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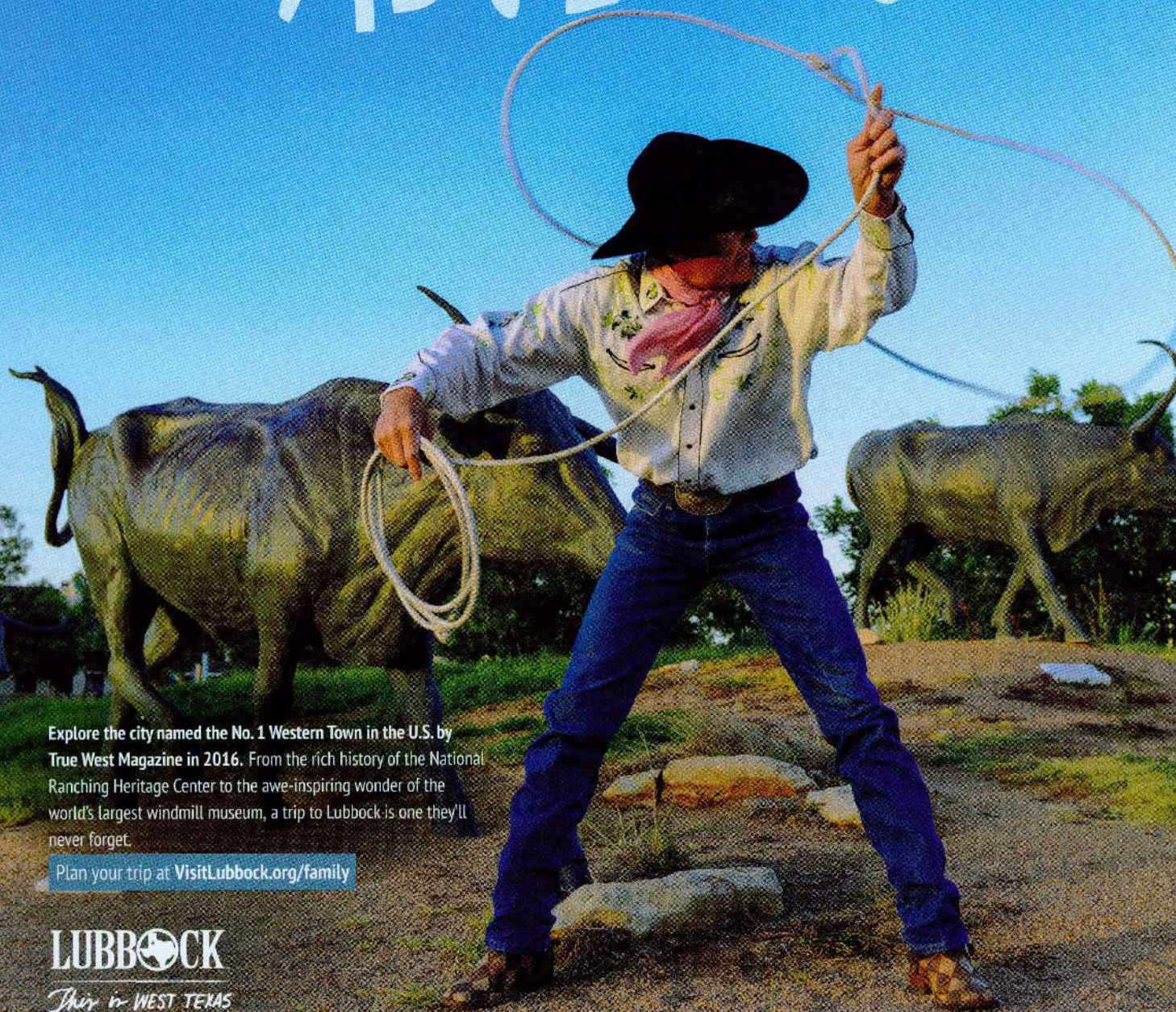
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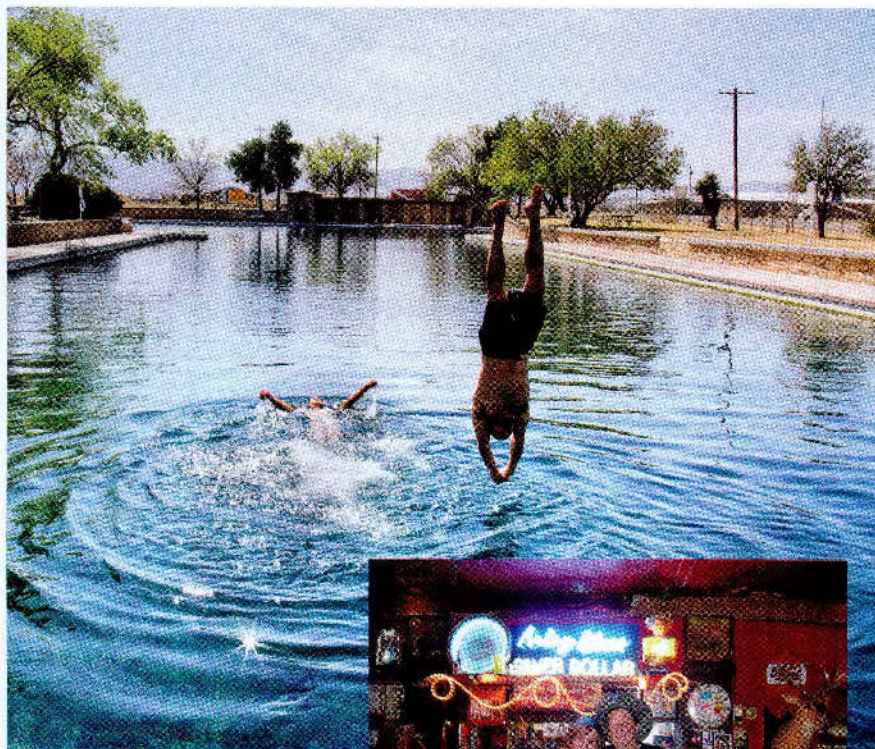
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EDITOR'S NOTE



Travelin' On

THIS ISSUE MARKS THE 44TH anniversary of the travel magazine of Texas. It's also the last issue for Senior Editor Lori Moffatt, who is retiring after an esteemed 27 years with the publication. As a staff, we're going to miss her irreplaceable knowledge of Texas' history and culture, insightful edits and sharp eye for details, but even more so the passion and vitality she's brought to these pages and the office over the years. Before her departure, I asked her to share some of her insights with the readers she's served so well for more than 300 issues.

What advice would you give to people traveling Texas?

LM: I think it's smart to do your research in advance and have a rough idea of things you want to do and see, but to allow plenty of flexibility. Ask the waiter, the bellhop, the person behind you in line, "What restaurant do you go to on your lunch hour?" "Where do you take

Outgoing Senior Editor Lori Moffatt's summer bucket list pick is Balmorhea State Park; Inset: Lori with singer-songwriter Arkey Juenke, owner of Arkey Blue's Silver Dollar Saloon in Bandera.

your friends who come to visit?" It's so fun, and you'll probably discover some great spots that may be under the radar of most travelers.

You're leaving behind quite a legacy.

What are you most proud of?

LM: I'm proud to have helped peers become stronger writers as they've helped me become a better editor, and vice versa. I'm proud that I've helped steer *Texas Highways* into the multifaceted brand it is today. And I'm really proud to think of all the memories we've helped readers make with their friends, family, and loved ones.

What are your favorite spots in Texas?

LM: Of the hundreds of pieces I've written over the years, certain spots stand out for their beauty and ability to change one's perspective, including Galveston and Port Aransas (for the ocean that reinforces how small we are), El Paso (for its fascinating xeriscaped yards and blend of cultures), San Antonio (perhaps my favorite city in all of Texas for its vibrant mix of history and modern energy), Palo Duro Canyon (for the surprise of seeing its jagged, unexpected beauty in the midst of all that flatness), the Rio Grande Valley (for many reasons, including tortillas that deserve James Beard awards and the aroma of citrus blooms), and the rather quiet stretch of Texas just south of the Red River (for its gentle hills, wineries, and roads less traveled). I've grown to love a long road trip, when the lonely miles lend themselves to introspection and inspiration.

Emily R Stone

EMILY ROBERTS STONE, Executive Editor

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MAY

44

93 Days of Summer

Celebrate the season with our ultimate summer bucket list. Whether you want to break a sweat, soak in local culture, or relax in powerful air conditioning, you'll find diversions that will satisfy and challenge.

Goat yoga, anyone?

Story by KIMYA KAVEHKAR
& JANE KELLOGG MURRAY

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New Adventures in Fredericksburg

One of the top Hill Country destinations, Fredericksburg has transformed from a rural getaway into a sophisticated hotspot with lots to do and see, including tasting locally made wine, relaxing at a luxurious spa, and dining on modern fare.

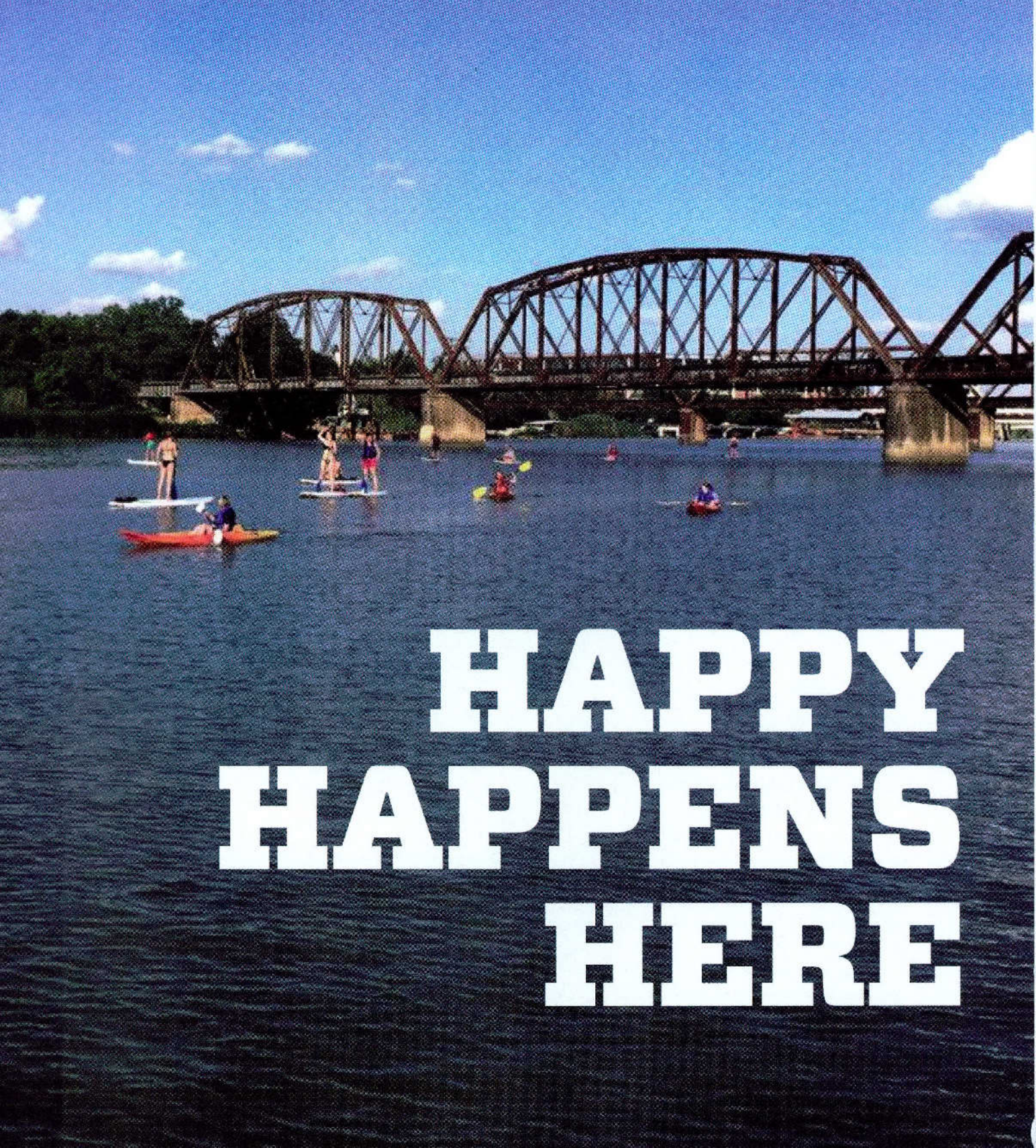
Story by JUNE NAYLOR
Photographs by TIFFANY HOFELDT



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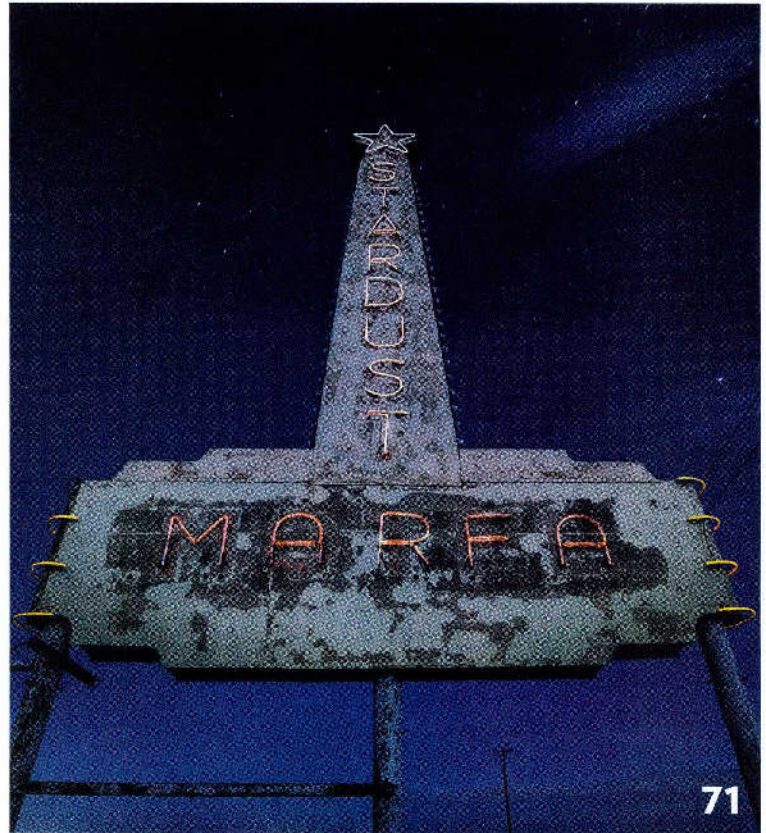
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COVER
Athens Scuba Park
© Kenny Braun



Sunflowers in Hillsboro

#TRUETXSUMMER CONTEST

If you feel inspired after reading our "93 Days of Summer" feature (Page 44), head to texashighways.com to see our printable Summer Bucket List checklist. To enter our contest, snap a picture at one of the spots on our checklist (be sure to include a handwritten sign with #TrueTXSummer in your photo!) and be the first to post it to the *Texas Highways*' Facebook page to win a True Texan hat. All participants will receive a True Texan sticker while supplies last! Stay tuned to our Facebook page for more details.



ONLINE EVENTS CALENDAR

Looking for summer fun? Check out our online events calendar—the most comprehensive listing of goings-on in Texas. Visit texashighways.com/events.



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MERGE



We hope this issue inspires more Texans to get outside and check out some new places!

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY



I'm a high school teacher and *Texas Highways* magazine is always in my classroom.

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I graduated from Stephen F. Austin State University while living in Kilgore. This West Texas gal was blown away by the beauty of East Texas! The campus is amazing.
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Coastal Jazz

Your Texas music festivals story [March] forgot the Texas Jazz Festival in Corpus Christi. It began in 1959 and is the longest running free jazz festival in the country, held each year in October in Heritage Park amid the historic homes and oak trees. The festival encompasses three stages with multiple bands from all over the U.S. and the world, representing all genres of jazz.

Gary N. Blum, Corpus Christi

TH: *The Texas Jazz Festival runs Oct. 19-21, 2018; texasjazz-fest.org.*

First Dates

How cool to see the Plaza Theatre and the wonderful city of El Paso (and Juárez) in the April issue. My family moved to the Sun City in 1960 when I was 9. I don't recall the first motion picture I saw at the Plaza Theatre, but I do remember being blown away by the elaborate Spanish mission décor and the stars twinkling from the ceiling. I also remember being startled when the Wurlitzer organ rose up out of nowhere with a flourish. In 1969 I took my future wife on one of our first dates to the Plaza to see (I am embarrassed to admit) the *Fistful of Dollars* trilogy. It must have worked: We've been happily married 44

years and counting!

Erv Crain, Dallas

Brackenridge Birds

The migratory birds that nest at Brackenridge Park in San Antonio have arrived. Located directly behind the San Antonio Zoo is a heaven for birders and photographers. The first of the migratory birds to arrive are the yellow crowned night herons. Then come the great white egrets, snowy white egrets, cattle egrets, little blue herons, and tricolored herons. These nest from March until August and usually start having chicks about the end of May. Once they all come in, there are hundreds in the trees.

Alesia Garlock, San Antonio

Remembering Round Top

Your mention of the Round Top antiques fair [September 2017] brings memories of when my grandfather preached in the Lutheran church there.

This was in the early 1940s when the men sat on the left side of the church and the women and children on the right side. On occasion it was so cold that my Grandmother Marie would cover us with a blanket, and my Grandfather Robert would shorten his sermon.

Jeanie Goodell, Silsbee

Family Ties

I love the story about Wiseman House Chocolates in Hico [February]. When I read the owner's name, Kevin Wenzel, my first thought was, "I wonder if he's kin to the Wenzels from Hamilton?" Hamilton is my hometown, and I started experiencing the culinary skills of Kevin's dad at his store, Dutchman's Hidden Valley Country Store. I really love to go back, from time to time, to the town of my birth, Hico, and see how it has grown.

Joyce Lee, Peoria



Down in Splendora

Y'all need to check out Coals Smokehouse, a country music venue with great Texas BBQ in Splendora. Can't get more Texan than that. During Hurricane Harvey, they fed first responders and those in need. On stage, they've had some big names: Stoney LaRue, Jason Boland, Uncle Lucius, Kyle Park, and Sundance Head. They are only a few miles outside of Houston.

CHRISTINE COURSEY, Houston

Coals Smokehouse, 25069 FM 2090 in Splendora, opens Sun-Thu 10:30 a.m.-9 p.m. and Fri-Sat 10:30 a.m.-midnight. Call 281-399-7324; facebook.com/CoalsSmokehouse.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Send feedback and recommendations to: *Texas Highways*, P.O. Box 141009, Austin, TX, 78714-1009. Email: letters@texashighways.com.



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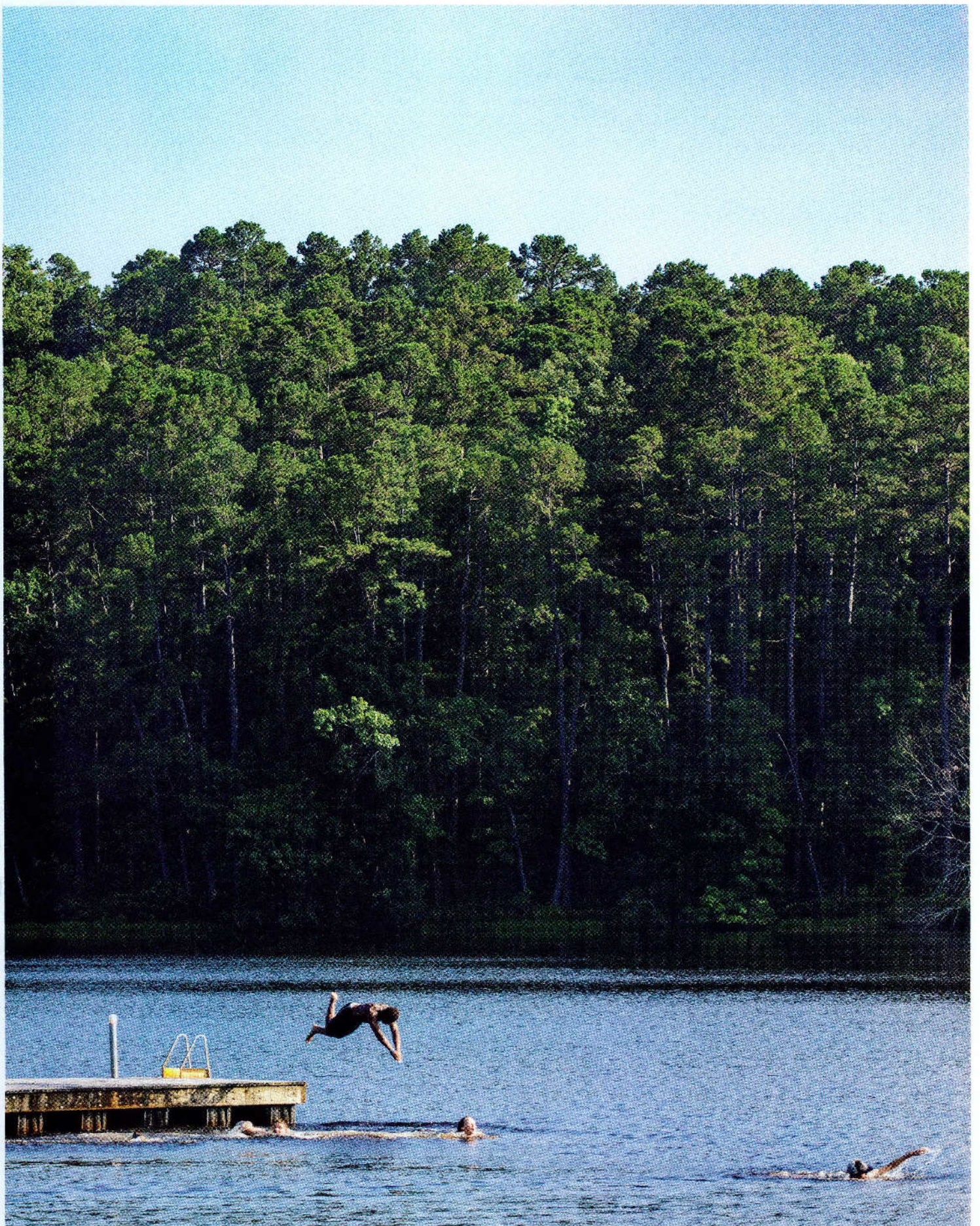
Dive in

33° 00' 29.25" N
94° 41' 53.53" W

SUMMER FUN AWAITS

at Daingerfield State Park, located a couple of miles southeast of the city of Daingerfield in Northeast Texas. The 507-acre park offers plenty of classic summer diversions from camping to swimming, fishing, hiking, dancing, canoeing, kayaking, and pedal boating. The swimming platform—placed about 140 feet from the shore of the 80-acre lake—invites jumping, diving, and perfecting your cannonball. For more information, visit texasstateparks.org.





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Flights of Fancy

Stressed by air travel? Take heart in airport art

story by Gene Fowler

Sunrise Wheel, a 1995 sculpture by the Art Guys, lends a sense of whimsy to Terminal B of the San Antonio International Airport.



FLYING CAN BE STRESSFUL—NAVIGATING a cavernous airport to squeeze into a cramped seat and sit closely confined with strangers in a long, winged tube that remains aloft for hours on end, well... “Flying is famously not an experience we look forward to,” notes Matt Evans of San Antonio International Airport. “But we’re working to reframe that narrative with art.”

Across Texas, airports have turned to artwork to take the edge off of air travel with displays that entertain, educate, challenge, and soothe jangled nerves. “Art adds a humanizing element to the travel experience,” says Tommy Gregory, director and curator of the Houston Airport System’s Public Art Program. “It warms up a space and lets the passengers know they’re not just a number on a ticket.”

As you might expect, many of these artworks interpret the travel theme. At San Antonio International Airport, *Suitcase Wheel*, a 16-foot tall ring made of 75 vintage Samsonite suitcases graces the Terminal B ticketing level. Houston duo Michael Galbreth and Jack Massing—known as the Art Guys—created *Suitcase Wheel* as well as

“Art adds a humanizing element to the travel experience. It warms up a space and lets the passengers know they’re not just a number on a ticket.”

a sculpture titled *Travel Light* in Terminal E of Houston’s George Bush Intercontinental Airport. The latter features 360 suitcases made of cast translucent resin with colorful, electronically controlled LED lights.

In San Antonio, a dozen photographs of open suitcases by the late Chuck Ramirez—found along the lower departure ramp of the parking garage—provide peeks into anonymous travelers’ personal universes. One photo, titled *Granny Goes to Vegas*, shows an open suitcase overflowing with items like a scarf, hat, and perfume bottle.

“We want the airport art to establish a sense of place and manifest the culture and charm of San Antonio,” explains Evans, who holds the San Antonio International Airport’s newly created position of Art, Culture, and Music Specialist.

To that end, in January the airport unveiled *Adelante San Antonio!*, a three-part mural by San Antonio duo Dos Mestizx (Suzy González and Michael Menchaca) in the airport’s new rental car facility. The largest part is a 240-foot mural that introduces visitors to San Antonio and Texas aviation history with figures like Bessie Coleman, who grew up

San Antonio artist Chris Sauter and his sculpture *Airport Seating (Somewhere Between Here And There)* at Houston’s Hobby Airport.


in Waxahachie and became the first woman of African American heritage to earn a pilot's license, and San Antonio native and World War I flying ace Edgar Tobin.

"The mural's footprints and river imagery are symbols of the first people who were here for thousands of years before the Spanish colonization," González says, "and we address the long history of immigration with images of Canary Islanders and Chinese settlers." Two exterior murals on the building feature eagles and early flight motifs in tribute to San Antonio's military aviation history. Inside, an interactive kiosk offers a guide to the works.

Also at the San Antonio airport, Alamo City artist Gary Sweeney pokes gentle fun at his adopted home and the Hill Country with *Nostalgia, Texas*, a series of eight ceramic baked enamel panels with humorous takes on vintage travel decals, located at the entrance to the long-term parking garage. One panel jokes about the hellacious Texas summers. Another declares "FIESTA SIESTA REPEAT" in reference to the city's popular springtime festival. A panel about the Hill Country boasts, "We have dozens of towns you can't pronounce," and points to Boerne and Gruene to prove it.

Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, the state's busiest, is also known for art, even garnering mention in *Smithsonian* magazine for its collection. Travelers encountering Dennis Blagg's 14-by-42-foot painting *Cosmic Big Bend Landscape* might be tempted to bolt from the ticket hall to the rental car counter and hightail it out to wild and rugged West Texas. The work is made up of 2,355 six-inch panels assembled in a grid system.

Another iconic Texas landscape greets visitors at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. In the ticketing area, Travis County artist Thomas Evans' *Hill of the Medicine Man* depicts Enchanted Rock with nine oil-on-canvas panels. Native Americans revered the pink granite dome near Fredericksburg, and today it forms the



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For photos and guides to public art at Texas airports, see:

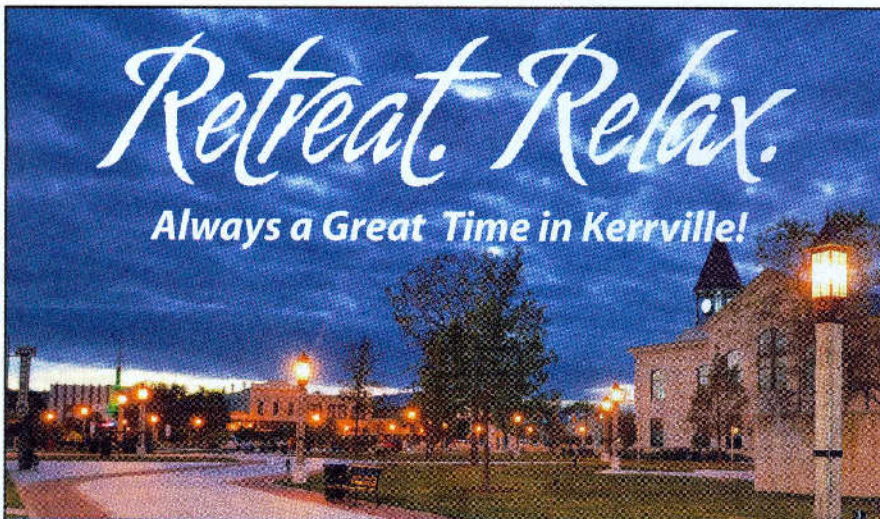
Dallas Fort Worth International:
dfwairport.com/art

William P. Hobby Airport:
fly2houston.com/hou/art

George Bush Intercontinental Airport:
fly2houston.com/iah/art

San Antonio International Airport:
sanantonio.gov/sat/at-the-airport/art

Austin-Bergstrom International Airport:
austintexas.gov/department/art-airport

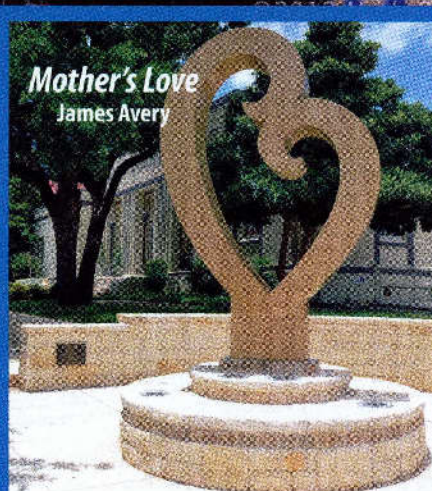


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Gregory notes that Texas artists created three-quarters of the 200-plus pieces in the Houston Airport System. Cindee Travis Klement's bronze *Heritage (Robert Fleming Travis)*, in the Terminal A connector at George Bush Intercontinental, is modeled from her grandfather's weathered Stetson Open Road. "As a teenager, I shaped hats at my father's Windmill Western Wear in El Paso," Klement says. "I learned that old hats are reflections of their owners. They retain something of the spirit of the person who wore them."

At Houston's William P. Hobby Airport, the title of Chris Sauter's large sculpture, *Airport Seating (Somewhere Between Here and There)*, is descriptive of both its content and function. Placed outside the international arrivals area, the concrete and LED lighting work spells out "SOMEWHERE BETWEEN HERE AND THERE," and passersby are welcome to sit on the art.

Gregory notes that artists like exhibiting in the airport because it provides an extra platform for exposure. "Many have received gallery opportunities and commissions from people passing through our airports," he says. González of Dos Mestizx concurs: "This work is not just for the art world. It's for the people." 🐾



Gone Hunting at The Hunt Store

Since 1946, Hunt's ad hoc community center has stood the test of time

story by Heather Brand

THE HILL COUNTRY TOWN OF HUNT IS A PLACE OF convergence—where the north and south forks of the Guadalupe River merge, and where residents rub elbows with out-of-towners at a local establishment that has stood the test of time. Since its inception in 1946, The Hunt Store or “the store” (as it’s commonly called), has gone through several expansions and nearly a dozen owners. At first the store was a simple wooden structure stocked with groceries and provisions—a necessity for this rural enclave about 13 miles west of Kerrville along State Highway 39. Yet over the years tourists began to flock to the area, drawn by its pristine waters and scenic hills, as

“The locals will let you know that you don’t own the store, you are just a steward for as long as you have it.”

well as its growing number of riverside resorts and hunting ranches. To meet the needs of its changing clientele, the store gradually expanded its facilities and diversified its offerings. Today, The Hunt Store still serves as the only grocery store and gas station for the town, but it also encompasses a bank, a café, a real-estate brokerage, and a stage for weekly live music.

