

ALMOST THERE!

MORE READERS' *Top 40* REVEALED ... 3 and 2!

# TEXAS<sup>TM</sup>

## HIGHWAYS

NOVEMBER 2014

The TRAVEL MAG



Enjoy **ARTS,**  
**CRAFTS, FOOD,**  
*and FUN!*



**BLUE BELL,  
BASEBALL  
GLOVES,  
BBQ, BIKES,  
GUAYABERAS,  
BIRDHOUSES,  
AND MORE!**



## History in the Making

**T**exans are a creative bunch, characterized by an exceptional blend of ingenuity and imagination. The state's makers over centuries have given rise to inspired arts and crafts, delectable edibles, forward fashions, practical and life-saving inventions, and sweet, sweet music. Thanks to Texans, we have space suits and Rocketbuster boots, Marshall Pottery and Crazy Water, Collings Guitars and Yeti coolers (bear proof!), and Shiner Bock and maroon bluebonnets. The list goes on, like so many Christmas fruitcakes flying from the case at Corsicana's Collin Street Bakery.

In this month's special issue, we spotlight several stand-out makers: There's Ovilla banjo luthier and part-time Santa Claus Chuck Lee, who crafts stringed instruments with soul. In Del Rio, Miguel Garcia energizes his family's Tex-Mex legacy as president of Julio's Corn Tortilla Chips. Premium baseball gloves still come from Nocona, and Dublin Bottling Works keeps on bubbling with original-recipe sodas concocted with cane sugar.

**Win a weekend getaway to Beaumont! Details on page 6.**

Sarah Gould, lead curatorial researcher at the Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio, speaks to what she calls Texas' culture of innovators and doers: "Texans build, program, create, cook, and conceptualize. And Texans have long

been innovators. From ancient stone tools to Dr Pepper, agricultural implements to artificial hearts, we solve problems big and small."

Last year, Dr. Gould curated the ITC's temporary *Made in Texas* exhibit, which covered the state's influence on the world through foodways, manufacturing and technology, music, fashion, and the arts. "Currently," she adds, "the ITC's permanent exhibits feature a number of historical items that were made in Texas, such as pine-needle baskets made by the Alabama-Coushatta, hand-carved yokes from Castroville, cross-stitched linens created by Greek Texans, a comforter made in the Norwegian settlement of Norse, and ceramic jugs from the Wilson Pottery near Seguin."

And through January 11, 2015, the ITC hosts two exhibits of more than 40 modern Texas art quilts on loan from the Texas Quilt Museum in La Grange. Exploring themes from science to natural beauty to fantasy, the artists put a bold spin on this venerable craft (see [www.texancultures.com](http://www.texancultures.com)).

Hats off to Texas makers present and past, extraordinary and everyday. No matter the creation—fine art or wine, custom leather handbags, or simply tonight's dinner—we are all makers in some way.

*Jill Lawless, Editor*



**WHERE WE'LL BE NEXT MONTH:**

The wait is almost over! Find out our readers' No. 1 destination in Texas as we wrap up this year's Texas Top 40 Countdown in December. Is it a town or city, lake or park? North, east, west, or south? We'll also celebrate Christmas along the El Paso Mission Trail, experience the illuminating works of light artist James Turrell, and tour the state's trio of presidential libraries. Plus, join us for a run with a ranger at Enchanted Rock State Natural Area, and a look at the new *La Belle* exhibit at the Bullock Texas State History Museum.



WHERE TO FIND US

Drop us a line anytime at [letters@texashighways.com](mailto:letters@texashighways.com). Find us on Facebook and Twitter.



Any tips on these spots? Let us know on Facebook or Twitter



Don't mess with Texas

Drive Clean Across Texas



Come and Take It  
**GONZALES TEXAS**  
**WINTERFEST CELEBRATION**

**8th Annual Parade of Lights**  
December 5, 7:00 pm • Downtown Gonzales

**Historic Home Tour**  
December 6 - 7, 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm  
For Ticket Information Call 888-672-1095

**Santa's Market - Arts & Crafts**  
December 5, 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm  
December 6, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

**"Stars in the Village"**  
Gonzales Pioneer Village  
December 5 - 6 and December 7 - 8  
Free Refreshments  
Cookies, Wassail, Campfire Popcorn  
Adults \$8 • Children 4-12 \$5

**Historic Organ Concert by Paul Keith**  
December 6, 7:00 pm  
Presbyterian Church

**STAY FOR THE WEEKEND**

Give us a shot! Visit Gonzales Texas!

**HISTORY**

Home of the "Come and Take It" Cannon  
Historic Homes • 1800s Architecture  
Six Museums

**NATURE**

Scenic Highways and Wildflowers  
Golf Course on the Guadalupe River  
Paddling Trails • Palmetto State Park

**EVENTS**

Visit our website or download our free app  
for information about winter events, lodging and accommodations!

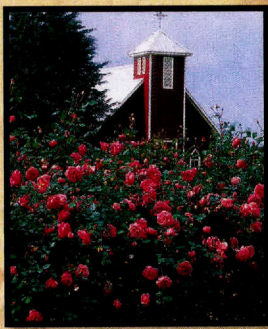


**Rusted Gingham Barn Sale**

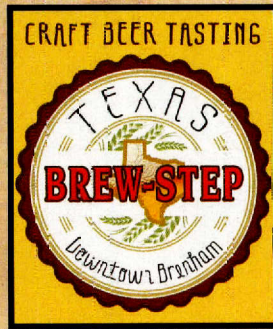
Vintage, Antique, Handmade, Remade,  
or Otherwise-Made Goods  
November 7 - 8, JB Wells Showbarn

[tourgonzales.com](http://tourgonzales.com)  
[cityofgonzales.org](http://cityofgonzales.org)  
888-672-1095





**Antique Rose Emporium**  
26<sup>th</sup> Fall Festival of Roses  
October 31-November 2



**Texas Brew Step**  
October 17-18  
[DowntownBrenham.com/BrewStep](http://DowntownBrenham.com/BrewStep)



**Home Sweet Farm Market**  
Texas' First Local Food Hub  
[HOMEsweetFARM.com](http://HOMEsweetFARM.com)



**Holiday Home Tour**  
November 22  
[GiddingsStoneMansion.com](http://GiddingsStoneMansion.com)

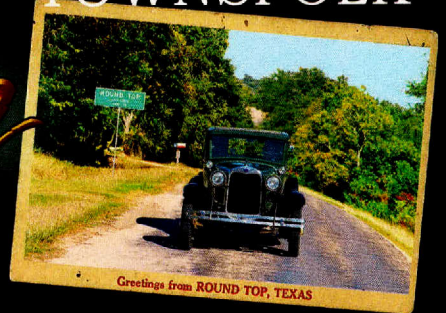
# Brenham

## Washington County

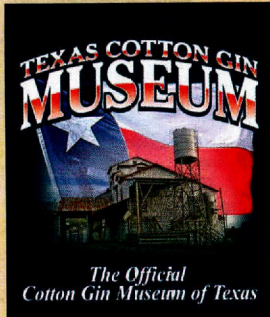
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FOR A FREE VISITOR'S GUIDE, CALL 1-800-509-1752  
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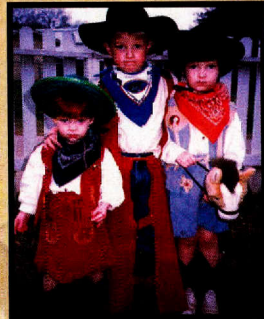
### TOWNSFOLK



The Gallery at Round Top  
Townfolk, collector's edition book  
[TheGalleryatRoundTop.com](http://TheGalleryatRoundTop.com)



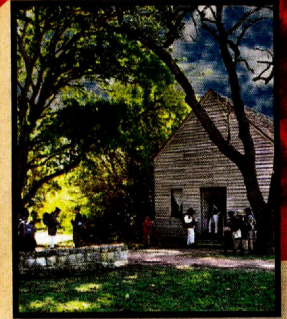
**11<sup>th</sup> Annual Barn Dance**  
October 18  
[CottonGinMuseum.org](http://CottonGinMuseum.org)



**The Barnhill House**  
An old-fashioned toy store  
979-836-1817



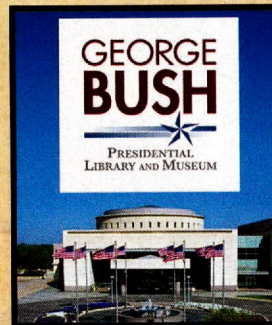
**Brenham Heritage Museum**  
History-Art-Culture-Humanities  
[BrenhamHeritageMuseum.org](http://BrenhamHeritageMuseum.org)



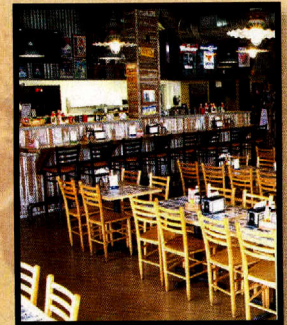
**Washington on the Brazos**  
936-878-2214  
[WhereTexasBecameTexas.org](http://WhereTexasBecameTexas.org)



**Buffalo Creek Wedding and Entertainment Venue**  
Bellville, TX • 979-865-0702  
[BuffaloCreekBellville.com](http://BuffaloCreekBellville.com)



**George Bush Library and Museum, College Station**  
979-691-4000



**Nathan's BBQ**  
Original 'True' Texas BBQ  
979-251-9900

# NOVEMBER 2014

The **PEOPLE**, the **PLACES**, and **WIDE-OPEN SPACES** of 

## 36

### TEXAS TOP 40

... *And Then There Were Two*

Comfortable, cultural, and charming:  
Destinations Nos. 3 and 2 in our countdown  
of the Readers' Choice Texas Top 40  
are turning heads afresh.

### FEATURES

#### MEET YOUR TEXAS MAKERS

### 38 *Arts, Crafts, and Icons in the Lone Star State*

From birdhouses to banjos, Texas-made  
products reflect the ingenuity, heart,  
and skill of our state's great craftspeople.  
See what makes these makers tick.

Text by CLAYTON MAXWELL

Photographs by WILL VAN OVERBEEK

### 48 *Fun With Food and Texas Treats*

Whether your tastes skew savory, sweet,  
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across Texas. Meet eight of the state's  
most tempting purveyors of the palate.

Text by ANTHONY HEAD

Photographs by ERIC W. POHL

### 58 *Texas Events: Music, Arts, and Infinite Possibilities*

Check out a sampling of the festivals and fairs  
that bring together the makers who shape  
the cultural landscape of the Lone Star State.

Text by ERIN INKS and JULIE STRATTON



#### FIND MORE ONLINE

Be sure to visit us at [texashighways.com](http://texashighways.com) for more content and events.



**Top 10 Reasons**  
YOU SHOULD VISIT GALVESTON ISLAND THIS Holiday Season



**1 MOODY GARDENS ICE LAND: ICE SCULPTURES FEATURING CHRISTMAS WITH SPONGEBOB**  
Journey through a vast and amazing icy wonderland of elaborately carved towering ice sculptures (NOV 15 - JAN 4)

**2 FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS AT MOODY GARDENS**  
Explore the largest holiday lighting festival on the Gulf Coast, featuring a mile-long trail of a million lights, ice-skating and more (NOV 15 - JAN 4)

**3 THE GRAND 1894 OPERA HOUSE HOLIDAY SEASON**  
Choose from among 10 of the most celebrated touring performances of any season – including Michael Martin Murphey, “Flashdance,” Manhattan Transfer, and “A

Christmas Carol” – presented in Galveston’s magnificent, historic theatre (NOV 15 - JAN 4)

**4 HOLIDAY SHOPPING IN GALVESTON'S HISTORIC DOWNTOWN DISTRICT**  
Find unique holiday gifts at the many boutiques, art galleries, antique shops and more within the Galveston Downtown Cultural Arts District (NOV 15 - DEC 24)

**5 SURFING SANTA AT SCHLITTERBAHN WATERPARK**  
See Santa surf the waves of the Boogie Bahn & enjoy all the water fun at Houston’s only indoor waterpark. Surfing Santa appearances & holiday meal packages (NOV 28-DEC 23)

**6 HOLIDAY LIGHTS AND MAGIC IN THE PARK**  
Attend free festivities in downtown Galveston’s Saengerfest Park, including light shows, music, visits with Santa and more (NOV 29 - DEC 31)

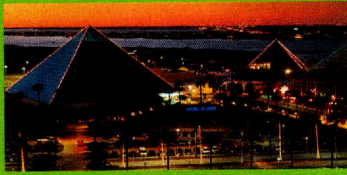
**7 41ST ANNUAL DICKENS ON THE STRAND**  
Travel back in time as downtown Galveston’s Strand Street is

transformed into the Victorian London of Charles Dickens with this exciting festival (DEC 5-7)

**8 SANTA TRAIN AT THE GALVESTON RAILROAD MUSEUM**  
Welcome Santa as he comes to town aboard the Galveston Railroad Museum’s Harborside Express train (DEC 13)

**9 BREAKFAST WITH THE SANDHILL CRANES**  
Get a fascinating view of the magnificent Sandhill Cranes that migrate through Galveston’s West End just before the holidays (DEC 13-14)

**10 MOODY GARDENS CHRISTMAS DINNER AND SHOW**  
Experience holiday magic at Moody Gardens with master illusionist Curt Miller and friends (DEC 18-27)



For a complete list of events and special offers, visit [WWW.GALVESTON.COM/HOLIDAYMAGIC](http://WWW.GALVESTON.COM/HOLIDAYMAGIC)

**GALVESTON ISLAND**  
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**nickelodeon**

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A MAGICAL CHRISTMAS DINNER & SHOW • HOLIDAY GIFT MARKET

NOVEMBER 15 - JANUARY 4

### ICE LAND: Ice Sculptures with SpongeBob SquarePants:

Master ice carvers from Harbin, China have transformed 900 tons of ice into magical works of art. Dive in for a SpongeTastic ice adventure with towering scenes featuring your friends from Bikini Bottom.

[MOODYGARDENS.ORG](http://MOODYGARDENS.ORG) \* 800-582-4673 \*



# NOVEMBER 2014

The PEOPLE, the PLACES, and WIDE-OPEN SPACES of TX



(65)

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A salute to Texas hospitality

### 8) Scenic Route

Harnessing the wind in Vega

### DRIVE

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Diversity of the Chihuahuan Desert

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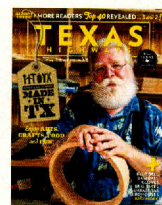
A pinion gear at Aermotor Windmill

### Destinations in this issue



Vega 8	San Antonio 18, 38, 79	Martindale 31	Nocona 38	Leon Springs 48	Gruene 58
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### ON OUR COVERS



FRONT: Banjo maker Chuck Lee crafts custom banjos in his backyard workshop in Ovilla. Photo by Will van Overbeek

BACK: A plate of Texas barbecue at the "Original" Rudy's Country Store in Leon Springs. Photo © Eric W. Pohl

PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINTS AVAILABLE Some images in this issue are available as prints in two distinctive formats. For more information, call toll-free 866/962-1191, or visit [www.texashighwaysprints.com](http://www.texashighwaysprints.com).

PHOTO: Will Van Overbeek

# WHERE IN TEXAS ARE YOU?



Will van Overbeek

## ENTER ONLINE BY NOVEMBER 4!

Go to [texashighways.com/contest](http://texashighways.com/contest) and tell us the name of the museum where the 1877 tall ship *Elissa* is on display, and you could win a Beaumont getaway!

Find contest rules and details online. The winner will receive:

- STAY!** • Two Nights Deluxe Accommodations at the MCM Eleganté Hotel
- EAT!** • Breakfast for two at Hemingway's Café
- PLAY!** • Two \$35 vouchers toward spa services at Getaway Aveda Day Spa
- \$50.00 MasterCard gift card
- VIP Passes to local attractions, including Gator Country, the McFaddin-Ward House Museum, the Fire Museum of Texas, and a Neches River Adventures boat tour
- A Beaumont-themed gift basket, courtesy of the Beaumont Convention and Visitors Bureau

*Our thanks to the Beaumont Convention and Visitors Bureau and their partners for these fabulous prizes!*



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TEXAS WITH A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA.

For more information on Beaumont, contact the Beaumont Convention & Visitors Bureau at 409/880-3749 or 800/392-4401; [www.beaumontcvb.com](http://www.beaumontcvb.com).

# TEXAS HIGHWAYS

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**Associate Editor** Matt Joyce  
**Editorial Coordinator** Cindy Newsom  
**Contributing Editors**  
Erin Inks, Julie Stratton

**Photography Editor** Brandon Jakobeit  
**Contributing Photographers**  
Michael Amador, Kevin Stillman,  
Will van Overbeek

**Art Director** Jane Wu  
**Associate Art Director** Kirsti Harms

**Web Editor** Lois M. Rodriguez  
**Digital Art Director** Matt Wetzler

**Operations Manager** Deborah Follien  
**Marketing/Ancillary Manager** Katy Venable  
**Advertising Coordinator** Lupe Valdez  
**Account Services** Raquel V. Sanchez  
**Administrative Assistant** Ana Alvarez

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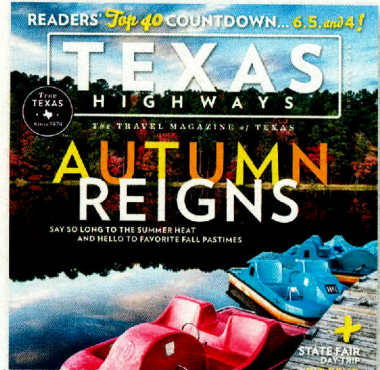


# MERGE

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

*Blue sky, open spaces, matching fields of flowers, and unique Longhorns. What's not to love about Texas!*

JOALENE CUMMINS, TH Facebook fan from Plainview



## OUR FAVORITE SOCIAL MEDIA OF THE MONTH...



*Scenic Route, October: I love these back roads! The Old Tunnel bat cave is so fascinating, watching the Mexican free-tailed bats at dusk.*  
Jenny German  
Marshall



*After seeing the excellent photos in our new issue of @TexasHighways I think I need to schedule some vacation time & hit the TX roads!*  
@brent\_houser



Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

## Comfy Confines

Comfort has been a place we have visited for many years [October]. I know you can't list all the lodging in Comfort, but you missed a gem. Meyer Bed and Breakfast is a relaxing and wonderful place to stay. I hesitate to tell you about this because I would like to keep it my own little secret. It is my happy place, but I need to share.  
**PAT MCKELLEY, Leander**

## Tip o' the Hat

I'd like to express my thanks for some outstanding Texan hospitality. In 2007, I traveled to Texas from England for a road trip, which was simply fabulous. Happily, next year I am coming back with my wife and young daughter. I can't wait to see Texas again and show my family around. Jill and Rogers Yakel of Cedar Hill have subscribed to your magazine for us for many years, getting it sent to England, and we are using it to plan our trip right now! I can't wait to show the girls San Antonio, Dallas, your fabulous rodeos, and wonderful

food and chilis ... and that's just for starters. If you could thank Jill and Rogers on my behalf, I would be absolutely thrilled.  
**PAUL ROBINSON, Tyme and Wear, England**

## Pirate Pride

I was surprised to see an article on Georgetown and all the great places to visit without Southwestern University being mentioned [The Daytripper, September]. A beautiful campus with old buildings and beautiful

new buildings. Take a trip to the Southwestern University campus the next time you are in Georgetown. You will be pleased.

**ROBERT KOENIG, Class of 1950, Decatur, Alabama**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *In the October issue, a caption in the Next Weekend story about Comfort incorrectly referred to the Hotel Faust as the Faust Hotel. The Comfort lodging is called Hotel Faust, while the Faust Hotel is in New Braunfels.*



## READERS RECOMMEND

## Cleburne's Gone With the Wind Museum

*The Gone With the Wind Remembered Museum in Cleburne is wonderful. Vicky Rogers has been collecting memorabilia since she was in high school, and her collection is amazing. It's really worth the trip to see it.*

**ROSANNE LEONARD NABORS, Cleburne**

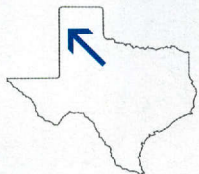
The Gone With the Wind Remembered Museum & Gift Shop, located at 305 E. 2nd St. in Cleburne, features exhibits about writer Margaret Mitchell, as well as memorabilia, costumes, and dolls related to the book and movie. Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Thu.-Sat.; 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Sun. Call 817/774-2844; [www.gwtwremembered.com](http://www.gwtwremembered.com).



**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!** Send feedback and recommendations to: *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009. Email: [letters@texashighways.com](mailto:letters@texashighways.com).

