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JUNE 2014

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Extraordinary Texas. And Texans.

The phrase “Too much is not enough” occasionally pops up as a possible motto for the state of Texas. Another humorous option is “If it’s not true, it ought to be.” Both phrases are ammunition for those shooting to maintain an over-the-top reputation for our uniquely shaped state.

At *Texas Highways*, we’ve found that even though the mythology of Texas sometimes relies on larger-than-life characters to support outsized claims, we’re generally satisfied simply telling the truth about our heroes. It’s enough to get the point across.

As we assemble this June issue of *Texas Highways*, we are narrowing down the list of extraordinary Texans to be featured in the upcoming September issue. Last year we learned, and shared, that everyday Texans are making history in unexpected ways. Some simply aspire to a job well done. Others want to achieve something never before attempted.

**Win a
Port Aransas
getaway! Details
on page 6.**

Extraordinary accomplishments are often team efforts, requiring long-range vision and constant discipline to accomplish. In the arts, we’ve seen the new Renzo Piano Pavilion of Fort Worth’s Kimbell

Art Museum open its doors in the past year. The long-anticipated and much-discussed project is a welcome addition.

On a musical scale, the Houston Grand Opera has made a start on the staging of Wagner’s Ring Cycle, four epic operas in a sweeping mythological narrative, that will appear over the next four years. These performances are prototypical, creating the popular image of opera and some of the most memorable music. The famous prelude to Act III of *Die Walkure* (the second opera) is known as *The Ride of the Valkyries*, and it is most widely recognized as the soundtrack for the helicopter raids directed by Robert Duvall’s character in the film *Apocalypse Now*. In spite of carrying such popular-culture baggage, the HGO’s staging is an historic event.

Even though Texas history does exhibit an operatic scale all its own, the anniversaries of its main events typically pass uncelebrated. But, it’s not out of line to think that an opera based on the Battle of San Jacinto, or the Alamo, is possible. After all, western movies were once called “horse operas,” and a number of the Texas heroes could hold their own on any stage.

If there is a composer who is dreaming of creating an opera about Texas—whether based on historic heroes or contemporary role models, we can all finally agree that, in that case, too much will not be enough.

Charles Lohrmann, Publisher



**WHERE WE’LL
BE NEXT MONTH:**

The July issue will wow with some of the best views in Texas, and offer summer-vacation inspiration in Grapevine—whether it’s skimming the lake, riding the rails, or whirling down a waterslide. Look for more readers’ Texas Top 40 destinations (the surprises continue), automotive treasures at Dick’s Classic Garage Car Museum in San Marcos, and a variety of other topics, from catfish to camels. Then, let’s get back to the basics with a favorite souvenir from Luckenbach.



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love to dig in the sand, lounge on the beach, feel the warm sun, smell the salty air, and take a dip in the sparkling waters of Texas. Bring *your* little ones, and don't forget the flip flops and a camera, because memories are made here.



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JUNE 2014

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

38

TEXAS TOP 40

Halfway to the Top

The latest batch of Texas Top 40 Travel Destinations reflects the diversity of our state's getaway opportunities, as well as the range of reader opinions on the topic.

FEATURES

40

Colors of the Coast

Come along on our photo tour of Texas' colorful coast, where a canvas of natural beauty inspires the whimsy and creativity of the human hand.

Text by E. DAN KLEPPER

48

Look What's Cookin' in Port A!

Beach bums demand sustenance, and Port Aransas delivers with a slate of eateries enticing enough to pull us off the sand, and even to don a shirt and shoes.

*Text by CELESTINA BLOK
Photographs by WILL VAN OVERBEEK*



54

Come Around

Casting distance from the bountiful waters of Aransas Bay, the Rockport-Fulton area offers a laid-back lesson in coastal recreation. Just ask the whooping cranes.

*Text by MATT JOYCE
Photographs by MICHAEL AMADOR*

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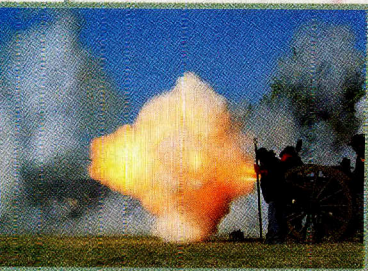
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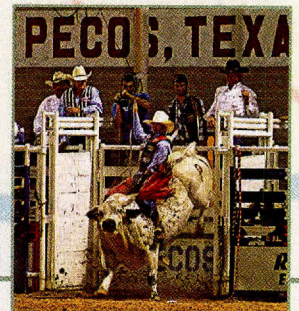
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EVENTS

- May-July - Alpine Cowboys Baseball - **Alpine**
- June - Summer off the Patio Concerts - **Fort Stockton**
- June - Live at Zero Stone Concerts - **Fort Stockton**
- June 1-30 - Wendy Wright at Greasewood Gallery - **Marfa**
- June 6, 13, 20, 27 - Hot Summers Nights (Music in the Park) - **Odessa**
- June 7 - Brand New Oprea at the Globe Theatre - **Odessa**
- June 25-28 - West of the Pecos Rodeo - **Pecos**

- June-July - *Into the Woods* at Kokernot Outdoor Theatre - **Alpine**
- July 2-6 - Marfa Film Festival - **Marfa**
- July 4-6 - "Coolest" 4th of July Celebration - **Fort Davis**
- July 24-27 - Viva Big Bend Music Festival - **Fort Davis, Alpine, Marfa**
- July 25-27 - Tall City Blues Fest - **Midland**
- July 26 - Night in Old Pecos / Cantaloupe Festival - **Pecos**
- July 30 - Steve Martin & The Steep Canyon Rangers - **Midland**

JUNE 2014

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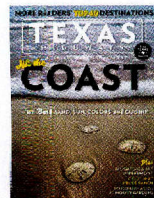
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ON OUR COVERS

FRONT: Waves wash over sand dollars on the beach at Isla Blanca Park on South Padre Island. Photo © Kenny Braun

BACK: Day breaks over Gulf waters in Chambers County on the upper Texas coast. Photo © Richard Reynolds

WHERE IN TEXAS ARE YOU?



TXDOT photo

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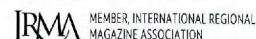
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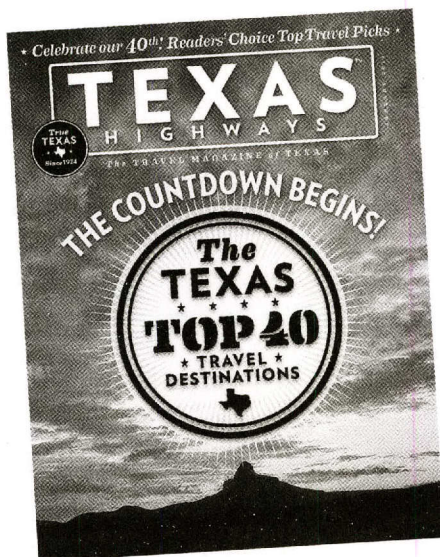
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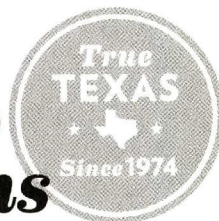
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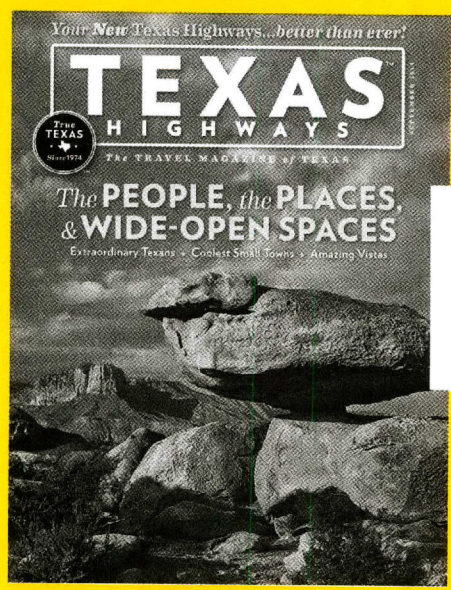
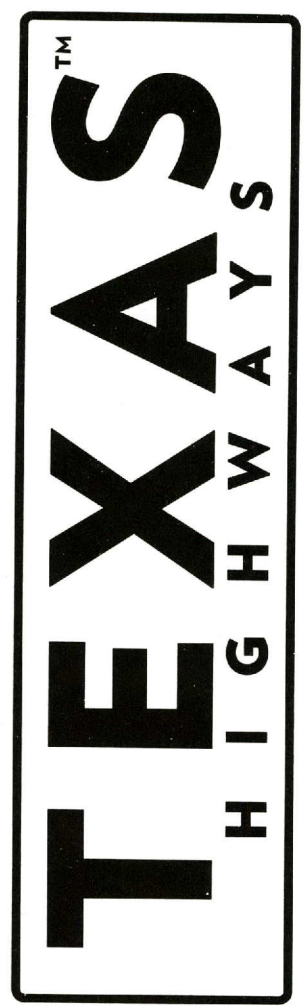
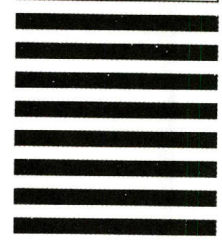
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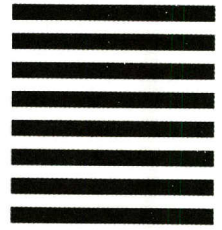
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MERGE

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

I'm coming back to live in Texas and plan to see every inch of it. Your magazine will be a must read.

—NOLA HENNESSY, TH Facebook Fan in Mollymook, New South Wales, Australia



OUR FAVORITE SOCIAL MEDIA OF THE MONTH...

I remember our Dad would load up all his kids and our cousins for a trip to the San Antonio Zoo. The one and only time I tasted rattlesnake meat—no, not like chicken. —Josie Robinson

Honey-Sweet Memory

I grew up with honeybees on our land and at least one hive always near our house to watch and enjoy [May]. I do miss having them around. They are amazing creatures, and I am just as fascinated with them now as I was as a child. And I was

never stung once growing up.

JAYMIE MCGRAW MASSEY,

TH Facebook Fan in Houston

Sign of the Times

I'm enjoying my new issue of *Texas Highways*, however, the photo of the folks around the fireplace in the Davis

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Mountains story [May] is sad: four people and there is one iPad, two cell phones, and the other guy might be on one, too. It looks like a lovely place with a nice fire, but no communication or warmth. A sign of the times, sadly.
SANDY OLDENBURGER, Friendswood

Serbin Surprise

Your article about the Wends and Serbin [April] reminded me of the time some friends and I from Dallas tried to go to Austin but ended up finding a place to stay in Giddings. We went to a festival in Serbin and saw the beautiful decorated eggs, food, and Texas Wendish Heritage Museum. We also toured the beautiful St. Paul Lutheran Church. All of us were happy that we found an unexpected place.

RICHARD COOK, Cartersville, Missouri

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Our readers note two recent errors that merit correction. The vintage aircraft displayed on the USS Lexington [May] should have been identified as an F-14 Tomcat. And, the oak-shaded deck pictured in an April story about Fredericksburg Wine Road 290 should have been identified as William Chris Vineyards in Hye.*



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READERS RECOMMEND

Beautiful in Burnet

I learned of a quaint little place just outside of Burnet called Perissos Vineyard and Winery. I was there as the photographer for the wedding of a coworker, and the grounds and the structure are gorgeous. The food is delicious and the service superb.

JANICE E. DAVENPORT, Seabrook

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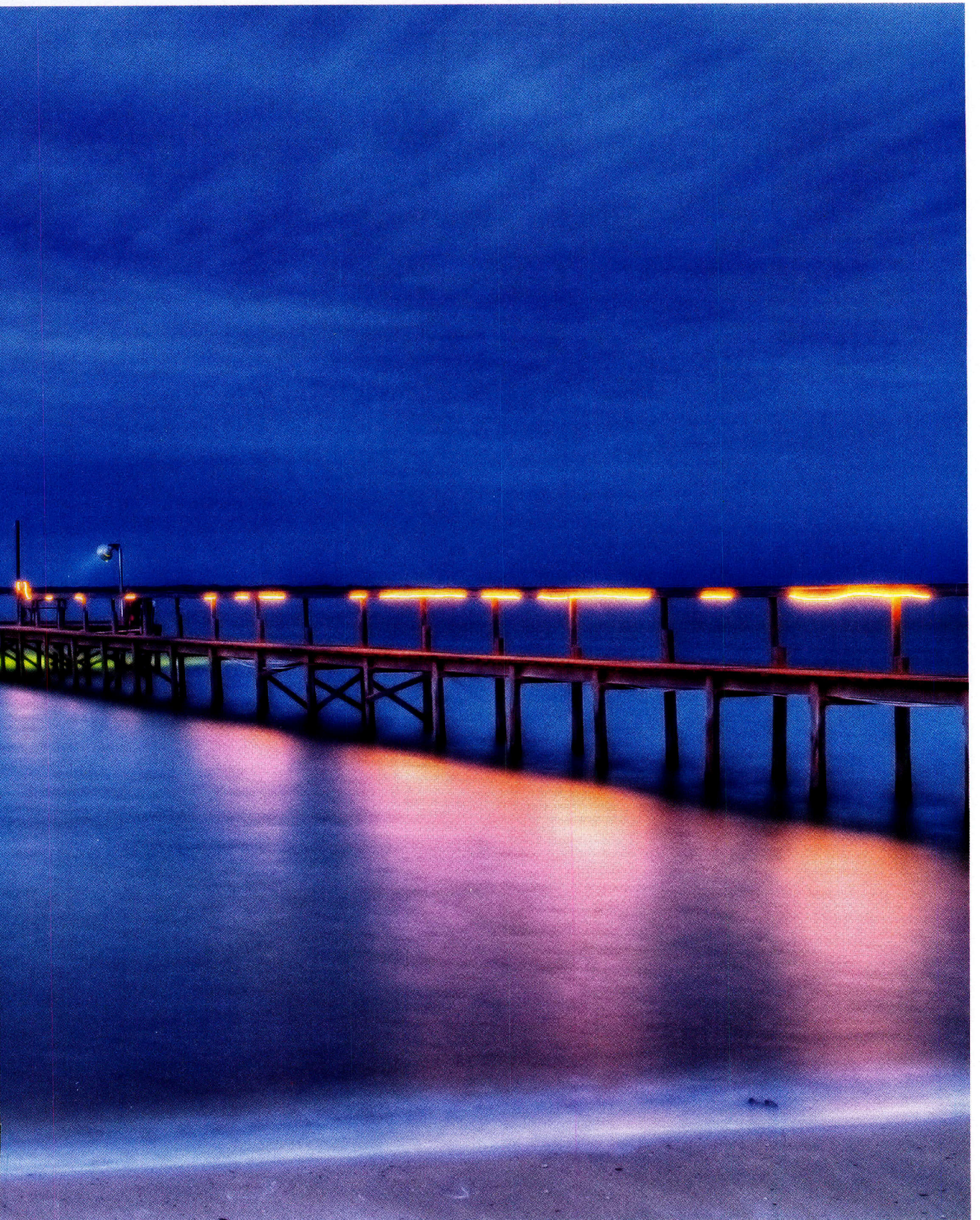
Gulf Coast

This private pier at the Little Bethel Bungalow on the Bay showcases a picturesque view of Baffin Bay, about 20 miles southeast of Kingsville. To reach the public fishing pier in this area: From US 77, turn east onto FM 628 and follow the road as it curves southeast (almost 10 miles) to the entrance of Kaufer-Hubert Memorial Park. The park has scenic views, a 500-foot fishing pier, a beach, picnic tables, an observation tower, and a boat ramp.



For Kaufer-Hubert Memorial Park information, visit www.klebergpark.org/parks/rv.html, and for Baffin Bay information, visit www.baffinbaytexas.org.





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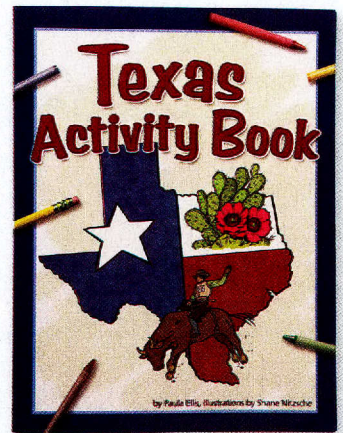
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By Paula Ellis and Shane Nitzsche
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Horse Sense

NURTURING A CHILD'S
EQUINE DREAMS IN WEST TEXAS

text by CLAYTON MAXWELL



HAPPY TRAILS

Don McGimils, head wrangler at Historic Prude Ranch, leads Victoria and Amber Brooks on a trail in the Davis Mountains.



SADDLE UP!
Victoria Brooks prepares for a trail ride with wrangler Don McGinnis at Historic Prude Ranch.

OLD GONZO DOESN'T WANT TO trot. At first we thought it was because he didn't like walking behind Chili Bean, my daughter's horse, who apparently is suffering mild gastrointestinal woes. So our cowboy leader moves Gonzo to the front of the line. But still, Gonzo is a reluctant trotter.

My daughter and I are learning much on this ride, not the least of which is that the moods of the horses play a significant role in the flow of things.

We are here, riding at Historic Prude Ranch in the rocky plateaus of Fort Davis, because my eight-year-old daughter, Carlisle, has become horse-obsessed. Ever since she attended an English riding day camp in Austin last summer, her world—and therefore mine—has turned abruptly equine. We have horse bed sheets, horse dolls, and multiple horse T-shirts. Carlisle spends her spare moments drawing horses, naming her imaginary future horses, and setting up jumping courses throughout our living room.

Growing up in Texas, I had cared about horses about as much as I'd cared about cowboy hats and rodeos, which is to



TRAIL RIDES AT PRUDE RANCH

Prude Ranch offers one-hour (\$30), two-hour (\$55), and half-day (\$110) trail rides Tuesday-Saturday. Reservations recommended. Call **800/458-6232**; www.prude-ranch.com.

say—not at all. Carlisle, however, has been bitten by the horse bug that often bites young girls. I recognize that part of my job as a parent is to encourage my children to explore different passions—and see which ones stick. But I also know that heading further down the path of horse mania is not to be taken lightly. It's expensive and involves carpooling through Austin traffic to rural farms. So before I committed to weekly riding lessons, we needed to investigate whether this horse bug is real or just a stage. With a West Texas family trip approaching, I booked a trail ride at Historic Prude Ranch, the endearing dude ranch that has been teaching kids to ride for decades.

So here we are in the desert mountains on a crisp West Texas morning. We weave our way across the dry and rocky Limpia Creek, where water once

flowed enough to draw people to this forbidding land: first Native Americans, then soldiers at the nearby military fort, and then settlers like Deidrick Dutchover, a Belgian pioneer who lived near the fort, raising goats and dodging Apache attacks.

Adrian Glidewell, the 21-year-old cowboy leading our ride, is a descendant of Mr. Dutchover, and he looks the part. With his floppy brimmed hat, pointy silver spurs, and wide agreeable face, he seems as natural in this landscape as the horses and prickly pear. Adrian was riding by the time he was two, and knows these animals' quirks and nuances. When the horses nibble on prickly pear fruit, Adrian plucks the cactus spines out of their noses. He cares for them like children.

Carlisle picks up on this. It plays into her own natural affection for the animals, whose power and size make her girlishness seem all the more delicate. She talks to her horse, sweetly chiding him when he stops to eat brush. I am reminded of something a child psychologist mentioned during a parenting talk at our church: Girls who are passionate about horses seem to weather the turbulent adolescent years with more aplomb than most, perhaps because of the relationship and care they have for the horses. Now I think I see what he means.

Even though Adrian is young, he tells stories like a seasoned cowboy. He talks about saving his horses from the 2011 wildfires that swept through Fort Davis. About how beautiful the sunrise is when he makes his morning horseback commute over the three little mountain ridges that stand between

With a West Texas family trip approaching, I booked a trail ride at Historic Prude Ranch, the endearing dude ranch that has been teaching kids to ride for decades.

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TEXAS FAMILY

Out on the trail, we are enjoying a freedom that our city living doesn't allow, a fresh connection that feels more essential and satisfying. Talking, but not a lot, we enjoy just being together.

Prude Ranch and his home. Carlisle hangs on every word. Instead of focusing on form and posture like she did at camp, she is absorbing something else—a respect for nature and its hazards and delights; things you may only get to know if you live close to them.

We ride on and I sense how uncommonly focused Carlisle is. Perhaps the swaying of our bodies atop these slow-walking horses is having a meditative effect. Perhaps the spare beauty of this rugged terrain is quieting her. At one point she says with wonder, “Mommy, look! The view!” She is slowing down and noticing things. And best of all, she wants to share them with me.

This is a different way to be together. Out on the trail, we are enjoying a freedom that our city living doesn't allow, a fresh connection that feels more essential and satisfying. We smell the creosote, we spot a lizard, we urge a horse to stop eating and keep moving. Talking, but not a lot, we enjoy just being together.

When we finally get Old Gonzo to trot, the whole line of riders picks up speed and we bounce along in our saddles. Carlisle's horse gives a little buck, but she is unperturbed. She tells me to try “two-point,” which I surmise is riding lingo for lifting up out of the saddle. She's confident. I am impressed and surprised in the way parents often are when they first realize that their child is following her own passion, mastering things we may know little about. And although I can't say how long her horse obsession will last, I see that helping her follow her eight-year-old dreams has a lot to teach me, too. ★

Paddling and Painting

GALVESTON'S ARTIST BOAT ADVENTURES BRINGS
NEW MEANING TO "WATER COLOR"

text by **Melissa Gaskill**



FIND MORE ONLINE

Q&A with an Artist
Boat tour guide at
texashighways.com/texaswild.

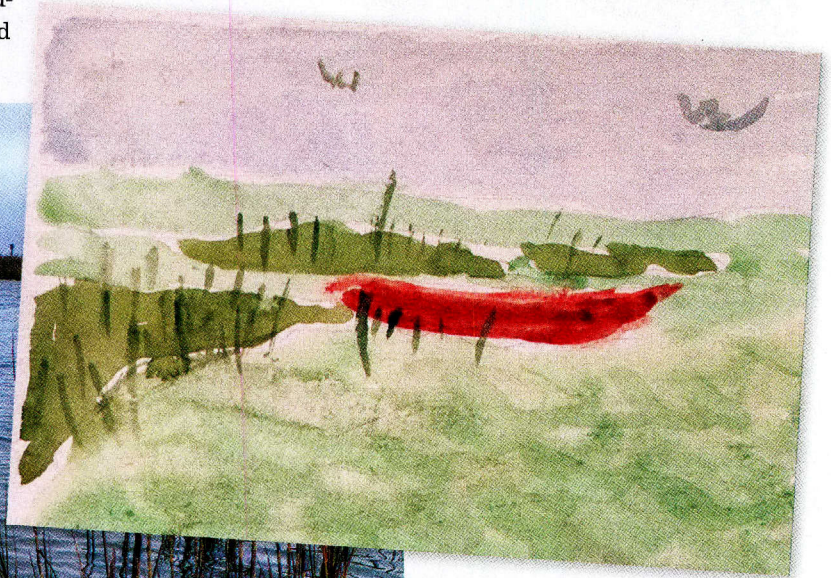
A

PLEASANT BREEZE ROCKED MY KAYAK AND rustled pale green and brown marsh grasses around me. Overhead, a few wispy clouds drifted across a blue sky. A heron squawked nearby, and the faint growl of a motorboat carried from the distance. Nary a peep came from the group of paddlers scattered around me, each of us clutching paintbrushes and thick watercolor paper fastened to cardboard with masking tape.

