



Gina Gershon
The actress had a Lady Gaga moment at camp. **M12**

MANSION

\$45 Million
A rare spec house lists on Pebble Beach Golf Links. **M3**



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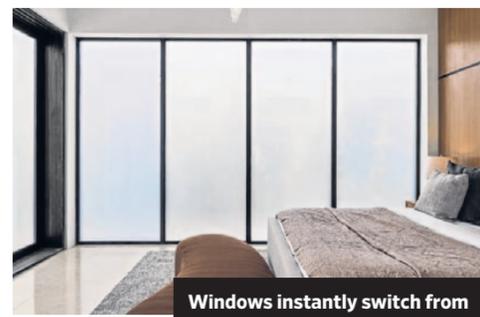
Friday, February 13, 2026 | **M1**



Fireplace surround changes color when a threat is detected.

How to Secure a Megamansion

Anxiety over high-profile violence has the wealthy spending big on armed security, bunkers and even moats to keep themselves safe from intruders



Windows instantly switch from clear to opaque.



100-foot long, 7-foot deep moat

Cameras

Casino-grade cameras with AI-powered facial-and-vehicle recognition capabilities

Planters



Sour orange trees with 4-inch spikes

Safe room



Above, the heavily secured home of David Widerhorn in Scottsdale, Ariz. The safe room has a 2,000-pound door and an air-filtration system built to keep out nuclear, biological and chemical contaminants.

By KATHERINE CLARKE AND E.B. SOLOMONT

British music producer Alex Grant was living in an under-construction mega-mansion in Los Angeles when, one morning shortly after 9 a.m., an armed intruder burst into the home.

"He came in and we had a tussle," recalled Grant, formerly known as Alex Da Kid. Grant managed to call his manager, who phoned the police. Soon, officers and helicopters were on the scene.

He briefly considered abandoning the project after the 2017 break-in but ultimately finished the 24,000-square-foot home, which has eight pools, a car elevator and a nightclub. But he doubled down on security features, installing a guard house, tall gates and a security system

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Why the Wood-Burning Fireplace Is Disappearing

High-end homebuyers love a crackling fire, but new obstacles mean building one is becoming a 'vanishing art'

By JESSICA FLINT

A SOUGHT-AFTER FEATURE in high-end homes has long been a primitive void in the heart of the great room: the wood-burning fireplace.

"There is absolutely a preference toward wood-burning fireplaces, particularly in luxury homes," says Bill Fister, general manager at the Chimney Doctor, a Colorado chimney-inspection and fireplace-repair company.

But between tightening restrictions, the age-old labor of maintenance and homeowners with no experience at the hearth, the traditional wood-burner risks transi-



A home in Park City, Utah, on the market for \$12.75 million has 11 working fireplaces.

tioning from a household staple to a high-status relic.

"Wood-burning fires are a vanishing art," says Park City-based interior designer Kristina Lawrence. She estimates that while 90% of her clients want a wood-burning fireplace in theory, only about 50% of her projects include one. "People realize it's a hassle, or they are simply not allowed."

A fireplace is consistently among the most-searched amenities by home buyers nationwide, according to Zillow. But while convenience leans toward the automated ease of gas, many wealthy homeowners prefer the sensory trifecta of real fire: the scent, the rhythmic crackling and the living warmth that a faux flame simply can't mimic. "The more high-end the property is, the more the homeowner typically wants it," says Katherine Koriakin of Wyoming's GYDE Architects.

Choosing a wood-burning fireplace is a lifestyle choice, says Bill

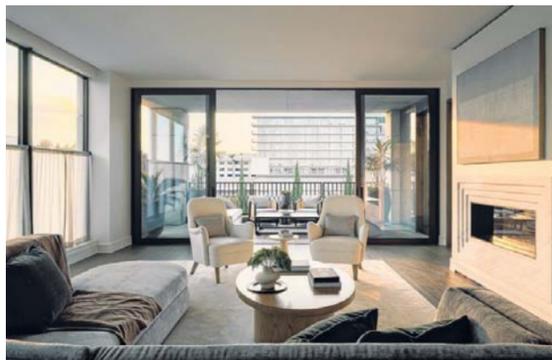
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MANSION



24/7 armed guard

All food and package deliveries go through multiple layers of vetting at Rosewood Residences Beverly Hills.



