

# TEXAS

HIGHWAYS™

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

## *Wildflower Rambles*

MARCH 2019

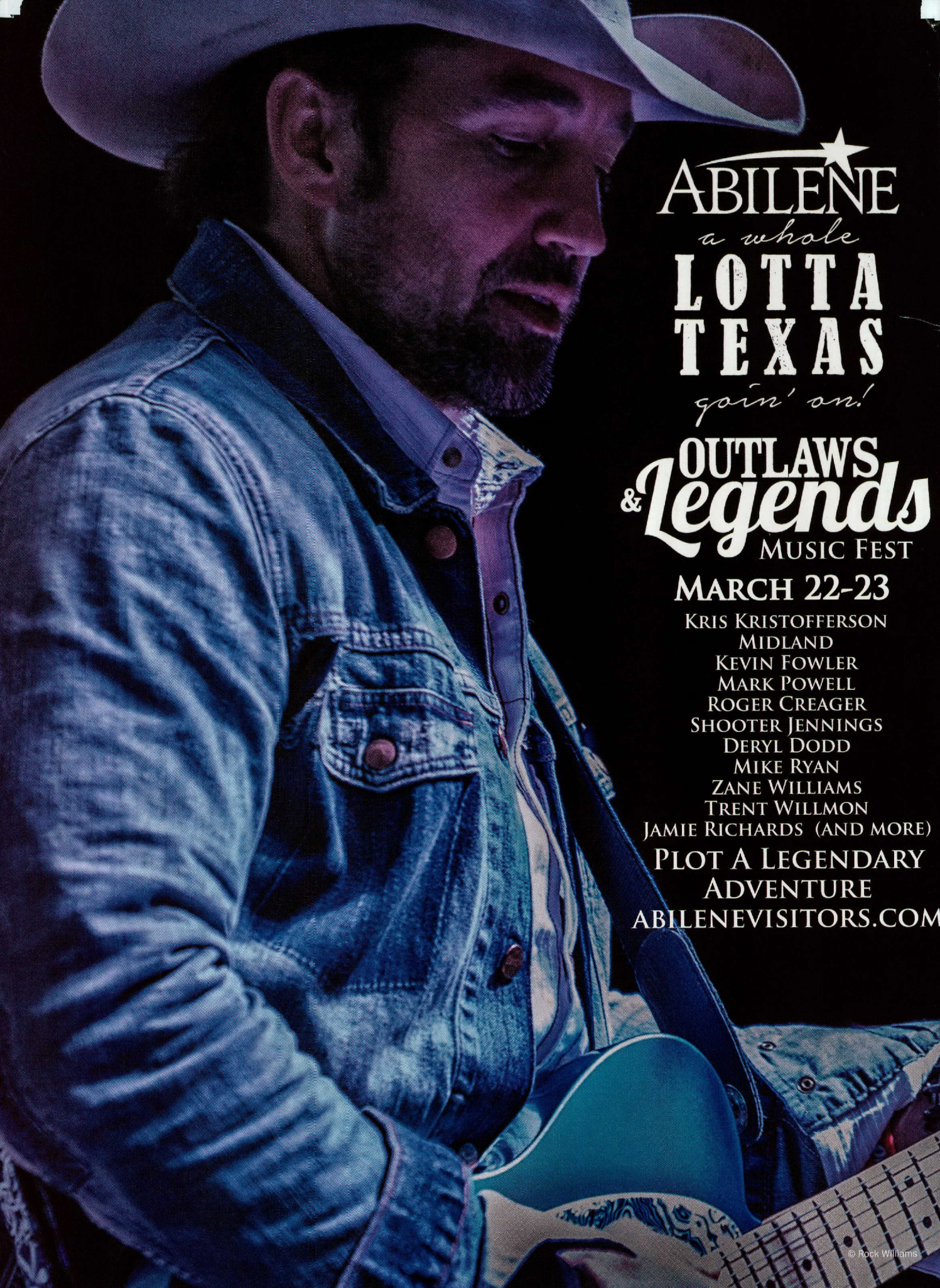
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EDITOR'S  
**NOTE**

## 45 Years and Counting

**I**f there's one thing Texans can agree on, it's their love of wildflowers. A field of native blooms graced the second-ever cover of *Texas Highways*, and readers' enthusiasm for the bluebonnet and its springtime companions hasn't dampened since. The June 1974 cover (below) featured "a field strewn with pink evening primrose and Indian paintbrush showing why the 'primrose path' has always been associated with beauty, tranquility and happiness."

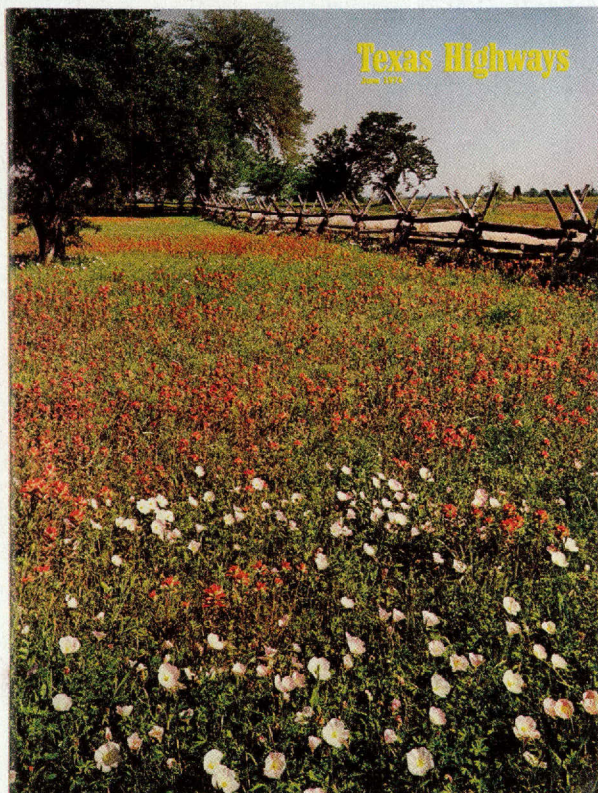
This year marks our 45th anniversary, and as with any milestone, it gives us an opportunity to pause and reflect on where we came from. Though *Texas Highways* was founded in 1953 when the Texas Highway Department changed the name of its employee publication from *Maintenance and Construction Bulletin*, it didn't become a travel magazine until enterprising editor Frank Lively began adding stories

about the history, people, and places of Texas in 1962. In 1974, under the late Lively's direction, the magazine made the full transition to a consumer publication, with an annual subscription price of \$4.50.

A year later, Gov. Dolph Briscoe signed a resolution by the state Legislature naming it the official travel magazine of Texas, stating, "*Texas Highways* beautifully interprets scenic, recreational, historical, cultural, and ethnic treasures of the state and recalls the best of our Texas heritage." Lively noted early on that readers enjoyed stories about history, scenery, travel, and wildflowers, which has held true over the years.

**"This year marks our 45th anniversary, and as with any milestone, it gives us an opportunity to pause and reflect on where we came from."**

Anniversaries also offer an opportunity to recommit to the future. As a staff, we are grateful to everyone who has sustained the magazine over the years: staff members, contributors, and most importantly, loyal readers. We look forward to 45 more years, and then some, of sharing the state's diverse scenic, cultural, and historical treasures that keep calling us back to the road—preferably alongside a field of bluebonnets.



*Emily R Stone*

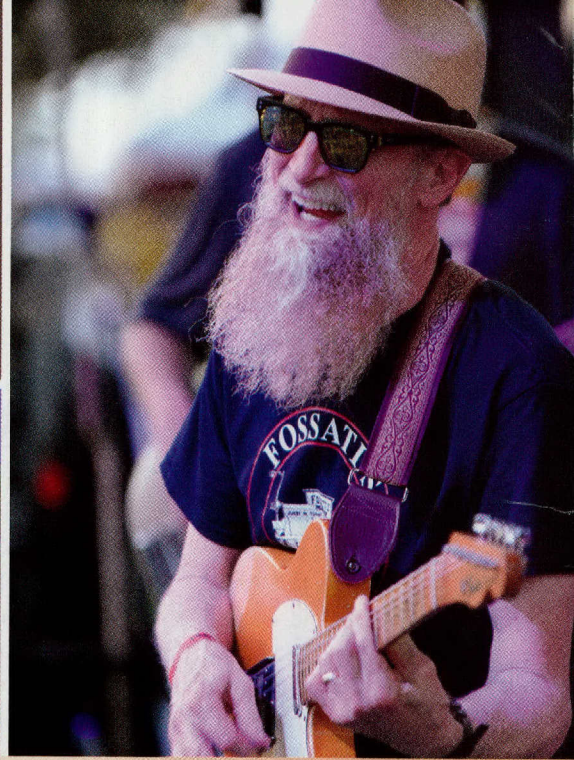
**EMILY ROBERTS STONE**  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR



# EXPLORE *Victoria!*



*Old Victoria Driving Tour*



*Live Music Scene*



*Birding in Riverside Park*

*EXPLORE*

EST.



1824

# *Victoria*

TEXAS

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# MARCH

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### State of Splendor

Four photographers visited the seven regions of Texas to capture the spectacular diversity of wildflowers that blanket the state during springtime.

*Photographs by Theresa DiMenno, Larry Ditto, Sean Fitzgerald, and E. Dan Klepper*

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### The Boogie Woogie Highway

Along US 59 from Houston to Texarkana, trace the history of boogie woogie music from Piney Woods lumber camps to the origins of rock 'n' roll.

*By Michael Corcoran  
Photographs by Dave Shafer*

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### Spring Break, Four Ways

Looking to skip the crowded coast this spring break? Try one of these four alternative trip ideas for a bit of the unexpected.

*Photographs by Erich Schlegel*



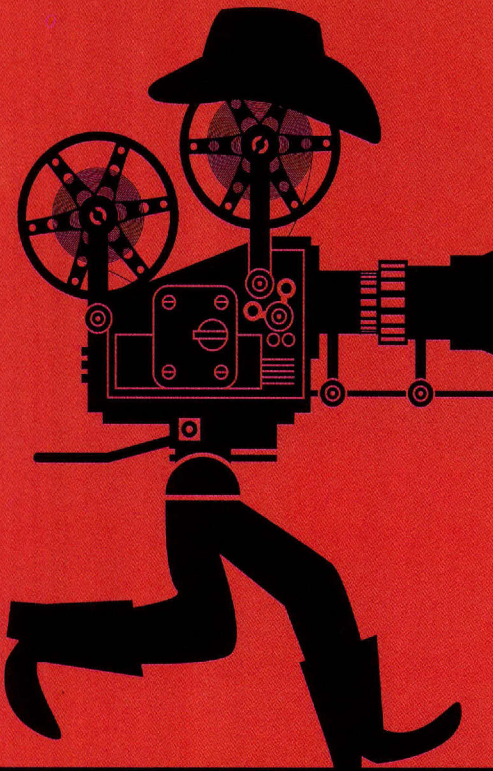
**BLACK SAMSON  
CONEFLOWERS**  
against the backdrop  
of the full moon on the  
Blackland Prairie.

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**thin line**  
FILM - MUSIC - PHOTO

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# VIDEO CONTEST

## **Texas Highways Readers Share a Taste of Texas**

To honor the diverse spirit and beauty of Texas, we reached out to *Texas Highways* readers to show us their True Texas Travel Experiences. This short film competition has yielded some winning entries.

**COME SEE THESE UNIQUE  
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**Selected short films will also be featured on [texashighways.com](http://texashighways.com). For more details, visit [thinline.us](http://thinline.us)**



# MARCH

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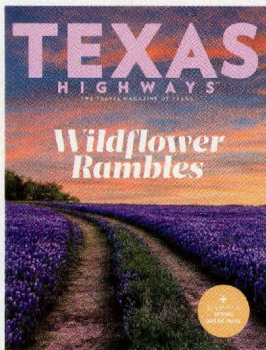
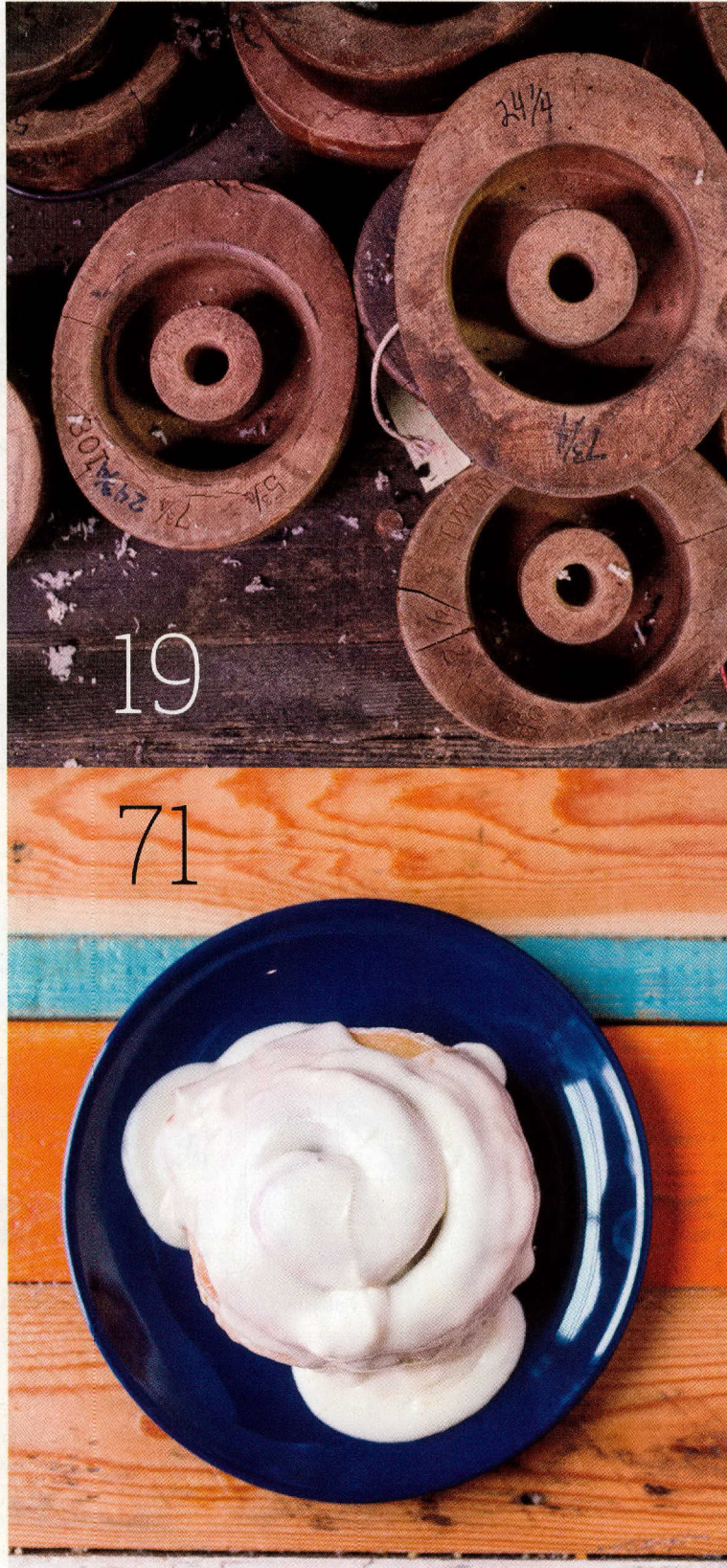
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Photo by Gary Regner

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Visit [texashighways.com](http://texashighways.com) for more content and events.



## Behind the Stories

### The Daytripper's 100th Column



This issue's "The Daytripper" on Sweetwater (Page 97) marks Chet Garner's 100th column in *Texas Highways*. Garner, who's hosted his Lone Star Emmy Award-winning travel show *The Daytripper* on PBS since 2009, started writing for the magazine in 2010 after then-editor-in-chief Charles Lorchman offered him a gig. "It's been an amazing ride," Garner says. "The best part is working with people who share my passion and fascination with the Lone Star State—folks you can chat with for hours about the best stretches of tubing on the Guadalupe, the tastiest back road cafés, and the weirdest roadside markers. Back when I started *The Daytripper*, *Texas Highways* was my go-to magazine for research and inspiration. I hope that by being a part of it for 100 columns, I've inspired someone else." Check out [texashighways.com](http://texashighways.com) to see Garner's most memorable "Daytripper" destinations.

### Family Matters



When Contributing Editor Clayton Maxwell's daughter, Carlisle, read her mom's essay "Take the Wheel, Kid," (Page 14) the 13-year-old remarked: "Mom, you know what I learned about you from reading this? You were a hippie." Carlisle followed that up with another takeaway: "I can tell that you made good friends on your road trips, and that's important."

### Topping it Off



For his story "Hats With History," (Page 19), Senior Editor Matt Joyce traveled by Amtrak from Austin to downtown Fort Worth to visit the store and conduct interviews. The hours on the train, combined with his walks around downtown Fort Worth, gave Joyce plenty of time to think about Peters Brothers and the fact that he hadn't acquired a new hat in quite some time. While waiting for his train home, he made the spur-of-the-moment decision to buy a custom Peters Brothers Hat. He returned to the store and got fitted for a pecan Shady Oak. But it will be a while before he gets to show off his new lid—he's still in the six-month back-order waiting period.

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Subscriptions are \$24.95 annually (\$39.95 foreign).

Back issues available by calling 512-486-5858.

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



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Published monthly by the Travel Information Division of TxDOT

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MEET OUR MAKERS

# Son of a Sailor

**AS PARTNERS IN MARRIAGE** and merchandising, William and Jessica Knopp founded Son of a Sailor in Austin in 2011. Their combined skills and interests manifest in a variety of handmade jewelry, personal accessories, and home goods, including beaded necklaces and earrings, key fobs, bottle openers, and leather wallets and bracelets. Their products all share a similar aesthetic: clean lines and bold geometric shapes, sometimes with a splash of color. It wasn't hard for the pair to become business partners. "William and I have always been creative together," she says. "We've designed entire collections around road trips we've taken and places we've explored."

Shop more Son of a Sailor products at [shop.texashighways.com](http://shop.texashighways.com)



# MERGE



I visited Big Bend last spring, but now I am learning of all of the places I missed. Can't wait to go back.

*Marilyn Newman, Grapeland*

## Big Bend National Park

We always enjoy the articles in *Texas Highways* that show the magic and majesty of Big Bend National Park [Collector's Edition, February]—a true treasure that every Texan and American should experience. Big Bend does not receive the publicity of a Yellowstone or Yosemite, but it's more unique than either of those parks.

*Mike Wortman, Weatherford*

It seems like every publication I see these days has an article urging people to visit the Big Bend area. I cringe when I think about the adverse effect that crowds of visitors will surely have on this park and the towns around it. The remoteness and isolation won't be the same once there are tourists everywhere you turn.

*Mack Warren, Austin*

## Along for the Ride

Sarah Hepola's article ["Go West Young Woman," December] resonated with me to the point I felt as if I could have written these words myself. Instead of feeling like a lone woman on the road on my next trip, I will imagine others like her along for the ride. Thank you for sharing her voice.

*Brenda Swirczynski, North Richland Hills*

## Reunion Resolution

My resolution is to travel to my high school reunion in May. I graduated from Breckenridge High School in 1947 and followed my geologist husband (who grew up in Pecos) to the oil fields of Wyoming and California; but I'm still a Texas girl at heart. Our class had its first reunion in 1987, and I've been to every one since then. We make a real trip of it. My husband, Bob, and I met when we

were students at Sul Ross, so we stay at least one night in Marfa, Alpine, or Fort Davis. We also visit family and friends in Dallas, Houston, and Gainesville. (You should try the Fried Pie Co. and Catfish Louie's in Gainesville.) Thanks for your magazine—my home away from home.

*Marie Otto, Fountain Valley, California*



### TRAVEL RESOLUTIONS

*I'm retiring this year and plan to begin my travels to visit every state park in Texas and every national park in the continental United States.*

**Suzanne Ragan, Paige**

*My resolution is to travel all over Texas and try chicken-fried steak at various restaurants throughout the state.*

**Paula Browning, Bay City**

### KEITH CARTER'S BEAUMONT

*What a nice surprise in my January Texas Highways. A living legend in Beaumont. I can't wait for his show at Lamar University in 2019!*

**Rachel Wiley-Janota, Galveston**



### OLD COUPLAND INN & DANCEHALL

*Twirled 'round a few lovely ladies on several sweet summer Saturday nights, 1999–2003. Thanks for bringing back some interesting memories. Best wishes to the good folks in and around Coupland.*

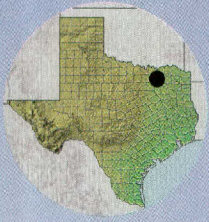
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## The Magic of the Meadow

With their characteristically droopy petals, Black Samson cone-flowers seem ready to turn down for the night as the sun sets on the Clymer Meadow Preserve northwest of Greenville. The preserve protects remnants of the Blackland Prairie, a tallgrass prairie that once stretched from the Texas coast to Canada. Prairies and pastures in North Texas and the plains of the Panhandle provide native habitats for this perennial, which blooms April through July and can also be propagated in gardens.











# Bellville

Finding the beauty in the backroads of Austin County

By Cynthia J. Drake



**LINDY CHAMBERS**  
in Bellville at the Austin  
County Jail Museum. For  
more on Chambers' art,  
visit [lindychambers.com](http://lindychambers.com)





## TOWN TRIVIA



POPULATION:

4,182



NUMBER OF STOPLIGHTS:

2



YEAR FOUNDED:

1846



NEAREST CITY:

Houston,  
64 miles southeast



MARQUEE EVENTS:

Market Days, first Saturdays of most months; Austin County Fair, Oct. 4-13; Small Town Christmas, Dec. 6-7.



MAP IT:

Austin County Jail Museum,  
36 S. Bell St.

**W**hen Lindy Chambers drives along the backroads of her hometown of Bellville, she often pulls over to take photos of dilapidated trailer homes or to collect the detritus that many people would pass off as junk—later to be resurrected in her artwork. A self-taught oil painter and sculptor known for colorful depictions of country life, Chambers moved from Hockley to this historic seat of Austin County about 20 years ago. She and her twin sister, Lee Lee Brazeal, taught art classes in a downtown frame shop and studio for two years before closing the business so Chambers could focus on making her own artwork. Over the years, Chambers has seen subtle changes in her adopted hometown, such as the recent opening of a barre and yoga studio downtown. While Chambers welcomes the new energy, she says she isn't worried Bellville will lose its small-town atmosphere any time soon.

### Country Life

"When people move out here, they get much nicer. They're not fighting that traffic. You get out here, and you are the first to hear the geese fly, and that's an awesome sound. And the tarantulas crossing the highways in springtime, it's an awesome sight. And the stars, you can actually see the stars, they're so bright."

### Sense of Place

"My art was inspired from just being out in the country. All these trailers, that's what's out here—I think they are part of every small town. Originally, trailers were made in the '40s for housing after the war. They were always zoned outside of town. The trailers have a stereotype. I wanted to get rid of that; they're homes for people. I try to make them interesting and pretty, and I try to do that with bright colors."

### Dumpster Diving

"I started painting trailers in 2013, and I was doing trash paintings before that, using water bottles and a mattress. I get some things at the dump, and friends will bring me some. When people leave stuff out in the road, free for anybody to pick up, I get that too. I just collect it, make something nice out of it, look at it in a different way. Artists are basically problem solvers, I think."

### Bellville Picks

"They have a really nice equestrian cross-country course out here at Pine Hill, and they put on some horse shows there [Chambers was formerly an equestrian rider and still owns horses]. It's just a great place to show, with sandy loam soil. We like to go to the Kenney Store; their aim is to be one of the biggest music venues in the Southwest. It's pretty awesome. When they have bands, the place is packed—they're all good bands. And then we have the Austin County Jail Museum, which is gorgeous."

### Quiet Town

"Bellville's a quiet little town. For Halloween one year, we put up a big painting of a pumpkin. Some people in town thought it was witchcraft. That was about 20 years ago, and the town really has changed a lot—more city people moving here. We try to hang around the creative people. They like art and they like music, and they want Bellville to grow."

### Animal Rescue

"You see a lot of strays, and you can't pass 'em by. You take care of them, or you find them a new home. We even had a donkey dumped off, a little yearling. We went up and down the road asking, 'Have you lost your ass?' We even put an ad in the paper. But we never did find the owners, and we kept him until he died." 🐾

### HISTORY HAVEN

Bellville is named for Thomas B. Bell, one of Stephen F. Austin's "Old 300" colonists. Today, one of Bellville's most interesting landmarks is Newman's Castle, a replica medieval compound open for tours and built by local bakery owner Mike Newman.







# TAKE THE WHEEL, KID

A travel-loving parent writes a letter to her daughter about the rules of the road

By Clayton Maxwell

**D**

Dear Carlisle,

Now that you are 13 and taller than I am, there are a few things I'm compelled to tell you before you someday take off on one of the greatest thrills of your growing freedom—the road trip. As a Texan, it is your birthright. With 858 miles to cover, from Orange to El Paso, and varied terrain from the Gulf Coast Prairies to the High Plains, this state is built for traversing. I can already see you: belting out tunes to the car radio as you wind through East Texas' Piney Woods, rolling down your windows to smell the salty air while crossing the causeway to Padre Island, and pulling over to sink your teeth into fresh-picked peaches at a farm stand in the Hill Country.

As your mom, the one who still makes you breakfast every morning, it's only fair that you should listen to a little of my wisdom gained from the road. The most important

thing to realize is that a good traveler can turn an unexpected detour into its own sweet destination and convert the bumps along the way into great stories to tell. But here are seven more travel tips to ensure you are—to borrow from the Roger Miller song—king, or queen, of your own road.

## 1. SELF-RELIANCE IS THE FIRST VIRTUE OF THE ROAD

Carlisle, have you heard of wanderlust? If it's genetic, chances are you have it, and I hope you do. I still do. After college graduation, I hightailed it out to the dusty Texas border town of Presidio to work for a hard-to-please adobe enthusiast I'll call Estelle, who had a vision to bring adobe housing to the people. I quickly disappointed her; she fired me, and I was stuck in Presidio without a plan. But I did befriend a brainy East Coast boy named Jon—another one of Estelle's flunkies. Not wanting to leave, he managed to finagle a job for himself as Presidio High's first college counselor. Jon, my new comrade in derailed plans, let me stay in the spare room of his casita until I figured out my next move.

Aimless and happy, I spent many cool desert mornings on Jon's front porch, drinking coffee, reading, and watching the golden West Texas light move across his dirt yard. At sunset, when Jon returned from work, we would sometimes sit in the shallow waters of the Rio Grande, where we could hear the *norteco* music and barking dogs across the river in Mexico.

We also listened to Walt Whitman. It was 1993—we didn't own iPhones or even computers—but Jon had a record player and five records. One was a gravelly baritone reading of Walt Whitman's poem "Song of the Open Road." We played that old scratchy thing over and over until I committed the words to memory. "Afoot and light-hearted, I take to the open road ... Henceforth I ask not good fortune. I myself am good fortune..."

Sunburnt and broke that winter, I crisscrossed the Trans-Pecos, from Marathon to Terlingua, in my dented 1984 Volvo sedan, adopting that great traveler's poem as my manifesto. Did I care that I had to survive on peanut butter and jelly sandwiches on stale bread? Nope. Could I make the most of any circumstance? Bring it on!

"O public road," Whitman wrote, "You express me better than I express myself." Out on those Texas roads, I felt very much myself. While my confidence and optimism have at times been challenged since—you know, knee injuries, mortgages, middle age—I still believe the best thing you take on any adventure is an ease with yourself, a kind of inner-unflappability. You—a strong, able girl who can tack up a horse in a flash—you are your own good fortune.



**2. PUT DOWN THE PHONE AND EMBRACE THE PAPER MAP**

The words “travel” and “travail” are similar for a reason. Back in the Middle Ages, when the word was coined, travel was a difficult pursuit—a travail—and danger and discomfort on the road were guaranteed. Nowadays, travel is comparatively cushy—GPS, Bluetooth, cruise control. And yet there are still travails and things you must pay attention to. Like the gas gauge. Texas is big, and there are some long stretches of highway where you can’t count on a gas station popping up when you need it.

For reasons I no longer understand, my college friends and I, when driving down to the border from Austin, or, say, up to Dallas for the 1989 Rolling Stones tour, would wait to see how close we could get to empty before filling up. It was as if there was some virtue in using as much gas as possible before refilling, like paying for

your coffee with exact change. However, driving on fumes means you risk humiliation or worse when you have to thumb a ride from a police officer, or perhaps a stranger, to buy and fill up a 5-gallon jug with gas at the nearest station, and then ride 20 or more miles back to your abandoned car.

Also, one crucial road-tripping tip that no one had to worry about in the Middle Ages: Put down your phone and drive. That is an order. No reading your Instagram messages while behind the wheel. If you do and you wreck, I’ll know about it, and you will never drive again. The only dependable thing to read while pulled over is a map. A paper map, like from the old days. Because, I’m sorry to say, Siri is not as reliable as she may seem, and there will come a time when you are in the middle of nowhere—Texas has a lot of nowhere—and there’s no cell phone coverage to power Google Maps.

**3. KNOW WHEN TO ASK FOR HELP**

Sometimes you will overestimate your Whitman-esque invincibility. It’s OK to ask for help. Back when I was figuring out my plan in Presidio, I also befriended some young architects who worked in Marfa at the Chinati Foundation. One Friday afternoon, I made a spur-of-the-moment decision to ride my old mountain bike from their little barrack studio in Marfa all the way down US 67 back south to Presidio. Never mind that I’d never ridden long distance before. It was just 60 miles and mostly downhill, so how hard could it be? I sang the song of the open road!

But there were key details about that stretch of road I hadn’t noticed before because I’d always been in a car. Like that the first part of US 67 to Presidio actually ascends before it cruises down to the Rio Grande. And that the wind can blow strong from the south, so you feel like you’re pedaling into a wall. I also hadn’t

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considered that on a Friday, folks would be driving up from Mexico for the weekend, and that means pickup trucks flying past, making me wobble in their wake. There was one moment I recall as vividly as West Texas light after a rainstorm: I stopped for water, straddled my bike, and stared at the jagged branches of the ocotillo by the highway. I thought, "You're just going to have to make friends with this road because you're going to be on it for a long, long time."

By the time I got to Shafter, the tiny silver-mining ghost town 20 miles north of the finish line, I wasn't invincible anymore. The once endless sky was darkening, and the wind grew fierce. Fortunately, the now long-shuttered general store in Shafter was open and had a pay phone. I had a quarter. Chagrined, I called Rod, a West Texas lawyer I'd met. Kind and reliable, he picked me up in his truck so I didn't have to ride the rest of the way in the dark.

In his own version of the golden rule, Whitman writes, "You have done such good to me I would do the same to you." Make friends who will show up for you in a pinch and be that kind of friend in return.

#### 4. LEAVE YOUR ASSUMPTIONS BEHIND

In the mid-'90s, my friend Kirsten and I were driving her Jeep from Austin to New Orleans for graduate school. We filled up at about 10 p.m. in Winnie, just off I-10. A few miles outside of town, the Jeep sputtered, coughed, and died. With no cell phone yet, it was just us, alone on the road in the dark, cicada song filling the humid night air. Two guys in a pickup pulled over. We hoped they'd stopped to help, but we couldn't be sure. These fellows wore work overalls and trucker hats and spit tobacco and determined that, by the smell of the diesel fumes, we'd put the wrong fuel in our tank.

We then spent a long, awkward, but strangely poignant few hours siphoning the diesel out of the Jeep's tank by sucking on a plastic tube these guys pulled out of their truck. With just a sliver of a moon

**I still believe the best thing you take on any adventure is an ease with yourself, a kind of inner-unflappability.**

overhead on a sticky East Texas night, using a flashlight from their truck, the four of us took turns siphoning. The guys played AC/DC from their truck. We shared Fritos and the last two | continued on Page 102



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# DRIVE

A man with a beard and a black cowboy hat is in a workshop, steaming a dark-colored hat. He is wearing a dark t-shirt and blue jeans. The workshop is filled with shelves of various hats and tools. A purple cloth is draped over a workbench in the foreground. The scene is lit with warm, ambient light, and steam is rising from the hat he is holding.