The store’s various additions and improvements are courtesy of a

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Corpus Christi

 TEXAS STATE AQUARIUM



The café here—a popular spot for breakfast and lunch—offers a creation called the “French Taco,” which is a burger wrapped in a flour tortilla.

string of successive owners—11 in all. In 1949 the original owner installed newfangled refrigerated lockers, allowing residents to rent out storage space for their surplus beef and venison. In 1971 a subsequent owner rebuilt the store’s walls using cedar posts and stacks of river stones hauled from a nearby creek, turning the facade into an eye-catching roadside attraction. Four years later, another owner added two smokehouses and a meat-processing service. In 2006 yet another granted permission for the Bank of the Hills to open a branch within the store. The teller windows are directly across from the seating area for the popular Hunt Rock Café.

The Hunt Store still serves as the only grocery store and gas station for the town, but it also encompasses a bank, a café, a real-estate brokerage, and a stage for weekly live music.


According to longtime patron and current owner John Dunn, who took over in 2013, “Executives from the bank say it is the only one in the nation where you can drink beer and do your banking.”

Although the store no longer processes meat, its café has plenty of Texas-raised beef and local game on the menu (and plenty of taxidermy on the walls to boot). In the morning, in addition to the standard selection of breakfast-taco fillings (egg, potato, cheese, chorizo), the café serves a tortilla stuffed with spicy sausage made from wild boar and venison mixed with jalapeños and cheese. At lunch, it offers the usual lunchtime fare of burgers, chicken-fried steak, and barbecue, along with some unexpected dishes, such as “Texas Toothpicks” (a heaping pile of deep-fried jalapeños and onions) and the “French Taco” (a burger inexplicably wrapped in a flour tortilla). “No one quite knows why it’s called ‘French,’” Dunn muses. Another option is “Bob’s

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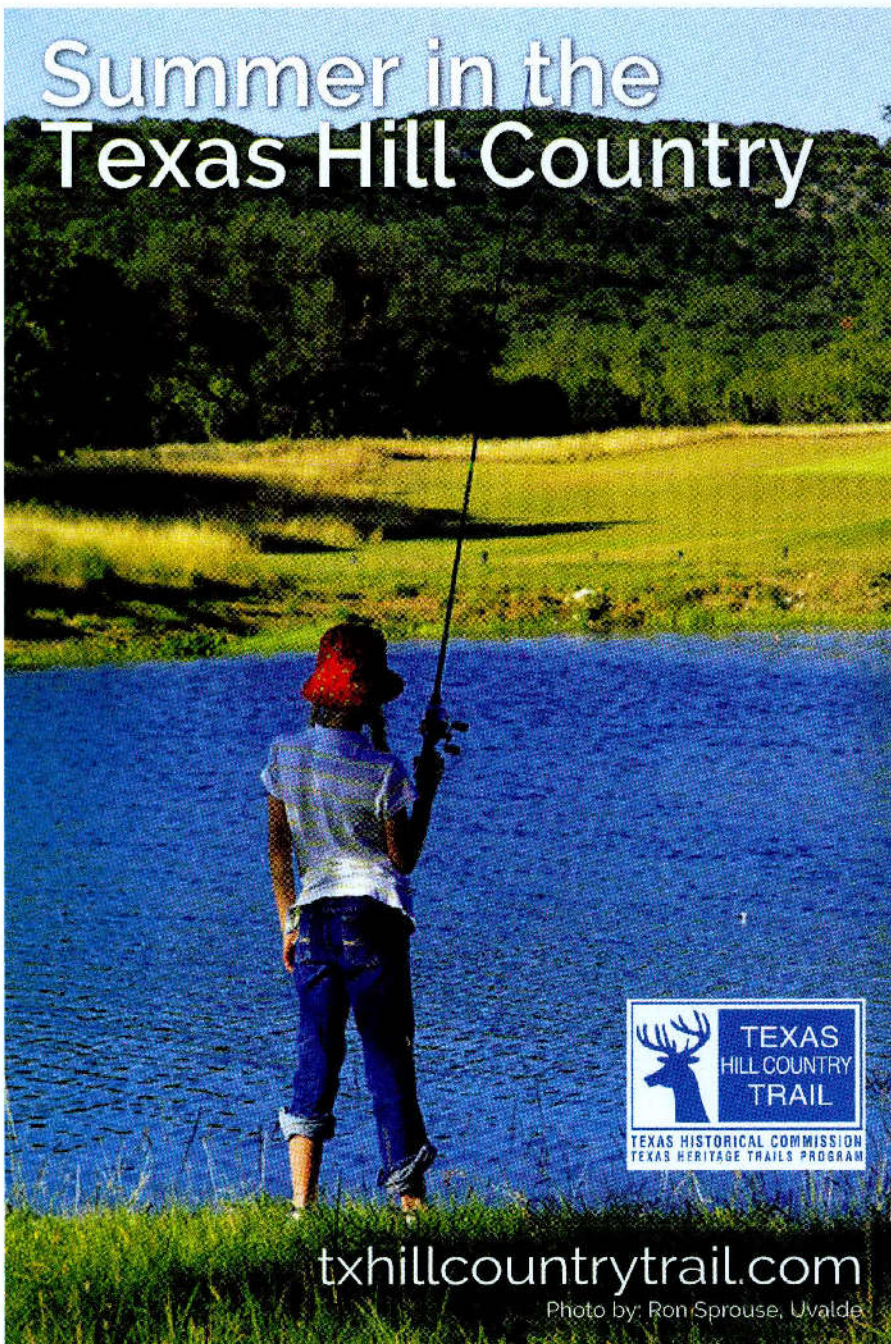
Burger,” named for a previous owner, which comes loaded with jalapeños, mushrooms, grilled onions, and blue cheese.

Dunn’s own innovation has been to add a fine-dining experience every Wednesday through Saturday evening from 5 to 9 p.m. He helped develop a menu incorporating the region’s abundant wild game, including

an appetizer of South Texas venison strips with cracked-pepper cream gravy, wild-boar-and-venison sausage, beef tenderloin, and grilled rib-eye steaks. Dunn’s other change has been to add a regular program of live music to the mix. Musicians have performed off and on at The Hunt Store since 1977, but Dunn added a stage to the covered back patio and

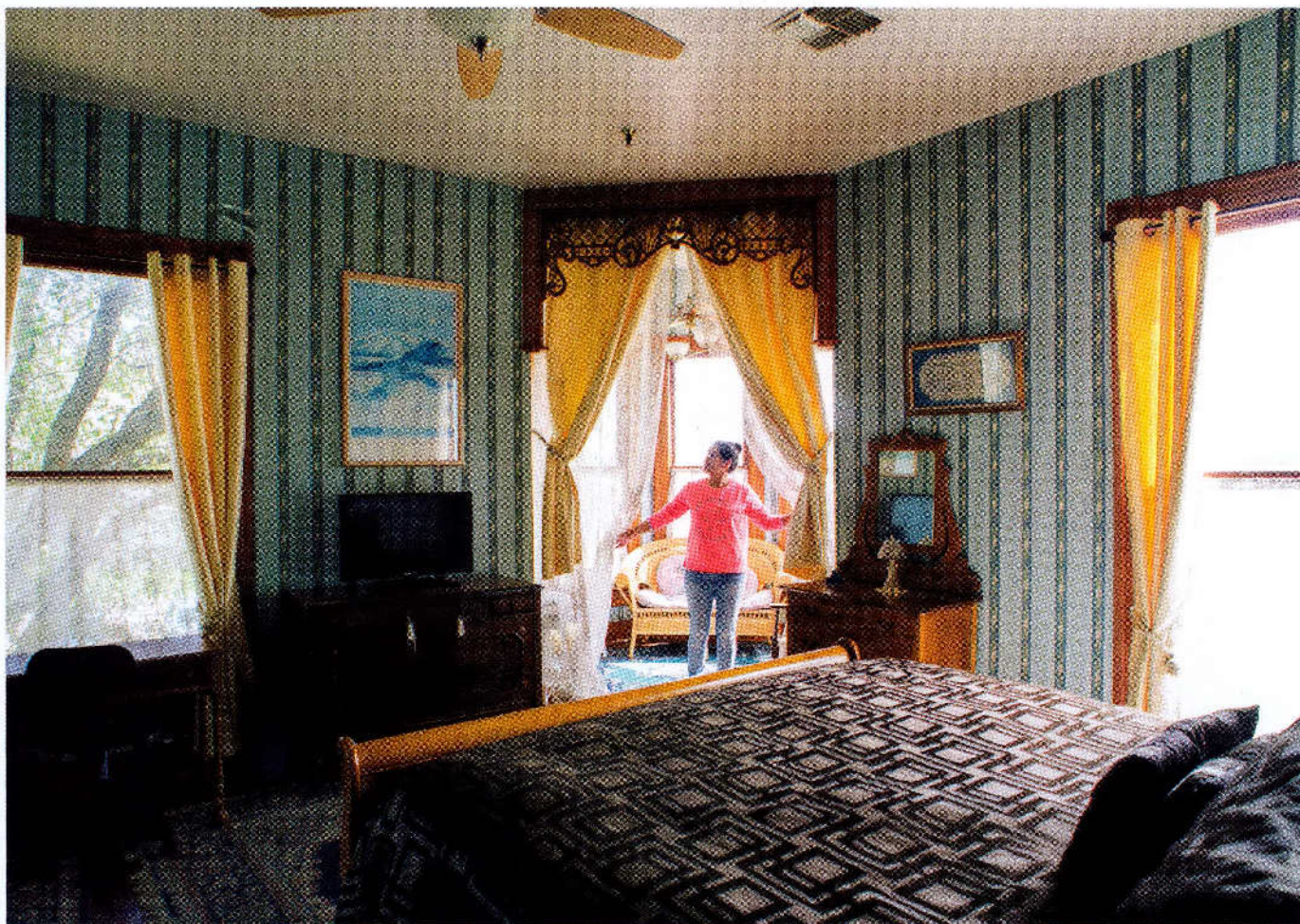
instituted weekly concerts. Besides showcasing local talent, the store has hosted such Texas musical legends as Ray Benson, Kinky Friedman, Charlie Robison, Gary P. Nunn, and Billy Joe Shaver. Dunn has also brought local specialty items to the store’s shelves, such as Ox Hollow Honey (in two varieties, *huajilla* and Texas wildflower), Hippie Hollow Granola (extra crunchy with almonds, cashews, and pecans), and beef jerky produced just for the store. One of the more intriguing items is the Wild Boar Man Soap (\$12.99), made from regionally sourced boar lard and scented with mountain cedar; an alternative for women called Silk Purse has a lavender aroma.

The changes Dunn has implemented have enhanced the store’s reputation as a roadside stop for tourists. Yet the store is still a grocery, after all—a place where you can dash in and pick up a loaf of bread or a six-pack of beer. Dunn says the store’s main purpose has remained the same, even as it has changed hands over the years: to serve as a gathering spot for the Hunt community, which numbers just over 1,000 people. “Hunt is an unincorporated town run by locals, and the Hunt store is the heart of the community,” explains Dunn. “The locals will let you know that you don’t own the store, you are just a steward for as long as you have it.” Area residents still congregate here every morning to get their fix of hot coffee; they drop in during the day to purchase supplies and do their banking; and they return in the evenings for dinner and a show. You can’t be all things to all people, so the saying goes. But you can certainly try, and the Hunt Store seems to be succeeding. **L**



THE HUNT STORE

is at 1634 State Highway 39 in Hunt. Open daily. Call **830-238-4410**; thehuntstore.com.



Woodbine Divine

Just off Madisonville's town square, the enchanting Woodbine Hotel dishes up a bountiful buffet along with a heaping helping of history.

story by **Susan L. Ebert**

APPROACHING MADISONVILLE'S COURTHOUSE square, I'm not surprised that traffic ebbs to a crawl. After all, this East Texas town, population 4,636, loves to throw a party. Kicking off with the Madison County Rodeo in March, followed by the Tour de Madison Bike Ride Festival in April, and the nearly month-long Sidewalk Cattleman's Celebration in May, Madisonville caps off its large galas with the Texas Mushroom Festival in October—with plenty of smaller events filling in the gaps.

My husband, Shannon, and I haven't come for the festivities, however, but for a brief respite from life's usual hectic pace. Our

From the expansive veranda, we step through the front door into an open parlor that transports us to an era of refined elegance.

destination is Madisonville's Woodbine Hotel, and because well-behaved dogs (and cats) are welcome, our border collie Chloe accompanies us. Our plan is to relax, recharge, and experience the hotel's gracious ambiance and sumptuous Sunday buffet—the talk of townsfolk and travelers alike.

From the expansive veranda, we step through the front door into an open parlor that transports us to an

Constructed as a pair of kit houses in 1904, the Woodbine Hotel offers understated luxury and a glimpse of Texas from a bygone era.



Above: A restoration in 1979, complete with Victorian woodwork, earned the hotel a spot in the National Register of Historic Places.

Right: Sunday brunch draws crowds.

era of refined elegance. Flanking the parlor to the left, mismatched vintage chairs and tables covered in white linens await diners. To the right, a tall transom-topped door leads to the hotel bar, which showcases an antique cash register and a 1904 telephone booth—the first one in Madisonville. (The second didn't arrive until 1929.) Directly ahead, two ornately carved curly-pine newel posts create the base of the staircase, which ascends to the second floor. Authentic period wallpapers complete the Victorian ambiance.

Owner Susan Warmuth peers over her glasses from the hotel desk beneath the staircase to beam a warm

welcome, and before checking into our room, we linger to visit. Originally from Pennsylvania, Warmuth earned a degree in hotel management from Penn State, then embarked on a culinary career that would take her from coast to coast.

"My dream was to run my own hotel," she says. "I found this one for sale on the internet nearly 20 years ago and fell in love with it." She reaches into a cabinet behind her desk and retrieves a well-thumbed binder stuffed with photographs of the property through the decades.

We learn that Jake and Sarah Shapira, Jewish Russian immigrants who settled in Madisonville in the 1870s, ran a boarding house here that burned in 1903. When they decided to rebuild, they purchased two kit houses at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. The first, a

turreted Queen Anne Victorian, now houses the dining room; the second, an Eastlake-style structure, holds the bar. The Shapiras joined the two kit houses with upstairs and downstairs parlors, adding rooms on both floors and verandas on both the front and the back. The kit houses came with plans and all of the necessary hardware, and the Shapiras had the lumber—primarily East Texas longleaf pine—milled in nearby Huntsville. Nearly 200 bluebonnet motifs hand-carved into the plinths above the doors and windows contributed Texas charm.

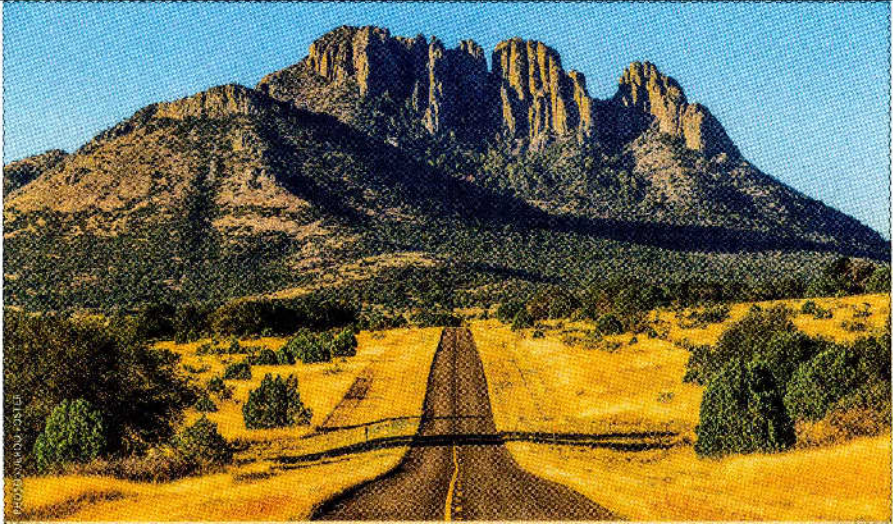
Over the years, the hotel changed hands and names several times but fell into disrepair by the mid-1970s. In 1979, local philanthropists Randy and Lynn Parten bought the hotel and undertook a thoughtful restoration, earning the hotel recognition in the



National Register of Historic Places in 1980 and Texas Historic Landmark status in 1982. The Partens donated the property to the Woodbine Foundation in 1997, and Warmuth bought it two years later, keeping the Woodbine Hotel name.



The hotel earned recognition in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 and became a Texas Historic Landmark in 1982.

At the top of the stairs in the Parten Suite, I settle into a cushioned wicker loveseat in a sunlit Queen Anne turret, book in hand, then luxuriate in the whirlpool tub before diving into the king sleigh bed's luxurious linens for a brief siesta. After watching the sunset from the




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upper back veranda, my husband and I amble around the downtown square, browse the shop windows, and enjoy a light meal in anticipation of the main event: tomorrow morning's buffet.

Early Sunday morning after a stroll around the grounds, I peer into the kitchen to watch Warmuth put the finishing touches on desserts while long-time Chef Leon de la Garcia grills chicken. I pour two cups of coffee, grab a copy of the *Madisonville Meteor*—which was founded in 1894—and head up the grand staircase to share coffee and the paper with Shannon on the veranda. When we descend the staircase for Sunday brunch, the downstairs parlor has been transformed. Small groupings of tables and chairs have been moved out, and long tables covered in white linens extend from the front door across the length of the

The Woodbine's Sunday Brunch attracts locals and travelers alike. Right: Nearly 200 handcarved bluebonnet motifs decorate the windows and doorways.

When we descend the staircase for Sunday brunch, the downstairs parlor has been transformed. My husband whispers to me, "A man could hurt himself here."

parlor. On the farthest table, pie slices galore—lemon meringue, coconut meringue, Key lime, chocolate, fruit, and chess among them—have been placed on pretty plates. Closest to the front door, a large green salad in a chilled silver serving dish and an artfully arranged fruit platter herald the start of the buffet line.

Warmuth greets us with her signature cheery smile as she and her staff carry out steaming chafing dishes to place between the salads and desserts. Today, there's prime rib, fried catfish and clams, beef medallions, fried chicken, and chicken-fried steak. Still more chafing dishes come out with grilled pork chops in a ginger cream sauce, grilled chicken, mashed potatoes, hot rolls, and butter.





Shannon takes it in, eyes widening, and whispers to me, “A man could hurt himself here.”

Indeed; a gal could, too. And while the Woodbine Hotel opens to the public for lunch Tuesday through Friday and supper Tuesday through Saturday, Sunday brunch is its big draw. Warmth keeps its pricing modest: \$15, which includes tax—a paltry sum for such a princely feast. We note farmers, townsfolk, travelers, and the after-church crowd drifting through in waves as we graze our way through the ample offerings.

But there’s always room for pie, isn’t there? A slice of lemon meringue pie—airy and sweet-tart, with a bonus middle layer of lemon mousse—provides a luscious coda, both to the meal and to the weekend. **L**



THE WOODBINE HOTEL

is at 209 N. Madison St. in Madisonville.

Call 936-348-3333;
woodbinehotel.com

Photos: Kevin Stillman (left); © Susan L. Ebert

FIELD GUIDE *to* BASTROP COUNTY

ISSUE
NO 45



Watering Hole

BASTROP / ELGIN / SMITHVILLE

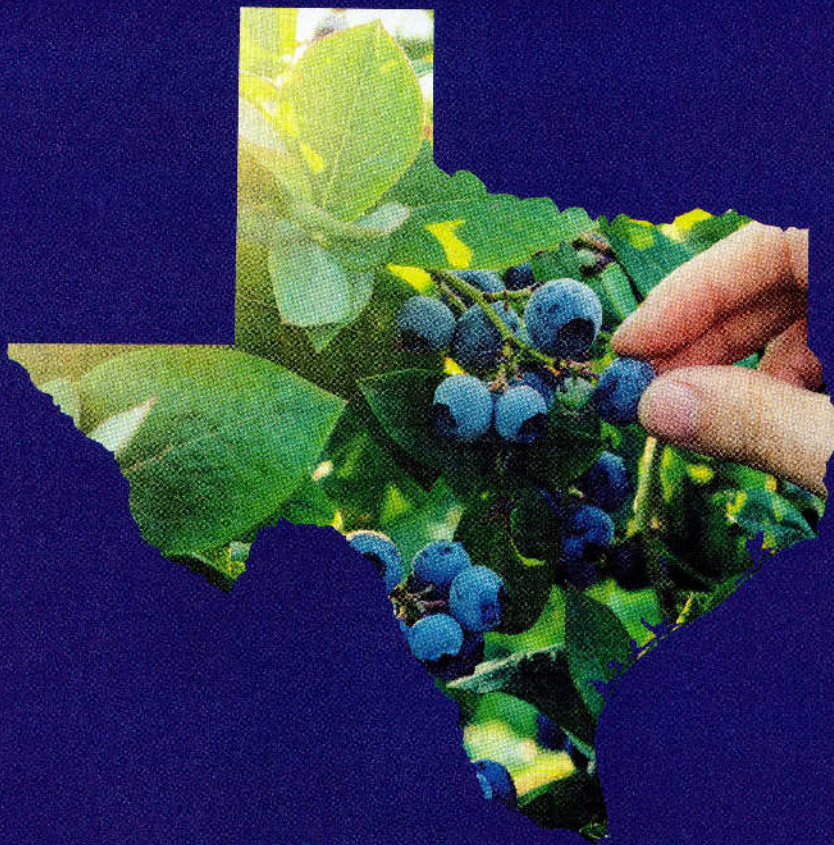


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From Water to Wine

The cool South Concho River draws summertime visitors to Christoval

story by **Michael Barr**



CRUISING ALONG US 277 SOUTH OF SAN ANGELO, THE flat cotton fields of Tom Green County soon give way to brush country, where natural vegetation gets scrawnier and colors fade as the distance from surface water increases. Here, gaunt mesquites and mouse-eared prickly pear cover the landscape while muted earth tones dominate the color spectrum.

But tall trees and lush greenery ahead are sure signs of an oasis. Vegetation soars and hues brighten abruptly as I approach the town of Christoval and the South Concho River.

In bone-dry West Texas, water draws people together, and the cool, refreshing water of the South Concho once made

Vegetation soars and hues brighten abruptly as I approach the town of Christoval and the South Concho River.

Christoval, 20 miles south of San Angelo, a mecca for West Texans. In the early 20th century, Christoval—named for an early settler—had a hotel, mineral baths, a Baptist encampment that hosted thousands each summer, and an impressive artist colony.

Then a 100-year flood wiped out the Baptist encampment in 1936. The highway came through, and a bridge replaced the low-water

A couple enjoys the sun and waterfall near a walking trail at Hummer House wildlife habitat in Christoval.

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The tasting room at Christoval Vineyards and Winery serves its best-selling tempranillo.

crossing. Travelers had little reason to stop, or even slow down.

But Christoval, population 500, is mounting a comeback by capitalizing on its historic role as a West Texas retreat. These days the town is all about water, wine, and wildlife.

Don't bother looking for a run-of-the-mill swimming pool in Christoval. This place has something better; one of the most popular public swimming holes in the region sits at Pugh Park. No concrete pool can compete with a park that has 600 feet of river frontage and a half-dozen rope swings hanging from limbs of sturdy live oaks, all leaning gently over the emerald-green water. On a hot day, Pugh Park bustles with swimmers, fishermen, and kayakers. Admission is free, as are the primitive campsites, which are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Christoval Vineyards and Winery, a 25-acre estate wedged between US 277 and the South Concho River, showcases the trendier

side of the hamlet. A chapel, which hosts weddings, special events, and nondenominational services every Sunday, sits just inside the iron gate beneath a canopy of live oaks. The double wooden doors, shuttered windows, steep roof, and stone construction give the chapel the look of a Mediterranean country house.

Don't bother looking for a run-of-the-mill swimming pool in Christoval. This place has something better; one of the most popular public swimming holes in the region sits at Pugh Park.

Beyond the chapel, the tall oak trees, shaded walking paths, manicured grounds, and grapevines planted in neat rows in the river bottom stand in stark contrast to the dry brush country less than a mile away. This isn't Tuscany, but in West Texas, it's as close as it gets.

The vineyard, established in the

mid-1980s, grows a variety of grapes, including riesling, tempranillo, petite sirah, vermentino, and mourvèdre. The riesling vines, planted more than 35 years ago, are some of the oldest in Texas.

The tasting room, where visitors can sample some of the winery's offerings, is a converted shed with 10 round tables, each with a spectacular view of the vineyard through large picture windows. There is a comfortable couch in the corner and a granite-top bar across the back. The shelves on the far wall display T-shirts for sale, medals collected in wine competitions, and dozens of bottles of award-winning wines, including the best-selling tempranillo.

The lunch menu at the tasting room features pizzas, meat and cheese trays, and cheesecake for dessert. A cheesy Neapolitan pizza and a glass

of tempranillo prove to be ample fortification for an afternoon exploring the town.

While the atmosphere inside the tasting room is relaxed and casual, the patio rings with boisterous laughter, tinkling glasses, and squeals of children. A group of young parents share food and wine while their children run and play on the grassy area between the patio and the river.

"My husband is stationed at Goodfellow Air Force Base in San Angelo," one young woman says. "When he has time off we bring our children to the park for a swim, and then come here to relax. Christoval is the best place around for a family outing."

Owner Drex Vincent agrees. "This is a place for people to unwind," he says. "It's a family place. We encourage people to bring their kids and dogs and just enjoy themselves."

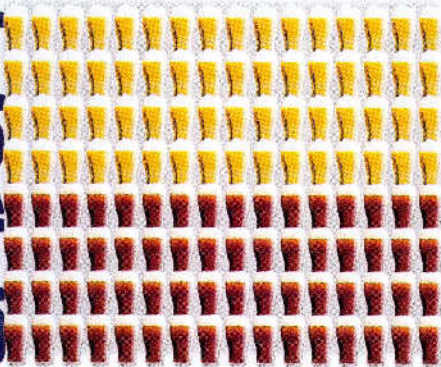


CHRISTOVAL VINEYARDS AND WINERY

is located at 5000 Cralle Road. Call **325-315-8077**; christovalvineyards.com. Tasting room hours are Thu-Sun, 11:30 a.m.-8 p.m.

It's not the taste of wine but the call of the wild that draws adults and children by the busload to the Hummer House and its one-of-a-kind wildlife habitat. The Hummer House, a lodging and preserve surrounded by ranchland, is the largest feeding and nesting area for black-chinned hummingbirds in Texas. The male hummers arrive in mid-March; the females arrive about a week later. And it's not just hummingbirds—a bird-banding program has documented more than 160 species.

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Inside the comfortable and spacious Observation Room, owners Dan and Cathy Brown entertain and educate visitors with hummingbird stories while just beyond the glass, hundreds of high-strung hummers hover at the feeders. They then dart away to their nests, almost too quick for the human eye to follow.

"A lot what we do is geared to

children," Cathy says. "We use birds to instill in them a love for wildlife and a respect for nature. You can see the wonder in their faces when they learn about hummingbirds and get to see them up close. It's something they don't forget."

The Hummer House is part of a 1,200-acre ranch teeming with wildlife on the South Concho River. It

hosts tour groups, family groups, school groups, birders, and day visitors looking to connect with nature. The ranch offers three bed-and-breakfast properties including a spacious two-bedroom house that sleeps six, a 1,850-square-foot lodge for groups of 12 to 14, and a romantic hideaway for two. But call early as they are booked up months in advance.

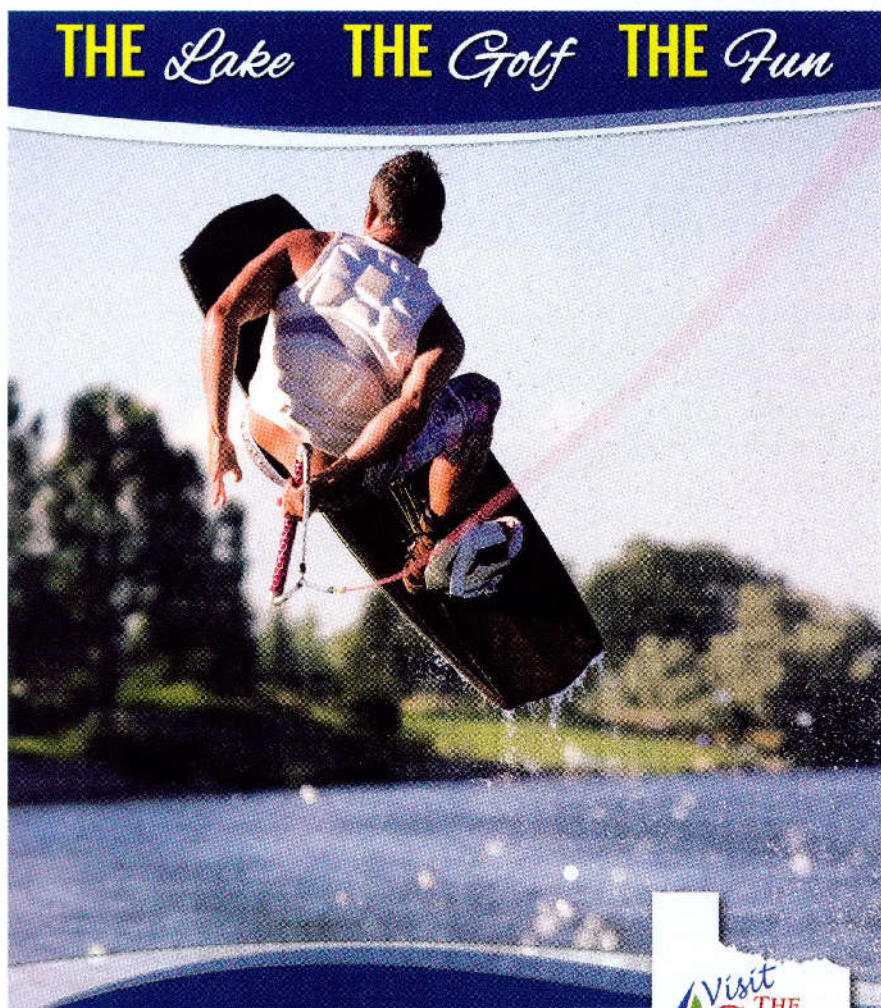
For those craving for Tex-Mex, Hidalgo's Restaurant and its Christoval Plate (chile relleno, crispy taco, beans, and rice) make a fitting end to a busy day. The cheerful waitresses serve the food while it's piping hot and keep glasses filled with iced tea while the dining room slowly fills with hungry people. Nothing fancy here, but the food is good and the atmosphere is warm and friendly.

Nearby the Concho Christoval River Retreat provides cozy lodging in the heart of town. The main cottage, called the Morning Glory House Bed and Breakfast, has a wraparound porch, tailor-made for drinking coffee in the morning and lounging on a lazy afternoon. The River View Bunkhouse is a larger accommodation across the road. Both spots have impressive views of the live oak, pecan, and transplanted bald cypress trees along the water, just yards away.



A doe grazes quietly a few feet from the front door, but she bounds away when visitors get too close. From the porch, the water sings as it tumbles over the rocks.


Christoval is no secret to natives of San Angelo and Tom Green County, but the rest of the state, beyond the Concho Valley, is rediscovering this hideaway. **L**

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THE HUMMER HOUSE

is located a mile south of Christoval at 21301 Toe Nail Trail. The Observation Room and Gift Shop are open April-Aug., Fri, 7-9 p.m. and Sat, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission is \$3. Children 12 and under are free.



Hamming it up in Flatonia

Spanish ibérico pork finds footing in Texas

story by Clayton Maxwell

TEXAS AND SPAIN HAVE JOINED FORCES IN an unexpected, four-legged way. For the first time since explorer Hernando de Soto did so back in 1539, the finest of Spanish ham, *jamón ibérico de bellota*, has been imported to the United States in its original form—as a pig. One hundred and fifty purebred black Iberian pigs, to be exact, which boarded a KLM flight in Spain for their new homes in Flatonia in 2013. Manuel Murga and Sergio Marsal, the Spanish porcine visionaries who founded

Murga shows me a map of live oaks across the state. “This is why we came to Texas,” he says.

