



**Don Cheadle**  
Even young, the actor analyzed his characters' motivations. **M8**

# MANSION

**\$18 Million**  
Condo bought with crypto last year sells at a loss for cash. **M3**



**ΑΦ**



**Design Budget: \$2 Million**

The Alpha Phi house at the University of Georgia in Athens finished its makeover in 2019.

## Greek Life Goes Glam

Designers who specialize in sororities transform them into luxurious yet functional homes shared by dozens of women

By **KELSEY OGLETREE**

**C**urled up on the couch in the traditionally decorated TV room of the Alpha Gamma Delta house at University of Kentucky in 2002, freshman Liz Toombs watched an episode of the reality show “Trading Spaces” that featured a sorority house redesign. “I didn’t think it was real, just that it was a made-for-TV moment,” she said.

Years later, Mrs. Toombs, who launched her Lexington, Ky.-based interior design firm, PDR Interiors, in 2009, was approached by a Greek organization that needed help updating its 1970s home at the University of Kentucky. She took the project, and has since gone all-in on this niche design space, even adapting her company logo to a Greek key. Sorority design is now about 90% of her business, she said.

“There are dozens and dozens of women coming through the house and using it, so it’s different than creating a space for a family of four,” said Mrs. Toombs. Everything in the house must be durable to withstand heavy use (think commercial-grade fabrics and rugs), especially during the period known as recruitment, formerly known



**ΓΦΒ**

Members of Oklahoma State’s Gamma Phi Beta chat with the house’s financial adviser.

as rush, in which dozens or even hundreds of potential members pass through. The house must also look presentable and feel like a home, since many women live there during their college years. Interior design is

focused on common spaces, such as living rooms, dining rooms and study rooms. Most houses let the residents design their own bedrooms.

Another consideration is branding, she



**Design Budget: \$750,000**

said. Each sorority has its own color palette, which Mrs. Toombs incorporates into her designs. Timing is also important. Installation must be done within a limited

*Please turn to page M4*



**Design Budget: \$350,000**

The newly constructed Alpha Omicron Pi sorority house at Texas A&M University.



**ΑΟΠ**

FROM TOP: HENDRICK BRINSON FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (2); BRETT DEERING FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (2); EMILY HART (2); 1 OAK STUDIOS (CRYPTO CONDO)



## Lions and Statues and Fish, Oh My! Inside an Italian Villa in Phoenix

Built by a ‘flashy guy’ who sold a pet-store chain to Petco, the home of the late Frank Mineo has a kitchen modeled after an Italian village, complete with a cloudy sky

By **LIBERTINA BRANDT**

**THE LATE FRANK MINEO** was a “flashy guy” who parlayed a basement fish-breeding operation into chains of pet stores, according to his son, Frank Mineo Jr., who said his father’s colorful personality is evident throughout his mountain-top compound in Phoenix.

“He liked to spend his money,” Mr. Mineo said of his father, who sold six fish and pet-supply stores to Petco in the 1990s.

The elder Mr. Mineo died last year at the age of 76, and the roughly 3.5-acre property is on the market for \$6.5 million with Rosie Derryberry of Realty Executives.

