

*[Editor's Note: This is the beginning of the third season of Meet Your Neighbors profiles. More to come; I hope you like them. Barry]*

# Meet Your Neighbors

## Evie and Dave Duncan



She likes the beach; he likes the mountains. She likes Motown; he likes Sinatra. Marriage made in heaven? Most certainly “yes”—33 years and counting after love at first sight. Meet Evie and Dave Duncan, two “salt of the earth” folks who enrich Diamond A by their presence. Evie puts out the Diamond A Rec newsletter and is incredibly helpful with the Rec; Dave is pursuing the entire lengthy program to become a volunteer firefighter in Diamond A’s firehouse (which now has four volunteers) and led the charge organizing the recent Fire Fair. *(Unpaid classified ad: we can really use some more fire station volunteers.)*

Whenever there’s something that needs doing, odds are that one or both of them just do it. And they do it for the right reason—helping makes them (and all of Diamond A) feel good.

Dave hails from Chicago and was raised in various places from Scottsdale to London to Houston because his dad, a mechanical engineer, took a new job in Houston. He graduated from the University of Colorado and earned a law degree from Golden Gate. The law degree has helped him be a better accountant/advisor. After a short tour at a large firm, he hung out his own shingle and has been his own boss since 1987. He merged his practice in 2014 but continues to work quite a bit with the acquirer and with clients that he retained. But there is a slower pace in his future. Until four years ago, Dave served as the volunteer special teams coach at Redwood High School, which is pretty unusual for an accountant with a daughter, not a son. From that activity he learned the joy of volunteering, of giving time to make the world a better place. Dave believes that his experience playing high school football in Houston instilled a work ethic and motivation that have served him well and remain with him today.

Evie was born in New Jersey and raised in a Philadelphia suburb. Her family moved to Fresno in 1969 when her dad took a professorship at Fresno State, and she's been a Californian ever since. She graduated from UC Davis in 1977, having majored in Design. Her first job was as a "girl Friday" at a small non-profit in Southern California, but she knew a growth industry when she saw it—law firms were growing and they needed administrators. She was Director of Personnel at Pettit & Martin in 101 California Street when that crazy man came in and killed eight people and wounded seven. After that she moved over to be the chief administrator at husband Dave's accounting firm. Evie worked inhuman hours for many years, and she's paid her dues. She's been retired since 2014. In 2008, having taken French classes, Evie created a meet-up group of people who wanted to speak French—a preview of the kind of thing she would go on to do in Diamond A activities.

They met serendipitously: Dave's then girlfriend had a small dinner party, and Evie was one of the guests. Lightning struck, and they married four years thereafter. Daughter Lauren, now 30, lives in Sausalito and teaches 8<sup>th</sup> grade in a Chinese language immersion school in San Francisco. One of the parties celebrating her wedding last summer was held at the Diamond A Rec.

After 27 years in Marin County, Evie and Dave decided it was time for new surroundings, and Sonoma, where Evie's parents then lived, looked ideal. Though they hadn't known anything about Diamond A, their realtor found a property that sounded perfect for them, and it was. They think they've lucked out, and the rest of Diamond A folks think that we've lucked out—a perfect marriage.

When their schedules permit, they can often be found in the evening watching old TV shows like the Dick Van Dyke Show and Andy Griffith. And probably cuddling on the couch.

\* \* \* \* \*

As usual, I asked them a few questions:

**Favorite Restaurant?** Both: Swiss Hotel. Honorable mention to Red Grape.

**Famous People You've Met?** Evie once rode in a private plane with Gerald Ford. Dave is the accountant for Martin Cruz Smith, the author.

**Favorite Vacation Spot?** In truth, they rather like it here in Sonoma, and they are not inclined to take long vacations. However, this year they will go to Budapest for a family wedding—Evie still has family near Budapest.

**Giants/A's?** Evie: only when one is in the playoffs. Dave: Giants fan since birth.

**Niners/Raiders?** Evie: only at playoff time; Dave: high school and college football are more interesting than the pros. However, certainly not the Raiders.

**Favorite Diamond A Activity:** Both: the Wednesday night barbecues.

**What do you worry about?** Dave: the accelerating decline in Western thought and principles. Evie: Everything.

**Early Bird/Night Owl:** Dave: a night owl, starting when he was a bartender; Evie: likes to sleep in.

**Books on Bedside Table:** Dave has a large pile of very serious books (including a copy of the US Constitution) which he attacks in five minute segments before falling asleep. Evie is the family reader (two dozen books a year) and book club (2) member—currently reading *The Sparrow* by Mary Doria Russell and just finished *The Underground Railroad* and *An American Marriage*.

**Pivot point of your life:** Dave: Meeting Evie, deciding to go to law school, opening his own office. Evie: being at the scene of the 101 California shootings and the recent deaths of her parents.

**Who does the cooking/cleaning?:** Dave is responsible for everything outside and Evie is responsible for everything inside.

**Favorite Decade of Life:** Dave: his 20s in Colorado. Evie: her 30s.

**Role Model:** Dave: my dad. Evie: my parents, immigrants from Europe in the 50s who had to overcome a lot of adversity to make a new life for the family.

**Best Recent Addition to the Family:** When she died, Evie's mom had a young cat, Creole, who now lives with Dave and Evie. (Most hoped for addition to the family: Both: when it's time, a grandchild.)

**Guilty Pleasure:** Dave: Barbecue; Evie: Binge watching something like *Breaking Bad* and eating milk chocolate.