

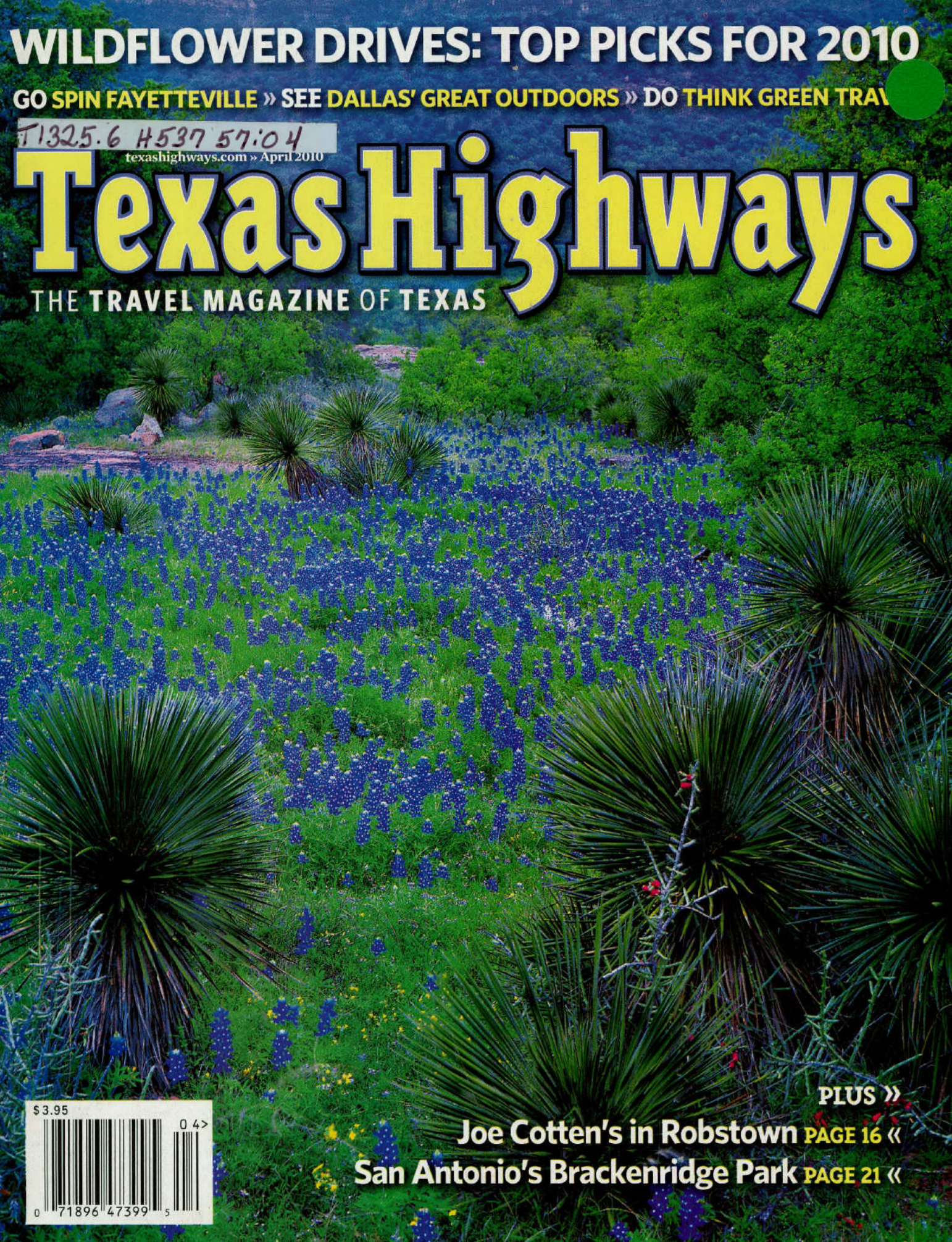
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Joe Cotten's in Robstown PAGE 16 «
San Antonio's Brackenridge Park PAGE 21 «



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COVER
STORY


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Trips to Bountiful 2010: The Serendipity of Wildflowers

Experts suggest these four wildflower drives offer the best chance to enjoy seasonal color, scenic landscapes, and cool stops along the way.

Text by **MELISSA GASKILL**



Check out www.texashighways.com for more travel information 

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With step-back-in-time scenery and a rich mix of history and cultural events, Fayetteville defines a pedaler's paradise.

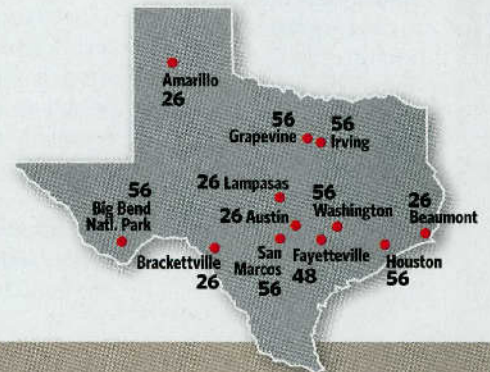
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Photographs by **J. GRIFFIS SMITH**

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Text by **HELEN BRYANT**





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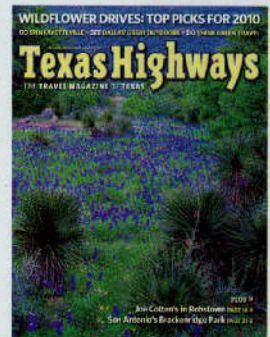
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About Our Covers

FRONT: Plumped-out bluebonnets take over a pastoral landscape in Gillespie County and prompt the question: Can spring get any more gorgeous than this? **Photo © Joe Lowery**

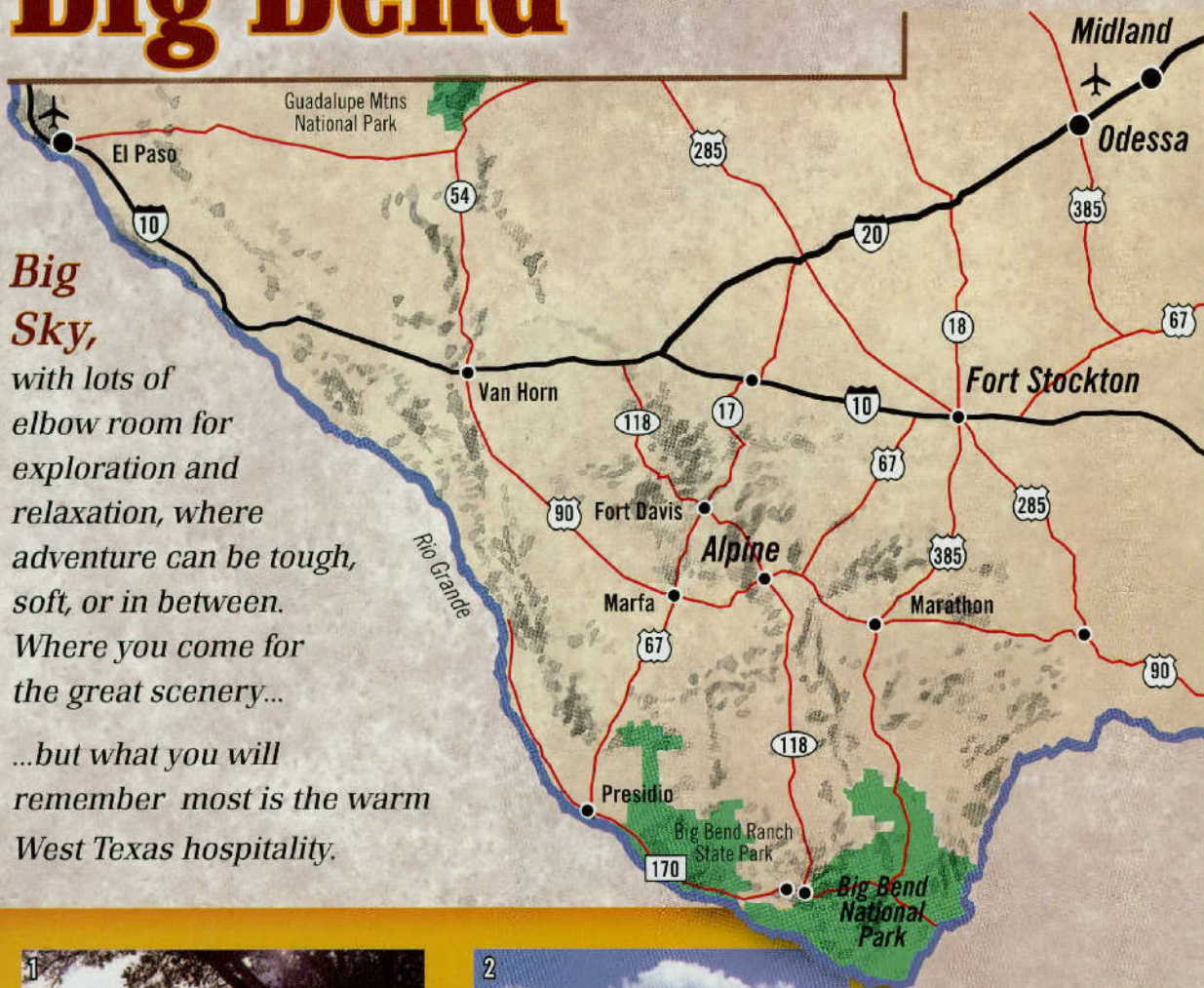
BACK: Fayetteville's 1880 precinct courthouse provides a note of nostalgia and a view of the town square. **Photo by J. Griffis Smith**

Photographic Prints Available

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

Big Bend & Texas Mountain Country

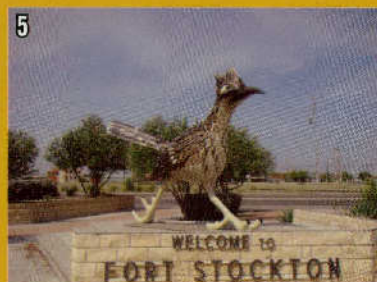
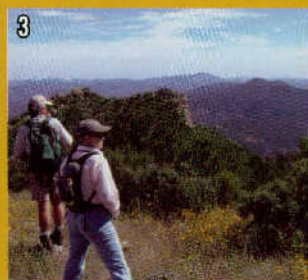
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Tough(er) Choices

How do you choose among the best photographs in Texas?

IN THE TEXAS HIGHWAYS office, we frequently hear from curious readers asking how we decide on feature subjects and select photographs that appear in the magazine each month. And that curiosity seems to double for the April wildflower issue. In short, we make a number of tough choices: We never get to include all the photographs that knock us out. One of the best examples is this remarkable photograph of a night-blooming sand lily. Wyman Meinzer clicked the shutter on this composition just as the last light left the North Texas sky. Of course, Meinzer's reputation for catching dramatic light just right is known far and wide, but it's always a thrill to see photographs like this one in the magazine.



© WYMAN MEINZER

Naturally, you'll find more outstanding images reproduced in this issue—our wildflower special—where the photo-editing challenge is all the more dramatic. Here's how it works: Once we learn from the folks at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center (www.wildflower.org) which highway routes are likely to offer excellent wildflower viewing this season, the call goes out to the state's best photographers, who send their finest for us to consider. Photography Editor Griff Smith works with Art Director Jane Wu to sort through 500 or more images to determine the finalists.

This year, in addition to following the professional advice of the experts at the Wildflower Center and seeking the creative help of Texas' finest photogs, we're working with Canon to organize an exhibit of the wildflower images in this month's issue. Bob Malish of Canon's regional office has agreed to produce a large print of each of the images. The exhibit, titled *The Serendipity of Wildflowers 2010*, will be on display in the Wildflower Center's McDermott Learning Center in Austin during National Wildflower Week, May 3 through 9. If you can't visit the exhibit, take a look at www.texashighwaysprints.com and create your own exhibit from the prints available there.

Wyman Meinzer's photograph of a sand lily, a wildflower that blooms at night, characterizes the excellence of images submitted for the April issue of *TH*.

Charles J. Lohrmann

Charles J. Lohrmann, Editor

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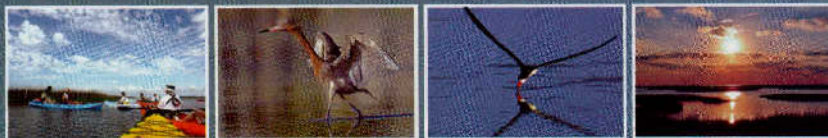
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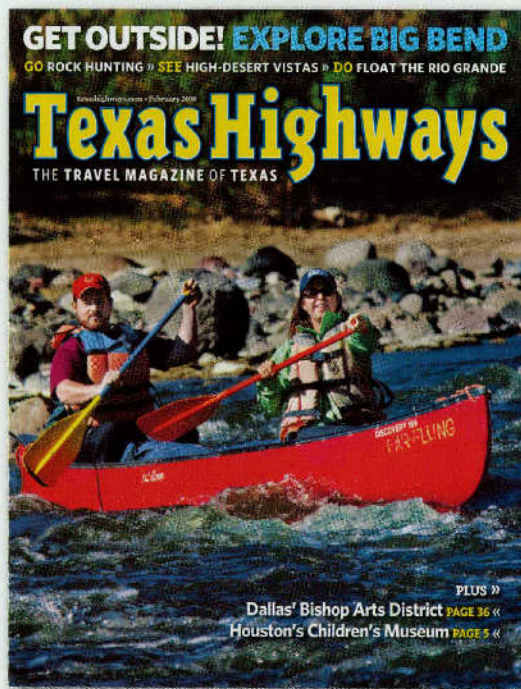
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OPEN FOR TOURS DAILY



"Had a blast in Dallas' Bishop Arts District, featured in February. Loved the shops and yummy places to eat."

—BRANDY ALEXANDER,
TH Facebook fan



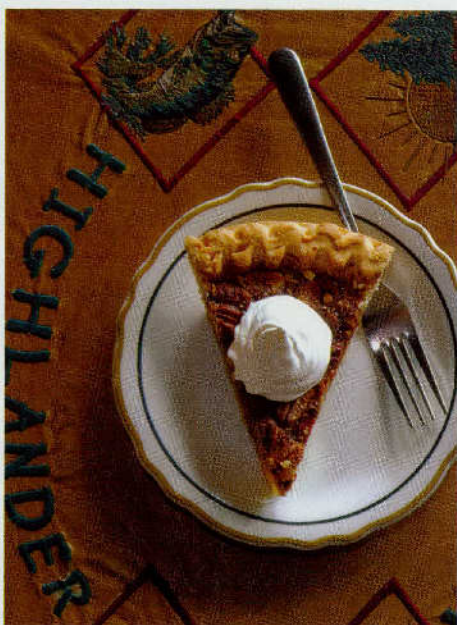
Sleepless in Langtry

I couldn't sleep, so I reached into my magazines to find something that would relax my mind. I happened to pick up February *TH*, and the Big Bend series was so exciting that two hours later I had to select another magazine that would put me to sleep.

The articles flooded my mind with memories of Rio Grande float trips, and of agate-hunting with Frank Woodward. Charles Lohrmann's River Road article reminded me of a time before the road was paved and Big Hill was steeper than it is today. The drive wheels of my car kept spinning just before I reached the summit, and after several attempts, my passenger finally stood on the back bumper and provided enough traction that we made it to the top.

JACK SKILES
Langtry

➔ **TH** READER RECOMMENDATION



Buffet and Bistro

WE TIME OUR return trips from the Hill Country so that we can stop at the **Highlander Restaurant** in **Burnet**. The restaurant is open every day for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. We especially like the wonderful buffet—a great selection of meats and vegetables—and the salad bar is second to none. We heartily recommend this fine establishment.

JOHN CAMPBELL AND BARBARA CAFFREY, Belton

Highlander Restaurant is at 401 Buchanan Dr.; 512/756-7401.

WE HAD A wonderful experience at the **Austin Street Bistro** in **Jefferson**. As we approached the arched doorway, the aroma of just-baked oatmeal-molasses bread greeted us. All of the foods are organic and fresh, and everything is prepared on site. The tomato-basil soup, chicken tetrazzini, meatloaf, and lasagnas are wonderful. Plus, there are daily specials. The blending of seasonings is what really makes this bistro distinctive. In addition, owner/chef Gena McCormick is so friendly—the open kitchen allows her to see her customers as she prepares the meals.

MICHAEL LONGLEY AND DEBORAH ANTHONY, McKinney

Austin Street Bistro is at 117 E. Austin St.; 903/665-9700; www.austinstreetbistro.com.



ILLUSTRATION BY ALLISON MERRWEATHER

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Bishop Bonus

June Naylor's story on Dallas' North Oak Cliff [Bishop Arts District, February] pulled at my heartstrings. I was born in Oak Cliff, and rode the streetcar over the viaduct to share lunch with my "rich Aunt Ruth" and her friends. Colorado Street was beautiful. The streetcar stopped at the library on Beckley for summer reading, and we waded and played in Lake Cliff Park. The Oak Cliff Zoo was abound with blossoming fruit trees in the spring! It is difficult for me to now imagine my childhood playground as eclectic. I am, however, thankful it is once again alive and well!

SANDY McWILLIAMS
Houston

Loved the Bishop Arts story. Nearby, don't miss Jack's Backyard (www.jacksbackyarddallas.com)—probably the best place in Texas to experience cool music. An added bonus in the fall and winter is the

open fire pits that remove downtown Dallas' hustle and bustle from mind and spirit.

RAYMOND FRANCIS COMPTON
Rocksprings

Oh, Henry!

Let me join the others who have spoken a word of praise for the February "Speaking of Texas" piece on O. Henry. Jennifer Nalewicki's text and the various illustrations made it truly a keepsake.

I have a 12-volume *Works of O. Henry* set I have been wearing out since I discovered it in my grandmother's house. Those books, published in 1919, are greatly improved by the pages from *TH*; reading his tales about New York City, San Antonio, and South America has more meaning now.

BILL O'HARE
Waco

The story cites legal troubles in Texas for which O. Henry was convicted, and a prison

sentence at the Ohio State Penitentiary. How on earth would a man convicted of a crime in Texas end up doing time in Ohio?

MIKE IMIRIE
Troy

EDITOR'S NOTE: According to *O. Henry Museum* curator Valerie Bennett, Porter served his sentence in Ohio because he was convicted of a federal offense. The bank was a national bank, and moreover, the bank examiner was a federal employee.

