

A question of balance

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06/02/2023 Catherine Blagden and Mary Ricks have dedicated themselves to reconciling differences. The couple enhance their rural life on California's exclusive coast with the urban lifestyle of Los Angeles – and with three Porsche models in the garage.

One life in two worlds – Catherine Blagden and her wife Mary Ricks have done what many only dream of. They left the hustle and bustle of Los Angeles for the coastal community of Montecito, California. After uprooting their lives, the two women had to tackle the question of how to maintain their connection to both urban and coastal life – and how to rediscover themselves. The answer: it's all a question of balance.

For the couple, both of whom are in their fifties, the move to Montecito was much more a return than a retreat. Blagden's great-grandparents moved to Montecito from New York City in the late 19th century, and her grandmother was born here. Ricks' grandparents lived here when she was little.

Returning to their roots

Rather than escaping the big city, they were returning to their roots. For Blagden, who has always felt connected to nature, this is true in more ways than one. Because she's a winemaker and the founder of Blagden Wines, nature also plays a role in her professional life. "Just like my love of nature, community and social interaction have always been a part of my life," she explains. "So I wanted to make a natural product that helps people connect." Blagden is now going one step further by focusing her organic cultivation on biodynamic production: with a method based on lunar cycles and clean, sustainable cultivation practices.

On the surface, Ricks' career couldn't be more different. As president of a global real estate firm, she's more concerned with growth in the building sector than in the vineyard. While transactions and market observation are a part of her everyday life, Ricks' true strengths lie in design. When it comes to properties, she's more interested in light, aesthetics, and a harmonious environment. According to Ricks, all these aspects combined form "the soul of a space" and expose its true identity.

When it came to choosing their private home, their areas of expertise played a key role in the decision. "The house has provided a place of peace," says real estate expert Ricks. They've been slowly renovating the property, which is just steps from the Pacific Ocean. "Being outside, hearing the waves crash, being connected to the beach and the ocean. This is where we find balance," Blagden adds.

Spending time with the family is what really matters to them. The decision to leave Los Angeles was also made for the benefit of their 12-year-old daughter Arden. Although they had built a life for themselves in the city, Blagden and Ricks ultimately came to the realisation that something had changed. "Los Angeles was becoming too aggressive, too crowded, and too self-centred," explains Blagden. "We looked for a place where we could rediscover ourselves."

Though largely shaped by uncertainty, this phase of life also gave the couple valuable insight: "We just said to each other, thank goodness we have each other. Whatever happens, we need to hang on to one another," says Blagden. "Raising a teenager is going to be a wild ride!" They found in Montecito what had been missing in Los Angeles. "Here, kids would rather go to the beach or be on a soccer team than go shopping," says Blagden. "They're surfing, hiking, or on bikes instead of on social media. That's what's good for us."

Harmony of contrasts

While Blagden and Ricks work in different worlds, they've managed to bring them together on a personal level. "A harmony of contrasts is a very good description of us," says Blagden, smiling. "Our values and interests are the same, but we're totally different people." A statement that extends to the garage located behind the house. The couple share a passion for driving – especially when it comes to Porsche. Shortly after moving to the California coast, they purchased their first air-cooled 911 – a

1996 993-generation Coupé in Midnight Blue Metallic. Blagden enjoys driving the 911 to her vineyard in nearby Santa Ynez. The winding roads and noticeable change in elevation have a calming effect on the winemaker.

There's a Macan GTS, also in Midnight Blue Metallic, parked on the driveway in front of the house, which they use for family trips and to drive their daughter to school. "I love the Macan. It was my favourite car that I'd ever owned," says Blagden with delight. "But now I can't decide between the Macan and Taycan. They're both just too incredible in their own way." She's referring to their third Porsche, a Dolomite Silver Taycan 4S, which she and Ricks usually drive to Los Angeles.

"Making any move, no matter how great the place you're moving to is, is hard," says Ricks. "We miss LA sometimes. It's where we started our family, after all." So whenever they have a craving for their favourite Italian restaurant in the city of angels, feel like visiting friends, or need to go into the office, they drive their Taycan about 140 kilometres along the Pacific coast back to the bustling city.

While it used to be the other way around, moments like these now represent a departure from their quiet life in Montecito. "We've definitely become more mellow, more in tune with the nature around us," explains Blagden. "But more importantly, more in tune with ourselves as a family." As the couple relaxes in the backyard after a long day, things get a little noisier in the courtyard. Their daughter Arden and her friends are splashing around in the pool and howling with laughter. Active, happy teenagers without a care in the world.

The family may have found their ideal solution here for reconciling differences: hustle and calm, internal combustion engines and electric motors, social and family life. A small, shared cosmos, a way of life – with an understanding of the contrasts that make life so special.

Info

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Consumption data

Taycan 4S with Performance Battery (Predecessor model)

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO_2 emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO_2-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, CO_2Emissions and Electricity Consumption Guide for New Passenger Cars), which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from DAT (Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Helmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, www.dat.de).

Image Sublines

Path: A question of balance/Images/img_2.jpg
Title: Mary Ricks, Catherine Blagden, l-r, Taycan 4S, Montecito, USA, 2022, Marc Urbano
Subline: Yearning: seeking a balance between urban and rural life.

Path: A question of balance/Images/img_4.jpg
Title: 911 Carrera 2, Montecito, USA, 2022, Marc Urbano
Subline: Excursion: at weekends, the women enjoy driving their 911 through the hills of Santa Ynez, where Catherine Blagden produces her organic wine.

Path: A question of balance/Images/img_5.jpg
Title: Mary Ricks, Catherine Blagden, l-r, Taycan 4S, 911 Carrera 2, Macan GTS, Montecito, USA, 2022, Marc Urbano
Subline: Harmony: despite the different ages and drives, the cars on the couple's driveway share the same values. After all, what they have in common is Porsche DNA.

Path: A question of balance/Images/img_6.jpg
Title: Taycan 4S, Montecito, USA, 2022, Marc Urbano
Subline: Commuter car: when a visit to Los Angeles is on the books, Ricks and Blagden enjoy driving 140 kilometres up the coast in their Taycan 4S.

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