

PELICAN HILL®

ON THE COAST *of* NEWPORT BEACH

A CONVERSATION WITH TEEMU SELANNE

by Patrick Mott

THERE'S NO WAY TO PROVE IT, BUT IN HIS 44 YEARS TEEMU SELANNE MAY HAVE HAD MORE ICE BENEATH HIS FEET THAN ANY OTHER SUBSTANCE. A HOCKEY PLAYER SINCE CHILDHOOD, THE ONE-TIME BUSINESS STUDENT AND KINDERGARTEN TEACHER PLAYED IN FIVE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS FOR HIS NATIVE FINLAND, COMPETED ON SIX FINNISH OLYMPIC TEAMS AND IS THE ALL-TIME LEADER IN OLYMPIC SCORING WITH 43 POINTS.

BUT IN HIS 21 SEASONS IN THE NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE, PLAYING FOR THE WINNIPEG JETS, THE SAN JOSE SHARKS, THE COLORADO AVALANCHE AND THE ANAHEIM DUCKS, IT IS HIS SKATING STYLE, SPEED AND CONSISTENT SCORING ABILITY THAT HAS FIXED SELANNE'S FACE IN THE MINDS OF HIS FANS.





Today, one year after his number 8 jersey became the first to be retired by the Ducks, the most famous Duck of all, the man known as The Finnish Flash, is enjoying life, family and a new business from his south Orange County home—without blades under his feet.

YOU HAD AN UNUSUALLY LONG CAREER IN HOCKEY. HOW DOES IT FEEL NOW THAT IT'S NOT A PART OF YOUR DAILY LIFE?

I don't really miss the hockey that much. Of course, I miss my teammates and the locker room life and the social side, but I think I played long enough. I think I left everything out there and I'm really enjoying every day right now. You live so many years with the schedule and a very, very disciplined lifestyle. I'm still busy all the time, though, and that's good.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BEST MEMORIES YOU'LL TAKE AWAY FROM YOUR PLAYING DAYS?

Obviously the number one thing for sure is winning the Stanley Cup in 2007. That's a very special moment. Overall, the Ducks have been a very, very happy place for me. The organization and everybody treated me so well. It was a pleasure and a big honor to play for the Ducks for so many years.

AND YOU GOT TO LIVE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

Yeah, I don't think there's a better place. All the activities and the lifestyle we have here, you can't get better than that.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR RESTAURANT IN LAGUNA BEACH, SELANNE STEAK TAVERN.

I've always dreamed of having a restaurant, and a couple of my friends have restaurants back home in Finland. Ten years ago



my golfing partner [Kevin Pratt] and I were sitting down after a golf round and talking about how it would be nice to have our own restaurant. We wanted the location to be perfect. Laguna Beach is one of my favorite places, and when [the former restaurant property] French 75 became available, that was it. We've been there for about a year and a half, and it's been a lot of fun. I get there two or three times a week, and I enjoy talking with the customers and seeing how the kitchen and the bartending works. I've been talking to the bartender about once in a while helping him out a little bit behind the bar.



YOU'RE A GOLFER. IS THERE A NATURAL TRANSITION FROM BEING A HOCKEY PLAYER TO BEING A GOLFER?

I think a little bit. The swing is not the same, but it's the same kind of motion. And there's the hand-eye coordination, and being an athlete helps for sure. But hockey is way easier than golf. Golf is...it's a love/hate relationship. The good thing about golf, though, is that you don't think you're ever going to be good enough. There are always things to improve. And it's one of the sports you can play all your life. I'm really enjoying it. I'm a four handicap. I try not to take it too seriously, but to get better and better.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE COURSE?

The North Course at Pelican Hill® is probably my favorite course in Orange County. If I'm going to go someplace that always makes me happy, it's Pelican Hill North. It's so special.

YOU'RE A CAR NUT, A RACING ENTHUSIAST. WHAT DO YOU HAVE IN YOUR GARAGE, AND WHAT SORT OF RACING DO YOU DO?

I used to race cars when I was younger, rally cars, and a couple of times I did the Nurburgring 24-hour race, which is an unbelievable experience. One lap is 16 miles, so it's a real challenge. It's getting a little harder to race



because of the time involved, but I've always loved racing. And I've always loved cars. I really fell in love with the old American muscle cars. I have a 12-car garage at my home and I have a '69 Corvette convertible, a '71 'Cuda, a '59 Cadillac, one hot rod, a '70 Challenger. Back home I have a GTO and a '57 Bel-Air. Also I have a few Ferraris. Out of all the cars I have, that Cadillac is the one people love the most. Oh my God, they go nuts when they see it.

DO YOU THINK OF ORANGE COUNTY AS YOUR HOME NOW?

We still think we are Finnish people who live here. I still call Finland home, but I'm pretty sure Southern California is going to be our home for the rest of our lives because we really love it. It's the perfect scenario for us to go to Finland for two months in the summer when the weather and everything is great, and then when it starts getting dark and cold we can come back here. 🇫🇮