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THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

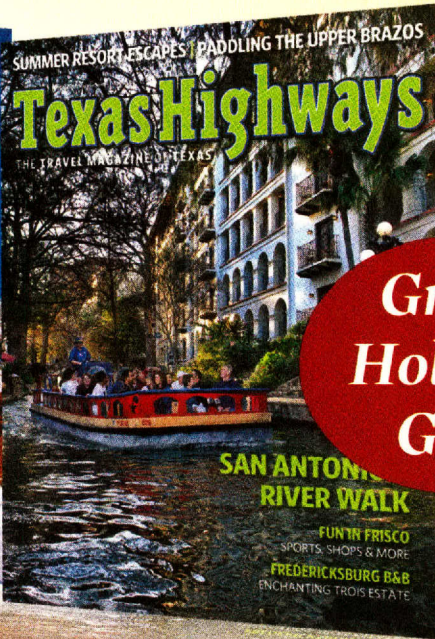
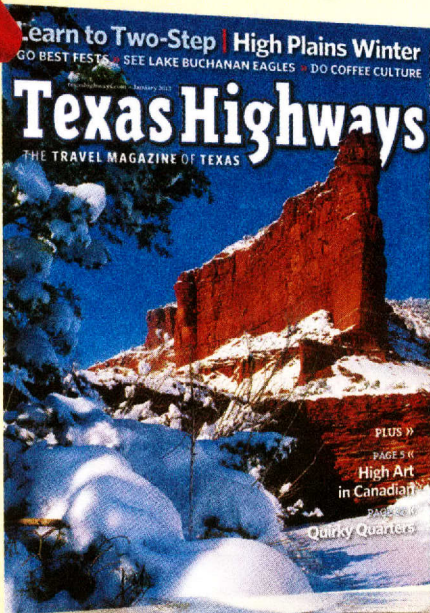
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# Texas Highways

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

## Lost Maples!

PLUS:

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KEVIN STILLMAN

Even though the tours are now focused on environmental issues and habitat preservation, Texas State University's Aquarena Center continues its tourism mission by drawing visitors to San Marcos and the University.

## Back to School: Travel and Learn

*Texas State University, Tarleton State University, and the University of North Texas offer destinations for exploration.*


**A**QUARENA CENTER at Texas State University in San Marcos continues to lure tourists to enjoy its clear spring water and beautiful scenery. Of course, these days, it draws a different category of visitor than it did during its decades as Aquarena Springs, when guests trooped into the submarine theater to marvel as Ralph the Swimming Pig churned his little piggy legs in pursuit of a bottle. But even now that Aquarena is home to the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment, the University continues to offer glass-bottom-boat tours and also educates students about habitat restoration. But the old traditions live on in the memory of Texans: When you review the FAQ at the center's website ([www.aquarena.txstate.edu](http://www.aquarena.txstate.edu)), you'll see that the last question is "Do you still have the Ralph the Swimming Pig Show or the Mermaid Show?"

The Aquarena story is one example of how colleges and universities across Texas build broad community relationships and draw tourists. The football fans are the most obvious example, but there are other important ways that this process works. While strolling around Denton's courthouse square a few months ago, I had the chance to visit UNT on the Square Gallery, operated by the University of North Texas Institute for the Advancement of the Arts. The gallery offers a visually engaging addition to the antiques stores and other shops in the historic district.

Another way that universities draw visitors is through the traditions nurtured by the institution. Not long ago, I had the opportunity to have lunch with Tarleton State University President Dominic Dottavio. As we walked from his office to his home on campus, he took a few minutes to visit with prospective students touring the picturesque campus in a multi-passenger golf cart.

When I asked about the students' concerns, Dottavio pointed out that Tarleton enjoyed a particularly high "conversion rate" for visiting students. In other words, a high percentage of prospective students who visit Tarleton decide to attend the university. And more than 90 percent of them say it's the Tarleton traditions that draw them to the school.

There's no question that establishing traditions—and building individual relationships—creates the bond that draws visitors back to colleges and universities.

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COVER STORY

# 24

## Looking for Bigtooth

Descendants of trees that survived the last ice age, the Bigtooth Maples at Lost Maples State Natural Area gleam each fall with spectacular color. When evening descends, frog symphonies and starry skies join the show.

Text by MELISSA GASKILL



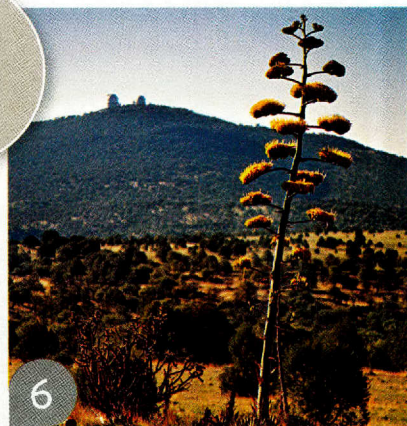
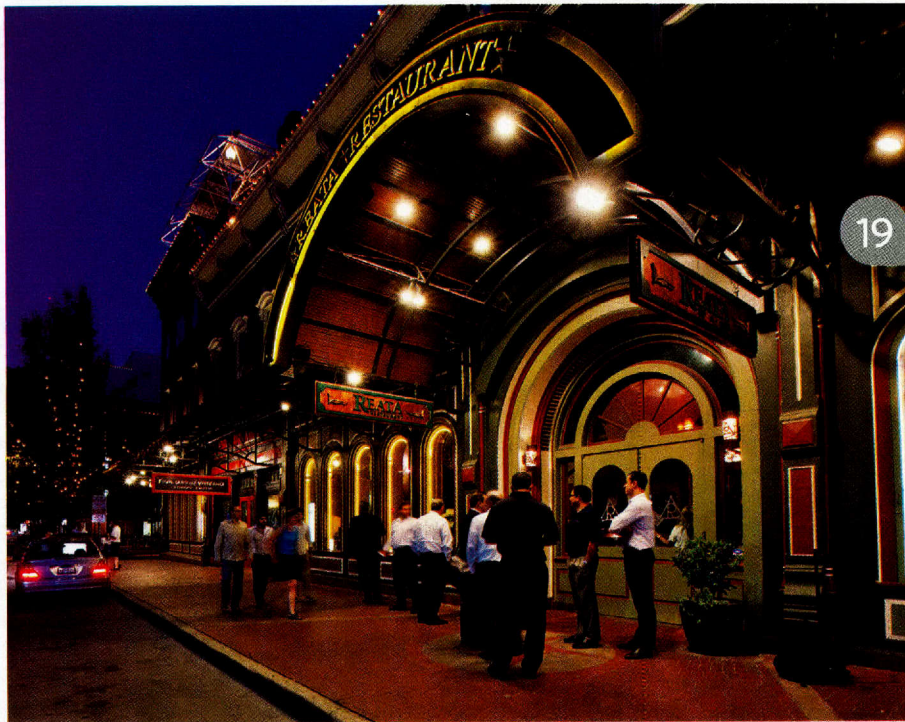
Check out [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com) for more travel information

## features

**32 | Main Street Marshall**  
Anchored by its 1901 courthouse, downtown Marshall attracts visitors with shopping, music, and art with ties to Russia and Uruguay. This month, Marshall celebrates its downtown revival with a Main Street Second Saturday festival.  
Text and photographs by **RANDY MALLORY**

**40 | Pearl of the Concho**  
The Concho River's freshwater pearls symbolize an element of discovery in San Angelo, where a former chicken farm now hosts an artists' colony, a waterlily collection receives worldwide acclaim, and a frontier military post recalls 19th-Century history.  
Text and photographs by **E. DAN KLEPPER**

**48 | Living Witness: Historic Trees of Texas**  
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Text by **RALPH YZNAGA** and **DAMON WAITT**



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Baby pines and kolaches

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**Davis Mountains Scenic Loop**  
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**13 | TH Taste**  
**What's New, Westheimer?**  
In Houston's Lower Westheimer area, chefs reinvent sushi, embrace old-school Tex-Mex, and push the envelope of the craft beer trend. *Plus:* An oil-and-vinegar

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Dining, lodging, and entertainment in Fort Worth's Sundance Square elevate Cowtown to "Wow-town." *Plus:* Two smokin' live-music venues in Linden.

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The gregarious and often whimsical Swiss woodcarver Peter Mansbendel fashioned embellishments for some of Texas' most iconic structures.

**60 | TH Traveler**  
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Boerne, romp in the snow in The Woodlands, plus 127 more fun things to do this month.

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Chet Garner goes to College Station to tour the Texas A&M campus, play a game of dominoes at the Dixie Chicken, and earn a master's degree in fried foods in nearby Snook, a town famous for chicken-fried bacon.

**65 | Window on Texas**  
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Fluorescent lights often wreak havoc on indoor photography. Here's how to fix a green glow by adjusting your camera's white-balance setting.



### About Our Covers

**FRONT:** One of Texas' most popular destinations for viewing fall color, Lost Maples State Natural Area offers year-round camping, hiking, and nature study. **Photo © Joe Lowery**

**BACK:** A rare night-blooming waterlily, native to Africa and Hungary, blooms at the International Waterlily Collection in San Angelo's Civic League Park. Kenneth Landon's lily collection opens daily for viewing. **Photo © E. Dan Klepper**

### Photographic Prints Available

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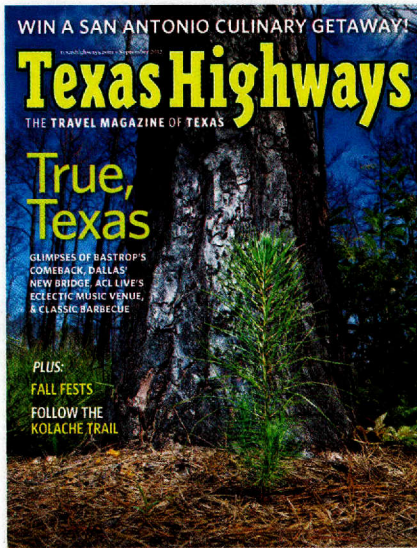
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"We love Chet Garner's Daytripper page. He provides such insightful information. Thanks for making it a regular feature."

—DONNA DeRON,  
Groves

## True Resilience

I was thrilled to see one of our baby pines on the cover of the September issue. I was one of the lucky ones—my house survived that horrific Labor Day fire. However, my whole neighborhood is gone, and we are still working on the recovery. There are also about 30 baby



pinus coming up in my yard, which is amazing. Thank you for continuing to cover the return of Bastrop. People should come visit—downtown is alive with lots of great stores and restaurants, and the park is making a comeback. Suggestion: Bring your family to the park and then make return visits so you can watch as the forest redefines itself over the years.

KAREY LeBLANC, Bastrop

## Lotsa Kolaches

While reading Les Thomas' "Texas Kolache Trail" [*TH Taste*, September], I could almost taste those traditional Czech pastries as my mouth watered. Growing up in the sizable Czech community of Jourdanton, our Sunday-morning breakfasts were kolaches baked by my mother the day before. Besides the usual varieties, mom also baked "Zelniky," which she made by frying shredded cabbage until it turned brown. She added butter, sugar, cinnamon, and a little pepper, and baked it in the usual dough with a brown-sugar topping.

JOHN NETARDUS, Slidell, Louisiana

I didn't really care for kolaches until I had one from Zamykal Gourmet Kolaches (979/364-2386) in Calvert. Zamykal's is run by the cutest twin sisters who have adapted their grandmother's recipe. Not

only do they serve some 30 flavors of awesome kolaches, but they sing for you, as well. Very entertaining.

JO FOWLKES, Waco

I've had kolaches from all of the featured bakeries and then some. Here in San Marcos, we have a gem near the Texas State University campus—Dos Gatos Kolache Bakery (512/392-1444), owned by two brothers named Katz. Their kolaches are the best I've ever had.

JIM WEBER,  
San Marcos

More  
TH Talk at [www.texashighways.com/talk](http://www.texashighways.com/talk)

The best bakery in West is Gerik's Ole' Czech Bakery (254/826-3327). It's where the locals meet.

TERRY TIMMONS, Abbott

## Brush with History

I read with great interest about Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument in Dale Weisman's article, "Our Paleo Past" [September]. Years ago, while my wife was attending Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, we lived in the married-housing section. A couple lived next door to us along with their 98-year-old grandmother. She was a delightful character with lots of charisma. She had many stories about the past, calling a dugout home and other hardships in general. Many stories were focused on her father, how he survived, and the many people who admired him. She said, finally, "Maybe you've heard of him; his name was Allie Bates." And indeed I had!

PHILIE M. HINSON, Midland

## TH READER RECOMMENDATION

## Delicious Del Norte

FOUR OF US spent the weekend at Cleburne State Park and decided to venture to Del Norte Tacos in Godley [*TH Taste*, May]. Our orders included that day's special of smoked barbecue pork ribs, the beef fajita burrito, the smoked-chicken enchiladas, and the chile relleno stuffed with smoked chipotle pork. As the sign says out front, it is definitely "Worth Stoppin' For."

BRAD ROGERS, Ding Dong

Del Norte Tacos is at 101 E. Hwy. 171, 817/389-2451; [www.delnortetacos.com](http://www.delnortetacos.com). More on Cleburne State Park at [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us).

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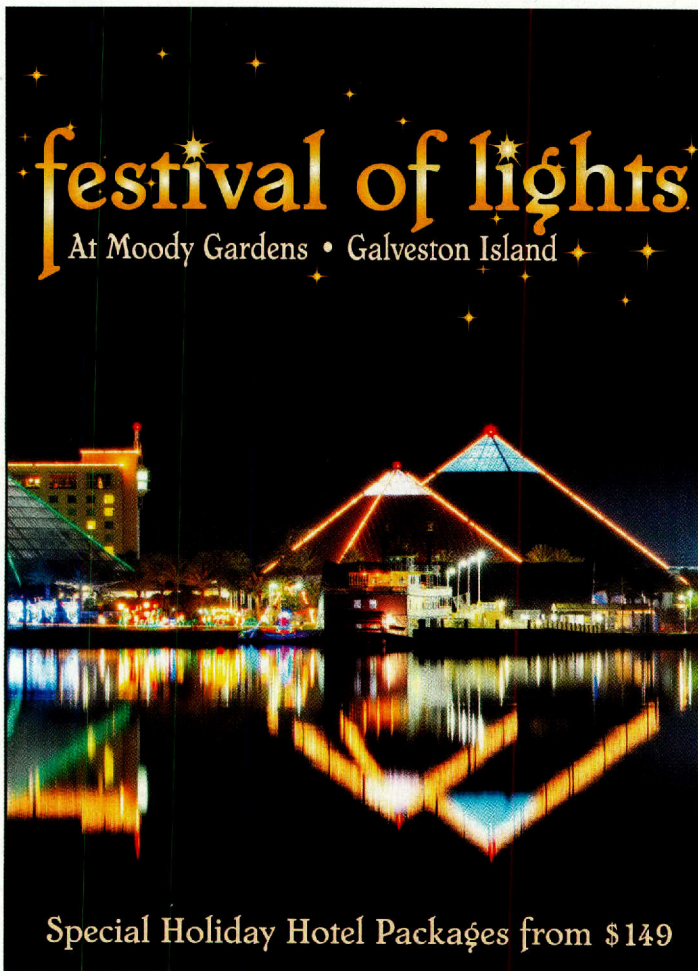
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12

# Postcards

📍 INSIDE: A RESTAURANT RENAISSANCE IN HOUSTON...13 FORT WORTH'S SUNDANCE SQUARE ...19



**TH tip**

Allow at least two hours to drive the loop

## Davis Mountains Scenic Loop

A 75-mile drive on the state's highest highway Text by **LARRY MCGINNIS**

**F**ROM A DISTANCE, WEST TEXAS' Davis Mountains float above the Chihuahuan Desert like a smoky mirage. Formed millions of years ago by volcanic activity, they rise up in green slopes punctuated by pine and oak trees, carpets of golden grasslands that wander through the canyons, and jumbles of rocky spires and escalating peaks. They are—at

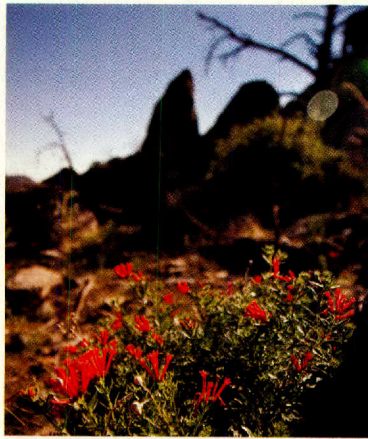
more than 8,000 feet—a dramatic contrast to the flatness of the surrounding desert, where the sun digs up secrets and a dark, starry night covers them up again.

Last November, my wife, Lindy, and I decided to explore this inviting pocket of the Trans-Pecos. With lodging secured in the bucolic town of Fort Davis, we set aside an afternoon to meander the Davis

Mountains Scenic Loop, a 75-mile stretch of Texas 118 and Texas 166 that is the loftiest public highway in the state, and certainly among the most scenic.

We drove out of Fort Davis on Texas 118 on the north end of town

**A leisurely drive on the 75-mile Davis Mountains Scenic Loop reveals stunning West Texas vistas.**



and turned west into Limpia Canyon. Our first stop was three miles ahead at Davis Mountains State Park, a rugged and lovely 2,700-acre park known for its hiking and equestrian trails and dramatic views of the 19th-Century military

Amid the Scenic Loop's rocky outcroppings, stands of grasses and wildflowers add pops of color.

We stopped to marvel at the stunning view of a wide, green valley hemmed in by a horizon full of mountains.

post, now a National Historic Site, that gives the town its name. We followed the park's main road through groves of gray oaks, Emory oaks, and junipers shading a string of picnic spots and campsites, and pulled into the parking lot of the park's historic Indian Lodge, built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Here, at the lodge's Black Bear Restaurant, we unfolded our map to plan our day.

Fortified by pancakes and under close supervision by a family of javelina, we

left the state park and turned north onto Texas 118, passing mountainside homes and historic ranches as we climbed higher and higher.

After about 10 miles, we stopped at a picnic turnout at Dead Man's Canyon to marvel at the stunning view of a wide, green valley hemmed in by a horizon full of mountains. According to the Fort Davis Historical Society, Dead Man's Canyon

got its name from an incident back in the 1880s, when the snow-covered body of a young man named Horace Powe was found propped against a boulder with 11 bullet holes in him.

Spur 78 turns off Texas 118 about a mile later and leads to the McDonald Observatory, a research unit of the University of Texas and one of the world's leading centers for astronomical study. We stopped

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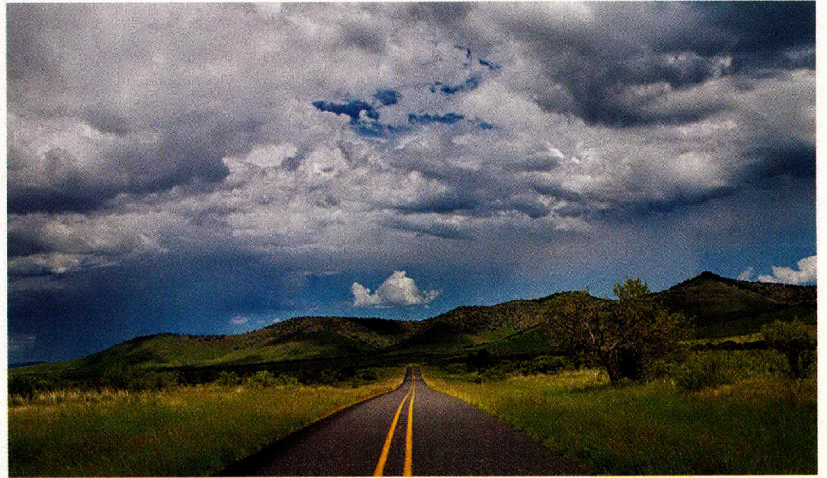
PHOTO: © E. DAN KLEPPER

# Postcards

at the visitors center for a self-guided tour brochure that led us to the top of Mount Locke for a close-up look at some of the most powerful telescopes on the planet. From our vantage point more than 6,700 feet above sea level, Texas unfolded in indescribable beauty. (Nightly Star Parties offer visitors the chance to look at stars and galaxies through these high-powered scopes, and we returned later that night for yet another eye-opening experience.)

With daylight still in our favor, we continued on Texas 118 and disappeared deeper into the isolation of the mountains. Out here there are no billboards, no honking cars, no gas stations. Naturalists consider the entire Davis Mountains range a “sky island” because many of the plants and animals found here—pinyon pines and madrones, shorthorn lizards and silver-haired bats, for example—rarely appear elsewhere in Texas.

We stopped at Madera Canyon eight miles later for a break at the Lawrence E.



Wood Picnic Area, a roadside park surrounded by swaying grasses and such high-elevation trees as pinyons, alligator junipers, and ponderosa pines. The only sounds we heard were the gusts of the wind and the calls of irascible scrub jays. All around us were 33,000 acres of wilderness

protected by the Nature Conservancy’s Davis Mountains Preserve. We took a short walk on the Madera Canyon Trail for a backcountry peek into remote woodlands and meadows.

**Gas up your car and bring snacks and water; the Loop offers an experience of splendid isolation.**

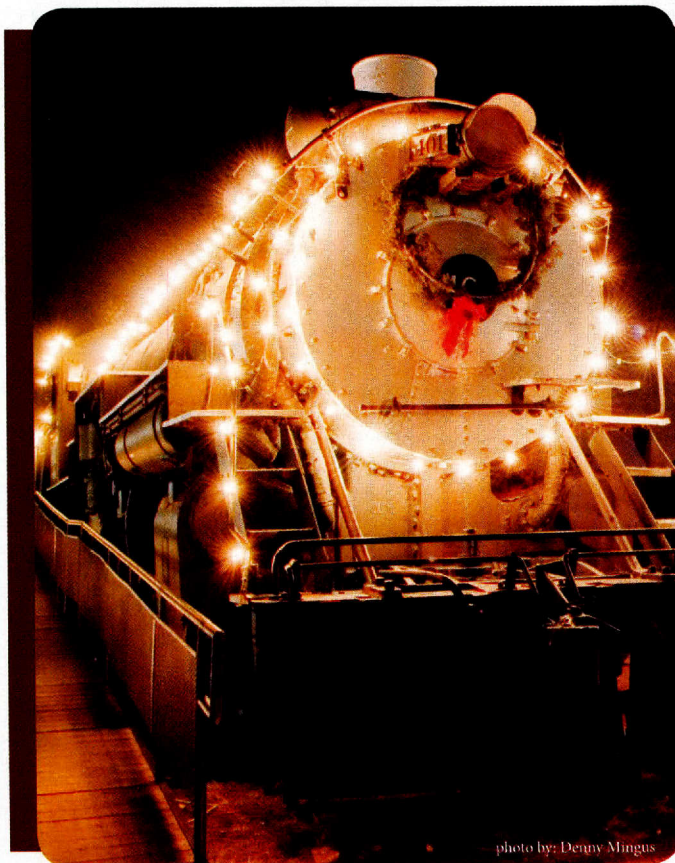


photo by: Denny Mingus

## *This Holiday Season Experience a Pioneer Christmas at the Ranch*

Grab a cup of hot cider and stroll back in time at the National Ranching Heritage Center’s annual Candlelight at the Ranch event in Lubbock, Texas. The celebration, set for December 7-8, offers visitors a glimpse into the pioneer Christmas. Each of the center’s historic homes will feature different scenes from holidays past.

