



Brash, flash and stuffed full of cash: that's The Bishops Avenue – aka Millionaire's Row. Nigel Farndale takes a tour of London's most ostentatiously expensive slab of real estate



Quantity street

As Trevor Abrahamsohn is cruising his way up the steady incline of Millionaire's Row, he flicks his hazard lights on, slows down to a crawl and reminisces about the time he showed one of these mansions to an oil sheikh who was blind. "I had to explain what the house looked like," he says savouring the memory. "It was a dream come true. A blind sheikh. Better than that. A blind sheikh with a fondness for the bottle and a compulsion to buy property. It was great."

Trevor – he insists you call him Trevor – is 41, wears a gold bracelet, tucks his napkin into his collar and says things like, "People probably think I'm spivvy, flash and gauche." In other ways, though, he is not your typical estate agent. He drives a crisp new Range Rover (and an Aston Martin). He lives just off The Bishops Avenue (aka Millionaire's Row, the road of modern, redbrick mansions in Hampstead which made his fortune). And he's quite droll.

Even though he left South Africa when he was seven, he still has a clipped Afrikaans intonation. It lends itself to the rattling pace at which he delivers salvo after salvo of anecdote. But it also serves as a constant reminder that Trevor sees himself as an outsider, a bit non-U, the man who, in the Eighties, made all those old-school, English estate agents look like mugs

Trevor Abrahamsohn, estate agent, left: "I know these houses better than their owners"

because they failed to recognise the money-spinning potential of pandering to international clients.

Not to put too fine a point on it, few of the residents on Millionaire's Row are British. This is because, first, the Queen Sharon-style of most of the houses – mock-Tudor this, neo-Barratt that – is, let us just say, the sort of thing that would appeal to Fergie but not Prince Charles. Second, with the average house price at £3 million and the combined value of the houses being roughly equivalent to the GNP of Burundi, only oil sheikhs, Asian steel magnates – Lakshmi Mittal, who rivals the Hinduja for the title of Britain's richest Asian, is, since January, the latest resident – can afford them.

And Trevor, of course. Nearly all the houses in what he terms "the favourable end" of The Bishops Avenue have been sold by Glentree Estates, the agency he founded in 1976 (after giving up ambitions to become a dentist, like his father, Sidney). The name Glentree is an amalgam of Glen, as in Trevor's brother Glen, and Tre as in the first three letters of Trevor's name (the origins of the extra E are a mystery). "We've sold 150 houses here," Trevor says as he leans forward for the pay-off to a threadbare joke. "And there are only 66!" (Some have been sold as many as five times.)

But the point is taken. This Golden Two Miles is very much Trevor's patch. "I know every blade of grass here and, given that every square foot

of garden costs about £56, I could probably evaluate each blade. I know all the stories, too. This house here, for instance, is where Alec Hubbers was clubbed to death by his mistress. Used a champagne bottle. Cracked it over his head. She's still doing time... This one belonged to the Greek millionaire Aristos Constantinou. Self-made man. In the early hours of New Year's Day, 1985, he was praying in his chapel and someone came in and shot him. Just like that. His wife escaped through the bathroom into the road. I had to sell the house with the bullet holes still in the chapel." The widow went to stay with Trevor's brother (Glen, a dentist) in Florida and, delicious non sequitur this, married a life-guard. Divorced within a year.

Trevor has a beguiling habit of leaving a subject dangling, like a gossip but easily distracted Alan Bennett character. Thus, as we drive on, he interrupts himself: "And here we have the house where Asil Nadir used to live. I sold it for him and he wouldn't pay my fee. It was only when I threatened to publicise this fact that he paid up."

It is a bright day and Trevor's staggeringly thick head of silver hair is dappled lime-green by the leaves that cloak the trees that line the avenue. A bead of perspiration trickles down his neck and, between jabs of his thumb in the direction of one house or another, he turns the air-con up discretely. "Over here was where the deputy prime minister of Oman lived – before he died in suspicious circumstances, a

