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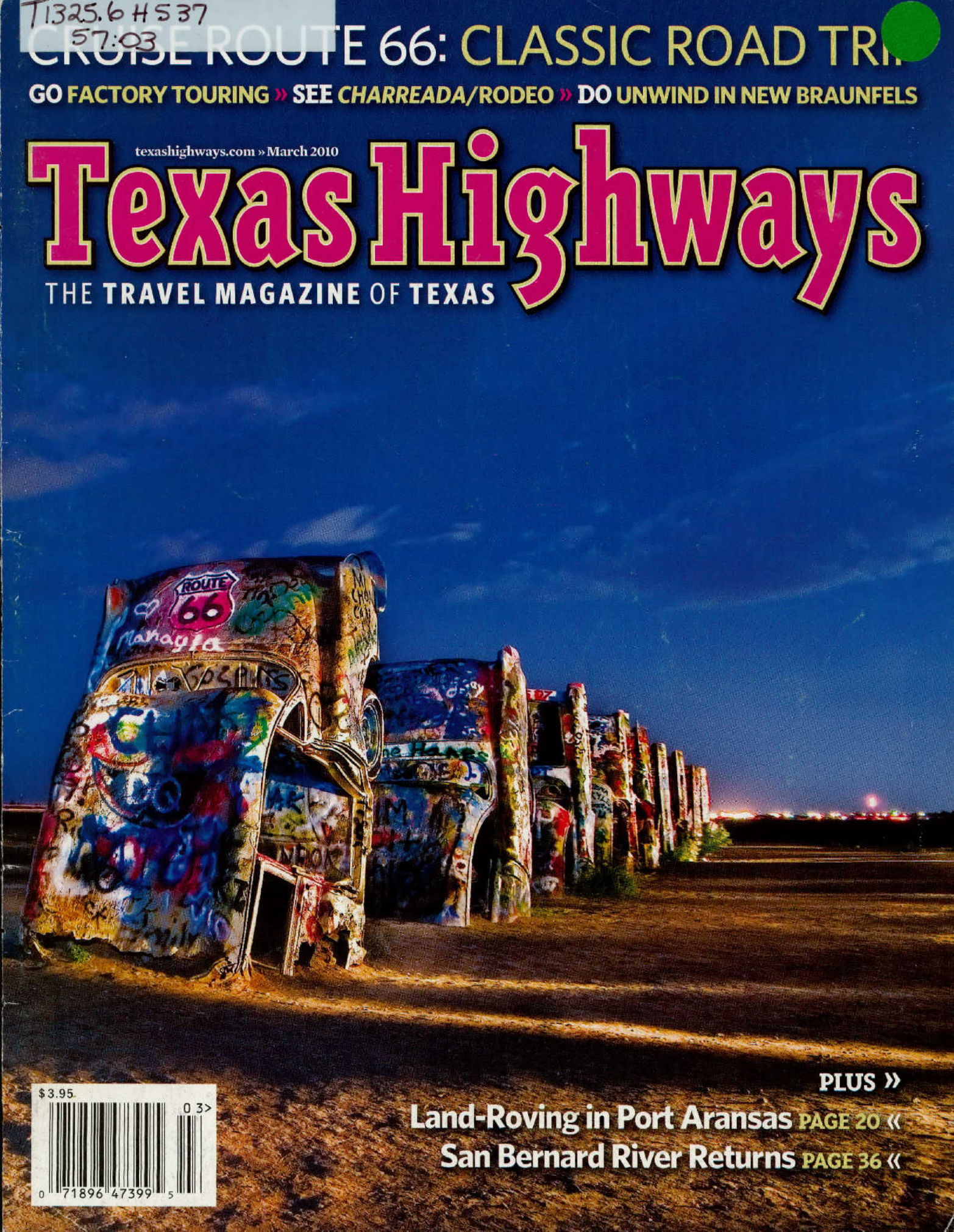
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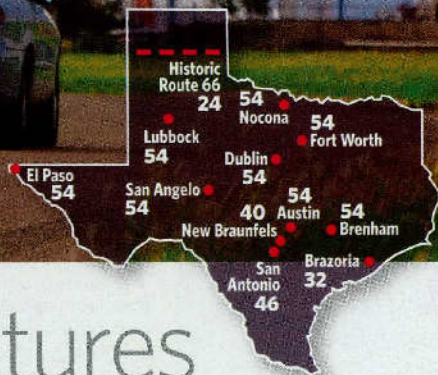
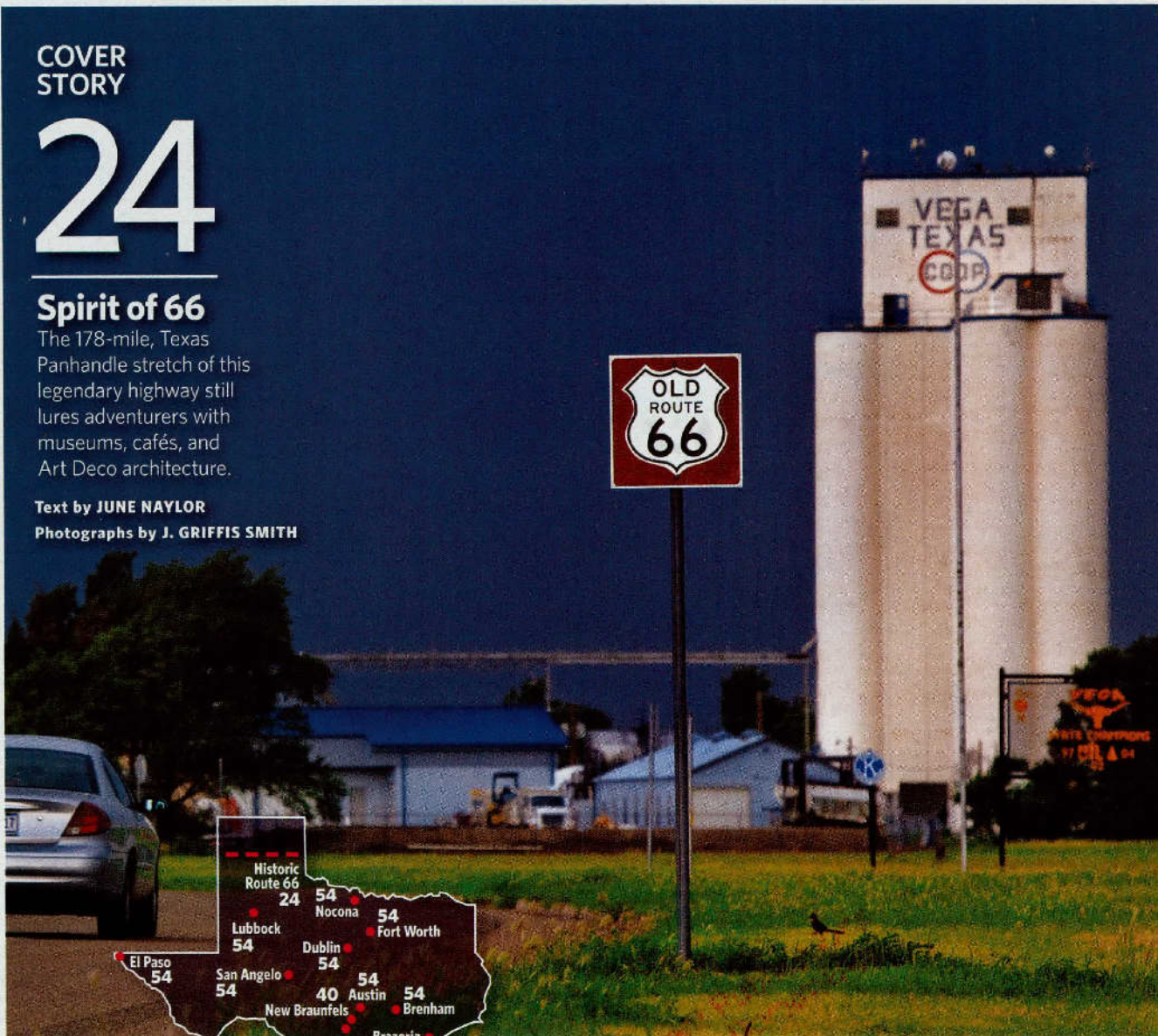
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Spirit of 66

The 178-mile, Texas Panhandle stretch of this legendary highway still lures adventurers with museums, cafés, and Art Deco architecture.

Text by **JUNE NAYLOR**

Photographs by **J. GRIFFIS SMITH**



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The San Bernard River in southeast Texas once again flows to the Gulf, bringing new attention to nearby historic sites and natural treasures.

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Touted for its water recreation, New Braunfels also offers charming inns, delightful dining, and German heritage.

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A hacienda tradition that dates back centuries, the *charreada* includes bronc and bull riding and precision horsemanship.

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Wonder what goes into making Rocketbuster boots or Collings guitars? Dr Pepper or Blue Bell? Spring is a great time for Texas factory tours—from El Paso to Brenham.

Text by **TH STAFF**

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MAY 19 2010
Dallas Public Library

Check out www.texashighways.com for more travel information





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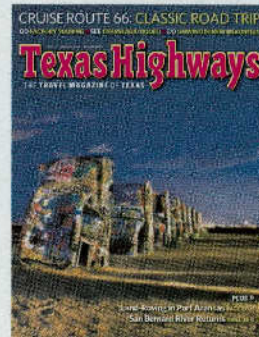
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About Our Cover

Cadillac Ranch, created in 1974 by Stanley Marsh 3 in collaboration with members of the Ant Farm, lies in a field along Interstate 40/Route 66 west of Amarillo. *TH* Photo Editor Griff Smith shot the iconic installation just before dusk, light-painting the 10 graffiti-covered cars to capture the unusual colors and texture resulting from multiple layers of paint. **Photo by J. Griffis Smith**

Photographic Prints Available



Some images in this issue are available as prints in two distinctive formats. For more information, call toll-free 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.

Fun Events for the Entire Family

Tyler's annual Azalea and Spring Flower Trail features mile after mile of blooming azaleas, dogwood trees and spring flowers that one must see to believe! The breathtaking beauty of this annual display has been praised by visitors as a floral wonderland and a photographer's paradise.

The Azalea and Spring Flower Trail begins the third weekend of March and continues through the first weekend of April every year. We invite you to enjoy the vivid colors and sweet scents that only an East Texas spring can provide.

Make plans to attend the many special events during The Trail—



living history exhibits, chili cook-off, quilt show, an outdoor arts and crafts fair and juried art show, —even a nearby Renaissance Faire! You'll also find many fine art venues offering special performances and

exhibitions during the Azalea Trail, including the UT Tyler Cowan Center and the Tyler Museum of Art.

Visitors may tour some of Tyler's finest old homes during



the ever popular Historic Tyler on Tour and nature lovers will find an abundance of garden tours, flower shows, plant sales and landscaping events. And what visit to The Rose Capital would be complete without a stroll thru the nationally acclaimed Tyler Municipal Rose Garden and Rose Museum.



For a complete listing of all Azalea & Spring Flower Trail events visit online at www.TylerAzaleaTrail.com.



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J. GRIFFIS SMITH

Restoring this 1936 monument to the Texas Centennial, which now serves as the Gonzales Municipal Museum, calls for \$3.5 million. If you'd like to know more about the restoration plan, e-mail curator@cityofgonzales.org.

Can We Preserve This Monument to Texas Independence?

MY ANECDOTAL INVESTIGATION tells me that most folks overlook the architectural gem that now houses the Gonzales Municipal Museum. The building is not well marked, so they breeze past on Alt. U.S. 90. This Art Deco limestone beauty, built in 1936 as a monument to the Texas Centennial, now languishes on a parkland city block, reflecting pool in front and amphitheater in back, awaiting the restoration it deserves.

But the overgrown shrubs, the stained exterior, and cracked stones do not obscure the outstanding design and finely wrought detailing. The Lone-Star-topped granite-and-bronze monument that sits in front of the building acknowledges “The Immortal Thirty-Two,” the men from Gonzales who fought their way into the Alamo in response to Colonel William Travis’ defiant letter—the only Texians to take such dramatic action when confronted with a call to defend this raw land.

March is the ideal time to visit the museum and the town of Gonzales and to commemorate Texas Independence. Gonzales, a truly essential landmark in the Texas fight to free itself from Mexico, is known as “The Lexington of Texas” because the first shots of that war were fired here in The Battle of Gonzales in late 1835.

In mid-March of 1836, Sam Houston, newly appointed leader of the Texian army, received the news of the fall of the Alamo while in Gonzales. After ordering that the town be burned, Houston and his army retreated, stopping to regroup about 10 miles east. A majestic live oak, called the Houston Oak, marks that spot.

On a rainy and cool winter morning, I turned off Alt. 90, drove through an open gate, and stopped near the oak to spend a few minutes imagining how Sam Houston felt that gray, spring morning, with Gonzales a smoldering ruin and 400 or so volunteer soldiers looking to him for guidance as, all around, the rag-tag settlers fled for their lives.

When I returned to the museum, a sprightly mockingbird perched atop the Lone Star of the Immortal Thirty-Two Monument. Maybe one of that bird’s distant ancestors had given Houston just a glimmer of hope for the victory to come.

Charles J. Lohrmann, Editor

Texas Highways

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Rick Perry

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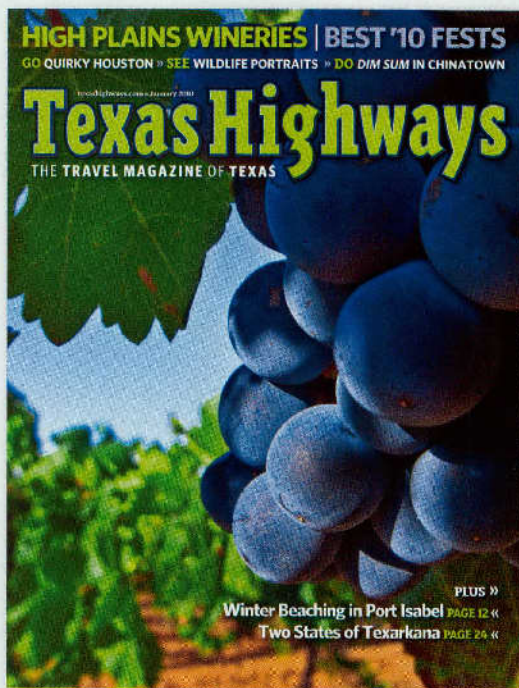
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"We went to see the presidential statues in Houston, just because of the January issue. Cool!"

—MICHAEL MOREHOUSE,
TH Facebook fan



Steeled Magnolia

I read the "Twice as Nice" article about Texarkana [January] and particularly enjoyed Marty Lange's description of the largest magnolia tree in Arkansas. That tree stood in my grandmother's front yard, and when I was a child in the 1950s, I enjoyed playing around it and climbing in it on visits to Grandma's.

After she died, the property was sold and ultimately became the site for the Chapel Ridge Apartments. I drove by there a few years ago and I was so pleased to see that they saved that great old tree where I spent many happy days.

SARAH (PORTER) THOMPSON

Take the TH Plunge

I thoroughly enjoy *TH*. Many times over the years while I was in a waiting room, at the library, or elsewhere, I picked up a copy of the magazine and thumbed through it. I have always been impressed with the lush, beautiful photography and well-written articles about all the glorious landscapes that make up Texas; all of the places off the beaten path for those weekend getaways; the rich nightlife of Texas cities; the historical landmarks; the wonderful eateries offering a smorgasbord of delectable culinary delights; the festivals and events that make each town uniquely Texan; plus all of those other attributes that Texas has to offer to both Texans and tourists alike. The professionalism exhibited in every article in every issue makes me proud to be a native Texan. *TH* is a class act and I kick myself for not subscribing long ago.

KENN MANLY
Lampasas

Plains and Simple

I enjoyed the story on "High Plains Vintners" [January], but I need to inform you of an error in the story. I have lived in the Lubbock area for 25 years, and it

TH READER RECOMMENDATION



Best of West

SULAK'S CAFE in our small town of **West** has been around since 1923, was closed for a while, and was recently reopened by Jeff Redding. The café has amazing food and a friendly staff. The bourbon barbecue sauce is to-die-for, as is the beef bourguignon. I'm Sulak's Cafe's biggest fan.

MARY HROMADKA, West

Sulak's Café is at 208 N. Main St.; 254/826-4355; www.sulaks.org.

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is not in the High Plains or the Panhandle. Lubbock is on the South Plains. The Texas Panhandle is the area from Canyon north. Keep up the good work.

REED KIRKPATRICK
Pampa

EDITOR'S NOTE: We appreciate your comments, Mr. Kirkpatrick. Knowing how ambiguous geographic designations can be, we asked Dr. Jeff Lee, a geography professor at Texas Tech in Lubbock, for his take. He agrees that Lubbock is not in the Panhandle, which he defines as the part of Texas north of where the Red River meets the 100th Meridian, or the actual handle if the state was a pan. "The definitions of High Plains, Southern High Plains, and South Plains are fuzziy," he says, "but they generally refer to successively smaller portions of the Great Plains—the South Plains are the portion of the Southern High Plains south of the Panhandle. Lubbock is within all three areas."



Huang Still Strong

I was really happy to read Jane Wu's "TH Taste" about Dorothy Huang and her Chinatown tours and cooking classes [January]. I received a copy of *Dorothy*

Huang's Chinese Cooking in 1985 from a good friend. I raised my son on her recipes for Stir-Fried Beef with Broccoli and BBQ Spare Ribs. I taught my nephew how to make wonton soup from her cookbook. It was a real comfort to me to see her picture [left] and know she is still educating people about Asian cooking. I feel like she is a dear, old friend. After all, she's been a resident of my kitchen since 1985. Maybe I will make a trip back to Houston soon to pay homage to her. Thanks to Dorothy for 25 wonderful years of great cooking.

JUDITH LIVINGSTON
Austin

Alamo Online

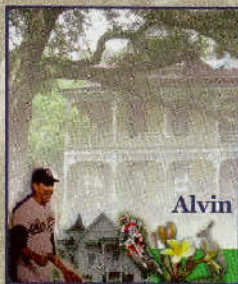
The wonderful video on your Web site about the Daughters of the Republic of Texas and the Alamo brought tears to my eyes.

TAMMIE SMITH
McCamey

[continued on page 10]

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Find the video, titled "The Alamo: Preserving History" (by Tim Florer with photography by Griff Smith), at www.texashighways.com. Click on the Alamo photo to reach our video vault.

TH Therapy

The great stories and beautiful pictures in the November issue make one

want to run to the car and take off for parts unknown.

You have a great publication that really advances the charm and character of the Lone Star State. I appreciate the effort that you all expend to publish this fine magazine. You know, I always seem to feel better after reading *TH*. Thank you.

JACK DROKE JR.
Fort Worth



Enjoy Texas' Largest Azalea Garden

Nacogdoches invites you to explore the stunning Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden, which boasts one of the most diverse azalea collections in the US. It is the centerpiece of the Annual Nacogdoches Azalea Trail, March 13 - April 3, 2010 and just one of many spring attractions in Texas' Oldest Town. Don't miss more than 20 miles of blooming Azalea Trails, great museums, unique shopping and charming bed & breakfast retreats.

For bloom reports and details about exclusive events planned throughout the Azalea Trail, visit www.NacogdochesAzaleas.com.

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TH READER RECOMMENDATION

Slice of SA

YOU MUST try out **Miss Ellie's Pizza** in **San Antonio**. Wonderful, fresh New York flavor! Larry and the crew are happy to tailor any order to your desires! Try the stromboli with spinach, mushrooms, and sausage!

AMY BOBROWITZ, Wichita Falls

Miss Ellie's Pizza is at 903 Bitters Rd., Ste. 301; 210/499-1258; www.misselliespizzaofny.com.