For more information about this and other holiday festivities, access the Visit Lubbock mobile website from your smartphone or tablet.

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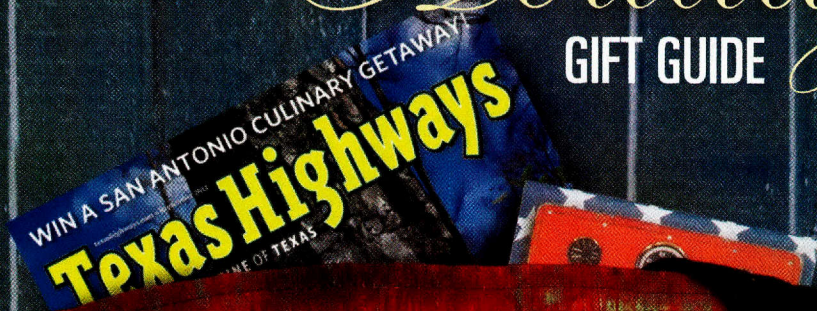


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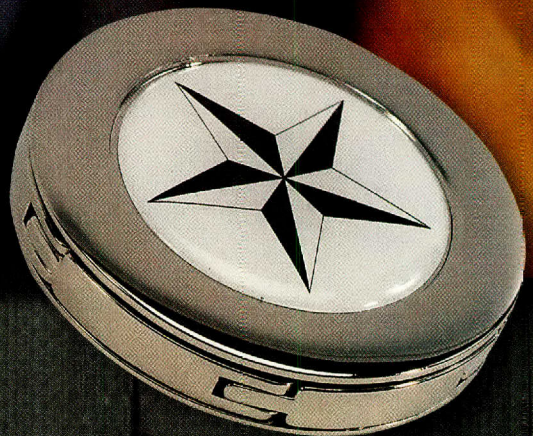


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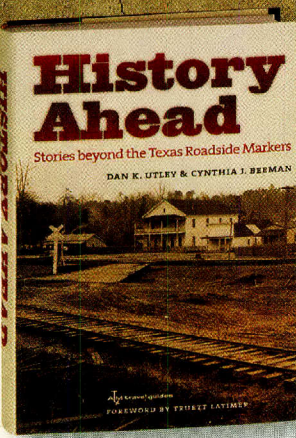




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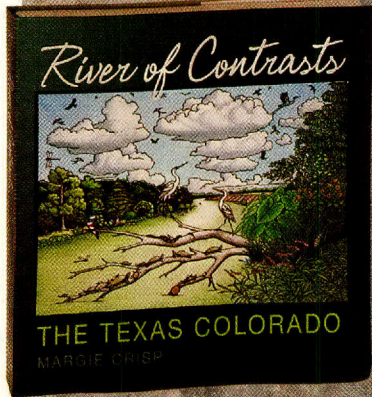
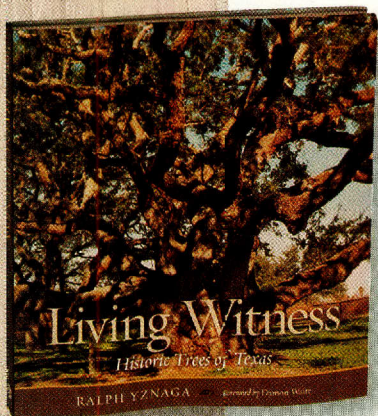
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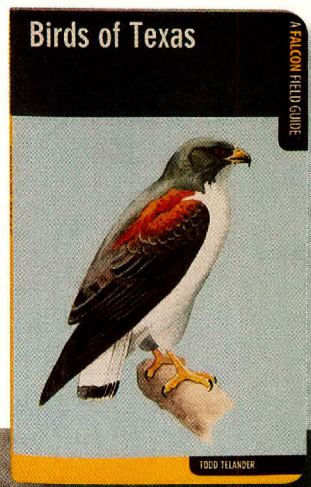
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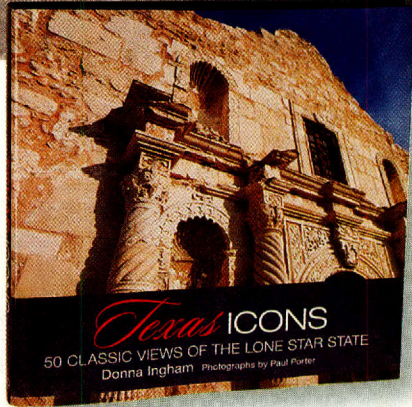


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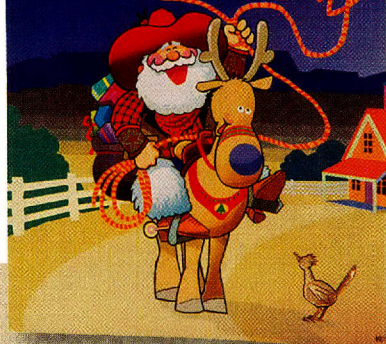
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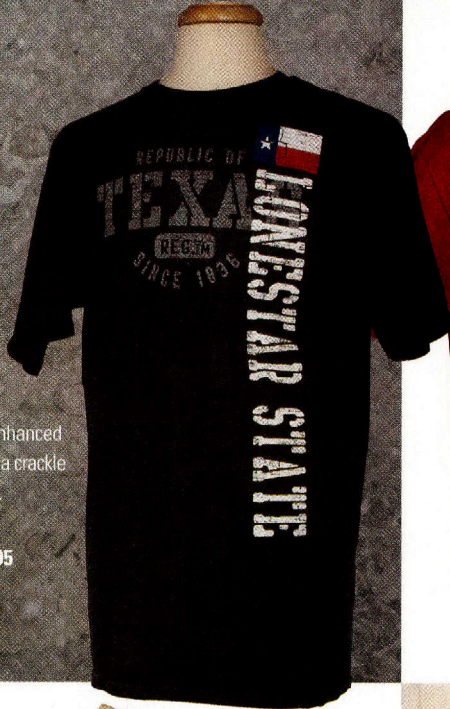


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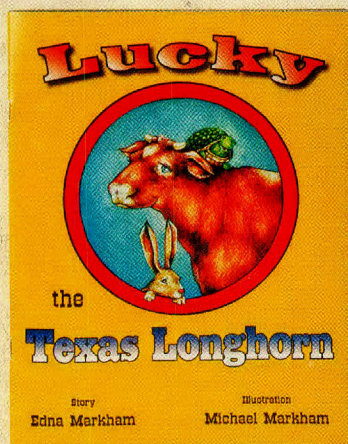
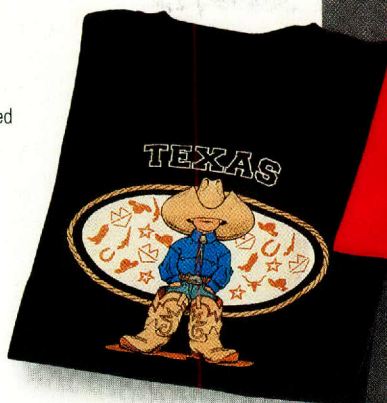
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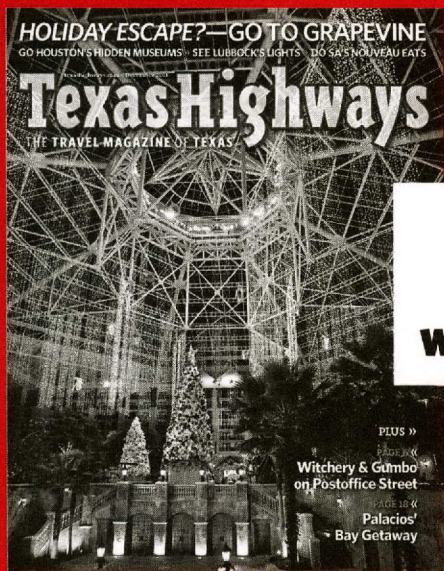
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# Made in Texas

*Inventions and innovations  
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## **SINCE 1968, SAN ANTONIO'S INSTITUTE OF TEXAN**

Cultures has shared the state's rich ethnic and cultural heritage. Through September 29, 2013, an exhibition called *Made in Texas* features an array of inventions ranging from food to technology that originated in the Lone Star State. Curator Sarah Gould has spent many months poring over books and gathering information from "inventors, scientists, and people who make stuff."

San Antonio alone is the birthplace of Pace Picante sauce, a gravity-defying space toilet and space treadmill employed by NASA, the extra-dense Whitmore Whacker baseball bat, and Sani-fresh soap dispensers mounted on restroom walls across the country. Ultima, the first fantasy role-playing computer game series, was developed in Austin; and the world-renowned Gabbanelli accordions hail from Houston.

In Corsicana during the oil boom of the late 19th Century, ranch cook Lyman T. Davis sold five-cent bowls of chili from the back of his wagon; the tasty canned version, called Wolf Brand Chili, hit stores in the 1920s. The sweet soda known as Dr



**For more than 100 years, the Washington's Birthday Celebration in Laredo has highlighted ornate, handmade pageant gowns.**



Pepper bubbled out of Waco for the first time in 1885. During the Great Depression, fried corn treats coined Fritos were first served in a San Antonio confectionary. Big Red, the soda ubiquitous at Southern celebrations, came out of Waco and was originally called Sun Tang Red Cream Soda.

**Gianfranco "John" Gabbanelli came to Houston in 1961 to repair and tune Italian-made accordions and soon developed his own company.**

The exhibit doesn't end with the appetizing. Other displays recount the histories behind a handmade debutante pageant dress worn to a Laredo celebration of George Washington's birthday; a sketch, mold, wax casting, and finished piece of James Avery Jewelry; a basket made from deer antlers; a handmade saddle and set of spurs; and a hand-carved wooden sculpture of Texas Governor Ann Richards.

Texas innovations also affect the world of medicine. In 1988, radiologist Julio Palmaz with the UT Health Science Center in San Antonio received a patent for a heart stent now used in millions of patients to repair clogged arteries. Another San Antonio doctor, Alvin Marx, helped millions of tennis-elbow sufferers with his ACE bandage.

"You will see a lowrider bicycle next to a hand-tooled leather saddle, a collection of Dr Pepper bottles next to a toilet designed for use in outer space, and a basket made of deer antlers next to a lavish ball gown," Gould says.

Call 210/458-2300; [www.texancultures.com](http://www.texancultures.com). —Elena Watts

Just past the picnic area, the road makes a sharp, blind curve to the right. Off in the distance, beyond the main gate to the Preserve, is the impressive north face of Mount Livermore, the highest summit of the Davis range. We could clearly see Baldy Peak, the highest point at 8,378 feet.

The Loop cuts through mountain

gaps and windswept valleys and makes a breathtaking drop down into a vast plain, where it turns left onto Texas 166 for a long arch some 46 miles back to Fort Davis. The highway gradually slopes upward through a wide swath of grasses and junipers, then continues dead-on toward the 7,686-foot Sawtooth Mountain. Its

distinctive precipice reminded us of broken teeth in a saw blade. On the right is the Rockpile, a jumble of gray stones the size of airplane hangars.

Some eight miles from the junction of Texas 166 and 118, the Loop works its way into a mountain gap called Broke Tank Draw and climbs to the top of H.O. Hill.

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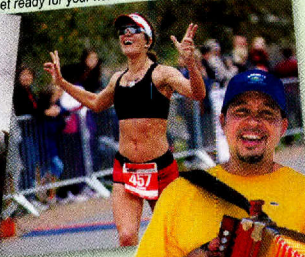
Josh Abbott Band plays the Cajun Catfish Festival



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Here, a gate marks the entrance to a private ranch. This spot denotes the drainage divide between the Pecos River and the Rio Grande.

We descended into still another canyon and stopped to rest at a remote picnic spot, momentarily transfixed by a lizard

From our vantage point more than 6,700 feet above sea level, Texas unfolded in indescribable beauty.

sunning himself on a rock and a hawk riding the thermals overhead. And then we followed the Loop out of the mountains into a savannah of grasses and scrub brush, finding ourselves once again in the Chihuahuan Desert.

We rolled with Texas 166 as it bent east and eventually arrived at Point of Rocks, a cluster of tremendous boulders that shelter

The telescope domes of the McDonald Observatory appear in the distance.

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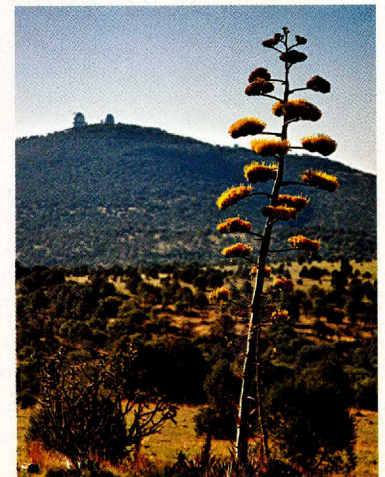


PHOTO: © E. DAN KLEPPER



south side just past Delores Mountain.

Engineers broke ground on the first stretch of the Loop on January 9, 1932, and opened the road on June 28, 1947. Although it took them 15 years to finish the project, Lindy and I enjoyed their beautiful road in four hours.

I folded up our map and put it in the glove compartment. We'll need it for the next time we drive the Davis Mountains Scenic Loop. **TH**

[See next page for more Postcards ☺]



## Davis Mountains Area

For information about the Davis Mountains Scenic Loop, Davis Mountains State Park, Indian Lodge State Park, the Davis Mountains Preserve, Fort Davis National Historic Site, and the McDonald Observatory—and information about visiting Fort Davis—call the Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce, 800/524-3015; [www.fortdavis.com](http://www.fortdavis.com).

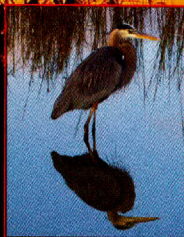
a few picnic tables. Earlier that day, Lindy and I had stopped at the Stone Village Market in Fort Davis to pick up deli sandwiches, and we hauled them out here for a picnic while we searched through binoculars for pronghorn sheep that sometimes graze nearby.

The highway moves out onto the treeless slope of Cienega Flat and gradually drops down to join Texas 17 for the return to Fort Davis, entering town on the Cottonwoods beside Limpia Creek, which runs through Davis Mountains State Park, turn golden in the fall.

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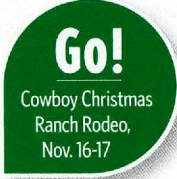


## Vernon's Music Legacy

*Rocking (and more) on the Red River*

**THE NORTH TEXAS TOWN OF VERNON BOASTS A** musical background of jazz, rock, and country that begins with the earliest recorded music.

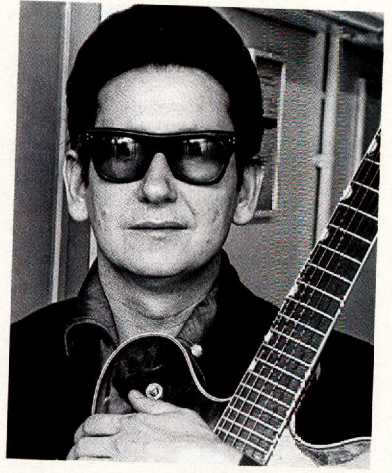
One-time resident Eck Robertson's 1922 fiddle songs comprised some of the world's first commercially available country music records. At the same time, Vernon jazz trombonist and vocalist Jack Teagarden was beginning a career that would last for more than 40 years. A Teagarden museum is currently under construction to house a massive collection of memorabilia related to the artist (see [www.teagardenmuseum.com](http://www.teagardenmuseum.com)). In the 1950s, Vernon native Roy Orbison, who began his career singing on local radio station KVWC, took his songs to the top of the charts in a career that was still going strong upon his death in 1988. And in 1966, Vernon resident Kay Adams was named Top New Female Vocalist at the very first Academy of Country Music Awards.



But Vernon isn't content to rest on its musical laurels. For the last 10 years, the Cotton Boll, a venue on the edge of town, has hosted music on Saturday nights from regional and national bands, as well as local acts like Under The Influence, Chris Clerihew, Tejas Heat, and Blaine Gillespie & Shot Full of Holes.

For information about Vernon, call the Vernon Chamber of Commerce, 940/552-2564; [www.vernontexas.net](http://www.vernontexas.net). For details about the Cotton Boll, including directions and a show schedule, see [www.facebook.com/thecottonboll](http://www.facebook.com/thecottonboll).

—Stephen Ray



**Born in Vernon in 1936, Roy Orbison worked in the Texas oilfields before beginning a music career.**

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## What's New, Westheimer?

*The new dining scene on one of Houston's most colorful byways*

Text by **JUNE NAYLOR**

**Underbelly's Chef Chris Shepherd describes Houston as "the most dynamic culinary destination in the United States," and he aims to prove it.**

**I**'VE MAINTAINED FOR SOME TIME THAT HOUSTON has grown into one of the nation's most interesting food cities. And so it was a pleasant surprise to discover on a recent trip that a handful of America's top culinary talents now strut their stuff within a couple of blocks from each other, on a stretch of Westheimer Road once known for its thrift stores, tattoo parlors, and smoke shops.

But a restaurant renaissance in this part of the Montrose neighborhood makes sense, considering that James Beard-nominee Hugo Ortega began forging the path for neighborhood appeal years ago with his elegant interior Mexican restaurant, Hugo's. Ortega, who recently released his first cookbook, *Street Food of Mexico*, proved that this bend of Westheimer could draw crowds.

Spending a weekend exploring the new synergy on Lower Westheimer, I soon realized I'd have to spend days to cover it all. So I focused on four restaurants whose chefs are breaking rules and expanding Houston's already adventurous palate.

With his new venture Underbelly, Chris Shepherd, one of the city's most imaginative (and gregarious) chefs, has created a place where he can feature the kind of homegrown food that he's come to love in the Houston area. Shepherd brings in honey, citrus, vegetables, herbs, dairy, and fish from local providers, and—after buying whole pigs and sides of beef from area ranchers—he breaks them down in the butcher shop adjacent to the kitchen.



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# Taste

In the former Tower Theater building on Westheimer, El Real serves old-school Tex-Mex with a side of vintage spaghetti Westerns.

Shepherd finds inspiration from myriad ethnic markets and restaurants to fashion what he calls “new American Creole” cuisine, blending influences from divergent cultures. The menu changes daily, but the assortment of dishes I found on one evening included grilled Wagyu satay with a field-pea hummus (melding Asian, Middle Eastern, and Southern ideas), seared scamp grouper with braised leeks and Kabocha squash broth (mixing French and Japanese influences), and roasted goat with tomatoes, chiles, and sweet potato greens (combining Southern flavors with hints of northern Mexico).

An antique plow and a wall of preserves and pickled vegetables fit into the decor, and two communal tables add familiarity to the mood. I was especially taken with Shepherd’s friendly rapport with cooks working the open kitchen, expediting dishes while keeping an eye trained on the dining room.

When Shepherd and his business partners acquired the space for Underbelly, they allocated half of the building for a gastropub that would share the butcher shop. This sister restaurant, Hay Merchant, boasts one of the city’s largest selections of craft beers and a menu that reaches far beyond what’s usually found in a bar.

Strange though it sounds, the crispy pig



A bite into the puffy tacos—one filled with picadillo (spicy ground beef) and another with smoked chicken—took me back to my childhood.

ears could be one of the finest nibbles to come along in ages. Thin enough to break into pieces—and ideal when accompanied by a pint of Buffalo Bayou Brewing 1836, a copper ale—these chips bear a simple coating of sugar and ground cayenne. I swooned over a plate of buttermilk waffles slathered in a peppery molasses butter and crowned with a handful of crunchy chicken livers, and briefly entertained



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## Taste

Anything's possible, from New Orleans-style crab balls with spicy corn relish to mussels steamed with garlic, onion, fennel, and smoked tomatoes.



Hay Merchant offers nearly 80 beers on tap and a food menu that focuses on locally sourced meats and vegetables.

and competitor on the Food Network's "Next Iron Chef," wins fans aplenty with Reef, his seafood restaurant in Houston's Midtown.

Walsh, a longtime dining critic and James Beard Award-winning cookbook author, persuaded Caswell to indulge their shared passion for vintage Tex-Mex.

They're doing just that in the renovated Tower Theater, keeping the movie marquee out front in pristine condition and projecting 1940s Westerns on a wall of the restaurant.

A bite into the puffy tacos—one filled with picadillo (spicy ground beef) and another with smoked chicken—took me back to my first childhood taste of those iconic goodies. The bestseller is the cheese enchiladas smothered in chili con carne and

topped with a fried egg, but my favorite snack in the place is the gooey queso flameado, flecked with bits of spicy chorizo and set aflame tableside by the server.

Take time to enjoy this foursome, you'll come away with a good idea of the new culinary treasures found on this ever-evolving stretch of Houston. **TH**

### Dining Lower Westheimer

**Underbelly**, 1100 Westheimer Rd., 713/528-9800; [www.underbellyhouston.com](http://www.underbellyhouston.com).

**Hay Merchant**, 1100 Westheimer Rd., 713/528-9805; [www.haymerchant.com](http://www.haymerchant.com).

**Uchi**, 904 Westheimer Rd., 713/522-4808; [uchirestaurants.com](http://uchirestaurants.com).

**El Real**, 1201 Westheimer Rd., 713/524-1201; [elrealtexmex.com](http://elrealtexmex.com).



ordering a plate of the Korean-style chicken wings, which are a hit with the 30-something clientele.