## Scenic ROUTE

35° 16' 58.43" N  
102° 29' 13.81" W

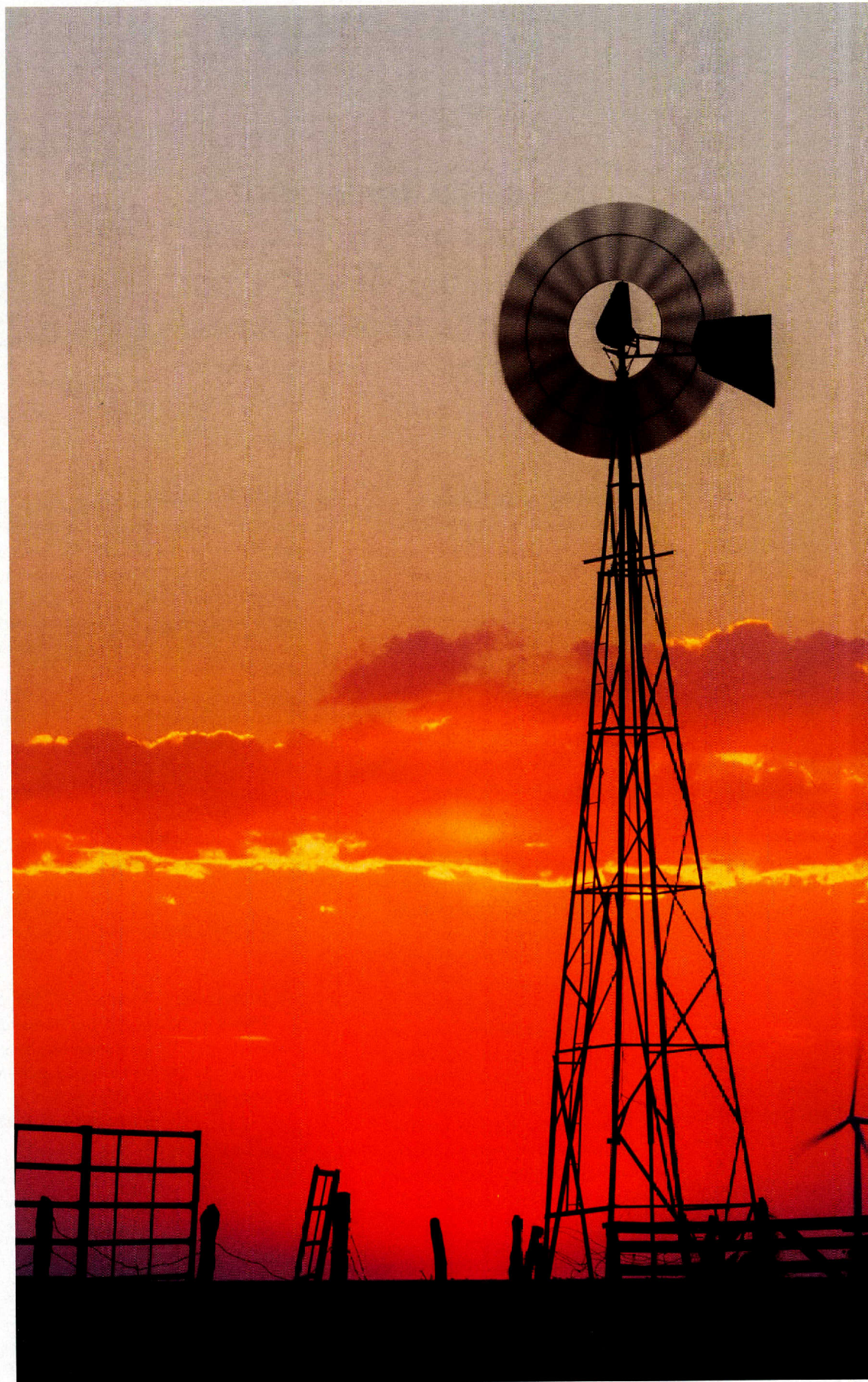


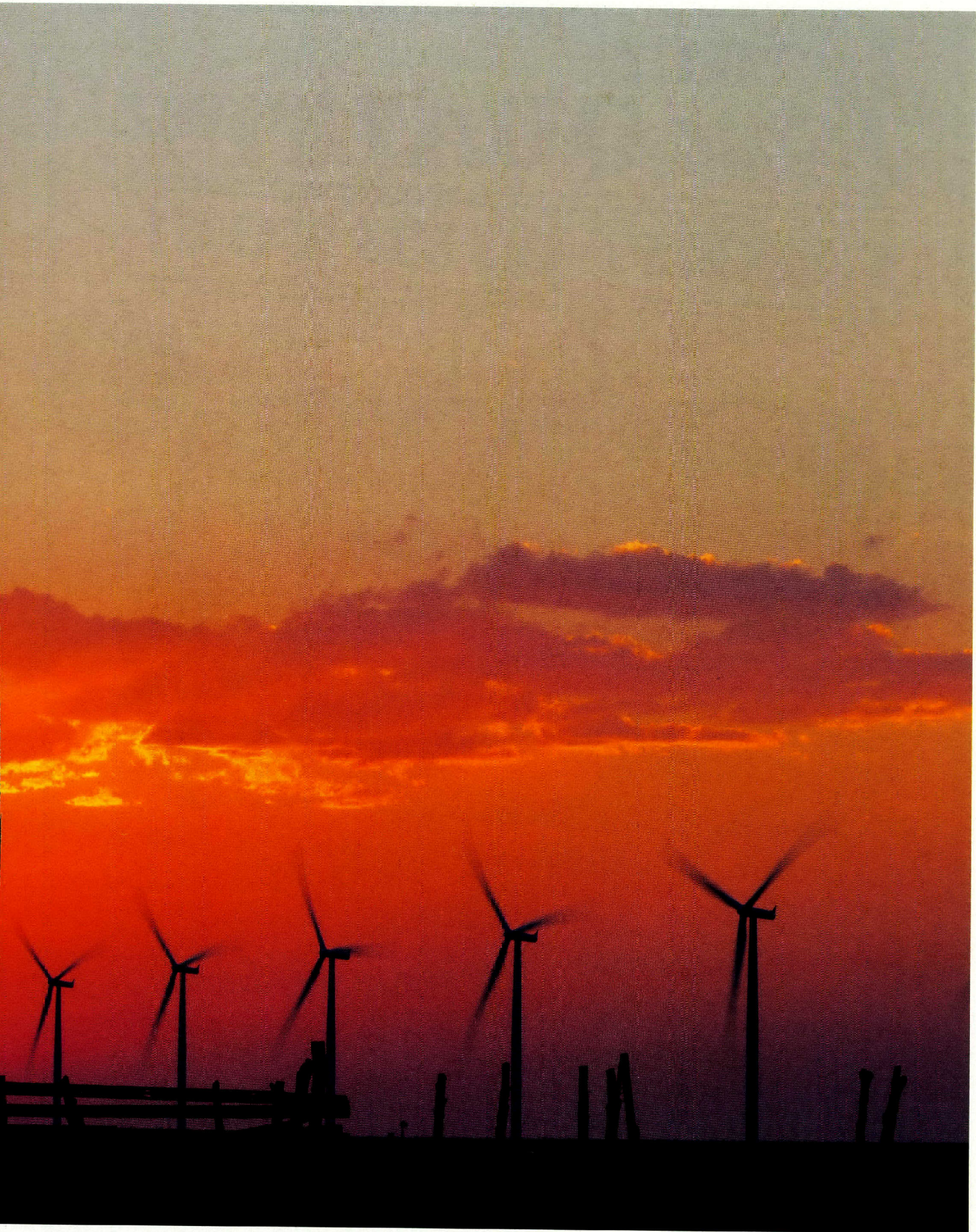
### Panhandle Plains

A water-pumping windmill and electricity-generating wind turbines punctuate this amazing view near Vega as the sun sets. From Vega, drive west along the I-40 frontage road about three miles, then turn north to get onto County Road 33. Travel north on the county road for 1.66 miles to find three windmills (including the one pictured) with a view of the wind turbines farther north in the distance. Additional wind farms dot the horizon just north of Vega along US 385.



For information on the area,  
visit the Oldham County  
Chamber of Commerce,  
[www.oldhamcofc.org](http://www.oldhamcofc.org).





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### The Gladstone

*Quite Possibly the Perfect Weekend Bag  
— or The Bag of a Lifetime*

Whether you're trying to get to Amarillo by morning or just want to get on the road again, you'll look mighty fine carrying this handcrafted piece of luggage. The bag's creator, **Daniel Ralsky of Satchel & Page**, was inspired by his grandfather's WWII map case, which, although worn, still looks good. Daniel wondered what it



would take to manufacture high quality goods in today's marketplace. He discovered most leather is tanned for just one day using toxic chemicals. Satchel & Page vegetable-tans their leather for 20-40 days. The result is a bag you'll love for a lifetime, featuring folded and riveted corners, more than 50 brass rivets, a hinge opening that makes packing easy, and cotton twill lining. All this and it fits TSA carry-on requirements! Made in Austin. Lifetime guarantee.

The Gladstone  
Item 37569.....\$560.00

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HIGHWAYS

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

NOV14TH

# DRIVE

TEXAS WILD + DETOUR + SOUVENIR + TEXAS FAMILY



## HUMMING AWAY

*Attracted by feeders and flowers in the pollinator garden, black-chinned hummingbirds are common at the center from May through September.*

TEXAS WILD

## A Desert Diverse

THE CHIHUAHUAN DESERT NATURE CENTER

*text by* MELISSA GASKILL

**DESERT FOX**

*Normally nocturnal, gray foxes sometimes make daytime appearances in Modesta Canyon.*

**R**ESTING IN THE SHADE NEXT TO A POOL OF CLEAR water, I could almost forget that miles and miles of West Texas desert surround me. But in fact I was in the middle of the Chihuahuan Desert, one of the most biologically diverse arid regions in the world.

This 220,000-square-mile desert starts south of Mexico City, reaches into southern New Mexico, nicks a corner of Arizona, and covers a broad triangle of westernmost Texas. More than 3,000 species of plants call it home, along with more kinds of birds, mammals, reptiles, and butterflies than any other ecoregion in the United States. Who knew a desert held so much life?

Eager to explore a bit of this landscape, I called my hiking buddy Kathy Weiler and we made the long drive from Austin to the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center, just outside Fort Davis. In addition to exhibits on geology and mining, a cactus greenhouse, and outdoor botanical gardens, the facility has more than three miles of trails, including the Modesta Canyon Trail, home of the aforementioned spring. Relatively short at less than two miles, this trail includes a steep hike into and out



**THE CHIHUAHUAN  
DESERT NATURE  
CENTER**

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of the canyon, so allow a couple of hours for the experience.

We left from the Visitors' Center, crossing level ground where grasses and wildflowers wave in the breeze and scattered juniper, oak, and agarita provide puddles of shade. No evidence betrayed the existence of the canyon mere yards in front of us; it appeared almost magically, a yawning crack in the ground. We started our descent on stone steps built into the canyon wall.

This part of the walk provides a living lesson in geology, as the canyon was formed at the contact point between two different kinds of rock. To our left, a formation known as the Sleeping Lion was named for a distinctive leonine mountain near Fort Davis National Historic Site, roughly five miles away. The Sleeping Lion was created millions of years ago by molten rock, or magma, that forced its way through rock layers above it then spread out over the ground to cool and solidify. The wall on our right, known as the Weston Intrusion, is younger, and was formed when magma squeezing up from deep within the Earth crystallized back into solid rock without reaching what was then the surface.

Over the years, erosion concentrated at the meeting point of these two formations, creating the 200-foot-deep canyon. The two sides bear little resemblance to each other. The Weston looks like a tilted, crumbling layer cake, with row after row of cracks and loose chunks poised to crash to the ground, while the Sleeping Lion appears more solid, with only the occasional crack or protruding boulder.

As we continued down into the canyon, the landscape gave way to pinyon pine, Mexican buckeye, madrone, and mountain laurels. Ferns cascaded from cracks in the rocks like a botanical Rapunzel, nourished by permanent water seeps. These plants grow here thanks to cooler, wetter conditions in the canyon, an area known as a microhabitat. Here and nearby in the upper Davis Mountains, a microhabitat known as a sky

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island harbors plants and animals not found in the surrounding desert.

The spring forms a pool of water, about the size of a king-size bed, on a level spot down in the canyon. We sat on flat rocks at its edge and enjoyed the cool shade and water. A dragonfly hovered over the water's quiet surface, and beneath it we could see wriggling tadpoles. These are likely the young of Rio Grande leopard frogs, which live here year round, although canyon tree frogs, red-spotted toads, and tiger salamanders also lay their eggs in this water. Late at night, after the center closes, mule deer, fox, and mountain lion have been known to show up for a drink.

Refreshed, we returned to the trail, which climbs up the other side of the canyon and out onto the top of the Weston Intrusion. The view from this high point is spectacular—row after row of mountains in shades of gray,

**As we continued down into the canyon, the desert gave way to pinyon pine, Mexican buckeye, madrone, and mountain laurels.**

buff, and green, the sky above streaked with wispy white clouds. The trail circles around Lion's Head Hill, a mound of upended rocks the size of trucks. Huge boulders scatter down the hillside, testament that erosion is still alive and well. This would make a great place for a game of hide-and-seek.

After rounding the hill, we crossed a wide swath of knee-high grass and reached an intersection marked with the number 17. To our left, a trail follows a bluff and ascends to 180-foot-high Clayton's Overlook, and from there

wends back to the Visitors' Center. We continued on the Modesta Canyon Trail, though, which veers slightly to the right and follows the edge of the canyon. After maneuvering a field of rocks sitting at various angles, we reached the beginning of the canyon, here little more than a dip in the ground.

Back at the Visitors' Center, we stopped at the water fountain on the covered back porch, then slipped into the botanical garden, making a beeline for the Pollinator Garden, where plants such as coneflowers, lantana, Turk's cap, and sage attract hummingbirds, butterflies, bees, and wasps. From a bench in the shade, we watched these hard-working pollinators go about the business of making sure flowers bloom again next season. On the breeze, we could pick up the scents those flowers produce to attract their helpers, and we could hear the hum and buzz of tiny wings. The desert is very much alive. ★

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# The Ballad of *Brownsville*

HISTORIC BROWNSVILLE MUSEUM RECOUNTS COLORFUL LOCAL HISTORY

text by **Gene Fowler**

**A** SA CROSSROADS CITY AT THE southernmost tip of Texas—and the state's closest point to the interior of Mexico—it's fitting that Brownsville would have a memorable train station. The city's Southern Pacific Railroad Depot, built in 1928 in the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style, is a beauty. Though the depot greeted its last passenger in 1952, you can still sense the presence of travelers from the past, as the distinctive structure today houses the Historic Brownsville Museum.

Architectural historians praise the old depot as a stellar example of Spanish Revival design, characterized by features



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such as ornate cornices and parapets. Cast-stone ornamentation—architectural elements made by pouring concrete into molds—adds elaborate detail to the building's façade. Inside, galleries accented with tile and stenciled beams lead visitors through a walking tour of Brownsville history that can easily be managed in an hour.

The museum's images and artifacts tell a story that starts around 1700, when Coahuiltecan Indians lived in the area. It continues with the mid-18th Century arrival of the Spanish, and



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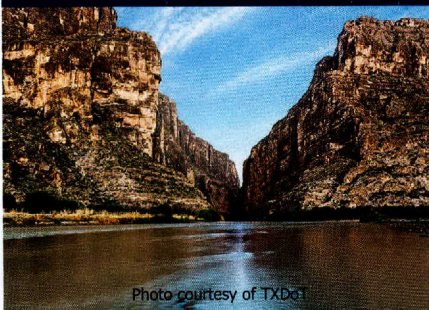


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and Window  
to the Stars

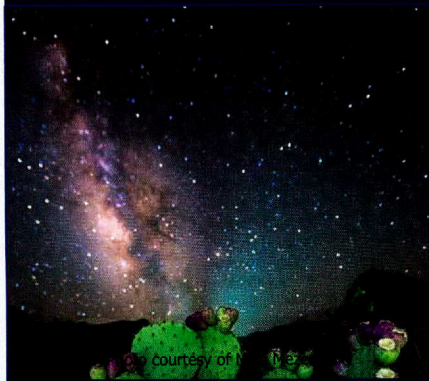
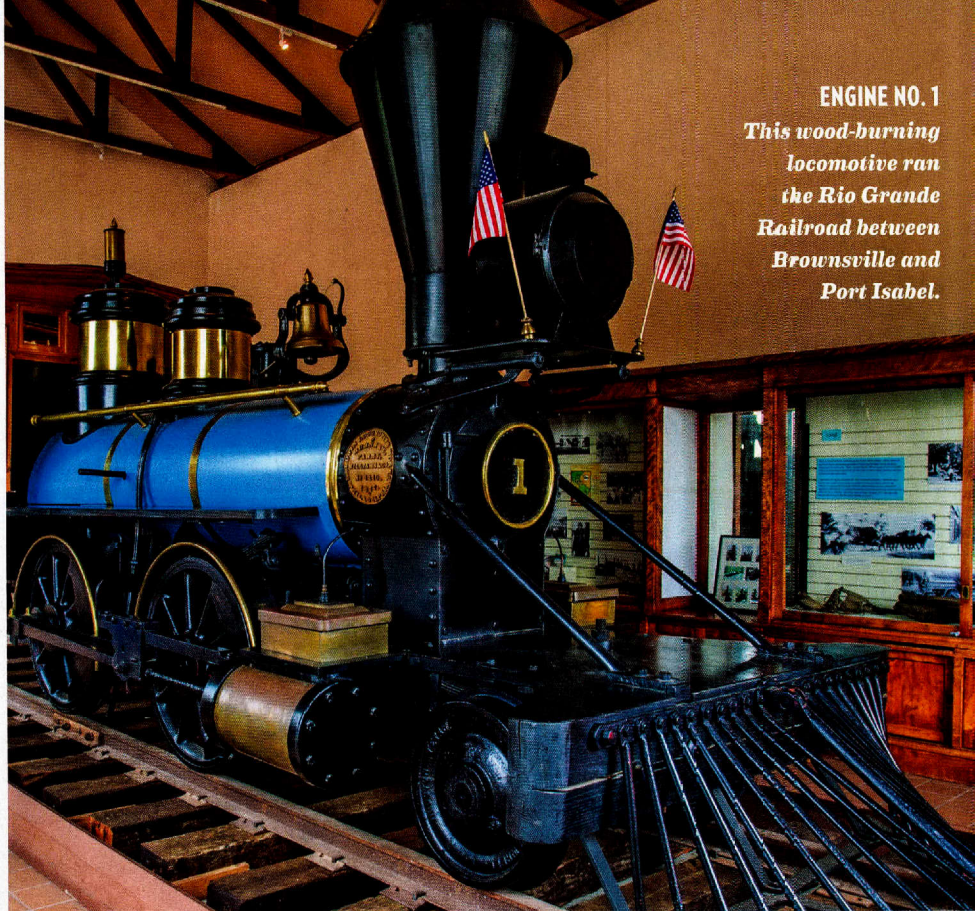


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### ENGINE NO. 1

This wood-burning locomotive ran the Rio Grande Railroad between Brownsville and Port Isabel.

then ventures into the 20th Century, when ribbons of steel brought the outside world—and more rapid development—to the Rio Grande Valley.

The Historic Brownsville Museum also chronicles the political turbulence of the Rio Grande Valley borderlands and the armed conflicts that unfolded here, including the Mexican War, which resulted in the founding of Brownsville. When the war first started in 1846, General Zachary Taylor moved his American troops to the north bank of the Rio Grande across from Matamoros, Mexico. The Americans established Fort Texas, which later became Fort Brown, and Brownsville grew up in the fort's shadow.

A highlight of the museum's Mexican War exhibit is the flag of the Mexican army's Matamoros Battalion. Decorated with the customary eagle and snake of the Mexican seal, the flag flew at the Battle of Palo Alto, the war's first major battle, held near present-day Brownsville, and also at the nearby Battle of Resaca de la Palma.

The last major clash of the Civil War, the Battle of Palmito Ranch, was also fought near Brownsville. Exhibits

include a reproduction of an unsigned painting of the battle, as well as photographs of important figures, such as Confederate colonels John Salmon "Rip" Ford and Santos Benavides.

The Historic Brownsville Museum also recalls Brownsville's role as the financial center of the Civil War-era cotton trade, when smugglers carted cotton from southern plantations to Mexican seaports to circumvent Union blockades along the Gulf of Mexico. The antique vault from Yturria Bank displayed at the museum likely protected money earned from the cotton trade. Museum signage describes Yturria Bank as possibly the first locally and privately owned bank south of St. Louis, Missouri.

Images of *soldaderas* (female soldiers) represent the Mexican Revolution of the 1910s. The museum tells the stories of Valentina Ramirez, who dressed as a man to participate in battles, and *Las Adelitas*, who were female members of Pancho Villa's forces. Another display features black metallic cones that were part of magician Adolf Dittmann's stage act. Dittmann built Brownsville's first movie house, the Dittman Theater,

and filmed Revolution battles in Matamoros for newsreel services.

One large gallery hosts changing exhibits. In November, the museum celebrates *Día de Los Muertos* with an exhibit done in partnership with the Mexican Consulate of Brownsville, says museum Director Maribel Guerrero. Along with an authentic *Día de Los Muertos* altar, the exhibit showcases skeleton figures in Victorian dress—known as *Las Catrinas*—and includes presentations about the history and significance of the holiday. In February, the museum will host an exhibit featuring Brownsville's annual Charro Days

**Inside, galleries accented with tile and stenciled beams lead visitors through a walking tour of Brownsville history that can easily be managed in an hour.**

Fiesta (February 26–March 18, 2015), including outfits and sombreros from the first Charro Days held in 1938.

Images of a steamboat, a stagecoach, a trolley, and a train explore the history of Brownsville transportation, as does the Rio Grande Railroad Engine No. 1, the original, restored locomotive of the Rio Grande Railroad. Now housed in the museum's Simon Celaya Building, *El Trenesito*, or Little Train, ran the 22.5-mile route from Port Isabel (then called Point Isabel) to Brownsville from about 1870 to 1928. The locomotive sat deteriorating for years near the Fort Brown Convention Center before it was restored and moved to the museum in the late 1990s, Guerrero says.

Brownsville's history is too dramatic and colorful to be contained in just one museum, however. The Brownsville Historical Association also chronicles local history at the Brownsville Heritage Museum, Stillman House

Museum, and other sites. The association's Brownsville-21 Project, started in 2007 with a grant from Preserve America, has placed information kiosks throughout Brownsville's historical areas, organized walking and multimedia history tours, and developed tours of the Old City Cemetery—both haunted and not.

Brownsville's location on the Rio Grande, along with the turbulent development of the frontier borderlands, shaped the city's storied past, says James Zavaleta, curator of the Historic Brownsville Museum. "You have a diverse array of people that came from Mexico, from Europe, and from other parts of the United States," he says. "South Texas and Brownsville are really the merging of many cultures, and that interchange makes for a very unique cultural identity. This is especially evident in the city's architecture and places like this museum building." ★

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# Drawn to Texas Trees

ARTIST YAN LEE BRANCHES OUT

text by Eric W. Pohl

**Z**IGZAGGING MY WAY THROUGH throngs of festival-goers, I'm browsing the eclectic wares of the Bayou City Art Festival in Houston's Memorial Park. In dappled shade of graceful oaks and towering pines, tightly packed rows of tents—each a self-contained art gallery—flank the park's walkways. The popular outdoor festival, now in its 43rd year, takes place in Memorial Park in the spring and downtown Houston in the fall. More than 300 artists from across North America exhibit everything from colorful and colossal steel sculptures to quirky and flamboyant found-object art.

I venture into one tent that's packed with patrons to see what the fuss is all about. In contrast to some of the neighboring tents, the gray walls of "Yan Lee's Big Tree Studio" showcase art with an understated appeal: meticulously detailed pen and ink drawings of trees, with prices starting at \$60.

A former geologist, Dr. Yan Lee makes arboreal portraits that spark a sense of wonderment and familiarity. Each piece captures the character of the tree, from the texture of the bark down

**Each piece captures the character of the tree, from the texture of the bark down to the delicate contour of every leaf.**

to the delicate contour of every leaf.

It suddenly dawns on me that these are historic and well-known Texas trees, such as the iconic "Goose Island Oak" in Rockport, the "Treaty Oak" in Austin, and the "Muster Oak" in La Grange.

Yan's "Alamo Live Oak" piece is drawn so true-to-life that it calls to mind the very first weekend excursion my wife and I took together. Strolling the Alamo courtyard under those shady boughs years ago, we had marveled how the stately oak's branches coiled on forever, spilling onto the ground. Now a near-perfect likeness hangs before me.

Yan's personal journey began a world away from the Lone Star State, in the Liaoning province of China. He later earned his undergraduate degree in geology at Nanjing University, and he

honed his drawing skills making maps and sketches of geological phenomena and landscapes.

In 1998, Yan immigrated to the United States, landing in College Station, where he eventually earned his Ph.D. in geophysics. One day, Yan decided to draw the campus' famous "Century Tree"—a sprawling live oak that, according to legend, bonds couples who walk beneath its branches.

Drawing the tree awakened a newfound passion, and Yan began developing his technique. In October of 2006, Yan debuted his work publicly at the Bayou City Art Festival.

Yan seeks out trees with history and a story to tell. "First you have to understand the tree. Its age. Its story," says Yan. He then sketches and photographs it from multiple angles. At his home studio in Spring, he makes his final work with ink on paper.

So far, Yan has drawn about 60 trees in Texas. He's also branched out to historic trees in other states. His work can be regularly seen at the Bayou City Art Festival, the Cottonwood Art Festival in Richardson, the Main Street Fort Worth Arts Festival, and the Fiesta Arts Fair in San Antonio.

"When I draw the tree, I try to learn from the tree. The tree is my teacher," Yan says. "I believe that trees are natural works of art that should be protected for future generations." ★

## YAN LEE IN TEXAS

Yan Lee's home studio in Spring opens for tours by appointment. To arrange tours or purchase prints, call 281/251-9453; [www.bigtreestudio.com](http://www.bigtreestudio.com). Houston's Bayou City Art Festival takes place in fall (Oct. 11-12, 2014) and spring (Mar. 27-29, 2015); see [www.artcolonyassociation.org](http://www.artcolonyassociation.org).

