

Get Your BOOTS On

In a nod to their rough-and-tumble cattle ranch heritage and their innate design talent, sisters Sarah Means and Lizzie Means Duplantis are giving the legendary cowboy boot an upscale, modern spin and global appeal.

BY JESSICA ELLIOTT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS PLAVIDAL



THERE ARE VIVID MEMORIES of early mornings working cattle on the ranch in worn leather boots bleached blond by the sun. Of ceremoniously branding cattle every spring. Of horse riding and roping lessons from their father. Sisters Sarah Means and Lizzie Means Duplantis have long shared treasured experiences tied to their cowboy-boot-wearing childhood on a working West Texas cattle ranch. This rich history is the spirit behind Miron Crosby, their new private-label, heirloom cowboy boot boutique in Highland Park Village.

Generations-old boot-makers would dare question their pedigree. Aside from their ranch upbringing—on the same property founded by their great-great grandfather in 1884 just outside Valentine, Texas—they were born in El Paso, the state’s famed cowboy boot capital. Not to mention, they are cousins to the owners of 1853-established Rios of Mercedes, the oldest cattle ranch boot-maker in the state and the first in the U.S. to widen the boot’s toe and apply a double-welt stitch. (Elizabeth Taylor, among others, is a former patron.)

When friends received jewelry to mark milestone life events, the Means sisters received custom, vaquero-worthy numbers they often designed themselves and had crafted by Rios. (Sarah, 26, blueprinted the pair Lizzie, 35, wore for her wedding.) “We would wear them everywhere—they are a staple in our wardrobe,” Lizzie says. “Our father doesn’t own a single pair of loafers—he wears boots with tuxedos. They really tell a story that is authentic.”



PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE WRUBEL

SISTERS AND MIRON CROSBY FOUNDERS Sarah Means and Lizzie Means Duplantis

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They took their boots with them when Lizzie moved to New York City to work in finance, and later, when Sarah launched a fashion career at Loeffler Randall in Manhattan after college. After Lizzie moved to Dallas and founded and sold Perch Event Decor, they realized the need for a place where husbands, mothers, and daughters could share in their own slice of the Old West. “Creating our own boot company is a dream we’ve always had—and all of a sudden, we felt the timing was perfect,” Lizzie says. “In an era when things are so mass produced and globalized, we knew we had a unique opportunity to bring handcrafted boots to the Dallas market.”

Enter Miron Crosby. The name’s first half is a tribute to their great grandfather Marion, “a debonair West Texas cowboy and fabulous human,” Sarah says. The latter half represents the ranch’s Crosby pasture and one of Sarah’s favorite streets in SoHo. “We wanted to nod to the fashion world,” Sarah says. It’s a brand that mirrors their product—a genuine boot given a fresh, high-fashion spin.

The Means version begins with men’s and women’s boots in authentic silhouettes with on-trend tweaks to heel heights and toe boxes, plus studding and tassels—each pair crafted by Rios artisans who have hand-stitched and hand-cut inlays for decades. “Everything is also hand-

lasted, which is a dying craft,” Sarah says. That means Rios professionals still to this day hand-mold leather onto custom-sized forms.

Steel shanks are sourced from St. Louis, and heels, soles, nails, and tacks are from Massachusetts. Leather lining is from Milwaukee, and side seams and top trims are found in Fort Worth. Leathers from the U.S. are hand-tanned in Italy, elk is from Colorado, ostrich comes from South Africa, stingray from Singapore, and sleek buffalo from India.

For an unbiased and contemporary approach to color and pattern, they tapped a seasoned New York-based Irish designer and top brand veteran. “We want our boots to appeal to the girl who lives in London and shops in New York,” Lizzie says.

Motifs are inspired by the flora and fauna of the Chihuahuan Desert the sisters grew up admiring—from prickly pear and saguaro cacti to birds—Native American tribal art based on studies of Navajo handcraft such as textile weavings and woven baskets, and Frank Lloyd Wright’s Prairie School architecture. “Really, everything iconic to the Southwest,” Sarah says. The results range from a navy-blue boot decked in jumping stars and crescent moons to an avant-garde, graphic black-on-black boot inspired by a Frank Lloyd Wright postcard.

In addition to their inaugural off-the-rack collection, which also includes children’s boots, an in-house concierge service enables custom creation of any available silhouette. From leathers to hues and monograms, each pair can be customized. But the sisters are nodding to their own soulful past in every boot, too. Willing customers can handwrite a note to mothers, brides, grooms—even a family cookie recipe for a grandchild—to be sewn into the liner.

“It goes back to the idea that these boots mark lifetime milestones, and the receiver will keep

them forever and pass them down,” Lizzie says. “We want them to be sentimental reminders of how special life is and how awesome certain events were—something tangible, hand-done, and not cliché.”

