

The **BIG BEND** Issue

All things Big Bend  
Places to stay, hike, eat, sleep,  
wander, drive, camp, and  
ponder the meaning of life.

texashighways.com » February 2013

# Texas Highways

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

HIKING *the*  
**CHISOS**  
HIGH COUNTRY *see page 28*



FINDING  
MARFA  
*see page 38*

CIBOLO  
CREEK  
RANCH  
*see page 46*

McDONALD  
OBSERVATORY  
*see page 54*

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## For the love of travel.

**W**e ♥ Texas travel, so to celebrate the month of *amore*, we asked readers online for their favorite romantic getaways—for those in love, and those simply in love with Texas. Marie Atlee Clark extolled the lure of Indian Lodge, a CCC-built, pueblo-style hotel in West Texas' Davis Mountains State Park. (Note: The hotel will be closed for maintenance Jan. 27-Feb. 10.) "The remodeled rooms in the old section are wonderful. The sitting deck is peaceful. Watch the sunrise together with coffee from the lobby, then sunset from the top of the mountain."

Zach Buie agrees that Indian Lodge is "fantastic," and also recommends the secluded resort at Chinati Hot Springs, another hideaway in Texas' far western reaches with healing spring waters, adobe cabins, and hiking trails.

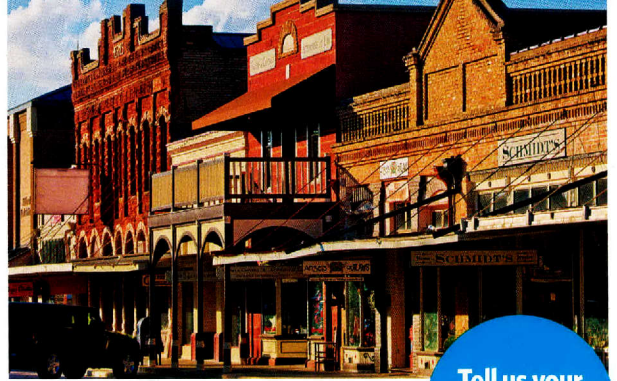
Zach and Marie's recommendations prove quite compatible with this month's Big Bend special issue. In features starting on page 28, we reveal the history and mystique of Cibolo Creek Ranch, nature's renewal in the Chisos Mountains, and McDonald Observatory's nightly star trek. Turn to page 38 for more on Marfa's art and the Mystery Lights, which for centuries have inexplicably pulsed in the Chinati foothills east of town.

Marfa writer Tex Toler has seen the lights regularly since his first visit in high school, and is "a firm believer that they exist." He cautions viewers, though, that "unlike Old Faithful in Yellowstone National Park, or the swallows' return to Capistrano, the lights are not on a predictable schedule. Some nights they're active, some nights they're not. After an hour of waiting for the lights to show, some folks get frustrated and join the ranks of the non-believers. But if you DO happen to see them—floating, pulsing, sometimes splitting and dancing—then you become a witness to a true phenomenon investigated and studied by scientists from all over the globe." And, he adds, even if their source or trigger is someday discovered, "It will still be an amazing anomaly that they occur in Marfa."

Here's to the mysteries of life and love. Until next time, find us online ([texashighways.com](http://texashighways.com)), and happy travels!

Jill Lawless, Editor

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter  



Tell us your favorite small town!

### BE HEARD:

## READER'S CHOICE

What do you think is Texas' coolest small town? Tell us your favorite (and why) at [texashighways.com/upfront](http://texashighways.com/upfront).

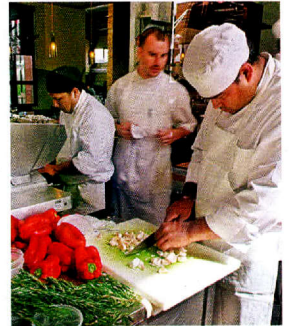
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### TRIP TIP:

## FOODIE ALERT!

Senior Editor Lori Moffatt recently returned to the rapidly evolving Pearl complex in San Antonio, where redevelopment in the past few years has brought interesting restaurants, retail shops, a popular Saturday-morning farmer's market, and the latest campus of the Culinary Institute of America. The CIA recently opened a student-run restaurant called NAO, which focuses on cuisines from throughout Central and South America. All dishes cost \$9. See [www.naorestaurant.com](http://www.naorestaurant.com).

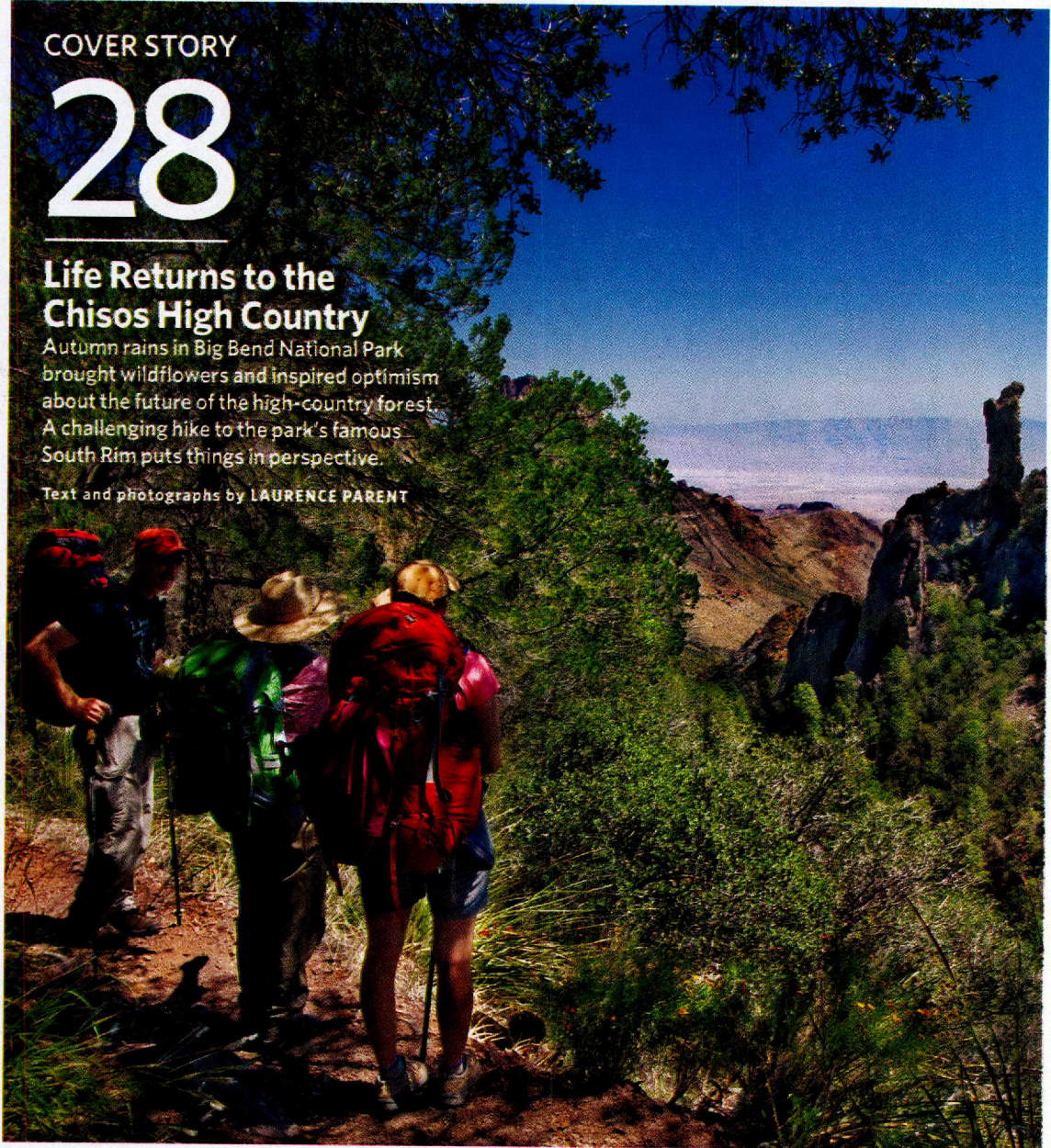


### SNEAK PEEK:

## THE NEXT ISSUE...

An intrepid writer-photographer bikes a little-known rail-trail in northeast Texas; a history buff hits the Texas Independence Trail; and we'll sample a lotta enchiladas. And who knew there's unicycle football in San Marcos? All this and more in March!





COVER STORY

**28**

**Life Returns to the Chisos High Country**

Autumn rains in Big Bend National Park brought wildflowers and inspired optimism about the future of the high-country forest. A challenging hike to the park's famous South Rim puts things in perspective.

Text and photographs by **LAURENCE PARENT**



**Destinations**

- San Antonio **10, 15**
- Dallas **14, 17, 62**
- Austin **20, 22, 73**
- Lubbock **23**
- Big Bend National Park **28**
- Marfa **38, 46**
- McDonald Observatory **54**
- Gonzales **72**

features

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

**38** | **Where's Martha?**  
 Marfa has captivated the hearts of art-lovers and desert denizens the world over. With art, music, a new "foodie" culture, and spectacular scenery, now is the perfect time to become a fan yourself.

Text by **TERRY TOLER**  
 Photographs by **J. GRIFFIS SMITH**

**46** | **The Not (Necessarily) Wild West**  
 Some of the Big Bend's most luxurious accommodations welcome guests to rugged land once owned by cattle baron Milton Faver. For privacy and luxury, nothing beats Cibolo Creek Ranch.

Text by **CHARLES LOHRMANN**  
 Photographs by **J. GRIFFIS SMITH**

**54** | **Galaxy Quest**  
 At McDonald Observatory, visitors explore outer space while keeping their feet planted firmly in West Texas. This premier astronomical research facility also provides an inviting opportunity for novices to gaze skyward.

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



# THIS SPRING



**GALVESTON**  
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Want a glimpse of it all? Embark on an all-inclusive sightseeing tour. Dolphin watch on a Harbor Tour, stroll the East End Historic District on a self-guided tour of the Galveston Tree Sculptures, or join the Galveston Duck Tours, Cool Tours or the Treasure Isle Tour Train.

Lodging in Galveston accommodates every budget and length of stay. Plan a week in one of the Island's beach houses and condos or take a quick escape in a hotel or a historic bed & breakfast.

Everything you need to know about Galveston Island can be found on [www.galveston.com](http://www.galveston.com). Plus share your experiences at [Facebook.com/VisitGalvestonIsland](https://www.facebook.com/VisitGalvestonIsland) or call us today at 888.GAL.ISLE (425.4753)



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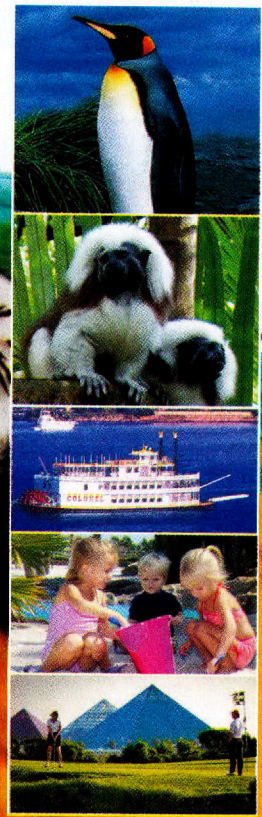
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## departments

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Peanut patties and Port A

**10 | Postcards**  
Telling the South Texas Story  
From vaqueros to chili queens, the Witte Museum's new Robert J. and Helen C. Kleberg South Texas Heritage Center brings the region's history to life. *Plus:* Dallas' Perot Museum of Nature and Science, and San Antonio's Pearl development.

**17 | TH Taste**  
Raising the Bar on Chocolate  
Valentine's Day inspires a flurry of chocolate gift-giving, but Texans go cocoa-loco year-round. *Plus:* Central Market's cooking school.

**23 | Weekender**  
Great Plains Gallivanting  
Lubbock, Texas: home to five wineries, stellar steaks, archeological treasures, prairie dogs, a rich ranching legacy, and wide-open spaces.

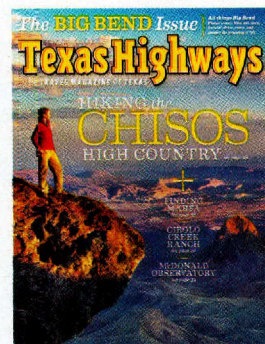
**62 | Speaking of Texas**  
The Princess of Popovers  
She didn't think much of Texas' culinary offerings when she first moved here from New York, so Helen Corbitt reframed the state's culinary scene with her innovative approach.

**67 | TH Traveler**  
A roundup of February events  
Rodeos in Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Houston; Alpine's Texas Cowboy Poetry Gathering,

plus 101 other fun things to see and do this month.

**72 | TH Daytripper**  
Come and 'Trip It  
Chet Garner traces the roots of the Texas Revolution, marvels at our forefathers' bravery, and celebrates Texas freedom with Tex-Mex and barbecue in Gonzales.

**73 | Window on Texas**  
Say Cheese  
Old-school enchiladas at a bowling alley? Order up! Deliciousness doesn't always translate to photo-ready, but Photo Editor Griff Smith embraces the challenge—and shares some tricks of the trade.



### About Our Covers

**FRONT:** On top of the world. As daylight fades into dusk, hiker Heather Ainsworth-Dobbins peers over Big Bend National Park's Elephant Tusk formation. **Photo © Laurence Parent**

**BACK:** On a tour of the remote Cibolo Creek Ranch near Marfa, guests can imagine what the land looked like when rancher Milton Faver built his empire here in the 1800s. The beauty of it? Not much has changed. **Photo by J. Griffis Smith**

### Photographic Prints Available



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## EVENTS

- Feb 4-7** TX Water Utilities Association School Big Bend - **Fort Stockton**
- Feb 7-10** Midessa Boat/RV & Gun Show - **Odessa**
- Feb 22-24** TX Cowboy Poetry Gathering - **Alpine**
- Feb 24** Monty Python at Noël Wagner Perf. Arts Center - **Midland**
- Mar 1-3** Texas Proud in Pecos - **Pecos**
- Mar 8-10** Camp Cooking - **Marfa**
- Mar 9-10** Scottish-Irish Faire at Midland County Horseshoe - **Midland**

- Mar 22-24** Odessa College NIRA Rodeo - **Odessa**
- Mar 31** Easter sunrise service - **Fort Davis**
- Mar 31** 7th Annual Picnic in the Park & Easter Egg Hunt - **Fort Davis**
- Apr 4-6** Viva Big Bend Food Festival - **Alpine**
- Apr 6** 26th Annual Reeves County Health Fair - **Pecos**
- Apr 24-27** Open Road Race April 24-27 - **Fort Stockton**
- Jun 26-30** Marfa Film Festival - **Marfa**



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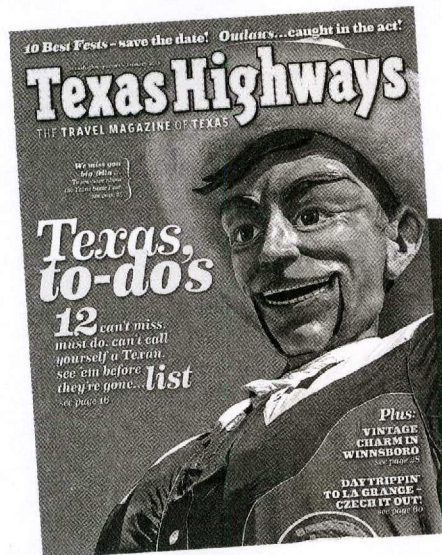
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## Published monthly by the Travel Information Division

**Division Director** Margo Richards

**Publisher** Charles J. Lohrmann

**Creative Director** Mark Mahorsky

**Editor** Jill Lawless

**Senior Editor** Lori Moffatt

**Associate Editor** Matt Joyce

**Editorial Coordinator** Cindy Newsom

### Contributing Editors

Erin Inks, Julie Stratton

### Editorial Associates\*

Elizabeth Franey, Elena Watts

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**Subscriptions to Texas Highways** are \$19.95 annually (\$29.95 foreign). Call 800/839-4997. (Call 903/636-1123 outside the U.S.) Copies of current and back issues are available. Call 512/486-5811. For subscription services, call 800/839-4997. To be removed from mailing list sales, write to Texas Highways Marketing, Mailing Lists, Box 141009, Austin, TX 78714-1009.

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

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

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## READER MAIL » READER RECOMMENDATIONS

# Talk TO TH

"We have Texas memorabilia all over our house. Yes, we're English, but wanna be Texan!"

—SHANE BISPHAM,  
Sandbach, England,  
TH Facebook Fan

### Think Pink

I enjoyed Mary O. Parker's "Sweet on Pink Peanut Patties" [*TH* Taste, December]. Anderson Candy Company in Blossom makes pink peanut rounders (patties) that are "soft and delicious." Though the company started in 1980 with Leon Anderson, the origin of the candy recipe was in the 1940s with Dan Hearn, who developed the softer-texture patty. The website ([www.peanutrounder.com](http://www.peanutrounder.com)) includes an interesting history of the recipe and the candy-making machines. LeAnne and Donny Gentry, Leon's daughter and son-in-law, currently own the company, at 201 Front Street. Purchase peanut rounders there or online.

FRANCES HARE, Garland

### Puff and Stuff

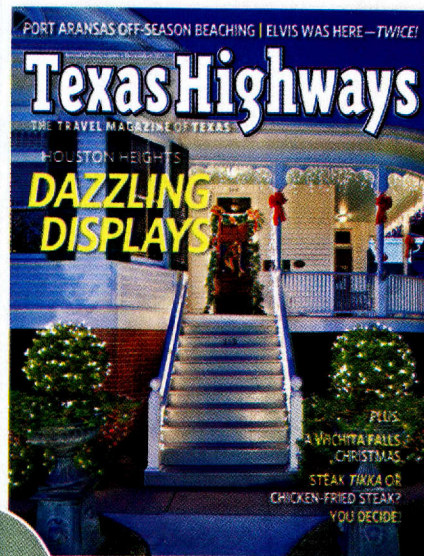
Robb Walsh's "Stepping Up to the Plate" [December] listed some marvelous Texas comfort foods, especially for Texans away from home. The mention of San Antonio

### CONTACT TH

**We want to hear from you! Send feedback and recommendations to:** Texas Highways, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009. Email: [letters05@texashighways.com](mailto:letters05@texashighways.com). We reserve the right to edit items. Because we're unable to check out every recommendation, and because hours vary and details can change, please call ahead for more information.

**Please pass this magazine along!**

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

puffy tacos brings back so many memories and makes my mouth water! It's a good reason for me to plan a trip to my native city for a big plate of them. You just may see me on the road headed west! Thanks for a great magazine.

DORIS PEIRCE, Gainesville, Georgia

### TH READER RECOMMENDATION

## Port A+

I THOROUGHLY enjoyed the December issue and June Naylor's article on **Port Aransas**. No trip to Port A is complete without a lunch or dinner stop at **Café Phoenix**. My wife and I found this restaurant while at the **Whooping Crane Festival** last February. Chef (and owner) Tiana Worsham does a marvelous job of making delicious seafood dishes. The restaurant is very quaint and intimate, and a fabulous place to eat.

JOHN PARKINSON, Friendswood

Café Phoenix is at 229 Beach Ave.; 361/749-9277. Find more on the annual **Whooping Crane Festival** (February 21-24, 2013) at [www.whoopingcrane festival.org](http://www.whoopingcrane festival.org).

02  
13

# Postcards

INSIDE: HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY—IT'S CHOCOLATE TIME...17 REDISCOVERING LUBBOCK...23

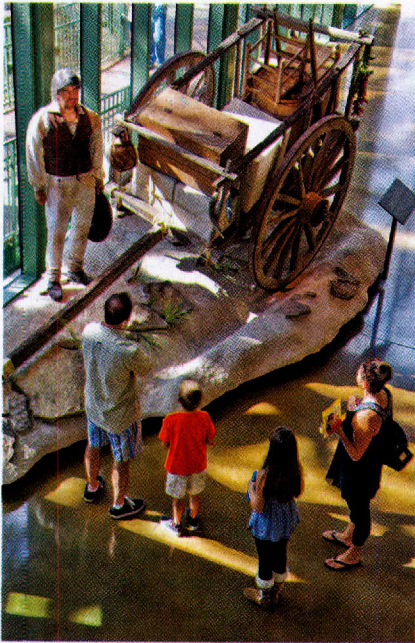
## Telling the South Texas Story

*The Witte Museum's Robert J. and Helen C. Kleberg South Texas Heritage Center*

text by GENE FOWLER



The South Texas Heritage Center takes visitors back to the region's frontier days.



**T**HE FREIGHT COURIER AND OX-DRAWN CART in the entryway of the new Robert J. and Helen C. Kleberg South Texas Heritage Center at the Witte Museum in San Antonio give visitors a hint that they're in for a thoroughly modern, yet authentic, telling of the region's colorful history. The well-worn wooden *carreta* dates from the 1850s, while the freighter mannequin speaks to viewers with holographic images projected onto its face.

The combination of interactive technology with a pre-industrial transportation relic provides the perfect introduction to the rich history, legend, and lore revealed in the Heritage Center's expansive portrayal of South Texas life. The museum entertains as much as it educates with a combination of rare artifacts, photography, audio and video exhibits, and interactive features.

The 20,000-square-foot, two-story South Texas Heritage Center opened last May, making it the newest addition to the venerable Witte Museum. The Heritage Center gives the Witte a permanent space to interpret the distinct cultures and traditions of South Texas, as well as San Antonio's prominence as an economic and cultural hub in the region's development.

The museum building itself embodies a striking combination of old and new—one section is housed in a 1930s wing of the Witte called Pioneer Hall, while the adjoining section is newly constructed of glass, steel, and limestone. Designed by the local architecture firm Ford, Powell & Carson, the light-filled atrium of the new section provides a view of the museum gardens, a limestone amphitheater, and the San Antonio River.

Venturing to the second floor, museum-goers enter a gal-

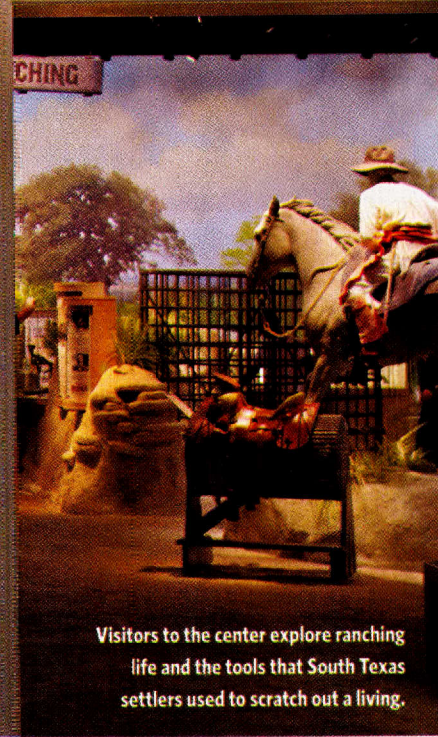
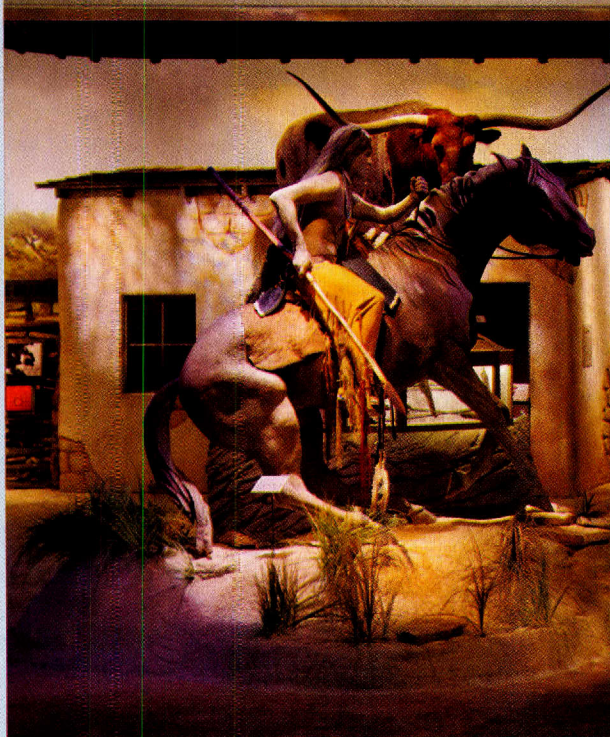
lery titled "A Wild and Vivid Land: Stories of South Texas." The first part of the exhibit is designed to represent Main Plaza, San Antonio's central business and gathering place in the 1800s. Visitors can step into a re-creation of the C.H. Guenther Mercantile, where the household goods on view include copper pots, china dolls, and Texian Campaigne china produced in Staffordshire, England, and decorated with scenes of the U.S.-Mexican War of the 1840s. A touchscreen display provides

The center blends historical artifacts, like an ox-drawn cart, with modern architecture and interactive exhibits.