For details about the Cottonwood Art Festival in Richardson, see [www.cottonwoodartfestival.com](http://www.cottonwoodartfestival.com); for the Main Street Fort Worth Arts Festival, see [www.mainstreetartsfest.org](http://www.mainstreetartsfest.org); for Fiesta Arts Fair in San Antonio, see [www.swschool.org](http://www.swschool.org).

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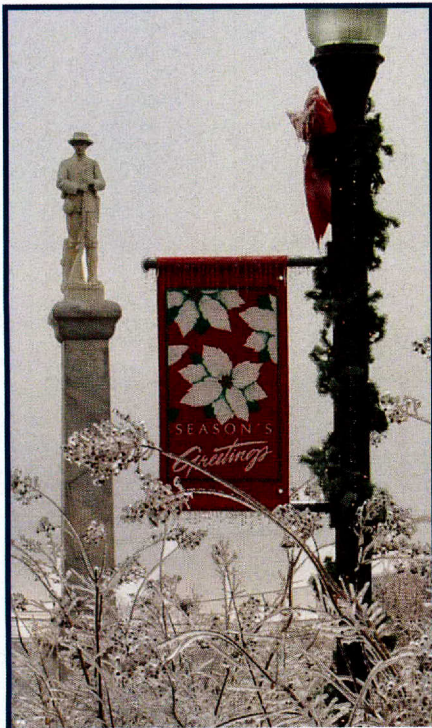
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## Boot Camping

FAMILY CAMPING WORKSHOPS COVER THE BASICS

text by Jennifer Babisak

I 'VE EXPLORED MANY REMOTE LOCALES across Texas, so most people assume that I'm a seasoned camper. But here's the real story: The closest I usually come to camping involves listening to nature sounds from an app on my phone.

But recently, parental guilt over this camping ignorance began nagging at my husband and me. We had our excuses: We don't have any equipment, we lack experience, we never learned proper outdoor survival skills. But our three kids, growing up within the concrete grid of a city, deserved to explore the great outdoors. So when we learned of an introductory camping program called Texas Outdoor Family, we knew that it was time to head for the woods.

Back in 2008, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department introduced the Texas Outdoor Family program after a survey on

The workshops focus on different activities depending on the park's natural resources; some locales include paddling instruction while others feature rock climbing.



state park usage revealed some alarming information. For instance, the average age of a state park visitor was 48, and fewer than a third of those visitors brought children along with them. Knowing that children hold the keys to future preservation of Texas' natural habitats, TPWD created the program to teach camping skills to families. Most of the equipment—including a tent, cots, and cooking supplies—is provided, participants receive hands-on instruction, and rangers and volunteers stand by for support.

These days, the program hosts around 80 camping workshops a year, with more than 15,000 campers as alumnae. The workshops focus on different activities depending on the park's natural resources; some locales include paddling instruction while others feature rock climbing. We decide to attend a workshop at Glen Rose's Dinosaur Valley State Park, thinking that

searching for dinosaur tracks will add even more excitement to the adventure.

The park itself is beautiful: The Paluxy River cuts through limestone and sandstone cliffs, rolling grasslands sport blankets of wildflowers, and ashe juniper and live oak groves provide welcome shade. We soon find our base camp and connect with Ranger Cassie Cox, our leader for the weekend.

While the kids play outdoor games and learn how to identify poison ivy on a guided hike, Ranger Cassie leads the adults in acquiring fundamental camping skills like setting up a tent and operating a propane camp stove.

After setting up our campsite, we enjoy a quick picnic lunch before embarking on a geocaching workshop. Geocaching—a GPS-guided treasure-hunting game that has millions of fans worldwide—involves finding “treasures” hidden in outside “caches” by other players; if you take the treasure,

you leave another in its spot. Volunteer instructors Corey and Teresa Davis explain geocaching strategy, rules, and etiquette, then hand each group a handheld GPS unit and send us on a hunt.

We're moderately successful geocachers, finding multiple caches and trinkets hidden near trees and beside piles of rocks, and soon, it's time to meet Ranger Kathy Lenz for a fossil workshop. She shows the kids a variety of fossils and gives geological detail on each. The group of youngsters breaks out in giggles after one kid licks a fossilized artifact and Ranger Kathy reveals, “You just licked dinosaur poop!”

Ranger Kathy then leads us on a hike across a shallow portion of the Paluxy, carefully navigating a series of stepping stones protruding from the water before coming to a cliff-shaded dry stretch of riverbed. Here, we see the tracks of Sauropod and Theropod dinosaurs, which roamed here 113 million years



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## TEXAS FAMILY

ago. The kids delight in fitting their hands inside the three-foot-wide Sauropod prints, which were discovered more than a century ago.

The kids splash in the river for a while before we hike back to camp for an outdoor cooking workshop. Ranger Cassie lights newspaper tinder under a coal-filled chimney, and we learn how to use a cast-iron Dutch oven to make a surprisingly delicious three-ingredient cake with orange soda, canned pineapple pie filling, and a white cake mix.

Then it's time to branch out and cook on our own. Finessing the chimney proves a challenge, but we finally achieve smoldering coals. In the Dutch oven, we layer cornmeal batter over meat, tomatoes, and spices, and bake it over the coals, producing a delectable "chili pie." For dessert, we pour brownie batter into a cast-iron skillet, which rests on a coal-fired grill. Topped with a gooey puddle of melted marshmallows and a sprinkling of graham cracker crumbs, our "s'mores brownie" makes a fine stand-in for the traditional campfire-roasted dessert.

After dinner, the rangers put on a Night Sounds program. The children try to identify various wildlife sounds as they become accustomed to nighttime in the forest. We don't have any critters interrupt our sleep, but a surprise rain shower does. When my husband rushes outside to put up our rain canopy, he sees a volunteer biking to a single mom's campsite to make sure her tent full of children is safe and dry.

The rangers and volunteers show our family the same dedication in helping us search for our son when he wanders too far from camp. We learn from their expertise throughout the weekend. With a little more practice, we'll be ready to head out on our own when the mood strikes. ★

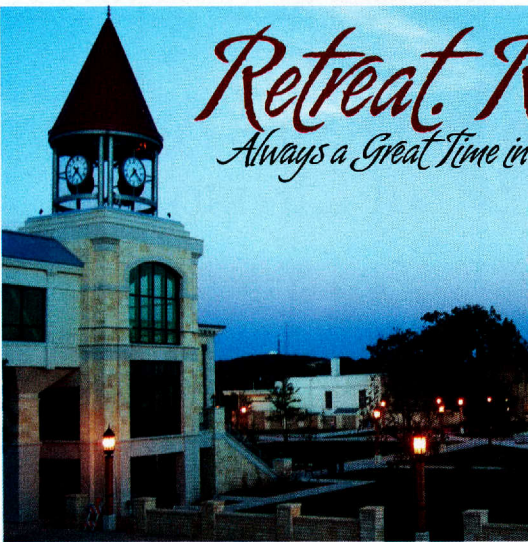


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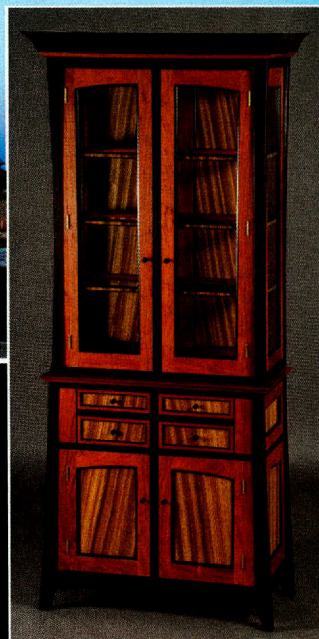
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## A Drink *Back in Time*

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*text by* JENNIFER BABISAK



### MAD ABOUT MEAD

Founded in 2009, Rohan Meadery in La Grange makes a dozen or so types of mead, an alcoholic beverage made of honey.

## DRINK

**A**FTER MULLING OVER wedding gift ideas for a friend, I decided to bypass her registries, forgo the china and silver, and instead turn to a 9,000-year-old beverage, the honey-based elixir known as mead. Quirky perhaps, but my gift of mead—the world's first fermented beverage—is strongly rooted in historical wedding tradition.

In fact, mead (also known as honey wine) served as an integral part of establishing the post-wedding vacation we know as the honeymoon, as it was widely regarded as an aphrodisiac. During the Middle Ages, so the story goes, wedding revelers not only consumed large quantities of mead, but they also gave the bride and groom enough mead to last through one lunar cycle in hopes of expediting a fruitful union.

I didn't have to search very hard to find mead in Texas. The United States mead industry is quietly booming—with a 130 percent increase in sales from 2012 to 2013—and Texas alone boasts nine meaderies and an association dedicated to promoting the industry. The Texas Mead Association, in fact,



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organizes an annual Texas Mead Fest each September at Rohan Meadery in La Grange.

I recently visited Rohan to see where owners John and Wendy Rohan turn honey into wine. John, whose great-grandfather immigrated from Moravia to nearby High Hill in the 1800s, says his love of Czech-style mead may be in his genes. In 2009, tired of the heavier German and English-style meads they encountered stateside, the couple founded their own meadery, one of Texas' first.

Now the couple, along with their three children, run Rohan on their 30-acre Blissful Folly Farm. The farm also supports a 13-hive apiary, a vineyard, and an orchard with peach, pear, and kumquat trees. A menagerie of animals includes two miniature Sicilian donkeys, three dozen dairy goats, and abundant chickens, which frequently beg for crackers from customers sitting outside on the pergola-shaded patio.

### IT BEGAN WITH BEES

*Wendy and John Rohan maintain an apiary with 13 beehives, along with a fruit orchard, to supply raw ingredients for their meadery.*



The meadery features small-batch mead in nearly a dozen creative flavors like buttery Apple Cyser and crisp Kumquat Honeywine. “We grow a lot of fruits and herbs—like mint, sage, and basil—here on the farm, and what we can’t grow, we try to buy locally,” Wendy says.

Inside the tasting room and production facility, I sit at a long wooden tasting bar facing nine stainless steel fermenting tanks and prepare to enjoy my “flight” of five meads. A faint, honey-kissed sweetness lingers in the air. I start with a sip of Orange Spice, its dry, honey-citrus base accented with cinnamon and nutmeg. Next, Peachy Keen presents a subtle peach flavor, and a mead known as Temperament Pymment—a blend of honey and Tempranillo wine—tastes smooth and sweet.

Wendy asks that first-time mead tasters keep an open mind. “You may get something that looks like wine, so your brain anticipates that taste, but it’s something totally different,” she says. She says that mead, like wine, is influenced by terroir—an agricultural product’s reflection of geography and climate. “You have a hive that sits in the same place every year, but every year the honey will taste different, thanks to the flowers that bloom.”

The meadery sells shirts that read, “Save the Bees, Drink Mead,” and donates a portion of the proceeds to fund honeybee conservation and research. After all, most meads require a pound of honey per bottle.

I particularly appreciate those bees’ efforts when I taste the Cranberry Honeywine. The honey’s sweetness presents itself initially, but a pleasant tang lingers behind; it’s a sophisticated version of the sweet-and-sour gummy candy I enjoyed as a kid.

Of course, I can’t leave without sampling Honeymoon. Smooth and refreshing, with a subtle complexity, this Old World-style mead makes me appreciate those ancient newlyweds’ good taste.

As for my friend, I better start thinking of baby-shower gifts in case this honeymoon mead lore rings true. ★

PHOTO: Kevin Stillman

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# It Started with Chips

JULIO'S CORN CHIPS IN DEL RIO

text by **Matt Joyce**

**T**HE SMELL OF CORN CHIPS permeated the Garcia household in the formative days of the family corn-chip business. “I would go to school and the kids would tell me, ‘Man, you smell good,’” recalls Miguel Garcia, who woke up early to fry corn chips in the family kitchen to help make enough for his father, Julio, to sell at a convenience store and for his mother, Lilia, to deliver for catering jobs. Miguel, now the president of Julio’s



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Corn Tortilla Chips, was literally raised in the tortilla chip business.

The Garcias didn’t choose the corn chip business as much as it chose them. With 10 children to feed, Julio and Lilia relied on their kitchen skills to make chips and salsa to supplement their income, starting in the 1980s. Customers came knocking on the door of the Garcias’ home in residential Del Rio; sales were transacted at the kitchen counter. By 2002, the chips had grown so popular that Miguel opened a factory with a Mexican restaurant in front. Nowadays, the restaurant is a bustling hub of Del Rio, and you can find Julio’s chips and salsa at big grocery stores across Texas.

“Without them, this would never have happened,” Miguel says, referring to his parents’ hardscrabble hustle. “They made all the sacrifice for us. Everything we do now with the creating and the cooking, it comes from way back. It’s hereditary—in the blood, I guess.”

Julio Garcia, now 83 and retired from the business, was born in Crystal City and raised in Acuña, Mexico, the city across the Rio Grande from Del Rio. When he was about 15, he ventured north to find work.

Julio eventually landed in a restaurant kitchen, learned to cook, and made a career in the food industry. His biggest gig was as chef at Del Rio’s Branding Iron Steakhouse in the 1970s. Cooking in an open kitchen where he could interact with customers, Julio would pound on pots and pans to the rhythm of an old-timey piano in the steakhouse, belting out Spanish classics like “El Rancho Grande.” People ate it up. It was also during this time that Julio developed a simple seasoning mix of salt, black pepper, garlic, paprika, and cumin. The same blend flavors Julio’s seasoned chips today, and plays a part in many dishes at Julio’s restaurant.

But the restaurant business is fickle, and over time, Julio found himself out of work and in debt. He took a job

**Jose Garcia, a son of Julio and Lilia Garcia, runs Julio's Burritos, an offshoot of the Del Rio corn chip business, with four locations in San Angelo.**

working the graveyard shift at a convenience store, where he noticed that the late-night crowd, returning from the bars in Acuña, loved the store's nachos, the processed ballpark kind with plastic-like cheese. Having learned to make tortilla chips at restaurants, Julio thought the customers might prefer fresh, seasoned chips. He was right. Demand grew, and within a few years, the family modified their detached garage, bought a fryer, and opened a storefront selling chips and salsa to go.

Miguel Garcia, now 47, still opens the tiny, canary-yellow shop next door to his boyhood home, but most of the action is at Julio's restaurant, a colorful eatery on US 90 set in a yellow metal-sided building with red trim. The walls of the 1,500-square-foot restaurant reflect the culture of the town. There are framed photos of volleyball and football players from Del Rio High School, tributes to Our Lady of Guadalupe, pictures of Laughlin Air Force Base servicemen chomping Julio's chips in the Middle East, and autographed promo shots of Tejano music stars. Families, mechanics, prison guards, businessmen, and airmen fill the tables, the drive-through, and the to-go line.

Miguel draws the crowds with a menu featuring Tex-Mex standards like tacos (\$1.99 for a fat taco in a 12-inch flour tortilla), carne guisada and enchilada plates (\$6.99), and brisket and steak plates (\$9.99).

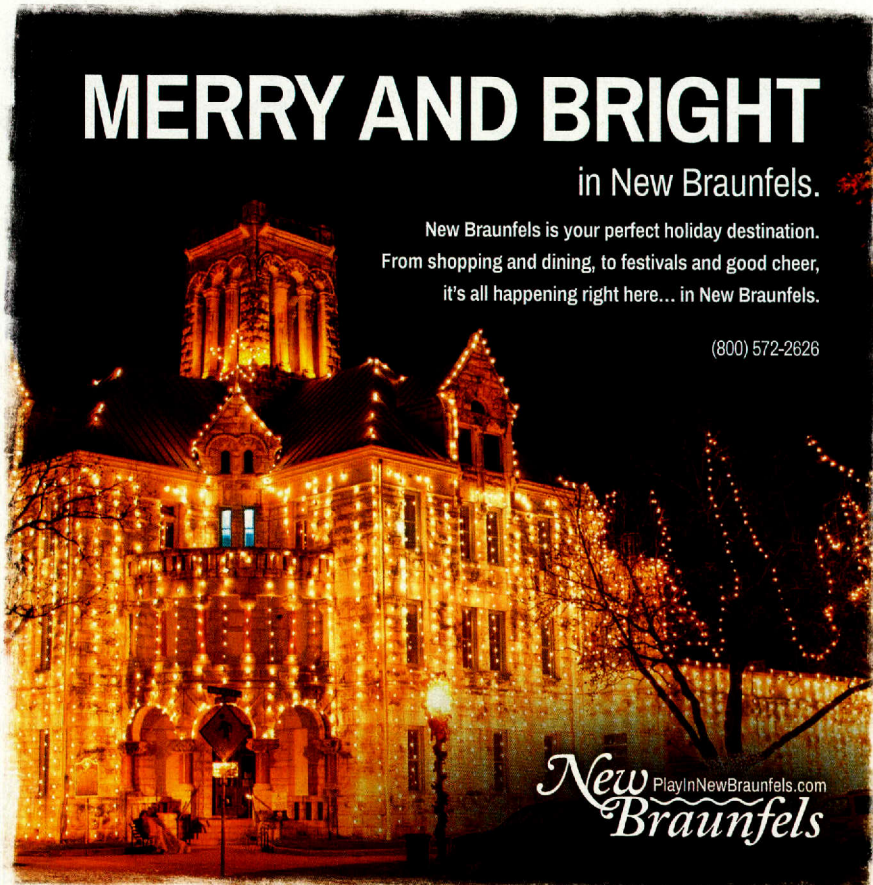
The Huevos Rancheros plate (\$4.99) features two eggs over-easy on a bed of Julio's chips and topped with a spicy jalapeño-tomato sauce. The barbacoa on the side—cooked soft but with crisp edges—reflects the salty spice of Julio's

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TRAVEL

seasoning mix, which is offset nicely by the garnish of cilantro and onion. The helping of carne guisada, cooked in Julio's salsa with added garlic, carries a compelling, earthy tomato essence.

Del Rio residents Orlando and Letty Polanco have been Julio's customers since the garage store opened in 1985. They stopped at the restaurant recently to pick up some chips and an order of Tacos Tapatios to deliver to their son in San Antonio. "The Tacos Tapatios are tasty, they're crispy, they're fresh," Orlando says. "I could eat a dozen and I don't feel over full."

**Having learned to make tortilla chips at restaurants, Julio thought the customers might prefer fresh, seasoned chips. He was right.**

Miguel says the Tacos Tapatios are a variation of the dish that he would eat during visits to Acuña as a child. The tacos are brisket wrapped tightly in corn tortillas, which are deep fried and then garnished with seasoned sour cream, shredded cabbage flavored with lemon and jalapeño juices, and tomato slices. Orlando's right—they're delicious and refreshingly light for Mexican food.

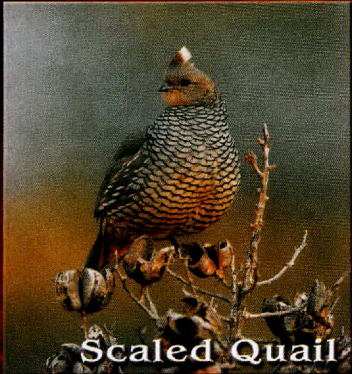
Behind the restaurant, Julio's 5,000-square-foot production facility is churning out chips and salsa as fast as it can. "We start production at 5 a.m. Monday and keep going through 3 a.m. Saturday," Miguel says. "On Sunday, we clean and grease the machines."

And so it grows. Miguel improvises as necessary, as the business has done from its inception. He's eyeing more space, bigger and better machinery, more efficiency. "The demand right now, it's a little hard to keep up with, but we're able to get it done," Miguel says. "Now we need a more modern building, and that's going to be my next step. I hope I can do it before I'm 80." ★


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# Fort Worth's *Black Forest*

SWISS PASTRY SHOP WINS NEW GENERATIONS OF FANS

text by Celestina Blok

**I**'M CUTTING THROUGH A SLICE OF BLACK Forest Cake at Swiss Pastry Shop in Fort Worth, running my fork through the confection's crispy, crackly layers of golden baked meringue, which are slathered with sweet whipped cream and heavily garnished with dark chocolate shavings and sprinkles. The highly praised pastry—made with egg whites, sugar, and crushed almonds—is, without question, the most well-known and beloved dessert in Fort Worth. It has served as the concluding course of countless luncheons, birthday parties, baby showers, and holiday dinners for decades.

“Meringue desserts have always been really popular in



## SWISS PASTRY SHOP

is at 3936 W. Vickery Blvd. in Fort Worth. Call 817/732-5661; [www.swisspastryonline.com](http://www.swisspastryonline.com). Follow Hans on Twitter at @swisspastryman.

Switzerland,” owner Hans Peter Muller tells me as we sit on red vinyl chairs at one of the restaurant's four-top tables. He's the jovial son of the late Swiss baker Hans Muller, who founded the landmark bakery 42 years ago.

I remember my mother requesting the popular pastry for her birthday, and topping one with candles for my own on multiple occasions. As I grew older, we'd indulge in a slice with hot coffee after Christmas dinner, if she had put her order in on time. Muller says that the restaurant's Black Forest Cake accounts for 35 percent of his total sales. Come Thanksgiving, most of Swiss Pastry Shop's tables will be filled with boxed orders ready for pickup. “Sometimes there's no room for anybody to eat,” Muller jokes.

These days, the success of his dad's Black Forest Cake allows Muller to explore his own culinary passion: smoking brisket on “Q-Zilla,” his giant offset smoker. A second-generation pastry chef who doubles as a barbecue pit master is a rare find, yet Muller says baking and barbecuing are more similar than most realize.

“I really respect the experienced barbecue guys in Texas,” he admits. “I have a lot in common with them. They're the ones who have to get up early in the morning like I do. There's a lengthy process involved in what we do.”

Muller's barbecue has breathed new life into the wood-paneled institution, where sheer curtains with eyelet cutouts still hang from the windows. A young, hip generation of diners now intermingles with the longtime, silver-haired regulars, and they're here not only for classics like the Black Forest Cake, but also for newer menu items like Muller's Fort Worth Cheese Steak. Comprised of



PHOTO: Kevin Stillman

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EAT

**Swiss Pastry's Black Forest Cake is the most well-known dessert in Fort Worth.**

thinly sliced rib-eye smoked over pecan wood and smothered in white queso with diced Hatch chiles, the rich and smoky sandwich is served on a house-made sesame-seed bun. Others swear allegiance to the Smoking Cuban sandwich, for which Muller again calls on Q-Zilla for pecan-smoked pork loin. Then there's a lengthy menu of prime Wagyu beefburgers, which range from the Dirty Redneck, a half-pound patty piled high with cheddar cheese, grilled onions, applewood bacon, and juicy smoked brisket, to the "eieiO," which comes with a plump egg cooked over-easy.

Muller also frequently dreams up off-menu specials, like the recent Texas burger, which featured ingredients from around the state, including cheese from Veldhuizen Family Farm in Dublin and South Texas onions sautéed in Llano Estacado Riesling.

Muller's smart use of social media illustrates his quick wit and self-deprecating sense of humor. ("Only 2 days left of vacation unless someone wants to buy a bakery," he recently tweeted.)

"The Fort Worth Cheese Steak and burgers have drawn in a younger crowd," Muller says. "But I don't want to do anything to run off the people who've been coming in here for 40 years. We'll keep the chicken salad, turkey-salad sandwiches, and Reubens."

