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Suzanne Jain and Family:

Making a Difference at the
Menlo Charity Horse Show

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Sofia, Derek, Suzanne, Raj and Sabrina Jain at home in Atherton. Photo by Anna Dobrenski.

Suzanne Jain and Family: Making a Difference at the Menlo Charity Horse Show

By Abbie Burgess

With world class competitions, a full calendar of social events including a gala and auction and elegant vendor shopping, the Menlo Charity Horse Show at the Menlo Circus Club is recognized as one of the finest equestrian events in the United States.

The six-day event, from August 7 through August 12, has an annual philanthropic focus - proceeds support charitable partner Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired. With offices in Palo Alto and Santa Cruz, Vista Center serves as a resource to empower individuals with vision limitations to embrace life to the fullest through evaluation, counseling, education and training. The center has a wide-reaching impact in San Mateo county and nearby areas, serving over 2,000 clients each year. The charitable partnership has raised over six million dollars for the Vista Center so far. All this is made possible by the 130 volunteers who work year-round to plan and run the Menlo Charity Horse Show.

A family affair

For one Atherton family, the Menlo Charity Horse Show is a chance to join forces for a common cause. The entire Jain family volunteers at the annual fundraiser and has for the last 20 years. Suzanne Jain has been on the committee since 1998 and was Co-Chair for a decade. Currently, she also serves as Board Member and Treasurer of the Menlo Circus Club.

Pictured on the cover:
SIG Careful and Sofia Jain,
Corason and Suzanne Jain,
Cottica II RV and Sabrina Jain.
Photo by
©Alden Corrigan Media



Suzanne and Raj Jain’s three children Sabrina, Sofia and Derek have been included in the Menlo Charity Horse Show since before they could walk. Daughters Sabrina, a rising college freshman, and Sofia, a rising high school junior, are accomplished equestrian riders and compete nationally. “The girls and I are serious horseback riders and compete in many shows on the West coast and occasionally back East,” Suzanne Jain says. “We ride both jumpers and hunters.”

Each rider in the Jain family has many equestrian accomplishments to her name. Among her many titles and top scores, Sabrina placed top 20 in the Hunterdon Medal. In the fall, she will attend Dartmouth and ride for her college team.

Sofia has won numerous horse show championships and competes in the Junior Jumper Division with hopes to compete as a Young Rider. She’s also a budding photographer whose photos have been published in several equestrian publications including The Chronicle of the Horse.

Suzanne is quick to list her daughters’ equestrian accomplishments, but she has won numerous horse show championships and Norcal Championships.

Family and accomplishments

While Raj and Derek may not join the rest of the family on horseback, they have unique passions to pursue of their own. Both father and son are avid tennis players who play competitively

with the United States Tennis Association (USTA), where Derek has won several USTA tournaments. He also plays on his school team.

“I am honored to be the Mom who is raising these wonderful kids,” Suzanne says.

Raj has his own competitive streak. A fun fact is that he was recently on “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire” twice, once as his nephew’s life line and a second time as a contestant. He is also a semi-pro poker player and he once made the final table at one of the events at the World Series of Poker.

When it comes to other sports, the family is split on who to root for. “Raj is a huge Steelers fan, I root for the Colts and the 49’ers. Sofia and Derek root for the Panthers,” Suzanne says. But there are two teams everyone cheers - the Warriors and the Giants.

A three-time Bay Area resident

Suzanne says her main source of inspiration is her parents, who were both entrepreneurs and academic professionals. “My father was the first in his family to go to college,” she explains. “My mother was an

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Her family tree goes back to immigrants from Western Europe in the early 1800’s who settled in Wisconsin and Indiana. Her ancestors stayed close to the Midwest and her parents met at the University of Wisconsin. Education brought them briefly to the Bay Area, where Jain herself would live three separate times in her life.

“I was born in Palo Alto,” she explains. “My father was getting his PhD at Stanford and my mother taught first grade at Corte Madera.” The family moved back to the Midwest when she was five and Suzanne grew up in Indiana while her father taught at Purdue University. He taught there for over 40 years at the Krannert Business School. “I moved back to go to Stanford and graduated there in 1983 and went on to work for Hewlett Packard,” Suzanne says. Attending Harvard Business School for her MBA took her out of California, but soon she was back and working in high-tech consulting and then at Cisco Systems for several years. For those counting, that’s three times that Suzanne has lived in the Bay Area.

Raj was born in New Delhi and became a naturalized citizen when his family immigrated from India in 1975. Raj spent his middle school and high school years in Knoxville, Tennessee and moved to

California to attend Stanford, where he was a Terman Scholar. After graduating in 1992, he worked for Oracle before launching his own consulting business and eventually co-founding the enterprise software company Kintana. After ten years he and his partners sold the company to Mercury Interactive, which later became part of Hewlett Packard. Raj then became CEO of Intalio for a few years and now he consults in the industry. He was one of Ernst and Young’s Entrepreneur of the Year award winners in 1999.

Journey to Atherton

Suzanne and Raj met at Cisco Systems in the mid-nineties, where Suzanne worked at the time and Raj was consulting. “We were working on a very large program to implement Oracle’s manufacturing and finance systems at Cisco,” she says. Suzanne explains that the couple started dating after Raj left Cisco for a new project and have been married since 1998.

The family moved to Atherton in 2003. “We wanted a house with a wonderful yard for the kids to grow up in and we found it in Atherton.” The people, the beauty of the properties and the houses are what Jain enjoys most about the city. “The location is fantastic as it is easy to get to Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Woodside, Portola Valley, Redwood City and San Francisco,” Jain says. And of course, it’s near the Menlo Circus Club!

While they love Atherton, the Jain family also travels the globe. “We take trips to Europe and India and travel around the United States,” she says. “And the girls and I travel quite a bit to horse shows.”

Besides their four beloved horses, the Jain family also includes a Siamese mix cat named Benjamin and a Havanese dog named Molly.

Wider philanthropic influence

In the family’s other volunteer capacities, Suzanne and Raj stay involved with Menlo School--which their children attend--and Trinity School. Raj is on the Board of Trustees of Trinity School, and they both volunteer and chair committees at the schools. Suzanne is a former Chair of Riekes Center Board of Trustees. “I like to work with a team and we like to support causes that are local in our community or in the communities that we grew up in,” she says.

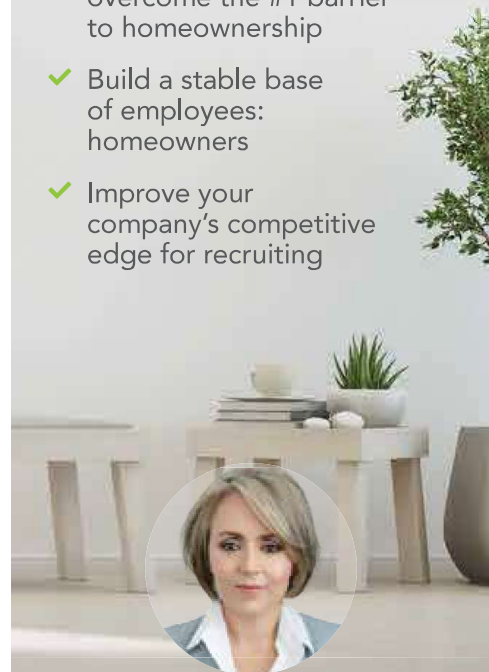


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