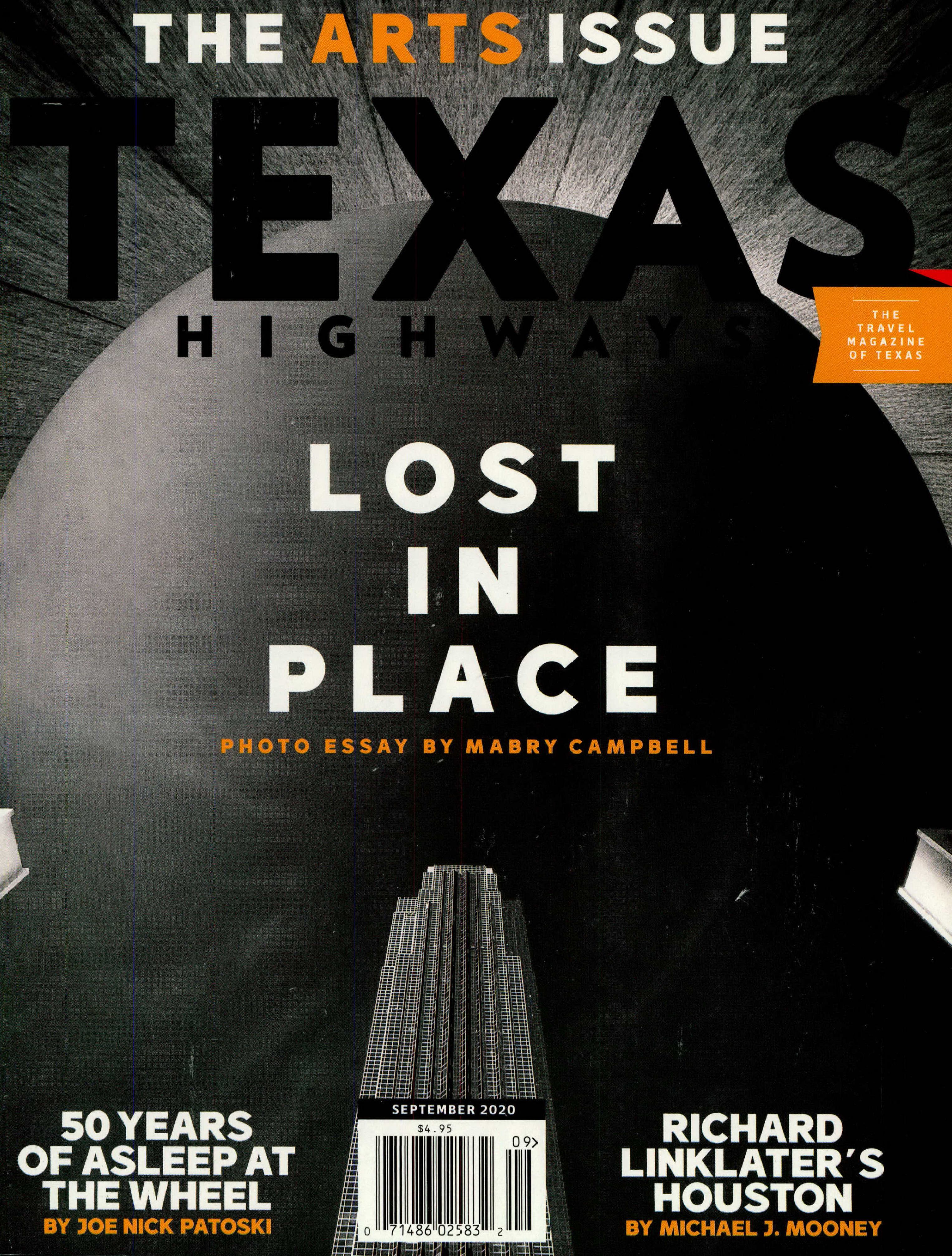


THE ARTS ISSUE

TEXAS HIGHWAYS

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

LOST IN PLACE

PHOTO ESSAY BY MABRY CAMPBELL

50 YEARS OF ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL

BY JOE NICK PATOSKI

SEPTEMBER 2020

$4.95

09>

0 71486 02583 2

RICHARD LINKLATER'S HOUSTON

BY MICHAEL J. MOONEY

GO VISIT
GO EAT
GO PLAY
GO STAY
GO SHOP

You're always the home team in Round Rock! Conveniently located in Central Texas, Round Rock is the best spot for a weekend getaway. Round Rock resides within the beautiful Texas Hill Country Region and neighbors the state's capital, Austin. Visitors have the best of both worlds, enjoying the peace and quiet of a charming southern community with all the amenities and attractions of a big city.

Get your swimsuit ready, Kalahari Resorts & Conventions opens its Texas location this November and will boast the nation's largest indoor waterpark!

GO RR
ROUND ROCK
GOROUNDROCK.COM

GO
ROUND ROCK

LET'S PLAY
AGAIN
SEE WHAT'S GOING
ON IN Frisco
VISITFRISCO.COM/PLAYAGAIN
EIGHT11 PLACE

EDITOR'S

NOTE

Sunset over Goose Island State Park in Rockport.

A New Lens

When photographer Mabry Campbell took the shot of the Houston Water Wall that graces our cover, his aim was to make a well-documented sight look unrecognizable, disorienting even. The picture was taken before 2020, but looking at it now, it seems as if it was conceived to evoke the feeling of this year—when everything familiar is askew, not quite recognizable. For most of us, our daily lives have changed dramatically, and previously routine tasks are tinged with uncertainty about our health and security.

For me, the counterbalance to the anxiety of the present is the new outlook it gives me on how much I have to be thankful for. Like being able to work on this magazine and knowing we are creating it for a community of readers who share in our enthusiasm for the beauty of Texas and the joy of discovering new places to explore. Not having the same freedom to travel as we did in previous summers has given me a deeper appreciation for past trips and brought sharper focus to my memories. Like a few autumns ago when my then 3-year-old son kept mistakenly referring to Big Bend National Park as Big Bend Magical Park on our first family trip there. Or the time I took the scenic route on a solo drive from my home in Driftwood to Rockport, where I enjoyed three-and-a-half glorious hours of quiet contemplation with nothing more pressing to do than take in the view.

Like Campbell's photo, my memories of those trips haven't changed, but my perspective has. Wherever you find yourself in this challenging year, my hope is that the stories and pictures we share each month bring moments of comfort, levity, and appreciation for our shared Texas landscapes.

Emily R Stone

EMILY ROBERTS STONE
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Photo: Dave Shafer

THE GRAND CENTRAL OF GRAPEVINE COMING SOON

Connecting Grapevine to Dallas/Fort Worth and beyond through TEXRail.

Get out of town in town. Grapevine's newest transit-oriented landmark features Harvest Hall with seven globally-inspired kitchens, lively entertainment venues, an observation tower worthy of Texas sunsets and the luxurious Hotel Vin. Get ready—something grand is coming this fall.

GRAPEVINE MAIN
est. 2018

GRAPEVINE

TRINITY METRO
TEXRail

Stay Tuned at GrapevineMain.com

VOLUME 67 . NUMBER 9

SEPTEMBER

38

The Power of Richard Linklater's Nostalgia

Linklater has captured Texas on film in a way no one else has. That continues with his upcoming movie, *Apollo 10 1/2*, set in his hometown of Houston in the late 1960s.

By Michael J. Mooney

46

Texas in Wonderland

The shapes and angles in Mabry Campbell's black-and-white photography may, at first glance, seem entirely abstract. A closer look reveals a different perspective on the familiar.

Photographs by Mabry Campbell

60

Rolling with the Wheel

Half a century ago, a couple of long-haired Philadelphia boys started a country band. Now, Ray Benson reflects on Asleep at the Wheel's 50 years of reinvigorating Western swing.

By Joe Nick Patoski

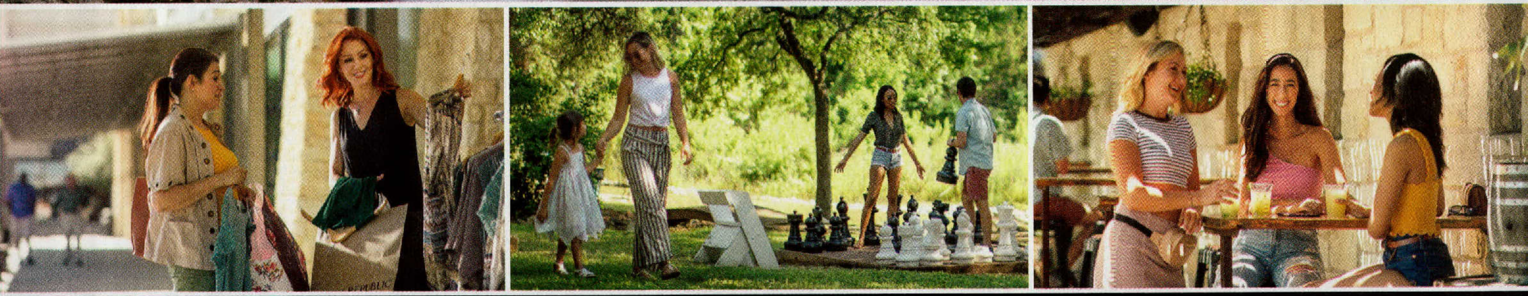
RAY BENSON can't wait to return to the dance hall.

Photo: Jeff Wilson

SEE WHAT THE BUZZ IS ABOUT

BEE CAVE ✱ TEXAS

EST. 1870 | VisitBeeCaveTexas.com



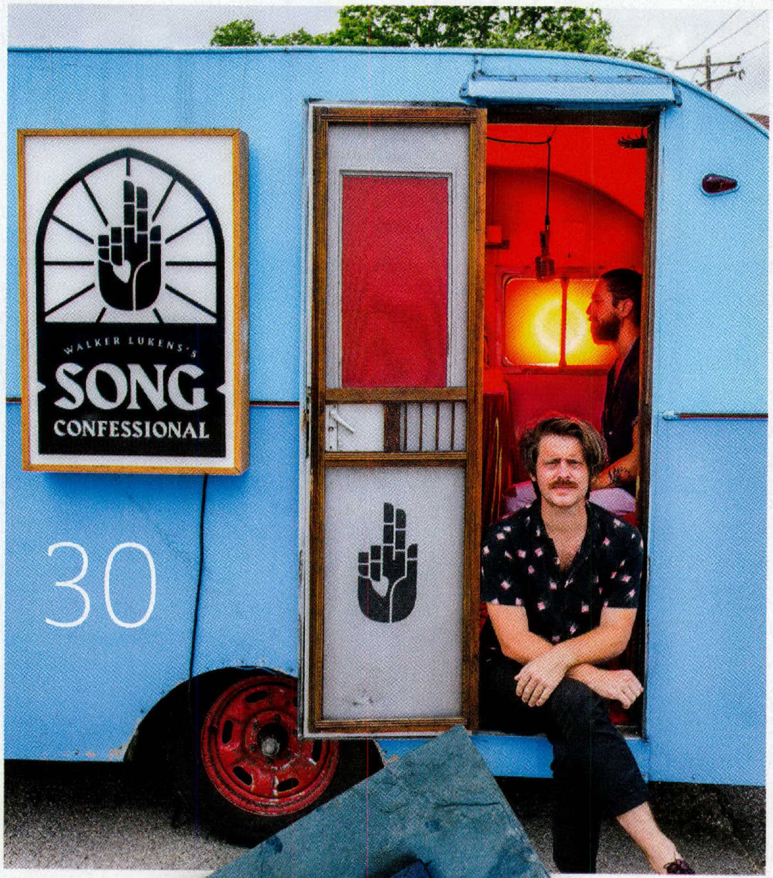
SHOP | PLAY | STAY

Craving a weekend getaway? Hop in the car and head less than 20-minutes west of Austin to Bee Cave, Texas. Here, you'll find sweeping Hill Country views, endless hours of outdoor adventures, and countless local dining and shopping destinations to explore. Once a dot on the map on the way to other places, Bee Cave has become a destination itself. So what are you waiting for? Come see what the buzz is about in Bee Cave.

EXPLORE SAMPLE ITINERARIES AND ALL THAT BEE CAVE HAS TO OFFER AT VISITBEECAVETEXAS.COM

VOLUME 67 . NUMBER 9

SEPTEMBER


WALKER LUKENS'S
SONG
CONFESSIONAL
30

11
Merge

12
Sightseer

14
My Hometown
Justin Treviño on Brady's country music appeal

16
Open Road
Traveling Texas as a child of migrant farmers

25
Drive/Stay
Lodge among the ruins of a Bandera dance hall

30
Drive/Savvy Traveler
Bare your soul in exchange for a song

34
Drive/Made in Texas
Bob "Daddy-O" Wade's legacy in one big book

36
Drive/Atlas
Homecoming mums are a fall tradition

69
Plates
Foraging for mushrooms in East Texas; German-Catholic sausage festivals; authentic gelato in the Hill Country

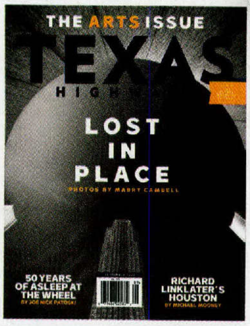
82
Texana
Curandero Don Pedrito Jaramillo had a cure for every ill

86
Daytripper
Houston's Museum District feeds your curiosity

87
Speaking of Texas
Chef Adán Medrano defines Texas Mexican food

89
Vintage
Piano prodigy Amos Milburn, circa 1950

Visit
texashighways.com
for more.


THE ARTS ISSUE
TEXAS HIGHWAYS
LOST IN PLACE
PHOTOS BY MABRY CAMPBELL
50 YEARS OF ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL
RICHARD LINKLATER'S HOUSTON

ON THE COVER
Photo by Mabry Campbell
Houston's Waterwall Park and Williams Tower

Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr. (top); Dave Shafer (bottom)

Behind the Story

For "Mining for Mushrooms" (Page 69), writer Jill Coody Smits accompanied two mushroom foragers on a chanterelle search in Davy Crockett National Forest. Smits had never heard of mushroom foraging before reporting the story, but the idea of spending hours finding a single thing drew her in. "When I'm at the beach I like to shell-seek," the Austin-based writer says. "This was like that but in the woods." There is one main difference between searching for shells and foraging for edible mushrooms: the latter can prove deadly, if you're not careful. "I did some research beforehand, but I pulled up some mushrooms and the foragers were like, 'No, those aren't chanterelles,'" Smits says. "These guys really know what they're doing. I would not have gone out by myself." Accompanied by experts and armed with a clear mission, Smits relished putting the stresses of everyday life on hold. "It's a mindful activity to just look for something," she says.

Featured Contributors

John Jay Cabuay

The New York City-based illustrator and educator says researching Houston chef Adán Medrano for his illustration of "Indigenous Eats" (Page 87) expanded his knowledge of food fusion. "It was educational to understand the difference between Tex-Mex and Texas Mexican," Cabuay says. "Food fusion is very dear to me, being Filipino. It reminded me of the Spanish influences in our local cuisine and the difference between native Filipino food and Spanish-influenced Filipino food." The most recent book he illustrated, *Get Up, Stand Up*, is available now.

ire'ne lara silva

The poet and author wrote about being raised by migrant farmers and living a childhood on the road in "A Place Before Words" (Page 16). "Writing this essay was a profound experience," says silva, who was born in Edinburg and now resides in Austin. "It allowed me to focus on the more positive aspects of my childhood and how they made me who I am." silva is the author of three poetry collections and a short story collection, *flesh to bone*, which won the Premio Aztlán Literary Prize. She is currently working on her first novel and a second collection of short stories.

TEXAS HIGHWAYS™

DIRECTOR
Joan Henderson

EDITORIAL
Editor in Chief
Emily Roberts Stone

Deputy Editor
Michael Hoinski

Senior Managing Editor
Matt Joyce

Managing Editor
Kimya Kavehkar

Assistant Editor
Julia Jones

Writers-at-Large
Sarah Hepola, Clayton Maxwell, Joe Nick Patoski

Contributing Editors
Heather Brand, Melissa Gaskill, E. Dan Klepper, June Naylor

Contributing Writers
Wes Ferguson, Chet Garner, John Nova Lomax, Michael J. Mooney, Suchi Rudra, ire'ne lara silva, Jill Coody Smits, Jason Stanford, Lee Williams

Editorial Interns
Sabrina LeBoeuf, Raquel Villatoro, Peter Warren

DIGITAL
Product and Engagement Manager
Natalie Moore

Digital Strategies Manager
Tyson Bird

CONTACT US
To be removed from mailing list sales and for other customer service needs, contact: 800-839-4997 (903-636-1123 outside the U.S.), customer_service@texashighways.us, or go to texashighways.com.

Subscriptions are $24.95 annually ($39.95 foreign).

For letters to the editor, write to letters@texashighways.com or Texas Highways, P.O. Box 141009, Austin, TX 78714-1009

PUBLISHER
Andrea Lin

ART
Creative Director
Mark Mahorsky

Art Director
Ashley Burch

Associate Art Director
Chris Linnen

Photo Editor
Brandon Jakobeit

Contributing Photographers
Kenny Braun, Mabry Campbell, Larry Ditto, Melanie Grizzel, Tom McCarthy Jr., Dave Shafer, Jeff Wilson

Production Coordinator
Raquel V. Sanchez

MARKETING
Associate Publisher
Sabrina Ballesteros

Strategic Partnerships Manager
Lois M. Rodriguez

OPERATIONS
Ancillary Publications Manager
Julie Stratton

Business Manager
Karen Garza

Ancillary Publications Coordinator
LaKena Cooks

Accounts Receivable
Ana Perez

Warehouse Manager
Oz Lopez

ADVERTISING
AJR Media Group
800-383-7677
texashighways@ajrmediagroup.com
texashighways.com/advertise

IRMA MEMBER International Regional Magazine Association

Texas Department of Transportation

© Texas Department of Transportation 2020
All rights reserved.

FSC
www.fsc.org
MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC® C132124

Published monthly by the Travel Information Division of TxDOT

Governor of Texas
Greg Abbott

Texas Transportation Commission
J. Bruce Bugg Jr., Chairman
Alvin New, Commissioner
Laura Ryan, Commissioner
Robert C. Vaughn, Commissioner

TxDOT Executive Director
James M. Bass

WE TREATED,
AND HE
TRIUMPHED.

TAKING YOU FROM DIAGNOSIS TO REMISSION. WITH PROVEN TECHNIQUES AND GENUINE COMPASSION.

At Memorial Hermann, we know it takes more than innovative treatments to triumph over cancer. It takes a team. Our accredited Cancer Centers are staffed by a caring team of affiliated specialists, experienced physicians and specialty trained nurses plus nutritionists, social workers and chaplains. Together, we connect you with the individualized treatment plan, resources and support you need. So you can focus on not only surviving—but thriving. And with Safe Wait™ enhanced safety measures at all of our facilities, you can get the care you need with peace of mind.

Advancing health. Personalizing care.

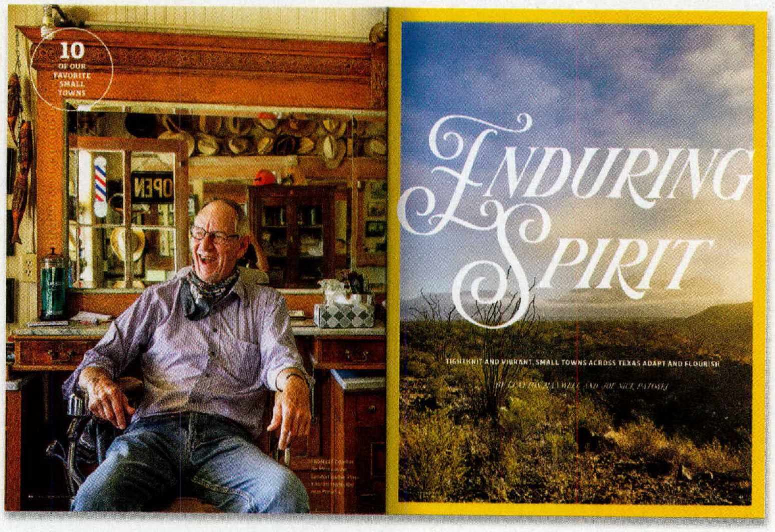
MEMORIAL®
HERMANN
Cancer Centers

memorialhermann.org/cancer

TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
ADOPT A BEACH
GEORGE P. BUSH, COMMISSIONER
NOAA
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
TEXAS COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
GEORGE P. BUSH, COMMISSIONER
clean beaches start with you.
#GiveTrashTheBoot
GIVE TRASH THE BOOT!

READERS RESPOND

MERGE


10 OF OUR FAVORITE SMALL TOWNS
ENDURING SPIRIT
TIGHT-KNIT AND VIBRANT, SMALL TOWNS ACROSS TEXAS ADAPT AND FLOURISH
OPEN

My family has been reading *Texas Highways* for 50 years, and I think the August 2020 small towns issue is one of, if not the very best, you've printed. It is just full of memories and new ideas.
Gay Bryant, Palestine

Secret Rivers
So many places to swim during these hot days, yet here we are looking at pictures [July issue]—but better that than taking foolish chances. Let us hope this time next year we'll all get to enjoy these spots in person.
Janet Joyce Keel Butler, Kerrville

Lower Canyons
I canoed this section of the Rio Grande while in high school ["The Lower Canyons," July]. What a trip, and what a privilege!
@EdytheThompson2

Coastal Cooking
The first time I saw the Gulf was when my family went to Mustang Island for vacation in the summer of 1966 ["Catch of the Day," July]. I still remember every detail so clearly.
@franhdevine

Life in Uncertain

For five years I worked in Karnack and lived about nine months in Uncertain at the Flying Fish Motel ["We All Live in Uncertain," August]. It was a good adventure living in Uncertain. One tale was that Uncertain got its name because you were uncertain if you were in Louisiana or Texas.

James B. Davis, Hot Springs, Arkansas

A Texas for Everyone

In the August issue, once you get past the story of another Black Texan who does not feel safe traveling our state ["Y'all Means All," August], you must go past many images of white people until you find a Black face on Page 24, and there are not many more in the remaining editorial pages and ads. Major non-white groups in our state are: Black, 12.3%; Hispanic, 38.2%; and Asian, 5%. I strongly urge you to represent these proud Texans in your pages wherever possible for the benefit of all Texans. Please don't print "Y'all Means All" unless you demonstrate that you mean it.

Chuck Lutke, San Antonio

I'm sorry to see you giving voice to a perception that our great state of Texas is racist. My wife and I have lived in the north, in two different countries, and now in Texas for 35 years, and that has not been our experience. The state has had to grow out of its racist past, but to suggest that we are still providing and supporting unsafe, unwelcoming tourist destinations for Texans in general, or African Americans specifically, is unfair to us, the citizens.

Steve Parke, Kempner

The last few years I began to read [*Texas Highways*] more carefully, seeing diverse stories and outstanding photography. This August issue means more to me than any other. Perhaps it's due to learning more about my ignorance and facing clear challenges to what I was taught in Texas schools and papers from the very early '60s through '70s in college and on through law school and practice here.

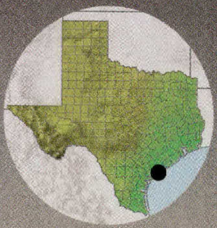
Barbara Radnofsky, Houston

T.V. Munson

We were recently traveling through Grayson County, and we found the T.V. Munson Viticulture and Enology Center complete with a vineyard. I couldn't believe it! I had read about Munson less than 24 hours before in the article "With Grape Power, Comes Grape Responsibility" [August]. History came alive that day, and we are grateful we knew all about Munson thanks to you guys.

Bill and Martha Little, Lake Kiowa

We want to hear from you! Send photos, feedback, and recommendations to letters@texashighways.com; P.O Box 11009, Austin, TX, 78714-1009. Follow @TexasHighways on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest.



Elevated Perspective

Photographer Mabry Campbell encountered these grain silos on Farm-to-Market Road 774 near Austwell last year during a drive from Rockport to his home in Houston. “It was a minimalist scene everywhere I looked,” Campbell said of the miles of harvested fields interrupted only by the road, silos, and an occasional building. “It was one of those times where you feel you just drove into a photograph.” See more of Campbell’s work in his photo essay, “Texas in Wonderland,” starting on Page 46.

Photo: Mabry Campbell

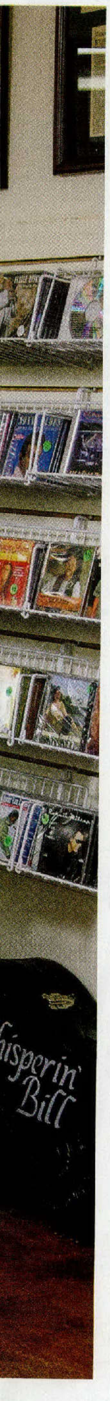
Brady

Justin Treviño finds the beating heart of hardcore country in Brady

By Clayton Maxwell

Justin Treviño, with guitar, can often be found at the Heart of Texas Country Music Museum, along with founder Tracy Pitcox.

Photo: Kenny Braun



To go to the heart of Texas, literally, you must go to Brady. On the northwestern edge of the Hill Country, Brady is the town closest to the geographic center of the state. But this little ranching and farming community is the heart of Texas in another way, too—it's the epicenter of traditional country music, what locals call "hardcore country." And that's why musician Justin Treviño calls Brady home. Blind since birth, Treviño grew up in Brownsville and Austin. He learned to sing and play guitar from his dad's records and has released 13 albums of country music, including his classic tune, "Texas Honky Tonk." Treviño was living in San Marcos, engineering and producing records for Heart of Texas Records, when in 2008, the label's president, Tracy Pitcox, invited him to move to Brady. With a community of musicians and the Heart of Texas Country Music Museum, Brady's got more than enough honky-tonk inspiration to keep Treviño singing, playing, and recording.

Ace of Hearts

"Tracy Pitcox has basically single-handedly launched the Heart of Texas music scene. Of course, everything around here is Heart of Texas something—Heart of Texas Ford, Heart of Texas Bed and Breakfast. Tracy's had the Heart of Texas Music Association for years and his radio show, *Hillbilly Hits*. And in the late 1990s, Tracy started Heart of Texas Records. I work on the record label and recording."

Tribute to the Greats

"The Heart of Texas Country Music Museum is the crown jewel of Brady as far as I'm concerned. Oh man, we've got some good instruments in here. We've got Floyd Tillman's old guitar and Hank Thompson's old guitar. We've got instruments from Justin Tubb, Billy Walker, and we've got all kinds of suits from various artists and things they wore, like Ray Price's 'Cherokee Cowboy' headdress. A lot of it I can't actually see, but every once in a while we break an instrument out, and I'll play. Because those guys are such heroes of mine, I can be a vocal chameleon and slip into character a little bit. So if I'm playing Billy Walker's guitar, I'll sing a Billy Walker song. It's easy for me because I grew up listening to those guys. I remember vividly what they sounded like."

Country Music Festival

"People come from all over the world, and that's not an exaggeration, to attend this event. The Saturdays are the big days when most of the artists play. Whoever is available on the Heart of Texas Records label, you're going to see—everybody from Norma Jean, Darrell McCall, Tony Booth, myself, Amber Digby. Tracy always manages to bring in some others—Johnny Rodriguez, Moe Bandy, Gene Watson, and Johnny Bush have all played."

The Trucountry Inn Hotel

"Heather Myles is passionate about bringing this traditional old hotel [built in 1932] back to its original form. It means something to her—she loves that it's from another time, when Brady was really a booming town. She told me all the stories about Bonnie and Clyde staying there; she's really into that kind of thing, silver screen cowboys and Texas outlaws. She's busy—these windmill companies that are putting in windmills all over West Texas, that's a lot of who's staying in the hotel right now."

Tex Mex

"Understand that in the business I'm in, I've played and eaten while venturing out in a lot of small-town Texas. Everywhere we play is usually rural areas. I'll tell you this, Brady, for a town its size, has more good food than you'd expect. My favorite restaurant hands down in this town is a little Mexican restaurant on Third and Elm behind the Methodist Church called Tex Mex."

Making Music with My Friends

"We have a community of like-minded people that like to sing, that have the same goals, in trying to preserve and promote real country music. So I think that's why we're all drawn together. It's a family, it's a community, and that's what it's all about."

TOWN TRIVIA

POPULATION:
5,302

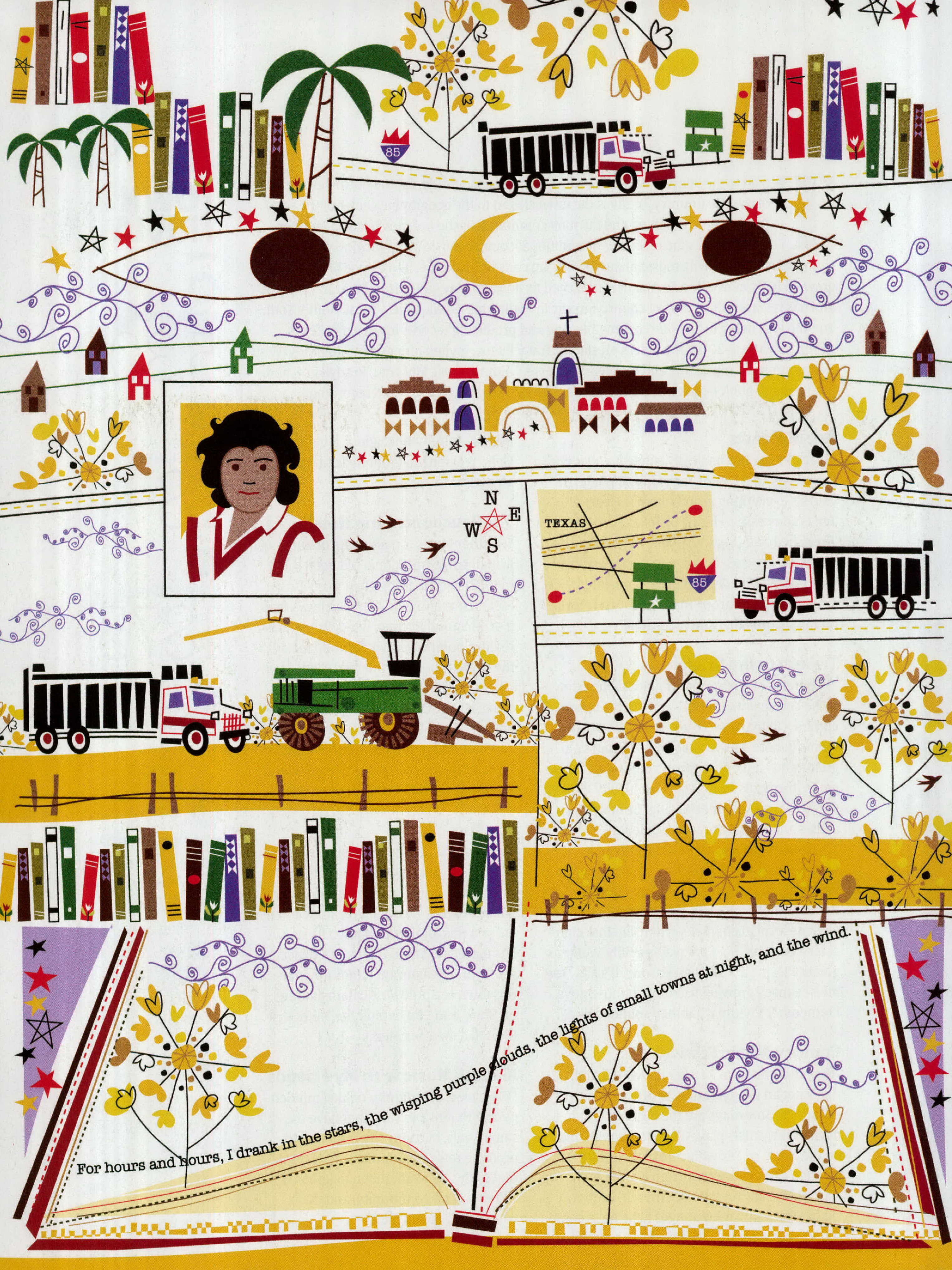
NUMBER OF STOPLIGHTS:
18

YEAR FOUNDED:
1875

NEAREST CITY:
San Angelo, 75 miles west

MARQUEE EVENT:
Heart of Texas Country Music Festival. After this year's event was canceled because of COVID-19, the 2021 festival is scheduled for March 19-27. hillbillyhits.com

MAP IT:
Heart of Texas Country Music Museum, 1701 S. Bridge St.


85
N
E
W
S
TEXAS
85

For hours and hours, I drank in the stars, the wisping purple clouds, the lights of small towns at night, and the wind.

A Place Before Words

What a childhood on the road taught a daughter of migrant truck drivers

By ire'ne lara silva

I learned how to read a map before I ever learned how to read a book. In one of my first memories, I am 4 or 5, kneeling on a chair, trying to see without getting in anyone's way. The Rand McNally map is spread over the dining room table. My father is standing with a thin black marker in his hand as his booming voice explains the route we'll be taking. With infinite care, he traces the spidery red lines and thicker blue lines on the map from our home in the Rio Grande Valley town of Edinburg to the Panhandle. There is no background noise, no TV or radio noise, no fidgeting on my part or my siblings'. This is done with the seriousness and care of ritual. There can be no mistakes, and there is no time to waste. The contractor called—he's ready to start harvesting, and my father's trucks are expected in the fields, ready to work, in 36 hours.

This is 1979 or 1980. My parents are truck drivers who cyclically follow the harvest seasons of various fruits, vegetables, and grains throughout Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. My parents don't drive the 18-wheelers most people associate with truck driving. Instead, they drive box trucks with only 10 wheels and truck beds that are modified according to the needs of each crop. My parents, born in different parts of South Texas in the late 1930s, attended only the first couple years of elementary school. They were predominantly Spanish speakers but with so little formal education, they were unable to read or write in either English or Spanish. Because of this, when my father read a map and laid out the route, he spoke in a language of numbers and directions.