Because the beer options change so frequently (Hay Merchant offers nearly 80 on tap), so do Chef Antoine Ware's menu options. Anything's possible, he tells me, from New Orleans-style crab balls with spicy corn relish to mussels steamed in India Pale Ale with garlic, onion, fennel, and smoked tomatoes.

Less than a block east, in a renovated space that for decades housed Felix's Mexican Restaurant, Austin superstar chef Tyson Cole recently opened the second location of his wildly successful restaurant Uchi. Cole and *chef de cuisine* Kaz Edwards now treat denizens of Lower Westheimer to Uchi's Japanese-inspired food, playing mad scientist with such

**Uchi, the Austin restaurant that made Chef Tyson Cole famous, recently opened a second location in Houston.**



combinations as smoked baby yellowtail with yuca root crisps, buttery Marcona almonds, Asian pear, and garlic brittle; or slices of big-eye tuna with goat cheese, pumpkin seed oil, and apple.

Sampling one of the ever-evolving Omakase menus—that's 10 courses, chosen by the chef—I particularly enjoyed

the blast of sweet, sour, spicy, and salty flavors in a dish called the Suzuki ringo, which is a combination of grilled loup de mer (a kind of sea bass) with green apple, citrus-chile paste, and Vietnamese fish sauce. For a meaty interlude, I found the perfect answer in a juicy slice of pork jowl with Brussels sprout kimchee, romaine lettuce, and a lush crème fraîche.

Sitting at the sushi bar, I watched the action in the open kitchen. But to sit in a cozy booth along one wall would be a way to enjoy the parade of dishes with someone special in an intimate setting, away from the hubbub. Red-blossom wallpaper, warm lighting, and blonde woods give Uchi a welcoming sophistication.

Across the street from these dining spots, El Real celebrates a distinctly old-school brand of Tex-Mex fare. The concept comes from two highly decorated culinary types: chef Bryan Caswell and journalist/author Robb Walsh. Caswell, a *Food & Wine* Best New Chef in 2009

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# Deliciously Different

*Waco's Dr Pepper Museum celebrates 75 years of Big Red*

**AS FANS OF BOTH DR PEPPER AND Big Red sodas,** my husband and I recently headed to Waco to see the Big Red 75th anniversary exhibit at the Dr Pepper Museum and Free Enterprise Institute.

Big Red, like Dr Pepper, originated in Waco. It was developed in 1937 when entrepreneurs Grover Thomsen and father-and-son team Robert H. and Robert T. Roark began mixing flavoring extracts for soft drinks at the Perfection Barber and Beauty Supply Co. just a block away from the Dr Pepper Bottling Company.

Some people have compared the flavor to bubble gum or strawberry. (To me, it tastes like pink cotton candy.) In reality, it's a blend of three extracts: lemon, orange, and vanilla. But as one poster in the exhibit states, "It just tastes Red."

When the soft drink was in its experimental stages, though, it was green. Known as Sun Tang Red Cream Soda when it hit the market, the drink officially became Big Red in 1969.

The exhibit includes production equipment, bottles, cans, advertising posters, and promotional items. Interactive displays include a smell station and a lighted display showing how Big Red expanded to markets throughout the country. Other displays highlight the rest of the Big Red family, including Nu Grape and Big Jak, the company's 2005 entry into the energy drink market.

See the Big Red 75th anniversary exhibit through spring 2013. Call 254/757-1025; [www.drpeppermuseum.com](http://www.drpeppermuseum.com).

—Julie Stratton

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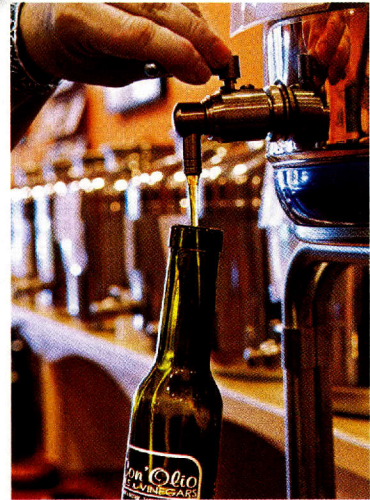
# An Oil and Vinegar Revolution

*Austin's Con' Olio features a tasting bar and classes*

**I HAD NEVER GIVEN MUCH THOUGHT TO VINEGAR** until recently, when a friend brought an especially tasty salad to a potluck and revealed her secret ingredient: a dressing made with fig-infused balsamic vinegar from Con' Olio, an Austin shop and vinegar-and-olive-oil tasting bar. Complex, sweet, and almost syrupy in texture—and absent that acerbic “let’s dye-some-Easter-eggs” aroma, this elixir I could imagine sipping from a spoon.

So, at a balsamic tasting class a few weeks later at Con' Olio's downtown location (the original, now three years old, is in north Austin), I wasn't surprised to begin the evening with a sampling of white and red vinegars, which co-owner Jeff Conarko advised us to study like wine. After a short primer on balsamic vinegar's history and uses (both culinary and medicinal!), we enjoyed dishes enlivened by different vinegars, including an heirloom tomato salad, a cheese plate, and a dessert of berries drizzled with honey and ginger balsamic.

Jeff and his wife, Tabatha, import Con' Olio's vinegars from a single source in Modena, Italy, where they're made according to a trademarked, 1,000-year-old process. Olive oils come from throughout the world, and each has a different flavor profile, ranging from grassy and peppery to buttery and fruity. Stainless-steel containers with spigots allow you to taste each one—an eye-opening culinary experience that will inform your future kitchen adventures. See [www.conolios.com](http://www.conolios.com). —Lori Moffatt



Small bottles of olive oil or balsamic vinegar make great holiday gifts.

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FUN FINDS ALONG THE ROAD



## One-Stop Weekend

*Fort Worth's Sundance Square has everything you need for a getaway*

Text by **JUNE NAYLOR**

I'M HARD-PRESSED TO NAME A GETAWAY MORE appealing than one in which I don't need wheels. Pointing my car about three miles from my Fort Worth home, I soon parked in a free Sundance Square garage and pocketed my keys for a couple of days. Escape came that easily.

While ambling around Sundance Square, the restored, gussied-up 35-block section of downtown Cowtown, I took my time to explore the neighborhood—and found plenty of folks from around the state and from England, France, and Japan doing the same. On previous visits, the hours had flown past as I marveled at the exceptional Western art collections at the Sid Richardson Museum, considered a stylish pair of cowboy boots at Leddy's Ranch, mooned over a string of pearls at Haltom's Jewelers, sipped a few craft beers on the patio of the Flying Saucer, viewed one of several first-run movies, and ate to my heart's content. I ran out of time before singing along at a piano bar, kicking back in a stylish jazz lounge, enjoying a massage, or taking in a symphony concert at Bass Performance Hall.

With so much to do here, I realized I could while away a sizable chunk of a weekend on just one corner of Sundance Square. A handsome, red-brick building at the intersection

### TH tip

Sundance Square parking is free on evenings and weekends

After enjoying the southwestern menu at Reata Restaurant at Fort Worth's Sundance Square, step next door to Four Day Weekend to laugh off the calories.



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The rooftop bar and dining patio at Reata Restaurant provide a place to relax and gaze out over Sundance Square and the Fort Worth skyline.

of Houston and Third streets held at least half of the diversions I'd need for a weekend of eating, drinking, laughing, and sleeping.

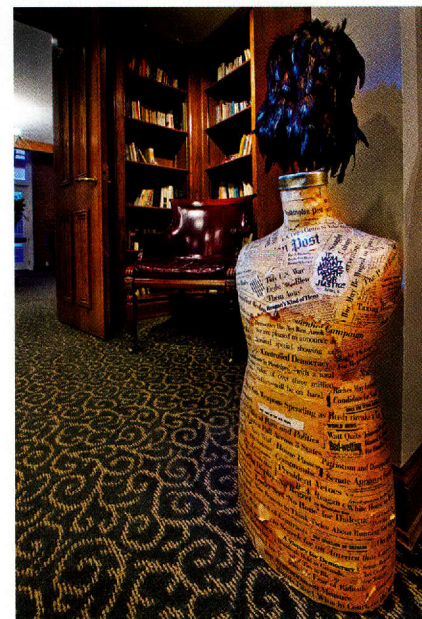
After checking in at Etta's Place, a 10-suite urban inn that opened in 1996 in the landmark building originally known as the Caravan of Dreams Performing Arts Center, I began plotting my explorations. The inn itself—a four-story lodging with a library, a parlor, and a dining room—is filled with comfortable furniture and eclectic artworks that convey the feel of large, welcoming home. Though erected in the 1980s, the building was fashioned to look a century old, as does much of Sundance Square.

Named for Etta Place, a paramour of legendary outlaw Harry Longabaugh, aka the Sundance Kid, the inn provided the perfect launching pad for the weekend's wanderings. Around the corner from the inn's

door is the entrance to Reata Restaurant—credited with pioneering a gastronomic concept now known as cowboy cuisine. Reata occupies most of the space initially used by the now-defunct Caravan of Dreams.

Reata came to Sundance Square after its original downtown location was destroyed by a tornado in March 2000. Spreading over 22,000 square feet, Reata

**Etta's Place's whimsical decor gives the 10-suite inn a homey feel.**



is a destination in its own right, thanks to scads of impressive Western regalia, cowboy artwork, and fancy ranch-inspired decor adorning spaces on the basement, first-floor, and rooftop levels.

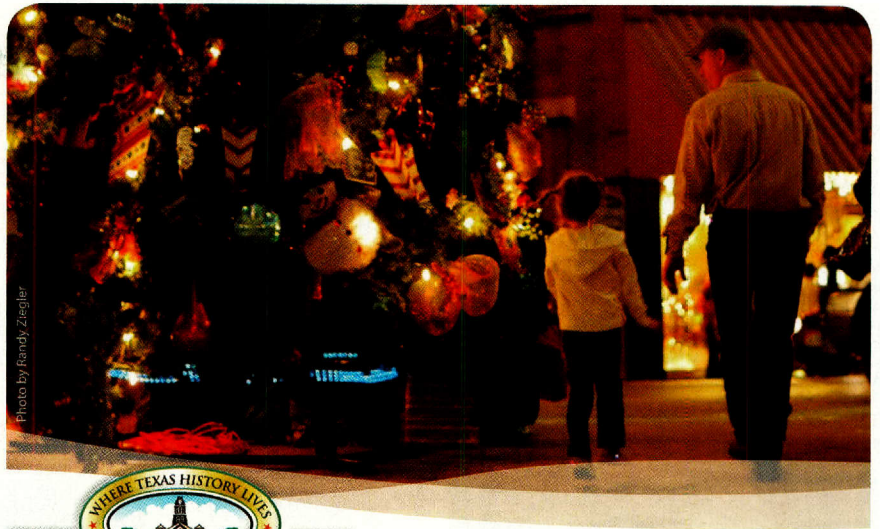
As I have on several occasions, I took time to admire the collection of antique parade saddles and vintage chaps

Named for Etta Place, a paramour of legendary outlaw Harry Longabaugh, aka the Sundance Kid, the inn provides the perfect launching pad for weekend wanderings.

displayed in Reata's main dining room. And because I'm a fan of Edna Ferber's writing, I always enjoy a look (albeit through a glass case) at the signed, first-edition copy of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Giant*, the novel in which the fabled ranch was called Reata.

But, of course, it's the celebrated food that brought me here. My dinner date and I struggled over choices, including classics like the renowned chicken-fried steak with cracked-pepper cream gravy (which compares in size to a deflated regulation football), carne asada topped with cheese enchiladas, and chicken chile rellenos served with roasted corn chowder.

Sure, there's plenty of rib-sticking goodness that would keep a cowpoke satisfied, but I drew comfort from the somewhat lighter options developed by executive chef Juan Rodriguez, including grilled mahi mahi in a lobster-spinach treatment. The irresistible jalapeño-cheddar grits, though,



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## Music City Texas

Live-music venues put *Linden* on the map

**TWO INTIMATE** venues bring music lovers to the northeast Texas town of Linden to enjoy national and regional musicians in historic settings.

Housed in a 1950s American Legion hall, the 360-seat Music City Texas Theater hosts big-name musicians four or more times a year. Shows

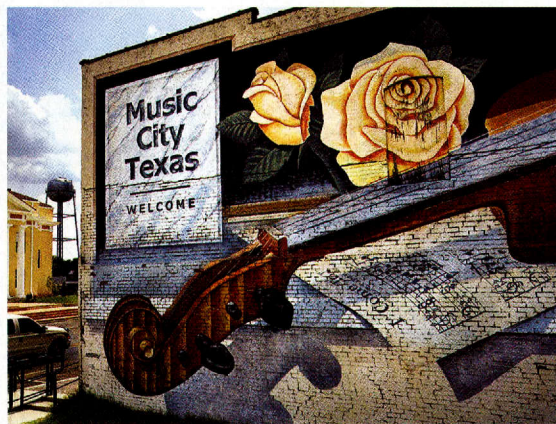
have featured Texas roots artists Guy Clark and Charlie Robison, plus superstars Jackson Browne (scheduled to play a sold-out show there this November 5) and Don Henley of the Eagles. While growing up in Linden, Henley played at the American Legion hall with his friend and fellow musician Richard Bowden, founder of Music City Texas.

The venue hosts annual bluegrass shows in February and August, plus a New Year's Eve dance. Each June, the theater honors another Lindenite at the two-day T-Bone Walker Blues Fest, which attracts a score of regional and national acts to indoor and outdoor stages.

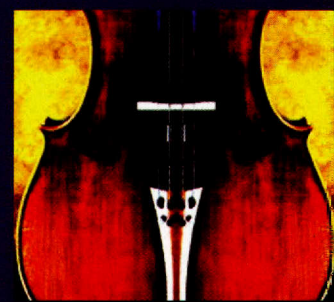
Nearby, a former Methodist church from the 1920s, houses Linden's Texas Music Barn. It stages frequent roots music shows, plus the Texas Music Awards in March, hosted by the Academy of Texas Music to honor independent performers.

Music City Texas is at 108 Legion St. Call 903/756-9934; [www.musiccitytexas.org](http://www.musiccitytexas.org). The Texas Music Barn is at 301 E. Houston St. Call 800/959-5796; [www.texasmusicbarn.com](http://www.texasmusicbarn.com).

—Randy Mallory



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cancelled out my virtuous aspirations. We admired the molten chocolate cake delivered to the next table, especially with happy-birthday wishes squiggled in chocolate syrup on the wide rim of the plate, but we decided to save our calories for an after-dinner drink on the roof.

The fourth-floor, open-air setting provided a splendid view of the sparkling night lights and the busy flow of foot traffic that enlivens Fort Worth's downtown nearly every evening.

Sipping Cowboy Cosmopolitans—beautiful pink cocktails made with Grey Goose l'Orange, Cointreau, and fresh lime juice—we peeked into the newly renovated geosphere dome, a private dining space featuring clear glass panels that allow diners to take in a 360-degree view of downtown.

Lingering ended, however, as we didn't want to miss the curtain at Four Day Weekend, an improv comedy show that takes place twice nightly on Friday and Saturday in the same building as



Reata and Etta's Place. Occupying a theater space on the second and third floors, Four Day Weekend began in 1997 as a six-week engagement at another downtown theater. Its overwhelming critical acclaim and popular success extended the run, and the comedy troupe eventually moved to the Caravan of Dreams building in 1998.

As on past visits, I came armed with a readiness to howl out loud, as this six-man team puts on a polished show with quick-thinking humor. My dinner date, experiencing Four Day Weekend for the first time, was immediately taken in by the players' sharp wits, inspired by the day's newspaper headlines and by suggestions submitted from the audience.

Sitting in plush seats, we were so swept up in the show—complete with live music and frequent, instant costume changes—that its end, after an hour and 45 minutes, seemed to come much too soon. We agreed it's no wonder that Four Day Weekend typically sells out its shows. The comedy remains mostly family-friendly, but with a delightful, grown-up edge.

After the show, I retired to my suite at Etta's Place, content to brew hot tea in the kitchenette and curl up with a book on the couch. But I found myself gazing out at the twinkly lights in the trees lining the streets below, and I was glad to have found such a simple escape. **TH**



**Sundance Square**  
is roughly bounded by Second, Fifth, Taylor, and Grove streets in downtown Fort Worth. Call **817/255-5700**; [www.sundancesquare.com](http://www.sundancesquare.com).

Etta's Place is at 200 W. Third St. Call **817/255-5760**; [www.ettas-place.com](http://www.ettas-place.com).

Reata is at 310 Houston St. Call **817/336-1009**; [www.reata.net](http://www.reata.net).

Four Day Weekend is at 312 Houston St. Call **817/226-4329**; [www.fourdayweekend.com](http://www.fourdayweekend.com).

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Image: Raul Caracosa, *Young Frida (Pink)* (detail), 2006. Screenprint. Collection of the McNay Art Museum. Gift of Harriett and Ricardo Romo. This exhibition was organized by the McNay Art Museum. The Elizabeth Huth Coates Charitable Foundation of 1992 is generously providing lead sponsorship. As of August 16, 2012, additional sponsors are the McCombs Foundation in honor of Connie McCombs McNab and Charlene McCombs; the William and Salomé Scanlan Foundation; Frost Bank; the Marcia and Otto Koehler Foundation; the Dan and Gloria Oppenheimer Fund of the San Antonio Area Foundation; Malu and Carlos Alvarez; Rita and John Feik; Ford, Powell & Carson Architects and Planners, Inc.; Gloria Galt; the Director's Circle; and the Host Committee. The *San Antonio Express-News* is contributing media sponsorship.



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Looking for

# Bigtooth



FALL FOLIAGE-SEEKERS FLOCK TO **LOST MAPLES STATE NATURAL AREA** FOR THE ANNUAL TURN OF THE BIGTOOTH MAPLES.

*Text by* **MELISSA GASKILL**

**A** S DUSK SETTLES OVER THE CAMPGROUND, A FAINT chorus rises from the reed-fringed pond next to my tent. The sound gradually grows louder, high-pitched trills and chirps punctuated by occasional deep harrumphs and

twangs. I crawl into my tent and fall asleep to this symphony created by amorous frogs and toads.

Primitive C, one of the most popular campgrounds in Lost Maples State Natural Area, lies a mile down a broad gravel trail, at a fork in the East and West hiking trails. Tents pop up along the shore of the three-quarter-acre pond, fed by Can Creek, beneath oak and sycamore trees. Lost Maples has only 30 developed campsites, but eight primitive areas can each accommodate multiple campers. The only catch: You

BELOW: Lost Maples' popular Primitive C Campground lies along a placid pond fed by Can Creek. The back-country campsites offer a retreat from the throngs of fall-foliage seekers.



© CHARLES CARLSON

LEFT: Lost Maples State Natural Area protects the easternmost and southernmost stands of Uvalde Bigtooth Maples in the United States. In autumn, the bigtooths blaze in shades of red and gold; check the park website for reports on peak color.

© LAURENCE PARENT



**LOST MAPLES** HARBORS SEVERAL LARGE, ISOLATED STANDS OF RARE UVALDE BIGTOOTH MAPLES. **THE TREES AREN'T TRULY LOST,** AS THE PARK'S NAME SUGGESTS, BUT MORE LIKE LEFT BEHIND.

# Looking for Bigtooth



have to carry your gear a mile or two, and, in some cases, up steep slopes.

But treats such as frog symphonies and starry skies—and the chance to soak up some of the park’s legendary fall color without much competition—make the effort more than worth it.

**LOST MAPLES**, which straddles the Edwards Plateau and Balcones Escarpment, holds the headwaters of the cool, clear Sabinal River, which flows into the Frio River—whose own headwaters are nearby. Besides rugged limestone canyons, springs, clear streams, plateau grasslands, and wooded slopes, Lost Maples also harbors several large, isolated stands of Uvalde Bigtooth Maples. Ancestors of these rare trees survived in the shelter of canyons created by erosion and weathering when

the climate around them warmed after the last ice age. The trees aren’t truly lost, as the park’s name suggests, but more like left behind.

**BELOW:** Maple leaves make a soft landing on a maidenhair fern in the clear waters of Can Creek.

The largest stand of maples in the



Eleven miles of trails wind through Lost Maples (a view from the East Trail shown here). Hikers may spot rock squirrels, javelinas, gray fox, deer, raccoons, armadillos, and bobcats.



BOTH PHOTOS © CHARLES CARLSON

# Looking for Bigtooth



park, lining the banks of the Sabinal, is easily accessible by the appropriately named Maple Trail, which is just under a mile long, or along the beginning of the East Trail, which continues on for another four miles or so. Either route allows for enjoying and photographing brilliant red shades set against limestone cliffs and pale green pools of water. Naturally, this area attracts a great deal of attention during peak fall foliage season, which generally occurs around the last two weeks of October and first two weeks of November.

Those willing to expend a bit more energy can get away from the crowds, as smaller stands and scattered maples can be found along the park's 11 miles of trails. Quite a few grow along the southmost section of the West Trail, about a mile in from the parking area on the way to Campground D. This area also has a few black walnut trees, and red and Lacey oaks are abundant all along the West Trail.

Although maples are most famous, these other trees contribute to the fall color display in the park, more or less in sequence. Walnut and golden-brown sycamore trees typically turn in early October, for example. Maples follow as nights get cooler later in the month, typically peaking in early November and lasting about two weeks; they start to drop their leaves by mid-November, ending up mostly bare by Thanksgiving. Sycamores, walnuts, and Lacey oaks turn colors in mid- to late October, and Texas

red oaks in late November or early December, usually after a freeze. An added touch of color comes from Virginia creeper vines, which turn a deep red, almost maroon. "At the beginning of the Maple Trail, right by the water, a big bunch of Maximilian sunflowers sometimes comes up in early fall," says park ranger/interpreter Richard Treece.

