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By: Barbara deBriere

John Anderson and Topa Management Company brought together a group of investors to purchase the Brentwood Country Mart in 1972, from its original owner Lewis Semtei. What impressed them most about the community of Brentwood was that it did not feel like a “concrete jungle”. Having spent his youth in the Midwest, the down-home style and neighborliness Mr. Anderson experiences when he visits Brentwood makes him feel like he has found a little piece of home. Few other properties capture that sense of easy living like the Brentwood Country Mart.

The Brentwood Country Mart stands on 26th Street just south of San Vicente, a charming village of merchant operated shops arranged around a central dining courtyard that has been a part of Brentwood’s landscape since 1948. Designed by architect Roland Crawford and built by the Baruch Corporation, the Mart harkens back to a day before the windowless, sprawling mall. Here shoppers are encouraged to mingle with their neighbors as much as shop.

Indeed, shopping at the Brentwood Country Mart seems like a relaxing indulgence rather than a hurried necessity. The Brentwood Country Mart with its recognizable Red Barn motif exemplifies slow living by its two open-air patios, outdoor fireplace, playground and quiet outdoor pathways leading to distinctive shops.

Some may recall that the Mart had a community auditorium that the people of Brentwood could use free of charge for meetings, parties and events. In providing free use of this auditorium to its neighbors, the Brentwood Country Mart became a community center as much as a shopping center. The mart stands today as a legacy to the Brentwood community and a reminder of a simpler, friendlier time that many Angelinos strive to retain.

In the design of the Mart, architects captured the way we believe California living should be – easygoing and friendly. It was Topa Management’s desire that these qualities not be lost over time. Several years ago, Topa entered into a long-term master lease agreement for the Country Mart with self-described preservationist James S. Rosenfield. The decision to work with Jim was largely due to a common commitment to seek out the “right tenant” - one that brings superior service or a unique product to the customer base while complimenting other offerings at the building. The Brentwood Country Mart is truly a visit into the past and glimpse into the future of Brentwood all in one place. More on at the Mart at www.BrentwoodCountryMart.com

Topa Management Company is proud of the fact that a majority of the retail businesses at its properties are owner operated. Brentwood storeowners and their staff become like extended family to the community contributing to a faithful following and strong customer commitment. Brentwood residents have a reputation for being loyal to their local businesses – supporting them, caring for them and perpetuating their character and charm.

Today Brentwood still feels like a small town despite the ever-increasing number of residents and businesses drawn to this safe and family oriented area.

Another Brentwood landmark built, owned and operated by Topa is Topa Town & Country Shopping Center – a cherished Brentwood retail center since 1978. In 1976, Topa bought the property at the corner of San Vicente and Darlington including the land under the Hamburger Hamlet to build the Town & Country Shopping Center. Marilyn and Harry Lewis had opened Hamburger Hamlet on San Vicente some years earlier in 1964.

The ranch-style design of the Topa Town & Country, with its heavy timbers and mission tile roof is easily recognizable by busy LA commuters. Architects created open-air walkways to reach second floor businesses and a rear parking lot. Front access parking was incorporated for customer convenience, to encourage

customer traffic and further summon a sense of hospitality. Many elements from the design of Topa Town & Country were used as a model for future development when Councilman Marvin Braude brought together a group of community leaders to write the San Vicente Corridor Specific Plan.

Topa Town & Country includes an appealing selection of businesses, many of which have been Brentwood retailing favorites for years. FrontRunners and Great Earth Vitamin had their grand opening in 1978 when merchants from the center greeted its first customers. If you live in Brentwood, you most likely have visited Sandbags Restaurant, Ted's Diner, Peter Norman Jewelry, Leslie Sacks Fine Art, Sara M, Fronrunner's Athletic Shoes and Clothing, Richard Williams Salon, Ophelia's Skin and Body Care, Great Earth Vitamins, Pumpkinheads, and Flowers with Love.

Just west on San Vicente Boulevard where it intersects with Montana Avenue is Topa Plaza. Constructed by Topa in 1988, the site was formerly occupied by Bank of America, Norton Realtors, and a Mobile gas station. This mixed-use, Mediterranean-style building offers retail and office space, ample below ground parking and a balanced mix of businesses to serve the surrounding communities.

Many of the Topa Plaza businesses are popular Brentwood staples; some such as Falconhead- Boots Belts Buckles, Bank of America and Souplantation have been tenants since the grand opening in 1988. Other merchants include Jamba Juice, Noah's Bagel, State Farm Insurance, Brew-n-Beans, Brentwood Kitchens, FrameStore, and Renaissance Kids.

For many years, Brentwood was home to Topa Management Company after Topa relocated its corporate offices from downtown Los Angeles to Topa Town & Country Shopping Center in 1978. As a sign of Topa's continued commitment to its tenants and to the community of Brentwood, Topa maintains a branch office at Topa Plaza to manage its Brentwood properties as well as several properties on Montana Avenue in Santa Monica, three commercial buildings on Sunset Boulevard in Pacific Palisades and properties in Westwood Village.

Some of Topa Managements' goals for the coming years are to continue building strong tenant relations while expanding their portfolio of properties under management. Topa will continue to be involved in communities like Brentwood where it manages property. Topa is committed to providing superior service to the owners it represents, to the tenants at the properties it manages and to the communities where those properties are located.

Growth and change are inevitable and necessary if a community is to thrive. The economic health of a community is dependent upon capital investment in both existing and new development. The shape of change must be tempered with a sense of the past, the culture of the present with an eye toward the future. Brentwood continues to offer a great opportunity for the leading businesses of the next generation while maintaining the significance and charm of the past generation.

Topa Management Company's headquarters are located in Century City. Topa manages in excess of four thousand apartment units and over four million square feet of commercial space including high-rise and low-rise office buildings, shopping centers, industrial and mixed-use projects throughout California and Hawaii. Topa serves property owners that seek experienced, professional and quality management of their real estate assets.

For more information, about Topa Management Company or any of the above properties visit www.Topa.com or call (310) 203-9199.