From memory, he could recite the entire chain of interstate highways, county roads, farm-to-market roads, and state highways from Edinburg to anywhere—Mathis, where we worked harvesting sorghum; Bay City for rice; Hereford for sugar beets and silage; cottonseed in Turkey; more silage in Dimmitt and Guymon, Oklahoma, and Portales, New Mexico; and then back to South Texas for sweet onions and watermelon. I learned parts of the chains before I went to kindergarten. Edinburg to Mathis was 281 to 359. Edinburg to Dimmitt was 281 to 359 (because of course we were going to stop on the way and visit my father's parents in Mathis) to 37 to 10 to 83 to 153 to 84 to 385.

We always set out in a convoy—at first three trucks, later almost always four. My father, my mother, one of my siblings, and sometimes a hired driver, or *chofer.* The choferes became common after my older siblings left home. They came looking for work, and over time some of them became family friends. Once the farmer and the contractor had decided it was time to start harvesting, the contractor would call the truck drivers and we would set out. For the weeks or months that we lived in different towns, we resided in everything from labor barracks to rented motel rooms, apartments, or houses. From September to May each year, my siblings and I would enroll in at least three different schools. My parents worked long hours, sometimes from 6 a.m. till

Illustration: Andrea Cobb

My "good English" led to my calling potential landlords to see if their apartments or houses were available for rent. Vacancies sometimes vanished spontaneously when my Indigenous-Texan-Mexican-American family showed up in person.

nightfall, hauling crops from the fields to the local processing plants.

On the long cross-state treks, I usually traveled with my mother. But once, when I was 8 or 9, I traveled with my father. I read out every sign, creek name, highway direction, and town name for the 850 miles it took us to get where we were going. In hindsight, I'm not sure how this wasn't incredibly annoying—and my father was an easy man to anger. But instead, he listened, tilting his head when it was an unfamiliar name and sometimes repeating it to himself. So many times, he said, "Oh, that's what it's called" (in Spanish), and then proceeded to tell me a story about the creek where snakes had frightened him and his childhood friends, the spot on the highway where a tire had blown out at night, the town with the best barbecue sandwiches ever, and so on.

My mother couldn't help me with my alphabet or read me children's books, but she taught me so many other things. The orientation of the sun. The direction of the wind. Signs of rain. How to instantly tell north from south and east from west. She drove with a relentless concentration and care, never speeding, never falling below the speed limit, hyperconscious of other drivers on the road. I didn't know it then, but these were lessons for the writer I would become. I started writing at age 8 and never stopped. On the page, I was never lost. On the page, I was all concentration and care.

Since 1998, I've made Austin my home. In the last decade, I've published three books of poetry and one short story collection. Somehow, with a 40-hour, Monday-to-Friday clerical government job and responsibilities as a caregiver for my disabled brother, I managed to make 60 events in 2019 throughout Texas and

WELCOME TO GRAPEVINE.
GREAT THRILLS. GREAT FUN.

Enjoy an entire season, jam-packed with cool events! Spend less time and money traveling and more time having fun close to home this fall in Grapevine – where there's something for everyone.

GRAPEVINETEXAS

GrapevineTexasUSA.com 817-410-3185

as far away as San Francisco and Maine. I taught workshops, met with students, and read my poems and stories at universities, book festivals, and community centers. I drove an incalculable number of miles within Texas last year, during which memories of old trips vied with new impressions.

There were two trips to South Texas that opened my eyes anew. There, I visited students at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, read in front of the border wall at the foot of a 900-year-old Montezuma cypress tree, attended the Texas Institute of Letters' annual banquet, and shared a stage with Latinx writers at the McAllen Public Library. I'd very much wanted to read at that library, not just because it's the largest single-floor library in the United States, but because I knew the patch of land it was built on.

When I was a child, it was a wide, wide field where they grew mustard plants. It bloomed golden all the way to Nolana Avenue, and after that you could see palm trees and all the dramatic colors of the sky. When they covered those golden fields with concrete and asphalt to build a Walmart, shops, and restaurants—and later the library—that view disappeared. Decades later, the first photos of the library I saw showed parts of the interior painted the same yellow as those blooming mustard plants.

My parents didn't know what to do with me. I didn't go anywhere without a book. I kept books under my pillow, under my mattress. I kept them in the bathroom under the sink so I could sneak in a few pages. I read until I had to turn off the lights, and then I read by flashlight or streetlight or any light that let me distinguish one letter from another. I took books with me when we traveled from place to place. Early on, I remember devouring Laura Ingalls Wilder and L.M. Montgomery and Louisa May Alcott; everything I could get my hands on about King Arthur; and the novels of Lloyd Alexander. Every cent of my allowance went to books or writing supplies.

My voracious reading made me the official reader and translator of all family mail. By the third grade, I was registering myself and my younger brothers into multiple schools. My "good English" led to my calling potential landlords to see if their apartments or houses were available for rent. Vacancies sometimes vanished spontaneously when my Indigenous-Texan-Mexican-American family showed up in person.

She might have been unread and unlettered, but my mother knew the importance of education. When my father threatened to pull my older sisters out of school so they could work as drivers or

Wine and Dine under the stars at the 10th annual Lufkin's Bistro, Saturday, October 3. Tickets on sale now.

OUTSIDE IS OUR BEST SIDE!

Stroll along our downtown streets and enjoy shopping and special events. Then explore our beautiful lakes and extensive network of trails. If you're looking for outdoor fun, visit Lufkin for an adventure your whole family will love.

LUFKIN
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
VisitLufkin.com
936-633-0349

in the fields, my mother said she would drive one of the trucks. My oldest sister is 17 years older than me, so I never knew my mother when she wasn't a truck driver. I think my mother was prouder of my siblings' high school diplomas than they were. Without complaint, she drove for more than 30 years, until only a few months before her death in 2001.

When I came home from my first year at Cornell University, aflame with everything I'd learned about Texas history and Chicano studies, *she* was the one who told *me* more about Gregorio Cortez, César Chávez, and La Raza Unida (formed in Crystal City, where she was born and raised). She also told me about LULAC and Henry B. González organizing for education, and she explained that truancy laws in Texas had not been enforced when it came to Indigenous-Texan-Mexican-American children when she was a child. The farmers and local economies were reliant on cheap labor and wanted all those brown bodies working in the fields.

Neither of my parents lived to see me publish my first book in 2010. I sometimes wonder what they would make of my life as a writer. Most of my travel now is solitary and independent. As far as I can remember, my mother never went anywhere unaccompanied by her husband or one of her children. In her life, she never boarded a plane. She would say stages and screens privileged the thin, the beautiful, and the light-complected. What would she make of me now? I am none of those things, but I know I'm meant to take up stages and speak to groups both large and small.

I write the truest things I know. Sometimes I write about mortality and grief, the body and illness, violence and history, sexuality and desire, transformation and hope. And then I go in front of audiences and share all of those thoughts, emotions, and experiences. I wonder what my father, who lived eternally with the shame of what other people thought, would think. I wonder what my father and mother would both think of the permission I give myself to say or do the things I do every day as a writer. They lived lives circumscribed by their socioeconomic status, their race and ethnicity, their lack of education. Even on those long cross-state treks as kids, my siblings and I wore our school clothes and kept them clean. If we were turned away from restaurants, motels, or other places, it was not because we were dirty, my father would say. And we were turned away many times.

What is rewritten, what is soothed, what is redressed by me being invited where I never thought I'd be welcomed?

DALLAS ARBORETUM

Autumn at the Arboretum

September 19 - November 1

Presented by reliant.

"One of America's Best Pumpkin Festivals"
– Fodor's Travel

Over 90,000 pumpkins, gourds and squash come together to form the nationally acclaimed Pumpkin Village.

DallasArboretum.org
Dallas, Texas • 214-515-6500

The Dallas Arboretum is a non-profit organization supported, in part, by funds from Dallas Park & Recreation.

To address students of diverse backgrounds educating themselves about literature, history, and art? To tell the stories of my imagining and my lived experience in all these places? To take a stage, to take my time, to listen, to speak, to share, to discuss, to teach?

In some ways, traveling as a writer reminds me of my parents' seasonal travels. I go where I am called. And often, I'm called to the same communities, the same universities—because my work is taught to students year after year, and because I believe art is a relationship you build with others. I take to the road to do my work, to follow where my words have gone before me. All of these roads are mine, as familiar to me as my mother's face. Perhaps another woman would be afraid to travel alone. Not all parts of Texas inspire confidence in people with brown skin, Indigenous features, or LGBTQ identities. But how to describe what it means to be invited? To be welcomed? Even as my size or color or what I say may take some aback? How to describe what it means to claim roads and claim spaces and to share my work?

Everywhere, I find students and readers eager to listen, eager to ask me questions, eager to share their stories with me. Everywhere I go, I find bridges with lovers of language, students of history, activists, cultural workers, readers who have never read stories about the places they come from, students who have told me that my presence and my work make them brave enough to write their own words. This, in turn, makes me braver and more truthful—on the page and in the world. It makes me willing to take on full-body pat-downs at airports, communication difficulties with those who don't believe I'm a writer or a U.S. citizen, or withstand those hours at night on the road hoping my vehicle doesn't break down.

> **I wonder what my father, who lived eternally with the shame of what other people thought, would think. I wonder what my father and mother would both think of the permission I give myself to say or do the things I do every day as a writer.**

Explore!
Cuero Municipal Golf Course
CuERO
shop ★ play ★ stay
Museums ★ Historic Downtown ★ Shopping
361-275-2112
VisitCuero.com

While the bulk of events I've done has been in Texas' largest cities, I've also had the good fortune to visit rural spaces. I've done this through the Writers' League of Texas' Texas Writes programs, which offer free presentations and discussions with published writers, and through the Texas Commission on the Arts' rural touring grants. In 2017, I was awarded a rural touring grant to visit the area around Laredo. I visited high schools, community colleges, and libraries in Leakey, Uvalde, Carrizo Springs, and Crystal City.

To get to Leakey, I passed by all the wonder that is Garner State Park. My parents used to haul peanuts in Uvalde before I was born, but I didn't go visit the crops this time. Instead, I spent a lovely afternoon at El Progreso Memorial Library in Uvalde, with its abundant wildflower garden. Carrizo Springs was charming and welcoming with its miles and miles of thorny mesquites. I'd planned to spend more time in Crystal City—I'd wanted to see if I could find my great-grandparents' graves or even just to sit and think of my mother as a child there—but the visit to Southwest Texas Junior College took up the whole day. I logged almost 1,600 miles on those four trips from Austin to those small towns, and I was grateful for every mile of road, every bit of wonder I felt.

> **I've seen many beautiful things in my life, but the memory of that trip still fills me with wonder. That is what writing at its best feels like to me—movement without time, drinking in starlight, alone and not alone.**

Writing is wonder in the same way travel is wonder. One winter when I was 12 or 13, I traveled with my mother and two of my siblings overnight from Hereford to Edinburg. I don't remember why it was urgent, but I remember we only stopped long enough to get more gas and to pick up food and coffee at a Whataburger. We were in my father's pickup truck, and there wasn't enough seating for all of us. I volunteered to make the trip in the pickup bed by myself. There was just enough room for me to make a little

Honoring Our Heroes

As we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII, let's take a moment to honor those who served.

Soldiers rejoice after they were released as POWs at Omori Camp in Tokyo, Japan, in 1945.

A Texas Historical Commission Property, © 2020 National Museum of the Pacific War.

VOTED #5 Best History Museum USA Today

RATED #1 Trip Advisor FREDERICKSBURG

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR 75 1945 2020 75TH ANNIVERSARY - END OF WWII

Visit Us from Your Own Home!

Listen to our **Oral History Collection** of many who served, including POWs.
See our **Highlights and Insights** of the Pacific War video series.
Experience our **Nimitz Minitz** video series for children and families.

NATIONAL MUSEUM™ OF THE PACIFIC WAR

PacificWarMuseum.org | Fredericksburg, Texas

cot out of a couple blankets.

It was dusk when we set out. I watched the night come, watched the stars emerge the way they do in the rural parts of Texas, where there are sometimes hardly any trees, where you can sometimes see horizon to horizon. The sky is so immense it feels as if the earth will give way. I didn't sleep at all that night. For hours and hours, I drank in the stars, the wisping purple clouds, the lights of small towns at night, and the wind. More than 700 miles of night sky and road. I've seen many beautiful things in my life, but the memory of that trip still fills me with wonder. That is what writing at its best feels like to me—movement without time, drinking in starlight, alone and not alone.

Before the pandemic struck, I traveled to Corpus Christi at the invitation of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi to read and lead a writing workshop for a group of 150 area high school students. The size of the group was a bit of a last-minute surprise for me, but it'll remain one of my favorite memories because of the students' enthusiasm and tender-hearted honesty. I felt at home in Corpus Christi. It brought to mind memories of hot summers when my parents hauled sorghum in nearby Mathis, Edroy, Robstown, and other little towns that were hardly more than city limits signs and Dairy Queens. Where my parents harvested crops, I sow the seeds of ideas.

Where do we start the story of the road and of writing? We start in a place before words. A place filled only with the rushing of the wind. I remember my mother's profile, dark and Indigenous, her small, strong hands on the steering wheel. I remember the beginning pink of dawn. I remember my 5-year-old hand reaching out the window, the wind on my face, my curls waving wildly. How I felt like a bird, both small and powerful.

I had no idea all my planned travel for 2020 would be wiped out so mercilessly this past March. But I know other days and other trips will come. The road lives in me. The road has made me the writer I am. I am the child of highways, of Texas skies, of hardworking people who harvested the land. I am the child of manual labor and skilled hands. I am the child and creator of border stories and folklore, the storyteller shaped and haunted and beguiled by this land. I learned language and its rhythms on these highways—endlessly rolling, sometimes slowing, sometimes labored, sometimes effortless. This is where I learned to breathe and to shape words and to become all of who I am. I can't resist who I am. This is what the road taught me. This is what the road still teaches me.

Relax & Restore

WITH A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Snap a selfie in the sunset, find inner peace on a paddleboard or connect with nature offline. The Colony is the perfect getaway to unwind without leaving creature comforts behind.

Visit The Colony

WHERE YOU GO TO PLAY SAFELY!

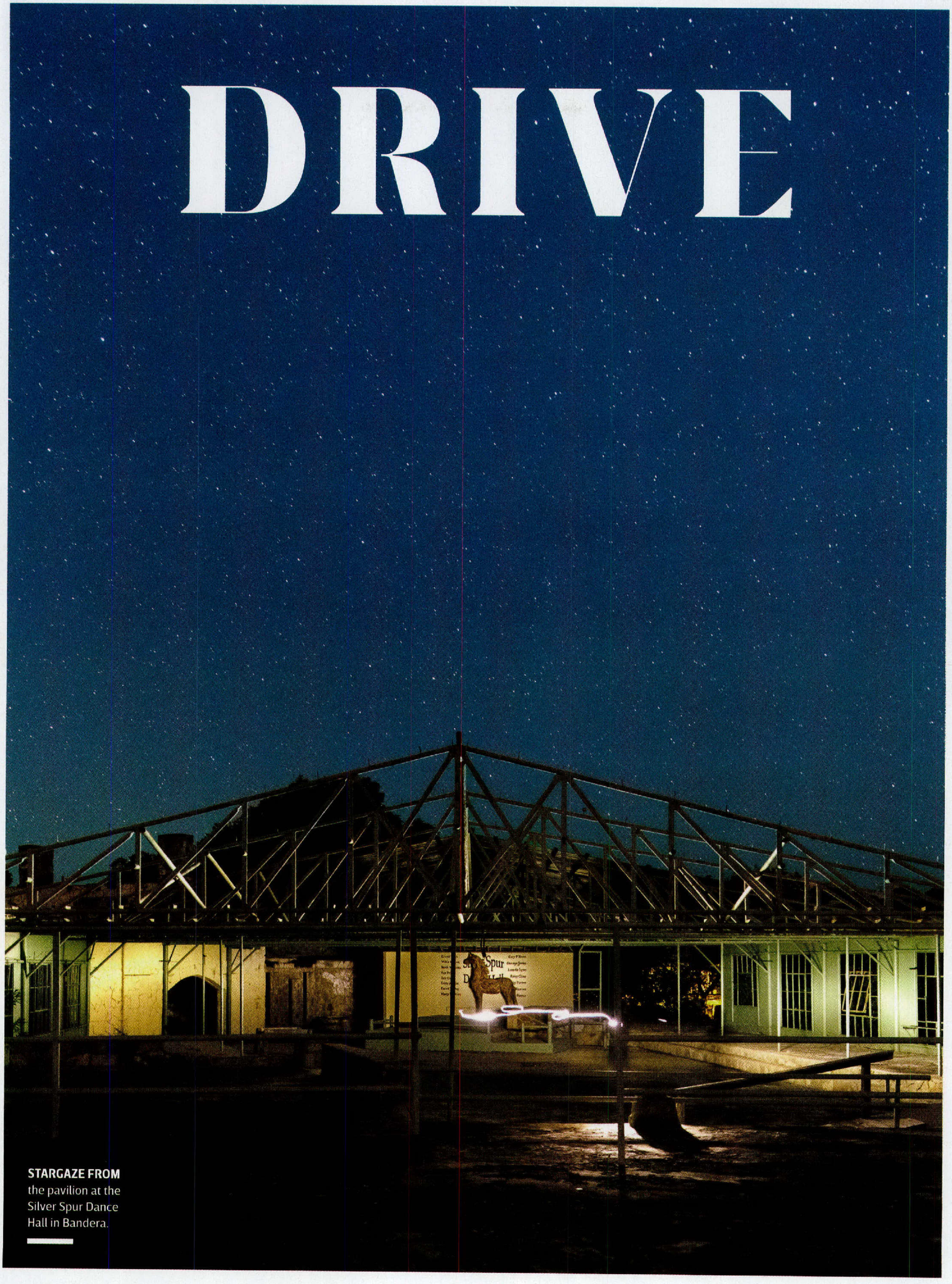
VisitTheColonyTX.com | 972.624.5253

Stay safe but dream big.

Better days are coming. So start planning, start dreaming, and get excited about discovering Texas all over again at ttia.org/lifesbetter.

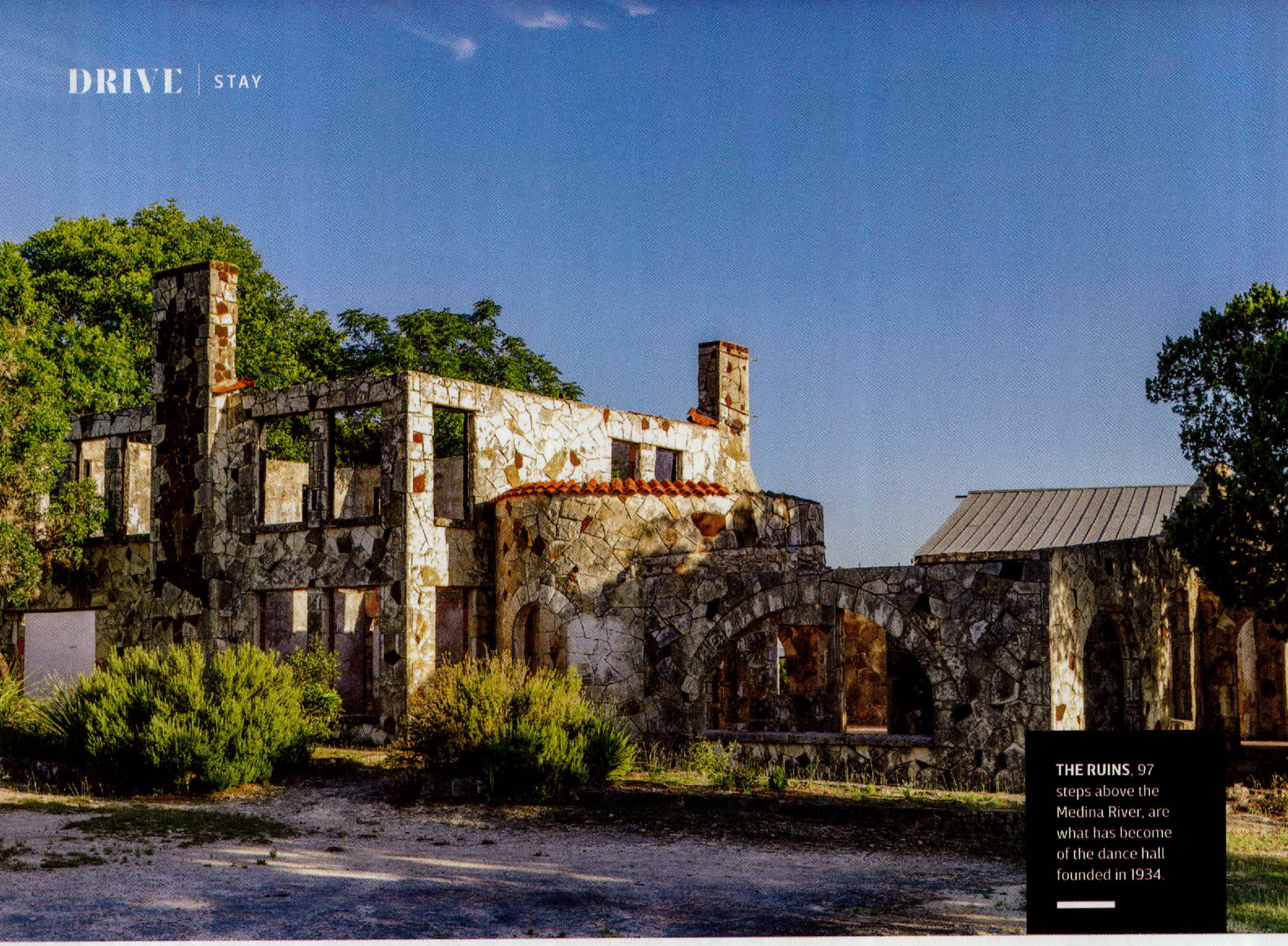
Life's better in a State of travel.

DRIVE



STARGAZE FROM the pavilion at the Silver Spur Dance Hall in Bandera.

Photo: Kenny Braun



THE RUINS, 97 steps above the Medina River, are what has become of the dance hall founded in 1934.

A Treasure Among the Ruins

Congregate under the stars at the famed Silver Spur Dance Hall

By Wes Ferguson

Pascale Payne first stumbled onto the old stone ruins of the Silver Spur Dance Hall while exploring the backroads of Bandera nearly three decades ago. Every time her family returned to the Hill Country on vacation from their Dallas home, she found herself again driving across the low-water bridge on the southwestern edge of town, where the Medina River flows past bald cypress trees. Then, down a narrow road that twists and turns as it ascends a rocky bluff. There, perched on the cliff's edge of Rugh Hill, the magnificent walls of the dance hall stood like an ancient monument to more rollicking times.

"The ruins always fascinated me," says Payne, who grew up in France. "It reminds me of Europe when you travel, and you always see the castles on the hill, and you are drawn to them. I never stepped foot on the property, but I would drive up to it and just check it out."

Four years ago, Payne gave in to her fascination and bought the empty "castle." On the 3-acre property, she now rents out four renovated cottages made of the same native stone as the dance hall. (Search Airbnb for "Silver Spur Dancehall Ruins." The property is designated Enhanced Clean, a service for COVID-19 and beyond.)

Payne hasn't made any changes to the dance hall, which is said to have burned down in the late 1950s or early '60s. "It could never be a commercial property again," she says, "which is fine with me. I love the old stones, and I wouldn't be able to rebuild it just the way it was."

SILVER SPUR DANCE HALL
118 Rugh Hill Road, Bandera.
830-688-1383;
facebook.com/silverspurdancehallruins
Cabin rentals start at $165 per night.

Photo: Kenny Braun

Large gatherings are no longer held at the roofless, open-air dance pavilion, connected to the Medina River below by 97 stairs made of rock. But the space remains a sanctuary for couples and history buffs. Cabin guests can explore the ruins during the day and stargaze from them at night, perhaps after an evening of dancing on the sawdust-strewn floors of Arkey Blue's Silver Dollar, the venerable honky-tonk about a mile down the road. The sun rising over the leafy flood plain of the river provides the ideal backdrop to take in the sights. Visitors can climb the concrete stage where bygone musical performers from the big band and Western swing eras kept the crowds waltzing and two-stepping for decades.

Bandera residents Stella Rugh and her first husband, Emil Rugh, the owner of a meat market, founded the dance hall as Mt. Rugh Courts in June 1934. Long since deceased, they operated 11 fieldstone cottages, a clubroom, and a "commodious dance patio," according to a front-page article in the *Bandera New Era* unearthed by local historian Raymond V. Carter Jr. on behalf of the Frontier Times Museum in Bandera. To commemorate the grand opening of the "pleasure resort," more than 700 people attended a Saturday night dance.

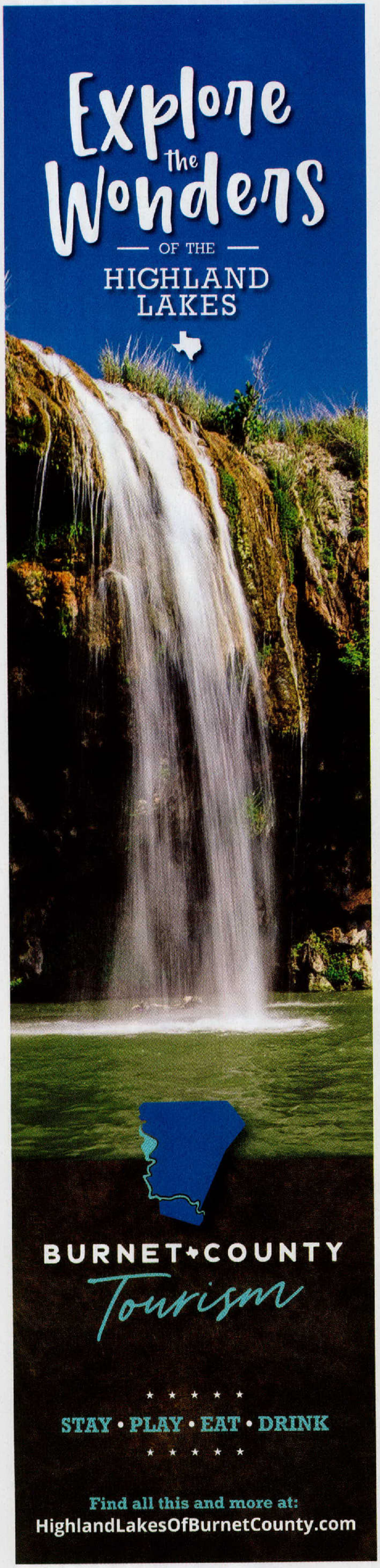
Bandera native H. Alfred Anderwald remembers feeding coins into the nickelodeon about a decade later, when he was a teenager in the mid-1940s. "We was all poor kids, and we'd maybe have a quarter apiece," he recalls. "We'd play a few records and dance a little bit, and sit and talk."

Stella, who later remarried and went by Stella Hubbard, lived in a rock house attached to the dance pavilion and dealt with the music many nights. "Ms. Hubbard would get tired of sitting there waiting for us to put a nickel in the box, and she'd tell us, 'When y'all get through, just roll the jukebox inside and unplug it.' So, we did."

According to Anderwald, some drivers struggled to make the hairpin descent from Rugh Hill after a night of carousing and slid off the road. They'd have to trudge back up to the dance hall and round up several revelers to maneuver the car back on track. Anderwald himself got into a little mischief once at the Silver Spur when he was about 18 years old.

"The old guy at the liquor store sold me a bottle of Guckie"—Guckenheimer whiskey—"and I went up there, and I was drinking that stuff, and I got to dancing around and sticking my elbows out, just daring somebody to push me," he says. Anderwald looked around and noticed a bunch of guys who were much bigger than he was. The intimidating sight triggered a rowdy outburst. "I threw four or five chairs out the windows, and then

SHOPS AT LEGACY
ANGELIKA FILM CENT
When it's time
SAY HELLO
visit Plano
TEXAS
It's all here. The sights, the sounds, the people and the places of Plano. All ready to welcome you back, when you're ready.


Explore the Wonders
OF THE
HIGHLAND LAKES

BURNET COUNTY
Tourism

STAY • PLAY • EAT • DRINK

Find all this and more at:
HighlandLakesOfBurnetCounty.com

MGD
Light
64
CALORIES
GALS
SILVER
DOLLAR
Let's Rodeo San Antonio!
BILL SMITH CAFE
KKYX
RECORD SHOP
PAUL'S ICE HOUSE
HOUSTON TEXAS
SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL MUSICIAN
1¢
WEIGHT
HOROSCOPE
AND
WEIGHT

BANDERA LOCAL
James E. "Hoot" Gibson, a cowboy poet, hangs out in Arkey Blue's Silver Dollar.

I decided I better go home before I got in trouble," he says, "so I eased out the back door and left."

With the exception of a performance by Harry James, a trumpet-playing big band leader who married Betty Grable in 1943, Anderwald questions the long list of big-name acts who are thought to have entertained at the pavilion. (Over time it was temporarily roofed and renamed the Silver Spur Room at Mt. Rugh.) So does Payne. "We have not found proof that those people performed there," she says of the proud claims that everyone from Hank Williams to Dolly Parton once crooned at the Silver Spur.

The names of the venue's supposed top entertainers are painted on a wall behind the stage. They are also promoted in Silver Spur collateral materials that predate Payne's ownership. In the previous owners' marketing zeal, it's possible

Live from Bandera

The Silver Spur went silent decades ago, but it's not hard to find live music a mile away in downtown Bandera. At the **11th Street Cowboy Bar**, a watering hole straight out of the Wild West, country acts take to the outdoor stage on weekends. *307 11th St., Bandera. 830-796-4849; 11thstreetcowboybar.com*

In the basement of the Bandera General Store just around the block, dancers two-step and waltz every night at **Arkey Blue's Silver Dollar**, founded in 1921 as The Fox Hole and owned by singer-songwriter Arkey Juenke since 1968. Immortalized by Robert Earl Keen's song "Feelin' Good Again," Arkey Blue's is thought to be the oldest continuously operating honky-tonk in Texas. *308 Main St., Bandera. 830-796-8826; facebook.com/arkeyblues.silverdollar* that someone confused the Silver Spur with another Bandera dance hall called the Cabaret, which operated for seven decades on Main Street. The Cabaret did host a veritable "who's who" of musicians —Bob Wills, Ernest Tubb, Loretta Lynn, Doug Sahm, Steve Earle—before it closed for renovations about seven years ago and never reopened.

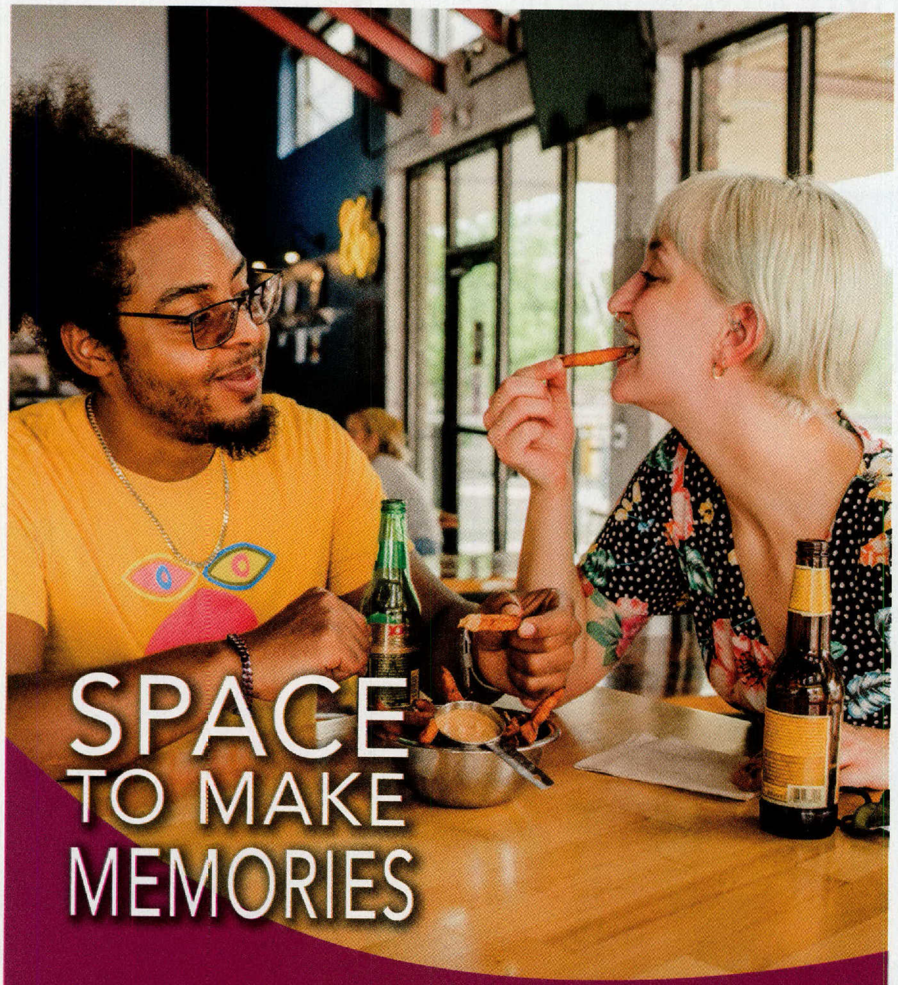
Advertisements in Bandera newspapers from the 1940s and '50s tout musical acts at the Silver Spur that are not as well-remembered today. These include Jimmie Revard and his Oklahoma Playboys, one of the Southwest's top Western swing bands before World War II, and Willie Moore and his Avalons, who performed shortly after the dance patio opened in the summer of 1934. Ladies got in free; gents had to cough up 40 cents.

No matter who performed at the Silver Spur, it remains an impressive structure with sweeping arches and towering rock chimneys on the top of the hill. No one contacted for this article was quite sure exactly when the Silver Spur burned down, and the stories surrounding it are considered hearsay. "There wasn't very much up there to burn," Anderwald says. "The railing and everything was rock."

Former Bandera resident Juanita "Amah" Jenkins bought the property and moved back to the Hill Country town in 2000, operating the vacation cabins until her death in 2014. Payne noted that every owner from Hubbard through Jenkins on down to herself has either been a single or widowed woman. Payne's goal is to preserve the place's history—she dreams of winning the lottery and restoring the house attached to the dance pavilion.

