



In Vino Veritas, In Cervesio Felicitas

For Dan and Traci Hansen, golf brought them together,
but beer brought them to Cordillera Ranch.

By Trisha Doucette :: Photography by David Teran



It was a pivotal moment for Dan Hansen and longtime golf partner George McKean, who also happens to be Traci's brother. They were one of 10 Flight winners who made it to the Lonestar Shootout, vying for the 2020 C-Star Member-Guest Championship trophy. Dan was encouraging the spectators to sing along with the mariachi band as he teed off on #11 — and drove the ball right into the ground! They didn't win the tournament, but in good fun, Dan was awarded "longest" drive. This is a perfect example of how the Hansens have happily made Cordillera Ranch their home for the past three years. Like many other residents, they got here in a roundabout way.

Dan grew up in a small rural town in Minnesota, and after graduating from high school, he joined the military. For two years he was stationed in Fort Bragg, North Carolina as a military policeman with deployments that took him to Alaska, Grenada and Egypt. It afforded him the opportunity to attend college at South Dakota State University when he completed his service. Throughout his college years, Dan worked at a local golf course and played on the SDSU golf team, and his love for golf began.

With a degree in Electrical Engineering and his first job at Nestle, Dan moved to central California to help them build an evaporated milk plant. This led to a promotion and relocation to Hermosa Beach where he worked as a corporate engineer in the pet food segment and traveled all over the U.S. overseeing capital projects. Dan's love of golf continued, carving out time for early morning and weekend games. But he didn't love the Los Angeles lifestyle, so in 2000 when E&J Gallo Winery offered him a position at their corporate office in Modesto, he jumped at the opportunity and moved back to northern California where he began his career in the wine industry.



Traci received an accounting degree from California State University, Fresno, near the small town where she grew up. After graduation she chose to stay close to home and family and began her career working for a public accounting firm.

While Dan began playing golf in college, Traci grew up playing golf on the weekends with her family and it has always been a big part of her life. So, it seems serendipitous that their love story began on a golf course. The couple met at an amateur golf tournament in Fresno that Traci's brother and Dan were competing in. Traci was there to cheer on her brother, and hosted a BBQ the night before the final round for all the golfers. Dan joined the party. "Dan was leading the tournament going into the last day. He didn't play so great on the final day, and the joke has always been that he might not have won the tournament, but he won a wife instead!" Traci laughs. They were married in 2006 after a short courtship and set up their home in Ripon, California.

Dan had already been with Gallo for about five years when they got married. Part of his job was to automate the wine-making process by building state-of-the-art red wine produc-



tion facilities in Sonoma and Livingston. “The new automated process combined the art of wine making and the science of engineering, which provides winemakers more control of the final product and ensures consistency throughout each vintage,” explains Dan, adding that the new process involves “gravity feeding” where grapes are laser and video sorted, and inspected by machines instead of humans, which creates a much more consistent, quality product.

During his time at Gallo, he also replaced 30-year-old equipment on 17 bottling lines while simultaneously continuing production. Gallo is the world’s largest wine producer, with production in excess of 70 million cases annually, and the majority of their bottling is done at the corporate location in Modesto. These packaging lines can produce anything from 187 ml bottles (airplane size) to an 18-liter bag-in-the-box (the equivalent of two cases of bottled wine for restaurant sales). “My job was to upgrade the technology on these lines to increase production capacity and technology to accommodate the volume,” says Dan.

After being with Gallo for seven years, Dan was recruited by The Wine Group, the second largest wine company in the world. “I was Director of Operations for a couple of years when Constellation Brands recruited me to run their operations at Robert Mondavi by Woodbridge and Turner Road Vintners. This included everything from grape receiving, to wine production, to packaging and distribution,” he says.

