

THE HOME FRONT

PRIVATE PROPERTIES

BY CHRISTINA S.N. LEWIS

Hefners List L.A. Mansion For \$28 Million

Hugh Hefner and his wife, **Kimberley Conrad Hefner**, who have lived in adjacent mansions since their 1999 separation, are listing Ms. Hefner's Los Angeles home for \$28 million.

In Holmby Hills, the house stands next door to the Playboy mansion, Mr. Hefner's massive, Tudor-style party-friendly home since the 1970s. Ms. Hefner, 1989's Playmate of the Year, says she and Mr. Hefner bought the house about 10 years ago so that she could raise their two sons there, who are now college-age. There's a door in the wall between the two properties for easier access back and forth. "You know his-and-hers towels? We have his-and-hers houses," she says. (Above, the couple in 1989.)



The 1929 brick and wood English manor-style house, on 2.3 acres, measures 7,300 square feet and has a pool and a three-car garage. There's extensive original wood paneling and a hand-carved staircase. "I get along with my former girlfriends and wives, or try to," says Mr. Hefner, 82 years old. Playboy Enterprises owns the Playboy mansion, but Mr. Hefner owns the house across the street, which he calls the Playmate Mansion. Ms. Hefner says she is looking for another house. Joyce Rey and Stacy Gottula, of Coldwell Banker Previews International, have the Holmby Hills listing.

For Maui House, Golfer Furyk Asks \$7.4 Million



In Hawaii, golfer **Jim Furyk** is asking \$7.5 million for his custom-built contemporary house in Maui.

The 38-year-old 13-time winner on the PGA Tour is known for an unusual looping golf swing. (His father, Mike, is his swing coach.) The five-bedroom single-level house was completed in 2005 and measures 6,400 square feet. In gated Plantation Estates, which has 76 home sites, the house has views of the ocean, mountains and the championship Plantation golf course—site of the annual Mercedes-Benz Championship, which Mr. Furyk won in 2001. There's also an extensive outdoor living area.

Mr. Furyk hired **Rick Ryniak**, who's designed houses for **Carlos Santana** and **Kelsey Grammer**, to design a home for the golfer, his wife, **Tabitha**, and their two children. Roy and Betty Sakamoto, of Sakamoto Properties Ltd., have the listing.

Relics of Rothko

A duplex in a small 19th-century New York building where painter **Mark Rothko** once lived is for sale for \$2.75 million.



The loft (above), in an 1843 building that was once a stable, is on Shinbone Alley, a narrow, privately owned street in the downtown NoHo neighborhood. The owner, artist **Robert Wilson**, has lived in the building since the 1960s, initially as a squatter. He later established ownership rights and took the building co-op. There's a spiral staircase, an open kitchen, a wood-burning fireplace and a large master suite.

Abstract painter Rothko lived in the building for roughly one year during his rocky 1930s marriage to **Edith Sachar**, according to a biography by **James E.B. Breslin**. Rothko died in 1970 at age 66. **Debra Duneier**, of Corcoran Group, has the listing.

► See photos of the homes featured here, at WSJ.com/RealEstate.

Views, Palms, Pets and Robots

A scientist dad creates a high-tech playground in his Coral Gables waterfront compound

BY CHRISTINA S.N. LEWIS
Coral Gables, Fla.

A 20,000-SQUARE-FOOT contemporary estate with a cobalt blue tiled roof, palm trees and a verdant lawn fronts an inlet of Biscayne Bay. The only hint as to what's inside: a 14-foot dome, housing what is surely the neighborhood's only professional-grade telescope.

Through the home's cherry-wood doors is a seventh-grade tech nut's dream come true. Against a backdrop of Brazilian hardwood and dazzling water views is a wood and metal workshop, a chemistry laboratory with fume hood, more than 15 computers and an innumerable assortment of objects including a blue tank of sulfur hexafluoride and a Geiger counter. There's also a recording studio, a darkroom and artifacts from the U.S. and Russian space programs.

