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Shell-Shockingly Gorgeous

From West Coast to East Coast, decorate with shells in a way that feels chic and sophisticated without the clutter and kitsch.

BY NICOLE LETTS

Summer might be fading, but incorporating shells into interior design is a classic look that's here to stay. Shells have been used for decoration for centuries, serving as both building materials and motifs. The entire Rococo movement even took its name from the French word *rocaille*, meaning shells, rock formations, and scrolls, and art aficionados will certainly recognize shells in famous works like Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*. In 2026, however, shell decor is understated but maintains sophistication.

To avoid the coastal clichés, opt for design moments that uniquely showcase shells. A mirror encircled in shells is a timeless choice. The mirror can be a simple circle or have an elaborate, shapely motif, but the style will be at home no matter where you live. Instead of filling a bowl with your finds, have special shells or sand dollars mounted on your favorite wallpaper or grasscloth and framed as a collection. Oyster shells with their mother-of-pearl inside become salt cellars in your kitchen or trinket dishes on your bedside table. For larger pieces such as conchs, incorporate them into your bookshelf styling, perching them on a stack or using them as delicate bookends.

Shells also translate beautifully into textiles and wallcoverings. Look for fabrics or wallpaper with subtle shell or scallop motifs to add pattern without overwhelming a space. A scallop-edged throw pillow or lampshade, for example, adds just enough nod to the theme without being too on the nose. When in doubt, remember the sage rule that less is always more. One well-placed shell will always outperform a shelf full of them.



BIRTHDAY SHOUT OUT

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Savoring Summer's Final Chapter

*Making the most of long days, lasting memories,
and one more month of summer magic.*

WRITTEN BY OWNER/PUBLISHER, ROGER CAETANO



August always feels a little bittersweet. Summer is still here, but there's a subtle shift in the air. The calendar reminds us that a new season is approaching, yet there is still plenty of time to enjoy the sunshine, gather with friends, and make a few more memories before routines begin to return.

For many families, August is filled with preparations for a new school year. Backpacks are purchased, schedules are finalized, and excitement builds for the opportunities that lie ahead. For others, it's a final chance to squeeze in a vacation, enjoy a staycation, or simply appreciate the slower pace that summer provides.

One of the things I love most about Ruby Hill is how every season brings its own unique energy. Summer may be known for vacations and outdoor fun, but it is also a time when neighbors connect, friendships grow, and community spirit shines brightly. Whether it's a casual conversation during an evening walk, a gathering with friends, or a chance encounter that turns into a new friendship, these moments are what truly make our neighborhood special.

This month's issue celebrates the people who bring that spirit to life. Inside

these pages, you'll discover stories of achievement, adventure, perseverance, and passion. You'll meet residents who inspire us, families creating lasting traditions, young people pursuing their dreams, and pets who continue to make us smile. Every story reminds us that the strength of our community comes from the people who call Ruby Hill home.

As always, I'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our Preferred Partner Sponsors. Their support makes it possible for us to share these stories and celebrate the incredible residents who make this neighborhood so remarkable. The businesses featured throughout this publication are trusted professionals who are invested in our community. The next time you need a service or simply want to learn more about a local business, I encourage you to reach out and say hello.

As you enjoy this month's issue, I hope you'll take a moment to appreciate the beauty of this season. Summer may be entering its final chapter, but there are still sunsets to watch, memories to create, and opportunities to connect with the people around us.

Thank you for being part of what makes Ruby Hill such an extraordinary place to live.

Wishing you a wonderful August and a smooth transition into the exciting season ahead.

Warmly,

Roger Caetano

Publisher, Stroll Ruby Hill



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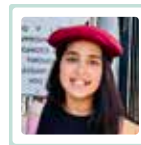
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Meet Vidhya Sankla

A meditation enthusiast who worked hard to provide for her children!

WRITTEN BY RUBY HILL RESIDENT,
ELIKA JUNEJA FROM HER INTERVIEW
WITH VIDHYA SANKLA



Where were you born and brought up?

Vidhya Sankla was born in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India where she lived for all her childhood. After high school, she attended Kamala Nehru college and completed a Bachelor's of Science there. When she was 22, Sankla got married. She and her husband moved to live in Mumbai due to his job in a chemical factory. A short while later they moved to Vapni, Gujrat, where they lived for 30 years. Vidhya soon had two sons, and she began staying home to take care of them daily. In 2001, her husband died. Within six months, Sankla's eldest son went to college in LA and she was left alone to take care of her youngest. Things were tough, but they rose above their problems and slowly became stronger. Little by little, she sold their properties and land areas to gather money. Using this money, Vidhya was able to support her sons and grow their education.

What dreams did you have as a child?

As a child, Sankla wanted to be in the medical field. She loved learning, and was one of the smartest in her class. Her hard work even led her to receive a Bachelor's of Science in college. However, after getting married, she decided to stay home and take care of her family, rather than pursuing a career.

How did you end up in the US?

After college, Vidhya's eldest son had stayed in the US for work. In 2006, she first took a trip to visit him there. From then on, she began to visit him yearly in the United States. Since then, she has been living partially in Ruby Hill each year, and partially back at her home in India.

What do you like to do in your free time?

During her free time, Vidhya enjoys doing many things. Her hobbies include cooking, watching movies, knitting, and crocheting. She also loves watching many sports, including cricket and soccer. Sankla also has a degree to teach Art of Living classes about meditation to children, which she has taken

many courses to receive. Currently, she is working on getting a degree to teach adults as well. Besides from meditation, Vidhya reads religious and spiritual books often.

What are you most proud of in your life?

"Seeing my sons grow up and get educated was something that made me the happiest person on the planet," she says, "My elder son did very well in school and got a masters from USC, while my youngest started working in a large company in India." She is extremely proud that both her children turned out well educated with good jobs and a great family.

What are your hopes for the future?

"I hope all people live in peace forever, and that everyone stays happy" Sankla says, "The whole world is our family and they should all be treated well." Vidhya wants people to be positive, strong, and happy, and she hopes to bring this idea to the world through her Art of Living lessons.

If you ever see Vidhya around the neighborhood, don't hesitate to introduce yourself!





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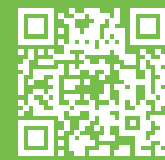
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WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH MCCABE, FROM HER INTERVIEW WITH DR. GOLDIE PANDHER
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“The strongest women don’t just break barriers.
They hold the door open for the next woman behind them.”



When Dr. Goldie Pandher stepped onto the stage at the Westin Rancho Mirage Golf Resort & Spa in Palm Springs, she wasn’t just standing there as an accomplished professional or a dedicated mother. She was there to claim a space entirely for herself. Standing 5’3”, Dr. Goldie defied traditional pageantry expectations to be crowned Mrs. USA Petite Globe 2026 on June 20. For this local powerhouse, the victory represents a lifelong devotion to breaking barriers and uplifting women.