**Learn about ranching, trail drives, and oil booms in a storyteller style designed to intrigue grade-schoolers and scholars alike.**

# Postcards

## GOV. DOLPH BRISCOE RANCHING



Visitors to the center explore ranching life and the tools that South Texas settlers used to scratch out a living.



The museum's second-floor gallery is called "A Wild and Vivid Land: Stories of South Texas."

short descriptions of each object.

Other displays in the plaza showcase such items as a vintage Menger Hotel ledger, a Bowie knife found on the San Jacinto battlefield, and a sword that

about conflicts on the frontier, with relics including a gold-plated sword presented by residents of Kinney County to General John Bullis, an 1870s eagle feather war bonnet owned by Yamparika Comanche Chief Tabananica, and a beaded Apache blouse. Audio narration recounts the tragic story of the 1840 Council House Fight

Lieutenant Colonel James Neill presented to William Barret Travis when Neill departed the Alamo in February 1836, leaving Travis in command. "The sword was found in a 1950s Alamo dig and presented to the city," explains curator Bruce Shackelford.

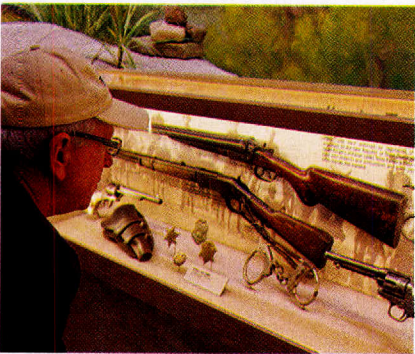
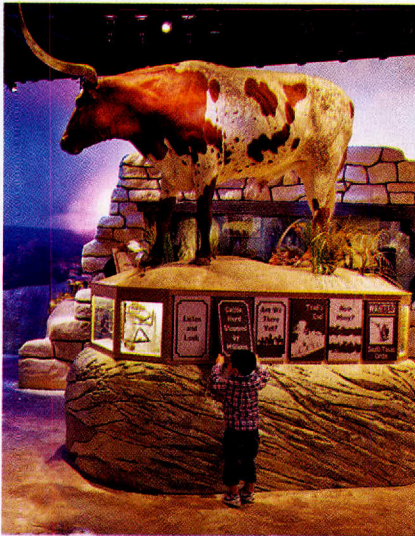
The plaza gallery also includes a display

The **second-floor gallery's** exhibits range from **depictions** of the lives of **ancient Texans** to the **inventions** of **technology** pioneers.

on Main Plaza, in which some 35 Penateka Comanches were killed. A photo of the captive Apache Geronimo illustrates the time he spent at San Antonio's Fort Sam Houston in 1886.

Also in the plaza gallery, enlarged images of "chili queens" and their customers provide a vivid sense of one of the





Alamo City's most storied culinary traditions. The women sold spicy fare from portable stoves in the city's plazas, reaching the height of their popularity in the late 19th Century.

Continuing in the second-floor gallery, visitors enter the Witte's former Pioneer Hall Ballroom. A sweeping mural—created from nine of the late San Antonio artist Porfirio Salinas' paintings—covers the upper halves of three walls. The mural sets the room's tone with its depiction of a South Texas day from sunrise to sunset.

The gallery's exhibits range from the daily lives of ancient Texans, represented by such artifacts as a pair of fiber sandals, to the stories of such trailblazing 20th-Century South Texans as Edgar Gardner

Longhorn cattle were an important part of the South Texas economy in the 1880s. Vaqueros and cowboys treasured their firearms for protection.

Tobin, the World War I flying ace who pioneered aerial land surveying, and O.S. Petty, an engineering genius who developed technology that could amplify and measure vibrations underground. In between, visitors learn about ranching, trail drives, law enforcement, irrigation, surveying, and South Texas oil booms, rounded up in a storyteller style that is designed to intrigue grade-schoolers and scholars alike.

In a display on cattle brands, for instance, we learn the story of Esther Clark Watson and her broken-heart brand. When the Gonzales County rancher branded her cattle in the 1850s, she did so with a broken heart. Clark's first husband had died on the job as a freighter. The second, it is said, perished at the Alamo. Then, in 1849, the third set out for the California gold fields, never to return. So Clark designed

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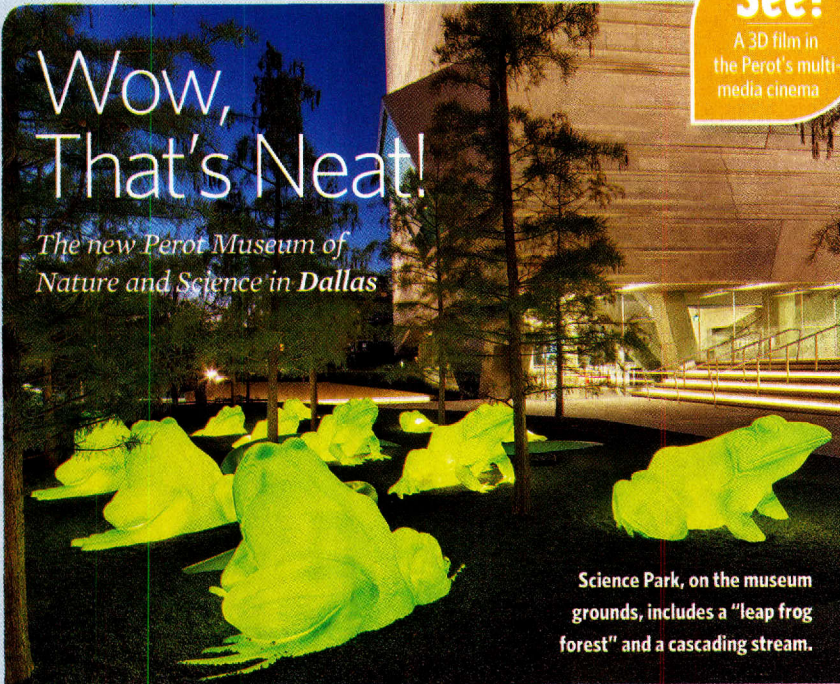
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**See!**

A 3D film in the Perot's multi-media cinema

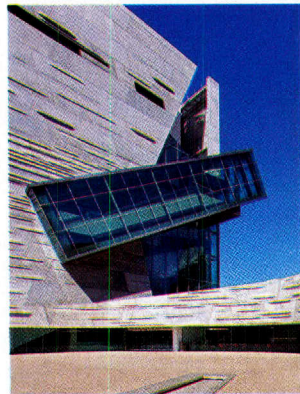


**IT'S NO SECRET THAT DALLAS PREFERS BIG, BOLD, AND FLASHY DIVER-**sions. The new Perot Museum of Nature and Science answers the call, while also mixing in a healthy dose of education and innovation.

The \$185 million, 180,000-square-foot museum opened to gushing reviews in December. With a mission to "inspire minds through nature and science," the Perot Museum offers a children's museum and 10 other permanent exhibit halls that delve into the sciences of sports, weather, energy, geology, the human body, space, engineering, birds, and more.

"We definitely cover the gamut from dinosaurs to DNA," said Nicole Small, the museum's chief executive officer. "I think people are staying a lot longer than they planned when they come."

The museum is located in Victory Park, adjacent to downtown. Its eye-catching design—conceived by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Thom Mayne and his firm Morphosis Architects—is meant to resemble a large cube floating over a landscaped base. Passersby on the Woodall Rodgers Freeway are sure to notice the glass-enclosed escalator that extends outside the building.



Robert Smithers, a computer consultant from Dallas, said he was impressed by the number of hands-on and interactive exhibits that he encountered during a recent visit. The museum is more than a children's activity, he said.

"I think eight-year-olds are going to love it because there are so many things to do and experience inside the building, but the adults were also doing and observing things, and getting into it," Robert said. "In other words, the stuff was neat." [www.perotmuseum.org](http://www.perotmuseum.org).—Matt Joyce

A glass-enclosed escalator is one of the Perot Museum's remarkable design features, along with a rolling roofscape and a full-height glass atrium.

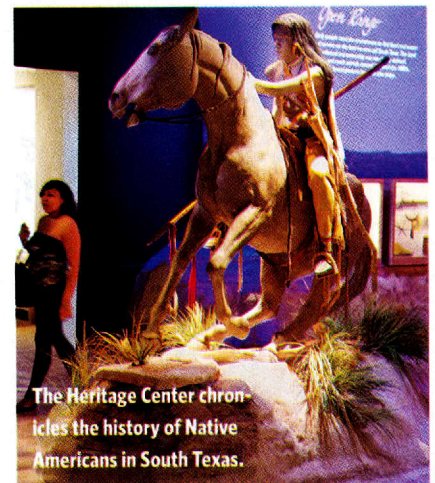
her broken-heart brand in the shape of a heart torn asunder by a vertical line.

The room's exhibit also includes life-size riders on horseback, frozen in fiber-glass, depicting a Spanish vaquero of the late 1700s, a Comanche hunter-warrior of the 1850s, and a 1930s portrayal of Helen Kleberg, wife of King Ranch heir and president Robert Kleberg. Museum

**Tools** of South Texas ranch life are featured in one exhibit, which include "**shotgun**" chaps, named for their straight-legged style, and "**batwing**" chaps.

signage explains that the Klebergs "created the world image of a Texas ranch family in the 1900s." According to the *New Handbook of Texas*, Helen Kleberg served as the model for Elizabeth Taylor's character in the movie *Giant*.

The tools of South Texas ranching life are grouped together in a large exhibit. It includes a pair of 1870s "shotgun" chaps, named for their [continued on page 16]



# What's New at the Pearl

*San Antonio's former brewery site continues to evolve*

**WHEN WE FIRST REPORTED ON THE REDEVELOPMENT** of San Antonio's former Pearl Brewery site in 2010, the 22-acre complex—at the northernmost navigable point of the San Antonio River—was beginning to fill in with shops, restaurants, and activities ranging from a weekly farmer's market to cooking classes at the new Texas campus of the Culinary Institute of America.

Less than three years later, the Pearl continues to evolve and grow. In the past few months, several new restaurants and bars have opened, along with shops offering treasures ranging from bespoke guayaberas to vintage cowboy boots, bike-share and bike-rental programs, and a full calendar of festivals and live music. (The annual Paella Festival in March draws 35 chefs and thousands of visitors to the grounds to sample Spain's iconic rice dish.) More than 300 apartments have opened, and crews recently broke ground to renovate the original 1880s brewery building into a 140-room boutique hotel—a project slated to open in 2014.

Several additional restaurants are scheduled to open in early

2013, including a new location of San Antonio's popular vegetarian restaurant Green; a spot called Arcade Midtown Kitchen, which will reinterpret southern fare like shrimp and grits; and a yet-unnamed restaurant helmed by former New Orleans chef Steve McHugh, which will occupy the Pearl Brewery's historic administration building.

Throughout the month of February in celebration of Valentine's Day, many of the Pearl's restaurants and boutiques will offer special menus, sales on gift items and clothing, and extended hours. See [www.atpearl.com](http://www.atpearl.com) for details. —Lori Moffatt

**Go!**  
Rent a bike and ride from the Pearl to the missions



Leigh Elena Navarro's new shop at the Pearl offers handmade jewelry and vintage clothing.

## ENJOY SPRING AT THE BEACH!

- Calendar of Events:**
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  - ◆ Matagorda County Fair & Rodeo
  - ◆ Matagorda Seafood Festival
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  - ◆ Nature Family Fun Fest
  - ◆ Palacios
  - ◆ Cinco de Mayo Festival



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PHOTOS AT LEFT AND TOP: WILL VAN OVERBEEK

# Postcards

**TH tip**

Schedule of interpretive plays at [texashighways.com/postcards](http://texashighways.com/postcards)

continued from page 14] straight-legged style, and some 1930s “batwing” chaps that kept legs cooler. The display’s computer touchscreen provides handy information on the sombreros, Stetsons, boots, and spurs that the ranch hands relied on. It notes, for instance, that a saddle common to northern Mexico circa 1870 had a larger horn for winding rope and that a fancy,

early-20th-Century Mexican bridle was custom-made for oilman Barney Halloran.

Downstairs, in the former Pioneer Hall, the Heritage Center continues the building’s tradition of displaying the portraits of members of the Old Time Trail Drivers Association. A new touchscreen database pops up portraits of trail drivers not represented on gallery walls.

A second downstairs gallery, the Russell Hill Rogers Texas Art Gallery, offers changing exhibits. On view through May 27th, *Artists on the Texas Frontier* includes such paintings as *Theater at Old Casino Club in San Antonio* by Carl G. von Iwonski, *San Pedro Springs Park* by Robert Jenkins Onderdonk, and *Crockett Street, Looking West, San Antonio de Bexar* by Karl Friedrich Hermann Lungkwitz.

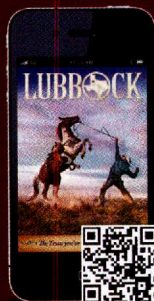
**The plays**, which take place in the amphitheater, feature characters **both real and imagined** discussing their lives, traditions, and cultures.

The Heritage Center also draws visitors into the past with regularly scheduled plays and demonstrations that illuminate the everyday life of 19th-Century South Texas. The plays, which take place in the amphitheater, feature characters both real and imagined discussing their lives, traditions, and cultures. This spring, the chili queens will take the stage for their turn in the spotlight. A new play about the old-time street cooks by San Antonio playwright Marisela Barrera opens March 16th. After a few hours of absorbing the rustic sites, sounds, and people of South Texas, a plate of the chili queens’ zesty market fare would surely hit the spot. **TH**



## SADDLE UP FOR SOME FUN IN LUBBOCK!

Shine your boots, dust off your cowboy hat and head out to the National Ranching Heritage Center’s 43rd Annual Ranch Day in Lubbock in April 2013. Enjoy a tour of the Center’s 48 restored ranch structures as well as horseback riding, rope making and delicious chuck wagon cooking. For more information about this and other western activities in Lubbock, view our Calendar of Events page online.



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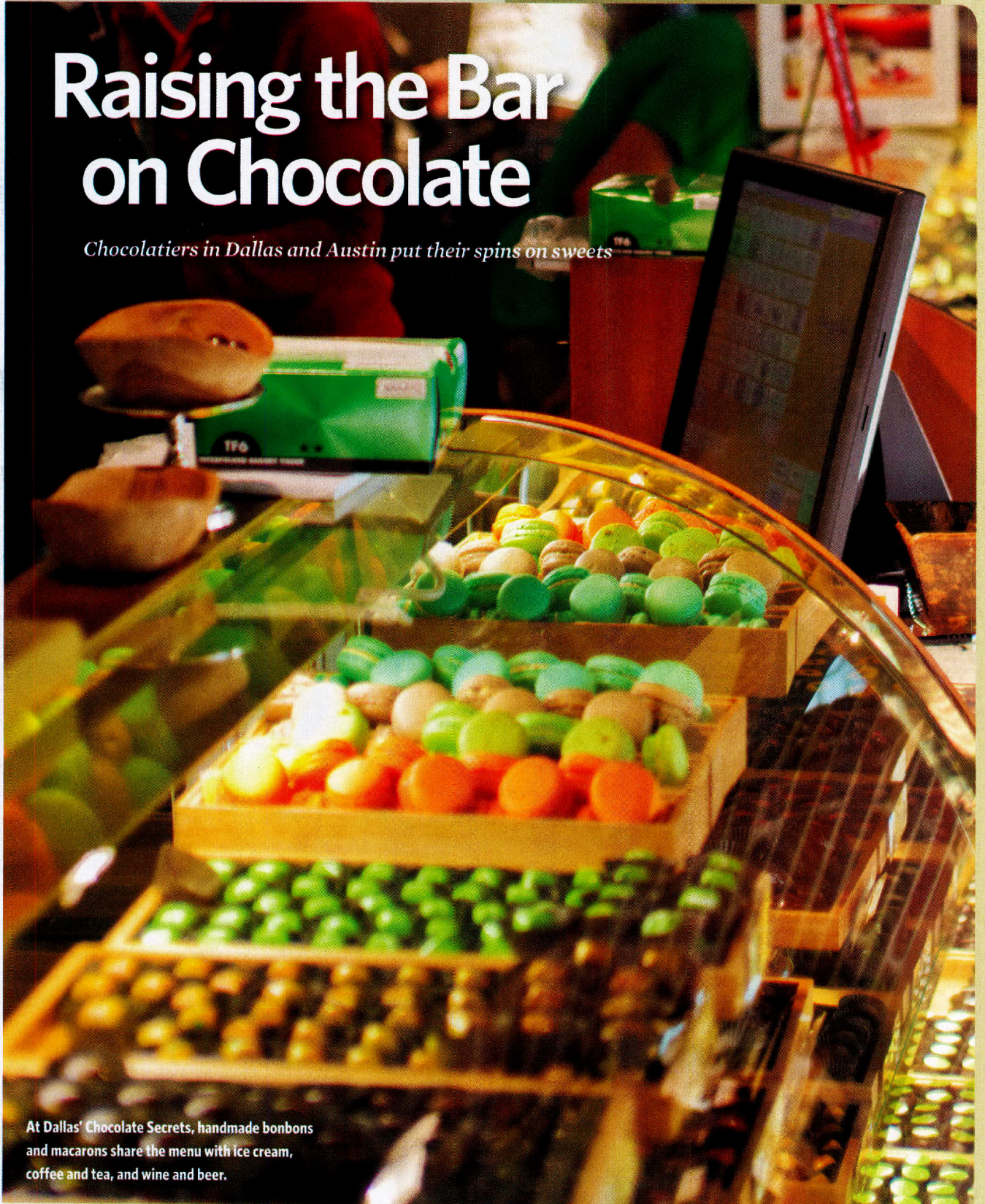
### The Witte Museum

is at 3801 Broadway, San Antonio, 78209. Call 210/357-1900; [sthc.witte-museum.org](http://sthc.witte-museum.org).



## Raising the Bar on Chocolate

*Chocolatiers in Dallas and Austin put their spins on sweets*



At Dallas' Chocolate Secrets, handmade bonbons and macarons share the menu with ice cream, coffee and tea, and wine and beer.



Dude, Sweet Chocolate's original location in Oak Cliff has proven so popular that the shop recently opened branches in Fort Worth and North Dallas.

**C**HOCOLATE HAS BECOME SYNONYMOUS WITH the month of February. Like the Aztec Emperor Montezuma, who is said to have drunk more than 50 cups of liquid chocolate daily for its aphrodisiacal properties, those looking to express sweet sentiments or celebrate love have long extolled chocolate in its many forms.

Perhaps nowhere in Texas are there more chocolate fanatics than in Dallas, where the chocolate business has grown to Aztec proportions in just a few short years. Dallasites have embraced the art of candymaking with zeal and a passion for high-quality—and often bizarre—ingredients.

“Dallas has a relatively young chocolate scene, so the local chocolatiers are free to experiment however they want,” says Sander Wolf, founder of DallasChocolate.org, a website devoted to promoting

artisan chocolate in the city. “The chocolatiers have formed an interactive community, and it’s really fun to watch (and eat) everything that’s going on,” says Sander, whose organization offers chocolate-sampling tours of the city and hosts an annual chocolate conference and festival in the fall. “When you come to Dallas for chocolate, you won’t go home hungry!” Sander exclaims.

Along with traditional chocolates, this cocoa-crazed city has seen everything from truffles made with curry, blue

cheese, bacon, and gummy bears to chocolates flirting with too-pretty-to-eat status, like the handcrafted works of art coming out of CocoAndré Chocolatier in Oak Cliff.

Chocolate shops have opened all across the Metroplex, including Elegantly Chocolate in Carrollton (try the raspberry-and-dark-chocolate floret cups), Sublime Chocolate in Allen, and The Dark Chocolate Bakery, which operates a mail-order confectionary out of Dallas.

### Chocolate Secrets

Love and chocolate go hand in hand for Kate Weiser, chocolatier and executive pastry chef at Chocolate Secrets, an upscale chocolate boutique in Dallas’ Uptown area that entices customers with organic, brightly colored treats that resemble jewels. Not only did it take this Kansas City transplant nearly two years to perfect the process of hand-painting her bonbons, but she recently celebrated her second anniversary with her husband and unofficial taste tester.

“I like to say that my husband fell in love with me through chocolate,” Kate



says with a laugh. Kate notes that her favorite Valentine’s treats are the painted, heart-shaped bonbons and the candies made with sea salt and caramel, which feature salty caramel with a chocolate outer shell painted with colored cocoa butter. “Chocolate is really a celebration of life and a celebration of love,” says Kate. “We’ve had a lot of love stories start

**Yes, these chocolate jewels from Chocolate Secrets are edible. And delicious.**

at our store; I've been part of five proposals!" Go to [www.chocolatesecrets.net](http://www.chocolatesecrets.net).

### Dude, Sweet Chocolate

When it comes to funky flavor combinations, few can compete with Katherine Clapner, chef and co-owner of Dude, Sweet Chocolate. Her creative recipes can convert even the most devout chocolate purist into a daring chocoholic. "I just make what I like and try to turn people on to things they wouldn't normally find," says Katherine, who began selling

her chocolates at farmers' markets before opening her storefront. "Just because it's a weird ingredient doesn't mean it tastes weird in the end. Everything is put in there for a reason."

Take her Albatross fudge, for instance. Although a few customers are still leery of its combination of dehydrated blue cheese and sea salt, this delicately crunchy fudge (named for a popular

Monty Python skit) is a top seller with its balance of creamy chocolate and pungent cheese. Katherine also offers an artisan sampler that includes flavors like Louisiana tobacco and cognac, beet and olive oil, and Peruvian purple corn.

After all, in chocolate as in love and romance, rules are made to be broken. Go to [www.dudesweetchocolate.com](http://www.dudesweetchocolate.com).

—Kristy Alpert

## Succumbing to the Temptress

### WHEN LAKEWOOD BREWING

Company in Garland debuted an Imperial Milk Stout called the Temptress to a crowd of beer aficionados at a local festival, no one was prepared for the crowd's intense reaction. Although there is no actual chocolate in this creamy, sweet beer, it's brewed with Madagascar bourbon vanilla and roasted



chocolate malt, giving it a rich chocolate flavor with a smooth, caramel finish that attracted admirers in droves.

The beer is great in a glass, but perhaps the true testament to the Temptress is what people are doing with it: Zio Carlo Magnolia Brew Pub in Fort Worth has created a Temptress chocolate mousse, Goodfriend Beer Garden and Burger House in Lakewood serves a Temptress ice cream float, and The Common Table in Dallas makes a cherry Temptress milkshake with bourbon and espresso-spiked whipped cream.

—Kristy Alpert

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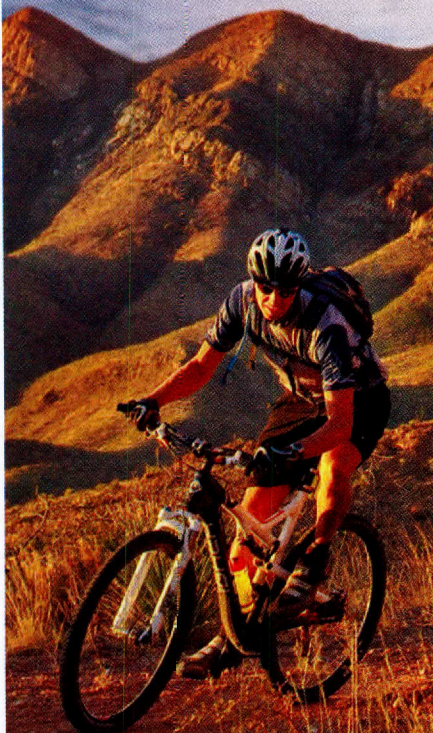
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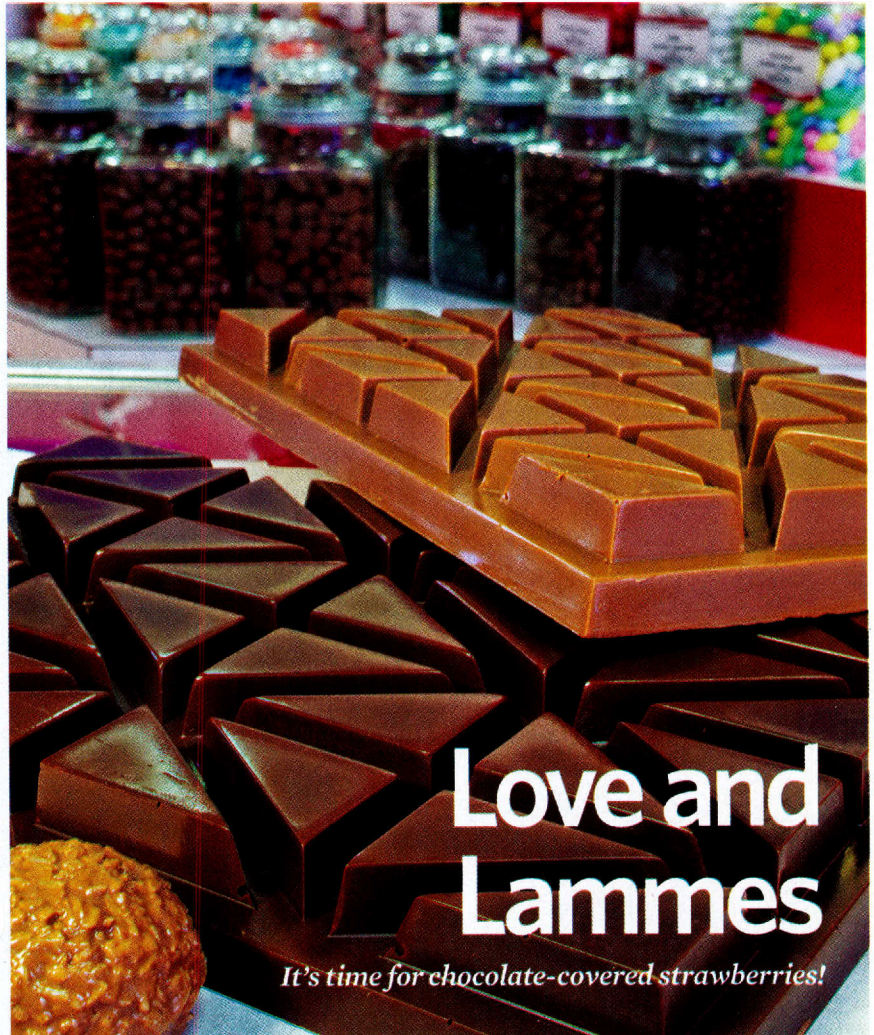
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## Taste



## Love and Lammes

*It's time for chocolate-covered strawberries!*

**AUSTIN'S 125-YEAR-OLD LAMMES CANDIES CRANKS OUT ABOUT** a quarter-million pounds of mouth-watering chocolates each year using ingredients such as peanuts, cashews, roasted almonds, caramel, orange peels, peppermints, and habanero peppers. But business really heats up in February, when chocolate-lovers purchase nearly 20,000 pounds of plump, milk-chocolate-covered strawberries in honor of Valentine's Day.

