

SARATOGA

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An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Saratoga
The Heart of Saratoga

Spotlight

*Caroline
Cocciardi:*

**Adventures and
Discoveries**



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Caroline Cocciardi: *Adventures and Discoveries*

By Genevieve Laucher

Caroline Cocciardi and her husband Jack love living in Saratoga. Together, they own a business building custom homes, following in Jack's father's footsteps. Although Saratoga is home, Caroline and Jack spent a few years living in Italy, which turned out to be a truly transformative experience.

Caroline grew up in Saratoga. Her parents, immigrants from Italy, were fruit farmers, growing prunes and apricots. One of Caroline's favorite memories from her childhood was seeing the fruit blossoms on Saratoga Sunnyvale Road each year. She would ride in her mother's car with her windows rolled down, and recalls the sweet fragrance as if being inside a perfume bottle. Another meaningful memory was visiting Italy with her mother for the first time when she was ten years old. Instantly, Caroline felt a connection to Italy, as if she could feel it in her DNA. It inspired her dream of living in Italy as an adult.

Jack and Caroline did not meet until their thirties, which is surprising since their fathers were friends and worked together on a project in

Los Gatos. Jack and his family lived in the Fresno area and his father commuted to the Bay Area. Caroline attended San Jose State's interior design program, and for her senior project had to design a ten by ten space. She came up with the design and contacted Jack's father Kenny, who she knew had power tools, to help her put the project together. Caroline kept in touch with Kenny through the years, but didn't realize that he had a son her age until she later moved into a new home and contacted Kenny to help her remodel it. However, Kenny decided to send his son Jack over instead, so Caroline and Jack first met when he knocked on her door.

Jack and Caroline worked with and learned so much about building homes from Kenny before he passed away. They have done projects around Saratoga, the Santa Cruz area, and even in Southern California. They are both involved in all aspects of the business, including the planning process, getting crews, buying supplies, and the interior design.

Although Jack is German, he shares Caroline's love for Italy. In 1999, after working very hard, they achieved Caroline's lifelong goal of moving to Italy for a few years. Jack had a great time perfecting his



Italian cooking, learning the language, and getting inspiration for his building from the spectacular architecture. Meanwhile, Caroline discovered a passion she never knew she had, and began an unexpected journey.

It began when some friends came to visit Caroline and Jack. Leonardo da Vinci's painting *The Last Supper* had just reopened after a long renovation, and their friends wanted to see it. Caroline, just a casual museum-goer at the time, didn't really think too much about it, but when she accompanied her friends and saw the painting, something changed within her. She was so moved by the painting that she plunged into a whole odyssey of studying everything da Vinci did, looking for some kind of explanation. Nothing really resonated deeply with her until almost a decade later, when she saw the *Mona Lisa Knots*.

On *The Mona Lisa*, there is embroidery on the bodice of her dress that does not match what women wore in the 1500s. Caroline recognized that the placement of this embroidery was mathematical, not decorative. She began to research Leonardo's knots and discovered that they were a huge part of his career. In reading da Vinci's writings and researching all that she could, Caroline discovered the meaning of the knots and why they were so important to da Vinci. He had a humble beginning that limited his social status, yet he painted, wrote on all subjects, and above all considered himself a mathematician. The knots are mathematical in that their meaning never wavers. The meanings are the same across different locations, religions, and time periods.

For example, the knot known as Solomon's Seal is two spheres that cross four times. It can be found in mosaic tiles in Italy, synagogue

tiles in Jerusalem, and all over the world. It symbolizes a connection between man and creator. A knot known as the Knot of Isis (after the Egyptian goddess) first showed up in hieroglyphics, showed up again in Roman times, and is in *The Last Supper* where the tablecloth is knotted. This knot, which is a symbol of motherhood, can also be seen in recent news. When Prince Harry and Meghan Markle announced their engagement, she wore a white coat with a belt tied with the Knot of Isis. Da Vinci was known in his time for painting these knots, and no one else has ever successfully recreated this work.

Caroline's newly published art book *Leonardo's Knots* will introduce you for the first time, to a facet of Renaissance painter Leonardo da Vinci overlooked for centuries yet present in his artworks: his passion for intertwining knots. The coffee table book highlights the artist's evolution, from traditional knots to mathematical knots, with revealing new discoveries. She is lecturing at the Odd Fellows building on Oak Street, one of her favorite places in Saratoga, and on February 11th at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco.

As the 500th anniversary of da Vinci's life is celebrated, Caroline recognizes how rare and remarkable it is for anyone to be remembered and celebrated globally for 500 years. There are books on da Vinci in every language from every decade. Although da Vinci was an unlikely success by today's standards, he has touched so many people's lives throughout the years, including Caroline's life. She looks forward to sharing all that she has learned, while continuing to learn more. (www.leonardosknots.com)

A very special thanks to Sue Kang with Sue's Gallery Cafe for allowing for a beautiful setting and backdrop for our Resident Feature photos. We had a wonderful time, enjoyed artisan coffees, delicious edibles, and we even took home some amazing ceramics. Sue's Gallery Cafe is both a gallery for Sue's handmade ceramics, as well as a specialty coffee shop located in Saratoga Village. They are open Everyday, 8:00 am - 6:00 pm and located at 14665 Big Basin Way Saratoga, CA 95070 – suesgallerycafe.com