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## A Performance in Pictures

By Lou Fancher



Taurean Green and Patricia Perez of Company C Contemporary Ballet Photo David DeSilva

dancers on stage. "There they are for two hours, posing over and over again. There's something everywhere to shoot!" He's a great dance photographer in-the-making, racing on to say, "I feel the music, and I can tell when they're about to unwind or jump or throw their partner." The adrenaline high reminds him of what he felt on the track, or what he feels when in the midst of developing a new product for the market: "It's a performance-just taking pictures."

What DeSilva does with those stunning pictures is even more impressive than his considerable enthusiasm for taking them. What he doesn't give to the dancers, what doesn't appear on the front page of the San Francisco Chronicle, ("A surreal experience," according to DeSilva,) he sells through his website, with 100% of the profits going to the Lincoln Child Center. His mother, now deceased, began volunteering for the Oakland-based non-profit 40 years ago, and DeSilva now gives legs to her legacy, donating all payments for his prints directly to the LCC. "The appreciation from the people there," DeSilva says, "It just makes you want to do it again."

Forward momentum means he wants to not only do it again, but to do it bigger, better, faster, stronger. The stereotype is nearly complete; remarkably, in DeSilva, gravel and grand jet• are perfectly paired, and drive and donation exist as one.

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

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Our fragile brains prefer to categorize, even stereotype, when it comes to people. That's why Orinda's David DeSilva, construction company executive v.p., race car driver, surfer, gentle father of 4 girls and ballet photographer, gives us pause. How did the man move from concrete to fiberglass, or diapers and dimples to dance? And more to the point, what drove him there?

The thru-line (organizing minds will be glad to know there is one,) is movement. DeSilva started his forward trajectory at the age of 16, working at his grandfather's company, DeSilva Gates Construction (DGC). At the University of Davis, Stockton, he majored in business, graduated, and then, in 1994, left his steady rise at DGC to race with Indy Lights, the triple A of major league racing. "That was proof in the pudding my dad would support me in anything," he says lightly. When racing began to plateau for him-when the speed of change began to stall-DeSilva returned to the family business. There, he dove into the company ethic, developing a management style he describes as "nimble, wanting to adjust quickly to what's happening now; what's immediately in front of us."

His father's principles, of supporting and acknowledging employees, influenced DeSilva's next move. He began shooting and printing portraits of the men and women receiving service awards, many of whom had been with the 75-year old company for most of their working lives. Photography was a familiar, childhood hobby. "I remember taking photos as a kid with a camera with one of those flash bulbs you had to stick on the top," he says. But these days, DeSilva was shooting with a Nikon D3S and a 200 mm lens: at a film speed of 12,800, he was cruising at top velocity, exactly where he is most comfortable.

Predictably, DeSilva's pace of discourse picks up momentum when he talks about photographing first his daughters, then a local dance company. "Trying to catch someone in the moment, in the zone: those are the photos I like," he says. With a flair for creating intimate portraits and a camera that "opens up the playing field in any type of lights," DeSilva is a natural for shooting bodies in motion. Introduced to Company C Contemporary Ballet, a professional dance company based in Walnut Creek, he found his match during a dress rehearsal.

"It's like shooting fish in a barrel," he says about photographing the