

# TEXAS

## HIGHWAYS™

THE  
TRAVEL  
MAGAZINE  
OF TEXAS

# DARK

THE FIGHT TO KEEP OUR NIGHTS BIG AND BRIGHT

# SKIES

BY RACHEL MONROE

DECEMBER 2019

\$4.95

12>



0 71486 02583 2

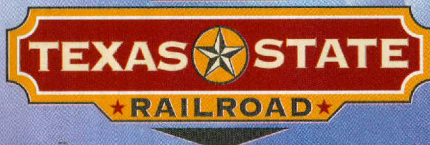


THE WORLD'S  
LARGEST PUBLIC  
FLEA MARKET

BY SARAH HEPOLA

# THE POLAR EXPRESS™

## Train Ride



This holiday season, experience Christmas magic aboard the authentic POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride, presented by the Texas State Railroad. Come dressed in your jammies and read along as the beloved children's story comes to life. Your golden ticket includes hot chocolate, cookies and a silver sleigh bell from Santa Claus himself.

RAIL  
EVENTS  
INCORPORATED

THE POLAR EXPRESS and all related characters and elements are trademarks of © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. WB SHIELD: TM & © WBEI (619)

RESERVE YOUR SPOT



TexasStateRailroad.net  
855.632.7729

BOOK TODAY!



EDITOR'S  
**NOTE**



Enchanted Rock State Natural Area in the Hill Country is one of five Dark Sky Parks in Texas, and one of 54 in the U.S.

## Turn Off the Lights

**W**hen my family and I moved to the Dripping Springs area three years ago, I remember noticing a few times that we'd left a light on outside—only to realize that the moon really was that bright in the clear sky. After growing up in the suburbs and living in Houston for years, I'd never imagined I'd be able to see the Milky Way from my back patio. It's one of the best parts of living in a rural area and more than makes up for not being able to get pizza delivered to your house or the spotty Wi-Fi. And though there are times when I wish for a few street lights to illuminate my drive home at night, I appreciate that my young children's most common bedtime stalling tactic is to ask to go look at the stars.

The Hill Country night skies really are something to behold. When people come to visit, it's our favorite thing to show off, even more than the local barbecue and wine trails. Constellations like the Little Dipper, too dim to be seen in the bright lights

of the big cities, are easily discernable. Looking up at the dazzling night is a welcome moment of calm in our overly busy lives.

And when we travel beyond our own backyard to more remote destinations in West or South Texas, the sheer number of bright stars can overwhelm and disorient, in a good way. Starry skies are a special part of traveling in Texas that I hope is preserved for my children's children and beyond. In our cover feature (Page 34), Marfa-based writer Rachel Monroe delves into the campaign to protect this singular Texas resource. Dark-sky initiatives should be important to every Texan who has proudly clapped four times before shouting, "deep in the heart of Texas."

**Looking up at the dazzling night is a welcome moment of calm in our overly busy lives.**

*Emily R Stone*


**EMILY ROBERTS STONE**  
EDITOR IN CHIEF



# TOTALLY. UNEXPECTED.

Frisco, Texas, where you can experience over 9+ million square feet of shopping, including Boxcar House, named one of the "Best Boutiques in the South" by *Southern Living*. This locally-owned boutique features furniture and home goods made with reclaimed metal and wood from old boxcars. Learn more at, [visitfrisco.com/unexpected](https://visitfrisco.com/unexpected).

Frisco™

 BOXCAR HOUSE

# DECEMBER

34

## The Stars at Night

In an era when most city kids have never seen the Milky Way, communities across Texas are fighting to protect their starry skies before the glow of civilization snuffs out the darkness.

*By Rachel Monroe*

48

## Stuff.

Younger generations may trend toward asset-light lifestyles, but you'd never know it when wandering the hundreds of acres of stuff for sale at First Monday Trade Days in Canton, the world's largest public flea market.

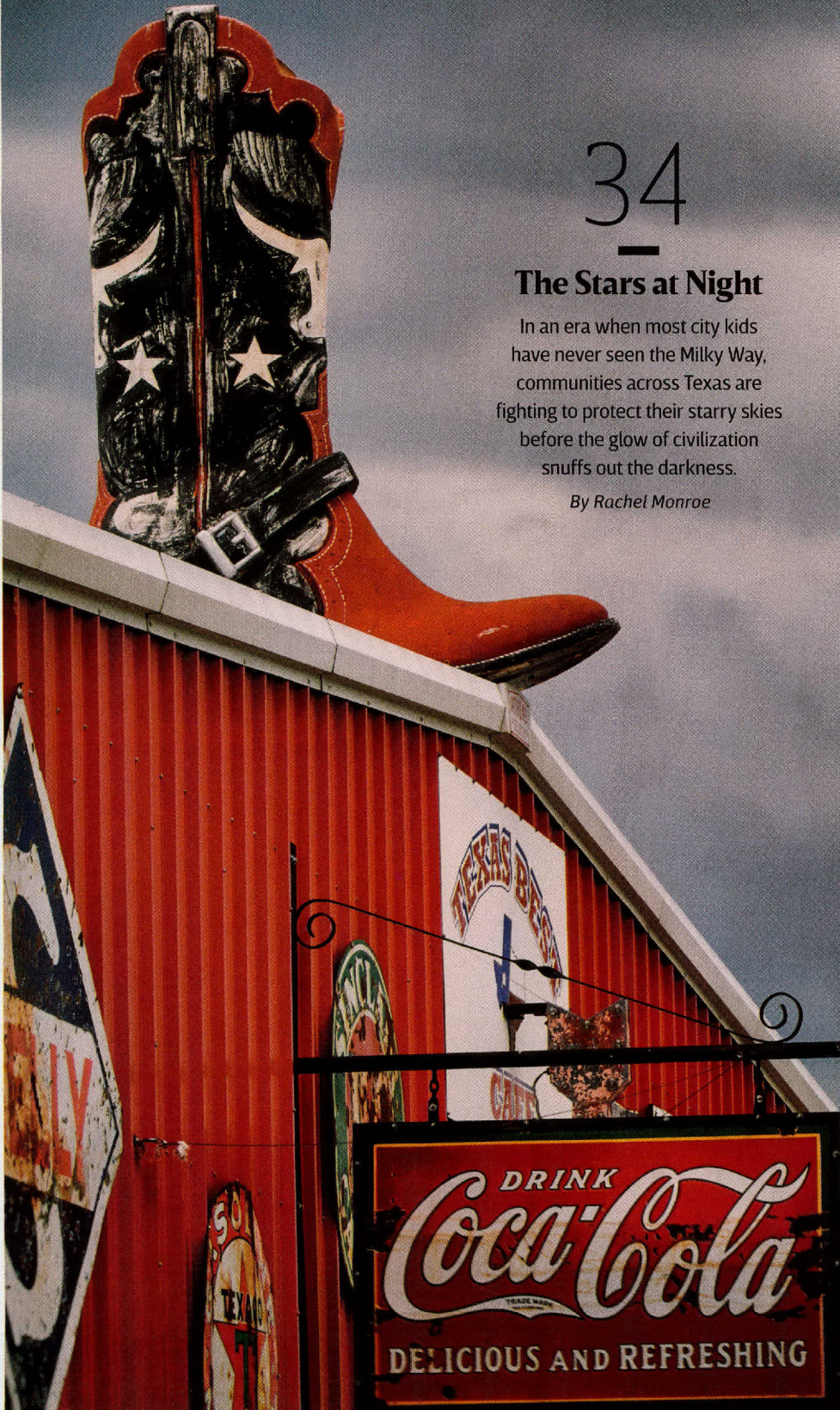
*By Sarah Hepola  
Photographs by Dave Shafer*

58

## Bright Lights, Small Cities

Small towns across Texas flash their merriest cheer during the holiday season, draping lights across everything from courthouses to carousels. Grab a hot chocolate and take in the spectacle.

*By MM Pack*



# YOU'RE ALWAYS THE HOME TEAM IN ROUND ROCK



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

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



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

# DECEMBER

## DEPARTMENTS

7

Merge

8

Sightseer

10

My Hometown

The roots of Bay City

12

Open Road

A stroll down memory lane in midcentury Fredericksburg

19

Drive/Made in Texas

Finding sanctuary in the trees

24

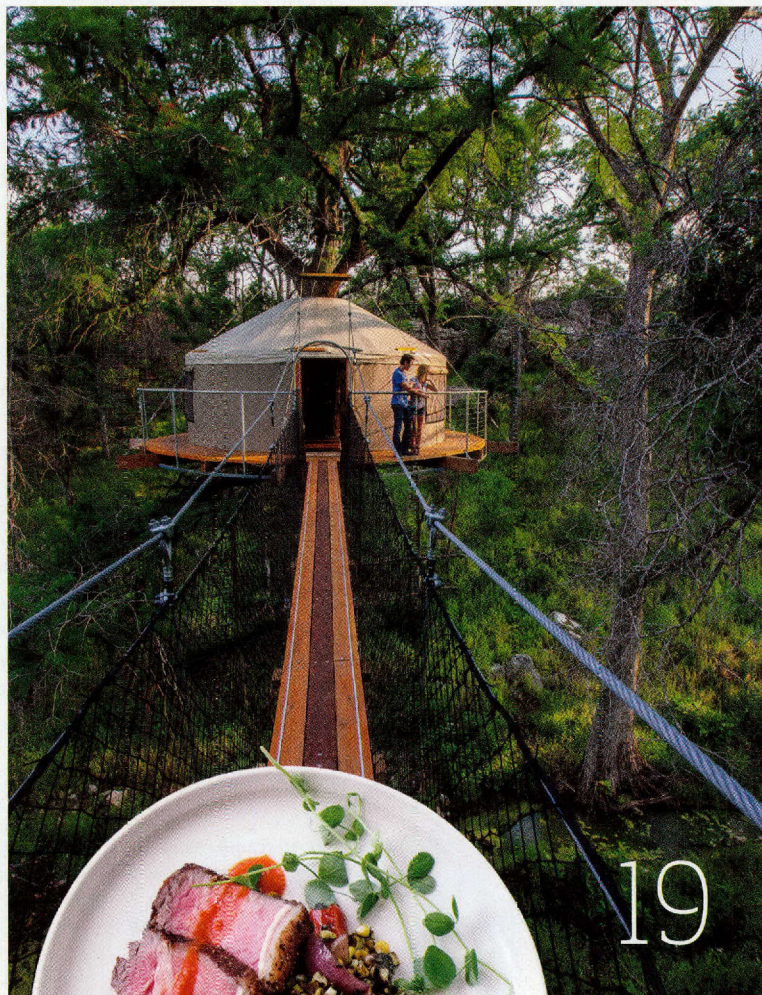
Drive/Detour

The murals of El Paso's Segundo Barrio

28

Drive/Stay

This Martindale schoolhouse lodging is no dorm



30

Getaway

What's new in Fort Worth

69

Plates

River Walk eats; agricultural ingenuity; cooking like the Aztecs

80

Texana

Community and craftsmanship at the saddle shop

89

Events

Chug to the North Pole via the Piney Woods

97

Daytripper

From meteor craters to Shakespeare in Odessa

99

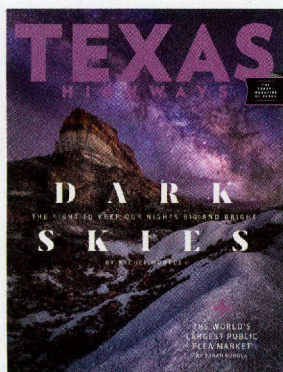
Speaking of Texas

Stephen Harrigan's big and wonderful chronicle of Texas

101

Vintage

Back when snowmen were abominable

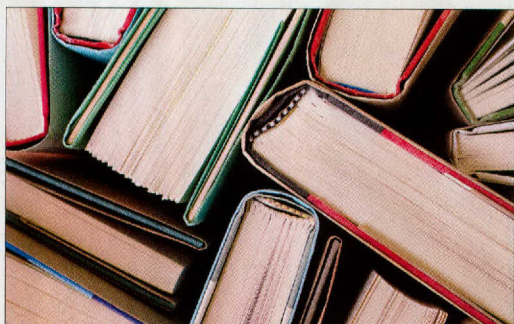


### ON THE COVER

Photo by Wayne Suggs  
Guadalupe Mountains  
National Park

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

## Behind the Story



When asked to come up with 100 Lone Star-inspired books for every age, book critic S. Kirk Walsh turned to librarians, teachers, fellow writers, and multigenerational Texans. The list began to take shape as she delved into the deep reservoir of literature that defines and contributes to the complex layers of identity of our vast state. For the past 20 years, Walsh has reviewed fiction and non-fiction for several publications, including *The New York Times Book Review* and *The San Francisco Chronicle*, among many others. With the curation of this list, which you can find exclusively online at [texashighways.com/100TexasBooks](http://texashighways.com/100TexasBooks), we invite readers to a conversation about the past, present, and future of Texas literature. After perusing the wide-ranging catalog, let us know what books you would add by commenting on social media or emailing us at [letters@texashighways.com](mailto:letters@texashighways.com).

### Featured Contributors



#### Daniel Blue Tyx

With this issue, Tyx signs off as a contributing editor. After living in the Rio Grande Valley for two decades, he recently moved to Costa Rica to teach high school English. He has fond memories of writing for *Texas Highways* since 2015. One of his favorite moments was posing for photographs with his family for a feature he wrote about the Pedernales Valley. His camera-shy 5-year-old daughter insisted on scowling in every picture, until the photographer suggested she take a bite of a giant chocolate sprinkle donut. The resulting picture was published in the July 2018 issue.



#### Gwen Karavel

French illustrator Karavel created art for the "The Stars at Night" feature (Page 34). "It reminded me of the good times I spent with my son looking at the stars with his little telescope," he says. "And it made me realize that I could see the Milky Way much better when I was a child." Karavel graduated from the Emile Cohl Art School in Lyon and currently lives nearby in the country "in an old house where I have space for making linocut prints and growing vegetables." His work has appeared in the *Washington Post*, *New York Observer*, and *Wall Street Journal*.

#### DIRECTOR

Joan Henderson

#### EDITORIAL

**Editor in Chief**  
Emily Roberts Stone

#### Deputy Editor

Michael Hoinski

#### Senior Managing Editor

Matt Joyce

#### Managing Editor

Kimya Kavehkar

#### Writers-at-Large

Clayton Maxwell, Joe Nick Patoski

#### Contributing Editors

Heather Brand, Melissa Gaskill,  
E. Dan Klepper, June Naylor, Daniel Blue Tyx

#### Contributing Writers

John Davidson, Paula Disbrowe,  
Roberto José Andrade Franco, Chet Garner,  
Sarah Hepola, Jen Hamilton Hernandez,  
Allison McNearney, Rachel Monroe, MM Pack,  
Christian Wallace, S. Kirk Walsh

#### Editorial Coordinator

Cindy Newsom

#### DIGITAL

#### Digital Strategies Manager

Peter Obering

#### MARKETING & EVENTS

#### Publications Development & Marketing Manager

Sabrina Ballesteros

#### Strategic Partnerships Manager

Lois M. Rodriguez

#### Marketing/Mercantile Manager

Katy Venable

#### ADVERTISING

#### AJR Media Group

800-383-7677

[texashighways@ajrmediagroup.com](mailto:texashighways@ajrmediagroup.com)  
[texashighways.com/advertise](http://texashighways.com/advertise)



© Texas Department of Transportation 2019  
All rights reserved.  
[txdot.gov](http://txdot.gov)

#### PUBLISHER

Andrea Lin

#### ART

**Creative Director**  
Mark Mahorsky

#### Art Director

Ashley Burch

#### Associate Art Director

Chris Linnen

#### Photo Editor

Brandon Jakobeit

#### Contributing Photographers

Michael Amador, Kenny Braun, Tim Burdick,  
Christ Chavez, Kathy Adams Clark,  
Clark Crenshaw, Darren Huski, E. Dan Klepper,  
Nathan Lindstrom, Eric W. Pohl,  
Erich Schlegel, Dave Shafer, Wayne Suggs,  
Jason Weingart

#### Production Coordinator

Raquel V. Sanchez

#### OPERATIONS

#### Business Manager

Karen Garza

#### Ancillary Publications Manager

Julie Stratton

#### Ancillary Publications Coordinator

LaKena Cooks

#### Accounts Receivable

Ana Perez

#### Warehouse Manager

Oz Lopez

#### CONTACT US

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

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](mailto:@texashighways.com) or Texas Highways, P.O. Box 141009, Austin, TX 78714-1009



Published monthly by the Travel Information Division of TxDOT

#### Governor of Texas

Greg Abbott

#### Texas Transportation Commission

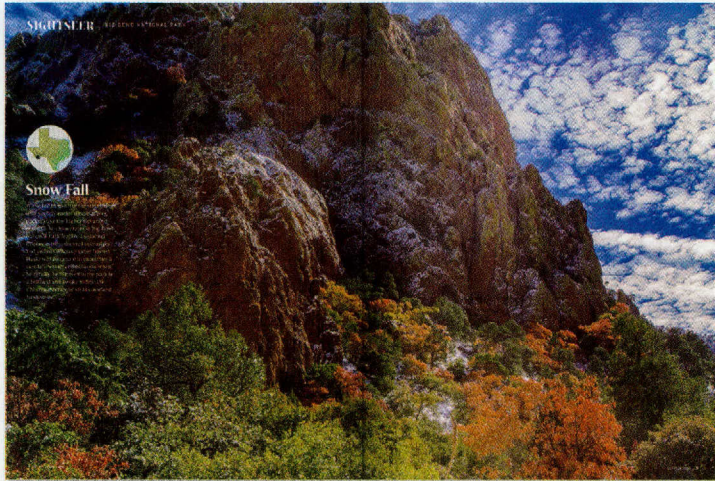
J. Bruce Bugg Jr., Chairman      Alvin New, Commissioner  
Laura Ryan, Commissioner      Robert C. Vaughn, Commissioner

#### TxDOT Executive Director

James M. Bass



# MERGE



We stayed in the Chisos Basin one night and woke up to find it foggy and snowing like crazy. We drove down the mountain, and it was about 45 degrees and sunny. Looking up, we could see the basin shrouded in clouds.

*Joe Cole, Fort Worth*

## TRACES OF TEXAS IN TEXAS HIGHWAYS

Love TOT! You two will be like peanut butter and jelly.  
**Roseann Brewer Dreasher,**  
Austin

One of those ideas that you wonder why it didn't happen sooner.  
**Dwayne Cullers,**  
Eberdeen, Scotland

That is great news. The Traces community is pretty passionate. I read every Traces post and always wonder how he does it.  
**Jenny Kimbrough,**  
Houston

*For this month's Traces of Texas Vintage pick, see Page 101.*

## Readers' Retreat

I'd been out of state for a month and was going through my stack of mail a bit overwhelmed and decided to sit back, slow down, and read a couple of the magazines from the stack. *Texas Highways* has come a long way! I like the bigger, better articles, and just the whole overall look. We have subscribed for 25 years or so, usually just thumbing through and moving on. It does pay to stop and slow down and enjoy things. I know I sure did.

*Danelle Dubose Brown, Ingleside*

## Low and in the Pocket

Bass is my first love, and I've played in local bands for over 40 years ["All About That Bass," October]. I'm not a frustrated guitarist as some people suggest—I love to hold down the low end and make people dance. As writer Jesse Sublett pointed out, the lead guitarist is usually the one who garners all the attention. But that's OK. We're still the glue that holds it all together. It made me remember one night in particular. The guitarist was really tearing

it up. All eyes were on him, but as I looked out over the crowd, every head and body was moving to the low end—the groove the drummer and I were laying down. So to all my low-end brothers and sisters: Keep it low and in the pocket, and you'll always have a gig.

*Patrick Kominczak, Spring*

## Due Credit

Steven Davis' "In Defense of J. Frank Dobie" [October] honors a Texas icon and the first secretary-editor of the Texas Folklore Society, founded in 1909. The event that he lauds, Dobie Dichos, enjoys acclaim due to the diligent work of a host of local folks who should not remain nameless. Let's start with Mary Margaret Campbell, former executive director of the nearby George West Storyfest. In 2010, she invited San Antonio writer Bill Sibley to emcee one of the stages at Storyfest. Afterward, Sibley noted that the festival needed a spotlight on local literary hero Dobie and suggested an event with folks sitting around a campfire telling Dobie

stories. Of course, there are dozens of other volunteers. It takes a village to make this event a success.

*Elaine Davenport, Dripping Springs,*  
*past president Texas Folklore Society*

## Colorful Daingerfield

Years ago we had a travel trailer that we took to the state parks around the Dallas area for long weekends. Our go-to place every year for fall colors ["True Colors," October] was Daingerfield State Park in early November. The colors of red, yellow, and orange were bright and just beautiful—the best we have ever seen in Texas.

*Vern Raven, Mansfield*

### We want to hear from you!

Send photos, feedback, and recommendations to [letters@texashighways.com](mailto:letters@texashighways.com);

P.O. Box 11009,  
Austin, TX, 78714-1009.

Follow @TexasHighways on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest

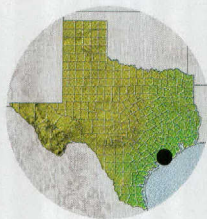






## Stardust to Starlight

On the western outskirts of Marfa, the Stardust Motel sign rises along US 90. The motel closed years ago, but the sign, a favorite subject for photographers, still stands in the now-empty lot. Characteristic of this sparsely populated area of West Texas, the skies around Marfa provide stunning views of the Milky Way.



# Bay City

Jerrilyn O'Neal Capers' roots run deep in this agricultural town on the Bay Prairie

By Heather Brand



JERRILYN O'NEAL CAPERS and the Matagorda County Museum, which is housed in Bay City's downtown 1918 post office building.

**B**ay City sprouted from the fertile bottomlands that stretch between the Colorado River and Caney Creek, just 20 miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico. Taking the town's name from the surrounding Bay Prairie, real estate speculators built Bay City in the 1890s, and by 1914, the region had become the United States' largest producer of rice. To this day, the county is known for rice, as well as sorghum, cotton, corn, and turf grass. Bay City native Jerrilyn O'Neal Capers counts farmers among the ancestors of her family, which has been in the area for five generations. Capers spent 39 years working for the local school district, and in 2011 she joined the Matagorda County Historical Commission. Earlier this year, Capers helped dedicate a historical marker for the Palacios Colored School, a precursor of the African American school she attended in Bay City as a girl.

### Rice Royalty

"Back in the day, the Lions Club held a big Rice Festival. There were rides and food, but the parade was the main thing. It would go around the square; there were grand marshals and a Rice King and Queen. It's a smaller event now, but we still have a Rice Queen. Cotton was also big around here. In the summers, I'd rather pick cotton than help my momma around the house. I picked cotton from the time I was nine to about ninth grade. I heard they grew sugar cane along Caney Creek. My dad would plant sugar cane in the backyard. [Biting into the canel] was like liquid sugar."

### Sweet Treats

"On a corner of the main square there's the Burlap Sack, a clothing store. On the other side of the square is Wild Bill's Western Wear and Nana's House of Treats, which is a candy store. I send my grandkids to Nana's. I don't go there because I'd spend more money than I want to spend. The old Franklin Theater is now a home-goods store."

### Architectural Interest

"At Christmastime, the city lights up all the old buildings downtown with strings of lights that outline the shapes of the facades. In the historic district just south of downtown, there are many other buildings with older architecture—some of them are doctor's offices or private homes, and some even have historical markers. There's an old train depot there that the city rents out for private and community events."

### Local Eats

"I like pretty much everything at A & A Bar-B-Que, especially the ribs. There are also some good Mexican restaurants, like El Zarape and Esperanza's, and a coffee shop, Mainstreet Coffee & Wine Bar."

### Fish and Fowl

"The Matagorda County Birding Nature Center has different educational displays on the Colorado River. I used to take special-needs kids from the school there to go fishing. During the migration season in the winter, people come to count the birds during the Christmas Bird Count. Right next to it is Le Tulle Park. I go out there every day to feed the ducks." 🦆

### THE MATAGORDA COUNTY MUSEUM

Located on the courthouse square, the Matagorda County Museum occupies a 1918 post office building and chronicles local history, including the story of 17th-century French explorer Sieur de La Salle and the 1997 excavation of his wrecked ship, La Belle, in nearby Matagorda Bay.



## TOWN TRIVIA



POPULATION:

17,534



NUMBER OF STOPLIGHTS:

26



YEAR FOUNDED:

1894



NEAREST CITY:

Houston,  
80 miles northeast



MARQUEE EVENTS:

Wild Game and Wine Camofest, Jan. 25; Bay City Lions Club Rice Festival, October; Day of the Dead Festival, November



MAP IT:

The Matagorda County Museum, 2100 Ave. F



GIFTS SOUVENIRS

★ Bierhaus ★

# Back to the Future

An *auslander* takes a trip down memory lane to midcentury Fredericksburg

By John Davidson

**D**

“Do you know much about this town?”

“I suppose so,” I answered. I was starting across Main Street in Fredericksburg, a traditional German town in the Hill Country.

The man, one of several tourists, had fallen in at my side. “Mind if I ask a question?” he said.

“No, of course not.” I was looking at the two-story stone building where my mother gave birth to my older sister and me. The Keidel Memorial Hospital, once a venerable Fredericksburg institution, is now Der Küchen Laden, a high-end kitchen shop. Sauté pans, mixing bowls, and food processors fill the rooms where doctors once saw patients.

“Is it right that this town was settled by escapees from concentration camps in Germany?” I heard him ask.

His question was so confused, I almost stopped in my tracks. Fredericksburg was founded in 1846—not by Jewish people, but by Germans—and nearly 100 years before Nazi Germany started incarcerating Jews.

What he was suggesting would require time travel and a rewrite of history. Not knowing where to start, I told him to have a nice time and went on my way.

Today, Fredericksburg is less a German enclave and more a tourist destination for Hill Country exploration. Out-of-towners visit for many reasons: to shop, to drink wine at vineyards, to play golf. They come for celebrations like Fourth of July, Night in Old Fredericksburg, and Oktoberfest. They arrive for the attractions, but can’t avoid the history. The town of Fredericksburg offers a lesson in the past writ large.

Start on the east end of Main Street, with the National Museum of the Pacific War, a 6-acre complex that tells the story of World War II and Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, a hometown hero. Finish less than a mile away, on the west end of the street, at the Pioneer Museum. This historical site promotes the region’s German roots through 19th-century artifacts and paints a picture of historical Fredericksburg through buildings including an original 1849 residence and store, a smokehouse, and a one-room schoolhouse. Between the two museums, there are several blocks lined with old limestone buildings; the Vereins Kirche, which was built as the first community church; and the original courthouse handsomely restored to become the public library. With all of the old buildings, the past feels tangible.

When I tell people I’m from Fredericksburg, they invariably ask me the same two questions. What was it like growing up there? And do I hate that it has become a tourist destination?

The first question is easier to answer. I had such a happy childhood, I'm not sure I ever recovered. It was a safe place, people were kind, everything made sense. I never felt alone or lonely, yet I had an immense amount of freedom. We heard roosters crow in the morning and church bells chime during the day. The night sky was darker, the stars brighter.

My parents moved to Fredericksburg during World War II. In the 1950s, when I was a kid, the town was almost entirely German. They referred to us as outsiders, or *auslanders*, not in any unkind way but just stating the obvious. The German families that settled the town put down roots and prospered.

The same surnames—Behren, Langenhans, Schmidt, Crenwolge, Keller, Stehling, Stein, and Keidel—recur generation after generation. After a hundred years, everyone was related in one way or another. The town didn't begin the

transition to English until after World War II. Until then, most of the local business was conducted in German—the banks, the schools, the newspapers.

In 1950, the population in Fredericksburg was approximately 3,800, compared with more than 10,000 today. The town had one African American family and a small Mexican American community. I must be forgetting some, but I can only think of five or six families

like mine where both parents were "English" or non-German. The Catholic Church had its own school system, and if you went to public schools there was a strong possibility, if not a probability, that you might never meet a student your age who attended St. Mary's.

During my childhood, Fredericksburg seemed both remote and obscure. Few people outside of the Hill Country had heard of the town. In Dallas or Houston, when I said I was from Fredericksburg, they thought I meant Fredericksburg, Virginia. Fredericksburg didn't seem as if it was in Texas. There were no big cattle ranches or oil wells, no cotton farms. But it always felt like the frontier, and I was always aware of the past.

We lived six blocks from Main Street on what was then the edge of town. Three other families—the Browns, the Coxes, and the Lawrences—lived on our block, and that was the neighborhood. All of the

**I had such a happy childhood, I'm not sure I ever recovered. Fredericksburg was a safe place, people were kind, everything made sense.**

**MUST SEE.**

"A museum of this quality, and importance, needs to be seen..."  
The Wall Street Journal

**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR**  
PacificWarMuseum.org | Fredericksburg, Texas

Experience the stories of honor and sacrifice our country demonstrated during a war that encompassed the world. From the Admiral Nimitz museum, an engaging exhibition honoring the man who led more than two-million brave men and women to victory in WWII, to the Japanese Garden of Peace dedicated by his former enemies, to the world-class George H.W. Bush Gallery that provides an interactive view of the magnitude and the strategy of the war, this experience is simply not to be missed.

**PacificWarMuseum.org**

U. S. ARMY FIELD RATION K  
BREAKFAST UNIT



parents and the children were friends. There were five boys about my age. We played football on the Coxes' lawn, raced our bikes on the Browns' circular drive, shot baskets in the Lawrences' driveway, and dug foxholes and built shacks on the back of our lot. All of the dads came home for lunch; indeed, the entire town stopped at noon, and walking down a street you could hear people eating.

Our house was the smallest in the neighborhood, but we believed we were the happiest family. Mother was a good cook, and we always laughed a lot during meals. If we bickered, Daddy would say, "Kids! Kids! Let's have good memories." He and Mother wanted us to have the happy childhood they had missed because of the Depression and the war.

Delia, my older sister, was pretty and precocious. She played the oboe and always had a boyfriend and the lead in school plays. Kathy, the middle child, was

less assertive, but was Daddy's favorite and told the funniest stories. I had a stammer that became a stutter when I got excited about telling a joke. Delia and Kathy would turn their eyes on me, hissing like geese: *Say it! Say it! Say it!*

In the neighborhood, we called parents by their first names and knew the most trivial and intimate details about each other. The Lawrences ate catsup on everything, including black-eyed peas, which seemed particularly shocking. Lorene Lawrence was a big, pretty woman with black hair, olive skin, and a temper. When we were outside, we could hear her yelling at her husband and sons.