In the narrow observatory, Tom Bales, a slight 60-year-old man wearing a blue aloha shirt, hops onto a counter and starts pulling at the ceiling—a rotating copper dome—directing his \$75,000 telescope towards Venus. In the craft room there are several partially built robots. "Most houses around here are built for entertaining," says Mr. Bales, a scientist and inventor. "Our house is full of hobbies and projects and things in progress."

Each year, the Baleses host "Camp Star House," when families pitch about 25 tents on the lawn and roast marshmallows over the fire pit (formerly a helipad). Rockets are sometimes launched off the dock. "Imagine if the coolest, nerdiest guy you ever met had an unlimited budget to build an amazing house with total disregard for anything at all that would constrain his vision," says Kevin Smith, Mr. Bales's business partner, who lives about five houses down the road.

Raised in Pensacola, Fla., Mr. Bales graduated from MIT in 1970, was drafted, served two years in the Army and then entered engineering and research. In the early 1990s, he and three partners sold a medical instruments company, Symbiosis, to American Home Products Corp. for \$175 million. Mr. Bales holds more than 80 patents for things like hybrid-propulsion launch boosters and flexible biopsy forceps.

In 1993, flush with proceeds from the sale, the Baleses purchased this peninsula of land for \$2.7 million. Even though sales are slow, asking prices in this district haven't yet fallen: Facing the Bales house across the waterway, a huge Asian-inspired house is under construction. On a lot half the size of the Baleses', it's asking \$24.5 million.

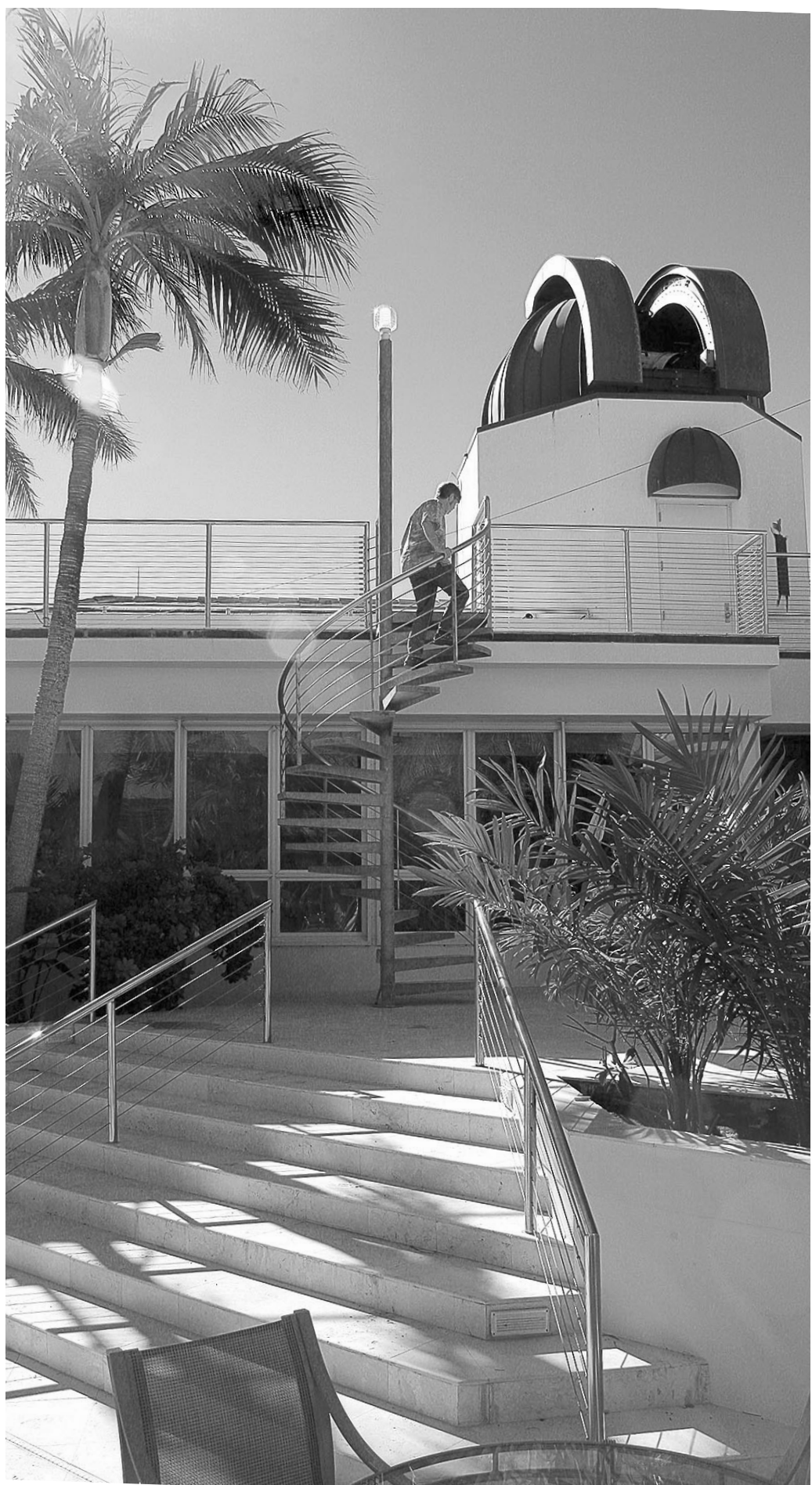
The family then began building their dream house. "It ended up getting a bit out of hand," said Mr. Bales. "There are 14 toilets, which is sort of embarrassing." When the house was built, construction costs were estimated at roughly \$150 per square foot—but Mr. Bales observes it ended up costing roughly double or triple that.