**W**EATHER conditions affect whether and how leaves turn. At the end of its

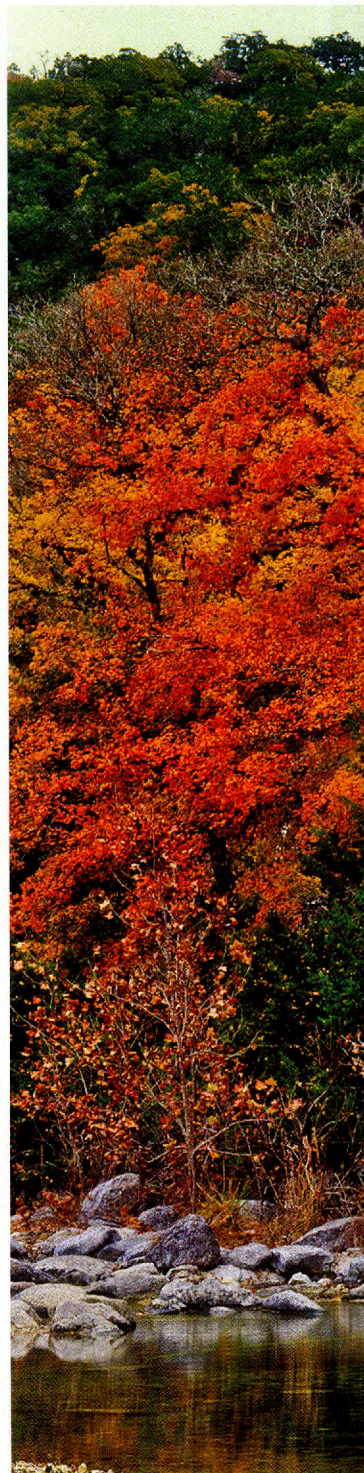
life, a leaf contains sugar and starch in varying amounts, based on conditions it experienced throughout the seasons. Cool temperatures, sunshine, and plenty of water create leaves with abundant sugar. Less water, warmer temperatures, and cloudy days equal more starch. Those sugar and starch levels determine whether a leaf turns brown, red, or yellow.

Treece says temperature makes the most difference for the park's maples. "Our weather up until October determines what our maple show will look like. For the best color, what we need is moderate temperatures in October, then two or three nights down into the 30s. Those cool nights kick things off, causing the trees to make more sugar, which is what you want for that bright, almost fluorescent red color."

Another factor, he says, is whether or not trees have produced seeds in a given year. Maples create winged fruits that twirl like little helicopters, carrying their seeds long distances. "During the drought in 2011, our trees made no seeds at all," Treece says. "Their energy all went into producing sugar for food, which made for a brilliant fall. This year, we had lots of seeds on the trees, so while we'll still have color if we get those cool temperatures, it perhaps won't be as brilliant as some years. Of course, Mother Nature could fool us, as she does just what she wants to do." The Maple Trail, not surprisingly,

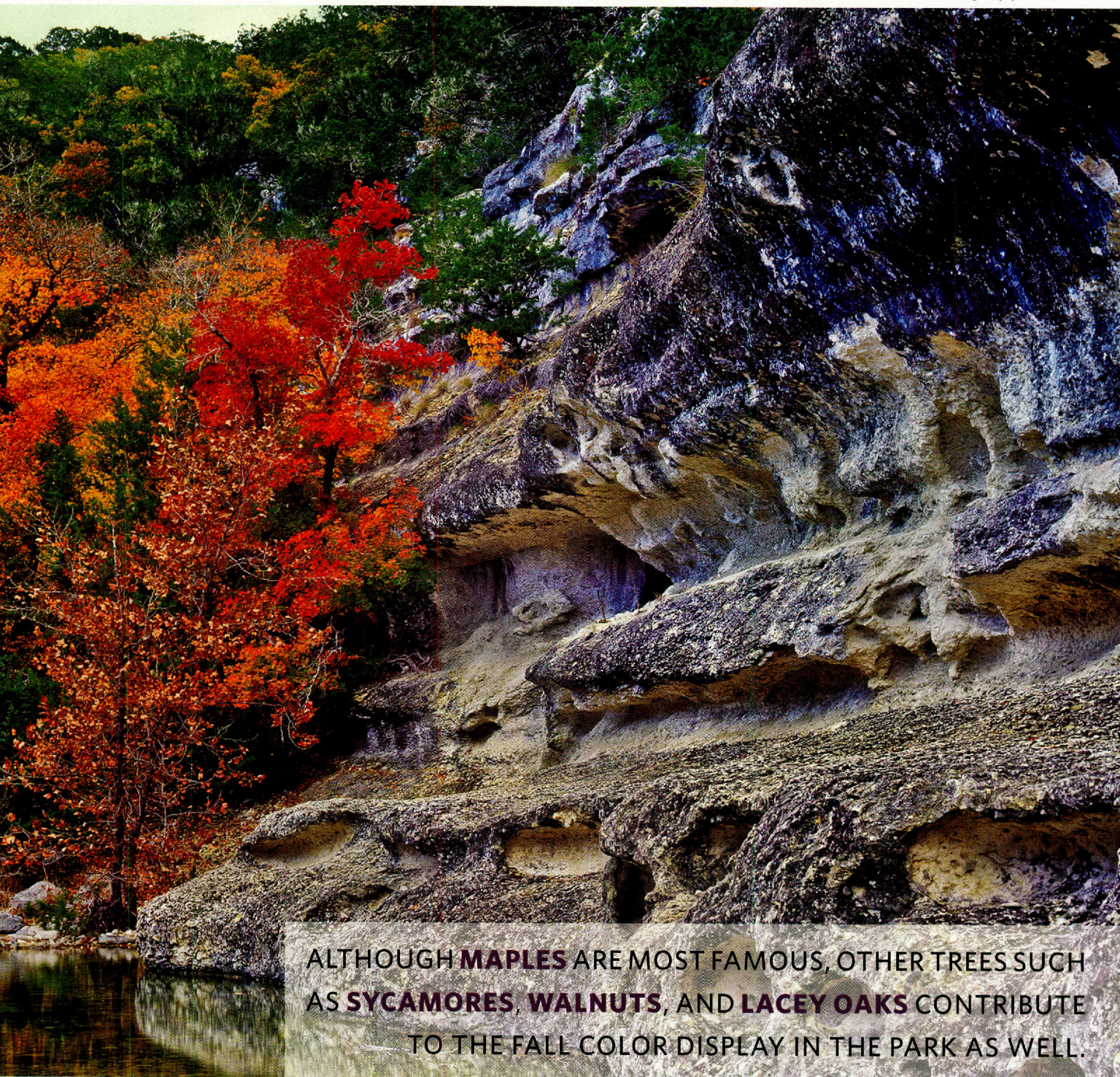
Explorers are asked to stay on the park's designated trails, as straying can damage the maples' shallow root system.

© LANCE VARNELL



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ALTHOUGH **MAPLES** ARE MOST FAMOUS, OTHER TREES SUCH AS **SYCAMORES, WALNUTS, AND LACEY OAKS** CONTRIBUTE TO THE FALL COLOR DISPLAY IN THE PARK AS WELL.

normally offers the best color display, although last year, Treece says the East and West trails had the most brilliant reds. And while color usually tapers off after Veteran's Day, in 2011, maples shone through Thanksgiving, when the red oaks usually start turning. "The dark maroon colors mixed in with the green cedar looked like Christmas," Treece recalls.

To help visitors catch the most impressive leaf displays, park staff post a weekly foliage report with photos on the web, from mid-October through November. If you have the luxury of flexibility, keep a bag packed and be ready to head out the

door when the colors peak.

**T**HE PARK in fall is a must-see, but I'm a fan of Lost Maples other times of the year, as

well. Birdwatchers flock to the park in spring, when migrating birds, including hummingbirds, pass through. Birding hosts Jane and Les Hall lead walks twice a week in March and April, the peak season for migratory birds. Les Hall says this is a great time

After the last great ice age, rugged limestone canyons protected the area's pockets of maples and ensured their survival. Above, sycamores add their own splendor to the maple display.



**PEAK** FALL FOLIAGE SEASON GENERALLY OCCURS AROUND THE **LAST TWO WEEKS OF OCTOBER** AND **FIRST TWO WEEKS OF NOVEMBER.**



# Looking for Bigtooth



BOTH PHOTOS © CHARLES CARLSON



The tree- and rock-climbing Virginia creeper provides early fall color. The vine's leaflets are in groups of five, while poison ivy is three-leaved.

for spotting birds because the trees aren't fully leafed out yet, and the birds sing a lot, which helps watchers find them. Black-capped vireos and golden-cheeked warblers nest here in spring and early summer, while some rare species of birds, including the green kingfisher, call the park home all year. Other wildlife you may spot in the park include gray fox, bobcat, and white-tailed deer. Plus those frogs and toads that sang me to sleep, which Treece suspects included cricket frogs, cliff chirping frogs, and leopard frogs. Some campers have also heard barking frogs, which, as you might expect, sound like barking dogs.

Starry skies rank as one of the top perks of camping, in my opinion, and Lost Maples comes through in that department, too. Local astronomers and folks with astronomy clubs from San Antonio and Houston occasionally

The park's three-quarter-acre pond mirrors this painterly autumn scene.

bring telescopes to the park, helping campers take advantage of the remote area's dark skies, which make for great celestial viewing.

If you want to combine leaves with stars, catch the Orionids meteor shower, which peaks the night of October 20 this year, and the Leonids meteor shower, peaking November 17. The moon will be new or nearly so the weeks of October 14 and November 11, which makes these the best times for picking out constellations or wishing on falling stars. **TH**

*Our thanks to Joe Marcus, Damon Waitt, and other experts at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center ([www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org)) for their ongoing assistance in confirming tree and wildflower identifications. See page 56 for more on the Wildflower Center's new Mollie Steves Zachry Texas Arboretum.*

*Fall in Texas is Austin writer **MELISSA GASKILL's** absolute favorite time for camping and hiking.*

## ➔ TH ESSENTIALS



## Lost Maples

LOST MAPLES STATE NATURAL AREA is 5 miles north of Vanderpool on RM 187. **Note: The parking area accommodates 250 cars, and visitors might wait in line 2 or 3 hours on fall weekends. Try to visit during the week to avoid the wait.**

For details on admission and camping fees and special events, call 830/966-3413; [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/lost-maples](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/lost-maples). Check the park website for fall color reports, which start around the second week of October. Some foliage can be seen from the park roads without walking, or for a short, colorful walk, the Maple Trail is only .8-mile.

**Find area information** at [www.friocanyonchamber.com](http://www.friocanyonchamber.com) and [www.sabinalchamber.com](http://www.sabinalchamber.com).

**Want to hear** some of those **frogs and toads**? Visit [www.enature.com/fieldguides](http://www.enature.com/fieldguides) and click on amphibians, then frogs and toads. And find **stargazing tips** at <http://stardate.org/nightsky>.

# Main Street Marshall



## Music, food, and art *lure folks to a downtown revival*

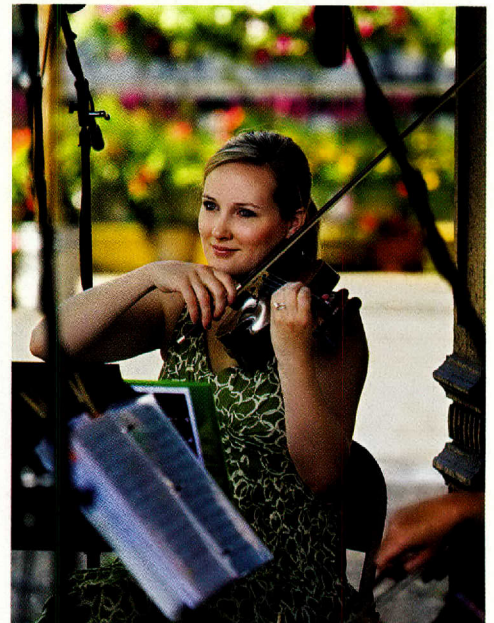


*Text and Photographs by* **RANDY MALLORY**

**F**ounded as the seat of Harrison County in 1841, Marshall embraces its history. I knew that from visiting its century-old rail depot and venerable courthouse square—lit up at Christmas with millions of twinkling lights. I also knew Marshall as the birthplace of such famous Texans as boxer-grillmaster George Foreman, civil rights pioneer James L. Farmer Jr., broadcast journalist Bill Moyers, and influential blues pianist Floyd Dixon.

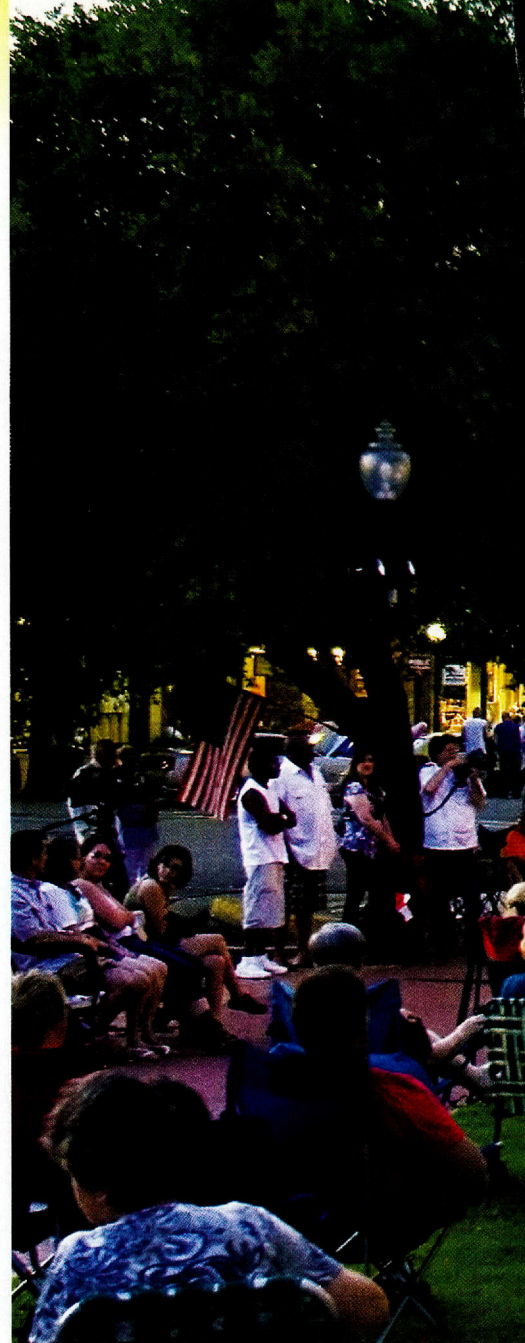
When I heard that Marshall is hopping with new activities downtown and even claims the title “Birthplace of Boogie-Woogie,” I decided to revisit the northeast Texas town hugging the Louisiana line. ▶

**LEFT AND RIGHT:** On the second Saturday of each month from March through November, downtown Marshall hops with art, music, a car show, and other activities.



# Main Street Marshall

begin my exploration at the 1901 Harrison County Courthouse. Designed by influential architect J. Riely Gordon in the Renaissance Revival style, with corn-yellow brick, pink granite columns, and carved limestone capitals, the courthouse recently underwent a \$10 million restoration. Inside, ornate blue plasterwork adorns the courtroom, and golden light from a vaulted stained-glass cupola filters into the central atrium with its striking cast-iron stairway. Outside, a seven-foot statue of Lady Justice rises from the cupola, surrounded by 12 gilded eagles.



The historic courthouse glows with white lights in November and December during a holiday display known as Wonderland of Lights. Year round, the edifice houses the Harrison County Historical Museum, which offers courthouse tours and stages exhibits on county history. I join a tour with museum director Janet Cook,

ABOVE: Telegraph Park hosts live music during Marshall's Main Street Second Saturday celebrations. LEFT: Dozens of shops and restaurants line Washington Avenue.

who recounts the remarkable expansions of 1925 and 1927. "To add more space, workers cut the east and west wings



free, top to bottom, put them on rails, and slowly moved them out,” she explains. “They filled in the gap so skillfully, you can hardly tell they were moved.” I look closely, and she’s right.

I find another skillfully restored structure a few blocks south of the square at the 1871 mansion called Maplecroft. It’s the centerpiece of the Texas Historical Commission’s three-acre Starr Family Home State Historic Site, where seven structures interpret an early Texas dynasty. After the Civil War, the Starr family owned a million acres across Texas and helped build the state’s railroad and cotton industries. Freshly refurbished inside and out and filled with family heirlooms,

Maplecroft embodies the Starrs’ elegant life at the turn of the 20th Century.

“The Starrs were fashionable but not flashy,” curator Megan Maxwell tells me on a tour of the stately parlor and dining room, which are ornamented with Louis XVI-style furniture. She points out graceful fireplace mantels that look like marble but are actually made of faux-finished slate. I’m amazed at the patterned floor of the downstairs hallway; it’s a reproduction of the original hand-painted canvas floor cloth.

One block east of the square, at Houston and Lafayette streets, a vertical pattern grabs my attention. Blue, green, red, and yellow geometric metal shapes cover the

For more on the 1871 Maplecroft mansion, see [texashighways.com/webextra](http://texashighways.com/webextra)

exterior of an otherwise nondescript building. In 2009, Uruguayan artist Volf Roitman installed the art piece at the request of the building’s owner, transforming a plain brick wall into an abstract artwork.

Two blocks down North Bolivar Street, youngsters work on their own art outside the Michelson Museum of Art. Inside the museum, more kids and parents hear a drummer play in a gallery filled with early-20th-Century American paintings, including pieces by the museum’s



namesake, Russian-American artist Leo Michelson, whose widow chose Marshall as the beneficiary of his life's works. The museum also houses a permanent collection of African masks and Chinese opera puppets, and hosts traveling exhibits.

**T**oday's artful goings-on are part of Main Street Second Saturday, a monthly arts and entertainment event started in 2004 by the Main Street program to draw locals and visitors downtown.

Most Second Saturday activities happen on North Washington Avenue, so I head that way. En route, I nod to guests

relaxing on the porch swing of the Wisteria Garden Bed and Breakfast, a Queen-Anne style home built in 1884, then pass a Greek Revival house whose backyard has been turned into a live-music venue called Charlie's Backyard Bar.

On East Rusk Street, artists display colorful paintings, and vendors around the corner offer arts and crafts along two closed-off blocks of North Washington. I spy folks sipping lattes under sidewalk awnings outside the historic Weisman Center. Opened in 1900 as the "first department store in Texas," the building was donated to the city, restored in 2001, and subsequently reopened as

a retail cooperative of 15 vendors.

I browse the high-ceilinged marketplace, impressed by the mix of old and new items. Here are gourds trimmed in woven pine needles beside letter openers with animal-head handles. There are antique box cameras and fancy ink pens next to alabaster sculptures and fused-glass jewelry. The third level showcases 10 area artists, while the mezzanine offers antique furnishings and a view of the espresso bar and restaurant on the ground floor, Central Perks. Sipping a glass of spiced iced tea and enjoying tomato basil soup, a tasty sandwich, and seasonal fruit, I gaze out Central Perks'



hopped-up hotrods now rolling in for Second Saturday's car show. By nightfall, 200 classic cars and 2,000 visitors jam the street.

Across from the Weisman, I poke around an early-1900s furniture store turned into a decor and gift shop called Charley & Bella's. Its upscale offerings range from eclectic clothing and furnishings to Italian glassware and fine china—all sectioned off by walls of salvaged windows and doors.

*The 1871 Maplecroft mansion is the centerpiece of the Texas Historical Commission's Starr Family Home State Historic Site, which interprets an early Texas dynasty.*

A few doors down, folks flock into a compact emporium called Under the Texas Sun, which offers 85 beers, 70 wines, and gourmet foods. Off-premises consumption is required, but customers

simply step out the door onto a covered patio to enjoy their selections. (On most Mondays, the patio even features an acoustic jam of local musicians.)

At the corner of North Washington and Austin Street, I check out the Blue Frog Grill, a popular eatery with a fine view of the courthouse. Owner Shawne Somerford recommends the Jekyll Isle crab cakes (red claw meat with herbs) and the catch of the day (fresh halibut topped with a tomato-onion-olive-raisin salsa). "We make our own everything here," she says, and I believe her after diving into the beautiful, well-prepared cuisine.

As daylight wanes, local musician Grady Lee cranks out a bluesy tune on the restaurant's small stage. It's part of a live-music series called Words and Voices, which is held at the Blue Frog each Second Saturday. "There was no live music downtown when we started Words and Voices nine years ago," Lee tells me, "but now you find music downtown almost every night."

After dinner, I step across the street to Telegraph Park, where Robin & the Bluebirds, a rhythm-and-blues band from Shreveport, performs while dancers circle across the lawn. The park terminates at the square with a life-size statue of two telegraph operators, marking this as the site of Texas' first telegraph office in 1854.

plate-glass windows to the scene on North Washington.

Next door, I admire the 1880s Knights of Pythias Hall, recently adapted as a visitors center and offices of the Marshall Convention and Visitors Bureau. On the sidewalk out front, the Marshall Symphony's string quartet performs a spirited arrangement of

"When the Saints Go Marching In." It's the perfect accompaniment for the souped-up Corvettes, maxed-out Mustangs, and

ABOVE: Each May, the Starr Family Home State Historic Site (open Tuesday through Sunday for tours) hosts a croquet fundraiser. RIGHT: Antiques at Three Oaks B&B include a Mughal temple lion.



Before night's end, I catch a few tunes from local blues veteran Bobbie Mercy Oliver at Cajun Tex restaurant, just off North Washington on Grand Avenue. Oliver marshals deftly through "Baby Scratch My Back" with alternating guitar and harmonica playing. Behind him stretches a mural of a swamp scene, and another wall depicts a ranch scene. I learn that owners Johnny and Donna Horne hail from Louisiana and Texas, respectively, and their heritage is reflected in both decor and menu. Seated at booths and picnic tables, patrons feast on Cajun cuisine like spicy gumbo and crawfish po-boys alongside Lone Star favorites such as chicken-fried steak and chili.

*Cajun Tex restaurant owners Johnny and Donna Horne hail from Louisiana and Texas, respectively. Their heritage is reflected in both decor and menu.*

I end my day seven blocks from the square on North Washington at Three Oaks Bed and Breakfast, where owners Donna and Mike Musselman have adorned the 1895 Victorian mansion with museum-quality antiques. The entry alone boasts a Mughal temple lion made in the 1400s of gold wire and semi-precious stones, an Italian apothecary cabinet (ca. 1800), and an eight-foot mirror, silvered in diamond dust, that survived the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.

Three Oaks B&B lies in the Ginocchio National Historic District, a block from the restored 1912 Texas and Pacific Depot, which now houses a railroad museum and Amtrak stop. After a restful night's sleep, I venture through the tunnel under the tracks, pass T&P steam engine No. 400



(built in 1915), and check out the museum. Period photos of rail workers and sleek locomotives line depot walls. Displays chronicle T&P history and that of the adjacent Ginocchio Hotel (currently being refurbished). At the telegraphy exhibit, I try my hand at Morse code on a signal key linked to another key in the next room. The depot's second-floor terrace offers a view down North Washington to the courthouse square, where I'd heard so much music the night before.