Burgers and Death Fries

STOVER BOYS Burgers in **Bryan** is becoming a local favorite. Rock music blared as I ventured in for the first time, and I was also entertained by the comic-book wallpaper. The Stover burger was distinctive with grilled onions and their famous "special sauce." I recommend the bacon-double-cheeseburger and the "Death Fries" or the sweet-potato fries. Yes, the burger is greasy, but come on, this is a burger joint, not a salad bar! The owners and staff are super-friendly as well!

KASEY CHESHIER, College Station

Stover Boys Burgers is at 4337 Wellborn Rd.; 979/846-4555; www.stoverboys.com.

CONTACT TH

We want to hear from you! Send feedback and recommendations to: *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009. E-mail: letters05@texashighways.com. We reserve the right to edit items. Because we're unable to check out every recommendation, and because hours vary and details can change, please call ahead for more information.

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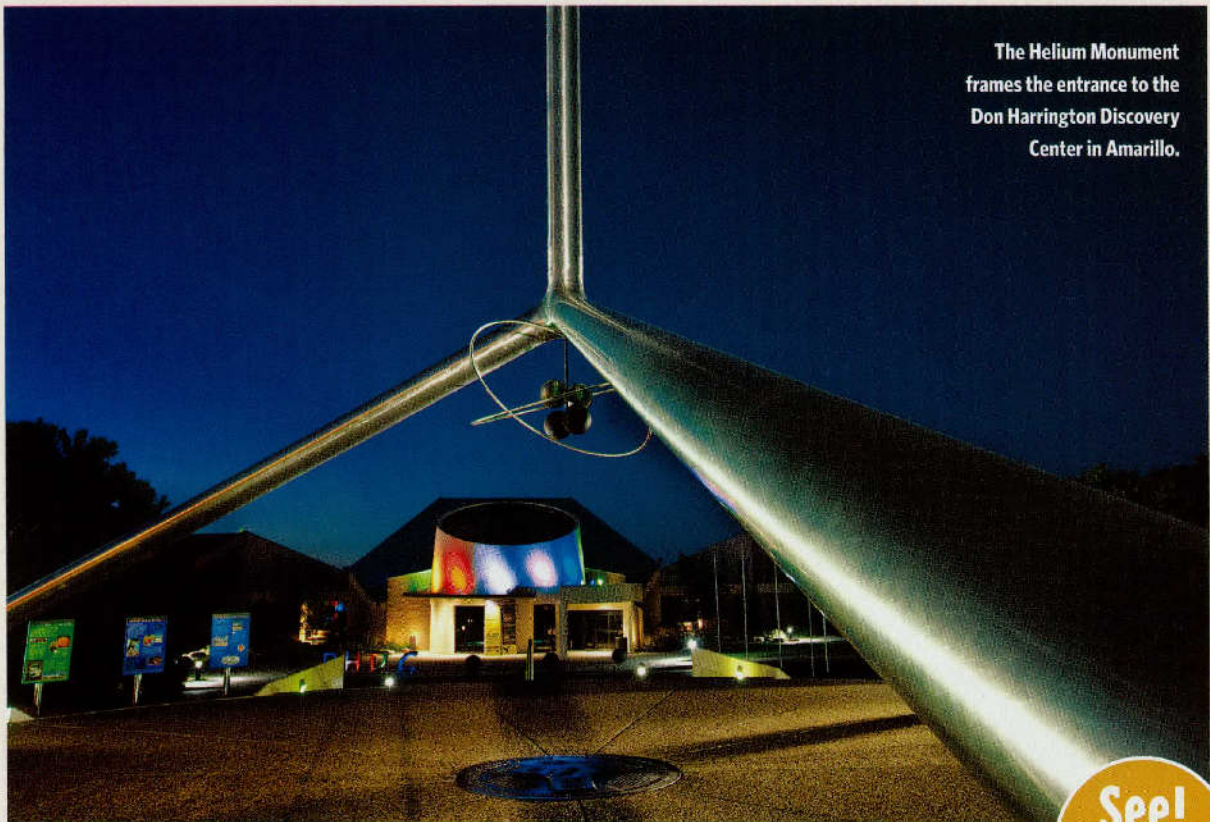
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Postcards

👉 INSIDE: NOSE-TO-TAIL: GOOD TASTE...16 COMFORT ON THE COAST IN PORT ARANSAS...20



The Helium Monument frames the entrance to the Don Harrington Discovery Center in Amarillo.

See!

The lovely Amarillo Botanical Gardens next door

Discovery Center Amarillo

A perfect place to seek out and savor the world of science Text by JUNE NAYLOR

TWO REVELATIONS STRIKE ME as I wander through the expansive, remodeled Don Harrington Discovery Center complex: You're never too old to get a kick out of bubbles, and you'll be surprised at how much science you've forgotten that you once learned.

Watching preschoolers chase big, buoyant bubbles spouting from a machine in *Bounce*, a permanent exhibit about everything spherical, brings a smile I can't shake. I refrain from running around

trying to catch and pop the shiny, floating balls. Instead, I'm content to watch them drift dreamily through the air, then disappear in a shimmery pool.

I proceed onward to discover much more throughout the rest of this informative attraction, and I hardly recognize it as the place I last visited nearly 25 years ago. Begun more than three decades ago and named for the late Don Harrington, a successful oilman and generous Panhandle benefactor, the center recently

underwent a massive, 25,000-square-foot renovation and expansion.

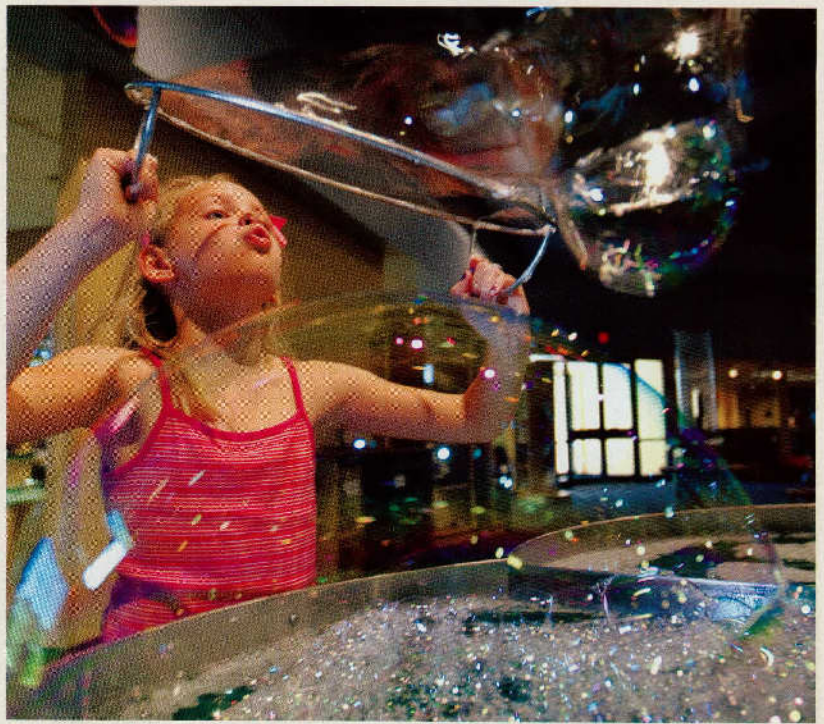
The once relatively plain front entry now features an inviting entrance, rich with stonework. The angular Helium Centennial Time Columns Monument still stands in front, created in 1968 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the discovery of helium, locally important because the Federal Helium Program calls Amarillo home.

Lifelong recollections get a jolt in

Memory, a traveling exhibit well-suited to adults (it has since been replaced with three new exhibits: *Einstein*, *Playing with Time*, and *Team Up: Explore Science & Sports*). At *Memory*, I find myself in front of a TV screen flashing images from nearly 500 films—*Casablanca*, *King Kong*, *Ghostbusters*, *Citizen Kane*, *Bonnie & Clyde*, *Psycho*, *Sabrina*, *Arthur*, *Animal House*, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, *Annie Hall*, *Easy Rider*, and *The Wizard of Oz*, among many, many others. The exhibit's Sense of Smell section evokes the mind's memories with whiffs of scents that include baby powder, Coppertone suntan lotion, Play-Doh, crayons, and Vicks VapoRub. On the exhibit's jukebox, more memories spill forth when I hear *Yakety Yak*, *Beat It*, and *Macarena*.

Kim May, the museum's director of business development, says mine is a typical adult reaction at Discovery Center.

"Adults think they're just coming to chaperone, then you see the 'ah-hah!'



moment hap-
pen," May says.
"That makes our
job here fun."

Bubbles are an integral
part of the center's *Bounce*
exhibit. Ansley McCubbin
gets interactive.

Teachers with
high school gifted-and-talented programs
have devised a scavenger hunt wherein
students have to find facts within the
museum, a clever strategy that appeals to
teens' competitive spirit.

May says the guests most surprised by
how much they like the Discovery Center
tend to be middle-schoolers.

"They're so used to external stimula-
tion from computer games, and then they
come in and find themselves really taken
with an exhibit," she adds. "We can see
them stop and look and set aside their pre-
conceived notions about what's cool."

One of the areas that gets attention is
Amazing Bodies!, with a "farting chair,"
something any 13-year-old boy will adore.
Within this installation, which uses kids,
cows, and dogs as content touchstones,
you learn how life science connects almost
all living creatures. Nearby, the *Hunters*
of the Sky exhibit examines birds of prey.

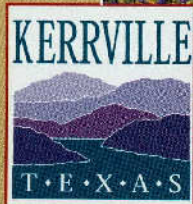
The Art of Discovery

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It's clear that kids enjoy this overview of eagles, owls, and vultures. My favorite display here dealt with what these winged wonders eat—a diverse menu of squirrels, beetles, small birds, minnows, snakes, frogs, and even crawfish.

Hungry myself, I step over to the Space Theater's entrance, buy a box of popcorn, and find a seat within the new, multimedia auditorium. Another addition in 2008,

You're never too old to get a kick out of bubbles, and you'll be surprised at how much science you've forgotten that you once learned.



Two young visitors examine the center's tornado simulator.

My impression: Wow! How could I forget something so astronomically astounding?

The theater's seats may be comfy, but I need to keep moving to see the rest of Discovery Center. I want to be sure to stop in the museum shop, too, to buy the best-selling mood ring—a '70s item that changes color according to temperature. I won't wait as long to return, as big plans continue to percolate here. Next? Perhaps an early childhood zone. An outdoor science park also figures among planning discussions. That should bring out even more of the kid in everyone. **TH**

daily, I watch a movie called *New Horizons*, a majestic journey through our solar system featuring 360° photorealistic, 3-D animation. I relearn about the heavenly phenomenon, Comet HaleBopp, its 10-million-mile-long vapor tail, and iceberg core.

Don Harrington Discovery Center

is at 1200 Streit Dr. in Amarillo. Call 806/355-9547; www.dhdc.org.



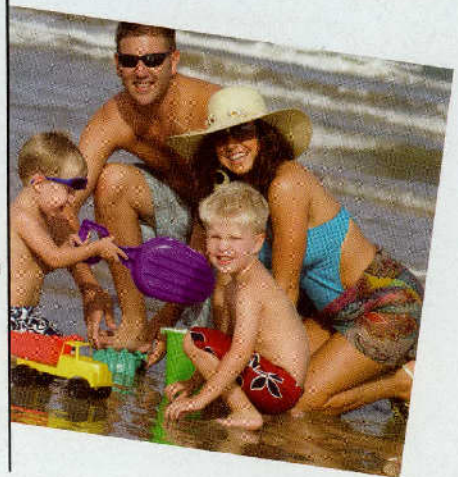
the digital planetarium takes spectators to Mars, a black hole, and beyond, as well as to remote areas of Earth and the galaxy to see what scientists have already discovered and hope to find in the future.

Among the theater's five or more films and planetary programs shown

Michael and Cassie Young produce air rings in water.



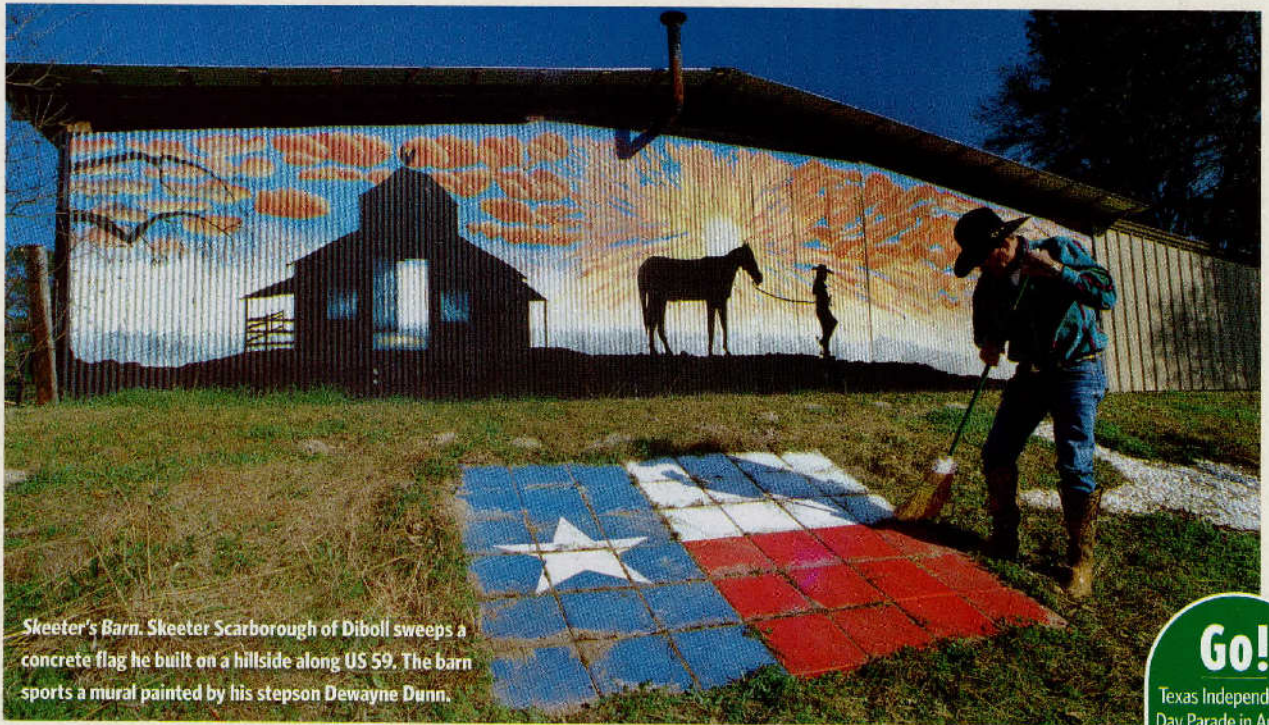
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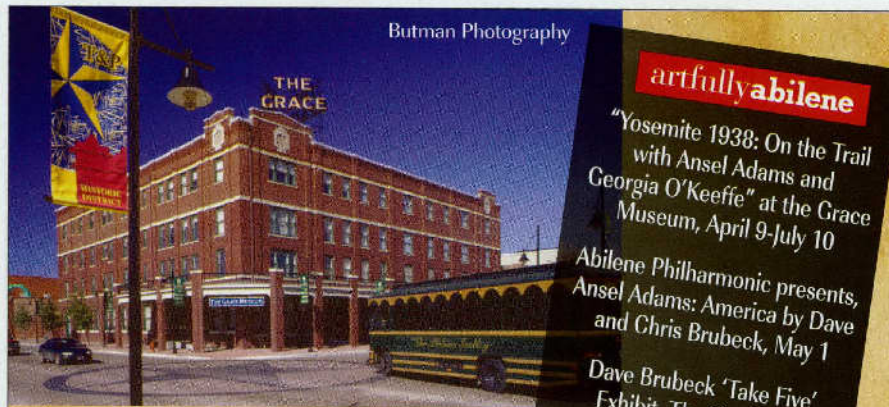
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Postcards



Skeeter's Barn. Skeeter Scarborough of Diboll sweeps a concrete flag he built on a hillside along US 59. The barn sports a mural painted by his stepson Dewayne Dunn.

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Texas Independence
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March 2



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Lovin' That Lone Star Flag

Texans fly their colors at every opportunity

DRIVE THE BACKROADS OF TEXAS

long enough, and you're sure to spot a distinctive symbol on the side of a weathered barn or atop a wavy tin roof. Perhaps you've also seen it on a water tank, the tailbone of a windmill, or a ranch gate—folk art inspired by the state's red-white-and-blue banner abounds from Amarillo to Brownsville. A new book by photographer E. Joe Deering—*Lovin' That Lone Star Flag* (Texas A&M University Press, 2009)—documents the phenomenon with more than a hundred striking images.

Deering began shooting the creative depictions in 2000, when he was still a photographer for the *Houston Chronicle* and chasing story leads around the state. He found Texas-flag representations on everything from buses to barbecue grills. His mix

of pix includes guitars, mailboxes, boots, and even a bathtub. The common denominator among all the artists or owners: unmitigated pride in their state. Deering not only photographed the flag-art, but he spent hours talking to the proud Texans who display it. Some of the backstories are as entertaining as the photos themselves.

Like when Deering photographed Doug Moreland's flag-painted 1972 Cadillac, complete with a pair of six-foot-long horns mounted in front, on the sidewalk in front of the State Capitol. The photograph almost didn't happen, but a state trooper guarding the entrance eventually proved understanding. And then there was the photo shoot of Bruce Lavorgna's hot air balloon. During the process, the second balloon in which Deering was flying crash-landed in a field while Lavorgna's Lone Star-adorned balloon sailed on serenely. Deering survived and got his shot as well.

Happy 174th birthday, Texas. Long may your colors wave, from the flagpole and beyond. To order the book, call 800/826-8911; www.tamu.press.com. —Nola McKey



Army. There's no mistaking the Lone Star theme of artist Becky Beale's "Army the Armadillo."

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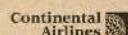
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Olivia offers happy-hour specials on select food items

Going Whole Hog

“Nose-to-Tail” cooking expands diners’ comfort zones

Text by **JESSICA DUPUY**

THESE DAYS, DESPITE A GROWING INTEREST IN BUYING LOCAL produce and meats, few people remember when meals depended on garden vegetables, the eggs from the chicken coop, and meat from a recent hunt. Making use of every edible bit, especially when it came to animals, was a concept born of necessity and respect. It’s an economical approach to eating that predates the modern restaurant if not the written record of human history.

As a food writer in Texas for the past few years, I’ve noticed that some inventive chefs are subtly introducing this age-old philosophy to modern diners. They’ve even given it a clever name: “nose-to-tail cooking.” Along with standard fare such as bacon-wrapped filet mignon and herb-roasted chicken, diners now find dishes made with pork belly, rabbit kidneys, or head cheese—a terrine that has appeared in peasant cuisines across Europe for centuries.

So, on a recent restaurant road trip, I decided to expand my comfort zone. First up: Olivia, Chef James Holmes’ contemporary-meets-rustic eatery in Austin, where the menu changes daily according to what’s available from a select circle of local farms and ranches. Holmes’ devotion to the “locavore” movement has paid off: In September 2009, *Bon Appetit* magazine lauded Olivia as one of the “Top 10 Best New Restaurants in America.”

Chef James Holmes of Austin’s Olivia turns to local ranchers and farmers for meats and produce.

My dining companion and I opted for the extravagant, 10-course tasting menu, and Chef Holmes smiled and advised us to keep an open mind. We settled into a nook at the cozy, wraparound bar and prepared for our culinary adventure.

