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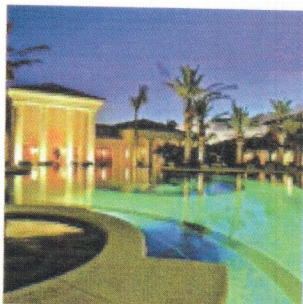
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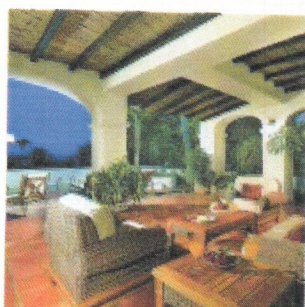
## UNIQUE PERSPECTIVES

By Sarah Binder

### *'Equity' Ownership*



While the real estate and travel industries continue to struggle, one company is offering consumers a share in both industries and has been growing at a rate of 50 percent each year since 2006. **Equity Estates** presents accredited investors with the opportunity to travel to and share in ownership of the company's 10 private vacation residences, which have an average value of \$3 million. With an extensive concierge program, meticulous residence upkeep, a closely monitored occupancy schedule and long-term appreciation, a membership in Equity Estates offers



investors more value than a timeshare, says co-founder Philip Mekelburg.

“With timeshares, people might have to wait 3 years to go when they want to,” says Mekelburg. And while most fractionals and destination clubs avoid full financial transparency, “Equity Estates is giving people a set of documents that show their ownership, where the money goes, how it is used, and all members get annual financials that are audited.”



New York City, Turks & Caicos, Hilton Head Island and Cabo comprise the most popular destinations, while the company intends to offer residences in Hawaii; Florence, Italy; Napa, Calif.; and Scottsdale, Ariz., within the next six months. Full (30 nights of usage per year) and half (15 nights) memberships are available. The 80 current members will share any profits when the residences are sold in 2021, though “as fund managers we can assess the marketplace; if 2021 looks like it does today, we would postpone up to 5 years,” says Mekelburg.

### *Editor’s Pick*

Diamonds are forever. When you purchase a **DNA2Diamond**, your loved ones, including cherished pets, can be with you forever too. DNA2Diamonds, a new, environmentally friendly company, creates one-of-a-kind, laboratory grown, GIA-certified diamonds in 70 days or less using the personal DNA carbon from a lock of hair or cremated ashes.



Chemically, physically and optically identical to earth-mined diamonds, DNA2Diamonds currently are available in radiant, princess or brilliant cuts in red, yellow-green or cognac. Customers are involved in the process from beginning to end — from receiving a DNA Signature Hair Collection Kit with step-by-step instructions to tracking each step of their order using their personal identification number. Updates are e-mailed to customers at the completion of each step in the diamond growth process.

“We want to appeal to a market segment that is looking for a way to create a commemorative keepsake that will be with them for eternity,” says Tom Bischoff, president and co-founder. The company’s first customer is a woman who lost a very special pet, a championship show dog who helped her get into the business and into breeding, says Bischoff. “She established so many new relationships she attributed to this pet and she felt very, very attached. She chose two smaller diamonds to put into earring settings.”

DNA2Diamond’s prices range from \$1,980 for a mini set of two cognac diamonds at a weight of 0.03 carats each, to \$18,575 for a red diamond at a weight from 1.90 to 2.09 carats.