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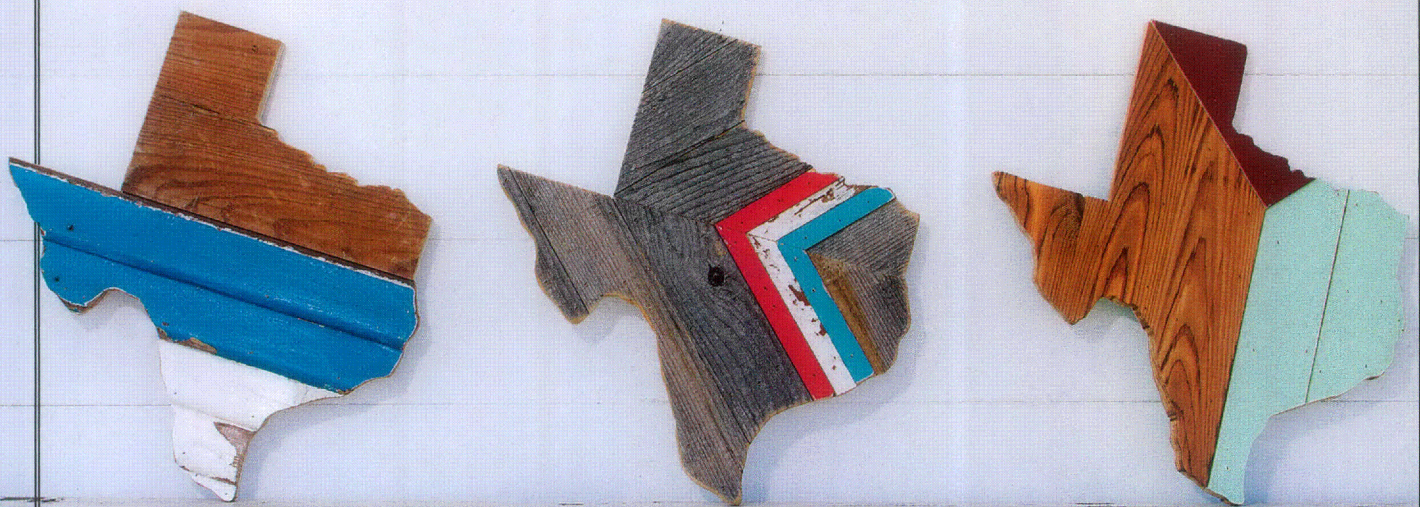

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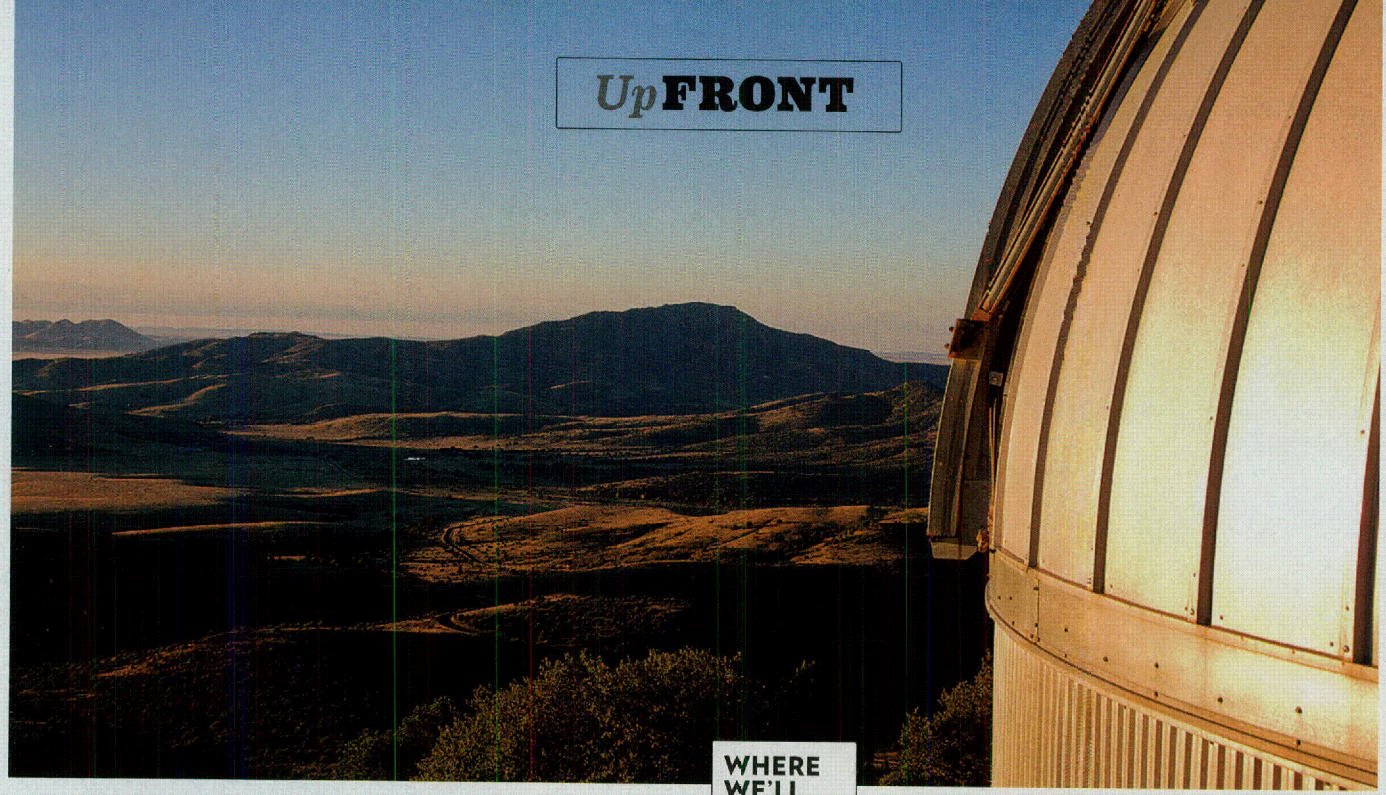

The Sky's the Limit

It's no secret that travel makes us smarter, whether the enrichment seeps in as we're exploring new cultures, or while we're navigating a nature trail or the backstreets of an unfamiliar city. And oftentimes, the best souvenir we can bring home from a trip is a brand-new skill.

With that in mind, we present our "Summer School" roundup of horizon-broadening activities to consider while planning your summer excursions. (Melissa Gaskill's story begins on page 52.) Hone those horseback-riding skills (on both Western and English saddles) in Waller, perfect that fly cast on a Hill Country river, and in Bryan, grasp the trapeze with the greatest of ease. Or for boundless enlightenment, go on a galaxy quest at The University of Texas McDonald Observatory, perched in the Davis Mountains some 20 miles northwest of Fort Davis.

The elevated setting makes the observatory an ideal summertime destination. While the dog days descend on other regions of the state, average high temperatures here usually stay in the 80s, with lows in the 50s. Among the daytime activities, visitors can participate in Solar Viewings (see live footage of sunspots, flares, and other solar features) and tours of the observatory's largest research telescopes, starring the Hobby-Eberly, designed to search for planets and study black holes, distant galaxies, and even exploding stars.

On certain evenings, there are Twilight Viewings and Special Viewing Nights with specific telescopes, along with the ever-popular Star Parties. (Go to www.mcdonaldobservatory.org for the schedule and to make reservations, which are strongly recommended.) "Some of the things Star Party visitors might see include globular star clusters, planetary nebulas, Mars, Saturn and its rings, Jupiter and its four largest moons, and the Andromeda galaxy," says Rebecca Johnson, the observatory's press officer and editor of *StarDate* magazine. There are even special programs for cloudy nights, like the demonstration of spectroscopy (decoding light to learn about galaxies) I enjoyed a few years ago when a rare summer storm thwarted my Star Party plans.

"We hope visitors will experience wonder at the vastness of the universe and what humans can learn through studying it," says Rebecca, "and realize that there's still so much that we don't know."

From deciphering the final frontier to mastering the trapeze, there's indeed so much to learn—and there's no time like this summer to start.

Jill

Jill Lawless, Editor

WHERE WE'LL BE NEXT MONTH:

Explore the shore with us in June as we spotlight top beach lodgings, Galveston by bicycle, and the new Independence Plaza at Space Center Houston. We'll kayak to Matagorda Island, cruise South Texas on US 77, and set sail to several Texas regattas, then venture inland for East Texas peaches and a day at Balmorhea's sparkling pool.

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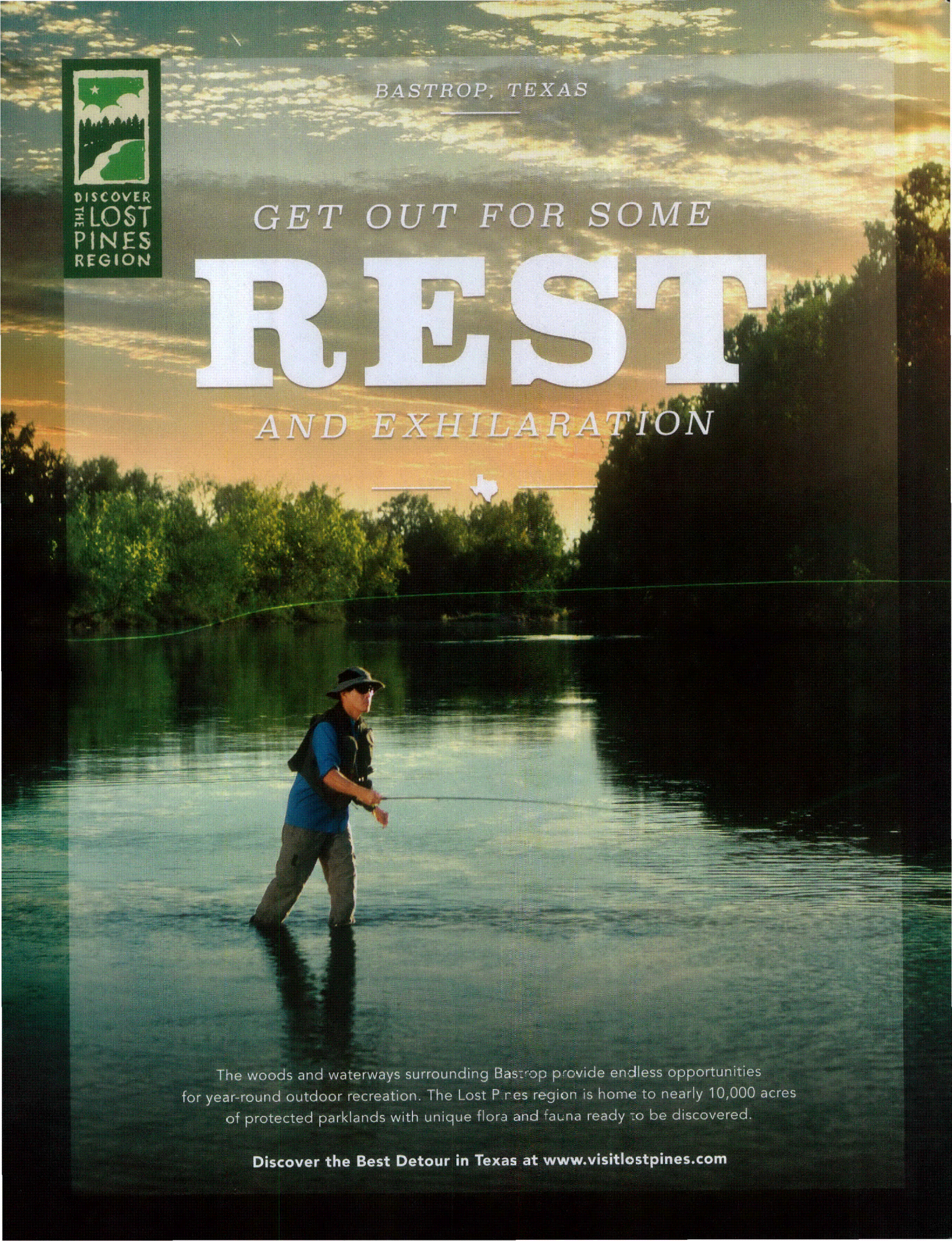
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VOLUME 63 / NUMBER 5

MAY 2016

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

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Our catalog of captivating curriculum will banish any skeptical notions you may have about summer school and inspire you to study up on self-enrichment. From trapeze to sewing, school's in!

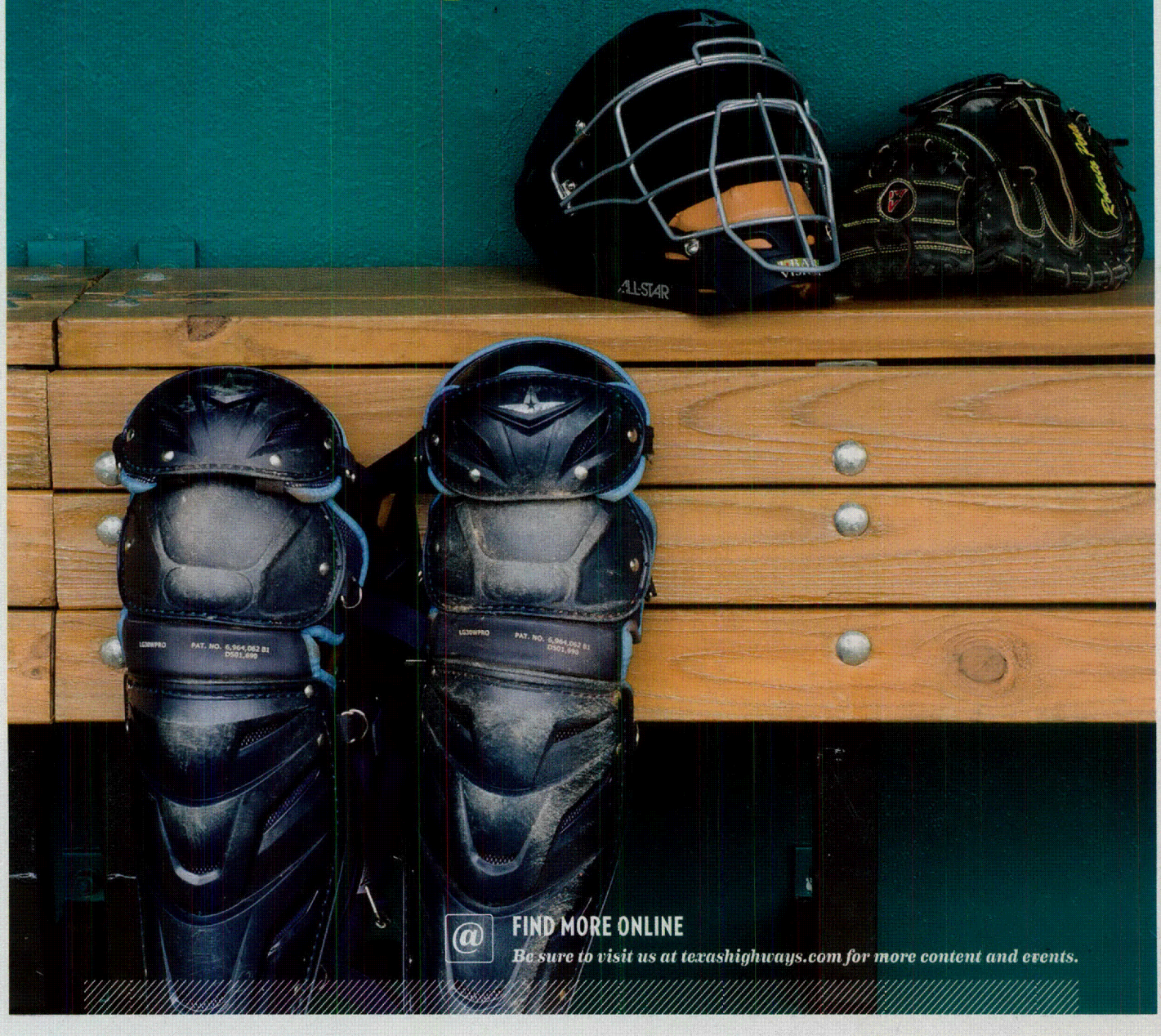
Text by **MELISSA GASKILL**

64 ***Play Ball***
Whether you're a baseball diehard or curious newbie, we take you out to the minor-league ballparks across Texas for exciting, nostalgic, and affordable summer fun.

Text by **JOHN LUMPKIN**
Photographs by **MICHAEL AMADOR**

72 ***Wimberley Reboots***
Little Wimberley showed big heart in rebuilding from last year's flooding. The town proves to be an outsized getaway, to boot, with its mix of scenery, lodging, art, and dining.

Text by **JOHN LUMPKIN**
Photographs by **JULIA ROBINSON**



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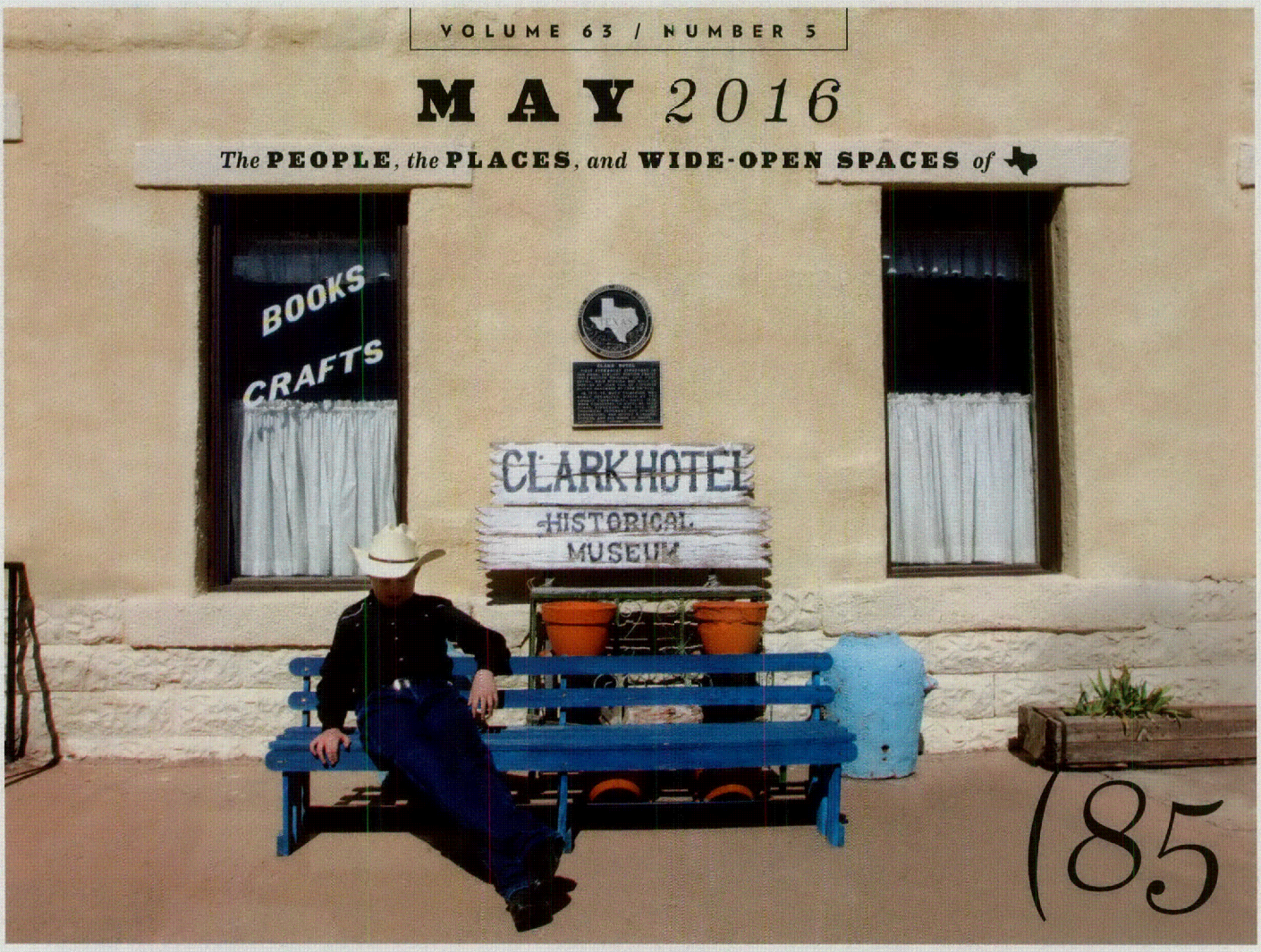

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ON OUR COVER
Kicking back at Blue Hole on Cypress Creek in Wimberley. Photo © Michael Hanson/ Aurora Photos

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Editor Jill Lawless
Senior Editor Lori Moffatt
Associate Editor Matt Joyce
Editorial Coordinator Cindy Newsom
Contributing Editor Erin Inks

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

Art Director Jane Wu
Associate Art Director Kirsti Harms

Web Editor Lois M. Rodriguez
Digital Art Director Matt Wetzler

Circulation Manager Andrea Lin
Marketing/Ancillary Manager Katy Venable
Special Projects Coordinator Julie Stratton
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Accounts Payable LaKena Cooks
Accounts Receivable Ana Alvarez
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MAY 2016

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MEMORABLE MOMENTS

Pack your Memorial Day holiday with meaningful remembrances and festive outings.

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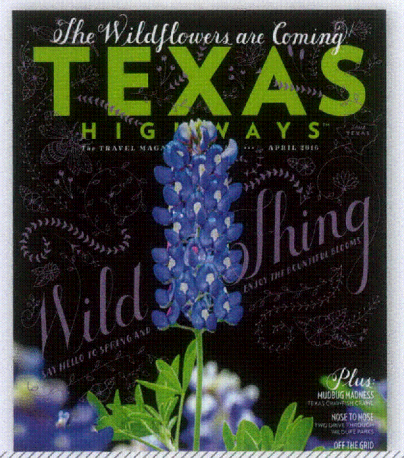

OUR FAVORITE SOCIAL MEDIA OF THE MONTH...

Just chilling at @TheHotelEmma library drinking my free margarita and ended up in a photo shoot for @TexasHighways. *@shaunapiranha, San Diego, California*

The beauty of my home state never gets old or ceases to amaze me. No place like Texas. No place I'd rather be. *@CVN70Texan, Matt Drake, Midlothian*

Doodlebug

The cover of the April issue is the most beautiful magazine cover I have ever seen. I could not stop looking at it. What a breathtaking piece of artwork!

HARVETTE GREEN, *Rockport*

Swinging Songs

Western Swing, the official state music of Texas, is the only musical style that was born right here in Texas, in the 1930s, and is still popular today. The Western Swing Hall of Fame recognizes pioneers of this musical style each year and had its 29th event in San Marcos on the first weekend of April. I think that a state with so much music in it needs to have more than one official state song. I don't want to delete our song, "Texas, Our Texas," but we should add more. Songs like "Deep in the Heart of Texas," "Beautiful Texas," "Waltz Across Texas," "Miles of Texas," "What I Like About Texas," and "The Eyes of Texas" should all be state songs.

AL DRESSEN, *Buda*
Musician and president of the Texas Western Swing Hall of Fame

READERS RECOMMEND

Mudbug Madness

Our April story about Texas crawfish hotspots inspired a full platter of reader feedback on their favorite mudbug eateries and suppliers. Here's a sampling of responses:

Boyd's Onestop in Texas City
LEANNA AMERSON

Circle M Crawfish in Big Sandy
DASHA NELSON, *Winona*

Hambone's Cajun Grill in Palestine
DONNA PHILLIPS GARNER, *Palestine*

Peggy's on the Bayou Cajun Cafe in Orange
CAROL Y. LARPENTER

Cajun Corner in Center
JEFF STEWART

Dudley's Cajun Cafe in Longview
CAROLYN WRIGHT MASTERS

Crawfish Shack in Crosby
JOE NUZZO, *Baytown*

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Cowboy Dreams

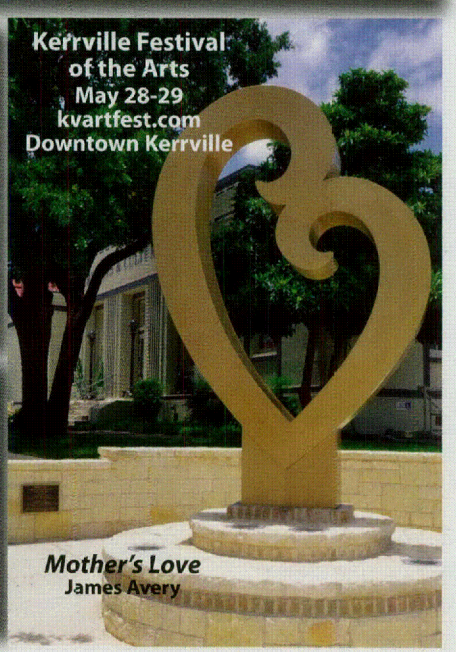
Charles Goodnight [March] was always a legendary figure when we were growing up in Amarillo and Canyon in the 1950s and early '60s. I have this memory of his cabin that my mother would point out—I think on the way to Palo Duro. Pretty interesting for a little kid with cowboy dreams.
GLENDON ROBERT FRANK, *Arlington, Virginia*

Splash Break

Thanks to *Texas Highways* I've discovered some amazing places. This is how we spent Spring Break 2016 in the beautiful Hill Country: tubing in the Frio River near Concan, splashing in the Medina River in Bandera, and at Pedernales Falls, Hamilton Pool, and Krause Springs near Austin.
ROSY BLANCO, *Facebook*

Buffalo Steaks

There is an interesting and little-known connection between Charles Goodnight [March] and the formative days of North Texas. When the Houston and Texas Central Railway initiated its service to Dallas in July of 1872, locals organized a large celebration. The Dallas newspaper dubbed it the "Grand Barbecue" and proceeded to invite the whole world. Held in an oak grove east of town at the site of Dallas' first fairgrounds, an enthusiastic crowd consumed barbecued buffalo steaks that had been obtained from Goodnight's ranch. Prairie chicken and lemonade were also served. Speeches and a brass band marked the occasion. The arrival of the railroads in the early 1870s kick-started the rapid growth of the entire North Texas region, a phenomenon which continues unabated.
HARRY RUCKER, *Dallas*



Scenic
ROUTE

30° 31' 38.44" N
97° 37' 49.87" W

Hill Country

Dell Diamond, off US 79 in Round Rock, is home to the Round Rock Express minor league baseball team. Opened in 2000, the stadium has 8,361 seats and an outfield lawn where fans can spread blankets to watch the game. There are plenty of chances to attend a home game during the season, which runs through September. Buy a ticket, pick up a gourmet hot dog, and settle in for a few hours of entertainment.

For information about taking in a game or touring the stadium, see **www.roundrockexpress.com**.

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TEXAS TICKET

Baile, Conjunto Style

TEX-MEX ROOTS AT SAN ANTONIO'S TEJANO CONJUNTO FESTIVAL

text by MICHAEL CORCORAN

ACCORDION TIME *Santiago Jiménez Jr. performs at the 2015 festival. His brother, Flaco Jiménez, is on the bill for this May's event.*

PHOTO: Will van Overbeek

IN THESE MODERN TIMES, THE WORDS "music festival" make me think of Jumbotrons and multiple stages, $225 wristbands and the Foo Fighters. There's none of that at the Tejano Conjunto Festival, a celebration of Tex-Mex accordion music that started in San Antonio in 1982 and maintains an old school feel as it enters its 35th year this May.

The festival, taking place May 11-15, is held in a no-frills pavilion in Rosedale Park on the West Side, with beer, food, and souvenir booths. So even though Tejano Conjunto fest was the first festival to feature conjunto music and presents the top names of the genre every year, it's more of a *baile* than a blowout.

The setting is just right for the members of "Table 99," about two dozen conjunto maniacs from Houston who trek to San Antonio each May for the dancing and camaraderie. Their tables are usually next to the Polka Dawgs, a "rival" dance club from San Antonio. "We've got our colors on," jokes Forrest Armstrong of Table 99, whose members wear custom shirts embroidered with the club's name. "But we're all friends." How could there not be an affinity among couples that drive hundreds of miles to dance for hours and hours?

This year's Tejano Conjunto Festival includes the San Antonio premiere of Nicolás Valdez's *Conjunto Blues* (7 p.m. May 12), a theatrical multimedia performance that explores the origins of conjunto music and culture.

"We attend dances and festivals all over South Texas," says Armstrong, "and the Tejano Conjunto in San Antonio always has the top performers. And then if you can't get enough, there are festival parties at local nightclubs."

The daytime activities of the event, sponsored by the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, include a seminar on accordion tuning and repairs, showcases of youth accordionists, and a senior citizens dance. The Arts Center hosts the activities at its 376-seat indoor

TEJANA POWER ***Blanca Rosa, above, and Eva Ybarra perform at last year's festival. Ybarra, the "Queen of Conjunto Music," returns this year.***

PHOTOS: Will van Overbeek

Guadalupe Theater, built in 1942 and wonderfully restored.

Conjunto music is the fusion of German polkas, introduced to Texas by Czech, German, and Polish settlers, and Mexico's 12-string *bajo sexto* guitar. It's a musical form born in Texas dance halls in the late 1800s, with the primary purpose of filling the wooden floors with hard-core dancers.

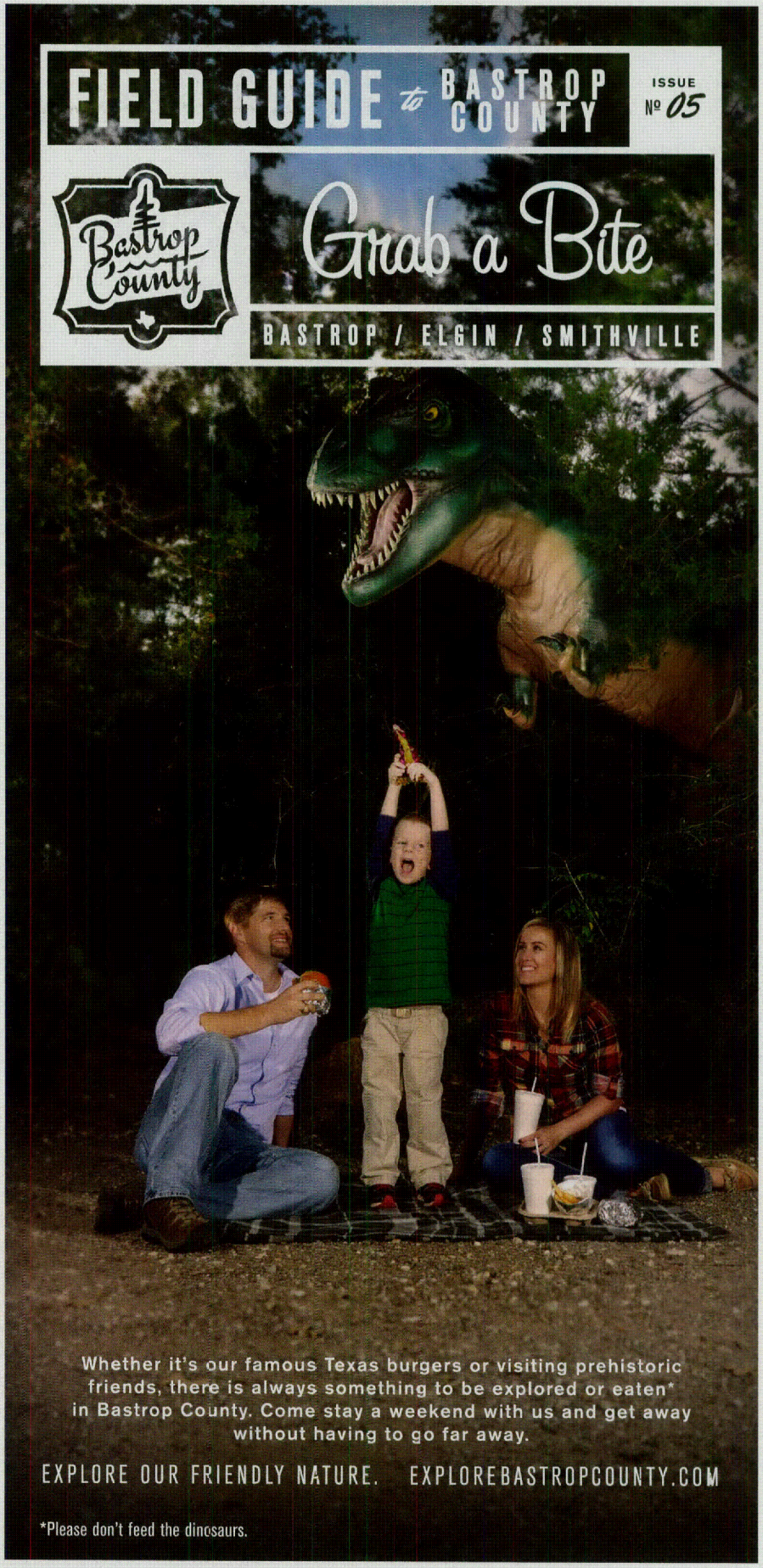
"You can't separate the dancing and the music in conjunto," says Juan Tejeda, who founded Tejano Conjunto fest in conjunction with the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center. At Rosedale Park, the festival crowd readily fills the large concrete dance floor, which is shaded by a metal awning and surrounded by picnic tables and oak trees bearing their bright green leaves of May.

