

GOING PLACES

**YAHYA SWALLEM, SENIOR SALES
CONSULTANT, BEAUCHAMP ESTATES**

"I don't have that typical story where I can say that I had a lifelong passion for property," Yahya Swallem tells me. Born in London – his father worked at the Saudi Arabian embassy – Yahya moved back to Cairo with his family, where he grew up in the shadow of the pyramids. He moved back to London in 2008, finishing a degree in international business.

In 2013 his father introduced him to Gary Hersham at Beauchamp Estates' Curzon Street office. That surprise meeting kickstarted Yahya's impressive career, which has seen him work predominantly in the Mayfair office.

Yahya has had an impressive 2025, personally completing almost £80 million worth of transactions. One of those includes Mayfair's biggest house sale of the year so far: the former Icelandic embassy on Park Street (£22 million).

While these sales garner headlines, hours of hard work can be invested into negotiations that fall through. It is these moments that Yahya finds most challenging. "It can be very tough to accept," he says. "But knowing that you've done everything you can brings you peace of mind and helps you move forward."

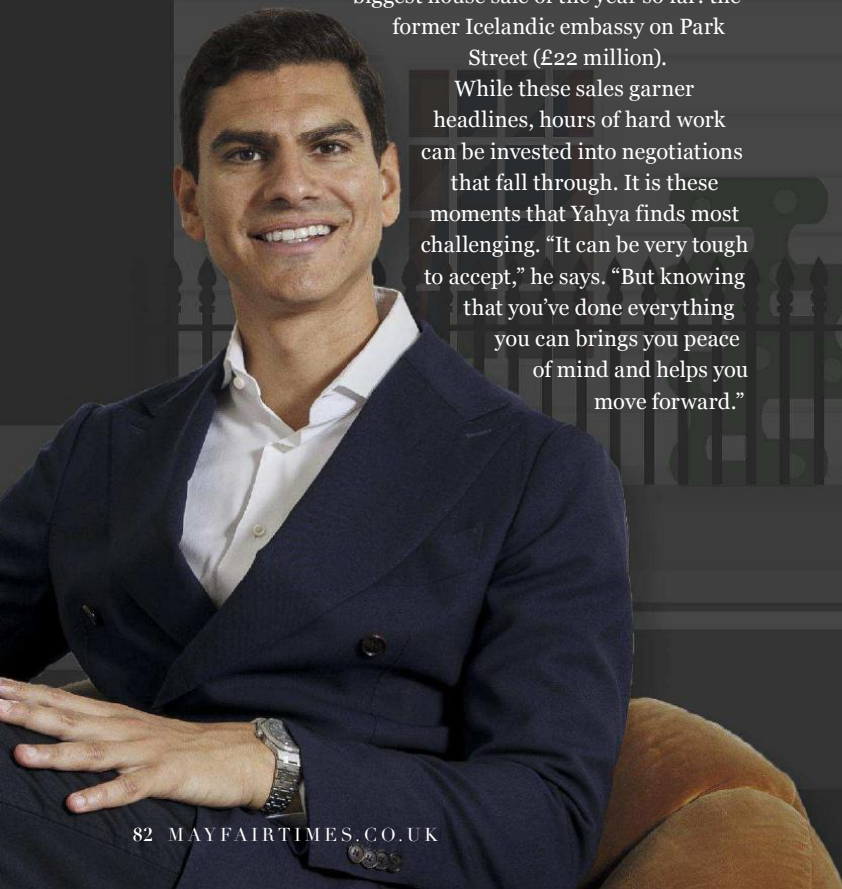
**POLINA SHCHEPETKOVA, SALES
DIRECTOR, SOTHEBY'S UK
INTERNATIONAL REALTY**

"My journey into real estate wasn't a straight line," says Polina Shchepetkova. "It was more of a quiet unfolding, shaped by intuition, circumstance and a sense of place that followed me long before I understood its significance."

Relocating to the UK from Russia in her mid-teens, Polina had to navigate the uncertainty of moving to a foreign country alone. With the support of her parents she found a scholarship, harbouring a "fierce commitment to carve out her own path". Living in different accommodation every six to 12 months during her teenage years prepared her for her current role, even if she didn't know it then.

Polina's drive and resilience has clearly stood her in good stead. Now a sales director at Sotheby's UK International Realty, where she is the youngest member of the team, Polina's schedule flits between property viewings, pitching for new instructions, liaising with clients to update them on the progress of their sale and connecting with new prospects.

Along with hard work, discipline and empathy, Polina cites reading widely as a trait that has given her a competitive edge. As she puts it: "A good broker knows the property market. A great broker understands the forces behind it."