Acornseekers brand pork, hatched this bold plan: they knew there was a better way for Americans to enjoy Spain’s most revered cured ham than smuggling it in their suitcases.

Once flown over the Atlantic, there were no guarantees that the pigs would pass quarantine, but their knuckle-biting venture has paid off. Turns out, Iberian pigs love Texas. The original 150 pigs of the Acornseekers brand, which Murga and Marsal call “the pioneers,” have multiplied to a herd of 2,000. These American-born pigs are now entitled to their green cards, Murga jokes.

And Texas loves those pigs right back. Their meat is in such demand that, in a trial sale at a Houston H-E-B last summer, the pork sold out within a week. Good things unfold, apparently, when pigs fly.

I visit Murga at the Acornseekers office, a trailer plopped down on an oak-dotted farm off a back road between Smithville and Flatonia. Marsal, the marketing and business half of the Acornseekers partnership, is not in town. While Murga makes espresso, I gush to him about my love of cured Spanish ham. I tell him how, when I lived in Madrid, I regularly asked for samples of the high-end *jamón de bellota* (literally, ham of acorns) at the *Museo de Jamón* (the Ham Museum, which is actually a shop) just to watch the bare-armed butcher shave the cured crimson slivers from the violin-shaped hind leg. He’d then hand them to me over the counter on a thin sheet of white paper, like a sacred offering, and I’d let the smoky goodness melt on my tongue. Spanish nirvana.

This is nothing new to Murga. He’s heard these tales countless times from Americans who’ve traveled to Spain. Then he hears the inevitable question that follows: “Why is it so hard to find in the United States?”

Manuel Murga brought Spanish pork to Texas.



More than 100 Spanish pigs formed the beginning of Texas' first Iberian herd. These pigs eat mostly acorns, and their meat tastes delicious.

"That's the first reason I did this," explains Murga, who says vagaries of the inspection process complicate importing the meat. "Imagine you are a dealer here and you are expecting 1,000 pounds and in the end you only get 200. Your clients are waiting, and it's a real problem. So I said this should be done in a different way."

Murga slaps a special map of Texas down on the table in front of me. "This is why we came to Texas," he says, pointing. "The area in green shows the live oaks." The map is almost entirely green. Except for a few patches out west, Texas is blanketed in live oaks, all working night and day to do what live oaks do best:

make acorns. To an Iberian pig, acorns are heaven. During the essential fattening-up season, called the *montanera* (when pigs go to the *montañas*, or mountains, for grazing) Iberian pigs eat only acorns, 10 to 15 pounds a day. Over the species' 2,000 years of acorn eating, these clever pigs have developed a talent for unshelling the acorns in their jaws and spitting the unwanted caps out, a skill unique to this particular pig.

Murga, an agricultural engineer, grew up with pigs. His family owns two ranches about 40 miles outside of his hometown of Seville, where his grandfather, father, and brother

currently raise Iberian pigs. "I've long been deeply involved in this business," Murga says, evident passion in his voice. "I love it because I love the animal, and not only the animal, but I love the environment as well. You can feed the Iberian pig anywhere in the world, but without the right environment, you are not going to get this quality."

And, lucky for us, Murga and Marsal found "the right environment" deep in the heart of Texas. Murga, who had noted the prevalence of live oaks in movies about Texas, visited the state nine years ago and collected samples of acorns from various ranches. He took the nuts back to Spain for analysis and found they have the same composition

as the acorns on his family ranch. "So then I realized that the only thing missing here in Texas were the pigs," Murga says. "You have the live oaks, you have the clients—maybe the best market in the world right now—but no pigs. I prayed hard to bring the pigs, and we did it," he says, laughing.

A respect for the comfort and intelligence of the Iberian pigs is another key component in Acornseekers' definition of "the right environment." The pigs roam over the Flatonía ranch, sleeping, swimming, and eating freely, like their Spanish cousins that ramble the Andalusian countryside. When Murga takes me out to walk among them, they barely notice me as they root in the dirt and lounge in a happy pig pile. They are the Labrador retrievers of pigs.

Acornseekers' compassionate treatment of the animals extends to their final hour. "In Spanish, we don't say

The pigs roam over the Flatonía ranch, sleeping, swimming, and eating freely, like their Spanish cousins that ramble the Andalusian countryside.

'slaughter', we say 'sacrifice,'" Murga explains. Acornseekers brings in professionals from Spain to help in the "sacrifice," done in a very particular way. "It's very important to avoid any suffering of the pig." So even as they are raising Old World pigs in New World digs, Acornseekers isn't changing anything up. Just like in Spain, nothing is rushed—the pig breeding, the slaughter, the curing. "I'm not trying to do anything here that is new," Murga says, "because this process has been done in Spain for more than 2,000 years and it works, so we only need to replicate it here."

Murga says his favorite part of the

whole process is watching the faces of people as they eat the finished product. While the most sought-after meat, the cured ham, will not be ready until spring 2019, Acornseekers' fresh pork is now available to buy online and in restaurants throughout the United States. And because of its singular nutty flavor, the demand is exceeding their supply.

If you want to actually meet some of these acorn-scarfing black pigs, you can hoof it to the shop and restaurant in Columbus that Murga and Marsal plan to open in early 2019.

Judge for yourself what happens when pigs fly. **L**



ACORNSEEKERS PORK

is available for purchase online and at restaurants, including Eberly in Austin, Fearants in Dallas, and Bliss in San Antonio. acornseekers.com

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An Ode to Campfire Cooking

Discovering the joys
of cooking over a fire

story by Paula Disbrowe



ALTHOUGH IT PROBABLY SHOULD HAVE been a requirement, I can't remember if I'd ever built a campfire before taking a job to cook on a guest ranch near Garner State Park. That was more than a decade ago, when my husband David Norman and I moved from Manhattan to a staggeringly beautiful property in the Hill Country. But what we lacked in frontier skills, we made up for in enthusiasm. So we drove our truck over the cattle guard and dove in.

As we settled into the rhythm of ranch life, lighting fires became mostly David's job—a charge that he relished. This was mainly because of how our duties were divided early on. I was typically in the kitchen, whisking vinaigrettes, shaking skilletts, and juggling guests while David was happily “out back” gathering wood for his bread oven, grilling chicken thighs, or building a campfire for evening s'mores (and I'm quite certain, drinking a couple of beers on the sly). David rose at dawn to orchestrate weekly campfire breakfasts—biscuits baked in a Dutch oven, *huevos* fried to order, and boiled coffee thick enough to chew.

That's the cool thing about grilling: The deep, complex flavors created by cooking over fire don't need fussy adornments.

Meanwhile, I was in the lodge making salsa, prepping dinner, and squashing the occasional scorpion.

I've always gravitated to the pleasures of a roaring fire and the wafting aroma of wood smoke. But back then, a fire was a reward after my kitchen duties were complete—not necessarily a means to dinner.

When we transitioned a few years later to urban life in Austin, our rustic grill—a heavy, round piece of equipment with a hinged grate—became a relic of our former life and the source of the occasional Saturday-night rib-eye.

But my connection to campfires was rekindled when our children were born. As they grew, so did our desire to explore Texas' state parks and the



A fire-kissed steak with mushrooms makes an easy dinner once you've mastered your grill. (And what joy is the learning process!)

RECIPE

PEDERNALES FALLS POTATOES

Serves 4

Is there a better package to open than one containing tender potatoes, browned onions, and creamy goat cheese? We've made these potato-and-cheese packets at home as a satisfying main course and on camping trips to serve with grilled steak or pork chops. The prosciutto is optional, but it adds incredible flavor, and the fat bastes the potatoes as they cook.

- ♦ 2 pounds Yukon gold potatoes, unpeeled and sliced 1/4-inch thick
- ♦ 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
- ♦ 1/2 cup olive oil
- ♦ 2 teaspoons freshly chopped thyme or oregano leaves
- ♦ Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ♦ 4 ounces fresh goat cheese
- ♦ 1/2 pint cherry tomatoes (yellow, orange, or red), halved
- ♦ 4 to 8 thin slices prosciutto (optional)

1. Prepare a charcoal grill for two-zone cooking and build a medium fire, or heat a gas grill to medium-high. Carefully wipe the preheated grates with a lightly oiled paper towel. Using a grill brush, scrape the grill grates clean, then carefully wipe with a lightly oiled towel again.

2. In a large bowl, generously season the potatoes, onion, olive oil, and thyme with salt and pepper and toss to combine. Cut four sheets of heavy-duty aluminum foil into 14- by 8-inch rectangles and place them shiny side down. Scoop one-quarter of the potato mixture in the middle. Top with a quarter of the goat cheese and prosciutto. Fold the top half of the foil over the potatoes and bring the top and bottom edges together. Fold the edges over several times to make a tight seal. Prepare the remaining packages the same way.

3. When you're ready to cook, place the foil packages on the grate over indirect heat. Close the grill (venting appropriately for indirect cooking) and cook, rotating every now and then for even cooking, until the packets are puffed and the potatoes are tender, 30 to 40 minutes. To test for doneness, open 1 small corner of a packet (using caution as escaping steam will be very hot) and use a paring knife to pierce (and/or taste) a portion. Serve warm.



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magnificent landscapes and rivers that we knew from songs by Lyle Lovett, Guy Clark, and Joe Ely. With our little native Texans in tow, we ventured out family-style, stuffing the car with packed coolers, bug spray, stuffed animals, tequila, limes, and other weekend essentials.

Naturally, I obsessed about the food. Before each trip, I dreamed up

complicated menus and photograph-worthy meals (who cares that no one has socks to wear, we have twinkly lights and flaky salt!). In my transition from ranch chef to Sherpa, I didn't consider hungry kids, unpredictable weather, and limitations of campsite grills as I planned dinner.

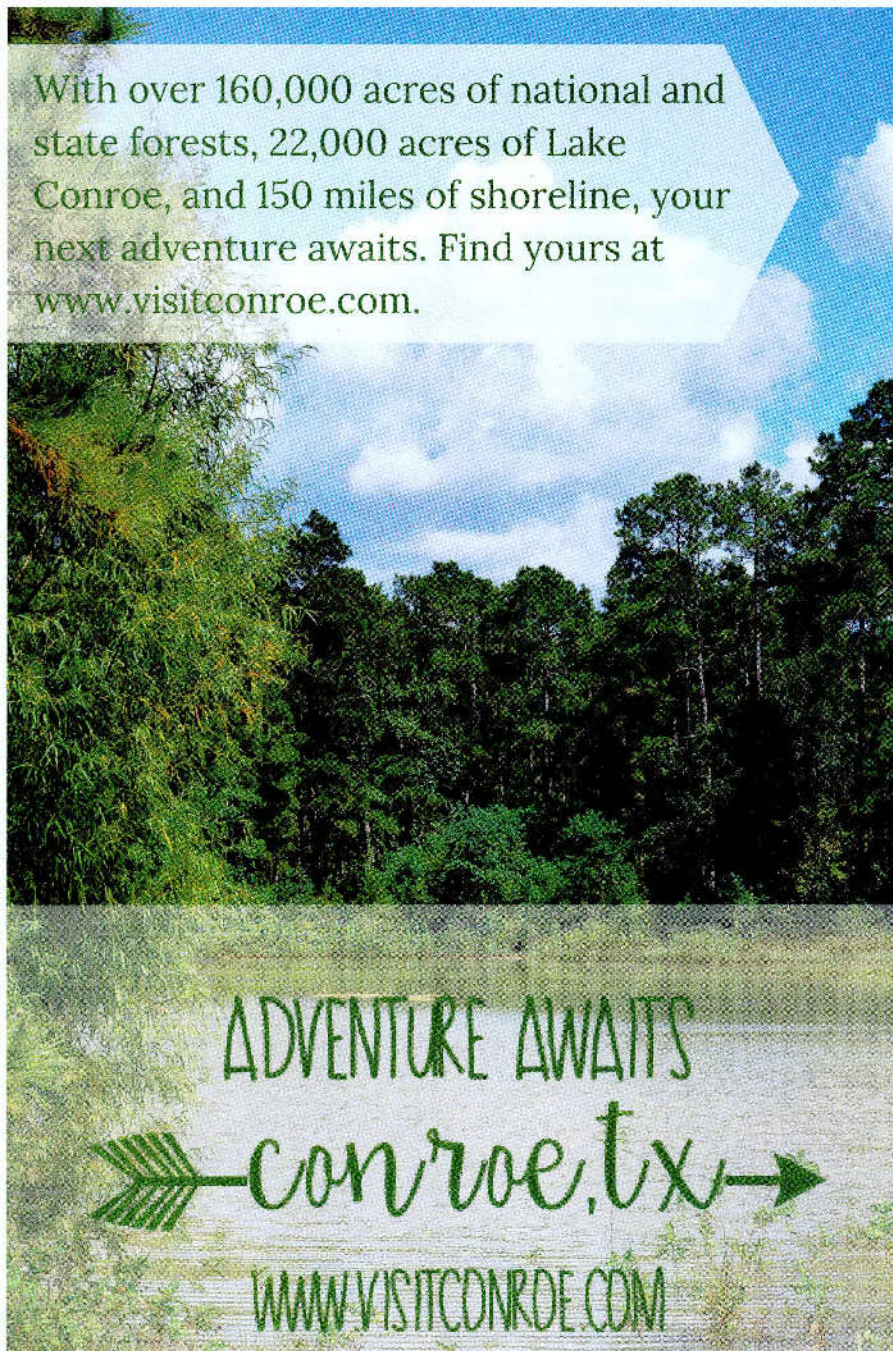
When we went to Inks Lake, for instance, I served a pretty fruit salad in

carved melon cups, but I couldn't pull together my dinner idea (grilled farmer's market carrots and strip steak) before my kids lost interest. A few months later, I scorched a fancy steak at Pedernales Falls. When we spent Thanksgiving at Enchanted Rock, dinner ran so late after tent-wrangling that chips and salsa became a better option.

Then came the game changer. As I developed my just-released cookbook, *Any Night Grilling* (Ten Speed Press), I undertook several months of firing up dinner on our charcoal and gas grills. David and I swapped roles as I signed on as backyard cook while he graciously held down the fort inside. And so began several months of nightly grilling everything from flatbreads and whole fish to leg of lamb. What began as somewhat of a scramble settled into a steady rhythm, with smarter game plans, confidence in building and managing fires, and recipes that home cooks can knock out any day of the week. That's the cool thing about grilling: It creates big flavors quickly—and it's also a whole lot of fun.

Needless to say, I've upped my grill game. These days, the whiff of a wood fire makes me yearn to cook, and I know how to plan accordingly. Whether it's dinner on the back porch or in the woods, I keep my menu simple, as the complex, smoky flavors created by grilling don't require a lot of additional flourish. I pack the basics (tongs, bread knife, cutting board, olive oil, salt and pepper, and of course—a lime squeezer) and place meat on the hot grates when the coals are glowing red and covered with gray ash. Then I feel confident moving it around the heat as needed for even cooking and to avoid flare-ups.

It's not always perfect. Like making paella or the perfect pic crust, nailing the precise doneness of, say, a whole grill-roasted chicken or smoked duck is a lifetime pursuit. But that's just fine—near the warmth of a fire, with family and friends in tow, all is well. **L**



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Let's Meet at the Pub

"Boogie Woogie" Wednesdays enliven downtown Marshall

story by Paul McDonnold



INSIDE THE OS2 RESTAURANT AND PUB, I AWAIT BEEF tenderloin medallions with roasted asparagus and mashed potatoes on the side. Through the front window, the blond-brick Harrison County Courthouse sits atop a raised oval of lawn. To the north are the railroad tracks and the historic train station. It's a regular evening in Marshall, but as I sip a glass of iced tea, the question in my mind seems outlandish.

Was Marshall really an important cultural incubator of modern Americana?

The answer is assuredly yes. After extensive scholarly research and personal interviews, in 2004, San Antonio-based musicologist Dr. John Tennison identified Marshall as the most likely geographic epicenter of a style of music called "boogie woogie." This style, characterized by a heavily percussive "barrelhouse" piano with a left-handed rhythm, was created in the 1870s by former slaves who worked in area logging

San Antonio-based musicologist Dr. John Tennison has identified Marshall as the most likely geographic epicenter of a style of music called "boogie woogie."

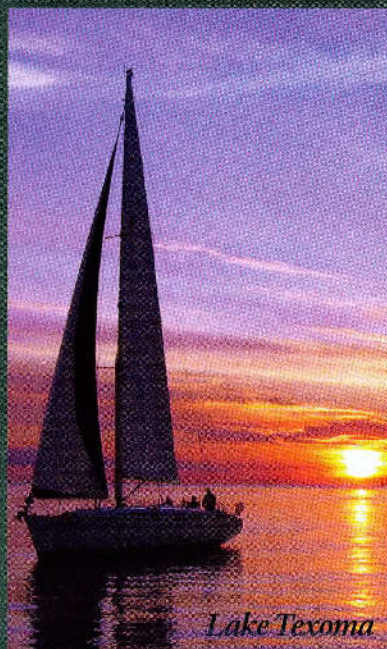
camp, clearing trees and laying iron for the steam trains that would transform life on the frontier.

After simmering a few decades, boogie woogie became a musical fad in the 1930s, leading to big-band hits such as "The Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B." It influenced the jazz and blues genres as well—through them altering country and gospel—then begat the genre known as jump blues in the 1940s. Jump blues helped spin the cultural hurricane of rock 'n' roll in the 1950s, under the influence of which we still live today.

That's the artistic genealogy, roughly

Get on the dance floor and boogie! The OS2 Restaurant and Pub's popular Boogie Woogie Wednesdays highlight a genre born in Marshall.

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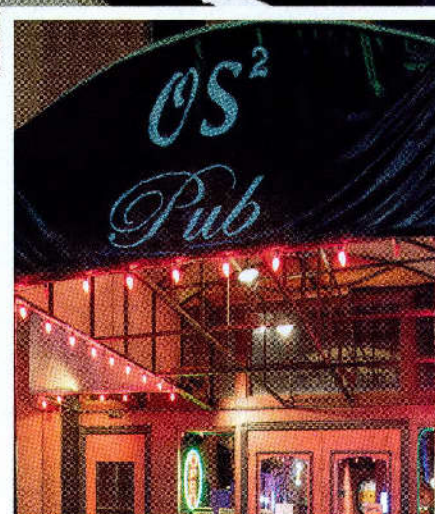


Robin and The Mystics honor the legacy of the late musician Omar Sharriff, Marshall's boogie woogie artist-in-residence. The food at OS2 hits the right note, too.

speaking. But what exactly is boogie woogie?

"If your feet are tapping, then it's boogie woogie," says Jack Canson, a Marshall native who met Tennison in 2009 through a mutual acquaintance. Inspired by Tennison's research, Canson and his wife, Nancy, were bitten by the boogie woogie bug. They developed a website, BoogieWoogieMarshall.com, and eventually contracted with the city to promote boogie woogie concerts and events in Marshall.

In 2010, Tennison made contact with a legendary boogie woogie and blues artist from Marshall named Omar Sharriff, aka Dave Alexander, who was living in obscurity in California. Other than an old digital piano, the man who was once named by *Contemporary Keyboard* magazine as one of the world's greatest living blues pianists had little to his name. The city of Marshall convinced him to



move back home to be an artist-in-residence. Sharriff could still play boogie woogie piano, and he gave a number of concerts in Marshall before passing away in 2012. In 2011, NPR's *All Things Considered* ran a story about Tennison's research and the musical revival it ignited.

In the midst of Sharriff's residency, Canson approached his friend Jan Black, who had been bringing in live music to her restaurant and pub on the courthouse square, OS2. Canson thought she could draw new customers downtown with boogie woogie, which appeals to a different audience



than some other genres. Boogie Woogie Wednesdays soon began at OS2 and have endured. Black says they are a natural fit.

Originally from Tennessee, Black began working in restaurants as a college student and eventually made her

Despite the success of the business' live-music offerings, food and drink are the main attractions here most nights.

way to Texas to co-own the Oxford Street restaurant in Longview. When the opportunity to manage a restaurant in a late-1800s building on nearby Marshall's square came up in 2005, she jumped at the chance, and OS2 was born. (The name, a play on "Oxford Street, squared" soon morphed to the simple OS2.)

Despite the success of the business' live-music offerings, food and drink are the main attractions here most

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nights. The menu features steak, chicken, and seafood dishes as well as pizza, sandwiches, and vegan options. Exposed brick walls and antique ceiling tiles give a sense of the building's history; over the years, the space has housed saloons, a billiards parlor, and—most famously—the Woolworth's drugstore that figured prominently in Marshall's 1960 Civil Rights protests.

As I await my entrée, a piping-hot loaf of bread arrives at my table with a crock of whipped butter. The bread cracks apart to reveal a crisp crust and an airy interior with a pleasantly nutty aroma. A soup course—lobster bisque (\$5.25)—soon arrives in a wide-brimmed bowl. The surface is as golden as an egg yolk, with a dusting of chopped parsley, and a spoonful feels smooth as silk on the tongue. My entrée, beef tenderloin medallions (\$16.95), arrive with a cup of buttery

Concerts on Wednesday and Saturday nights bring in artists from a variety of genres in addition to boogie woogie players; on any given night you might find blues, rock, country, or jazz.

Béarnaise sauce for dipping, with a mound of coarsely mashed potatoes and gravy. Roasted asparagus completes the dish, well-seasoned and tender-crisp.

After eating my fill, I venture through a brick archway to the pub, where an upstairs game room offers billiards, shuffleboard, and darts. Downstairs, stools front a long bar, and televisions tuned to sporting events hang in strategic spots. Concerts on Wednesday and Saturday nights bring in artists from a variety of genres in addition to boogie woogie players; on

any given night you might find blues, rock, country, or jazz.

"But most of the music—whether it's R&B, blues, or rock 'n' roll—it all comes indirectly from boogie woogie," Black says.

I can't claim to hear those connections in a precise, technical sense. But as I imagine the virgin forests of East Texas 150 years ago, the logging camps, and the rowdy barrel houses where workers unwound at the end of long days, I feel a certain energy. Fingers danced on the keys of upright pianos, transmitting feelings into vectors of sound. How amazing that a sound, a Marshall sound, would carry not only across the room but across musical history. **L**



OS2 RESTAURANT & PUB

is at 105 E. Houston St. in Marshall. Call **903-938-7700**; os2marshall.com.

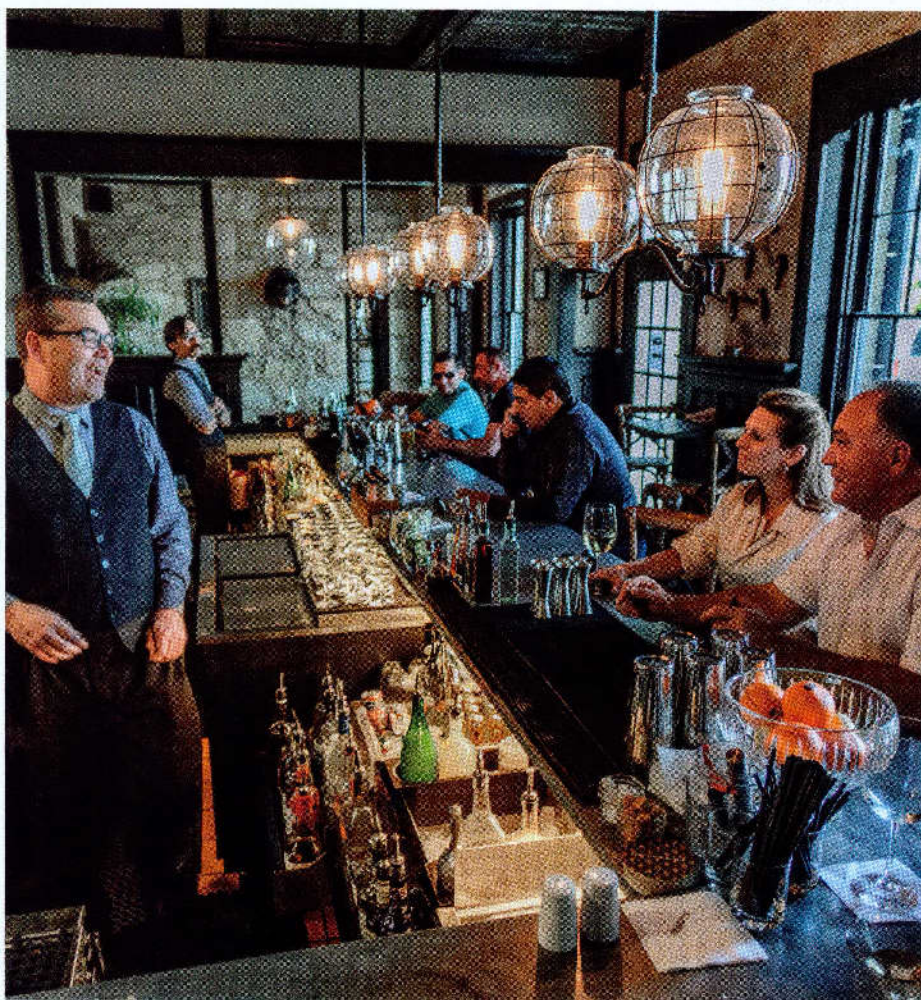


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Peggy's Knows Steaks

Unfussy fine dining in Boerne

story by Clayton Maxwell

“LOOK AT THAT MARBLING! THIS IS THE ROLLS-Royce of steaks!” a man sitting near me booms, caught in a carnivore's bliss. We are burrowed at the bar at Peggy's on the Green, the Boerne eatery that's taken the town to a new culinary frontier, and he'd just cut into a prime rib about 2 inches thick, a steak for which Chef Mark Bohanan is renowned. “I feel like a Michelin-starred restaurant has come to Boerne!” he pretty much shouts to everyone in the room.

While impressed by his enthusiasm, I am in my own state of reverie, just having sipped from my margarita. The fresh lime, top-shelf tequila, orange liqueur, and citrus-salt rim comingle deliciously. It's easy to relax in this handsome barroom adjacent

While the décor at Peggy's might suggest the English countryside, the cuisine comes from deep in the heart of Texas.

to the main dining room.

Outfitted like a Texas gentleman's parlor, with a coffered ceiling, limestone walls, and cozy couches for tête-à-têtes, it's as warming to the soul as the tequila. While I'm here tonight to enjoy drinks with a friend, I take mental note: I will come back soon to Peggy's on the Green, and I will come hungry.

In a few months I return, this time with my husband and children, ages 12 and 8. We are embarking on a family pilgrimage, driving down from Austin for a whole night of it. I've reserved the Texas Room at Ye Kendall Inn, the thoughtfully restored 1859 home-turned-historic hotel adjacent to Peggy's, so that we can all tumble into bed afterward. Nobody should have to drive very far after a steak dinner.

For those of us who don't live nearby, Peggy's hits the mark as a destination restaurant—an eatery so good it's worth a road trip—and its location in a historic little corner of Boerne makes it even more so. The fact that beautiful Cibolo Creek runs just steps away from the restaurant's welcoming wrap-around porch is icing on the cake.

Before our feast, we check in to Ye Kendall Inn; with an old-timey school desk and a big metal washtub, the Texas Room gives the kids a chance to marvel at how life used to be here. We then venture on to Cibolo Creek, where they get their wiggles out running along the grassy banks. A local man feeding birds offers them scoops of grain for the ducks and mallards, which gulp it out of their hands and honk for more. This blood-pumping outdoor gambol makes an ideal prelude for our meal.

We spruce up for our 6:30 reservation. Peggy's isn't fussy, but it is elegant, so I bribe my son with a promise of dessert to swap his Cowboys' jersey for a button-down. A hostess escorts us through the well-appointed dining room; with its dark wood molding and

San Antonio restaurateur Mark Bohanan brings his signature steaks—and world-class cocktail offerings—to Boerne.



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subdued floral curtains, it feels like an upscale English tavern. Once seated at our table, big white napkins in our laps, we can tell right away we're in for something special.

While the décor at Peggy's might suggest the English countryside, the cuisine comes from deep in the heart of Texas. To be precise, it comes from deep in the heart of Bohanan's family kitchen. Bohanan, San Antonio's prince of prime beef, has long been equated with the melt-in-your-mouth steaks served at his eponymous steakhouse in downtown San Antonio.

Peggy's, which he opened in 2016, also stars beef, but in the friendly company of comfort food: flaky butter-milk biscuits with honey butter, smoky pulled-chicken soup, Andouille shrimp and grits. These dishes harken from Bohanan's childhood in Jourdanton, where he grew up watching his mother

and grandmother in the kitchen. Epitomizing this Southern heritage, my son's rich and creamy mac-n-cheese and my daughter's maple-glazed pork chops are both served in cast-iron skillets set hot on the table. Such details recall a vision of the country past; you can almost hear a rooster in the yard and the screened-porch door slam.

These dishes harken from Bohanan's childhood in Jourdanton, where he grew up watching his mother and grandmother in the kitchen.

But, like Boerne, Peggy's straddles the rural and the urban. San Antonio has grown to meet this town of almost 15,000 people, so much so that it's unclear where the city ends and the town begins. The food at Peggy's also blurs boundaries. Take the most popular appetizer on the

Fried quail and beautifully grilled, cross-hatched steaks star on the well-rounded menu.



menu—chicken-fried quail legs atop cornmeal johnny-cakes (\$13.95), a Southern interpretation of what might otherwise be known as pancakes. Drizzled with a maple-cayenne syrup that hits the sweet and spicy balance just right, this dish has complex flavors that blow out diners' expectations of what comfort food can do. And so it is with the cremi mushroom side dish (\$12.95), the

biggest surprise of the meal. Cooked in a red-wine reduction sauce, these little fungi are so shockingly rich that we say there is no way they could be vegetables. And yet, they are. And the kids gobble them up.

And then there is the service, which strikes a balance between urban polish and small-town bonhomie. Our waitress presents us with a black box of shiny steak knives so we can select our own implements—a small gesture that adds big drama to our experience. And as the sommelier pours our malbec into a shapely carafe, he tells us how he moved to Boerne from San Antonio before Peggy's, but its opening has been like a dream come true. "I get world-quality wines and food," he tells us, "but here in a beautiful town. It's the best of both worlds."

And what about my prime rib, the carnivore experience I had been waiting for ever since my first visit? My



**PEGGY'S
ON THE GREEN**

is at 128 W. Blanco Road in Boerne.
Call **830-572-5000**;
peggysonthegreen.com.

mesquite-smoked cut of Allen Brothers' Beef, the premium meat purveyors from Chicago, is tender throughout, with a taste so complex I can't help but close my eyes while I chew.

As the grand finale, we fork into a silky slice of chess pie. Decked out with salted caramel and whipped cream, it's a snazzed-up version of the pies I imagine once graced the windowsills at Bohanan's mother's house. Drowsy with contentment, the four of us walk next door to our room and surrender to our comfortable beds. Peggy's had earned its title as a destination restaurant—and it now has a respected place in the family memory book. **L**



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TO SOAK UP EVERY SECOND
OF THE SEASON

BY **KIMYA KAVEHKAR** AND **JANE KELLOGG MURRAY**
ILLUSTRATIONS BY **JAKOB HINRICHS**



SOME TEXANS

AREN'T CONTENT WITH A LIFE WELL LIVED, THEY WANT HARD EVIDENCE: THE FAMILY VACATION PHOTOS, A SOUVENIR TO STICK ON THE SHELF, THEIR NAME IN A REGISTER AT THE HIGHEST POINT IN TEXAS. TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE THOSE GOALS, WE'VE COMPILED A LIST OF ONLY-IN-OUR-STATE PURSUITS YOU NEED TO CHECK OFF BEFORE ANOTHER SUMMER SPEEDS BY. SOME OF TEXAS' GREATEST ADVENTURES REQUIRE PHYSICAL CHALLENGE (THE WORLD'S TOUGHEST CANOE RACE) AND SOME MAY REQUIRE GETTING OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE (GOAT YOGA), WHILE OTHERS ARE SIMPLY EXCUSES TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL TEXAS HAS TO OFFER (WATERPARKS, MUSEUMS, SWIMMING HOLES, AND OLD-FASHIONED DR PEPPER FLOATS). THIS IS A PACKED LIST—MORE THAN 100 IDEAS TO FILL THE 93 DAYS OF SUMMER—BUT THE REWARD WILL BE WELL WORTH THE EFFORT. TAKE NOTE, THEN TAKE OFF.