"It used to be a mansion on the hill by itself, and then Stella had to find a way to make an income off it, so she added the dance hall in the back," says Payne, who recently hired a team of engineers to examine the stability of the rock walls. It seems the dance hall ruins will be standing there, on the bluff above Bandera, long after the rest of us are gone. "They looked at it and said, you know, if it's been standing for 100 years, it shouldn't go anywhere."

Photo: Kenny Braun



San Marcos gives you space to make memories. Stroll the downtown square to dine, shop and soak up the art scene. Then head to one of our craft breweries to find your new favorite beer. And that's just day one. Plan your trip at VisitSMTX.com.

San Marcos

@TourSanMarcos VisitSMTX.com | 512.393.5930

STONEHENGE II

HILL COUNTRY ARTS FOUNDATION
Ingram~Texas
hcaf.com

WALKER LUKENS'S
SONG
CONFESSIONAL

WALKER LUKENS (front) and Zac Catanzaro travel to festivals around the country and turn people's confessions into songs.

These Are My Confessions

Step right up to these Austin musicians' 1948 LintzCraft camper to have your story converted into a song

By Jason Stanford

Adam's girlfriend, friends, and family came from all over to the Newport Folk Festival in Rhode Island last year to celebrate his birthday in his absence. They were excited to catch the scheduled acts, but some of the best music they ended up hearing, they made themselves. It started when they saw a bright blue trailer called "Walker Lukens's Song Confessional." One after another, all weekend long, they climbed into the red-lined confessional booth—a creation of Walker Lukens, an Austin-based singer-songwriter, and his drummer, Zac Catanzaro—and told their stories into a microphone. On the other side of the wall that divided the trailer in two, an unseen interviewer asked questions and recorded their confessions.

On the third day of the festival, Adam's girlfriend, who gave her confession on the condition of anonymity, told the story about the love of her life. "I saw his picture and I knew," she says in the recording. She was a planner, and he was spontaneous. He got her to say yes to things. "It was like discovering a new side of myself that I just never knew," she continues, her voice cracking.

"I could tell it was going to be something serious," says Catanzaro, who was taking the confession that day.

In 2018, Catanzaro and Lukens came up with the idea of turning a camping trailer into a hybrid confessional booth and recording studio because, frankly, they weren't seeing the fame and fortune for all the work they were putting in as recording musicians, and they wanted to try something new. After two minor hit songs (2015's "Every Night" and 2016's "Lifted"), touring to support their second full-length album, *Tell It to the Judge*, left them exhausted and depressed.

"We were like, we should be able to record in a cool vintage trailer," Catanzaro says. "We should try to travel around, hear some stories, and record songs." They found the little blue 1948 Lintz-Craft camper in Denver in January 2018.

Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

“We should try to travel around, hear some stories, and record songs.”

On the drive back to Austin, they workshopped the idea. *What if we had other musicians join us in the trailer to record? What if we had people come in and tell stories, and we used their stories as songwriting prompts? Ooh, what if we put up a wall so the storyteller couldn't see the musicians? Like a confessional booth. Yeah! What do we call it?*

“The reason that I liked the name was when you go to confessional, you get Hail Marys or something,” Lukens says. “I'm not Catholic. I have no idea. They give you like a sentence.”

“Right,” adds Catanzaro, a former altar boy. “You have prayers and absolution.”

“Yeah, a sentence,” Lukens counters. “I just liked the idea that you went in and you told something, and you got a song out of it. That was the exchange.”

Walker Lukens's Song Confessional (the name changed to just Song Confessional about a year ago) debuted at SXSW in 2018, parked on a side street in downtown Austin. Different musicians took turns hearing confessions in the studio portion, while total strangers told their stories for free in the confessional booth. Musical acts including Riders Against the Storm, Har Mar Superstar, and Jackie Venson lined up to create songs. A few weeks later, the confessor got a free, 7-inch vinyl record in the mail—a song about their true confession.

Lukens and Catanzaro thought this was just a collaborative songwriting exercise. What they didn't expect was how quickly it became about the stories.

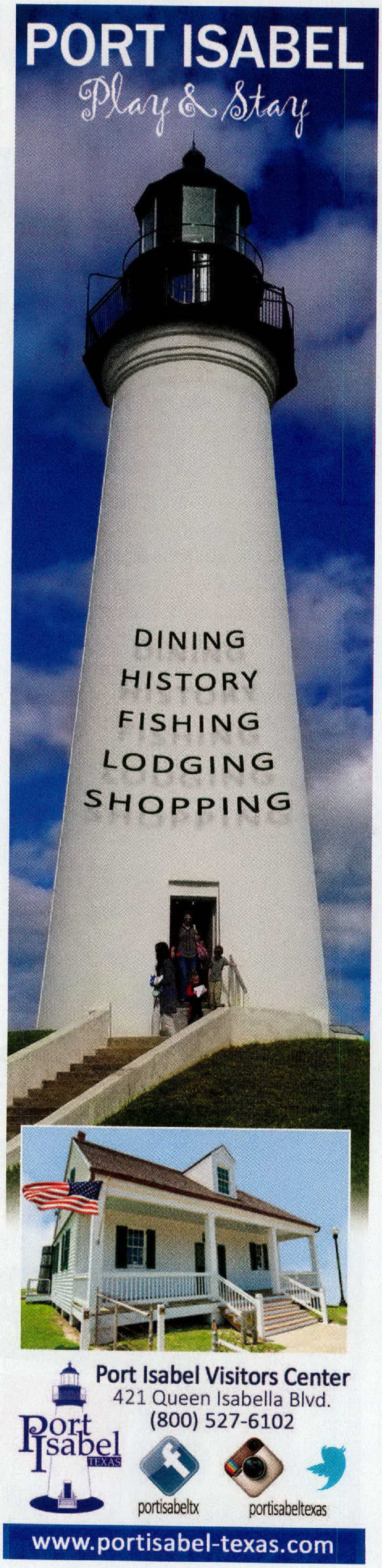
After nine months of bicoastal romance, Adam and the anonymous woman started talking about kids and marriage. They even picked out their wedding song, “This Must Be the Place” by the Talking Heads. But four days after he moved in with her in New York, he stopped sleeping and became increasingly anxious. “Things just got worse and worse and worse,” she says in her recording, “and eventually one day he didn't know who I was anymore.” She took him to a psychiatric hospital for treatment for bipolar disorder. If they could get the treatment right, the couple was assured, they could still have kids, a life. There was no reason to call off his annual trip to the Newport Folk Festival.

“I felt really hopeful,” she says. They got a bottle of wine from a vineyard they'd visited in Napa. “We ate Taco Bell for dinner one night because it was our favorite guilty pleasure, and I just thought that meant, ‘You know what, he's getting better, and he's feeling more like himself’—so much so that I went back to work. I worked a full day for the first time in four months.”

In 2019, Lukens, Catanzaro, and producer Aaron Blackerby turned the song confessional into what all storytelling ventures inevitably become these days: a podcast. They joined forces with Austin radio station KUTX 98.9, in partnership with NPR, and started taking the trailer on tour. They took the trailer to Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Los Angeles, and Newport, calling on fans via Twitter to come tell their stories.

Usually Lukens and Catanzaro match the confession to the singer, but for Adam's girlfriend's confession, Jim Eno, drummer for the rock band Spoon and an Austin producer, was in on the gig. They all heard the Newport confession and thought of Kat Edmonson, a jazzy pop singer with an ethereal voice, formerly of Austin and now in New York. Eno emailed her the recording.

Adam didn't answer her texts. His best friend called. He hadn't been able to reach Adam, either. She rushed home. “I walked in, and he was hanging in



PORT ISABEL
Play & Stay

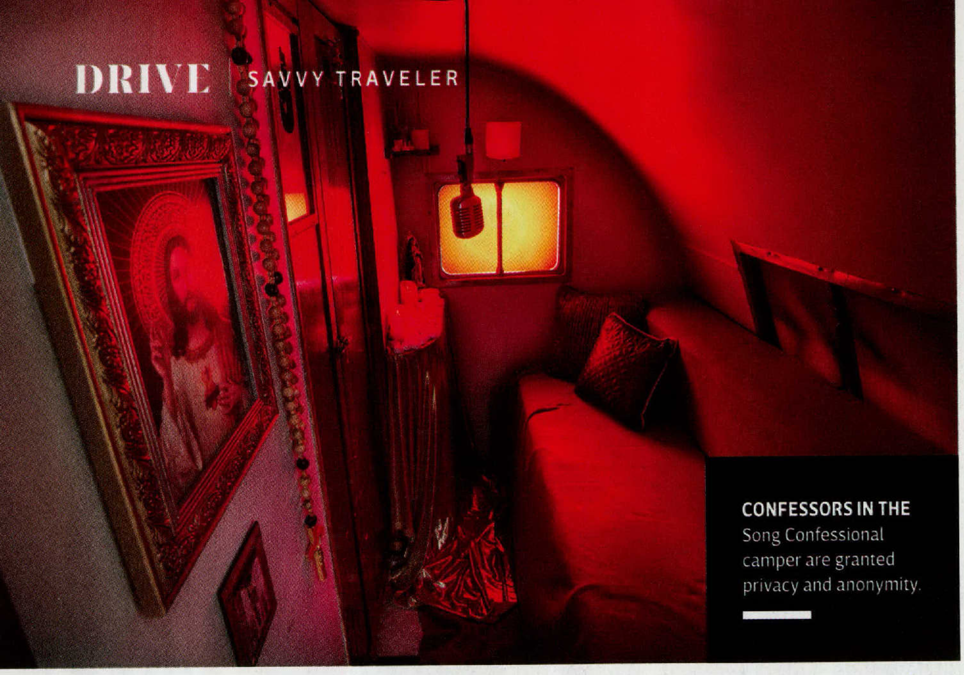
DINING
HISTORY
FISHING
LODGING
SHOPPING

Port Isabel Visitors Center
421 Queen Isabella Blvd.
(800) 527-6102

Port Isabel TEXAS

portisabeltx
portisabeltexas

www.portisabel-texas.com



CONFESSORS IN THE Song Confessional camper are granted privacy and anonymity.

our bedroom," she says in the recording. "You know, all those things we did, the Taco Bell and s---, it was like his last meal." In the recording of her confession, you can hear a bluegrass band on the tented stage cover Cher. *Do you believe in life after love?*

Should she go on Adam's annual trip to Newport in two months with all his friends and family? She decided to go on the trip as planned, and told her story of love and loss. She ended it by talking about how they would play "This Must Be the Place" in happy and sad times. "I haven't heard [that song] since he died," she says.

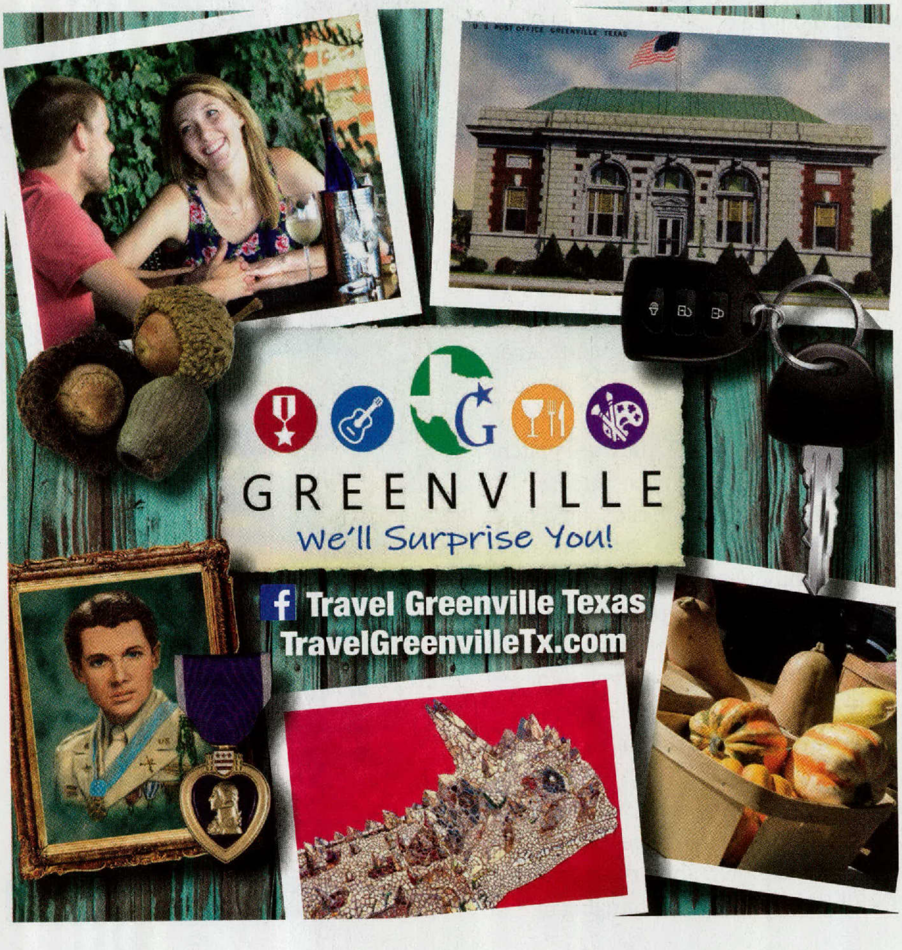
The next spring, Edmonson stood in a glass booth in Eno's Austin studio to record the vocals for the song she wrote on the plane from Phoenix earlier in the day.

"What I learned from it is that she's very courageous," Edmonson says. "It's not just sadness. When I wrote this, I knew I'd have to write this for her."

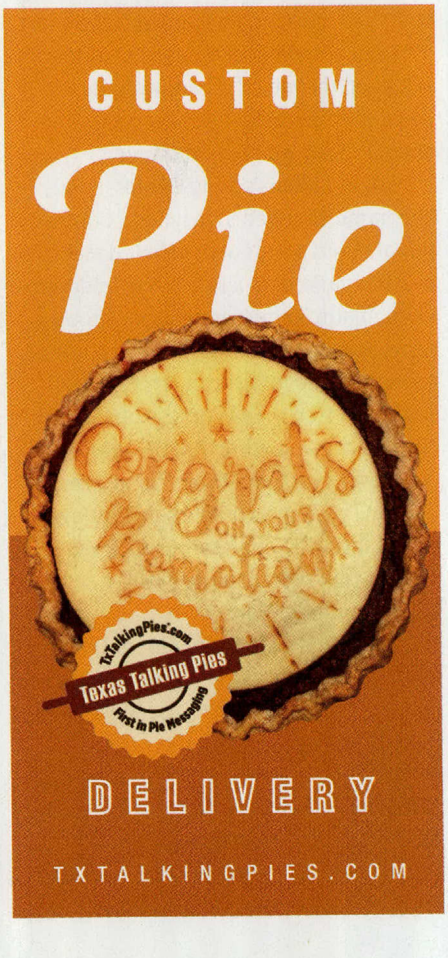
The song sounds like a metronomic dirge. There is no chorus, no hook. The chords build a hymn of redemption. Edmonson wrote dialogue set to music that opens the only way it could. She opens her mouth and sings, and it sounds like a memorial.

This must be the place I'm supposed to be/ but you're not here with me. ▙

VISIT texashighways.com on Aug. 28 for the song's debut, as part of the Song Confessional miniseries "48 Hours in Newport."



GREENVILLE
We'll Surprise You!
Travel Greenville Texas
TravelGreenvilleTx.com



CUSTOM
Pie
DELIVERY
TXTALKINGPIES.COM

Just the Hits

Walker Lukens on his favorite episodes from the Song Confessional podcast. Hear the songs at songconfessional.com.

"**Lost My Head**" by Odessa
This is the only song produced by the Song Confessional that is a genuine tear-jerker.

"**Don't Let Me Die in Waco**" by Croy and the Boys
I think in another universe this would be a massive country hit.

"**Don't You Go Forgetting About Me Now**" by Har Mar Superstar
It sounds like it's from a past that didn't exist, and it's really peaceful and great.

"**I Can't Wait**" by Kam Franklin (of The Suffers)
It was 100% remotely recorded during quarantine, with Kam singing into an iPhone.

"**Things That Make Me Happy**" by Royal Teeth
This is the first song that the Song Confessional has ever produced that sounds like it could be a commercial hit.

The journey...

is the destination
The memories, a lifetime!
Visit PARIS
TEXAS
PARISTEXAS.COM

Sept 14 | Wine in the Pines Train Ride
TEXAS STATE RAILROAD
September & October | Leisure Excursions aboard the Texas State Railroad
October 31 | Wiggy Thump Festival
Nov 22-Dec 28 | Fall Foliage Scenic Tours
Nov 15-Dec 28 | The Polar Express Train Ride
VISITPALESTINE.COM | 800-659-3484
WELCOME TO PALESTINE TEXAS

Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

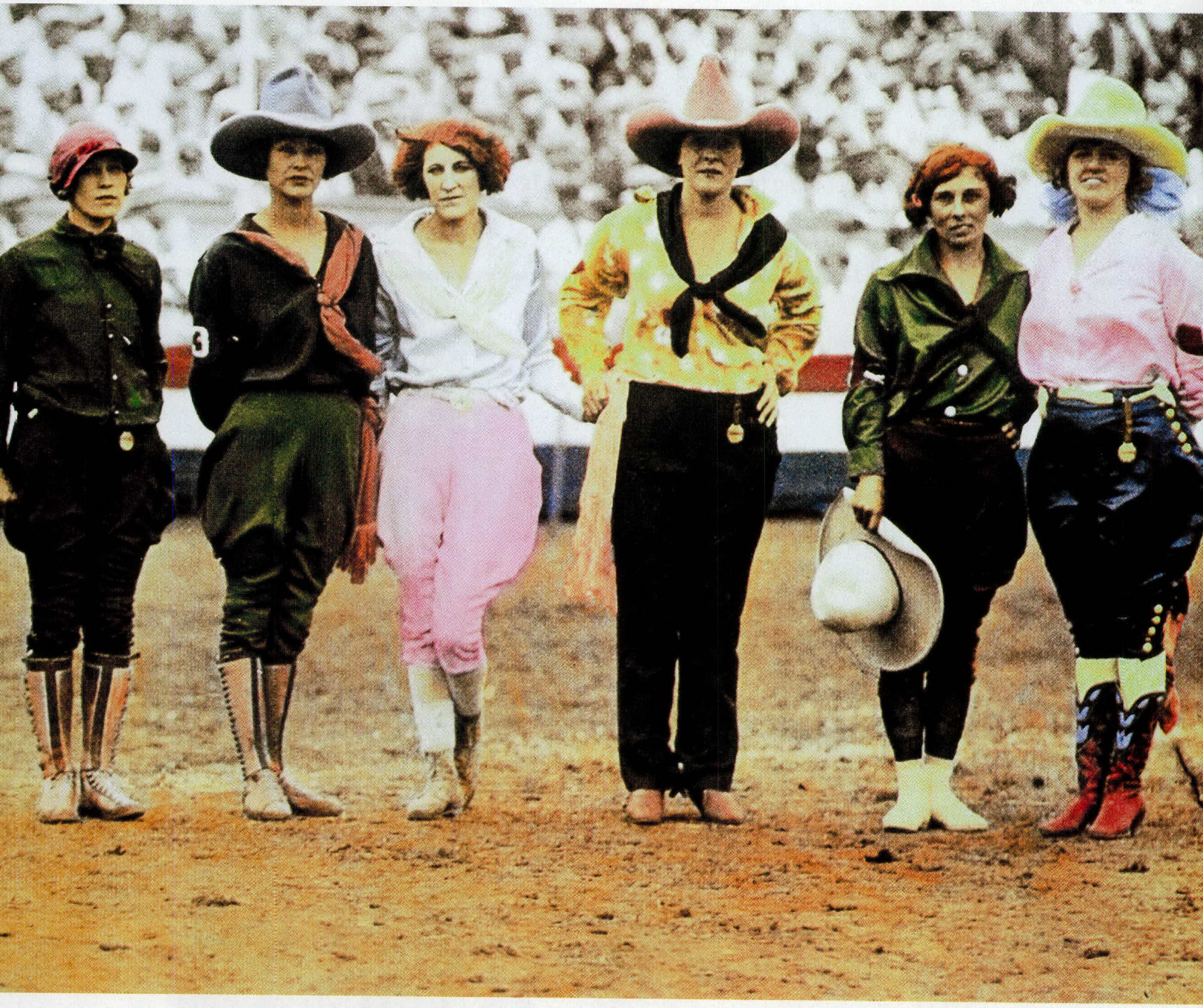
Larger Than Life

A new book on artist Bob "Daddy-O" Wade sizes up the creator of the world's largest pair of cowboy boots

By Joe Nick Patoski

In the mysterious process of making art, every now and then the creator becomes as much the story as the creation. The late Austin artist Bob "Daddy-O" Wade was one of those—loud, colorful, and over-the-top, like his outsize sculptural works. I'm talking about his dancing frogs on the roof of the Taco Cabana on Greenville Avenue in Dallas, his iguana atop the herpetarium building at the Fort Worth Zoo, and his cowboy boots—the largest pair in the world, according to Guinness World Records—on the grounds of the North Star Mall in San Antonio.

Over the six decades Wade imagined his offbeat menagerie, he turned *himself* into a work of art. He became the character who lit up the room, cracked forever wise, and showed up at all the cool places and events—his wife, Lisa Wade, riding shotgun. He was also the cat who linked serious art buyers and museum curators with the



freewheeling Austin Museum of Popular Culture poster-art gang, and ran with 20-something college professors, musicians, Dallas Cowboys, criminal lawyers, and fellow raconteurs. An icon of twisted Texan sensibility, he was a madman you wanted to spend quality time with.

Daddy-O's Book of Big-Ass Art, a pictorial biography out Nov. 4 from Texas A&M University Press, is Wade writ large. The book is a collaboration between Wade and author W.K. "Kip" Stratton In addition to their own contributions, the pair rounded up more than 40 of Wade's associates, including me, to offer their takes on Wade and more than 100 of his artworks.

Included in the book is "13 Cowgirls" (above), one of Wade's many hand-tinted, airbrushed paintings of vintage photographs. Austin screenwriter Anne Rapp owns the work and wrote about it for the book. "I've been a traveler and a nomad most of my life, just like the girls in '13 Cowgirls,' and wherever I go, they go with me," Rapp says. "I still find myself staring at them, trying to figure out their personalities—which ones I would've been friends with, which ones have the best hair and boots, and which ones I wouldn't want to meet in an alley."

I know Wade was looking forward to the book's rollout because he scoped out practically every book event I did in Austin last year for my latest book, *Austin to ATX*. "OK Bob, here's your baseline," I joked to him at a full-house event at the Austin Public Library. "Top this," I told him. I knew he would.

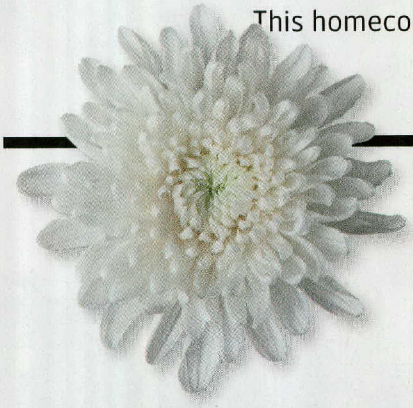
We ran into each other during the 2019 Texas Book Festival, right after the musician Joe Ely and I did a panel. That's the last time I saw Wade. On Christmas Eve, he died from a heart attack. Ironically, his book is a festival selection this year, and his art will grace the festival's poster. Texas is a whole lot duller since Wade's departure. The pages of his book will tell you why.

Photo: Courtesy Lisa Sherman Wade

Mum's the Word

This homecoming tradition didn't start in Texas, but we made it bigger

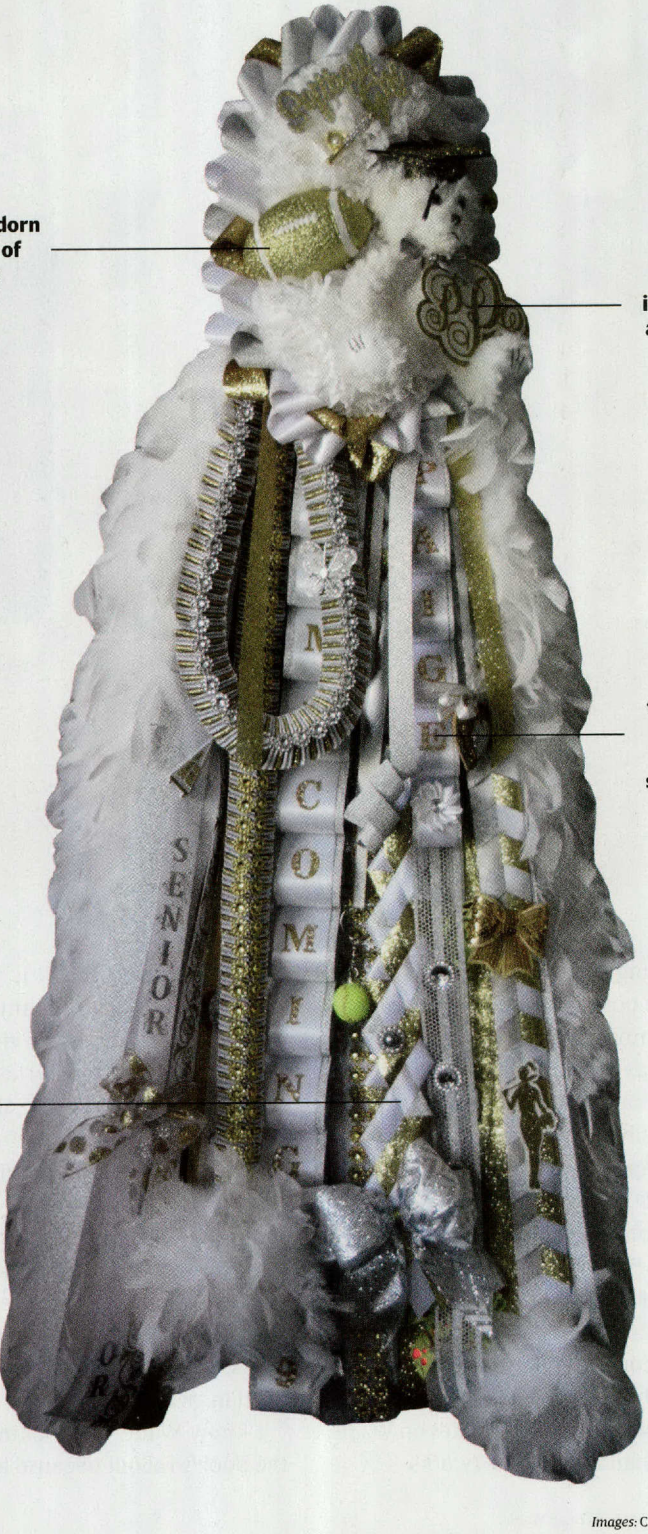
By Julia Jones



If you went to high school in Texas, you've seen them: extravagant faux chrysanthemums done up in glitter, lights, and stuffed mascots, with ribbons and braids trickling down. Mums—and garters, their male counterparts—are homecoming staples all over the state and a rite of passage for high schoolers. But the tradition's origin is largely obscure—and surprisingly, not Texan.

Homecoming mums are said to have appeared in Texas during the 1930s, but the first known homecoming mums were worn in Missouri, which also hosted the first-ever homecoming football game in 1911. Some claim the tradition of wearing mums—at the time, made from real chrysanthemums—began before the 1930s.

The flower's temporal qualities led homecoming-goers to transition to artificial flowers, which were glamorized in the '90s. Today, mums often include more than one flower and extend wider than the shoulders, with ribbons trailing down to the feet, so that only the wearer's head is visible. The gaudier, the better. Garters have stayed relatively tame in size, although they're frequently decked out in the same manner. The spectacular displays are only to be worn on the day of the fall homecoming game, never to the dance typically held the following evening.



Trinkets adorn the tops of mums

Mum-wearer's initials add a personal touch

Ribbons feature the wearer's name and school year

School colors form a braid

Images: Courtesy Kisha Clark

1936

Year of the first mum sighting in Texas, at Baylor University

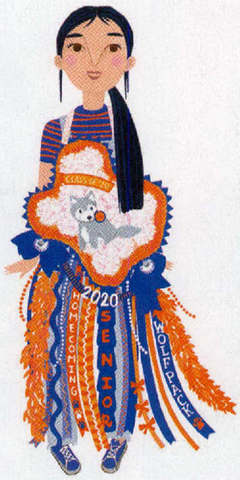
$1,000+

Price for a high-end mum

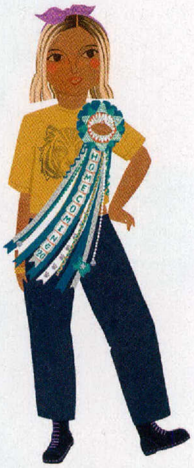
18 feet

Length of the world's largest mum, made by Whataburger

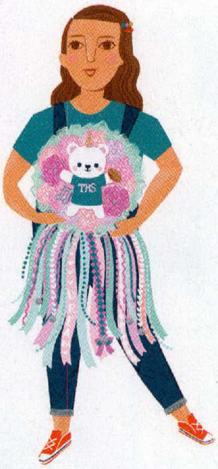
Popular Mum Styles by Region



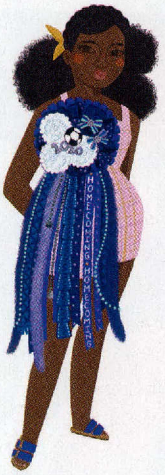
North Texas
Large, with standard school colors.



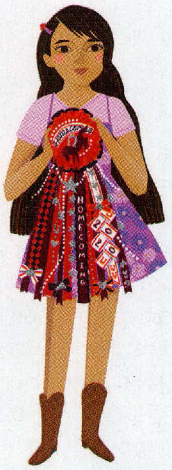
Gulf Coast and South Texas
Traditional, smaller mum.



Houston
Large, with school colors and nontraditional colors like plum, cream, teal, and pink.



Central and East Texas
Knee-length or shorter, more traditional.



West Texas
Smaller, trinket-heavy, waist-length.

Mums, Incorporated

Kisha Clark has made mums since high school, and her passion for the art has only increased with time. In 2012, she started Mums Inc., an organization that now comprises 145 mum-making professionals and 80 businesses. The group allows mum-makers around Texas to connect with each other, share supplies, and give advice to up-and-comers. Based in Providence Village outside of Dallas, Clark's mum-making company, DK Florals Inc., ships across Texas and out of state.

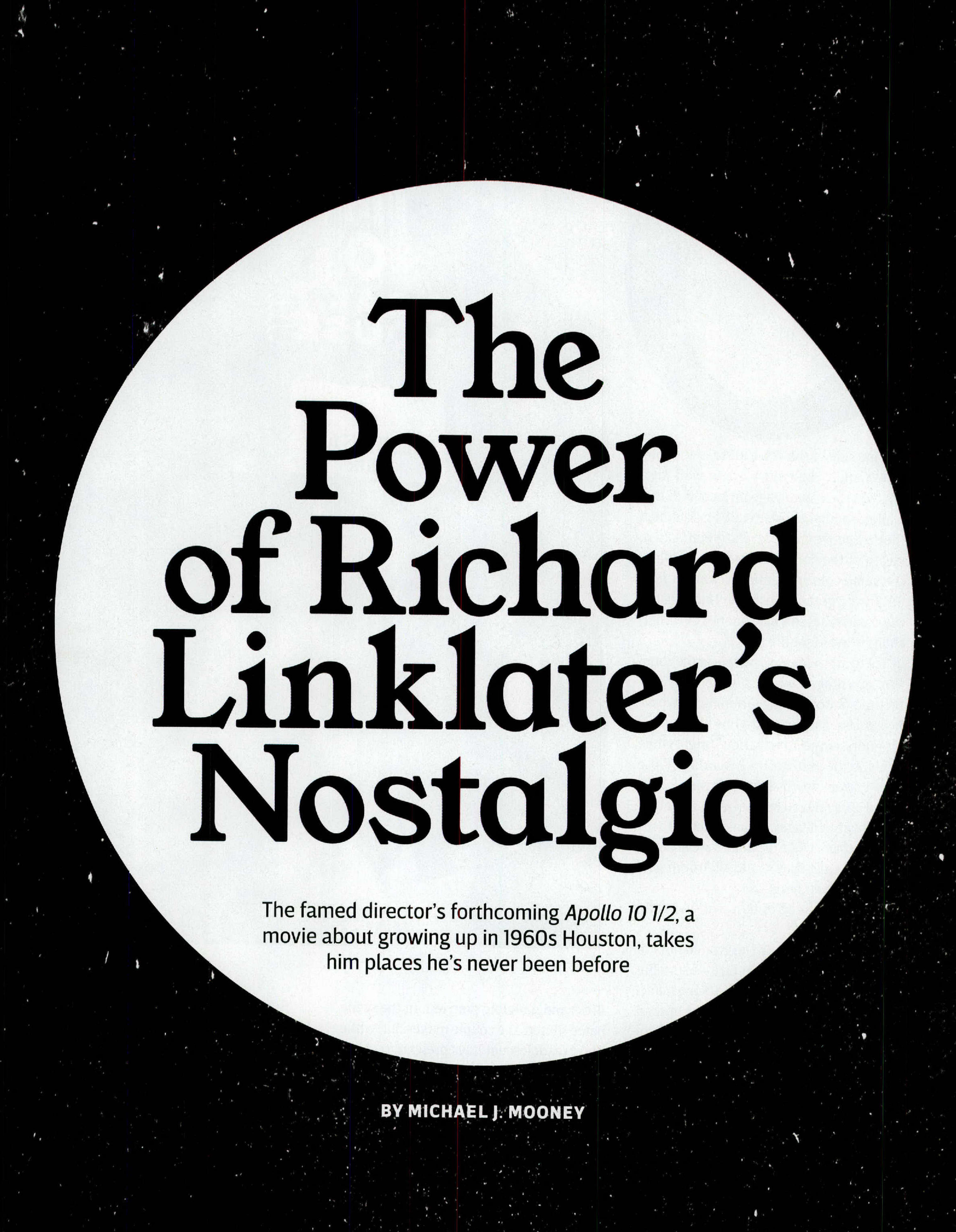
What's the largest, most extravagant mum you've made to date?
I have something called a "megaquad," and it's body-sized. It has four 7-and-a-half-inch flowers. It's very long; it goes all the way to the floor. On those mums we do four or five braids, looping, and lots of extra little details here and there that I add to each mum.