Lorene thought Mother and Virginia Brown acted too ladylike. Virginia was a beauty who told off-color jokes and put garlic salt on almost everything. The Browns had the fanciest house, the newest everything: a color TV and twin brushed-copper refrigerators in

their kitchen, which always smelled like cantaloupe and the drug samples Dr. Brown brought home from his office.

The Coxes lived across the street from us in the ranch-style house they had built. May Cox could be bossy and brusque, but Mother always said she had a good heart. May was German—a Stein—one of the two most important families in town. She raced around town in her Buick doing good deeds, working for the PTA, the First Methodist Church, and the historical society. At one point, the Coxes had a pet skunk and kept a burro—Pedro, I believe—in their backyard.

We lived between the Browns and a fifth family, the Treibs, with a sandy alley separating our families from the Treibs. The Browns had a big circular drive in front of their modernist house, drove station wagons, played badminton, and took *The New Yorker*. The Treibs, meanwhile, kept chickens, goats, and sheep.



# Christmas in Cuero

**Christmas in the Park**  
Lighted Display  
Driving Tour  
Cuero City Park  
Nov. 25th - New Year's Day 6-10 pm  
Free Admission • Donations Accepted

**Christmas in Downtown**  
Santa's Workshop • Artificial Ice Rink  
Snowzilla Mountain Slide • Bungee Bounce  
Petting Zoo • Trackless Train • Rock Climbing  
Horse & Carriage • Entertainment and more!  
Live Music Entertainment  
Shopping • Artisans Market  
2nd Weekend in December

**CUERO**  
shop ★ play ★ stay  
www.Cuero.org • 361-275-2112

They spoke with a heavy German accent, and Mrs. Treibs wore aprons and sunbonnets, made soap from lard in a black iron kettle over an open fire, and dried venison on her clothesline. I had been away from Fredericksburg for decades before this juxtaposition struck me as odd.

Across the street, the Coxes had the same situation with the Houys, who had a ranch in the country but kept a barnyard behind their house in town, opposite the sandy alley. I was never sure if Mrs. Houy spoke English because she never responded when I said hello to her. It never occurred to me that she might resent us. This was 19th-century rural German life bumping up against 20th-century suburbia.

As outsiders, Mother and Virginia spent years trying to untangle the old family trees in town, going at it like a massive research project. But families, like languages, are complex, and I suspect

there were subtleties that didn't translate. Mother belonged to the same bridge club for decades, and "the girls" would apologize to her before telling a joke in German, saying that it just wouldn't be funny in English.

In retrospect, I didn't realize how tiny the neighborhood was—one block, four families. The Germans referred to it as Little America, and I suppose like most

immigrants, we coped by living together.

Remembering that time, I'm amazed by how much freedom we had, roaming up and down Main Street on our bikes. What are now souvenir shops, wine tasting rooms, and art galleries were businesses owned by local people that served the townspeople. There were five or six grocery stores, two bakeries, two weekly newspapers, three pharmacies, three dime stores, a Western Auto, three car dealerships, two banks and a savings and loan, several gas stations, the Palace Theatre, dry cleaners, a pool hall, one antiques shop, and clothing stores.

Fredericksburg didn't really start to change until President Kennedy's assassination in 1963, when I was a high school sophomore. A stunned Walter Cronkite was reporting the shooting in Dallas, on TV, as I left home for school. The atmosphere was weird and oddly giddy until our principal, Mr. Westerfeldt,

**With Kennedy's death, the balance of power shifted in the country, and this was more pronounced in Fredericksburg because the LBJ Ranch was only 15 miles away.**



**D** DALLAS ARBORETUM  
**Holiday at  
 the Arboretum**

Presented by **reliant.**

**Through December 31**

**Featuring *The Christmas Village,  
 The 12 Days of Christmas and  
 "Christkindlmarket Treasures"*  
 in *The DeGolyer House***

Twelve elegant European-themed shops that represent different trades in a quaint hamlet during the holidays; including a bakery, candy shop, butcher and more. Adults and children will love to explore them.

Also, enjoy the 12 Days of Christmas gazebos with close to 1 million holiday lights throughout the garden.

**The Dallas Morning News** **WFAA**

**DallasArboretum.org**

8525 Garland Road • Dallas, Texas 75218 • 214-515-6500

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

told us that it was a tragic day in the history of our country, a day we would never forget. The world was about to change in ways we couldn't imagine.

With Kennedy's death, the balance of power shifted in the country, and this was more pronounced in Fredericksburg because the LBJ Ranch was only 15 miles away. The national press corps followed Lyndon Johnson to his home, the Texas White House, and began to discover the Hill Country as if it were a quaint New England hiding in Texas.

The world kind of collapsed, becoming at once bigger and smaller. Two years after JFK's assassination, I was in the school library looking at pictures of Sofia Loren's villa in Italy in one of the big photo magazines—*Life* or *Look*—when a classmate glanced over my shoulder. "Is that my house?" Juan asked.

I scowled. "Why would your house be in a national magazine?"

I didn't understand until the following week when I saw Juan's father on the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post*. Looking like a saddle tramp, Hondo Crouch was sitting on the porch of the general store at Hye, a couple of miles from the LBJ Ranch. That struck me as ironic, given that the story was about LBJ's Texas, and everyone knew the Crouches were Republicans. Hondo's father-in-law, Adolf Stieler, was a big rancher (his nickname was the "Goat King of the World") and an early supporter of the GOP in Texas.

But the picture of Hondo was good, and according to the text, he was pranking tourists asking for directions to the ranch by saying that he'd never heard of Lyndon Johnson. I had another moment of recognition as I looked at the pictures and saw that the Crouches' ranch house, with its weathered stone walls, did look a bit like an Italian villa. The Crouches

were landed gentry, the most glamorous family in Fredericksburg.

Hondo wasn't the only Republican to recognize the value of LBJ's fame. Fredericksburg had always voted GOP and people there didn't think much of Johnson, but the Chamber of Commerce wanted to attract LBJ traffic and avoid the fates of other small towns in that area, which were beginning to die. Tourists would spend money in Fredericksburg and leave, so the town had to give them something to do and see.

This was around the time the Nimitz Hotel was closing, so the town went with what it had. Fredericksburg was the birthplace of Chester W. Nimitz, so the Nimitz Hotel was repurposed into the National Museum of the Pacific War, which became a calling card for visitors.

In 1970, as Fredericksburg was transforming into something bigger, Hondo

continued on Page 98

# TEXAS 2020 CALENDAR

HIGHWAYS

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

**\$13<sup>95</sup>**

**MAKES A GREAT GIFT!**  
Order more and save!

APRIL 2020

MAY 2020

shop.texashighways.com | 800-839-4997 (903-636-1123 from outside the U.S.)



# THE HEART OF INNOVATION

## Setting the pace for cardiovascular care in Greater Houston.

At Memorial Hermann, our team of world-renowned, affiliated heart physicians provides innovative cardiovascular care – from revolutionary new medications, to minimally invasive procedures for correcting atrial fibrillation or repairing heart valves to innovations in heart and lung transplants. These cutting-edge solutions are less traumatic and aim to reduce a patient's pain and recovery time. Our innovations are putting Memorial Hermann at the forefront of advancing heart health in Greater Houston and helping our patients lead a better quality of life.

Learn more about heart care at [heart.memorialhermann.org](http://heart.memorialhermann.org)

MEMORIAL<sup>®</sup>  
HERMANN  
Heart & Vascular Institute

# DRIVE



**ARTISTREE'S**  
Yoki treehouse  
takes design  
inspiration from  
the creek that runs  
below it.



# He is Will Beilharz. He Speaks for the Trees.

ArtisTree builds treehouses for the love of nature

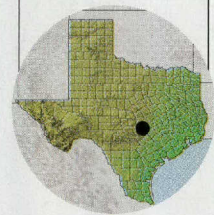
By Allison McNearney

**YOKI IS** suspended 25 feet in the air, between two bald cypress trees.

**T**here is something about being suspended high in an ancient tree that makes you see the world in a new way. It's a rare vantage with which Will Beilharz is intimately acquainted. As a teenager, Will worked for his family's business, Cypress Valley Canopy Tours. It was one of the first zipline courses in the continental United States to send adventurers flying along cables through the treetops—in their case, centuries-old bald cypresses in the Hill Country.

But while on a retreat to the forests of northern California after the 2011 Pedernales wildfire ripped through his family's land, Will's wheels started turning on another lofty venture. As he and some buddies spent the night suspended 275 feet high in a redwood tree, which the group had climbed, Will remembers thinking, "Wouldn't it be cool if everybody in the world could sleep in

**ARTISTREE AT CYPRESS VALLEY CANOPY TOURS.**  
1223 S. Paleface River Road, Spicewood. 432-345-2850; [artistreehomes.com](http://artistreehomes.com)



a tree? How would that change people's perspective on our relationship with nature, with life?"

Fast forward eight years, and Will has made his dream a reality by starting ArtisTree, a treehouse design and build company he co-founded with his mother, Amy Beilharz. In addition to five treehouse rentals on the family's Hill Country ranch, ArtisTree has designed treehouses and tiny homes in such far-flung places as the Pacific Coast of Mexico and a lava field in Hawaii, all available for rent. The mission of ArtisTree is to not only explore

the limits of high-end sustainable design, but to also share the magic that happens when we reconnect with nature and experience the playfulness and whimsy of our childhoods.

Spend a night in Yoki, the most recent of ArtisTree's rental properties on the Beilharz ranch, opened in 2018, and you will instantly become a convert. Cradled between two giant cypresses and suspended 25 feet over a creek, the treehouse combines all the amenities and cool-kid design of a bohemian boutique hotel with the natural wonders of the forest. (There's no Wi-Fi because, hey, you're in a tree and you shouldn't be surfing the internet.)

The 500-square-foot structure is an enchanting experience by any measure, with a comfy king bed, small kitchen, den, and Japanese soaking tub in the separate bathhouse. When you step out onto the porch to a morning filled with birds and butterflies flitting about against the soundtrack of droning cicadas and Van Morrison on the record player, the allure of sleeping in a tree is undeniable.

By his own account, a young Will would have been surprised by the path his life has taken. In 1998, he was 10 and trying to come to terms with his parents' decision to move the family from the ritzy Westlake suburb of Austin to rural Spicewood. After working in the communications industry, Amy, along with her husband, David, began to worry that technology and the changing culture were causing their kids to grow up too fast. She wanted something different for them.

So, decades before digital detoxing and forest bathing became popular wellness trends, the couple made a radical move. They found 88 untouched acres in Spicewood and decided to try living off the land. First order of business: build a yurt for the six-person family to live in.

"It was a wild adventure," Amy says. "Everybody thought we were nuts."

Will was one of those people. "I thought they had gone off the deep end," he says. He remembers thinking, "Why would you give up the house with the pool and the nice cars, and sell it all and move out to the country?"



Shop antique stores and Magnolia Market, stroll through the Cultural Arts District and follow in the footsteps of mammoths and Texas Rangers. Find out why Waco is becoming one of the most popular destinations in the heartland.

*Waco*  
— HEART ♥ TEXAS —

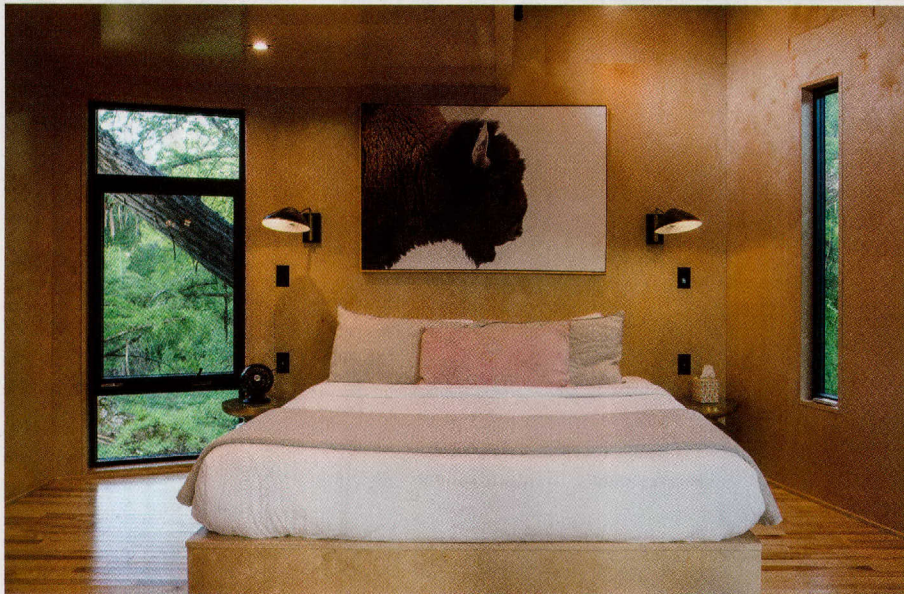
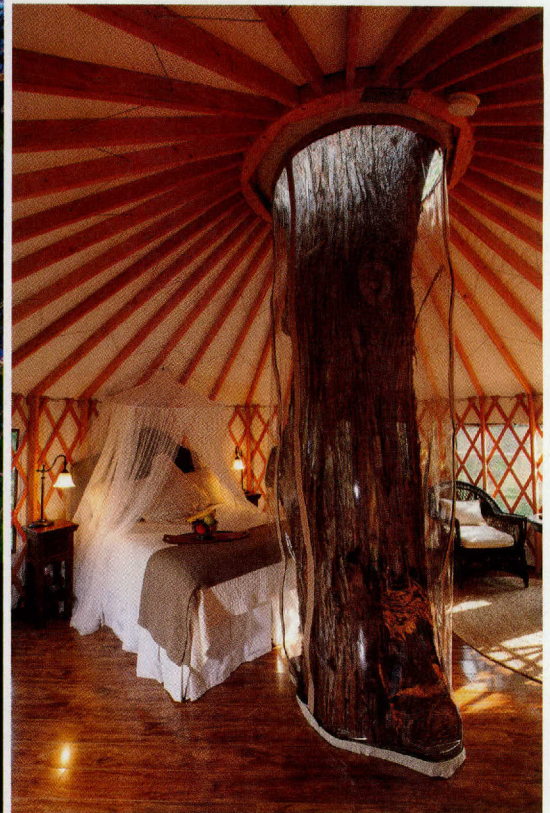
[wacoheartoftexas.com](http://wacoheartoftexas.com)



[shop.texashighways.com](http://shop.texashighways.com)



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** Lights lead across a bridge to Lofthaven II; a treehouse inspired by Will's childhood yurt, Yoki's minimalist bedroom.



But as the years passed, Will's experience living closer to nature slowly infiltrated his psyche. He helped his father build a series of structures starting with that first yurt and culminating in a traditional family home, though one that utilized materials found on the property, solar panels for electricity, and techniques to maximize natural air flow.

The move to Spicewood wasn't just an experiment in a simple and sustainable lifestyle; Amy and David chose to buy land on both sides of a creek in order to protect

the waterway. In 2005, they took their environmental efforts one step further when they opened Cypress Valley Canopy Tours as a fun way to both monetize the ranch and, as Amy says, to get people "inspired about environmental ideas without beating them on the side of the head with a two-by-four." The very next year, they built Lofthaven, a treehouse with a queen bed and canvas exterior, to serve the chorus of zipline guests who had expressed the desire to stay longer in the trees.

The business carried on until 2011,

**"My first step in any design process is just really deep listening," Will says. "What are the trees asking for? Where are the beauty points?"**

when the wildfire broke out and swept through nearly two-thirds of the Beilharz land, destroying several 600-year-old cypress trees, part of the zipline course, and Lofthaven. After taking a moment to process their losses, the family decided to reopen the zipline tour. Then, when Will returned from the California redwoods, where he had retreated in the wake of the fire, he offered to make the family zipline business the very first client of his new luxury treehouse company.

Will's first build on the Spicewood property, Lofthaven II, was an homage to two structures destroyed in the fire: the yurt of his childhood and the original treehouse. The circular roost is perched above a ravine and surrounds a giant tree that grows directly through its center. The



interior is the picture of romantic glam-  
ping. Gauzy, white netting envelopes a  
king-size bed that sits next to a macramé  
hammock. Outside, lights are embedded  
in the suspension bridge that leads back  
to land and a bathhouse complete with a  
waterfall hot tub.

“My first step in any design process is  
just really deep listening,” Will says.  
“What wants to happen here? What are  
the trees asking for? What are they able  
to hold? What’s the ecosystem that it’s in?  
Where are the beauty points?”

What started for Will as a one-off com-  
mission for Cypress Valley Canopy Tours  
to gain experience for the launch of Arti-  
sTree has resulted in five luxury tree-  
houses built in the cypresses on the ranch  
of his youth. The success of these, the  
family’s rentable treehouses outside of  
Texas, and client-based ArtisTree projects  
around the country have allowed Will to  
build something of a creative collective,  
assembling a group of craftspeople fo-  
cused on elevating green design and pro-  
tecting the environment.

Ben Newman, a designer, project man-  
ager, and partner in ArtisTree, is an arti-  
san who says he often rummages through  
local dumps to find discarded objects that  
can be repurposed for each new project.

“Creating environments where people  
can play again, and dream and feel that  
sense of creativity, is really what inspires  
me to design spaces,” says Newman, who  
loves the challenge of figuring out how to  
take as much reclaimed material as possi-  
ble and “spin it to have a new look to it.”

As modern life becomes ever more fre-  
netic and as concerns for the environment  
grow ever more serious, it’s no surprise  
that there is an increasing interest in eco-  
tourism, conservation, and the restorative  
powers of nature. But there is also some-  
thing special about exploring these ideas  
through treehouses.

“I hope the guests get a sense of what it  
means to be held by a living, breath-  
ing thing,” Will says. “I think part of what  
we’re seeing is just the human psyche  
needing places of sanctuary. And tree-  
houses were the original childhood sanc-  
tuary, right?”

**Love for the west.**

**Deep in the heart.**

Herb Mignery, Checkmate, Bronze, 1988,  
Gift of Jack and Valerie Guenther and Shannon Michaud

[briscoemuseum.org](http://briscoemuseum.org)  
Located on the Historic  
San Antonio River Walk.

the west starts here

**BRISCOE**  
WESTERN ART MUSEUM

**SHOP ON THE EDGE**

*San Bernardo Avenue,  
Laredo's original main  
street, boasts the largest  
collection of import  
merchandise along  
forty-plus city  
blocks.*

**Laredo**  
TEXAS

#HolaLaredo | 800.361.3360 | VisitLaredo.com

# The Murals Are Alive in El Segundo Barrio

Artist Jesus "Cimi" Alvarado paints and collects history on the streets of El Paso

By Roberto José Andrade Franco

It's sprinkling rain and the surrounding desert smells of wet dirt as Jesus "Cimi" Alvarado, an artist and an arts and culture coordinator for the Boys & Girls Club, takes his phone out of his pocket. He taps the phone and points the camera at a mural he painted on the side of El Mandadito de Waneks, a locally owned corner store at Campbell Street and 4th Avenue in El Paso. The mural, titled *Barrio Soul*, has a background shade of green that almost matches the color of prickly pear cacti found in this part of Texas. Featured on it are enlarged, black-and-white photographs of late El Paso radio personality Steve Crosno and local musical acts from the 1950s through '70s, including The Nite Dreamers and The El Paso Drifters. These bands play oldies you can still hear from windows of homes and slow-moving cars on a Sunday afternoon.

Cimi is standing in El Segundo Barrio, a working-class neighborhood whose southern border is outlined by the Rio Grande separating El Paso from Juárez, Texas from Chihuahua; and the United States from Mexico. Historically, El Segundo

**FRIDA KAHLO, A** symbol of Mexican identity, as depicted by artist Jesus "Cimi" Alvarado.



Barrio has been one of the first stops for many Mexican citizens arriving in the U.S. It's known as another Ellis Island. Walk around and you're more likely to hear Spanish than English.

As Cimi steadies his phone, the mural suddenly comes alive. Thanks to the Augment El Paso app, which debuted in 2015, *Barrio Soul* becomes an interactive experience where you can hear the music of each of those artists and read their short biographies. But because the stories behind the dozens of murals that inhabit El Segundo Barrio aren't readily available—they're oral history, not written record—part of bringing the murals to life through the app includes searching for people who lived that history and can convey it. "We don't have these archived," Cimi says of the photographs he uses as models, "so we have to go find these *viejitos* and be like, 'Hey, we want to talk to you.'"

Viejitos is a loving term for older people. They are the grandparents who walk through El Segundo Barrio during the day. Sometimes, they walk their gentle steps while holding the hands of their grandchildren. Sometimes, *viejitos* see Cimi working on a mural, and they stop to reminisce. They point at the mural and tell their grandchildren about how they grew up. How El Segundo Barrio, for better or worse, is changing. How new apartment buildings have replaced the old houses that once stood there. How a few decades ago, gangs on every other block would have made it difficult to even stand there, in the heart of El Segundo Barrio, and admire one of the many colorful murals that says something about this place. *Viejitos* help bring to life all of these murals, which collectively tell the story of the area's deep ties to Chicano culture.

While walking between a few of the eight murals he's painted in different parts of El Segundo Barrio, Cimi points at one of the others that has been there for decades. "That's by Felipe Adame," he says, nodding at a mural. Adame is a celebrated muralist who passed away in 2017 and whose work colors many walls of the barrio. "[He's one] of the guys that, now as an adult, you go back and realize what they

Getting better for you.



MCKINNEY FALLS STATE PARK



## New ways to visit your state parks!

### Pick Your Site

Reserve specific campsites, cabins or shelters in advance. View photos and details of each site online. This also makes it easy for groups to choose sites near each other.

### Save the Day

Ensure your day entry to even the most popular parks at the most popular times with this new option. You can reserve your day visit up to 30 days in advance.

Book your next park visit today at  
[TexasStateParks.org/Reservations](https://TexasStateParks.org/Reservations)



# FIND YOUR LIFERS

in Matagorda County



## BIRDING CAPITAL

**#1** IN THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

December 16, 2019: National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count Matagorda County

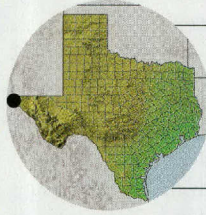


(979) 323.1176 • [visitbaycitytx.com](https://visitbaycitytx.com)

VISIT BAY CITY TX



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** Cesar Chavez and Emiliano Zapata in a community garden; Cimi in front of El Mandadito de Waneks; *El Corrido del Segundo Barrio*.



**EL SEGUNDO BARRIO MURALS**  
in Downtown El Paso.  
915-534-0600

were doing, or trying to do—the same thing that we’re doing now. They were case workers or social workers who were working with gang members and doing the murals.”

Cimi, 42, was born in Juárez and raised here. Keeping El Segundo Barrio’s history alive is important to him. In high school, as he learned more about Chicano and indigenous history, young Jesus became Cimi, a Mayan word representing that culture’s concept of “continuous growth.” It was also there, at Bowie High School, that

Cimi met Gaspar Enriquez, an art teacher and artist whose work is displayed in the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery, among other places. “It inspired me,” Cimi says of his would-be mentor’s art, “because it was like, whoa, he’s painting us. He’s painting who we are. And he’s not ashamed of doing it.”

In the past two decades, Cimi has painted several murals across Texas. They depict figures and symbols that reflect Mexican and Mexican American identity—Emiliano Zapata, Cesar Chavez,

indigenous iconography, and the international bridges that, in a border town like El Paso, many people cross daily.

In Dallas, Cimi’s murals color the walls of the Oak Cliff neighborhood, another historic Mexican barrio in Texas. Last year in Marfa, Cimi and his team painted a mural that retold a part of that city’s lesser-known history. The mural, titled *Pages from the Marfa Storybook*, features an adobe building that for almost 60 years served as Marfa’s segregated school for students of Mexican descent. Also last year, Cimi painted murals in Mexico City, Los Angeles, and of course, El Paso.

“I wanted to teach history,” Cimi says, “and then I ended up doing muralism. I’m still trying to, I guess, do the same thing.”

**“I wanted to teach history,” Cimi says, “and then I ended up doing muralism. I’m still trying to, I guess, do the same thing.”**

Back in El Paso, Cimi is standing in front of one of his other murals, *El Corrido del Segundo Barrio*, located at 801 S. Florence St., near the Boys & Girls Club. “They’re from el barrio,” he says of the two musicians—one holding an accordion, the other a guitar—at the center of the mural. “They go from little bar to little bar or restaurant, and they play.”

In the lower left-hand corner, the mural shows a mother bathing her son inside of a metal tub in the middle of a tenement courtyard. Cimi then points to the lower right-hand side. There are three people carrying backpacks who are about to cross a bridge during sunset. “They are migrating through the *rio*,” Cimi explains, incorporating Spanish words and phrases into his conversation, as he often does. “[It’s] how a lot of our people, our families, got here.”

Walk around El Paso’s Segundo Barrio and it’s impossible not to notice that it’s changing—gentrifying, to speak plainly. But a constant are the murals that artists like Cimi and others before him have painted. Some have been there for decades. Others are relatively new. Each of them continues the muralist tradition of telling stories of the past within a changing present. Documenting these narratives, through *viejitos* or other sources, is crucial to keeping this history alive in the app-driven, digital era.

“I see it as an obligation to teach our youth about who we are and the stories that happen, especially in this community,” Cimi says while walking across the park behind the Boys & Girls Club. There, he’s working on yet another mural on the history of El Segundo Barrio. **✎**



**BEAUMONT**

**GEAUX  
EXPLORE**

History, Nature and Good Times

Visit Beaumont for crave-worthy culinary diversions, outdoor adventure and history on a grand scale. Call 1-800-392-4401 for a free Visitors Guide and start planning your next getaway now.

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



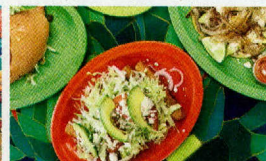
**Birdwatchers Welcome**

Beaumont is a natural address for over 320 species of birds and is an international renowned bird-watching destination.



**Beautiful Murals & Art**

Colorful murals and beautiful artwork are popping up all over Beaumont, even on the traffic boxes!



**Foodies Delight**

From fine dining to Tex-Mex, farm-to-fork and all in between, Beaumont’s food scene is hot. See what’s trending @eatbmt



**GREENVILLE**  
We'll Surprise You!

**f Travel Greenville Texas**  
[TravelGreenvilleTx.com](http://TravelGreenvilleTx.com)



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** The living room; staff at the social hall; performers at Martindale River Café. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** The social hall.



# Back-to-School Days

Austin expats reimagine a schoolhouse in Martindale while paying homage to the past

By Jen Hamilton Hernandez

In 2017, Craig and Wendi Foster, a hip empty-nester couple living in Austin and working in marketing and fashion, got tired of the grind and went looking for life at a slower pace. That's when they found and acquired an old schoolhouse in Martindale. The population of this former agricultural town in Central Texas waned in the late 1960s, but the town remains a hot spot among paddlers dipping into the San Marcos River, as well as for filmmakers (Richard Linklater's *The Newton Boys* and Sundance entry *Sister Aimee* were shot there).

The Martindale Schoolhouse, designated a Texas Historical Landmark just this year, is one part short-term rental, and with the pairing of the Martindale Social Hall, another part event venue. The combined facility celebrates the history of the town while providing chic accommodations on a street off the banks of the San Marcos River.

"You get so busy raising kids and working for a corporation," says Craig, a new member of the town's historic commission.

**MARTINDALE SCHOOLHOUSE**  
101 Lockhart St.,  
Martindale,  
512-656-8896;  
martindale  
schoolhouse.com

Group rentals run \$700 and up per night. The schoolhouse sleeps 14.



"Austin is very fast-paced. At a certain point in life some of us start thinking of an escape plan. We wanted a different life and we took a risk, sold our Austin house, and bought the schoolhouse."

The schoolhouse, a Mission Revival-style building with arched windows and doorways, was built in 1921 and designed by C. H. Page Bros. Architects, whose work includes the Travis and Hays county courthouses. The Martindale School, as it was called while in operation until 1968, was the center of Martindale life during the cotton- and corn-seed boom that occurred up until the '60s. During that time, it served as a meeting place as well as a school building.

Then, in the late '60s, rural towns across the country saw a demographic shift as families moved to suburban and urban areas. Martindale was no exception; the town's population began to shrink as nearby San Marcos grew. In 1965, a measure passed to merge the two school districts, and while the Martindale School continued to operate as part of the San Marcos Independent School District, it closed three years later, in '68. Since shuttering, the schoolhouse has gone through various incarnations, including an antiques mall, an auto repair shop, and a private residence.

Today, when guests arrive, they can walk past the school's original flag pole and down a front sidewalk—once the site of many a hopscotch session—shaded with pecan trees. Arched double doors await, leading into the expansive front entry and living room. Stylish midcentury modern furniture brought from the former Austin home of the Fosters mingles with international and local art.

There are also design elements that honor the building's history. A seed counter lines one wall, a nod to Martindale's past as the seed capital of Texas, and school photos dot a long hallway leading to five bedrooms, which were once classrooms. After taking it all in, guests can

unwind in the living room with an eclectic record collection featuring artists from Johnny Cash to Bob Marley to Blondie.

In Wendi's former job for a fashion brand, she traveled four days a week for 12 years, which proved beneficial for this

venture. "I stayed in hotels all the time," she says. "I thought, 'I know that. I know hotels. I know hospitality. I can do that.'"

Harper's Hall, a large bedroom with three beds, has creaky, longleaf pine floors and a chalkboard where lessons were once given. Arched windows shine airy light into the Lady Martindale room, with French doors beckoning its guests outside to the front courtyard for one last look at the stars and moon.

The communal spaces—both indoors and out—make the house a destination in itself. The large kitchen allows for cooking, and there's plenty of seating at the table with a banquette, or in the expansive dining room. In the living room, guests can jam out to tunes, and in the front courtyard or on the veranda they can chat over coffee or an adult drink.

Out back, it's quiet and nature is on display. A hawk may fly overhead. A butterfly could grace the vintage wrought-iron patio chair, perfect for lounging. Looking across the bright green lawn that was once the schoolyard, you'll see the Martindale Social Hall, formerly the school's gymnasium. The building was a Public Works Administration project constructed in 1939 and designed by Driscoll & Groos Architects, who also worked on the Deep Eddy and Barton Springs bath houses in Austin. During the heyday of the Martindale School campus, the gym held bake sales, school dances, and even donkey basketball, a variation of basketball in which players ride donkeys.

