

wonders, “what’s the company that will lead the boom? What’s the Netscape of green innovation?”

A BLEARY-EYED AL GORE needs another cup of coffee, and no wonder. It’s a Tuesday morning, and four days earlier he and his wife, Tipper, were up into the wee hours in San Francisco waiting to learn if he’d won the Nobel. (He was cited “for informing the world of the dangers posed by climate change.”) They then flew home to Nashville after a stopover in Phoenix, where Gore spoke to an advertising industry convention about Current TV, the youth-oriented cable television network he co-founded in 2002. Over the weekend, Tipper threw him a party with 150 or so of their closest friends.

Country singers Kathy Mattea and Kim Richey preformed at the bash, at Nashville’s Park Café. “It was a good weekend,” Gore says with a grin.

Now Gore, Doerr, and Blood are gathered on the back patio of Gore’s \$2.3 million, 10,000-square-foot home in the Belle Meade section of Nashville. That’s the mansion—to Gore’s critics it’s always a mansion—that tagged the former Vice President as an energy hog. He’s quick to point out that the house generates electricity from more than 30 solar photovoltaic panels on the roof as well as seven 300-foot geothermal wells in the ground, and that it has been certified as an energy-efficient home by the U.S. Green Building Council. After offering everyone coffee or bottled water (hey, no one’s perfect), Gore explains why he’s combining his advocacy work with a profit motive. “We want to give a big shout-out, though that’s not the corporate term, to every inventor and entrepreneur and idea generator at the micro, macro, systems-integration, and global-thinker level to create with this alliance a clearinghouse for the identification and selection of the most promising ideas on the planet for quickly solving this climate crisis,” he says, without pausing to take a breath. Then, clearly catching himself in a moment of speechifying, Gore boils it down: “We all believe that markets must play a central role.”

Professionally Gore, Doerr, and Blood have little in common. Once the boy wonder of American politics, Gore turns 60 in March. In addition to his roles at Kleiner, Generation, and Current, he’s an advisor to Google and a director at Apple. He also founded an advocacy organization in Palo Alto called the Alliance for Climate Protection. At times his schedule seems downright presidential: the week after our interview in Nashville, Gore visited the leaders of France, Germany, and Austria to talk about the environment. Says Gary Hirschberg, a climate-change activist and the CEO of Stonyfield Farm, who has known Gore for years: “I had an easier time seeing him when he was in the White House.”

Technically, of course, Gore was never “in” the White House. But he’s been dealing with continual speculation about whether he still has designs on the place. Is there



DOERR, BILL JOY, AND GORE AT A MEETING AT STARTUP BLOOM ENERGY.

