

The Faris Reilman Family

Locally Rooted Globetrotters

By Dave Focareta

Photography by Robert Staley



The Faris Reilman family practically embodies the idea of being rooted to one's neighborhood. Allison Faris and Andy Reilman are native Angelenos who bought a house in Culver City blocks away from where Andy spent his formative years. Allison also grew up in nearby Westchester, where her mother still lives. Their children, Annelise and Gabe, attend (or attended, in Annelise's case, as she has now graduated to the nearby middle school) the same elementary school their dad attended. They take piano lessons at the Culver City Music Center and participate, as Andy did when he was their age, at the Culver-Palms YMCA. Andy serves as a member of the Culver City Planning Commission and the family has been season ticket holders at the Kirk Douglas Theater for over a decade. As Andy puts it, "We are very local in

our day-to-day...We really stay within the city most of the time."

One might assume, then, that this is a family of homebodies, folks very comfortable in their little corner of the world without much need to get outside of that bubble. That assumption would be a mistake.

For all their connections to Culver City, the family's dedication to seeing other parts of the world would make a travel blogger jealous. Earlier this year, they spent spring break in Australia, snorkeling at the Great Barrier Reef, traveling along the Great Ocean Road, and seeing the sights in Melbourne and Sydney. They particularly enjoyed the opportunity to see the wildlife in the

outback, including wallabies, camels and plenty of koalas. The entire family revels in their description of watching a koala walk across the road, with Annelise colorfully likening it to watching "a drunk dog with hip problems." For his part, Gabe excitedly shares that he had learned that camels are the most dangerous animals in Australia, noting that they were warned about camel stampedes that can destroy cars, tents and worse.



They've also included Annelise and Gabe on plenty of their state trips; "what we do with the kids is we also try to incorporate a National Park where we can fly in and camp," Allison explains. They've already visited Glacier National Park, Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone as a family. "And then our next one with the kids is going to be Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, to camp in Acadia National Park."

Although both Allison and Andy grew up in Southern California, they actually met in the Bay Area. Both attended college in northern California, Allison at the University of California, Berkeley and Andy at UC Davis. Their paths crossed because of activities they had undertaken as kids here in the Southland area. "We were both delegates in the YMCA Youth and Government program in high school," Andy explains, "and then we both volunteered for the YMCA in San Ramon in the fall of 1995, at a conference where all the (Youth and Government) delegations come together. That's how we met."

They eventually married and settled back in the Los Angeles area in 2005, buying the home where they currently reside in Culver City. "We have so many family ties here," Andy says, "and we wanted them (Annelise and Gabe) to be closer to their grandparents."



But the desire to settle down and the proximity to family and the familiar neighborhoods of their youth did not mean that Andy and Allison were done seeing the world. Far from it. In addition to the trip to Australia, the family has visited a number of international locales, from Mexico to France to Costa Rica. But perhaps their greatest travel project is "Fifty by Fifty," a challenge that Andy and Allison have given themselves to visit all 50 states before they turn 50. And they are well on their way, having already visited 35 states.

"Last year we did Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa. We had already been to Missouri, but for that trip, we did four states in three days," Allison explains. "That was really fun, because we followed the Missouri River, which was the path of Lewis and Clark." Allison and Andy often visit states "that may not be so fun for kids," during the week each summer when Annelise and Gabe attend Camp Whittle, the YMCA summer camp program in Big Bear Lake. "Next year when we drop the kids off we're going to do Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan," Allison describes.

While travel is clearly one passion of the Faris Reilman clan, the concept of environmental sustainability is another. In fact, their entire home was remodeled with sustainability in mind. They have solar power on the roof, flooring certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, and tile in their bathroom made completely of recycled materials. Their house is GreenPoint rated, meaning that it has been certified by an independent third-party as being resource-efficient and healthy. They've also created a garden in their front yard that is completely California native, meaning that they don't ever have to water.

The focus on sustainability extends to both Andy and Allison's professional lives as well. Allison, who has a PhD in Civil and Environmental Engineering, quit her job to attend business school at UCLA, where she earned her MBA in 2015. "I decided to go to business school and pursue sustainability

from inside a corporation, to change operations to make a smaller environmental impact," she says. **Allison's theory is, "that if you minimize the amount of utilities or impacts that you need, then when you have a disruptive event, you can get back to operating quickly. I developed a business case for efficiency around waste, water and electricity."**

For Andy too, the concept of sustainability has shaped his professional choices. A mechanical engineer, he's chosen to work for a firm that is an industry leader in pushing zero energy and high-performance buildings. **"High performance means low energy use, comfortable environments, and visual, acoustic and thermal comfort," Andy explains.** He also devotes a significant amount of time and energy volunteering for the Culver City Planning Commission, with the goal of making sure that planning and development in the city is being done with sustainability in mind. He's currently focused on encouraging the City to adopt Reach Codes, construction standards for energy efficiency that would

exceed the requirements of California's mandatory codes.

Like their parents, Gabe and Annelise are preparing to be both local and global citizens of the world. They are proud to have been part of the dual language program at La Ballona Elementary School, receiving their instruction in both English and Spanish. Gabe recently ran for, and won, an election to be Secretary of the student council. Annelise has a plan to one-up her parents "Fifty-by-Fifty" accomplishment. "I call it Seven Continents," Annelise says, explaining that her goal is to visit all seven continents over the course of her life. She's already well on her way, living in North America and having

traveled to Europe and Australia. "And in the next coming year, I'm going to Japan for my school's spring break." Pretty good progress, considering that she'll be more than halfway to her goal by the time she is a teenager.

As if to symbolically drive home the point of their rootedness in the community, Allison and Andy planted a tree in their front yard shortly after they bought their home. The tree is an Island Oak, a species native to California. It's a magnificent tree, having now grown to over 20 feet tall, and looking as though it will be a fixture in the neighborhood for many years to come. Much like the Faris Reilman family.



Family Photo

William Rassman, CFP Wealth Strategist

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- 2 Do I know how to mitigate taxes?
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William Rassman is a Certified Financial Planner and Director of Advisory Services for the independent investment and insurance firm Centric Capital Advisors.

He began his career in NYC at Smith Barney in 2008. He has held positions at Deutsche Bank, Merrill Lynch and Mariner Wealth Advisors. Frequent contributor to the Kiplinger Letter.

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CENTRICCAPITAL
ADVISORS

310-579-9060

www.centriccapitaladvisors.com

12424 Wilshire Blvd, 9th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90025