

VALLEY OF THE STARS

Many celebrities call Las Vegas home

By Joan Burkhart
Review-Journal

Be it ever so humble, Las Vegas is still home to a galaxy of stars.

Their addresses aren't listed in the phone book, but the homes of celebrity residents dot our desert landscape.

Big-name entertainers, not surprisingly, have the big bucks to alter the desert to suit their particular domestic tastes.

Illusionists Siegfried and Roy have created what they like to call a "jungle palace" just north of the Las Vegas municipal golf course at Washington Avenue and Decatur Boulevard.

Their Moorish-inspired residence at 1639 Valley Drive is easily distinguished from their neighbors' homes. A gleaming white wall ornamented with sculpted white tigers surrounds the property. A massive gold monogram reading "SR" adorns the gate. The adjacent homes are modest; the neighborhood is decidedly middle-class.

Siegfried Fischbacher and Roy Horn purchased the first property in what makes up their present compound in 1980. In the next several years, they bought up several adjacent homes and incorporated the properties into their master plan. At this point, the residence actually straddles both sides of Valley Drive. The main structure offers more than 10,000 square feet of living space.

"There were no birds, no trees (when the pair moved in). They created this lovely environment," said spokesman Julian Read. "It's a very great source of pride to them." Read said he "can't imagine them considering" moving away, despite the heavy tourist traffic around the home. On occasion, groups of schoolchildren have been permitted inside for guided visits.

"It's obviously a tourist attraction of its own," continued Read, noting that the property's animal habitat can accommodate up to about 15 white tigers. (Siegfried and Roy's tiger count is now at 22. At any point, some of the cats are on display at The Mirage, others are resting in their secure "dressing room" in back of The Mirage, and still others are relaxing at the duo's 80-acre ranch north of Las Vegas.)

Las Vegas Phyllis McGuire — lead singer in the McGuire Sisters trio — has gone in for a very different architectural theme. Her European-style stone mansion is located in the heart of Rancho Circle, an exclusive enclave off of Rancho Drive, between Alta Drive and U.S. Highway 95.

"Elegant French chateau-type thing" is how McGuire described her home. Outside, it sports stone lions acquired from the J.P. Morgan estate. Indoors it features a dining area designed within what is a 30-foot high replica of the Eiffel Tower.

"I would rent ranches," said McGuire of her old lodgings when the trio used to perform in Las Vegas in the '50s and '60s. Finally, in 1964 she bought herself the Rancho Circle home. In the subsequent years, she purchased two other homes nearby, merging them into a compound that offers separate guest houses for visitors.

"Rancho Circle is so special," said McGuire, who estimates she spends about six months of the year in Las Vegas. "I'm right near downtown,

eight minutes from the Strip. I can walk around the circle. If a house becomes available, nine times out of 10, it's because of death. It's gobbled up, like that."

Contemporary California ranch is the best way to categorize the home of Engelbert Humperdinck, located in the Desert Inn Country Club.

Low-slung and long, the one-story home wraps around a wide bend in the residential street around which the golf course is laid out. It boasts a glass and stone exterior.

Inside, it features niceties like a console television in the master bedroom that sinks down, when not needed, into a massive coffee table, and an entertainment room that includes a performing stage, player piano, wine cellar and soda fountain.

According to representative Dennis Barry, Humperdinck purchased the home, which was built in 1964, in 1974. His four children grew up in the 11,000-square-foot home. More recently, in the landlord's absence, celebrity artists have stayed in the home during their Las Vegas runs, including Willie Nelson and Barry Manilow.

But the one-story home is now on the market, with an asking price of \$1.25 million. Not that the pop singer has given up his penchant for golf.

"Depending on his busy schedule, he does frequent the Las Vegas area, and he's most fond of the golf facilities in our valley ... (and) Lake Mead," said Barry, explaining that once the home is sold, the performer plans to break ground for a three-acre estate on a 25-acre parcel he has bought in the southern part of the valley, in the "Warm Springs Equestrian/Sierra Vista area."

The new residence will indulge the singer's golf habit by including a private nine-hole putting green — as well as a recording studio, tennis and racquetball courts, guest house, pool and spa, lagoon and waterfall, said Barry.

In his new neighborhood, the singer will be in good company, noted Barry. "Wayne Newton's out there. Gladys Knight's out there. Robert Goulet's out there."

Newton's in-town ranch, Casa de Shenandoah, is labeled for all to see on the perimeter wall at the corner of Sunset and Pecos roads. (His out-of-town ranch is near Overton, but has been put up for sale.)

The name derives from "Wayne's orientation: the valley he grew up in — Wayne's originally from Virginia — and the Southwest," said spokesman Mike Cotton.

The address, 6629 S. Pecos Road, marks a formal driveway that leads to a small bungalow originally purchased by Wayne Newton's parents in his teen years, when they were sure their son would be performing regularly here.

The bungalow is just one of eight homes on the 52-acre property. (Only 18 acres have been developed.) Most are used as guest houses or housing for Newton's extensive staff. The estate has been assembled through the years by acquiring adjacent lots "as Wayne became more successful," explained Cotton, ranch manager and Newton's fixed-wing aircraft pilot.

The centerpiece of Casa de Shenandoah is the
Please see HOMES/2L