When do you start prepping for homecoming season?
We spend all year preparing for this. If you're importing, you start immediately after the season ends. You get to have Christmas without mums, then in January it's back to inventory and cleaning and prework for the season, and it lasts until the season begins.

How has the mum industry changed this year because of COVID-19?
We're not sure. The tradition is very much alive, especially with our seniors. Seniors look for that same level of support from mum-makers. They're not going to want to miss out on those memories. Parents will want some level of normality, regardless of whether or not football games happen, or the homecoming dance happens. These kids depend on us to help them make memories.

Illustrations: Bambi Ramsey

GAME TIME INC.
HOUSTON
SPACE CITY, U.S.A.
BASKIN-ROBBINS 31
ASTROWORLD
FUN LAND
Fun Island



The Power of Richard Linklater's Nostalgia

The famed director's forthcoming *Apollo 10 1/2*, a movie about growing up in 1960s Houston, takes him places he's never been before

BY MICHAEL J. MOONEY

Illustration: Peter Horvath

ALAMO
DRAFT
HOUSE
CINEMA
TX
DOCUMENTARY
TOUR

FROM LEFT: Richard Linklater with S.R. Bindler, director of *Hands on a Hardbody*, outside the Alamo Drafthouse in Austin circa 1998; Glen Powell, Zachary Levi, Linklater, and Milo Coy on the set of *Apollo 10 1/2*.

On one side of the warehouse-size room, a two-and-a-half story green wall towers over the soundstage. Attached to that wall is another shorter wall, also painted the distinctive green-screen green. A large swath of the floor in front of the walls is the same color, creating a seamless field of infinite green so pristine that most of the crew wears soft blue booties over their shoes to avoid scuffing it.

There are at least 40 people in the room this morning, each responsible for and focused on something different, all weaving and buzzing around a line of cameras, monitors, cranes, and various bright white lights. At the center of it all, wearing a loose gray button-down shirt with the sleeves rolled up, a relaxed pair of Levis, and black Nikes with red laces, is the director: Richard Linklater. Once the actors are in place, the clapboard snaps, and the room gets quiet. Linklater nods.

“All right,” he says in a firm yet calm voice. “Action.”

It’s late February, on the ground floor of Troublemaker Studios in East Austin. But for the purposes of the movie being made, the space is supposed to be the suburban sprawl of Houston in 1969. In the middle of the green soundstage sits an immaculate classic white Chrysler sedan, a whale of a vehicle with an old Texas license plate. It’s parked next to a stand-alone drive-in movie speaker. In the front seat of the car, a couple in their late teens is dressed head to toe in attire taken directly from photos from the 1960s: his orange-striped shirt and slicked-down hair, her light-cotton dress and dangling ponytail. In the scene being filmed, the couple makes out, while two preadolescent boys pretend to sneak up and spy on them.

After a few seconds, Linklater stops the boys, walks in front of the cameras, and points at various markers on the green floor.

“You walked through a car,” the director says matter-of-factly. His calm, urban-Texas drawl makes some of his instruction sound a little like spiritual guidance.

“Remember to stay in your lane,” Linklater tells the boys.

The boys go back to their original marks and walk toward the Chrysler again, this time careful to maneuver around the designated imaginary cars in the imaginary drive-in movie theater. The boys point and giggle at the kissing couple in the car. The director lets the cameras run, encouraging the actors to do whatever feels natural to them in the

moment, which is his general approach to directing. There's more giggling.

The movie being filmed, slated for release on Netflix in 2021, is called *Apollo 10 1/2: A Space Adventure*. It will be Linklater's 22nd feature film, and like much of his previous work, he wrote it himself, and it's largely autobiographical. The movie is a novelistic look at the life of a 10-year-old boy growing up in Houston in the late 1960s, just as NASA was sending humans to the moon. But unlike any of Linklater's other films, the entire movie was shot on green screen. The actors will all be Rotoscoped, a dreamlike computer-animation style Linklater employed in his movies *Waking Life* and *A Scanner Darkly*. The backgrounds and settings—the drive-in movie theater in the scene with the Chrysler, for example—will be filled in with 3D computer illustrations using decades-old photos and home movies as reference. These images were compiled by the production staff, and some were even submitted by the public.

But beneath all of that—the huge crew and the technical challenges—is a director guiding actors on camera.

"Let's do it again," Linklater says. He's so relaxed, it's almost like he's suggesting a restaurant for dinner.

This time, Linklater gives the boys another direction, as they creep toward the kissing teenagers in the car, to bring them into a certain moment and place in history: "You're happy to be here, too!"

The idea for *Apollo 10 1/2* came while Linklater was making *Boyhood*. That movie, shot over 12 years and eventually nominated for five Golden Globes and six Academy Awards in 2015, followed a boy and his family as they changed and developed over more than a decade. Every year, Linklater would write a short vignette based on a year of the boy's life. As he prepared to write the third vignette, the filmmaker thought back to what was happening in his own life at that age.

Growing up in Houston during those years felt like living in a real-life science fiction movie, Linklater tells me. Between 1965 and 1969, doctors there performed the nation's first successful heart transplant; architects built the world's first domed stadium, replete with newfangled artificial grass dubbed "AstroTurf;" and scientists at NASA were sending men to the moon.

"It was just unbelievable," he says. "Houston felt like the center of everything scientific."

Astronauts stepping foot on the surface of the moon united humanity in a way that hasn't really happened since, he says. Looking back now, it seems more like a fleeting final moment of something now lost to us all.

"This is the last thing that the whole world thought was good," Linklater tells me.

It's a few weeks after shooting wrapped on the movie, and he's talking to me in the library he built on his 48-acre ranch in Bastrop. In relative isolation 30 miles from Austin, Linklater can work on the postproduction of *Apollo 10 1/2*, as well as a few other projects. Outside his window, birds and crickets chirp and click beneath the afternoon sun. Today he's working on music cues for the movie. Linklater's films are known to have incredible soundtracks, and while he can't name the songs he's using yet, he assures me they're all era-appropriate.

As he talks about the movie, his voice grows more enthusiastic and wistful. Since wrapping the shoot, a pandemic has spread around the globe and protests have filled

Photos: Courtesy Austin Film Society (left); Courtesy Netflix

the streets. Linklater says he knows the late '60s weren't peace and love for everyone, but watching the Apollo 11 mission as a boy filled him with unbounded optimism. So, he's enjoyed the opportunity to escape into a different time.

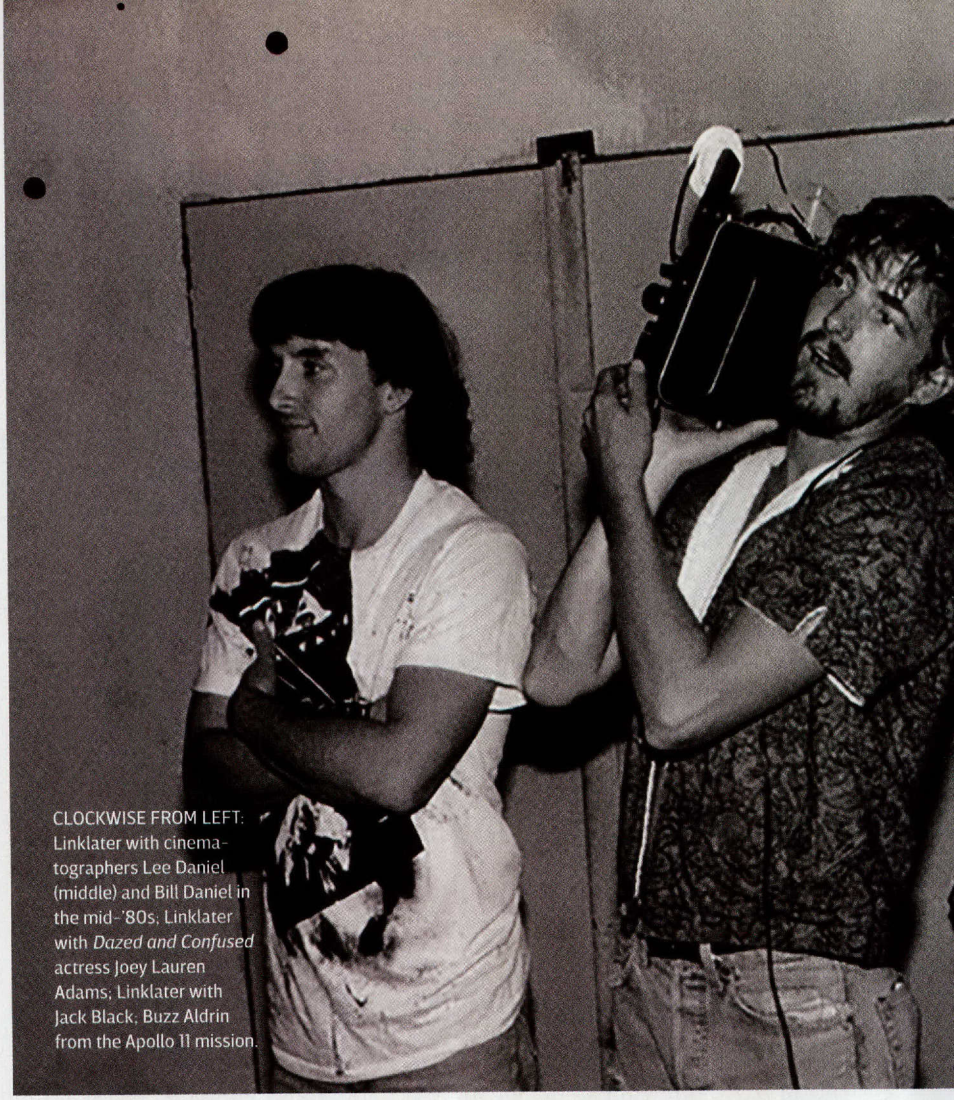
"Fifty years ago," he says, his voice stretching out the thought. "That's a good place to be residing during this time."

Linklater was born in 1960 at Hermann Hospital in Houston. He lived in the city until he was 7, then his family moved to the suburbs. He was 8 when the Apollo 11 mission landed on the moon.

For kids growing up in suburban Houston around then, Linklater recalls, the world was full of indistinct, treeless expanses to ride bikes through, endless housing subdivisions and construction sites to play at, and newly built bowling alleys and movie theaters to escape the heat in. Summer days often meant going to the pool with other kids, cruising through the fog behind the DDT trucks, going to AstroWorld, or taking family trips to the coast. Looking back now with a rose-colored lens, the entire setting seems like one big blank slate waiting to be filled in with a child's imagination and fantasy. That's the experience Linklater is trying to capture in the movie.

Of course, Houston in 2020 doesn't look like the Houston of 1969. Most neighborhoods have trees now. The Astrodome doesn't look so new. AstroWorld has long since closed. Recreating all of that in the real world would cost tens of millions of dollars. So, in 2018, Linklater's Austin-based production company, Detour, put out calls for home movies and archival photos of Houston in the 1960s. They received dozens of replies, with hours of grainy footage of AstroWorld, the Astrodome, the young, budding suburbs, and plenty of escapades down to Galveston.

Detour is working with Submarine, a production company based in Amsterdam, to fill the background of every shot with modified versions of those old images as well as the images the production team collected. The result should be a dreamy, nostalgic adventure. It's unlike anything Linklater has ever done before. It's unlike anything anybody has ever done before.


CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Linklater with cinematographers Lee Daniel (middle) and Bill Daniel in the mid-'80s; Linklater with *Dazed and Confused* actress Joey Lauren Adams; Linklater with Jack Black; Buzz Aldrin from the Apollo 11 mission.

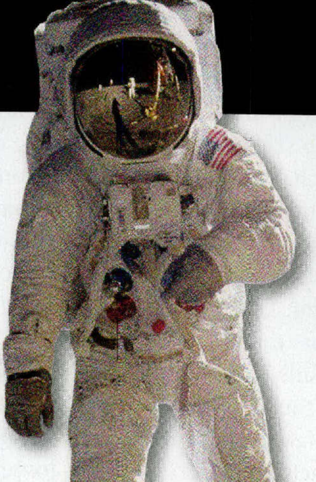
This movie won't be the first time Linklater has pushed the boundary of filmmaking. His most personal movies are, in many ways, about the medium itself. He's a renowned fan and scholar of film and film history. (A media outlet once asked Linklater to name the 10 movies that influenced him most, and he returned a list of 250 titles, noting, "This is just the beginning.") He's also a founding member of the Austin Film Society, a nonprofit for film exhibition and independent filmmaking. Linklater's movies not only question what a feature film can be; they each do so in different ways.

His first commercially released feature, 1990's much-celebrated ultra-low-budget *Slacker*, doesn't have a plot or a protagonist, per se. It's a stream-of-consciousness narrative that follows a series of people and conversations around Austin. His next movie, the beloved *Dazed and Confused*, didn't have much of a traditional plot either. It follows an ensemble of high schoolers through the travails of the last day of school in 1976. His *Before* trilogy chronicles the relationship of a man and woman through a few hours of different days, each installment nine years apart. *Waking Life*, which centers on a young man having several philosophical discussions in an ethereal existence, was the first full-length movie to use digital Rotoscoping. His 2001 movie *Tape* takes place entirely in one motel room, unfolding in real time. *Bernie*, about the East Texas murder of a despised 81-year-old millionaire by her 39-year-old companion, repeatedly cuts away from the unfolding narrative to documentary-style interviews with local townspeople. Perhaps most famously, 2014's *Boyhood* tells an epic 12-year tale with the actors visibly aging on camera.

Ethan Hawke, who has appeared in eight Linklater films, is one of a handful of actors who are quoted in *Richard Linklater: Dream Is Destiny*, part of PBS' American Masters series. Hawke noted the director

GUILLAUME-EN-EGYPTE

CIRRUS LOGIC
Gibson
AUSTIN FILM SOCIETY



Matthew McConaughey has said Linklater is "so Buddhist he doesn't know that he's Buddhist."

is "very, very interested in form and content and doing something new." He added, "Rick is not looking through Hollywood's eyes, and he doesn't care how Hollywood sees him."

Linklater's movies retain a degree of positivity that most movies don't. They are nearly all some type of philosophical treatise, a comment on the state of humanity. And while his films can touch on a whole host of dark subjects, the viewing experience is always fun. The takeaway is always hopeful. That's Linklater.

On the set and in conversation, the director—who turned 60 in July—maintains an even-keel demeanor. He equates the way he deals with actors to the approach of a good baseball team manager. (Linklater played at Sam Houston State University, and the sport is in several of his movies, including a remake of *Bad News Bears.*)

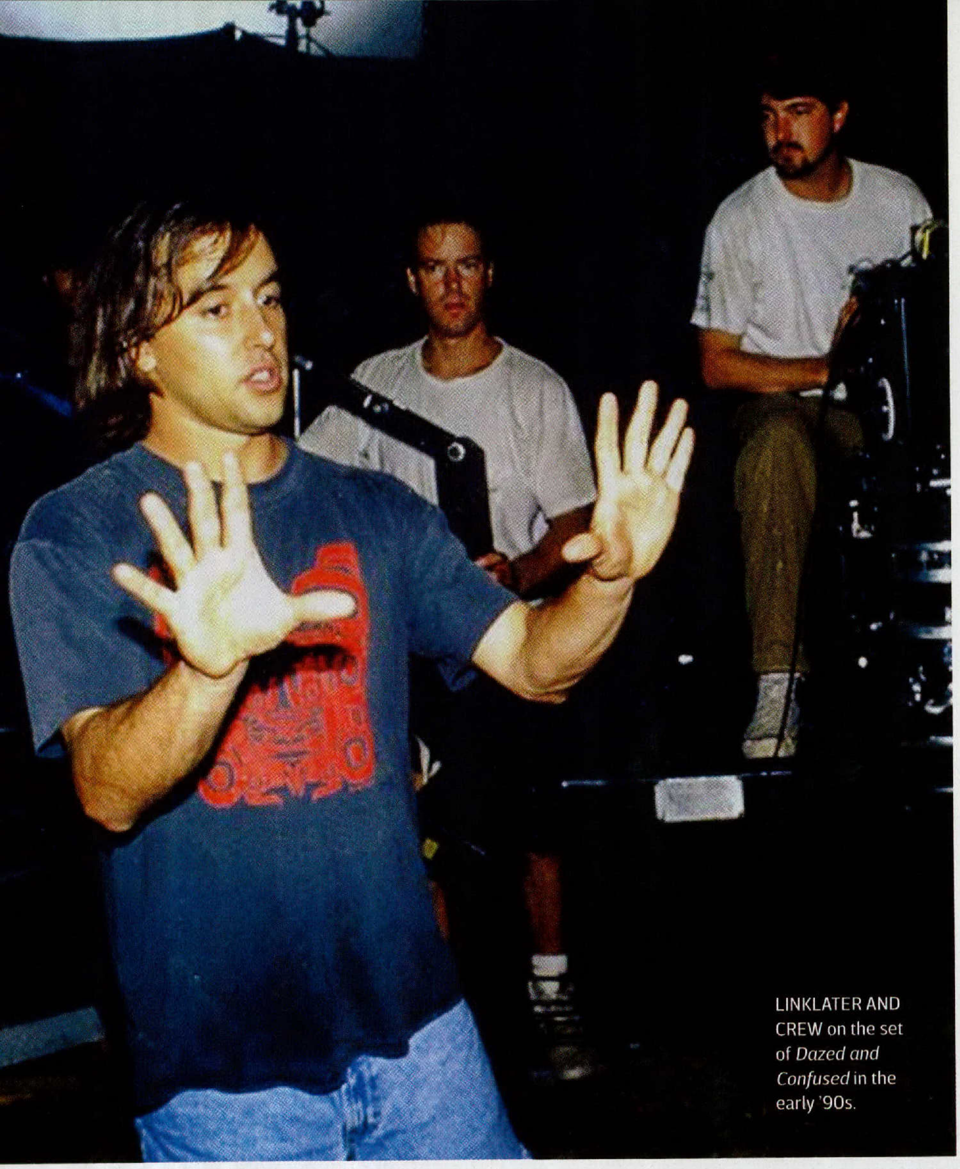
"Every player needs something different," he tells me. "Sometimes you've got to yell at somebody, and sometimes you've got to be super nice to somebody else. Everybody has different needs."

Matthew McConaughey, whose first movie role was as the eminently quotable Wooderson in *Dazed and Confused* ("all right, all right, all right"), later starred with Jack Black and Shirley MacLaine in *Bernie*. In *Dream Is Destiny*, he is quoted as saying Linklater gives only positive feedback. "He's redirected me, and I've seen him redirect many people," McConaughey said. "But I've never seen him say the word 'no.'" McConaughey has also said the director is "so Buddhist he doesn't know that he's Buddhist."

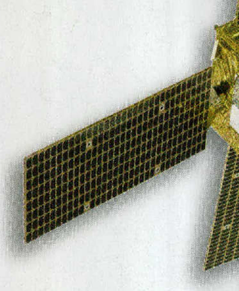
Linklater says the set can stay relaxed because of all the hard work that goes into the front end, from extensive rehearsals to the precise details planned for every part of every frame he shoots.

Jack Black received massive acclaim after working with Linklater in both *School of Rock* and *Bernie*. He plays the main character, an adult looking back, in *Apollo 10 1/2*. In *Dream Is Destiny*, he's quoted as saying, "When you see his process, you don't go 'How the f--- does he do it? He's the f---ing mad genius! If only I could think like he thinks!' When you see his process, you go, 'Oh, it's just hard work.'"

Photos: Courtesy Austin Film Society



LINKLATER AND CREW on the set of *Dazed and Confused* in the early '90s.



On the day I visit the set in Austin, the crew shoots for more than 10 hours, with only a few breaks. Scene after scene, Linklater is behind the camera or talking with actors or producers. Or he's working out some final detail with a costume or prop. The actors come and go—there are limits on how many hours minors can work in a day, and personnel on set keep strict track—but Linklater is always there, keeping the operation moving.

After the scene with the couple making out in the Chrysler, there's another scene of the two boys sitting in lawn chairs at the imaginary drive-in, eating real popcorn, pretending to drink imaginary soda. Everything in front of the camera—from the boys' clothing, to the lawn chairs, to the popcorn box they're sharing—is authentic to 1969 Houston. Before the popcorn scene, a production assistant showed the boys clips from *Hellfighters*, the 1960s John Wayne movie they're pretending to watch. (It's also set in Houston.) So worried about accurately evoking the time they're in, Linklater's team combed through old newspapers to see which movies were actually playing in Houston that summer.

Later, there's a scene that includes some of the kids riding their bikes through an imaginary fog behind a mosquito-killing truck. Three adults on the production staff make sure the playing cards slotted into the spokes of the kids' bicycles are genuine to the time.

"It's fun to dial in on those details to try to get them right," Linklater tells me. "That's what makes you want to be a filmmaker—trying that kind of specificity."

Following lunch, they film a scene with nine neighborhood children in bathing suits all piled into the back of a vintage 1960s blue Ford Ranger, cruising down the imaginary highway toward Galveston. After one take, Linklater moves one of the fans gusting on the truck—replicating the wind on the highway—to make sure everyone's hair is blowing in the right direction. (Vehicles have memorable roles in most of Linklater's films. In addition to the flawless Chrysler and Ranger, *Apollo 10 1/2* also features several scenes in an old Woody station wagon.)

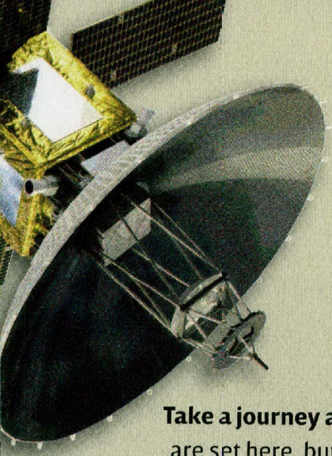
While most of the cast and crew periodically sneak away to the craft services tables for a snack, Linklater barely leaves the room all day. A few times, he walks over to a plate of fruit in a chair a few feet from the cameras and has a couple bites of pineapple and strawberry—he's been a vegetarian since his 20s—but he's never away for more than a minute or so.

Late that afternoon, they're shooting a few scenes of the kids playing on the beach. Some pretend to tan. Some toss a football. At some point they chase the imaginary tides and sandpipers. Of course, here, on the soundstage, there is no sand. There is no ocean water. It's just actors romping about in front of the green walls. Even after a full day on set, standing behind a monitor, watching this pretend family pretend to play on the pretend beach, Linklater is smiling—for real.

He feels the same way a few months later, he tells me, as he's working through the postproduction, watching and listening for hours every day as the movie slowly comes together. It's hard for an outsider to know what any of this will ultimately look like when the editing and animation is done. But knowing the director's career, somehow this elaborate, seemingly chaotic collaboration and technical jigsaw puzzle will eventually become a work of art.

For now, though, Richard Linklater is happy to let his movie take him to a more optimistic time and place.

Photos: Courtesy Austin Film Society



A Focus on Texas

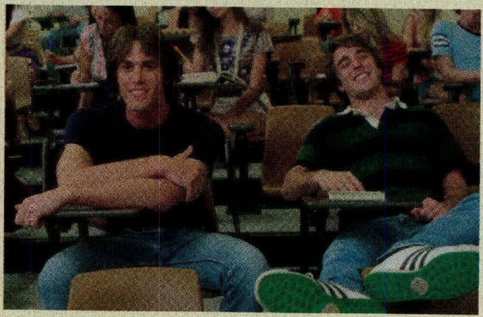
Take a journey across Texas and through time by watching a collection of Richard Linklater films. Not all of his movies are set here, but throughout his career the director has consistently managed to depict—often in remarkably specific detail—a variety of locales in our state at various points in history.

Austin, 1989
SLACKER
(released in 1990)

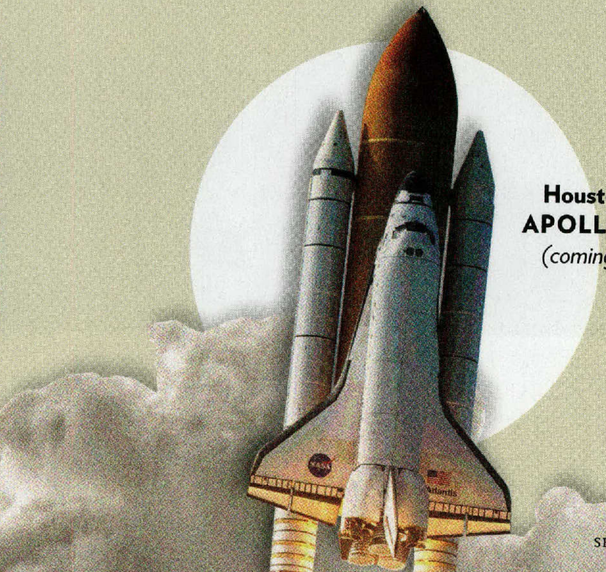
Huntsville, 1976
DAZED AND CONFUSED
(released in 1993)

West Texas and Various, 1920
THE NEWTON BOYS
(released in 1998)

Carthage, 1996
BERNIE
(released in 2011)



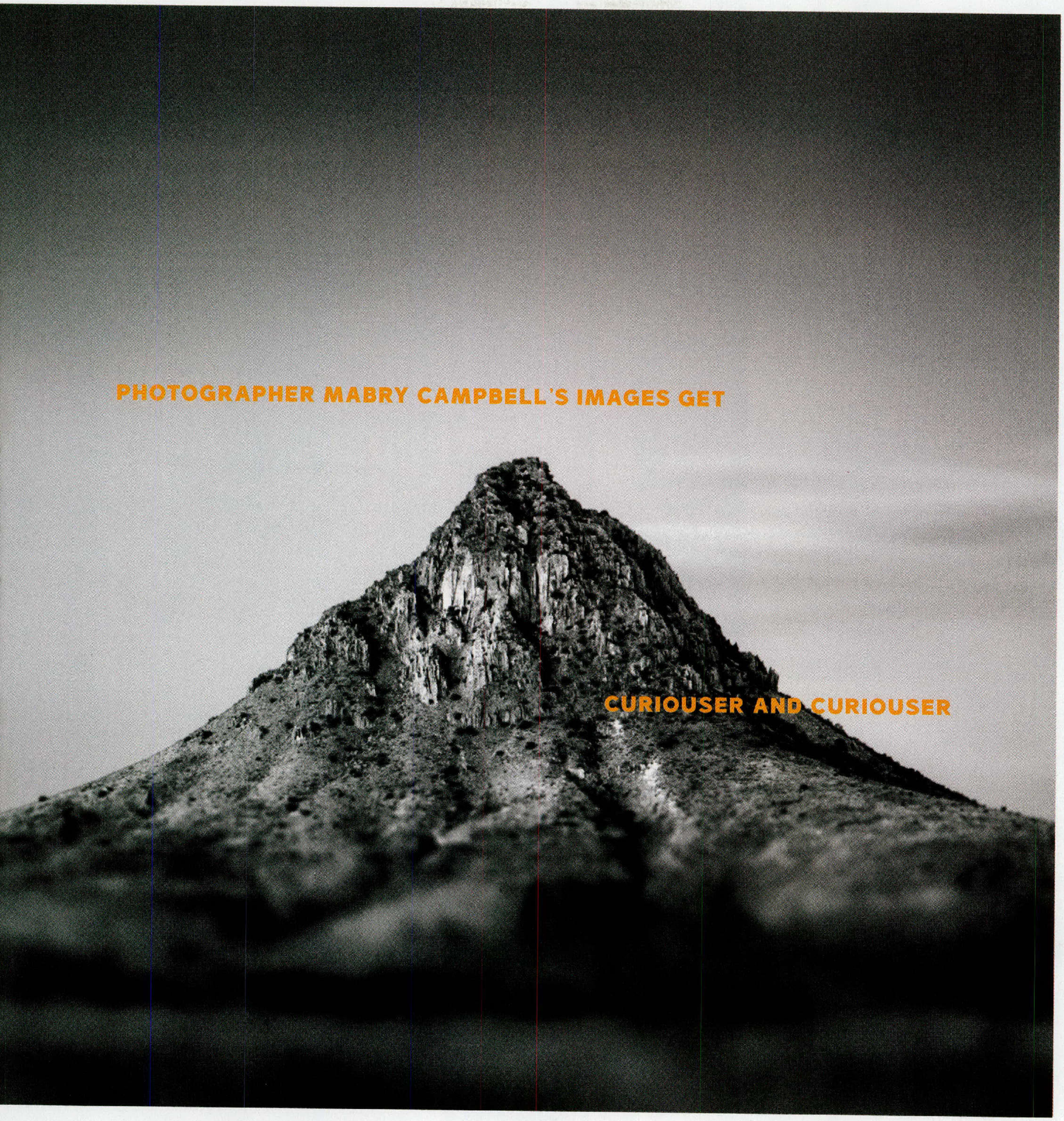
Southeast Texas, 1980
EVERYBODY WANTS SOME!!
(released in 2016)



Houston, 1969
APOLLO 10 1/2
(coming in 2021)

TEXAS IN WONDERLAND

LYONDELLBASELL TOWER IN DOWNTOWN HOUSTON



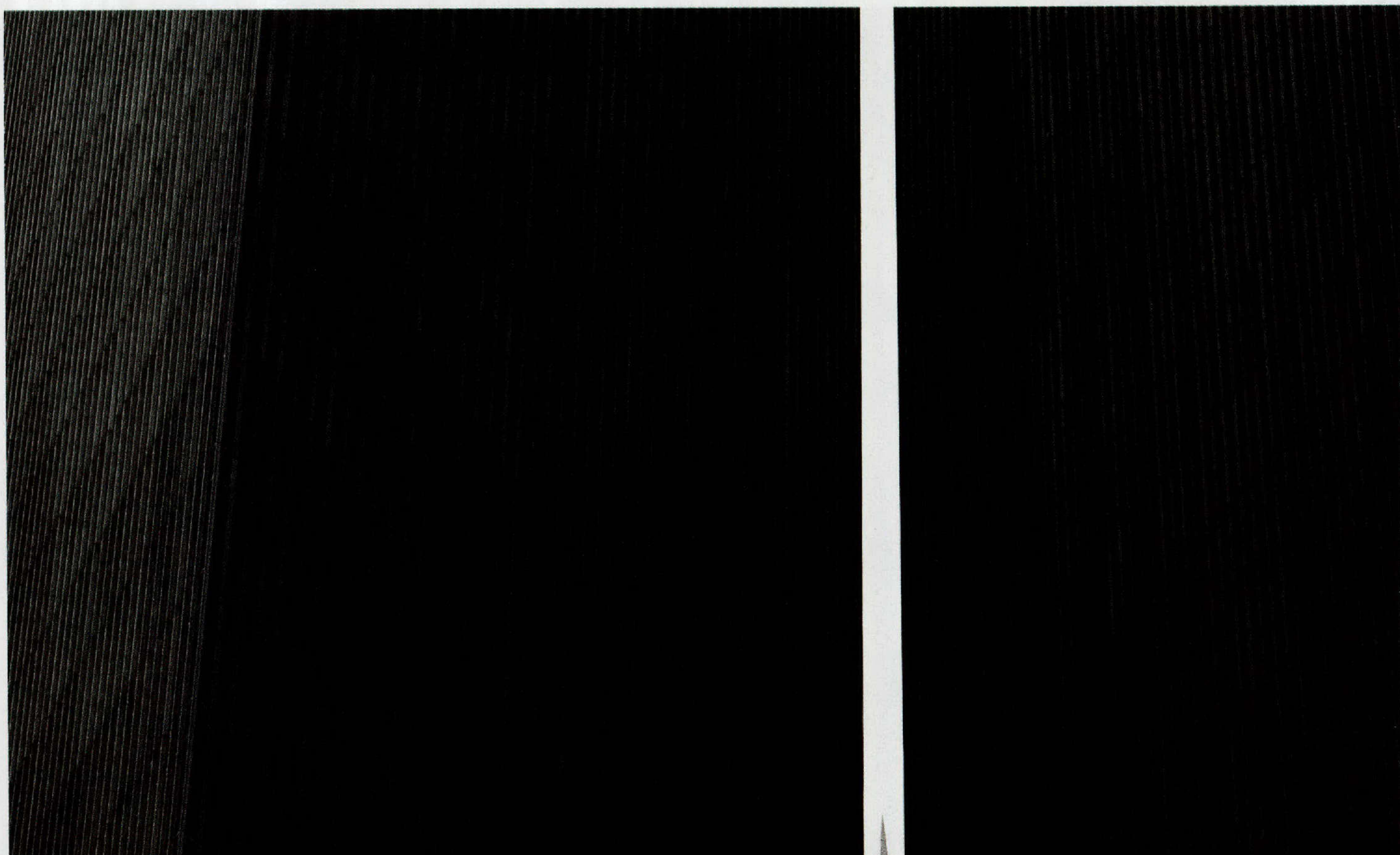
PHOTOGRAPHER MABRY CAMPBELL'S IMAGES GET CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER

