

# \$4.2 million home sale sets local Realtors record



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROBIN SUE KAISERMAN

Take a gander at those digs! Greenery-covered exterior walls, a beautiful swimming pool and — get this — a private-plane taxiway leading to La Cholla Airpark.

## Purchase by Robert Beaudry, of RV fame, indicates mansion market is healthy here

By Joseph Barrios  
ARIZONA DAILY STAR

The most expensive home ever sold through the Tucson Association of Realtors Multiple Listing Service — a European-style villa complete with a 3,327-square-foot airplane hangar — changed hands last week for \$4.2 million.

The house was bought by Robert Beaudry, president of Beaudry RV.

As home prices in Tucson have risen in all price ranges, Tucson has seen more and more million-dollar-plus home sales. Experts say that \$1 million today won't quite buy you the same mansion it did a few years ago.

That's not the case here. This house was "impeccably well-built and beautiful," said Robin Sue Kaiserman, the Long Realty Co. agent who listed the

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property.

The house was built in 1992 by philanthropists Sidney and Faye Morse. The house and accompanying hangar are on 16 acres in Oro Valley's La Cholla Airpark, northwest of North Rancho Vistoso Boulevard and West Tangerine Road.

Sidney Morse, a member of the Pima Community College Foundation board of directors and former managing general partner of California Mart in Los Angeles, died in February at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, where he was receiving cancer treatment.

The distinction does come with some



The entrance to the European-style villa resembles that of a luxurious hotel. Antique iron gates came from the old Pioneer Hotel.

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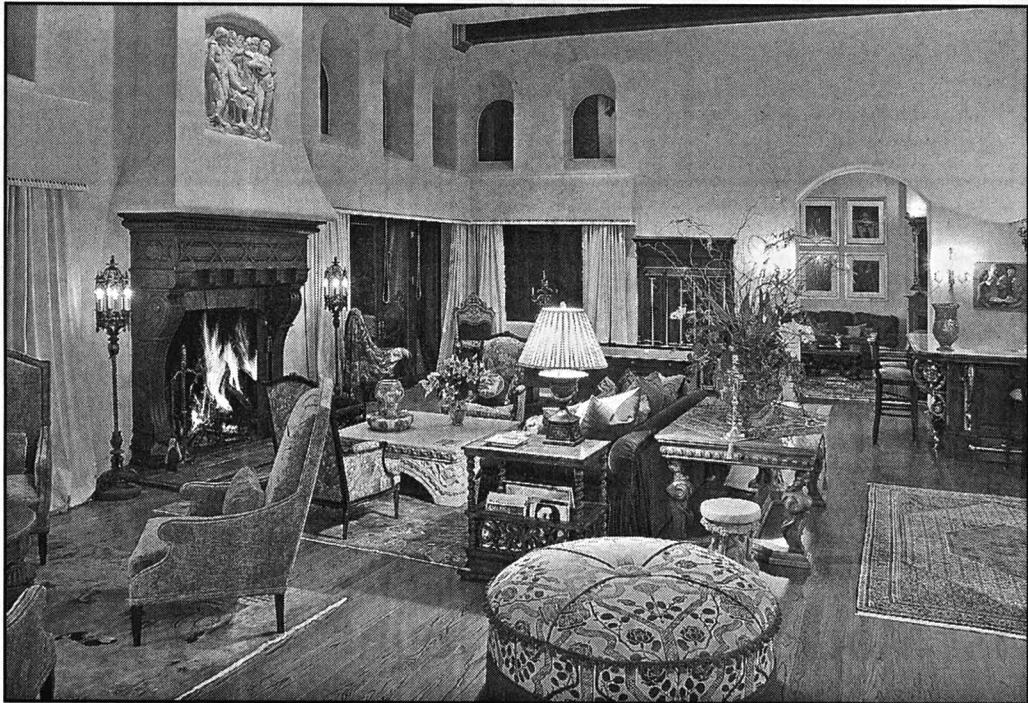
qualifiers. Houses have been built at greater expense in recent years. And the most expensive asking price on the MLS is still the 25,000-square-foot mansion with its own name and Web site, Campbell Cliffs, with a price in the \$13 million range for the house alone.

But for houses sold, this three-bedroom La Cholla Airpark property is tops. The house has a taxiway to the airpark's 4,500-foot runway. It features original antique iron gates from Tucson's old Pioneer Hotel, eight fireplaces, and a marble and mahogany bar. It had been listed for sale for more than a year, and at one point it had an asking price of more than \$5 million.

The house itself has 7,868 square feet of living space.

While Tucson's residential market has slowed, its highest echelons are poised to do better than even last year, Kaiserman said. Sixteen homes with prices of more than \$2 million have been sold so far this year through the MLS, compared with 15 homes above \$2 million sold during all of last year. Kaiserman said the \$1 million-and-over market is poised to beat last year's sales of 164 homes. So far this year, 118 homes have sold for \$1 million or more.

"The million-and-up market



This grand room is spacious enough for plenty of well-heeled guests and features a cozy fireplace.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBIN SUE KAISERMAN

is better than last year," Kaiserman said, although she stopped short of saying Tucson is becoming more exclusive.

"I wouldn't use the term 'exclusive.' It's just been discovered. Those people used to go to Scottsdale, but now Scottsdale is so crowded. Santa Fe (N.M.) is not as popular as it used to be," Kaiserman said.

Some buyers who might have gone to Florida in previous years will now come here in search of "more reliable"

weather, Kaiserman said.

Another top-selling Long Realty agent, Janell Jellison, agreed. She said more buyers are looking at contemporary homes.

"The 'old world' is not quite as popular to them. It doesn't necessarily have to be connected with a resort or golf course," Jellison said.

Tucson housing analyst John Strobeck said he's seen an increase in the number of homes sold for \$1 million and up.

"A regular month has 10 or

more," Strobeck said. "A decade ago, if we saw 15 in a year, we were lucky. Now it's becoming commonplace."

The distinction for the Morse-Beaudry home may be short-lived. The MLS shows another property — a 4,000-square-foot house on 165 acres near Tubac — is under contract with a listing price of \$5 million.

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