



TODAY IN MANSION

# Larry Ellison's Fantasy Island

ARENA Inside the 'Duck Dynasty' Best-Seller Machine

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

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# Kanye West Reclaims Center Stage

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because of his relationship with reality TV queen Kim Kardashian, who is pregnant with their child. Mr. West previewed his new music one month ago

the "SNL" performance he sought out Mr. Rubin. "We ended up listening to three hours of partially finished pieces," said the producer via email. "The raw material

them still needed lyrics. I scored 40 points for you in two hours before he had to do it. He did exactly that."

West first broke out as a rapper in the early 2000s he shaped signature hits that earned him a behind-the-scenes reputation. "People took Mr. West seriously as a rapper. His first album, 'The Black Album,' a re-statement he would later mythologize in song). Rob Stone, co-founder of music magazine the Fader, recalled the budding lyricist visiting his office in 2003 and quietly asking him to put on a CD. He then rapped "voraciously" over the instrumentals for a song he wrote after a serious car crash, "Through the Wire," which would become his first solo hit. Mr. Stone says, "He was performing as if he was in front of 20,000 people but there was only four of us in the room." That display earned Mr. West his first magazine cover.

Since the release of his debut, "The College Dropout," his albums have sold a combined 13.4 million U.S. copies, according to Nielsen. His most recent solo album, "My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy," was a critics' favorite of 2010.

Once known for knotty rhyme schemes and samples of old soul songs, Mr. West has adopted elongated rhymes, half-singing and raw shrieks on "Yee-

Clockwise from top left: David X. Penning (@faync.com); Benita Liu/Corbis; Jenna Blazron