

Weekend

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Q&A: TEEMU SELANNE

He left ice rink but isn't done

The onetime hockey great now is a restaurateur in O.C., and he still finds time for the kids, his own and others.

BY KATHLEEN LUPPI

He's a six-time Olympian, the Anaheim Ducks' all-time leader in goals, points and games played, and the 15th leading scorer in NHL history.

Teemu Selanne, the former hockey standout, may have retired from the rink, but he's been transferring



Robert Gauthier | Los Angeles Times

THOUSANDS OF people fill Rautatietori Square in Helsinki, Finland, to celebrate the arrival of the Stanley Cup and hometown hero Teemu Selanne in 2007.

his success on the ice to the restaurant business.

"The Finnish Flash," as he is known, opened Laguna Beach restaurant Selanne Steak Tavern with Coto de Caza neighbor Kevin Pratt about two years ago. The location at the former French 75 features a tavern and bar, a wine room and a dining room, all in

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Gina Cioli

FORMER NHL GREAT Teemu Selanne opened the Laguna Beach restaurant Selanne Steak Tavern with a Coto de Caza neighbor about two years ago. The dad of four also leads a foundation that provides opportunities to kids.

SELANNE

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a contemporary beach look.

Retirement for him means spending time with his wife, Sirpa, and their three sons and daughter. The family spends summers near Helsinki.

And when Selanne is not busy operating the Pacific Coast Highway restaurant, he is leading the Teemu Selanne Youth Sports Foundation, an organization providing financial and inspirational opportunities to children.

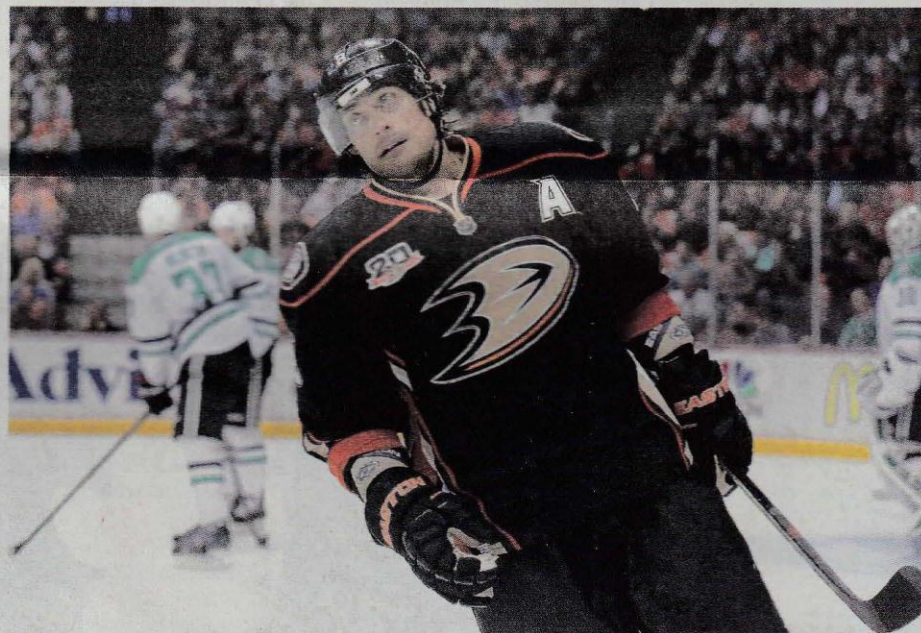
Selanne, a kindergarten teacher for three years in his native Finland, has long been interested in helping children and their families. His first order of business after the Ducks won the Stanley Cup in 2007 was to share the glory with young patients at the Helsinki Children's Hospital. He made his way from child to child carrying the hockey trophy.

He recently talked about his restaurant, success and his entree recommendations.

Weekend: You opened Selanne Steak Tavern in Laguna Beach in 2013. Why did you decide to pursue a career in the restaurant business?

Selanne: 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



Robert Gauthier | Los Angeles Times

FORMER ANAHEIM DUCKS winger Teemu Selanne, seen here on the ice before a playoff game in 2014, finished his NHL career with 684 goals and 773 assists.

my favorite places, and when the former restaurant French 75 became available, that was it. We opened Selanne Steak Tavern in November 2013, 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 even bartended from time to time — it's a lot of fun.

Weekend: What's the story behind your favorite dish on the menu?

Selanne: My favorite would have to be the Lord Stanley — a Wagyu tomahawk rib eye from Darling Downs, Australia. I really enjoy perfectly prepared great steaks, and it doesn't get much better than the Lord Stanley, named after the Stanley Cup.

Weekend: Providing financial and educational

support through sports programs and organizations is the mission of Teemu Selanne Youth Sports Foundation. Tell us about why you do this kind of work.

Selanne: Charity work has always been a big part of my life. We started the children's foundation in Finland in 1989, and cause-related activities have always been very important to me wherever I am. The Teemu Selanne Youth Sports Foundation's goal is to lend support to families so that they are able to buy hockey gear for their kids. We want kids to enjoy the sport and be able to fulfill their hockey dreams. It's been fun and just feels good when we can help. One of my favorite things to do is to bring smiles to a child's face.

Weekend: What's the piece of advice you've

imparted that kids aren't likely to have heard from their teachers or authorities?

Selanne: Stay hungry. Being overly self-satisfied is your worst enemy because it doesn't leave room for self-improvement and moving forward. You always have to keep pushing and go after your dreams and goals to succeed in life.

Weekend: You're quick to acknowledge the friends and family who have helped you on your way to a successful hockey career. Who gave the biggest push?

Selanne: My dad and my brothers motivated me a lot as I wanted to be better than them. I always got the leftover hockey equipment since I was the youngest, and they always got first pick of everything.

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