Although "Tejano" is an umbrella term that covers Tex-Mex music, accordion-fueled conjunto is the focus of Tejeda's musical booking. "The main requirement to play the festival is that you have an accordion in the group," says Tejeda, a music instructor at Palo Alto College. Some of the more progressive bands use synthesizers and electric bass for a fuller sound, but at the core is the squeezebox.

Honoring the heritage of conjunto music is a primary theme of the festival. "There's a formula to the booking," says Tejeda. "First of all, we've gotta bring in the legends who are still alive. Then, of course, we try to book the most popular acts." Also, the festival inducts musicians each year into its Conjunto Music Hall of Fame.

Several performers on the bill for 2016 have already been inducted, among them Flaco Jiménez, the legendary San Antonio accordionist known partly for his crossover work with the Texas Tornados; Boni Mauricio y Los Maximos, from Corpus Christi; and Eva Ybarra, a San Antonio accordion master known as "The Queen of Conjunto Music."

Bands from South Texas make up most of the schedule, such as Los Texmaniacs, a San Antonio group that won the Best Tejano Album Grammy Award in 2010, and Los Fantasmas del



TEXAS TICKET

Valle and Los Monarcas de Pete y Mario Diaz of Houston. But other regions are also represented. This year's performers include The Hometown Boys, from Lubbock, and all the way from the Netherlands, Dutch phenom Dwayne Verheyden, perhaps the only Tex-Mex accordion virtuoso in his home country.

Tejeda also works to book new acts that have never performed at the Tejano Conjunto Festival. Fresh faces this year include Conjunto Cats from Seguin, Los Nuevos Chachos de Jesse Gomez from Mission, and Conjunto Delta Boyz of Elsa. Tejeda's budget for talent is only $30,000 for three full days of music, so there's a balance between established acts who command greater fees and new acts who play the fest for exposure—a proud achievement in the industry.

During the early 1990s, when Selena's rise spiked the popularity of Tejano, the festival expanded and used multiple stages, but these days it's back to the simpler one-stage setting—a format that Tejeda prefers because fans can catch all of the bands.

"It's a relatively small festival," says Tejeda, "but the impact has been pretty huge when you think about all the unknown acts who started out here. In May, San Antonio becomes the center of the conjunto universe for all of the United States, and increasingly Mexico and other parts of the world. We're very proud of that. We were the first festival dedicated to conjunto music and we're still going strong." ★

THE 35TH ANNUAL TEJANO CONJUNTO FESTIVAL IN SAN ANTONIO is May 11-15 at Rosedale Park, 303 Dartmouth St., and the Guadalupe Theater, 1301 Guadalupe St. A festival pass covering three days of music at Rosedale Park is $40, while a one-day ticket costs $12 to $15. **www.guadalupeculturalarts.org.**

Ship Sharp

HISTORIC VESSELS REPURPOSED AT THE KNIFE SHOP IN LUFKIN

text by **Heather Brand**

ALONG THE TEXAS GULF COAST, a series of decommissioned ships navigate the nation's maritime history. In Galveston, the 1877 tall ship *Elissa* recalls the waning days of international sailing ship commerce while the submarine USS *Cavalla* chronicles the deep-sea battlegrounds of World War II and the Cold War. In La Porte and Corpus Christi, respectively, the imposing Battleship *Texas* and aircraft carrier USS *Lexington* reflect the American Naval might of the 20th-Century world wars.

As floating museums, these ships offer a rare educational experience, but they also face difficult maintenance problems—metal corrosion and wood rot are common; upkeep is constant and expensive. Recognizing an innovative opportunity to help, the Lufkin-based knife maker Percy Richardson has created a series of knives using metal and wood discarded from these vessels during renovations to raise funds for their support. In 2014, Richardson, working with his wife Lynne and sons Rich and Aaron, launched the America's Fighting Ships Knives series with a signature knife for the *Texas*. They followed it up in 2015 with knives for the *Lexington*, *Cavalla*, and *Elissa*.

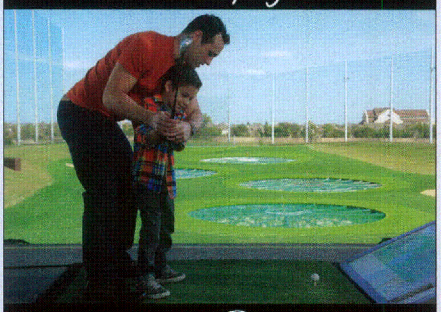
Knife maker Percy Richardson has created a series of knives using metal and wood discarded from these vessels during renovations to raise funds for their support.

"He's taken scrap and has made

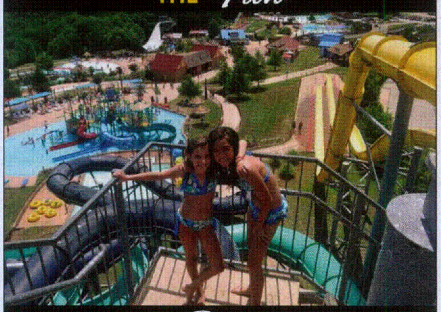
PHOTO: Kevin Stillman

THE Lake

THE Golf



THE Fun



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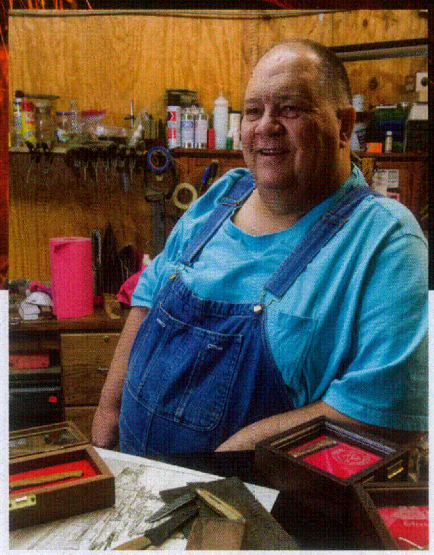


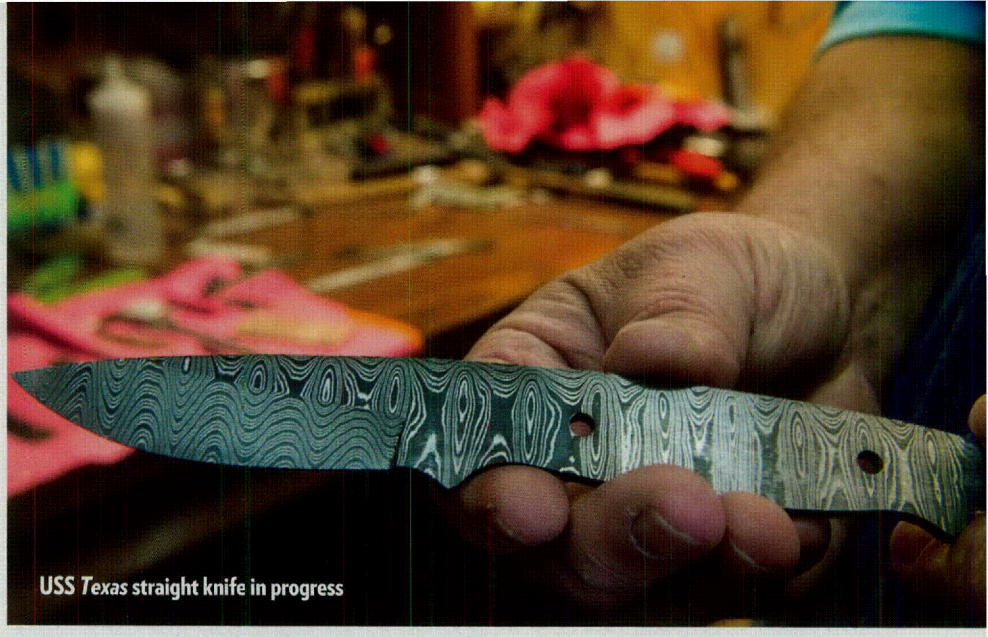
For each ship, Richardson initially produces about 100 folding knives and between 10 and 20 straight knives, with additional straight knives available on demand.

something artistic out of it," says Andy Smith, ship manager of the *Texas*. "The knives are jaw-droppingly gorgeous and wildly popular. When you hold it in your hand, the craftsmanship is amazing, but also you think about how that piece of metal has been around the world and fought in two world wars. It's like owning a piece of history."

A native of Hemphill, Richardson taught himself how to make jewelry before turning to knife making in 1989. What started as a hobby soon led to custom orders from hunters, and he opened his own shop in 1991. "I'm just a self-taught country boy," Richardson professes. But he's also a perfectionist with an eye for detail. His artistry is evident in the smooth, carved handles and precisely shaped blades of his straight knives, which he makes in his shop in Lufkin, The Knife Shop. Because of the demand for the ship series' folding knives, Richardson outsources their fabrication to Great Eastern Cutlery in Pennsylvania, which helps him keep up with production volumes. The ship knives now make up about 60 percent of his business.

Richardson's workroom at the back of his shop is full of saws, sanders, and raw materials. File cabinets hold such exotic items as a whale's tooth and the tusks of warthogs and walruses, to be

PHOTOS: Kevin Stillman



USS *Texas* straight knife in progress

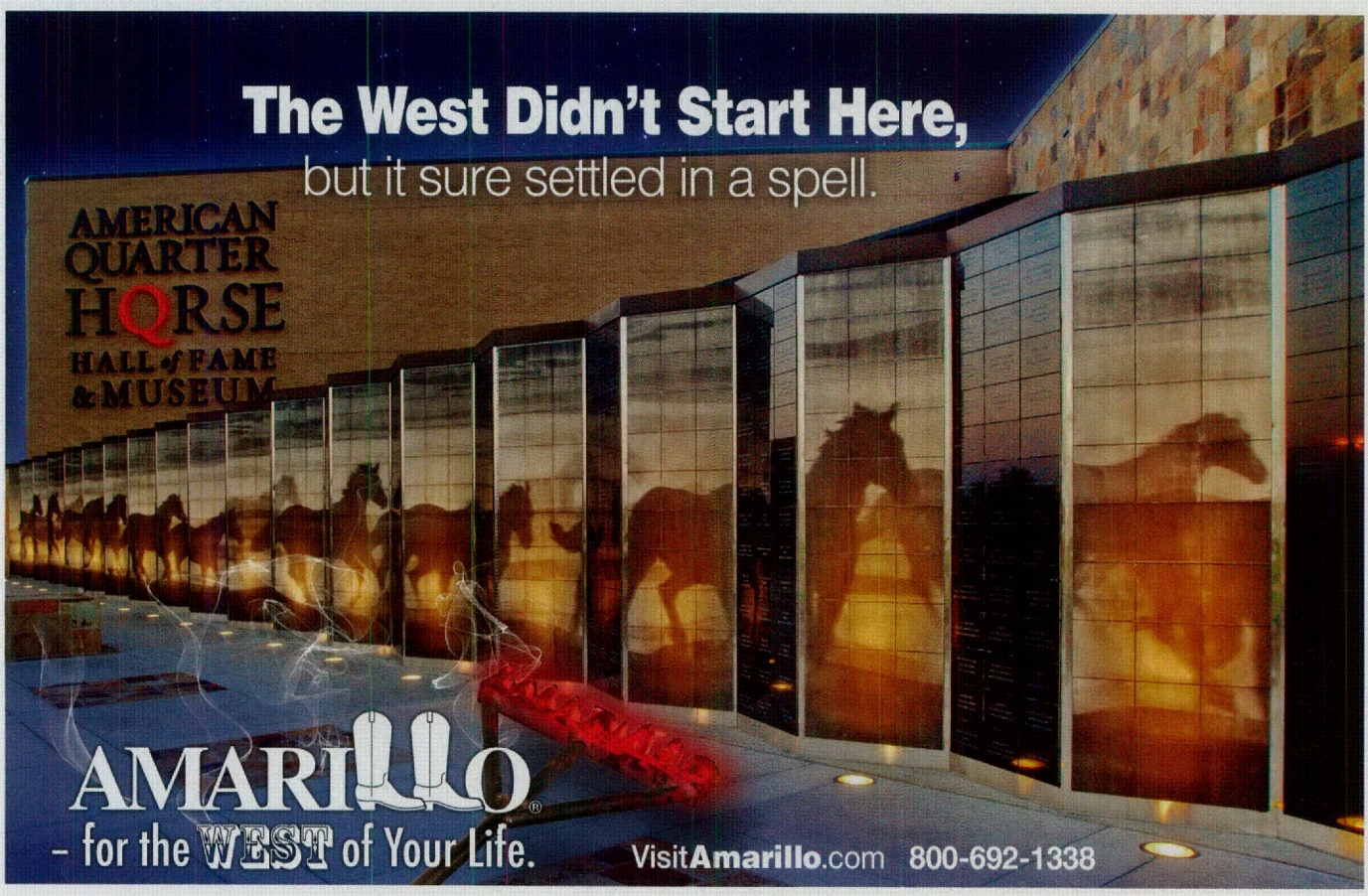
fashioned into handles. One drawer contains, among other things, a wooden block labeled "TX 1912–14"; it's a piece of the *Texas*' original teak decking before it was replaced with pine (Richardson has some of that pine on hand, too).

He also has teak—for centuries a prized boatbuilding wood because of its durability and natural resistance to rot—from the decks of the *Lexington* and *Cavalla*, and from the 1877 captain's quarters of the *Elissa*. Richardson carves these wood blocks into knife handles and uses reclaimed metal for their blades. *Texas*' metal comes from an engine brace; the *Cavalla*'s from a bulkhead; the *Lexington*'s from anchor chain; and the *Elissa*'s from the hull.

"There are lots of knife makers that make collectible knives, but these are the most historical," Richardson asserts. They're exclusive as well, because Richardson has 10-year contracts with the ships for rights to use salvaged material for knives.

The recycled ship metal is usually too soft to be used for cutlery, so Richardson first sends the material to Devin Thomas of Panaca, Nevada, a knife maker and expert producer of Damascus steel. Thomas combines the salvaged ship metal with a harder grade of steel in a process that strengthens the metal and adorns the surface with decorative patterns reminiscent of wood grain, flowing water, or fingerprints.

At The Knife Shop, stacks of Damascus steel billets—thick sheets of metal that measure about 5-by-18 inches—rest on a worktable. Richardson selects a different blade pattern for each annual series; the 2014 *Texas* knife blades had a raindrop pattern, while the *Lexington*, *Cavalla*, and *Elissa* blades have



a ladder pattern. For the *Elissa*, the only merchant ship in the series, he also varied the shape of the blade, producing a blunt-tipped rigging knife, typical of those used on sailing vessels.

Richardson ensures that all of the elements of his knives are produced in the United States. Even their walnut-and-oak display cases are handmade in the town of Oakwood, by Meadows Display Cases. In his shop, Richardson spends about eight hours on each straight knife, first shaping the blade using a band saw and belt grinder, and then carving the handle using a drill press and sander.

For each ship, Richardson initially produces about 100 folding knives and between 10 and 20 straight knives, with additional straight knives available on demand. The folding knives cost $395 and can be shipped overnight; the straight knives start at $600 and can take two weeks to a few months to complete, depending on customization. The larger Bowie knives, measuring about a foot in length, start at $1,000. Richardson sells the knives at his shop and by phone order. The *Lexington* and *Elissa* knives are also available in the gift shops on those ships.

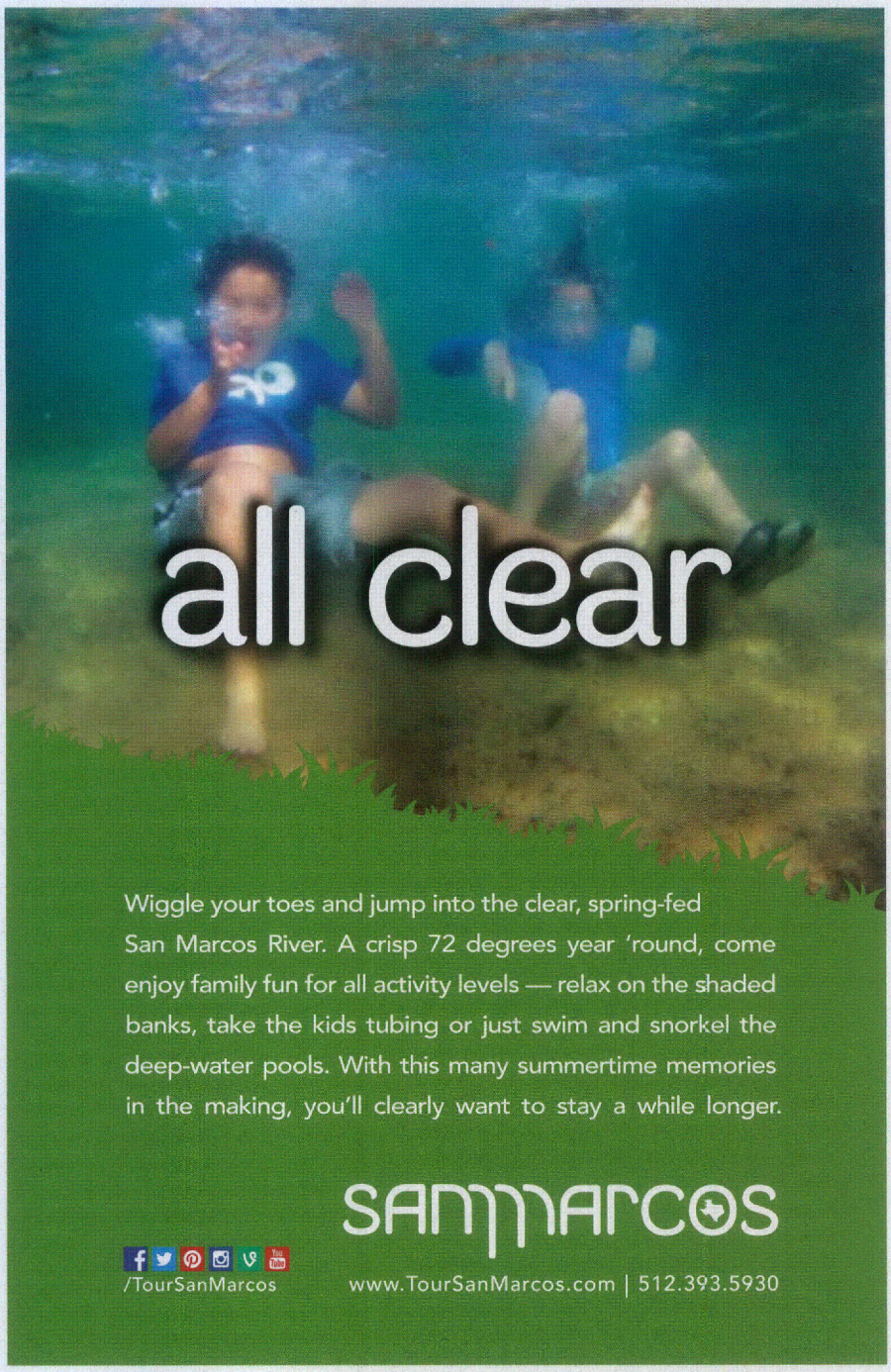
Richardson donates a portion of the sales price back to the ships: $50 each for the first 100 sold of each series, and then $100 for each additional knife sold. Also, Richardson says he often donates additional knives for auction or raffle, and gives $10 per knife to local Wounded Warrior projects. To date, the initiative has raised more than $20,000 for the Battleship *Texas* alone, Smith says.

Richardson intends to produce knives for 15 ships in need throughout the United States, with plans to focus on about three new ships every year until 2020. In 2016 he will create knives for Battleship *New Jersey* in Camden, New Jersey, and the aircraft carriers USS *Hornet*, in Alameda, California, and USS *Nimitz*, in Bremerton, Washington. Richardson hopes that his knives will support these ships in their battle to stay afloat for years to come. ★

THE KNIFE SHOP

opens Tue-Fri 9-5 and Sat 9-2. The shop is located at 1508 Atkinson Dr. in Lufkin. At press time, the shop planned to move in May to a new facility at 7000 US 69 South. Call **936/634-1690**; **www.americasfightingshipsknives.com**.

The ship knives cost $395 for folding knives and start at $600 for straight knives. Richardson donates $50 each for the first 100 sold of each series back to the ship, and then $100 for each additional knife sold.



See the Sights... *and Save*

TOP ATTRACTIONS MADE AFFORDABLE IN HOUSTON AND DALLAS

text by **Mai Pham** *illustration by* **WACSO**

ANYONE WHO TRAVELS TO A big city for vacation knows that apart from lodging, food, and shopping splurges, the other big expense—especially if you have a family—is admission to attractions. Those costs can be shaved by at least 40 percent in Dallas and Houston, thanks to a program called CityPASS.

CityPASS launched its program in San Francisco and Seattle about 20 years ago. The idea behind it was simple: Pick the top attractions in each city, bundle them together in a booklet that could be used over a period of nine days, and offer the pass as a discounted package deal at a savings of close to 50 percent off individual ticket prices.

Admission to select attractions can be shaved by at least 40 percent in Dallas and Houston.

These days, CityPASS is offered in 12 U.S. cities and regions, and travelers purchase more than a million booklets per year. In Texas, CityPASS Houston has been available since 2008, while Dallas got its CityPASS in 2015. Let's look at what a trip with CityPASS could look like in each of these cities.

Houston CityPASS

For $56 per adult (age 12 and older), and $46 per child, the Houston CityPASS grants you access to five Houston attractions, including Space Center Houston, the Downtown Aquarium,

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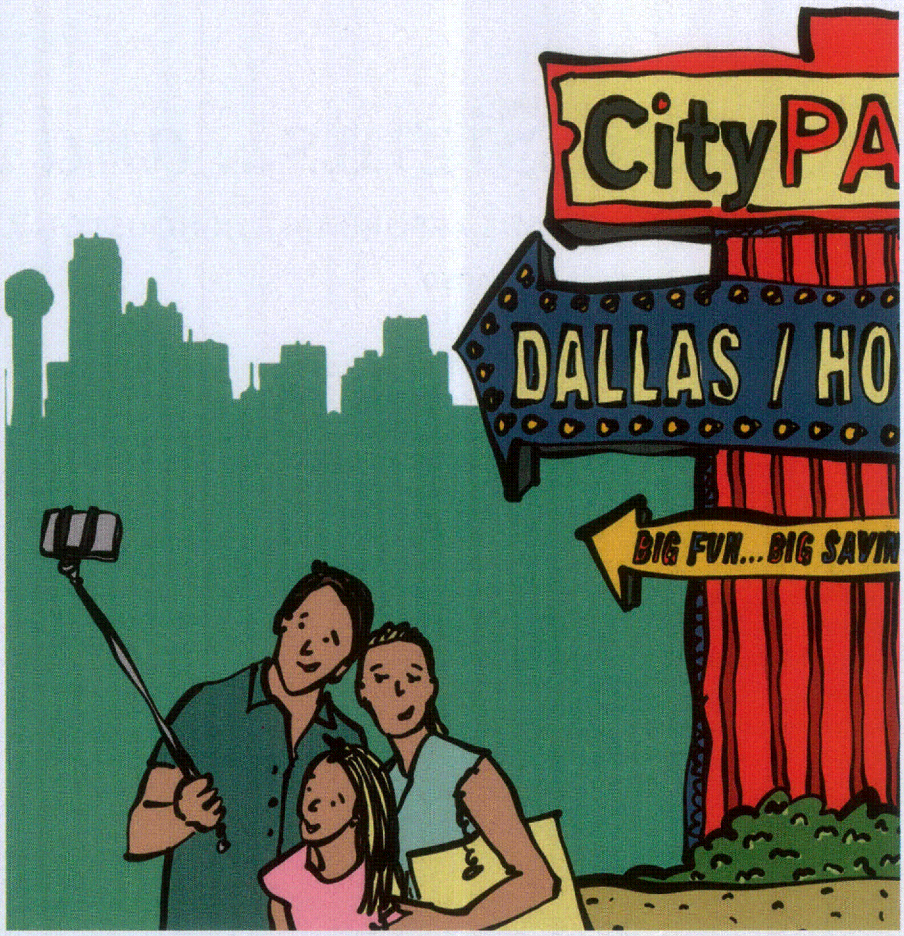

the Houston Museum of Natural Science, either the Houston Zoo or the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and your choice of the Kemah Boardwalk or the Children's Museum of Houston.

Let's say you want to spend the first afternoon doing something easygoing. Your first excursion could take you to either the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, or to the manicured grounds of the Houston Zoo, where you'll want to note the various animals' feeding schedules before checking out the lions, gorillas, monkeys, birds, and reptiles. Make a beeline for the wonderful giraffe habitat, where, if you're lucky, you'll get to feed romaine lettuce leaves to several of the spectacularly long-necked creatures.

The next day, you might make the 40-minute drive to Space Center Houston, where your CityPASS lets you breeze by the long lines as you channel your inner astronaut. Feel what it's like when a shuttle launches at the Blast-Off Theater, inspect the life-size *Galileo Seven* shuttlecraft from "Star Trek," then head to Independence Plaza to explore the replica of the shuttle *Independence* and its NASA 905 shuttle carrier aircraft. Finish the journey with a 90-minute NASA Tram Tour through the 1,600-acre Johnson Space Center (tickets are timed, so you'll want to book yours online ahead of time to avoid lines).

Perhaps you'll want to take a break for a day to do some shopping at the Galleria mall. The CityPASS gives you the flexibility to have non-excursion days because you have nine days to use it.

When you're ready for more arts and culture, however, you could spend several hours at the wonderland that is the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Stop by the Morian Hall of Paleontology to marvel at the dinosaur skeletons on display, and don't leave without taking

CITYPASS
For more information or to purchase booklets, visit **www.citypass.com.**

a peek at the beautiful jewelry gleaming in the gem vault.

With just three attractions under your belt, your Houston CityPASS has already more than paid for itself. If you still have time, however, your booklet also contains a ticket for the Downtown Aquarium, and a choice between an outing at the Children's Museum of Houston or an afternoon on the waterfront Kemah Boardwalk, either of which will make a fine conclusion to your stay in Space City.

Dallas CityPASS

Dallas' CityPASS bundles your choice of four of Big D's most popular attractions into a booklet that costs $46 per adult (age 12 and older) and $31 per child.

You'll want to spend an afternoon at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science, a state-of-the-art learning space named for the family of entrepreneur and billionaire Ross Perot. The dinosaur exhibit, an 11,000-square-foot space where you can acquaint yourself with a Tyrannosaurus rex and other prehistoric animals, is stunning, as are the 10 other permanent exhibit halls, which let you explore the universe, learn about your body, discover rare minerals, and experience a tornado via a simulation exhibit.

For step two in your CityPASS booklet, take the elevator some 470 feet to the observation deck of Reunion Tower. Here, from the recently redesigned GeO-Deck, you can appreciate 360-degree views of the Dallas skyline, zoom in on landmarks via touch-screen computers, and learn more about the assassination of President Kennedy, an important if tragic chapter in the city's history. On a clear day, you can see as far as 32 miles.

For your third outing, decide whether you want to spend an afternoon immersed in U.S. history at the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, where you can take a photo in a full-size replica of the Oval Office; or if you'd like to spend the afternoon frolicking in the sun at the picturesque Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden—always fun for the kids and a gold mine for family photos.

Your last attraction might be the Dallas Zoo, which beckons with 106 acres of wildlife, including zebras, elephants, giraffes, and hippos. Families with kids might also pack their swimsuits for a break in the zoo's wading stream. Alternatively, you can take a deeper look at President Kennedy's life and legacy at the Sixth Floor Museum.

As with all CityPASS offerings, you'll have nine days to use your tickets, which leaves ample time to explore areas such as Deep Ellum for live music and nightlife, or the Bishop Arts District for the quintessential Big D boutique shopping experience. ★

A Key to *Understanding*

A VISIT TO THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR BRINGS HISTORY INTO FOCUS

text by **Clayton Maxwell**

I **KNOW A MUSEUM HAS TRIUMPHED WHEN** I leave a bit stunned, new realizations having just taken hold. Before my recent visit to the National Museum of the Pacific War and Admiral Nimitz Museum in Fredericksburg, I had considered the site a destination solely for World War II history buffs. And while I was surprised to find the artifacts of war so intriguing, that realization is not the one that left me teary-eyed in the penultimate exhibition room. I was startled by how, in weaving together the complex threads of history, the museum tells the story of a whole generation—and in that telling, there is a story of my family, too.

The awareness hits me right away, in the first exhibition room, when I read one of FDR's famous quotes, emblazoned large upon the wall, "To some generations much is given. Of other generations much is asked. This generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny." It dawns on me that FDR was talking about my mother's mom and dad, Joy and Stanley Price, aka Nana and Papa, who played outlandish games with my sister and me in the attic and took us to the dollar store for shopping sprees. But now, standing at the beginning of this labyrinth of exhibition halls, taking in FDR's dignified pronouncement, I get a whole new perspective on something I had never fully comprehended: that my grandparents had been two young people swept up in a wave of history that changed the world. And it changed them, too.

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR is at 340 E. Main St. in Fredericksburg. Call 830/997-8600; www.pacificwarmuseum.org.

My grandmother, at the age of 19, married a fighter pilot named Edward Raymond Woolery; they were stationed in the Philippines when she gave birth to my uncle. A few months before the Pearl Harbor attack, she and her son were sent home to San Antonio. She didn't find out that her husband had died in combat until months later, when an Air Force officer knocked on the door with the news. A wartime widow with a small child, she then met and fell in love with my grandfather,

In weaving together the complex threads of history, the museum tells the story of a whole generation.

also an Air Force pilot, who was stationed in San Antonio at that time as a flight instructor. They married and had a daughter, my mom. But he too was called away to the Pacific War, and began flying B-29s off of the island of Tinian in the Marianas. My grandmother said goodbye yet again to her husband, not knowing if he would return.

I move from room to room of the museum and take in all of the video, audio, photographs, maps, and artifacts that the museum uses to explain the war and the global forces that caused it: the U.S. isolationism that followed the Great Depression, the introduction of Japan to the West after the invasion of Commodore Perry in the mid-1800s, and the ensuing Sino-Japanese War. One thing leads to another, of course, and the museum teaches how these seemingly disparate events of history are interwoven.

I stand in the Pearl Harbor room and listen to a recording of FDR announcing war on Japan, imagining my grandparents hearing his voice over the radio 75 years ago. I watch computerized maps showing how U.S. planes steadily took over the islands that they needed in the Pacific to gain access to Japan, thinking about my grandfather making the 12-hour round-

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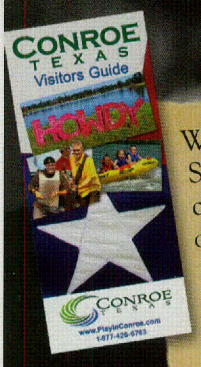

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PHOTOS: Courtesy Clayton Maxwell (Air Force cadet Stanley Price); Brandon Jakobeit (key chain)

trip flight between Tinian and Japan.

But it is in the Victory Room where I understand at a gut level how this museum presents a personal story, too. Because it is in the video of the momentous September 2, 1945, surrender ceremony aboard the USS *Missouri* that I get to see my grandfather flying in a tiny black plane over the Bay of Tokyo. I can't really see him *specifically*, of course—but I know that he was in one of the B-29s flying in a massive air formation, floating like flocks of geese over the ship where General MacArthur, Admiral Nimitz, the Japanese foreign minister, and many Allied heads of state were signing the peace document that would end the war.

In watching that video screen, I feel a hint of what that ceremony represented to so many people—the promise of peace. And for us, it meant that my mother and my uncle were going to grow up with a father, and that my grandmother would not be widowed again.

I stand in the Pearl Harbor room and listen to a recording of FDR announcing war on Japan, imagining my grandparents hearing his voice over the radio 75 years ago.

Afterwards, into the sunshine of a perfect blue-sky day, I sit overlooking the Peace Garden. This Japanese garden, with its waves of raked white rocks representing the Pacific Ocean, was built by Japanese gardeners and carpenters in 1976 to honor the respect between U.S. Admiral Nimitz and Japan's Admiral Togo, as well as the work Nimitz did after the war to repair relations between the two countries. A plaque reads that this garden "is a gift to the people of the United States from the people of Japan with prayers for everlasting world peace through the goodwill of our two nations."