**FIFTH-GENERATION**  
hatter Brad Peters steams  
a Western custom felt hat  
in the Peters Brothers'  
Fort Worth workshop.



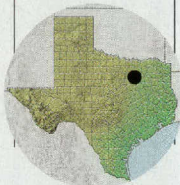


# Hats with History

In Fort Worth, five generations of handcrafting headwear at Peters Brothers

By Matt Joyce

**PETERS BROTHERS HATS**  
 909 Houston St.,  
 Fort Worth,  
 817-335-1715;  
 pbhats.com



**W**illie Dedmon calls himself a walking billboard for Peters Brothers Hats, the historic Fort Worth haberdashery. His collection numbers around 60, with headwear stored in various closets around the house and under his bed. Every day, the 65-year-old retiree dons a hat that fits his mood and attire before making his rounds about town.

“I just wear a hat like a gentleman should: You clean up and you put your hat on,” Dedmon explains. “I went to get some food the other day and a young man said, ‘Mister, where’d you get that hat? That’s a nice hat.’ I tell a lot of the younger guys, ‘That’s a taste of the old school. Y’all don’t know nothing about that. It’s called class.’”

For about 30 years, Dedmon has purchased his hats from Peters Brothers, the downtown storefront that’s been handcrafting custom hats for generations. Opened as a shoeshine shop in 1911 by Greek immigrant brothers Tom and Jim Peters, the store expanded into hat renovations and in 1933 moved into its current home as a full-fledged hat shop.

Not much has changed since. A sign with a dapper Western gentleman juggling cowboy hats, installed in 1952, marks the entrance on Houston Street. Inside, under a pressed-tin ceiling, a workshop of century-old equipment sits among shelves of poplar wood blocks and brim flanges—the molds used to shape felt and straw hats. The two-man operation works to a soundtrack of a simmering steamer, whirring sewing machines, and the rhythmic whisk of off-balance ceiling fans.

And there’s always been a Peters at the helm. Brad Peters, 28, is the fifth generation to run the shop. He took over in 2013 when his grandfather, Joe Peters Sr., passed away.

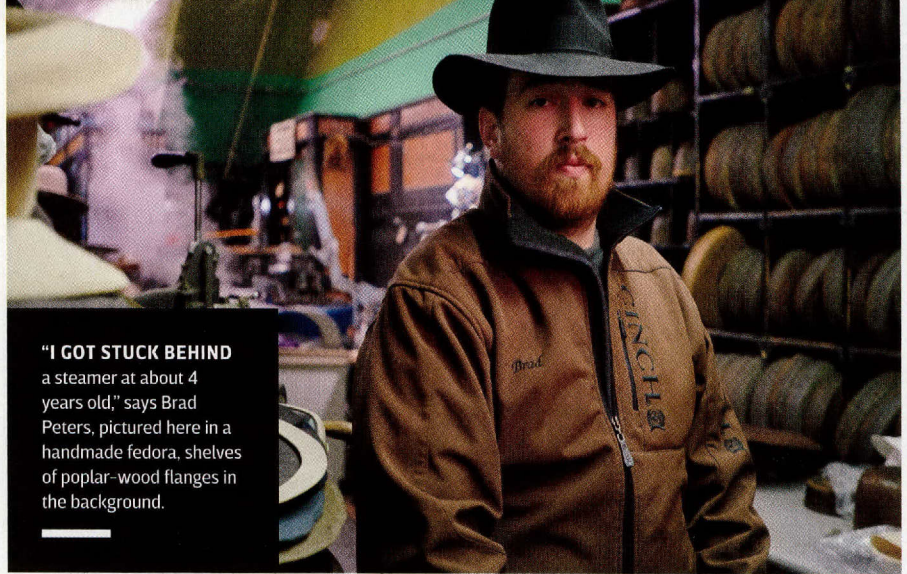
“I got stuck behind a steamer at about 4 years old,” Brad says. “It’s just what we did, really. It’s not an easy thing to do, and it’s not easy to keep what a lot of



people consider a dying art alive. But it's the legacy factor that keeps us going."

The legacy factor is strong at Peters Brothers. There aren't too many prominent 20th-century Texans who haven't worn a Peters Brothers hat. Dallas Cowboys coach Tom Landry wore a fedora. President Lyndon B. Johnson wore a Shady Oak, a short-brimmed Western hat. In a glass case, the shop displays hats of historical or sentimental value, including an open-crowned model signed by customer Billy Gibbons, the sharply dressed ZZ Top bluesman.

Joe Peters Jr., owner of the company and Brad's father, reels off spools of celebrity tales, like the time he convinced George Jones to wear a hat. Famous for his coiffed hair, Jones eschewed toppers until Joe Jr. put one on him at the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo. Or the



"I GOT STUCK BEHIND a steamer at about 4 years old," says Brad Peters, pictured here in a handmade fedora, shelves of poplar-wood flanges in the background.

time a man wearing a New York Yankees cap and a Rolex entered the Peters Brothers shop and ordered 36 hats.

"He handed me his credit card, and I looked down and it was Neil Diamond," says Joe, who, despite a proud affiliation with Peters Brothers, now works in the hat department at M.L. Leddy's, a boot store in town. "The last time I saw Neil Diamond, he looked at me and said, 'I love this store, don't ever change a thing.'"

And I looked at him and said, 'Don't worry, we have no plans to.'"

Peters Brothers' prominence can be traced in part to Amon Carter Sr. (1879-1955), publisher of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. Whenever a dignitary visited Fort Worth, Carter would gift them a Peters Brothers' Shady Oak, a style he's credited with naming.

The Shady Oak remains a top seller. Brad Peters says the hat originated with

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## Hats Off to Texas Haberdashers

Travel to any corner of Texas, and you're bound to see at least a few locals sporting full-brimmed hats. Whether it's a cowboy-hatted auctioneer rattling off weights and prices at a weekly stock sale or a doting *abuelo* in a crisp new fedora for his granddaughter's *quinceañera*, hat wearers find their styles at a variety of Texas shops that make hats by hand, refurbish old headwear, and sell the latest styles off the rack.

### Paris Hatters

Around the corner from the Alamo, follow the vintage red-and-white sign to find all styles and hat services at this traditional institution, which opened in 1917 and claims to be "the oldest surviving retail business in downtown San Antonio." 119 Broadway St., San Antonio. 210-223-3453; [parishatters.com](http://parishatters.com)

### Limpia Creek Hats

The selection of straw and felt cowboy hats resonates with West Texas character in a small, rustic building of native rock. Limpia Creek will shape a hat for you while you wait and catch up on the latest news from cowpunchers and deputies who've also stepped in for a new lid. 200 N. State St., Fort Davis. 432-426-2130; [limpiacreekhats.com](http://limpiacreekhats.com)

### Hatco Outlet Store

This is the perfect stop after a tour of the neighboring hat factory, where Hatco makes Stetson, Resistol, Dobbs, Charlie I Horse, and other brands. The shop sells cowboy boots, Western apparel, and thousands of hats—felt and straw Westerns, fedoras, wool outdoors hats, and linen flat caps, among others, often at reduced prices. 721 Marion Drive, Garland. 972-494-0337



his great-great grandfather Tom, who in 1921 moved to Philadelphia for a few years to work with the John B. Stetson Co. Stetson makes a similar hat called the Open Road. "I'm pretty sure they designed that together, but they couldn't decide on what brim size was right," Brad says. "Ours have just a little bigger brim."

In a corner of the shop, among various autographed photos, a black-and-white image shows President John F. Kennedy holding a Shady Oak as he stands at a lectern to address the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce. The photo was taken on Nov. 22, 1963, hours before Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas.

"The story is that they tried to get him to put the hat on, and he said he would put it on when he got back to the White House," Brad says. "Nobody knows where the hat is now."

JFK's refusal to wear the hat on that

**"It's not easy to keep what a lot of people consider to be a dying art alive. But it's the legacy factor that keeps us going."**

fateful morning was no surprise. In his 2004 book *Hatless Jack*, Neil Steinberg recalls the Fort Worth chamber breakfast in the context of the president's distaste for hats and the desperate attempts of the hat industry, which was already in decline, to persuade him otherwise.

Hat manufacturing peaked in the United States way back in 1903. Nowadays the popularity of dress hats comes and goes with fads, largely driven by women and country music. But the allure





**FROM LEFT:** A Peters Brothers Shady Oak; a glass case in the store displays a collection with notable hats, such as a fedora made with mercury.

of a handmade Peters Brothers remains a draw for throwback fans. Case in point, Willie Dedmon, whose favorite styles are felt fedoras and homburgs.

"I get nothing but compliments on those hats," he says. "Every year or so I get a hankering for a new one. And every year I tell them, I'm not buying any more hats, I have enough. And they say, 'He'll be back.'"

### GET YOUR OWN

Peters Brothers Hats is open Tue-Sat 9 a.m.-5 p.m. The shop carries a selection of felt and straw Western and dress hats, bucket hats, and flat caps. Retail straws start at \$60, felts at \$300.

There's a six-month wait for custom hats. Custom straws start at \$150; custom felts cost \$350 for rabbit fur, \$600 for 50/50 rabbit-beaver blend, and \$1,100 for pure beaver felt.

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**KEEP AN EYE OUT**  
for the tiny freshwater shrimp that come to life when rainwater fills the pools found on top of Enchanted Rock.

# Hill Country Crustaceans

Hiking Enchanted Rock in search of the elusive fairy shrimp

By Heide Brandes



**ENCHANTED ROCK STATE NATURAL AREA**  
16710 Ranch Road 965,  
Fredericksburg, 830-685-  
3636; [tpwd.texas.gov](http://tpwd.texas.gov)

**D**on't splash in the puddles that form atop Enchanted Rock: Tiny fairies are dancing there.

Shallow pools that form after rains on the massive granite dome north of Fredericksburg are among the few places where fairy shrimp are found in Texas. Growing about a centimeter long, the translucent freshwater crustaceans exist on the constant edge of survival, laying eggs that endure the dry season only to hatch when the pools refill with rainwater.

When the pools are full, fairy hunters crouch down to peer at the tiny swimmers that almost look like mosquito larvae. The shrimp disappear in the shadows, but sunlight unveils their tiny little world. "Some people hear about the fairy shrimp and come to Enchanted Rock just to see them," says Jessica DeBoer, a ranger and interpreter at Enchanted Rock State Natural Area. "A lot of people don't know about them until they get here."

Rising 425 feet above the rest of the park, Enchanted Rock's pink dome has drawn worshipers and explorers for thousands of years. Many visitors flock to the park for hiking, geocaching, and rock climbing every year. But guided hikes on the weekends are an ideal way to learn about fairy shrimp, which belong to the order of Anostraca, the same family as the ubiquitous Sea-Monkeys marketed since the 1960s as novelty aquarium pets. Texas' fairy shrimp act the same way: They start as dry eggs until water is added; then poof, Lone Star Sea-Monkeys are born.

"Most of the time when you hear about fairy shrimp, it's in California and Oregon and along the coast," DeBoer says. "That's why it's so interesting that they are here. How did they get on top of a big rock in Central Texas?"

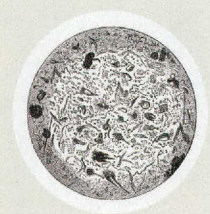
Like the settlers of the Old West, the shrimp traveled far to reach Enchanted



Rock. But unlike those who rode on horseback or in covered wagons, shrimp eggs came via less comfortable accommodations.

“We think the most likely way the eggs got here was through the feces of birds,” DeBoer says. “We see shorebirds like sandpipers—birds you usually only see by the ocean—on top of Enchanted Rock sometimes. They are eating out of the vernal [seasonal] pools. The shrimp eggs may have also been blown here by the wind, but from where? It’s more likely they were transported here from the oceans in bird poop.”

After a long journey in bird bowels, the shrimp found a perfect home. “Everything they need to survive is in that microhabitat in the vernal pools here at Enchanted Rock,” DeBoer says. “They are pretty tough little suckers, too. Think about our Texas droughts—they still survive those.” 🐟



## For the Birds

Tiny, translucent fairy shrimp swim upside down in rainwater-filled pools on top of Enchanted Rock. They eat algae and plankton and are in turn eaten by birds, a cycle the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department describes as an important link in the area’s food chain.

# Stand Tall!

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**A MOTORCYCLIST**  
 cruises FM 165, a country road whose meandering route connects the small towns of Dripping Springs and Blanco.



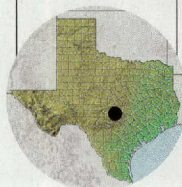
# The Joy Ride

A motorcyclist escapes city freeways for a ramble through the Hill Country

By Dale Weisman

**THE ROAD MORE TRAVELED**

Not into riding solo? The annual Republic of Texas Rally in Austin is the nation's largest biker event of its kind. June 13-16. [rotrally.com](http://rotrally.com)



After a rainy spell, a sunny Sunday morning window opens up: a perfect day for a Hill Country ride. My motorcycle, a silver BMW sport-touring machine, is ready to roll. Jacket, gloves, and helmet on, I hit the ignition. The engine rumbles to life and warms up. I shift into first gear and ease through Austin's Zilker Park.

I sneak out of the city, skirting congestion, following a path of least resistance like flowing water. After a brief freeway dash, circuitous backroads lead to Dripping Springs. Beyond the suburban sprawl and signal lights, I'm home free. The traffic abates, and the open road beckons.

West of town, FM 165 turns south to Blanco. I've traveled this country road countless times. Like replaying a favorite old tune, I never tire of it. The two-lane blacktop meanders through rolling ranchland and pastures lush with recent rains. Bright-yellow sunflowers dapple the roadside. The low hills rise to a crest, and the road abruptly opens up to a divide that delights



with a skyline view of southern Blanco County and the Twin Sisters Peaks on the horizon.

Cruising along, I wave to several oncoming riders. "The wave" is unique to motorcycling, a brief expression of camaraderie signaling "we're in this together." We have another saying, too: "It's all about the ride. The destination is the excuse."

Crossing the Blanco River and rolling into Blanco's town square, I pass two favorite diners—the Blanco Bowling Club Café and Redbud Café—and admire the Old Blanco County Courthouse.

After a southward turn onto US 281, I throttle past the turnoff for FM 32, the scenic Devil's Backbone route to historic Fischer and artsy Wimberley. Instead, I turn west onto FM 473, a twisty, two-lane road perfect for motorcycling. A pair of bikes are parked in Kendalia, where their riders are admiring the 1903 Kendalia Halle. Hein and Alita, a South African couple, recently moved to the area from the Northwest to escape the dreary winters. "We love it here," Hein says. "We can ride year round, and the roads are fantastic for motorcycling."

From Kendalia, wide-open ranchland sweeps south to Bergheim. Heading west into the historic heart of Boerne, the busy highway turns into languid River Road, a shady parkside stretch along Cibolo Creek. While it's tempting to linger along Main Street for lunch and antiquing, I head north on Sisterdale Road (FM 1376), another gorgeous Hill Country ramble.

Crossing the Guadalupe River, a limpid blue ribbon lined by cypresses, I stop at Sister Creek Vineyards in Sisterdale, a charming hamlet settled by free-thinking Germans in the mid-19th century. Vineyard employee Doug Ballard greets me in the tasting room, an old cotton gin turned winery renowned for its award-winning Muscat Canelli and other fine reds and whites. "I love motorcycles and still have a dirt bike," admits Doug, who rode a 1968 Triumph Bonneville years ago. "I can't stay off of them."

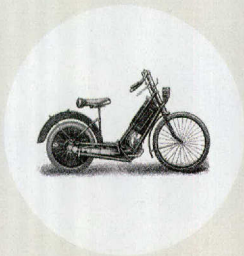
On the road again, I ride north to Luckenbach along the wildest, prettiest stretch

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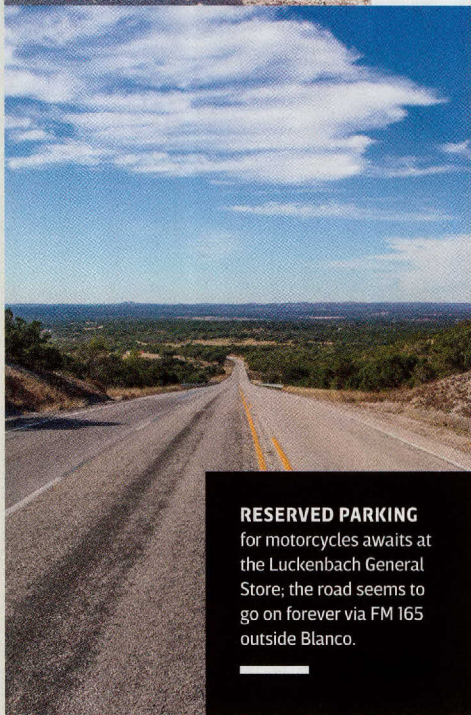


## A Motorcycle Museum Tour

Less than a mile south of Lost Maples State Natural Area, the **Lone Star Motorcycle Museum** displays machines dating to the 1910s, including a red 1917 Indian Model O. 36517 FM 187, Vanderpool. 830-966-6103; [lonestarmotorcyclemuseum.com](http://lonestarmotorcyclemuseum.com)

**The South Texas Motorcycle Museum** preserves dozens of motorcycles; the showstopper is a four-cylinder bike manufactured by Henderson, which operated from 1912 to 1931. 4403 E. Richardson Road, Edinburg. 956-292-0770; [stxmm.net](http://stxmm.net)

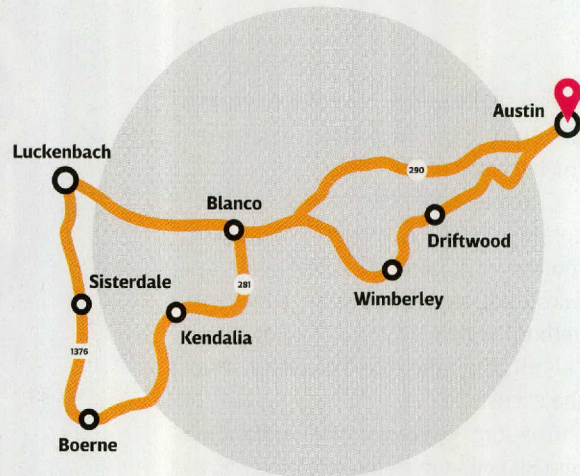
**The Haas Moto Museum** immerses visitors in more than a century of motorcycle history and displays more than 180 bikes, including a late 1920s-era Majestic, one of just 100 produced. 1201 Oak Lawn Ave, Suite 110, Dallas. 972-685 3051; [haasmotomuseum.com](http://haasmotomuseum.com)



**RESERVED PARKING** for motorcycles awaits at the Luckenbach General Store; the road seems to go on forever via FM 165 outside Blanco.

of 1376. This is cycletherapy at its best. No other vehicle engages the senses, body, mind, and soul like a motorcycle. Work and life stress melts away as I zoom along, focusing on sharp curves, abrupt climbs, and plunging dips. It's a sensation of flying over an undulating landscape with two wheels hugging the road, my boots inches above the blacktop.

Riding past South Grape Creek, I slow down, turn left, and coast into downtown Luckenbach. It's a perfect Sunday afternoon in the place where "everybody's somebody," especially those who ride. Harleys, Gold Wings, Japanese cruisers, and European sport bikes pack the



motorcycle parking area, while melodic Texas troubadours serenade a longneck-sipping audience gathered around the oak-shaded stage. Before leaving, I chat with a wizened, wiry rider, age 77, astride an enormous black Harley. He tells me he's enjoying a Sunday ride with his daughter piloting her own hog.

Homeward bound, I know the 75-mile route from Luckenbach to Austin by muscle memory and auto pilot. Avoiding the winery-infused traffic of US 290, I backtrack south and head east on a series of familiar roads with sweeping curves and little traffic, rolling across bucolic ranchland, back to Blanco, and beyond to Wimberley.

Before reaching the busy village square, I turn left onto Jacob's Well Road and wind past a nature preserve. Suddenly, I spot a fawn by the road and brake firmly as it jumps a fence and disappears into the brush, a gentle reminder to obey a motorcycling mantra: pay attention. Given the risks, why ride at all? Motorcycles are the perfect escape vehicle, the embodiment of adventure, speed, adrenaline, camaraderie, and freedom of the open road.

Cruising north of Wimberley, I turn right onto Elder Hill Road, a zigzagging lane ending at photogenic Driftwood. Then FM 1826, a pilgrimage route to crowd-pleasing Salt Lick BBQ, leads me home. After 200 miles and hours of riding across six counties, I'm at rest—yet restless. A line from Robert Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* captures the mood: "Sometimes it's a little better to travel than to arrive." 🏍️

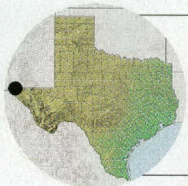


**NATIVE PEOPLE MADE** more than 3,000 rock paintings in the natural shelters of Hueco Tanks, beginning several thousand years ago.

# Faces in the Rocks

Pictographs at Hueco Tanks are clues about the people who've visited this El Paso-area site for millennia

By Robyn Ross



## HUECO TANKS STATE PARK & HISTORIC SITE

6900 Hueco Tanks Road No. 1, El Paso.  
915-857-1135; [tpwd.texas.gov](http://tpwd.texas.gov)

“**W**e need to talk quietly as we approach the White-Horned Dancer,” Harry Stone calls over his shoulder in a stage whisper. “Even the vibrations from our voices can damage the pictographs.”

Stone and his wife, Susan, are volunteer tour guides at Hueco Tanks State Park & Historic Site. They lead the way as I follow to the base of a cliff, where an overhanging rock provides natural shelter. There on the face of the rock is White-Horned Dancer, a 4-foot-tall painting of a shaman-like figure with outstretched arms and giant horns. A few feet to the left is a tiny rust-brown deer. To its right is a faint figure thought to be a feathered serpent.

The images may be a thousand years old. But the longer I stare at White-Horned Dancer's face, the more it seems to stare right back at me, as though it could come to life.

At Hueco Tanks, 30 miles northeast of El Paso, four mountains of granite-like rock soar out of the desert landscape. The surface of the rock is covered with *huecos*—Spanish for hollows—formed through millions of years of erosion. Because the *huecos* hold water, this oasis has attracted humans for more than



10,000 years. Some left their mark: Hueco Tanks is home to more than 3,000 pictographs, including the largest number of ceremonial mask paintings in North America.

The pictographs date from three periods. The hunter-gatherer Desert Archaic people painted geometric designs and hunting scenes beginning several thousand years ago. Between 500 and 1450 AD, the Jornada Mogollon, an agricultural people, painted images of animals and ceremonial masks representing deities. As recently as the 1800s, the Kiowa, Mescalero Apache, Comanche, and Tigua painted human and animal figures.

The Jornada Mogollon left behind the images we're seeing on today's tour. I follow the Stones beneath a rock overhang where a pictograph thought to be Tlaloc, the Mesoamerican rain and storm god, gazes at us from the roof overhead. Beneath another outcropping, we study the

**The longer I stare at White-Horned Dancer's face, the more it seems to stare back, as though it could come to life.**

red-outlined face of what may be the deity Quetzalcoatl, the plumed or horned serpent. Religious beliefs likely traveled the trade routes, Susan explains, which accounts for the appearance of Mesoamerican deities this far north.

Susan points out another inches-tall pictograph, a face with a crown, near Quetzalcoatl. I can barely see it. "Here," she says, handing me her smartphone. "Look at it in DStretch." On her screen, the pictograph suddenly pops with bright color, revealing the shapes and outlines. DStretch, a digital image enhancer, lets

the user emphasize colors and sharpen the contrast of a pictograph—even one that's barely visible to the naked eye. In 2017, the app helped researchers find previously undiscovered pigment in 31 locations.

Throughout our tour, the abundance of wildlife reminds us we're in an oasis in the desert. Cottontail rabbits and road-runners dart across the path, and on the mountains above we see a family of aoudad, a mountain goat-like animal imported from North Africa in the early 1900s. At our last pictograph site, we file into a crevice between boulders only to stop short, startled by a family of javelinas. They're equally surprised, and they hustle farther into the shadows, allowing us to peer safely at the faint red outlines of a Jornada Mogollon face.

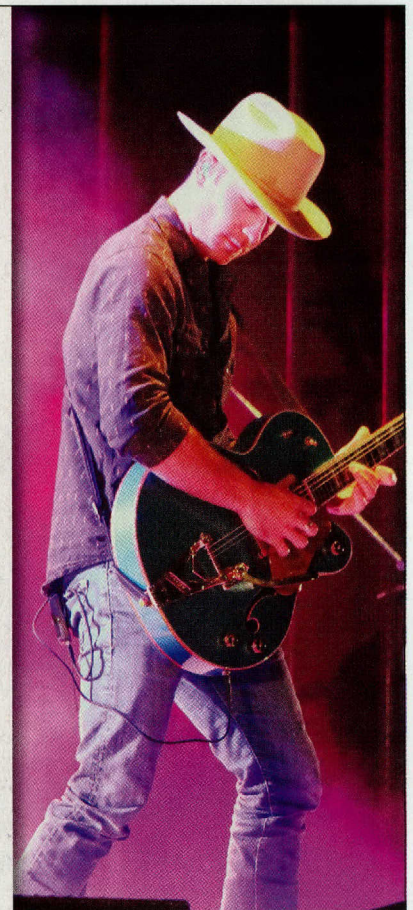
After our tour I strike out for the Cave Kiva on North Mountain, where the Jornada Mogollon painted eight faces. The rock radiates the heat of the afternoon sun



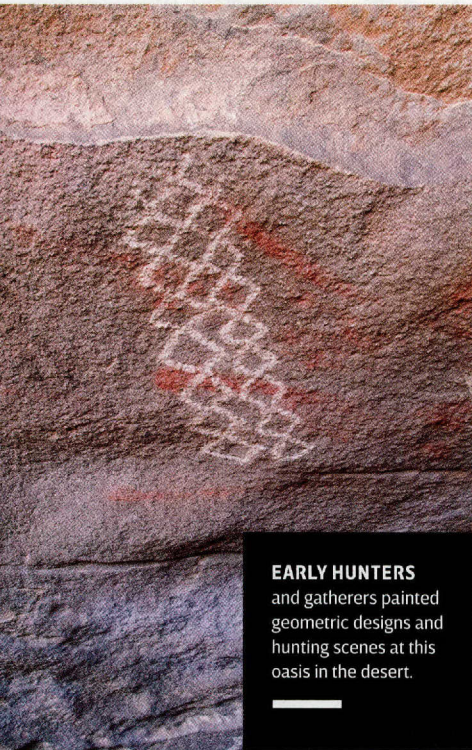
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**LASTING MEMORIES**

**IT'S ALL HERE**

It'd been so long since all of us girls got together. The college reunion, I think. We were so ready for this. We picked Plano for our getaway since it's just minutes outside Dallas and has it all! Hip, new restaurants. Amazing live music. And the best hotel accommodations. We had an incredible dinner and then caught a live music show. Christie and I couldn't stop dancing. I hope someone got pictures. Either way, I'll be back because Plano has it all. [visitplano.com](http://visitplano.com)



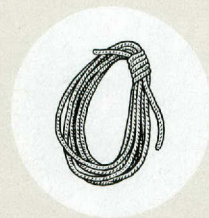




**EARLY HUNTERS**  
and gatherers painted  
geometric designs and  
hunting scenes at this  
oasis in the desert.

as I climb the mountain's steep face. At last I find the entrance to the cave, which is really more of a hollow beneath a giant boulder. Still, I have to crawl for a few feet until the space widens enough for me to sit up. The rock surface beneath the boulder is cool and worn slick by countless hands.

Once I'm inside, I see the eight reddish faces on the curved surface of the rock. One has two long horns; another has what looks like a halo or crown. A breeze whispers through the cave, a fly buzzes, and then the space fills with a dense, alert silence. I am completely alone, except for a solitary bat suspended in an alcove overhead. Yet as the faces' blank eyes stare at me, I feel connected to the people who made these paintings a millennium ago. We all found this hidden spot tucked into the rock and sat in quiet contemplation. I linger for a few more minutes, savoring the cool and the silence, before making my way back down the mountain. **L**



## Bouldering at its Best

Hueco Tanks is considered a world-class rock-climbing destination. Restrictions in place since the early 2000s balance climbers' and hikers' interests with protection for the pictographs and the park's delicate ecosystem. Because the number of daily visitors is limited, arrive early or call the park in advance to reserve a permit—especially when visiting on a weekend or holiday. For guided hiking and rock art tours in restricted areas, which are offered Wednesday–Sunday, call the park at least a week in advance to reserve a space.

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**PacificWarMuseum.org**







# Bluebonnet Bastion

In Ennis, wildflowers beckon weekenders in pursuit of small-town charm

By Allison McNearney

**G**rowing up, I often felt like I lived on Interstate 45, traveling frequently between home in Dallas and a large extended family in Houston. “Ennis” was a sometimes-welcome sight on a highway sign—a signal for how close we were to our destination or how far we still had to go. But considering its proximity to Dallas—only 35 miles south—Ennis was never a convenient stop. That’s how I found myself an adult before I walked the charming streets of Ennis for the first time.

Founded in 1872 by the Houston and Texas Central Railway, Ennis is a product of two pillars of Texas’ 19th-century economy: cotton and the railroad. While Ellis County is no longer a top cotton producer, the railroad still plays a role in connecting Ennis’ thriving manufacturing industry with the world.

**San Antonio**

5 hours

**Austin**

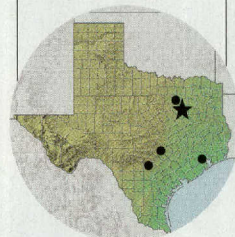
3 hours

**Houston**

4 hours

**Dallas**

45 minutes



In 2013, a tornado carved a destructive path through downtown, spurring city leaders to develop a five-year community-improvement plan focused on renovating and restoring the historic downtown, creating new public spaces, and expanding development opportunities. As part of this effort, Ennis also decided to rebrand. With the help of locals, the city chose a new slogan: “The bluebonnet spirit of Texas.” The area’s swaths of wildflowers have long been the pride of the community: In 1997, the Texas Legislature named Ennis the “Official Bluebonnet City of Texas.” Today, visitors flock to Ennis not only for springtime wildflower drives but also to explore downtown’s historical roots.



# Friday



4 P.M.

## Next Stop: Ennis

Hotels in Ennis come in one variety—limited-service economy—so the best way to get a feel for the local flavor is to book a room at one of the area's bed-and-breakfasts.

The Moore-Ventura Bed and Breakfast is located near downtown in the city's largest historic mansion. Built in 1905 by a Civil War veteran, the home was purchased in 1999 by current proprietors Sam and Joanne Ventura, who have restored it to its early 20th-century glory. They rescued the original red velvet drapes from the attic, preserved the art nouveau owl wallpaper and much of the woodwork and light fixtures in the downstairs sitting rooms, and filled the home with thoughtfully chosen antiques.

After privately enjoying their work for 16 years, the former Dallasites decided to open their doors to guests in 2015. "We just love to share it," says Joanne, who gives visitors history-packed tours that, if you play your cards right, extend to the attic where Sam keeps his extensive antique model train collection.



7 P.M.

## Date Night at the Drive-In

While car culture thrives in Texas, drive-in movie theaters were left in the dust following their peak in the 1950s. But Ennis is one of the



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SHOP



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“

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few Lone Star cities where you can still watch the latest blockbusters from your driver's seat.

The best time to pull in to the Galaxy Drive-In, located off I-45 just north of town, is around twilight. That way you've got a bit of daylight to purchase double-feature tickets (\$7; \$3 for 12 and younger) to one of seven screens and then wind through the labyrinthine lot. The movie slate may be filled with current hits, but the concession stand features old-school American classics. Dine on burgers, nachos, and popcorn in the comfort of your car for a whimsical night at the picture show.