The home, located on Camel-  
*Please turn to page M6*



**The kitchen’s upper level looks like homes with balconies.**



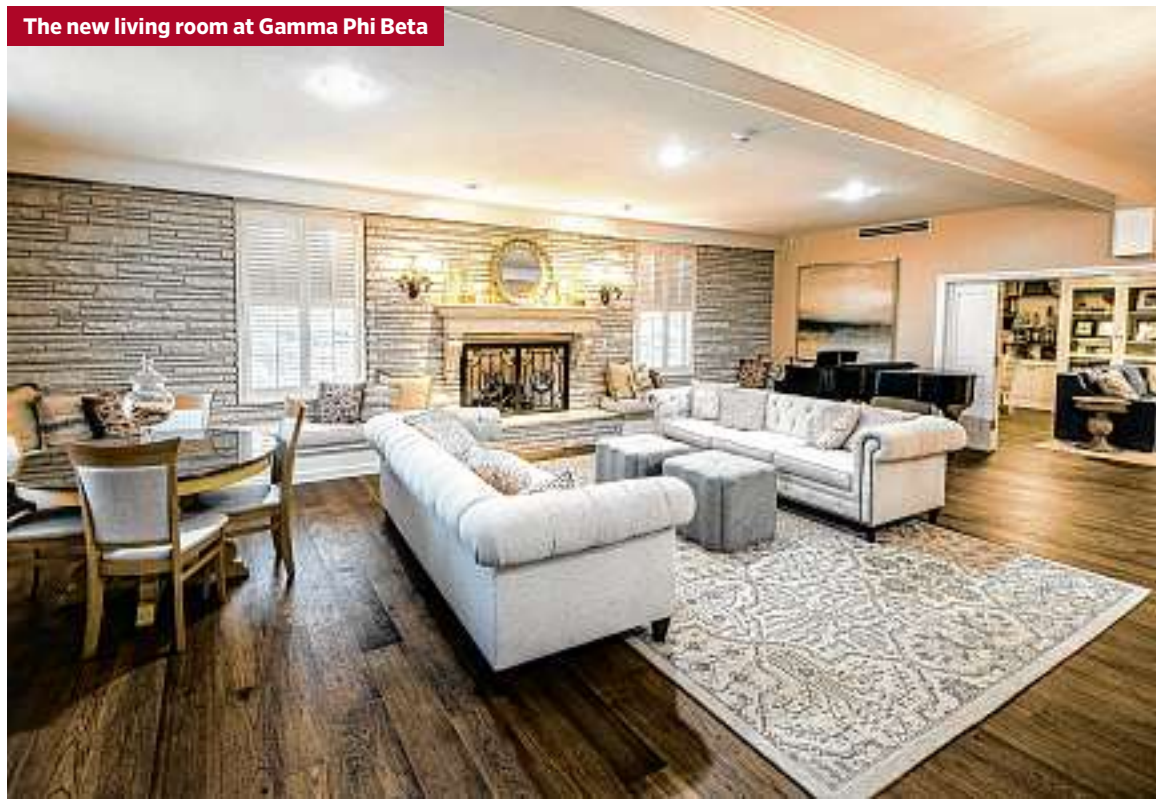
The dining room has a 750-gallon aquarium filled with freshwater fish, which are included in the asking price.

FROM LEFT: EXTREME AERIAL PRODUCTIONS; ANDY FARQUHAR (2)



## MANSION

The new living room at Gamma Phi Beta



## Greek Goes Glam

Continued from page M1

window in the summer, before move-in and recruitment begin.

Sorority design is changing with the times. Mrs. Toombs said she has been asked to create quiet spaces to promote mental health. This has included transforming a small closet—or, in older homes, a former phone booth—into a private room where the women can go to be alone, study, take a call, do an interview or take a test. She outfits these spaces with a desk or a wall-mounted counter, a comfortable chair, ambient lighting and artwork. Considering video calls is important. “We make sure that the wall behind where they’re sitting is an attractive backdrop,” said Mrs. Toombs.

Technology is another important element of modern sorority house design. “It’s not enough to have outlets in the wall,” said Mrs. Toombs. At the Gamma Phi Beta home she designed at Oklahoma State University, she added two square ottomans in the study room with six surrounding chairs. The center of each ottoman pops up to reveal numerous outlets for charging laptops and phones.

Before embarking on a sorority design plan, Mrs. Toombs meets with the stakeholders of the organization, usually including the local house corporation board or sorority managing body and current sorority members, to learn how the house will be used. Alumni and college students don’t always agree on design direction. “I joke that I should have gotten a psychology degree [to manage people],” said Mrs. Toombs.

Compromise is important, as design is a big expenditure for many sororities. Even when the new design and installation are complete, a designer’s job isn’t necessarily done. For instance, there was the time a member of a sorority house sat in a new light-gray custom chair to apply hair coloring on herself a few weeks after the install. “When you put brown hair dye on it, it was pretty rough looking,” said Mrs. Toombs. “I couldn’t believe somebody would do that.”

The Gamma Phi Beta sorority went all in on its home at Oklahoma State. Built as a sorority house in the 1960s with a wing added in 1972, it was overdue for a renovation that began in fall 2016, with Mrs. Toombs joining in as designer in 2018. The local house corporation board budgeted about \$6 million for the project, including a \$1 million fundraising goal, with \$750,000 budgeted for interior design. They raised \$940,000 and borrowed \$5 million, said Shelley Pulliam, past president of the local house corporation board for Gamma Phi Beta, which serves as the sorority’s landlord. This is funded through a mix of building fund fees (\$450 charged to new sorority members), in-house members (\$4,140 per semester) and out-of-house members (\$1,470 per semester), plus income from another owned property rented to a different sorority, and donations from alums. Gamma Phi Beta typically has around 185-190 total members, with 55-60 new members each year.

A critical part of the renovation was enlarging the dining room, said Miss Pulliam. Previously, it wasn’t big enough for all the women in the house—up to 87 at one time—to enjoy the formal dinner on Monday nights or spe-

Gamma Phi Beta members pose in the foyer of their sorority at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater.



The new bathroom makeup counter



cial events together. The kitchen needed updating and so did the furniture and soft goods throughout the home. Study spaces, bedrooms and a spalike bathroom were also added.