Now it's an events facility, available along with the Martindale Schoolhouse, for weddings for couples with an edgy, industrial aesthetic. It also hosts concerts, arts markets, and yoga classes. Part of the social hall's roof blew off in a storm a few decades back and hasn't been replaced. The steel trusses remain overhead—better to see sunsets and the night sky.

Though it's easy to settle into the campus for a long weekend, don't miss out on what the town of Martindale has to offer. At the end of the night, return to the schoolhouse and rest comfortably knowing there will be no punishment for sleeping in class this time around. 🐼

## More in Martindale

### Martindale River Café and Mercantile

Purchase works by local artists and listen to live music. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are paired with Texas beers on tap, plus wine and cider. Hours: Wed-Sat 9 a.m.-2 p.m. and Fri-Sat 5-10 p.m. (music from 8-10 p.m.); 415 Main St., Martindale. 512-668-9049; martindalrivercafe.com

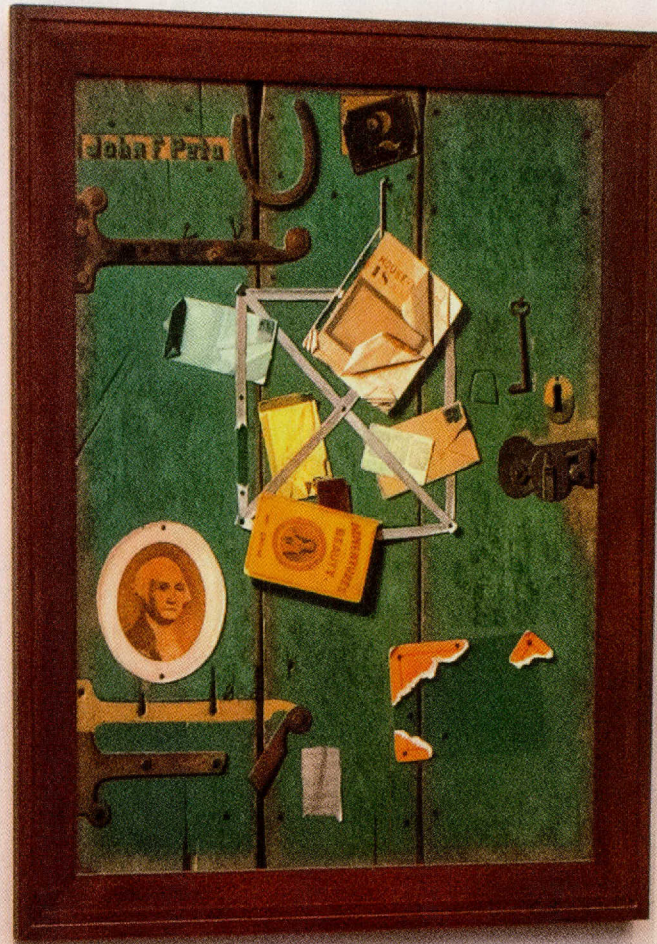
### El Taco Feliz

This food truck serves hearty tacos with homemade salsa. Breakfast tacos are popular with locals. Open daily, 6 a.m.-2 p.m. 408 Lockhart St., Martindale. 512-357-6710

### Paddle With Style

Book a paddling tour on the San Marcos River or rent gear. 512-749-2350; paddlewithstyle.com





# Worth the Journey

Fort Worth has always been the center of Western culture, but with a booming population, the city embraces other kinds of culture, too

By June Naylor



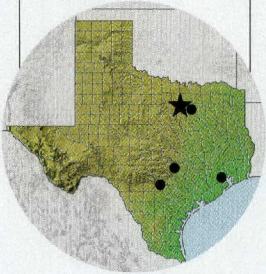


**Dallas**  
30 minutes

**Austin**  
3 hours

**Houston**  
4 hours

**San Antonio**  
4 hours



**F**ort Worth has long been a hub for Western heritage and art. Cowboys, honky-tonk enthusiasts, and culture vultures have always embraced the city thanks to the Stockyards and world-class museums. But lately, it's growing into much more. Identified as the 13th most-populated city in the nation earlier this year, Fort Worth has expanded its number and level of restaurants, watering holes, and art galleries. The influx of new residents has brought with it a youthful energy found in neighborhoods like the Near Southside, downtown, and even the historic North Side. Here's how to experience it all—classic and new—in one weekend.



**STAY**



**EAT & DRINK**



**SHOP**



**EXPLORE**

BETHLEHEM REVISITED + CHRISTMAS TOUR OF HOMES + SANTA RUN + THE NUTCRACKER

You'll feel at home for the holidays with a heartwarming weekend filled with wonderful activities, touring, dining and shopping in Waxahachie.

*Join us for upcoming holiday events!*

# WAXAHACHIE

*A place to be*  
**Merry**

For holiday event information, please visit [waxahachiecvb.com](http://waxahachiecvb.com) or call 469-309-4040.



[shop.texashighways.com](http://shop.texashighways.com)

# Friday



3 P.M.

## Art-Inspired Digs

Check into your room at the Texas White House, an art-filled inn occupying a big, white 1910 home with a broad wraparound porch on the city's booming Near Southside. When owner Cindy Lucio purchased the city's oldest bed-and-breakfast a few years ago, she turned it into a contemporary gallery space with changing exhibits by local artists. The lodging includes three upstairs rooms in the main house and three more in the carriage house across the back patio, all filled with natural light. Choose rooms with themes like "Tejas," with Mexican folk art and a pair of leather chairs; and "Cowtown East," with a coffee bar and work space.



4 P.M.

## The Cowtown Experience

Mosey over to the Stockyards, the 100-acre national historic district that once served as home to outlaws and gunslingers, cattle drovers, and meatpacking houses. Today, it's the place to see Western lore come alive. During "the world's only twice-daily cattle drive," a collection of gentle Longhorns lumbers down the well-worn bricks that pave Exchange Avenue. Afterward, sip a cold longneck at the White Elephant Saloon, the site of a historical gunfight reenactment every February, or pick out a pair of cowboy boots at M.L. Leddy's, a local landmark on the corner of Exchange and Main since the 1940s.



6:30 P.M.

## Burgers and Bulls

Grab something quick at Love Shack. The burger stand, like the

White Elephant Saloon, is owned by renowned chef Tim Love. He shows off his zeal for quality meat with burger patties incorporating a signature 50/50 blend of ground prime beef tenderloin and prime brisket. Across the street, the Stockyards Championship Rodeo at the 1908 Cowtown Coliseum offers front-row seats to bronc riding and barrel racing. Should a nightcap call to you, imbibe a craft cocktail at Thompson's Bookstore, which does indeed occupy a former, much-loved bookstore. For a different kind of nightcap, there's always Melt Ice Creams in Sundance Square.

# Saturday



9 A.M.

## Check Out the Goods

Head over to The Clearfork Farmers Market for a free yoga class on a grassy spread next to the Trinity River. The farmers market features local vendors, including Fratelli Colletti, selling olive oil harvested by a Fort Worth family from its orchards in Sicily; sourdough breads made with a variety of grains by Icon Bread; seasonal fruit and cream pies from Sweet Lucy's Pies; fresh local honey from SD Captain Bees; and assorted handmade seasonal loose-leaf teas from Black Poodle Tea Co. The treats are best enjoyed while strolling along the Trinity Trails, paved pathways following the river's flow east and west.



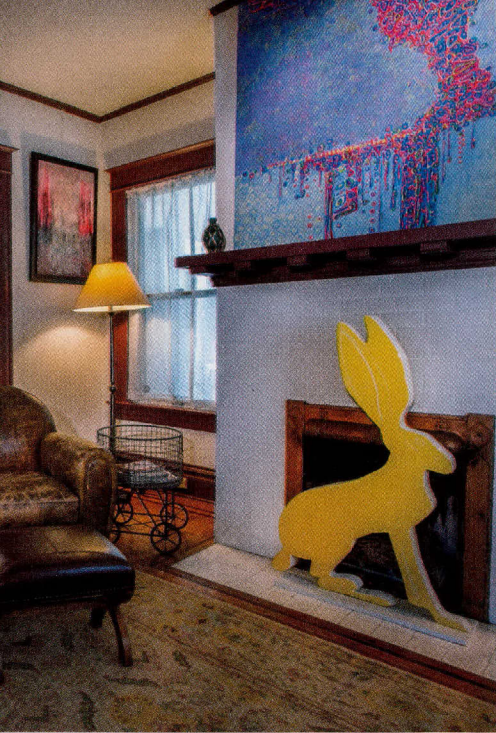
12 P.M.

## Tastes of the Town

West Magnolia Avenue is best explored on foot. The milelong stretch featuring lovingly restored



**OPENING SPREAD:** Kids learn about art at the Amon Carter Museum of American Art. **THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** art infuses every guest room at the Texas White House; blow glass at SiNaCa Studios; Panther City BBQ; barrels of bourbon at Firestone & Robertson distillery; yoga at The Clearfork Farmers Market.



turn-of-the-century buildings is the heartbeat of the Fairmount National Historic District. For lunch, try the poblano cheeseburger and gorgonzola waffle fries, or the chicken salad/tabouli combo at Lili's Bistro, a popular restaurant within a vintage dry cleaning building. Stop at SiNaCa Studios for a fascinating glassblowing demonstration or to take part in an afternoon workshop. Across town, Firestone & Robertson bourbon distillery offers guided tours and a fantastic view of downtown Fort Worth.



**7 P.M.**  
**A Certain Glow**

Venture back to West Magnolia for dinner—there are plenty of tempting options there. One favorite is Ellerbe Fine Foods, an homage to Southern elegance in a restored gas station. Seasonal dishes include housemade gravlax with dill crème fraîche, crispy Texas quail with pimento cheese stuffing, and sautéed wild Alaskan halibut with lemon-tarragon butter. Take an after-dinner stroll along sidewalks aglow with sparkling white lights in the trees. Stop for a specialty cocktail at Proper, a tiny bar where talented mixologists shake-up custom drinks.



**2 P.M.**  
**Heart of the Arts**

In the same triangle where you'll find the Kimbell Art Museum and the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth screens arthouse films at Magnolia at the Modern, open only on weekends. After the show, drop by the Cafe Modern for coffee and chocolate cake with tangerine glaze. Outside, artist Richard Serra's "Vortex," a rusted steel work rising 67 feet, serves as a natural echo chamber. It's customary to stand inside the structure and shout something. We recommend a hearty "yeehaw!" for a fitting end to your weekend in Cowtown. 🍷

# Sunday



**9 A.M.**  
**Pedal Pushers**

At the Texas White House, Lucio, who's also a Fort Worth Academy of Fine Arts-trained chef, creates sumptuous breakfasts for her guests. Changing each morning, this spread can include Texas-shaped waffles with sautéed fruit,

## CAMP OUT

Eighteen miles southwest of downtown, Holiday Park Campground on Benbrook Lake offers campsites and RV sites, boat ramps, a fishing pier, equestrian and hiking trails, picnic sites, and restrooms with showers. 6000 Pearl Ranch Road, Fort Worth. Reserve at 877-444-6777; recreation.gov



THE  
STARS  
AT  
NIGHT



**BY RACHEL MONROE**



As Texas grows, communities work to curb the  
light pollution threatening our spangled skies

# IN

his time as a naturalist at Enchanted Rock State Natural Area, Scott Whitener loved taking kids on night hikes. Whitener had left his previous job teaching in Fredericksburg partly because he wanted to spend more time outside. On treks up the massive granite dome, he encouraged young people to overcome their nerves as they grew accustomed to the dark, their senses sharpening in the absence of artificial light.

A group of high school students from San Antonio made a particularly strong impression. Most of them had never ventured outside the city in their lives; now, they were exploring in the dark and peering at the night sky through a telescope. “When kids see the Milky Way for the first time—that’s a life-changing experience,” Whitener says.

Unfortunately, such experiences are growing increasingly rare. When Texas was still a primarily rural state, light pollution wasn’t an issue on anyone’s radar. As everyone from Gene Autry to George Strait to Pee-Wee Herman has crooned, “The stars at night are big and bright, deep in the heart of Texas.” Today, though, those spangled night skies are a little less stunning than they used to be.

Texas’ population is booming and its cities are sprawling. Industry is expanding, particularly oil, natural gas, and wind energy development, all contributors to light pollution. This means more artificial light after dark, and as a result, the state has some of the nation’s highest per-capita rates of nighttime light emission. Across Texas, unshielded or upward-pointing lights contribute to the gradual, diffuse brightening of the night sky, an effect known as “skyglow.” If you’ve ever searched the sky for shooting stars and noticed the night doesn’t seem quite as dark as it used to be, you’ve seen skyglow.

The cumulative effect of bright lights can

be felt hundreds of miles away. Big Bend National Park, home to some of the darkest skies in the lower 48, experiences light pollution from as far afield as Del Rio, El Paso, and Midland. These days, the majority of Texans can no longer see the Milky Way at night, according to the Hill Country Alliance, a Dripping Springs-based nonprofit that seeks to preserve the natural resources and heritage of the Texas Hill Country.

The movement to protect our night skies from light pollution has lagged behind advocacy for other elements of the environment. Championing darkness can be a tough sell, says John Barentine, director of public policy for the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA). Based in Tucson, Arizona, IDA is at the forefront of the fight against light pollution. “I can give people facts ’til

I’m blue in the face, but that’s not going to move somebody who’s afraid of the dark and who has a gut feeling that more light will make them safe,” Barentine says. “I have to slowly evolve their emotional reaction from seeing darkness as a problem to seeing it as a value that they support.”

Even so, appreciation for darkness has gained traction around the world, and in Texas in particular. Barentine says Texas is a leader in the dark sky movement, in part because the state is home to some of the last night skies that remain pristine—that is, largely unaffected by skyglow. From the remote desert landscapes of far West Texas to the grassy expanses of the Hill Country, Texans are working together to protect our famously starry skies.





The Milky Way over Big Bend National Park, which is recognized as a Dark Sky Park.

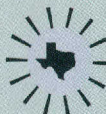


**OPENING SPREAD:**  
A meteor shower  
near Terlingua. **LEFT:**  
Matagorda Beach.  
**RIGHT:** Bluebonnets  
in Terlingua.

## SMALL-TOWN CAMPAIGN

When people think of dark skies in Texas, they often associate them with the vast expanses of West Texas, home of the University of Texas McDonald Observatory, a leading research hub for astronomy. This makes sense; the area has some of the darkest night skies in the continental U.S., and the McDonald Observatory hosts regular tours, star parties, and other events to acquaint the public with celestial bodies.

But you shouldn't have to drive into the desert to see stunning stars. When Cathy Moreman moved to Wimberley from Houston eight years ago, she loved the peaceful, quiet atmosphere—and the night skies. The Central Texas town, which exists at the confluence of the Blanco River and Cypress



**TEXAS HAS SOME**  
of the nation's  
highest per-capita  
rates of nighttime  
light emission.



# TEXAS DARK SKY PLACES

The Arizona-based **International Dark-Sky Association** recognizes places for their efforts and success at maintaining dark skies. Here are the classifications as they apply to Texas sites:

**Dark Sky Communities** have shown "exceptional dedication to the preservation of the night sky," including public-education efforts and rules for outdoor lighting.

Dripping Springs, 2014  
Horseshoe Bay, 2015  
Wimberley Valley, 2018

**Dark Sky Parks** must be an "exceptional dark sky resource" with strict standards for sky brightness (sky brightness must be routinely equal to or darker than 21.2 magnitudes per square arc second):

1. Big Bend National Park, 2012
2. Copper Breaks State Park, 2014
3. Enchanted Rock State Natural Area, 2014
4. Big Bend Ranch State Park, 2017
5. South Llano River State Park, 2017



**International Dark Sky Sanctuaries**—the IDA's most rigorous designation—recognizes natural areas in exceptionally remote areas, with even stricter standards for sky brightness (sky brightness must be routinely equal to or darker than 21.5 magnitudes per square arc second):

Devils River State  
Natural Area near Del Rio, 2019







LEFT: The Paluxy River near Glen Rose. THIS PAGE: Taken at Block Creek Natural Area, this image stacks multiple photos to capture the light of stars rotating around the North Star.

Creek, takes pride in its quaint atmosphere, from its annual rodeo to the outdoor walk-in theater to the serene and silent nights. When I visited this summer, I squinted up at the sky, trying to remember the constellations I'd learned about during visits to the McDonald Observatory—Orion, Cassiopeia, and the elongated triangle that represents the horns of Taurus the bull. Moreman told me she has noticed a shift over the past several years as Central Texas—like the rest of the state—has boomed. In 2018 the state added more new residents than any other in the country, many of them in the Austin–San Antonio corridor. Spillover from the growth is palpable in the Hill Country, where the population is projected to double over the next three decades.

Five years ago, Moreman, currently the executive director of the Wimberley Valley Chamber of Commerce, learned that neighboring Dripping Springs had just become the first community in Texas to be

designated by the IDA as a Dark Sky Community. The designation recognizes places that have taken steps to preserve night skies, including passing and enforcing an outdoor lighting ordinance, as well as demonstrating community engagement and educating the public about the importance of dark skies.

Following in their footsteps, Moreman began working with a group of Wimberley City Council members and citizens “because people do like to visit places where they can see the skies at night, but also because I live here, and I want to protect what I love about it.” The group eventually came to be known as the Wimberley Valley Dark Sky Committee, which formed to help the area attain IDA recognition.

Moreman was concerned about light pollution's impact on tourism, which is central to the economies of many towns in the Hill Country. “There are a lot of bed-and-breakfasts in the area where people go to get away from the city lights and city

noises,” she pointed out.

She also learned that exposure to artificial light at night has been shown to have damaging effects on human health. Overexposure to bright lights—particularly those with a bluish tinge—disrupts our innate circadian rhythms, according to the National Sleep Foundation. It's been linked to a suppression in the production of melatonin, a hormone that plays an important role in regulating the thyroid system, and contributes to increased risks for obesity, depression, and sleep disorders, according to a study published in the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*.

Dark skies benefit non-human populations, too: Animals rely on their circadian rhythms when mating, migrating, and hunting. Artificial light disrupts these processes in ways scientists are only now beginning to understand. It doesn't merely impact nocturnal animals, such as bats and frogs, but also species ranging from monarch butterflies to songbirds. Fireflies, those icons of long summer evenings, flash

less often when in the presence of artificial light, a study from the University of Virginia found. And researchers have seen that light pollution can hurt insects' ability to communicate and reproduce, according to a review in the scientific journal *Ecology and Evolution*.

## SKY-FRIENDLY LIGHT

Moreman and her fellow dark-sky advocates began talking to their neighbors and local business owners about simple fixes, such as turning off lights at night or, for lights that must remain on, shielding them so the glare is pointed down. It's also best to use lights that are neither too bright nor too cool. Cool-toned lights, including most LED bulbs, emit light at wavelengths that are more disruptive to wildlife and human health. "It's just about making people aware," Moreman says.

While Wimberley achieved IDA dark-sky recognition in 2018, not everyone is on board with the fight to keep skies dark. Some Hill Country residents keep their yards and homes well-lit at night for security reasons. But a number of studies have found that

brightly lit environments don't necessarily improve safety; sometimes, in fact, they have the opposite effect. Bright lights create a strong contrast between lit areas and their unlit surroundings, which makes it more difficult to see what's happening in the shadows. A study done by Chicago's Alley Lighting Project found more crime associated with brightly lit alleyways, contrary to expectations. It's also true that bright lights don't necessarily make roadways safer; badly designed or poorly aimed lights can temporarily blind drivers.

The kind of lighting that dark-sky advocates prefer—shielded fixtures that point light down, not up—don't cause the kind of glare and contrast that impair vision. Making sure outdoor lights are dark-sky friendly also has economic benefits. From 20 to 50 percent of all outdoor light is wasted—that is, unshielded or poorly aimed—amounting to \$3.5 billion a year in energy loss for outdoor residential lights

alone, according to the IDA.

Dripping Springs has worked to help corporations minimize their light pollution. When Home Depot announced plans to build a big-box store in the town, it was subject to regulations aimed at reducing glare and light trespass. "The lighting company initially said, 'We can't do that,'" recalls Cindy Luongo Cassidy, a consultant who works with the town. Cassidy pressed them to find a solution, and within 48 hours, they had come up with a new light-shield design that's now considered standard. When H-E-B planned a grocery store and gas station in nearby Wimberley, that town's dark-sky committee helped the company reconfigure its lighting to be better shielded and more efficient. It now uses half the wattage of the original plan.

Dark-sky advocacy is spreading throughout Hill Country communities. Thirteen Hill Country counties have adopted resolutions supporting the

preservation of nighttime darkness. And two-thirds of the region's population (excluding the cities of Austin and San Antonio) live in unincorporated areas. However, as


it stands now, Texas law prevents counties from adopting ordinances regarding outdoor lighting.

"The population growth in unincorporated areas presents a very strong rationale for revisiting these questions," says Cliff Kaplan, a program manager for the Hill Country Alliance. "How long can counties go with so little authority before their natural resources are depleted and they become undesirable places to live?"

Even though Texas counties have limited authority over lighting, Hill Country communities have "made progress by leaps and bounds," notes Barentine, of the IDA. "They consider the night sky part of their heritage, and they don't want to lose that." He noted that alliances have formed among people who may not see eye-to-eye politically, but share concern for the importance of dark night skies.

Of the 23 IDA Dark Sky Communities in the United States, three are in the Hill

**"Most kids living in a city have no idea that there's anything in the sky other than the moon. You can't experience nature to its fullest if you can't see the Milky Way or identify Saturn on a dark night."**



An illuminated adobe-brick ruin in Big Bend Ranch State Park.



**UP TO HALF** of residential outdoor light is wasted, meaning unshielded or poorly aimed.

**HOME TO SOME OF THE LAST REMAINING PRISTINE NIGHT SKIES, FAST-GROWING TEXAS IS A LEADER IN THE DARK-SKY MOVEMENT.**

**1.** Across the state, unshielded or upward-pointing lights contribute to the gradual, diffuse brightening of the night sky, an effect known as "skyglow."

**2.** Overexposure to bright lights at night—particularly those with a bluish tinge—disrupts our innate circadian rhythms.



3. Residents can assist in their communities' dark-sky efforts by turning off lights at night and/or using shielded lights.

4. Dark-sky ordinances reduce light pollution by requiring outdoor lighting to be shielded to reduce glare and light.

5. Artificial lights affect animals—bats, frogs, monarch butterflies, and songbirds—ability to mate, migrate, and hunt. Light pollution also hurts insects' ability to communicate and reproduce.

6. Community education efforts include star parties where attendees can peer through telescopes at distant celestial objects and listen to stories about the constellations.

7. At South Llano River State Park, kids can check out a Night Sky Explorer Pack. The pack's red flashlight makes enough light to see without disrupting night vision.



Country. Others may join that list soon. Such activity is still largely concentrated in West Texas and the Hill Country, but Moreman hopes other municipalities will learn about the Wimberley Valley's successes and feel inspired. "Blanco's working toward it, and I got an email about it from Buda the other day," she says. "Everyone is interested. It's an idea that's growing—and it's great to be a part of it."

## DENS OF DARKNESS

Because so many Texans travel to state parks to immerse themselves in nature, these preserves play a key role not just in protecting dark skies as a natural resource, but also in educating the public about the dangers of light pollution. In 2016, Whitener, the former Enchanted Rock naturalist, moved to become the superintendent of the 2,600-acre South Llano River State Park in the western Hill Country near Junction, about 60 miles west of Fredericksburg. As a native of Houston and a longtime resident of the Hill Country, he was concerned about the impact of population growth.

"Places like Junction that really used to be in the middle of nowhere aren't anymore," he tells me. "The cities keep spreading out, getting bigger and bigger. Fredericksburg's population has exploded. Dripping Springs is going to be eaten up by Austin. Pretty soon it's going to be one big metroplex. It's getting bigger and brighter everywhere you go."

Barentine points to Las Vegas as a cautionary tale: From the South Rim of the Grand Canyon in neighboring Arizona, the glow of Las Vegas is visible on a clear night. "These decisions made in cities are impacting parks," he says. If something doesn't change, Barentine warns, "cities will get progressively brighter, and the remaining parts of the country that currently experience natural darkness—in Texas, parts of East Texas, parts of the Panhandle—that natural darkness is going to be squeezed out of existence."

At South Llano River State Park, increased traffic, a new pipeline project north of Interstate 10, and Junction's growth have all had an impact on the park's night sky.

Whitener is doing what he can to counter



Enchanted Rock State Natural Area, near Fredericksburg, occasionally hosts stargazing parties and nighttime hikes.

light population. Starting in 2016, South Llano began to get rid of unnecessary lights at night and shield others. Whitener worked with Junction to minimize artificial lighting as well. The park also hosts regular events educating the public about the value of the night sky and periodically takes measurements of the skyglow around the park. When a strobing light at the top of a distant radio tower a dozen miles away disrupted the darkness—"It looked like there was a rave going on in the sky," Whitener says—he had to call the Federal Communications Commission to get it shut off.

As Whitener sees it, South Llano State Park's work to cut down on light pollution

is beneficial to both the park and the community. The park's reputation for dark skies attracts stargazers and dark-sky photographers. "They're a good group," he tells me. "Amateur astronomers don't tend to be a rowdy bunch." The changes also make economic sense. "It doesn't cost any money to take out lights, to use less electricity."

The park has taken steps to encourage awareness among its visitors. Tourists are invited to attend regular star parties, where they can peer through telescopes at distant celestial objects and listen to stories about the constellations. Park rangers host night hikes, where they encourage people to tune into their senses. Kids can borrow a Night





Sky Explorer Pack, which includes binoculars, constellation cards, a star chart, and a red flashlight. (Red light allows for enough light to see without disrupting night vision.) Whitener hopes people who experience the beauty of a star-spangled sky at South Llano will be motivated to consider light pollution when they return home.

During a recent visit to the park, I hiked for a mile and a half, then pitched my tent in one of the backcountry campsites. It was the middle of the week, and Whitener had told me I would have the park to myself. As night settled in, I began to get anxious. I was alone in the dark, and every rustle of the leaves made my heart thump with

rising anxiety. But then I remembered what Whitener had said just a few hours earlier: “Most kids living in a city have no idea that there’s anything in the sky other than the moon,” he told me. “You can’t experience nature to its fullest if you can’t see the Milky Way or identify Saturn on a dark night. It’s something we’ve gotten away from, and we’re trying to retrain people. We’re trying to grow new stewards of the night sky.”

