

LEISURE

*By Jon Hindman*ON THE
WATERFRONT*Awe-inspiring properties offer scenic, private escapes*

EXTREME architecture, Hollywood connections, exquisite natural surroundings, the latest and greatest creature comforts and serene water views: These are among the selling points for some of the elite properties available for athletes, movie stars and, of course, executives looking for a unique private getaway at a moment's notice.

Washington CEO has uncovered some of the most lavish rental properties on the market, from a private island in the Bahamas to a cliffside villa in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, to a Hunts Point, Wash. home perfectly aligned with nature.





JOHN GREER (3)



For \$30,000 a day, visitors can rent their own island in the Bahamas. This one has a villa with 10 bedrooms, two pools and a yacht. Food and liquor included.

MARVEL OF THE NORTHWEST

Close to home is a property on Hunts Point in Bellevue where, for \$25,000 a month, you'll have the distinction of living on the edge of Lake Washington as do Bill Gates and Paul Allen.

Noted architects Ralph Anderson and Roland Terry built the masterpiece residence, which is owned by a Boeing executive who prefers to fly below the radar.

"This home was built for the owner, and it's very traditional Northwest contemporary," says Tere Foster, associate broker and owner of Foster Realty in Bellevue. "It has great big timbers, it's

"Northwest Natural" is the theme for a Hunts Point getaway, which comes with a steam room in the master suite and neighbors like Microsoft's Bill Gates.

nestled in the woods on the water and it includes Native American art in the inside."

The property is perfect for a small family, with two bedrooms and three-and-a-half baths, though the space can hardly be considered intimate: the home is 3,000 square feet. The master suite has a full steam room and two bathrooms. The home also has a 6,000-pound boat lift and a Jacuzzi.

Foster says the owner's goal was to blend the house into the natural environment. "It's sort of like the old principles of Frank Lloyd Wright," she says. "You build as one in the environment." Therefore, she adds, the rental property is for "purists who want to experience true Northwest architecture and lifestyle, because nowadays there are so many large Mediterranean homes with palm trees going up all over Washington."

The home is available for short-term

rentals from three to six months. For more information, call Tere Foster at 888-450-5215 or visit her company online at www.fosterrealty.com.

MAYAN REBIRTH

If it's a three-day jaunt in paradise you're looking for, Peter Nygard can supply it. The self-made multimillionaire and chairman of Toronto-based woman's fashion design company Nygard International Ltd. put an estimated \$50 million into building his own utopia, a 150,000-square-foot resort on the tip of Lyford Cay in the Bahamas – appropriately named Nygard Cay.

The luxury resort's architecture was fashioned after Mayan ruins and was built, in part, by Hollywood set designers using natural stones and materials shipped from Asia and Canada. Nygard was the visionary behind the look and feel of the property, which has nine bedrooms, two pools, five



One of Mexico's top private villas, Estrella Mar, offers six bedrooms, two elevators and a dedicated staff of 11, all within walking distance off downtown Puerto Vallarta.



COURTESY: VILLAS OF DISTINCTION (2)

Jacuzzis, a tennis court, two volleyball courts, a basketball court and is generously equipped with seven boats, two Hummers, a 48-foot yacht, a 24-seat movie theater, exotic birds and a staff of 20.

Possibly more impressive is what's still to come.

According to John Greer, CEO of Unusual Villa and Island Rentals of Richmond, Va., the resort's management company, "We're putting in a shark tank. You can be dancing and watch sharks swimming underneath your feet. We're hoping in the next 24 months it'll be approved and put in. Plus, we're going to get some dolphins on the property. It's going to get better and better."

The first rental of Nygard Cay is in November, and interest has already been piqued. There are dates available still for 2006 and 2007, though, for a mere \$30,000 per day (food and liquor included), with a minimum three-day rental in the low season (April 15 to December 15) and a minimum five-day rental in the high season (December 15 to April 15).

For more information, call Unusual Villa and Island Rentals at 800-846-7280 or log on to www.unusualvillarentals.com.

VIVA VALLARTA

For others, a slice of bliss can be found elsewhere. Take Estrella Mar in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, which is scaled down quite a bit from Nygard Cay but still has a pampering atmosphere.

You'll be thrust into luxury at this four-story, 20,000-square-foot beachfront villa, which has six spacious bedrooms, nine bathrooms, an exercise room and a large heated pool that overlooks Banderas Bay on Mexico's Pacific Coast.

Robert Eastman, eastern regional vice president of Petaluma, Calif.-based Creative Leisure International, gives some reasons why the villa his company rents out is such a hot commodity. "It's one of the bigger houses in Puerto Vallarta, and it's only five to seven minutes from the property to the heart of town. It's also set on a cliff, so it's ultimately private," he says.

There are other alluring features, as well, such as a dedicated staff of 11, which includes a cook who will prepare two meals a day, a houseman who speaks English, a gardener and daily maid service. The property also has 24-hour security, two elevators, Jacuzzi tubs, satellite television and a high-tech reverse-osmosis drinking water system, putting at bay any worries about drinking the Mexican water.

Estrella Mar accommodates 12 people, and prices start at about \$16,000 per week in the low season (May 1 to December 1). During the high season (December 1 to May 1), the villa rents for \$21,000 per week, except for Christmas, when rates are even higher. Clients also pay additional for food and alcohol, although the staff will do all the shopping. For more information, call Creative Leisure International at 800-289-0900 or visit www.villasofdistinction.com.

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