

DRAC & JANSON

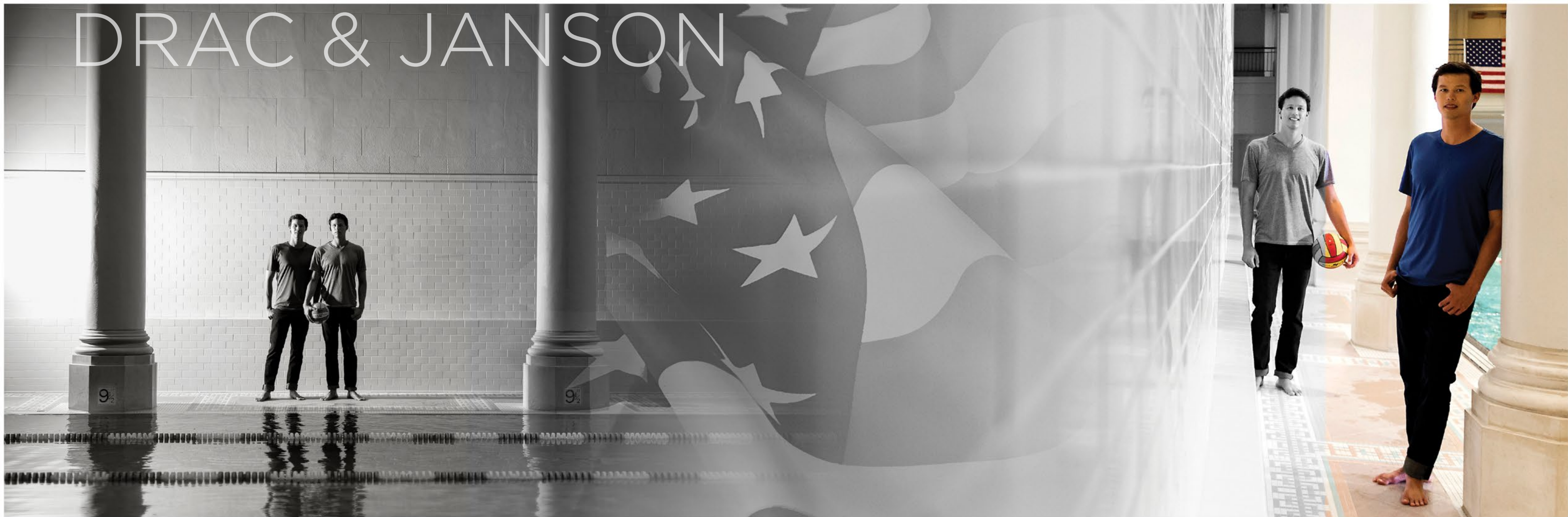




Photo by Roy Morsch

A Rock Solid Olympic Legacy

By Maggie Grainger | Photos by Lisa Vortman

They say birds of a feather flock together. This happens to be true for twin water polo players Drac and Janson Wigo. The two powerhouses are part of a water polo dynasty—older brother Wolf competed in three summer Olympic Games (1996, 2000, 2004) and their father, Bruce, is currently the president of the International Swimming Hall of Fame.

With pools ever present in their young lives, it seemed only natural that the twins would follow in their family’s footsteps. However, Drac and Janson are the first to admit water polo wasn’t always on their radar. “Honestly, we were against swimming at first even though it was all around us,” Drac admits with a laugh. “We were both more into soccer.”

After trying their hand at a variety of other sports both in and out of the water, the two found their true calling playing water polo. The Florida natives played for Stanford University, where they honed their impressive skills in the pool—both made All-American all four years and Janson worked as an assistant coach for the 2013 team.

Although he said coaching was a rewarding experience, he’s focusing on finishing his own athletic career before looking into coaching options. For now, he’s all about getting ready to train with Team USA in Los Angeles, and Drac continues to train right here in San Francisco at The Olympic Club while juggling a career in the tech industry.

It will be a big adjustment for the brothers, who have been inseparable for as long as they can remember, excluding their first year at Stanford University. “We had to split up freshman year,” Janson says with a smile. “But we lived together sophomore through senior years.” They currently live only four blocks away from each other in Russian Hill, and can easily walk to each other’s houses.

Although he’s not in full training mode yet, Janson says he trains daily on his lunch breaks at the Olympic Club City Clubhouse with other Stanford, Cal, USC, and UCLA alumni water polo players. Soon, Janson will head off to Australia to train and then move to L.A. The brothers aren’t taking this short period together for granted, making the most of their limited free time, and neither let training consume their lives. Both guys love hitting up Crissy Field or Dolores Park with friends on the weekends, although it’s tough to get them to stray too far from water.

“I’ll go down to the Aquatic Park and do laps or head to Ocean Beach to surf,” Janson admits. “I love the big waves.” And if this whole water polo thing doesn’t pan out, the boys have a backup plan: sharpening their skills as male models, another profession that runs in the family. Their parents actually fell in love while filming a commercial in Italy.

“Our mom was Miss Chinatown in the 1980s and our dad was an actor who let us tag along to auditions,” Drac explains. Both boys remember the excitement they felt when they would come home and see their parents on TV. They say they still feel that flutter of pride when they see their mom in commercials today.

In fact, it was during an audition run that the duo got their first taste of the spotlight, acting in a Dunkin’ Donuts commercial when they were barely out of diapers. After closing down an entire section of an airport for the shoot, the boys spent the day sinking their teeth into doughy treats. Not a bad work day for any kid. Cheshire smiles cross their faces. The decision to get back into acting after a long hiatus was a piece of cake.

“Water polo is such a physically demanding sport,” Janson explains. “You can’t get hurt in front of the camera.” Plus, the brothers are routinely stopped by people who think they know them or have seen them before, so they both agreed modeling feels like a natural progression for them. Janson and Drac are represented by Brave Talent, the brand ambassador division of Bratty Model Agency in San Francisco.

Although they are gracious about getting recognized on the street, their brother, Wolf, gave them some good advice about fame, telling them not to let it go to their heads when they went to college. “Other than that, he’s been good about letting us do our own thing and go through the motions,” says Janson.

You might think the pressure to succeed at such a high level would cause friction between all of the brothers, or at least make for some heated family discussions, but Drac and Janson are the first to say they’re each other’s biggest supporters. “We’ve only competed against each other in scrimmages,” Drac says, and they both hope to keep it that way.

Janson will never forget going to Atlanta at nine years old to cheer Wolf on during his first Olympic Games back in 1996. It wasn’t until they approached the stadium, surrounded by clusters of people, and saw their brother playing in front of thousands that they realized this was a big deal. “It was crazy.”

Now the twins are ready to hear thousands of people cheer them on, and they know how much work they need to do in order to achieve this dream. A lot rides on the next year for Drac and Janson, but they know no matter what happens, their brotherly bond is rock solid.

Location: The Olympic Club, Grooming: Yvette Armendariz, Wardrobe: Marine Layer

