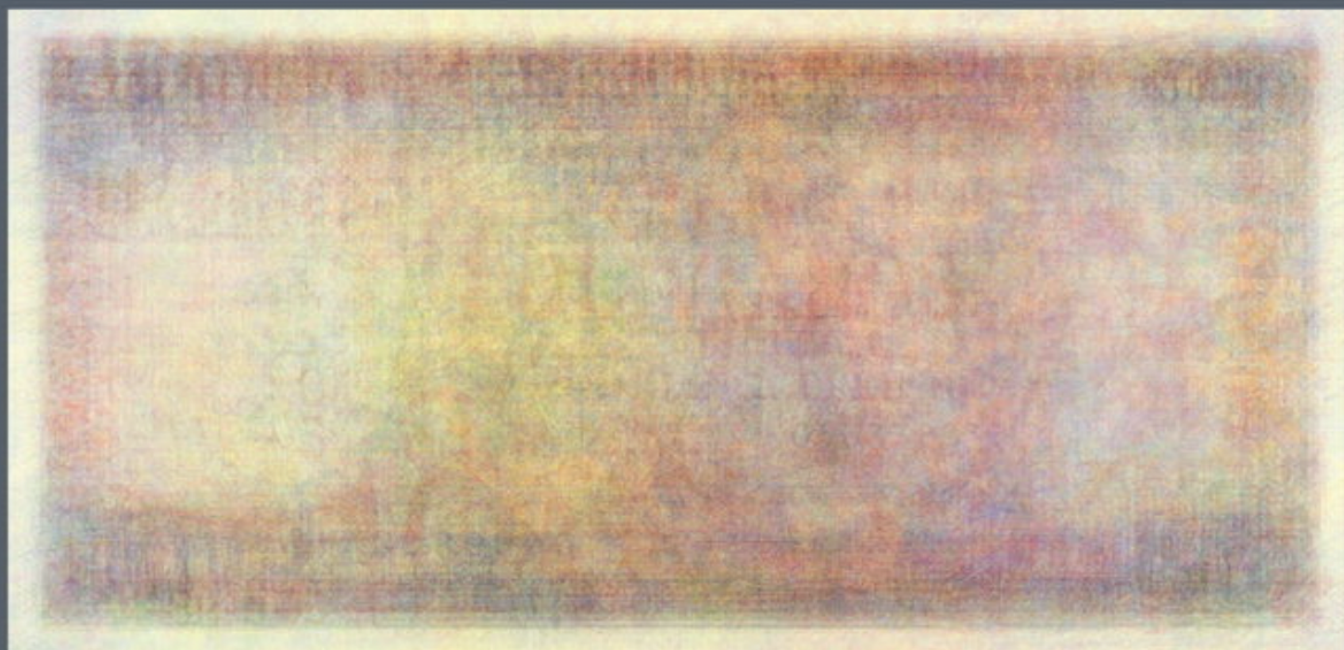


PENTA

What's Next for NFT Art

Works sold as nonfungible tokens are reshaping the industry and changing how we think about digital collectibles



NEWLY MINTED

The artwork on this cover, *Global Currency*, by Tom Friedman, featuring superimposed images of paper money from around the world, will be auctioned as an NFT.



MANSION GLOBAL

The Great Pandemic Escape

Many affluent people worked and lived from their beach or mountain homes during lockdowns. Some went even farther afield.

By MICHELE LERNER

For a while during the pandemic, Boston-based tech executive Corey McCann's dinner depended on whatever he managed to catch while spearfishing. McCann wasn't stranded on a deserted island in the middle of the ocean, he simply chose to live off the grid in a luxurious modern villa at Costa Elena in Costa Rica.

"Before Covid-19 hit, I would travel weekly between San Francisco and Boston and spend 20 to 25 days every month away from home," McCann says.

The exterior of Beth and Quentin Gillette's new home in Kukui'ula, Hawaii.

"My partner and I decided to use the pandemic as a reason to explore remote places and try out a new lifestyle."

While McCann's ability to adopt a remote yet luxurious lifestyle during the pandemic is uncommon, his instinct was shared by many Americans. People who could afford to leave cities left for beach towns, mountain resorts, and lakes where they could spend time outdoors and away from potential exposure to the virus.

Nearly half of Americans (48%) polled by Gallup at the end of 2020 said they would choose to live in a small town (17%) or a rural area (31%) rather than a city or suburb. Gallup's 2018 poll found only 39% of Americans wanted to live in a small town or rural area.

In December 2020, McCann, and his partner were in Costa Rica to hunt yellowfin tuna, and ended up at Costa Elena, where they had rented places a couple of times. "We decided to buy here because we both love modern design and the proximity to nature," he says.

McCann's home is one of eight bay villas at Las Mareas at Costa Elena, a four-bedroom, five-bathroom home with a separate guesthouse and views of Salinas Bay, Orosi Volcano, and Bolaños Island. While he declined to share his

villa's price, a similar villa is listed now for \$1.45 million.