Lammes first started making chocolate-covered strawberries in the late 1970s, but at first they weren't popular with customers, explains company President Pam Teich, whose great-great grandfather, William Wirt Lamme, founded the confectionary in 1878. Pam says that originally, her father, David

Lamme Teich, made the strawberries with liquid centers similar to what you'd find with chocolate-covered cherries, so "they were really messy." But the real obstacle was that people weren't familiar

**Make it!**

Chocolate-covered-strawberry recipe at [texashighways.com/thtaste](http://texashighways.com/thtaste)

Originally called Red Front Candy Factory, Lammes adopted its current name in 1885.



Customers purchase nearly **20,000 pounds** of **chocolate-covered strawberries** every February in honor of **Valentine's Day**.



with the combination of flavors, she says. "The first time we offered samples of chocolate-covered strawberries, we couldn't get anybody to try them," adds employee Mildred Walston, who began working for the iconic candy-maker 73 years ago when it had just one store in downtown Austin. That changed quickly, she says, and these days they're

a bestseller, along with the popular Longhorns, a mix of caramel and pecans enrobed in milk or dark chocolate.

Lammes sells 100,000 pounds of Longhorns annually, says Pam, and customers have sent them to chocolate-lovers as

Lammes' Airport Boulevard location in Austin draws chocolate-lovers year round.

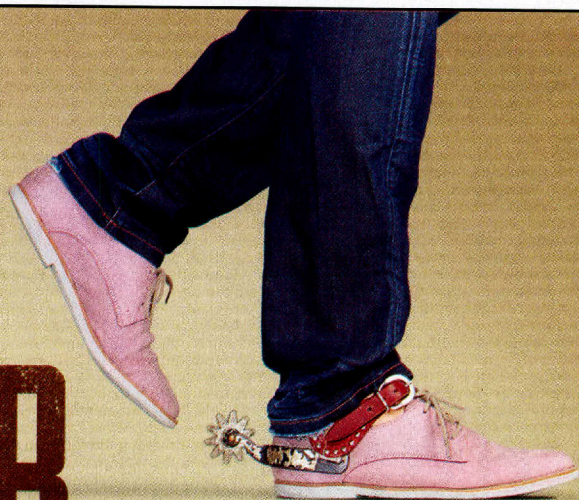
pedigreed as Queen Elizabeth and Katherine Hepburn. "And President Lyndon Johnson actually ordered Longhorns to be delivered to the White House," she says.

Another popular Lammes candy, the now-famous "Texas Chewie" pralines, were first made in 1892 using pecans from trees growing on the banks of Austin's Lady Bird Lake. The buttery, chewy pralines have long ranked #1 with customers, but prior to the 1920s they were available only by special request.

Lammes Candies today has five Austin-area locations and a vibrant online presence. But considering that William Wirt Lamme lost his confectionary in an 1885 poker game (only to have his son buy it back), we're lucky to savor Lammes Candies' sweets at all. "This part of our family lore was a secret for a long time," says Pam. "I would have liked to be a fly on the wall during that game."

Call Lammes Candies at 800/252-1885; [www.lammes.com](http://www.lammes.com). —Mary O. Parker

# WALK IN SWAGGER OUT



The women who shaped Texas have worn every kind of shoe – and boot. When you learn what they accomplished, you'll have something new to brag about – and – you might just hear a jingle on your shoe.

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## What's Cooking?

*Creating community in the kitchen*

**SINCE I BEGAN TAKING COOKING CLASSES A FEW** years ago, I've learned how to finely dice an onion with a few strategic knife cuts, how to use a pillowcase as a makeshift salad spinner, and how Elizabethan chefs relied on fleet-footed canines called turnspit dogs to power their rotating barbecue spits. But these gems can't compare to the lesson bestowed upon students in one of Central Market's recent grilling classes in Austin, in which chef Adam Perry Lang tenderized a standing rib roast with a baseball bat. "Now you know why we call the front row 'the splash zone,'" says Cooking School Manager Meredith Beeman.

These days, she says, the popularity of "hands-on" classes has exploded, especially as cooking has become more popular among people in their 20s and 30s. "Students say they hope to invite friends and family to their homes and give them the gift of preparing a great meal," says Meredith.

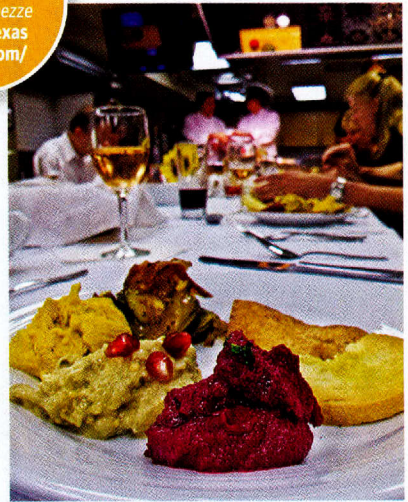
Just as a home-cooked meal makes a great gift, so does

a cooking class, especially for Valentine's Day, an oft-pressurized holiday that at its heart, focuses on shared experiences. At a recent Lebanese-food cooking class in Austin hosted by chef Anissa Helou, a table of strangers became friends over three hours of listening, laughing, and eating. By night's end, we were toasting to one couple's upcoming nuptials. Central Market's classes are posted at [www.centralmarket.com](http://www.centralmarket.com).

**A Lebanese mezze spread at Central Market's Cooking School.**

—Lori Moffatt

**See!**  
Lebanese mezze recipes at [texashighways.com/titaste](http://texashighways.com/titaste)



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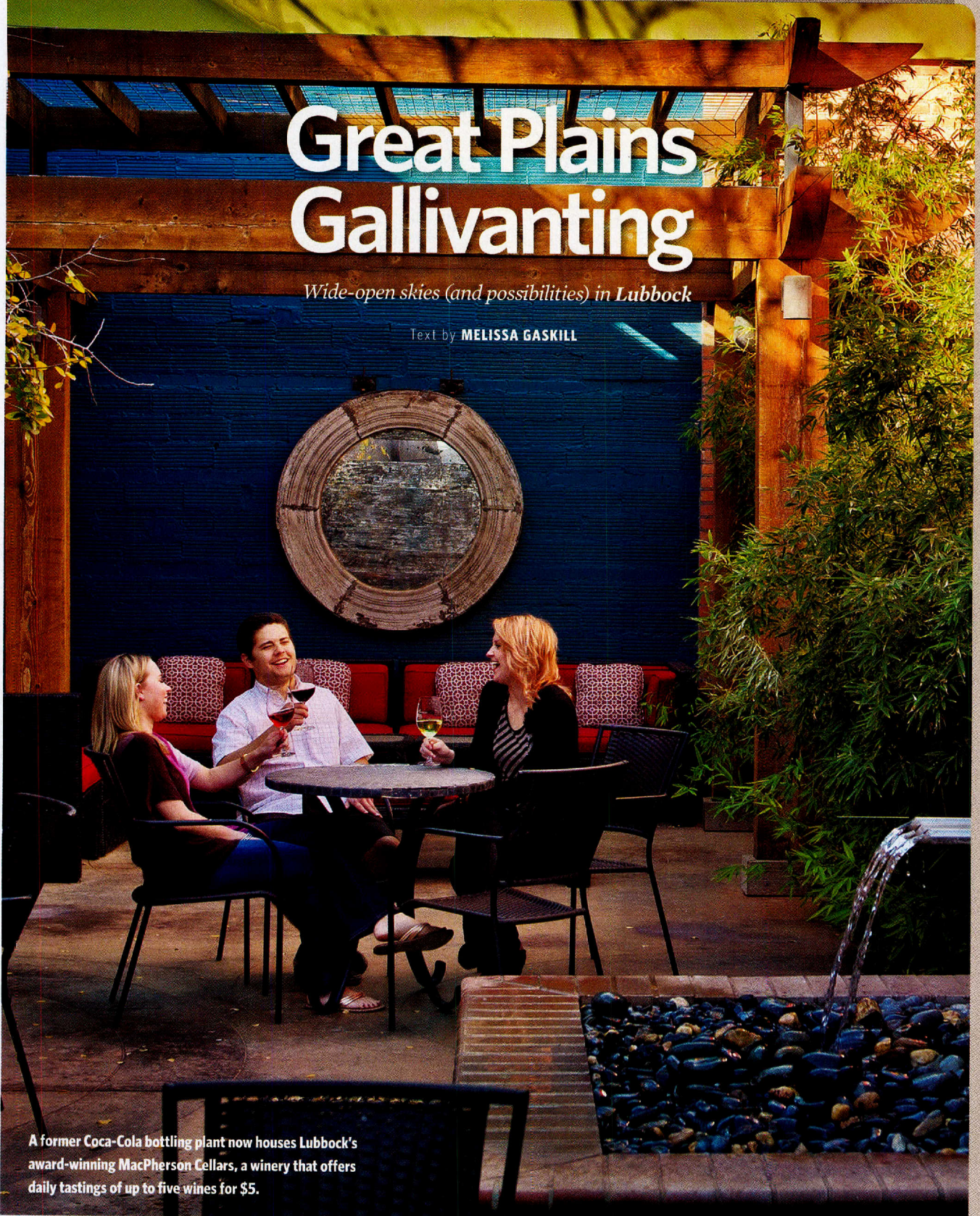
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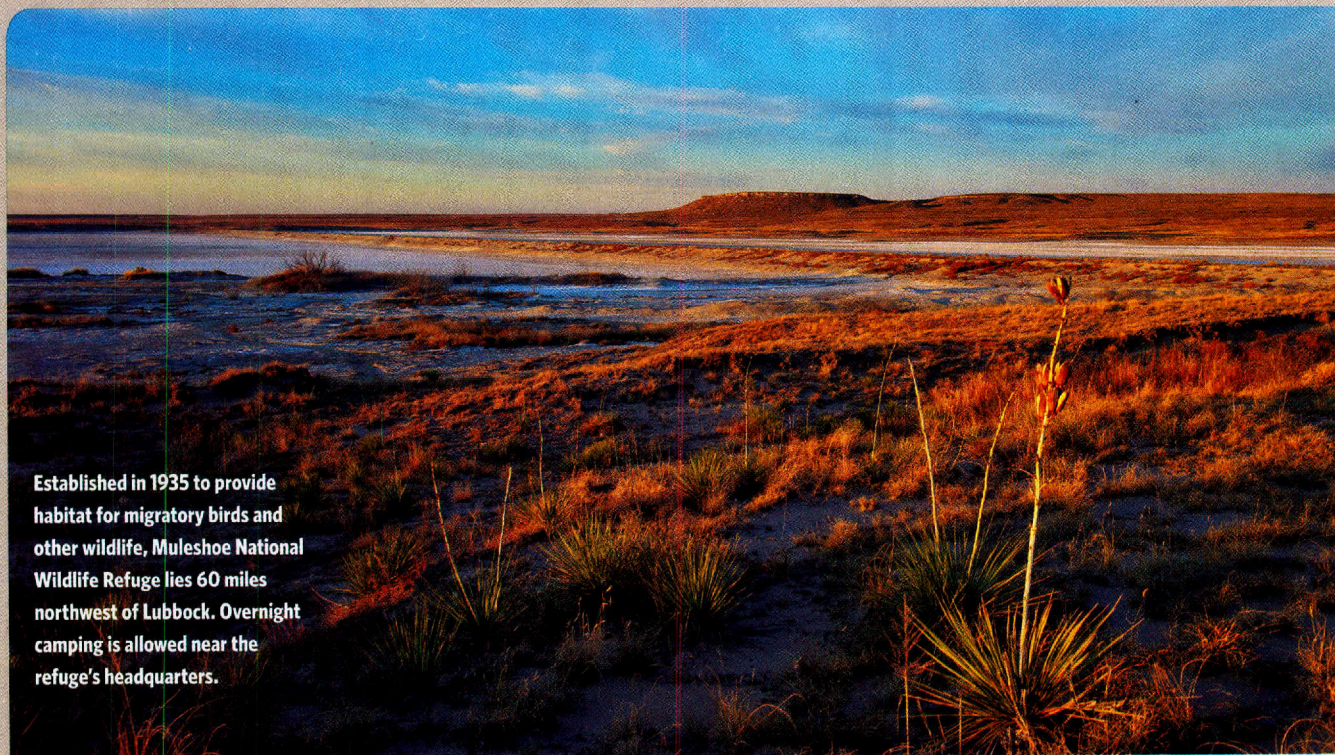
## Great Plains Gallivanting

*Wide-open skies (and possibilities) in Lubbock*

Text by **MELISSA GASKILL**



A former Coca-Cola bottling plant now houses Lubbock's award-winning MacPherson Cellars, a winery that offers daily tastings of up to five wines for \$5.



Established in 1935 to provide habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge lies 60 miles northwest of Lubbock. Overnight camping is allowed near the refuge's headquarters.

**T**HE SKY IN LUBBOCK SPRAWLS FROM HORIZON to horizon, soaring overhead like the sandhill cranes that pass through twice a year. The wind ruffling my hair has met scarcely an impediment as it traveled the length of the country, and it carries the scent of thousands of fresh, fertile miles.

Lubbock pins the southern end of Texas' Great Plains, holding it fast to the rest of Texas. People here work hard to make a living, but my weekend visit proved they appreciate playing hard, too.

Upon arrival, I checked in to the stylish, 15-story Overton Hotel, one of the city's highest buildings, which meant a great view from my room window. The large and leathery lobby furniture evokes a Western spirit, and the downstairs bar has an outdoor patio, the better to enjoy those big skies. The Overton's Pecan Grill menu listed tempting dishes such as rabbit loin wrapped in jalapeño bacon, sweet-tea-brined Cornish game hens, quail, antelope, and wild boar, but I had arranged to meet friends for dinner a few miles west of town at Cagle Steaks.

The only steak served at this family-owned, Old West-style restaurant is the ribeye, which comes from the center of the rib roast and is prized for its marbling and flavor. Owner John Cagle tells me that his cooks season the steaks with a secret-recipe spice mixture and then grill them over mesquite. The result is a juicy, melt-in-your-mouth flavor explosion. But the menu here offers more than ribeyes: Diners can also choose grilled chicken, salmon, fajitas, and barbecue plates, which come with a buffet of beans, potato salad, cole slaw, and cornbread. Throw in peach or cherry cobbler, and you may not need to eat for a week. A full stomach and luxurious bed had me out like a light that night—all the better to get an early start on adventures



the next morning.

The campus of Texas Tech University starts just a block from the Overton. One of its main attractions, the Museum of Texas Tech University, includes a gallery of Southwest Indian Art, plus an extensive exhibit called *The Ice Age on the Southern Plains*, which includes two murals depicting plant and animal life, dinosaur

In the main gallery of the Museum of Texas Tech University, visitors encounter a faceoff between T. Rex (shown) and Triceratops.

and phytosaur bones, and skeletal casts.

At the National Ranching Heritage Center next door, the real action is outside. Spread across 27 acres, a total of 48 authentic structures re-create ranch life and history from the late 1780s through the 1950s. A dugout, bunkhouse, one-room schoolhouse, barns, blacksmith shop, ranch homes, train depot, windmills, livestock pens, stables, and cookhouse scatter among grass-covered hills dotted with sotol, mesquite trees, and the occasional jackrabbit. With the right point of view, I could imagine I'd gone back in time.

**The ground beneath  
my feet contained traces  
of the humans who  
lived here thousands  
of years ago.**

A little more than a mile north, Lubbock Lake Landmark, an archeological preserve of the Museum of Texas Tech University, contains a complete cultural record from the Clovis period (roughly 12,000 years ago) through the present. Several trails crisscross the property, each focusing on a theme: archeology, natural history, and nature. Archeological digs here have uncovered bison kills from more than 10,000 years ago, along with the remains of mammoths, ancient stone tools and pottery, and artifacts from early Anglo-American settlers. As I walked in a draw once filled by ancient springs, knowing that the ground beneath my feet contained traces of the humans who had lived here, I felt both serene and disconcerted.

Just as humans found the area hospitable, so do creatures such as prairie dogs. Some 60 miles northwest of town, Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge, whose saline lakes draw thousands of sandhill cranes in winter and many other

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## Weekender

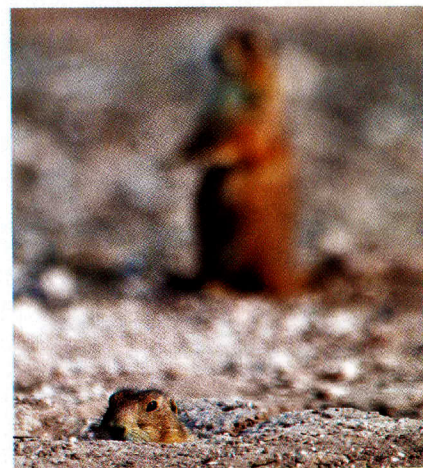
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birds year-round, harbors a robust prairie dog community. Check it out from the road near the refuge's Paul's Lake; bring binoculars for a close look.

I also enjoyed watching the antics of prairie dogs near downtown Lubbock at Prairie Dog Town in Mackenzie Park, established in the 1930s by resident Kennedy Clapp, who feared the entertaining animals were disappearing. I hopped out of my car and watched the plump, furry critters—not actually dogs, of course, but rodents closely related to ground squirrels—zip in and out of their burrows, yip, and stand upright as if posing for photos. Prairie dog burrows provide habitat for owls, horned lizards, rabbits, and hares, and the little fellows may help preserve grasslands by reducing the spread of brush.

Grapes like it here as well. In fact, the area's grape-friendly climate and soil earned designation as The High Plains American Viticultural Area, one of eight appellations in Texas, and it produces many award-winning wines. I grabbed a spot at the stainless-steel bar of McPherson Cellars' tasting room, in a former Coca-Cola bottling plant, to try some for myself. Owner Kim McPherson's father, Clinton A. "Doc" McPherson, co-founded Llano Estacado Winery in 1976, one of Texas' first post-Prohibition wineries. McPherson



Cellars debuted in 2000, and this tasting room opened in 2008. McPherson's Viognier, Sangiovese, and DBS (a blend of Dolcetto, Barbera, and Sangiovese grapes) won my top votes.

Located about 10 minutes from my hotel—which counts as "way out" in Lubbock—the Funky Door Bistro & Wine Room does, indeed, have a funky, sculpted-metal door. It also has fondue, pasta, burgers, live music, and an extensive wine list that includes 48 available by the glass from a European Enomatic

**FROM TOP:** An indoor tasting room opens year-round at McPherson Cellars. Protected prairie dogs entertain visitors to Lubbock's Mackenzie Park.

“self-serve” machine. I ordered a glass the old-fashioned way and enjoyed a robust Malbec to accompany my fettuccine with prosciutto and peas.

As the child of a World War II B-25 pilot, I’m always drawn to military war museums, so I stopped by the Silent Wings Museum in the original Lubbock airport terminal, which tells the story of the WWII glider pilot program. Roughly 80 percent of

**I watched** the plump, furry **critters zip in** and out of their burrows, **yip**, and **stand upright** as if **posing** for photos.

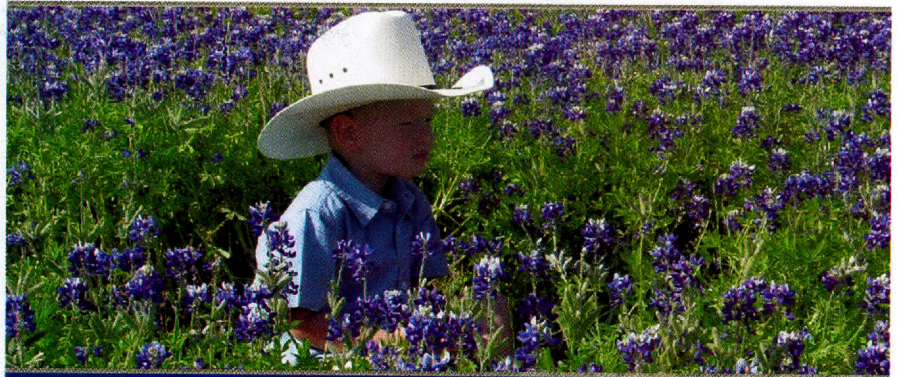
American glider pilots received their silver wings here at the South Plains Army Air Field, the precursor to the Lubbock International Airport. The museum has several gliders on display in a tall, glass-walled room overlooking the airport, along with exhibits on operations in which gliders participated, including the Normandy landing. Here, too, is a wealth of period photos, uniforms, weapons, flags, and banners.

I had time for one more stop. Should I make it the Buddy Holly Center, American Wind Power Center, an apple orchard, or one of the area’s four other wineries? I knew I’d have to make another visit. And so before I moved on, I stood for a few more moments, taking in the wide, blue sky and feeling the wind in my hair. **TH**

## Lubbock

is in far northwest Texas in the region known as the Llano Estacado. For more information on the Lubbock area, contact the Lubbock Convention and Visitors Bureau, 800/692-4035; [www.visitlubbock.org](http://www.visitlubbock.org).