## Saturday

 **10 A.M. Antiques Hunting**

After enjoying the delicious two-course breakfast Joanne serves each morning, head to Pop Top Coffee Shop for an extra buzz before exploring the sights and shops of downtown. Just across the road from Pop Top is Minnie McDowal Park. The park holds a special significance for locals, who remember when the site was home to the city's only indoor movie house, the Plaza Theatre—later known as the Tara—for more than 60 years. The building was demolished in the 1990s after suffering irreparable storm damage, and the city dedicated it as a park and named it for one of the theater's most beloved employees. The park now features family entertainment on Saturday mornings, like magic and comedy shows.

After you've gotten a taste for the town, start your shopping spree at Interior Ideas Inc., which offers a selection of home design and furnishings, as well as

original artwork by local artist LaJuan Schlegel, who paints landscapes of East Texas. One block over on Ennis Avenue, the hunt for vintage finds begins at All in the Family, a rustic shop filled with farmhouse-style furniture, antiques, and collectibles.

 **1 P.M. Remembering the Railroad**

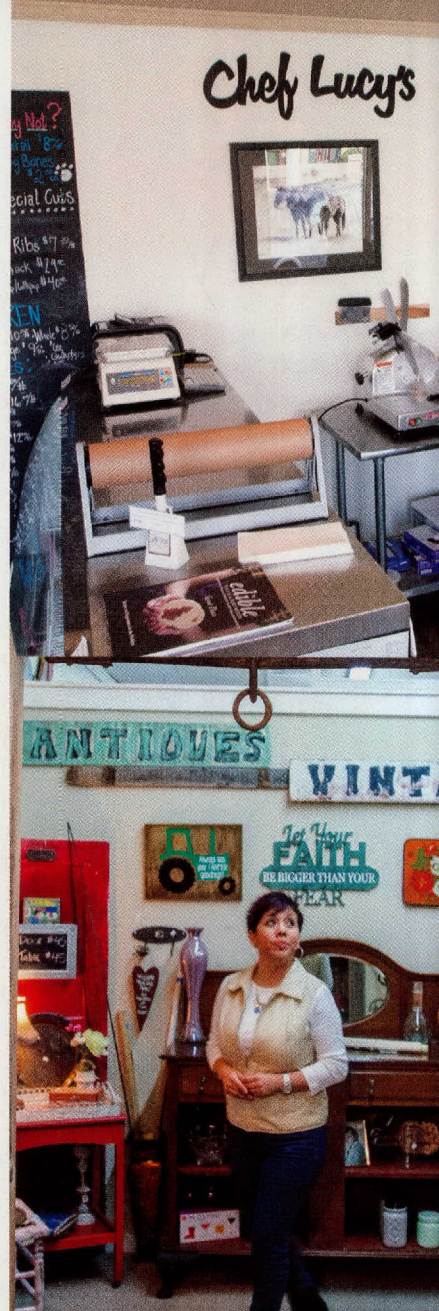
To truly get to know Ennis, a trip to the Ennis Railroad & Cultural Heritage Museum is a must. Located along the tracks on the eastern edge of downtown, the museum is housed in the former restaurant that served rail passengers in the early 20th century. The museum is a time capsule of Ennis' early days with educational displays on the evolution of engines, artifacts from the golden age of train travel, and exhibits on city history and hometown heroes.

When it is time to refuel, grab lunch at Home Grown Market, where proprietor and chef Lucy Braddock specializes in products made from the Wagyu beef raised locally by her father. Assemble a selection of meats, cheeses, and picnic items (the homemade pastрами is a must) or order one of the daily rotating lunch specials like meatball sliders and grilled pimiento-cheese sandwiches.

Braddock left Ennis after high school, but she returned to her hometown to open the butcher shop in 2018. "I came back to a different town than I left," she says. "Now, there's a lot more to do, there's a lot more life going on, [and] a lot more festivities than just football!"

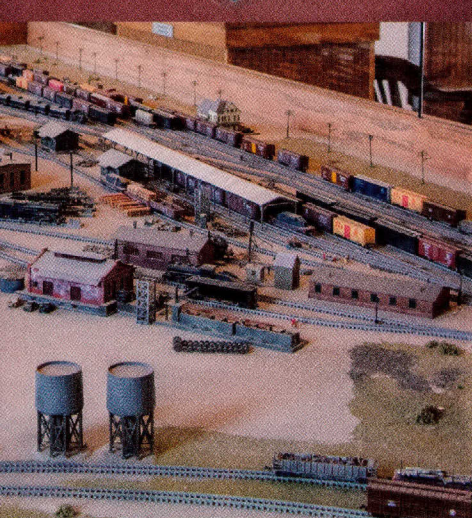
 **7 P.M. Small-Town Drama**

Though Ennis has fewer than 20,000 residents, it has big ambitions for its cultural offerings. Two local theaters, the Ennis Public Theatre and Theatre Rocks!,



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** Home Grown Market specializes in locally raised Wagyu beef; Veterans Memorial Park; the Ennis Railroad & Cultural Heritage Museum encapsulates the golden age of train travel; the Galaxy Drive-In shows current movies with an old-school vibe; the Downtown Historic District offers a rare selection of antiques.





stage impressive lineups of plays throughout the year starring local thespians, including the manic “Noises Off” this month and “A Little Princess” this April and May.

For visitors who prefer a little more high-octane entertainment, the Texas Motorplex has been hosting drag racing events on its quarter-mile concrete track since 1986. After an evening of high drama, grab a nightcap at Finn MacCool’s Pub, which offers a warm ambiance and a neighborly welcome in the heart of downtown.

## Sunday

### 10 A.M. In the Wild

Most downtown Ennis establishments close on Sundays, so it’s the perfect day to explore the great outdoors in this piece of the North Texas prairie. The first stop is Veterans Memorial Park, which honors U.S. service members who gave their lives in conflicts ranging from World War I to the current global war on terrorism. The monument is a tranquil spot, and the surrounding park has been seeded with 40 pounds of bluebonnet seeds.

While the wildflowers can start popping up as early as mid-March, they usually reach their peak around San Jacinto Day (April 21). When the flowers are in full bloom, set out on a country drive through more than 40 miles of Bluebonnet Trails—the Ennis Visitor Center provides maps. “I love that people come to Ennis to see the vast amount of beauty we offer,” says Sandy Anderson, chair of the Bluebonnet Trails, a project of the Ennis Garden Club. She remembers one globe-trotting visitor who told her after a wildflower tour, “I’ve been all over this world, and I have not seen anything more beautiful than what I saw today.” 🐾



### THE BLUES Ennis Bluebonnet Festival and Bluebonnet Trails

Every spring a fantastic display of Texas bluebonnets paints the Ennis countryside. The Ennis Garden Club maps the country roads and parks with the best views. Pick up a trail map at the Ennis Visitor Center anytime throughout the month of April, and then drive the trails at your leisure. April 12-14, the season peaks in Ennis with the Bluebonnet Festival—a weekend of arts and crafts, wildflower walks, live music, and samples from Texas wineries. 972-878-4748; [bluebonnettrail.org](http://bluebonnettrail.org)

### CAMP OUT High View Park

On the western shores of Lake Bardwell, this popular spot offers 39 multiuse sites for RV and tent camping, as well as a marina. 972-875-5711; [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov)





# State of Splendor

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THERESA DIMENNO,  
LARRY DITTO, SEAN FITZGERALD,  
AND E. DAN KLEPPER





**AWED BY THE SPECTACULAR VARIETY OF WILDFLOWERS**

throughout Texas, we sent four photographers on a springtime mission across the state. They combed seven distinct regions of Texas, from the shaded forests of the Piney Woods to the mountains and deserts of the Big Bend, from sandy coastal dunes to rolling hills and the vast plains of the Panhandle. The results are as magnificent and diverse as the lands that nurture our abundant blossoms.

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Wild roses on Texas' Blackland Prairie.









# BIG BEND COUNTRY



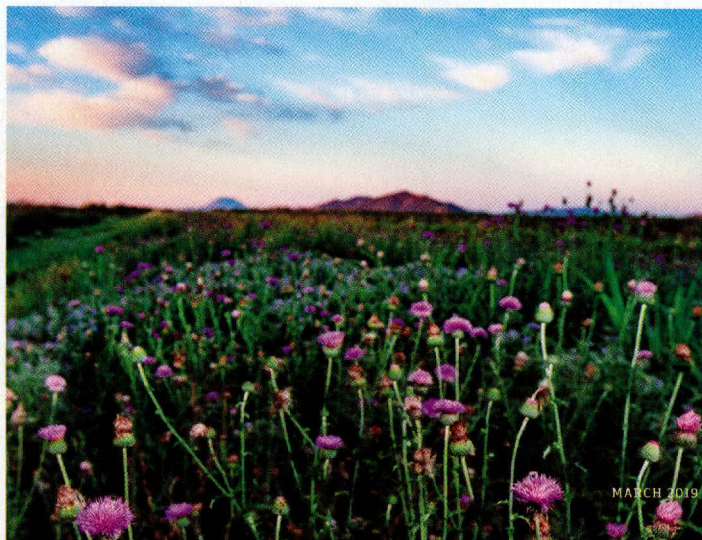
ACCORDING TO E. DAN KLEPPER

**MOST BIG BEND RESIDENTS ARE FAMILIAR WITH A WEATHER** phenomenon known as “virga,” streaks of rain that fall from a cloud but never quite reach the ground. After taking on this assignment, all I saw were weeks of virga followed by a dry spring that offered only the occasional scraggly roadside bloom. Fortunately, the desert finds its way forward; some plants, like cactus, flower regardless of rain. Desert wildflower seeds can remain dormant for decades, protected beneath a slim crust of soil as they wait for the right amount of moisture at the right time of year to flourish. Sometimes all it takes are a few mornings of condensation rolling off the highway, especially in low-lying areas where moisture tends to gather, and showy headliners like purple thistle and the hardy silver-leaf nightshade quickly dominate the roadsides. In dry seasons, most desert plants will thrive with a little help, including the native species that command my unmanicured quarter-acre in Marathon. A soaker hose usually brings out the best of the big bloomers like the giant yuccas, desert willows, and paloverde trees that grow among my rocks and weeds.

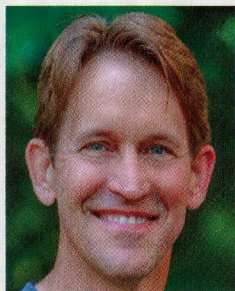
The elevation in West Texas rises from 1,800 feet along the Rio Grande to the 8,751-foot Guadalupe Peak 300 miles away. Habitat and species are similar across much of the range; if you miss a species blooming at lower elevations you can wait a few weeks, then catch it in mid-performance higher up. I did just that to capture the stunning scarlet blooms of the ocotillo—signature plant of the Big Bend—where I began this assignment in the Guadalupe Mountains at a mile above sea level. Months later, rain finally reached the ground, transforming the parched and lackluster desert into a verdant midsummer terrain.

—E. Dan Klepper

**FROM LEFT: Spindly, spiky ocotillo bloom as the Guadalupe Mountains' El Capitan rises from the distance; a field of purple thistle.**







# PINEY WOODS



ACCORDING TO SEAN FITZGERALD

**LOOKING FOR WILDFLOWERS IN THE DENSE PINEY WOODS IS A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE** than in the wide-open prairies and other landscapes to the west, says Dallas-based photographer Sean Fitzgerald, who enjoys exploring backroads looking for pockets of lush wildflowers beneath the towering forest canopy. “The Piney Woods have a certain magic, especially early and late in the day,” Fitzgerald says. “I love the sight of wildflowers shrouded by morning fog, covered in dew, and lit with sunlight filtering through nearby pines and dogwoods.”

For this assignment, among the overlapping ecosystems of the Big Thicket, he stumbled across pitcher-plants, dogwoods, compass plants, orchids, and rare carnivorous species. “The Big Thicket is kind of the jewel of the entire Piney Woods, a biodiversity powerhouse,” he says. From there, he recommends searching farther north, in lush areas like Caddo Lake. And even if you don’t find an abundance of blooms, Fitzgerald says it’s worth it to hit the road for a glimpse of historic, small-town Texas. “With a little tour, you can get a lot of variety,” he says. “It just sort of keeps revealing itself.”

— Ashley Slaton

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A boardwalk through ferns and wetland bog in the Big Thicket; stemless spiderwort; Cherokee bean; helmet skullcap; and a native daisy.**







# PRAIRIES & LAKES

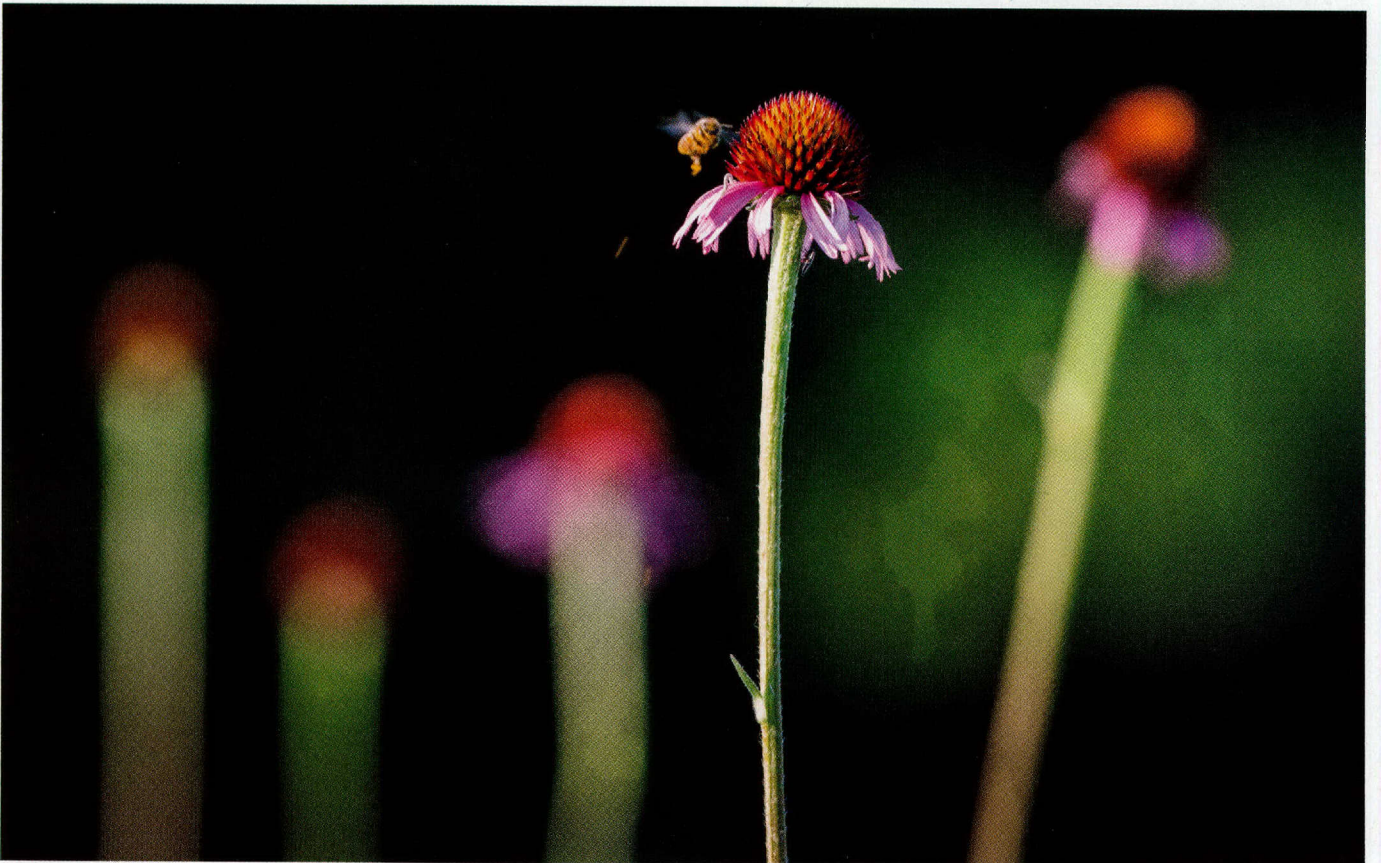
ACCORDING TO FITZGERALD

## **DON'T EXPECT A MONOCHROMATIC CARPET OF WILDFLOWERS IN THE PRAIRIES**

and Lakes region of Texas, Fitzgerald says. Better to keep your eye out for subtle changes and unique blooms. "The thing about these prairies up here is that they roll," he notes. As spring advances toward summer, fields dotted with bluebonnets and the bright red hue of Indian paintbrush give way to deeper blues and purples, notes Fitzgerald, who recommends taking a few hours to drive the bluebonnet trail in Ennis and to explore the blackland prairie blooms at White Rock Lake in Dallas. Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge near Denison is also worth a day trip for a less traditional experience. Pockets of wildflowers can be found in more urban locales; for instance, Plano sports small patches throughout the city. But it takes an observant eye to spot them, Fitzgerald says: "A lot of the prairie rewards patience." —A.S.

**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Sunflowers growing in tall grass near Vernon; bluebonnets and Indian paintbrush alongside Lake Bardwell in Ennis; and purple coneflower.**

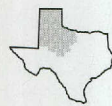








# PANHANDLE



ACCORDING TO THERESA DIMENNO

**IT WAS NEAR THE TOWN OF CANYON THAT PHOTOGRAPHER**

Theresa DiMenno, always in pursuit of wildflowers, pulled off a dirt road by a field and got down on her belly. She had just spotted a shock of bright yellow flowers blooming out from the rusty red dirt that's prevalent in this part of the Panhandle. A spring rainstorm was streaking the sky a grayish blue far across the field in the horizon, and she had to get the shot. "It's the thrill of the chase, to see what you can find," DiMenno says. "It's never the same. I was really excited to see the storm clouds. I could smell the rain. I was down on my stomach shooting. I wanted to get it all in there—the flowers, the dirt, the rain. To get the shot I want, I have to get in close contact with the earth." Georgia O'Keefe, who once lived and taught art in Canyon, was in part DiMenno's flower-chasing muse; O'Keefe once said, "Nobody sees a flower really; it is so small. We haven't time, and to see takes time." DiMenno spends hours up close, observing flowers and their insect suitors—often while on her belly. "It brings me such joy," she says.

—Clayton Maxwell



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Thistle; pink evening primrose; greenthread; and more primrose framed by a purple bouquet of prairie phlox.**











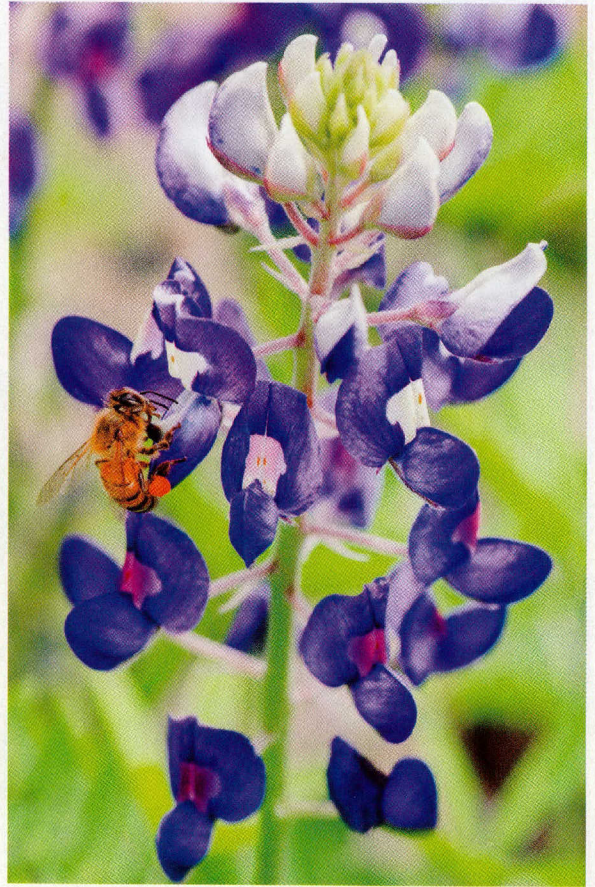




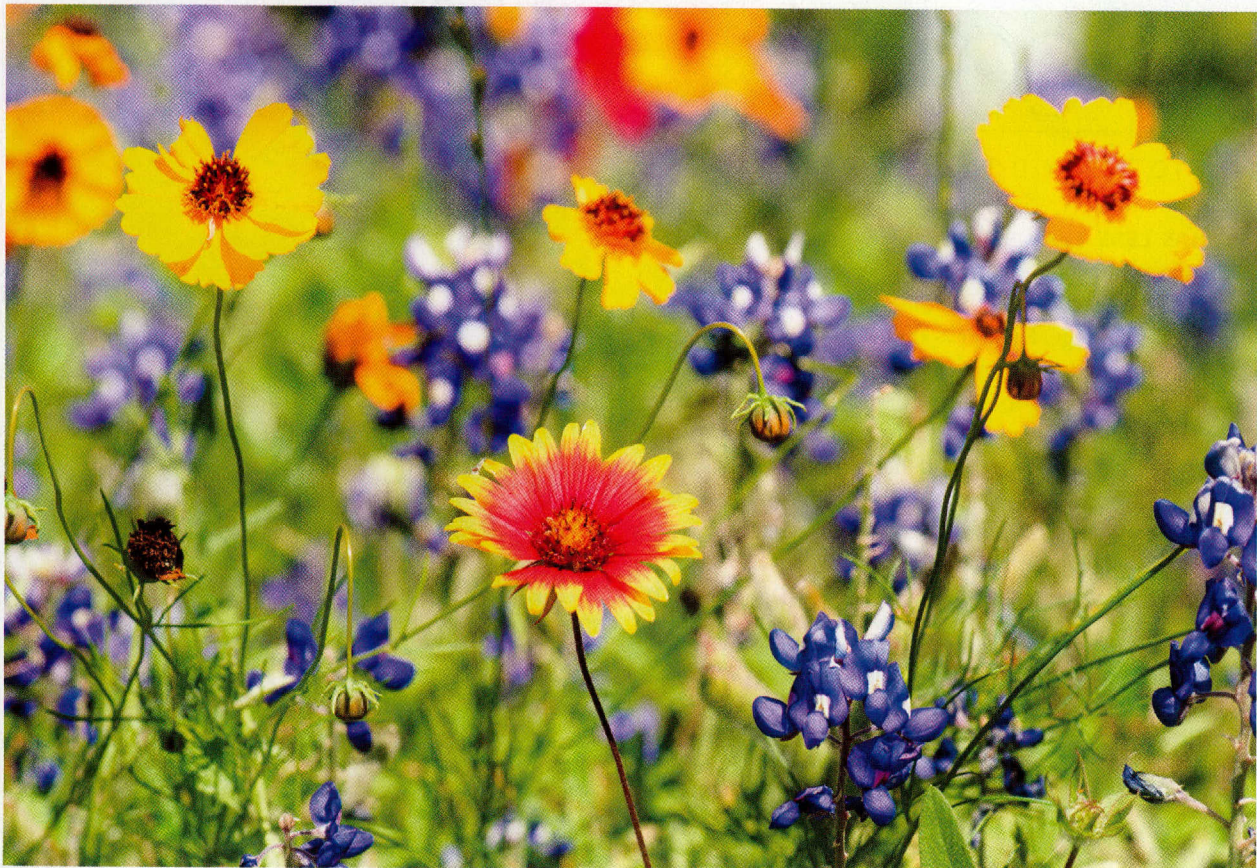
# HILL COUNTRY

ACCORDING TO DIMENNO

**“IN THAT MOMENT, I GOT IT—I GOT THE BLUEBONNET,”** says DiMenno, a dedicated annual photographer of Texas Hill Country wildflowers. DiMenno, who’d once considered the bluebonnet a bit humdrum, had an epiphany about *Lupinus texensis* while watching a bee coax nectar from within one of its little blue bells. “When I saw the bee close-up nectaring on the bluebonnet, it was just stunning,” she says. “The bluebonnet has so many layers to it—it’s a really complex flower. So I get the bluebonnet now. I just don’t think I’d ever really seen it before.” DiMenno also delights in the pink evening primrose, a Hill Country wildflower that thrives even in years of scant rain. Though they are delicate, swaying in the breeze on roadsides, evening primroses are also resilient. When mingled with a field of bluebonnets, their pink hue compliments the swaths of blue, giving off a tinge of violet. “These wildflowers put out so much beauty,” DiMenno says. “And they don’t do it for us; it’s just intrinsic to them. We just get to enjoy it.” —C.M.



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A field of bluebonnets and pink evening primroses next to a pond outside New Braunfels; a bee lights on a bluebonnet; and a mix of Indian blankets, bluebonnets, and greenthread.**







# GULF COAST

ACCORDING TO LARRY DITTO

**LARRY DITTO HAS LESS THAN A TWO-WEEK WINDOW TO CATCH** the yuccas blooming at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge. Luckily, in his former life before becoming a full-time nature photographer, he was the manager of the refuge. He knows the natural calendar there by heart. But for all his knowledge, getting a memorable photo takes a little serendipity, too. He was already on his way home on the last of several long days shooting when a scene unexpectedly caught his eye. “The sun was just touching the horizon,” he says, “and there were these high clouds that looked like spider webs. I ran over and sat down in the middle of these really tall yuccas, like three walls of a room. I shot these big old monster silhouettes of yuccas hanging over me with the last light of day reflecting off them. You can’t plan a moment like that.” —*Daniel Blue Tyx*



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** Spanish dagger yucca at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge; beach evening primrose trailing across the dunes of Boca Chica Beach at sunset; and purple sage on the edge of Laguna Atascosa.









# SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

## ACCORDING TO DITTO

**SHOOTING WILDFLOWERS IN THE SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS IS NOT FOR THE FAINT OF heart.** Forget mellifluous fields of bluebonnets or Indian paintbrush—for Ditto, photographing this sometimes unforgiving terrain requires getting up close and personal with the region's beautiful but prickly nopal cacti. Ditto snapped some of his favorite shots in a roadside spot where he found blooms of four different colors in one stand: red, peach, orange, and yellow. But to capture them, he had to be prepared for the consequences. "Sometimes the best shots are when you get down in it," he says. "You're stepping over it, squatting down beside it, there's old pads rotting all around with thorns still in them. You get stuck. That's just part of it." **L**

—D.B.T.





The orange blossoms  
of a prickly pear cactus.







FROM PINEY WOODS LOGGING CAMPS TO  
THE ADVENT OF ROCK 'N' ROLL ON US 59

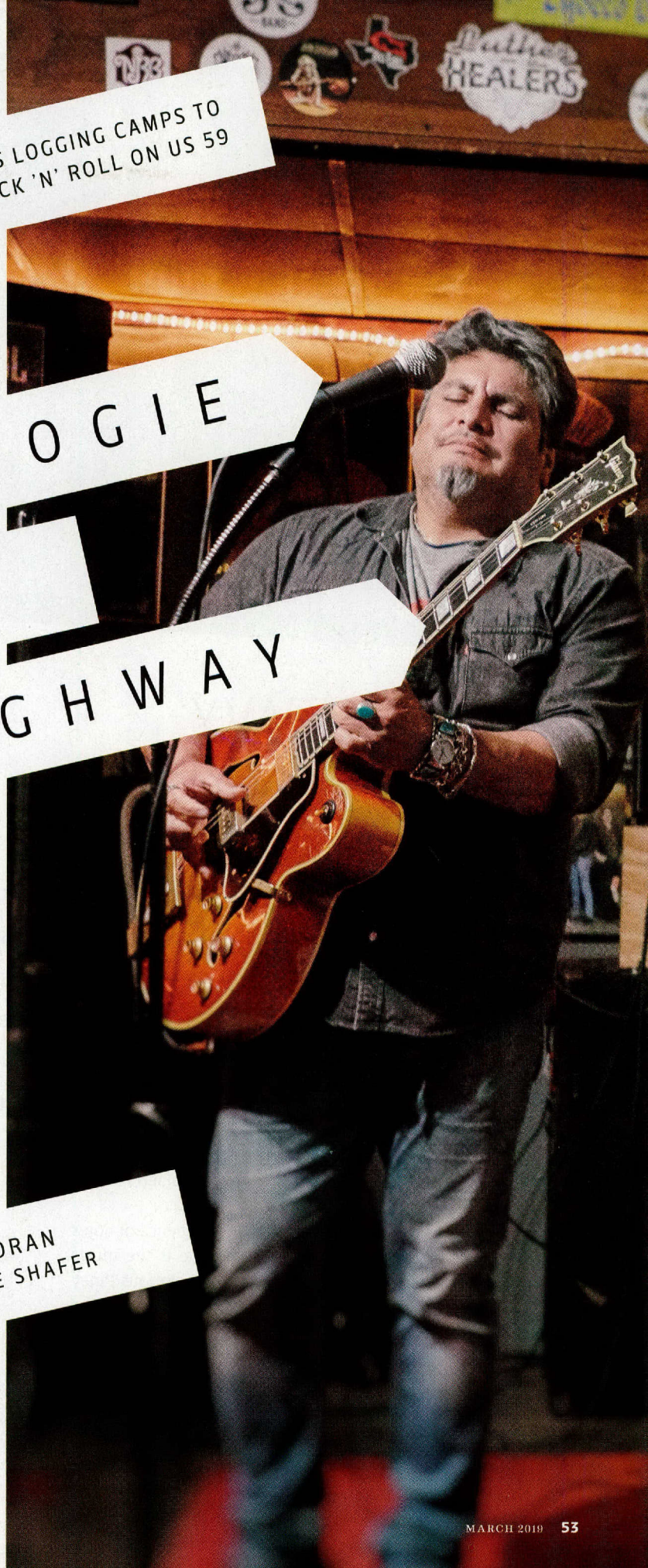
THE

BOOGIE

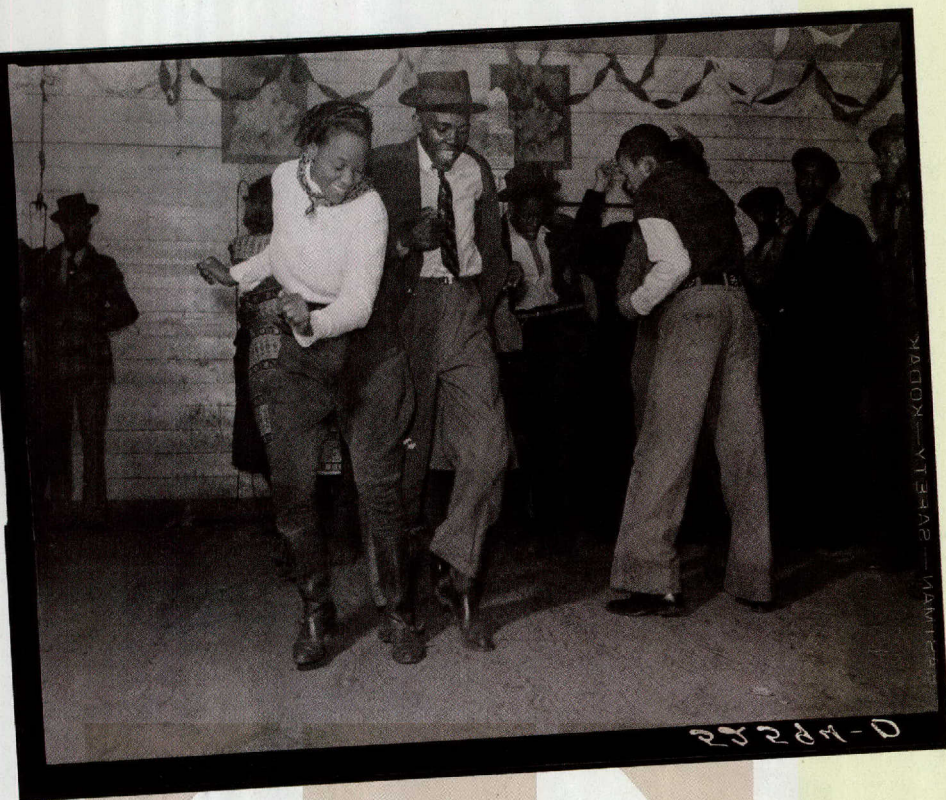
WOOGIE

HIGHWAY

BY MICHAEL CORCORAN  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVE SHAFER







# THE HEAVY LEFT HAND MIMICKED THE RUMBLE OF STEAM LOCOMOTIVES ON IRON RAILS,

while the right played melodic cross-rhythms that whistled up and down the tracks. A national craze during World War II, the hard-driving piano style known as boogie woogie set the stage for the musical revolution of rock 'n' roll. And its roots can be traced to the logging camps of East Texas, where former slaves played music for respite from their toils, accentuating the piano's rhythmic properties to get people dancing.

