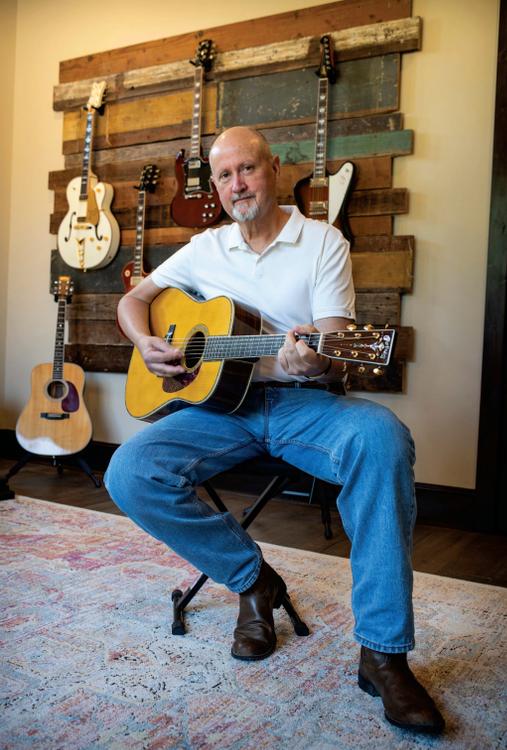


# WESTERN ADVENTURE LEADS TO CORDILLERA RANCH

By Cheryl Van Tuyl Jividen :: Photography by Mark Humphries

*It's a good thing Nancy Smith's friends were late for dinner that night in Carmel, Indiana. Waiting in the restaurant lobby for them, she engaged in conversation with a tall stranger waiting for a table. Cameron Hutchison, a labor relations consultant who was based in North Carolina was in Indiana for a long-term project. The two found they had much in common and Smith's group invited him to join their table. "We've been together ever since," says Nancy of her husband of twelve years.*



As random as their meeting was, their similarities were definite. Both were empty nesters, were close in age, were adventurers and had the ability to work from anywhere. Nancy, a career hospitalist nurse, worked in surgical units and recovery before becoming a resource team nurse supporting in any department she was needed. Cameron is the founder and president of Hutchison Group, Inc., a human resources and labor relations management consulting firm he started in 1996 ([www.hutchgrp.com](http://www.hutchgrp.com)).

"Prior to starting my business, I had a great corporate job, but always had a yearning to be an entrepreneur, so I took a leap of faith; 23 years later the rest is history, and we continue to fill an important niche in the market," says Cameron.

Cameron's company provides a wide range of services, and they are especially noted for their ability to help employers create productive and cooperative work environments, maintain union free status, negotiate competitive "win-win" labor agreements (for union-represented locations), support mergers and acquisitions, facilitate employee relations assessments and conduct onsite supervisor training. The firm has assisted clients with several large multi-billion-dollar projects. Most notably, Cameron successfully negotiated competitive union labor agreements for General Electric, Boeing and General Motors divestitures, helping new ownership restructure labor costs and improve productivity and, in turn, position both the company and their employees for future success. "The one piece of advice I give to all my clients is listen to and learn from your employees and let them know that their efforts and contributions are appreciated," says Cameron.

For his work in human resources and labor relations, Cameron has received numerous awards including the HR Excellence Award sponsored by KPMG Consulting. He served as an advisor on business development matters for two State Governors, taught business management courses at Ohio State University, and was invited by the Director of the U.S. Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to present at their annual conference where he was recognized as an innovator in the field of labor relations.

In addition, Hutchison Group is frequently retained by private equity firms like KKR, The Carlyle Group and Onex to evaluate potential acquisitions and assist with integration activities. Other well-known clients include: United

Technologies, Dow Chemical, GKN Aerospace, Spirit Aero-Systems, CenturyLink, PepsiCo, Allison Transmission, Haier and Westinghouse.

It was a project such as these that brought Cameron to Carmel, Indiana, and he persuaded Nancy to join him in North Carolina once it was completed. However, the West would come calling.