CONTACT TH

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

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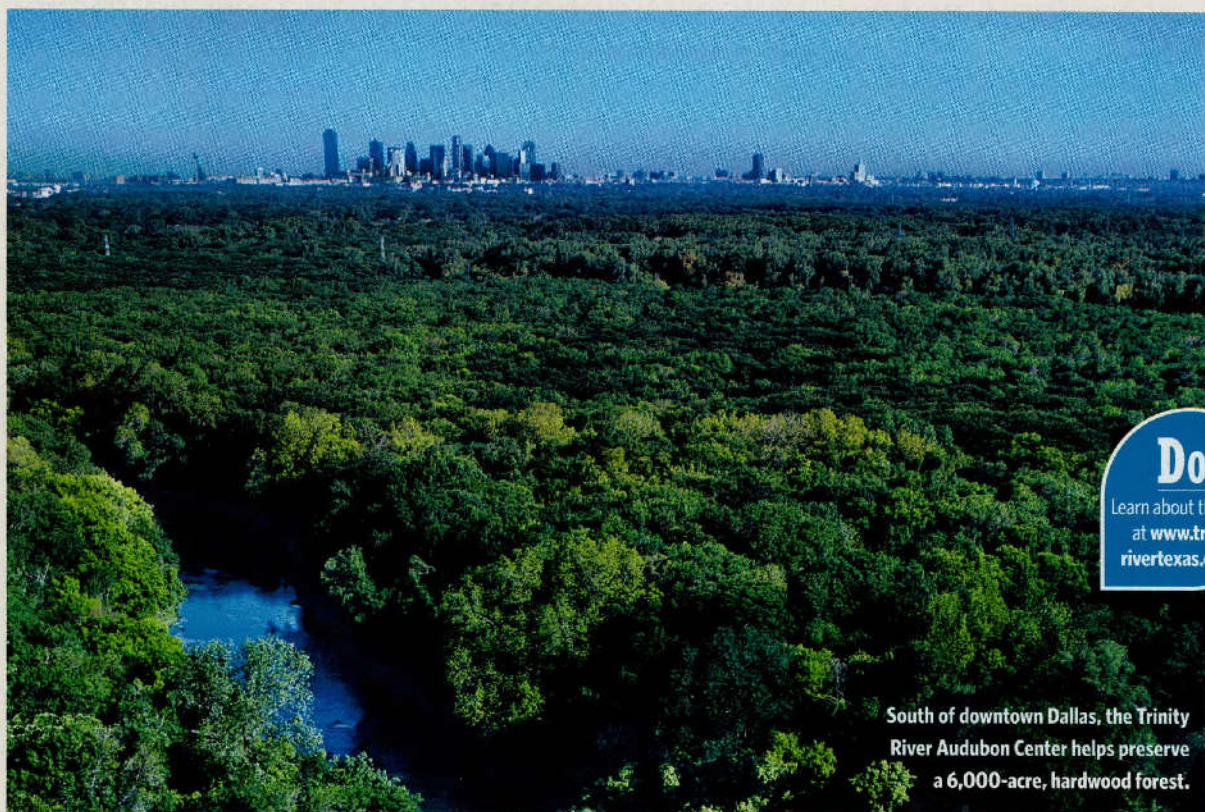


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Postcards

INSIDE: BARBECUE AT JOE COTTEN'S...16 SAN ANTONIO ZOO AND BRACKENRIDGE PARK...21



Do!

Learn about the Trinity
at [www.trinity
rivertexas.org](http://www.trinityrivertexas.org)

South of downtown Dallas, the Trinity River Audubon Center helps preserve a 6,000-acre, hardwood forest.

Nature Near Downtown

The Trinity River Audubon Center turns trash into treasure Text by **MELISSA GASKILL**

TAKE A BOARDWALK OVER A stream of shallow, tea-colored water and follow the trail to a small wooded area. Under a wide, blue, North Texas sky, bees buzz around hives tucked into the trees, and lizards sun on the path. I negotiate a large puddle and hear the splash of a frog jumping into the water up ahead. Tall cattails rustle in the breeze and blue dragonflies patrol the surface of a small pond.

I feel miles from civilization, yet downtown Dallas lies less than 10 minutes away.

The 120-acre Trinity River Audubon Center, which opened to the public in October 2008, represents the first step of an ambitious plan for parks, trails, bridges, and other improvements on the river, together known as the Trinity River Corridor Project. While flood-control levees hem in the waterway west of downtown,

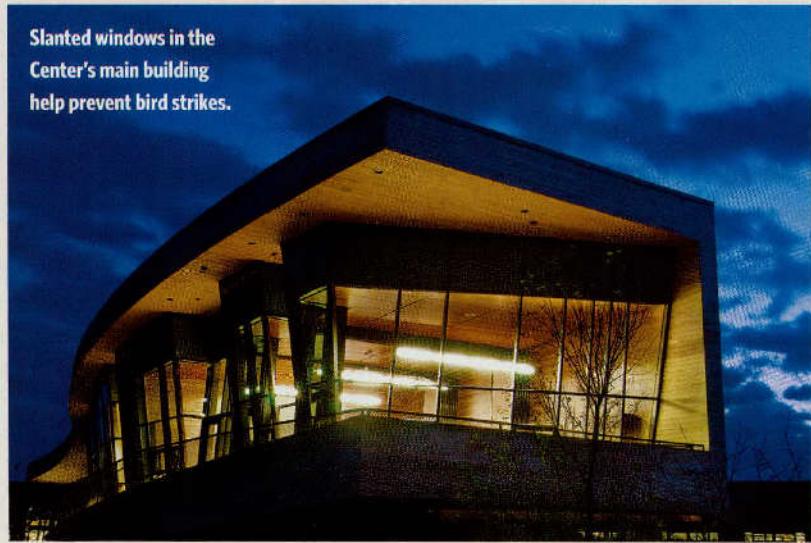
here to the south, the river meanders through the 6,000-acre Great Trinity Forest, North America's largest urban bottomland hardwood forest.

If 6,000 acres of natural land aren't surprise enough, there's this: The Center occupies a former illegal dump site. Once cursed with 1.5 million tons of construction waste, it has been transformed into a rolling landscape covered

with Texas prairie grasses. Four miles of trails traverse woods and circle ponds and wetlands, where shorebirds wade in the shallows. The main building, designed by architect Antoine Predock, has a vegetated roof, a rainwater-collection system, energy-efficient heating and cooling systems, solar panels, and was built of sustainable materials that include Forest Stewardship Council-certified cypress walls, bamboo flooring, and recycled denim insulation. Floor-to-ceiling windows slant toward the ground to prevent bird strikes. Outer walls sport concrete made from locally quarried gravel and sand. Dramatic angles rise above the floodplain to a soaring point, evoking the image of a bird about to take flight.

Owned by the city of Dallas and operated by Audubon Texas, the facility serves as the flagship for the organization's Texas education and conservation initiatives. On a typical morning, schoolchildren carrying clipboards scurry about

Slanted windows in the Center's main building help prevent bird strikes.



the building's spacious lobby. Others perch on the wooden boardwalk outside, pencils at the ready and ears cocked for bird calls. A dozen more follow volunteers or Audubon staff down a trail to a

bluff overlooking the river. A curriculum developed by Audubon Texas has contributed to improvements in science scores for local fourth and fifth graders.

The building [continued on page 13]

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Postcards

Buy a Piece of The Grove

A Central Texas village destined for new owners

IT IS RARE TO FIND AN ENTIRE TOWN ON THE MARKET. But such an opportunity is coming up because The Grove is on the auction block: Its general store, blacksmith shop, and saloon—and all their contents—will be offered to the highest bidder during an event set for the weekend of April 23-24.

The Grove, about 15 miles northwest of Temple, first came to life in 1917, when the general store and Lutheran church were built to serve the community. After the highway was moved because residents didn't want to pave over their well, The Grove grew ever quieter.

Then, beginning in 1972, the village regained some energy through the indulgence of Moody Anderson, a retired National Guard colonel and inveterate antiques collector. Ever since then, Anderson has restored, renovated, tinkered, and shaped a sort of living museum.

"This has been Moody's playground and his passion," explains Lori Najvar, who documents history on The Grove (and other Texas culture) through her nonprofit PolkaWorks.org. "He really brought vitality to the community, and his collections are so visually rich that students and young filmmakers are drawn to it. The general store is organized in such a way that it helps you take a step back into the past," she adds.



Go!

Going once,
going twice, sold!

The Grove now serves as a living history museum through the diligence of owner Moody Anderson.

Indeed, there are household and veterinary products from "the old days" on the general store's shelves. The smithy's tongs and hammers rest near the bellows in the blacksmith shop, scary period instruments await a patient in the dentist's office, and a fabled bar-back sets a western vibe for the Cocklebur Saloon. Some of these pieces are famous in their own right because Anderson often rents props to film and television productions, including *Lonesome Dove*.

For more information about the history of The Grove, contact Lori Najvar by e-mail: lori@polkaworks.org. For auction details, call the Burley Auction Group at 830/237-3440, or e-mail info@burleyauction.com.

—Charles Lohrmann

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PHOTO: © LORI NAJVAR

continued from page 11] includes a display area with live animals, including a red-eared slider and a bullfrog as big as a cat—allowing visitors a good look at creatures that live wild just outside the windows. Shells, wasp nests, sticks, and other tangible pieces of nature await close-up inspection and handling, something city kids may never experience otherwise.

An audio system plays the calls of Eastern phoebes and Northern cardinals, as well as bullfrogs and other amphibians common on the property, accompanied by their pictures under wooden flaps. A wall of windows overlooks a pond and the Discovery Garden, a nook with flowing water

A former dump site has been transformed into rolling hills covered with Texas prairie grasses.

and a sand play area. A floodplain model occupies the center of the room and, on the other side, a couple of faucets invite children—and adults—to make their own river in a basin filled with sand, demonstrating how the flow of water shapes land.

Across the lobby, which sports a ceiling hung with recycled cotton patterned like feathers, a gift shop offers honey made from local bees, bird-identification books, and nature-oriented toys. Through the breezeway lies an education wing with wet labs whose flooring is made from recycled tires, and a multi-purpose room that can be divided into three classrooms.

Outside, trails invite exploration. One leaves the Center on a boardwalk made of a recycled plastic and wood, passes over a pond, and winds through a field of tall grass into woods, dead-ending at a horseshoe bend of the river. Yet another trail skirts several wetlands areas, one of which [continued on page 15]

Backpedal on a bayside beach.

Families reconnect on beach time—where twitters are bird songs and rhythmic waves wash away stress.

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Object Lesson

Lawndale Art Center spotlights modern design

THANKS TO THE NEARLY 20 MUSEUMS, GALLERIES, AND other attractions in Houston's lively Museum District, visitors can immerse themselves in topics as diverse as weather, butterflies, art, and design from around the world. But you don't have to travel the world to find creative design, and Houston's Lawndale Art Center aims to prove it during its first annual Design Fair 2010 (April 21-25), an event that brings new life (and a Texas focus) to Lawndale's 20th Century Modern Market.

Lawndale's executive director, Christine West, explains the transformation: "When we started Modern Market in the mid-1990s, Mid-Century Modern design was collectible, but it wasn't as popular as it is now. Today, there are other similar markets around the country; mainstream manufacturers like IKEA and West Elm are making knockoffs and reproductions; and the television show *Mad Men* has influenced taste in fashion and furniture. Original items have gotten expensive as the period has become more mainstream. So the board decided to broaden the focus to incorporate the exciting things happening in 21st-Century design."

The event kicks off with a free public lecture on April 21,

See!

Lawndale's year-round contemporary exhibitions

Clean lines and organic shapes typify modern design.

then continues with a benefit preview party and sale on April 23 (tickets:

\$75), during which participants can enjoy first dibs on the fair's furniture, glass, ceramics, lighting, books, metalwork, textiles, and fashion.

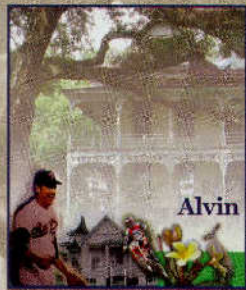
Design Fair continues on Saturday and Sunday with two floors of items on display (and for sale) by artists and designers from throughout the world. New for 2010: the Texas Co-Op, a presentation of furniture, glass, ceramics, lighting, books, metalwork, and fashion by Texas designers, curated by Houston retail legend Mickey Rosmarin. "We'll showcase the best designers in Texas," says West, "while we focus on both Mid-Century design and what is modern today." Call 713/528-5858; www.lawndaleartcenter.org.

—Lori Moffatt



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continued from page 13] sports a multi-level blind for watching the many waterfowl that visit. When the Trinity floods, the ponds on the property fill, mimicking the land's natural response before levees were built. Still another trail affords a good look at one of those construction-debris hills—a gentle swell covered in waving grasses, with a cattail-rimmed pond in the foreground.

“Our intention is to give people access to the Great Trinity Forest and a close-up look at the river itself,” says Director Chris Culak. “But it’s also interesting to see what a landfill can look like once it’s cleaned up, to see how the property

Shells, wasp nests, and other pieces of nature get close-up inspection from city kids.

is being restored to its native state—part blackland prairie, forest, wetland, and ponds. Looking at it now, you’d never think it all had trash sitting on top of it.”

The Dallas Parks and Recreation Department hopes to connect the Center’s trails to a network reaching downtown Dallas, making it possible to hike or bike here from the heart of the city. For now, the Center offers evidence of nature’s resilience and the power humans have in reversing ecological damage. On your next trip to Dallas, spend some time at this still-developing jewel. Grab a sandwich and soda in the gift shop and picnic on the outdoor deck, watching for some of the 120 different species of birds identified here. Just make sure to properly dispose of your trash. **TH**

The Trinity River Audubon Center

is at 6500 S. Loop 12, southeast of downtown Dallas. Hours: Tue-Sat 9-4, Sun 10-5. Call 214/398-TRAC; www.trinityriveraudubon.org.



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Do!
Indulge in vanilla or strawberry ice cream for dessert

Meat Mecca

Joe Cotten's Barbecue in Robstown remains a landmark café

Text by **HELEN BRYANT**

AT 3 P.M. ON A WEDNESDAY, I FIND THE PARKING LOT AT JOE COTTEN'S Barbecue in Robstown (founded in 1947 and home of arguably the best barbecue in South Texas) crowded with pickup trucks. I smile at the nearly lifesize plastic cow and pig perched on the edge of the roof, clomp across the wooden porch, and enter next to the placard proclaiming: "No credit cards, no checks, no separate checks." I smell mesquite smoke as I scan the dark-paneled room for an empty table.

I take a seat at a table covered in a red-and-white tablecloth, and soon my waiter, Robert Elizaldi, arrives, spiffily attired in the Joe Cotten's uniform: black pants, white shirt, maroon coat, and a black bow tie.

"Stringy beef," I say, and in my mind I can already taste the tender brisket, so succulent that it pulls apart in strings. "And potato salad."

There are no menus here. If you haven't eaten here before, your waiter will give you the rundown: brisket—lean or "stringy"—sliced pork shoulder, pork ribs, and sausage. (They won't mention it, but if you call several hours in advance, they'll smoke you a chicken.) You can order one, two, or three meats, and whatever you mention first, you'll get the most of.

Today, my husband, John, accompanies me, and he orders stringy beef, ribs, and sausage. As an afterthought, I ask for a slice of pork shoulder, as well. We both order

Joe Cotten's Barbecue in Robstown regularly hosts a full house for lunch.

potato salad in lieu of a green salad or a bag of potato chips.

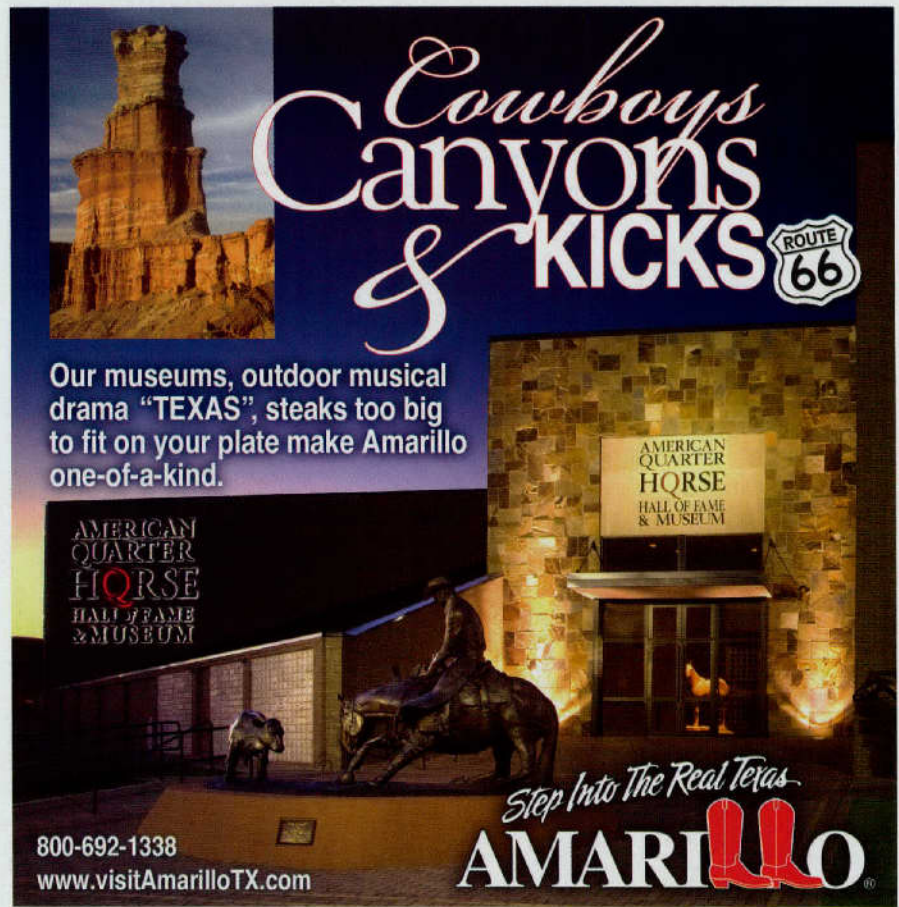
We note the usual crowd: locals in gimme caps, tourists in sneakers, and the occasional border patrol officer and sheriff's deputy. Heads down, attention focused on the meat, many of us have been coming here so long that we've ceased to notice the vintage Coca-Cola sign on the wall or the fortune-telling machine next to the ATM and gumball machines at the entrance. We don't check ourselves out in the wall mirror with the steer horns over it. We've got one thing on our minds.


There are no menus here. If you haven't eaten here before, your waiter will give you the rundown: brisket—lean or "stringy"—sliced pork shoulder, pork ribs, and sausage.

Elizaldi drops a sheet of butcher paper in front of me. On it rests a pile of glistening brisket with a quarter-inch pink smoke ring and a ribbon of fat as big as a string bean. A hefty slice of pork shoulder sits beside it. The meat arrives with a cup of unadorned pinto beans, two pieces of bread (one white, one wheat), dill pickles, a jalapeño, and a slice each of tomato and sweet onion.

Elizaldi, who has been with the restaurant since 1975, tells us that some diners have mistaken the barbecue sauce—a chunky, tomatoey mixture with a tiny bit of onion and jalapeño mixed with brisket drippings—for salsa or soup. It's nothing like the sweet or vinegary barbecue sauces elsewhere.