Defined by a walking bass line—a repeating sequence of notes that propels the rhythm forward—boogie woogie is the music of movement, perfect for a road trip through the glorious Piney Woods where the style originated. Musicologist John Tennison has dubbed a 280-mile stretch of US 59 between Houston and Texarkana the “Boogie Woogie Highway.”

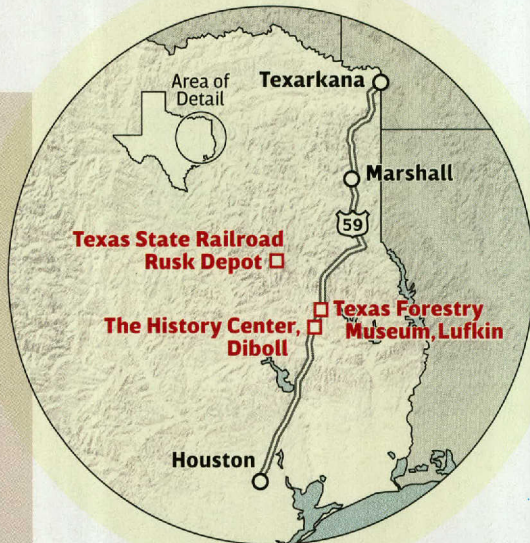
“It was African Americans who originated boogie woogie, and they were in the Piney Woods of East Texas in association with the railroad and lumber camps,” says Dr. Tennison, a Texarkana native who now lives in San Antonio, where he works as a psychiatrist and plays a mean piano. “Highway 59 is the most reason-

able approximation of the railroad corridor, but it was the railroad completed in 1873—from Texarkana to Houston—that the itinerant musicians would have used.”

Tennison became interested in boogie woogie's Northeast Texas origins as a teenager. He interviewed local musicians and historians, and combed through oral histories and other resources to explore how African Americans developed the piano style. Boogie woogie came about in the 1870s during the East Texas timber bonanza of the late 1800s and early 1900s, when Eastern logging companies discovered the region's abundant pine forests. Coinciding with the end of the Civil War, the companies employed freed slaves in jobs like felling trees and building new railroad mainlines, spurs, and taps to move the timber to mills and markets.

Life in the lumber camp was filled with the clatter of rhythmic hammering and the chuff of steam engines. Tennison notes that boogie woogie's classic eight-beats-per-measure bass line mimics two rotations of a steam engine driver wheel. Untutored ivory-smiths rode the rails from camp to camp to play in barrel-houses, which the lumber companies built to keep their workers from straying into town—and maybe never coming back. These makeshift juke joints hosted parties sometimes called “booga roogas” with liquor, dice games, and dancing. In 1929, Alabama pianoman Clarence Smith gave

**TUNE IN TO WRITER MICHAEL CORCORAN'S "TEXAS BOOGIE WOOGIE" PLAYLIST ON SPOTIFY, FEATURING SONGS SUCH AS "JOYCE'S BOOGIE" BY CHARLES BROWN AND "PINETOP BOOGIE WOOGIE" BY PINETOP PERKINS.**







**OPENING SPREAD:** The wheel of a 1906 steam locomotive at the Texas Forestry Museum in Lufkin; blues night at The Big Easy in Houston. **THIS SPREAD, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** A Mississippi juke joint in 1939; an East Texas logging train circa 1900; the Texas & Pacific Railway Depot in Marshall.

the style its name with his hit song “Pine Top’s Boogie Woogie.”

Tennison presented his research to the Marshall City Council in 2010 to make the claim that the Harrison County seat, as headquarters of the Texas & Pacific Railway, could rightfully be considered “the birthplace of boogie woogie.” In the first half of the 20th century, music historians had pegged East Texas as the original home of the rhythmic style. Within the region, Tennison said, three key factors overlapped to the highest degree in Marshall—Harrison County’s large African American population, the Piney Woods timber industry, and Marshall’s status as a railroad trade hub. The city of around 24,000 has taken the motto to heart; in September, Tennison joined Marshall officials in unveiling a state historical marker declaring the city as boogie woogie’s birthplace.

“You can’t really pinpoint any one







place where boogie woogie started, but Marshall lies at the geographical center of gravity, spreading the music along the railroad tracks running north and south,” Tennison says, adding that one of the earliest boogie bass lines was called “The Marshall.” Legendary Marshall street singer Leadbelly, from nearby Caddo Lake, was among the first to play such bass figures on the guitar. When a heavy backbeat was added, you had rock ‘n’ roll.

Time to cue up the boogie woogie, blues, and rock ‘n’ roll on the car stereo and hit the road: The Boogie Woogie Highway calls.

## Houston

Houston’s George Thomas Jr. took boogie woogie from the backwoods to urban centers in the 1910s. His composition “The Fives,” which he wrote with his younger brother, Hersal, helped shape boogie woogie into its own style in the 1920s. According to Peter J. Silvester’s essential boogie woogie history, *A Left Hand Like God*, Thomas was the first to publish walking bass lines in sheet music in 1916.

Though Houston’s blues landmarks have mostly been torn down, the music is still alive on Kirby Drive, not far from Rice University, at The Big Easy Social & Pleasure Club, which sometimes draws piano players to its Wednesday night blues jam. Sundays belong to zydeco, which often incorporates boogie woogie’s walking bass line.

“Essentially if you go to any blues club in Texas, and there’s a piano player, almost certainly they’ll play some boogie woogie or something close to it,” Tennison says.

## Diboll and Lufkin

Lumber and railroads, as dependent on each other as hands on a piano, were instrumental in the creation of this new forceful style of blues. Built in 2003 to house the archives of lumber

magnate Arthur Temple and other local companies, The History Center in Diboll explores both industries with exhibits of historic photographs, audio recordings, and artifacts such as a vintage 6-foot crosscut saw. The center also keeps a thick file on local African American piano thumper W.J. “Professor” Jackson, who died in 1972 at age 102. Jackson also played the trumpet in circus bands, which is how he met Harry James, a boy from Beaumont whom he taught to play jazz trumpet. James went on to become one of the superstars of Big Band, with his 1939 single “Back Beat Boogie” presaging rock ‘n’ roll.

Just 14 miles north on US 59, Lufkin’s Texas Forestry Museum preserves the history of the 14 million acres of East Texas Piney Woods that dominated the regional economy in the late 1890s and early 1900s. The museum’s vintage equipment—including a high-wheeled cart and a sawmill steam engine—help portray how timber was logged, transported, and milled during the bonanza days. The exhibits also depict life in sawmill towns and logging camps, where workers scratched out a tough life and were often paid in “scrip”—credit for goods at the company store—rather than cash.

## Rusk

Both The History Center and the Forestry Museum have steam locomotives on display for visitors to explore, but for a ride on a living, snorting model, you’ll want to veer northwest on US 69 to Rusk, home of the Texas State Railroad. The tourist railroad runs steam and diesel locomotives, leading several elegant passenger cars on 50-mile round trips to Palestine. The journey is both spiritual and educational, with forested scenery and a Neches River bridge that’s nearly four football fields long and 35 feet tall. During spring, the dogwoods and red sumacs are in bloom.

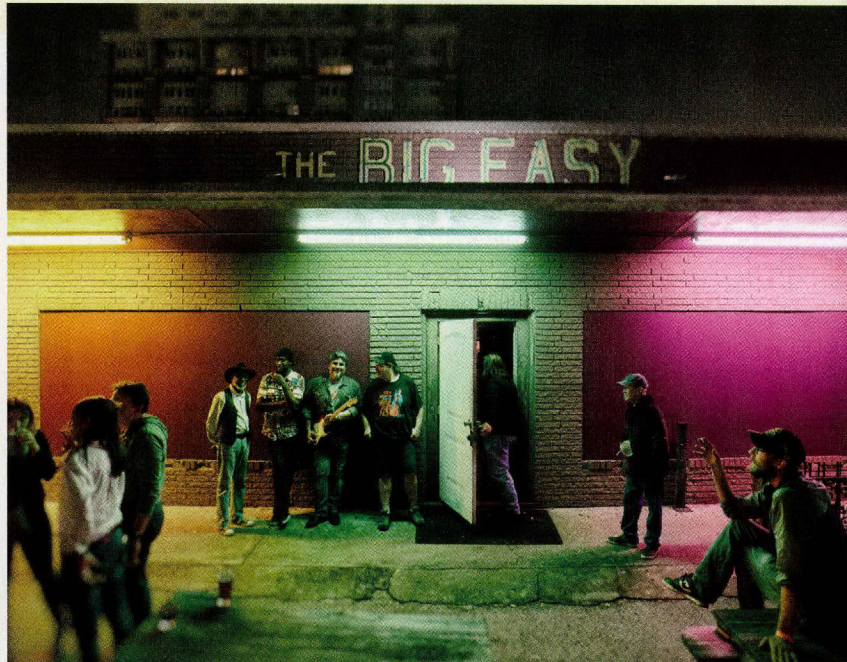
Prison inmates built these tracks more than 100 years ago. As the train clacks along, listen to the vintage locomotive rumble over the tracks: Can you hear the rhythm that inspired boogie woogie and



**IN MARSHALL,  
AN ONGOING  
RESTORATION  
OF DOWN-  
TOWN’S 1927  
MEMORIAL CITY  
HALL WILL  
PROVIDE A  
HISTORIC VENUE  
FOR BOOGIE  
WOOGIE.**



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The Ginocchio in Marshall; a fire lookout tower at the Texas Forestry Museum in Lufkin; The Big Easy in Houston; Marshall boogie woogie pianist Benjamin Cohen.





the well-known tune, "The Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B"? The 1941 Andrews Sisters' smash turned left-hand fever into an epidemic.

## Marshall

Back on US 59, the Boogie Woogie Highway heads north to Marshall, where it reaches its anchor at the end of North Washington Street. There stands the historical marker chronicling Marshall as the hub of boogie woogie, with the still-busy 1912 Texas & Pacific Railway Depot in the background and the beautifully restored 1896 Ginocchio Restaurant and Hotel in the foreground. Though the Ginocchio's top two floors are no longer a hotel, the restaurant has been a big draw since opening in late 2017. With plates of steak and seafood, diners can watch the trains pass and sip on glasses of house-brewed Boogie Woogie Golden Ale.

There isn't much live boogie woogie in Marshall these days, but its influence is reflected at the OS2 Pub, which hosts musicians on Boogie Woogie Wednesdays. The pub launched the event in 2010 when Marshall invited noted pianist Omar Sharriff back to his hometown as its "artist in residence." Sharriff died in 2012, but Boogie Woogie Wednesdays carried on. You can hear traces of boogie woogie's distinctive bass patterns in the bands that play these days, but they're often played on the guitar rather than the piano.

Marshall's interest in boogie woogie has made a mark on younger residents, as well. Eighteen-year-old Benjamin Cohen first heard boogie woogie a few years ago at a special event held at OS2 featuring European pianist Eeco Rijken Rapp.

"It was amazing, and I fell in love with it the minute I started to hear it," says Cohen, a student at East Texas Baptist University. "I thought, I could do something like this."

Cohen has been studying boogie woogie ever since and recently started performing around town. "I like faster-paced rhythms and beats," Cohen says. "I grew up listening to a lot of rock 'n' roll, and I guess you could say it followed the rules of a lot of the music I grew up hearing."



## Boogie Woogie Road Map

**Big Easy Social & Pleasure Club**, 5731 Kirby Drive, Houston. 713-523-9999; thebigeasyblues.com

**The History Center**, 102 N. Temple, Daboll. 936-829-3543; thehistorycenteronline.com

**Texas Forestry Museum**, 1905 Atkinson Drive, Lufkin. 936-632-9535; treetexas.com

**Texas State Railroad Rusk Depot**, 535 Park Road 76, Rusk. 855-632-7729; texasstaterailroad.net

**OS2 Pub**, 105 E. Houston St., Marshall. 903-938-7700; os2marshall.com

**The Ginocchio**, 707 N. Washington Ave., Marshall. 903-927-1400; theginocchio.com

**Texas & Pacific Railway Depot**, 800 N. Washington Ave., Marshall. 903-938-9495; facebook.com/marshall.depot

**Museum of Regional History**, 219 N. State Line Ave., Texarkana. 903-793-4831; texarkanamuseum.org



# Texarkana's Scott Joplin

Texarkana is the northern terminus of the Boogie Woogie Highway, but the city's most famous musical son found his voice in a different style of late-19th century piano. Scott Joplin didn't invent ragtime—a direct precursor of jazz—but he was certainly its most accomplished and prolific composer. Joplin's 1899 sheet music for "Maple Leaf Rag" was the archetype for many a piano composition in the next century.

Although ragtime contains some of the melodic properties of boogie woogie, it's a more structured style that has no use for improvisation. Boogie woogie is all about those pulsing bass lines, while ragtime is defined by syncopated melodies that dislocate the expected beat.

Boogie woogie flourished in Texarkana's Swampoodle neighborhood, but Joplin said he learned to play piano at a house his mother, Florence, cleaned. Texarkana's Museum of Regional History displays the piano believed to be the same one, an 1870 Mathushek that matches Joplin's description of the square grand piano he once played. The instrument belonged to the Wilder family on the 700 block of Hazel Street, whose house Florence kept.

Other Joplin-related points of interest in Texarkana include the Orr School he attended as a boy on the Arkansas side (now a vacant building), plus the colorful 16-foot tall and 115-foot wide mural at 311 Main St., which was painted in 1984 and redone in 2015 as part of the Perot Theater and Art Park Restoration Project.

LEFT: Scott Joplin may have learned to play on this piano, which is now kept at the Museum of Regional History in Texarkana; the Union Pacific railroad in Jefferson.

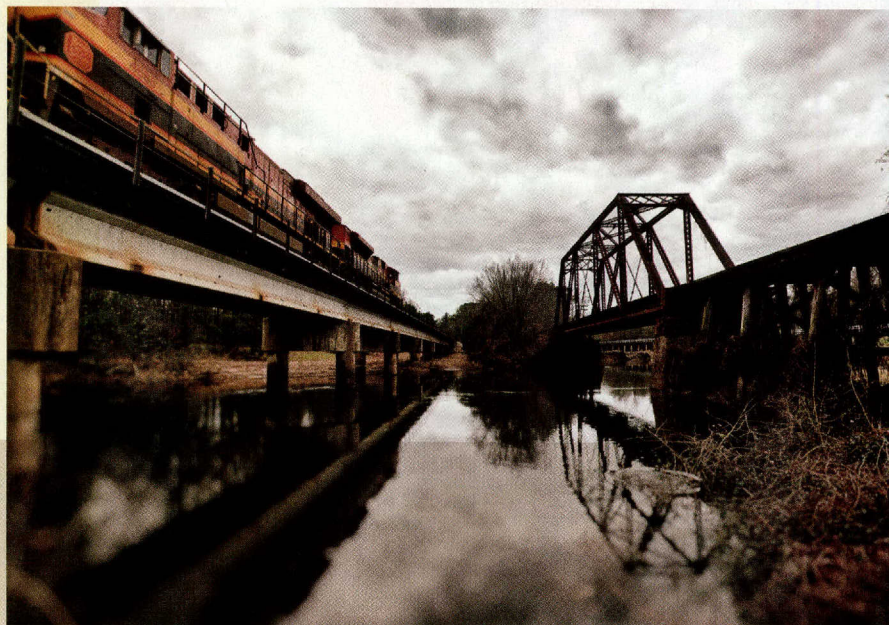
## Jefferson and Texarkana

From Marshall to Texarkana, US 59 runs roughly parallel to the Texas & Pacific Railway, a corridor where prominent boogie woogie bass lines were developed, according to Tennison. "The Jefferson" bass line bears the influence of New Orleans, the origin point for steamboats that ferried people and goods to Jefferson on Big Cypress Bayou. While the railroad initially bypassed Jefferson, trains soon arrived, and the industry's influence runs deep, as is illustrated by the restored 88-foot railroad car displayed on Austin Street. Called "The Atlanta," the lavish car was built to the specifications of rail tycoon Jay Gould, who owned the Texas & Pacific.

US 59 ends its Texas run at Texarkana, whose most prominent former resident, Scott Joplin (1868-1917), made his mark not in boogie woogie but in ragtime (see sidebar). "Scott Joplin is a good example of someone who could've played boogie woogie but saw it as something as symbolizing sex and gambling and sin," Tennison says. "With ragtime, he was trying to elevate the music and the value of education."

Joplin likely never stepped foot in Texarkana's Swampoodle district, where the pounding strains of boogie woogie emanated from rowdy juke joints and bawdy sporting houses. No trace remains of Swampoodle—named for Swampoodle Creek—but the notorious era, from the 1880s to around 1910, lives on in the Swampoodle bass line, an eight-beat line that's instantly recognizable as a foundation of boogie woogie.

You can hear the magic, hypnotic drive of boogie woogie in the music of masters like Sharriff and Stevie Ray Vaughan, who spread Texas blues to the world. And it all traces back to the forest clearings from Cass to Bowie counties, where the clatter of steaming locomotives provided musical themes and polyrhythmic inspiration. It was here that the left hand made its mark in a right-handed world and led to the creation of what we call rock 'n' roll. **L**





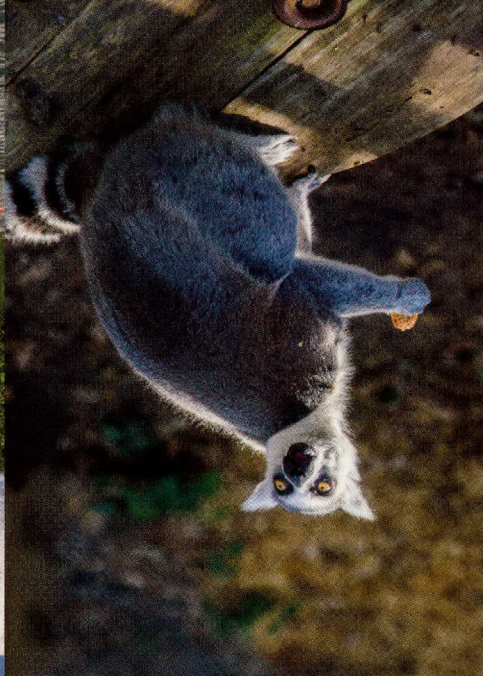
The title "Spring Break Ways" is rendered in a playful, multi-colored font. The word "Spring" is in a mix of purple, orange, yellow, and pink. "Break" is in orange, red, and pink. "Ways" is in pink, orange, red, and yellow. The text is surrounded by various icons: a hot air balloon, a kayak, a classical building, a cafe, flip-flops, a flower, a shopping bag, and a bicycle.

# Spring Break Ways

**SAY "SPRING BREAK,"** and most of us picture a tourist-packed beach, but there's a world of options away from the seashores. We've planned four under-the-radar trips for those ready to seek out experiences beyond the norm ... with or without kids in tow.

*Photographs by Erich Schlegel*









## “IT’S CALLED DRIPPING SPRINGS

for a reason,” says Meryl Sager, the sparkly-eyed bartender at the Desert Door tasting room as she spoons a glob of honeycomb into the Yaupon Palmer, a sotol-based version of an Arnold Palmer made with yaupon tea. “Everything here is dripping.” Sager’s right. When you drive the back roads around Dripping Springs and Driftwood, you are meandering through Central Texas’ distillery motherland. Although not visible from these pretty, tree-lined roads, barnfulls of stills are near at hand, all bubbling away to create small-batch spirits—from gin to sotol to whiskey—ready for you to swill, preferably while sitting outdoors on a breezy day with friends. These springs drip the good stuff.

Some might think spring break is just a student perk, a lucky gift bequeathed to kiddos by a pause in the school calendar. But think again. Grown-ups need spring break, too. And, sitting at the bar at Desert Door Distillery, sipping a little copita of the world’s only Texas-made sotol, you are getting one yummy taste of it. While watching Sager and her high-spirited fellow bartenders shake, pour, and bedeck pretty cocktails, you are also witness to the zeal for locally made spirits that is endemic in this neck of the woods. Every single bartender, distiller, and guide you are likely to meet out on Dripping Springs’ Distillery Row seems crazy about the spirits they make and serve. Their friendly booze enthusiasm, paired with a sampling of so many locally made small-batch liquors, means Dripping Springs is ground zero for a very merry grown-up spring break.

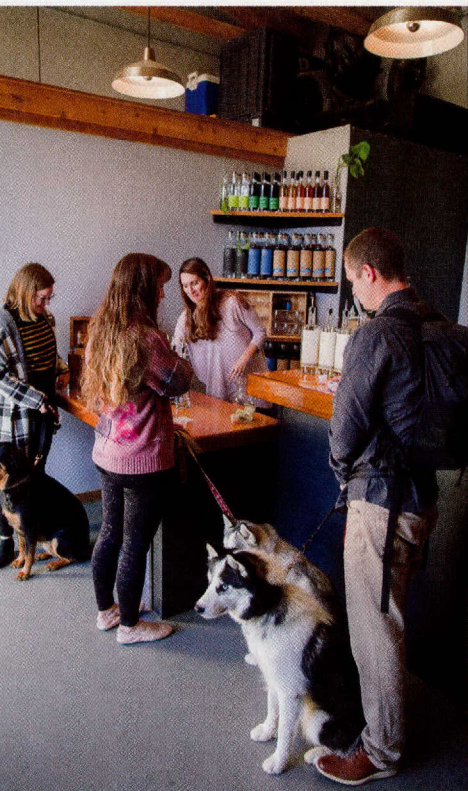
There’s Laura Christie, at Revolution Spirits, who beams as you walk into the distillery’s cozy tasting room. “What we do is pretty far out, so we like to give you an introduction,” she says as she generously fills little plastic cups with free tastings from each of the eight handsome liquor bottles before you, from their much-praised gins to a bitter pecan liqueur. And there’s Jason Stein, a guide and brewmaster at Treaty Oak Distilling, who boils down the science



## SPRING BREAK ON DISTILLERY ROW

By Clayton Maxwell





**DESERT DOOR  
DISTILLERY**

211 Darden Hill Road,  
Driftwood, 512-829-6129,  
desertdoor.com

**REVOLUTION SPIRITS**

12345 Paul's Valley Road,  
Austin, 512-358-1203,  
revolutionspirits.com

**TREATY OAK DISTILLING**

16604 Fitzhugh Road,  
Dripping Springs,  
512-599-0335,  
treatyoakdistilling.com

**CHARIOT**

888-735-5079,  
chariot.com/charters

**CABINS AT ONION  
CREEK**

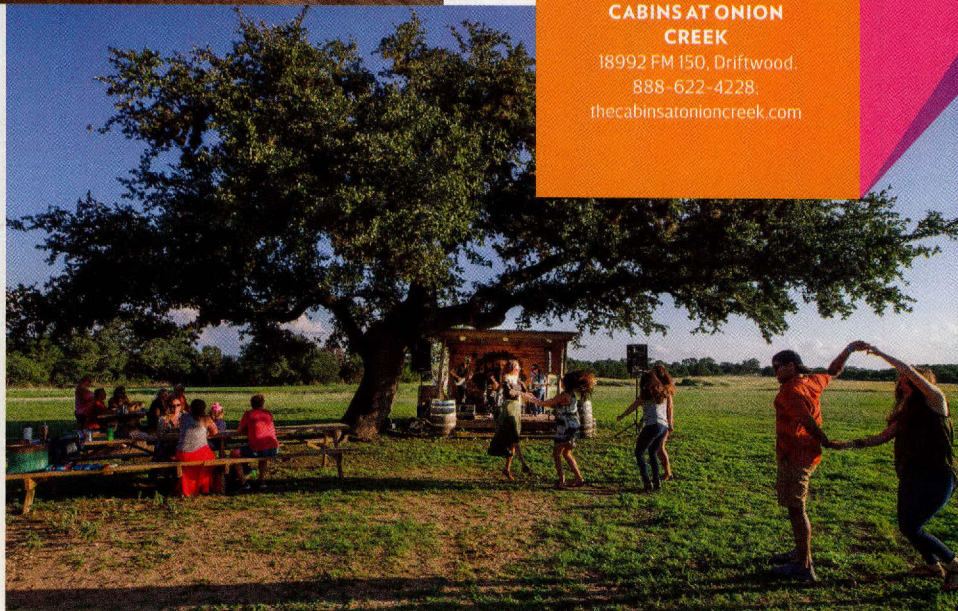
18992 FM 150, Driftwood,  
888-622-4228,  
thecabinsatonioncreek.com

and craft of distilling so enthusiastically you feel like you are being let in on the secrets of a sacred art form, which in many ways you are.

Treaty Oak, which opened in 2006, is one of the early leaders in the now super-amped Texas craft distillery movement, one that keeps growing every year. With 28 acres of ample green fields dotted with picnic tables and a live-music shack tucked under a mammoth live oak, the ambience at Treaty Oak is of the sit-back, slow-down, and sip variety. Make sure to line your belly here with something sinful; Treaty Oak's new restaurant, Alice's, serves Texas comfort cuisine like chicken mole, creole shrimp and grits, chicken-fried steak, and smoked Bandera quail. Good food is important after sipping 80-proof liquor all afternoon.

To minimize driving, some visitors travel as a posse with a chartered van company like Chariot. Rideshare services from Austin will come out to this area, but wait times can be long. If you bring a designated driver, make sure everyone else pitches in for his chicken-fried steak; it's only fair.

And because there are far too many distilleries in the area to hit them all in one day, cozy up in a local hotel, like the



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** Desert Door Distillery dispenses the world's only Texas-made sotol; taste much-praised gins and a bitter pecan liqueur at Revolution Spirits; Desert Door's Sandstorm Margarita is infused with agave and freshly sliced jalapeño; Treaty Oak's 28 acres features a live-music shack under a mammoth live oak.

Cabins at Onion Creek. While a bit plain on the outside, the interiors of these cabins—decked out in painted white shiplap, luxury beds, and furry pillows—let you recoup from your boozy explorations in comfort. And if you purchased a bottle or two on your tours, the rocking chairs on the front porch are a pleasant place to unwind with one more tipple. As you listen to screech owls make their nocturnal rounds, you can reflect upon all those bubbling stills of Dripping Springs working away nearby for your pleasure.





# Small TOWN

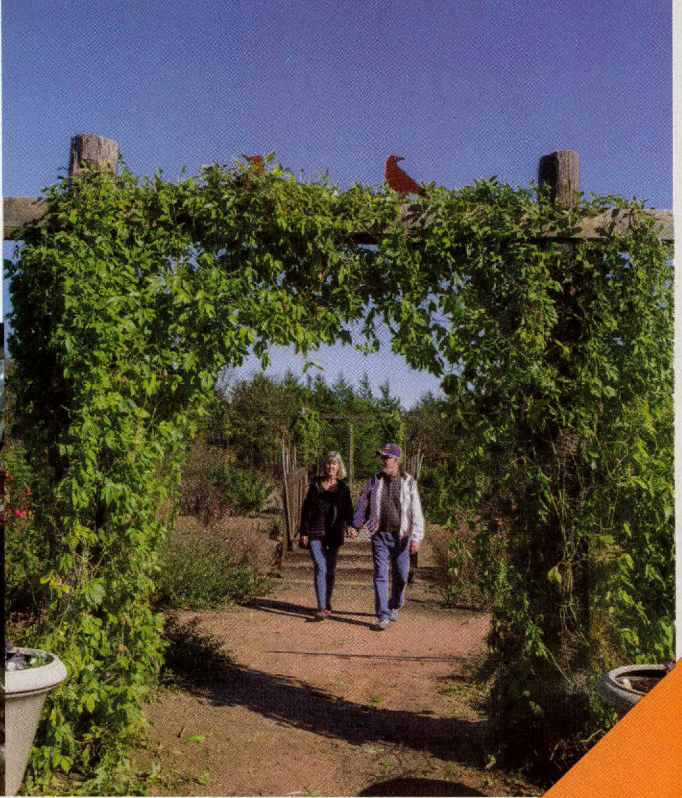
SPRING BREAK IN GAINESVILLE

By June Naylor

**NOT EVERY SPRING BREAK** needs to be spent on a beach or skiing down a mountain—just relaxing on an easy road trip rewards you for making it through the first third of the year. The Cooke County seat of Gainesville, sitting just a stone's throw below the Red River and in quick reach of Dallas and Fort Worth, has recently grown into a delightful burg ideal for whiling away a couple of days. Good shopping, a romp on a lavender farm, and a relaxing stay at a pretty new bed-and-breakfast makes it just the place for a small family reunion, girlfriends trip, or romantic escape—with or without the kids.



**FROM LEFT:** Paige Davidson in her art gallery and studio; downtown Gainesville offers a variety of small-town shopping, like the family-owned Kinne's Jewelers; find respite from the crowds at Lavender Ridge Farms.



### Lavender Ridge Farms

Situated about 20 minutes down tiny country roads blessedly far from any crowds, Lavender Ridge Farms' 20-acre site sits on land owned by the same family for 150 years. While their ancestors once farmed strawberries and melons, today's generation grows lavender for cutting as well as herbs, irises, and other colorful flowers. Blooming butterfly gardens beg exploration, and one pathway leads to spacious pens where resident donkeys Dora and Diego await guests. A shop brims with handmade temptations such as winged elm wreaths, soaps, lotions, and linen spray, while the café spoils visitors with a menu of lavender honey chicken salad and indulgences like lavender ice cream and lemon-lavender gooey cake.

### Paige Davidson Studio

Historic buildings lining the courthouse square house a growing number of boutiques, including Paige Davidson Studio, a local artist's combination shop and gallery. Two sizable displays bear the colorful fabric handbags, clutches, and wallets Davidson makes, and her watercolor paintings of landscapes and villages cover the walls. Her kitchen and tabletop ceramics mix in with collections of handcrafted gifts—such as hand-turned wooden pieces, jewelry, and leather goods—from other local talents.

### Market Days

About 5 miles north of downtown, Market Days at Liberty Crossing hosts a monthly weekend gathering of close to 150 retailers and craft vendors at a former outlet center. Stores (all indoors) include those selling fresh local grass-fed beef and lamb, handmade wooden dining tables and chairs, and antique wares for home and garden. Several food trucks are at the ready to appease shoppers, serving coffee, barbecue, and Asian noodle bowls. There's a beer garden at the center of the market, as well as wine tastings at 4R Ranch Winery shop. Kids have an outdoor lawn with lots of games for burning off energy.

### 205 Melody Lane

Overnighting is the only way to experience all of Gainesville's charms, so plan to rest up at 205 Melody Lane, a guest house about three minutes from downtown. The three-bed, two-bath 1956 home recently underwent a face-lift, which delivered a big, lovely kitchen, an ample living room with a fireplace and lots of books, and a patio next to a sprawling backyard. The hosts, who live next door, leave a homemade breakfast casserole for you, and their sweet black labs are always available for affection if you ask.