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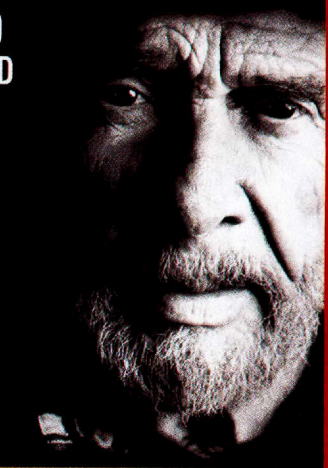
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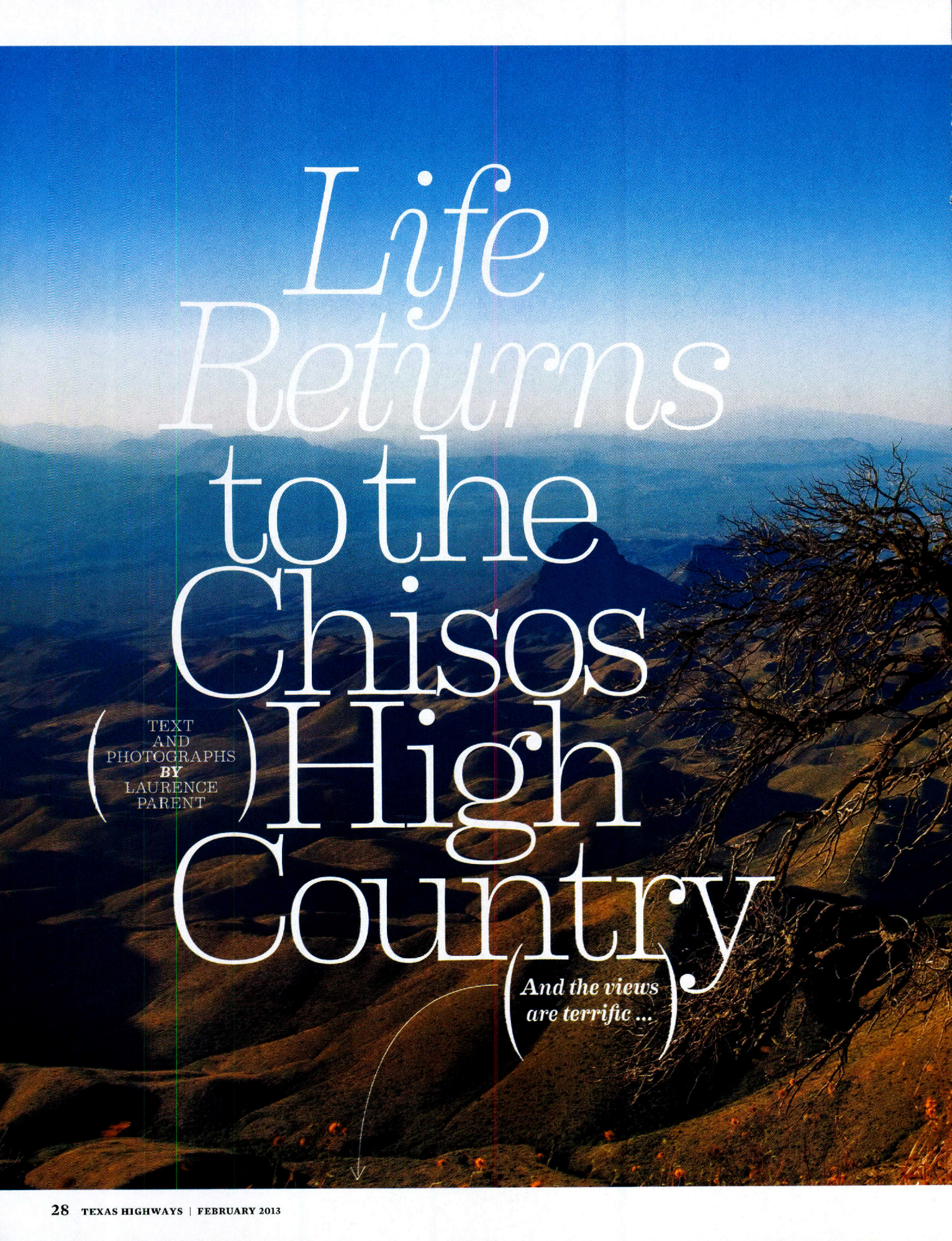
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*John Morlock, Heather Ainsworth-Dobbins, and Mary Baxter taking a breather on the Boot Canyon Trail.*



With pleasant late-September temperatures and a picture-perfect blue sky overhead, I shrugged on a backpack loaded with overnight gear and made last-minute hiking plans with friends in the Basin parking lot of Big Bend National Park. Above us towered the craggy heights of the Chisos Mountains, daring us to hike up into the rocky peaks.

The four of us— Heather Ainsworth-Dobbins, Mary Baxter, John Morlock, and I—had gathered here to hike to the park's famous South Rim, a strenuous, 12.6-mile, round-trip hike that climbs more than 2,000 feet and affords spectacular views stretching clear into Mexico. It's possible to do the hike in a single long, exhausting day, but we planned to camp for a few nights to fully enjoy the views, the solitude, and the park's brilliant sunrises and sunsets.

I had heard that many of the mountains' trees had died during the extended drought of 2011, and I wanted to see if the rumors were true. There are two main routes to the South Rim—the steep Pinnacles Trail and the more gradual Laguna Meadows Trail. We figured we'd take the hard way up and the easier route back, so we started up the Pinnacles Trail, admiring the lush green grass and abundant wildflowers. Recent rains had obviously started the mountains on the road to recovery. As we climbed, though, scattered damaged trees showed that the drought had indeed been tough on Big Bend.

John Morlock, superintendent of Fort Davis National Historic Site in nearby Fort Davis, previously worked in Big Bend National Park as a ranger, and before that, as the park's fire management officer. He estimated that half of the pinyon pines here—the Chisos High Country's dominant tree—had been severely compromised during the drought. He explained that the lack of water had stressed the pines, and bark beetles had then infested them, further weakening the trees. "By the springtime growing season," he said, "it will be evident which ones will make it and which ones won't."

And so life continues. As we sweated our way up the steep trail, John pointed out the twisted, white-barked aspens at the base of Emory Peak and the sheer ramparts of Casa Grande Peak, which reminded us of a castle.

"I love the South Rim," said Heather, catching her breath. "But right now, I'm not nuts about the Pinnacles Trail."

Mary smiled and offered, "I appreciate that the route home will be downhill."

We stopped for some trail mix and dried fruit in the shade of maple and oak trees just before reaching the saddle between Emory Peak and Toll Mountain at the high point of the Pinnacles Trail. The saddle—a "low" point between hills—marks the entrance to the park's official High Country. Here, swaths of

I had heard that many of the mountains' trees had died during the extended drought of 2011, and I wanted to see if the rumors were true.





*Distressed trees were  
a frequent reminder  
of 2011's widespread  
drought.*



*Scarlet ladies' tresses and skeleton-leaf goldeneye add color to the Chisos' rocky slopes.*



To order a print of the top or bottom photograph on page 34, call 866/962-1191, or visit [www.texashighwaysprints.com](http://www.texashighwaysprints.com).



skeleton-leaf goldeneye, mountain sage, and scarlet bouvardia lined the trail.

Although John was pained to see the struggling pines, “a thinning of the high Chisos forest was needed for long-term health,” he told us.

We dropped into Boot Canyon, stopping at Boot Spring to obtain and filter water. Before the hike, we had checked with park rangers about the spring’s status, as it’s often unreliable. When Boot Spring is flowing, a multi-day hike-and-camping adventure is much easier since you don’t have to carry three days’ worth of water. Lucky for us, the recent rains had not only spurred the flowers into an incredible bloom, they had also rejuvenated the spring.

A few of the tall Arizona cypress trees here had succumbed to the drought, but most

Lucky for us, the recent rains had spurred the flowers into an incredible bloom and had rejuvenated the spring.

trees in the sheltered canyon had made it through. We were too early in the fall to see the maples in full color, but they looked healthy and green. Yellow butterflies fluttered around the many pools dotting the rock canyon bottom.

Although all of us had seen it before, the view where the Boot Canyon Trail meets the South Rim Trail brought exclamations of joy. Here, the South

Rim drops off abruptly in a sheer cliff just beyond the trail junction. Thousands of feet below unfold the Chisos foothills, and in the far distance, almost lost in the vast expanse of desert, flows the tiny green ribbon of the Rio Grande. We admired the view for a few minutes, but soon our shoulders protested the weight of our now water-filled packs. We hiked the short distance northeast to our reserved campsite, where we happily shed our packs, set up tents, and relaxed in the shade of oaks and pinyon pines as we cooked dinner.

After refueling our bodies, we picked up jackets, headlamps, and cameras and walked the easy  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile over to the South Rim. The trail hugged the rim, offering spellbinding views of the endless ridges and hills below. Looking east, we could see the Sierra del Carmen range of Mexico, and above

and below us, peregrine falcons and ravens soared gracefully in golden sunlight. We were so distracted by the abstract patterns of golden light and dark shadows highlighting the canyons below that we made it to the South Rim only minutes before the sun dipped below the western horizon.

“How many hikes allow us to see into a different country and imagine ourselves as explorers in the Wild West?” Heather asked. “I love to sit up here and picture a lone cowboy riding on a ridgetop.”

We crawled into our sleeping bags that night tired and happy. The next morning, we got up before dawn to watch the sun peek over the Sierra del Carmen. The slanting golden rays cast long shadows over the desert below and illuminated the high country with pink and gold. We spent the day hiking the loop out to the Northeast Rim, then down into Boot Canyon to replenish our water supply, taking photos all the way. After returning to our campsite and fixing a freeze-dried dinner, we sat on the Rim through another glorious sunset until the light had faded from the sky. The next morning, after sunrise and a granola breakfast, we took down the tents and reluctantly packed our gear.

Via the South Rim Trail, we hiked to the Laguna Meadows Trail for a gentler descent back to the Basin trailhead. Fields of gold-eye distracted me constantly, demanding more photos. Slowly we descended, passing more aspens, this time high on the south slope of Emory Peak, and the tall, lush grass of Laguna Meadows.

“The South Rim view is the obvious spectacular place, but the meadows are really nice in a quiet way,” Mary noted.

We arrived at our cars by late morning. We looked forward to a big meal and a shower, but as we drove out of the Basin, I caught my

“How many hikes allow us to see into a different country and imagine ourselves as explorers in the Wild West? I love to sit up here and picture a lone cowboy riding on a ridgetop.”

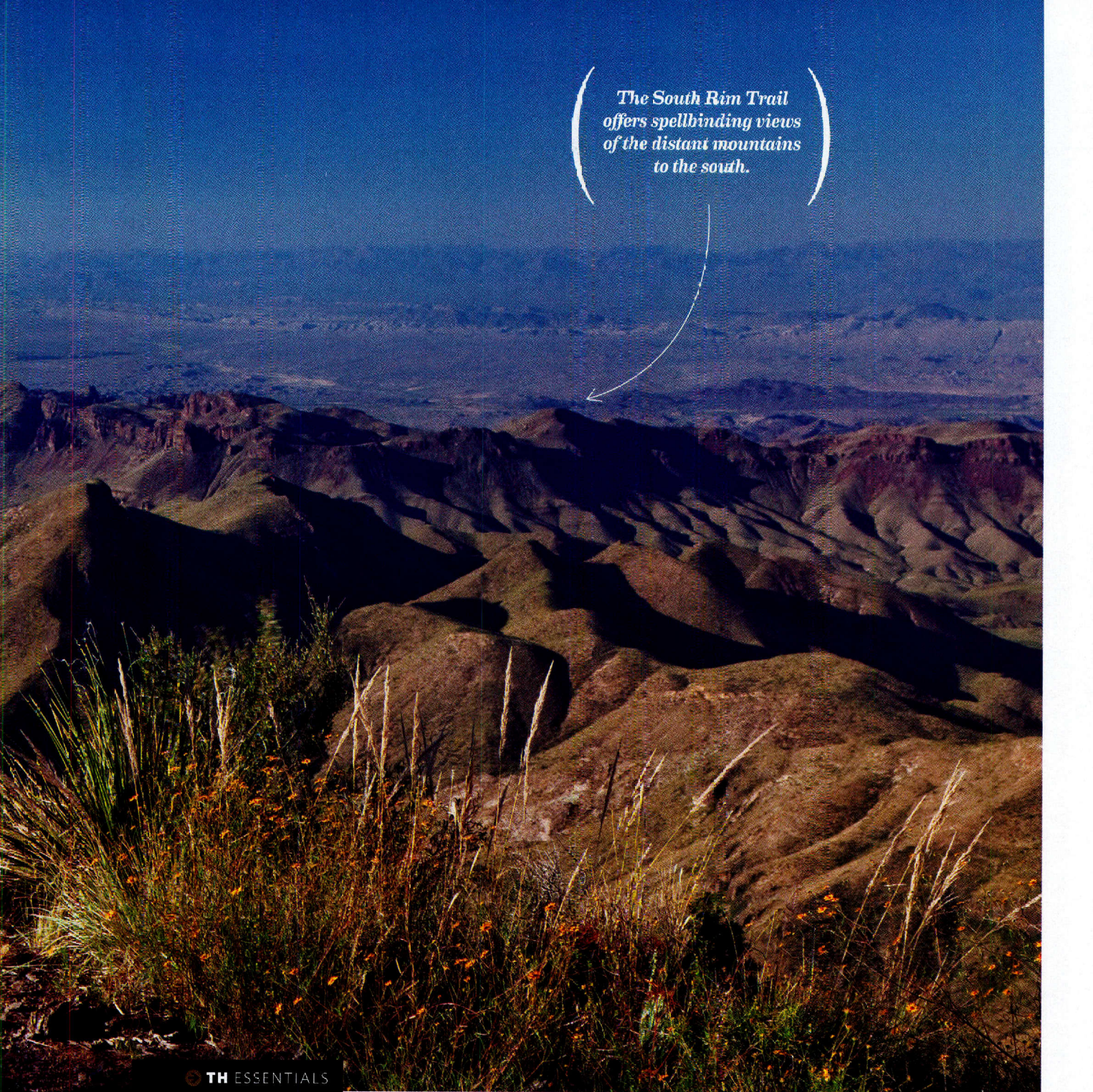


hiking partners eyeing the high peaks more than once. I knew that we would all be back. **TR**

**LAURENCE PARENT** is the author of many books, including *Death in Big Bend* (Iron Mountain Press). “If you follow the rangers’ advice,” says Laurence, “you’re not likely to be in future editions.”



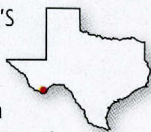
*The South Rim Trail offers spellbinding views of the distant mountains to the south.*



TH ESSENTIALS

## Hiking the South Rim

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK'S SOUTH RIM can be done by strong hikers in one day via the Pivacles and Laguna Meadows trails. To enjoy the incredible sunrises and sunsets, consider camping for one or two nights. Day-hikers should check weather forecasts and carry adequate clothing,

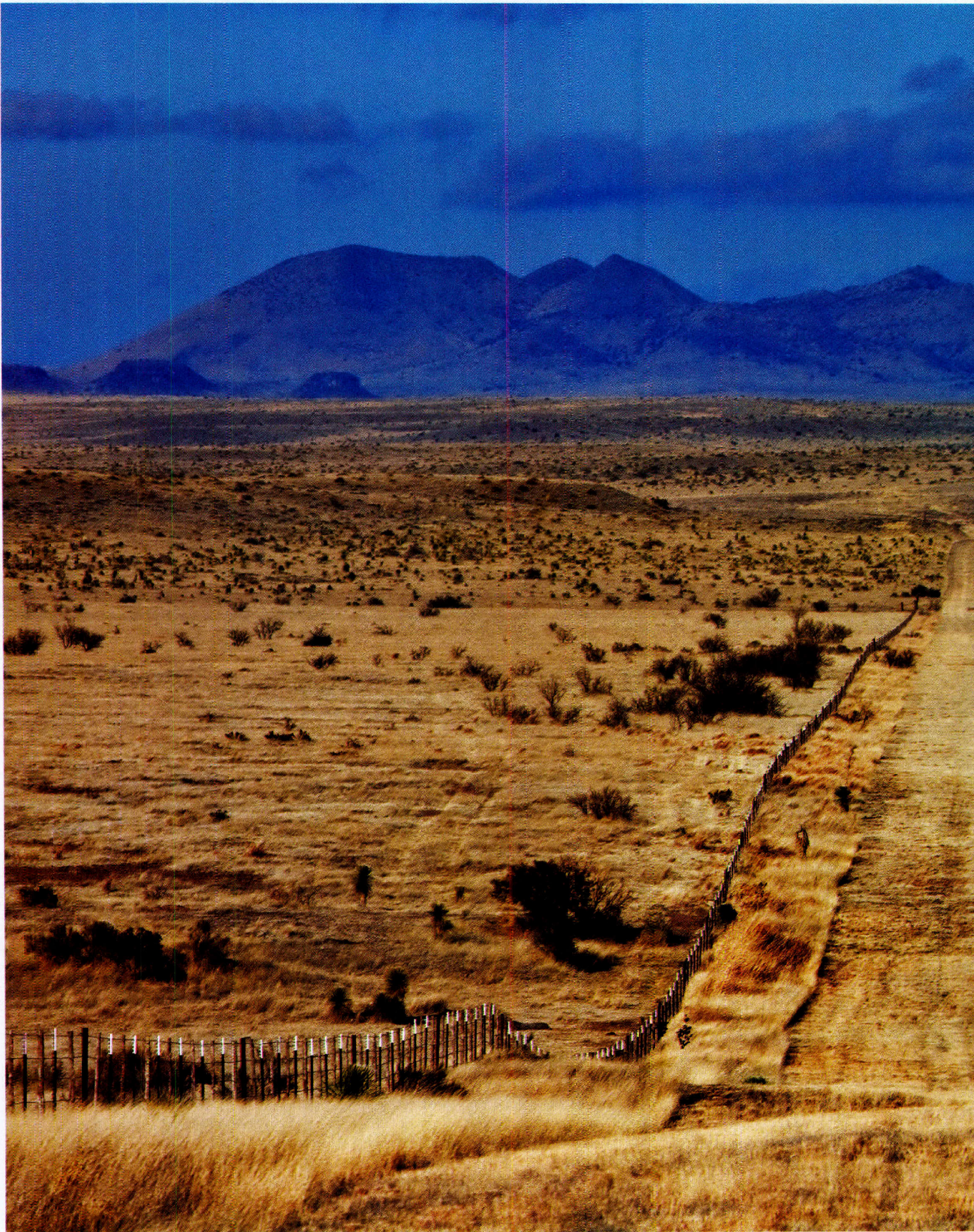


a map, food, sun-screen, and a hat. Campers will need a tent, pad, sleeping bag, stove, additional food, and other overnight gear. Carry at least a gallon of water per person per day. Do not depend on Boot Spring for water without assurance from park rangers that it is flowing. Purify any water taken from the spring. The park requires

a permit for overnight camping.

To reach **Big Bend National Park**, call 432/477-2251; [www.nps.gov/bibe](http://www.nps.gov/bibe).

**The Brewster County Tourism Council** provides helpful information about the region's activities, attractions, accommodations, and restaurants at [www.visitbigbend.com](http://www.visitbigbend.com).

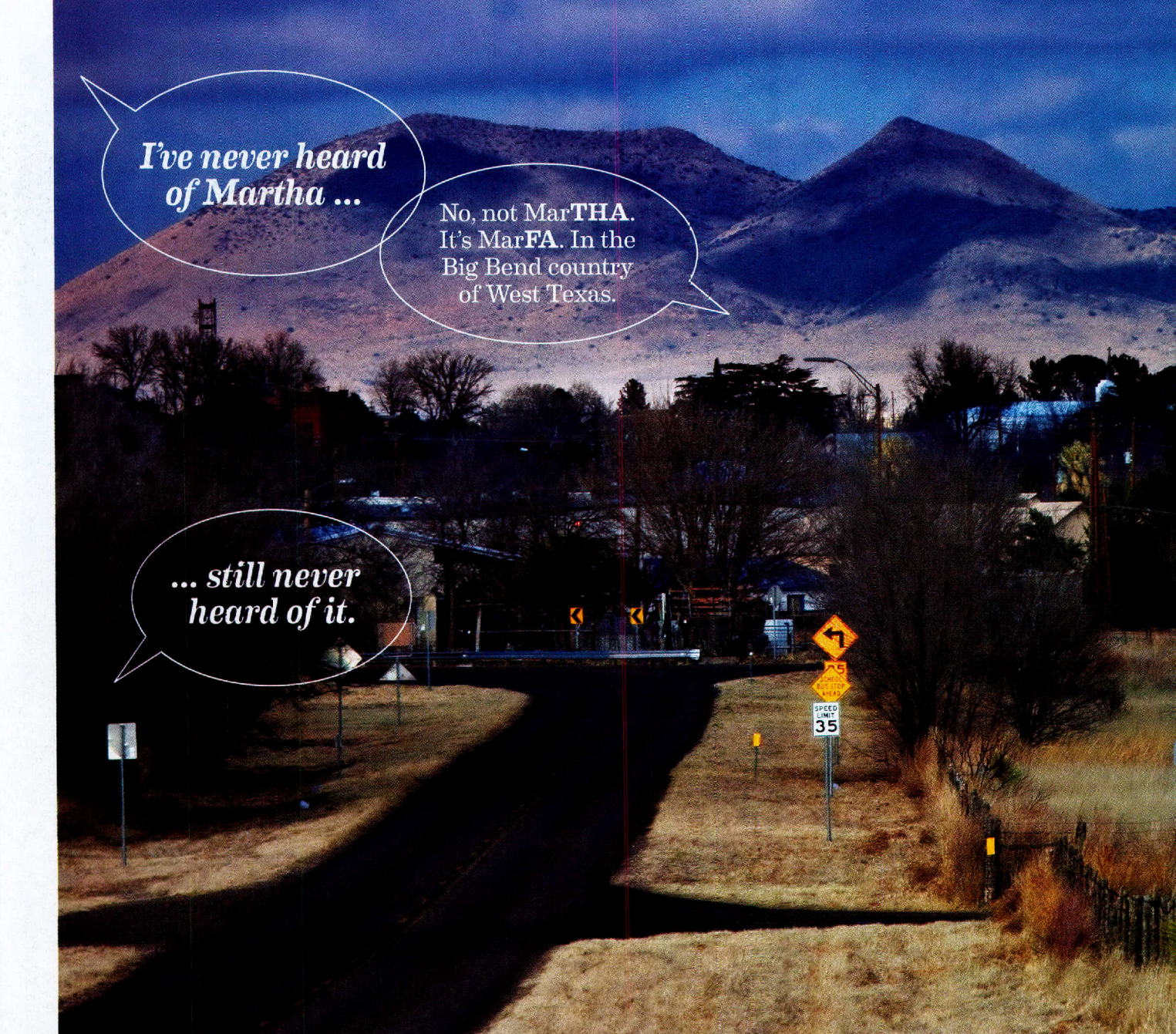


# Where's Martha?

Text by  
**TERRY TOLER**  
Photographs by  
**J. GRIFFIS SMITH**

... even if some folks  
don't get the letters quite  
right, a Big Bend insider  
reveals the mystique  
of **MARFA**

Ranch Road 2810 streaks through the Chihuahuan Desert into the town of Marfa, which sits between three mountain ranges.  
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*I've never heard of Martha ...*

No, not MarTHA. It's MarFA. In the Big Bend country of West Texas.

*... still never heard of it.*

**T**his exchange happens often, and because I actually worked to build tourism in Marfa, it still surprises me that many folks—especially Texans—don't know about Marfa. After all, it's mentioned regularly in *The New York Times* as well as in countless international publications. Marfa is a regular stop for art pilgrims and patrons from all over the world, and the town serves as a getaway for celebrities and experienced travelers.

On any given day (or evening) in Marfa, a visitor can experience critically acclaimed art installations, hear a poetry reading at the Marfa Book Company, share a potluck dinner under the stars at El Cosmico, or join a creative workshop for kids and adults at the Crowley Theater. Depending on your mood, you can take in the premiere of a theatrical production, savor four-star cuisine, or just enjoy exceptional weather and scenery on the mile-high Texas prairie.

In spite of the varied options, most folks, if they've heard of Marfa at all, are aware of its two most common claims to fame: as the site of the Mystery Lights, which occasionally (and unexplainably) glow east of town, and as the location for the classic movie *Giant*, considered the Lone Star State's *Gone With The Wind* big-screen epic, starring James Dean, Elizabeth Taylor, and Rock Hudson.

Marfa remains an enigma, and even longtime citizens can't quickly explain the intrigue created when ranching heritage, art connoisseurs, writers, musicians, and foodies collide and join forces on the high plateau. Some might say that the vast sky and quality of light remind them of northern New Mexico or a favorite Italian landscape.

Long before Marfa was the darling of *The New York Times*, I knew it as the site of world-champion glider flying. My father's aviation business offered glider training, so I heard him and other pilots rave about the "uplifts" in Marfa, created by



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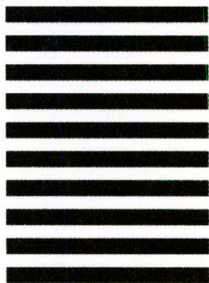
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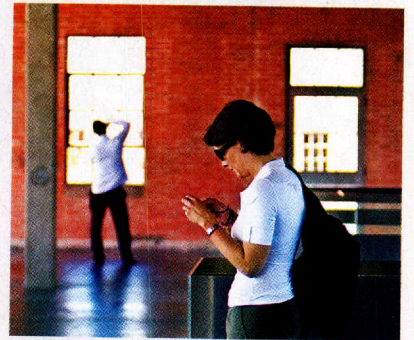
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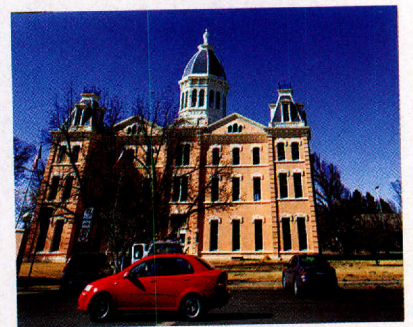
6302B11



LEFT: At almost 5,000 feet, Marfa's elevation is roughly the same as that of Denver's—you may need a sweater even on summer nights, when temperatures can dip into the 50s.



*Made it into the Chinati today!*



*Check out the courthouse!*



*The Thunderbird has a pool!*

the winds' interaction with the surrounding mountains. Gliding is still popular here and is an appealing activity to the adventurous traveler.

As a native Houstonian, the prospect of mountains in Texas has always intrigued me. So in 1972 I took my first road trip to the mountains of Big Bend. Of course, we planned a side trip to see Marfa and the Mystery Lights. Rolling into town on US 90 just after 5 p.m., we stopped at the only four-way blinking red light (there's still just one traffic signal in Marfa). The town seemed nearly deserted.

Looking north up Highland Avenue, we saw the 1886 Presidio County Courthouse—one of the prettiest courthouses in Texas—in the middle of the square, among the one- and two-story buildings. Highland Avenue, Marfa's main commercial street, was (and still is) a four-block stretch of remarkable and beautiful architectural heritage.