Welcome to Artist Boat Adventures in Galveston, an unexpected pairing of art-making and kayaking. My sister Janet Wray, who has created many a work of art but never kayaked before, and myself, an avid kayaker but certainly no artist, represented a definite test of Artist Boat's claim of "no experience necessary." The nonprofit organization integrates art and science to promote awareness and preservation of coastal habitats, including Galveston Bay. It offers guided "eco-art" tours at nearly a dozen locations from the lower Trinity River to Drum Bay.

For this program, we gathered with a half-dozen other participants at a kiosk on Oak Bayou, an inlet on the bay side of Galveston Island State Park, where a row of brightly colored kayaks and our Artist Boat guide, biologist Kari Howard, awaited. After a quick lesson in paddling technique, we slathered

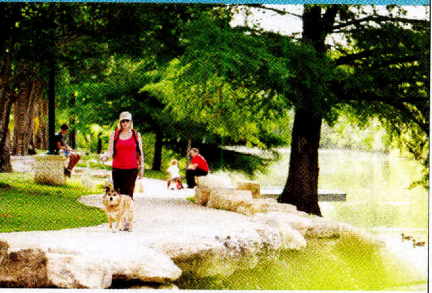
The nonprofit organization integrates art and science to promote awareness and preservation of coastal habitats, including Galveston Bay.



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TEXAS WILD

“Galveston Island’s bay side is often overlooked, but it’s an ecological jewel, with more than 600 species of birds.”

on sunscreen, snapped on life jackets, loaded up with water and snacks, and launched our boats off the end of a boardwalk.

For more than an hour, we wandered the shallow bay, circumnavigating islands of marsh grass that sheltered white egrets, great blue herons, pelicans, and roseate spoonbills. Kari pointed out the various birds and gave us updates about restoration efforts in the bay. We paddled over a recently planted seagrass bed, the primary food for green sea turtles, and past restored plots of marsh grasses, which help create wetlands. Kari filled us in on the important functions of the wetlands, including reducing flooding, holding sediment together to maintain land mass for the island, filtering pollutants from the water, and providing a safe haven for the young of such commercially important marine species as shrimp, blue crab, and many varieties of fish.

Then, with all of our boats pulled up against a small island, we unloaded the art supplies from boxes strapped to each kayak. These included paper, paintbrushes, a set of watercolors, and a plastic tray with little wells for mixing. Kari talked us through the process, suggesting we first cover our paper with a background color and then place a horizon line two-thirds of the way up the page. She pointed out how subtly the color changed from water to shore to sky, and showed us how to mix those shades from our paints.

Once back on shore, we shared our finished creations. In less than an hour, working on moving boats, the group had produced surprisingly beautiful images. I’d heard that being in nature makes people more creative, and here was

tangible evidence right in front of me.

“I haven’t painted with watercolors since high school, and it’s probably the most difficult medium I’ve ever worked with, but I found Kari’s tips helpful,” Janet told me. “At first, I was somewhat uninspired by the limited color in the terrain, but that forced me to stretch creatively.”

Kari hopes that Artist Boat will serve to educate more people about the less-famous side of the island. “Galveston Island’s bay side is often overlooked, but it’s an ecological jewel, with more than 600 species of birds,” she said. “The Galveston Bay watershed begins in the Dallas-Fort Worth area with the Trinity River and covers 33,000 square miles. More than half the population of Texas lives within this watershed.”

She referenced a famous 1968 quote by Baba Dioum, a former agriculture minister in Senegal who served on the executive committee of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature: “In the end, we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught.”

“The work we’re doing is important because it ties back to conservation—an issue that’s certainly timely in light of the recent oil spill here in the bay,” said Kari. “If enough people care about these environments, they will be protected and conserved. A big component of Artist Boat is educating the public about these coastal margins and making the connection between human actions and wildlife. We want ordinary people to rally for their own small parts on this big planet.” ★



ARTIST BOAT ADVENTURES

also leads tours at other Galveston Bay locations, as well as Armand Bayou Coastal Preserve, Smith Point, and Cypress Swamps. Tours range in price from \$10-\$50 per person, depending on trip length and destination. Call 409/770-0722; www.artistboat.org.



Go Off-Grid!

COLUMBUS' INDUSTRIAL COUNTRY MARKET

text by Paula Disbrowe

This one-of-a-kind road stop offers quirky shopping, native plants, a surreal sculpture garden—and proof that a business can run entirely on sun, wind, and rain.

THE SWATH OF TEXAS 71 THAT STRETCHES BETWEEN Austin and Houston is a well-traveled stretch for Longhorn fans, Houstonians with kids at the University of Texas, Austinites headed to H-town to binge on museums, and all manner of east-west adventurers. Typically these road warriors, myself included, are dead-set on their destinations, and we hit the turn signal to pause only for essentials: coffee, fuel, and fruit-filled kolaches.

But what's a road trip without the occasional whimsical detour? The results can be eye-opening, inspiring, and a whole lot of fun. Which is to say that it would be a shame to cruise by the Industrial Country Market in Columbus (just a few miles northwest of the I-10 juncture), without taking a closer look. From the highway, the self-proclaimed



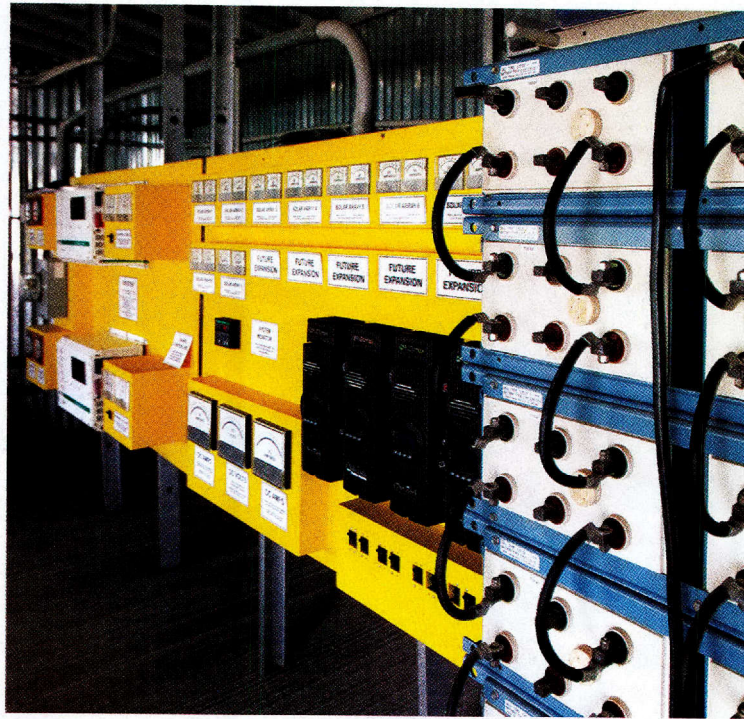
FIND MORE ONLINE

See more photos of this eccentric complex at texashighways.com/madeintx.

MADE IN TEXAS

SOLAR-POWERED
The Industrial Country Market operates entirely on solar energy.

Visitors can see the "power room," where a wall of batteries stores the sun's energy for future use.



"non-general general store" looks a bit like a ranch gone feral, with its sprawl of corrugated metal, gleaming solar panels, and colored glass. There's a good reason the ever-evolving complex defies easy explanation: It's a combination gift shop, art gallery, sculpture garden, nursery, and education center. And here's the kicker—the entire operation is 100 percent off-the-grid, sustained by solar energy and more than 40,000 gallons of collected rainwater.

On a recent trip to Houston, my kids and I spent a couple of hours poking around the 6,000-square-foot retail store, which sells everything from plastic toys to wind chimes, garden tools, and elaborate metal sculptures created by Chris Maxa, a popular artist based in Leakey. Don't expect lunch here (find that at nearby Weikel's or Hruska's), but there is free water chilled by solar power, and you can purchase soda and European chocolate, as well as fresh spices and global seasonings to inspire future meals.

Exit through the far end of the store, and you'll amble beneath an arbor of passion vines, over a bridge that crosses a reed-framed pond brimming with

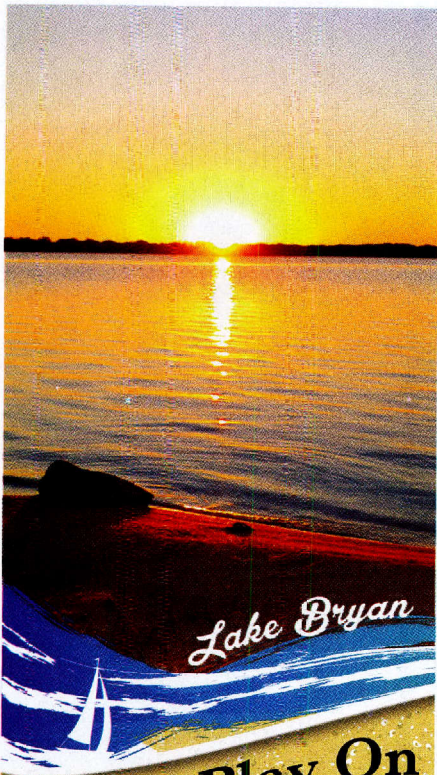
colorful goldfish, and along a brick path into a sculpture garden built by Houston artist Buddy Merrow, who makes good use of repurposed materials like wrought iron, glass bottles, and cement bricks. An adjacent cottage houses a gallery featuring local art, as well as pottery and other fair-trade wares from around the world. There's also a greenhouse where hydroponically grown herbs, succulents, lettuces, and juicy tomatoes flourish.

Industrial Country Market is the creation of Michele and Daniel Bretch, who decided that Columbus was the perfect midway spot between their business in Houston and their sons in Austin. In 1995, they built a weekend home here, and in 2005 they purchased the 45-acre site where the market is located. "My husband has always been fascinated by the idea that you can capture and use the sun's energy," says Michele.



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If you show interest in various plants, don't be surprised if you walk away with a free clipping of a passion vine or basil plant.

"He realized that solar would work."

The engine of the complex is the market's "power room," a wall of recycled batteries that helps people visualize what's happening. As a sign explains, batteries are used to store the sun's energy. "During the day, we run the market directly off the sun," Daniel explains. "That's why we're open 10-6." During those daylight hours, the batteries collect energy that keeps things humming along at night. The rainwater—a precious commodity in Texas—is collected in two swimming pools and a variety of tanks and drums.

Michele explains that for folks who want to dig deeper into the challenges and rewards of living off-the-grid, there's also an educational facility where she and Daniel, along with other instructors, teach classes on everything from hydroponic gardening to beekeeping and harnessing solar energy.

General Manager Matt Hartmann runs the store and the greenhouse, where succulents sell at a brisk clip. If you show interest in various plants, don't be surprised if you walk away with a free clipping of a passion vine or basil plant. The Bretchs' newest addition to the complex is a "butterflea market" that features fine antiques, medical posters, granite creations, and vintage kitchenware.

Daniel hopes that the takeaway from visiting the market is inspiration. "The primary thing we want to show is that using the sun can make sense," he says. "We love what we do," he continues. "It's a challenge, like anything, but I'm like a seven-year-old child being able to run a commercial and educational venture on my own terms. A side benefit is that nice people come to our store, and then they keep coming back." ★

FIELD GUIDE *to* BASTROP COUNTY

ISSUE
No 43



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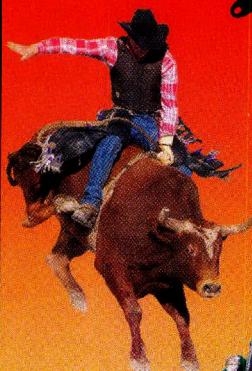
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SOUVENIR

Penguin *Picassos*

AVIAN ARTISTRY AT MOODY GARDENS

text by *Melissa Gaskill*



A

FREQUENT VISITOR TO GAL-
 veston, I'm used to sighting sea
 turtles, dolphins, wading birds,
 pelicans, and even penguins. Pen-
 guins? Yes, these birds from the
 Southern Hemisphere are part of
 conservation efforts at the Aquar-
 ium at Moody Gardens, which has
 105 individual penguins representing six different species:
 King, Gentoo, Chinstrap, Northern Rockhopper, Southern
 Rockhopper, and Macaroni penguins.

I recently booked one of the aquarium's penguin encoun-
 ters, a chance to go behind the scenes and learn more about
 these birds and their care here. I got even more excited when I
 learned that the experience includes someone winning a piece
 of penguin artwork.

The event starts in front of the penguin exhibit, where
 penguins waddle about on a faux-rock landscape behind a
 glass wall. On land, they're comically awkward, but zipping
 around underwater, they appear quite graceful. After a brief

**A quick
 switch of colors
 and the penguin
 repeats the
 process, creating
 a multicolored
 pattern of
 chicken-like feet
 on the canvas.**

introduction from biologist and tour guide Jessica Raeke, we follow her through double doors and down a hallway lined with placards bearing information on all 18 penguin species and a large world map showing where each lives—from the shores of far-south South America to Antarctica, the bottom of the African continent, and the southern tip of New Zealand. We stop in the kitchen, where aproned and booted workers busily measure and weigh fish for each animal in the facility, 200 pounds a day in all. (That's nearly two pounds per bird.)

Ascending a short flight of stairs, we gather around the gated doorway into the back of the penguin habitat. A small group of birds begins vocalizing when they spot us. Jessica explains that some of the birds really like the penguin encounters and will jostle each other in hopes of having a turn.

We get to meet our penguin in a small room lined with benches. Because people loom so tall relative to a knee-high penguin, we must sit before the lucky bird comes in. The room is chilly; the resident penguin species like it between 36 and 45 degrees, and the room is the latter. Blankets are provided so everyone remains comfortable.

"The birds come here because they want to," Jessica assures us. "They enjoy the painting, and it is all up to them. If the penguin isn't in the mood, there will be no artwork that day."

A Southern Rockhopper named Hendrix waddles into the room (all the rockhoppers here are, fittingly, named after rock stars). Hendrix lifts his head, shakes his feathers, and lets loose with raucous squawking. This, Jessica says, is his happy sound, and it's hard not to smile. Hendrix is nine years old and will likely live into his 30s.

Jessica spreads out a towel and he hops onto it, doing his happy dance again and waiting expectantly, nibbling at the towel. Next, Jessica spreads different colors of paint onto squares of foam, sets the squares next to the towel, and, next to them, two white canvases.

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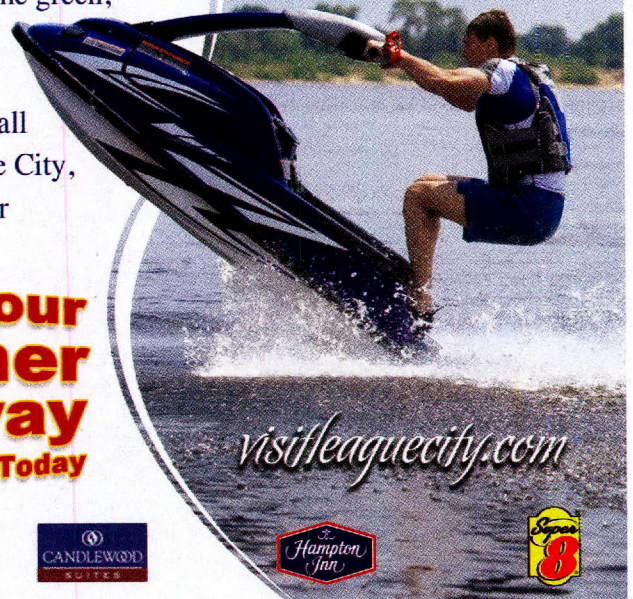
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SOUVENIR

With a little gentle encouragement, Hendrix walks onto one of the foam squares, where he pauses before walking across the two canvases, chortling as he does so. A quick switch of colors and the penguin repeats the process, creating a multicolored pattern of chicken-like feet on the canvas.

Each bird has his or her own style, Jessica says. Hendrix, for example, "paints" calmly, crossing the canvas in a straight line. His sister Marley takes a freestyle approach, quickly zigging and zagging across the canvas. The aquarium uses non-toxic, water-based paints so that no harm is done if some ends up on the bird, or if one of them decides to taste it.

At the end, the small artist walks around the room, pausing so each of us can gently pet his back. A penguin's one-inch-long feathers pack tightly to create a sort of wet suit, waterproof and airtight. We're only seeing, and feeling, the top layer. I must admit penguins are rather odd looking, especially Rockhoppers, with their wild hairdo of yellow feathers sticking out from both sides of their heads. That squawk isn't something you'd want to hear in the dark without knowing who made it, either.

We then number off, and Jessica draws a number and awards one of Hendrix's creations to the lucky winner. The other one, along with a stack of previous works of art, is for sale in the gift shop, with all the money supporting penguin enrichment, aka toys for the birds. Changing up their environment on a regular basis is a good way to stimulate and keep them happy. I buy a souvenir and support a good cause. Not bad for 10 bucks. ★



PENGUIN ENCOUNTERS

(\$50 per person) take place at 1 p.m. Private tours are also available (\$350 for four people). For more details, and for information on general visits to Moody Gardens, call 800/582-4673; www.moodygardens.com.

PLATES

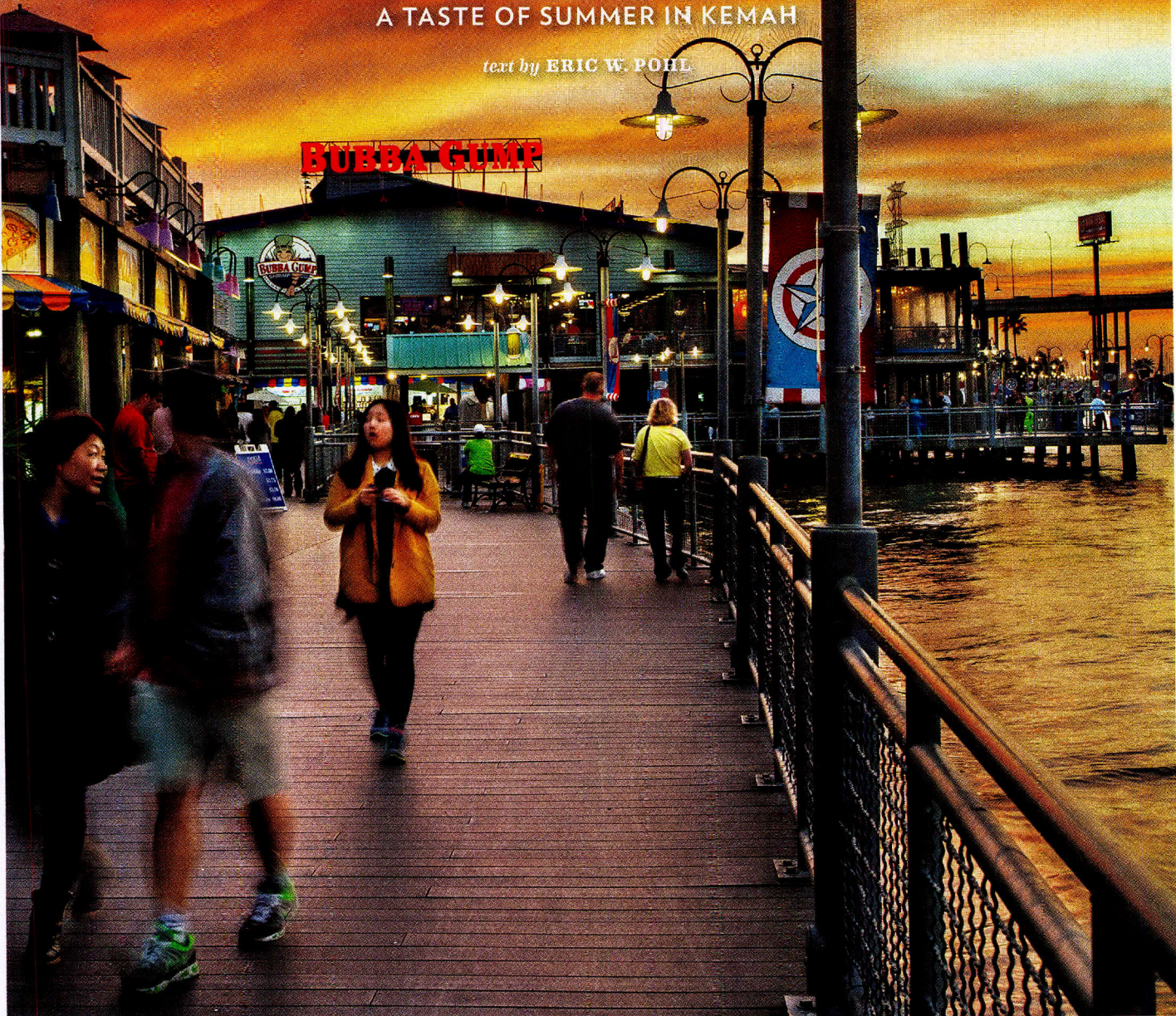
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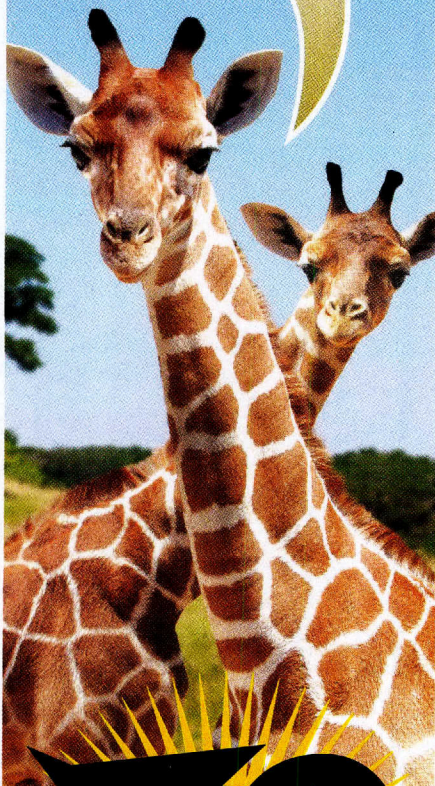
A TASTE OF SUMMER IN KEMAH

text by ERIC W. POHL



**MY TWIN & I
FIND HUMANS
VERY CLUMSY.**

**THEY KEEP
DROPPING FOOD
OUT OF THEIR
ROLLING CAGES.**



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SUMMER IS HERE. FOR ME, THERE'S something about the longer days and warm nights that calls to mind childhood memories of whirling amusement rides and delicious theme-park fare. Today one of my all-time-favorite haunts for reliving those summertime indulgences is the Kemah Boardwalk—a 60-acre tri-jecta of fun, food, and excitement, just southeast of Houston. The salty Gulf breeze and postcard views of Galveston Bay set the scene for amusement rides, midway games, retail shops, and a variety of waterside restaurants and concession stands.