ON THE WATER

HANG 10, DUDE

Whether you're a beach bum who can't wait to wax up your board or a curious beginner, catching waves makes your Texas summer all the more righteous. Some of the best surfing destinations in the state include Matagorda Bay, North Jetty on South Padre Island, Boca Chica Beach, Jamaica Beach in Galveston, and the neighboring towns of Quintana and Surfside Beach. Most of these towns have vendors offering gear and lessons for beginners. If you don't want to work for your waves, **NLand Surf Park** in Austin offers hourly rates (as well as seasonal and annual memberships) for access to its lagoon, which features a wave-making machine that creates consistent surf at three levels of difficulty. The facility also offers lessons, an observation area, a sand beach, brewery, and restaurant, so you can have a full day of fun. For those who want to engage in surf culture without getting on a board, the **Texas Surf Museum** features exhibits on Gulf Coast female surfers, surfing films, and photography. nlandsurfpark.com; texassurfmuseum.org



ON THE WATER



Frio River

GO WITH THE FLOW

Fill up a cooler and grab your pals for a leisurely float down one of Texas' refreshing rivers. Head to Concan to enjoy the **Frio River**, trek to San Marcos to check out the youthful spirit of the **San Marcos River**, or decamp to New Braunfels to float the **Comal River**. Riverside outfitters will prep you for the relaxing float ahead. Don't forget to reapply sunscreen!

JUMP OFF A CLIFF

Possum Kingdom Lake—the Brazos River basin's first water supply reservoir—sparkles with blue waters and 310 miles of shoreline. But its most striking feature looms dramatically over the water on the southern edge of the lake: two towering cliffs that rise 90 feet on either side—appropriately named Hell's Gate. Like flies to honey, the world's best competitive cliff divers converge here in the summer for the Red Bull Cliff Diving

World Series (June 2). The reservoir's bone-chilling waters (about 53 degrees) aren't reserved for thrill-seekers; spectators can watch the cliff-diving action from boats, kayaks, and paddleboards and beat the Texas heat with a plunge in the lake from a more sensible height. possunkingdomlake.com

PADDLE THE CITIES

Kayaking novices and experts will find much to love when going out on **Lady Bird Lake** in Austin, **Buffalo Bayou** in Houston, and the **Trinity River** in Fort Worth. No need to buy your own equipment or venture out into the wild unknown—rental shops provide boats, life vests, and instruction. All you have to do is sit back and enjoy the cool urban views—oh, and paddle of course.



LAZE ON THE RIVER

Downstream from the Highland Lakes, the **Colorado River in Bastrop** winds through a quiet stretch of Texas' Blackland Prairie that makes for relaxing paddling. Forests and pastures line the river, and several sandbars and islands provide overnight camping stops between Webberville Park and Columbus. Avoid camping on the riverbanks though, as almost all of them are private property.

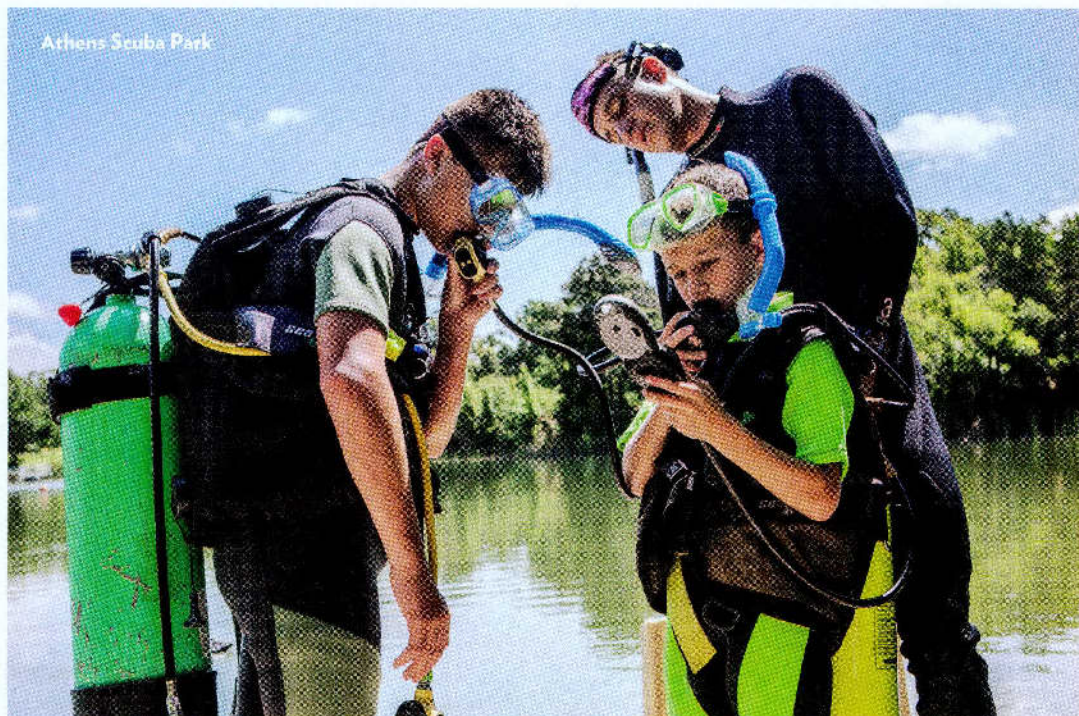
WATCH JAWS ON THE WATER

Even in the tame waters of Lake Travis, it's easy to feel on edge when John Williams' score for *Jaws* starts. That adrenaline rush is why movie-lovers head to **Alamo Drafthouse's annual Jaws on the Water** events at Volente Beach in Austin. Each viewer gets a keepsake tube to float in while a giant screen plays the 1975 Spielberg classic. To keep things interesting, scuba divers have been known to pinch and tickle unsuspecting audience members underwater. Check website for dates. drafthouse.com

PARK IT AT A WATERPARK

Whether you seek out the most harrowing, jaw-dropping slides or enjoy the chill vibe of a lazy river, Texas water parks offer something for everyone. There are also cool times to be found at **Typhoon Texas** in Katy, **Great Wolf Lodge** in Grapevine, **Six Flags**

Athens Scuba Park



Six Flags Hurricane Harbor in Arlington, and Wet 'N' Wild Splashtown in El Paso. With its 70 acres of tube chutes, slides, and pools, the original Schlitterbahn in New Braunfels is a Texas summertime rite of passage. Water-sport enthusiasts might find a refreshing challenge in wakeboarding parks like BSR Cable Park in Waco and Texas Ski Ranch in New Braunfels.

TAKE A DEEP DIVE

Scuba-diving, often associated with tropical destinations, is possible (and

fun!) in Texas. In East Texas, Athens Scuba Park features a dive shop for equipment and training courses on everything from rescue diving to night diving, and 35 sunken wrecks to discover in both an indoor pool and an outdoor manmade lake. At Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, with the help of a dive charter company, you'll experience a variety of sea life as you delve into the depths of the Gulf of Mexico 100 miles offshore. athensscubapark.com; flowergarden.noaa.gov



DIVE IN

Can you truly experience summer in Texas if you don't swim in a spring-fed swimming hole? Some of our favorites include San Solomon Springs in West Texas, Barton Springs in Austin, Blue Hole in Wimberley, Fort Clark Springs in Brackettville, and Hancock Springs in Lampasas.

CHEER ON CANOERS

With 260 miles of paddling in the relentless summer heat, the Texas Water Safari is known as "the world's toughest canoe race." Starting June 9, competitors have four days and four hours to navigate the San Marcos River's rocky hazards, rapids, portages, and spillways from the headwaters in San Marcos to the shrimping town of Seadrift on the Texas coast. texaswatersafari.org

PADDLEBOARD ON LAKE MARBLE FALLS

Jolly Rodgers Paddle Co. offers a sublime stand-up paddleboarding experience on the sparkling waters of Lake Marble Falls. Once you get the hang of it, head out for one of the rental company's frequent special events. "Dive In Movie Nights" feature classics like *The Sandlot* for viewers floating in the lake. jollyrodgersstx.com



ADMIRE SAN ANGELO'S LILIES

It might seem odd to find water lilies in arid West Texas, but in San Angelo's Civic League Park, seven raised ponds display hundreds of varieties. The plants are the life work of Ken Landon, who has traveled the world collecting seeds of rare lilies, many of which are now extinct in their native countries. Celebrate the blooms at San Angelo Lilyfest on Sept. 15. internationalwaterlilycollection.com

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

HOP ABOARD THE IVORY BILL

Experience East Texas' Neches River on one of the *Ivory Bill's* weekly guided tours of the **Big Thicket National Preserve**. The covered pontoon boat explores the diverse flora and fauna of the thicket's swamps and forests, an outing that's typically 10 degrees cooler than hiking the bottomlands on foot. nechesriveradventures.org

CLIMB TO THE TOP OF TEXAS

Hiking **Guadalupe Mountains National Park** is a nice reminder that Texas isn't as flat as some people think. Six peaks in the park top 8,000 feet, including El Capitan, the most famous sight you'll see when entering the park driving north from Van Horn. Nearby Guadalupe Peak is the highest point in Texas at 8,751 feet. Test your legs on the Guadalupe Peak Trail, an 8.4-mile round trip. nps.gov/guano

DON'T FORGET TO WRITE

Don't let the kids have all the fun this summer. Relive the glorious days of sloppy joes, bunk beds, and campfires with a stay at **Camp No Counselors**. Part of a nationwide chain, the Texas version of this adult camp takes place in Hunt, along the scenic Guadalupe River. Just like grade-school camp, activities include archery, arts and crafts, dodgeball, a slip 'n' slide, and a talent show—but with grown-up twists like a Bloody Mary bar at breakfast. "Camp No Counselors

ENJOY THE MOUNTAIN BREEZES

Situated along the southern reach of the Davis Mountains—one of the largest and wettest mountain ranges in the state—the 2,709-acre **Davis Mountains State Park** is a favorite summer getaway for heat-weary Texans because of its high elevation, low humidity, and frequent breezes. Established in the 1930s, the park's CCC-built Indian Lodge will reopen in June after months of renovations. tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/indian-lodge



GLIDE IN WEST TEXAS

See Marfa's breathtaking desert landscape from a whole new perspective by hopping on one of Marfa Gliders' aircrafts. Make an appointment online to ride shotgun and enjoy the view while a certified pilot takes the wheel. flygliders.com

yoga classes, 20- to 85-mile cycling trips, runs, and hikes of various levels of difficulty. Lest you think it's all a grueling, sweat-soaked affair, fun outings like viewing the Marfa Lights and swimming in San Solomon Springs at Balmorhea State Park are also on the schedule. fitnesscamp.org

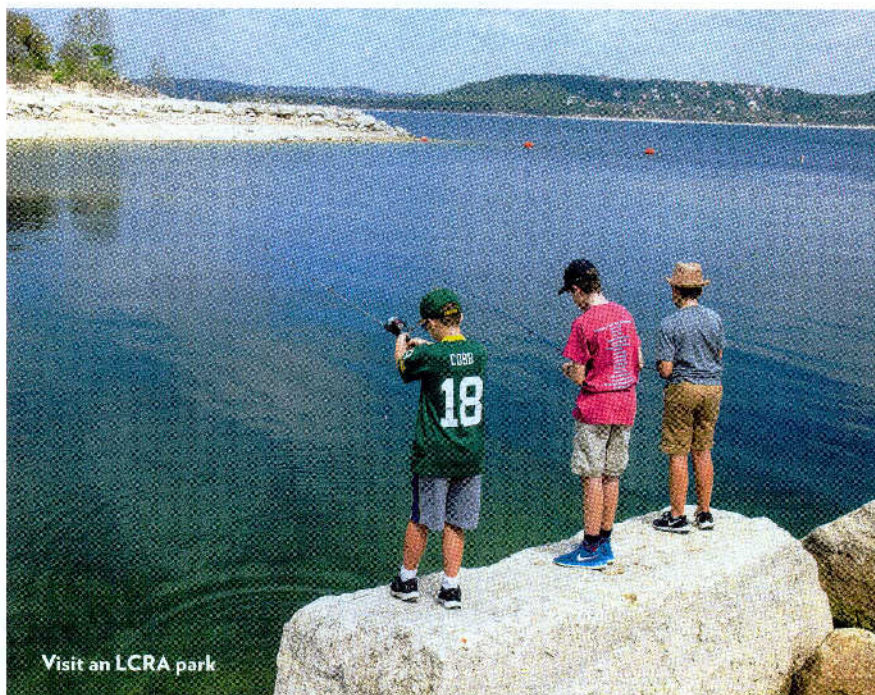
VISIT AN LCRA PARK

Established in Depression-era Texas, the Lower Colorado River Authority operates 41 parks encompassing more than 11,000 acres—from the Cedar Point Recreation Area along the north shore of Lake Buchanan to the isolated beaches of Matagorda Bay Nature Park, which offers guided horseback riding, beachcombing, and birding. The legendary Highland Lakes—Inks, Buchanan, LBJ, Marble Falls, Travis, and Austin—sparkle in the Central Texas summer sun. The biggest of the collection, Lake Buchanan, offers nice pebble beaches on its western shore, perfectly primed for swimming, water skiing, canoeing, and windsurfing. lcra.org

was created to give adults a chance to step away from their lives at work and home, and get in touch with the fun of being kids again, along with the fun parts of being an adult," says Dave Kushner, vice president of community engagement. Who knows? You might find a pen pal or develop a lifelong friendship with your bunkmates. Upcoming sessions run May 10-13, and Oct. 5-8 and 11-14. campnocounselors.com

TAKE YOUR FITNESS TO NEW HEIGHTS

Not for the faint of heart, the Davis Mountains Fitness and Training Camp whips amateur athletes into shape over the course of a week in August. Every summer, about 100 fitness enthusiasts gather at Prude Ranch to partake in a wide range of daily activities, like early-morning



EAT AND DRINK



Black's BBQ

EAT YOUR WAY THROUGH THE BARBECUE CAPITAL OF TEXAS

Lockhart is home to three of Texas' most legendary barbecue joints: **Kreuz Market** (go for the sausage, stay for the smoky pork chops), **Black's BBQ** (dinosaur beef rib, anyone?), and **Smitty's Market** (lines form for a taste of its shoulder clod, brisket, hot links, and pork ribs). Why not try all three in a day? lockhartchamber.com/pages/bbqcapitaloftexas

TRY A PIÑA PREPARADA

Piñas preparadas satisfy your inner child, but you might think twice about serving one to a kid. The South Texas specialties feature a hollowed-out pineapple filled with a variety of fruits, gummy bears, sour worms, and other candies, all sprinkled with a dusting of chili-lime powder, then filled with Topo Chico or malt liquor. Its brazen ingredients and liberal use of sugar make for a summer temptation that's worth the indulgence. Try one in Laredo at **La Laguna** or **Picca Dilly's**.



FILL UP AT A FOOD HALL

Following a trend in cities like Atlanta and Seattle, food halls are popping up across Texas. These convivial food courts feature several vendors in a large, shared space serving varied cuisines—like a mess hall but with more pizzazz (and a bar). **The Bottling Department** at The Pearl in San Antonio

features burgers by Fletcher's and doughnuts by Maybelle's; **Fareground** in Austin dishes out tacos by Dai Due and pretzels from Easy Tiger; **Conservery** in Houston serves up poke and pizza ("European-style" Finn Hall is set to open later this year); and **The Market** in Dallas has everything from

seafood to macarons. bottlingdept.com; faregroundaustin.com; conservatoryhtx.com; dallasfarmersmarket.org/the-market

IMBIBE IN THE HILL COUNTRY

Brew buffs will find much to love at award-winning Hill Country breweries like **Real Ale Brewing Co.** in Blanco, **Twisted X Brewing** in Dripping Springs, **Pecan Street Brewing** in Johnson City, and **Seguin Brewing Company** in Seguin. The **Hill Country Craft Beer Trail** offers five different shuttles for a safe and fun way to experience it all. hillcountrycraftbeertrail.com

DRINK A DR PEPPER FLOAT

As you tour the **Dr Pepper Museum** in Waco and delve into the history of this homegrown Texas soda, you might find yourself salivating. Lucky for you, the museum's **Frosty's Soda Shop** serves everything from chili dogs to ice cream sundaes. But nothing beats an old-fashioned float, made with hand-pumped Dr Pepper and a scoop of Blue Bell vanilla ice cream. drpeppermuseum.com



PICK YOUR OWN TEXAS FRUIT

Summer in Texas means farm-fresh fruits will be ripe for the picking. Since 1982, Texans have been picking their own blueberries at **Blueberry Hill Farms** in Edom. At **Sweet Berry Farms** in Marble Falls, blackberries should be ready for harvest in May, while peaches and nectarines at **Sweet Eats Fruit Farm** in Granger ripen late May through August. blueberryhillfarms.com; sweetberryfarm.com; sweeteats.com

Blueberry Hill Farm's Blueberry Streusel Muffins

Yield: one dozen

Muffins:

1/3 cup sugar
1/4 cup butter or margarine, softened
1 egg, beaten
2 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
4 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup milk
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
In a mixing bowl, cream together sugar and butter. Add egg; mix well. Combine flour,

baking powder, and salt; add to creamed mixture alternately with milk. Stir in vanilla. Fold in blueberries. Fill 12 greased or paper-lined muffin cups two-thirds full.

Streusel:

1/2 cup sugar
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/4 cup butter or margarine
In a small bowl, combine sugar, flour, and cinnamon; cut in butter until crumbly, then sprinkle mixture over muffins. Bake at 375 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes or until browned; test with toothpick.





SHAKE UP THE SOTOL

If **Desert Door** has anything to say about it, sotel will someday be to Texas what bourbon is to Kentucky. The Driftwood-based distillery, which opened in December, crafts sotel from the ubiquitous West Texas plant of the same name. Take a tour, take home a bottle, and try this recipe:

Desert Door Paloma

Ingredients:

- 2 oz. Desert Door Original Sotel
- 3/4 oz. fresh grapefruit juice
- 1/2 oz. fresh lime juice
- 1/4 oz. agave nectar
- Splash of grapefruit soda

Directions:

Combine all ingredients except soda into shaker. Add ice and shake vigorously for 8-10 seconds, then fine strain in a rocks glass with fresh ice, and top with soda. Garnish with a grapefruit wheel. desertdoor.com



GRAPE STOMP

In a classic episode of *I Love Lucy*, our favorite comedic heroine visits a vineyard for some barefoot grape-stomping, only to get into a juicy skirmish with an angry local. In Fredericksburg, **Becker Vineyards** pays homage with its annual **Lucy and the Italian Woman Costume Contest** (Sept. 2), the culmination of two weekends of grape-stomping. beckervineyards.com



TOUR THE BLUE BELL CREAMERY

Blue Bell fans travel from all over to see the making of their favorite ice cream. At **The Little Creamery** in Brenham, visitors can watch the manufacturing process from an observation deck while attendants narrate and provide fun facts, and then check out the Visitors Center to read up on the company's history and see artifacts. The self-guided tours conclude with \$1 scoops from the parlor. In addition to regular favorites, the creamery also serves special flavors like Milk 'n' Cookies and Cake Batter. bluebell.com

INDULGE IN INNOVATIVE ICE CREAM

Sure, vanilla, chocolate, and rocky road satisfy—but a crop of upstart ice cream shops are pushing the cup and cone with new adventurous flavors. Sample the slightly spicy strawlepeño from **Melt Ice Creams** in Fort Worth, blueberry lavender from **The Latest Scoop** in San Angelo, Rice Krispie treat from **A La Mode Gelateria** in Corpus Christi, duck fat caramel from **Heritage Creamery** in Waco, and roasted beets and fresh mint from **Lick Honest Ice Creams** in Austin and San Antonio. melticecreams.com; latestscoopicecream.com; alamodelgelateria.com; heritagecreamery.com; ilikelick.com

Lick Honest Ice Creams

Photos: © Eric W. Pohl, Clark Crenshaw (right)

FAMILY FRIENDLY

GAZE AT THE STARS

It may still be warm when the sun goes down, but nighttime activities offer a welcome reprieve from the blazing sun. George Observatory in Needville, only open on Saturdays, has three telescopes for public use and a planetarium with educational exhibits. The University of Texas McDonald Observatory high up in the Davis Mountains offers daytime tours, solar viewings, and star parties. hmns.org/george-observatory; mcdonaldobservatory.org

FLY A KITE ON SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

There's something joyful about looking out across the Laguna Madre and seeing hundreds of kites soaring over the Gulf of Mexico. Pick out a colorful kite from the multitude available at **B&S Kites** or rent a kiteboard from a local vendor. In 2017, *National Geographic* named the island as one of the world's 13 greatest kiteboarding spots. sopadre.com

FIND A LIGHTNING WHELK

The lightning whelk—Texas' state shell—is among the Gulf Coast's largest shells at 8 to 16 inches long. Found only on the western part of the Gulf of Mexico, the shell has a long history in the region: Some Native Americans used it as a tool for eating and drinking, while others considered it to be sacred.

BEFRIEND A PENGUIN

In Galveston, **Moody Gardens'** 45-minute Penguin Encounter grants you access to the frigid penguin habitat, along with a biologist-led tour of the food-preparation area, participation in an enrichment activity with the animals, and information about conservation, training, and biology. Or you can always visit penguins at the Aquarium Pyramid, where they reside next door to seals, stingrays, and sharks. moodygardens.com



TAKE YOURSELF OUT TO THE BALL GAME

No doubt the World Series-winning Houston Astros are the hottest ticket this summer—and the most expensive. For more wallet-friendly bat-crackin' entertainment, the minor leagues offer numerous teams to support across Texas. Perks like the lazy river at **Dr Pepper Ballpark** (home of the Frisco RoughRiders) and the gorgeous view of the Gulf of Mexico at Corpus Christi's **Whataburger Field** (home of the Hooks) add to the fun. mlb.com

SPRAY PAINT A CAR AT THE VW SLUG BUG RANCH

An homage to the more famous Cadillac Ranch just 35 miles east, this quirky roadside attraction on Interstate 40 outside of Amarillo touts five Volkswagen Beetles planted nose-down in the dirt. In some ways, it's better than its Cadillac cousin: fewer people, lower profile, and more room to spray paint with abandon.



Dell Diamond, home of the Round Rock Express

BEAT THE CHRISTMAS RUSH

Summer Christmas shopping might sound crazy, but come November you'll be patting yourself on the back. In Laredo, the **Sister Cities Festival** features more than 180 vendors from Mexico (and sometimes China, Australia, Argentina, and Spain) selling handmade items ranging from leather goods to jewelry to pottery. The free, three-day shopping extravaganza has been around for 16 years and runs July 13-15 this year. visitalaredo.com

HEAD UNDERGROUND

Halfway between San Antonio and Big Bend National Park off Interstate

10, the **Caverns of Sonora** is a prime locale to hide from the blazing Texas sun this summer. Keep in mind: While the temperature 155 feet below the surface is 72 degrees year-round, high humidity levels mean it can feel more like 85. cavernsofsonora.com

WATCH THE SUNSET FROM A TREEHOUSE

Cypress Valley Canopy Tours opened in Spicewood in 1999 as the first zip-line canopy tour in the continental United States. Nestled high above a creek, Cypress Valley's two-bedroom "Nest" is an ideal sanctuary for families. "There's something about being off the ground, when you're up in a tree," co-owner David Beilharz explains, "whether it's some instinctive monkey evolution or it's feeling like *The Swiss Family Robinson*." cypressvalleycanopytours.com

REMEMBER—AND REIMAGINE—THE ALAMO

"What if you could stand where Davy Crockett defended the Alamo and could hear the story about how he wound up there?" asks Michael McGar, president of augmented-reality production company Imagine Virtua. Thanks to the combined efforts of coders, artists, and a half-dozen historians, you don't have to wonder anymore.

Imagine Virtua debuted its free **Alamo Reality** app in March, offering



ENCOUNTER ELEPHANTS

Last year, the **Houston Zoo** renovated its **McNair Asian Elephant Habitat**, adding a 7,000-square-foot barn and boardwalk with unobstructed views of the pachyderms bathing in their new 160,000-gallon pool. Summer also brought a new baby elephant, Joy. Now's the ideal time to visit and learn about these highly intelligent animals. houstonzoo.org

users the chance to interact with the hallowed historical site in a new way. At 14 sites on the Alamo grounds, the app recognizes your location and displays 3-D digital images of what the location looked like in 1836, the year of the Alamo battle, including various characters that would have been present. At each location, the app also provides deeper historical context, interpreting the sites as they would have appeared when occupied by Native Americans and then the Spanish.

“You can be engaged on your phone and share it with the people around you and still be in the moment,” says Leslie Komct Ausburn of Imagine Virtua. “The app is designed to elevate the experience.” alamoreality.com



WATCH THE BATS TAKE FLIGHT

As if summoned by a dinner bell, millions of bats spiral out of their dark homes across Texas every summer night—a spectacular show if you know where to look.

More than 15 million Mexican free-tailed bats make **Bracken Cave** near San Antonio the world's largest such colony. In

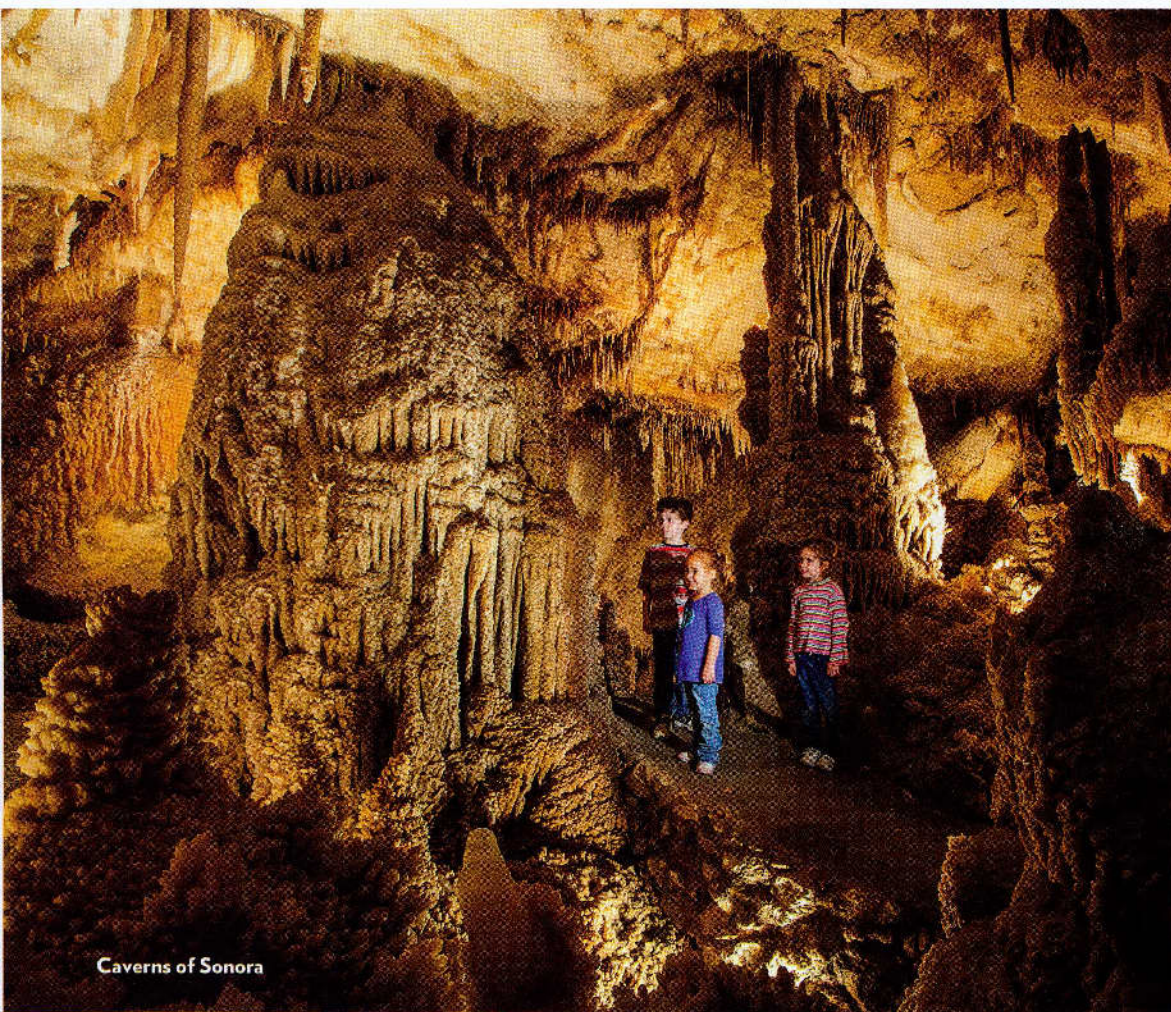
Austin, **Congress Avenue Bridge** is home to more than 1.5 million.

batcon.org/bracken;
batcon.org/congress



SEE THE SUNFLOWERS SHINE ALONG I-35

From May to October, you're likely to witness the golden glow of sunflowers when driving along Texas highways. More often than not, the flowers are part of crops harvested for their seeds. The sunflowers along Interstate 35 near Hillsboro often draw admirers, but keep in mind the fields are mostly on private property.



Caverns of Sonora



SAVE THE DATE

JOIN A PICKIN' CIRCLE IN LUCKENBACH

Pickin' circles are a longstanding tradition in the blink-and-you'll-miss-it, unincorporated town of Luckenbach. On Sunday through Thursday nights, musicians of all sorts and skill levels gather under the oak trees outside the Luckenbach Texas dance hall and general store for an acoustic jam session. If you've never strummed in public, don't be shy; the town's motto says it all: "Everybody's Somebody in Luckenbach."

luckenbachtexas.com

WATCH A MUSICAL IN THE NATION'S SECOND-LARGEST CANYON

Every summer for more than five decades, Palo Duro Canyon has set the stage for **TEXAS!**, an outdoor musical chronicling the Native Americans who called this Panhandle wonder home and the pioneers who settled it. It's theater for the people, but more than anything, it depicts the drama of frontier history in a setting like no other. Shows run June 1-Aug. 18. texas-show.com

SEE THE SEA TURTLES

The Gulf Coast is preparing for summer's most welcome guests: tiny Kemp's ridley sea turtle hatchlings. While most of the endangered turtles' nests are protected from public view, well-timed tourists can witness a release from Malaquite Beach in front of the **Padre Island National Seashore Visitor Center** from mid-June through August. nps.gov/pais

GET COUNTRY ON THE 4TH

In Austin, the red-headed stranger returns to Circuit of The Americas for the 45th annual **Willie Nelson's 4th of July Picnic**, a full day of country music old and new. Meanwhile at Kerrville's Louise Hays Park, **Robert Earl Keen's Fourth on the River** offers free live music and the largest fireworks display in the Hill Country. thecircuit.com; kerrvilles4th.org



SAY WHAT?

