one former client as "real property insiders" – made £60m-worth of acquisitions in 2018, including one of the finest houses in Richmond (priced at over £14m). Development of the rental side of the business has been a key focus over the last 12 months, a move that's paid dividends in a tough sales market.

#Acquisitions #London #Independent #Rentals #Commercial

Who to know	Grant Aitken (Founder); Michael Linz	Principal Address
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37 Prime Portfolio



Working on behalf of UK and international investors, this well-established outfit walks clients right through the property investment process, from acquisition to eventual disposal. 2018 saw the firm move to a new base on Grosvenor Gardens and transact on 20 deals, with a combined value of £38m; the purchase of two artist's studios on Chelsea's Mulberry Walk for a conversion into a single family house proved one of the highlights. Consultants have recently been brought on to widen the menu of services to include country house purchases and corporate city moves.

#Acquisitions #London #Independent #Rentals #Sales

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38 GWD Property Consultants



Original founders Deborah Walker and Hugh Dixon may have departed (Dixon to Knight Frank's Private Office), but ex-PV and Strutt's man James Geddes has taken GWD forward under the same moniker, and chalked up £20m worth of deals last year. 2018 also marked the creation of, and affiliation with, GWD Finance to provide clients with access to specialist mortgage brokers. Geddes, who served in the Grenadier Guards before embarking on his property career, has travelled extensively throughout the Middle East and acts for numerous clients from the region.

#Independent #London #Acquisitions #Rentals

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39 Ludgrove Property

New Entry



Launched in 2018 by husband and wife team Fraser and Isabella Slater, Ludgrove has hit the ground running, averaging a deal a month at a typical price point of £4m. The former fund manager and interior designer produced some heavyweight research on stamp duty last year, earning them a high-level meeting with the Housing Department, and a referral to HM Treasury. Other successes have included the assembly of a \$100m portfolio of Prime Central London property opportunities. Clients are full of praise for the "hassle-free" service and access to a rich vein of off-market options. One to watch.

#Acquisitions #London #Independent #Rentals

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40 Rose Capital Property Consultancy

New Entry



After qualifying as the youngest Chartered Surveyor in the UK at CBRE, Jessica Parkinson went on to hold senior roles at buying agencies Black Brick and Quintessentially Estates before founding her own independent operation in 2018. Search and acquisition, rental search, managed sales, project management and interior design services are all offered by the Mayfair-based firm, which has already attracted a set of glowing reviews.

#Acquisitions #London #Country #Independent

Who to know Jessica Parkinson (Founder & Managing Director)
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41 Louise Crichton Property Search



One of the most experienced operators in the business, Louise Crichton set up her independent consultancy in 1998 after working for a number of big-name agencies in PCL. 2019 will see the search coverage expanded into the country market and the launch of a “Desktop Advisory” service, while those who have worked with Crichton over the years describe her as “efficient and meticulous” and praise her intricate knowledge of the London property market.

#Acquisitions #London #Country #Independent

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42 Simon English Property Search



Following lengthy stints at Beany Pearce and Lane Fox, Simon English founded his own search consultancy in 2009, covering both London and country markets. Clients receive the benefit of his 35 years’ experience, which has led to some high-calibre acquisitions of late – including the historic Dippenhall Grange, one of the most notable houses in West Surrey. English receives praise from one former client for “providing a very personal service... which never feels generic, and is underscored by clear and frank advice”.

#Acquisitions #Independent #London #Country

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43 Recoco



After running and selling a chain of regional estate agencies, Nigel Bishop founded Recoco (Relocation Coast & Country) in 1999. Since then, he’s helped dozens of clients buy millions of pounds worth of property across the South West and built a “small, hand-picked team of exceptional property professionals” to cover a sizeable swathe of England & Wales. 2018 proved a successful one for the firm, sourcing over £25m worth of properties on behalf of clients, and securing the services of former Humberts man Jeremy Campbell-Harris to enhance the coverage across the South East.