While I imagine this unlikely respect between two admirals from opposing sides of the war, I hold in my hands a leather key chain I'd just bought in the gift shop. Fastened to the leather is a silver replica of the Air Force Seal—an eagle clutching a shield flashing with lightening bolts. Sometimes we need an everyday object to remind us of the bigger picture, of the victories and losses that have shaped our world. This keychain is a reminder of what the museum helped me grasp in a more meaningful way—that while Joy and Stanley Price will always be two lovable grandparents, they are also, as FDR put it, part of a generation of whom much was asked, when even surviving to become a grandparent meant that you were one of the lucky ones. ★

Happy Trails

TAKE AN EASY AMBLE THROUGH THE FRIO CANYON

text by **Paula Disbrowe**

THE SCENE IS WISTFULLY FAMILIAR. As I pull off US 83 and into the stables at Elm Creek Ranch near Concan, there are a dozen or so horses saddled and tethered to the open-air barn where round bales of hay are stacked to the ceiling. A mess of chickens scratch around the yard, an old dog snoozes in the shade, and a frisky chestnut foal prances around the ring. Clayton Kessler, a strapping 27-year-old roper, is attempting to shoe an impatient cream-colored horse. His grandfather, George Streib, a veteran rancher who originated the trail rides and other offerings here, sits at a nearby picnic table, offering unsolicited advice. The horse paws at the dirt, irritated. George looks at me and winks; I smile in return, feeling the deep swell of happiness that comes from seeing an old friend.

ELM CREEK STABLES is in Concan, 1/4-mile north of Garner State Park, at 31611 US 83 North. Reservations are recommended. Call **830/232-5365** or **817/781-5079**.

"I thought I'd be slowing down by now," George tells me, removing his gray Resitol and wiping the sweat from his broad, sun-freckled forehead, "but I haven't. I'm busier than ever." It's nice to know things haven't changed. I met George 14 years ago when my husband and I left New York City to cook

PHOTO: Will van Overbeek

Experienced wrangler Cooter Todd shows a rider the ropes.

at a guest ranch a few miles down the road. For four years, we swapped stories over coffee in the morning and cold longnecks on most evenings. Dragging a trail of caliche dust, his pick-up and red horse trailer became as predictable as the goats escaping the pasture and feasting on the front lawn.

George taught us how to identify agarita and wild persimmon, how to harvest prickly pear, and to never, ever, walk between a momma feral hog and her babies. George served as a trail guide for our guests, and the memory of him sitting sideways in the saddle, smoking a cigarette and charming guests with tall tales, makes me smile even today.

We'd lucked into the perfect mentor for our new life in Texas. George was born and raised in the Frio Canyon, and his roots go way back. His grandfather left Germany when he was 21 and eventually landed a position running sheep at a ranch in Kerrville, where he married and had children. The family moved to the land that's now Garner State Park when George's father was young. George tells me that going to dances in the park pavilion each summer beneath a sky full of stars were some of the "happiest times in my life."

Over the years, George would leave the area and return several times before settling down for good. He opened Elm Creek Stables 18 years ago. "I've been to a lot of places, and none of them are prettier than this," he says, motioning to the soft slope of hills that shapes the horizon.

In addition to his horses, there are plenty of other hungry mouths to feed. With a gentle nature that can soothe a frightened fawn, George's wife, Beverly,

PHOTOS: Will van Overbeek

has taken in an endless stream of abandoned animals, including baby goats, a blind deer, a miniature horse, a Shetland pony, a pot-bellied pig, and a pea-hen. The spoiled menagerie has become a petting zoo for visitors, who often hang out here before and after their horseback rides into the hills.

"We have people who came as kids who are returning with their kids," George tells me. There are two trails for riders to choose from. The lower "family trail" has gentle inclines that can accommodate "doubles" (a parent and child age two to five); this ride lasts about an hour and meanders past mountain laurel, cedar, Spanish oak, and live oaks. The "high trail" offers spectacular views of the Frio River canyon and is so inspiring that some visitors have proposed marriage up there. "Riders have climbed off their horses, gone down on one knee, and pulled out a diamond and a bottle of wine," says Beverly.

Guests begin an easy ride.

Although the cowboy setting is legit, the experience in the saddle is an easy amble; riders stay on the trail in single file, mostly for the safety of other riders. "Most of our riders are inexperienced," Beverly says, "So our horses have been trained to stay on the trail. If one started to gallop, the others might follow."

At the end of the trail, there's a gift shop selling stuffed animals, plaques

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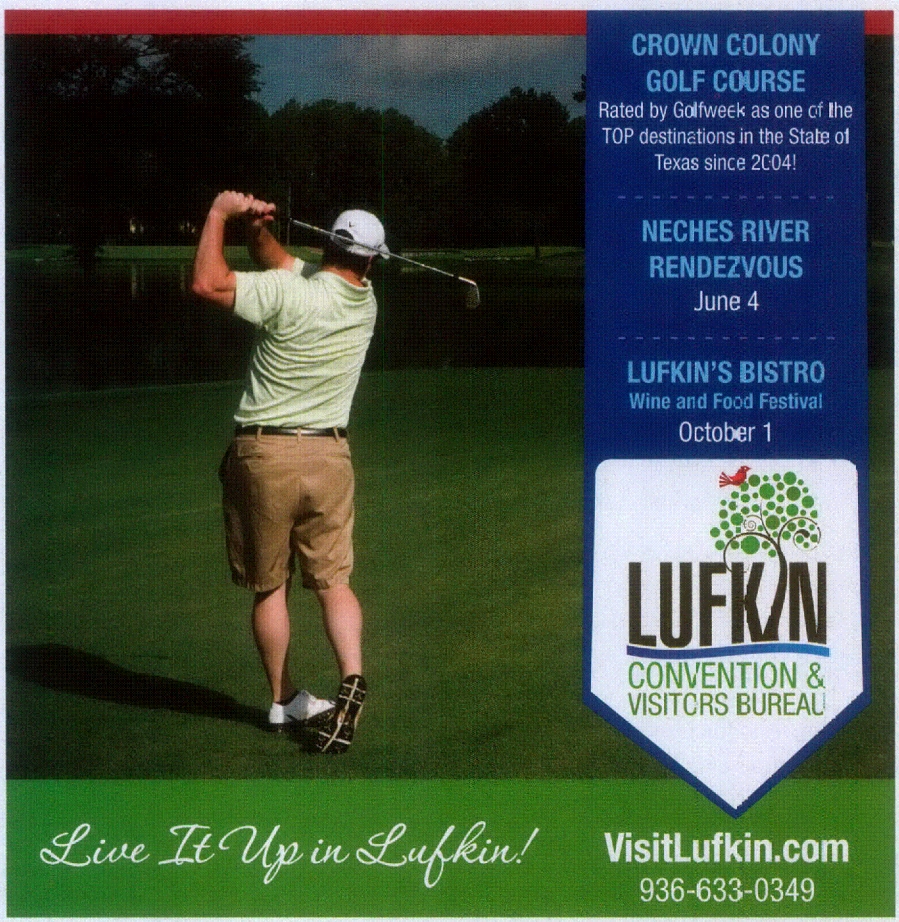
with cowboy slogans, and gifts made by local craftsmen, including such necessities as whiskey bottles repurposed as night lights.

In addition to creating memories for families that descend upon the Frio each summer, the Streibs are also doing their part to preserve what makes the area special. Like most horse operations across the state, Elm Creek endured drought over the last several years. While the Streibs were able to sustain their horses on supplemental feed, other owners resorted to releasing their animals to survive on their own. Beverly created the Frio Canyon Horse Rescue in 2014, and soon they started taking in neglected or abused horses and rehabilitating them for future adoption. Currently the program supports 30 horses and offers visitors several ways to interact with them: Not only can you groom some of the tamer animals, but you can also sponsor a specific horse and receive a picture and updates about its progress.

"I've been to a lot of places, and none of them are prettier than this," he says, motioning to the soft slope of hills.

They're also working to honor their family's history. When the Rio Frio church was put up for sale last year, George, his brother Willis, and a group of local investors purchased it and turned it into a community center for local events. "Our grandparents helped build the church in 1915, and my parents were married there," Willis says. "We didn't want it bulldozed and turned into a vacation home."

George says that the biggest change in the area has been the shift from ranching to tourism. "Very few people are running sheep and goats these days," he says. Luckily for visitors who crave a connection to the area's history, it's still possible to stop at Elm Creek Stables and ride a horse through the natural landscape. That's a simple pleasure that changes little with the times. ★



A *Meteoric* Blast

THE ODESSA METEOR CRATER MUSEUM EXPLORES A 63,000-YEAR-OLD CRATER

text by **Cathryn A. Hoyt**

A METEOR STREAKS ACROSS THE pre-dawn sky, its long tail sparkling. Perhaps Chicken Little is right. The sky is falling. But what are the chances that a killer meteorite might land in West Texas? The chances are low, but it has happened before.

To learn more about that catastrophic occasion some 63,000 years ago, I head for the second-largest meteor crater in the United States. About 10 miles west of Odessa, I exit off Interstate 20 and follow Meteor Crater Road as it threads between tumbleweed-choked fence lines and pump jacks en route to the Odessa Meteor Crater Museum.

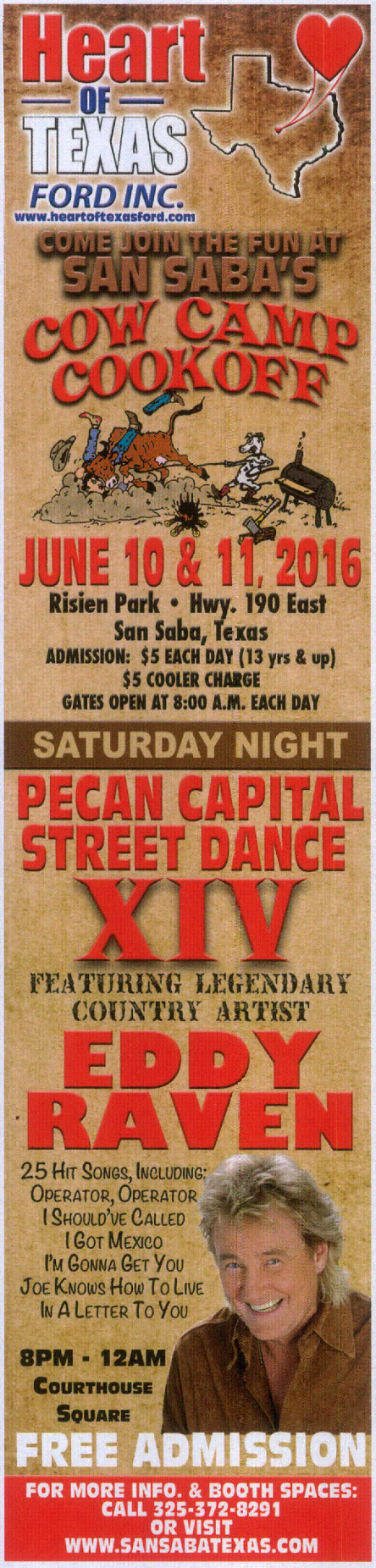
The Odessa meteor crater site has attracted attention at least since the 1890s, when a rancher found a strange fist-sized rock in his pasture.

Perched on the edge of the 550-foot diameter crater, the museum tells the story of its namesake crater and offers fascinating exhibits about meteorites from around the world. Posters line a wall of the one-room museum, showing where meteors come from, where they've struck the earth, and the dramatic consequences. A small gift shop—including necklaces with meteorite fragments—occupies one corner of the room, while a flat-screen monitor showing educational videos occupies the other.

The Odessa meteor crater site has attracted attention at least since the 1890s, when a rancher found a strange fist-sized rock in his pasture. Thinking it was a sample of iron ore, he gave the rock to a geologist from Baltimore who sent it to the Smithsonian Institution for testing. The piece was 91 percent iron and

DIG THIS
A 1953 search for meteorites at the Odessa Meteor Crater.

PHOTO: Courtesy Odessa Meteor Crater Museum



The museum tells the story of its namesake crater and offers fascinating exhibits about meteorites from around the world, including this 70-pound iron octahedrite from Odessa.

contained the classic black fusion crust and crystalline structure of a meteorite.

At first, no one gave much thought to "the great depression" where the meteorite was found, despite the upturned limestone blocks lining the rim of the eight-foot-deep hole. Standing on the lip of the crater, I marvel at the force that was necessary to dislodge these blocks, some of them as large as desks, from 22 feet below the surface to where they stand now.

It happened, scientists believe, when a superheated lump of iron and nickel crashed through the atmosphere and shattered into a swarm of meteors. Moving at up to 27,000 miles per hour, the meteors compressed and warmed the air as they fell from the sky. One chunk, perhaps as large as 32 feet in diameter, never made it to earth. Just before impact, the chunk exploded, throwing a shower of small meteorites in a two-mile radius and creating the Odessa meteor crater. (The blast actually created five craters, which are collectively known as the Odessa Meteor Crater.) Shock waves threw dirt and rock high into the air, peeled limestone back, and fractured deeper layers of sandstone into rock flour. The blast sparked fires, created a rush of 1,500-mph winds, and instantly killed any plants or animals within 2,000 feet.

Inside the museum, a glass case displays the type of nickel-iron meteorites found at the Odessa crater, as well as stony meteorites found elsewhere in the world. Douglas "Turtle" Neatherlin, the museum's manager, explains the difference. "It's the amount of metal they contain," he says. "The nickel-iron meteorites are usually 90 to 95 percent iron. The stony meteorites are only about 5 percent iron. We think the nickel-iron meteorites came from the core of a planet or asteroid that disintegrated, while the stony meteorites come from the crust." Some of the museum's dense nickel-iron meteorites are cut and polished to show their beautiful crystalline structure.

Interest in the Odessa meteor crater accelerated in 1926, when geologist D.M. Barringer Jr. read a paper describing the meteorite and the curious hole near Odessa. The son of a Philadelphia mining engineer who identified a huge meteor crater in Arizona, Barringer was intrigued. Could this be another meteor crater? Barringer

THE ODESSA METEOR CRATER MUSEUM

is at 5599 Meteor Crater Rd, about 10 miles west of Odessa. The museum opens Tue-Sat 10-5. Free admission, donations accepted. Call **432/381-0946**; **www.odessameteorcrater.com**.

PHOTO: Will van Overbeek

visited the site and immediately recognized the upturned rocks encircling the depression, the iron shale, and the material blown out of the crater and scattered across the surface—all features indicating that the hole was special. He was sure it was a meteor crater.

It wasn't until 1939, however, that geologists from the University of Texas arrived with a crew of Works Progress Administration men to excavate the crater. They believed that the meteorite was buried deep below ground. They set out to dig a shaft down to the main body of the meteorite, then dig a lateral tunnel to provide a view of the meteorite in its subterranean resting place.

The WPA workers dug a 165-foot-deep shaft into the center of the crater, turning up tiny fragments of meteorites along the way but ultimately discovering that there was no big meteorite. The impenetrable layer that geologists thought was the main meteorite turned out to be a dense layer of bedrock. In 1941, the project ended abruptly as the WPA workforce was called to fight in World War II.

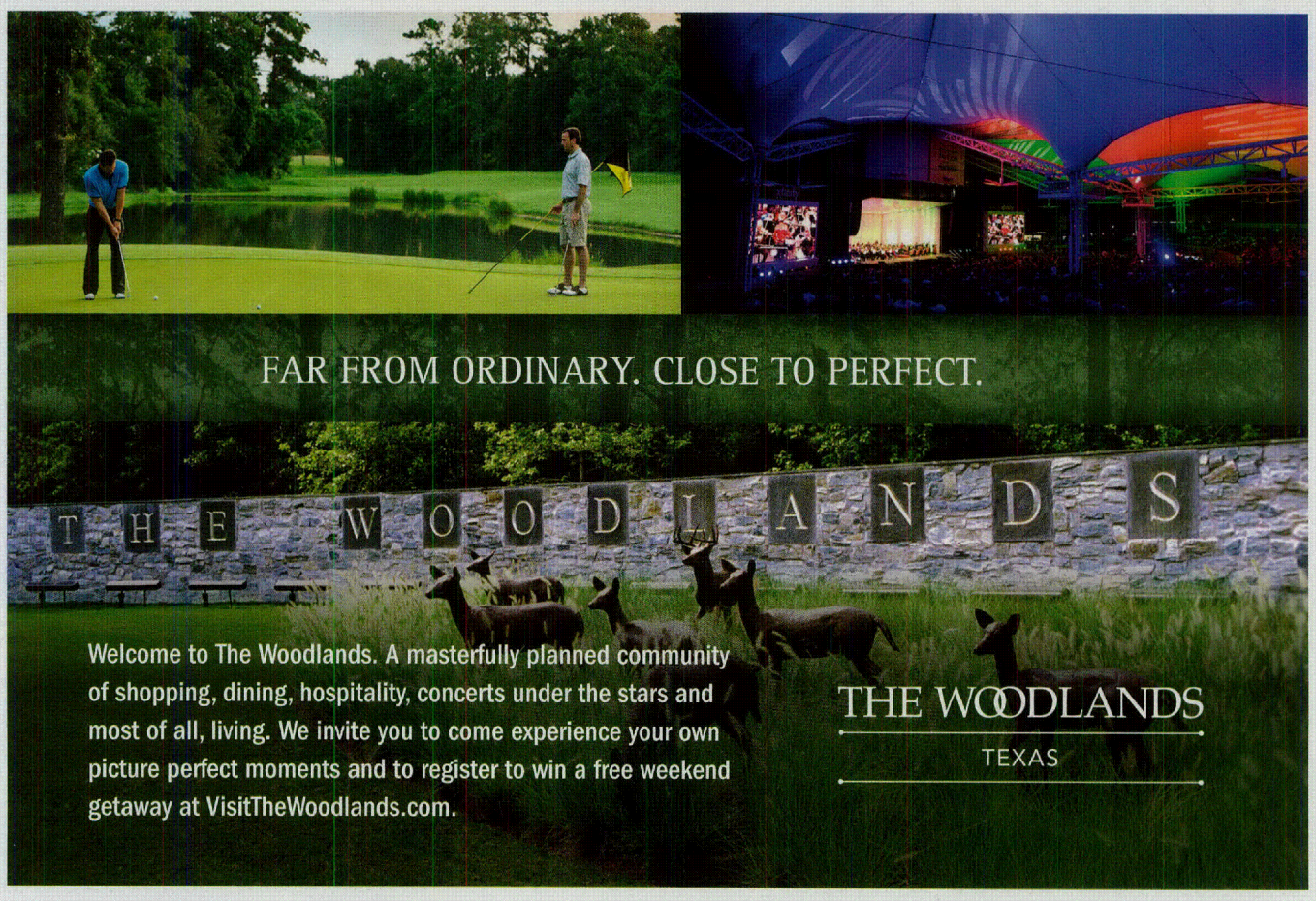
Located on land owned by the Texas & Pacific Railroad, the shaft lay abandoned, a place for local teenagers to explore. "When I was in high school, we'd go out there at night with a mesquite stick and light it and climb down," says Tom Rodman, who grew up on a neighboring ranch and is now an attorney in Odessa.

Rodman's boyhood adventures sparked a lasting interest in meteors and prompted him to lead efforts to preserve the site, raising funds to build a small museum on the property. "A lot of people said, 'We've got this crater, we ought to do something with it,'" Rodman recalls. Rodman also donated a collection of meteorites and put together exhibits for the museum. The museum opened in 1965, the same year the National Park Service designated the crater site a National Natural Landmark. The railroad donated the crater land to Ector County in 1979.

The remote museum proved to be a target for vandalism and thieves, but Rodman didn't give up. He eventually convinced the late state Representative Buddy West of Odessa to provide state funding to build the current museum, which opened in 2002 and attracts thousands of visitors each year.

I follow the quarter-mile-long asphalt trail down into the crater, pausing to read the interpretive signs. Over thousands of years, sand and dirt have filled the crater to within about eight feet of the surrounding ground. Mesquite, thin patches of grass, and yucca plants cover the crater floor.

As I head back up the trail, I stop to visit with a family making its way to the crater. The children bubble with excitement. Why, I ask, are they interested in this place? "Because," the little girl says, "It's from outer space." ★



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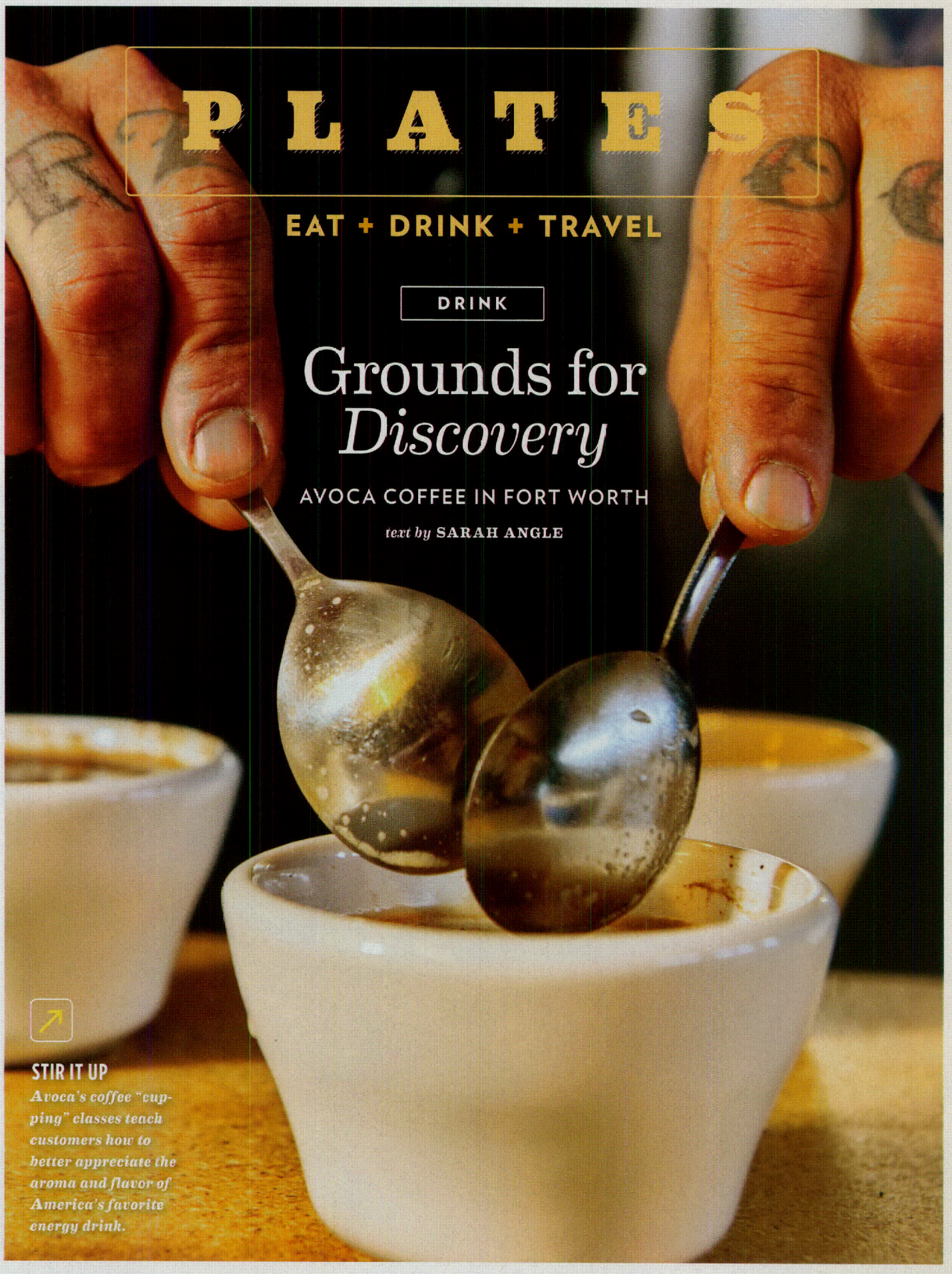
AVOCA COFFEE IN FORT WORTH

text by SARAH ANGLE



STIR IT UP

Avoca's coffee "cupping" classes teach customers how to better appreciate the aroma and flavor of America's favorite energy drink.

PHOTO: © Jeffrey Wooten

I WAS 35 WHEN I WENT TO PARIS FOR THE first time, which coincided with my first cup of coffee. By the end of the 11-day trip, Paris had turned me into a coffee fiend. But I didn't know the first thing about my new favorite drink.

Luckily, I live in Fort Worth, which has a well-established and growing craft coffee culture. The arguable leader of this brewing movement is a funky 2,000-square-foot shop called Avoca Coffee Roasters, which became the first wholesale and retail coffee company in Fort Worth when it opened in 2011. It's located in Fort Worth's Near Southside neighborhood, which is filled with independent restaurants, bars, and restored Craftsman-style homes from the early 1900s.

Not only does Avoca—which means "great mouth" in Gaelic—brew and sell its internationally sourced selection of beans to restaurants and other coffee shops across the state, but it also teaches classes for restaurant owners and regular folks on palate education through bean selection, latte art, roasting and brewing techniques, and a sensory experience known as "cupping." Here, my thirst for knowledge could fully be quenched and caffeinated.

There's a rotating display of locally made artwork for sale at Avoca, but the primary art form here is creating the perfect brew.

Behind the coffee shop's wooden counter, which is topped with succulents and bags of ground coffee, Avoca's baristas prepare coffees and open bottles of Topo Chico while they talk about art and music. Customers perched at wooden tables and curled up in deep

PHOTO: © Jeffrey Wooten

leather sofas sip coffee, work on their laptops, and chat quietly with one another. I can smell the earthy, sweet fragrance of coffee beans in a mix of aromas from the shop's cakes, scones, cookies, and other baked goods, most of which come from Stir Crazy Baked Goods down the street.

The blue-green mural covering the back wall makes me imagine a psychedelic trip through a rainforest. And while there's a rotating display of locally made artwork for sale at Avoca, the primary art form here is creating the perfect brew. Garold LaRue, a fifth-generation coffee farmer who runs Avoca with co-owner Jimmy Story, knows his beans and his business.

In the adjacent room that houses Avoca's roasting facility, LaRue encourages me to plunge my hand inside a burlap bag of green, unroasted coffee beans from Ethiopia; they feel cool and smooth, and they clack against my silver rings. My cupping class is about to begin, and we joke that it's the coffee equivalent of a wine tasting with a different sort of buzz at the end.

Apprentice roaster Efrain Quinonez—who says he's been "doing coffee" for more than a decade—sets up the cupping table. First, he places 16 white cups in two lines across a long rectangular table. Eight of those cups contain different types of coffee grounds; the other eight will be used for brewing the coffee with hot water and tasting and smelling the finished product. Cupping, I see, is a carefully controlled science experiment.

After the hot water is poured into the coffee grounds and four minutes pass, LaRue breaks the crust with his spoon and dips it inside the cup. Leaning

AVOCA COFFEE ROASTERS is at 1311 W. Magnolia Ave. in Fort Worth. Hours: Mon-Sat 7 a.m.-10 p.m., Sun 7 a.m.-6 p.m. Call **682/233-0957**; **www.avocacoffee.com**.

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down, he brings a spoonful of the dark liquid up to his nose, closes his eyes, and inhales through his nostrils. "I'm not thinking about anything when smelling," he says. "I'm just taking in the information without bringing any assumptions." That information, he says, helps him create a consistent product for his customers.

Smelling the aroma of fresh coffee from different parts of the world is almost as revealing as tasting it. As I go around the table, even my untrained nose can discern coffees with fruity, spicy, or nutty aromas.

Quinonez tells me that the table is set up in order from lightest to darkest roasts, with a decaffeinated version in the middle. This aroma of carefully curated beans is so far removed from the mass-produced coffee my dad sipped when I was growing up that it seems like a different drink entirely.

In the coffee world, I learn, slurping is an essential part of the tasting process, because the slurping motion aerates the coffee across your entire palate—letting it touch every taste bud. So, the thinking goes, the louder the better, and LaRue slurps like a king. "Slurp louder!" Quinonez calls out playfully. Letting go of inhibition, I take a loud slurp of coffee like I'm drinking the last drops of my grandmother's signature soup from a bowl.

My favorite brew from the table is the La Selva roast from Chiapas, Mexico. It has a spicy aroma with hazelnut and milk chocolate flavors, and with a rich body. LaRue likes them all, but he says that a cup of Ethiopian Misty Valley at home with toast and hard cheese is a good snack.

Five years ago, it was hard to find a well-prepared cup of coffee in Fort Worth, LaRue says, but these days, craft coffee is readily available across North Texas—with four craft coffee shops in Fort Worth alone. And early this summer, Avoca will open a second location in Fort Worth's trendy West 7th District. It'll provide more space and time for classes and the conversations that inevitably ensue over a fine cup of coffee. By the time I make a return trip to Paris, I'm bound to be a connoisseur. ★

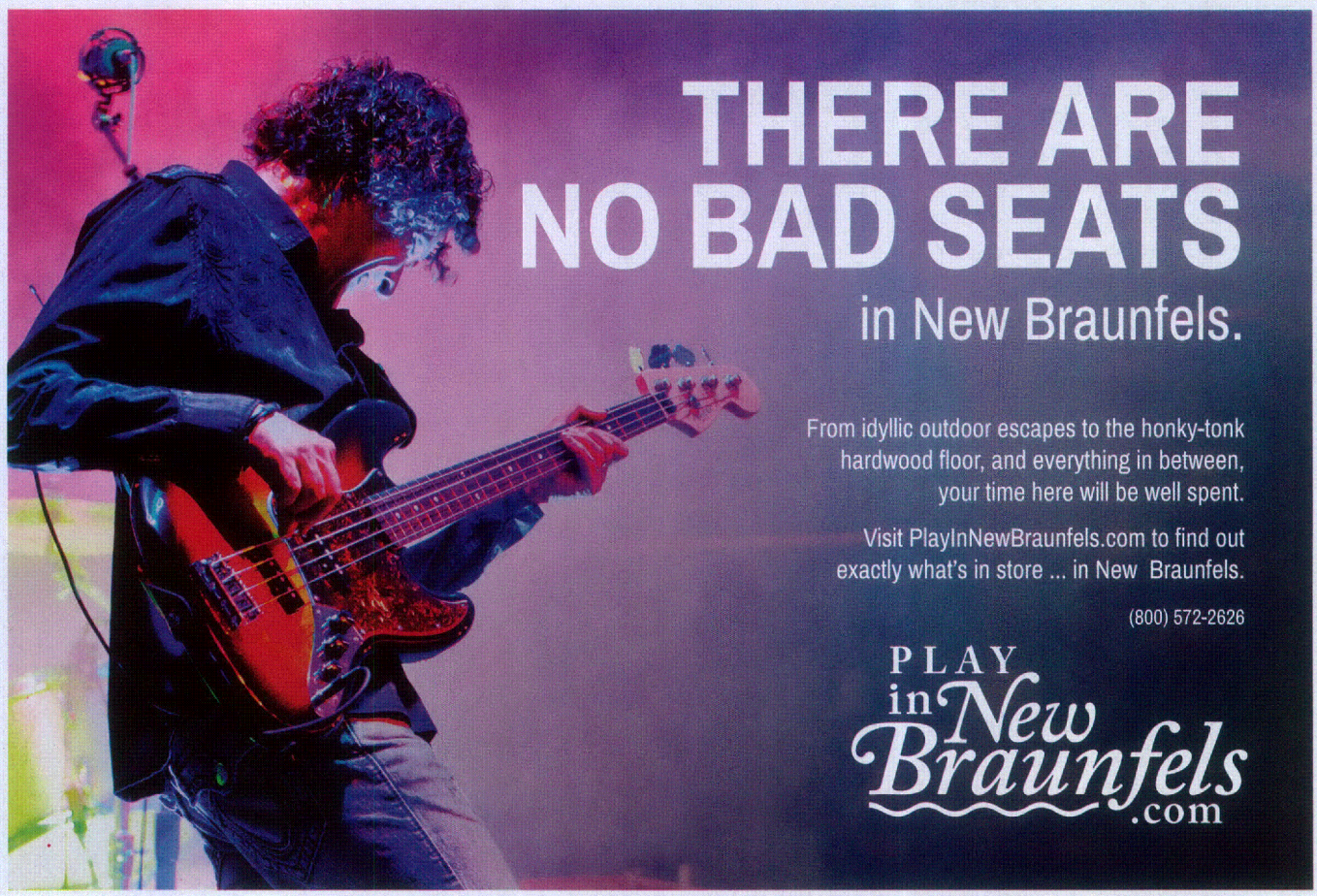
MORE CRAFT COFFEE IN COWTOWN

Here are a few other spots to satisfy your craft coffee jones in Fort Worth.

