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The Latest in Security for Hollywood Homeowners: “Laser Systems in Every Single Project”

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BY ALEXANDRIA ABRAMIAN OCTOBER 24, 2019 5:00AM



ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE SCOTT

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“The world has changed, particularly in California, where there has been a huge increase in robberies and burglaries,” says Mauricio Umansky, founder and CEO of luxury **real estate** brokerage The Agency, who sees those changes reflected in every aspect of the high-end real estate market in L.A. “Fingerprints and retinas now open doors instead of keys, safes are bulletproof, as are entire rooms. We just sold a home with a bulletproof master bedroom.” (Umansky himself upgraded to two full-time armed guards after thieves stole more than \$1 million in handbags, jewelry and watches from his 10,000-square-foot Colonial in Encino, formerly owned by Smokey Robinson.)

Security booths, guards and laser systems have become expected elements in the \$40 million to \$50 million homes developer Ramtin Ray Nosrati builds for buyers like the NBA's DeAndre Jordan. "We're installing laser systems in every single one of our projects," says Nosrati, adding that buyers pay \$35,000 to \$50,000 and often are "celebrities, athletes and musicians who aren't home much. Lasers surround the property so intruders can't get to the home to disable the alarm system or shut the cable, internet and phone."

Security systems are now also trained toward people living inside the home. In one under-construction Brentwood estate with an elaborate cannabis lounge, Nosrati has installed fingerprint-recognition software so that only certain people can be admitted: "If the kids or the housekeeper try to enter the room, nobody can get in except those who have access."

But just as L.A. homes are starting to function more like banks and museums, cybersecurity expert Lou Rabon says luxury compounds are becoming more, not less, vulnerable to attack. The culprit? Smart appliances. "You've got Alexa, Siri, but then you also have light bulbs, toasters and coffee makers that are all connecting to the internet," says Rabon, former manager of information security at Sony (before the 2014 hack) and now CEO of Cyber Defense Group, which charges as much as \$10,000 a month to protect homeowners from digital dangers. "If you use the same password on your iCloud or Gmail as you do on DoorDash, it's trivial for an attacker to enter very sensitive areas of your life."

One of the fastest-growing waves of home security is enabling residents to escape from their own compounds. "Safe rooms have always been around, but now there are secret passages and exits so that they can get out quickly," says Umansky. Daniel Giersch (ex-husband of Kelly Rutherford) has listed his \$13 million home in the South of France that includes a description of a series of underground tunnels.

A hidden garage is becoming a must-have amenity for the \$40 million-plus home. Typically a one-car interior space located far from the main garage, the area is often underground and connects to the home via tunnels for a full *Mission: Impossible* escape from intruders armed with weapons or simply recording devices. "Here in L.A., keeping people safe from intruders includes the paparazzi," says Umansky.

Jannie Cercone, a former screenwriter and now a developer of a new Malibu home, currently listed, installed not just one 10-foot-high hedge but "two — with a chain-link fence woven with PVC blackout slats in between," she says. "That way, the home is surrounded by beautiful landscaping, but it prevents a paparazzo from reaching his or her camera through the branches."

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