At the end of a cul-de-sac, the two-story stucco house is designed as a series of interconnected modules. The pool area includes a shallow wading pool, a 5-foot-deep swimming pool and a hot tub. The home's interior architecture is a mix of modern, arts and crafts and traditional styles. The custom wine room is full of French Bordeaux, dessert wines and old Ports.

But the most noticeable feature of the Bales house is the stuff. The dining room is dominated by a life-size papier-mâché Egyptian sarcophagus, their youngest son's school project. Children's artwork is pasted to most of the kitchen cabinets; mail and magazines cover the blue granite island and the adjacent breakfast-room table. The family owns seven pets: two hamsters and three turtles, a cat named Pikachu and a gecko named Ricardo.

"I know it's cluttered and crazy, but I love my house," says Constance Ryan, 53, a former operating-room nursing director who stands several inches taller than her husband. The least cluttered room is the little-used living room, with its large glass windows overlooking the bay.

When he's not working as research chief for a medical devices company he co-founded, Mr.



Alex Quesada for The Wall Street Journal

Bales is busy with the Boy Scouts, as well as serving on the board for his sons' elementary school, as a robotics team coach and as a sponsor of various science-education projects. Mr. Bales says his son Gregory, 10, likes taking apart old printers while William, 16, wins awards for his BattleBots. Max, 14, loves videogames.

On this recent chilly Saturday morning, the Baleses opened their home to the local Cub Scout troop who were making cars for the Pine-wood Derby, an annual racing event taking place that afternoon. At 9 a.m. Ms. Ryan, Mr. Bales's wife, sported goggles and was using a band saw. "I think this house is the funnest place," said crime novelist James Grippando (of the Jack Swyteck series), watching his son paint his car (which went on to win third place). "Every time you walk through the door you find yourself saying, wow, I've never done that before."

There is one issue with owning a home crammed with gadgets: At any one time at least 20 things need fixing. Inside the double-level

TOP: Tom Bales scales the steps to his pool house, situated on top of his observatory. 'Imagine if the coolest, nerdiest guy you ever met had an unlimited budget,' says business partner Kevin Smith.

wood-paneled library, Mr. Bales discovers that his GPS digital clock, which calculates the time based on the earth's position, is significantly off. The home has over a dozen timepieces ranging from antique grandfather clocks to cuckoo clocks.

