

This \$5.5 million property, with sand on its west and south sides, is at 1251 Capri Way in Mandalay Shores. RE/MAX's Cuoco has the listing.



# OXNARD: THE MELLOW MALIBU

In-the-know players are heading an hour up the coast to Ventura County's quieter beach scene, the Montauk of SoCal *By Gary Baum*

AS THE SECOND-HOME SUMMER season hits high gear and Malibu begins to yet again resemble a zoo, savvy industry players eager to skip the scene but keep the sunscreen are heading a bit farther up the coast to the beaches of Oxnard in Ventura County, on the way to Santa Barbara. Fox Filmed Entertainment co-chief **Jim Gianopulos** has a place there, along with the likes of **Dave Grohl**, **Pat Sajak** and A-list attorney **Warren Dern**.

"It's fantastic, quiet, beautiful," says **Shelley Browning**, CEO of management firm Magnolia Entertainment. She and husband **Ken**, a top entertainment lawyer, purchased in the area — which is an hour north of Los Angeles — after looking seriously at several properties on Malibu's Carbon Beach. "Here, you have none of the nonsense of other beach towns — the noise and traffic and parking issues and headaches." As Keller Williams real estate

agent **Susan Blau** puts it: "If this were back east, Oxnard would be Montauk and Malibu would be East Hampton."

The neighboring stretches of the Oxnard coast — from north to south are Mandalay Shores, Hollywood Beach and Silver Strand — long have been a favorite of those in the business: from *The Sheik*, starring **Rudolph Valentino**, being shot on its dunes to **Clark Gable** and **Carole Lombard** famously sharing a quaint wooden bungalow in the neighborhood. Even **Humphrey Bogart** and **Lauren Bacall** were rumored to have kept a beachfront love nest there.

Prime Oxnard oceanfront property lures buyers for three reasons. First, the wide-for-the-region sandy beaches. Second, the value relative to more well-known communities. And third, the sparsely populated shore remains mostly under the radar and off the cosmopolitan grid. Unlike Malibu, there are no chichi boutiques or hot restaurants.

The housing stock, all on typically narrow 20- to 30-foot-wide lots, ranges from midcentury A-frame surf shacks (right now, there's a \$2.3 million listing at 4161 Ocean Drive) to contemporary spreads (a \$2.9 million residence on Ocean Drive put on the block by Warner Bros. executive vp/CFO **Edward A. Romano**).

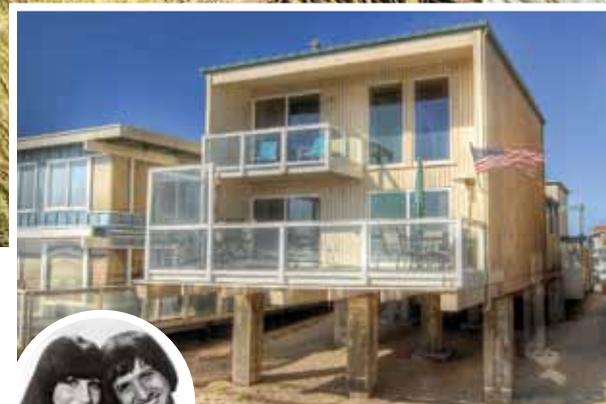
"It's the last undiscovered, or at least underappreciated, beach area along the Southern California coast," says hotel designer **Darrell Schmitt** (The Peninsula Beverly Hills), who has a house on Hollywood Beach. Adds **Ariel Palmieri** of Coldwell Banker: "You can buy a stunning home in Oxnard for \$2.5 million to



Gianopulos



Grohl



901 Mandalay Beach Road features four bedrooms and a pedigreed past: Sonny Bono and Cher (inset) once lived there. It's on the market for \$2.2 million; Cuoco has this listing as well.

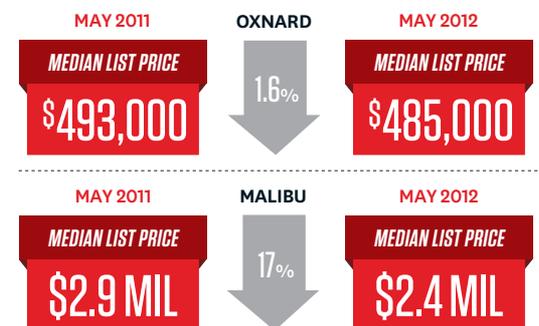
\$3 million versus \$8 million to \$10 million in Malibu. Plus, you are not going to run into your boss, or someone who is going to pitch something to you. You can be totally incognito. Yet at the same time it's very accessible: You can rise early on a Monday morning and still get into work back in L.A. if you want to."

According to RE/MAX agent **Gary Cuoco**, oceanfront prices are down 35 percent from their peak of several years ago, but are holding. "Right now," he says, "people are picking up some amazing value on the sand." **THR**



## PRICE WARS: OXNARD VS. MALIBU

In short: Oxnard is a steal — though not quite as much as it appears. Numbers for its beach ZIP code 93035 are much lower since they also include less-affluent areas farther inland



Source: Realtor.com