



HILL COUNTRY

State of Mind

By Angela Rabke Photography by Dror Baldinger



Sunday-House: *Noun. In the German immigrant culture of the Texas Hill Country, one of the houses erected by farming settlers for overnight stays while visiting town for supplies and church attendance.*



The Texas Hill Country is rich with examples of the sturdy architecture of Texas settlers. From homesteads to courthouses to the storefronts of Main Street Fredericksburg, the beloved design vernacular of the area is undoubtedly as much a part of the landscape as the rolling hills, and the traditional Sunday-House development in Fredericksburg carries that architectural legacy forward. At the private club community of Boot Ranch just north of Fredericksburg, the historic Sunday-House concept and architecture has inspired a new collection of second homes.

The Boot Ranch Sunday Houses are situated around the luxurious golf course at Boot Ranch, but they definitely aren't your typical "golf course" homes. Architect Don B. McDonald envisioned each property as an inviting compound, carefully tucked into the native landscaping, with three to four buildings situated around a pristine rectangular lawn, in some cas-



es with an adjoining pool. This idea is inspired by traditional settlements and the way that they encouraged communal interaction around a central square. The properties feel both organic and modern, primarily accessible by foot or golf cart via a series of wooded trails, while the carefully maintained lawn at the center of each village evokes the nearby manicured golf course and the town squares that are a familiar part of the regional narrative. Each property is composed of a main house with a master suite and bunkroom, a detached master cabin, and two dog-trot cottages around a lawn. "Each building and each compound is unique," Don said. "Each site dictates a different approach, so we apply the range of building options that best suits each location."

Those options are inspired directly by the local environment. "When you look at the buildings, you should know that you are in Gillespie County," shared Don. "The shapes and scale





are reminiscent of the agrarian building in the area, with different ‘skins’ applied to them.” Interior Designer Donna Figg agreed. “This area is known for its rich German heritage and craftsmanship,” she said. One example of that craftsmanship is the woodwork throughout the homes. “Since cabinet making is such an important part of Fredericksburg’s history, we used local carpenters to incorporate large furniture-like cabinet pieces, as well as our modern interpretation of armoires.” Open, barn-like ceilings with exposed beams are painted, and the bathrooms combine local limestone with honed marble for a current representation of the area’s familiar stonework.

Like the actual structures, each interior’s décor is unique. “We definitely drew off of the concept of the architecture,” said Donna. Central to the concept is the fact that these are second homes. “It feels really comfortable and relaxed, and has a vacation aesthetic that is appropriate for the region and is a departure from what was there before.” Because these are vacation homes, comfort and ease of maintenance are also a priority, and when the houses are sold, they are move-in ready, complete with housewares, tableware and linens. All-white bedding with pops of color is easy to clean, and the relaxing color palette evokes the warm red clays and soothing greens that are abundant in the natural landscape.

Both the architect and the interior designer relied on materials that are specific to the region. Details such as native Oak floors, limestone accents, and even the construction techniques used throughout the structures are all local. The art in

each home adds another homespun touch, with one-of-a-kind paintings by local artist Marion Loucks, and regional photography of historical Fredericksburg buildings.

Every detail of the Sunday House is firmly rooted in the Hill Country environment, from the rafters to the pavers, and this is exactly what the owners seek. “All kids of families are attracted to Boot Ranch Sunday House ownership,” said Barbara Koenig, Director of Marketing at Boot Ranch. “Some have school-age kids and want a wholesome getaway that’s spacious enough for family and friends, while others entertain business clients, or host their grown children and grandchildren several times a year.” Each property is a time-shared arrangement, with each owner spending about five weeks per year enjoying the amenities.

While early settlers built their one-room second homes in town, away from their rural homesteads, these modern Sunday Houses provide an opposite sort of escape. With access to all of the Boot Ranch amenities, coupled with exquisite design and craftsmanship, what an escape it is. ♦

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