# Winning an Omaze mansion comes with costly and unexpected challenges, warn experts



We British have a well-documented obsession with homes. We find ourselves endlessly scrolling through property listings on websites like Rightmove, indulging in reality television shows about the housing market, or longing for the glamorous properties highlighted in publications. It is no surprise, then, that the concept of winning a lavish mansion through a raffle, as offered by companies like Omaze, is incredibly alluring. The prospect of a fully furnished, multi-million-pound home can easily lead many to invest time—and money—into the dream.

Omaze's current offering of a £5 million mansion in the Cotswolds is a prime example of this temptation, promising to include not just the property but also a substantial cash prize and a guaranteed charitable donation of £1 million to Guide Dogs for the Blind. Yet, while many entertain the fantasy of living in such luxury—imagine hosting lavish soirées or filling vast en-suite bedrooms with friends and family—reality often paints a starkly different picture. Liz Jones, a seasoned writer who has made her own forays into rural life, reflects on her personal journey in leaving the urban sprawl behind for the countryside, only to confront a barrage of challenges that turned her aspirations into a “living nightmare.”

Hailing from her experiences, Jones highlights issues that anyone considering such a windfall should ponder. From spiralling maintenance costs and unpredictable living conditions to the often-ignored reality of losing one’s pastoral dream, the picture is far from rosy. In her first country home, a farmhouse in Somerset, she encountered myriad frustrations, from heating issues to invasive local wildlife. Critics have echoed her sentiments, noting that other winners of Omaze homes have rapidly resold their prizes, citing burdensome upkeep as a primary motivator. A recent investigation revealed that one Cornwall winner chose to sell the property within eight weeks, unable to bear the financial strain that came with ownership, while another prize was sold shortly after due to unanticipated maintenance requirements.

The house raffle industry, buoyed by the allure of grandeur, is not without its controversies. Questions have arisen regarding the transparency of such initiatives, particularly concerning how much of the proceeds genuinely benefit charity. Some critics argue that companies like Omaze retain a significant portion of the funds, raising concerns about the clarity and ethics of their operations. According to a report by the Lotteries Council, there is a growing call for such prize draws to be regulated more like traditional charity lotteries. Many consumers are unaware of the differing regulations that apply, which may inhibit a fully informed choice regarding charitable contributions.

Furthermore, potential buyers—whether of a raffle ticket or a traditional property—may overlook the practical consequences of owning a mansion. The allure of grandeur often glosses over the realities of insuring a large home, maintaining expansive grounds, and dealing with neighbours or community dynamics. Rural life can present social challenges, as Jones herself discovered when faced with hostility from local residents, particularly in her later life within the Yorkshire Dales. Such experiences have left many winners of luxury homes questioning whether the dream is worth the cost.

In truth, owning a luxurious property often transforms from a dream into a demanding responsibility, requiring both time and financial resources that most winners are ill-prepared for. With tales of abandoned homes and rapidly resold properties, the excitement of winning a mansion can quickly dissipate, shedding light on the sobering reality of rural living. For those with the means to hire a team of caretakers, perhaps the dream can endure. For others, as Jones poignantly notes, one may merely find themselves trapped in an expensive prison of their own making, forced to reconsider what it truly means to have and to hold.

