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Round Hill Country Club



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MEET THE
ROWBOTHAMS!

A LEGACY OF ADVENTURE, INTEGRITY & GLOBAL SUCCESS

MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

BRIAN ROWBOTHAM AND HIS SON JAMES

LIVING A LIFE
OF ADVENTURE
& ACTION!

WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH MCCABE
FROM HER CONVERSATION WITH
ROUND HILL RESIDENTS, BRIAN &
JAMES ROWBOTHAM



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READY. SET. ACTION.

If you are looking for a Hollywood script, Round Hill resident Brian Rowbothan's life reads like an action-packed movie. He worked on high-profile financial recoveries, including the Robert Maxwell family's billion-dollar pension theft scandal. He advised the Russian tech entrepreneurs behind the iconic Tetris game—until a brutal (unsolved) murder of the company CEO and family in Palo Alto, that ended that relationship. His clients include billionaires in Asia, foreign dignitaries, Middle Eastern governments and wealthy Emirs, and even Hollywood legends like Sophia Loren among his clients.

"I've dealt with fascinating people," Brian reflects, "from the mafia, which he disengaged after doing due diligence, to global investors to heads of stock exchanges. Some clients were incredibly wealthy from family fortunes, while others had unknown pasts that required extra scrutiny."

"Working with clients offshore, you have to keep your wits about with whom you do business," he comments. He has rejected black market sources, corrupt foreign governments, and money laundering along the way. "You lose control of your long-term strategy and direction when you take on clients from the darker side of business just for the sake of a bit more income."

INTERNATIONAL ROOTS

Born in Buenos Aires in 1950 to British parents, Brian's early years were steeped in international influence. During World War II, his father was a tank commander in the British Army, and his mother, a captain in the Royal Air Force. They returned to Argentina post-World War II, but political instability under a dictatorship in the 1950s caused the family to seek a new home. In 1953, they boarded a freighter from Buenos Aires to New Orleans, then drove north to Montreal, and then across the Trans-Canada Highway to British Columbia, a safer, albeit, more pioneering lifestyle in the early 1950s. That's where Brian spent his formative years before the family later headed south to California, towing a U-Haul trailer with all their possessions in search of opportunity.

Education became Brian's passport to success. He earned both his bachelor's degree and MBA with honors from the University of California, Berkeley. His career took off at Arthur Andersen before leading him to PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in London, where he specialized in international tax. "Looking back, I was lucky to have choices. The best decision of my life was becoming a naturalized American citizen in 1970, aged 19," he comments, "even if it was during a tough time like the Vietnam War. I was lucky not to go to Vietnam since the war was winding down when I graduated from UC, Berkeley."

While working in London, a chance meeting with Andrea (from Scotland), a classically trained actress performing in a Shakespearean theatre company and country wide repertory companies, changed the course of his life. The two got married in a 11th Century Norman church near Oxford, and they eventually settled in California, where Brian continued to excel at PwC before launching his own international tax firm. For 26 years, he built a reputation as a trusted advisor to high-net-worth individuals, global investors, and some of the world's most intriguing figures. He's chaired several professional organizations, and his latest, as the Chair of the Hong Kong Business Association in Northern California was challenging and rewarding, helping businesses connect across the Pacific, while avoiding political issues. Some of his biggest clients came from Hong Kong, China and India. One of his success factors: "Go the distance to meet your clients where they work and live." The travel routine was often grueling, and the occasional bouts with food poisoning along the way toughens one up. "It made the daily commute to the city an easy routine."

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Life has been challenging, however, for Brian, but he has a positive outlook. "Adversity is a friend in disguise," says Brian. That's his life motto. He adds, "Don't choose the easy path, and don't fear the difficult path. You're rewarded in the

end. The challenges are great learning experiences.” Over the years, his company launched many careers and employees and partners became friends for life.

One of his tougher times looking back was when his son James was in the US Army on two tours in Iraq on Active Duty as a Cavalry Scout. “He started as a ‘spotter’ for a Humvee recon group. His task: looking for possible IEDs on the road ahead and as extra support for potential ambushes. He was “promoted up” with Sergeant stripes, but that put him topside of his Humvee behind a 50 Caliber machine gun,” says Brian.

Serving in the 1st Armored Division, 2nd Brigade in a Cavalry Regiment, James was stationed in Baumholder Germany and deployed to Iraq, from 2004-2007 where he led a reconnaissance unit in active combat zones. Patrolling northern and southern Iraq in the middle of war was not for the faint of heart, but James was up to the challenge. “Iraq was the most dangerous place I’ve ever been,” James admits. Brian agrees. Days and weeks would go by without a word from James while he was out on week-long patrols. Seeing the gut-wrenching tragedies daily on the news was also heart wrenching. On his first tour, the HumVees had no armor, so troops were extremely vulnerable. Fortunately, while he had several life-threatening encounters, James returned to the United States safely, where he finished his four years in the army. “Looking back,” says Brian, “it was a tense time in all our lives. We’re thankful for his safe return, and give support to the Veterans organizations.”

After leaving the military, James continued his commitment to service by joining the Oakland Police Department. Over 16 years, he worked in some of the city’s toughest neighborhoods, facing challenges that required both tactical skill and deep community engagement, dealing with drug busts, gang violence and showing up in court testifying about investigations.

“Oakland was unpredictable,” he says. “But the biggest lesson I learned was how to work with people from all walks of life. That’s something I bring into my real estate career today.”



A medical retirement led James to a new chapter—real estate. He now works as a REALTOR® with Compass, where he assists clients in finding their ideal homes.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

James isn’t the only Rowbotham in real estate. His sister, Zara, a USF graduate, and with an MBA, has been a top agent in San Francisco for 15 years. Now, with Sb. Vanguard Properties, and with Brian, leveraging his global connections, the family has built a powerhouse real estate team.

“With a combined background in tax, international finance, and real estate, we can guide our clients through complex transactions, whether it’s a single-family home or a foreign owned 1,100-acre winery in Napa we’re working on now.”

The Rowbothams’ business model is deeply personal. “It’s all about relationships,” James adds. “My father has spent decades proving that trust and integrity and his commitment to client service matters more than any single transaction. “That’s what we bring to our clients, along with confidentiality.”

ROOTED IN ALAMO, REACHING THE WORLD

Despite their global footprint, the Rowbothams are firmly rooted in Alamo. They cherish the close-knit community, the quality of life, and the beauty of Northern California. Their home in Round Hill has been their base for 35 years, a place where they raised their children and now enjoy time with their four grandchildren.

Brian, ever the adventurer, still finds time for travels—whether it’s running with the bulls in Spain with James, doing his 20th hike up Mt. Whitney, taking family safaris in South Africa, or giving business talks in Shanghai. But no matter where life takes him, he is always happy to return home to Round Hill.

“California has been the land of opportunity and a window into the world for me and our family,” Brian says. “It’s my home base, from where I built an international business, raised our family, and found success. Now, it’s about helping others do the same.”



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