#### LAVENDER RIDGE FARMS

Open weekends at 2391  
County Road 178  
940-665-6938;  
lavenderidgefarms.com

#### PAIGE DAVIDSON STUDIO

205 S. Commerce St.  
940-665-2138;  
paigedavidson.com

#### MARKET DAYS

4321 N. I-35 (frontage  
road). 940-230-2099;  
thelibertycrossing.com

#### 205 MELODY LANE

817-403-5980.  
205melodylane.com





# Adventure Seeker

## SPRING BREAK AT MCKINNEY ROUGHS

By Melissa Gaskill

**WITH 18 MILES OF** hiking trails—13 of them open to mountain bikes and horses, along with plenty of flora and fauna along the Colorado River—McKinney Roughs Nature Park lives up to the “nature” in its name. Adding the word “adventure” seems more appropriate though, given the current offerings of zip lining, universal terrain vehicle tours, survival skill classes, and more. All of the above makes this Lower

Colorado River Authority property an excellent destination for a family spring break adventure.

The Zip Lost Pines complex explores the east side of the park, with six zip lines strung over the wooded slopes and valleys, bearing names like Piney Plunge, Loblolly Landing, and River Run. The longest stretches 1,315 feet, and according to Director Sarah Linden McBee, “It depends on the wind, but most people

reach speeds of 35 to 40 miles per hour on it.” Dual lines make zipping more fun than going one at a time, letting competitive types race each other. The lines use a passive braking system, and guides do all the work with the gear so riders can focus on the adrenaline rush. The six-line tour involves a couple of short hikes through the woods and over several suspension bridges—a total of about 2.5 hours or less—and the fee includes entrance to the entire park.

While hiking trails are a great way to explore McKinney Roughs, universal terrain vehicle tours make it possible to see more of it in less time—and with less effort. These golf carts on steroids each hold up to four people and up to five vehicles go out at a time, following old ranch





**MCKINNEY ROUGHS** Nature Park offers universal terrain vehicle tours, six zip lines for exploring the east side of the park, and guided kayak tours of the Colorado River.



**MCKINNEY ROUGHS  
NATURE PARK**  
1884 SH 71 W., Cedar Creek,  
512-303-5073;  
[lcra.org/parks](http://lcra.org/parks)

**ZIP LOST PINES**  
1760 SH 71 W., Cedar Creek,  
512-761-2323;  
[ziplostpines.com](http://ziplostpines.com)

**HYATT REGENCY  
LOST PINES RESORT  
AND SPA**  
575 Hyatt Lost Pines Road,  
Cedar Creek,  
512-308-1234, [hyatt.com](http://hyatt.com)

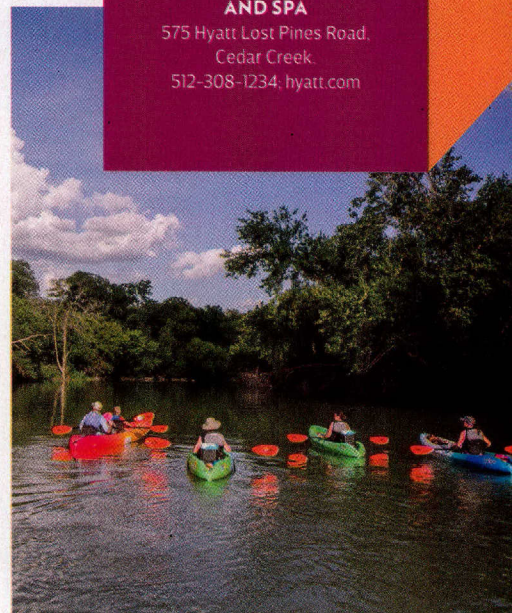
roads and trails across fields, over hills, and along the river as the guide imparts tidbits of the area's history and current wild residents. On a recent visit, guide Nicholas Cowey, a park program coordinator, plucked a sprig of Yaupon Holly and explained that tea from its leaves provides a bit of caffeine, but too many cups have unpleasant side effects. He squeezed a tiny drop of nectar from a widow's tear flower and pointed out a spot rubbed raw low on the trunk of a loblolly pine—a sort of Tinder for whitetail deer, he explained. Few people spot javelinas, bobcats, deer, or armadillos, but Cowey often finds their tracks on tours.

The park's survival classes focus on practical skills handy for outdoor adventurers: building fires and shelters,

locating drinking water and food, and making emergency kits. People can take one class or the series, which culminates in an overnight experience and lots of hands-on practice. Classes are taught by experienced instructors from both outdoor retailer REI and LCRA parks.

Other adventures at McKinney Roughs include guided kayak trips, star parties, and mountain biking classes. The park has three dorms that accommodate 128 people altogether, and is next door to Hyatt Lost Pines, which books many adventures directly and provides shuttle service.

Whether the LCRA adds the word to the park's name or not, those in search of adventure can find plenty at McKinney Roughs.







**A SAN ANTONIO** spring break may conjure images of theme parks and a barge ride along the Paseo del Río, and certainly, those are a few options for family fun, but the city's new attractions and hidden treasures offer alternative adventures worth exploring. Some are decidedly urban—museums and chef-driven restaurants—while others bring you right into a natural oasis just south of downtown. But all dot the banks of the San Antonio River, the city's lifeblood for centuries.

### **Yanaguana Garden**

Nowhere is San Antonio's ability to reinvent itself more evident than at Yanaguana Garden, the epic playground located in the heart of the city at Hemisfair. Originally the site of the 1968 World's Fair, this enchanted park celebrates the city's Spanish and Native American roots with a climbable mosaic blue panther sculpture and mosaic benches inspired by those at Park Güell in Barcelona. Yanaguana Garden is a public space like no other, with activities ideal for all ages: foosball tables, a giant chess set, a splash pad, a sandbox, and a playscape for climbing. Restaurants border the park, and the on-site Magik Theatre puts on productions based on classic children's literature. Slab Cinema also hosts free outdoor screenings in the park year-round. If the Paseo del Río is calling you, it's just across South Alamo Street and down a few steps.

### **Confluence Park and the Mission Reach of the San Antonio River**

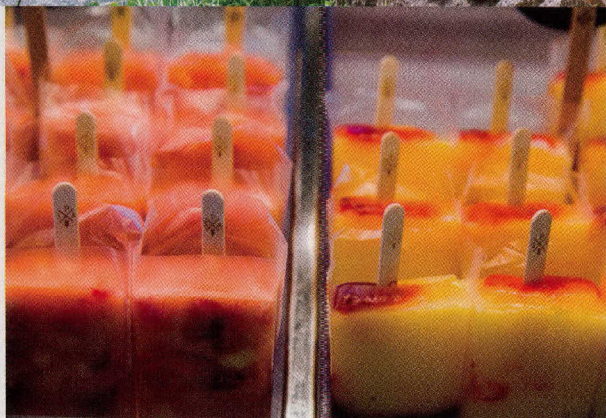
Opened in the spring of last year, Confluence Park serves as an entry point to the Mission Reach of the San Antonio River while also representing the city's efforts to preserve its most important waterway and the wildlife along it. Recreation combines with education as visitors learn about native grasses and water systems. There's also a SWell Cycle station, enabling visitors to rent a bike and head out on the Mission Reach hike and bike trail, which connects Confluence Park to all five missions in San Antonio. After reaching Mission Espada, the southernmost of the five, you can

# Family FRiendly

**SPRING BREAK IN SAN ANTONIO**

By Jen Hamilton Hernández





**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** The historic Pearl's recent expansion includes a free splash pad; the Japanese Tea Garden in Brackenridge Park; the Witte Museum; Paletería San Antonio at Hemisfair crafts artisanal ice pops, or *paletas*.

turn around and ride back—or as some locals do, use a rideshare service to take the easy way back. You can even stop at Espada Park along the way to rent a kayak from Mission Kayaks for a different way to explore the San Antonio River.

### San Pedro Creek Culture Park

Another recently unveiled gem celebrating the restoration of waterways in the Alamo City, this park in the heart of downtown honors the history of the creek as well as the influence of local artists upon the landscape of San Antonio. *De Todos Caminos Somos Todos Uno (From All Roads, We Are All One)*, a 117-foot long mural by local artist Adriana M. Garcia, is not to be missed, but public art also dots the walkway, or paseo. *The Bridges of Understanding*, glazed ceramic pieces by artist Diana Kersey, adorn three bridges crossing the creek at street level. Wading

pools with limestone benches invite visitors to soak their feet, sit for a moment, and take it all in.

### Rainy Day at the Museums

If rain threatens your plan to spend time outdoors, head to the Witte Museum for hands-on science and natural history exhibits for kids, as well as dinosaur bones and *Planet Pioneers*, a special space exploration exhibit that runs through April 7. Pack a picnic lunch to enjoy in the covered outdoor space overlooking the San Antonio River. Then, head to the Briscoe Western Art Museum downtown for the Lil Partners Program, which features activities for children ages 10 and younger from 10 a.m.–2 p.m., March 10–16. The Briscoe also hosts a Spring Break Round Up on March 11, from 4–8 p.m., featuring food trucks, cowboy trick ropers, s'mores, and activities for kids of all ages. 🐾



**YANAGUANA GARDEN**  
434 S. Alamo St. 210-709-4750. [playathemisfair.org](http://playathemisfair.org)

**CONFLUENCE PARK**  
310 W. Mitchell St.  
210-224-2694.  
[confluencepark.sariverfound.org](http://confluencepark.sariverfound.org)

**MISSION REACH**  
210-227-1373;  
[sanantonioliver.org](http://sanantonioliver.org)

**SAN PEDRO CREEK CULTURE PARK**  
715 Camaron St.  
210-302-3652;  
[spcculturepark.com](http://spcculturepark.com)

**WITTE MUSEUM**  
3801 Broadway St.  
210-357-1900;  
[wittemuseum.org](http://wittemuseum.org)

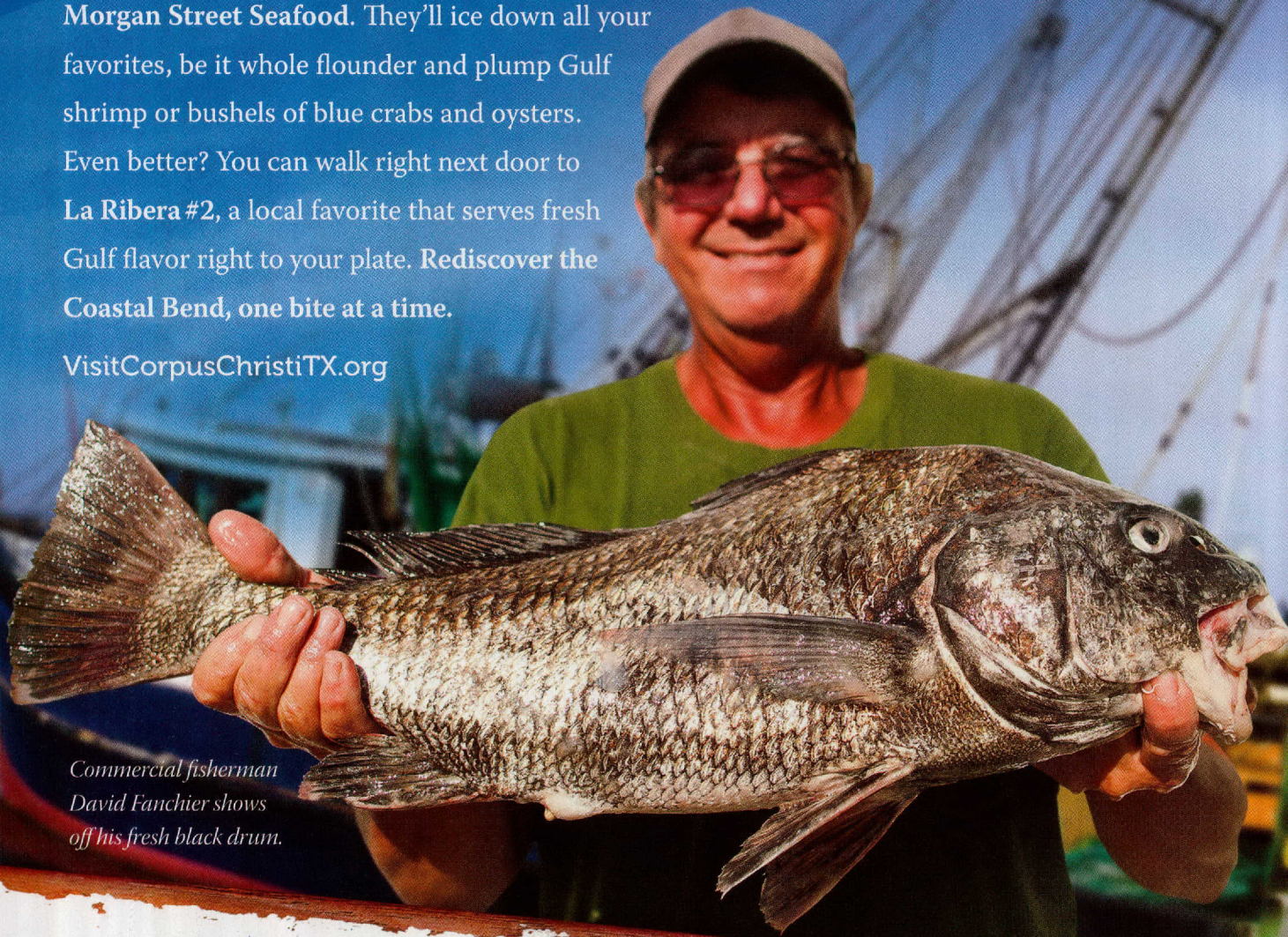
**BRISCOE WESTERN ART MUSEUM**  
210 W Market St.  
210-299-4499;  
[briscoemuseum.org](http://briscoemuseum.org)




# reDiscover FRESH SEAFOOD

Visit Corpus Christi and the Texas Coastal Bend where the catch of the day is, indeed, *caught today*. David Fanchier reels in 50,000 pounds of the black drum you see here from his one small fishing boat each year, supplying long-standing fish markets like Morgan Street Seafood. They'll ice down all your favorites, be it whole flounder and plump Gulf shrimp or bushels of blue crabs and oysters. Even better? You can walk right next door to La Ribera #2, a local favorite that serves fresh Gulf flavor right to your plate. Rediscover the Coastal Bend, one bite at a time.

VisitCorpusChristiTX.org



Commercial fisherman  
David Fanchier shows  
off his fresh black drum.



**COASTAL  
BEND  
UNITED**  
REBUILD. RESTORE. RECOVER.

Coastal Bend United is a non-profit coalition of ten Convention and Visitors Bureaus and Chambers of Commerce created to support small businesses affected by Hurricane Harvey in the Coastal Bend. The best way that you, as a Texan, can help your neighbors is to rediscover the coast. Come visit. Eat in our restaurants. Shop in our stores. Swim on our beaches. Stay for a while. **We appreciate your support.** [CoastalBendUnited.org](http://CoastalBendUnited.org)



# PLATES



**CASHEW-BASED SPINACH QUESO**  
from Señor Veggie in San Antonio comes with housemade tortilla chips for dipping.





**EMPANADAS** at San Antonio vegan restaurant Señor Veggie are filled with sweet potatoes, black beans, and roasted corn.

# Vegging Out

Vegan restaurants across Texas are sowing the seeds of imaginative meatless dining

By Robyn Ross



If the thought of vegan food conjures images of a giant plate of alfalfa sprouts, it's time to revisit the concept. These days, vegan restaurants in Texas tend more toward soul food than rabbit food, and they use creative stand-ins for beef (protein-rich seitan, made from vital wheat gluten), cheese (soaked and pureed nuts), and pork (the shredded flesh of the giant Asian jackfruit) that can satisfy even die-hard carnivores. While Austin has long been considered the capital of Texas' vegan scene, other cities now offer stiff competition in the way of veggie-forward, animal-free fare. These five eateries around the state break the mold while putting plants first.

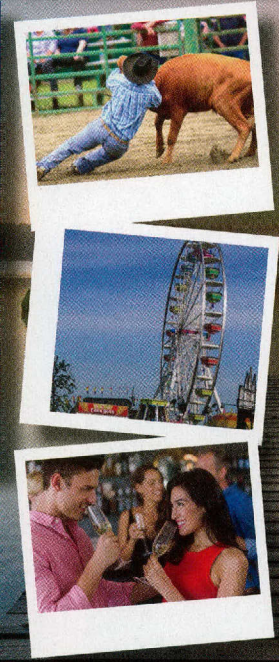


**Señor Veggie**  
San Antonio

After selling mouthwatering falafel at farmers markets, **José Cruz** and Tiffany Sotelo opened vegan restaurant Señor Veggie in 2014. Housed in a marigold-hued building in the artsy Lavaca neighborhood, the eatery is well known for its veggie street tacos stuffed with tender jackfruit, tangy cilantro-lime coleslaw, and cashew-based crema; and Southwestern empanadas filled with sweet potatoes, black beans, roasted corn, and poblanos. Cruz uses vital wheat gluten —“a culinary marvel,” he says—to make the seitan that he smokes to create vegan brisket and carne asada. The vibe is laid-back and funky, and heaping portions mean you'll take home leftovers. 620 S. Presa St. 210-228-0073; [senorveggie.us](http://senorveggie.us)

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## PLATES



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Pretzel bread and cinnamon roll from Tough Cookie Bakery; sandwich with vegan cream cheese and smoked Tofurky from Central Perks; vistec tacos from Chile de Árbol.



### Tough Cookie Bakery *Bastrop*

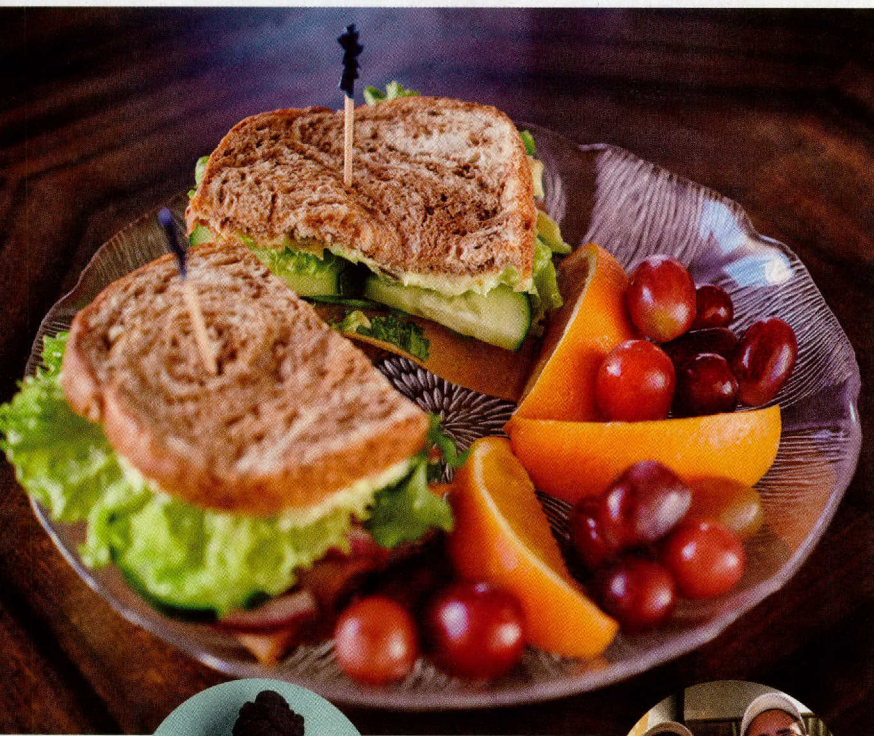
This community-focused vegetarian coffee shop located in a century-old former church features local artwork on its walls, live music on Fridays, a kids' play area, and a dog-friendly porch that invites patrons to linger. In the pretzel brat, a wheat gluten- and soy-based bratwurst is wrapped in owners **Chris and Jennie McEwan's** signature pretzel bread, which they developed while selling pretzels at farmers markets in Dallas. If you have a sweet tooth, try the gooey cinnamon rolls dripping with vegan cream cheese frosting and the dense, cakelike brownies made with applesauce instead of eggs. *601 Chestnut St., Suite D; 1204 Chestnut St. 512-629-6936*

### Central Perks *Marshall*

Deb and Rob Sorich saw increased demand for vegan options in 2011, after then-mayor of Marshall Ed Smith and his wife, Amanda, began sponsoring healthy-living events that taught residents how to lose weight and lower blood pressure by adopting a plant-based diet. The coffee shop and café still honors the message with a vegan menu offering dishes like the Southwest black bean burger dressed with vegan jalapeño cream cheese, cilantro, and avocado. The same burger patty is a centerpiece of the fiesta salad, drizzled with creamy housemade vegan cilantro ranch dressing. Be sure to browse the antiques and gift shop that shares Central Perks' historic building. *211 N. Washington Ave. 903-934-9902; centralperks.us*







**The Queen's Table**  
**Vegan Cuisine**  
 El Paso

Located in a strip mall on the east side of the city, The Queen's Table dishes out vegan soul food lovingly prepared by owner **Queen Adalah Aza**. Start with the surprising and inventive soy-based "unShrimp" wrapped in "unBacon" and served with remoulade. The deep-fried "unChicken," made from wheat gluten, comes with traditional sides like collard greens; nutritional yeast, liquid aminos (a soy sauce analog), and vegan bacon infuse the dish with a rich, smoky flavor. For dessert, the cake cup alternates layers of chocolate, red velvet, or carrot cake with scoops of vegan ice cream and is topped with dairy-free whipped cream and a cherry. 12115 Montwood Drive, Suite B201. 915-234-2277; [thequeenstablevegancuisine.com](http://thequeenstablevegancuisine.com)



**Chile de Árbol**  
 Brownsville

When brothers **Ramses (right) and Anubis Avalos** adopted a vegan diet three years ago, they realized it would be hard to dine out in Brownsville. So they opened their food truck, Chile de Árbol, where they offer tacos, burgers, and Indian-inspired veggie-and-rice bowls, all relying heavily on scratch-made ingredients. In the vistec taco, a vegan adaptation of the region's popular *tacos de bistec*, seitan made with wheat gluten, black beans, and garbanzos substitutes for steak. The pastor taco features homemade tempeh (fermented soybeans) marinated in a tangy-sweet sauce made from chiles, agave, and vinegar. "The ultimate accomplishment is when we see our meat-eating, barbecue-frenzied friends enjoying our tacos and coming back for more," Anubis says. *The Broken Sprocket Bar and Food Truck Park*, 6305 Paredes Line Road. 956-545-3800

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**FROM LEFT:** Distiller Marlene Holmes, whiskey expert Heather Greene, owner Marsha Milam, and general manager Jordan Osborne; hand-labeled Ben Milam bottles.

# Spirit of Texas

A Hill Country whiskey distillery honors a Texas revolutionary

By Gene Fowler

**BEN MILAM WHISKEY**  
1919 Main St., Blanco, 830-833-3033; benmilamwhiskey.com. Tasting room opens Tue-Sat, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.



**T**exian revolutionary Ben Milam may not be as famous today as James Bowie, Davy Crockett, and William Barret Travis, but he should be. After all, Milam led the Siege of Bexar in late 1835 that drove Mexican forces out of San Antonio and the Alamo and set the stage for the Republic of Texas to win its independence the following spring. Felled by a sniper, Milam gave his life to the cause. Distant cousin Marsha Milam is out to remedy that gap in repute. Her Ben Milam Whiskey, distilled in the Hill






Country town of Blanco since 2017, pays tribute to her adventurous ancestor. By contrast, the Davy Crockett brand of Tennessee-made whiskey was recently renamed Ole Smoky. Garrison Brothers Distillery of Hye offers a Jim Bowie cocktail recipe, but no whiskey namesake. And poor Travis' legacy in spirits remains dry as a Texas drought.

A co-founder of the Austin Film Festival and creator of Austin summer music series Unplugged at the Grove, Marsha Milam spent 25 years in the production and promotion side of the music business. "I experienced an epiphany in 2015," she says, "when I assisted Jimmie Vaughan with his participation in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame's induction of his brother Steve Ray. It was such a perfect night that it felt like a phase of my life had been completed and I had been freed to move on to the next chapter." The direction of that "next" crystallized in 2016 on a trip to Kentucky, Ben Milam's birth state, when she took a tour of the "bourbon trail."

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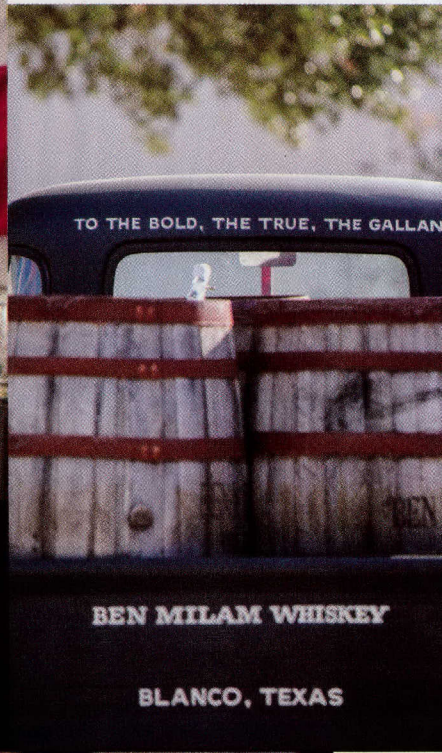
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**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Distiller Marlene Holmes; a truck emblazoned with the distillery's motto; the Bourbon Smash cocktail.



In a moment of what she describes as “mountaintop clarity,” Milam decided to come back home and get into the whiskey business. “Everything about bourbon, from the way it’s made to the way it’s sipped, requires us to slow down,” she explains. “It was exactly what I needed.” It took a year to find the perfect 2 acres for her distillery and tasting room on the north side of Blanco.

Today, the company offers three products: Ben Milam Barrel Proof Bourbon, Ben Milam Small Batch Rye Whiskey, and Ben Milam Single Barrel Bourbon. The last, which features notes of cinnamon and caramel with a vanilla finish, took first-place honors in its category at the prestigious San Francisco International Spirits Competition in 2017 and '18.

Tuesdays through Saturdays, visitors to Ben Milam Whiskey can take a tour led by distiller Marlene Holmes to see how she and fellow distiller Jordan Osborne cook, ferment, distill, and age the corn, barley, water, and rye that go into the smooth-sipping spirits. After the educational



**“Everything about bourbon, from the way it’s made to the way it’s sipped, requires us to slow down.”**

experience, guests are welcome to sit at the bar and order cocktails made with Ben Milam whiskey, from bourbon bloody marys to Old-Fashioneds and Manhattans. Holmes came to Ben Milam after 27 years with Jim Beam. “I wanted to be part of an upstart distillery,” she explains of the career move. “Plus, this is the best whiskey I’ve ever tasted.”

Cousin Ben would be proud. **L**





## Bourbon Smash

Marsha Milam describes her Bourbon Smash (see photo, left) cocktail recipe as “delicious, flexible, and forgiving.” Mix one up at home to celebrate Texas Independence Day on March 2—or head to the distillery for its second anniversary bash—and toast to the spirit of Ben Milam and other brave Texas revolutionaries.

### INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup ice
- 2 tablespoons raspberry preserves or jam
- 2 tablespoons Ben Milam bourbon
- 1 tablespoon triple sec
- 2-3 tablespoons orange juice
- Club soda
- Orange slices

### DIRECTIONS

Add ice, preserves, bourbon, triple sec, and orange juice to a shaker and shake vigorously for 15 seconds. Then pour into a glass with a few ice cubes and top it with a splash of club soda. Garnish with orange slices.

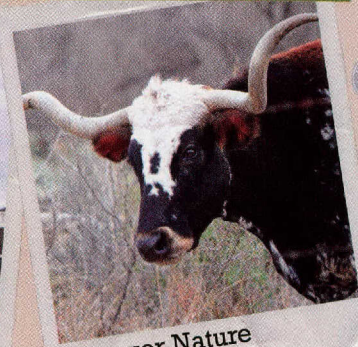
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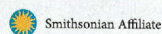
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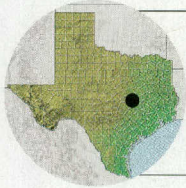
**DINERS ENJOY PIES** like the Roman and California Dreamin' with beer and a Grilled Italian Salad at Fire Street Pizza in Belton.



# All Fired Up

Fire Street Pizza brings Neapolitan fare to rural Belton

By Julia Jones



**FIRE STREET PIZZA**  
10310 FM 439, Belton.  
512-910-4676;  
firestreetpizza.com

The road to Fire Street Pizza seems more likely to lead to nowhere. As you wind around cedar trees and open, mostly empty ranch land on FM 439 near Belton, you might think you've gotten lost. But the red laser-cut sign hanging over the restaurant's driveway will put hungry travelers at ease: "There's no place, quite like this place, anywhere near this place, so, this must be the place."

Sitting on 2 acres about 7 miles west of Belton, a town of nearly 20,000 an hour north of Austin, Fire Street serves up wood-fired Neapolitan-style pizza in a convivial atmosphere. While the location might be a little out of the way, it was convenient for first-time restaurant owners Jason and Alis Brumalaw, who bought the land from Jason's parents. The husband-and-wife team bought the property in the late '90s and set about building Fire Street from the ground up with the help of some friends. After about 20 years, the restaurant finally opened in November 2017.

"It's been a long, long road [creating]

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**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Fire Street's bright sign welcomes guests; the California Dreamin' pizza; owners Jason and Alis Brumbalow.

this place,” Jason says. “This place was built on beer, sausage, and friends.”

The couple had wanted to own a restaurant since they started dating in high school. Jason worked for years as a producer and product developer for magicians, and Alis was an elementary school teacher—jobs they both loved. When their kids got to be teenagers, Jason and Alis, now 43, decided to try to turn their pizza-making dream into reality. With little formal training, Jason meticulously worked on perfecting the crust—the most important part of the pizza, he’ll readily assure you—including three years of attempting Atlanta restaurateur Jeff Varasano’s famous 22,000-word dough recipe.

After Jason was satisfied with his base, he and Alis tested topping combinations by inviting neighbors over to taste pizza in “driveway food labs,” as Alis calls them. The pizza oven Jason ordered online was temporarily stuck in their driveway, as it was too heavy to move to the backyard. That didn’t matter for their grateful guests, who raved about their



incorporation of candied pears and prosciutto as toppings, but also offered helpful feedback. “Thank God our friends were so harsh about our pizza,” Jason says. “They don’t cut us slack.”

Their next step, which Jason refers to as their “trial by fire” phase, was to operate out of a custom-built food truck they parked in nearby towns and at local events starting in the summer of 2015. They quickly earned local fame and regularly sold out. That reputation has followed them out to the country,

**“It’s been a long, long road [creating] this place,” co-owner Jason Brumbalow says. “This place was built on beer, sausage, and friends.”**

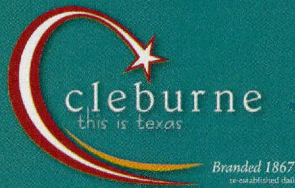


and people keep coming back because the Brumbalows know how to deliver an experience. “We’re creating an environment for people,” Alis says. “It’s the music, the smiles.”

Loyal fans drive out of their way for pizzas like the Roman, topped with pears candied in wine and sugar, caramelized onions, aged prosciutto, and crumbled goat cheese; the California Dreamin’ with herb-crusted chicken, bacon, scallions, fresh tomatoes, cilantro, and avocado Caesar dressing over a signature three-cheese blend; or the Jabberwocky, which features sausage, pepperoni, bell peppers, olives, red onions, and cheese, plus burgundy mushrooms, simmered for hours in beef stock and garlic. Any pizza pairs well with one of the 13 Texas craft beers on tap and a wood-fired dessert like the Splodin’ Smores—a deconstructed s’mores dish wrapped in pizza dough, resembling a large calzone.


While the pizza is gourmet, Fire Street’s exterior is decidedly down-to-earth—and fun: tetherball poles, lawn games, and a playground occupy the field out front. The outdoor stage often hosts live music in the evenings, and people line up for photos in front of the “love you to pizzas” sign near the fire pit. The interior is lively and warm with wood-paneled walls, picnic tables, and Edison light bulbs dangling from the ceiling. And with no TVs or Wi-Fi, conversation flows easily as customers engage with each other. “We wanted to foster a different type of clientele,” Jason says. “Let’s make people talk to each other because I believe that they will enjoy their experience a lot more.”