Beautiful heirloom boots aside, their quaint, 490-square-foot studio-boutique, designed in collaboration with Droese Raney Architecture, alone is worth a visit. Situated above The Honor Bar, it reads free-spirited, breezy, and Baja, the perfect backdrop for allowing the punchy, vibrant shoes to shine.

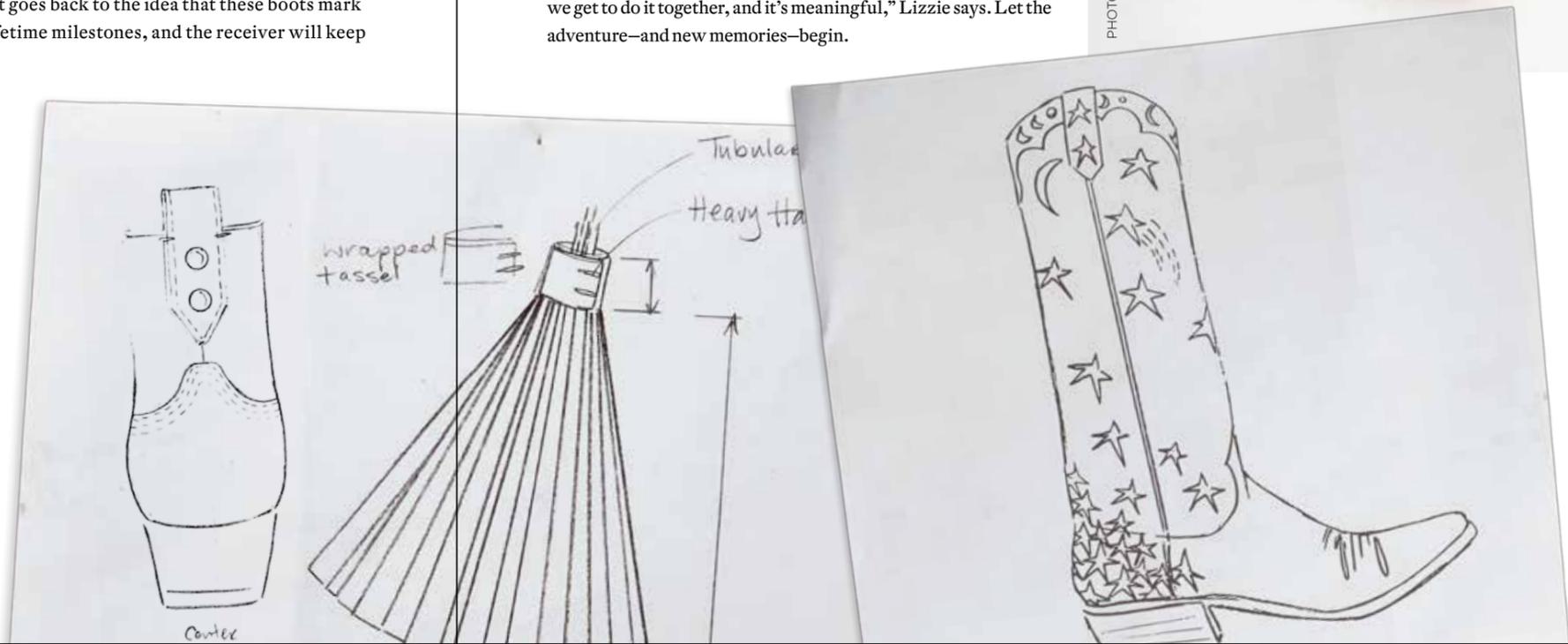
A large, marble-topped drafting table provides ample space for customization and is surrounded by beautiful displays of artisan-made goods Sarah and Lizzie have sourced from across the U.S., including beaded scarf necklaces from New York City-based Mignonne Gavigan; consigned turquoise jewelry from renowned Shiprock Santa Fe; and barware, jewelry, and fine metal buckles from Comstock Heritage, one of the oldest silversmiths in the United States.

And as any quality boot-maker’s space should, Miron Crosby also sports a well-stocked bar for browsers who want to sip whiskey neat. “We want it to feel welcoming and personal—a fun spot to visit, whether there is any intention of buying cowboy boots,” Lizzie says. “We want people to come have a drink and check out our new leathers and colors.” Products and ready-to-wear boots are also found in their online shop and on social media, where new collections are announced.

But the Highland Park Village boutique is where you’ll go to meet the down-to-earth sisters—who have an enviable yin-yang relationship—on any given day. Though their journey to create their own brand has been a busy one—Lizzie is pregnant with her third child and Sarah is in law school—they are taking a page from their pioneering genes to create a brand that reflects both their heritage and current generation. “The icing on the cake is that we get to do it together, and it’s meaningful,” Lizzie says. Let the adventure—and new memories—begin.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE WRUBEL



LEFT: Miron Crosby’s preliminary design sketches of boots and embellishments.

ABOVE: A pair from the Miron Crosby 2017 collection inspired by West Texas starry nights.