While at Constellation Brands, Dan took winemaking certification classes from the University of California, Davis School of Viticulture and Enology to better understand winemaking in order to improve the process through engineering principles. After being in operations for eight years, Dan realized that his real passion was in engineering and transitioned back to corporate engineering. With the division based in Napa, Dan managed all the wine and spirit engineering for 15 facilities in the U.S. and Canada. “Some of the projects included winery expansion, process improvement, new packaging lines and the remodel/redesign of the new tasting facility for Prisoner wine,” he says.

Meanwhile, Traci was building her career as well — and they were also busy building their family. Traci took a job with Foster Farms, spending 13 years advancing through the ranks of corporate finance. They had two children, Julia and Justin, now 13 and 12 years old, respectively, and she was always involved at their schools, serving as Parent Faculty Club President and organizing fundraisers.

Naturally, golf remained a constant in their lives. For four years Dan and Traci were part of a golf group called the Ripon Cup, where 10 teams from Ripon, California and 10 teams from Ripon, England became friends and golfing companions. “The men played in a Ryder Cup-style tournament. Every other year our teams would go ‘over the pond’ to stay with a couple from the England team to play golf, and on the off year they would



come to California and we would host. It was a fun group to be a part of that fostered friendship and tradition,” says Traci.

Dan’s job with Constellation required travel to Napa every week, but they also enjoyed “adult” weekend trips to Napa, exploring different wineries at least every other month. Wondering if Dan’s career in wine turned them in to collectors? Traci says, “I would say we are more wine drinkers than collectors! All kidding aside, yes, we do collect wine and yes, his career has definitely fostered this hobby for us.”

Life was good. Then, Constellation Brands purchased Grupo Modelo (Modelo, Corona, Pacifico, Victoria and others) from Anheuser Busch, so off to Texas they went. “Now life is even better in Cordillera Ranch!” laughs Traci, though completely serious.

In 2017, Dan transferred to Constellation’s beer division, based in San Antonio, in the engineering department. “Part of the purchase of Grupo Modelo included the Nava facility in Mexico which is now the largest brewery in the world. Constellation produces 300 million cases of beer annually compared to about 40

million cases of wine annually,” says Dan. It was a relatively smooth transition from wine to beer for Dan. He explains that the processes are actually very similar, “The main difference is beer is more consistent in its cycle because there is no aging process. The brewing cycle is more consistent because of the availability of materials and shorter production, typically 30 days. Wine production is seasonal and typically takes anywhere from one to three years from harvest to bottling and distribution.”

As they began looking for a home near San Antonio, access to golf was their first priority, and a close-knit community was a close second. Since both Dan and Traci had grown up in small towns, the larger city of San Antonio didn’t seem like a good fit for their family. They were introduced to Cordillera Ranch through Dan’s co-workers who also live in the neighborhood, and after a tour of the property and amenities, they knew they had found their home. “We immediately knew this was the Club we wanted to join — not only for the golf, but also for the river, pool and shooting facilities. It was the best of all worlds right in our backyard,” says Traci.

With their move to Texas, Traci decided to take a step back from her corporate career to focus on getting their family settled in their new home. She still did financial consulting from home for about two years but was able to spend more time ensuring a smooth transition for Julia and Justin, now attending Voss Middle School in Boerne, and volunteering at

their schools. Once the kids were comfortable in their school with new friendships and activities, Traci went back to work full time as the Chief Financial Officer of Nuevo Garcia Foods.

“Contrary to California, Cordillera Ranch was easy to become immersed in,” Dan says. They moved in and immediately started participating in events at the Club. While golf still remains at the core of their family, Dan and Traci also enjoy the wine dinners — a perfect connection to their former lives in California, and have nurtured many new friendships with other young families through Club events. The kids participate in the tennis and golf programs, and Julia has even played in some tournaments coordinated through the Club. They spend many Sunday afternoons golfing as a family, and Dan and Justin also enjoy the shooting range. “We spent most of our first summer hanging out at the river, letting the kids play on the rope swing and fish,” says Traci.

Cordillera Ranch has been a blessing to the Hansen family. As Dan and Traci both agree, “It created a sense of family when we didn’t have one here in Texas.” 🍷