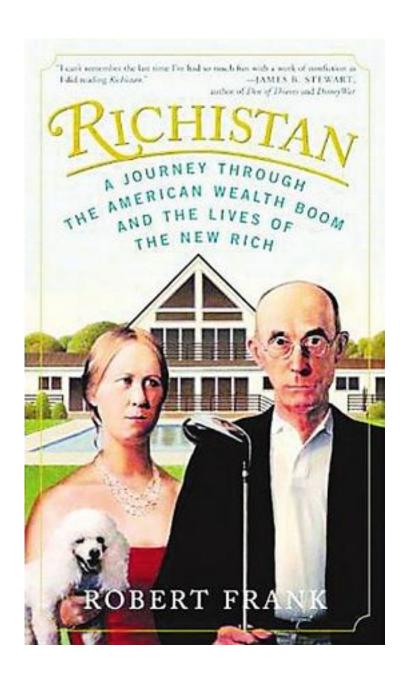
Richistan



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The rich have always been different from you and me, but this revealing and funny journey through "Richistan" entertainingly shows that they are more different than ever. Richistanis have 400-foot-yachts, 30,000-square-foot homes, house staffs of more than 100, and their own "arborists." They' re also different from Old Money, and have torn down blue-blood institutions to build their own shining empire.

Richistan is like the best travel writing, full of colorful and interesting stories providing insights into exotic locales. Robert Frank has been loitering on the docks of yacht marinas, pestering his way into charity balls, and schmoozing with real estate agents selling mega-houses to capture the story of the twenty-first century's nouveau riche:

House-training the rich. People with new wealth have to be taught how to act like, well, proper rich people. Just in the nick of time, there's been a boom in the number of newly trained butlers— "household managers"—who will serve just the right cabernet when a Richistani's new buddies from Palm Beach stop by.

"My boat is bigger than your boat." Only in Richistan would a 100-foot-boat be considered a dinghy. Personal pleasure craft have started to rival navy destroyers in size and speed. Richistan is also a place where friends make fun of those misers who buy the new girlfriend a mere Mercedes SLK.

"You want my money? Prove that you' re helping the needy!" Richistanis are not only consuming like crazy, they' re also shaking up the establishment's bureaucratic, slow-moving charity network, making lean, results-oriented philanthropy an important new driving force.

Move over, Christian Coalition. Richistanis are more Democratic than Republican, "fed up and not going to take it anymore," and willing to spend millions to get progressive-oriented politicians elected.

"My name is Mike and I'm rich." Think that money is the answer? Think again as Robert Frank explores the emotional complexities of wealth.

And, as Robert Frank reveals, there is not one Richistan but three: Lower, Middle, and Upper, each of which has its own levels and distinctions of wealth —the haves and the have-mores. The influence of Richistan and the Richistanis extends well beyond the almost ten million households that make up its population, as the nonstop quest for status and an insatiable demand for luxury goods reshapes the entire American economy.

(Source from Random House)

美国资深作家罗伯特·弗兰克即将推出的一本新书披露,美国百万富翁数目在过去10年增加了一倍,比全欧富翁加起来还多。最富的1%,却掌握着全美33%的财富。财富分布之悬殊为二战以来之最,而这些暴发户生活穷奢极侈的程度更是前所未见。

本版文字 艾丹

时报综合报道 美国作家罗伯特·弗兰克在他的新书《Richistan: AJourney Through the American Wealth Boomand the Lives of the New

Rich》(暂译:《富豪之地:美国财富暴增与新富豪生活之旅》)中指出,"美国现已成为生产百万富翁的世界领袖"。估计目前在美国,身家100万至1000万美元的共有750万户,家财1000万至1亿美元的有200万户,另有数以千计超级富豪更拥有1亿至10亿美元财产。在2004年,这些美国百万富翁共拥有30万亿美元财富,比中国、日本、巴西、俄罗斯和全欧洲的国内生产总值加起来还要多。

富豪之间也比富

对于这些新贵富豪来说,香车、美女、游艇、豪宅当然是他们字典里不可或缺的字眼。 弗兰克在书中介绍,游艇商从这些美国新贵那儿接定单都接到手软,若将订造的所有游 艇连起来,足有24公里长。除此之外,经营富豪圈、加入高档俱乐部,也不失为富豪们 彰显身份,结交朋友的好办法。这些超级富豪们可以在俱乐部找到背景相似的人,一起 谈论如何投资以及怎样处理自己庞大家产等问题。