MITRE PEAK NEAR FORT DAVIS

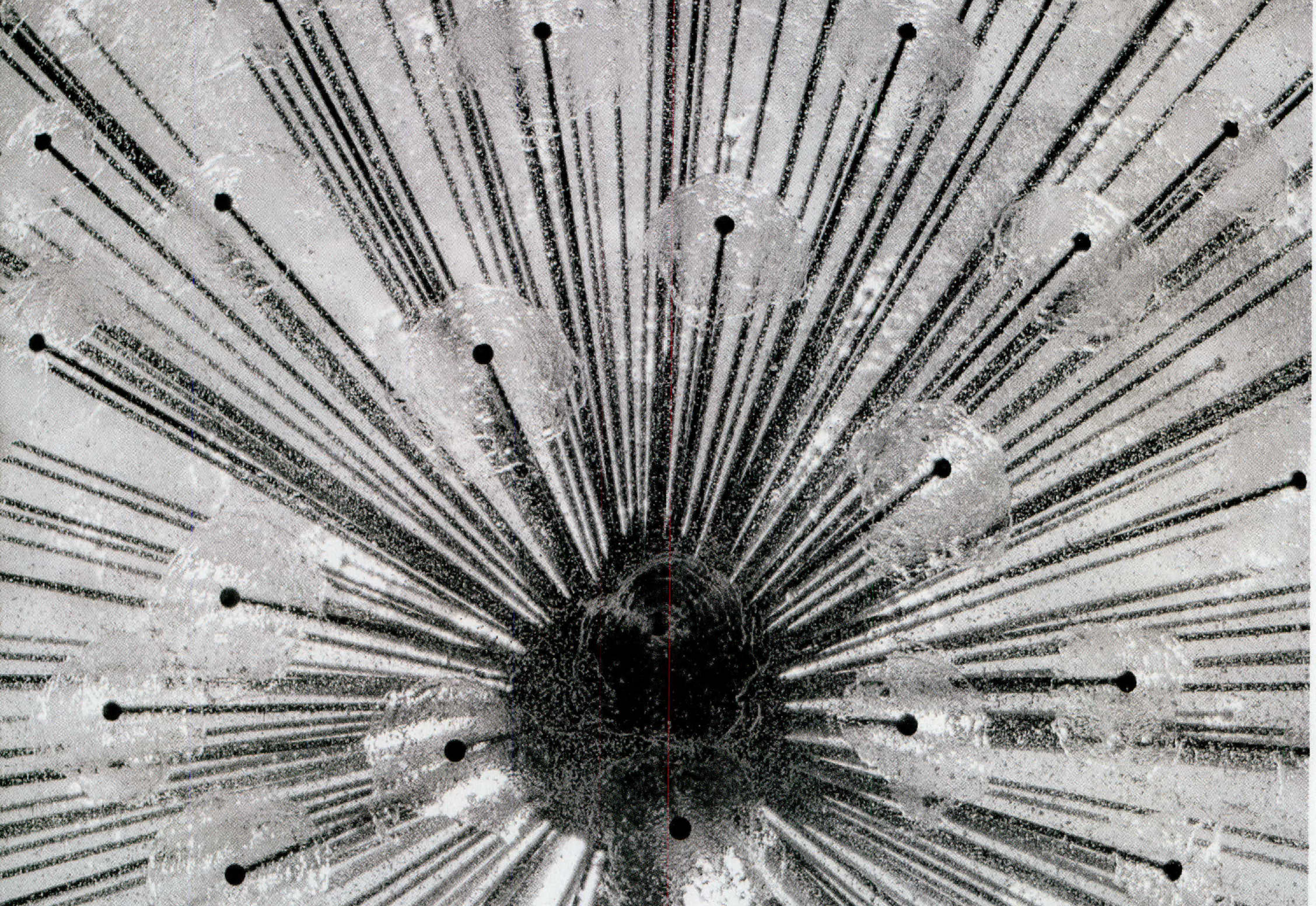
MABRY CAMPBELL WANTS YOU TO FEEL CHALLENGED WHEN YOU LOOK AT his photographs. Maybe lost, maybe a little bit small. And after you're done feeling those things, a sense of wonder. ¶ The Houston-based photographer's images are simple upon first glance—stark, clean, and black-and-white. Simplicity, in this case, is a clever mask for complexity. In Campbell's photos, incongruent shapes clash, then seamlessly blend; details abstract larger forms; and light and shadow make the buildings and landscapes you pass by every day remarkable. Viewers might not know what they're looking at right away, but more time spent with the pictures reveals familiar places rendered in unfamiliar ways. ¶ Campbell first became interested in photography on a fishing boat in Port Aransas. While attending the University of Texas at Austin in the mid-1990s, he would guide fishing trips on weekends for some extra money. With hand-me-down cameras, he started capturing the Gulf of Mexico and the fish in it. "That's when I started really taking photos with some intention behind them," he says. ¶ Later on, after graduating with a master's degree in business from Rice University, he worked in real estate and began photographing architecture—now one of his hallmark subjects. While that work was certainly more commercial than fine art, it's where Campbell developed his signature style of long-exposure photography. This requires the shutter of the camera to be open for a long period of time, whether 30 seconds or two minutes. The technique allows the camera to sharply capture stationary elements while blurring moving aspects. ¶ "Things like water smooth out. Clouds streak through the sky," Campbell explains. "It's really a step away from reality." The distance from actuality also explains why he prefers to shoot in black and white. "I've always liked photography that doesn't resemble real life," he says. "Since we don't see in black and white, it's just one way to remove things from reality." ¶ Campbell's ethos is clear in his photos of architecture, especially the iron and glass structures in Houston and Dallas. The buildings are quotidian to the naked eye, but through his lens they resemble fantastical works of art. He's especially inspired by the postmodern architecture of the 1970s, citing downtown Houston's Pennzoil Place as one of his favorite subjects. ¶ Even his landscape photos, mostly taken in West Texas and on the Gulf Coast, play on the idea of construction. "If you look at a road going through a landscape, you can see that road as a volume, as a shape," Campbell says. "These sorts of things I am absolutely drawn to. I'm trying to emphasize the angles and treat the landscape as an architectural form by keeping things angular and looking at it like something that was built." ¶ Campbell's photographs—on view at the Catherine Couturier Gallery in Houston—give the viewer a bit of "visual misdirection." Not knowing exactly what you're looking at, at least for the first few seconds, elicits the emotional response Campbell hopes for. "When people are looking at your work, and really start to lean in and you can tell they're not quite sure how this was made, to me, that's how I grade myself on success."

—**KIMYA KAVEHKAR**

CHAPEL OF THANKS-GIVING IN DOWNTOWN DALLAS

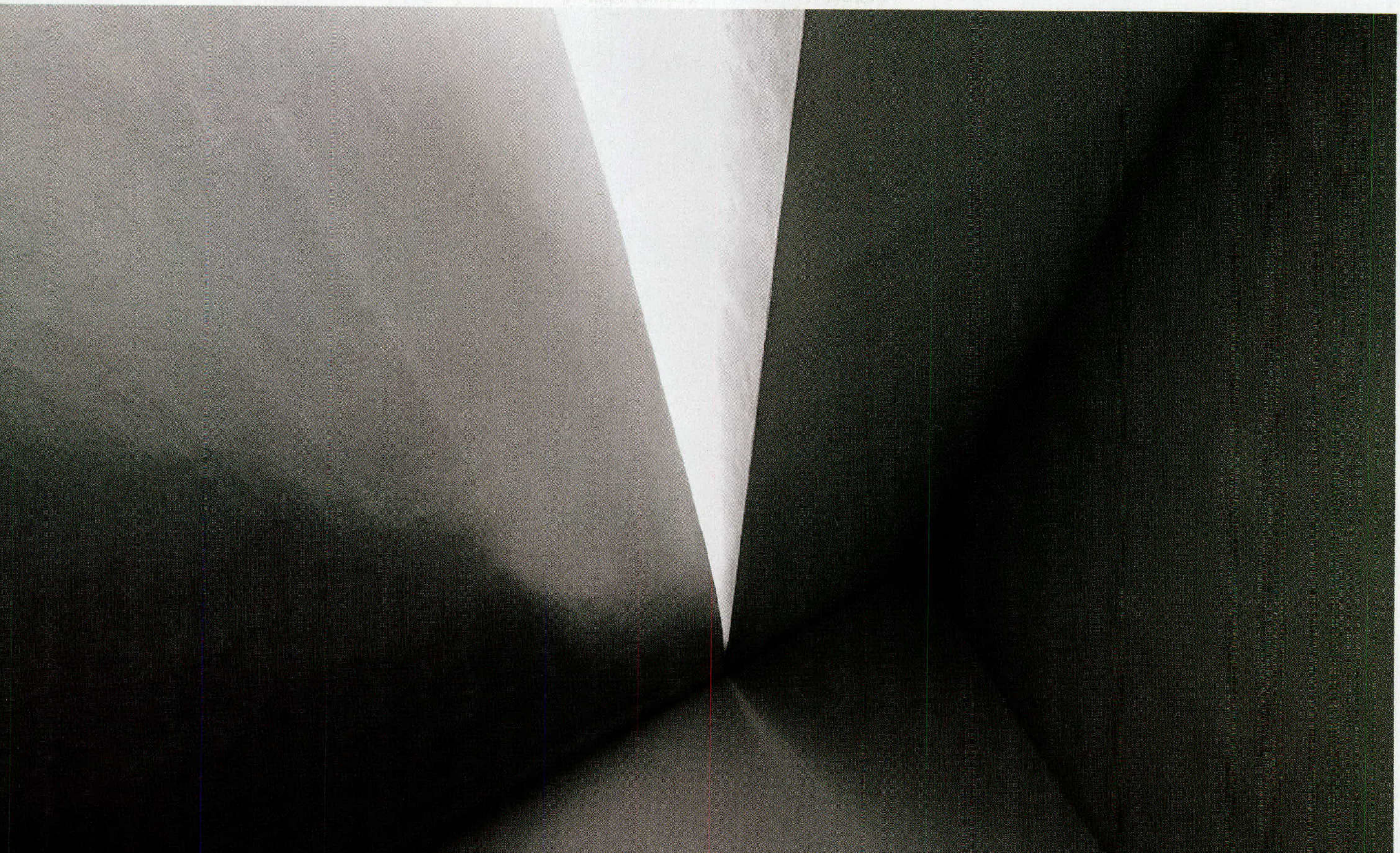


THE TWO TOWERS OF PENNZOIL PLACE IN DOWNTOWN HOUSTON

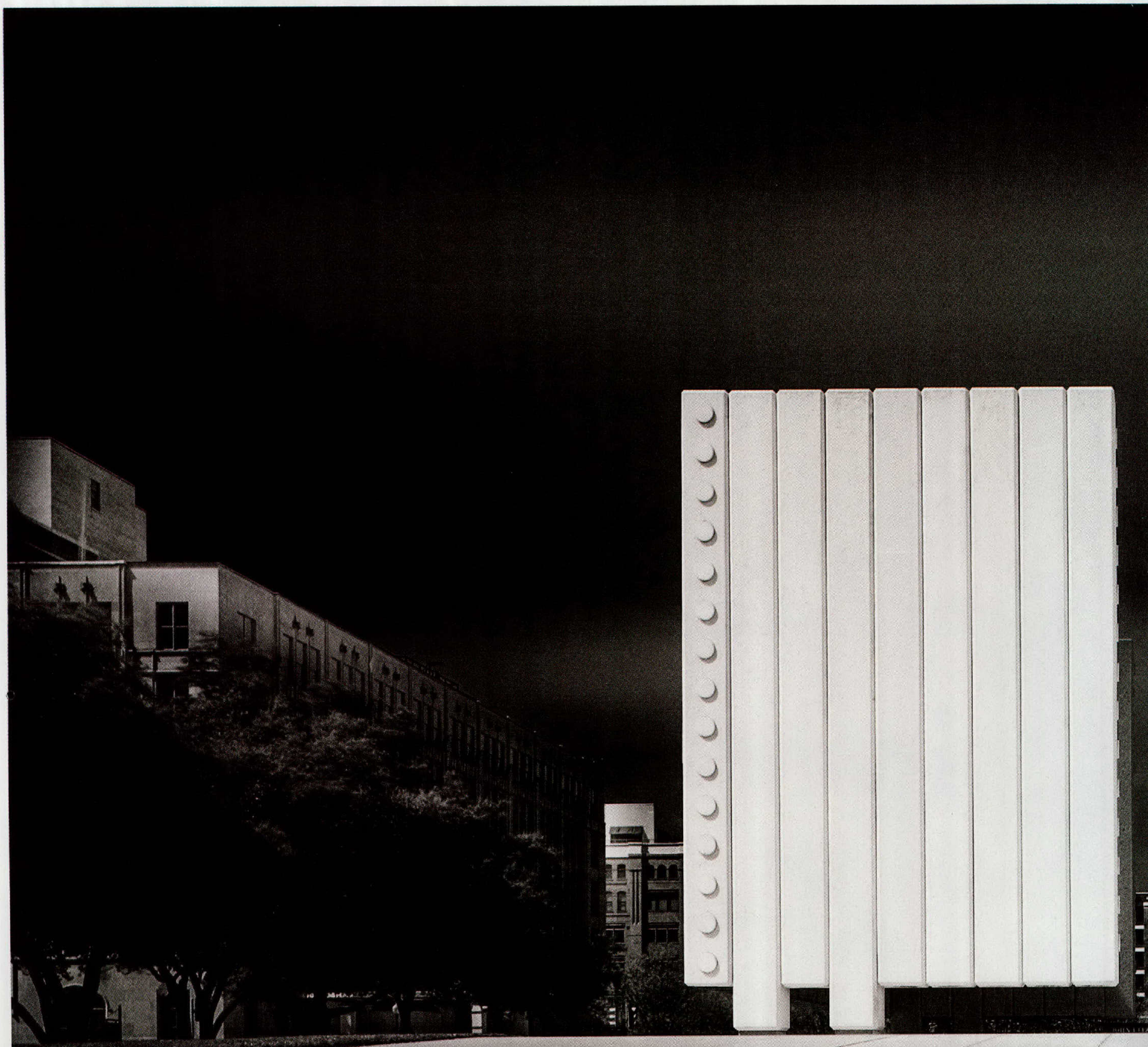


GUS WORTHAM MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN IN BUFFALO BAYOU PARK IN HOUSTON

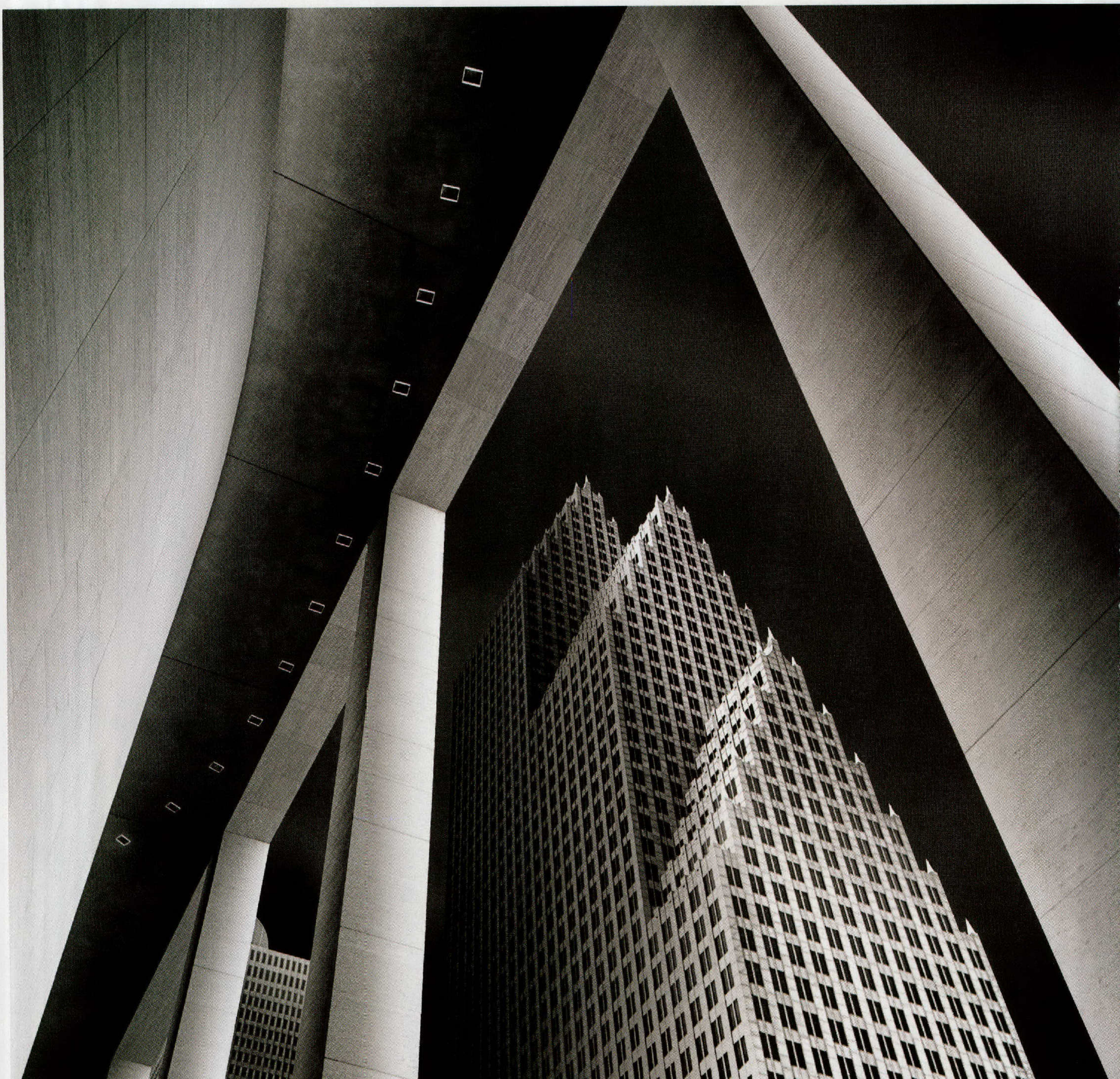
RANCH ROAD 2810 FROM MARFA



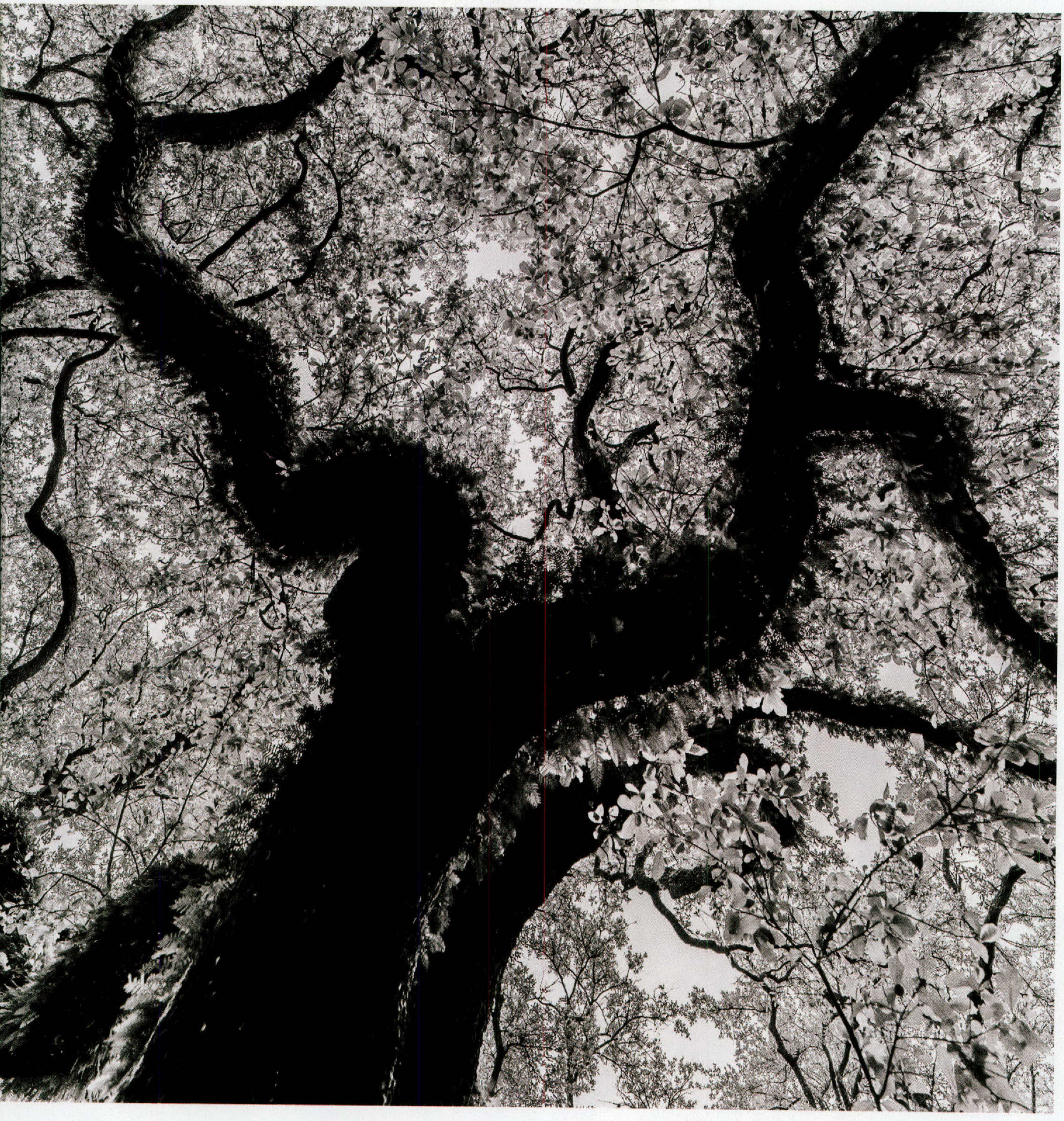
CHAPEL OF ST. BASIL ON THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS CAMPUS IN HOUSTON



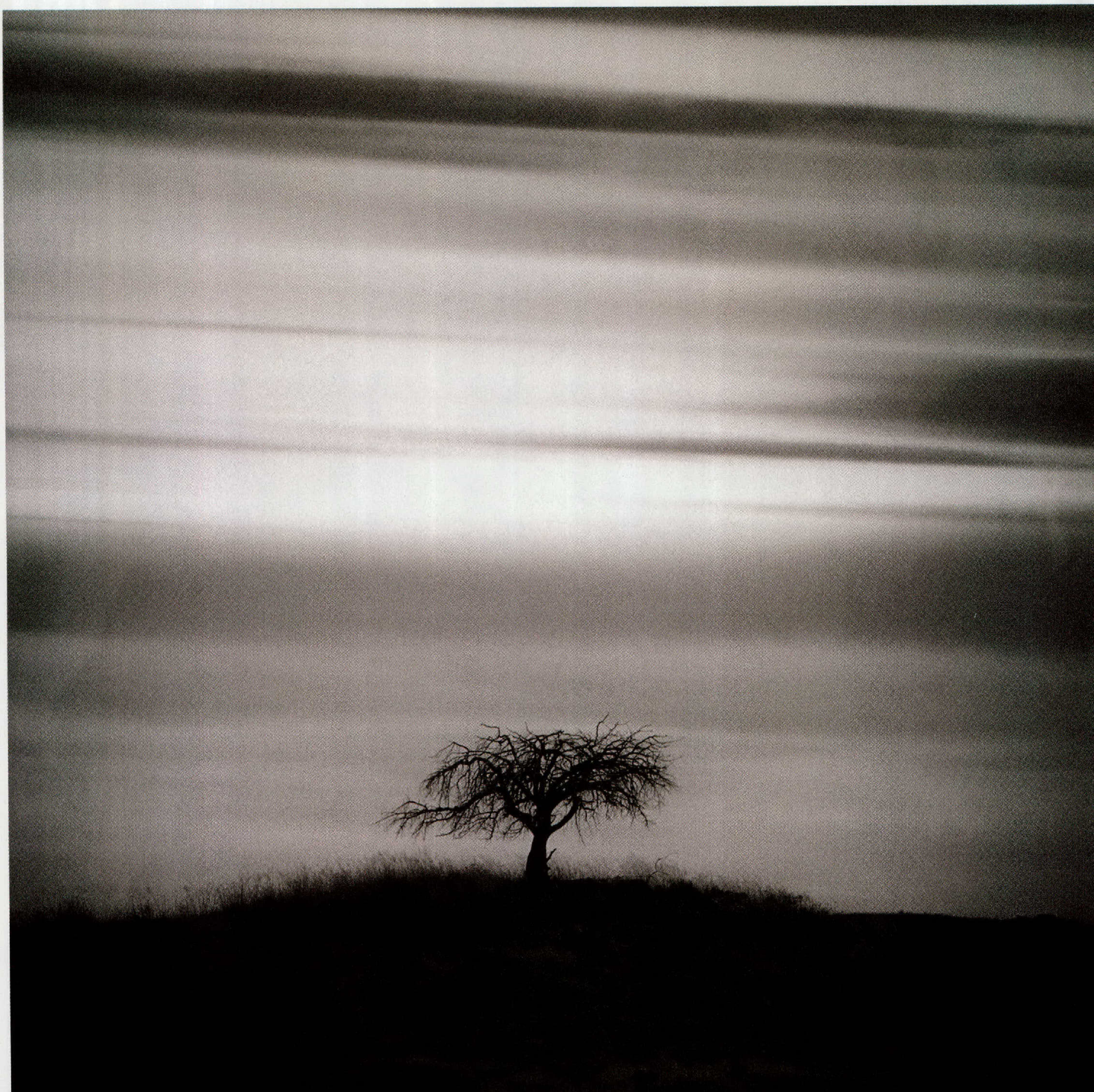
JOHN F. KENNEDY MEMORIAL PLAZA IN DOWNTOWN DALLAS



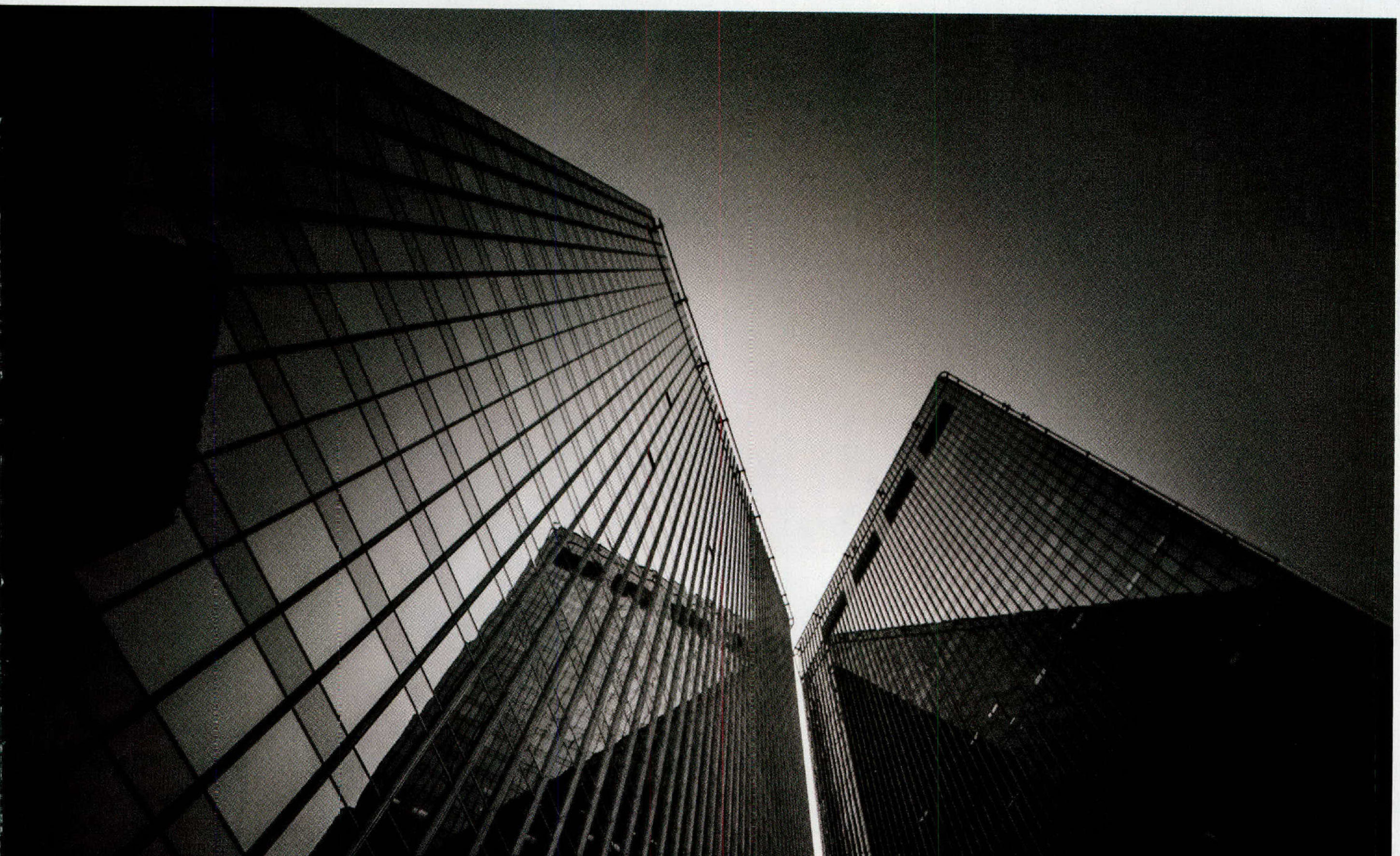
JESSE H. JONES HALL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS IN DOWNTOWN HOUSTON



LIVE OAK TREE ABOVE NORTH BOULEVARD IN HOUSTON

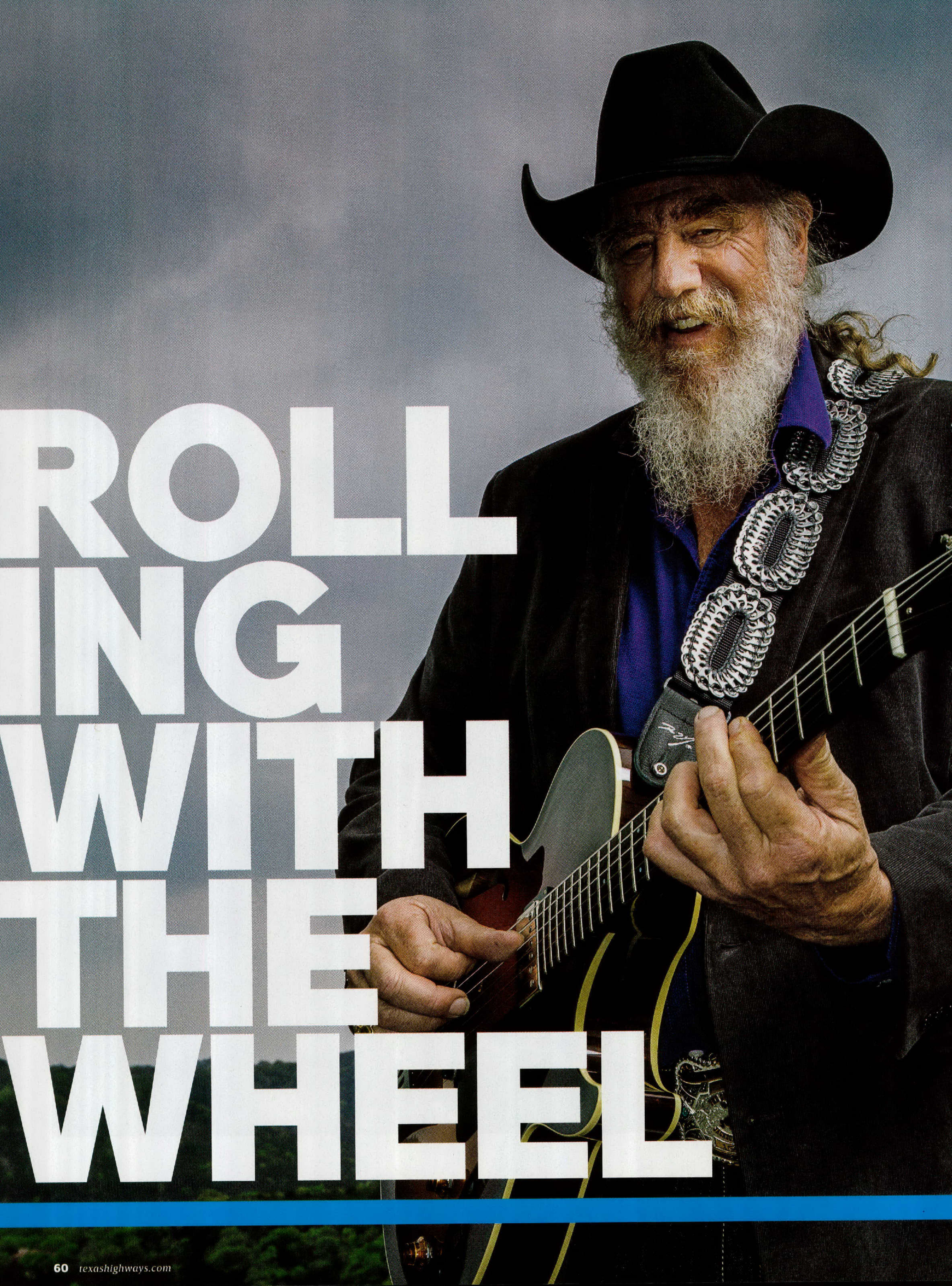


MESQUITE TREE ALONG RANCH ROAD 2810 NEAR MARFA



PENNZOIL PLACE IN DOWNTOWN HOUSTON

ROLLING WITH THE WHEEL



WESTERN SWING DISCIPLES ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL MARK 50 YEARS AND COUNTLESS MILES OF TEXAS

BY JOE NICK PATOSKI

Photo: Jeff Wilson

ONE AFTERNOON THIS MARCH, the visage of Ray Benson, founder and leader of the band Asleep at the Wheel, flickered before my eyes. Well, on my computer screen, actually, courtesy of FaceTime. It had been a rough two weeks. Plans for a 50th anniversary Asleep at the Wheel reunion show and recording session in the band's hometown of Austin had been done in by the coronavirus. Without his trademark cowboy hat, Benson looked downright deflated.

He said as much. It wasn't the thwarted album or the cancellation of his annual birthday party show in March. It was the stage being ripped from his soul. "I haven't gone this long without playing in front of an audience since I was 18," Benson moaned.

As it turned out, Benson had plenty reason to be bummed. A few days after our conversation, he was in the news, having tested positive for COVID-19. Thankfully, the 69-year-old recuperated, and a few weeks later, we talked again.

