

# FINDING FALL

# TEXAS

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# Lubbock

T E X A S



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No trip to Lubbock is complete without snapping your pic at one of the many Instagrammable spots around town. From public art to building murals created by local artists, be sure to check out [lubbock.is/instagrammable](http://lubbock.is/instagrammable). Don't forget to share your photos with us using **#LIVELOVELUBBOCK!**

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EDITOR'S  
**NOTE**



The Panhandle town of Canadian makes an ideal fall retreat, with colorful foliage, and plentiful art and history offerings.

## Unexpected Rewards

**O**ften, the most gratifying parts of travel are the places or moments that take us by surprise. In honor of recent staff promotions, I asked our newly minted managing editor and writers-at-large to share a rewarding discovery they've made in their nearly 70 combined years of writing about Texas. I hope their revelations inspire one of your own.

**Michael Hoinski, managing editor:** For the last day of summer break, my wife and I took our daughter and her friend to Hamilton Pool in Dripping Springs. I'm embarrassed that after living in Austin for almost 15 years, it was my first visit there. Hello—love at first sight. The natural beauty, the refreshing water, and the hikes in and out that make you work for the experience. We're already looking at multiple reservations for next summer.

**Clayton Maxwell, writer-at-large:** I am often gobsmacked by people's generosity. Strangers I've just met take time to tell me their stories, and they don't seem to mind all my questions. For example, Steve Russell, a painter in Rockport, invited my

travel partners and me into his living room and regaled us with stories about his life painting in Mexico after returning from Vietnam and his losses from Hurricane Harvey. Then he took us to look for whooping cranes on a friend's property nearby.

It's humbling—how many warm souls there are who have great stories to tell.

**Joe Nick Patoski, writer-at-large:** The town of Canadian in the eastern Panhandle may be my biggest surprise. It's very well-established and prosperous for such a small town, with the Cit-

adelle Art Foundation and the River Valley Pioneer Museum, a restored movie theater, a fine library, three art galleries, walking trails, close access to national grasslands, and a vibrant sense of place that few other small towns in Texas have managed to retain.

**"It's humbling—  
how many warm  
souls there are  
who have great  
stories to tell."**

*Emily R Stone*

**EMILY ROBERTS STONE**  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

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# OCTOBER

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## What Lies in the Shadows

You don't have to look far in Texas for a haunting. From a lonesome Piney Woods road to an abandoned hospital in Yorktown, we explore the state's spookiest spots.

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Texas may not be widely known for colorful autumn foliage. But fall does really happen here—you just have to know where to look.

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Bass is the heartbeat of Texas music, from honky-tonk to Tex-Mex, and polka to punk. Meet the musicians responsible for locking in the Lone Star groove.

*By Jesse Sublett  
Photographs by Bill Sallans*

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# OCTOBER

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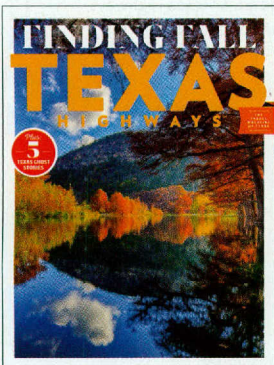
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## ON THE COVER

Photo by Rob Greebon

Frio River in Garner State Park

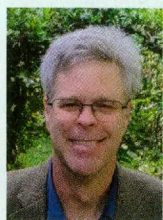
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## Behind the Story



For “What Lies in the Shadows” (Page 36), photographers were tasked not only with working in reportedly haunted areas but also with making sure the photos captured the locations’ eeriness. Nathan Lindstrom, who shot Bragg Road in Saratoga, used special equipment to give a spectral glow. “My studio manager, John Maxwell, and I set up large strobe lights in the middle of the road to create the effect of a train coming,” he says. “Then John pulled a generator and fog machine up and down the road to give a supernatural vibe to the lights shining toward the camera.” While the photographers didn’t experience anything paranormal, there were some hair-raising incidents. “I was setting up the camera on a tripod in the stairwell [at Yorktown Memorial Hospital] when a cat came careening down the stairs,” Tom McCarthy says. “We both jumped about 10 feet in the air when we saw each other.”

## Featured Contributors



### Steven L. Davis

San Marcos-based Davis penned “In Defense of Dobie” (Page 12) about a festival devoted to the father of Texas literature. “I’d earlier written a biography of J. Frank Dobie, but hearing storytellers share his words around a blazing campfire helped me gain a fuller appreciation for him as a writer,” he says. Davis is the literary curator of The Wittliff Collections at Texas State University and the author of several books. He recently edited a collection of Dobie’s writing, *The Essential J. Frank Dobie* (Texas A&M University Press).



### Bill Sallans

Houston native Sallans photographed bassists and luthiers for the feature “All About That Bass” (Page 58). “It was great to see the diversity of style and musical talent,” says the photographer, who is now based in Austin. “I know there are many more great bassists in the state, but the cross-section we were able to photograph is a good representation of the deep talent and musical heritage we have here.” Sallans’ work has also been featured in *British GQ*, *Airways*, and *Austin Monthly*.

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# MERGE



## MESQUITE BEAN BOUNTY

*Chorupes* in Spanish. We ate them as kids out in West Texas and when visiting family in Ojinaga [Mexico]. So yummy.

@lavidanorita

I can't wait to purchase some mesquite beans and see how this story unfolds. So many memories of these beans and wondering what they were used for.

Until now.

@drjbar



## RESTFUL RAILCARS

We loved staying in the cabooses at The Antlers Inn in Kingsland. My son was over the moon!

Heather Kenley, Austin

My mother's family lived in a train car for real when she was a kid in the early 1900s.

Jean Ann Tatum, Wadsworth

You can travel the world in Texas—Paris, Athens, Moscow, Italy, and I could go on and on.

Randall Terry, San Antonio

### Soft Landing

Good article about Apollo's 50th anniversary ["Remembering the Moonshot," July]. However, Mr. Brinkley didn't mention that the first thing to touch the moon, on that first human landing, contained materials made by Texans in Graham at the now closed Hexcel manufacturing plant. The energy absorption material contained in the legs of the lunar module was made there and provided the astronauts with a safe and cushioned landing on the moon.

Wayne Williams, Burlleson

### A Tragic Turning Point

The New London school explosion ["The Day a Generation Died," August] was and still is a horrific tragedy with the loss of lives of students and teachers. But in recalling how terrible the explosion was, the lives that were lost, and the awful aftermath that is depicted in the New London Museum and in stories told by survivors, not all is bad. Out of that terrible

tragedy came remarkable actions by the State of Texas to regulate engineering and add an odorizer to natural gas to save lives.

Robert P. Mills, Keller

### Hometown Memories

My family moved to Schulenburg ["My Hometown," August] in 1966. I graduated in '68 and went to university in West Texas, then lived in South America. My family moved away, but I've always had a soft spot for this wonderful little town.

Jack Walker, Dallas

### Baloney and Pie

We found the Midpoint Café ["Three for the Road," August] when we drove Route 66 in my Corvette from Santa Monica, California, to Chicago. I read about the pies but didn't know about the fried baloney sandwich until we got there. Now we stop there every time we take I-40 through the Texas Panhandle. I love the

pies, and my husband loves the fried baloney.

Bette Clifford Roberts, Livingston

### Trailing our Ancestors

I live in Seguin where my ancestors from Germany settled, traveling from Indianola. I have a vacation home a few miles from Indianola, and we often travel the same route as the author of this article ["Indianola, Onward," June]. I often think of my ancestors as I make this trip, but not of the hardships they endured.

Sandra Cunningham, Seguin

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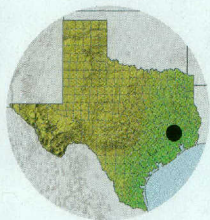




## Snow Fall

While fall in much of the state brings only slightly cooler temperatures, pockets like the higher elevations of the Chisos Mountains in Big Bend National Park feature a seasonal display of trees dressed in oranges and yellows. Photographer Darren Huski was fortunate to encounter a rare fall-winter combination when, he recalls, he "arrived in the park in a blizzard and awoke to find the Chisos a mixture of vivid color and fresh snow."





# Navasota

An old railroad town rich in history and blues music develops as a cultural hub

By Heather Brand

RORY SKAGEN ©



PATTIE PEDERSON celebrates her hometown, where a postcard mural adorns Miller's Theatre.



## TOWN TRIVIA



POPULATION:

7,715



NUMBER OF STOPLIGHTS:

5



YEAR FOUNDED:

1854



NEAREST CITY:

College Station,  
25 miles northwest



MARQUEE EVENTS:

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Holidays, Dec. 14;  
Texas Birthday Bash,  
March 6-7



MAP IT:

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Washington Ave.,  
Suite B

**N**avasota has long stoked history buffs' imaginations. It was, after all, the area where historians believe French explorer Sieur de La Salle was murdered in 1687. Then, as a 19th-century railhead on the Navasota River, the town bustled with both commerce and unsavory characters with little regard for the law. Legendary lawman Frank Hamer helped bring order in the early 1900s, and according to local history, his buggy driver was none other than Mance Lipscomb, who would become one of Texas' most influential blues musicians. Lipscomb grew up among sharecroppers who picked cotton by day and blues guitar by night, sowing a creative legacy that underpins Navasota's burgeoning reputation for arts and culture. As proprietor of The Gallery Downtown, Pattie Pederson has played a key role in Navasota's cultural rebirth with her eclectic venue's showcase of local artists and live music. Ever since she and her husband, Mike Pederson—a sixth generation Navasotan—opened The Gallery Downtown in 2017, the building has been abuzz with activity, attracting locals and out-of-towners alike.

### Law and Order

"At the turn of the century, this was a lawless town. People were being shot in the streets. Frank Hamer was a Texas Ranger who became city marshal and cleaned it up. Netflix recently made a movie about him called *The Highwaymen*. It was a big deal for the city of Navasota because he is our hero. There's a statue of him by the artist Russell Cushman at City Hall."

### Musical Roots

"Navasota is known as the Blues Capital of Texas because it was home to Mance Lipscomb. But there were many other blues musicians in this part of East Texas, like Lightnin' Hopkins and Blind Lemon Jefferson, and they all played together. This year, one of the local musicians, blues guitarist Tubie Pushee, of Tubie and the Touchstones, started a new event: the Navasota Blues Review. It takes place in August in the Junction Dance Hall, an old honky-tonk."

### Architectural Charm

"The houses along East Washington Avenue are reminiscent of several different time periods. You've got old Southern mansions with big columns, hundred-year-old oaks, and beautiful wrought-iron fencing. You have brick ranch houses with big pools in the yards. And then you'll see Eastlake Victorians with

gingerbread trim painted in fancy colors—like the Red Velvet Inn, one of the many bed-and-breakfasts in town. It's like a time capsule of architecture."

### Train Town

"The Union Pacific line runs right through downtown. Railroad Street was a central hub of commerce. Old photographs show thousands of people lined up waiting for the train to see the latest goods and to find out what was going on in the world. The railroads brought wealth to Navasota. This was a farming community, and many families came here specifically for the economic advantages because they could easily ship goods to the Houston Ship Channel via train. Today, some people complain about the train because of the horn, but this town wouldn't be what it is without it."

### Main Attractions

"In the past few years there's been a revitalization of the main street [Washington Avenue] downtown. There's Classic Rock Coffee Co., which is music-themed and has a mural of musicians along its side. There's the Muddy Water Bookstore and also the Navasota Theatre Alliance, which does performances year-round. We've got tons of antiques stores. And P. Nemir Dry Goods Co. has been in business in the same location for over 100 years."



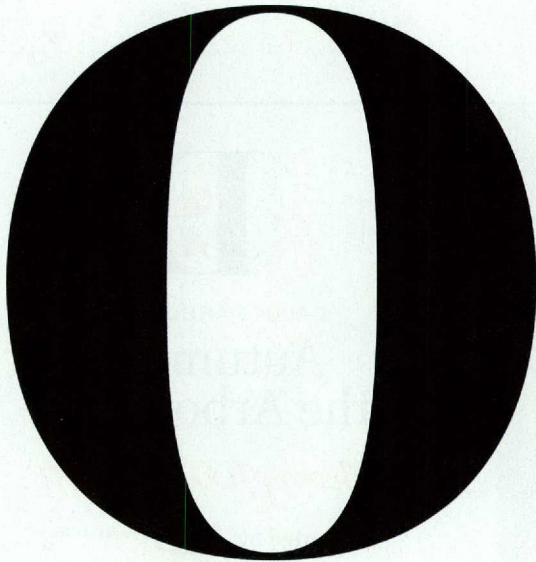


Tom Newsom

# In Defense of Dobie

Reading between the lines about the father of Texas literature

By Steven L. Davis



On a soft autumn evening last year, I stood in a South Texas ghost town, ready to climb up onto the bed of a rusted old pickup truck and speak to nearly 300 people. The bed had been fashioned into a wooden stage, decked with strung lights and a small reading lamp. Nearby, a campfire's flames licked the cooling air. I looked out at the audience, friendly folks who'd brought their own lawn chairs for this occasion. A breeze rustled through the leaves and a fading orange glow hugged the southwestern horizon. What a perfect night for me to share old-time tales collected by J. Frank Dobie, the father of Texas literature.

Dobie had been dead more than 50 years, but I'd just put together a new book of his best writing, *The Essential J. Frank Dobie* (October 2019, Texas A&M University Press). Now I was invited to join some of the state's leading writers and storytellers at this festive literary gathering known

as "Dobie Dichos," Spanish for "sayings of Dobie." Over the past decade, I've become a regular here, joining people from all over the state who travel to the historic village of Oakville (pop. 30). Everyone gathers under a majestic live oak tree beside an old stone jail and eats chili con carne with *pan de campo*. Then, as the sun sets, we pay homage to Dobie, who grew up on a nearby ranch in the surrounding brush country, by reading his works.

Born in 1888, Dobie came of age just as old pastoral lifeways were crumbling before the rapidly expanding industrial age. In the 1920s, after serving in World War I, he became an English instructor at the University of Texas in Austin. Dobie taught British literature, for American writing was dismissed as unworthy of study.

As for Texas, well, we were known for cattle, not books. Still, Dobie understood that our state had a proud oral-storytelling tradition. He had grown up hearing real-life accounts of the frontier days, of epic quests for lost mines and buried treasures. He learned of renegade Longhorns that busted out of northern stockyards and traveled 800 miles to return home. Dobie knew vaqueros who'd encountered ghosts every bit as real as Hamlet's father, and he heard accounts of trickster coyotes that rivaled anything the Brothers Grimm had compiled.

Dobie feared that, while he was busy teaching young Texans about British literary fashions, much of their own cultural inheritance, which had never been written down, was in danger of disappearing forever. He decided to go out and collect these stories from surviving old-timers. He adapted the tales he heard into best-selling books and thus, Texas literature was born.

IT WAS A LONG JOURNEY FOR ME TO appreciate Dobie, who died in 1964. I'd grown up in the backwash of the '60s and was raised in the Dallas suburb of Mesquite. I was dimly aware of a Texas mystique, but the only world I knew was tract homes and chain stores, bordered by interlocking expressways. Like other school kids, I dutifully regurgitated the gospel taught in our Texas history classes, but I had little sense of what it really meant to be a Texan, or what made this place so special. That process would take many years, and it would require a lot of help from Dobie.

As I stood on the old truck at Dobie Dichos, I felt welcomed here as a *paisano*, Spanish for "fellow countryman," a term Dobie favored. Above all else, Dobie wanted to educate Texans about their surroundings. He said, "It seems to me that other people living in the Southwest

will lead fuller and richer lives if they become aware of what it holds."

The mesquite logs crackled in the fire, and I thought of my old hometown. As a kid, I only knew mesquites as brushy trees no one much liked. It wasn't until reading Dobie that I came to understand their greater significance.

"The mesquite seems to me the most characteristic tree or brush that we have in the Southwest," Dobie wrote. "Its name comes to us from the Aztec, and its association with the land and the peoples' of this region is dateless. The mesquite is as native as rattlesnakes and mockingbirds, as distinctive as northers, and as blended into the life of the land as cornbread and tortillas. Humans and other animals have been making use of it for untold generations; they are still making use of it."

Who knew that mesquite was an Aztec word? Or that it was so closely

**As for Texas, we were known for cattle, not books. Still, Dobie understood that our state had a proud oral-storytelling tradition. He adapted these tales into books and thus, Texas literature was born.**

intertwined with human history? Dobie explained that Native Americans relied on mesquite bean pods as a food staple, that the long thorns served as pins, and that the tree's amber-colored sap was used as a glue by Apaches to make woven baskets watertight.

He described how the beans, leaves,



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roots, and bark were brewed into teas or made into lotions to treat everything from headaches and flesh wounds to colic and dysentery. He told how Comanches favored mesquite fires because they gave off relatively little smoke, and he noted that when a frontier Texan named Big Foot Wallace “wanted to describe eyes as being especially bright, he said they ‘glowed like mesquite coals.’”

Dobie had taken the commonplace object behind my ordinary suburb and injected it with life, with meaning. In this and so many other ways, Dobie can make the world around us come alive. He makes us all *paisanos*.

**M**Y APPRECIATION FOR DOBIE crystallized while working as a curator at The Wittliff Collections, a magnificent archival repository at Texas State University devoted to the writers,

photographers, and musicians of Texas and the Southwest. Bill Wittliff, the recently deceased author and photographer who adapted Larry McMurtry’s novel *Lonesome Dove* for TV, founded The Wittliff with a gift of Dobie’s papers to the university.

Earlier, as a graduate student studying Southwestern literature, I had learned a bit about Dobie. I delighted in his famous observation: “The average Ph.D. thesis is nothing but a transference of bones from one graveyard to another.” But beyond that he didn’t come off very well.

I read devastating critiques of his writing by some of my literary heroes, including McMurtry, who judged Dobie’s prose to be “endlessly repetitious, thematically empty, structureless, and carelessly written.” Even worse, I heard him condemned as a racist and saw him dismissed as a sexist, though without much evidence.

Then one day at The Wittliff, I began exploring his archive for a planned exhibition. What I discovered blew my mind. Dobie single-handedly integrated the Texas Folklore Society in the 1920s—with a woman. One of the young writers he mentored, Jovita González, became president of the Folklore Society in 1930. This was an astonishing accomplishment for a Mexican American woman in Texas during those years.

It turns out Dobie opened doors for many other accomplished people. In 1934, he invited J. Mason Brewer, an African American, into the Folklore Society. By the ‘40s, Dobie was one of the most prominent white Texans to champion civil rights. He publicly called for integrating the University of Texas, which led in part to the university firing him.

I began to see that Dobie was also a visionary environmentalist. He helped



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inspire Big Bend National Park by galvanizing the Texas Legislature to preserve the vanishing wilderness. He also was instrumental in the movement to save animals from extinction by railing against the widespread use of chemical poisons such as DDT.

Believing that “Texas needs brains,” Dobie constantly fought for the promotion of the intellect. He waged the battle against censoring school textbooks. He was the first public figure in Texas to stand up against McCarthyism. J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI investigated him, Lyndon Johnson’s White House celebrated him, and ultimately, he was presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom just four days before he died.

I was amazed. Who knew that Dobie was such a renaissance man?

But hardly anybody was aware of this stuff. The last biography had been done

30 years earlier and was sorely out of date. I knew I could do something fresh if I avoided the literary analysis and focused on Dobie the person. So, I deliberately concentrated only on his writings that revealed useful biographical data. In 2009, I published *J. Frank Dobie: A Liberated Mind*, which tells the story of how Dobie grew up in a prejudiced time but transformed himself into one of the state’s leading champions of civil rights and intellectual freedom.

A couple of years later, I got invited to that South Texas ghost town, where I found Dobie’s voice coming alive at my first Dobie Dichos in a way I had never heard before. My work with him was apparently not done.

**T**HE VILLAGE OF OAKVILLE SITS along a cluster of hills crowned with live oaks on the north side of the Nueces

River. Located halfway between San Antonio and Corpus Christi, this had been the bustling seat of Live Oak County in 1888, when Dobie was born, but then the railroad veered 10 miles south to George West. Soon, the courthouse followed, and Oakville sank into oblivion.

In recent years, Oakville’s old town square has been lovingly restored, making this an attractive stop for visitors traveling along Interstate 37. The plaza is anchored by the stone jail, an impressive Italianate-style structure built in 1887 of rough-hewn sandstone blocks. Today, the renovated jail is a picturesque B&B. Other vintage buildings in the area have been saved, from the post office to the mercantile store, and moved to the tree-shaded plaza. This has recreated an atmosphere Oakville hasn’t seen in nearly a hundred years, making it a destination for weddings and family reunions.

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**This year's Dobie Dichos takes place in Oakville on Nov. 1. Participants include writers Sarah Bird and Sergio Troncoso, plus musician Tish Hinojosa. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit [dobiedichos.com](http://dobiedichos.com).**

In 2011, San Antonio-based writer William Jack Sibley decided to create a literary festival honoring J. Frank Dobie. Sibley, like Dobie before him, comes from a ranching family in the areas surrounding Live Oak County. A wiry bullwhip of a

man with a crackling wit, Sibley can rope and deworm cattle with the best of them. He is also an accomplished author whose literary output includes stage plays, screenplays, and two acclaimed novels set in Texas.

"I grew up reading Dobie," Sibley told me. "What made it so fascinating is that his stories didn't take place in some far-away fantasyland. They happened in places I knew."

Sibley worked with local folks to use Oakville as a venue for staging Dobie Dichos. He had a bold vision for recruiting performers. "I decided to go for broke and invite the best, most prestigious writers I could think of," he said. "I wasn't sure what to expect, but to my surprise, they all said 'yes.'"

There is a lot of love and respect for Dobie among the Texas literati. Writers recognize his historical importance

and more than a few have drawn inspiration—and helpful research—from his work. And some, honestly, just like the idea of coming out to a cool literary event in an old ghost town.

The roster of performers who have participated at a Dobie Dichos event reads like a Hall of Fame of Texas letters: Stephen Harrigan, Paulette Jiles, Elizabeth Crook, John Phillip Santos, Carmen Tafolla, Bill Wittliff, Naomi Shihab Nye, and many other luminaries.

I missed the first year of Dobie Dichos, but in 2012 Sibley invited me, on the strength of *J. Frank Dobie: A Liberated Mind*, to speak in the capacity of Dobie's biographer. This was the first of several iterations of Dobie Dichos in which I have participated. On the appointed evening, I drove the leisurely back roads to Oakville

continued on Page 94



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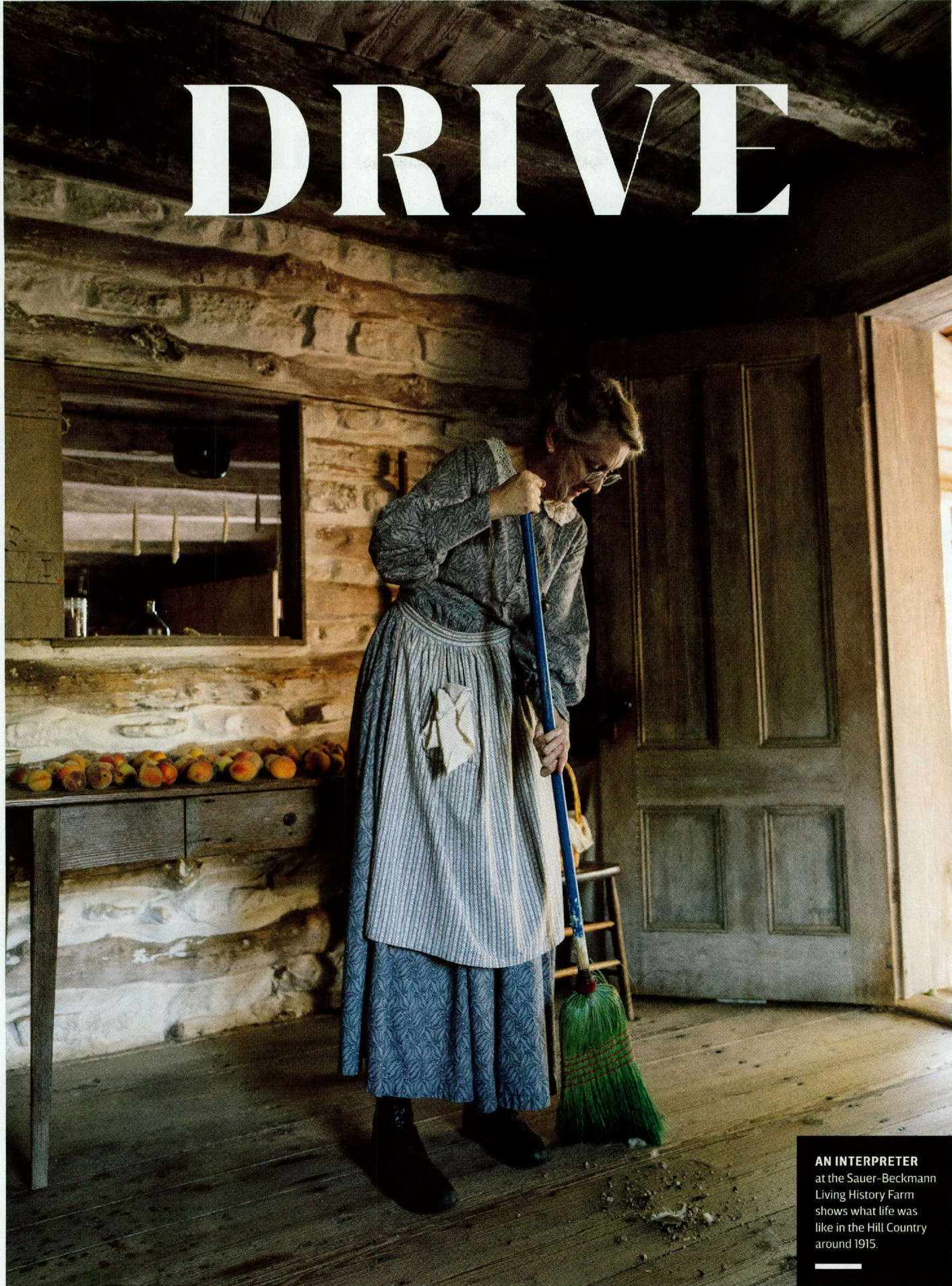
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# DRIVE



**AN INTERPRETER**  
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Living History Farm  
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like in the Hill Country  
around 1915.

# Road Scholar

An LBJ enthusiast retraces the route of her school field trips in search of history—and herself

By Robyn Ross

Every May, after the bluebonnets had faded from the hills around Marble Falls, my classmates and I would pack sack lunches, board a diesel-powered school bus, and hit the road. The annual field trip was the last major educational event before the school year ended. Or was it?

I'm not quite sure what I actually learned from these trips. When we visited living-history farms, where we were supposed to learn about pioneer life, I spent the day wondering why the interpreters wanted to dress up in bonnets and ankle-length skirts in the scorching heat. When our school bus drove through

the Lyndon B. Johnson State Park in Stonewall, my classmates and I glanced at the historic buildings but we were far more excited about swapping CDs to play on our Discmans. At the LBJ Presidential Library in Austin, I marveled at the endless rows of crimson boxes containing the president's papers but took only a superficial look at the exhibits about his life. The trips left me with vivid images but few real insights.

Still, these visits made an impression: They taught me that LBJ was a local hero who happened to grow up just down the road from me and went on to become president. As a teenager, I developed a

reflexive sense of pride in the president's Central Texas roots. But as an adult, I have realized President Johnson was a far more complex character. The field trips introduced me to the man, but as a lifelong Texan, I've felt obligated to get to know him better.

In the past few years I've watched the movies *Selma* and *All the Way*, which offer starkly contrasting depictions of LBJ's attitude toward civil rights. I've also read excerpts from biographer Robert Caro's book *Working* that portray Johnson as a political genius who sometimes played fast and loose with the rules. I've learned that Johnson was



THE PRESIDENTIAL LIMOUSINE in the lobby of the LBJ Library.