What if the dark was not something to be afraid of, but rather to appreciate? I stretched back and regarded the sky anew. I thought about what a gift it was to be able to see the stars so clearly, and to feel so small in such a satisfying way. 🐾

## DARK SKY EVENTS

Many parks and natural areas in Texas host events that can help you get a closer look at our night skies:

### **McDonald Observatory Star Parties**

Guided constellation tours and stargazing parties are held in the telescope park on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings. [mcdonaldobservatory.org](http://mcdonaldobservatory.org)

### **Dripping Springs Texas Night Sky Festival**

Held biennially in March—next in 2021—this celebration features storytelling, yoga under the stars, solar observations, and a night sky advocate’s workshop. [facebook.com/texasnightskyfestival](https://facebook.com/texasnightskyfestival)

### **Wimberley Blue Hole Star Party**

Peer through telescopes and spot constellations during this semi-regular event. [facebook.com/blueholeregionalpark](https://facebook.com/blueholeregionalpark)

### **South Llano River State Park Night Hikes**

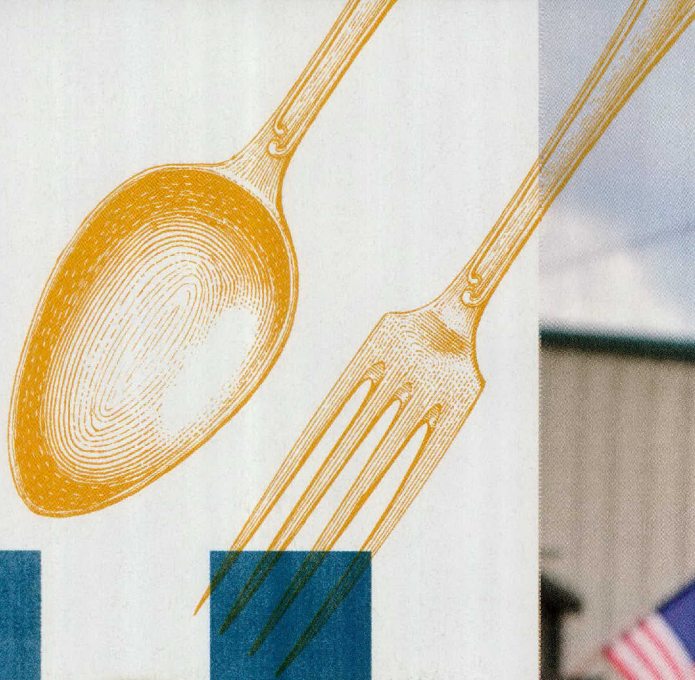
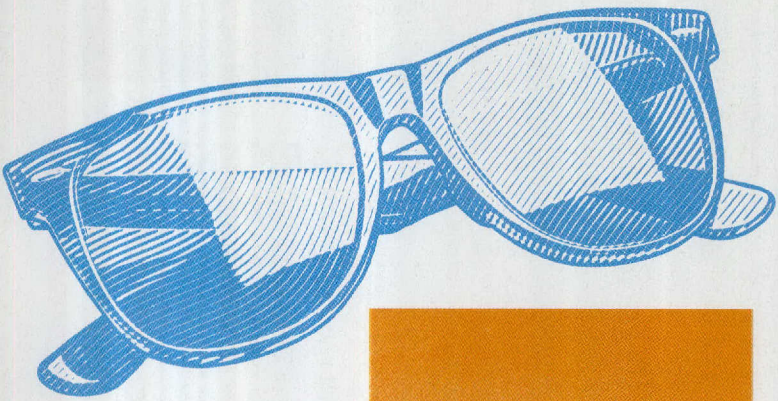
Explore the park after dark during a ranger-led mile-and-a-half hike, enjoy the stars, and look for nocturnal creatures. Dec. 7. [tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/south-llano-river](http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/south-llano-river)

### **Big Bend National Park A Park Ranger’s Guide to the Galaxy**

Rangers and volunteers interpret the night skies for visitors. Check the program schedule for the next event. [nps.gov/bibe](http://nps.gov/bibe)

### **Copper Breaks State Park**

The park offers occasional nighttime events, including night-sky photography workshops and guided sky-viewing. [facebook.com/copperbreaks](https://facebook.com/copperbreaks)

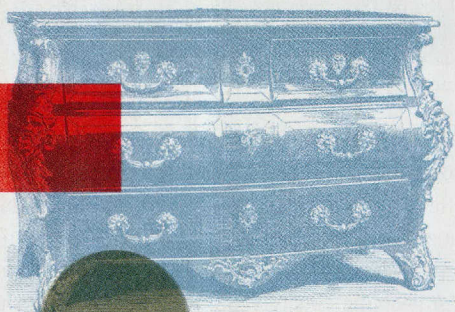


# STU

Find it all at First Monday Trade Days, the world's largest public flea market



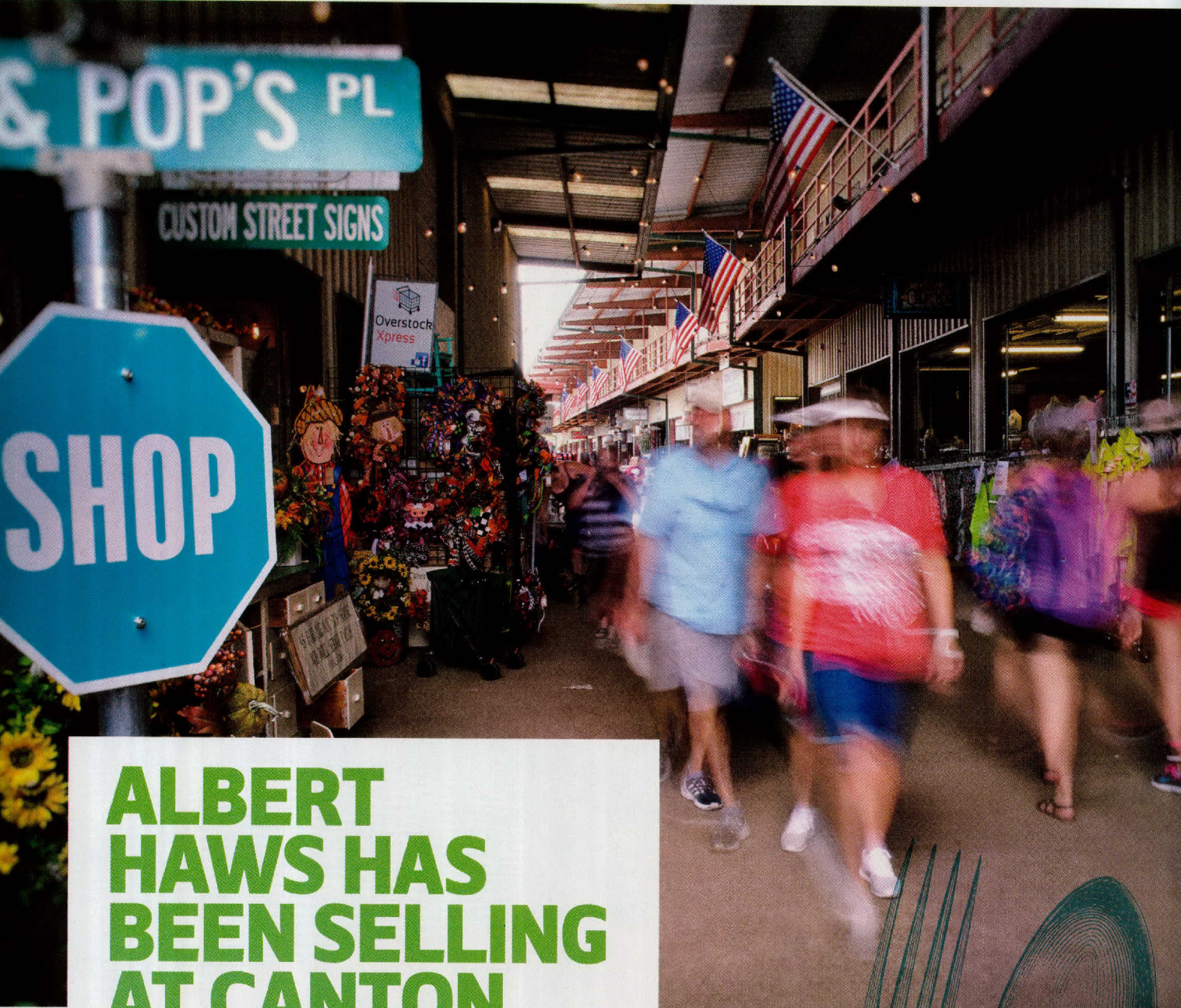
# F



BY SARAH HEPOLA  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVE SHAFER



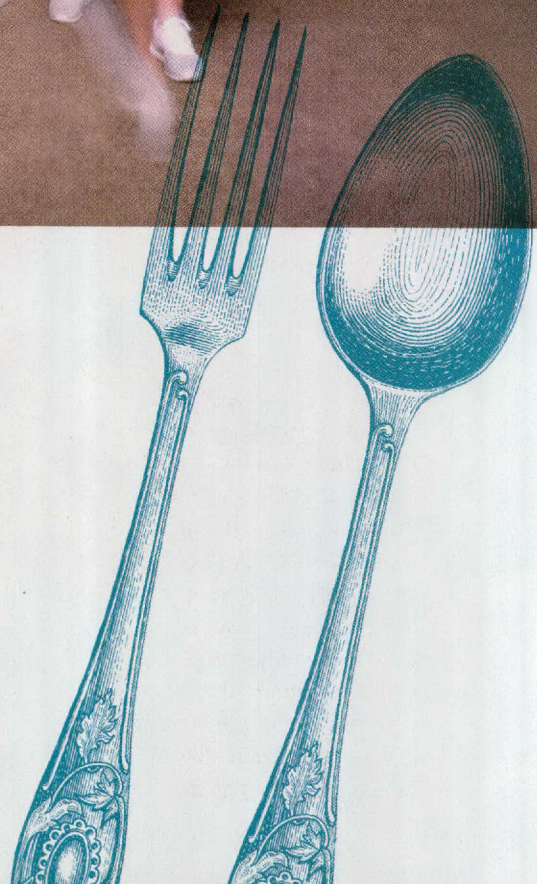




## ALBERT HAWS HAS BEEN SELLING AT CANTON

so long it's hard to remember when he started. He knows it was a couple of years before O. J. Simpson's arrest—he watched that on TV while on the job—so let's just say 1992 or '93. Canton, in East Texas, was easy money in the 1980s and '90s, that ancient era before the internet, before eBay, before Amazon Prime 1-click, before Marie Kondo swept onto bestseller lists by counseling retail-addled Americans in their cluttered condos and red-brick dream homes to toss any item that didn't spark joy. Back then, the joy was acquisition, the thrill of the hunt.

Once a month, Haws hitched a trailer on his Dodge truck and drove the 560 miles from his home in Kansas to converted farm land about 60 miles east of Dallas, where buyers practically swooped in with cash. When I ask what sold best, he struggles to place a finer point on an assortment whose distinguishing factor was its randomness. "Antique doors, glassware, fixtures," Haws says. "You know, stuff."





Perhaps it could be a new state motto. Texas: We Have the Most Stuff.

Perhaps it could be a new state motto. Texas: We Have the Most Stuff. Anyone who doubts that can drive Ronald Reagan Memorial Highway out to Canton from Dallas, where the four days preceding the first Monday of each month bring a consumer treasure hunt across 400 acres. On a great weekend—nice weather, no rain, perhaps early November—as many as 400,000 folks might wander this labyrinth seeking solutions to problems they didn't even know they had. CBD oil for pets. Squishable hamburger toys. Candles, soaps, peanut brittle.

The market is divided into three sections. The traditional outdoor part is crammed with classic flea-market randomness set up at tables. Elsewhere, the indoor civic center boasts pricier antiques and collectibles. Then there's The Arbors section, an indoor shopping market of pre-fab items, like if Bed Bath & Beyond went all-in on the "Beyond" category. For example: pet-hair removal products, cutesy aprons ("Sip happens," with a wine glass), so many knickknacks. Near one of the many kiosks selling home décor, a middle-aged woman pushes an overflowing shopping cart with a decorative sign on top that reads, "We ain't got sh\*t try next door."

Stuff brings people together—everywhere in America, but

The story of Canton Flea Market, also known as First Monday Trade Days, is a story about stuff. The comfort of stuff, the nostalgia of stuff, the status of finding stuff that is not like other people's stuff. One-of-a-kind stuff!

Out here on the flat and sprawling fields of the world's largest public flea market, booths of odds and ends stretch into the horizon. A glass case of original railway spikes. A clawfoot tub. Crates of vinyl that release a musty waft of time as you flip from Olivia Newton-John to Merle Haggard. Knives, guns, ammo, mannequin heads, stacks of old J. C. Penney catalogs as thick as the phone book, if you remember those. Icy-blue satin lingerie draping to the floor, like a costume out of *Dynasty*. A largemouth bass frozen in mid-flip and lying on its side, bent like a very odd cereal bowl. Hundreds of enormous green city signs, the kind you find at county lines, for all your enormous green city sign needs.

**OPENING SPREAD:** Jane and Bill Swafford from Coahoma find a treasure. **FROM LEFT:** The Arbors, full of pre-fab items; Harley from Odessa; sales await those who negotiate.





especially in Texas, where space and a robust economy have given rise to great halls of consumerism. We built some of the best shopping malls, and while malls are now dying, Canton thrives as a place where people can touch stuff, negotiate the price of stuff, and find stuff they didn't know they wanted.

The need to sell and acquire stuff is one of the origin stories of First Monday Trade Days, a Texas tradition that dates back to the middle of the 19th century, when folks would gather at the courthouse once a month to trade horses, crops, and grain. The crowds in Canton grew over the following decades, to the point where the city passed an ordinance hoping to curb its growth, but the opposite happened. Trade Days kept booming.

Throughout the 20th century, the essential items at Canton told the story of a changing landscape. In the 1930s, it was the place to buy a bronc. In the '40s, tractors and hogs. Then a few decades later, it was where you bought a dog. (Over the past few years, Canton's Dog Alley has courted controversy, with an #endpuppymills protest billboard positioned on the road leading to the event.) Today, there's just so much stuff—a sign of the times—that it's hard to know what's essential.

## WHEN HAWS STARTED SELLING

his wares in the mid-'90s, the must-have items in his trailer were Victorian doors. Oh, how people wanted those Victorian doors, made of solid mahogany with ornate woodwork and a stained-glass inlay. Customers were no longer farmers taming the land, but instead homeowners gussying up their property and all those rooms that needed filling. Walnut dressers, a buffet table, an Underwood typewriter. Canton was an antique dealers' dream.

Many of Haws' customers were sellers who repurposed the things he scavenged from teardowns in the middle of the country for new products to hawk elsewhere, creating a conveyor belt of entrepreneurialism. For example, some clunky metal machine he pulled from a lodge in Kansas could become a one-of-a-kind coffee table sold to a discriminating buyer in the arts districts of Houston or Dallas. The beauty of the past reinvented by the present. These days, a lot of people just paint an old door purple or green, call it a renovation.

Canton is changing because Americans' relationship to stuff



**FROM TOP:** Metal art salesman Pedro Reyes flaunts his flamingos; resurrect the Jurassic period with a metal *T. rex* or stegosaurus of varying sizes and colors.

is changing. This comes in an era defined by technology, online commerce, and virtual communication. You can especially sense this among young people, who don't have the desire to acquire that defined earlier generations. They don't have interest in interacting with humans in general and are mortified about haggling over prices. Many of the young people I do see at Canton are lounging around on benches and couches, staring at their phones. As I stand in Haws' booth, speaking across a table cluttered with rusted doorknobs and glass bearers, we jaw over this cultural shift.

"Millennials don't want stuff," he says. Haws has gray hair, a red shirt, and a hearty chuckle. Two of his kids are grown men, both carrying college debt, and both disinterested in the antiques game that was their father's unlikely career. His sons like actual games: Call of Duty, Dungeons & Dragons. Gaming isn't



Funnily enough, it is this millennial aversion to stuff that fueled a resurgence of flea markets in other parts of the country.



some teenage rite of passage to them; it's a part of life, and it requires no stuff aside from consoles.

The vendor beside Haws, a retired firefighter from Rockwall, wanders over to tell us his son wants to buy an Airstream trailer. If the American dream of the 20th century was putting down roots—the white picket fence, the two-car garage—perhaps the 21st-century American dream is the opposite: rootlessness.

Funnily enough, it is this millennial aversion to stuff—as in, mall-bought consumer goods shipped from overseas, emblematic of a disposable plastic economy—that fueled a resurgence of flea markets in other parts of the country. Places like the Brooklyn Flea in Brooklyn, New York, and the Rose Bowl Flea Market in Pasadena, California, are beacons for chic, discerning women in floppy hats and jangly jewelry who comb through endless boxes and shelves for items that just can't be found at Anthropologie and Forever 21. They are searching for cute sundresses and Bakelite jewelry and antler candelabras.

In Dallas, an hour west, entrepreneur Brittany Cobb has



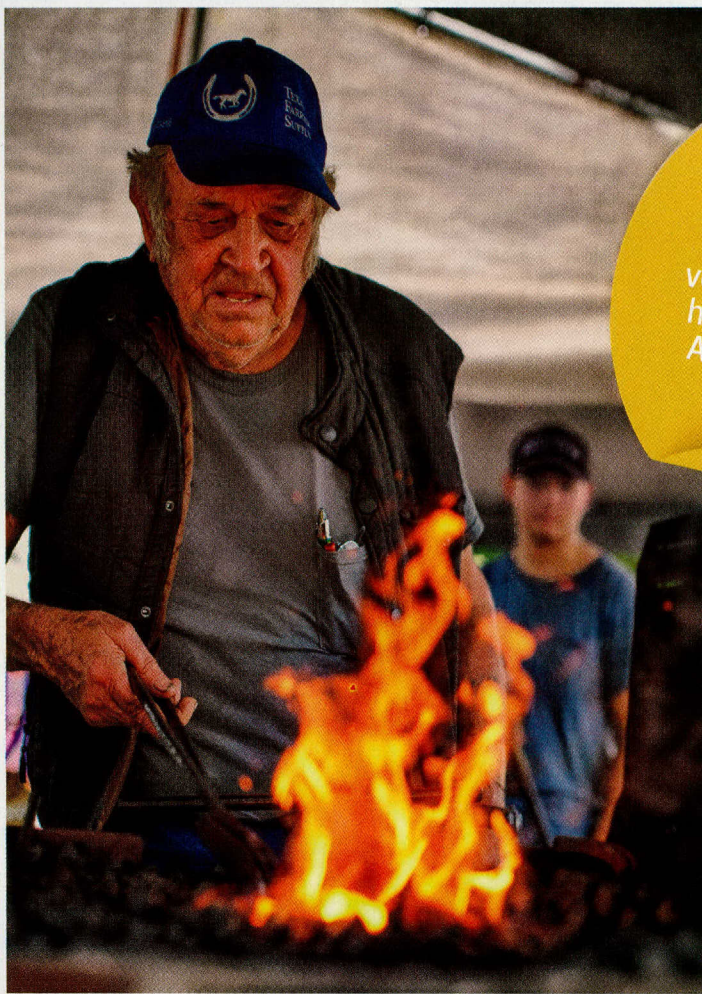
**CLOCKWISE  
FROM LEFT:**  
James Kibodeaux' kettle corn is something to smile about; blacksmith Bill Epps teaches the finer points of making tongs; flat bread from Blazin Pizza Company.

brought this aesthetic to Flea Style, her store in Deep Ellum, which boasts cool finds pulled from the stacks of Canton. She has made a pilgrimage there, with her Handi Wipes and comfortable shoes, each month for the past decade. Glossy magazines have featured her tips on how to “do the flea”—park near the civic center, keep to the fields, go on Thursdays (the lowest traffic days)—but the Canton consumer base remains stubbornly country, not urban. Older, not younger.

“A new generation wants to buy things how I offer them,” Cobb says, as she sweeps her hand across an urban loft of soothing white and pink far removed from the bonanza out in East Texas. Her store is populated by fashionable 20-something women whom I imagine to all be named some variation of Brittany—Britney, Brittani, Brittni. These women have a strong connection to stuff, just not stuff as it’s presented at Canton.

Canton is an old-school flea market, by which I mean it is not a hipster flea market, with groovy young vendors boasting ironic handlebar mustaches. Any facial hair here is utterly sincere. Take George Davis, for instance, a 67-year-old man with gray mutton chops that remind me of my Maine coon cat. Davis lives in Lawrence, Kansas (many of the vendors come from the Midwest and Rust Belt states), and he’s been working this flea market since 1971. He wears camo pants and a white T-shirt whose pocket sags with a pack of Seneca menthols. As we stand beside his table, covered with scrap metal, he explains that he used to return from Canton with paper bags of money. He made up to \$30,000 per trip. May not sound like much, he explains, but that





Canton is an old-school flea market, not a hipster flea market, with vendors boasting ironic handlebar mustaches. Any facial hair here is utterly sincere.

was the equivalent of six *Chevy Impalas*.

And then, as in all stories—things changed. “Canton kept getting bigger and bigger, and trashier and trashier,” he tells me later, when I call him on the phone to discuss his nearly half-century as a dealer. The biggest collectors died or quit. The premium buyers moved on to Round Top, a collection of high-end wares that brings customers from Europe and Japan. It’s not that young people don’t have a connection to their past. It’s that the connection isn’t to artifacts of human progress like railways or machine parts or housing wares; it’s to *Star Wars* memorabilia, or ‘90s comic books. What would the artifacts of today’s culture even be? A Snapchat filter? A BuzzFeed headline?

Over the years, Davis has sold telephones and ceiling fans, but his specialty is dismantling cattle bridges, some dating from as far back as 1880. When bridges get taken down, Davis shows up with a 4-foot blow torch. “I’ll cut 16 inches through steel,” he tells me. Never been injured, either, not more than a finger banged. When I ask him what kind of personality type gets drawn to antiques dealing, he laughs. “Crazy,” he says. “I think that’s the type.”

He means that with love. These are his people. They are part scavenger, part fixer-upper, part gambler, part traveling salesman. This is his home away from home, though he has a family of his own in Lawrence, and the boom years of the Canton Flea Market kept them in designer duds. Davis can’t complain. “Eighty-five percent of these vendors are great folks,” he says. “The other 15 percent? Eh, well. You can’t like everyone.”

It’s hard to know what the future might





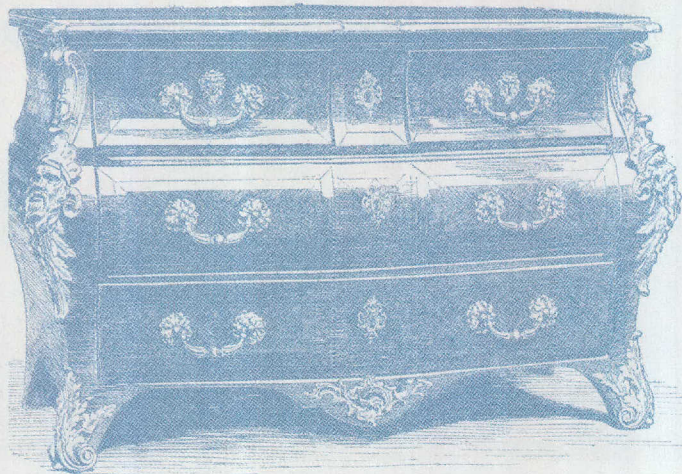
hold for Canton, since so much of its appeal seems to be a preservation of the past. The civic center is an emporium of collectibles just waiting to tug passerby back to their childhoods. Beanie Babies, a Ziggy Stardust album, a Strawberry Shortcake doll, a Nancy Drew paperback.

I linger at a booth run by an older married couple. She sells fine jewelry while wearing spectacular Dior glasses and a snowy white bob, and he sells knives at the booth beside her. What a duo. Diamond earrings on one side, buck knives on the other side. Her parents owned a 100-acre farm in Madisonville, but she and her husband worked in the oil industry. Theirs is a 20th-century Texas journey: from farmlands to petroleum, and now to a comfortable retirement that places them around the good people of East Texas.

You have to like people to work Canton. People are ultimately what make this place different than the endless online retailers where many of these products can be found. Anyone can trawl eBay and Etsy and Bonanza from their bed, disappearing down rabbit holes of recommended products and algorithms

**FROM LEFT:**  
Kandy Smith scores a piece of art; K-n-P Boutique operates out of a trailer; Tenley Chappell exudes the thrill of the hunt.

First Monday Trade Days  
800 First Monday Lane,  
Canton. 903-567-6556;  
firstmondaycanton.com  
The next flea market  
is Nov. 28-Dec. 1.





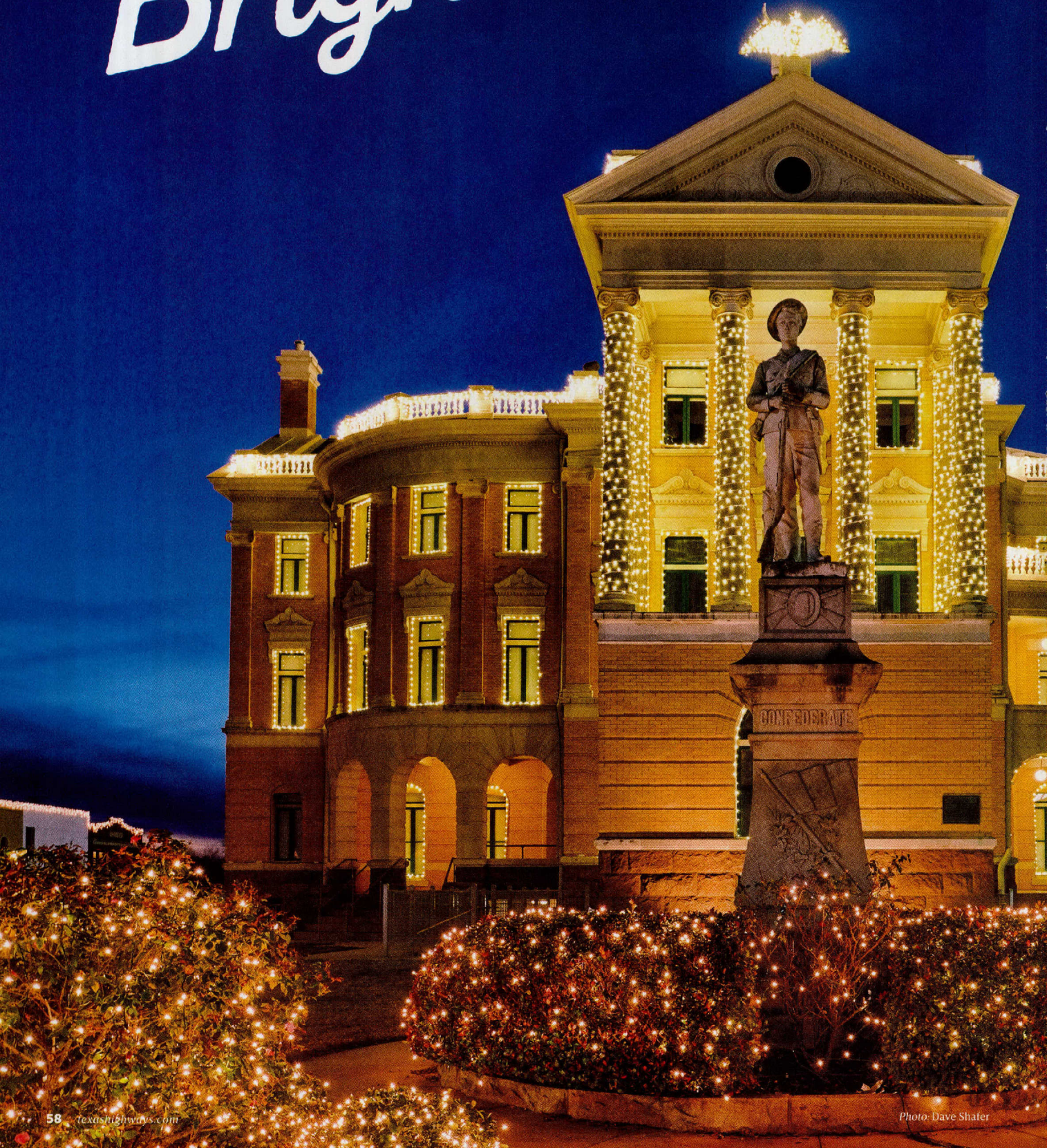
designed to give you more of what you already have. The draw of a place like Canton is its uncanny discoveries and human interactions. Touching stuff with your hands. Locking eyes with your fellow travelers. Hearing about other people and how they got here. Canton has the bustling feel of a county fair, with its lemonade and homemade ice cream and corn dogs and brisket sandwiches. It is a reminder that we live alongside each other, even in our isolated iPhone-centric times.

You never know what you might find. I'm walking through The Arbors when my attention gets snagged. Sweet potato cheesecake in a cup. Hmm, I'll bite. I buy a jar, and as I stand there shoveling delicious spoonfuls into my mouth, I chat with the woman behind Ms. Penny's Kitchen, Penny Curry, who has another kind of Texas tale. She grew up in Fort Worth, got recruited to play college basketball in Colorado, missed home cooking, and started making barbecue sauces and desserts from back home. She lives in McKinney now.

"This stuff is insane!" says a woman, picking up a jar of Ms. Penny's sugar-free BBQ sauce. Curry laughs, assuring me she didn't pay that woman to say that. I bought a jar, and indeed, it was great. Who would have thought anyone could make good barbecue sauce without sugar? But there it was, another invention from the world's largest public flea market, a reminder that our past is still being reinvented in our present all the time. 🐾



# Bright Lights,



# Small Cities

INDULGE IN THE DELIGHTS  
OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON  
AT THESE SMALL-TOWN  
CELEBRATIONS

The old Harrison County  
Courthouse in Marshall.

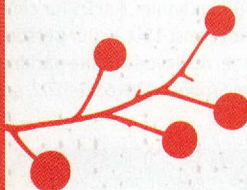
**T**winkling lights on dark, chilly nights have long loomed large in our collective imagination.

The concept has roots in ancient midwinter festivals; it eventually developed into Victorian Christmas fantasies of crackling Yule logs, candles, and lighted evergreen trees. While most modern Texans may be a bit short on snow and sleigh bells, we continue to find joy in holiday lights and the celebratory seasonal activities that accompany them.

While the major metro areas of the state boast massive, glitzy extravaganzas enjoyed by throngs of urban merrymakers, many small towns create their own special versions of holiday cheer, away from city crowds and traffic.

Ranging from homegrown festivities developed and maintained by dedicated local volunteers to professional productions, these events capture the magic and spirit of the season. In addition to the shared enthusiasm for lights, lights, and more lights, visitors can also expect live music, food, opportunities to stroll, children's activities, and horse-drawn rides. Oh, and pride, lots of local pride. The residents hope you'll come and see for yourself.

*By MM Pack*





## SANTA'S WONDERLAND, COLLEGE STATION

NOV. 8-DEC. 30, 2019

If you're looking for a fantasy Christmas city, Santa's Wonderland in College Station fits the bill. Each holiday season, a 72-acre, Western-style village comes to life—teeming with activities, live music, food vendors, shops, and more than 3 million lights. This annual attraction, which began 22 years ago as a simple drive-thru display, has evolved into a "Texas Christmas experience." The centerpiece is a mile-long hayride or carriage ride on a trail of holiday- and Texas-themed light exhibits. There are also train rides; a mechanical bull; cozy fire-pits; a dancing, Stetson-wearing snowman named Marshall Frostbite; a food village and dining hall serving barbecue, s'mores, hot cocoa, and chuck-wagon peach cobbler; and a section covered in real snow thanks to the modern miracle of snow machines.

Hayrides cost \$46.95 for adults, \$41.95 for children, and nothing for kids under 2. Carriage rides cost \$50.95 per person. Off-site parking with shuttle service is free; reserved on-site parking costs \$10.95-\$24.95. 18898 SH 6, College Station. 979-690-7212; [santas-wonderland.com](http://santas-wonderland.com)



Horse-and-carriage rides add a little old-world charm to the electric decorations.

## LIGHTS SPECTACULAR, JOHNSON CITY

NOV. 29, 2019–JAN. 5, 2020

Every year since 1989 on the Friday after Thanksgiving, Johnson City becomes the “twinkliest town in the Hill Country.” The hamlet inaugurates the season with fireworks, a street dance, and the ceremonial lighting of the historic Blanco County Courthouse. The following night is the Lighted Hooves and Wheels Parade, where Santa and Mrs. Claus lead as many as 60 lighted floats and The Clickety Cloggers dance down the street. Each successive night, pedestrians stroll the closed-off streets around the courthouse, City Park, and Pedernales Electric Company, festooned with 2.3 million lights in total. Local food stalls, horse-drawn carriages, and antique tractor-pulled hayrides enhance this sweet experience. Event chairwoman Chrystal Tamillo stresses that Lights Spectacular—celebrating its 30th year—continues as a completely volunteer endeavor, providing “not just Christmas fun, but also support for area nonprofits.”

No admission fee for walking/enjoying the lights; carriage rides cost \$15 per person, tractor rides are by donation. 101 E. Pecan Drive, Johnson City. 830-868-7684; [lightspectacular.com](http://lightspectacular.com)





## WONDERLAND OF LIGHTS, MARSHALL

NOV. 27-DEC. 29, 2019

**T**he centerpiece of Marshall's 33-year tradition of holiday festivities is the old Harrison County Courthouse, one of the state's more flamboyant public buildings with its Beaux Arts columns, pink base, and a yellow dome topped by clocks and Lady Justice. The merriment begins the Wednesday before Thanksgiving with a ceremonial lighting of the 1901 courthouse, completely covered in lights. Celebrations continue daily (except Mondays) with an outdoor ice-skating rink, horse-drawn carriage and wagon rides, a Santa's Village of tiny houses offering children's crafts and cookies, a vintage carousel, trackless train rides, and free music in nearby Telegraph Park. Special events occur each Saturday, including a Wassail Walk where local shops serve spicy holiday drinks and compete for the best recipe, a lighted Christmas parade, a stroy fest, and an outdoor Christmas market.