"One of our big requirements was to have bulletproof Wi-Fi because we need to be on Zoom meetings all day," McCann says. Other infrastructure requirements for McCann included a generator and battery backup for routers and for power surges, he says.

"This place is rugged and feels off the grid, yet it's easy to access because the airport is 90 minutes away and has direct flights to Boston and San Francisco."

From Suburbia to the Mountains

While about 50 million more rounds of golf were played in 2020 compared with 2019, both mountain communities and golf course communities drew new residents looking for privacy.

For Kent Rounds, a vice president at CrowdStrike, a cybersecurity firm, an escape to Idaho was exactly what he and his wife, Simone Rounds, 34, and their 6-month-old daughter needed to breathe more easily during the pandemic. The Roundses' permanent home is in Creighton Farms in Loudoun County, Va., outside of Washington, D.C.

"I'd been skiing in Idaho before and was looking for a mountain area where we could stay during the pandemic,"

says Rounds, 60. "I saw Tributary online and bought a place sight unseen because it was exactly what I had in mind. The house sits on a half-acre and faces the Teton Mountains and the golf course for unobstructed views."

Tributary, a low-density community in Driggs, Idaho, offers the remote feeling and privacy the Roundses want. It also includes a spa, a pool, ice skating, and a ski lounge if they want to socialize. The community is about 45 miles from the Jackson, Wyo., airport.

The couple spent \$2.5 million on their four-bedroom, 3,900-square-foot home, and plan to split their time between Idaho and Virginia.

An Extended Stay in Paradise

Hawaii's travel restrictions kept some tourists from the islands during the pandemic, but others took the opportunity to put down permanent roots there.

Beth and Quentin Gillette, owners of

"It feels like we're living in a treehouse."

Beth Gillette

From top: Corey McCann and his partner at Las Mareas in Costa Elena, Costa Rica; Bruce and Kathleen Pobligh's home in Danzante Bay, Mexico.

PowerGrid Services, a Decatur, Ala.-based company that maintains power lines, vacationed at the resort community of Kukui'ula on the island of Kauai for more than a decade but it took a pandemic to get them to buy a home there.

"We love staying fit, hiking, and biking. There's an organic farm in the community where we can pick vegetables, herbs, and fruit and we overlook an orchard," Beth says.

Their home, named Hale Nanea and designed by architect Olson Kundig, has panoramic ocean views.

"It feels like we're living in a treehouse," Beth says.

The Gillettes—she's 57, he's 55—were able to run their business via videoconferencing and the occasionally sporadic internet, although the time difference was sometimes frustrating. They plan to spend more time in Hawaii in the future despite the challenge of getting to Kukui'ula from Alabama, which can take as long as 16 to 18 hours of multiple

flights. Homes at Kukui'ula range in price from \$2 million to more than \$5 million.

"The beauty of this place is that it's a complete 180-degrees from Alabama," Beth says.

A Family Adventure

For Marc and Kat Vorkapich, the pandemic pushed them from Vero Beach, Fla., to a 10-acre lakefront estate in the Homesteads at Reynolds Lake Oconee in Greensboro, Ga. Marc, 47, is president and CEO of Watercrest Senior Living Group and Kat, 42, handles media for the company. The couple has three children, ranging from 9 to 13 years old.

"We just wanted something different and when Marc found the Reynolds property site online, we jumped in the car to see it," Kat says. "We love the lake, the woods, and the fact that we could build a house on a big lot."

The Vorkapichs are living in a rental property in the community while building a 9,500-square-foot main house with a 1,700-square-foot guesthouse on a three-acre lot on the lake. Lots range from \$1.3 million to \$3.2 million for three to 12 acres.

The property feels remote but the community includes a Ritz-Carlton Hotel, restaurants, and recreational amenities, just 90 minutes from the Atlanta airport.

"The pandemic just made us realize how fragile life is and how much we want to spend family-oriented time in this beautiful place, where we can disconnect from work and outside pressures," Marc says.

From Minnesota to Mexico

For Bruce and Kathleen Pobligh, a retired couple living in Alexandria, Minn., living in a remote location comes naturally. Although they live 150 miles from Minneapolis and 100 miles from Fargo, N.D., the Poblighs became interested in the islands of Loreto in Mexico a few years ago. "It's just an extraordinarily beautiful peninsula with a tiny international airport," Bruce says.

The couple, both 73, have lived in their island home since October 2020.

Homes in Danzante Bay cost approximately \$450,000 to \$650,000 for the lot and \$1.6 million to \$2.5 million for the structure.

"It's just extremely peaceful here and we like being in a different culture," Bruce says. "This place is remote and feels like the 'anti-Cabo' part of Mexico, with a safer and slower way of life." ■



Opposite page: Courtesy of Kukui'ula; this page, from top: Courtesy of Corey M. McCann; Courtesy of Danzante Bay