A barbecue purist, I prefer my meat without sauce.




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Moments later, Elizaldi brings the potato salad: a healthy scoop of mustardy, somewhat mashed potatoes mixed with egg and crunchy bits of pickle and red pepper, a concoction that tastes something like a deviled egg. Two olives sit atop it like eyes.



I am already pulling my mesquite-smoked brisket apart with my fork. I savor the crisp saltiness of the brisket edge, the tender smokiness of the stringy beef, and that extra burst of mesquite that pops out of the fat.

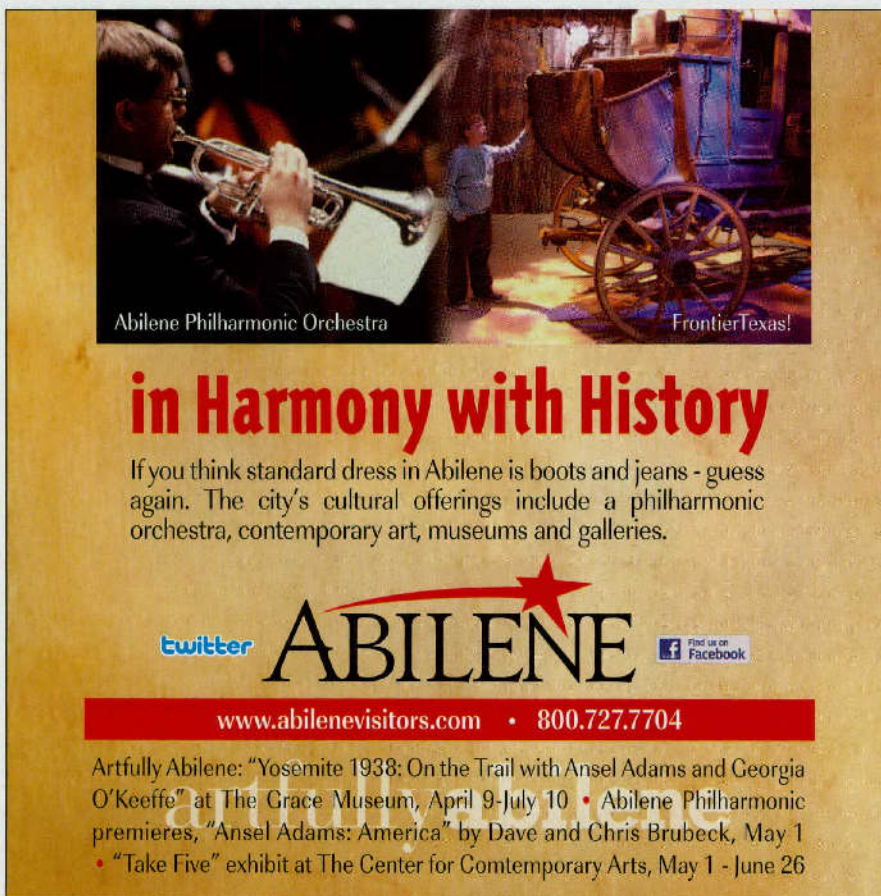
Up on the roof. A cow and pig welcome diners to Joe Cotten's.

The smoky pork shoulder, tasty though less moist and fatty, proves satisfying, as well. John devours his rib so fast I don't get a chance to taste it. He gives me a bite of his sausage, which the restaurant makes in-house. It's loosely packed with coarsely ground pork shoulder and fat, seasoned with only salt and pepper—a juicy, falling-apart sausage that makes for a generous chin-dribble.

Above all the table chatter, I notice that Marty Robbins' classic recording of "El Paso" fills the room. Oh, yes.

But there's more: Because we've asked to try some of everything, Robert has brought out a pot of sharp Wisconsin cheese spread, even though it's not yet 4 p.m., the time each day when cheese joins each meal's offerings. We spread it atop captain's wafers and wheat crackers, and it perfectly complements the barbecue.

The late Joe Cotten founded his place in 1947 on Robstown's Avenue A (FM 665) as a beer joint and gambling hall, adding barbecue to keep his customers from getting hungry.



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Go!

Enjoy Hudson's wonderful menu

Adventures in Cooking

Hudson's on the Bend shares some secrets

UNTIL RECENTLY, COOKING FEARLESSLY IN MY kitchen meant adding a few chopped vegetables to tomato sauce. But thanks to a class at Hudson's on the Bend Cooking School, where "cooking fearlessly" is the philosophy of its namesake Austin restaurant, I have diced, sliced, and sautéed my way to a new identity as a culinary adventurer.

Along with three dozen other participants, I spent a Sunday afternoon watching Chef Jeff Blank and Chef Robert Rhoades prepare a four-course meal at an outdoor kitchen in the backyard of Chef Blank's elegant Hill Country home overlooking Lake Austin. Upon arrival, the chefs greeted us with a fuchsia prickly pear margarita. The demonstration started with dessert first. As we watched and asked questions, the chefs prepared rhubarb-berry compote and a lemon cake with a lemon buttercream frosting.

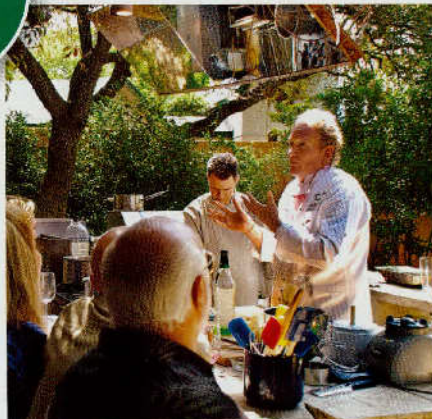
Then they prepared other dishes: eggplant slices stuffed with ricotta cheese and topped with crab in an heirloom-tomato sauce, hot-and-crunchy green tomatoes, and a pork tenderloin injected with watermelon salsa. "You have 11,000 taste buds in your mouth,"

Chef Jeff Blank holds class in his outdoor kitchen, which overlooks Lake Austin.

Chef Blank said, "and our job as chefs is to activate them all at once."

After hearing various ingredients sizzle on the stove and smelling the aroma of cilantro and lemon zest blended to perfection, I was ready to put my taste buds to work. Following the demonstration, we enjoyed a lunch at nearby Hudson's on the Bend restaurant—featuring all the courses from the class and a choice of wines.

I left feeling full, fearless, and ready to fire up my own stove. Now if I can just find an outdoor kitchen overlooking the lake, I am set. Call 512/266-7655; www.hudsonsonthebend.com. —Kate Hull



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Taste

"Back then, gambling was a misdemeanor," says Joe's son Cecil Cotten, who runs the place now. When gambling became a federal offense, Joe turned his attention to smoking barbecue with locally plentiful mesquite. Cecil says Joe tinkered with the recipes, adding "It took him eight years to get the sauce the way he wanted it."

Some diners mistake the barbecue sauce for salsa or soup. It's chunky, with onion and jalapeño mixed with bacon drippings.

In 1969, Joe built the current, decidedly unfancy wooden building on the edge of US 77, the main highway to the Rio Grande Valley. Its three rooms can, and often do, seat 360 people. When Joe died and Cecil took over, he was smart enough to leave everything exactly as it was.

Only once in recent history have customers at Joe Cotten's been distracted from the meat—when Dallas Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo dropped in on his way to a hunting trip in 2008. Diners summoned friends and relatives by cell phone, Cecil says, and soon a traffic jam formed on US 77 as folks filled the parking lot.

"The police weren't directing traffic," Cecil says. "They were inside getting autographs." I'm guessing they didn't leave without a little stringy beef. **TH**

Joe Cotten's Barbecue

is at 555 US 77 South, in Robstown, about 20 miles west of Corpus Christi. Call 361/767-9973. It's open for lunch and dinner, Tue-Sat, except for the weeks of Labor Day and the Fourth of July. As the sign says: No credit cards, no checks, no separate checks.



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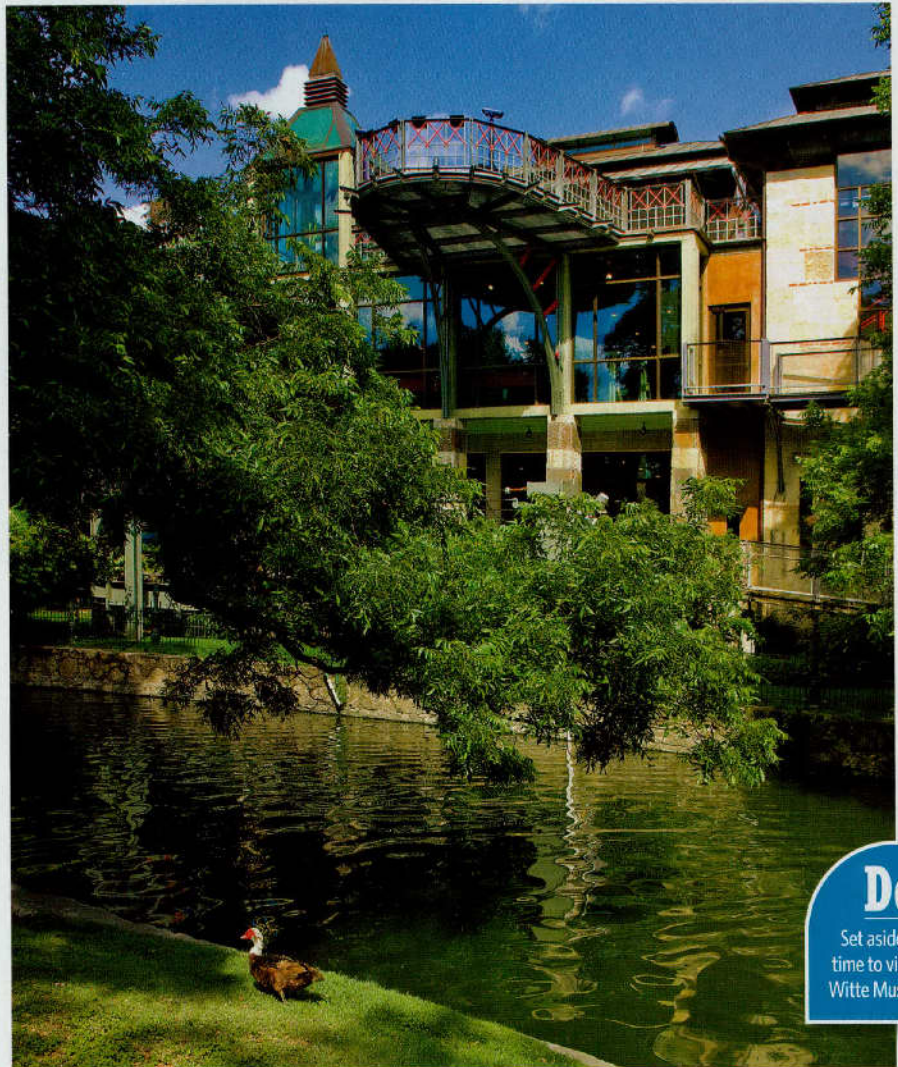
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A Day in the Park

A longtime San Antonio favorite still beckons

Text by **SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS**



Do!

Set aside some time to visit the Witte Museum

Explore the San Antonio Zoo and the Japanese Tea Garden, two of the many attractions in Brackenridge Park.

TALK ABOUT A RUCKUS! MY HUSBAND, JAMES, AND I HAVE BARELY stepped inside the Lory Landing—a netted enclosure at the San Antonio Zoo—when four dozen rainbow-hued, squawking lories alight around us. That's because James is holding a tiny cup of nectar, which we purchased at a concession stand earlier. As soon as he unsnaps the plastic lid, the mini parrots jockey for position. One crimson bird with blue streaks hops onto his hand, karate-kicks the others away, and then laps up the sugary liquid with his brush-like tongue. Fascinated, we watch until the container is empty and the lories fly off.

The zoo is just one of the attractions in Brackenridge Park, a 344-acre public space that lies a few miles north of downtown and nestles along the banks of the San Antonio River. Visitors will find *lots* to do here. Like ride a miniature train. Tour a botanical garden. Picnic by the river. Hike along almost three miles of scenic trails. Explore history, culture, and natural science at the Witte Museum. Even play a round at the park's golf course.

We're here for the day, so we're keeping our itinerary short: zoo, train, and garden. It's not our first trip here. Truth is, I've made visits to Brackenridge Park since I was a kid. As a young parent, I took my two children to see the animals and ride the train. I still enjoy visiting, especially since the lories moved into the zoo a few years ago.

The H-E-B Science Treehouse offers four levels of fun at the Witte Museum, a history, culture, and natural science museum in Brackenridge Park.

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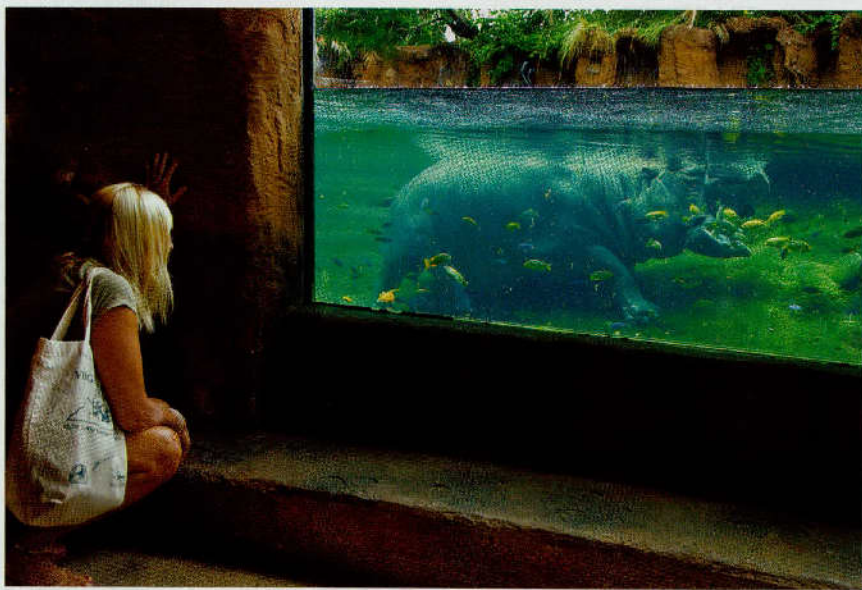
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Weekender



The park originated in 1899 with an initial donation of 199 acres of wooded land to the city by prominent businessman George Brackenridge. Some years later, he placed buffalo, elk, and deer, along with caged monkeys, lions, and bears, in a fenced area

indoor displays, which together house more than 3,500 animals.

We start with the bears. At the first open-air habitat, we scan a huge limestone terrace and spot two black bears, wrestling and nuzzling noses. Alas, the grizzly habitat is empty; the grizzlies must be snoozing in a rock hidey-hole. Along our route, we see giraffes, elephants, lions, and other large animals in habitats that incorporate the same towering cliffs and stair-step terraces.

We spy a butterfly exhibit ahead, in a screened greenhouse nearly hidden behind lush stands of blooming lantana, turk's cap, and bougainvillea. After paying our dollar admission, we admire several iridescent blue beauties fluttering just inside. "They're blue morphos from the rainforests of South America," says interpreter June Paden.

Following a brick walkway, we mosey through a tropical garden inhabited with more exotic butterflies. Some fly overhead, while others adorn vegetation. I see long-winged zebras sipping nectar from red pentas and purple Jamaican portweed. Brown owl butterflies—named for large "owl eye" spots on their hind wings—cling to mesh walls. "I could stay here all day," [continued on page 24]

Hippos swim with African cichlids in the Africa Live! exhibit at the San Antonio Zoo.

Some of the nation's first cageless exhibits were introduced at the San Antonio Zoo.

on the park's south end. The menagerie was moved near its present site in 1914. Fifteen years later, zoo leaders opened some of the nation's first cageless exhibits, which incorporated the chiseled cliffs and terraces left from an abandoned limestone quarry. Today, most animals live in surroundings that mirror their native homes as closely as possible. Conservation also plays a role here. Behind the scenes, zookeepers successfully breed whooping cranes, snow leopards, and many other endangered species.

On a cool October morning, James and I set out to explore the zoo's 35 acres of open-air habitats, walk-through exhibits, and

Lone Star Wildflowers

A new field guide offers enthusiasts insights into botany and folklore

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A MULTI-purpose manual to help you appreciate the state's wildflower bounty—coming soon to a roadside near you—consider picking up a copy of *Lone Star Wildflowers: A Guide to Texas Flowering Plants*.

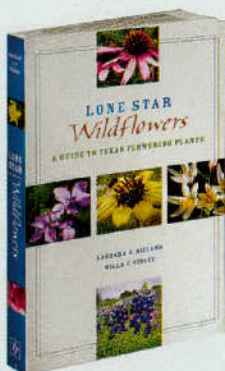
West Texas natives LaShara J. Nieland and Willa F. Finley have researched and photographed their way from the Panhandle to the Gulf Coast, from Big Bend to the

Big Thicket, to produce a field guide that's filled with scientific information, as well as flower uses, history, and lore. Their photographs of nearly 500 wildflowers are grouped by color for easy identification.

Even if you're not planning any firsthand explorations, *Lone Star Wildflowers* is an entertaining read. Did you know that tumbleweeds (Russian thistles) are edible when the plants are young and tender? Did you know that Native Americans used chocolate daisies to season food, especially meat dishes? Or that *Echinacea angustifolia* (purple coneflower) is being produced commercially as an immune system stimulant?

Whether you're going to curl up in an armchair with this beautiful book or stash it in a backpack on your next hike, you'll find it a wonderful companion. For details, call 806/742-2982 or 800/832-4042; www.ttup.ttu.edu.

—Nola McKey



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Weekender



Ride the miniature train and enjoy scenic views of the San Antonio River.

☞ continued from page 22 | I say with a sigh.

But it's time to move on. Inside the Friedrich Aquarium building, we pause by one wall-encased tank to examine a massive alligator snapping turtle. Weighing more than 100 pounds, this beady-eyed, beak-nosed, spiny-backed specimen represents North America's largest freshwater turtle.

Hunger pangs hit, so we stroll into the zoo's Riverview Restaurant and order burgers at the counter. The menu board also lists chicken nuggets, smoked turkey sandwiches, hot dogs, pizza, and other choices. Though shaded tables on an outdoor deck beckon, we decide it's too breezy and plunk down our trays at a table in the casual dining room. Our hearty lunch of two juicy burgers, a basket of crisp fries, and a soda sets us back only \$14.

Next, we tour Africa Live!, a stunning exhibit designed to replicate an African river habitat. Through underwater windows, we observe hippos, Nile crocodiles, and schools of fish. The building's interior walls—sculpted to resemble earth, fossils, and rocks—encase glass exhibits featuring pythons, green mambas, and cobras. A new addition to Africa Live!—just opened

in March—leads visitors outdoors, where they can see acrobatic colobus monkeys, long-necked okapi, and a giant, “walk through,” faux termite mound.