“After having my second baby, I decided I wanted to do something that was just for me,” Dr. Goldie reflects. “This pageant gave me an identity as Goldie, not just as a doctor, and not just as a mom. It showed me that we, as women, have absolutely no limitations.”

Eighteen years ago, this driven and determined woman migrated to the United States from India, where she had already been practicing dentistry. Navigating an entirely new country and professional system, she found mentors who helped her get a foot in the door, ultimately earning her dental degree from UCSF. Today, she is a high-end general and cosmetic dentist, leading an all-female practice, Pleasanton Valley Dental, which has been committed to the community for the last 11 years. Dr. Pandher’s practice is on the cutting edge of dentistry.

“I have a lot of clients in Ruby Hill,” she says. “We offer implants, veneers, Invisalign, laser treatments for TMJ and sleep apnea, and Botox,” she says.

The Heart of a Dream Maker

The grueling, week-long Mrs. USA Petite Globe competition evaluates what organizers call the “overall package.” Beyond the traditional evening gown and swimsuit rounds, contestants are heavily judged on their communication skills, community involvement, and a high-pressure 45-second Personality Profile speech on stage.

Among a lot of National delegates, Dr. Goldie shone brightly. She was nominated in three elite categories at the Golden Globe awards.

The Intelligence Award, Businesswoman of the Year, and the Dream Maker Award. Ultimately walking away with the Dream Maker



title, the honor perfectly mirrors the way she runs her business.

“I love creating dreams for younger women,” Dr. Goldie says. “My practice is an entirely open platform for local dental students and interns to volunteer, shadow, and learn. I especially want to help women who come from other countries, just like I did. Someone reached out a hand to help me when I first arrived in America, and it is my absolute duty to give that back to the next generation.”

Beauty with a Purpose: Supporting the WIN Foundation

What truly drew Dr. Goldie to the Globe organization? It was all about making a difference for others. The pageant is tied to the WIN (Women In Need) Foundation, a non-profit founded three decades ago by philanthropist.

Dr. Tracy Kemble to provide abuse recovery, trauma therapy, and empowerment classes for women reclaiming their lives.

During the pageant, public votes cost \$10 each, with 100% of the proceeds going directly to the foundation. Every single \$10 vote funds a free healing and reclaiming class for a woman recovering from trauma.

“The WIN Foundation is so incredibly close to my heart because its mission directly mirrors why I chose to build an all-female team at my practice,” explains Dr. Goldie. “As women, we understand each other’s struggles implicitly. We need to be supporting and empowering one another. Whether it’s at my dental office or through

my new platform as Mrs. USA Petite Globe, my primary goal is to ensure women are heard, seen, and actively helped.”

Looking Ahead to the World Stage

The celebration is only just beginning. Fresh off her June 20th victory, Dr. Goldie is preparing for a major winning party this August at her home. This event won’t just be a celebration; it will double as a targeted fundraiser for the WIN Foundation and a networking showcase for local, women-owned small businesses.

“I want to bring my friends, colleagues, and local female entrepreneurs together to pitch their ideas, support one another, and create a positive environment where we can collectively bring about real change,” she says.

As she balances her high-tech dental practice and raises her two children, a 12-year-old daughter and a 1-year-old son, Dr. Goldie already has her eyes set on the next horizon. In June 2027, she will return to the Westin Rancho Mirage to compete in the international Mrs. Globe pageant, representing the United States against delegates from all over the world. With an upcoming national costume round added to the mix, she is ready to take her message of boundless female empowerment to a global scale.

“I want to inspire young girls and mothers everywhere,” Dr. Goldie says. “You can be a mom, a business owner, a doctor, and follow your wildest dreams simultaneously. There are no limits.”



To follow Dr. Goldie's journey as she prepares to represent the United States on the international stage, visit her on Instagram @dr.goldiepandher_official.

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Our Annual Pilgrimage to Monterey

WRITTEN BY RUBY HILL RESIDENT, WILL LACHNIT

Monterey Car Week is almost here again. This year’s events begin on Saturday, August 8, and run through Sunday, August 16. What started more than 70 years ago as a road race through Pebble Beach and later, the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance, has evolved into a week-long celebration of automotive culture that fills the Monterey Peninsula from morning until late at night.

Today, Car Week encompasses multiple automotive ecosystems: auctions, historic races, concours events, car shows, rallies, scenic drives, manufacturer unveilings, and countless receptions and parties. Whether your interest lies in multimillion-dollar classics, modern supercars and hypercars, motorsports, or simply watching cars along Ocean Avenue in Carmel, there is something for every budget and every level of enthusiast, even for those who don’t consider themselves automotive enthusiasts. The week now attracts approximately 100,000 visitors from around the world, transforming the Monterey Peninsula into the center of the automotive universe each August. The biggest challenge is deciding where to spend your time, since there are often several worthwhile events happening at the same time.

Our typical itinerary includes a little bit of everything. We spend most of the week on the peninsula, attending concours events, watching the races at Laguna Seca, participating in drives, and admiring the endless stream of interesting cars that appear throughout the week. A few of our friends devote much of their time to the major auctions hosted by RM Sotheby’s, Broad Arrow, Mecum, Bonhams, and others. Last year, however, my brother, several friends, and I shifted our focus more toward the receptions and gatherings that have become a bigger part of the Car Week experience.

One of the highlights was receiving an invitation to “Project Karussell,” a private unveiling of a vehicle that had not yet been announced publicly. The event was held at one of the many Pebble Beach homes that luxury and exotic automakers use to host exclusive receptions during the week. Details were intentionally scarce before the event; once we RSVP’d, we were simply told where to arrive.

Upon arrival, we were required to sign a non-disclosure agreement and surrender our phones before entering. Inside, the atmosphere was unmistakably Japanese, from the décor to the food and presentation. The car itself was completely unbranded, with no badges or logos to reveal its identity. However, the hosts were all wearing the manufacturer’s shirts, so the mystery wasn’t exactly difficult to solve.

Five months later, in December, the secret was finally revealed. Unfortunately, our phones were collected at the door, so we were unable to photograph the vehicle. The accompanying images are from Toyota’s official press materials released after the concept was publicly unveiled.

The vehicle we had seen was the Toyota GR GT Concept, essentially a preview of the road-going counterpart to Toyota’s upcoming GR GT3 race car. The long-hood, front-engine coupe features long, purposeful proportions, aggressive aerodynamics, and a low-slung profile that evokes classic GT cars while clearly reflecting its racing roots. Toyota is expected to power the production version with a twin-turbocharged V8 hybrid powertrain, making it one of the most ambitious performance cars the company has developed in decades. The concept we viewed was mostly a design model rather than a functional prototype, but it gave us an early look at what could become a future halo car for Toyota’s Gazoo Racing division and a serious competitor to some of Europe’s most established high-performance GT cars.

