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Manu
Changotra

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cover story

By Zachary Cohen

Manu Changotra

FINDING HOME IN THE BAY AREA

Born in Amritsar, India and raised in Bangalore, Manu Changotra went on to earn an MBA in advertising and build a successful marketing career in her home country. She worked with multinational brands, such as Coca-Cola and Gillette, alongside a host of top Indian brands, but when Manu's husband got a job opportunity to work for Apple in the Bay Area, the couple jumped at the chance to experience life in America.

Manu and her husband intended to stay in the US for one year, but they fell in love with the area.

One year became two, then three. Now more than twenty years later, they still call the Silicon Valley home.

"We started loving this place," Manu reflects with a smile. "I felt the Bay Area and the people were amazing. I felt at home with a good mix of all kinds of people from all



over the world. People are easygoing, not rushed. There is diversity. I could try every cuisine in the world. I could meet different people from different backgrounds. And that's what it was about for me — the people, the connections.”

While her husband had a clear career path with Apple, Manu's professional path in the US was less clear. She stayed at home with her two children for many years. Meanwhile, she worked in sales at Godiva Chocolate and later started a cake-making business.

“There I was at Godiva with an MBA selling chocolates,” Manu laughs. “But it was an exciting time, too. In India, I couldn't dream of starting my own business. I started baking, and from there, started making designer cakes.”

By 2012, Manu was ready to return to the workforce full-time. That's when she turned to real estate.

“I was excited to work with people and be able to help them achieve something. I connect with people well, and I wanted to take that journey with people,” Manu offers. “I realized I could have my own business, have flexibility, and be at home when my kids needed me. There weren't too many full-time South Asian agents at that time, and there was a huge demographic of the South Asian population looking to have that connection with their agent – to be culturally understood, to talk in their language. So I got my license, and before I knew it, I was off.”

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”

Manu has now been thriving in real estate for over a decade. She closed \$142 million as a solo agent in 2022, making her the #215 individual agent in the nation and #37 agent in the Bay Area by volume (as ranked by RealTrends and The Leading 100).

Although Manu serves people from all cultural backgrounds, most of her clients are South Asian; the cultural similarities offer a pathway to instant connection.

“In real estate, it's not always straightforward. We dig in deep, and I can give clients perspective on choices. I take the journey with my clients and guide them along every step to make sure they make the right decision. I add value from a real estate perspective but also from the emotional connection I offer. It's all about relationships in life,” Manu explains.



Manu's journey from a marketing career in India to becoming a REALTOR® in the US has been a path with tremendous rewards. She now has a business and a life she is immensely proud of.

"I came to the US, and I wasn't scared, but I had to start all over. I wasn't in tech, and being in the Bay Area, I had to discover what I could do here. I'm constantly out to reinvent myself, reenergize my business, and revamp my business because I enjoy my work. This comes naturally to me."

BEYOND REAL ESTATE

Manu and her husband, Manish, have two children, Salinka (19) and Shivank (16). Her daughter, Salinka, recently got her real estate license and works part-time around her schoolwork at San Jose State. Outside real estate, family is Manu's priority. She enjoys traveling, exploring new restaurants, and volunteering.



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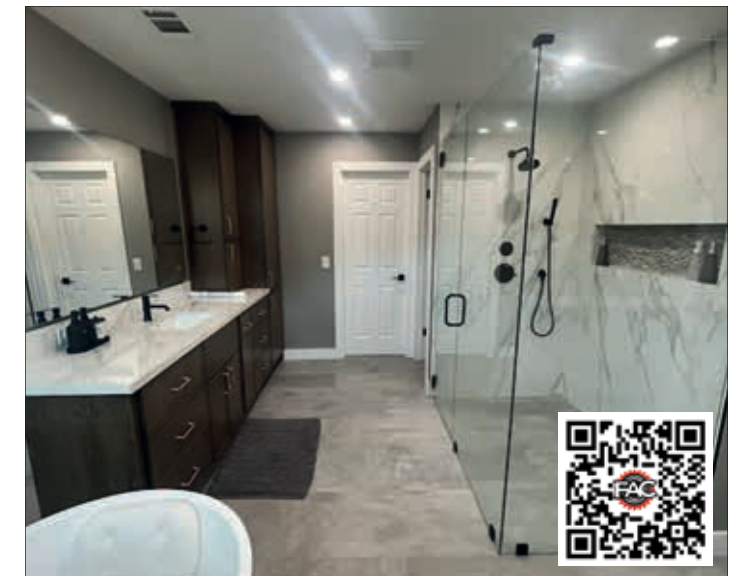
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