Raised on a 2,500-acre farm in Rockville, Indiana, Nancy and her family vacationed each summer in western states including Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. "Dad had a love for the West that inspired me," says Nancy who remembers the trips were full of natural beauty and wildlife. Cameron, who grew up on the East Coast, had never been to the West. Following travels



all over the West, the couple were ready for a move specifically seeking a place of adventure. They chose Summerlin, Nevada, a community that lies between the Spring Mountains and the Red Rock Canyon. "Some people think the desert is simply a barren wasteland. After living there, nothing could be further from the truth; we learned all about how the desert has a true-life form of its own," shares Nancy.

After five years, it was time for another adventure with a move to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains near Fort Collins, Colorado. On their 40-acre ranch, Nancy was able to reignite her love for horseback riding and dogs. "My dad was an animal lover who rode horses and had me on a horse as soon as I could walk," says Nancy. "I get my adventure, my affinity for nature and fearlessness from him. It served me well as a nurse and I use what I learned to this day." With that experience, she and Cameron enjoyed planning and designing their horse facilities in preparation for their growing family. After much research, the barn became home to a rare, dappled Rocky Mountain Horse named Hickory and Sundance, a Tennessee Walking Horse. Both geldings, the sweet-natured horses were raised and trained together as yearlings in trail riding at a ranch in Oklahoma that specializes in gaited buckskin

horses — gait breeds are known for smooth riding and unique footwork. Riding was new to Cameron. "Nancy inspired me; I had never been on a horse," he says. "The horses are like brothers; they groom each other in the pasture and come running when they see us often trying to be in our pockets. They are like big dogs. Caring for and riding them is simply therapeutic," says Nancy. The horses were joined by more family with the addition of big Irish Wolfhounds Whiskey and Akela, and a harlequin Great Dane named Harley — a breed Nancy had as a child.

Colorado had its charms, but for the cold. "During winters we lost a lot of time bundling up to go out and enjoy the outdoors," says Cameron. Five years later, they were ready to relocate. "We said we would never leave the West, but we were in search of a warmer climate," says Nancy. A friend suggested a move to the Texas Hill Country, and research led them to Cordillera Ranch. Cameron says the fit was ideal, "For us it's the perfect mix between the resort lifestyle we enjoyed in Nevada and the ranching lifestyle we lived in Colorado. It suits our needs. Cordillera is a jewel and the trail system is fantastic."

"We were fortunate that Vance Waller showed us the ideal lot to build on, because we made it clear it was all about the horses,"



says Nancy. Cameron adds, "It's a great lot with relatively flat land and pasture and access to three trails, an advantage for us as we don't need to trailer the horses." They chose Garner Homes and collaborated with architect Jim Terrian. "We spent more time working on the barn than the house! The design was so fun, a real team effort," says Cameron.

Their new home provides a place for Cameron to showcase his guitar collection including a dozen vintage acoustic and electric models. "In high school and college, I was in an informal band. Now I'm collecting the guitars I always wanted back then," he says. Playing every day in the music room sound studio Nancy's son Darin designed for Cameron is cathartic for the musician and songwriter, "It's a great way to unwind after a long day in the office."

Nancy and Cameron travel regularly to visit their children and grandchildren who live out-of-state and they enjoy sharing Cordillera Ranch with family. "Riding, kayaking, swimming, lunch at the Club, even skipping rocks with the grandkids on the Guadalupe — these are ways we are making memories," says Nancy.

Only Cordillera Ranch residents for a year, Nancy and Cameron have made many friends. "Our dogs and horses are social lubricants; it's how we met all our neighbors so fast. Animals bring people together," says Cameron. Nancy says, "The best thing about Texas are the people. Not just in our neighborhood, but in the greater community. Everyone is so genuine, so fun and very neighborly." The plan, they say, is for this to be their forever home. Nancy sums it up, "Life is all about your story and we're just trying to live a good one. We saved the best for last!" 🐾

