

BELLE OF THE BALLROOM

From Tuscany and the Czech Republic to Houston and New York, ballrooms are back en vogue, as **lyna Bort Caruso** reveals.

Among the labyrinth of rooms that make up grand old estates, none is more evocative than the ballroom. You can practically hear the orchestra, feel the rhythm and see the dancers in flickers of gloriously bygone images.

These Downton Abbey-worthy dance halls are legacies of a time when formal entertaining at home was common and square footage was considerable. Ballrooms demanded generous, obstruction-free dimensions, with high ceilings for optimal acoustics.

Grand and gilded ballrooms have largely gone the way of drawing rooms, fainting rooms and cloakrooms. Modern life is lived less formally and more intimately with many more entertainment options than gliding across the hardwoods in three-quarter time. Some residential ballrooms have been repurposed, yet in some homes, ballrooms are enjoying an afterlife.

Martha Turner, founder and co-president of Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty in Houston, Texas, can tick off a number of estates with private ballrooms still used in ways that honour their original intention. Examples span the decades. A modern Versailles-inspired château on the market for \$43 million – Houston's priciest ever – features a breathtaking ballroom among its many public spaces. The current homeowners use it for large-scale entertaining, concert performances and charity galas. And then there's a pair of would-be Fred and Gingers so passionate about dancing that when they couldn't find an existing residence for sale with a ballroom, they decided to construct a new one.

If you build it, they will rumba.

New York-based writer lyna Bort Caruso has contributed to *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *Newsday*, among others.

LUCCA

ITALY

(Right) One of the most beautiful historical villas in the area of Lucca. Lavish detail adorns the interior, while lush gardens and vast grounds including about 2,000 olive trees for oil production and wood, surround the exterior.

USD\$30,558,611 Property ID: L757J3
Tuscany Sotheby's International Realty
Daniela Sprea +39 055 0751888



LLOYD HARBOR

NEW YORK

(Right) A magnificent custom-built home with 380 feet of waterfront situated on 4.35 acres. This exceptional home offers grand living spaces with skilled craftsmanship throughout.

US\$12,000,000 Property ID: PXYYLH
Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty
Nikki Sturges +1 631 427 6600



CENTRAL BOHEMIA

CZECH REPUBLIC

(Below) The history of the Château Klecany dates back to the end of the 14th century. Following a complete renovation, Château Klecany represents a sensitive fusion of historical tradition and the latest technology. The interior of the château, whilst very generous in the size of its accommodation, is also sensibly structured and will satisfy even the most demanding requirements.

Price upon request Property ID: MQE4G2 | sir.com
Czech Republic Sotheby's International Realty
Vladimir Gulla +420257223376
Jitka Dankova +420724188540



HOUSTON

TEXAS

(Above) Secluded on approximately 2.5 wooded acres, this Neoclassical, close-in Memorial-area château is a masterpiece of luxury and refinement surrounded by private, park-like grounds. The ballroom/salon perfectly replicates the magnificent French palaces of the 18th century from the ornamental ceiling to the hardwood floor.

US\$43,00,000 Property ID: 26WZK | sir.com
Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty
Memorial Brokerage
Kellie Geitner +1 713 520 1981

GREENWICH

CONNECTICUT

(Left) Classic refinement describes this significant country estate. Fine architectural elements and well-crafted details create a timeless environment throughout the home. The grand ballroom/salon was added to this historic home in the 1930s along with an octagonal receiving room with wet bar.

US\$5,200,000 Property ID: 96BCJ4 | sir.com
Sotheby's International Realty
Greenwich Brokerage
Barbara O'Shea +1 203 869 4343