



ERIC AND NANNETTE BRILL bought this hilltop mansion above Palmdale for \$1.35 million. It has a three-story swimming pool atrium.

Discovering their desert Xanadus

As L.A. home prices rise, people are realizing dream homes in the most unlikely places

BY JACK FLEMMING

DeeAnn Noland has crafted her own slice of paradise in Southern California. Her property is perched in the hills, overlooking the city below. It spans nearly 7 acres and feels more like a resort than a home, boasting a 6,000-square-foot Spanish-style villa and a swimming pool topped by palm trees. Her dream house isn't found in Beverly Hills or Bel-Air or Malibu. It's in Hemet — and it cost her \$740,000. Southern California is riddled with luxury enclaves, but it'll cost you. As housing prices soar, some Angelenos are bailing on the big city in favor of places that are hotter, dryer and more remote, sprawling out into Riverside, San Bernardino and Kern counties in search of dirt-cheap mansions. In L.A., \$1 million might not even buy a second bedroom. A few hours outside



THE BRILLS' house above Palmdale cost twice as much as the median home in the city. One resident says: "It doesn't look like a house, more like a resort."

L.A., \$1 million can buy a dream house. Noland, 67, grew up in Alhambra and bought her first house in Baldwin Park with her husband, Manuel. The tract home barely had a backyard. Since then, she's found the allure of open land, moving farther and farther away from city centers and buying bigger and bigger homes — mostly for the same price. Noland first landed in Cherry Valley near Yucaipa, buying a 2,600-square-foot home on an acre before buying her Hemet mansion in 2015, turning it into a tropical haven filled with horses, goats and a handful of exotic birds, including toucans and African crowned cranes. Noland does well, but she's far from rich. Her late husband was a civil engineer, and she breeds animals for extra income. But in Hemet, she lives like royalty. Tucked in the San Jacinto Valley, Hemet has a median family income of [See Mansions, A5]

Newsom's presidential prospects fade, for now

Governor stands by Biden and Harris, but that could be winning strategy in long run.

BY TARYN LUNA

As rising stars in the California Democratic Party, Kamala Harris and Gavin Newsom dodged a potentially bruising campaign

battle in 2015 when she chose to run for U.S. Senate and he announced his candidacy for governor. This week, Newsom said he would avoid an even bigger potential head-to-head fight with Harris over the White House. The California governor repeated that he would not run against Harris, standing by a comment he made last year that has new relevance after President Biden's per-

formance in the June presidential debate left many in the party calling for him to leave the race. Although Biden has vowed to continue his bid for reelection, a decision Newsom has steadfastly supported, Harris and the governor have been widely mentioned as potential replacements for the Democratic presidential nomination. As vice president, Harris appears to be the front-runner

and has the most legitimate claim given that she's already on the 2024 ticket. "Of course," Newsom said when asked whether he would still decline to run against Harris. "Yes." If it holds, his decision could save the party and its donors from having to choose between California's two most prominent politicians. Declining to challenge [See Newsom, A6]



KENT NISHIMURA Los Angeles Times GOV. Gavin Newsom and Vice President Kamala Harris at a rally in 2021.

Biden dilemma deepens after summit

A decent news conference, poll could keep president in race as Democrats worry.

BY NOAH BIERMAN

Many Democrats are now in a perverse position in which seemingly good news for Biden — a decent news conference Thursday and a good poll Friday — feels like bad news for the prospects of winning the election. "He did as well as he could do last night and, on the foreign policy stuff, was very strong," David Axelrod, who served as political advisor to former President Obama, said in an interview Friday. "But anything that encourages him to believe that his situation is anything other than grave, relative to this election, isn't necessarily good news." Early reviews of Biden's Thursday news conference at the conclusion of a NATO summit in Washington were mixed. Voters who watched the entire 59 minutes, particularly supporters, saw a veteran of foreign affairs who could speak with authority about wars in Gaza and Ukraine, with a bit of rambling in between. But many more people probably saw viral clips of him calling former President Trump his vice president — instead of Kamala Harris — and in the hours before, introducing Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky as Russian President Vladimir Putin, the man who invaded his country. "My gosh, when he does a press conference where he mistakes Zelensky for Putin and Trump for Kamala Harris and everyone goes, 'Great job'? I mean, blech," Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.) said. Smith, one of the highest-ranking Democrats to ask Biden to withdraw, said he continues to have great respect for the president and his tenure, but is increasingly worried that people around him have "fought dirty" and "aggressively" to prevent a serious conversation because they are more invested in his personal fate than keeping Trump out of the White House. "The bar for what's considered good for Joe Biden has been lowered considerably for roughly 20% of the country, and that is the 20% [See Biden, A6]

Judge dismisses case against Baldwin in 'Rust' shooting



RAMSAY DE GIVE Associated Press ALEC BALDWIN speaks with his wife, Hilaria, in court Friday. The judge's decision to scrap the case ended a nearly three-year ordeal for the "30 Rock" star.

The ruling came after the actor's attorneys accused prosecutors of misconduct.

BY MEG JAMES

SANTA FE, N.M. — The involuntary manslaughter case against "Rust" star Alec Baldwin was dismissed by a judge Friday after the actor's defense attorneys raised new questions over how New Mexico law enforcement officers and prosecutors handled evidence. The decision ends a nearly three-year-long ordeal for the "30 Rock" and "Hunt for Red October" star, which began in October 2021 when he accidentally shot cinematographer Halyna

Hutchins with a prop revolver during a rehearsal for the low-budget western. Baldwin's attorneys accused the state of misconduct, pointing to a batch of unexamined bullets that a potential witness turned over to sheriff's investigators months ago. New Mexico 1st Judicial District Court Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer appeared furious over

the handling of the evidence, which was not given to the defense. Baldwin broke down in tears as the judge explained her reasoning for scrapping the case. "There is no way for the court to right this wrong," Marlowe Sommer said. Amid the scrutiny during the high-profile criminal trial [See "Rust," A8]

State Bar targets ex-DWP official

William Funderburk faces corruption charges. CALIFORNIA, B1

Weather

Patchy fog, then sun. L.A. Basin: 85/65. B8

For the latest news, go to latimes.com.

Printed with soy inks on partially recycled paper.



Get the story as it's happening. Download the app for instant breaking news alerts.

