



Don and Cathy Carruth at their new Boot Ranch home.





# CLEARED FOR LANDING

STORY BY ANNE MCCREADY HEINEN

**After years of flying high, Don and Cathy Carruth are now happily grounded in their Boot Ranch bluff-top home.**

**W**hen Don and Cathy Carruth decided to build a home at Boot Ranch, they had specific goals in mind: to leave behind the days of two domiciles—a homestead in Midland, and a second home in Fredericksburg—and in the process, create a refuge for themselves that would be a welcoming home-away-from-home for their four daughters and their families.

On each point, the Carruths have succeeded. “Every morning we pinch ourselves,” Cathy says, basking in the gratitude and enjoyment she and Don experience in the home that they moved into in December 2019.



Top & bottom photos by Andrea Galo



The gorgeous, four-bedroom, 5,300-square-foot home, built from cream and gray Sisterdale limestone and perfectly positioned on a Boot Ranch bluff overlooking the golf course, was designed by architect Chad Faucheux of Design Visions, with interior design and decor guided by Donna Figg Design. The Hill Country-style structure is elegant and sophisticated, but comfortably so; it's intimate yet roomy, without feeling grandiose just for the sake of size, allowing overnight visitors to stay under the same roof as their hosts.

The interior design direction balances time-aged materials and modern comforts, says interior designer Donna Figg. "Each space unfolds with unique elements and serves as a base camp for their many adventures."

"We also focused on making things as ergonomic as possible," adds Paige Jones, senior interior designer. "For example, in their closet, storage is maximized, but they're not having to get a ladder out every time they want to put something in high storage," pointing out that the motorized upper racks are lowered with the touch of a button for easy reach. "We tailored the home to suit their needs, so that it's designed for them aesthetically and functionally."

From their Midland home base, Don grew his parents' oil field sales and service business into a 400-employee firm that was sold to Schlumberger in 2014.

"Don is really wise about these things and we had a good team that worked for us," Cathy says. "For someone who came from a very humble background—Don's family never took vacations because they couldn't afford to—it's cool to see how someone succeeds. Don gives credit to God for that. We know where our blessings are from."

Married for 51 years, the Carruths often take to the skies, with Navy veteran Don in the pilot's seat of several airplanes that they've owned over the years since earning his pilot license at 22. (A son-in-law is following in Don's footsteps by recently earning his license.) Don piloted small planes for work, as well as family trips that found the Carruths using their Piper Cherokee Six like a family station wagon, loading the kids and luggage for vacations.

"We've traveled extensively all over the United States, the Caribbean, Central America, and Costa Rica," Don says. "A plane gives you a lot of flexibility in terms of getting there."

Don's love of flying served as the impetus for the couple to join six other planes on a 2018 around-the-world, 24-destination trip with Don piloting their single-engine turboprop. The trip took 70 days, after Don convinced Cathy to go. "I was thinking it would be too long to be away from home," Cathy says. "But it was the most incredible trip of our lives."





THIS PAGE: The master porch features an outdoor shower, hot tub, and gorgeous Hill Country views. OPPOSITE: A bronze statue, *The Young Aviator*, by Dennis Smith, purchased at Mountain Trails Fine Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico.



THIS PAGE: Each guest bedroom in the Carruth's home has an attached bath and patio for private space. The barrel-vaulted ceiling in the master bath was an idea from their previous home in Fredericksburg.  
OPPOSITE: The collection of model replicas of planes the couple has owned.





Two of the Carruths' daughters (and six grandchildren) live in the Hill Country. Another lives in Midland, while one lives in Pennsylvania. "Eventually we're hoping our whole family will live closer to us," Cathy says.

Cathy and Don's house wish list included a one-story layout, a low-maintenance yard, and having all four bedrooms in the house. "Around the holidays, when the kids are all here, we play games and we're doing things together," Cathy says. "If you have a lot of different little buildings, teenagers tend to go off and get on their electronics, and you don't really connect."

Every guest bedroom has its own style, and each has an attached bath and outdoor patio for private space. "We purposefully don't have televisions in the bedrooms," Cathy says. "We don't want people going away from each other to watch TV."

