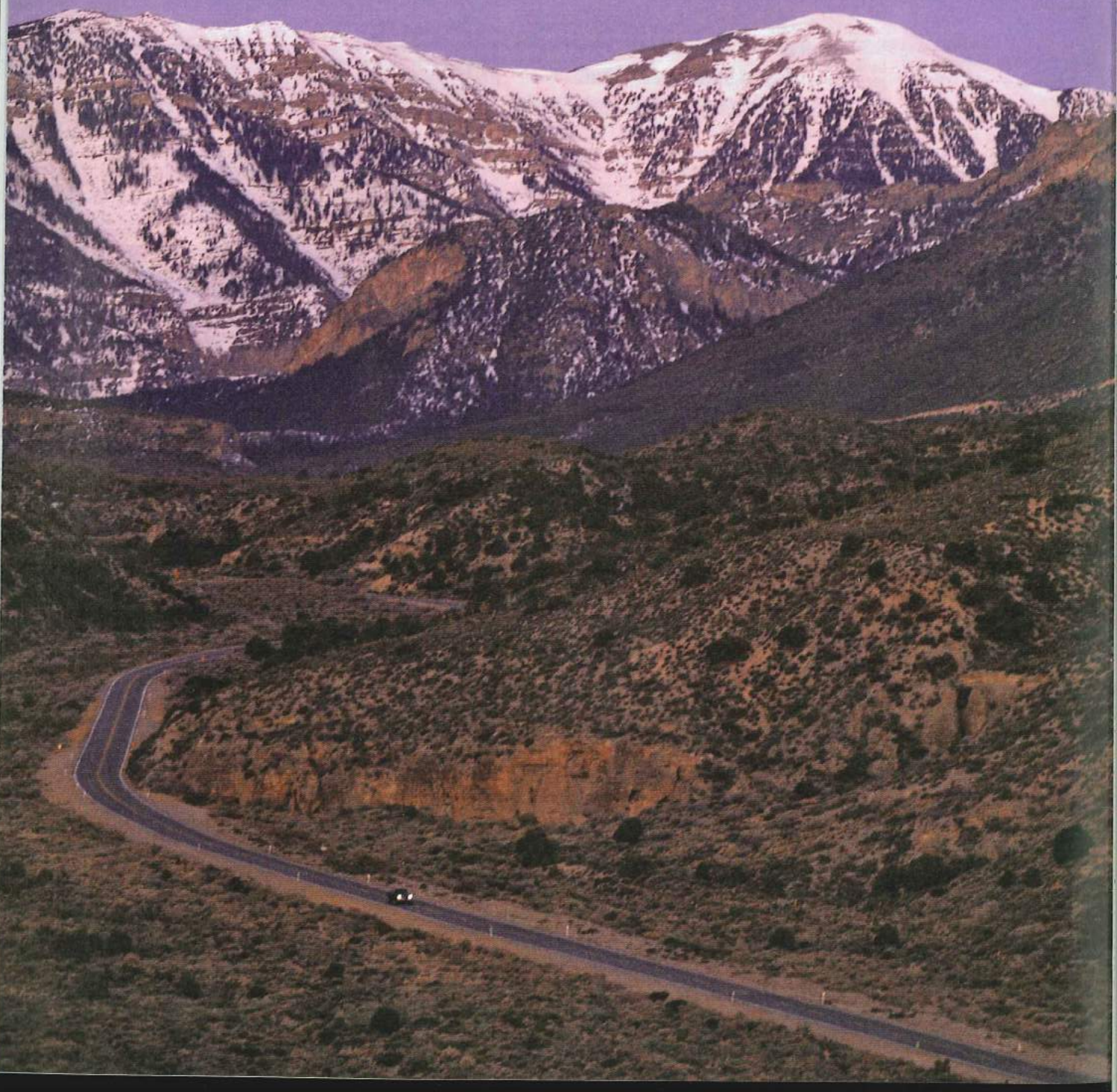


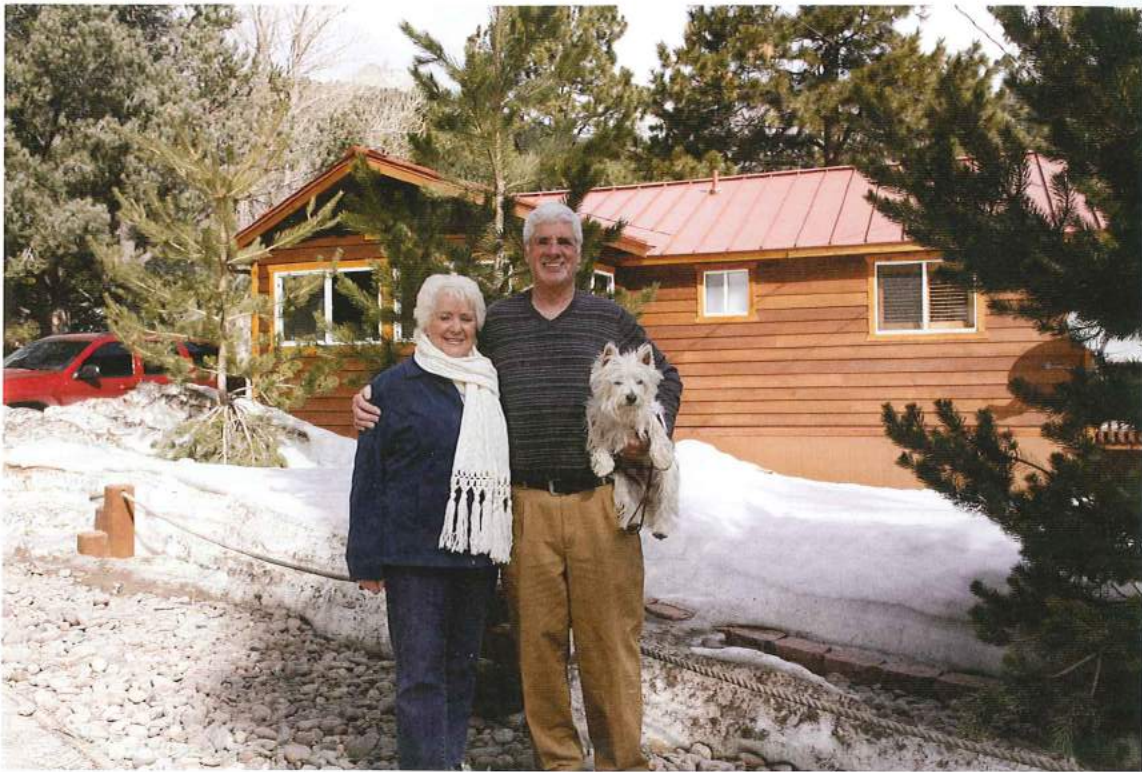
MOUNT CHARLESTON

living

## SURROUNDED BY NATURE

The mountain lifestyle isn't as hard to find  
in Southern Nevada as you might think.





STORY BY MIKE HENLE | PHOTOS BY JIM LAURIE

**FOR SOME SOUTHERN NEVADANS CAUGHT UP** in the hustle-and-bustle Las Vegas lifestyle, the serenity and beauty of Mount Charleston—a short drive to the northwest—make for the perfect retreat.

“It’s the best 50 miles of my life,” says Allan Hirschorn about the drive from Vegas to his home off State Route 157, the gateway to Mount Charleston. The self-appointed, unofficial mayor of Mount Charleston and long-time gaming executive with MGM Grand isn’t kidding. “When I get to Highway 157, I just say ‘Thank you, God.’” Allan and his wife of 38 years, Patricia, used to have dinner dates in the mountains. However, they dreaded the return trips to Vegas and decided six years ago to buy a cottage in a place known locally as Rainbow Canyon. “My wife loves walking our dog in the morning,” says the colorful 67-year-old Allan, a 46-year veteran of the gaming business. He is so entrenched in the Mount Charleston lifestyle that he serves on the volunteer fire department auxiliary division.