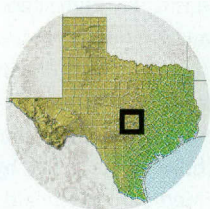
often overbearing and crass, yet he cared deeply for the poor and brought opportunity to neglected communities.

So, this past spring, I decided to take my own field trip back to these historic sites. What would I recognize from those initial visits years ago? What ideas that I overlooked then would resonate with me now that I had another few decades of education and life experience?

My first stop was the LBJ National Historical Park Visitor Center in Johnson City, where I read about legislation Johnson signed into law. As a high school student, I skimmed the names and dates—boring. But today, I quickly saw the connections between these laws and my life. For example, the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 facilitated the development of *Sesame Street* and *3-2-1 Contact*, two of my favorite childhood television shows, and the rural electrification programs Johnson championed as a congressman included the formation of the Pedernales Electric Cooperative, the utility that served my childhood home.

Like many kids, I once saw government and policy as the stuff of textbooks, far removed from my daily existence. Now, after years of voting, reading the news, and calling my elected officials, I understand the significance of LBJ's work. He wasn't just the hometown boy made good; he effected change that influenced my life, decades after the legislation was signed.

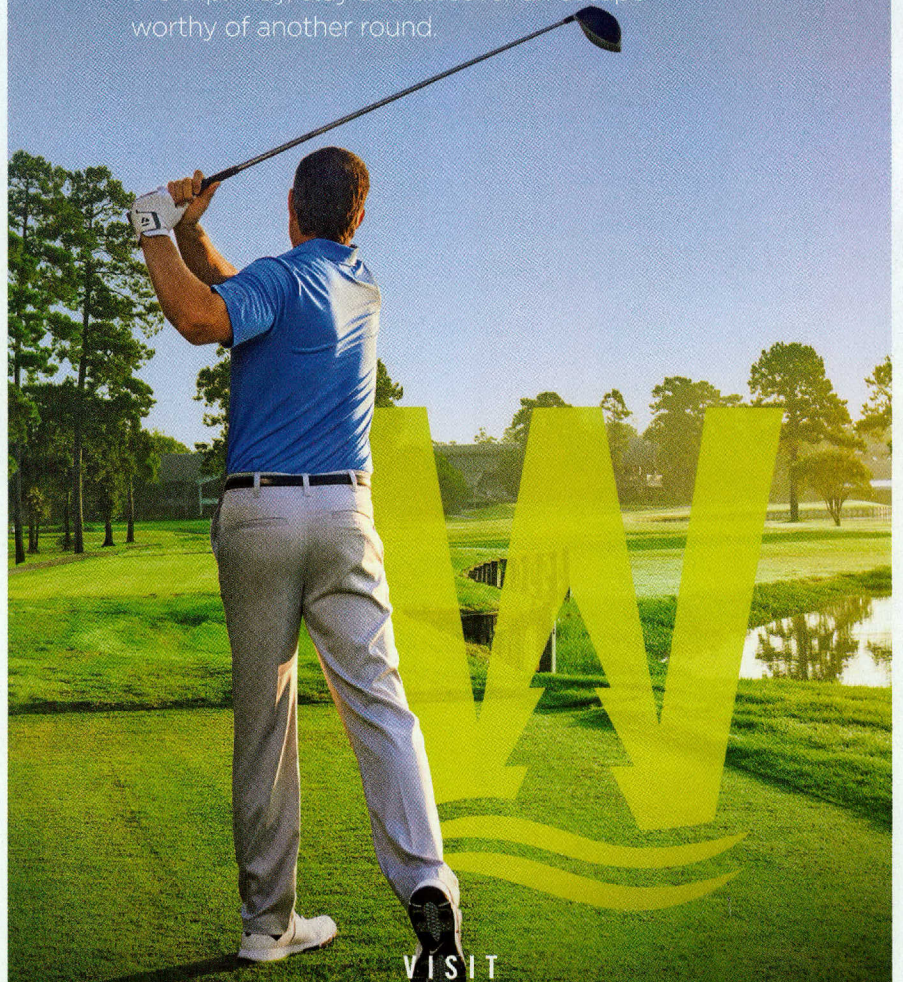
Down the road in Stonewall, I stopped at the LBJ State Park & Historic Site. This includes the Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm, where interpreters manage farm and household chores the way settlers did around 1915. Johnson wanted the farm preserved to show what life was like when he grew up, before he helped bring electricity to the Hill Country.



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**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:**  
A photo from the LBJ Library of LBJ and his constituents, volunteers at Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm mind the house and tend the garden.

The interpreters showed me the summer garden, recently planted with squash, beans, corn, and okra. Nearby, the storeroom overflowed with mason jars of sauerkraut and produce harvested from the winter garden. A volunteer said that when the team cans food on the wood-burning stove during the summer, the kitchen gets as hot as 120 degrees. Lacking refrigeration, the interpreters, like the original farmers, turn the milk from the cows into yogurt-like clabber, butter, and cheeses that are stored at room temperature.

As I walked to my car, I tipped my hat to LBJ for his strategic request that the farm be suspended in time. The bygone chores are entertaining for kids, but they also drive home two larger points: Life in the Hill Country was terribly difficult without electricity and, by extension, Johnson should be celebrated for his role in providing it.

My last stop was the LBJ Library, where a familiar awe washed over me as I entered the Great Hall. Above me, four stories of crimson archival boxes, their gold seals glowing, stood silent and proud behind full-length windows. Most people come here for the exhibits, but these boxes are the real prize: They hold more than 45 million pages of LBJ's documents. In my work, I have used them to research hydroelectric power and the construction of the Highland Lakes—something I never would have predicted when I came here in ninth grade.

I didn't remember much more than the crimson boxes from my first visit here, which is a shame. My high school history classes always ran out of time to cover anything after World War II, leaving me to learn about the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, and the Great Society in college. Today, I was struck by the displays about Medicare, Medicaid, and the



**Lyndon B. Johnson  
National Historical Park  
Visitor Center**

Exhibits and films tell stories about the president and Lady Bird Johnson. Tour his boyhood home and the Johnson Settlement, the headquarters of his family's cattle-droving operation.

830-868-7128; [nps.gov/lyjo/planyourvisit/visitorcenters.htm](http://nps.gov/lyjo/planyourvisit/visitorcenters.htm)

**Lyndon B. Johnson State  
Park & Historic Site**

Exhibits complement self-guided tours of nearby LBJ Ranch. Interpreters at the Sauer-Beckmann farm demonstrate chores from before electricity and running water. 830-644-2252; [tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/lyndon-b-johnson](http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/lyndon-b-johnson)

**LBJ Presidential Library**

The library is home to the president's archive and features a museum about his career in public service, complete with a replica of the Oval Office.

512-721-0200; [lbjlibrary.org](http://lbjlibrary.org)

Immigration and Nationality Act, all of which Johnson signed into law in 1965. More than 50 years later, the country is still debating how to fund healthcare for its citizens, and where those citizens should come from. I took pictures of the exhibits and scribbled notes about topics I wanted to research further. Before I left, I stopped by the bookstore and added a few titles to my reading list.

On this journey, I was disappointed at myself for how little I had retained from my class field trips, but it's unfair to judge those experiences against my adult sensibilities. Those trips weren't meant to change my worldview, but instead to expose me to places and ideas I could revisit later. The real education comes when we're adults, driven by our own curiosity and exploring on our own terms. The best thing about adult field trips: There's no quiz afterward. 🐾

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**Shop more products illustrated by Aletha at [shop.texashighways.com](http://shop.texashighways.com)**

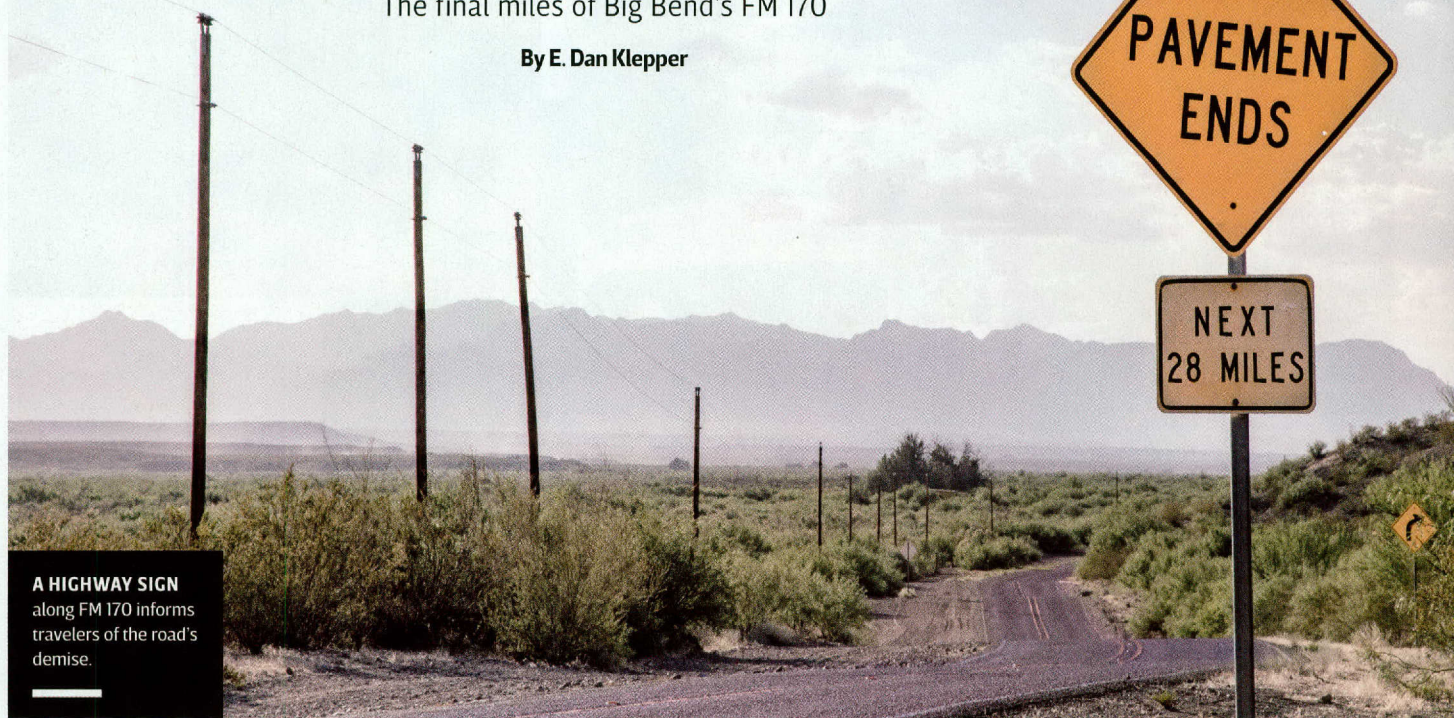


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# Going, Going, Gone

The final miles of Big Bend's FM 170

By E. Dan Klepper



**A HIGHWAY SIGN**  
along FM 170 informs  
travelers of the road's  
demise.

**D**rive west along Farm-to-Market Road 170 from the border town of Presidio, leaving all convenience stores and gas stations behind, and you'll travel two slim lanes of humped, serpentine blacktop, its edges collapsing like desert crust. The road's convolutions mirror the Rio Grande to the left but after just a few miles, the river's water diminishes, occasionally disappearing altogether. In its place, dense mesquite thickets and catclaw thrive along its dry bed, a thorny border wall of its own making.

On both sides of the road, the country unravels in a sparse scrubland accentuated by towering yuccas and ocotillo, the signature plant of the Chihuahuan Desert—its bony branches like torches tipped with scarlet flames. Shallow arroyos drain this tilted landscape and low, swelling

hills give way to rising, rocky elevation. Beyond that, range upon range of broken mountains cradle the route like the walls of a bassinet. Continue driving for another 49 miles, passing a couple of cars if any at all, and the road will abandon you in the tiny community of Candelaria, where the pavement abruptly stops.

FM 170 begins approximately 115 miles southeast of Candelaria in Study Butte, just beyond the boundary of Big Bend National Park. A drive along FM 170, or "River Road," usually encompasses the stretch from the park to Presidio, providing visitors with windshield views of a storied desert landscape. For most, the tour ends in Presidio, where a turn north on US 67 delivers them to Marfa. But continue on and, while a dead end ultimately awaits, there are seemingly lost histories and communities to discover.

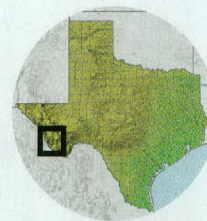
Some people say this stretch of FM 170 leads to nowhere, but they are wrong. This has always been somewhere, an austere, bare-bones region that generations of intrepid and resourceful people have called home. Archeologists believe that humans first arrived between 8000 and 6500 B.C. Later, Paleo-Indians occupied the region for thousands of years. Within the first few miles out of Presidio, La Junta de los Ríos, likely the oldest known settlement in the state, will appear. When Spanish explorer Cabeza de Vaca passed through there in 1534, he found a thriving community of villages, established by the Patarabueyas, who operated a trade network with help from the nomadic Jumano tribe.

Nothing of this ancient past remains in apparent evidence except for the land itself. Drought has transformed the place into a creosote-filled desert. Now, the



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:**

Graves in Indio Ranch Cemetery; a view of the peaks in Mexico; the late artist A. Kelly Pruitt.



including California and Colorado. “Large-scale, organized farms use lots of pesticides and that’s hard on my bees,” Haefeli explains. “But out

landscape is favored by independent-minded artists like Rackstraw Downes, the British-born, New York-based plein-air painter who renders the area’s natural sand hills and human-made artifacts, which consist of a racetrack and a water tower, in a wistful, mystical palette. The late Texas painter A. Kelly Pruitt made La Junta his home, living and creating art in a hand-fashioned gypsy wagon beneath the shade of a tin barn that can still be seen from the road. Pruitt, who died in 2009, is buried nearby, alongside his dogs.

Twelve miles up from La Junta lies the settlement of Indio, established by pioneer John W. Spencer in 1854. Indio is now demarcated most clearly by its surviving remnant, the Indio Ranch Cemetery, located on a short bluff just above the road. Industry once thrived here courtesy

of pioneer Esteban Ochoa, who implemented an irrigation project to grow cotton in 1917, then built a cotton gin. Little is left to see of the community, though, beyond the cemetery’s headstones and rows of cross-marked rock piles denoting graves, many unidentified.

Today, seasonal bee-keeping is the dominant industry in this area. Colorado-based Haefeli’s Honey Farms places thousands of hives here as well as additional FM 170 locations so that the high-altitude bees can winter in a warm climate. Tom Haefeli, whose family started its Presidio operation in the late 1960s, says the Big Bend area enhances the honey with flavors of flowering desert plants. It also provides a healthy environment in which his bees can recover after spending most of the year pollinating crops elsewhere,

here there’s none of that. When the desert blooms, it’s chemical-free.”

Drive another 21 miles northwest of Indio and you’ll arrive at Ruidosa, where a few adobe and timber buildings hug the roadway. Established in 1824 as a penal colony, Ruidosa was once occupied by a group of convicts known as the “Condemned Regiment” before the Comanche massacred them. By 1872, Ruidosa had transformed into a farming hamlet, reaching its highest population of 1,722 residents by 1911. Today, according to Jennifer Weaver, proprietor of a general store and bar there, “the entire population is down to about 15 or 20, and that’s within a 10-mile radius.” Weaver’s operation is also the office for the Hot Springs Airport, a dirt landing strip nearby. “The FAA identifier is 3TangoEcho4,” Weaver says. “Be

**Some people say this stretch of FM 170 leads to nowhere, but they are wrong. This has always been somewhere.**

sure and call first for permission to land and to give me time to chase any wild burros off the runway.”

Nearby lie the handsome adobe ruins of El Corazón Sagrado de la Iglesia de Jesús, the Ruidosa community church built in the early 1900s. As the population declined, so did the church's condition, but a renovation was launched to prevent what remains of it from collapsing. Meanwhile, roosting bats and free-roaming cattle call the church home.

Ruidosa offers two detours. One is 8 miles north on adequately maintained gravel to the Chinati Hot Springs, a desert getaway destination. The other leads to Marfa along a 52-mile route called Pinto Canyon Road, a stretch highlighted in *In the Shadow of the Chinatis: A History of Pinto Canyon in the Big Bend*, a new book by archeologist David Keller. The latter includes 20 miles of a high-clearance, single-track lane featuring deep washouts prone to flash flooding and precipitous ascents. In certain conditions, four-wheel drive is required.

Twelve miles northwest of Ruidosa along FM 170 lies the community of Candelaria. During heavy rains, runoff fills a *resaca*—a dried-up river channel—that occasionally floods the road. FM 170's blacktop didn't reach Candelaria until 1985. Perhaps because of its delayed connection to the rest of the modern world, Candelaria still feels like its 19th-century iteration as a ranching settlement comprised of the determined who put down roots and made a go of it. Candelaria's cluster of adobe homes, kitchen windows illuminated at dusk, and handful of streets lively with children at play suggest that the undaunted have remained. It's only the pavement that gave up. 🐾

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**A**t fun runs across the country, it's not uncommon to see participants goofily dressed in animal costumes for effect, but at Marathon 2 Marathon, a race occurring each October in West Texas, it's the spectators who assume the role of the beast. In this case, though, the antelopes, rattlesnakes, javelinas, roadrunners, coyotes, and jackrabbits are real.

Exotic wildlife, a big sky, and an expanse of high-desert landscape are

integral components of M2M, the Boston Marathon-qualifying run held in Marathon, named after the city in Greece that inspired the modern-day race. Last year's event, the 16th annual, more than tripled the size of the town, considered an entry point for Big Bend National Park. The community of around 420 souls welcomed nearly 540 registrants, along with family and friends. Part Trans-Pecos Mardi Gras, part fundraiser and community-builder, M2M steers runners through

the beautiful, windswept prairie along US 385 and into downtown Marathon.

"It is the biggest event that Marathon has, and everyone is touched in some way by M2M," says Marci Roberts, the race director and a Marathon resident. "Since 2011, the race has given \$60,000 to local organizations, including the school, the volunteer fire department, the library, and the clinic. That may not sound like much for a big city, but for us it is huge." 

# Running Wild

Qualify for Boston at this marathon in Marathon

By John T. Davis



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# Fall Aflutter

Fly away to the Rio Grande Valley to see a wide array of beautiful butterflies

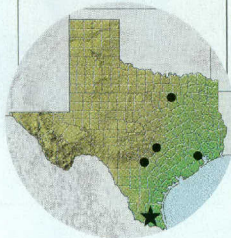
By Daniel Blue Tyx

**San Antonio**  
3.75 hours

**Austin**  
5 hours

**Houston**  
5.5 hours

**Dallas**  
8 hours



**T**he Texas Butterfly Festival promises visitors “the best butterflying in America.” It might seem like hyperbole were the claim not backed up by the fact that the Rio Grande Valley contains a greater diversity of butterflies than anywhere else in the country—more than 300 species and counting, or roughly 40 percent of the butterflies in North America. You can see a great deal of them at the festival, which takes place the first week of November at the National Butterfly Center in Mission. All of those butterflies—condensed within a region that’s easy to traverse over a weekend—make a fall tour of the Valley a must-do on any Texas bucket list.

The weather in tropical South Texas is inviting year-round, but the very best time to see butterflies is October and November. That’s when monarchs are



stopping over to rest and refuel at the halfway point of their transcontinental journey. If you time your trip just right, you might even glimpse the once-in-a-lifetime sight of hundreds of monarchs clinging to the branches of a single tree. But whether you catch the monarchs or not, you'll soon find yourself strolling through sun-drenched gardens as hundreds of butterflies of every possible hue alight all around you. If you're lucky—as I was during my own recent butterfly trail expedition—one might even land right on you.

## Friday



6 P.M.

### Mission: Relaxation



Just up the road from the National Butterfly Center, The Bryan House bed-and-breakfast makes a terrific landing place. Owner Ariel King is a Texas master naturalist, and the grounds are a butterfly hot spot featured on eco-tours of the region.

The house itself was home to former Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, a Nebraskan who began wintering in the Valley in 1909 because the warmer climate was beneficial to his wife's arthritis. King has painstakingly restored the farmhouse to its former glory, complete with nods to both Bryan and butterflies in the form



STAY



EAT & DRINK



SHOP



EXPLORE

of campaign paraphernalia, butterfly-patterned pillows, and a library generously stocked with biographies and field guides.

Before you retire to bed, consider driving a few blocks to the Loretto Bistro, where you can enjoy a sumptuous dinner of fish tacos in homemade flour tortillas with a Sriracha-lime cream sauce.

## Saturday

**9 A.M.**  
**Butterfly, USA**

Compared to birders, who hit the trails at the crack of dawn, butterflyers have it easy: Sun-loving butterflies don't really become active until at least 9 a.m. That leaves plenty of time for savoring a homemade breakfast of waffles and tacos delivered piping hot to the kitchen table at the bed-and-breakfast.

Fueled for the day, head for the National Butterfly Center, which the North American Butterfly Association established in 2003 to further its mission of butterfly habitat conservation. The helpful staff in the visitor center can supply you with maps, field guides, and a butterfly checklist.

From there, it's off to explore the center's 100 acres of butterfly gardens, woodland trails, and bird- and butterfly-viewing areas. The sheer number of butterflies alone is cause for wonder, but what makes the experience truly incredible is the kaleidoscope of colors. Some of the more brilliant winged residents include enormous blue-and-purple pipevine swallowtails;

electric-green malachites; and the zebra heliconian, whose black-and-white stripes really do resemble its namesake.

For true butterfly enthusiasts, though, the flamboyant show-stoppers are just part of the appeal. Executive Director Marianna Treviño Wright refers to the homeliest of specimens as Little Brown Jobbers, or LBJs. "There are lots of butterflies here that are really special and rare," she says, "but to someone who doesn't know butterflies really well, it's like, 'Oh, I just saw another LBJ.'"

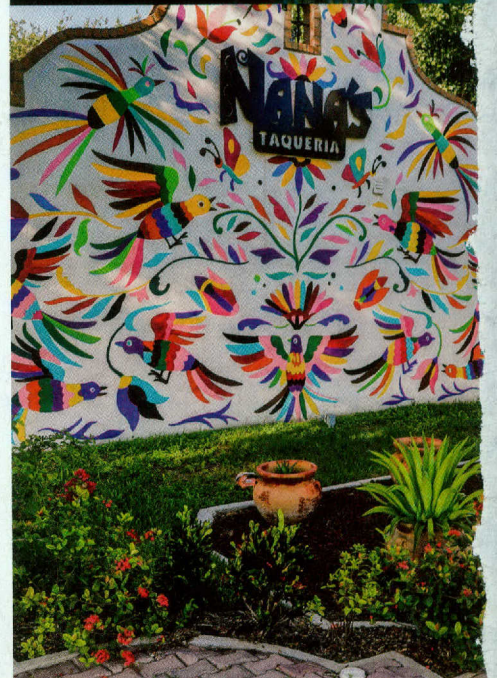
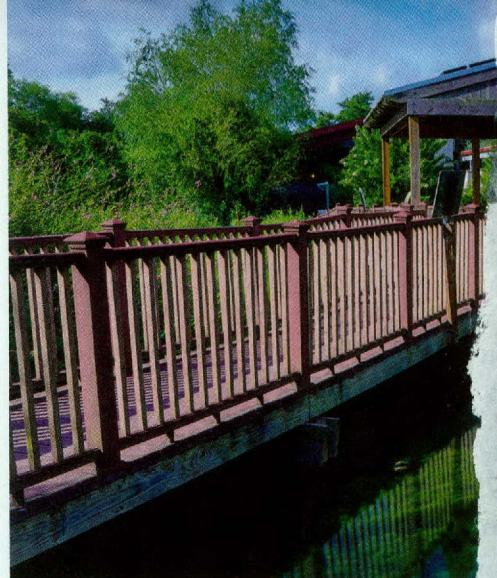
**1 P.M.**  
**Winged Weslaco**

Make a pit stop at La Estación Bakery in Mission, which offers a full menu of Mexican breakfast and lunch classics. Be sure to try the signature *café lechero*—coffee with milk prepared with a flourish right at your table—and an extra-large pan dulce.

About 20 miles east, the small city of Weslaco contains no less than three parks with well-developed butterfly gardens. Their close proximity to one another makes for an ideal destination.

Near the entrance of the Valley Nature Center, a sunny garden attracts notable species, including the rare tropical Erato heliconian. Behind the visitor center, an extensive network of trails is dotted with butterfly feeding stations. There you'll find logs slathered with a mixture known as "butterfly brew," made with ripe bananas, brown sugar, and dark beer. The beer continues the fermentation process to create a pungent, protein-rich food source the insects can't resist.

The 15-acre urban nature



**OPENING SPREAD:** Photographer Paul Denman strolls one of the Valley's butterfly gardens. **THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** Valley Nature Center in Weslaco; a pipevine swallowtail; butterfly-watching around the blooms of an esperanza tree; a zebra heliconian; stop for a bite at Nana's Taqueria in Weslaco.



sanctuary Frontera Audubon is another butterfly hot spot in town, while just outside the Weslaco city limits awaits Estero Llano Grande State Park. This 231-acre park is home to a unique spectacle: a thriving colony of Western pygmy blues, the smallest butterfly in North America. Estero Llano Grande also happens to be the place where a shimmering Mexican bluewing alighted on my shirt sleeve, an unforgettable experience that a fellow onlooker informed me is also an ancient sign of good luck.



**6 P.M.**  
**Music in the Air**

Situated just down the road from Estero Llano Grande, Nana's Taquería beckons with *lonches*, a variation on the taco that employs fried Mexican bolillo bread in place of the traditional tortilla. Come for the delectable street-food-inspired fare, but stay to enjoy live mariachi music and the signature chamoy (a sweet and spicy condiment) margaritas in the spacious open-air patio.

## Sunday



**9 A.M.**  
**Vamos a la Playa**

The beach is a little more than an hour away from Mission, but it's well worth the drive—even more so if your arrival happens to coincide with the monarchs pausing at South Padre Island on their journey from Canada to central Mexico.

The most recent addition to the Valley's network of ecotourism destinations is the South Padre Island Birding and Nature

Center, situated on the Laguna Madre side of the island's main thoroughfare. Every year in late October, the center hosts a Halloween weekend event called HalloWings, scheduled to coincide with the arrival of migrating monarchs. The exact date of this spectacle is impossible to predict, of course, since the monarchs' departure depends on factors such as a cold front arriving to give them a little extra push in their southerly journey.

My trip, which I'd planned for the second week of November, happened to come a week too late. Still, park naturalist Javier Gonzalez showed me a video he'd taken of a single evergreen tenaza tree pulsating with the incredible sight of hundreds of butterfly royalty. "For one or two days," Gonzalez said, "our gardens are filled with monarchs. Then they'll just keep going."