And he won't change a thing with the Black Forest Cake. I'm finishing my serving now, searching for more crunchy bits of meringue amid the small mound of whipped cream that's left on the plate. Although Muller tells me the chocolate éclairs, cream-filled Napoleons, and strawberry tarts are among the storied desserts they've offered since the bakery's beginning, and that he takes real pride in his meringue pies, it's the Black Forest Cake that pulls at customers' heartstrings. Just ask anybody in Fort Worth. ★



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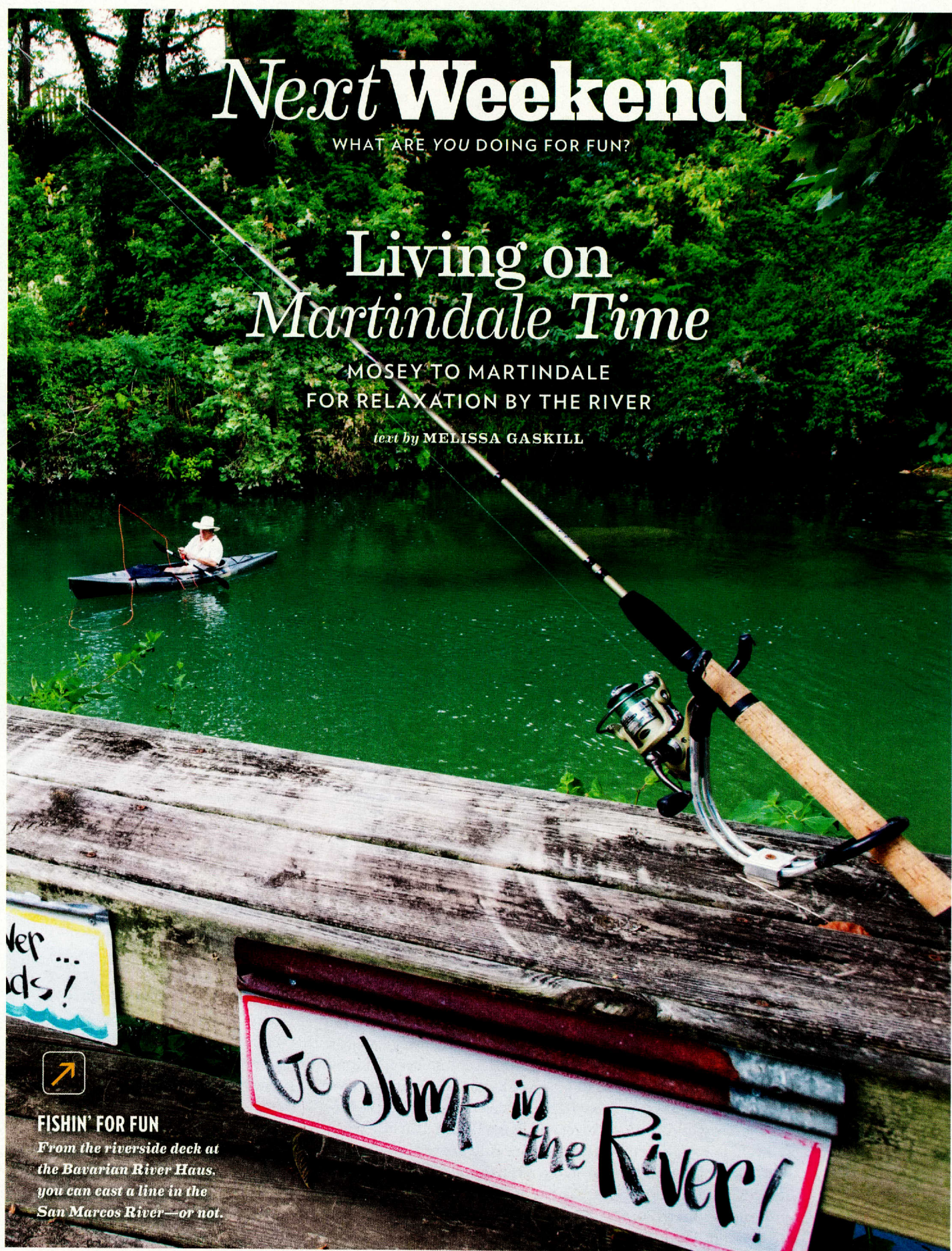
# Next Weekend

WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR FUN?

## Living on Martindale Time

MOSEY TO MARTINDALE  
FOR RELAXATION BY THE RIVER

text by MELISSA GASKILL



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### FISHIN' FOR FUN

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**T**HE PALE GREEN WATERS OF THE SAN MARCOS RIVER slip silently past my comfy spot on the shady deck. During summer, groups of kayakers would float by, but at this time of year, the only sound is the delicate percussion of distant rapids. Soon, I'll walk the broad, grassy slope back up to the Bavarian River Haus and start a fire in the grill. I may follow a juicy pork chop and grilled vegetables with a soak in the hot tub or a spell by the chimenea on the patio.

This cozy bed and breakfast served as home base for my weekend getaway in Martindale, a hamlet just a few miles outside of San Marcos—but effectively in a whole different world. Owners Roger and Erika Wood fell in love with the San Marcos River as students at Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State), and when they went shopping for a home on the river, the one they found happened to come with a B&B. The property is less than a mile outside of Martindale, a tiny town located a few blocks off Texas 80, east of Interstate 35 between San Marcos and Luling.

Founded in 1852 on land that settler John Crayton sold to the Martindale family,



**MARTINDALE**  
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between San Marcos  
and Luling. City in-  
formation, including  
a list of businesses,  
is available at [www.martindaletexas.org](http://www.martindaletexas.org).

**The Bavarian River Haus, a cozy bed and breakfast, served as home base for my weekend getaway in Martindale, a hamlet just a few miles outside of San Marcos—but effectively in a whole different world.**

the town boasted a Baptist church by 1858 and a post office—still in operation—by 1875. Much of the cottonseed and hybrid seed corn produced in Texas in the 1950s came from Martindale. Today, the town has about 1,000 residents, and while the downtown's storefronts are mostly empty, the slow pace and a handful of interesting destinations will satisfy visitors looking for a relaxing weekend.

I started my getaway with a day of kayaking on the San Marcos River with a boat from Spencer Canoes, a canoe-manufacturing and rental shop headquartered at the Shady Grove Campground. First, I drove my car about 10 minutes south to the town of Staples, the take-out point for my river trip. The folks from Spencer then shuttled me upriver to Shady Grove and the boat. Many San Marcos-area river trips end at Shady Grove, but downstream, both the crowds and riverside development thin out.

The five-and-a-half-mile stretch from Martindale to Staples makes for a leisurely three- to four-hour trip by kayak or canoe. I pulled up on an occasional island to soak up the sun, and if I had packed a fishing pole, I could have bothered a few of the bass swimming in deeper parts of the river.

At the end of the route, I gathered up my paddle, life jacket, and seat back and drove back to Shady Grove. Spencer retrieved the boat, which I just pulled onto the shore. This reverse-shuttle set-up meant I could take my time on the river and jump in my car without waiting on anyone when I finished.

I refueled with a hearty lunch at Cottonseed Café and Deli, where the

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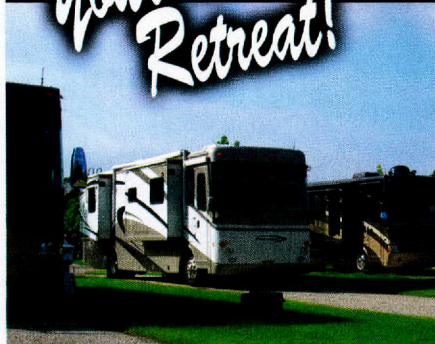
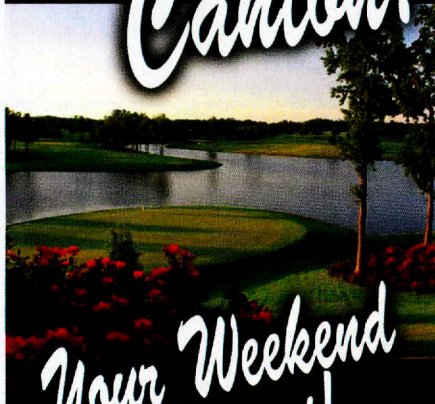
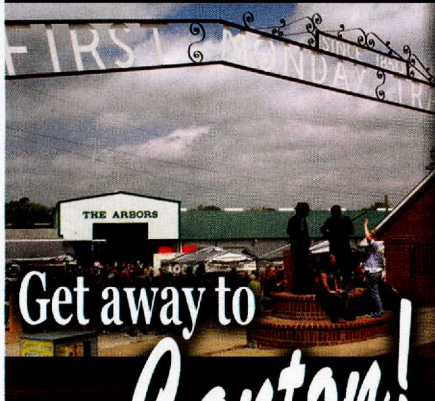
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## Next Weekend MARTINDALE

seasonally inspired menu includes comfort food such as meatloaf and chicken-fried steak, along with interesting surprises—salmon patties and pork schnitzel—and a wide selection of salads and sandwiches. Be sure to save room for the fresh-baked pies and cakes. The top sellers are carrot cake and buttermilk pie, a creamy-sweet concoction with a tender and flaky homemade crust.

Across Texas 80 (also known as San Marcos Highway), a sign lured me to Native Furniture Works Emporium, a barn-like building stuffed with custom wood furniture and country-themed home furnishings. James Robertson has made furniture since 1976, and the store specializes in products crafted from local pecan trees, including polished wood dining tables that are matched with chairs upholstered in cowhides. It all had me lusting after a country home to furnish. Since I have a suburban home instead, not to mention a tiny Honda car, I satisfied myself with a couple of knickknacks, including a coffee mug adorned with a horse and some Western-themed cocktail napkins.

In summer, most visitors to the Martindale area head to Don's Fish Camp, a sprawling, 50-acre complex located off Texas 80 down a short, unpaved road that passes corrals of goats, cows, horses, donkeys, and a Longhorn or two. There's an actual Don, last name Nelle, who has owned the property for more than 50 years. Colorful tubes tower several stories high under open shelters, and a fleet of school buses ferries river-runners about 10 minutes by road upriver. In season, the shuttles run from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on weekends and start at 11 a.m. on weekdays. Don's will even pick folks up from local accommodations or send a bus to shuttle groups from Austin or San Antonio. The float down the

**The first Friday of each month, Three Dudes Winery hosts Dudes and Dogs, which features live music, Angus-beef hot dogs topped with a secret sauerkraut recipe, and, of course, wine.**



river takes about three hours, and returning tubers are welcome to linger at the camp, where oak and pecan trees and thatch umbrellas shade picnic tables along the shore. Don's campground opens year-round, offering tent camping along the river—perfect for enjoying warm fall days without the crowds.

Given the hint of chill to come in the fall air, though, I opted to stay dry and save tubing for another day. So I headed just up the road to Three Dudes Winery, where a rugged wood-and-metal tasting room faces a shaded outdoor seating area and decks overlooking the river. The first Friday of each month, these decks host Dudes and Dogs, an event featuring live music, Angus-beef hot dogs topped with a secret sauerkraut recipe, and, of course, wine.

The dudes in question are Jeff Felderhoff, Terry Alford, and Ron Pontiff, friends who had developed a tradition of touring Hill Country wineries together. During one of these outings, they hit on the idea of starting their own operation. The three built much of the facility themselves, with help from friends. Three Dudes, which strives to make its wines from 100 percent Texas grapes, currently offers six varieties for tasting: chenin blanc, merlot, cabernet sauvignon, white zinfandel, a Texas white, and a Texas red. "We make wines that we enjoy drinking, and our hope is that everyone who visits us finds at least one that they would take away as one they enjoy," says Felderhoff.

I was tempted to head the short distance into San Marcos for a Saturday night dinner and perhaps some live music, but back at the River Haus, fresh firewood waited in the chimenea and now I had a bottle of merlot to sip in the hot tub. Tomorrow, I could sleep in before enjoying continental breakfast in the biergarten swing, followed by another long communion with the San Marcos River on the River Haus deck before heading back to the city. No need to drive farther; Martindale had everything I needed for my stress-free weekend. ★

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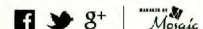


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## ... And Then There Were Two

### This month, our Readers'

Choice Texas Top 40 winners weave a tale of two cities separated by 125 miles along the thriving artery that is Interstate 35. Both are rich in history and culture, and ever-energetic with lively college populations. Each blends small town and big city seamlessly—a little bit country, a little bit rock-and-roll.

Coming in at No. 3, Waco won nods for its numerous museums (spotlighting Dr Pepper and Texas Rangers, Freemasonry and mammoths), parks and trails along the scenic Brazos River corridor, popular Cameron Park Zoo, and the mighty Baylor Bear spirit. Denton earned second-place honors for its live music, food, shopping, fests, and other fun around the historic courthouse square. A timely comment from resident Amber Mumford: "Denton in early November! We have a city full of trees. When the colors change, there's nothing like it."

Autumn and beyond, all of our Readers' Choice Texas Top 40 attractions (see below for the full list to date) are worthy additions to any Texas travel to-do list. See our gradual reveal of videos for the top six winners at [texashighways.com](http://texashighways.com). And save room on your trip itinerary for our readers' No. 1 destination next month! ➔



#### MORE INFO

Call the Waco Convention Center, 800/922-6386; [www.wacoheartoftexas.com](http://www.wacoheartoftexas.com).

## WACO

For those unfamiliar with Waco, the little city in the heart of Texas might be tough to decipher. What to do in this Interstate 35 distribution hub known primarily for the world's largest Baptist school? Quite a bit, actually, as anybody who's taken time to explore Waco will attest. Waco fans spoke loudly and voluminously about their favorite local attractions: outdoor recreation among the hills and cliffs of Cameron Park along the Brazos River; the naturally beautiful Cameron Park Zoo; a lineup of tasty restaurants (especially barbecue); and the shiny new McLane Stadium, home to Baylor University's resurgent football program. And then there are the museums, a diverse collection that'll keep you engaged for days—the Dr Pepper Museum, the Texas Sports Hall of Fame, the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, the Waco Mammoth Site, and Baylor University's Mayborn Museum and Armstrong Browning Library. All this and a refreshing break from the traffic of Interstate 35.



#### MORE INFO

Call the Denton Convention and Visitors Bureau, 888/381-1818; [www.discoverdenton.com](http://www.discoverdenton.com).

## DENTON

Forty minutes north of the rapidly growing cities of Dallas and Fort Worth, the college town of Denton (population 121,000, more or less) enjoys a relaxed vibe that some admirers liken to "Austin in the old days." Maybe so, if old Austin had a half-dozen coffeehouses, restaurants both fine and funky, a multi-story used bookstore, multiple live-music venues, art galleries, shops, and a restored 1896 courthouse—all within walking distance. And while you could easily while away a few days in Denton proper, the surrounding countryside has its charms, too. Among the guided and self-guided tours offered by the Denton CVB, a tour of the area's horse country, where more than 350 horse farms raise and train equines of many breeds, might open your eyes about an industry as tied to Texas as it is to Kentucky.

- 40 LUBBOCK
- 39 MARBLE FALLS
- 38 BASTROP
- 37 CADDO LAKE STATE PARK
- 36 HOUSTON
- 35 GLEN ROSE
- 34 AMARILLO
- 33 MARFA
- 32 DALHART
- 31 DALLAS
- 30 FORT WORTH
- 29 GARNER STATE PARK
- 28 LOCKHART
- 27 FOSBURN
- 26 LINGUUM LAKE
- 25 LAKE FORT
- 24 AUSTIN
- 23 GRANBURY
- 22 FORT AMANSAS
- 21 FERRVILLE
- 20 FORT CHADBOURNE
- 19 BEN WHEELER
- 18 ALMINE
- 17 FORT DAVIS
- 16 PADRE ISLAND
- 15 ABILENE
- 14 MCKINNEY
- 13 CANYON
- 12 GALVESTON
- 11 PALESTINE
- 10 GORPUS CHRISTI
- 9 BRAZOS BEND STATE PARK
- 8 MCUNNY
- 7 FLEASANT
- 6 PALO DURAO CANYON
- 5 NEW BRAUNFELS
- 4 MACODOCHIES
- 3 FREDERICKSBURG
- 2 RICKETTSVILLE
- 1 FULTON





“WACO’S A NICE FAMILY CITY WITH HISTORIC SITES. WE HAVE EVERYTHING A BIG CITY HAS, BUT IN A FAMILY SETTING. PLUS WE ARE RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MAJOR CITIES OF TEXAS, WHICH MAKES US A GREAT POINT FOR DAYTRIPS.”

—JANA STEWART,  
WACO



“DENTON! FOR EVERY AGE, FOR EVERY INTEREST! DENTON HAS HISTORY, MUSIC, ART, CULTURE, AND FUN. THE BEAUTIFUL, HISTORIC SQUARE AND COURTHOUSE AREA OFFERS FOOD, BARS, MUSEUMS, MUSIC, AND MONTHLY FESTIVALS, ALL WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE.”

—AMY HYDOCK,  
CORINTH



BANJO MAKER CHUCK LEE



## ARTS, CRAFTS, *and* ICONS in the LONE STAR STATE

In his song “Stuff That Works,” Texas troubadour Guy Clark pays homage to “stuff that holds up ... stuff that’s real.” His description of a favorite blue shirt worn soft over time is enough to make you wince at the thought of buying a T-shirt made in an overseas factory. Clark’s sweet, simple lyrics honor things with integrity—the stuff that lasts.

And that is what we hope to do here—give a tip of the hat to eight Texans, either artisans or small companies, who are making real, enduring, one-of-a-kind products. Be they custom bicycles, Western couture, fine cotton guayaberas, or baseball gloves, these are things born and raised in Texas. What all of these products have in common can be summed up in one word: soul.

“If you can put a piece of yourself into what you are building, then whatever comes out is soul,” says Chuck Lee, a banjo maker in Ovilla. “It’s why one banjo might seem sterile and another feels alive. When I build something, I enjoy it, but not just for the joy of completing the project. What’s important is the end user: The banjo player has to go ‘Wow,’ and he needs to play it for other people who also go ‘Wow.’ Then I feel fulfilled.”

The pride and joy that these Texas makers gain from their work does indeed ripple beyond their workshops. Whether it’s hollowing out trunks of East Texas cedar trees to make ornate birdhouses, cutting leather into high-end bags in Panhandle ranching country, or using Texas-made windmill blades to harness the power of our West Texas desert gales, the works of these designers and companies leave a lasting impression and make people feel good—like putting on a favorite old shirt.

*text by* **CLAYTON MAXWELL**  
*photographs by* **WILL VAN OVERBEEK**



## HISTORIC INDUSTRY IN SAN ANGELO

Call 800/854-1656  
[www.aermotorwindmill.com](http://www.aermotorwindmill.com)  
Factory tours by appointment.

As familiar as bluebonnets and Dairy Queen, the Aermotor windmills that dot the Texas countryside are such a fixture that you might overlook them. But take note. These graceful machines turning in the wind have been hydrating Texas' arid lands for generations, faithfully drawing water from as deep as 1,500 feet underground. The last American-made windmill in the country, the Aermotor symbolizes a Texas knack for perseverance through tough and changing times.

"Windmills are pretty much a way of life in West Texas," says Jesse Zwiebel, a manager at this 126-year-old company now located in San Angelo, a city perched on the northeastern edge of the Chihuahuan Desert. "A lot of places they might be a novelty item. But here, people depend on them every day."

Aermotor was founded in 1888 in Chicago, but the company's current incarnation is 100 percent Texan. Owned by a group of West Texas ranchers, Aermotor moved to San Angelo in 1986. Its 25 employees make all windmill components, from the blades to the cotter pins, in house. The castings are poured elsewhere—in Coolidge and Enid, Oklahoma—but finished in San Angelo. Although it costs a little more to make the windmills in Texas, sales at the last U.S. windmill factory are climbing, Zwiebel says.

"The western United States would not have been pioneered the way it was without the Aermotor windmill," says Zwiebel. "It was a lifesaver—and still is."



## CUSTOM GUAYABERAS FROM SAN ANTONIO

Call 210/222-9117  
[www.doscarolinas.com](http://www.doscarolinas.com)  
Shops in San Antonio and Houston.

Robin's egg linen, yellow seersucker, blue madras ... The fabric options for a custom-made Dos Carolinas' guayabera are as varied and inviting as the colors in a crayon box. As integral now to San Antonio culture as margaritas and cascarones, Dos Carolinas has elevated the classic Mexican party shirt into a fashion essential far beyond the mass-produced varieties imported from south of the border. Dos Carolinas' materials breathe and feel good to the touch; each pin tuck, embroidery stitch, and monogram is sewn with care; and the possible color and style combinations are as endless as the confetti at a Fiesta parade.

"It just isn't true when people say that Texas men aren't fashion snobs," says Caroline Matthews, who founded the company in 1987. "They love wearing a nicely made shirt. What has made our business is that our clients can design a shirt that fits exactly what they want. For a lot of men, this is the first time they've ordered a custom-made shirt, and they love it."

Matthews launched the company at the suggestion of former Texas Supreme Court Justice Rose Spector, the only female judge in Bexar County at the time. "She told me, 'I've looked everywhere for cotton guayaberas, and they are nowhere to be found. That's what you've got to do—make me a cotton guayabera.' And I told her, 'But that's not a business.'"

Almost three decades later, Matthews' unmistakable guayaberas are not only a business, they are an icon of true Texas style.





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## REMARKABLE ROOSTS FROM EDOM

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Call 903/852-7893

[www.arborcastlebirdhouses.com](http://www.arborcastlebirdhouses.com)

Showroom opens Tuesday through  
Saturday, or by appointment.

“If you want to find out how to do something, you just have to start doing it,” says artist Joseph Hopps in his low East Texas drawl. “And if you are lucky, you will find someone along the way who knows more about it than you do.”

With this spirit of pluck and ambition, Hopps embarked on a flight of fancy in 1999, when he began transforming the hollowed trunks of local cedar trees into whimsical birdhouses. Working with an artist’s eye, he crafts imaginative, detailed avian castles complete with spires, turrets, and tiny little leaves for their ivy-covered walls. “You don’t have to stick to any kind of roadmap,” says Hopps. “The possibilities are limitless.”

Hopps honed his skills along the way, figuring out the best ways to hollow out the fallen cedar trees, how to use a welding torch, and methods for fashioning roofs of copper, iron, and ceramic. “There was a lot of stuff I had to learn,” Hopps says. “I didn’t know anything about copper, but I knew that I

needed a torch. So I purchased one, started experimenting, and finally got where I needed to go.”

With his birdhouses gaining many admirers—art patrons as well as birds—Hopps has enlisted the help of his son, Bobby. The results of their shared determination are works of art that many a chickadee can happily call home.



## CUSTOM CARBON-FIBER BICYCLES FROM AUSTIN

Call 512/459-7458  
[www.crumptoncycles.com](http://www.crumptoncycles.com)  
Consultations by appointment.

Behind his house in central Austin, in a tiny space decked out with machinery, an industrial oven, and a peg-board holding tools and designs, Nick Crumpton transforms the raw material of carbon fiber into sleek, lightweight riding machines. Crumpton is one of a few high-end custom bike makers shaping frames from carbon fiber, a material that allows him to bump personalization up to a higher level.

"I like carbon fiber because I can really tune the characteristics of each tube of the bike in a way you can't do with a metal," he says. "Because we are working with a textile, we can stack the fiber so the bike will respond differently; I can make a frame that is really stiff in one direction but really soft or compliant in another."

