

LIVING Brentwood

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A photograph of a family of four and two dogs on a brick staircase. In the foreground, a young woman with long brown hair and a white short-sleeved dress stands on the steps. Next to her is a woman with blonde hair, also in a white dress, wearing a watch and high heels. Behind them stands an older man in a blue and white striped shirt. To the left, two dogs are sitting on the steps: a small black and white dog and a larger golden retriever. The background shows a white house with a porch and a black lantern-style light fixture.

Stephanie Blum and Tim Reuben

*Grit, grace, hustle — and
happy dogs*

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Stephanie Blum and Tim Reuben

Partners in work and in life

BY NICOLE SELHORST | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT STALEY

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The first time they met, he was a client of the boutique family law firm where she worked, and she passed him onto a colleague because, “I suspected that as a big-time litigator he would be a difficult client. Plus, I already had a full caseload.” The second time they met, two years later at the gym, “I recognized him immediately, I could tell he thought I looked familiar but that he couldn’t place me.”

“Six months he carried that ring around!”

But Tim Reuben put it together and called, and Stephanie Blum said yes — to lunch. “At that lunch, I thought ‘Wow, he is so charming and smart and handsome!’” They started dating and a few years later, he — unbeknownst to her — bought a ring. “Six months he carried that ring around!” Stephanie laughs.

And the proposal? “We were visiting my family in Florida for Passover,” Stephanie says. “The traditional 4 seder questions were being asked in Hebrew and Tim interrupted saying ‘Wait a minute, I need that said in English!’ My grandparents were there, everybody, all staring. So, the question ‘Why is this night different from all other nights?’ was asked in English. And that’s when Tim stood up and said, ‘Because tonight I am asking Stephanie to marry me.’”

Stephanie’s grandfather never got the seder back on track after that. Everyone had to admire the ring. Her sisters immediately started planning the wedding. And Stephanie? She said, “Yes!”



With great humor and evident delight, Stephanie Blum and Timothy Reuben have built a life together from that auspicious start.

Stephanie and Tim are Californians by choice and love. Stephanie grew up in New York, Tim in Chicago. Stephanie attended the Cornell School of Hotel Administration. After graduation a bright career in wine sales in New York opened up for her. Perks, such as the lease of a company car, were quick to come. Stephanie was the only woman working in sales for the firm at the time. That alone was enough, during the 90's, to make life on the job challenging for the only woman out of 100 men. But when she planned to exercise her option and lease a BMW, there was more overt hostility towards her.

"My boss felt that no 22-year-old female should be driving the same car he was. When push came to shove, I realized I couldn't be in a position where I didn't have the ability to speak my mind — or where doing so jeopardized my ability to support myself. So, I decided to finally take my father's advice and go to law school."

Her choice was USC — and Family Law.

"I decided to open my own firm in 1992."

Tim grew up in Chicago and attended prep school in Pennsylvania, going on to Harvard College and Harvard Law School. After graduating, he narrowed down where he wanted to practice to Washington, D.C., New York, and Los Angeles — they all offered the cosmopolitan lifestyle and cutting-edge opportunities he sought. "But I didn't want to go into government so that left New York and LA. In New York at that time, you were hired by a big law firm and would end up in the law library for years. I wanted more."



"LA was different. There was optimism in the air. I went to a big law firm and then a smaller one and then I decided to open my own firm in 1992." He set out to build a firm with a small group of lawyers who could all fit in a conference room together and talk through their cases. And so he did.

Tim's practice was mainly civil litigation until Stephanie joined the firm, bringing in the complementary practice of family law. "I am very focused on my practice," says Stephanie. "My parents went through a terrible divorce. It was high conflict, they put my sisters and me in the middle, they did everything that you're not supposed to do." This personal experience was formative in Stephanie's choice of family law practice, and in how she interacts with her clients. "I don't want children to have the same experience that I had. Having the ability to improve the experience of children whose parents are going through a divorce by working closely with my clients is what makes my job so meaningful."

"She's a machine," says Tim. "She will work like crazy. And she's an amazing cook, she loves the dogs, is a great golfer, and a great mother. She is doing all these things and practicing law!"

Being a mom means a lot to Stephanie. She and Tim have a daughter, Becca, aged 14, who is in 9th grade at Brentwood School. For many years, Tim coached Becca's AYSO soccer teams with Stephanie taking on the job of organizing the team trips, group lunches and dinners, etc. These days, they just are good parent spectators at the games. But Becca stays busy. Piano lessons, singing, club soccer, tennis and volleyball as well as all the other delights of teen life. Becca loves skiing on the family trips to Deer Valley in the winter. She also attends sleepaway camp in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania, a camp Stephanie's niece and nephew attended. Stephanie's father was a camp counselor there many years ago, and Becca loves it.

Tim also has three children from a first marriage. Two of them, Danny, who attended Northwestern, and Jenna, who went to LMU, are in LA. Aubrey, who attended Boston University, lives in Northern California and visits frequently. Both Danny and Aubrey have weddings coming up.

Maintaining a relationship with his children post-divorce as well as melding a new family together was challenging. With patience and determination, they have found success.

"We've learned that you have to adjust to things in life, that you have to adapt," says Tim. "You take that negative or that disadvantage and you find a way to flip it so that you can make it better for you and for everybody else. Being able to pivot is key. You are going to have setbacks, everyone does. So, you figure it out."

"We've been fortunate," he continues. "I am very proud of the children. Becca is thriving and the older ones are doing very well. We get to spend time with all of them."

"Being able to pivot is key."

In fact, Tim's daughter, Jenna, works with them in the law firm, and comes over for dinner with Tim's 91-year-old mom almost every week. Danny and his fiancée live in the Venice area. Daughter Aubrey, who lives in Northern California, is part of the reason Stephanie and Tim have a second dog. The pandemic shutdown came just as the family was getting ready to celebrate Becca's bat mitzvah. "Becca had studied diligently. Everything had been done, invitations, all the plans. The big day was just weeks away. And then came the shut down. But I couldn't cancel my daughter's big event without replacing it with something happy," says Stephanie. That something was named Snoopy — a Saint Bernard poodle mix.

However, some time later, when Stephanie floated the idea of another dog that would keep Snoopy company, Tim said no. But then, Aubrey came by and said, "You should get a second dog." Tim thought it was a great idea.

They found their Bernadoodle and brought her home. "We couldn't name her 'Lucy,' because the sound of Lucy is the same as Snoopy. But we were on the 'L' theme." The old Kinks song came to mind...and so Lola became the Bernadoodle's name.

As busy as Stephanie and Tim are, the year ahead is particularly full. Along with two weddings, the family will also celebrate Becca's bat mitzvah — finally! "It's a big year for us," says Stephanie.

"We are very Brentwood centric. I play tennis at Riviera, we play golf once a week at Brentwood Country Club," says Tim. Another new normal of the pandemic is walking the dogs. "Our morning loop is about three miles," says Stephanie. The long up-and-down hill loop of their neighborhood means meeting all the neighbors. "People are out, we stop and chat. It's been great fun!"

"I took a Peloton class the other day and I love what the instructor said," says Stephanie. "She was talking about three things: grit, grace, and hustle. I can't take credit for this, but it has really resonated for me. You need grit. Everything isn't always rainbows and unicorns. You need hustle, too. If you want something you have to make it happen. You go and fight for what you want. As for grace, how do you say that better?" ■