All the more reason, I thought, to hit the butterfly trail again next year. **L**

### CAMP OUT

Bentsen Palm Drive, located near the National Butterfly Center, is lined with RV parks catering to nature enthusiasts. One popular option is Bentsen Palm Village RV Resort, which borders Bentsen Rio Grande State Park and offers a wealth of hiking and biking trails. In addition to RV sites, the resort also offers cabin and casita rentals. 956-381-1500; [bentsenpalm.com/active-adult/rv-resort](http://bentsenpalm.com/active-adult/rv-resort)

TEXAS & WINE

# A Great Blend

## Rosé

*A bit of grape skins for a kiss of peach*



**INTO YOUR GLASS:**

- Light peach hue
- Hints of ambrosia fruit, unripe strawberry, pomegranate, watermelon & rosemary

**IN TEXAS:**

- High Plains
- West Texas
- Hill Country

**FROM THE VINEYARD:**

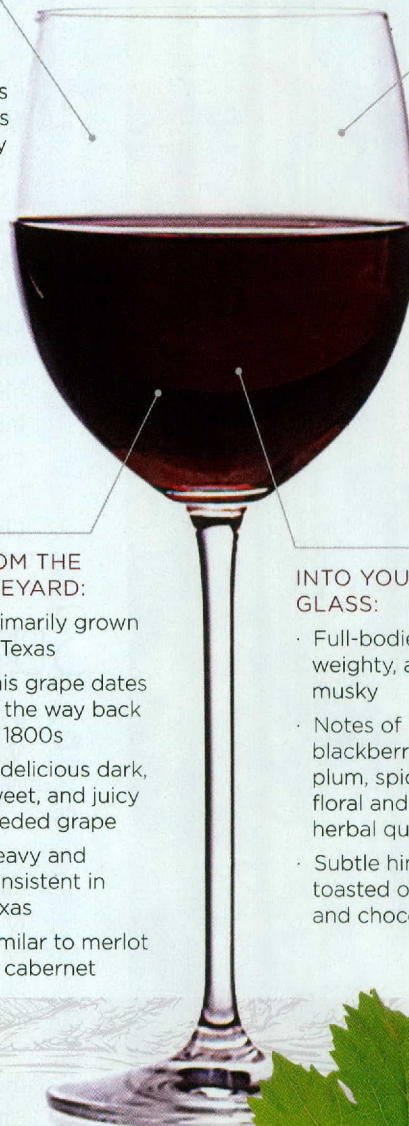
- Incorporates some color from the grape skins, but not enough to fully qualify as a red wine
- Can be made from any grape
- In Texas, it is often from the Grenache grape

**PAIR WITH:**

- Fried Gulf Shrimp with Classic Cocktail Sauce & Jalapeño Tartar Sauce
- or*
- Barbecued Gulf Crabs with Spicy Mango BBQ Glaze

## Black Spanish

*A red grape with grit & resilience*



**IN TEXAS:**

- High Plains
- North Texas
- South Texas
- Hill Country

**PAIR WITH:**

- Smoked Brisket
- or
- Grilled Pork Tenderloin with Chocolate Mole

**FROM THE VINEYARD:**

- Primarily grown in Texas
- This grape dates all the way back to 1800s
- A delicious dark, sweet, and juicy seeded grape
- Heavy and consistent in Texas
- Similar to merlot or cabernet

**INTO YOUR GLASS:**

- Full-bodied, weighty, and musky
- Notes of blackberry, plum, spice floral and herbal qualities
- Subtle hints of toasted oak and chocolate



**4,000+**  
acres of vineyards

**400+**  
wineries

**12**  
thriving grape  
varietals

**5th**  
largest wine-producing  
state in the US

## Let's make Texas #1

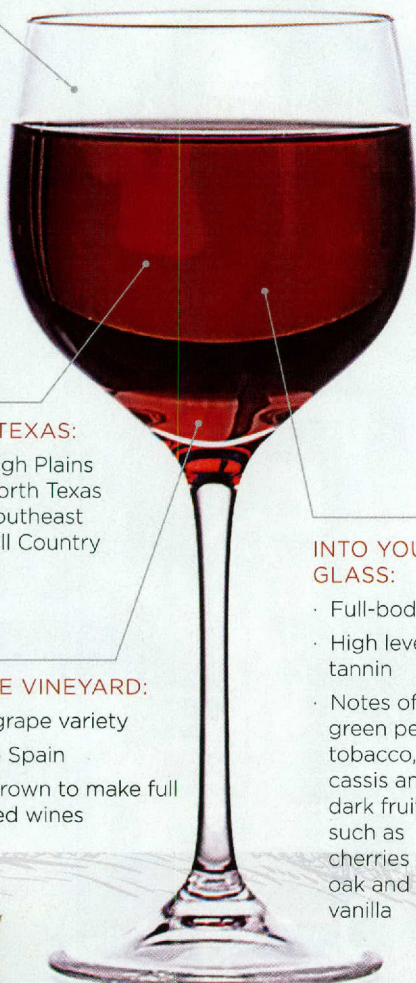
For more on wineries and  
wine trails, pairings and  
events, visit  
[UncorkTexasWines.com](http://UncorkTexasWines.com)

# Tempranillo

*A black grape boasting a taste of Spain*

### PAIR WITH:

Marinated Beef Fajita with Citrus Guacamole spicy  
crema grilled peppers and fresh flour tortilla



### IN TEXAS:

- High Plains
- North Texas
- Southeast
- Hill Country

### FROM THE VINEYARD:

- A black grape variety
- Native to Spain
- Widely grown to make full bodied red wines

### INTO YOUR GLASS:

- Full-bodied
- High levels of tannin
- Notes of green pepper, tobacco, cassis and dark fruit such as cherries aged oak and vanilla

# Blanc du Bois

*A refreshingly southern white grape*

### PAIR WITH:

Grilled  
Shrimp and  
Pimento  
Cheese Grits  
with Apples  
Smoked  
Bacon

### INTO YOUR GLASS:

- Fresh, succulent stone fruit with a citrus backbone
- Hints of a warm tropical fruit and a touch of oak
- Aromas of ripe citrus, nectarine, and passionfruit



### IN TEXAS:

- East Texas
- Along the Gulf Coast

### FROM THE VINEYARD:

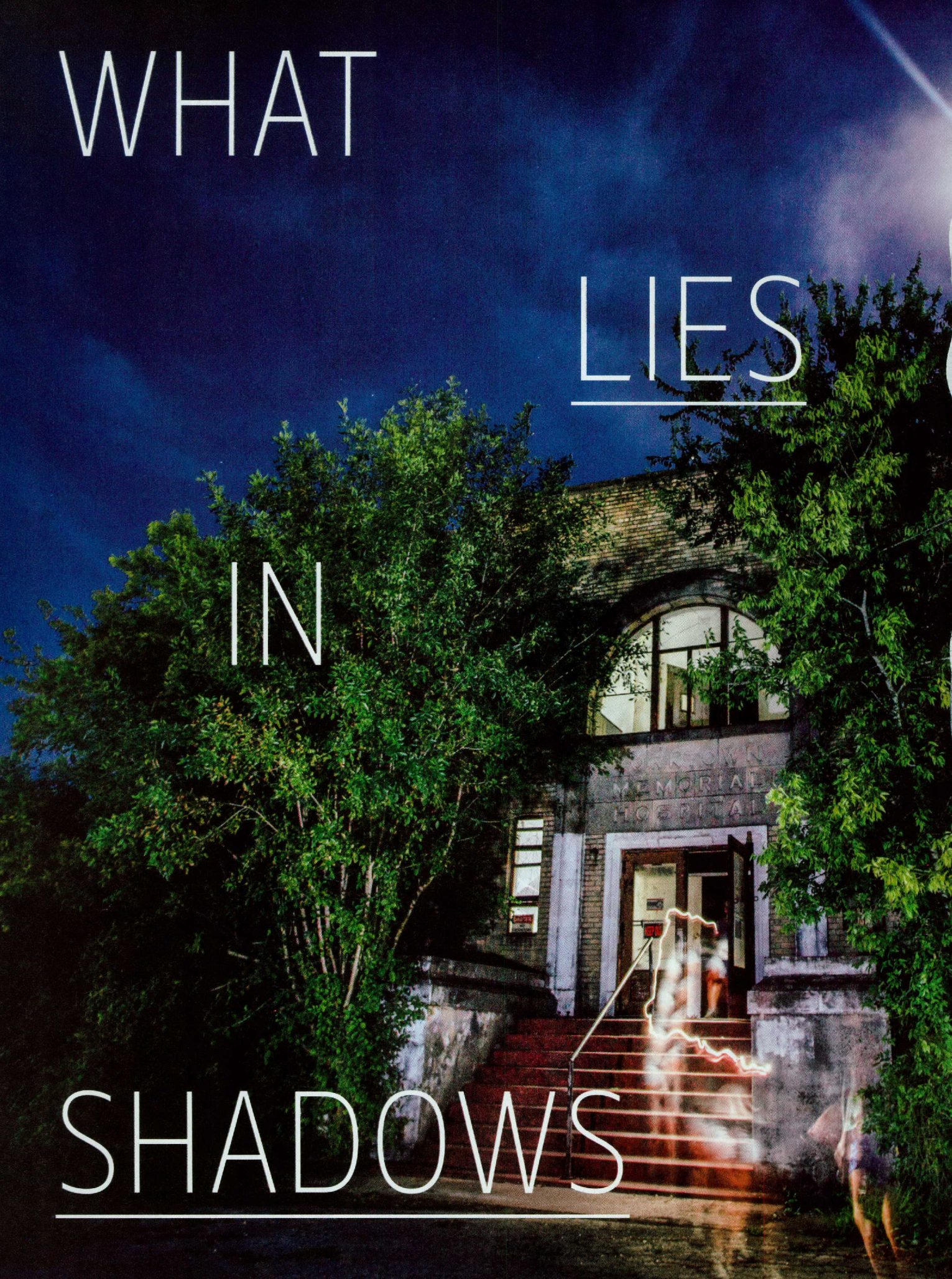
- A white wine grape named for Emile DuBois, an influential grower and winemaker

WHAT

LIES

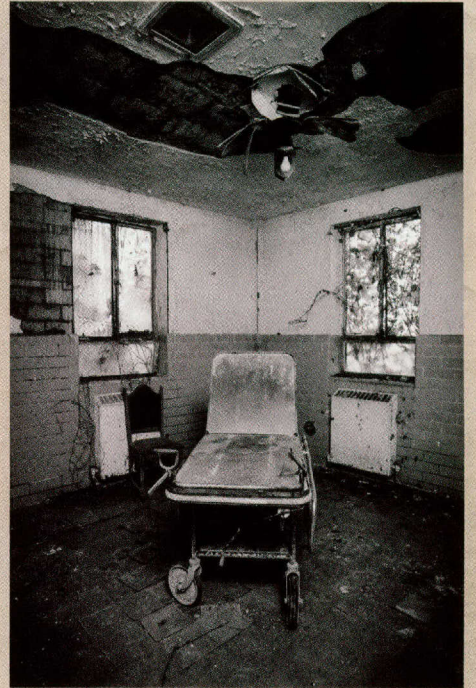
IN

SHADOWS



# THE

From Left: A family explores the Yorktown Memorial Hospital after an evening tour; an old gurney sits in one room of the reportedly haunted former hospital.



**For every person now alive, science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke once wrote, there stand 30 ghosts,** “for that is the ratio by which the dead outnumber the living.” So it stands to reason that wandering spirits abound in a vast state like Texas. From the barren deserts of the west to the thick woodlands of the east, specters have been reported to haunt defunct hospitals, active schools, lonely highways, and thriving hotels. Whether you believe in the afterlife—or just enjoy a spine-tingling tale—you don’t have to look far in Texas for a haunting. Sometimes, you just need to look over your shoulder...

EAST TEXAS

# BRAGG ROAD

Saratoga

From Left: Photo illustration of the unidentified light often seen along Bragg Road; the road in daylight; a graffiti filled sign greets visitors.





**DEEP DARK WOODS** and an oft-seen but unexplained light? These are ideal ingredients for a good ghost story.

The Big Thicket is a dense, biodiverse forest region in East Texas. A few tribes, including the Alabama-Coushatta and Caddo, hunted around the edges, but it was essentially uncharted territory when Anglo settlers arrived in the 1830s seeking solitude to hunt and carve out subsistence farms. Swampy, dark, and difficult to penetrate, it was a destination for people who didn't want to be found. Oil and lumber operations rendered the terrain more accessible, but the Big Thicket remains plenty dense and mysterious today.

In the heart of the Big Thicket is Hardin County, and in the heart of Hardin County is the infamous Bragg Road, home to countless sightings of the Ghost Road Light (aka Big Thicket Light, Saratoga Light, and Bragg Road Light) that appears to nighttime travelers on the road between Saratoga and the defunct village of Bragg Station.

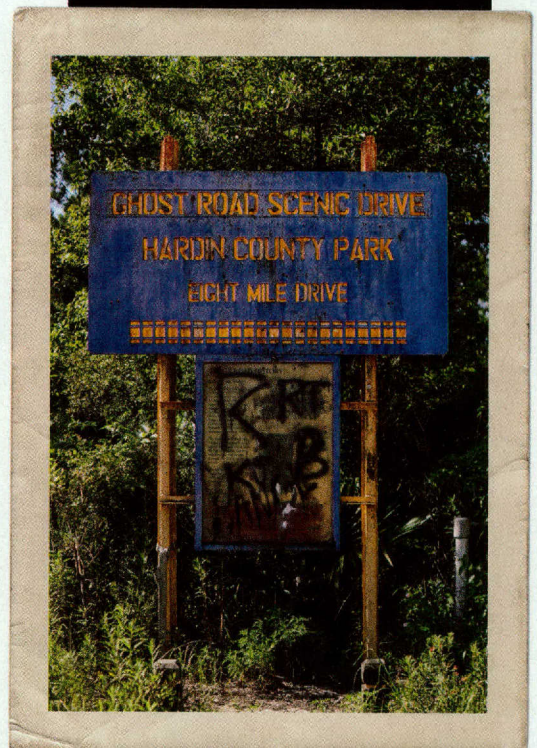
Before the current road was built, the arrow-straight clearing served as Santa Fe Railroad's branch line built in 1903. From its inception, locals considered the line haunted by Mexican laborers murdered by a thieving foreman; a recalcitrant deserter shot by Confederate soldiers; a hunter lost forever in the woods; and a decapitated railroad brakeman searching for his head. But all the stories share a common theme—a floating orb of light.

The road replaced the railroad tracks in 1934, but the light remained, seen by hundreds of people over the decades. In the 1960s, Archer Fullingim, iconoclast editor of *The Kountze News*, spread its notoriety in articles. *National Geographic* published a clear photo of the light in a 1974 feature about the Big Thicket. Texas folklorist Francis Abernethy documented sighting stories from old-timers and young folks alike.

In 1997, Hardin County designated Bragg Road as Ghost Road Scenic Drive Park. A pretty road through the woods in the daytime turns into a spooky spot for supernatural sightings by night. Word is the most auspicious times to see the light are on moonless autumn nights. Dare you go? —MM Pack

▼  
**The Grove**, a private home built in Jefferson in 1861, offers weekend tours (reservations required) with stories about the glowing white figure of the original owner, Minerva Fox Stilley; ghostly victims of the violent Reconstruction-era murders known as the Stockade Case; and mysterious wet footprints indoors, odd sounds, and unexplained odors. 405 Moseley St., Jefferson.

The oldest continuously operating hotel in East Texas, the **Excelsior House Hotel** in Jefferson, is notorious for sightings of a headless man; a woman in black holding a child; and "Diamond Bessie," murdered by her itinerant lover. Director Steven Spielberg told the *Dallas Morning News* he was spooked while staying there in the 1970s. 211 W. Austin St., Jefferson.



**SOUTH TEXAS**

# YORKTOWN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

**728 W. Main St., Yorktown.**

**210-748-4475**

**FROM THE OUTSIDE**, Yorktown Memorial Hospital looks like the definition of “haunted”: a 30,000-square-foot building with a granite and concrete façade and overgrown bushes around its sides. Broken windows lead into a black interior; the door is chained shut. Inside the building, a cool breeze wafts down the dark hallway, leaves press against dusty windows, and wasps crawl along the walls.

Originally built in the 1950s and managed by the Felician Sisters of the Roman Catholic Church, the sprawling facility contains two main floors, a basement, two wings, a chapel, and an observation tower. The hospital closed in 1986, says current caretaker Stephanie Mayfield, after a new facility opened in nearby Cuero. From then on the building operated as a drug rehab facility, but the state closed it in 1992. The building sat empty, attracting stories of terrible malpractice and lurid misbehavior. Rumor has it that hundreds of patients died there, Mayfield says.

Naturally, it also acquired a lasting reputation for ghosts. There are stories of patients killed by neglect or surgical mistake and the ghost of the surgeon who is often held responsible. A fearsome black

From Left: An old doll sits on top of the mantle at the Yorktown Memorial Hospital; many rooms are in a state of disrepair; inside the chapel, an old organ sits coated in a layer of dust.





specter with red eyes has been reported to haunt the chapel and growl when Bible verses are read there. Mayfield says she once saw the ghost of a young man staring out from behind the locked front doors, a bullet wound in his head. The spirits of the nuns residing on the second floor are said to push and scratch at men with tattoos.

Mayfield has experienced feelings of oppressive weight and cold spots, unseen things touching her during tours. Just walking through the building makes her jittery, and she mentions hearing footsteps and faint moaning sounds. "A lot of awful things went on here," Mayfield says. "The place freaks me out! The vibe's not good ... once you shut those doors and get in here, you forget there's even anything beyond the hospital."

The hospital is on private property and has been a popular spot for ghost tours since the building was acquired in part by Jo Ann Marks-Rivera, owner of Victoria's Black Swan Inn (likewise haunted). Rivera hired Mayfield to look after the building after the departure of an earlier caretaker. The hospital offers daily walking tours for \$25, photography/video shoots for \$100 an hour, and overnight investigations for \$500.

The hospital has had a recent problem with vandals breaking in for unauthorized ghost hunts, graffiti, or other mischief, often leaving the building's antique furniture in bad shape. Mayfield wishes to remind everyone that this doesn't just rile up the local ghosts, it's also against the law and will be prosecuted as such. If you're not there on an official tour, honor that most hallowed of haunted house signs: Keep out. —Asher Elbein



The Donkey Lady—a local variant of the weeping ghost La Llorona—is said to haunt the **Donkey Lady Bridge** in south San Antonio. *Applewhite Road, San Antonio.*

At **The Alamo** you may hear ghostly whispers or see the shade of a Mexican soldier. *300 Alamo Plaza, San Antonio.*

A stay at the **Emily Morgan Hotel** is reputed to expose visitors to whole floors of ghostly visitations, including phantom visions of the building's past as a hospital. *705 E. Houston St., San Antonio.*

In Goliad, the **Presidio La Bahia** commemorates the Goliad Massacre with Spanish-speaking poltergeists, humming women, and a spooky (though entirely real) flock of vultures. *217 US 183, Goliad.*



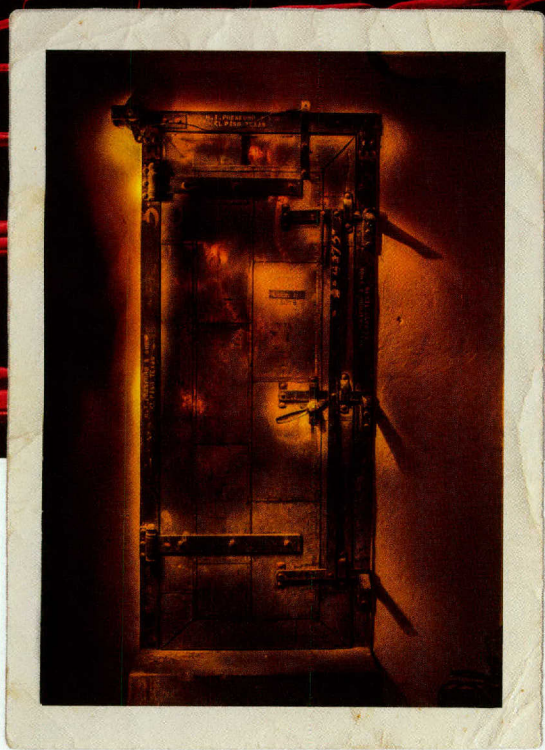


**The Gage Hotel** in Marathon harbors a few ghosts, including a violin-playing woman with long white hair who has appeared on the historic section's second floor, according to General Manager Carol Peterson. 102 NW First St—Hwy. 90 W., Marathon. 432-386-4205; [gagehotel.com](http://gagehotel.com)

Theories regarding the **Marfa Mystery Lights** proliferate, from UFOs to atmospheric phenomena, but none are able to confirm their true origins. Check them out at the Marfa Lights Viewing Area and be patient: The lights are often a no-show... until they aren't. Hwy. 90, 8.8 miles east of Marfa.

Rumors suggest that El Diablo—an easy-on-the-eyes vaquero with an extra dash of swagger—once showed up to party at **Los Arcos Ballroom** in Odessa, dancing the night away until his cloven hooves (or, alternatively, chicken feet) gave away his true identity as the devil. 2205 W. Whitney Lane, Odessa. 432-269-2991

From Top: Interior of the Plaza Theatre from the mezzanine; a door leads to underground tunnels, running beneath the orchestra, that were once used to cool the theater.



## WEST TEXAS

# THE PLAZA THEATRE PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

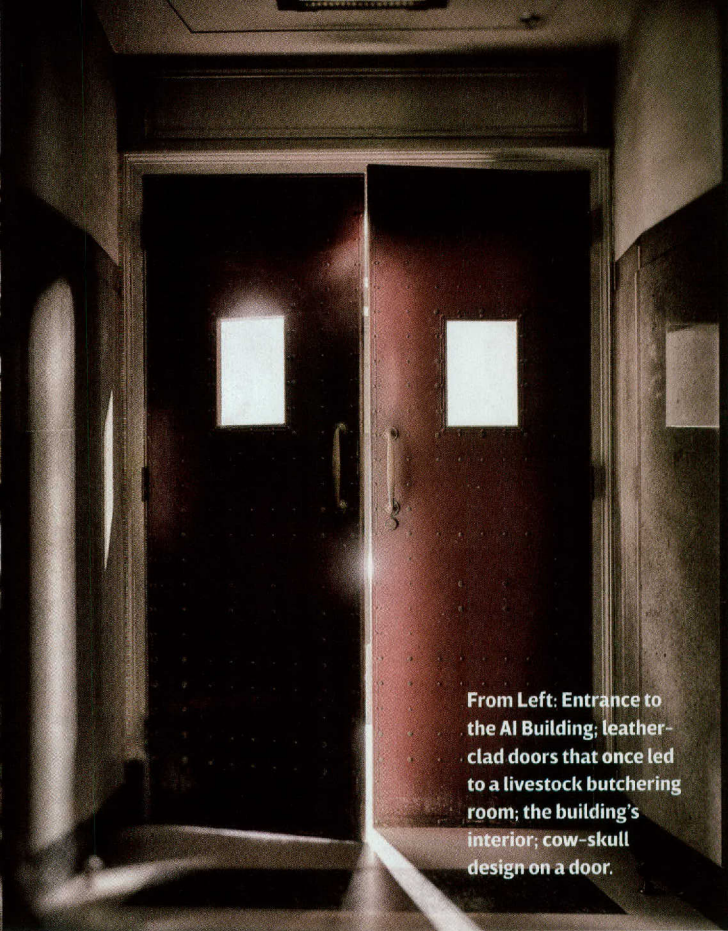
125 W. Mills Ave., El Paso.

**EL PASO'S PLAZA THEATRE** opened as an opulent movie palace in 1930, operating for 55 years before shutting down in 1985. The theater then remained dark for about two decades before a grand renovation took place, turning it into a performing arts center in 2006. Not surprisingly, the Plaza spent its 76 years from inception to rebirth accumulating ghost stories.

"We managed to revive this historic theater before it was too late," says Gary L. Williams, senior program officer with the El Paso Community Foundation, the organization that saved the Plaza Theatre and then partnered with the city of El Paso to restore it to its former glory. "The dust and cobwebs may be gone, but it appears the ghosts have remained."

Some of the Plaza's creepy tales, concocted in abundance, feature all the usual suspects—a drifting woman in white, a materializing man in black, a vanishing child bouncing a ball. Like most ghost stories, their veracity lies in the retelling rather than the reoccurring. But a much larger share of the Plaza's supernatural phenomena may require a ghost hunter's skill set to resolve. Apparitions including orbs, lights, and shadows; physical manipulations like electrical components switching on without power, objects moving independently, and sounds without sources; and manifestations such as stimulation by touch, smell, and temperature have all endured, transgressing the barrier between the spiritual and the material worlds again and again. Together, they suggest something more dynamic than a mere ghost story. You might want to call this a real haunting.

"Intelligent people don't believe in ghosts!" exclaimed 90-year-old Charles Russell, Plaza manager from 1940 to 1951, during an interview for the 2006 commemorative reopening. "While I consider myself to be intelligent, if you ever spent the night in the Plaza Theatre, you might change your mind." —*E. Dan Klepper*



From Left: Entrance to the AI Building; leather-clad doors that once led to a livestock butchering room; the building's interior; cow-skull design on a door.

## CENTRAL TEXAS

# AI ENGINEERING BUILDING

(Formerly the Animal Industries Building)

**423 Spence St., College Station.**

**IN 1959, ROY SIMMS**—foreman of the meat locker in Texas A&M University's old Animal Industries building—was performing a bit of routine butchery on a slab of bacon. As he was cutting toward himself, the knife slipped in his hand, stabbing his leg near the groin. The blade cut open his femoral artery. His assistant, who'd stepped out for a moment, returned to find him bleeding out on the floor. An ambulance was summoned, but in vain: Simms died before he could be removed from the building.

Simms' death was a tragic accident. But it doesn't take much for tragic accidents to take on a more ghostly cast. "In the daytime, we never thought much about any ghosts or strange occurrences," says Jeffrey Savell, a Texas A&M professor who was an undergrad and grad student in the 1970s. "It was the nights when we were in the Meat Laboratory, conducting research, usually by ourselves, that one would hear strange noises or feel like you were not alone."

Over the years, Savell says, students and custodians working in the bowels of the building have reported invisible footsteps, strange noises, and objects scattered far from their original resting spots. Savell attributes many of the stories to the natural spookiness of an old building and noisy machinery such as the elevator and the refrigeration compressors. A series of renovations of the building have turned the site of Simms' accident into an office space.

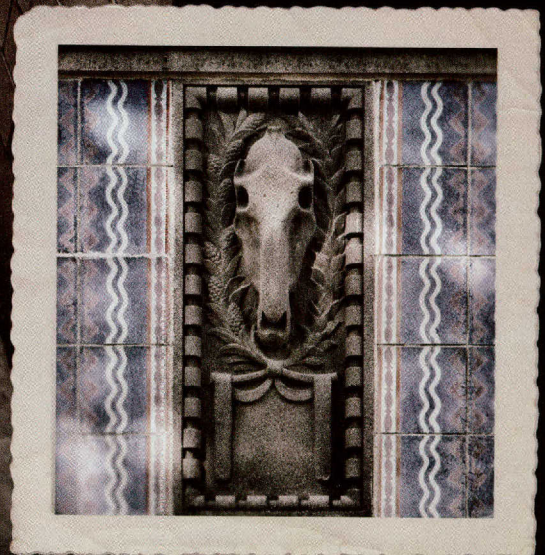
Whether or not Simms' ghost roams the hallways, Savell says, one thing keeping his memory alive is the lesson offered by his death. "It became a precautionary tale each semester as we visited with students about safety and meat cutting. It gets their attention when you tell them that someone lost their life because of a knife accident." —A.E.



**The Driskill Hotel** in Austin features some spooky apparitions, including the ghost of a bride who supposedly committed suicide there and the ghost of a little girl who died on the Grand Staircase. Large ghost tours are not allowed to visit, but you can always take a peek inside by yourself or book a room for the night.  
*604 Brazos St., Austin.*

The University of Texas' historic **Littlefield Home** in Austin was the last home of Alice Littlefield, who passed in 1935 and has been reported to play the piano and move objects around. While not open to the public, the exterior can be visited. *302 W. 24th St., Austin.*

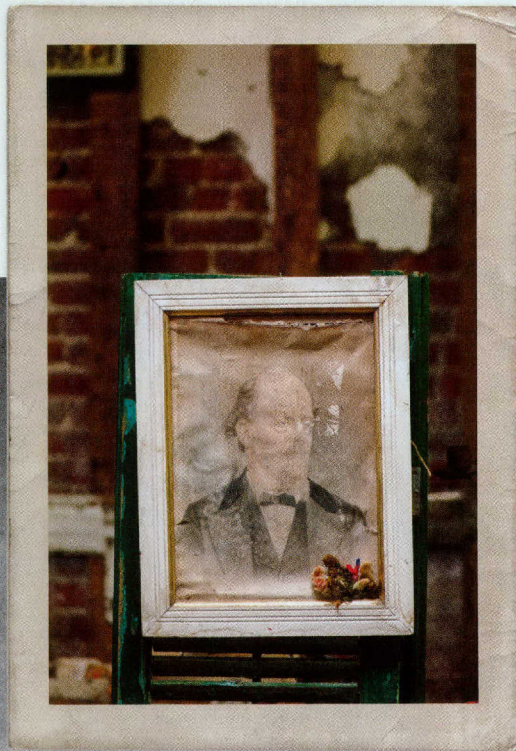
The drive from Wimberley to Blanco is known as **The Devil's Backbone**, and contains its own history of phantom riders and undead settlers, as well as gorgeous Hill Country vistas. Ranch-to-Market 32, southwest of Wimberley.