Brewed is at 801 W. Magnolia Ave. Call 817/945-1545; www.brewedfw.com.

Buon Giorno Coffee Co. is at 915 Florence St. Call 817/698-9888; www.bgcoffee.net.

Craftwork Coffee Co. is at 4731 Camp Bowie Blvd. Call 817/737-4169; www.craftworkcoffeeco.com.



Flags representing the 20 regions of Italy hang from the rafters, and on the shelves you'll find hundreds of imported Italian products and more than 300 varieties of Italian wine.

Eat *Well*, Laugh *Often*, *Love* Much

TASTE ITALY AT JIMMY'S IN DALLAS

text by **Christine Gardner**

ITALIANS HAVE A SAYING, "*MANGIA BENE, ridi spesso, ama molto*"—Eat well, laugh often, love much. This approach to life also sums up the 50-year history of Jimmy's Food Store in east Dallas, where an extensive inventory of Italian foods and attentive customer service spearheaded by owners Mike and Paul DiCarlo make each customer feel like part of the family. Located northeast of downtown, just a few miles east of Central Expressway, the store is easy to spot: Just look for the awning sporting the red, white, and green colors of the Italian flag.

JIMMY'S FOOD STORE is at 4901 Bryan St. in Dallas. Hours: Mon-Sat 9 a.m.-7:30 p.m. Call 214/823-6180; www.jimmysfoodstore.com.

Currently celebrating its 50th anniversary, this small Italian market enjoys a cult following of Dallas "Italianphiles" who adore the offerings of this long-standing mom-and-pop grocery. There is so much packed into the store's five narrow aisles that it's sometimes difficult to know where to start. Flags representing the 20 regions of Italy hang from the rafters, and on the shelves you'll find hundreds of imported Italian products and more than 300 varieties of Italian

PHOTO: Michael Amador

wine. There are multiple brands of coveted San Marzano tomatoes, bags of dried pasta in dozens of shapes, cans of oil-packed tuna, jars of Italian preserves, and a freezer case filled with imported pizza dough, handmade pastas, gelato, and cannoli cream filling.

On my first visit to Jimmy's in 2010, I had recently returned from living in Italy and longed for the Italian flavors I had come to enjoy. Many hard-to-find ingredients made favorite recipes impossible to cook, and I'd given up my stateside search for small-production southern Italian wines like Aglianico or Falanghina.

After exploring the store and meeting the DiCarlo family, I discovered that Jimmy's vastly exceeded my expectations. Their inventory and hospitality reminded me of shopping in Italy at the quaint family-run markets in the town square. Over the store's 50 years, it has evolved from a neighborhood grocery to an Italian specialty food store.

Vincent DiCarlo and his son James (aka Jimmy) started working together in the grocery business in south Dallas in the 1940s, but in 1966 decided to open a shop in a more central location. At first, the Thai and Cuban housing projects in the neighborhood dictated an inventory of global products. As the neighborhood continued to evolve, so did the clientele and inventory. In the late 1990s, the DiCarlo family was inspired by their heritage to become an Italian specialty food store.

"At the time, no one else in Dallas was doing it. It took us a few years to understand gourmet foods," said Jimmy's son Mike, who runs the shop today with his brother Paul. "People don't realize the complete history. They think we've been doing Italian food for 50 years."

Mike and Paul have worked in the store for as long as they can remember, and they managed it with their father until his passing in 2013. When the family decided to focus on products from

I'm always inspired to try something I hadn't noticed before—a can of eggplant caponata, a bottle of Nero d'Avola wine from Sicily, thinly sliced beef to make *braciole*, or chocolate-covered *torrone* spiked with amaretto.

PHOTO: Michael Amador

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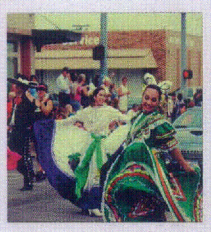

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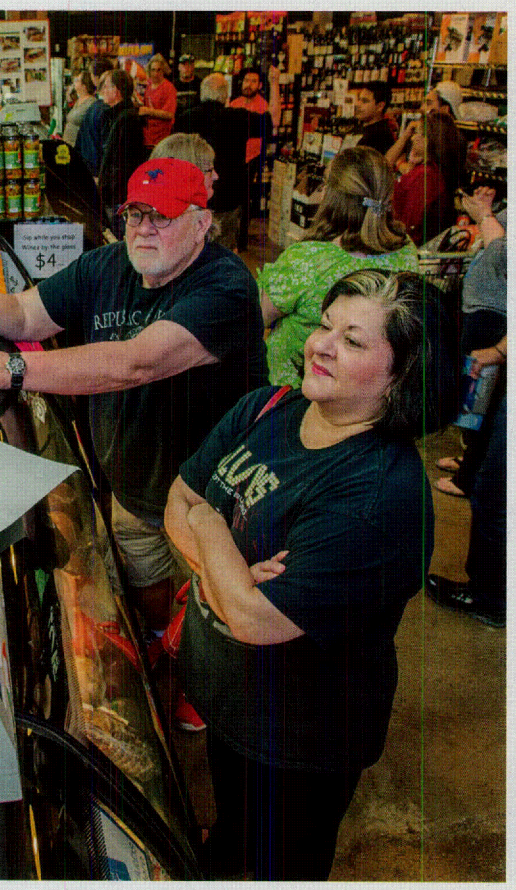
Italy, Mike turned to New York City to find suppliers, and Paul began traveling abroad to learn more about Italian wine. Their mother, Marie, started rolling her own meatballs, making Italian sausage, and preparing other family recipes. (Marie passed away in 2005, but meatballs and sausages made according to her recipe are still some of the shop's most popular items, and more than 30 Dallas restaurants serve the sausages on *their* menus, as well.) Mike and Paul's sister, Mary Martha, eventually joined the team to make desserts like Italian cream cake, cannoli, cookies, and tiramisu. Over the years, they've added Italian deli items, handmade pizza, lasagna, and made-to-order sandwiches.

After a fire destroyed the interior of Jimmy's in 2004, the DiCarlos picked up the pieces and reopened with even more Italian products, a larger selection of Italian wines, and, eventually, a wine room called Circolo del Vino. Tastings at the store take place every Saturday



A recent event featured wines from Masi Agricola, a famous winery in Veneto that has been owned by the same family since 1772.

from 11-4, and bi-monthly wine dinners here feature a visiting Italian winemaker serving wines to complement a multi-course, Italian menu.

A recent event featured wines from Masi Agricola, a famous winery in Veneto that has been owned by the same family since 1772. A member of the family presented the wines, and Italian chef Tommaso Lestingi, who lives in the Dallas area, created a pairing menu featuring seared scallops in a truffle sauce, porcini risotto, seared beef tenderloin with foie gras, and a cheese course with fig chutney. The dinners have a loyal following and usually sell out within hours of being advertised.

During the day, Jimmy's is popular with the downtown lunch crowd, who flock to east Dallas for Italian sandwiches made at the deli counter. On average, Jimmy's sells 2,000 sandwiches a week from a menu that includes Italian subs, muffulettas, prosciutto panini, and assorted salads.

Despite the store's small size, I always manage to spend an hour or two on every visit. I enjoy discovering new Italian products, browsing the wine racks, and admiring all the cheeses, meats, and olives that fill the deli counter. I'm always inspired to try something I hadn't noticed before—a can of eggplant caponata, a bottle of Nero d'Avola wine from Sicily, thinly sliced beef to make *braciole*, or chocolate-covered *torrone* spiked with amaretto.

As I approach the register with my coveted Italian purchases, I always think how lucky we are to have a destination like Jimmy's Food Store offering a tiny slice of Italian heaven right here in Texas.

Arrivederci, Jimmy's—or until my Italian cravings strike again. ★

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The *Bee's* Knees

APIS RESTAURANT AND APIARY IN SPICEWOOD

text by **Melissa Gaskill**

ON SIX ACRES OVERLOOKING the Pedernales River in Spicewood, bees come and go from 20 hives scattered around a field of wildflowers and oak trees. The honey these bees produce goes into select dishes and cocktails at Apis Restaurant and Apiary, where fine dining and Hill Country ambiance blend seamlessly in a cozy limestone building surrounded by more wildflowers and oak trees.

APIS RESTAURANT & APIARY is at 23526 TX 71 W. (just south of the Pedernales River) in Spicewood. Call **512/436-8918**; **www.apisrestaurant.com.**

Owners Taylor and Casie Hall see theirs as a dual mission—save the bees, serve hungry humans.

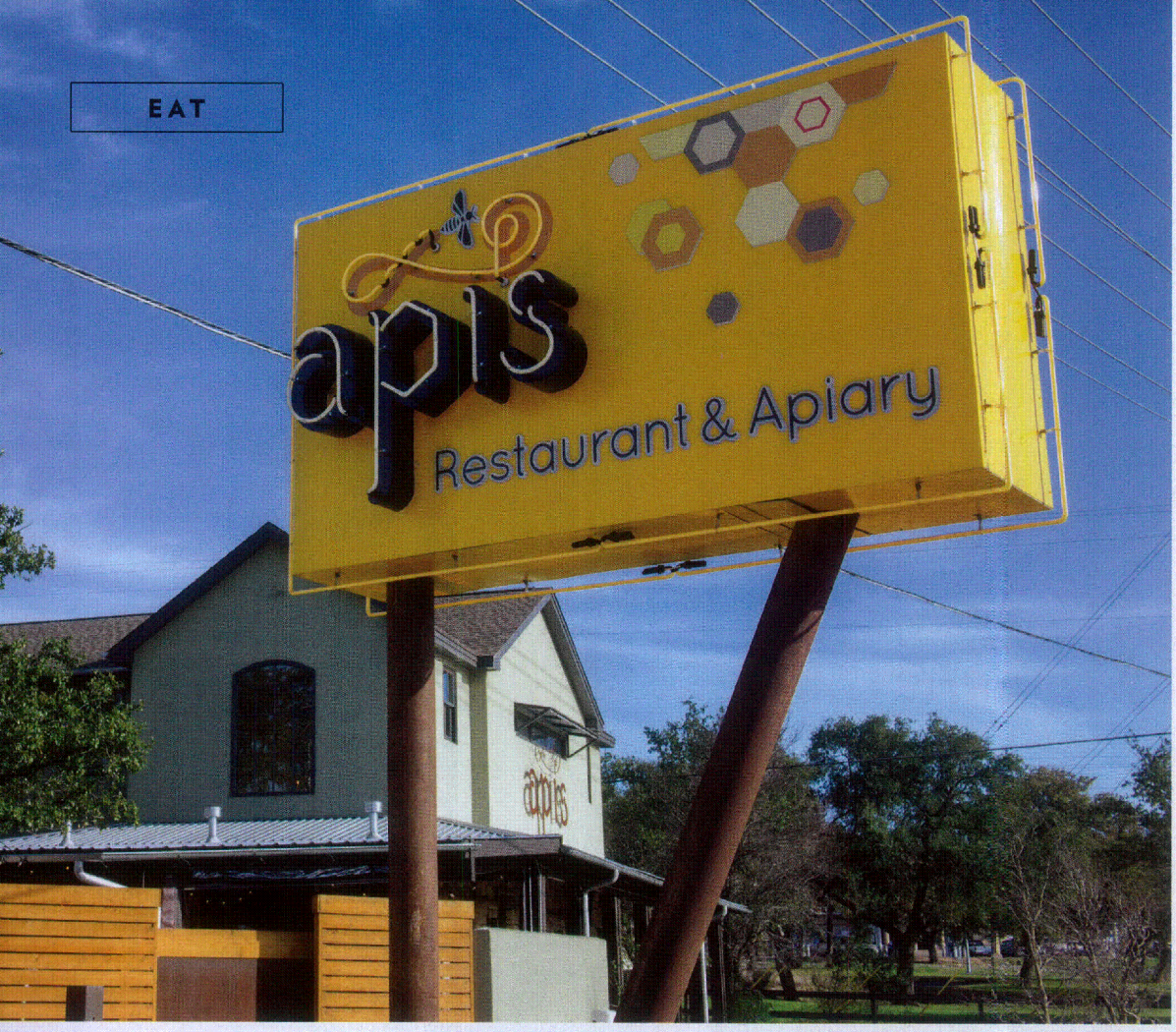
Taylor grew up in Bowie, and Casie hails from Louisiana. Shortly after they married, the couple headed west, where Taylor attended the California Culinary Academy of San Francisco and honed his skills at such top restaurants as Wolfgang Puck's Postrio and the James Beard Award-winning Boulevard. The Halls always intended to return to Texas, though, and in 2007 started a boutique catering company in Spicewood. Around that time, Taylor read an article about colony collapse disorder, which had begun decimating honeybees across the United States.

By 2015, beekeepers were reporting average annual losses of 30 percent. A combination of pesticides, pathogens, loss of pollen and nectar sources, and

Pork glazed in mead and Belgian ale

Owners Taylor and Casie Hall see theirs as a dual mission—save the bees, serve hungry humans.

PHOTO: Kevin Stillman



Bees must collect nectar from about 2 million flowers to make one pound of honey, making all those wildflowers around the restaurant very important.

climate change likely bears the blame.

"The article hit home, because my career and life centered around people eating, and this was a huge threat to our food supply," Taylor says. According to Ben Hutchins, an invertebrate biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, bees pollinate close to 50 percent of our agricultural crops in addition to wildflowers and other native plants.

Inspired, Taylor signed up for beekeeping school at Round Rock Honey, which produces honey from hives throughout Central Texas for sale at grocery stores and farmer's markets. "The first day, we suited up and opened a hive," Taylor recalls. "It was an electrifying experience, hearing the hum of tens of thousands of bees." Soon, he and Casie started keeping bees at their Spicewood home.

The idea for combining those bees with a restaurant came in fall 2008, when the Halls found riverfront property and a two-story building that had renovation potential. They added a kitchen and converted the first floor into an intimate bar and dining room. "We wanted to do something in the country, focused on the environment; an authentic link with the natural world," Casie recalls.

Both took an active role in designing the space, incorporating bee motifs wherever they could. The hexagonal shape of honeycomb appears in light fixtures, in the ceiling design, and three subtle cells of pale wood randomly placed on each table top and the bar. Golden yellow lights evoke the color of pure honey, and a chunk of real honeycomb from a hive frame graces a wall by the entrance.

"After we made the bee our mascot, we started seeing all these similarities with how we operate and the nature of the honeybee," Taylor says. "Bees are seasonal creatures, reflected in how we pay attention to the season. Bees are famously noted for being busy and hard-working. In the restaurant, as in a hive, everyone has a duty and when everyone does their job, it succeeds."

And, of course, the food creates a buzz of its own. Taylor, Chef de Cuisine Adam Brick, Beverage Director Jose Luis Sapien, and their staff use honey in creative ways. For example, Brick recently created honey vinegar using classic apple cider vinegar fermented with honey. When I visited, a bee pollen miso adorned several items on the seasonal menu. "We have this wonderful product and a lot of it. We want to highlight it, but not everything is sweet," Taylor points out.

I started with The Apiary, a flavorful cocktail of honeycomb-infused bourbon, lemon, sarsaparilla, and dry curaçao over ice. My friend Kathy Weiler and I shared an order of Egg Toast—brioche topped with dry-aged *parisa* (a steak tartare from Castroville), a feisty jalapeño, and nutty French cheese; the contrast of textures and creamy/spicy flavors set the stage for a remarkable meal. For her main course, Kathy had Icelandic cod with barley and farro grains cooked in carrot stock and

PHOTO: Kevin Stillman

dressed with bee pollen miso. I ordered duck breasts glazed with honey, a rich and slightly sweet dish complemented by rutabaga-duck confit, wild plum sauce, and a vinaigrette accented with black caraway and green fennel seeds. We wrapped up with Apis' version of a honey bun, a rich pastry topped with rum-soaked raisins, pecans, and a dollop of *horchata* ice cream.

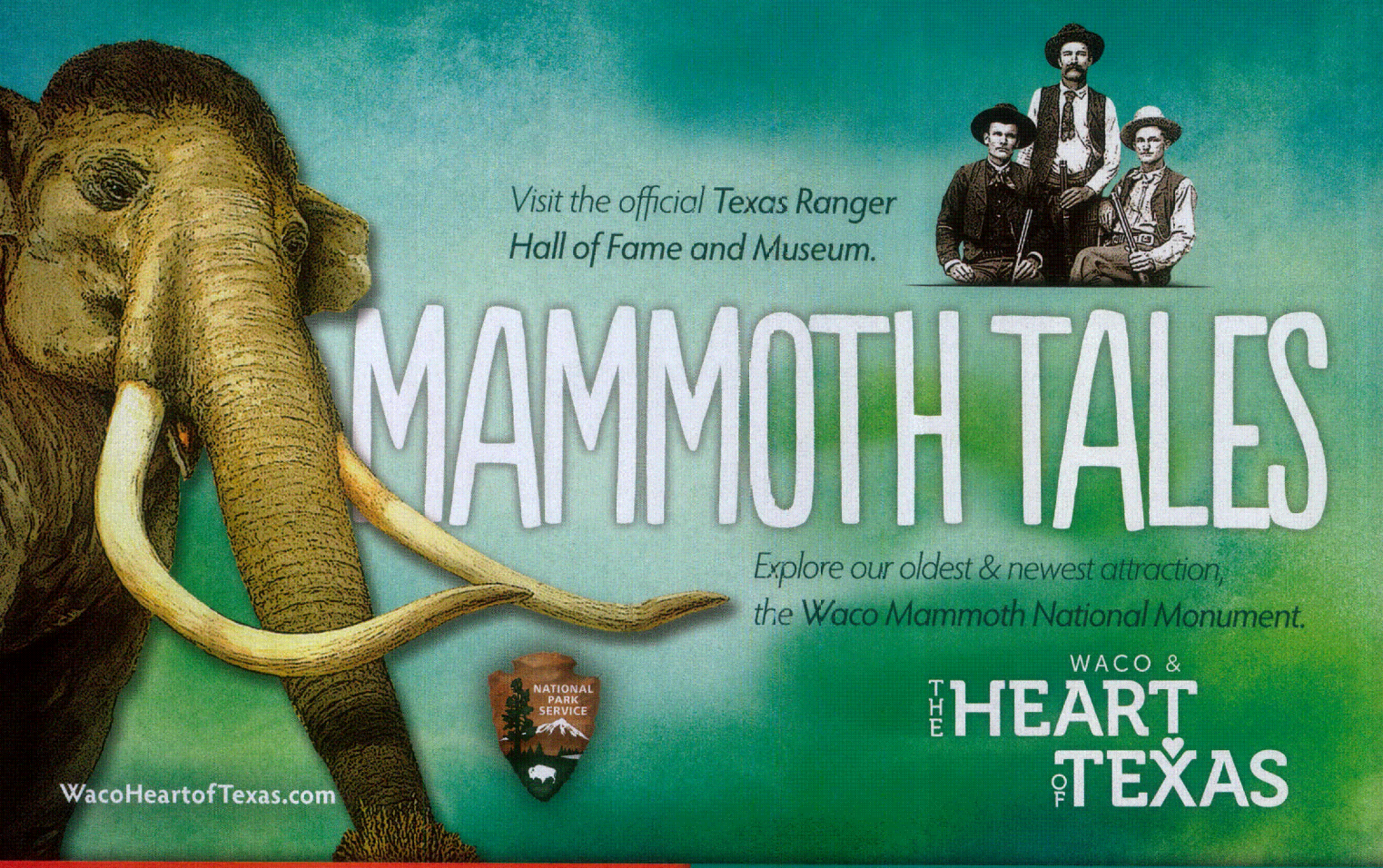
As we dined, we discussed the important role bees play in the plant world, and I vowed to find out more in the coming weeks. A typical hive, I learned, contains 50,000 bees, including a queen, male drones, and female workers. The workers collect pollen, produce and tend the honeycomb, guard the hive, or scout out nectar sources. Honey-making workers have a special stomach that creates honey and jelly, which other workers feed to the colony. Bees must collect nectar from about 2 million flowers to make one pound of honey, making all those wildflowers around the restaurant very important. And consider this: The average bee makes only about a quarter teaspoon of honey in her lifetime.

The Apis bees live in hives at the back of the property with plenty of flora between them and the restaurant. Guests can glimpse them from the restaurant parking lot, but aren't likely to accidentally encounter the little honey-makers. Those who want to see them in action can schedule an apiary tour. A couple of professionals now manage the hives so Taylor can focus on the restaurant.

"Our first year, we served as a special-occasion kind of place," Taylor says, but the couple soon realized that if they brought in happy-hour specials and simpler menu options, they'd appeal to a broader section of diners. They also added a covered outdoor patio so that diners could enjoy the outdoors year-round.

"To be honest, I'm just a country person; it's where I live and want to make my life," says Taylor. "Nature plays such a big part in everything with the restaurant."

I'll drink my honey-infused cocktail to that. ★



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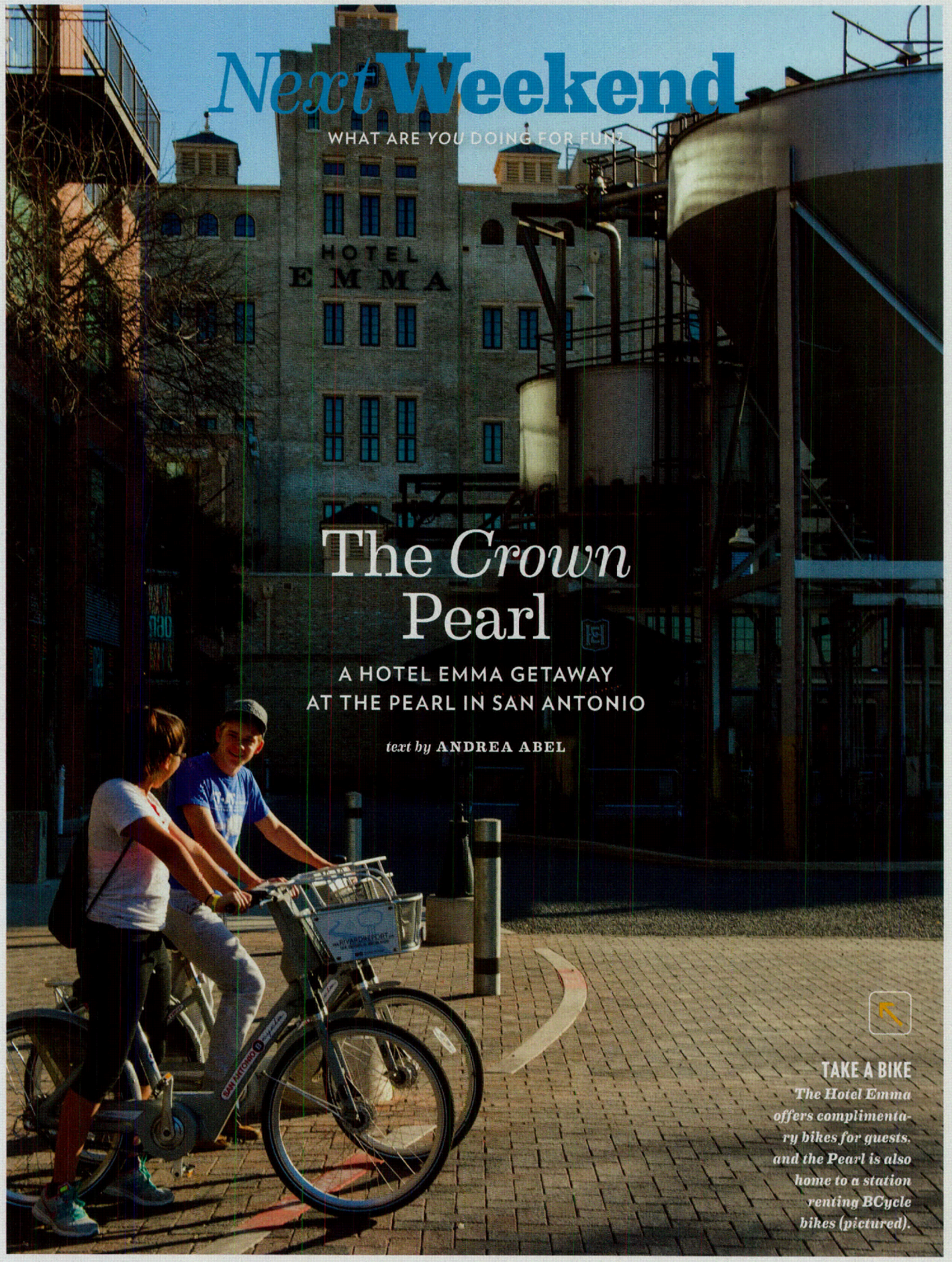
WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING FOR FUN?

The *Crown* Pearl

A HOTEL EMMA GETAWAY AT THE PEARL IN SAN ANTONIO

text by **ANDREA ABEL**



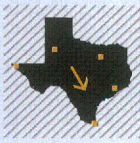
TAKE A BIKE

The Hotel Emma offers complimentary bikes for guests, and the Pearl is also home to a station renting BCycle bikes (pictured).

PHOTO: Michael Amador

Southerleigh Fine Food & Brewery

***The* DISTANCE *to* SAN ANTONIO →**



Brownsville	Houston	Dallas	Lubbock	El Paso
275 miles; 4 hours	*200 miles; 3 hours*	*275 miles; 4.25 hours*	*385 miles; 5.75 hours*	*550 miles; 7.5 hours*

LIKE MANY URBANITES, MY DAILY grind includes too much traffic and too many frazzled nerves. After one recent particularly hectic stretch, my husband John and I were in dire need of an escape. We imagined a weekend without getting into a car that would allow us to relax, eat great food, take in some culture, and spend time outdoors.

Our craving for a break coincided with enticing reports of San Antonio's new Hotel Emma, which opened in November at the Pearl, the mixed-use redevelopment of the historic Pearl Brewery. As we hoped it might, the boutique hotel fit the bill—and more. From the moment we pulled into the hotel's circle drive on a Friday afternoon and handed over our car keys to the guayabera-clad valet, the stress melted away.

Isaac, our eager and informed bellman, took charge of the luggage and ushered us to the library, which holds the 3,700-book collection of local novelist Sherry Kafka Wagner and doubles as a makeshift bar in the afternoons. A bartender presented us with complimentary hand-shaken margaritas, and we sipped the refreshing concoction as Isaac shepherded us on a brief tour of the lobby.

HOTEL EMMA
is located at the Pearl, 136 E. Grayson St. in San Antonio. Room rates start at about $350 per night. Call 210/448-8300; www.thehotelemma.com.

The brainchild of San Antonio businessman Christopher "Kit" Goldsbury, the former Pace Foods' owner who sold the salsa maker to Campbell Soup in 1994, the Pearl preserves more than a century of industrial history, renovated and repurposed with Hotel Emma as the crown jewel. Goldsbury's vision created a home for the acclaimed San Antonio campus of the Culinary Institute

PHOTO: Michael Amador

of America, a slew of farm-to-table restaurants from some of the city's finest chefs, a farmers market, retail shops, an amphitheater, and apartments—all with direct access to the River Walk's Museum Reach.

Founded in 1883, the Pearl Brewery made beer until 2001 (excepting a 14-year Prohibition hiatus). Goldsbury's redevelopment project started a couple of years later, culminating with the completion of Hotel Emma, which is built around the original brew house. The hotel's "high/low" vibe incorporates industrial features such as the turbine-like ammonia compressor anchoring the lobby and cozy seating areas with leather sofas draped in colorful throws and pillows—a style that marries aspects of a Mexican hacienda and an urban boutique hotel.

In our dapper and spacious room, tall windows provided an expansive view of the River Walk. The room felt less like a hotel and more like a vintage private club with clever modern amenities and thoughtful touches. A large cabinet stored snacks, as well as dishes, cloth napkins, and even a cocktail shaker. In the closet, we found slippers and blue-striped seersucker bathrobes made by Dos Carolinas, the custom guayabera tailor located in the Pearl's retail section. We were tempted to kick back in the room, but adventure beckoned.

In keeping with the theme of repurposed brewery buildings, we strolled less than a half-mile on the River Walk to the San Antonio Museum of Art, which occupies the former Lone Star Brewery. We marveled at the art installations along the trail, including the brightly colored fish sculptures suspended from the Interstate 35 overpass. On Fridays, the museum stays open until 9 p.m., giving us plenty of time to amble through the spacious galleries, including the Latin American collection, my favorite, which spans 4,000 years from Pre-Columbian artifacts to works by 20th-Century Mexican artists Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco, as well as contemporary artists.

For dinner, we walked back to the Pearl for a meal with friends at Southerleigh. This rustically refined restaurant honors the Pearl's heritage with its onsite craft brewery. The four of us whiled away the evening catching up on jobs and kids, sampling local beers, and working our way through the "Texas cross-cultural" menu. Not to be missed are the fried snapper throats, a plateful of triangular fish wedges complete with crispy fins akimbo. Don't be deterred by the name; they were so delectable that we polished off the perfectly seasoned and fried succulent fish morsels before they cooled.

Saturday morning started in the lobby's east end with complimentary local Merit Roasting Co. coffee (brewed pour-over style) and bite-size pecan muffins served in front of an array of red pipes. Known as king valves, these red pipes once controlled the brewery's compressed ammonia to keep the beer cooled as it aged in various cellars.

The lobby nibbles were just the overture to a full breakfast at Supper, Hotel Emma's restaurant under the culinary stewardship of Chef John Brand. In the sunny bistro, my husband and I shared bites of chorizo Scotch eggs served over green chile cornbread; heavenly light and delicate Meyer lemon ricotta pancakes with pine nuts and raspberries; and the delicious millionaire's bacon, rich slab bacon finished with a drizzle of sorghum syrup.

Before setting out for the day, we stopped at Larder, the hotel's gourmet grocery, which carries snacks and baked sweets. We ordered a wood-grilled lamb sandwich on ciabatta bread and a butternut squash salad for the road. Armed with maps and the concierge's suggested route, we hopped on the hotel's complimentary bikes and headed down the River Walk path to the San Antonio Mission Trail.

The trail follows the River Walk and wends through old neighborhoods as it connects four 18th-Century outposts founded by Franciscan missionaries. Our destination? Mission San José, a 17-mile round trip from Hotel Emma. Strolling Mission San José's walled Spanish outpost was like stepping back in time. We imagined the life of the missionaries and the 350 indigenous Texans who resided in the dwellings that line the mission's perimeter.

Making our way back to Hotel Emma in the late afternoon, we headed for post-ride cocktails at Sternewirth. The bar takes its name from the "Sternewirth Privilege," a 19th-Century brewery custom of allowing employees free beer during the workday. Late-afternoon sunlight cast a warm glow as we sank into a leather sofa. Behind us, other visitors relaxed in repurposed 7,000-gallon fermentation tanks, which have been cleverly cut open and look something like sultans' tents.

I ordered the Three Emmas cocktail, a delicious, boozy concoction of gin, Italian amaro, apricot, and a dash of absinthe. The libation gets its name from

DECOMPRESS
The vintage ammonia compressor in the Hotel Emma lobby, which occupies the Pearl Brewery's former engine room.

Larder, café and grocery

the real-life melodrama of three women in the life of Otto Koehler, who owned the Pearl Brewery from 1902 until his death in 1914. The first Emma was Otto's wife, who ran the brewery after her husband died and for whom the hotel is named. The second Emma was a caretaker for Mrs. Koehler when she was bedridden after a car accident. Emma II became Otto's mistress but eventually married someone else. The third Emma was also a caretaker for Mrs. Koehler and also a mistress of Otto. Emma III rebuffed Otto's marriage proposal and shot him to death in what she claimed was self-defense. As our server explained, "One Emma is delightful, two and you are flirting with trouble, but three—well, three will kill you!" I stopped at one, just to be sure.

That afternoon, we popped into a few of the Pearl's retail shops. Dos Carolinas, the clothier that made the uniforms for much of the hotel staff, carries racks of colorful guayaberas. At Melissa Guerra's Latin Kitchen Market, we surveyed the inventory of gorgeous traditional Spanish and Mexican ceramics and glassware, and I treated myself to a set of Texas-themed cookie cutters.

After a day of activity, I wanted to be sure we got some time to enjoy the room. John and I each commandeered a corner of the couch and spent an all-too-rare hour reading, occasionally glancing up to watch the River Walk transform as dusk's long shadows turned into nightfall. It was a perfect prelude to a delectable dinner at Supper.