To get to our next destination, we board the *San Antonio Eagle*, a miniature steam train that has chugged the 15-minute loop around the park since 1956. Most passengers have youngsters in tow. The ride takes us over two bridges and past thick woods. Down the line, we step off at the Japanese Tea Garden, a botanical masterpiece sculpted in 1918 from the same rock quarry as the zoo. In 1926, artist Kimi Eizo Jingu and his Japanese-American family moved to the garden and operated

An adult white rhino greets visitors in the zoo's African Rift Valley area.



a tearoom. Sadly, officials evicted them during World War II and then renamed the site the Chinese Tea Garden, a name that still remains on a Japanese-style, faux-wood entrance gate created by concrete artist Dionicio Rodriguez. (The garden's original name was restored in 1984.) In 2007, extensive renovations restored the pond and waterfall. This summer, the newly restored Jingu House is scheduled to reopen, complete with a tearoom.

The *San Antonio Eagle* has chugged the 15-minute loop around the park since 1956.

Standing beneath a huge, thatch-roofed pagoda, we peer down at a sunken koi pond, encircled with palms, banana trees, bougainvillea, and live oaks. We head down the stone steps for a closer look at the koi, glimmering orange, white, and black in the water. Along shaded walkways, we meander past lacy ferns, ornamental grasses, bright zinnias, and a plethora of exotic plants. An arched stone bridge guides us to a towering waterfall, another scenic overlook, and back to the pagoda.

Instead of hopping back on the train, we follow a short trail that links to the zoo. Time to head home. But we'll be back. Because I can't wait to feed the lories again. **TH**

Brackenridge Park

is at 3700 N. St. Mary's St. in San Antonio; open daily 5 a.m.-11 p.m. For general information, call 210/207-3000; www.sanantonio.gov/sapar/brackpavilions.asp. The **San Antonio Zoo** opens daily 9-5; admission ranges from \$5-\$10. Call 210/734-7184; www.sazooaq.org. The **Japanese Tea Garden** opens daily during daylight hours; call 210/207-3053.

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Text by **MELISSA GASKILL**



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aFTER an unusually cold, wet, and blustery winter, spring couldn't come soon enough to Texas this year. One bonus for suffering through those dreary months: This year's wildflowers could prove spectacular.

Most of us have a favorite field, road, or hillside that we watch for those first blips of color that foretell the blaze of spring glory to come. To help us plan our annual wildflower drives, we asked experts at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin to recommend some locations likely to sport a bounty of blooms. Of course, when, where, how many, and what types of wildflowers bloom in any given area depend mightily on rainfall, temperature, and whether a landscape was mowed, tilled, or otherwise altered. But odds are good for an abundance of color and variety along the routes spotlighted on these pages. In addition to flowers, we've suggested other sights to look for, places to grab a bite, and, should one day not prove sufficient to slake your wildflower thirst, a few nice spots to spend the night. Take your camera ... and take your time.

LEFT: Blue sky, blue flowers. Bluebonnets seem to burst out of a clearing near Mason.
TOP: An albino bluebonnet near Kingsland offers unusual contrast.

Llano Estacado

THE CANADIAN RIVER winds through the windswept Llano Estacado, or Staked Plains, in the Texas Panhandle north of Amarillo. Cottonwoods, soapberry, and willows grow along its banks, while mesquite, prickly pear, yucca, grasses—and during the spring, wildflowers—blanket the higher ground.

Start in Amarillo, and head north on Texas 136 for about 30 miles. Turn west onto Cas Johnson Road, the turnoff for Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, part of Lake Meredith National Recreation Area. For 13,000 years, native people used the high-quality flint they found here for tool-making and trading. Tours of the quarries have to be arranged in advance, but flora-seekers can drive the winding, hilly road about five miles to the locked gate anytime. Glorious displays of yellow—sunflowers, scrambled eggs (*Corydalis aurea*), tansy-mustard, and Gordon's bladderpod—as well as winecups, bigtop prairie clover, stiff flax, and blazing stars await. On the way back to Texas 136, turn south at the “Y” onto the McBride Canyon road, and follow it to McBride Canyon, an area three miles long and one-and-a-half miles wide with unpaved roads, where wild grapes, gayfeather, sunflowers, daisies, yucca, and many types of grasses grow. Pleasant picnic and camping areas here make it easy to linger.

Continue north on Texas 136 to Fritch, and stop at the Lake Meredith Aquatic and Wildlife Museum to see life-size dioramas of hawks, mule deer, white-tailed deer, and other local wildlife, as well as two large aquariums occupied by bass, catfish, and other species found in the lake. Admission is free. Just past town, turn north on Farm-to-Market Road 687 to Sanford, then go west on Ranch Road 1319 across Sanford Dam. Go about one mile, and turn west on FM 3395, which takes you through Bugbee and past the Three Falls Cove bed and breakfast. When you reach

RR 1913, turn south to Lake Meredith NRA's Blue Creek area. Willows, cottonwoods,

BELOW: Gold-medal flower. A Texas prickly pear bloom brightens a landscape in Marble Falls.



© STEVEN SCHWARTZMAN



and cattails grow along the creek and higher up, more typical dryland vegetation, including yucca. When RR 1913 reaches US 87/287, turn south toward Amarillo, then take Loop 335 west to Wildcat Bluff Nature Center. Miles of trails, open sunrise to sunset, meander through rolling prairie and along a high bluff with classic Panhandle views. On the Prairie Dog Trail, three types of daisies—chocolate, flea-bane, and Engelmann—bloom, along with lemon-yellow puccoon, delicate yet toxic antelope horns, prairie verbena, and silver-leaf nightshade, or horse nettle. Prickly poppy,

ABOVE: A luxuriant field of Indian blankets, horsemint, and paperflowers present a colorful display near Palo Duro Canyon.

purple coneflower, dotted gayfeather, wild onion, and buckwheat grow along the bluff trails, blue flax in the windmill area, and penstemon, fennel,



© WYMAN MEINZER

and butterfly bush around the visitor center. Yucca also blooms throughout the center.

Continue on Loop 335 to Ninth Avenue. Hang a left, and follow a sharp jog to Sixth Avenue, aka Historic Route 66. Pop into Cowboy Gelato, decorated in a spaghetti Western theme and serving “cowboy comfort food” (stuffed hamburgers, barbecue pulled pork sandwiches) and gelato. Or try heapin’ helpings of Tex-Mex at Acapulco Restaurant’s 1920s building downtown, on Polk Street. Keep your eyes peeled for 90 decorated fiberglass horses, and faux traffic signs spouting bits of country-western songs, poems, and pithy quotes selected by eccentric artist and philanthropist Stanley Marsh 3.

A few blocks from downtown, the shady deck of La Casita del Sol bed and breakfast makes a perfect spot to review your photos. Next morning, innkeeper Bonnie Rodriguez’s break-

fast—homemade banana bread, eggs the way you like them, and her special salsa—will fuel you for another flower-filled day.

For information on Amarillo, call 800/692-1338, visitamarillotx.com; Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, 806/857-3151, www.nps.gov/lam or nps.gov/affl.



Sunflowers bloom among the pumpjacks in Dawson County.



© RANDY HEISCH

Mexican hats take a bow in Georgetown.



KEVIN VANDIVIER

Look for pitcher plants along the Pitcher Plant and Sundew trails in Big Thicket National Preserve.

For more information about photographic prints, call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.



© LANCE VARNELL

Upper Coast

FROM BEAUMONT, head north on US 96 about 10 miles to Village Creek State Park. This heavily wooded preserve occupies a bend of its namesake creek, a free-flowing stream that offers a flat-water canoe float through the heart of the Big Thicket to the Neches River. If you like, rent a canoe from one of the local outfitters in Lumberton or Silsbee. Take time for a picnic or a hike on the park's eight miles of trails, which include a one-mile jaunt to a sandy swimming beach and a slightly shorter trek through cypress swamps that provide habitat for abundant wildlife.

In Lumberton, go west on West Chance Cutoff Road, and cut over to US 69. Drive north, among bluebonnets, Indian paintbrush, Indian blankets, phlox, and primroses. Eight miles past Kountze, turn east on FM 420 to the visitor center of Big Thicket National Preserve, which is comprised of 15 units spread over seven counties. A unique convergence of eastern hardwood forests, Gulf coastal plains, and Midwest prairie create 10 defined habitats here, accessible via eight trails from one to 17 miles in length. Pick up a map at the visitor center and choose your favorite.

Continue north on Texas 69, and turn west on FM 2827, then south at the sign for Sundew Trail, a one-mile, wheelchair-accessible option that loops through longleaf pine/wetland savannah. Several species of orchids and four species of carnivorous plants occur here, including pitcher plant and the trail's namesake sundew. This dime-sized plant's white or pink flowers bloom in summer, as do most wildflowers in these heavy woods. You'll see dogwood, magnolia, and redbud in the spring.

Drive north on US 69 about 17 miles to Woodville, watching for fringed sneezeweed, Carolina jessamine, yellow wood-sorrel, and prolific southern dewberry. Enjoy all-you-can-eat chicken and dumplings or fried chicken at



J. GRIFFIS SMITH

Phlox add a splash of fuchsia to a roadside in Lee County.

the Pickett House Restaurant in Heritage Village, a living

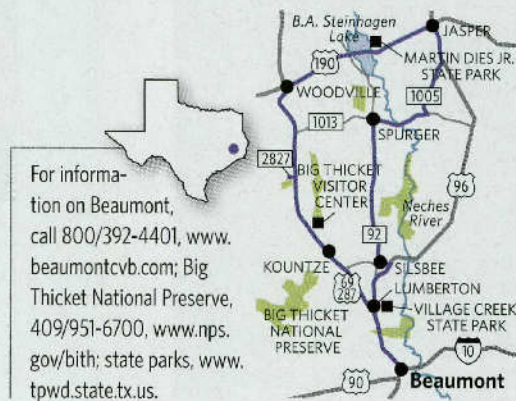
pioneer town just west of Woodville on Texas 190. Then drive east on Texas 190, across B.A. Steinhagen Lake, to Martin Dies Jr. State Park. The latter's classic Piney Woods landscape includes numerous magnolia-lined sloughs, while four miles of hiking trails and a two-mile nature trail offer good places to spot bluebonnets, bluebells, bloodroot, jack-in-the-pulpits, and other wildflowers.

Drive 12 miles farther to Jasper, and turn south on US 96. Then, since country roads often yield the best wildflowers, follow FM 1005 for 10 miles to FM 1013, and go west across the Neches River to Spurger. Take FM 92 south to Silsbee, where Big Thicket rangers like to eat at West Texas BBQ, known for its delicious pies. Follow US 96 back to Beaumont. Cardinal River Adventures' Neches River boat tours depart from Riverfront Park downtown, Saturdays at 10 a.m. After a long day, rest up at one of Beaumont's many accommodations. Still hungry? Head to Spindletop Restaurant in the Crockett Street District downtown for the best rolls ever.



© ERIK H. PRONSKA, M.D.

Stunning bluebells bloom in profusion at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin.



For information on Beaumont, call 800/392-4401, www.beaumontcvb.com; Big Thicket National Preserve, 409/951-6700, www.nps.gov/bith; state parks, www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

These Montgomery County bluebonnets appear as majestic as the pines that tower above them.



For more information about photographic prints, call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.

© LANCE VARNELL



Beach evening primroses sparkle in the dunes at Bolivar Flats.



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Nueces River Valley

START IN BRACKETTVILLE with a visit to Fort Clark, a cavalry post built in 1852 near Las Moras Springs. Brackettville and Fort Clark have always been closely related. A settlement called Las Moras sprang up near the fort soon after it was established. In 1856, the town's name was changed to Brackett, and later, in the mid-1870s, to Brackettville. Deactivated in 1947, the fort today is the centerpiece of Fort Clark Springs, a gated community and resort that welcomes visitors with an RV park, 18-hole golf course, cavalry barracks-turned-hotel, and spring-fed swimming pool (the third largest in Texas).

Take scenic RR 334 northeast for 30 miles, across the clear-flowing West Nueces River. When the road dead-ends into Texas 55, turn north and drive 20 miles to Camp Wood. At higher elevations, you may see stands of macrosiphonia, or rock trumpet, on rocky outcrops.

In Camp Wood, stop at B.J.'s Café and Sweet Shop on Texas 55 for steak, burgers, or fajitas, and made-from-scratch pie with ice cream. If the blue sky and green river—or your full stomach—entice you to linger, book a cabin at Rocky River Camp, or a riverside house at the Mill Wheel on the Nueces.

A short detour east on RR 337 to Leahey navigates 17 miles of twisting, hilly, scenic road. Mountain laurel grows abundantly throughout this area, and mountain mahogany, normally associated with the Davis Mountains, also appears in cliffs along the roadside. Take advantage of pull-outs in the road to stop and get a close look at this plant's small white flowers. Look also for the white flowers of native wild plum trees, pink-and-cream devil's shoestring, bright red cedar sage, and redbud,

BELOW: A scarlet hedgehog cactus blooms at Enchanted Rock State Park.

© AJA MARTIN



penstemon, larkspur, mealy blue sage, lace cactus, Texas star, and featherleaf desert peony. If you didn't fill up at B.J.'s, stop into Alamo Grocery for a burger from the grill in back or one of the homemade desserts. All that gawking and picture-taking works up an appetite.

Backtrack to Camp Wood (the route deserves another look), then turn north on Texas 55 and drive another 30 miles to Rocksprings. This ridgetop town enjoys renown for the Devil's Sinkhole State Natural Area and its several

million bats. The bats don't return in force from Mexico until late spring, but the Devil's Sinkhole Society offers guided nature

ABOVE: A field of Indian blankets fronts a stand of mesquite in Gillespie County.



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© RICHARD REYNOLDS

hikes around the impressive collapsed cave on the first and third Saturdays, February through October. Tours begin at the Rocksprings Visitor Center on the town square. Also on the square, the Historic Rocksprings Hotel, in a perpetual state of renovation, rents rooms featuring pressed-tin ceilings and other 19th-Century touches.

From Rocksprings, take Ranch-to-Market Road 674 south roughly 58 miles to return to Brackettville. This hilly road winds along the Nueces much of the time. Look for cacti, particularly in rocky areas, and rock lettuce. The latter's two-inch-wide flower head (white with a yellow center) with petals of varying lengths closes by midday, though. That's reason enough to spend a night at Fort Clark Springs.

www.texashighways.com



For information on Brackettville, visit www.brackettville.us; Camp Wood, www.mycampwood.com; Rocksprings, call 830/683-3181; Fort Clark Springs, 830/563-2494, www.fortclark.com.



Splashes of Indian paintbrush add the crowning touch to a field of bluebonnets in Grimes County.



For more information about photographic prints, call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.





For more information about photographic prints, call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.

Heart of the Hill Country

FROM LAMPASAS, take FM 580 west about 20 miles to Bend. Along the way, you may see delicate white windflowers, yellow tansy-mustard, and prairie penstemon. Stop in at Colorado Bend State Park, home of stunning Gorman Falls and 16 miles of hiking trails, including one along Spicewood Creek's travertine falls. This area's climate and soil are excellent for growing grapes. Alamosa Wine Cellars, just off FM 580, opens weekends for tastings of its signature El Guapo tempranillo and other wines.

Put your designated driver behind the wheel and continue north on FM 580 to US 190, watching for bluebonnets, of

course, plus blackfoot daisies, pink evening primroses, and winecups. Turn west on US 190 to San Saba, which bills itself as the Pecan Capital of the World. The area produces millions of pounds of tasty nuts annually, including a few types developed here, most notably the papershell (my personal favorite). Pick up fresh pecans, trail mixes, and candies for the rest of your drive at Oliver Pecan Company (US 190 at Hope Street) or Great San Saba River Pecan Company (234 West US 190), where you can picnic among 10,000 pecan trees.

Follow Texas 16 south 33 miles to Llano, passing through more bluebonnets, prairie verbena, goldeneye phlox, and Englemann's daisies. Llano loves its barbecue, with Cooper's Old Time Pit Bar-B-Q a real favorite. But for a fun



© AL BRADEN

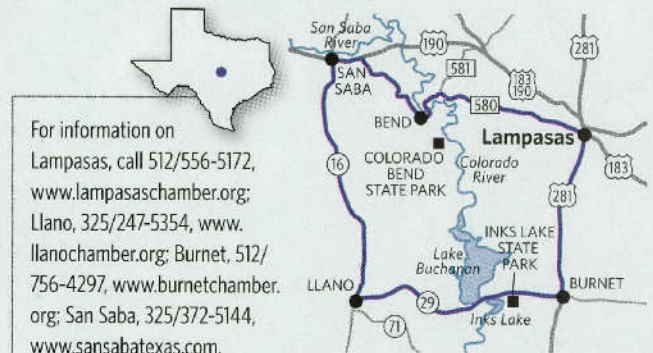
State Park, where hikes of varying lengths explore cedar and oak woodlands amid granite outcroppings on the lake's south end. Bluebonnets and

Indian paintbrush typically bloom abundantly here. The park offers picnicking, kayak rental, fishing, and one of the state's best swimming holes, if you have time to linger. Stay the night in one of the limited-use cabins, which have beds, electricity, air conditioning and heat, and outdoor picnic tables and fire rings.

Return to Texas 29 and continue to Burnet, then take US 281 north for about 22 miles back to Lampasas. Expect to see more bluebonnets, Indian paintbrush, and buttercups along the way. In Lampasas, stop by locally owned Storm's Drive-In for a thick, juicy burger and maybe another shake to celebrate a drive well done. **TH**

After writing our 2009 Wildflower Drives story, **MELISSA GASKILL** found herself contemplating potential routes for 2010 every time she drove Texas roads.

Return to Texas 29 and continue to Burnet, then take US 281 north for about 22 miles back to Lampasas. Expect to see more bluebonnets, Indian paintbrush, and buttercups along the way. In Lampasas, stop by locally owned Storm's Drive-In for a thick, juicy burger and maybe another shake to celebrate a drive well done. **TH**



For information on Lampasas, call 512/556-5172, www.lampasaschamber.org; Llano, 325/247-5354, www.llanochamber.org; Burnet, 512/756-4297, www.burnetchamber.org; San Saba, 325/372-5144, www.sansabatexas.com.

ABOVE: Indian blankets, bluebonnets, and prickly poppies dot a field near Pontotoc in northeast Mason County.

alternative, try Stonewall's Pizza, Wings and Things on the town square, where employees hand-toss the dough, encourage kids to write on the walls, and make

the shakes with Blue Bell Ice Cream.

Heading east from Llano, Texas 29 parallels railroad tracks and the picturesque Llano River on your right, while wildflowers paint the fields on your left. Seventeen miles from Llano, Buchanan Dam represents the country's longest multiple-arch dam, a design that required more labor but used fewer materials. Get a good view of it from the bridge over Inks Lake. A bit farther along, turn south onto Park Road 4 to Inks Lake





© STEVEN SCHWARTZMAN

LEFT: A patch of pink evening primroses casts a spell along Texas 6 near Rule.

