

HUNDREDS REMEMBER ACTOR JAMIE FOXX JOINS PEACE WALK, 1B

The Miami Herald

\$2.00 110TH YEAR, NO. 149 ©2013

MiamiHerald.com 🔠



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2013

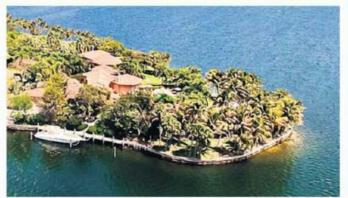


If you bought this \$16 million palace from Pat Riley, would you:

- A Leave it exactly as is
- Remodel the kitchen
- C Bulldoze it and build something bigger

To South Florida's über-rich, the correct answer is (G)





BY MARTHA BRANNIGAN

iami Heat President Pat Riley sold his spectacular bayfront mansion in gated Gables Es-

tates for \$16.8 million last March. The 12,856-square-foot Mediterranean-style dream house at 180 Arvida Parkway has a theater, wine cellar, library, and a sprawling pool with water-

falls and an aqua bar. But that's all coming down. Turns out the lure was the lot: a rare fingertip of prime land, nearly two •TURN TO MANSIONS, 26A

acres, jutting into the turquoise waters of Biscayne Bay.

In December, the buyer — listed as 180 Arvida LLC represented by Miami attorney Mark Hasner — presented the city of Coral Gables with plans to tear down the home, built in 1991, and erect an even grander estate along the 900 linear feet of bayfront.

"Most people would move in and be perfectly happy, but clients are looking for perfection - really good stuff,"

THE TUTORING MONEY MACHINE

Unscreened by state, cashing in on your kids

In Florida, private tutoring is big business. But among those being paid tax dollars in the mandated program are cheaters and profiteers who operate virtually unchecked.

First of two parts

BY MICHAEL LAFORGIA

When Yolanda Axson wasn't watching, a pot of hot water spilled into a crib at her daycare in Orlando, scalding a 4-month-old

She served probation for felony child neglect and then, barred from child care, found a less-regulated line of work. She started a

company to earn tax dollars tutoring poor kids in Florida's failing schools.

When state officials saw Axson's name on an application for the government tutoring program, they didn't hesitate. They stamped their approval, and her business, Busy BEE Services, went to work tutoring Florida's neediest children.

The cost to taxpayers per student? At least \$60 an hour.

Axson's case points to a larger problem with mandated tutoring in Florida: The program pays public money to people with criminal records, and to cheaters and profiteers who operate virtually unchecked by state regulators.

In a three-month investigation, The Tampa Bay Times examined invoice records from 59 school districts, conducted dozens of interviews and reviewed thousands of pages of complaint reports, audits and other documents, and found:

· Florida school districts spent at least \$7 million last year on tu- •TURN TO TUTORS, 27A

toring companies run by people with criminal records. Among those who have headed state-approved tutoring firms are a rapist, thieves and drug users.

· In more than 40 cases across the state, tutoring companies have faked student sign-up sheets or billed for tutoring that never happened. Companies that overcharged for tutoring earned more than \$10 million last year alone.

The program is riddled with conflicts of interest. In one county last year, more than 100 teachers

Stadium funding will be put on ballot

After resisting a vote on the controversial stadium deal, the Dolphins agree to put the matter on the ballot in Miami-Dade.

BY BARRY JACKSON, PATRICIA MAZZEI AND DOUGLAS HANKS

The Miami Dolphins have agreed to seek voter approval of tax dollars for Sun Life Stadium, with team executives dropping their objections to a referendum on the controversial plan, sources close to the matter said Saturday.

The Dolphins and County Mayor Carlos Gimenez expect to announce the referendum agree-ment on Monday, The Miami Herald has learned. Sen. Oscar Braynon, the Miami Gardens Democrat sponsoring a bill to bring Sun Life new state and county subsidies, would then change the proposed legislation to require a countywide vote on the plan, a source familiar with the Dolphins' lobbying efforts

The Dolphins hope to get the issue before voters by May 22,

TURN TO STADIUM, 2A

MENENDEZ CASE

Senator on hot seat is 'one tough hombre'

From his tenement upbringing to his fight to keep Elián González in the U.S., Sen. Bob Menendez has faced down adversity plenty of times.

BY JUAN O. TAMAYO

New Jersey Sen. Bob Menendez is at the apex of his career, the

highest-ranking Hispanic in congressional history as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and one of the "Gang of Eight" senators leading the charge for immigration reforms



Not bad for the son of pre-Castro Cuban migrants — his mother a seamstress, his father an oddjobs carpenter - who grew up in a Union City tenement and was

• TURN TO SENATOR, 2A



2013 Infiniti G37 Sedan

lease per month*

SWEETHEART SALES EVENT



SOUTH South Motors Infiniti US-1 & South 169 St. MOTORS 888-314-7291 SouthInfiniti.com







BMW | Honda |





ROLLING WITH THE SUPER-RICH: Jill Hertzberg and Jill Eber, marketing 42 La Gorce Circle.