Fast-paced, fluid and ultra competitive, the property game in prime central London is not for the faint-hearted. Six of Mayfair's rising stars reveal their journey into the industry, their biggest challenges and the milestones they're most proud of

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**SOFIEN SCAPPINI, ASSISTANT LETTINGS
MANAGER, HARRODS ESTATES**

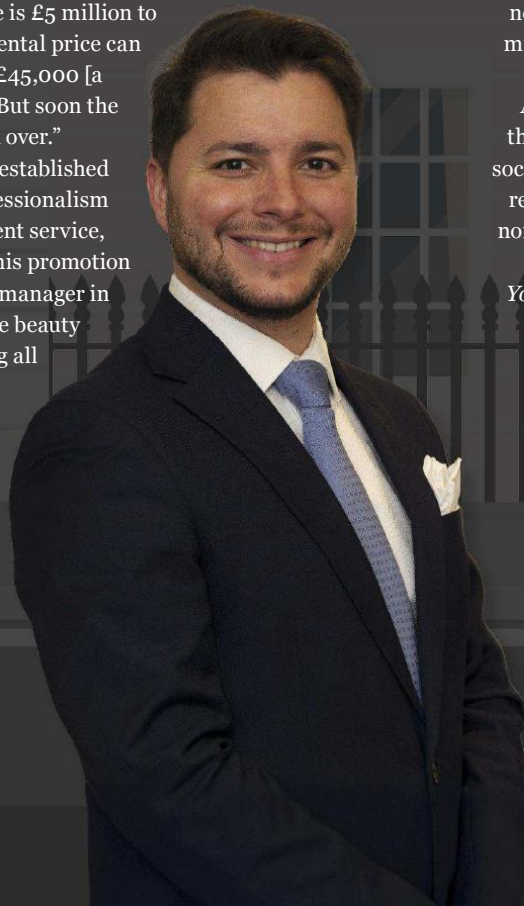
Sofien Scappini began his property career selling homes and villas in the idyllic hilltop town of Taormina on Sicily's ocean-swept east coast.

After moving to London he worked at Foxtons in 2016, specialising in residential lettings across Marylebone, Notting Hill and the West End.

A year later he was promoted to rare lettings negotiator, building a strong reputation for his energy, market expertise and ability to deliver a highly personalised lettings service to discerning clients.

He joined Harrods Estates in 2018, tasked with managing a portfolio of premium rental properties across Mayfair, Knightsbridge and Chelsea. "I was a bit scared at the beginning moving to Harrods Estates, where the average sale price for a house is £5 million to £10 million and the rental price can go up to as high as £45,000 [a week]," Sofien says. "But soon the excitement took over."

Since then, he has established a reputation for professionalism and outstanding client service, as acknowledged by his promotion to assistant lettings manager in March this year. "The beauty of this job is meeting all sorts of people from different cultures and backgrounds," he says.



**ANNA ROBERTS, SENIOR NEGOTIATOR,
KNIGHT FRANK**

To say that Anna Roberts grew up with a passion for property is an understatement. Aged 12 she was fascinated by Rightmove. "I probably knew every house that was for sale in Bristol," she tells me. "I'd notice a particular house with a red door, for instance, and I'd know it was on the market for £950,000."

It's no surprise then that Anna's precocious talent was noticed early. After starting her career with Knight Frank in Bristol, with a work experience role, she took on an admin role in the Exeter office while studying for her degree. At 21 she was hired to work as a sales negotiator in the Mayfair office, becoming the youngest negotiator hire in recent years in Mayfair.

Since then Anna has been promoted to senior negotiator and transacted on more than £100 million worth of property across Mayfair and central London.

Asked what has changed the most in the industry, she cites the growth of social media: "When I started nobody really had a presence, but now it's normal for agents to have their own brand."

*You can find Anna on Instagram
@mayfair.lady*



“A BUYER MIGHT FLY IN AND SAY:
‘I’M IN MAYFAIR FOR TWO DAYS.
SHOW ME EVERYTHING YOU’VE GOT’”

Imy Blunt, Savills Mayfair

**ELLA GONDZIC, SALES DIRECTOR,
SOTHEBY’S UK INTERNATIONAL REALTY**

“I’m always scrolling on TikTok so I know what I enjoy watching,” says Ella Gondzic, who has 11,700 followers on the platform and counting. For Ella, who is adept at filming short and stylish videos that offer a vicarious peep into some of London’s most enviable homes, the formula is

property before person.

As she puts it: “[It’s] very much not an agent presenting a house, but a short clip of a house or a property tour that is completely just about the property and not about me or the company.”

Having previously worked in the art and fashion worlds, Ella began her career at Hoffen West in Belgravia before moving to London House for three years. At Sotheby’s she works for super-prime specialist Becky Fatemi, catering to a diverse network of high-net-worth clients.

“You’re competing against agencies who are willing to drop their fees, so you’re constantly defending your place in the market,” Ella says. “A lot goes on behind the scenes that people don’t realise,” she adds.

“We don’t just sell properties. We’re selling a lifestyle.”
@ellagondzic

**IMY BLUNT, ASSOCIATE SALES
NEGOTIATOR, SAVILLS MAYFAIR**

“The thing with this job is that no two days are the same,” Imy Blunt says. “I can come into this office and my whole diary could just completely change. A buyer might fly in and say: ‘I’m in Mayfair for two days. Show me everything you’ve got.’”

Having started her career at Savills in Richmond, Imy moved to the Mayfair office in June 2024. She covers the sales market up to £5 million. A recent transaction she is particularly proud of is a flat in St James’s that sold for £2 million and had been on the market for two years.

The most challenging part of her role? “I’m quite a positive person, so I love giving good news, but giving bad news is never fun,” Imy says. “A deal can fall through for all sorts of reasons.”

