Forbes 2017 Billionaires List: Meet The Richest People On The Planet

By Luisa Kroll and Kerry A. Dolan

It was a record year for the richest people on earth, as the number of billionaires jumped 13% to 2,043 from 1,810 last year, the first time ever that Forbes has pinned down more than 2,000 ten-figure fortunes. Their total net worth rose by 18% to $7.67 trillion, also a record. The change in the number of billionaires -- up 233 since the 2016 list -- was the biggest in the 31 years that Forbes has been tracking billionaires globally. Gainers since last year’s list outnumbered losers by more than three to one.

Read more: The Full List of The World's Billionaires

Bill Gates is the number one richest for the fourth year in a row, and the richest person in the world for 18 out of the past 23 years. He has a fortune of $86 billion, up from $75 billion last year. Amazon’s Jeff Bezos had the best year of any person on the planet, adding $27.6 billion to his fortune; now worth $72.8 billion, he moved into the top three in the world for the first time, up from number five a year ago.

Warren Buffett had the second-best year, and the biggest gain since Donald Trump was elected president in November 2016. His $14.8 billion jump in 12 months was enough for him to grab back the number two spot from Amancio Ortega, founder of Spanish clothing chain Zara. Ortega’s fortune was up $4.3 billion since last year, but he still fell to fourth in the world, unable to keep up with the outsize gains of others.
Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg moved up to number five for the first time, after his fortune rose $11.4 billion in 12 months. Meanwhile Carlos Slim Helu of Mexico, once the world’s richest man, fell to number six, the first time he’s been out of the top five in a dozen years.

There were 195 newcomers. Mainland China had the most new ten-figure fortunes with 76. The U.S. was second with 25. Notable newbies include Patagonia sportswear founder Yvon Chouinard; Viking Cruises founder Torstein Hagen of Norway; U.S. hedge fund tycoon Cliff Asness and two of his partners; and John and Patrick Collison, Irish citizens who cofounded San Francisco-based Stripe, which enables online payments. John Collison, age 26, is now the world’s youngest self-made billionaire, just two months younger than Snapchat’s Evan Spiegel. The Collisons are two of just four self-made billionaires in their 20s (the other two are the Snapchat cofounders). There are 56 billionaires under age 40, down from 66 last year, after some aged out and others dropped below the $1 billion mark.

New Australian billionaire Manny Stul may not be a familiar name yet, but his popular Shopkins, grocery-inspired plastic collectibles with names like Kris P. Lettuce and Posh Pear, are a huge hit with American kids.

There are also 15 new self-made women, all but one of whom are from Asia Pacific. That includes 10 from China and the first ever from Vietnam, Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao, who took her budget airline, VietJet Air, public in February 2017. The sole American self-made woman newcomer is Thai Lee, who was born in Thailand but moved to the U.S. as a child and now runs tech reseller SHI, reportedly the nation’s largest woman-owned business by sales. Altogether there are 227 women on list, including 10 who cofounded or own businesses with a spouse or a brother and thus...
share the fortune.

The U.S. continues to have more billionaires than any other nation, with a record 565, up from 540 a year ago. China is catching up with 319. (Hong Kong has another 67, and Macau 1.) Germany has the third most with 114 and India, with 101, the first time it has had more than 100, is fourth.

Seventy-eight people fell off the list, including 33 from China, 7 Americans and 9 who are still super wealthy but share their wealth among extended family members and therefore are not eligible for these ranks. Additionally, 20 billionaires died in the past year, including Enterprise car rental founder Jack Taylor and Michael Ilitch, who launched Little Caesar’s pizza with his wife, Marian.

Go here for the full list of all the world's billionaires.

**METHODOLOGY**

The *Forbes* Billionaires list is a snapshot of wealth taken on **February 17, 2017**; we used stock prices and exchange rates from around the world to calculate net worths. Some fortunes have changed considerably since then.

We list individuals rather than multigenerational families who share large fortunes, though we include wealth belonging to a billionaire’s spouse and children if that person is the founder of the fortune. For daily updates of net worths, go to [www.forbes.com/real-time-billionaires](http://www.forbes.com/real-time-billionaires).