ABOVE: Behold this beautiful American basket-flower on FM 963 near Burnet.

Mexican hats and Navajo tea appear to dance
above southern bluets on a country lane in Burnet County.





© STEVEN SCHWARTZMAN

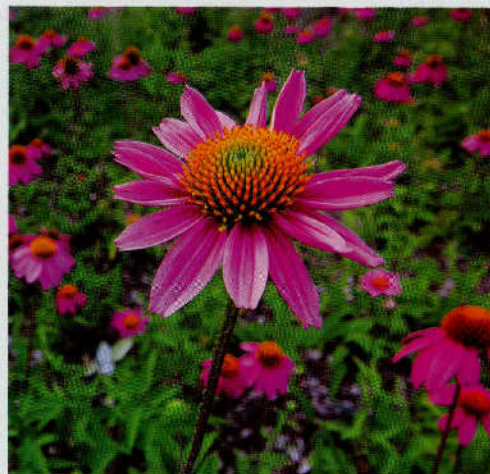


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Upcoming Wildflower Center Events

THE LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER in Austin, in conjunction with *Texas Highways* and Canon, presents *The Serendipity of Wildflowers 2010*, an exhibit of exceptional wildflower photography in its McDermott Learning Center, May 3-9. Selected from among the wildflower images shown in this issue, the enlarged photographs will be mounted in a gallery setting, allowing visitors to experience them in an extraordinary way.

The center also hosts its annual **Gardens on Tour** on May 8 (the Saturday of Mother's Day weekend). Activities include tours of selected private landscapes, as well as the center's celebrated gardens. **Wildflower Days**, which began March 15, continues through May 31 and features a full slate of events emphasizing family activities. The **Spring Plant Sale & Gardening Festival** takes place April 10-11; more than 300 species of native plants, including flowers, shrubs, and trees, will be on sale, and native-plants experts will also conduct guided tours of the gardens. Call 512/232-0100; www.wildflower.org.



© RANDY HEISCH

TOP: This Texas thistle in Llano County could double as a sea urchin. ABOVE: Narrow-leaf coneflowers dazzle visitors at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.

Bluebonnets flourish among stands of prickly pear near Mason.



For more information about photographic prints, call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com

TIM FITZHARRIS



A FRESH SPIN
ON

fayetteville



*Petals and pedals, churches and chamber music
enrich an historic burg between Austin and Houston*

Text by IAN DILLE

Photographs by J. GRIFFIS SMITH

It's six o'clock on a Saturday evening in Fayetteville, and Clovis Heimsath is spontaneously holding court in the lobby of his Country Place Hotel, a 1900 mercantile remodeled into a country inn. Relaxing in an antique rocking chair, Heimsath regales three visitors from Houston, along with my girlfriend, Lindy, and me, with tales of the town's history.

ABOVE: Orsak's double-meat burgers tower five inches high. Spice them up with jalapeños, if you wish. RIGHT: A bicycling mecca with bucolic byways, Fayetteville hosts a stage race every spring; this year's prize purse is \$8,000.





Heimsath relates that members of Stephen F. Austin's original 300 first settled here nearly two centuries ago, followed by German and then Czech (and later Czech-Moravian) immigrants. Today, the town (population 261), situated midway between Austin and Houston, draws an eclectic mix of visitors: Motorcyclists refuel their gas tanks, and then fill their stomachs with monstrous, double-meat burgers from Orsak's Cafe on the historic square; anglers cast for bass in Fayette Lake; shoppers browse the town's five antiques stores; and art buffs seek out the 19th-Century paintings hanging in a local church.

I've visited the area annually for a decade now. Every March, just as the blue-bonnets and Indian paintbrush burst into bloom across the area's rolling countryside, the Fayetteville Stage Race—like the Tour de France, but on a much smaller scale—draws hundreds of cyclists.

The winding maze of quiet country roads, gentle hills, and step-back-in-time scenery make the Fayetteville area a paradise for biking. Two-wheeled tourists range from somewhat obsessive racers like me, to the more recreational-minded folks. The Fayetteville Stage Race, promoted by Houston's Southwest Cycling

The winding maze of quiet country roads, gentle hills, and step-back-in-time scenery make the Fayetteville area a paradise for biking.

Guests staying in one of the Country Place's eight simply appointed rooms (think antiques, iron bedsteads, colorful quilts) can enjoy their morning coffee on an expansive balcony overlooking the square. Heimsath explains that the inn numbers among many recently refurbished buildings in town. Over the past two decades, recent retirees and second-home buyers, primarily from Houston and Austin (including Heimsath and his wife, Maryann), have flocked to Fayetteville. The newcomers and longtime residents have helped to preserve the town's original charm. Working together for more than three years, they were able to obtain a National Historic District designation for the town last year.

"Today, Fayetteville is experiencing a renaissance," Heimsath says. In addition to physical restoration, the influx of outsiders expanded the town's cultural offerings, which include the Fayetteville Chamber Music Festival featuring

world-renowned musicians, and an annual Art Walk on the town square.

On this evening, Heimsath suggests that Lindy and I attend a concert at the Art Guild of Rural Texas. A nonprofit organization founded in 2003, the Art Guild brings performing arts, such as the Houston Grand Opera, to the schools in and around Fayetteville, but it also regularly provides concert and gallery showings for the general public.

The sun has already set by the time Lindy and I step out onto the Country Place's expansive wooden porch on our way to the concert. I inhale a deep breath of the crisp, clean air and gaze at the blanket of stars overhead. We stroll across a thick bed of green grass surrounding the gleaming Fayette County Precinct Courthouse—constructed in 1880 and in 1934 adorned with a four-sided Seth Thomas clock—and enter the Art Guild headquarters building on the other side of the square.



Club, consists of three events over two days, with some courses as long as 100 miles. For less competitive cyclists, the annual MS-150 charity ride rolls through Fayetteville on its route between Houston and Austin every April.

A few weeks prior to last year's Fayetteville bike race, I took an opportunity to explore the town's amenities, in addition to pedaling its bucolic countryside. Luckily, Heimsath, a former head of the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce, thrives in the role of tour guide.

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FACING PAGE: The restored St. Mary Catholic Church near Ellinger features an ornately painted high altar.

LEFT: On second Saturdays from April through November, the popular Texas Pickin' Park event attracts musicians to the bandstand and other spots on the town square for acoustic jam sessions; for details, visit www.texaspickinpark.com.



For more information about photographic prints, call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.

Before the show, featuring Houston-area pianist Johnny Wilson, Lindy and I chat with Art Guild co-founder Mike Clann and his wife, Linda, over a spread of hors d'oeuvres that includes a tasty pâté. The Clanns live somewhat of a double life. During the week, they're based in Houston, where Mike works as an attorney. On

weekends, they escape to the countryside, immersing themselves in Fayetteville's rural charm and burgeoning culture. Mike, an accomplished watercolor and acrylic painter, shares an art studio behind the Country Place Hotel with Heimsath, whose large oil paintings of local scenes and nature decorate the walls of his hotel. (Glass artist Dick Bour, noted potter Pat Johnson, photographer Jerry Brown, and other artists

also have studios and gallery spaces on and around the square.)

Seated behind a glossy black grand piano, Wilson starts the show. He showcases a musical repertoire ranging from classical to hits from Willie Nelson—all while engaging the crowd with stories from his travels around the globe. "This is as good as anything we get in Houston," Linda whispers.

Later that evening, Lindy and I slip next door to grab dinner at Joe's Place,



which occupies an 1890 building that once housed Baca's Historic Saloon & Confectionary. The blackened tenderloin steak I order comes sprinkled with bleu cheese crumbles and topped with tobacco-onion strings. Lindy slices into a lightly breaded mahi-mahi fillet topped with crabmeat and a side of asparagus drizzled with hollandaise sauce. A couple of Shiner Blondes on draft perfectly complement our dishes.

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The sun has already set by the time we step out on our way to the concert. I inhale a deep breath of the crisp, clean air and gaze at the blanket of stars overhead.

The following morning, Lindy and I savor the Country Place breakfast of mini-quiches, fresh fruit, and stout coffee, then make a short walk to St. John's Catholic Church. We want to see the church's recently rediscovered and restored theological paintings, originally commissioned from the prolific Moravian master Johann Ignaz Berger in the 1870s and brought here by the Moravian immigrants who founded the church.

However, as we approach the cream-colored brick church, we notice the congregation gathered behind the building, where two rows of barbecue pits sit under a long tin roof. Once a month, it turns out, men from the Fayetteville chapter of the Knights of Columbus wake up well before dawn and fire up a couple of pits to barbecue a hundred-plus chickens.

Townfolk line up, and at seven dollars apiece, the barbecued birds typically sell out by 11 a.m. The pitmaster's charcoal-stained shirt reads, "It always tastes right when served by a knight."

Inside the church, current priest Father Stephen Nestrta, of Czech ancestry, welcomes us. According to Father Nestrta, in 2002, the previous pastor happened upon a painting stored in the rectory. He learned of the artwork's historical significance, and soon after, discovered five more paintings that had been stored in other locations long ago by the church. Three of the paintings had been placed

in the Fayetteville Area Heritage Museum on the square for safekeeping.

ABOVE: It took the work of 10 men to hoist the 600-pound painting of St. John the Baptist above the altar at St. John's Catholic Church.



Working together, longtime residents and newcomers were able to obtain a National Historic designation for the town last year.

Thanks to generous donations from the community, the church succeeded in fully restoring all six paintings.

The first painting we see, depicting St. Martin of Tours, graces the entryway to the church, while the five other immense artworks—each framed in hand-gilded, 24-karat gold molding—hang in a row above the altar. The display mimics their position in the original 1870s church. The largest painting, a detailed, six-and-a-half by 11-foot

depiction of Saint John the Baptist baptizing Jesus, hangs the highest in the middle, surrounded by an ornate tabernacle frame. The painting and frame together weigh 600 pounds.

Father Nestrsta recommends we also visit the ornate St. Mary Catholic Church near Ellinger, six miles to the south. To Lindy and me, this sounds like a fine bicycle ride. We suit up and pedal across the train tracks running

parallel to Main Street, before heading out Ross Prairie Church Road. The smooth, one-lane road rolls just enough to provide a challenge.

Built in the mid-1800s, the church sits on a hill overlooking the surrounding countryside. Before entering, Lindy and I peer back toward the iconic silver water tower in town—dubbed the “Tin Man’s head”—and the blinking lights of the Fayette power plant farther in the distance. Inside the small sanctuary, rows of wooden pews lead to a massive white altar spanning the width of the building. The altar’s Baroque design features decorative, painted carvings of various saints and patrons, each accented with gold highlights.

Dubbed the “Tin Man’s head,” Fayetteville’s 1920s water tower received a facelift (new paint and repairs) in 2006.

Fayetteville

FAYETTEVILLE is at the junction of FM 955 and Texas 159. For details on events, attractions, restaurants, and lodging (including some 20 B&Bs and guest cottages in the area), call the **Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce**, 888/575-4553; www.fayettevilletx.com. More details on the town's historic structures are available in a **walking-tour brochure**, which you can download from the chamber Web site. Following is contact information for sites in the story. **Hours vary; call ahead.**

Restaurants

Orsak's Cafe, 121 W. Fayette St., 979/378-2719.

Joe's Place at Baca's Saloon, 120 N. Live Oak St., 979/378-9035.

Accommodations

Country Place Hotel, N. Washington St. and E. Fayette St., 979/966-7771; www.countryplacehotel.com. (**Country Place Gallery** is behind the hotel.)

Art

Art Guild of Rural Texas, 114 N. Live Oak, 979/378-2113; www.artguildtexas.org.

Dick Bour Art Glass, LLC, 107 N. Washington St. (open by appt. only), 979/716-8489.

Pat Johnson Art Studio, 122 N. Live Oak (open by appt. only), 979/378-2872.

Honeysuckle Gallery and Guest House (see photography by **Jerry Brown** by appt.) is at 111 E. Fayette St., 979/378-3026.

Attractions

Fayette Lake, 4 miles west of town on Texas 159, includes two parks (Park Prairie and Oak Thicket) that offer campsites, trails, fishing piers, and other amenities. Go to www.lcra.org/parks.



Fayetteville Area Heritage Museum, 217 N. Washington, 888/575-4553 or 979/378-2378.

St. John's Catholic Church, E. Bell St. and N. Church St., 979/378-2277.

St. Mary Catholic Church, FM 2503 and St. Mary's Church Rd., 979/378-2277.

Events

Fayetteville Stage Race (Mar. 20-21, 2010); www.swcc.cc.

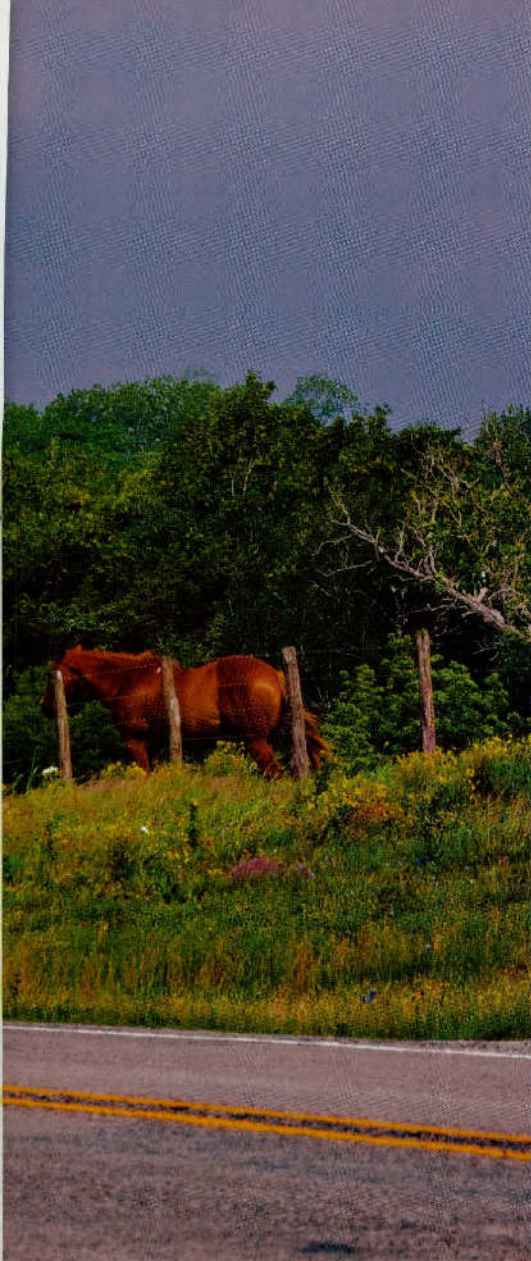
MS 150 (April 17-18, 2010); www.ms150.org.

Art Walk, Fayetteville town square (May 1-2, 2010), 979/378-2113; www.artguildtexas.org.

Fayetteville Chamber Music Festival, Country Place Hotel (May 7-16, 2010); 979/249-5035; www.fayettevillemusic.org.

Licksillet Days (Oct. 16-17, 2010), includes a barbecue cook-off, parade, music, and games, 888/575-4553.

For more on the 2010 spring and fall **antiques shows** held in surrounding communities, start at www.roundtop.org and www.antiqueweekend.com.



Shoppers stroll the square in front of the Fayetteville Area Heritage Museum, which highlights local history and features Teddy Schultz's handmade train replicas.

Shortly before reaching town, we pass a timeless Texas sight—a sea of brilliant bluebonnets. The field proves so stunning it almost appears groomed. Later, as we check out of the Country

The return ride to Fayetteville inspires a long cut down a narrow dirt road, across a tree-covered

Place, Heimsath assures me that the flowers grow naturally and, like everything else we've seen, are embedded in Fayetteville's history. **TH**

Austin writer IAN DILLE plans on recovering from this year's Fayetteville Stage Race with a chocolate milkshake and a basket of onion rings from Orsak's Cafe. Photography Editor GRIFF SMITH enjoyed picking and grinning with locals in the gazebo on the courthouse square.





KEVIN STILLMAN

Green Thinking

Planet-friendly destinations make every day Earth Day

Text by **HELEN BRYANT**

AS TRAVELERS strive to tread more lightly on the planet, more and more hotels, resorts, restaurants, parks, and attractions are plotting their course on the green map, going the extra mile to consume less and conserve more. And since practical conservation is often about efficiency—whether it's serving locally grown food, recycling creatively, or taking advantage of new heating and cooling technologies—travelers don't need to sacrifice all creature comforts. Let's take a look at some destinations that offer first-rate travel experiences while helping take care of Texas.

In Irving and Houston, the Element Hotel features energy-efficient design and adheres to the generations-old green philosophy of "reduce, reuse, and recycle."

Element Hotel, Irving and Houston

The taupe window shade somehow bathes my suite in a meditative green glow at Irving's Element Hotel, Starwood Hotels' new mid-priced hotel brand.



An illusion? Perhaps, but other green elements aren't: soy-foam sofa cushions, bed headboards made from wood harvested from a green-certified forest, reverse-osmosis filters on the faucets (to reduce the use of bottled water), dual-flush toilets, and low-VOC paint.

The rooms have full kitchens with energy-efficient appliances. And of course there's a recycling bin (still rare at most hotel chains) and a program allowing guests to opt out of daily linen laundry.

You know you're at a green hotel when the closest parking spaces are reserved for hybrid vehicles. A sliding glass door opens into a modernist lobby with floor-to-ceiling windows, contemporary furniture, and guests tapping away on their laptops. You don't stop to think that the double-pane windows keep the Texas heat out while they let in natural light.

Want to take greenness even further? Borrow a complimentary bike and cycle to your business meeting.

Element Hotels are at 3550 I-635 in **Irving** (972/929-9800) and 14555 Vintage Preserve Parkway in **Houston** (281/379-7300); www.starwoodhotels.com.

Great Wolf Lodge, Grapevine

Happy squeals echo through the 80,000-square-foot indoor water park at Great Wolf Lodge as little kids—and big ones, too—frolic in seven pools and on 12 waterslides. After everyone's thoroughly exhausted, they can choose from one of a half-dozen restaurants or retire to one of more than 600 guest suites.



© ERICH SCHLEGEL



In the heart of Big Bend National Park, Chisos Mountains Lodge offers hot showers, comfortable beds, and spectacular views—while making strides toward sustainability.

This place uses lots of water. How can it be green?

Because it works at it. Most of the park's water gets filtered, treated, and returned to the pools and chutes. That state-of-the-art filtration system uses 80 to 90 percent less water—and far less chlorine—than a traditional system. And the lodge controls humidity and temperatures to lose as little water as possible to evaporation. The lodge's environmental initiative

An indoor waterpark and resort goes green: Behind-the-scenes conservation and recycling earn Green Seal certification for Great Wolf Lodge in Grapevine.

encompasses everything from the paint used on the walls to the detergent in the laundry department. For example, the guest

Chisos Mountains Lodge
takes its stewardship of the
environment seriously.