We charted new terrain gingerly and grew bolder as plates arrived to the table. Plump gnocchi in sage cream sauce, herbed French fries served with lemon aioli for

at Bijoux, an intimate restaurant in the Inwood Village shopping center. Dark woods and heavy, Versailles-inspired tapestry curtains create an Old World ambiance here, and Chef Gottlich devotes similar care to the presentation and complexity of his dishes. Daily three-course and five-course *prix-fixe* menus are the way to go here, as they allow diners to

sample a nuanced range of Chef Gottlich's creations, which might be buttery day boat scallops served with pork cheek-stuffed ravioli in bacon-mustard vinaigrette, or a trio of seared duck breast, smoky duck confit, and *foie gras*-shepherd's pie.

For Chef Gottlich, the "nose-to-tail" trend challenges him to be a better chef. "Classic cooking evolved from a time

The age-old philosophy of making use of every edible part of an animal has recently been embraced by chefs and foodies alike.

dunking, and mussels steamed in saffron broth gave way to a slice of lamb's heart wrapped with jalapeño and a ribbon of bacon, then grilled and drizzled with yaupon honey. Next, we indulged in thin slices of pig's ear, pickled in jalapeño-infused vinegar, and served with roasted green beans and crispy French fries—a beautiful interplay of chewy and crunchy textures with briny and spicy flavors. And finally, Chef Holmes brought us a small plate of "lamb frites"—tender morsels of fried lamb's testicles served with a tangy Dijon sauce. Marvelous. I now have a new comfort zone.

The nose-to-tail concept has made a slow but steady comeback in the past decade, with chefs throughout Europe and the U.S. devoting their kitchens to going "whole hog"—as well as whole lamb, beef, rabbit, and fowl. "From an ethical standpoint, if you respect what you're eating, then you owe it to the animal to use every bit of it," Holmes told me.

In Dallas, Chef Scott Gottlich relies on classic French culinary techniques to employ this concept in his daily menus

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An extra admission charge to the McNay applies during these special exhibitions (general admission + \$5).
General admission is FREE on Thursday nights and the first Sunday of the month.

TruthBeauty is a smaller version of the exhibition of the same name produced by Vancouver Art Gallery. Both versions were curated by George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film. As of November 4, 2009, funding at the McNay is generously provided by the William and Salome Scanlon Foundation and the G. A. C. Halff Foundation. Funding for *An Impressionist Sensibility: The Halff Collection* and related programs is provided by the Elizabeth Huth Coates Exhibition Endowment, the Employment Fund for Exhibitions, and the Host Committees.

Dallas Delights!

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BEFORE DALLAS' NORTH CENTRAL

Expressway bisected the city in 1950, Greenville Avenue—now flanked with homes and businesses—served as the primary auto route from the northern reaches into downtown. The street continues to draw traffic, though now—especially in the trendy stretches of Lower Greenville Avenue—visitors are as likely to travel by foot as by car. Long known for its

bars, music venues, and restaurants, the area now boasts a vibrant daytime complement to its after-dark appeal.

Neighborhood resident Chuck Cole can take some of the credit for this transformation. In 2004, Cole recognized the charm of the 1920 Belmont Pharmacy Building, and began restoring the structure's transit glass, black-and-white terrazzo floors, and original pressed-tin ceiling. In 2006, he opened his unusual venture: a combination florist/deli shop called The Corner Market. "We had lots of nightlife and dinner-type places, but not a deli," says Cole. "Not a place where people could get a sandwich or a muffin and read the paper."

One half of the shop handles the floral side of the business,



See!

Greenville Avenue's St. Paddy's Day parade

while the other half serves a varied clientele who stop by for pastrami paninis and Mediterranean salads, breakfast burritos and fruit tarts, Italian sodas and espressos, and any of dozens of freshly prepared takeout specials in the chef's case. And, with trendy clothing resaler Buffalo Exchange on one side and the restored Granada Theater—now a popular music venue—a few minutes' walk down the street, The Corner Market's patio might offer the best people-watching north of Deep Ellum. Call 214/826-8282.

Muffins, chocolates, sandwiches, and freshly prepared takeout items entice diners to The Corner Market.

—Lori Moffatt

when cooks didn't have refrigerators or freezers to keep foods fresh," he says, "so they used the whole animal, and learned how to cure meats, make pâtés, or serve untraditional parts of the animal. Cooking this way today demonstrates efficiency and a mastery of techniques."

In Houston's eclectic Montrose neighborhood, Feast (another of *Bon Appetit's* 2009 "Top 10 Best New Restaurants in America") has also garnered critical acclaim for its nose-to-tail commitment. Growing up in West Sussex, owners James Silk and Richard Knight had been exposed to offal (organ meat) in pubs and restaurants since they were children. When they, along with Silk's wife, Meagan, opened

Feast in 2008, they wanted to introduce diners to a style of cooking that the British have enjoyed for centuries.

The decor of Feast—with its dark wood floors and timber-framed rooms, and handmade wooden tables with distressed wooden chairs—made us think of a British country tavern. As we sampled a hearty pea-and-bacon soup, rich rabbit hearts and kidneys served on toast with demi-glace, and roasted beef marrow—which arrived warm, buttery, and still in the bone, with a pick and a tiny spoon—indeed we felt as though we had traveled far beyond the borders of Texas.

More and more chefs are committed to giving us a taste of an age-old tradition

where life on a farm meant an abiding respect for the natural bounty that was given. "It's our responsibility to use as much as we can of what we have," says Chef Gottlich. "As they say, it's not in good taste to waste." **TH**

Dining "Nose-to-Tail"

Olivia is at 2043 S. Lamar Blvd. in Austin. Call 512/804-2700; www.olivia-austin.com.

Bijoux is at 5450 West Lovers Ln. in Dallas. Call 214/350-6100; www.bijoux-restaurant.com.

Feast is at 219 Westheimer Rd. in Houston. Call 713/529-7788; www.feasthouston.com.



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Parker and Richard Becker to cultivate the appreciation of fine food and wine, the event features seminars and wine-tastings, exclusive dinners, cooking demonstrations, a dance, and offerings by Texas restaurants and chefs.

You'll probably discover some unexpected food-and-wine pairings. Viognier and fajitas. Pinot noir and barbecued sausage. Port and dark chocolate.

The latter makes chocolatier Pamala McCombs smile. Her business in nearby Abilene, Candies by Vletas, which occupies the restored 1936 Railway Express Building, has provided chocolates and pralines to sweets-seekers since 1912. "We're known for our pralines, and also for our chocolate," says McCombs. "Probably thanks to news about health benefits, we've seen interest in our dark chocolate increase by 75 percent."

Of course, convivial company always yields healthful rewards. So make tracks to Buffalo Gap for the Summit. Until the news breaks that barbecued ribs, fried chicken, and the other treats served with panache here are good for your heart, you can savor them for the delight they bring to your spirit. Tickets go on sale on March 1; hotels and other accommodations are available in Buffalo Gap and Abilene. Call 800/367-1721; www.periniranch.com (Wine and Food Summit) and 800/725-6933; www.candiesbyvletas.com (Candies by Vletas).

—Lori Moffatt

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Port A Getaway

Dining and cycling on Mustang Island

Text by **MELISSA GASKILL**

MY FAMILY SPENDS A WEEKEND IN PORT ARANSAS at least once a year, a tradition since the kids, now 16, 18, and 21, were babies. We return mainly for the beach, where we spend hours collecting shells, playing in the waves, and building sandcastles, but we also swing by the jetties to watch dolphins, browse a few souvenir shops, eat fried shrimp and fresh fish, and drop lines from a fishing pier.

This year, though, I jumped at the chance for an adults-only Port A weekend. I called my friend Stacy Oberman, packed a corkscrew and my beachcombing clothes, and headed for the ferry and the legendary Tarpon Inn.

Built in 1886, the Tarpon Inn attracted anglers hoping to land a tarpon, a large game fish once abundant in area waters. (In fact, Port A originally went by the name of Tarpon, Texas.) The Inn suffered a fire in 1900 and a hurricane in 1919, followed by reconstruction that better anchored the two-story wooden structure. Small (though well-appointed) rooms open onto wide porches running the length of the inn on both floors. The lobby sports a wall covered in tarpon scales, each signed and dated by the angler who caught the fish. We had fun searching for familiar names, including Bob Lilly and Duncan Hines (the person, not the cake mix).

For Friday-night dinner, we held court at one of nine tables at Shell's Pasta and Seafood, whose specials that night included local blue crab cakes—delicately seasoned with a perfect

Do!

Try dinner at the Venetian Hot Plate

One room at the Tarpon Inn honors Franklin D. Roosevelt, who fished in Port Aransas in 1937.

balance of crabmeat and breadcrumbs. After dinner, rocking chairs on the Tarpon porch offered a great spot to relax, open a bottle of wine, and watch people come and go from the busy restaurants and bars at Fisherman's Wharf across the street.

The beach, which stretches from the South Jetty more than 20 miles to Mustang Island State Park, ranks as the main attrac-

Port A's small size and flat terrain make bicycles a perfect mode of transportation.

tion of Port Aransas, and rightfully so. But just across the ship channel lies San Jose Island, which everyone here calls St. Jo's. Accessible only by boat, this privately-owned island remains in a natural state – no cars, but also no amenities and no grooming. That means any trash washed up on the beach remains there, but it also means an uncrowded shore with lots of shells. Early Saturday morning, Stacy and I boarded the Jetty Boat from Fisherman's Wharf and spent a few hours walking the beach, finding a practically flawless lettered olive and a handful of tiny sand dollars. Later, we watched green turtles paddling around the jetty and ships plowing through the pass, dolphins leaping on their bow waves.

Port A's small size and flat terrain make bicycles a perfect mode of transportation, and Island Surf & Kayak Shop provides beach-worthy rides as well as surfboards, boogie boards, and kayaks. While we didn't have time this trip to kayak, owner Jeff Nicholson sang the praises of Lighthouse Lakes Paddling Trails in Redfish Bay. A series of loops ranging from around one mile to nearly seven wander through mangroves and seagrass flats, he reports, offering outstanding birding and fishing.

Tossing our water bottles, sunscreen, and

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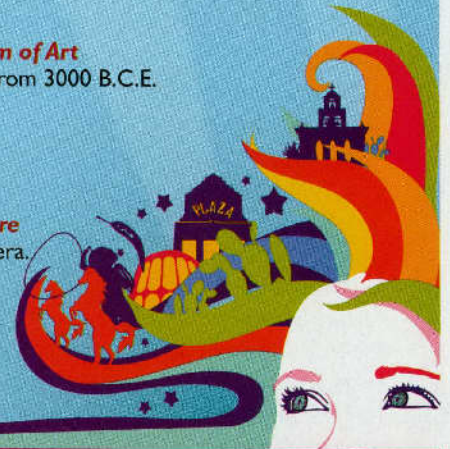
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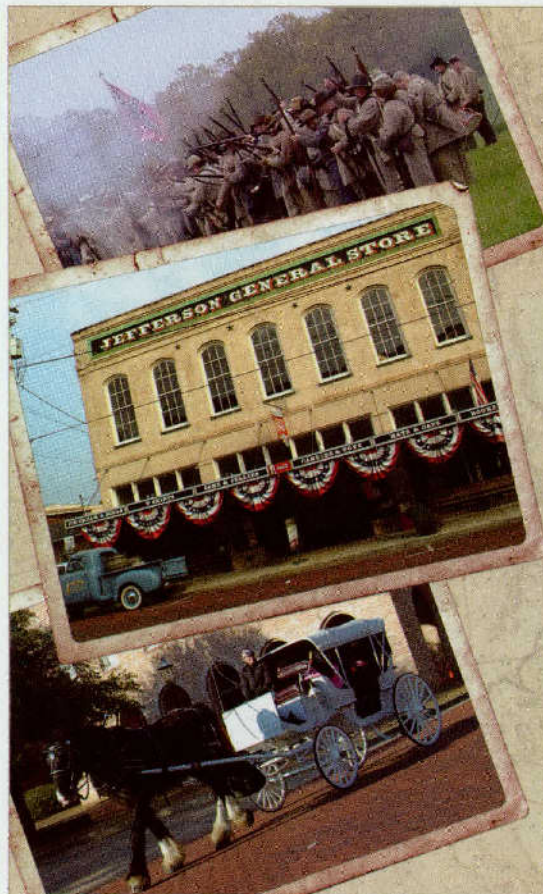
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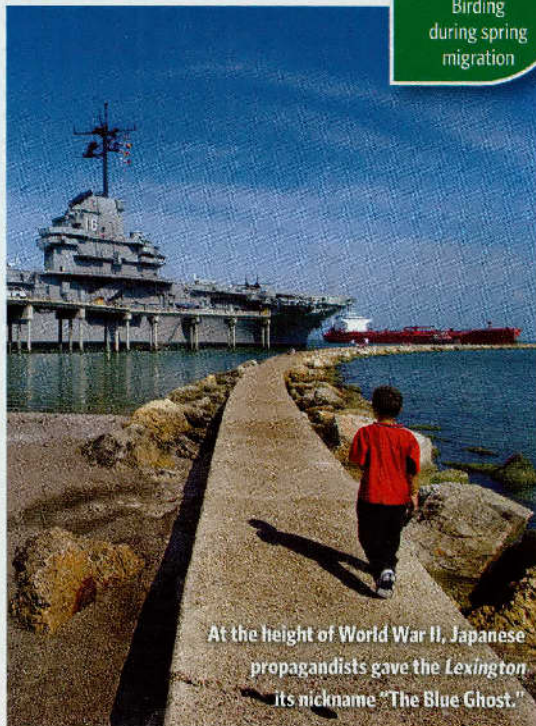
City by the Sea

Corpus Christi's cosmopolitan mix

VISITORS TO PORT ARANSAS SOMETIMES SKIP PAST THE AREA'S biggest city, Corpus Christi—and that's a shame. Together, Port A and Corpus Christi offer an unusual mix of barefooted island attitude and cosmopolitan attractions. If your schedule allows, budget a few extra days to explore Corpus Christi (springtime rates at luxury bayfront hotels start around \$120 per night).

History buffs will want to explore 11 decks of the imposing *USS Lexington*, which was commissioned in 1943. Now moored in Corpus Christi Bay, the *Lexington* offers five self-guided tours. Nearby, the Texas State Aquarium provides insight into the creatures inhabiting the Gulf of Mexico and oceans beyond. Its conservation and rehabilitation programs for turtles and dolphins, in particular, earn the aquarium nationwide respect. Also on the bay, the Art Museum of South Texas surprises first-time visitors with its combination of modern architecture and the art and craft of the Americas. And on the south side of town, the 180-acre South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center allows visitors to meander a network of walking trails along Oso Creek and then take in the center's gardens, which focus on bromeliads, roses, orchids, palms, and other native and foreign species. There's even a new butterfly house.

Meet you at the beach. See www.visitcorpuschristitx.org. —Lori Moffatt



At the height of World War II, Japanese propagandists gave the *Lexington* its nickname "The Blue Ghost."

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Home of Sam Houston

towels in the bicycle baskets, we pedaled to the Port Aransas Museum, which occupies a two-story house constructed nearly a century ago. One of the few structures in town to survive the 1919 hurricane, it now showcases maps, ship models, an original lighthouse lens, and a wealth of photos that portray area history, including the constant movement of the pass between San Jose Island and Mustang Island before engineers built jetties and seawalls to fix it in place early in the 1900s.

Suitably enlightened on Port A history, we cruised Alister Street, the main drag through town, which is lined with restaurants, boutiques, and souvenir shops. We spent some time at The Shops at Pelican's Landing, an eclectic collection of local boutiques offering everything from clothing and purses to toe rings. Our stop also included The Art Center for the Islands, where local artists display and sell their work and frequently host workshops and receptions.

Our afternoon dolphin-watching tour on the 65-foot *Mustang II* departed from Woody's Sports Center, a five-minute walk

PHOTO: J. GRIFFIS SMITH

from the Tarpon Inn. The vessel, which has a covered lower deck and open upper one, turned first toward the ferry crossing, where a pod of dolphins jumped and splashed playfully. We then chugged past the Aransas Lighthouse, where the crew briefly dragged a small shrimp net. Soon, they pulled up half a dozen shrimp, four small stingrays, and several little fish, including a couple of flounder, so passengers could get a closer look.

After the one-and-a-half hour cruise, we cleaned up for dinner and walked across the street to Virginia's on the Bay. The open-air dining room overlooks gleaming boats tethered on calm water; small craft going in and out of the harbor, and ships passing in the background. I opted for a classic fried shrimp platter and cold beer, while Stacy did her best to finish a generous portion of grilled mahi-mahi and a tangy margarita. In short, an ideal island evening.

We started Sunday morning at Bundy's, where a crowd queued up for quiche, cinnamon rolls, bread pudding, Eggs Benedict, and Eggs Bundy, a messy but satisfying bowl of eggs, bacon, hash browns, and cheese. Sufficiently fueled, we biked to the beach and passed under Horace Caldwell Pier, where anglers patiently waited for nibbles in the sea below. With the sun climbing higher, we enjoyed a final bike ride and set our sights on one last Port A meal (hey, we earned it).

Port Aransas Brewing Company sits just a block off Cotter, where the ferry line forms, and makes a perfect pre-departure lunchstop. Its hearty Stopher Burger—a thick beef patty on a fresh-baked bun, served with lettuce, tomato, pickle, onion, and perfectly crunchy sweet-potato fries—makes regular appearances on “best” lists, and now I know why. I took half of it home; if only I'd tossed one of the restaurant's brewed-on-site beers into the cooler, I could have enjoyed another taste of Port A that evening. **TH**

Port Aransas

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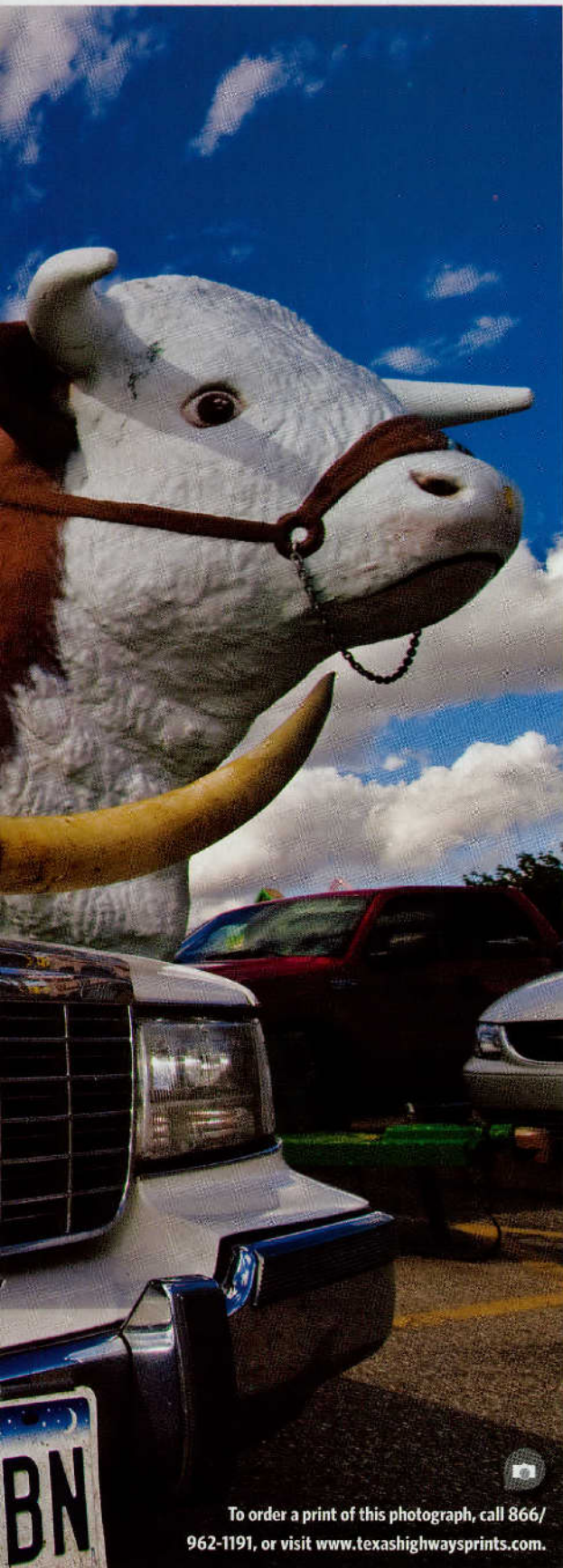


Upcoming Events:

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- 2nd Saturday Art & Wine
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Amarillo's famous Big Texan Steak Ranch epitomizes the spirit of Route 66 during the highway's car-crazy 1950s heyday.