**GULF COAST**

# HENDLEY ROW

**2000–2016 Strand St., Galveston.**



**“THEY’RE FRIENDLY,”** says Cheryl Jenkins, manager of Galveston’s eclectic Hendley Market. She’s talking about the non-corporeal habitués with whom she’s worked in Hendley Row, the oldest commercial structure in the Strand Historic District, since 1990.

It’s not surprising that Hendley Row is a hot spot for supernatural activity. Completed between 1855 and 1858 for shippers and cotton brokers, it was the town’s tallest structure during the Civil War; the roof doubled as a Confederate lookout for Union ships. Galveston and nearby barrier islands’ history have been laced with tragedy. It was the site of a bloody Civil War fight, and serial epidemics of yellow fever decimated the populace. Hurricanes blast through regularly; the 1900 storm left up to 12,000 casualties in the worst natural disaster in U.S. history. No wonder Texas writer Bryan Woolley called Galveston “an old cemetery with a beach attached.”

The resident ghosts of Hendley Row represent aspects of Galveston history. There’s the Confederate soldier seen on the roof







From Left: The picture of Dr. Wilbur hangs at Hendley Market; the exterior of Hendley Market; this staircase is where the mysterious “lady in white” is seen.

and around the building. The bloodied, teenage “factory worker” is a vestige of the building’s cotton-grading days. “The lady in white” and the running and playing “little boy” and “little girl” are thought to be 1900 storm victims. The upper floors house apartments and offices now, but Hendley Market’s glass ceiling reveals views of stairs and landings (and perhaps apparitions). During renovations, workers reported tools mysteriously moving around.

Jenkins and staff recall other spooky experiences. Some years ago, a friend gave her an old photo—of “Dr. Wilbur,” from a house on Church Street—that’s always displayed in the shop. When Hurricane Ike inundated the building with 10 feet of water in 2008, the photo went undamaged while many other things were destroyed. Every year on Nov. 1, Jenkins constructs an elaborate Day of the Dead altar that includes the photo and lighted candles. Before closing, the staff follows a three-person backup routine to ensure the candles are completely extinguished, even dousing them with water. Yet almost every year, one or more candles are burning the next morning. And Jenkins has photos of lighted candles at night, taken by a passerby through the shop window. Perhaps Dr. Wilbur is afraid of the dark. —M.M.P. 🐾

The landmark **Ashton Villa**, built in 1859 by wealthy businessman James Brown, is no longer open to the public other than infrequent seasonal tours and private rentals. Reported resident ghosts are Brown’s daughters—the adventurous Bettie Brown and piano-playing Tilly Brown-Sweeney—and Confederate soldiers seen patrolling outside. 2328 Broadway, Galveston.

The majestic **Hotel Galvez** hosts ghost tours (reservations required) with tales of spooky occurrences and spirit sightings—most famously a sailor’s distraught bride-to-be “Audra” from the 1950s; “Sister Catherine,” a heroic nun killed in the 1900 storm; and naughty, laughing phantom children. 2024 Seawall Blvd., Galveston.

The third iteration of the elegant **Tremont House** features ethereal as well as physical vestiges of its earlier incarnations, including a Civil War soldier; the mischievous small boy “Jimmy;” and the gambler “Sam,” murdered for his winnings. 2300 Ship’s Mechanic Row St., Galveston.

In Houston, Market Square’s **La Carafe Wine Bar**, built in 1860 and the oldest commercial property in the city, is home to the ghost of bartender/manager “Carl,” plus footsteps, loud noises, and unexplained lights from the empty upstairs. 813 Congress Ave., Houston.

Visitors to the **USS Lexington**, an aircraft carrier used during World War II, can take self-guided tours of the decommissioned ship where they might encounter “Charly,” the polite seaman in white; other ghostly sailors; or a uniformed Japanese pilot. 2914 N. Shoreline Blvd., Corpus Christi.



# True Colors

Fall really does happen in Texas—  
you just have to know where to look.

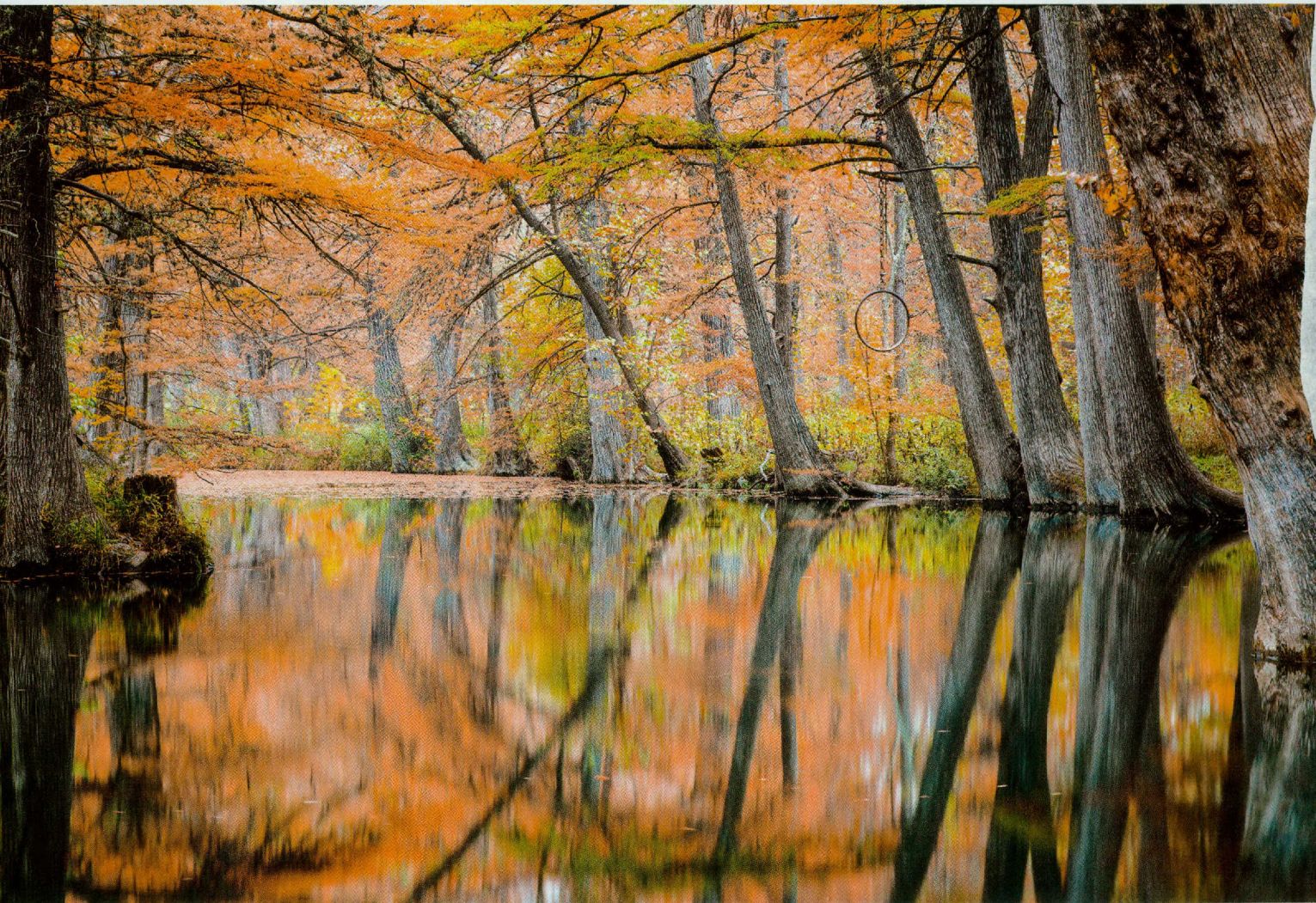


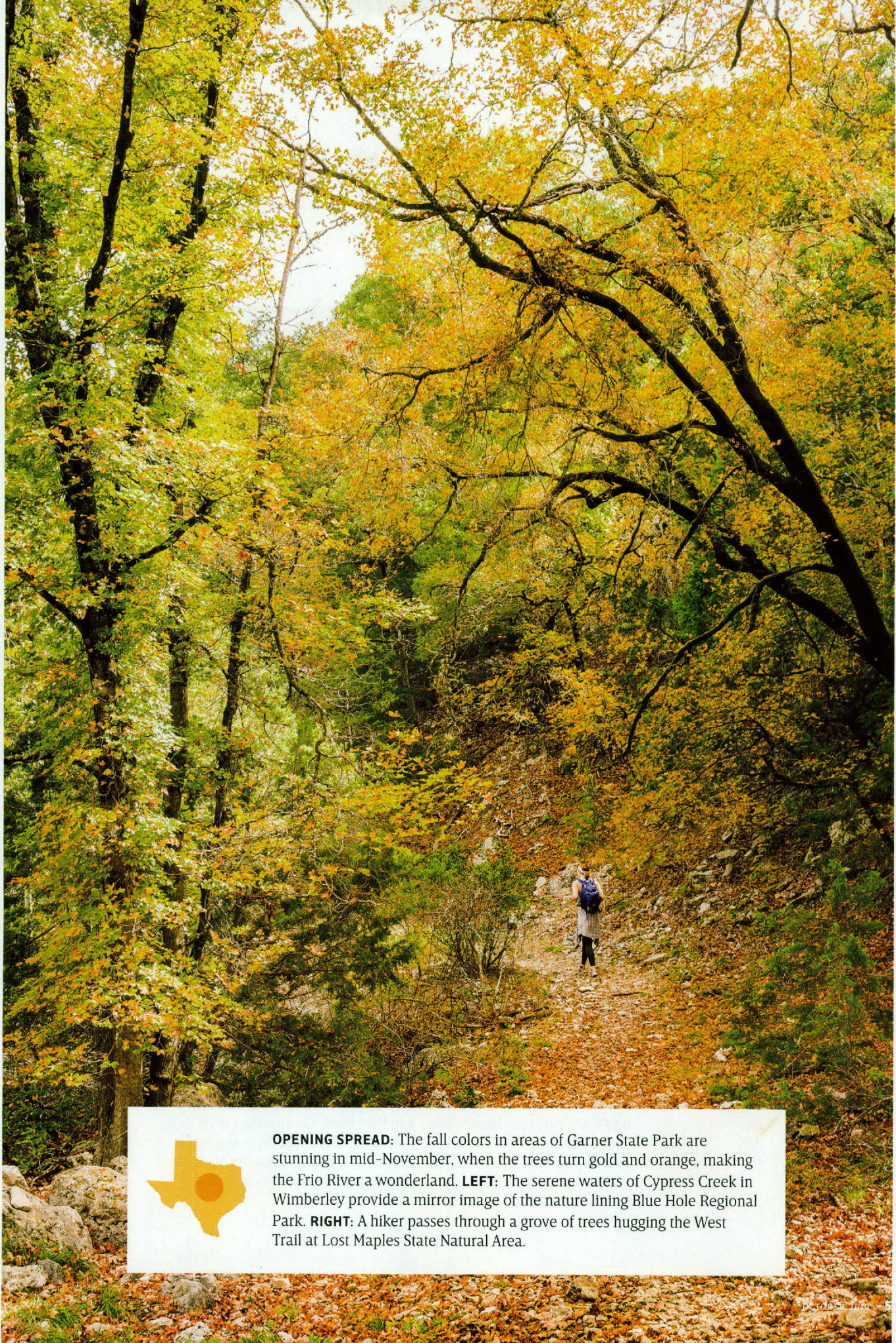
**M**other Nature's autumnal coloration of leaves before she applies her cruel winter grip is a visual gift typically associated with areas of the country that actually experience four distinct seasons. In Texas, where for the most part it's oppressively hot and dry in September and October, green can abruptly give way to brown, without displaying even a hint of the kaleidoscope of oranges, reds, and yellows typical of a postcard New England fall. There are hidden pockets of the state, however, where the trees, beneficiaries of just the right weather conditions, offer one final, dramatic blush. Follow our photographers to these special places for some of the best foliage in the state—from the Nolan River in North Texas and Garner State Park in the Hill Country, to the Canadian River in the Panhandle and Guadalupe Mountains National Park in West Texas.

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## HILL COUNTRY

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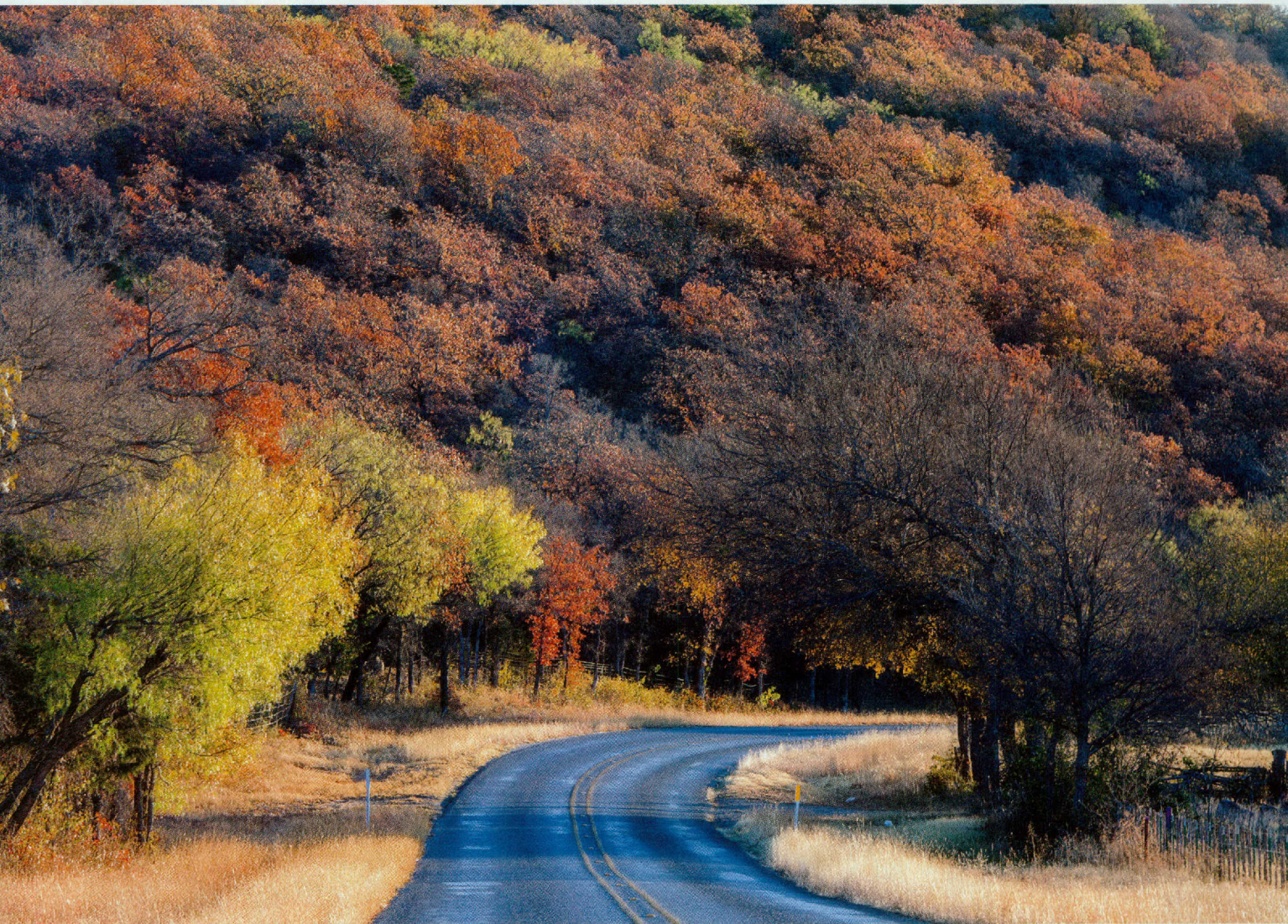


**OPENING SPREAD:** The fall colors in areas of Garner State Park are stunning in mid-November, when the trees turn gold and orange, making the Frio River a wonderland. **LEFT:** The serene waters of Cypress Creek in Wimberley provide a mirror image of the nature lining Blue Hole Regional Park. **RIGHT:** A hiker passes through a grove of trees hugging the West Trail at Lost Maples State Natural Area.

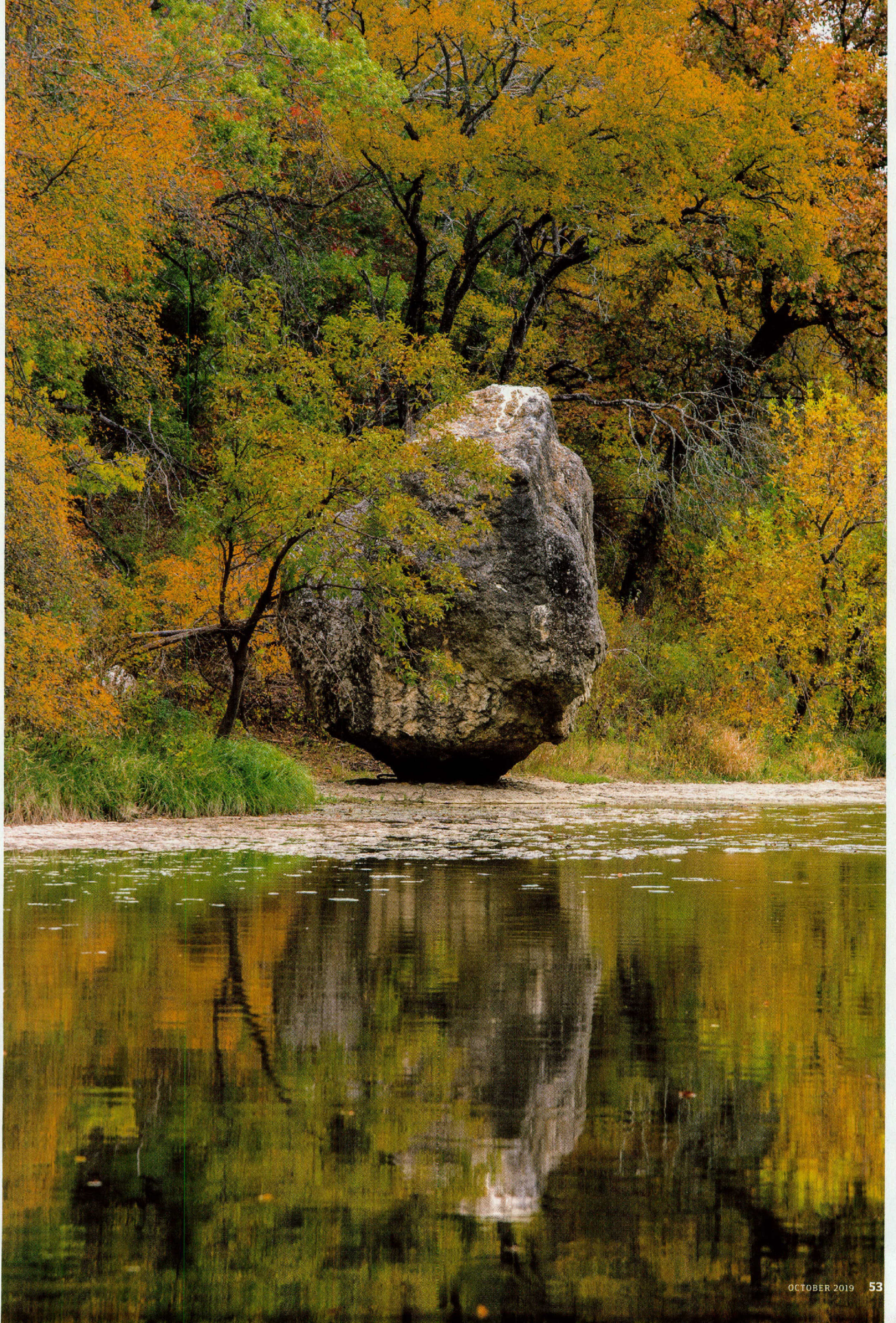
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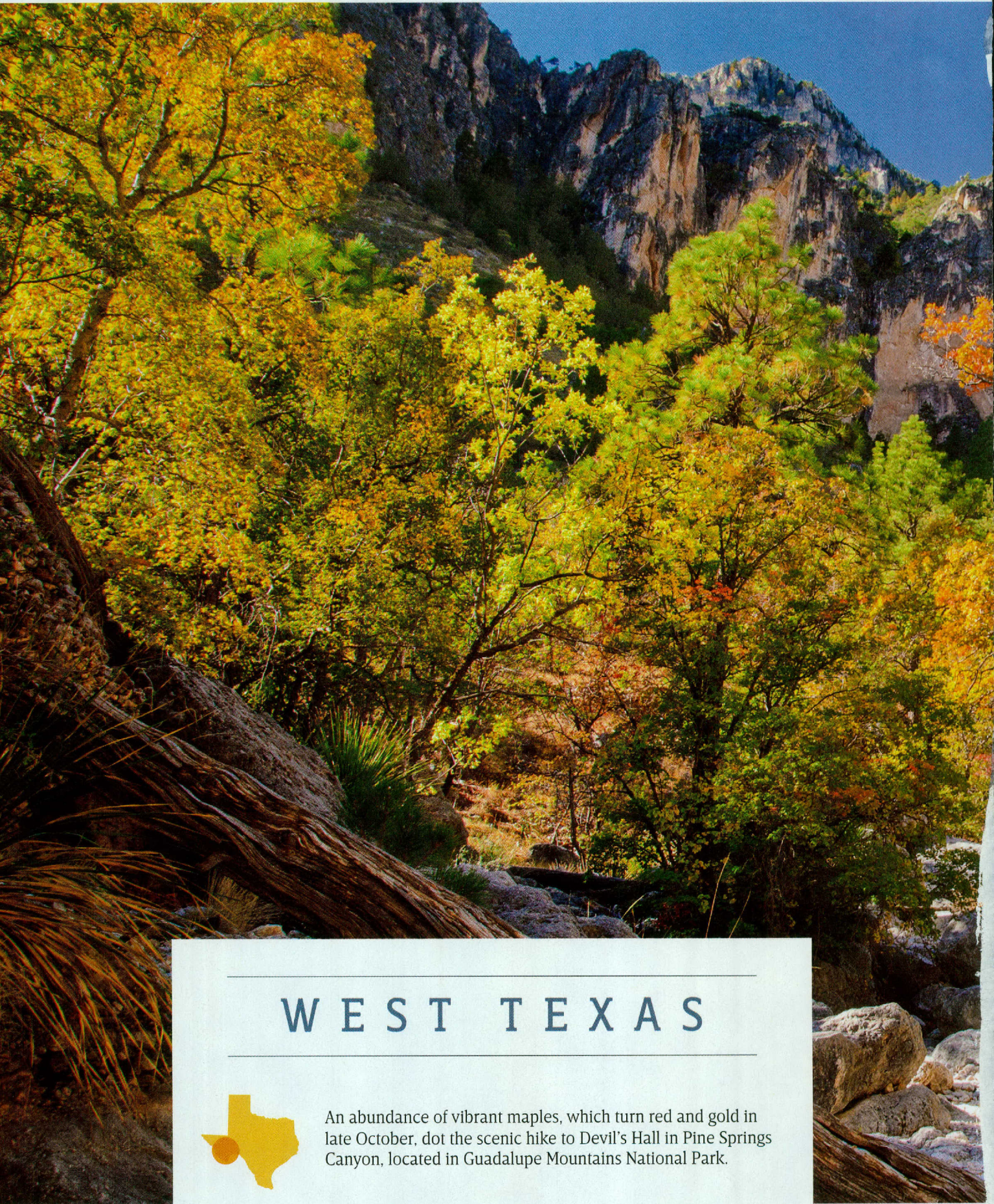
# NORTH TEXAS

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**LEFT:** On Farm-to-Market Road 4 in Palo Pinto County, the curvy stretch along the Brazos River provides a picturesque drive starting in mid-November. **RIGHT:** Fall color appears in early November along the Nolan River, which runs southwest through two counties and meets the Brazos River at Lake Whitney.





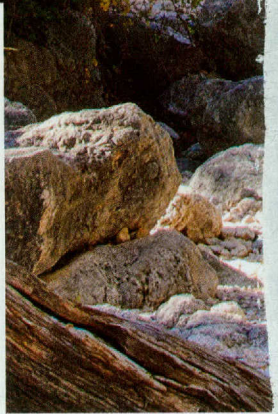
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# WEST TEXAS

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An abundance of vibrant maples, which turn red and gold in late October, dot the scenic hike to Devil's Hall in Pine Springs Canyon, located in Guadalupe Mountains National Park.







