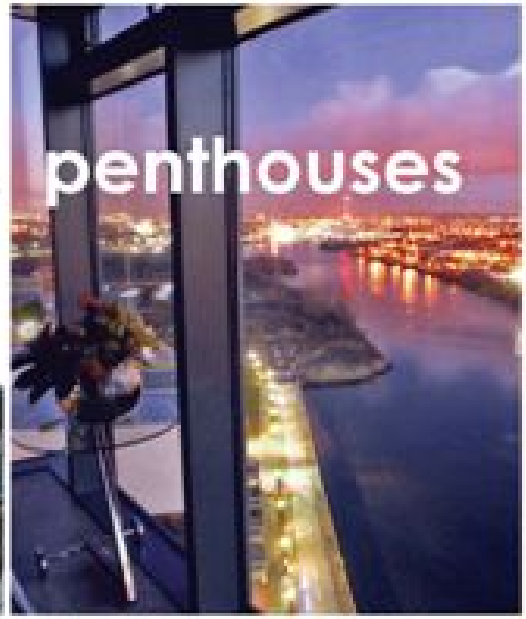
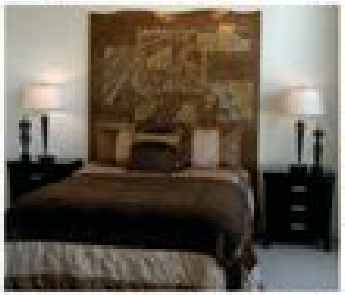
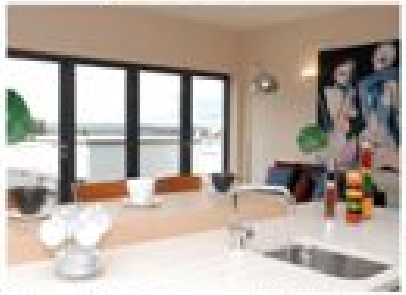
The truth about ... penthouses

Climb to the very top of the property ladder, step off that final, elevated rung and the chances are you'll find yourself walking into the ultimate symbol of wealth, power, and social sophistication: the penthouse apartment...







Above: Rent a penthouse. This top class rental property, owned by Corporate Boutique Apartments, has three bedrooms and a fabulous private terrace with West end views plus further balconies overlooking the River Clyde. To rent call 0141 942 0519. Classic Provencal muted white and a fixed bed reception creates intrigue at alongside latest imported Spanish designer furniture and original art on an upscale set, all from XS Showhouse Furniture. Bespoke penthouse style at seven here with hand made bedding and curtains. The unique wallpaper upsides volumes of originality.

Above: Top superb Glasgow penthouse by Palisade Properties boasts areas of floor to ceiling windows with views to the University and vast quaint traditional Victorian rooftops. XS interiors revamped this viewing area with an exclusive Manchester grey base, flanked by relaxing stainless bases. A pair of cut Scandinavian styles classic sofas and Italian modular glass tables give the cavernous lounge a classic contemporary feel. Solid wood floors retains original quirk and links environment securely. The large window room may remains of the penthouse all modern requirements adds a chic to chilly living and is directly accessed from the luxury kitchen/dining room.

The whole elevator has never been given the acclaim it so greatly deserves. It has totally transformed the way we enjoy and perceive top floor living. In the past the thought atoms of the dreaded hike up to a top floor flat was enough to put off many prospective buyers. The actual climb itself made movie moguls to and whistling their the TV commercials soundtracking sun screens. Even the cathedrally inclined arrived out of puff at the end of the climb, returning reign embedded in sore grips wheezing a "money, I'm home", for all that has changed.

Going Up

Contemporary high rise living is on the up and what better way to appreciate it than at the top with a Penthouse. New York's Manhattan has always been the be all and end all in Penthouse living. Gravity has defied this apple. Serious floor space of up to 15,000 square feet over a triplex layout on full three floors, for those correlated in Penthouse speak) is not uncommon. Some mules Angela enjoying Penthouse life even have a full blown recording studio within their vast collection of rooms. With outdoor space equally as important as indoor space the wealthy luxurious developments space not improve theirs either. Outdoor areas can include spa and meditation zones complete with swimming pool and fully landscaped terraces. If money is no object the sky's the limit for enhancements both inside and out.