Among the many highlights from last year’s trip included an early morning drive down Highway 1 with friends. Timing those drives is always a trade-off. Leave early and enjoy empty roads, but deal with damp pavement left by the coastal fog. Leave later and benefit from dry roads, but often face heavy traffic. We also attended Motorlux at the Monterey Jet Center on Wednesday evening and, of course, spent time at the legendary Baja Cantina gathering in Carmel Valley.

As always, Monterey Car Week offers far more than any one person can experience in a single visit. Whether you’re there for the cars, the people, the scenery, or simply the atmosphere, it remains one of the most unique automotive events in the world. I’m looking forward to seeing what surprises this year’s edition has in store.

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THE COURT IS CALLING

at Ruby Hill's Junior Tennis Program

From First Swing to Lifelong Sport

WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH MCCABE, FROM HER INTERVIEW WITH MYLENE MARTIN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY EHRETH PHOTOGRAPHY

The best thing a child might pick up this summer isn't a phone. It's a tennis racquet.

While many kids spend their summer moving from one screen to the next, a growing number are finding something different at The Club at Ruby Hill: friendly competition, new friendships, healthy activity, and a chance to learn a sport they can enjoy for decades.

That's exactly what excites Mylène Martin. "I'm excited to build it back up," she says of Ruby Hill's junior tennis program. "I want kids to be happy to come, happy to learn, happy to meet new friends, and feel at home here." Sure, children can learn about backhand and forehand, but it's also a place for them to gain confidence, find connections and community.

For Mylène, the passion for tennis comes naturally, dating back decades. Tennis has been part of her life for as long as she can remember.

"I picked up tennis at age two and started really playing at age four," she

laughs. "I've never put my racquet down since." Now she wants children to find the same love for tennis that she has. After joining Ruby Hill's tennis staff and stepping into the role of Manager of Tennis Programming this past month, Mylène has been working to strengthen and expand the junior program.

"We want to build a vibrant community where players enjoy coming, enjoy meeting new friends, enjoy learning, and feel like it's a second home," she says. Helping her accomplish that goal is Tennis Professional Tyler Croisetiére, who brings more than 20 years of playing experience to the program.

"Tyler has been a great addition," says Mylène. "He's great with the kids, and our coaching styles complement each other really well."

All levels are welcome. Together, they provide instruction for players ranging from beginners who are just learning how to hold a racquet

to high school athletes preparing for competitive play. The program is divided into several levels, allowing players to develop skills appropriate for their age and experience.

Red Ball introduces children ages 5 to 8 to the fundamentals of tennis in a fun, encouraging environment. Orange Ball generally serves players ages 9 to 11, while Green Ball is designed for players 10+ years old. High School Prep and Tournament Training help competitive players continue sharpening their skills.

But age isn't the only factor considered.



"We look at each player on a case-by-case basis," explains Mylène. "If families aren't sure where their child fits, they can come out and we will evaluate them and help determine the best level."

One of the most rewarding parts of coaching, she says, is watching players improve over the course of a session.

The youngest players often show some of the most dramatic growth. "When they first start, some of them have a hard time making contact with the ball," Mylène says. "Then by the end of the session, their strokes are cleaner, they're making much better contact, and you can really see their confidence growing."

Those improvements aren't limited to beginners. Whether a player is aiming for the next level, preparing for high school competition, or training for tournaments, Mylène has worked to create a structured pathway that helps players understand what they need to do to keep progressing.

"I'm trying to build a nice structure so players know what they need to work on," she says. "If you work hard, you can make it happen in a very good timeline." The program also emphasizes flexibility, something many busy families appreciate during the summer months.

The current summer session runs through July 30, and participants can choose one or two days per week depending on their schedules for all levels except red ball which only meets on Mondays. Since many families travel during the summer, the program allows players greater flexibility than traditional seasonal sessions by choosing which week they want to attend.

"We're trying to make it as flexible as possible for people," says Mylène.

For families who have never participated before, there is an added incentive. Ruby Hill is welcoming new players with a referral from a member to attend a complimentary clinic. If they decide to join the summer session, they can get one session at member pricing.

For Mylène, however, the greatest value of tennis extends well beyond the court. "It's a lifetime sport," she says. "You don't have to be a professional to enjoy it. You can play recreationally with friends, with family, and continue playing throughout your whole life."

She also points to the health benefits, including cardiovascular fitness, coordination, and overall wellness. But perhaps the biggest benefit is something less tangible. It's the friendships that are formed. The confidence that grows. The excitement of learning a new skill. The feeling of belonging to a community.

Those are the things Mylène hopes every child experiences when they step onto the courts at Ruby Hill.

And if they leave with a stronger forehand along the way, that's a bonus.



JUNIOR TENNIS PROGRAM

Red Ball (Ages 5-8)

Mondays: 4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Orange Ball (Generally Ages 9-11)

Mondays: 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Wednesdays: 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Green Ball (Generally Ages 10+)

Mondays: 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Wednesdays: 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

HIGH SCHOOL PREP

Tuesdays & Thursdays:

4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

TOURNAMENT TRAINING

Tuesdays & Thursdays:

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Summer Session:

June 1 - July 30

Players may choose one or two days per week. Racquets are available for those who do not have one, and staff members can help determine the appropriate level for new players. Just bring a water bottle and be ready to have fun!

HOW TO SIGN UP

Registration: SCAN QR CODE

For more information, player evaluations, or registration assistance, contact:

Mylène Martin

Manager of Tennis Programming

The Club at Ruby Hill

3400 West Ruby Hill Drive

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mylene.martin@arcisgolf.com

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On a hot summer day: Lemonade Anyone?

If there is just one plant you should have in your garden, I'd say, make that an Improved Meyer Lemon Tree.

The improved variety is readily available in local nurseries, and it is perfect for our climate. It is disease-resistant, evergreen, compact and tidy. Especially in late spring, the tree is laden with fragrant white flowers, and it keeps flowering and fruiting sporadically all year round.

Planted in-ground or in large pots, lemons require deep watering at least twice a week in our dry season and ideally should be fed a citrus fertilizer every 3 to 4 months, as all citruses are heavy feeders. In pots, they remain a smaller size but really flourish if planted in the ground. As long as you place them where they get strong sunlight, any location will do.

Once the tree starts fruiting, don't pick all the fruit all at once, but pick a fruit or two as and when you need them since the fruit last a good 2 to 3 years on the tree. In fact, in 2026, I'm still harvesting ripe fruit from the 2024 crop. It's easy to identify the 2-year-old lemons as the lemons are a little softer and not as firm as the 2025 crop but are extremely juicy and worth the wait. The flavor and quantity of juice from a home-grown lemon far surpasses any store-bought lemon.

After the initial effort of planting a lemon tree and setting up its irrigation, other than tossing a handful of fertilizer every quarter, there is no more work. That's it!! No pruning needed, no spraying, no fallen leaves.....just lots of lemons for those lemonades, pies, margaritas and more.