This was before world-renowned contemporary

FROM TOP RIGHT: The Chinati Foundation features installations in former cavalry barracks and converted artillery sheds, along with outdoor displays. The Second Empire-style Presidio County Courthouse was built in 1886. Modern design meets desert oasis at the Thunderbird hotel ([www.thunderbirdmarfa.com](http://www.thunderbirdmarfa.com)).



*James Dean stayed here!*



*Sea bass at Cochiseal—yum!*



minimalist artist Donald Judd relocated to Marfa from New York City in the 1970s. He purchased several large buildings and the decommissioned cavalry post and installed large artworks of his own design, as well as works by other world-famous artists who happened to be his friends.

This changed Marfa.

Most observers say Judd, along with his contemporaries and followers, saved Marfa, but a handful of holdouts aren't as positive in their assessment. Either way, it is safe to say that without Judd's influence and contribution, Marfa might have passed the point where its impressive buildings could be saved and restored.

The transformation came about over a two-decade process that hit its stride in the early 1990s when media buzz created a real-estate boom. Adobe houses and buildings sold at several times their assessed value, commercial buildings were remodeled, and several new businesses opened their doors.

Of all the places in far West Texas and the Big Bend country for which I held so much affection, Marfa was at the top of my list. So when a job opportunity arose there in 2011, I jumped at the chance to make the move.

I arrived in the midst of an historic drought, two days after one of the worst wildfires in Texas history had ignited just west of town, then raced northeast and destroyed homes in Fort Davis along with thousands of acres of ranch land. This was, literally and figuratively, baptism by fire. While the threat of more wildfire lingered, Marfa was about to host a traveling music festival called Railroad Revival, which would attract enough visitors to double the size of the town and tax all our resources—law enforcement, fire and emergency services, accommodations, and even food and cell phone service.

The Fort Davis house fires were still smoldering when Marfa residents started organizing a benefit for the victims. A local artist created graphically dynamic burn ban/fire danger posters for distribution throughout the area, and citizens volunteered to help feed, house, and welcome the 2,000 concert-goers descending on tiny Marfa.

This gave me true insight into the soul of the community. Naysayers said the town was populated by aimless 20-somethings, drifting artist-types, wealthy absentee vacation homeowners, and eccentric society dropouts. After living,



More on the Marfa Lights at [texashighways.com/webextra](http://texashighways.com/webextra).



## Toler's Tips

### As the town's ads


proclaim, Marfa is tough to get to, tougher to explain, but once you get here, you get it. So when planning your visit, a **multi-day stay** is recommended.

**With only 100 hotel/motel rooms in town**, reservations are essential. There are numerous guest houses, B&Bs, and the El Cosmico campgrounds, with restored vintage trailers, tipis, yurts, and campsites.

**Marfa is Texas' highest elevation town**, situated on a high plateau in the Northern Chihuahuan Desert, at roughly the same elevation as Denver, and typically has the state's lowest temperatures. With relative humidity usually in the single digits, even summer nights can dip into the 50s. Bring a sweater or windbreaker in the summer, and warmer wear during the autumn and winter months.

**For some outdoors time**, pack your clubs so you can golf the nine holes at the Marfa Municipal Golf Course, known as "The Highest Golf Course in Texas." And check ahead for weather and availability for a glider ride at Marfa Gliders, based at the Marfa Airport.

**Note that although Marfa is an "artistic town,"** it is not a gallery-filled town like Santa Fe or other art communities. It has a dozen gallery spaces free to the public, and the art foundation installations offer guided tours with fees (reservations are essential). Operating hours are varied, so be sure to call ahead when planning your visit. —Terry Toler



Who knew  
Marfa had so  
much art!

working, volunteering, and participating in Marfa for 18 months, I came to know a friendly, compassionate, caring, and hard-working citizenry.

The influx of creativity has created a synergy in town that one might find in a particular resurgent neighborhood in a large city. But in Marfa, population 1,981 and a three-hour drive from the nearest airline service in El Paso or Midland, the influence of creative newcomers makes a dramatic impact.

**M**arfa's unusual name is attributed to Hanna Maria Strobbridge, wife of railroad executive James Harvey Strobbridge, who directed the first transcontinental railroad in the 1860s and again the southern route two decades later. According to legend, Mrs. Strobbridge accompanied her husband on his cross-country rail construction treks, and was given the honor of naming the water stops along the route as it progressed westward.

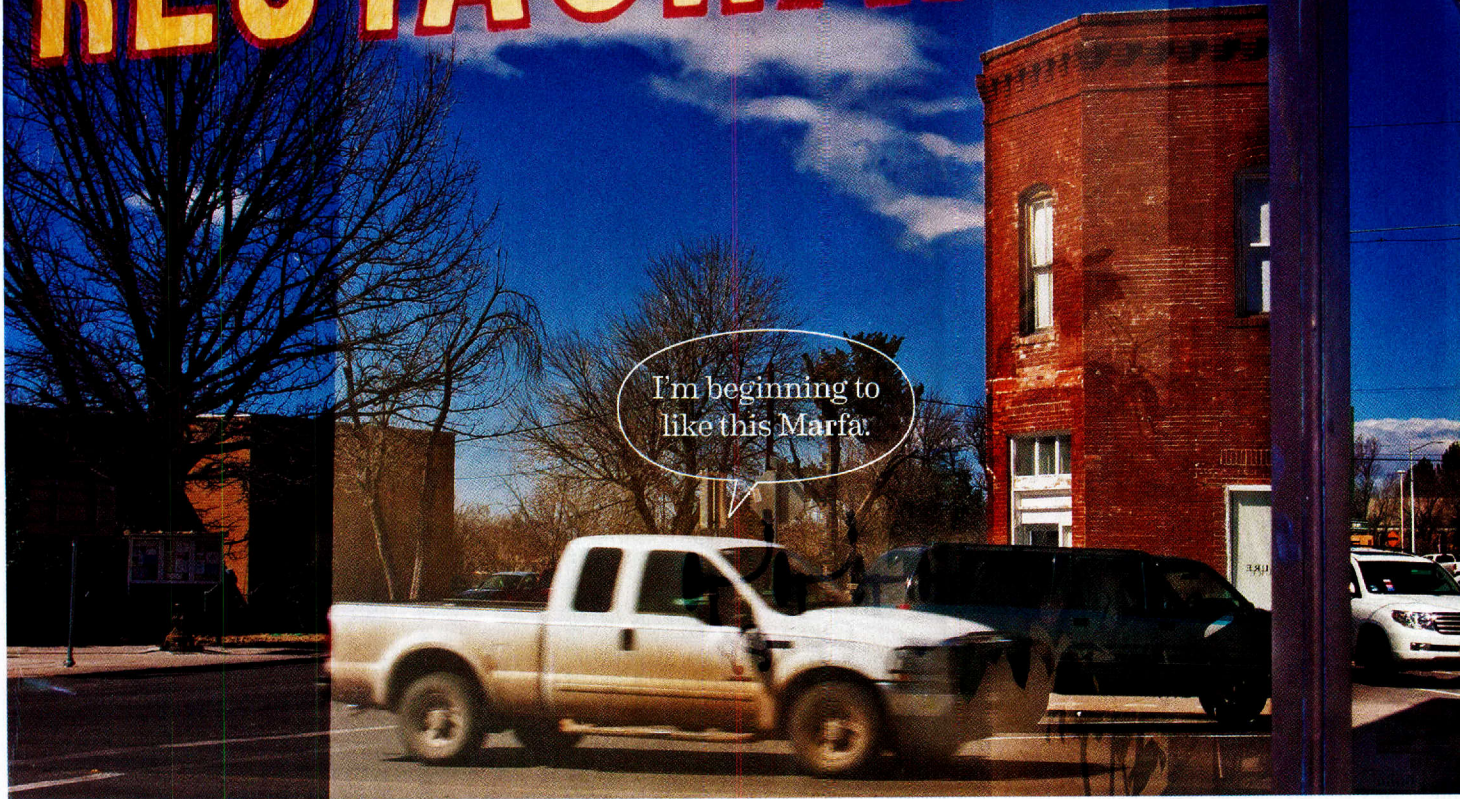
As an avid reader, she bestowed such literary names along the way as Dryden, Longfellow, and the odd name of Marfa, long thought to come from a character (Russian for "Martha") in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov*. However, an etymologist researching

TOP LEFT: Hotel Paisano played host to Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson, and James Dean during the filming of *Giant*.

LEFT: Cochineal's menu changes daily (sea bass with lentils and fried cabbage shown here), and the wine list includes 250 labels from around the globe.

ABOVE: Marfa has more than 10 gallery spaces with free admission; the art foundation installations offer guided tours with fees.

# RESTAURANT



the issue determined that Hanna Strobbridge likely named the town for a character in the Jules Verne novel *Michael Strogoff* (1876).

After the turn of the century, a cavalry post that became Fort D.A. Russell (later purchased by Donald Judd, and current site of the Chinati Foundation) was established to protect the U.S.-Mexican border during the Mexican Revolution. The post was

decommissioned in 1933 but later reactivated during World War II as a German prisoner of war camp.

In 1942, soon after the U.S. entered World War II following the attack on Pearl Harbor, an Army Air Training Base was established east of town, near the present site of the Marfa Mystery Lights viewing area. The Marfa Army Air Base trained 8,000 bomber pilots during its four-year operation, and closed at the end of the war. All that remains of its dozens of barracks, halls, and large hangars—the faint remains of the mesquite- and yucca-overgrown runways—can be seen only by air.

The only remaining World War II-related structure to survive was the 1942 USO Hall, constructed in town to allow civilians to mingle with the military personnel for social events. The City of Marfa has refurbished the hall, and it now serves as a conference and event center.

The 70-year-old hall is barely changed from its original appearance, and displays hundreds of photographs of Marfa and Presidio servicemen and -women, from the cavalry days through the present, as well as other military memorabilia. The walls surrounding the vaulted, trussed ceilings in the main hall are lined with the military insignia of all the units represented by those who served.

The filming of *Giant* in 1956 brought fame to Marfa, as the film was much publicized and drew major Hollywood stars to town, where they stayed in the Spanish Colonial-style Hotel

## Marfa Mañana Manifesto

**You may hear** or read this term used to describe Marfa's somewhat laid-back attitude about customer service. Some folks get to

Marfa after reading about the fabulous food, art, and other amenities, only to find a shop closed, odd hours, or in some cases, cafés running out of food. Keep in mind that Marfa is three hours from major shopping centers, and most service personnel are working two or three jobs (the waitress you had this morning may give you an art tour in the afternoon, and help you at the hotel counter that night). Even with as much as Marfa has going on any given day, it's still a slow-paced, easy-going town, and even though the café or gallery may look like it could be in Manhattan or L.A., it's in a town of fewer than 2,000 people, far away from the goods and services of the big city. —Terry Toler



*Tim Johnson, Marfa Book Co.*



*tipi at El Cosmico*

Paisano. But after the production left, the town population continued to shrink, businesses closed, and the new Interstate 10 siphoned traffic off old US 90.

Enter Donald Judd, searching for a remote, wide-open location to house his large, contemporary art pieces in a permanent setting. He was joined by such eminent artists as Claes Oldenburg, Dan Flavin, and John Chamberlain, whose works are now permanently installed in open fields, and housed in large bank and commercial buildings, and even a former wool and mohair warehouse.

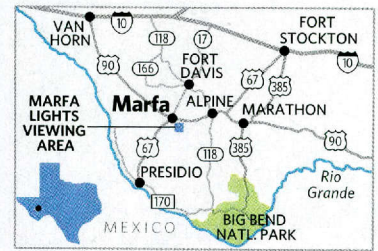
Even with all the changes, the ranching and railroading heritage of the old Marfa is never far away. Sidewalk diners outside Maiya's Restaurant on Highland Avenue or the outdoor patio of nearby Cochineal hear the sounds of the train as it roars through town. And the occasional 18-wheeler double-decker cattle truck still rumbles down US 90. Marfa's historic roots and the quirky, surprising, and beautiful West Texas landscape merge into its contemporary mystique. **TH**

**TERRY "TEX" TOLER** has seen the *Marfa Mystery Lights* regularly for decades and is a firm believer that they are *NOT* traffic lights on US 67, as many have dismissed them as such. "Some nights they are active, some nights they are not," he cautions. Photo Editor **GRIFF SMITH** has had the best luck seeing the lights right at sundown.

**LEFT:** A view of Highland Avenue from Maiya's Restaurant, which features chef Maiya Keck's inventive dishes using local and regional ingredients.

**FROM TOP:** At Marfa Book Company, owner Tim Johnson hosts frequent readings, talks, music performances, and other special events. You can camp at El Cosmico, or overnight in a vintage trailer, safari tent, or 22-foot-diameter tipi.

## Marfa



FOR GENERAL information about visiting Marfa, contact the **Marfa Visitor Center** (432/729-4772; [www.visitmarfa.com](http://www.visitmarfa.com)), in the **1942 Marfa Army Air Base USO Hall** (302 South Highland Ave.). Find more information on lodging, restaurants, and activities at the **Marfa Chamber of Commerce** (432/729-4942; [www.marfacc.com](http://www.marfacc.com)), in the historic Hotel Paisano. For a list of events in Marfa, visit [www.marfa.org](http://www.marfa.org). For area information, visit [www.visitbigbend.com](http://www.visitbigbend.com). Following is contact information for sites in the story.

### Lodging

Marfa offers several distinctive lodgings, including the **Hotel Paisano** (207 North Highland Ave., 432/729-3669; [www.hotelpaisano.com](http://www.hotelpaisano.com)).

At **El Cosmico** (802 South Highland Ave., 432/729-1950; [www.elcosmico.com](http://www.elcosmico.com)), guests can sleep in vintage trailers, safari tents, or tipis, or camp out under the stars.

### Activities

The official **Marfa Lights Viewing Area** lies 9 miles east of town on US 90, toward Alpine.

**Marfa Municipal Golf Course** is on Golf Course Road, 432/729-4043.

**Marfa Gliders** is at Marfa Airport on Texas 17. Visit [www.flygliders.com](http://www.flygliders.com) for more information.

### Restaurants

**Maiya's Restaurant**, 103 North Highland Ave., 432/729-4410; [www.maiyasrestaurant.com](http://www.maiyasrestaurant.com).

**Cochineal**, 107 W. San Antonio St., 432/729-3300; [www.cochinealmarfa.com](http://www.cochinealmarfa.com).

### Books and Arts

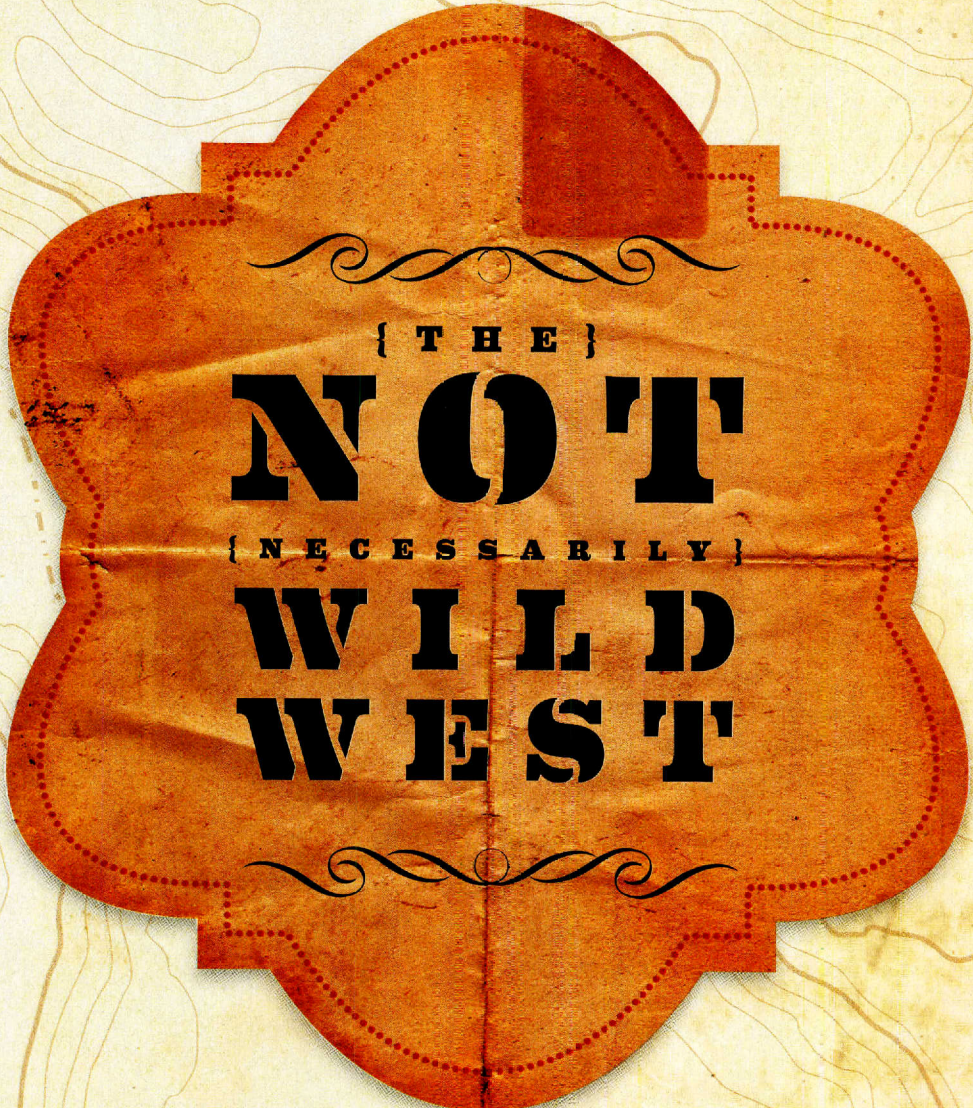
**Marfa Book Company**, 105 South Highland Ave., 432/729-3906; [www.marfabookcompany.wordpress.com](http://www.marfabookcompany.wordpress.com).

**Crowley Theater**, 300 South Austin St.; [www.crowleytheater.org](http://www.crowleytheater.org).

**Chinati Foundation**, 1 Cavalry Row, 432/729-4362; [www.chinati.org](http://www.chinati.org).



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



{ THE }  
**NOT**  
{ NECESSARILY }  
**WILD**  
**WEST**

**CIBOLO CREEK RANCH'S**  
HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE  
FRAMES *a* VIEW *of* RANCH LIFE,  
WILDLIFE, *and the* LUXURY LIFE.

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TEXT *by* CHARLES LOHRMANN  
PHOTOGRAPHS *by* J. GRIFFIS SMITH



## AS YOU DRIVE US 67 SOUTH FROM MARFA TOWARD PRESIDIO AND THE RIO GRANDE,

the rolling hilly plains are sparsely punctuated by houses and other signs of the world today, so that it's easily possible to create a welcome feeling of escape from the conventional limitations of schedules and deadlines. The occasional pronghorn and buffalo are common enough to allow a hazy image of the 19th-Century landscape. That sense of time spacing out and slightly distorting its logic is an appropriate preamble to a wide-open ranch experience in the Texas Big Bend Country.

Thirty-two miles into the drive, about halfway to Presidio, a simply designed flag bearing the basic "F" brand stands near an unobtrusive stone wall and an historic marker on the west side of the highway. The marker explains part of the story of Milton Faver, the original baron of Cibolo. Assuming Cibolo Creek Ranch is your destination, here's where you turn off the pavement onto the gravel road. If you're driving past, stop and read a little about the landscape that surrounds you.

The F on the flag is your first hint of Faver on the approach to the ranch. But this is not the last time you'll consider the man who left the mortal realm well over 100 years ago. That's because the current baron of Cibolo, John Poindexter, has rejuvenated the Faver legacy by reconstructing Faver's three historic forts so painstakingly and so faithfully that the buildings not only house luxurious lodging, but also are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The stories about Cibolo Creek Ranch, burnished by fable and rumor, continue to evolve. But Poindexter is extremely precise in his descriptions and meticulous in everything to do with the ranch. Based on my conversations with him, I'll suggest that it's dangerous to generalize about the ranch or its history in his presence. That's because Poindexter published a history of the ranch and exhibits a daunting attention to detail as if it defines his personal creed.

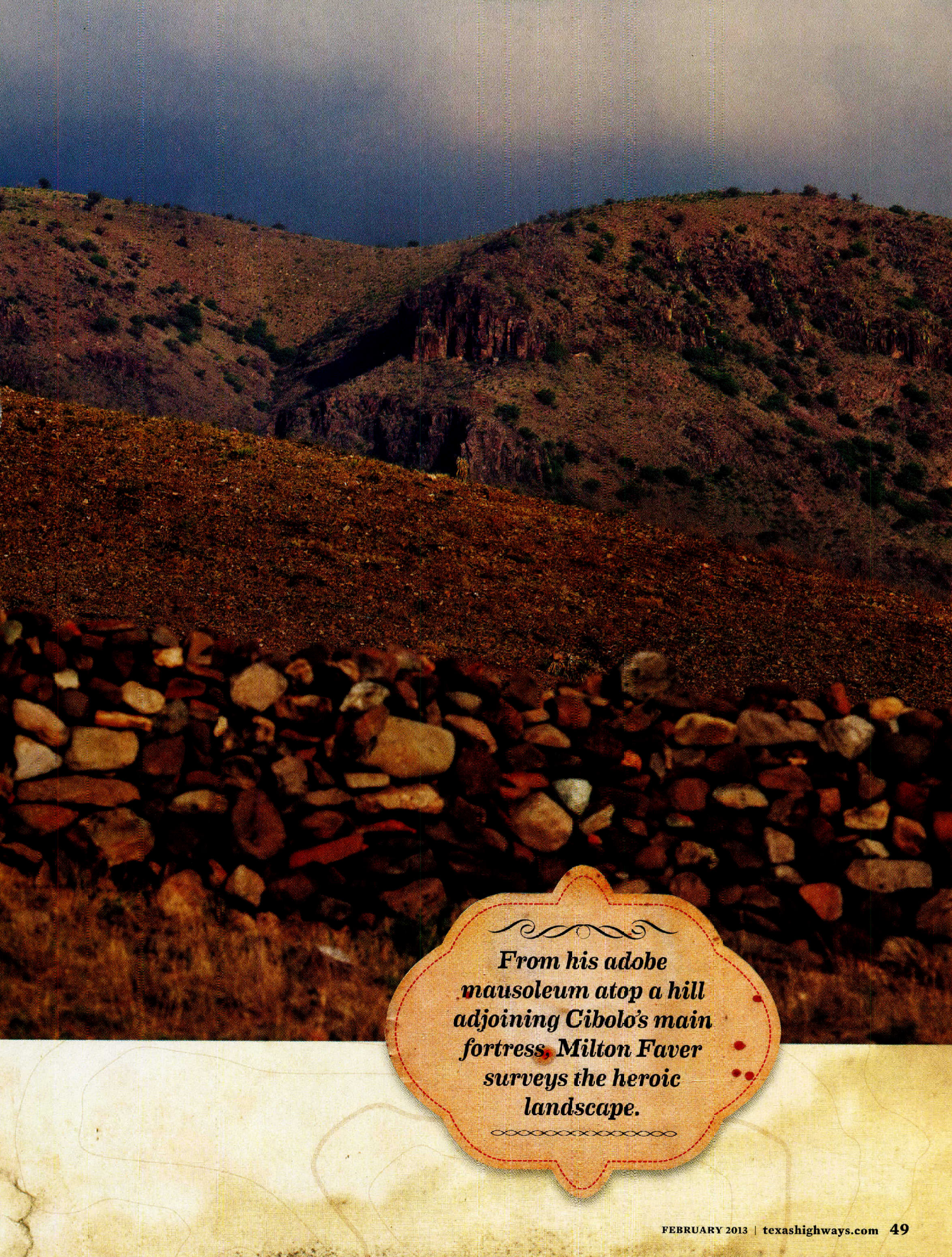
Whether it's because of Poindexter's fascination, obsession, or precision, Faver's legacy defines the ranch buildings: three adobe forts, each sited to protect a priceless water source in this semi-arid environment. This architecture rises out of the ground and frames the visitor's experience of the vast landscape.