Houston's **Comicpalooza** attracts more than 40,000 attendees for all things comic books, sci-fi, anime, gaming, and pop culture. This year's event, May 25-27, promises star power from the likes of Edward James Olmos, Jimmie Walker (dy-no-mite!), and Orlando Jones. comicpalooza.com



EMBRACE THE MOSQUITOES

In most places, to be called “mosquito legs” would be considered an insult. But skinny stems are prize-worthy in Clute, home of the **Great Texas Mosquito Festival** (and its Mosquito Legs competition). The 38th annual event, July 26-28, celebrates the summer nuisance in style with three days of events, including carnival rides, the mosquito chase (a 5K race), barbecue and fajita cookoffs, horseshoe and washer throwing tournaments, and games. Live entertainment caps off each evening with the likes of Jack Ingram and Rodney Atkins. The buzziest sight is the Mosquito Calling competition, in which contestants vie to summon the biggest bloodsucker. “It definitely put us on the map,” says Clute Visitors Bureau Director Angel Cowley. “We’ve embraced it.” mosquitofestival.com

HONOR JUNETEENTH

Celebrated on June 19, the Juneteenth holiday memorializes the day in 1865 when word of the Emancipation Proclamation—signed two-and-a-half years earlier—finally reached Texas. Galveston celebrates with a reading of the Proclamation at the Ashton Villa. Houston’s Emancipation Park is home to one of the oldest Juneteenth festivities in the South—dating to 1872—with parades, church choirs, and vendors. galveston.com; visithoustontexas.com

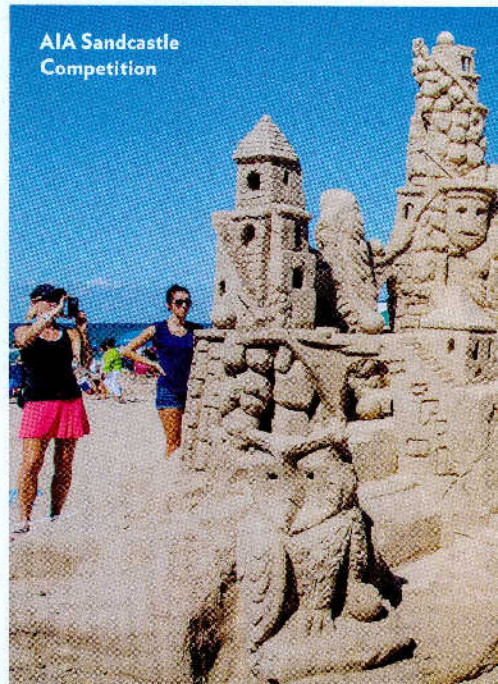
CATCH A CLASSIC MOVIE ON THE SILVER SCREEN IN EL PASO

Celebrate the magic and nostalgia of cinema at the **Plaza Classic Film Festival** (Aug. 2-12), which screens

an array of films in downtown El Paso’s beautifully restored Plaza Theatre. Don’t be surprised if you spy a few famous faces while you’re there; in previous years, celebrities like Al Pacino and Debbie Reynolds have attended screenings of their classic hits. plazaclassic.com

GET SANDY IN GALVESTON

What kind of sandcastle would a professional architect build? Find out on Aug. 25 when more than 60 teams of architects, designers, engineers, and contractors dig in for Galveston’s annual **AIA Sandcastle Competition**. This isn’t your average sandcastle contest—teams often spend months developing a design plan before taking to the beach. aiahouston.org



AIA Sandcastle Competition



SOW THE SEEDS OF SUMMER

Luling will serve up a juicy slice of summer during its annual **Watermelon Thump**, June 21-24. Held since 1954, the festival draws an estimated 30,000 visitors to the small town for live music, a parade, car rally, carnival, and of course, watermelons—topped off with a seed-spitting contest. watermelonthump.com



LOOK TO THE SKY IN LONGVIEW

Now in its 41st year, the **Great Texas Balloon Race** (July 27-29) attracts some of the best balloon pilots in the world to race for the title during the day; evenings are filled with live concerts and a spectacular balloon glow. greattexasballoonrace.com



FROLIC WITH SEA LIFE

Discover magnificent underwater worlds at the spectacular—and air-conditioned—Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi. The expansive facility displays all manner of marine life, from sharks and flamingos to river otters and dolphins, with special programs that involve feeding and interacting with some of the animals and educational programs led by staff members. texasstateaquarium.org

GRAB A DRINK IN PORT A

Less than a year after Hurricane Harvey ravaged the Gulf Coast, Port Aransas is ready to welcome back tourists for the summer. While recovery work remains, many of the town's businesses have already reopened, including **Shorty's Place**—the self-proclaimed “oldest and friend-

liest bar in Port Aransas”—and the pirate-themed **Gaff Bar**, home of the belt sander races. shortysportaransas.com; gotothegaff.com

STAY AT A VINTAGE SUMMER RETREAT

A stay at Alpine's **Antelope Lodge** feels like stepping into a sepia-toned Big Bend postcard. While it still caters to travelers who like its rustic charm, this 1949 motor court relic has been refreshed after a new owner took over this year. New linens, appliances, a renovated lobby, updated plumbing, and improved Wi-Fi add comfort while retaining the lodge's midcentury character. antelopelodge.com

ADMIRE ART IN HOUSTON

Houston's cultural abundance manifests itself in the **Houston Museum District**, home to a whopping 19

museums across 9 square miles. With its location in the heart of the city, the district allows visitors—it saw 6.5 million last year—to truly experience the diversity Houston has to offer.

The institutions are divided into four walkable and cyclable zones: Those with kids in tow might enjoy Zone 4, which includes the Houston Zoo and the Children's Museum of Houston; aesthetes should head to Zone 3, where the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston are stationed; and history buffs will find much to learn in Zone 2, home of the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum, Holocaust Museum Houston, and Czech Center Museum Houston.

Houston Museum District Executive Director Julie Farr has a special fondness for Zone 1, which includes

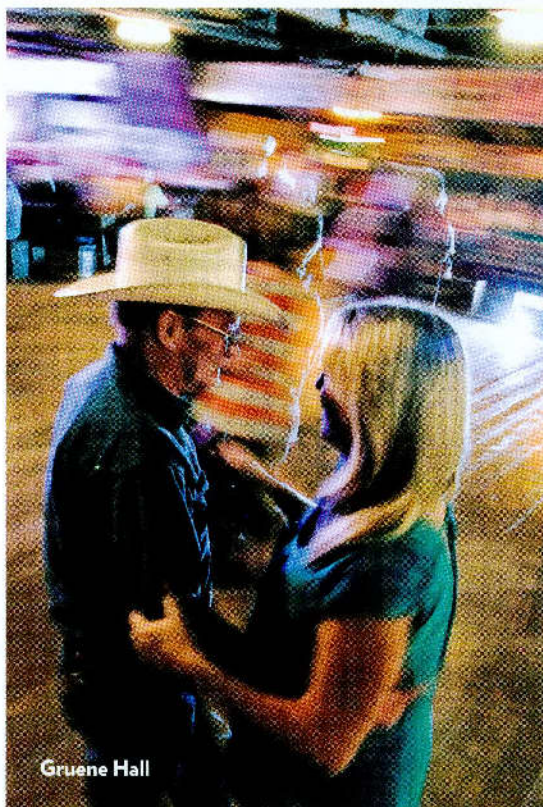
the Menil Collection, Rothko Chapel, and the Houston Center for Photography. "I like to call Zone 1 a 'lower your blood pressure' atmosphere," Farr says. "It's very calm and peaceful; you'll see families picnicking, people taking wedding photos, and dogs chasing Frisbees." houmuse.org

COOL OFF WITH THE GRANDEST OF HISTORIES

The Bullock Texas State History Museum's permanent exhibits—the 17th-century *La Belle* ship and the original Goddess of Liberty statue, for example—are always worth a visit. But the museum introduces new opportunities for learning this summer with special exhibitions *Rodeo!* and *Comanche Motion*. When you get your fill of history, the giant, dark, and chilly IMAX theater is a worthy respite. thestoryoftexas.com

LEARN HOW TO SWING DANCE AT GRUENE HALL

Grab your dancing shoes and head to Texas' oldest continually operating dance hall, which this summer hosts



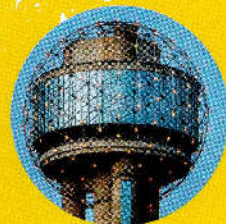
Gruene Hall

Two Ton Tuesdays June 5-Aug. 14. Before the country music starts (courtesy of San Antonio band Two Tons of Steel), the venue offers one-hour swing-dancing lessons so you can brush up on your boot-scootin' skills. gruenehall.com



NAMASTE WITH GOATS

If you're looking for a tough workout, this class isn't for you. But if you need an Instagram-worthy moment and a good laugh, goat yoga definitely delivers. Several studios—among them GOGA Goat Yoga in Austin, Goat Yoga Houston, Texas Hill Country Goats & Yoga, and Goat Yoga Richardson—have joined the trend of adding goats into yoga classes because of the animal's anxiety-reducing effect. As class members practice sun salutations, baby goats are free to climb on top of people, chase each other, and even nap on the mats. goga.yoga; goatyoghouston.com; nuluvgoatmilkproducts.com/goat-yoga; goatyogarichardson.com



TOWER OVER TEXAS

Enjoy the view from the top of these city towers. At Dallas' Reunion Tower, a 470-foot observation deck with telescopes and high-definition zoom cameras provides panoramic views. In San Antonio, check out the city from the 750-foot observation deck and the revolving Chart House Restaurant at Tower of the Americas. Travel 34 floors in the glass elevator of the Hyatt Regency Houston to get to Spindletop, a revolving restaurant that shows off the glittering metropolis. reuniontower.com; toweroftheamericas.com; houston.regency.hyatt.com

FIND ZEN IN AN ART MUSEUM

Stay cool in crow pose at a museum yoga class. At the Blanton Museum of Art in Austin, Longview Museum of Fine Arts, San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, and the Amon Carter Museum of American Art in Fort Worth, mix stretching with creative inspiration and contemplation. After class, you're invited to enjoy the art. 🐏

NEW ADVENTURES IN

Grade Ricks Burg

TEXAS



The GLASS IS ALWAYS HALF FULL IN
THIS VIBRANT HILL COUNTRY RETREAT



Story by JUNE NAYLOR • Photographs by TIFFANY HOFELDT





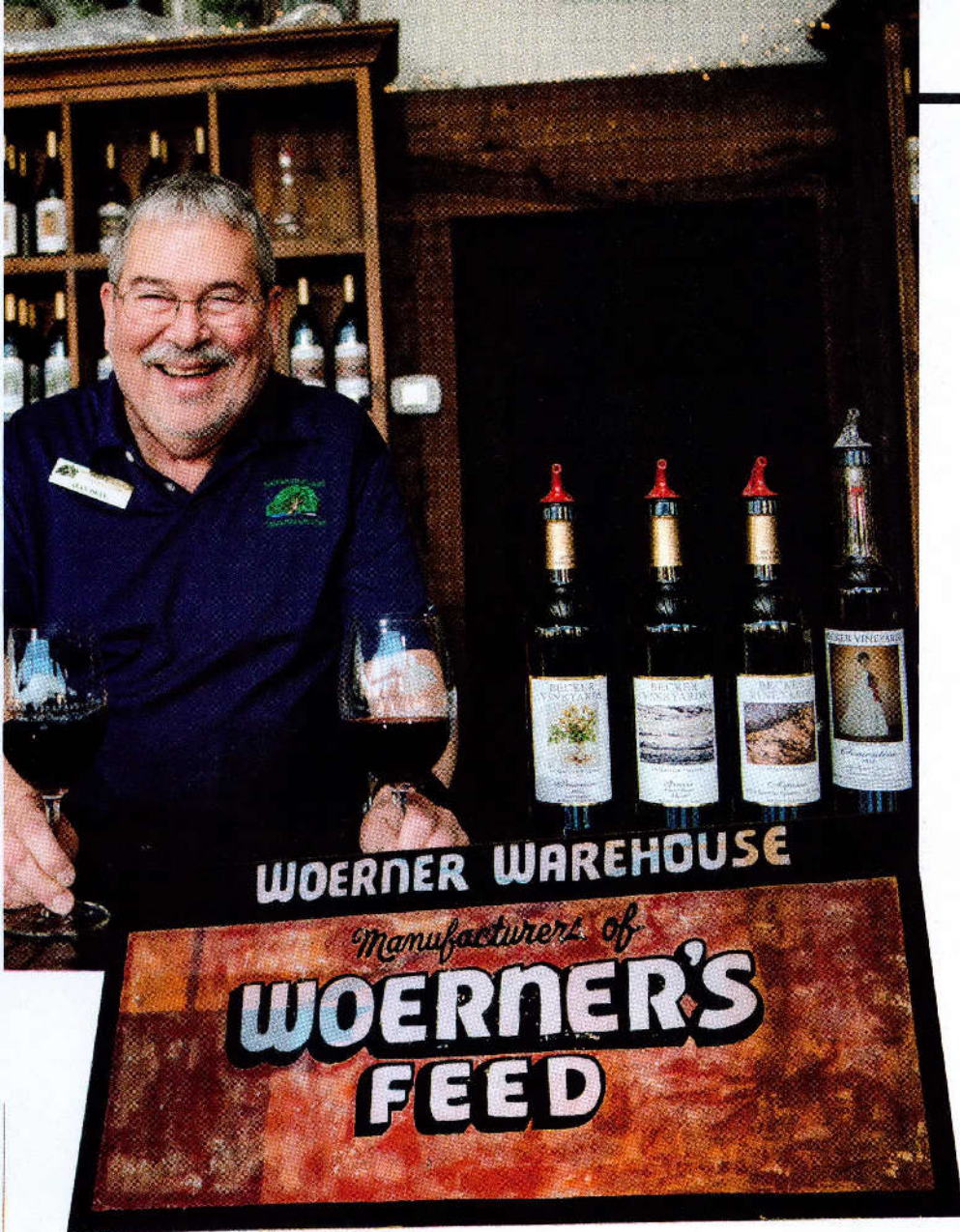
Driving along US 290 west to Fredericksburg from Johnson City, I'm struck by how much the roadside scenery has changed in two decades. In my mind's eye, I can see those primitive stands selling local peaches, weathered signs promoting the upcoming county fair, and an occasional old farmhouse amidst vistas of wildflowers. Back then, Fredericksburg's renown rested on its beauty, B&Bs, German heritage, and shopping on Main Street. Today, there's all that and more: Vineyards, winery tasting rooms, boutiques, restaurants, and shops have brought new energy to Fredericksburg. I think how much our early girlfriend getaways would have benefited from such luxuries: I clearly remember an old roomie of mine pining for a mocha latte and a spa day when we were here about 20 years ago, and I wish she could see today's Fredericksburg.

Just as I enter the city limits, I note the beautiful Hill Country University Center, where Texas Tech University offers viticulture and winemaking education. Soon I'm marveling at the proliferation of new and old buildings housing bistros, coffee bars, art galleries, and herb apothecaries. I spy the occasional shop offering T-shirts, fudge, and German beer steins, but altogether I find a more sophisticated Fredericksburg. What really matters, though, is this: While the town is most famous for its rich German heritage, it has grown into an invigorating destination for all of the pleasures found in the heart of the Hill Country, whether I'm visiting with my mom and sisters, closest pals, or my husband.



Tasting room ambassador Alan Dean serves up smiles and wine at Becker Vineyards; Woerner Warehouse makes antiquers' dreams come true; tiny pastries at Das Peach Haus.





◆ SIP ◆

Fredericksburg, the seat of Gillespie County, lies at the center of the Hill Country wine region, which is a significant driver in the exploding Texas wine industry. Just a short drive from downtown Fredericksburg, wine tourists find more than 50 wineries and vineyards, and in Gillespie County alone, the count is nearly 30 wineries. Nearly all of them offer tasting rooms, and about 10 have satellite tasting rooms downtown. On Main Street, my husband and I wander into the newest addition to the so-called "Urban Wine Trail," Becker Vineyards' tasting room in a smartly renovated former Buick dealership showroom. The



Fredericksburg,
THE SEAT OF GILLESPIE
COUNTY, LIES AT THE
CENTER OF THE HILL
COUNTRY WINE
REGION, WHICH IS A
SIGNIFICANT DRIVER IN
THE EXPLODING TEXAS
WINE INDUSTRY.

eye-catching design elements, particularly the repurposed parts, accessories, and service signage in a curved retro style, make the space distinctive.

Becker has been making wine at its winery southeast of Fredericksburg since the mid-1990s, and with the opening of a Main Street tasting room, it's easier than ever for fans to explore its many styles. As is the case at almost every tasting room in the world, guests have the option to try a flight of small pours. At Becker, a lovely piece of Riedel crystal stemware is included in the tasting fee (\$20 for six wines) as a souvenir. Instead of bellying up to the long tasting bar, we sit at a vintage wooden community table to savor a full glass. I've chosen the 2014 Raven, a robust, spicy-fruity blend of petit verdot and malbec grapes that recently claimed a double gold medal at the *San Francisco Chronicle* Wine Competition; my husband enjoys his pick, the 2015 Prairie Cuvée, a Rhone-style white blend that won a silver medal at the same competition. While we sip, I check out the retail area, an assemblage of old wooden crates and barrels filled with must-haves such as chic wine coolers and products made with lavender grown on the Becker estate.

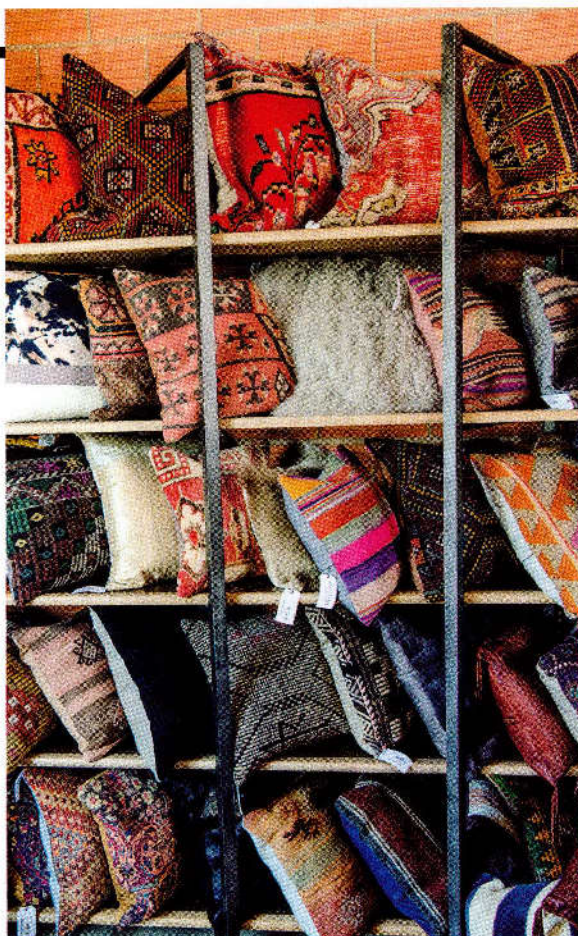
Main Street still buzzes with beer lovers, and Fredericksburg Brewing Company, which opened in 1994, has never been more popular. The brew house, restaurant, and retail shop fill the ground level of a restored 1890s limestone building, and there's a B&B upstairs. The beer menu changes regularly, so you can try something new on each visit, whether it's the popular Honey Cream Ale, made with local honey; or the hoppy, British-style Harper Valley IPA. Fredericksburg's status as a beer town will soar to new heights later this year, when Altstadt Brewery opens its 120-acre Bavarian village showplace with a beer garden and restaurant. The copper roof over Altstadt's main brewery and its giant silos are already eye-catching sights on US 290 just east of town. The three

beers brewed here include the malty, caramel-colored alt; a light, clean-tasting lager; and the crisp, hoppy kolsch. All are already popular picks throughout the Hill Country and in Austin, San Antonio, Waco, and College Station.

It's an easy shot from Altstadt to the hamlet of Hye, home to Garrison Brothers Distillery, where bourbon is handmade in small batches and hand-bottled right on the ranch. After a hay-wagon ride to see the bourbon-making process, we sample a selection of heady barrel-aged creations in the log cabin that serves as tasting room and welcome center.

Although the distillery and breweries make solid alternatives to wine touring, make no mistake—wine-wandering rules as the favorite Fredericksburg pastime. On weekends, it's a good idea to sign up with an organized tour or check whether specific wineries require reservations. (There are nearly 20 Fredericksburg-based wine touring companies providing guides and transportation.) Knowing that crowds can be daunting, we heed wise locals' advice and keep our touring to a weekday.

At Grape Creek Vineyards, a 15-minute drive from the center of town, the motto is "wine is a pleasure, not a party." On Saturdays, when crowds surge throughout the area, Grape Creek limits tour groups and excludes limo tours entirely. Pulling onto the property, we climb a hill that ultimately reveals a spread of vineyards and an assemblage of stone buildings evoking the look and feel of Tuscany. We join guests aboard a tram that takes us across the estate to the winemaking facilities, where we barrel-sample wines in various stages of the aging process. Next, we walk through the crushing and



fermenting areas before tasting six wines from a list of nearly 20 choices, including the spicy petite syrah, which is my favorite. Our guide, a symphony conductor who moonlights at Grape Creek, offers such an informative, entertaining commentary that many guests buy bottles to take home.

A distinctive wine-tasting experience appeals to us at Kuhlman Cellars in Stonewall, roughly 20 minutes east of downtown Fredericksburg. Flower and herb gardens surround a pair of gray-and-white contemporary buildings, one with a rooftop patio. We've arranged to experience Kuhlman's "Signature Pairing," a guided wine-and-food pairing. Our sommelier educates the eight of us through tastes of five

Otto's German Bistro

SITS IN THE MIDDLE OF TOWN IN A SIMPLE WHITE COTTAGE NEAR THE TOWN'S VISITOR CENTER AND ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE EXCEPTIONAL NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR.





Kuhlman wines, each coupled with a two-bite appetizer. Chef Chris Cook changes the pairings according to the season; ours included the combo of 2016 Hensell, a salmon-hued, French-style rosé made with mourvèdre grapes grown in the Texas High Plains, matched with a tiny taco filled with black beans and spicy chicken. After the tasting, everyone's welcome to enjoy another glass on the patio or in the airy tasting room, where natural light spills through windows overlooking the 7-acre property.

◆ EAT ◆

Though a few of the older German restaurants remain in Fredericksburg, my favorite dining experience in town may be the modern interpretation of that cuisine at Otto's German Bistro. Otto's sits in the middle of town in a simple white cottage near the

town's visitor center and across the street from the exceptional National Museum of the Pacific War. Sipping a cocktail called the Jürgen—made with rye, a fruity vermouth, toasted barley liqueur, and walnut bitters—I study the quirky knickknacks on a shelf above the bar, including a 1950s clock radio, a vintage french fry slicer, and a small Electrolux vacuum cleaner. Our dinner starts with rustic German bread, butter, and beet jam then continues with duck schnitzel over spätzle, as well as gnocchi stuffed with ricotta and sage and tossed with roasted butternut squash and leafy greens.

Another evening, we perch on stools at the Culinary Adventure Cooking School, inside Fischer & Wieser's Das Peach Haus, for a cooking class with John DeMers. DeMers is a chef, instructor, and the author of several cookbooks, and it's great fun to share

Opposite: Blackchalk Home and Laundry sells housewares and décor from around the world; a wholesome brunch at Otto's. **Above:** Blackchalk's café offers salads and light fare to re-energize after antiquing; Garrison Brothers Distillery in nearby Hye makes bourbon and offers spirited tours.

an evening of wine tasting with food pairings. On this night, DeMers serves up his usual amusing discourse alongside delicious and finely crafted dishes of serrano ham and Manchego cheese appetizers, meatball-artichoke soup, poached cod, and beef tenderloin, all accompanied by delicious wines.

◆ **SHOP** ◆

Fine oil paintings and bronze sculptures figure among Fredericksburg's souvenirs today, though you

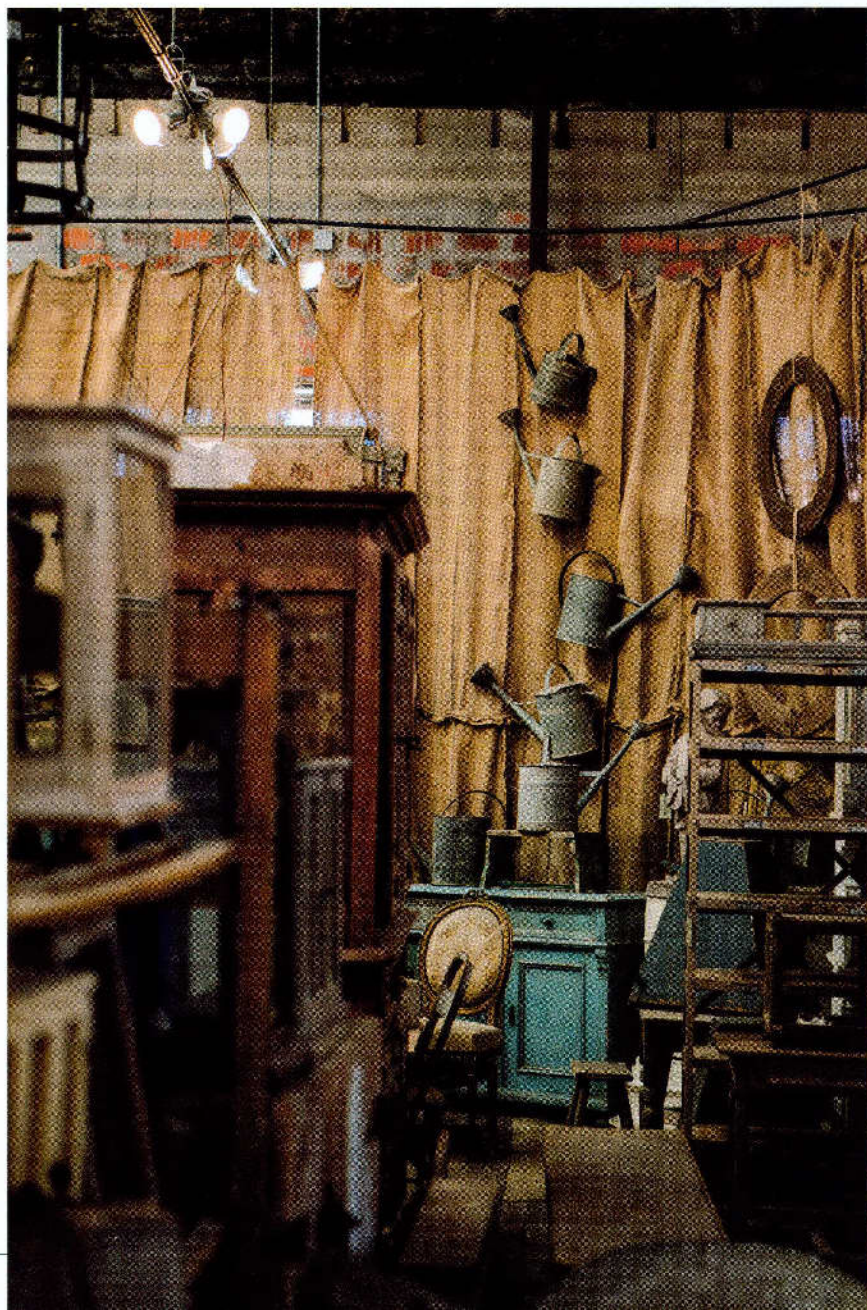
◆◆◆◆◆
Fine oil paintings
AND BRONZE
SCULPTURES FIGURE
AMONG FREDERICKSBURG'S
SOUVENIRS TODAY,
THOUGH YOU CAN
STILL FIND BEER STEINS
AND SPANGLED
JEWELRY.

can still find beer steins and spangled jewelry. The handsome Schwarz Building on Main Street, a 1900-era rock structure that once held a dry goods store, now houses the elegant InSight Gallery, displaying beautiful landscapes, wildlife-focused works, and Western-themed pieces. But my favorite galleries and shops take me off Main Street, southward along Lincoln Street.

Out front at a shop called Blackchalk Home and Laundry, a heavy-duty commercial laundry press speaks to the century-old building's former use. And inside, the colorful assortment of handpainted dishes from Turkey, handmade wooden tables from Texas artisans, Italian lamps, and contemporary light fixtures from around the world make me want to live in the store. Across the street at Woerner Warehouse, there are light fixtures fashioned from old windmill blades, chandeliers crafted from old chicken feeders, battered lockers made into armoires, and lots of shabby-chic French bedding. (A café here serves a satisfying Tuscan cobb salad, among other light dishes.) Next door, Carol Hicks Bolton Antiquités brims with distressed doors, cabinets, wrought-iron patio tables, and washtubs, along with books, beds, fabrics, and old milk bottles—almost all of the inventory French.

◆ **UNWIND** ◆

After such indulgences, my body and soul beg for downtime. That's an easy fix at Nature's Spa, among many reasons to visit Fredericksburg Herb Farm. In the couples' massage room, my husband and I enjoy treatments incorporating herb-infused essential oils made on-site. Afterward, we sip herbal tea in a relaxation room and summon the will to return to our hideout on the western edge of town. There are more than 350 lodgings to choose from in the area, and whereas I once liked booking a B&B right in the center of town (there are at least 100 options in walking distance of





Essentials

For information about Fredericksburg's many options for wine, food, shopping, lodging, and activities, call the Fredericksburg Convention and Visitor Bureau, 830-997-6523 or 888-997-3600; visitfredericksburgtx.com. The Visitor Information Center is at 302 East Austin Street.



Facing page, industrial and agricultural antiques from France bring seekers to Carol Hicks Bolton Antiquités. This page, Das Peach Haus offers tastes of dozens of salsas and jams; massages and other treatments await at Nature's Spa.

downtown alone), I'm now happy to be removed from the hubbub. The perfect answer is Outlot 201, a small collection of guesthouses southwest of downtown. Our cottage is called Parker House, and its ample living-breakfast room is separated from the spacious bedroom and bathroom by a sliding barn door. The simple décor includes vintage egg crates on the wall and colorful throws for curling up on the sofa with a book.

Out the back door, there's a brick patio facing a pasture where sheep, goats, and horses graze beyond the fence line. Bringing out a bottle from Kuhlman, we sip a glass, toasting Fredericksburg's evolution and our good fortune to explore it. **L**

Fort Worth-based writer June Naylor enjoyed rediscovering Fredericksburg after so many years away. Photographer Tiffany Hofeldt of Austin specializes in portraits, culinary imagery, and nature.