Later, I learn the connection between

The boat suspended from the ceiling at Cajun Tex restaurant came from a fishing camp at nearby Caddo Lake.

the railroad and Marshall's claim as birthplace of boogie-woogie, a style of piano-based blues that musicologists such as Alan Lomax have long linked to East Texas of the late 1800s. In fact, research by San Antonio physician, musicologist, and pianist Dr. John Tennon pegs the earliest boogie-woogie to the Marshall area, with African-American musicians honing the rhythmic piano

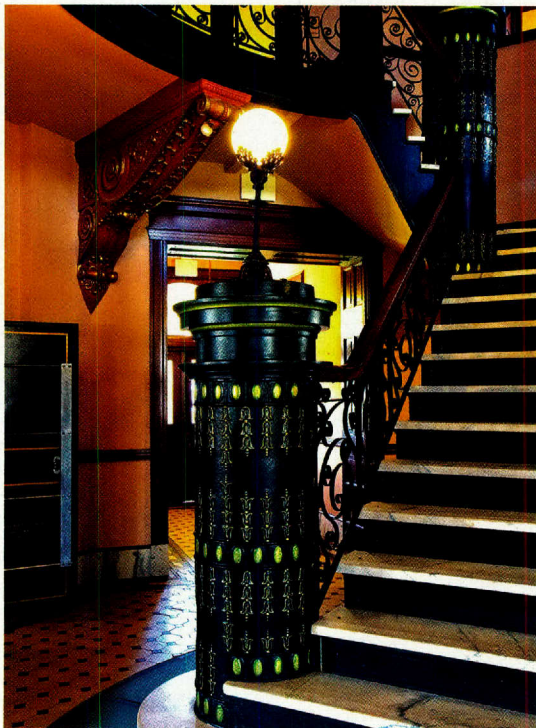


style in barrelhouse bars at logging and railroad-construction camps. The style's characteristic rolling bass line, it is said, mimics the beat of a train on a track. Marshall became the headquarters of the Texas & Pacific Railroad in the 1870s, and local black musicians spread boogie-woogie as they traveled the ever-advancing rail lines. Boogie-woogie gained national popularity by the 1930s and shaped such musical styles as blues, Western swing, jazz, and rock-and-roll.

return to the downtown square on Wednesday to hear that musical heritage in action at a restaurant and pub called OS<sup>2</sup>, which occupies a structure dating to the early 1900s. Here, owner Jan Black offers steaks, seafood, and vegetarian fare, and also stages a weekly performance called Boogie-Woogie Wednesday, along with singer-songwriter shows on weekends. The bar is packed with guests grooving to the rhythm-and-blues sounds of local band Anthony G. Parrish & Friends.

As I tap my feet to the contagious beat, I enjoy a fork-tender filet mignon with béarnaise sauce, a side of steamed mixed vegetables, and an ice-cold beer. I glance around the room—watching the crowd of locals and visitors enjoy

Designed by architect J. Riely Gordon in the Renaissance Revival style, Marshall's 1901 courthouse offers tours Wednesday through Friday.



music with deep local roots, played within the shadow of a grand restored courthouse—and I'm grateful that much of what makes Marshall old is new again. **TH**

*Tyler-based writer and photographer* **RANDY MALLORY** enjoys exploring Texas' small towns and arts communities. Look for his story on Winnsboro in the January issue.

## ➔ TH ESSENTIALS

# Marshall

MARSHALL lies at the intersection of Interstate 20 and US 59, 150 miles east of Dallas. For visitor information, contact the Marshall Convention & Visitors Bureau, 903/702-7777; [www.visitmarshalltexas.org](http://www.visitmarshalltexas.org). Following are sites in the story.

### Attractions and Shops

#### The Harrison County Historical Museum

is in the Harrison County Courthouse (1 Peter Whetstone Square, 903/935-8417; [www.harrisoncountymuseum.org](http://www.harrisoncountymuseum.org)). Hours: Wed-Fri 10-4, with courthouse tours at 11 and 2.

**The Weisman Center**, 211 N. Washington Ave., 903/934-8836; [www.theweisman.com](http://www.theweisman.com).

**Charley & Bella's**, 216 N. Washington Ave., 903/938-6445; [www.charleyandbellas.com](http://www.charleyandbellas.com).

**Under the Texas Sun**, 207 N. Washington Ave., 903/935-7678; [www.underthetexas.sun.net](http://www.underthetexas.sun.net).

**Michelson Museum of Art**, 216 N. Bolivar St., 903/935-9480; [www.michelsonmuseum.org](http://www.michelsonmuseum.org).

**Starr Family Home State Historic Site**, 407 W. Travis St., 903/935-3044; [www.visitstarrfamilyhome.com](http://www.visitstarrfamilyhome.com).

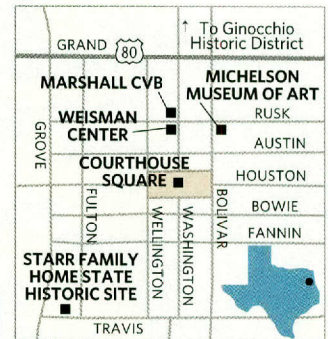
**Texas & Pacific Railway Museum & Depot**, 800 N. Washington Ave., 903/938-9495.

### Dining and Nightlife

**Central Perks** is inside the Weisman Center, 211-A N. Washington Ave. Call 903/934-9902; [www.centralperks.us](http://www.centralperks.us).

**Stottford House restaurant**, 210 E. Houston St., 903/935-7818.

**R&R Bakery and Coffee Shoppe**, 115 E. Houston St., 903/935-3380; [www.randrbakeryandcoffeeshop.com](http://www.randrbakeryandcoffeeshop.com).



**OS<sup>2</sup> Restaurant & Pub**, 105 E. Houston St., 903/938-7700; [www.os2marshall.com](http://www.os2marshall.com).

**Blue Frog Grill**, 101 W. Austin St., 903/923-9500.

**Charlie's Backyard Bar**, 303 N. Columbus St., 903/472-4050; [www.charliesbackyardbar.com](http://www.charliesbackyardbar.com).

**Cajun Tex**, 104 W. Grand Ave., 903/935-7719; [www.letseat.at/cajuntex](http://www.letseat.at/cajuntex).

### Lodging

**Wisteria Garden Bed and Breakfast**, 215 E. Rusk St., 903/938-7611; [www.wisteriagarden.com](http://www.wisteriagarden.com).

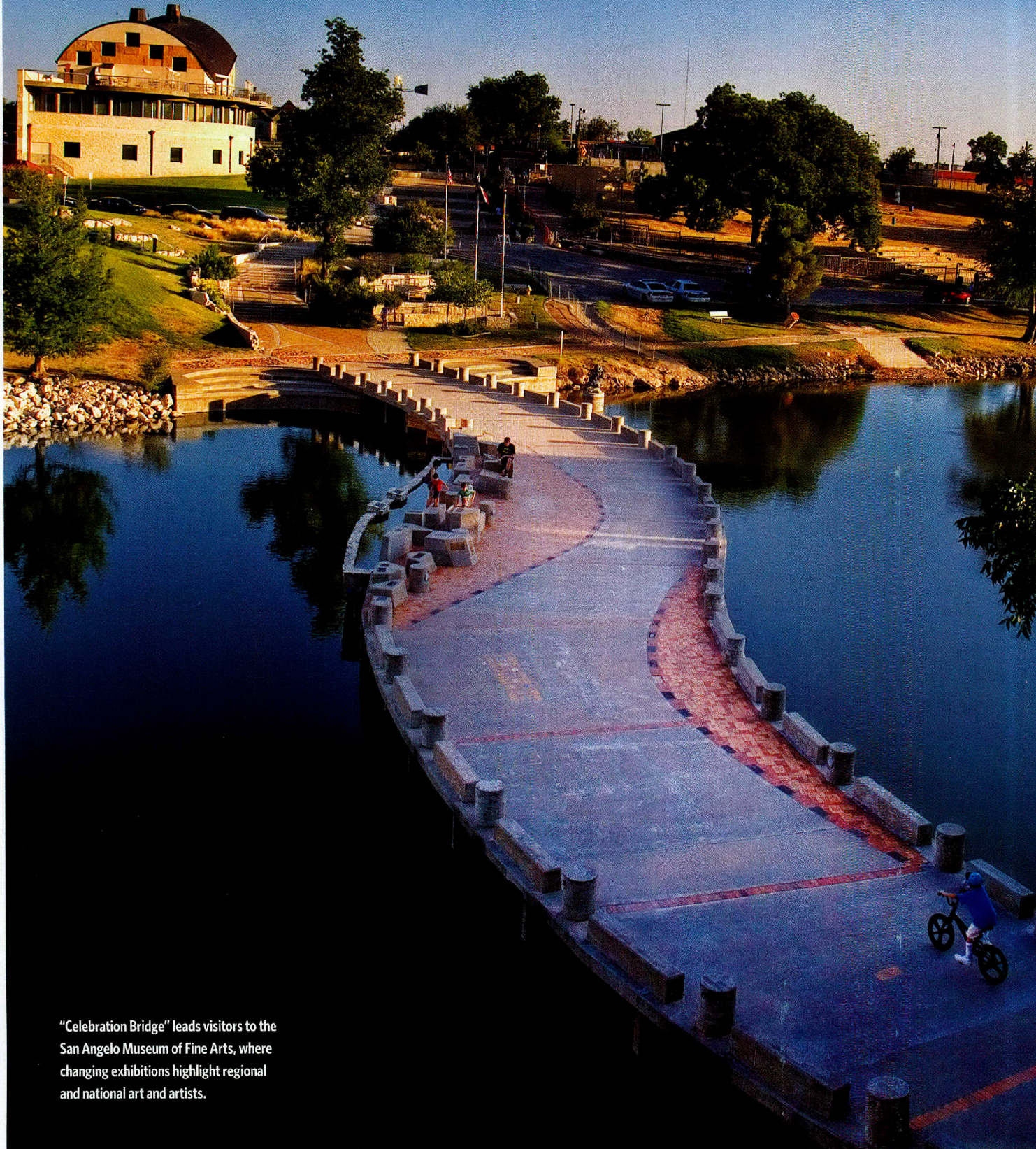
**Three Oaks Bed and Breakfast**, 609 N. Washington Ave., 800/710-9789; [www.threeoaks-marshall.com](http://www.threeoaks-marshall.com).

### Events

**Main Street Second Saturday** features art, music, shopping, classic cars, and food downtown on the second Saturday of each month, March through November. Contact the Main Street Program at 903/935-4417; [www.marshalltexas.net/departments/main-street](http://www.marshalltexas.net/departments/main-street).

**Wonderland of Lights Festival** runs Nov. 21 through Dec. 31 (closed Dec. 24). Contact the Convention and Visitors Bureau (see above).

# PEARL *of the* Concho



"Celebration Bridge" leads visitors to the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, where changing exhibitions highlight regional and national art and artists.

**SAN ANGELO's art, history, and culture thrive along the banks of the Concho River**



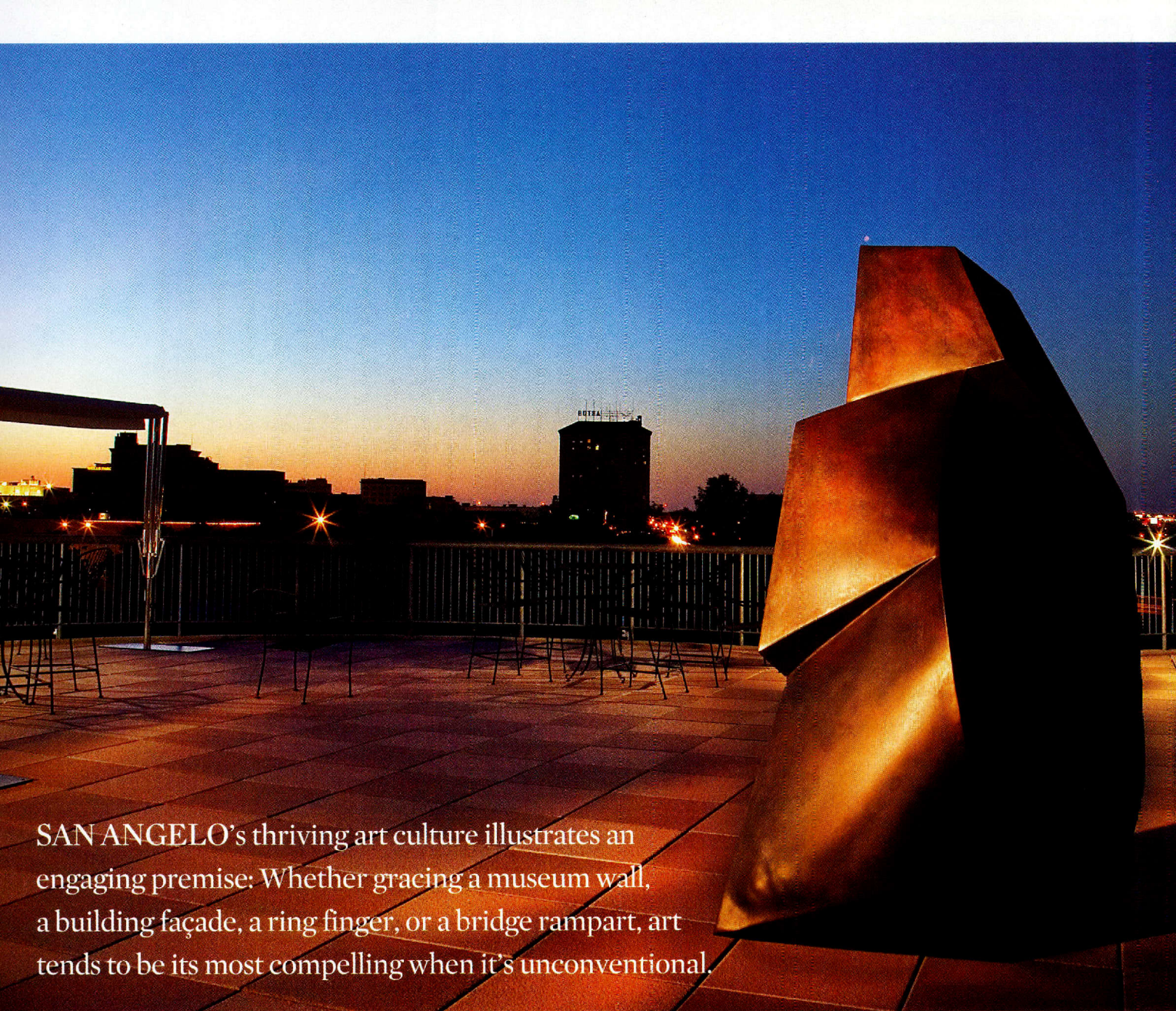
*Text and Photographs by* **E. DAN KLEPPER**

**ART IS LIKE  
A PEARL.**

MYSTERY IS A CHIEF COMPONENT in its creation, its beauty is often derived from an unlikely source, and whether showcased individually or as part of a group, its tendency is to greatly enhance its surroundings. The central-west Texas city of San Angelo knows the value of both natural and manmade artistry, an appreciation in evidence along its walkways, in its shops, and throughout its public spaces. The city, which lies along the banks of the Concho River, capitalizes on its riparian vistas framed in leafy, green banks and winding trails, perfect settings for San Angelo's expanding public art collection.

San Angeloans, in fact, take to their urban green spaces daily—strolling, jogging, biking, and relaxing along the Concho. But the city's appeal is not only bankside. A dive beneath the river's surface upturns the

ABOVE: Esteban Apodaca, ceramicist and art professor at Angelo State University, exhibits his bowls in a show of works by University art faculty at the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts.



SAN ANGELO's thriving art culture illustrates an engaging premise: Whether gracing a museum wall, a building façade, a ring finger, or a bridge rampart, art tends to be its most compelling when it's unconventional.

ABOVE: Originally part of an exhibition by artist Catherine Lee, the bronze sculpture called *Scarista* remains on long-term loan in the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts' rooftop garden. Its backdrop? The San Angelo skyline.

To order a print of this photograph, call 866/962-1191, or visit [www.texashighwaysprints.com](http://www.texashighwaysprints.com).

Tampico pearlymussel, a naturally-occurring freshwater shellfish found only in Texas and northern Mexico that produces a gem of another sort, each unique and beautiful, known as the Concho pearl. Like art, these pearls are known for their infinite variety, appearing in every imaginable shape and color.

Concho pearls inspired the earliest written reference to the region surrounding San Angelo, a conflux of river branches that come together in the city center. Upon arrival to the area in 1650, Spanish explorers called the river "Concha," meaning "shell," a reference to the abundance of freshwater mussels and their pearls, a fact the explorers reported with enthusiasm to the Spanish crown. Pearls were once considered the exclusive gemstone of royalty, so it's possible that Concho pearls transported back to Spain were used to embellish the Spanish royal jewels.

Mark Priest, jeweler, graduate gemologist, and owner of Legend Jewelers in downtown San Angelo, knows all about the royal gemstone. Priest specializes in natural, freshwater pearls of Texas and devotes an entire display in his well-appointed shop exclusively to the Concho pearl. "Jewelry is beauty and magic," says Priest, a seasoned craftsman who has worked with precious gems for more than 30 years.

# PEARL of the Concho

**J**UST ACROSS the river from Legend Jewelers lies Fort Concho, another historic San Angelo gem and one that warrants a surprising bit of artistic merit all its own. Established in 1867 as a frontier military post, Fort Concho occupied a considerable piece of real estate near the south banks of the Concho River. The Fort's builders employed civilian stonemasons and carpenters from Fredericksburg to construct its beautiful limestone structures, and many of them remain today.

Inside the fort's reconstructed hospital, a spacious, white-washed interior where soldiers often failed to recover from bouts of dysentery, an assortment of sick-room powders and remedies line the shelves in one corner. Nearby, a coffin rests upright, suggesting the limitations in the era's art of medicine. Past the parade ground, authentic Victorian frilleries enhance the parlor of a restored officers' quarters. The late -19th-Century interior design, a popular styling of the period, helped offset the barebones reality of frontier military life. Atop a doily-laden tray table, a stereoscope viewer rests among the teacups, with an image of the Eiffel Tower mounted in its wooden stand.

Over the antique belvederes of the Fort and on to the banks of the Concho, dramatic architecture makes another appearance in the sweeping design of the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. The Museum's rooftop construction incorporates an unusual barrel roll, creating a visual center-point high above the surrounding streets and adding an unmistakable profile to the city's skyline. Some people think it looks like a saddle or covered wagon. The structure also takes its regionalism to heart, using

BELOW: The museum is currently hosting *Sacred Visions: Masterpieces of Spanish Colonial and Mexican Religious Art* through January 13 (the Catherine Lee exhibit shown below has closed).



## LIVING HISTORY at Fort Concho

LIVING-HISTORY programs feature prominently in the events calendar at Fort Concho National Historic Landmark. For instance, at a number of events throughout the year, the Fort Concho Artillery performs fiery, ear-splitting blasts using a replica of the cannon assigned here between 1875 and 1889.

Also present at Fort Concho events are reenactors portraying Company A of the 10th Cavalry, also known as the Buffalo Soldiers, and Company D of the 4th Cavalry, a unit stationed at the Fort between 1871 and 1873.

Fort Concho's Vintage Base Ball Program features a winning team in period clothing using authentic equipment to play ball against local civilian teams. The club plays by 19th-Century rules. Find event details at [www.fortconcho.com](http://www.fortconcho.com).

—E. Dan Klepper

ABOVE: An original Holmes stereopticon, loaded with a stereoscope postcard of the Eiffel Tower, decorates a tea tray in the parlor of a renovated Fort Concho officers' quarters.

  
More Fort Concho  
living history at  
[texashighways.com/webextra](http://texashighways.com/webextra)



# PEARL

of the Concho



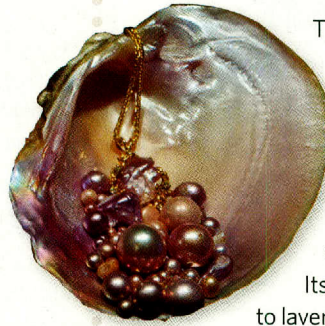
**A VOLKSWAGEN BEETLE**  
and a 1948 Ford pickup truck  
now serve as canvases for  
mosaic designs, thanks to  
art partners Julie Raymond  
and Sue Rainey.

ABOVE: San Angelo will celebrate the installation of *Texas Wildflowers*, a mosaic-covered vintage truck designed by local artist Joe Morgan, on October 27th at the San Angelo Visitors Center. The work, along with a half-dozen other mosaics, will take its place along the downtown banks of the Concho River as part of the "Art in Uncommon Places" program.

locally quarried limestone for walls, Texas mesquite as flooring, and D'Hanis red clay for the elevator tower. Its 4,000-square-foot, open-air rooftop deck provides visitors with an ideal view of downtown San Angelo and the Concho River below. Inside, the museum mounts changing exhibitions of regional, national, and international artwork, and its permanent collection includes a significant number of works by established Texas artists. A focus on American crafts influences a particular area of concentration for the Museum, represented by an impressive collection of contemporary American ceramics, many of them winners of the biennial San Angelo National Ceramic Competition.

Ceramics and crafts also headline at the Old Chicken Farm Art Center, an eclectic mix of artists and artistry founded in 1971 on the site of a former chicken farm. Located in the San Angelo city limits not far from downtown, the Center was created by Texas potter Roger Allen and now houses art studios and galleries, a small restaurant, and a bed and breakfast. The Center hosts an open house the first Saturday of each month, inviting the public to tour studios, shop for art, meet the Center's artists (known as "chicken farmers"), and enjoy the acoustic stylings of the Chicken Pickers, the Center's local music ensemble. Particular Center standouts in the ceramic tradition include Jeremy and Millicent Bundick, a husband-and-wife team specializing in unusual, hand-built and hand-painted ceramic sculpture. Their studio, Jeremy and Millicent Clayworks, also sells wheel-thrown tableware decorated in lively designs and colors. Elsewhere across the Center's sprawling, three-acre

## the CONCHO RIVER pearl



THE TAMPICO PEARLYMUSSEL (*Cyrtornaias tampicoensis*), creator of the Concho River pearl, is a surprisingly drab looking shellfish. But its dull, reddish-brown-to-black exterior belies a beautiful inner shell layer called the “nacre,” also known as “mother of pearl.”

