

Meet Your Neighbors

Marcelo Defreitas and Scott Smith



What Sonoma neighborhood can point to having had three of its own selected to be Sonoma's Alcalde in the past seven years? (The Alcalde is the honorary mayor of Sonoma for a one year term, selected—after a rigorous process-- by the mayor to recognize outstanding contributions to the Sonoma community.) The answer is, of course, DIAMOND A!

The current Alcalde is Marcelo Defreitas, the Board President of La Luz Center and non-profit event producer extraordinaire, the spouse of financial services (venture capital, merchant banking and wealth management) entrepreneur and author Scott Smith. Marcelo and Scott, who have been together for 30 years and married for 10, purchased their magical piece of Diamond A heaven (having been shown it by our very own Leo Merle) more than 20 years ago, and they have been living in their showplace home on the property for 12 years. They share their land with 9 peacocks, 2 horses, 100 chickens, two swan, about 30 "rescue" parrots, three very

affectionate dogs and 4 cats. *(Editor's note: every so often there is an email about one or more "wandering" peacocks, and the odds are that they are Marcelo's.)*

Marcelo (straight haired and tall) and Scott (curly haired and not so tall) lead rather different lives. Marcelo lives here full time, but Scott is in San Francisco from Monday morning until Friday afternoon. They check in with each other multiple times each day.

And they got here from very different places. Marcelo was brought up on a large cattle ranch in the city of Uruguaiara in the south of Brazil, and Scott was brought up in Los Gatos. Marcelo's family owned a working ranch; Scott's parents were both doctors. Scott has a BA in philosophy and a law degree; Marcelo was in a joint USF/Academy of Art program and graduated with a degree in graphic design. These different roads came together when Marcelo was tutoring a person in Portuguese, and that person happened to be a friend of Scott's who then fixed them up. The rest is history.

Marcelo first became involved with La Luz when Donna Halow (then a Board member of La Luz) and a neighbor on Canyon saw first hand what kind of party Marcelo is able to imagine and carry out, and she asked him if he could put on an event for La Luz. Yes, he surely could. He became very interested in La Luz' mission, and he became increasingly involved and has served as its Board president for three years; he's been on the Board for nine years. He has also helped arrange events for many non-profits over the years, including the 100th birthday of Jack London, though he's thinking about dialing those activities back a bit.

Hoping to raise a child, they entered into an adoption agreement with a young woman, but when her family saw the baby, she changed her mind. Then they tried to adopt a Rwandan baby but were not able to. So they pour their energies into their animals, their busy lives and each other.

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As usual, I asked them a few questions:

Favorite Sonoma Restaurant? Both: EDK.

Famous People You've Met? Marcelo: Obama and Oprah, at one of Obama's initial fundraisers. Scott: great-uncle Upton Sinclair and Madonna and Gwen Stefani who invested in one of Scott's businesses.

Favorite Vacation Spot? It wouldn't be a bad gig to be their travel agent. They both love St. Bart's, Venice, Rio and Thailand. Scott would love to visit Kashmir and Marcelo is looking forward to a safari. There is no other place that Marcelo would want to live, but Scott thinks he could like the island life in the Caribbean (though only if he had to live somewhere else).

Favorite Sonoma Activity: Both: the Fourth of July parade. Although the Alcalde generally waves to the crowd separately, Marcelo just marched with the La Luz delegation.

What do you worry about? Marcelo: Our politics of divisiveness; Scott: Trump.

Early Bird/Night Owl: Both are (very) early birds. Scott is at the Sonoma market when it opens and then at the golf club when it opens as well. He's home in time

for breakfast, often eggs fresh from the coop. (*Editor's note: the eggs really are amazing!*)

Books on Bedside Table: Scott reads about 100 books a year, both fiction and non-fiction; by the time this goes out, he will have just finished House of Trump/House of Putin. Marcelo's not such a book guy but he's got A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo on his bedside table.

Pivot point of your life: Marcelo: coming to America and connecting with La Luz. Scott: leaving his law practice to work in finance, realizing he is gay and losing his grandmother who was a major influence on his life.

Who does the cooking/cleaning?: Scott's first job was as a cook, and he enjoys non-recipe cooking of diverse cuisines. Marcelo does cleanup.

Favorite Decade of Life: Scott: whatever's coming next; Marcelo: right now.

Role Model: Marcelo: his father who modeled being kind. Scott: Ken Langone (founder of Home Depot) who was a client and taught him about the investment business.

What makes you get up in the morning?: Marcelo: Being able to make a better day for others; Scott: joy and curiosity..

Guilty Pleasure: Marcelo: a good martini; Scott: going wild in a casino with \$500.