

Reprinted from ...

LOCAL  
REAL ESTATE  
LISTINGS  
PHOTO PAGES  
& FEATURES  
SECTION B

# Rancho Santa Fe REVIEW



National  
Award-Winning  
Newspaper

Subscriber  
Rancho Santa Fe  
CA 92067  
ECSW56

PUBLISHED  
SUNDAY  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
RANCHO SANTA FE  
PERMIT NO. 21

Providing The Ranch with 24 Years of Quality Journalism

www.sdranchocostnews.com

VOLUME XXVII / NUMBER 7 • April 17, 2008



Snezana Jankovic (left) and Shannon Biszantz (center) keep Jelena Jankovic company in the players patio before her recent semi-final match at Indian Wells.

## Longtime RSF resident helps top tennis star make a move to the Ranch

By Diane Welch

In Rancho Santa Fe when new neighbors move in it's not remarkable when they are entertainment stars, highly successful business owners or world-class sports stars. In fact, it's the norm.

What is less commonplace, is when the new neighbors have achieved celebrity status and are moving in to be close to their Realtor. Now that's novel.

But this is exactly what happened recently to Whispering Palms Realtor Shannon Biszantz when one of the world's highest-ranking professional tennis stars, Jelena Jankovic, bought a lot through Biszantz's Del Mar realty services. And plans to build her dream home in Rancho Santa Fe are already underway.

The buzz that resulted has sports reporters on a national level ringing Biszantz's phone off the hook and trying to get the scoop. But Biszantz isn't budging in her bid to give the *Rancho Santa Fe Review* the exclusive.

In a recent interview Biszantz explained how it came about that the world-famous Serbian tennis star hired her as an agent and how within 24 hours a prime 2.5-acre lot had been located, viewed and bought.

"It was last Thanksgiving when I got a surprise knock on my door and there was Jelena with her parents and coach, and about 20 bags. They had just flown in from LAX and were dropping by to visit. Luckily I had decided to stay home and was planning a quiet break over the holiday. I wasn't expecting to work," Biszantz explained. She was surprised to have unexpected guests and even more taken off guard when Jelena said, "I want to be your neighbor, Shannon. Can you help find a lot for us?" After "a lovely Thanksgiving dinner" at the

Morgan Run Resort & Club, Biszantz escorted the family – which included mom, Snezana and dad Veselin – on a tour of possible sites. In the course of that day they found the perfect lot. "It has magnificent westerly views to the ocean and east to the mountains," said Biszantz. "Veselin stood on the lot and said, 'I feel king of the hill!' and so they bought it that day. It's very rare that a European will come in and buy a lot like that but it made a great Thanksgiving for us."

Biszantz's knowledge of Rancho Santa Fe is home grown. She was born in Rancho Santa Fe, raised in Rancho Santa Fe and continues to be a resident of Rancho Santa Fe. She was a student at the Ranch's R. Roger Rowe Elementary School, attended Torrey Pines High School and graduated from USD. "You can't get more San Diegan than that!" Biszantz affirmed.

In the mid 1990s, Biszantz started a contract manufacturing company in San Diego servicing the biotech, medical device and defense industries. After 10 years of being one of only two women in California to direct and lead a company in this field, she retired from her position of vice president of sales and marketing to start her career in the real estate sector.

Her parents throughout Biszantz's upbringing have been a philanthropic force in San Diego County. Gary Biszantz, her father, is owner of Cobra Golf and through his foundation has built the gymnasium and the tennis barns at the Magdalena Ecke YMCA. With Don Sammis he raised funds and supported the construction of the R. Roger Rowe School. He serves on the executive committee of the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association, owns a thoroughbred breeding farm in Kentucky, Cobra Farm and was named San Diego Entrepreneur of the Year in 1990. In 1999, Gary and his wife, Betty, were honored by the San Diego Hall of Champions as the "Community Champions" for 1998. Also in 1999, the Association of Racing Commissioners International awarded Gary their annual "Animal Welfare" award. That same year, the Kentucky Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders honored Biszantz with their "Humanitarian of the Year" award for 1998. He and his wife Betty have six children.

Biszantz shares in her parents' love of thoroughbreds and recalls the days that she used to ride her horses into the Ranch's downtown area, "We'd tie up the horses and go into the candy shop." As a child she was a member of the Rancho Riding Club and learned to play tennis and golf. Today, Biszantz plays on the golf team at Whispering Palms and plays tennis at the Lomas Santa Fe Country Club. "I'm really involved in my neighborhood; I write a newsletter that's all about the community of the Ranch and Whispering Palms – it's helping bring the neighborhood together," Biszantz explained.

Her close relationship with the Jankovic family began in 2003, when she volunteered her house to visiting players during the La Costa Tennis Tournament that year. "When I met Jelena she was in her teens; she traveled with her family and I was able to accommodate the three of them," recalled Biszantz. Jankovic was ranked in the 400's back then. Today, she is ranked third in the world.

Subsequently they have become close friends and, as Biszantz has seen Jankovic's star rise, their friendship has deepened. "Over the years, I've started traveling with Jelena to attend tournaments with her. It is such a lonely life," Biszantz said. "When she came here to La Costa her parents always came with her and on their days off we'd go to the horse races, or we'd go shopping just to relax and take the pressure off. Snezana, Jelena's mother, is getting quite a reputation for being a wonderful mother to a tennis player. She gets interviewed at every tournament that they go to, the U.S. open, the Australian Open, she's a lovely woman who gets along with everyone. She's just kind in her heart."

A mutual respect resulted in the Jankovic family's hiring of Biszantz as their agent, and the bonds of friendship strengthened their desire to live in Rancho Santa Fe. "I like to be in this area because of this climate – it is the best, and I have been in lots of different part of the states," said Jankovic. "Shannon is one of my best friends. She is a great woman and a great real estate agent. When we see each other everything is so nice, we enjoy spending time together."

After the lot was bought, five days were spent looking at different styles of houses. Biszantz picked five architects, and from the short list one made an impression. "Snezana and Veselin were very experienced builders in Europe, so they know the building process; they were clear that they wanted to find an architect that they could relate to and be able to express their own ideas. Out of the five architects I found Mark Radford; he was just above and beyond the others. He was able to escort them on a Sunday and take them to about 15 of his projects," Biszantz said. "He worked 24/7 around the clock from the time he signed the contract to get 80 percent of the home plans already done on the property," Biszantz said.

The Jankovic family hope to see their dream home built within a year. Meanwhile, Jelena Jankovic will have to stave off reporters' questions as to the exact location of her newly planned residence. It will remain confidential. But when they ask she teasingly retorts, "I'm going to be Phil Mickelson's neighbor." To find out more about Shannon Biszantz visit her Web site at [www.ShannonBiszantz.com](http://www.ShannonBiszantz.com) or call her at 858-755-0075. To find out more about Jelena Jankovic, visit her Web site at [www.jelenajankovic.net](http://www.jelenajankovic.net).



The **Biszantz Connection**



619.417.4655

[www.ShannonBiszantz.com](http://www.ShannonBiszantz.com)  
Shannon@ShannonBiszantz.com