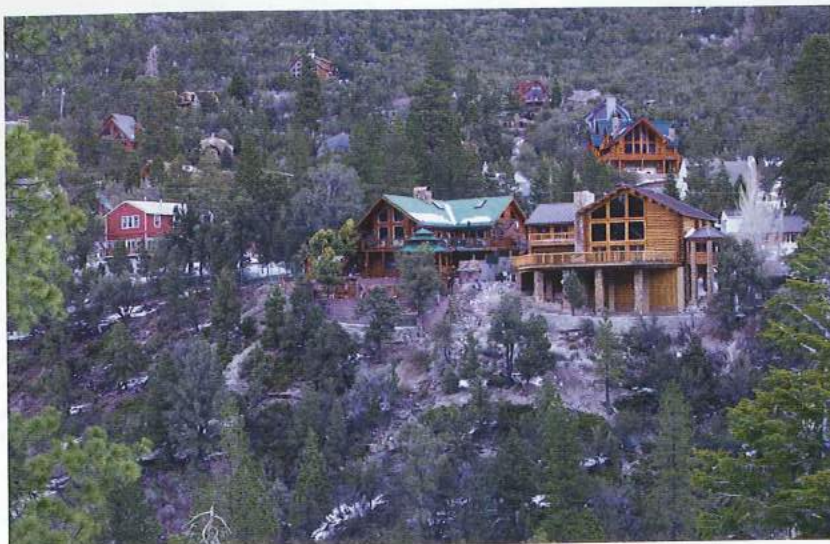
It is easy to see why people like living near Mount Charleston, with cabins and homes priced from

\$300,000 to \$3 million. The general area can be as much as 25 degrees cooler than Vegas in the summer.

Garry and Angie Tomashowski are native Las Vegans who own and operate Mount Charleston Realty. Their love of weekend motorcycle excursions drew them to Mount Charleston. “When you hit that turnoff to Highway 157, you can feel your shoulders just relax,” says Angie, who worked with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department for 17 years. The couple purchased their double A-frame chalet in the Rainbow Canyon subdivision in 1988 as a part-time getaway, but soon after moved there permanently.

Although their home was a Housing and Urban Development repurchase, the Tomashowskis worked hard to improve the property to its present condition. As they raised their family in Mount Charleston, their passion for the area grew. Angie says, “Appreciating the simple things like nature is invaluable.” Now it’s the Tomashowskis’ job, along with their daughter, Katie, to show others the mountain-lifestyle dream. “We live, work, play, and sell a mountain paradise,” Angie says.

State Route 157—shown on the opposite page as Charleston Peak looms in the distance—is the gateway to Mount Charleston. Allan and Patricia Hirschorn (above, with their West Highland Terrier, Hamish), have lived in the area for six years.



Long-time *Las Vegas Review-Journal* columnist John Smith, his wife, Tricia, and their daughter, Amelia, live in the Old Town subdivision. "Living at Mount Charleston gives us the opportunity to be surrounded by nature at more than 7,000 feet elevation and still live near Las Vegas," John says. "It's common for us to see mule deer in the yard. Last summer, a bobcat visited Old Town for a few weeks. Coyotes and foxes make regular rounds in the area, and on rare occasions someone spots a mountain lion." Kyle Canyon, near the Smith home, creates a unique perspective in that it catches the light. He says, "Distant limestone cliffs and pine-covered ridges come alive with detail and color."

"I was born in Henderson, but I can't imagine living anywhere else. During the harsh winters, I arrive at work with my Subaru covered with snow. I tell people I live in Minnesota, but work in Las Vegas."

Dan Sussman, a 47-year-old psychiatrist and native of Long Island, N.Y., says

Mount Charleston is worth the commute. "You have to put up with a little weather to be off the beaten path," says Dan, who also resides in the Rainbow Canyon subdivision. "However, it's really not that far to have a totally different environment. I can get from Mount Charleston to anywhere in the city in about an hour. It seems like half the days you come down into the valley, it's a big dust bowl. These mountains are beautiful."

Dan has been in Southern Nevada for more than four years after living in Kentucky. He couldn't wait to get his house built into the side of a mountain. "It's totally worth it to live up there," he says, adding that he does worry about an avalanche taking out his home. "Right out the back of my house, the whole mountain pitches up 40 degrees. And three years ago, we had a six-foot base."

Even though he has challenges getting into the driveway because of the snow, Sussman wouldn't trade it for anything. "I lose about 10 pounds every winter shoveling snow," he says.



## MOUNT CHARLESTON RECREATION

### Winter

#### Las Vegas Ski and Snowboard Resort

Located at the end of State Route 156 in Lee Canyon.  
[skilasvegas.com](http://skilasvegas.com)  
 702-385-2754

### Warm Weather

#### Mount Charleston Wilderness

Located within the Spring Mountains and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. Some 40 miles of trails. Elevation changes and the lack of flat terrain make for strenuous but beautiful hiking.  
[fs.fed.us/r4/htnf](http://fs.fed.us/r4/htnf)  
 702-515-5400

Top left: Trees in the Echo Canyon area seclude Cabin-style homes. Two Rainbow Canyon residents enjoy a winter sled ride not far from their homes (top right).