Crumpton, who's been fixing bikes since 1988 and building them since 1995, takes an active role in every stage of the process, from fitting his riders to helping them select paint colors. Watching him pull the long black tubes of malleable fiber from the oven, it's difficult to imagine that these will later become the shiny, finished-out masterpieces drying in the studio next door.

"Building with carbon fiber is a ton to keep track of," Crumpton says. "It was a lot easier 20 years ago when I was buying the steel tube sets from a distributor and just breaking out my torch and blazing them together. But it's worth it. The feedback and smiles I get are the payoff."



Meet **YOUR TEXAS** Makers  
*Artists, Crafters, and Icons*



**SUPPLYING  
AMERICA'S  
PASTIME FROM  
NORTH TEXAS**

Call 940/825-3327

[www.nokona.com](http://www.nokona.com)

Factory tours on Mondays and  
Fridays; retail shop at factory.

In the 1960s, when former Nokona CEO “Big Bob” Storey was asked why he wasn’t buying from overseas to make his sporting equipment, he famously said, “If I have to import and send my employees home, I would rather just quit and go fishing.”

The company’s deep-seated commitment to staying in its hometown of Nocona has made it the country’s largest American-made baseball glove manufacturer. Surprisingly, almost all of the equipment for America’s pastime is made in factories in Asia. But Nokona baseball and softball gloves—die-cut, stitched, and laced by a small team—are Texan, through and through. (Nokona replaced the “c” in the spelling of its hometown-inspired name in the 1930s over trademark concerns.)

Lone Star baseball legend Nolan Ryan’s first glove, bought at age seven, was a Nokona. And when a former Texas cattle truck driver recently toured the Nokona factory, he could identify which Texas ranches some of the leather came from based on the cattle brands visible in the hides.

Nokona has weathered its own share of victories and losses over the years, and its story is part of the fabric of American history. During World War II, the company sold 260,000 gloves per year to the U.S. government for soldiers fighting overseas. Nowadays, the company is challenged by a shrinking supply of American tanneries and competition from massive sporting-goods companies that outsource work to Asia. And in 2006, a fire destroyed the company’s Depression-era factory. But Nokona rebuilt. Sales are up, and the company is thriving.

“Big Bob was a small-town Texas boy,” says Rob Storey, Bob’s grandson and Nokona’s vice president. “It’s always been a family creed that we would continue to manufacture in Texas.”







## WESTERN WEAR AND DÉCOR FROM SMITHVILLE

Call 800/728-9653

[www.patriciawolf.com](http://www.patriciawolf.com)

A factory sale Dec. 6 coincides with  
the Smithville Festival of Lights.

**W**hen Patricia Wolf was a little girl growing up in Pennsylvania, she often fell asleep at night gazing at the posters of Western landscapes she'd put on her wall, thinking: "Someday, I'll live in Texas."

So, when she and her husband, Sam, decided to settle down after six years on the road selling Pat's handmade apparel in their tricked-out school bus called the Prairie Schooner, they came to Smithville. That was 1976. Almost 40 years later, Patricia has established herself as an authority of flashy Western style. Still inspired by the landscapes of Texas, she designs and sews sumptuous Western-wear pieces that would make you the star of any rodeo. And it's a family affair: Her husband styles the vests and concho belts, and her son, Zach, makes jewelry and home décor furr.iture.

Wolf's unique fashion alchemy takes place in a former-grocery-store-turned-textile factory on Main Street in the heart of Smithville, about 45 miles south-east of Austin. Overflowing boxes of lambskin, Tibetan/Mongolian fur, and deer suede stack up next to racks of patterns hanging from the wall. A handful of employees work at sewing machines, lean over cutting tables, and thread long ribbons of brown suede through handsome cowgirl shawls.

While Patricia Wolf says she faces increasing pressure from overseas manufacturers, plenty of people still want the real deal, designed and sewn by Texans with the best materials. Reba McEntire, the Dixie Chicks, Alan Jackson, Loretta Lynn, and members of Bon Jovi have all worn her creations.

Meet **YOUR TEXAS** Makers

*Artists, Crafters, and Icons*



**OVILLA PLUMBER STRIKES A CHORD**

Call 972/617-5576  
[www.chuckleebanjoes.com](http://www.chuckleebanjoes.com)  
Workshop tours offered  
by appointment.

**Y**ou can't play a sad song on a banjo, says Chuck Lee. Which is a big part of why this banjo-pickin' father of seven and plumber by trade decided to use his retirement savings to convert his backyard shed into a banjo workshop. With the help of his wife, Tamara, and the rest of his family, Chuck Lee and his custom-made Texas banjos are helping people across the country play more happy songs.

"My older brother called me one day and said he was going to give up on music, it just wasn't there," says Lee, an engaging raconteur who looks so much like Santa Claus that he plays the role each Christmas. "And I said, 'I need to send you a banjo.' He asked why and I said, 'Because you can't be sad playing a banjo.' So I sent him one, and it sparked his whole passion for music again."

Over the past 12 years, Lee has built 660 banjos by hand. Banjo aficionados say you can tell the strum of a Chuck Lee banjo from across the room—the tones are clear, distinctive, and clean. Lee is also known for his personalized inlays on the fingerboard: a girl in a cowboy hat sitting on a crescent moon, a beloved basset hound, an angel. Lee still falls in love with each instrument he makes.

"Even now, before I pack a banjo up to send it off to a customer, I'll hang it on the wall," he says. "Every single one, I'm just wowed that I made it and that it turned out so nicely."



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## WORLDLY HANDBAGS FROM BUSHLAND

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www.libbylane.com.

**L**ibby Lane cuts and sews her streamlined leather bags in an old converted bunkhouse on the Panhandle ranch where she grew up, surrounded by cattle and wide-open space. Although she has lived and worked in the fashion and art business in New York and Chicago, and her bags are coveted internationally, the 27-year-old prefers to work close to the land from which both she and her craft hail.

Lane made her own chaps as a girl and has studied with local saddle makers to learn their techniques. She likes how the light and expansive views of the Panhandle Plains filter into her studio as she works. And she's found Texas to be a friendly environment for launching her business, which is growing so quickly she will soon have to build more studio space. "I love working here. Not only is the history of craftsmanship and leather here so strong, but the community is really great. It's been very supportive."

When Lane was a student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, she toured textile factories and became intrigued by the artistry of leather tanning. She bought samples from the best tanneries and stitched together ultra-durable, minimalist bags that she and her friends began toting around. In 2011, *Vogue* magazine profiled her work; demand hasn't let up since.

Lane's simple designs highlight the utilitarian beauty of the leather she uses—all of it domestic, much of it from Texas. "People who paint leather cover up its natural markings; each hide has something interesting, some sort of barbed wire mark or brand or bug bite."

Lane even puts her bags under a running faucet to test their water-resistance. She's making Texas totes to last a lifetime. ★





## **FUN *with* FOOD** ***and* TEXAS TREATS**

**I**f you only ate wild foods native to Texas, you'd never go hungry. But add on all the food products that we also make here, and, well, you could enjoy a feast for the ages. Texas is among the country's most important agricultural states, and its farmers, ranchers, and other producers provide a diverse portfolio of raw ingredients, which we chefs, home cooks, and other creative types turn into world-class cuisine.

For example, there are wines made from tempranillo grapes grown on the High Plains to enjoy with rib-eye steaks from North Texas cattle. There's fresh shrimp from the Gulf of Mexico to pair with craft beers from small breweries in places like Blanco, Granbury, and Alpine. Peanuts, pecans, tomatoes, blueberries, onions, grapefruits, and all sorts of herbs and leafy greens flavor comfort foods and staple foods alike, from classics like peach cobbler and peanut brittle to contemporary favorites like seafood ceviche.

There's always something coming into season, which is why the Texas Department of Agriculture helps consumers locate local and seasonal foods through their GO TEXAN program ([www.gotexan.org](http://www.gotexan.org)). GO TEXAN identifies many foods grown and produced in the state, as well as the farmers' markets, grocery stores, and restaurants that feature them.

Even though the following assortment represents only a small fraction of the number of Texas foods available, each is a delicious example of authentic Texas flavor. One thing is clear: Whether you use them for home-style cooking or fine dining, for building meals entirely of Texas foods or enlivening any dish with Texas flavors, you'd better bring a Texas-size appetite to the table.

***text by* ANTHONY HEAD**  
***photographs by* ERIC W. POHL**





BARBECUED CHICKEN FROM THE "ORIGINAL" RUDY'S COUNTRY STORE



## ROUND ROCK HONEY

### IT'S THE BEE'S KNEES

See [www.roundrockhoney.com](http://www.roundrockhoney.com) for information on beekeeping classes and to order honey online.

**R**ound Rock Honey begins with honeys sourced from about 900 individual hives concentrated in Central Texas, says Konrad Bouffard, who founded Round Rock Honey in 2003 with his wife, Elizabeth.

The Bouffards use a method called biodynamic beekeeping, employing handheld smokers to calm their bees when removing honey, cinnamon to discourage ants, and olive-oil traps to suffocate beetles and other predators.

Straight from the hives, individual honey batches taste different from year to year—and sometimes from season to season—because of fluctuations within the bee population, the weather, and the plants that emerge. Plus, each plant's nectar has its own flavor; some taste buttery while others seem peppery. Mesquite nectar, for example, is light and sweet, while persimmon nectar features much stronger flavors.

“Many of these individual honeys aren't necessarily ideal on their own,” says Konrad. “But when blended, they lend a symphony of flavors. We're trying to create a symphony of flavors.”

Round Rock's unfiltered honey is also blended for an appealing chestnut brown color, as well as for a consistent, rich flavor with floral and citrus notes. You can find jars in grocery stores and for sale through the company's website, which also provides information on Konrad's beekeeping classes.





## THE INSIDE SCOOP

Blue Bell Creameries is at  
1101 S. Blue Bell Rd. in Brenham.  
For details about tours and products,  
see [www.bluebell.com](http://www.bluebell.com).



In 1907, businessmen in the Brenham area opened a creamery to churn excess milk from area farms into butter. A few years later, it began producing batches of ice cream, which became so popular that by the time the company changed its name to Blue Bell Creameries in 1931, its focus was almost entirely on ice cream.

Blue Bell is still headquartered in Brenham, and today it makes one of the best-selling ice cream brands in the country. Despite its national prominence, it still uses Texas ingredients to manufacture dozens of ice cream varieties, and visitors to Brenham can take guided tours of Blue Bell's production facilities each weekday. Blue Bell's runaway best-selling flavor is Homemade Vanilla; it's one of the many varieties with year-round availability.

"We try to release six new flavors every year, and we also have rotating flavors, which come back yearly for a limited time," says longtime employee Carl Breed, who is celebrating his 25th year at Blue Bell. "If a flavor sells like gangbusters, we do everything we can to make sure it comes back again."

Italian Cream Cake is one such flavor: vanilla ice cream, loaded with pieces of Italian cream cake, shredded coconut, roasted pecans, and cream-cheese icing. It was introduced in 2013 and did so well that it returned this year. (Eager and hopeful taste buds await another encore in 2015.)

"My favorite flavor," says Carl, "is always the next new flavor that comes out."





**DUBLIN TEXAS  
ROOT BEER**



## ROOTING FOR DUBLIN

Dublin Bottling Works is at 105 E. Elm St. in Dublin. Call 888/398-1024; [www.dublinbottlingworks.com](http://www.dublinbottlingworks.com).

The 1891 Dublin Bottling Works enjoys the dual honor of being the state's oldest soda bottling facility and the first to bottle Dr Pepper (created in Waco in 1885). So when the plant stopped bottling what Texans fondly referred to as "Dublin Dr Pepper" in 2012, some people wrote off the company.

Kenny Horton, who is the manager and "head soda jerk" at Old Doc's Soda Shop, located at the Dublin Bottling Works, sets the record straight: "No. The company never closed."

Instead, Dublin Bottling Works introduced its own line of original-recipe bottled sodas.

"We want to make the drinks true to the original sodas of the 1940s, '50s, and '60s," Kenny explains.

Texas Root Beer, for instance, was introduced in 2013 and features a smooth and creamy mouthfeel, light vanilla and licorice aromas, and dark, crisp flavors.

Kenny says the company's long-time practice of using cane sugar as a sweetener gives the soda authentic flavor and texture. "Pure cane sugar doesn't add bitterness like corn syrup does. So we don't have to over-carbonate our sodas to compensate," he says. "If you're a real connoisseur, there's a big difference."

In his role as Tour Guide, Kenny meets a lot of those connoisseurs.

"Many still make the pilgrimage hoping to locate some lost bottles of 'Dublin Dr Pepper,'" he jokes. "But they usually leave having found a new favorite flavor created right here in Dublin."





**RUDY'S  
BAR-B-Q  
"SAUSE"**

**GETTING SAUCED IN  
LEON SPRINGS**

The "Original" Rudy's Country Store  
is at 24152 W. I-10 in Leon Springs.

See [www.rudysbbq.com](http://www.rudysbbq.com).

It probably can't be overstated how important barbecue is to Texans. There are countless barbecue pits smoking away—right now—all over the state. That's happening, too, at Rudy's Texas Bar-B-Q, which has locations scattered throughout the state and beyond.

The "Original" Rudy's Country Store opened its doors as a meat market in 1989 in Leon Springs. The next year, co-owner Mac "Doc" Holiday added barbecue and indoor seating. Around that time, so the story goes, Doc noticed diners putting mustard on the brisket and decided to create his own sauce.

Using a recipe from his mother as a foundation, Doc introduced a barbecue "Sause" in the early 1990s, and today, Rudy's sauces—"Original" and a milder version—are two of the company's signature products. Available at the restaurants and through the online store (along with T-shirts, caps, rubs, and smoked meats) this tomato-based sauce adds a black-pepper kick not just to brisket, but also to pork ribs, grilled chicken, and turkey.

Some barbecue fans say it's more akin to "basting sauce in a bottle" while others claim to sip it straight-up; regardless, Rudy's "Original" sauce is so popular that Rudy's sells about 43,000 bottles every year. And that doesn't count the sauce enjoyed at the chain's nearly three dozen restaurants, nor what's shipped complimentary to soldiers stationed overseas.





## IN A NUTSHELL, DELICIOUS

Texas Pecan Candy Shoppe  
is at 17605 I-35 N in Schertz.

Call 210/651-5754;

[www.texaspecancandy.net](http://www.texaspecancandy.net).

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**O**n most days of the week, the various ovens and cooktops at the Texas Pecan Candy Shoppe in Schertz, just north of San Antonio, are hot and running by 5 a.m. The small storefront fills with the aromas of freshly prepared baked goods, ice creams, jams, jellies, and other confections, an inviting sensory welcome for the shop's daily parade of visitors.

Many of the products use local ingredients, especially pecans from San Saba, which come in several flavors (sweet-and-spicy, honey-roasted, and cinnamon-and-sugar, for example). You'll also find pecan brittle and pecan divinity.

The star of pecan confections here, however, is the creamy homemade praline. The Texas Pecan Candy Shoppe uses a recipe that's "generations old," according to Manager Julianna Lavulo, who helps owner Bonnie Palmer make the candies by hand in small batches and form them into Texas-shaped pralines. "We get people in from places like Louisiana saying they've hunted high and low for a praline that tasted like how they tasted when they were growing up," Julianna says.

The secret to the pralines' popularity, Julianna says, is the same as with just about everything else prepared by the company, which turned 25 this year: "As much as we can, we source our ingredients from Texas. Then we put in a lot of hours over the stove."

### TEXAS PECAN CANDY SHOPPE





## TEXAS TAMALE COMPANY

### IT'S A WRAP

The Mexican Deli is at  
3340 Fountainview Dr. in Houston.  
For information about ordering  
tamales and other products,  
see [www.texastamale.com](http://www.texastamale.com).

Among the great culinary traditions of Texas is the Mexican tamale. This savory staple of meat and vegetable fillings steamed inside thick ground-corn dough, called masa, has become a showcase for professional chefs and home cooks alike. The Texas Tamale Company's roots go back to the 1980s, when the original owner sold tamales from a pushcart on the streets of Houston. Today, the company sells more than 3 million tamales every year.

For tamales straight out of the steamer, visit The Mexican Deli, Texas Tamale Company's retail location and restaurant on Houston's west side. Using the original lard-free and gluten-free masa recipe, the pork, beef, chicken, black bean, and spinach-and-cheese varieties are well-seasoned, finely textured, and incredibly addictive.

The small restaurant features a few tables for dining and does a brisk take-away business, but the majority of these signature tamales are frozen to be sold in grocery stores and specialty foods shops. Through its website, the Texas Tamale Company ships tamales overnight throughout the country. In fact, it sells just about everything needed to put together a home tamale-making party, including several masa blends, finishing sauces, seasonings, rice, and chile con queso.



## CHEERS TO TEXAS CITRUS

For recipes and information about tours of the new distillery in Dripping Springs, see [www.deepeddyvodka.com](http://www.deepeddyvodka.com).

**D**ating to the first experimental orchards planted in the 1880s, citrus fruits are among the most important crops of South Texas, contributing around \$140 million annually to the state economy. The subtropical climate and fertile soils of the Rio Grande Valley are ideal for growing lemons, oranges, and grapefruit, including several varieties of famous Texas red grapefruit. Juice from some of these deeply colored, deeply flavored red fruits is the star ingredient of Deep Eddy Ruby Red Vodka.

Introduced in 2013, this premium vodka is distilled 10 times and then charcoal-filtered to finish at 70 proof. It's smooth and refreshing when served simply over ice with a splash of club soda, but it has also inspired myriad cocktails from professional and amateur mixologists alike.

Deep Eddy's co-owner Chad Auler takes the "made in Texas" slogan seriously, producing vodka in Central Texas with Texas-grown corn. After all, he named the company after Austin's historic Deep Eddy swimming pool. He says fresh grapefruit flavor is what makes the Ruby Red Vodka so appealing to Texans.

The company, which also produces Deep Eddy Vodka, Sweet Tea Flavored Vodka, and Cranberry Infused Vodka, is opening a new, larger facility this year in Dripping Springs. "We'll sell north of 400,000 cases of all our products this year," says Chad. "Roughly 40 percent of that volume is Ruby Red."

### DEEP EDDY RUBY RED VODKA





## SPICES FROM SOUTH TEXAS

La India Packing Company is at 1520 Marcella Ave. in Laredo. [www.laindiaherbsandspices.com](http://www.laindiaherbsandspices.com).

“With the resurgence of cooking shows, people are always looking for secret ingredients,” says Elsa Rodriguez Arguindegui, one of the family owners of Laredo’s La India Packing Company, which recently celebrated its 90th anniversary. “La India is in the business of secret ingredients.”

The Laredo store sells pineapple pepper, chorizo spice, arbol chile powder, and dozens of other herbs and spices, along with blends developed especially for seasoning fajitas, chile con carne, steak, carne guisada, and many other popular dishes. Introduced in the late 1990s, Tejano Seasoning has become one of La India’s bestsellers. “It’s a perfect balance of cumin, ground pepper, and garlic,” says Elsa. La India’s Tasting Room Café, which does a brisk lunch business, offers diners a chance to try new seasonings before they hit the shelves.

Elsa explains that, being a border town, Laredo enjoys culinary influences of two countries. “We represent the ‘real McCoy’ flavors of South Texas,” she says, adding that interest in traditional flavors is an important reason why La India is still around after 90 years.

Elsa’s grandfather Antonio Rodriguez and his wife, Antcna Villarreal Rodriguez, opened La India in 1924 to sell Mexican chocolate, medicinal herbs, and kitchen staples. Eventually, they focused on packaging spices and herbs, as well as creating blends such as their signature menudo and chorizo mixes.

Elsa and her family were recently presented a Texas Treasure Business Award from the Texas Historical Commission to recognize their 90 years in business. ★





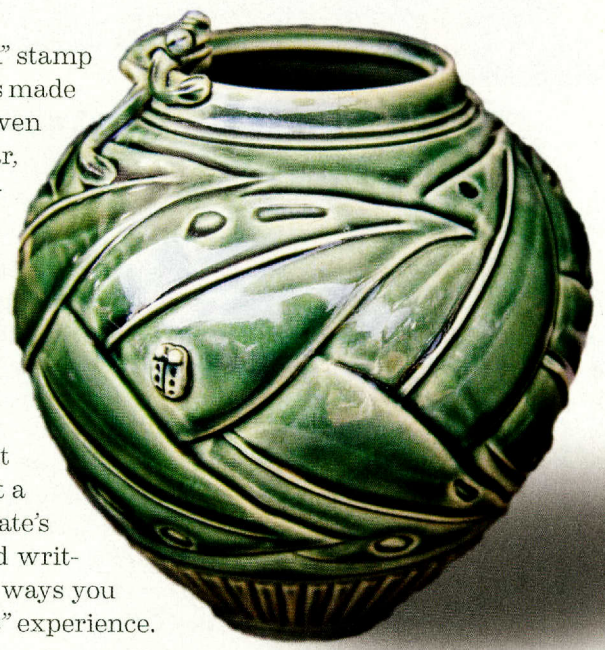
WILLIE NELSON  
& FAMILY  
#ALDWIX 3



## MUSIC, ARTS, *and* INFINITE POSSIBILITIES



If the “Made in the USA” stamp is hard to find, products made in Texas may seem even more elusive. Never fear, brave travelers! Numerous events across the state offer the Lone Star faithful a place to find their calling, celebrating the state’s creations from fine art to home cooking. Even better, these festivals, exhibits, and tours are more than just a storefront to browse—you might even get a chance to rub elbows with the state’s finest artisans, musicians, and writers. Here are just a few of the ways you can find a truly “Made in Texas” experience.



*text by*  
**ERIN INKS *and* JULIE STRATTON**



Becker Vineyards, Stonewall



## RAISE A GLASS TO TEXAS WINES

WINE IN THE PINES, October 24-25, 2014, and PINEY WOODS WINE FESTIVAL, May 15-16, 2015, Mount Vernon GRAPE STOMPS mid-July through September

**W**inemaking in Texas goes back to the mid-1600s, when Spanish missionaries harvested grapes near El Paso to make sacramental wine. Today, the state is one of the top wine producers in the nation and home to nearly 300 wineries—and plenty of fun ways to enjoy the fruits of winemakers' labor.

When harvest season arrives in late summer, many vineyards celebrate by inviting visitors to try their hand—or actually, feet—at an old-fashioned grape stomp. Becker Vineyards in Stonewall even entertains wine lovers with a costume contest based on a memorable episode of “I Love Lucy” that turns the grape stomp into a lighthearted and messy brawl.

If you prefer to sip with your shoes on, Mount Vernon hosts two annual festivals to celebrate Texas wines. On the third weekend in May, the Piney Woods Wine Festival highlights nearly 20 establishments on the Piney Woods Wine Trail; then the community puts out the welcome mat for Texas vintners on the fourth weekend in October for the Wine in the Pines festival. Call 903/537-4070; [www.mtvernonwine.com](http://www.mtvernonwine.com).

## GET IN TOUCH WITH TRADITION

CRAFTTEXAS

September 26-December 24, 2014, Houston

**A**rtists throughout Texas are creating remarkable contemporary pieces using traditional craft techniques, and the CraftTexas 2014 exhibition at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft showcases amazing examples of this artistry.

This year's exhibition features 46 works by 43 artists in sculpture, jewelry, textiles, installations, and furniture. Items include binary code presented in the form of a necklace and a sculpture with topographical layers of copper and wood denoting the time span of human history. Two themes that





Curator Elizabeth Kozlowski found specifically interesting in this year's selection are material explorations in which the artists play with the idea of what is precious by using found objects, and large-scale works using unusual materials, such as a weaving created with the tape from cassettes.

