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PRIVATE PROPERTIES

Relational Investors' David Batchelder Lists California Ranch for \$17.5 million

The Santa Ysabel compound includes a go-kart track, paint ball course and a 650,000-gallon pool with a dock and a sandy beach



Relational Investors co-founder David Batchelder has listed his San Diego-area ranch for \$17.5 million. HALL AND HALL

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By Candace Taylor

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With California activist investment firm Relational Investors winding down, co-founder David Batchelder has listed his San Diego-area ranch for \$17.5 million.

The ranch is located in Santa Ysabel, about 30 miles east of San Diego. The 720-acre property, with a main house measuring about 4,000 square feet, two guesthouses and extensive equestrian facilities, is listed with Bill McDavid of Hall and Hall and Eric Iantorno of Pacific Sotheby's International Realty.

Mr. Batchelder said he purchased the ranch as raw land in 2000 for \$5 million, and set about building what he calls "a family fun compound." The property has a go-kart track, skeet-shooting range, paint ball course and two fishing ponds. Mr. Batchelder also converted a cow pond into a 650,000-gallon pool with a dock and a sandy beach "designed for small kids."

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“When the grandkids come out, there are plenty of activities to entertain everyone,” he said, adding that it is even enough to get the children “off the mobile devices.”

Mr. Batchelder’s wife Sylvia trains dressage horses, and the couple has eight horses on the ranch, he said. The property has a 19-stall barn, a 6-stall “mare motel,” two dressage arenas, over 100 acres of pastures and miles of riding trails.

With partner Ralph Whitworth, Mr. Batchelder co-founded Relational Investors, one of the oldest and most successful activist investment firms, in 1996. The San Diego company is known for taking stakes in companies such as Hewlett-Packard and persuading management to make changes. Mr. Whitworth has been battling cancer and the firm plans to wind down, a process Mr. Batchelder said should be completed by the end of the year.

Mr. Batchelder, 65, describes himself as “semiretired.” He said he and his wife will relocate with their horses to Pennsylvania, where they have purchased a farm. Work-wise, he said, “I can do what I do from anywhere now.” He said the couple will keep their beach house in Del Mar.

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