Continued from page M7
looked into the viability of installing a complex camera and laser system that could sense any movement on the perimeter of the property, including on the water. Bay Area real-estate agent Steve Mavromihalis of Compass said he has clients with multiple residences who send security teams ahead to survey their property before they arrive to ensure it is safe. When Mavromihalis shows high-end homes, he assumes everything he says and does is being monitored. "It's assumed like the sun's coming up," he said.

The fortified life
Hertzberg said an increas-

ing number of his clients are gravitating toward gated communities and are asking questions about whether certain neighborhoods have roving security guards and license-plate readers. Particularly in demand are island communities like Miami's Indian Creek because it's wholly owned by the residents, meaning they don't have to allow outsiders onto their streets. Bay Area cities and towns including Palo Alto, Atherton and Woodside already use license-plate readers for neighborhood surveillance, as does Las Vegas. Miami has said it will install cameras this

summer to combat crime. At Rosewood Residences Beverly Hills, developers tapped an outside security firm, Arsec Group, to provide a 24/7 armed guard for the project. High-net-worth Californians are particularly concerned about robberies and burglaries, said Mikey Arana, founder of Arsec, who was formerly an in-house security guard for popstar Justin Bieber. "They'll be out in Beverly Hills having dinner wearing some jewelry or driving a nice vehicle, then they'll be followed home," he said. Arana said many of his clients previously shied away from arming security guards. Now, they concede it might be necessary. "Sometimes, unfortunately, the only way to stop violent action is with violent response," he said. The armed security guard patrols the premises with a 9-millimeter pistol strapped to his leg and observes the property via infrared cameras that are dotted around the perimeter of the site. San Francisco tech entrepreneur Kevin Hartz said he and his high net-worth peers in California are increasingly focused on their security. "They're rethinking how they can be safe in

the chaotic, strange world that we're in today," he said. Hartz said he co-founded his security company, Sauron, in 2024 after being spooked by an attempted break-in at his home in San Francisco. The person first rang the doorbell before making his way around the house trying some of the doors and windows. When he couldn't gain access, he went to Hartz's next-door neighbor's home, where he tried to push through the front door. He was arrested by police. "That could have been us," Hartz said. The Sauron system, which has only been launched in beta across a few homes in the Bay Area, will differ from other security systems in that it includes deterrence strategies, not only response, said Yvonne McLaughlin, head of client experience at the company. For instance, if it senses an intruder, it could include a feature that automatically triggers sounds, such as dogs barking or police sirens coming closer. Hartz declined to discuss the system's cost. The company sends teams to clients' homes to take drone footage and photographs and then produces a 3D model to identify security vulnerabilities. It uses Lidar technology—rapid, pulsed laser beams to measure precise distances—and 4K cameras to keep tabs on the property. Charlie Garcia, founder of R360, a network for centimillionaires, said he and many of his organization's



SECURITY, ON WHEELS

As a step up from armored black SUVs, an Arkansas-company retrofits Land Rover Defenders with electrified door handles, steel panels and side-view mirrors that shoot pepper spray. Helderburg's Bellatrix model, which starts at around \$658,000, also has a smoke screen function to obscure the vehicle's whereabouts. "Being a James Bond buff, it was like 'What would Q want in his armored vehicle?'" said founder Paul Potratz.

members also use Global Guardian, a private-security and emergency-subscription service designed to manage both physical and cyber risk. He said his family is particularly sensitive to security issues because his wife, who is originally from Ecuador, was kidnapped decades ago in a ransom scheme. "I have a button on my phone. If I touch it, within 45 seconds I get a call from one of their command centers asking me if everything is okay," he said. A spokesperson for

Global Guardian declined to comment on the cost of their services. During a routine cyber audit conducted by the company, Garcia recently learned that one of his children's friends had posted a picture to Instagram of the contents of Garcia's home safe in Fort Lauderdale, which included precious metals. The family quickly made sure the photo was removed. ▶ See video of David Widernhorn's ultra-secure mansion at WSJ.com/RealEstate.



SECURITY, ON FOUR LEGS

Some wealthy individuals are spending up to \$175,000 on protection dogs. At the 170-acre Svalinn Ranch in Montana, Kim Greene breeds dogs that are a cross between German Shepherds, Dutch Shepherds and Belgian Malinois. Training begins at eight weeks, and they are delivered to their owners at around 2 years old. They are highly trained and well-mannered, and "the presence of a trained, thinking, discerning, obedient animal is a deterrent. Full stop," said Greene, who has bred more than 400 dogs to date.

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870 United Nations Plaza #37/38A | \$4,000,000
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Robert Taub | M: 646.541.7215 | robtaub@bhhsnyp.com



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