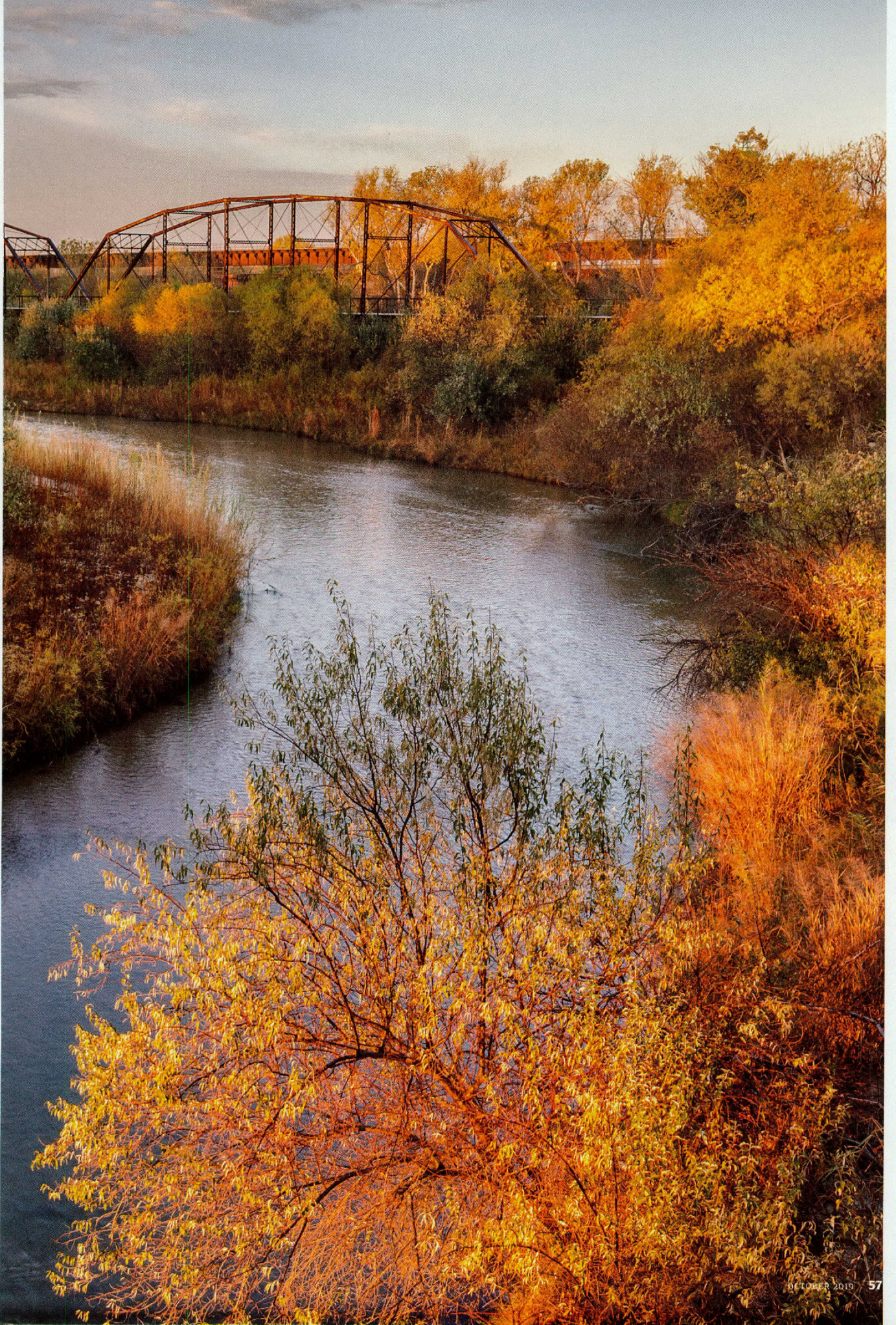
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# P A N H A N D L E

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**LEFT:** A November full moon, or “Full Beaver Moon” due to the animal’s pre-winter activity, rises at dusk along the Canadian River near Canadian. **RIGHT:** The Canadian River Wagon Bridge, a walkable, steel-truss structure on the Canadian River, is the longest pin-connected bridge in Texas. 🇺🇸



BY JESSE SUBLETT

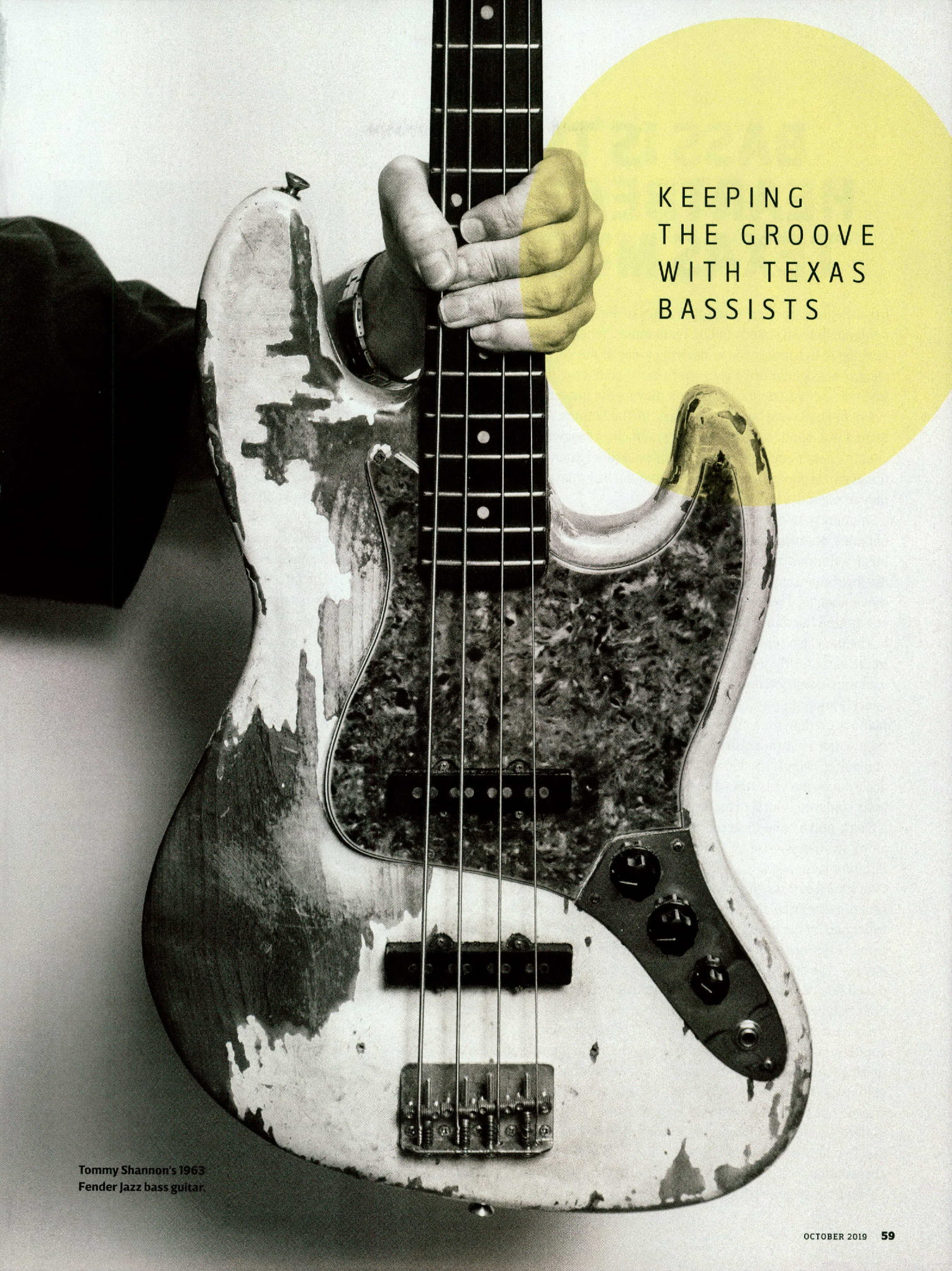
A L L

A B O U T

T H A T

B A S S

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BILL SALLANS



KEEPING  
THE GROOVE  
WITH TEXAS  
BASSISTS

Tommy Shannon's 1963  
Fender Jazz bass guitar.

# BASS IS THE HEARTBEAT OF TEXAS MUSIC,

from the hard-rocking roadhouse blues of Stevie Ray Vaughan to the *conjunto*-revival sounds of Los Texmaniacs. Whenever you go out dancing to live music, the underlying tones of the upright bass fiddle or electric bass guitar drive your every move across the floor—and that's true whether you notice the person playing the instrument or not.

I've been playing bass for 50 years. In The Skunks, Austin's first punk band, I was band leader, lead singer, and chief songwriter—and yet I couldn't help noticing that many fans paid more attention to our exceptional guitar player. Such is the plight of the bass player, even though they're often the MVP of the group.

In many native Texas musical styles, bass is a point of distinction, a hallmark of the genre's origins and dance styles. Western swing wouldn't mean a thing without the bassist's fretting fingers walking up and down the instrument's neck, emphasizing the swing feel and the illusion of movement, as if you're "waltzing across Texas" while whirling your partner around the dance floor.

The bass also serves as a cultural ambassador, bridging musical styles. In the early 1900s, a hybrid Tex-Mex musical style was born when Mexican musicians borrowed the accordion and polka beat of German and Czech immigrants as a foundation for their conjuntos. They traded the piano accordion for a button accordion and the rhythm section for the *bajo sexto*, a hybrid 12-string guitar with both heavy-gauge bass strings and guitar strings. The bajo took the place of the left-hand side of the accordion—the bass side—freeing the accordionist to play the complex arias conjunto is known for. It would be natural for the bass player of a Czech polka band to step onstage with a Tex-Mex conjunto and play along seamlessly—for an audience that speaks a completely different language.

In 1956, the bass guitar forever altered country music. In a recording session, Ray Price, the honky-tonk superhero from Perryville, became frustrated by the bass guitar causing feedback during the song "Crazy Arms." Price asked the bass player to switch to a 4/4 shuffle walking bass pattern. The change not only cured the feedback problem, it also produced one of Price's biggest hits and proved to be such a reliable dance-floor magnet that the pattern became known as the "Ray Price beat."

Fast-forward to the late 1970s, when The Skunks and our spiky-haired contemporaries were reinventing three-chord garage rock by hammering loud and fast eighth notes on our Fender basses—as if we were getting paid by the note. Maybe in the last place you'd expect it, we were staking out Texas' outsized role in the punk-rock revolution.

Here we profile four working bassists who propel the beat forward and two luthiers who craft the instruments. These are the low-frequency cornerstones of Texas' ever-evolving musical melting pot. As goes the bass guitar, so goes Texas music.

## JENN ALVA

**J**ENN ALVA'S EPIPHONE P-BASS IS ALWAYS up-front and loud in the mix, the perfect foundation for the music of Fea, a Latina quartet from San Antonio. The band is on Joan Jett's record label and has even won praise from punk guru Iggy Pop.

Alva has played with drummer Phanie Diaz since they were 12. In 2004, the pair recruited Nina Diaz, Phanie's younger sister, as lead vocalist and guitarist, and named the trio Girl in a Coma. After releasing four critically acclaimed albums, the band parted ways, leading Alva and Phanie Diaz to form Fea in 2014.

The fat and fierce tone of Alva's bass, which she runs through a distortion pedal, is a point of pride. "I always get dudes trying to sneak a look at my pedal board," she says. On occasion, a sound tech will ask if they can get a clean signal in addition to the distorted one, "and I'm like, no, that's it."

Alva's mother was always playing oldies by favorites like Patsy Cline and Freddy Fender in their San Antonio home, and eventually, Alva realized that many artists were Latinos with Americanized names. "Like Ritchie Valens and Freddy Fender—why did they think they had to change their names?" she says.

Fea spent roughly half the summer on tour and the other half recording its second album at Sonic Ranch in Tornillo, a border town 40 miles southeast of El Paso. But the band's home base remains San Antonio, which is where you'll find Bang Bang Bar, operated by Diaz; Alva works at the bar and owns The Dogfather, a gourmet hot dog shop next door.

"One thing we've all learned is that touring is great, but it always feels good to come back to San Antonio," Alva says. "Phanie and I always preach that you don't have to leave your hometown to make it. We've got this great family here."



**SIGNATURE TRACKS:**

Check out “Mujer Moderna” and “No Hablo Español” on *Fea*, the band’s eponymous debut from 2016.

**FAVORITE PLACES TO PLAY:**

When not on tour, Fea can be spotted at venues on the St. Mary’s strip in San Antonio, Alva says, name-checking La Botanica, Paper Tiger, Limelight, and Hi-Tones. Sam’s Burger Joint is also among the band’s favorite places to play, along with Bang Bang Bar.

MAX  
BACA JR.



Max Baca Jr. and his nephew and bandmate Josh Baca.



**M**AX BACA JR., LEADER OF THE SAN Antonio-based, Grammy-winning Los Texmaniacs, is a big guy—big enough to make a bajo sexto look like a small guitar. In reality, his Macias '74 bajo is about the size of a jumbo acoustic but with a deeper body to accommodate the low strings. With the instrument in his hands, Baca thumps bass notes while playing rhythm chords and inserting crisp chromatic runs. "I call the bajo the grizzly bear of guitars," Baca says.

First developed in the Mexican state of Michoacán, the bajo sexto was quickly embraced by Mexican musicians on this side of the border in the early 1900s. Today, as other parts of the country are catching on to bajo-centric music—i.e., conjunto, Norteño, and Tejano—Texas remains its largest exporter.

Baca grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he learned to play accordion and bass as a child, accompanying his father's conjunto band. Max's father used to take his sons to see the big conjunto stars perform at Lubbock's Fronteriso club, which is where a 7-year-old Max first saw Texas accordion legend Flaco Jimenez. It was the beginning of years of hero worship, followed by years of working together. Max was 24 when Jimenez called him to San Antonio to play bajo in his band. "First thing, Flaco told me to start using the lower bass strings," Baca says. "He told me, 'You know, they put those strings there for a reason.' A lot of players don't, but I play them now."

Baca collaborated with Jimenez in line-ups of the Texas Tornados and Los Super Seven before Baca formed his own band, Los Texmaniacs, in 1997. The Texmaniacs have since become standard-bearers of Tex-Mex music with seven albums to their name. "I wanted a band that played traditional conjunto but also had that rock 'n' roll energy," Baca says.



**SIGNATURE TRACKS:**

Check out "Deportee" on the album *Los Cruzando Borders* (2018), with guest vocals by Lyle Lovett.

**FAVORITE PLACES TO PLAY:**

"Some of our favorite places are Hilltop Cafe in Fredericksburg, Gruene Hall, and Luckenbach. Those places have the vibe, man."



KEVIN SMITH



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**I**N THE PAST 30 YEARS, AUSTIN musician Kevin Smith has toured and recorded with many marquee names, but the big daddy gig has to be playing bass with Willie Nelson and Family. Smith got the job after the death of Nelson's longtime bassist Bee Spears in 2011. Nelson couldn't have worried much about Smith's qualifications, which include stints with such acts as Heybale!, Jim Lauderdale, Dwight Yoakam, rockabilly legend Ronnie Dawson, and Smith's own rockabilly outfit, High Noon.

Smith moved to Austin from Colorado in 1988. "My first marriage broke up, and I ended up moving in with another bass player, Mark Rubin, of the bluegrass band The Bad Livers," he says. "We both had our own drummer-less trios we were playing in, so there was a lot of bass testosterone in the house."

Smith and Rubin also produced a how-to video on the "slap-bass" technique that makes rockabilly music snap, crackle, and boom—without a drummer's help. "You're grabbing the string and pulling it away from the fingerboard," Smith says, "and letting it snap back to the fingerboard, so that makes a click. Also, you're letting your palm hit the fingerboard, which makes extra clicks."

Smith says Nelson runs his show by intuition and instinct, with no set list. "We always start with 'Whiskey River,'" Smith says. "You can sense the flow by the way he's running the set. I start on the electric bass, and at some point I'll switch to the upright."

And whether with Nelson or other Texas country-western bands, he says it all comes back to the signature 4/4 walking bass style, aka the Ray Price beat.

"It's all about keeping people dancing because that's what we do. Locking into a real good groove and letting people dance—that's my favorite thing."

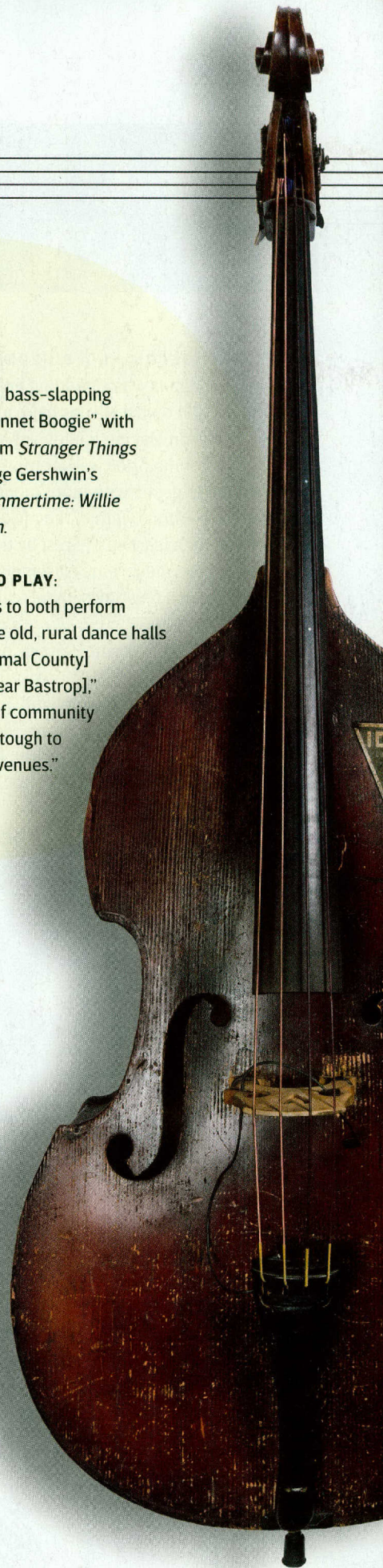


**SIGNATURE TRACKS:**

Check out Kevin Smith bass-slapping up a storm on "Bluebonnet Boogie" with High Noon on the album *Stranger Things* and grooving on George Gershwin's "Summertime" on *Summertime: Willie Nelson Sings Gershwin*.

**FAVORITE PLACES TO PLAY:**

Smith's favorite places to both perform and see bands are "the old, rural dance halls like Fischer Hall [in Comal County] and Watterson Hall [near Bastrop]," he says. "The feeling of community in rural dance halls is tough to find in other types of venues."



## JACOB AND SORAYA SALINAS

**B**EFORE BECOMING A BUILDER OF CUSTOM BAJO SEXTOS, Jacob Salinas was a budding bajo player with big dreams. He wanted to own a Macias bajo, made in the San Antonio shop founded by Martín Macias, a native of Mexico who settled in San Antonio in the 1920s. But the price was far more than a 13-year-old could afford.

After trying to get by with more modestly priced instruments made by a different San Antonio luthier, he picked up a few tips from watching the luthier work, then learned the rest by trial and error.

"He never gave me any measurements or anything," Salinas says. "I just watched him a few times, then I came home and started putting wood together."

In 2011, Jacob and his wife, Soraya, built their own shop behind their home on the outskirts of San Marcos. Today, they produce about 25 bajos a year. With ornate rope binding and exotic woods like koa and Brazilian rosewood, the instruments sell for \$2,400 and up. Among the high-profile players of Salinas bajos are the Uvalde hit-makers Los Palominos, a modern Tejano band that owns four Salinas instruments.



### SIGNATURE TRACK:

For a taste of modern Tejano, check out Los Palominos' 2016 album *Piensalo* and the new single "Con La Fuerza De Un Huracán."

### WANT A CUSTOM BAJO SEXTO?

Jacob and Soraya Salinas welcome visitors and prospective bajo buyers by appointment to their shop near San Marcos High School. 512-667-0233. In San Antonio, the descendants of Martín Macias still craft some of the world's most coveted bajo sextos and bajo quintos (the 10-string version) at their shop on Vermont Street. 210-923-7529.

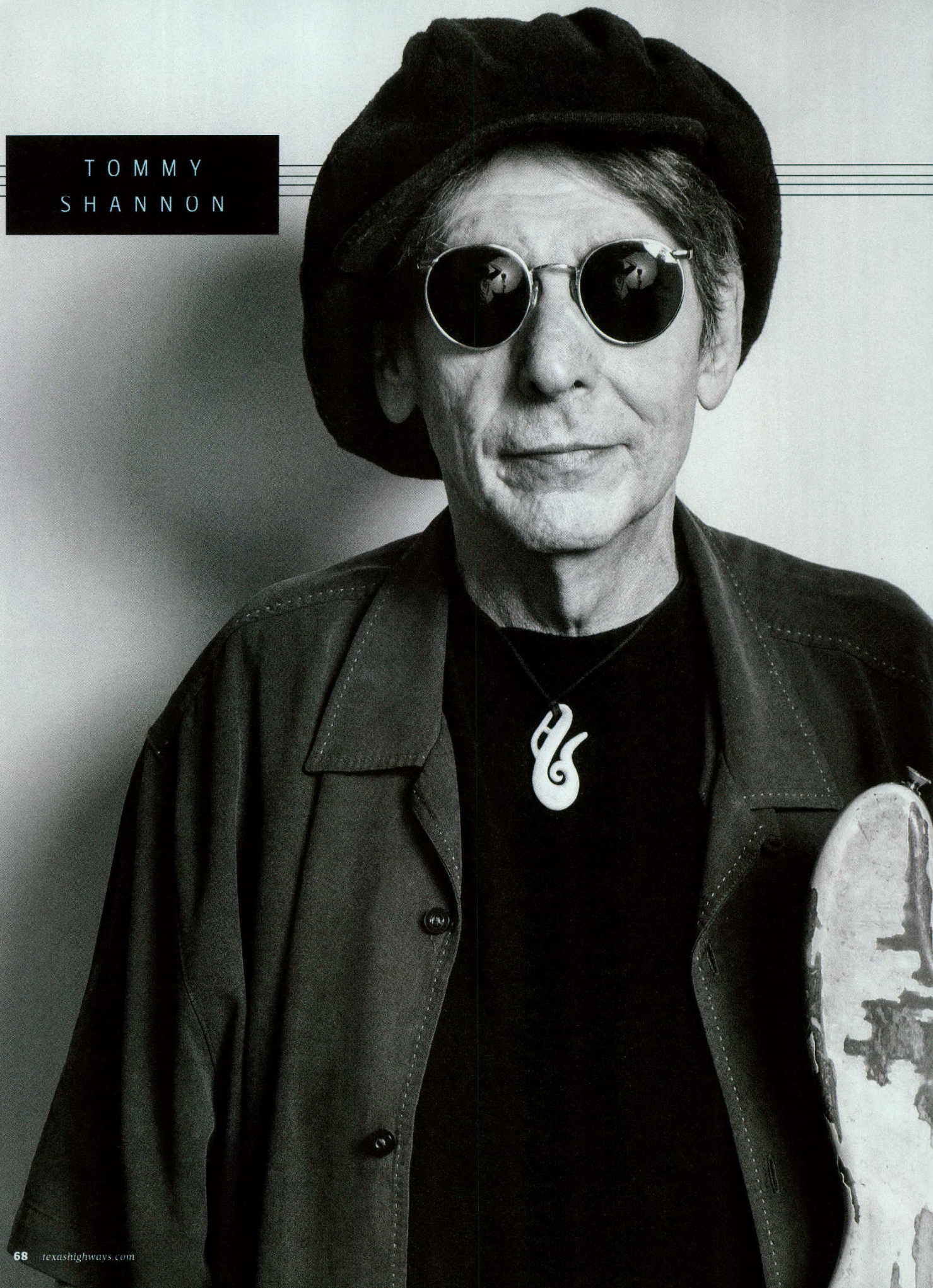




Jacob

Salinas  
Guitars

TOMMY  
SHANNON





**T**OMMY SHANNON, RAISED IN THE Panhandle town of Dumas, stands well over 6 feet tall, skinny and long-limbed, as if crafted in the image of the white '63 Fender Jazz bass that's taken him all over the world. Shannon was laying down the bottom line with that Fender in Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble during the 1980s; the great glam-blues band Krackerjack in the 1970s; and the Johnny Winter Trio at Woodstock in 1969, to name just a few notable musical ensembles. Not many bass players can say they've been playing the same instrument for over 50 years.

And if basses could talk, Shannon's bass could tell some stories, like about the time Jimi Hendrix played it. "I was playing in this club in New York," Shannon recalls, "and somebody came up behind me and asked if he could play. When I saw it was Jimi, I just handed it over. I didn't even finish the song I was playing."

When Beaumont's Johnny Winter took the blues-rock world by storm in the late 1960s, his flashy guitar slinging was driven home by Shannon's thunderbolt bass riffs. Shannon's style reflects years of experience playing Top 40, soul, and rhythm and blues on the Texas bar-band circuit. In that cutthroat world, bands lived or died by a single dictate: Keep people dancing because dancing people buy drinks; and if the bar doesn't sell drinks, the band is useless overhead.

Shannon brought that same sensibility when he joined Vaughan's band in 1981, another key moment in the growth of Texas blues. With Shannon and drummer Chris Layton constituting the monster rhythm section of Double Trouble, the trio sold over 11.5 million records and continues to define Texas blues-rock today, almost three decades after Vaughan's death.

"Texas blues has its own feel, just like Chicago and other places," Shannon says. "The cool thing with blues is you just stay in the pocket. I never think about what I'm going to play next." 🎸

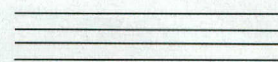


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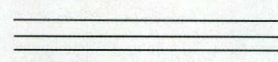
"Crossfire" on Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble's 1989 album *In Step* shows off the hard-driving, irresistible force that is Shannon's bass style. The song actually originated with a bass riff Shannon came up with "fooling around in my living room."

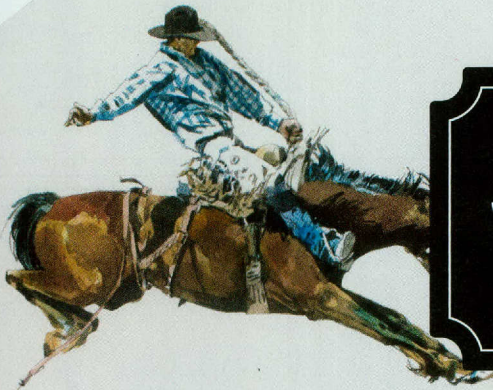
**FAVORITE PLACE TO PLAY:**

Antone's Nightclub in Austin. "I've played Antone's for over 40 years," Shannon says. "I've been fortunate enough to have played with some of the greatest musicians in the world on that stage."



To listen to a playlist of songs mentioned in the article, go to [texashighways.com/allaboutthatbass](https://www.texashighways.com/allaboutthatbass)





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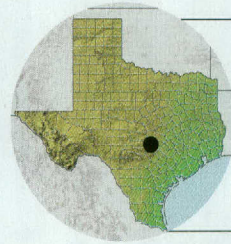
  
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# PLATES



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**A** sign above the door to Cabernet Grill in Fredericksburg tells patrons what they need to know about the restaurant: “Texas Wine Spoken Here.” Fluently, in fact. Cabernet Grill has landed on *Wine Enthusiast’s* “America’s 100 Best Wine Restaurants” two years in a row with an all-Texas wine list—a feat even the most Texas-centric restaurants haven’t achieved.

“I can tell you that back in 2005 when I decided to do the all-Texas wine list, I had people literally get in my face and tell me, ‘You are crazy,’” owner and chef Ross Burtwell says. Cabernet Grill’s criteria for selecting wines are that the winery must be Texas-based and have in-state production, if not made with only Texas grapes. “Unfortunately, Texas does not harvest enough of its own grapes each year to keep up with the demand of the industry, so many wineries must supplement with non-Texas fruit,” Burtwell notes.

In the 1980s and ’90s, Texas wines had a reputation for not being as sophisticated as wine from regions like Napa and Sonoma, in California, and Willamette, in Oregon. But Burtwell changed that in 2002 when he bought Cotton Gin Village, a restaurant with adjacent cabins, and renamed it in homage to the proliferation of Hill Country vineyards. He introduced his “Texas Hill Country cuisine,” with an emphasis on Texas-sourced ingredients.

Today, Cabernet Grill’s kitchen is a family affair. Burtwell’s sous chefs are his wife, Marianna, whom Burtwell met in 1989 while working in a San Antonio hotel kitchen, and son, Hunter, who started rolling silverware for diners at age 8 and subsequently trained at Austin’s Auguste Escoffier School of Culinary Arts.

# On Cloud Wine

Cabernet Grill pushes boundaries with its all-Texas wine list

By John Lumpkin



**FROM LEFT:** Executive chef and owner Ross Burtwell (right) with his son and sous chef, Hunter; the exterior; Niman Ranch sous-vide beef short rib.

The restaurant stocks 1,200 bottles of 140 different vintages from 40 Texas wineries. Cabernet Grill's wine reserves—likely the most extensive in the state for a restaurant—illustrate Texas vintners' resourcefulness and willingness to experiment, which was born out of necessity. "When they started planting grapes in Texas, they planted grapes from California," Burtwell says. "We don't have the same conditions as California." In the search for more appropriate grapes, winemakers went to Italy and Spain. The Texas-like climates and soil conditions in those locales led to planting lesser-known varietals like piquepoul, tempranillo, and tannat. "Our wine list is constantly evolving," Burtwell says. "Texas winemakers are trying all kinds of different varietals."

Even with Cabernet Grill's national recognition, wine director Elizabeth Rodriguez instills a "no wine snobs allowed" ethos among the staff. Rodriguez started out in the hospitality industry by cleaning tables at a barbecue joint as a teenager. She came to Cabernet Grill in 2005 as a server and started learning about wine. Encouraged by Burtwell, she educated herself by visiting local wineries and winemakers before eventually earning her sommelier certification. Now, Rodriguez conducts Saturday roundtables with the wait staff that include blind tastings of new offerings,

"because they have to be excited about it to sell it."