2024 Crop



2025 Crop



2026 Crop

ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

Meet Rising Junior **ASHWIKA KOPPISETTI,** Ruby Hill's Tennis Enthusiast!

WRITTEN BY RUBY HILL RESIDENT, SRUTI POLAVARAPU

STARTING AT A YOUNG AGE, Ashwika was a very busy child; between her mentally tiresome classes and extracurriculars she needed an activity that brought her joy and was fulfilling. Inspired by her father, who loves tennis and is always up for playing, Ashwika picked up the sport at the age of 8.

Immediately her passion was ignited; the versatility of the sport along with the peaceful mindspace it brought her. While her dad practiced professionally, Ashwika found fond memories in her practices outside against the wall, finding that listening to music and enjoying the peace was a core memory.

"I like tennis because it helps me destress and focus my mind productively" Koppiseti remarks, highlighting the beneficial mental aspect tennis brings to her life.

Year after year, Ashwika gained skills and confidence and her abilities strengthened greatly. While she started merely playing against her wall, she excelled and made her way to the Foothill High School JV team for her freshman and sophomore years! There she improved greatly and was a strong competitor



for many tournaments in the singles category earning countless awards and accolades.

Advancing to her junior year now, Ashwika plans to continue her tennis career for the rest of high school, and she even intends to keep the sport as a club in college and the future because of the sheer impact tennis has made on her life.

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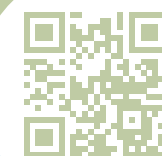
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Where Will Your Rock Land?

Explore beginner-friendly tutorials, creative Facebook groups, and the excitement of hiding and tracking painted rocks throughout the community.

BY RUBY HILL RESIDENT, CAROL OVALLE

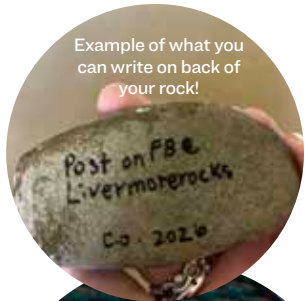
Hi everyone!
Carol here back with some helpful info you budding rock painting artists might enjoy! I thought I'd include some websites and Facebook pages that might further inspire you!
Rock painting 101 is set up like a tutorial and very helpful - I use it a lot! Rock painting for beginners is a good one too!

PRIVATE ONES YOU CAN JOIN ON FACEBOOK:

- Rock painting ideas and suggestions
- We painted rocks

Also, for a more local fun thing to do if you go out of Ruby Hill to hide your rocks - you can join Livermorerocks on Facebook and write that on the back of your rock - take a picture of it and post on that site and see what happens!! I also hide rocks downtown Pleasanton and will post and watch where it lands. Remember not everyone who takes your rock will post it!! Again, just for fun!!

Until next time,
Rock on



ROCK SNAKE UPDATE

The snake is up to 91!! A record - many thanks to all who contribute and care about our community!!



Dylan

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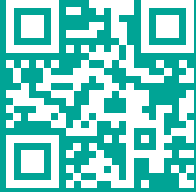
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STROLL Ruby Hill 31

IS E-MAIL SPAM OVERWHELMING YOUR INBOX?

WRITTEN BY STEVE COWNIE, OWNER OF BETTER CALL STEVE

Hello everyone! Steve Cownie from “Better Call Steve” back again. This month’s article focus is on E-mail spam. In addition, if you are still using Windows 10, you will want to read my section on what you need to do before October 13, 2026

If you are as frustrated as many of my clients and I am with spam and junk e-mails filling your inboxes daily, there is something that you can do to end the onslaught immediately.

I have been looking for a solution that is less time-consuming than opening each e-mail, reporting it as Spam, and then blocking the sender. This approach has also become much

less effective, as spammers generate different e-mail addresses from which to send the spam messages.

I decided to look at email spam blocking applications and chose to subscribe to SpamDrain for \$19.99/year. I have been using it for two months and am happy with it. Mail that comes to my inboxes has dropped from over two hundred/day to less than 20/day.

I want to remind those who are still running Windows 10 that Microsoft ends support for that operating system on October 13, 2026. This means that they will no longer update the product with the latest virus threat protections and will no longer provide fixes for their software.

THESE ARE YOUR OPTIONS:

1. Check to see if your computer can be upgraded to Windows 11.
2. Windows Update Settings: Navigate to Start > Settings > Update & Security > Windows Update. Click Check for updates; if eligible, a prompt to upgrade will appear.
3. If the computer can be upgraded, back up your data files, and then proceed with installing Windows 11 choosing the option to keep all the files. You must re-install all the application software that you use.
4. If the computer cannot be upgraded to Windows 11, you need to purchase a new computer, unless you want to use the computer only for non-internet connected activities.
5. Connecting to the internet using Windows 10 will put you at significantly greater risk of being hacked.
6. You will need to re-install all the application software that you use. You will also need to restore all the files you had on the old computer.

I have upgraded more than fifty of my clients’ computers to Windows 11 since late 2021. I can recommend computers to purchase, provide advice, and do the entire upgrade for you for less than \$500. I typically charge \$150/hour and will cap the cost for this service at \$450. If I complete the work in two hours, I will charge \$300. If I complete the work in four hours or more, I will charge the capped price of \$450.

If you have any other type of technology questions or other topics you would like me to discuss in this column, I would love to hear from you.