We eased into Sunday morning, knowing that in due time we would face the workweek ahead. We strolled the Pearl Farmers Market, a bustling mix of vendors selling local produce and artisanal foods on Saturdays and Sundays year-round. Then, we put a bow on this gift of a weekend with a hearty brunch of pork carnitas and poached eggs at Boiler House, housed in—you guessed it—the brewery's boiler room. Rested, relaxed, and fulfilled with experiences from a memorable weekend, it was time to retrieve the car keys and head home. ★

PHOTOS: Michael Amador

Text by Melissa Gaskill

PHOTO: Michael Amador

Kiteboarding lessons on Corpus Christi Bay with Kiteboarding.com.

Many of you may find the thought of school in the summer somewhat, well, less than exciting. We get that. But our idea of summer school means learning how to have more fun. The kind of school where you pick up a skill—say cooking, sewing, or glassblowing—that lets you entertain or test your creativity. Classtime spent near the water, learning fun things—perhaps fly-fishing, sailing, kayaking, or sandcastle-building. Places to find a new activity you can enjoy over and over again, such as horseback riding or birding. Or, ones that offer the opportunity to explore and learn more about our natural world, the better to appreciate its amazingness and importance.

That's our kind of summer school, and we think you'll give it an A+.

JUST ADD WATER

Flyboarding

South Padre Island Water Sports, South Padre Island

Hover above the water on a water-jet board connected to a personal watercraft during a flyboarding lesson. After a short orientation covering gear and technique, you spend 20 to 30 minutes of hands-on training, hovering up to six feet above the water. First-timers tend to find themselves pretty tired after 30 minutes of flyboarding, but if you still have get-up-and-go, add time in 10-minute increments. "Flyboarding is relatively easy and most people get the hang of it in 10 or 20 minutes," owner Jeff Hoxtell promises.

Rather stay on the water's surface? Instructors also teach surfing, kiteboarding, and stand-up paddle boarding lessons.

South Padre Island Water Sports opens seven days a week; book lessons a day in advance. Lessons range from $99 to $199 depending on the number of people in your group. An additional 10 minutes flying time costs $49. Surfing and stand-up paddle board lessons start at $59. **Call 956/299-9463; www.spiws.com or www.flyboardsouthpadreisland.com.**

Sailing

Bay Area Sailing School, Kemah

More than a dozen sleek sailboats bob in their berths at the sunny, breezy Watergate Yachting Center, and you can learn to sail one of them in a two-day course with American Sailing Association-certified instructors. After completing the basic keelboat course, rent sailboats up to 33 feet long from Sackett's Sailing Center and cruise nearby Galveston Bay. The next level course teaches bareboat chartering, a skill that opens the door for sailors to go anywhere in the world.

The basic course at Bay Area Sailing School costs $293 and includes one mentor sail and one half-day charter upon completion of course. **Call 281/334-4179; www.bayareasailing.com.**

FUN FACT:
Galveston Bay covers 384,000 acres or 600 square miles, averaging only seven feet deep. Find more at www.gbep.state.tx.us/what-makes-galveston-bay-special.

PHOTO: © Erich Schlegel

Joe Laughlin with the Bay Area Sailing School teaches a class on Clear Lake.

SANDCASTLE-BUILDING

Sandcastle Guy, Port Aransas

Mark Landrum, aka the "Port Aransas Sandcastle Guy," offers lessons on building classic sandcastle structures with towers, stairs, arches, and rocky cliffs. Call and make an appointment and he'll come to your beachfront condo or favorite spot on Mustang Island or North Padre Island beaches (he needs at least a week's notice in summer). Landrum provides everything needed to learn three ways to stack and carve sand into impressive shapes. Well, you do need to bring your own camera.

An hour-and-a-half lesson with the Port Aransas Sandcastle Guy for up to 10 people costs $70; $140 for two-and-a-half hours, up to 30 people. **Call 361/290-0414; www.sandrum.com/index.html.**

Stand-Up Paddle Board and Kayak Tours

Aquarena Center, San Marcos

Two hundred springs bubble up beneath Spring Lake, forming one of the largest aquifer-driven spring systems in the world. People first came to these waters some 12,000 years ago, making the San Marcos area one of the longest continually inhabited settlements in North America. These springs create the San Marcos River and house eight threatened and endangered species, including Texas Wild Rice, found nowhere else on earth. Texas State University's Meadows Center for Water and the Environment, which manages Spring Lake, teamed up with REI Outdoor School to offer kayaking lessons, plus sunset stand-up paddle board and kayak tours, on the impressively clear and chilly water. REI provides the gear and instruction. Learn about the aquifer, the springs, and inhabitants of the lake as you glide along its surface. No experience required.

Aquarena Center's Sunset Kayak Tour costs $45 ($40 for REI members). The Full Moon Kayak Tour costs $65 ($55 REI members). Kayak and stand-up paddle board classes cost $65 ($55 for REI members). **Find more information at www.reispringlake.com and www.meadowscenter.txstate.edu/Education/Glass-BottomBoats.html.**

FUN FACT: Daily flow from these springs, collectively known as San Marcos Springs, varies dramatically with rainfall but regularly exceeds 100 million gallons per day. The springs have never ceased to flow that we know of.

Illustration by Ross MacDonald; Photo by Will van Overbeek

BUILD YOUR SKILLS

Sewing

Urban Spools, Dallas

Can't find a pillow to match your room? Want a one-of-a-kind outfit? Michelle Kitto (below) started Urban Spools so you can sew your own! She offers a basic sewing class—sewing machines provided—for ages 16 and up and one for ages 8 to 15. Other classes teach specific projects such as drawstring bags, zipper pouches, and quilts. Urban Spools stocks fabric and supplies and houses a kitchen so you can bring snacks or lunch.

"I really believe that everyone needs some sort of creative outlet," Michelle says. "Sewing, specifically, empowers you." She offers Sunday afternoon "open sew" sessions for people to come hang out and sew together. And yes, guys can sew and one even teaches here.

Urban Spools' three-hour "Intro to Sewing" class costs $45, which includes the fabric to make a pillow cover. **Call 214/324-5755; www.urbanspools.com/collections/classes.**

© Robert Hart

Glassblowing

Southwest School of Art, San Antonio

In a six-session glassblowing class for beginners, you'll handle hot glass and create a finished piece such as a tumbler-sized drinking glass. One of the most ancient of art forms, glassblowing has many modern applications, ranging from decorative or functional objects to architectural accents. The school organizes contemporary art exhibitions and houses a small history museum and a lunch café.

The Southwest School of Art's introduction to glassblowing costs $455. Use of the studio, safety equipment, and clear glass materials are included. Classes are also offered on making stained glass, glass beads and marbles, and mosaics. The school also offers a wide array of art courses in ceramics, metalsmithing, printmaking, drawing, painting, and more. **Call 210/224-1848; www.swschool.org.**

FUN FACT: Glass is heated to 2,100 degrees in the glassblowing furnace.

Larry West teaches glassblowing, Southwest School of Art, San Antonio

PHOTO: Michael Amador

BUILD YOUR SKILLS

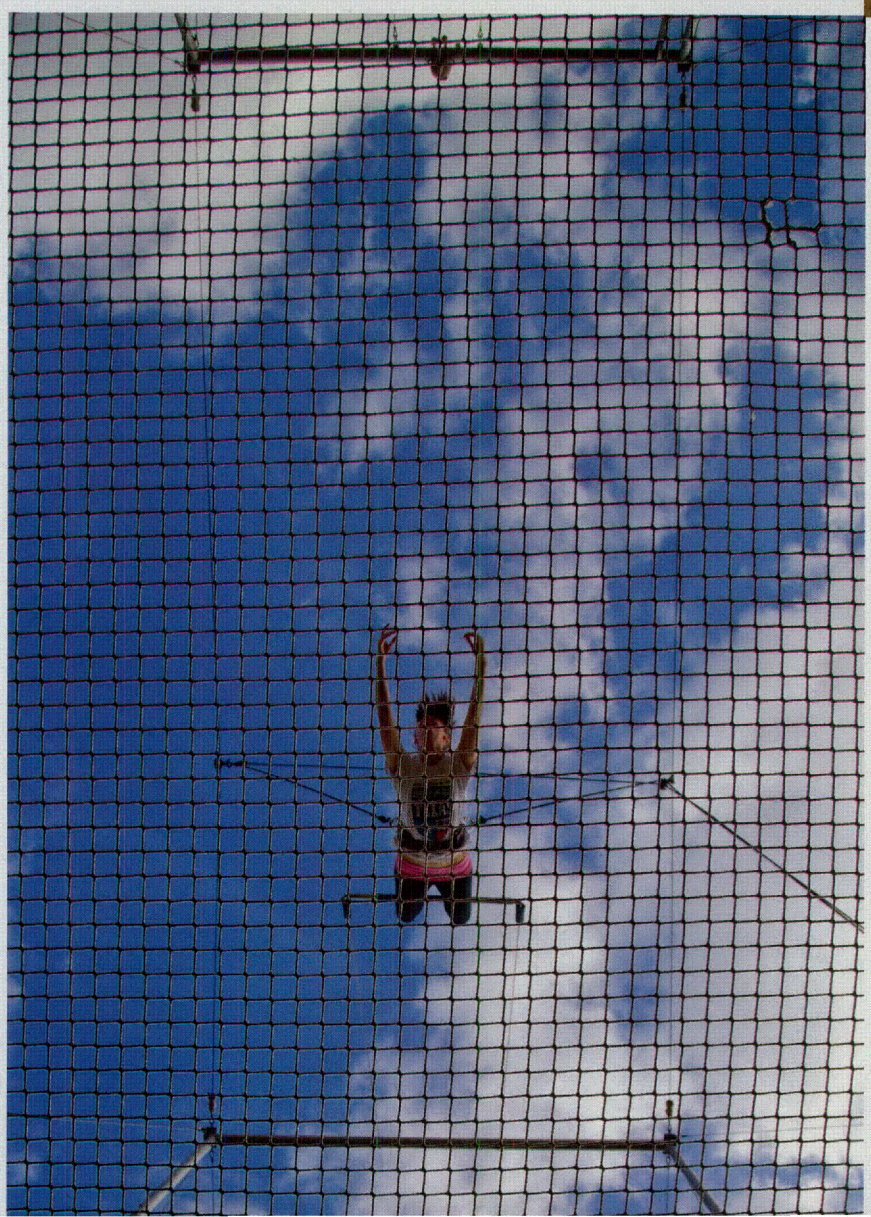
Beer & Wine Making

Texas Brewing Inc., Fort Worth

Brenden "Stubby" Stubblefield (right) was bitten by the home-brewing bug after taking microbiology at Texas Tech University. In his classes, you'll learn enough about the science of making beer to start turning water, malt, hops, and microbes (yeast) into an enjoyable beverage. For those who prefer the science of fermenting grapes, Texas Brewing offers a beginner's wine-making class, too.

Texas Brewing's Intro to Brewing or Winemaking costs $20. Class participants receive a 15-percent discount on any ingredient kit. **Call 682/647-1267; www.txbrewing.com/classes-events.**

© Robert Hart



© Sam Craft

TRAPEZE

Lone Star Trapeze Academy, Bryan

Fly through the air with the greatest of ease and learn this circus act invented by Jules Léotard in 1859. You need no experience or special level of fitness; owner Chad Davis says everyone six years of age and up can try it. Experienced instructors walk you through the whole process, and you'll be wearing a safety harness.

A two-hour session at Lone Star Trapeze Academy costs $45 per person (maximum weight 250 pounds). Schedule online. **Call 979/220-3744; www.lonestartrapezeacademy.com.**

Need something a little less, um, airborne? Try the Power Pole at Travaasa Austin resort. Scale a telephone pole and leap from the top to a hanging trapeze—no worries if you miss, you'll be safely lowered to the ground via your safety harness. Another option is the giant swing 35 feet in the air. **Call 877/261-7792; www.travaasa.com/austin.**

GO WILD

© Rolf Nussbaumer

Bracken Cave

BAT-VIEWING

Bats play important roles in nature: spreading seeds, pollinating plants, and eating insects. One species even eats scorpions and centipedes. What's not to love?

Texas claims 34 bat species—more than any other state, naturally—including two of the three pollinating species in the United States, the Mexican long-tongued bat and Mexican long-nosed bats. Both migrate from Mexico, following the flowering of cactus species during spring.

Female Mexican free-tailed bats migrate here from Mexico in early spring. They form large maternity colonies, give birth in June, and remain in Texas through October. Several places offer the opportunity to watch one of these colonies emerge from its cave at dusk, an unforgettable sight. These tours include educational talks about why we need the flying mammals. "A world without bats is a world full of biting insects," says Fran Hutchins of Austin-based Bat Conservation International.

Before attending a bat emergence, know that bats, like humans, may not come out in inclement weather (including cold, rainy, or windy conditions).

BRACKEN CAVE, New Braunfels

Bracken Cave houses the largest bat colony and greatest concentration of mammals in the world, more than 15 million Mexican free-tailed bats. Bat Conservation International (BCI), which owns this cave and some 2,000 acres of surrounding Texas Hill Country, works to protect bats and bat habitat around the globe. Some of that land lies right under the path the bats take when leaving and returning to the cave and, since young bats learning to fly sometimes crash-land, this undeveloped land creates a safety net for the pups.

According to BCI, Bracken Cave's residents eat 140 tons of bugs a night throughout the summer. When the mother bats leave to forage at night, they deposit the pups together in a "crèche," clinging to the ceiling of the cave. The pups begin hanging closer to the entrance of the cave as they grow and eventually join their mothers hunting for insects all night. Sit on benches opposite the cave opening and watch an ever-growing cloud of bats flow from the cave like so much fluttering smoke.

FUN FACT: Only one bat species out of more than 1,300 feeds on blood from mammals, and it lives in Latin America. A powerful anticoagulant for humans is produced from this bat's saliva.

Bat Conservation International offers tours of Bracken Cave to members during the summer, and public tours on select nights. Book in advance. Group camping and special events are available by previous arrangement. **See www.batcon.org/our-work/regions/usa-canada/protect-mega-populations/bracken-cave, or call 512/327-9721.**

ECKERT JAMES RIVER BAT CAVE PRESERVE, Mason

Southwest of the town of Mason, the Eckert James River Bat Cave Preserve houses about 4 million Mexican free-tailed bats. The preserve opens to tours from mid-May, when the pregnant females arrive from Mexico, until late September, when mothers and young head south. A small amphitheater faces the cave opening and bats skillfully fly within inches of the audience as they take off into the dusk.

Interpretive tours of the Eckert James River Preserve are offered May through September, every Thursday through Sunday, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Some sunrise viewings of bats returning home also are offered. Entry fee: $5, free age 5 and younger. **Call ahead (325/347-5970) for best viewing times and river status; www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/texas/placesweprotect/eckert-james-river-bat-cave-preserve.xml.**

DEVIL'S SINKHOLE, Rocksprings

Devil's Sinkhole, a 1,860-acre state wild and natural area, houses a Mexican free-tailed bat colony in a vertical cavern more than 320 feet in diameter and more than 350 feet deep. A 140-foot shaft leads from the cave to an opening on the surface approximately 50 feet wide. More than 3 million bats stream out of this opening, forming a "bat tornado"—a constantly rotating swirl of flying mammals extending ever higher and wider until the bats break off into separate streams and head out across the Hill Country.

Bat emergence tours at Devil's Sinkhole take place Wednesday through Sunday, May through October. Day tours of the sinkhole, nature hikes, and morning bat return tours are also offered. Tours begin at Rocksprings Visitor Center; reservations required. Preseason tours cost $6. During bat season, tours cost $12 adults, $10 seniors, and $6 age four to 11. Group rate for 10 or more is $8. **Call 830/683-2287; www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/devils-sinkhole.**

© Larry Ditto

Eckert Bat Cave. Only experts should handle bats.

Fly-fishing

Hill Country Flyfishers

Texans love to fish, and we enjoy different types of fishing on a variety of water bodies. Hill Country Flyfishers' Kevin Hutchison, author of *Fly Fishing the Texas Hill Country*, teaches the theory behind fly-casting, basic cast movements, and how the two work together to form the perfect cast. He will come to your riverfront property or meet you at a public location on one of 14 different Hill Country rivers, including the Frio, Blanco, Colorado, San Marcos, and Llano rivers. Cast for Guadalupe bass, spotted bass, Rio Grande perch, Bluegill, Yellow Belly sunfish, carp, catfish, and more.

Hill Country Flyfishers' two-hour casting lesson costs $100 for one person, $200 for two to three people, and $250 for four to 10 people (perfect for families). **Call 512/589-3474; www.hillcountryflyfishers.com/workshops/casting.**

Several state parks host Go Fish! learn-to-fish events; in three hours, learn to set up a fishing pole, how different lures and bait work, casting, safety, and how to identify different types of fish. Other parks schedule "fish with a ranger" programs to help folks get the hang of it. Anyone can fish in a state park any time without a fishing license (rules on number and size of fish and entry fees still apply). Check the calendar of events online at **www.tpwd.texas.gov/calendar/state-park-events.**

Illustration by Ross MacDonald

FUN FACT: About a million horses reside in Texas. The state's human population is approximately 27 million.

HORSEBACK-RIDING

Five Horses Ranch, Waller

The road into Five Horses Ranch passes between a pond and a pasture where a friendly Clydesdale named Feather whinnies a greeting. Near the barn, owner and instructor Shannon Birkelbach brushes a sleek black Fresian named Erriond. Five Horses Ranch has more than a dozen different kinds of horses and teaches people how to ride on Western and English saddles. "I teach natural horsemanship," says Birkelbach. "I can do a private lesson if you've never ridden and just want to try it. Even if you've never been on a horse, in about 10 lessons you'll learn to walk, trot, and canter." Many places around Texas offer trail rides and a number have lessons for folks with their own mount, but only a few provide lessons for those without a horse.

A one-hour private lesson at Five Horses Ranch costs $60; $50 per person for a one-and-a-half-hour group lesson. Book 48 hours in advance. **Call 832/993-1895; www.fivehorses.com.**

Instructor Tara Chatterson at Five Horses Ranch.

GET SMART AFTER DARK

Nature Nights

The University of Texas at Austin
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin

Dedicated to conserving, restoring, and creating healthy landscapes, this south Austin facility includes public gardens, woodlands, and meadows containing more than 650 native plants, along with exhibits, trails, and a family garden. Free Nature Nights feature interactive presentations, hikes with experts, story times, scavenger hunts, live animals, and more. This summer's topics include growing plants, predators, pollinators, and "harnessing fire."

The Wildflower Center's Nature Nights take place this year on June 9, 16, 23, and 30.
Call 512/232-0100; www.wildflower.org/nature.

OBSERVATORY TOURS

Stargazing remains an unbeatable summer activity, but many observatories also offer day tours and a chance to learn more about telescopes and astronomy. Two Texas favorites follow.

MCDONALD OBSERVATORY, Fort Davis

Take a 90-minute guided tour for an up-close look at the observatory's largest research telescopes and insight into the workings of this scientific research facility. The Frank N. Bash Visitors Center has a *Decoding Starlight* exhibit and a Solar Viewing Program at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. daily, featuring telescope viewing of features such as sunspots, prominences, and flares (or viewing of recorded images if it's cloudy).

McDonald Observatory's Solar Viewing and tour costs $8 for adults, $7 for children; solar viewing only costs $5 for adults, $4 for children (online price). Kids 5 and younger are free. Advance reservations are strongly recommended, especially on holiday weekends and during summer months. Self-guided tours of only the Hobby-Eberly Telescope are offered free from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. **Call 877/984-7827; www.mcdonaldobservatory.org/visitors/programs/tours.**

GEORGE OBSERVATORY, Fort Bend

Part of the Houston Museum of Natural Science but located in Brazos Bend State Park, this observatory houses a meteorite exhibit with a piece of a carbonaceous chondrite meteorite that landed in the Mexican town of Allende, Chihuahua, in February 1969. The meteorite contains interstellar grains (or stardust) and may have formed during an explosion of a supernova before the birth of our solar system.

The sidewalk to the observatory features a representation of the solar system with the observatory building representing the sun and each planet scaled to its distance from there—except for the former planet Pluto, that is. An accurate scale would place it in the park's Elm Lake, home to hundreds of alligators. Instead, Pluto's marker lies at the end of the walk. By this scale, the star nearest us would be in Denver, Colorado. Visitors can stand on a sundial on the observatory roof with their feet on the current month and tell time by their shadows.

FUN FACT: **Nearly 250 recorded meteorites have fallen in Texas, including one that fell into a swimming pool in Brewster County in 1946.**

George Observatory exhibits open Saturdays from 3 to 11 p.m.; solar system model and sundial available any time. **Call 281/242-3055; www.hmns.org/george-observatory.** ★

For writer Melissa Gaskill, summer is all about finding fun new things to do and try. Except maybe that trapeze.

PHOTO: Will van Overbeek; Illustrations by Ross MacDonald

Play Ball

Text by John Lumpkin

Photographs by Michael Amador

The TIMELESS FUN *of a* VISIT *to* TEXAS' *Minor League* BASEBALL *Parks*

For the Love of the Game, statue by Seth Vandable

GER
HRISTI
WELCOME
THE HOME OF TH
ST/SEPT
BURGER FIELD
BALLPARK O
734 E. Port Ave.
KED

From a perch beyond the left-field fence, the mid-summer scene unfolds like a real-life *Field of Dreams*. An afternoon thunderstorm gives way to puffy clouds. Scores of youngsters stream onto the outfield turf with their mitts and new souvenir baseballs for a session of pitch-and-catch with their parents.

While little ones scramble after soft tosses they can't catch, the older, more experienced children snap their throws to the adults, with a sharp thwack of ball meeting leather. Close by, it sounds like popcorn popping.

So goes the pre-game activity on Father's Day at Dell Diamond, home of the Triple-A Round Rock Express. Major league teams like the Houston Astros and the Texas Rangers may generate the biggest crowds and headlines, but they can't match the intimate fan experience of minor league ballparks like this one, which offer low-priced seats, player interaction, and a close-up view of lively competition.

With stadiums from Sugar Land to El Paso, Corpus Christi to Amarillo, and Austin to Alpine, Texas is home to 10 minor league teams playing in five leagues for the 2016 season. The clubs range from the Round Rock Express—a Rangers affiliate that's one step below the big-league team—to teams like the Laredo Lemurs (part of the independent American Association), where rookies make only $800 a month and endure lengthy bus rides between games.

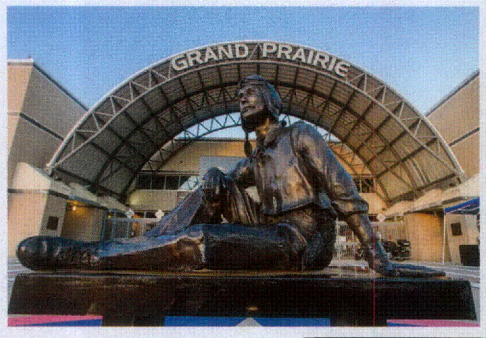
Depending on their level, minor league players could be semi-pros with side jobs to make ends meet or a famous star like Texas Ranger Josh Hamilton on a rehabilitation assignment. More broadly, they are on their way up or down—college or high school draftees, prospects from Latin America's baseball academies, undrafted rookies hoping to catch a scout's attention, and veteran journeymen still chasing the dream.

The Texas minor leagues feature state-of-the-art venues like the El Paso Chihuahua's Southwest University Park, which opened in 2014 and drew one million spectators in less than two seasons, as well as quaint, venerable settings, like 1,400-seat Kokernot Field in Alpine, made from locally quarried stone and the home of the Pecos League Cowboys.

Whichever park you visit, you'll meet imaginative mascots, like the spike-collared Chico the Chihuahua in El Paso, who appears more cranky than cuddly, or Henry the Puffy Taco in San Antonio. Don't bet on Henry when it comes time for his nightly race around the bases with a young volunteer from the crowd—the taco almost always loses.

The ballparks' nightly promotions rival the team mascots in creativity. In San Antonio, the annual "Used Car Night" draws thousands when Security Service Federal Credit Union gives away 12 vehicles. Other top draws are $1 beer nights, free food for seniors, and ticket deals like $2 Tuesdays in which tickets and concessions cost $2 each. The Sugar Land Skeeters once held a school's-out "Splash Day," with water-balloon fights and spray hoses. In Round Rock, throngs turned out when the team gave away Willie Nelson bobbleheads.

While most Texans can find a minor league ballpark close to home, there's nothing quite like hitting the road for a summer baseball journey. Last summer, I set off on my own version of this nostalgic American road trip, starting from my hometown in the Dallas area and heading south on Interstate 35 to Corpus Christi with stops along the way in Round Rock and San Antonio. It's an easy excursion of less than a week if team schedules mesh. Just make sure you've got an open shelf waiting at home for a new stock of ball caps.

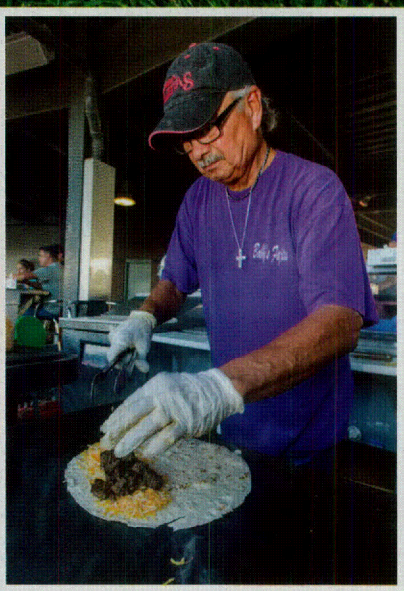


Best Seats in the House
Clockwise from right: Lawn seats at Dell Diamond; Bobby's Fajitas in Grand Prairie; high-fives with the AirHogs mascot; an aviator statue in Grand Prairie.

GRAND PRAIRIE

The Ballpark at Grand Prairie, home of the Texas AirHogs (formerly the Grand Prairie AirHogs), has the classic features of a baseball stadium, albeit on a smaller scale. There are suites above home plate, a shaded grandstand, and embellishments like statues of Navy aviators that honor the legacy of the decommissioned air station nearby. "AirHogs" is slang for such pilots.

The AirHogs, part of the American Association of Independent Professional Baseball, harken to the early days of the sport, when dozens of communities like Vernon and Paris hosted professional teams. Today's version are the "independent" leagues, whose members aren't affiliated



with Major League Baseball clubs. Many of these players are scrapping to make a career out of baseball, working other jobs during the off-season and shuffling between teams in search of opportunity.

Before a game against the St. Paul Saints, rock music blares as the players take their cuts during batting practice. A beverage stand serves regional craft beers with thematic names such as "Slow Pitch" and "Sidewinder." In the concourse behind home plate, a food vendor decked out in sunglasses and a ball cap serves up quesadillas, nachos, and ballpark fajitas.

As the first pitch approaches, seven- and eight-year-old players from the Haltom Youth Baseball Association hustle out of the stands in replica AirHogs uniforms, pairing with AirHogs starters for warm-up tosses. Then they take positions in the field with the players to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner," caps across their hearts.

Small knots of spectators are on hand, far fewer than the 27,000 at the Texas Rangers' Globe Life Park seven miles down Interstate 30 in Arlington. So why bring the youth here instead of the major-league stadium?

"You get a better feel for the actual game—what goes on in a game," says the boys' coach, Lane Pinkston. "You don't have nosebleed seats. You can be a part of the game."

ROUND ROCK

Matt and Jenny LaSeur and their three boys arrive early to Dell Diamond to claim a grassy spot beneath the two-story "Home Run Porch" in left field. The older boys—ages eight and five—are members of "Spike's Junior Sluggers Kids Club," a promotion with $1 general admission, and the two-year-old is free. With the parents' tickets costing $4 each, the LaSeurs' admission totals $10—not bad for an evening of baseball under the stars. "We sit out on the berm," says Matt. "We have a ball."

Behind the third-base dugout, the LaSeurs join other families forming a line in anticipation of the Father's Day pitch-and-catch. Soon they file to the outfield for a brief experience of playing under the lights. Kids are everywhere. The operator of the tractor dragging the infield holds a toddler in his lap. Other children flock to the Fun Zone, a playground with slides, forts, and even a bungee cord and trampoline.

But Dell Diamond caters to adults, too. On the suite level is a chic, air-conditioned club with food buffets and a bar offering drink specials like a bourbon-spiked milk shake and a prickly-pear margarita.

The Express' team gear reflects a railroad theme, conflating Hall of Famer Nolan Ryan's "Ryan Express" nickname and the railroad tracks running nearby. In 2000, Ryan, his son Reid Ryan, and partners helped bring professional baseball to this Austin suburb, convincing Round Rock to build a ballpark in the middle of a cornfield.

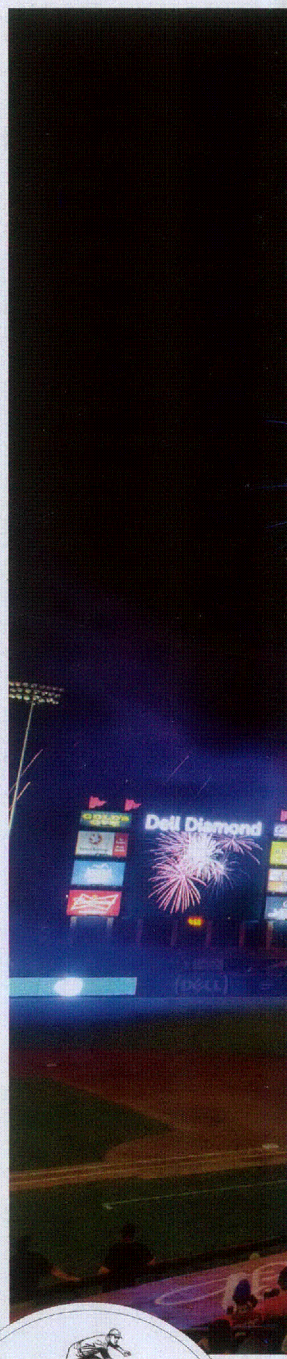
Ryan's influence extends to the stadium concessions like the 34 Chophouse (Ryan's jersey number was 34), which offers burgers made from Ryan-branded beef. I choose the "Aloha Burger," a juicy, teriyaki-marinated patty topped with grilled pineapple, Swiss cheese, and chipotle mayonnaise on a King Hawaiian roll.

My decision to dine at a picnic table away from the action turns out to be prudent when I hear the crack of a bat, followed by the crowd's roar. Express outfielder Michael Choice has clobbered an Iowa Cubs errant pitch into Home Run Porch for a first-inning grand slam. I'm sorry I missed it, but I might also be wearing my Aloha Burger (instead of eating it) amid the crowd's jumping, raucous celebration.

SAN ANTONIO

Nelson Wolff Municipal Stadium, commonly known as "The Wolff" and home of the San Antonio Missions, also offers fans a bargain, especially on $2 Tuesdays, when grandstand seats, parking, beer, sausage wraps, and tacos all cost $2 each. During my visit, I join regulars Dominick and Alicia Tapia, who prefer to sit in lawn chairs on the hillside beyond the left-field foul pole. As fans, the Tapias are part of San Antonio's rich legacy of professional baseball. The city fielded a charter team of the Texas League in 1888, along with Houston, Galveston, Austin, Dallas, and Fort Worth.

Our schedule puts us in San Antonio on "Ball Cap Night," and I have a free Missions cap to prove it. For a snack, I consider the local pizza, barbecue, or "Ballapeño's 1/4 pound Nacho Dog," which is named for the team's Ballapeño mascot. But the Funnel Cake Fries are more intriguing—deep-fried strips of funnel cake, sprinkled with powdered sugar, slathered with chocolate sauce, and covered



WEB EXTRA

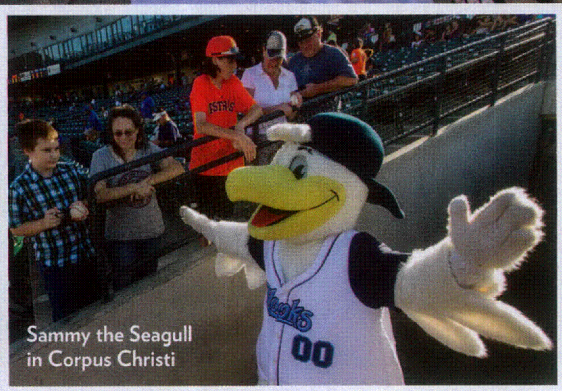
For more on minor league baseball in Texas, including the state's 10 teams and the leagues they compete in, see **texashighways.com/webextra**.

Fireworks anc a burger at Dell Diamond in Round Rock

"You get a better feel for the actual game–what goes on in a game," says the boys' coach, Lane Pinkston. "You don't have nosebleed seats. You can be a part of the game."

