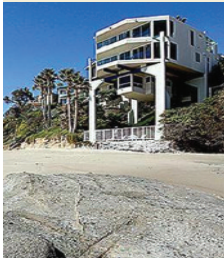


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## New Territories for Irvine Company Apartment Buy Stretches From Placentia to Aliso Viejo

By MARK MUELLER

Irvine Company has taken over the ownership and operation of a portfolio of nearly 5,000 apartments in Southern California, in a deal that gives the Newport Beach-based real estate company a presence in several new Orange County markets.

The company last week quietly completed the acquisition of eight apartment complexes in OC, and another eight in San Diego County.

A bulk of the local properties are in new markets for Irvine Co.—Orange County's dominant real estate company—including locations in Aliso Viejo, Fountain Valley, Huntington Beach, Mission Viejo, Placentia, and Rancho Santa Margarita.

► Irvine Company 12



Placentia Place: 416-unit complex expected to get Irvine Co.'s brand

## OC Developers Take Neighborly View on Big Plans in Texas

**REAL ESTATE:** 9M-SF plan sees Dallas as extension of SoCal ports

By MARK MUELLER

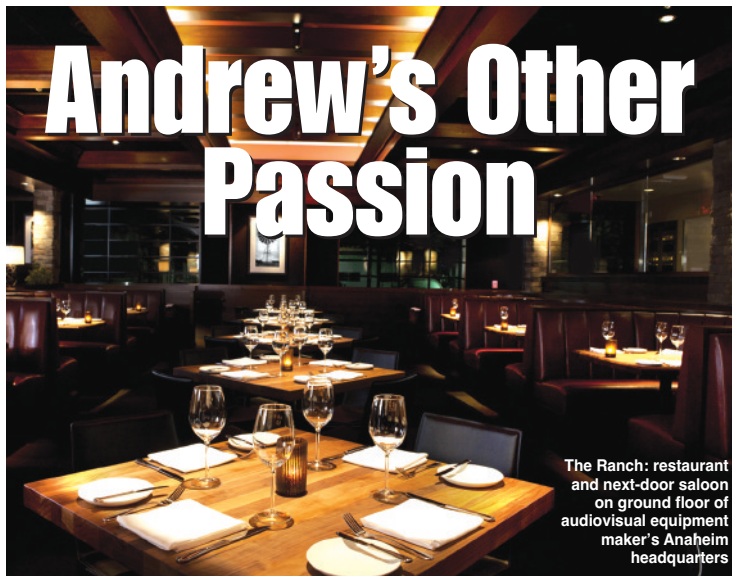
A pair of Orange County developers are hopping the rails to Texas, where they plan to build one of the largest high-end industrial campuses in the U.S.

CT Realty Investors of Aliso Viejo and Seal Beach-based Xebec Realty Partners recently closed on the



Watson: no plans to shift HQ to Lone Star state

► Texas 46



## Andrew's Other Passion

The Ranch: restaurant and next-door saloon on ground floor of audiovisual equipment maker's Anaheim headquarters

## Extron Boss Takes Country Chic to Top Floor

By KARI HAMANAKA

The mere mention of the Petaluma fried quail at **The Ranch Restaurant & Saloon** in Anaheim prompts **Andrew Edwards** to hold up his hand and bring the conversation to a halt.

"The best I've ever had," he says after a brief pause. "It is incredible. Nobody does it like us."

Edwards would know.

He owns the Ranch and spends nearly every night there with his wife, **Morgan**.

His time at the restaurant comes after his work is done upstairs, in his fifth-floor office of the headquarters for **Extron Electronics Inc.**, the audiovisual equipment

manufacturer he founded 30 years ago.

The North Carolina native opened the restaurant and saloon about a year ago—mostly because he wanted a good local spot for dancing.

Now he's expanding—mostly because he can.

"I have the space, I own the building, I own the company in the building," Edwards says. "I believe that it is something that is needed. I like doing things that are more unique than what everybody else is doing."

The Ranch stands out as a high-end steakhouse with a saloon for dancing and live entertainment attached.