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DESTINATION: MARFA



Planet Marfa

Stylish, otherworldly experiences in the tumbleweeds of West Texas

story by Michael Corcoran

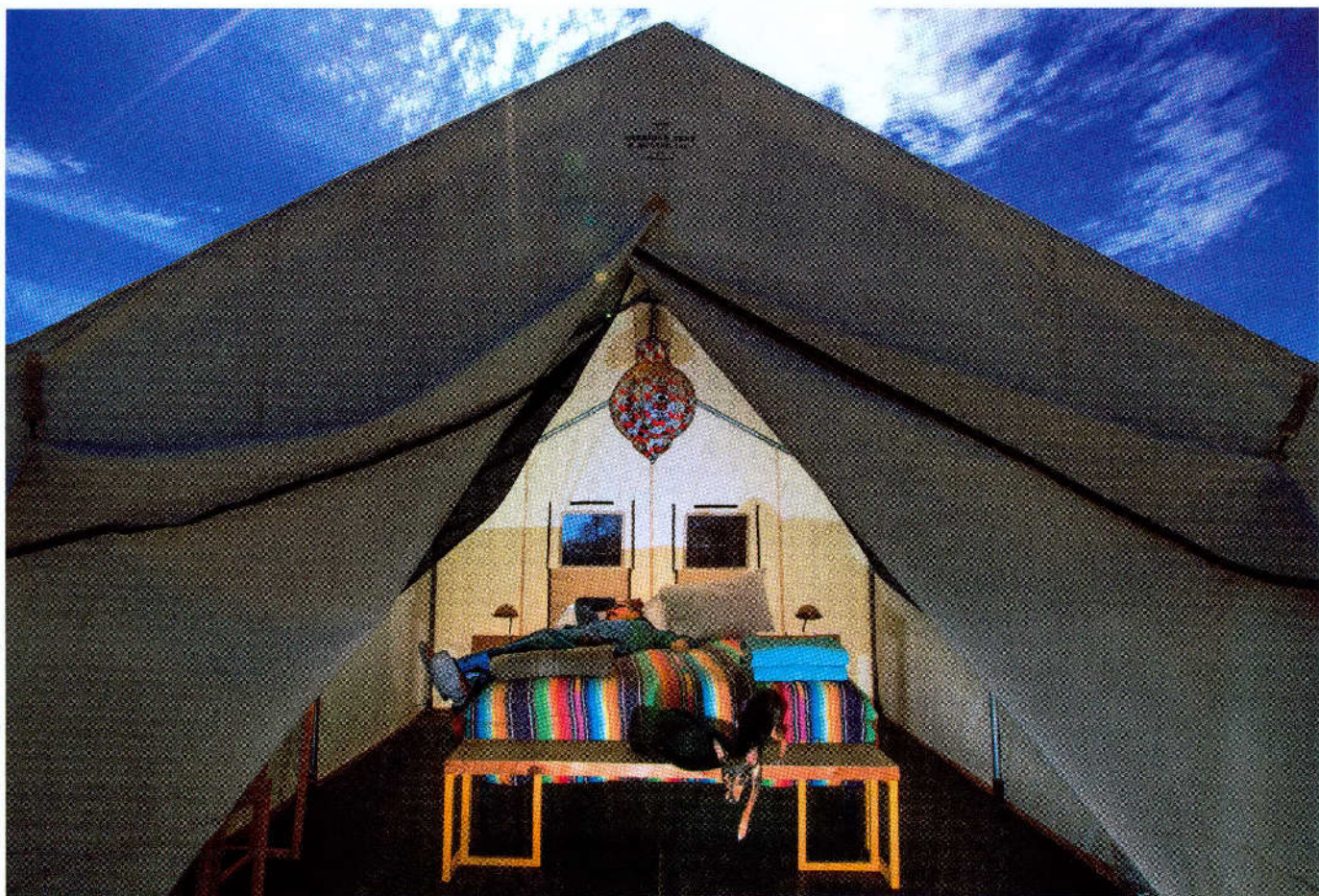
THE LAND AND THE LIGHT AND A SENSE OF space unlike anywhere else. That's what attracted renowned Manhattan artist Donald Judd to Marfa in the '70s. His large-scale installations, which meld sculpture and nature on an old Army base renamed The Chinati Foundation, made this far West Texas town a destination for the international art crowd. But in recent years, "The Capital of Quirkiness" (as CBS' *60 Minutes* dubbed it in 2013) has broadened its appeal to "bucket list" millennials and tourists who might think Donald Judd was Wynonna's pop. A fascination for Hollywood in recent years, Marfa also enjoys frequent



- **El Paso**
3 hours
- **Austin**
7 hours
- **Dallas**
8 hours
- **Houston**
9 hours

coverage in *The New York Times*—which ran at least eight stories with a Marfa dateline in the past two years (including four in the paper's fashion supplement). All this attention has helped convert this tiny town with its own NPR station into the San Francisco of the Texas desert.

The nouveau influx might expect some sort of hipster theme park (Schlackerbahn?) when they approach on US 90. But being the Marfa people expect isn't very Marfa-esque—this town challenges tourists like abstract art. "Nobody's gonna make it easy for you," says Ginger Griffice, proprietor of the Marfa Brand soap company. "There are no signs



Above: El Cosmico, a 21-acre escape from the “built world,” introduced yurts, teepees, and vintage travel trailers to Marfa’s accommodations in 2009. Below right: The Well day spa offers yoga and meditation classes.

that tell you what’s cool.” After a first spin around the dusty streets, the song in some heads might be Peggy Lee’s “Is That All There Is?” Where are Beyoncé and Solange? Where’s all the hip stuff we’ve heard about?

Oh, it’s there, but Marfa is a town where almost everything interesting is bubbling under the surface. Example: An old church is a provocative art gallery called the Wrong Store, but you can barely see it from the road for the trees in front. “Tough to get to; tougher to explain” is a slogan printed on brochures distributed by the Marfa Visitor Center, which is housed in the old USO building on South Highland Avenue. That’s a good place for Marfa virgins to start, as is the dome of the pinkish Presidio County Courthouse, built in 1886 when Marfa was just a water stop for steam locomotives. The view

from the courthouse cupola provides a panoramic bird’s-eye of the town. From on high, the serene, heavenly lit landscape is the star.

Marfa’s not a day trip; it’s a pilgrimage. It takes such an effort to get here—a nine-hour drive from Houston, eight from Dallas, seven from Austin, six from San Antonio, and three from El Paso—that it’s natural to hope everything’s easier once you arrive. But since the town is built on self-discovery, you’re on your own. Signage is more often a reflection of the creativity of the business than a guide for the lost or curious.

One such place is The Lumberyard, a collection of studios for painters, artisans, woodworkers, and fashion designer Ashley Rowe—from a car going 20 mph, it looks like lumber might still be stored there. The

happening compound is also home to the Do Your Thing coffeeshop (famous for its porridge and “Jerusalem Toast”—housemade country sourdough with avocado, tahini, za’atar, toasted sesame seeds, and a fried egg), plus the Adobe Room, an unusual Airbnb rental, which doubles as a theater space during the annual Marfa Film Festival in July.

Visiting Marfa on a weekday can feel like going to Wrigley Field when the Cubs are in St. Louis. Someone should write a sad country song: “Since my baby up and left/Every day’s like Monday in Marfa.” With the Chinati Foundation closed Mondays and Tuesdays, there’s just not enough local business to stay open, says Adam Bork, whose Mediterranean-styled Food Shark (est. 2006) presaged the nation’s food truck craze by a few years.

The acclaimed Marfa Burrito, famous for handmade tortillas the size of bath towels, is one of the few eateries open on Mondays—at least, that's what the sign says. (On a recent Monday, Marfa Burrito's front door opened to a dark and empty restaurant; a woman doing yard work eventually confirmed that the restaurant was closed because the workers hadn't shown up that day. Welcome to Marfa.)

The seven-days-a-week Marfa is anchored by the posh Hotel Saint George (built on the site of the 1886 hotel of

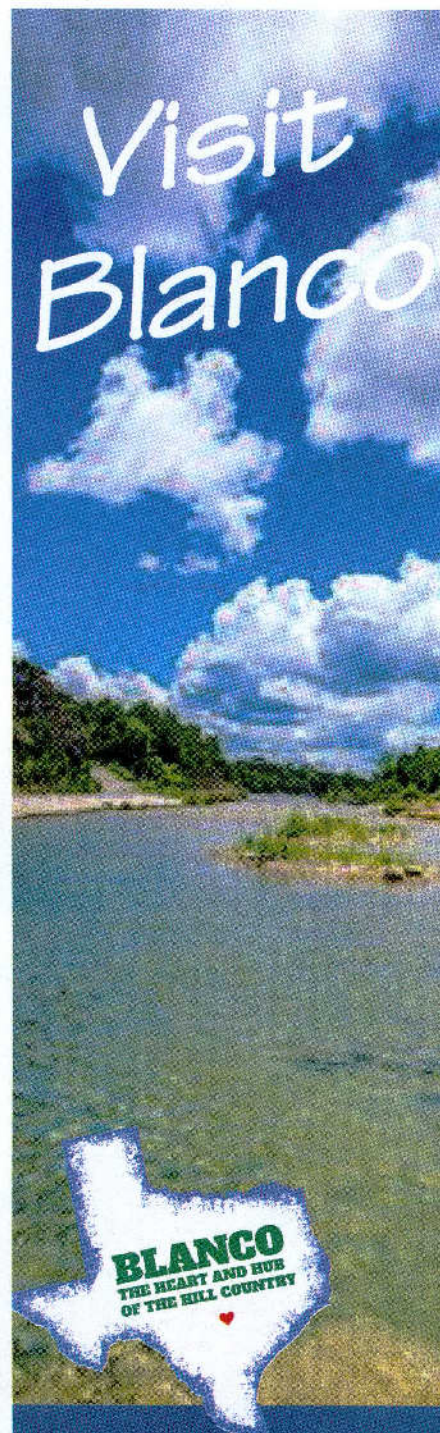
Since the town is built on self-discovery, you're on your own. Signage is more often a reflection of the creativity of the business than a guide for the lost or curious.

the same name), which opened to rave reviews in 2016 with 55 rooms and suites. Besides four-star restaurant LaVenture, the lobby area has an austere bar on one side that serves a wagyu beef cheeseburger worth its \$12 price tag, and then on the other side of the front desk is the fabulous Marfa Book Company, specializing in art, Texana, and fiction. Every hotel should have such a well-curated independent bookstore.

But the best thing the Saint George has brought to Marfa is across the street at Bar Nadar Pool + Grill, open to the public from 4-11 p.m. (21 and over, except Tuesdays, which is Family Night). With shaded cabanas, luxurious lounge chairs, and all the beautiful people, the hotel's pool evokes Hollywood in the '50s, except with tattoos. If you're lucky, there will be a show while you're in town at the adjoining Saint George Hall, a 600-capacity venue that hosted the likes of David Byrne, Los Lonely Boys, and Ruben Ramos in its first few months. These concerts, and events at the 175-capacity Crowley Theater performing arts space, are the only times there are parking problems in Marfa.

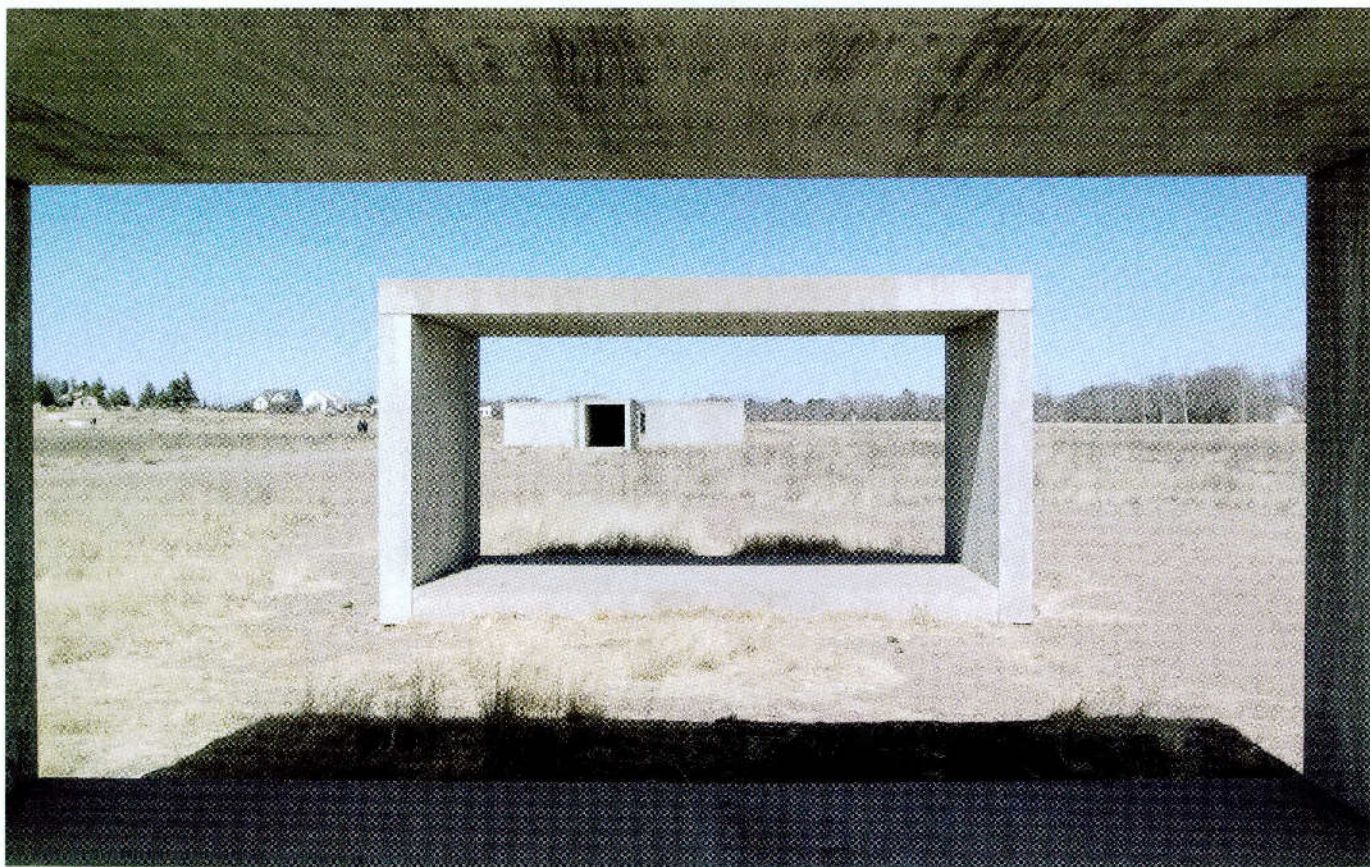
The Saint George complex has the luster of the new kid on the block, but the reborn Hotel Paisano downtown has lost none of its stature as the classic Texas rancher hotel. This is where the cast of *Giant*—including Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson, and James Dean—stayed during filming in 1955. The hotel's memorabilia room sells re-creations of the original key tags with the actors' names and room numbers.

From the Paisano, a short stroll down Highland Avenue (Marfa's main



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Clockwise from top: Going to Marfa without a visit to The Chinati Foundation is like a trip to Niagara without seeing the falls; paprika roasted cauliflower at Al Campo; The Lumberyard, a collection of studios for painters, artisans, and woodworkers.

street) will take you past The Well day spa, which offers yoga and meditation classes, haircuts, massages, and facials. Walk back toward the courthouse, and you'll want to pop into Ranch Candy Marfa/Spare Parts, an offbeat shop that specializes in vintage Western wear,

jewelry, and hard candy.

Marfa Brand, which sounds redundant, is the creation of the aforementioned Griffice, a former New York City location scout. A Dallas native, she bought a vacation home in Marfa in 2004. Since this town between the Davis Mountains and Big Bend is a magnet for West-set films like *No Country for Old Men* and *There Will Be Blood*, Griffice was able to continue scouting for films. But such work is irregular, so she started making soap—experimenting with ingredients such as rosemary, Earl Grey tea, goats' milk, patchouli, and honey. "I'm not an artist, but I wanted to make something," Griffice says. "It's the small-town thing to do." Ginger's shop in The Lumberyard opens to the public Wednesday through Sunday, but you can also buy her products across the street at The Get Go, a specialty grocery

store, and at El Cosmico, a 21-acre escape from the “built world,” where hotelier Liz Lambert introduced yurts, teepees, and vintage travel trailers to Marfa’s accommodations in 2009.

Another key figure in Marfa becoming more than a destination for fans of Donald Judd and the spooky Marfa Lights (ghostly lights that dance between the prairie and the mountains at night, which some kill-joys explain as reflections of headlights from a nearby highway) is former Austinite Virginia Lebermann, who co-founded the nonprofit art gallery Ballroom Marfa, and

“I’m not an artist, but I wanted to make something. It’s the small-town thing to do.”

co-owns the fabulous Capri restaurant with her chef-husband, Rocky Barnette, and the carefully renovated Thunderbird Hotel with her mother, Louise O’Connor. Barnette’s elevated regional cuisine (tempura-fried yucca blossoms are popular) earned its own feature in *The New York Times*.

“It used to be that you had to know how to cook if you lived in Marfa,” says Presidio County Justice of the Peace David Beebe, a musician (Houston’s El Orbits) who moved to Marfa about 11 years ago to rest his



pics or it didn't happen.
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HIT THE ROAD

overtaxed vocal chords. "But now we have all these great restaurants." He counts barbecue joint Convenience West and Northern Italian-inspired Stellina as favorite new eateries. The town's culinary scene has come a ways since filmmaker John Waters proclaimed several years ago that Marfa's a great place for tourists to "eat food all the same color!" For less fussy foodies, burritos and burgers at the Lost Horse Saloon (a classic Old West watering hole) and great cheeseburgers and brisket tacos at Beebe's divey Hombres will bring comfort. Beebe recommends getting your caffeine fix at the Frama coffeeshop/Tumbleweed laundromat hybrid, which uses beans from Big Bend Coffee Roasters and serves Texas-made Henry's Homemade Ice Cream. If you don't have time for laundry on

your visit, buy a bar of Marfa Brand soap and put it in your suitcase. Magically, the smoky and woodsy-scented soap makes your dirty clothes wearable again.

When the storefronts are dark, Marfa's creatives are still hard at work. Colt Miller and Logan Calbeck are handcrafting sawed-off cowboys boots at Cobra Rock, Jennifer Creager and Cody Barber are making mid-century modern hoop chairs at Cast & Crew, and Paul Graybeal at Moonlight Gemstones is polishing his rare agates. "Just about everyone I know in Marfa has two jobs," says Beebe, who has three if you count his monthly gig performing with Primo Carrasco at Planet Marfa, the finest Mexican beach bar not on a beach.

That work ethic started with Judd, who passed away in 1994 but still rules the cultural landscape with his



MARFA

For visitor information, call
Visit Marfa at **432-729-4772**;
visitmarfa.com.

big boxes of concrete and aluminum. Going to Marfa without a visit to The Chinati Foundation—named after the mountain range that backdrops the town—or Judd's residence and studio just west of downtown (informally called The Block) is like a trip to Niagara without seeing the falls.

"People are always asking me, 'What is there to do here?'" says Planet Marfa owner Jon Johnson, who grew up on a cotton farm 50 miles outside of town and returned in 2004 as a retiree. "I say, 'There's nothing to do here. That's why people come to Marfa—to get away from all that. They come here to breathe!'"

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June 12

MAIN STREET MARKET DAYS

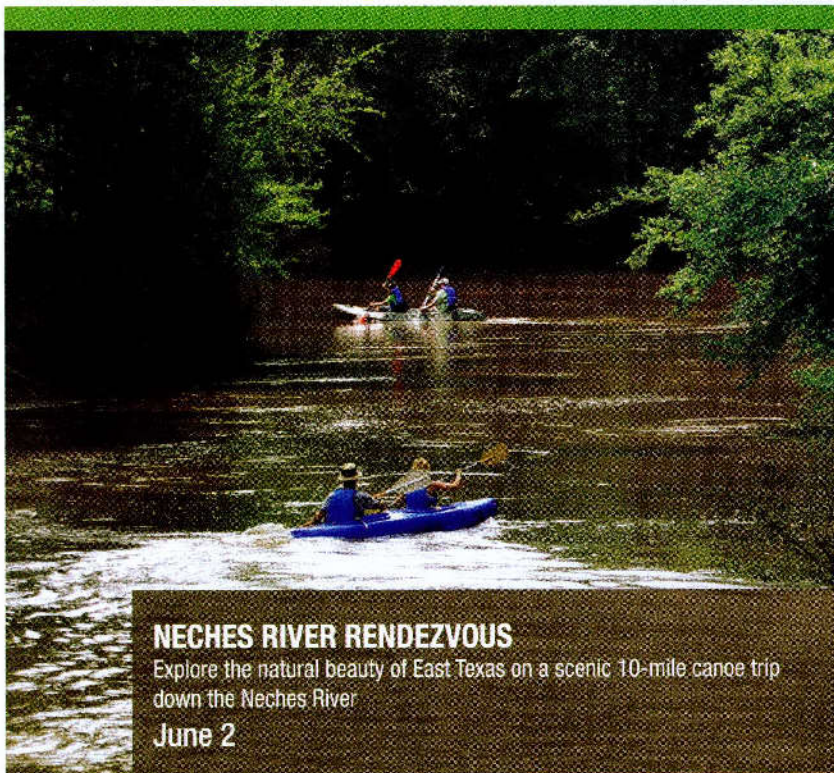
Downtown streets become an open-air marketplace every third Saturday of the month

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REAL TEXAS STORIES BORN AND BRED

A Soaring Story

Track the history of flight
at the Lone Star Flight Museum's
new Houston home

Story by Heather Brand

The Lone Star Flight Museum's display of vintage military aircraft includes this Piper L-4 Grasshopper.



ON A CLEAR SATURDAY MORNING, I FIND myself perched in the glass nose cone of a World War II bomber, barreling through the sky at about 200 miles per hour. The roar of the engines fills my ears as the two pilots, seated behind me, guide the plane over my hometown of La Porte. From this vantage point, some 1,500 feet in the air, I gaze down upon a patchwork landscape of refineries divided by the sinuous path of the Houston Ship Channel. The plane banks to the left, revealing a familiar landmark: the limestone pillar of the San Jacinto Monument. As we pass over its crowning star, I catch a glimpse of the Battleship *Texas*, docked nearby.

This incredible perspective comes courtesy of the Lone Star Flight Museum, which offers such “Flight Experiences” from its home at Ellington Airport in southeast Houston. The museum opened last September, unveiling a 130,000-square-foot concrete facility with a soaring arched atrium at its center and vast hangars measuring

With galleries and vintage planes, the Lone Star Flight Museum explores the history of and technology of flight.

about 30,000 square feet on either side. The museum was originally located at Scholes Field in Galveston, but damages from Hurricane Ike in 2008 prompted directors to rebuild inland—ultimately a nine-year, \$38 million project.

With its informative galleries and collection of vintage planes, the Lone Star Flight Museum explores the history and technology of flight stretching well beyond Texas. Museum President Larry Gregory, who happened to be the captain of my bomber flight, says the museum has plenty to offer for history buffs, but its greater focus is on the technology that makes flight possible and on the innovators who’ve driven its

On display in the museum’s Waltrip Hangar, the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress is also available for a ticketed Flight Experience.

development and evolution.

“We’re not so much trying to teach WWII, but how individuals shaped things,” Gregory says. “We give people a perspective on what it took to design and build these airplanes, and how they changed our culture by providing opportunities for women and minorities, like the WASPs [Women Airforce Service Pilots] and the African American Tuskegee Airmen, to perform outside the stereotypical norms of their time.”

One of the two main exhibition halls, the Texas Aviation Heritage Gallery spotlights individuals who have made significant contributions to the field. The educational displays walk visitors through the history of flight, covering early trailblazers such as Katherine Stinson, a stunt pilot who worked out of San Antonio and in 1912 became the fourth woman in the United States to earn a pilot’s license; the establishment of military airfields across the state, spurred by World War I; and the role of Texas in the air-travel industry and in NASA’s space explorations. This gallery also includes the Texas Aviation Hall of Fame, featuring more than 70 inductees—among them Bessie Coleman, an African American pilot who grew up in Waxahachie and rose to fame in the 1920s as a barnstormer; and Houston’s own Red Duke, who pioneered the use of Life Flight helicopters for emergency medical transport.

The Flight Academy Gallery gives an overview of the principles of flight, with hands-on interactive exhibits and an eight-minute film explaining the dynamics of thrust, drag, lift, and weight. Various displays delve into the design and engineering of planes, as well as the navigation skills needed to pilot them. Visitors can take a seat among the controls of a replica cockpit and fly a simple hang-glider simulator. On select Saturdays the museum offers 15-minute “Pilot Experiences” with a Mooney M20 simulator for an additional \$5. Participants



THE LONE STAR FLIGHT MUSEUM,

at 11551 Aerospace Ave. in Houston, opens Tue-Sat 9-5 and Sun noon-5. Entry costs \$20 for adults, \$18 for youth 12-17, \$16 for seniors and children, \$12 for military, and free for children 3 and younger. Flight Experience seats range from \$250 to \$995. Call **888-359-5736**; lonestarflight.org.

get to practice flying from Ellington Airport to Galveston and back.

Sheltered in the museum’s hangars, an array of historically significant aircraft illustrate the technological innovations

discussed in the galleries. Most of the Lone Star Flight Museum’s airplanes date to WWII, while some served in later conflicts. In addition to displaying 20 from its permanent collection, the



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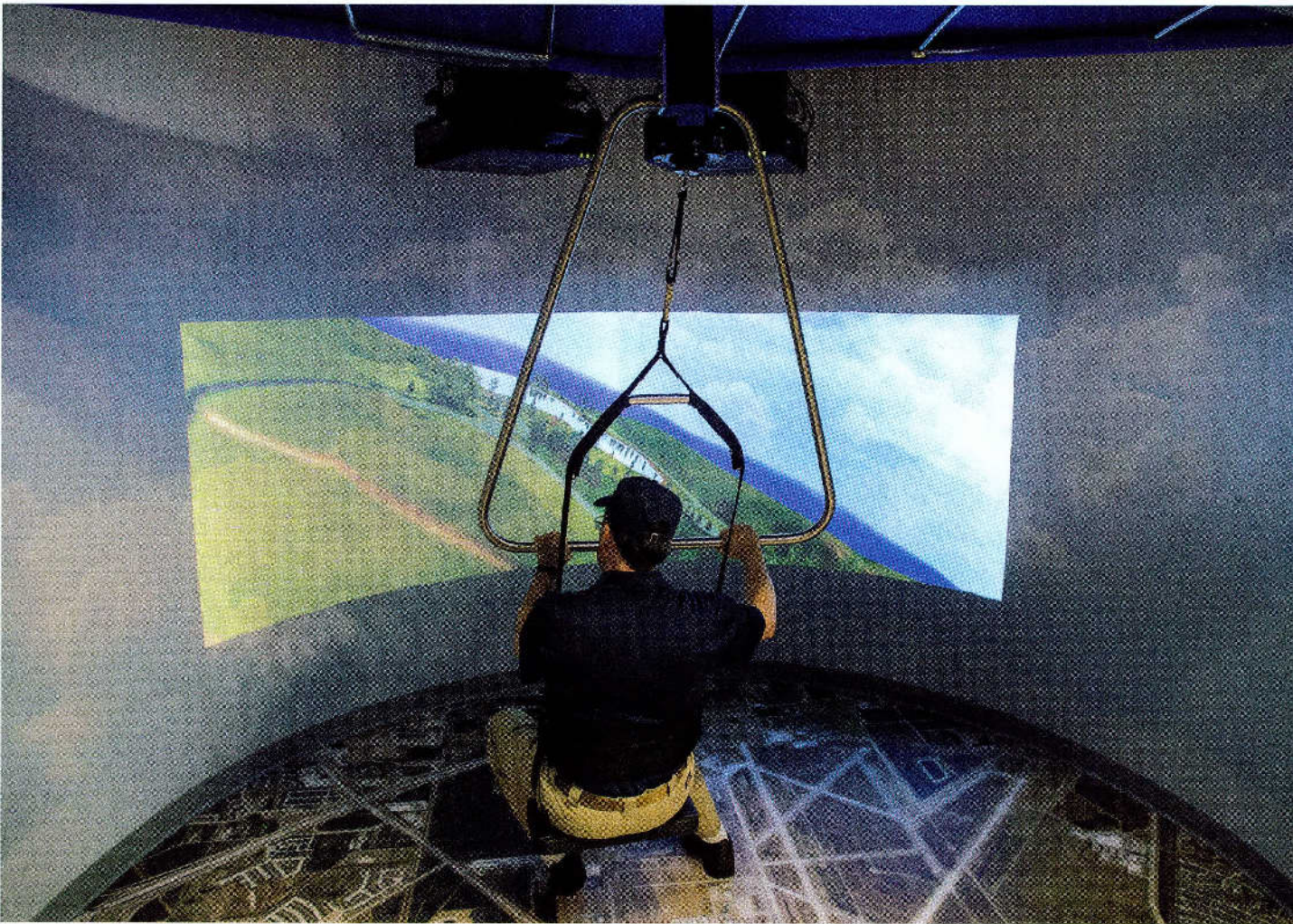
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museum hosts a rotation of planes from other organizations and individuals.

The museum's vintage aircraft don't educate and dazzle only on the showroom floor—all of them can also fly. Among them, eight are available for ticketed flights on fair-weather Saturdays from March through November. The Flight Experiences range in price from \$250 for a ride on a 1943 Boeing PT-17 Stearman, an open-cockpit biplane used for training, to \$995 for a seat on a rare 1942 Douglas SBD Dauntless, a WWII Navy dive bomber. Among the mid-price-range options are two other bombers: the medium-sized B-25 Mitchell, with room for five passengers, and the imposing B-17 "Flying Fortress," which can accommodate seven.

During the approximately 25 minutes spent aloft, passengers get the thrill of going airborne and then exploring the interior. The museum's crew of volunteer pilots has been specially trained to fly these vintage planes. At the brief orientation before boarding the B25-Mitchell, the pilots

The museum's vintage aircraft don't educate and dazzle only on the showroom floor—all of them can also fly.

warn me not to touch anything "red, rusty, or dusty"—meaning switches, knobs, or equipment that clearly did not need to be adjusted. Yet once in the sky, I am free to clamber about, crawling into the bombardier's compartment at the nose and also venturing toward the



From top: In the Flight Academy Gallery, visitors can try their hand at a hang-glider simulator; a Douglas DC-3 commercial airliner from 1940.

HANGARS FULL OF STORIES

The vintage airplanes on display at the Lone Star Flight Museum tell stories just as big and expansive as the two 30,000-square-foot hangars that house the aircraft.

A restored OY-1 Sentinel with a wooden propeller sustained damage from enemy fire over Iwo Jima in 1945. A 1944 Grumman F6F-3 Hellcat, with wings that fold up to conserve space on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier, played an important role in the war as a Navy fighter.

A handful are on loan from the Vietnam War Flight Museum: a 1952 Douglas AD-1 Skyraider, first employed as a fighter in the Korean War; a glossy red Polish-made Soviet MiG-17F; and a Bell TAH-1P Cobra attack helicopter, bristling with guns. The permanent collection also highlights non-military planes such as civilian flyers and even an early commercial airliner—a gleaming Douglas DC-3A, originally built in 1940 for American Airlines.

back to catch a breathtaking view of the distant Houston skyline from the gunner's compartment at the tail. To get from one end to the other, I climb over the central bomb bay on hands and knees before dropping down feet first on the other side. For thrill-seekers, Flight Experiences are the adventure of a lifetime. And for those seeking excitement without leaving the ground, an outdoor viewing area provides views of the planes as they taxi to and from the runway.

