

***This Wall Street Journal article highlights Mark Partin,
partner with Crown Realty Advisors.
Mark works extensively with international investors
buying "distressed" opportunities in the U.S.***

U.S. Home Prices Lure Foreigners
By ALEKSANDRA TODOROVA

Americans' love affair with real estate may be cooling, but -- thanks to falling home prices and the weak dollar -- attention is heating up from another group of suitors: foreign investors.

Foreign buyers have long looked to certain U.S. markets, such as high-end properties in Manhattan or South Beach Miami, as investment opportunities.

These days, however, real-estate professionals report increased international interest in a much larger range of properties, from \$60,000 single-family homes in South Florida's inland neighborhoods to \$1 million waterfront villas located just miles from the Canadian border in Washington State.

Almost one in five, or 18%, realtors surveyed by the National Association of Realtors last year said they sold homes to international clients between April 2006 and April 2007. More recent data aren't yet available, but according to anecdotal evidence, those numbers continue to rise.

"There definitely is more interest in U.S. properties, no question about it," says Mark Partin, partner with Crown Realty Advisors, which brokers deals between U.S. developers and Canadian investors interested in buying residential properties in "bulk."

For many foreign buyers, property in the U.S. is cheap. Foreign buyers also seem more optimistic about the long-term health of the U.S. market, says David Michonski, a certified international property specialist and chief executive of Coldwell Banker Hunt Kennedy in New York. "The foreign buyer has an unbridled confidence in the U.S. market that is lacking in the domestic purchaser today," he notes. "They view this as the bargain of a lifetime and are terribly excited about it."