



Fantasy LAND

Filled with everything from a car museum to a beauty salon, the Primm house is an architectural marvel—and it's for sale.

By Sue Hostetler Photographs by Jeff Green

SOMEONE ONCE SAID, “Las Vegas is sort of like how God would do it if he had money.” If so, it’s safe to say that he would probably choose casino magnate Gary Primm’s Tomiyasu Lane home as his dream residence.

Originally completed in 1991, the Primm Vegas compound is a singular, utterly over-the-top property, unlike anything in the area. The 10-acre spread, which sits just a few miles from the Strip, is the ultimate playground and bachelor pad, boasting some of the most outré toys any man could want (think *007* and *Indiana Jones*). “The home reflects my personality,” says Primm. “It’s my own magical retreat. Even though I’m only five minutes from both the airport and the Strip, it’s completely private, secure and luxurious, entirely its own entity.”

That’s what makes it all the more unbelievable that Primm has decided to sell the property. “We immensely enjoyed raising our children here,” Primm offers with a hint of melancholy. “Now the kids are grown up and

have lives and places of their own, it’s time to let someone else enjoy the best place in Las Vegas.”

After spending years visiting Vegas, Primm moved here from Orange County in the early ’80s. His father, Ernest, famously bought 400 acres of land in 1951, for just \$12,000 near the California-Nevada border and what was then US 91, adding another 400 acres a few years later. He then put the town, informally referred to as Stateline, on the map, developing the wildly successful Whiskey Pete’s Hotel and Casino. After Ernest’s death, in 1981, Gary took over the business and expanded, building the resorts Prima

Donna in 1990 and Buffalo Bill’s in 1994. A few years later, Gary had the town name officially changed. “When we were working on the properties, I would come up and watch the traffic go by,” Primm recalls. “And one evening I said, ‘I’m going to honor my dad and call this Primm, Nevada.’” (The company, which

Lush landscaping of palm trees and a fountain designed by architect F.H. Laudenfrost set off the entrance to the main house on the Primm compound. OPPOSITE PAGE: Primm fashioned the over-the-top pool area after the Grand Wailea and Four Seasons resorts in Hawaii.



The compound has an equestrian center with a 10-stall barn and trainer's quarters.

The desert oasis is amplified by Primm's extensive pool area, complete with waterslides, a grotto bar and guestroom built into a cave behind a waterfall.





also came to include New York-New York Casino, was sold to MGM Grand in 1998.)

While building the resorts, Primm, his then-wife and their two children needed someplace to live and liked the idea of a ranch outside of Vegas. “We chose this neighborhood because, if you can believe it, back then it was out in the middle of nowhere,” he laughs. “It was away from the hustle and bustle of the city, quiet, no noise. We could ride horses... the streets weren’t even paved!” (Historic Tomiyasu Lane is named after Japanese immigrant Bill Tomiyasu, whose innovative farming techniques were responsible for bringing certain produce, trees and plants to the area.)

As Vegas’s population swelled, what used to be open tracts of land and desert horse-country became one of the most prestigious addresses in Nevada; the neighborhood has been home to Clark Gable, Carole Lombard, Wayne Newton and the Sultan of Brunei.

After acquiring the property, the Primms quickly got to work and hired Southern California architect F.H. Laudenfrost to build their fantasy home, after admiring the unique vision of one of his designs. Contemporary Mediterranean in architecture and aesthetic, Primm’s grand main residence

The cheetah-print carpet in the vast master suite is a nod to Primm’s love of Africa; an impressive wood sleigh bed complements the oak-beamed ceiling. INSET: Pale-yellow walls and a wrought-iron canopy bed give the guest room in the main house a sophisticated feel.

is a lavish two stories sprawling over a staggering 15,000 square feet. In addition to the main house, the estate also includes a detached guest villa, a pied-à-terre within the pool grotto, and a barn with a trainer apartment and staff quarters, bringing the total compound living space to a whopping 21,000 square feet.

Laguna Beach interior designer Hank Morgan was brought in to fashion a comfortable family sanctuary out of the colossal surroundings and came up with a look that is at once flamboyant and fresh. This is a couture environment, to be sure. One look at the oversized living room, with a 25-foot-high travertine fireplace, and it becomes apparent that Morgan had to have all of the furnishings custom made to match the home’s massive scale. Substantial overstuffed pieces upholstered in lush, heavy fabrics, balanced by light oak floors and ceiling, telegraph a feeling of old-world charm. But the devil, as they say, is often in the details,



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:
 The plush lounge area in the bar/billiards room features a fireplace made of rich chocolate and white granite and a high-tech Creston system with multiple televisions. The double-height living room is outfitted with comfortable earth-tone furnishings, custom-made to accommodate the immense space. Sunlight fills the lofty Mediterranean-style, professional-grade kitchen.





FROM TOP LEFT: "I had as many as 20 cars in the car showroom when I was young and stupid," admits Primm. The home also includes a gas station and special car wash that uses deionized water. The home gym is worthy of any swank spa, while the luxe private theater boasts custom-made reclining electronic seats.



and even the grandest project depends on the success of the small components, like the air-purification system in the new movie theater. "It's unique in the respect that my friends and I can go in and smoke cigars, and it has special exhaust fans that clear the air," Primm explains.

Primm's favorite place to hang? The 3,000-square-foot trophy and game room, which is accessed through an underground tunnel connected to the wine cellar of the main house. Big-game lovers like Primm, who has been to Africa a dozen times, will marvel at the full-size giraffe, gorgeous butternut wood paneling and automated recorded sounds of animals in the wild that are light-activated. "It's the most spectacular room on the property—a great place to entertain," he says.

Though if there's one thing Primm is not short on, it's entertaining space. In addition to the aforementioned theater and game room, the compound also boasts a car museum, gas

A secret tunnel from the wine cellar (BELOW) in the main house leads to a subterranean indoor shooting range (BOTTOM), which can also double as a safe room. RIGHT: Every desire has been anticipated for the private theater, which includes a popcorn machine, bar with wine cellar, special air system and preloaded digital movie library.



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station, beauty salon (for both owners and their dogs), indoor underground shooting range (which can double as a safe room), equestrian center with a 10-stall barn and a golf driving range. “I had as many as 20 cars in the car showroom when I was young and stupid,” admits Primm. “I’ve been selling them off over the last few years, though. What was important then is not now; plus, you can’t drive them all, and then they deteriorate!” (though his special deionized-water car wash has no doubt helped keep them in top condition). The desert oasis is also amplified by Primm’s extensive pool area, complete with waterslides, a grotto bar and guestroom built into a cave behind a waterfall. “I went to the Grand Wailea and the Four Seasons in Hawaii and saw their caves and waterfalls and decided to create it at home,” Primm says.

So if you just happen to be in the market for a new spread—dog salon included—this unbelievable compound could be yours. Gary Primm is moving on to bigger game. ▼