

Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi Buy, Buy and Buy Again in Montecito

By Mark David | January 17, 2020



Location: Montecito, California
Price: \$3.607 million
Size: 3 bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms

Two of Tinseltown's most prolific buyers and sellers of luxury real estate in the Los Angeles and Santa Barbara areas, Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi, are at it again, recently and quietly adding three residential properties in California's aristocratic seaside community of Montecito to their always in-flux portfolio.

Last summer, the daytime chat show queen and the "Arrested Development" actor made an almost \$1.4 million, under-the-radar purchase of a two-bedroom/two-bathroom condo in the heart of Montecito's Upper Village, presumably for family or staff, and in the fall they plunked down almost \$1.9 million in a clandestine, off-market deal for an approximately one-acre fixer upper next door to the sprawling, Balinese-inspired contemporary compound they acquired in early 2019 for \$27 million. Most recently, however, just after the first of this year, the property gossip column staples shelled out a mite more than \$3.6 million for one of Montecito's most unique properties.

<https://www.dirt.com/entertainers/actors/ellen-degeneres-montecito-mansion-120330771/>

Secured behind discreet gates and invisible behind high hedging and mature trees, the quirky and low-key yet rarefied and elegant residence comprises a pair of barn-like, English Tudor buildings that date to the mid-1700s. Originally built in Surry, England, the antique structures were carefully dismantled, shipped at what was no-doubt tremendous effort and expense to California and painstakingly reconstructed on a thickly wooded parcel of about 1.3 acres in a coveted pocket of Montecito. The two structures, which contain a total of three bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms and at least five fireplaces, are connected by an "orangerie," a glassed-in space where weather sensitive plants and fruit trees can be brought indoors during winter months.

Deeply evocative of the Old World but fully up-to-date with modern-day creature comforts, the charmingly idiosyncratic residence features a mix of brick and wide-plank hardwood floors, scads of leaded glass windows and plastered walls crisscrossed with uneven grids of rustic, hand-hewn wood beams. Each of the two structures includes a spacious living room with an imposing fireplace. There's also a study, a formal dining room with a fireplace, a large, high-end kitchen finished with hand-painted tile countertops and a breakfast room with a huge stone fireplace. Listing details indicate the estate also offers a gym space, a workshop, a full basement and an over-sized three-car garage with a restroom for the gardener and other staff.

French doors in the larger of the two living rooms open to a sun-dappled brick terrace surrounded by mature specimen trees and, according to marketing materials, the supremely private, tree-shaded gardens were designed by landscape architect Tom Nielsen to "honor all of the season with spectacular surprise blossoms throughout the year."

The property was listed with Susan Pate of The Morehart Group at Compass; DeGeneres and De Rossi were represented in the deal by Riskin Partners Estate Group.

The design savvy real estate obsessives, who have bought and sold dozens of multi-million dollar homes in the Los Angeles and Santa Barbara areas over the last ten or twelve years, also made property gossip headlines last May when they shelled out a gasp-worthy \$42.5 million for their current home in Los Angeles, a stately, 1930s English Tudor manor house with an illustrious chain of ownership in plum pocket of Beverly Hills. In 2008, professional tennis legend Pete Sampras sold the double-gated estate for almost \$17 million to "Will & Grace" co-creator Max Mutchnick and entertainment attorney Erik Hyman, who gave the place a sophisticated makeover that was featured in *Elle Décor* before it was sold for \$33.9 million in a 2018 off-market deal to rock star Adam Levine and fashion model Behati Prinsloo. Levine and Prinsloo almost immediately caught a raging case of The Celebrity Real Estate Fickle — they quickly set their real estate sights on Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner's Pacific Palisades compound, which they snapped up in early 2019 for almost \$32 million — and, after a multi-million dollar renovation, flipped the mansion to DeGeneres and de Rossi.