Ultimately, as the latest draw for the Cotswolds mansion concludes, it's worth reflecting on the age-old adage: be careful what you wish for. The glitz and glamour of rural living may seem enticing, yet in its pursuit, many have found themselves confronted with demands that far exceed the initial allure.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14752957/winners-Omaze-Cotswolds-house-living-nightmare-lurking-LIZ-JONES.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.propertyinvestortoday.co.uk/breaking-news/2021/06/house-raffles--are-they-a-bargain-of-a-lifetime-or-just-a-con/), [[5]](https://www.metro.co.uk/2023/10/20/why-has-almost-every-omaze-dream-home-been-put-up-for-sale-19406184/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14752957/winners-Omaze-Cotswolds-house-living-nightmare-lurking-LIZ-JONES.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.propertyinvestortoday.co.uk/breaking-news/2021/06/house-raffles--are-they-a-bargain-of-a-lifetime-or-just-a-con/), [[6]](https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/omaze-winners-who-deserted-mega-31838209)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/report-calls-for-prize-draws-such-as-omaze-to-be-regulated-like-charity-lotteries.html), [[6]](https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/omaze-winners-who-deserted-mega-31838209), [[7]](https://www.cityam.com/win-a-dream-house-for-15-how-omaze-found-controversial-success-in-the-uk/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.devonlive.com/whats-on/what-happened-omaze-luxury-homes-8717052), [[5]](https://www.metro.co.uk/2023/10/20/why-has-almost-every-omaze-dream-home-been-put-up-for-sale-19406184/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14752957/winners-Omaze-Cotswolds-house-living-nightmare-lurking-LIZ-JONES.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/omaze-winners-who-deserted-mega-31838209)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14752957/winners-Omaze-Cotswolds-house-living-nightmare-lurking-LIZ-JONES.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.propertyinvestortoday.co.uk/breaking-news/2021/06/house-raffles--are-they-a-bargain-of-a-lifetime-or-just-a-con/> - This article examines the pros and cons of house raffles, focusing on companies like Omaze. It highlights concerns about transparency, with some critics alleging that Omaze retains a significant portion of the proceeds, leaving a smaller percentage for charity. The piece also discusses potential issues with the properties offered, such as undisclosed flooding problems in a Cotswolds home, and the high running costs associated with maintaining large properties. The author calls for greater transparency and regulation in the house raffle industry to protect consumers and ensure fair charitable contributions.
3. <https://www.devonlive.com/whats-on/what-happened-omaze-luxury-homes-8717052> - This article explores the fate of luxury homes won through Omaze prize draws in the UK. It details instances where winners, despite receiving mortgage-free properties, chose to sell them due to high maintenance costs and other challenges. For example, a winner in Cornwall sold the property within eight weeks, citing unaffordable upkeep. The piece sheds light on the financial and practical implications of owning such high-value homes, suggesting that the reality of maintaining them can be more burdensome than anticipated.
4. <https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/report-calls-for-prize-draws-such-as-omaze-to-be-regulated-like-charity-lotteries.html> - A report by the Lotteries Council advocates for regulating large-scale prize draws, like those conducted by Omaze, under the same framework as charity lotteries. The report highlights concerns that the current unregulated status of such prize draws could undermine the viability of traditional charity lotteries, which are subject to stricter rules. It also points out that some members of the public are unaware of the regulatory differences between prize draws and charity lotteries, leading to potential consumer confusion and reduced charitable contributions.
5. <https://www.metro.co.uk/2023/10/20/why-has-almost-every-omaze-dream-home-been-put-up-for-sale-19406184/> - This article investigates why many winners of Omaze's dream home prize draws have chosen to sell their properties shortly after winning. It presents several cases where winners, despite receiving mortgage-free homes, opted to sell due to high maintenance costs, concerns about the property's location, or personal financial considerations. The piece suggests that while winning a luxury home appears appealing, the associated responsibilities and expenses can be overwhelming, leading many to prefer the cash equivalent.
6. <https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/omaze-winners-who-deserted-mega-31838209> - This article reports on instances where winners of Omaze's luxury home prize draws have abandoned their properties within months of winning. It highlights issues such as high running costs, maintenance challenges, and concerns about the property's location, including risks like flooding and coastal erosion. The piece suggests that while winning a multimillion-pound mansion seems like a dream, the reality of ownership can be fraught with unforeseen difficulties, leading many winners to sell or abandon their prizes.
7. <https://www.cityam.com/win-a-dream-house-for-15-how-omaze-found-controversial-success-in-the-uk/> - This article delves into Omaze's business model and its controversial success in the UK. It discusses how Omaze has rapidly grown by offering luxury homes as prizes in exchange for charitable donations. The piece also touches on the regulatory landscape, noting that Omaze operates as a 'prize draw' rather than a lottery, which subjects it to different regulations. Critics argue that this distinction allows Omaze to operate with less oversight, raising concerns about consumer protection and the ethical implications of its business practices.