Following in the footsteps of some of America's most iconic boardwalks, such as those at Corey Island and Atlantic City, the Kemah Boardwalk has all the nostalgic sights and sounds you'd expect from a year-round oceanside carnival. As you stroll along the wooden promenade, the distant click-clack of the Boardwalk Bullet roller coaster blends with screams of excitement and nearby laughter. Bellowing midway games, packed to the gills with giant stuffed animals and trinkets, offer carnival kitsch at every turn.

When it comes to food, the boardwalk is known for its themed restaurants and eclectic mix of cuisines. Nothing

If there's one thing that I always do at the boardwalk, it's indulge in some funnel cake. This carnival staple reaches new heights with a cherry à la mode version.

against the sit-down eateries, but at the boardwalk I usually want food with a little more get-up-and-go: something fried or on a stick, that doesn't come with a salad or grilled vegetables on the side. And Kemah delivers.

On a recent trip to Kemah, my brother and I came not for the rides and restaurants, but for the food stands along the boardwalk, which tempted us with carnival classics like pizza, snow cones, soft pretzels, and smoked turkey legs.

In the shadow of the 65-foot Ferris wheel and with stomachs growling, we weighed our options. But before we could decide between chili-cheese fries, buffalo chicken empanadas, or a foot-long corn dog, we found ourselves at the head of the line and made a quick call: We'd try a north-to-south taste-test of New York-style hot dogs and Tex-Mex hot dogs.

With our portable entrées in hand, we sat down at a nearby umbrella-covered picnic table. Lacking adult supervision,



THE KEMAH BOARDWALK

The Kemah Boardwalk is at 215 Kipp Ave. in Kemah, about 20 miles southeast of downtown Houston. See www.kemahboardwalk.com.

we put our elbows up on the wood plank tabletop and stuffed our faces. The New York dog, with its tangy sauerkraut and undulating garnish of spicy mustard, certainly satisfied, but we declared the Tex-Mex dog the winner, smothered in yellow ballpark cheese and topped with mild peppers, tomatoes, onions, and cilantro. But the game wasn't over yet.

Soon, a familiar aroma caught our attention amid the jumble of sweet and savory smells. It was the unmistakable aroma of deep-fried confectionery bliss, the delight known as the funnel cake.

As if the allure of fried batter dusted with powdered sugar wasn't enough, at Kemah they've taken this carnival

staple to new heights with a cherry à la mode version. "We call it the gourmet funnel cake," says Jacob Bigger, a boardwalk security staffer who knows his way around fried pastries. And so we ordered one.

Normally, two manly men such as my brother and I would have devoured a funnel cake in less than a minute. However, this occasion was to be savored. After all, a cherry à la mode funnel cake is the kind of delicious guilty pleasure that can leave a grown man unconcerned when the cherry topping conspicuously dribbles down his chin. Scooping my plastic fork in for the first bite, my knees weakened. The tart cherry-pie filling and creamy vanilla ice-cream proved the perfect foil to the still-warm, crispy fried dough.

After our last bite, we lined up for a thrilling zipline ride on the boardwalk's newest addition, the Iron Eagle, before calling it a day. ★

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PORT ARANSAS' SALTY DOG SALOON

text by Celestina Blok

I'M AT THE "COOLEST HONKY TONK ON the Texas Riviera," so claims the large, plywood sign outside. Having passed by many times, this is my first visit to the Salty Dog Saloon, a laid-back bar on Port Aransas' main drag. There's a not-too-bothersome haze of smoke in the air, pool tables, a digital jukebox, and a handful of weathered regulars—salty dogs themselves—who turn their heads to catch a glimpse of each newcomer walking through the door. The place is a little bit country and a little bit rock-and-roll, and my girlfriends and I have decided to belly up to the bar for a quick refreshment. We would soon be spoiled forever by this bar's version of a classic cocktail.

"Four salty dogs, please," I order for my crew, figuring it's



THE SALTY DOG SALOON

is at 203 N. Alister St. in Port Aransas. Call 361/749-4912, or see the saloon's page on Facebook.

only appropriate to partake in the grapefruit juice-and-gin concoction that gave the establishment its name. The salty dog, not nearly as popular as the Cape Cod, screwdriver, or tequila sunrise, is a drink folks rarely request but bartenders are expected to know. Dating to the 1950s, the salty dog is a variation of the popular greyhound, made "salty" with a salted rim. Some people order it with vodka, but gin is considered the norm, and that's how they're served here at this popular island hangout. It's a beverage I enjoy but never think to order, because back home in Fort Worth, most bars have embraced the current craft-cocktail trend, and I'm usually sidetracked by the latest martini list. But this is Port Aransas, and those lists don't exist here.

"Here you go, ladies," says the bartender, presenting salty dogs like I've never seen. Sitting before us were four frosty, ice-filled, and salt-rimmed mugs, each one garnished with a large ruby-red grapefruit slice and filled with citrusy liquid the color of a Gulf Coast sunset. The presentation was unexpected from this no-frills bar, and the taste was as exhilarating as the ocean air. Another round would definitely be in order.

"I have people come from all over who say they came just to have our salty dogs," says owner Rhonda Shirey when I ask about her version of the classic beverage. "If you order one at an airport or something, they would pop open a can of grapefruit juice, but mine is 'on the gun' and it's mixed with syrup and CO₂."

By "on the gun," Rhonda means that her grapefruit-juice supply is connected to her soda spout, providing for a crisp, carbonated combination. She says she serves the beverage in a frosted mug because "it looks prettier," and the big grapefruit slice adds aroma and style. A dog lover and former bar owner from Austin, Rhonda moved to Port Aransas, once just her "getaway place," 20 years ago. It was her dream to open the Salty Dog Saloon.



Salty approves of this salty dog.

“Four salty dogs, please,” I say, figuring it’s only appropriate to partake in the grapefruit juice-and-gin concoction that gave the establishment its name.

“Now I’m an expert fisherman. I know every fish out there,” she says. “When I opened the bar, I knew there was a drink called the salty dog. Now, we’re world-famous for the drink.”

Whether she’s exaggerating or not, I believe her assertion with one sip. Fittingly, Rhonda also has a dog named Salty, who enjoys sitting at the bar with patrons. “He’s a yellow Lab, and sometimes folks come to the bar just to see him,” she says, adding that friendly, well-behaved dogs are also allowed inside to keep Salty company.

Along with the signature drink, the Salty Dog Saloon also hosts regular karaoke nights, generally Wednesday through Sunday, starting around 9. And customers—especially tourists—can get a little crazy when they lose all inhibitions and decide to sing in front of strangers.

“They’ll never see these people again, so they’re not embarrassed to let loose,” says Rhonda. “People love our karaoke nights. In a lot of places, you’re listening to a band and after about an hour, you might get bored. But for karaoke, you’re waiting to get up there and sing *your* song. I think that’s why people love coming here.”

We’re not driving, and so with our second salty dogs in hand, we encounter a bit of this karaoke magic as the jukebox goes silent and the small stage lights up. Before we know it, the bar is full and festive, and we’re on our third game of shuffleboard, dancing between turns to hit the pucks and cheering for each brave soul who passionately belts out a favorite tune. What was supposed to be a quick stop for a drink has turned into another memory-making Port Aransas evening we’ll look to repeat. ★

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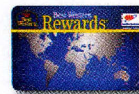
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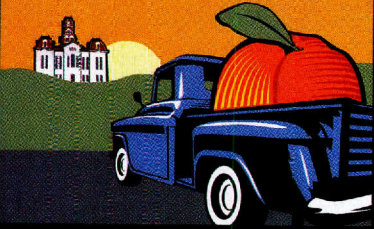


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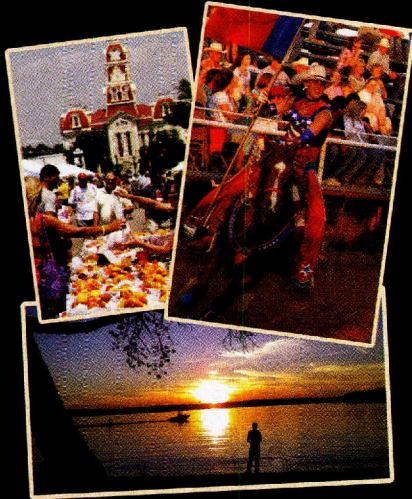
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Dining on the Dock of the Bay

DIRTY AL'S PELICAN STATION IN PORT ISABEL

text by Eileen Mattei

INSIDE DIRTY AL'S AT PELICAN STATION IN Port Isabel, I have a front-row seat for watching the Laguna Madre: A tugboat pushes barges on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, the *Black Dragon* pirate ship and dolphin-watch boats crisscross the bay, and cormorants float semi-submerged beyond the patio. Sitting in the restaurant on the dock of the bay, practically in the shadow of the Queen Isabella Memorial Causeway, I'm transfixed as the fog rolls in and out, hiding then re-revealing the barges and boats bringing commerce to the area.

In 2003, restaurateur Alfonso "Dirty Al" Salazar opened his



**DIRTY AL'S
PELICAN STATION**

is at 201 S. Garcia St.
in Port Isabel. Call
956/943-3344; [www.
dirtyalspi.com](http://www.dirtyalspi.com) (click
on Pelican Station).

first restaurant on South Padre Island, three miles from this spot, transforming his bait stand and beer bar into a hotspot for fabulous fried shrimp. With help from his culinary-school trained sons, Salazar soon expanded the menu and opened locations at Port Isabel and McAllen—with a fourth due soon in Brownsville. Dirty Al's at Port Isabel—a half-hour drive from our home in Harlingen—is the place my husband, Guy, and I take out-of-town friends for food that is consistently delicious.

Other diners provide a happy background hum as Guy and I join two friends for a late-afternoon meal. Sam, our attentive server, guides us to some of Dirty Al's specialties.

For happy-hour starters, we order two plump, lightly breaded crab cakes atop a light three-cheese sauces, laden with popcorn shrimp, garnished with scoops of fresh pico de gallo. Guy, who is allergic to shellfish, shares his platter

Dirty Al's is the rare seafood restaurant with a railroad theme: Railroad lanterns complement large-format, early-1900s photographs depicting the train and its passengers.

of fragrant fried mushrooms sprinkled with Parmesan cheese. Between sips of margaritas and savory bites, we catch up as the fog rolls in again, temporarily limiting our view of the cormorants and the pelicans perched on pilings.

Those pilings trace the path of the 1,000-foot-long wharf that once ran into the bay from the Rio Grande Railroad depot, built here in 1872. Pelican Station's exterior mimics the old train depot, complete with an authentic RGRR caboose nearby. The railroad itself, a narrow-gauge line that connected

what was then called Point Isabel to Brownsville, some 26 miles away, offered Brownsville merchants an alternate trade route from the steamboat service operated along the Rio Grande by entrepreneurs Richard King and Mifflin Kenedy. The train was used to carry both freight and beach-bound tourists through the 1930s.

And so, Dirty Al's is the rare seafood restaurant with a railroad theme: Railroad lanterns complement large-format, early-1900s photographs depicting the train and its passengers, including women in long skirts posed on the cow-catcher. Other décor elements focus on a sea theme, with pelican mobiles circling over the bar and sculptures mirroring the birds on the water outside.

Our waiter recommends we order a flounder or red snapper dish, prepared with locally caught fish. "The flounder and red snapper are as fresh as can be," he tells us.



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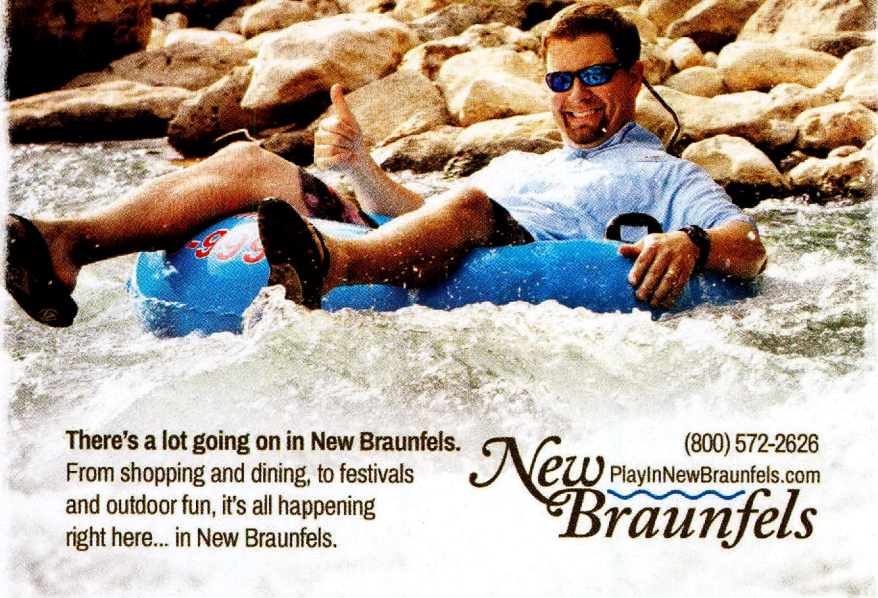
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Henri Matisse, French, 1869-1954, *Purple Robe and Anemones*, 1937, Oil on canvas; h. 28 3/4 in. (73 cm), w. 23 5/8 in. (60 cm), The Baltimore Museum of Art; The Cone Collection, formed by Dr. Claribel Cone and Miss Etta Cone of Baltimore, Maryland, BMA 1950.261. Photography by Mitro Hood. ©2014 Succession H. Matisse / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

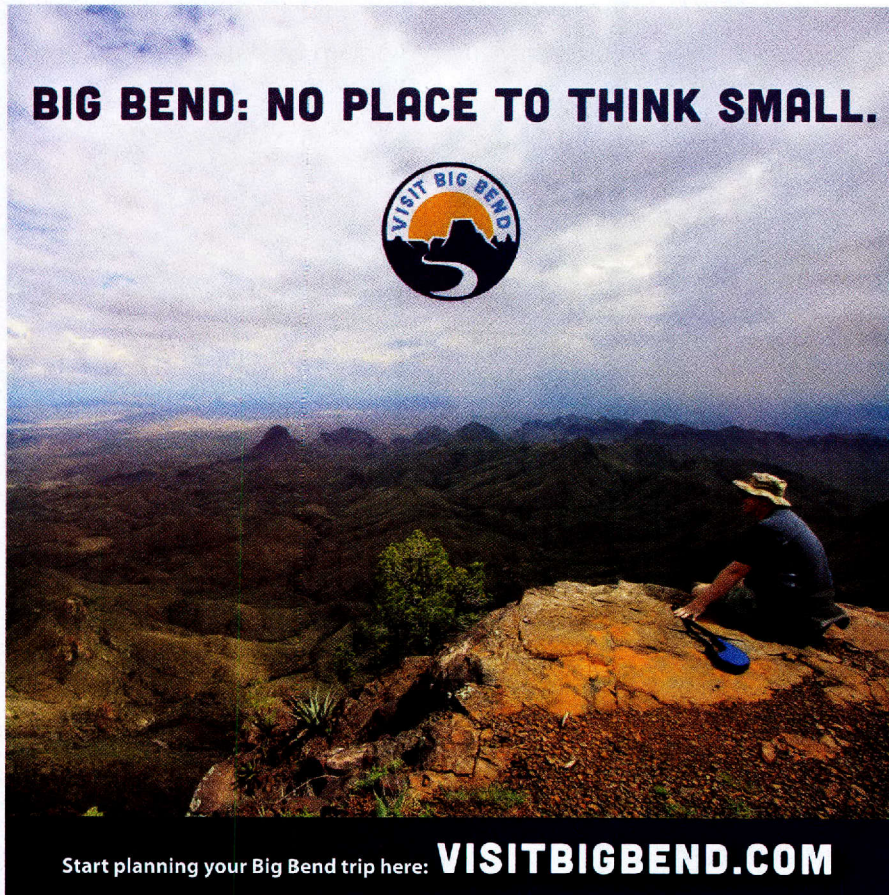
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EAT

The fog lifts enough to see South Padre once more, and the entrées arrive. Guy's whole red snapper, scored and baked with butter, pepper, and garlic, then crowned with ripe tomato slices and juicy lime wedges, looks like a still-life painted by an Old Master. The dish is eye-popping enough to inspire a stranger at the next table to ask, "Oooh, what did you order?"

Snuggled next to garlic mashed potatoes and crunchy, julienned squash and carrots, the snapper not only looks great, but tastes wonderful, too. "Perfectly cooked," Guy says. When the catch is running small, the restaurant often puts whole flounder and snapper on special, our waiter adds.

One friend had confessed that she cannot resist Dirty Al's seafood chalupas and orders them every time. So I sample them and see her point: They're a tasty mix of fish, shrimp, crab, and scallops scattered on flat crispy tortillas and lavished with a colorful blend of pico de gallo, chopped cabbage, and chipotle sauce.

I almost always order Dirty Al's jumbo fried shrimp plate. Okay, sometimes the fried shrimp and oysters. Dirty Al's uses only Gulf shrimp, which are tasty morsels dusted with bread crumbs and deep-fried; that accounts for the light and crispy coating. "You can't compare Dirty Al's shrimp to any others," my friend Terrie says, between nibbles. "There's never any disconnect between the shrimp and the coating." And the fries dredged in Dirty Al's special seasoning before frying come out fluffy on the inside and crunchy on the outside.

But today I buck tradition and order the Red Snapper Rockefeller, a substantial fillet partnered with spinach, bacon, and shrimp in a delicate, three-cheese sauce. What's not to like? Conversation falls silent as we settle into satisfied murmurs.

We're too sated for dessert, so as a nightcap we stroll the patio deck, watching the lights on the water until the fog rolls in again, obscuring everything but the memory of a good dinner with friends and a spectacular bay view. ★

Next Weekend

WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR FUN?

Southeastern Spice

BEAUMONT'S BODACIOUS BREW

text by HELEN ANDERS



GATOR-GAZING

An alligator surfaces at Cattail Marsh, a wetlands area with gravel levee roads that provide access for watching wildlife.

At the Texas Energy Museum, get a peek inside the refining process from the vantage point of an oil molecule.

WATCHING AN ALLIGATOR GLIDE THROUGH a murky bog, I'd have sworn I was in Louisiana. But no, this gator—one of a dozen I spotted during an hour's tour—patrols the waters of Cattail Marsh in Beaumont.

A healthy dollop of swamp seasons this city of 118,000 on Interstate 10 just 30 minutes west of the Louisiana border, blending with a strong heritage of oil and diverse museums exploring sports, art, and even firefighting history. Whether you're after an outdoors adventure, air-conditioned culture, or distinctive East Texas cuisine, you'll find plenty in Beaumont to pack into a weekend.

Nature lovers should grab a camera and trek or bike into the 900-acre Cattail Marsh, part of the city's Tyrrell Park and free to explore. "Grebe! Grebe! It's a common grebe!" alerted our guide, George Newsome, who clearly embraces overseeing the marsh as part of his duties as the city's water reclamation superintendent. He pointed out a bald eagle and nest of eaglets, along with red-winged blackbirds, northern shovelers, a roseate spoonbill, and the black mallards that dwell here year-round. It's safe to photograph gators from the trail on levees above the marsh, Newsome said, "but I never turn my back to them."



BEAUMONT

For information about visiting Beaumont, including upcoming events, call the Beaumont Convention and Visitors Bureau, 409/880-3749; www.beaumontcvb.com.

The DISTANCE to BEAUMONT



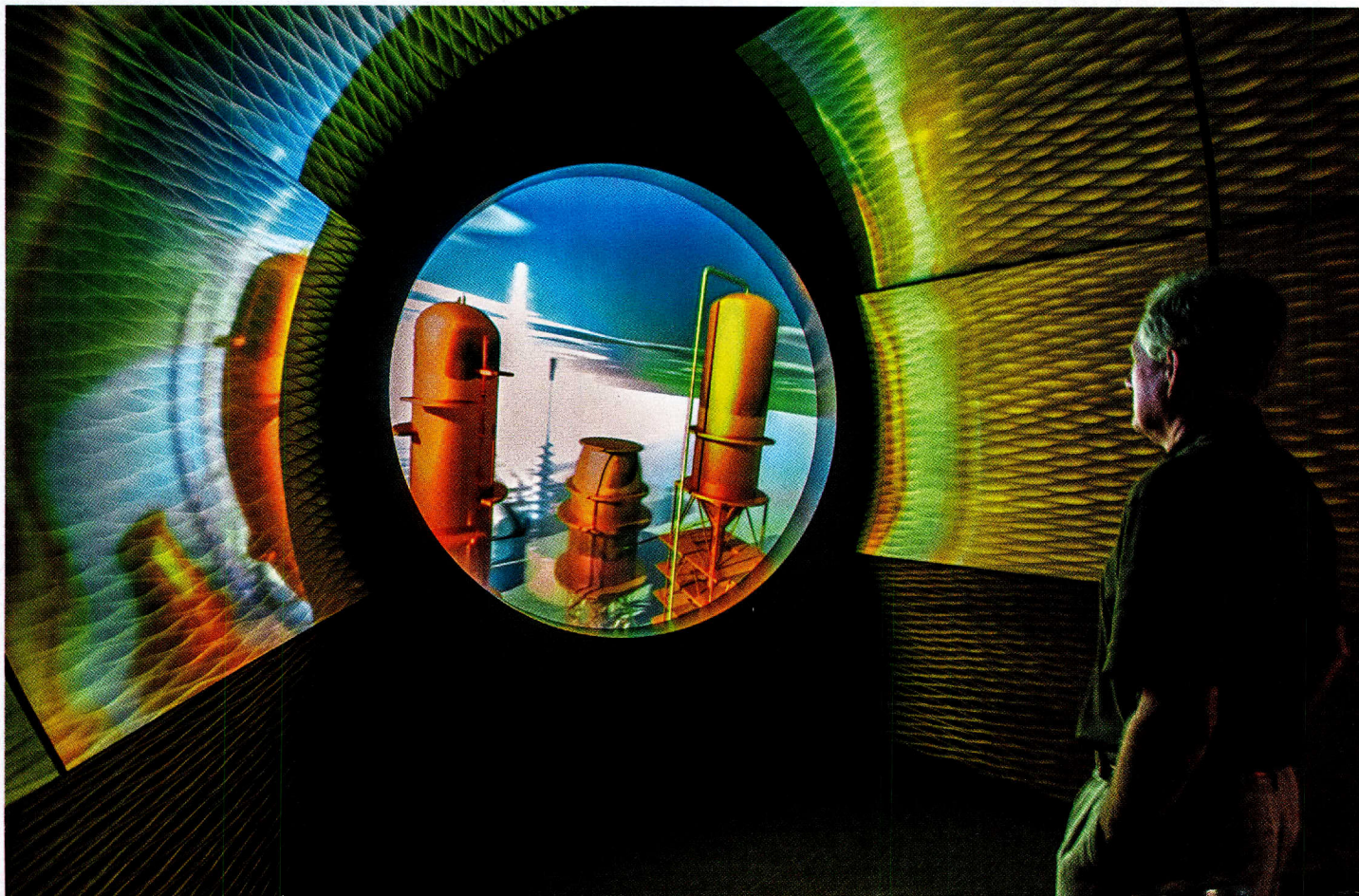
Houston
85 miles;
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Fort Worth
305 miles;
4.75 hours

El Paso
830 miles;
12 hours

Brownsville
440 miles;
7 hours

Lubbock
600 miles;
9.5 hours



If you prefer your gators penned, head for Gator Country, home to hundreds of rescued alligators, including 80-year-old Big Al, who at 1,003 pounds and 13-foot long holds the title of largest gator in captivity in Texas. Gator Country gives visitors the chance to hold a baby alligator and, for an additional price, swim with a gator whose mouth has been safely taped shut.

