



A FAMILY THAT FLIES TOGETHER,



STAYS TOGETHER!

By Kimberly A. Suta :: Photography by David Teran

Your new neighbors, Ashlee and Brett Nichols, along with their kids, Laikyn, Lennyn and Brextan, are flying high with a life-changing decision they made two years ago and have loved their landing in Cordillera Ranch.



"Brett's a pilot for fun. It allows us to take the whole family in the plane. He also volunteers for Angel Flight, which is a cool nonprofit. His skills at piloting an airplane allow him to help people in need," shared Ashlee.

Not too long ago, he even volunteered to help out one of his fellow Cordillera Ranch residents and a new friend by flying in his ailing mother from Wichita to Boerne.

Brett, who's had his pilot's license since 2008, even proposed to Ashlee mid-flight, so aviation has always been a part of their story. And now the kids love it, too. The convenience of air transportation allows the family to easily visit their former hometown of Seminole, Texas (about 80 miles south of Lubbock), where Brett grew up and where his family still owns and operates their farm and cotton gin.

Ashlee is from Canyon, Texas, but both Brett and Ashlee grew up in farming and ranching families, so they had similar backgrounds with strong traditional values. They also both graduated from West Texas A&M University, which is where they first met.

"My dad was having a fundraiser for the rodeo team in his barn, and asked me to go there and support it. I ended up meeting Brett there, but we didn't start dating until a year later," explained Ashlee.

"I was a team roper on the rodeo team in college," added Brett. "I served her a steak and then shortly after asked her dad if I could marry her. While it was just a joke at the time, maybe it was meant to be!"

"It's a true story," she continued. "I just remember him as the guy with pretty green eyes who served me a steak. Then once we started talking a year later, after seeing each other at the homecoming parade, he said maybe we should go out, and I said maybe we should, since you already asked my dad if you could marry me. We dated four years before he proposed during that flight from Amarillo to Seminole."

Several years and three kids later, the Nichols still love the rodeo and recently brought the whole family (including family from back home) to San Antonio's Stock Show and Rodeo for a day of family fun.

Brett claims Ashlee's just a farm girl with no country bone in her body. She was in competitive and school cheer through college, and went on to teach kindergarten and ESL while pursuing her Master's degree in education. In 2012, she started blogging, which in 2016 blossomed into a full-time career as a life and style content creator on social media. You can follow her on Instagram at @ashleeknichols or via her website, ashleenichols.com.



Brett, as you might imagine, is also team Ashlee and works with her to support the brand, handling the finances and back-end of the business while also building his real estate portfolio. Being an influencer and giving people a peek into their lives is also something the kids get to take part in on occasion.

"I share a lot, but there are also lots of private moments off screen as well. I'm not sure the kids even notice it, although sometimes people recognize us in public. But I'm very calculated about what I share about the kids and where we live for their privacy," said Ashlee.

Recently, the family participated in a reality TV show called Pigeon Forge Family Challenge, which they filmed in Tennessee. Coming up on social, you'll see Ashlee sharing a few Mommy and Me collections featuring some of her favorite brands, as well as some family travel. The Nichols have plans to go on a cruise for Spring Break, and then Brett and Ashlee are taking a cruise in Greece this summer. Brett's got a few golf trips planned, too.

"We also love doing water sports. Brett has been going to Lake LBJ since he was little with his family, so it's a tradition to go with them every summer!" she said.

Brett's family continues to run the cotton gin. Brett ran it for 12 years and completely redesigned and rebuilt it in 2012. Now, thanks to his efforts, it's a state-of-the-art facility. According to Brett, back in the 50s, there used to be hundreds of thousands of cotton gins, but today there's only about 1,000 left in existence in the United States. Although his family and the family business were in Seminole, the Nichols had another calling.

"We felt like the Lord was leading us out of Seminole for a life change and so we started talking about where we wanted to go. Since I can work from home anywhere, we knew we wanted to stay in Texas and thought about visiting the Hill Country, so we wanted to look at Boerne first," said Ashlee.

Brett knew of the Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course at Cordillera Ranch, but in his wildest dreams he didn't imagine they'd end up here. They decided to visit one day and, essentially, never left. They found a Burdick Custom Homes' house that they loved and everything just seemed to fall into place. "We came after the buying frenzy, after COVID. It was a spec home on the golf course and we had to talk them into selling it. They had just poured the foundation," recalled Brett.

They moved from West Texas in May of 2022, stayed in town for a short period of time until their home was ready, and moved in during the holidays in 2022. A year later, and the Nichols have

settled in brilliantly. Laikyn is in 4th grade, adores horseback riding at the Equestrian Center, and competes on a team in gymnastics. Lennyn is in 2nd grade and also enjoys being on the competitive gymnastics team. And Brextton, like his father, is passionate about golf and Little Linkstars at the Club, as well as tee ball and just about any sport he can find.

"We love our new life here in Cordillera Ranch and Boerne. Our friends have become our family. They took us in. Without having that community, I'm not sure we would be so happy moving away from everything we knew, but the people here have just been so amazing, from a women's Bible Study group and couples' small group to Golf Chicks and Sticks, and the kids' Summer Camps," said Ashlee.

Brett has enjoyed making friends on the golf course, some of which have flourished into successful business relationships.

"From a family standpoint, the community has been very supportive through fun events, and they really cater to kids. Some people think Cordillera Ranch might look like a retirement community but it's more than that — the roots are set in community. It's just a little family," said Brett. "The culture at Cordillera is one you won't find replicated and is what makes it so magical."

Sounds like you'll be making some extraordinary friends if you get the opportunity to meet the Nichols. Besides some good old-fashioned hospitality from this kind and humble couple, you might just get invited on a flight into the wild blue yonder! 🌟