The main reason for the redesign was to help Gamma Phi Beta gain an edge. “Greek life is very competitive on our campus,” Miss



Members of Alpha Omicron Pi at Texas A&amp;M University pose in front of their new sorority house.

Pulliam said of Oklahoma State University, which has 13 sororities. “We were the first [to renovate], along with another house, but since then two others have renovated, and two more are do-



Custom dining chairs feature the sorority’s infinity rose design.



comes down to finding an organization whose members you connect with and values you support,” said Mrs. Toombs.

Woody Ratterman, managing partner of CSL Management, a Cleveland, Tenn.-based consulting and operations management firm for Greek housing, said sororities are increasingly evaluating how their facilities can best meet the needs of their members. “They are certainly looking at it from a competitive lens and how they compete with their neighbors next door, and with other housing opportunities in the community where they operate,” said Mr. Ratterman. Between 2014 and 2018, CSL Management averaged more than 50% growth year-over-year in project management, 95% of which was sorority house redesigns or new builds. Since the pandemic, that growth is about

## DESIGN DO’S

- Everything must be durable to withstand heavy use. Think commercial-grade fabrics and rugs.
- Spray a nontoxic protectant to help shield furniture from stains, including those from spray tans popular among the house residents.

ing so next year.”

She added that the renovation helped to give the women something to be proud of, as well as garner more interest in the sorority from potential new members. While Gamma Phi Beta hasn’t seen an increase in membership because of the design, that is due to quotas put on each house by Oklahoma State’s Panhellenic Council, part of the National Panhellenic Conference, a trade association for sororities.

Beauty isn’t the only factor in choosing a sorority, though. While design helps make a good first impression of the house, which may help create interest among potential new members, “it really

20%,” said Mr. Ratterman. While the firm has sorority renovation projects booked out through 2027, it isn’t solely due to demand. Financing, permitting and materials are all taking longer to source. Many of CSL’s projects have been paused in the last 18-24 months due to cost.

Staying competitive was a strong reason that the Alpha Phi sorority, invited to the University of Georgia campus in Athens in 2015, decided to purchase, renovate and expand a historic home originally built in 1862 as a private residence. They purchased the house for \$2.5 million in December 2017, and the budget for the project was \$6.5 million with \$2 million dedicated to interior design, said Linda Massie, Alpha Phi’s house corporation president. “Greek life at Georgia is a big part of the social environment, and we knew that to be successful there, we had to provide a home for our women that fit into and was on the scale of all the other chapters there,” said Ms. Massie. “A house can’t make a chapter, but if you don’t have a nice house and everybody else does, it can certainly hurt.”

Alpha Phi contracted Metal + Petal, an Athens-based firm specializing in commercial and residential design, including sororities, to oversee the design. Jade Joyner, who co-owns the firm with her husband, Graham Joyner, said they wanted to preserve the history of the home while making it more functional for the modern sorority woman. In an older home, rooms are smaller, but windows tend to be larger, so it was important to use appropriately scaled furniture and custom window treatments to create a high-end look, said Ms. Joyner. She chose pieces that would create an elevated, timeless look, such as Schumacher wallpaper and velvet pillows, while also incorporating playfulness. On upholstered items, she sprayed a nontoxic protectant to help shield furniture from stains, including those from spray tans popular among the house residents. Mrs. Joyner even had a few of her team members get spray tans and sit on the pieces to be sure it worked (it did). Made-for-Instagram elements include the entry with blue-and-white chinoiserie wallpaper and a blue sofa against the window in the sitting room. “I could see all the girls

Please turn to page M5



## MANSION

piled up there to take a great group photo," said Ms. Joyner.

The University of Georgia saw its highest enrollment ever in fall 2021 with more than 40,000 students, according to a report from the university, ahead of the university's first college football national championship win since 1980 in January 2022. Joyner said that Alpha Phi set off "kind of an avalanche" for sororities on campus when it comes to design, increasingly competitive for more students. Four more houses of the 19 sororities on campus have renovated since the installation at Alpha Phi was completed in summer 2019, according to the Greek Life office at the university.

Purpose-driven design within sororities isn't limited to the Southern states. Mrs. Toombs of PDR Interiors recently completed a design install for Delta Gamma sorority at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, a school at which all sororities aren't individual homes,



A study room

for sororities to put on their best face now that they are competing for a smaller pool of students. Undergraduate student bodies are down 9.4% since spring 2020, a reduction of 1.4 million students, according to data from National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Studio Ten 25 owner Abbe Fenimore, a Dallas-based interior designer who specializes in sorority houses, said that for her clients, declining enrollment meant a struggle to fill beds in sorority houses even before the pandemic.