"Well, I've got time!" a revitalized Benson boomed through the computer screen. He'd just wrapped up an online board meeting of the nonprofit Texas Cultural Trust, but it wasn't like he had a gig to rush off to.

In a weird way, it was telling that Benson was among the first high-profile Texans diagnosed with COVID-19. His familiar baritone sounds like Texas—just like the Western swing band he's led for 50 years sounds like Texas.

If there's a dance hall in the Lone Star State with a stage and a dance floor that'll hold enough folks, Asleep at the Wheel has played it. With fiddles and steel, the Wheel has articulated an ensemble sound that links Western swing—the made-in-Texas original sound popularized by Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys in the 1930s and '40s—with modern Western sounds.

"Asleep at the Wheel have kept Western swing vital and relevant to country music and gave it a worldwide audience," said Rich Kienzle, a country music historian.

Asleep at the Wheel's been playing so well for so long, it's actually eclipsed Wills' band in longevity. Along the way, Benson and his crew have graced thousands of stages, released more than 25 albums, won 10 Grammy Awards, and counted nearly 100 musicians among its membership.

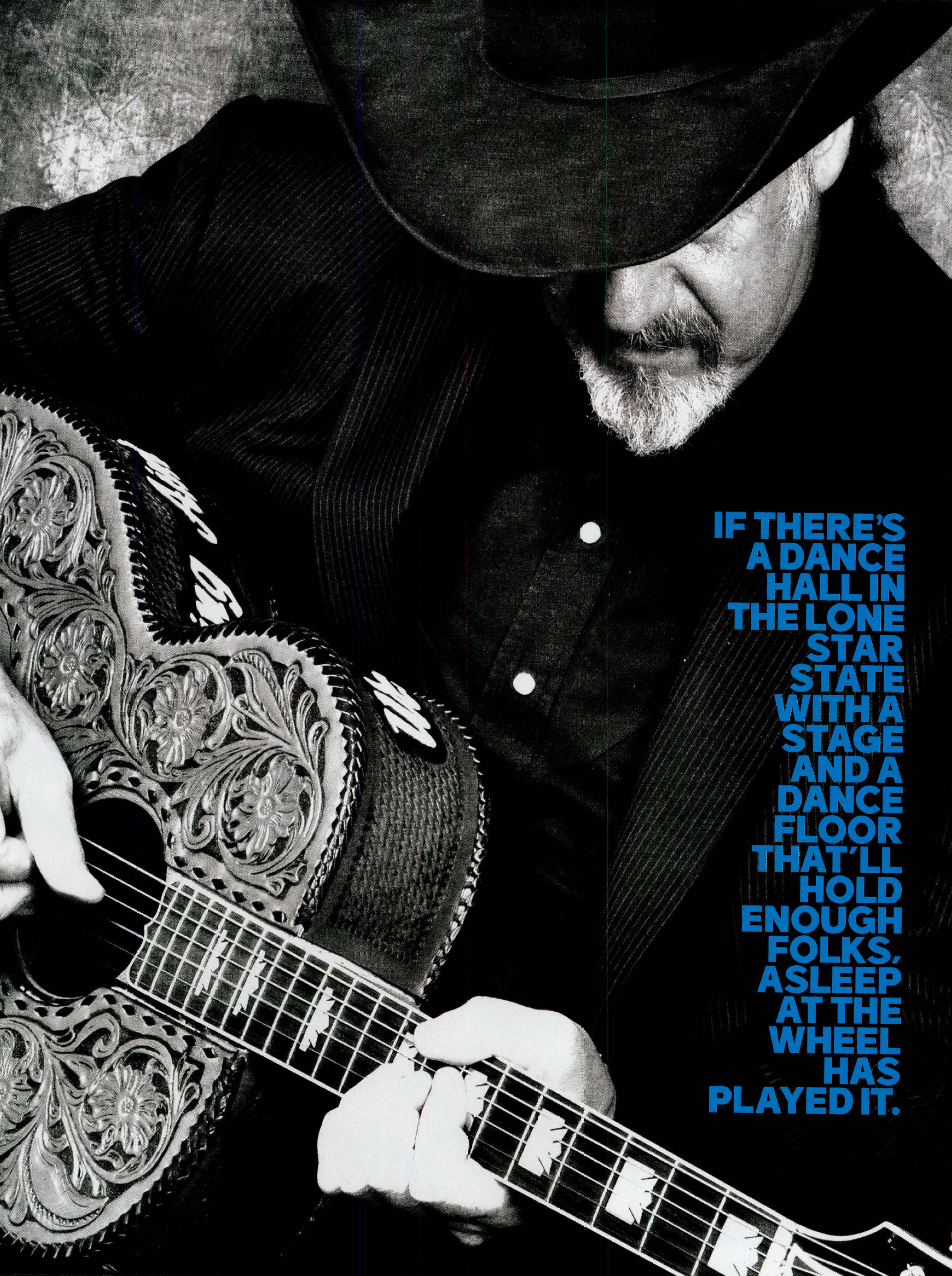
"I wanted more Broken Spokes, more 'Cotton Eye Joes,' more Western swing music," Benson said, looking back across a half-century of nurturing Western swing's flame. "Guess what? It happened. There are a number of Western swing bands around the country now."

Pretty good for an idea hatched by two boys from the suburbs of Philadelphia.

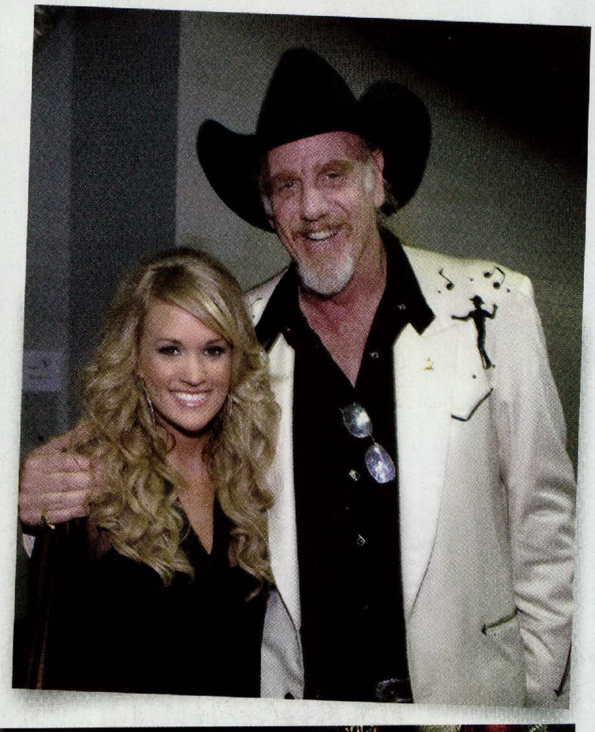
LONE STAR BEER
THE WHEEL

OPENING SPREAD: Ray Benson at his home in Austin earlier this year. **THIS SPREAD, FROM LEFT:** a vintage photo of Benson sporting a band tattoo; Benson and sister Sandy Katz as children in about 1955; Benson in 2009.

Photos: Lisa Pollard (right); Courtesy Ray Benson



IF THERE'S A DANCE HALL IN THE LONE STAR STATE WITH A STAGE AND A DANCE FLOOR THAT'LL HOLD ENOUGH FOLKS, ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL HAS PLAYED IT.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Benson, Redd Volkaert, and Dale Watson at Benson's 2004 birthday bash; Benson and Carrie Underwood at the Grammy Awards in 2007; Benson and Willie Nelson on Nelson's bus in 2009; Benson and Jason Roberts in 2007; Benson and Porter Wagoner in 2007.

THE STORY BEGINS IN THE 1950S, when Ray Benson Seifert and Reuben Gosfield (who later adopted the showbiz names Ray Benson and Lucky Oceans) started running together at age 3, going to the same schools and summer camp, buying records, seeing shows, and playing in bands. A Gene Autry show in Philadelphia was a transformative moment for both of them. Oceans' eyes popped when he saw Autry ride his horse onto the theater stage. After getting deep into Hank Williams, in 1969, Benson made a proposal: "We're going to be the first hippies to have a real country-western band."

Leroy Preston met Benson and Oceans in Boston in 1969. He was a Vermont farm kid with a guitar, raised on country music and rock 'n' roll. The three decided to start a band, and in the spring of 1970, they took a break from college and moved to a friend's farm near Paw Paw, West Virginia. Joining them was Danny Levin, a pianist and fiddler from Boston. For months it was "funky cabin living, bonding, and building the musical base for the band," Preston said.

"We were broke," Benson recalled. "Lucky's folks, in their wisdom, gave us a 100-pound sack of flour, a 100-pound sack of oats, and a tub of peanut butter, and said, 'Don't starve.' Friends of ours brought us deer meat. We were very serious that the band was our job."

One night at a nearby club, Ernest Tubb and His Texas Troubadours left an impression. "They were blowing jazz in the warm-up set, just smoking," Preston said. "And then Ernest came out, and straight as tick-tock, they were on classic country. It was the aha moment for us: You can do both."

On Aug. 25, 1970, Asleep at the Wheel played their first gig, opening for Hot Tuna and Alice Cooper in Washington, D.C. The Wheel played country standards "Cocaine Blues" and "Truck Drivin' Man"—as straight as a band could be with a long-haired, barefoot guitarist standing 6-foot-7. One young singer, Chris O'Connell, was so enthralled seeing the Wheel open for the country-rock outfit Poco at American University, she followed the band back to Paw Paw and became its female vocalist.

"All of a sudden we had a big band that was really good," Benson said.

The band took off for East Oakland, California, in 1971 and immediately gained a following, sharing a manager and club dates with Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen and bills with the Doobie Brothers, Tower of Power, and Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks. Soon, a young jazz-trained pianist from Berkeley hired on after a one-song audition. He then changed his name from Jim Haber to Floyd Domino.

ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL
ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL
New Routes
ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL
RIDE WITH BOB

10 ESSENTIAL ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL SONGS

"TAKE ME BACK TO TULSA,"
from *Comin' Right at Ya*, 1973

"CHOO CHOO CH'BOOGIE,"
from *Asleep at the Wheel*, 1974

"DEAD MAN,"
from *Asleep at the Wheel*

"DON'T ASK ME WHY (I'M GOING TO TEXAS),"
from *Asleep at the Wheel*

"LETTER THAT JOHNNY WALKER READ,"
from *Texas Gold*, 1975

"ROLL 'EM FLOYD,"
from *Texas Gold*

"MILES AND MILES OF TEXAS,"
from *Wheelin' and Dealin'*, 1976

"ROUTE 66,"
from *Route 66*, 1992

"CORINE, CORINA,"
from *A Tribute to the Music of Bob Wills*, 1993

"HESITATION BLUES,"
from *Willie and the Wheel*, 2009

FIND A PLAYLIST AT TEXASHIGHWAYS.COM

With an opportunity to back up mainstream country acts, the hippie country outfit got serious, cutting their hair and donning Western suits to play with the likes of Stoney Edwards, a Black honky-tonk singer on Capitol Records. Around that time, the band went to Nashville to record its first album. "We wanted to be a country band," Preston said. "We didn't want to be lumped with New Riders of the Purple Sage or the Flying Burrito Brothers."

Their first album, *Comin' Right at Ya*, was produced by Tommy Allsup, the Texan who had played in Bob Wills' Texas Playboys and as one of Buddy Holly's Crickets. Allsup brought in fiddler Johnny Gimble, another Playboys alumnus. The Wheel's version of "Take Me Back to Tulsa" became the star of their reinvention of Western swing and got the band touring in Texas.

"The audience in Texas knew our music as roots rather than fad," Preston said.

Up until then, Wills' music had been only a small part of the band's repertoire. But the Wheel added twin fiddlers in California, and in 1973, Benson and the band saw Wills at a Dallas studio during the recording of the Texas Playboys' album *For the Last Time*. A formal introduction planned for the next day didn't happen; Wills had a stroke that night and never recovered.

The Wheel played venues like the Farmer's Daughter in San Antonio; the Western Place in Dallas, where Willie Nelson showed up to introduce himself and jam with the band on stage; and the Armadillo World Headquarters in Austin, where they opened for Commander Cody and his Lost Planet Airmen. "It was like, 'Holy moly, this is heaven!'" Benson said of the crowd's untethered enthusiasm.

The band moved to Austin in February 1973 at the urging of Nelson and Doug Sahm. It was an exciting time, when longhairs in cowboy hats were suddenly a thing. Most of the musicians on the Austin club scene—legends like Steve Fromholz, Jerry Jeff Walker, and Willis Alan Ramsey—played rock, folk, or what was known around town as "progressive country." The Wheel fit right in. "We were regressive country," Benson laughed.

Nelson liked the band so much he had the Wheel open shows all over Texas. They

Photos: Courtesy Ray Benson

FROM LEFT: Asleep at the Wheel at the Armadillo World Headquarters in Austin in 1980; Benson and a look-alike birthday cake in 2015.

were an ensemble of smart players with chops. O'Connell was a featured vocalist, along with Benson and Preston. Domino was the featured boogie-woogie instrumentalist. Upright bassist Tony Garnier and Domino would hold up fingers to represent which classic rhythm section they wanted to emulate during a particular instrumental break. Benson developed a crisp swing-guitar style on his big-bodied Epiphone, which melded seamlessly with fiddles and Oceans' steel guitar.

Benson was the focus. He did most of the talking and worked on taking care of business and building relationships offstage.

In 1975, "The Letter That Johnny Walker Read," a Benson-O'Connell duet in the tradition of Porter Wagoner and Dolly Parton, reached No. 10 on the country singles chart and kept the Wheel on the road, playing 200 shows a year.

But by the early 1980s, as far as Nashville was concerned, Asleep at the Wheel was a band whose moment had passed. The band had won a Grammy, had a hit record with *Texas Gold*, and recorded five albums, but now members were having kids and buying houses. "At that point, I would have done anything else, but nobody offered me a job, and the band still had fans," Benson said. "They'd say, 'Don't quit. There's nobody else doing this.'"

Benson's persistence paid off with another string of country hits in the late '80s—"House of Blue Lights," "Boogie Back to Texas," and "Way Down Texas Way." The 1990s were full-on Bob, as Asleep at the Wheel recorded two Wills tribute albums. In 2009, Benson's career-long friendship with Nelson was cemented with the album *Willie and the Wheel*. That same year the band was hired to tour behind Ray Price, Merle Haggard, and Nelson on their Last of the Breed tour.

OVER THE COURSE OF ITS RUN, Asleep at the Wheel has earned the reputation as a road musician's finishing school. If you can play with the Wheel, you can play with the best live bands out there. The band's alumni list is getting close to 100 names long and counts well-known musicians including Jason Roberts, the fiddler who now heads the modern Texas Playboys; and Cindy Cashdollar, a renowned steel guitar and dobro player.

Turnover is routine for any large ensemble, and Benson never hesitated to demand the best of new members. Practically all living veterans from early iterations of the band made the 40th anniversary reunion in 2010. And they've all committed to a 50th reunion show, whenever that's feasible.

"When we get back together, there's such a fondness for each other, such a love, that any resentment falls away," O'Connell said. "It's all about perseverance, and I have to give all the credit to Ray."

As far as the old band goes, founding member Oceans moved in 1980 to Australia, where he's a radio broadcaster and an international pedal-steel legend. Preston returned to Vermont after a stretch as a Nashville songwriter. O'Connell moved back to Northern California, where she still performs. Garnier has been Bob Dylan's

Photos: Christina Fedderson (this page, right); Courtesy Ray Benson bassist for more than 30 years. Domino remains a fixture in Austin beer joints, solo and leading his All-Star's Western swing band.

As for Asleep at the Wheel, the band plays about 130 shows a year across Texas, Canada, and Europe. With touring stymied by the pandemic, the band staged a virtual dance online in late July. Benson has mellowed to the point of leaving business details to his son, Sam Seifert, who oversees operations at Benson's headquarters. Seifert's job, he said, is for "Ray to be able to play music and play golf."

The old man has earned it. He sits on the boards of the St. David's Foundation and Health Alliance for Austin Musicians, and speaks to university business classes about life as a small business entrepreneur. He published a book in 2015—*Comin' Right at Ya: How a Jewish Yankee Hippie Went Country, or, the Often Outrageous History of Asleep at the Wheel*—and recently donated his archive to the Wittliff Collections at Texas State University.

"Ray Benson has a ridiculous work ethic, and he has something in him that people love to watch," said Dave Sanger, the Wheel's drummer since 1986. The secret sauce, he said, is "one part great musicianship, one part accessible yet challenging music, one part freedom to improvise and excel, and five parts Ray Benson. My mom always tells me how much joy we bring to people. Maybe that's it."

BACK ON FACETIME, RAY BENSON and I were talking about longevity when he brought up something the late singer-songwriter Steve Fromholz told him back in the 1970s: "It's easier to get out of show business than it is to get back in."

Ray has always been all in.

"You're going to perform until nobody wants to come see you," he said.

The Wheel keeps rolling, with Nelson and Tubb as its GPS. "With them, it's the same thing: It's all about getting on stage and doing it."

"I have a theory," Benson added, his voice buffering along with his image on the computer screen. "When the technology came where you and I can do what we're doing now, and music legends are being recreated as holograms, people will pay a premium to see a band live on stage. There's this thing that happens between people. It's hard to explain, but when people are in the same room with other people, something happens. It's not like staring at an avatar."

When we can do that again, my money's on people taking the dance floor and Asleep at the Wheel taking the stage.

50 YEARS OF SLEEPING AT THE WHEEL

1954

Reuben Gosfield and Ray Seifert (the future Lucky Oceans and Ray Benson) meet as children in a Philadelphia suburb.

1969

Benson and Oceans, students at Antioch colleges in Ohio and Maryland, respectively, meet Leroy Preston in Boston at the house Leroy shares with Ray's sister. They all move to a cabin in the woods to start a band, joined by Danny Levin.

1970

Aug. 25, Asleep at the Wheel plays its first gig as the unannounced opener on the Medicine Ball Caravan, the "Woodstock on wheels" headlined by Alice Cooper and Hot Tuna at L'Enfant Plaza in Washington, D.C. Wavy Gravy of the Hog Farm commune gets them the job.

1971

Asleep at the Wheel relocates to East Oakland, California.

1972

Asleep at the Wheel records its first album, *Comin' Right at Ya*, in Nashville with Tommy Allsup producing and guest fiddler Johnny Gimble opening the door to the world of Bob Wills.

1973

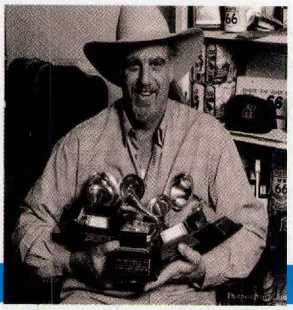
The band tours Texas and moves to Austin.

1975

"The Letter That Johnny Walker Read" hits No. 10 on Billboard's country chart.

1978

After being nominated for Grammy Awards the previous three years, Asleep at the Wheel wins its first award for "One O'Clock Jump" (Best Country Instrumental Performance).



1987

The Wheel records its first music video for "Way Down Texas Way."

2009

The Wheel and Willie Nelson release *Willie and the Wheel*, which is nominated for a Grammy Award.

2020

Asleep at the Wheel marks its 50th anniversary. A reunion show and new album with the original band are delayed by the coronavirus until fall 2021.

Photos: Courtesy Ray Benson

True TEXAS
True Texas
C&J FARMS
Garlic & Herb
Greek Seasoning

TEXAS HIGHWAYS

MERCANTILE

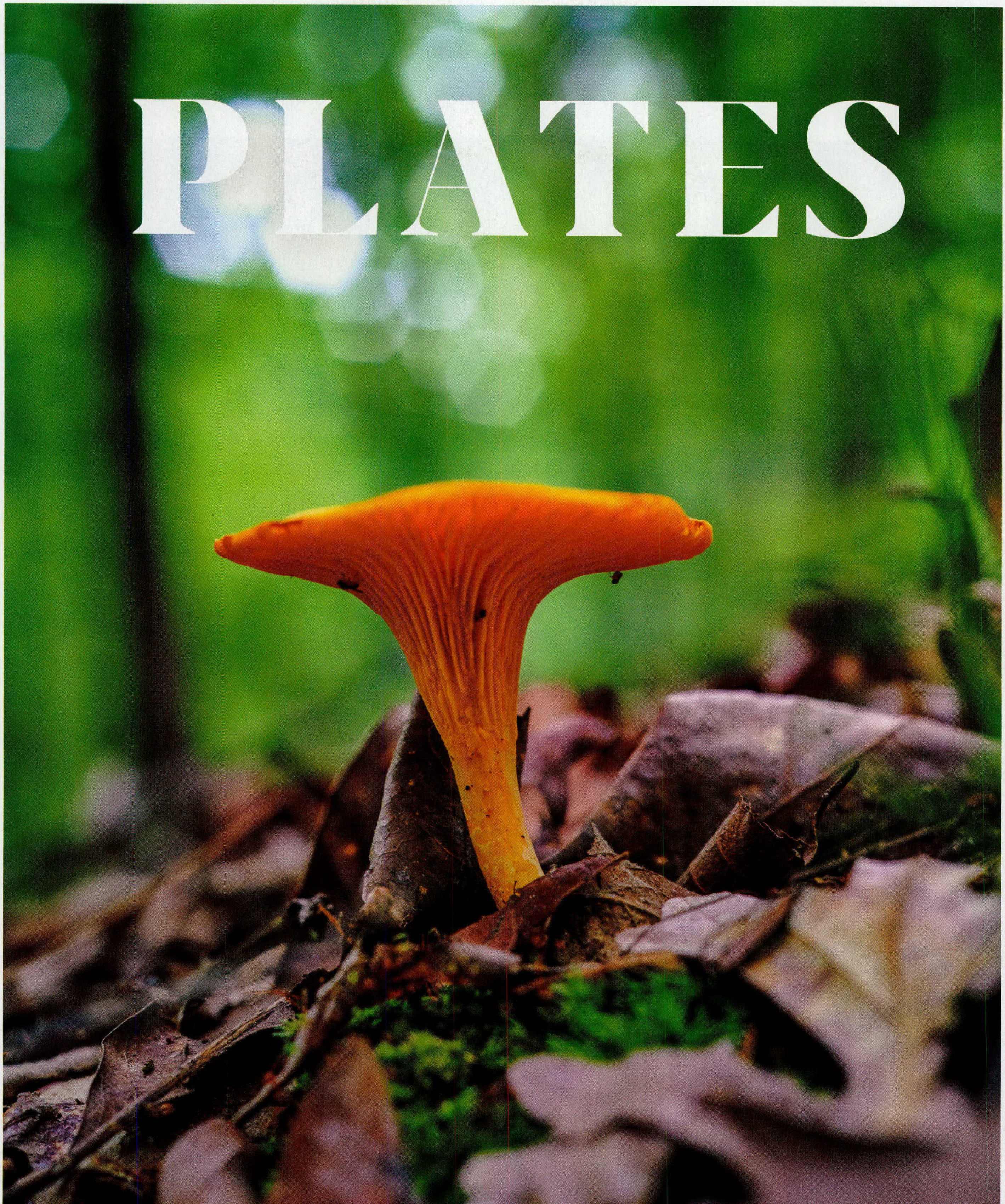
TEXAS-MADE True TEXAS CRAFT GOODS

Leather Coasters $32.00 (set of 4), *Handmade in Corpus Christi by Indigo Laine*, 37356
True Texas Tea Towels $16.00, *Exclusive with Kimball Prints out of Austin*, 37888
American Style Variegated Rolling Pin $80.00, *Handcrafted from walnut, mahogany, and maple*, 37850
French Style Texas Mesquite Polka Dot Rolling Pin $100.00, *Maple with Texas mesquite polka dots*, 37879
Texas Wildflowers Apron $34.95, *Apron is made from 100% organic Texas grown cotton*, 38811
Blue Star Pitcher $57.95, *Handmade in Texas by Luling Icehouse Pottery*, 37761
Seasoning Set $14.00, *Grown by C & J Farms – a family-run farm in Corsicana*, 40010

Order Online
SHOP.TEXASHIGHWAYS.COM

Or call 800-839-4997
903-636-1123
from outside
the U.S.A.

PLATES



GOLDEN chanterelles pop up in East Texas forests.

Photo: Dave Shafer

Mining for Mushrooms

On the hunt for chanterelles in Davy Crockett National Forest

By Jill Coody Smits

RUSSELL BELUE wanders the woods in search of coveted mushrooms.

Photo: Dave Shafer

Deep in a remote East Texas forest, two outdoorsmen are on the hunt for golden chanterelles.

"I think there's a trail up ahead," says Russell Belue, unbothered by being a little bit lost in the woods. It's exactly the right state of mind to have on a quest for wild mushrooms.

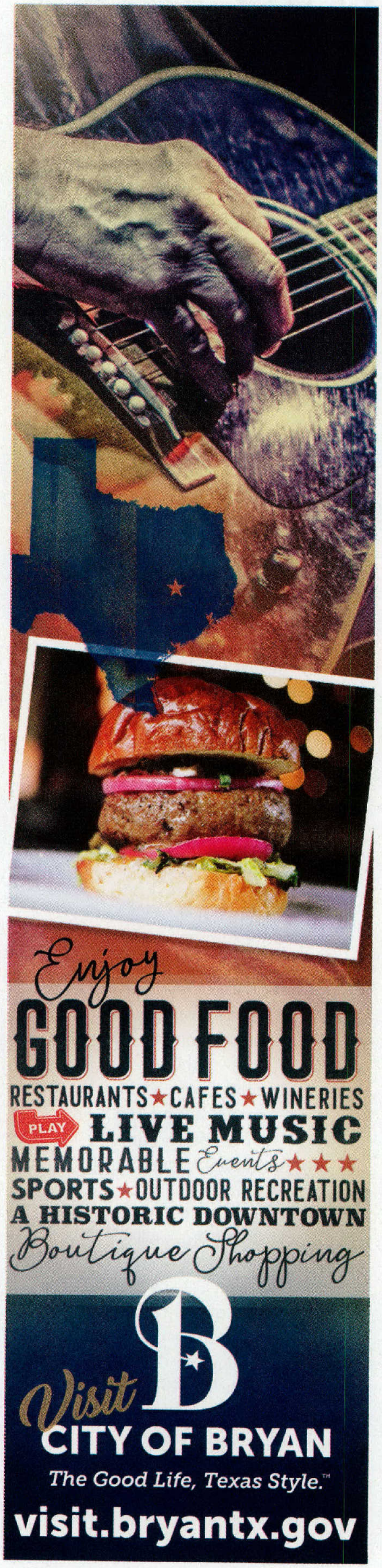
Belue, a Mixon-based artist, gardener, and entrepreneur, has traveled 75 miles south to Davy Crockett National Forest with his old friend Mark Tietz, an ecological consultant and arborist who lives in Arp. With an appreciation for native flora and fauna and enthusiasm for exploring, Belue and Tietz take on roles as fungi-finding experts.

Like truffles and morels, chanterelles are highly sought after edible mushrooms. With a chewy texture and peppery, fruity flavor, they are just as delicious sautéed and served on toast as they are spiking a creamy pasta sauce. They are also very expensive, going for around $40 a pound at some high-end grocery stores.

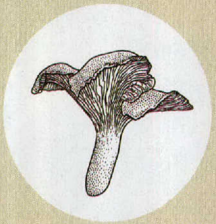
Chanterelles are pricey because they are mycorrhizal, which means they grow in a symbiotic relationship with tree roots and, therefore, are nearly impossible to cultivate. As a result, chanterelle lovers in Texas have to be ready to shell out or—if they're lucky enough to find themselves in the right part of the state at the right time—forage some for themselves.

Chanterelles generally need moisture and a choice tree to propagate. They are most often found near hardwoods like oak, but sometimes they pop up near pine. Beyond that, it's a bit of a mystery, even to David P. Lewis, a Bleakwood-based researcher who has been studying Texas fungi for around 45 years. "Most of the mushroom is hidden in the ground or logs, and until you have the right conditions, they won't send up a fruiting body," he says.

From spring through early fall, there's a reasonable chance the right conditions will exist in East Texas, and it's no coincidence that Belue and Tietz chose Davy Crockett National Forest for their late-May



Enjoy
GOOD FOOD
RESTAURANTS ★ CAFES ★ WINERIES
PLAY LIVE MUSIC
MEMORABLE Events ★ ★ ★
SPORTS ★ OUTDOOR RECREATION
A HISTORIC DOWNTOWN
Boutique Shopping
Visit B
CITY OF BRYAN
The Good Life, Texas Style.™
visit.bryantx.gov



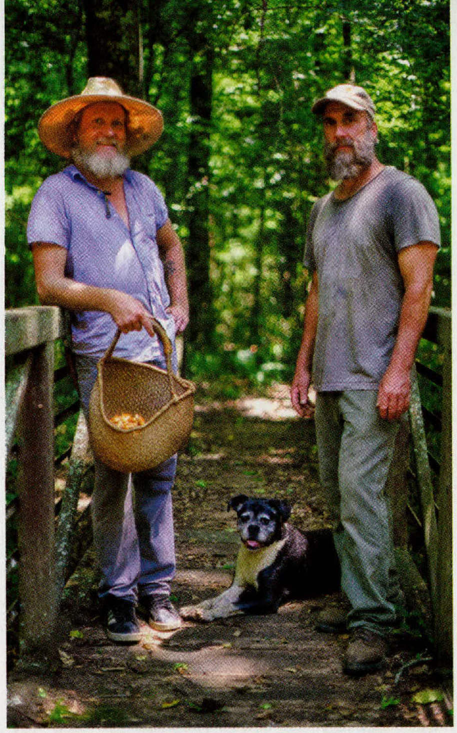
Resources for Mushroom Hunting

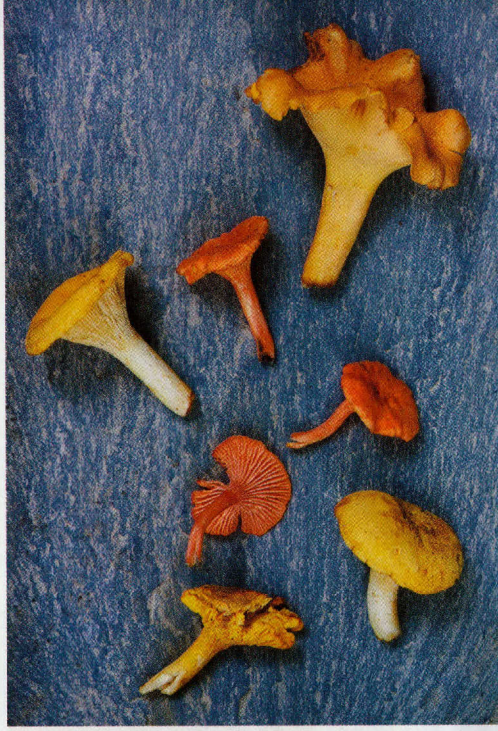
If you'd like to try mushroom hunting but need more education, there are a number of Texas-based groups and books that can help ensure you have a safe foraging experience.

Mark "Merriwether" Vorderbruggen, Texan author of *The Idiot's Guide to Foraging*, leads in-person "walkabouts" across the state. foragingtexas.com

Mushrooms of the Gulf Coast States: A Field Guide to Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida is co-authored by David P. Lewis, who has hero status among Texas mushroom enthusiasts. gsmyco.org

There are numerous local mushroom groups that connect online as well as in person. Many of them can be found on Facebook, including North Texas Mushroom Hunters, Texas Mushroom Identification, and Central Texas Mycological Society.





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Russell Belue with his dog, Georgia, and Mark Tietz; a variety of mushrooms found in Davy Crockett National Forest.

hunt. There are plenty of hardwood trees, and rain and temperatures in the upper 80s make it an ideal time and location to look for *Cantharellus lateritius*, or the smooth chanterelle, which Lewis says is among the most common local mushrooms. "When it fruits in abundance, it's like gold nuggets on the ground as far as you can see," he says.

Upon reaching this location via meandering red dirt roads lined with purple coneflowers and sunny black-eyed Susans, Belue and Tietz set out from their truck with Belue's canine pal Georgia trotting alongside. They have high expectations for collecting enough mushrooms for a late-afternoon feast as they make their way to Walnut Creek, a tried-and-true location for finding a solid stash of chanterelles. "It's always good," Belue says. "The trees, soil moisture, soil temperature, topography, and shade are all factors that make finding mushrooms here probable."

Foraging for mushrooms is like a meditative Easter egg hunt. With a specific purpose but no clear route or destination, one has to be mindful

Photos: Dave Shafer

enough to spot trumpet-shaped fungi peeking out from under dead leaves, and game enough to withstand hot, humid, and slightly buggy conditions.

Both Belue and Tietz enjoy the rambling process of the hunt, spotting other native plants like the Piney Woods lily and drummond phlox along the way. At one point, Tietz, who specializes in propagating the area's native plants and trees, whips out a trowel, digs up a coneflower, and nibbles on a bit of the tongue-tingling root.

This knowledgeable confidence exemplifies why every mushroom hunt should include someone who knows what they are doing. Between the two of them, Tietz and Belue have many years of experience studying and exploring the East Texas ecosystem, and are familiar with many of the 15 or more species of chanterelles found in the state. Today, they find three: the rosy-hued *Cantherellus cinnabarinus*; the smooth, wavy *Cantherellus lateritius*; and the more circular-capped *Cantherellus tenuithrix*. They also find other mushroom types, some of which look dangerously like chanterelles. "There are lookalikes, and you have to be careful," Tietz says, "but it's pretty simple once you know what a chanterelle looks like."

As the longtime president of the Gulf States Mycological Society, Lewis, a mushroom researcher, is often called upon to identify fungi for the state's growing number of enthusiasts. He also consults on the Galveston Poison Control Board. "You'd be surprised what people put in their mouths," he says. "Though deadly mushrooms are small in number, and you're more likely to find an edible mushroom than a poisonous one, the only rule is to know exactly what you're eating."