► The Ranch 54



Special Report:  
Fifi's Best

page 21

## William Lyon Homes Latest on IPO Watch

**REAL ESTATE:** Push required by 2016; market suggests sooner

By MARK MUELLER

Newport Beach-based **William Lyon Homes** is the latest Orange County builder that looks like a candidate to take advantage of Wall Street's increased interest in the homebuilding industry with an initial public offering.

The iconic homebuilder, which has been privately held since 2006, last month registered shares of its stock with the Securities and Exchange Commission on behalf of investors who helped recapitalize the company following a short stint in bankruptcy that ended early last year.

► Lyon 54

## Hoag, St. Joseph OK Covenant, Pick Board

**HEALTHCARE:** New company to oversee regional healthcare network

By VITA REED

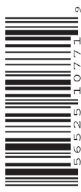
Newly formed **Covenant Health Network** has named its board of directors and plans to set up shop in Irvine with **St. Joseph Health**, which has shifted its headquarters from Orange.

St. Joseph Health and Newport Beach-based **Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian** said last week that both healthcare providers have approved final plans to



Afable: now chief executive of Covenant, executive vice president of St. Joseph's Southern California region

► Covenant 53



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# The Ranch

► from page 1

Edwards turned heads a few years ago when he announced plans to open the Ranch in 20,000-square-foot of ground floor space inside Extron's corporate headquarters in a mostly industrial section of Ball Road. That was after plans to build it at the Revere House in Tustin fell through.

The restaurant and saloon now attract hour-and-a-half-long waits at the door on weekends.

The operations has a Zagat rating of 28 for food and service and 29 for décor. The scale, which goes up to 30, classifies ratings between 26 and 30 as "extraordinary to perfection."

Average guest checks run between \$45 and \$60 per person.

Now the Ranch, which employs 125 workers, is going upstairs, with banquet space being built on the top floor of the six-story building. There will be a 200-seat banquet facility along with 30- and 70-seat private dining rooms and a smoking lounge. A hospitality suite for guests of Edwards includes a fireplace, with room for a grand piano.



Edwards: "My tendency is to go my own path"

Construction crews are hammering and sawing away at the expansion space with a country-chic design in mind—a similar approach taken with The Ranch Restaurant & Saloon.

"I wanted upscale, not a Western barn," Edwards said.

Double-paned windows on the sixth floor, which offer guests views of the fireworks show from Disneyland, were created to give the feeling of being inside a home rather than the headquarters of an electronics company with annual sales estimated at \$600 million.

And, of course, every dining room has a projection and audiovisual system courtesy of Extron.

The new space is expected to be completed in the summer.

With a year in the restaurant industry now under his belt, Edwards says he has learned a lot.

"I'm not from the restaurant world, so I've been getting educated," he said. "I personally love planning strategy, marketing, operations [and] the approach to the customer. It's been an interesting year. A very interesting year."

The restaurant has yet to turn a profit, but Edwards points out that it's a tough business that requires a long-term view. And his personal nature no doubt adds to the overhead.

"I'm a perfectionist," he says. "My execu-



Rendering of banquet room: sixth-floor expansion will give diners view of Disneyland fireworks

tive chef is a perfectionist. It takes a lot of people, and most restaurateurs, it seems to me, run with a very lean staff, and their tendency is not to provide the benefits that other organizations might provide like health insurance. The tendency is for restaurant employees to work a lot of hours and not really get paid for it. Here, we take a little different approach, and we have health insurance and the benefits."

## Profitability

Edwards is uncertain if the Ranch will reach profitability in its second year, but he believes the expansion will do the business good in any case.

"The larger your organization, the more you can spread your fixed expenses because you're spreading it to money-making parts of the company," he said. "So, bringing on the sixth floor will spread some expense."

Edwards didn't spare any expenses prior to the Ranch's opening.

He hired the Ranch's entire management team 18 months before it opened, putting them in a wing on the fifth floor of the headquarters building. The team lineup included Master Sommelier **Michael Jordan**, known in OC for prior stops here, including at Napa Rose at Disney's **Grand Californian Hotel**, and Executive Chef **Michael Rossi**.