STEVE COWNIE

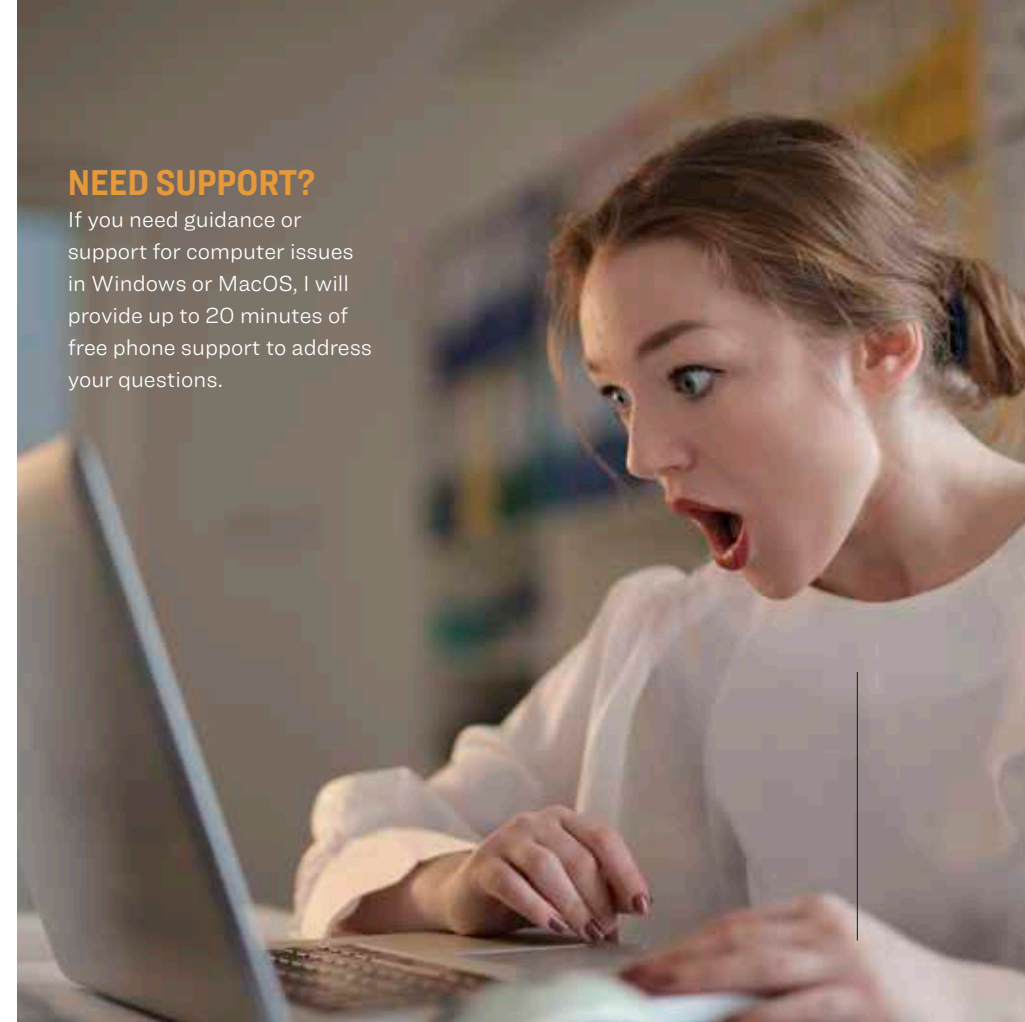
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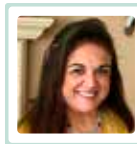
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Madrid

A Capital of Art, Flavor, and Unforgettable Streets

WRITTEN BY RUBY HILL RESIDENT, PAM SAHNI



Madrid is a city that rewards unhurried exploration. Spain's capital may be famous for its grand boulevards, royal architecture, and world-class museums, but its real charm lies in the rhythm of daily life: morning coffee at a neighborhood café, late lunches that stretch into the afternoon, and lively plazas that glow long after sunset. For first-time visitors, Madrid offers the perfect blend of history, culture, food, and easygoing energy. It's a city to meander around in and imbibe the history, and it is also well connected by metro. Bring your walking shoes.

A natural starting point is Puerta del Sol, the symbolic center of the city and one of Madrid's busiest meeting places. From here, it is an easy walk to Plaza Mayor, the elegant, arcaded square that has hosted markets, celebrations, and public gatherings for centuries. Sit beneath the arches, order a coffee or a calamari sandwich, and watch street performers, locals, and travelers move through one of the city's most iconic spaces.

Just beyond the old center stands the Royal Palace of Madrid, an essential stop for anyone interested in architecture and Spanish history. Its vast façade, ceremonial rooms, and sweeping courtyards reveal the scale of Spain's royal past. Nearby Almudena Cathedral adds a striking contrast, with its blend of traditional and modern design. Together, the palace and cathedral create one of Madrid's most impressive sightseeing moments, especially in the golden light of late afternoon.

Madrid is also one of Europe's great art capitals. The Prado Museum is the headline attraction, home to masterpieces by Velázquez, Goya, El Greco, and other giants of European painting. Art lovers should also make time for the Reina Sofia Museum,

where modern works, including Picasso's celebrated Guernica, offer a powerful counterpoint to the classical treasures of the Prado. The Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum completes the city's famous "Golden Triangle of Art," making Madrid especially rewarding for museum-focused travelers.

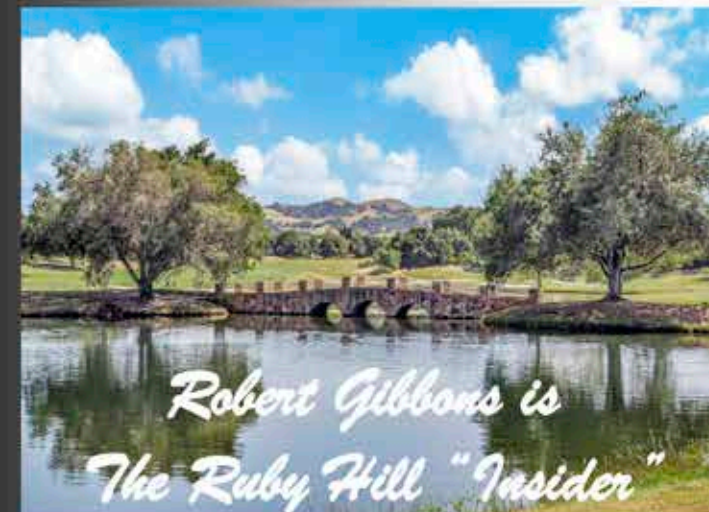
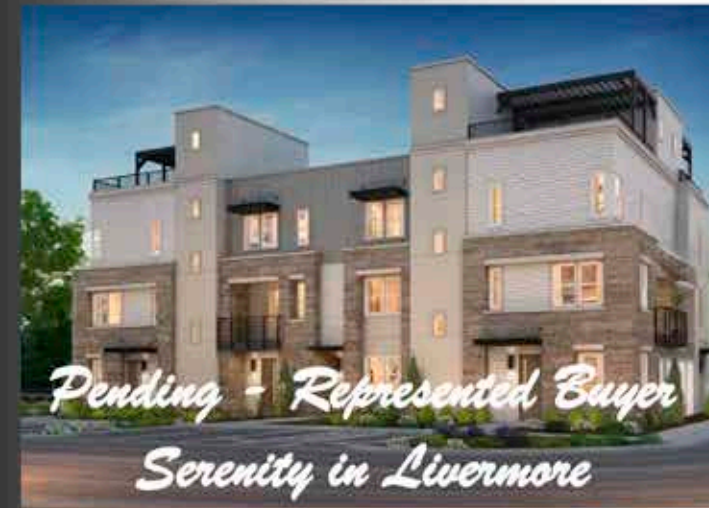
For a change of pace, head to El Retiro Park, a beloved green escape close to the museum district. It's a city of many facets and no visit is complete without experiencing Madrid's food scene. Mercado de San Miguel is a popular introduction, offering tapas, seafood, cheeses, pastries, and wine under one historic roof. For a more local evening, wander through La Latina, where narrow streets are lined with taverns serving patatas bravas, jamón ibérico, tortilla española, and vermouth on tap. Madrid's dining culture is social and relaxed, so plan to eat late and linger.

