BIG SPENDERS

Item	Estimated cost
One year's schooling at Hilton College	R129 560
Luxury home in Hyde Park, Sandton	R20-m
Holiday home on Marina Island, St Francis	R8.9-m
Personal concierge services	R25 000pm
Lyn entertainment system	R500 000
Groceries from Woolworths	R8 000pm
Bodyguard	R25 000pm
Chauffeur	R20 000pm
Dinner for two at Le Quartier Francais	R800
Beechcraft Hawker 1000 jet	R8.9-m
Lamborghini Gallardo Superleggera	R3.4-m
Tag Heuer Grand Carrera watch	R45 995
Montblanc Francois I Limited Edition pen	R68 430
Three week trip to the Antarctic	R500 000
Three week stay at luxury kennels for dog	R3 000
Luxury sports fishing cruiser	R40-m
Twice-monthly spa treatments	R4 600
Personal trainer at home	R5 000pm
TOTAL	±R73.6-m

Graphic: FIONA KRISCH

KEEP THE CHANGE: Lamborghini Murcielago LP 640 Roadster

FLIGHT OF FANCY: This Hawker Beechcraft 1000 is the first jet to define the super-midsize category. The price in SA of a used model is about R89-million. A must for those who need a transcontinental taxi

Planes, trains and automobiles will always catch the eye

The cost of being rich

LINDA DOKE

THAT an entire country like Iceland can sink into economic oblivion overnight, and banks deemed solid for more than 10 decades can melt off the financial scales in a blink seems impossible when we see how the world's wealthy play with their surplus cash. Take, for example, the Johannesburg couple who last month forked out in excess of R950 000 on a birthday party for their 10-year-old daughter, flying them and 25 of her school chums to Euro Disney for a week, all expenses paid. Bashes like that make keeping up with the Joneses somewhat financially challenging.

Planes, trains and cars will always catch the eye of the rich: or of those wanting to appear to be rich. Add opulent cruisers and sleek submarines to the mix and all modes of luxury transport are covered.

Just present the cash and the choice becomes yours.

If flash and fast is your thing, the Lamborghini Murcielago LP640 Roadster with orange and black leather interior can be yours for R5.5-million. If solid and stately has more appeal, then the Rolls-Royce Phantom Bespoke Collection will be more suitable, for a tidy R5-million.

Zunaid Moti, owner of the Future Exotics Lifestyle Emporium at the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town, says despite the downward economic spiral, the sale of exotic cars, boats, yachts, helicopters and planes remains relatively steady.

Just a couple of months ago Future Exotics sold a Rolls-Royce Phantom Drophead for R8-million, and a Lamborghini Gallardo Superleggera for R3.4-million.

Private jets have long been a must for those who can afford luxurious transcontinental freedom. The Beechcraft Hawker 1000 is the first jet to define the super midsize category — the price in SA of a used model is more than $8.9-million.

For more convenient hopping between cities for meetings or to your private game reserve, you can pick up a Kaola Single Turbine light helicopter for a starting price of $3.6-million.

Entertaining on posh yachts is now passé. Luxury submarines are the latest way to entertain, with costs starting at $3 000 per person per day, and topping at around $25-million to buy the entire vessel.

Ocean cruising in lavish opulence has always appealed to those who can afford it.

The Fairline and Riviera brands cover the luxury cruising and sports fishing categories, and can set you back anything from R1.5-million to R45-million, depending on size and spec.

Ideal, really, for docking in the private marina in the V&A Waterfront, in front of your luxury penthouse at Sol Kerzner's One&Only Hotel, which could be yours for R110-million — a steal in comparison to the R400-million you would spend for a penthouse in New York.

Extra holiday homes still appeal to the select few for whom price is not an issue

Second and third holiday homes still appeal to the select percentage of SA's well-heeled, and, at the upper edge of the market, price is not an issue.

Tara Whiting of the Pam Golding Signature Collection said: "Those purchasing property at the very top end of the market are really not concerned about price — they're generally unaffected by global economic conditions and interest rate fluctuations as they tend to pay cash. The very affluent are paying R50-million to R100-million for local properties: it's a lifestyle choice."

Popular property scoops for holiday homes outside of SA this year have included exclusive areas of Mozambique's coastline, Mauritius and the Seychelles, but it's only a matter of time before someone local garners the ultimate trophy property, a penthouse in The Chicago Spire in the US, the tallest residential building in the world.

The seven-sided, 150-storey building soars 609.6m above downtown Chicago, and each segment of the building is able to rotate 360°.

Apartments start at a mere $800 000 for a 49.61m² suite, and top at $40-million for a 956m² duplex penthouse.

Living luxuriously may be appealing to many, but it comes with its own demands — sourcing style requires a degree of *je ne c'est quoi* simply to know what's available and where to find it. This never need stress the über-rich themselves, however — they can leave the legwork to the professionals in the know.

Private concierge services ensure their clients have every possible luxury to ensure their comfort at all times. For a good private concierge, no request is ever too demanding or off the wall, anywhere, anytime, 24/7.

Sarah McGrath, MD of Quintessentially SA, says the pursuit of exclusive and hard-to-get items and experiences is not only a sign of spending power but insider knowledge and connections. "South Africans are becoming increasingly sophisticated: their perception of luxury is rising."

Carole Day, MD of The Desk concierge and lifestyle management company, pinpoints time as the highest request on the service list of the wealthy: using professionals to free them of the chore of planning their lives enables opulence to shape the lifestyles of the wealthy.

The cost of using personal concierge services can be anything from R2 400 for eight hours to a bespoke membership for extensive use at upwards of R20 000 a month.

Not for sale to persons under the age of 18.