More alligators inhabit East Texas' dense, massive Big Thicket National Preserve. Beaumont rests at the edge of the 108,000-acre preserve, and a good way to explore its spooky bayous is with a Neches River Adventures cruise put on by the Big Thicket Association. Offered March through November, the two-hour pontoon-boat cruise starts at Riverfront Park near the railroad lift bridge and winds its way up the Neches and into the Thicket's bayous, lined with moss-draped cypresses and leafy tupelos.

We saw no gators, but we enjoyed hearing Park Ranger Mary Kay Manning describe them as some of the few reptiles known to use tools to help catch prey. During nesting season, a gator will balance a twig on its snout and submerge under the water's surface. A bird flies by to grab the stick for nesting material, and well, there you go.

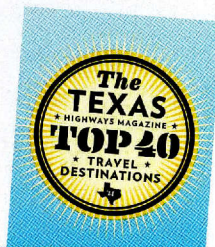
Thousands of species inhabit the Big Thicket, including such carnivorous plants as the bright green, funnel-like pitcher plant; about a dozen species of bats, including the red bat, a rust-colored, camouflaged bat that dwells in the woods; and a cute microscopic critter called a moss pig—because under a microscope, it resembles a six-legged porker—which lives in the fuzzy green moss found on trees throughout the Thicket.

The Big Thicket's status as a preserve means that timber harvesting is restricted, but oil and gas exploration remain. Oil has shaped the culture of Beaumont—and Texas—ever since black crude gushed from a little hill called Spindletop on January 10, 1901. Several Beaumont attractions tell the story of the energy industry, which still plays a big part in the city's economy.

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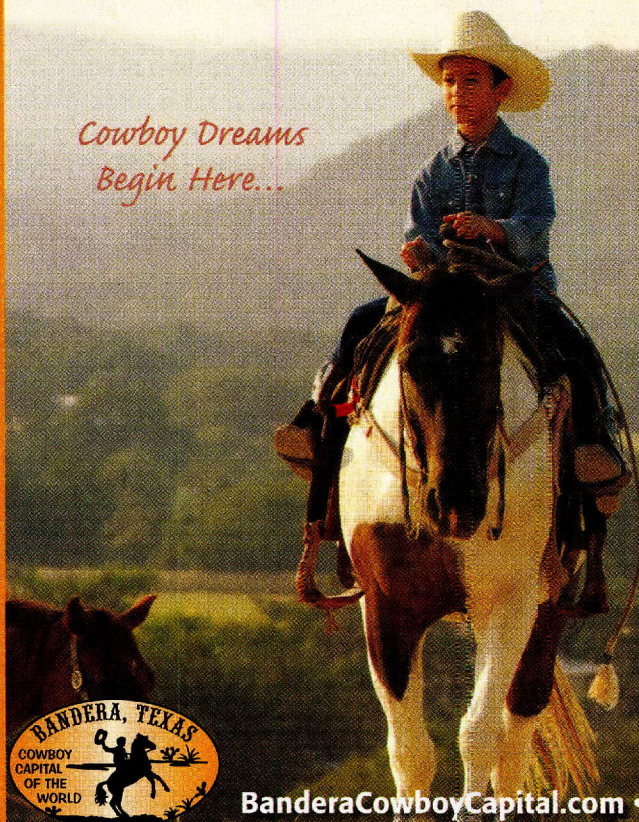


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Next Weekend BEAUMONT

The Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum on the Lamar University campus replicates the boomtown village of Gladys City, where thousands of wildcatters and roughnecks arrived in the early 1900s. You can walk into many of the 15 buildings, including a saloon, a functional print shop, a barbershop, and a photo studio filled with vintage cameras, including a box-shaped 1887 Kodak #2 Flexo. Several times a month—check the museum website for a schedule—water shoots out the top of a replica oil derrick. Stand upwind to stay dry.

For a look at the lifestyle of one of the families that benefitted from the Spindletop oilfield, tour the McFaddin-Ward House, built in 1906. W.P.H. McFaddin was a successful cattleman with interests in real estate, including part of the Spindletop field. The home's original furnishings and Beaux Arts-Colonial Revival style reflect the grandeur of turn-of-the-20th-Century wealth in Beaumont. Unusual touches include a massive fireplace in the entry hall and a third-floor "man cave" complete with pool and poker tables.

The third must-see oil-related attraction is the Texas Energy Museum, which portrays the history of the regional oil industry. Talking wildcatter mannequins share first-hand accounts, and interactive exhibits enliven the

subject, including a video that re-creates the experience of motoring up the Neches River on an oil tanker. In another dark room, peek inside the refining process from the vantage point of an oil molecule.

Next door to the Texas Energy Museum, check out the Art Museum of Southeast Texas to explore regional artists. Exhibits rotate, but you may find the likes of David Bates, James Surls, and Robert Rauschenberg. Across the street, admire the marquee of the 1927 Jefferson Theatre—still a performance venue—where *It's a Wonderful Life* premiered in Texas in 1946 and where a country music crooner named George Jones sang and ushered as a young man.

Nearby, the Fire Museum of Texas displays vintage fire trucks, including the one that reporter Walter Cronkite jumped on to race to the scene of the 1937 New London school explosion. The 24-foot, working fire hydrant out front hails from the 1999 re-release of the Disney animated movie *101 Dalmatians*.

A few miles away, the Babe Didrikson Zaharias Museum showcases trophies, newspaper clippings, and even the harmonicas of the pioneering, multi-talented athlete who dominated women's sports in the 1930s and '40s. Born in Port Arthur and raised in Beaumont, Babe was best-known for her achievements in

**A good way
to explore the
Big Thicket's
spooky bayous
is with a Neches
River Adventures
cruise.**



PHOTO: Kevin Stillman

golf and track, including gold medals in javelin and the 80-meter hurdles in the 1932 Summer Olympics.

An eye-popping attraction that may surprise you is Saint Anthony Cathedral Basilica. Built in 1907 and designated a basilica in 2006 by Pope Benedict XVI, Saint Anthony's welcomes guests to its ornate sanctuary to marvel at stained glass windows depicting saints and intricate mosaics portraying biblical virtues.

Along with gators and swamps, you'll find a pinch of Louisiana influence in Beaumont's food. At Willy Burger, the Booty Burger piles fried boudin upon a juicy burger made of freshly ground beef. Add a side of crunchy, peppery onion rings and devour the whole thing inside an Airstream trailer that's attached to the little diner. Prefer a salad? Try Katharine & Company's Pecan Parmesan Crusted Chicken Salad, packed with tomatoes, green beans, and new potatoes glazed with honey mustard. For an upscale dinner, The Grill serves specialties like juicy steaks, grilled oysters topped with Parmesan garlic butter, and an especially creamy, tart Key lime pie.

Don't forget breakfast. Step inside Rao's Bakery and breathe in the cinnamon. A Beaumont staple since 1941, when the cook for Magnolia Oil opened the kitchen, Rao's still offers a vast array of freshly baked cinnamon rolls, fluffy muffins, and savory sausage pastries, to name just a few treats. Jake Tortorice Jr., who's been presiding over the kitchen since 1998, adds his native Sicilian note to the menu with delicacies like Sicilian cheesecake, which is topped with a layer of sweetened sour cream.

And you haven't been to Beaumont if you haven't eaten the catfish. I found a deftly cooked whole catfish, fried with a crispy cornmeal coating, at Pine Tree Lodge. About 15 minutes southwest of town, Pine Tree looks for all the world like somebody's cabin, except that it recently added a large outdoor deck from which you can throw fries to the fish and turtles and watch alligators lurk in Taylor Bayou. Where else but Southeast Texas? ★

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- Cultural Events and Festivals
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Halfway to the Top!

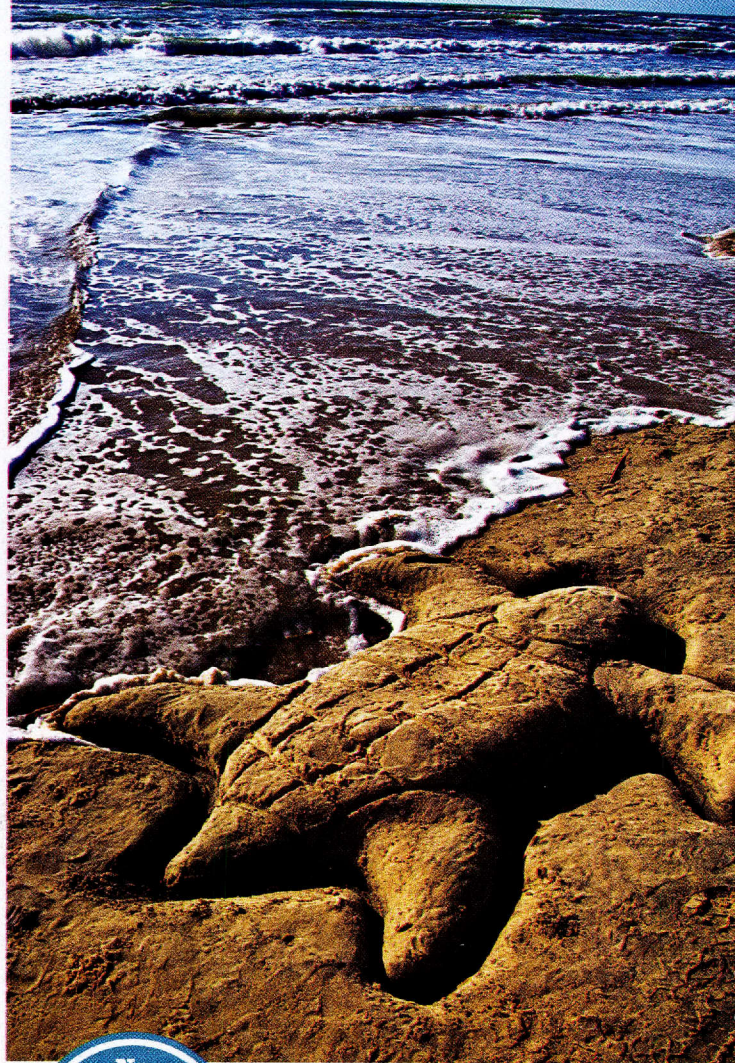


Quaint towns, picturesque

scenery, riveting history, and authentic cuisine—all are among the favorite attractions for those of us who relish traveling the great state of Texas. As we dive into the final half of our countdown of the Texas Top 40 Travel Destinations, the diverse qualities of the Lone Star State are fully displayed in four distinctly different places: Padre Island, Abilene, McKinney, and Canyon. Whether you're inclined to lounge on the beach, whoop it up at a rodeo, or peruse local boutiques for a one-of-a-kind find, these Texas destinations will stretch your bucket list that much longer.

The readers of *Texas Highways* shaped the Top 40 list, which we began in January to celebrate the magazine's 40th anniversary. The countdown will continue through December, when we'll unveil the top Texas travel destination for 2014.

Several themes quickly became apparent as we sifted through the input of readers who voiced their support for the latest batch of top destinations. Padre Island is an unbeatable escape; McKinney's historic downtown is a can't-miss stroll; Abilene exudes frontier hospitality; and Canyon's Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum elevates history for buffs and neophytes alike. Now, about that bucket list ... ➔



PADRE ISLAND

The beaches of Padre Island are so inviting that inland lakes have been known to import loads of Padre sand for their own waterfronts. But there's no substitute for a visit to the lanky barrier island, with attractions both urban and pristine. South Padre Island is a hotbed of beach culture with lodging, dining, nightlife, and watersports. Northward, Padre Island National Seashore protects the longest stretch of undeveloped barrier island in the world, along with the wildlife that depends on it.

MORE INFO

Contact the South Padre Island Convention and Visitors Bureau, 800/767-2373; www.sopadre.com.

Contact Padre Island National Seashore, 361/949-8068; www.nps.gov/pais.

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—FRANCISCO ORTIZ, LAREDO

- 20 LUBBOCK
- 39 MARBLE FALLS
- 38 DASTROP
- 37 CADDOLAKE STATE PARK
- 36 HOUSTON
- 35 GLEN ROSE
- 34 AMARILLO
- 33 MEXIA
- 32 DALHART
- 31 DALLAS/FORT WORTH
- 30 GARNER STATE PARK
- 29 LOCKLART
- 28 FOSSUM FINGERS LAKE
- 27 LAKE FORT
- 26 AUSTIN
- 25 GRANBURY
- 24 PORT ARANSAS
- 23 KERRVILLE
- 22 FORT CHAPARRONE
- 21 BEN WHEELER
- 20 ALPINE/FOR DAVIS
- 19 PADRE ISLAND
- 18 ABILENE
- 17 MCKINNEY
- 16 CANYON
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MCKINNEY

On the northern fringe of the Dallas-Fort Worth area, McKinney's historic character and natural amenities draw both tourists and a steady influx of new residents. Specialty shops, art galleries, local eateries, and frequent events are major attractions in McKinney's picturesque downtown. Nature takes center stage at a plethora of parks and the Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary, while local history is on display at the Chestnut Square Historic Village, a collection of historic homes and replica structures from the 1854-1920 time period.

MORE INFO

Contact the McKinney Convention and Visitors Bureau, 888/649-8499; www.visitmckinney.com.

"LOVE THE DOWNTOWN MCKINNEY AREA! BEAUTIFULLY MAINTAINED, LOTS OF HISTORIC SITES, GREAT HOTELS, FUN FLEA MARKETS, LIVELY ART SCENE, GREAT FOOD, GREAT SHOPPING, TROLLEY TOUR, ROMANTIC CARRIAGE RIDES, FARMERS MARKET, FESTIVALS, AND WELCOMING PEOPLE!"

—ALYCIA BELLAHA, SHREVEPORT, LA



CANYON

"I am loving the plains more than ever it seems—and the SKY—Anita, you've never seen SKY—it is wonderful." The great painter Georgia O'Keeffe thus described her life in Canyon in a 1916 letter to a friend. Spectacular skies still amaze fans of Canyon, a Panhandle college town about 20 miles south of Amarillo. Canyon also offers the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, with its engaging account of regional and state history; the restored Randall County Courthouse; and nearby Palo Duro Canyon, one of the state's most-treasured natural attractions.

MORE INFO

Contact the Canyon Chamber of Commerce, 806/655-7815; www.canyonchamber.org.

"PANHANDLE-PLAINS HISTORICAL MUSEUM IN CANYON IS THE GO-TO PLACE FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO COME TO VISIT US, ESPECIALLY IF THIS IS THEIR FIRST VISIT TO THE TEXAS PANHANDLE." —LELIA GRONEMAN, VEGA



ABILENE

Abilene won readers' praise for its small-town feel, state park, zoo, shopping, history, and restaurants, which range from classic barbecue joints to newcomers like Abi-Haus, which makes waves with craft cocktails and modern American fare. Visitors could easily spend a day exploring the pedestrian-friendly downtown, which dates to the late 1800s. Here, the high-tech museum Frontier Texas! illustrates regional history, the Grace Museum covers the art scene, and the National Center for Illustrated Children's Literature showcases the imaginative artworks that bring classics and new titles to life. As reader Grant Rampy wrote, "Abilene's got it going on!"

MORE INFO

Contact the Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau, 800/727-7704; www.abilenevisitors.com.

"ABILENE IS GREAT FOR SPORTS, HUNTING, MUSIC, AWESOME WEST TEXAS LIFESTYLE AND PACE, HOSPITALITY ... AND, OF COURSE, GREAT FOOD!"

—GARY GRUBBS, ABILENE



Randall County Courthouse, Canyon

C O L

OF THE COAST



ORIS

A person wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, a hat, and a red backpack is wading in the water, pulling a yellow kayak by a rope. The water is choppy and reflects the light. In the background, a bridge with multiple arches spans across the water. The overall scene is outdoors during the day.

SUMMER INSPIRATION ON LONE STAR SHORES

TEXT BY E. DAN KLEPPER

BY THE TIME YOU FINISH READING THIS PARAGRAPH,

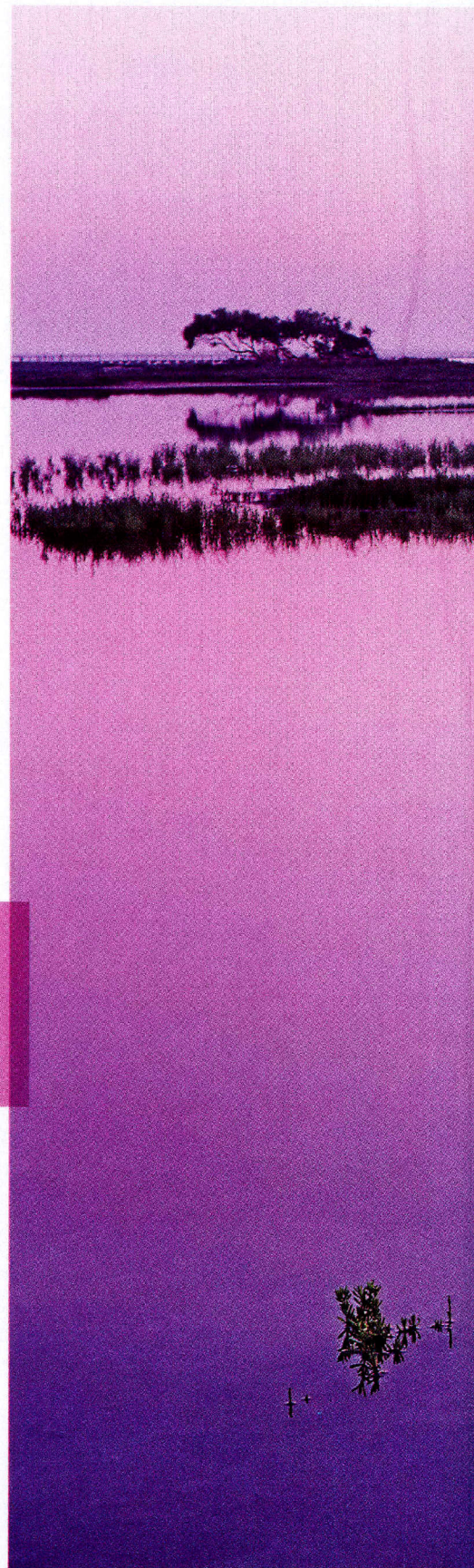
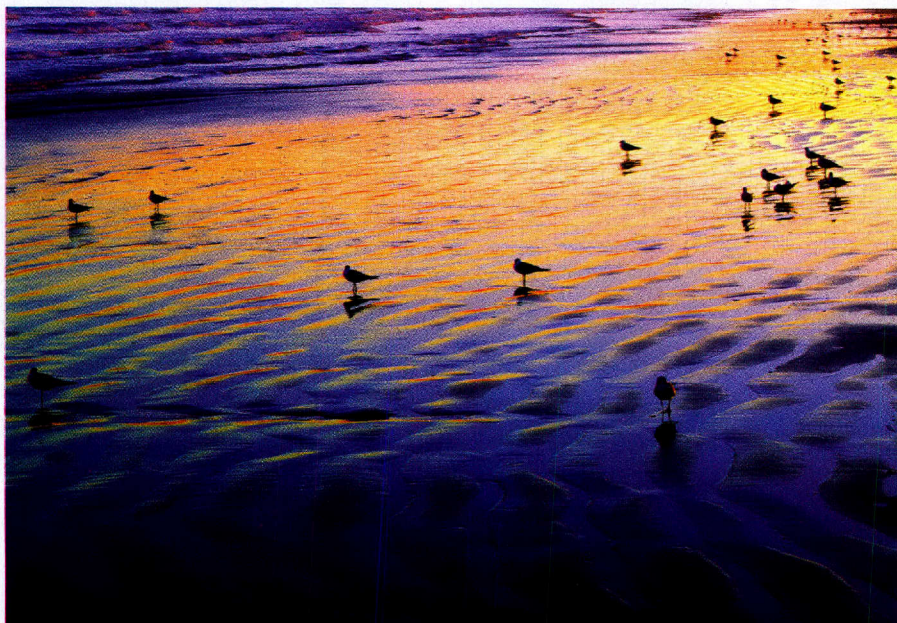
hundreds of glass-green waves will have completed crossing the Gulf of Mexico on their route to the Texas coast. Along the way, brown pelicans will have poked at their crests for mullet while sea turtles rock and roll in their troughs. Once arriving on our beaches, the waves will break and run, painting the shoreline in skeins of lacy surf as they strive for the dunes in the slowly rising tide. If you close your eyes, you can hear the rush of the surge as it reaches the tide line, then feel the soft sand collapsing beneath your toes as the waves slide gently back out to sea.

With 367 miles of coastline, there's definitely somewhere along the salty edge of Texas with a little slice of beach just for you. Whether it's the sugar sand of South Padre, the cinnamon shores of Mustang Island, or the carnival colors of the Kemah Boardwalk, your backdrop will always be that beautiful hue where the sky meets the waves. And, as you may already know, blue goes with everything. Maybe that's why we like to add our own, personal touch of color to the beach, creating a dizzy kaleidoscope of pink cottages, orange surf shops, lime-green bikinis, yellow boogie boards, rainbow umbrellas, electric-blue kites, and lavender bonnets. We also bring our dogs, children, trucks, barbecue grills, ice chests, lounge chairs, boomboxes; our spouses and partners, paperbacks and e-readers, tents, rods, reels, and smartphones; our floaties and beach towels, Frisbees and bocce balls.

Our love affair with the sun and sand transforms our coastline into the multihued canvas of a summer afternoon seaside, a background of blues and buffs layered in a calamity of color as if all the flotsam and jetsam of the world had arrived on our shores simply to service our pleasures. Best of all, when the day is done and we're slowly making our way back to our resort hotels and rental cottages, or to our travel trailers, campgrounds, and tents, nature takes over the coastline's palette, pigmenting clouds and tinting shadows in hues unachievable without the salt spray and soft breezes and the setting sun that make them all possible.


Do you have a favorite spot at the beach? Here are a few you might want to consider. Maybe you, too, will end up calling some of them your own.

COOL
AND
DREAMY





To order a print of either photograph on this spread, call 866/962-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.

 *Tranquility manifested* **LOYOLA BEACH**

LEFT: © Richard Reynolds, ABOVE: © Tim Fitzharris

JUNE 2014 | texashighways.com **43**



To order a print of this photograph, call 866/968-1191, or visit www.texashighwaysprints.com.