**Wealth Editors:** Luisa Kroll and Kerry A. Dolan

**Deputy Editor:** Keren Blankfeld

**Country Editors:** Graham Button, Russell Flannery, Naazneen Karmali, John Koppisch, Nathan Vardi

**Wealth Team:** Angel Au-Yeung, Elena Berezanskaya, Maggie Chen, Grace Chung, Max Jedeur-Palmgren, Noah Kirsch, Andrea Murphy, Chase Peterson-Withorn, Ryan Salchert, Katia Savchuk, Daniela Sirtori-Cortina, Chloe Sorvino, Katie Taylor, Michela Tindera, Kate Vinton, Jennifer Wang

**Reporters:** Forbes Indonesia, Forbes Mexico, Forbes Middle East, Forbes Russia, Forbes Turkey, Dan Alexander, Kim Bode, Deniz Cam, Muhammad Cohen, Antoine Gara, Ricardo Geromel, Christopher Helman, Jane Ho, Neerja Pawha Jetley, Arooba Khan, Elaine Mao, Zina Moukheiber, Anuradha Raghunathan, Leonard Schoenberger, Deborah Steinborn, Jessica Tan

**Research:** Susan Radlauer

**Design, Photography, and Style:** Merrilee Barton, Charles Brucaliere, Anton Klusner, Bob Mansfield, Kristine Gentile Smith, Robyn Selman, Gail Toivanen

**Database:** Ariana Santana, Dmitri Slavinsky, Louie Torres

**Additional Reporting:** Forbes China, Forbes Czech Republic, Forbes Kazakhstan, Forbes Poland, Forbes Romania, Susan Adams, Vuri Aksyonov, Kurt Badenhausen, Abram Brown, Kathleen Chaykowski, Shu-Ching Jean Chen, Daniel Fisher, Sean Kilachand, Alex Konrad, Nicole Lindsay, Ryan Mac, Jan McCallum, Joann Muller, Johannes Musial, Suzanne Nam, Lan Anh Nguyen, Clare O’Connor, Wendy Pugh, Natalie Robehmed, Matt Schifrin, Lucinda Schmidt, Tatiana Serafin, James Simms, Brian Solomon, Neha Soni, Derek Xiao, Xiang Wang

**Product:** Uyen Cao, Kai Hecker, Daniel Kleinman, Jordan Lebeau, Ariana Santana, Dmitri Slavinsky, Louie Torres

**Video:** Leah Bottone, Nick Graham, Matt Kang, Michael Russo, Margaret Leigh Sinrod, Kirsten Taggart

**Acknowledgments:** Special thanks to LW Hospitality Advisors, Orbis by Bureau Van Dijk, Privco, Real Capital
Analytics, Euromonitor International and dozens of other experts who helped us with our reporting and valuations:

Eric Anton, HFF; Farha Aslam, Stephens Inc.; Claudio Aspesi, Sanford C. Bernstein; Michael Braunnoltz, Prestige Property Group; James Cahill, Costa Rica Invest; Keith Calder, Snoot Entertainment LLC; Paola Carboni, Equita Sim; Galen Chase, Chase Brother Properties; Jeremy Cunnington, Euromonitor; Cushman & Wakefield; Karl Danielsson, Karl Danielsson Egendomar; Martin Deboo, Jefferies; Rommel Dionisio, Wunderlich Securities; Thomas Druyen, Sigmund Freud PrivatUniversitat; Euromonitor; Nicklas Fharm, SEB; Kristian Gravenor; Green Street Advisors; Alexander Hall, Horwath HTL; Vineyard Intelligence; Jeffrey Harwood, Oriel Securities; Matt Hegarty, Daily Racing Form; Lars Hevreng, Danske Bank; Donna Hood Crecca, Technomic; International Consortium of Investigative Journalists; Julien Jarmoszko, S&P Capital IQ; Brian Ker, CBRE Canada; Daniel Lesser, LW Hospitality Advisors; Mark Lester, Jones Lang LaSalle; Staffan Lijlekvist, Tornstaden; Jack McCabe, Jack McCabe research; Michelin; Jonathan Miller, Miller Samuel; Maarten Mosselman; Diego Moyo-Ocampo, IHS Country Risk; Muskoka Tourism; Claudia Norrgren, Vessels Value; Bill Ostrove, Forecast International; Micheal Pachter, Webush Securities; Richard Parkes, Deutsche Bank; Pitchbook; Richard Pollak, Barrington Research; Matthias Queck, Lebensmittel Zeitung; John Ransom, Raymond James; Real Capital Analytics; Thomas Roeb, Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg; Erik Sandstedt, Handelsbanken; Andrew Sangster, Hotel Analyst; Patrick Scholes, SunTrust Robinson Humphrey; Martin Schreiber, Zurcher Kantonalbank; Bill Selesky, Argus Research; SNL Kagan; Lisa Springer, Singular Research; Duane Stanford, Beverage Digest; STR; Ole G Stenhagen, SEB; Surmontes BH Inmobiliaria; Tim Swannie, Home Hunts; Paul Swinand, Morningstar; Matt Tiampo, Craig-Hallum Capital; Stephen Volkman, Jefferies; Kwame Webb, Morningstar; David Windley, Jefferies; Jerry Witler, Northwest Forestry Services; Marcus Yaniv, Diamond Investment & Intelligence Center; Paul Yong, DBS Bank; Paul Zimnisky, independent diamond analyst; Konrad Zomer, ABN AMRO Bank.