The moment of the wealthy share life at the top end of these dizzy heights and are as diverse as their interiors. Included in these are Yoko Ono, Maria Carey, Branson's own Prince Albert, entrepreneur Richard Branson and countless others.

Have you heard...Donald Trump in the Docklands?

Bellsherne is building Europe's tallest residential development at 1 Millharbour, in London Docklands - 700 apartments located on two interlinking towers rising to 36 and 50 storeys. They will be working hard to top their New Providence penthouses, and word has it they have already placed a winning card and hooked Donald Trump. The catchen that comes with living in Europe's tallest building will be considerable. The penthouses will set the

around £10 million. The apartments will be amongst the most luxurious on in the London market and will be aimed at Docklands executives and international business professionals. As in the Big Apple the residential development will offer a range of hotel style services including valet parking and a 24 hour concierge who will be able to arrange everything from dry cleaning to dinner parties. Work began in Autumn of 2005 and the development is scheduled for completion in 2009.

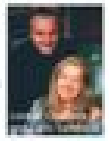
River Cities

Riverside development has also been a major force in recent years and there are some spectacular developments throughout Britain. One of the most recent and striking is Glasgow Harbour on the River Clyde. It is reported to have a staggering overall investment of £1.2 billion. It's no surprise that it is fast becoming 'the' place to live in Glasgow, with the fusion of Glasgow's traditional and cosmopolitan tribal and on one side with the bustling City centre on the other. Premier builders Cale City Park Lane and Bryden, the forerunners in this exclusive riverside development, have produced some fabulous apartments and extravagant penthouses many with River to cooling glazing that make the most of this views.

Loft or Penthouse?

The redevelopment industry has also had to find peculiar architectural hybrid - the loft penthouse. Lofts may once have been the preserve of bohemian types but they went upmarket a long time ago. Top floor shell spaces are the place anyone with the money wants to be. You're above everyone else away from the noise and pollution of the streets and the roof can provide a great outside space. Loft developers typically bring in their own designers and architects to fit the place out and this has resulted in some superb bespoke apartments. But the bespoke trend has also become a feature of the new build sector as well. "Developers have decided to sell shells that buyers can design rather than second guess what they want - these are not people used to buying off the peg. This is probably where the the penthouses market is going," says Carly Sambidoni, of XS Interiors.

With most major developers and investors on their books, Lorenzo Chiappini and Carly Sambidoni of XS Interiors and XS Showhouse Furniture have designed and furnished apartments and Penthouses within most of the recent developments including The Pinnacle, Merchant Exchange, Lancefield Quay, The Iceni, The Metro, The Metropolitan, Anchor Apartments and Glasgow Harbour to name but a few. For information on their services - interior design, furniture supply and hire or purchase options contact them on 0141 942 0519.



Penthouses The Facts

1. Usually, though not always, the top floor. Great views, terraces, balconies and often outside space.

2. Private lift or lift that allows penthouse owners privacy while using it.

3. High-tech features such as: comfort cooling, plasma screens in bathrooms and bedrooms, touch pad/ electronic controls, integrated sound system, high-tech lighting and security systems, etc.

4. Top of the range fixtures and fittings: brochures will invariably name check this big players.

5. Bespoke design and use of high quality materials - in some cases architectural glass, rare timbers, solid oak floors, marble, hand-painted silk wallpaper etc.

6. Exceptional bathrooms, perhaps saunas, steam rooms, and more, cinemas and media rooms.

7. In developments, top notch concierge services. More recent penthouses crown developments with restaurants and hotel type services.

8. Buyers, rich or the top end crowds, corporate kings etc). 'Boyzin' done good! Types: international types in search of a bolt-hole with the wow factor.

9. Buyers, in the loft market, arty and design types who want to create their own bespoke space.

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