"You don't have to look beyond Texas to recognize the talent that exists; we have it here at home," Kozlowski says. Call 713/529-4848; [www.crafthouston.org/exhibition/crafttexas-2014](http://www.crafthouston.org/exhibition/crafttexas-2014).

## TUNE IN TO AUSTIN CITY LIMITS

AUSTIN CITY LIMITS' 40th-anniversary season started October 3, 2014

Since its pilot episode was taped with Willie Nelson in 1974, *Austin City Limits* has blazed a trail through music and television history, becoming the nation's longest-running TV music series and adding authority to Austin's title as "Live Music Capital of the World." This season marks the program's 40th year on the air, which kicked off October 3 with a star-studded, two-hour prime-time special. The anniversary season keeps humming through November before picking up again in January 2015, featuring an eclectic range of artists from emerging roots-music songstress Valerie June to veteran industrial rockers Nine Inch Nails.

Longtime viewers might have noticed that the familiar backdrop of the Austin skyline changed in 2011 (mirroring the city's actual skyline) when the program moved to its new digs in the Moody Theater, which expanded audience capacity from roughly 300 to 2,000. Still, no seat is more than 75 feet from the stage, and the show's intimate approach to live music lives on. Passes are distributed free by lottery about a week before each taping; visit [www.acltv.com](http://www.acltv.com) for a schedule and details on how to attend a show.



## FIRE UP WITH TEXAS CLAY ARTISTS

TEXAS CLAY FESTIVAL

October 25-26, 2014, Gruene

The art of making pottery has had roots in the Texas mud since ancient times. While the tools and techniques have advanced since then, modern artists still get their hands dirty for the sake of this craft, and they're more than happy to show how it's done at the annual Texas Clay Festival.

Held annually on the fourth weekend in October in New Braunfels' Gruene Historic District, the event features works by approximately 70 Texas-based potters and clay artists. Demonstrators show skills such as sculpture, decoration, and using the potter's wheel. One of the most exciting displays is raku firing—a process in which a clay piece is quick-fired, removed from the kiln while red-hot, and cooled in a container filled with combustible materials such as grass, paper, or wood chips. The end result is a fire-marked appearance, which might look crackled or colorful. Call 830/629-7975; [www.texasclayfestival.com](http://www.texasclayfestival.com).





Fredericksburg Food & Wine Fest



## PAIR IT! TASTE TEXAS FOOD AND WINES

FREDERICKSBURG FOOD & WINE FEST

October 25, 2014, Fredericksburg

TEXAS REDS STEAK & GRAPE FESTIVAL

September 26-27, 2015, Bryan

**T**ry these two fests for a rounded Texas culinary experience. The Fredericksburg Food & Wine Fest celebrates 24 years this fall. The fest's Saturday event on the Marktplatz features 28 Texas wineries, 45 Texas specialty products (most food-related), and six Texas chefs creating dishes paired with Texas wines.

In addition to the main draw, the festival has three special events: a Thursday-night food and wine pairing dinner with a GO TEXAN focus, A Celebration of Texas Food and Texas Wine on Friday, and the Saturday-morning Patron Party. Call 830/997-8515; [www.fbgfoodandwinefest.com](http://www.fbgfoodandwinefest.com).

Texas Reds Steak & Grape Festival in Bryan hosts more than 30 Texas wineries, GO TEXAN vendors, a steak cook-off, Texan-created arts & crafts, Texas-based food vendors, and Texas musicians. The festival takes place on the streets of downtown, where locally owned restaurants also offer their spins on steak dishes, including steak wraps and steak tacos. Call 979/822-4920; <http://tr.blog.bryantx.gov>.

## BEHOLD BEAUTIFUL FURNISHINGS

TEXAS FURNITURE MAKERS SHOW

October 30-November 29, 2014,

Kerrville

**A**wonderland of Texas-made furniture transforms the three galleries at the Kerr Arts & Cultural Center in Kerrville for 31 days during the Texas Furniture Makers Show.

Makers must reside in Texas, work in a small shop, and create one-of-a-kind or limited-edition pieces. Works can be made of wood, iron, steel, ceramic, paint, glass, plastic, stone, fiber, or a combination. Past pieces have included everything from a fanciful, red spiderweb chair made of painted metal to traditional and contemporary chests, chairs,



tables, and desks. Depending on the size of the pieces submitted, generally 50 to 60 are chosen for display, and many are available for sale. "It's mindboggling to see the craftsmanship," says Debbie Minns, executive director of the Kerr Arts & Cultural Center.

A few years ago, an accessories element was added to the show. This category includes jewelry boxes, game sets, quilt racks, bowls, and other small pieces. Call 830/895-2911; [www.texasfurnituremakersshow.com](http://www.texasfurnituremakersshow.com).

## BOOK A TRIP TO ABILENE

WEST TEXAS BOOK FESTIVAL  
September 21-26, 2015, Abilene

When the West Texas Book Festival began, organizers knew what they wanted to accomplish—to promote Texas books and authors, as well as Abilene's local literary scene. The state's wellspring of talent continues to sustain a thriving event, keeping its focus on writers who are from Texas or live here.

The event includes a week of author presentations, school visits, workshops, a showcase for local writers, and the annual cookbook gala, culminating Saturday with book signings and the Boots and Books Luncheon. The A.C. Greene Award—named for the author, columnist, and Abilene native—is bestowed on a distinguished Texas author each year.

Festival Chairman Glenn Dromgoole says the event's success is based on the dedicated support of donors, volunteers, and the Abilene Public Library, along with the Texan penchant for tale-spinning. Go to [www.abilenetx.com/apl/bookfest.html](http://www.abilenetx.com/apl/bookfest.html). ★

*Erin Inks is editor of the Texas Highways Events Calendar and an occasional jewelry maker and painter. Contributing editor Julie Stratton enjoys events highlighting Texas-made items, especially those where visitors get to interact with the makers.*



## BRUSH UP ON TEXAS ART

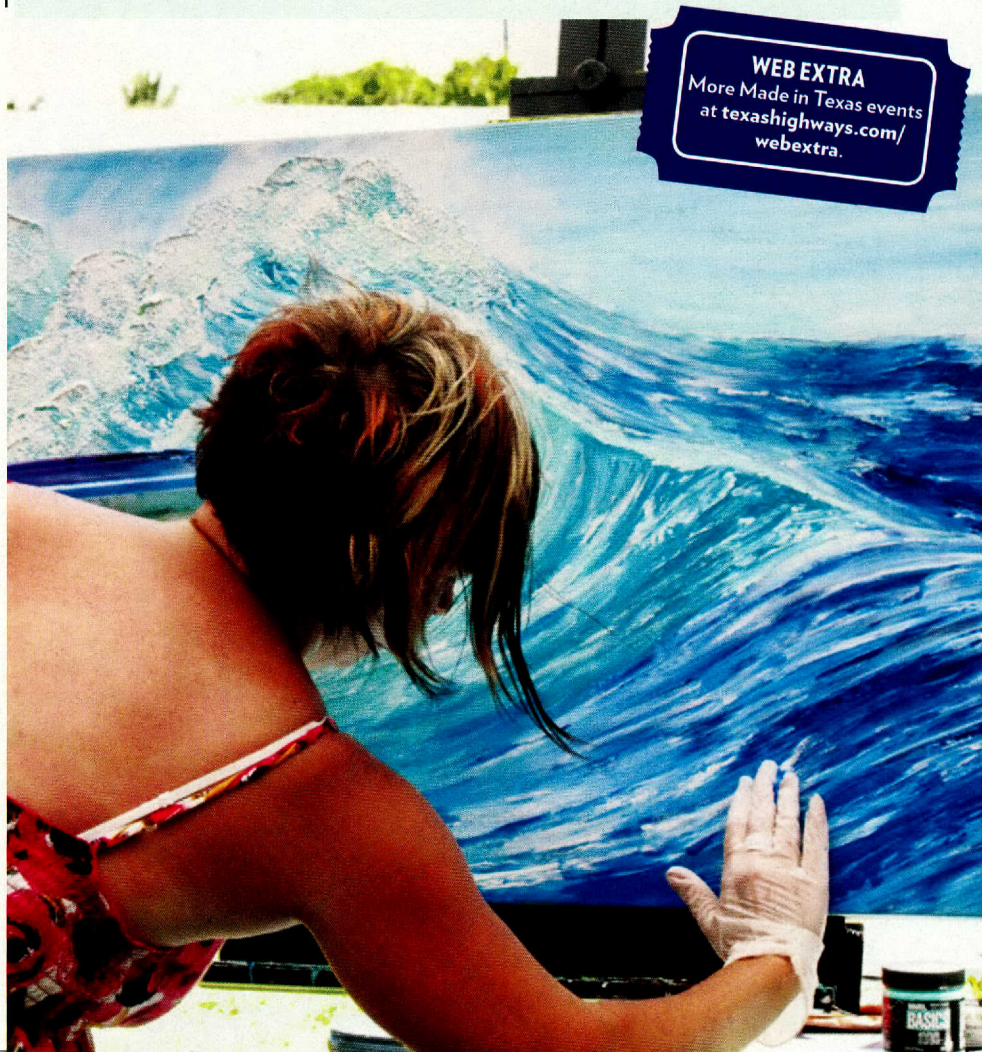
ROCKPORT ART FESTIVAL

July 4-5, 2015, Rockport

Find the perfect convergence of Texas artists, art lovers, and beautiful location at the Rockport Art Festival. The festival brings artists from a variety of disciplines together for the July 4th weekend, explains John Aäsp, visual arts director at the Rockport Center for the Arts, which hosts the event. While the festival, which began in 1969, isn't exclusive to Texas artists, most of the approximately 120 artists selected for the juried event hail from the Lone Star State.

Within sight of Rockport Beach Park, artists set up showcases of their work in ceramics, glass, jewelry, mixed media, painting, photography, sculpture, and wood inside four large tents on the festival grounds. Other tents house a children's gallery, face painting, and art projects, along with live music and food.

For attendees, the festival offers a great opportunity to see the quality and diversity of work achieved by Texan artists and to visit with the artists about their creations. Call 361/729-5519; [www.rockportartcenter.com/art-festival](http://www.rockportartcenter.com/art-festival).



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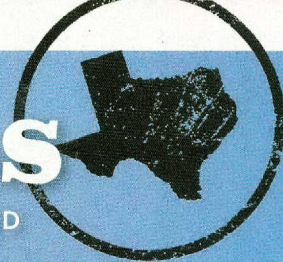
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# True Texas

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## If It Ain't Broken

AUSTIN'S LEGENDARY BROKEN SPOKE  
HONKY-TONK TURNS 50

Text by MICHAEL CORCORAN



### KEEP AUSTIN COUNTRY

*James White, owner of the Broken Spoke, with his 1954 Cadillac Coupe de Ville in front of the honky-tonk and restaurant on South Lamar in Austin.*



**TWO-STEP TUTORIAL**

*Dancing will help you get the most out of your Broken Spoke experience. Terri White leads country dance lessons four nights a week at 8 p.m.*

**J**ERRY JEFF WALKER USED TO SAY THAT HE DOESN'T LIVE IN Texas, he lives in Austin. The opposite can be said of the Broken Spoke, where true honky-tonk Texas lives in the heart of nouveau hip Austin. The Spoke used to be a roadhouse on the outskirts of town, but now it's surrounded by the bustle of South Lamar Boulevard, including trendy new condos that rise on two sides of the low-slung dancehall. When you step inside the rustic red building, though, it's still 1964, the band is playing "Walking the Floor Over You," and the dance floor is a counter-clockwise swirl of bodies.

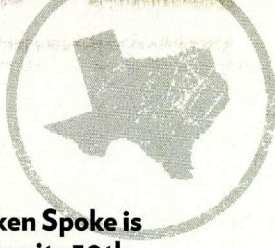
"We've never changed a thing," says James White, who has run the Spoke with his wife Annetta for two-thirds of his 75 years. "When you come to the Broken Spoke, you're coming to the same place that folks have been coming to for 50 years." November 5-8, the 661-capacity dancehall with the big oak tree out front and "the best chicken-fried steak in town" is celebrating its landmark golden anniversary with a week of classic country dancing and honky-tonk bands.

The Broken Spoke experience is still one of the coolest things about Austin, a visitor's favorite stop at night after a day at Barton Springs Pool. "I figure it's like going to the Alamo," White continues. "You see all these big buildings and chain stores all around it, but when you go inside, it's still the Alamo."

When you go to the Sistine Chapel you use your neck; at the Broken Spoke, it's all about your dancing feet. "We have only two rules when it comes to the bands," says Annetta, who runs the Spoke's nightly operations with a legendary feisty streak. "First, they've gotta be country. And then I tell them, 'If the dance floor ain't



**THE BROKEN SPOKE**  
is at 3201 S. Lamar Blvd.  
Call 512/442-6189;  
[www.brokenspokeaustintx.com](http://www.brokenspokeaustintx.com).



full, you're playing the wrong songs!"

Acts like Thursday mainstay Jesse Dayton tailor their sets for the venue. "It's not about presenting yourself as a singer-songwriter—or even an entertainer—at the Broken Spoke," Dayton says. "The music is totally for the dancers, and we play the shuffles, waltzes, polkas, and 4/4 beats they love."

Dale Watson is so attuned to what the Spoke crowd wants that he named a Texas two-step "Quick Quick Slow Slow" as a template for new dancers, who share the floor with expert twirlers. As for non-dancers, they quickly learn to respect the number one Spoke rule: no standing on the dance floor.

You don't need to be an experienced two-stepper when you show up at the Spoke. The Whites' daughter, Terri, gets the old-fashioned Western dance party started with two-step dance lessons (\$8) at 8 p.m. on Wednesdays through Saturdays. "I don't care if you're old or out of shape or butt-ugly," Terri says. "If you can two-step, you'll have the ladies lined up to dance with you."

Terri's goal is to get her students on the polished-concrete dance floor that night when the band's playing. "Last year we had 40 Korean men, and their translator didn't show up," laughs Terri. "And we still had them two-stepping that night." It's a story she relates to new classes that don't seem to be getting it.

"Texas has a dance culture unlike any state in America," says Dayton. "Asking someone to dance without any intention of picking them up is just a part of who we are. And it started at places like the Broken Spoke."

In 1964, Austin native James White was a 25-year-old just out of the Army when he discovered a vacant property with beautiful oak trees at 3201 South Lamar. He put the money together to build a beer joint and restaurant, and dreamed up a memorable name. That first year, the Broken Spoke consisted of only the front room, which is now the restaurant. A big fan of country music, James White and friends added the dancehall the next year.

**The Broken Spoke is celebrating its 50th anniversary with a free dance featuring special-guest performers on Nov. 5 and shows by Jesse Dayton on Nov. 6, Alvin Crow on Nov. 7, and Dale Watson on Nov. 8.**

"Everybody wanted to help," White says of the roadhouse's construction. "Every drunk in town helped build the Broken Spoke. People try to copy us, but they can't duplicate us, because there are no blueprints. We had everybody from ditch diggers to millionaires, and it's still that way today."

The roof leaked for 25 years and the ceiling is too low for some musicians to wear their cowboy hats onstage. Most of the tables are quartered sheets of plywood supported by two-by-fours cut at an angle. And the chairs are cheap metal fold-ups.

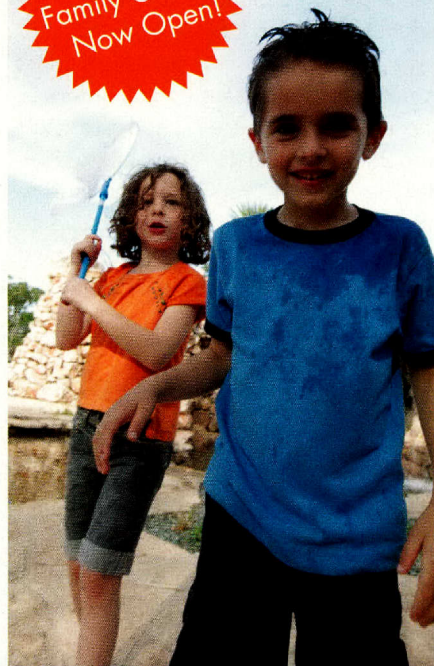
"I worked 16 hours a day at the bar in the beginning," says White. "And I was in charge of booking the bands." The Broken Spoke remains a family endeavor. The Whites' youngest daughter, Ginny, helps coordinate the business, including employees and the restaurant. "It's a true mom-and-pop operation," White says.

In 1966, White landed Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys, to the surprise of the regular crowd. "I showed 'em on the calendar and they'd say, 'He's not going to show,'" recalls White. "So you can imagine when Bob Wills himself walked through that door, smoking a big cigar. The fellas practically fell off their barstools."

Other country greats who've played the Spoke include Roy Acuff, Tex Ritter, Ernest Tubb, Kitty Wells, and, of course, Willie Nelson, who was a clean-cut Nashville artist when he first played here in 1967.

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The newer bands that play the Spoke, such as the Derailers and Mike and the Moonpies, play all the old songs, as if country music never experienced Urban Cowboy. The 1980 hit movie starring John Travolta and Debra Winger spurred a country disco scene that continues to flourish in Texas and beyond—in complete opposition of the Broken Spoke model.

“Cold beer, good food, and real country music is all we’ve ever advertised,” says White, who can be found most weekend nights greeting customers in the walkway between the restaurant and the dancehall. He also likes to wander his “Tourist Trap” room of memorabilia, pointing to an autographed photo of George Strait and telling impressed onlookers that “King George” played the Spoke once a month from 1975 to 1982, for about \$500 a gig.

The journey has not been without its bumps. When the Spoke raised the price of beer a nickel to 30 cents in the ‘60s, there was outrage. Then, when selling liquor by the drink became legal in Texas in 1973, the Spoke opted to remain a beer joint because regulars threatened mutiny if they couldn’t

continue to bring in their own bottles of hooch.

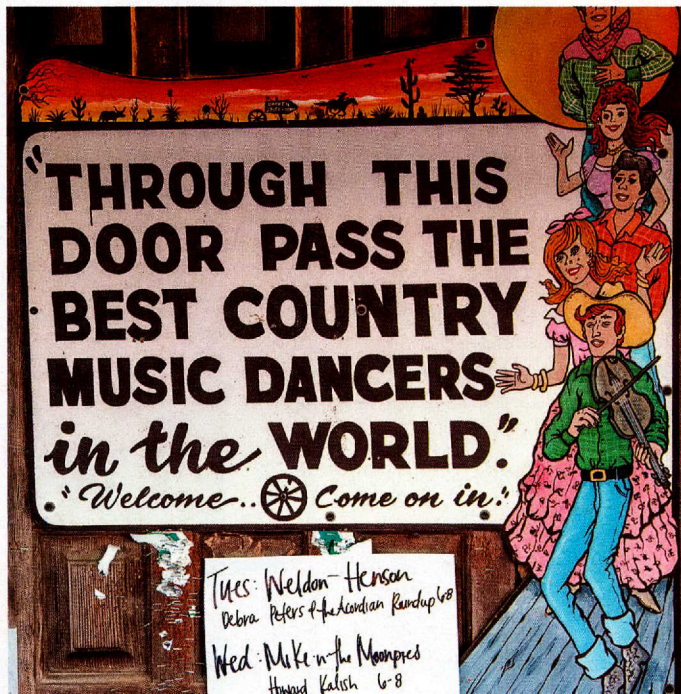
But around the same time, the Spoke picked up a new crowd of music fans. “Freda and the Firedogs played a benefit here for Lloyd Doggett and drew 500 people,” says White, referring to Marcia Ball’s popular country band of the early 1970s. “So I started booking them regularly.”

Asleep at the Wheel and Alvin Crow and the Pleasant Valley Boys were other longhaired country bands that White booked in the ‘70s. “Their fans had a dance we called ‘the hippie hop,’” White says. “But that crowd helped us through some hard times.”

The Spoke finally got its liquor license in 1980, one of the only changes in the venue’s 50-year history. And don’t expect the Whites to start changing the Broken Spoke now, even as Austin transforms around it.

“When people come to Texas, they wanna see Texas,” says Annetta. “But you can’t find it anymore in Austin. Maybe in West Texas or Fort Worth, but not in Austin. That old Texas, real Texas, is gone, except when you come to the Broken Spoke.” ★

There are older clubs in Austin, but the Broken Spoke is believed to be the oldest continuously operating music venue in town.



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EXPRESS: For delivery within 3 days of receipt, add \$8. Express handling is not available outside the continental U.S.

SALES TAX is required by state law for merchandise, shipping, and handling. For orders shipped to Texas addresses, please add 8.25% sales tax to your subtotal.

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TEXAS  
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### Texas Icons Cloisonné Ornament

This beautiful ornament is designed by Kitty Keller Designs in Seguin, and produced overseas. The cloisonné process is done entirely by hand with enamel paste, copper, and 24-karat gold plating. Each ornament comes packed in a beautiful silk-covered box. Imported. Item 39512.....\$39.95

### EASY to ORDER:

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TEXAS  
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## KIMBALL PRINTS TEA TOWELS

These soft towels are hand printed by Carolyn Kimball. Some slight variations are possible and make every towel unique. 100% cotton. Hand-mixed non-toxic ink. Machine wash cold. 22 x 38 inches. See website for more designs. **\$16.00 each**

Shown here: 37861 Snowflakes, 37862 Succulent Wreath, 37859 Cowboy Boots, 37860 Cardinal



## TEXAS GEO BOXED DRINKING GLASSES

Wow your friends with these fun frosted tumblers. Boxed set includes four 15-ounce glasses.

37344 ..... **\$59.00**

## TEXAS GEO EMBROIDERED PILLOW

Celebrate Texas with this delightful pillow. Hand embroidered on 100% organic cotton. 19 x 19 inches.

37833 ..... **\$158.00**

## TEXAS GEO DISH TOWEL

These silkscreened dish towels make a wonderful gift. 100% cotton, with hand-embroidered details and colorful ric-rac trim. Packaged in a giftable and reusable organdy pouch. 20 x 29 inches.

37834 ..... **\$20.00**

## TEXAS GEO APRON

Try on this fabulous apron in 100% hand-loomed cotton with two front pockets. Ruffle trim at bottom is a mini-floral design. Texas graphic is silkscreened with 12 colors.

38803 ..... **\$36.00**



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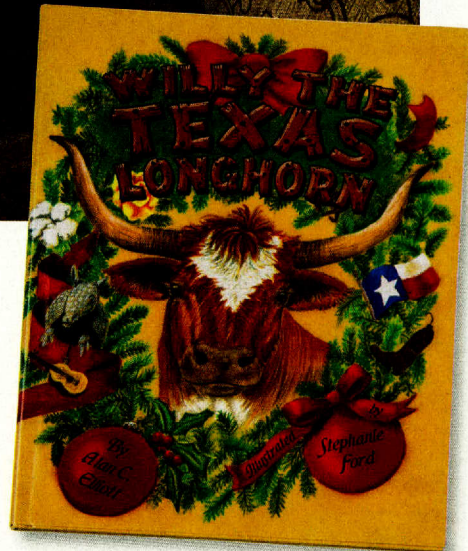


**CHRISTMAS TAPESTRY THROW AND PILLOW**

Add a touch of Texas holiday flair to your home with this tapestry throw featuring a cowboy Santa and his armadillo friend. 100% cotton. 50 by 60 inches. Matching pillow features the Texas flag, an armadillo, and some iconic ornaments. Polyester blend tapestry and filling with 100% cotton backing. 17 by 17 inches.