She relishes defending the Texas-only wine list to guests unfamiliar with the state's award-winning vintages. "People say they don't like any Texas wine," she says. "We take it as a challenge." Winning guests over also lies in affordable prices: all but a few bottles cost \$30 to \$65 and glasses range from \$7 to \$16.

As waiters pour wine flights, they take great care in explaining to guests the different varietals, wineries, and vineyards. Suggesting wine pairings for dishes, they follow Rodriguez's principle: "Sometimes, the wine by itself or the food by itself is not so great, but putting them together makes it great."

Pursuit of such greatness starts with Cabernet Grill's innovative appetizers. A waiter may recommend the chilly viognier from Hilmy Cellars to temper the serrano-infused relish on the pecan-crusted crab. The coconut-lime soup spiked with curry and topped with Texas Gulf shrimp pairs well with William Chris Vineyards' Mary Ruth white blend. A heavier dish like the chicken-fried rib-eye topped with

lobster and Hatch-chile gravy is enhanced by Becker Vineyards' Merlot Reserve, full-bodied and sold only to restaurants. Bending Branch Winery's dry tannat complements a medium-rare slice of sous-vide short rib.

A native stone fireplace dominates the main dining room. Thoughtful décor touches include chandeliers fashioned by Burtwell and his daughter from West Texas irrigation wheels and stained glass renderings of Hill Country pastoral scenes by local artisan Meryll Redding. The covered patio and shaded courtyard are bordered by wine barrels and illuminated by strings of lights.

Surrounding the courtyard are 14 log cabins and cottages for overnight guests. The 19th-century cabins were shipped from Kentucky and Tennessee and reassembled. The recently debuted stone cottages include wine chillers, as visiting wineries is a requisite part of a Hill Country excursion.

"Texas wines have come a long way," Rodriguez says. "And customers are now taking Texas wines seriously and are open to exploration." 🍷



**FROM LEFT:** The Brisket Mac & Cheese Cone is sure to keep Cowboys fans satiated this season; cheer on the Spurs while sipping a *mangonada*.

# Ballgame Bites

See how these *epicurious* stadium snacks stack up

By Phil West

**R**oot, root, rooting for the home team works up a mighty hunger. At some stadiums around the state, the snacks have become bigger, bolder, and more ridiculous—take for example the Texas Rangers' Globe Life Park in Arlington, which debuted a 2-pound chicken tender on its 2019 menu. But some arenas attempt to make their offerings ambitious in a different way, even scoring notable Texas chefs to create menu items. While hot dogs and nachos aren't going

away anytime soon, fans can also find high-class dining to fuel them.

## **Brisket Mac & Cheese Cone**

*AT&T Stadium, Arlington*

Executive chef Tony Sinese and food and beverage director George Wasai take a from-scratch approach to feeding Dallas Cowboys fans, even when pushing levels of decadence. For this ultimate comfort food dish, 16-hour house-smoked brisket is layered with truffle oil-infused mac and cheese, then nested in an egg-bread cone and topped with jalapeños and barbecue sauce. Though it is designed to eat on the go, we wouldn't take any chances scaling the stadium's steep steps. Sit and savor it.

## **Carved Roast Beef Sandwich with Wedge Slaw**

*NRG Stadium, Houston*

This offering brings to mind the atmosphere of a country club rather than the raucous home of the Houston Texans and Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo. But it's best to place trust in James Beard Award-winning chef Chris Shepherd, who aimed to recreate an experience from one of his lauded restaurants, Georgia James. Beef from 44 Farms is topped with horseradish cream, pickled red onions, blue cheese, bacon, onion, and tomato, with the wedge-salad-inspired slaw adding a refined touch.

## **Mole Fries**

*AT&T Center, San Antonio*

While the restaurant Burgerteca may be best known for its playful Mexican interpretations of the hamburger, chef Johnny Hernandez produces similar culinary creativity with the sides. The mole fries—akin to nachos—are substantial enough to be considered a whole meal. A layer of fries is heaped with a complex mole sauce and queso fresco. It's almost too messy to eat courtside at a Spurs game, but it's so good you're likely to polish it off before halftime's over. Pair it with a *mangonada*—a frozen drink with tequila, fresh mango and cantaloupe, and a straw covered in tamarind powder.

### New Mexico Dog

#### Southwest University Park, El Paso

El Paso borders both Mexico and New Mexico, making this Land of Enchantment-inspired hot dog a natural for fans of the Chihuahuas (AAA baseball) and Locomotive (USL Championship soccer). The dog comes loaded with cactus relish, green chile mustard, toasted cumin seeds, and pico de gallo. Other festive treats include the Rangoon Dog, in which the dog is encased in a wonton wrapper and topped with cream cheese, cilantro, and Thai chili sauce. Or opt for a link: The Sausage Spot features a rotating selection of elk, venison, gator, and wild boar.

### Feta-Marinated Portobello Sandwich

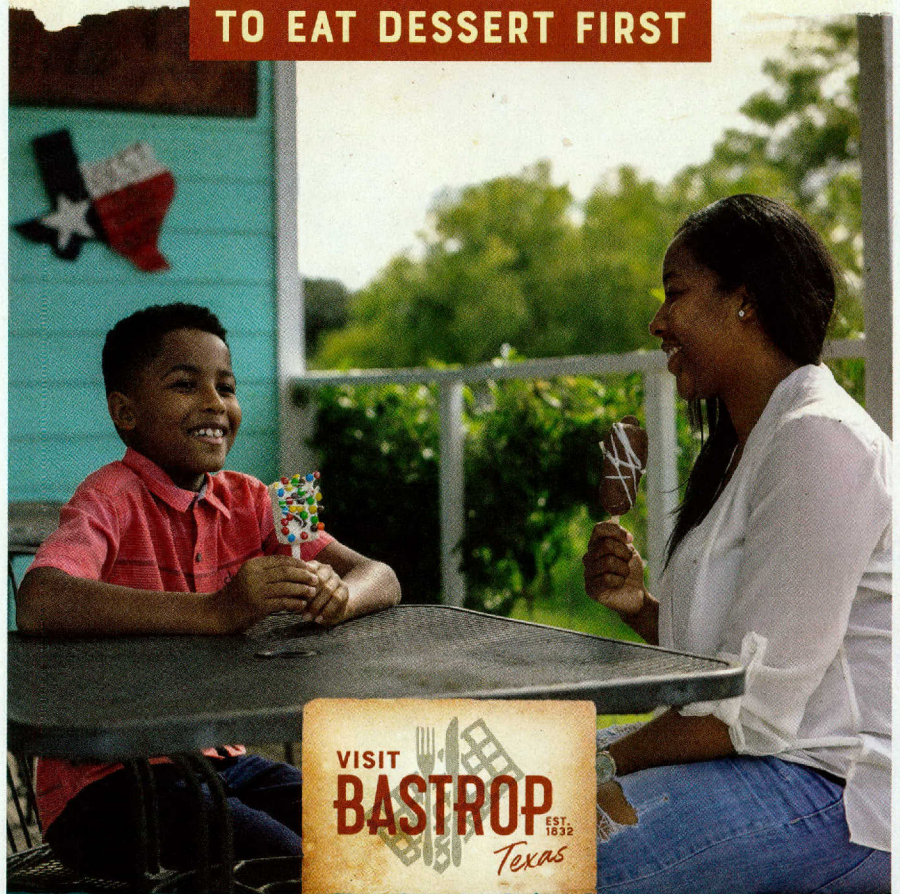
#### Dell Diamond, Round Rock

Though the forthcoming MLS team Austin FC promises gourmet offerings when it kicks off its inaugural season in 2021, local sports fans currently venture north to Round Rock to cheer on the minor league baseball team, the Express. At the Dell Diamond, Ono Pacific Grill features a tempting option for vegetarians (insert Austin hippie joke here) in which a portobello mushroom—marinated in feta vinaigrette—is topped with pepper jack, chipotle mayonnaise, and arugula. 🍴



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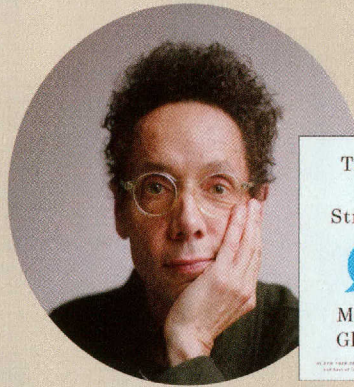


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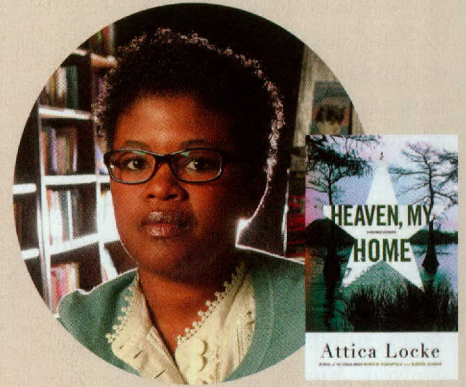
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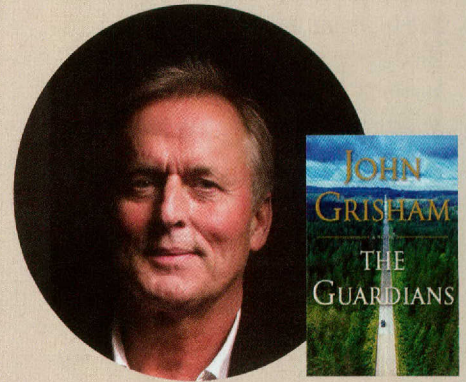
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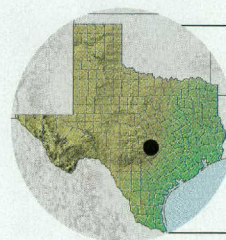
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# Garten of Eden

A 153-year-old Texas institution endures despite continuous change

By Kimya Kavehkar



**SCHOLZ GARTEN**  
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512-474-1958;  
scholzgarten.com



**T**he state Capitol and the University of Texas used to be what Austin was most known for—before the city became a hotbed of live music and tech. Both institutions still anchor the city and cast iconic shapes in the skyline. And directly between them, there's an even older, longer-surviving establishment: Scholz Garten.

The beer garden and restaurant, erected in 1866 by German immigrant and bookbinder August Scholz, is the place where college professors and state legislators often meet over pints. Nearly every Texas governor has patronized the bar, and it's famous for game-day crowds during Longhorn football season.

But you don't stake your claim to being Texas' oldest live music venue and continuously operating tavern without a few bumps along the way. There have been fires, overhauls, and upgrades—not to mention Prohibition. After Scholz's death in 1891, a litany of different owners and operators ran the business. In 2017, Daniel Northcutt became the latest operator to take up the mantle.

A veteran of the hospitality industry, the 43-year-old San Angelo native started out washing dishes at his brother-in-law's restaurant at age 13. When he found out the management contract for Scholz's was up for grabs, he submitted one of the 30 proposals to Austin Saengerrunde, the German cultural organization that has owned the property since 1908. He won the 20-year contract and, over the past two years, has slowly but surely implemented subtle changes.



**PREVIOUS PAGE:** Scholz Garten's giant pretzel is served with mustard, garlic butter, and beer cheese. **FROM LEFT:** charcuterie board; the famed beer garden.

## “This place is near and dear to so many hearts, and rightfully so.”

it operates an events hall and members-only bowling alley next door.

Northcutt says the restaurant experienced a drop in customers when he took over, and he had to work to gain the trust of loyal customers. “This place is near and dear to so many hearts, and rightfully so. As a matter of fact, we’ve played host to at least half a dozen wakes in the last two years,” Northcutt recalls. “It chokes me up because that’s how powerful this place is.”

In some ways, Scholz’s hasn’t changed very much. In the beer garden, there’s still a wood stage with an idyllic Bavarian scene painted on the backdrop. An old tree stretches out its branches to provide shade for dozens of long, communal tables. Steins line the top of a mirrored bar in the main dining room. “Scholz Garten” (its original spelling) is painted on the brick exterior above the portico. Some of the small cosmetic updates recently made include replacing carpet with concrete in the banquet room and moving taps to the back of the bar.

More significant changes have been made with food and drink. After a “methodical, hard decision,” Northcutt added liquor to the bar menu—featuring made-to-order and draft cocktails—to complement the ubiquitous beer. And while the menu still prominently proffers traditional German fare like pretzels and schnitzel, Scholz’s has expanded its sausage offerings to include adventurous options. For example, the Schweinewurst—a pork, bacon, jalapeño, and sage sausage topped with mac and cheese and barbecue sauce—and the jalapeño-and-cheese venison sausage served with cactus sauerkraut and a prickly-pear sauce are new.

“One of the things we’re most proud of is that we overhauled the barbecue program,” Northcutt says. “I think we

Northcutt knew it would be a challenge to appease longtime patrons. “People fear change—that’s just psychological fact,” he says. “Folks get a little skittish when you’re going to change something.”

But he’s not the first Scholz operator to confront hand-wringing over change. According to Scholz Garten lore, former owner Bob Bales was almost run out of town for adding air-conditioning in 1962. It’s just an occupational hazard when it comes to running Scholz’s. It has a

certain importance in the community—especially to local descendants of German immigrants. Around the time the beer garden opened, Austin’s population doubled, with German-born residents making up more than 7 percent of the population by 1875. The bar became a popular gathering place for Germans and the exclusive meeting place of the Austin Saengerrunde, or “singing group.” The oldest ethnic organization in Austin still features men’s and women’s choirs, and



could go toe-to-toe with my boy Aaron Franklin,” he adds with a laugh. Barbecue is served on Friday evenings to go alongside live music.

Four to five nights a week you can hear everything from psych-rock to country and polka on Scholz’s outdoor stage. Northcutt has worked to expand the crowd with diverse bands and a variety of events, from political rallies to the Bloody Mary Fest, a celebration of the brunch cocktail held in April.

Growing new business may be an even bigger challenge for Scholz’s than appealing longtime customers. Located on a stretch of San Jacinto Boulevard, the historic building is tucked between nondescript state office buildings and frequent construction. However, Northcutt doesn’t seem too worried.

“The spirit of the beer garden, and friends and family and community having a good time, are what’s going to keep



this place alive,” he says. As the battle between “new Austin” and “old Austin” continues to rage among residents and expats, Scholz’s and its proprietors

are content to just be Austin. As Northcutt says, “If you want to keep it weird in Austin, that’s great. But we want to keep Scholz stable and fun.”



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# TEXANA



## Twistflower Tales

Prehistoric discoveries at a rugged West Texas ranch

By Clayton Maxwell

**O**ften the most exceptional things are found by accident. That's what happened at Twistflower Ranch, 5,800 acres of West Texas mesas and canyons, named for the rare bracted twistflower that bathes the arid landscape with delicate purple blossoms in the spring. Around 2004, owners Mike McCloskey's sons, Ted and Kevin, were exploring when they discovered a cave with a spring bubbling out of it. Mike McCloskey invited an archeology buff to check it out. As they hiked down, they stopped for a breather in the shade of a rock shelter—not quite a cave—set back into the bluff. While talking, the archeologist stopped mid-sentence, pointed to the limestone façade, and shouted, "Rock art!" And that's how the McCloskeys discovered the 2,000-year-old pictographs tucked away on their land.

It's also partly why I am here at Twistflower, about 45 miles north of Ozona, with my 9-year-old son, Harry, and two of my friends, one

of whom has also brought her son, Prine, age 13. We have signed up for one of Twistflower's regular Archeology Weekends hosted by McCloskey and Mike Quigg, an archeologist from the Gault School of Archaeological Research. Quigg's knowledge is vast, so all of our rookie questions—and there are many—get answered: "Quigg, is *this* an arrowhead?"

McCloskey, a retired environmental engineer from Austin, bought this land with his wife, Donna, in 2000 from a family that ranched sheep and cattle here for 100 years. They had no idea prehistoric people had left rock paintings as record of their life and times here. It took the McCloskey boys to find it.

And now McCloskey, Quigg, and the five of us in my group are off to see these 2,000-year-old drawings, dodging cactus spines and lechuguilla points as we crawl down the caprock to that same limestone shelter. Harry and Prine race ahead—their urge to climb, discover, and leave their parents behind must be as ancient as the rock art we are here to see. I wonder if prehistoric mothers also shouted at their children to slow down and watch for rattlesnakes.

We arrive to the shelter, but I see no rock art. Quigg takes out the yoga mat from his backpack and lays it on the shelter's bumpy floor. Then Harry lies on his back next to Quigg, their noses just inches below the slanting rock of the shelter's ceiling, and Quigg begins to point out red and black painted figures. One resembles a feather, another looks like a snake around a stick. Harry's face transforms from mild interest to wonder. The little rocky grotto is filled with "ohs!" and "ahs!" as our eyes adjust and the ancient art emerges into view.

When it's my turn on the mat, I lie back and look up. Right above my nose, spirals and feathers emerge from the rock. I am lying in the same spot as the human who drew these shapes two millennia ago. Weirdly, I feel tears dripping down my temples into my ears. In a flash of new awareness, I zoom out from the micro to the macro. I sense how I am not

just me—a 21st-century mom and writer, a mere blip in time; I'm also part of this much bigger and quite miraculous story of being a human.

### **In the Bedrock**

That afternoon, Quigg takes us hiking along a creek valley, where yellow aster and vervain flowers mingle with yucca and choya. He shows us the earth ovens and discarded burned rock that prehistoric people used for cooking. He grabs a burned rock, scratches it, and holds it up to our noses. Somehow, all these centuries later, it still smells like someone struck a match. He shows us the bedrock mortars—holes in large limestone rocks that natives once used to grind down plants and minerals. He notes dried bulbs

### **The open skies and intensely starry nights at Twistflower make it an appropriate place to ponder big questions.**

of the sotol plant, a source of food and fiber. "These people understood their environment and what could and could not be done with it."

Quigg also shows Prine and Harry how to throw a dart with an atlatl—a kind of arm extender the natives made out of sticks—and how to shape chert into arrowheads. Later, Harry sits cross-legged on the ground for hours trying to carve rocks into pointy tips. He hasn't been on his iPad once this weekend.

Before dinner, some of us jump in the reviving water of Twistflower's pool while McCloskey is back at the house cooking up pork and roasted vegetables so good that even the veggie-resistant boys like them. The primary ranch compound—a main house, a yoga room, and four spacious cabins accented with native stone and wood—is perched atop a plateau with never-ending views. The pool overlooks a canyon where turkey buzzards, eye level to us, glide on thermals. Harry, who hasn't learned yet that buzzards are considered ugly, watches. "Mom, they're beautiful," he whispers to me.

The open skies and intensely starry nights at Twistflower make it a natu-



**OPENING PAGE:** A sunrise view from the guesthouse porch at Twistflower Ranch.  
**THIS PAGE:** The ranch's yoga studio.

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** A rock shelter with pictographs at Twistflower Ranch; the Twistflower pool; rock art.



ral place to ponder big questions. I ask Quigg about the meaning of the serpentine motif in the rock shelter. “We will never know for sure,” Quigg says, “but the important thing is to record and ask these questions now. Like the White Shaman [a well-known rock painting on the Lower Pecos], these are fading. We can’t preserve them; they are a vanishing resource. But we can document.”

**Grateful Land**

Shorn of its natural grasses after a century of overgrazing, Twistflower’s terrain is partly dominated by caliche and scrub brush. But the McCloskeys have labored to rehabilitate the land, killing off some of the tar bush to make way for native

grasses. In a section of 700 rehabilitated acres, fields of grasses blow in the breeze, and the springtime wildflower colors are breathtaking: purple verbena, pink and gold Indian blankets, yellow daisies.

Found only in Texas—and rarely at

**It seems fitting the bracted twistflower—a rare species found only in Texas—should thrive here, where you can feel the care given to this land.**

that—the bracted twistflower sprouts delicate leaves that had already blown away in a spring storm by the time we visited. But it seems fitting they should thrive here, where you can feel the care given to this land. McCloskey and his son, Ted—who moved out to Twistflower when he was 23 to be its caretaker—built this retreat from unforgiving ground. Ted and a co-worker lugged truckloads of limestone rocks up to build the exterior walls of the A-frame big house and cabins located at the highest point on the property. They hauled lumber from Austin to line the walls and soaring ceilings. A proficient welder, Ted fabricated all the metalwork on the property, creating the rails around the wide porches.

The Irish poet John O'Donahue wrote, "May you know that absence is alive with hidden presence, that nothing is ever lost or forgotten." After 15 years of running Twistflower, Ted was killed in late 2017 when trying to stop a gunman who opened fire at a Halloween party in Austin. He was 37. I never met him, but even as a visitor I sense how part of him is present in every aspect of this ranch: in the ancient rock art he helped find, in the sweeping sunsets he once watched from porches he built, and in the new wild-flowers that were finally able to bloom again this spring.

In the face of the tragedy, McCloskey still says he appreciates their shared labor of love at Twistflower and how their relationship evolved from one of father and son to that of partners and collaborators.

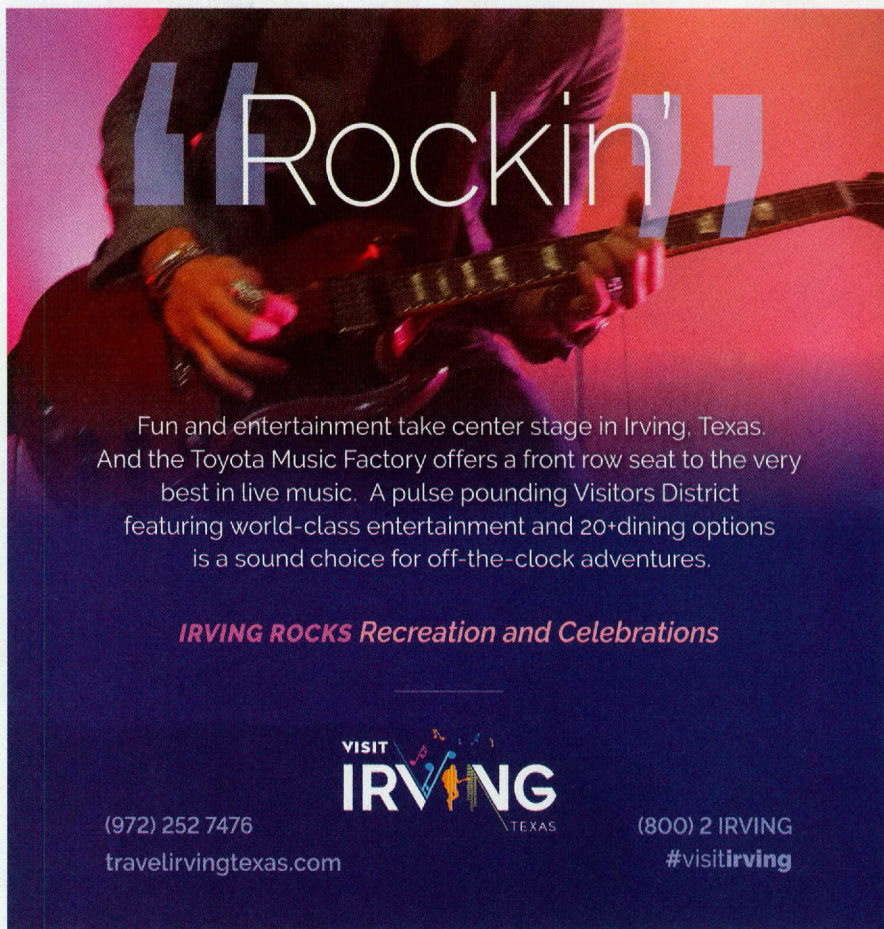
"That's something a lot of parents don't get," McCloskey says. "The other thing about Ted, for pretty much every day he was out here, he was doing what he wanted to do—being outside, using his hands, solving problems."