Its nacre coloration varies from white to lavender and salmon to pink, reflecting the deep coloration of the pearl that may be produced within the mussel’s soft tissue. Nacre is produced by an organ called the mantle; a pearl forms when an irritant—usually a grain of sand—slips into the mussel (or oyster) and irritates the mantle. To protect itself, the mussel envelops the irritant with nacre, producing a pearl. A unique feature of the Concho River pearl is its shape, typically spherical but infinite in its combination of teardrop, bulleted, oval, or flat-bottomed variations. Its luster varies from dull opaque to “wet shine,” a characteristic that affects its value as much as its size and form. Pearls more than 10 millimeters in diameter have been discovered in the past, but today finding a Concho River pearl even half that size is unlikely.

The Tampico pearlymussel is considered a reliable pearl producer compared to other shellfish, but only about three to four percent of Tampico individuals will produce a pearl and out of those, true gem-quality pearls are exceedingly rare.

“Rare” has also begun to describe the freshwater mussel population in general. In fact, freshwater mussels are now considered one of the most vulnerable groups of animals in the country. Freshwater mussels are filter feeders, meaning that they feed by passing water through their tissue, thus filtering out food from their watery habitat. During this process they filter toxins as well as nutrients, and are often the first species to die off when rivers, lakes, or streams become compromised by environmental changes and toxic pollutants. Sadly, a decline nationwide in mussel populations indicates a decline in water quality across the country, including Texas.

To harvest or even handle any freshwater mussels or shells today, Texas requires a valid commercial mussel or clam fishing license or scientific research permit (more at [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)). Because of the decline in the state’s freshwater mussel populations, new commercial licenses are no longer being issued, but you can see Concho River pearls at San Angelo’s Legend Jewelers ([www.legendjewelers.com](http://www.legendjewelers.com)).

—E. Dan Klepper

compound, potters and ceramicists including Ashley Dyer, Vicki Hardin, Joe Morgan, and founder Roger Allen display their wares among raw clay blocks, jars of slip, firing kilns, and the ubiquitous potter’s wheel.

San Angelo’s abundance of talent also includes art partners Julie Raymond and Sue Rainey, who spearheaded the creation of five dazzling mosaic sculptures constructed from, oddly enough, cars. In an effort to help the city revitalize its riverfront parks and trails, Raymond and Rainey established “Art in Uncommon Places,” an art-production project with an emphasis on community involvement. Under the duo’s guidance, new public artworks have been created for permanent installation along the refurbished waterway. A Volkswagen Beetle and a 1948 Ford pickup truck now serve as canvases for mosaic designs, after undergoing a transformation from junkyard fodder to functional whimsy with picnic tables and benches incorporated into their construction. Local artists

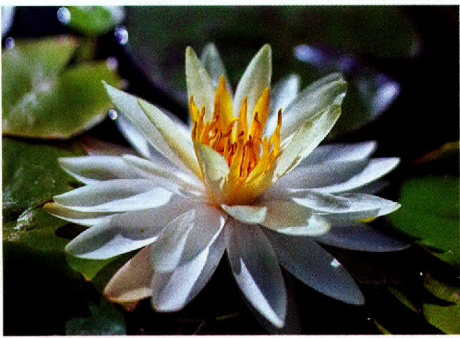


PHOTO BY J. GRIFFIS SMITH

created the initial designs for the five “art cars,” and volunteers applied the tile. “Thousands of people have helped place tile on the five cars over a six-year period,” Raymond says, “and now these volunteers will finally be able to see and enjoy these unique pieces of art.”

The Chicken Farm Art Center sponsors an open house the first Saturday of each month. Visitors may peruse art studios and listen to the Center’s own band known as the Chicken Pickers.

ACCORDING to the great Italian film director Federico Fellini, “the pearl is the oyster’s autobiography.” Fellini went on to clarify that all art is autobiographical, and San Angelo’s collection of wildly-embellished sheep sculptures prove his point. Once considered the wool capital of the world, San Angelo selected sheep to star in a downtown revitalization program used successfully by other urban centers around the country. A series of fiberglass animals (in San Angelo’s case, life-size ewes) anchor street corners and “graze” along sidewalks throughout the city, each one sponsored by a local business and transformed by area artists. Joining the colorful livestock downtown are sculptures and



## international WATERLILY collection

IN 1988, San Angelo resident and waterlily authority Ken Landon spearheaded efforts to transform a neglected reflection pool in the city's Civic League Park into a waterlily showcase. By 1993, the extensive collection of lilies earned recognition by the International Waterlily and Water Gardening Society and Landon acclaim as one of the country's leading horticulturists in cross-breeding and creating new waterlilies (a process called "hybridizing"). To date, the collection has expanded to six additional display pools where Landon encourages

his latest creations and those of other hybridists to bloom and often assists unusual and endangered species to

survive and thrive. Landon, known for risking life and limb to collect unusual species, travels the world to gather waterlily bulbs and seeds from their native habitat to introduce them to his San Angelo pools. It's simply the nature of gathering the lilies, many of which thrive in particularly wild regions of the world where conditions are less than friendly to humans.

Landon has preserved almost 85 species of "Nymphaea," the waterlily genus named for the Greek nymphs of mythology believed to inhabit springs. His rescues also include the Blue Lotus of the Nile, a waterlily considered sacred in ancient Egypt. Seeds harvested in Landon's pools have been shipped to Egypt and used to boost the Nile's once dwindling population.

A visit to the International Waterlily Collection may be undertaken year-round, day or night, in Civic League Park; find more information at [www.internationalwaterlilycollection.com](http://www.internationalwaterlilycollection.com).

—E. Dan Klepper

ABOVE: "Texas Dawn," the official waterlily of Texas, blooms among the lily pads at San Angelo's Civic League Park, home of the International Waterlily Collection.

RIGHT: *USS Bridgman*, a painted mural by Julie Raymond and daughter Amanda Philips, contributes to the collection of works by more than 30 local artists decorating "Paintbrush Alley," part of downtown San Angelo's beautification effort.

paintings decorating the alleyways and handpainted murals stretching across street-side walls. The murals, created with financial support from local citizens courtesy of the nonprofit "Historic Murals of San Angelo," often serve as a particular point of pride for San Angeloans. The latest painting, a three-part panorama representing San Angelo's military history (currently in progress), occupies prime visual real estate at the corner of South Oakes and Concho Avenue, and reprises the talents of professional muralist Styllle Read, creator of the city's homage to hometown boy Elmer Kelton.

San Angelo's thriving art culture illustrates an engaging



## HAND-PAINTED MURALS anchor street corners, while life-size sheep "graze" along sidewalks throughout the city.

premise: Whether gracing a museum wall, a building façade, a ring finger, or a bridge rampart, art tends to be its most compelling when it's unconventional. Perhaps that's why Ken Landon, San Angelo's waterlily enthusiast, may be the city's most innovative artist. Landon's materials include seeds and bulbs of some of the rarest plants on the planet, and his canvas consists of specially-designed water ponds located at the city's Civic League Park. Recognized worldwide as the International Waterlily Collection, the ponds overflow with vibrant flowers and lily pads from around the world. Landon's hybridizing efforts, which have influenced color, shape, size, and other characteristics, have produced some of the waterlily world's most stunning flowers, including the much-heralded "Blue Cloud," a radiant sapphire bloomer of startling proportion. Landon is also the creator of "Texas Dawn," adopted by the state legislature as the official waterlily of Texas, a robust, star-shaped, rose-to-yellow hybrid that reminded Landon of morning light in West Texas. Of equal importance, the collection's lily ponds serve as a safe haven for more than 80 species, many of which are imperiled in their



# PEARL of the Concho



## ➔ TH ESSENTIALS



## San Angelo

FOR MORE information on San Angelo, call the San Angelo Convention and Visitors Bureau, 800/375-1206; [www.visitsanangelo.org](http://www.visitsanangelo.org). Contact information for sites in the story follows.

**Legend Jewelers**, 18 E. Concho Ave., 325/653-0112; [www.legendjewelers.com](http://www.legendjewelers.com).

**Fort Concho National Historic Landmark**, 630 S. Oakes St., 325/481-2646; [www.fortconcho.com](http://www.fortconcho.com). Self-guided and guided tours available.

**San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts**, 1 Love St., 325/653-3333; [www.samfa.org](http://www.samfa.org).

**The Old Chicken Farm Art Center**, 2505 Martin Luther King Blvd., 325/653-4936; [www.chickenfarmartcenter.com](http://www.chickenfarmartcenter.com).

**Jeremy & Millicent Clayworks**, Studio 5, The Old Chicken Farm Art Center, 325/245-7399.

**Art in Uncommon Places**, 701 S. Irving, 325/245-5472 or 325/234-8441.

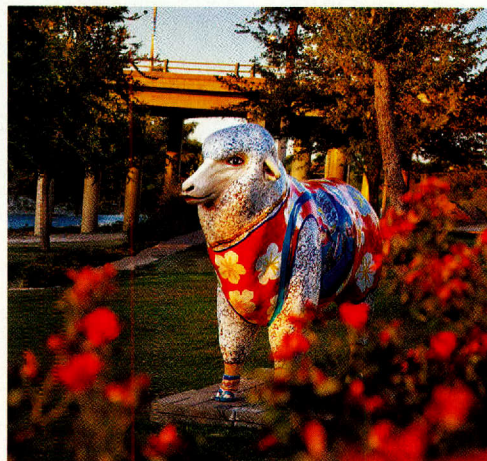
**Historic Murals of San Angelo**, 325/944-1443; [www.historicmuralsofsanangelo.org](http://www.historicmuralsofsanangelo.org).

**International Waterlily Collection**, Civic League Park (at 24 S. Park St. between W. Beauregard Ave. and Harris St.). This neighborhood park, established in 1907, is well-lit at night. The best months to see both night- and day-blooming waterlilies are June through October, from dawn to around noon. For a partial list of plants, go to [www.internationalwaterlilycollection.com](http://www.internationalwaterlilycollection.com).

native habitat. Landon travels the world collecting the seeds, bulbs, and plants of waterlily species to preserve their genetic lines before they are lost. Thirteen species have already vanished from their native habitat, revived halfway around the world by artists like Landon.

Landon's lilies appear to follow the trajectory of all art—gathered from life, inscrutable at times, and revised by a creator's hand before inviting the admirer's gaze. San Angelo's evolution from frontier outpost to cultural destination has followed suit, embodied in a bronze figure perched above the Concho waters. The public sculpture, one of the city's first, depicts a mermaid, the creature of myths and legends, offering an open freshwater mussel in her outstretched hand where a single Concho pearl, the creation of perhaps San Angelo's most enigmatic artist, lies ready for the taking. **TH**

*"I enjoyed exploring the city's creative culture," says writer and artist E. DAN KLEPPER. "San Angelo's artists show that it doesn't just have to be all bluebonnets and cowboys anymore."*



LEFT: *Welcoming Ewe*, a life-size fiberglass sheep sculpture decorated by local artist Crystal Goodman, greets visitors on the grounds of the San Angelo Visitors Center.





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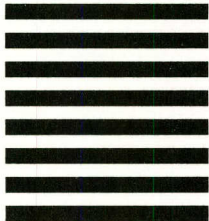
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# LIVING HISTORIC TREES OF TEXAS WITNESS

**T**HE NAME *TEXAS* EVOKES DUSTY SPANISH missions and cowboys resting beneath a sea of stars. Texas' myriad legends are based in both reality and myth, and the state's mystique is partly due to the great variety of people who have called this land home, and—just as significantly—to the nature of the land itself. One impressive attribute of this land is the bounty of imposing trees.

Hollywood may have contributed to the popular misconception that Texas is treeless, but even in the starkest landscapes, like the plains of West Texas, trees are often the only identifiable feature. Elsewhere across the state, tall elms and pines, rustling cottonwoods, majestic live oaks, and stately pecans dignify a landscape of lonely deserts, arid mountains, whispering marshes, long beaches, and dense forests.

Texas' trees have always been respected for the comfort they provide. Native Americans used them as landmarks, meeting places, and protection from harsh weather. The Spanish, French, and Mexicans established settlements among them, using their wood to build missions and forts.

Later, their wide boughs supported the homes and marked the homesteads of Anglo settlers. During conflicts, settlers used trees as mustering places and scouting nests. In peacetime, churches and courts held services and convened sessions beneath them, and their limbs were often the site of frontier justice.

More than five hundred years after Europeans first arrived in the Americas, some of the trees that were then seedlings or saplings remain among us as silent witnesses to, or participants in, history. Today, it seems remarkable that you can stand under the same tree where Sam Houston gathered his small army to journey to San Jacinto. For me, learning the stories of these great trees and the lives of the people connected to them has been an exciting journey of discovery. I hope you enjoy learning their stories as much as I have.

They are also the last living witnesses to Texas' unique story.

—RALPH YZNAGA

EXCERPTED AND ADAPTED FROM THE BOOK *LIVING WITNESS: HISTORIC TREES OF TEXAS*.  
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## ◀ THE RUNAWAY SCRAPE OAK

GONZALES

**Where a resourceful general and his army sought refuge in 1836 on their journey to independence.**

The people of Gonzales are rightly proud of their town's early role in the struggle for Texas independence. In March 1836, camping beneath the limbs of an oak tree that seemed to stretch out forever, Sam Houston gathered his tiny army. Hopelessly outmanned and outgunned, he chose to retreat eastward in an action that has gone down in history as the "Runaway Scrape." The people of Gonzales followed the volunteers east, burning their beloved town as they departed.

The Runaway Scrape Oak, also known as the "Sam Houston Oak," is on private property in Gonzales, but you can view it from the road. From the Gonzales County Courthouse (414 St. Joseph St.), go east on St. Louis Street for two miles. Turn right (east) onto US Alt 90, and go eight miles (across Peach Creek), then left on CR 361. Travel .3 miles to a driveway leading to a historic house. The tree is on the right of the driveway. For more details about Gonzales, call 830/672-6532; [www.gonzalestexas.com](http://www.gonzalestexas.com).

## THE GOOSE ISLAND OAK *(opening spread)*

GOOSE ISLAND STATE PARK, ARANSAS COUNTY

***In a place where bigger is better, this tree stands alone.***

While the facts about and measurements of this oak tree are astounding, one item stands above all others: The great Goose Island tree is believed to be at least one thousand years old. Possibly the most famous tree in the state, the tree has outlasted the Karankawa, who reputedly used it as a council place, and early Spanish and French explorers, who are believed to have passed by it. The town of Lamar arose nearby in the 1830s, only to dwindle. People and their built legacy come and go, but the mighty oak tree continues on its seemingly endless life.

The "Big Tree" at Goose Island State Park was named the State Champion Coastal Live Oak in 1969. It stands some 44 feet tall, with a trunk circumference of more than 35 feet. The park is in Aransas County 15 miles from Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Call 361/729-2858; [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us).

## THE HEART O' TEXAS OAK

MERCURY

***They didn't need a sign to mark the exact center of the state.***

Along a quiet stretch of road south of Brownwood stands an unassuming tree. It's not noticeably tall or beautiful, but it does hold claim to an impressive title:

It stands at the geographic center of the state as determined by a survey in 1922. A plaque stands a few miles from the tree on US 377, close to a state rest area known as the Heart of Texas Park. The tree shares the rugged landscape with plenty of prickly pear cactus and a few inquisitive steers.

The Heart O' Texas Oak is near Mercury, in the northeast corner of McCullough County, about halfway between Killeen and San Angelo. From Brady, head north on US 377 for a little more than 20 miles and turn right on FM 502. After passing through Mercury, turn south on FM 1028. Proceed .2 miles to the tree, which is about 50 feet west of the roadway.







## ◀ THE CENTURY TREE

COLLEGE STATION

*In a place where traditions hold strength, this revered tree has the power to unite people for life.*

Few institutions honor their traditions with more reverence than Texas A&M University. One such story concerns the legend of the Century Tree, which is considered the most romantic spot on campus. No one knows how the tradition started, but it is believed that when you walk under the tree's branches with someone special, you will spend your life together. Friendships can be cemented here, too.

From the western entrance to the Texas A&M University campus, head into campus on Old Main Drive, cross the Military Walk, and you will be facing the Academic Building. The Century Tree will be on your left. For more information about visiting the tree and parking at Texas A&M University, see <http://maps.tamu.edu>. For details about lodging, restaurants, attractions, and events in Bryan/College Station, call 979/260-9898; [www.visitaggieland.com](http://www.visitaggieland.com).



For more details about these and other famous trees in Texas, see <http://famoustreesoftexas.tamu.edu>

## THE BEN MILAM CYPRESS

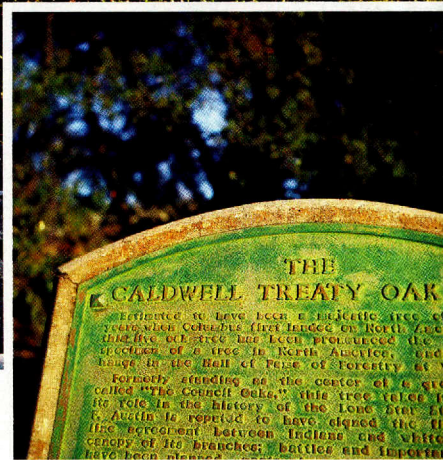
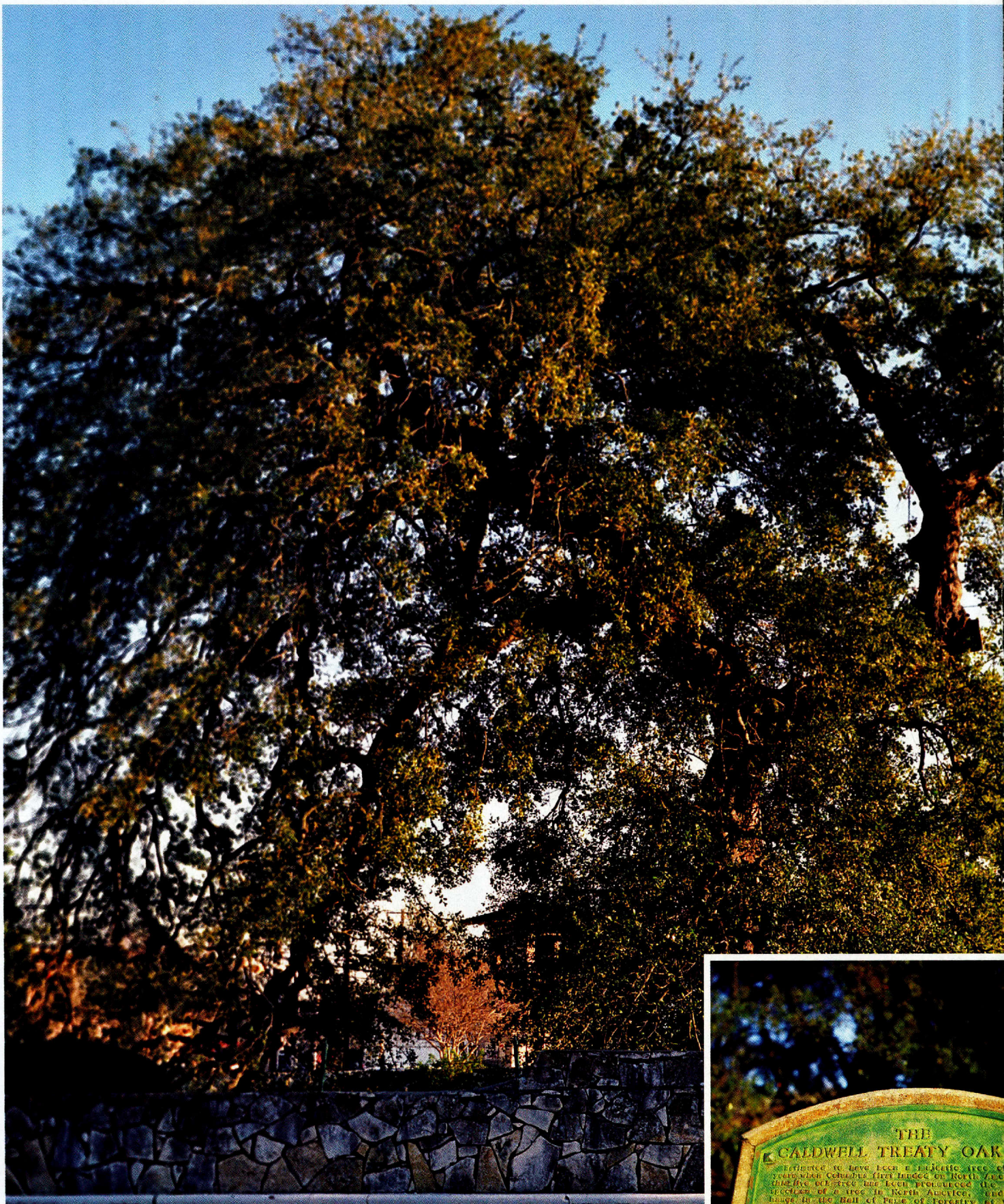
SAN ANTONIO

*From its branches, a sniper's musket sent an early hero straight to a higher place.*

Although most people are familiar with the story of the Alamo, many are unaware of the struggle for possession of San Antonio that preceded the famous battle. Late in 1835, as Texas forces were laying siege to the city—then held by the Mexican army—Texian soldier Ben Milam leaped to his feet and shouted, “Who will go with old Ben Milam into San Antonio?” Roused, the Texian army charged into the city and began a house-to-house battle. Early in the fight, Milam was killed by a Mexican sniper perched high in the branches of a tall cypress tree on the banks of the San Antonio River.

To see the Ben Milam Cypress from St. Mary's Street in downtown San Antonio, follow the stairs at Commerce and St. Mary's down to the River Walk, bear right, and you will see the historic tree where the two sections of the river intersect. For information about visiting San Antonio, call 800/447-3372; [www.visitsanantonio.com](http://www.visitsanantonio.com).





## ◀ THE TREATY OAK

AUSTIN

*People gathered here to find a common cause, but today, keeping the Treaty Oak alive is the cause.*

Stephen F. Austin is believed to have negotiated one of the earliest treaties between Texas settlers and Texas tribes beneath the branches of Austin's Treaty Oak, which was once voted "the most perfect specimen of an oak tree in the United States" by members of the American Forestry Association. Victim of an herbicide poisoning in 1989, the tree survives today thanks to the efforts of arborists and concerned citizens across the state. A small park now surrounds the grounds, and visitors to Austin often stop to pay respects to Treaty Oak's indomitable spirit.