And while the drive to Fire Street can be an exercise in patience and navigational skills, the road eventually leads to an eatery grounded in family, friendship, and lots of wood fire. Like the sign says, “this must be the place.”



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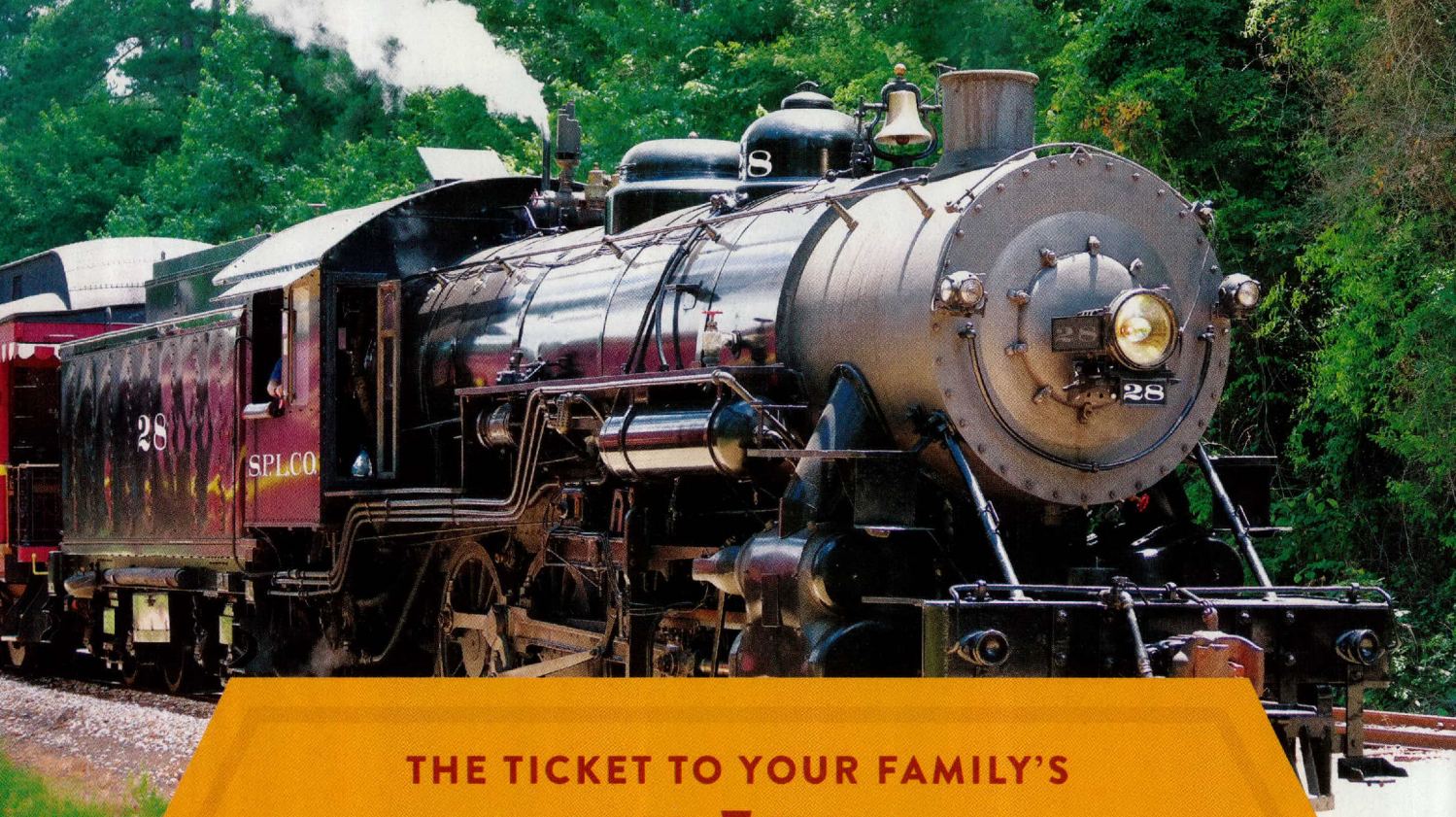
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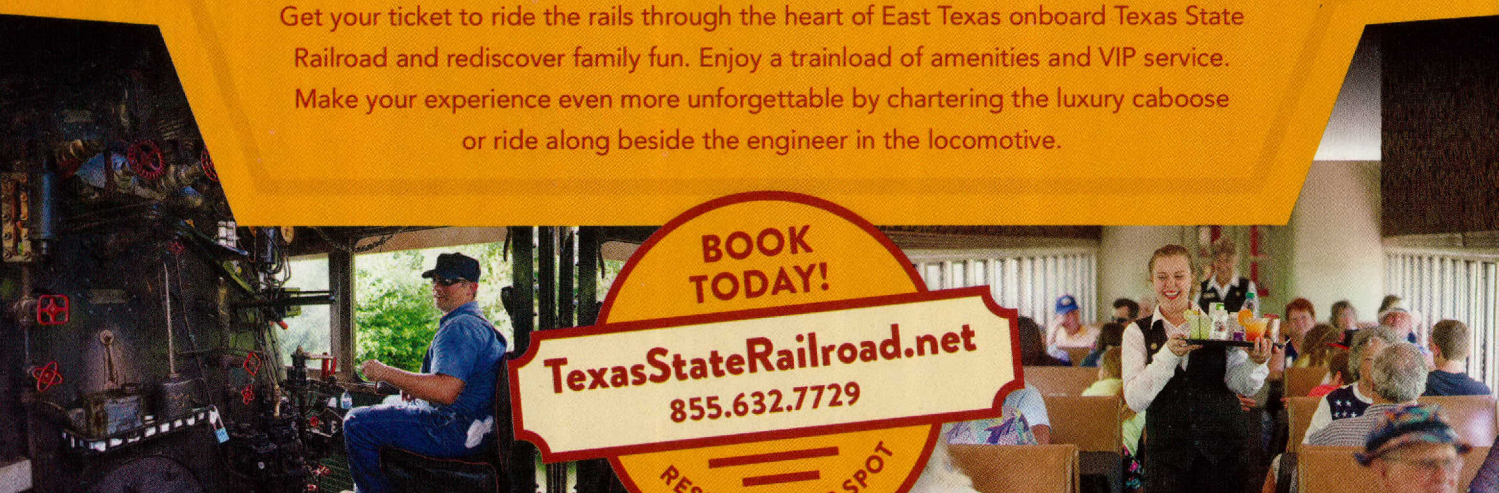




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# TEXANA

Bathing Pavilion, Hot Wells Hotel, San Antonio, Texas.



**A VINTAGE** postcard promotes the early 20th-century Hot Wells Hotel in San Antonio.

## Taking the Waters

The century-old glory days of Texas' mineral-water health resorts

By Gene Fowler

Fortified with a variety of minerals and elements, the medicinal bubbly was prescribed for wide-ranging ailments.

---

**D**r. John Sutherland would have died in the Battle of the Alamo had William Travis not dispatched him as a messenger to Gonzales. Years later, in 1849, Sutherland settled east of San Antonio on Cibolo Creek, opened a stage stop at the juncture of the Chihuahua and Goliad roads, and incorporated nearby sulfur springs into his medical practice. As the community bearing his name took root, Sutherland honed his steam and herb system of medicine, reportedly treating cholera and other maladies with some success.

A half-century later, a new Sutherland Springs arose along Cibolo Creek with a hotel and an immense sulfur water swimming pool. Known as "The Carlsbad of America" and "The Saratoga of the South," the spa drew health-seekers from far and wide, though the local population never topped 1,200. Ironically, too



## Taking the Waters Today: Not Such a Crazy Idea

While mineral-water resorts have gone the way of the foxtrot and the interurban railroad in Texas, for those who seek, the water still flows. Crazy Water from Mineral Wells is available at grocery stores, but nothing beats a pilgrimage to the antique Famous Water pavilion in Mineral Wells to taste the Crazy beverage at its source.

Famous Water Co., which sells Crazy Water, recently restored the Crazy bottling plant and opened a Crazy Bath House, where guests can bathe in the waters and spend the night. Both of the town's grand hotels, the Baker and the Crazy, are closed. Local investors are in the early stages of restoring the Crazy Hotel as a mixed-use development, while renovation plans come and go for the Baker.

In San Antonio, Bexar County is stabilizing the Hot Wells ruins as a park projected to open this year, while the nonprofit Hot Wells Conservancy plans to establish a museum and visitors center. Though the site's well has been plugged, developer James Lifshutz, who donated the site to Bexar County, plans to drill a new well on adjacent land and offer therapeutic bathing. "People all over the world are drawn to thermal healing waters," Lifshutz says, "and I want to bring back that legacy."

You can also take a hot mineral bath right now out at Chinati Hot Springs in Ruidosa, near the Texas-Mexico border southwest of Marfa.



**CRAZY WATER** is bottled in Mineral Wells.

much and too little water helped end the site's resort days, along with developers' legal woes. "A flood destroyed much of the resort in 1913," explains Richard McCaslin, author of *Saratoga Springs, Texas: Saratoga on the Cibolo*. "And the springs quit flowing when the water table went down after 1920."

Sutherland Springs was one of many alternative "Saratogas" and "Carlsbads" across Texas. West of Fort Worth, Mineral Wells was known as the place "Where America Drinks Its Way to Health." Near Waco, Marlin beckoned as "The South's Greatest Health Resort, Where Life-Giving Waters Flow." In San Antonio, the Hot Wells resort touted its steaming water as superior to the fabled waters of Europe. Natural spas also bubbled up in Wizard Wells, Stovall Hot Wells, Indian Hot Springs, Glen Rose, and Sour Lake.

Nineteenth- and early 20th-century

health-seekers drank and bathed in mineral water both hot and cold. Fortified with a variety of minerals and elements, the medicinal bubbly was prescribed for wide-ranging ailments, from backaches to cancer and diabetes. Medical opinions on the healing springs sometimes diverged. But many doctors—both classically trained and "alternative" healers—believed in the waters' efficacy, and like Sutherland, established their practices where mineral water was available.

The people of Marlin did not immediately perceive the natural-health bonanza that gurgled from their soil. When the Falls County seat drilled a new well for potable water in 1892, locals grimaced at the odiferous sulfur water that shot from the earth at 147 degrees. According to various accounts reported in early 1900s editions of the *Marlin Democrat* and *Texas Magazine*, a stranger discovered



the hot water's therapeutic benefit when he repeatedly plunged into an old linseed barrel of hot well water, resulting in the cure of his skin affliction or blood disease.

Bathhouses and hotels sprang up, and by the early 1900s, Marlin was a hot spot for spring training among professional baseball clubs, including the Chicago White Sox, Philadelphia Athletics, and New York Giants. "Drink it. Best stuff on earth," a practice field groundskeeper urged a New York journalist when he saw the scribbler frown at the water's taste, according to a 1908 *Democrat* story. As late as 1956, the American Society of Medical Hydrology held its annual meeting in Marlin.

"Marlin's mineral water was utilized as a therapeutic tool into the 1960s," says Janet Abbott, an Austin resident and president of the Balneology Association of North America, which researches and promotes mineral waters for wellbeing.

"Modern medicine directed seekers away from the water cures by replacing natural treatments that took time and patience with heavily advertised, quick-fix pharmaceutical remedies."

Today, Marlin's hot sulfur water still flows from a fountain at the town's chamber of commerce, and people can still fill jugs for free.

The same year that Marlin struck its water gusher, 1892, San Antonio drillers

**"Modern medicine directed seekers away from the water cures by replacing natural treatments with ... pharmaceutical remedies."**

uncorked a fountain of hot mineral water on the grounds of the Southwestern Lunatic Asylum, across the San Antonio River from Mission San José. Leased to a succession of entrepreneurs who built elegant hotels and bathhouses, the site—dubbed Hot Wells—attracted not only health-seekers but also celebrities such as Will Rogers, Theodore Roosevelt, and Porfirio Díaz. "No use to go outside the state to Topo Chico, Mexico, or Hot Springs, Arkansas," promised a Hot Wells advertisement in San Antonio's 1892-93 city directory, "as these springs are not only equal, but superior to them."

Hot Wells visitors could also enjoy dancing, bowling, gambling, visits to Mission San José, and the spa's alligator and ostrich farms. In 1910 and 1911, spa guests could venture across the river to watch French cinema pioneer Gaston Méliès make silent films. Shooting feverishly, Méliès' Star Film Ranch made some



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# TEXANA

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70 movies in San Antonio, including *The Immortal Alamo*. Today the company's 20-acre site is part of Bexar County's Padre Park.

Movie magic also graced the state's largest and best-known spa, Mineral Wells, tucked in a picturesque valley of the Palo Pinto hills in North Texas. With its two grand hotels, the Baker Hotel and the Crazy Hotel, both built in the late 1920s, silver screen legends like Clark Gable, Marlene Dietrich, and D. W. Griffith visited the "town built on water."

The James Lynch family discovered the healing waters of Mineral Wells when they drilled a well in 1880. The resource tasted funny, but after drinking it for a while, family members felt renewed and restored. Soon, locals were crediting the water with curing everything from cancer to anxiety and rheumatism.

The next year, a woman suffering from dementia sat drinking from one local well for days on end until, as town legend tells, "the crazy old lady was not so crazy anymore." In time, the well became known as the "Crazy Well" and Crazy Water became Mineral Wells' best-known brand. The fact that it contains traces of lithium, an element used to treat mental imbalances, may indicate some fact among the folklore.

The Great Depression of the 1930s slowed the number of customers trekking to Mineral Wells to "drink their way to health." But economic hardship was only one factor that spelled the gradual decline in the popularity of mineral-water resorts in the 20th century. The discovery of antibiotics and other medical developments also took a toll, along with the advent of television and changing social trends.

It's hard to beat a natural elixir like Crazy Water, though, bottled today in the Brazos Valley spot where it was discovered. Indeed, the hydration and health appeal of mineral water remains evident in the variety of bottled offerings that fill the shelves of grocery and convenience stores. As they say in Mineral Wells, "Crazy Water—making people feel good inside and out since 1881." 🐾

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# EVENTS



## Meals on Wheels

Food trucks face off to see who can make the best bite in Texas

By Mikela Floyd Kinnison

When it comes to food trucks, you may think cities like Portland and Los Angeles have the market cornered, but on March 16, Waco plans to give them a run for their money. Since 2015, foodies have flocked to the heart of the Lone Star State to sink their teeth into the signature dishes of various truck cuisines—from Italian and Mexican to Mediterranean—at the annual Texas Food Truck Showdown. Up to 40 trucks and a crowd of approximately 25,000 is expected to chow down and witness the crowning of the next Texas Food Truck Champion. In addition to celebrity judges and a beer and wine garden, festivities include live music, family-friendly activities such as petting zoos and ponies, and, of course, a cornucopia of Texas' finest street food.

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##### International Series: Bandini-Chiacchiaretta Tango Duo

March 2  
Experience the joy, sincerity, and passion of tango. Austin ISD Performing Arts Center, 1500 Barbara Jordan Blvd. 512-300-2247; [austinclassicalguitar.org](http://austinclassicalguitar.org)

#### Austin

##### South by Southwest

March 8-17  
Noted filmmakers, musicians, and multimedia artists from around the world converge to showcase music, film, and interactive media across more than 50 venues during this internationally recognized event. Various locations. [sxsw.com](http://sxsw.com)

#### Austin

##### Crime and Punishment

March 21-April 6  
As a police inspector investigates a gruesome murder, audience members journey through the mind of a criminal. What did he do? Why did he do it? And what would you be capable of in certain circumstances? Before "Law & Order," there was *Crime and Punishment*. Performed in 90 minutes with only three actors, this chamber piece compresses all the tension and pathos of the novel into a powerful evening of theater. Dive into one of the greatest crime stories ever written, a tale of murder, motive, and redemption that plumbs the depths of the human soul. *Ground Floor Theatre*, 979 Springdale Road, No. 122. [penfoldtheatre.org](http://penfoldtheatre.org)

#### College Station

##### Koresh Dance Company Show

March 8  
The Koresh Dance Company was founded in 1991 by Israeli-born choreographer and artistic director Ronen (Roni) Koresh. Known for its engaging performances and technically superb dancers, the company performs critically acclaimed works at its biannual

Philadelphia season, as well as in touring performances around the country. Koresh has been hailed internationally, touring to Spain, Turkey, Israel, South Korea, Mexico, and Guatemala. *Rudder Auditorium*, 401 Joe Routh Blvd. 979-862-5766; [academyarts.tamu.edu](http://academyarts.tamu.edu)

#### Llano

##### Wildflowers in Bloom Quilt Show

March 29-30  
The show features more than 100 quilts, door prizes, a quilt raffle, bed turning, vendors, demos, speakers, a thrift shop, the Antique Sewing and Quilting Museum, and more. *John L. Kuykendall Arena & Events Center*, 2200 W. RR 152. 325-247-5354; [hcqguild.wordpress.com/2019-quilt-show](http://hcqguild.wordpress.com/2019-quilt-show)

#### New Braunfels

##### Mary Shelley's Frankenstein

March 14  
Written two centuries ago in 1818, *Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus* was the first true science fiction novel. Years ahead of its time, the story has since become the inspiration for countless films and stage adaptations. "Frankenstein" is a living, breathing, gruesome outcome of scientific discovery. The piece still poses a myriad of critical ethical questions. Just because it can be done, should it be done? *Brauntex Performing Arts Theatre*, 290 W. San Antonio St. 830-627-0808; [brauntex.org](http://brauntex.org)

#### New Braunfels

##### Hill Country Comicon

March 16-17  
The event promotes art, literacy, and imagination through comics and pop culture. It features comic books, toys, cards, games, artwork, cosplay, apparel, guest creators, and celebrities. Break out your capes, helmets, light sabers, and wands and gather for a fun weekend. *Civic & Convention Center*, 375 S. Castell Ave. 830-625-2385; [hillcountrycomicon.com](http://hillcountrycomicon.com)

#### West

##### West, Central Texas Ceramic Expo and Handcrafted Items

March 15-16  
Learn a new hobby or stock up on ceramic supplies. *West Knights*



**FREE  
EVENTS  
GUIDE**

For a free subscription to the quarterly Texas Highways Events Calendar, go to [texashighways.com/eventsubscription](http://texashighways.com/eventsubscription)

of Columbus Club, 2547 Jerry Mashek Drive. 254-716-5227; [westceramicshow.com](http://westceramicshow.com)

**NORTH TEXAS / PANHANDLE**

**Copperas Cove  
Five Hills Art Festival:  
Bridge the Gap**

March 30-31  
The fourth annual art festival features talents and handmade designs from local and traveling painters, jewelers, photographers, sculptors, wood workers, and more. Find plenty of music, dancing, performances, and food trucks for all to enjoy. *Ogletree Gap, 1878 Post Office Road. 254-458-8424; [fivehillsartguild.com](http://fivehillsartguild.com)*

**Dallas  
Quilt Show**

March 8-10  
More than 400 quilts compete for \$15,000 in prize money. The theme this year is animals. There are more than 100 vendors, free demonstrations, lectures, and a mini quilt auction. *Dallas Market Hall, 2100 N. Stemmons Freeway. 214-535-1161; [quiltersguildofdallas.org](http://quiltersguildofdallas.org)*

**Denton  
Tejas Storytelling Festival**

March 7-10  
Storytellers from across the nation come to share ghost stories, tall tales, family stories, sacred stories, personal experience stories, and folktales from around the world. *Various locations. 940-380-9320; [tejasstorytelling.com](http://tejasstorytelling.com)*

**Ennis  
Noises Off**

March 22-April 7  
In "the funniest farce ever written," a manic menagerie of itinerant actors rehearse a flop called *Nothing's On*. In this live performance, doors slamming, on-and-offstage intrigue, and an errant herring all figure in the plot of this classically comic play. *Ennis Public Theatre, 113 N. Dallas St. 972-878-7529; [ennispublictheatre.com](http://ennispublictheatre.com)*

**Frisco  
Texas Pinball Festival**

March 21-24  
The event features more than 400 vintage and new pinball machines available for play. Guests enjoy tournaments, vendors, celebrity guests, and more. *Embassy Suites & Frisco Conference Center, 7600 John Q Hammons Drive. [visitfrisco.com](http://visitfrisco.com)*



**Grand Prairie  
Kids Fest**

March 16  
Enjoy fun, educational shows at the Big Red Patio along with carnival rides, great food, and 3,200 vendors. *Traders Village, 2602 Mayfield Road. 972-647-2331; [tradersvillage.com](http://tradersvillage.com)*

**Richardson  
The Best of The Second City**

Feb. 28, March 1, 2  
This show features the best sketches and songs from The Second City made famous by superstars like Tina Fey, Stephen Colbert, Steve Carell, Gilda Radner, Bill Murray, and more—as well as their trademark improvisation. This show contains mature content. *Eisemann Center, 2351 Performance Drive. 972-744-4650; [eisemanncenter.com](http://eisemanncenter.com)*

**Richardson  
B—The Underwater Bubble Show**

March 10  
Inspired by Cirque du Soleil, the show is rich in various stage effects using the latest laser technologies, snow cannons, soap bubble tornadoes, theatrical fog, gigantic smoke rings, smoke-filled soap bubble machines, optical illusions, and other surprises. After another long day, Mr. B finds himself transported, as if by magic, to a special, colorful, happy place called Bubblelandia. The "inhabitants" of Bubblelandia—seahorses, dragonfish, starfish, mermaids, clownfish, and others—carry Mr. B along his imaginary journey in an underwater world where fantasy becomes reality. *Eisemann Center, 2351 Performance Drive. 972-744-4650; [eisemanncenter.com](http://eisemanncenter.com)*

**Richardson  
Stomp**

March 22-23  
A unique combination of percussion, movement, and visual comedy, *Stomp* has created its own inimitable, contemporary form of rhythmic expression: both household and industrial objects find new life as musical instruments in the hands of an idiosyncratic band of body percussionists. The eight-member troupe uses everything but conventional percussion instruments—matchboxes, wooden poles, brooms, garbage cans, Zippo

lighters, and hubcaps—to fill the stage with magnificent rhythms. *Eisemann Center, 2351 Performance Drive. 972-744-4650; [eisemanncenter.com](http://eisemanncenter.com)*

**Richardson  
Shh! We Have a Plan**

March 31  
A nonverbal tale featuring magic, music, and puppetry based on the Chris Haughton book of the same name, this performance tells the journey of a family adventuring through the woods. When they see a beautiful bird perched high in a tree, each of these three madcap characters have a plan to capture it. Join along as the youngest teaches everyone that treating nature with respect is more important than getting what you want. *Eisemann Center, 2351 Performance Drive. 972-744-4650; [eisemanncenter.com](http://eisemanncenter.com)*

**Sherman  
The Sherman Celtic Festival  
and Highland Games**

March 23-24  
The festival hosts a complete Scottish Highland athletic competition, the Douglass Cup pipe and drum competition, a Scottish Highland Dance competition, live Celtic and Irish music from numerous bands, Celtic and artisan vendors, cultural exhibits, more than 30 Scottish Clans, and more. The 2019 theme is Cultural Connections—celebrating the cultural and historical connections that link the U.S. with Celtic countries. *North of Midway Mall, 2190 Fallon Drive. 903-892-7230; [shermancecelfest.com](http://shermancecelfest.com)*

**Shiner  
Spring into Quilting Show**

March 8-9  
This quilt exhibit has an adult and youth division, block challenge, guild boutique, demonstrations, and food and drink. *Methodist Church Activity Center, 102 W. Church St. [shinerheritagequilters.org](http://shinerheritagequilters.org)*

**EAST TEXAS**

**Conroe  
Rising Stars and Legends of Texas**

March 11-16  
The event kicks off its third year with a weeklong celebration of the arts and culture. It brings the community a smorgasbord of fine-art offerings,

from painting, sculpture, and poetry, to theater and music, culminating with a performance by a Texas legend on March 16. *Downtown Conroe, 234 N. Main St. 936-539-8879; [greaterconroeartsalliance.com](http://greaterconroeartsalliance.com)*

**Kilgore  
Kilgogh Arts Festival**

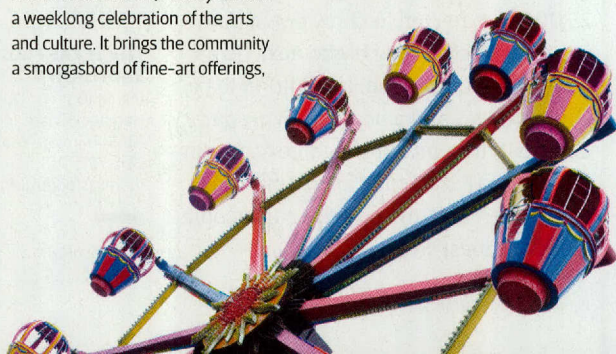
March 29-31  
In its seventh year, Kilgore's annual arts festival has expanded to a three-day event that provides more time for people to view, experience, and immerse themselves in the art showcased by artists from East Texas and beyond. This year's theme of "Gogh Big or Go Home" is sure to produce thought-provoking artwork to the annual artist and student artwork competitions. *Historic Downtown Kilgore, Kilgore and Main Street. 903-984-2593; [kilgogh.com](http://kilgogh.com)*

**Lufkin  
Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood—  
King for a Day**

March 17  
Based on the No. 1 PBS KIDS TV series, this delightful musical is for all the little tigers and their moms and dads. Not only is this performance filled with sweetness, charm, and songs to sing along with, it teaches valuable lessons of kindness, helping others, and being a friend. *Angelina College Temple Theater, 3500 S. First St. 936-633-5454; [angelinaarts.org](http://angelinaarts.org)*

**Marshall  
East Texas Square and Round  
Dance Hoedown**

March 29-30  
Square dancing is a clean, family-oriented, fun activity for all ages from early teens to nonagenarians. Guests have the opportunity to meet the officers from the Texas State Federation of Square and Round Dancers, plus many other officers and dancers from all over Texas. There is free admission for non-square dancers. Square and round dance lessons are offered throughout the year by local clubs. *Marshall Convention Center, 2501 East End Blvd. S. 903-790-4565; [etsrda.com](http://etsrda.com)*





**Tyler**  
**Lagniappe: The Art of Letitia Huckaby**

Through March 17  
This solo exhibition spotlights the family narratives and African American history themes prevalent in the work of acclaimed photographer and multimedia artist Letitia Huckaby. *Tyler Museum of Art, 1300 S. Mahon Ave. 903-595-1001; tylermuseum.org*

**Tyler**  
**Distinguished Lecture Series: Dan Rather**  
March 19

With more than 60 years spent chronicling the world and nation, few can match the authority, experience, and perspective that the famed newsmen brings to almost any subject. With a career that began in radio and is currently shaping news coverage in social media and beyond, Dan Rather has earned his place as one of the world's most influential and respected journalists. *R. Don Cowan Fine and Performing Arts Center, 3900 University Blvd., FAC 1120. 903-566-7424; cowancenter.org*

**SOUTH TEXAS / GULF COAST**

**Eagle Pass**  
**International Friendship Festival**  
April 22-30

The festival includes the Abrazo Ceremony at Bridge No. 1 March 22, carnival March 22-30, Noches Mexicanas March 28-30, and downtown parade March 30. *Shelby Park, at the end of Main Street under Bridge No. 1. 830-773-3224*

**Houston**  
**To Be of Use: The Functional Ceramics of Mike Helke, Ayumi Horie, and East Fork**  
Through May 12

This group exhibition demonstrates the uniqueness, independent spirit, and social relevance found in the handmade as it compares the different creative paths taken by three makers of contemporary functional ceramics. *Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main St. 713-529-4848; craftthouston.org*

**Houston**  
**Tom Loeser: Please Please Please**  
Through May 12  
In partnership with the Museum of Craft and Design in San Francisco, the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft presents this traveling exhibition of the Wisconsin-based maker and designer's imaginative furniture and works on paper. The

playful show encourages viewers to shake up their habits and interact with the environment and one another, while considering issues such as body posture and etiquette that are often taken for granted. Loeser's work also raises a clever question: "If the furniture we sit on every day were totally different, would our lives be different, too?" *Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main St. 713-529-4848; craftthouston.org*

**Houston**  
**Mamma Mia!**  
Feb. 19-March 3

This raucous musical about a wedding on a Greek island tells a sweet story of love and heartbreak. A jukebox musical featuring all the hits from ABBA, "Mamma Mia!" is the ninth longest running show on Broadway and the longest running jukebox musical in Broadway history. *Theatre Under The Stars, 800 Bagby St. 713-558-8887; tuts.com/mammamia*

**Houston**  
**Little Shop of Horrors**  
March 6-April 28

This sci-fi musical has devoured the hearts of theatre-goers for more than 30 years. A nerdy flower shop clerk named Seymour stumbles across a new breed of plant which he affectionately names after his secret crush, Audrey. The exotic bloom offers the promise of fame and fortune, but Seymour soon discovers that the mysterious "Audrey II" also has a taste for blood, ominous origins, and an insatiable appetite for power. *Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway. 713-527-0123; stagestheatre.com*

**Houston**  
**Bayou City Art Festival**  
March 29-31  
Celebrate 48 years of fine art and giving back to local nonprofits with this festival featuring more than 300 artists. As one of the nation's premier outdoor fine art events, the three-day festival provides patrons with the opportunity to personally meet artists, view original works, and purchase world-class art. The festival benefits local nonprofit partners and features live music, local food vendors and food trucks, beverages, entertainment, and a Children's Creative Zone. An exhibition of student artwork composed of the top 30 finalists from the middle school art competition is also displayed

at the festival. *Memorial Park, South Picnic Lane. 713-521-0133; artcolonyassociation.org*

**Sugar Land**  
**George Lopez**  
March 9

The television, film, standup comedy, and late-night television star presents his stand-up comedy tour. *Smart Financial Centre at Sugar Land, 18111 Lexington Blvd. 281-207-6278; smartfinancialcentre.net*

**Victoria**  
**Swan Lake**  
March 2-3

Of all the great classics, *Swan Lake* remains the quintessential ballet, the one that defines the standards of a company, tests its dancers, and ennobles the spirit of the audience. This romantic fable of ill-fated passion, dream-like transformation, and ultimate forgiveness is set to Tchaikovsky's glorious score. With breathtaking choreography and a visually magnificent production, the fabled lake of the swans rises into view, inspiring awe for generations to come. *Leo J. Welder Center for the Performing Arts, 214 N. Main St. 361-575-2313; victoriaballet.org*

**WEST TEXAS**

**Alpine**  
**Constellations**  
March 1-10

Nick Payne's play is about free will, friendship, spellbinding exploration of love, quantum theory, and infinite possibility for heartbreak or for hope. *Sul Ross State University Studio Theatre, 400 N. Harrison St. 432-837-8218; sulross.edu/theatre*

**San Angelo**  
**Early Texas Ceramics and Furniture**

Through March 30  
This exhibit shows a wide array of early Texas ceramics and furniture. *San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, 1 Love St. 325-653-3333; samfa.org*

**San Angelo**  
**Evita**  
March 7

With more than 20 major awards to its credit, the original Broadway and West End production of Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's iconic musical embarks on an international tour this year, directed by legendary Broadway director Hal Prince. *Evita* charts the story of Eva Perón, wife of

Argentine dictator Juan Perón, from her humble beginnings to the extraordinary wealth, power, and status that ultimately led her to be heralded as the "spiritual leader of the nation" by the Argentine people. *Evita* features some of the best-loved songs in musical theater, including "Don't Cry For Me Argentina," "On This Night of a Thousand Stars," "Oh What a Circus," "You Must Love Me," and "Another Suitcase in Another Hall." *Murphey Performance Hall, 72 W. College Ave. 325-284-3825; sanangelopac.org*

**San Angelo**  
**The World of Musicals**  
March 18-19

The entire family can sing along to favorite and beloved musicals in one unforgettable evening. *Murphey Performance Hall, 72 W. College Ave. 325-284-3825; sanangelopac.org*

