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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

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\$18 Million
 A three-bedroom penthouse lists in Washington, D.C.
M2

MANSION

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Mary Steenburg
 On growing up in Arkansas
M12



HOMES | MARKETS | PEOPLE | REDOS | SALES

Friday, January 15, 2021 | M1



\$1.195 MILLION
 Original asking price of the house

Jack and Kie Hirsch, below, outside their new Oakland, Calif., home with their son Levi and their Great Dane Lou. They made three music-themed bids to appeal to the prior owners, whose music collection, below, led them to believe they were also music fans. Turns out they were right.

PHOTO TOP: CHRISTIAN KUTNER/REUTERS; BOTTOM: JACOB LANGE/REUTERS

Buyers Get Creative With Bids

These couples went the extra mile to convince sellers in a hot market that they deserved to be the new owner

By KATHERINE CLARKE

After a year of searching for a home in Oakland, Calif., for their growing family, technology executive Jack Hirsch and his wife Kie Hirsch found the perfect place in November—a charming 1930s Spanish Colonial Revival-style three-bedroom in a family-friendly neighborhood in the city's foothills. But there was one problem: Like many U.S. home buyers in 2020, they had a lot of competition.

In a bid to make their offer stand out in the midst of a three-way bidding war, Ms. Hirsch leveraged her extensive knowledge of rock music.

Ms. Hirsch was convinced that the sellers were rock music fans, too. During tours of the property, she saw vinyl records by the B-52s, Neil Young and U2, a set of bongo drums, a guitar and a keyboard. They displayed a shadow box filled with old concert tickets.



She saw an opening. For their first offer, the Hirsches submitted a bid of \$1,450,138 exactly. While it seemed, especially to their mortgage broker, like an oddly specific number, the 138 at the end was a reference to the 1978 song “We Are 138” by the punk rock band *Please turn to page M4*



<p>1ST OFFER \$1,450,138 Refers to “We Are 138,” the 1978 punk rock song by The Misfits</p>	<p>2ND OFFER \$1,471,979 Invokes the song “1979” by The Smashing Pumpkins</p>	<p>FINAL ACCEPTED OFFER \$1,486,753.09 A nod to the 1981 song “867-5309/Jenny” by Tommy Tutone</p>
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They Found the Simple Life Isn't So Simple

As urbanites escape the city to country estates, they are learning that getting away from it all comes with its own set of challenges

By BETH LANDMAN

STEPHANIE TRUNZO USED to jet around America as global vice president at Oracle from her base in a 6,800-square-foot Raleigh, N.C., house. These days, she can be found watching alligators snack on



seafood from the back porch of her three-bedroom, three-bath-room Daufuskie Island, S.C., home, where she retreated with her husband, Ryan Malynn, and daughter to ride out the pandemic.

"We looked at it as a bunker, a bubble away from fear," said Ms. Trunzo, 43. She and her husband, 43, purchased the \$920,000 home a year ago. "It's as if we've returned to childhood and are playing outside. We are like Davy Crockett off exploring in the wilderness."

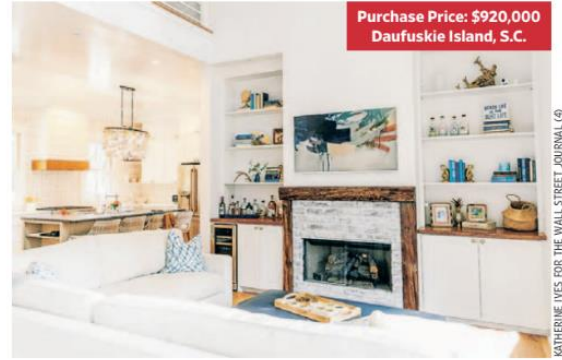
Ms. Trunzo and Mr. Malynn are far from alone in their newfound appreciation for a more basic life. From New York to San Francisco, urbanites have escaped to bucolic second homes and found a deeper

connection to the nature that surrounds them. While some might miss the culture and socializing of their past lives, others have developed a sort of reverse snobbery,

Please turn to page M6



The living room of Stephanie Trunzo's house, above. Ms. Trunzo, husband Ryan Malynn, and their daughter Adelaide walk the beach.



KATHERINE IVES FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL ©

MANSION



Purchase price: \$2.4 million
Sun Valley, Idaho



Louis Hoffer, right, relocated from Seattle to Sun Valley due to Covid. He bought his three-bedroom, three-bathroom vacation condo in 2007 and expanded it in 2014. Now that he's there more, he is taking on additional projects, which have been slow going thanks to his frequent beer breaks.

Simple Life Not Simple

Continued from page M1 celebrating their inner chicks, switching up their Porsches for Ford Broncos and expressing pity for wretches who breathe frailer air. They take pride in their chicken coops, check in with their landscapers as if they were stockbrokers, and have that same gleam in their eyes that Eddie Arnold had as he traded in his suit for overalls in the TV show "Green Acres."