If Poindexter followed Milton Faver's legacy with the ranch buildings, he just as surely established his own legacy with the management of the land itself. "We're involved with the true restoration of the landscape," he points out, "not conservation," as he describes management practices such as clearing invasive species, planting native grasses, and after years of careful tending of grassland, moving cattle to pastures for

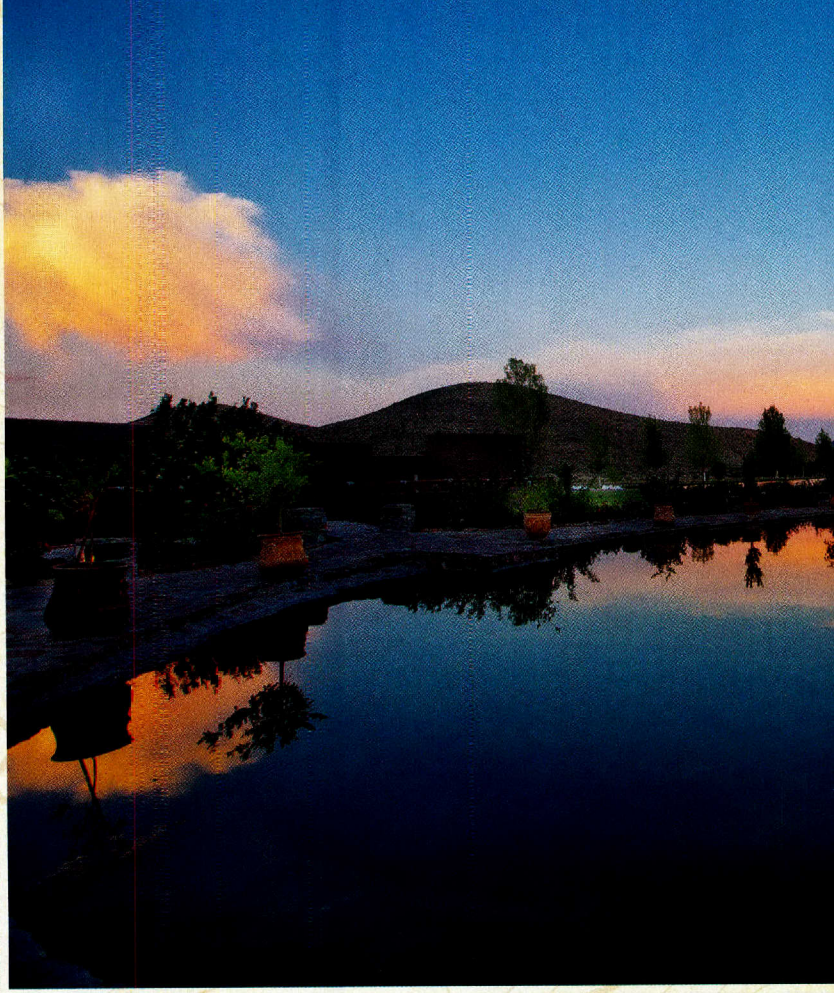
**This  
architecture  
rises out of  
the ground  
and frames  
the visitor's  
experience  
of the vast  
landscape.**



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*From his adobe  
mausoleum atop a hill  
adjoining Cibolo's main  
fortress, Milton Faver  
surveys the heroic  
landscape.*







**CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT:**

*Cibolo Creek Ranch  
canyons shelter  
enigmatic rock art;  
Sunset brushes sky with  
warm hues reflected in the  
spring-fed lake; ruins of  
long-ago hand-built  
houses.*

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

short periods, so the grass is not overgrazed or abused.

And the landscape around the main fort, El Cibolo, which also houses the main rooms of the hotel, bears testament to Poindexter's commitment to landscape restoration. The hilly land around the fort, like more than 15,000 additional acres of the ranch, has been cleared of brush and replanted to allow the bunch grass to flourish once again.

On a tour of the ranch, most notably on the drives to the second and third forts, La Ciénega and La Morita, the impact of Poindexter's restoration is abundantly evident. On one side of the fence, Cibolo Creek Ranch's grass stands thick and healthy. On the other side of the fence, another landowner's neglect is evident in the choking, almost impassable, brush and prickly pear.

He doesn't dwell on it, but the hugely successful Poindexter admits that the land itself can be a

**The sprawling, 25,000-acre ranch harbors wildlife (the remaining brush provides shelter and habitat for both game and non-game); ruins of long-abandoned, dry-stacked-stone houses; even an example or two of native rock art.**

tough adversary, and he is candid about the challenges of restoring native grasslands that have been overgrazed and abandoned for decades. Then there was a controlled burn that got out of control one year. And recent relentless drought makes nourishing rain—as well as the picturesque, seasonal waterfall that tumbles from a height of several stories when one wet-weather creek is flowing—seem a distant memory.

But the ranch's essential springs, the resources that helped sustain Faver's original farming and livestock empire more than a century ago, still flow. The sprawling, 25,000-acre ranch harbors wildlife (the remaining brush provides shelter and habitat for both game and non-game); ruins of long-abandoned, dry-stacked-stone houses; even an example or two of native rock art.

Late one afternoon, weather radar shows thunderstorms drifting up from Mexico, with two menacing pockets, only a few miles away, near the Rio Grande, glaring red from the computer screen. Our group figures that even if the storms don't bring some always-welcome rain, the storms should create a glorious sunset, so we pile into the ranch's tricked-out Hummer and—bounding over tortuous, winding roads—make our way to a high point.

There are a lot of high points on Cibolo Creek Ranch. The Chinati Mountains make their presence known. "On an afternoon drive like this, the chance of seeing wildlife is strong," suggests our guide. In the course of this ride, we see a few elk grazing and a pair of aoudad making their way up a steep, scree-strewn slope a few hundred yards away. Almost as if on schedule, the thunderstorms drift away

from the ranch, teasing us with a random spattering of rain.

“Looks like they might be getting some rain back in Marfa,” the guide says.

The next afternoon’s tour takes us to the tumble-down walls of hand-stacked stones, some with windows and doors defining multiroom cottages that provided shelter for a few dozen villagers in the early 1900s. An ancient, enormous fig tree, now long dead, clearly marks a still-flowing spring that reminds us of the remnant of a lifeway integrated into this unforgiving setting. Today, it is impossible to relate to the remoteness of that long past.

Sometimes I hear stories about the genuine Texas ranching heritage, and my conclusion is that “genuine” doesn’t always translate into “fabulous” when the adjective applies to a guest experience. Today, stories about the big ranches are likely to include celebrities jetting in for a hideaway weekend. Those folks, like most visitors, adventurous or not, don’t really want to work cattle and jump into the rough-and-tumble of true, old-fashioned ranch ways. At Cibolo, the history, made more vivid by the massive adobe buildings, is integral to the experience. The big skies and open spaces of the western prairies, and the accompanying brilliant, intense colors of the sunsets, make the ranch mythology seem even more immediate and alluring.

In this setting, the reality of the rugged individual and the Old West seems more immediate, even if not actually attainable.

For most visitors, it’s hard to beat a tart and icy margarita to accompany a batch of fresh guacamole and house-made tortilla chips to sharpen the appetite for Cibolo’s succulent grilled quail paired with a voluptuous pinot noir. And a bite of caramelicious flan for dessert. Follow this with a stroll to look at the stars, maybe a few minutes in the hot tub, and then a cozy bed.

That’s not really ranch life. But it’s a good start for something like a vacation.

In fact, most visitors to Cibolo Creek Ranch are not averse to some variation on the theme of the ranch experience, even though they’re not looking for the sleep-on-the-ground cowboy ways. It’s useful for the mystique if the entire operation cultivates a sense of the endless possibility that still attracts visitors to West Texas.

The significance of the ranch comes into play when you’re out touring the land.

At Cibolo, it’s the re-creation of the original, 19th-Century forts that generates a dramatic part of the attraction. And Milton Faver himself—in spirit at least—surveys his original ranch from his adobe mausoleum atop a hill adjacent to El Fortín de Cibolo. **TH**

**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE RIGHT:**  
*The tiny chapel in the main building;  
Scrumptious meals define the Cibolo  
hospitality; original adobe walls were  
built for defensive strength; comfortable,  
relaxed socializing in the lobby bar.*



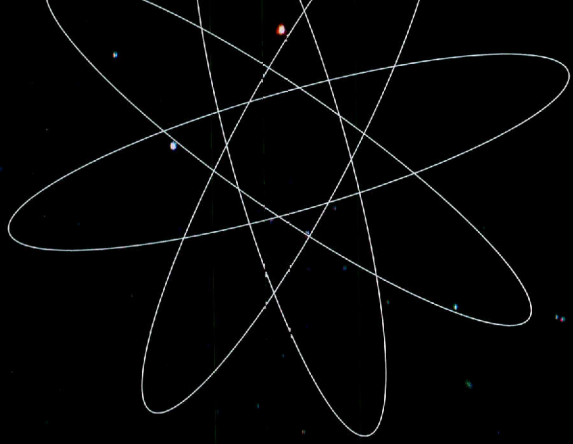
**TH ESSENTIALS**

## Cibolo Creek Ranch

CIBOLO CREEK RANCH, HCR 67, Marfa, 432/229-3737; [www.cibolocreekranch.com](http://www.cibolocreekranch.com). The ranch offers options for group and individual accommodations, and arrangements typically include meals and cocktails. Ask about special events and tours. Activities vary with the season and can include guided hunting trips. Area attractions include the ghost town of Shafter a few miles away. Marfa lies 32 miles north and Presidio an almost equal distance south.







**McDonald Observatory**  
*offers viewing opportunities  
for astronomers and  
stargazers of all stripes*

# Galaxy Q

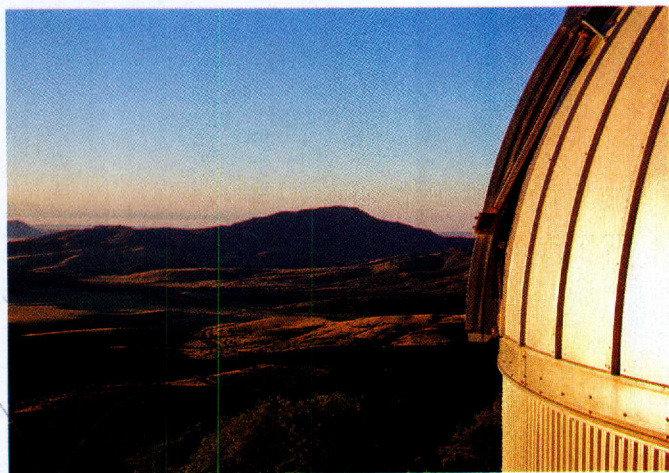
Remotely situated in the Davis Mountains of West Texas, beneath some of the country's darkest skies, McDonald Observatory provides opportunities for visitors to explore deep space with powerful telescopes.



# west

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

*The summit of Mount Locke, home to McDonald Observatory, pokes into a particularly isolated patch of the rural West Texas sky, making it a very dark place to be on a moonless night.*



LEFT: The view from Mount Locke includes mountain peaks and the Davis Mountains Scenic Loop, a highway route that starts and finishes in nearby Fort Davis.

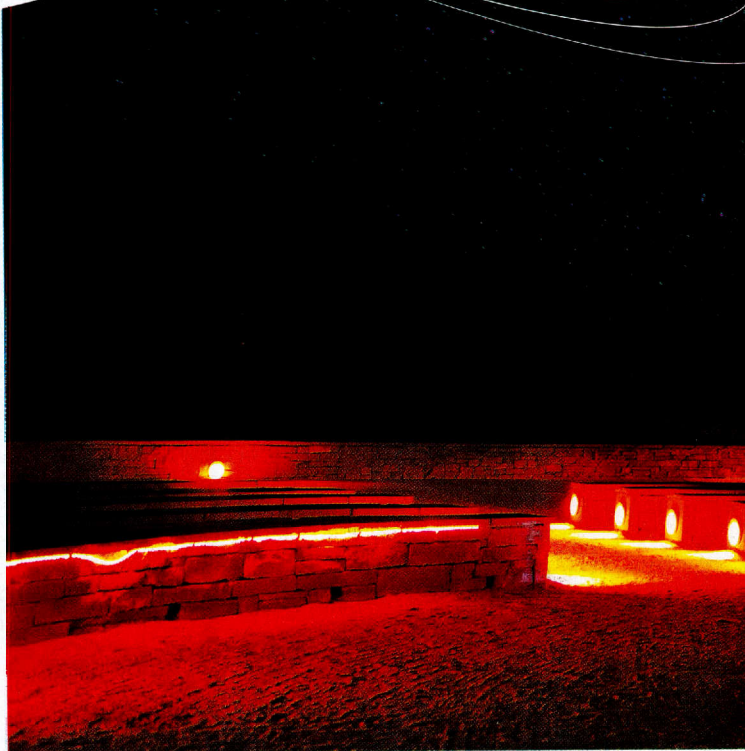
The remote peak, one of dozens forming the Davis Mountains, lies northwest of the communities of Fort Davis, Marfa, and Alpine, where a dark-skies initiative (designed to minimize unnecessary illumination from outdoor lighting) helps keep the night sky free of excessive brightness. For a few nights each month, the mountain is also free of the moon's spectral haze, and night atop the peak achieves a starlight glow. Earthbound objects dissolve into silhouettes and seem to float, unmoored, like smoke. Overhead, a blaze of radiant particles burns in full conflagration as Mars brightens in the southwestern sky and Jupiter rises in the east. Amid the spectacle, falling stars hang in the balance for one final shining moment before descending and flaming out.

Together, Mount Locke and McDonald Observatory, a University of Texas research facility, have been providing the world with one of its premiere stargazing destinations for more than 70 years. Ten research telescopes occupy Locke's peak and adjacent Mount Fowlkes, a companion summit connected to Locke by a swayback mountain pass. The observatory's three main telescopes, the Otto Struve, the Harlan J. Smith, and the Hobby-Eberly, operate every clear night of the year, offering astronomers a chance to enter deep space and explore expanding intergalactic space, black holes, and supernovas.

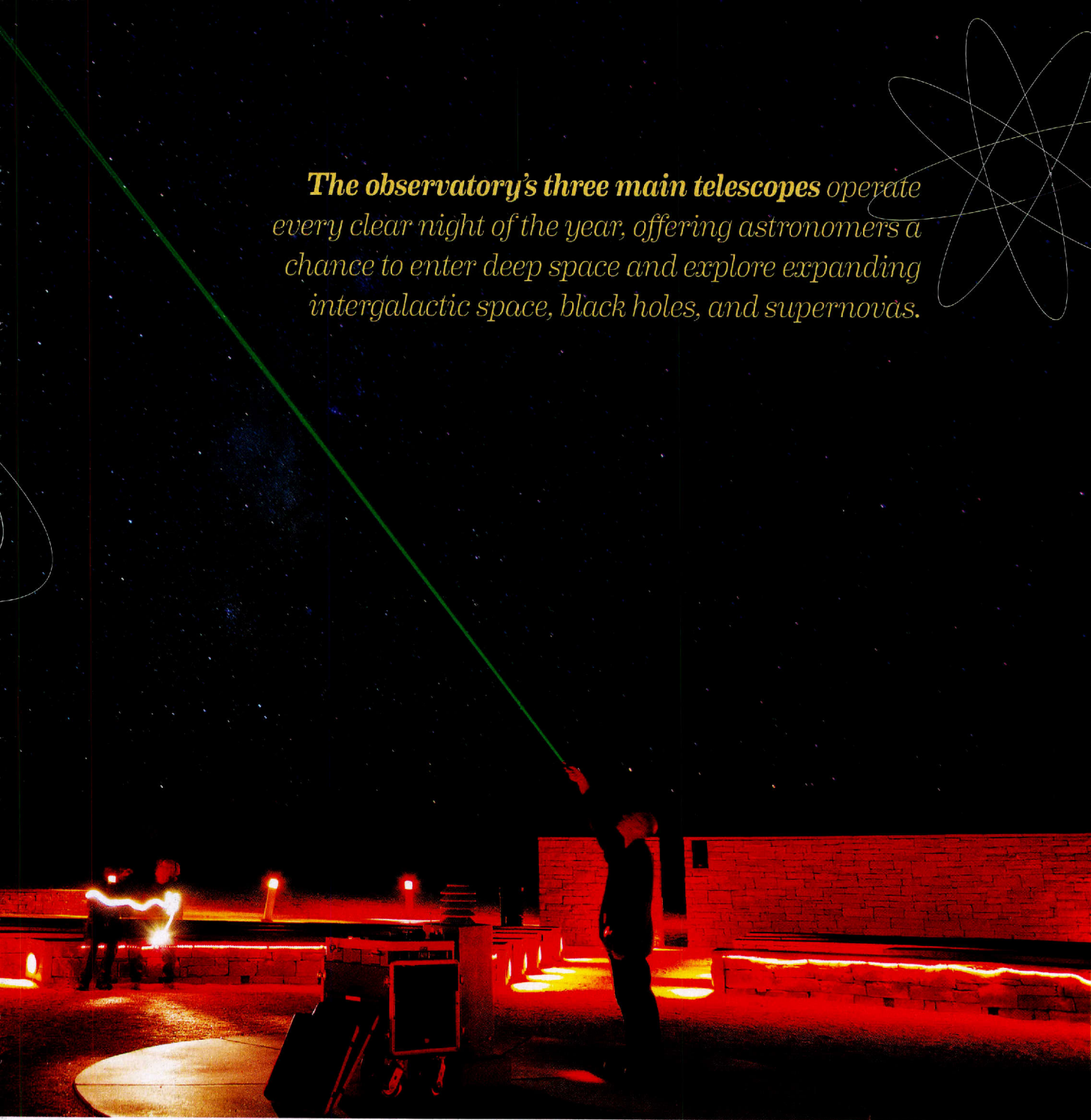
But professionals aren't the only stargazing enthusiasts to step through McDonald's "stargate." The observatory offers a robust schedule of weekly viewing programs for the public, including its popular "star parties," where astronomers operate telescopes to track space objects like planets, binary stars, spiral

galaxies, and gaseous nebulae. Star-party participants stroll from telescope to telescope, witnessing space phenomena like the Swan Nebula, the Whirlpool Galaxy, and the rings of Saturn. The viewing options change with the seasons; each month brings new sights within telescopic range.

For visitors wishing to dive deeper into the observatory's mission and equipment, the facility also sponsors "special viewing nights" throughout the year, utilizing several of the resident research telescopes. These programs include opportunities to peer through the observatory's 36-inch telescope (36 inches refers to the mirror's diameter), a starlight-gathering system anchored to Locke's rocky mountain flank, and



*The observatory's three main telescopes operate every clear night of the year, offering astronomers a chance to enter deep space and explore expanding intergalactic space, black holes, and supernovas.*



the 107-inch Harlan J. Smith telescope, designed for planetary studies. The Smith is one of two massive telescopes crowning Mount Locke's summit (the other is the Otto Struve).

Observing the stars through the observatory's 36-inch telescope during one of the viewing programs means you'll be enjoying some of the darkest skies and brightest starshine in the continental United States. The small telescope (relative to its two neighbors, at least) was designed to collect as much light as possible to help measure star brightness and variability. Its dome, constructed with leftover materials from the 1938 Otto Struve, rotates atop a native stone housing. You'll spend about three hours viewing different space objects and hearing

the knowledgeable staff's detailed explanations of cosmic phenomena.

Just beyond the 36-inch dome, Mount Locke's volcanic palisades drop precipitously. The cliff's edge affords an unobstructed view of the serpentine Davis Mountains Scenic Loop, the 75-mile stretch of Texas 118 and Texas 166 woven into the valley below. Lightning from seasonal storms often strikes distant peaks along the horizon, adding fireworks to the galactic array overhead.

The Harlan J. Smith, another telescope performing double duty as research laboratory and host for special viewing nights,

ABOVE: Star parties at McDonald Observatory give visitors the chance to learn more about outer space and peer through telescopes at various celestial objects.



*Visitors marvel at the science and the scenery on display at the McDonald Observatory.*

features a monster of a mirror, weighing in at 7,800 pounds and with a 107-inch diameter. It's dwarfed only by the telescopic cylinder itself, which is 32 feet long and weighs 160 tons. (Smith directed the observatory from 1963 to 1989 and spearheaded the telescope's construction in the mid-1960s.) Designed to explore the solar system, the configuration of mirror and instrumentation produces a light-gathering power one million times greater than that of the human eye. Once used to reflect a laser beam off mirrors positioned on the moon by Apollo astronauts, the Smith telescope helped define the distance of our lunar companion from Earth and tested Einstein's theory of general relativity. Today, astronomers outfit the Smith telescope with a variety of instruments to study the composition of stars and the motion of galaxies, as well as to search for undiscovered planets. Rarely idle, the Smith's giant eye penetrates the cosmos every night of the year that offers a clear view.

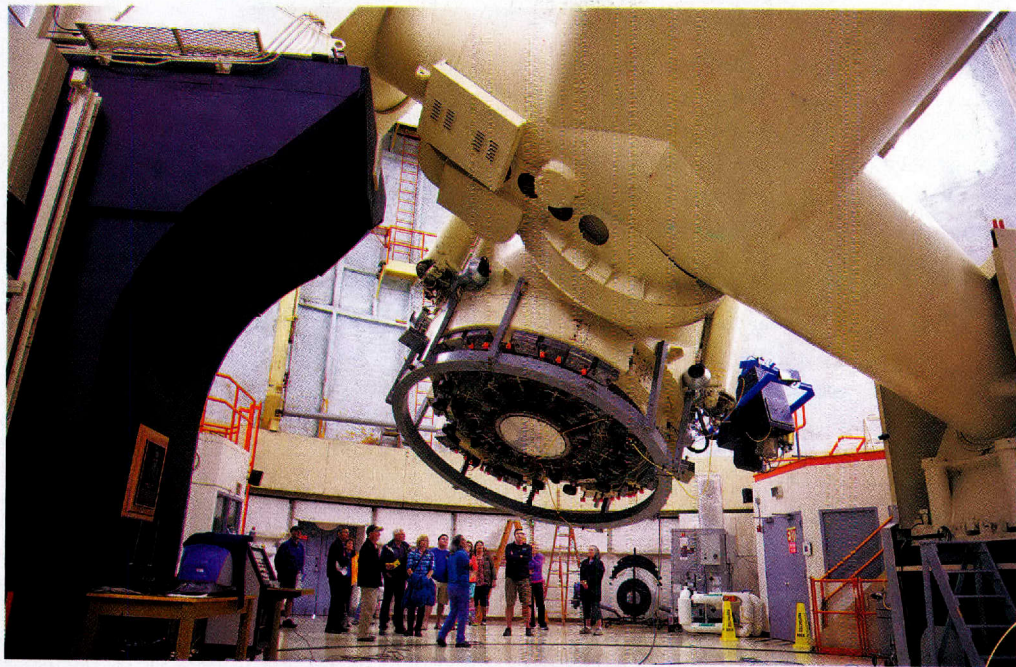
Special viewing nights using the 36-inch scope and the Harlan J. Smith also offer a few more perks than the weekly star parties, including smaller groups, late-night stargazing, and an option to stay overnight at the Astronomer's Lodge. The accommodations

include room, private bath, and meals. Breakfast in the Astronomer's Lodge dining room (quiet please—astronomers are sleeping just down the hall) also features a sweeping view of the Davis Mountains and Mount Fowlkes through a wall of windows.

At the scenic panorama's center sits the silver-clad Hobby-Eberly, the observatory's largest telescope, where some of the most innovative on-site research occurs. Its 91 identical, six-sided mirrors, assembled together into one giant concave surface, collect and focus light from astronomical objects. From there, the light is split into component wavelengths. This study of astronomical objects, called spectroscopy, explores the chemical composition of a star, its surface temperature, and, together with other information like mass, reveals the star's evolution, its destiny, rotation, and whether it's accompanied by any planetary companions.

The observatory offers both guided and self-guided tours of the Hobby-Eberly, allowing visitors to enter a viewing chamber and admire the mirror construction from behind a glass wall. Learning about the Hobby-Eberly makes for a fact-filled afternoon; beyond the science, the telescope is simply a beautiful





LEFT: The Otto Struve telescope has been updated extensively since it was first built in 1938. The telescope itself weighs 45 tons. ABOVE: The Harlan J. Smith telescope's light-gathering power is one million times greater than that of the human eye.

thing to see. The intricate design, delicate materials, and structural ingenuity express an architectural elegance that is both organic and alien to the surrounding natural world it inhabits.

This contradiction between terrestrial indiginity and cosmic exploration

is represented throughout the observatory grounds, where domes, antennae, discs, towers, lasers, mirrors, and lenses interlace with the Davis Mountains' habitat, a unique ecosystem populated by species like Montezuma quail, Chisos agave, pronghorns, and golden columbine. Few places on earth share a similar synchronicity.

The panoramic view from Mount Locke also inspires retrospection as much as it affords exploration, prompting the imagination to question just how 19th-Century inhabitants of the Davis Mountains would have grasped the 21st-Century transformation of their landscape. What would the early Texas pioneers have made of the sophisticated telescopes or the entire stargazing mountaintop? The observatory has been a leader in astronomy research since its dedication in 1939—when UT and the University of Chicago established the facility with seed money left by the late banker William Johnson McDonald—signaling a period of accelerating discoveries that has yet to subside. The surrounding countryside, however, has remained a pastoral study in classic Texas ranching since the 1800s,

## Daylight Activities

Here's what to do while waiting for the sun to go down.