To order a print of this photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.



TEXAS' STRETCH OF THE CLASSIC NOSTALGIC ROAD TRIP

Text by JUNE NAYLOR

Photographs by J. GRIFFIS SMITH

Route 66 first enticed adventure-seekers on a transcontinental journey from Chicago to Los Angeles in 1926. Ever since, cross-country travelers have heeded the call to hit the open road in pursuit of freedom, new beginnings, and the rewards of a fresh experience.

Although the interstate highway system eventually pulled traffic away from this legendary artery of American heritage, Route 66 devotees can still explore much of the storied route. Texas claims 178 miles of the old road, much of it still intact as it parallels Interstate 40 across the top of the Panhandle prairie from the Oklahoma border westward to the New Mexico state line.

On a recent cold spring weekend, I chased the sun as I explored the famous road's Texas stories.



Just 14 miles west of the Oklahoma-Texas line, Shamrock rises from the plains with a smattering of Art Deco buildings that date to the 1930s and 40s, when westward travelers stopped here en route from points east. I ponder the millions of life dramas that have played out—and still play out—along this highway.

Christened the “Mother Road” by Nobel Prize-winner John Steinbeck in his classic novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, Route 66 served as America’s main artery west during the devastating Dust Bowl of the 1930s. When World War II erupted a decade later, the route funneled wartime supplies to the West Coast. Then, in the 1950s and 60s, as the heartland rebounded, car-crazy travelers rediscovered Route 66 as a thoroughfare to western vacation destinations, ushering in an era of neon-lit motor courts and cafés, kitschy tourist stops, curio shops, and roadside billboards.

One of the finest examples of Route 66 Art Deco architecture has been preserved and restored here in Shamrock: the Tower Conoco Station and U-Drop Inn, a National Historic Site. The building now serves as the local chamber of commerce, and it features a neon-festooned tower, walls of glazed tile, and intricate, geometric details on the fueling canopies and in the lobby. Kids especially get a big kick out of the place, which inspired the body shop in the Disney/Pixar film *Cars*.

Continuing my westward path, just before I cross the line into Gray County, the road begins a gradual climb onto the Caprock. Patches of trees appear in the occasional draw, cattle graze behind barbed-wire fences, and I spy a mural painted on the side of a small ranch building. As the sun climbs higher into the brilliant morning sky, it paints the prairie grasses shimmering silver.

In the 1940s and 50s, advertisers discovered the power of roadside billboards, and Route 66 travelers could count on Burma-Shave signs—which appeared in a series of five—to provide a rhyme and a humorous message. Someone in McLean, about 21 miles west of Shamrock, has paid homage to the classic campaign with signs that read: Going East—or Going West—Route 66—Does it Best—McLean, TX.

Route 66’s role in popular culture remains strong, I think. No wonder that Bobby Troup’s catchy 1946 song “(Get Your Kicks on) Route 66” has been recorded dozens of times by artists ranging from Nat King Cole to the Rolling Stones.

In McLean, I stop for a few hours to explore, starting with the small but carefully curated Devil’s Rope and Route 66 Museum. A detailed barbed-wire (devil’s rope)

IN THE 1950s AND 60s, TRAVEL AS A THOROUGHFARE TO WESTERN

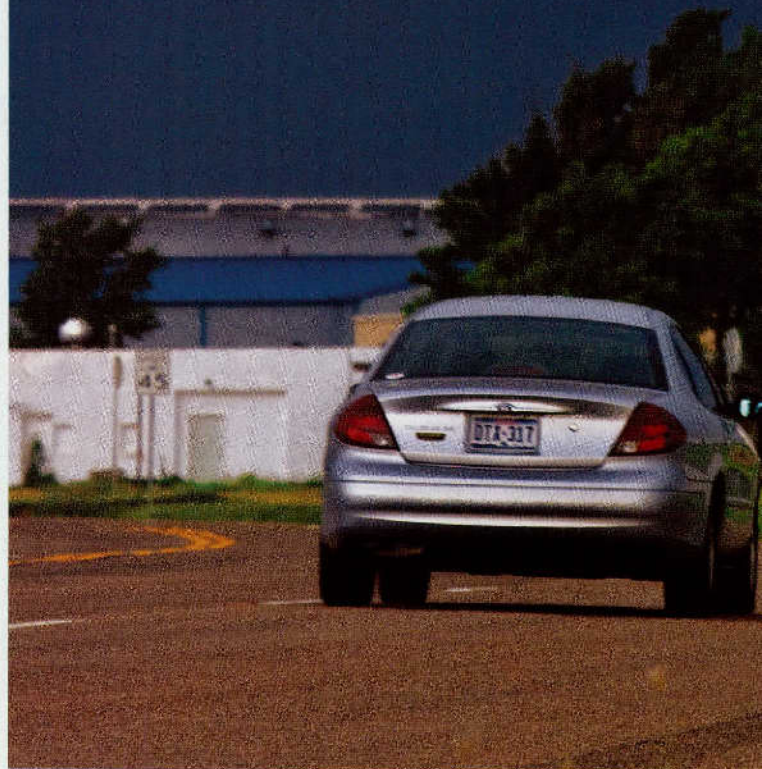
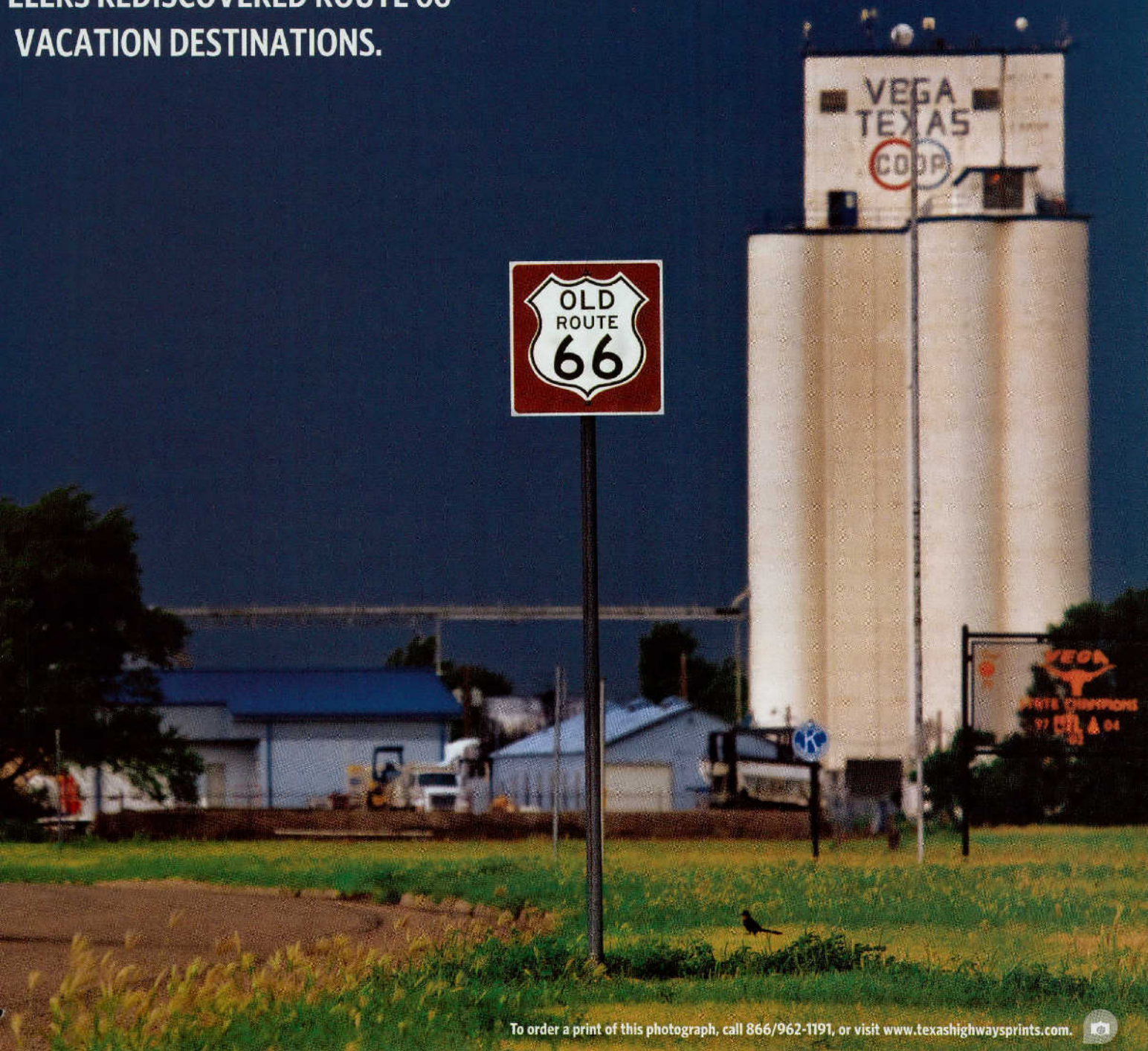


exhibit illustrates the arduous work required in fencing big, open country. In one hallway, a collection of wild-flower photography highlights scenes from a nearby ranch. A comprehensive exhibit on the evolution of the American cowboy features brands from dozens of Panhandle ranches, as well as those from famous folks like Teddy Roosevelt (a Maltese cross) and LBJ (his initials).

ELERS REDISCOVERED ROUTE 66 VACATION DESTINATIONS.



To order a print of this photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.

The museum provides insight into the Dust Bowl era with a collection of stark, black-and-white photographs, including grim pictures of homes buried in sand and families making tent camps around their cars. While many families fled the plains in hopes of a better future out west, many remained to tough it out. I'm startled to see a joyful image of three girls laughing as they bathe in a galvanized

Vega offers several reasons to stop and explore, including a restored Art Deco gas station, a nouveau-Western restaurant called Boot Hill, and Roarke's Hardware, a third-generation shop that opened in the early 1920s.

tub, and I'm reminded of the resilience of the human spirit.

In another section of the museum, I find a McLean café replica from the boom period and loads of scrapbooks



depicting the town in the 1950s. A small gift shop offers souvenirs—magnets and mugs and books—and

I buy a book of retro Route 66 postcards on the way out.

Before leaving town, I stop to photograph a landmark from 1926—a restored Phillips 66 station, flanked by a vintage gas truck and orange pumps. With its brick exterior and high, pitched roof, the building resembles a dollhouse more than a gas station, and it reminds me of how car culture has changed. In those days, wrote Michael Karl Witzel and Gyvel Young-Witzel in their book *Legendary Route 66*, “It was full-service all the way.”

The Devil’s Rope and Route 66 Museum in McLean showcases a replica of a mid-century diner.

Along some parts of the road, it’s easy to hop on I-40 and watch for the brown “Historic Route 66” highway signs that indicate how to find the old road again. I take one of these exits at Groom, where a 190-foot-tall white cross was erected in 1995; you can see it from 20 miles away. Tumbleweeds roll across the streets as I explore. An abandoned 1940s motor court once welcomed weary travelers, but the town is quiet these days, and I don’t find much besides the Blessed Mary Restaurant, advertising a menu of burritos and tacos; and a tiny downtown grocery

store serving those who have opted to stick around. A leaning red-and-white water tower here no longer functions but serves as a good photo subject.

Built in 1936 and restored in 2002, Shamrock’s Tower Conoco Station and U-Drop Inn now serves as a visitor’s center. On Thursday nights during the summer, the landmark hosts live music.

Wheeling into Amarillo on Interstate 40, I exit Georgia Street and follow it north to West Sixth Avenue, a section of Route 66 that still bustles. Crowded next to one another on both sides of the street, art galleries, cafés, bars, and antiques shops flourish. I stop in at the famous Golden Light Cafe for a 6th Street Special, a thick burger patty folded into a grilled flour tortilla with sautéed onions and jalapeños. Across the street, Copper Horse Antiques tempts me with vintage cowboy boots; a child’s red Roy Rogers guitar, still in its original 1950s box; a black-and-white photo by livestock photographer Frank Reeves, who documented the cattle industry from 1914 through the 1970s; and a mid-century tablecloth printed with stylized images of cacti.

I’m driving west from Amarillo on I-40, and I want to see Cadillac Ranch, an outdoor art installation that embodies the inventive spirit of Route 66. In 1974, local eccentric millionaire Stanley Marsh 3 collected 10 Caddies from the late 1940s to the early 1960s, and then buried them nose-first at a spot south of I-40 about a half-mile from Route 66, their tails exposed so as to suggest the Pyramid of Cheops in Egypt. They were later moved farther west. Like most visitors, I take a few photographs. The car fins have been painted, repainted, and graffiti-decorated since the beginning.

Driving on, I’m captivated by the whirling blades of thousands of wind turbines, and soon, I approach the town of Vega, which lies at the intersection of US 385 and the old road. A 1920s Magnolia gas station has been fixed up, but the little museum inside keeps limited hours.

ONE OF THE FINEST EXAMPLES OF ROUTE 66 ARCHITECTURE HAS BEEN PRESERVED AND RESTORED IN SHAMROCK.

To order a print of the photographs on this spread, call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.



CAFÉ

UDROP INN

CAFÉ



Across the street, Roarke's Hardware dates to the 1920s. And just west of the town square, Dot's Mini Museum showcases such conversation starters as cookware used during the Dust Bowl era and a huge tree strung with dozens of pairs of cowboy boots. Nearby, Boot Hill, an Old West-style restaurant and saloon that opened in 2007, has become a destination for food and drink; owner-chef Rory Schepisi first visited Vega from Los Angeles in 2004 to film a reality show and decided to stay.

I save my sweet tooth for dessert at the MidPoint Cafe, a Route 66 landmark in the hamlet of Adrian, about 14 miles west of Vega. The town and café sit at the Mother Road's halfway point; a sign outside notes that Chicago and Los Angeles lie 1,139 miles in either direction. Inside the cheery, red-and-white dining room, I find myself

melting into a piece of chocolate-peanut butter cream pie, a dreamy creation cradled by a buttery, flaky crust. The menu boasts that this is the "home of the ugly crust pies," and I cannot imagine why. I ask for the backstory, and my waiter tells me a tale of an overworked baker and a helpful friend who offered to help with the café's pie load, but couldn't make a pretty crust. That was a long time ago, but the story has stuck around. After checking out the cool Route 66 souvenirs in the café's store, I head out again.

Griddle-cooked burgers and deep-dish pies star at the MidPoint Cafe in Adrian, which inspired Flo's V8 Café in the Disney/Pixar film *Cars*.

Driving the remaining 23 miles to the New Mexico state line, the landscape appears flatter than ever, then suddenly changes into a stretch of mesas, buttes, and scrubby



swells of red dirt with small peaks sprouting cactus and mesquite. At the sign for Exit 0, Glenrio, I hop off I-40 and follow the Old Route 66 sign pointing south. After about a mile, I arrive in the ghost town of Glenrio. Cactus threatens to bury a crumbling motel; its adjacent café probably once served westward tourists elated to have passed the half-way point to California. Fragments of a sign advertise “The Last Motel in Texas,” but I can’t find the building. Abandoned truck skeletons rust in the elements.

I can’t help but consider the irony: A road that provided so much hope now sits nearly deserted in places. But then I spot a few newer cars in front of a house, with horses off to the side, and I smile. Someone is still making a living here, and people like me still visit to try to connect with the past. Perhaps we’re all searching for new beginnings and new adventures, even if it’s just an extraordinary road trip on Route 66 through Texas. **TH**

Fort Worth writer **JUNE NAYLOR** longs to return to the Golden Light in Amarillo for another burger. Photography Editor **J. GRIFFIS SMITH** always loves a good road trip.



The stretch of Route 66 that runs through Amarillo is now known as West Sixth Avenue, where you’ll find restaurants, galleries, and antiques stores.



In McLean, the Devil’s Rope and Route 66 Museum presents snapshots of local history; nearby, a restored Phillips 66 station makes a great photo backdrop.

To order a print of this photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.

TH ESSENTIALS



Route 66

IT’LL TAKE at least two full days to explore the Texas section of Route 66, and that’s an ambitious schedule. Pick up a map at the **Texas Travel Information Center** (exit 76 on the south side of I-40 in Amarillo), 806/335-1441. The **Amarillo Convention & Visitor Council** (800/692-1338; www.visitamarillotx.com) can provide details about destinations along the entire 178-mile stretch. Selected contacts follow.

Shamrock

Shamrock Chamber of Commerce, inside the restored Tower Conoco Station, 806/256-2516; www.shamrocktx.net.

McLean

Devil’s Rope and Route 66 Museum, www.barbwiremuseum.com.

Amarillo

Golden Light Cafe, 806/374-9237; www.goldenlightcafe.com.

Copper Horse Antiques, 806/373-1100.

Vega/Adrian

The **Oldham County Chamber of Commerce**, 806/267-2828; www.oldhamcofc.org.

Boot Hill (Vega), 806/267-2904; www.bothillvega.com.

MidPoint Cafe (Adrian), 806/538-6379; www.midpointroute66cafe.com.

NOW OPEN

The San Bernard River Once Again Flows to the Sea

Text by JANICE VAN DYKE WALDEN *Photographs by* KATHY ADAMS CLARK





Neotropic cormorants perch on pilings in a slough along FM 2918 in Brazoria County. On the horizon, homes line the banks of the San Bernard River.

To order a print of this photograph, call 866/967-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.

I recently witnessed something historic.

A Texas river, choked at the mouth and no longer able to reach the Gulf, was destined to die. But, a community banded together, worked tirelessly for three years, and convinced the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to save the clogged waterway by dredging a path to the sea.

Seeing the San Bernard River flow unimpeded to the Gulf of Mexico is something of a miracle. The project, completed in March 2009, holds the promise for a 21st-Century renewal of the region where Stephen F. Austin issued his first land grants in the 1820s.

While revisiting the San Bernard River in southwest Brazoria County not long ago, I found the area replete with wildlife, Texas historic sites ready for exploration, and recreational activities like birding, paddling new canoe trails, sea kayaking, boating, fishing, photography, and shelling.

Mark Hazelrigg (a retired Dow chemist who spends much of his time volunteering at the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge) and Jan Edwards (who along with her husband, Roy, helped found Friends Of the River San Bernard) enlightened me regarding the San Bernard's past, present, and future.

The San Bernard River springs out of the ground in New Ulm and flows 120 miles to the Gulf of Mexico, along the way sustaining the Post Oak Savannah and the Columbia Bottomlands, an old-growth oak forest and wetlands under the protection of the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge. When the Corps of Engineers diverted the nearby Brazos River in 1929, the sweep of silt from

its new mouth progressively choked the mouth of the less powerful San Bernard River, four miles away. By 2006, the San Bernard no longer reached the sea.

During our morning drive around the San Bernard NWR, Hazelrigg explains the importance of the Texas Midcoast Refuge Complex (a string of three preserves—Brazoria, Big Boggy, and San Bernard—that dot the central Texas coast) and the Justin Hurst Wildlife Management Area. Without these preserves, thousands of migrating birds might have insufficient habitat. Some 320 bird species travel here from the continent's northern reaches to escape cold winters; others from Central and South America and the Caribbean use the preserves as stopovers and resting places in the spring before their long flight to points as far north as Canada. This great convergence attracts up to 1,000 birders for the San Bernard NWR's annual Migration Celebration in April.