GRIFFIS SMITH

suites use low-flow showerheads and faucets; lights in low-traffic areas go off when there's nobody around; and restaurant oil becomes biofuel.

Do you think about that while you're splashing around? Of course not. But the nonprofit environmental group Green Seal does, and it has given Great Wolf one of its three Texas silver certifications.

At the end of each day, a local shelter gets the resort's extra food, and the water very quietly goes through another recycling—all under the radar while you sleep to splash another day.

Great Wolf Lodge is at 100 Great Wolf Dr. in Grapevine. Call 800/693-9653; www.greatwolf.com.

www.texashighways.com

Chisos Mountains Lodge, Big Bend National Park

You can't help but feel at one with nature in the midst of the 801,000 acres of rugged Big Bend National Park. There's only one place to stay that has walls: Chisos Mountains Lodge, in the shadow of 7,100-foot Casa Grande mountain in the Chisos Basin. The lodge, a member of the Green Hotels Association, takes its stewardship of the environment seriously.



The lodge recycles, and in this West Texas wilderness, that's no small feat. The staff goes through tourist trash every day and pulls out recyclable goods to combine with the park's own recycling. The lodge also uses low-flow sprayer



Houston's Ruggles Green restaurant has its own environmental scientist.

heads in the restaurant, low-flow faucets and toilets in the rooms, and efficient lighting.

The park's biggest news? Its reduction of light pollution. A project completed last summer reduced ambient light at the Panther Junction visitors center, which cut a 2,238-watt glare down to 112 watts. That's enough to enable visitors to read a map and still enjoy the night sky.

Next up: a wattage cut at Chisos Basin. Soon, we'll be able to see the stars at night, shining big and bright.

Chisos Mountains Lodge is in Big Bend National Park. Call 877/386-4383; www.chisosmountainslodge.com.

Ruggles Green, Houston

I'm sitting beneath hanging vines on the pleasant outdoor patio of Ruggles Green, and Chef German Mosquera has placed before me a perfect bite: a slice of sweet yellow beet from the farmer's market down the street, topped with crunchy honeycomb produced by bees 45 minutes away, and drizzled with the tart juice of a Rio Grande Valley lime.



Let's hear it for eating local.

Ruggles Green is one of only eight restaurants statewide to earn the endorsement of the Green Restaurant Association, a national nonprofit organization that requires energy efficiency and sustainable food sources of its members. Mosquera fills plates with produce from local farms, herbs grown in a garden behind the restaurant, shrimp caught in the Gulf of Mexico, Texas buffalo, and grass-fed beef from Oklahoma. The menu—which offers a variety of inventive soups, salads, pastas, pizzas, and sandwiches—includes many gluten-free and lactose-free selections.

The restaurant, which will open a second location in Houston's new CityCentre development this spring, even has its own environmental scientist, Federico Marques, who oversees planet-friendly efforts like using dimmable fluorescent lighting and low-flow rinsing heads, toilets, and sinks; and recycling several tons of cardboard and glass monthly. If you order take-out, your box will be made of biodegradable sugarcane



J. GRIFFIS SMITH

fiber. Frying oil gets repurposed as fuel for the restaurant's truck.

Of course, all the environmental efficiency in the world won't bring in customers if the food's not good. No worries here: It's delicious! On my visit, I delight in a salad made with field greens, seared salmon, hard-boiled eggs, queso fresco, and crunchy sourdough croutons. My dining companion raves about the beef "hempanadas" (the dough is made from hemp flour), piquant with garlic-cilantro sauce and made lively with mint and mandarin oranges.

When I have lunch here, I know I'm doing the right thing—for the planet's health, and mine, too.

Ruggles Green is at 2311 W. Alabama in Houston. Call 713/533-0777; www.rugglesgreen.com.

For tips on green travel, see texashighways.com/webextra.

LEFT: In San Marcos, passengers on Aquarena Nature Center's glass-bottomed boats can view the plants and aquatic life in Spring Lake. RIGHT: Environmental scientist Federico Marques oversees planet-friendly initiatives at Ruggles Green in Houston.



Aquarena Nature Center, San Marcos

From my seat in a 50-year-old, wooden, glass-bottom boat, I watch a baby musk turtle skitter past a largemouth bass hovering lazily amid the feathery cabomba. We're in Spring Lake, a man-made reservoir above the San Marcos River. The vegetation parts to reveal a crack about 12 feet down, and I can see bubbles rising from the limestone bed. This clear spring water protects the lake's resident plants, fish, and other creatures, including endangered salamanders, fountain darters, and Texas wild rice. Thanks to these glass-bottom boat tours, visitors can see what they can't touch.



"It's like looking at your grandmother's jewelry under glass," says the center's director, Ron Coley.

Preservation of this rare ecosystem wasn't always the first priority. From the

'50s until the mid-'90s, Aquarena Springs operated as an amusement park made famous by Ralph the Swimming Pig. Non-native swans kept natural shore birds away, and the lake became choked by hydrilla, an invasive aquatic plant.

Texas State University purchased Aquarena Springs in 1994 and shifted the focus from entertainment to conservation. Volunteer divers tend the underwater garden and its residents of some 50 fish species. Turtles sun on rocks and partially submerged tree limbs. On the shore, lizards zip past great blue herons, white egrets, and various grebes and coots.

Explore the lake, then meander across the wetlands on a floating boardwalk of recycled plastic planks, where buzzards peer balefully at you from live oak branches. The water gives way to muck as the boardwalk leads into a riparian area beneath graceful black willows.

Nature has reclaimed its playground, and it welcomes you to visit.

Aquarena Nature Center is at 601 University Dr. in San Marcos. Call 512/245-7570; www.aquarena.txstate.edu. [continued on page 76]

Texas Highways

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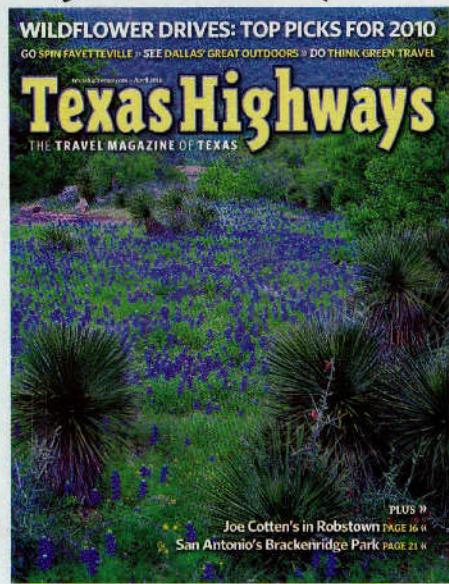
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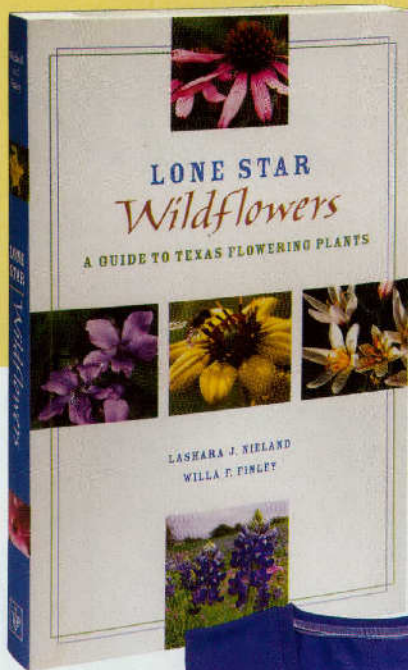
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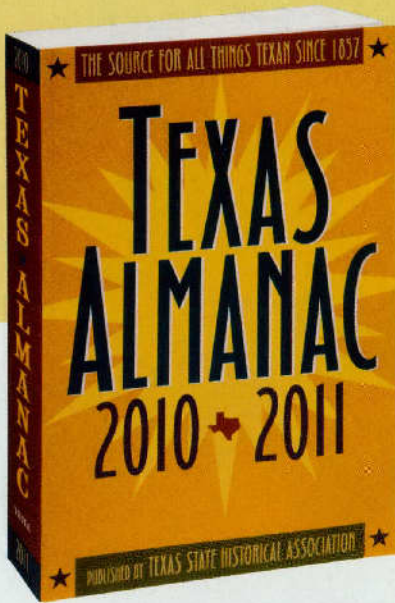
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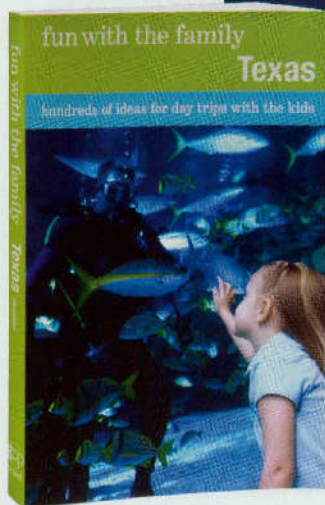
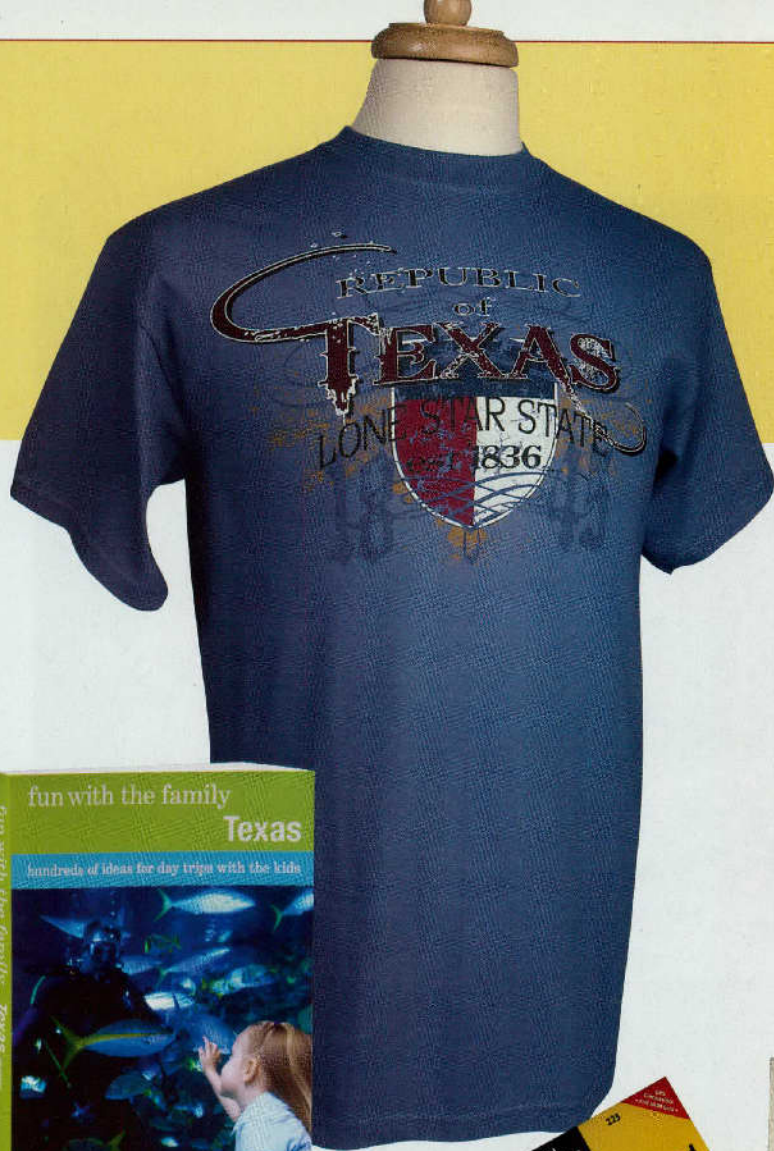
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Orange you smart for being a fan of the Lone Star State? What's not to love about the dreamsicle color of this comfy-soft Henley button-down. Plus, it's the perfect piece to wear from Port-A to Pampa. Slim fit, over-hip body length, ¾-sleeve length with ribbing at cuffs, neckline and around hood. Green design: water-based printed, uses no solvents.

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Revisiting a Texas Treasure

Smithsonian affiliation signals new era at the Institute of Texan Cultures

Text by **NOLA McKEY**

SINCE ITS BEGINNING IN 1968 AS THE TEXAS Exhibits Hall for San Antonio's HemisFair, the Institute of Texan Cultures has showcased the artifacts, photographs, and stories of diverse groups reflected in the state's heritage, from Paleoindians to Polish-Americans. Its best-known event, the Texas Folklife Festival—at which representatives of more than 40 cultures cook, demonstrate, dance, and otherwise entertain spectators—attracts thousands each June. However, other Institute offerings have been overlooked or underused in recent years. That's about to change.

With the University of Texas—San Antonio, the Institute's parent institution, on track to become a national research university, it has shown new interest in developing the Institute's resources. Several new staff members came aboard last year, revitalizing the museum's educational efforts. A portion of the historic photo archive has been digitized for online browsing, and researchers are producing oral history podcasts available for download. In January, a new gallery for traveling exhibits opened on the first floor. The first exhibit—*RACE: Are We So Different?*—explores the science, history, and everyday experience of race perceptions. The Institute is hosting moderated "RACE Forums," as well as a RACE lecture series, to encourage discussion about the exhibit.

Museum staff have begun revamping some of the permanent exhibits, emphasizing

A group of German-Texans picnics on the banks of Salado Creek near San Antonio in 1901.

the interactions between various cultures, rather than presenting individual groups in isolation. They're also incorporating more of the museum's vast store of historical photos and oral histories. "Our photo archive and oral history collection are really hidden treasures," says Director of Education and Interpretation Lupita Barrera. "We have more than three million photos, and hundreds of oral histories from Texans such as Robert Hugman, the architect of San Antonio's River Walk, musician Flaco Jiménez, and cowboy and rodeo clown Leon Coffee. We've also heard from prominent businessmen, Doolittle's Raiders, and civil rights leaders. We're incorporating these elements into our permanent exhibits to bring Texas history to life for our visitors."

On January 28, the Institute celebrated an important milestone: It became an

affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. "This affiliation is a really big step for us," says Institute Executive Director Tim Gette. "It gives us access to the Smithsonian's collections, traveling exhibits, experts, educational programs, and other resources."

"Our photo archive and oral history collection are really hidden treasures."

—Lupita Barrera

After the ceremony formalizing its partnership with the Smithsonian, the Institute held a naturalization ceremony for 238 new citizens from more than 50 countries, from Albania to Vietnam. A military brass band played marches, and the R.O.T.C. color guard from a local high school carried in American and Texas flags. After presiding District Judge Xavier Rodriguez administered the Oath of Allegiance, there were tears, hugs, and handshakes. Children waved small American flags. The assembled group of new citizens and well-wishers then said the Pledge of Allegiance and sang "The Star-Spangled Banner." ❁

Giving Voice to History

"WE'VE BEEN COLLECTING ORAL HISTORIES SINCE 1970," SAYS RHETT RUSHING, WHO HEADS the Institute's oral history program, "and today we have more than 600 on file. We recently created a podcast of three oral histories from local military aviators to supplement one of the current exhibits, *A Salute to Military Flight*. The first history is from Colonel Carl J. Crane (1900-1982), who witnessed the birth of aviation in Texas. As you view the Web component of the exhibit, you hear Crane's voice:

"Well, it seems almost that I fell in love with flying as soon as I was able to identify myself as a human being, because Orville Wright and Wilbur Wright made their first flights in 1903 By the time I was four or five years old, you can imagine that a lot of people were aware of, and interested in, the antics of the Wright brothers. And my dad, particularly, was interested in everything he could read on aviation ..."

I grew up on East Commerce Street in San Antonio just a few blocks from Fort Sam Houston, and there I was ready, at the age of 10, to witness the first flight of an Army airplane by the late General Foulois, at that time Lieutenant Foulois, who made his first solo flight at Fort Sam Houston in 1910. Of course, I could see this airplane flying from my front porch ... and that is when I really got interested in aviation."

While oral histories add to visitors' enjoyment of exhibits, Rushing says, "Our primary goal is to get the entire collection online and searchable so that it's available to every classroom, library, and home computer in Texas and beyond." To hear podcasts and read transcripts of a sampling of the museum's oral histories, go to www.texancultures.com/library/histories.html.

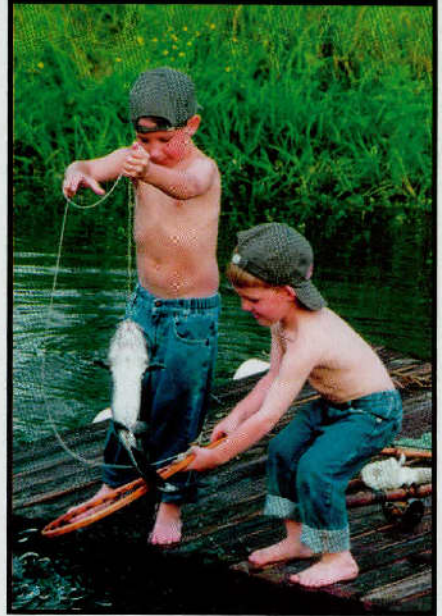
—N.M.

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Speaking of Texas

The Institute is digitizing its entire photo archive—some three million images showcasing Texas history and culture, many of which are already available online.



The Institute hosts similar naturalization ceremonies about 10 times a year. They tend to involve more fanfare than the ceremonies held elsewhere across the state,

perhaps because Judge Rodriguez, who was born in Monterrey, Mexico, is a naturalized citizen himself and fully appreciates the significance of the occasion. The setting also lends itself to extra celebration.

A Tigua woman sits with a child in a ceremonial house at the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo in El Paso in this 1970 photo from the museum's collection.

“These naturalized citizens are our newest Americans, and we also think of them as our newest Texans,” says Public Affairs Specialist James Benavides. “Since our purpose is to educate visitors about the many cultural groups that came together to build this state, the Institute seems the perfect place to hold this ceremony. Many of the ethnic groups represented on our exhibit floor are represented in the audience gathered for the ceremony. We want them to know that their people have contributed significantly to the history, culture, and character of this state.”

Museum staff have this same goal for every Texan who visits the museum, including virtual visitors. “We think the Institute should be a place for Texans to discover themselves,” says Lupita Barrera, “and by making all of our resources more available—both on-site and online—we’re helping them do that.” **TH**



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Even if you decide to visit on a day without any special events, you'll have your work cut out for you, just seeing the displays.

Start with the Institute's best-known exhibit, **Texans One and All**, which focuses on more than 20 of the original cultural groups that settled the state, from African Americans to Wends. The English, Irish, and Scottish sections have recently been updated and include new photos and artifacts, as well as interactive kiosks that provide supplementary material. Be sure to take in one of the multimedia presentations in the 26-screen, 360° Dome Show Theater.