No charge for admission; tickets for various activities range from \$3 to \$12.50. Downtown Marshall near Harrison County Courthouse, 200 W. Houston St. 903-702-7777; [wonderlandoflights.com](http://wonderlandoflights.com)



FROM LEFT: a girl poses at the outdoor ice-skating rink; the historic downtown area decorated for the season.





## TOWN LIGHTING/PONY EXPRESS RIDE, GRUENE

NOV. 12, 2019-JAN. 1, 2020

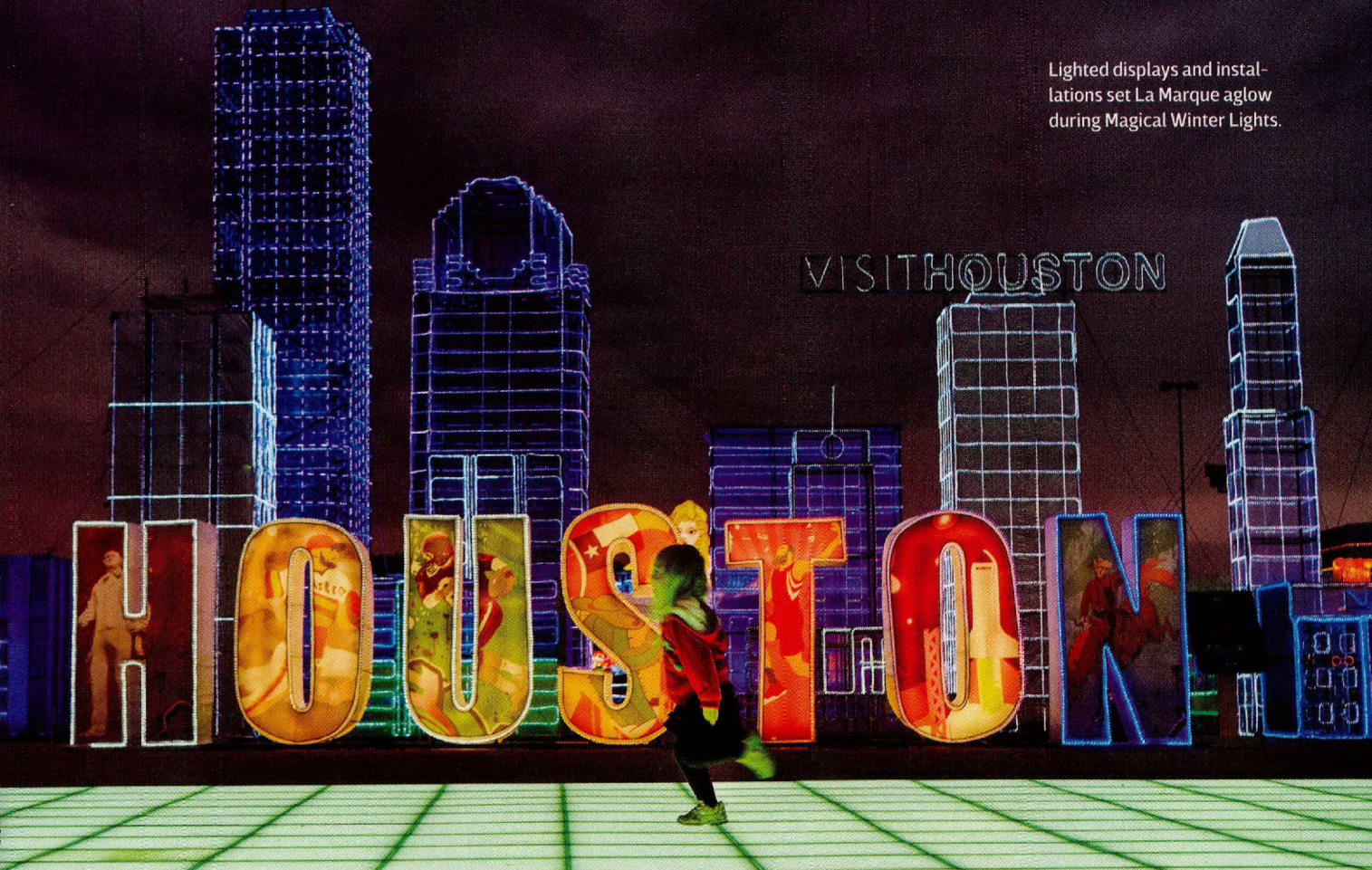


**O**n the Guadalupe River, the Gruene Historic District starts holiday celebrations early in November with Christmas Market Days, photo ops with the black-hatted Cowboy Kringle, and the Thanksgiving Day 5K Turkey Trot. The holiday highlight, though, is the 18th annual Pony Express Ride from New Braunfels to Gruene on Dec. 7, bearing a letter from the governor read aloud, followed by Cowboy Kringle riding in on horseback to flip the switch that lights up the town. "Cowboy Kringle is quickly becoming a Texas holiday icon, and the Pony Express reminds us of our historic roots and times gone by," says Crystal Kinman of Gruene Historic District. Festivities continue through New Year's Day, including a Jingle Bell Run/Walk and concerts by such musical performers as Kelly Willis and Bruce Robison.

Photo packages with Cowboy Kringle are \$15-\$130; registration fees for runs and ticket prices for musical events vary. *Gruene Historic District, Gruene Road, New Braunfels. 830-629-5077; [gruenetexas.com/holidays.php](http://gruenetexas.com/holidays.php)*


It isn't Christmas in Gruene without a visit from Cowboy Kringle, who literally lights up the town.

Lighted displays and installations set La Marque aglow during Magical Winter Lights.



## MAGICAL WINTER LIGHTS, LA MARQUE

NOV. 15, 2019-JAN. 5, 2020

For the past five years, La Marque, a small mainland town near Galveston Bay, has hosted one of the state's more elaborate holiday lights displays. This mostly non-traditional extravaganza reflects various aspects of the region's cultural diversity. A professional production team led by Houston resident Yusi An transforms 20 acres of Gulf Greyhound Park into eight themed sections, ranging from Disney to dinosaurs to the Houston skyline. Six million lights illuminate more than 100 giant Chinese lantern structures built in Zigong, China, home to historic lantern festivals. The lanterns can reach heights of 40 to 60 feet, and some features are interactive, like the giant walkway of multihued lighted rectangles that change color as you step on them. Carnival rides, food stalls, music, and twice-nightly performances by Chinese acrobats add to the experience. 



Admission costs \$22 for adults, \$13 for children, and is free for children under 4. Parking costs \$5, cash only. Gulf Greyhound Park, 1000 FM 2004, La Marque. [magicalwinterlights.com](http://magicalwinterlights.com)



**Texas States Tie** \$75.00, *Designed right here in Texas by Paris Texas Apparel Co., 38809.*

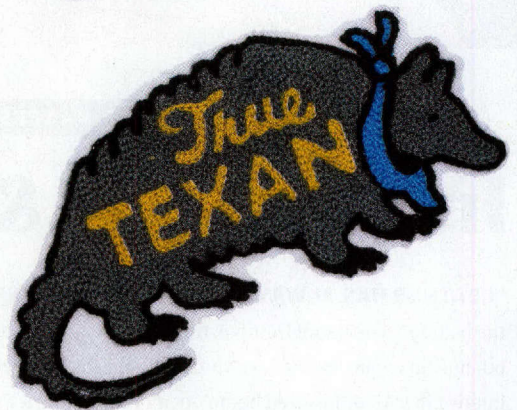
**Sailor Earrings** \$24.95, *Made in Lorena by Margrit Co., 37942.*

**Megan Tote** \$245.00, *Made by hand by Bear Creek Leathers in New Braunfels, 37438.*

**Coaster Set** \$32.00, *Handmade in Texas by Indigo Laine & Co., 37356*



  
**Order Online**  
[SHOP.TEXASHIGHWAYS.COM](http://SHOP.TEXASHIGHWAYS.COM)  
Or call 800-839-4997  
903-636-1123  
from outside  
the U.S.A.



**True Texas Heroes Mugs (set of 4)** \$99.00, Hand-thrown in Austin by studio potter Ryan Lucier of Rhyno Clayworks., 37345.

**Texas Bluebonnets T-Shirt** \$27.00, Designed by Texas Sweet Tees in Willis, Texas, 38327.

**Waxed Canvas Dopp Kit** \$52.00, Made in Austin by Newton Supply Co., 37428.

**Armadillo Patch** \$50.00, Made in Austin, TX by Die Trying TX., 37768.



MEET OUR MAKERS

# Indigo Laine & Co.

**“LEATHER HAS ALWAYS BEEN A LOVE OF MINE—THE SMELL, THE DURABILITY, the beauty”** says Randi Hamlyn, the designer and owner of Indigo Laine & Co. “Once I figured out how to create with it, I was hooked.” The daughter of an entrepreneurial family, Hamlyn’s interest in leather inspired her to open Indigo Laine & Co. in 2016. In her workshop, located outside of Corpus Christi, Randi makes totes, clutches, wallets, and other leather products. Some of the bags are exclusively leather, while indigo and studs differentiate others. “Every leather artist brings their own unique style to their product,” Hamlyn says. “It’s almost like their finger print. I think Indigo Laine is known for classic, unfussy shapes and a scalloped edge.” Hamlyn says she finds inspiration in nature, history, and her family. And road trips, of course. “The Texas Hill Country is where I go to unwind and breath,” she says. “The rolling hills, the wildflowers, peaches, rivers—what’s not to love?”

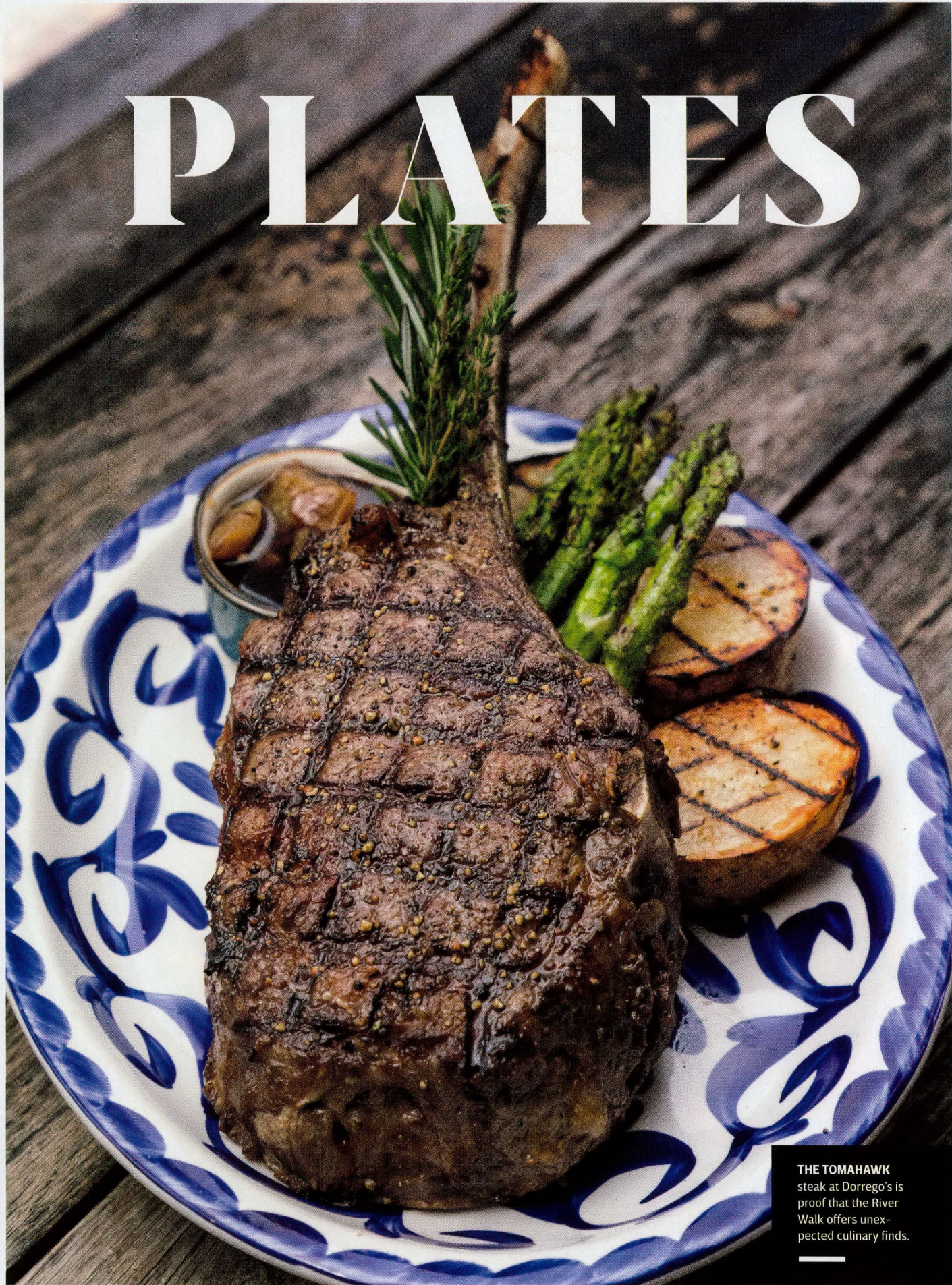


## Indigo Leather Pouch

**\$50.00**

ITEM 37434

# PLATES



**THE TOMAHAWK** steak at Dorrego's is proof that the River Walk offers unexpected culinary finds.



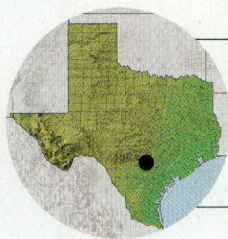
**DORREGO'S** infuses Spanish style into its Argentine fare with a paella of shrimp, chicken, sausage, and mussels.



# River Walk This Way

Culinary delights abound just off  
San Antonio's biggest tourist attraction

By Paula Disbrowe



SAN ANTONIO  
RIVER WALK

**S**an Antonio's River Walk is at its most spectacular in December, when more than 2,250 strings of twinkling lights cloak towering trees and set bridges aglow. Of course, the waterway is one of the top attractions in the state year-round, but the festive holiday décor and cool weather make for more pleasant strolling, shopping, and boating experiences. It's easy to get seduced by the typical, colorful eateries that line the River Walk and promise fishbowl-size margaritas and a place to rest your feet, but these five restaurants make it worth straying from the well-beaten path. Still within steps of the River Walk, they offer a reprieve from the crowds and appeal to more adventurous palates.

## Dorrego's

Tucked inside the Valencia Hotel, Dorrego's is one of a few Argentine-inspired restaurants in the city. Like any contemporary restaurant in Buenos Aires, the menu shows influences of Spain, Italy, and France with dishes such as paella,

saltimbocca, and poached-pear salad. Order a glass of malbec (Argentina's acclaimed red wine) and start with the warm, flaky cheese-and-corn empanadas or the *provoleta*, aged provolone cheese that's broiled until bubbly and then served with roasted tomatoes and crostini. Keep your knife close at hand for locally raised steaks slathered with chimichurri oil. You'll be reluctant to leave the sleek dining room that overlooks the River Walk. 150 E. Houston St. 210-227-9700; [dorregos.com](http://dorregos.com)

## Restaurant Gwendolyn

At this acclaimed fine-dining restaurant, chef and owner Michael Sohocki's devotion to old-world techniques—no blenders, mixers, ice cream machines, or anything else that requires an outlet—transports you far from the chips-and-queso crowd. The cozy dining room, artful presentation, and the staff's attention to detail create a luxurious experience, whether you're sitting down for a seven-course tasting menu or just munching on a quick cheese or charcuterie board. The

DISCOVER  
**SAN ANGELO!**  
DiscoverSanAngelo.com

Dec 6-8, 2019



Christmas at  
Old Fort Concho

Dec 7-31, 2019



Concho Christmas  
Celebration

Dec 14-15, 2019



San Angelo Civic Ballet's  
"The Nutcracker"

You'll #SanAngeloLove it!



menu, which can feature chilled-pear soup or quail ratatouille, changes daily, with all ingredients sourced within a 150-mile radius. 152 E. Pecan St., Suite 100. 210-222-1849; [restaurantgwendolyn.com](http://restaurantgwendolyn.com)

## Kimura

Located just around the corner from Restaurant Gwendolyn, Kimura is a laid-back noodle shop serving cocktails, steaming bowls of ramen prepared with four different traditional broths, and steamed-rice-based dishes. Take a seat at the bar to warm up near the sizzling woks. It's easy to craft a hearty meal of appetizers like *yakitori*, grilled chicken skewers with teriyaki sauce; *gyoza*, pork dumplings with ginger and garlic; and

seaweed salad. Keep your strength up for holiday power-shopping with a picturesque bowl of egg-and-mushroom-topped ramen, or a tangle of *yakisoba*, stir-fried noodles with meat and vegetables. 152 E. Pecan St., Suite 102. 210-444-0702; [kimuras.com](http://kimuras.com)

## Burgerteca

Chef Johnny Hernandez, who also owns La Gloria and The Fruteria restaurants, gives burgers a Mexican makeover by employing indigenous ingredients (like tomatillos in the ketchup) and riffs on regional dishes. The Oaxaca burger, for instance, features a beef patty topped with mole negro, black beans, pickled red onions, avocado, and queso fresco. The Baja fish burger stars crispy cod dressed with

**It's easy to get seduced by the typical eateries that line the River Walk, but these restaurants make it worth straying.**


chipotle mayo, lettuce, tomato, and avocado crema. But there is so much more than burgers to indulge in. Consider the *queso fundido* fries, fruity *paletas*, raspas, and Mexican-style ice creams (which are based on seasonal fruits and have a dense, gelato-like texture). The punchy art, colorful interior, and casually hip vibe create an atmosphere that is the next best thing to a ticket to Mexico City.



**FROM LEFT:** onion dip and chips from Esquire Tavern; mangonada cocktail from Burgerteca; ramen from Kimura.

403 Blue Star, Suite 105. 210-635-0016; [chefjohnnyhernandez.com](http://chefjohnnyhernandez.com)

### Esquire Tavern

The expertly crafted—and not too sweet—cocktails at Esquire Tavern have amassed a devoted following, so the bar is typically packed. Take a cue from locals and reserve a table in the chill basement after taking in a holiday concert at the nearby Tobin Center for the Performing Arts. Relax into a booth and sip a Wonderlust King, made with whiskey, amaro, vermouth, and chocolate and orange biters. Once you've whet your appetite, dunk waffle-cut chips into creamy onion dip and dig into the warming Cajun beef stew with cheddar grits. 155 E. Commerce St. 210-222-2521; [esquiretavern-sa.com](http://esquiretavern-sa.com) 

One of "The Best Small Towns for Christmas in the South" — Southern Living Magazine

SEE HOW AN OLD-WORLD HOLIDAY CAN BRING

# joy to your world

holiday lighting on Main | festivals & events | over 40 wineries & tasting rooms  
sophisticated shopping | cycling | German heritage | golf | live Texas music  
museums & historic sites | eclectic art galleries | Hill Country cuisine

**Fredericksburg**<sup>®</sup>  
THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

*Texas Heart. German Soul.*

Visit [FredericksburgTX.com](http://FredericksburgTX.com)



# Produce-Aisle Pioneers

Scientists and farmers have invented truly Texan vegetables  
and fruits since the 1920s

By E. Dan Klepper

**MAROON-COLORED** carrots known as Beta Sweets were first created for Aggie gardeners.

---

**D**uring the 1920s, McAllen citrus grower A.E. Henninger discovered a red-tinged grapefruit among his pinks. The red color was due to a genetic mutation in one branch of the tree. Henninger patented his Ruby Reds in 1934, catalyzing the growth of a nationwide market that continues to enjoy red grapefruits today. Throughout the last century, creative growers, botanists, and researchers have taken advantage of the state's rich soil, temperate climate, and moderate rainfall to develop uniquely Texan produce, including the TAM mild jalapeño, a maroon-colored carrot known as the Beta Sweet, the 1015 onion, and the red grapefruit. You can find some of them at your grocery store, depending on the season.

Spanish missionaries, by way of Florida and the Caribbean, most likely brought the grapefruit to South Texas in 1893. The fruit is a natural hybrid of the pomelo and the sweet orange. Its flesh is usually white, yellow, or pinkish, and like all grapefruit varieties, it grows on trees in clusters, like grapes.

"The motto among grapefruit growers in the 1950s was 'the redder the better,'" says John da Graça, director of Texas A&M University-Kingsville's Citrus Center in Weslaco. "So Texas A&M citrus horticulturist Dr. Richard Hensz gave nature a nudge. Today, the Rio Red dominates Texas grapefruit production."

Reasons vary for modifying a crop, from altering its flavor to strengthening virus resistance. For some Texas fruits, like the jalapeño pepper, too much flavor was the problem. Growers decided to tone down the heat. The Texas Agricultural Experiment Station system, part of Texas A&M University, has devised new versions of commercial crops like jalapeños since 1887. The system consists of a network of regional centers that conduct research in crop and livestock improvement, production, and market expansion.

"Science has been providing fruit and vegetable growers with superior yields, longer growing seasons, resistance to

# BEYOND PLANET EARTH

## THE FUTURE OF SPACE EXPLORATION

Exhibition on view  
through January 12, 2020



1800 N. CONGRESS, AUSTIN | @BullockMuseum | THE STORY OF TEXAS.COM

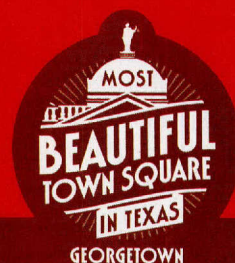
*Beyond Planet Earth: The Future of Space Exploration* is organized by the American Museum of Natural History, New York, ([www.amnh.org](http://www.amnh.org)), in collaboration with MadaTech: the Israel National Museum of Science, Technology, & Space, Haifa, Israel.

Support for the Bullock Museum's exhibitions and education programs is provided by the Texas State History Museum Foundation.



## TWINKLY NIGHTS, DAYTRIPPER APPROVED

Light up the holidays with a stroll around the Most Beautiful Town Square in Texas. Check your list twice at a bevy of boutiques, then toast everything nice with farm-to-fork fare. Remember, this December, do as the Daytripper does and plan to delight in festive fun in Georgetown all month long.



VISITGEORGETOWN.COM



**RIO RED** grapefruits were developed by Texas agricultural scientists.

pests and diseases, and of course, better flavors,” says Dante Galeazzi, president of the Texas International Produce Association. “And Texas A&M University has been front and center in helping to bring about those changes.”

In 1981, researchers at the Weslaco Experiment Station developed a milder-tasting jalapeño using cross-fertilization. It was followed by several generations of the new hybrid (grown in greenhouses and field plots), resulting in the TAM, a mildly flavored, virus-resistant chili pepper with 1,000 to 1,500 Scoville Heat

Units. The Scoville is the pungency scale used to measure the amount of capsaicin—the heat-causing compound—present in a chili pepper. The TAM falls thousands of SHUs below a typical jalapeño, satisfying those who like a cooler, sweeter pepper. “Thanks to the milder jalapeño, salsa producers could control both the flavor and pungency levels,” explains Dr. Juan Anciso, Texas A&M Extension vegetable specialist and professor.

Scientists tinkered with carrots, too. The Beta Sweet started out as a novelty idea concocted by the late Dr. Leonard

Pike. The former director of Texas A&M’s Vegetable Improvement Center wanted to replicate Aggie maroon in a vegetable for alumni who liked to garden. The carrot proved to have additional characteristics as well, like a sweeter flavor, crisper texture, and a higher rate of beta-carotene (a good source for Vitamin A and antioxidants). “They’re packed with a lot more nutrients than the original carrot,” Galeazzi says. “And for some fans, the Aggie-maroon-colored carrot may be just a little better looking than the old standard orange.”

**“Science has been providing fruit and vegetable growers with superior yields, longer growing seasons, resistance to pests and diseases, and of course, better flavors.”**

Pike championed the creation of another dietary staple for most Texans—the sweet onion, more specifically the 1015. Through a process of coupling and cross-fertilization that would have made a royal matchmaker blush, the 1015 was sweeter, more virus resistant, and harvested earlier than its ancestor. Sweet onion seeds first arrived in South Texas in 1898 from the Bermuda Islands.

Planted on a farm near Cotulla, in 1899 the onions were sent to a market in Wisconsin, where they were met with enthusiasm, followed by a demand for more. By 1946, growers were shipping more than 10,000 carloads of onions in one season. Decades later, researchers bred the onion with other candidates to improve flavor and growing characteristics. The 1015 hit the Texas market in the 1980s, after 10 years of research. Called the 1015 because it's best when planted on Oct. 15, the softball-size, pale yellow onion combines a crisp, tender texture with a sweet and savory scent.

The ingenious innovations continue to this day. “Mother Nature has once again stepped up our game by inducing a mutation in a Rio Red grapefruit tree, which produces fruit with an even darker red flesh and peel,” da Graça says. “This seems to have a milder, sweeter flavor and could appeal to consumers who still sprinkle their grapefruit with sugar. This variety is currently undergoing patenting and pathogen clean-up, with commercialization expected in the next two years.”

It looks like the future for Texas fruits and veggies just got a little sweeter. 🍷

IN THE GALLERIES @ IAC

IRVING  
ARTS  
CENTER



**ED WHEELER: SANTA CLASSICS**  
THROUGH JANUARY 26

Santa Classics is a series of images created by artist, photographer Ed Wheeler. He imagines Santa entering into the great masterworks of art, with humor and reverence for the originals. Wheeler has been a photographer for the past 30 years.

3333 N. MacArthur Blvd. Irving, TX 75062 • Free parking  
Open 7 Days a Week [IrvingArtsCenter.com](http://IrvingArtsCenter.com)



irvingarts



Smithsonian Affiliate

*Retreat... Relax in Kerrville*  
**The Capital of the Texas Hill Country!**



**KERRVILLE**  
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

The Kerrville River Trail • Family Adventures • Galleries • Shopping  
[KerrvilleTexasCVB.com](http://KerrvilleTexasCVB.com) • 800-221-7958 • One Hour West of San Antonio on I-H 10



# Marvelous Masa

Cutting-edge cuisine inspired by pre-Colombian cooking

By Daniel Blue Tyx

According to chef Larry Delgado, you haven't really tasted a tortilla unless you've tried one made from freshly milled corn and prepared using a technique that predates the Aztecs and Mayans.

At Salomé on Main, the restaurant Delgado opened this spring in McAllen, the chef soaks millennia-old corn varieties overnight in an alkaline solution of slaked lime, a powdered version of the limestone bedrock underlying most of Mexico. This process,

known as nixtamalization, removes the tough outer hull of the corn kernels, unlocking the rich nutrients and flavors inside. The next morning, Delgado grinds the treated corn into dough for tortillas as well as traditional Mexican delicacies like dish-shaped *memelas*, oval *huaraches*, and Oaxacan-style tamales wrapped in steamed banana leaves.

Salomé on Main's tortillas contain no preservatives and arrive to the table fresh off the *comal*, or griddle. Depending



on the type of corn and seasoning, they are blue, red, or golden. If you like, you can order a pile accompanied by a sampler of traditional Mayan mole sauces—only one of which is the best-known chocolate variety.

“You can smell the difference,” Delgado says of the tortillas. “You can taste the difference. And the texture is different. You know what you’re eating, and I know what I’m serving to you.”

Salomé on Main is one of a growing number of Texas restaurants with menus focused on nixtamalization and other pre-Colombian cooking techniques. Inspired by a similar movement currently happening in Mexico, chefs are creating thoroughly contemporary dishes by looking back to the very-distant past.

“Early on, we were deeply into trying to move forward by using modern techniques,” says Rico Torres, co-creator of Mixtli in San Antonio. Housed in an intimate converted train car in the Olmos Park neighborhood, the restaurant started its use of in-house nixtamalization when it opened in 2013. “Real quick we figured out going backward was the key—rescuing and preserving these beautiful traditions that have been overlooked, overplayed, or changed.”

Mixtli’s menu changes completely every nine weeks, allowing Torres and partner Diego Galicia to spotlight specific regions and themes such as Oaxaca, the Yucatán peninsula, and contemporary Mexican cuisine. The restaurant has only 12 seats around a single rectangular dining table, directly adjacent to the open kitchen. Diners converse freely with the chefs, who are happy to share the wealth of research that goes into each of the 10 courses.

“We tell guests when they arrive that *mixtli* means cloud in Nahuatl [the language of the Aztecs],” Torres says. “We like to say that our menu travels the way clouds travel, putting a laser focus on small parts of Mexico, so we can really examine it.”

Tradition inspires Mixtli’s spirit of innovation, an approach embraced by other chefs across the state. At Suerte,



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** dishes from Salomé on Main, where tortillas are made fresh daily; handmaking tortillas at Suerte; raw corn used for masa.

which opened last year in East Austin, chef Fermín Núñez’s nixtamal-focused menu dispels any preconceived notions of Mexican food. A standout is the visually striking heirloom bean tamal, stuffed with finely diced beet picadillo and topped with a beet-feta cream sauce. Also not to be missed: the wide selection of tequilas and mezcal, and a refreshingly light side dish of peaches, mangos, queso fresco, and the traditional herb *hoja santa*.

Back in McAllen, Delgado attributes this explosion of interest in

pre-Colombian cooking to a broader desire to revive lost or neglected culinary traditions across the globe. But in Texas specifically, he also saw an autobiographical component.

“We’re using ingredients that haven’t been used at a lot of restaurants, but that our abuelitas used,” says Delgado, who rediscovered the traditional flavors of his borderland childhood during a trip to Mexico City in 2015. “Cooks like me want to bring our heritage back. We’re coming full circle with our own journeys.”

# TEXANA



**TERRY HOLDER** worked as a cowboy and a county extension agent before opening his own shop in Pecos, West of the Pecos Saddlery.

## Around the Horn

The craftsmanship and community of Texas saddle shops

By Christian Wallace

**T**he rodeo clown dabbed at the sweat slicking his forehead, careful not to smudge his makeup. It was a Friday afternoon in June, and a posse of youngsters and parents had gathered to meet the clown on the front porch of West of the Pecos Saddlery. Terry Holder looked on in amusement. The 66-year-old shop owner and saddlemaker had been busy all week, selling tack and other gear to cowboys who had streamed into town for the annual Pecos Rodeo. He was happy to pause for a moment, a smile lifting the corners of his gray mustache as he watched the kids peer inside the padded barrel that protects the clown from gore-happy Brahman bulls.