#Acquisitions #Independent #London #Country

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44 Homes One



Described as a “tremendous dealmaker”, Karim Bazzi received praise in our survey for producing results “in any market”. 2018 saw the firm’s first foray outside of London (resulting in the off-market purchase of a serviced apartment building in Edinburgh), and the launch of an interior design arm, headed up by Bazzi’s wife, Najwa Mroue.

#Acquisitions #London #Independent

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45 Jemimah Barnett

New Entry



Australian-born Jemimah Barnett provides an independent acquisition service for private buyers and investors looking in London and further afield, and put through £35m-worth of deals across seven transactions in 2018. One of the most pleasing was also one of the smallest, Barnett tells us: a two-bed repossession in South Kensington “snatched up” for £1.165m (under £1,100 psf). The client confirmed an instruction to buy over text, and the deal was closed within days; the apartment was subsequently refurbished and has now been let out (attracting multiple bids) at a “cracking” yield. A China-based fund client has recently engaged the firm’s services as exclusive sourcing partner in UK & Europe, and the team is currently working on the allocation of c.£30m in funding towards projects in London and Dublin.

#Acquisitions #Independent #London #Country

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46 The Buying Agents



Prime fringe specialists The Buying Agents operate for private clients in the £1m-5m range, along with some large-scale investors. Managing Director Henry Sherwood has over 25 years’ experience, including a successful stint in the South of France, buying property from Monaco to St Tropez. In the face of 2018’s economic tough conditions, the team posted their best year to date, with 35 acquisitions adding up to a combined value of £60m.

#Acquisitions #Independent #London #Country

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47 The Search Partnership

THE SEARCH
PARTNERSHIP

Specialising in finding and securing “the most outstanding” property in Yorkshire and the north of England for retained private clients, this impressive team has a combined 30 years agency experience with both Strutt & Parker and Knight Frank. The successful off-market acquisition of two prime Yorkshire grouse moors was one of the highlights of 2018, as was the launch of a new land management arm.

#Acquisitions #TheNorth #Independent

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Toby Milbank (Director)

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48 Mercury Homesearch

MERCURY
HOMESERCH

The debonair Jeremy McGivern has been a pillar of the buying agent community in London for over 15 years. He’s viewed well over 20,000 properties during that time, which means there’s very little prime resi stock he hasn’t investigated at one stage or another. He’s even devised “proprietary processes” – The Dominant Buyer System and The True Value Matrix – to deliver the best service and deals to clients. Another regular on the media circuit, McGivern frequently appears on international news screens, giving a spirited and informed take on the London property market. “What and who Jeremy does not know about the prime resi market is not worth knowing”, said one former client.

#Acquisitions #London #Independent

Who to know Jeremy McGivern (Founder & Managing Director)

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49 Hyde Park Residential



Before setting up his independent property advisory and acquisition firm, Nicholas Portelli spent 15 years working as a private client financial advisor and as the chief executive of a financial services and property company. Helping clients source pied-à-terres, investments, rental properties and development opps right across PCL, the firm has impressed industry folk and househunters alike with “outstanding” levels of service.

#Acquisitions #London #Sales #Rentals

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50 Astute Property Search



Described by one of his clients as “energetic, creative and reliable”, Matt Turner set up his firm in 2011 and is currently doing a sterling job of raising the profile of UK buying agents, fronting a property-themed radio show and providing extensive market commentary in the nationals. His Mayfair-based operation caters for both investors and owner-occupiers, covering all 33 boroughs.

#Acquisitions #London #Independent

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RATIONALE: PrimeResi’s Prime Movers indices are based on independent research and a range of sources – including a survey of PrimeResi Professional Members, which resulted in over 1,000 nominations for individual firms. PrimeResi.com tracks notable prime residential deals, instructions and business moves throughout the year, closely monitoring which agencies are involved on both the buying and selling sides. Short-listed firms are given the opportunity to submit a company profile and business highlights from the last 12 months. The rankings are qualitative judgements that attempt to measure recent success and business developments, quality of service, influence, innovation, and reputation within the industry; they are not based on company size or quantity of deals done.

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