The traveling exhibit **RACE: Are We So Different?** runs through May 16. Another temporary exhibit **Small Town Texas**, a photo exhibition by UTSA President Ricardo Romo, which "documents the cultural and social features of a fading way of life," runs through May 23. **A Salute to Military Flight**, which honors the centennial of military flight in San Antonio runs through July 4.

On May 30, the Institute presents **Memorial Memories**, a free, two-and-a-half-hour concert that features music of the Big Band era and pays homage to each branch of the military. The museum's annual **Texas Folklife Festival** takes place June 11-13. This well-loved event includes a rich spectrum of ethnic food and entertainment, from crawfish étouffée to fortune cookies, from Lebanese folkdancers to mariachi groups. **Texas Trails and Tales**, June 21-July 31, offers visitors a chance to learn about pioneer life through hands-on experiences at the Back 40—washing clothes with homemade lye soap, making cornhusk dolls, attending school in a one-room schoolhouse.

In addition, most exhibits include a Family Day with related programs, crafts, and stories for children. The museum's Bluebonnet Puppet Theater also offers family-friendly presentations on Texas history. For details about the museum and events held at other times of the year, call 210/458-2300; www.texancultures.com.

—N.M.



These lion dancers from the San Antonio Lion Dance Association were among 50 ethnic dance groups that entertained spectators at last year's Texas Folklife Festival.

PHOTO: INSTITUTE OF TEXAN CULTURES



HOTELS OF TEXAS

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|--------------------|----------------------|
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| Big Spring | Livingston |
| Borger | Llano |
| Bowie | Lockhart |
| Brady | Longview (2) |
| Brenham | Lubbock (2) |
| Bridgeport | Lufkin |
| Brownfield | Madisonville |
| Brownsville | Mansfield |
| Bryan | Marvel |
| Buda | Marble Falls |
| Buffalo | Marshall |
| Burleson | Mathis |
| Burnet | McAllen |
| Canadian | McKinney |
| Canton | Mexia |
| Canyon | Midland |
| Carthage | Mineola |
| Cedar Park | Mineral Wells |
| Center | Mission |
| Childress | Monahans |
| Clarendon | Montgomery |
| Cleburne | Mount Pleasant |
| Cleveland | Nacogdoches (2) |
| Clifton | Navasota |
| Clute | New Braunfels |
| Coleman | New Caney |
| Columbus | North Richland Hills |
| Comanche | Odessa |
| Copperas Cove | Ozona |
| Corpus Christi (5) | Palentine |
| Corsicana | Pampa |
| Cotulla | Paris |
| Cresson | Pearland |
| Dalhart | Pearsall |
| Dallas (5) | Pecos (2) |
| Dayton | Perryton |
| De Soto | Plainview |
| Decatur | Piano |
| Deer Park | Port Aransas |
| Del Rio | Port Lavaca |
| Denison | Portland |
| Denton (2) | Post |
| Donna | Quanah |
| Dumas | Raymondville |
| Duncanville | Refugio |
| Eagle Pass | Rio Grande City |
| Edinburg | Roanoke |
| Edna | Robstown |
| El Campo | Rockdale |
| El Paso (2) | Round Rock |
| Falfurrias | Salado |
| Floresville | San Angelo |
| Forney | San Antonio (12) |
| Fort Stockton | San Benito |
| Fort Worth (3) | San Marcos |
| Franklin | Schulenburg |
| Fredericksburg | Seagoville |
| Freer | Sealy |
| Fulton | Shamrock |
| Galveston | Sinton |
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| George West | South Padre Island |
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| Graham | Sulphur Springs |
| Granbury | Sweetwater |
| Greenville | Taylor |
| Groesbeck | Temple |
| Gun Barrel City | Terrill |
| Hallattsville | Texas City |
| Harlingen | The Woodlands |
| Hebbronville | Three Rivers |
| Henderson | Tyler |
| Henrietta | Vega |
| Hereford | Vernon |
| Hidalgo | Victoria |
| Hillsboro | Waco |
| Hondo | Weatherford |
| Houston (7) | Webster |
| Humble (2) | Weslaco |
| Ingliside | West Columbia |
| Irving (2) | Wichita Falls (2) |
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Winterfest
Historic Homes Tour
First weekend of Dec

April Events

BIG BEND COUNTRY

EL PASO: The Da Vinci Experience April 1-July 10. (began January 16) Exhibit of more than 60 precise and working machines described and designed by Leonardo da Vinci along with replicas of his greatest paintings. El Paso Museum of History. www.elpasotexas.gov/history 915/351-3588

EL PASO: Bill Maher April 3. Plaza Theatre. www.theplaza theatre.org 800/745-3000

EL PASO: El Paso Symphony Orchestra April 16-17. Plaza Theatre. www.epso.org 915/532-3776

FORT STOCKTON: Big Bend Open Road Race April 21-24. Racers and vehicles from around the nation match their skills against 118 miles of twists, turns, and elevation changes. Route follows U.S. 285 from Fort Stockton to Sanderson and back. www.bbrr.com 432/336-3331

MIDLAND: CAF Hops & Props April 24. CAF George H.W. and Barbara Bush Commemorative Center, 9600 Wright Drive. www.commemorativeveairforce.org 432/563-1000

MONAHANS: Sands Art Festival April 23-24. Ward County Convention Center. www.monahans.org 432/943-2187

SAN ELIZARIO: First Thanksgiving Celebration & Conference April 23-25. www.ElPasoMissionTrail.com 915/594-8424

SAN ELIZARIO: Mission Trail Art Market April 24-25. www.MissionTrailArtMarket.com 915/594-8424

GULF COAST

BEAUMONT: Brigadoon April 30-May 15. www.beaumont communityplayers.com 409/833-4664

CLEAR LAKE AREA: Clear Lake Crawfish Festival
April 9-10. www.clearlakearea.com 281/488-7676

CORPUS CHRISTI: The Big Bloom April 10. Spring garden festival at South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center. www.stxbot.org 361/852-2100

CORPUS CHRISTI: Buc Days April 15-18. www.bucdays.com 361/883-5111

CORPUS CHRISTI: Earth Day—Bay Day Celebration
April 17. www.baysfoundation.org/edbd 361/882-3439

CORPUS CHRISTI: Frederica von Stade with the Corpus Christi Symphony Orchestra April 17. Performing Arts Center at Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi, 6300 Ocean Drive. www.ccsymphony.org 361/883-6383

CORPUS CHRISTI: Texas International Boat Show
April 22-25. Corpus Christi Marina. www.TexasInternationalBoatShow.com 561/842-8808

DEER PARK: Totally Texas Music Festival April 16-17. www.deerparktx.gov/recreation 281/478-2050

GALVESTON: FeatherFest April 8-11. www.galvestonfeatherfest.com 409/392-0841 or 888/425-4753

GALVESTON: Memorial Hermann Ironman 70.3 Texas Triathlon April 25. www.ironmanlonestar.com 512/535-5224

HOUSTON: Dance Salad Festival April 1-3. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas. www.dancesalad.org 713/237-1439

HOUSTON: Earth Day April 3. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. www.earthdayhouston.org 713/528-3779

HOUSTON: In the Heights April 6-18. A new musical about chasing your dreams and finding your true home. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. www.broadwayacrossamerica.com 713/622-7469

HOUSTON: Houston International Film Festival April 9-18. Features a blend of feature films, shorts, screenplays, TV commercials, music videos, and documentaries. www.worldfest.org 713/965-9955

HOUSTON: Houston Children's Festival April 10-11. www.houstonchildrensfestival.com 281/363-0900

HOUSTON: Houston Heights Spring Home & Garden Tour April 10-11. www.houstonheights.org 713/861-4002

HOUSTON: Japan Festival April 10-11. Hermann Park's Japanese Garden. www.jashouston.org 713/963-0121

HOUSTON: Czech SpringFest April 11. SPJST Lodge 88, 1435 Beall St. www.czechheritage.org 713/349-0500

HOUSTON: The Grand Wine & Food Affair April 21-25. www.TheGrandWineAndFoodAffair.com 713/747-9463

HOUSTON: Little House on the Prairie April 28-May 9. Theatre Under the Stars. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. www.tuts.com 713/558-TUTS or 888/558-3882

HOUSTON: Handel's Xerxes April 30, May 2, 8, 12, 14. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas Ave. www.houstongrandopera.org/xerxes 713/228-6737

KINGSVILLE: Ride on the Wild Side April 17. Bicycle the historic 10-mile loop on the King Ranch, as well as longer rides in the countryside. Includes a 100-K timed ride. King Ranch, Texas 141. www.kingsvilletexas.com 361/592-8516

KINGWOOD: Picnic on the Park April 3. Town Center Park. www.picniconthepark.com

LA MARQUE: Highland Bayou Park Kite Festival
April 10-11. Highland Bayou Park. 409/938-9270

LA PORTE: San Jacinto Day Festival & Battle Re-enactment April 24. San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site. www.sanjacinto-museum.org 281/479-2421

LAKE JACKSON: Migration Celebration April 16-18. San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge. www.migrationcelebration.org 866/403-5829

LAKE JACKSON: Great Texas Birding Classic April 24-May 2. Gulf Coast Bird Observatory www.gcbco.org 979/480-0999

MAURICEVILLE: Crawfish Festival April 16-18. Mauriceville Festival Grounds. 409/745-1202

ORANGE: Romeo & Juliet April 8. The Guthrie Theater and The Acting Company present Shakespeare's tragedy. Lutchter Theater, 707 Main. www.lutchter.org 409/745-5535

ORANGE: Chris Botti April 17. Lutchter Theater, 707 Main. www.lutchter.org 409/745-5535 or 800/828-5535

ORANGE: Earth Week/Eco Fest April 19-24. Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center. www.shangrilagardens.org 409/670-9113

PORT ARANSAS: Texas SandFest April 9-11. www.TexasSandfest.com 361/215-0677

PORT ARTHUR: Mercado Days Latino Fest April 16-17. Downtown. 409/983-4006

PORTLAND: Windfest April 15-18. Portland Community Center. www.portlandtx.org 361/643-2475

ROCKPORT: Herb Festival April 3. Rockport-Fulton High School. www.rockportherbs.com 979/562-2153

SAN BENITO: San Benito High Conjunto Band Concert
April 27. W.H. Heavin Amphitheater. 956/361-3804

SPRING: Texas Crawfish & Music Festival April 9-11, 16-18, 23-24. Preservation Park. www.texascrawfishfestival.com 800/653-8696

VICTORIA: Victoria Symphony April 24. Victoria College Auditorium. www.victoriasymphony.com 361/576-4500

VICTORIA: The Dinner Party April 30-May 1. www.theatrevictoria.org 361/576-6277

VIDOR: Texas Barbecue Festival April 23-25. Claiborne Park West. www.vidorchamber.com 409/769-6339

HILL COUNTRY

AUSTIN: Urban Music Festival April 3. Auditorium Shores. www.urbanmusicfest.com 512/314-5433

AUSTIN: Easter Orchid Show April 3-4. Zilker Botanical Gardens Center, 2220 Barton Springs Road. www.hotos.org 512/477-8672

AUSTIN: Pianist Ingrid Fliter with the Austin Symphony April 9-10. Long Center for the Performing Arts. www.austinsymphony.org 512/476-6064

AUSTIN: Texas Hill Country Bicycle Tour April 10-16. www.adventurecycling.org/tours 800/755-2453

AUSTIN: Capitol 10,000 April 11. Congress Ave. to Auditorium Shores. www.statesman.com/cap10K 512/472-3254

AUSTIN: Old Settler's Music Festival April 15-18. Salt Lick Pavilion and Camp Ben McCulloch, FM 1826 south of



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Austin in Driftwood. www.oldsettlersmusicfest.org
888/512-SHOW

AUSTIN: Texas Hill Country Wine & Food Festival
April 15-18. www.texaswineandfood.org 512/249-6300

AUSTIN: Chelsea Handler's Chelsea Chelsea Bang Comedy Tour April 16. Bass Concert Hall. www.texasperformingarts.org/event/chelsea 800/982-BEVO

AUSTIN: Lorenzo Micheli April 17. Noted classical guitarist at Northwest Hills United Methodist Church, 7050 Village Center Drive. www.AustinClassicalGuitar.org 512/300-ACGS

AUSTIN: Hansel & Gretel April 24-May 2. Long Center for the Performing Arts. www.austinlyricopera.org 512/472-5992

BANDERA: Ranch Heritage Weekend April 23-24 Hill Country State Natural Area. www.hcsnap.org 830/796-4413

BOERNE: Mostly Native Plant & Green Living Fair April 3. Cibolo Nature Center, 140 City Park Road. www.cibolo.org 830/249-4616

BOERNE: Texas Corvette Association Open Car Show April 17. www.texas-corvette-association.org 210/226-5386

BUDA: Buda Lions Club Country Fair & Cookoff
April 24-25. Buda City Park. www.budalionsclub.com
512/312-0084

BURNET: Bluebonnet Festival April 9-11. Downtown Square. www.burnetchamber.org 512/756-4297

CEDAR PARK: Cedar Park Heritage Parade & Festival
April 10. Elizabeth Milburn Park. www.cedarparkfun.com
512/401-5508

DRIPPING SPRINGS: Founders Day April 7-9. 512/858-4725

FREDERICKSBURG: Wildflower Celebration April 3-18. Wildseed Farms. www.wildseedfarms.com 830/990-8080

FREDERICKSBURG: Wine & Wildflowers Trail April 9-11, 16-18. www.texaswinetrail.com 866/621-9463

GEORGETOWN: Red Poppy Festival April 24-25 Downtown Georgetown. www.redpoppyfestival.com 800/436-8698

GOLDTHWAITE: State Championship BBQ & Goat Cookoff April 23-24. Goldthwaite City Park. www.goldthwaite.biz 325/648-3619

HUTTO: Kids Egg Hunt April 3. Fritz Park. www.huttotx.gov 512/759-4000

JOHNSON CITY: Wildflower Day Festival April 17. www.johnsoncitytexaschamber.com 830/868-7684

KERRVILLE: Easter Hill Country Bike Tour April 2-4. Schreiner University, 2100 Memorial Blvd. www.ehct.com 281/782-8743

KERRVILLE: Camerata San Antonio April 8. First Presbyterian Church, 800 E. Jefferson St. www.cameratasao.org 210/492-9519

KERRVILLE: Earth Day Celebration April 17. Riverside Nature Center. www.riversidenaturecenter.org 830/257-4837

LAMPASAS: Bloomin' Fest April 3. www.lampasaschamber.org 512/556-5172

LUCKENBACH: Hill Country Run Motorcycle Rally
April 30-May 2. www.hillcountryrun.com 830/997-8515

SAN MARCOS: Viva! Cinco de Mayo April 30-May 1. Hays County Civic Center. www.vivacincodemayo.org 512/353-VIVA

WIMBERLEY: Butterfly Festival April 17. EmilyAnn Theatre. www.emilyann.org 512/847-6969

PANHANDLE PLAINS

ABILENE: Shakespeare in Hollywood April 15-17, 22-24. Abilene Christian University's Fulks Theatre. www.acu.edu 325/674-2787

ABILENE: Cinco de Mayo Festival April 30-May 2. St. Vincent Pallotti Catholic Church, 2525 Westview Drive. 325/672-1794

ALBANY: Classic Car Show April 17. www.albanytexas.com 325/762-2525 or 817/925-3269

BRECKENRIDGE: Stephens County Frontier Days
April 30-May 1. City Park. www.breckenridgetexas.com
254/559-2301

BUFFALO GAP: Buffalo Gap Wine & Food Summit
April 23-25. Perini Ranch. 325/572-3424 or 800/367-1721

CISCO: Folklife Festival April 24-25. Cisco College. www.ciscotx.com 254/442-2537

DIMMITT: Ogallala Quilt Festival April 9-10. Castro County Expo Building. www.ogallalaquilters.org 806/647-5362

HENRIETTA: Turkey Fest & Expo April 17. www.hccchamber.com 940/538-5261

LUBBOCK: Raider Red's Awesome Dance Spectacular
April 8-11. Texas Tech University's Charles E. Maedgen Jr. Theatre. www.ttu.edu 806/742-3603

LUBBOCK: The Sleeping Beauty April 15-18. Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts, 511 Ave. K. www.balletlubbock.org 806/785-3090

LUBBOCK: Arts Festival April 15-18. Civic Center. www.lubbockarts.org 806/744-2787

POST: Old Mill Trade Day April 3. Main Street. www.postcitytexas.com 806/495-3461

SAN ANGELO: Texas Mesquite Art Festival April 16-18. Fort Concho National Historic Landmark. www.texasmesquiteassn.org 325/481-2646 or 866/839-3378

SAN ANGELO: Mariachi Vargas April 24. Angelo State University's Junell Center. www.sanangelosymphony.org 325/658-5877

SAN ANGELO: San Angelo Food & Wine Festival
April 29-May 1. www.sanangeloarts.com 325/653-6793

VERNON: National Western Trail Celebration April 30-May 1. Doans, just outside Vernon. www.vernontexas.net 940/553-1849

WICHITA FALLS: Red River Wine Festival April 17. J.S. Bridwell Ag. Center. www.reddriverwinefestival.com 940/766-3347

PINEY WOODS

CARTHAGE: Piney Woods Quilt Festival April 16-17. Texas Country Music Hall of Fame, 310 W. Panola St. www.carthagetexas.com/MainStreet/quilt.htm 903/693-4403

CONROE: Ricky Skaggs April 3. Crighton Theatre. www.mcpcas.org 936/760-2787

CONROE: Montgomery County Fair & Rodeo April 9-18. Montgomery County Fairgrounds. www.mcta.org 936/760-3631

GLADEWATER: East Texas Gusher Days April 10, 16-17, 24. www.gusherdays.com 903/845-5501 or 800/627-0315

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GRAPELAND: Folk Festival April 24. Mission Tejas State Park. 936/687-2394

HUNTSVILLE: General Sam Houston Folk Festival April 30-May 2. Sam Houston Memorial Museum. www.samhoustonfolkfestival.org 936/294-1832

JEFFERSON: Great Locomotive Chase April 30-May 2. Historic Jefferson Railway. www.jeffersonrailway.com 866/398-2038

JEFFERSON: Historic Homes Tour, Spring Festival, and Battle of Port Jefferson April 30-May 2. www.jefferson-texas.com 903/665-2672 or 903/665-2513

LINDEN: Wildflower Trails of Texas Festival April 22-24. Events in Linden, Avinger, and Hughes Springs. www.lindenwildflowertrails.com 903/796-3003 or 903/639-7519

LONGVIEW: Longview PRCA Rodeo April 16-17. Longview Fairgrounds. www.longviewrodeo.com 903/399-8482

LONGVIEW: Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder with Haley Dykes April 24. LeTourneau University's S.E. Belcher Jr. Chapel and Performance Center. www.letu.edu 903/233-3080