Gran Vía provides the city's showier side, with theaters, shops, rooftop bars, and ornate early twentieth-century buildings. At night, its lights give Madrid a cinematic quality. From there, neighborhoods such as Malasaña and Chueca offer boutiques, cafés, nightlife, and a more contemporary glimpse of the capital.

Madrid is best enjoyed on foot, with time left open for detours. Its must-see places—Puerta del Sol, Plaza Mayor, the Royal Palace, the Prado, Retiro Park, Gran Vía, and the tapas bars of La Latina—are memorable not only as landmarks, but as invitations to experience the city's warmth, elegance, and irresistible energy.



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Located around the side of the Nob Hill Shopping Center in Livermore you will find an eclectic restaurant called POSADA Alta Cucina. Chef Eduardo has evolved this restaurant to a real gem.

We first visited the restaurant years ago primarily due to the owner's support of local wineries. Unfortunately, we left unimpressed. The Mexican cuisine was lackluster and uninspired. The bar and beverage selection left a lot to be desired.

So, when Roger and Rhonda invited us to join them for a Monday night at Posada, we were apprehensive. They explained that the restaurant has developed and on Monday nights they offer a special paella menu with live music. The spot is on the Murrieta Blvd. side of the shopping center and can be easily missed – but don't, it is worth finding.

The dining room is intimate with some outside patio seating. We opted for the dining room, especially to listen to the great music of Didier Bouvet and Joey Torres. The duo brought a great vibe to the room inspiring many of the guests as well as some of the staff to get up and dance. I can see coming back on a Monday for cocktails and appetizers just to listen to the music.

But we were there for the star of the evening – the paella. But not so fast. We started with the chicharrones and Mexican street corn cheese dip – a generous platter of house made pork cracklins

that arrive to the table still crackling. Talk about the ultimate spin on chips and queso – this is a must for any visit. This we paired with the house made guacamole and chips which was creamy rich and very fresh. While the chips were tasty, I couldn't help but dip the chicharrones which made it even better.

To feel like we were not too indulgent we shared an order of the charred beet and apple salad – if you have to have salad this is definitely one to have. Fresh crisp green, pecans, queso fresco, pickled onions and a pear balsamic. Great balance of sweet and acid with perfect textural range from soft and luscious to crunch and sweet.

At this point I was sad that we had not been back sooner. But the best yet to come.

The Posada mixta paella – while not what you would think of when thinking of Mexican food and a Mexican chef, but Eduardo owns this dish. We have had paella in Barcelona and Eduardo can hold his head high with his version. The rice was cooked perfect with the just the right amount “socarrat”- this is the rice that sticks to the bottom of the paella pan (the paellera). The idea is to share, with the suggestion of being enough for 2 – I suggest 3 or even 4. The pan came to the table sporting a very generous selection of plump shrimp, chorizo, chicken and sauteed vegetables to make this the real deal. As if it needed more the dish comes with a sourdough cheese bread

– although not a big sourdough fan I am a big cheese fan and I was more than satisfied.

BTW – we started with margaritas with the appetizers and appreciated the extensive bar selection of premium and super premium spirits. The range is not limited to tequila but includes a wide range of bourbons – which is my favorite and made me smile again.

At this point we felt very satisfied and even had leftovers for tomorrow. But then our server suggested we try at least one of the desserts. Not a hard sell so we settled on 2 desserts instead. While Nancy is not a fan of classic flan, I am so we ordered the flan and not to be selfish we decided to add the Tres leche cake – the best tres leche we have ever had. The cake with rich but not soggy with a great balance of sweetness.

It was a delightful evening and not just a hot considering I went in with a low expectation. The service, environment, entertainment, cocktails and dinner were just right

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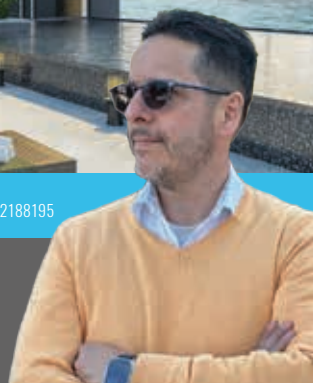


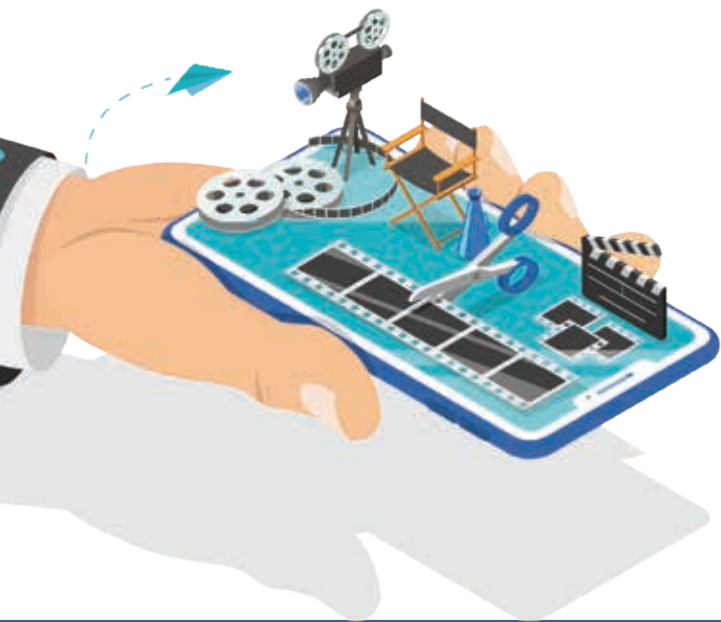
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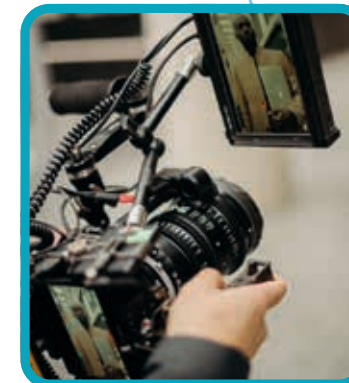
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Chocolate Cake

WRITTEN BY RUBY HILL RESIDENT, CAROL OVALLE

Hi everyone - Carol the rock lady back with another recipe - super easy!! Get ready this recipe has 2 ingredients - yes you read that correctly! Two!!

I might start by saying you can probably add your favorite icing, frosting with sprinkles if you like- but this is a simple chocolate cake!

CHOCOLATE CAKE RECIPE:

Ingredients:

- 4 eggs - separated
- 1/2 cup dark chocolate chips

Directions:

1. Whip up egg whites til peaks form
2. Folk in the 4 yolks
3. Melt your chocolate chips in microwave in

20-30 sec intervals until melted- then fold chocolate into the egg mixture!

4. Use 1, 8-9 inch round cake pan lined with parchment paper or spray Pam before pouring into pan.

5. Bake at 350 degrees for 28-30 minutes

6. The cake will look poofy when it first comes out

of oven but will drop to a flatter cake for serving!

