

Detroit Motors to the Top of New Luxury Housing Market Ranking—Here's How Its Fortune Has Changed

BY JOY DUMANDAN

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In a surprising turn of events, Detroit has emerged as the top luxury market according to the Wall Street Journal/Realtor.com® Emerging Housing Market Index report. Despite its history of financial challenges, Detroit now boasts a thriving luxury real estate market, offering accessible luxury to buyers looking for high-end properties at relatively affordable prices. The city's appeal lies in a combination of strong buyer demand, reasonable pricing, and balanced market fundamentals, making it a standout destination in the luxury housing landscape. Neighboring suburbs, such as Bloomfield Hills and Birmingham, also contribute to Detroit's luxury market success, with median prices below the national average.

The Motor City is getting a new reputation and it's an expensive one. Detroit tops the list of luxury markets, according to a new Wall Street Journal/Realtor.com® Emerging Housing Market Index report.

Yes, that's right—Detroit, a city that once filed for Chapter 9 bankruptcy, now can claim bragging rights as the No. 1 luxury metro.

"Detroit rose to the top because it combines strong buyer demand, attainable pricing, and balanced market fundamentals, traits that have become increasingly valuable in today's high-end housing landscape," explains **Anthony Smith**, senior economist at Realtor.com.

The city emerges as a clear favorite namely for its lower entry price point for people who want luxury for less. Entry into the top 10% in Detroit comes in at \$721,625, compared with the national median level of \$1,243,506 as of September 2025.

"Homes in this range are also selling faster than most luxury listings nationwide, with a median 57 days on market for million-dollar homes compared with 78 days nationally," says Smith.

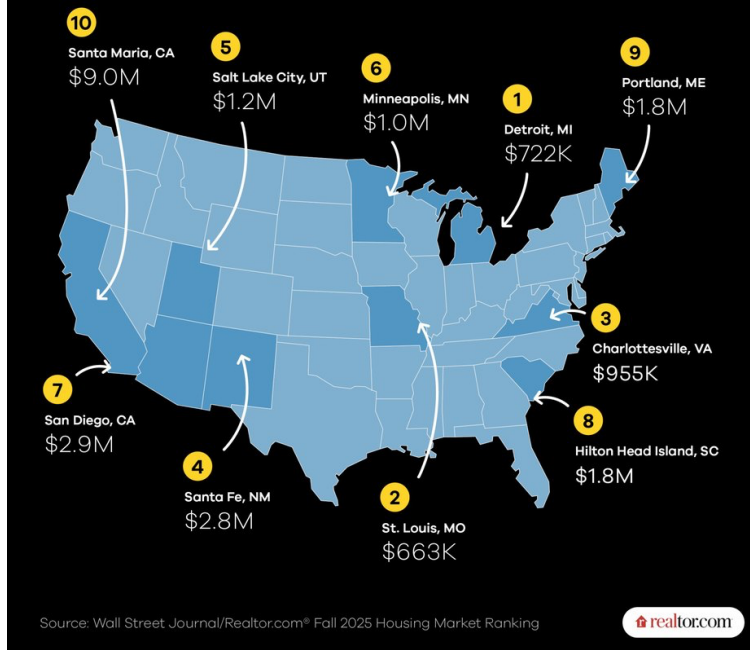
This affordable luxury makes Detroit one of the most accessible major metros for buyers.

"There's an ability to own an architecturally significant home or condo (often under \$1 million) without sacrificing lifestyle—combined with the creative energy, the authenticity, and the community sense. They can be part of a renaissance rather than just a market trend," **Erica Collica**, associate broker at [Max Broock Realtors](#), tells Realtor.com.

Detroit Rises to the Top of Luxury Housing Market Ranking—5 Key Takeaways

Ranked: Top 10 Luxury Housing Markets

This map highlights top luxury markets and their median prices, as luxury buyers shift focus to quality of life over high-cost coastal hubs.



Detroit tops the list of luxury markets. [REALTOR.COM](https://www.realtor.com) Neighboring Detroit suburbs are also attracting luxury buyers. [REALTOR.COM](https://www.realtor.com)

The report reveals that Detroit homes in the 95th percentile come in just under \$1 million, compared with \$1.95 million nationally. At the very top—the 99th percentile—Detroit luxury listings start around \$2.84 million, about half of the \$5.41 million national benchmark.