WILD
AND
ECLECTIC

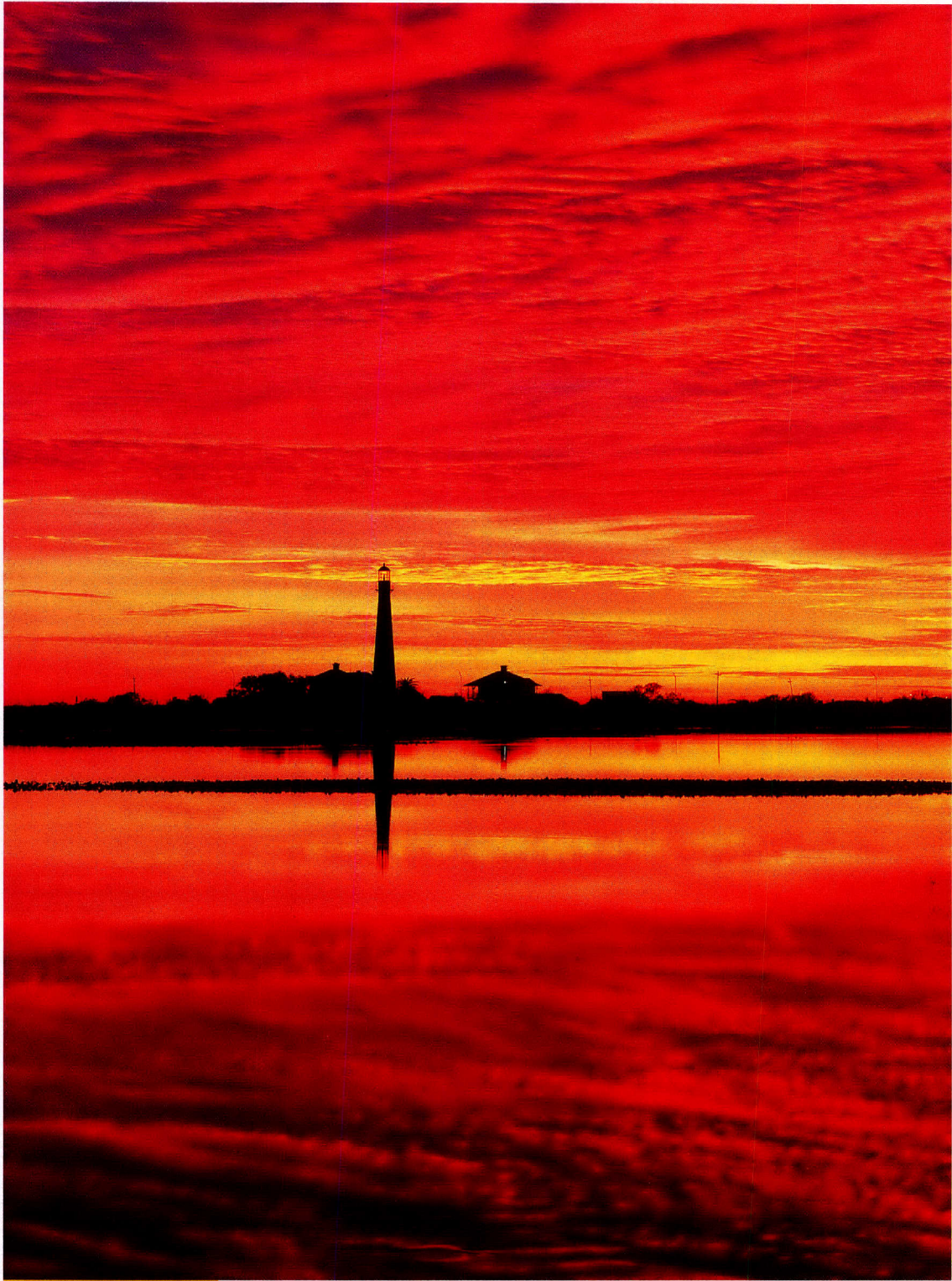


Calling all
creativity
SEADRIFT

📍 *Cornucopia of color* **GALVESTON**



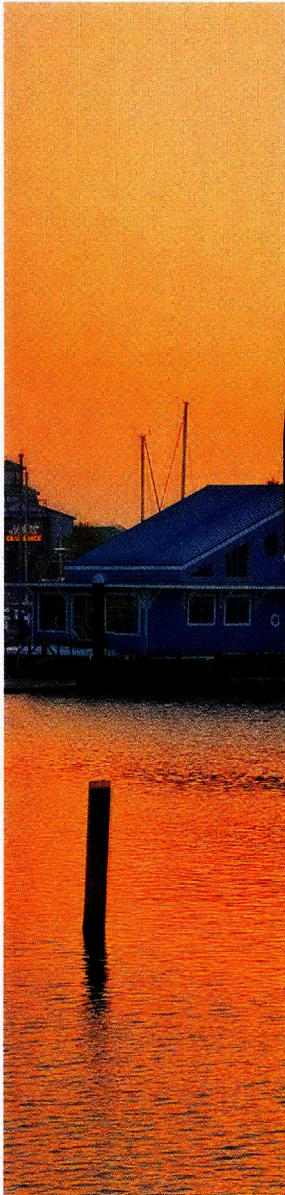
📍 *The color of fun* **MUSTANG ISLAND**



FIERY
AND
WARM

▲ *Sky on fire* **BOLIVAR POINT**

Dock at sunrise **CORPUS CHRISTI MARINA** ▶





◀ Seeing red **SABINE LAKE**





LOOK
WHAT'S
COOKIN' IN
PORT A!

FROM FRIED
SHRIMP PLATTERS TO
AUTHENTIC ITALIAN
FARE, PORT ARANSAS
RESTAURANTS STEP UP
TO THE PLATE

text by CELESTINA BLOK
photographs by WILL VAN OVERBEEK

...grilled over grilled shrimp
greens

STEAMED CLAMS in white

bone wine broth
w/ parsley salad



- Sweet Onion
- or
- Clam Chowder



My annual summer vacations to Port Aransas

consist of two things: beach-bumming and restaurant-hopping, and I'm not sure which I look forward to more. With sunscreen-sticky skin and sea salt-infused hair, we can breeze into our favorite eateries wearing flip-flops and sit down to a fabulous meal. As the island's dining options continue to multiply, dishes span well beyond fried seafood platters paired with umbrella-adorned cocktails. Diners can find authentic taqueria-style *tortas*, barbecue, fresh baked goods, and even Northern Italian fare. My restaurant must-visit list grows with every trip, but Shell's, a nine-table eatery loved by locals as well as in-the-know tourists for its seriously good food, remains a front runner.

"Tuna tacos," my friend Ashley says to our waiter once we're seated inside the tiny eatery, which lies a few blocks from the beach.

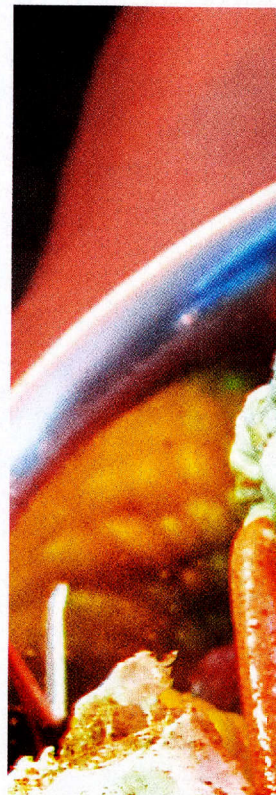
"Same," her sister Lindsey adds, without looking at the menu.

I follow suit, because the popular blackboard special—coriander-and-chili-crusting Ahi tuna that's seared, sliced to expose a rare center, then enveloped in corn tortillas and served with avocados, black beans, and a tangy cucumber-jicama slaw—always sells out quickly. We make sure to arrive right before Shell's opens for lunch, as this entrée isn't on the dinner menu. I think it's the accompanying salsa, made with fresh orange juice, thyme, garlic, and chipotle peppers, that makes the tacos so addicting.

"I've always liked the ocean," says Heber Stone Sr., who left a well-established culinary career in Austin to pursue life at a more leisurely pace in Port Aransas. He and his wife, Karen, opened Shell's in 1996. The longtime chef, who had

FROM PIER TO PLATE

Opening spread, the blackboard menu at Shell's, plus a popular seafood linguini. Below left, the fresh seafood offerings at Shell's bring crowds for lunch and dinner.



also worked in restaurants in Hawaii, California, and on the west coast of Canada, was raised in Brenham and says trips to the coast were frequent when he was a child.

"When we moved to Port Aransas, I wanted to do something small," he says. "Karen does the pastries and bakes all the bread, and my son Heber Jr. is a chef, too. He's been in the kitchen with me since he was 12 years old, and now he and his wife, Robin, take care of the business at night."

The restaurant's platter of roasted olives, doused in olive oil and coated in fresh herbs, is served with grilled, house-made foccacia. We often order it as our table's shareable appetizer. Sometimes a member of our group will stray from the tacos and order a bowl of mixed seafood tossed with buttery Alfredo sauce served over linguini, or the blue crab cake sandwich, which features a flaky patty of local blue crab meat formed with a light touch of breadcrumbs. It's served open-faced, atop more of that thick foccacia, then drizzled with a Key lime aioli. Karen's desserts change often, but the tart Key lime pie remains the most popular, Stone says.

While I do love fishing, it falls second to lazy lounging on the beach. Not so for my husband Josh, who hits the surf to cast for sea trout and redfish while we watch from the shore. When he reels them in, that means we're likely headed to Castaways Seafood and Grill for dinner.

Open since 1986, Castaways is one of the island's most popular tourist destinations, so we usually visit on the late side—around 8:30—to avoid the crowds. With his filleted fish ice-packed in a cooler, Josh hands over his catch to our waiter for preparation upon seating. When you don't live in or near a beach town, this process is very cool, as it's rewarding for the fisherman and for those with whom he's sharing his bounty, and seafood doesn't get much fresher.





**AT THE
CRAZY CAJUN,**
EATING WITH
YOUR HANDS IS
ENCOURAGED, AND
THE LOAVES OF
SOURDOUGH BREAD,
WHICH COME WITH
WHIPPED BUTTER
UPON ARRIVAL,
ARE WORTH
ELBOWING OVER.

The Crazy Cajun's "Hungry Cajun" seafood boil.



CRAZY FOR SEAFOOD

One, two, three, dig in! Above, the Crazy Cajun's family-style seafood boil requires multiple napkins, a wooden mallet, and a hearty appetite.

"There is something magical about catching your own dinner," says Castaways owner Jay Jones, who bought the restaurant in 2005. "We've seen it all—from piggy perch to great big sharks."

Castaways will fry, grill, or blacken your fish (bring it in cleaned and ready) and serve it family-style with sides like fried okra and cole slaw along with hot bread and crispy hush-puppies. But if the fish aren't biting, Castaways' menu runs the gamut of beach-town fare, including crab-stuffed flounder, grilled mahi mahi, and fried shrimp po' boys. We usually make a point to order coconut shrimp, whose light batter contains just enough coconut flakes to complement the sweetness of the shrimp.

When we're up for making a hot mess, we visit The Crazy Cajun, Port Aransas' go-to spot for boiled shrimp, crab legs, sausage, and crawfish in season. We usually order a family-style sampler called The Hungry Cajun, which includes a spicy assortment of seafood, sausage, crawfish, new potatoes, and corn-on-the-cob, which servers dump onto tables covered with white butcher paper in traditional shrimp boil fashion. Eating with your hands is encouraged, and the loaves of sourdough bread, which come with whipped butter upon arrival, are worth elbowing over. With its eclectic décor



The surf-and-turf combo at Shell's.

and informal atmosphere, this touristy restaurant is just plain fun, especially when we get to use small wooden mallets to pound those tricky crab legs.

"We have people who came when they were six or seven years old, and now they bring their kids," says Phyllis Capps Layne, who opened the Crazy Cajun in 1987. "Eating here is an experience you remember, because it's different."

When my parents accompany us, they'll often order a bowl of crawfish Creole to share. Spicy crawfish tails stewed in a rich tomato sauce made with chopped celery, onions, and bell pepper generates a piquant aroma that turns the heads of the rest of our party. It's a flavorful dish we promise to order for ourselves next time.

When the island is in full summer swing and the streets have gone golf-cart crazy, most restaurants will have a substantial wait time during standard dining times. But Avery's Kitchen, opened three years ago by longtime islander Avery Hernandez, sits off the island's main drag and off the radar of tourists—so far. The exterior resembles a trailer home, and the interior is similarly minimalist, with walls free of neon beer signs or beach-themed décor. Avery's doesn't even have a liquor license, so if you want beer, wine, or something stronger, you've got to bring your own. Despite the lack of traditional



husband, Maurice, opened the restaurant almost 20 years ago.

“We thought we would open a restaurant in Florida,” says Linda, who considered Port Aransas at the persuasion of her father-in-law. “But we fell in love with the funkiness of the island immediately.”

But bringing true Italian cuisine and more than 85 wine selections, at least half of which are Italian varietals, to Port Aransas hasn’t been without its challenges. “We’re thousands of miles from Italy, so it’s sometimes hard to find certain ingredients,” she says. “But it pays to be stubborn and tell our vendors, ‘No, you have to bring in this specific brand.’”

Filet medallions topped with creamy gorgonzola sauce “go like hotcakes,” Linda says, adding that regulars have learned that if they want a slice of the Hot Plate’s lasagna, layered with rich Bolognese meat sauce, velvety béchamel, and Italian cheeses, they should reserve it in advance, by phone, as it almost always sells out.

I’ll make sure we do that next time. But right now, the wine is flowing and we can’t get enough of the *misto mare*, a hot skillet of sautéed Gulf shrimp, diver scallops, blue lip mussels, and clams in a garlicky white wine sauce that we’re sharing as an appetizer. This dinner will commemorate the end of another food-centric trip to Port Aransas for us, and once again, another must-visit restaurant has been added to the list. ★

Fort Worth-based writer Celestina Blok contributes restaurant and recipe stories to the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. Photographer Will van Overbeek enjoys visiting Port Aransas, as he likes to watch the anglers fishing from the piers.

restaurant trappings, Avery’s Kitchen is fast building a reputation for quality beach cuisine with a home-cooking flair.

Open most days for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, Avery’s serves homemade biscuits with country gravy and fresh cinnamon rolls, as well as seafood dishes with house-made tartar and cocktail sauces. Fish can come grilled, blackened, fried, or sautéed with a lemon pepper blend or garlic butter. If seafood no longer sounds novel, diners will also find comfort-food standards like chicken-fried steak, chopped sirloin with brown gravy, and rib-eye steak.

On my lunchtime visit, I ordered the fried oyster po’ boy with seasoned fries, and I was glad I did. The plump oysters were lightly battered and juicy, especially delicious after a liberal squeeze of lemon to add acidity. The accompanying side dish of crispy, seasoned fries proved the perfect foil. We’re eager to return for breakfast.

On our most recent Port A trip, we finally made reservations to experience the lively scene at the Venetian Hot Plate, where gregarious owner Linda Halioua can often be heard offering wine recommendations with boisterous enthusiasm. Originally from Venice, Linda brings authentic Northern Italian gourmet dishes to the Texas coast, but that wasn’t her original intention when she and her late



ESSENTIALS PORT ARANSAS DINING

Shell’s is at 522 E. Avenue G.
Call 361/749-7621; www.eatatsHELLS.com.

Castaways Seafood and Grill is at 320 N. Alister St.
Call 361/749-5394; www.castawaysporta.com.

The Crazy Cajun is at 303 E. Beach Ave.
Call 361/749-5069.

Avery’s Kitchen is at 200 W. Avenue G.
Call 361/749-0650.

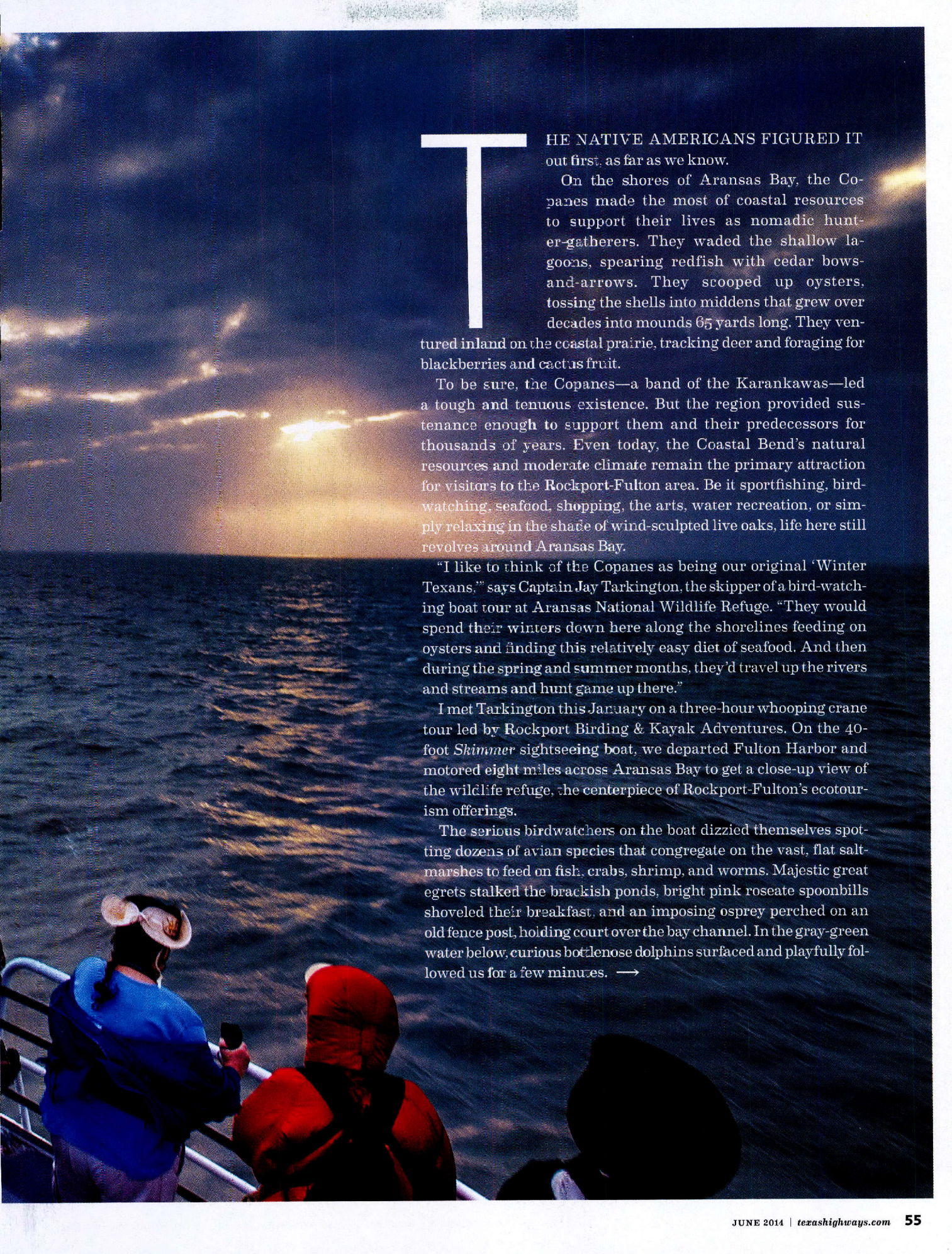
Venetian Hot Plate is at 232 Beach Ave.
Call 361/749-7617; www.venetianhotplate.com.

COME AROUND

TO ROCKPORT-FULTON'S LOW-KEY LEISURE

text by MATT JOYCE photographs by MICHAEL AMADOR





THE NATIVE AMERICANS FIGURED IT out first, as far as we know.

On the shores of Aransas Bay, the Copanes made the most of coastal resources to support their lives as nomadic hunter-gatherers. They waded the shallow lagoons, spearing redfish with cedar bows-and-arrows. They scooped up oysters, tossing the shells into middens that grew over decades into mounds 65 yards long. They ventured inland on the coastal prairie, tracking deer and foraging for blackberries and cactus fruit.

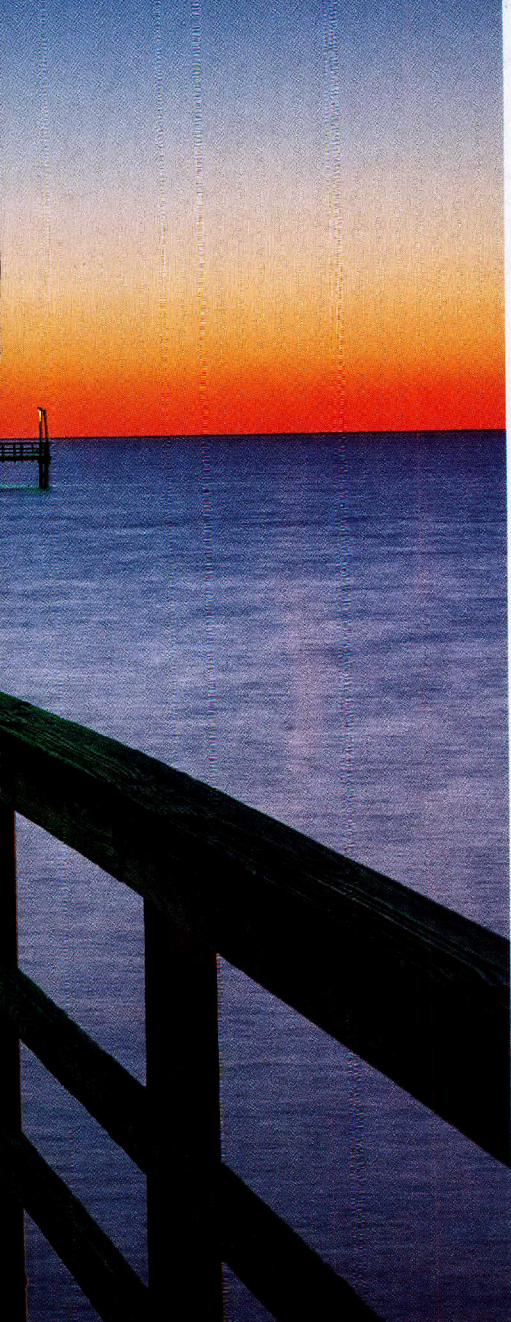
To be sure, the Copanes—a band of the Karankawas—led a tough and tenuous existence. But the region provided sustenance enough to support them and their predecessors for thousands of years. Even today, the Coastal Bend's natural resources and moderate climate remain the primary attraction for visitors to the Rockport-Fulton area. Be it sportfishing, bird-watching, seafood, shopping, the arts, water recreation, or simply relaxing in the shade of wind-sculpted live oaks, life here still revolves around Aransas Bay.

"I like to think of the Copanes as being our original 'Winter Texans,'" says Captain Jay Tarkington, the skipper of a bird-watching boat tour at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. "They would spend their winters down here along the shorelines feeding on oysters and finding this relatively easy diet of seafood. And then during the spring and summer months, they'd travel up the rivers and streams and hunt game up there."

I met Tarkington this January on a three-hour whooping crane tour led by Rockport Birding & Kayak Adventures. On the 40-foot *Skimmer* sightseeing boat, we departed Fulton Harbor and motored eight miles across Aransas Bay to get a close-up view of the wildlife refuge, the centerpiece of Rockport-Fulton's ecotourism offerings.