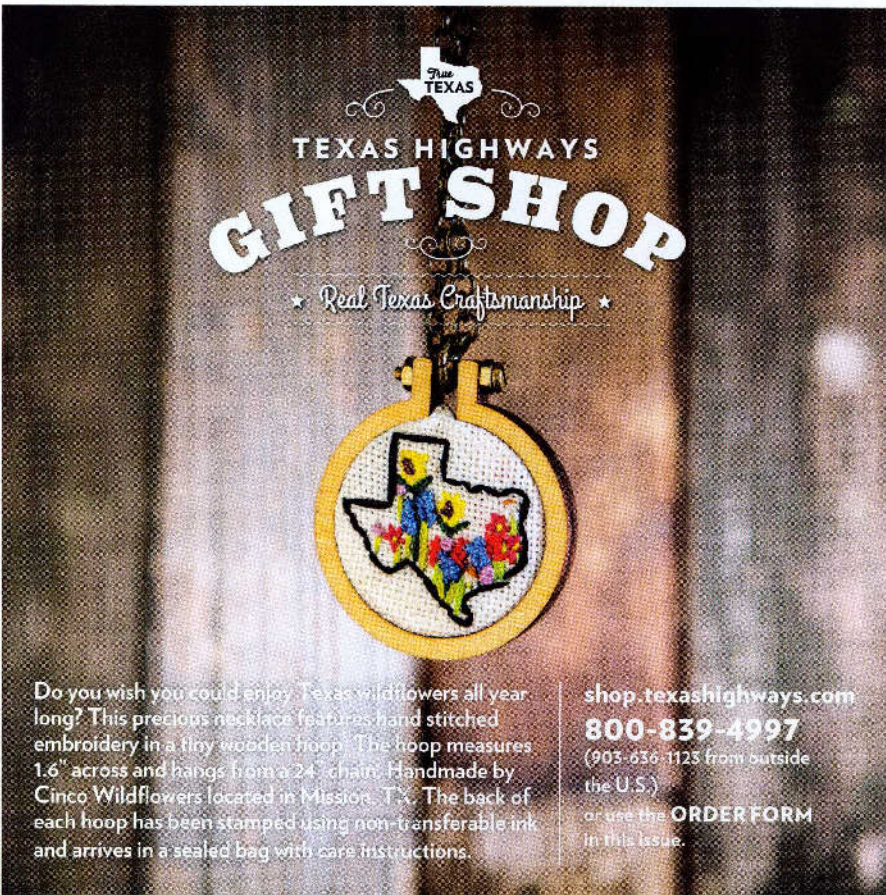
Before leaving the museum, I check out the temporary exhibition gallery to see paintings by artist Douglas Ettridge depicting various aircraft in exquisite detail. Afterward, I make a final stop at the gift shop. Though I'm tempted by customized dog tags, model planes, and jewelry made from reclaimed aircraft materials, I already have the best souvenir of all—the memory of winging through the air and seeing my town from an exhilarating new perspective. Whether in the sky or on the ground, the Lone Star Flight Museum provides a fresh outlook on the evolution of flight in Texas—and plenty of opportunity for the imagination to soar. **L**



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EVENTS



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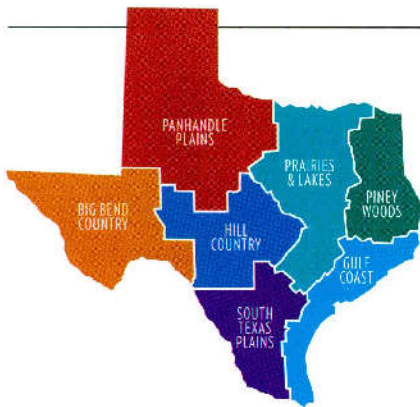
HILL COUNTRY > Austin

Hot Luck

WITH BARBECUE GURU AARON FRANKLIN AT the helm, this hybrid food-and-music festival showcases the crème de la crème of Texas chefs—*Top Chef* alum and Dallas steakhouse personage John Tesar, revered Houston chef Chris Shepherd, Steve McHugh of San Antonio's Cured—among a mix of notable chefs from across the country. But it's far from a buttoned-up soirée; festival organizers promise a laid-back weekend of à la carte eats served with a side of live

music ranging from garage punk to blues. The second annual festival, May 24-27, introduces new events like Night Court, where chefs deliver a refined take on nostalgic mall food court favorites, and a taco takeover by James Beard-nominated New York chef Alex Stupak at Tex-Mex institution Cisco's. The centerpiece event on Saturday, held at Wild Onion Ranch, feels like a super-size backyard cookout—a celebration of open-fire cooking styles from Texas to Thailand. hotluckfest.com

Want more? View the *Texas Highways Events Calendar* at texashighways.com/events.



BIG BEND COUNTRY

PECOS: Golden Girl/Little Miss Cantaloupe Style Show, May 6. Reeves County Civic Center. 432-445-2406

VAN HORN: Cinco de Mayo, May 5. Van Horn City Park. vanhorn.texas.us 432-283-2682

GULF COAST

BEAUMONT: Young Frankenstein, May 11-12, 18-19, 24-26. Beaumont Community Players. beaumontcommunityplayers.com 409-833-4664

BEAUMONT: Maypole Festival, May 12. Beaumont Botanical Gardens. beaumontbotanicalgardens.org 409-832-3135

CLUTE: *The Little Theater's Production of Hamlet*, April 27-29, May 4-6. Center for the Arts & Sciences. brazosportcenter.org 979-265-7661

CLUTE: Planetarium Show, May 1, 8, 15. Center for the Arts & Sciences. brazosportcenter.org 979-265-3376

CORPUS CHRISTI: Buc Days, April 19-May 5. Corpus Christi Bayfront and other locations. bucdays.com

CORPUS CHRISTI: Principles of Designing Landscape Curb Appeal, May 5. South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center. stxbot.org 361-852-2100

CORPUS CHRISTI: Teens, Tweens Meet Parrots, Reptiles Up Close! May 19. South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center. stxbot.org 361-852-2100

CORPUS CHRISTI: Marvels of Purple Martins, May 26. South Texas Botanical

Gardens & Nature Center. stxbot.org 361-852-2100

CRYSTAL BEACH: Texas Crab Festival, May 11-13. Gregory Park. texascrabfestival.org 281-773-3044

FREESPORT: Schuster Home Open House, May 26. Schuster Home. 979-297-0868

GALVESTON: The Summit: The Manhattan Transfer Meets Take 6! May 5. The Grand 1894 Opera House. thegrand.com 800-821-1894 or 409-765-1894

GALVESTON: Blood, Sweat, and Tears—50th Anniversary Tour, May 12. The Grand 1894 Opera House. thegrand.com 800-821-1894 or 409-765-1894

HOUSTON: *Light Charmer: Neon and Plasma in Action*, through May 13. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft. craffthouston.org/exhibition/light-charmer 713-529-4848

HOUSTON: *Hamilton*, April 24-May 20. The Hobby Center. houston.broadway.com 800-952-6560

HOUSTON: Da Camera Presents: Poetry and Music: Exile and Return, April 30-May 1. Matchbox 2, Midtown Arts and Theater Center Houston (MATCH). dacamera.com 713-524-5050

HOUSTON: *Hamilton*, May 1-13. Theatre Under the Stars, The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. tuts.com 713-558-2600

HOUSTON: Deutsch-Texanischer Saengerbund Saengerfest, May 5. Omni Hotel. saengerfest2018.houstonsaengerbund.org 281-660-0283

KATY: Wild West Brewfest, May 4-5. Katy Mills Mall.

katybrewfest.com
713-502-0328

LA PORTE: Main Street Trade Days, May 5. Historic Downtown La Porte. visitlaportetx.com 281-470-7275

LAKE JACKSON: Outdoor Concert Series, May 4, 11, 18, 25. Lake Jackson Civic Center Plaza. lakejacksontx.gov 979-415-2600

LAKE JACKSON: Abner Jackson Plantation Site Tour, May 5. Abner Jackson Plantation Site. lakejacksonmuseum.org 979-297-1570

LAKE JACKSON: Bird Banding, May 19. Gulf Coast Bird Observatory. gcbo.org 979-480-0999

ORANGE: *The World War I Homefront: Orange Goes Over the Top*, through July 14. The W.H. Stark House. staikulturalvenues.org/whstarkhouse 409-883-0871

ORANGE: Deep South Racing Association Boat Races, May 19-20. City Boat Ramp. orangetx.org

PALACIOS: Palacios Pirate Festival, May 11-12. South Bay. palaciospiratefestival.com 832-805-9434

PALACIOS: Boys & Girls Club Denim & Diamonds—Beneath the Oaks, May 17. Beneath the Oaks. palacioskids.org 361-972-2642

PASADENA: Pasadena Strawberry Festival, May 18-20. Pasadena Fairgrounds. strawberryfest.org 281-991-9500

PORT ARTHUR: Crabbing 101 at Sea Rim State Park, May 19. Sea Rim State Park. tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/sea-rim 409-971-2559

PORT ARTHUR: SALT Club Memorial Classic Fishing Tournament, May 26-27. Pleasure Island. saltclub.net 409-626-2501

PORT NECHES: RiverFest, May 2-6. Port Neches River Front Park. pnriverfest.com 409-722-9154

QUINTANA: Spring Fling, through May 5. Neotropical Bird Sanctuary. qcbo.org 979-480-0999

ROCKPORT: Nautical Flea Market, May 5-6. Rockport Harbor. 361-729-3115

ROCKPORT: Babes on the Bay, May 18-19. babesonthebay.com

ROCKPORT: Festival of Wine and Food, May 26-27. Texas Maritime Museum. texasmartimemuseum.org

SEABROOK: Keels and Wheels Concours d'Elegance, May 5-6. Lakewood Yacht Club. keels-wheels.com 713-521-0105

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: Fireworks over the Bay, May 24-25. Louie's Backyard. sopadre.com 800-657-2373

SUGAR LAND: Celtic Woman in Concert, May 5. Smart Financial Centre at Sugar Land. smartfinancialcentre.net 281-207-6278

SUGAR LAND: Tom Jones in Concert, May 16. Smart Financial Centre at Sugar Land. smartfinancialcentre.net 281-207-6278

SUGAR LAND: Khalid in Concert, May 18. Smart Financial Centre at Sugar Land. smartfinancialcentre.net 281-207-6278

SUGAR LAND: Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra Presents: The Planets, May 20. Stafford Centre. fbsco.org 281-208-6900

SUGAR LAND: Joe Bonamassa in Concert, May 21. Smart Financial Centre at Sugar Land. smartfinancialcentre.net 281-207-6278

SUGAR LAND: Memorial Day Ceremony, May 28. Sugar Land Memorial Park. sugarlandtx.gov 281-275-2825

THE WOODLANDS: Waterway Nights, May 5, 12, 19, 26. Waterway Square. thewoodlands

township-tx.gov
281-210-3800

THE WOODLANDS: CB&I TRI—The Woodlands Triathlon, May 12. Northshore Park. thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov/races 281-210-3800

THE WOODLANDS: Kenny Chesney in Concert with Special Guest Old Dominion, May 17. The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion. woodlandscenter.org 210-364-3010

THE WOODLANDS: Memorial Day in The Woodlands, May 27. Town Green Park. thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov 281-210-3800

TOMBALL: Vintage Car Festival, May 12. First Presbyterian Church. fpc.tomball.org 979-799-4185

VICTORIA: Cinco de Mayo Celebration, May 5. Downtown Victoria. victorifesta.com 361-573-5227

VICTORIA: Memorial Weekend Bash, May 25-27. Victoria Community Center. salazarpromotions.com 361-237-0351

HILL COUNTRY

AUSTIN: James Drake: *Tongue-Cut Sparrows (Inside Outside)*, through May 20. The Blanton Museum of Art. blantonmuseum.org 512-471-5482

AUSTIN: An Evening with George Takei, May 4. The Long Center for the Performing Arts. thelongcenter.org 512-474-5664

AUSTIN: Boots & Blooms, May 4. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. wildflower.org 512-232-0100

AUSTIN: *Texas Monthly LIVE!*, May 4. Paramount Theatre. austintheatre.org 512-472-5470

AUSTIN: *Rodeo! The Exhibition*, May 12-Jan. 27, 2019. Bullock Texas State History Museum. thestoryofexas.com 512-463-6485

AUSTIN: Emmylou Harris in Concert, May 19. Paramount Theatre. austintheatre.org 512-472-5470

AUSTIN: Chick Corea and Bela Fleck in Concert, May 23. Paramount Theatre. austintheatre.org 512-472-5470

AUSTIN: *An American in Paris*, May 30-June 3. Bass Concert Hall. austin.broadway.com 800-731-7469

AUSTIN: *Sunday in the Park with George*, May 30-June 24. ZACH Theatre. zachtheatre.org 512-476-0541

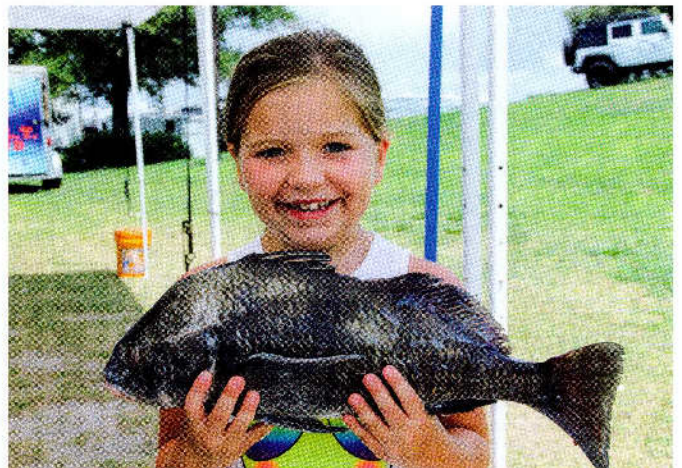
BANDERA: Cowboy Capital Opry, May 1. Silver Sage Community Center. banderacowboycapital.com 830-796-3045

BANDERA: Bandera Cattle Company Gunfighters, May 5, 12, 19, 26. Bandera Visitors Center. banderacowboycapital.com 830-796-3045

BANDERA: Bandera Market Days, May 5. Bandera County Courthouse Lawn. banderacowboycapital.com 830-796-3045

BANDERA: Chuck Wagon Dinner & Show, May 5, 12, 19, 26. Flying L Hill Country Resort. banderacowboycapital.com 830-796-3045

PORT ARTHUR: SALT Club Memorial Classic Fishing Tournament





BANDERA: Cowboys on Main

BANDERA: Cowboys on Main, May 5, 12, 19, 26. Cowboys on Main. banderacowboycapital.com 830-796-3045

BANDERA: Medina River Cleanup, May 3. Bandera City Park. banderacowboycapital.com 830-796-3045 or 210-413-7264

BANDERA: The Old Timers Trading Post, May 5. The Old Timer. banderacowboycapital.com 830-796-3045

BANDERA: St. Stanislaus Parish Festival, May 6. St. Stanislaus Catholic Church. banderacowboycapital.com 830-796-3045

BANDERA: Second Sunday Music Fest, May 13. Frontier Times Museum. banderacowboycapital.com 830-796-3045

BANDERA: Third Thursday Cowboy Camp, May 17. Bandera Beverage Barn RV Park. banderacowboycapital.com 830-796-3045

BANDERA: Armed Forces Day, May 19. 11th Street Cowboy Bar. banderacowboycapital.com 830-796-3045 or 830-796-7528

BANDERA: Bandera ProRodeo, May 25. Mansfield Park Rodeo Arena. banderacowboycapital.com 830-796-3045

BANDERA: Funtier Days Arts & Crafts Show, May 26-27. Bandera County Courthouse Lawn. banderacowboycapital.com 830-796-3045 or 830-796-4447

BANDERA: Funtier Days Parade, May 26. Main Street Bandera. banderacowboycapital.com 830-796-3045

BLANCO: Arts in the Park, May 4, 25-26. Bindseil Park. blancochamber.com 410-463-4076

COMFORT: Spring Antique Show, May 5-6. Comfort Park. comfortchamber.com 830-995-3131

COMFORT: Music in the Park, May 8. Comfort Park. comfortchamber.com 830-995-3131

FREDERICKSBURG: First Friday Art Walk, May 4. flawl.com 830-997-6523

FREDERICKSBURG: Hill Country Run Motorcycle Rally, May 4-6. Luckenbach Texas. hillcountryrun.com 830-997-8515

FREDERICKSBURG: Derby Day Party, May 5. Messina Hof Hill Country. messinahof.com 830-990-4653

FREDERICKSBURG: Maifest German Chorale Concert, May 6. visitfredericksburgtx.com

FREDERICKSBURG: Texas Flower Country Women's 5K and 10K Run, May 12. Wildseed Farms. runintexas.com/flower

FREDERICKSBURG: Fredericksburg Trade Days, May 18-20. Sunday Farms. fbgtradedays.com 210-846-4094

FREDERICKSBURG: Fredericksburg Professional Bull Riders, May 19. Gillespie County Fairgrounds. gillespiefair.com

FREDERICKSBURG: Kay & Friends in Concert, May 20. Fredericksburg United Methodist Church. fredericksburgmusicclub.com

FREDERICKSBURG: Fredericksburg Crawfish Festival, May 25-27. Marktplatz. fbgcrawfishfest.com 830-433-5225

FREDERICKSBURG: USO-Style Memorial Day Hangar Dance, May 26. Hangar Hotel Pacific

IN THE GALLERY

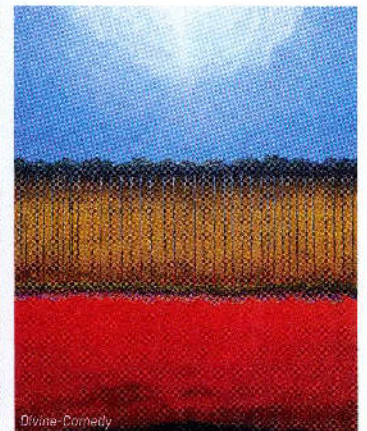
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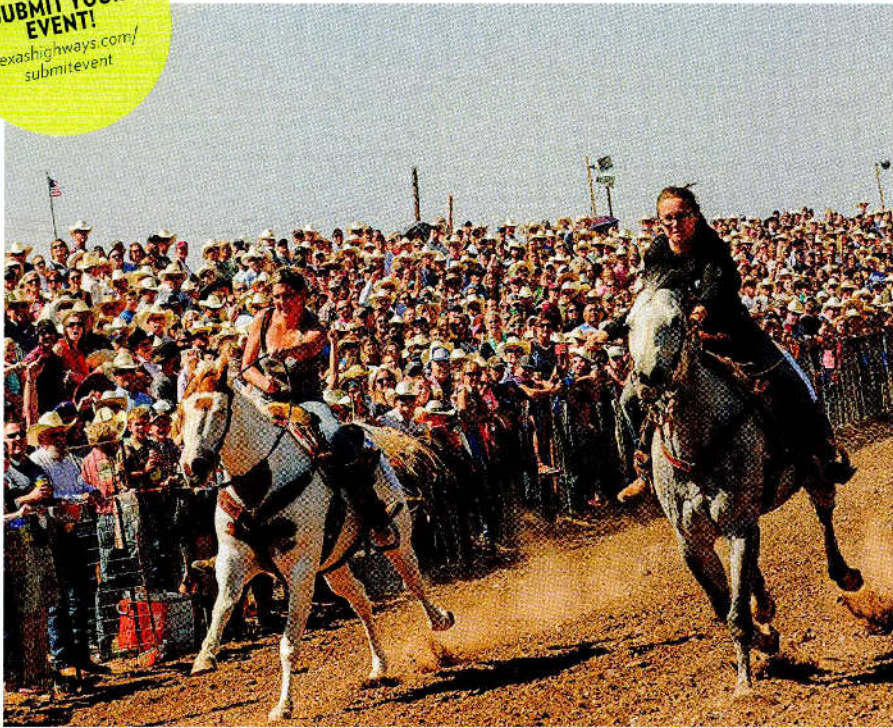
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EVENTS



ABILENE: Western Heritage Classic Rodeo

Showroom. hangarhotel.com 830-997-9990

FREDERICKSBURG:

WWII Pacific Combat Program at the National Museum of the Pacific War, May 26-27. Pacific Combat Zone. pacificwarmuseum.org 830-997-8600

FREDERICKSBURG:

Memorial Day Observance, May 28. National Museum of the Pacific War. pacificwarmuseum.org 830-997-8600

GRUENE: Friday Afternoon Club, May 4, 11, 18, 25. Gruene Hall. gruenehall.com 830-606-1281

GRUENE: Mother's Day Gospel Brunch with a Texas Twist, May 13. Gruene Hall. gruenehall.com 830-629-5077

GRUENE: Come and Taste It: Meet Texas' Best Winemakers, May 17. The Grapevine. grapevinegruene.com 830-629-5077 or 830-606-0093

GRUENE: Old Gruene Market Days, May 19-20. Gruene Historic District. gruene-marketedays.com 830-629-5077 or 830-832-1721

GRUENE: KNBT Americana Music Jam,

May 20. Gruene Hall. gruenehall.com 830-629-5077 or 830-606-1601

HUNT: Criders Rodeo & Dance Hall, May 26. cridersrodeoanddance.com 830-238-4441

INGRAM: Texas Watercolor Society Annual National Exhibit, April 17-June 28. Hill Country Arts Foundation. hcafc.com 830-367-5120

INGRAM: *Doublewide, Texas Christmas*, May 4-19. Hill Country Arts Foundation. hcafc.com 830-367-5121

JOHNSON CITY:

Art Walk, May 26. lbcountry.com 830-868-7684

JOHNSON CITY: Market Days, May 26-27. City Park. lbcountry.com 830-868-7684

KERRVILLE: Hill Country Swap Meet, May 5. Kerr County Hill Country Youth Event Center. kerrmarketdays.org 830-459-6198

KERRVILLE: Kerr County Market Days, May 5. Kerr County Hill Country Youth Event Center. kerrmarketdays.org 830-895-7524

KERRVILLE: Shatter the Stigma—Motorcycle Ride and 5K Walk/Run, May 19. Louise Hays

Park. kerrvillevsc.org 830-896-2211 ext. 6269

KERRVILLE: Kerrville Folk Festival, May 24-June 10. Quiet Valley Ranch. kerrvillefolkfestival.org 830-257-3600

KERRVILLE: Southwest Gourd Fine Art Show, May 24-June 24. Kerr Arts & Cultural Center. kacc.kerrville.com 830-895-2911

KERRVILLE: Texas Masters of Fine Art & Craft, May 25-27. Y.O. Ranch Hotel & Conference Center. texasmasters.com 214-497-7179

KERRVILLE: Kerrville Festival of the Arts, May 26-27. Historic Downtown Kerrville. kva.rtfest.com 830-895-7692

KYLE: Market Days, May 12. City Square Park. cityofkyle.com/recreation 512-262-3939

KYLE: Squeeze Me On the Square. Squeeze-Box Music Fest, May 12. City Square Park. cityofkyle.com/recreation 512-262-3939

LAMPASAS: Lampasas Trade Days, May 5-6. Marigold's Antiques & More. marigoldantiques.com 512-734-1294

MARBLE FALLS: Howdy-Roo CASI

Regional Chili Cookoff/ Lonestar Barbecue State Championship, May 6. Johnson Park. howdyroo.com

NEW BRAUNFELS: Wein & Saengerfest, May 5. Downtown New Braunfels. downtownnewbraunfels.com 512-917-6707

OZONA: *Vintage Hat Happenings*, through Sept. 30. Crockett County Museum. ozonamuseum.com 325-392-2837

OZONA: Western Frontier Days, May 18-19. Fort Lancaster State Historic Site. ozona.com/events/calendar 432-856-4391

OZONA: Memorial Day Ceremony, May 28. Veteran's Memorial at Cedar Hill Cemetery. ozona.com/events/calendar 325-392-2827

STONEWALL: Lavender Festival at Becker Vineyards, May 5-6. Becker Vineyards. beckervineyards.com 830-644-2681

UVALDE: Cactus Jack Pro Bull Riding, May 3-5. Uvalde County Fairplex. uvaldecountyfairplex.com 830-591-9040

UVALDE: Four Square Friday, May 11. Historic Downtown Uvalde.

visitualde.com

830-278-4115

WIMBERLEY: The Sunshine Boys, through May 6. Wimberley Playhouse. wimberleyplayers.org 512-847-0575

WIMBERLEY: Market Days, May 5. Lions Field. shopmarketdays.com 512-847-2201

WIMBERLEY: Second Saturday Gallery Trail, May 12. Various locations. gallerytrail.com 512-847-2201

PANHANDLE PLAINS

ABILENE: Broadway in Abilene: *Chicago*, May 2. Abilene Convention Center. celebrityattractions.com 800-869-1451

ABILENE: Western Heritage Classic Rodeo, May 10-13. Taylor County Expo Center. westernheritageclassic.com 325-677-4376

ABILENE: Abilene Kennel Club Annual Dog Shows, May 18-20. Taylor County Expo Center. abilenekenelclub.org 325-893-5793

ALBANY: *Cell Series: Lily Cox-Richard*, through May 12. Old Jail Art Center. theojac.org 325-762-2269

ALBANY: Matt Kleberg, through May 12. Old Jail Art Center. theojac.org 325-762-2269

AMARILLO: Chicago, April 30-May 1. Amarillo Civic Center Complex. panhandletickets.com 806-378-3096

AMARILLO: Cinco de Mayo Fajita Festival, May 4. Big Texan Starlight Ranch. amarillohcc.com 806-379-8800

AMARILLO: Multifest, May 20. Memorial Park. amarillosoca.net 806-290-2883

AMARILLO: Polk Street Cattle Drive, May 31. Downtown Amarillo. coorsranchrodeo.com 806-374-1497

BAIRD: Railhead Festival, May 19. Downtown. bairdchamber.com 325-854-1212

BIG SPRING: Summer Fest, May 18-19. Ryan Hall. facebook.com/northsidem

CANADIAN: Canadian River Music Festival, May 12. Jones Pavilion & Hemphill County Recreation Complex.

canadianrivermusicfestival.com 806-323-6660

ELECTRA: Electra Goat Barbecue and Craft Show, May 18-19. Electra Fairgrounds. electratexas.org 940-495-3577

GRAHAM: Lions Club Carnival, May 9-12. Graham Downtown Square. 940-549-0401

GRAHAM: Run for the Children—5K and 10K, May 19. Virginia's House. runforthechildren.org 940-550-8963

LAMESA: Red Dirt Ranch Texas Country Music Fest, May 18-19. Old Lamesa Golf Course. thereddirt-ranch.com 806-462-7943

LUBBOCK: *Columbia: 15 Years After*, through June 17. Silent Wings Museum. silentwingsmuseum.com 806-775-3049

LUBBOCK: *Portals: The Art of Yvonne Armitage Greene*, through May 13. Buddy Holly Center. buddyhollycenter.org 806-775-3560

LUBBOCK: *Our Mothers' Daughters*, May 11-12. LHUCA Firehouse Theatre. civildubbock.com/select.html 806-770-2000

POST: Cinco De Mayo Festival, May 5. Old Mill Trade Days. 432-934-1479

POST: Old Mill Trade Days, May 11-13. 432-934-1479

SAN ANGELO: San Angelo National Ceramic Competition, through June 24. San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. samfa.org 325-653-3333

SAN ANGELO: *One-Man Star Wars Trilogy*, May 1-2. Brooks & Bates Theatre. sanangelopac.org 325-284-3825

SAN ANGELO: Art Thursday, May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31. San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. samfa.org 325-653-3333

SAN ANGELO: *Chicago: the Musical*, May 4-5. Murphy Performance Hall. sanangelopac.org 325-284-3825

SAN ANGELO: Chamber Music Series Concert, May 6. San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. samfa.org 325-653-3333

SAN ANGELO: Downtown Stroll, May 17. San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. samfa.org 325-653-3333

SAN ANGELO: *Robin Hood & Maid Marion*,

May 18-20. Brooks & Bates Theatre. sanangelopac.org 325-284-3825

SAN ANGELO: Armed Forces Day, May 19. Fort Concho National Historic Landmark. fortconcho.com 325-234-0316

SAN ANGELO: Memorial Day Exercises, May 28. Fort Concho National Historic Landmark. fortconcho.com 325-234-0316

SANTA ANNA: Funtier Days Featuring the World Championship Bison Cookoff, May 18-19. Old Armory Civic Center, Gary James Memorial Park. santaannatex.org 432-889-8359

SNYDER: Snyder Wheels Car Show, May 4-5. Towle Park. snyderwheels.club.com 325-573-8961

SNYDER: Cinco de Mayo, May 5. North Park (Spanish Park). snyderchamber.org 325-573-7321

SNYDER: May Day, May 5. The Coliseum of Snyder. snyderchamber.org 325-573-4035

VERNON: Doan's Picnic, May 5. Doans Crossing. doansmaypicnic.com 940-839-8720

VERNON: Santa Rosa Roundup Parade and Rodeo, May 16-19. Santa Rosa Rodeo Grounds. santarosarodeo.com/calendar 940-357-1607

WICHITA FALLS: After School Fishing, May 8, 10, 15, 17. South Weeks Pond. wichitafallstx.gov 940-761-7490

WICHITA FALLS: Cajun Fest, May 12. Downtown Wichita Falls. facebook.com/canjunfestwf 940-322-4525

WICHITA FALLS: Celtic Woman: Homecoming Tour, May 12. Memorial Auditorium. wfmpec.com 940-716-5555

PINEY WOODS

GLADEWATER: Apron Strings: Ties to the Past, May 12. Antique District Apron Strings. 903-845-5501

HENDERSON: East Texas Wildflower Trails, through May 31. Various locations. visithendersontx.com 866-650-5529

HUNTSVILLE: Wine Down, Shop Small, May 3. Historic Downtown Square. huntsvillemainstreet.com 936-291-9726

HUNTSVILLE: Cinco de Mayo, May 5. Walker County Annex. huntsville.texas.com 936-291-9726

HUNTSVILLE: East Texas Folk Festival, May 18-20. Sam Houston Memorial Museum Grounds. samhoustonmemorialmuseum.com 936-291-9726

JEFFERSON: "Battle for Jefferson" Civil War Re-enactment, May 4-6. Cypress River Ranch. battleforjefferson.com 903-240-1599

KILGORE: Kilgore Geekend, May 5. Downtown Kilgore. facebook.com/kilgoregeekend 903-218-6896

MAGNOLIA: Corks & Canvas on The Stroll, May 12. The Stroll. cityofmagnolia.com 713-542-4358

TYLER: Red Dirt Barbecue Festival, May 5. reddirtbbqfest.com 903-581-0606

TYLER: Celtic Woman in Concert, May 10. University of Texas at Tyler R. Don Cowan Fine & Performing Arts Center. cowancenter.org 903-566-7424

TYLER: Hit the Bricks, May 12. Downtown Tyler. visittyler.com/secondaturday 903-592-1661

TYLER: Tyler Civic Chorale 50th Anniversary Spring Gala, May 19. First Presbyterian Church.

tylercivichorale.org 903-597-6317

WOODVILLE: Dinner on the Grounds, March 25. Heritage Village. heritage-village.org 409-283-2272

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

ADDISON: Bread, through May 6. Water Tower Theatre. watertowrtheatre.org 972-450-6232

ADDISON: Cystic Fibrosis Foundation—Great Strides Walk, May 12. Vitruvian Park. fightcfcff.org 214-871-2222

ADDISON: Taste Addison, May 18-20. Addison Circle Park. tasteaddison.texas.com 972-450-2800

BOLIVAR: Unlimited Off-Road Show—Jeep Resort, May 17-19. Texas Frog Field Venue. uorshow.com/jeepresort 404-401-2807

BONHAM: Bonham Heritage Day, May 5. Downtown Bonham Historic Square. visitbonham.com 903-583-9830

BRYAN: Cooking Party: Locally Sourced, May 20. The Vintage House

Restaurant. messinahof.com 979-778-9463

CLARKSVILLE: Barbecue Smoke-Off at Langford Lake, May 19. Langford Lake. redrivercoc.com 903-427-2645

CLEBURNE: *To Kill a Mockingbird*, April 27-28, May 3-19. Plaza Theatre Company. plaza-theatre.com 817-202-0600

CLEBURNE: Cinco de Mayo Celebration, May 5. Hulen Park. visitcleburne.com 817-645-0949

COLUMBUS: Magnolia Days, May 18-19. Downtown Columbus, Courthouse Square. columbus.texas.org 979-732-8385

CORSICANA: Corsicana AirSho, May 19. KCRS, C David Campbell Field. coyotesquadron.org 903-467-7170

DALLAS: *Journey to Space*, through May 6. Perot Museum. perotmuseum.org 214-428-5555

DALLAS: *Hometown Texas: Photographs by Peter Brown, Stories by Joe Holley*, through May 5.