Mrs. Fenimore caters to the 18-21-year-old crowd by creating rooms that are fun, bright and trendy, without stuffiness. Yet preserving a formal feel is important for when the homes are used to entertain parents and alumni, she said.

She said she does this by sticking with high-quality staples and neutral basics like window treatments, then layering in color and pattern with furniture and rugs. For instance, at the Alpha Omicron Pi sorority house at Texas A&M University in College Station—a new construction house with a design budget of \$350,000—she used modern swivel chairs upholstered in a bright floral fabric and a raspberry-hued round settee.

The latter has been a star of social media, popping up in frequent home tours by the women who live there. "They want to show it off," said Mrs. Fenimore.

Working on tight time frames for installation has less-than-Instagrammable moments, however. For one new-build sorority house, the contractors weren't finished when Mrs. Fenimore and her team showed up. Landscaping hadn't begun, either. "We're dragging all this expensive, high-end furniture into the house and they're having to come through mud," said Mrs. Fenimore. Two custom large-scale pieces from a local artist were accidentally pierced with a forklift. The photos of the house, taken that same week, needed Photoshop to remove heavy equipment seen through the windows.

"Everything went wrong," said Mrs. Fenimore, "but I look back now and we laugh about it."

The Alpha Phi sorority at the University of Georgia in Athens is a home originally built in 1862 as a private residence. The total renovation of the property was budgeted at \$6.5 million. It was finished in summer 2019.



but rooms within a larger university building. Delta Gamma's room, a 1,000-square-foot space within Hamilton Hall (built in 1940) was particularly challenging in that it was located on the basement level. The cost for the renovation was \$45,000, paid for by the Delta Gamma Fraternity Management Corporation. The chapter also gave a gift toward the project

of \$25,000, funded through the chapter's accumulated surplus.

Mrs. Toombs's work included choosing paint colors and updating all furniture, rugs and artwork to give a fresh, feminine look to the space, inspired by Delta Gamma's colors of bronze, pink and blue. The final furniture was installed in October 2022.

It has become even more critical

The foyer at Alpha Phi



CLOCKWISE: KRISTIN KARCH; KENDRICK BRINSON FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (2)

## Casa Bella

RESIDENCES

by B&amp;B ITALIA

The Art of Italian Living Curated by Piero Lissoni

## The Height of the High Life

Personally curated by globally renowned architect Piero Lissoni in collaboration with B&B Italia—creators of some of the most innovative and iconic Italian designs in the world—to bring the exquisite experience of Italian luxury to life.



CasaBellaResidences.com | 305-744-5101

4141 NE 2nd Ave. Suite #114 Miami, FL 33137

Located Behind the B&amp;B Italia Showroom

Artist's Conceptual Rendering

RELATED

ALTA

Sales by

FORTUNE DEVELOPMENT SALES

ORAL REPRESENTATIONS CANNOT BE RELIED UPON AS CORRECTLY STATING REPRESENTATIONS OF THE DEVELOPER. FOR CORRECT REPRESENTATIONS, MAKE REFERENCE TO THIS BROCHURE AND TO THE DOCUMENTS REQUIRED BY SECTION 718.503, FLORIDA STATUTES, TO BE FURNISHED BY A DEVELOPER TO A BUYER OR LESSEE.

The complete offering terms are available from the Sponsor, PRH 1400 Biscayne 1, LLC, 2850 Tigertail Avenue, Suite 800, Miami, Florida 33133; File No. CP22-0066; 1400 Biscayne Condominium, 1400 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami, Florida 33132. 1400 Biscayne Condominium (the "Condominium") marketed as Casa Bella Residences by B&B Italia is developed by PRH 1400 BISCAYNE 1, LLC ("Developer") and this offering is made only by the Developer's Prospectus for the Condominium. No statement should be relied upon if not made in the Developer's Prospectus. The illustrations and images are conceptual and may vary from concept to actual construction. All artist's renderings are for representational purposes only and subject to variances. Finishes depicted in artist's rendering are not necessarily indicative of what is specified in the offering materials and not all items depicted in artist's rendering are included in a unit purchase. All renderings of views and exposure to light are for representational purposes only and subject to variances. Furnishings, design features, fixtures, and décor illustrated are conceptual and are not included with purchase of a Unit. Consult the Developer's Prospectus for information on what is offered with the Unit and the calculation of the Unit square footage and dimensions. The Developer, PRH 1400 BISCAYNE 1, LLC, is a licensee of: The Related Group; B&B Italia; and Piero Lissoni, but none of these licensors is the Developer. © 2022 with all rights reserved PRH 1400 BISCAYNE 1, LLC.