LUMBERTON: Earth Day Festival April 24. Village Creek State Park. 409/755-7322

MOUNT PLEASANT: Ride with the Eagles Bike Rally April 24. Northeast Texas Community College. www.ntcc.edu/bike 903/434-8310

THE WOODLANDS: Waterway Arts Festival April 10-11. The Woodlands Waterway. www.woodlandsartsfestival.com 281/681-0564

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

ATHENS: PRCA Rodeo April 23-24. Henderson County Fairgrounds. 903/675-5131

BASTROP: Yesterfest April 24. Old Town Bastrop. 512/321-6600

BRENHAM: Brenham Country Flavors Festival April 24. Downtown Brenham. www.downtownbrenham.com 888/273-6426

BRYAN: Wine & Roses Festival April 24. Messina Hof Winery & Resort. www.messinahof.com 800/736-9463

BURTON: Cotton Gin Festival April 16-18. Burton Cotton Gin & Museum, 307 N. Main St. www.cottonginmuseum.org 979/289-3378

CAMERON: Dewberry Festival April 23-24. Ledbetter Park. 254/697-4979

CANTON: First Monday Trade Days April 1-4, 29-May 2. Canton Trade Days Grounds. www.chambercantontx.com 877/462-7467

CHAPPELL HILL: Official Bluebonnet Festival of Texas April 10-11. www.chappellhillmuseum.org 979/836-6033 or 888/273-6426

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CLEBURNE: Steel Magnolias April 1-3, 8-10, 15-17. Plaza Theatre, 111 S. Main. www.plaza-theatre.com 817/202-0600

COOPER: Delta County Fair & Junior Livestock Show April 17. Cooper City Harmon Park. 903/395-4314

CORSICANA: Derrick Days April 18-24. www.derrickdays.com 877/648-2688

CUERO: DeWitt County Wildflower Month April 1-30. www.dewittwildflowers.org 361/275-2112

DALLAS: Deep Ellum Arts Festival April 2-4. www.deepellumartsfestival.com 214/747-3337

DALLAS: 2010 Dallas International Film Festival April 8-18. www.dallasfilm.org 214/720-0555

DALLAS: Dallas Symphony Orchestra April 2-3, 8-11, 15-18, 29-May 2. Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center. www.dallassymphony.com 214/692-0203

DALLAS: Guitar Show & Music Fest April 16-18. Market Hall, 2200 Stemmons Freeway. www.eventful.com/dallas/venues/dallas-market-hall 214/655-6181

DALLAS: Escher String Quartet April 19. Caruth Auditorium, SMU. www.dallaschambermusic.com 214/768-2787

DALLAS: Dallas Black Dance Theatre II April 23-24. Latino Cultural Center, 2600 Live Oak. www.dbdtt.com 214/670-3320

DALLAS: Moby Dick April 30, May 2, 5, 8, 13, 16. Margot & Bill Winspear Opera House. www.dallasopera.org 214/880-0202

DENTON: Redbud Festival April 10. Civic Center. www.kdb.org 940/349-8737

DENTON: Denton Arts & Jazz Festival April 23-25. Quakertown Park, 321 E. McKinney. www.dentonjazzfest.com 940/565-0931

DUBLIN: A Night on the Town April 3. Downtown. www.dublinfoxchamber.com 254/445-3422

EAGLE LAKE: Attwater's Prairie Chicken Festival April 10-11. Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge, FM 3013. www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/texas/attwater 979/234-3021

EDOM: April in Edom April 17-18. Old-fashioned street fair in the quaint arts community of Edom. 903/852-4438 or 903/852-7820

ENNIS: Official Texas Bluebonnet Trails April 1-30. Designated by the 1997 State Legislature as "The Official Texas Bluebonnet Trails." Includes 40 miles of mapped wildflower trails. Free maps and tour guides available. Sponsored by the Ennis Garden Club. www.visitennis.org 972/878-4748

ENNIS: Bluebonnet Trails Festival April 17-18. Historic Downtown Ennis. www.visitennis.org 972/878-4748

FORT WORTH: Texas Motor Speedway O'Reilly 300 & Samsung Mobile 500 April 15-18. NASCAR auto racing at Texas Motor Speedway. www.texasmotorspeedway.com 817/215-8500

FORT WORTH: Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra April 16-18. Bass Performance Hall. www.fwsymphony.org 817/665-6000

FORT WORTH: Prairie Fest April 24. Tandy Hills Natural Area, 3400 View St. www.tandyhills.org 817/731-2787

FORT WORTH: Mayfest April 29-May 2. Trinity Park. www.mayfest.org 817/332-1055

GARLAND: Funny Girl April 15-18, 22-25, 29-May 2. Granville Arts Center, 300 N. 5th. www.garlandcivictheatre.org 972/205-2790

GIDDINGS: Spring Fling April 24. Landmark Square. www.GiddingsTexas.com 979/542-3455

GRAPEVINE: Easter Bunny Train April 3-4. Cotton Belt Depot, 701 S. Main St. www.grapevintexasusa.com 800/457-6338

GRAPEVINE: Blessing of the Vines & New Vintage Wine & Gallery Trail April 16-17. Delaney Vineyards, 200 Champagne Blvd and Historic Downtown Grapevine. www.grapevintexasusa.com 800/457-6338

IRVING: New Philharmonic Orchestra of Irving April 11. Irving Arts Center. www.irvingartscenter.com 972/252-2787

LA GRANGE: BP MS 150 April 17-18. La Grange is the half-way stop for the two-day bike ride from Houston to Austin. Activities and entertainment at the Fayette County Fairgrounds. www.ms150.org 713/526-8967

LULING: Roughneck Chili & BBQ Cookoff April 10. Downtown on Davis Street. www.lulingcd.org 830/875-3214

MALAKOFF: Cornbread Festival April 24. Downtown. www.malakoffchamber.com 903/489-1518

MESQUITE: Real. Texas. Festival. April 23-24. Rodeo Center. www.realtexasfestival.com 972/216-6499

MIDLOTHIAN: Spring Fling Arts & Crafts Fair & 5K Run April 24. Heritage Park. www.midlothianchamber.org 972/723-8600

MOUNT VERNON: Tour de Cypress Bike Ride & Tour April 17. Mount Vernon/Lake Cypress Springs. www.tourdecypress.com 903/537-4495

NAVASOTA: Mance Lipscomb's Birthday Celebration April 10. Blues, barbecue, and bluebonnets. Downtown at Blues Alley, Village Market. 936/825-4754

PALESTINE: Peanuts—The Easter Beagle Express April 3. Texas State Railroad's Palestine Depot. www.TexasStateRR.com 888/987-2461

SEGUIN: Ladies State Chili Cookoff April 16-17. Starcke Park. www.visitseguin.com 800/580-7322

SHERMAN: Earth Day Festival April 24. Municipal Lawn, 405 N. Rusk. www.earthdaytexoma.net 903/957-0310

SNOOK: ChiliFest April 9-10. www.chillifest.org 979/695-2998

TEMPLE: Bloomin' Temple Festival April 9-11. Downtown Temple. www.bloomintemple.com 254/773-2105

TROY: FunFest April 16-17. Downtown, and from the Community Center Pavilion into Trojan Park. www.troytexas.org 254/718-8572

WAXAHACHIE: Scarborough Renaissance Festival April 10-May 31. www.scarboroughrenfest.com 972/938-3247

WEATHERFORD: Alice in Chandor Gardens April 3. Chandor Gardens. www.weatherfordtots.org 817/341-8687

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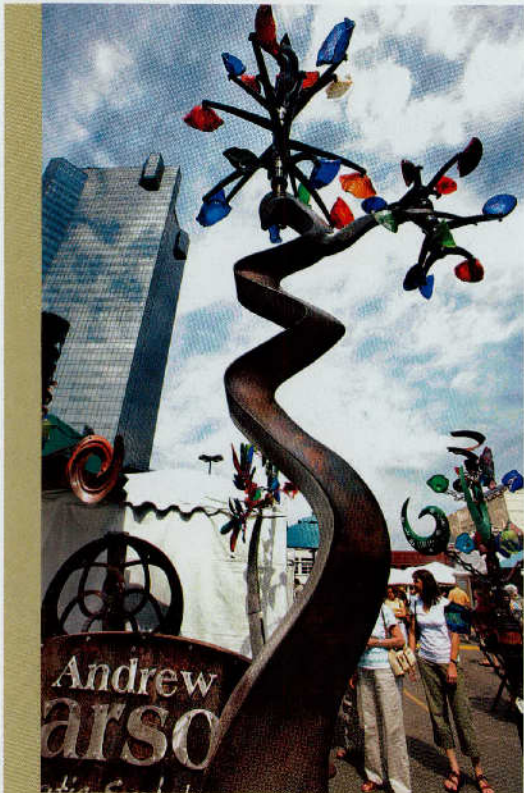
photo courtesy of Megan Mendelsohn

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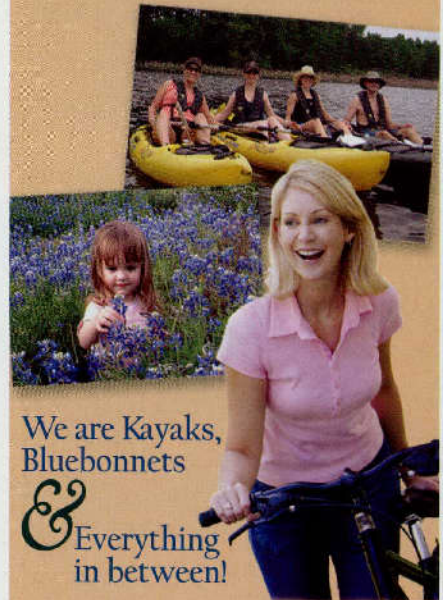
TH SPOTLIGHT

Remember the Main

CELEBRATING ITS 25TH YEAR, The Main St. Fort Worth Arts Festival, April 8-11, hosts thousands for four days of visual arts, live entertainment, and gourmet fare on the historic red bricks of downtown Main Street, stretching a magnificent mile from the Tarrant County Courthouse to the Fort Worth Convention Center. This popular and prestigious art fair showcases the finest of Cowtown and beyond. And, best of all, it's free. For additional information, call 817/336-ARTS; www.mainstreetartsfest.org.

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SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

BEEVILLE: Oklahoma! April 29-May 2. Jones Auditorium, Coastal Bend College. 361/354-2303

CARRIZO SPRINGS: Bull Riding Bullnanza April 24. Dimmit County Fairgrounds & Arena. 830/876-5205

GOLIAD: Cinco de Mayo April 30-May 1. Goliad County Fairgrounds. www.goliadcc.org 361/645-8364

LAREDO: Laredo International Sister Cities Festival April 23-25. Laredo Entertainment Center. www.visitlaredo.com 800/361-3360

POTEET: Strawberry Festival April 9-11. www.strawberryfestival.com 830/742-8144

SAN ANTONIO: San Antonio Symphony April 2-3, 16-17, 30-May 1. Majestic Theatre. www.sasymphony.org 210/554-1010 or 210/226-3333

SAN ANTONIO: 2010 NCAA Division I Women's Final Four April 4-6. Alamodome. www.NCAA.com/FinalFour 877/NCAA-TIX

SAN ANTONIO: Fiesta San Antonio April 15-25. www.fiesta-sa.org 210/227-5191 or 877/723-4378

SAN ANTONIO: Fiesta Arts Fair April 17-18. Ursuline Campus and Coates Chapel, Southwest School of Art & Craft. www.swschool.org 210/224-1848

SAN ANTONIO: A Night in Old San Antonio April 20-23. La Villita National Historic District. www.niosa.org 210/226-5188

Want more? Go to the Events Calendar at www.texashighways.com.

For a free printed copy of an even more detailed, quarterly schedule of events, write to Texas Events Calendar, Box 149249, Austin 78714-9249. Or, call 800/452-9292 from anywhere in the U.S. or Canada, between 8-6 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 any emergency road conditions, and send brochures (including the official Texas State Travel Guide and map, accommodations guide, and quarterly Texas Events Calendar).

Send future event information to: Texas Events Calendar, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009; fax: 512/486-5879; e-mail: trv-tec@dot.state.tx.us. Listing deadlines: Spring (Mar, Apr, May) Dec 1; Summer (Jun, Jul, Aug) Mar 1; Fall (Sep, Oct, Nov) Jun 1; Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb) Sep 1.



Wildflower Fields in bloom!

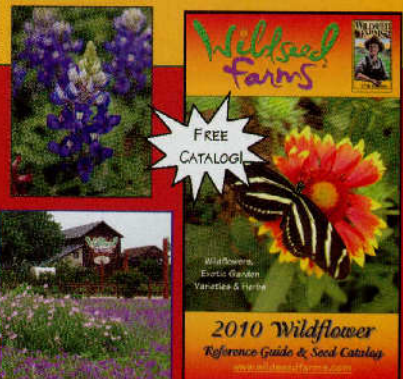
Our farm is open 7 days a week ~
9:30 am to 6:00 pm ~ and is located
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1-800-848-0078, or visit our website at
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GREEN THINKING

☉ continued from page 62]

Talk about eating local: The food grows just yards from the table.

Inn at Dos Brisas, Washington

Just east of Brenham, on a 313-acre horse ranch in the blackland prairie, a prolific garden provides ingredients for gourmet meals served at The Inn at dos Brisas, a Relais & Châteaux luxury inn. Peas, wax beans, collards, and cabbage flourish near a bed of red torpedo onions and a feathery shock of asparagus. Raspberry and blueberry bushes grow nearby with lemon, lime, pomegranate, plum, and persimmon trees.



A designated herb garden holds five-foot outcroppings of rosemary, stands of lemongrass, and half a dozen kinds of basil.

Talk about eating local: The food grows just yards from the table.

Chef Jason Robinson employs the garden's bounty magnificently. Some 150 varieties of vegetables (with more than 30 types of tomatoes alone) give him plenty of options. In the softly lighted dining room, anchored by a stone fireplace, my husband and I linger for nearly three hours over an elegant dinner that mixes locally sourced ingredients with those plucked from the garden.

After the meal, we drive a golf cart down a country road to our luxurious casita (the inn has only four) and sink into a downy king bed with 1,200-thread-count Egyptian-cotton sheets.

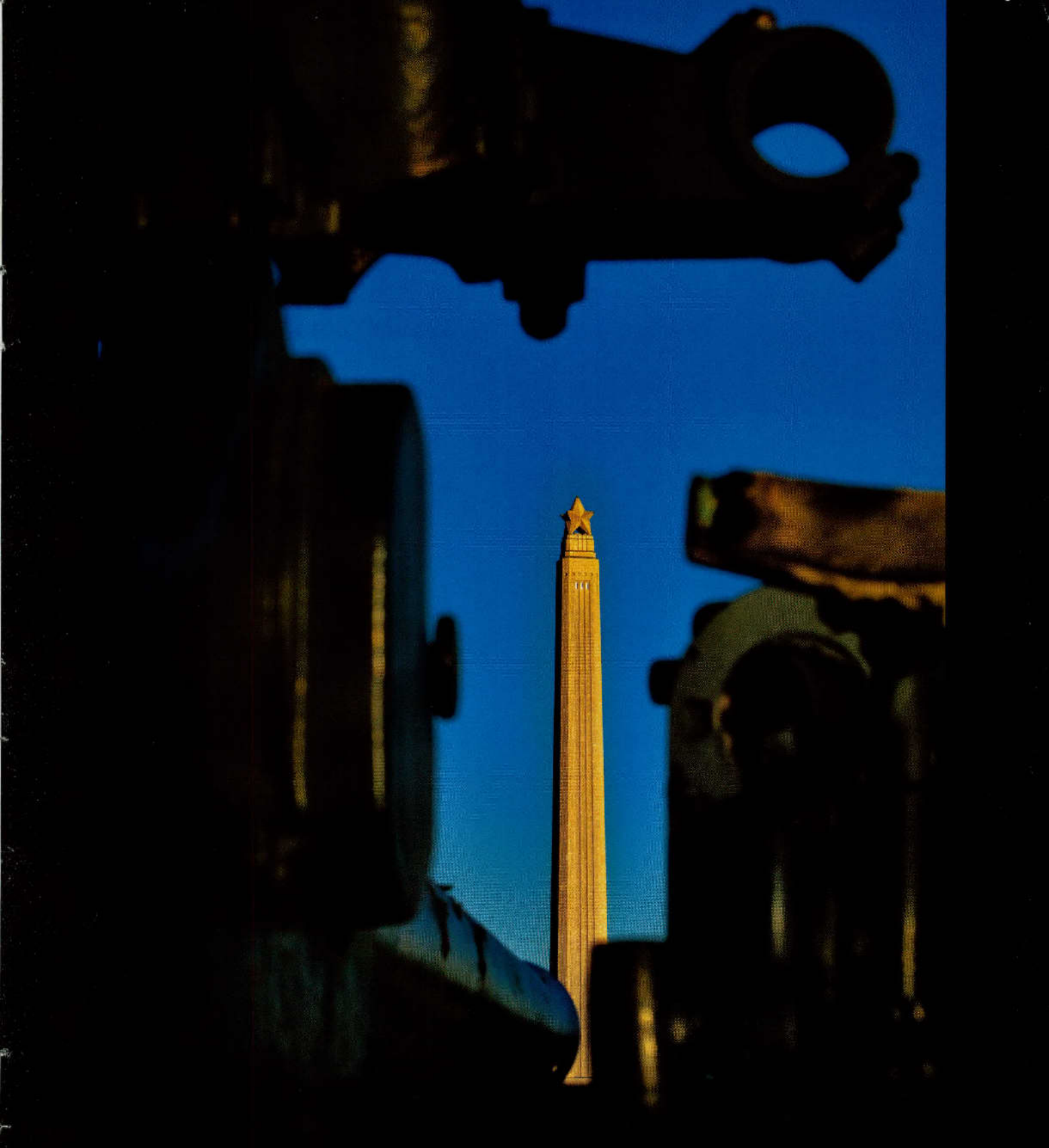
The Inn at Dos Brisas is at 10000 Champion Dr. in Washington. Call 979/277-7750; www.dosbrisas.com. **TH**

Austin-based writer and road warrior **HELEN BRYANT** promises to turn the lights out when she's the last one to leave.



The restaurant at The Inn at Dos Brisas, a resort near Brenham, makes use of herbs and vegetables grown in a prolific, on-site garden.

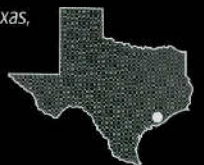
J. GRIFFIS SMITH



Window on Texas

Photograph by **J. GRIFFIS SMITH**

MONUMENTAL SIGHT The San Jacinto Monument, seen here from the Battleship Texas, is the tallest monument column in the nation. This National Historic Landmark offers a nearly-500-foot elevator ride to an observation deck with marvelous views of the Houston skyline, the busy ship channel, the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site, and the famous U.S. battleship. Visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us.



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