37835 Throw ..... **\$49.95**

37836 Pillow ..... **\$22.95**



**WILLY THE TEXAS LONGHORN**

Willy wants to guide Santa's sleigh, and in true Texas Longhorn style, he doesn't give up on his dream.

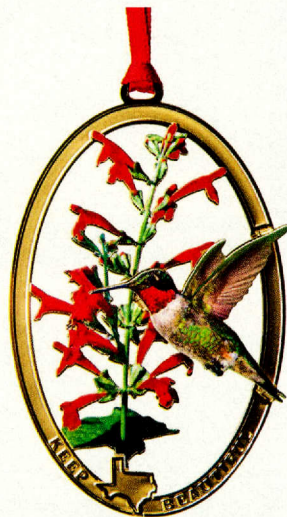
36808 ..... **\$16.99**



**TEXAS, OUR TEXAS ORNAMENT**

This delightful glass ornament is hand painted in Garland by Pattilu Bowsby. This year's ornament features the state of Texas with a strand of lights. 3 inch diameter.

39513 ..... **\$15.95**



**2014 KTB ORNAMENT 11TH EDITION**

The 2014 Keep Texas Beautiful ornament features the ruby-throated hummingbird set against red cedar sage. Made in the USA. Width: 3 inches. See our website for the entire collection of KTB ornaments.

39411 ..... **\$24.95**

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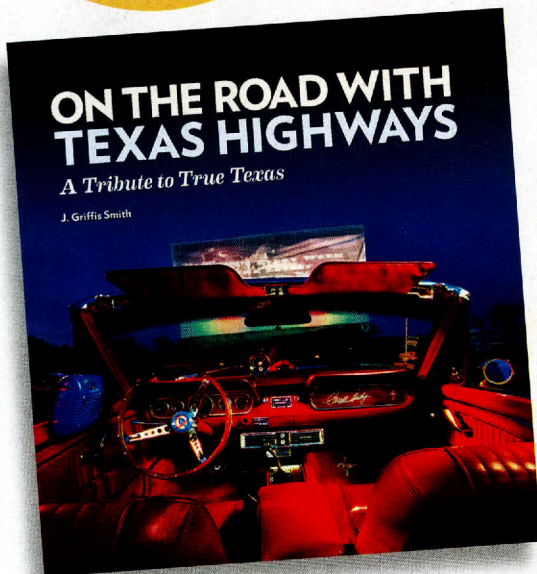
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**ON THE ROAD WITH TEXAS HIGHWAYS:  
A TRIBUTE TO TRUE TEXAS**

This dazzling book represents a thirty year career spent photographing on assignment for *Texas Highways*. If you love Texas, you'll love going on the road with Griff. Text and photographs by J. Griffis Smith with an introduction by E. Dan Klepper. 10 x 11 inches. 294 color photos.

39717 . . . . \$29.95



**TEXAS FLAG SILK TIE IN A BOX**

Show your Texas pride with this state flag tie. 100% silk. Comes in a decorative silk box.

38806 . . . . \$39.95

**WELCOME TO TEXAS PUZZLE**

Take a trip around Texas when you put this colorful puzzle together. Shaped like the state, it features dozens of themes and locations throughout Texas. 1,000 pieces will make this one a challenge for the most experienced puzzler. 32 x 25.5 inches.

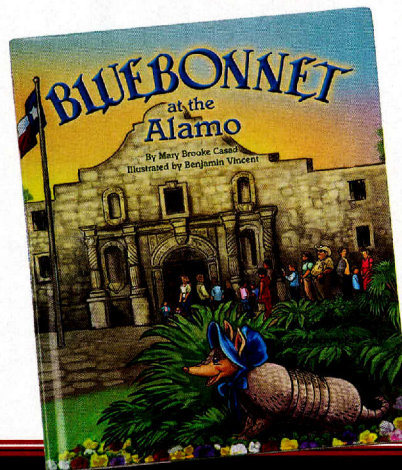
37528 . . . . \$21.95



**1891 COUNTY &  
RAILROAD MAP, FRAMED**

This handsome map was originally published by Rand McNally & Co. in 1891. Our reproduction is handcrafted in Houston. 27 x 26 inches framed.

32222 . . . . \$139.95



**BLUEBONNET AT THE ALAMO**

Everyone's favorite armadillo gets a history lesson about the Alamo. By Mary Brooke Casad. Illustrated by Benjamin Vincent. Hardback.

36809 . . . . \$16.99



**TEXAS STAR PRODUCT LINE**

Beautiful stoneware handmade in Luling. Choose from a variety of products. All are oven, dishwasher, and microwave safe.

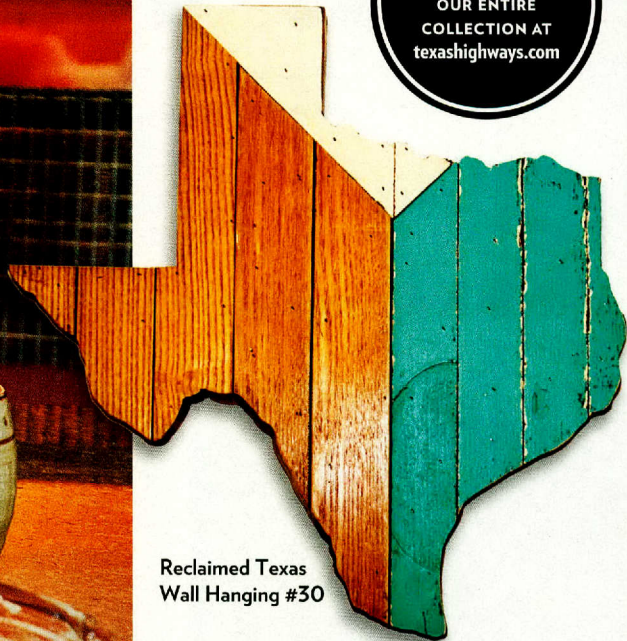
- 37830 Oil Bottle . . . . . \$28.95
- 37831 Ladle Rest . . . . . \$17.95
- 37838 Utensil Holder . . . . . \$49.95
- 37839 Beverage Cozy . . . . . \$49.95
- 37840 Pie Plate . . . . . \$39.95
- 37343 Mug . . . . . \$28.95



**COULBURY DESIGN ROLLING PINS**

These beautiful rolling pins are made by hand in Austin from walnut, mahogany, and maple. The French-style pin features tapered ends for easy rolling and the American-style pin has comfortable handles. 20 inches long and 2 inches in diameter.

- 37847 French-Style Polka Dot . . . . . \$100.00
- 37848 American-Style Polka Dot . . . . . \$100.00
- 37849 French-Style Variegated . . . . . \$80.00
- 37850 American-Style Variegated . . . . . \$80.00



Reclaimed Texas Wall Hanging #30

**RECLAIMED TEXAS WALL HANGINGS**

Original wall hangings from Austin-based Hemlock & Heather are handcrafted from wood pieces rescued by the artists. Each numbered wall hanging is unique. Our custom *Texas Highways* design features three distinct sections and is 20 inches wide. It is signed by the artists and comes with a personal note.

- 37571 #30 . . . . . \$195.00

**CIRCLE 21 ORCHARD LANE SOY CANDLE**

These long-lasting soy candles, created by Circle 21 Candles in Amarillo, are made from premium soy wax and exquisite fragrance oils. See our website for more fragrance options.

- 37851 . . . . . \$25.00



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# E V E N T S

WANT MORE? GO TO THE EVENTS CALENDAR AT [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com).

## November's travel spotlights:



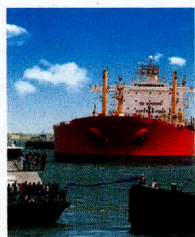
### PINEY WOODS > Todd Mission Age-old Amusement

Join the lords and ladies for the 40th annual Texas Renaissance Festival in Todd Mission. Located six miles northwest of Magnolia, the festival transforms 55 acres of pine forest into a fantastical realm of themed villages based loosely on the European Middle Ages. Held weekends October 11-November 30, the festival features craft demonstrations, musicians, theatrical productions, magicians, jousts, kids' activities, more than 400 shops, and camping. New this year: A replicated Greek temple will host a "King Midas Masquerade" party each Saturday night. Call 800/458-3435; [www.texrenfest.com](http://www.texrenfest.com).

### SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS > Beeville

#### Tools of the Times

At the Beeville Art Museum, *Made in Texas: Art, Life & Culture 1845-1900* transports visitors to 19th-Century Texas with a display of the remarkable implements and craftsmanship of the day. Organized by the Bayou Bend Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the exhibit showcases items such as a stoneware sauerkraut press, a 14-foot panoramic print of 1847 New Braunfels designed to lure German settlers, and a steer-horn-and-jaguar-hide rocking chair made by San Antonio craftsman Wenzel Friedrich. Through January 10. Call 361/358-8615; [www.bamtexas.org](http://www.bamtexas.org).



### GULF COAST > Houston

#### Maritime Muscle

The Houston Ship Channel opened 100 years ago this November, connecting the Port of Houston and the Gulf of Mexico for trade ships. *Stories of a Workforce: Celebrating the Centennial of the Houston Ship Channel* examines the culture and history of the workers who've operated the channel and port. Presented by the Houston Arts Alliance and Houston Public Library, the exhibit of photos, audio and video installations, signage, and work gear is on display at the Julia Ideson Building through January 31. [www.storiesofaworkforce.com](http://www.storiesofaworkforce.com).

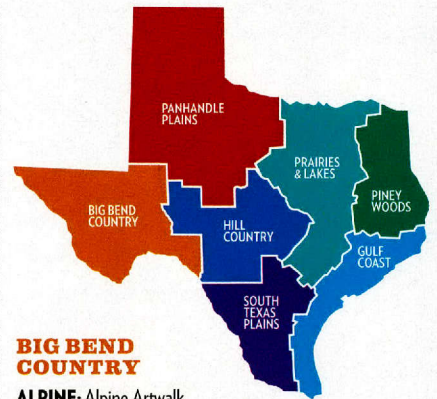
### HILL COUNTRY > Johnson City

#### Christmas Kickoff

Johnson City flips the switch on its annual Lights Spectacular November 28, turning on more than 100,000 lights that drape the Blanco County Courthouse. Free hayrides, live music, and a crafts sale round out the night. The festivities continue November 29 with a Lighted Hooves and Wheels Parade and a performance by the Clickety Cloggers. Also November 29, Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park rangers will lead lamplight tours of LBJ's boyhood home in Johnson City. Call 830/868-7684; [www.johnsoncity-texas.com](http://www.johnsoncity-texas.com).



PHOTOS: (from top) Courtesy Texas Renaissance Festival; Rick Gardner/Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Port of Houston Authority; J. Griffiths Smith.



### BIG BEND COUNTRY

**ALPINE:** Alpine Artwalk November 21-22. [artwalk.alpine.com](http://artwalk.alpine.com) 432/837-3067

**DEL RIO:** First Friday Art Walk November 7. Various locations. 830/775-0888

**ODESSA:** Harvest Fair November 1. [www.ectorcountycoliseum.org](http://www.ectorcountycoliseum.org)

**ODESSA:** Merry Marketplace November 6-9. Ector County Coliseum. [www.jlodesa.org](http://www.jlodesa.org) 432/332-0095

**PECOS:** Reeves County Sheriff Posse Christmas Bazaar November 1. [www.pecostx.com](http://www.pecostx.com) 432/448-7628.

**SAN ELIZARIO:** San Elizario Historic District Ghost Tour November 7. [www.SanElizarioHistoricDistrict.org](http://www.SanElizarioHistoricDistrict.org) 915/851-0093

**SAN ELIZARIO:** Mission Trail Art Market November 16. San Elizario Historic District. [www.MissionTrailArtMarket.com](http://www.MissionTrailArtMarket.com) 915/851-0093

**TERLINGUA:** Terlingua International Chili Championship October 27-November 1. Rancho de los CASI on F.M. 170. [www.chilli.org](http://www.chilli.org) 432/371-2595

**TERLINGUA:** Terlingua International Frank X. Tolbert-Wick Fowler Championship Chili Cook-Off October 30-November 1. Terlingua Store on F.M. 170. [www.abowlofred.com](http://www.abowlofred.com) 817/653-0988

**VAN HORN:** Trans Pecos Big Buck Tournament November 28-December 15. Van Horn Convention Center. [www.transpecosbigbuck.com](http://www.transpecosbigbuck.com) 432/283-2682

### GULF COAST

**BEAUMONT:** Turkey Trot November 27. Downtown. [www.searimstriders.org](http://www.searimstriders.org)

**BROWNSVILLE:** Celebrating Space Exhibition November 8-March 6. Brownsville Museum of Fine Art. [www.brownsvillemfa.org](http://www.brownsvillemfa.org) 956/542-0941

**BROWNSVILLE:** Holiday Village November 24-January 1. Dean Porter Park. [www.holidayvillage.cob.us](http://www.holidayvillage.cob.us) 956/546-3721

**CORPUS CHRISTI:** Dia de los Muertos Street Festival November 1. Downtown. [www.diadelosmuertoscc.com](http://www.diadelosmuertoscc.com) 361/887-6834

**CYPRESS:** Fenske's Trade Days and Craft Market November 8-9. [www.fenskescountrystore.com](http://www.fenskescountrystore.com) 713/870-3806

**EDNA:** Texana Chili Spill November 6-8. [www.texanachilispill.com](http://www.texanachilispill.com)

**FRIENDSWOOD:** Christmas Home Tour November 22-23. Marie Workman Garden Center. [www.heritagegardener.org](http://www.heritagegardener.org) 281/992-4438

**GALVESTON:** Ice Sculptures November 15-January 4. [www.moodygardens.org](http://www.moodygardens.org) 800/582-4673

**GALVESTON:** ArtWalk November 29. [www.galveston.com/artwalk](http://www.galveston.com/artwalk) 800/821-1894

**HARLINGEN:** Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival November 5-9. Harlingen Municipal Auditorium



Complex and Casa Amistad.  
www.rgvbf.org

**HOUSTON:** *Wings of the City* Exhibit September 5-February 8. [www.discoverygreen.com/wingsofthecity](http://www.discoverygreen.com/wingsofthecity) 713/400-7336

**HOUSTON:** International Quilt Festival October 30-November 2. George R. Brown Convention Center. [www.quilts.com](http://www.quilts.com) 713/781-6864

**HOUSTON:** Wings Over Houston Airshow November 1-2. Ellington Airport. [www.wingsoverhouston.com](http://www.wingsoverhouston.com)

**HOUSTON:** Texas Championship Native American Powwow November 8-9. [www.tradersvillage.com/houston](http://www.tradersvillage.com/houston)

**HOUSTON:** The Nutcracker Market November 13-16. Reliant Center. [www.houstonballet.org](http://www.houstonballet.org)

**KINGSVILLE:** Ranch Hand Festival Weekend November 21-23. [www.kingsvilletexas.com](http://www.kingsvilletexas.com) 361/592-8516

**LAKE JACKSON:** Festival of Lights November 21-22. [www.lakejackson-tx.gov](http://www.lakejackson-tx.gov) 979/415-2600

**PORT ARTHUR:** Pleasure Island Bridge Half Marathon November 8. [www.theusheramarathon.com](http://www.theusheramarathon.com) 409/781-2932

**ROCKPORT:** Rockport Film Festival November 6-8. Rockport Center for the Arts. 361/729-5519

**SAN BENITO:** San Benito Market Days November 8. 956/361-3804 ext. 302

**SPRING:** Home for the Holidays November 8-December 21. [www.shopoldtownspring.com](http://www.shopoldtownspring.com) 281/353-9310

**TOMBALL:** Tomball Holiday Parade November 22. On F.M. 2920. [www.tomballchamber.org](http://www.tomballchamber.org) 281/351-7222

**VICTORIA:** Dia de los Muertos Festival and Exhibit November 1. [www.navemuseum.com](http://www.navemuseum.com) 361/575-8227

**VICTORIA:** Sharon Kopriva: *Gothic Green* November 13-December 21. [www.navemuseum.com](http://www.navemuseum.com) 361/575-8227

## HILL COUNTRY

**AUSTIN:** *The Making of Gone With the Wind* September 9-January 4. Harry Ransom Center. [www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions](http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions)

**AUSTIN:** Formula 1 United States Grand Prix

October 31-November 2. [www.circuitoftheamericas.com](http://www.circuitoftheamericas.com)

**AUSTIN:** Austin Powwow and American Indian Heritage Festival November 8. Toney Burger Center. [www.austinpovwow.net](http://www.austinpovwow.net) 512/371-0628

**AUSTIN:** Blue Genie Art Bazaar November 28-December 24. Marchesa Hall and Theatre. [www.bluegenieartbazaar.com](http://www.bluegenieartbazaar.com) 512/222-7303

**AUSTIN:** Chuy's Christmas Parade November 29. [www.chuysparade.com](http://www.chuysparade.com)

**AUSTIN:** Fun Fun Fun Fest November 7-9. Auditorium Shores. [www.funfunfunfest.com](http://www.funfunfunfest.com)

**BOERNE:** Dickens on Main November 28-29. [www.dickensonmain.com](http://www.dickensonmain.com)

**BOERNE:** Market Days November 8-9. Main Plaza. [www.boernemarketdays.com](http://www.boernemarketdays.com) 210/844-8193

**BURNET:** Hill Country Christmas November 21-22. The YMCA of the Highland Lakes. 512/756-6180

**CASTROVILLE:** Fiorella Fridays November 7. Fiorella and Paris Streets. 830/931-2525

**CEDAR PARK:** Hill Country Flyer November 1, 8, 15, 22. [www.austinsteamtrain.org](http://www.austinsteamtrain.org) 512/477-8468

**CEDAR PARK:** North Pole Flyer November 28-30. [www.austinsteamtrain.org](http://www.austinsteamtrain.org) 512/477-8468

**COMFORT:** Christmas in Comfort November 29. [www.comfortchamberofcommerce.com](http://www.comfortchamberofcommerce.com) 830/995-3131

**DEVINE:** Devine's Fall Festival and Avocado Showcase November 1. [www.DevineChamber.com](http://www.DevineChamber.com) 830/663-2739

**FREDERICKSBURG:** Contemporary Masters Fall Invitational Art Show November 7-29. [www.fbgartgallery.com](http://www.fbgartgallery.com) 830/990-2707

**FREDERICKSBURG:** Veterans Day Observance November 11. National Museum of the Pacific War. 830/997-8600 ext. 205

**FREDERICKSBURG:** Fredericksburg Fall Antiques Show November 15-16. Gillespie County Fairgrounds. [www.texasantiqueshows.com](http://www.texasantiqueshows.com) 830/995-3670

**FREDERICKSBURG:** Lighting of the Community Christmas Tree and German Pyramid November 28.



# Festive Family Fun

Making spirits bright with three days of festivities in Rosenberg's Historic Downtown Cultural District.

**Thursday, Dec. 4 – Saturday, Dec. 6**  
Christmas Tree Lighting, Sip-n-Stroll, Carriage Rides, Dinner Under the Stars, Shopping, Holiday Entertainment, Photos with Santa, Family Activities Throughout Downtown

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ROSENBERG CULTURAL DISTRICT  
Arts in Historic Downtown

[www.cityofrosenberg.com/cinr](http://www.cityofrosenberg.com/cinr)

INDEPENDENCE FESTIVAL ★ WORLD CHAMPION HOPKINS COUNTY STEW CONTEST ★ CHRISTMAS ON THE SQUARE



## Sulphur Springs TEXAS

Just play. Have fun. Celebrate!  
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FALL FESTIVAL ★ TEXAS STATE CHAMPION HOMEMADE ICE CREAM FREEZE-OFF ★ DAIRY FESTIVAL



# Discover the heroes.

The life of Audie Murphy, the most decorated soldier of WWII, is proudly displayed in Greenville, Texas, the county seat of his hometown. The Audie Murphy/American Cotton Museum also features military life both on and off the battlefield as well as a Veterans Gallery which showcases the personal stories of everyday heroes.

And don't miss the first annual Cotton Boll ArtFest on June 6-7, 2015.



**TUESDAY-SATURDAY 10:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.**  
\$6 ADULTS | \$4 SENIORS / VETERANS / COLLEGE STUDENTS | \$2 CHILDREN AGES 6-18  
Funding partially provided by City of Greenville Hotel Occupancy Tax Revenues

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## Kick Up Your Heels!



Step out and relish the art and culture of our Fall Art Walk. Indulge yourself while shopping in our historic downtown and partaking in our restaurants, winery, or distillery. Visit our website for info on our attractions, events, and lodging.

Nov 1: Fall Art Walk & Dia de los Muertos  
Nov 6: Girls Night Out (5-8 pm Downtown)  
Nov 28-Dec 31: Holiday Lights (Loy Lake Park)



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[www.VisitFredericksburgTX.com](http://www.VisitFredericksburgTX.com)  
830/997-6523

### FREDERICKSBURG:

Frontier Days at Fort Martin Scott November 29.  
[www.ftmartinsscott.org](http://www.ftmartinsscott.org)

**GRUENE:** Tour de Gruene Fall Bicycle Classic November 8-9.

[www.TourDeGruene.com](http://www.TourDeGruene.com)  
210/862-3524

**GRUENE:** Come and Taste It November 20. Grapevine Texas Wine Bar. [www.grapevinegruene.com](http://www.grapevinegruene.com) 830/606-0093

**JOHNSON CITY:** Christmas at LBJ's Boyhood Home November 29. LBJ National Historical Park. [www.nps.gov/ljyo](http://www.nps.gov/ljyo) 830/868-7128 ext. 244

**JUNCTION:** Boots 'n' Bangles Bazaar November 8-9. Coke Stevenson Memorial Center. [www.junctiontexas.com](http://www.junctiontexas.com) 325/446-4730

**JUNCTION:** Kimble County Wild Game Dinner November 29. Coke Stevenson Memorial Center. [www.junctiontexas.net](http://www.junctiontexas.net) 915/446-3190

**LEAKEY:** Christmas on the Square November 29. [www.friocanyonchamber.com](http://www.friocanyonchamber.com) 830/232-5222

**LLANO:** Starry, Starry Nights November 28-December 31. Badu Park. [www.llanochamber.org](http://www.llanochamber.org) 325/247-5354

**LUCKENBACH:** Luckenbach Thanksgiving Dance November 29. [www.luckenbachtexas.com](http://www.luckenbachtexas.com) 830/997-3224

**MARBLE FALLS:** Walkway of Lights November 21-January 1. Lakeside Park. [www.marblefalls.org](http://www.marblefalls.org) 830/693-4449

**MASON:** Fall Art Walk November 7-8. Various locations. 325/347-5758

**MASON:** Wild Game Dinner November 8. Mason Community Building in Fort Mason Park. 325/347-5758

**NEW BRAUNFELS:** Wurstfest November 7-16. [www.wurstfest.com](http://www.wurstfest.com)

**PFLUGERVILLE:** Pfall Pfest Craft Show November 15. [www.pflugervilletx.gov/pfallpfest](http://www.pflugervilletx.gov/pfallpfest) 512/990-6350

**SAN MARCOS:** Cormac McCarthy: Unveiling a Legend September 2-December 19. [www.thewittlifecollections.txstate.edu](http://www.thewittlifecollections.txstate.edu) 512/245-2313

**SAN MARCOS:** CAF Veterans' Day Dinner and

Dance November 8. Centex Hangar at the San Marcos Airport.