**Food & Drink**

**CENTRAL TEXAS**

**Bandera**  
**Wild Hog Explosion and Cookoff**  
March 15-16

Cookers compete in chicken, ribs, pork butt, and brisket categories on Friday and Saturday. Wild hogs are brought in for an action-packed day on Saturday, where teams of two enter the ring, catch a hog, and race to the finish line. This fun-filled event also includes vendor booths, arts and crafts, and music. Proceeds benefit the Kronkosky Library of Bandera County. *Mansfield Park, 2886 SH 16. 830-796-3045; banderacowboycapital.com*

**Bryan**  
**Downtown Bryan Firkin Fest**  
March 30

Firkins are small, generally wooden casks in which beer is fermented and then served out of as well. The beer from firkins is not filtered and often, additional ingredients such as spices, fruit, or extra hops are added. Even with the same ingredients, no two firkins are the same. Firkins and brewery reps from across the state of Texas are available, so you can sample these one-of-a-kind beers. *Blackwater Draw Brewery in Downtown Bryan, 701 N. Main St. 979-822-4920; downtownbryan.com/events*



# 7,000 azaleas in one garden?



The Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden is the largest in Texas, attracting visitors and enthusiasts from around the world. It's a big reason Nacogdoches has earned the title of Garden Capital of Texas. Peak season for this mother lode of color is mid-March through mid-April. If "wow" is what you're looking for, we have a Nac for that. Plan your personal tour at [NacogdochesAzaleas.com](http://NacogdochesAzaleas.com)

**Azalea Trail**  
Mid-March - Mid-April



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## EVENTS | MARCH 2019

### Fredericksburg Luckenbach Mud Dauber Festival and Chili Cookoff

March 16  
Feel the heat at this open chili cookoff and music festival named in honor of that pesky wasp. Luckenbach Texas. 830-997-3224; [luckenbachtexas.com](http://luckenbachtexas.com)

### Uvalde Corks and Kegs Queso Fest

March 23  
Enjoy three things Texas does best: queso, craft beer, and live music. The event also offers a queso competition and food and retail vendors. Uvalde Memorial Park, 379-443 E. Main St. 830-278-3361; [uvalde.org](http://uvalde.org)

### NORTH TEXAS / PANHANDLE

### Granbury General Granbury's Birthday Festival and Cookoff

March 16-17  
Barbecue lovers head to Granbury for the 41st annual bash. Put your barbecue skills to the test and compete for the best ribs, brisket, or beans. Find craft food and shopping vendors, fun activities, live music, and free cake and ice cream. Don't miss the hilarious Outhouse Race. Granbury Square. 682-936-4550; [granburysquare.com](http://granburysquare.com)

### Grand Prairie Shrimp Fest

March 9-10  
Combine choices of boiled shrimp, shrimp gumbo, or shrimp etouffee with music from the popular Cajun band Crawfish, and you have a fun-filled weekend. Traders Village, 2602 Mayfield Road. 972-647-2331; [tradersvillage.com](http://tradersvillage.com)

### Stephenville Ragin' Cajun

March 23  
This crawfish boil fundraiser for the Cross Timbers Fine Arts Council features live music, silent auctions, and great food. Agave at City Limits, 1907 E. Washington St. 254-965-6190; [ctfac.com](http://ctfac.com)

### SOUTH TEXAS / GULF COAST

### Fulton Oysterfest

March 7-10  
Whether you love oysters or aren't completely sure yet, the 40th annual event is a Gulf Coast must. During this weekend salute to the tasty bi-valve, visitors enjoy carnival rides, games, food, an oyster-eating contest, live music,

unique vendor booths, and family fun. Fulton Navigation Park, North Fulton Beach Road. 361-463-9955; [fultonoysterfest.org](http://fultonoysterfest.org)

### Houston Kosher Chili Cookoff

March 3  
The largest kosher food event in Houston offers a day of food, live entertainment, contests, and family activities while raising funds for nonprofit organizations in Houston's Jewish community. Congregation Beth Yeshurun, 4525 Beechnut St. [houstonkosherchilicookoff.com](http://houstonkosherchilicookoff.com)

## History & Heritage

### CENTRAL TEXAS

### Austin Woodward and Bernstein: Power, the Press, and the Presidency

March 20  
From breaking the Watergate story that led to President Nixon's resignation to Bob Woodward's revealing new book about President Donald Trump, few journalists have impacted American history like Pulitzer Prize winners Woodward and Carl Bernstein. For more than 45 years, their collective works have focused on the enduring themes of Watergate: government secrets, abuses of power, and the role of the press. Now, they've joined together for a speaking event to point out parallels from the past and provide unparalleled insights for the future—pulling back the curtain on Washington as only Woodward and Bernstein can. The event is moderated by Evan Smith, CEO and cofounder of The Texas Tribune. Paramount Theatre, 713 Congress Ave. 512-472-5470; [austintheatre.org](http://austintheatre.org)

### Austin Anita Hill: Speaking Truth to Power

March 24  
Anita Hill made sexual harassment a national issue by testifying at the Supreme Court confirmation hearings for Clarence Thomas in 1991. Her bravery empowered thousands of women to bring their own sexual harassment lawsuits and helped revolutionize the treatment of women in the workplace. Today, Hill continues her mission by fighting for institutional change to increase parity and protection for women and minorities. She'll

speak about lessons learned and progress won since her testimony, and how institutions can step up to promote equality—and why it's more important than ever before to keep fighting for vigorous enforcement of the law and create positive change within organizations. Paramount Theater, 713 Congress Ave. 512-472-5470; [austintheatre.org](http://austintheatre.org)

### Burton Texas Ranger Day

March 16  
Celebrate Burton's history with the Annie Maud Avis Memorial Fajita and Bean Cookoff and experience Texas Ranger camp life in the 1880s, live action folk life demonstrations, crafts, and tours of the Railroad Depot, as well as Burton Farmer's Cotton Gin Tours. The event has DJ music by the Kountry Chick. All proceeds are used to restore the Mt. Zion Historical Chapel. Downtown Burton, 307 N. Main St. 979-289-3378; [burtontexas.org](http://burtontexas.org)

### Fredericksburg WWII Pacific Combat Program at the National Museum of the Pacific War

March 9-10  
History comes to life with equipment and weapons used during WWII and a battle re-enactment set on an island in the Pacific. Pacific Combat Zone, 508 E. Austin St. 830-997-8600; [pacificwarmuseum.org](http://pacificwarmuseum.org)

### Fredericksburg Celebrate Texas!

March 16  
Feel history come to life with the Old Chisholm Trail Show, the Traditional American Indian Society, Tales of the Texas Rangers, and more. Texas Rangers Heritage Center, 1636 E. Main St. 830-990-1192; [trhc.org](http://trhc.org)

### Fredericksburg Fort Martin Scott Days

March 29-30  
This living history event brings the 1850s fort to life with cannon firings, bugle calls, military drills, soldiers' stories, and pioneer crafts and cooking. Fort Martin Scott, 1606 E. Main St. 830-217-3200; [ftmartinsscott.org](http://ftmartinsscott.org)

### Gruene Texas Independence Day Celebration

March 2  
To celebrate the 182nd anniversary of Texas independence, Gruene Historic District throws its ninth annual Texas-size celebration. Gruene Historic District, 1601 Hunter Road. 830-629-5077; [gruenetexas.com](http://gruenetexas.com)



## Navasota

### Texas Birthday Bash

March 1-2

Navasota celebrates Texas Independence with all things Texas—from music to vendors and food. It's the biggest birthday party in Texas. In 1836, 7 miles down the road from Navasota in Washington-on-the-Brazos, the Texas Declaration of Independence was signed and the Republic of Texas was born. *Navasota City Hall, 200 E. McAlpine St. 936-825-6475; texasbirthdaybash.com*

## Washington

### Texas Independence Day Celebration

March 2-3

This annual living history celebration on the 293-acre Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site commemorates when 59 delegates bravely met in 1836 to make a formal declaration of independence from Mexico and form a nation. The admission-free event features two stages of nonstop live music and entertainment, arts and crafts, food trucks, and other family-friendly programs. Historical re-enactors set up a bona fide 1836 Texas Army camp on the park grounds, where visitors can wander freely to learn how soldiers and their families lived then, and witness musket and cannon firings. Admission fees are waived for the site's attractions (Independence Hall, Star of the Republic Museum, and Barrington Living History Farm) for the weekend. There is no better place to celebrate Texas independence than on the very spot "where Texas became Texas." *Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site, 23400 Park Road 12. 936-878-2214; wheretexasbecametexas.org*

## San Antonio

### Dawn at the Alamo

March 6

Join in the commemoration of the Battle of the Alamo as re-enactors from around the country gather to pay homage to both sides of this epic conflict. *Alamo Plaza, 300 Alamo Plaza. 210-219-7181; salha.org*

## EAST TEXAS

## Huntsville

### Texas Independence Day and Sam Houston's Birthday Celebration

March 2

A special ceremony honors General Sam Houston at his gravesite in Oakwood Cemetery and the gravesite ceremony includes a "Baptized Texan Ceremony,"

Immediately following is a luncheon. The day culminates at the Sam Houston Statue and Visitors Center with a "Toast to Texas," birthday cake, and a special commemorative award. *Various locations throughout Huntsville. 936-291-9726; huntsvilletexas.com*

## Woodville

### Toast to Texas Independence

March 2

Join Texans and honorary Texans around the world in saluting Texas Independence Day. The celebration includes a toast with pure East Texas spring water. *Heritage Village Stage, 157 PR 6000. 409-283-2272; heritage-village.org*

## SOUTH TEXAS/ GULF COAST

## Goliad

### Goliad Massacre and Living History Program

March 30-31

Re-enactors and living historians from across Texas gather to recreate the final days of Colonel James Fannin's command. Take a stroll through the camps of both the Mexican and Texian armies and visit with re-enactors as they go about their daily activities all inside the old stone walls of the presidio. Grab a front-row seat for one of the battle re-enactments. Stay over and immerse yourself in the turbulent times surrounding Fannin and his men with the candlelight tours Saturday evening. And finally, come back out Sunday to witness a recreation of the final days of Fannin's men before they were massacred, followed by a memorial at the Fannin Monument. Dress for the weather as this event takes place outdoors. *Presidio La Bahía, 217 US 183. 361-645-3752*

## Nederland

### Heritage Festival

March 12-17

Enjoy a celebration of Dutch heritage with a carnival, fun run, chili cookoff, crafts market, a washers tournament, a treasure hunt, entertainment in Tex Ritter Park, and the famous Cuisine Walk. *Downtown Nederland, Boston Avenue. 422-692-6922; nederlandhf.org*

## WEST TEXAS

## San Angelo

### Frontier Ladies Living History Symposium

March 8-10

This event has workshops and presentations covering the lives,

clothing, daily routines, and customs of the ladies of the late 1800s frontier. *Fort Concho National Historic Landmark, 630 S. Oakes St. 325-234-0316; fortconcho.com*

## Holidays & Seasonal Celebrations

## CENTRAL TEXAS

## San Marcos

### Mystick Krewe of Okeanos Mardi Gras Parade

March 2

This free annual event flows through three historic neighborhoods. This year's theme is "Okeanos Salutes Texas Independence" since the event falls on Texas Independence Day. *Belvin Street. 512-659-6668; mistickkreweofokeanos.com*

## San Antonio

### Mardi Gras River Parade and Festival

March 2

A procession of decorated river floats transform the River Walk into a floating Mardi Gras celebration. Krewes of costumed revelers and live entertainment celebrate San Antonio style. Enjoy live music, entertainment, and food trucks. The public is encouraged to come dressed in masks, costumes, and beads. Free admission. *Downtown Area of the River Walk and Arneson River Theatre, 418 Villita St. 210-227-4262; thesanantonioriverwalk.com*

## San Antonio

### St. Patrick's Day Festival

March 16

Since 1968, the San Antonio River Walk has celebrated all thing green and Irish. Festival activities include face-painting, henna artistry, caricatures, photo booth, and Irish novelty items for sale. Floats release 110 pounds of environmentally friendly green dye into the San Antonio River, transforming a 2.5-mile stretch that's temporarily renamed "The River Shannon." *San Antonio River Walk. 210-227-4262; thesanantonioriverwalk.com*

## NORTH TEXAS/ PANHANDLE

## McKinney

### Krewe of Barkus Dog Parade

March 3

The 17th annual event features more than 250 dogs parading around the downtown square in

# 5 Spring events in the Piney Woods of Longview, TX



## 1 Longview Wine Festival

April 27, 2019

Texas wine, music, and food



## 2 Rodeo & Crawfish Boil

April 12-13, 2019

Two events; one fun weekend



## 3 Downtown Live

Fridays in April & May

Free concerts with food trucks



## 4 May the 4th Be With You

May 4, 2019

Symphony goes Star Wars



## 5 Dalton Days

April 6, 2019

Downtown wild west festival

VisitLongviewTexas.com





catch the  
*action*

Don't miss your chance to see the Stars shine as our home team takes the ice and the competition. The edge of your seat is all you'll need, so bring the family and catch the action all season long at the H-E-B Center in Cedar Park.



costumes based on this year's theme, "Canines Keeping It Real—A Barkus Salute to Reality TV." *Downtown McKinney, III St. Tennessee. 972-547-2660; downtownmckinney.com*

**Shamrock  
St. Patrick's Day Celebration**  
March 15-17

The state's official St. Patrick's Day celebration made its debut in 1938. The town celebrates with a kickoff banquet, live music, a carnival, Donegal Beard contest, parade, 5K run, and pageant. *Downtown. 806-256-2516; shamrocktexas.net*

**SOUTH TEXAS/ GULF COAST**

**Galveston**

**Mardi Gras!**  
Feb. 22-March 5  
Texas' largest Mardi Gras celebration is a two-weekend event that includes live entertainment, Electric Mardi Gras, balcony parties, and more. The holiday was first publicly observed in Galveston in 1867. *Downtown, 2314 Strand St. 409-770-0999; mardigrasgalveston.com*

**Nature & Outdoors**

**CENTRAL TEXAS**

**Austin**

**Zilker Kite Festival**  
March 31  
The nation's oldest kite festival celebrates its 90th year with hundreds of kites and free fun for all ages. This year's event is complete with kite-flying contests, food, games, and more. *Zilker Park, 2100 Barton Springs Road. abckitefestival.org*

**Bandera**

**Thunder in the Hill Country Biker Rally**  
March 28-31  
This three-day event offers tent camping, a poker run, vendors, food, field events, music all day Friday and Saturday, a bike show, a tattoo contest, and a Sunday morning church service. Attendees must be 21 or older, no exceptions. *Mansfield Park, 2886 SH 16. 830-796-3045; banderacowboycapital.com*

**Dripping Springs  
Texas Night Sky Festival**  
March 30-31

Celebrate the night with the return of Texas' most loved star-studded

event. On Saturday, this free biannual event features fun daytime and nighttime activities, including solar observations, mobile planetariums, demonstrations of glare-reducing lighting, opportunities to meet astronomers, tales of the night sky from indigenous cultures, delicious food, live music, and a star party. Hear world-renowned speakers and music by headliner Terri Hendrix. On Sunday, night sky advocates are invited to participate in a workshop led by the International Dark-Sky Association. *Dripping Springs Ranch Park and Event Center, 1042 Event Center Drive. texasnightskyfestival.org*

**Llano**

**LEAF: Llano Earth Art Fest**  
March 15-18  
Watch internationally renowned artists defy gravity with amazingly balanced rock sculptures. Listen to great musicians fill the park with song. Try your hand at rock balancing or see if you've got what it takes to compete in the World Rock Stacking Championship. For kids, there are plenty of activities, including a climbing wall, face painting, and more. Adults can take part in workshops, view and create art, or just relax in the sun. *Greenwidge Park. 325-247-5354; llanoearthartfest.org*

**Stonewall**

**LBJ 100 Bicycle Tour**  
March 30  
The 12th annual event includes routes of 10, 30, 42, and 62 miles throughout the scenic Texas Hill Country. *Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park, 199 Park Road 52. 830-868-7128; lbj100bicycletour.org*

**NORTH TEXAS/ PANHANDLE**

**Dalhath**

**Dust Bowl Marathon**  
March 20  
Five days, five marathons, and five states. All events include half-marathons, and walkers are welcome. *Rita Blanca Lake Trail. 806-244-5646; mainlymarathons.com/series-3/dust-bowl*

**Dallas**

**Dallas Blooms**  
Feb. 23-April 7  
The largest floral festival in the Southwest offers more than 100 varieties of spring bulbs and more than 500,000 blooms bursting with color. This year's theme, "Life's A Picnic," features an extraordinary, larger-than-life,

picnic scene topiary comprised of a stunning 40'x40' picnic blanket, vase of flowers, picnic basket with pie, and a giant picnic ant. *Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden, 8525 Garland Road. 214-515-6615; dallasarboretum.org*

**Plano**

**Texas Fly Fishing and Brew Festival**  
March 23-24

The third annual event introduces various aspects of fly fishing in a family-friendly atmosphere. Both experts and novices can learn more about where to fly fish locally and abroad. Fly fishing guides, fly shops, kayak experts, and instructors teach a wide variety of topics to help fishermen get out on the water more often. Those 21 and older can sample and purchase microbrew beer from various Texas microbreweries. *Plano Event Center, 2000 E. Spring Creek Parkway. 703-402-8338; visitplano.com*

**Waxahachie**

**Tulip Festival Month**  
March 1-30

Enjoy more than 1 million blooming tulips and themed activities. *Poston Gardens, 818 Cantrell. 214-718-1945; postongardens.com*

**EAST TEXAS**

**Nacogdoches**

**Azalea Trail**  
March 15-April 15  
Travel to Nacogdoches, the Garden Capital of Texas, to view the largest azalea garden in the state. With more than 7,000 azaleas, the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden located on the campus of Stephen F. Austin State University boasts spring color like nowhere else. While here, take time to drive the scenic Azalea Trail that stretches throughout gorgeous parts of the city. *Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden, 2107 University Drive. 936-564-7351; visitnacogdoches.org*

**Palestine**

**Dogwood Trails Celebration**  
March 22-April 7  
Held for more than 80 years, this celebration allows visitors to enjoy the beauty of the dogwood trees in Davey Dogwood Park. Activities are planned each weekend, including a festival the first weekend. Other activities include a historic tour, car show, brunch, live theater show, chuckwagon race, and a farm and flower market. *Historic Main Street, 825 W. Spring St. 903-723-3014; texasdogwoodtrails.com*



## Palestine

### Dogwood Brunch Train Ride

March 24

Enjoy the blooms of spring from the comfort of the Texas State Railroad. Visitors to East Texas can enjoy a special brunch train ride to make the viewing a truly memorable occasion. *The Texas State Railroad*, 789 Park Road 70. 855-632-7729; [texasstaterailroad.net](http://texasstaterailroad.net)

## Tyler

### Azalea and Spring Flower Trail

March 22-April 7

Enjoy the vivid colors and sweet scents that only an East Texas spring can provide. Travel through 10 miles of residential gardens and historic homes sites, and stop to visit with the Azalea Belles, the official greeters of the Azalea Trail. *Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce*, 315 N. Broadway Ave. 903-592-1661; [visittyler.com/azaleatrail](http://visittyler.com/azaleatrail)

## Woodville

### Tyler County Dogwood Festival

March 22-April 6

The oldest outdoor historical pageant in the south calls attention to the beauty of the area. The festival features live bluegrass, gospel, and country music; a village tour; demonstrations; exhibits; trail rides, a parade; a rodeo; a 5K fun run; a car and motorcycle exhibit; arts and crafts; food; a coronation ceremony; a historical play; and fireworks. *Various locations*. 409-283-2632; [tylercountydogwoodfestival.org](http://tylercountydogwoodfestival.org)

## SOUTH TEXAS/ GULF COAST

## Corpus Christi

### Name that Wildflower Class

March 9

Nueces master gardener and wildflower expert Betty Whitt shares where and when to find wildflowers, giving resources to help identify and appreciate these natural Texas beauties. *South Texas Botanical Gardens and Nature Center*, 8545 S. Staples St. 361-852-2100; [stxbot.org](http://stxbot.org)

## Rockport

### Whooping Crane Strut

March 9

The 31st annual event features a 5K run, a 10K run, or a 2-mile walk. *Rockport Beach*. 361-727-2158; [rockport-fulton.org](http://rockport-fulton.org)

## Victoria

### The Texas Mile

March 22-24

Drivers compete against themselves as they see how fast their

cars, trucks, and motorcycles can go in 1 mile—with no speed limit. *Victoria Regional Airport*, 609 Foster Field Drive. 281-303-1844; [texasmile.net](http://texasmile.net)

## WEST TEXAS

## San Angelo

### Crazy Desert Trail Race

March 9-10

The race includes a 100K, 50K, 13.1K, and 10K. The location has a good mix of rolling hills and a variety of terrain. *San Angelo State Park*, 7126 N. FM 2288. 325-655-4136; [trailracingovertexas.com/crazy-desert-trail-race](http://trailracingovertexas.com/crazy-desert-trail-race)

## Music

## CENTRAL TEXAS

## Boerne

### Concert in the Cave—Spring Equinox

March 23

A concert in the Cave Without A Name is a musical experience unlike any other. Immerse yourself in the natural acoustics of the Queen's Throne Room. *Cave Without A Name*, 325 Kreuzberg Road. 830-537-4212; [visitboerne.org](http://visitboerne.org)

## College Station

### Boston Pops in Concert

March 22

The Boston Pops, known as "America's Orchestra," is the most recorded and arguably the most beloved orchestra in the country. Led by conductor Keith Lockhart, the orchestra performs a broad spectrum of styles from past to present, including jazz, big band, pop, Broadway, and film scores. It's the perfect combination of classical and pop—an evening of symphony for people who don't know they love the symphony. *Rudder Auditorium*, 401 Joe Routh Blvd. 979-845-1234; [hmscopas.org/boston\\_pops](http://hmscopas.org/boston_pops)

## New Braunfels

### Johnny Bush in Concert

March 1

Celebrate Texas Independence Day with Texas Country Music Hall of Famer Johnny Bush. He is best known for his distinctive voice and as the writer of "Whiskey River," a Top 10 hit for himself and Willie Nelson's signature song. *Brauntex Performing Arts Theatre*, 290 W. San Antonio St. 830-627-0808; [brauntex.org](http://brauntex.org)

## New Braunfels

### Memories of Elvis

March 7

Enjoy an unforgettable evening complete with a three-course chef-prepared dinner and a show. Award-winning entertainer Travis Hudson takes attendees on a trip down memory lane as he performs nostalgia-worthy Elvis tunes. *Sylver Spoon*, 6700 N. I-35. 830-627-7226; [sylverspoon.com](http://sylverspoon.com)

## New Braunfels

### Squeezebox and Mollie B in Concert

March 14

International Polka Hall of Famer Mollie B. performs live folk dance music. Squeezebox has something for everyone in their huge repertoire of more than 800 songs, featuring tunes in Czech, Polish, and German. *Krause's Cafe*, 148 S. Castell Ave. 830-625-2807; [krausescafe.com/events](http://krausescafe.com/events)

## Round Top

### Pianist James Dick in Concert

March 9

Enjoy an afternoon of solo piano virtuosity from the founder and artistic director of the Round Top Festival Institute. From his early years as prize winner of some of the world's most prestigious piano awards to his current successful career as an international guest artist, James Dick melds modern-day energy and technique with an Old World graciousness and civility. The result is a passionate sound that keeps audiences engrossed. After the concert, spend an evening at an elegant reception and buffet dinner in the Menke House Parlours. *Festival Concert Hall*, 248 Jaster Road. 979-249-3129; [festivalhill.org](http://festivalhill.org)

## San Antonio

### Jazz on the River

March 2-5

Get your jazz fix with everything from brass bands, trios, and jazz ensembles as they float on the beautiful River Walk. Sounds of jazz fill the night air along the 2.5-mile route. *San Antonio River Walk*, downtown area. 210-227-4262; [thesanantonioriverwalk.com](http://thesanantonioriverwalk.com)

## NORTH TEXAS/ PANHANDLE

## Irving

### Texas Steel Guitar Jamboree

March 7-10

Steel guitarists from the U.S. and around the world come together for the 35th annual event. There are educational seminars, vendors, and manufacturers of steel guitar and music products. The U.S. Navy's

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country-bluegrass band, Country Current, performs. *Sheraton DFW*, 4440 W. John Carpenter Freeway. 817-558-3481; [texassteelguitar.org](http://texassteelguitar.org)

**McKinney**

**From Vienna to Liverpool: A Tribute to the Beatles**

March 30  
The Janoska Ensemble consists of four young classically trained musicians—Ondrej, František, and Roman Janoska plus Julius Darvas—who have combined their individual musical talents. *McKinney Performing Arts Center*, 111 N. Tennessee. 214-544-4630; [mckinneyperformingartscenter.org](http://mckinneyperformingartscenter.org)

**Richardson**

**Plano Symphony: The Young Artists and a Salute to Leonard Bernstein**

March 16  
In August 2018, Bernstein—an American composer, conductor, author, music lecturer, and pianist—would have turned 100 years old. To celebrate, the Plano Symphony Orchestra welcomes Chamberlain Performing Arts for Bernstein's West

*Side Story* dances. Then, the winners of the annual Collin County Young Artist Competition perform their concerto-winning acts. *Eisemann Center*, 2351 Performance Drive. 972-473-7262; [planosymphony.org](http://planosymphony.org)

**EAST TEXAS**

**Crockett**

**Blood, Sweat, and Tears in Concert**

March 9  
A 21st-century version of one of the music world's most popular bands; Blood, Sweat & Tears is the next chapter in a musical tale that stretches from the late '60s to the swiftly changing world of the 21st century. Hit singles include "Spinning Wheel" and "When I Die." *Crockett Civic Center*, 1100 Edmiston Drive. 936-544-427; [pwfaa.org](http://pwfaa.org)

**Lufkin**

**Black Violin in Concert**

March 21  
With their signature blend of classical and hip-hop, these young musicians with a worldwide following return to Lufkin. *Lufkin Middle School*

*Auditorium*, 900 E. Denman Ave. 936-633-5454; [angelinaarts.org](http://angelinaarts.org)

**Lufkin**

**The Doo Wop Project in Concert**

March 28  
The Pines Theater presents an evening filled with harmonies and classic '60s hits. Former stars of Broadway's *Jersey Boys* and *Motown: The Musical*, The Doo Wop Project brings authentic sound and vocal excellence to recreate some of the greatest music in American pop and rock 'n' roll history. *The Pines Theater*, 113 S. First St. 936-633-0359; [thepines.visitlufkin.com](http://thepines.visitlufkin.com)

**Palestine**

**Old Time Music and Dulcimer Festival**

March 29-31  
The 18th annual festival features workshops, concerts, jam sessions, and more. *The Museum for East Texas Culture*, 400 Micheaux Ave. 903-723-3014

**Tyler**

**The Chieftains in Concert**

March 16

As the band most recognized for reinventing traditional Irish music on a contemporary and international scale, the six-time Grammy winners have been making music together for more than 50 years. The opening act for this concert is Switchback, who play Americana and Celtic tunes. *R. Don Cowan Fine and Performing Arts Center*, 3900 University Blvd., FAC 1120. 903-566-7424; [cowancenter.org](http://cowancenter.org)

**SOUTH TEXAS/ GULF COAST**

**Galveston**

**The Rob Landes Trio Revisits the Music of WWI**

March 24  
Relive the big band sounds that kept this nation's spirit alive through the toughest war in U.S. history. This trip down memory lane is filled with stories and the subtle piano tunes of the day. The trio charms listeners with the memorable music of the past. *The Grand 1894 Opera House*, 2020 Postoffice St. 800-821-1894 or 409-765-1894; [thegrand.com](http://thegrand.com)

**Houston**

**Da Camera Presents: New York Philharmonic String Quartet**

March 29  
This new string quartet is comprised of four virtuosi principal musicians from the vaunted New York Philharmonic, who are equally at home as concerto soloists with the Philharmonic and orchestras around the world. Da Camera welcomes violinist Frank Huang, native Houstonian and former concertmaster of the Houston Symphony, back to the Bayou City as the quartet makes its Houston debut. *Zilkha Hall, Hobby Center*, 800 Bagby St., Suite 300. [dacamera.com](http://dacamera.com)

**Sugar Land**

**Camila and Sin Bandera in Concert**

March 23  
Camila, Mexico's premier pop/rock duo, and Latin pop legends Sin Bandera join forces to share the stage for the first time on their 4 Latidos Tour. *Smart Financial Centre at Sugar Land*, 18111 Lexington Blvd. 281-207-6278; [smartfinancialcentre.net](http://smartfinancialcentre.net)

**Sugar Land**

**The Beach Boys in Concert**

March 30  
The band synonymous with the California lifestyle performs during their Now & Then tour. *Smart Financial Centre at Sugar Land*, 18111 Lexington Blvd. 281-207-6278; [smartfinancialcentre.net](http://smartfinancialcentre.net)

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## Ranches & Rodeos

### NORTH TEXAS/ PANHANDLE

#### Arlington RFD TV's The American Rodeo

March 2-3  
Amateurs compete against a mixture of champions and top athletes from the PRCA and WPRA for their share of the \$2.35 million purse. Cowboy Church starts Sunday at 10:30 a.m. AT&T Stadium, 1 AT&T Way. 214-551-8483; americanrodeo.com

#### Waxahachie Ellis County Fair and Rodeo

March 21-30  
Enjoy a rodeo, concert, carnival, and livestock exposition. Ellis County Expo Center, 2300 US 287. 972-825-5175; elliscountyouthexpo.com

### EAST TEXAS

#### Conroe Montgomery County Fair and Rodeo

March 29-April 7  
This 10-day event features two Texas country concerts, an amazing CPRA rodeo, and carnival, plus fair food. Montgomery County Fairgrounds, 9201 Airport Road. 936-760-3631; mcfa.org

#### Huntsville Walker County Fair and Rodeo

March 21-30  
This event showcases a wide range of agricultural and livestock products and services, craft items, rides, food and beverages, free music, free attractions, and family-oriented games. Walker County Fairgrounds, 3925 SH 30. 936-291-8763; walkercountyfair.com

#### Woodville Tyler County Western Weekend Rodeo and Parade

March 29-30  
More than 2,000 trail riders travel by horseback and wagon to the county seat of Woodville during Western Weekend in an effort to preserve the heritage of the East Texas cowboy and enjoy the region's beauty. It's a not-to-miss weekend of trail rides, a rodeo, parade, and a western dance. Tyler County Fairgrounds and Downtown Woodville, 405 CR 2025. 409-283-2561; tylercountyydogwoodfestival.org

### SOUTH TEXAS/ GULF COAST

#### Goliad Goliad County Fair and PRCA Rodeo

March 15-17  
This county fair and rodeo is produced by Stace Smith, who produces more PRCA rodeos than any other stock contractor in the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association. Goliad County Fairgrounds, Auditorium Drive. 361-645-3563; smithprorodeos.com

### WEST TEXAS

#### Sweetwater 40-Plus Team Roping

March 2  
This team roping is for ropers age 40 and older. East Covered Arena at Nolan County Coliseum, 220 Coliseum Drive. 325-212-2736; nolancountycoliseum@gmail.com

## Shopping & Antiquing

### CENTRAL TEXAS

#### Fredericksburg Hill Country Indian Artifact Show

March 30  
Shop more than 75 tables of Native American artifacts including arrowheads, beads, and pottery. Pioneer Pavilion at Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park. 830-626-5561; hillcountryindianartifacts.com

#### Burton LaBahia Antiques

March 29-April 6  
Dealers across the country provide antiques, collectibles, vintage, and repurposed items at the show. Free admission and parking. LaBahia Hall, 550 SH 237. 979-289-2684; labahiaantiques.com

#### Seguin ArtsFest

March 2  
Artisans set up around the park selling handmade crafts, jewelry, art, and more. Throughout the day, enjoy live entertainment from area nonprofits and schools. The day's events culminate with an evening reception at the Texas Theater. The evening includes delicious food, local wine and beer, a silent auction, art sale, and live entertainment. Central Park, 201 S. Austin St. 830-401-5000; seguintexas.gov

## ★ 100th Column ★

## THE DAYTRIPPER'S TOP 5

# Sweetwater

A Texas-size roundup

BY CHET GARNER



Texas is already known for being big. But in our beloved "Big Country," things are taken to another level. When visiting Sweetwater, the history seems a little richer, the stories a little grander, and the snakes a little longer. If you find yourself in this Big Country town, don't miss these spots.