Nearly 6 miles and six hours after setting out, Tietz and Belue have collected enough golden chanterelles to feed a small army. Setting up camp near Hickory Creek in the Big Slough Wilderness area, they pop open cold drinks, break out a cast-iron skillet, sauté the tiny beauties with butter and fresh thyme, then ladle them onto crusty French bread. It's a five-star feast in the middle of the forest. L

You'll need a passport...
IN THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

TEXAS HILL COUNTRY TRAIL
TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
TEXAS HERITAGE TRAILS PROGRAM

Want more of a reason to discover the rich heritage and storied history of Central Texas? Then pick up a Texas Hill Country Passport and start collecting stamps today to earn Hill Country prizes tomorrow!

txhillcountrypassport.com
HAYS COUNTY
STAMP HERE!
SAN MARCOS TOURIST INFORMATION CENTER
617 IH-35 North, San Marcos, Texas 78666
512-393-5930 / toursanmarcos.com
KENDALL COUNTY
STAMP HERE!
I VISITED BOERNE!
BOERNE VISITOR CENTER
108 Oak Park Drive, Boerne, Texas 78006
888-842-8080 / visitboerne.org

Get lost with the TEXAS STATE TRAVEL GUIDE

Snag your free travel kit today at texashighways.com/2020travel
Plot your destinations with the Official Travel Map and select attractions with the State Travel Guide.
TEXAS STATE TRAVEL GUIDE
2020 OFFICIAL TRAVEL MAP
LET'S TEXAS
Texas Highways

Link by Link

Five small-town sausage festivals trace the travels of a visionary Catholic priest

By Lee Williams

FROM LEFT: Parishioners do most of the cooking at these sausage festivals; Father Joseph Reisdorff.

In December 1891, a Catholic priest moved from St. Louis, Missouri, to Texas for the drier climate. In three decades, Father Joseph Reisdorff established five towns across North Texas and the Panhandle—Windthorst, Rhineland, Nazareth, Umbarger, and Slaton. These were places for German-Catholic immigrants to call their own, where they could farm, live, and worship. Today, these communities gather annually and biannually to celebrate their German heritage and Catholic faith with sausage festivals that raise funds for local churches and towns.

While Reisdorff doesn't have a direct link to sausages or these events, it's undeniable that his influence—even nearly a century after his death—is still palpable in these five communities. "We're all connected by him," says Annelle Welch, a Rhineland native who helps run the local sausage festival.

Dining on hot links, sauerkraut, and sweets among these friendly small-town folks reveals a sincere appreciation for this little-known part of Texas history and the turn-of-the-century German-Catholic priest who relied on sheer will and a dream.

Photos: Melanie Grizzel (left); Courtesy Diocese of Amarillo (right)

Windthorst Sausage Meal, Windthorst

Reisdorff's first stop in Texas was in Windthorst, about 30 miles south of Wichita Falls, where he founded St. Mary's Catholic Church. The town of about 400 is surrounded by rolling green pastures and tin-roof barns. The church can be spotted from miles away, perched atop the highest point in Archer County.

At the base of the church is a grotto and shrine that opened in 1950. During World War II, 64 servicemen from Windthorst sent portions of their pay home to finance the structure. Every man returned, and their names are displayed in the grotto, which serves as a testament to faith during hard times.

Windthorst has two sausage festivals put on by the Knights of Columbus, an international Catholic fraternal service association, on the first Sundays of December and March. "People around here mark their calendars with those dates," says Debbie Schroeder, a city secretary who was born and raised in Windthorst. The handmade pork sausage recipe was perfected by late Knights of Columbus member Oliver Koetter, and after he died, the torch was passed to his two sons. Parishioners also contribute ribs, sauerkraut, green beans, and salad. "We're still very much a German-Catholic community," Schroeder says. "That's our heritage."

DEC. 6, 2020, AND MARCH 7, 2021
St. Mary's Parish Hall
101 Church St.

HIT THE ROAD!

Make the Huntsville Wine Trail your next Road Trip!

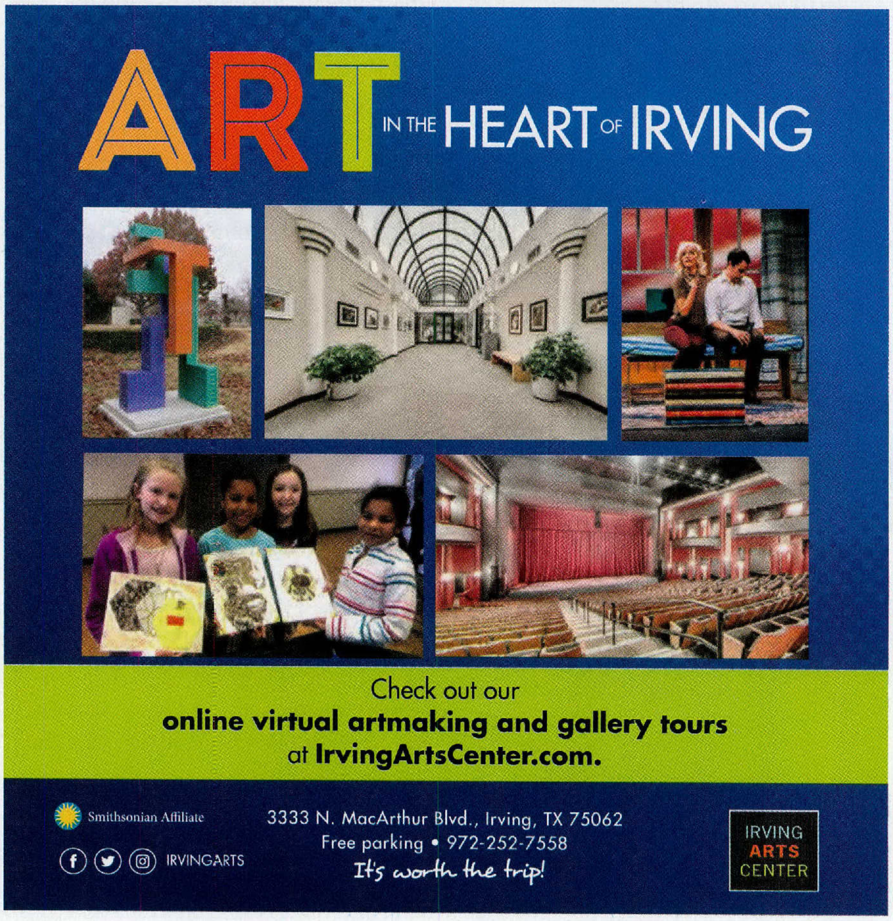
Huntsville offers visitors an array of discoveries – history, arts, antiques, culture, nature, shopping, entertainment, and wineries. The small-town, historic flair of Huntsville brings new meaning to 'Texas Charm'. There is truly something for everyone in Huntsville!

For more information and overnight accommodations visit **HuntsvilleTexas.com**

@SamHoustonStatueTX
@VisitSamHouston

City of Huntsville

HOME SWEET Huntsville



ART IN THE HEART OF IRVING

Check out our
online virtual artmaking and gallery tours
at **IrvingArtsCenter.com.**

Smithsonian Affiliate
IRVINGARTS

3333 N. MacArthur Blvd., Irving, TX 75062
Free parking • 972-252-7558
It's worth the trip!

IRVING ARTS CENTER

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS
LONGVIEW
150
1870•2020

Enjoy the View.

Longview's history and present are full of makers, builders, doers, and inventors. Ever since Longview was founded as a railroad town in 1870, industrious people have enjoyed our beautiful corner of East Texas.

#Longview150

VISIT Longview TEXAS

(903) 753-3281
VisitLongviewTexas.com

THE BEVY of side dishes served includes potatoes, rolls, green beans, and sauerkraut.

Rhineland Sausage and Fried Chicken Dinner, Rhineland

Reisdorff's next stop became Knox County, where he purchased 12,000 acres to be sold to German-Catholic farmers. He named the town after the Rhine Valley, his home in Germany. St. Joseph's Catholic Church remains the anchor of the community with its stained glass windows and ornate artwork. A sign on the highway reads, "A Cathedral in a Cotton Patch."

Today, Rhineland, about 80 miles southwest of Wichita Falls, only counts about 50 residents, but St. Joseph's parish serves about 150 families, most of whom live on farms or in nearby towns. Last year's sausage festivals attracted people from surrounding towns such as Munday, Knox City, Seymour, and Haskell, but also as far as Lubbock, Abilene, Wichita Falls, and Dallas-Fort Worth.

The fundraiser meals take place in October and March, with proceeds from the October event going to the Knights of Columbus and proceeds from the March event going toward the church. Guests can dine on handmade pork sausage, sauerkraut, green beans, mashed potatoes, salad, desserts, and of course, the famous fried chicken made by the Knights and community members. "We had some folks from Windthorst over and they said they came for the fried chicken," Rhineland native Janet Dillard says.

OCT. 11, 2020, AND MARCH 21, 2021
Knights of Columbus Hall
10180 CR 6010.
stjosephrhineland.org

German Fest and Suds N Sounds, Nazareth

Reisdorff brought four farmers with him to the vast and windy plains of the Panhandle. Like he'd done in Windthorst and Rhineland, Reisdorff took out ads in Midwestern German-Catholic newspapers, encouraging settlers to move to Nazareth, where farmland was plentiful and affordable.

Matt Olvera has spent most of his life in Nazareth and runs MO Supply downtown. He's also one of the organizers of the annual German Sausage Festival and Suds N Sounds country music concert. The sausage festival started in 1972, and the concert was added in the late 1980s. "It's usually a different crowd for Suds N Sounds," Olvera says. "It's geared more toward the 25-to-35 crowd."

The sausage is usually made by Keeter's Meat Company in Tulia, using a special recipe that's been in place since the first festival in Nazareth. Residents of the town make the rest of the food, including the coveted German chocolate cake.

Most of the residents of Nazareth grew up there and understand what it takes to pull off the jam-packed day of events. "It's a lot of work and takes a community effort to get it all done," Olvera says.

JULY 10, 2021
German Fest at Nazareth Community Hall
101 First St.
Suds N Sounds at Nazareth Ballpark
East of First Street on State Highway 86.
facebook.com/germanfestsudsnsounds

Photo: Melanie Grizzel

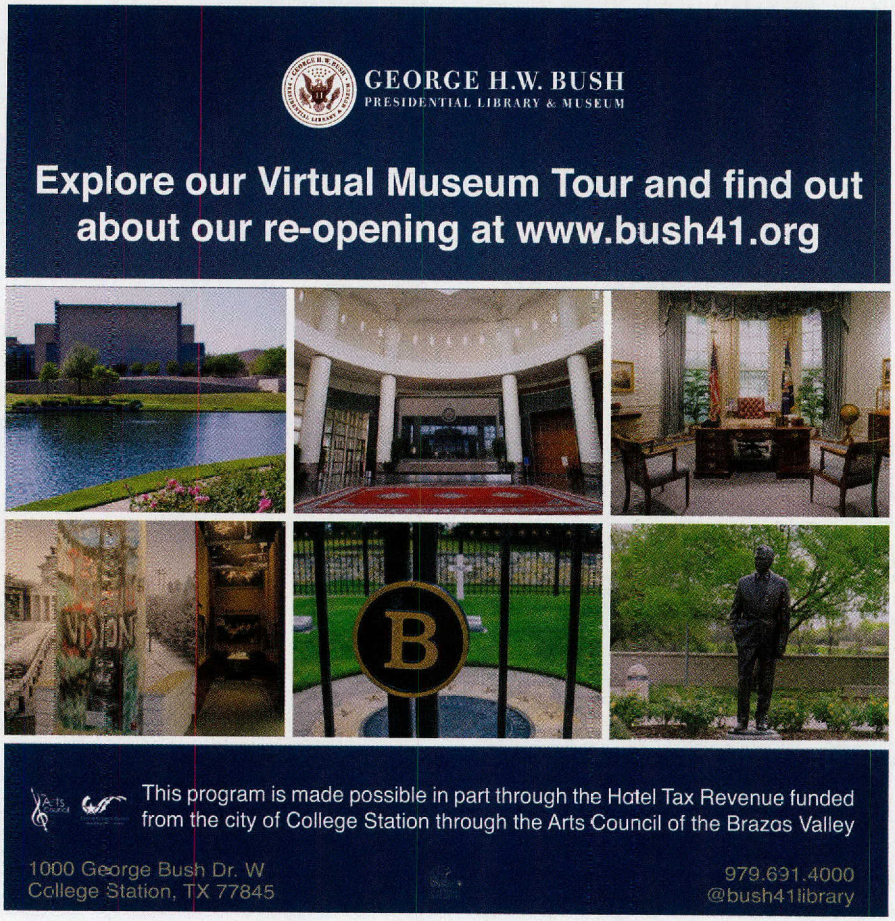
German Sausage Festival, Umbarger

In 1908, after his stint in Nazareth, Reisdorff moved 30 miles up the road to Umbarger. "He was a colonizer and didn't stay in Nazareth very long," says Darryl Birkenfeld, a former priest based in Nazareth. "He liked biblical names and wanted to name Umbarger after Bethlehem, but the postmaster thought otherwise."

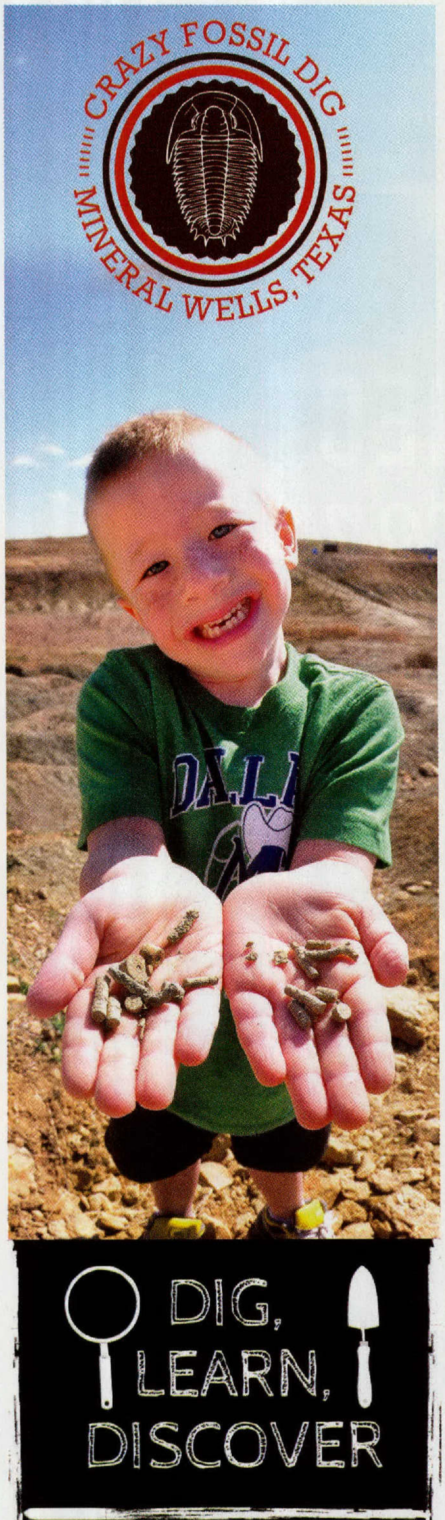
Like Rhineland, the community never incorporated, but it has remained loyal to St. Mary's. The church was mostly finished in 1929, but its artwork was completed during World War II by a group of Italian prisoners of war detained in nearby Hereford. The paintings were restored in 2012, and are available to view during the sausage festival.

"The church is a big draw," says Harold Artho, the festival's publicity director

DISCONNECT
To Reconnect
HUNT ◆ FISH ◆ BOAT ◆ HIKE ◆ EXPLORE
VISIT GRAHAM, TEXAS
CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU GRAHAM WHERE TEXAS COMES HOME
VISITGRAHAMTEXAS.COM
940.549.0401



GEORGE H.W. BUSH
PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY & MUSEUM
Explore our Virtual Museum Tour and find out about our re-opening at www.bush41.org
This program is made possible in part through the Hotel Tax Revenue funded from the city of College Station through the Arts Council of the Brazos Valley
1000 George Bush Dr. W
College Station, TX 77845
979.691.4000
@bush41library



DIG,
LEARN,
DISCOVER

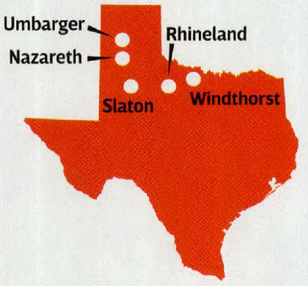
MINERAL WELLS
FOSSIL PARK

Saturday
October 17, 2020
11am-2pm
FREE

MINERAL WELLS FOSSIL PARK

for almost 30 years. "People love to see it." The festival prides itself on its beef and pork sausages, mashed potatoes, applesauce, fresh-baked bread, and sauerkraut, all crafted by church parishioners. "I'm pretty sure we're the only festival around here that still makes our own sauerkraut," Artho says. "We start peeling 3,500 pounds of cabbage in September."

NOV. 8, 2020
St. Mary's Catholic Church Parish Hall
22830 Pondaseta Road.
stmarysumbarger.com/german-sausage-festival



St. Joseph's Sausage Festival and Oktoberfest, Slaton

After Umbarger, Reisdorff traveled to the developing railroad community of Slaton, where he continued to recruit German Catholics from the Midwest and German Lutherans from Central Texas. Reisdorff served as the first priest at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Slaton, but he stayed occupied as a businessman and was paid a commission on land sold in the area to Catholic families. Reisdorff remained the parish priest until 1917, when he went on sick leave. He lived in Slaton until his death in 1922 and is buried in Jefferson City, Missouri.

The Slaton Sausage Festival celebrated its 50th annual event last year. Organizers added Oktoberfest to the event five years ago with live music and other activities on Saturday to complement the sausage meal on Sunday. "We're trying to keep

FIVE North Texas and Panhandle towns honor their German heritage through sausage festivals.

people around with local bands," says David Buxkemper, who's been volunteering at the festival for more than 30 years. Sunday is the main event, with smoked German sausage by Keeter's Meat Company; and grilled chicken, German potato salad, sauerkraut, green beans, bread, and homemade cakes by churchgoers. There's also a beer garden with a live brass band in the afternoon.

OCT. 17–18, 2020
St. Joseph Catholic Church Parish Hall
205 S. 19th St.
facebook.com/slatonsausage

While these events are not highly publicized like Wurstfest in New Braunfels and the Boerne Berges Fest, the grassroots meals emphasize local sausage, good conversation, and a nod to German roots. "They are some of the last vestiges of German tradition out here," Birkenfeld says.

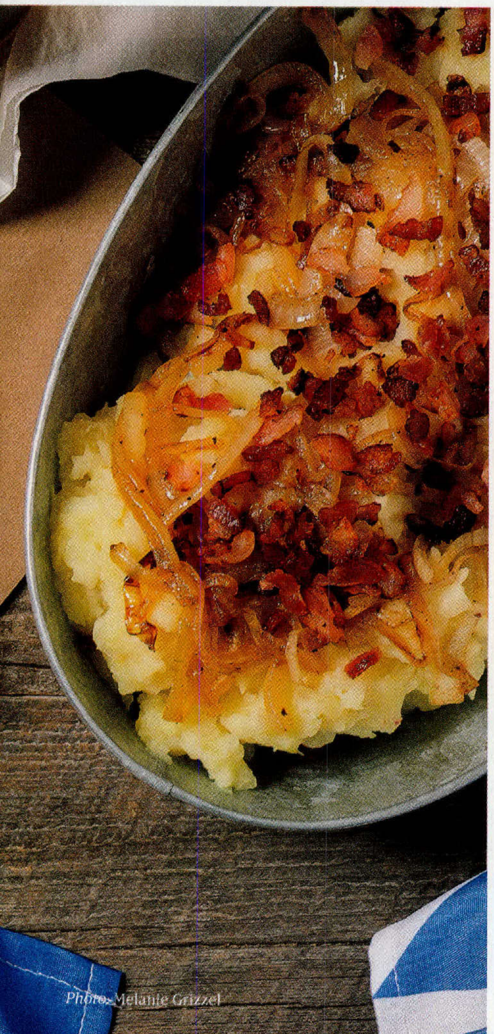
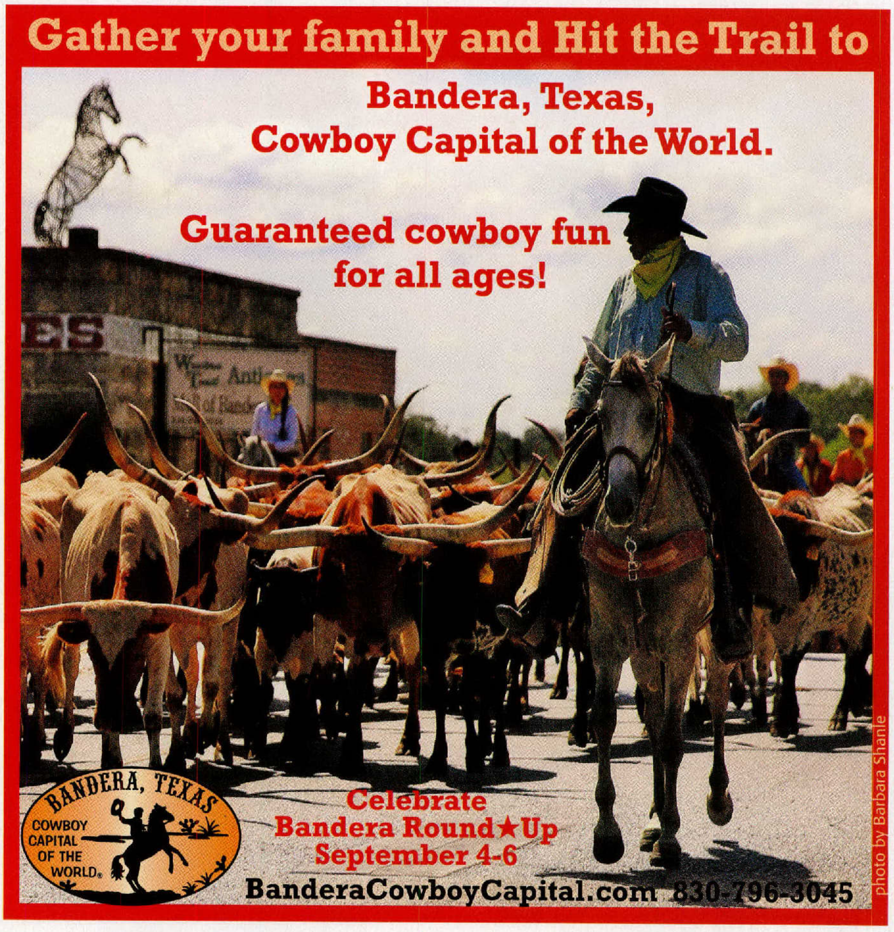
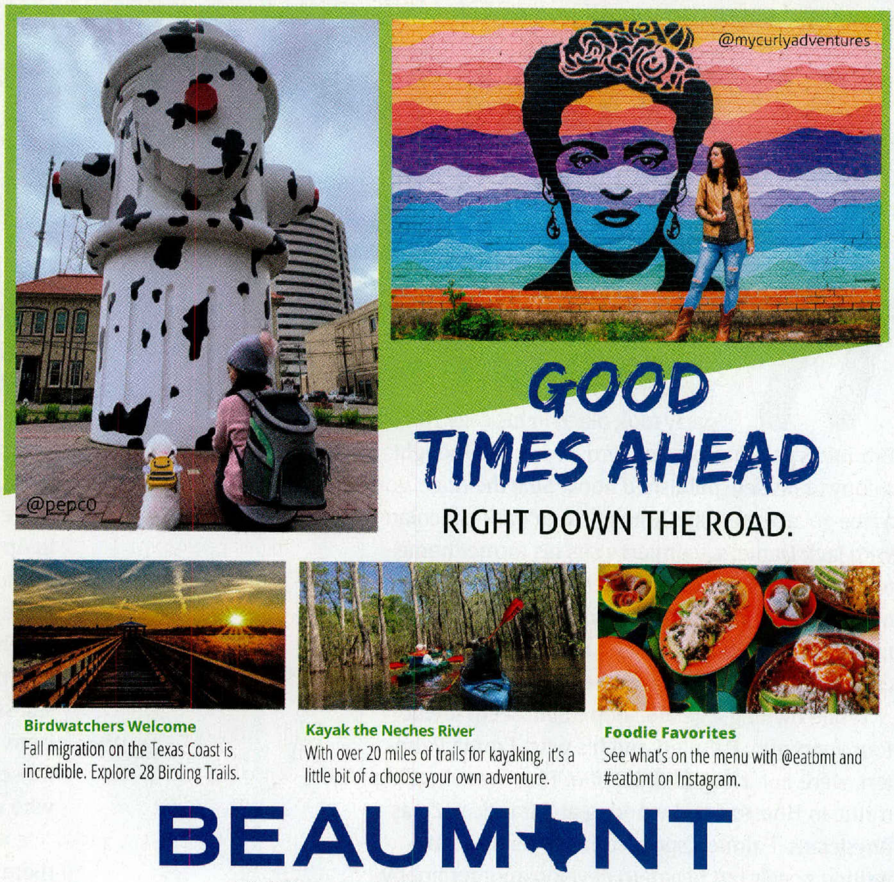


Photo: Melanie Grizzel


Gather your family and Hit the Trail to
Bandera, Texas,
Cowboy Capital of the World.
Guaranteed cowboy fun for all ages!
BANDERA, TEXAS
COWBOY CAPITAL OF THE WORLD.
Celebrate
Bandera Round★Up
September 4-6
BanderaCowboyCapital.com 830-796-3045
photo by Barbara Shanle



GOOD TIMES AHEAD
RIGHT DOWN THE ROAD.

Birdwatchers Welcome
Fall migration on the Texas Coast is incredible. Explore 28 Birding Trails.

Kayak the Neches River
With over 20 miles of trails for kayaking, it's a little bit of a choose your own adventure.

Foodie Favorites
See what's on the menu with @eatbmt and #eatbmt on Instagram.

BEAUMONT
VisitBeaumontTX.com | 1-800-392-4401

EMMA AND PETER Palmieri own Zenzero, a gelato shop in New Braunfels.

From Italy with Love

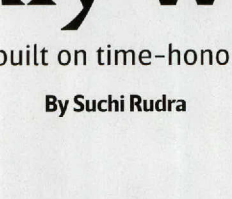
Zenzero, a New Braunfels gelato shop, is built on time-honored methods and high-quality ingredients

By Suchi Rudra

When Peter Palmieri released his third medical thriller in early February, a small book launch party took place in his cozy New Braunfels gelato shop, Zenzero. Those who bought a copy of his self-published book, *Sing the Rage*, got a free gelato—perhaps limoncello or dark chocolate with Jack Daniel's. Palmieri visits his former hometown of Trieste, Italy, once every few years to draw inspiration for new gelato flavors, although his own tastes lean traditional. "I like to order coffee, pistachio, and amarena [cherry]," he says.

While owning a gelato shop might seem idyllic, four years ago, Palmieri and his wife, Emma Palmieri, were not living *la dolce vita*. They were battling traffic in Houston and working at a frantic pace as physicians. Palmieri spent some of his free time writing novels but began to develop another hobby: making gelato.

ZENZERO
244 FM 306,
Suite 122,
New Braunfels.
830-499-8344;
zenzerogelato.com



In 2016, growing tired of his stressful lifestyle, Palmieri relocated to New Braunfels with Emma and their two children. "As I considered retiring from medicine, I was thinking about the different things I could be doing," Palmieri says. Over the years, he had refined his gelato skills at home. No longer just a hobbyist, Palmieri was ready to go pro. In April 2017, Zenzero opened as one of the few artisan gelato shops in Texas that doesn't use preservatives or artificial colors and flavors.

While Zenzero's more natural approach to gelato isn't the norm in Italy, Palmieri says his process is still steeped in tradition. Palmieri, who lived in Italy from ages 5 to 14 before moving to the United States for school, says he often thinks of his grandmother, who would send him and his siblings to buy gelato. "On the bottom floor of her apartment building, there were shops: a bakery, a meat market, and a dairy shop, which sold milk and cheese, but also

Photo: Bryce Tumlinson

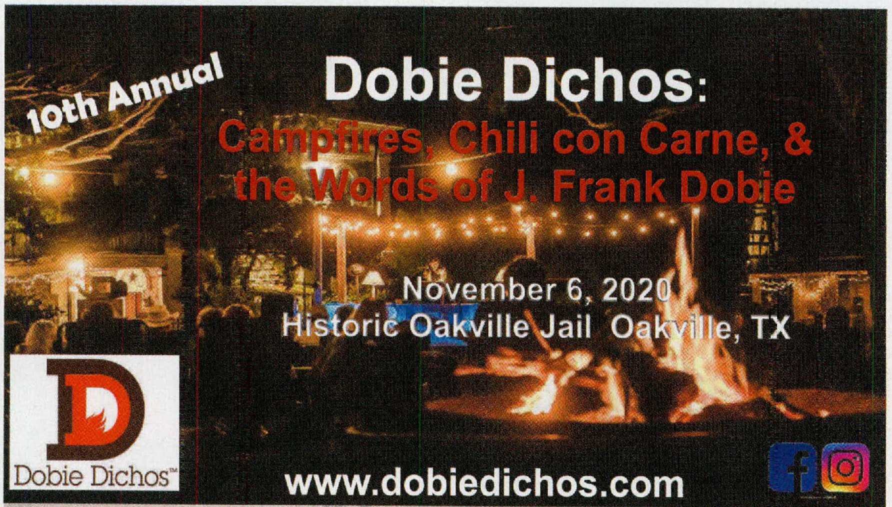
gelato," Palmieri recalls. "Her favorite gelato was called *cassata Triestina* [a trio of chocolate, pistachio, and strawberry gelato embedded with candied fruit and sandwiched between two wafers], and she would portion it out for us. It was a family event, and this happened almost every day during the summer. So the good feeling I have about gelato is that I feel like I'm carrying on this tradition."

To recreate classic Italian gelato with high-quality natural ingredients, Palmieri sources pistachios, amarena cherries, and chocolate from Italy and purchases other ingredients, including peaches, pecans, figs, and strawberries, from Texas farms. As a nod to Emma's Mexican roots, Zenzero regularly churns out flavors like avocado, horchata, tamarind, and piña colada.

Zenzero offers an array of ever-changing gelato flavors, with dairy-free and sugar-free options, but the menu also features sweet or savory crêpes and classic desserts like panna cotta and macarons. And because no Italian culinary experience would be complete without coffee, Zenzero has a full menu of espresso drinks, with coffee beans sourced from the Illy factory in Trieste.

In just three years, Zenzero has developed a strong bond with the New Braunfels community. When Palmieri had to temporarily shut his business down due to COVID-19 restrictions, he posted on Facebook about the struggle to keep the business alive. The next day, Zenzero fans and local business owners flooded Palmieri with messages and calls of support. Zenzero was invited to sell at a small farmers market and take part in a community event. When he reopened for take-out, orders poured in, including from a pastor who purchased gelato for 30 parishioners.

"We didn't know how things were going to shape up and didn't get much help from the SBA," Palmieri says, referencing the Small Business Administration. "But the community came out in a huge way. They told us, 'We want you to be around and succeed.'"



