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Country Club's new general manager Ron Haas

By *Sophie Braccini*

From left, Ron Haas with his daughter, wife and son. Photo provided

The Moraga Country Club has hired a consummate hospitality professional to replace Andrew Scott as general manager. Ron Haas is not boastful, but behind his ready wide smile one can detect the iron hand in the velvet glove. He is keenly aware that the club accommodates a large portion of the Moraga population and he plans to lead the club in the spirit of penultimate manager Frank Melon, mixing exclusivity and flawless service to members with involvement with the town. "My role is to create a great community here," he says.

Haas explains with pride that he is a third generation hospitality professional, from his grandfather who owned a bed and breakfast with a restaurant and gas station in Austria, and his father who worked in that industry starting in Vienna, moving to Bermuda where Haas was born. Haas completed his education in Austria before getting a job in Hawaii where his father worked. He says that his favorite part of hospitality is interacting with people: clients and staff.

His wide experience includes working on boats - he says that is the ultimate way to learn the trade - hotels (Sheraton, Hilton, Hyatt), private clubs (Desert Mountain, Lake Las Vegas, Santa Lucia Preserve) and a health club/spa (Carmel Valley Athletic Club, Refuge). He met his wife in Hawaii; she is an educator and grant writer. He wants to create the experience people expect at the club, adjusting to different situations: at times relaxed and casual, at other times more formal. He wants his staff to understand and always provide the right experience for each patron. He believes that the "MCC product" is great, that it just needs some return to the basics and fine-tuning.

Haas has had his eye on the Moraga Country Club for a while, even when managing the Santa Lucia Preserve in Carmel Valley, because his son, while attending Holy Names College in Oakland, worked for the club's tennis director Mark Orwig. Haas says he will take a clear sky on a warm day in Moraga any day over Carmel ocean fog. He also really appreciates the mix of challenges that represent MCC as both a homeowners association with 521 homes and a private country club. He adds that the board immediately made him feel like a welcome partner.

Haas' mantra is one club, one member, one experience. His father used to say what was important was to create the processes and the culture that make people want to work for the general manager. He is aware that MCC needs to mend some relationships, and he adds that he feels this has always been his strength.

Haas explains that the tennis and swim clubs are doing better, and that the process has started to hire more tennis pros and a new swim director. His vision is to make all the members, HOA or sports members, feel taken care of. He wants to create a harmony from the top down encompassing everyone. He adds that is why he had to let the swim director go, to have a clean slate to rebuild trust.

He notes that attracting people to work in Moraga is difficult because of the lack of public transportation. On Sept. 11 MCC held a job fair and Haas says that 11 very good candidates came, but he still has plenty of openings: six in "grounds and greens," and about as many on the hospitality side of the house. MCC is the second largest employer in Moraga, after Saint Mary's College.

Haas declares that what he likes about Moraga and the club is the comfortable and down to earth feel where you can be yourself. He relates that the board confirmed its desire to have the club be included and active in the town.

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