\$23.4 MILLION AND IT'S YOURS: Mark Zilbert, president of Zilbert International Realty, shows off the grounds at 100 Palm Ave. on Palm Island, Miami Beach. He says luxury homes have never been pricier

Market for trophy homes is sizzling

• MANSIONS, FROM 1A

said Jorge Uribe, a senior vice president at One Sotheby's International Realty, who wasn't involved but sold an even bigger trophy property last year: a \$39.4 million estate at 14 Indian Creek Dr., on Indian Creek Island in Miami Beach, dubbed "Miami's Billionaire Bunker" by Forbes magazine.

"The trend in the last several years is a demand for very high-quality product. People are looking for really good locations, really good materials, and they're will-ing to pay for it," Uribe said.

Miami's ultra-luxury market is on fire. Prices for the fanciest single-family homes and condominiums have soared to levels never before seen in the area, fueled by strong foreign de-mand and renewed interest from New Yorkers and oth-

ers in the Northeast. With Miami's global image burnished by Art Basel Miami Beach and the debut of other cultural and entertainment venues, the city is emerging as an even greater magnet for the world's super-rich.

In January, a penthouse at the Setai Resort & Residences on Miami Beach fetched \$27 million, a new high for a Miami-Dade condominium. "Every building we do business in is at its highest price of all time," said Mark Zilbert, president of Zilbert International Realty, which represented the buyer in the Setai deal.

Last August, a sleek, new home, built on spec at 3 Indian Creek Dr., sold for \$47 million, a record high for a Miami-Dade residence. The buyer, whose identity has not been revealed, is

"People are realizing how home," Murphy said. valuable the bay waterfront is," said Oren Alexander, cofounder of the Alexander Group at Douglas Elliman Real Estate, who co-listed the 3 Indian Creek property with The Jills team at Coldwell Banker and represented the buyer for the home. His father, Shlomy Alexander, developed the property

with partner Felix Cohen. Shlomy Alexander is working on two more extravagant spec homes - one at 30 Indian Creek Dr. and a second that is set to break ground shortly at 252 Bal Bay Dr. in Bal Harbour, his son said. Plans envision a tropical modern-style project that fuses the indoors and outdoors - a concept popular in Brazil.

The elder Alexander recently traveled to Italy to shop for exclusive stone for the projects, said the son.

"It's really trending to the ultra-luxury. All sorts of exotic materials - exotic woods, exotic marbles, exotic stones," said Sean Murphy, an executive vice president at Coastal Construction, a major builder of luxury hotels and condominiums that also has erected some of the most extrava-



KOB! KARP ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIOR DESIGN WHAT COAL CAN BUY: The home designed for coal exec Wayne M. Boich, Jr. at 4700 North Bay Rd.



PATRICK FARRELL/MIAMI HERALD STAFF AHOY: The view of the former Pat Riley residence

from the water off Gables Estates.

gant mansions in the region.

Everything is so exotic. Some rich folks building their dream castles "are buying a stone quarry, harvesting the stone, and shutting it down, so that no one else can have it again," Mur-phy said. "It's happened multiple times."

Details are crucial: It's not enough for a wall to be fine marble, it has to be book matched, so the lines flow naturally. "It's expensive and time consuming," Murphy said. Onyx and mother of

pearl are in vogue. The bigger the better. One custom house Coastal is building in Hillsboro Beach is set to be 60,000 square feet. That's about the size of 50 two-bedroom apart-ments. "A beautiful big

A huge issue: South Flori-da — especially Miami — is running out of prime oceanfront and bayfront sites. "Land has been scarce, A majority of the projects we're touching are all knock-downs. Or it's been knocked down by the time we get there," Murphy said. "You're seeing more people buying not one lot, but one, two, three."

Coldwell Banker luxury super-broker Jill Eber who works with Jill Hertzberg as The Jills in marketing many of South Florida's most exclusive homes said tear-downs are increasingly common.

We just closed at the end of the year on a property at the tip of Sunset Island for \$20 million," said Eber, whose team had the listing for the record \$47 million Indian Creek sale and closed on some \$480 million in residential deals in 2012. Somebody bought it for \$20 million and is tearing it down. It's only about 46,000 square feet [of lot], but it's got 200 feet on the open bay directly looking

Another likely tear-down, added Hertzberg, is 15 Star

downtown.

Island, which is listed for \$16.9 million.

"At the highest end, a luxury home is of the moment, right now," Hertzberg said. "It's current, with all the bells and whistles and amenities."

Many buyers at the top of the Miami market are snubbing the long-popular Medi-terranean-style architecture of barrel-tiled roofs and stucco walls in favor of sleek, contemporary, mostly glass houses.