Later, Harry and Prine want to look for more caves and rock art. I think about the McCloskey boys and their exploratory rambles on this ancient terrain. After just one weekend here, Harry and Prine are fueled up with their fresh knowledge of the land and how to navigate it. I like their newfound confidence. Sometimes the best thing we give our kids is a chance to lead the way. 🐾

**Twistflower Ranch,**

4942 County Road 208, Ozona.

Lodging, including meals, costs \$125 per night per person; discounts for children. The ranch hosts guests year-round and schedules occasional weekends themed around archeology, birding, and photography. Upcoming Archeology Weekends include Oct. 25-27, Jan. 25-26, Feb. 22-23, and March 28-29. The ranch also offers botany tours. 512-516-1750; twistflower ranch.com



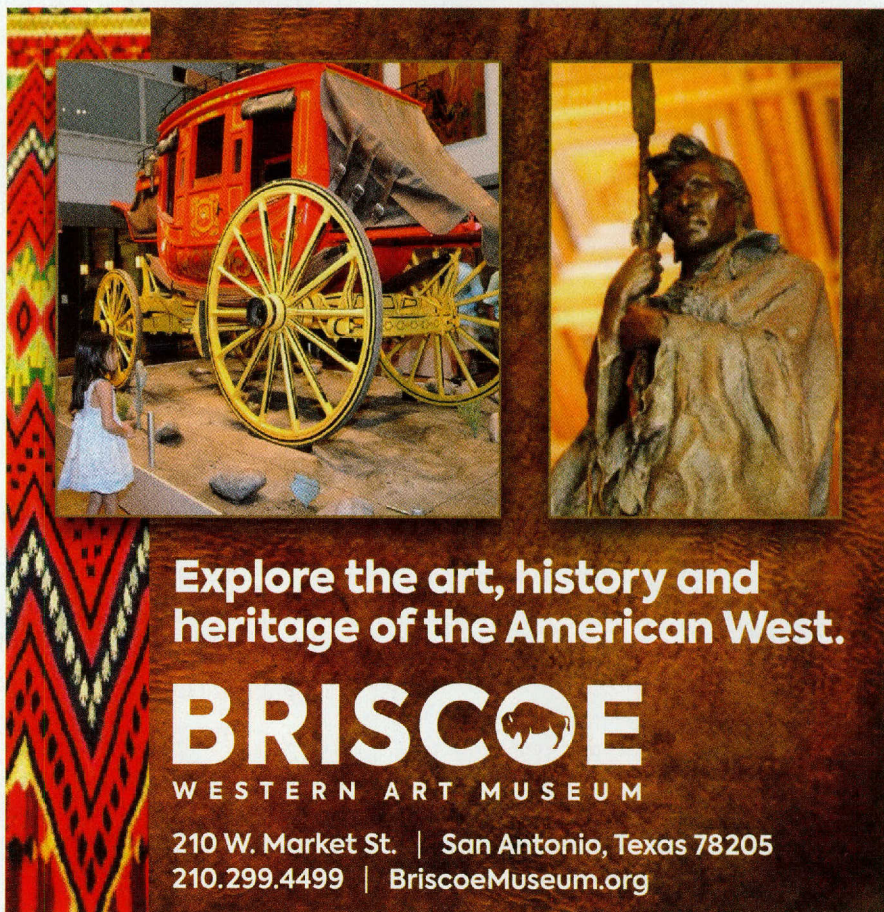
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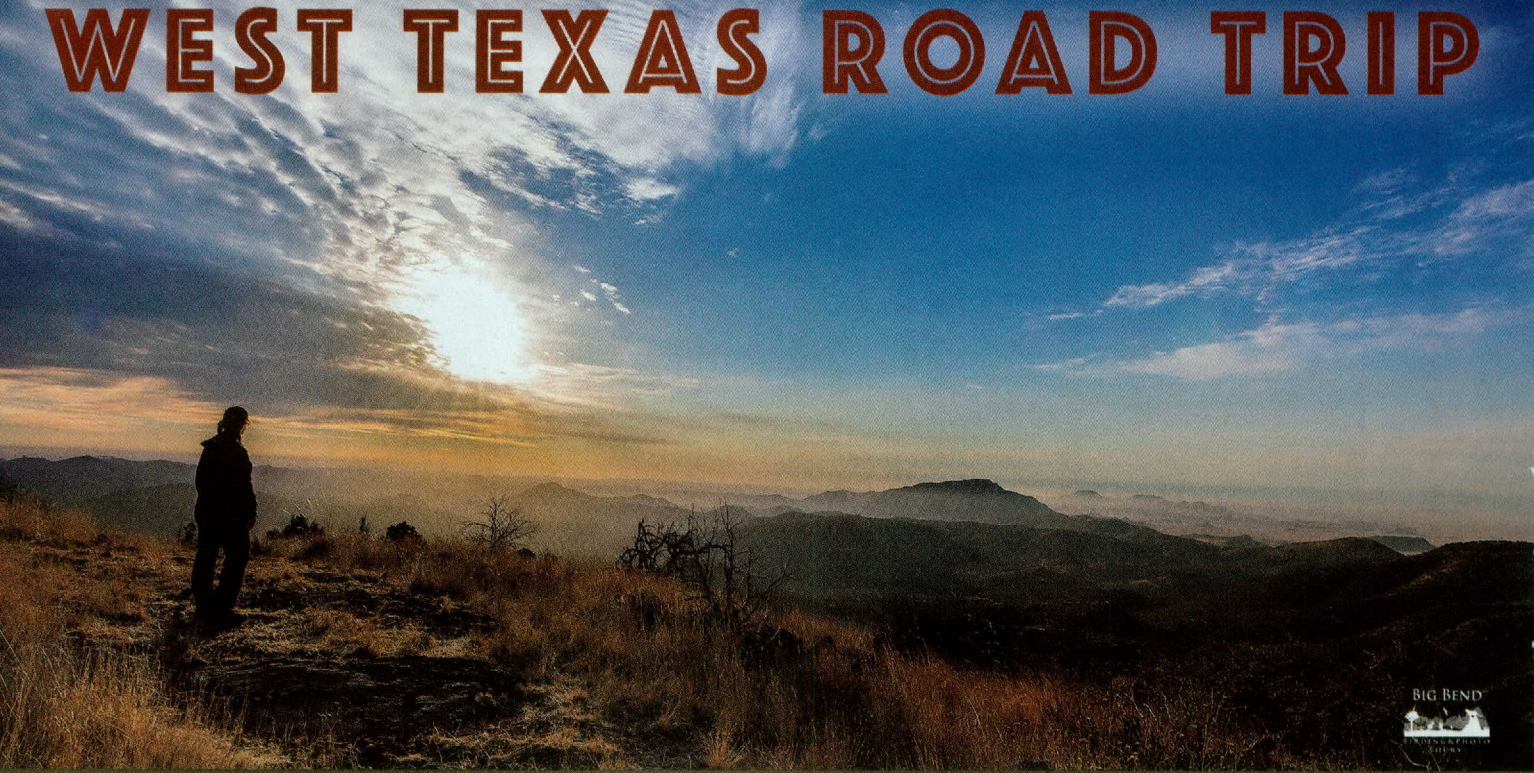


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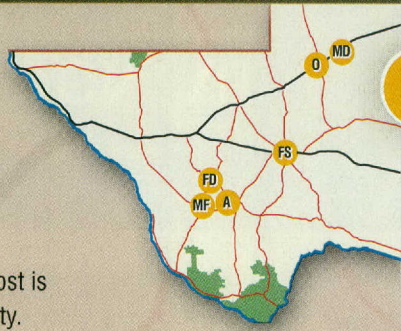
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[fortdavis.com](http://fortdavis.com)

- November 11** - Veterans Day Program at the Fort
- December 7** - Frontier Christmas



MD

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[visitmidland.com](http://visitmidland.com)

- Oct 10** - 36th Annual Taste of the Permian Basin
- Nov 13** - Basketball: Texas Tech vs. Houston Baptist



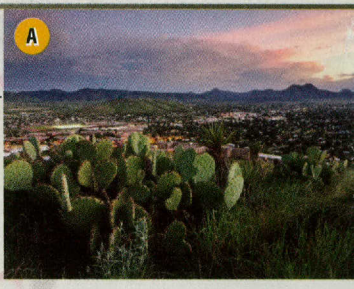
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[discoverodessa.org](http://discoverodessa.org)

- Oct 11** - Wade Bowen concert @ Dos Amigos
- Oct** - Bloody Bill's Chainsaw Carnage - over 7,000 square feet of haunts!

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[visitalpinetx.com](http://visitalpinetx.com)

- Oct 5** - Big Bend Comic Con & Wild West Bird Fest
- Nov 22-23** - ARTWALK art & music festival



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- Oct 26** - Marathon 2 Marathon

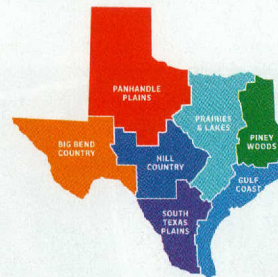
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- Oct 11-13** - Chinati Weekend
- Oct 21** - MARFA100 - 100km bike race



MF

# EVENTS



## Rally Around the Flag

Come and take it in at this celebration of Texas independence

In 1831, Mexico gave the people of Gonzales a cannon to ward off Native American attacks. Four years later, Mexican troops came to get the howitzer back and were greeted by a lone star flag baring a taunt: "Come and Take It." The firing of that cannon was the start of the Texas Revolution, and today, the cannon sits in the Gonzales Memorial Museum, the centerpiece of the Come and Take It Celebration, a three-day festival booming with Texas bravado. The festivities take place in downtown Gonzales, which has three town squares, so there's plenty of room for carnival rides and live music, plus the popular chicken flying contest. (That's flying, not frying, unfortunately.) A downtown parade is followed with a reenactment in Pioneer Village of the battle of Oct. 2, 1835, when the first shots of the Texas Revolution were fired.

—Michael Corcoran

**Come and Take It Celebration, Oct. 4-6  
Downtown Gonzales  
830-672-6532;  
gonzalestexas.com/come-and-take-it**

### BIG BEND COUNTRY

#### Alpine

##### Big Bend Comic Con

Oct. 5

This celebration of popular culture in the high desert mountains offers special guests, talks, vendors, art contests, and games. *Espino Conference Center, 400 N. Harrison St. facebook.com/bigbendcomiccon*

#### Alpine

##### NCOM

Oct. 12

America's premier 1,000-, 383-, and 208-mile ultra bicycle road race features solo, tandem, and relay categories. *Quarter Circle 7 Hotel, 2800 US 90. ultradex.net/ncom-home*

#### Del Rio

##### Fiesta De Amistad

Oct. 18-20

Del Rio has a close relationship with its sister city of Ciudad Acuña, Mexico, and this festival is a celebration of that friendship. Enjoy an arts and crafts fair among other activities. *Various locations. 830-775-3551*

#### El Paso

##### Chalk the Block

Oct. 11-13

This free annual public arts festival is an opportunity for artists in all disciplines to showcase their work with live painting, performances, live music, art installations, and art classes. Though not technically a music festival, it features top local musicians every year. *The El Paso Downtown Arts District, 400 W. San Antonio Ave. 915-212-0110; chalktheblock.com*

#### El Paso

##### Hueco Tanks Interpretive Fair

Oct. 19-20

This free event includes Native American dancing and drumming, a buffalo soldier encampment, folkloric dancers, pictograph and birding tours, climbing demonstrations, and campfire storytelling. *Hueco Tanks State Park, 6900 Hueco Tanks Road No. 1. 915-857-1135; tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/hueco-tanks*

#### El Paso

##### Boo at the Zoo

Oct. 26-27

This wild event offers a fun-filled day with animal encounters, children's activities, games, and frightfully delightful decorations for more than 19,000 visitors. *El Paso Zoo, 4001 E. Paisano Drive. 915-212-0966; elpasozoo.org*

#### Fort Davis

##### Open Weekend at Davis

##### Mountains Preserve

Oct. 11-13

The Nature Conservancy's Davis Mountains Preserve opens for hiking, biking, equestrian activities, picnics, photography, and birding. *Davis Mountains Preserve, SH 118, 25 miles northwest of Fort Davis, 10 miles past McDonald Observatory. 432-426-2390; nature.org*

#### Pecos

##### Reeves County Fall Fair

Oct. 4-5

Enjoy two days of fun, games, food, a variety of vendors, quilt and food shows, art exhibits, and arts and crafts at the 74th annual fair. *Reeves County Civic Center, 1500 S. Cedar St. 432-445-2406; visitpecos.com*

### GULF COAST

#### Baytown

##### Heritage Scaritage Festival

Oct. 26

Ring in fall with arts and crafts vendors, food, tours of the authentic 1894 one-room school and 1910 farmhouse, living history reenactments, wool-spinning demonstrations, fiddle/banjo music, scarecrows, pumpkin decorating, face painting, and games. *Republic of Texas Plaza, 5117 N. Main St. 281-421-2099; baytownhistory.org*

#### Galveston

##### ARToberFEST

Oct. 19-20

The 22nd annual outdoor fine arts festival features more than 100 artists throughout four blocks in Galveston's historic downtown Cultural Arts District. *The Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice St. 800-821-1894; thegrand.com*

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**Galveston**

**Island Oktoberfest**

Oct. 25-26  
Enjoy a full weekend of food, drinks, live performances, and dancing. Attendees are encouraged to dress in traditional German costumes. *First Lutheran Church, 2415 Winnie St. islandoktoberfest.com*

**Galveston**

**Lone Star Motorcycle Rally**

Oct. 31-Nov. 3  
Experience the largest four-day biker rally in the country. The event features bike shows, live concerts, and celebrity appearances. *Downtown Galveston, Strand Street and Seawall locations. lonestarrally.com*

**Houston**

**Korean Festival**

Oct. 5  
The Korean American Society of Houston presents its 11th annual festival. Partnering with dozens of global and local sponsors, the festival includes amazing food, interactive games, and special guest performances on the main stage for more than 40,000 visitors. *Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. 713-400-7336; kfesthouston.com*

**Houston**

**Bayou City Art Festival**

Oct. 12-13  
Houston's largest art festival transforms the streets of downtown as it spotlights 300 artists representing 19 disciplines. Meet artists, view original works, and purchase world-class art, prints, jewelry, and sculptures. Enjoy live music, entertainment, beverage stations, and food trucks. *Downtown Houston, 901 Bagby St. 713-521-0133; artcolonyassociation.org*

**Lake Jackson**

**Sea Center Spooktacular**

Oct. 27  
Dress up in a Halloween costume and enjoy crafts, games, and other special programs around the fish-filled, floor-to-ceiling aquariums. *Sea Center Texas, 302 Medical Drive. 979-292-0100; tpwd.texas.gov/fishing/sea-center-texas*

**Port Aransas**

**Beachtoberfest**

Through Oct. 27  
Activities include the Port A Live Music Fest, the Texas Super Chef Throwdown Series, Beach Pumpkin Hustle Fun Run, the Harvest Moon Regatta, Shorty's 36th annual Pig Party, Old Town Fest, the Sand Pumpkin Patch, Haunted Hayrides, and Surf Fest. *Various locations.*

361-749-5919; portaransas.org/beachtoberfest

**Richmond**

**Texian Market Days Festival**

Oct. 26  
Discover more than 150 years of Texas history at the 36th annual festival with battle reenactments, live music, pioneers, cowboys, and historic home tours. *George Ranch Historical Park, 10215 FM 762. 281-343-0218; texianmarketdays.com*

**Rockport-Fulton**

**Rockport-Fulton Seafair**

Oct. 10-13  
Right on the Aransas Navigation District grounds, the 45th annual festival has live big-name and local entertainment, including headliner Tracy Byrd on Friday night. Enjoy a gumbo cookoff, hilarious crab races, arts and crafts, a market, food vendors, an outdoor expo, a car show, and a kayak race. *Festival Grounds at Rockport Harbor, 101 Seabreeze Drive. 361-729-6445; rockportseafair.com*

**South Padre Island**

**Sandcastle Days**

Oct. 3-6  
More than 30,000 fans watch sand artists qualify for the World Championship of Sand Sculpting. *Clayton's Beach Bar & Grill, 6900 Padre Blvd. 956-761-3000; sopadre.com*

**Victoria**

**Bootfest**

Oct. 4-5  
The free festival features Texas country music, Western crafts and performers, a free kids' corral, and food and merchandise vendors. *DeLeon Plaza, 101 N. Main St. 361-485-3116; bootfest.org*

**Victoria**

**The Texas Mile**

Oct. 18-20  
Named one of the top speed events in the world, drivers from around the country push the limits of their vehicles on the airport's 1-mile track. *Victoria Regional Airport, 609 Foster Field Drive. 281-303-1844; texasmile.net*

**West Columbia**

**Hogg-toberfest**

Oct. 5  
Celebrate the season and learn about harvest time on an 1800s plantation with hayrides, crafts, sugar cane, storytelling, and more. *Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Site, 1702 N. 13th St. 979-345-4656; visitvarnerhoggplantation.com*

**HILL COUNTRY**

**Austin**

**Austin City Limits Music Festival**

Oct. 4-6, 11-13  
One of the country's largest celebrations of live music, this two-weekend, six-day festival brings the magic of the famed public TV series *Austin City Limits* outside the studio and into Austin's most beloved park. More than 150 musical acts—including Billie Eilish, Mumford & Sons, and Tame Impala—take over eight stages, along with local food vendors, brewers, artists, and pop-up shops. *Zilker Park, 2100 Barton Springs Road. aclfestival.com*

**Austin**

**Gem Capers**

Oct. 18-20  
This gem and mineral show includes members' mineral collections, a touch table, and a fluorescent mineral display of rocks that glow under special lighting. Enjoy demos on stone faceting, wire wrapping, and cabbaging. Don't miss jewelry making and gemstone Wheel of Fortune. *Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Road. 512-458-9546; agms-tx.org*

**Austin**

**Texas Book Festival**

Oct. 26-27  
Known as one of the largest and most prestigious literary festivals in the country, the annual event features more than 250 nationally and critically recognized authors, more than 20 venues including the State Capitol, 100-plus exhibitors, local food trucks, and countless opportunities to meet authors and fellow book lovers. *Various locations. texasbookfestival.org*

**Boerne**

**Antique Tractor Pull and KurbisFest**

Oct. 12  
This is a special KurbisFest ("Pumpkin Fest" in German) that includes the annual "Key to the Hills" Tractor Pull. *The AgriCultural Museum, 102 City Park Road. 210-445-1080; visitboerne.org/calendar*

**Cedar Park**

**Fable Fest**

Oct. 26  
Jousting knights and costumed characters abound at this festival offering food truck fare, musical performances, story time, a shopping bazaar, a petting zoo, and a jousting show. *Elizabeth Milburn Park, 1901 Sun Chase Blvd. 512-401-5600; cedarparkbooks.org/fable-fest*



**Comfort**

**Harvest Moon Celebration**

Oct. 26

This old-world Halloween and harvest festival offers a full day of food, crafts, entertainment, kids' activities, demonstrations, and contests. Enjoy music and dancing in the evening. Costumes are encouraged. Muleshoe Farm & Ranch Trust, 306 US 87. 830-431-0259; harvestmooncelebration.com

**Dripping Springs**

**Songwriters' Festival**

Oct. 18-20

This is a music festival unlike any other, where you can see, hear, and get to know talented performers who have a deep love of songwriting. Watch more than 30 shows a day by songwriters from all over the U.S. and beyond on six stages, all for free. Various locations on Mercer Street. 512-858-4740; drippingsprings songwritersfestival.com

**Early**

**Stagecoach Market Days**

Oct. 19-20

This two-day event in a historical setting features vendors of all types: wood crafts, metal works, home decor, jewelry, art work, refurbished and repurposed antiques, leather, glass, and boutiques. Stagecoach Station Venues, 400 Old Comanche Road. 325-200-8198; stagecoachstationvenues.com

**Ingram**

**Kerr County Celtic Festival and Scottish Highland Games and Highland Dance Competition**

Oct. 12-13

Celebrate Celtic heritage with song, dance, and Scottish athletics. Hill Country Arts Foundation, 120 Point Theatre Road. 713-256-1173; kerrcountyceltic.com

**Kerrville**

**Kerr County Fair and Carnival/Midway**

Oct. 25-27

The 40th annual event includes judged creative arts exhibits, a 4-H prospect show, bull riding, a carnival and midway, a parade, a dance, vendors, and children's activities. Hill Country Youth Event Center, 3785 SH 27. 830-257-6833; kerrcountyfair.com

**Kerrville**

**Pumpkin Run 5K/10K and Harvest Festival**

Oct. 26

At the ninth annual event, dress in costume and stay for a free festival following the Pumpkin Run. Food,



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**Kerrville Chalk Festival**

Oct 12-13 • kerrvillechalk.org



**Kerr County Fair**

Oct 25-27 • kerrcountyfair.com



**Texas Furniture Makers Show**

Oct 31- Dec 14 • kackerrville.com

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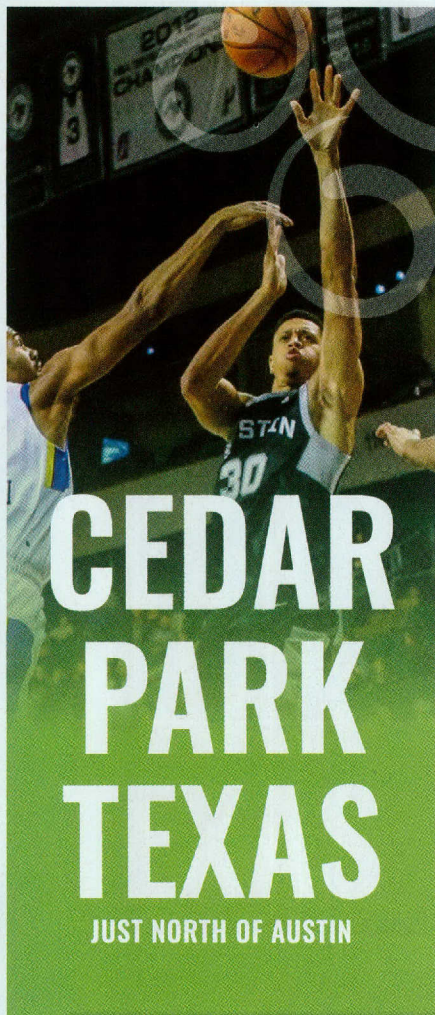
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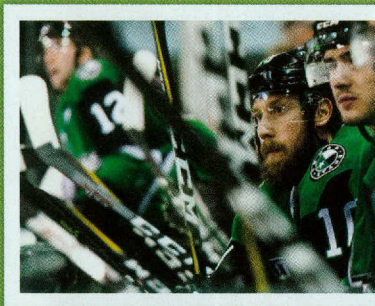
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CedarParkfun.com

a cake walk, and carnival games are included. *Salvation Army Kroc Center, 201 Holdsworth Drive. 830-315-5762; kerrvillekroc.org*

**Llano**  
**Western Trappings on the Llano**  
 Oct. 19–Nov. 2  
 Experience an art-filled Western weekend on the banks of the Llano River and see the finest in custom Western gear and original art. *Llano County Historical Museum, 310 Bessemer Ave. 214-801-0944; westerntrappings.com*

**Llano**  
**PRCA X-treme Bull Riding**  
 Oct. 19  
 The fourth annual bull riding event includes top PRCA cowboys competing against the NFR bucking stock for big prize money. *John L. Kuykendall Arena and Events Center, 2200 RR 152 W. 325-247-5354; prcallanorodeo.com*

**Llano**  
**Llano River Pumpkin Float**  
 Oct. 26  
 Bring your carved pumpkins and enjoy the evening float and glow as you see lit jack-o'-lanterns gliding across the water. There is a cake walk, vendors, children's activities, live music, Wildflower Dance Studio dancers, and pumpkin carving. Costumes are encouraged. *Badu Park, 300 W. Legion Drive. 325-247-5354; facebook.com/llanoriverpumpkinfloat*

**New Braunfels**  
**Gruene Music and Wine Fest**  
 Oct. 10–13  
 The 33rd annual festival has specially curated wine and beer tastings, plus live music. *Gruene Historic District, 1601 Hunter Road. 830-629-5077; gruenemusicandwinefest.org*

**New Braunfels**  
**Fall Train Show**  
 Oct. 26–27  
 Enjoy extra-large exhibits of LEGO trains; seven to nine large displays of traveling model railroads of various scales; more than 60 vendors displaying items to buy, sell, and swap; drawings and prizes; and a mini food court at this event hosted by the Historic Railroad and Modelers Society. Kids get to be a junior engineer at the Kids Run the Trains layout. *Civic and Convention Center, 375 S. Castell Ave. 830-627-2447; newbraunfelsrailroadmuseum.org*

**New Braunfels**  
**Texas Clay Festival**  
 Oct. 26–27  
 The 27th annual event features the

work of more than 80 Texas potters and clay artists. View and purchase a wide variety of pottery, from traditional to sculptural, by the top clay artists in the state. Demonstrations are held in four tents throughout both days, from forming on the potters wheel to hand-building and raku firing. *Gruene Historical District, 1296 Gruene Road. 830-629-7975; texasclayfestival.com*

**San Marcos**  
**Sacred Springs Powwow**  
 Oct. 19–20  
 This annual celebration of the Native American culture that has been part of the San Marcos area for thousands of years features dancers from across Texas dressed in beautiful, handcrafted regalia. Booths offer authentic arts and food. *Meadows Center, 201 San Marcos Springs Drive. 512-393-3310; sspowwow.com*

## PANHANDLE PLAINS

**Amarillo**  
**Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association Wrangler World Championship**  
 Oct. 15–19  
 This world championship event determines who is the fastest and most accurate shot on horseback. *Amarillo National Center, 3301 SE 10th Ave. 806-376-7767*

**Eastland**  
**RipFest**  
 Oct. 5  
 Enjoy a 5K, a large parade, vendor booths, bounce houses, pony rides, a car show, live music, and tons of food. Prizes are given to the top parade floats in various categories. *Downtown Square, 100 W. Main St. 254-629-2332; eastlandchamber.com/ripfest*

**Mineral Wells**  
**Crazy Water Festival**  
 Oct. 11–12  
 The 40th annual event is a crazy-fun time for a crazy-good cause. There are vendors, the Crazy 5K, Crazy Car Show, live music, a children's area, a chalk art competition, and a beer garden. *Downtown Mineral Wells, Sixth Street. 940-325-2557; crazywaterfestival.org*

## PINEY WOODS

**Conroe**  
**Bull Mania**  
 Oct. 19  
 Top stock contractors bring their

biggest, baddest, and meanest bulls in hopes that these all-star cowboys and bulls put on a show like never before. *The Lone Star Convention and Expo Center, 9055 Airport Road. 936-538-8000; visitconroe.com*

**Conroe**  
**Cajun Catfish Festival**  
 Oct. 11–13  
 This tasty festival draws more than 30,000 people annually to hear live music, browse craft booths and exhibits, and eat a variety of cajun-style food. The kids area has fun rides, a monster mural, a petting zoo, and pony rides. There is also the annual Catfishing Contest and the wine and food area. *Historic Downtown Conroe, 101 S. Main St. 936-539-6009; friendsofconroe.com*

**Grapeland**  
**Lone Star Blues and Heritage Festival**  
 Oct. 25–27  
 This three-day celebration of Texas blues has veteran artists and rising young stars. The Piney Woods of East Texas is rich with blues history of enduring legacy. Considered the westernmost region of the Deep South, it is the birthplace of artists including Blind Lemon Jefferson, Mance Lipscomb, T-Bone Walker, and Lightnin' Hopkins. Join in and celebrate the history, the legacy, and the future of Texas blues at the inaugural Lone Star Blues and Heritage Festival. *Salmon Lake Park, 247 Salmon Lake Road. 936-687-2594; lonestארbluesfest.com*

**Jasper**  
**Fall Butterfly Festival**  
 Oct. 19  
 Come to the Butterfly Capital of Texas for a festival featuring arts and crafts, music, food, exhibitions, and entertainment on the courthouse square. Only one block away from the festivities, the Outdoor Learning Center hosts butterfly releases throughout the day. *Various locations. 409-384-2762*

**Jefferson**  
**Texas Sounds International Country Music Awards**  
 Oct. 17–20  
 Top musicians from more than 15 nations flock to Jefferson to compete in three evenings of concerts and a line-dancing competition. Awards follow on Sunday with performances by all the winners. *Downtown Jefferson, Austin Street. 903-634-7665; texassounds.org*

**Kilgore  
Oktoberfest**

Oct. 5  
This family-friendly event is the authentic German experience in East Texas with German food, music, drinks, and children's activities. Come dressed for the occasion in a dirndl or lederhosen and enter the Best Dressed competition. *Various locations.* 903-988-4117; [kilgoremaintstreet.com/oktoberfest-2018](http://kilgoremaintstreet.com/oktoberfest-2018)

**Kilgore  
East Texas Oilmen's Chili Cookoff**

Oct. 24  
This annual all-you-can-eat chili throwdown showcases oilfield service and energy companies from Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma as they prepare hundreds of pounds of chili and compete to claim the title of No. 1 chili in the oilfield. *World's Richest Acre, 101-199 E. Main St.* 903-984-5571; [easttexasoilmen-s-chili-cook-off.org](http://easttexasoilmen-s-chili-cook-off.org)

**Palestine  
Hot Pepper Festival**

Oct. 26  
Everything is hotter in Texas, and this festival is no exception. There is a hot-pepper-eating contest, live music, interactive activities, and free admission. *Historic Downtown Palestine, 101 Main St.* 903-731-8428; [visitpalestine.com](http://visitpalestine.com)

**Rusk  
Pumpkin Patch Train**

Oct. 5, 12, 19, 26  
Every Saturday, the pumpkin patch opens and trains depart to celebrate the harvest season. A pumpkin patch is full of interactive games, prizes, tricks, and treats. Costumes welcome. *Texas State Railroad—Rusk Depot, 535 Park Road 76.* 855-632-7729; [texasstaterailroad.net/events/pumpkin-patch](http://texasstaterailroad.net/events/pumpkin-patch)

**Tyler  
Texas Rose Festival**

Oct. 17-20  
Rich in heritage and tradition, the festival offers enchanting ceremonial events such as the Rose Parade and the Queen's Tea. All of this happens amid a backdrop of brilliant roses. *Various locations.* 903-592-1661; [visittyler.com/rosefest](http://visittyler.com/rosefest)

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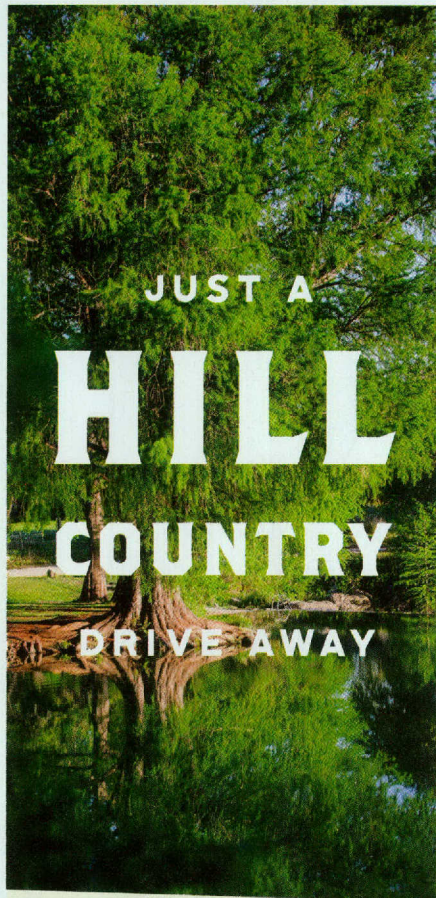
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are back. Enjoy activities for the entire family throughout the day and come back for an evening of spine-chilling scares after the sun goes down. *Six Flags Over Texas*, 2201 Road to Six Flags. 817-640-8900; [sixflags.com/overtexas](http://sixflags.com/overtexas)

