



ETX Revival—Justin and Haylea Morgan with Caitlin and Alex Rice.

# MORE THAN FOUR WALLS

BY TIFFANY HORTON

PHOTOS BY MOLLY KENDRICK AND HAYLEA MORGAN

If anyone understands the beauty of friendship, it is the owners of ETX Revival. Made up of two couples, Haylea and Justin Morgan and Caitlin and Alex Rice, the entire business was founded on friendship. According to Morgan, the company actually “started as a joke.” The couples had been helping each other with personal projects and tossing around the idea of flipping a house together. The next thing they knew, the foursome bought a foreclosure, and their Hazel House Project was born. The group works full-time jobs outside of their ETX Revival gig, so they do all the work in the evenings and on the weekends, completing 90 percent of the projects themselves. They have slowly learned new techniques, and everyone rolls up their sleeves and jumps in on the work. Central to their work culture is business meetings, which according to

Morgan, include “sitting around somebody’s house eating dinner and talking.” The most important part she says is making sure that “everybody feels heard and everybody seems to feel important and acknowledged.” “Community” is the word that seems to be the foundational focus for ETX Revival. Their latest project, the old Masonic Lodge building in Wake Village, seems very fitting to this concept so close to their hearts. Under the direction of the Masons, the building served not only as a Blue Lodge, but was also used for the Lions Club and rented out for community events. While much of the secret society of the Freemasons remains mysterious, building community has always been a central theme for them as well. It was actually a vacation to Mobile, Alabama, that prompted the project. They stopped at a coffee shop while enjoying the historic town, and as they looked around,



they noticed the quaint little shop was a simple building that someone had put a little love into and had brought to life. “You could tell at one point it was just a square cinderblock building. Now, it had all this dimension that they’d added, and you could feel a sense of community in the space,” Morgan said. They immediately began dreaming about the possibilities of a simple building and the life they could give to one if they ever had the opportunity. Ironically, just after returning home, they drove past the Masonic Lodge and noticed a small “for sale” sign in the yard. It felt

like fate. They immediately contacted the Masons to tour the property and were so drawn to the coziness of the space, they made an offer on the spot. “It was just like we had to do it.” With their original offer accepted in October 2019, ETX Revival now had the task of deciding exactly what to do with the building. They had so many ideas, but ultimately let the space itself guide the project. With calming blue colors inside, the space felt very cozy and inviting. From that feeling came the idea of giving a nod to the building’s roots by naming it “The

Lodge.” Once they had chosen the name, it only made sense for phase one to include converting the upstairs into two cozy, modern-day cabin themed apartments. Phase one started in January 2020 and has taken the entire year to complete, but the apartments are now ready for tenants. The outside of the building has been given a fresh look with dark green paint and black accents. At the entrance to each unit, you will find beautiful craftsman doors with a single sidelight that opens to lead into a spacious open concept living area. The group left the cinderblock walls





exposed inside, painting them a soft white and allowing the texture to be the star. Both apartments welcome you further with inviting corner fireplaces, decorative wood detailing and accents of moody green paint. Pair that with well-placed wood tones in the flooring, beautiful butcher block island counters and industrial style stainless fixtures, and you are sure to feel right at home. As you move through the space, you will also notice the sleek wooden bathroom vanity and custom tile tub surround. In the secondary bedroom, they hung bedside light fixtures from the ceiling to increase the space and functionality of the room. Even installing the beautiful new metal roof themselves, the outside of the property is an important extension of the space. To maximize this, they created an oversized deck. The deck serves a dual purpose, as it is also the covered parking. To build off the industrial vibes inside, the group used a cable railing system on the deck. To continue the sense of community, while still allowing privacy, they also added doors

between the two deck spaces. Each side has their own locking door that can be opened to make for quick access between the two spaces, encouraging the tenants to become not just neighbors, but friends.

As for phase two, the team has kicked around several ideas during multiple business meetings, but plan to take some time off before they start. Time off, by the way, isn't at all what most of us would imagine. They will spend this time continuing to work together, but focused on personal projects. When these are complete, if they can stay away that long, they will be back to work on The Lodge and completing phase two.

At the end of the day, Morgan says, "Our main goal is to keep people, especially the younger generation, in Texarkana-to show them you don't have to go to Dallas or Nashville. We have great small businesses right here." I think the Freemasons would love the cultivation of community that is brewing in their old 1950s building and be proud to see the property thriving under the new ownership of ETX Revival. 🍷



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