The serious birdwatchers on the boat dizzied themselves spotting dozens of avian species that congregate on the vast, flat salt-marshes to feed on fish, crabs, shrimp, and worms. Majestic great egrets stalked the brackish ponds, bright pink roseate spoonbills shoveled their breakfast, and an imposing osprey perched on an old fence post, holding court over the bay channel. In the gray-green water below, curious bottlenose dolphins surfaced and playfully followed us for a few minutes. →





THE BAY'S BREADTH

Opening page: A bird-watching tour with Rockport Birding & Kayak Adventures. This spread: A fishing pier on Aransas Bay, the Texas Maritime Museum, and whooping cranes.

But the whooping cranes stole the show, especially the pair that flew directly over the bow, their seven-foot wingspans on full display a few yards overhead. The Aransas refuge is the winter home of the only remaining wild migratory flock of whooping cranes in the world, an endangered species with a local population of roughly 280. The flock's numbers had dwindled to about 15 birds in the 1940s, but the refuge—created in 1937 as a haven for migratory birds—provided a patch of safe habitat for the cranes to recover.

During the summer, when the whoopers are at their Canadian breeding grounds, Rockport Birding & Kayak Adventures offers dolphin-watching tours and sunset cruises. There are plenty of birds to see in the summer as well, says Tarkington, who also serves as the aquatic education program director at the Center for Coastal Studies at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi. The tours also provide a thumbnail introduction to Coastal Bend ecology and industry. During our tour, we came across oyster boats circling reefs to collect their daily catch and floated past a massive petrochemical barge on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.

"To really take in Rockport and the Coastal Bend area you have got to get out and be immersed in it," Tarkington says. "It sets the stage for what we're looking at here ecologically and how unique the area really is."

Another way to immerse yourself in Aransas Bay is with a swim at Rockport Beach, a park set on a small peninsula next to Rockport Harbor. The beach, a mixture of sand and pebbles, stretches for several hundred yards. Thatch-roof umbrellas on wooden posts offer bits of shade, and a grass lawn provides space for covered picnic tables and a playground. Compared to Gulf beaches, Rockport Beach's location on the bay makes it relatively shallow and calm—great for little kids.

For many visitors to Rockport-Fulton, the vibrant estuaries of Aransas and neighboring bays are most notable for their prime sportfishing and duck hunting. Sportsmen from Texas and beyond have made Rockport-Fulton a destination since the railroad arrived in 1888. Aransas and San Antonio bays, together covering more than 350 square miles, are famous for their redfish, trout, flounder, and drum. Dozens of guides offer fishing charters, and numerous wooden piers stretch into the bay to provide access for anglers.

Danny Adams Sr., a Rockport sportfishing guide since 1955, has seen the industry grow dramatically since he got his first guiding job at age 15. Adams still guides, and two of his sons and a grandson have followed him into the business. Tourism and activities like sportfishing now drive Rockport's economy, he says, as the commercial seafood industry has declined due to harvesting restrictions and other factors.

"The '70s was the biggest era for shrimping. In the '80s it started declining, and by the '90s it was virtually non-existent," says Adams, who owned a seafood distribution business in the 1970s. "But the tourist industry has more than replaced it—way more than replaced it."

Even if you're a landlubber, Rockport-Fulton offers a range of activities to keep you busy for a few days. Some visitors find the area inviting enough to stay for longer. During the cold months, "Winter Texans"—generally retirees from northern climes—nearly double Rockport-Fulton's population of 10,000 residents.

A common starting point for tourists is the Rockport-Fulton Visitor Center, a clearinghouse of information about attractions and activities. A timeline of local history spans a wall of the center and highlights important moments, such as Spanish explorer Alonso Álvarez de Piñeda's mapping of the Texas coast in 1519, U.S. General Zachary Taylor's 1845 encampment on Live Oak Peninsula en route to the Mexican War, and the establishment of tourist attractions, such as the Texas Maritime Museum in 1989.

The Maritime Museum sits across the street from the Visitor Center among a cluster of tourist sites adjacent to Rockport Harbor. The museum covers various subjects, including the tale of French explorer La Salle's ill-fated expedition to Texas—illustrated by a striking five-foot-long wooden scale model of the shipwrecked



La Belle and artifacts from the shipwreck, such as knives and axe heads. The museum also delves into other seafaring topics, including navigational devices, boat-building tools, the Texas Navy, and offshore drilling.

“When everybody thinks of Texas, they think of the Alamo and all the inland history and don’t realize what a major role the coast has played in Texas history,” says Phil Barnes, curator of the Texas Maritime Museum. “We want people to get a better idea of what has gone on along this coast, and how valuable it has been.”

Also at Rockport Harbor, the Rockport Center for the Arts serves as a hub for the local arts community with galleries and a robust lineup of classes, such as color theory and silversmithing. Set in a historic house, the center’s pale blue walls, natural lighting, wooden floors, and colorful paintings exude a coastal vibe of warmth and creativity.

Rockport Harbor also offers opportunities to learn more about local ecology. The Bay Education Center explores the Mission-Aransas Estuary with displays about local habitats such as seagrass meadows, as well as the creatures that thrive in the rich blend of fresh water and seawater, including oysters, blue crabs, and whooping cranes. The center also features



MADE FOR SHADE

Clockwise from top: Instructor Diane Pike, standing, works with Joy Hyde in a class held by Rockport Center for the Arts; the 1,000-year-old "Big Tree" at Goose Island State Park; and the Science on a Sphere exhibit at the Bay Education Center.

a futuristic "Science On a Sphere" exhibit with regular presentations of vivid images projected onto the suspended globe screen. Nearby, the Aquarium at Rockport Harbor houses 24 marine exhibits containing mostly local bay and Gulf aquatic species like shrimp eel and speckled trout.

Ironically, it was turf—not surf—that put the Rockport area on the map in the second half of the 19th Century. The Fulton Mansion State Historic Site recalls the region's ranching history and tenure as a shipping center. The 1877 mansion is closed for a two-year, \$3.4-million restoration project—tentatively scheduled for completion in early 2015—but in the meantime, visitors can peruse the site's Education and History Center to learn more about the Fultons, who built the mansion among the live oaks overlooking the bay.

In pursuit of distant markets for their beef and cattle by-products, George Fulton and his associates developed cutting-edge methods of refrigeration for meatpacking and shipping. The meatpacking industry fizzled in the 1880s when the railroad arrived and shippers found it cheaper to move live cattle by rail. However, the infrastructure continued to sustain a profitable but short-lived turtle meat industry, satisfying big-city demand for a delicacy of the time period—sea turtle soup.

"Because the Fultons had lived in the eastern U.S. for a while, they knew about the latest innovations and conveniences you could have in a home, so they built it with three flush toilets, hot and cold running water, central heating, and gas lighting," says Marsha Hendrix, the site manager. "Both the combination of their personal lives, and the uniqueness of the architecture and the construction, make it significant."

The Fulton Mansion is worth a stop, despite the restoration project, to see the mansion's stylish French Second Empire exterior and the verdant grounds shaded by large live oak trees. In fact, the majestic live oaks along this stretch of the Coastal Bend are a worthy attraction in and of themselves. Some are individually famous, such as the gnarly, millennium-old "Big Tree" at Goose Island State Park and the Zachary Taylor Oak, where Taylor camped in 1845. Other stands of wind-sculpted oaks near the shoreline are remarkable for their shape—angled, twisted, and reaching inland from decades of prevailing winds and salt build-up on their seaward edge.

Come evening, after a day of exploring Rockport-Fulton's coastal scene, a fitting way to reflect on the experience is from the shade of one of these magnificent live oaks. As the bright orange sun sinks into the horizon, a gentle breeze blows ashore, and the aroma of fresh fish smokes from the grill, it's simple to understand why the Copanes chose this stretch of the Texas coast for their home, and why others have followed them ever since. ★

Associate Editor Matt Joyce says camping in the wooded area of Goose Island State Park is among the best coastal camping he's ever experienced. For photographer Michael Amador, the boat tour of Aransas National Wildlife Refuge provided an interesting education in the area's diversity of birds.



ESSENTIALS ROCKPORT- FULTON

The Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce provides travel information and operates the local Visitor Center, located at 319 Broadway in Rockport. Call 800/242-0071; www.rockport-fulton.org. Information for other sites in the story follows. Call ahead for hours and admission details.

Rockport Birding & Kayak Adventures tours depart from Fulton Harbor. Call 866/277-3468; www.whoopingcranetours.com.

Rockport Beach is on Seabreeze Dr. near Rockport Harbor. Call 361/729-6661; www.rockportbeach-texas.com.

Texas Maritime Museum is at 1202 Navigation Circle. Call 361/729-1271; www.texasmaritimemuseum.org.

Rockport Center for the Arts is at 902 Navigation Circle. Call 361/729-5519; www.rockportartcenter.com.

Bay Education Center is at 121 Seabreeze Dr. Call 361-749-6711; www.utmsi.utexas.edu/visit/bay-education-center.

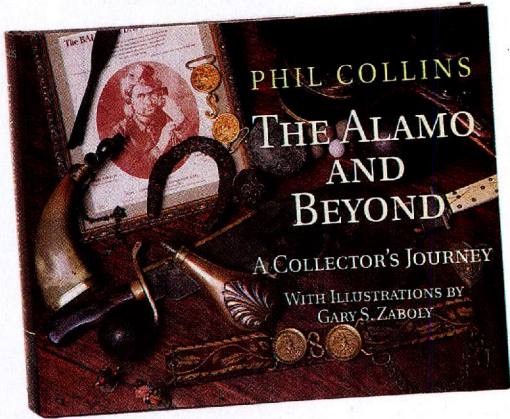
Fulton Mansion State Historic Site is at 317 Fulton Beach Rd. Call 361/729-0386; www.visitfultonmansion.com.

Goose Island State Park is at 202 S. Palmetto St. Call 361/729-2858; www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/goose-island.



FATHER'S DAY

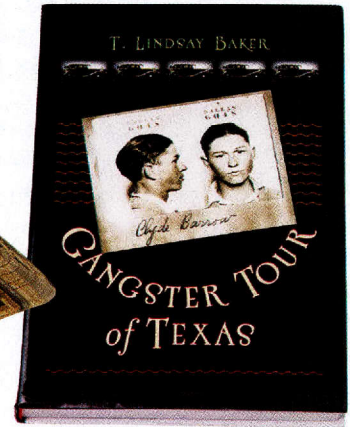
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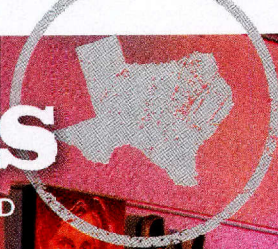


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JUN14TH

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For Love of the Lyric

THE OLD QUARTER ACOUSTIC CAFE
IN DOWNTOWN GALVESTON

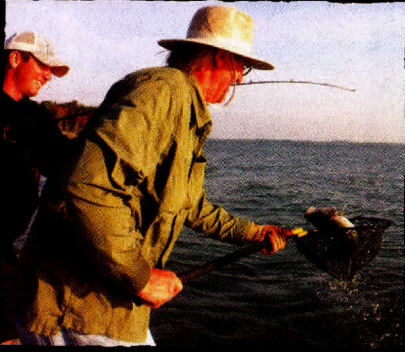
Text by ROGER WOOD



LISTENING ROOM

Houston musician Jorge Palomarez performs at the Old Quarter Acoustic Cafe in Galveston. The 80-seat venue showcases singer-songwriters.

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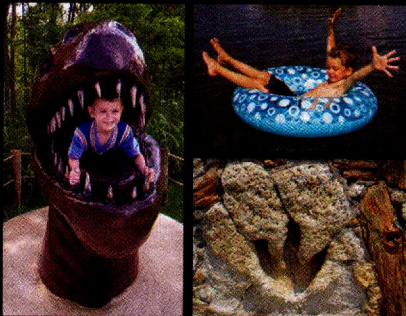
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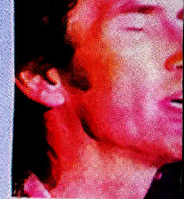
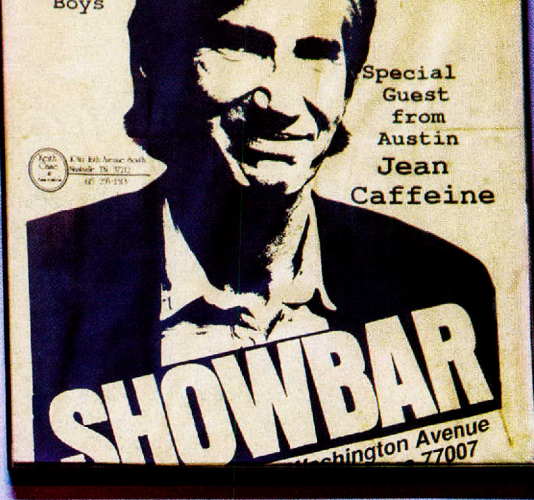
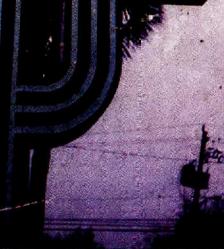


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A

MONG THE MANY GOOD REASONS to visit downtown Galveston, one of the more obscure, but best, is a passion for song. As often as four nights a week, savvy aficionados of a distinctive Lone Star State troubadour tradition trek to the Strand Historic District. There, just around the corner from the majestic 1894 Grand Opera House, a quirky little performance venue on 20th Street showcases talent and celebrates the history of the Texas singer-songwriter movement.

Operating at this site since 1996, the Old Quarter Acoustic Cafe is, in the words of Houston radio host James "Blues Hound" Nagle, "one of the finest listening rooms in the state." Situated on the ground floor of a three-story red brick building that dates to 1914, this haven for picker-poets provides a modest yet functional space for performers and audience. "Nothing pretentious about it, bare bones," Nagle adds, "but the quality

Images of the late Townes Van Zandt on the walls comprise the dominant motif among the artifacts, imparting an almost shrine-like quality to the space.

of entertainment on any given night is just par excellence.”

The timeworn room seats about 80 people. Dimly bathed in the glow of neon signs, its walls display memorabilia that serve as a whimsical archive of Texas songwriting and local history: posters, photographs, paintings of people and psychedelic abstractions, a couple of beat-up guitars, and a pair of mud-crusted red rubber boots that recalls the notorious 2008 hurricane—“IKE” inscribed on one, “SUCKS” on the other. In the rear, there’s a basic, cash-only wooden bar backed by a darker vintage wall unit that frames a large mirror. The limited selection of beer, wine, and soft drinks is a clue to patrons that the Old Quarter prioritizes listening.

The focal point, wedged into one front corner, is the triangular stage, which rarely holds more than two or three musicians at a time. The long list of artists who have graced it includes the late Townes Van Zandt, the legendary Fort Worth-born troubadour known for his brilliant songwriting and conspicuous hard living. Though he died in 1997 and performed here only twice, Van Zandt clearly reigns as patron saint of this establishment. His likeness on the walls—rendered in photographs, oil paintings, sketches, and silk-screened T-shirts—comprises the dominant motif among the artifacts, imparting an almost shrine-like quality to the space.

However, as evidenced by the bounty of other posters, publicity photos, and snapshots on exhibit, numerous artists of substance have contributed to the legacy—from Guy Clark, Joe Ely, Ray Wylie Hubbard, and the late Blaze Foley to relatively younger talents such as Jesse Dayton, Ruthie Foster, and Gordy Quist. “All the great Texas writers play there,” says Dayton, referencing his revered elders.

Yet with open-mic sessions on Wednesdays and Thursdays, the Old Quarter Acoustic Cafe is also a domain where anonymous upstarts can learn and make themselves known. Citing one who went on to become a national

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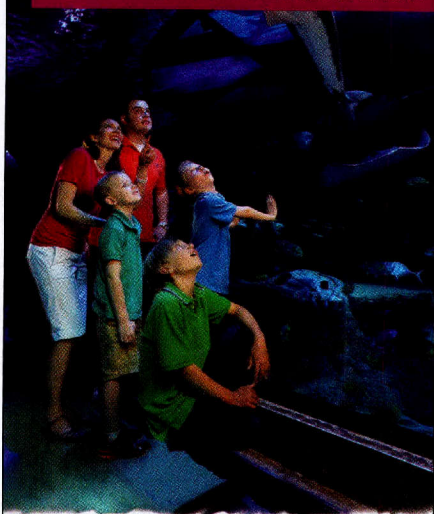
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star, Dayton quips, "I met Hayes Carll there before he could shave."

Despite his recording success and busy touring schedule, Carll still plays this little venue, most recently in February. Carll keeps coming back to the Old Quarter, he explains, because the owner is "a personal friend and mentor. He gave me a home when I needed one, taught me just enough to keep it between the ditches, and helped me know when to fold and when to go all in."

That man, the creator and caretaker of this songwriter's sanctuary, is the amiable Rex (aka "Wrecks") Bell, founder and proprietor of not only the Galveston club but also its progenitor—the original and now-legendary Old Quarter in Houston. From 1965 through 1977, that former venue functioned as home base for much of the Bayou City's singer-songwriter scene.

Located in an aged, two-story building on the gritty east side of downtown, the original Old Quarter seated even fewer patrons than its Galveston descendant, yet generated a nexus

of creativity and exchange. "We were such outlaws then, being hippies," Bell reflects, and the club's countercultural identity fostered new possibilities during changing times. The key, perhaps, was a booking policy that featured older African-American blues masters, such as Lightnin' Hopkins and Juke Boy Bonner, as well as youthful folk, country, and rock-inspired songsters, such as Jerry Jeff Walker, Guy Clark, and most famously, Townes Van Zandt.

In fact, fans worldwide know of Bell's erstwhile music club as the setting where Van Zandt produced his definitive recording—the classic 1973 double album *Live at the Old Quarter, Houston, Texas*. Others have learned of it more recently via the prominent Americana singer-songwriter Steve Earle, who often recounts how he, at age 18, first met Van Zandt there in 1972. Earle, who grew up in San Antonio with an infamous wild streak, bonded with Van Zandt and became his protégé. Their relationship inspired Earle's 2009 Grammy Award-winning album *Townes*.



Upcoming shows at the Old Quarter Acoustic Cafe include Ramblin' Jack Elliott on June 20; Terri Hendrix and Lloyd Maines on June 21; Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Butch Hancock on July 18; and Jesse Dayton and John Evans on July 26.

Bell, of course, had a special relationship with Van Zandt, too. In addition to providing stages in Houston and in Galveston where Van Zandt performed, Bell also played bass with him for years. As evidenced in the documentary films *Be Here to Love Me: A Film About Townes Van Zandt* (2004) and *Heartworn Highways* (1981), the two were as close as brothers, on stage and off. In fact, Bell personally inspired the poignant and oft-recorded Van Zandt ode titled "Rex's Blues."

Apart from his collaborations with Van Zandt, Bell's credentials as a professional musician include intermittent work from 1965 to 1980 as bassist with Lightnin' Hopkins—including a storied 1979 gig at New York City's Carnegie Hall. Moreover, in 1980, Bell played on the Houston studio sessions for *Happy Woman Blues*, the first album of original material by Lucinda Williams—well before she became famous and *Time* magazine declared her in 2001 to be "America's best songwriter." These days Bell still performs, as both singer and instrumentalist, in a duo with his wife or with his longtime partner in the Hemmer Ridge Mountain Boys, Mickey White.

Ever since Van Zandt's untimely death on New Year's Day 17 years ago, Bell has regularly staged an anniversary event at his Galveston Old Quarter. Though billed as a "wake," it's actually an open jam session celebrating the immortality of Van Zandt's songs. Anyone—professional or amateur—is encouraged to bring an instrument and pay tribute by singing a composition or two from the Van Zandt repertoire. Since its premiere in 1998, the annual gathering has triggered pilgrimages among devoted fans. "People come from all over," says Bell. "The room will be packed, and I'll have another 100 people milling about outside."

As he nears septuagenarian status, Bell remains committed to sustaining the Old Quarter Acoustic Cafe as long as he can. There have been setbacks in recent years that threatened its survival,

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Old Quarter Acoustic Cafe owner Rex Bell

including the sudden death of his wife LeAnne in 2005 and the physical and psychological devastation wrought by Hurricane Ike in 2008. "We had seven feet of water in the club," Bell recalls. "It ruined everything. ... I really was so disheartened I didn't want to reopen."

Yet this unlikely institution, like Bell himself, is a survivor—buoyed in large part by a network of friends and supporters. "I had so many fans and musicians who didn't want to see it close; they started having benefits for me," he explains. Grateful and inspired, he undertook the difficult labor of rebuilding the club, and by late December 2008 the Old Quarter was reborn again.

In 2009 Bell remarried, and his current wife, Janet, now collaborates with him to perpetuate the heritage and vitality of the Old Quarter Acoustic Cafe. As the host couple, they extend a friendly welcome to patrons who respect the founding principle: "You have to listen when people play. 'Where Lyrics Still Count' is our motto," says Bell. "We really want people to listen to the words." ★



THE OLD QUARTER ACOUSTIC CAFE

is at 413 20th Street in Galveston.

Call 409/795-7777; www.oldquarteracousticcafe.com.

E V E N T S

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June's travel spotlights:



PRAIRIES AND LAKES > Arlington

Playing it Strait

George Strait is parking his tour bus for good, but not before playing a final blowout in his home state. At age 62, King George will close out "The Cowboy Rides Away Tour" with a June 7 show at AT&T Stadium in Arlington. Born in Poteet and raised in Pearsall, Strait parlayed his Texas roots into a record-setting career that racked up 69 million album sales and 60 No. 1 hits. Strait isn't ruling out future recordings and the occasional performance, but we bet he reserves plenty of time for roping on his South Texas ranch. www.georgestrait.com.

HILL COUNTRY > Austin

Hang Onto Your Helmets

The world of extreme sports will converge on Austin June 5-8 for the X Games, ESPN's championship competition for skateboarding, BMX, dirt bikes, RallyCross, and off-road trucks. Circuit of the Americas—the 1,500-acre facility built for Formula One—will host the array of wheeled acrobatics, breathtaking stunts, and racing. The accompanying X Music festival will feature Kanye West, Flaming Lips, Bad Religion, and others. www.xgamesaustin.com.



GULF COAST > Beaumont

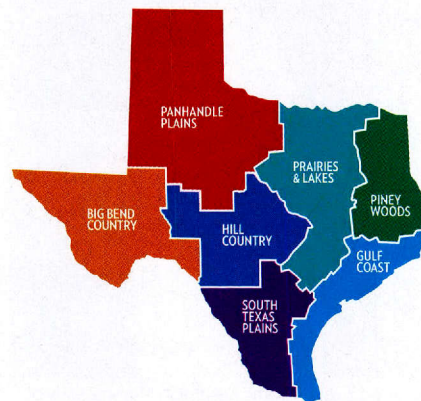
Creole Cowboys

Celebrating African-American ranching heritage, the Bill Pickett Trail Riders Trail Ride, Zydeco Festival & Rodeo brings together Creole and cowboy culture June 13-15 at Lady's Arena in Beaumont. The 10th annual event includes a Racking Horse show, a trail ride through Jefferson County, zydeco concerts, and a full rodeo. Born in 1870 in Travis County, Bill Pickett was a black cowboy who developed the bulldogging technique that became a popular rodeo competition (also known as steer wrestling). www.bptrailriders.com.