"I like having everything in advance," Edwards said.

A research-and-development kitchen was set up in another Extron building across the street.

The restaurant is a passion project for Edwards, so his outlook is long-term, and he's working off a hunch that the sixth floor is just what people are looking for—even if he hasn't yet heard requests from customers for banquet space.

"I wanted that because I feel like the market is there," Edwards said. "We're right here at the convention center, so it's my outlook on the convention center and the customers are in the market here."

He's not big on mixing with others in the restaurant industry.

"My tendency is to go my own path," he

said.

There's no traditional advertising for the Ranch. It counts on word of mouth, a strategy that's not expected to change because "that's the way it's going to be," Edwards said.

"It's all about the product, so if you've got a top product, then the word is going to spread, and in my opinion, we've got the best product," he said.

It helps that Edwards has some control over his food supply. Some of the Ranch's produce comes from a 2-acre plot of farmland Edwards owns in Orange, not far from where he lives.

Last summer the farm produced 400 heirloom tomatoes for salads at the Ranch. Edwards guesses there will probably be 500 this summer. There are orange trees, two fig trees and one pomegranate tree. Squash and peas are being planted.

Edwards also owns 168 acres in Santiago Canyon.

"What could we do out there?" he wondered aloud with a smile. "Maybe we'll do a winery. More future planning."

Edwards' other operation counts plenty of other Orange County real estate—more than 750,000 square feet either leased or owned.

## Extron

Extron makes the accessories, cables, connectors and other products that allow for different audiovisual technologies to "talk" remotely to one another over the Internet. That communication allows for the transfer of an image, audio or video from a computer onto presentation screens used at conferences, training centers, boardrooms and other places.

The company is a major player in a global audiovisual industry that is projected to reach \$115 billion in sales in 2015, according to Virginia industry association InfoComm International.

Extron's competitors include Rockleigh, N.J.-based **Crestron Electronics Inc.** and **Kramer Electronics Ltd. International** in Jerusalem.

The company counts 1,300 employees here. Manufacturing of some Extron products—what Edwards calls the "commodity-level

products"—is done in Anaheim, with one factory on Ball Road and another on Taft Avenue.

The idea to start Extron 30 years ago came during an exchange between Edwards' former employer—a maker of flat-screen projectors—and one of the employer's customers.

Edwards recalled that **Boeing** wanted to project something from an **IBM** computer screen, and the company he worked for installed a device in the back of the projector to accommodate the request. But that interface was limited in the number of colors it could project—a total of eight compared with that IBM computer's capability for 16. "So, I said to them, 'You need to put that interface down here at the computer,' and they said, 'We're not in the interface business.' So, I said 'Hello,'" Edwards said. "We developed an interface and that became Extron."

Extron started out in Garden Grove and later shifted to Santa Fe Springs before settling in Anaheim in 1995.

## Early 2000s

It grew rapidly along with the rest of the industry in the early 2000s, when companies saw a shift from sales of single projectors through office supply stores to extensive systems operating over the internet.

"The early 2000s was a major sea change for the industry and that's when Extron went from its infancy and really accelerated," said InfoComm spokesperson **Betsy Jaffe**. "They were there at the head of that IP revolution."

Extron expanded with offices in Chantilly, Va., and Raleigh, N.C., where it recently built a 144,000-square-foot office, complete with a training facility.

Extron also has training facilities in Toronto, New York, Europe and the Netherlands, among other places. It recently acquired a building in Dallas.

The company's training program, which it calls Extron Institute, began back in the 1980s and is the "mainstay of our marketing," Edwards said.

"We fly in our customers and dealers, put them up over at the Crown Plaza, and bring them here to train for two days on technology and our products," Edwards said.

The program has gone up a notch now that trainees are treated to food at the Ranch.

The differences between the restaurant and audiovisual industries are bridged by Edwards' approach to customer service.

He'll sometimes respond directly to the Ranch customer complaints on the review site Yelp. He occasionally posts his thoughts on various industry subjects in a section of the Extron website called Andrew Online.

"I like to set the record straight," he said. "I get to give my opinion—and that's the way I can do it." ■