"The ranking reflects the entire Detroit-Warren-Dearborn metro area, not only the city limits. That includes long-established affluent suburbs such as Bloomfield Hills, Birmingham, Grosse Pointe, and Rochester Hills, areas where typical listing prices easily exceed \$1 million," says Smith.

For perspective, Rochester Hills (48306) has a median list price of \$1,101,900, Birmingham (48009) has a median list price of \$1,478,125, and Bloomfield Hills (48301) has a median list price of \$1,107,500.

"Those suburbs anchor much of the metro's high-end inventory. In short, Detroit's top ranking represents the broader regional luxury ecosystem, combining the legacy prestige of its suburbs with the urban revival happening within city limits," Smith adds.

These are all options for people looking at the upper tiers of luxury, but the common thread whether it's on the "entry level" of luxury or the peak of high end is that buyers are able to access premier homes, neighborhoods, and amenities that are still below more expensive cities. Bottom line, a homebuyer is getting more house and lifestyle for less money.

Who's looking?

Detroit residents fuel the demand for luxury, with nearly half of the home shoppers looking at Detroit residential real estate on Realtor.com located in other parts of the Motor City metro.

As for the other half of people searching, "according to the Cross-Market Demand index for Q3 2025, the largest share of non-local buyer interest in the Detroit metro comes from Indianapolis (14.6 %), followed by Washington, DC, (12.6 %), and New York City (12.3 %)," Smith explains. "These out-of-metro inquiries help explain why Detroit's luxury market has strong momentum: The buyer pool isn't only local, it's drawing in interest from other regional centers and major markets."

Detroit's appeal has grown as the city has worked to redefine itself after decades of problems. Auto manufacturing took a downturn when Chrysler and GM declared bankruptcy in 2009, which had a ripple effect as thousands of residents were employed by the automakers. In March 2011, the city reached its lowest population level in 100 years with only 713,777 people, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

In 2013, the city filed for Chapter 9 bankruptcy. A federal judge approved a bankruptcy plan a few months later, wiping out about \$7 billion in debt.

Now, the city has been turning around. Professional sports teams, like the Detroit Lions (NFL) and the Pistons (NBA), plus nearby University of Michigan in Ann Arbor all contribute to drawing people to the city and the surrounding areas.

"Over the past decade, intentional reinvestment, adaptive reuse of historic architecture, and the rise of design-driven development have completely reframed what 'luxury' means in Detroit," Collica says.

"People are drawn to this area because Michigan truly offers something for everyone," **Liz Watts**, Michigan real estate agent with National Realty Centers, tells Realtor.com.

"From serene lakefront living and luxurious estates to peaceful country settings and vibrant urban communities, the state provides a diverse range of lifestyles. Residents can enjoy everything from upscale high-rise lofts and well-appointed rental communities to lively nightlife, social events, and a blend of small-town charm and big-city energy."



Buyers are able to get more for their money. This five bedroom, 4.5 bath home is listed for \$2.13 million. REALTOR.COM

Life of luxury

Detroit dethroned St. Louis to take the No. 1 spot on the luxury market list. St. Louis has a median list price of \$662,863, followed by Charlottesville, VA (\$954,866); Santa Fe, NM (\$2,786,250); and Salt Lake City (\$1,231,940).

Newcomers breaking into the top 10 luxury market ranking are San Diego-Carlsbad, CA (\$2,880,567) and Hilton Head, SC (\$1,799,000). Those cities' coastal charm give them steady demand and premium lifestyle offerings.

The most expensive luxury market is Santa Maria-Santa Barbara, CA (\$8,950,000) which comes in at No. 10.

Metros such as Atlanta, Chicago, and Boulder, CO, are all gaining in potential.

Realtor.com and The Wall Street Journal team up to identify the highest-performing and most attractive metro areas for luxury home purchases by scoring 60 different luxury housing markets across the country in categories that include supply and demand strength, economic health, and quality of life.