"Little things like that made me crazy at first and then I realized it's pointless," said Mr. Bales as he wound an antique grandfather clock. "You're never going to have everything working in a house like this."

► See more photos from Tom Bales's house, at WSJ.com/RealEstate.

RELATIVE VALUES | License to Dive

Houses near some of the world's top diving spots—with ocean views to match



MERMAID BEACH, Australia A\$9.5 million (US\$6.2 million)

10,764 square feet, four bedrooms, five baths, two powder rooms

DETAILS: 54 miles south of Brisbane on the Gold Coast, this house is one unit in a three-story beachfront duplex known as Villa Pantai. This unit consists of half of the second floor, the entire third floor and a rooftop terrace with pool, heated spa and entertaining area.

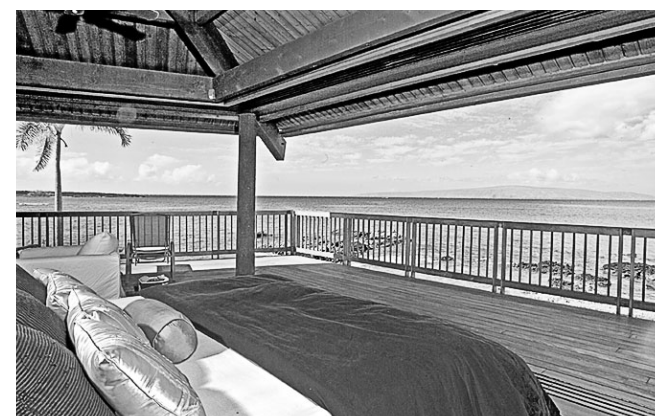
DIVING: The coal ship S.S. Alberta, which sank in 1890 in shallow water, provides a good place for beginners and for skin diving. Elsewhere, Nine Mile Reef is known for its visibility—and its sharks.

NONDIVING OPTION: Sea World marine park with its shark lagoons and tiny fairy penguins; hiking at Tamborine Mountain

TODAY'S FORECAST: Showers, 80 degrees

SOURCE: Michael Kollosche, Ray White Broadbeach, +61-411-188-865; michael.kollosche@raywhite.com

► See a slideshow about these homes, at WSJ.com/RealEstate.



MAUI, Hawaii \$6.5 million

3,000 square feet, two bedrooms, 3 1/2 bathrooms

DETAILS: On a promontory surrounded on three sides by the Pacific Ocean, this 30-year-old octagonal house, on a 10,977-square-foot lot, has a large fish tank inside; there's an outdoor saline pool. Remodeled five years ago, the home is in the Ahihi-Kina'u Bay and Nature Preserve, next to one of the island's premier snorkeling and dive sites.

DIVING: Divers will share the waters with humpback whales and green sea turtles. The Maui Dive Shop is about four miles away.

NONDIVING OPTION: Nearby Makena Stables offers horseback rides into the foothills of Haleakala volcano.

TODAY'S FORECAST: Partly cloudy, 73 degrees

SOURCE: Thomas Muldoon and Sean Crowley, Coldwell Banker Island Properties, 866-476-MAUI, info@tomandsean.com



KEY LARGO, Fla. \$6.25 Million

4,440 square feet, three bedrooms, 4 1/2 bathrooms

DETAILS: This oceanfront house, in the gated Ocean Reef Club community, has an elevator and comes with a guest house and heated lap pool and spa.

DIVING: Off the key are the remains of Spiegel Grove, a 510-foot Navy ship scuttled in 2002 to help create a new coral reef. The World War II Benwood Wreck is now home to grunt and porkfish. The Dry Rocks reef has a famed sunken bronze statue of Christ of the Abyss.

NONDIVING OPTION: Swimming with dolphins and sport-fishing for bonefish and trout.

TODAY'S FORECAST: Partly cloudy, 81 degrees

SOURCE: Russell Post, Sotheby's International Realty, 305-367-2027
—Sushil Cheema