Treaty Oak, a Southern live oak estimated to be at least 500 years old, is at 507 Baylor Street, west of downtown Austin. Heading west on Sixth, cross Lamar and turn immediately left (south) on Baylor Street. Treaty Oak is on the east side of Baylor before you get to Fifth Street. For information about visiting Austin, call 866/GO-AUSTIN; [www.austintexas.org](http://www.austintexas.org).

See next page  
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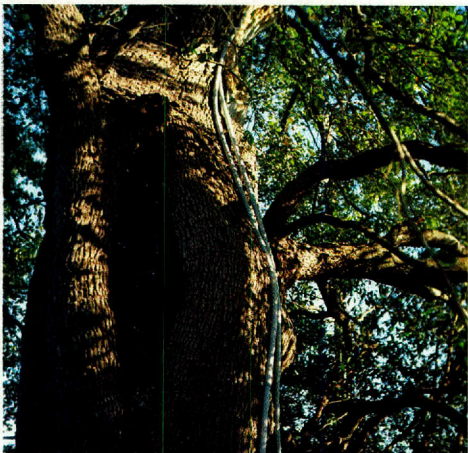
## THE CART WAR OAK

GOLIAD

*A curious little war settled under an enormous landmark.*

In the 1850s, Mexican traders driving horse-drawn carts full of supplies were a common sight on roads between the Gulf coast and inland towns like Goliad. Anglo competitors began intercepting, robbing, and murdering the enterprising "cart men." The situation became so bad that state funds were allocated to deal with the robbers, but the people of Goliad had had enough and began taking care of the thieves in a much swifter fashion. In 1857, before state militia could intervene, most of the troublemakers had been hanged from the great tree outside the courthouse in Goliad.

The Cart War Oak is on the north side of the Goliad County Courthouse, midway between Commercial and Market streets. For information about visiting Goliad, call 800/848-8674; [www.goliadcc.org](http://www.goliadcc.org).



## Hall of Texas Heroes

BOTANICAL PROGENY AT THE LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER  
AND THROUGHOUT THE STATE

**B**y virtue of their size and longevity, trees are often identified with historic places or events. From the Heart O' Texas Oak in Mercury, which marks the exact center of the state, to San Antonio's Ben Milam Cypress, which housed a Mexican sniper in the battle of San Antonio in 1835, these trees have fascinating stories to tell that span both space and time.

One of Texas' most well-known historic trees, Austin's 500-year-old Treaty Oak, is the sole survivor of a group of oaks known as the council oaks, under which Stephen F. Austin was purported to have signed a boundary treaty with Native Americans. In 1989, a man attempted to poison the tree

to keep the woman he loved from the arms of another. The man served ten years in prison, and experts managed to save about one-third of the tree. Today, the Treaty Oak lives on, as do its offspring in numerous botanical collections throughout Texas.

One such collection, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's Mollie Steves Zachry Texas Arboretum, features a Hall of Texas Heroes, where Texas' past will come alive through the propagation of historically significant trees. Once completed, this collection will help conserve the heritage of culturally significant trees and provide a tangible and living connection to our past.  
—Damon E. Waitt, Senior Director and Botanist, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

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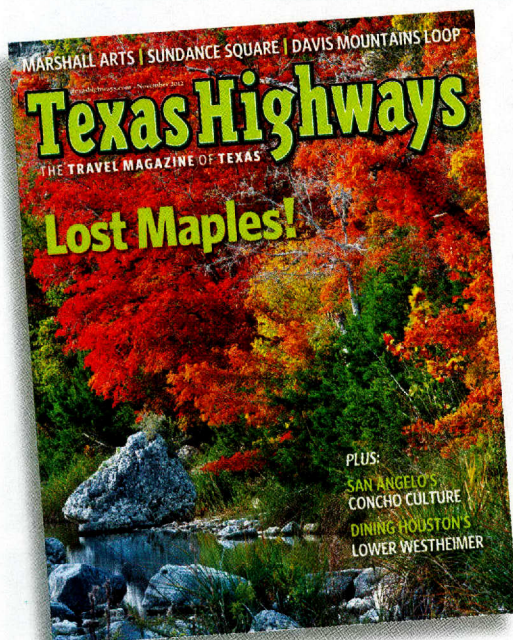
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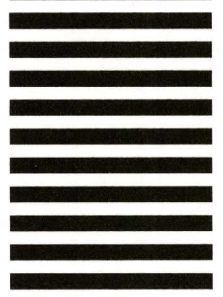
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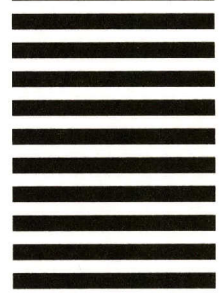


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# Mansbendel's Masterpieces

*Swiss woodcarver Peter Mansbendel beautified buildings throughout Texas*

Text by **GENE FOWLER**



**LEGIONS OF VISITORS TO MISSION SAN JOSÉ** and the Spanish Governor's Palace in San Antonio have admired the doors and other architectural details that Swiss-born Austin woodcarver Peter Mansbendel created for their restorations in the 1930s. Mansbendel, who often described himself as a "chiseler" and once declared that "real genius does not need to proclaim itself other than in its work," left plenty of public work to prove his talents. In fact, Mansbendel's hand-carved mantels, altars, doors, bargeboards, portraits, plaques, and myriad other creations beautify locations throughout Texas, including several buildings on the University of Texas at Austin campus, the Austin Museum of Art-Arthouse at Laguna Gloria, the Austin History Center, Quinta Mazatlan in McAllen, the W.H. Stark House in Orange, and the landmark Austin watering holes of Scholz Garten and The Tavern.

Born in Basle, Switzerland in 1883, Peter Heinrich Mansbendel apprenticed with a local woodcarver from the ages of 10 to 16, then traveled to England, where he studied the work of Grinling Gibbons, often regarded as Britain's greatest woodcarver. After completing his education in Paris at the Coquier-Roland School of Art, Mansbendel sailed for New York in 1907 and soon found work. Before long, he was director of the woodcarving department at the interior decorating firm of L. Marcotte & Company and taught clay modeling at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art.

Love, however, lured him to Texas. At a tea in his New York studio in 1911, he met Austinite Clotilde Shipe, and the two began a short courtship. After marrying that same year, the

couple settled in Hyde Park, Austin's first suburb, which was developed by Clotilde's father, Monroe Shipe.

For more than a quarter-century, until his death from throat cancer in 1940, Mansbendel worked in his studio in Austin's former Swedish consulate. Using some 300 carving tools, many of them made in the Old World, he wrought from oak, pine, cypress, walnut, and mesquite an endless variety of architectural elements, household furnishings, and other artistic creations.

For one of his first Texas commissions, Mansbendel carved a mantel for Clara Driscoll's Italianate mansion—set on a Colorado River lagoon on the western outskirts of Austin—which is known today as the Austin Museum of Art-Arthouse at Laguna Gloria. The wood used for the mantel is a beam from the Alamo that

## More

On the life and works of Peter Mansbendel at [texashighways.com/more](http://texashighways.com/more)

The ornate work of Swiss woodcarver Peter Mansbendel, who was known for his sense of humor and whimsy, embellishes sites throughout Texas.

# Speaking of Texas

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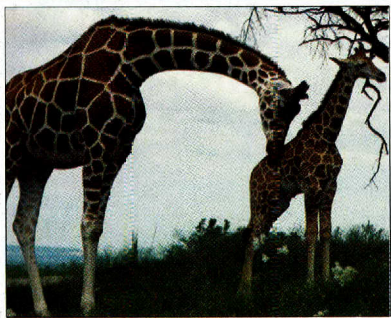
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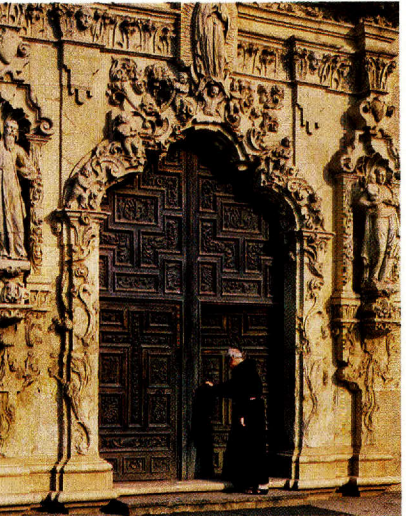
## Mansbendel's Carvings

NUMEROUS EXAMPLES OF PETER MANSBENDEL'S WOODCARVINGS

are on display throughout Texas. To learn more about his life and work, visit [www.petermansbendel.com](http://www.petermansbendel.com).

In **Austin**, you can see Mansbendel's work at the **Austin History Center** (810 Guadalupe St., 512/974-7480; [www.austinhistorycenter.org](http://www.austinhistorycenter.org)); the **Briscoe Center for American History** (2313 Red River, Sid Richardson Hall, 512/495-4518; [www.cah.utexas.edu](http://www.cah.utexas.edu)); the **Texas Union** (2247 Guadalupe St., 512/475-6636; [www.utexas.edu/universityunions](http://www.utexas.edu/universityunions)); and the **Austin Museum of Art-Arthouse at Laguna Gloria** (3809 W. 35th St., 512/458-8191; [www.amoa.org](http://www.amoa.org)). In addition, the entrance sign for **The Tavern** (922 W. 12th St., 512/320-8377; [www.tavernaustin.com](http://www.tavernaustin.com)) and a bargeboard along its eaves were made by Mansbendel, and for **Scholz Garten** (1607 San Jacinto St., 512/474-1958; [www.scholzgarten.net](http://www.scholzgarten.net)), the artist made a greeting sign in German.

Other Texas locations that highlight Mansbendel's work include the **W.H. Stark House** in **Orange** (610 Main Ave., 409/883-0871; [www.whstarkhouse.org](http://www.whstarkhouse.org)); the **Spanish Governor's Palace** in **San Antonio** (105 Military Plaza, 210/224-0601; [www.spanishgovernorspalace.org](http://www.spanishgovernorspalace.org)); and **Mission San José**, also in San Antonio (6701 San José Dr., 210/932-1001; [www.nps.gov/saan/planyourvisit/sanjose.htm](http://www.nps.gov/saan/planyourvisit/sanjose.htm)). In **McAllen**, Mansbendel carved the front doors of the 1930s Spanish Revival adobe hacienda **Quinta Mazatlan** (a World Birding Center), basing his design on the Spanish Governor's Palace doors. Look for the gargoyles and cherubs in the likenesses of the original residents' children (600 Sunset Dr.; 956/681-3370; [www.quintamazatlan.com](http://www.quintamazatlan.com)).



In the 1930s, Mansbendel created new doors for San Antonio's Mission San José, which dates to 1720.

—Gene Fowler

was presented to Driscoll by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas in appreciation of her role as "Savior of the Alamo." Mansbendel carved an Alamo scene in the mantel's center, flanked by carvings of the State Capitol and the lagoon.

As Mansbendel's reputation grew, Texas architects and homeowners called on his services when their projects needed a distinctive touch. In the 1894 W.H. Stark House in Orange, Mansbendel's work includes a pair of mahogany beds. Other works by Mansbendel, including an Alamo scene carved on a beam, an elaborate coat rack, and a carved figurine of a tipsy monk that reveals the woodcarver's whimsical side, are part of the Nelda C. and

H.J. Lutzer Stark Foundation collection.

Public examples of his work at the University of Texas at Austin include a walnut exhibit case in the lobby of the Briscoe Center for American History and carvings of past UT presidents at the university's Texas Union. And at the Austin History Center, the local history archives of the Austin Public Library, visitors can view Mansbendel's walnut portrait plaque of Stephen F. Austin.

Mansbendel created some of his best-known works, for San Antonio's Spanish Governor's Palace and Mission San José, during the nation's Great Depression. According to legend, the seashells, dragon, baby's face, medicine man's mask,





and other symbols carved into the palace's cypress doors tell the story of Columbus' voyage to the New World and Spain's subsequent reign in the Southwest. Al Lowman, a former president of the Texas State History Association, once wrote that the scrolls and leaves in the mission's

Texas architects and homeowners called on Mansbendel when their projects needed a distinctive touch.

massive, black walnut doors were crafted in a Moorish tradition that refrained from depicting living creatures.

Mansbendel likely could have enjoyed a more glamorous career had he remained in New York, but he seems to have taken to the Lone Star State like a native son. The Mansbendels sang in the choir at St. David's Episcopal Church, and Peter served as art director for the Austin Community Players. Saturday-night soirees at the Mansbendels' Hyde Park home would often include such friends as iron-work artist Fortunat Weigl, architect Arthur Fehr, commercial artist Godfrey Flury, and Willie Dieter of the Calcasieu Lumber Company, who kept the carver supplied with the choicest woods.

Thanks to the efforts of Flower Mound woodcarver Doug Oliver, who has documented Mansbendel's work since 1995 for a forthcoming book, interest in the Swiss woodcarver's legacy is enjoying a renaissance. "He turned out an amazing amount of work," says Oliver, "and he worked feverishly in the late '30s as he knew his health was failing. Peter Mansbendel was a true Renaissance Man and a genius master woodcarver." **TH**

## The Republic of Texas in 1836

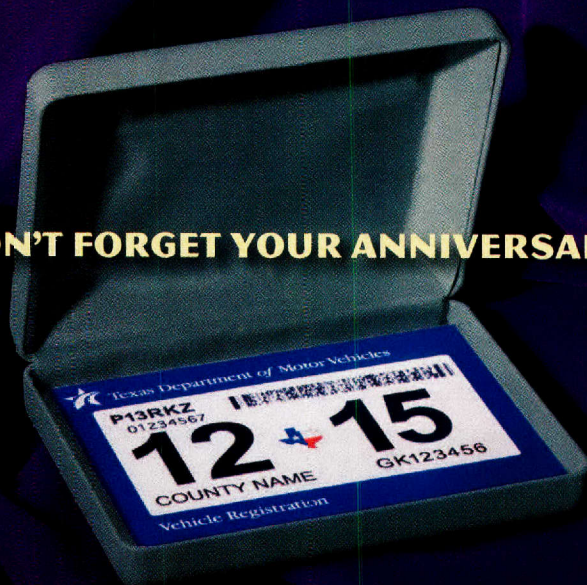
This rare pocket map by Mitchell-Young was published as the battle for independence raged and was won. It was designed to inform and tempt emigrants to the area. Includes leather cover.

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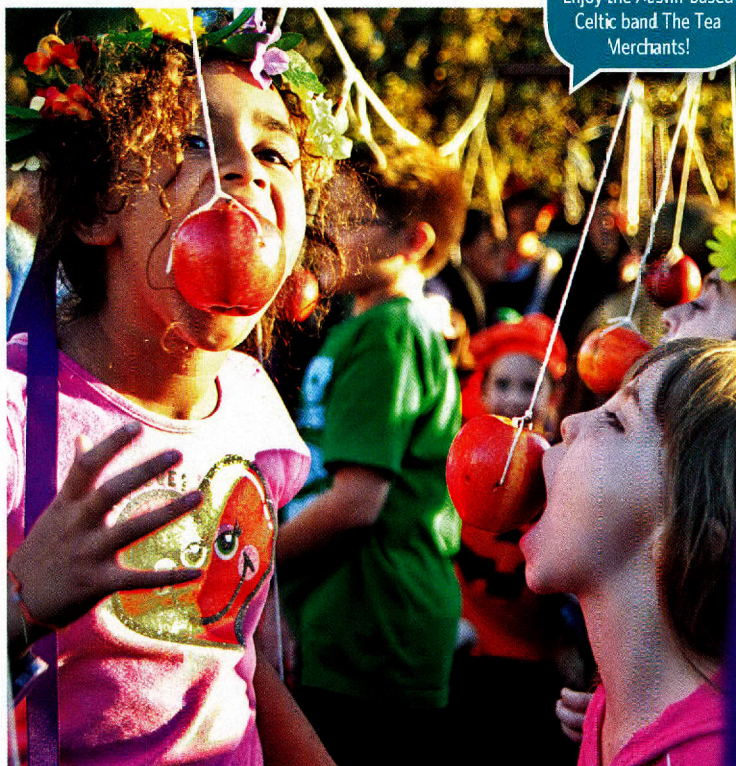
Enjoy the Austin-based Celtic band The Tea Merchants!

## Boerne Bash

ON OCTOBER 27, BOERNE PUTS ITS OWN SPIN on an old Celtic autumn-harvest festival at the 6th annual **Harvest Moon Celebration**. Gather on the lawn of the Boerne Visitors Center (in the Historic Kingsbury House) and enjoy food, Celtic music, old-fashioned games, and shopping (think Irish wools and Celtic jewelry). Activities include palm-reading, magic and paranormal entertainment, henna tattoos, and face-painting. Visitors are invited to participate in a variety of competitions, including kid and adult costume contests and a pie-eating contest.

A team from Last Chance Forever Bird of Prey Conservancy will provide a close-up look at hawks, vultures, falcons, and eagles with an exhibition and flight demonstration. At night, the torch-lit "Trail of the Mysterious Night Flyers" owl demonstration gives visitors a glimpse of these nocturnal creatures in their natural habitat.

The celebration takes place from noon to 8 p.m. For more details, visit [www.visitboerne.org](http://www.visitboerne.org).



## November Events

### BIG BEND COUNTRY

**ALPINE:** **Artwalk 2012** November 16-17. [www.artwalkalpine.com](http://www.artwalkalpine.com) 432/837-3067

**MARFA:** **Marfa Architecture + Design Weekend** November 2-4. [www.designmarfa.com](http://www.designmarfa.com)

**MIDLAND:** **American Society of Marine Artists Exhibition** November 1-11. [www.museumsw.org](http://www.museumsw.org) 432/683-2882

**ODESSA:** **Home for Christmas** November 9-11, 16, 18. Globe Theatre. [www.globesw.org](http://www.globesw.org)

**VAN HORN:** **Trans Pecos Big Buck Tournament** November 23-December 10. [www.vanhorn-texas.org](http://www.vanhorn-texas.org) 432/283-2682

### GULF COAST

**BEAUMONT:** **Very Merry Main Street Market** November 29-December 2. Beaumont Civic Center. [www.juniorleaguebeaumont.com](http://www.juniorleaguebeaumont.com) 409/832-0873

**BROWNSVILLE:** **Memorial Illumination at Resaca de la Palma Battlefield** November 7. [www.nps.gov/paal/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/paal/index.htm) 956/541-2785

**CLUTE:** **Elizabethan Madrigal Feast** November 23-25, 30-December 2. [www.bcfas.org](http://www.bcfas.org) 979/265-7661

**CORPUS CHRISTI:** **Las Luces Del Mar** November 30. [www.harborlightsfestival.com](http://www.harborlightsfestival.com) 361/985-1555

**EDNA:** **Texana Chili Spill and Go Texan Barbecue Cook-Off** November 8-10. [www.brackenridgepark.com](http://www.brackenridgepark.com) 361/782-7272

**FRIENDSWOOD:** **Friendswood Heritage Gardeners' Christmas Home Tour** November 17-18. Marie Workmen Garden Center. [www.heritagegardener.org](http://www.heritagegardener.org) 281/992-4438

**GALVESTON:** **Lasers, Lights and Magic in the Park** November 24-December 31. Saengerfest Park. 409/762-0062

**HARLINGEN:** **Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival** November 7-11. [www.rgvbf.org](http://www.rgvbf.org) 956/423-5565 ext. 223

**HOUSTON:** **CraftTexas** November 1-December 30. [www.crafthouston.org](http://www.crafthouston.org) 713/529-4848

**HOUSTON:** **Henry Ossawa Tanner: Modern Spirit** November 1-January 13. [www.mfah.org](http://www.mfah.org)

**HUMBLE:** **Trade Days** November 30-December 2. Humble Civic Center. [www.humblecc.com](http://www.humblecc.com) 281/446-4140

**KINGSVILLE:** **Ranch Hand Breakfast** November 17. King Ranch. [www.king-ranch.com](http://www.king-ranch.com) 361/592-8516 or 361/592-8055

**LAKE JACKSON:** **Festival of Lights** November 16-18. Lake Jackson Civic Center and Plaza. 979/297-4533

**NASSAU BAY:** **Bay Area Houston Fine Arts Festival** November 2-3. [www.taaccl.org](http://www.taaccl.org) 281/335-7777

**ORANGE:** **Scarecrow Festival and Autumn Fair** November 1-10. [www.shangr.lagardens.org](http://www.shangr.lagardens.org) 409/670-5113

**ORANGE:** **National Geographic Greatest Photographs of the American West** November 7-January 26. [www.starkmuseum.org](http://www.starkmuseum.org) 409/886-2787



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**[www.sonoratexas.org](http://www.sonoratexas.org) 888-387-2880**

**RICHMOND: Candlelight Tours of the Historic John M. Moore Home** November 24-25. [www.fortbendmuseum.org](http://www.fortbendmuseum.org) 281/342-6478

**ROCKPORT: Film Festival** November 1-3. Main Street Arts and other locations. [www.rockportfilmfest.com](http://www.rockportfilmfest.com)

**SAN BENITO: Veterans Day March and Ceremony** November 11. [www.cityofsanbenito.com](http://www.cityofsanbenito.com) 956/399-7464

**SUGAR LAND: International Festival** November 3. [www.sugarlandtownsquare.com](http://www.sugarlandtownsquare.com) 281/276-6000

**TOMBALL: Holiday Parade** November 17. On F.M. 2920. [www.tomballchamber.org](http://www.tomballchamber.org) 281/351-7222

**VICTORIA: El Día de los Muertos Exhibit** November 1-25. [www.victoriaregionalmuseum.com](http://www.victoriaregionalmuseum.com) 361/575-8227

**VICTORIA: Texas Senior Open PGA Tournament** November 6-9. [www.stpga.com](http://www.stpga.com) 832/442-2404

**WHARTON: Holiday Parade and Official Lighting Ceremony** November 20. [www.whartonchamber.com](http://www.whartonchamber.com) 979/532-1862

## HILL COUNTRY

**AUSTIN: Fun Fun Fun Fest** November 2-4. Auditorium Shores. [www.funfunfunfest.com](http://www.funfunfunfest.com)

**AUSTIN: Formula 1 United States Grand Prix** November 16-18. Circuit of the Americas. [www.circuitoftheamericas.com](http://www.circuitoftheamericas.com)

**AUSTIN: Chuy's Christmas Parade** November 26. Congress Avenue. [www.chuysparade.com](http://www.chuysparade.com)

**BANDERA: Hunters' Barbecue and Outdoor Expo** November 2. [www.banderahuntersbbq.com](http://www.banderahuntersbbq.com) 830/796-3280