Instead, the extended family gravitates to the media room. Its tiered flooring holds ten smart, comfy recliners that face a big screen for movies, TV, gaming, or the internet. Shelves in the back of the room sport a popcorn machine, a beverage fridge, and family photos and memorabilia, while cozy throws and pillows are at the ready. "The grandchildren love the media room," Don says.

Cathy's love of natural forms and organic shapes is reflected throughout the home in pieces that derive their beauty from trees, plants, and stone.

Agate-topped accent tables create this aesthetic next to the fireplace sitting area in the master bedroom. It continues in the powder room's live-edge wood vanity top with a flawless mitered edge that makes the utilitarian surface look like a furniture piece. The great room graces the theme with a soaring chisel-edged limestone fireplace as well as centerpiece wood coffee tables embellished with a reclaimed tree root overlay.

The great room's tall ceiling holds another outstanding feature: reclaimed wooden beams from an 1800s Oregon barn. The beams establish a visual foundation that is echoed in other rooms, as well as in the great room's lintels and mantle, which are created from the same barnwood. A close look reveals the ax marks that show the antique wood was hand-hewn.

Flanking the fireplace is shelving that holds books, photos, and the collection of model replicas of every airplane the couple has owned. Wide-width, wire-brushed European white oak hardwood serves as the flooring that also extends into the hallways and other rooms of the house.

Seating provides defined areas in the open living room, dining room, kitchen, and breakfast nook layout. To be sure the couple found all the furniture comfortable, Figg and Jones brought them to Dallas showrooms to sit on selected couches, chairs and other pieces under consideration for the home.



And while most furnishings in the home are new, the Carruths and their designers smoothly incorporated select, beloved pieces as well. The antique pedal sewing machine and cabinet that Cathy learned to sew on serves as the bedside table in a guest room. In the sunlit breakfast nook, a beautiful antique French sideboard looks right at home with a new dining set.

“The old and the new, married,” Cathy says.

The breakfast nook’s ceiling is reclaimed wood, while a soft rug links the space with the colors in the great room. Drapes are edged with hide, bringing in a natural-form accent and organic element.

In the kitchen, a custom, showstopper vent hood boasts a hammered-finish copper patina. While it has the aura of an antique element, the vent hood’s recent creation means it’s fully functional. The kitchen’s compact layout is anchored by a leathered black granite island. China is displayed in lighted cabinets, while cookbooks are held on the island’s side shelves. A very large pantry area is tucked away behind a sliding door set in an arched opening.

Hallways continue the warm, integral plaster walls from the great room and serve as galleries for art and for canvas prints of Cathy’s travel photographs.

Attention to detail extends to the master bath. A barrel-vaulted ceiling in the couple’s previous Fredericksburg

house was a favorite feature of Cathy’s, so one was incorporated into the bath to arch over the seagrass limestone flooring that is dotted with fossils. A makeup chair with a touch of voluptuous fur on the back sits at Cathy’s vanity, set at a perfect height for her, while Don’s shaving mirror is set at the perfect height for him at a separate counter. The natural pebble stone shower floor flows outside to the outdoor shower, adjacent to the hot tub.

Delectable details are everywhere in the home, without being heavy-handed, including penny gap wall treatments, wallpaper with sophisticated designs, and honed-stone finishes that convey a more relaxed feel than polished stone.

The office is a perfect example of the old and new coming together for the Carruths, with a swirl-design chandelier featuring a pewter metal finish and ombre drapery set against a traditional desk, built-ins, and a reclaimed-wood vaulted ceiling. While the office serves both Don and Cathy, it’s recently been home to Cathy’s sewing projects, such as face masks in seasonal fabrics for the family.

And while many people were grounded in 2020, the Carruths feel like their Boot Ranch home has given them wings. “Especially with the pandemic, I told Don it doesn’t feel bad to be stuck at home,” Cathy says. “This house lets us feel like we’re always on vacation.” ★





Photos by Andrea Gallo

THIS PAGE: The reclaimed wood ceiling and drapes edged with hide bring an organic element to the breakfast nook. OPPOSITE: The hammered-finish copper patina in the kitchen adds an antique feel to the modern kitchen.





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