"People are asking more and more for contemporary, clean lines," said Audrey Ross, senior vice president of Esslinger-Wooten-Maxwell and a top-selling luxury Realtor who has sold many of Miami's prime estates

several times. Wayne M. Boich Jr., the 37-year-old CEO of the an email. Boich Group of Companies, The inc a Columbus, Ohio-based coal business, bought three adjoining bayfront properties at 4666, 4682 and 4700 North Bay Rd. in Miami Beach for \$17.7 million last July and knocked down the homes to make way for a sleek, contemporary home bigger than all three.

Boich, known on the South Beach party circuit for throwing lavish gather-ings, sold his penthouse at Icon South Beach for \$21 million last year.

At North Bay Road, he and fiancée Cynthia Marin, who plan to marry in March, building

17.975-square-foot crystalline glass palace designed in a series of horizontal rectangles perched on a wide swath of Biscavne Bay.

"Finding the right lot took a significant amount of time. We were really happy to gather this together. It's been really exciting," said Boich, who hopes to move in early next year. "It's a modern feel, a sleek

Miami architect Kobi Karp, who also is doing some of Miami's most up-

scale condominiums, said effort was focused on taking advantage of the spectacular view of Miami and downtown. The building, which he describes as "floating rectangles" will have "huge verandas and terraces to create shade" on the mostly glass façade, he said.

Karp said the project is all about superlatives: "Anything that's been done before in Miami we had to meet, greet and beat it."

Keeping up with the Joneses requires as much. A few blocks south of Boich at 4358 North Bay Rd. is the jaw-dropping home of New York Yankees slugger Alex Rodriguez. A-Rod recently had the spacious contempo rary mansion listed with One Sotheby's International Realty for \$38 million but took it off the market and rented it out.

To the north, at 5800 North Bay Rd. is a lavish home formerly owned by Jennifer Lopez, now owned by healthcare executive Mark Gainor, who has listed it for sale for \$40 million.

Boich took some heat from locals for his extravagant plans. While two of the houses he bulldozed were in poor condition, the third, built in 1964 by architect J Arango, was a Miami Mod-ern style structure that some thought should be preserved.

Some of the more fanati-cal fans of the Miami Heat, which clinched the NBA championship in 2012, might argue a former home of Pat Riley deserves to be preserved and turned into

some sort of monument. Riley, who bought the home in 1996 for \$6.3 million, declined to comment. "Unfortunately, Pat is not interested in being quoted for your story," Heat spokesman Tim Donovan said in

The individual behind the corporation that bought the home has not been identified.

As for Boich, who says he grew up at Turnberry Isle and played in the U.S. Tennis Association Iunior International Championship as a teenager, he wants a topnotch tennis court on the northwest side of his property next to a swank glasswalled gym and spa overlooking the bay and downtown Miami. "We're very interested in sports," said Boich, who plans to live in the place and "raise a family."

For many of the world's one-percenters, however, a Miami mansion is a third, fourth or fifth home. Some collect homes like others collect cars or art - or, at more plebian levels, stamps or coins.

"It's a discretionary purchase, almost 100 percent of the time," said EWM's Ross. "Generally speaking, my business in the ultra highend tracks the stock market one to one. I can watch the ticker and know if I'm going to be busy or not. Right now, the high-end is flying."

Mega mansions on the market



Location: 3 Indian Creek, Miami Beach Price: \$47 million (record sales price for a Miami-Dade residence)

Features: A 22,000-square-foot ultra-modern glass palace on Biscayne Bay, with 100-foot swimming pool, cabana, six wet bars, a rooftop sky bar and Jacuzzi, a spa and a waterfront gym. Status: Sold



ONE SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY

Location: 4358 North Bay Rd., Miami Beach Price: \$38 million

Features: Ultra-contemporary estate is owned by New York Yankees superstar Alex Rodriguez. Home has more than 20,000 square feet of living space, with grand rooms. Expansive views along 275 feet of bayfront. Infinity pool, outdoor kitchen and rooftop deck.

Status: Listed for sale, but removed and rented out.



Location: 1114 Ocean Dr., Miami Beach

Price: \$100 million, marked down from \$125 million Features: Casa Casuarina is the former home of Italian designer Gianni Versace, who was slain on the front doorstep. Mediterranean-style mansion has 10 bedrooms and is lavishly decorated in fantasy themes, with a 54-foot mosaic-inlaid pool lined in 24-karat gold.



PSSI INGED.WOOTEN.MAYWELL DEALTODS

Location: 5800 North Bay Rd., Miami Beach Price: \$40 million

Features: Formerly owned by Jennifer Lopez, it's a 12,152-square-foot, Mediterranean-style estate, built in 1929 and extensively renovated. Boasts 200 feet along Biscayne Bay, and views of downtown Miami. Chef's kitchen, big wine cellar, koi pond, Dominican coral stone deck, summer kitchen and cabana.

Status: For sale.