Hazelrigg shows me visitor-access points at the refuge: the trail along the three ponds at Wolfweed Wetlands; the pier, boat ramp, trail, and fishing area of Cedar Lake Creek; the auto tour around Moccasin Pond; and the trail at Cow Trap Marsh.



A white ibis enjoys the marshy areas of the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge as well as the shallow ditches and flooded fields of Brazoria County.



To order a print of this photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.



Cool cats fish the San Bernard River.

NOW OPEN





The San Bernard River springs out of the ground
in New Ulm and flows 120 miles to the Gulf of Mexico, along the way sustaining
the Post Oak Savannah and the Columbia Bottomlands, an old-growth oak forest
and wetlands under the protection of the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge.

Fog covers the lower reaches of the San Bernard River near the Gulf of Mexico.



To order a print of this photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.



Gulf Prairie Cemetery on CR 304 in Jones Creek contains volumes of early Texas history.



Read about the Battle on the Bernard tug of war at www.texashighways.com/webextra.

On this fall morning, these areas are quiet. However, during the Christmas Bird Count here on December 18, Wolfweed Wetlands alone would be packed with well over 1,000 birds.

As we leave the refuge, we pass a thick stand of oaks that protects a treasure inside: Texas' largest tree and the Texas state champion live oak, "Big Tree." Worn, yet sturdy, deep in a forested bog of palmettos, "Big Tree" grows comfortably amid hackberry, western soapberry, and other oaks. Collectively, this stand forms a unified protection against hurricanes. Standing alone, "Big Tree" would likely be gone by now.

At midday, Hazelrigg says goodbye by presenting me an ice chest full of delicious stuffed crab. To learn more about the area, I meet Jan Edwards at her home, a former shrimper's cabin overlooking the San Bernard at River's End, which she and her husband, Roy, renovated several years ago.

On this beautiful afternoon, we head up the road to the local café and marina, 2J's. As Jan and I share gumbo and fried shrimp, she tells me about the plantations that prospered along the San Bernard River in the 1820s: Ellerslie, Old Oakland, Durazno, and the Peach Point Plantation, granted by Stephen F. Austin to his sister, Emily Perry.

After lunch we view the markers of those sites near the community of Jones Creek, and note how these plantations were all just a short carriage ride from the place of worship, the Gulf Prairie Presbyterian Church (on CR 304) established by the Perry family on their Peach Point Plantation. A tombstone in the cemetery marks the spot where Stephen F. Austin was originally buried before the State of Texas moved his body in 1910 to the Texas State Cemetery in Austin. Other tombstones speak of death by cholera, malaria, and yellow fever. As Jan and I seek out additional Texas history, we concede to swarming mosquitoes and retreat to the safety of our car, and then proceed to one last stop: the Levi Jordan Plantation (on FM 521), now under restoration by the Texas Historical Commission.

We stop by the Circle Bar C fishing camp, which opened as a result of the San Bernard's new life. A steady stream of recreational fishermen has returned since the river reopened.

"Mom used to bring me here fishing as a kid," says the new owner, 35-year-old Kelly Chapman, who grew up in nearby Wharton.

Chapman pulls out a black-and-white photo of a pretty, young girl fishing on the river. "That's my Mom when she used to fish here," he says. Then he reveals a snapshot of her taken more recently, when she snagged the biggest fish she'd ever caught from the dock here, a 22-inch redfish. In the photograph, she's beaming.

FACING PAGE: A 60-foot statue of Stephen F. Austin, "The Father of Texas," by sculptor David Adickes, stands near the intersection of Texas 288 and Texas 35 outside of Angleton in Brazoria County.



Standing beside the bait tanks full of fish, Chapman says that most weekends he sells out of everything—fresh table shrimp, live bait, frozen shrimp, and crab.

With Willie Nelson playing on the sound system in the background, Chapman talks about further renovations and how the locals next door have returned and adopted him as family. He also shares his concerns: Will the river stay open? In the last few weeks the sands had been shifting in the stabilization process; at times the new mouth was six feet deep, then only 18 inches deep.

I look beyond us toward the river, and this evening, the San Bernard flows swiftly.

As we leave the refuge, we pass a thick stand of oaks that protects a treasure inside: Texas' largest tree and the Texas state champion live oak, "Big Tree."

Before the light fades, I call it a day, say goodbye to my friends at River's End, and drive back to Houston. On Texas 288, I pass the larger-than-life statue of Stephen F. Austin created by Houston sculptor David Adickes. Austin stands erect, facing the setting sun. I think about the new life coming to the San Bernard River, and the life that's always been there, and remember the quote by Leonardo da Vinci that Jan Edwards shared: "When you put your hand in a flowing stream, you touch the last that has gone before and the first of what is still to come." **TH**

JANICE VAN DYKE WALDEN lives in Houston and enjoys exploring the Texas coast with her family, especially in winter. **KATHY ADAMS CLARK** photographs nature, teaches photography, and leads international photo tours from her base in The Woodlands. One of her favorite places to shoot is the Columbia Bottomlands along the San Bernard River.

TH ESSENTIALS

San Bernard River

THE MOUTH of the San Bernard River and the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge are south of Houston, near Brazoria and Lake Jackson. Sargent, Bay City, and Matagorda are to the west. Galveston is up the coast to the northeast.



Events

Breakfast on the Bernard. The first Saturday of each month, members of Friends Of the River San Bernard gather for breakfast from 8-10 at Dido's Restaurant, 2922 CR 519, in Brazoria. Open to the public; www.sanbernardriver.com/breakfast/default.aspx.

Battle On the Bernard. West of the Brazos Communities' tug of war event, Mar. 27, 2010, noon-6 p.m., FM 2611 bridge at Churchill; www.battleonthebernard.com.

Migration Celebration, at San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge, CR 306, Apr. 16-18, 2010; www.migrationcelebration.org.

Christmas Boat Parade, presented by Friends Of the River San Bernard, Dec. 11, 2010, 6 p.m.-8 p.m. Parade starts at the FM 521 bridge and ends at Las Playas; www.sanbernardriver.com/parades/Christmas/default.aspx.

Attractions

Circle Bar C Bait Camp, 1601 CR 441D, off of FM 2918, River's End; 832/344-7302.

Gulf Prairie Presbyterian Church & Cemetery, 231 Gulf Prairie Rd. (CR 304), Jones Creek; 979/233-2464; www.gulf-prairie.org/index.htm.

Levi Jordan Plantation State Historic Site, 7234 FM 521, Brazoria; 979/798-2202; www.visitlevijordanplantation.com.

Recreational Fishing Boat Launch, end of FM 2918, River's End. Boat-launching ramps also at the FM 2611 and FM 521 bridges.

San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge, 6801 CR 306, Brazoria; 979/964-3639; www.refugefriends.org/history-SBNWR.htm.

Restaurants

2J's Café and Marina, 5100 CR 469, Brazoria, 979/964-3233; www.2jscafe.com. Steaks, seafood, grilled and fried chicken, burgers, sandwiches, salads, and soup.

Dido's, 2922 CR 519, Brazoria, 979/964-3167; www.didosrestaurant.com. Seafood, steaks, burgers, onion rings, salads, and desserts.

Sting Rae's, Texas 457 at the GIWW swing bridge, Sargent, 979/323-0611. Open Thu-Sun. Seafood and burgers.

New Braunfels | Unwind Time



NATURAL WONDERS ENHANCE OLD-WORLD CHARM IN A SMALL-TOWN SETTING



Text by **MELISSA GASKILL**

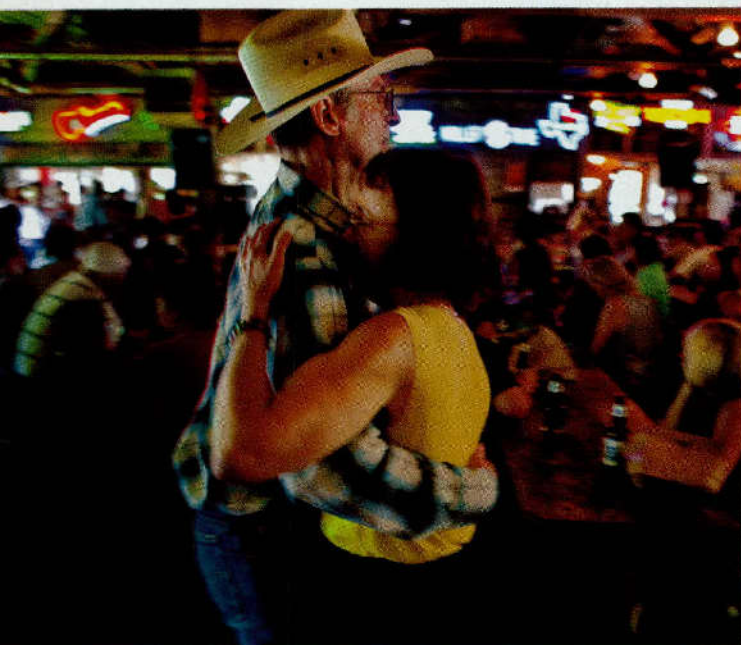
Photographs by **WILL VAN OVERBEEK**

The clear, green Comal River rushes from the ground, flows two-and-a-half miles, and empties into the Guadalupe River, without ever leaving the city limits of New Braunfels. While many people consider the town synonymous with water recreation, the bustling burg also offers a variety of high-and-dry attractions that make it hard to beat as a weekend getaway.

On a recent visit, my husband, Corey, and I, along with our daughters, Holley and Bridget, stayed at Prince Solms Inn, a comfortable bed-and-breakfast named for New Braunfels' founder, German Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels (more on him later). Upon arrival, we freshened up in our rooms and then relaxed for a few minutes in the cozy parlor, which left us ready for our first order of business—dinner.

Laid-back fun in New Braunfels starts with a visit to the 152-year-old Henne Hardware, which offers housewares, cast-iron pots, and galvanized washtubs, as well as "toobs" for floating area rivers.

A short walk from the inn, Myron's Prime Steakhouse occupies the former Palace Movie Theater, where a soaring ceiling testifies to the restaurant's history. White tablecloths and plush, upholstered booths separated by fluted German glass complement an impressive wine list and a selection of fine steaks and seafood. We opted for steaks, which left us more than satisfied. Still, I couldn't resist a slice of the restaurant's signature chocolate cake topped with a locally made Jack Daniels-infused vanilla ice cream—a heavenly combination.



Saturday morning kicked off with a leisurely breakfast on the Prince Solms patio. The inn includes nine rooms in the main building, and three in an historic feed store. The latter rooms open directly onto the patio and feature rustic, country decor, including pine floors, Mexican-made wooden furniture, and Western saddles and tack. The 1852 Klein Haus, a self-contained guest cottage, includes a front porch and enclosed back patio.

Fueled on scrambled eggs, sausage, and fluffy biscuits, we walked a few blocks to Henne Hardware, which dates to 1857. Strolling among the rolling ladders and antique display cases, with wood floors squeaking beneath my feet, I felt a strange urge to buy lantern oil or a pound of nails. A sign out front proclaiming a sale on "toobs" (Hill Country-speak for the inner tubes used

to float the region's rivers) pulled me back to the present.

Down the block from the hardware store, the former International & Great Northern, Missouri Pacific and Union Pacific Depot houses the New Braunfels Railroad Museum. Restored in 1986 by the local Historic Modelers and Railroad Society, the depot displays lanterns, baggage carts, timetables, and photos of the golden age of railroading, many of them related to this area, as well as two operating model trains. A restored 1942 locomotive and 1950 caboose also occupy the grounds. They'll soon be joined by two other railcars: a 60-foot boxcar, which will house additional exhibits, and a 1922 Pullman lounge-turned-dining car, which will be rented out for special occasions.

Three blocks south of the Railroad Museum, on a hill overlooking New Braunfels, we found The Sophienburg Museum & Archives. Prince Carl named the site *Sophienburg* (Sophie's castle) in 1845, intending to build a grand home here for his fiancée, Lady Sophia, Princess of Salm-Salm. Legend says that once Sophie found out how primitive the conditions were in Texas, she refused to leave Germany and Prince Carl soon returned to her. However, the museum's director, Linda Dietert, says the romantic story doesn't take into account that Prince Carl was relieved of his duties as general commissioner of the Adelsverein (a society of German noblemen that promoted emigration to Texas) before his departure. At any rate, he later married Sophie and never returned to Texas.

Upon entering the museum, visitors walk through a room designed to replicate the steerage area of a ship that brought German settlers to Texas in 1844. The tour includes an astonishing number of original artifacts, such as trunks, tools, dishes, and even some of Prince Carl's personal belongings—among them his sword and a walnut writing desk. The gift shop remains in a perpetual state of Christmas, with more ornaments than Grandma's attic, including hand-painted glass from Germany. A new exhibit inspired by the scrapbook of a local traveler, *European Travel in the 1930s*, starts this month and runs through August.

Between the two museums, a 1920s building now houses the Huisache Grill. Billed as "the contemporary version of a 1940s road house," the restaurant serves everything from fried oysters and chicken-tortilla soup to portobello mushroom sandwiches and sirloin steaks. Everything on the extensive menu sounded delicious, so we had a hard time deciding what to order. We settled on a salad sampler, hot-and-crunchy trout, and blackened salmon, with Mexican-chocolate mousse for dessert. The restaurant's wine list features selections from around

LEFT: Joe and Merle Albrecht of Kerrville enjoy the music at Gruene Hall, the oldest continually running dance hall in Texas. RIGHT: Tubers on the Comal River, as seen from the San Antonio Street Bridge.



See a preview of The Sophienburg's upcoming exhibit *European Travel in the 1930s* at www.texashighways.com/webextra.



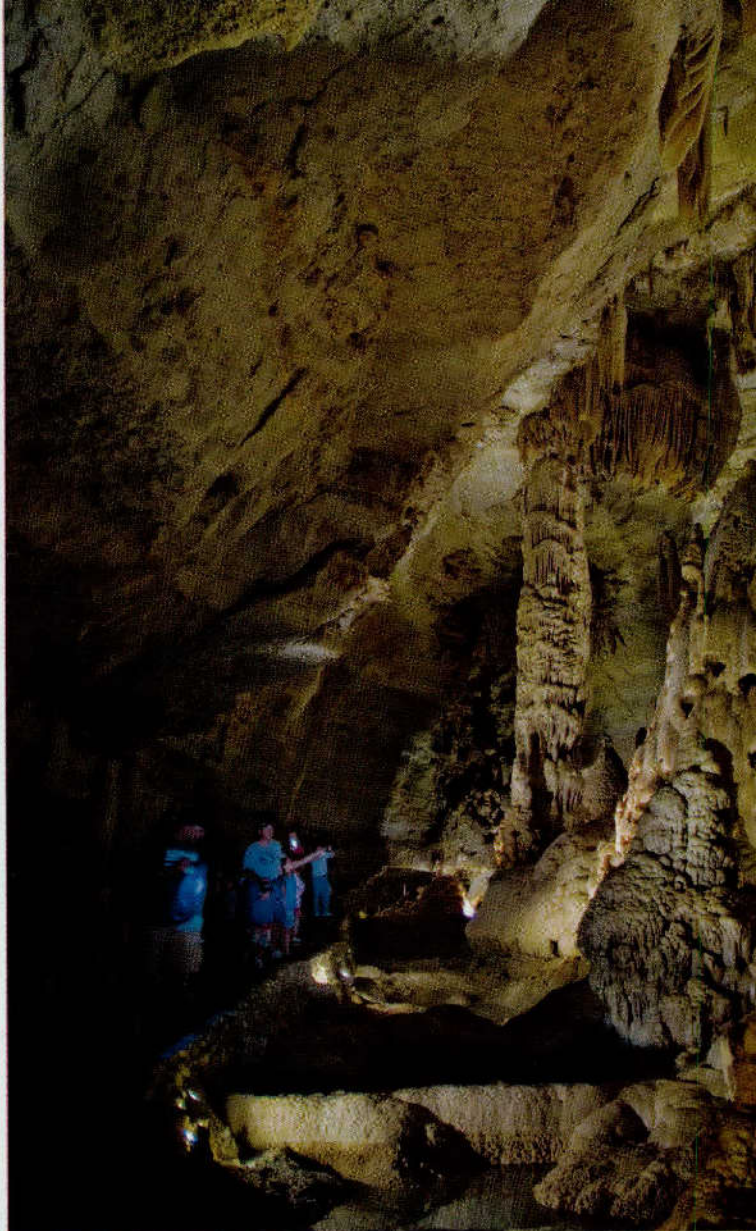
the world—including some from Germany, of course. I attribute the hefty wine lists and beyond-ordinary beer selections at many area establishments to New Braunfels' German heritage.

Next, we drove a few miles west on Texas 46 to visit Dry Comal Creek Winery, which grows Black Spanish grapes and butterfly-attracting flowers on five acres of vineyards and gardens. For an \$8 tasting, the winery pours nine wines, from dry whites to demi-sweets and dry reds. A \$13 tasting adds four reserve wines, and for another \$2, we braved a Shootin' Blanc, or a dash of Sauvignon Blanc with a jalapeño in a frozen shot glass. Only in Texas.

With 16-year-old Bridget now serving as designated driver, we headed a bit farther out on Texas 46 to FM 3009 and the Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch. Here, visitors may drive the four-mile loop as many times as they like for a close look at some 40 species of native and exotic animals, including gemsbok antelope, elk, wildebeests, and zebras. The free bag of animal feed that comes with admission equals instant popularity with most of these residents—but if you can, visit early in the day when the animals are still hungry.

Natural Bridge Caverns next door offers guided tours every half-hour. The U.S. natural landmark's cavernous, underground rooms feature stunning formations created by running and dripping water. That moisture and abundant stairs and slopes—the three-quarter-mile tour reaches a depth of 180 feet—dictate walking shoes with good traction.

In the 1870s, H.D. Gruene, son of early settlers in the area, Ernst and Antoinette Gruene, opened a mercantile store, cotton gin, and a gathering place, Gruene Hall, on the banks of the Guadalupe



LEFT: The 1893 building that houses Henne Hardware retains its original wood floors and wall-mounted display cases. ABOVE: West of town, Natural Bridge Caverns boasts spectacular limestone formations.

River just northeast of New Braunfels. Pat Molak bought the hall in 1975, and later, with friend Mary Jane Nalley, added a collection of area buildings and

what remained of Gruene's cotton gin. That became The Gristmill River Restaurant, a grouping of 10 distinctive dining areas, including the one where we landed that evening, the River Room. This impressive maze of decks hanging off the hillside at treetop level above the river no doubt keeps the wait staff in great shape. Enjoying an onion-ring appetizer and a glass of cold sangria, with music drifting from the patio out front and a breeze rising from the flowing water, I couldn't have been happier.

Now listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Gruene lures nearly a million visitors from around the world to dine, shop, and catch live music at Gruene Hall. There, people pack the wide room, linger around a couple of pool tables, and relax at picnic tables or play horseshoes outside. We enjoyed first-rate people-watching and great music, but on our visit, only a handful of people danced, perhaps because it was so crowded.



New Braunfels

FOR INFORMATION on lodging, restaurants, events, and other attractions, call the **Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce** at 800/572-2626; nbjumpin.com. Contact information for the sites in the story follows.

Prince Solms Inn, 295 E. San Antonio St., 830/625-9169; www.princesolmsinn.com.

Myron's Prime Steakhouse, 136 N. Castell Ave., 830/624-1024; www.myronsprimesteakhouse.com.