Fist bumps with Conrad Gregor

Ballapeño in San Antonio



Sammy the Seagull in Corpus Christi

"I remember sitting on the outfield lawn, not a worry in the world, close to my buddies, just having a good time," Conrad Gregor says.

with whipped cream and syrupy strawberries.

On the field, the Missions seek revenge against Texas League rivals the Midland RockHounds, who had won 5-0 the night before. It looks promising when Alberth Martinez, a five-year veteran, lifts a double to left field, driving home the first two Mission batters. Alas, he would be caught in a rundown after overrunning second base, and the Missions wouldn't score again in a 6-2 defeat.

CORPUS CHRISTI

Whataburger Field, home of the Corpus Christi Hooks, the Houston Astros' Double-A affiliate, resonates with warm Gulf Coast atmosphere. Located at the Corpus Christi Port, the park offers fans a view not only of the game but also of huge tankers navigating the nearby port channel, as well as the picturesque Corpus Christi Harbor Bridge.

Corpus Christi embraces much of the best of minor league baseball—it's a mid-sized Double-A market with a strong fan base that reveres its players. When first-baseman Conrad Gregor was growing up in Carmel, Indiana, he could not have imagined that his new home would be on the Texas Gulf Coast, but he recalls his dad taking him to Indianapolis Indians minor league games. "I remember sitting on the outfield lawn, not a worry in the world, close to my buddies, just having a good time," he says. So it goes in Corpus with young fans of Gregor, a 2015 Texas League all-star.

Drafted out of college powerhouse Vanderbilt University, Gregor joined the Hooks in his first full rookie season in 2014. He makes ends meet by staying with a local host family. Some minor league clubs rely on their fan base for this kind of help, offering a small subsidy and season tickets. "I love it," Gregor says. "It's lots of fun—great when the fans get behind you like Corpus Christi."

A staff of energetic young professionals generates the ballpark atmosphere at Whataburger Field. JD Davis, director of ballpark entertainment, and his team program a sophisticated video board with four instant replay cameras. They also synchronize a player's favorite music to his upcoming at-bat and display players' statistics.

The programming can be quite poignant. During my visit, the surviving family members of a soldier who died in Operation Desert Storm take the field for a public ceremony, wearing commemorative T-shirts.

Then, in an upbeat segue, the team picks a boy from the stands for the traditional start of the game. As he makes his way down the aisle to the field, cameras project the boy's image on video boards across the park while his parents scramble into position to take photos. The microphone is thrust toward his face. At first, the youngster gulps, but then he rises to the occasion and shouts for all to hear, "Play ball!" ★

Writer John Lumpkin first experienced the joys of minor-league baseball attending Nashville Volunteers games as a boy. For photographer Michael Amador, minor-league ballparks are at their best with fajitas, funnel cakes, and fabulous fans.

Essentials

Texas' minor league teams play in the summer, from roughly April to September. Here's more information for teams mentioned in the story:

The Texas AirHogs play at the Ballpark at Grand Prairie, 1651 Lone Star Pkwy. For the 2016 season, the Texas AirHogs have merged with the Amarillo Thunderheads in the American Association of Independent Professional Baseball; the team will play half of its games at Potter County Memorial Stadium, 3303 E. Third Ave., in Amarillo. Call 817/343-0729; www.airhogsbaseball.com.

The Round Rock Express, Triple-A Texas Rangers affiliate, play at Dell Diamond, 3400 E. Palm Valley Blvd. in Round Rock. Call 512/255-2255; www.roundrockexpress.com.

The San Antonio Missions, Double-A San Diego Padres affiliate, play at Nelson Wolff Municipal Stadium, 5757 US 90 W. Call 210/675-7275; www.samissions.com.

The Corpus Christi Hooks, Double-A Houston Astros affiliate, play at Whataburger Field, 734 E. Port Ave. Call 361/561-4665; www.cchooks.com.

Other Texas Minor League Teams

El Paso Chihuahuas, Triple-A San Diego Padres affiliate, www.elpasochihuahuas.com.

Frisco RoughRiders, Double-A Texas Rangers affiliate, www.ridersbaseball.com.

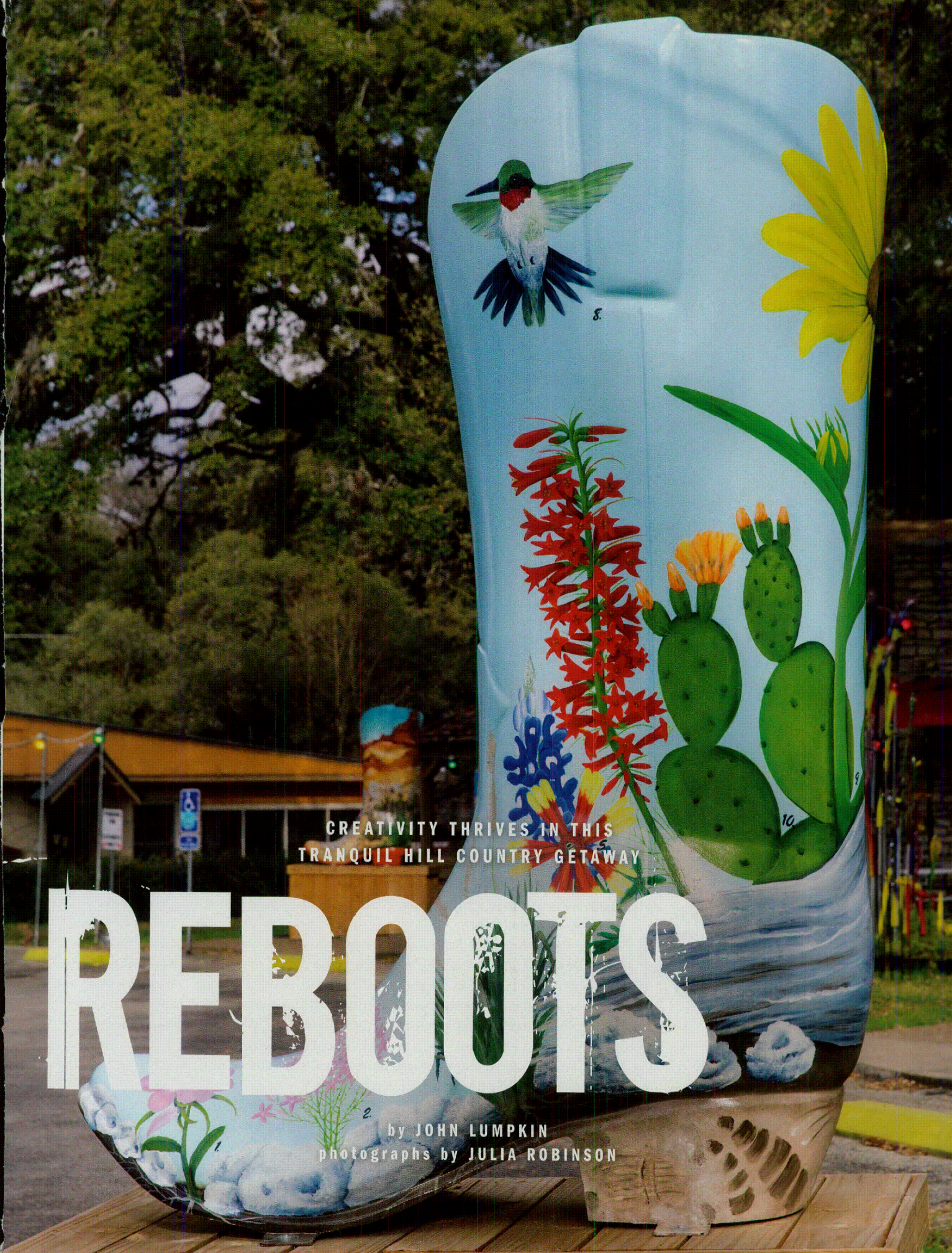
Midland RockHounds, Double-A Oakland Athletics affiliate, www.midlandrockhounds.org.

Alpine Cowboys, Pecos League, http://alpine.pecosleague.com.

Laredo Lemurs, American Association, www.americanassociationbaseball.com/teams/laredo.

Sugar Land Skeeters, Atlantic League, www.sugarlandskeeters.com.

WIMBERLEY



CREATIVITY THRIVES IN THIS TRANQUIL HILL COUNTRY GETAWAY

REBOOTS

by JOHN LUMPKIN

photographs by JULIA ROBINSON

BOOTS, BOOTS, AND MORE BOOTS.

Here in Wimberley, a town of less than 3,000 in the heart of the Hill Country, visitors and residents alike describe the scene as "bootiful."

The fiberglass boot sculptures, which were installed in 2014 and 2015, are just one attraction for this community some 45 minutes southwest of Austin. Wimberley blends small-town rodeos, Friday night football, water recreation, and a popular monthly outdoor market with stylish bed and breakfasts, high-end art, Texas fine dining, and a gourmet kitchen store.

The "Bootiful" project was spearheaded by artist Lynn Myers and Wimberley art gallery owner Rob Pitzer, whose Pitzer's Fine Arts opened here in 2006. Thanks to a dedicated committee of local artists and community leaders, 50 renditions of boots created by area artists now occupy Wimberley's business district and beyond—each six feet tall but a universe apart in color, design, and message. Maps are available at galleries, stores, and online so visitors can find the boots in a scavenger hunt.

For a town ravaged twice by floods in 2015, the mood in Wimberley is upbeat, and longtime visitors appreciate that the best of "old" Wimberley is intact. The cypress-lined Blue Hole, one of Texas' most inviting spring-fed swimming destinations, is on target to open for swimming in May (weekends only until Memorial Day). Old Baldy, a popular summit for climbing and exploring, draws outdoorsy types eager to work up a sweat for

KICK IT UP

From opening pages: Adam Podolec does a back flip into Jacob's Well. Artist Bejat McCracken's *Wimberley Wildflowers & Pollinators* south of the main square.

"BOOTIFUL" ART

Fifty embellished boot sculptures enliven Wimberley's business district and beyond; artist Julie Underriner at work at Art on 12; the "Betrothal Tree" at EmilyAnn Theatre & Gardens (www.emilyann.org).

a view. Throughout the town's center, shops and cafés are thriving. Beyond the boots and the town's emerging art colony, you'll find restaurants, shops, and even a zipline operation to give you a bird's-eye view of all the surrounding beauty.

"We received a little bit of damage, but it was nothing we couldn't fix," says Amanda McAlpin, a multi-tasker at Wimberley Zipline Adventures, who tells me that the guides keep guests "entertained while we inform them about the hillsides, our ranch, and the environment." The course includes 10 separate ziplines; together, they stretch for about a mile over the cypress-studded, hilly expanse known to most locals as the Wimberley Valley.

Yet perhaps no activity in Wimberley speaks to the easy-going nature of the town as well as a swim in the spring-fed waters of Cypress Creek at Blue Hole, the centerpiece of a 126-acre community park. A manicured lawn amid the towering bald cypresses creates a tranquil spot for sunbathing, reading, or games. Ropes from the trees invite swimmers to swing out and drop into the cool and clear creek—with water temperatures in the 70s year-round.

North of town, Jacob's Well, another spring-fed swimming hole, is an alternative to a dip in Blue Hole. The artesian springs that form the limestone-surrounded "well" create the headwaters of Cypress Creek, which wends through downtown Wimberley. A swim here, or a quick wade in Cypress Creek, are ideal ways to cool off when the temperatures climb.

Day trips like the 30-mile drive to Blanco underscore the calmness and rugged beauty of this part of the Hill Country. First, check off Wimberley's Old Baldy from your list by making an early-morning ascent up its 218 stone steps to the tabletop summit for a 360-degree view of the surrounding hillsides and treetops. From there, find your way to FM 2325 and eventually FM 165 for grand vistas of the Hill Country at eye level, including photo-worthy glimpses of low-lying pastures, escarpments, occasional wildlife, and the Blanco River. Go for a brief spin through Blanco State Park, a 104-acre sliver of serenity near downtown Blanco, and stop for lunch on or near the town square. You might choose Redbud

BLISS AND BLING
A peaceful spot at Blue Hole; *Turn the Boot Around* by artist Rhett Ryan on the steps of Gallery on the Square.

Café for its well-made sandwiches and draft beer from Blanco's Real Ale Brewing Company, or make your way one block toward the river for a burger at the café for the Blanco Bowling Club, which dates to 1948 and still runs a German-style nine-pin bowling alley.

Your counterclockwise return to Wimberley via FM 32 follows ridgelines of the aptly named Devil's Backbone for views of the valley from its southern rim. Not far from one shaded overlook is the Devil's Backbone Tavern, which opened in 1932. Beer is cheap and cold, and pickup trucks outnumber sedans in the gravel parking lot. A handwritten message on a white board behind the bar says, "If you ain't here, please sign in. Tell the bartender." An old-fashioned shuffleboard table completes the picture.

Lodging around Wimberley includes campgrounds, cottages, cabins, and B&Bs. On our two most recent visits, my wife and I chose the Blair House Inn and Creekhaven Inn for their comfort, accessibility, and scenery.

The Blair House's current owners, Chris and Lois Mahoney, honor the legacy of original owner Jonnie Stansbury, a California transplant who brought acclaim for her B&B with extravagant, wine-paired Saturday-night dinners. The next owners, veteran hospitality managers Mike and Vickie Schneider, added spacious cottages to increase accommodations to 12, a swimming pool, and an expanded schedule of cooking classes. The inn's 86 acres are dotted with live oaks and stands of prickly pear and native grasses. As a fog lifted during our visit, we took in the Hill Country tranquility from the deck of our cottage, a moment made even more noteworthy when the Mahoneys' 11-year-old tabby cat Oliver arrived to keep us company.

The common areas of the Blair House's main lodge are ringed with art for sale, including originals by local painters and digital prints by Los Angeles-based painter Todd White, a native of San Antonio known for his animation work in the television cartoon "SpongeBob SquarePants." Cooking classes here are a big draw, and Saturday night's menu often features an entrée presented by students. During the week, you'll want to head off-property to dine, but save room for dessert: The Mahoneys often make sure that a carafe of red wine and a few

THE VIEW FROM HERE
An unusual bench with a view of the Hill Country at EmilyAnn Theatre & Gardens; Wimberley Zipline Adventures guide Kelly Brunelle in action.

slices of pie in your room await your return.

Closer to town, Creekhaven Inn's shaded location beside Cypress Creek was almost its undoing in October 2015, when the creek's raging waters engulfed the main house's first floor and tore away the main deck, carrying it 150 feet before it smashed into a tree. A concerted effort by owners Bill and Pat Appleman and scores of community volunteers resulted in Creekhaven's reopening three months later. These days, 14 rooms (six in the main house and another eight in a second building alongside) offer peaceful views of Cypress Creek via hammock or shaded porch, along with complimentary kayaks, birdwatching opportunities, and the option to simply let the gurgle of the creek lull you into relaxation. "What I most often hear from visitors is that it's so peaceful here, with the trees and the sounds of the creek," says Pat. "There are so many places to sit and enjoy nature." Mornings bring a full breakfast—an egg casserole, plus a meat and plenty of fruit—served buffet-style in the main house. "We are so glad to be innkeepers again rather than project managers," says Pat with a laugh.

BEYOND THE BOOTS AND THE TOWN'S EMERGING ART COLONY, YOU'LL FIND RESTAURANTS, SHOPS, AND EVEN A ZIPLINE OPERATION TO GIVE YOU A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF ALL THE SURROUNDING BEAUTY.

As a rule, Wimberley's dining options are varied—comfort food at Cypress Creek Cafe or Wimberley Cafe, Tex-Mex at Milagro, *al fresco* overlooking Cypress Creek at Ino'z Brew and Chew, or pizza at Marco's, among others. My current favorite is Linda's Fine Foods; on my last visit I skipped the main course and went for Indian-style black-eyed pea salad, a trio of tart deviled eggs, and sautéed sweet potatoes and kale. The restaurant's kitchen and dining room occupy a former stone house, and outdoor seating is available in the evening beneath spreading oak trees. Musicians perform several days each week, and the menu changes frequently, reflecting chef and owner Linda Allen's eclectic tastes.

From March through December, Wimberley's Market Days event brings shoppers to town on the first Saturday of each month, when more than 475 booths set up within walking distance of Cypress Creek. But there is plenty of shopping to be had year-round, too. We like Kiss the

WIMBERLEY SHUFFLE
Playing shuffleboard at the Devil's Backbone Tavern; Artist Dan Moore's *Boot Hill* at Santa Fe Connection, a gift shop and gallery on Ranch Road 12.

Cook, which rivals larger metropolitan stores with its selection of creative kitchenware and level of personal service. In other shops, local merchants offer art, jewelry, clothing, furniture, and collectibles.

The colorful boots of the "Bootiful" project now unite Wimberley's stores, galleries, restaurants, lodgings, and public institutions. The sparkling *Turn the Boot Around* by artist Rhett Ryan radiates reflected light at Gallery on the Square. Some depict nature scenes, such as Doug Hiser's *Hill Country Birds* at the Wimberley Visitors Center. *Layers* by Chrys Grummert, at the Leaning Pear restaurant, is an abstraction of wavy rings in hues of red, blue, and yellow. And if you go by the Hill Country Cowboy Church, you'll spy *Boot Scootin' Believer* by Jean Schuler, which features a silhouette of a cowboy on a bucking horse with a fading orange background.

The concept of boots sprang from Rob Pitzer's and Lynn Meyers' desire to encourage collaboration among area artists. After discussing many ideas, Pitzer says, "I suggested we have a public art project." Like similar projects elsewhere that have featured cows or guitars, local merchants and institutions sponsored a boot and were paired with an artist, who produced the designs.

Some artists who didn't have studios large enough to accommodate the six-foot boot frames labored in a former church building nicknamed the "Boot Hole." Once the fiberglass boots were painted or decorated, they were clear-coated at an auto-body shop and installed on secure platforms at their new owner's venue. The project was coordinated by a nonprofit known as the Wimberley Valley Arts and Cultural Alliance, which facilitated Wimberley's designation by the Texas Commission on the Arts as a "cultural arts district." This made Wimberley eligible for TCA grants like the one that helped remodel the 117-seat Wimberley Playhouse. The theater hosts performances of the Wimberley Players, a volunteer troupe that came together in 1979.

Among Wimberley's 15 galleries is Art on 12, which represents 53 artists, including painter Julie Underriner, who uses brushes sparingly and instead pours paint on canvases and panels, creating works that are sometimes startling and always evocative.

WHAT'S COOKIN'?
A hammock strung between live oaks greets visitors at the Blair House Inn; Michelle Carr at work during a Blair House cooking class.

Next door to Art on 12 is Pitzer's Fine Arts, whose patio could be a museum attraction. The gallery's highest priced piece is there—a $90,000 life-size sculpture of Thomas Jefferson writing the first draft of the Declaration of Independence. It faithfully depicts details such as Jefferson's handwriting and the writing box he invented.

At Pitzer's entrance is its boot art, *The Yellow Rose of Wimberley* by Denice Calley. A bursting yellow rose on the boot's left side is complemented by a collage of stars, a powder-blue toe, blue straps, and the words "A Little Bit of Heaven," one of Wimberley's many mottos. It was the first "Bootiful" boot commissioned. "Residents and visitors have really embraced this project," says Pitzer. "It has created one more thing for people to experience when they come to Wimberley." ★

Writer John Lumpkin, a former Dallas bureau chief for The Associated Press, enjoys exploring the back roads of Texas. Austin-based photographer Julia Robinson has a special affinity for Wimberley's swimming holes.

ESSENTIALS
WIMBERLEY

For details about lodging, dining, events, art galleries, and attractions, including Blue Hole, Jacob's Well, and Old Baldy, contact the Wimberley Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau at 512/847-2201; www.wimberley.org. (For details about the Blanco sites in this story, see www.blancochamber.com.)

Find information about the "Bootiful" project, including interactive maps, boot images, and details about artists at www.bootifulwimberley.com.

Pitzer's Fine Arts is at 13909 RR 12. Call 512/722-6032; www.pitzersart.com.

Wimberley Zipline Adventures. Call 512/847-9990; www.wimberleyzipline.com.

Devil's Backbone Tavern is at 4041 FM 32 in Fischer. Call 830/964-2544.

Blair House Inn is at 100 W. Spoke Hill Dr. Call 512/847-1111; www.blairhouseinn.com.

Creekhaven Inn is at 400 Mill Race Ln. Call 800/827-1913; www.creekhaveninn.com.

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IT'S ISLAND TIME

GALVESTON of SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Enjoying the cool breezes and crashing waves of the Galveston Island shore is one of those summer pastimes that make you forget you're even in Texas. But these days, the beach is just the beginning of what this charming little island has to offer.

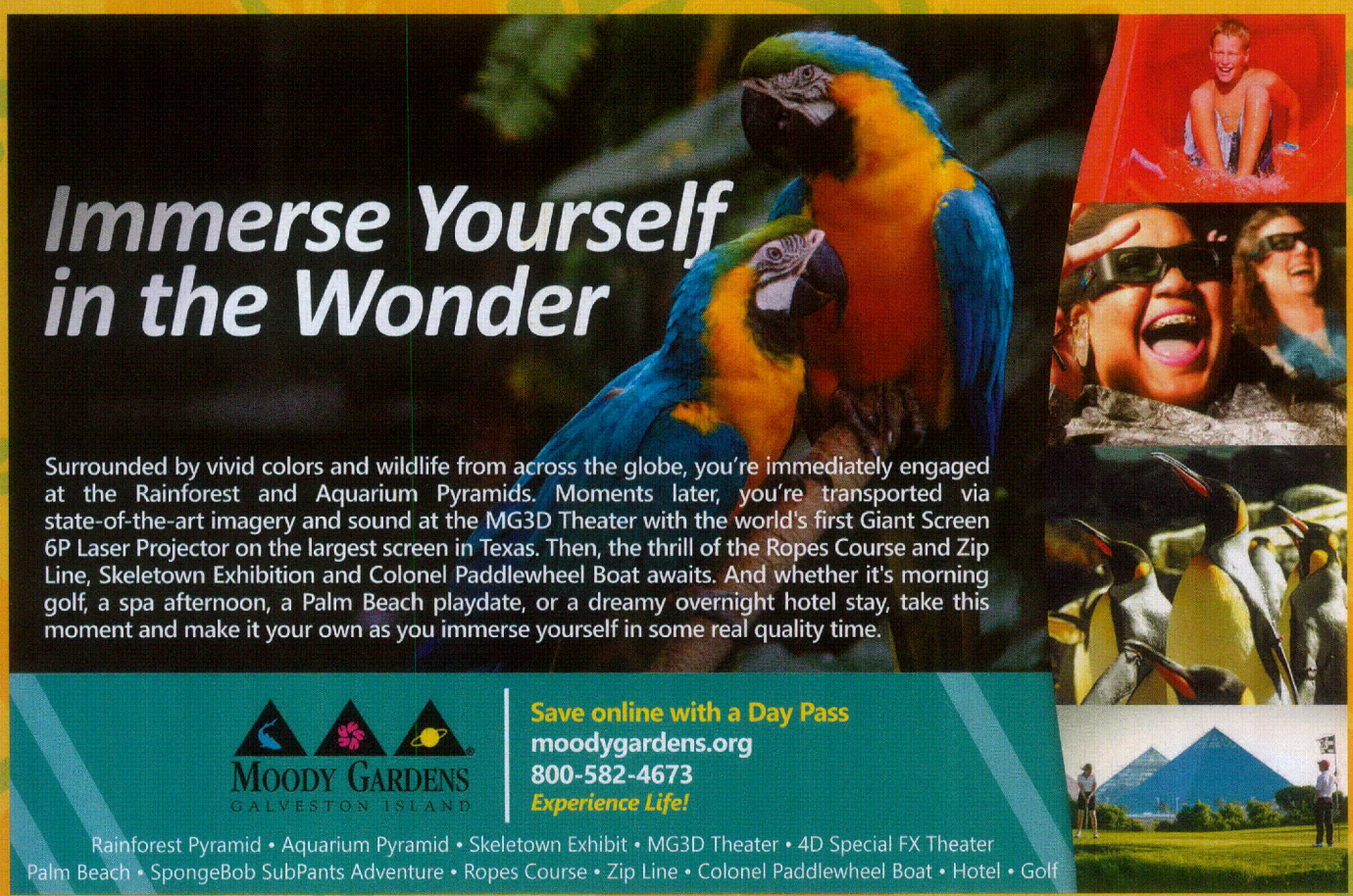
Located on the Texas coast all the way south on I-45, Galveston is buzzing with new energy. Whether you're walking along the seawall where laughter fills the air near the Pleasure Pier or you're journeying through the island's emerging foodie scene one delicious bite at a time, it's evident that Galveston has been reborn in so many ways.

No longer just a beach town, Galveston is a thriving vacation destination because of its diversity – from its large collection of Victorian architecture and historical sites to its family attractions, culinary experiences and cruise port. Just recently, Galveston became home to The Bryan Museum, housing the world's largest collection of southwestern artifacts, opened a luxury resort, The Villas, and created a brand new beach along the western part of Seawall. Plus, it seems "new" has become a yearly buzzword for the island as the new attractions, new hotels, and new restaurants just keep coming.

While visiting Galveston this summer, you can see – and ride, if you dare – the tallest water coaster in the world opening at Schlitterbahn Galveston Island Waterpark. Or, if history is where your interest lies, you can visit historic downtown Galveston, where old-world charm is drawing fresh interest from lovers of the arts. Majestic iron-front buildings house a great variety of coastal-inspired art galleries, shops, restaurants, and The Grand 1894 Opera. While strolling the district, you can visit the new Hendley Green Park, for a picnic surrounded by beautiful Oak trees.

While there's plenty new to see on the island, there is nothing wrong with enjoying classic Galveston experiences, like sunbathing on the beach or enjoying a poolside drink. And, it's easy to lounge all day with Galveston's numerous lodging options, from beachside homes and condos to award-winning resorts and quant bed and breakfasts.

For more information on Galveston, call 888-GAL-ISLE or visit www.galveston.com.



GALVESTON of SUMMER ACTIVITIES

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A Wolverine Walks Into a Bar
Saturday 7.16.16 | 3pm & 8pm

Vicki Lawrence and Mama: A Two Woman Show
Saturday 7.23.16 | 8pm

Jeanne Robertson
Friday 8.5.16 | 8pm & Saturday 8.6.16 | 8pm

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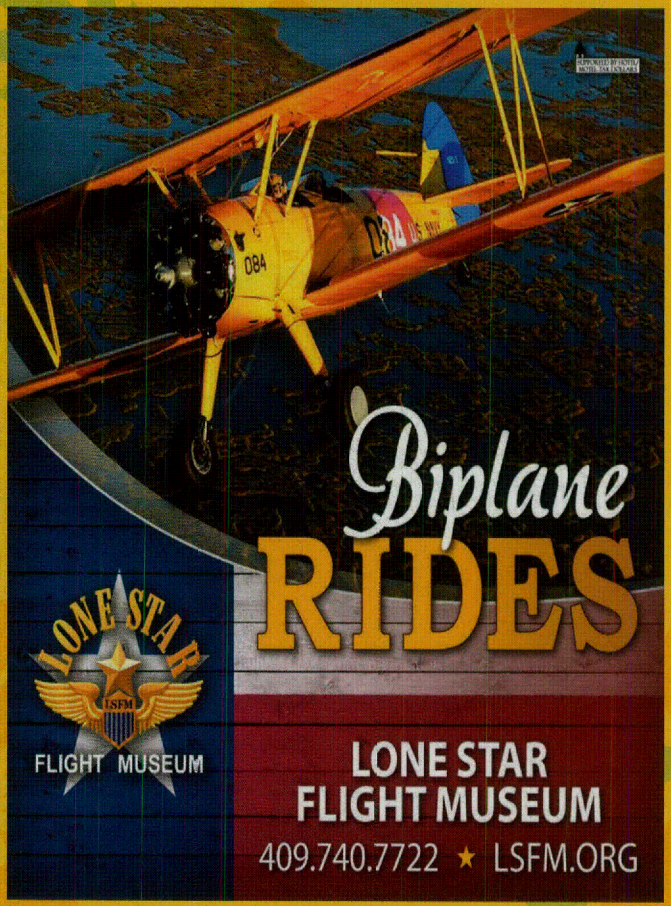
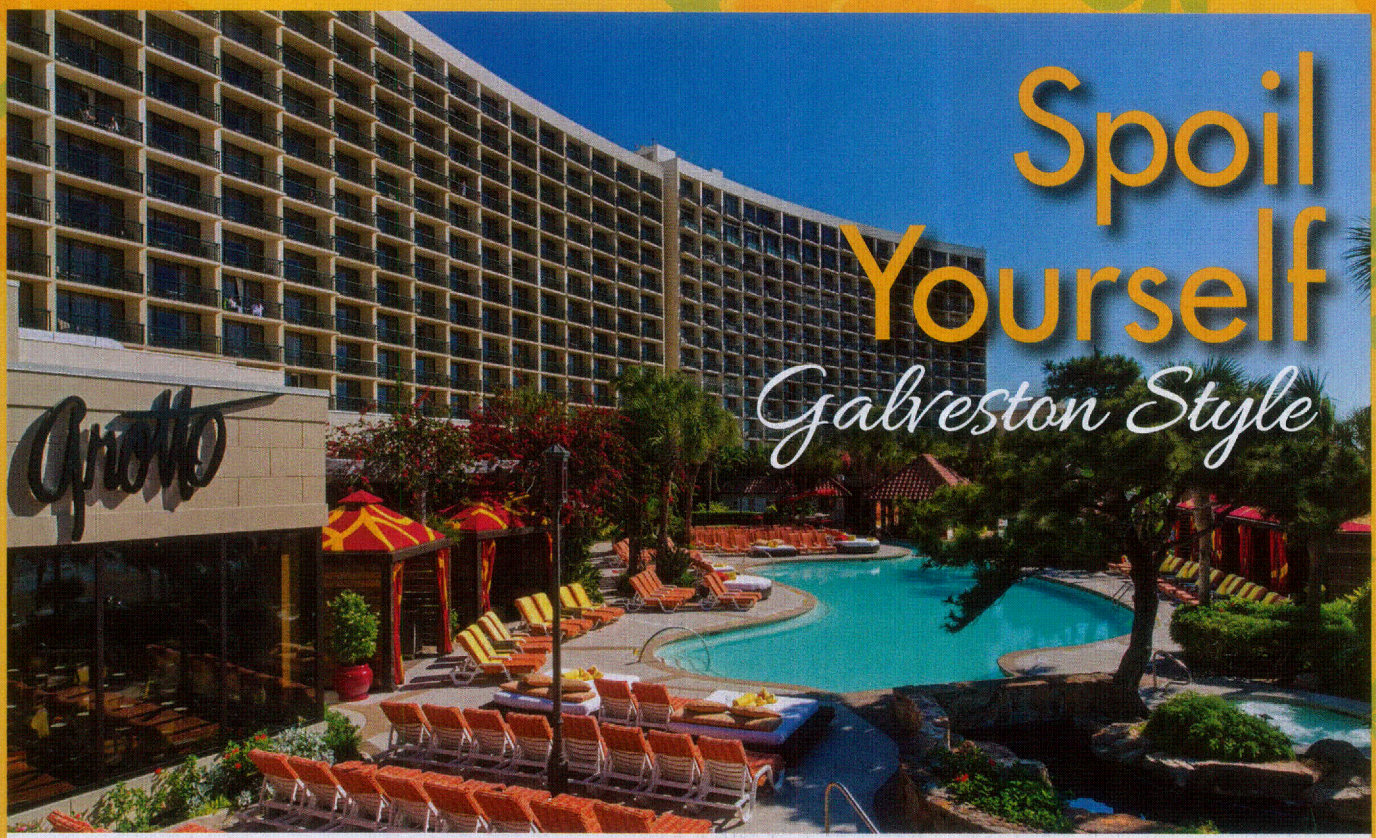
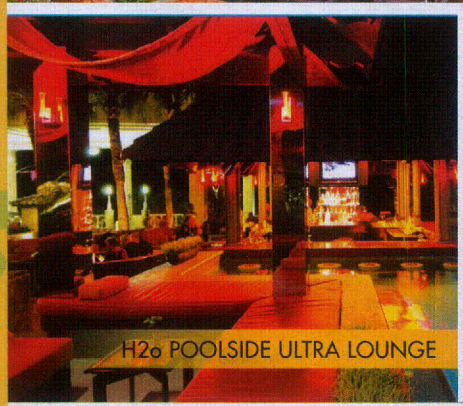