**Take a Hike** Nearby Davis Mountains State Park, a 15-minute drive on Texas 118 downhill from the observatory, offers 12 miles of hiking trails. Try the Fort Trail, a 4.5-mile walk from the park's interpretive center to the boundary fence between the park and Fort Davis National Historic Site. Just across the highway from the state park, the Limpia Canyon Primitive Area (check in at Davis Mountains State Park headquarters) offers another seven miles of trail options, taking hikers from Limpia Creek (usually dry) up to 5,700 feet in elevation for views of the Chinati Mountains 50 miles away. Or try the Madera Canyon Hiking Trail, a 2.4-mile loop in the Nature Conservancy's Madera Canyon Preserve. The trailhead is located about 10 minutes north of the observatory along Texas 118 at the Lawrence E. Wood Picnic Area. Go to [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org) for details. For information on the state park and primitive area, visit [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/davismountains](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/davismountains).

**Take a Drive** Davis Mountains State Park offers Skyline Drive, a scenic route above the park's campgrounds with expansive views of the West Texas landscape. But one of the most popular drives in the state lies at the observatory's doorstep. The two-lane Davis Mountains Scenic Loop, comprised of Texas 118 and Texas 166, winds through the Davis Mountains on a 75-mile route that perambulates through some of the prettiest, and most unpopulated, countryside in Texas.

**Take a Nap** The Davis Mountains area offers abundant opportunities to stay overnight at secluded getaways. Try the Harvard Lodge, a comfortable retreat on the historic H.E. Sproul Ranch below Mount Locke. Call 432/426-2500; [www.harvardhotelandlodge.com](http://www.harvardhotelandlodge.com). For an intimate countryside hideaway, try La Cabaña Escondida on the R.M. Sproul Ranch just outside of Fort Davis. Call 432/426-3097; [www.rmsproulranch.com](http://www.rmsproulranch.com). Bringing the family? Book Hope's Ranch, a vacation rental home on the edge of Fort Davis with lots of privacy and terrific views of the mountains. Call 432/426-2050; [www.schoolhousebnb.com](http://www.schoolhousebnb.com). Looking for an on-point read? Try *Dear Visitor—Voices of McDonald Observatory* by Karen Stewart Winget, a compilation of oral histories from dozens of astronomers, employees, and characters associated with the observatory throughout its history. Although out of print, copies can still be found online. —E. Dan Klepper

coexisting alongside a natural world relatively undisturbed by outside forces. Even at the dawn of the modern age, when astronomers first turned the Otto Struve telescope's eye to the distant planets, concepts like dark matter, black holes, and expanding galaxies were still in their infancy and hardly the catchphrases that serve our routine vocabulary today.

But, as it turns out, some inhabitants of the Davis Mountains weren't strangers to the alien world of the cosmos. In 1903, a seven-year-old named George Duncan discovered a significant piece of cosmic debris just 15 miles northwest of Mount Locke. The 1,530-pound rock appeared to be different than any other boulder George had seen. He was correct, in fact, because the solid iron and nickel lump proved to be a meteorite, one of the earliest and largest of its kind found in Texas. As a result, the meteorite spent time in the Field Museum of Chicago

before it was returned to the Davis Mountains in 1987.

Today, visitors can view the meteorite up close at the observatory's Frank N. Bash Visitors Center, named for the observatory director from 1989 to 2003. In addition to the meteorite display, the center features a state-of-the-art, interactive exhibition hall where you can learn all about the universe and its principles. The center's theater shows a multimedia presentation on the observatory's research into the planet's most important star—the sun—featuring telescope views of sunspots and flares taking place across the sun's surface in real time. Afterward, you can relax and have a snack at the Star Date Café, then purchase some “space oddities” like squishy toys, hand-blown glass galaxy orbs, or glittering kaleidoscopes at the gift shop. Or take the 90-minute tour of the 107-inch Harlan J. Smith and learn more about the activities taking place in the observatory's professional



*The sundial court at the Frank N. Bash Visitors Center offers a striking view of the surrounding area.*

## McDonald Observatory

McDONALD OBSERVATORY is at 3640 Dark Sky Drive, about 16 miles west of Fort Davis on Texas 118. Call 877/984-7827, [www.mcdonaldobservatory.org](http://www.mcdonaldobservatory.org).

**Weekly public programs** include solar viewing and guided tours, twilight programs, and the very popular star parties.

**Star parties** last about two hours and cost \$12 for adults; \$10 for members of the military, visitors age 65 and older, and current UT students with ID; \$8 for children age 6 to 12. Group discounts are available.

**Special viewing night programs** include lunar viewing, dinner, and a viewing on the 107-inch telescope. Cost is \$96 per person. There are also special viewing night programs that feature the 36-inch telescope for \$60.

*Both weekly and special programs require reservations.*

Special viewing night program participants can book rooms at the on-site **Astronomer's Lodge**. Single king or twin-bed rooms with private baths, executive suites, and a separate cabin with a single king are available. Rates start at \$88 per night for single occupancy.

Elsewhere, overnight **accommodations and meals** are available in **Fort Davis, Alpine, and Marfa**. Check their chamber of commerce websites for details: [www.fortdavis.com](http://www.fortdavis.com), [www.marfacc.com](http://www.marfacc.com), [www.alpinetexas.com](http://www.alpinetexas.com).



bit unsettling until you realize these noises emanate from the rotation of the giant telescope domes above you, the Struve and the Smith, the mechanically driven behemoth instruments that turn slowly and methodically throughout the night, mimicking the movement of the earth itself through the cosmos. Across the pre-dawn hours, the mountain becomes an odd, dark place where nature's terrestrial simplicities come together with study of the most complex and perplexing forces at the heart of our existence. After a full night of the observatory experience, it shouldn't be a surprise when you wake the next morning with the sense that the universe and everything in it will never quite seem the same again. **TH**

*"Whether or not you 'grok' the science behind the stars," says writer and photographer E. DAN KLEPPER, "you're still gonna be dazzled by their spectacle. A McDonald Observatory stargazing program should be at the top of every Texan's to-do list."*

The Frank N. Bash Visitors Center, which opened in 2002, is home to exhibits, a theater, Star Date Café, and a gift shop that sells space-themed memorabilia and gifts.



**More**  
TH's variation of Corbitt's Texas caviar recipe at [texashighways.com/more](http://texashighways.com/more)

## The Princess of Popovers

*Helen Corbitt's pioneering influence on Texas cuisine*

Text by **BARBARA RODRIGUEZ**

Helen Corbitt made her mark as a chef, hostess, and teacher. One of her most memorable treats is the popover, a puffed muffin with a hollow center that the Zodiac serves to this day.

**S**HE HAD ME AT POPOVERS. WHAT OTHER FOOD COULD BE SO SIMPLY magical, so appealing to adults and children alike? Comforting, but with pizzazz—which is not a bad description of Helen Corbitt. In the 1960s, the cookbook author and groundbreaking foodie became at once as familiar as everyone's favorite aunt, and yet not at all ordinary.

I knew just how special Helen Corbitt was the first time I saw my mother, in silk stockings and heels, clatter out the door in what would become an annual pilgrimage from Fort Worth to Dallas for a Christmas lunch at the Zodiac—the flagship Neiman Marcus restaurant that Corbitt put on the culinary map. Lunch out was no small thing to my mother; that she went to lunch in the plush department store and shopped after dining, *while wearing heels*, rocked my world. When she came home with a Helen Corbitt cookbook and taught me how to make popovers, she forever changed it.

Corbitt was born in upstate New York in 1906, but with her move to Texas as a young woman, she did more than perhaps anyone else to create an early cult of food in the Lone Star State. As open to new experiences as she was to cultivating new tastes, she left her job as a dietitian at Cornell Medical Center and moved to Austin, where she taught tearoom management and catering at the University of Texas. It didn't take long before Corbitt's career took her to Houston for jobs at the Houston Country Club and Joske's department store tearoom, before the Driskill Hotel pulled her back to Austin. In between, she taught cooking classes and opened a catering business. All the while, Stanley Marcus was calling.

## The Zodiac and Classic Cookbooks: Corbitt's Legacy

Marcus was wowed by Corbitt's fresh seasonal takes and inventive flavor combinations, always served with panache. It took eight years, but the retail giant finally wooed Corbitt to become the store's director of food services. With the job, she also claimed a ticket to travel to destinations such as Paris, which allowed her to broaden her tastes and menus. Texans were entranced. Corbitt filled her menus (and seven cookbooks) with dishes familiar and foreign, with global influences and spices. Two signature items, her poppy-seed dressing and the to-sigh-for popovers—served to this day with strawberry butter as the Zodiac's signature starter—quickly achieved iconic status. (Corbitt reportedly said she was unsure where poppy-seed dressing originated and attributed the popularity of her rendition to its pairing with Texas grapefruit.)

It's hard to imagine, but there are those Texans who have never heard of Helen Corbitt. Or so they think until the query is redefined using the words "poppy-seed dressing" or "Zodiac restaurant." Suddenly everyone remembers a story. I tested this theory on my Facebook page with a call for Helen Corbitt memories. Friends of all ages began a salutation of salivation. Their responses were characterized by breathlessness and exclamation marks, and the sort of sensual memories born in kitchens that connect generations. "My favorite recipe is her poppy-seed dressing!" wrote one friend. "It is always in my fridge." Remarkd another, "Mother still makes her chicken salad with whipped cream, grapes, and almonds. It always gets rave reviews!"

But following the trail back to first encounters with Corbitt is harder than you might think. I asked noted chef and restaurateur Stephan Pyles about the shout-out he gives Corbitt on the menu at Stampede 66, his recently opened Dallas restaurant. "Helen Corbitt is the 'unsung hero' of Texas cooking," Pyles wrote to me in an email. "Even though her impact on food in the Lone Star State was similar to Julia Child's on America as a whole, most

THE ZODIAC RESTAURANT'S FLAGSHIP LOCATION REMAINS OPEN—AND MUCH LOVED—on the sixth floor of the Neiman Marcus in downtown Dallas. And, just as it has for more than 50 years, the restaurant begins every lunch service with Helen Corbitt's popovers, strawberry butter, and tiny cups of chicken consommé. Open only for lunch, the dining room retains the timeless posh that it's always had. But note, the crisp service and white-tablecloth sensibility first given the nod by Helen Corbitt have kept the Zodiac restaurant popular as a lunch spot as well as the place for a pie and coffee pick-me-up in the middle of a power-shopping spree; reservations are recommended. Luncheon fare ranges from hamburgers and hardy sandwiches to elegantly composed salads and Corbitt's trademark steak and pot roast.

The restaurant is at 1618 Main St. in Dallas; call 214/573-5800.

In 2000, the University of North Texas Press published *The Best from Helen Corbitt's Kitchens*, a compilation by Patty MacDonald of more than 500 favorite recipes from several of Corbitt's classic works, which were published between 1957 and 1979. MacDonald's book also includes recipes not seen elsewhere. Vintage photographs and a chapter on Corbitt partially drawn from interviews with Stanley Marcus (who also wrote the foreword) make the book a good read, as well as a compendium of a lot of good cooking.

—Barbara Rodriguez

of the young 'celebrity chefs' in Texas today have probably never even heard of her. I display her name proudly (twice) on my all-Texas menu at Stampede 66."

I asked Pyles if he could remember his initial introduction to Corbitt's cooking or whether, like Santa, she was always a

presence in his life. He replied that indeed, she was simply "always there." Like Santa. Like birthdays. Like special occasion lunches with my mother. Corbitt, who died in 1978, was recognized in the food world for more than 40 years as something special. Stanley

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# Speaking of Texas

Foodies remember those popovers, of course, but also note that Corbitt was an early promoter of fresh and seasonal foods.

Marcus described her as “the Balenciaga of Food.” Lyndon B. Johnson, a boisterous fan of her stroganoff, reportedly wanted to whisk her off to the White House.

LBJ’s fandom is not the only clue that Corbitt did more for the Texas culinary scene than define ladies’ lunches. Her food attracted men from the beginning. Before she forever linked her name to the Zodiac, she dared serve lamb to cattlemen at the Houston Country Club. Legend has it that winning the hearts and minds of the steak-and-potatoes set garnered her a raise.

If you have any mental image of Corbitt, it is no doubt the owl-eyed, oversized round eyeglasses you remember, or perhaps her red hair. Texans of my mother’s generation liked to tell the story of

Stanley Marcus’ recruitment of Corbitt, knowing that she—like the other fine and rare things he pursued for his store—was highly valuable, both as a cook and a personality, the ultimate hostess. Foodies remember those popovers, of course, but also note that she was groundbreaking, an early promoter of fresh and seasonal foods, and the first woman to receive the Golden Plate Award, the highest honor in the food business in her time. When Helen Corbitt died in 1978, *Dallas Morning News* columnist Dick Hitt wrote a salute that summed her up this way: “She was a bouillabaisse of a person, part administrator, part hostess, part duchess and part Mother Superior.” My mother would have agreed. **TR**

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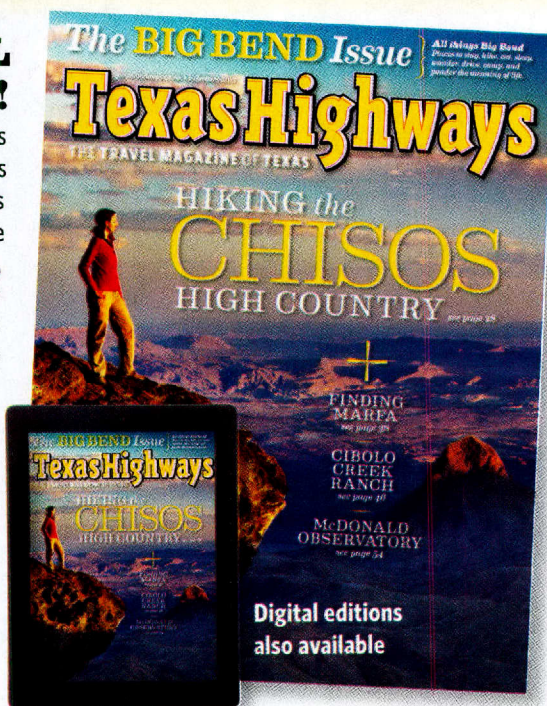
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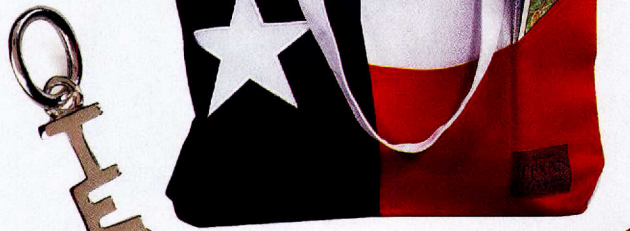
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# Valentines

## TEXAS ♥ STYLE



### Texas Flag Tote

The strength of 100% cotton heavy-duty canvas with a zipper closure and two exterior slip pockets makes this tote perfect for commuting, touring or shopping. Canvas straps suitable for hand or shoulder carrying. 18½ x 16 inches

Item 37414.....\$14.95

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Stunning sterling silver pendant announces Texas is home. A perfect addition to a silver chain or charm bracelet. 1¼ inches long.

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Item 38289.....\$19.95

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Junior sizes: SM-2X

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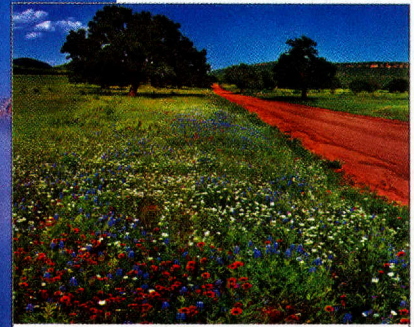
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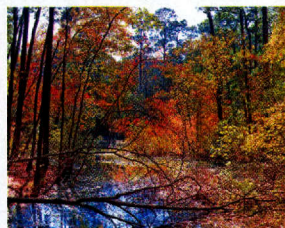
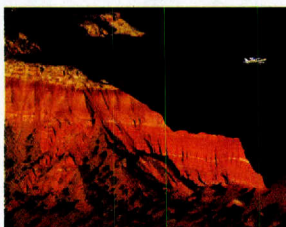
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## Cowboy Up

### THE TEXAS RODEO SCENE HEATS UP

in the winter, and *TH Traveler* is hitting the circuit. The state's three biggest rodeo events stretch across February: the **Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo** (January 18-February 9 at the Will Rogers Coliseum), the **San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo** (February 7-February 24 at the AT&T Center), and the **Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo** (February 25-March 17 at Reliant Park). The shows are sprawling tributes to agriculture and ranching, featuring everything from lucrative bull riding competitions that draw the nation's top cowboys, to poultry exhibitions, star-studded country music concerts, and of course, carnival midways. In Fort Worth, check out the cowboy mounted shooting event. In Houston, indulge in the offerings of the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest. In San Antonio, introduce the children to the kids and calves at the petting zoo. Go to [www.fwssr.com](http://www.fwssr.com), [www.sarodeo.com](http://www.sarodeo.com), and [www.rodeohouston.com](http://www.rodeohouston.com).

### TH tip

Rodeo tickets include entry to the stock show.



## February Events

### BIG BEND COUNTRY

**ALPINE:** *Trappings of Texas* February 22-April 14. Exhibit and sale features cowboy gear and Western art. Museum of the Big Bend. [www.sulross.edu/museum/events.html](http://www.sulross.edu/museum/events.html) 432/837-8143

**EL PASO:** *El Paso Marathon* February 24. Begins downtown at One Civic Center Plaza. [www.elpasomarathon.org](http://www.elpasomarathon.org)

**MONAHANS:** *Ward County Livestock Show* February 1. Ward County Coliseum. 432/943-4112

### GULF COAST

**ARANSAS PASS:** *Coastal Bend Woodcarvers Show and School* February 1-7. Aransas Pass Civic Center. [www.texascarvers.org](http://www.texascarvers.org)

**BEAUMONT:** *Ceramics Exhibit* February 1-April 7. Features a selection of ceramic artwork on loan from the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. Art Museum of Southeast Texas. [www.amset.org](http://www.amset.org)

**BEAUMONT:** *Taste of the Triangle* February 12. This food festival demonstrates that Southeast Texas is a true melting pot of flavors. Ford Park. 409/951-5400

**BEAUMONT:** *Boomtown Film and Music Festival* February 22-23. Various locations. <http://cinematicboomtownfestival.com/> 409/422-9030

**BROWNSVILLE:** *Charro Days Fiesta* Feb. 24-March 3. [www.charrodaysfiesta.com](http://www.charrodaysfiesta.com) 956/542-4245

**CORPUS CHRISTI:** *Contemporary Studio Glass from the Collection of the Mobile Museum of Art* February 1-May 5. The 65 works of glass in this exhibition are one-of-a-kind pieces, featuring a wide range of subjects and techniques. The Art Museum of South Texas. [www.artmuseumofsouthtexas.org](http://www.artmuseumofsouthtexas.org) 361/825-3500

**CORPUS CHRISTI:** *Annual Stage Door Canteen* February 15. The USS *Lexington* Big Band at this event recalls the canteen shows of WWII. USS *Lexington* Museum on the Bay. [www.ussexington.com](http://www.ussexington.com) 361/888-4873, ext. 337

**CORPUS CHRISTI:** *Kickin' Quilts of Texas* February 15-16. American Bank Center. [www.corpuschristiquilts.com](http://www.corpuschristiquilts.com) 361/993-4855

**CRYSTAL BEACH:** *Bolivar Peninsula Lighthouse Krewe Mardi Gras Parade* February 9. This year's theme is "Endless Summer." On Texas 87. [www.bolivarparade.com](http://www.bolivarparade.com) 409/684-5940

**GALVESTON:** *Mardi Gras Galveston* February 7-8, 8-10. Historic downtown. [www.mardigrasgalveston.com](http://www.mardigrasgalveston.com) 409/770-0999

**GALVESTON:** *Boots on the Beach* February 8. Country-western music festival includes performances by Jerry Jeff Walker and Joe Ely, among others. 2102 Seawall. [www.BeachCentralGalveston.com](http://www.BeachCentralGalveston.com) 409/762-0062

**HARLINGEN:** *Jalapeño 100 Bike Ride* February 23. Old Mill Pavilion. [www.jalapeno100.com](http://www.jalapeno100.com) 956/423-3168

**HOUSTON:** *Gunilla Klingberg Art Installation* January 31-March 17. Rice University Art Gallery. 713/348-6069

**HOUSTON:** *Art/Work and the Invisible Hand* February 1-24. MFAH's Glassell School of Art. [www.mfah.org](http://www.mfah.org)

**HOUSTON:** *Blood Memory: A View From the Second Generation* February 1-March 24. Artist Lisa Rosowsky explores the "second generation" experience as the daughter of a hidden child and refugee from the Holocaust. Holocaust Museum Houston. [www.hmh.org](http://www.hmh.org) 713/942-8000

**HOUSTON:** *Portraiture Now: Asian American Portraits of Encounter* February 1-April 14. Asia Society Texas Center. [www.asiasociety.org](http://www.asiasociety.org) 713/496-9901

**HOUSTON:** *Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo* February 25-March 17. Headliner concerts include Toby Keith, Demi Lovato, Jason Aldean, Luke Bryan, and George Strait. Reliant Park. [www.rodeohouston.com](http://www.rodeohouston.com) 832/667-1000

**KEMAH:** *Yachty Gras Boat Parade* February 9. Begins at the Seabrook Channel and proceeds past the Kemah Boardwalk. [www.yachtygras.com](http://www.yachtygras.com) 713/882-4040

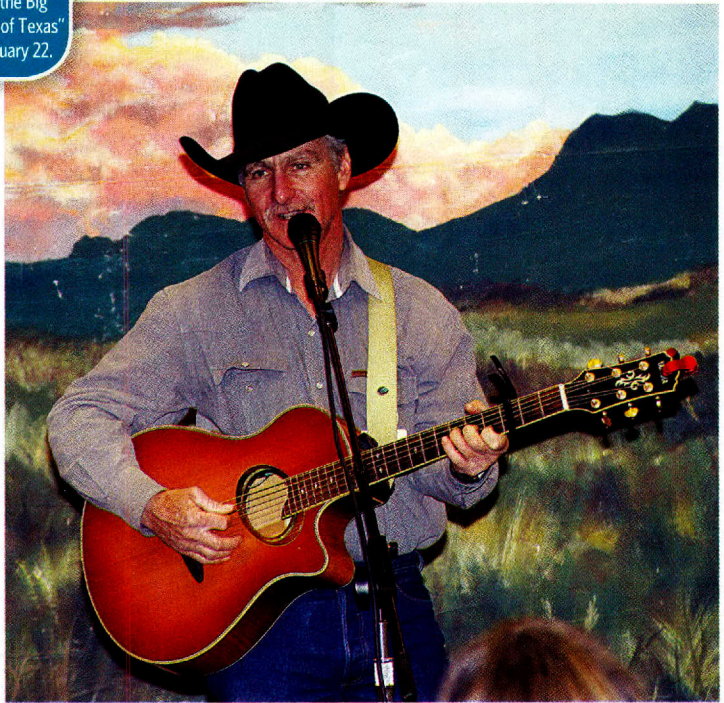
## TH tip

The Museum of the Big Bend's "Trappings of Texas" show opens February 22.

### TH SPOTLIGHT

## Gather Round

**TH TRAVELER ROAMS WEST THIS FEBRUARY FOR the Texas Cowboy Poetry Gathering**, a celebration of cowboy culture and tradition held February 22-23 in Alpine. Nearly 50 performers from Texas and beyond will ride into town for the 27th year of the event. "The purpose is primarily to continue the oral tradition of cowboy poetry and music, and to highlight Western heritage, particularly of this area of Texas," says Pam Cook, a member of the organizing committee. Rise with the cowboys on Friday and Saturday mornings for a \$5 chuckwagon breakfast at Kokernot Park. The poets commence the free daytime sessions at 10 a.m. Friday and Saturday in classrooms at Sul Ross State University. One-dollar programs with the scheduling specifics are available on site. The headliners take the stage at Marshall Auditorium for two-hour performances starting at 7:30 both nights. Tickets to the evening events cost \$12.50. [www.texascowboypoetry.com](http://www.texascowboypoetry.com).



