

CHEMISTRY CREATES FAMILY BONDS

AMANDA AND CHANCE RICHIE

By Kimberly A. Suta :: Photography by David Teran; personal photos courtesy of the Richie family





Like most Cordillera Ranch residents, Amanda and Chance Richie knew they wanted to live here the moment they saw the property three years ago. Although they initially searched for a place in the Dominion, ultimately, they decided it wasn't the right vibe for them. Amanda found Cordillera Ranch while doing some research and they decided on a whim to go check it out.

"We drove to Cordillera not knowing anything about it and bought a lot the next day. We knew we wanted to be here from the moment we came through the gates," recalled Chance, but it was a long, circuitous road to get here.

Both Chance and Amanda have had jobs and experiences that most people would call interesting and perhaps even unusual.

Chance grew up on a ranch in Menard. He went to high school in San Angelo before working on drilling rigs in South Texas and then joining the Navy. He started out operating nuclear reactors and worked his way up to become a nuclear submarine officer onboard the USS Alabama (which is the length of two football fields), after the Navy sent him to UT Austin for a chemical engineering degree.

"It was interesting to hear about people complaining about

bootcamp. I went from roughnecking in 100-degree heat to bootcamp, so I thought it was a cakewalk. We got three meals a day, and I appreciated the opportunity the Navy was giving me," shared Chance. "We'd go out for ninety days at a time [on the submarine]. After 9/11, it was a dangerous time, and when you're on a ballistic missile submarine in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, you don't know if your launch orders are a drill or real, but we were ready to go. I felt fortunate to be able to serve this country."

"The more responsibility you give him, the more he responds. I think

some special people rise to whatever challenge you give them, and Chance is one of those people. It's a rare thing," added Amanda proudly.

Chance will be the first to admit that one look at his beautiful wife and you'd be surprised to find out that she's worked in an industry dominated by men her whole life and enjoyed getting her hands dirty right along with them.

Amanda is originally from Vermont but primarily grew up in Ohio and Michigan. After graduating from Albion College in Michigan, with a degree in applied mathematics, she intended to pursue a career in environmental law. However, as is often the case, life took a turn, and when her dad got sick, she returned home to help run his chemical business.

"I think most people who look at me wouldn't think I knew





how to operate a lot of systems at manufacturing facilities, but I really like to get dirty and rebuild a chemical pump or do some plumbing if needed," she laughed.

Years later, it was thanks to their respective businesses that Chance and Amanda met serendipitously. At the time, Chance owned oilfield service businesses with operations in West Virginia, Ohio and Texas and had been buying specialty chemicals from Amanda's chemical company, headquartered outside Detroit, for some time.

"One day, my sales rep, Bobby, set up a meeting in Pittsburgh for the two of us to meet but I got stuck on a frack job and was running late," said Chance.

As a busy business owner, Amanda was not happy about it: "I told Bobby if you're guy doesn't show up, I'm leaving. I don't wait over an hour."

"I was fifty minutes late and rolled in wearing my Shalewater shirt, jeans, work boots and a straw hat. I was kind of dirty, truthfully," laughed Chance. "Then, I see this really good-looking blonde sitting next to Bobby in business attire. Amanda introduced herself as the CEO of Plymouth Technology and I

thought, 'no, you're not,' but we got to talking and twenty minutes into it, I knew she was the real deal."

Although there was initial chemistry on both sides, the relationship grew slowly into a friendship before Amanda let Chance know she liked him. "I probably made the first move. I was pretty guarded, even though Chance said he wanted to ask me out. I was so used to working with men so I was very careful about being professional," shared Amanda. "After I let him know it was safe to ask me out, we went out on a date night and I met his mom. Fortunately, she liked me, and the rest is history."

The couple has been married ten years and have five grown children. After meeting Amanda, Chance moved to Michigan and brought his two girls up so they could attend Cranbrook, the private school Amanda's kids went to. "Cranbrook opened up opportunities for my girls they weren't getting in their local public schools," said Chance. It wasn't until the youngest graduated high school that they moved back to Texas permanently, and thus, moved into the Cordillera Ranch neighborhood.

The initial plan was for both of them to retire, but as Chance pointed out, "I got out here to Cordillera and realized I wasn't

much of a golfer, so I had to figure out another way to use my time. We both got a little restless, so we started an oil-field chemical business together called Texx Chemicals."

"We decided we wanted to continue to use all of this knowledge that we had and create a new company," added Amanda.

When the couple isn't working, which clearly, they love to do, they like to visit the family ranch near Brady to go horse-back riding and spend time with their menagerie of animals (which includes horses, goats, cattle, dogs, cats and one chicken).

Something that most people don't know about Chance is that he really enjoys and is quite good at training livestock guard dogs, such as Great Pyrenees or Anatolian Shepherds. "I never had a lot of patience, but since I started training the dogs, I have learned to develop a tremendous amount of patience. I'll lay in the grass with them for hours to earn their trust because they are basically wild animals born in the brush when we get them," said Chance.

On the other hand, Amanda loves to get in the kitchen and bake, everything from homemade gingerbread to shortbread cookies, which she made the night before the interview for this article. Here is another area where Chance gets to practice patience. "I've gotten better at not eating the whole batch," he joked.

Of course, more than anything, Amanda and Chance love the opportunity to spend time with their children, even though they are quite spread out. Sasha (22) is a journalist for the Dallas Morning News and has always loved and been very good at writing. Max (23) lives in Chicago and works as a data analytics consultant. Jack (26) works for a real estate tech company in NYC. Emma (20) is studying poultry science at A&M and, finally, Jordan (19) is a sophomore at UT Austin in chemical engineering. It's clear they've all inherited their parents' business savvy and mathematical minds.

At least once a year, they all get together for a family vacation. One of the most memorable was an African safari last year. "We love to do stuff with our kids ... we're a tight knit family. Africa was a trip of a lifetime and everything you can imagine," said Amanda.

"A wild lion got so close to the Jeep — he was only three feet from us," added Chance.

Next up, the family is going to Michigan for the Michigan-Texas football game to root for their respective teams and continue the beloved family rivalry.



Until then, Chance and Amanda will enjoy their new home, go for long hikes and explore all of the amenities Cordillera Ranch has to offer. "We love the flexibility Cordillera's Equestrian Center gives us. We can easily take our horses back and forth from the ranch, which is nice," Chance said, "And the sense of community is amazing here."

The couple is continuing to build on that community of friends in Cordillera Ranch. "Carla and Mac Northington were the first people to welcome us here during a time that was especially meaningful. One of our favorite things is going to dinner at the Club and running into friends that we've made that have helped welcome us," said Amanda. "We've thrown a couple of parties and invited everyone in the neighborhood, so we've gotten to know a lot of great people." 🍷