**SAN MARCOS:** Texas Author Day November 9. San Marcos Public Library. [www.sanmarcostx.gov/library](http://www.sanmarcostx.gov/library) 512/393-8200

**SAN SABA:** Christmas Extravaganza November 15-January 8. Mill Pond Park. [www.sansabachamber.com](http://www.sansabachamber.com)

**STONEWALL:** Holiday Cookie Decorating and German Traditions November 29. Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm at Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site. [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us) 830/644-2252 ext.222

**TAYLOR:** F1 Invitational Car and Art Show November 1. [www.ci.taylor.tx.us](http://www.ci.taylor.tx.us) 512/352-3675

**UVALDE:** Holiday Arts and Crafts Show November 29. 830/278-3361

**UVALDE:** Stargazing Party November 14. Fort Inge Historic Site. 830/278-4115

**WIMBERLEY:** Wimberley Home Tour November 7-8. [www.wimberleyccc.com](http://www.wimberleyccc.com) 512/847-3595

**WIMBERLEY:** Trail of Lights November 29-December 31. [www.emilyann.org](http://www.emilyann.org) 512/847-6969

### PANHANDLE PLAINS

**ABILENE:** Western Horseman Stock Horse World Championship October 31-November 2. Taylor County Expo Center. [www.stockhorsetexas.org](http://www.stockhorsetexas.org) 855/846-7468

**ABILENE:** Junior League Christmas Carousell November 6-9. Abilene Civic Center. 325/677-1879

**ABILENE:** 24fps International Short Film Festival November 7-8. Paramount Theatre. 325/676-9620

**ABILENE:** An Evening with Condoleezza Rice November 18. Abilene Civic Center. [www.globalsamaritan.org](http://www.globalsamaritan.org) 325/676-9991

**ABILENE:** ArtWalk November 13. Downtown. 325/677-8389

**ALBANY:** Ronald Rozenohn: A Living Old Master September 20-January 4. [www.theoldjailartcenter.org](http://www.theoldjailartcenter.org)

**ALBANY:** Texas Moderns: George Grammer September 20-January 4.

[www.theoldjailartcenter.org](http://www.theoldjailartcenter.org)  
325/762-2269

**AMARILLO:** WRCA World Championship Ranch Rodeo November 6-9. Amarillo Civic Center. [www.wrca.org](http://www.wrca.org) 806/374-9722

**AMARILLO:** First Friday Art Walk November 7. Galleries at Sunset Center. [www.amarilloartists.com](http://www.amarilloartists.com)

**BIGSPRING:** Mustang Woodcarvers Club Show and Sale October 27-November 1. Dora Roberts Community Center. 432/270-2510

**BUFFALO GAP:** Chautauqua Learning Series November 8. Buffalo Gap Historic Village. 325/572-3365

**CACTUS:** Cactus Market Days November 15. Across from the historic Cactus Hotel. 325/949-6200

**COLORADO CITY:** The Return to the Big Country Art Show November 15. Colorado City Civic Center. [www.westartguild.net](http://www.westartguild.net) 325/728-2184

**DALHART:** XIT Rangers Veterans' Day Parade November 11. Denrock Avenue from Second to Eighth streets. 806/249-5758

**ELECTRA:** Holiday of Lights Parade November 29. [www.electratexas.org](http://www.electratexas.org) 940/495-3577

**LEVELLAND:** Home for the Holidays November 8-9. Mallet Event Center and Arena. [www.levellandrotary.com](http://www.levellandrotary.com) 806/894-3157

**MINERAL WELLS:** Crazy Fossil Dig November 1. [www.mineralwellsfossilpark.com](http://www.mineralwellsfossilpark.com) 940/325-2557

**POST:** Post City Trade Day November 1. Main Street. [www.postcitytexas.com](http://www.postcitytexas.com) 806/495-3461

**SAN ANGELO:** En Plein Air Texas October 26-November 2. Various locations. [www.EnPleinAirTexas.com](http://www.EnPleinAirTexas.com)

**SAN ANGELO:** First Saturday at the Chicken Farm Art Center November 1. [www.chickenfarmartcenter.com](http://www.chickenfarmartcenter.com)

**WICHITA FALLS:** Christmas Toys and Christmas Joys November 22-January 3. [www.museumofnorthtexas.history.org](http://www.museumofnorthtexas.history.org) 940/322-7628

**WICHITA FALLS:** City Lights Downtown Festival and Parade November 22. Downtown.

[www.downtownproud.com](http://www.downtownproud.com)  
940/322-4525

### PINEY WOODS

**CENTER:** Pinecone and Mistletoe Christmas Market and Taste of the Holidays November 7-8. Windham Civic Center. 936/591-6543

**GLADEWATER:** Antique District Holiday Open House November 8. In the Antiques District. 903/845-5501

**HENDERSON:** Heritage Syrup Festival November 8. Downtown and at the Depot Museum. [www.hendersontx.us](http://www.hendersontx.us) 866/650-5529

**JASPER:** Christmas in the Park November 29. Sandy Creek Park. [www.christmasinjaspers.tx.com](http://www.christmasinjaspers.tx.com) 409/384-4651

**JEFFERSON:** History, Haunts and Legends November 1. Jefferson Transportation and Tourism Building. [www.jeffersonghostwalk.com](http://www.jeffersonghostwalk.com) 903/665-6289

**JEFFERSON:** Medieval Wine Faire November 7-9. The KnightLight Tavern. [www.knightlighttheater.com](http://www.knightlighttheater.com) 903/665-8546

**JEFFERSON:** Old-Fashioned Christmas Parade and Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony November 29. Lions Club Park. [www.visitjeffersontexas.com](http://www.visitjeffersontexas.com) 903/665-3733

**KILGORE:** Christmas Under the Stars November 20-December 15. Various locations. [www.VisitKilgore.com](http://www.VisitKilgore.com) 903/984-5022

**LUFKIN:** Festival of Trees November 24-January 6. Museum of East Texas. [www.metlufkin.org](http://www.metlufkin.org) 936/639-4434

**MARSHALL:** Smithsonian Journey Stories Exhibit September 22-November 1. The Weisman. [www.harrisoncountymuseum.org](http://www.harrisoncountymuseum.org) 903/935-8417 ext. 1

**MILAM:** Milam Settler's Days November 21-22. El Camino Park. [www.milamsettlersday.org](http://www.milamsettlersday.org)

**NACOGDOCHES:** Day of the Dead Fiesta November 1. Downtown. 888/653-3788

**NACOGDOCHES:** East Texas Half Marathon November 16. Pecan Acres Park. [www.easttexashalf.com](http://www.easttexashalf.com) 888/653-3788

**NACOGDOCHES:** Nine Flags Festival November 21-December 13.

Millard's Crossing.  
www.nineflagsfestival.com  
888/653-3788

**PALESTINE:** The Polar Express Train Ride  
November 14-December 30.  
www.TexasStateRR.com  
903/683-3451

**THE WOODLANDS:**  
Annual Children's Festival  
November 8-9. The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion.  
www.woodlandscenter.org  
281/363-3300

**THE WOODLANDS:**  
Lighting of The Doves and International Winter on the Waterway  
November 22. Town Green Park. www.holidayinthe.woodlands.com  
877/963-2447

**WINNSBORO:** Wild West Days November 15-16. Jack Cross Pavilion. www.thelegendsofcrossroads.com  
903/347-1263

## PRAIRIES AND LAKES

**ANDERSON:** Twilight Firelight at Fanthorp Inn  
November 29. Fanthorp Inn State Historic Site. www.birthplaceoftexas.com  
936/878-2214

**ARLINGTON:** Texas Christkindl Market  
November 28-December 21. Globe Life Park in Arlington. www.texaschristkindlmarket.com  
817/461-3888

**ATHENS:** Christmas Park Land of Lights  
November 10-January 2. www.athenstx.org  
903/675-7469

**ATHENS:** Athens Scenic Fall Foliage Driving Trail  
November 15-30. Athens Partnership Center. www.athenstx.org  
888/294-2847

**ATHENS:** Turkey Trot  
November 27. Cain Center. www.athenstx.org  
903/677-2000

**BASTROP:** Veteran's Day Celebration and Classic Car Show  
November 8-9. Historic Downtown. www.bastropdba.org/vets  
512/303-0904

**BASTROP:** First Friday Artwalk  
November 7. Downtown. www.facebook.com/bastropartwalk  
512/985-6403

**BASTROP:** Pine Street Market Day  
November 8. Downtown. www.bastropbusinesswomen.com  
512/303-6233

**BELLVILLE:** Antiques and Garden Festival  
November 8-9. Turnverein Hall. www.ruraltexasantiques.com  
979/865-5618

**BELLVILLE:** Market Day on the Square  
November 1. Downtown. www.bellville.com  
979/865-3407

**BOWIE:** Second Monday Trade Days  
November 7-9. www.cityofbowietx.com  
940/872-4861

**BRENNHAM:** Wine and Pottery Celebration  
November 15. Bluebonnet Pottery and Windy Winery. www.bluebonnetpottery.com  
888/273-6426

**BRENNHAM:** Holiday Home Tour and Trunk Show  
November 22. www.GiddingsStoneMansion.com  
979/836-1690

**CANTON:** First Monday Trade Days  
October 30-November 2. On I-20 in Canton from exits 523, 526, 527 and 528. www.visitcantontx.com  
877/462-7467

**CLEBURNE:** Chisholm Trail Pioneer Days  
November 21-22. Chisholm Trail Outdoor Museum. www.jcchisholmtrail.com  
817/648-1486

**CLEBURNE:** Whistle-Stop Christmas  
November 24. Hulen Park. www.whistlestopchristmas.com  
817/645-2455

**COLLEGE STATION:** Brazos Valley Worldfest  
November 21-22. Wolf Pen Creek Amphitheater. www.brazosvalleyworldfest.org  
979/845-4016

**CUERO:** Christmas in the Park  
November 24-January 1. Cuero Municipal Park. 361/275-8178

**DALLAS:** *Dallas Times Herald* 1963: Photographers Remember the Kennedy Assassination  
November 18. The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza. www.jfk.org

**DALLAS:** Christmas Lights, Chocolate and Sips Tours  
November 28-December 30. Krispy Kreme. www.dallasbychocolate.com  
972/814-5997

**DALLAS:** Sightings: *Pierre Huyghe*  
October 25-January 18. www.nasher sculpturecenter.org

**DENTON:** Guided Tour of the North Texas Horse Country  
November 1. Historical Park of Denton County. www.discoverdenton.com  
940/382-7895

**DENTON:** Beaujolais and More Wine and Food Tasting  
November 20. Denton Civic Center. 940/382-1915

**EDGEWOOD:** Edgewood Heritage Festival  
November 8. Heritage Park

Museum of East Texas. www.edgewoodheritagefestival.com  
214/673-1882

**ENNIS:** Fun Ford Weekend at the Texas Motorplex  
November 8. Texas Motorplex. www.texasmotorplex.com

**FAIRFIELD:** Fairfield Market Days  
November 21-23. W.L. Moody Reunion Fairgrounds. www.fairfieldtexas.com  
903/388-9845

**FORT WORTH:** Lone Star Film Festival  
November 6-9. Sundance Square. www.lonestarfilmfestival.com  
817/924-6000

**FORT WORTH:** Parade of Lights  
November 28. Downtown. www.fortworthparadeoflights.org

**GIDDINGS:** Merry Marketplace Arts and Crafts Fair  
November 23. Lee County Youth Center. www.giddingstx.com  
979/542-3455

**GLEN ROSE:** Fall Woodcarving Rally  
November 8-14. Oakdale Park. www.glenrosetexas.net  
888/346-6282

**GLEN ROSE:** Fossil Dig and Hike  
November 8. Fossil Rim Wildlife Center. www.fossilrim.org  
254/897-2960

**GRANBURY:** Granbury Gunslingers on the Square  
November 1. www.granburytx.com  
817/579-7233

**GRANBURY:** Country Christmas "Night of Lights Parade"  
November 28. Granbury Historic Square. www.granburysquare.com  
817/573-5299

**GRAND PRAIRIE:** Mountain Man Weekend Gathering  
November 8-9. www.TradersVillage.com  
972/647-2331

**GRAND PRAIRIE:** Prairie Lights  
November 27-January 4. Lynn Creek Park. www.prairielight.org  
972/237-4569

**GRAPEVINE:** Pastel Society of the Southwest Annual Awards Exhibition  
November 5-28. Grapevine CVB Headquarters and Museum Complex. www.GrapevineTexasUSA.com  
817/410-3185

**GRAPEVINE:** Candlelight Tour of Homes  
November 8. Downtown Grapevine Historic District. www.GrapevineTexasUSA.com  
817/410-3185

**GRAPEVINE:** *ICE!* and *Lone Star Christmas* Exhibits  
November 13-January 3. www.GaylordTexan.com

**GRAPEVINE:** Carol of Lights  
November 24. Town Square Gazebo. www.GrapevineTexasUSA.com  
817/410-3185

**GREENVILLE:** Bob Wills Fiddle Contest and Music Festival  
October 31-November 2. Historic downtown. www.visitgreenvilletexas.com  
903/455-1510

**LULING:** Lighted Yule Trail  
November 26-January 1. www.lulingmainstreet.com  
830/875-3214 ext. 3

**LULING:** Christmas Arts-and-Crafts Show  
November 29. Watermelon Thump Pavilion. www.lulingcc.org  
830/875-3214 ext. 1

**MCKINNEY:** Fish of North Texas and Flycasting  
November 15. Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary. www.heardmuseum.org  
972/562-5566

**MCKINNEY:** Home for the Holidays  
November 28-29. Various locations. www.downtownmckinney.com  
972/547-2660

**MCKINNEY:** Third Monday Trade Days  
November 14-16. www.tmtcd.com  
972/562-5466

**MESQUITE:** Texas Area Artists Exhibit  
November 2-28. Mesquite Arts Center. www.mesquiteartscenter.org  
972/216-6444

**MESQUITE:** Texas Motorsport Expo and Auction  
November 29. Mesquite Expo Hall at Rodeo Center. www.texasmotorsportexpo.com  
972/289-7723

**PLANO:** Neath the Wreath Holiday Gift Market  
November 6-9. Plano Centre. www.jlcollincounty.org  
972/769-0557

**ROUND TOP:** Fall Wine Fest  
November 1. www.stonecellarwines.com  
979/249-3390

**ROWLETT:** Paint Rowlett Plain Air Competition  
October 2-November 1. Rowlett Public Library. 972/475-1836

**SALADO:** Gathering of the Scottish Clans and Highland Games  
November 7-9. Salado Civic Center. www.SaladoScottishGames.org  
254/947-5232

**SMITHVILLE:** Airing of the Quilts and Tour of Homes  
November 8. Main Street. www.smithvilletx.org  
512/237-2313

**TEMPLE:** *America's Road: The Journey of Route 66*

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September 20-December 31.  
Temple Railroad and Heritage Museum. www.rrhm.org 254/298-5172

**THE COLONY:** American Heroes: A Salute to Veterans Festival and Fireworks November 8. The Colony Five Star Sports Complex. www.saluteamericanheroes.com 972/625-1106

**WACO:** Christmas on the Brazos November 29-December 15. McCulloch House. www.historicwaco.org 254/753-5166

**WASHINGTON:** Night at the Star of the Republic Museum November 1. www.starmuseum.org 936/878-2461

**WASHINGTON:** Independence Hall, Then and Now: A Look at the Historic and Modern Building November 15. Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site. www.birthplaceof.texas.com

**WAXAHACHIE:** WWII Weekend and Re-enactment November 7-8. Downtown. www.waxahachievb.com 972/938-3434

**WEATHERFORD:** First Monday Trade Days October 31-November 2, 28-31. weatherfordtx.gov 817/598-4351

**SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS**

**COTULLA:** Hunters' Appreciation November 14. A.B. Alexander Convention Center. www.cotulla-chamber.org 830/879-2526

**EAGLE PASS:** Veterans' Day Parade November 8. American Legion Eagle Post No. 211. 830/773-2528

**GEORGE WEST:** George West Storyfest October 31-November 2. Live Oak County Square. www.georgeweststoryfest.com 361/449-2481

**GOLIAD:** Goliad Market Days November 8. Goliad Courthouse Square. www.goliadcc.org 361/645-3563

**LA VERNIA:** Sunday Music and Art in the Park November 23. La Vernia City Park. www.laverniaarts.org 210/216-8218

**MISSION:** Texas Butterfly Festival November 1-4. National Butterfly Center. www.texasbutterflyfestival.com

**SAN ANTONIO:** Firearms of the Texas Frontier: Flintlock to Cartridge October 15-April 15. www.thealamo.org 210/225-1391

**SAN ANTONIO:** Dia de los Muertos November 1. Various locations. www.sacalaveras.com

**SAN ANTONIO:** 20th Annual Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza November 16-22. Lila Cockrell Theatre and other venues. www.mariachimusic.com 210/225-3353

**SAN ANTONIO:** Feria De Santa Cecilia: "Dia Del Musico" November 28-30. Historic Market Square. www.facebook.com/marketsquaresa 210/207-8600

**SAN ANTONIO:** Ford Holiday River Parade and Lighting Ceremony November 28. The River Walk. www.visitsanantonio.com

**WESLACO:** Alfresco Weslaco November 20. www.weslaconow.com 956/969-0838

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PBS; [www.the-daytripper.com](http://www.the-daytripper.com).

**3:00 P.M.** While the ride was less than two miles long, it took me back more than 250 years to the days of Franciscan friars at **Mission Concepción** within the **San Antonio Missions National Historical Park**. People may forget that the Alamo is one of five Spanish missions in San Antonio, and Mission Concepción is often considered the best-preserved of all of them.

**4:30 P.M.** Another short ride downriver and I stood before the magnificent **Mission San José**, established in 1720 and known as the “Queen of the Missions.” The reconstructed grounds gave me a full 360-degree panorama of what life was like within the mission walls. As the national park closed for the day, members of San José’s local congregation filled the church for Saturday-evening mass. More than a historic artifact, this mission is still going strong.

**8:00 P.M.** Back in Southtown with plenty of time to contemplate life, I decided I should enter a convent ... for dinner. So, I headed to **Liberty Bar**, which has turned a holy convent into a “holy moly, that’s good” restaurant. My plate of sautéed shrimp with onions tossed with a chile morita sauce and fettuccine was truly a near-religious experience.

**9:30 P.M.** I heard a resounding chorus of German voices and polka music emanating from a small one-story building. Next thing I knew, I was standing in the beer garden of the **Beethoven Maennerchor** (since 1867) with a glass of German “bier” in hand.

The next time you ride to the top of the **Tower of the Americas** and appreciate the view, remember that San Antonio stretches in every direction. And no matter if you head east, west, north, or *south* ... adventure awaits. So whether you follow my footsteps or forge your own path, I hope to see you on the road. ★

## Southbound in San Antonio

**You can’t blame folks** for donning coonskin caps and partaking in the tourist tradition that is San Antonio’s River Walk. However, if the Alamo and surrounding area are all you ever see of the “Alamo City,” you’re missing out. I embarked on a southbound adventure, and my view of San Antonio will never be the same.

**9:00 A.M.** I passed through downtown and set my compass to **Southtown**. This loosely defined district is undergoing an artistic revival, mixing modern style with Old-World traditions. It’s also home to some of the best food in town, which my plate of *huevos rancheros* and homemade tortillas from **Taco Haven** certainly confirmed.

**10:00 A.M.** I drove to a 25-block area within Southtown known as the **King William Historic District**. In the late 1800s, this section was settled by German merchants who established San Antonio’s most stately neighborhood. I joined a tour of **Villa Finale**, a museum filled with some 12,000 decorative arts pieces and antiques collected by the late Walter Nold Mathis, including Spanish Colonial paintings, a violin-playing machine, and a rare Napoleon death mask.

**11:30 A.M.** I headed to the **Blue Star Arts Complex**, where repurposed

warehouses hold restaurants, shops, studios, and galleries. **Mockingbird Handprints** impressed with hand-dyed custom textiles, while **San Angel Folk Art** transported me to *el Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead), and I picked up my own wooden *La Catrina* skeleton figure. I finally made it down to **Blue Star Contemporary Art Museum** and wandered among the stunning local works.

**1:00 P.M.** I walked over to **Blue Star Brewing Company** and ordered a pulled-pork sandwich and a “Texican Lager” so good that it made me question whether I should spend the rest of my day drinking pints and chatting with the locals. However, my curiosity took over, and I decided to press on.

**2:00 P.M.** I rented a **B-cycle** from the bike-share kiosk and rode along the Mission Reach of the San Antonio River Walk. I instantly felt miles from the city, surrounded by tall grass, birds, and colorful art installations.

 **Contact the San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau at 210/207-6700 or 800/447-3372; [www.visitsanantonio.com](http://www.visitsanantonio.com).**

## Travel Matters

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF TRAVELING



# Always Talk to Strangers

MAKING FRIENDS—AND MEMORIES—ON THE ROAD

text by **Barbara Rodriguez** illustration by **Michael Witte**

**I** WAS IN TUCSON'S INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT circa 1984, on my way to join a press trip in Mexico. I had recently cut my hair into a spiked Mohawk and dyed it platinum, a look completely on-trend somewhere in the world, even then. And I was about to miss my plane.

I began to run. Suddenly, a woman I hadn't seen before was pacing me, step for step before surging ahead. I immediately noted that she had a luggage trolley. I had been traveling professionally for years, but was still too foolish to have condensed packing to one manageable carry-on. A luggage carrier was a whim I had not yet indulged.

"Where are you going?" She tossed the question over her shoulder. "Guaymas, Mexico," I shouted back.

"Me, too. Throw your bag on my carrier!"

And like that, a friendship was born that has lasted to this day.

That's the thing about travel—the lasting memories aren't always about the destination. Sometimes, what you savor after you get home—sometimes for the rest of your life—is a moment shared with a traveling companion or a relationship, however fleeting, struck up over a cup of coffee, in a ticket line, or completely unexpectedly.

How could I ever forget the young boy who appeared along

a Rio Grande acequia one day to ask me what I was doing. I explained that I was birdwatching and handed him my binoculars. I helped him focus in on a chachalaca, then a green jay. We talked for maybe 20 minutes, but I like to think that somewhere, a now grown man remembers the wonder of that encounter. Maybe he's a birder with a life list.

On another journey, I hitched a ride through South Texas in a rickety van. At one point we lurched to a stop to pick up an elderly woman, more spirit than flesh. The *abuelita* stared at my Sony Walkman with curiosity, and I offered her the tape player. She put the headphones on, then grabbed her chest. "It makes my heart pound," she said, smiling. At the next stop she stepped off and disappeared in a cloud of dust, the reggae beat of UB40 reverberating in her head. When I think about her, I wonder if she took that memory with her to heaven, as I expect to.

These are just a few of the hundreds of reasons why I always talk to strangers when I travel. And I am grateful that, all those years ago, Marita spoke to the wild-haired stranger that was me. It was the first of many adventures we've shared. ★

**And like that,  
a friendship was  
born that has  
lasted to this day.**

Find Babs Rodriguez's full adventure at [texashighways.com/matters](http://texashighways.com/matters).

## RearVIEW

ONE LAST THOUGHT

“My Dad’s buddy Bill has an old saying. He says that some people were forged of a hotter fire. Well, that’s what it is to be Texan. To be forged of a hotter fire.”

—The late football coach Bum Phillips from Lone Star Quarterly



**ARTISTRY AND TECHNOLOGY** go hand in hand at Texan-owned Aermotor Windmill Company.

PHOTO: Will van Overbeek