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS > San Antonio

Matisse's Masterworks

Immerse yourself in the colorful works of influential French artist Henri Matisse (1869-1954) this summer at the San Antonio Museum of Art. Opening June 14-September 7, *Matisse: Life in Color, Masterworks from the Baltimore Museum of Art* features nearly 100 paintings, sculptures, and works on paper spanning Matisse's career. In conjunction, the museum is also showing *The Art Books of Henri Matisse* (June 21-September 7), including four of Matisse's illustrated books. www.samuseum.org.



BIG BEND COUNTRY

EL PASO: Alfresco! Fridays June 6, 13, 20, 27. www.alfrescofridays.com 915/534-0600

EL PASO: Music Under the Stars June 8, 15, 22, 29. Chamizal National Memorial. www.elpasoartsandculture.org

EL PASO: Downtown Street Festival June 21-22. www.elpasolive.com

EL PASO: Mission Valley Duathlon June 22. www.raceelpaso.com/mision-valley-duathlon

MIDLAND: Summer Sunday Lawn Concerts June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29. www.museumsw.org 432/683-2882

ODESSA: Hot Summer Nights Concerts June 6, 13, 20, 27. www.odessaarts.org/hot-summer-nights.com 432/335-4682

ODESSA: Opreé at the Globe Theatre June 7. www.globesw.org 432/335-6731

ODESSA: Juneteenth Celebration June 19-22. Woodson Community Park. www.odessabcc.org 432/853-1344

PECOS: West of the Pecos Rodeo and Parade June 25-28. www.pecostx.com 432/445-2406

SAN ELIZARIO: Billy the Kid Festival June 6-8. www.billythekidfestival.com 915/851-0093

VAN HORN: Frontier Days and Fourth of July June 27-28. 432/283-2682

GULF COAST

ARANSASPASS: Shrimporee June 13-15. Johnson Community Park. www.aransaspas.org/Shrimporee.cfm 361/758-2750

BEAUMONT: *Texas City Burning: The 1947 Texas City Disaster* June 1-30. www.firemuseumoftexas.org 409/880-3927

BEAUMONT: *Beili Liu: Opposing Forces* June 1-August 31. Art Museum of Southeast Texas. www.amset.org 409/832-3432

BEAUMONT: *Karin Broker: wired, pressed, and nailed* June 1-August 31. Art Museum of Southeast Texas. www.amset.org 409/832-3432

BEAUMONT: First Thursdays on Calder Avenue June 5. Downtown. www.beaumontcvb.com/events

BEAUMONT: Spindletop Spin June 7. www.spindletop.com 409/839-2332

BEAUMONT: Great Outdoors Day at Gladys City June 21. Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum. www.spindletop.org 409/880-1750

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CLUTE: Night Dive at Mammoth Lake June 7. www.mammothlakewaterpark.com 979/529-9174

CORPUS CHRISTI: Metal in Motion II: Mark "Scrapaddy" Bradford June 1-22. Art Museum of South Texas (through Sept. 1) and South Texas Botanical Gardens and Nature Center. www.artmuseumofsouthtexas.org 361/825-3500

CORPUS CHRISTI: Target Texas: Contemporary Studio Art Glass June 1-July 2. www.artmuseumofsouthtexas.org 361/825-3505

CORPUS CHRISTI: Happy Tiki Nighttime 5K and 10K Runs June 21. 956/793-4713

EAST BERNARD: Czech Kolache Klobase Festival June 14. Riverside Hall. www.kkfest.com 979/335-7907

FREEPORT: Skimmer Day June 28. A bus shuttles visitors to the viewing site from 9 a.m.-noon. www.visitbrazosport.com 979/238-4649

GALVESTON: ArtWalk June 7. www.galveston.com/artwalk 800/821-1894

HOUSTON: Magritte: The Mystery of the Ordinary, 1926-1938 June 1. www.menil.org

HOUSTON: Free Press Summer Festival June 1. Eleanor Tinsley Park. www.fpsf.com

HOUSTON: Tristar Collectors Show June 1. www.reliantpark.com

HOUSTON: Exhibits at the Lawndale Arts Center June 1-14. www.lawndaleartcenter.org 713/528-5858

HOUSTON: The Wartime Escape: Margret and H.A. Rey's Journey from France June 1-15. www.hmh.org 713/942-8000

HOUSTON: Melanie Smith Exhibit June 1-15. www.camh.org 713/284-8250

HOUSTON: The Immanuel and Helen Olshan Texas Music Festival June 1-28. Moores Opera House at the University of Houston. www.tmf.uh.edu 713/743-3313

HOUSTON: Memories of a Voyage: The Late Work of Rene Magritte June 1-July 13. www.menil.org

HOUSTON: Magna Carta June 1-August 17. www.hnms.org/magnacarta

HOUSTON: A Thin Wall of Air: Charles James June 1-September 7. www.menil.org

HOUSTON: Texas Masters Series: Sandie Zilker June 1-September 7. www.crafthouston.org

HOUSTON: Wine and Food Week June 2-8. Various venues. www.wineandfoodweek.com 713/557-5732

HOUSTON: Houston Culinary Tours: Montrose June 5. Advance tickets recommended. www.houstonculinarytours.com

HOUSTON: Caribbean Heritage Month Festival June 7. Jones Plaza. www.caribbeanheritagetx.org

HOUSTON: Favorites and Firsts—Hear and Now! Concert June 7. The Church of St. John the Divine. www.houstonchamberchoir.org 713/224-5566

HOUSTON: Houston Beer Fest June 7-8. Hermann Square and City Hall. www.houstonbeerfestival.com

HOUSTON: Houston Culinary Tours: Downtown June 13-14. Advance tickets required. www.houstonculinarytours.com

HOUSTON: Dad's Day 5K, 3K and 1K June 14. Wortham Center. www.dadsday5k.org

HOUSTON: Charles Marville: Photographer of Paris June 15-September 14. www.mfah.org

HOUSTON: Houston Summer Boat Show June 18-22. www.reliantpark.com

HOUSTON: Juneteenth Celebration June 19. www.milleroutdoortheatre.com 832/200-0540

HOUSTON: Houghton Hall: Portrait of an English Country House June 22-September 22. www.mfah.org

HOUSTON: Pride Houston Festival and Parade June 28. In the Montrose area. www.pridehouston.org/event/festival-and-parade

HOUSTON: fresh: Haim Steinbach and Objects from the Permanent Collection June 28-August 31. www.menil.org

KEMAH: Rock the Dock Concert Series June 5, 12, 19, 26. www.kemahboardwalk.com 877/285-3624

LAKE JACKSON: Abner Jackson Plantation Site Tours June 7. www.lakejacksonmuseum.org 979/297-1570

LAKE JACKSON: National Fishing Day Youth Fishing Event June 7. Sea Center Texas. www.tpwd.state.tx.us/seacenter 979/292-0100

LAKE JACKSON: Bird Banding June 21. www.gcb.org 979/480-0999

MATAGORDA: Day on the Bay Wetland Kayak Trip June 7, 28. Matagorda Bay Nature Park. www.lcra.org/matagorda 800/776-5272 ext. 4740

MATAGORDA: Paddle and Stroll June 14. Matagorda Bay Nature Park. www.lcra.org/matagorda 800/776-5272 ext. 4740

ORANGE: Navajo Weaving: Traditions and Trade June 1-July 12. www.starkmuseum.org 409/883-3513

PORT ARANSAS: CCA Take A Kid Fishing Tournament June 6-7. www.woodysonline.com 361/749-5252

PORT ARTHUR: Garden Festival at Buu Mon Buddhist Temple June 7-8. Email: cbmtemple@yahoo.com 409/982-9319

PORT ARTHUR: The Soul of Vietnam: A Portrait of the North June 7-August 3. Museum of the Gulf Coast. 409/982-7000

PORT ARTHUR: Zachary Breaux Jazz Festival June 13-14. Downtown. www.zacharybreauxjazzfestival.com 409/982-8394

PORT ARTHUR: Juneteenth Celebration June 19. Downtown. 409/543-0436

PORT ARTHUR: Cajun Celebration June 21. Jefferson County Singles Club. 409/983-5118

PORT ISABEL: Port Isabel Antique and Flea Market June 1. Buelah Lee Park. www.portisabel-texas.com 956/455-6798

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: Shark Run June 7. www.fight-tothefinish.com

VICTORIA: Reptile Weekend June 7-8. www.texaszoo.org 361/573-7681

VICTORIA: Victoria Bach Festival June 10-14. www.victoriabachfestival.org 361/570-5788

WHARTON: Juneteenth Celebration June 14. Courthouse square. 713/480-9589

WHARTON: Citywide Garage Sale June 20-21. www.whartontexas.com 979/532-1862

HILL COUNTRY

AUSTIN: On the Run: Currency, Credit and Capitals of the Republic of Texas June 1-22. www.texascapitolvisitorscenter.com 512/305-8400

AUSTIN: The World at War, 1914-1918 June 1-August 3. www.hrc.utexas.edu

AUSTIN: Between Mountains and Sea: Arts of the Ancient Andes June 1-August 17. www.blantonmuseum.org

AUSTIN: Backwards in High Heels: Getting Women Elected, 1842-1990 June 1-October 5. www.austinhistorycenter.org 512/974-7480

AUSTIN: ATX Television Festival June 5-8. Various locations. www.atxfestival.com

AUSTIN: Austin Pond Society Pond and Garden Tour June 7-8. Various locations. www.austinpondsociety.org

AUSTIN: Republic of Texas Biker Rally June 12-15. www.rotrally.com

AUSTIN: Nature Nights June 12, 19, 26. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. www.wildflower.org 512/232-0100

AUSTIN: Father's Day Concert in the Park June 15. Zilker Hillside Theater. www.austinsymphonicband.org

AUSTIN: Texas Heritage Songwriters' Hall of Fame Awards Show June 22. ACL Live at Moody Theater. www.texasheritage songwriters.com

AUSTIN: In the Company of Cats and Dogs June 22-September 21. www.blantonmuseum.org

AUSTIN: Keep Austin Weird Fest and 5K June 28. The Long Center. www.KeepAustinWeirdFest.com

BANDERA: Market Day June 7. Courthouse square. www.banderatexasbusiness.com 830/796-4447

BANDERA: Cowboys on Main June 7, 14, 21, 28. www.banderacowboycapital.com 830/796-3045

BANDERA: Flying L Ranch Chuck Wagon Dinner June 7, 14, 21, 28. www.flyingl.com 800/292-5134

BANDERA: Twin Elm Ranch Rodeo June 7, 14, 21, 28. www.twinelmranch.com 888/567-3049

BANDERA: Frontier Times Museum Cowboy Camp June 8. www.frontiertimesmuseum.org 830/796-3864

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BANDERA: Riverfest June 28. Bandera City Park. www.banderariverfest.com 830/796-4447

BLANCO: Lavender Festival June 13-15. Tours of local lavender farms and a lavender market on town square. www.blancolavenderfest.com 830/833-5101

BOERNE: Berges Fest June 13-15. Main Plaza. www.bergesfest.com

BOERNE: Second Saturday Art and Wine June 14. www.secondsaturdayartandwine.com

BOERNE: Market Days June 14-15. Main Plaza. www.boernemarketdays.com 210/844-8193

BOERNE: Boerne Concert Band June 29. www.boerneconcertband.org 830/249-7502

BURNET: Burnet County Fair June 20-21. Burnet Community Center. www.burnetcountyfair.com 512/756-9396

CASTROVILLE: Citywide Yard Sale June 7. www.castroville.com 830/538-3142

CASTROVILLE: Market Trail Day June 14. Houston Park. www.castroville.com 830/538-3142

CEDAR PARK: Austin Steam Train Saturday Evening Express June 7, 14, 21, 28. www.austinsteamtrain.org 512/477-8468

CEDAR PARK: Cedar Park Rodeo June 20-22. www.cedarparkcenter.com 512/600-5000

DRIPPING SPRINGS: Dripping Springs Tomato Roundup June 21. Founders Memorial Park. www.drippingspringstx.org

DRIPPING SPRINGS: Brent Thurman Memorial PBR Bull Riding June 28. Dripping Springs Ranch Park Event Center. 512/858-4740

FREDERICKSBURG: First Friday Art Walk June 6. www.ffawf.com 830/997-6523

FREDERICKSBURG: Tractor and Engine Club Show June 13-14. Gillespie County Fairgrounds. www.rustyiron.org 830/889-9348

FREDERICKSBURG: Fort Martin Scott Day June 14. www.ftmartinscott.org 830/997-7521

FREDERICKSBURG: Trade Days June 20-22. Off US 290, at 355 Sunday Farms Lane. www.fbgtrade.com 830/990-4900

GEORGETOWN: Williamson County Sheriff Posse Georgetown Rodeo June 27-28. www.georgetownrodeo.com

GRUENE: Swing Dance Lessons and Two Tons of Steel in Concert June 3, 10, 17, 24. 830/606-1281

GRUENE: Come and Taste It June 19. www.grapevineingruene.com 830/606-0093

GRUENE: Old Gruene Market Days June 21-22. www.gruenemarketdays.com 830/852-1721

JOHNSON CITY: Art, Wine and Live Music June 8. www.tastewineart.com

JOHNSON CITY: Antique Engine and Tractor Pull June 28. Blanco County Fairgrounds. 830/868-4364

JOHNSON CITY: Art Walk on Nugent Avenue June 28. 512/422-4080

JUNCTION: Family Festival June 7. At 301 Main St. www.junctiontexas.com

KERRVILLE: Kerrville Folk Festival June 1-8. www.kerrville-music.com 830/257-3600

KERRVILLE: Exhibits at the Kerr Arts and Cultural Center June 1-22. www.kackcerville.com 830/895-2911

KERRVILLE: Southwest Gourd Fine Art Show June 1-22. www.kackcerville.com 830/895-2911

KERRVILLE: Native Healing Garden Presentation June 19. www.riversidenaturecenter.org 830/257-4837

KERRVILLE: Kerr County Market Days June 28. www.kermarketdays.org 830/895-7524

MARBLE FALLS: Marble Falls Adult Soapbox Classic June 13. Downtown. www.adultsoapboxderby.com 830/693-4449

NEW BRAUNFELS: Destination Texas Fly Fishing Expo June 12-14. New Braunfels Civic and Convention Center. www.innewbraunfels.com

SAN MARCOS: Acting Up and Getting Down: Plays by African-American Texans June 1-August 1.

The Wittliff Collections. www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu 512/245-2313

SAN MARCOS: Coming to Light: New Acquisitions June 1-December 7. The Wittliff Collections. www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu 512/245-2313

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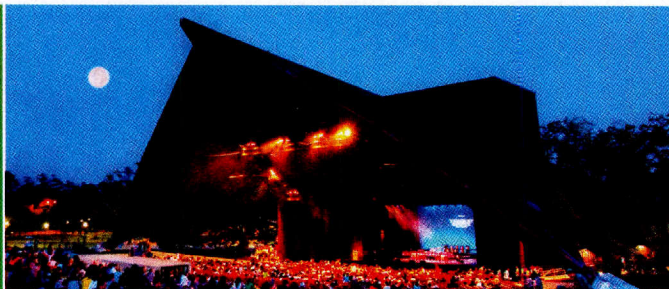
June 7 | 6 p.m.
25th Annual Accordion Kings & Queens

June 11-13 | 11:00 a.m.
June 13-14 | 8:15 p.m.
TUTS presents: Big! The Musical

June 19 | 7:00 p.m.
Houston's Juneteenth Celebration featuring Allen Toussaint

June 20-21; 27-28
8:30 p.m.
ExxonMobil Summer Symphony Nights
Houston Symphony

July 2 | 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Starship



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SAN MARCOS: *Mary Ellen Mark: Man and Beast—Photographs from Mexico and India* June 1-December 7. The Wittliff Collections. www.thewittliffcollections.com. txstate.edu 512/245-2313

SAN MARCOS: Salsa Fest June 14. Eye of the Dog Art Center. www.eyeofthedog.com/upcoming-events

SAN MARCOS: Texas Water Safari June 14-18. Aquarena Center. www.texaswatersafari.org

SAN MARCOS: BIGFest June 27-29. www.bigfest.cheathamstreetfoundation.org 512/353-3777

SONORA: Sonora Outlaw Pro Rodeo and Sutton County Days June 27-28. www.sonorataxas.org 325/387-2880

STONEWALL: Stonewall Peach JAMBoree and Rodeo June 20-21. www.stonewalltexas.com 830/644-2735

TAYLOR: Outlaw Tractor Pull Super Nationals June 27-28. East Williamson County Events Center. www.taylorrodeo.com 512/970-8756

UVALDE: Four Square Friday June 13. Downtown.

www.visituvalde.com 830/278-4115

PANHANDLE PLAINS

ABILENE: *Home on the Range, Where the Prairie Meets the Plains in Central West Texas* June 1-August 9. www.thegracemuseum.org 325/673-4587

ABILENE: Texas High School Rodeo Association State Finals June 6-14. Taylor County Expo Center. www.ybmow.org 817/822-1108

ABILENE: Arrow Ford 50th Anniversary Car Show June 7. At 4001 S. 1st St. 325/692-9500

ABILENE: ArtWalk June 12. Historic Downtown. 325/677-8389

ABILENE: Stars Over Abilene Regional Quilt Show June 13-14. www.abilenequiltersguild.com 325/232-8772

ALBANY: *Allison V. Smith: Going West* June 7-September 7. www.theoldjailartcenter.org 325/762-2269

ALBANY: *Cell Series Exhibition: Camp Bosworth* June 7-September 7.

www.theoldjailartcenter.org 325/762-2269

ALBANY: *West Texas Triangle Art Exhibition: Ken Little* June 7-September 7. www.theoldjailartcenter.org 325/762-2269

ALBANY: Art Exhibition: James Magee June 7-September 7. www.theoldjailartcenter.org 325/762-2269

ALBANY: *Fort Griffin Fandangle* June 19-21, 26-28. www.fortgriffinfandangle.org 325/762-3838

AMARILLO: *War Horses: Bred to Serve* June 1-July 26. www.aqha.com/museum 806/376-5181

AMARILLO: *Treasure! Your Hunt has Just Begun...* June 1-September 12. www.dhdc.org 806/355-9547

BIG SPRING: Moonlight Rave Run June 13. Big Spring State Park. www.permianbasinevents.com

BIG SPRING: Big Spring Cowboy Reunion and Rodeo June 19-21. Howard County Rodeo Arena and Heritage Museum. 432/267-5053

BIG SPRING: *Fantastic Fourth* June 27-28. Downtown. www.visitbigspring.com 432/268-3116

BUFFALO GAP: Chautauqua Learning Series June 14. 325/572-3365

CANADIAN: Music in the Park June 5, 12, 19, 26. Gazebo Park. www.canadiantx.com 806/323-6234

CANYON: *TEXAS Outdoor Musical* June 1-August 16. Pioneer Amphitheatre at Palo Duro Canyon State Park. www.texas-show.com 806/655-2181

CANYON: *Madonnas of the Prairie: Depictions of Women in the American West* June 1-August 31. www.panhandleplains.org

CANYON: *High Fashion on the High Plains* June 1-January 10. www.panhandleplains.org 806/651-2244

CANYON: *Olive Vandruff: Artist of the American West* June 1-January 31. www.panhandleplains.org

CANYON: *Gems of the Plains* June 1-February 7. www.panhandleplains.org

CANYON: *Girls of the Golden West* June 1-February 7. www.panhandleplains.org 806/651-2235

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TEXAS HIGHWAYS

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Reader Service Guide to Advertisers

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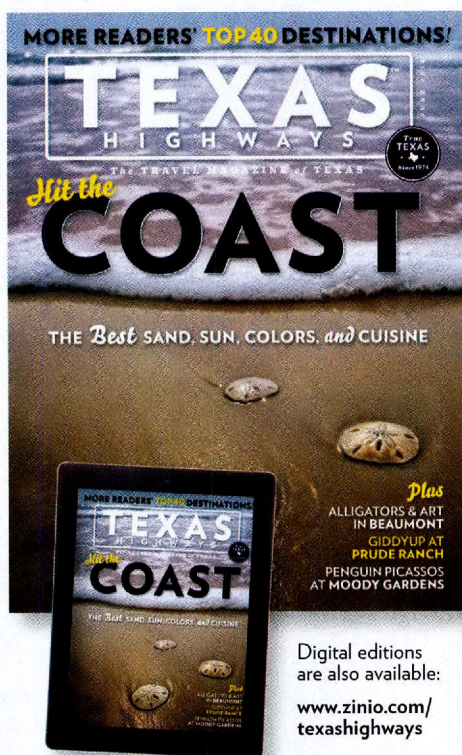
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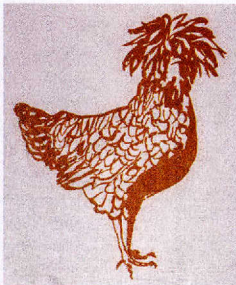
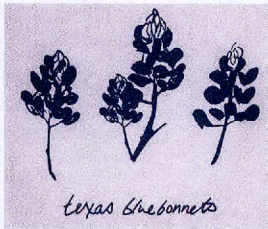
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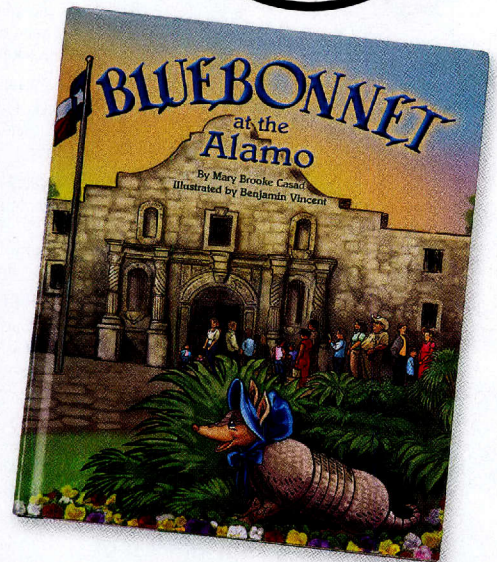


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« continued from page 70 »

CHILDRESS: Crown Victoria Car Show June 5-7. At Main Street and Avenue D N.W. 940/937-0281

CHILDRESS: Childress Rotary Greenbelt Bowl June 13-14. Fair Park. www.greenbeltbowl.com 940/937-3611

COLEMAN: PRCA Rodeo June 12-14. www.colemanrodeo.com 325/625-2163

COLORADO CITY: CC Riders Cruise and Car Show June 13-14. Downtown. 325/242-0929

DALHART: XIT Trail of Sales June 7. From Texline to Channing. www.dalhart.org 806/244-4434

DALHART: Golf Tournament June 14. Dalhart Country Club. www.dalhart.org 806/244-5646

GRAHAM: Possum Pedal Bike Ride June 28. Downtown. www.possumpedal.com 940/549-3355

HENRIETTA: US 82/287 Yard Sale June 6-7. On a 425-mile route through North Texas. www.hccchamber.org 940/538-5261

LUBBOCK: West Texas Watercolor Spring Membership Show June 1-8. Buddy Holly Center. 806/794-4655

LUBBOCK: Summer Stampede June 21. www.ranchingheritage.org 806/742-0498

PALO PINTO: Frontier Days June 7. www.PaloPintoHistory.com 940/769-2600

POSSUM KINGDOM: Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series June 6-7. Viewing by boat is recommended. Possum Kingdom Lake. www.redbullcliffdiving.com