Henne Hardware, 246 W. San Antonio St., 830/606-6707.

New Braunfels Railroad Museum, 302 W. San Antonio St., 830/627-2447; www.newbraunfelsrailroadmuseum.org.

The Sophienburg Museum & Archives, 401 W. Coll St., 830/629-1572; www.sophienburg.com.

Huisache Grill, 303 W. San Antonio St., 830/620-9001; www.huisache.com.

Dry Comal Creek Vineyards & Winery, 1741 Herbelin Rd., 830/885-4121; www.drycomal.creek.com.

Nature Bridge Wildlife Ranch, on Natural Bridge Caverns Rd. (FM 3009), off Interstate 35, 830/438-7400; www.wildliferanchtexas.com.

Natural Bridge Caverns, on Natural Bridge Caverns Rd. (FM 3009) off Interstate 35, 210/651-6101; www.naturalbridgecaverns.com.

Gristmill River Restaurant & Bar, 1287 Gruene Rd., 830/625-0684; www.gristmillrestaurant.com.

Gruene Hall, 1281 Gruene Rd., 830/606-1281; www.gruenehall.com.

Naegelin's Bakery, 129 S. Seguin Ave., 830/625-5722; www.naegelins.com.

Landa Falls, 178 Landa Park Dr., 830/627-1440; www.landafalls.com.

Conservation Plaza, 1300 Church Hill Dr., 830/629-2943; www.nbconservation.org.

On Sunday morning, we stopped just around the corner from the inn at Naegelin's Bakery for cinnamon rolls that stretched six inches across. We took these to nearby Landa Park, whose 51 acres along the Comal just north of downtown include an arboretum and spring-fed pool. Adjacent city parks feature a nature trail and a tube chute. The pool and tube chute open only in the summer, but brave souls with their own "toobs" can float the river anytime. Find public access at Hinman Island, between the Landa Park Golf Course and the river. A few tube-rental outfitters open year round, and some offer wetsuits. Downstream from the park, Landa Falls rents tubes and provides river access and shuttle service during the summer. This starting location offers the longest float on the Comal, and a relatively tame and family-friendly one.

After our picnic, we drove east of town on Loop 337 to Conservation Plaza, a three-and-one-half-acre site that includes a 19th-Century log cabin, general store, saloon, music studio, furniture shop, ranch home, and school, arranged like a German village. Our guide that day, the president of the New Braunfels Conservation Society, Barron Schlameus, pointed out the Baetge House, which was built in 1852 by Carl Friedrich Baetge, a German civil engineer who constructed railroads for a Russian czar, married a member

of the Russian royalty, and moved her to the Texas Hill Country. Schlameus helped rescue and move the house in 1975 from its original location 26 miles northwest of town. The structure retains a wood-plank floor, original doors, and handmade period furniture.

We ran out of time for many other New Braunfels attractions: Antiques shops. German food. The Museum of Texas Handmade Furniture and the Fire Museum. Schlitterbahn Waterpark. Texas Ski Ranch. Tubing on the Guadalupe. If Prince Carl showed up today, there's no way he'd ever leave, Sophie or no Sophie. **TH**

Long a fan of Schlitterbahn and "toobing," writer MELISSA GASKILL enjoyed getting to know New Braunfels' many other attributes. Photographer WILL VAN OVERBEEK loves New Braunfels' San Antonio Street. He says, "It's really fun, with Henne Hardware, Naegelin's Bakery, and the plaza all nearby."





PAGEANT OF THE
CHARRO

CHARREADA CELEBRATES HACIENDA RANCHING TRADITIONS
AND SUSTAINS THE ROOTS OF THE MODERN RODEO.

Text and photographs by JULIA ROBINSON

PAGEANT OF THE CHARRO



IT'S A CLEAR SPRING DAY AT THE CHARRO Ranch in San Antonio. Warmth radiates from the sun-drenched walls of the cream-colored arena. The church bells of Mission San José, less than a mile away, ring out over the 30 spectators taking their seats in the stands. Children play tag along the bleachers, which are mostly empty this early in the season. The smell of *carne asada* wafts on the breeze through oak and pecan trees. Tourists drive past the wrought-iron gates on their journey down the historic Mission Trail. Their efforts to experience the Hispanic heritage of Texas might be better served if they turned in to watch the *charreada*.

Dating to the 16th Century, *charreada* began as a celebration, a fiesta, that marked the close of a major cattle roundup. Teams of *charros*, cowboys from sprawling ranches, called *haciendas*, competed against one another in a series of events, called *suertes*, modeled on the equestrian competitions of the Spanish conquistadors and everyday ranch work.

"The charro is, in a certain way, the father of the cowboy," says Dr. Raul Gaona, himself a charro and historian on the subject. To this day, cowboys

PREVIOUS SPREAD: As mariachis serenade the crowd with *Marcha de Zacatecas*, teams of *charros* open the *charreada* by riding into the arena's circular *rueda*. Each team forms its own line.
ABOVE: Victoriano Flores Sr. adjusts his gloves before the *Jineteo de Toro*.





In the charreada, unlike today's western rodeo, bull riders stay on as long as possible, not just for 8 seconds.



ABOVE: In the final event, called *la escaramuza* (or skirmish) only women compete, wearing bright, flowing dresses and executing precise maneuvers on horseback at full speed. RIGHT: Colorful traditional outfits add drama to the charreada performances.

hold rodeos (the Spanish word for “roundup”), wear chaps (an abbreviation for the leather *chaparreras* worn by the charros to protect their legs from small shrubs called *chaparros*), and will dally rope around the saddle horn to keep a steer in control (from the Spanish *dar la vuelta* or “give it a turn”).

“The difference is that the cowboy kept evolving,” says Gaona. By adopting modern clothing, synthetic ropes, and squeeze chutes, the cowboy made practical changes in tools and methods. “Some of the things the charros still do may look awkward or inefficient,” Gaona continues, “but our interest is in preserving traditions. Charreada has given me an identity that makes me feel complete,” he says.

For Gaona and the hundreds of thousands of charros across the United States and Mexico, the *suertes*, the suit, and sombrero provide a tangible link to the lives of their fathers and grandfathers.

After the dissolution of the haciendas during Mexico’s 1910 Revolution, family

PAGEANT OF THE CHARRO



the *Marcha de Zacatecas*, a patriotic march, while each team rides in its own line stretching from the outer wall of the arena toward the center. As the riders step around the ring, their sombreros move in unison and create an image like the spokes of a turning wheel.

The month of March marks the beginning of a new year of charreada competition in Central Texas. Every weekend, spring through fall, teams of charros gather at backyard arenas, called *lienzos*. The keyhole-shaped lienzo is 110 yards long with competition in two areas, a 66-yard-long panhandle and the round *rueda*, 44 yards in diameter. The nine *suertes* test horsemanship and roping skills. Just as in the old days of the hacienda, there are no cash prizes, just the respect of fellow competitors. "Keep the money, keep the belt buckle, we just want the bragging rights," says Gonzalez.

These days, more than 200 official teams compete in the United States, with more than 30 across Texas in Austin, El Paso, Dallas, Houston, Del Rio, and San Antonio. Teams take turns hosting the charreada, sharing the expense of leasing livestock, or hiring a band for a dance, or *baile*, in the arena after the charreada is over.

From the opening parade, the charreada moves at a stately pace. Among the *suertes*, fans of American rodeo will recognize bronc and bull riding, but the charreada distinguishes itself with horse reining, intricate rope work, and an emphasis on style over speed.

The *cala de caballo*, or "horse reining," begins each competition. A charro at full speed brings his horse to a sliding

groups of charros formed as performers in the charreada. As the 20th Century progressed, ranch life slowly changed with the times, but the tradition of the charreada continued.

"It wasn't a sport when my dad was doing it, it was a way of life," says Juan Gonzalez, current President of the San Antonio Charro Association. The group, founded in 1947, is the oldest charro association north of the Río Grande. "Charreada is one of the biggest romances of my life," says Gonzalez.

Today, as I gaze into the arena at the Charro Ranch, it's easy to feel transported to a much earlier time. Two dozen regal horsemen, dressed in the charro finery of the 19th Century, ride side by side into the circular part of the arena, called the *rueda*, for the opening parade. Mariachis sound





stop in the rueda then executes tight spins and half turns. In all the charreada events, charros earn higher scores for their endurance as well as for their style. Where North American rodeo cowboys hope to hang on for an eight-second ride, a charro rides a bull or bronc until it stops bucking. Sometimes the rides evoke gasps of amazement from spectators watching the charro romp for several laps around the arena on the back of a kicking animal. Other times, when the animal is not in the bucking mood, the ride ends quickly. It's the luck of the draw, but a better ride will earn more points.

In the *manganas*, or forefooting, the charro proves his skill with the *reata*, or lasso. Teammates chase the bronc while the charro displays his best flourishes for the judges, closing

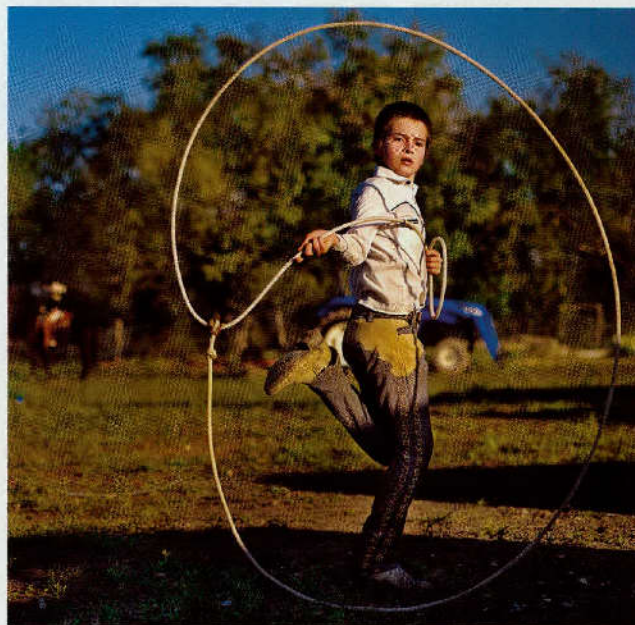
his performance with an attempt to lasso the horse by the front legs as it races past.

In the final event, *paso de la muerte*, or pass of death, a charro riding bareback leaps from his horse onto a wild mare and rides her to a stop. If he falls, the charro risks being trampled by the mare or his teammates racing behind.

The Mexican Federation for Charrería officially adopted the *escaramuza*, or skirmish, in the early 1990s as an optional 10th event. This is the only event for women in the charreada tradition. Riders in bright, flowing dresses, called *adelitas*, perform intricate drill patterns at high speeds. In a

Sometimes the charreada closes with a *baile*, or dance, that brings participants of all ages into the arena.

PAGEANT OF THE CHARRO



Success in charreada competition demands long hours of practice. Charros start early to learn the generations-old skills they need.

blur of color, they burst from the center of the arena in all directions like a blooming flower, and execute turns on a dime, inches from one another.

For keen-eyed spectators, a charreada proves more fun with some knowledge for the subtleties of scoring. In the *cala*, for example, a charro earns points for turning his horse more than three times, but loses points if the horse opens his mouth during the reining. In a bull ride, the charro forfeits points if he loses his sombrero or doesn't land on his feet.

A newcomer to charreada would do well to sit next to a charro in the crowd.

Most spectators at the Charro Ranch love the tradition and will gladly explain anything about the performances. "We're all amateurs," says Juan Gonzalez, "but there's a passion behind what we do." During the week, these men are doctors and lawyers, butchers and carpenters, but on Sunday they each become the charro.

As the afternoon turns to dusk in San Antonio, a young charro is showered with boots and hats thrown from the stands into the dusty *rueda*. His excellent performance in the *lienzo* has earned him this special honor. He returns them one by one to their owners, a personal exchange between the charro and his admirers. His youth makes Gaona and Gonzalez hopeful that the charreada tradition will carry on, one Sunday at a time, one generation at a time. **TH**

Photojournalist JULIA ROBINSON's yearlong affair with charreada began with a bright red lienzo, curiosity, and a U-turn on a back country road.

➤ TH ESSENTIALS

Charreada in Texas

CHECK SCHEDULES of charreada, get directions to events in the San Antonio area, and find information about the history of charreada at the following Web links—www.sacharros.org and www.sacharro.com.

The **San Antonio Charro Ranch** can be reached at 210/532-0693.

Lienzos in Texas include: **San Antonio Charro Ranch/Los Caparales**, 6126 Padre Dr., San Antonio; **El Bajio**, 13398 Trawalter Ln., Von Ormy; **La Forteleza**, 13840 Watson, Von Ormy; **Rancho Los Compadres**, 175 South Loop 1604, San Antonio; **Rancho Alegre**, 10800 Mour-sound Rd., San Antonio; **Rodeo Los Corrales**, 7261 Texas 27, Comfort; **Tres Potrillos**, 17021 FM 1937, San Antonio.



Made -in- Texas

**A behind-the-scenes peek
at Lone Star creations, from boots to bucks.**

Text by TH STAFF

"Just how do they do that?" we asked. And that question was about everything from Mary Kay cosmetics in Addison to Nokona baseball gloves up north in, you guessed it, Nocona. (The "k" is because the company couldn't corner the use of the town's name.) So we called all around the state, from El Paso on the western tip (where we learned a little bit about making boots; see text next page) to Picklesmith in Taft (they periodically have tours) to find out just what kind of stuff gets canned, frozen, mixed, sewn, printed, or glued together in the Lone Star State.

So if you have a few extra hours during spring break, or if you're just insatiably curious about how Blue Bell ice cream gets made (another variety of insatiety applies here), we've got a few suggestions.

And don't ask about rolling up a spare sheet of hundred-dollar bills at the Federal money factory in Fort Worth. We already checked, and the folks there somehow failed to see the humor. —C.L.



Note: *Company operating hours vary, and tour times and fees can change, so we recommend calling ahead.*

LEFT: *Rocketbuster Boots, El Paso.* Taylor Hulsey and Gabe Grote each spend up to four hours detailing a pair of boots.
ABOVE: *Dr Pepper Bottling Company, Dublin.* Guides will bust the prune-juice myth: The recipe has never included it.



Rocketbuster Boots and CABOOTS, El Paso

El Paso is a bootmaking mecca. This westernmost Texas city is home to major factories for Tony Lama and Lucchese—both big names with longtime reputations, and both well-known for a quality product worn by millions. These two large factories thrive on mass production and features like computer-controlled stitching. Those processes keep prices low, but they're nothing like the individual artisan finessing one pair at a time.

Two of El Paso's custom boot-making operations—CABOOTS and Rocketbuster—encourage tours. Both are relatively small shops that house only a handful of skilled craftsmen. And both Rocketbuster and CABOOTS stress that it's important to call a couple of days ahead for an appointment to take a tour.

Rocketbuster Boots' reputation rides on almost shockingly colorful designs and surprising subjects—from Santa Claus to the Statue of Liberty to the Virgin of Guadalupe, as well as cartoon characters and tattoo-inspired, almost psychedelic patterns. You'll see for yourself with just a step inside the front

door of the near-downtown Union Plaza warehouse space that is home to Rocketbuster.

Of course you expect to pay more for a pair of made-to-order boots, and Rocketbuster staff members say you'll start around \$650 and head north well into four figures as your design becomes more complex and your leather selections get more exotic.

However, it doesn't cost anything to look. But be forewarned, temptation lies within this building. Once you're inside, the bright, kaleidoscopic visual impact of the colorful boots, accessories, and retro artifacts blends with the pungent, smoky aroma of leather and the audio track of the craftsmen tapping, twisting, and hammering. And, it won't take too much time watching the new boots take shape before you'll develop a new definition of wearable art. And want a pair for yourself. —C.L.

Rocketbuster Boots is at 115 South Anthony in El Paso. Free tours (call ahead); 915/541-1300; www.rocketbuster.com. **CABOOTS** (Champion Attitude Boots) is at 2100 Wyoming in El Paso. Free tours (call ahead); 915/544-1855; www.caboos.com.

Preview the bootmaking process with **Tony Lama's** online factory tour video at www.tonylama.com/en/boottalk.html.

Aermotor Windmill Company, San Angelo

A nondescript metal building on the outskirts of San Angelo houses one of the country's oldest manufacturers—Aermotor Windmill Company. Started in 1888 in Chicago, the factory shows no signs of slowing down—demand for “the windmill that won the West” is strong, both in the United States and other countries.

General Manager Kevin Stout says that Aermotor's 20 employees take pride in the company's long history and the fact that it produces the only windmill made entirely in the U.S. His own pride shows as he takes visitors on one of the half-hour tours offered most weekdays. He starts by explaining that each wheel, whether it's six feet or 16 feet wide, has 18 sails, as well as a tailbone with the signature red “Aermotor” stamp, just as they always have. Pointing out a drill press that is thought to have come from the original factory in Chicago, he says, “It's still used today. One of the neat things about these old machines is that if a part breaks, we can build a replacement for it right here in our shop.”

Aermotor Windmill Company, San Angelo. Kellen Bowhay prepares a windmill for shipment. Aermotor produces the only entirely American-made windmill.

Asked if urban pioneers have begun buying windmills for energy applications, Stout says not so much. “We've been approached by only a handful of people wanting to go green,” he says. “Most of our customers just want to fill a stock tank or pond, or perhaps re-create a sound they remember fondly from their past—the distinctive creak of a windmill as it turns in the wind.” —*N.M.*

Aermotor Windmill Company is at 4276 Dan Hanks Ln. in San Angelo. Free tours (call ahead); 800/854-1656; www.aermotorwindmill.com.

Dublin Dr Pepper Bottling Company, Dublin

Tour-goers at Dublin's Dr Pepper Bottling Company (the world's oldest) begin their indoctrination by imbibing from frosty bottles of the original-recipe drink—made with Imperial Pure Cane Sugar (unlike



© E. DAN KLEPPER

the corn-syrup-sweetened concoction sold in grocery stores). An effervescent guide leads the group through the 1,400-square-foot plant, which produces up to 300 cases of Dr Pepper monthly, along with other drinks like Big Red, NuGrape, and XXX Root Beer. See the vintage bottle washer (made in 1965, it's the “newest” machine in the plant), and the contraptions that inject first syrup and then chilled carbonated water into each bottle. And try your hand at quality control by determining the perfect caramel color and appropriate fill lines among a sampling of bottles.

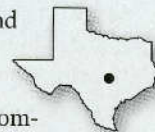
In the adjacent history room, your guide covers Pepper's past, from the drink's creation in Waco in 1885 and its bottling in Dublin that same year, to exposure at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, and later, promotional campaigns including Pretty Peggy Pepper and the therapeutic oomph of imbibing at 10, 2, and 4 o'clock every day. Peruse the memorabilia in the next room, which brims with such Pepper artifacts as vintage posters, clocks, thermometers, and a timeline featuring a sample bottle from each decade of Dr Pepper's existence.

Next door, Old Doc's Soda Shop sells Dr Pepper floats, sundaes, shakes, and Frosty Peppers, as well as several kinds of sandwiches. You'll find the Pepper product line here, too: T-shirts, caps, mugs, and jewelry, along with Dr Pepper cake mix, sauces, marinades, and syrup (for floats, Frostys, and pancakes). —*J.L.*

The **Dublin Dr Pepper Bottling Company** and Old Doc's Soda Shop are at 105 E. Elm in Dublin. For tour times and fees, call 888/398-1024; www.dublindrpepper.com. Note: The 40-minute tours take place several times a day, but you can see the bottling process only once a month; call ahead for bottling dates.

Collings Guitars, Austin

Musicians such as Lyle Lovett and Pete Townshend applaud Austin-made Collings guitars for their musical clarity, beauty, and craftsmanship. Each



of the company's handmade guitars, mandolins, and ukuleles takes about six months to make (and costs thousands of dollars), and you'll see why when you take a free tour of the 22,000-square-foot shop.

