

What's Better than a Bunker? A “SOCIAL STORM” Home



Judy Dutton

Every billionaire these days has a bunker—Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos, Sam Altman—but what do you do with these fortified hideaways if doomsday never arrives? That’s why a smarter investment, in both good times and bad, might be what real estate broker Jon Kohler calls a “Social Storm” property. Here’s why, according to the man who coined the term.

Q: What inspired you to sell “Social Storm” properties? “In Florida, we prepared for hurricanes. But at some point, I looked around and realized that society was in turmoil, so ‘Social Storm’ fit. When I first started using the term as a real estate broker, people begged me to stop, since they’d never heard a broker say anything negative. Shows like Doomsday Preppers made preparedness look kooky. Then Covid changed everything. Before, I had to convince people that bad things could happen. Now everyone knows they can.”

Q: What are the main features of a Social Storm property, and how does it differ from a bunker? “The main feature is being self-sufficient. A good water source is critical. You want to store hard assets like cattle, wildlife, timber, and farms, and have multiple energy sources, such as a generator and solar. But unlike a bunker, a Social Storm

property is a place where your family and friends can be comfortable and have fun. A bunker is more the adolescent knee-jerk ‘I’m gonna buy bullets and build a wall and live underground in a decommissioned missile silo in Kansas.’”

Q: Are Social Storm properties smart investments? “They’re incredible investments because they’re also recreational real estate assets for fishing, hunting, hiking, farming, growing timber; some treat them like personal national parks for their families. So if tomorrow is a better day, these properties will go up the value just like they pretty much always have. But if tomorrow is a worse day, they’ll go up even more. They’re the perfect financial hedge. People focus on their stock portfolio, but if you don’t have a place where your family can be safe, who cares about stocks?”

Q: Do you have to be a billionaire to buy one? “No. They can cost as little as half a million. You’ll want a place within driving distance on two tanks of gas. People say they’ll fly to New Zealand, but what if airports and borders are closed?”

Q: Do you live on a Social Storm property? “I don’t talk about my own property—that’s part of the concept. Privacy and discretion are essential. No one wants their exact location known.”