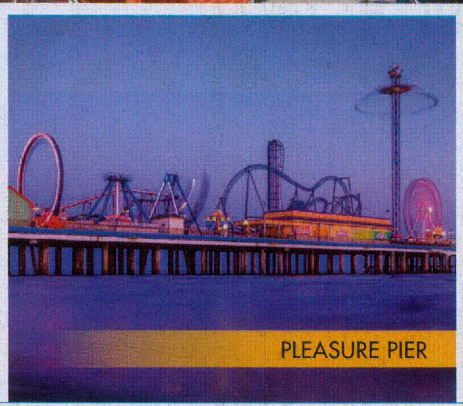


Spoil Yourself

Galveston Style



H2o POOLSIDE ULTRA LOUNGE



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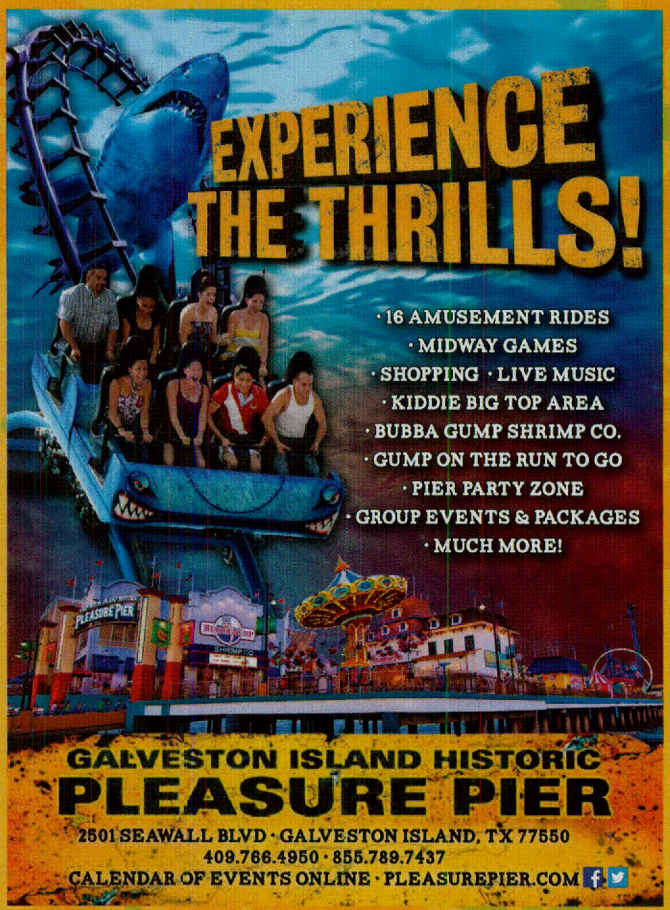
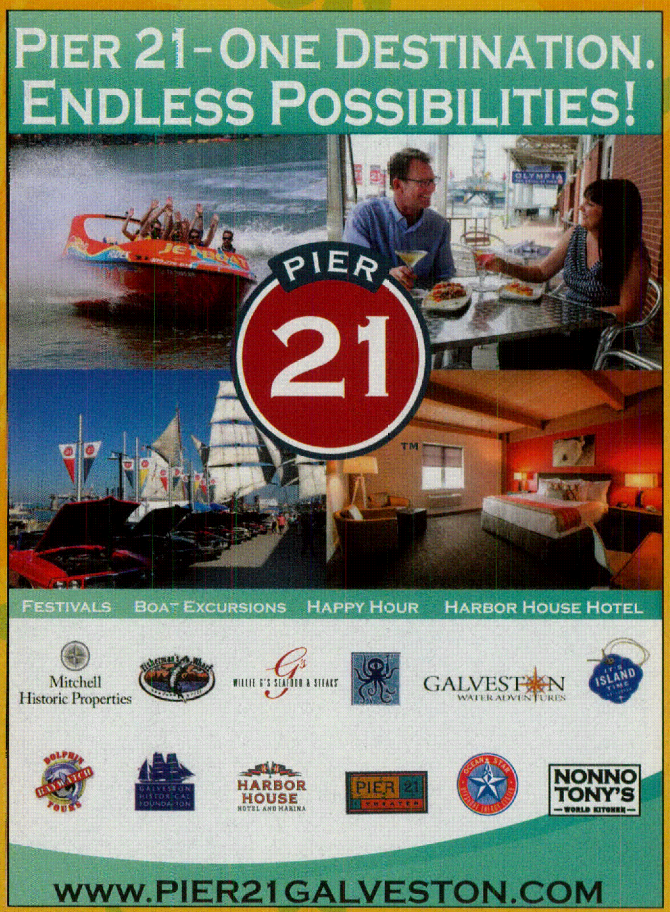
GALVESTON of SUMMER ACTIVITIES





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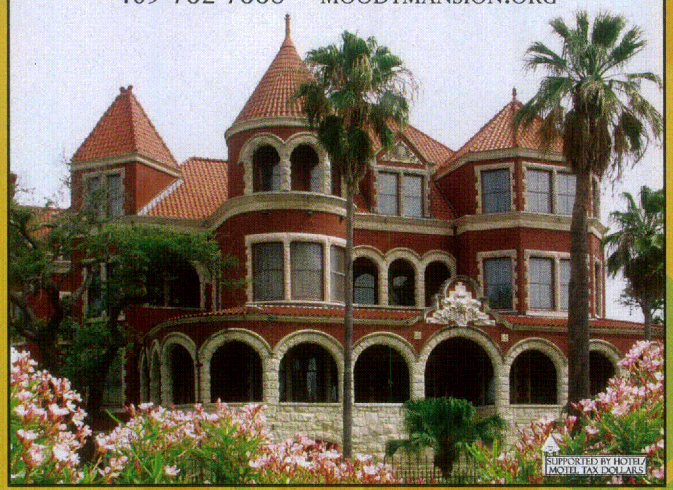
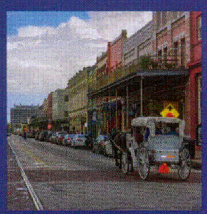
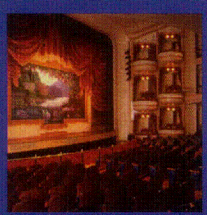
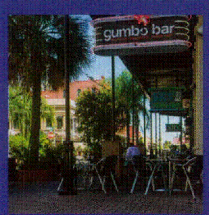


Downtown
Galveston



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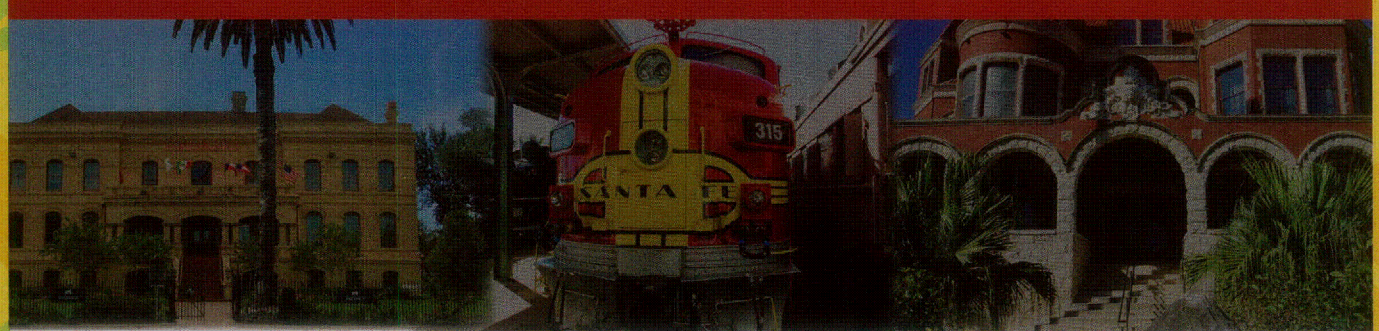

1315 21st St., Galveston, TX
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www.TheBryanMuseum.org

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(409) 765-5700
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www.MoodyMansion.org

Rambling Spirit

THE STORY OF VAN HORN'S CLARK HOTEL MUSEUM

Text by **E. DAN KLEPPER**

BEST FACE FORWARD *In the 1920s, the Clark Hotel flipped its front entry from the railroad side to the side facing the new Bankhead Highway.*

PHOTO: © E. Dan Klepper

TIMELESS TABBY *Museum Director Patricia Golden portrays a hotel visitor of the past in one of the Clark Hotel Museum's early 20th-Century hotel room exhibits. Tab Hunter, the museum's resident cat, on an antique piano.*

A COMPARISON CAN BE MADE of Van Horn, a dusty stop on the trek from Pecos to El Paso, and a barbed-wire fence stretched across a grassland plain. Both are windswept, catching and holding travelers or tumbleweeds as they pass by before releasing them onward. Barbed-wire likely appeared in this desert mountain country around the 1880s. Van Horn, then an outpost on the San Antonio-El Paso stage line, entered perhaps its most defining era within the same decade. The tracks and trains of the Texas and Pacific Railway rumbled through the community in 1881, delivering growth and prosperity in their wake.

By the end of the 19th Century, Van Horn had become a full-fledged town with an increasing population of travelers passing through the community, partaking of the meals and overnight accommodations offered by the Clark Hotel and, later, the Hotel El Capitan. Today, visitors continue to stop over on their way to parts west or east. But now the interstate overlays the wagon trail, parking spaces have replaced hitching posts, and historic buildings provide spaces for specialty shops or, in the Clark's case, a museum. The El Capitan, restored to its original elegance, continues to offer comfortable rooms while local restaurants, including the Van Horn Cattle Company, Tortilleria Lizy, and Chuy's Mexican Restaurant, have replaced rowdy Old West predecessors like the Bank Saloon.

Van Horn's rise to permanence was not easy. The constant threat of Mescalero Apaches and the unpredictable

PHOTOS: © E. Dan Klepper

THE CLARK HOTEL MUSEUM, located at 112 W. Broadway in Van Horn, opens Mon-Fri 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission is free. Call **432/283-8028**; **www.clarkhotelmuseum.squarespace.com.**

nature of the surrounding frontier challenged preliminary efforts to establish a settlement, first prompted by the discovery of a water supply known as the Van Horn Wells. During its formative years, a handful of settlers made lasting contributions to Van Horn, including A.A. "Gus" Cox, whose son John E. Cox built the Clark Hotel. Also included is rancher A.S. Goynes, whose role in Van Horn lore represents the irony inherent in frontier history. After suggesting the community adopt the motto "This Town Is So Healthy We Had To Shoot a Man To Start a Cemetery," Goynes obliged, dying from a gunshot wound he suffered during an argument with his brother-in-law. Allegedly, Goynes was the first to be buried in the local cemetery. In return, Goynes' motto was memorialized on a painted sign, later hung in the Bank Saloon. A replica hangs in the Clark Hotel Museum today.

While Goynes exemplified the idiosyncrasy of Van Horn history, John E. Cox made his contributions in stone. One of his first buildings, a two-story, six-bedroom home constructed for his family, underwent a dramatic transition in the hands of a later owner, then was partly destroyed by fire. Today, the building's odd, castle-like shell continues to be a popular sight with both locals and selfie-snapping visitors. Located across the street from the Culberson County Courthouse, the ruins are surrounded by a striking Victorian fence with star-topped pickets and ornamental gateposts.

Cox, in partnership with his brother, also built the Cox Building, which later became the Clark Hotel, now listed in the National Register of Historic Places

as Culberson County's oldest surviving structure. Built in 1901, the Cox Building first served as a small business complex. The property changed hands in 1903 but the Cox brothers regained ownership in 1905 and expanded the structure, building space for more offices, an opera house, the first county courthouse, a pool hall, a saloon, a watchmaker's shop, and a meeting room for the Woodmen of the World Lodge. In 1918, the building underwent its most dramatic transition when Fred Clark Sr. bought the property and turned the entire complex into a hotel.

In many ways, the Clark Hotel embodies the rambling spirit that created Van Horn. Hemmed by a dry, calloused geography of jagged mountain ranges like the Sierra Diablos, the Apaches, and the massive Guadalupes, Van Horn and the Clark Hotel offered respite along a considerable stretch of inhospitable land, a circumstance that remains as real today as it did 100 years ago.

As a museum, the Clark provides a different sort of sanctuary. Comprised of large, high-ceilinged spaces on the first floor and a warren of hallways and rooms on the second, the Clark houses a considerable archive of folklore and historical artifacts. Constructed of adobe and concrete blocks manufactured on site, the building's textured rectangles, made to look like rough stone, highlight door and window openings, indicating a division between additions and providing an idea of the staggered expansion that lasted for 28 years.

And like most frontier characters concealing a labyrinth of complexity behind a façade of good looks, the Clark has two faces. Today's front was yesterday's backside, modified to accommodate the arrival of the Bankhead Highway in the 1920s. One of the first transcontinental highways built in the country, the Bankhead bisected Van Horn on its way from Texarkana to El Paso, rerouting the town's main street, which is now called Broadway Street, and still serves as Van Horn's main drag. A stylistic distinction can be seen between the building's original façade facing the railroad tracks, composed of a dozen bays with plenty of storefront windows and a wooden balcony, and its "new" front, an interpretation of 1920s modernism—clean lines, hard edges, and few frills.

Inside, however, the past and present collide in a cabinet of curiosities, as if

the building had actually spun around in its Bankhead Highway realignment and tumbled a century of oddities into a half-dozen rooms. The collection represents decades of donations from area families as well as artifacts considered preservation-worthy by the town and county. The main room is dominated by an elaborate mahogany bar, a feature of the former Bank Saloon and imported from France in 1876. An afternoon of poking around adjacent rooms reveals mining implements, blacksmith tools, Native American artifacts, a horse-drawn buggy, cowboy trappings, and early chuck-wagon appliances. Upstairs, a series of rooms are outfitted to replicate frontier hotel rooms in the early 20th Century. The furnishings mix with pioneer jetsam like bonnets, bedclothes,

VAN HORN

For Van Horn visitor information, including lodging, restaurants, and activities, call the Van Horn Convention Center, **432/283-2682**; **www.vanhorntexas.us.**

PHOTO: © E. Dan Klepper

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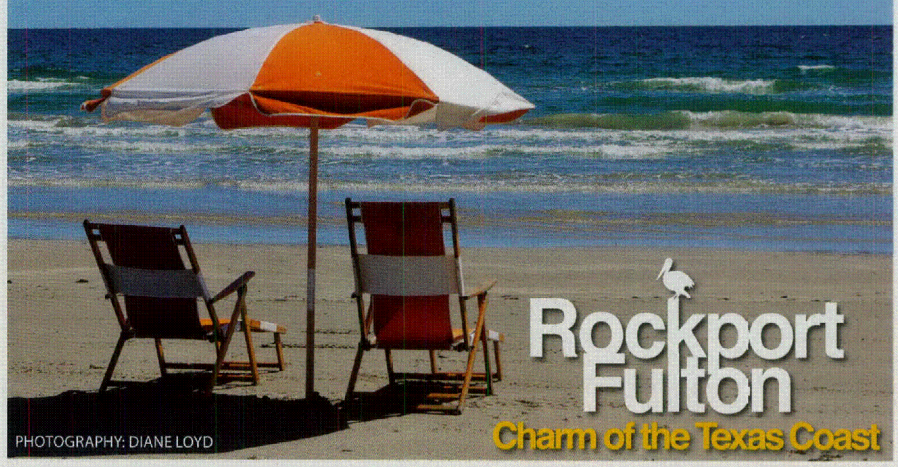


buttons, and surprises like a braid of hair clipped from the head of someone's ancestor.

Outside, the surrounding town proves to be an equally compelling assemblage of history and rescued flotsam. Within a block of the Clark Hotel Museum on Broadway Street, Hotel El Capitan, designed and completed in 1930 by noted Southwest architect Henry Trost, adds a spark of retro cool to the surrounding Main Street. In 2007, Lanna and Joe Duncan of Fort Davis bought the El Capitan building, which at the time housed a bank, and restored it as a hotel, including the Gopher Hole restaurant and bar. The old Bankhead Highway route also abounds with flea markets, disgorging bargains and household remnants, as well as whimsical sculptures of giant insects, bottle trees, and dinosaurs by the late Big Bend artist Gerald Scott, who scavenged and then reimagined a junkyard of scrap.

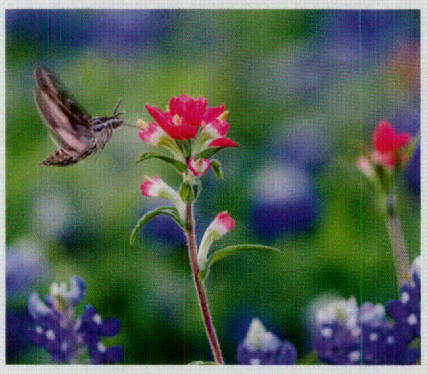
Van Horn and the Clark Hotel offered respite along a considerable stretch of inhospitable land, a circumstance that remains as real today as it did 100 years ago.

Van Horn feels like a place for new beginnings as well as an opportunity to leave everything behind, a duality that has played out repeatedly here for over a century. "Are there ghosts?" a visitor asked while exploring the Clark Hotel Museum hallways. Likely there are, in the Clark and elsewhere across this enduring frontier town. The museum is a probable haunt, complete with dusky shadows and the sound of wind whistling between the bead board and the tongue-and-groove planking. But few spirits seem to stick around, eventually electing, like weekend visitors traveling through, to continue on down the road. ★

EVENTS

WANT MORE? GO TO THE EVENTS CALENDAR AT www.texashighways.com.

May's travel spotlights:



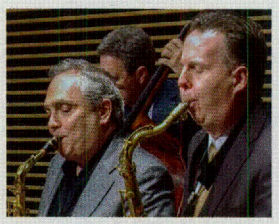
HILL COUNTRY > *Austin*

Wild Thing

Wildflower Days are upon us! Along with springtime's burst of blooms across the state, the season heralds the annual Wildflower Days celebration at the University of Texas at Austin Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center (through May 31). *Texas Highways* is proud to participate with a fetching exhibit of wildflower photography. This year's show, *Wild Thing*, runs April 30-May 30 at the center's McDermott Learning Center and features images from *Texas Highways*' April wildflower issue and expert shutterbug contributors Theresa DiMenno, Rob Greebon, and Joe Lowery. www.wildflower.org.

BIG BEND COUNTRY > *Odessa*

Jazz Party!



Since 1966, premiere jazz players from across the nation have made an annual pilgrimage to Odessa for the West Texas Jazz Party—a series of performances focused on traditional jazz and swing music. May 20-22, the West Texas Jazz Society hosts the 50th edition of the party at the MCM Eleganté Hotel. The event includes four-hour performances on Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday afternoon—broken into ensemble sets—as well as a Thursday swing dance and a Saturday brunch show. Twenty-three musicians are scheduled to attend, among them pianist Johnny Varro, cornetist Ed Polcer, and clarinetist Ken Peplowski. www.wtjs.org.

HILL COUNTRY > *Bandera*

Funtier Days

Summer doesn't officially start until late June, but Memorial Day weekend sure feels like the season's debut as events across the state celebrate the three-day weekend and pay tribute to our nation's war dead. In the cowboy country of Bandera, Funtier Days (May 28-29) features a Memorial Day parade with 90 entries, including veterans groups, and a bustling arts-and-crafts fair on the courthouse lawn. Local restaurants and bars hop with live music, and at 7:30 p.m. May 27-29, the Bandera ProRodeo Association hosts its annual PRCA Memorial Day Rodeo at Mansfield Park Arena, a classic outdoor venue. www.banderatex.com; www.banderaprorodeo.org.

PINEY WOODS > *Jefferson*

Jefferson Train Days

Jefferson may be best known for its rich history as a 19th-Century steamboat river port, but the region's railroad heritage takes center stage May 14-15 at Jefferson Train Days. The weekend includes a model train show with operating demos, clinics, vendors, and a play area for kids; guided tours of railroad tycoon Jay Gould's private 1888 rail car, complete with plush couches, ice boxes, and a bathtub; rides and gunfighter reenactments on the Historic Jefferson Railway steam train; and the Jefferson Historical Museum's expansive model of the Texas & Pacific Railway's West Texas system circa 1950. www.jeffersontraindays.com.

PHOTOS: *(from top)* © Sean Fitzgerald; © David Leonnig; © Larry Haddad; courtesy Excelsior House Hotel.

BIG BEND COUNTRY

ALPINE: 30th Annual Trappings of Texas April 14-May 15. Museum of the Big Bend at Sul Ross State University. www.museumofthebigbend.com 432/837-8143

EL PASO: Alfresco Fridays May 6, 13, 20, 27. Convention Center Plaza. www.elpasolive.com 915/534-0600

EL PASO: *Celtic Woman* May 13. Plaza Theatre. www.elpasolive.com 915/534-0600

EL PASO: Neon Desert Music Festival May 27-29. Downtown. www.neondesertmusicfestival.com 915/534-0600

MIDLAND: Celebration of the Arts May 6-8. The Horseshoe. www.acmidland.org 432/687-1149

MONAHANS: Monahans Chamber Golf Tournament May 21-22. Ward County Golf Course. www.monahans.org 432/943-2187

ODESSA: Midland-Odessa Symphony Orchestra Concert May 7. Wagner Noel Performing Art Center. www.moscorg 432/563-0921

PECOS: PMGA Memorial Golf Tournament May 28-29. Reeves County Golf Course. 432/447-2858

VAN HORN: Cinco De Mayo May 7. Van Horn City Park. www.vanhorntexas.us 432/283-2682

GULF COAST

BROWNSVILLE: Living History May 7. Palo Alto Battlefield NHP. www.nps.gov/paal/index.htm 956/541-2785 x333

BROWNSVILLE: USA Heroes Tribute Night Trail Run 25K/10K/5K/1 Mile May 28. Resaca de la Palma State Park. www.usaheroesrun.com

CLUTE: Texas Gulf Coast Arts Festival May 13-15. The Center for the Arts and Sciences. www.bcfas.org 979/265-7661

CORPUS CHRISTI: *Nature's Brush Strokes* Juried Art Exhibition April 2-August 9. South Texas Botanical Gardens and Nature Center. www.stxbot.org 361/852-2100

CORPUS CHRISTI: South Texas Botanical Gardens Orchid Show May 7-8. www.stxbot.org 361/852-2100

CORPUS CHRISTI: Shorebird Identification Short Course May 14. South Texas Botanical Gardens and Nature Center. www.stxbot.org 361/852-2100

CORPUS CHRISTI: A La Mano May 27. North Bayfront Park. 361/561-2000 ext. 201

CRYSTAL BEACH: Texas Crab Festival May 6-8. Gregory Park. www.texascrabfestival.org 281/923-1440

FRIENDSWOOD: *Spring Into Song* May 9. Friendswood United Methodist Church. www.bayareachorus.org

GALVESTON: Galveston Historic Homes Tour May 1, 6-8. www.galvestonhistory.org 409/765-7834

GALVESTON: Galveston Symphony Orchestra Concert May 1. The Grand 1894 Opera House. www.thegrand.com 800/821-1894

GALVESTON: Paul Anka May 8. Grand 1894 Opera House. www.thegrand.com 409/765-1894

GALVESTON: *Mamma Mia* May 13-14. Grand 1894 Opera House. www.thegrand.com 409/765-1894

GALVESTON: Yaga's Wild Game and Barbecue Cook-off May 13-14. Pier 21. www.ycfund.org

GALVESTON: Galveston Island Beach Revue May 20-21. Beach Central. www.beachrevue.com 806/236-0715

HOUSTON: *The Secret of the Hanging Egg: Salvador Dali* Through June 19. The Menil Collection. www.menil.org

HOUSTON: *La Virgen de Guadalupe: Empress of the Americas* Through September 5. Houston Museum of Natural Science. www.hmns.org

HOUSTON: *Deco Nights: Evenings in the Jazz Age* Through June 5. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. www.mfah.org

HOUSTON: *Honoring Olivewood* Through May 29. National Museum of Funeral History. www.nmfh.org 281/876-3063

HOUSTON: *Mixed and Mastered: Turntable Kitsch* Through May 8. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft. www.crafthouston.org 713/529-4848

HOUSTON: *Taking Flight: The Butterfly Project* Through July 31. Holocaust Museum Houston. www.hmh.org 713/942-8000

HOUSTON: *William N. Copley Retrospective* Through July 24. The Menil Collection. www.menil.org

HOUSTON: *Sculpted in Steel: Art Deco Automobiles and Motorcycles, 1929–1940* Through May 30. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. www.mfah.org

HOUSTON: *Profile of a Houston Oil Family: Photographs from the Staiti/ Reisner Family Collection* Through July 2. The Heritage Society. 713/655-1912

HOUSTON: *Miss Teen* April 6-May 1. Stages Repertory Theatre. www.stagestheatre.com 713/527-0123

HOUSTON: *High Society: The Portraits of Franz X. Winterhalter* April 17-August 14. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. www.mfah.org

HOUSTON: *The Christians* April 22-May 15. www.alleytheatre.org

HOUSTON: *I and You* April 27-May 22. Stages Repertory Theatre. www.stagestheatre.com 713/527-0123

HOUSTON: Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* April 27-May 1. The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. www.broadwayat thehobbycenter.com 713/622-7469

HOUSTON: *Heathers* April 28-May 8. Hobby Center. www.tuts.com/shows/ heathers

HOUSTON: Houston Symphony Concert April 28-May 1. Jones Hall. www.houstonsymphony.org

HOUSTON: Bayou City Art Festival Memorial Park April 29-May 1. Memorial Park. www.artcolony association.org 281/571-3102

HOUSTON: *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* May 3-15. Sarofim Hall at The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. www.tuts.com 713/558-8887

HOUSTON: *Star Trek: The Ultimate Voyage* May 5. Jones Hall. www.spahouston.org

HOUSTON: Houston Symphony Concert May 6-8. Jones Hall. www.houstonsymphony.org

HOUSTON: Houston Dragon Boat Festival May 7. Allen's Landing on Buffalo Bayou. www.texasdragonboat.com 713/524-3567

HOUSTON: Carnival Houston Show and Parade May 16. Various locations. www.carnivalhouston.com 832/614-9337

HOUSTON: *Big Fish* May 18-June 26. Stages Repertory Theatre. www.stagestheatre.com 713/527-0123

HOUSTON: *The Nether* May 19-June 12. www.alleytheatre.org

HOUSTON: Houston Symphony Concert May 19-21. Jones Hall. www.houstonsymphony.org

HOUSTON: Houston Barbecue Festival May 22. NRG Park. www.houbbq.com 832/454-6106

HOUSTON: *Jitney* May 23. Ensemble Theatre. www.ensemblehouston.com

HOUSTON: Houston Ballet's Spring Repertory May 26-June 5. Wortham Theater Center. www.houstonballet.org

HOUSTON: Houston Symphony: *The Cosmos—An HD Odyssey* May 27-29. Jones Hall. www.houston symphony.org

HOUSTON: *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* May 31-June 5. The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. www.broadwayat thehobbycenter.com 713/622-7469

ORANGE: DSRA Boat Races May 21-22. City of Orange Boat Ramp. www.orangetexas.org 409/883-1010

PASADENA: Pasadena Strawberry Festival May 20-22. Pasadena Fairgrounds. www.strawberryfest.org 281/991-9500

PORT ARANSAS: Texas SandFest April 29-May 1. Mustang Island Beach, between beach markers 9-14. www.texassandfest.com 361/758-9800

PORT ARANSAS: Art Festival and Songwriter's Showcase May 13-15. Robert's Point Park. www. portaransasartcenter.org 361/749-7334

PORT NECHES: RiverFest: Thunder on the Neches April 27-May 1. Port Neches Park. www.portnecheschamber. com 409/722-9154

ROCKPORT: Babes on Bay Fishing Tournament May 13-14. Rockport Festival Grounds. www.babesonthebay.com

ROCKPORT: Festival of Wine and Food May 28-29. Texas Maritime Museum. www.texasmaritime museum.org

SAN BENITO: Third Thursday Conjunto Nites at the Chicho May 19. Narciso Martinez Cultural Arts Center. 956/244-0373

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: Splash South Padre April 28-May 1. Various venues. www.sopadre.com 956/761-3000

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: Run the Jailbreak May 7. www.sopadre.com 956/761-3000

SPRING: Texas Crawfish and Music Festival April 29-May 1, 6-8. Old Town Spring. www.texascrawfish festival.com 281/353-9310

SUGAR LAND: *Amazing Butterflies* Through May 15. The Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land. www.hmns.org 281/313-2277

SUGAR LAND: Giving Spirits Concert May 6. 2711 Plaza Drive. www. sugarlandtownsquare.com 281/276-6000

SUGAR LAND: Sugar Land Bash May 14. Sugar Land Town Square. www.sugar landtownsquare.com 281/276-6000

SUGAR LAND: Southland Conference Tournament May 24-28. Constellation Field. www.SugarLand Skeeters.com 281/240-4487

SUGAR LAND: Memorial Day Ceremony May 30. Sugar Land Memorial Park. www.sugarlandtx.gov 281/275-2825

TOMBALL: Rails and Tails Mudbug Festival April 30-May 1. Historic Downtown Depot. www.tomballtx.gov 281/351-5484

TOMBALL: Vintage Car Festival May 7. First Presbyterian Church. www.fpctomball.org 281/351-2199

VICTORIA: Cinco de Mayo Celebration May 7. Downtown. www.victoriafiesta.com 361/573-5227

VICTORIA: Swim, Bike, Run with HONOR361 Triathlon May 8. Saxet Lake Park. www. swimbikerunofvictoria.com 361/485-0771

VICTORIA: Memorial Weekend Bash May 27-29. Riverside Park Special Events Area. www.salazarpromotions.com 361/237-0351

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Reader Service Guide to Advertisers

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    - The Galvestonian
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    - Mitchell Historic Properties
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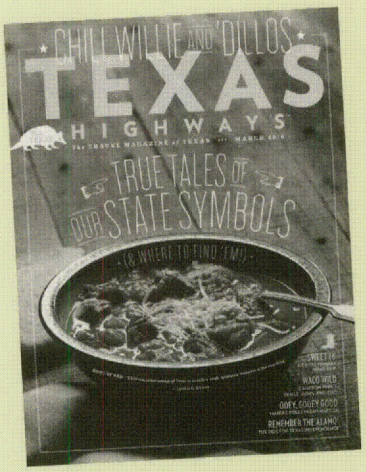

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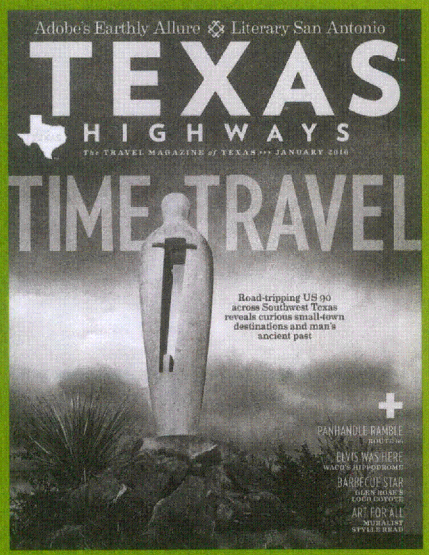

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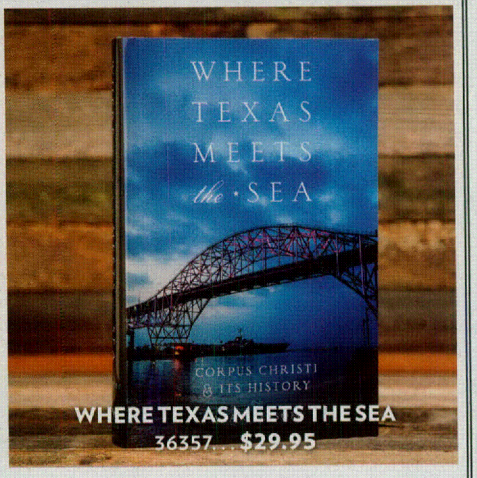

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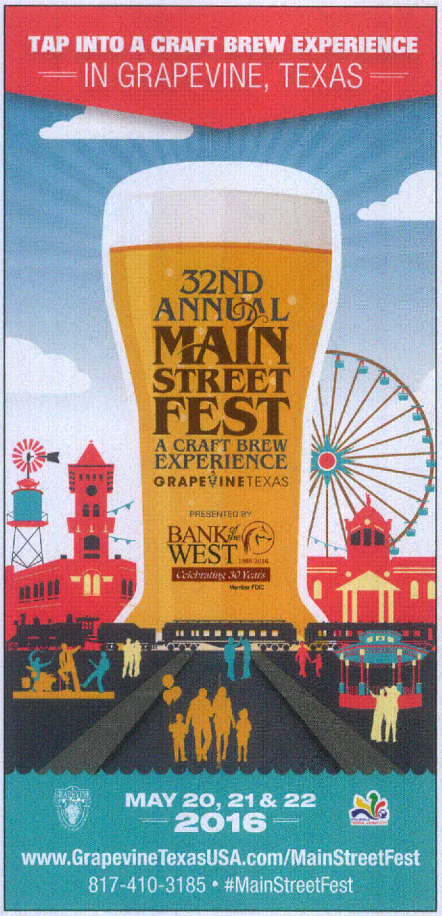

