
The International Buyer's Guide to Los Angeles Luxury Real Estate

A Private Advisory Resource for Cross-Border Buyers

Jean Baptiste (JB) Rugiero | The Agency | Beverly Hills

Introduction

For international buyers considering real estate in Los Angeles, the opportunity is genuine — and the path to a well-executed acquisition is more straightforward than it might initially appear.

This guide is designed to give you a clear, honest picture of why Los Angeles attracts global buyers, what the acquisition process involves, and how to approach the market with confidence from wherever you are in the world.

This is general guidance only — not legal, financial, or tax advice. Cross-border acquisition involves complex considerations that vary significantly by country of origin and individual circumstance. We strongly recommend working with qualified legal and financial advisors in both your home country and the United States before making any decisions.

Why International Buyers Choose Los Angeles

Los Angeles — and Beverly Hills in particular — has maintained consistent appeal for international buyers over several decades. That appeal is not simply cultural. It reflects a combination of practical fundamentals that make this market genuinely compelling for global capital.

Political and legal stability

The United States offers a well-established, transparent legal framework for real estate ownership. For buyers from countries with less predictable legal or political environments, this stability has real and lasting value.

Year-round usability

Unlike many global luxury real estate destinations, Los Angeles offers genuine year-round livability — consistent mild temperatures, over 280 days of sunshine annually, and a lifestyle infrastructure that functions without seasonal interruption.

Pacific positioning

For buyers from Asia, Australia, and the Pacific Rim, Los Angeles is the closest major American city. Direct connections to Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong, Singapore, Sydney, and Beijing make the city genuinely accessible for regular use — not simply an asset that sits empty for most of the year.

Cultural and community infrastructure

Los Angeles has one of the largest and most established international communities of any American city. For buyers from France, Japan, Korea, China, Iran, and many other countries, the city offers genuine community, language access, and cultural familiarity.

Architectural depth and privacy

The Beverly Hills, Bel Air, and Holmby Hills neighborhoods offer a combination of architectural quality and genuine privacy that is difficult to find at equivalent price points in cities like New York or London. For buyers who want space, seclusion, and architectural character, Los Angeles delivers in ways that few global cities can match.

Key Considerations for International Buyers

Cross-border real estate acquisition involves several considerations that domestic buyers do not face. Understanding these in advance allows you to structure your approach correctly from the beginning.

Ownership structure

International buyers often choose to acquire US real estate through a legal entity — an LLC, foreign trust, or other structure — rather than in their personal name. The right structure depends on your country of residence, estate planning objectives, and tax situation. This decision should be made in consultation with qualified US legal counsel and, where relevant, advisors in your home country — before the search begins.

Tax considerations

The US has specific tax rules that apply to foreign buyers, including rules around rental income, capital gains on sale, and estate tax exposure. These are important to understand before acquiring any US property. We strongly recommend working with a US tax attorney or CPA experienced in international real estate transactions. This guide does not provide tax advice.

Financing

Some international buyers choose to finance US real estate acquisitions, though this involves additional complexity for non-US residents. Many international buyers at the Beverly Hills and Los Angeles luxury level transact in cash, which simplifies the process considerably. Your financial advisor can help you determine the optimal approach for your situation.

Currency planning

For buyers whose primary assets are held in non-dollar currencies, currency timing and hedging strategy can materially affect the total cost of an acquisition. Working with a financial advisor experienced with international real estate transactions is advisable.

Accessing the Market

For international buyers, access to the Los Angeles luxury market is the most important practical consideration. The public listing market represents only a portion of what is available at the high end. A significant number of the most compelling properties in Beverly Hills, Bel Air, and Holmby Hills are transacted privately — off-market.

Off-market access comes through established advisor relationships. International buyers who arrive in the market without a local advisor relationship are effectively limited to what is publicly available — which is not necessarily where the best opportunities are concentrated.

What a locally embedded advisor provides:

- Access to properties that are not publicly listed
- Knowledge of actual transaction conditions and pricing not available in public records
- Relationships with seller representatives that allow your interest to be communicated credibly and discreetly
- The ability to coordinate the full transaction process on your behalf, even when you are not physically present

The Acquisition Process for International Buyers

The Beverly Hills and Los Angeles luxury real estate transaction process follows a relatively consistent structure, though international buyers should plan for additional steps that domestic buyers do not face.

Typical process steps:

- Advisory conversation: Define your objectives, budget, timeline, and criteria with your advisor
- Entity and tax planning: Work with US legal and financial advisors to establish the right acquisition structure before searching

- Search and access: Your advisor identifies properties matching your criteria, including off-market opportunities
- Property visits: In person during a Los Angeles visit, or virtually for initial screening
- Offer and negotiation: Your advisor manages this process on your behalf
- Due diligence: Inspection, title review, property disclosures, and legal documentation
- Escrow: A neutral third party manages the transfer of funds and title
- Close: Title is transferred and the transaction is complete

Timeline for international buyers typically ranges from 60 to 120 days from an accepted offer to close, depending on the complexity of the ownership structure and the financing approach.

Frequently Asked Questions for International Buyers

Can non-US citizens buy real estate in Beverly Hills?

Yes. Non-US citizens can purchase real estate in California. The process involves the same general transaction structure as domestic purchases, with additional considerations around ownership entity, tax exposure, and currency planning. These should be addressed with qualified legal and financial advisors before the search begins.

Is it possible to purchase without being physically present in the US?

Many international buyers complete the transaction process without being physically present throughout. Initial search and research can be conducted remotely, and the closing process can often be handled through power of attorney arrangements. A locally embedded advisor can coordinate the transaction on your behalf. A visit to Los Angeles before committing to a specific neighborhood or property type is generally advisable.

What should I budget for acquisition costs beyond the purchase price?

Beyond the purchase price, buyers in California should generally budget for closing costs — typically between 1% and 3% of the purchase price — along with costs associated with establishing an ownership entity, legal counsel, and potentially currency conversion. Property taxes in California are reassessed at the time of sale based on the purchase price. Your advisor and legal counsel can help you understand the full cost picture before making an offer. This is general guidance and not tax or financial advice specific to your situation.

About Jean Baptiste (JB) Rugiero

Jean Baptiste (JB) Rugiero is a Beverly Hills-based luxury real estate advisor with The Agency. With a refined international background — including deep familiarity with buyers from France, Asia, China, and global investor networks — JB specializes in guiding international and cross-border buyers through the Beverly Hills and Los Angeles luxury market. He works with a focused group of international clients, providing the access, context, and discretion that a well-executed cross-border acquisition requires. For a private conversation, reach out directly through The Agency.

This guide is provided for general informational purposes only and does not constitute legal, financial, investment, or tax advice. Cross-border real estate acquisition involves complex considerations that vary significantly by country of origin and individual circumstance. Readers are strongly encouraged to consult qualified legal and financial professionals in both their home country and the United States before making any real estate decisions. Jean Baptiste (JB) Rugiero is a licensed real estate professional in California.