**LAMAR: Lamardi Gras** February 8-9. Hagy Drive. [www.lamarvfd.com](http://www.lamarvfd.com) 361/790-7543

**ORANGE: The Pipes and Drums of the Black Watch Third Battalion** February 20. Lutchter Theater. [www.lutchter.org](http://www.lutchter.org) 409/886-5535

**PORT ARANSAS: First Friday** February 1. Port Aransas Art Center. [www.portaransasartcenter.org](http://www.portaransasartcenter.org) 361/749-7334

**PORT ARANSAS: Whooping Crane Festival** February 21-24. Port Aransas Civic Center and UT Marine Science Institute. [www.whoopingcranefestival.org](http://www.whoopingcranefestival.org) 800/452-6278

**PORT ARTHUR: Mardi Gras Southeast Texas** February 7-10. This year's theme is "Loves and Legends." Downtown. <http://mardigras.portarthur.com> 409/721-8717

**ROSENBERG: Houston Glass Show and Sale/The Best Little Antique Show in Texas** February 15-17. Fort Bend County Fairgrounds. [www.houstonglassclub.org](http://www.houstonglassclub.org) 713/410-4780

**SAN BENITO: Market Days** February 16. Plaza de San Benito. [www.cityofsanbenito.com](http://www.cityofsanbenito.com) 956/399-5321

**SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: SPI KiteFest** February 1-3. An indoor exhibition is held at the convention center on Friday. On the flats north of the South Padre Island Convention Centre. [www.spikitefest.com](http://www.spikitefest.com) 956/761-1248

**SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: SPI Market Days** February 22-24. South Padre Island Convention Centre. 956/554-9899

**SUGAR LAND: Sugar Land Heritage Foundation Historic Walking Tour** February 9. Historic Imperial Sugar Refinery site. [www.slheritage.org](http://www.slheritage.org) 281/494-0261

**VICTORIA: Victoria Livestock Show** February 21-March 4. Victoria Community Center. [www.victorialivestockshow.net](http://www.victorialivestockshow.net) 361/576-4300

## HILL COUNTRY

**AUSTIN: Carnaval Brasileiro** February 2. One of the largest of its kind outside Brazil. Palmer Events Center. [www.sambaparty.com](http://www.sambaparty.com)

**AUSTIN: Through the Eyes of Texas: Masterworks from Alumni Collections** February 24-May 19. Blanton Museum of Art. [www.blantonmuseum.org](http://www.blantonmuseum.org) 512/471-7324

**BANDERA: Cowboy Mardi Gras** February 1-3. Downtown. [www.11thstreetcowboybar.com](http://www.11thstreetcowboybar.com) 800/364-3833

**BOERNE: Chocolate Walk** February 9. Downtown. [www.ci.boerne.tx.us/calendar.aspx](http://www.ci.boerne.tx.us/calendar.aspx) 830/249-9511

**BOERNE: Second Saturday Art and Wine** February 9. Various venues. [www.secondsaturdayartandwine.com](http://www.secondsaturdayartandwine.com) 877/833-0621

**CASTROVILLE: Friday Night Fever** February 8. A variety of antique and modern cars are on display. Wommack Chevrolet. [www.castroville.com](http://www.castroville.com) 830/931-2479

**FREDERICKSBURG: First Friday Art Walk** February 1. [www.firstfriday-fbg.blogspot.com](http://www.firstfriday-fbg.blogspot.com) 830/997-6523

**FREDERICKSBURG: Fasching Week: Fest Nacht, Fasching Ball and Fat Tuesday** February 2-12. Fest Nacht on Feb. 2, the Fasching Masquerade Ball and Benefit on Feb. 9, and Fat Tuesday on Feb. 12. Various locations. [www.faschingfredericksburg.com](http://www.faschingfredericksburg.com) 830/998-1981

**FREDERICKSBURG: Wine Lovers Trail** February 8-17. [www.texaswinetrail.com](http://www.texaswinetrail.com)

**FREDERICKSBURG: Trade Days** February 15-17. More than 350 vendors in six barns. 355 Sunday Farms Lane. [www.fbgtradedays.com](http://www.fbgtradedays.com) 830/990-4900

**GRUENE: Old Gruene Market Days** February 16-17. Gruene Historic District. [www.gruenemarketdays.com](http://www.gruenemarketdays.com) 830/832-1721

**KERRVILLE: Nikolai Massenkoff and the Russian Folk Festival** February 3. A combination of traditional balalaika musicians, Russian folk dancers, and the booming baritone voice of Nikolai Massenkoff. Cailloux Theater. [www.caillouxtheater.com](http://www.caillouxtheater.com) 830/896-9393

**KERRVILLE: Chocolate Fantasy Weekend** February 10. Kerr Arts and Cultural Center. [www.kackerrville.com](http://www.kackerrville.com) 830/895-2911

**KERRVILLE: Mardi Gras on Main** February 12. [www.kerrilletx.gov](http://www.kerrilletx.gov) 830/792-8395

**LUCKENBACH: Hug-In and Valentine Ball** February 15-17. An annual camping event with live music and plenty of boot scootin' at the Valentine Ball. Gary P. Nunn performs. On R.M. 1376. [www.luckenbachtexas.com](http://www.luckenbachtexas.com) 830/997-3224

**NEW BRAUNFELS: Troutfest** February 23. Rio Raft and Resort. [www.rioraft.com](http://www.rioraft.com) 830/964-3613

**SAN MARCOS: Global Odyssey: From Texas to the World and Back** February 1-May 10. The Wittliff Collections in the Alkek Library at Texas State University. [www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu](http://www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu) 512/245-2313

**SAN MARCOS: Eddie Durham Jazz Festival** February 8. Part of the Texas Hill Country Jazz Festival. Evans Auditorium at Texas State University. 512/245-2651

## PANHANDLE PLAINS

**ABILENE: Mardi Gras** February 2. 220 Cypress St. 325/677-8389

**ABILENE: Abilene Christian University Sing Song**  
February 16-17. ACU students compete. Abilene Christian University Moody Coliseum. 325/674-4864

**ALBANY: Cell Series Featured Artist: Kana Harada**  
February 2-May 19. The Old Jail Art Center. www.theoldjailartcenter.org 325/762-2269

**ALBANY: Selections from the Barrett Collection**  
February 2-May 19. The Old Jail Art Center. www.theoldjailartcenter.org 325/762-2269

**AMARILLO: First Friday Art Walk** February 1. The Galleries at Sunset Center and the sculpture garden. www.amarilloartists.com 806/353-5700

**AMARILLO: The Kwahadi Dancers' Winter Night Ceremonials** February 8-9, 15-16. Kwahadi Museum of the American Indian. www.kwahadi.com 806/335-3175

**CANYON: Collecting Art History: Taste on the Southern Plains** February 1-16. This exhibit explains how regional collectors brought art masterpieces to West Texas. Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum. www.panhandleplains.org

**LUBBOCK: First Friday Art Trail** February 1. Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts. www.ffat.org 806/762-8606

**LUBBOCK: Remembering The Day the Music Died** February 3. The Buddy Holly Center. www.buddyhollycenter.org 806/775-3560

**LUBBOCK: Lubbock Lions Club Pancake Festival** February 16. Lubbock Memorial Civic Center. www.lubbocklions.org 806/763-4789

**POST: Post City Trade Day** February 2. Main Street. www.postcitytexas.com 806/559-0835

**SAN ANGELO: Art Walk** February 21. Galleries and art exhibits, museums, library exhibits, and more. www.downtownsanangelo.com/artwalk.html 325/653-3333

**SAN ANGELO: Buffalo Soldier Heritage Day** February 24. Fort Concho National Historic Landmark. www.fortconcho.com 325/481-2646

## PINEY WOODS

**GILMER: Hog-Wild Hunt** February 16. www.gilmerarea.chamber.com 903/843-2413

**JEFFERSON: Mardi Gras Upriver** February 8-10. Downtown. www.mardigrasupriver.com

**LUFKIN: Corks and Forks** February 9. Lufkin's finest chefs showcase appetizers and desserts paired with wine and champagne. Downtown. 936/633-0349

**TYLER: Ed Asner as FDR** February 5-6. UT Tyler Cowan Center. www.cowancenter.org 903/566-7424

**TYLER: Quilt-A-Thon** February 9. Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. www.oslctyler.org 903/581-1865

## PRAIRIES AND LAKES

**ATHENS: Bird and Nature Walk** February 9. A monthly birdwatching outing. Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center. www.athenstx.org 888/294-2847

**BELLVILLE: Market Day on the Square** February 2. Downtown. www.bellville.com 979/865-3407

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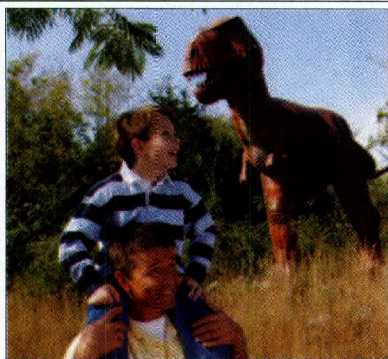
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# Traveler



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- **Creation Evidence Museum**
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- **Historic Courthouse Square**
- **Land of the Dinosaurs**
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979-968-5756 [Lguncorked.com](http://Lguncorked.com)

**CANTON: First Monday Trade Days** February 1-3, 28-March 3. On I-20 in Canton from exits 523, 526, 527, and 528. www.visitcantontx.com 877/462-7467

**CANTON: Western Swing Valentine's Party** February 14-16. Canton Civic Center. www.swingcantontx.com 800/243-6502

**CLEBURNE: Brazos Chamber Orchestra Valentine's Gala Concert and Meal** February 14. Cleburne Conference Center Theater. www.brazoschamberorchestra.org

**DALLAS: Rising Up: Hale Woodruff's Murals at Talladega College** February 1-28. African American Museum of Dallas. www.aamdallas.org 214/565-9026

**DECATUR: Wise County Antique Auto Swap Meet** February 21-23. Wise County Sheriff's Posse Grounds. www.decatortx.com 940/627-3107

**DENTON: Thin Line Film Fest** February 8-18. Campus Theater and Fine Arts Theater on the square downtown. www.thinlinefilmfest.com 888/893-4560

**DENTON: Materials Hard and Soft** February 9-April 5. Center for Visual Arts. www.dentonarts.com/subsite2/materialshands.html 940/382-2787

**ENNIS: Ennis Czech Music Festival** February 9. Sokol Activity Center. www.ennisczechmusicfestival.com 972/878-4748

**FARMERSVILLE: Farmers & Fleas Market** February 2. Historic Onion Shed. www.farmersvilletx.com 972/782-6533

**FORT WORTH: Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo** February 1-9. The nation's oldest livestock show and the world's original indoor rodeo. Includes the Cowboys of Color Rodeo on Jan. 21. Will Rogers Memorial Center. www.fwssr.com 817/392-7469

**FORT WORTH: Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition** February 1-March 24. Fort Worth Museum of Science and History. www.fwmuseum.org 817/255-9300

**FORT WORTH: Bernini: Sculpting in Clay** February 3-April 14. Kimbell Art Museum. www.kimbellart.org 817/332-8451

**FRISCO: World Olympics Gymnastic Academy Classic** February 16-17. One of the largest and longest-running international competitions in the United States. Dr Pepper Arena. www.woga.net/woga-classic-home 972/712-9642

**LA GRANGE: Best Little Quilt Show in Texas** February 22-23. Fayette County Fairgrounds Commercial Exhibit Building. www.cvquiltguild.com 979/968-5372

**MCKINNEY: Krew of Barkus Costumed Dog Parade** February 10. Mitchell Park. www.downtownmckinney.com 972/547-2660

**MCKINNEY: Third Monday Trade Days** February 15-17. One of the largest flea markets in North Texas. 4550 W. University. www.tmtd.com 972/562-5466

**MESQUITE: Billy Renfro Stone Sculpture Exhibit** February 6-24. Main Gallery at Mesquite Arts Center. www.mesquiteartscenter.org 972/216-6444

**NOCONA: Mardi Gras Nocona Style** February 9. Downtown. www.noconachamber.org 940/825-3526

**ROUND TOP: The Art in Fiber** February 2-March 3. Copper Shade Tree. www.coppershadetree.com 979/249-4042

**ROUND TOP: Winedale Quilt Exhibit** February 11-23. 3738 F.M. 2714. www.cah.utexas.edu

**SALADO: Salado on the Rocks** February 9. Various locations. www.saladoevents.com 254/947-8634

**WACO: Big Red's 75th Anniversary Exhibit** February 1-28. Dr Pepper Museum. www.drpeppermuseum.com 254/757-1024

**WAXAHACHIE: Mardi Gras on the Square and Parade** February 9. Singleton Plaza. www.collegestreetpub.com 972/938-2062

**WAXAHACHIE: Gingerbread House Chili Cook-Off** February 15-17. Benefits the Ellis County Children's Advocacy Center. Ellis County Expo Center. www.elliscountycac.org 972/937-1870

## SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

**FALFURRIAS: Funfest** February 28-March 2. Brooks County/J.M. Alaniz Showgrounds. 361/325-3333

**HIDALGO: Borderfest** Feb. 29-March 3. www.myborderfest.com

**MERCEDES: Rio Grande Valley Music Festival** February 12-17. Rio Grande Valley Livestock Showgrounds www.rgvvmf.com 956/373-0130

**MISSION: Winter Texan Fiesta** February 23. Leo Peña Placita. www.missionchamber.com 956/585-2727

**SAN ANTONIO: San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo** February 7-24. AT&T Center. www.sarodeo.com 210/225-5851

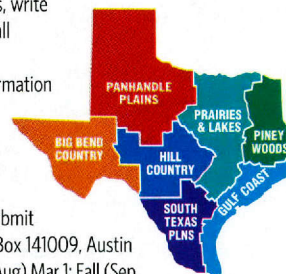
**WESLACO: Alfresco Weslaco** February 21. Texas Boulevard. www.weslaconow.com 956/969-0838

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

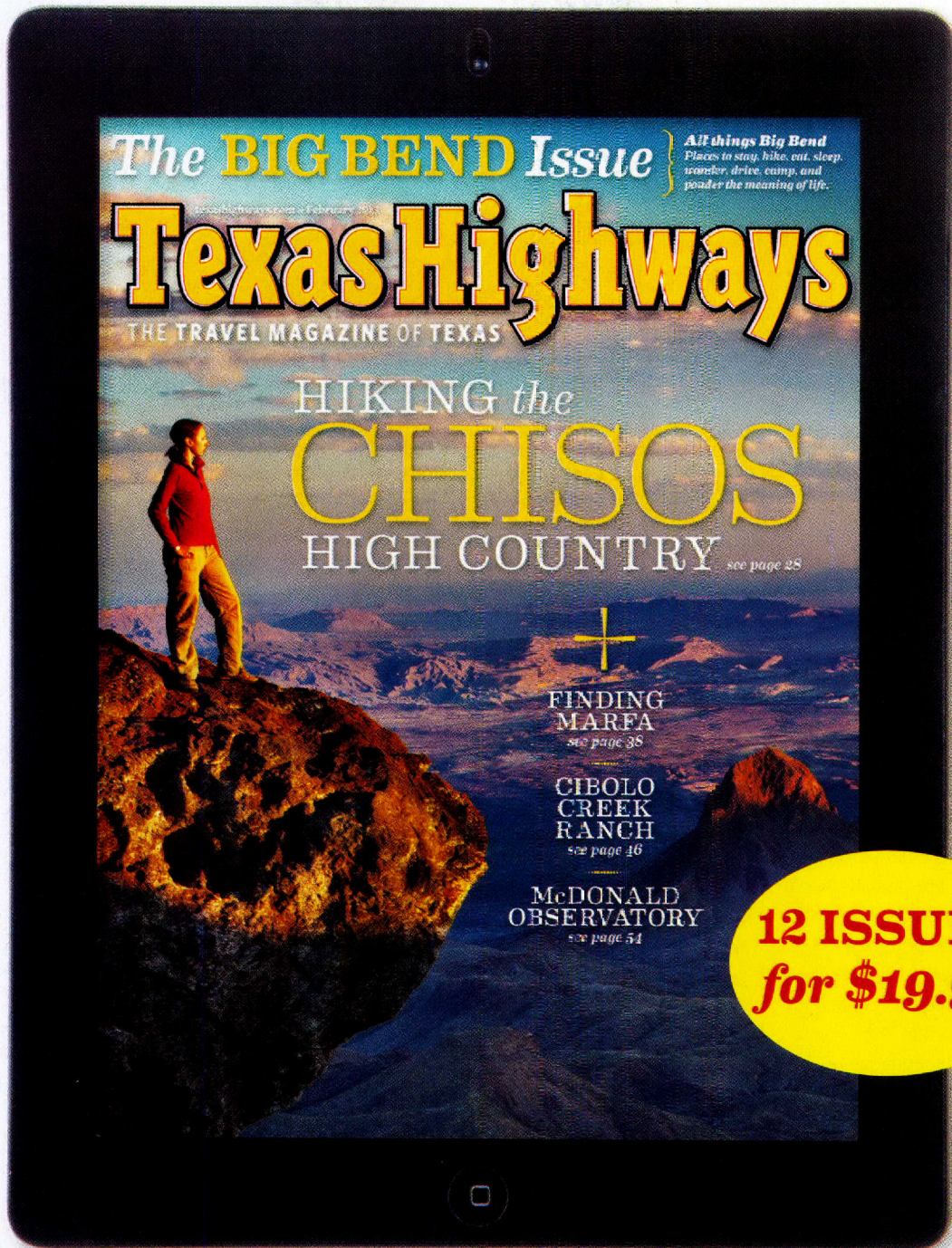
For a free printed copy of an even more detailed, quarterly schedule of events, write to Texas Events Calendar subscriptions, Box 149249, Austin 78714-9249. Or, call 800/452-9292 from anywhere in the U.S. or Canada, between 8-6 Central.

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

To submit event information: [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com) and go to Events, Submit Event Listing; e-mail: [texasevents@txdot.gov](mailto:texasevents@txdot.gov); or mail: Texas Events Calendar, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009. Listing deadlines: Spring (Mar, Apr, May) Dec 1; Summer (Jun, Jul, Aug) Mar 1; Fall (Sep, Oct, Nov) Jun 1; Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb) Sep 1.



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# Come and 'Trip It

**IN TEXAS**, our independent spirit runs deep, tracing its essence to the state's original settlers and the days of the Texas Republic. To delve into the fearless roots of the Texas Revolution, I headed to the place where it all started—Gonzales.



**10:00 a.m.** At the **Gonzales Memorial Museum**, artifacts and photographs document Gonzales' role in Texas' fight for independence, including the story behind the "Come and Take It" cannon. After loaning the cannon to town settlers for protection from native tribes, the Mexican government realized that it might be used against Mexican troops in an impending revolution. But in October 1835, after officials ordered that the cannon be returned, the Texian men—waving a flag bearing the words "Come and Take It"—fired it upon the Mexican soldiers and officially sparked the Texas Revolution. As I viewed the weaponry and read the historic letters, I was once again struck by the bravery and resolve it must have taken to stand up for the dream of Texas.

**11:15 a.m.** When General Sam Houston arrived in Gonzales in March 1836, he learned of the fate of the Alamo defenders and led the settlers in the "Runaway Scrape." Houston ordered all persons to flee town and burn everything behind them, leaving nothing

of use for the advancing Mexican army. The weary group set up camp 8.5 miles outside of town beneath a sprawling live oak now known as the **Sam Houston Oak**. I made the short drive and found the majestic oak still standing tall on the Texas prairie in front of the historic Braches House.

**12:00 p.m.** I headed back to Gonzales for a face-to-face battle—not against the Mexican army, but with a massive plate of Mexican food from **Matamoros Taco Hut**. This local, family-owned joint serves some of the tastiest tacos in Texas, including the two I devoured consisting of *carne guisada* rolled in homemade flour tortillas.

**1:00 p.m.** After the Texas Revolution, Gonzales was rebuilt, including its **Historic Downtown**. However, instead of a traditional small-town square, I was surprised to find seven square blocks laid out in a Mexican-plaza style. The old buildings were filled

with a mix of businesses. At the incredible Romanesque-Renaissance **Gonzales County Courthouse**, built in 1896, legend holds that a prisoner awaiting death in the nearby jailhouse cursed the clocks atop the courthouse and they've never kept the same time since.

**2:00 p.m.** Next door, I explored the first floor of the 1887 **Old Jail Museum**, which holds the Visitor Center and features displays of handmade weapons and photos of famous Gonzales captives such as John Wesley Hardin. As I walked up the creaky iron stairs

to the second floor, the air thickened and I found myself standing at the base of a re-created hanging gallows with 13 steps up to a dangling noose. I promptly walked back outside into the welcome fresh air and daylight.

**3:00 p.m.** Walking the blocks of downtown shops, I stumbled into **Discovery Architectural Antiques**, a store that sells salvaged architectural hardware. I was in-

spired to start rethinking my own home's interior design.

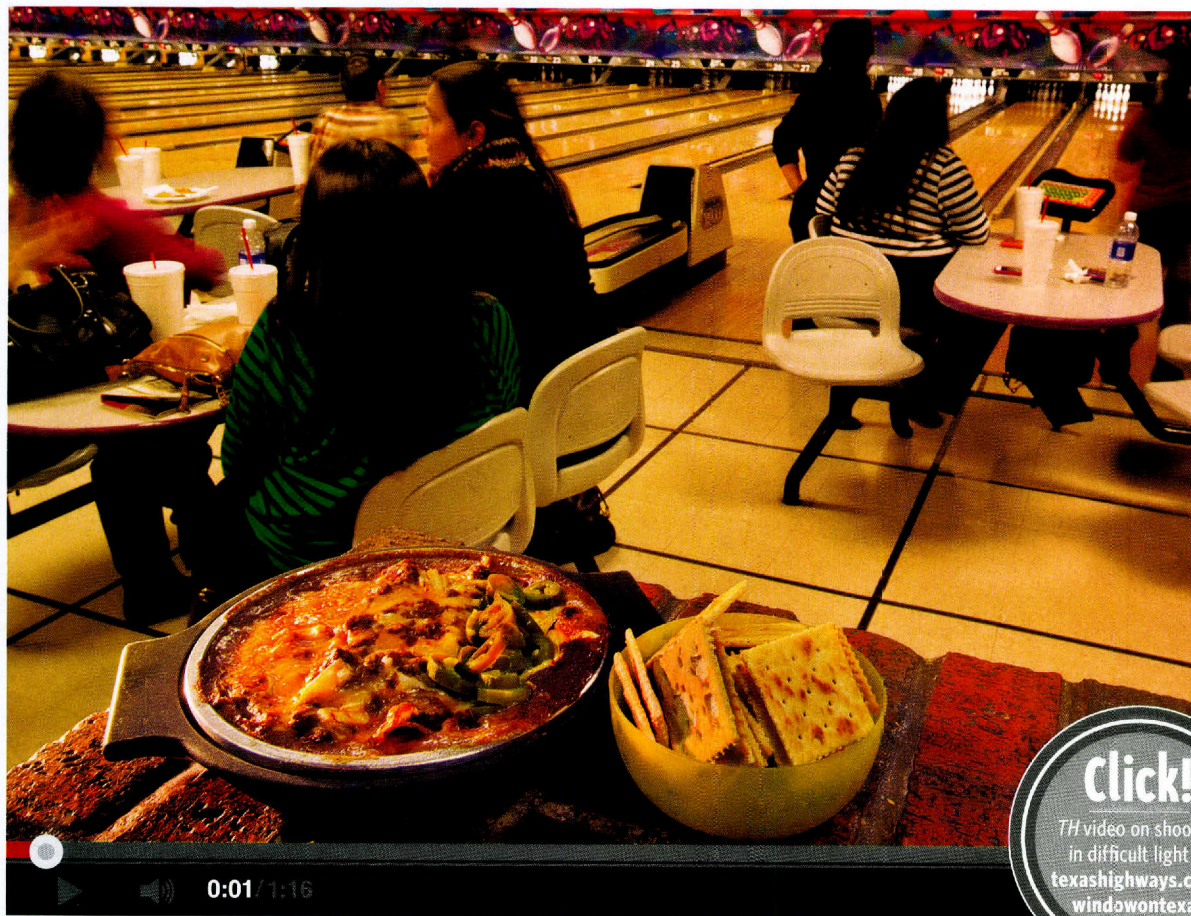
**4:30 p.m.** I hopped back in my car and cruised past blocks of historic homes rivaling those in any small town I've ever visited. But instead of taking one of the chamber of commerce's historic homes tours, I headed to **Independence Park** and passed the time walking below the towering pecan trees and skipping rocks in the flowing Guadalupe River.

**6:00 p.m.** My dinner destination was **Gonzales Food Market** off the Texas Heroes Square. Started in 1959 by the Lopez Family, this market/barbecue joint cooks up the finest smoked meats in town, including its one-of-a-kind smoked lamb ribs. I savored every flavorful bite.

GONZALES has been the backdrop for some of Texas' most heroic and dramatic events, and it still shares that same independent spirit with everyone who comes to town. So, whether you follow my footsteps or forge your own path, I hope to see you on the road. **TH**

Contact the **Gonzales Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture**, 830/672-6532; [www.gonzales.texas.com](http://www.gonzales.texas.com).





## Window on Texas

Photograph by **J. GRIFFIS SMITH**

**SAY CHEESE** When Photography Editor Griff Smith visited the Dart Bowl bowling alley in Austin to shoot its popular enchiladas for the March issue, he faced several challenges. These included overcoming the unflattering light to make the cheesy treats stand out.

In his latest photo-tips video at [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com), Smith throws some light on the situation and discusses working in mixed-lighting locations. In the film days, mixed lighting required a lot of work. However, with today's digital cameras, you can bring a strobe or flashlight (and a tripod) to add sidelight and then let the automatic white balance on the camera make the adjustments for the difference in colors produced by the light sources. "Don't be afraid to take photos in mixed-light situations. Let the auto white balance do the work for you," Smith says.

Dart Bowl is at 5700 Grover Ave. Call 512/452-2518; [www.dartbowl.com](http://www.dartbowl.com).

**Look for our story on enchiladas in March's TH Taste.**