10th Annual

Dobie Dichos:

Campfires, Chili con Carne, & the Words of J. Frank Dobie

November 6, 2020

Historic Oakville Jail Oakville, TX

Dobie Dichos™

www.dobiedichos.com

DobieWestPerformingArtsTheatre

OralHistory

LocalTellers

StoryTellingCapitalOfTexas

www.dobie-westtheatre.com

GhostStories

LarryThompson

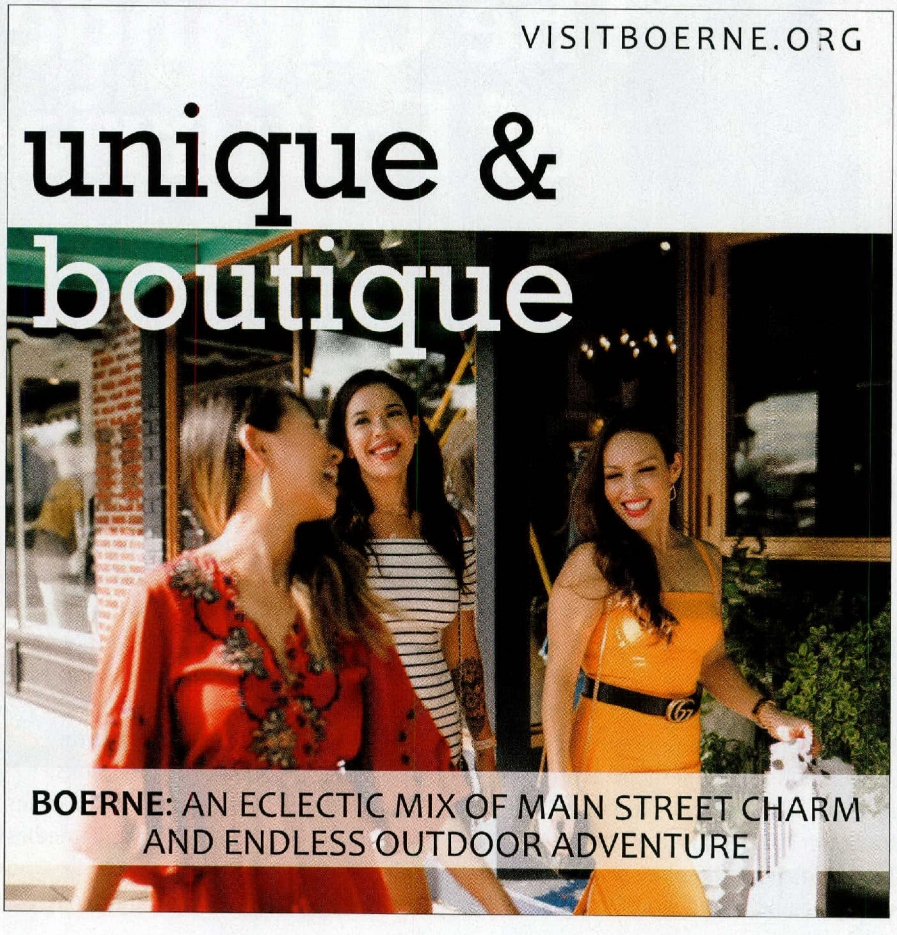
TexasStateLiarsContest

DonnaIngham Storytelling

EldrenaDouma

DayOfStories

November.7th.2020

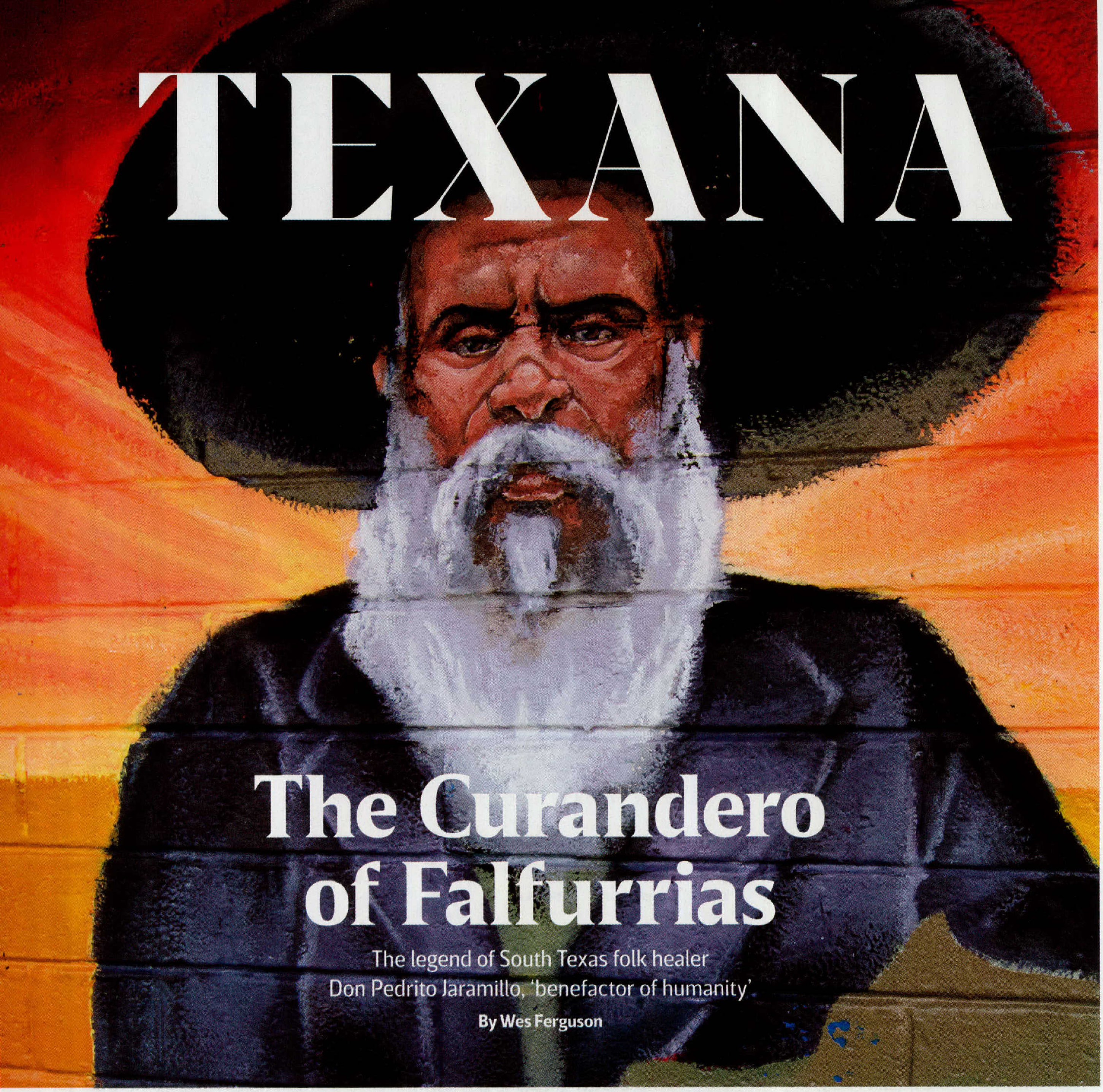


VISITBOERNE.ORG

unique & boutique

BOERNE: AN ECLECTIC MIX OF MAIN STREET CHARM AND ENDLESS OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

TEXANA



The Curandero of Falfurrias

The legend of South Texas folk healer Don Pedrito Jaramillo, 'benefactor of humanity'

By Wes Ferguson

The burial shrine for saintly South Texan Don Pedro Jaramillo sits beside a dusty farm-to-market road in the brush country near Falfurrias, about 60 miles southwest of Corpus Christi.

If you're unfamiliar with Jaramillo, the inscription on his granite headstone might seem a bit hyperbolic. It proclaims him "the benefactor of humanity." But for South Texans raised on stories of Jaramillo's legendary benevolence, his epitaph could not be more fitting.

Jaramillo, more widely known as Don Pedrito, was a community leader and *curandero*, or folk healer, around the turn of the 20th century. In black-and-white photographs, he's shown with a long white beard and a deep scar across the crumpled bridge of his nose. From 1881 until his death on July 3, 1907, he lived in a modest adobe hut near the banks of Los Olmos Creek in Brooks County, where he prescribed equal doses of Catholic faith and homespun remedies to heal the sick.

At first, Jaramillo simply administered to his neighbors, oftentimes riding a donkey or walking on "healing missions" to area ranches where medical care was practically nonexistent for vaqueros and laborers of Mexican ethnicity. Though Jaramillo wasn't a priest and operated outside the formal church structure, his acclaim quickly spread. Thousands of pilgrims flocked to him by foot or wagon from throughout the Texas-Mexico borderlands. On any given day, up to a hundred sick or disabled people could be found outside his hut, eating beans and corn harvested from his small patch

Photos: Larry Ditto

of land, as they waited for their moment with Don Pedrito.

"He'd actually feed them and take care of them while they sat and waited," says Jennifer Koshatka Seman, a historian who researched Don Pedrito for her dissertation at Southern Methodist University. Now a lecturer at Metropolitan State University in Denver, Seman is the author of *Borderlands Curanderos: The Worlds of Santa Teresa Urrea and Don Pedrito Jaramillo*, which the University of Texas Press is publishing in December. (Urrea, a contemporary of Jaramillo, lived in El Paso.)

"He was an effective healer," Seman says of Don Pedrito. "He also provided social support and a kind of informal welfare to his community at a time in Texas history when there was a lot of violence against people of Mexican descent."

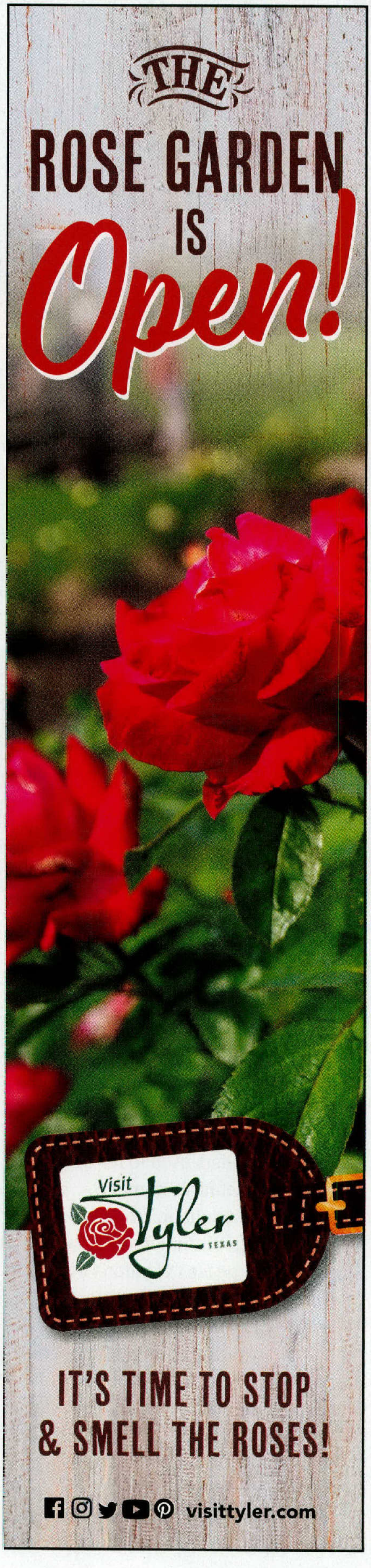
The words *curandero* and *curanderismo* (folk healing system) come from the Spanish root word *curar*: to cure, heal, or treat. Curanderos remain active in communities throughout Latin America. Their treatments combine elements of Catholicism with traditional Spanish medicine and indigenous practices that harken to the moment of contact between the Spanish and native people of Mexico, Seman says. "It was a violent moment," she explains, "but one thing that came out of it was this cultural blending that happened all across the New World."

Unlike some curanderos, Jaramillo never charged for his services and often gave away the remedies he prescribed. He accepted donations of money and food but was revered for redistributing nearly all of it. "What this man received with one hand, he gave away with the other," his friend Antonio Hinojosa Perez told the biographer Ruth Dodson for her 1934 book, *Don Pedrito Jaramillo: Curandero.* Perez donated the land where Don Pedrito grew beans and corn.

People who were unable to travel to remote Los Olmos knew they could also reach Don Pedrito by mail. An estimated 200 letters requesting Jaramillo's aid

Unlike some curanderos, Jaramillo never charged for his services and often gave away the remedies he prescribed.

FROM LEFT: Artist Mabel Garza painted a mural of Don Pedro Jaramillo on a downtown Falfurrias building; inside the Jaramillo shrine.



THE ROSE GARDEN IS Open!

Visit Tyler TEXAS

IT'S TIME TO STOP & SMELL THE ROSES!

visittyler.com

DONADO
por
Familia

THE JARAMILLO SHRINE includes a photo of the curandero and a carving of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

arrived each week. Jaramillo's prescriptions, or *recetas*, often incorporated herbs, vegetables, and simple measures like drinking water and taking baths. Sometimes he recommended a cheap whiskey called *Mataburros*, Spanish for "kills jackasses." Many people with deep roots in South Texas still remember the stories their elders used to tell about the effectiveness of his treatments.

Jaramillo's neighbor, Lino Olivares Treviño, was a prominent freemason and justice of the peace. "He didn't believe in the curanderismo, but he respected Don Pedrito, who was an influential man at the time," says Treviño's granddaughter, Lourdes Treviño-Cantu, a school librarian and volunteer for the Heritage Museum at Falfurrias. The museum displays portraits and other mementos of Jaramillo's legacy.

When Lino's wife, Marcela Galindo Treviño, began to lose her eyesight, she sent one of her daughters to seek Don Pedrito's advice. He instructed Marcela to eat a particular can of tomatoes every night for three consecutive nights. "She died in 1952," Treviño-Cantu says. "My mother never said anything about my grandmother going blind, so I'm assuming it worked."

From our modern perspective, it's easy to dismiss such mysterious remedies as eating tomatoes to reverse blindness. We've benefited from more than a century of significant medical advances. And yet there's no denying that faith, strengthened by rituals and pilgrimages, can have curative powers. The placebo effect is real. As Seman puts it, "The process of moving toward healing, in and of itself, is healing."

There's no denying that faith, strengthened by rituals and pilgrimages, can have curative powers. The placebo effect is real.

Jaramillo also benefited from healing that he could only explain through faith. Born in 1829 near Guadalajara in the Mexican state of Jalisco, Jaramillo was a poor shepherd who, when riding a horse one day, crashed into a tree branch. The blow knocked him unconscious and broke his nose, tearing his flesh down to the bone.

"The pain was unbearable," author Juan Sauvageau wrote in his classic 1975 book of South Texas folklore, *Stories That Must Not Die.* "He felt an irresistible urge to go to a nearby lagoon and soak his face in the mud." The mud brought immediate relief. "Although an ugly scar remained," Sauvageau recounted, "the pain was completely gone."

After lying at the lagoon for three days, Jaramillo heard a voice telling him that, from then on, he would cure in God's name. He eventually left Jalisco for Texas, possibly traveling with a group of tequila exporters, and settled at Los Olmos when he was a little over 50 years old.

In 1894, a healing trip to San Antonio put Jaramillo on a collision course with professional physicians. They saw him as a dangerous competitor for patients. At the time, Seman says, many Tejanos distrusted doctors, whose prevailing ideology painted them as racially inferior disease carriers.

Seven years later, the American Medical Association and U.S. Postal Service took Jaramillo to federal court. They accused him of peddling fake cures and defrauding his applicants via the mail. The esteemed South Texas attorney and politician José Tomás Canales—who later became the only Hispanic member of the state House of Representatives at the time—successfully argued for the case's dismissal. He noted that Don Pedrito "never charged a single cent for his cures." One of those cures had even healed Canales' own mother of a grave

Photo: Larry Ditto

illness when a professional doctor had failed, he said.

Jaramillo never married, although he adopted two boys. He lived off donations, which he also used to buy food and hire employees to feed the multitudes who came to see him. When he died, according to the *Handbook of Texas*, more than $5,000 in 50-cent pieces was found in his hut near Los Olmos Creek.

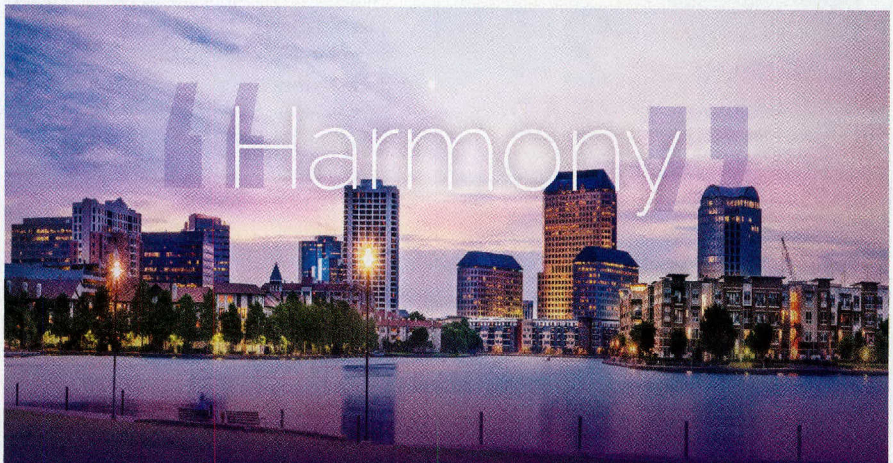
Today, the shrine to Jaramillo stands on that same patch of land. It's open to the public every day. In February, however, vandals desecrated the shrine. They damaged the face of a statue of Don Pedrito and destroyed other religious icons. While the criminals have not been caught, community members rallied. They cleaned the shrine and have already repaired or replaced the broken statues.

On a recent morning at Don Pedrito's shrine, little flames glimmered from dozens of prayer candles, and numerous bouquets of silk flowers adorned the small, chapel-like building. Earnest, handwritten prayers in English and Spanish filled bulletin boards. Most of the notes sought Jaramillo's help with sickness, financial hardship, or family harmony. Some asked him to remember their deceased relatives.

Outside the shrine, a breeze caught the wavy green fronds of a tall palm tree standing in Jaramillo's small family cemetery. Time seemed to slow as a mourning dove cooed from the branch of a gnarled live oak. Its shade provides comfort and rest for visitors, just as it likely did for Don Pedrito and his pilgrims more than a century ago.

The Don Pedro Jaramillo Shrine opens daily 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at 1936 FM 1418 in Falfurrias; donpedrojaramillo.com. The Heritage Museum at Falfurrias opens Tue-Sat 10 a.m.-noon and 1-3 p.m. at 415 N. St. Mary's St. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, appointments are required. 361-474-5522; heritagemuseum-falfurrias.org

COME AND TAKE IT
TOUR GONZALES
Plan your stay at **gonzalestx.travel**



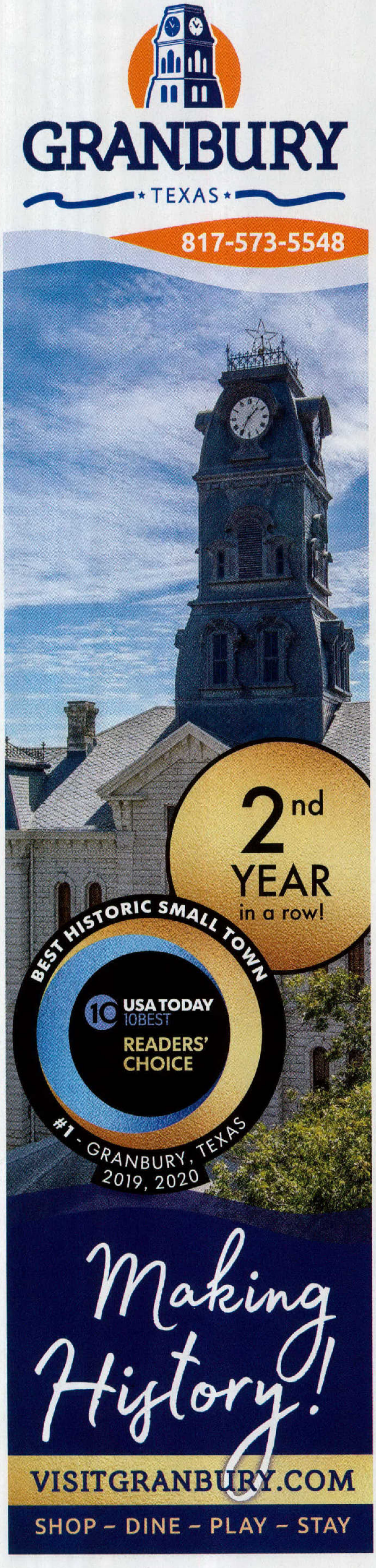
Our hearts go out to everyone during this challenging time. We look forward to having you visit Irving. . . later. Until then – stay home, stay kind, stay connected! The beat will go on in Irving, and when it does, we hope you'll be here to rock with us.

IRVING ROCKS *Business and Pleasure*

VISIT IRVING TEXAS

(972) 252 7476
travelirvingtexas.com

(800) 2 IRVING
#visit**irving**


GRANBURY
★ TEXAS ★
817-573-5548
2nd YEAR in a row!
BEST HISTORIC SMALL TOWN
USA TODAY 10BEST READERS' CHOICE
#1 - GRANBURY, TEXAS 2019, 2020
Making History!
VISITGRANBURY.COM
SHOP - DINE - PLAY - STAY

THE DAYTRIPPER'S TOP 5

Houston's Museum District

Feed your mind—and your stomach

BY CHET GARNER

"Tripping" in Houston may seem overwhelming because, well, it's the fourth most populated city in the U.S. Luckily, the city breaks itself up into bite-size districts, like the Bay Area, Chinatown, and the Museum District. The latter features 19 museums in a 1.5-mile radius and offers mind-expanding attractions and tasty eats.

Hermann Park

You could spend an entire day exploring this park, which has become Houston's backyard, picnic spot, outdoor art gallery, and playground. Get a quick lay of the land on the bright red Hermann Park Railroad train. Next, encounter lions, tigers, and—you guessed it—bears at the on-site Houston Zoo, or make a splash paddling with the ducks in the park's lake. The Japanese Garden offers a moment of quiet sitting amid its serene beauty. If you're looking for an adrenaline rush, roll down the hill near the Miller Outdoor Theatre.

Houston Museum of Natural Science

Anyone interested in science, history, or entertainment should visit this museum. Walk beneath full-size dinosaur skeletons or ogle priceless mineral formations that look more like sculptures than works of nature. The hall of mummies may give you the heebie-jeebies, but the Cockrell Butterfly Center will make your cares flutter away on the wings of hundreds of butterflies.

Turkey Leg Hut

If your favorite part of any festival is the giant turkey legs, then, boy, are you in for a treat. This restaurant gives the State Fair fave an over-the-top makeover by smothering smoked turkey legs with crazy toppings. The Hut's signature "Stuffed Turkey Legs" are filled with all the goodness of home-cooked dishes like crawfish mac and cheese or shrimp Alfredo. There are pasta dishes, chicken wings, and salads for folks intimidated by the giant, caveman-style turkey legs.

Popston

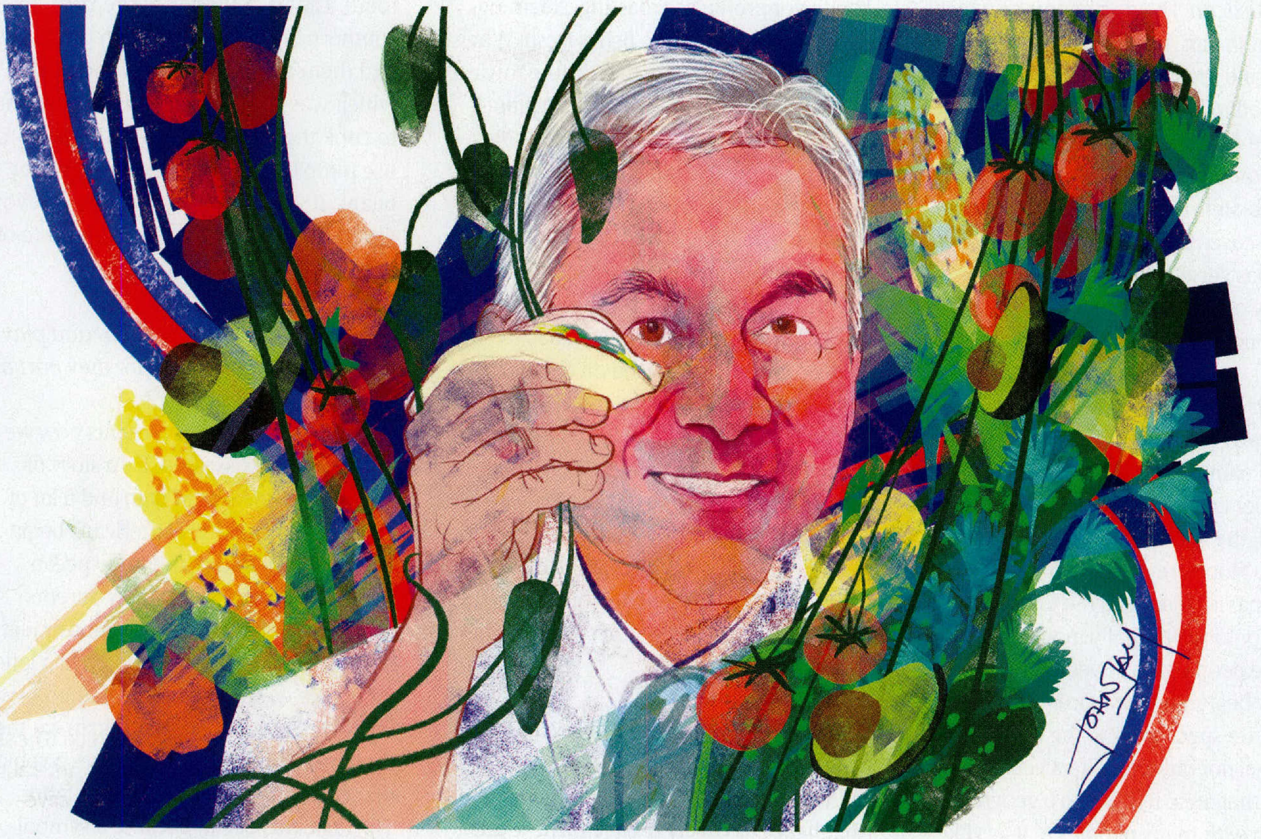
There's no doubt the Houston humidity will leave you sweating. Cool off with an off-the-wall frozen treat from this local frozen pop stand. The all-natural pops come in flavors like mango chamoy and kiwi guava with chunks of real fruit frozen inside. If you prefer chocolate to fruit, opt for the cookies-and-cream ice pop with whole Oreos. Get your napkins ready.

Museum of Fine Arts

This museum is for those whose interests lie more toward Renoir and Monet than mummies and dinosaurs. The world-class collection of paintings and sculptures is unmatched in Texas and contains 6,000 years of artistic creation. Every time I walk the halls, I feel like I'm walking through the pages of an art textbook. I'm always astonished at how oil smeared on canvas can make me feel something deep in my soul.

So 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 Houston episode visit thedaytripper.com. Follow along on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter @chettripper.*



Indigenous Eats

Adán Medrano on the intricacies of 'Texas Mexican food' and the trinity of garlic, cumin, and black pepper

By John Nova Lomax

At first, the concept of "Texas Mexican food" espoused by Houston-based chef and food writer Adán Medrano is a little hard to wrap your head around. Wait a minute, you might wonder, don't we already have a name for that? Is this just splitting hairs over the semantics of Tex-Mex versus Texas Mexican? But the deeper Medrano dives, the more he reveals a truth that has been hiding in plain sight. Though there is some overlap, Texas Mexican is not Tex-Mex, nor is it what is sometimes referred to as "Mex-Mex" or "interior Mexican" food.

Born into a migrant farming family in San Antonio, Medrano worked as a film producer and as a chef at restaurants in Koksijde, Belgium, and Houston before focusing his work on the native food of his homeland. He describes Texas Mexican food as the modern-day expression of the fare indigenous to the original inhabitants of South Texas and northeastern Mexico. In pre-Columbian times, this patchwork of peoples known as the Coahuiltecans ate a diet that infuses the way both Texans and northeastern Mexicans eat today, reflected in dishes like sopa fideo, carne guisada, and chili con carne. It's typically lighter and less processed than Tex-Mex standards like nachos or fajitas, which are known for plentiful cheese and grease.

> **"Tex-Mex is what people think is our food. But Tex-Mex is really someone else's idea of how we eat. And that's not how we eat."**

In Medrano's conception, the Rio Grande is just another stream, not a culinary border, and subtle shifts in language can have big cultural implications. He's written about this cultural history in two books—*Truly Texas Mexican: A Native Culinary Heritage in Recipes* and *Don't Count the Tortillas: The Art of Texas Mexican Cooking.* Now he explores the topic on film as the executive producer of *Truly*

Illustration: John Jay Cabuay

Texas Mexican. The documentary, which was shot in San Antonio, Houston, Corpus Christi, and the Rio Grande Valley, is scheduled to be released this fall. (Specifics of the debut are pending, complicated by the coronavirus pandemic.) In his work, Medrano aims to tell the story of Texas *comida casera*, or home cooking, and how it has survived to "sustain the memory of Mexican American families and strengthen the bonds of community."

Q: What does "Coahuiltecan" mean in the context of your work?

A: The Coahuiltecan region is a triangle. The upper end would be around Victoria, going all the way to Del Rio, and then down to Monterrey, and then back up the coast. That is what I call the Coahuiltecan region for food. It's really indigenous food from the peoples who lived there. From the very beginning the word Coahuiltecan didn't refer specifically to the Coahuiltecan language, nor did it refer to a very specific tribe in that area. It refers to a geographical area with many peoples in it. It's like when you say, "I'm a Texan." That doesn't go into your ethnic background; that just says you live in a particular cultural space.

Q: What are the foods of the Coahuiltecan region?

A: The bedrock foods of the Coahuiltecan region are seasonal and local—local meaning cactus, brush things [such as mesquite beans], deer, quail, turtle, fish, all of those plants and animals that are indigenous to this region. Cooking was the domain of women, and women really are the engineers of all the cooking technologies of the Coahuiltecan cuisine, such as earth ovens and boiling techniques. Today there is a straight line between all of those people and people like myself.

Q: What are the flavor profiles of ingredients like game, cactus, corn, and beans in Texas Mexican dishes?

A: I would divide it into the techniques that are used, and then secondly the ingredients and how you treat those ingredients. We wouldn't do a lot of deep frying. The techniques that would shape the flavor profile are roasting, steaming, drying. Very fresh—the fish is fresh. When you get to deep frying, that's more toward Tex-Mex. We do some deep frying, but that's not the flavor profile of Texas Mexican. As for the use of ingredients, the flavor profile is more direct. There's the floweriness, and the intricacy and the complexity comes in the way that you blend stuff together.

Let's take the cheese enchilada. My cheese enchilada is based on chile guajillo, chile ancho, and then the trinity—garlic, black pepper, and a little bit of *comino*. So that's not a lot of ingredients, and the trick is how to mix those in a way that they really come together when they're supposed to. You eat the dish and you say, "You can't add anything else. This is just right." It's that sort of technique that characterizes our food.

Q: And so what is Texas Mexican in relation to Tex-Mex?

A: Around the 1960s, there's a movement that happens called Tex-Mex. These are new restaurants run by Anglo people who imitate [Texas Mexican] food and are very successful in selling it. It's a format that is high-fat, high-cheese, and the format really attracts the Europeans because they are used to it. You have the Germans with their sausage and the French with their deep-frying. Those are not indigenous, but that is Tex-Mex food. And I think Tex-Mex becomes a reality because food writers of the '70s began to write about it. There were so many of them writing about it while [Mexican Americans] did not have access to the centers of communication; we didn't have any writers. So, other writers took over the conversation. Tex-Mex is what people think is our food. But Tex-Mex is really someone else's idea of how we eat. And that's not how we eat.

Q: Can you elaborate on your thoughts on pinto beans versus black beans?

A: You mean how I once said that black beans are not "philosophically correct"? Black beans are fine—serve them in a restaurant like Merida [a Houston restaurant that serves Yucatán-style Mexican food]. That is authentic to the Yucatán and southern Mexico. One time in Chiapas I had them alongside iguana enchiladas, which was—something. But if you want to cook the Mexican food of this region, use pinto beans because those are our beans. If you use black beans, the flavor's different, the relationship to the taste of rice is different.

Q: Pecans are native to Texas and play a role in many cultures. Are they part of Texas Mexican cooking?

A: The pecan for me represents how we have been dispossessed. It's a story of poverty. It's got a lot of pain and a lot of anger. When Mexican Americans begin to write these things about the pecan, it becomes more weighty. My parents used to shell pecans to make ends meet, and they were paid very poorly. In a land where we were hunters and gatherers who loved the pecan and were able to eat them freely, all of a sudden it becomes a vehicle to turn us into low-paid or slave labor. The delicious pecan became a symbol of terrible things. Whenever I speak in the Rio Grande Valley or elsewhere to Latinos, I tell that story in order to urge them to write or to speak. Because people who have written about our food have not been Mexican Americans or Latinos, and the more that we do, this side of the story—a more complete story—will be told. All food has culture, all food has politics, and I always say, "Make beautiful food." But can there be beauty without justice?

Visit Adán Medrano's website for information on the release of *Truly Texas Mexican*, as well as his future speaking engagements and recipes for Texas Mexican dishes such as tortilla soup and Texas pecan-stuffed mushrooms.
adanmedrano.com

Texas Highways (ISSN 0040-4349) is published monthly by the Texas Department of Transportation, 150 E. Riverside Drive, Austin, Texas 78704; phone 512-486-5858, fax 512-486-5879. *The official travel magazine of Texas encourages travel within the state and tells the Texas story to readers around the world.*

Periodicals Postage paid at Austin, Texas, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Texas Highways* Circulation, P.O. Box 8559, Big Sandy, Texas 75755-8559.

VINTAGE

BY TRACES OF TEXAS

Boogie on the Bayou

HOUSTON, CIRCA 1950

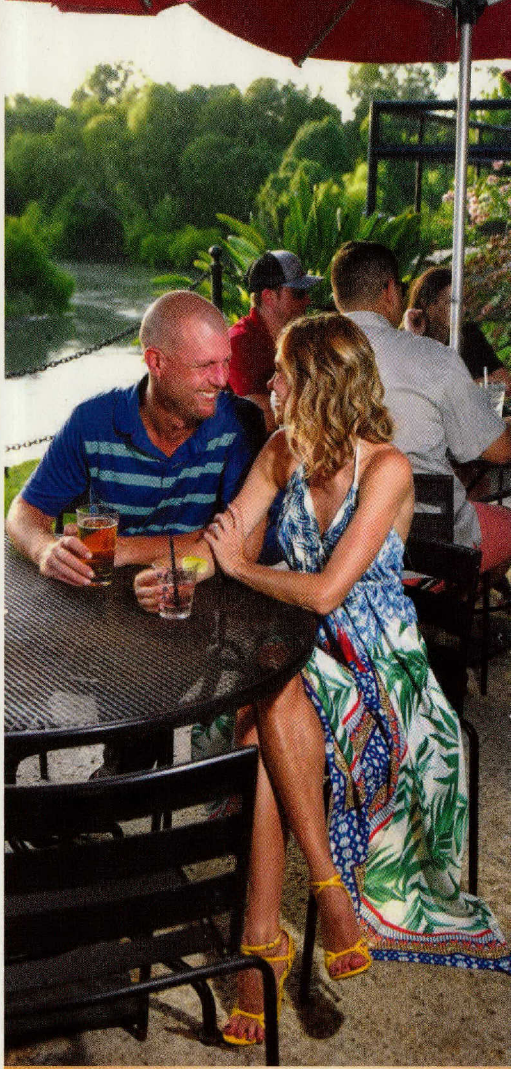
Born in Houston in 1927, Amos Milburn was a piano prodigy, sounding out tunes from the age of 5. Piano teachers couldn't keep up with the young player, so he'd linger outside of clubs listening to the music, and then play what he'd memorized. At age 15, Milburn bluffed his way into the Navy and went on to earn 13 service stars in World War II. Back in Houston, Milburn created a party-romp style that blended the cocktail blues, jump blues, and boogie-woogie sounds of his hometown. Milburn had numerous hits, such as "Thinking and Drinking" and "Chicken Shack Boogie," and was a regular presence on *Billboard's* R&B charts in the early 1950s. A series of strokes eventually left him incapacitated, and he died in 1980 at age 52. But Milburn's early rock 'n' roll lived on in the music of stars like Fats Domino and Little Richard.

Know of any fascinating vintage Texas photographs? Send copies or ideas to ***tracesoftxphotos@gmail.com****.*

Photo: Traces of Texas/The Complete Aladdin Recordings of Amos Milburn

EXPLORE
Victoria!

Old Victoria Driving Tour


PumpHouse
Riverside Restaurant & Bar

Five Points Museum

EXPLORE
EST. 1824
Victoria
TEXAS

ExploreVictoriaTexas.com