**Aubrey**  
**Peanut Festival**

Oct. 5  
This festival dates to 1986, when residents began celebrating the harvest of the local cash crop. Today, it honors the area's peanut heritage and includes a full slate of activities including live music, street performers, peanuttty contests, and more than 100 arts and crafts booths. *Aubrey Festival Grounds*, 301 S. Main St. 940-343-1313; [aubreypeanutfestival.com](http://aubreypeanutfestival.com)

**Bellville**  
**Austin County Fair and Rodeo**

Oct. 4-13  
This year's fair brings Koe Wetzel, Parker McCollum, Mickey Gilley, Johnny Lee, and John Michael Montgomery to Bellville for four nights of concerts. Also enjoy nightly rodeos, livestock shows, queens pageants, a carnival, a parade, and hypnotist magic shows. *Austin County Fair Grounds*, 1076 E. Hill St. 979-865-5995; [austincountyfair.com](http://austincountyfair.com)

**Brenham**  
**Texas Arts and Music Festival**

Oct. 18-20  
The fourth annual event is full of live music, art, food, and drinks. Throughout the festival, artists paint masterful works on exterior walls in downtown Brenham. *Downtown Brenham*, 115 W. Main St. 979-337-7580; [texasartsandmusicfestival.com](http://texasartsandmusicfestival.com)

**Bryan**  
**Boonville Days Festival**

Oct. 5  
This free festival features the Buffalo Stampede Half Marathon and 5K, a chuckwagon cookoff, demonstrations, arts and crafts, music, artisans, and reenactors. *Brazos Valley Museum Of Natural History*, 3232 Briarcrest Drive. 979-776-2195; [brazosvalleymuseum.org](http://brazosvalleymuseum.org)

**Cuero**  
**Turkeyfest**

Oct. 11-13  
Held annually the second weekend of October, the event features food, dances, a parade, entertainment, and the final heat in the "Great Gobbler Gallop" turkey race to see which town gets the title

of "Turkey Capital of the World." *Cuero Municipal Park*, Leonard Roy Harmon Drive. 361-275-2112; [turkeyfest.org](http://turkeyfest.org)

**Cuero**  
**Cuero Celebrates Warhol**

Oct. 11-Nov. 16  
This new exhibit features Andy Warhol's "Cowboys and Indians" series. Other noted Western and Native American artists featured are Bob Wade, John Nieto, John Moyers, Billy Schenck, and Ira Yeager. *Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum*, 302 N. Esplanade St. 361-277-2866; [chisholmtrailmuseum.org](http://chisholmtrailmuseum.org)

**Dallas**  
**Autumn at the Arboretum**

Sept. 21-Oct. 31  
As one of the Southwest's most picturesque fall horticultural displays, the garden is a spectacular show of color with 150,000 stunning, fall-blooming plants; the internationally acclaimed Pumpkin Village, featuring more than 90,000 pumpkins; and Rory Meyer's Children's Adventure Garden. This year's theme is "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown." *Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden*, 8525 Garland Road. 214-515-6615; [dallasarboretum.org](http://dallasarboretum.org)

**Dallas**  
**State Fair of Texas**

Sept. 27-Oct. 20  
The 24-day fair has more than 110 daily attractions and activities including the Texas Auto Show, four stages of Texas music, a nightly starlight parade, and Big Tex to greet visitors near and far. *Fair Park*, 3921 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. 214-565-9931; [bigtex.com](http://bigtex.com)

**Edom**  
**Edom Art Festival**

Oct. 12-13  
For more than 47 years, this small artists' community has hosted a free festival for working artists to present their talents. High-quality art, fine crafts, live music, and food and wine fill the festival grounds behind the resident artists' studios on the only main street in town. *FM 279 and FM 314*. 903-852-6473; [visitedom.com/edom-art-festival](http://visitedom.com/edom-art-festival)

**Elgin**  
**Hogeye Festival**

Oct. 24-26  
The 32nd annual festival features handmade arts and crafts, live music on three stages, delicious food, a carnival, a car show, a pork cookoff, a farm equipment exhibit,

kids activities, cow patty bingo, a cornhole tournament, and plenty of pig puns to go around. *Historic Downtown Elgin*, 109 Depot St. [hogeyefestival.com](http://hogeyefestival.com)

**Flatonia**  
**Czhillispjel**

Oct. 25-27  
This festival is a nod to Flatonia's Czech and German heritage. Enjoy cookoffs for "czhilli," barbecue, beans, and margaritas. There is live music in a tented biergarten, food, arts and crafts, a carnival, a parade, a car and truck show, and contests. *Downtown Flatonia*, 101 E. N. Main St. 361-865-3920; [flatoniachamber.com](http://flatoniachamber.com)

**Fort Worth**  
**Gordon Parks: The New Tide, Early Work**

Through Dec. 29  
Organized by the National Gallery of Art in collaboration with The Gordon Parks Foundation, this exhibition highlights Parks' mastery of the camera to create an uplifting vision of African American life in the mid-20th century. *Amon Carter Museum of American Art*, 3501 Camp Bowie Blvd. 817-738-1933; [cartermuseum.org](http://cartermuseum.org)

**Fort Worth**  
**Pottery in the Park Arts Festival**

Oct. 5-6  
The 17th annual free festival features more than 50 artists specializing in pottery, jewelry, and glass art. Guests can watch wheel and hands-on demonstrations. *Corporate Employees Recreational Association*, 3300 Bryant Irvin Road. 817-528-1915; [cera-fw.org](http://cera-fw.org)

**Fort Worth**  
**Bell Fort Worth Alliance Air Show**

Oct. 19-20  
One of the nation's premier air shows draws the best in aviation talent and ground activities. Featured performers are the U.S. Navy Blue Angels and the F-22 Raptor Demo Team. *Alliance Airport*, 2221 Alliance Blvd. 817-890-1000; [allianceairshow.com](http://allianceairshow.com)

**Fort Worth**  
**Red Steagall Cowboy Gathering and Western Swing Festival**

Oct. 25-27  
One of the top authentic cowboy festivals in the world features music, a ranch rodeo, and cowboy poetry to celebrate the heritage of the American cowboy. *Fort Worth Stockyards National Historic District*, 2501 Rodeo Plaza. 817-336-8791; [redsteagallcowboygathering.com](http://redsteagallcowboygathering.com)

**Frisco**  
**Lone Star Storytelling Festival**  
 Oct. 17-18

Share an evening or two of laughter with nationally renowned professional storytellers Lyn Ford and Bill Harley at the 16th annual event. *George A. Purefoy Municipal Center, 6101 Frisco Square Blvd. 972-292-5266; visitfrisco.com*

**Grapevine**  
**Grapevine Vintage Railroad Train Excursions**

Oct. 5-6, 12-13, 19-20  
 Travel along the Historic Cotton Belt Route between Grapevine and the Fort Worth Stockyards. Special fall events include Halloween Trains and a Witches Brew Train. *Cotton Belt Depot, 705 S. Main St. 817-410-3185; gvrr.com*

**Grapevine**  
**Butterfly Flutterby**

Oct. 19  
 During this 22nd annual event, witness hundreds of butterflies being released into the wild as they migrate to Mexico. A butterfly-themed parade kicks off the event along with dozens of activities including games, scavenger hunts, and face painting. *Grapevine Botanical Gardens, 411 Ball St. 817-410-3185; grapevintexasusa.com*

**Madisonville**  
**Texas Mushroom Festival**  
 Oct. 19

Every October, the downtown square is converted into a free old-time street festival, complete with live music and dance performances, delicious food, and hundreds of vendors offering handcrafted wares. Start your day with the Shiitake 5K run, then enjoy an auto showcase, a photography and art contest, Texas craft beers, wine tastings, and kids activities. *Downtown Madisonville, 113 W. Trinity St. 936-348-9333; texasmushroomfestival.com*

**Mesquite**  
**PumpkinFest**

Oct. 19  
 The 19th annual event includes a live jousting show and competition, an archery show, a falconry show, ghost and goblin storytelling, a maze, carnival games, bounce houses, food, and trick-or-treating in Peddler's Alley. Costumes are encouraged. *Valley Creek Park, 2482 Pioneer Road. 972-216-6260; visitmesquitetx.com/events*

**Pilot Point**  
**Bonnie and Clyde Days**

Oct. 12  
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- ★ REEL East Texas Film Festival - Nov 14-16

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Oktoberfest

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rates and reenacts the 1967 filming of the bank robbery scene in *Bonnie and Clyde*, starring Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty, at the historic bank building on the town square. See a classic car show, historic exhibits, demonstrations, craft and food vendors, live music, children's activities, and an annual soap box race. *Historic Town Square*, 102 E. Main St. 940-293-7434; [bonnieandclydedays.org](http://bonnieandclydedays.org)

### Plano

#### Plano International Festival Oct. 12

Enjoy multicultural music and dance performances, ethnic food trucks, and displays from more than 100 cultures. Hands-on children's activities, a flag parade, and the area's only outdoor naturalization ceremony round out the free fun. *Haggard Park*, 901 E. 15th St. 214-495-7838; [planointernationalfestival.org](http://planointernationalfestival.org)

### Plano

#### Fall Plano Train Show Oct. 12

Experience the largest model train show in North Dallas. Novices and seasoned engineers alike can enjoy club layouts, how-to clinics, and vendors with trains. Tickets available only at the door. Cash only. Parking is free. *Plano Event Center*, 2000 E. Spring Creek Parkway. [dfwtrainshows.com](http://dfwtrainshows.com)

### Rockdale

#### Fall Music Festival Oct. 5

Live music, wiener dog races, a car show, a vendor market, a street dance, zombie and trick-or-treat runs, a washer tournament, a chili cookoff, and carnival booths are all part of the fun at this second annual festival. *Downtown Rockdale*, 106 N. Main St. 512-446-2030

### Round Top

#### Fall Antiques Show Sept. 19-Oct. 6

Shop more than 100 antique venues across Round Top, Carmine, Burton, Warrenton, and the Winedale area. 110 Schumann Lane. 979-249-4042; [explorroundtop.com/antiques](http://explorroundtop.com/antiques)

### Shiner

#### Shiner Music Fest Oct. 19

Enjoy a day of music, food, beverages, and fun. See performances by American Aquarium, Cory Morrow, and Jarrod Birmingham. *Green-Dickson Park*, 65 CR 350. 361-894-5046; [shinermusicfest.com](http://shinermusicfest.com)

## Sulphur Springs

### World Champion Hopkins County Stew Contest

Oct. 26  
The 50th annual cookoff features more than 150 teams competing for thousands of dollars in prizes. Cooking over open wood fires, teams prepare hearty chicken or beef stew in huge cast-iron pots. *Buford Park, 733 Connally St. hopkinschamber.org*

## Van

### Oil Festival

Oct. 12  
This year marks 90 years of oil in Van, and festivities include a 5K run, barbecue cookoff, a baked and canned goods contest, an auction, games, races, train rides, vendors, inflatables, the Dr. Squeek balloon ministry, oil museum tours, a car show, live music, and an introduction of the newly crowned Van Oil Queen and her court. *Van City Park, 300 VZ CR 1527. 903-963-5051; vantx.com*

## Waxahachie

### Screams Halloween Theme Park

Sept. 27-28; Oct. 4-5, 11-12, 18-19, 25-26  
The world's largest Halloween theme park offers attractions you can tour as many times as you like, scores of professional actors, activities, food and drink, and games. *2511 FM 66. 972-938-3247; screamspark.com*

## Waxahachie

### Texas Country Reporter Festival

Oct. 26  
The 24th annual event features artists, crafters, music, and food from all over the Lone Star State—much of it featured on the public television show over the years. It's free and family-friendly. *Historic Downtown Waxahachie, 100 W. Main St. 469-309-4040; waxahachiecvb.com*

## Yorktown

### Western Days

Oct. 18-20  
Activities at the 61st annual event include music, a carnival, arts and crafts vendors, a chainsaw carver, parades, cookoffs, a quilt show, an arrowhead exhibit, and horse-shoes and washers. *Various locations, 100 block of N. Riedel Street. 361-564-2661; yorktowntx.com*

## Waco

### Heart O' Texas Fair and Rodeo

Oct. 3-13  
At the 64th annual event, enjoy one additional day of the rodeo, fairgrounds, and attractions. Activities include a carnival, beer

and wine garden, mutton bustin', wiener dog races, petting zoo, and the Wild West Market Place. *Extraco Events Center, 4601 Bosque Blvd. 254-776-1660; hotfair.com*

## Waco

### Doc McStuffins: The Exhibit

Oct. 6-Jan. 6  
See the McStuffins Toy Hospital environment and explore the hospital, assume doctor play roles, and help solve problems, all while learning lessons about healthy habits, empathy, and nurturing care. *Mayborn Museum, Baylor University, 1300 S. University Parks Drive. 254-710-1110; maybornmuseum.com*

## Waco

### Silobration

Oct. 17-19  
The fifth annual event features more than 90 artisan vendors from every corner of the U.S., craft eats from Waco and beyond, lawn activities, and a ticketed after-hours JohnnySwim concert. *Magnolia Silos, 601 Webster Ave. 254-235-6111; magnolia.com/events/silobration-2019*

## SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

## La Vernia

### Circle-N-Maze

Oct. 4-27  
Enjoy a 5.5-acre maze plus a mini one for young children. There is also a pumpkin patch, picture stations, and a petting zoo. Come for the special "Lights Out" hours to tackle the maze in the dark. Multiple vendors and food trucks are set up, as well as hay bales and games. *Circle-N-Maze, 558 CR 345. 210-274-3816; circlenmaze.com*

## San Antonio

### Black International Film Festival

Oct. 10-13  
The inaugural festival presents indie films in competition throughout the global diaspora, panels, workshops, and networking events. *Various locations. 202-505-3144; sobiff.com*

## San Antonio

### Mala Luna Music Festival

Oct. 26-27  
National talent is showcased alongside up-and-comers at this annual event that also pays tribute to Dia de los Muertos. The weekend features multiple outdoor stages, vendors, artists, themed designs and costumes, and a diverse lineup. *Nelson Wolff Stadium, 5757 US 90. malalunamusicfestival.com*

## THE DAYTRIPPER'S TOP 5

# Brownsville

*Trippin' to the tip of Texas*

BY CHET GARNER

Down at the Southern tip of our state, Tex-Mex is more than just a food group—it's an entire way of life. And here in one of our most vibrant border cities, the cultures of two countries blend together into one incredible day trip. (And yes, I'm considering Texas a country.) This town started with a "bang" and continues to excite everyone who visits.

### Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park

The Mexican-American War may get glossed over in most history classes, but it gets the full treatment here. The park museum tells the story of a war that resulted in the U.S. acquiring more than 1 million square miles of land from Texas to California. It's incredible to walk the battlefield where the first shots were fired in 1846, and where the U.S. Army—outnumbered by more than 1,000 men—defeated the powerful Mexican forces. Brownsville was founded in 1848 and named for Major Jacob Brown, who fought and died while serving in the war. *7200 Paredes Line Road, 956-541-2785; nps.gov/paal*

### Vera's Backyard Bar-B-Que

This joint still uses the traditional Mexican method of preparing barbacoa by burying a full cow head in the ground atop burning coals. It's the last of its kind in Texas. Smoking the full head comes with some peculiar delicacies, including the *cachete* (cheek meat), the *lengua* (tongue), and the *ojo* (eyeball). There's nothing better than when you put these delicious, tender, and smoky meats on a fresh tortilla and cover them with homemade salsa. *2404 Southmost Blvd., 956-546-4159; facebook.com/verasbackyardbarbque*

### Sabal Palm Sanctuary

Hidden along the Rio Grande and behind the beautiful 1892 Rabb Plantation House is a surprisingly lush forest of native palm trees. Teeming with wild greenery and home to some of the state's most beautiful bird species, including the green jay and chachalaca, this preserve makes a short hike feel like you've tripped to the Amazon rainforest. You're sure to be lost in no time, which isn't always a bad thing. *8435 Sabal Palm Grove Road, 956-541-8034; sabalpalmsanctuary.org*

### El Ultimo Taco Taqueria

When you're in South Texas, eating tacos for every meal is the sign of a day trip done right. This establishment is one of Brownsville's most beloved taco huts and stays open till 3 a.m. to service everyone's late-night cravings. The menu is short and sweet with flautas, tostadas, and choice street taco classics including bistec, al pastor, mollejas, and barbacoa. A good starting order should be at least four tacos, but don't be surprised if you eat eight before you leave the table. *938 N. Expressway, 956-554-7663; facebook.com/elultimotacotaqueria*

### Boca Chica Beach

You literally can't trip any further south on the Texas coast. This wild and undeveloped area of beach and coastal wetland reaches all the way to where the Rio Grande River reaches the Gulf of Mexico. I'd recommend bringing a swimsuit, a fishing pole, and a sense of awe, as it's amazing to see these two iconic waterways crash together. *23 miles east on SH 4.*

**Whether you follow my footsteps or forge your own path,  
I hope to see you on the road.**

*Chet Garner is the host of The Daytripper® travel show on PBS. To view the Brownsville episode visit [thedaytripper.com](http://thedaytripper.com). Follow along on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter @chettripper.*



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**OPEN ROAD** | continued from Page 17

and I arrived at the old town square by late afternoon.

I strolled among the renovated buildings and admired the antiques on display. A band performed old Western swing tunes while everyone lined up for food and iced-down beer. Under the massive live oak next to the old stone jail, The Twig Book Shop, based in San Antonio, set up tables with books by the featured authors, along with Dobie's titles. Some folks brought their kids and a couple of friendly dogs wandered about. Everyone seemed to fit right in.

As night fell, the communal campfire blazed inside a stone pit, carrying the aroma of mesquite. If anything could summon Dobie's spirit back to Live Oak County, I thought, this would do it. "Often I get homesick for the smell of burning mesquite wood," Dobie once observed. "Nothing seems remote to the light and the warmth of the fire." Beyond the softly lit plaza and flickering flames, I could hear the occasional yip of a coyote, Dobie's favorite animal, out roaming somewhere in the darkness.

Then the show began. I thought I knew Dobie, but I was completely unprepared for the power of these live readings. I'd only read him on the page. Now, for the first time, I was hearing his stories as they were meant to be shared—out loud, under the open skies, with a campfire crackling. The event was a revelation to me. Dobie's writing sounded great, and so many other people were enjoying hearing it. I began to realize that I had underestimated his gifts as a writer.

When the next autumn rolled around, in 2013, I felt the pull of Dobie Dichos and returned to Oakville, this time as an audience member. I've been coming back every year since, paying close attention to how the writers and storytellers have carefully curated their selections of Dobie's material to great effect. Sitting in my lawn chair underneath the twisting limbs of a centuries-old live oak, warmed by the mesquite fire, and listening to Dobie's words, a spark lit inside of me.

Inspired by what I was hearing, a new

idea began to form. Was there a way to recover Dobie's purest, strongest voice—the voice these writers and storytellers were sharing to delighted crowds every year at Dobie Dichos?

And then it hit me: What if I went back through Dobie's writings, this time with an eye toward selecting his most vital and enduring pieces? Then I could judiciously edit those works—pruning away the brushy overgrowth at the heart of criticism by the likes of McMurtry—so modern readers could more easily stay on the narrative trail. I could collect all of them into a new book that specifically honored Dobie's literary legacy.

I plunged back into reading Dobie and found a once-lost mine, a rich vein of literary ore. I could see, at long last, that Dobie wasn't just a dusty old writer; he was a timeless writer. He wrote at a moment in history when rapid technological changes were upending people's lives, when the natural world seemed to be under attack from all sides. Dobie eloquently confronts those critical issues head on, but he also helps us better appreciate what makes this place we call Texas so special.

When I finished putting together my new book, Sibley invited me back to Dobie Dichos, as a presenter, to give everyone a sneak preview. That's how I found myself stepping up onto the back of that pickup truck last fall.

I looked out at the audience and made my confession. "It took me a long time to figure out that J. Frank Dobie could be a brilliant writer," I said. Then I began reading from my edited version of part of Dobie's book *Voice of the Coyote*. By the time I got to the line, "I confess to a sympathy for the coyote that has grown until it lives in the deepest part of my nature," you could hear Dobie's words taking over, casting a spell of their own as they floated on the evening breeze.

Dobie once observed, "Great literature transcends its native land, but none that I know of ignores its soil." Here on our state's soil, a new generation is reawakening to Dobie's enduring contributions to Texas literature. **L**





# Cowboy Corner

Red Steagall's journey from Panhandle polio survivor to country hit-maker and cowboy ambassador

By Matt Joyce

**D**riving the backroads northwest of Fort Worth, you'd never know that one of the luminaries of Texas country and western music lives just around the bend. Down a gravel road, a pickup marked with Red Steagall's "RS" brand signals that Steagall is around today. Inside his office, framed records and photos signed by the likes of Ronald Reagan line the wall, hinting at Steagall's influential career. The display saddles, miniature chuckwagon, and Western artworks reflect a fascination with ranching heritage that has made Steagall one of the nation's preeminent cowboy poets.

Born in Montague County, Steagall grew up in the Panhandle town of Sanford. He studied animal science and agronomy in college, but it was music that took him to places like Hollywood

**"Texas is its own country, and the reason for that is we have so much pride in who we are and what we've accomplished."**

and Nashville. For the past 42 years, Steagall's ranch in Azle has been home base for a career that's generated 25 albums, including the 1976 classic *Lone Star Beer and Bob Wills Music*. His resume also includes several books of cowboy poetry, movie and TV appearances, and in 1991, legislative designation as Texas' "Official Cowboy Poet."

These days, the 80-year-old hosts a radio show and TV program chronicling the ranching way of life. When not traveling for work—177 days on the road in 2018—Steagall dedicates his time to causes like the West Texas Rehabilitation Center and the Red Steagall Cowboy Gathering and Western Swing Festival, held every October for 29 years at the Fort Worth Stockyards.

**Q: You overcame polio as a 15-year-old. That's hard to imagine.**

**A:** It was pretty traumatic. I was on the football team, the Phillips Blackhawks, and I woke up the morning before the first game with a horrible temperature and excruciating pain in my head and my back. And then I spent two weeks in the hospital and two weeks in a rehab center. That was in September of '54, and in January of '55, the Salk vaccine was in full use. So I'm the last of the polio class, thank God.

**Q: What were the impacts of the disease?**

**A:** I lost the use of my upper left arm. So I have the use of my lower arm and my hand, but my fingers were just like little pieces of rope. I regained the strength in my fingers by playing a mandolin and a guitar. It took several weeks to concentrate on one finger at a time, getting enough strength to make a chord.

**Q: Is that what led you into the music business?**

**A:** That's all I ever wanted to do really. After I got out of college, I got into agricultural chemistry and sales, and then I had some friends who were doing really well in Hollywood, and they invited me to come out. One afternoon, I came home and my roommate [Don Lannier] was fooling with his guitar, and he

and I wrote a song called "Here We Go Again," and we got Ray Charles to record it. That was in '66, and by 1969, I had 60 of my songs recorded by other people, and I started recording myself. My first chart record was "Party Dolls and Wine," which was released in December of 1968. It got into the Top 10, and that kicked my career off.

**Q: You like to sing about rodeos. Did you ever participate in any?**

**A:** When I was at school in West Texas [A&M, in Canyon] a group of my friends built a bucking barrel, a suspended barrel. And I learned to ride that thing, and they entered me in an intramural rodeo, and I won it, but I had to tie my left arm down to my chest so I wouldn't slap the bull and get disqualified. For about three years I entered amateur rodeos in the Panhandle and eastern New Mexico—and then realized I could make a lot more money playing the dances.

**Q: You're credited with discovering Reba McEntire. How did that happen?**

**A:** I saw her sing the national anthem at the National Finals Rodeo in Oklahoma City [in 1974], and I was really overwhelmed with her ability to control her voice, both from a tone standpoint and an emotional standpoint. I was living in Nashville at the time, and I needed a female singer to do two songs. So I invited Reba and her mother to come to Nashville, and we cut a demo on those two songs. We pitched that demo and finally got some interest from Mercury Records. And so we signed Reba to Mercury, and it just built from there.

**Q: When did cowboy poetry become part of your career?**

**A:** I like to say that 1985 was the year that sad songs and waltzes quit selling. What I was doing was no longer competitive in the radio world. That same year the first Cowboy Poetry Gathering was held in Elko, Nevada. I went out there and fell in love with the art form and realized that's where my heart had been all of my life. So for five years I didn't write one song. I

wrote nothing but poetry, and as a result, I created a whole new market for what I do as far as performance goes.

**Q: What are some of your favorite venues to play?**

**A:** I really like to perform for people who understand what I'm talking about, and that is primarily at functions for people who are in the livestock industry—the American Quarter Horse Association, the Angus Association. I have performed at the Fort Worth Stock Show five times, and some of those years will always be the highlight of my career.

**Q: Where do you like to take visitors in this area?**

**A:** I have a lot of friends who are interested in history, and there are a lot of historical places like Isaac Parker's cabin [at Fort Worth's Log Cabin Village] and Greenwood Cemetery where Oliver Loving and Bose Ikard are buried in Weatherford. Everybody likes to go to Fort Worth, to Cowtown, which is changing, but they like to feel like they're going back a hundred years.

**Q: You travel a lot. What distinguishes Texas from the rest of the nation?**

**A:** Texas is its own country. And the reason for that is we have so much pride in who we are and what we've accomplished, and we have a feeling of belonging. It doesn't make any difference where I go in the world, if I wear a hat, they'll say, "Hey, cowboy." Texas is identified with the trail drives that went north to the railheads after the Civil War. And so the cattle business made the image of Texas, but it all started with those people who did not give in to tyranny and developed their own way of life on their own piece of ground.

**Q: How do you explain the enduring appeal of cowboy poetry and Western heritage?**

**A:** The cowboy way of life that I like to talk about extends from an agrarian society where we had to depend on our neighbors, not only for help but for

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The Red Steagall Cowboy Gathering and Western Swing Festival is Oct. 25–27 at the Fort Worth Stockyards. Catch Steagall weekly on *Cowboy Corner*, which airs on radio stations around the country and on SiriusXM; and on *Red Steagall Is Somewhere West of Wall Street*, which airs on RFD-TV and The Cowboy Channel. Steagall's latest album, *Hats Off to the Cowboy*, is planned for release this October. [redsteagall.com](http://redsteagall.com)

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survival. As we moved to the cities, we forgot some of that. We didn't have to really depend on each other anymore. So life changed for all of America. But the thing that remained is a respect for yesterday and the ability to look forward to tomorrow. So the traditions and values of an agrarian way of life make us a harmonious society, and that lifestyle is what America stands for—it's honesty and integrity, loyalty, work ethic, dedication to family, conviction about their belief in God, and practicing common decency and respect for their fellow man every day.

**Q: Which of your poems are you most proud of?**

**A:** The main one is "The Fence that Me and Shorty Built." That was about lessons I learned from my uncle on his farm in northwestern Iowa, when he indicated to me that I'm in charge of my destination, and if I don't choose to be the right kind of person, then I wasn't going to be happy because nobody's gonna be happy with me. 🐎

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# VINTAGE



## Homecoming Heritage

NOV. 18, 1949

**H**igh schools and universities across Texas are gearing up for the autumnal tradition of homecoming, when alumni return for special events like the homecoming football game. Fort Worth photographer Calvin Littlejohn (1909–93) captured this Friday night scene, complete with traditional homecoming mums, at I.M. Terrell High School. The school opened in 1882 as Fort Worth's first black school under segregation and operates today as the I.M. Terrell Academy. With his focus on the African American community, Littlejohn left behind an invaluable record of 20th-century life in Fort Worth. His photos, which are archived at the Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin, are the basis for the 2009 book, *Calvin Littlejohn: Portrait of a Community in Black and White*. **L**

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*Know of any fascinating vintage Texas photographs? Send copies or ideas to [letters@texashighways.com](mailto:letters@texashighways.com).*



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