POST: Post City Trade Day June 7. www.postcitytexas.com 806/495-3461

QUANAH: Ranch Rodeo June 27. Quanah Riding Club Arena. 940/663-2222

RULE: Squash Cook-Off June 20. Village Primitives. 940/256-0267

SAN ANGELO: San Angelo National Ceramic Competition June 1-22. www.samfa.org 325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: Salmon Sculpture Competition June 1-August 11. www.samfa.org 325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: First Saturday at the Chicken Farm Art Center June 7. www.chickenfarmartcenter.com

SAN ANGELO: Family Day Activities June 14. www.samfa.org 325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: Art Walk June 19. www.downtownsanangelo.com/artwalk.html 325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: Showdown in San Angelo Drag Boat Races June 27-29. Lake Nasworthy. www.visitsanangelo.org 325/655-4136

STANTON: Old Sorehead Trade Days June 7-8. Downtown and Community Center Complex. www.stantontex.com 432/756-2006

PINEY WOODS

CENTER: Shelby County Sheriff's Posse PRCA Rodeo June 13-14. Shelby County Expo Center. www.shelbycountychamber.com 936/598-8453

CROCKETT: Regional Steak Cook-Off June 14. Crockett Civic Center. www.crockettareaechamber.org 936/544-2359

CROCKETT: World Championship Fiddlers Festival June 14. Crockett Civic Center. www.crockettareaechamber.org 936/544-2359

GLADEWATER: Round-Up Rodeo June 11-14. Gladewater Rodeo Arena. www.gladewaterrodeo.com 903/845-5126

HENDERSON: Air Show Fly-In June 7. www.ruskcountyairport.com 903/657-7081

JACKSONVILLE: Tomato Festival June 14. Downtown. www.jacksonvilletexas.com 903/586-2217

JEFFERSON: Big Cypress Corvette Classic June 6-8. Downtown. www.jefferson-texas.com 903/665-2672

JEFFERSON: Route 49 Biker Rally June 6-8. Diamond Don RV Park. www.route49rally.com 972/226-7205

JEFFERSON: Friday the 13th Aboard Jefferson's Ghost Train June 13. www.jeffersonrailway.com 866/398-2038

KILGORE: Texas Shakespeare Festival June 26-July 27. Van Cliburn Auditorium. www.texasshakespeare.com 903/983-8601

LONGVIEW: Summer Boat Show June 12-15. Maude Cobb Activity Center. 903/753-3515

LONGVIEW: Trade Days June 14-15. Maude Cobb Exhibit Building.

www.longviewtradedays.com 903/753-4478

LUFKIN: The Neches River Rendezvous June 7. North Boggy Slough. www.lufkintexas.org 936/634-6644

NACOGDOCHES: Texas Blueberry Festival June 13-14. Downtown. www.texasblueberryfestival.com 888/653-3788

TEXARKANA: Charles B. Pierce Film Festival June 13-14. www.charlesbpiercefilmfestival.org 903/277-1236

TYLER: *Mediterranea: American Art from the Graham D. Williford Collection* June 1-29. www.tylermuseum.org 903/595-1001

TYLER: *Scott M. Lieberman, M.D.: At the Vantage Point* June 1-July 13. www.tylermuseum.org 903/595-1001

TYLER: Smith County Master Gardener Garden Tour June 7. www.scmg.tamu.edu 903/590-2980

TYLER: Super Ride XII: International Festival of the Equestrian Arts June 17-21. Texas Rose Horse Park. www.superride.us 972/679-0770

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

ATHENS: National Fishing Day June 7. Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center. www.athenstx.org 903/676-2277

ATHENS: Bird and Nature Walk June 14. Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center. www.athenstx.org 903/676-2277

BASTROP: First Friday Artwalk June 6. Downtown. www.facebook.com/bastropartwalk 512/985-6403

BASTROP: Pine Street Market Day June 14. Downtown. www.bastropbusinesswomen.com 512/303-6233

BASTROP: Juneteenth Celebration June 19-21. Main Street. www.facebook.com/BastropJuneteenth

BELLVILLE: Market Day on the Square June 7. www.bellville.com 979/865-3407

BELLVILLE: Spring Creek Bluegrass Club Show and Jam June 21. Coughatte Recreation Ranch. www.springcreekbluegrass.com 979/865-5250

BREMOND: *Polski Dzień (Polish Day)* Festival June 27-28. Main Street. www.bremontexas.org

CALDWELL: Saturday Orchard Tours at Royalty Pecans June 7, 14, 21, 28. www.royaltypicans.com 979/272-3904

CAT SPRING: Cat Spring Agricultural Society June Fest June 1. www.catspringagsociety.org 979/865-1313

CLARKSVILLE: 82 Yard Sale June 6-7. Along 425 miles of Highway 82 and Highway 287. www.redrivervalley.info/YardSale.html 903/427-2645

CLARKSVILLE: Gateway to Texas Bicycle Tour June 18-22. www.redrivercoc.com 903/427-2645

CLEBURNE: Johnson County Sheriff's Posse PRCA Rodeo June 11-14. www.sheriffsposse.com 817/556-9910

CLIFTON: *Bosque County in World War II* June 1-September 13. www.bosquemuseum.org 254/675-3845

COPPERAS COVE: Summer Run to Fun 5K June 21. South Park. www.copperascove.com 254/547-7571

CUERO: KidFest June 5. Downtown. www.cuero-mainstreet.com

DALLAS: *Alexandre Hogue: The Erosion Series* June 1-15. www.dallasmuseumofart.org 214/922-1803

DALLAS: *Besa: A Code of Honor* June 1-18. www.dallasholocaustmuseum.org 214/741-7500

DALLAS: *Sightings: Bettina Pousttchi* June 1-July 13. www.nasher-sculpturecenter.org

DALLAS: Mark Grotjahn Sculpture June 1-August 17. www.nashersculpturecenter.org

DALLAS: *The World's Largest Dinosaurs* June 1-September 1. www.perotmuseum.org 214/428-5555

DALLAS: Concerts in the Garden Series June 5, 12, 19, 26. www.dallasarboretum.org 214/515-6615

DALLAS: Living History with J. Elke Ertle June 6-7. Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza. 214/747-6660

DALLAS: A-Kon 25 June 6-8. Hilton Anatole Hotel. www.a-kon.com

DALLAS: Safari Nights June 7, 14, 21, 28. www.dallaszoo.com 469/554-7500

DALLAS: Flavors of Dallas June 25. Hyatt Regency Dallas. 817/343-6309

DECATUR: Cruise Night on the Courthouse Square June 7. www.decaturnainstreet.com 940/393-0340

DENTON: Twilight Tunes Concert Series June 5, 12, 19, 26. Courthouse on the Square. www.dentonmainstreet.org 940/349-8529

DENTON: Juneteenth Celebration June 13-14. Fred Moore Park. www.dentonparks.com 940/349-7275

DENTON: Denton Airshow June 14. www.denton.schultzairshows.com 940/484-1603

DETROIT: Car Show June 21. Downtown. www.detroitartfest.com 903/674-2909

FARMERSVILLE: Audie Murphy Day June 21. Historic Onion Shed. www.farmersvilletx.com 972/784-6846

FAYETTEVILLE: Fayetteville Good Old Summertime Classic Bike Ride June 1. On the square. 713/777-5333

FLATONIA: Flatonia Freedom Fest June 28. Downtown. www.flatoniachamber.com 361/865-3920

FORT WORTH: *Samurai: Armor from The Ann and Gabriel Barier-Mueller Collection* June 1-August 31. www.kimbellart.org 817/332-8451

FORT WORTH: First Fridays at The Modern June 6. www.themodern.org 817/738-9215

FORT WORTH: Winstar Casino and Resort 400 NASCAR Camping World Truck Series June 6-7. www.texasmotorspeedway.com 817/215-8500

FORT WORTH: Friday Night Drags June 13-27. www.texasmotorspeedway.com 817/215-8518

GARLAND: Marketplace on the Square June 21. Downtown square. 972/978-7759

GIDDINGS: Quilt Show June 27-28. Giddings High School. 979/542-3006

GLEN ROSE: All-Around Performance Horse Ranch Finals June 12-14. www.glenroseexpo.org 254/897-4509

GLEN ROSE: Discovery After Dark June 13. www.fossilrim.org 254/897-2960

GLEN ROSE: Photography Tour at Fossil Rim Wildlife Center June 14, 28. www.fossilrim.org 254/897-2960

GRAND PRAIRIE: Spring Thoroughbred Racing

Season June 1-July 12. Lone Star Park at Grand Prairie. 972/237-1197

GRAND PRAIRIE: Crawfish Boil June 7. Market Square. Email: FarmersMarket@GPTX.org

GRAND PRAIRIE: Fly-Buy Flea Market June 7. Grand Prairie Municipal Airport. 972/237-7591

GRAND PRAIRIE: Philippine Republic Day Celebration June 7. www.tradersvillage.com 972/647-2331

GRAND PRAIRIE: Festival de Mariachi June 28. www.tradersvillage.com 972/647-2331

GRAPEVINE: Light Crust Dough Boys Exhibit June 1-July 15. Grapevine Tower Gallery. www.grapevinetexasusa.com

GRAPEVINE: *Human Plus* June 1-September 14. Grand Gallery. www.grapevinetexasusa.com 817/410-3185

GRAPEVINE: Great Train Robberies June 1, 7-8, 14-15, 21-22, 28-29. Cotton Belt Depot. www.gvrr.com 817/410-3579

GRAPEVINE: Grapevine Market June 5, 7, 12, 14, 19, 21, 26, 28. Liberty Park. www.grapevinetexasusa.com 817/410-3185

GRAPEVINE: First Friday at Nash Farm: Crop Production June 6. www.nashfarm.org 817/410-3185

GRAPEVINE: Grapevine Fun Trains June 6, 13, 20, 27. Grapevine Train Depot. www.gvrr.com 817/410-3185

GRAPEVINE: Dairy Day at Nash Farm June 14. www.nashfarm.org 817/410-3185

GROESBECK: Groesbeck Lions Club Car Show June 21. Groesbeck City Park. www.groesbecklions.com 903/626-5268

IRVING: Annual Texas and Neighbors Regional Art Exhibition June 1-7. www.irvingartscenter.com

LEWISVILLE: Sounds of Lewisville Concert Series June 3, 10, 17, 24. MCL Grand Theater. www.soundsoflewsville.com 972/219-3401

LEWISVILLE: Best Little Brewfest in Texas June 21. Old Town Lewisville. www.bestlittlebrewfestintexas.com

LOCKHART: Chisholm Trail Roundup "Barbecue Capital of Texas" Barbecue and Chili Cook-Off June 6-7. Lockhart City Park. www.chisholmtrailroundup.com

LOCKHART: Chisholm Trail Roundup June 12-14. Lockhart City Park and other locations. www.chisholmtrailroundup.com 512/398-2818

LULING: Watermelon Thump June 26-29. Downtown and Watermelon Thump Pavilion. www.watermelonthump.com 830/875-3214 ext. 2

MARLIN: Americana Crafters Market June 7. Courthouse square. 254/803-2366

MCKINNEY: Texas Art History Series June 4.

Heard-Craig House. www.heardcraig.org 972/569-6909

MCKINNEY: Third Monday Trade Days June 13-15. At 4550 W. University. www.tmtd.com 972/562-5466

MCKINNEY: Killis Melton Ice Cream Crank-Off June 14. Chestnut Square Historic Village. www.chestnutsquare.org 972/562-8790

MCKINNEY: McKinney Garden Club Home and Garden Tour June 14. www.mckinneygardenclub.org

MCKINNEY: Second Saturday on the Downtown Square June 14. Historic downtown square. www.downtownmckinney.com 972/547-2660

MESQUITE: Texas Sculpture Association Exhibit June 2-July 2. Mesquite Arts Center. www.mesquiteartscenter.org 972/216-6444

MESQUITE: JazzBreaks on the Plaza June 3, 10, 17, 24. Mesquite Arts Center Plaza. www.mesquiteartscenter.org 972/216-6444

MESQUITE: Mesquite Pro Rodeo June 6-7, 13-14, 20-21, 27-28. Resistol Arena. www.mesquiteprorodeo.com 972/285-8777

MESQUITE: Devil's Bowl Speedway Racing June 7, 14, 21, 25, 28. Devil's Bowl Speedway. www.devilsbowl.com 972/222-2421

MESQUITE: Florence Ranch Homestead Tours June 14. At 1424 Barnes Bridge Road. www.historicmesquite.org 972/613-7547

MESQUITE: Quilt Show June 20-21. Rutherford Recreation Center.



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www.mesquitequiltguildinc.com 972/216-7790

MESQUITE: Opal Lawrence Historical Park Tour June 28. www.historicmesquite.org 972/216-6468

MIDLOTHIAN: Pancake Breakfast Fly-In June 7. www.mid-wayregional.com 972/923-0080

PALESTINE: Piney Woods Steam Excursions June 6-8, 13-15, 20-22, 27-29. www.texasstaterr.com 903/683-3098

PLANO: HamCom June 12-14. Plano Centre. www.hamcom.org 469/964-2814

RED OAK: Red Oak, White, and Blue June 28. Pearson Park. www.redoaktx.org 469/218-1202

ROUND TOP: Round Top Music Festival June 6-July 13. www.festivalhill.org 979/249-3129

ROUND TOP: County Line Antique Show June 19-21. www.billdmoore.com 760/587-1300

ROUND TOP: Shakespeare at Winedale June 19-21. Winedale Historical Complex's Theatre Barn. www.shakespeare-winedale.org 512/471-4726

ROUND TOP: The Original Round Top Antiques Fair June 20-21. Big Red Barn. www.roundtoptexasantiques.com 512/237-4747

RUNAWAY BAY: The Fourth Festival and Firecracker Golf Scramble June 28. Club at Runaway Bay. 940/575-4999

SEALY: Sealy KC Summer Music Fest June 28-29. KC Hall. www.visitsealy.com 979/885-6786

SEGUIN: Yellow Rose Fiber Fiesta June 6-8. Seguin-Guadalupe County Coliseum. www.yellowrosefiberproducers.com

SHERMAN: Melody Ranch Bluegrass Festival June 1-7. www.melodyranchbluegrassfestival.com 903/546-6893

SHERMAN: *In the Shadow of Danger* June 3-28. www.theshermanmuseum.org 903/893-7623

SHERMAN: Hot Summer Nights Concert Series June 5, 12, 19, 26. Municipal Lawn and Gazebo Stage. www.shermanchamber.us

SHERMAN: Youth First Hands-On Nature Activities June 7. Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge. www.friendsofhagerman.com 903/786-2826

SHERMAN: Second Saturday Nature Program June 14. Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge. www.friendsofhagerman.com

SPRINGTOWN: All-American Bicycle Rally June 14. Springtown High School. www.springtownchamber.org 817/220-7828

WACO: *Women in Art and Academia* June 1-July 13. Martin Museum of Art. 254/710-1867

WACO: *Be the Dinosaur* June 1-September 3. www.maybornmuseum.com 254/710-1110

WACO: Stars Over Texas Jamboree June 5. Lee Lockwood Library and Museum. 254/755-7257

WACO: Lecture: Paleontologist John Hutchinson June 14. www.maybornmuseum.com 254/710-1110

WASHINGTON: *Weather Wisdom: Forecasting in the Texas Republic* June 1-February 15. www.starmuseum.org

WAXAHACHIE: Historic Waxahachie Plein Aire Paint Out June 1-8. Historic district. www.elliscountyart.net 972/937-3414

WAXAHACHIE: Gingerbread Trail Historic Home Tour and Arts & Crafts Show June 7-8. At 201 S. College. 972/937-0681

WAXAHACHIE: Juneteenth Parade and Celebration June 19. Penn Park. 972/938-8662

WEIMAR: Juneteenth Celebration June 14. Community Park. www.weimartexas.org

YOAKUM: Tom Tom Festival June 6-8. At 703 South Park Road. www.yoakumareachamber.com 361/293-2309

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

BEEVILLE: *If We Had Known* June 1-July 17. www.bamtexas.org 361/358-8615

MCALLEN: McAllen Blues Night June 27. McAllen Creative Incubator. www.mcallenart.com 956/687-2787

SAN ANTONIO: *Constructing the Stage: Artists from the Theatre Collection* June 1. www.mcnayart.org 210/824-5368

SAN ANTONIO: *Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo* June 1-6. www.thealamo.org

SAN ANTONIO: *Hats Off to Fiesta!* June 1-July 6. www.texancultures.com

SAN ANTONIO: Primer Sabado y Domingo: "Fun in the Sun" June 7-8. Historic Market Square. 210/207-8605

SAN ANTONIO: Texas Folklife Festival June 7-8.

Institute of Texan Cultures at HemisFair Park. www.texasfolklife festival.org 210/207-6700

SAN ANTONIO: Fathers' Day Weekend Celebration June 14-15. www.marketsquaresa.com 210/207-8605

SAN ANTONIO: Mesquite Artisan Art and Furniture Show June 20-22. Shrine Auditorium. www.mesquiteartshow.com 830/426-2219

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WITH CHET GARNER



On Deck in Corpus Christi

There's no denying that Corpus Christi is one of the most beloved destinations in Texas, and for good reason. However, among the well-known ways to pass a day on the bay, Corpus Christi is packed with plenty of hidden gems and off-the-beaten-path surprises. I headed to this bay-front city in search of my own day-trip adventure.

8:30 A.M. I kicked things off at **Nano's Taco Run** with a couple of steaming breakfast tacos—the most important taco of the day. The flour tortillas were fresh off the griddle, with the chorizo and eggs delivering the spicy protein punch I needed to jump-start my trip.

10:00 A.M. To learn about the origins of the city, I explored the **Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History**. Starting with the native Karankawas up to modern-day citizens, the museum traces the people and cultures that have shaped the Coastal Bend of Texas. I walked among displays spotlighting Spanish and French shipwrecks and stagecoaches, and eventually found myself staring at full-size replicas of two of Christopher Columbus' ships, which also sailed from Spain ... in 1992.

11:00 A.M. I crossed the **Harbor Bridge** to experience another era of nautical

travel aboard the **USS Lexington**, a World War II aircraft carrier turned floating museum. The self-guided tour is packed with 100,000 square feet of incredible information and displays. After exploring the top, I decided to go deeper—literally—grabbing a flashlight and appropriate head protection for a guided **Hard Hat Tour**. We descended into the belly of the beast, down narrow staircases and into dimly lit corners, including #1 Engine Room and the Evaporator Room, which could produce 180,000 gallons of fresh water a day.

1:00 P.M. I was hungry enough to eat a dozen MRE's, but opted instead for the **Executive Surf Club**, a restaurant allowing everyone to get a small taste of the city's surf culture. I grabbed a seat at a table made of old surfboards and ordered a shrimp wrap filled with fried shrimp, fresh vegetables, and homemade dressing. Cowabunga, it was good!

2:00 P.M. While traditional surfing is hit-or-miss in Texas, Corpus Christi is one of the best places in the world to **kite surf**.

CHET GARNER
is the host of
The Daytripper®
travel show on
PBS; www.the
daytripper.com.

I arranged a private lesson from **Prokitesurf** and hit the water. The wind was consistent and strong, but sadly, my skills at capturing the wind were erratic and weak. I spent most of my lesson getting dragged through the water and tossed around like

a rag doll. However, some small successes, and an awesome instructor, made me eager to come back and try again.

4:00 P.M. To enjoy the water in a much more relaxing fashion, I headed to **McGee Beach**, right next to the heart of downtown along Corpus Christi Bay. After a few hours of splashing around, I was ready to cash in my chips and spend the rest of my life wearing flip-flops and listening to old Jimmy Buffett records.

6:00 P.M. Margaritaville sounded pretty nice, but sno-ball-ville sounded even better, so I headed to **Sno-Ball, Too**, which keeps Corpus Christi iced-in. This local snowcone shop has more than 60 flavors, but upon a recommendation, I got a strawberry sno-ball with a scoop of vanilla ice cream on top. I can't imagine a more perfect treat on a hot summer day.

7:00 P.M. I may have eaten dessert first, but I was still hungry for dinner. Luckily, it was game night for the **Corpus Christi Hooks** at **Whataburger Field**. I grabbed a last-minute ticket from the box office and a Whataburger with fries on the way to my seat. It was a fitting meal to end a day in Corpus Christi, as Whataburger started here in 1950.

The Star Spangled Banner played as the teams took the field, and I savored a day well-spent exploring this city by the bay. So whether you follow my footsteps or forge your own path, I hope to see you on the road. ★

 **Contact the Corpus Christi Convention & Visitors Bureau, 800/766-2322; www.visitcorpuschristitx.org.**



Take the Plunge

FIND A GOOD SWIMMING HOLE TO SORT THROUGH LIFE'S CHOICES.

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

THROUGHOUT MY LIFE, IN EVERY neighborhood, on every summer's vacation, road trip, or nature hike, there has been a memorable swimming hole. Some were big enough to classify as small lakes, complete with floating platforms and lap lanes. Others were closer to cauldrons, where I happily abandoned myself to bobbing up and down like a potato in a pot. Looking back over the years, I've made my list of druthers for a swimming hole that is just so.

First of all, the best water is not so easily accessible. I prefer private property that's related to me by kin or friendship, but fortunately, Texas is so blessed with water-filled parklands that it isn't necessary to own a pond to enjoy one.

Some shade is important, but even more important is the type of tree creating it. Were I designing a splash pad of my own, I would hem it in regal, mile-high cypresses.

Hours spent at a swimming hole should be a fifty-fifty blend of paddling and sun-sloth. For that reason, the perfect swimming hole is bounded by boulders, near enough to the water that I can sink in silently. Not that a good swimming hole is deathly still. It buzzes with cicadas and clacks with frogs and

wheezes with crickets. And, the best water of all falls from some height, giggling, guzzling, and singing as it tumbles.

I'll admit I don't like to share my swimming holes with strangers. From time to time I do delight in grandly public incarnations. The spring-fed Barton Springs in Austin, the desert oasis that is the pool at Balmorhea State Park, and other peopled puddles in state parks along the Rio Frio or Sabinal have won my heart. But generally, you discover the best swimming holes while you're foraging for mushrooms or pursuing a picnic.

A just-so swimming hole tempts ordinary people, grandmas and preachers alike, into shucking their drawers, because no right-minded person wears clothing in a private swimming hole. No doubt the elusive Fountain of Youth is a swimming hole, a mythical, ever-changing place that never seems to

The best water of all falls from some height, giggling, guzzling, and singing as it tumbles.

be in quite the same spot from visit to visit. What other shimmering places take you back to the contentment of the womb? Go ahead. Strip off on the banks and get right on in. ★

Find Babs Rodriguez's full adventure at texashighways.com/matters.



RearVIEW

ONE LAST THOUGHT

“I still see her standing by the water
Standing there looking out to sea
And is she waiting there for me?
On the beach where we used to run”

-Jimmy Webb, "Galveston"

ROMANTIC VIEW: A time-lapse photo captures waves crashing over the Galveston Seawall breakers.

PHOTO: © Maryanne Gobble

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