My tour group—roughly divided between wide-eyed musicians ogling guitars and wide-eyed woodworkers ogling tools—enjoyed an intimate look at the facility's many processing areas, including the acclimating room



STAN WILLIAMS

Collings Guitars, Austin. Bill Bridges performs the final make-ready on a Crimson 15g Collings electric guitar.

RANDALL MAXWELL



Blue Bell Creameries, Brenham. Who needs a spoon? One of Blue Bell's biggest fans slurps his favorite of the company's 24 flavors.

machine to carve out a guitar body), the bracing and neck areas (where we could see the instruments start to take shape), and the finishing and buffing areas (where employees create luminous sunbursts and other specialized patterns).

As we proceeded from area to area, our guide pointed out founder Bill Collings' many guitar-making innovations—such as the contraption that uses heat and moisture to bend wood for the body shapes—and showed us bins of “mistakes,” where tiny flaws destined certain parts for the “boneyard.”

Such is the attention to artistry here that it's a stretch to call the place a factory. “What did you make before you made guitars?” I asked one luthier. “Houses,” he replied with a smile. “And music.” —L.M.

Collings Guitars is at 11210 W. US 290 in Austin. Tours (free) take place on selected Fridays at 3:30. Call 512/288-7776; www.collingsguitars.com.

Blue Bell Creameries, Brenham

“Brenham—Ice Cream Capital of Texas,” proclaims the giant sign at the corner of US 290 and FM 577, which becomes Blue Bell Road, home to Blue Bell Creameries. The tour begins in a small projection room with a brief, humorous video depicting the history of Blue Bell, founded in 1907 as the Brenham Creamery Company. Afterward, a guide leads visitors upstairs to watch cream transform into frozen confections. Tour-goers peer through large, glass windows that overlook the various processing areas. Stainless steel vats and chutes crank out the chilly treats into paper tubs, which are loaded into boxes headed for the freezer.

Our guide mentions that less than half of Blue Bell's 18 year-round and 24 rotating flavors are produced on a given day. Today,

(where floor-to-ceiling stacks of wood reach optimal moisture content), the mill room (where we watched a former aerospace engineer direct a digital cutting

ice cream. Luckily, an ice-cream parlor awaits downstairs at the end of the tour. Visitors receive a serving from their choice of 24 flavors, including the latest creations. An extensive gift shop adjoining the parlor tempts with everything Blue Bell, even temporary tattoos and windbreakers. —J.W.

Blue Bell Creameries is at 1101 S. Blue Bell Rd. in Brenham. For tour times and fees, call 800/327-8135; www.bluebell.com.

Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Fort Worth

Quick, pull a bill out of your wallet and look to the right of the portrait. If the bill is marked “FW,” it was printed at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Fort Worth, where more than half of all U.S. paper currency originates. (The rest is printed in Washington, D.C.). You can see some of it roll off the presses on a free tour of the facility.

After a thorough security screening, I joined a tour group for a look—via an elevated, half-mile catwalk—at one of the United States' most fascinating print shops. Below us, machines larger than semitrucks rolled out currency notes while pallets of uncut bills waited to dry for the next step in the production process. Behind green curtains, printers tinkered with the new \$100-bill, which will debut later this year. As we observed employees literally make money, our guide educated us about the history of U.S. currency. You can fold a piece of paper currency 4,000 times, for example, before it will tear.

After the 45-minute tour, spend as much time as you wish in the visitor center, which presents dozens of museum-quality exhibits about the history and artistry of paper currency, including a turn-of-the-20th-Century spider

Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Fort Worth. The atrium area features two floors of interactive exhibits and displays. This eye-popping box holds a million dollars' worth of five-dollar bills.



For details on tours of Picklesmith Inc. food manufacturer in Taft, go to www.texashighways.com/webextra.





press and an engraver's bench. —L.M.

The **Bureau of Engraving and Printing** is at 9000 Blue Mound Rd. in Fort Worth. Free tours; call 866/865-1194; www.moneyfactory.gov.

Breedlove Foods Inc., Lubbock

A tour of Breedlove Foods in Lubbock—the first and only food-dehydration plant dedicated to feeding the hungry—begins with a stop at a world map mounted on a wall and dotted with pushpins. Established in the early 1990s, Breedlove distributes 200 million servings of food annually to more than 80 countries; the map gives visitors a tangible reference for the global effort that originates in this 100,000-square-foot factory on the South Plains. Think famine sufferers in Kenya, tsunami survivors in Thailand, Katrina evacuees in Arkansas, earthquake survivors in Haiti.

Plant Manager Jim Brown then takes the group down a long hall to the entrance of the processing area, where



J. GRIFFIS SMITH

Breedlove Foods Inc., Lubbock. Spuds lumber along the line. The company's dehydrated soup mix and other products feed hungry people worldwide.

he gives each visitor a hairnet and dons one himself. "When it comes to sanitation, we're no different than any other food handler," says [continued on page 72]

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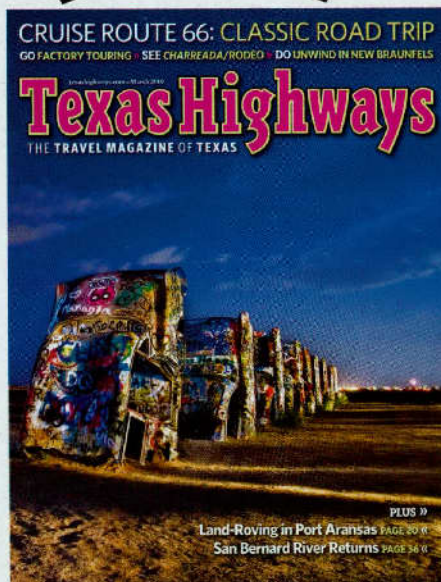
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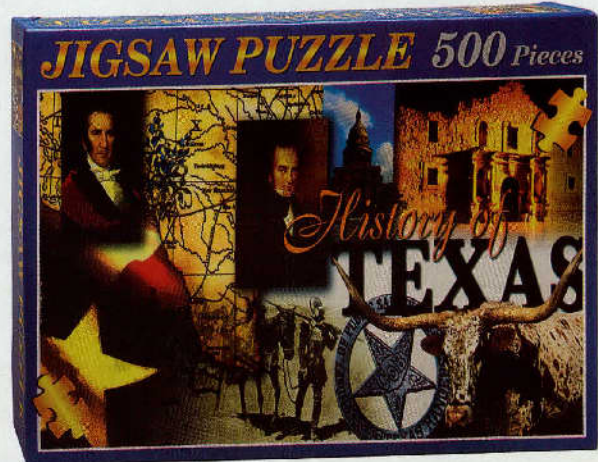
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San Bernard River Returns PAGE 36 !!

AOCTHM

Reflections on

Texas HISTORY



Battlefield Texas: Republic of Texas Map Signed Print

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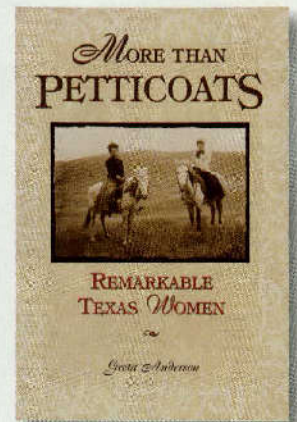
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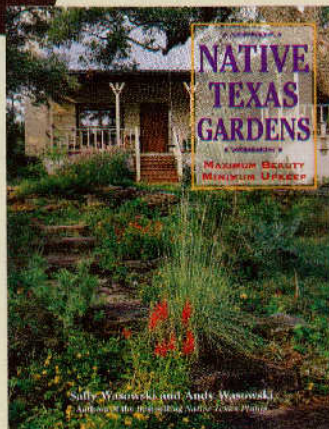
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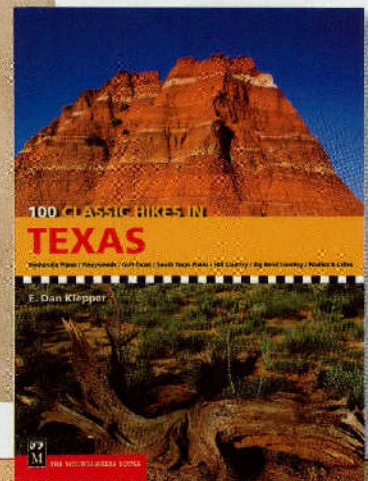
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Call of the Wild

Well-traveled Texan brought attention to world's wildlife

Text by **STEPHEN TAYLOR**

PERHAPS NO NATIVE SON OF TEXAS EVER CLAIMED a more globetrotting sense of adventure than Frank Buck (1884-1950). This international hunter, author, and filmmaker was born in Gainesville, Texas, and as an adult traveled to the jungles of South America, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, and Africa, capturing and bringing back animals for zoos, circuses, and private collections. His success earned him the nickname Frank "Bring 'Em Back Alive" Buck.

Buck moved from Gainesville to Dallas when he was six and then, as a teenager, lived at a ranch near San Angelo.

Fittingly for a native Texan, Buck started out as a cowboy. He worked on area ranches learning the trade, and at 18, was hired to oversee a trainload of cattle headed to Chicago. Winnings from a poker game in 1911 financed a trip to Brazil, where he exported parrots for profit. This experience influenced his decision to deal in exotic animals on a large scale. Soon, he was making a living selling animals to zoos and circuses in North America and Europe. By 1930, Buck had traveled extensively and collected enough tales to write his best-selling book, *Bring 'Em Back Alive*. He followed up that popular title with others such as *Wild Cargo* (1932), *Fang and Claw* (1935), and his autobiography, *All in a Lifetime* (1941).

Buck contributed to *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's* in the '20s and '30s, in

Frank Buck with his wife, Muriel. Their daughter, Barbara, says Buck "loved life more than anyone I've ever known."

Fittingly for a native Texan, Buck started out as a cowboy.

In addition to hosting a network radio program. He appeared as a celebrity guest on numerous radio shows, and ultimately produced and starred in movies. Audiences found his tales of near-death encounters with animals in the wild to be thrilling. Buck's 1932 movie *Bring Em' Back Alive*, became one of the year's biggest hits, establishing an audience for additional motion-

picture productions: *Wild Cargo*, *Fang and Claw*, *Jungle Menace*, *Jacare*, and *Tiger Fangs*. Reportedly, Buck was the model for the character of film director Carl Denham (portrayed by actor Robert Armstrong) in the original movie *King Kong*. Buck's box-office appeal also landed him a starring role with Abbott and Costello in the comedy *Africa Screams*.

Gazelles in Gainesville

THE FRANK BUCK ZOO IS HOME TO MORE THAN 130 ANIMALS FROM

four different continents, and offers a surprisingly diverse zoological experience. Comprised of 13 acres within Gainesville's Leonard Park, just off exit 496B from Interstate 35, much of the zoo simulates the animals'

natural habitat and offers up-close viewing of the animal collection, which ranges from birds and bears to a camel and kangaroos.

Traverse a circular walkway connecting all segments of this family-friendly zoo in about an hour. The zoo's plants, as well as the animals, suggest multiple geographic locales: cottonwoods, pine trees, and native grasses give way to palms and bamboo.

Perhaps the most breathtaking view here is from the elevated walkway spanning the African savannah display, where zebra, antelope, ostrich, and ibex graze below. Here, the public can feed the giraffes by hand from a feeding platform. "People plan their visits around giraffe feeding," says zoo director Susan Kleven. You can also feed the goats in the North America Barnyard area.

The zoo's gift shop contains an interesting Frank Buck exhibit. Donated by Buck's daughter, Barbara, artifacts include Buck's rifle case, jungle machetes and other tools, movie memorabilia from the '30s, and photos. On March 17, the zoo celebrates Frank Buck's birthday with \$1 admission. A new lemur exhibit is also slated to open in March.

The Frank Buck Zoo is at 1000 W. California in Gainesville. Hours: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Call 940/668-4539; www.frankbuckzoo.com.

—Stephen Taylor

Your keys to the animal kingdom are as close as Gainesville's Frank Buck Zoo.



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Speaking of Texas

Buck was the model for the character of film director Carl Denham in the original movie *King Kong*.

In 1934, Buck turned his immensely popular 1933 Chicago World's Fair exhibit (a replica of his overseas jungle base camp) into an East Coast attraction—a 40-acre zoo and base camp on Long Island, called Frank Buck's Jungle Camp. Buck had his staff grow mustaches and wear the same khaki outfit he did. Employees also carried autographed Frank Buck cards, so that when visitors came up and asked "Frank Buck" for an autograph, the employee just handed them a card. Nancy Jane Tetzlaff, whose first husband, Larry, left college to work with reptiles at Buck's Long Island operation says, "No one knew exactly what Buck looked like except for this image of him in a pith helmet."

Tetzlaff reports that Buck took Larry aside and told him, "Young man, always remember, no matter how rare the animal is, unless there is a lot of animation it doesn't matter. People will always

be attracted to activity." Buck noticed people had more fun watching rhesus monkeys than a rare Indian rhino he had captured, she added.

Several unforeseen circumstances proved problematic. During World War II, the Japanese took over the Singapore hotel that Buck used as his base for animal-capture forays, according to his daughter, Barbara. Gas rationing meant fewer people could drive to see the Jungle Camp, and there were problems getting food for the animals, recounted Buck's Jungle Camp partner, T.A. Loveland. Buck eventually left that venture, and by 1946 had moved to be with family in San Angelo. He planned a return excursion to Malaysia—and ordered lassoes made in San Angelo for the trip—but died of lung cancer in 1950.

Today, staff members at the Frank Buck Zoo in Gainesville field questions about this adventurous raconteur, and keep this famous Texan's story alive. The zoo started with animals from the Gainesville circus after it disbanded in the 1950s and was renamed in honor of Buck in 1954.

"One of the biggest misconceptions for people who have heard of Buck is that he just went out and captured animals for zoos," says zoo director Susan Kleven.

Buck's daughter, Barbara, agrees that her father saw wild animals as more than potential exhibits. "Way back before people said, 'Oh, there's not going to be any more,' he realized how limited the future was for many of these animals."

The value of providing animals naturalistic habitats in which to flourish was not a particularly common consideration in Frank Buck's era. But, Buck believed people should have the opportunity to view, and would thoroughly enjoy, rare and exotic species in person—especially if the creatures were well cared for. Before *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom with Marlin Perkins*, Jane Goodall, *Animal Planet*, the San Diego Zoo's Joan Embury, Jim Fowler, Crocodile Hunter Steve Irwin, *The Lion King*, and *The Discovery Channel*, Buck's life work shaped a legacy of zoological education. **TH**

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See!

College baseball in Houston. Minute Maid Park, Mar. 5-7

March Events

BIG BEND COUNTRY

DEL RIO: Bassmaster Open Fishing Tournament March 8-12. Lake Amistad. 830/775-3551

EL PASO: Michelob Ultra El Paso Marathon March 7. Marathon, half-marathon, 5K run and walk. www.elpasomarathon.org 915/274-5222

EL PASO: Guided Birding Tour March 20. Reservations required. Hueco Tanks State Historic Site. 915/849-6684

EL PASO: Franklin Mountains Poppies Preservation Celebration March 20. El Paso Museum of Archaeology, 4301 Transmountain Road. www.elpasotexas.gov/arch_museum 915/755-4332

MIDLAND: Victory Garden Redeaux with the Permian Basin Master Gardeners March 13. CAF Airpower Museum. www.airpowermuseum.org 432/567-3010

PRESIDIO: Pancho Villa & The Battle of Ojinaga March 1-May 31. Exhibit at Fort Leaton State Historic Site. 432/229-3613

GULF COAST

BEAUMONT: Chicago March 5-20. www.beaumontcommunityplayers.com 409/833-4664

BEAUMONT: Beaumont Blues Festival March 12. Civic Center. 409/838-3435.

BEAUMONT: Big Thicket Bicycle Tour March 20. www.funtrails.org 409/626-2168

BEAUMONT: YMBL South Texas State Fair March 25-April 4. www.ymbbl.org/fair 409/832-9991

BRAZORIA: Brazoria Heritage Celebration March 6. www.brazoriahf.org 979/236-0241

BRAZORIA: Battle on the Bernard Tug of War March 27. Tug-of-war competition across the historic San Bernard River. www.battleonthebernard.com 979/964-4503

BROWNSVILLE: Air Fiesta March 13-14. Air show. Brownsville-South Padre Island International Airport. www.airfiesta.org 956/541-8585

CORPUS CHRISTI: Taylor Swift March 12. American Bank Center Arena. www.americanbankcenter.com 800/745-3000

CORPUS CHRISTI: Edgar Meyer with the Corpus Christi Symphony March 13. Performing Arts Center at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, 6300 Ocean Drive. www.ccsymphony.org 361/883-NOTE

CORPUS CHRISTI: Judy Chicago: Glass March 25-May 30. Exhibit showcases 25 of the artist's most recent works. Art Museum of South Texas, 1902 N. Shoreline Blvd. www.artmuseumofsouthtexas.org 361/825-3500

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CORPUS CHRISTI: Corpus Christi Festival of the Arts March 26-28. Art Center of Corpus Christi. www.ccfestivalarts.org 361/826-3494

CORPUS CHRISTI: Chiara String Quartet March 27. Wolfe Recital Hall—Del Mar College. www.corpuschristi-chambermusic.org 361/884-5775 or 361/855-0264

CORPUS CHRISTI: Mark Twain Tonight! March 27. Hal Holbrook at the American Bank Center's Selena Auditorium. www.americanbankcenter.com 800/745-3000

FULTON: Oysterfest March 4-7. Navigation Park. www.townoffulton.org 361/463-9955

GALVESTON: Porgy & Bess March 6. The Grand 1894 Opera House. www.thegrand.com 409/765-1894

GALVESTON: Galveston Symphony Orchestra March 14. Program of Wagner, Respighi, and Brahms. The Grand 1894 Opera House. www.thegrand.com 800/821-1894

HARLINGEN: 100 Years of Style March 3. Celebrates Harlingen's Centennial. TSTC Cultural Center. www.myharlingen.us 956/536-7218

HOUSTON: 2010 Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo March 2-21. Reliant Park. www.rodeohouston.com 832/667-1000

HOUSTON: La Bayadere March 5-7. Houston Ballet at the Wortham Center. www.houstonballet.org 713/227-2787

HOUSTON: 75th Anniversary Azalea Trail March 5-7. www.riveroaksgardenclub.org 713/523-2483

HOUSTON: Mozart's Requiem March 5-7. Houston Symphony, Jones Hall. www.houstonsymphony.org 713/224-7575

HOUSTON: Harvey March 5-28. Alley Theatre. www.alleytheatre.org 713/228-9341

HOUSTON: South Pacific March 9-21. Theatre Under the Stars. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. www.tuts.com 713/558-TUTS or 888/558-3882

HOUSTON: FotoFest Biennial March 12-April 25. International biennial of photography and photo-related art. www.fotofest.org 713/223-5522

HOUSTON: Buffalo Bayou Regatta March 13. Canoe and kayak race. Starts at 7700 San Felipe. Finish line at Sesquicentennial Park, 1113 Vine St. www.buffalobayou.org 713/752-0314

HOUSTON: Bayou City Art Festival March 26-28. Houston's premier outdoor fine arts event. Memorial Park. www.bayoucityartfestival.com 713/863-8403

HOUSTON: Shell Houston Open Golf Tournament March 29-April 4. PGA Tour event at Redstone Golf Club's Tournament Course. www.shellhoustonopen.com 281/454-7000

HUMBLE: NatureFest March 6. Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center. www.hcp4.net/jones 281/446-8588

KEMAH: Pan Jam March 27. Authentic Caribbean steel drums, calypso, and reggae. Kemah Lighthouse District. www.kemahpanjam.com 281/538-4165