PDNB Gallery. pdnbgallery.com 214-969-1852

DALLAS: *The Power of Gold: Asante Royal Regalia from Ghana*, through Aug. 12. Dallas Museum of Art. dma.org

DALLAS: *Blue*, April 21-May 6. Dallas Children's Theater. dct.org 214-978-0110

DALLAS: A Night of Symphonic Hip-Hop featuring Wyclef Jean with the Dallas POPS, May 2. Winspear Opera House. attpac.org 214-880-0202

DALLAS: *Air Play*, May 3-8. Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre. dct.org 214-978-0110

DALLAS: *Jungalbook*, May 4-26. Dallas Children's Theater. dct.org 214-978-0110

DALLAS: *Sterling Ruby: Sculpture*, May 5-Aug. 19. Nasher Sculpture Center. nashersculpturecenter.org

DALLAS: Command Performance, May 5. AT&T Performing Arts Center Winspear Opera House. attpac.org 214-880-0202

DALLAS: Taste of Bishop Arts Food and Historical Tours, May 6, 13, 20, 27. Veracruz Cafe. dallasbitesfoodtours.com 972-814-5997

DALLAS: House of DIFFA, May 12. Omni Dallas. diffadallas.org 214-748-8580

DALLAS: Mother's Weekend Chocolate Tours, May 12-13. Dallas by Chocolate. dallasbychocolate.com 972-814-5997

DALLAS: AT&T Byron Nelson, May 11-20. Trinity Forest Golf Club. atbyronnelson.org 214-943-9700

DALLAS: The Hidden Dallas Tour, May 19. dallasbychocolate.com 972-814-5997

DALLAS: Peter Hook & the Light in Concert, May 22. Granada Theater. granadatheater.com 214-824-9933

DECATUR: Cruise Nights on the Courthouse Square, May 5. Historic Downtown. decaturmainstreet.com 940-399-9558

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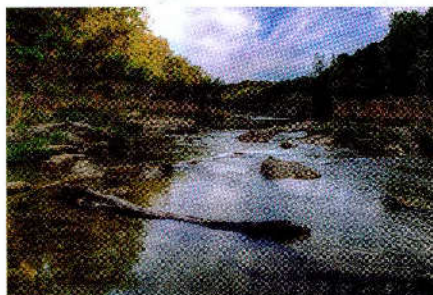
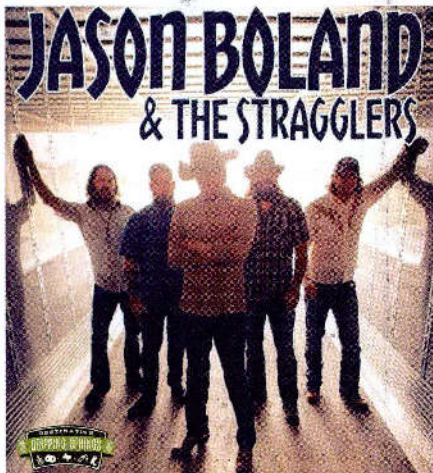
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GlenRoseTexas.net



GRAND PRAIRIE: Thoroughbred Racing

DECATUR: Eightr from Decatur Food Truck Challenge, May 5. Decatur Chamber. eightr foodtruckchallenge.com 940-627-3107

DENISON: Temporary Exhibit: *The Birth of NASA*, through Aug. 13. Eisenhower Birthplace. visiteisenhowerbirthplace.com 903-465-8908

DENISON: Bark & Paws, May 19. Heritage Park. denisonlive.com 903-465-2720

DENISON: Memorial Day Parade, May 28. Main Street. denison.texas.us 903-465-1551

DENTON: Twilight Tunes Concert Series, May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31. Downtown Denton Courthouse on the Square. dentonmainstreet.org 940-367-7321

DENTON: Cinco de Mayo, May 5. Quakertown Park. dentoncincode.com 940-367-7811

ELGIN: Sip, Shop, and Stroll, May 10. Historic Downtown Elgin. elgintx.com

ELGIN: Elgin Art Studio Tour, May 19-20. Historic Downtown Elgin. elgintx.com

ENNIS: *Sleeping Beauty*, April 27-May 12. Theatre Rocks! theatre.rocks.com 972-878-5126

ENNIS: *The 39 Steps*, May 3-13. Ennis Public Theatre. ennispublictheatre.com 972-878-7529

ENNIS: National Polka Festival, May 25-27. Downtown Ennis. nationalpolkafestival.com 972-878-4748

FORT WORTH: Fort Worth Opera Festival, April 27-May 13. Bass Performance Hall. fwopera.org 817-731-0726

FORT WORTH: Mayfest, May 5-6. Trinity Park. mayfest.org 817-332-1055

FORT WORTH: Dean & Deluca Invitational, May 21-27. Colonial Country Club. deananddelucainvitational.com 817-926-0118

GARLAND: Garland Symphony Orchestra Concert: Pianist Alex McDonald, May 11. Granville Arts Center. garlandsymphony.org 972-926-0611

GIDDINGS: Lee County Fair and Charcoal Challenge Barbecue Cookoff, May 17-19. Firemans Park. leecountyfairtx.com 979-542-3455

GLEN ROSE: Photo Tour, May 5, 19. Fossil Rim Wildlife Center. fossilrim.org 254-897-2960

GLEN ROSE: Dulcimer Festival, May 11-13. Oakdale Park. 254-897-3081

GLEN ROSE: Memorial Day Weekend Band Bash, May 26. Oakdale Park. 254-897-3081

GLEN ROSE: Discovery After Dark, May 27. Fossil Rim Wildlife Center.

fossilrim.org 254-897-2960

GRAND PRAIRIE: Thoroughbred Racing, April 19-July 22. Lone Star Park. lonestarpark.com 972-263-7223

GRAPEVINE: 1860s Baseball, May 12. Nash Farm. nashfarm.org 817-410-3185

GRAPEVINE: Main Street Fest—A Craft Brew Experience, May 18-20. Historic Downtown Main Street. grapevintexasusa.com 817-410-3185

GREENVILLE: Audie Murphy Day, May 12. Audie Murphy American Cotton Museum. cottonmuseum.com 903-450-4502

HALLETTSVILLE: *Texas in World War I*, through Nov. 30. French Simpson Memorial Library. hallettsvillelibrary.org 361-798-3243 ext. 208

IRVING: Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra Presents Pianist Alex McDonald, May 21. Irving Arts Center, Carpenter Hall. lascolinassymphony.org 972-252-4800

LEWISVILLE: Keeping Tradition Alive Jam Session, May 11. Wayne Ferguson Plaza. cityoflewisville.com 972-219-3401

LEWISVILLE: Fiesta Charra, May 26. Lewisville Rodeo Arena. cityoflewisville.com 972-219-3401

MADISONVILLE: Madisonville Downtown Shop & Stroll, May 11. Downtown Madisonville. madisoncountychamberofcommerce.com 936-248-3591

MARLIN: Spring Dinner Theatre, May 11-12. Palace Theatre. palacetheatremarlin.com

MCKINNEY: Bike the Bricks, May 25. Downtown McKinney. downtownmckinney.com 972-547-2660

MCKINNEY: Smiles Charity Concert & Family Festival, May 27. Adriatica Village. smilescharity.org 972-540-9714

MESQUITE: Mesquite Creative Artists Exhibit, May 1-31. Mesquite Arts Center Main Gallery. mesquiteartscenter.org 972-216-6444

MESQUITE: Cinco de Mayo Celebration, May 5. Paschall Park. cityofmesquite.com/pard 972-216-6260

MESQUITE: Florence Ranch Homestead Tours, May 12. Florence Ranch Homestead. historicmesquite.org 972-216-6468

MESQUITE: Marketplace Mesquite: Farmers' and Artisan's Market, May 12, 26. Heritage Square in Downtown Mesquite. themarketplacedfw.com 214-795-6121

MESQUITE: Mesquite Symphony Orchestra Concert: Spring is in the Air, May 12. Mesquite Arts

travel resource guide



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 - 7 Beaumont Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - 8 Blanco Chamber of Commerce
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 - 10 Brazosport Convention & Visitors Council
 - 11 Brenham/Washington County
 - 12 Bullock Texas State History Museum
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 - 14 City of Angleton
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 - 70 Nacogdoches Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - 71 National Museum of the Pacific War
 - 72 New Braunfels Historical Museum Association
 - 73 Palestine Visitors Center

- 74 Paris CVB/Lamar County Chamber of Commerce
 - 75 Port Arthur Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - 76 Port Lavaca Chamber of Commerce & Tourism
 - 77 San Angelo Chamber of Commerce
 - 78 San Marcos Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - 79 Seguin Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - 80 South Padre Island Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - 81 Stark Cultural Venues
 - 82 Temple Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - 83 Texas Hill Country Trail Region
 - 84 Texas Historical Commission
 - 85 Texas Independence Trail Region
 - 86 Texas Jack Wild West Outfitter
 - 87 Texas Parks & Wildlife
 - 88 Texas State Aquarium
 - 89 Texas State Railroad
 - 90 The Center for the Arts & Sciences
 - 91 The Colony
 - 92 The Nature Conservancy
 - 93 Thin Line Film Festival
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 - 99 Visit Lubbock
 - 100 Visit Plano
 - 101 Waco Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - 102 Waxahachie Convention & Visitors Bureau
- West Texas Co-op**
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 - 104 Big Bend Chamber of Commerce
 - 105 Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce
 - 106 Fort Stockton Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - 107 City of Marfa
 - 108 Odessa Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - 109 VisitMidland
-
- 110 Wichita Falls Convention & Visitors Bureau

EVENTS

Center Concert Hall.
mesquitesymphony.org
972-216-6444 or
972-216-8127

MESQUITE: Mesquite Meander Historic Cemetery Tour, May 18-19. Mesquite Cemetery. historicmesquite.org 972-216-6468

MESQUITE: Opal Lawrence Historical Park Tours, May 26. historicmesquite.org 972-216-6468

NOCONA: Cruisin' Nocona, May 3. Downtown Nocona. nocona.org 940-825-3526

PARIS: Cruisin' on the Plaza, May 4. Downtown Paris Fountain Plaza. paristexas.com 903-784-2501

PARIS: Uncle Jesse Big Bass Fishing Tournament, May 5. Pat Mays Lake. paristexas.com 903-784-2501

PARIS: Wings over Paris, May 12. Cox Field. paristexas.com

PLANO: Courtyard Texas Music Series, May 3. Courtyard Theater. visitplano.com 972-941-5600

PLANO: AsiaFest, May 5. Haggard Park. asianamericanheritage.org 972-379-9351

PLANO: Head for the Cure 5K: Race for Brain Cancer Research, May 5. Oak Point Park Amphitheatre. headfortheure.org/north-texas 816-218-6871

PLANO: Smoke and Mirrors, May 10-26. Rover Dramawerks. roverdramawerks.com 972-849-0358

SHINER: Memorial Day Service, May 28. Green-Dickson Park. shinertx.com 361-594-4180

TEMPLE: First Friday, May 4. Downtown Temple. discovertemple.com 254-298-5378

TEMPLE: Family Days, May 5. Temple Railroad & Heritage Museum. templerrhm.org 254-298-5172

TEMPLE: National Train Day, May 12. Temple Railroad & Heritage Museum. templerrhm.org 254-298-5172

WACO: Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Secrets of the

Sewer, through May 6. Mayborn Museum Complex. baylor.edu/mayborn 254-710-1110

WACO: Faces of the Southern Ocean, April 30-Nov. 25. Mayborn Museum Complex. baylor.edu/mayborn 254-710-1110

WACO: KidzooBible, May 5. Cameron Park Zoo. cameronparkzoo.com 254-750-8400

WACO: Beyond the Storm: 65th Anniversary Commemoration of the Waco Tornado, May 10. Mayborn Museum Complex. baylor.edu/mayborn 254-710-1110

WAXAHACHIE: Scarborough Renaissance Festival, May 5-6, 12-13, 19-20, 26-28. srfestival.com 972-938-3247

WAXAHACHIE: Cinco De Mayo Festival, May 4-5. Downtown Waxahachie. elliscountyhispanic.org 469-309-4040

WYILE: Pedal Car Races, May 6. Downtown Wylie. wylietexas.gov 972-516-6016

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

SAN ANTONIO: SA300 Commemorative Week, May 1-6. sanantonio300.org/commemorative-week

SAN ANTONIO: Yellow Ribbon Project, May 6-19. San Antonio River Walk. thesanantonio riverwalk.com

SAN ANTONIO: Culinaria Wine + Food Festival, May 17-20. La Cantera Resort. culinarias.a.org 210-822-9555

SAN ANTONIO: Ritmo y Canción: Celebrating 300 Years of San Antonio's Historic Missions, May 20. Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower. sachorasociety.org 210-228-4147

SAN ANTONIO: Exhibition Performance: *Perpetuating Nostalgia: Songs about the American West*, May 25. Briscoe Western Art Museum. briscoemuseum.org 210-299-4499

SAN ANTONIO: Special Exhibition: *Andy Warhol: Cowboys and Indians*, May 25-Sept. 3. Briscoe

Western Art Museum. briscoemuseum.org 210-299-4499

SAN ANTONIO: Armed Forces River Parade, May 19. Arneson River Theatre. thesanantonioriverwalk.com 210-227-4262

SAN ANTONIO: Special Exhibition: *Billy Schenck and the Roots of Western Pop Art*, May 25-Sept. 3. Briscoe

Western Art Museum. briscoemuseum.org 210-299-4499

SAN ANTONIO: Memorial Day Artisan Show, May 25-28. Downtown River Walk Extension. thesanantonioriverwalk.com 210-227-4262

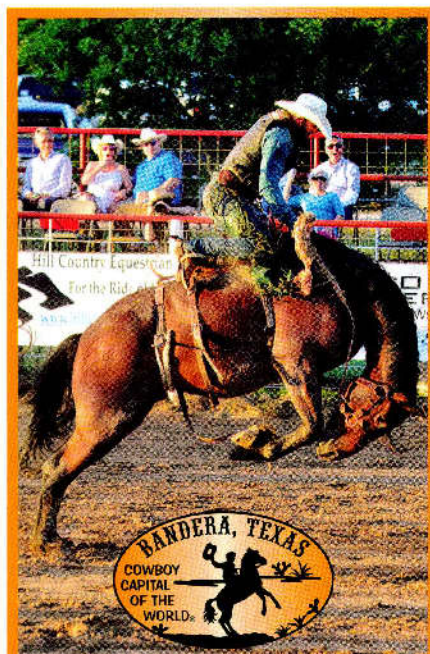
SAN ANTONIO: *Night of Artists*, through June 6. Briscoe Western Art

WANT MORE? VIEW THE TEXAS HIGHWAYS EVENTS CALENDAR AT texashighways.com/events.

For a free printed copy of an even more detailed, quarterly schedule of events, go to texashighways.com/freepubs; write to *Texas Highways Events Calendar*, P.O. Box 149249, Austin, TX 78714-9249; or call 800-452-9292 from anywhere in the U.S. or Canada, between 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Central.

For Texas travel questions, call 800-452-9292 to reach a TxDOT Travel Information Center, where a professional travel counselor will provide routing assistance, advise you of road conditions, and send brochures (including the official *Texas State Travel Guide*, Texas Official Travel Map, and quarterly *Texas Highways Events Calendar*).

To submit event information, visit texashighways.com and go to Events, Event Submission form; email: texasevents@txdot.gov; or mail: *Texas Highways Events Calendar*, Box 141009, Austin, TX 78714-1009. Listing deadlines: Spring (March, April, May) Dec. 1; Summer (June, July, Aug.) March 1; Fall (Sept., Oct., Nov.) June 1; Winter (Dec., Jan., Feb.) Sept. 1.



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continued from page 96

to Round Top?

A: Aimee: Go to Round Top Mercantile Company and order sandwiches.

Jolie: It's like Subway, but better.

Aimee: Yeah. Get a sack lunch and go drive around on the back roads and just cruise. There are so many amazing farmhouses out here. And then go to Festival Hill, explore that whole area. Come here in the off-season to shop a little bit, eat some good food, like at Royers [Round Top Café], and just slow down on the back roads. Come visit us, hang out here.

Q: Where's your favorite place to travel in Texas?

A: Aimee: We stop as much as we can in Kilgore at the East Texas Oil Museum.

Jolie: Oh my gosh, that's our favorite. I think for one, that's home. We grew up in Overton, which is 12 miles from Kilgore.

Aimee: You are in this museum part, then you open these old-timey looking doors and you literally walk into...

Jolie: ... the oil boom of the 1930s. It's a road with old cars with their tires stuck in the mud.

Aimee: And they have stuffed horses and donkeys pulling the wagons. It's a little eerie, but it's the coolest.

Q: What's your favorite part about flea markets?

A: Jolie: The dealers have such diverse backgrounds—former lawyers, former doctors, former CPAs, former convicts. We have ex-cons who are our junker friends. Everybody has really fascinating and interesting backstories, and they all chose this, which is what's really great. Everybody has this common love, and everybody is happy because they chose to be here. So it's a really cool environment. And the evenings are so fun because there's Texas music, there's beer, there's good food, and everybody's milling around the flea market with little lights everywhere.



JUNK GYPSIES

Find the Junk Gypsies at gypsyville.com and visit their storefront at 1215 State Highway 237 in Round Top.

Q: What are your favorite memories of traveling around the state?

A: Aimee: We don't quite as much now, but we used to stop at every dive bar, like Devil's Backbone Tavern [in Fischer]—that place is amazing—and every little diner and quirky little spot. That was kind of our thing, stopping in all those places. The road does this to you—you just get so flexible. You may or may not make it there that night. You just have to be open to that. You have to be open to the road, the universe of the road.

Q: Growing up, you worked at your parents' pizza restaurant—what business lessons did you learn from them?

A: Aimee: They treated people so good and were super hard workers. They would take us out of school sometimes and take us on a road trip. And it might just be going to New Braunfels, or going to Dallas to go to the museum, or going to Canton to the flea market.

It wasn't really about making money. It was about making a good life.


Q: How do you explain your success?

A: Jolie: I think it's a combination of hard work and always sticking true and firm to our beliefs. The ultimate goal was to be with our families, to work together with our kids.


Aimee: We always feel like Junk Gypsy evolved into its own being, and we're just running behind, trying to catch up all the time. We could never sell the soul of Junk Gypsy. We held onto that, and for some reason, people keep liking what we do, and we're thankful. 🐾

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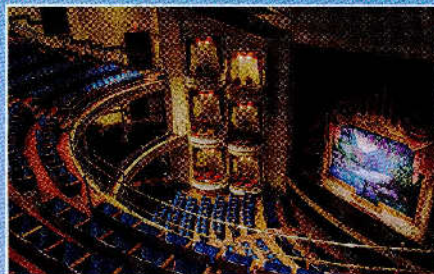
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Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier

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The San Luis Resort, Spa & Conference Center

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SanLuisResort.com
800-322-5937



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GalvestonHolidayInn.com
409-740-5300



Hilton Galveston Island Resort

Soak up the sun at the Hilton Galveston Island Resort. The well-appointed resort offers exceptional accommodations and amenities coupled with fun-filled summer activities for the whole family to enjoy! Partake in exciting pool games and activities, including beach bingo, contests and arts and crafts, or sip on a cocktail poolside and enjoy great music from live DJs. Between a dynamic lineup of activities, a vast variety of dining options and a location steps away from the beach, there is truly something for everyone at the Hilton Galveston Island Resort.

GalvestonHilton.com
409-744-5000

GRAND GETAWAYS LITTLE LUXURIES



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the trolley to Galveston's historic downtown and spend time shopping and dining. Hotel Galvez is an ideal family getaway or romantic escape.

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Hotel Galvez & Spa®, A Wyndham Grand® Hotel
2024 Seawall Blvd., Galveston, TX 77550
www.HotelGalvez.com
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The Tremont House, A Wyndham Grand Hotel

Browse your favorite shops, grab ice cream at La King's, dine in one of the island's most popular restaurants or take in a show at The Grand 1894 Opera House – all just steps away from The Tremont House, A Wyndham Grand® Hotel, in Galveston. The Tremont House, a boutique-style hotel located in the heart of The Strand Historic District, offers Galveston's only Rooftop Bar, the popular 1888 Toujouse Bar and casual dining at Tremont Cafe. It's the perfect location for a romantic escape or girls' getaway with plenty to see and do within walking distance.

Remember The Tremont House is in the heart of every downtown festival so check the calendar for upcoming events on the island or monthly happenings, like Movie Nite and Music Nite on The Strand. The hotel is also a popular venue for weddings and meetings. Couples transform the

hotel's ballroom into their own fairytale wedding while planners appreciate the floor to ceiling windows to rejuvenate attendees.

Guests enjoy an exceptional level of service and complimentary Wi-Fi at this top-rated TripAdvisor® hotel. Take advantage of our Book Ahead and Save 10% Rate + 100 Bonus Points to save and earn points for your next visit at any Wyndham property. The hotel also offers discounts for AAA and AAHP members.

The Tremont House, A Wyndham Grand® Hotel
2300 Ship's Mechanic Row, Galveston, TX
409.763.0300
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THE DAYTRIPPER

WITH CHET GARNER



Get Cracking

NESTLED IN THE northern reaches of the Texas Hill Country is the laid-back town of San Saba, also known as the “Pecan Capital of the World.” While the endless acres of native nuts have made San Saba County famous, I found lots of reasons to fall for this charming town.

8 A.M. I strolled past the stately **San Saba County Courthouse** and found myself in the heart of downtown. My first stop was **Oliver and Co. Cafe**, a hip coffee shop that offers pastries, salads, sandwiches, and the best cup of joe in town. I enjoyed a bowl of steel-cut oatmeal as the locals stopped in for a morning fix. Above the café sits the renovated **Dofflemyer Hotel**, which could give any big-city boutique lodging a run for its money.

9 A.M. Intrigued by a giant boot sign, I crossed the street to **Harry’s Boots**. This iconic shop has sold boots and Western wear since 1939 and now stretches across five downtown buildings. Its customers come from far and wide, and include many families who’ve shopped here for generations.

10 A.M. It was time to explore San Saba’s main industry, which revolves around the “official state nut of Texas.” It all goes back to the mid-1800s when traveling English cabinetmaker E.E. Risien discovered wild pecans growing

along the San Saba River. He decided to plant his own and subsequently founded the Texas pecan industry by developing some of the most popular pecan varieties in the world. His family is still in town running the **Millican Pecan Company**. I stopped in for a history lesson and to sample some “Carmillicans,” which are gooey clusters of homemade caramel, pecans, and milk chocolate.

10:30 A.M.

I spent the rest of the morning visiting pecan shops, indulging along the way. I bought some amazing pecan coffee at **Alamo Pecan & Coffee**; nibbled on some delicious cinnamon-sugar pecans from **Oliver Pecan Company**; and bought an entire pecan pie from **The Great San Saba River Pecan Company**.

NOON Needing to balance my sugar overload, I headed to the **San Saba Olive Oil Company**. I roamed the

shop and sampled dozens of infused olive oils and vinegars, ranging from blazing-hot habanero olive oil to black-berry-ginger balsamic vinegar.

1 P.M. Ready to give my stomach a rest, I headed out on a hike through **San Saba River Nature Park**. I explored the ruins of the town’s first watermill and discovered some hidden waterfalls until I eventually arrived on the banks of the San Saba River. Rather than resting, I decided to find the source of this spring-fed creek.

2 P.M. I crossed the highway and found myself at **Mill Pond**, a spring-fed lake already full of folks enjoying a reprieve from the afternoon sun. Luckily, I had brought my swimsuit, so I decided to join them. I jumped off the dock and onto the floating trampoline as nearby paddleboarders laughed at my terrible form.

4 P.M. I had skipped lunch, so I headed to **Youngs Burritos & BBQ** for an early dinner. The brisket burrito was one of the best I’ve ever had, with flavorful mesquite-smoked brisket, fresh pico de gallo, and spicy jalapeño sauce all wrapped in a flour tortilla. The homemade bread pudding for dessert perfected the meal.

5 P.M. Next, I grabbed a seat at **Wedding Oak Winery** as founder

Mike McHenry explained the varietals and how the historic “Wedding Oak” tree, located just a mile away, inspired the winery’s name. This tree was a popular gathering spot for

Native Americans and for early settler weddings. I ordered a glass of a popular tempranillo blend called Tioja to take to the shady back patio.

I realized I still had a few candied pecans in my pocket, which paired deliciously with the wine. It’s easy to see why folks are nuts about San Saba. I’m right there with them. So whether you follow my footsteps or forge your own path, I hope to see you on the road. **L**

Chet Garner is the host of *The Daytripper*® travel show on PBS. To view the San Saba episode visit thedaytripper.com.

Contact the San Saba Visitors Center at 325-372-5200; visitsansabatexas.com

TRAVEL MATTERS

TRAVEL TALK WITH TRUE TEXANS



Sister, Sister

The Junk Gypsy empire keeps growing

story by **Kimya Kavehkar**

FOR SISTERS AIMEE AND JOLIE SIKES, IT ALL BEGAN WITH A patch of green shag carpet. As preteens in East Texas, they plucked the relic from a pile of discarded furniture and repurposed it in their tree house. Now the duo, popularly known as the Junk Gypsies, have made a very successful pursuit out of turning other people's trash into treasure, or "junking." The sisters' brand includes the Junk Gypsy Company retail store in Round Top, a self-titled book, merchandise ranging from fringed cowgirl boots to ruffled bedding, and a TV show.

The Junk Gypsies got their start in 1998 when Aimee and her mother, Janie, a flea market devotee, set up a booth at Canton's First Monday Trade Days to sell stuff they had collected from across Texas. Younger sister Jolie joined them two years later. Cultivating a rebellious, wild-hearted cowgirl aesthetic, the Junk Gypsies caught the eye of country star Miranda Lambert, who called on the sisters to "junkify" her tour bus and decorate her 2011 wedding to Blake Shelton.

The Sikes' national profile exploded in 2012 with the premier of *Junk Gypsies*, which ran for one season on HGTV and two more on sister network Great American Country. The sisters' pleasant draws, feisty spirits, and crafty skills won the hearts of home improvement enthusiasts and propelled them to more projects, both on-camera and

off. They currently star in two digital series: one on HGTV.com called *That Junk Gypsy Life* and one on Facebook called *The Find & The Fix*.

This year, the Junk Gypsies—a family business incorporating three generations of Sikes—are celebrating their 20th anniversary with the opening of the Wander Inn, located behind the Junk Gypsy Company store in Round Top. The bed and breakfast's two ranch-style properties exude Junk Gypsy style, complete with neon lighting, vintage signage, and Americana flair. With only eight rooms, the inn is sure to book up early during the world-renowned Original Round Top Antiques Fair, held annually in April and October.

Q: *You two have been settled in Round Top for seven years now. What made you want to call the town home?*

A: Jolie: It was already like a home away from home, but we really love it here. The land and the countryside and the hillside.

Aimee: And the people. Because of the antiques scene here, people are constantly in town from all over the world.

Q: *The Round Top Antiques Fair seems to have grown into an international phenomenon in recent years.*

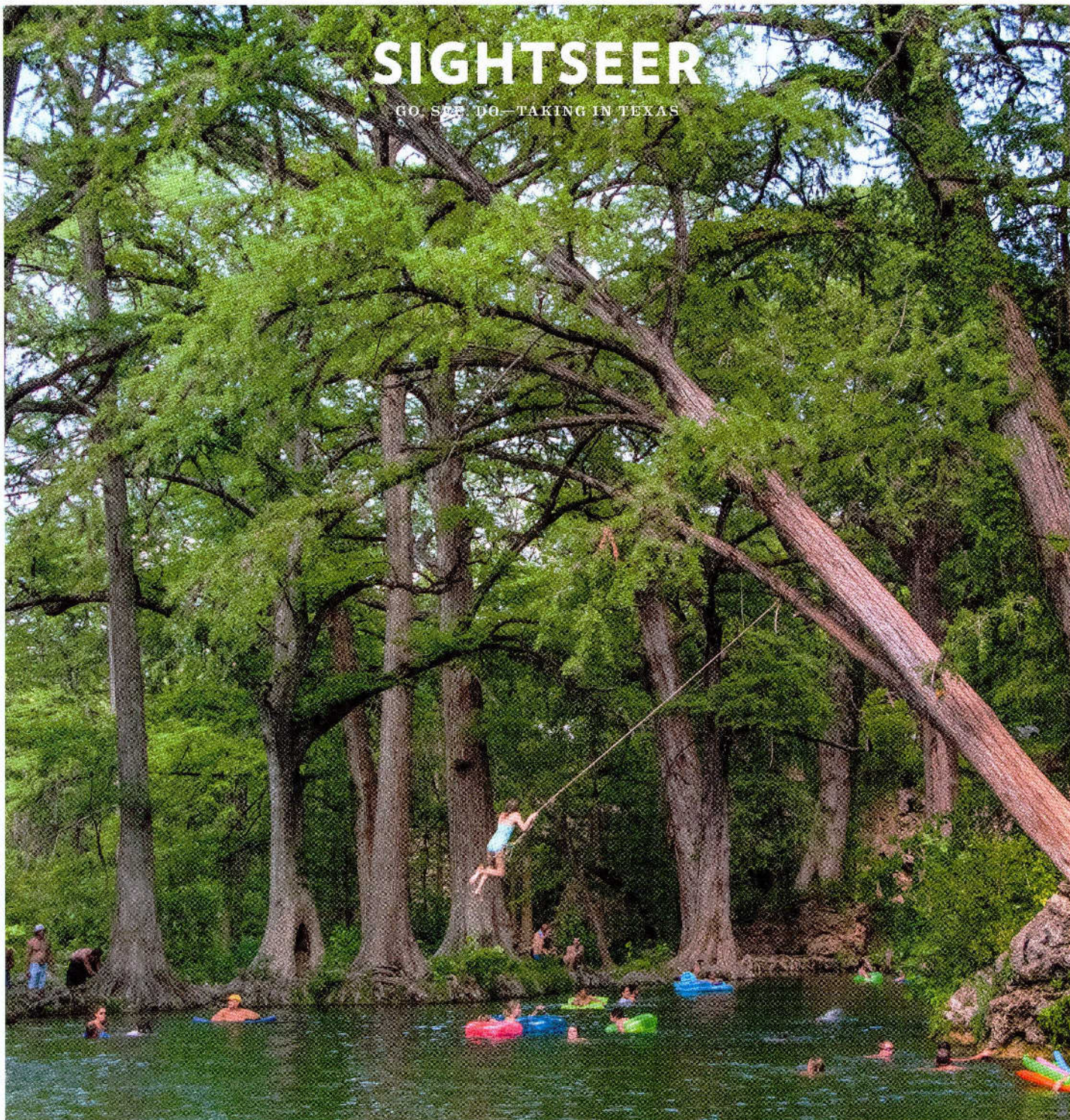
A: Aimee: I think the antiques show has always been fun, but I think now it's infinitely more fun, and people aren't coming here just for antiques. They're coming here for a soul vacation. They're coming here to be a part of this kindred spirit feeling. It's like the Woodstock of antiques.

Q: *What would you recommend for a newcomer* > continued on page 91

"They're coming here for a soul vacation. They're coming here to be a part of this kindred spirit feeling. It's like the Woodstock of antiques."

SIGHTSEER

GO, SEE, DO—TAKING IN TEXAS



WHAT: KRAUSE SPRINGS **WHERE:** 404 KRAUSE SPRINGS ROAD, SPICEWOOD **WHEN:** YEAR-ROUND (TYPICALLY CLOSED DECEMBER-FEBRUARY)

Spring into Summer

Founded in 1955, these spring-fed pools are a prime summer hideout

Rope swings dangling from centuries-old cypress trees, campgrounds, waterfalls, and manicured foliage surrounding grottos and natural swimming holes have attracted families to the idyllic waters of Krause Springs for generations. Since the 1950s, the Krause family has operated this 11.5-acre paradise in the Texas Hill Country—added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 for its undisturbed Native American burial sites. Its 68-degree waters on Cypress Creek offer a cool respite from Texas summers. krausesprings.net

ABILENE

Children's Art & Literacy Festival

Celebrate illustrator

OLIVER JEFFERS

June 7-9



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