**BANDERA: Cowboy Capital Opry** November 9. Silver Sage Corral. [www.silversagecorral.org](http://www.silversagecorral.org) 830/796-4969

**BOERNE: Market Days** November 10-11. Main Plaza. [www.boernemarketdays.com](http://www.boernemarketdays.com) 210/844-8193

**BOERNE: Dickens on Main** November 23-24. Downtown streets of Historic Boerne. [www.dickensonmain.com](http://www.dickensonmain.com)

**BROWNWOOD: Holiday Arts and Crafts Show** November 10. Brownwood Coliseum. 325/646-9535

**BULVERDE: The Lighting of Downtown Bulverde** November 23. [www.bulverdespringbranchchamber.com](http://www.bulverdespringbranchchamber.com) 830/438-4385

**FREDERICKSBURG: Veterans' Day Observance** November 11. [www.pacificwarmuseum.org](http://www.pacificwarmuseum.org) 830/997-8600

**FREDERICKSBURG: Holiday Lighting Ceremony** November 23. [www.visitfredericksburgtx.com](http://www.visitfredericksburgtx.com) 830/990-9335

**GRUENE: Tour de Gruene Fall Bicycle Classic** November 3-4. [www.tourdegruene.com](http://www.tourdegruene.com) 210/828-6856

**GRUENE: Old Gruene Market Days** November 17-18. [www.gruenemarketdays.com](http://www.gruenemarketdays.com) 830/832-1721

**HONDO: Christmas in God's Country** November 17. [www.hondo-chamber.com](http://www.hondo-chamber.com) 830/426-3037

**JOHNSON CITY: Lamplight Tours of the Boyhood Home of President Johnson** November 24. [www.nps.gov/lyjo](http://www.nps.gov/lyjo) 830/868-7128 ext. 244

**KERRVILLE: Texas Furniture Makers' Show** November 8-December 9. [www.kackerrville.com](http://www.kackerrville.com) 830/895-2911

**KERRVILLE: Holiday Lighted Parade, Festival and Courthouse Lighting** November 17. [www.kerrvilletx.gov](http://www.kerrvilletx.gov) 830/792-8395

**LLANO: Hunters' Appreciation** November 2-3. Llano Visitor Center. [www.llanochamber.org](http://www.llanochamber.org) 325/247-5354

**LUCKENBACH: Thanksgiving Dance** November 24. Luckenbach Dance Hall. [www.luckenbachtexas.com](http://www.luckenbachtexas.com)

**NEW BRAUNFELS: Wurstfest** November 2-11. Wurstfest Grounds. [www.wurstfest.com](http://www.wurstfest.com) 800/221-4369

**NEW BRAUNFELS: Weihnachtsmarkt (German Christmas Market)** November 16-18. [www.sophienburg.org](http://www.sophienburg.org) 830/629-1572

**SAN MARCOS: Sights and Sounds of Christmas** November 28-December 1. [www.sights-n-sounds.org](http://www.sights-n-sounds.org) 512/393-8400

**STONEWALL: Holiday Cookie Decorating and German Traditions** November 24. [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/lyndon-b-johnson](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/lyndon-b-johnson) 830/644-2252 ext. 222

**WIMBERLEY: Market Day** November 3. Lions Pavilion on R.M. 2325. [www.shopmarketdays.com](http://www.shopmarketdays.com) 512/847-2201

## PANHANDLE PLAINS

**ABILENE: 24fps International Short Film Festival** November 2-3. Paramount Theatre. 325/676-9620

**ALBANY: Gene Owens: Modern Vision** November 1-January 20. [www.theoldjailartcenter.org](http://www.theoldjailartcenter.org) 325/762-2269

**AMARILLO: The Paintings of Colleen Browning** November 1-January 5. [www.amarilloart.org](http://www.amarilloart.org)

**CANYON: Collecting Art History: Taste on the Southern Plains** November 1-February 16. <http://panhandleplains.org>

**CROWELL: World Championship Wild Hog Cook-Off** November 2-3. [www.crowelltexaschamber.com](http://www.crowelltexaschamber.com) 940/655-8314

**DALHART: XIT Rangers Veterans' Day Parade** November 11. [www.dalhart.org](http://www.dalhart.org) 806/244-5646

**EASTLAND: Texas Writers Exhibit** November 1-24. E-mail: [eastlandcountymuseum@gmail.com](mailto:eastlandcountymuseum@gmail.com) 254/631-6894

**EDEN: Camouflage Cotillion** November 17. Eden Fire Hall. [www.edentexas.com](http://www.edentexas.com) 325/869-3336

**ELECTRA: Holiday of Lights Parade** November 24. Downtown. [www.electratexas.org](http://www.electratexas.org) 940/495-3577

**LUBBOCK: Take in the Local Color! Lubbock's Artist Studio Tour** November 10-11. [www.lubbockarts.org](http://www.lubbockarts.org) 806/252-6162

**POST: Post City Trade Day** November 3. Main Street. [www.postcitytexas.com](http://www.postcitytexas.com) 806/559-0835

**SAN ANGELO: Art Walk** November 15. [www.downtownsanangelo.com/artwalk.html](http://www.downtownsanangelo.com/artwalk.html) 325/653-3333

**SEMINOLE: Trade Days** November 16-18. [www.seminoletradedays.com](http://www.seminoletradedays.com) 432/758-0807

**SLATON: Fifth Friday Art Show and Christmas on the Square** November 30. Town Square. [www.slatonchamberofcommerce.org](http://www.slatonchamberofcommerce.org) 806/828-6238

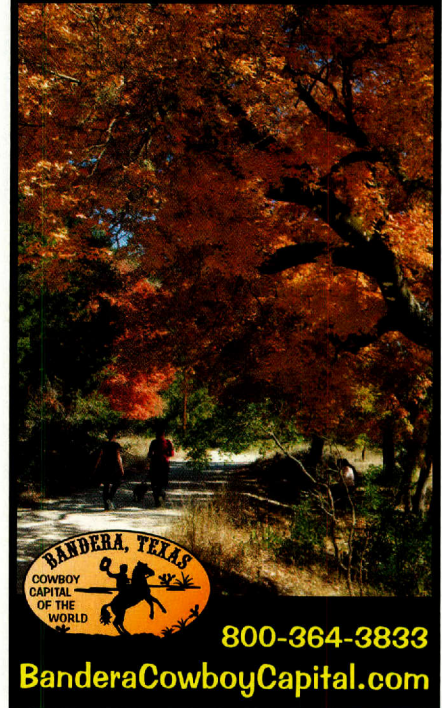
**WICHITA FALLS: Downtown City Lights Festival and Parade** November 17. [www.downtownproud.com](http://www.downtownproud.com) 940/322-4525

## PINEY WOODS


**BULLARD: Red, White and Blue Festival** November 3. Downtown. [www.bullardtexaschamber.com](http://www.bullardtexaschamber.com) 903/894-5056

**CROCKETT: Christmas in Crockett** November 17. [www.crockettareachamber.org](http://www.crockettareachamber.org) 936/544-2359

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### TH SPOTLIGHT

## Holiday in The Woodlands

ON NOV. 17, A WINTER WONDERLAND OVERTAKES THE WOODLANDS AT the annual **Lighting of the Doves and International Winter on the Waterway** celebrations. Holiday traditions from around the world, live music, ice-carvers, and fireworks entertain revelers as they browse vendor booths and sample snazzy versions of old-fashioned favorites like burgers and hotdogs. Children can spend the day playing in a snow area, jumping in bounce houses, and flaunting painted faces while awaiting Santa Claus' grand waterway arrival at 7 p.m. The lighting of the 70-foot holiday tree and 20 large dove figures takes place the same evening, along with the illumination of holiday scenes that surround the outdoor ice rink. Shoppers can hop a trolley and head for the Market Street stores while couples might opt for a romantic horse-drawn carriage ride.

Enjoy the holiday displays and ice rink through Jan. 21. Visit [www.thewoodlandscvb.com](http://www.thewoodlandscvb.com) for details.



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**HENDERSON: Heritage Syrup Festival** November 10. <http://visithendersontx.com>

**HUNTSVILLE: Journey Through Bethlehem** November 30-December 1. [www.journeythroughbethlehem.org](http://www.journeythroughbethlehem.org) 936/439-5899

**JEFFERSON: History, Haunts and Legends** November 3. [www.jeffersonghostwalk.com](http://www.jeffersonghostwalk.com) 903/665-6289

**JEFFERSON: Rail of Lights Christmas Train** November 22-24, 29-30. [www.railoflights.com](http://www.railoflights.com) 866/398-2038

**KILGORE: Christmas in the Oil Patch** November 15. World's Richest Acre Park. [www.khpf.org](http://www.khpf.org) 903/984-1333

**LIBERTY: Country Christmas** November 27. Downtown. [www.libertydaytonchamber.com](http://www.libertydaytonchamber.com) 936/336-5736

**LONGVIEW: Trade Days** November 10-11. 903/753-4428

**MAGNOLIA: Peddlers' Green Craft Market** November 4, 18. F.M. 1488 at F.M. 1774. 832/934-2648

**MILAM: Milam Settlers Day** November 16-17. El Camino Park. [www.milamsettlersday.org](http://www.milamsettlersday.org)

**MINEOLA: Iron Horse Fall Festival** November 3. Downtown. [www.mineolachamber.org](http://www.mineolachamber.org) 903/569-2087

**MACOGDOCHES: Nine Flags Festival** November 17-December 8. <http://nineflags.visitmacogdoches.org> 888/653-3788

**THE WOODLANDS: Children's Festival** November 10-11. [www.woodlandscenter.org](http://www.woodlandscenter.org) 281/363-3300

**TYLER: The Wyeths Across Texas** November 1-11. Tyler Museum of Art. [www.tylermuseum.org](http://www.tylermuseum.org) 903/595-1001

**WINNSBORO: Wild West Days** November 10-11. [www.tnlegendsofcrossroads.com](http://www.tnlegendsofcrossroads.com) 903/342-1300

**WOODVILLE: Christmas in Tyler County** November 30-December 1. [www.tylercountycr.com](http://www.tylercountycr.com) 409/283-2632

## PRAIRIES AND LAKES

**ANDERSON: Twilight Firelight at Fanthorp Inn** November 24. [www.birthplaceoftexas.com](http://www.birthplaceoftexas.com) 935/878-2214

**BASTROP: Veterans Day Car and Motorcycle Show Weekend** November 11-13. [www.bastropdba.org](http://www.bastropdba.org)

**BELTON: Market Days** November 17. Downtown. [www.countytownbelton.com](http://www.countytownbelton.com) 254/721-4693

**BRENHAM: Christmas Stroll and Lighted Parade** November 30. [www.downtownbrenham.com](http://www.downtownbrenham.com) 888/273-6426

**CANTON: First Monday Trade Days** November 1-4. [www.visitcantontx.com](http://www.visitcantontx.com) 877/462-7467 or 903/567-1849

**CLEBURNE: Pioneer Days** November 16-17. [www.cleburne-chamber.com](http://www.cleburne-chamber.com) 817/648-1486 or 817/645-2455

**CLIFTON: Clifton Swirl** November 10. At nine wineries in the area. [www.cliftonswirl.com](http://www.cliftonswirl.com) 254/675-8337

**COLLEGE STATION: Brazos Valley Worldfest** November 10. [www.brazosvalleyworldfest.org](http://www.brazosvalleyworldfest.org) 979/862-6700

**COLUMBUS: Live Oaks and Dead Folks Cemetery Tour** November 2-3. [www.columbus-texas.net/library](http://www.columbus-texas.net/library) 979/732-3392

**CUERO: Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony** November 19. At Esplanade and Live Oak streets. 361/275-2112

**DALE: Showdown at Unobtainium 2012: Tesla vs. Edison** November 10-11. [www.showdownat-unobtainium.com](http://www.showdownat-unobtainium.com) 512/484-9769

**DALLAS: Rediscoveries: Modes of Making in Modern Sculpture** November 1-January 13. [www.nashersculpturecenter.org](http://www.nashersculpturecenter.org)

**DALLAS: Ornament Extravaganza** November 17-December 31. [www.kittrellriffkind.com](http://www.kittrellriffkind.com) 888/865-2228

**DENTON: Guided Tour of North Texas Horse Country** November 3. 940/382-7895

**DENTON: Annual Holiday Lighting Festival** November 30. Downtown square. [www.dentonholidaylighting.com](http://www.dentonholidaylighting.com)

**EDGEWOOD: Edgewood Heritage Festival** November 10. [www.edgewoodheritagefestival.com](http://www.edgewoodheritagefestival.com) 903/896-4358

**FORT WORTH: The Kimbell at 40: An Evolving Masterpiece** November 1-December 30. [www.kimbellart.org](http://www.kimbellart.org) 817/332-8451

**FORT WORTH: Lone Star Film Festival** November 7-11. [www.lonestarfilmsociety.com](http://www.lonestarfilmsociety.com) 817/924-6000

**GONZALES: Stars in the Village** November 20. [www.gonzalestexas.com](http://www.gonzalestexas.com) 830/672-6532

**GRANBURY: Country Christmas Parade** November 23. [www.granburysquare.com](http://www.granburysquare.com) 817/573-5299

**GRAND PRAIRIE: Mountain Man Weekend Gathering** November 10-11. [www.tradersvillage.com](http://www.tradersvillage.com) 972/647-2331

**GRAND SALINE: Great American Peanut Butter Festival** November 10. [www.greatamericanpeanutbutterfestival.com](http://www.greatamericanpeanutbutterfestival.com) 903/962-3122

**GRAPEVINE: ICE! and Lone Star Christmas** November 9-January 1. [www.gaylordtexas.com](http://www.gaylordtexas.com) 817/410-3185

**HEMPSTEAD: Civil War Weekend** November 17-18. [www.liendo.org/civilwarweekend/civilwar.html](http://www.liendo.org/civilwarweekend/civilwar.html) 979/826-3126

**LOCKHART: A Dickens Christmas in Lockhart** November 30-December 1. <http://lockhartchamber.com/Dickens.htm> 512/398-2818

**MCKINNEY: Third Monday Trade Days** November 16-18. At 4550 W. University. [www.tmtdd.com](http://www.tmtdd.com) 972/562-5466

**MOUNT VERNON: Alamo Trade Day and Redneck Games** November 5. <http://alamomission.weebly.com>

**PLANTERSVILLE: Texas Renaissance Festival** November 3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25. [www.texrenfest.com](http://www.texrenfest.com) 800/458-3435

**SALADO: Scottish Gathering of the Clans and Highland Games** November 9-11. [www.saladoscottishgames.org](http://www.saladoscottishgames.org) 254/947-5232

**SULPHUR SPRINGS: Christmas Light Parade and Christmas Comes To Town** November 30-December 2. [www.visitsulphur-springstx.org](http://www.visitsulphur-springstx.org) 888/300-6623

**THE COLONY: American Heroes Festival** November 10. [www.saluteamericanheroes.com](http://www.saluteamericanheroes.com) 877/264-4386

**WACO: Christmas on the Brazos Home Tours** November 24-25. [www.historicwaco.org](http://www.historicwaco.org) 254/753-5166

**WALLIS: Arts and Crafts Show** November 3-4. American Legion Hall. 979/885-2164

**WAXAHACHIE: Candlelight Home Tour** November 23-25. [www.waxahachievb.com](http://www.waxahachievb.com) 972/938-3434

**WHITEWRIGHT: Grand Street Fall Festival** November 3. <http://grandstreetfallfestival.com> 903/818-9023

## SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

**BEEVILLE: WinterFest** November 30-December 1. Bee County Expo Center. 361/358-3267

**EAGLE PASS: Veterans Day Parade** November 10. Downtown. 830/773-2528

**GEORGE WEST: Storyfest** November 2-4. Courthouse Square. [www.georgeweststoryfest.org](http://www.georgeweststoryfest.org) 888/600-3121

**GOLIAD: Christmas in Goliad** November 30. Courthouse square. [www.goliadcc.org](http://www.goliadcc.org) 361/645-3563

**SAN ANTONIO: For Jerry: Masterpieces from the Lawson Bequest** November 1-January 27. [www.mcnyart.org](http://www.mcnyart.org)

**SAN ANTONIO: Royal Drummers and Dancers of Burundi** November 8. [www.the-carver.org](http://www.the-carver.org) 210/207-2234

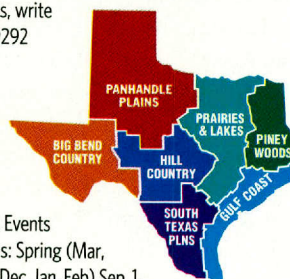
**SAN ANTONIO: Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza** November 25-December 1. [www.mariachimusic.com](http://www.mariachimusic.com) 210/225-3353

## Want more? Go to the Events Calendar at [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com).

For a free printed copy of an even more detailed, quarterly schedule of events, write to Texas Events Calendar, Box 149249, Austin 78714-9249. Or, call 800/452-9292 from anywhere in the U.S. or Canada, between 8-6 Central.

For Texas travel questions, call 800/452-9292 to reach a TxDOT Travel Information Center, where a professional travel counselor will provide routing assistance, advise you of any emergency road conditions, and send brochures (including the official Texas State Travel Guide and map, accommodations guide, and quarterly Texas Events Calendar).

Send future event information to: e-mail: [texasevents@txdot.gov](mailto:texasevents@txdot.gov); mail: Texas Events Calendar, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009; fax: 512/486-5860. Listing deadlines: Spring (Mar, Apr, May) Dec 1; Summer (Jun, Jul, Aug) Mar 1; Fall (Sep, Oct, Nov) Jun 1; Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb) Sep 1.



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CHET GARNER is the host of *The Daytripper*™ travel show on PBS; [www.thedaytripper.com](http://www.thedaytripper.com).

# Spirit of Aggieland

**WHILE** Texas A&M University has made a sports move to the Southeastern Conference, College Station is still a truly Texan destination. I headed into the heart of Aggieland to see what this maroon oasis had to offer.



**9:00 a.m.** I stopped at **Blue Baker**, a local bakery-turned-Texas-chain selling scratch-made artisan breads, sandwiches, and pastries. I grabbed a cup of coffee and a delicious blueberry muffin that just about matched the blue-painted walls and décor.

**10:00 a.m.** I hit the sidewalks of **Texas A&M University** and joined the sea of maroon-adorned students passing each other with a friendly “Howdy.” Founded in 1876, this multidiscipline establishment is about more than just agriculture and mechanics these days. I strolled past campus landmarks such as the **Sul Ross Statue**, where students place pennies at the feet of the statue for good luck on exams, the sprawling **Century Tree** (see page 52), and the **Memorial Student Center grass**, where stepping on the lawn is an Aggie *faux pas* of the highest offense. While I may not understand everything the Aggies do, I do understand the value of tradition, and for that they have my utmost respect.

**12:30 p.m.** One thing I love about college towns is the abundance of good grub; the kind students require to pull all-nighters for exams and still have the strength to stand for four quarters of football. For this, I headed to **Layne’s Chicken Fingers**, a spot so beloved that the current customer record stands at eating 72 chicken-finger plates in one month. My plate with chicken, fries, potato salad, Texas toast, and “secret sauce” was so delicious that I considered sticking around for another 71.

**1:30 p.m.** With more to see on campus, I went to the **George Bush Presidential Library and Museum**. Though he was not an Aggie, George H.W. Bush (that’s Bush #41) fell in love with the traditions of A&M and ultimately chose it to house his presidential library. The museum has a number of exhibits about his life before, during, and after the

presidency, including displays about his service in World War II, his time as director of the CIA, and his terms as Vice President under Reagan—not to mention a replica Oval Office.

**3:00 p.m.** I was now ready to partake in some off-campus traditions in the **Northgate District**. These few city blocks are packed with bookstores, restaurants, bars, and, of course, Aggies. After

a walk through **Bottlecap Alley**, where the ground is littered with rusting beer-bottle caps, I found myself at the entrance to the **Dixie Chicken**. Through the swingin’ saloon doors and

past the live rattlesnake cage, I walked up to the bar, grabbed a cold beer, and found a group needing a fourth player for a dominoes game of “Texas 42.” One game turned into four, and before I knew it I had been fully initiated into one of College Station’s most cherished off-campus traditions.

**6:00 p.m.** While Northgate is full of greasy spoons and tasty food, I decided to take a 13-mile pilgrimage to the town of **Snook** for the heart-stopping pinnacle of fried delicacies: **Chicken Fried Bacon** from **Sodolak’s Original Country Inn**. It was here in the 1990s that a kitchen experiment went incredibly right, and chicken-fried bacon was born. My plate of about a half-dozen bacon strips came out piping hot with a side of cream gravy. I was skeptical at first, but became a believer when the first piece of chicken-fried goodness hit my mouth with a crunch and bacon-y explosion. I polished off my platter, and even saved room for one of Sodolak’s signature steaks.

IT TURNS OUT that you don’t have to be a “Fightin’ Texas Aggie” to have a good time in Aggieland. All you need is an appetite for tradition, history, and delicious chicken-fried food. So, whether you follow my footsteps or forge your own path, I hope to see you on the road. **TH**

Contact the **Bryan College Station Convention and Visitors Bureau**, 979/260-9898 or 800/777-8292; [www.visitaggieland.com](http://www.visitaggieland.com).



## Window on Texas

Photograph by **J. GRIFFIS SMITH**

**COLOR CORRECTION.** The *Dublin Rodeo* exhibit at the Dublin Historical Museum presented a perfect opportunity for *Texas Highways* Photography Editor Griff Smith to demonstrate the benefits of accurate white balance for those who don't use photo-editing software. "If you're shooting indoors and your colors are looking weird, you might want to look at where your white balance is set," Smith says. One photo shows the typical yellow-green color that a camera picks up when a room is lit with fluorescent lights. The second photo shows what Smith achieved after setting the camera's white-balance feature.

This is part of an ongoing series of tips and videos on taking better photos with point-and-shoot cameras. If you missed any, all are at [texashighways.com/windowontexas](http://texashighways.com/windowontexas).

The Dublin Historical Museum, which illustrates the history of the town from the mid-1850s to the present, is at 116 W. Blackjack St. Call 254/445-4553.

**Look for our story on Dublin in December's Postcards.**



**Click!**

TH video on using white balance at [texashighways.com/windowontexas](http://texashighways.com/windowontexas)





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