KINGSVILLE: Wings Over South Texas Air Show March 27-28. The Blue Angels perform both days in the skies over Kingsville. Naval Air Station. www.kingsvilletexas.com 800/333-5032

LA PORTE: Fords of the '50s Car Show & Picnic March 8. San Jacinto Battleground/Battleship TEXAS State Historic Site, 3523 Battleground Road. www.fordsofthe50s.com 281/479-2431

LAKE JACKSON: Empire Brass in Concert March 5. The Clarion. www.clarion.brazosport.edu 979/230-3658

LAKE JACKSON: Brazosport Symphony Orchestra March 27. The Clarion at Brazosport College. www.clarion.brazosport.edu 979/265-7661 or 979/230-3658

NASSAU BAY: Biloxi Blues March 5-20. Clear Creek Community Theatre. www.clearcreekcountrytheatre.org 281/335-5228

NASSAU BAY: Clear Lake Symphony March 12. Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. www.clearlakesymphony.org 281/488-0066

NEEDVILLE: Birding Hike March 5. Brazos Bend State Park. 979/553-5124

ORANGE: Art in the Park March 27. Stark Park. www.orangetexas.org 409/883-1011

ROCKPORT: Coastal Classic Auto Show March 27. Rockport Beach Park. 361/777-0277

SAN BENITO: San Benito High School Conjunto Band Concert March 30. W.H. Heavin Amphitheater. 956/361-3804

SEABROOK: Lucky Trail Marathon Weekend March 20-21. Meador Park. www.seabrookmarathon.org 866/611-4688

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: Texas State Surfing Championship March 27-28. Isla Blanca Park. www.sopadre.com 800/SOPADRE

SPRING: SpringFest March 6-7. Art and wine festival at Preservation Park. www.oldtownspring.com 800/653-8696

SURFSIDE BEACH: St. Patrick's Day Parade March 13. City Hall. www.surfsidetxt.org 979/233-9161

TOMBALL: German Heritage Festival March 26-28. www.tomballsistercity.org 281/379-6844

VICTORIA: Always ... Patsy Cline March 25-26. Leo J. Welder Center for the Performing Arts. www.alwayspatsycline.net 361/570-TKTS

VICTORIA: Lyceum Series featuring economist James Galbraith March 30. Victoria College Auditorium. www.victoriacollege.edu 361/572-6448

WEBSTER: A Day-by-the-Bay Home Tour Weekend March 26-28. www.hslba.org 713/224-4240

HILL COUNTRY

AUSTIN: Fiddler on the Roof March 2-7. UT-Austin's Bass Concert Hall. www.BroadwayAcrossAmerica.com 512/477-6060

AUSTIN: Zilker Park Kite Festival March 7. Zilker Park. www.zilkerkitefestival.com 512/448-5483

AUSTIN: Lady Bird, Pat & Betty: Tea for Three March 9-14. Emmy award-winner Elaine Bromka reveals intimate portraits of three first ladies: Lady Bird Johnson, Pat Nixon, and Betty Ford. The Long Center. www.TheLongCenter.org 512/474-5664

AUSTIN: Keiko Matsui March 12. One World Theatre. www.oneworldtheatre.org 512/329-6753

AUSTIN: SXSW March 12-21. Artists from around the world converge to showcase music, movies, and interactive media. Austin Convention Center and more than 50 venues. www.sxsw.com 512/467-7979



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AUSTIN: Star of Texas Fair & Rodeo March 12-27. Travis County Exposition Center. www.rodeoatustin.com 512/919-3000

AUSTIN: Clyde Littlefield Texas Relays March 31-April 3. Mike A. Myers Stadium, UT-Austin. www.texasassports.com 800/687-8379

BANDERA: Texas Equestrian Trail Riders & HCSNA Trail Ride March 19-21. Trail-riding fun in 5,400-acre Hill Country State Natural Area. www.hcsnap.org 830/796-4413

GRUENE: Jerry Jeff Walker Texas Bash March 28. Gruene Hall. www.jerryjeff.com/bash 830/629-5077

JOHNSON CITY: Texas Star Trail Ride March 5-13 www.johnsoncitytexaschamber.com 830/868-7684

JOHNSON CITY: Texas Men's State Chili Cookoff & Barbecue Championship March 27. Blanco County Fairgrounds. www.johnsoncitytexaschamber.com 830/868-7684

KERRVILLE: Western Heritage Day March 27. Museum of Western Art. www.museumofwesternart.com 830/896-2553

LOMETA: Diamondback Jubilee March 27. Lometa Regional Park. 512/752-3106

LUCKENBACH: Texas Independence Day Celebration March 6. www.luckenbachtexas.com 830/997-3224

NEW BRAUNFELS: Mid-Texas Symphony Pops Concert March 28. Civic & Convention Center. www.mtsymphony.org 830/372-8089

STONEWALL: LBJ 100 Bicycle Ride March 27. LBJ Ranch, Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park. www.lbj100bicycletour.org 830/868-7128

PANHANDLE PLAINS

ABILENE: Tuna Does Vegas March 1-2. Abilene Civic Center. 800/869-1451

ABILENE: University Theatre Festival March 8-10. Van Ellis Theatre, Hardin-Simmons University. www.hsutx.edu 325/670-1405

AMARILLO: Tuna Does Vegas March 3-4. Civic Center Auditorium. www.amarillociviccenter.com 806/378-3096

BIG SPRING: Big Spring Symphony Pops Concert March 27. With singer/songwriter Paul Williams. Howard College Coliseum. www.bigspringsymphony.com 432/267-1626

BIG SPRING: Rattlesnake Roundup March 27-28. Howard County Fair Barns. 432/263-3409

BROWNWOOD: Lone Star Expo & Rattlesnake Roundup March 19-21. Brownwood Coliseum. www.brownwoodjaycees.org 325/643-9566

LUBBOCK: Lubbock Symphony Orchestra March 5-6. Civic Center Theater. www.lubbocksymphony.org 806/762-1688

LUBBOCK: Raider Red's One-Act Play Spectacular March 29-April 4. Texas Tech University. www.ttu.edu 806/742-3603

POSSUM KINGDOM: Mardi Gras March 6. www.possumkingdomlake.com 940/779-2424

QUANAH: 4-H Spring Carnival March 24-27. Hardeman County Courthouse Square. 940/663-6301

SAN ANGELO: Laurel Trio March 21. Chamber music at the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. www.samfa.org 325/653-3333



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➔ TH SPOTLIGHT

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SAN ANGELO: Moving Image Theater March 30. San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. www.samfa.org 325/653-3333

SWEETWATER: Jaycees World's Largest Rattlesnake Roundup March 12-14. Nolan County Coliseum. www.sweetwatertexas.org 325/235-5488

VERNON: TCRA Rodeo March 29. Bradley 4-H Rodeo Arena. www.vernontexas.net 940/552-5474

PINEY WOODS

CONROE: Young Texas Artists Music Competition March 11-13. Crighton Theatre. www.youngtexasartists.org 936/441-7469 or 936/756-7017

CROCKETT: The Amazing Kreskin March 13. Fantastic feats of mind power and concentration. www.pwfaa.org 936/544-4276

HUNTSVILLE: General Sam Houston's Birthday March 2. www.samhouston.memorial.museum 936/291-9726

HUNTSVILLE: Walker County Fair, Rodeo & Barbecue Cookoff March 26-April 3. Walker County Fairgrounds. www.walkercountyfair.com 936/291-8763

JASPER: Azalea Festival & Air Show March 20-21. www.jaspercoc.org 409/384-2762

LIBERTY: Jubilee March 26-27. Family fun fest. Downtown. www.cityofliberty.org 936/336-3684

LONGVIEW: Longview Symphony March 5. www.longviewsymphony.org 903/236-9739

NACOGDOCHES: Nacogdoches Azalea Trail March 13-April 3. www.nacogdochesazaleas.com 888/653-3788

TEXARKANA: The Lincoln-Douglass Encounters March 11. Historic Regional Arts Center/Cabe Hall. www.trahc.org 903/792-8681

TROUP/WHITEHOUSE: Four Winds Faire Renaissance Festival March 6-April 25. Just southeast of Tyler. Saturdays and Sundays. www.fourwindsfaire.com 903/839-5271

TYLER: Azalea & Spring Flower Trail March 19-April 4. www.tylerazaleatrail.com 800/235-5712

WOODVILLE: Toast to Texas Independence March 2. Salute Texas independence with a toast of pure East Texas spring water. Heritage Village Museum. www.heritage-village.org 409/283-2272

WOODVILLE: Western Weekend Rodeo & Parade March 26-27. Tyler County Fairgrounds. www.tylercountydogwoodfestival.org 409/283-5192

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

ADDISON: Out of the Loop Festival March 4-14. Addison Theatre Centre. www.addisontexas.net 800/233-4766

ATHENS: Triathlon March 6. Cain Center. 903/677-2000

BASTROP: Pedal Thru the Pines March 6. Cyclists traverse Bastrop and Buescher state parks and the surrounding country roads of Bastrop, Fayette, and Lee counties. www.pedalthrupines.org 512/321-7760

CLEBURNE: Thoroughly Modern Millie March 4-6, 11-13, 18-20. Plaza Theatre. www.plaza-theatre.com 817/202-0600

DALLAS: North Texas Irish Festival March 5-7. Fair Park. www.ntif.org 972/943-4616

DALLAS: Savor Dallas March 5-7. Dedicated to showcasing the finest chefs in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, the world's best beverages, and the renaissance of downtown Dallas. www.SavorDallas.com 888/728-6747

DALLAS: Wynton Marsalis & the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra March 5-7. Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center. www.dallasymphony.com 214/692-0203

DALLAS: Taylor Swift March 11. American Airlines Center. www.americanairlinescenter.com 214/222-3687

DALLAS: Romeo & Juliet March 12-14. Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House. www.texasballettheater.org 214/880-0202

DALLAS: Rock 'n' Roll Dallas Half Marathon March 14. Dallas Convention Center. <http://dallas.competitor.com> 214/939-2700

DALLAS: Jupiter String Quartet March 15. Program of Haydn, Golljov, and Brahms at SMU's Caruth Auditorium. www.dallaschambermusic.com 214/768-2787

DALLAS: Brinker International Forum—Conversation with David Frost & Frank Langella March 17. AT&T Performing Arts Center. www.dallasperformingarts.org 214/880-0202

DALLAS: Dallas Symphony Orchestra March 18-21, 25-28. Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center. www.dallasymphony.com 214/692-0203

DENTON: Texas Storytelling Festival March 11-14. Civic Center. www.tejastorytelling.com 940/382-7014

DUBLIN: St. Patrick's Festival March 20. City Park. www.dublinfoxchamber.com 254/445-3422

FORT WORTH: Andy Warhol: The Last Decade March 1-May 16 (began February 14). Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. www.themodern.org 817/738-9215

FORT WORTH: Fort Worth Symphony March 19-21. Program of Liszt, Sibelius, and Higdon. Bass Performance Hall. www.fwsymphony.org 817/665-6000

FRISCO: Dr Pepper Dallas Cup XXXI March 28-April 4. Soccer teams from around the world compete for the 2010 Dr Pepper Dallas Cup. Pizza Hut Park. www.dallascup.com 214/221-3636

GARLAND: Greater Tuna March 4-7, 11-14, 18-21, 25-27. Granville Arts Center. www.garlandcivictheatre.org 972/205-2790

GLEN ROSE: Glen Rose PRCA Rodeo March 4-6. Somervell County Expo. 254/897-4509

GONZALES: Texas Independence Day Celebration March 2. Downtown Gonzales Historic District. www.gonzalestexas.com 830/672-6532

GRANBURY: General Granbury's Birthday Celebration March 20-21. www.granburysquare.com 817/573-5299

GRAND PRAIRIE: Gilberto Gil March 28. NOKIA Theatre. www.NOKIATheatreDFW.com 214/373-8000

GRAPEVINE: Hot Club of Cowtown March 12. Jazz and Western swing concert at the Palace Theatre. www.grapevintexasusa.com 800/457-6338

GROESBECK: Texas Independence Day Rally March 5-7. Lost Prairie Cycle Ranch. www.thehotrally.com 254/729-2602

IRVING: Irving Symphony Orchestra Presents Patti Austin March 13. Irving Arts Center. www.irvingartscenter.com 972/252-2787

MALAKOFF: KCKL/KLVQ Big Bass Tournament March 27-28. Log Cabin City Park. 903/489-1518

MESQUITE: National Watch & Clock Show March 5-6. Mesquite Exhibit Hall. www.nawcc.org 214/328-1984

MESQUITE: Chamber Singers Concert March 7. Mesquite Arts Center. www.mesquiteartscenter.org 972/216-6444

MESQUITE: Mesquite Championship Rodeo Parade March 27. www.mesquitechamber.com 972/285-8777

RICHARDSON: Richardson Symphony Orchestra March 13. Eisemann Center for Performing Arts. www.richardsonsymphony.org 972/744-4650

ROUND TOP: International Guitar Festival March 6. Concerts featuring the Minneapolis Guitar Quartet, Flavio Sala, and Pro Tango Duo. Festival Concert Hall. www.festivalhill.org 979/249-3129

ROUND TOP: Spring Antiques Fair March 31-April 3. www.roundtopexasantiques.com 512/237-4747

SEGUIN: Toast to Texas March 2. Sebastopol State Historic Site. www.visitseguin.com 830/379-4833

SEGUIN: Roundup Cowboy Gathering March 20. Rio Cibolo Ranch. www.visitseguin.com 800/580-7322

SOUTHLAKE: Easter in the Park March 28. Bicentennial Park. www.southlakeparksandrec.com 817/748-8019

TEMPLE: Temple College Jazz Fest March 26-27. Temple College. www.templejc.edu 254/298-8555

WACO: Intertribal Powwow March 6. Student Recreation Center, Texas State Technical College. www.waco.tstc.edu/activities/NASAclub.php 254/867-2623

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

EAGLE PASS: International Friendship Festival March 19-28. 830/773-3224 or 888/355-3224

ELMENDORF: Olives Olé, Texas International Olive Festival March 27. Sandy Oaks Olive Orchard. www.ldeisanantonio.org 210/621-0044

GOLIAD: Goliad County Fair & Rodeo March 19-21. Goliad County Fairgrounds. www.goliadcc.org 361/645-8204

GOLIAD: The Texas Mile March 26-28. Motorcycles, vintage cars, race cars, performance street cars, and land speed racers compete for the Best in Class on a one-mile straightaway. 2241 Airpark Road. www.texasmile.com 281/802-9863

HIDALGO: 34th Annual BorderFest March 4-7. Dodge Arena Grounds. www.myborderfest.com 956/843-2734 or 888/443-2540

LAREDO: Laredo Birding Festival March 25-27. www.visitlaredo.com 800/361-3360

MERCEDES: 71st Annual Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show March 12-21. www.rgvlivestockshow.com 956/565-2456

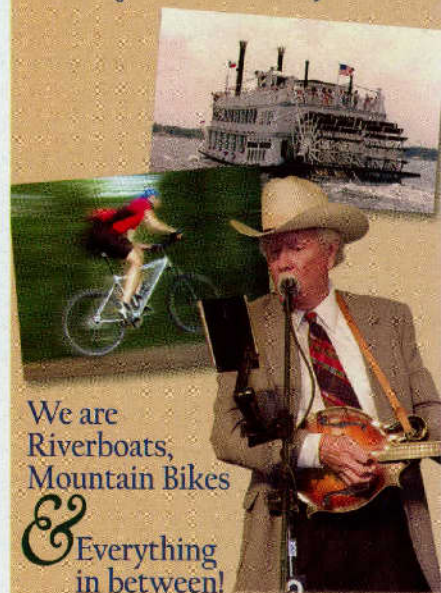
SAN ANTONIO: George Strait Team Roping Classic March 12-13. San Antonio Rose Palace. www.gstrc.com 210/698-3300

SAN ANTONIO: Fiesta of Gems March 20-21. Live Oak Civic Center. www.swgemandmineral.org 830/935-3373

WESLACO: Texas Onion Fest March 26-27. City Park. www.weslaco.com/OnionFest/Home 956/968-2102

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March

- 2 Toast to Texas: Texas Independence Day Celebration
- 2-3 Showcase Seguin Business Expo
- 7 Blue Norther Duathlon
- 13 25th Annual Noche de Gala Mariachi Vocals Competition
- 20 Round-up Cowboy Gathering
- 27 2nd Annual Cajun Jamboree Main Street Trade Days

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MADE IN TEXAS

© continued from page 601

Brown, who began working for Breedlove as a volunteer when it was still a spin-off from the South Plains Food Bank. As he leads the way to the receiving area, where 40-foot semitrucks deliver tons of potatoes straight from the farm, he explains that Breedlove initially processed a variety of vegetables, but soon settled on potatoes as the most feasible base for its dehydrated vegetable-soup mix.

"We add other vegetables and seasonings, depending on where a particular shipment is going," says Brown. "Since everything is dehydrated, the product has a long shelf life, requires less space and energy to store, and is less expensive to ship. This allows us to minimize our costs, to the point that we can provide shipments of food for less than five cents a serving."

After following the raw potatoes through a maze of equipment that includes peelers, dicers, blanchers, and a 60-foot-long gas dehydrator, the tour eventually reaches a processing area where the dehydrated spuds are packaged, along with other ingredients, into a nutritional soup mix—lifesaving food for hungry people around the world. —N.M.

Breedlove Foods Inc. is at 1818 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in Lubbock. Free tours (call ahead); 806/741-0404; www.breedlove.org.

Nocona Athletics Goods Company, Nocona

Baseball epitomizes all things American. Surprisingly, there's only



RANDALL MAXWELL

Nocona Athletics Goods Company, Nocona. The staff recommends that you break in your glove the old-fashioned way—by playing catch.

one place to find an American-made baseball glove—the Nocona Athletics Goods Company in Nocona. For more than 75 years, the business, owned and operated by the Storey family, has been creating premier Nokona baseball gloves with skilled crafters going through more than 50 steps, using an array of leathers, to create more than 60 models. (Note: The Nokona glove was trademarked with a "k" in the spelling because the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office would not allow the company to register the name of an incorporated town.)



Visitors can take a close-up, guided tour, often led by Neilann McBroom, who has been the company's public relations manager for five years. She says she's seen people from all over the world come through to watch the process, which includes die-cutting the leather (cow, buffalo, and kangaroo hides), stamping, monogramming, sewing, lining, binding, lacing, and conditioning the gloves.

In a 2009 *Texas Highways* interview, pitching legend Nolan Ryan shared with readers that his first baseball mitt, at age 7, was a Nokona. "I still have it to this day," he says of the glove, which is now part of the Nolan Ryan Exhibit Center at Alvin Community College.

An unpolished, former boot factory has been home to the company since its 80-year-old building burned to the ground in 2006. There's no mistaking it's a working facility, but during a recent visit, our informative guide led us through the narrows of various stations where workers were more than willing to take a moment to demonstrate and explain their parts in the process. —L.R.

The **Nocona Athletics Goods Company** is at 105 Clay St. in Nocona. Free tours; call 940/825-3326; www.nokona.com. TH

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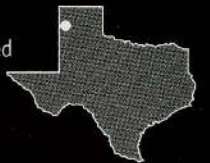
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Window on Texas

Photograph by **CHRIS BURT**

ROUTE 66 REMNANT An Art Deco classic, this Walter Dorwin Teague-designed Texaco station (thousands were built in the Fifties and Sixties) stands empty in Glenrio, on Interstate 40/Route 66 near the Texas-New Mexico border. A prolific creative force, Teague also designed the Kodak Brownie camera and various Boeing aircraft. Chris Burt created this particular light painting on a cold night in the Panhandle.



To order a print of this photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.