The reprieve didn't last long. A cowboy approached carrying a dusty, busted-up hat. Holder took the misshapen felt, briefly inspected it, and then went to work.

Back inside the shop, Holder strode past glass cases displaying sterling silver buckles and handsome blades; shelves packed with toy horses, metal tractors, and *Hank the Cowdog* books; and rows of spurs, blankets, and lariats. The leather goods—from chaps and gloves to wallets, belts, bridles, and saddles—imbued the space with its characteristic smell. At the far end of the store, Holder turned on his Jiffy steamer, held the hat's brim to the fine warm mist, and began to work the felt with his fingers. Slowly, the hat returned to a respectable taco shape. He finished and handed it back to the owner. The cowboy stuck it on his bare head, peeked in a mirror, grinned, and shook Holder's hand.

**West of the Pecos Saddlery,**  
located at 123 S. Oak St. in Pecos,  
opens Mon-Fri 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and  
Sat 10 a.m.-1 p.m. 432-448-6844;  
westofthepecosaddlery.com

LONGHORN CAVERN STATE PARK

## THE NATIONAL CAVE OF TEXAS™

**Less than  
90 minutes  
from Austin**

**A TEXAS TREASURE**

- Guided Cave Tours
- Family Hiking Trails
- Hill Country Views
- Texas Historic Landmark

See  
our coupon  
online and  
**SAVE!**

[visitlonghorncavern.com/highways](http://visitlonghorncavern.com/highways)

6211 Park Road 4 S  
Burnet, TX 78611  
(512) 715-9000

# Messina Hof

WINERY

JOIN THE FAMILY  
EST. 1977

PREMIUM COLLECTION  
AWARD-WINNING WINES

GIVE THE GIFT OF EXCELLENCE

## Uncork THE HOLIDAYS

Shop Gifts For Wine Lovers!

PROUDLY MADE IN TEXAS

[WWW.MESSINAHOF.COM](http://WWW.MESSINAHOF.COM) |



## Texas Saddle Shops

### ALPINE:

#### Big Bend Saddlery.

This beautiful stucco building on the edge of Alpine has made saddles and leather goods for Trans-Pecos cowboys since 1905. 2701 US 90. 800-634-4502; bigbendsaddlery.com

### FORT WORTH:

#### M.L. Leddy's.

The next time you go honky-tonking in the Stockyards, be sure to set aside some time to gawk at the handmade boots and saddles at this long-running institution. 2455 N. Main St. 817-624-3149; leddys.com

### AMARILLO:

#### Oliver Saddle Shop.

For over 100 years, the Oliver family has been crafting beautiful saddles for working cowboys and customers like George W. Bush. 3016 Plains Blvd. 806-372-7562; oliversaddle.com

### YOAKUM:

#### Double J Saddlery.

Opened in 1991, Double J Saddlery has made a name for both its saddles and its fashion-forward handbags. 2243 US 77A South. 800-669-2535; doublejsaddlery.com

**ABOVE:** West of the Pecos Saddlery hosts jam sessions the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month. **RIGHT:** The shop's services include rehabbing worn boots.

The West of the Pecos Saddlery, like other saddleries across the state, will rehab your crumpled hat or build you a new seat for your next trail ride. But saddleries are much more than just gear shops. They're community gathering spots for cowboys and agrarian types from across a region, a place for far-flung neighbors to stop by for a coffee and a chat. At West of the Pecos Saddlery, on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month, the shop becomes a music venue with both locals and blow-ins from the oil patch stopping by with guitars and other instruments. They push aside the merchandise, set up chairs, and play songs. "Everybody sits down and listens," Holder said, "but they can get up and dance if they want to." For his part, Holder plays the bass gui-

tar during the jam sessions, a natural fit for a guy who spends his days working with his hands. The light blue Wranglers he wears are held up by one of his handmade belts. He carries a pistol tucked into a leather holster—he made the holster too. In fact, some 25 percent of his time is spent cutting and tooling custom leather pieces. Another quarter is devoted to cobbling old cowboy boots back to nearly new condition. But the backbone of his business is saddles.

"I've been working on saddles since '73," Holder said as he lifted one from among the several surrounding him. "This one here's a barrel saddle. I'm building it for a girl. One of these days, she might get to the National Finals Rodeo. If she does, she'll be riding this saddle."

Holder was born in New Mexico, graduated high school in the panhandle of Oklahoma, and learned how to build saddles in the Texas Panhandle. A veteran cowhand named Junior Gray taught him the craft after they had met while cowboying together at the Reynolds Cattle Company near Dalhart. But Holder didn't go into saddlemaking full-time. Among other gigs, he spent 10 years at Mississippi State University helping farmers write agricultural grants and later served as the county extension agent for Reeves and Loving counties.

Throughout his various careers, working on saddles remained a reliable source of extra income—and a rewarding hobby. Some guys tinker under the hoods of cars. Holder likes assembling saddles from scratch. Eight years ago, he finally decided to open his own saddlery. He moved his tools out of his barn and into a retail space in downtown Pecos, right across the street from the West of the Pecos Museum, which chronicles local history from Old West gunslingers to the modern-day oil boom.

Today, Holder's workspace is what Santa's shop might look like if all kids dreamed of becoming barrel racers,

bronc riders, or steer ropers. There are mounds of tiny tools, both small and industrial-size sewing machines, two finishing machines for grinding and burnishing boots, and scraps of leather ranging from 1-inch strips to massive hides. Customers browsing the store's racks of straw hats or the wall of nylon ropes can watch Holder foxing new leather onto worn-out boots, measuring a new saddle's fenders—the leather pieces that shield a horse from the rider's legs and connect to the stirrups—or carefully tooling acorns or floral patterns onto a belt or holster.

Holder is continuing a long-standing Texas tradition of leather craftsmen and saddlemakers. He can talk at length

**“Everybody kind of thinks this is a dying art, which in some respects it might be, but there's still a lot of guys around making saddles.”**

---

about the history of his craft: basket stamps (a pattern that resembles a woven basket) and other designs that have come in and out of vogue, the old masters who perfected certain techniques. Yet the service he and other saddlemakers provide today is just as essential to the men and women who make their living on horseback as it was in the past.

“Most of my saddles go to working cowboys,” Holder said. “I don't send any to any big-shot people.” While that may be true, it's a modest statement. Cowboys from all over Texas, and as far away as Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi seek out his saddles. It's not exactly a quick turnaround, either. “If I had nothing else to do,” Holder said, “I could probably get one done in 15 to 20 days.” (A belt, on the other hand, takes only a couple of hours.)

Holder motioned to a saddle that he'd nearly finished. Rather than the typical smooth, slick leather, this client had opted for the rough, unfinished look of coarse suede. “This ol' boy's gonna be breaking a lot of horses and he likes that rough-out feel,” Holder said. “But I talked him into getting the basket stamp on there, where at least it'll be a little bit pretty.”

While Holder still does most of the work himself, he has started mentoring a few others at the shop. He said there's no shortage of folks interested in learning. In fact, each October, he attends a trade show for bootmakers and saddlemakers in Wichita Falls. It's a vibrant scene. “Everybody kind of thinks that this is a dying art,” Holder said, “which in some respects it might be, but there's still a lot of guys around making saddles.”

Back on the front porch of West of the Pecos Saddlery, it was well after the time the meet-and-greet with the rodeo clown had been scheduled to end. Yet there he was, still sitting with his barrel. Holder told him that he was welcome to go whenever he felt like it.

“Oh, I don't mind,” the clown answered. “This is as good a place as any to spend an afternoon.”





**MEET OUR MAKERS**

# Bear Creek Leather

**WHEN IT COMES TO DEVELOPING HANDCRAFTED LEATHER GOODS,** the designers behind Bear Creek Leather draw inspiration from family members. "Most of our products have been created with a family member in mind to suit their needs, and we will often name our patterns after them. From the first concept to design and actual production, the whole family is involved." Doug Childers got his start as a one-man shop making holsters, then expanded into totes, leather jewelry, and other products. Along the way, his wife, Betsy, and son and daughter-in-law, William and Angela, joined the business. "We love seeing what our customers come up with to make it personal," Doug says. Based near New Braunfels, this family business feels at home in the Hill Country. "We love the small towns and all the sights," he says. "You can catch us enjoying a schnitzel or a pork chop on a stick every year at Wurstfest."



**Betsy Crossbody Tote**  
**\$175.00**  
ITEM 37437

# HISTORIC GALVESTON

OFFERS AN ISLAND HOLIDAY WITH VICTORIAN CHARM,  
LIGHTING FESTIVALS, CHARLES DICKENS  
& RIDES TO THE NORTH POLE

There's no shortage of holiday destinations in Texas, but historic Galveston Island is the only one where you'll experience tropical weather and a 32-mile-coast with traditional Victorian charm, a world-renowned Dickens festival, a 2-million-pound ice land and spectacular light shows – all within a close drive from the state's largest city.



**GALVESTON**  
★ ISLAND ★

GALVESTON.COM  
888 - 425 - 4753

Located just 50 miles south of Houston, Galveston is bringing even more to its holiday lineup this year with the addition of The Polar Express™ Train Ride offering rides to the North Pole from the Galveston Railroad Museum.

Need more convincing? No problem! Here are 10 reasons Galveston Island is a holiday destination worth traveling to:

## 1. GALVESTON RAILROAD MUSEUM PRESENTS THE POLAR EXPRESS™ TRAIN RIDE

Galveston Railroad Museum will offer a 60-minute round-trip journey to the North Pole aboard THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride. Once aboard, hot chocolate and treats are served as passengers read along with the classic children's book, *The Polar Express*, by Chris Van Allsburg. Santa and his helpers greet passengers at the North Pole and then board the train, where each child is given the first gift of Christmas – a silver sleigh bell. Chefs aboard each car lead passengers in singing Christmas carols on the ride back to the museum. **Nov. 15 – Dec. 29**

## 2. HOLIDAY IN THE GARDENS

Eight holiday attractions, one venue at Moody Gardens. Enjoy Festival of Lights, ICE LAND, ice skating, holiday 3D/4D films, Cirque Joyeux and more. Save Big with Value Days. **Nov. 16 – Jan. 12**

## 3. THE GRAND 1894 OPERA HOUSE HOLIDAY SEASON

Celebrate the holidays with Grand entertainment – Vienna Boys Choir, *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*,

*Bandstand*, *Once*, Jaston Williams' *Blood and Holly*, Jerry Jeff Walker, City Ballet of Houston – *The Nutcracker*, Nutcracker Afternoon Tea, Holiday Arts Market at ArtWalk, The 5 Browns and *The Greatest Love of All: The Whitney Houston Show* – presented in Galveston's magnificent, historic theatre. **Nov. 9 – Jan. 12**

## 4. LASERS, LIGHTS AND SHOPPING IN HISTORIC DOWNTOWN

Downtown Galveston has all the charm of a traditional holiday destination while offering the benefits of tropical weather and outdoor shopping. The 36-block district will sparkle with lasers and lights while visitors enjoy boutique shopping, dining, antiques, art galleries and more. **Nov. 24 – Dec. 31**

## 5. HOLIDAY WITH THE CRANES

Celebrate the magnificent 4-foot-tall Sandhill Cranes that arrive just in time for the holidays, with special events from sunrise to sunset. **Dec. 14 – 15**

## 6. 46<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL DICKENS ON THE STRAND

Travel back in time as downtown Galveston's Strand street is transformed into the Victorian London of Charles Dickens with this beloved festival. **Dec. 6 – 8**

## 7. HOLIDAY SPLASH AT SCHLITTERBAHN GALVESTON WATERPARK

Enjoy a sprinkle of holiday cheer while making a splash at the Houston area's only indoor waterpark. Learn to Surf with Santa, check

out the Bahn Borealis light show, meet holiday friends, save with Grill & Thrill packages, and more! **Nov. 29 – Jan. 5**

## 8. SANTA HUSTLE HALF MARATHON AND 5K

Run with thousands of Santas through the streets of Galveston and along the Gulf waters! With festive music, outrageous holiday decorations and awesome swag, this isn't just a race – it's a magical experience! Register with code SANTAHUSTLE5 to save \$5 off registration at [santahustle.com](http://santahustle.com). **Dec. 15**

## 9. HOLIDAY DELIGHTS: A LONE STAR CHRISTMAS AT THE BRYAN MUSEUM

All trails will lead to The Bryan Museum and converge under the Lone Star for a day of purely Texas festivities, music, holiday foods and, of course, Santa. And what could be more Texan than Santa's two lead Longhorns arriving just in time for a few photos before heading back to the Ranch to get ready for the big night? **Dec. 15**

## 10. MIRACLE POP-UP BAR AT DTO (DAQURI TIME OUT)

Miracle is a Christmas-themed pop-up bar that serves specialty holiday cocktails from locations around the world. With kitschy holiday décor and professionally developed cocktails, Miracle is sure to get even the grouchy grinch in the holiday spirit. **Nov. 29 – Dec. 25**

For a list of all holiday events, visit [galveston.com/holidaymagic](http://galveston.com/holidaymagic) or call 888-GAL-ISLE (425-4753)

STAY MIDWEEK AND SAVE!

[GALVESTON.COM/HOLIDAYMAGIC](http://GALVESTON.COM/HOLIDAYMAGIC)

# San Luis Resort, Spa & Conference Center

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 with a cocktail at our climate-controlled pool, The Cove. 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 Holiday brunches, 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



## 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! Conveniently located along the famed Seawall Boulevard, 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 live entertainment nightly!

GalvestonHolidayInn.com  
409-740-5300

## Hilton Galveston Island Resort

Our AAA Four-Diamond resort is vibrant with energy and nestled along famed Seawall Boulevard. Hilton Galveston Island Resort boasts tastefully-appointed premium beachfront rooms, delicious dining experiences and easy access for those who want to explore the city, enjoy a day at the Historic Pleasure Pier or play on the island's beautiful beaches, there is truly something for everyone.

GalvestonHilton.com  
409-744-5000

## Ocean Star Offshore Drilling Rig & Museum

Welcome aboard!

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 oil 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.

OceanStarOEC.com  
409-766-7827

STAY MIDWEEK AND SAVE!



# Experience Holiday in the Gardens

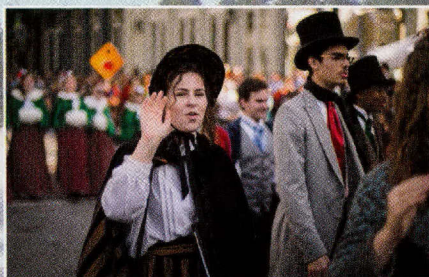
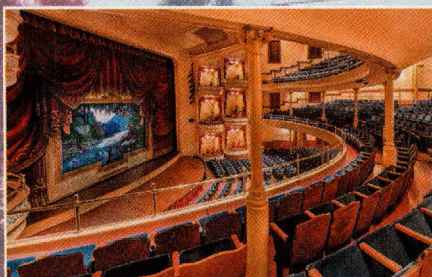
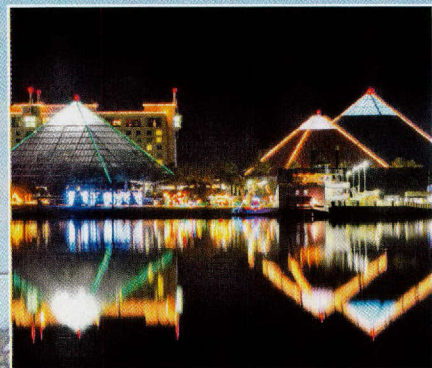
**November 16 – January 12**

## Eight Holiday Attractions at One Spectacular Venue

Enjoy Ice Land: Christmas Around the World! A skilled team of master ice carvers has taken 2 million pounds of ice to create a holiday journey around the world! Travel from Russia and Egypt to China and beyond to see how other cultures celebrate the season. Glide from the top of the Eiffel Tower on the Giant Ice Slide and chill out with a festive drink inside Shiver's Ice Bar.

The Festival of Lights takes you on a mile-long trail with more than two million lights and scenes around the Moody Gardens property with spectacular views of Galveston Bay. Ice skating, holiday 3D films, Rudolph 4D, Cirque Joyeux Dinner & Show Dec. 20 – 30, and New Year's Palooza family celebration are all a part of the fun with a variety of hotel packages. Take advantage of group discounts, Super Value Days or an Evening Pass all of the Moody Gardens attractions.

MoodyGardens.org  
409-744-4673



## The Grand 1894 Opera House

Get your holiday entertainment at The Grand! A Christmas Carol, The Doo Wop Project and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, the Musical are a few of the featured performances this holiday season. 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! Tickets make great gifts!

For complete performance schedule visit [TheGrand.com](http://TheGrand.com)  
800-821-1894

## Dickens on The Strand

Brush off your bowlers and prepare your petticoats as Galveston Historical Foundation presents the 46th annual Dickens on The Strand. Held December 6-8, the annual festival is a holiday tradition with family-friendly programming, live entertainment, special events, and more. With new additions like Tiny Tim's Play Land and the Shopkeeper Skills Village there's holiday fun for the whole family!

Details at [DickensOnTheStrand.org](http://DickensOnTheStrand.org)  
409-765-7834

## Welcome Aboard the Galveston Naval Museum

Experience what life was like as a sailor and submariner on the ocean 75 years ago. What they ate, where they slept and how they worked together as a fighting force during World War II. Bring the entire family and show the next generation how to honor the Greatest Generation.

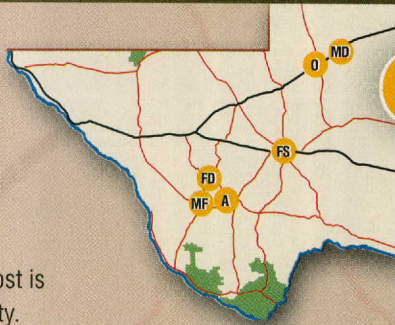
Visit [GalvestonNavalMuseum.com](http://GalvestonNavalMuseum.com)  
409-770-3196

# WEST TEXAS ROAD TRIP



As you explore, you'll find an amazing range of relaxation and adventure, natural beauty and urban culture, fine art, fine dining, small-town charm and big-city amenities...

but what you will remember most is the warm, West Texas hospitality.



FS

## FORT STOCKTON

Standing at 11 feet tall and 22 feet long from beak to tail – “A True Texas Town Mascot” as *Texas Highways*’ September 2011 issue proclaimed him, **Paisano Pete** continues to be Fort Stockton’s number one photographed attraction. Paisano Pete celebrates his 40th Birthday in 2019 with a community celebration to be held on November 30 at the Pecos County Coliseum.

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

**November 30 - Paisano Pete Birthday Celebration**

**December 6 - Christmas Parade**

**January 11 - Pecos County Livestock Show and Dance**



MD

**MIDLAND**—Midland is a great place to eat, play, shop & stay as you explore West Texas! Midland International Air & Space Port is the closest commercial airport to Big Bend National Park. [visitmidland.com](http://visitmidland.com)

**Dec 12** - Charlie Brown Christmas Live on Stage

**Dec 27-28** - The Eighty Eights Dueling Pianos

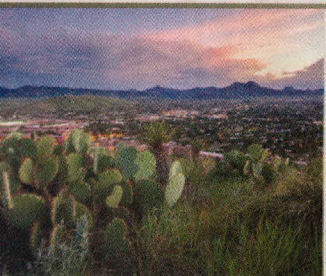


O

**ODESSA**—Known for breathtaking sunsets, wide-open spaces and warm West Texas hospitality; you'll enjoy shopping, dining, unique cultural attractions and events. Discover Odessa! [discoverodessa.org](http://discoverodessa.org)

**Dec 7** - Parade of Lights

**Dec 14** - Winter Fest Staycation in Downtown Odessa



**ALPINE**—Natural beauty, unique nightlife and shopping, and a grand array of hotels and guest lodging make this the perfect staging grounds for your West Texas adventure. [visitalpinetx.com](http://visitalpinetx.com)

**Dec 7** - Lighted Evening Christmas Parade

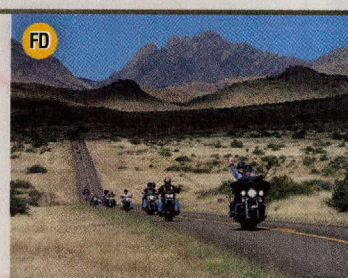
**Dec 14** - Winter Wonderland Festival- full-sized ice rink (free skating all day)

**FORT DAVIS**—Experience the mile-high climate in the Texas mountains! Award-winning State and National Parks offer excellent nature activities and star gazing under the “Darkest Skies in North America”! [fortdavis.com](http://fortdavis.com)

**Dec 7** - Frontier Christmas

4:00pm Parade

4:30pm Photos with Santa



FD

**MARFA**—It defies easy explanation, yet any google search yields thousands of opinions. Marfa is tough to get to—tougher still to explain. But once you arrive, you get it. [visitmarfa.com](http://visitmarfa.com)

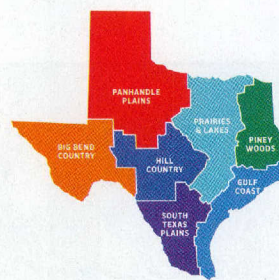
**Dec 13-15** - “GIANT” Christmas @Hotel Paisano

**Dec 31** - New Years Eve @St George Hall with Jimmy Dale Gilmore & Friends



MF

# EVENTS



## North Pole Bound

A Piney Woods Christmas on the Texas State Railroad

Since its debut in 1985, Chris Van Allsburg's book *The Polar Express* has charmed kids and kids at heart with its tale of a magical train ride to the North Pole. The Texas State Railroad brings the story to life with its own Polar Express Train Ride, a vintage steam-train voyage through the Piney Woods of East Texas. Departing from Palestine, the train makes a one-hour round-trip journey to the North Pole as chefs serve guests hot chocolate and cookies, and passengers read along to *The Polar Express*. When the train reaches the North Pole, Santa Claus and his merry elves greet passengers, hand out commemorative sleigh bells, and pose for pictures. Visitors may stroll around the North Pole, trim a tree, and visit the gift shop. Then it's "all aboard" again, with a train full of holiday cheer returning to the depot. Trips take place multiple days per week Nov. 16–Dec. 28 (excluding Christmas Day). For those who want to immerse themselves in the story, wearing your favorite pajamas is highly encouraged.

—Mikela Kinnison

The Polar Express Train Ride, Nov. 16–Dec. 28, in Palestine. 855-632-7729; [texasstaterailroad.net](http://texasstaterailroad.net)

Photo: Kevin Stillman

### BIG BEND COUNTRY

#### ALPINE

##### Christmas in Alpine

Nov. 30–Dec. 14

Head west for holiday events and shopping, including the Mountain Country Christmas Arts and Crafts Bazaar (Dec. 6–8), a parade of lights and tree lighting (Dec. 8), and Winter Wonderland ice skating, plus family activities, music, and treats all day long on Dec. 14. *Downtown Alpine.* 432-837-2326; [visitalpinetx.com/christmas](http://visitalpinetx.com/christmas)

#### DEL RIO

##### Wild Game Dinner

Dec. 7

Feast on a dinner of wild game cooked by the Chamber of Commerce. More than 125 guns will be raffled off this year, with a total value worth over \$60,000. *Del Rio Civic Center, 1915 Veterans Blvd.* 830-775-3551; [drchamber.com](http://drchamber.com)

#### EL PASO

##### Sun Bowl

Dec. 31

One of the nation's oldest bowl games marks its 86th year in 2019. Game week events include the Fan Fiesta with live music and activities for kids and the Don Haskins Basketball Invitational. *Various locations.* [sunbowl.org](http://sunbowl.org)

#### FORT DAVIS

##### Frontier Christmas

Dec. 5

The highest town in Texas kicks off the holidays with Santa, a parade down the town's main street, ornament crafts for kids, and other festivities. *Various locations.* 432-426-3015; [fortdavis.com](http://fortdavis.com)

#### FORT DAVIS

##### Open Weekend at Davis Mountains Preserve

Dec. 6–8

The Nature Conservancy's Davis Mountains Preserve is open this weekend for camping, hiking, biking, equestrian activities, picnics, photography, and bird watching. *Davis Mountains Preserve, SH 118.* 432-426-2390; [nature.org](http://nature.org)

### VAN HORN

#### Trans Pecos Big Buck Tournament

Nov. 29–Dec. 16

Deer hunters of all ages compete in antler categories such as most points and greatest spread at this annual hunting tournament. *Van Horn Convention Center, 1801 W. Broadway St.* 432-283-2682; [vanhorn-texas.org](http://vanhorn-texas.org)

### VAN HORN

#### Lighted Christmas Parade and Show and Sell

Dec. 7

Enjoy a lighted parade along Broadway and an open house with vendors, food, arts and crafts, a pecan dessert contest, and other entertainment. Don't leave before the lighting of the Christmas tree. *Van Horn Convention Center, 1801 W. Broadway St.* 432-283-2682; [vanhorn-texas.org](http://vanhorn-texas.org)

### GULF COAST

#### BAYTOWN

##### Christmas Past and Present

Dec. 14

Step back in time at this holiday event hosted by the Baytown Historical Preservation Association. The 1894 one-room Wooster School and 1910 Brown-McKay Farmhouse, both located at Republic of Texas Plaza, are adorned with period decorations, and Santa Claus is in the barn, listening to children's wish lists. *Republic of Texas Plaza, 5117 N. Main St.* 281-421-2099; [baytownhistory.org](http://baytownhistory.org)

#### BROWNSVILLE

##### Holiday Village

Nov. 25–Jan. 1

Thirty-four life-size cottages are on display, each providing a window into a holiday scene, including Santa's workshop, an ice cream shop, and the elf scouts' bunkhouse. Best viewed at night when each cottage is lit, inside and out. *Dean Porter Park, 501 E. Ringgold St.* 956-592-2001; [holidayvillagebrownsville.com](http://holidayvillagebrownsville.com)

VISIT  
GRAND PRAIRIE  
— VISITGRANDPRAIRIETX.COM —  
**Prairie Lights**  
Texas' Premier Holiday  
Drive-Thru Park  
**NOV. 28 - DEC. 31**



**GO GRAND!**  
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

**Epic Waters**

Breakfast with Santa  
Dec. 7, 14, 21

**Farmers Market**  
Holiday Gift Market  
Dec. 7, 14, 21

**Ripley's Believe It or Not!**  
Christmas at the Palace  
Dec. 6

**The Big Kahuna**  
Christmas Excursion Boat Ride  
Nov. 28 - Jan. 5

**The Theatre at Grand Prairie**  
Disney Jr. Holiday Party!  
Dec. 8

**Traders Village**  
Holiday Market With Santa  
Nov. 30 - Dec. 22

**Uptown Theater**  
Peter Pan  
Dec. 6-8 & 13-15

Visit **GRANDPRAIRIETX.COM**

**CLUTE**

**Christmas Belles**  
Nov. 29-Dec. 8  
Be ready to laugh when the actors take the stage in this Southern farce about squabbling sisters, family secrets, a surly Santa, a vengeful sheep, and a reluctant Elvis impersonator. *Center for the Arts and Sciences, 400 College Blvd. 979-265-7661; brazosportcenter.com*

**FREEPORT**

**A Christmas Story Market**  
Dec. 8  
Local vendors showcase their homemade goods, farm-fresh items, and handcrafted wares for the holiday season. *Freeport Historical Museum, 311 E. Park Ave. 979-233-0066; facebook.com/cfhmuseum*

**GALVESTON**

**Dickens on the Strand**  
Dec. 6-8  
Victorian bed races, strolling carolers, historic walking tours, and a public art exhibit are just a few of the events at this beloved holiday street festival that transforms downtown Galveston into the Victorian London of Charles Dickens. *Historic Downtown Galveston. 409-765-7834; galvestonhistory.org*

**HOUSTON**

**The Ice**  
Through Feb. 2  
Glide beneath the glittering lights of downtown Houston and embrace the holiday cheer on Texas' largest outdoor ice-skating rink. *Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney St. 713-400-7336; discoverygreen.com*

**HOUSTON**

**The Nutcracker**  
Nov. 29-Dec. 29  
The Houston Ballet enchants audiences with its performance of the Christmas classic, featuring choreography by artistic director Stanton Welch, exquisite costumes and sets, and the entire company of dancers. *Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas Ave., 832-487-7000; houstonballet.org*

**HOUSTON**

**Full Moon Fridays: The Skatalites in Concert**  
Dec. 13  
This new family-friendly concert series presents Gulf Coast musicians under the full moon. The stars of this evening, the Skatalites, are ska-reggae legends going on 55 years. Blankets, lawn chairs, and picnics are welcome. *Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney St. 713-400-7336; discoverygreen.com*

**HOUSTON**

**Panto Hansel and Gretel**  
Through Dec. 15  
In this reimagining of *Hansel and Gretel*, two selfish Houston parents pursue their dream to be stars of the theater and leave their social media-obsessed children in the woods. *Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway, Suite 101; 713-527-0123; stages theatre.com*

**LAKE JACKSON**

**Gone West in Concert**  
Dec. 13  
The newly formed Nashville-based group consists of Grammy winner Colbie Caillat, singer-songwriters Jason Reeves and Justin Kawika Young, and ACM and CMT awards nominee Nelly Joy. *The Clarion, 500 College Drive. 979-230-3658; brazosport.edu/clarion*

**RICHMOND**

**Campfire Christmas**  
Dec. 14, 21  
For a one-of-a-kind immersive experience, take themed tours of the park's historic sites, including Christmas in a log cabin and a Victorian mansion. The family-friendly holiday evening tour culminates with cowboy songs, stories, and hot cocoa around a campfire. *George Ranch Historical Park, 10215 FM 762. 281-343-0218; georgeranch.org*

**SOUTH PADRE ISLAND**

**Holiday Sand Castle Village**  
Nov. 30-Jan. 13  
The spirit of Christmas is a sight to behold at this sand castle village. Be in awe of the sculptures—from a sand snowman to "Sand-ta"—built by talented sand artists. *Gravity Park, 106 W. Marlin St. 956-761-3000; sopadre.com*

**SPRING**

**Grand Canyon Photographs: Celebrating the Centennial**  
Through Jan. 11  
Commemorating the establishment of Grand Canyon National Park 100 years ago, these images were taken by American photographer Mark Burns between 2011 and 2018. *Pearl Fincher Museum of Fine Arts, 6815 Cypresswood Drive. 281-376-6322; pearlmaf.org*