7. Frost or serve plain!

*Optional - you can melt 1-2 Hershey bars on top as cake cools and spread when melted like a frosting!

Enjoy!

1008 Candles Lit for Peace in Pleasanton, a Magical Evening with 8 Pleasanton Leaders.

WRITTEN BY RUBY HILL RESIDENT, REENA JADHAV

On Sunday May 31st, at Oasis Grill, Pleasanton leaders & community came together to light 1008 candles for peace for all. It was magical. It was transformative. It was the first of Peace9.org mission to light 100 million candles globally for inner peace.

WHY?

In a world moving at relentless speed, where stress has become the norm and burnout is often worn like a badge of honor, perhaps the most revolutionary act is surprisingly simple:

- Pause. Then choose peace.
- For 6 minutes just breathe. Become still. Light a candle to remember that we can choose light amidst darkness.

This is the heart of the Peace Candle Vigil movement, a global invitation for people everywhere to stop for a few moments each day and consciously choose peace. Through free collective Zoom gatherings held daily 6 times including 6:00 AM, 12:00 PM, and 6:00 PM, participants are guided into inner peace.

WHY PEACE?

Because peace is not passive. It is powerful.

We live in an age of constant stimulation, rising anxiety, division, and reactivity. Yet history and human experience remind us that lasting change begins within. Every act of peace creates a ripple. Every calm mind influences the people around it. Every peaceful heart contributes to a more harmonious world.

AS WE OFTEN SAY:

Silence is the antidote to violence.

Modern neuroscience supports what ancient wisdom traditions have taught for thousands of years. Moments of intentional stillness can calm the nervous system, reduce stress hormones, regulate the vagus nerve, and shift the body into a state of healing and restoration. Just a few minutes of conscious breathing can transform how we feel, think, and respond to life.

Now imagine millions of people pausing together. Lighting a candle. Sending peace and love to the entire planet.



The impact would be profound. We invite you to join Peace9.org and light just **one candle each day** as a personal commitment to peace. Let it be a reminder that even the smallest light can illuminate darkness. As your candle burns, take a few moments to pause, breathe, and silently offer the intention:

“Peace within me. Peace around me. Peace for all beings.”

A small practice with the potential for extraordinary impact.

Join us. Set your alarms. Invite your family, friends, workplace, school, or community group. Share your experience and inspire others to participate.

Together, we can bring peace into our lives.

Together, we can make peace louder than fear.

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PEDALS IN THE WIND

WRITTEN BY: JAN COLEMAN- KNIGHT



BIRDS JOYFULLY FLUTTER over two bicycles bearing bright flowers at the signal light where West Las Positas meets the multi-use cycling Iron Horse Trail. Two painted utility boxes bring surprised delight. It is just what artist Irma Grant intended: “Every image presents a new adventure: a means to express some of my favorite memories, moments and experiences”.

Irma Grant is an artist, graphic designer, teacher, and illustrator. Born and raised in the Netherlands, she later lived in Canada and Sweden. While in France, she studied fine art at Paul Valery University of Montpellier, training in classical methods requiring precision, perspective, and composition mastery. The French love for narrative in art inspired Grant's expression of both a personal and universal story as seen in the precision of “Pedals in the Wind,” and her two other painted utility boxes in Pleasanton, “Children at Play” and “Hummingbirds”.

Originally entitled “Bicycle Box” and later named “Pedals in the Wind” by Robbie Helms of Valley View Elementary School, Irma Grant's artwork tells the story of the continuum of cycling for all ages and celebrates young and older riders sharing the same path. Birds twisting and floating portray the motion of wind and the rush of air that exhilarates a cycling journey. Irma chose the American Robin and the California Scrub-Jay since they are common to Pleasanton. Other birds also play in the soft wind and are symbolic of the energy and movement of cycling. The bright flowers speak of the beauty of nature. Vine leaves twine about the images as a reminder that Pleasanton is a gateway to the Tri-Valley wine country and a nod to the historic Villa Armando Winery in Pleasanton until 1985.

This bright expressive artwork was completed under a stipend from Pleasanton's Public Art Acquisition Fund in 2018 and additional sponsorship from Bob and JoAnne Rossi Becker. The background paint is a mixture of Titanium White and a “dot” of Yellow Ochre. It commands attention, and along with the playful images, it invites glee that unfolds into a happy smile.

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CAPS OFF TO THE CLASS OF 2026

Celebrating Ruby Hill Graduates as they reflect on their achievements, memories, and exciting journeys ahead.



LAYA MARTIN

Laya is graduating from Carondelet High School in Concord and will attend the University of Arizona this fall, where she plans to major in Criminal Justice.

Throughout her youth, Laya has pursued her passions with determination and dedication. She began as a competitive figure skater before transitioning to competitive cheerleading, traveling across the country to participate in national competitions. Since the age of 12, she has spent her summers traveling internationally on community service missions, gaining valuable life experiences and a broader perspective of the world. Her interest in law and criminal justice has also led her to participate in specialized academic programs, including coursework at the University of Maryland, helping to confirm her future career aspirations in the legal field.

This combination of athletic achievement, service, and academic exploration has prepared Laya well for the exciting journey ahead.



ADIN LIVELY

Adin's journey is a testament to his dedication and passion for competitive cheer.

Originally from Illinois, he relocated to California to train with one of the nation's premier All-Star cheer programs, Black Ops in Livermore. Over the past two years, he has attended Amador Valley High School while pursuing his athletic goals at the highest level.

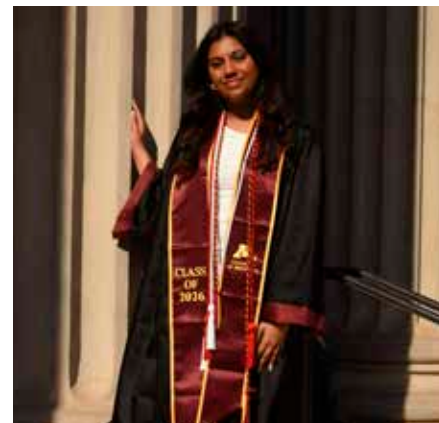
This fall, Adin will take the next step in his journey after signing with Navarro College, widely recognized as one of the top cheerleading programs in the country. Alongside his athletic pursuits, he plans to earn a degree in Business.

Moving across the country meant leaving his family behind, and during the past two years, our family has had the privilege of hosting him. What began as an opportunity to support a talented athlete quickly grew into something much more—Adin has become a cherished member of our family and a brother to Laya.



SIENNA ABREU

Graduated Summa Cum laude with a major in Psychology and a sales minor from California Polytechnic State University. She will be working for Salesforce in San Francisco.