In Raleigh, Ms. Truzso and Mr. Malyn paid for their daughter's horse to be groomed, but now the 11-year-old is mucking out the stables herself. Ms. Truzso, who dined out almost nightly, has been catching dinner from the Calligoye Sourd.

Recently divorced Louis Hoffer, 57, has taken on the roles of plumber, gardener and carpenter since relocating from Seattle. To flee Covid, he decamped to the \$2.4 million, three-bed, three-bath vacation condo in Sun Valley, Idaho, that he purchased in 2007 and added on to in 2014. He is redoing his deck and bathrooms and trying to landscape.

"These are the things subcontractors are for but you can only do so much hiking and biking, and since there is no symphony or ballet, I thought I would take these things on," said Mr. Hoffer.

He sanded and finished the porch but miscalculated the drying process, so it remained interminably wet and sticky. The bathroom project went more smoothly. He changed the shower heads, removed the toilets and installed Toto bidets.

"I've enjoyed doing this but I'm pretty inefficient because I stop for a cold beer every hour," he said.

Dan Gatsby, widower of lifestyle guru Barbara Smith, who, along with his wife, ran the B. Smith brand, has turned his back on his glamorous Manhattan lifestyle in favor of chopping firewood on his East Hampton, N.Y., property.

Mr. Gatsby, 64, first bought the modern seven-bedroom, 6½-bath property, now valued at over \$5 million, in 2017. After the pandemic he moved there full time. He likes to roam the 10 acres, on which he has created a dog run for his three Italian mastiffs and a mile-long jogging path.

"I had two penhouses in Manhattan but I don't miss it," he said. "The last time I went back the only thing I could see were ambulances and people walking around like the living dead. It made me realize how lucky I am to be living in a place where I get to see deer, hawks and rabbits."

Encounters with wildlife aren't always wondrous.

"A big black bear ate our dog food," said Ken Prydzman, a 62-



Purchase price: \$13 million
East Hampton, N.Y.

Lola Lewis bought her East Hampton, N.Y., home in 1995. She, her daughter, Christina Lewis, and grandchildren sheltered there during part of the pandemic.



Current value: \$5 million
East Hampton, N.Y.

from the city's chaos."

Mr. Hoffer reported that animals were flocking into Sun Valley's town to dodge the hunters. "The elk are mixing with the horses," he said. "I think they believe they are dispusing themselves."

Elizabeth Marston, 41, relocated from London, where she worked on a project in the Egyptology department at the British Museum, to her family's 40-acre vineyard in Napa Valley. She abandoned the sarcophagi, moved into her two-bedroom, two-bathroom cottage on the property and began working with the grapes and learning to drive a tractor. She loved the birds and going froggling with her nieces and nephews, but when a rattlesnake crossed her path, she was less enthusiastic.

"I had to call a man who came with his stick and bucket," she said. "I never thought I would have the snake guy in my Relo-

der."



Saidly, after five months of living with her family, making fig jam on Sunday mornings and going to the market with her little boy, she went

back to London briefly after the fire and is now working remotely from France.

Urban refugees are taking pride in working the land and growing their own food. Ms. Marston said she stayed and her husband, who went back to London briefly after the fire and is now working remotely from France.

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Hampton. After two tenants in her Manhattan office building contracted Covid, Ms. Lewis, who preferred not to give her age, moved to the 11-bed, nine-bath estate, which she purchased in 1995 for \$33 million, with her daughter Christina Lewis, 40, and grandchildren to shelter from the pandemic. There, she attempted to grow her own produce.

"My gardener quit because he couldn't find enough help, so we decided to do it ourselves," said Ms. Lewis, the widow of billionaire entrepreneur Reginald Lewis.

A storm destroyed much of the crop but she hasn't given up. Though they returned to the city because the children were called back to school, they will be planting again in the spring.

"It's wonderful to watch something grow from a seed," she said.

There have also been big style changes for the new country folk. Ms. Lewis has left her usual stow-away of suits at her five-bedroom, 4½-bath 5th Avenue apartment, so her daughter has been urging her to buy new tops.

"I have jeans so why should I buy new jogging pants?" she said. "I grow up in a Third World country. I am thrifty."

Mr. Hoffer has donated his suits to Goodwill, traded in his Range Rover for a 1995 Defender and travels to town on an old bicycle with a metal basket. "I saved a couple of Brooks Brothers shirts but I got some stores when I wear them, so my flannel and L.L. Bean collections are definitely growing," he said.

Mr. Prydzman and Mr. Bruder may have changed their daily routine, but she clings to some sartorial relics of her city life.

"She insists on wearing her Jimmy Choo flats on our hikes and Prada slip-ons to garden," he said.

For most of these former slickers, the rural experience has been transformative. Ms. Marston said her family will rebuild what has been destroyed.