

Grapevine

Elvis' house for sale

You can find all manner of Elvis Presley collectibles on the market today. While many are of varying interest and quality, here's one guaranteed to catch the attention of even the most jaded collector: Elvis' house.

No, it's not Graceland. It's the very first house Presley purchased for himself and his family in March 1956, at 1034 Audubon Drive, Memphis, Tenn. Elvis lived there for a year, and then, when the steady stream of fans drew too many complaints from the neighbors, he sold the house and moved to Graceland.

In 1998, the house was purchased by Cindy Hazen and Mike Freeman (authors of the Elvis sites guide *Memphis Elvis-Style*, among other books), who did Elvis fans a huge favor — they restored the house to how it looked in Presley's day and then opened it to the public.

"We knew people would want to see the house," Freeman told *Goldmine* in 2002. "All the bus groups already came by Audubon Drive, just to see it from the street! So it was just a matter of us opening the door so they could come in to the house itself." In fact, even before the couple was fully unpacked they were showing fans around the house.

Unfortunately, the couple is now divorcing and not able to keep the house, which was scheduled to be put up for auction on eBay April 14, closing May 14. "It's hard to let go of the house, very hard, but it was not possible to keep it," Freeman admitted. Fittingly, the couple gave their final public tour of the house during Elvis Week last year, Aug. 15, 2005.

The press release describes the house thus: "The traditional one-story ranch-style house (ca. 1954) has a broad rambling facade and a low-pitched hip roof of vertical redwood board-and-batten siding with a brick wainscoting. There is a two-car attached garage, and Elvis' pool and motorcycle garage are in the backyard. The house interior retains the improvements made by Elvis that allow the pool area to be visible from all the family areas. The front of the property is enclosed with a brick-and-metal fence installed by the Presley family." Photographer Alfred Wertheimer took several well-known shots of the Presleys in the house, which can be seen in the book *Elvis '56: In The Beginning*.

Since 2002, when *Goldmine* last visited the house, Hazen and Freeman fully uncovered the musical-note wallpaper in the hallway near the bedrooms. Pool repairs and



Photo courtesy of Gillian G. Gaar

Mike Freeman and Cindy Hazen inside the Memphis home Elvis Presley purchased in 1956.

repainting was also done, and the floors in the kitchen and den were resurfaced; when the parquet wood floor in the den, which was not original, was removed, the concrete floor, which Elvis had installed in December 1956, was exposed.

The biggest change will come when the house has new owners, for it may mean the end of public tours. "I can't speculate on what people may do," said Freeman. "You never know what will happen. But if they close it forever, I did have some friends/fans who told me, 'At least we had the chance to see the house when you owned it.' I can live with that. Overall, it was a great experience living in Elvis' house, hard to sum up in a few words. It was not always easy. By opening the house while living there full time, we sacrificed a lot of privacy, and that proved to be difficult in the long run."

Though losing Presley's house, Freeman noted he is involved with the effort to save the Libertyland amusement park (a favorite hangout of Presley's), which the city plans to demolish, "which is a shame," said Freeman. "Elvis fans from around the world know that he used to rent the park for parties. The park also meant a lot to Memphians, as recreation, and as summer employment for teenagers. Some Memphians have created a grass-roots organization, Save Libertyland!. I am also still interested in saving the Overton Park Shell [the site of early Presley performances]." Freeman's tour company, Memphis Explorations, offers city tours of other Presley sites (info: www.memphisexplorations.com, mike@memphisexplorations.com).

— Gillian G. Gaar

GRAPELEAVES



News & notes: Jazz pianist/composer Thelonius Monk received a posthumous Special Citation from the Pulitzer Prize board during its 90th Annual Pulitzer Prizes In Journalism, Letters, Drama And Music. Monk was recognized "for a body of distinguished and innovative musical composition that has had a significant and enduring impact on the evolution of jazz"... The off-and-on again quartet Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young will launch their Freedom Of Speech tour July 6 at The Tweeter Center of Philadelphia. Young has just finished recording a new album of politically charged songs titled *Living With War*. Beginning April 28, the album can be heard via streaming audio for free on Young's Web site, www.neilyoung.com... The first instrumental album from guitarist Peter Frampton, titled *Fingerprints*, will be on store shelves Sept. 12. The 10-track set finds Frampton playing across a broad range of styles with help from musicians such as original Shadows members Hank Marvin and Brian Bennett, Gov't Mule and Allman Brothers Band guitarist Warren Haynes, and Pearl Jam's Mike McCready and Matt Cameron, who contribute to a smoking cover of Soundgarden's "Black Hole Sun." The album also marks a return after nearly 25 years to A&M, the label where Frampton rose to superstardom with 1976's *Frampton Comes Alive*. Watch for a cover story on Frampton in *Goldmine* later this year.

For couch potatoes: Sixteen full-length performances from soul legend Marvin Gaye are featured for the first time on DVD. Reelin' In The Years/Hip-O Records' *Marvin Gaye — The Real Thing In Performance 1964-1981* showcases Gaye on American and European TV and in concert. Gaye is shown performing songs such as "Hitch Hike" in 1964 on *American Bandstand*, dueting with Tammi Terrell in 1967 on "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," and going it alone on "I Heard It Through The Grapevine" from the American TV show *Hollywood Palace* in 1969 and "What's Going On" and "What's Happening Brother" from 1972. Between the songs, Gaye talks about his life and music in interview segments from various TV shows throughout his career... *Arena, Smoke & Mirrors* is a 20-song performance recorded September 2005 at Wyspiaski Theatre in Katowice, Poland. It

features a special 10th anniversary setlist that includes Arena fan favorites "(Don't Forget To) Breathe," "The Hanging Tree" and "Witch Hunt" and songs from their newest album, *Pepper's Ghost*. The DVD also features bonus video from the reunion concert filmed in October 2005 in Holland plus an interview with Clive Nolan and Mick Pointer, band biography, animated menu, discography, photo gallery, desktop images and Web links... Other new DVD releases from Music Video Distributors include *Exodus, A Ray Of Sunshine* and *Landmarq, Turbulence* (Music Video Distributors)... Huey Lewis And The News, *Greatest Hits & Videos* (EMI) is a CD/DVD package containing a 21-track CD including 20 Top 20 hits spanning the band's career. The DVD collects nine music videos and a concert performance clip from 1982. All 10 video cuts make their DVD debut... *Austin City Limits Music Festival* (Image Entertainment) spotlights 24 performances from the TV show's 2005 festival. The two-DVD set features performances by The Allman Brothers Band, The Black Keys, Kaiser Chiefs, Blues Traveler, The Decemberists, Robert Earl Keen, Steve Earle And The Dukes, Gov't Mule, John Prine, Widespread Panic and others. Plus bonus interviews, mini-documentaries and more.

Sites and sounds: If you've been thinking about transferring your LPs, 45s and cassettes to CD but aren't sure where to start, Acoustica's Spin It Again software makes it easy. The program provides step-by-step instructions on how to hook up your equipment, how to record, how to divide tracks and more. It can also help clean up recordings by getting rid of click-and-pop record noise as well as removing hiss and hum from cassettes. You can also record your LP collection and cassettes to an iPod or MP3 player. Get started with a free trial download at www.acoustica.com/spinitagain.

For analog kids: Mobile Fidelity is rolling out three new 180-gram vinyl releases, including Aimee Mann's *Bachelor No. 2* and two limited editions: the two-LP set *Dave Alvin, Blackjack David* and Los Lobos' *Good Morning Aztlan*. The Alvin and Los Lobos albums are limited to 1,000 copies only and can be pre-ordered at www.mofi.com.