### 1 National WASP WWII Museum

Sitting on the old taxiways of Avenger Field, this museum marks the spot where, during World War II, an all-female air base trained—the only all-female military base then and now. While this may not seem like a big deal nowadays, until the 1940s, females had never flown military planes. Yet these brave women stepped up to form the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) and to serve the country by ferrying planes across the continent and even flying planes for target practice drills. Their stories make Rosie the Riveter look like child's play. 210 Avenger Field Road. 325-235-0099; waspmuseum.org

### 2 Big Boys Bar-B-Que

When hunger calls, answer it with a trip to this hometown joint where they're still cooking meat the cowboy way: over direct heat. Here, real cowboys order the Child's Plate: a big-boy portion of ribs, pork butt, and brisket that'll wrangle any appetite. The pork ribs come in two cuts: the traditional "Your Ribs" and the country-style "My Ribs," which will confuse your tongue but tingle your taste buds. 2117 Lamar St. 325-235-2700

### 3 J. Paul Turner Winchester Collection

Inside the Nolan County Courthouse is a small display that holds one of the largest private collections of antique Winchester rifles in the world. Donated by collector J. Paul Turner, the collection holds 88 guns, some of which are the last of their kind. When donated, Turner dictated that each gun be kept clean and in firing condition. Even if you don't know the first thing about rifles, you've gotta give this museum a shot. 100 E. Third St. 325-235-8547

### 4 World's Largest Rattlesnake Roundup

Each year, folks from around the globe come to see one of the largest (and oldest) rattlesnake roundups in the world, where thousands of rattlesnakes fill the rodeo arena. Don't worry—they are mostly in cages...and pits...and educational shows. Collected from local ranches, the snakes are measured, weighed, and milked (the process for extracting venom for research). The roundup is a smattering of snake-themed events, contests, and a market where vendors sell every snake souvenir imaginable. March 8-10; rattlesnakeroundup.net

### 5 Guided Rattlesnake Hunt

Along with the Roundup, the Sweetwater Jaycees lead guided rattlesnake hunts to local ranches where you can see dozens of rattlers emerging from their dens. Nothing will get your heart racing faster than staring down a rattler with only a pair of snake tongs between you and its juicy fangs. It definitely gave me new respect for the West Texas farmers who must cohabitate with these scaly neighbors. \$75; rattlesnakeroundup.net/guided-hunts.html

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 Sweetwater episode visit thedaytripper.com. Follow along on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter @chetripper.



**FREE EVENTS GUIDE**

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**Waco**  
**10-2-4 Collector's Club Convention**

March 10  
The convention celebrates its 34th annual event. The public is invited to view and shop for Dr Pepper collectibles at 10 a.m. Hilton Waco, 113 S. University Parks Drive. 254-757-1025; [drpeppermuseum.com](http://drpeppermuseum.com)

**Waco**  
**Spring at the Silos**

March 14-16  
In celebration of the arrival of spring, this event features a free vendor fair, additional food trucks, and no shortage of florals. Magnolia Market, 601 Webster Ave. 254-235-0603; [magnolia.com](http://magnolia.com)

**NORTH TEXAS/ PANHANDLE**

**Big Spring**  
**Gem and Mineral Show**

March 2-3  
The 50th annual show has displays, dealers, working demonstrations, and food vendors. Howard County Fair Barn, 2900 Old State Highway 80. 432-528-7323

**Fort Worth**  
**Funky Finds Spring Fling**

March 9-10  
The 11th annual event is the perfect opportunity to shop for local, handmade goods from more than 100 artists, crafters, designers, authors, and gourmet food makers. The free, pet-friendly event also features a charitable raffle with all proceeds benefitting the Humane Society of North Texas and CASA of Tarrant County. There are on-site pet adoptions all weekend. Will Rogers Memorial Center, Cattle 1 Building, 3401 Burnett-Tandy Drive. 903-665-7954; [funkyfinds.com/spring-fling](http://funkyfinds.com/spring-fling)

**Fort Worth**  
**Pearl Snaps and Dust: Upscale Vintage with a Little Bit of Rust**

March 9-10  
For more than 10 years, Funky Finds has been producing some of the best and largest handmade events in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. This event allows visitors to shop local for special and funky items. Will Rogers Memorial Center, Small Exhibits Building, 3405 Burnett-Tandy Drive. 903-665-7954; [funkyfinds.com/pearl-snaps-dust](http://funkyfinds.com/pearl-snaps-dust)

**Wichita Falls**  
**Top of Texas Market**

March 30-31  
This annual event entices visitors to shop all weekend from vintage dealers, artisans, and crafters. Roy Clymer Exhibit Hall, 1000 Fifth St. 940-723-0623; [topoftexasmarket.com](http://topoftexasmarket.com)

**EAST TEXAS**

**Huntsville**  
**Rusty, Chippy, Vintage, Hippy, and Garden Show**

March 9-10  
Brings an antique, vintage, and repurposed wonderland to this little corner of East Texas. Walker County Fairgrounds, 3925 SH 30. 936-661-2545; [huntsvilleantiqueshow.com](http://huntsvilleantiqueshow.com)

**SOUTH TEXAS/ GULF COAST**

**Rosenberg**  
**Junk Hippy**

March 8-9  
The event features vintage furniture and decor, farmhouse and shabby chic finds, retro and midcentury goods, and handmade items. Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, 4310 SH 36. 405-242-3290


**Want more? View the Texas Highways Events Calendar at [texashighways.com/events](http://texashighways.com/events).**


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

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

To submit event information, visit [texashighways.com/submitevent](http://texashighways.com/submitevent).

**Listing deadlines:**  
Spring (March, April, May): Dec. 1  
Summer (June, July, Aug.): March 1  
Fall (Sept., Oct., Nov.): June 1  
Winter (Dec., Jan., Feb.): Sept. 1



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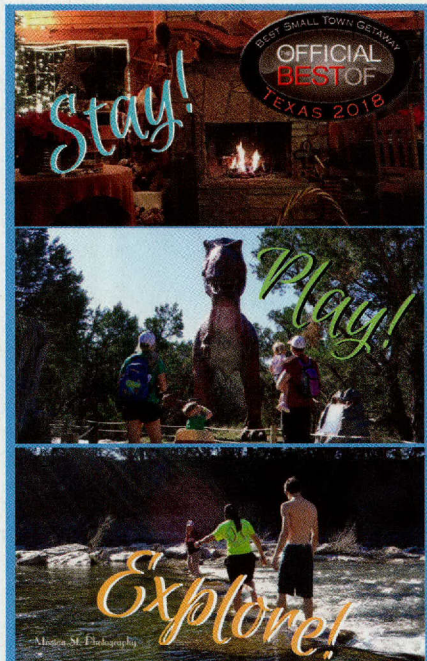
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# SPRINGTIME MEANS GALVESTON IS CALLING

There's nothing quite like visiting the beach this time of year. Feeling the sand beneath your feet, welcoming the sun as it shines above and exhaling with a sense of instant calm – as if the spring air has brought in a fresh promise of renewal as it rolls off the waves.

This is what being on Galveston Island is all about.

But, if you step away from the island's 32 miles of sun-soaked shores, you'll also discover a place that balances the old and the new with captivating ease.

Drawing you in with its old-world charm, Galveston is the type of place that nurtures curiosity. There's something enchanting about exploring its rich history and visiting historic sites like the 1892 Bishop's Palace and 1895 Moody Mansion. Wandering through residential neighborhoods like the East End Historical District will make you feel like you've traveled back in time, leaving you to imagine all that used to be.

The new Bryan Museum has the same effect. Here, you can stand in awe of one of the world's largest collections of artifacts, documents and artwork relating to the American West. And, as a bonus, the museum is housed in a completely restored 1895 orphanage that is just as fascinating as the 70,000 historic items found inside.

Along the harbor, downtown Galveston's majestic Victorian architecture creates the perfect backdrop for shopping or perusing the district's many boutiques, antique shops and coastal-inspired art galleries. A visit to La King's Confectionery is always in order (as is indulging in its irresistible chocolates, ice cream and fresh saltwater taffy). Catching a live show at The Grand 1894 Opera House is an equally enjoyable treat in an intimate setting with no seat further than 70 feet from the stage.

With all its Victorian beauty, the island is just as much a modern destination for family fun, whether you dare to ride the world's tallest water

coaster at Schlitterbahn Galveston or ride the state's tallest swing ride at the Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier. You could spend days exploring family adventure resort Moody Gardens with its three iconic pyramids housing an impressive aquarium, living rainforest, 3D or 4D theaters, and discovery museum.

As the weather breaks, making it just right for outdoor adventure, the possibilities for new experiences in Galveston are endless, from horseback riding on the beach and kayaking on the bay to flyboarding on the bayou. You can take a dolphin tour or sunset cruise from Pier 21 or go fishing almost anywhere you see water.

And, with all Galveston has to offer, the best part is there's no pressure on island time. You can do it all or simply remain at the beach, sinking your toes in the sand and taking in spring one relaxing breath at a time. Visit [galveston.com](http://galveston.com) to plan your island time.



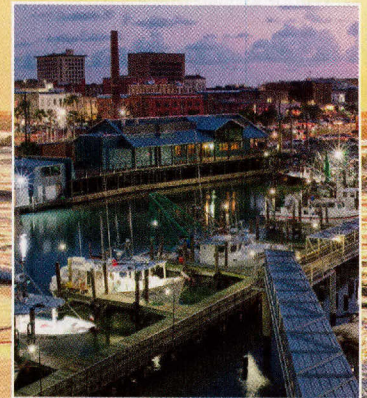
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## Ocean Star Offshore Drilling Rig & Museum

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Embark on an industrial-strength discovery in a modern museum setting. The Ocean Star offers the opportunity to physically enter the world of the offshore industry. So much of our modern society relies on oil and things made from it. At the Ocean Star Museum learn how hydrocarbons form and what it takes to extract them from the earth—from people and processes to tools and technologies. Open seven days a week for self guided tours, step aboard for a unique learning adventure. Discount rates are available for groups.

[www.OceanStarQEC.com](http://www.OceanStarQEC.com)  
409-766-7827



## Galveston Naval Museum

Immerse yourself in National World War II Heritage at the Galveston Naval Museum at Seawolf Park.

Explore historic warships on a self-guided tour or with a veteran tour guide. Experience first-hand, USS Cavalla, the heroic submarine that helped turn the tide of WWII.

Walk the decks of USS Stewart, a protector of Allied forces in the North Atlantic and the only Edsall-class destroyer escort in the United States.

Group sleepovers available year round.

[www.GalvestonNavalMuseum.com](http://www.GalvestonNavalMuseum.com)  
409-770-3196



## Holiday Inn Resort Galveston - On The Beach

Family-fun is in store at the Holiday Inn Resort Galveston – On the Beach! The beachfront resort is the ultimate destination to enjoy the best of Galveston, including Mardi Gras, festivals and spring break! Conveniently located along the Seawall, guests are within reach of a variety of restaurants, entertainment and attractions including the Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier. For an evening of fun, head to B. Jigger's for daily happy hour and nightly live entertainment!

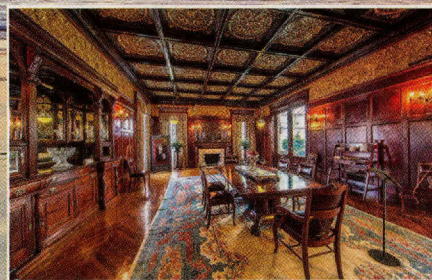
[GalvestonHolidayInn.com](http://GalvestonHolidayInn.com)  
409-740-5300



## Hilton Galveston Island Resort

Soak up the sun at the Hilton Galveston Island Resort. Located along the historic Seawall, the well-appointed resort offers exceptional accommodations and amenities coupled with exciting spring break activities for the young and young at heart! Between a dynamic line-up of activities, a vast assortment of dining options and a location steps away from the beach, there is truly something for everyone at the Hilton Galveston Island Resort.

[GalvestonHilton.com](http://GalvestonHilton.com)  
409-744-5000



## Moody Mansion

Explore the historic elegance of Galveston's 1895 Moody Mansion at 2618 Broadway, and hear stories from family members on a self-paced audio tour. The home is meticulously restored to its 20th Century glory and filled with original furnishings. Rotating exhibits of special interest are installed throughout the year, and premium behind-the-scenes guided tours are also popular – call 409-762-7668 for premium tour schedules and reservations. Moody Mansion is a popular setting for social events, wedding receptions and bridal photography, and offers group discounts. Open daily, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Visit [moodymansion.org](http://moodymansion.org) for photos and events.

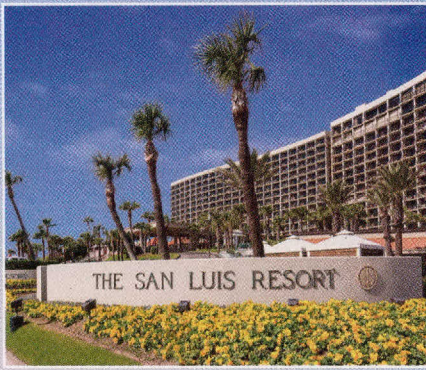


## Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier

Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier is a Gulf Coast destination featuring family-oriented attractions including 16 rides, midway games, waterfront dining and retail shops. From the extreme steel coaster, the Iron Shark to our 5D Theater Ride, kids of all ages will relish in the excitement.

Be adventurous at [pleasurepier.com](http://pleasurepier.com).  
409-766-4950



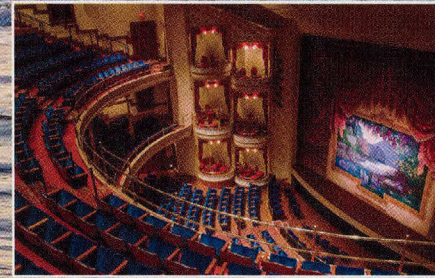


# San Luis Resort, Spa & Conference Center

This spring, your paradise awaits you at The San Luis Resort on Galveston Island. The opulent, 16-story hotel offers premier accommodations and amenities, breathtaking Gulf views and unmatched, personalized service. Guests can choose from an array of accommodations including VIP floors, the elite "Club Ten," enhanced guest rooms and The Villas at The San Luis Resort, five luxurious suites offering the relaxed charm of a secluded hideaway. Take time to relax and rejuvenate with top-shelf pampering at the Spa San Luis. Enjoy a stroll on the beach or soak up the sun poolside with a cocktail at The Cove, the hotel's enhanced luxury pool and grotto. For added privacy, opt for

a cabana, exclusively available for rental to overnight guests. With so many restaurants on property, The San Luis Resort promises a dining experience for every whim. Enjoy a leisurely breakfast at Blake's Bistro, indulge in authentic Italian cuisine at Grotto, or escape to the award-winning restaurant, The Steakhouse. In addition to sumptuous amenities, enjoy an endless variety of spring break activities, events and entertainment perfect for couples, families and groups! Experience the very best in style, elegance and comfort at The San Luis Resort.

SanLuisResort.com  
800-392-5937



## 17<sup>th</sup> Annual FeatherFest

Experience the magic of spring migration at FeatherFest, Galveston Island's annual birding & nature photography festival! It's no wonder Galveston is one of the top locations in the country for birding with its wide variety of habitats in a small geographical area that some 300 species call their permanent or temporary home during the year. Register now to attend the largest birding and nature photography festival on the Upper Texas Coast, April 11-14. Kevin Karlson, Greg Miller, Hector Astorga, and other experts lead memorable field trips and workshops, birding and photography events.

www.GalvestonFeatherFest.com  
832-459-5533

## The Grand 1894 Opera House

The Grand 1894 Opera House presents a year-round performing arts schedule featuring stars of stage and screen, Broadway hits, music, dance, comedy and more. This historic venue, the official opera house of the State of Texas, offers no seat further than 70 feet from the stage with an intimate view of performances that can't be matched! The Grand is also available for meetings, weddings, and corporate events, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Get your entertainment at TheGrand.com  
800-821-1894

The Galveston Island Pass is your key to adventure and savings while exploring the numerous attractions that make Galveston so special. Buy at [www.galvestonislandpass.com](http://www.galvestonislandpass.com).

Attraction may change seasonally. For information call 409.765.3580.



Lone Stars they had in their cooler. It actually felt pretty good, like we were all in this together—and we were.

Leave your assumptions about people and places behind—we don't know as much about others as we think we do. In "Song of the Open Road," Whitman embraces the highway and everyone on it. "I think whatever I shall meet on the road I shall like, and whoever beholds me shall like me." People will often surprise you with their kindness.

(But you, Carlisle, have a cell phone, so if you ever end up on the side of the road in the dark, please call Dad and me.)

## 5. PICK YOUR SOUNDTRACK WELL

Remember two summers ago singing "You're So Vain" full tilt with me when driving out to visit Aunt Martha in Galveston? Music is better on a road trip. You can croon out loud, and your off-notes are disguised by the hum of the car. And because you have nothing else to do but drive and listen with the landscape zooming past, the music seeps into your bones. Although, and no offense, maybe not so much with your favorites musicians—Drake, Cardi B, Khalid. I'm talking about real road trip songs like David Byrne's "Road to Nowhere" or Joni Mitchell's "Coyote," or the entirety of Cat Stevens' *Tea for the Tillerman* album.

Many of the best singer-songwriter poets to amplify a road trip with their songs are fellow Texans. "Me and Bobby Magee"—penned by one Texan, Kris Kristofferson, and made legendary by another, Janis Joplin—takes on new meaning when you're belting it out on the highway. Blaze Foley's "Clay Pigeons" hints at both the melancholy and redemption of life on the road, but he's traveling in a Greyhound bus, something I've done plenty and you should try too someday. Guy Clark's "Dublin Blues" conjures all the loneliness that can hit you when you're traveling, when you miss someone and maybe you crave a visit to a familiar haunt, like Austin's Texas Chili Parlor.

And then there's Willie. My old Volvo had this thing called a cassette player. It would play the same tape over and over

until you made it stop. On one road trip to Port Arthur, with only a handful of cassettes, my friends and I listened to Cassette 1 of the double LP *Willie and Family Live* for the entire 249 miles. It's a real hum-dinger that kicks off with "Whiskey River," peaks into the Willie and Waylon Jennings duet "Good Hearted Woman," and mellows into "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain." Every time it cycled back to that opening line, "Whiskey River take my mind," it was as energizing as mile one.

## 6. KNOW WHEN TO TAKE THE RIDE

A couple of years ago just before Christmas, my friend Brooke's mother, Mary Lou, who lived in Fort Davis, was admitted to the hospital. Brooke, who hadn't seen her mother in a few years, had a wonky car at the time so I offered to drive her out from Austin to see her mom. Your Christmas presents weren't yet wrapped, but getting my friend to her mom was more important. And then, the night before our departure, Brooke got the call that Mary Lou had suddenly passed, and the trip we thought was going to be a visit abruptly turned into a farewell.

Those six-plus hours on the road, driving west at 80 miles an hour, were a bittersweet rite of passage. Neither of us had ever lost a parent; we were not prepared.

The next day, we walked out of clear December sunlight into the stucco doorway of the Alpine Memorial Funeral Parlor, bracing ourselves to say goodbye. The funeral director, a large football player of a guy named Joe, was formal but kind and told us he had not embalmed Mary Lou, as Brooke had requested, but had applied "just a little natural makeup so she would look pretty." He also told us, just as we were about to walk into the visitation room, that he had not put on music. "I know that you guys are from Austin," he said, "so you'd probably want something cool, like Led Zeppelin."

It was hard to suppress the laughter. We told him it was OK, we didn't need Led Zeppelin. Silence was fine. That moment—Joe's odd but sweet aside—crystallized the absurd beauty of this whole wild world. Whether he intended to or not, Joe brought

just the right zing of humor into the moment so we could laugh and exhale.

So, Carlisle, when given the chance, and if it's with the right person, a road trip can give you the best gift there is—a deepened friendship.

## 7. PAUSE, KEEP A JOURNAL

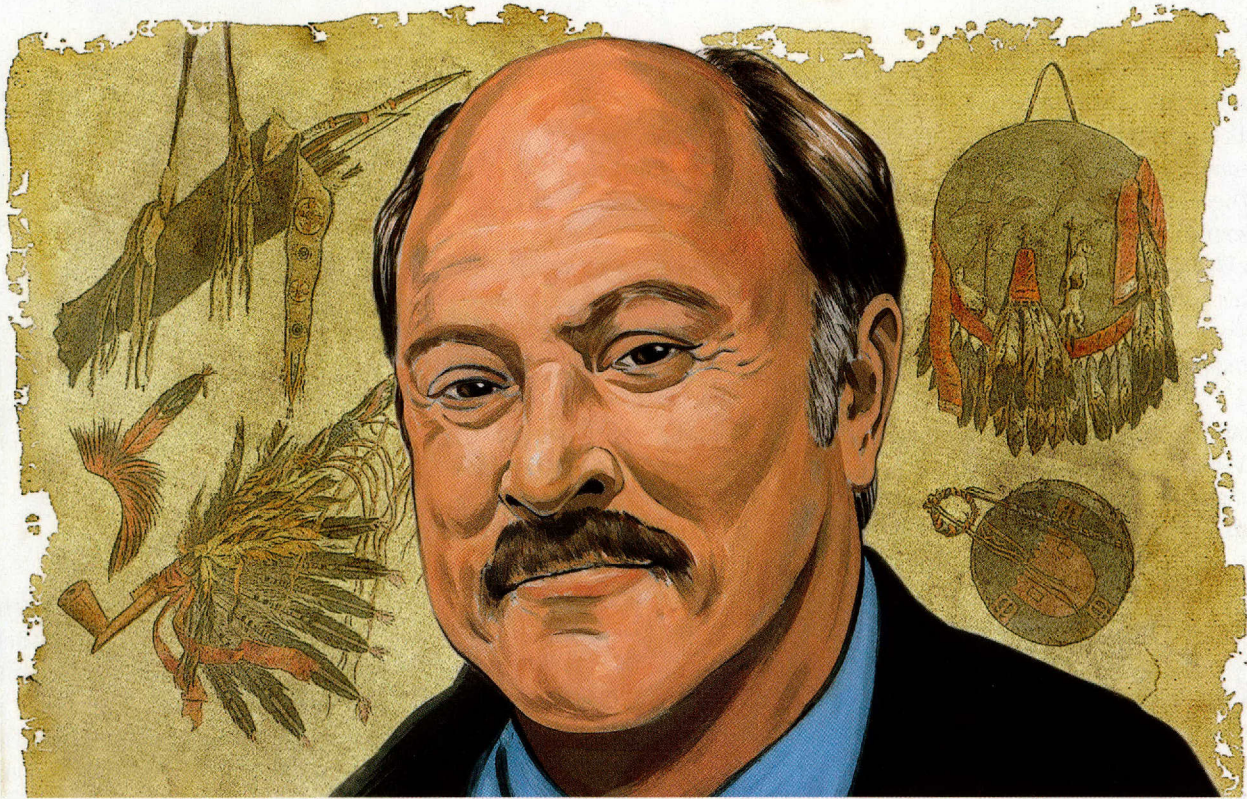
At the end of his essay "Why We Travel" Pico Iyer writes, "And if travel is like love, it is, in the end, mostly because it's a heightened state of awareness, in which we are mindful, receptive, undimmed by familiarity and ready to be transformed. That is why the best trips, like the best love affairs, never really end." A break from familiarity and routine, road trips sharpen your awareness enough that you arrive home better knowing who you are. So wherever you go, make sure you give yourself space: Pull over, lean back against the car, and breathe in the air. Out under the endless Texas sky, the world is big. Feel yourself in it.

And write it down. Remember that drive home from our South Padre surf trip when we were still giddy from catching our first waves, and the sky outside Lockhart was otherworldly with huge gray clouds backlit by a strange golden glow? You'll have experiences so good you'll want them to last forever. They won't, but writing them down memorializes them.

The road is thrilling but less so if it's all you've got. For me, the very best thing about a road trip is coming home—to you, your brother, your dad. Whitman ends "Song of the Open Road" with an invitation: "Camerado, I give you my hand! ... will you come travel with me? Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?" That Whitman's expansive poem about life on the road should conclude with a simple request for companionship is a message to all travelers: We need each other.

Wanderlust, if it runs deep, never leaves you. So yes, I will come travel with you. When the time is right. But first, you have to take off on your own. Before that, though, you need to learn how to drive. Love,  
Mom **L**





# The Art of Artifacts

Good stories drive San Antonio curator and *Antiques Roadshow* appraiser Bruce Shackelford

By Matt Joyce

**B**ruce Shackelford is one of those enviable characters who's developed a notable career by pursuing his own particular interests. Once dubbed a "scholarly cowboy," the 65-year-old parlayed his fascination with Native American art, Western history, and horsemanship into a job as the Texas history curator at The Witte Museum, San Antonio's elegant and enlightening repository of Texas history and culture. He's also one of only a handful of appraisers to have appeared on every season of PBS' perennial reality show favorite, *Antiques Roadshow*. For 23 years, viewers have tuned in to watch Shackelford—who mans the Tribal Art table—and other experts as they appraise the significance and value of antiques and collectibles brought in by the public.

**Q:** What sparked your interest in history?

**A:** I grew up with it. My great-grandfather was born in 1869. He was 80 when I was born, and I grew up with him on the ranch [in Ovalo, near Abilene]. He was still working, and I'd go out there and

spend the night in the house or sleep out in a tent in the pastures. And my grandmother, her father was the Methodist minister in Clarendon, and when they lived in the parsonage in about 1910, his next door neighbor was Quanah Parker's son. So my grandmother played with all of Quanah Parker's grandkids. I had heard the stories my whole life.

**Q:** How did you get into tribal art?

**A:** After I went to art school, I got real interested in the American Indian thing. And a job came up at a museum called the Creek Council House, and they couldn't hire anybody to try to get it together. I took the job and I moved to eastern Oklahoma, and that's what I've been doing ever since.

**Q:** What intrigues you about Texas history?

**A:** Texas repeatedly changed the boundaries of the United States. The Louisiana Purchase and the land won from the U.S.-Mexican War in 1848 and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo are pretty close to the same amount of territory. Most people don't know that. In our world here,

**"The second season, we got to Dallas and there were 5,000 people in line by 9 o'clock. It was just insane. And at that point, we knew we had totally misread it."**



the country definitely moved much earlier from south to north and to the east. You talk to people in Boston, and they don't know there's anything but east to west. There's always more to the history, and it's not just cut and dry. It's like the Alamo—it was a long series of confrontations; it wasn't one confrontation. It started way before the battle. It's a great story and hard to walk away from.

**Q: If someone were to see only one thing at the Witte, what should it be?**

**A:** The South Texas Heritage Center, because that's what I love and do. But if you were to ask Thomas Adams, who's the paleontology curator, he would say the dinosaurs. As far as a single thing, maybe the Gutzon Borglum sculpture of the trail drivers that's out in the back garden. Borglum also did Mount Rushmore.

**Q: How much does the youth audience factor into a Witte exhibit?**

**A:** It's real important, because every year we get 50,000 schoolkids on field trips. The wording on labels is aimed at sixth grade. It makes it more difficult to write, because you've got to communicate on a level that is true, correct according to today's knowledge, and clear. We want something to grab them that makes them want to come back. The best part is when you see them six months later, and they're with their parents dragging them in, "Hey, this is what we saw, isn't that cool?" That's the payoff.

**Q: Are you surprised at the success of Antiques Roadshow?**

**A:** The biggest show for the first season was San Antonio, and 1,200 people showed up. We were all saying, "Well, we're going to give it a year and it will probably wash out." So then the second season, we got to Dallas and there were 5,000 people in line by 9 o'clock. It was over a mile long. It was just insane. And at that point, we knew we had totally misread it. And by about the third season, I think it was in Providence, Rhode Island, there were people camped out in tents like a rock concert. It's not anything

we could have imagined. You know, we're just geeky guys who are interested in what we're interested in.

**Q: Why does the show remain compelling after 23 seasons?**

**A:** It's the stories. They do the "this is worth a lot of money" thing because it excites viewers, but repeatedly the feedback is it's the story—why is this on TV, why is this important to look at? And that's why I'm still there. I don't sell this stuff. I'm interested in the market because I'm interested in what comes up. After 23 years of doing it, I've seen thousands of pieces. It just gives you a much bigger perspective on what's going on, and you can't buy that.

**Q: How long do you have to research an object before you assess it for TV?**

**A:** Five minutes.

**Q: Seriously? How does that work?**

**A:** I just know the stuff. When we were doing halls, we were seeing 6,000 to 7,000 people a day. It's so busy we don't have time to go research. We may spend a couple of minutes with a computer, and a friend of ours has a database to get the latest sales records for the past two or three years, and we'll do a quick comparable check for the price. I may look up when somebody died, some detail like that, but I know what I'm looking at and whether or not it's going to be worth pitching for TV. And so if we see something we think would make good TV, we call a producer and they say yes or no.

**Q: Can you describe a particularly memorable day on the show?**

**A:** We were doing the show in Denver, and I saw a diary from a guy who was with Custer going from Colorado to the battle of Washita River in Oklahoma where [Southern Cheyenne leader] Black Kettle was killed. There's stuff in there that is not anywhere else—not in any record or history books. Another lady came in that same show with a few items related to Maximilian, what they call a "look book" that had all of the proposed

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**The Antiques Roadshow 2019 tour** comes to San Antonio on April 27. The ticket application deadline has already passed, but PBS will air the episode as part of the show's 24th season starting in January. Find past episodes online at [pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow](http://pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow).

**The Witte Museum**, 3801 Broadway St. in San Antonio, opens daily. 210-357-1900; [wittemuseum.org](http://wittemuseum.org)

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designs for the royal accoutrements when he was declared emperor of Mexico [1864-67]. It was all the stuff for his palace—all in watercolors, page by page.

**Q: How has Antiques Roadshow changed your career?**

**A:** In every way. It gives you an international profile that you didn't have before. But it gives you a little bit more humility about what's going on out there, and what people's situations are, because you're meeting every kind of person you can think of. You meet people who are trying to be sneaky and trick you, and people who lie, and people who are great, who are absolutely wonderful.

**Q: What pieces do you remember most?**

**A:** It was in Austin, or maybe Houston, a lady came in and she had a stick, and she slapped it down on the table and said, "Tell me what that is." It had rotted leather on one end, and it was some kind of handle, obviously. I got to looking and put it under a black light, and a mimeographing stamp shows up on the back. It was the handle of a bullwhip from the Alamo gift shop. And she said, "How do you know?" And I said, "Because I had one." That's what I remember, not the zillion-dollar whatever that came in. And I remember the guy who came in with a shrunken head that was in a music box. When you open the box it sings, "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head." It's weird stuff like that—I remember that. 🐱

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**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



## Back at the Ranch

1968

**T**his year marks the 50th anniversary of President Lyndon B. Johnson's return to the LBJ Ranch in Stonewall after serving five-and-a-half years in the White House. Having decided not to seek a second full term as president, Johnson spent his retirement in the Hill Country where he grew up, largely out of the public eye. Accounts of Johnson's final years recall him as a hands-on ranch manager who also dedicated himself to the LBJ Presidential Library and Museum at UT-Austin; writing his presidential memoir, *The Vantage Point*; and entertaining friends. This photo, taken one year before his retirement, shows Johnson at the ranch with his grandson, Patrick Lyndon Nugent, and dog, Yuki. Johnson died four years after moving back to Texas and was buried in the family graveyard on the ranch, which is now open to the public as a national historical park ([nps.gov/lbjc](https://nps.gov/lbjc)). 🐾

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








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