**SUGAR LAND**

**The Hip Hop Nutcracker**  
Dec. 4  
In 2017, *The Hip Hop Nutcracker* made its debut at Smart Financial Centre and was one of the best-selling shows on the tour. The show reimagines Tchaikovsky's classic score through explosive hip-hop choreography. *Smart*

*Financial Centre at Sugar Land, 18111 Lexington Blvd. 281-207-6278; smartfinancialcentre.net*

**SURFSIDE BEACH**

**Nighttime Kites**  
Dec. 14  
Members of the Surfside Flyers Kite Club brighten the night sky with their lighted kites, creating a brilliant show for kids of all ages. *Surfside Beach Main Entrance. 979-233-1531; surfsidetx.org*

**VICTORIA**

**The Celtic Tenors in Concert**  
Dec. 14  
The Victoria Symphony presents the award-winning trio from Ireland, who performs a range of songs—from carols like "O Holy Night" to beloved Celtic holiday favorites—by blending Irish roots and classical training. *Victoria Fine Arts Center, 1002 E. Sam Houston Drive. 361-576-4500; victoriasymphony.com*

**WEST COLUMBIA**

**Candlelight Christmas**  
Dec. 14  
The Varner-Hogg plantation house is decorated in the style of an 1800s Texas Christmas. See the feather tree, learn about the toys of the period, view a dining room table set for a holiday feast, and enjoy wassail while listening to a reading of "Texas Night Before Christmas." *Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Site, 1702 N. 13th St. 979-345-4656; visitvarnerhoggplantation.com*

**HILL COUNTRY**

**AUSTIN**

**Downtown Holiday Stroll and Sing-Along**  
Dec. 7  
Sing carols and watch the Texas State Capitol's Christmas tree light up. Then take a stroll down Congress Avenue to browse the vendor booths, indulge in tasty treats, and see live music. *Various locations. austintexas.gov/event/downtown-holiday-stroll*

**AUSTIN**

**Trail of Lights**  
Dec. 10-23  
Returning for its 55th year, Trail of Lights is the largest holiday tradition in the state capital, with more than 400,000 attendees annually. Come see Zilker Park lit up by 60 displays, 2 million lights, a Ferris wheel, and live music for two weeks. *Zilker Park, 2100 Barton Springs Road. austintrailoflights.org*

**AUSTIN****Fashion Forward**

Dec. 21-April 12

Fashion takes center stage in this exhibition showcasing the history of style in Texas, particularly Dallas' influence on the fashion industry. The show draws from the Texas Fashion Collection at the University of North Texas and includes pieces by designers like Christian Dior, Anne Klein, and Geoffrey Beene. *Bullock Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. 512-936-8746; thestoryoftexas.com*

**AUSTIN****Ed Ruscha**

Jan. 11-July 12

The iconic American artist and pioneer of the Pop Art movement, whose career spans 60 years, debuts a new collection at the Blanton Museum. His already vast body of work ranges from painting and drawing to photography and print. *Blanton Museum of Art, 200 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. 512-471-5482; blantonmuseum.org*

**BOERNE****Oma's Christmas Craft Fair**

Dec. 7-8

For more than 35 years, vendors have brought their wares to Oma's Christmas Craft Fair—everything from handcrafted clothing to homemade jellies to custom arts and crafts items. The merchandise takes up three large buildings, so plan plenty of time to browse and shop. *Kendall County Fairgrounds, 1307 River Road. 830-249-2839; visitboerne.org*

**BOERNE****Winter Solstice Celebration Circle**

Dec. 21

Celebrate the Winter Solstice with this evening featuring the natural beauty of Cave Without a Name and music that combines contemporary arrangements of traditional carols, soaring vocals, original acoustic music, and pulsing world-beat rhythms. *Cave Without a Name, 325 Kreutzberg Road. 830-537-4212; visitboerne.org*

**BURNET****Christmas on the Square**

Dec. 14

A truck dumps 40,000 pounds of snow for children of all ages to play in. There are plenty of artisan vendors and food booths, a bicycle giveaway, and parade with Santa. *Downtown Burnet, 220 S. Pierce St. 512-756-4297; burnetchamber.org*

**CASTROVILLE****Old-Fashioned Christmas**

Dec. 6-7

Celebrate the holiday season with the lighting of the town's Christmas tree, plus plays, live music, handmade crafts, homemade food, and a kids' area. *Houston Square, 1306 Angelo St. 830-538-3142; castroville.com*

**CEDAR PARK****Holiday Wishes**

Dec. 24

Cirque Musica performs in a full theatrical cirque setting. This show features the cast paired with favorite holiday hits, all performed live by a full symphony orchestra. *H-E-B Center at Cedar Park, 2100 Avenue of the Stars. 512-401-5060; hebcenter.com*

**CLIFTON****Jingle All The Way**

Dec. 12

Bosque Chorale presents its annual holiday show. This season features *Jingle All the Way*. *Bosque Arts Center, 215 S. College Hill Drive. 254-675-3724; bosqueartscenter.org*

**DENVER CITY****Yoakum County Tamale Festival**

Dec. 5-7

Celebrate all things tamale with a kickoff dinner, Christmas parade, tamale cookoff and eating contests, vendors, and games. Plus, visits from both Santa and festival mascot, Tomas Tamale. *Stuffy Moorhead Park, 806-592-5424; denvercitydc.org*

**FREDERICKSBURG****Light the Night Christmas Parade and Afterglow**

Dec. 6

Presented by the Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce, the lighted night parade casts a holiday glow over the town's famous Main Street. Be sure to visit the Marktplatz before or after the parade and enjoy local foods, wines, shopping, and free Santa photos. *Main Street and Marktplatz. lightthenightchristmasparade.com*

**FREDERICKSBURG****Pearl Harbor Day Observance**

Dec. 7

To mark the historic attack on Pearl Harbor, the National Museum of the Pacific War hosts guest speakers, a Joint Color Guard, a rifle salute, music, and other activities. *National Museum of the Pacific War, 340 E. Main St. pacificwarmuseum.org*

**FREDERICKSBURG****Luckenbach New Year's Eve Celebration**

Dec. 31

Usher in the New Year with a party in the historic Luckenbach Texas Dance Hall. *412 Luckenbach Town Loop. 830-997-3224; luckenbachtexas.com*

**JOHNSON CITY****A Frontier Christmas**

Dec. 7

Commemorating its 50th anniversary, the historic park invites visitors to Johnson Settlement, where chuckwagon cooks prepare vittles and recite cowboy stories over a campfire, and Sam and Eliza Johnson, grandparents of President Johnson, set up house at the dogtrot log cabin. *Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park, 200 E. Elm St. 830-868-7128; nps.gov/lyjo*

**KERRVILLE****Texas Furniture Makers Show**

Dec. 3-7, 10-14

The annual juried show celebrates its 20th year of showcasing the best furniture makers in the state. *Kerr Arts and Cultural Center, 228 Earl Garrett St. 830-895-2911; kacckerrville.com*

**MARBLE FALLS****Walkway of Lights**

Nov. 22-Jan. 1

One of the biggest yearly holiday events in the Highland Lakes has 2 million lights on more than 130 sculptures at Lakeside Park. On weekends and holidays, including Christmas Eve, children can visit with Santa and his elves. *Lakeside Park, 305 Buena Vista Drive. 830-693-4449; marblefalls.org*

**NEW BRAUNFELS****Bah Humbug**

Dec. 7

Award-winning actor Damian Gillen transforms into all of the beloved characters—from Scrooge to Tiny Tim—in this imaginative retelling of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. *The Grapevine, 1612 Hunter Road. 830-606-0093; holidayingsruene.com*

**NEW BRAUNFELS****Gruene Town Lighting**

Dec. 7

Enjoy a magical evening featuring a brass band street performance, the annual town lighting, and Cowboy Kringle riding into town on horseback to hand out candy canes to the kids. *Gruene Historic District. 830-629-5077; holidayingsruene.com*



APRIL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
6:00 AM																														
7:00 AM																														
8:00 AM																														
9:00 AM																														
10:00 AM																														
11:00 AM																														
12:00 PM																														
1:00 PM																														
2:00 PM																														
3:00 PM																														
4:00 PM																														
5:00 PM																														
6:00 PM																														
7:00 PM																														
8:00 PM																														
9:00 PM																														
10:00 PM																														
11:00 PM																														
12:00 AM																														

## George Boutwell's 2020 Texas Sunrise Calendar

Featuring twelve of my Paintings of Classic Texas Sunrises (Suitable for Framing). It is 15" x 20" with large 2" x 1 3/4" date boxes with lots of room to write.

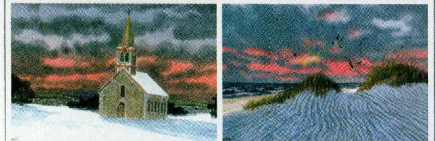
### Order Yours Today!

**\$12.50 each**+Tax & \$3.50  
Shipping or order more for less!  
(16-30 \$10 ea.) (31-75 \$9 ea.) (76-150 \$8 ea.)  
(151-300 \$6.50 ea.) (over 300 \$5 ea.)

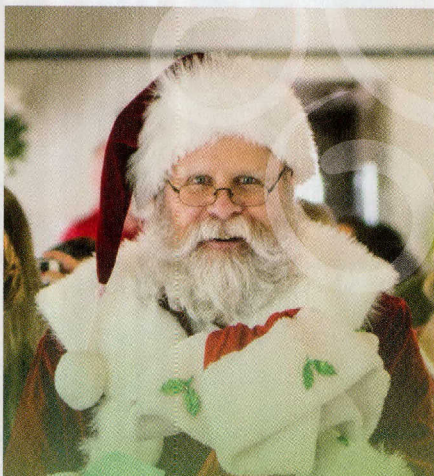
Order 40 or more and you can have your business name or message printed at the bottom for FREE!

Call us Toll Free! 1-800-243-4316

between 9AM & 5PM Weekdays.  
George Boutwell, 3083 Highway 6,  
Clifton, TX 76634 [www.gboutwell.com](http://www.gboutwell.com)



"2006 Official State Artist"



# CEDAR PARK TEXAS

EXPERIENCE WINTER FUN



Texas Stars Hockey



Cirque Musica at the H-E-B Center

CedarParkfun.com

**NEW BRAUNFELS**

**Pony Express Ride**

Dec. 7

Pony Express riders from the Heritage Trail Ride Association arrive at 10 a.m., carrying a "Christmas Greetings" message from the governor of Texas. A temporary post office is set up next to Gruene Outfitters, ready to stamp your Christmas cards with the 2019 commemorative stamp. *Gruene Historic District*. 830-629-5077; [holidaysingruene.com](http://holidaysingruene.com)

**ZOZONA**

**Crockett County Deerfest**

Dec. 7

In its 32nd year, the Deerfest is a community-wide appreciation banquet for hunters. The evening helps raise money for local civic organizations and the West Texas Rehab. Enjoy a meal of chicken-fried deer, turkey, axis, deer sausage, deer chili, deer tamales, and brisket. *Crockett County Fair Park Convention Center*, 1301 Ave. AA. 325-277-9345; [deerfest.org](http://deerfest.org)

**SAN MARCOS**

**Art Squared Arts Market**

Dec. 14

Find all kinds of art and crafts, including paintings, sculptures, glasswork, ceramics, textiles, jewelry, woodworking, leather, and photography, plus live music, a free kids' arts and crafts booth, live art demonstrations and supply swaps, and more at this market. *Downtown Square, San Marcos*, 150 E. Hopkins. 512-679-5059; [artsquaredmarket.com](http://artsquaredmarket.com)

**STONEWALL**

**LBJ Tree Lighting**

Dec. 15

Celebrating its 50th year, this annual holiday event was started by President and Mrs. Johnson and has carolers, a live nativity, Santa Claus, refreshments, and of course, the tree lighting. *Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site*, 199 Park Road 52. 830-644-2252; [tpwd.texas.gov](http://tpwd.texas.gov)

**UVALDE**

**Briscoe Ranch Barbecue Cookoff**

Dec. 13-14

Sanctioned by the International Barbecue Cookers Association (IBCA), the cookoff pits barbecue teams against each other for cash and prizes. Competition categories include beef brisket, pork spare ribs, chicken halves, and jackpot rib-eye steak. *Uvalde County Fairplex*, 215 Veterans Lane. 830-591-9040; [uvaldebq.com](http://uvaldebq.com)

**WIMBERLEY**

**Market Day**

Dec. 7

More than 450 booths are filled with art, furniture, collectibles, and treasures of all kinds. Live music, food, and drink make for a shopper's delight. *Lions Field*, 601 FM 2325. 512-847-2201; [shopmarketdays.com](http://shopmarketdays.com)

**WIMBERLEY**

**Trail of Lights**

Nov. 30-Dec. 28

Stroll the grounds at EmilyAnn Theatre and Gardens and delight in the light displays, along with live entertainment, a yule log, and food and drink. *EmilyAnn Theatre and Gardens*, 1101 FM 2325. 512-847-6969; [emilyann.org/trailoflights](http://emilyann.org/trailoflights)

**PANHANDLE PLAINS**

**ABILENE**

**Abilene Winter Circuit Cutting**

Dec. 28-Jan. 1

Cutting is an equestrian event where a rider and his horse work together to separate a single animal away from a cattle herd and keep it away a certain amount of time. The dynamic duo is judged on how well they accomplish that feat. *Expo Center of Taylor County*, 1700 SH 36. 325-583-2545; [abilenevisitors.com](http://abilenevisitors.com)

**DUMAS**

**Museum Christmas Open House**

Dec. 7

The Window on the Plains Museum ushers in the Christmas holidays with this open house featuring entertainment, refreshments, and a special appearance by Santa Claus. *Window on the Plains Museum*, 1820 S. Dumas Ave. 806-935-3113; [dumasmuseumandartcenter.org](http://dumasmuseumandartcenter.org)

**GRAHAM**

**Christmas Stroll and Parade**

Dec. 5

Enjoy the lighted parade and Christmas stroll around "America's largest downtown square," featuring more than 70 themed floats, a Hot Choccolicious competition, and various children's activities. *Graham Downtown Square*, 608 Elm St. 940-549-0401; [visitgrahamtexas.com](http://visitgrahamtexas.com)

**LUBBOCK**

**High and Dry Photography Exhibit**

Nov. 25-Jan. 31

Since 2001, the juried photo exhibition has attracted hundreds of

artists from around the world, who capture life in an arid or a semiarid region. Images have been shot in places as far away as Morocco, Iran, and Chile, and as near as Caprock Canyon. *Texas Tech University International Cultural Center*, 601 Indiana Ave. 806-742-3667; [www.depts.ttu.edu/international/events](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/international/events)

**LUBBOCK**

**Santa Land**

Dec. 10-23

Approximately 50,000 people visit this 62-year tradition each year. The holiday village has a huge lighted Christmas tree, animated holiday scenes. Each evening, a sleigh with reindeer brings Santa and Mrs. Claus to Santa Land to hear the Christmas wishes of area children. *Mackenzie Park*. 806-775-3000; [visitlubbock.org](http://visitlubbock.org)

**POST**

**Old Mill Trade Days**

Dec. 13-15

Find all kinds of merchandise while having a unique shopping experience in a historic setting. *Postex Mill*, 318 S. Avenue F. 432-934-1479; [oldmilltradedays.com](http://oldmilltradedays.com)

**SAN ANGELO**

**San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts: Highlights from the Permanent Collection**

Dec. 13-April 5

Selections from the museum's permanent collection include masterpieces of ceramics, Texas art, Spanish Colonial art, and American glass. *San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts*, 1 Love St. 325-653-3333; [samfa.org](http://samfa.org)

**SWEETWATER**

**Applause Series Christmas Special**

Dec. 7

Enjoy music with special guests Lindsay Miles, soprano; Cloyce Kuhnert, mezzo soprano; Matt Olglesby, tenor; and Timothy Tucker, baritone. The local soloists and chorus are directed by Jonathan Jones. *Sweetwater Municipal Auditorium*, 400 Locust St. 325-518-9407; [sweetwatertexas.org](http://sweetwatertexas.org)

**VEGA**

**Christmas on the Square**

Dec. 2

Oldham County celebrates Christmas with Santa making his yearly appearance and local businesses having food available to those strolling the streets. The event takes place inside the Oldham County Courthouse as well as on the square around the building.

Oldham County Courthouse Square,  
105 S. Main St. 806-267-2828;  
oldhamcofc.org

## WYLIE

### Wylie Arts Festival

Dec. 7

More than 140 vendors offer unique fine art and craft items, including jewelry, home décor, clothing, paintings, and one-of-a-kind gift items, all available for purchase. There is also fair food, kids activities, pictures with Santa, and the tree lighting. *FBC Wylie Event Center, 200 N. Ballard Ave. 972-516-6016; wylitexas.gov*

## PINEY WOODS

## CONROE

### Conroe Kennel Club All-Breed Show

Nov. 29-Dec. 1

Consisting of two all-breed dog conformation shows and a specialty show, the holiday classic also has obedience and rally competitions, owner-handler contests, and canine good-citizen testing for all dogs. *Montgomery County Fairgrounds, 9333 Airport Road. 936-538-8000; conroekennelclub.org*

## HUNTSVILLE

### Houston Family Christmas

Dec. 7

Enjoy historical demonstrations around the Sam Houston Memorial Museum grounds and learn about life on the farm. Be sure to indulge in the goodies at Aunt Eliza's kitchen. *Sam Houston Memorial Museum, 1836 Sam Houston Ave. 936-294-1832; samhoustonsamuelmuseum.com*

## JEFFERSON

### Sportman's Expo

Dec. 14-15

Shop for new and antique weapons, knives, gun parts and equipment, archery items, and other outdoor sportsman merchandise in a safe and family-oriented environment. *Jefferson Visitor Center, 305 E. Austin St. 903-431-0043; jefferson-texas.com*

## KILGORE

### Rangerette Christmas Show

Dec. 8

Founded in 2011, this now-annual tradition is a Broadway-style show featuring the Kilgore High School Hi-Steppers, all Kilgore area dance studios, and of course, the Rangerettes. *Dodson Auditorium at Kilgore College, 817 Nolen St. 903-983-8179; rangerette.com*

## MARSHALL

### Wonderland of Lights

Nov. 27-Dec. 29

Millions of white lights illuminate the historic Harrison County Courthouse as downtown Marshall is transformed into a winter wonderland. Enjoy outdoor ice skating and catch a ride on the Holly Trolley, Wonderland Express, the beautifully restored 1948 Herschel carousel, or a horse-drawn carriage. *Downtown Marshall, 211 N. Washington Ave. 903-702-7777; wonderlandoflights.com*

## MOUNT PLEASANT

### Deck the Halls Holiday Bazaar

Dec. 14-15

Browse over 40 vendor booths packed to the brim with something for everyone on your Christmas list. This year, visit the kids room, where every business is owned and operated by a child under 12 (Saturday only). *Mount Pleasant Civic Center, 1800 N. Jefferson Ave. 903-572-8567; visitmountpleasanttx.com*

## ONALASKA

### Christmas in Our Town and Reindeer Dash

Dec. 7

Walk down Candy Cane Lane, Hot Chocolate Way, and Rudolph Road to take in the displays. Participate in snow sledding, the Reindeer Dash (3K and 5K fun run/walk), Christmas caroling, a bicycle giveaway, and other holiday activities. *Onalaska Park, Garland Pavilion, 600 Onalaska Loop. 936-646-5000; cityofonalaska.us*

## PALESTINE

### Grinch's Lair at the Texas Jail House

Nov. 22-24, 29-30; Dec. 1, 6-8, 13-15, 20-22

At the Grinch's Lair, a Who's Who of Whoville greets you before sending you up into the lair, where you'll get a tour with Mr. Grinch through his Texas Jail House home. *Texas Jail House, 704 Avenue A. 903-480-0212; texasjailhouse.com*

## SILSBEE

### Christmas in the Big Thicket

Dec. 7

Spanning three blocks, this event has something for everyone, including craft and food booths, live performances, pups on parade, photos with Santa Claus, wiener-dog races, and a 1-mile run. The event culminates with the annual lighted parade. *Silsbee Public Library-Downtown, 295 N. Fourth St. 409-385-5562; silsbeecoc.com*

## TYLER

### Works by Joseph Glasco

Nov. 24-Feb. 16

Signature pieces from the Tyler Museum of Art's Permanent Collection as well as works drawn from public and private collections throughout the state highlights this retrospective of the late abstract expressionist painter and sculptor. *Tyler Museum of Art, 1300 S. Mahon Ave. 903-595-1001; tylermuseum.org*

## PRAIRIES AND LAKES

## ADDISON

### Vitruvian Lights

Nov. 29-Jan. 1

Vitruvian Park transforms into a magical wonderland. Enjoy gourmet food trucks, sweet treats, free photos with Santa, classic holiday characters, elf balloon artists, and performances by Jordan Kahn Orchestra, Phat Strad, and Sonny's Holliday. *Vitruvian Park, 3966 Vitruvian Way. vitruvianpark.com*

## ARLINGTON

### Holiday In The Park

Nov. 23-Jan. 5

Six Flags Over Texas presents this breathtaking winter park that features a variety of delightful and interactive activities to help capture the holiday spirit. *Six Flags Over Texas, 2201 Road to Six Flags. 817-640-8900; sixflags.com/overtexas*

## ARLINGTON

### Big 12 Championship Football Game

Dec. 7

Who will win bragging rights when the top two college football teams in the Big 12 Conference face off? *AT&T Stadium, 1 AT&T Way. 817-892-4000; attstadium.com*

## BASTROP

### Lost Pines Christmas Lighted Parade

Dec. 14

Downtown Bastrop is a Christmas light hot spot. Join in and marvel at the jolly lighted Christmas parade. *Downtown Bastrop, 921 Main St. 916-960-2921; visitbastrop.com/lost-pines-christmas*

## BELTON

### Christmas on the Chisholm Trail

Dec. 7

Join in for some good old-fashioned family fun. There are craft vendors, food trucks, and a kids zone with a bounce house. Holiday music rings through the air, and Santa makes an appearance. The Christmas parade begins in the evening. *Downtown Belton. 254-933-5860; beltontexas.gov*

## BONHAM

### Holiday Open House

Dec. 7

Sam Rayburn served in the United States House of Representatives for 48 years, 17 of which were as speaker of the house. This event features special tours of the Rayburn family home decorated in its seasonal splendor and an ornament-making activity. *Sam Rayburn House State Historic Site, 890 SH 56 W. 903-583-5558; visitsamrayburnhouse.com*

## BRENHAM

### A Gatlin Brothers Country Christmas Concert

Dec. 6

Winners of multiple Grammy and CMA awards, not to mention seven No. 1 hits, the celebrated brothers bring their signature harmonies and inspirational stories to Brenham. *The Barnhill Center at Simon Theatre, 111 W. Main St. 979-337-7580; thebarnhillcenter.com*

## CAMERON

### Christmas Basketball Classic Tournament

Dec. 27-28

Settle in for two days of fierce competition between local boys and girls basketball teams as they battle for first place in the annual Christmas Basketball Classic Tournament. Teams from all over Central Texas gather to compete for the gold. *C.H. Yoe High School Gym, 303 E. 12th St. 254-697-4979; cameron-tx.com*

## CLEBURNE

### Whistle Stop Christmas Lighting Ceremony

Nov. 25

Enjoy various festivities for the whole family and the lighting of the park. Whistle Stop Christmas displays more than 3.5 million lights every evening at Hulen Park, around the courthouse, and throughout the city. *Hulen Park, 409 W. Westhill. 817-645-2455; whistlestopchristmas.com*

Shopping  
outside of the  
big box?



If you're looking for something handmade, one-of-a-kind or antique, we have a **Nac** for that. In fact, Nacogdoches is home to vintage shops and hard-to-find Texas originals that you just won't find in a big box store. Plan your stay and explore the unexpected at [VisitNac.com/shopauthentic](http://VisitNac.com/shopauthentic)



888-564-7351  
[VisitNac.com](http://VisitNac.com)

**CLIFTON**  
**Norwegian Country Christmas Parade and Tour**

Dec. 7  
This lighted holiday parade in downtown Clifton kicks off the weekend's Norwegian Country Christmas Tour, celebrating the town's unique status as the Norwegian Capital of Texas. After the parade is the tour of homes and historic sites, shopping, and performances. The self-guided tour includes sites in Clifton and the Norse Historic District. *Various locations.* 254-675-3720; [cliftontexas.org](http://cliftontexas.org)

**COLLEGE STATION**  
**The Midtown Men: Holiday Hits**

Dec. 3  
See the stars from the original Broadway cast of *Jersey Boys* in their new *Holiday Hits* show. Backed by an equally explosive band, the Midtown Men—Tony winner Christian Hoff, Tony nominee J. Robert Spencer, Michael Longoria, and Daniel Reichard—sing and dance their way through iconic '60s rock 'n' roll hits and holiday classics. *Rudder Auditorium, Texas A&M, 401 Joe Routh Blvd.* 979-845-1234; [mscopas.org](http://mscopas.org)

**COLUMBUS**  
**Santa Claus Museum**  
Dec. 5-28  
Visions of sugar plums dance in your head when you visit the only Santa museum in the South. With more than 2,000 Santas decking its halls, the museum is a Christmas lover's dream come true. *Santa Claus Museum, 604 Washington St.* 979-732-8385; [santamuseum.org](http://santamuseum.org)

**CORSICANA**  
**Annexation: Celebrating Texas Statehood**

Through Dec. 3  
This traveling exhibit, created by the Texas Capitol Visitors Center and produced by Humanities Texas, chronicles the story of Texas as a Mexican colony and Republic, its campaign to join the United States, the vote for annexation, and the consequences of that vote. *Pearce Museum, 3100 W. Collin St.* 903-875-7642;

**CORSICANA**  
**100W Artist and Writer Residency Studio Opening**  
Dec. 14  
See the works of residency artists Patricia Fernandez from Los Angeles and Sophie Treppendahl from Richmond, Virginia, and writer Kerri Arsenault from Roxbury, Connecticut. Formerly the Inter-

national Order of Odd Fellows hall, the venue is now used by artists and writers to work while enjoying the charm of a small Texas town. *100W Artist and Writer Residency, 100 W. Third Ave.* 480-677-0928; [100westcorsicana.com](http://100westcorsicana.com)

**DALLAS**  
**Pauline and Austin Neuhoff Family Christmas Village**

Nov. 29-Dec. 31  
Brand new to the Arboretum, Family Christmas Village is inspired by European Christmas markets, or Christkindlmarket. The village is comprised of charming shops and façades that represent a quaint European hamlet. Measuring 14 to 20 feet tall, each house is themed and large enough that several children and adults can enter at a time. *Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden, 8525 Garland Road.* 214-515-6615; [dallasarboretum.org/holiday](http://dallasarboretum.org/holiday)

**DALLAS**  
**Black Nativity**  
Dec. 5-22  
For 16 years, Langston Hughes' story of the birth of Christ has transformed Bishop Arts Theatre into a gathering that unites artists and audiences of different ages, backgrounds, and beliefs through the heart-stirring power of song, story, and dance. *Bishop Arts Theatre Center, 215 S. Tyler St.* 214-948-0716; [bishopartstheatre.org](http://bishopartstheatre.org)

**Dallas**  
**Ariana Grande in Concert**  
Dec. 9  
One of the biggest stars in music, the pop and R&B diva sings tracks from her current album, *Thank U, Next.* *American Airlines Center, 2500 Victory Avenue.* 802-255-1826; [americanairlinescenter.com](http://americanairlinescenter.com)

**DALLAS**  
**Lights All Night**  
Dec. 27-28  
Ring in 2020 at one of the biggest New Year's Eve events in the state. The 10th anniversary celebration includes world-renowned EDM acts including Skrillex, Bassnectar, Virtual Self, and Louis the Child. *Dallas Market Hall, 2200 N. Stemmons Freeway.* [lightsallnight.com](http://lightsallnight.com)

**ELGIN**  
**Hot Cocoa Stroll and Holiday by the Tracks**  
Dec. 7  
On the first Saturday of December, sample a variety of hot cocoa from downtown businesses and vote for your favorite during the Hot Cocoa Stroll. The day also includes Holiday by the Tracks, which offers shop-

ping at local businesses in Historic Downtown Elgin. [elgintx.com](http://elgintx.com)

**ENNIS**  
**The Best Christmas Pageant Ever**

Dec. 5-Dec. 15  
The adaptation of Barbara Robinson's book follows the shenanigans of the Herdman siblings, or "the worst kids in the history of the world." Mayhem ensues as the siblings take over the Christmas pageant in a hilarious yet heartwarming tale involving the Three Wise Men, a ham, scared shepherds, and six rowdy kids. *Ennis Public Theatre, 113 N. Dallas St.* 972-878-7529; [ennispublictheatre.com](http://ennispublictheatre.com)

**FORT WORTH**  
**The Grand Ol' Christmas Show**

Dec. 1  
This one-of-a-kind musical variety show brings all-time favorite Christmas classics and original sketch comedy antics to theaters across Texas. Featuring acclaimed musician Robert Ellis and Americana group Blue Water Highway as well as a cast of the best artists and entertainers in Texas. *The Riddle Theater, 6025 Camp Bowie Blvd.* 979-583-2221; [gochristmasshow.com](http://gochristmasshow.com)

**FORT WORTH**  
**Gordon Parks: The New Tide, Early Work**

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

**GONZALES**  
**Historic Organ Concert**

Dec. 7  
Guest organist Chris Oelkers performs classical and Christmas selections at this concert, where the real star is a rare, 94-year-old pipe organ, built by a famed organ maker and still in its original state. *Presbyterian Church, 414 St. Louis St.* 830-672-3521.