PRATIKSHA THORALI

Graduated University of Minnesota Twin Cities, and moving on to working as a Behavioral Technician



MIHIR RAO

Graduated University of Minnesota Twin Cities, and moving on to working as a Behavioral Technician

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Tim and I in Lanai golfing for our 20th anniversary

GOLFER OF THE MONTH

Meet Mokie Marchi

A Love for the Game, Family, and Fun on the Fairways

WRITTEN BY RUBY HILL RESIDENT, MOKIE MARCHI

WHEN MOKIE MARCHI first picked up a golf club, she probably never imagined the game would become such an important part of her life. Yet today, golf has taken her from the fairways of Ruby Hill to the stunning coastlines of Hawaii, introduced her to lasting friendships, and created countless memories with the people she loves most.

Mokie and her family have deep roots in Ruby Hill. In fact, their connection to the club began before they even officially became residents.

“We bought a lot in Ruby Hill in 1998 and purchased a membership before we even closed on our lot,” she recalls with a laugh. “My husband said he had to take my brother out for his birthday.”

That decision would become the beginning of a 28-year relationship with the club and a lifelong connection to the game.

While Mokie played golf for several years early on, life became busy, and the clubs sat idle for nearly a decade. It wasn’t until her three sons reached school age that she found her way back to the course.

The motivation was simple—and one many spouses can appreciate.

“I realized that with three boys and a husband who all played golf, I was going to be by myself on our vacations while they golfed,” she says. “So I decided I needed to start playing again.”

What began as a practical decision soon evolved into a genuine passion.

Her goal was never to become the longest hitter or the most competitive player in the group. She simply wanted to be able to join her family on golf trips and enjoy the experience. Over time, she accomplished exactly that.

Today, Mokie has played golf throughout the Bay Area, Sacramento, Lake Tahoe, Arizona, Palm Springs, Mesquite, and across four Hawaiian Islands—Oahu, Maui, Hawaii, and Lanai.

Among all the courses she’s experienced, two stand out above the rest: Monterey Peninsula Country Club and Wailea Emerald Course in Maui.

“They’re both just beautiful courses,” she says. “I’ve only played Monterey Peninsula once, but I’ve played Wailea quite a few times.”

Closer to home, however, Ruby Hill remains special for a different reason.

“I love that the course is very women-friendly,” she says. “It’s very playable for women.”

For Mokie, golf has always been about much more than scorecards and handicaps. It’s about community, laughter, and the stories that happen between shots.

One of her favorite Ruby Hill memories came during a Couples Twilight event that almost didn’t happen.

A night golf tournament had been scheduled, but severe thunderstorms forced organizers to cancel the official event. Rather than call it a complete loss, participants were given the glow-in-the-dark equipment and encouraged to play on their own.

About ten couples decided to make the most of it.

“It was so much fun,” Mokie remembers. “We made it all the way to the last hole, and then the sprinklers started coming on.”

Another unforgettable moment came during a Member-Guest Tournament when her partner eagled Hole No. 7—one of the longest par fours on the course.

Moments like those are why Mokie loves events such as Couples Twilight and Nine & Wine. While she enjoys competition and playing tournaments, it’s the social side of golf that keeps her coming back.

“I like playing for the social aspect of the game and going out with my friends,” she says. “It’s also fun having couple friends that we can travel with and play golf.”

Like most golfers, Mokie is quick to acknowledge that the game is never easy.

She jokes that her biggest weakness is distance, admitting she doesn’t hit the ball particularly far. Her strength, however, may be even more valuable.

“I’m usually a pretty good putter and tend to do better under pressure,” she says.

That perspective has also shaped the advice she shares with newer golfers.

“Everyone struggles at some point. As long as you’re having fun, that’s the most important thing.”

She knows this from experience.

One of her earliest tournaments required participants to count every single stroke. On one particularly difficult hole, she became trapped in a bunker and carded an unforgettable 16.

“I shot 126 that day,” she says. “And because it was a tournament score, it stayed on my handicap for a year. It was so embarrassing.”

Today, she laughs about the memory.

“It’s a good reminder that you can always improve.”

Perhaps that’s what makes Mokie’s golf story so relatable. It isn’t defined by trophies, perfect rounds, or bucket-list

pairings with famous golfers. In fact, when asked about her dream foursome, she gives an answer that perfectly captures her outlook on the game.

“I’ve been lucky enough to play with so many amazing and fun people,” she says. “I’ve enjoyed playing with all my family and friends. If I played with people I didn’t know but admired, I would probably freeze and not have fun.”

Instead, her golf dreams focus on experiences.

At the top of her bucket list? Playing Pebble Beach and taking a golf trip to New Zealand.

For someone who originally returned to the game simply to avoid sitting alone during family vacations, golf has delivered far more than she expected. It has provided adventure, friendships, family traditions, and a lifetime of memories.

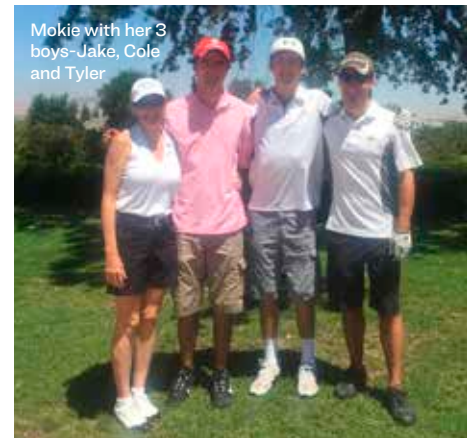
And if you find Mokie at Ruby Hill, chances are she’s not worrying about her score. She’s enjoying exactly what golf was always meant to be—a great day spent with great people.



Mother-Son tourney at Ruby Hill



An early picture with me, my husband Tim and our friends Lori and Mike Racer



Mokie with her 3 boys-Jake, Cole and Tyler



Family in Hawaii

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resident business guide

This is a current list of business owners and professionals from our neighborhood. It is an opportunity to network, qualify, and potentially build a business relationship with other successful individuals who also live here. To be included in the Resident Business Guide, email your information to Brooke.Rowten@n2co.com or scan the QR code.

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Better Call Steve
Steve Cownie
(914) 582-7476
BetterCall-Steve.com

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Tek Valley
Seema Chawla
(925) 558-2275
www.tekvalley.com/

LASER AND SKIN MED SPA

MD Laser Spa
Dr. Robert Gray
(925) 846-2772
mdlaserspa.com

LUXURY HAIR EXTENSIONS

Marina Hair Extensions
Marina Ozturk
(925) 699-1791
marinahairextensions.com

NON MEDICAL HOME CARE REFERRAL AGENCY

From The Heart Home Care, Inc.
Nancy and Dominic Scotto
(925) 803-0663
www.fromthehearthomecare.com/

ORAL & MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY & DENTAL IMPLANTS

Ashok N. Veeranki, DDS, FIBCSOS, FACS.
Christopher Vanderbeek, DDS
Ashok N. Veeranki
(209) 836-3870
drveeranki.com

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