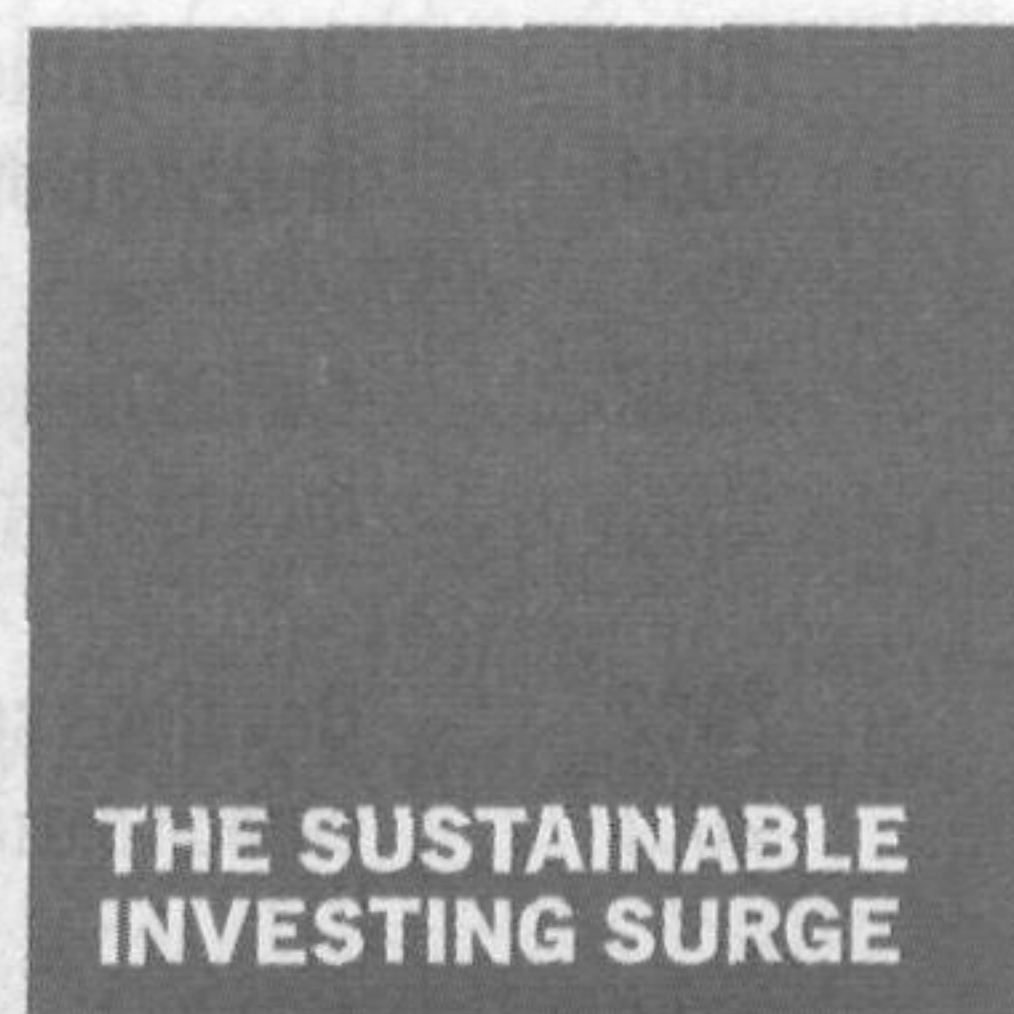
a chance he’ll jump into the race? “It’s a luxury to be able to focus on what

you are most passionate about all the time,” he says. When asked to elaborate he adds, “Casting about for words to describe this with precision is less productive than just saying that what I’m doing feels like the right thing to do.” So the answer is probably not, though like any good politician, he’s left the door open. For now Gore truly seems to enjoy kicking around Nashville, where he’ll continue to be based. Since he won’t be on Sand Hill Road daily, he explains, he’s installed a high-definition videoconferencing system to dial into Kleiner’s weekly partner meetings.

If Gore is the elder statesman of the group, Doerr is the salesman. Famous both for his boundless energy and his high-end hucksterism, at 56 he is wiry and birdlike in his tendency to flit from topic to topic. He specializes in making everyone around him believe as passionately about his current cause—first the PC, then the Internet, now the environment—as he does. Blood, silver-haired and 48, may be the youngest of the group, but he’s accustomed to managing money on a scale that dwarfs Kleiner’s. At Goldman he oversaw the company’s \$325 billion asset-management arm from London. A retired Goldman exec, Phil Murphy, who now raises money for the Democratic Party, introduced him to Gore.

Gore and Doerr got to know each other more than a dozen years ago when they met to discuss technology and education policy during Gore’s vice presidency. They were seen together so often that by the late 1990s, VC Stewart Alsop jokingly printed up and distributed hundreds of buttons that read GORE AND DOERR IN 2004. Doerr says he never considered elective office, but he credits Gore for his environmental awakening.

In June 2005, Doerr invited the Gores and Bill Joy, the former chief scientist at Sun Microsystems and now a Kleiner partner, to dinner at his home. Over coffee and dessert Gore hooked up his laptop to a projector and showed the group the slide show that the filmmaker Davis Guggenheim was just beginning to turn into a feature-length documentary. “I didn’t get it until Al showed his slide show at our home,” says Doerr. (Doerr has on various other occasions credited his conversion to his daughter Mary, Segway inventor



\$1.9 billion

Value of venture capital invested in clean-technology companies

\$1.7

\$0.8

'90

'07*

*Through Sept. 30, 2007.

SOURCE: THOMSON FINANCIAL