

RANCH SERIES

Dedicated To: Bill & Susie Robertson
By,
Kirk A. Clark
February 21, 2000

Acknowledgements:

I dedicated this South Texas Brush Country Series, Minten Ranch edition to our dear friends Bill and Susie Robertson who are dedicated supporters of The Valley Land Fund and have displayed their stewardship and care for their lease of 15 years of a portion of the Minten Ranch which they generously shared with Jeri and me our guests on behalf of The Valley Land Fund. The Minten Ranch is approximately 20 miles west of Falfurrias, Texas, nestled amongst the oaks. Thank you Bill and Susie for your wonderful hospitality.

To: Bill and Susie Robertson
From: Kirk A. Clark 2-21-2000

The Joy Of It All

Special times and special places!
Bill and Susie share Minten.
Bill's father taught his son
about the out-of-doors
and how to appreciate nature.
Bill's stewardship blesses us all.
Susie joins in his love
of this piece of heaven.

Thank you Bill and Susie for a delightful weekend at the Minten Ranch. Your stewardship of the land and its critters as well as your support of The Valley Land Fund are exemplary. Your hospitality is unmatched. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Kirk A. Clark

P.S.

The form of writing I am utilizing is a 6,000 year-old Chinese poetry form out of the Tai Chi tradition which utilizes 8 lines with 5 words per line. This poetry form is called Bagua.

MINTEN RANCH SERIES

2-20-2000

For Bill and Susie Robertson
And Valley Land Fund

Sentinel

2-20-2000

Great horned owl stands sentinel
over South Texas stock tank.
Whitetail buck appears with harem.
Six healthy does alertly watching
for any tale-tale signs
of threats in shadows, stalking.
I sit motionless in blind.
Buck spooks, driving does away.

Javalinas

2-20-2000

Javalinas circle blind by tank.
Sitting motionless, I'm shallow breathing,
hoping they won't notice me.
I catch their pungent scent
carried on gentle northern breeze.
They keep their distance, walking,
briskly, parallel to stock tank.
Ghost-like, they slip away.

Minten Ranch Blue Heron

2-20-2000

Blue heron glides to tank.
Wings spread, feet stretch out
for landing at waters edge.
Day's last light fades away
heron walks through shallow water
head cocking side to side.
Its presence marks day's passing.
Water critters scurry for cover.

Chef Bill, (Bill Robertson, gourmet host)

Friends Gather

2-20-2000

Chimeneas send piñon smoke skyward.
Fragrance brings fond Santa Fe memories.
Friends gather for special treat.
Susie shares in culinary preparations
while cooking pits contain succulent
tenderloin and ferol hog shank.
Bill delights in Minten Ranch
Graciously shared with lucky guests.

Wild Turkey Fries

2-20-2000

Wild turkey fries in skillet.
Oaks wave in gentle breeze
as friends gather around fire.
Bill and Susie, gracious hosts
share love of Minten Ranch
with lucky friends, voices smiling.
Lab cuddles in Susie's lap
under Texas sky, cloud filled.

Minten Serenade

2-20-2000

Recorded voices serenade camp visitors
as heat waves rise skyward.
Aroma of fried turkey breast
wafts on gentle ranch breeze.
Rattlesnakes glide nearby in brush.
Sleep tugs at my lids.
Gabby leaps into my lap.
Wet paws leave sandy tracks.

Juan, Invaluable Ranch Hand

2-20-2000

Gray clouds hang over Minten.
Morning's light will arrive shortly.
Cricket serenades from thick brush
having survived another Texas night.
Spanish greeting begins new morning.
Juan is invaluable to camp
working with joy throughout day
tending to details, all important.

Bill Robertson, Master Host

2-20-2000

Bill enjoys South Texas ranch.
The Minten has deep roots
that reach into his soul.
With his lovely wife, Susie,
they share piece of heaven
with abundant hospitality, graciously given.
Time is not a factor
when coyotes yelp in distance.

Bird Voices

2-20-2000

Bird voices welcome sun's rising.
Turkeys sighted in distance
working their way to water.
Silence is requirement of nature
if one is to observe
critters in their natural habitat.

Cardinals talk across the tank.
Milky melodies fill morning air.

Tight Quarters

2-20-2000

Tight quarters mark unique opportunity.
Steve Lay, exceptional wild life photographer
shares his portable, camouflage blind.
Photographer and poet occupy space
originally designed for just one.
Special time to learn process
that could result in prize.
Stock tank holds many reflections.

Sleepy Morning

2-20-2000

I am fighting heavy eyelids.
Early rising follows fun night.
Cool morning air relaxes me,
making return to slumber probable.
Yet sentinel bird calls keep
me alert to nature's pulsations.
Doves fly into water's edge.
Renewal repeated time after time.

Steve Lay, Photographer, I

2-20-2000

Steve is a visual poet
who keenly views nature's ways.
With patience, he awaits instant
that nature speaks to him
saying, "now is the time
to snap camera's shutter."
Only later will he know
if perfect moment was captured.

Steve Lay, Photographer, II

2-20-2000

Film, camera, light, shutter speed
are just a few variables.
Steve displays reservoir of patience.
Raptors gather in mesquite tree
poised to enjoy the feast.
Hog remains attract from afar.
Pecking order not yet determined.
Steve awaits that defining moment.

Gabby, The Yellow Lab

2-20-2000

Gabby's ears perk, suburban speaks.
Remote control turns vehicles lights
on with chirp from alarm.
Gabby stands ready to attack
not knowing what will exit.
Interior lights automatically turn off.
Gabby confused, returns to master
befuddled by continued electronic harassment.