**GRANBURY**  
**The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**

Nov. 22-Dec. 22  
A dramatization of C.S. Lewis' classic tale faithfully recreates the magic and mystery of the great lion Aslan, his struggle with the White Witch, and the adventures



of four children who inadvertently wander from an old wardrobe into the exciting, never-to-be-forgotten Narnia. *Granbury Opera House*, 133 E. Pearl St. 817-579-0952; [visitgranbury.com](http://visitgranbury.com)

#### GRAND PRAIRIE

##### Prairie Lights

Nov. 28-Dec. 31

At the region's biggest holiday lights tradition, you can drive through more than 4 million lights that shine across a 2-mile path inside Lynn Creek Park by Joe Pool Lake. *Lynn Creek Park*, 5700 Lake Ridge Parkway. 972-237-8100; [prairielights.org](http://prairielights.org)

#### GRAND PRAIRIE

##### Jay Leno

Dec. 7

The legendary comedian, former *Tonight Show* host, and car aficionado brings his stand-up act to the Theatre at Grand Prairie. *The Theatre at Grand Prairie*, 1001 Performance Place. 972-854-5050; [theatregr.com](http://theatregr.com)

#### GRAPEVINE

##### ICE! and Lone Star Christmas

Nov. 15-Jan. 5

Be amazed by two-story ice slides and larger-than-life ice sculptures of Charlie Brown and friends in this walk-through winter wonderland carved from more than 2 million pounds of ice. *Gaylord Texan Resort*, 1501 Gaylord Trail. 817-410-3185; [grapevinetexasusa.com](http://grapevinetexasusa.com)

#### GRAPEVINE

##### Christmas on Main

Nov. 25-Jan. 5

With more than 1,400 events in over 40 days, Grapevine is the Christmas Capital of Texas. Be sure to visit Main Street, with its beautiful backdrop of buildings dressed up with ribbons, bows, and wreaths set aglow with twinkling lights. *Historic Downtown Grapevine*, Main Street. 817-410-3185; [grapevinetexasusa.com](http://grapevinetexasusa.com)

#### IRVING

##### Irving Symphony Orchestra Holiday Concert

Dec. 14

*Home for the Holidays* features soprano Haley Sicking and the Irving chorale with Harry Wooten as director. Irving's favorite Christmas concert has become the community event for the holiday season with traditional carols, holiday favorites, spectacular orchestral arrangements, and a jolly good time with Santa. *Irving Arts Center*, 3333 N. MacArthur Blvd. 972-252-2787; [irvingsymphony.com](http://irvingsymphony.com)

**First Basin**  
COURTESY OF

**Starbright Village**  
ODESSA

The right place in Texas  
**Odessa**  
City of Odessa  
Parks and Recreation

**December 5 – January 1**  
Open Daily 7:00 PM – 11:00 PM  
McKinney Park • I-20 & Highway 385 • Odessa, TX  
For more information:  
[odessatxparks.org/sbv](http://odessatxparks.org/sbv) or (432) 368-3548

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION (required by 39 USC 3685) filed September 23, 2019, for *TEXAS HIGHWAYS* magazine, publication number 3857-70, published monthly, 12 issues annually for an annual subscription price of \$24.95, by the Texas Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 141009, Austin, Travis County, Texas 78714-1009, contact person Sabrina Ballesteros, telephone 512-486-5881, located at 150 E. Riverside Drive, Austin, Travis County, Texas 78704. Publisher: Andrea Lin, P.O. Box 141009, Austin, Travis County, Texas 78714-1009. Executive Editor: Emily Stone, P.O. Box 141009, Austin, Texas 78714-1009.

Owner: Texas Department of Transportation, 125 E. 11th Street, Austin, Texas 78701-2483. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: None. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes have not changed during the preceding 12 months.


Publication Title: <i>Texas Highways</i>	Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: September 2019	
Extent and Nature of Circulation: Direct	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
15.a. Total Number of Copies (Net Press Run)	174,179	172,360
15.b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)		
15.b.(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541	108,361	106,147
15.b.(3) Sales Through Dealers & Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution	3,652	3,551
15.c. Total Paid Distribution	112,013	109,698
15.d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)		
15.d.(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	50,295	50,000
15.d.(4) Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	2,688	2,970
15e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1, 2, 3, & 4))	52,983	52,970
15f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)	164,996	162,668
15g. Copies Not Distributed	9,183	9,692
15h. TOTAL (Sum of 15f and 15g)	174,179	172,360
15i. Percent Paid (15c/15f x100)	67.89%	67.44%
16a. Paid Electronic Copies	12,736	12,940
16b. TOTAL Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies	124,749	122,638
16c. TOTAL Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies	177,732	175,608
16d. Percent Paid (Both print and electronic copies)	70.19%	69.84%

I CERTIFY THAT 50% OF ALL MY DISTRIBUTED COPIES (ELECTRONIC AND PRINT) ARE PAID ABOVE A NOMINAL PRICE.

PUBLICATION OF STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP REQUIRED. WILL BE PRINTED IN THE DECEMBER 2019 ISSUE OF THIS PUBLICATION.

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete: Signed Andrea Lin, Publisher 09/23/2019

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including multiple damages and civil penalties).




**Restoring and Preserving Our History**

*The Friends of Gillespie County Country Schools*

In the heart of the Texas Hill Country visit 17 historic one-room schools built between 1847 and 1936 by following the 120 mile Gillespie County Country Schools Driving Trail through the scenic Fredericksburg, Texas countryside.

Visit our website for a tour map and information on our historic schools and community centers.

All schools listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Member of Country School Association of America.

[WWW.HISTORICSCHOOLS.ORG](http://WWW.HISTORICSCHOOLS.ORG) 



TEXAS HIGHWAYS MAGAZINE

**MERCANTILE**

TEXAS MADE  CRAFT GOODS

[shop.texashighways.com](http://shop.texashighways.com)

**LA GRANGE**

**Schmeckenfest**

Dec. 5  
Sample more than 25 types of wassail made by various business owners and community leaders. The wassail competition brings the allure of the coveted honor of being named Schmeckenmeister, a title that lasts until the next Schmeckenfest. *Fayette County Courthouse Square, 151 N. Washington St. 979-968-3017; visitlagrangetx.com*

**LA GRANGE**

**Marcia Ball with Shelley King and Carolyn Wonderland in Concert**

Dec. 13  
The award-winning singer-songwriters join forces for a holiday show at one of the best listening rooms in the state. *The Bugle Boy, 1051 N. Jefferson. 979-968-9944; thebugleboy.org*

**MANSFIELD**

**Hometown Holidays**

Dec. 6-8  
Get ready for the holiday season with this three-day extravaganza that kicks off Friday evening with the Christmas Fair and tree lighting at City Hall. Saturday, there's the Falalala 5K and Holiday Parade, as well as a special concert at the Farr Best Theater. Sunday, enjoy the Holiday Home Tour. *Various locations, 1200 E. Broad St. 817-728-3382; visitmansfieldtexas.com*

**MCGREGOR**

**Lighted Christmas Parade**

Dec. 14  
Enjoy a lighted Christmas parade in historic downtown McGregor with shopping, treats and eats, and favorite floats in an awesome parade. Santa makes an appearance on the fire truck and then there are cookies with him in Legacy Park with hot chocolate, a live nativity, and live music. *Historic Main Street McGregor, 303 S. Main St. 254-840-2292; mcgregorfoundersday.com*

**MESQUITE**

**Mesquite Outlaws Soccer**

Nov. 30, Dec. 4, 21  
The newest member of Major Arena Soccer League, the Mesquite Outlaws, plays its inaugural home opener against the Dallas Sidekicks, followed by home games against Monterrey Flash and Kansas City Comets this month. *Mesquite Arena, 1818 Rodeo Drive. 972-285-8777; mesquiteoutlaws.com*

**MESQUITE**

**Deck the Paws**

Dec. 14-15  
Make your holidays merry and bright at this two-day "pet-topia," the largest holiday festival for animal lovers in North Texas. The event includes tail-wagging holiday shopping and entertainment that benefits local animal rescues. *Mesquite Convention Center, 1700 Rodeo Drive. 972-329-3100; visitmesquitetx.com*

**MESQUITE**

**Mesquite Championship Rodeo Winter Classic**

Dec. 28-29  
Wrangle the family and head to the Rodeo Capital of Texas for bull riding, barrel racing, steer wrestling, and more competitive feats by the best cowboys and cowgirls in the area. *Mesquite Arena, 1818 Rodeo Drive. 972-285-8777; visitmesquitetx.com*

**PLANO**

**The Gift of Christmas**

Dec. 7-8, 11-15  
A Prestonwood tradition, thousands of guests attend this performance every year. This visually stunning multimedia event is complete with special effects, a nearly 1,000-member cast and choir, a live orchestra, and flying angels. *Prestonwood Baptist Church, 6801 W. Park Blvd. 888-424-3977; visitplano.com*

**RICHARDSON**

**Riders in the Sky and The Quebe Sisters in Concert**

Dec. 17  
For more than 30 years, Riders in the Sky have been keepers of the Western music flame passed on by the Sons of the Pioneers, Gene Autry, and Roy Rogers. The Quebe Sisters are a sibling trio of champion fiddlers who sing Americana songs with angelic harmonies. *Charles W. Eisemann Center for Performing Arts, 2351 Performance Drive. 972-744-4650; eisemanncenter.com*

**ROUND TOP**

**Christmas at Winedale**

Dec. 14  
Visitors are invited to tour the period-furnished, historic Texas homes at Winedale while also enjoying demonstrations of blacksmithing, quilting, woodworking, lace making, and weaving. Children's activities include old-fashioned crafts and games, horse-drawn wagon rides, and a petting zoo. *Winedale Historical Complex, 3738 FM 2714. 979-278-3530; brenhamtexas.com*

**SALADO**

**Salado Christmas Stroll**

Dec. 6-8, 13-15  
Bring the entire family and make lasting memories at Salado's largest event of the year. Enjoy festivities such as carriage rides, a live nativity, *A Christmas Carol* at the amphitheater, a visit with Santa, carolers, and food vendors. *Village of Salado, Main Street. 254-947-8634; visitsaladotexas.com*

**SHERMAN**

**Snowflake Festival**

Dec. 7  
The City of Sherman's Snowflake Festival is a fun and festive family-friendly event that leads up to the annual Christmas parade and big tree lighting. *Grayson County Courthouse Square, 100 W. Houston St. 903-892-7230; shermantx.org*

**SHINER**

**Christmas in the Park**

Dec. 5  
This festive community gathering includes tables of delicacies offered by various organizations, beautiful holiday lights, the lighting of the Christmas wreath, and the arrival of Santa Claus with bags of treats for children. *Welhausen Park. 361-594-4180; shinertx.com*

**TEMPLE**

**Family Day: Santa at the Depot**

Dec. 7  
Santa is coming to the museum. He is checking his list and giving out toys. Santa arrives by train and meets with kids throughout the day. There are crafts, music, and old-fashioned holiday fun in the grand lobby. *Temple Railroad and Heritage Museum, 315 W. Ave. B. 254-298-5172; templerrhm.org*

**WACO**

**Christmas at the Silos**

Dec. 6-14  
Don your Christmas sweater and ring in the holidays at Magnolia Market. A weekend of holiday festivities includes a Christmas market with artisan vendors, Santa Claus, and your favorite Christmas tunes at an evening concert. *Magnolia Market, 601 Webster Ave. 254-235-0603; magnolia.com*

**WACONNA**

**Wynonna and the Big Noise in Concert**

Dec. 7  
Wynonna Judd and her band, the Big Noise, bring their brand new "Rockin' Roots Christmas Tour" to Waco this holiday season. The

show features incomparable musical arrangements from the Big Noise and Wynonna's powerful voice front and center for a memorable evening. *Waco Hippodrome*, 724 Austin Ave. 254-296-9000; [wacohippodrometheatre.com](http://wacohippodrometheatre.com)

#### WAXAHACHIE

##### Historic Waxahachie Christmas Tour of Homes

Dec. 14-15  
Waxahachie may be known as "Gingerbread City" due to the large concentration of Victorian-style homes, but there are many other styles that make the town proud. See five homes ranging from Queen Anne Victorian to midcentury modern to mission style during the weekend. *Various locations, Main Street*. 469-309-4040; [historicwaxahachie.com](http://historicwaxahachie.com)

#### WAXAHACHIE

##### Santa Run

Dec. 14  
At this 5K Race and Fun Run, participants receive a five-piece Santa suit to wear during the run. Those not feeling festive can sign up for a Grinch costume and run the course backwards. *Railyard Park, 455 S. College St.* 972-937-9622; [ymcadallas.org/waxahachiecvb.com](http://ymcadallas.org/waxahachiecvb.com)

#### SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

#### EAGLE PASS

##### Festival of Lights Ceremony

Dec. 6  
While the main attraction is the Christmas lights being turned on, there are also musical performances, a message from the mayor, and picture with Santa. The Candy Cane Christmas Parade takes place on Main Street later in the evening. *Festival of Lights Ceremony, San Juan Plaza*. 830-773-4343; [facebook.com/officialcityeaglepasstexas](http://facebook.com/officialcityeaglepasstexas)

#### EAGLE PASS

##### Christmas on Main

Dec. 19  
The ninth annual celebration is a local tradition with live performances, food, music, and entertainment. *Downtown Main Street*. 830-773-1111.

#### EDINBURG

##### Night of Lights Festival and Night Parade

Dec. 6  
Individuals, local businesses, community groups, and youth organizations show off their holiday spirit in downtown Edinburg,

with trophies and prize money awarded to the floats that place first, second, and third in different divisions. *Downtown, 415 W. University Drive*. 956-383-4974; [edinburg.com](http://edinburg.com)

#### GOLIAD

##### Christmas Rendezvous and Trade Fair

Dec. 7-8  
On the first Saturday of December, period craftsmen, artisans, and reenactors gather on the grounds of Presidio La Bahia to bring history to life. Browse the trade blankets and sutlers tents for unique Christmas gifts for that special person on your list. *Presidio La Bahia, 217 Loop 71*. 361-645-3752; [presidiolabahia.org](http://presidiolabahia.org)

#### SAN ANTONIO

##### Holiday Boat Caroling

Dec. 5-22  
San Antonio's timeless tradition is a joyous way to usher in the holidays amid the splendor of the city's River Walk. Charter an affordable private caroling boat and bask in the glow of 100,000 Christmas lights. *River Walk, 125 E. Houston St.* 210-227-4262; [thesanantonioriverwalk.com](http://thesanantonioriverwalk.com)

#### SAN ANTONIO

##### A Homemade Christmas at the Alamo

Dec. 7  
Visit the Alamo and explore what the holiday season would have looked like on the Texas frontier. This event includes period crafts for visitors of all ages, living-history demos, and Christmas storytelling. *The Alamo, 300 Alamo Plaza*. 210-225-1391; [thealamo.org](http://thealamo.org)

#### SAN ANTONIO

##### Rock 'n' Roll Marathon

Dec. 7-8  
This popular marathon and half-marathon in the Alamo City includes an expo and live music with headliner Mike Ryan. *Various locations*. [runrocknroll.com](http://runrocknroll.com)

#### WESLACO

##### Weslaco 100 Centennial Celebration

Dec. 6-10  
Celebrate Weslaco's 100th birthday with a variety of events including a parade and downtown festival, and concluding with fireworks at the Weslaco ISD stadium on the evening of Dec. 10. *Downtown Weslaco, Texas Boulevard*. [weslaco100.org](http://weslaco100.org)

## THE DAYTRIPPER'S TOP 5

# Odessa

*Wildcatting for good times in West Texas*

BY CHET GARNER



Odessa isn't just for wildcatters: This town on the West Texas plains booms with more than oil these days. From alien objects to Shakespearean monologues, there isn't much you can't find in Odessa, making for one incredibly weird and wonderful day trip.

### Odessa Meteor Crater

For a Texas-size dose of the extraterrestrial, you'll want to visit the Odessa Meteor Crater Museum, home of the second-largest crater in the U.S. The museum tells the story of a time, 63,000 years ago, when a giant meteor crashed into the earth, creating a crater over 550 feet wide and 100 feet deep. Wind-blown dirt has filled in most of the hole over time, but you can still see the crater's shape from the well-maintained walking paths. 5599 Meteor Crater Road; 432-381-0946; [odessameteorcratermuseum.wordpress.com](http://odessameteorcratermuseum.wordpress.com)

### Permian Basin Hamburger Co.

Right in the middle of Grant Street—Odessa's historic main street—you'll find this stalwart joint that's served greasy burgers since 1978. As you walk through the cafeteria line, pile on the self-serve fries to complement your mouthwatering cheeseburger. And don't miss the pinto beans. 520 N. Grant Ave; 432-333-4971

### Presidential Archives and Leadership Library

Sitting on the campus of the University of Texas Permian Basin, this museum focuses on the U.S. presidency. Explore photos, stories, and artifacts from each commander in chief. You'll see the Marine 1 helicopter seat that was used by every president from Gerald Ford to Barack Obama; campaign buttons; one of LBJ's hats; and even dinnerware from Thomas Jefferson's era. The crown jewel sits behind the museum—the Bush House, the restored home where the Bushes lived in 1948 when George H.W. Bush, Barbara, and little "W" lived in Odessa as the elder future president worked in the oil business. 4919 E. University Blvd. 432-552-2850; [shepperdinstitute.com/presidential-archives](http://shepperdinstitute.com/presidential-archives)

### Globe of the Great Southwest

To trip or not to trip? What an easy question! Grab your tights, sonnets, and British accent and head to Odessa College to see this theater modeled after Shakespeare's renowned Globe Theatre in London. Performances take place year-round, including non-Shakespearean plays if you don't speak iambic pentameter. 2308 Shakespeare Road; 432-335-6400; [odessa.edu/community/GlobeTheateratOdessaCollege](http://odessa.edu/community/GlobeTheateratOdessaCollege)

### Curb Side Bistro

Think of the most delicious food at the State Fair of Texas, combine it with gourmet comfort food, and then you'll have something resembling this place. The Curb Side Bistro started as a food truck, but now hungry patrons come to them. Enjoy dishes like the Homer Simpson Slider, piled high with mac-and-cheese and bacon, or the Buffalo Fries with cheese, chicken, cilantro ranch, and buffalo sauce. For the ultimate dessert, order the Funfetti Fritters (fried cake balls doused in icing). It's definitely not for the carb counters out there, but that's OK—more for the rest of us. 3816 Andrews Highway; 432-272-0959; [facebook.com/curbsidebistro2014](http://facebook.com/curbsidebistro2014)

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

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

Snag your **Free**

# TEXAS STATE TRAVEL KIT



Visit [texashighways.com/2019travel](http://texashighways.com/2019travel)

Plot your destinations with the Official Travel Map, select attractions with the State Travel Guide, and plan for each season with the Texas Highways Events Calendar.

From the publishers of  
**TEXAS**  
HIGHWAYS  
THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

OPEN ROAD | continued from Page 17

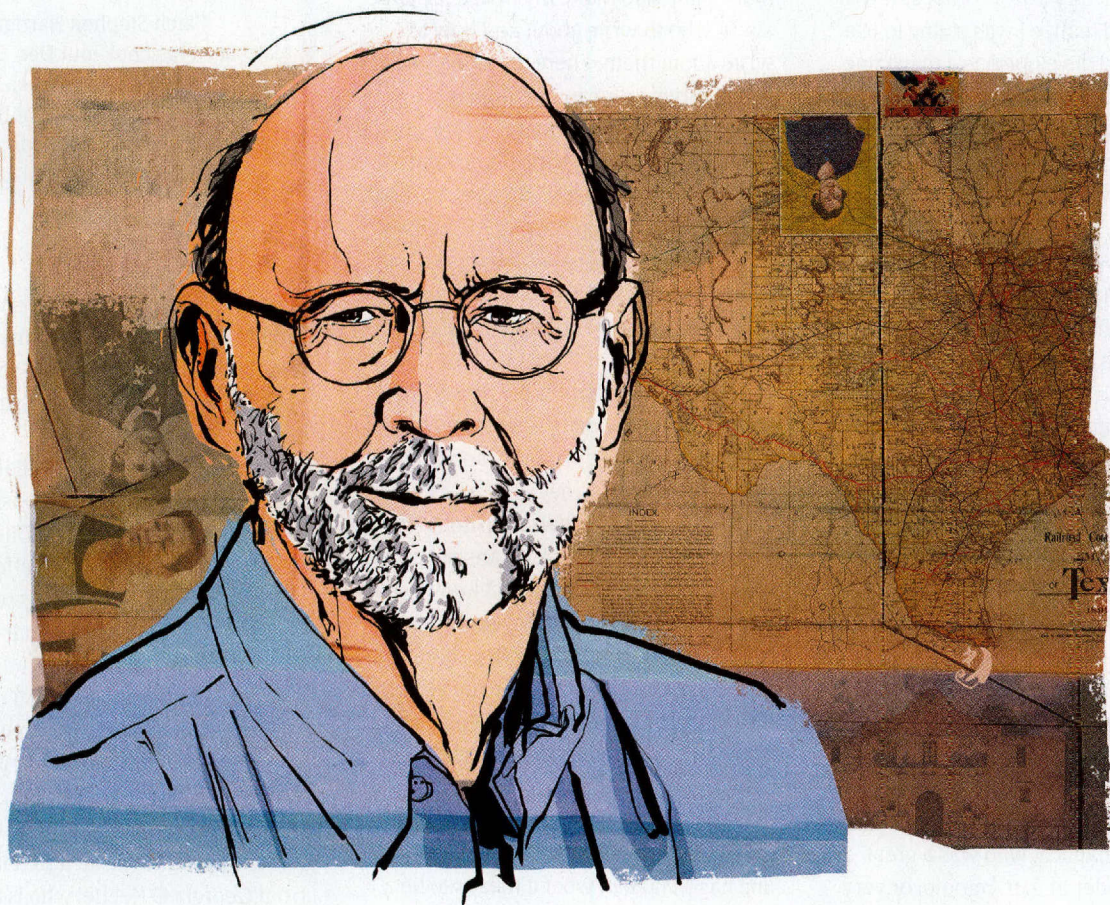
was 10 miles away purchasing Luckenbach, a virtual ghost town (pop. 3). With anti-war protests, student demonstrations, and race riots, people were growing nostalgic for simpler times. Hoping to capitalize, Hondo declared that “everybody’s somebody in Luckenbach.” The town looked both authentic and like a movie set.

Hondo, a folklorist and raconteur, and his business partner, Guich Kooock, an actor who had won a singing-cowboy competition in Hollywood, put on an all-women chili cook-off and a Valentine’s Day hug-in. In 1972, 20,000 people showed up for the Luckenbach World’s Fair. The following year, Jerry Jeff Walker recorded the album *Viva Terlingua* in the dance hall and put a photograph of Hondo and Luckenbach on the cover. “Let’s go to Luckenbach, Texas, with Waylon and Willie and the boys,” Waylon Jennings sang on the 1977 song “Luckenbach, Texas.”

The same people in Austin who derided Fredericksburg for pandering to tourists would drive to Luckenbach hoping to see celebrities. Together, Fredericksburg and Luckenbach created a synergy, a gravitational pull for tourists. One was cool, the other square. Nothing was really what it seemed, but it worked.

I didn’t exactly hate what was happening to Fredericksburg, but I began to feel that something was getting lost. Making everything a fest or *haus* seemed a bit predictable and walking down Main Street, I missed seeing familiar faces. But I left Fredericksburg for good when I went to college so it’s no longer my hometown. My friends who stayed have prospered. They might complain about the tourist traffic, but for the most part, the change has been good for them.

Fredericksburg is now two different places, two different times, but I can sense a current of the past running beneath the surface. Those founding families stayed, a virtue they passed on to their descendants. But as for me, sometimes you can’t go home again. 🐾



# Filling in the Gaps

Writer Stephen Harrigan tackles the breadth of Texas history in *Big Wonderful Thing*

By S. Kirk Walsh

**S**tephen Harrigan has written about Texas for most of his life. He was born in Oklahoma and grew up in Abilene and Corpus Christi before moving to Austin, where he graduated from the University of Texas in 1970. He stuck around and started writing for *Texas Monthly* after it launched in 1973. Over his career, he's written countless long-form articles about his home state, along with six novels (including the bestselling *The Gates of The Alamo* and more recently, *A Friend of Mr. Lincoln*), multiple screenplays, and five nonfiction books. It's not surprising, then, that University of Texas Press tapped Harrigan to write an updated history of Texas. Six years later, in October, Harrigan released *Big Wonderful Thing*, a monumental work at 944 pages. The printer's binding machine broke twice while running off the 35,000

**"You should always have a sense of place and where you are from. I want to make sure my grandchildren have that rootedness."**

copies of this massive tome. "It's not a blueprint for what we should become or how we should change or what we should hold on to," says Harrigan, 71. "It's a story of how we got here."

**Q: How did you begin writing *Big Wonderful Thing*?**

**A:** I just plunged in because I knew if I hesitated or thought too much about it, I would lose my nerve. I had a general idea that I wanted to make this book conversational and not forbidding to a reader and not—for lack of a better phrase—too

much like a history book. As I began writing, I began to realize I was trying to use the skills that I developed as a magazine writer and a novelist in order to make the people come alive and make the place come alive. To the degree that I had a strategy, that was it.

**Q: Did you do a lot of research first?**

**A:** I thought that I would spend a year doing research, but what I quickly found was as soon as I learned about something, I quickly forgot about it. I had to research each chapter and write it before I forgot what I had learned. Again, that's the magazine writer in me: You become an instant expert on something, and then you become an instant idiot about it after you've written.

**Q: What was the most surprising thing that you learned?**

**A:** I think the surprising thing for me as a writer was how much fun it was to write about people, particularly people who readers might not be aware of. For example, Emma Tenayuca, who was a great civil rights leader in San Antonio; or very sad people like Norma McCorvey, who was "Jane Roe" in *Roe vs. Wade*. It surprised me how human it was.

**Q: In the narrative, you talk about "shadow" history. What exactly do you mean by this?**

**A:** I knew going in that there were opportunities available to me, as a 21st-century writer, of understanding the mosaic of Texas history in a way that someone from a hundred years ago—an Anglo writer, like me—would not have thought to address. I'm not saying that I did a perfect job of making that story inclusive and diverse, but it was a priority. I just tried to cast my net as wide as possible in terms of all of the people who played a role in making Texas what it is.

**Q: Was there an existing text of Texas history that you referred to as you were writing?**

**A:** There were a number of books that I kept around more as a kind of timeline

aid. I wanted to make my own decisions about who to write about and how to write about them. There are some sweeping histories of Texas, like Randolph Campbell's *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State*, and James Haley's *Pasionate Nation: The Epic History of Texas*. And, of course, *Lone Star* by T.R. Fehrenbach. I decided to avoid it because it's an imposing book. I didn't want his very intoxicating voice to infiltrate mine.

**Q: What do you think is the most common misconception of Texas, and how do you hope to right it with this book?**

**A:** I'm not on a crusade to tell people what Texas is or tell people what it should be because I don't know those answers. I know what I've written, and I know what I've experienced. I do know that [Texans seem to want] a Texas identity—and it's a very elastic identity. It used to be very specific. It used to be an Anglo identity, and it was a very chauvinistic and one-dimensional view of Texas. When you widen that lens to include everybody who made this state what it is, you realize that everyone has a stake in what it means to be a Texan. Nobody wants to cede that term to somebody else. It belongs to all of us.

**Q: What are the intersections between writing nonfiction history and historical fiction?**

**A:** In both of my historical novels set in Texas [*The Gates of The Alamo* and *Remember Ben Clayton*], there is a lot of serious research involved. My own feeling about historical fiction is that it ought to be reliable. A lot of the research for the novels that I've written about Texas fed into how I researched this book. The way of telling the stories is similar—the pitch varies; you begin in surprising places; you don't begin a chapter where the reader might expect you to; you take detours to interesting people and places.

**Q: How did you come up with the title *Big Wonderful Thing*?**

**A:** Finding the right title is a real tricky thing. We wanted a title that was interesting and personal and a conversation

---

Catch Stephen Harrigan on his book tour Dec. 5 at Wolfmueller's Books in Kerrville and Dec. 6 at Front Street Books in Alpine.  
[bit.ly/BigWonderfulTour](http://bit.ly/BigWonderfulTour)

---

starter. All the time that I was working on this book, I was really thinking hard about what to call it. I would read through Texas poetry and songbooks; everything had been used. At one point, I was ready to throw in the towel and call it *Texas*, but then I made up a list of possible titles and sent it to the publisher. One of them was from this Georgia O'Keeffe quote: "I couldn't believe Texas was real... The same big wonderful thing that oceans and the highest mountains are." I didn't give much thought when I wrote it down. They all loved it. It was a controversial title among my writer friends. They genuinely wanted to talk me out of it because it felt trivial to them. It's easy to say. It's easy to remember. I like the idea that it's a quote from Georgia O'Keeffe, who is a woman.

**Q: As your Texan grandchildren grow older, what would you want them to know about the state of Texas?**

**A:** It doesn't matter where you are from. You should always have a sense of place and where you are from. I want to make sure my grandchildren have that rootedness. Whether they read this book or not, they will see it on the bookshelf, and they will realize their grandfather wrote this book about the place where they are from. They don't quite yet understand all of the dynamics and implications of Texas history, but they'll be taking Texas history in seventh grade, and they'll learn about it—and I can fill in some of the gaps for them. **L**

---

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

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

# VINTAGE

BY TRACES OF TEXAS



## A Snowman for the Ages

FORT WORTH, JAN. 28, 1889

**W**inter in Texas means everything from Christmas tamales to New Year's black-eyed peas, Gulf Coast fishing to chilly northers under cobalt-blue skies. What winter does *not* usually mean in Texas is snow, at least not in appreciable quantities. The white stuff was plentiful, however, on this January day in 1889 for the Fonte, Cheatham, Farris, Phillips, and Wallace families of Fort Worth. They gathered enough snow to build a monumental, if slightly terrifying, snowman at 1004 Lamar St. (now a downtown parking lot). Their achievement caught the attention of an unknown photographer, who captured the wintery moment for posterity. No doubt there was something warm to drink afterward, probably by a fire with an old hound dog sleeping and dreaming of the spring to come and the rabbits he'd chase. **L**

---

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

Photo: Courtesy University of Texas at Arlington Library Special Collections

# *It's More Merry* IN GRAPEVINE



1,400 EVENTS IN 40 DAYS!  
NOW - JANUARY 5

Visit Grapevine, and create Christmas memories  
while experiencing the thrill and joy of the holiday season.

ICE!® at Gaylord Texan Resort ♦ Snowland at Great Wolf Lodge ♦ Santa's Wonderland at Bass Pro Shops  
North Pole Express,® presented by Great Wolf Lodge ♦ Holiday Bricktacular at LEGOLAND® Discovery Center  
Classic Christmas movies & concerts at the Palace Theatre ♦ Christmas Wine Trail ♦ Chic boutiques and well-known stores  
Enormous decorations and Christmas displays ♦ Texas' best Christmas lights - by the millions

**AND A WHOLE LOT MORE!**

Visit us at [GrapevineTexasUSA.com/Christmas](http://GrapevineTexasUSA.com/Christmas) or call 817.410.3185 ♦ #GVChristmas