不过,富豪之间的竞争、比较也相当激烈。一位不愿透露姓名的华尔街百万富翁对弗兰克说道:"当你去到汉普顿买下一栋昂贵的房子,却发现隔壁家的比你的更好,这时你就必须决定,到底是想要一栋更好的房子还是马上搬离那儿。"

Casel 威尼斯瓷器镶楼梯

63岁的曼哈顿富豪Ed·巴齐内,靠售卖陶器小饰物赚得一亿美元,是曼哈顿最大手花钱的富翁之一。巴齐内的五层豪宅内有一道旋转楼梯,竟然全部镶有人手雕刻的威尼斯瓷器,尽显主人的奢侈浮华。不过巴齐内似乎对这座豪宅仍不满意,并标出2850万美元的高价准备出售,想来是打算搬进更大更阔的住宅。

另外,巴齐内养的两只宠物猫也堪称无价宝,这两只名叫尼科拉斯和内森的小家伙来头不小,属于极其珍惜的欧西猫种,样子看上去就像两只小豹子。

Case2 女友每年10万脂粉费

55岁的顾问界大腕乔治·克卢切身家高达6000万美元,他每年都要在佛罗里达的富人聚居地棕榈滩悠哉游哉地度假,还经常会带着他那位貌似好莱坞艳星帕米拉·安德森的女友出席各种名人舞会。据悉,仅是女友的衣服和珠宝两项,克卢切每年都要花上10万美元。

克卢切的超豪作风显然也宠坏了他身边的女人。有报道称,他的前任女友在一次社交舞会上偶然发现另一个女人戴着跟她一样的项链,立刻红颜大怒,不顾项链高达3.5万英镑的天价,一把扯下还给克卢切,也同时宣告和他"再见"。

Case3豪宅如酒店佣仆上百人

木材和地产大亨提姆·布利克斯塞思在自己40岁正当壮年时,便决定退休开始享受人生。富豪似乎永远都有名车与豪宅的情结,布利克斯塞思也不例外。身家10亿美元的他拥有两部价值32万美元的顶级劳斯莱斯Phantom豪华房车,一辆蓝色一辆银黑相间,布利克斯塞思管这它们叫"饭店坐驾",因为他去酒店吃饭总会开这两辆车,这样泊车的服务生总会为他选一个最好的停车位。

布利克斯塞思的豪宅则俨如酒店度假村,其中连客房都建成独立别墅(每栋都可以住下普通人一家人),整整修了10栋用于接待客人的别墅,另外还有超大型的地下舞厅,后院配有私人高尔夫球场,豪宅前的喷水池仿照拉斯韦加斯Bellagio赌场的喷水池建成,而长长的车道用上法国香榭丽舍大道的同类街灯。如此庞大的家业当然需要专业团队管理,布利克斯塞思雇用了105人为自己专门打理豪宅庭院,饮食起居,其中光是厨师就请了10个。豪宅里使用的毛巾、浴袍以及职员制服上都印上专属于布利克斯塞思的标志

布利克斯塞思最爱去加利福尼亚州的胜地棕榈泉度假,在那儿他经常穿一条短裤外加一件夏威夷衬衫就上街闲逛,去星巴克喝喝咖啡,和几个朋友聊聊天。在谈到赚钱之道时,布利克斯塞思说道:"俗语说得好,万事开头难。要掘得第一桶金永远是最困难的,那之后就容易多了。"

五花八门豪奢要求

鳄鱼皮马桶

弗兰克在书中写道,据专为富豪定制马桶的埃利克·罗什透露,他就曾经接到一个订单,要求其将马桶坐厕用美洲鳄鱼皮制作,结果罗什真的将两块鳄鱼皮缝在一起做成座厕,花掉5000美元。

传送带运衫

弗兰克还参观过一个面积约为40平方米的巨型衣帽间,居然主人给衣帽间安装上了干洗店式的传输带,以便她可以存放数不清的晚装,并可方便快捷地找到想穿的衣服。

亿元俱乐部

富豪俱乐部的门槛通常高得吓人,比如曼哈顿私人俱乐部Met Circle就只考虑身家在1亿美元以上的人物。

(Source: http://house.sohu.com/news/2007-06-06/320729.html)

作者介绍:

Wall Street Journalist

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