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WHARTON: Wharton County Freedom Fest May 21. Downtown. www.whartonchamber.com 979/532-1862

HILL COUNTRY

AUSTIN: *Shakespeare in Print and Performance* Through May 29. Harry Ransom Center. www.hrc.utexas.edu 512/471-8949

AUSTIN: *Texas Czechs: Rooted in Tradition* Through June 9. State Capitol Visitors Center. www.polkaworks.org 512/799-6842

AUSTIN: *Look Inside: New Photography Acquisitions* Through May 29. Harry Ransom Center. www.hrc.utexas.edu

AUSTIN: *Come As You Are: Art of the 1990s* Through May 15. Blanton Museum of Art. www.blantonmuseum.org

AUSTIN: *Our Global Kitchen* Through July 24. Bullock Museum. www.TheStoryofTexas.com

AUSTIN: *Obra Grafica: Selections from the Mexic-Arte Museum Print Collection* Through May 29. Mexic-Arte Museum. www.mexic-artemuseum.org 512/200-7278

AUSTIN: *Wish You Were Here: Postcards from the Texas State Archives* April 4-September 16. Lorenzo de Zavala State Library and Archives Building. www.tsl.texas.gov 512/463-5455

AUSTIN: *Journey Into Big Bend* April 22-September 18. Bullock Museum. www.thestoryoftexas.com

AUSTIN: *Fixing Shadows: Contemporary Peruvian Photography, 1968–2015* April 23-July 3. Blanton Museum of Art. www.blantonmuseum.org 512/471-7324

AUSTIN: *Motown the Musical* April 26-May 1. Bass Concert Hall. www.BroadwayInAustin.com 800/731-7469

AUSTIN: Art City Austin April 29-May 1. Palmer Events Center. www.artallianceaustin.org

AUSTIN: Levitation Fest April 29-May 1. Carson Creek Ranch. www.levitation-austin.com

AUSTIN: Citywide Garage Sale April 30-May 1. Palmer Events Center. www.cwgs.com 512/441-2828

AUSTIN: Lone Star Rattlesnake Days April 30-May 1. Travis County Exposition Center. www.lonestarrattlesnakedays.org 512/837-6253

AUSTIN: Jeff Dunham's *Perfectly Unbalanced* Tour May 5. Frank Erwin Center. www.uterwincenter.com 512/471-7744

AUSTIN: *Cinderella* May 6-8. The Long Center for the Performing Arts. www.balletaustin.org 512/476-2163

AUSTIN: Mother's Day at the Capitol May 8. South Steps of the State Capitol. www.austinsymphonicband.org

AUSTIN: Pentatonix World Tour 2016 May 8. Frank Erwin Center. www.uterwincenter.com 936/215-9484

AUSTIN: National Wildflower Week May 9-15. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. www.wildflower.org 512/232-0100

AUSTIN: The Cure Tour 2016 May 13. Frank Erwin Center. www.uterwincenter.com 936/215-9484

AUSTIN: The Ferrari Challenge May 13-15. Circuit of the Americas. www.circuitoftheamericas.com

AUSTIN: Journey and The Doobie Brothers May 18. Circuit of the Americas. www.circuitoftheamericas.com

AUSTIN: *Clybourne Park* May 26-June 2. Long Center of the Performing Arts. www.penfoldtheatre.org 512/850-4849

AUSTIN: Janet Jackson in Concert May 26. Frank Erwin Center. www.uterwincenter.com 512/471-7744

BANDERA: Cowboy Capital Opry May 3. Silver Sage. www.silversagecorral.org 830/796-4969

BANDERA: Bandera ProRodeo May 27-29. Mansfield Park. www.banderaprorodeo.org 830/522-0054

BOERNE: *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* May 7. Boerne Community Theatre. www.visitboerne.org 830/249-9166

BOERNE: Hauptstrasse Quiltfest May 7. Main Plaza and Downtown Boerne. www.visitboerne.org 830/249-9511

BOERNE: Art Waddle Neighborhood Art Walk May 14. www.visitboerne.org

BOERNE: Boerne Market Days May 14-15. Main Plaza. www.visitboerne.org 210/844-8193

BOERNE: Second Saturday Art and Wine May 14. Galleries in Boerne. www.visitboerne.org

BOERNE: Axiom String Quartet in Concert May 28. Cave Without A Name. www.cavewithoutaname.com 830/537-4212

COMFORT: Comfort Village Spring Antiques Show April 30-May 1. Comfort Park. www.texasantiqueshows.com 830/329-2870

FREDERICKSBURG: Hill Country Film Festival April 28-May 1. Fritztown Cinema. www.hillcountryff.com 512/838-6828

FREDERICKSBURG: Wings Over the Hills Nature Festival April 29-May 1. Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park. www.wingstx.org 830/990-9823

FREDERICKSBURG: Maifest German Chorale Concert May 1. St. Joseph's Halle. 830/456-1713

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

FREDERICKSBURG: Texas Flower Country Women's 5K and 10K Run May 7. Wildseed Farms. www.runintexas.com/flower 830/990-8441

FREDERICKSBURG: Conspirare Chorale Concert May 11. St. Mary's Church. www.conspirare.org 830/997-9554

FREDERICKSBURG: Founders Day Celebration May 14. Pioneer Museum. www.pioneermuseum.net

FREDERICKSBURG: Fredericksburg Trade Days May 20-22. Trade Days at Sunday Farms. www.fbgtradedays.com 210/846-4094

FREDERICKSBURG: Fredericksburg Crawfish Festival May 27-29. Marktplatz. www.fbgcrawfish.com 830/433-5225

FREDERICKSBURG: USO-Style Memorial Day Hangar Dance May 28. Hangar Hotel Pacific Showroom. www.hangarhotel.com 844/596-2300

FREDERICKSBURG: Memorial Day Observance May 30. National Museum of the Pacific War. www.pacificwarmuseum.org 830/997-8600

GEORGETOWN: Market Days on the Square May 14. www.VisitGeorgetown.com 512/868-8675

GRUENE: KNTB Americana Music Jam May 22. Gruene Hall. www.gruenehall.com 830/629-5077

GRUENE: Gospel Brunch with a Texas Twist May 8. Gruene Hall. www.gruenehall.com 830/629-5077

GRUENE: Come and Taste It May 19. Grapevine Texas Wine Bar. www.grapevineingruene.com 830/606-0093

GRUENE: Old Gruene Market Days May 21-22. Gruene Historic District. www.gruenemarketdays.com 830/832-1721

JOHNSON CITY: Last Saturday Art Walk May 28. www.texcetera.net 830/868-2419

JUNCTION: Golf Tournament May-8. www.junctiontexas.com 325/446-2968

KERRVILLE: Kerr Arts and Cultural Center May Gallery Exhibits April 28-May 22. www.kacckerrville.com 830/895-2911

KERRVILLE: First Friday Wine Share May 6. www.storkcountry.com 830/200-1483

KERRVILLE: Hill Country Swap Meet May 7. Kerr County Hill Country Youth Event Center. www.kerrmarketdays.org 830/459-6198

KERRVILLE: Kerrville Folk Festival May 26-June 12. Quiet Valley Ranch. www.kerrville-music.com 830/257-3600

KERRVILLE: *Southwest Gourd Fine Art Show* May 26-June 26. Kerr Arts and Cultural Center. www.kacckerrville.com 830/895-2911

KERRVILLE: *Texas Masters of Fine Art and Craft Exhibition* May 27-29. YO Ranch Resort Hotel. www.texasmasters.com 214/328.6382

KERRVILLE: Kerr County Market Days May 28-29. Kerr County Courthouse. www.kerrmarketdays.org 830/895-7524

LAMPASAS: Riata Roundup Festival May 13-14. 580 Sports Complex. www.lampasaschamber.org 512/556-5172

LEAKEY: Fire on the Frio BBQ Cook-off May 13-14. www.FrioCanyonChamber.com 830/279-4960

LEANDER: Old Town Street Festival May 21. www.oldtownstreetfestival.com 512/259-1907

LUCKENBACH: Hill Country Run Motorcycle Rally May 6-8. www.hillcountryrun.com 830/997-8515

MARBLE FALLS: *Howdy Roo* CASI Regional Chili Cook-Off, Lonestar Barbecue State Championship and Backbone Creek Chili Cook-Off May 7-8. Johnson Park. www.marblefalls.org

NEW BRAUNFELS: *Lindheimer's Texas* Through May 1. The Sophienburg Museum and Archives. 830/629-1572

NEW BRAUNFELS: Wein and Saengerfest May 7. Downtown. www.weinandsaengerfest.com 830/625-2385

NEW BRAUNFELS: *The Music of the Carpenters* May 14. Brauntex Theatre. www.brauntex.org 830/627-0808

OZONA: Fort Lancaster Western Frontier Days May 20-21. Fort Lancaster State Historic Site. www.visitfortlancaster.com 432/836-4391

PFLUGERVILLE: Deutschen Pfest May 20-22. Pfluger Park. www.pflugervilletx.gov

SAN MARCOS: *Rodrigo Moya: Photography and Conscience / Fotografía y conciencia* Through July 3. The Wittliff Collections. www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu 512/245-2907

SAN MARCOS: *Animals Among Us: Photographs from the Permanent Collection* Through May 13. The Wittliff Collections. www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu 512/245-2907

SAN MARCOS: *Places in the Heart: Texas Cinescapes* Through July 3. The Wittliff Collections. www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu 512/245-2907

SONORA: Cinco De Mayo May 7. Sutton County Park. www.sonoratexas.org 888/387-2880

SPICEWOOD: *A Toast to Tony* May 6. Spicewood Vineyard Event Center. www.spicewoodarts.org

STONEWALL: Lavender Festival at Becker Vineyards April 30-May 1. www.beckervineyards.com 830/644-2681

STONEWALL: *The Fandangle Sampler* at the LBJ Ranch May 7. LBJ National Historical Park. www.friendsoflbjnationalpark.org 830/868-7128

UVALDE: Four Square Friday May 13. Downtown. www.visituvalde.com 830/278-4115

UVALDE: Fishing Derby May 28. Uvalde National Fish Hatchery. www.fws.gov/fisheries/uvalde 830/278-2419

WIMBERLEY: *Good People* April 15-May 8. Wimberley Playhouse. www.wimberleyplayers.org 512/847-0575

WIMBERLEY: Wimberley Lions Market Days May 7. Oudoor Trading Market. www.shopmarketdays.com 512/847-2201

WIMBERLEY: Garden Tour May 14. Various locations. www.wimberleygardenclub.org 512/940-2577

WIMBERLEY: Second Saturday Gallery Trail May 14. Wimberley Square. www.facebook.com/SecondSaturdayGalleryTrail 713/732-1543

WIMBERLEY: Concerts at Susanna's Kitchen May 19. Susanna's Kitchen. www.wimberleyumc.org 512/722-3316

PANHANDLE PLAINS

ABILENE: Abilene Philharmonic Orchestra Concert May 7. Abilene Civic Center. 325/677-6710

ABILENE: Western Heritage Classic May 12-15. Taylor County Expo Center. www.westernheritageclassic.com 325/677-4376

ABILENE: ArtWalk May 12. Downtown. 325/677-8389

ALBANY: *Robert Langham: Blackfork Bestiary Exhibition* Through May 14. Old Jail Art Center. www.theojac.org 325/762-2269

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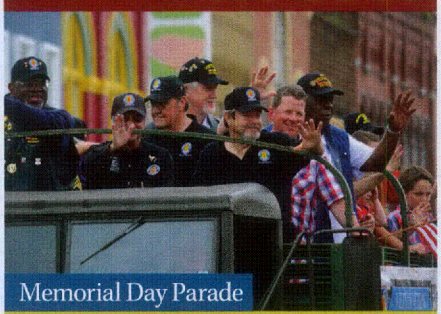

Memorial Day Parade

- MAY 7 – BARK & PAWS – DOWNTOWN
- MAY 12-14 – TEXAS STATE H.O.G. RALLY HILTON GARDEN INN / EVENTS CENTER
- MAY 30 – MEMORIAL DAY PARADE & TASTE OF TEXOMA – DOWNTOWN
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ALBANY: Lonesome Dove: Highlights from the Wittliff Collections April 30-July 23. The Old Jail Art Center. www.theoldjailartcenter.org 325/762-2269

AMARILLO: *The Bold and Beautiful; Trailblazing Women of the American Quarter Horse* Through July 30. American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame & Museum. www.aqha.com 806/378-4718

AMARILLO: First Friday Art Walk May 6. The Galleries at Sunset Center. www.amarilloartists.com 806/353-5700

AMARILLO: Muttfest May 15. Memorial Park. www.amarillospca.net 806/622-0555

ANDREWS: Wild, Wild West Fest April 28-May 1. ACE Arena. www.andrewstx.com 432/523-2695

BAIRD: Baird Railhead Festival May 21. Downtown. www.bairdchamber.com 325/854-1212 ext. 4

BIG SPRING: Cinco de Mayo May 6-7. St. Thomas Hall. www.facebook.com/northsidem 432/264-6111

BRECKENRIDGE: Stephens County Frontier Days May 6-7. www.breckenridgetexas.com 254/559-2301

BUFFALO GAP: Chautauqua Learning Series May 14. Buffalo Gap Historic Village. 325/572-3365

CANYON: *Jose Arpa, A Spanish Painter in Texas* April 9-September 5. Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum. www.panhandleplains.org

CROSS PLAINS: Trade Days in Cross Plains May 21. The Yard. 254/270-0568

MINERAL WELLS: CSWM Swing Fest May 6-7. Holiday Hills Country Club. 817/588-7580

MINERAL WELLS: PRCA/WRPA Pro Rodeo May 11-14. Mineral Wells Rodeo Grounds. 940/325-2557

MINERAL WELLS: Celebrate Art Festival May 21. Historic Post Office Building. 940/325-2557

SAN ANGELO: Richard and Pam Salmon Sculpture Competition Through August 7. Sunken Garden Park. www.samfa.org 325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: San Angelo National Ceramic Competition April 15-June 26. San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. www.samfa.org 325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: National Train Day Celebration May 7. Railway Museum of San Angelo. www.visitsanangelo.org 325/655-4136

SAN ANGELO: First Saturday May 12. Old Chicken Farm Art Center. www.visitsanangelo.org 325/655-4136

SAN ANGELO: Family Day: Summer! May 14. San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. www.samfa.org 325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: Downtown Art Walk May 19. Various locations. www.samfa.org 325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: Cactus Market Days May 21. Cactus Hotel Parking Lot. 325/949-6200

SAN ANGELO: Memorial Day Exercises May 30. Fort Concho National Historic Landmark. www.fortconcho.com 325/234-0316

VERNON: Battle on the Red Cattledog Trials May 7. Wilbarger County Events Center. www.southwestcattledogassoc.com 940/552-5474

VERNON: Doan's May Picnic May 7. About 13 miles north via US 283. www.vernontx.gov 940/552-2581

VERNON: Santa Rosa Roundup Rodeo May 18-21. Santa Rosa Rodeo Grounds. www.santarosaroundup.com 940/552-2581

WICHITA FALLS: *A Streetcar Named Desire* May 6-21. Backdoor Theatre. www.backdoortheatre.org 940/322-5000

WICHITA FALLS: Tornado Alley Craft Beer Tasting May 7. J.S. Bridwell Ag Center. www.tornadoalley brewfest.org 940/782-2624

WICHITA FALLS: Homesteader's Fair and Ranch Rodeo May 20-21. J.S. Bridwell Ag Center. 940/716-9300

WICHITA FALLS: Pro Wrestling Hall of Fame Induction May 20-21. Ray Clymer Exhibit Hall (MPEC). www.wfmpec.com 800/799-6732

PINEY WOODS

GLADEWATER: Apron Strings May 14. Antique District. www.gladewaterchamber.org 903/845-5501

HUNTSVILLE: General Sam Houston Folk Festival May 13-15. Sam Houston Memorial Museum. www.samhoustonfolkfestival.blogspot.com 936/294-1832

JEFFERSON: Jefferson Historical Pilgrimage April 28-May 1. Various venues. www.jefferson-texas.com/events 903/665-3733

JEFFERSON: Jefferson Flea Market May 6-7, 20-21. www.jeffersonfleamarket.net 903/431-0043

JEFFERSON: Friday the 13th Ghost Train May 13. Historic Jefferson Railway. www.JeffersonRailway.com 866/398-2038

LIBERTY: Liberty Opry May 7, 14, 21. Liberty Opry. www.libertyopry.com 936/336-5830

LUFKIN: *A Spring Double Bill—Lufkin Community Band and the East Texas Wind Symphony* May 1. Temple Theater. www.angelina.edu/fine-arts-events 936/633-5233

MAGNOLIA: Corks and Canvas on The Stroll May 14. The Stroll in Downtown Magnolia. www.cityofmagnolia.com 713/806-4401

MARSHALL: *Resonance and Memory: The Essence of Landscape* Exhibit Through May 28. Michelson Museum of Art. www.michelsonmuseumofart.org 903/935-9480

MARSHALL: Second Saturday May 14. www.visitmarshalltexas.org 903/702-7777

PALESTINE: Railfan Photographer's Special April 30-May 1. Texas State Railroad Palestine Depot. www.texasstaterr.com 877/726-7245

THE WOODLANDS: The 1975 in Concert May 7. Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion. www.woodlandscenter.org

THE WOODLANDS: Journey in Concert with the Doobie Brothers and Dave Mason May 21. Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion. www.woodlandscenter.org

TYLER: *Chihuly: Works from Texas Collections* Through May 15. Tyler Museum of Art. www.tylermuseum.org 903/595-1001

TYLER: Red Dirt Barbecue and Music Fesival May 14. www.reddirtbbqfest.com 903/581-0606

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

ADDISON: Taste Addison May 13-15. Addison Circle Park. www.tasteaddisontexas.com 800/ADD-ISON

ARLINGTON: Texas Scottish Festival and Highland Games May 13-15. Maverick Stadium at UT Arlington. www.texasscottishfestival.com

ARLINGTON: Vivian Maier Exhibit May 21-August 21. Arlington Museum of Art. www.arlingtonmuseum.org

BASTROP: World War II and Camp Swift Exhibit Opening May 28. www.BastropCounty Historical Society.com 512/303-0057

BELTON: *Grand Ole Opry-Classics* April 13-August 6. The Bell County Museum. www.bellcountymuseum.org 254/933-5243

BELTON: Discovery Day with Charley Chisholm May 21. The Bell County Museum. www.bellcountymuseum.org 254/933-5243

BONHAM: Bonham Heritage Day Festival May 7. Downtown Square. www.visitbonham.com 903/583-9830

BRENHAM: Maifest May 6-7. Fireman's Park. www.maifest.org 888/273-6426

BRIDGEPORT: Butterfield Stage Days Festival and PRCA Rodeo May 6-7. Harwood Park. www.bridgeportchamber.org 940/683-2076

BRYAN: Downtown Bryan Sip and Shop May 21. 979/822-4920

CANTON: Tailwind Regional Balloon Fest May 13-14. First Monday Grounds. www.balloonfestcanton.com 903/567-1849

CLEBURNE: *Heaven Can Wait* April 29-May 21. Plaza Theatre Company. www.plaza-theatre.com 817/202-0600

CLEBURNE: Powwow May 27-28. Chisholm Trail Outdoor Museum. www.jcchisholmtrail.com 817/648-4633

CLIFTON: Bosque Tour de Norway May 21. Clifton Chamber of Commerce. www.cliftontexas.org 254/675-3720

COLLEGE STATION: *You are Here: Texas Photographers Respond to the Texas Landscape* April 21-June 2. Wright Gallery at the College of Architecture at Texas A&M University. www.arch.tamu.edu

DALLAS: *Spirit and Matter: Masterpieces from the Keir Collection of Islamic Art* Through July 31. Dallas Museum of Art. www.DMA.org

DALLAS: *Anne Frank: A History for Today* Through May 31. Dallas Holocaust Museum/Center for Education and Tolerance. www.dallasholocaustmuseum.org 214/741-7500

DALLAS: *Vermeer Suite: Music in 17th-Century Dutch Painting* Through August 21. Dallas Museum of Art. www.dma.org

DALLAS: *Path to the Presidency* Through October 9. George W. Bush Presidential Center. www.georgewbushlibrary.smu.edu 214/346-1650

DALLAS: *The Harvest of Leisure* April 9-June 4. CYDONIA Gallery. 214/296-4848

DALLAS: *Eye of the Collector* April 15-September 5. Perot Museum of Nature and Science. www.perotmuseum.org

DALLAS: *Roald Dahl's The BFG (Big Friendly Giant)* April 29-May 22. Rosewood Center for Family Arts. www.dct.org

DALLAS: *Dave Isay: Purpose and Passion* May 3. Horchow Auditorium at the Dallas Museum of Art. www.dma.org 214/922-1200

DALLAS: *Historic Dallas through Photography* May 5-June 12. Saint Matthew's Cathedral Arts. www.cathedralartsdallas.org

DALLAS: *Kate Tempest: Musical Poet and Prophet* May 13. Dallas Museum of Art. www.dma.org 214/922-1200

DALLAS: *Amy Stewart: Crime-Fighting Sisters* May 17. Dallas Museum of Art. www.dma.org 214/922-1200

DALLAS: Special Exhibit: *A Time For Greatness: The 1960 Kennedy Campaign* May 21-November 13. The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza. www.jfk.org 214/747-6660

DALLAS: *Drew Daywalt: Colorful Characters* May 22. Dallas Museum of Art. www.dma.org 214/922-1200

DALLAS: *Dacher Keltner: Survival of the Kindest* May 31. Dallas City Performance Hall. www.dma.org 214/922-1200

DENTON: Denton Arts and Jazz Festival April 29-May 1. Quakertown Park. www.dentonjazzfest.com 940/565-0931

DENTON: Twilight Tunes May 5, 12, 19, 26. Denton Courthouse-on-the-Square lawn. www.dentonmainstreet.org 940/367-7321

DENTON: North Texas Horse Country Tour May 7. Historical Park of Denton County. www.discoverdenton.com 940/382-7895

DENTON: Cinco de Mayo May 14. Quakertown Park. www.dentoncinco.org 940/349-8272

DESOTO: Music in the Park Series May 19, 21, 26. DeSoto Amphitheater. www.ci.desoto.tx.us 972/274-2489

ELGIN: Flea Market Days May 7. Elgin Memorial Park. 512/285-4025

ELGIN: Community-wide Garage Sale May 7. Various locations. www.elgintx.com 512/285-3333

ELGIN: Sip, Shop and Stroll May 12. Downtown. www.elgintx.com 512/285-5721

ENNIS: 50th Annual National Polka Festival May 27-29. Various locations. www.nationalpolkafestival.com 972/878-4748

FAYETTEVILLE: Artwalk 2016 May 7-8. Downtown. www.artsforruraltexas.org 979/378-2113

FLATONIA: Memorial Day Service May 29. Flatonia American Legion Hall. 361/865-3920

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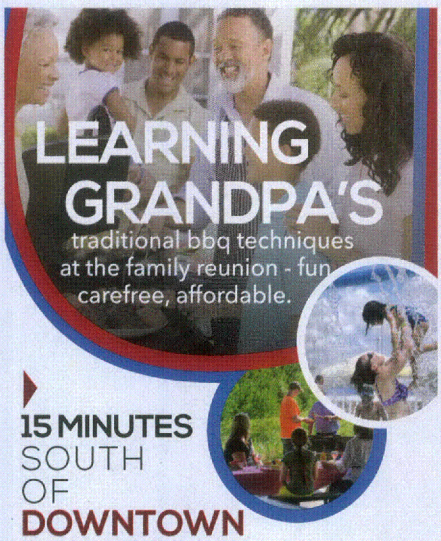

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FORT WORTH: *Pasture Cows Crossing Indian Creek* Through May 30. Amon Carter Museum of American Art. www.cartermuseum.org 817/738-1933

FORT WORTH: *Texas Folk Art* Through September 19. Amon Carter Museum of American Art. www.cartermuseum.org 817/738-1933

FORT WORTH: *American Epics: Thomas Hart Benton and Hollywood* Through May 1. Amon Carter Museum of American Art. www.cartermuseum.org

FORT WORTH: *The Entombment of Christ* Display Through June 12. Kimbell Art Museum. www.kimbellart.org

FORT WORTH: *Discarded: Photographs by Anthony Hernandez* Through August 7. Amon Carter Museum of American Art. www.cartermuseum.org

FORT WORTH: *Frank Stella: A Retrospective* April 17-September 18. Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. www.themodern.org 817/738-9215

FORT WORTH: Fort Worth Opera Festival April 23-May 8. www.fwopera.org 877/396-7372

FORT WORTH: Mayfest April 28-May 1. Trinity Park. www.mayfest.org 817/332-1055

FORT WORTH: *FOCUS: Thomas Demand* April 30-July 17. Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. www.themodern.org

FORT WORTH: Frontier Forts Day May 13-14. Stockyards Historic District. www.forworthstockyards.org 817/625-9715

FORT WORTH: *The Brothers Le Nain: Painters of Seventeenth-Century France* May 22-September 11. Kimbell Art Museum. www.kimbellart.org 817/332-8451

FORT WORTH: Crowne Plaza Invitational May 23-29. Colonial Country Club. www.crowneplaza invitational.com 817/927-4221

GAINESVILLE: *The Diary of Anne Frank* May 6-15. Butterfield Stage. www.butterfieldstage.org 940/665-8152

GAINESVILLE: The Spring Fling May 7. Leonard Park. www.gainesville.tx.us 940/668-4530

GARLAND: Guns and Hoses Golf Tournament May 2. Firewheel Golf Park–Old, Lakes and Bridges Courses. www.gunsandhoses northtx.org 972/880-8095

GARLAND: Urban Flea May 14. www.resurrected designs.com 469/298-0042

GARLAND: The Marketplace May 21. Downtown. www.themarket placedfw.com

GIDDINGS: Lee County Fair and Charcoal Challenge BBQ Cook Off May 19-21. Firemans Park. www.GiddingsTX.com 979/542-3455

GRANBURY: Cruisin' Granbury May 28-30. Historic Granbury Square. www.granburysquare.com 682/936-4550

GRAND PRAIRIE: Celtic Woman May 11. www.verizontheatre.com 972/854-5111

GRAPEVINE: Main Street Fest May 20-22. Downtown. www.GrapevineTexasUSA. com 817/410-3185

GREENVILLE: Audie Murphy Day May 14. Audie Murphy/American Cotton Museum and Fletcher Warren Civic Center. www.amacmuseum. com 903/450-4502

HALLETTSVILLE: Hallettsville Market Days May 21. Hallettsville KC Hall. www.hallettsville marketdays.com 361/772-0084

IRVING: AT&T Byron Nelson PGA Golf Tournament May 16-22. Four Seasons Resort and Club Dallas at Las Colinas. www.attbyronnelson.org 214/943-9700

JOSHUA: JACC Annual Golf Tournament May 9. Hidden Creek Golf Course. www.joshuachamber.org 817/556-2480

KERENS: Barbecue and Dancin' on the Bricks May 21. Main Street. www.ci.kerens.tx.us 903/396-2391

LEWISVILLE: Keeping Tradition Alive May 13. Old Town Lewisville. www.cityoflewisville.com 97/219-3400

MCKINNEY: *Sordid Lives* May 13-21. McKinney Performing Arts Center. www.McKinneyRep.org 214/544-4630

MCKINNEY: Old Red Lumberyard May 13-14. Flour Mill District. www.visitmckinney.com 214/544-1407

MCKINNEY: Second Saturday Bird Walk May 14. Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary. www.HeardMuseum.org 972/562-5566

MCKINNEY: Bike the Bricks May 27. Historic downtown. www.DowntownMcKinney. com 972/547-2660

MCKINNEY: Smiles Charity Concert and Family Festival May 29. Adriatica Croatian Village. www.SmilesCharity.org

MCKINNEY: Pecan Grove Historic Cemetery Memorial Day Ceremony May 30. www.PecanGrove Cemetery.com

MCKINNEY: Third Monday Trade Days May 13-15. www.tmtd.com 972/562-5466

MCKINNEY: Second Saturday on the Downtown Square May 14. www.downtownmckinney. com 972/547-2660

MESQUITE: *Brighton Beach Memoirs* April 15-17, 22-24, 29-May 1. Mesquite Arts Center Black Box Theatre. www.mesquite communitytheatre.com 972/216-8126

MESQUITE: Shari Hornish Exhibit May 2-30. Mesquite Arts Center Main Gallery. www.mesquiteartscenter.org 972/216-6444

MESQUITE: Mesquite Symphony Orchestra Concert May 7. Mesquite Arts Center Concert Hall. www.mesquitesymphony.org 972/216-6444

MESQUITE: Mesquite Meander Historic Cemetery Tour May 13-14. Mesquite Cemetery. www.historic mesquite.org 972/216-6468

MESQUITE: Florence Ranch Homestead Tours May 14. www.historicmesquite.org 972/216-6468

MESQUITE: Kidfish May 14. City Lake Park. www.cityofmesquite.com 972/216-6260

MESQUITE: Opal Lawrence Historical Park Tours May 21. www.historicmesquite.org 972/216-6468

MOUNT VERNON: Piney Woods Wine Trail Festival May 20-21. Downtown Plaza. 903/537-4070

NOCONA: Cruisin' Nocona May 12-14. Horton Classic Car Museum. www.nocona.org 940/825-3526

PLANO: 365 Women a Year Festival May 5-14. Rover Dramawerks Theatre. www.roverdramawerks.com

PLANO: Asleep at the Wheel: Plano Courtyard Texas Music Series 2016 May 5. Plano Courtyard Theater. www.plano.gov 972/941-5600

PLANO: AsiaFest 2016 May 7. Haggard Park. www.asianamericanheritage. org 214/556-9852

PLANO: Shark Tank: Barbara Corcoran Live! May 10. Plano Centre. www.championsschool.com 972/941-5840

PLANO: PCANT Vaisakhi Mela 2016 May 21. Plano Event Center. www.pcant.info 214/662-6766

PLANO: Night Out On 15th May 22. www.visitdowntown plano.com 972/941-5840

PLANO: *Crisis* May 26-June 18. Rover Dramawerks Theatre. www.roverdramawerks.com

PLANO: *A Salute to America* Free Concert May 29. St. Andrew United Methodist Church. www.standrewumc.org 972/380-8001

RICHARDSON: *Elizabeth Gilbert: Creative Living* May 10. Charles W. Eisemann Center. www.dma.org 214/922-1200

SACHSE: Movie in the Amphitheater May 7. City Hall Amphitheater. www.cityofsachse.com 469/429-0275

SALADO: Ultra520KTexas Ultra Endurance Triathlon April 29-May 1. Various venues. www.salado.com 254/947-5040

SALADO: Mother's Getaway Weekend May 6-8. Various locations. www.salado.com 254/947-5040

SHINER: Memorial Day Tribute May 30. Green-Dickson Municipal Park. www.shinertx.com 361/594-4180

SMITHVILLE: Thunder on the Colorado Biker Rally May 6. Riverbend Park. www.thunderonthecolorado.com 512/237-2313

SMITHVILLE: Fly-In and Pancake Breakfast May 14. Smithville Crawford Municipal Airport. www.smithvilletx.org 512/237-2313

TEMPLE: Central Texas Airshow May 6-8. Draughon-Miller Regional Airport. www.discovertemple.com 254/298-5900

TEMPLE: Battle of Temple Junction Reenactment May 20-22. Tractor Fair Grounds. www.discovertemple.com 254/298-5440

WACO: *Tinkertoy: Build Your Imagination* and *The Adventures of Mr. Potato Head* Through May 1. Mayborn Museum Complex. www.maybornmuseum.com 254/710-1110

WACO: Sertoma Kite Festival May 7. Heart of Texas Miniature Aircraft Club. www.sertomakitefest.org 254/776-0947

WACO: *Imaginate* May 28-September 5. Mayborn Museum Complex. www.maybornmuseum.com 254/710-1110

WAXAHACHIE: Scarborough Renaissance Festival April 9-May 30. Scarborough Faire Site. www.SRFestival.com 972/938-3247

WAXAHACHIE: Cinco De Mayo Festival May 5-7. Singleton Plaza. www.elliscountyhispanicorg.com 469/309-4040

WAXAHACHIE: Crossroads of Texas Film Festival May 18-21. Various venues. www.crossroadsoftxff.com 469/309-4012

WYLIE: Wylie 500 Pedal Car Races May 1. Downtown. www.discoverwylie.com 972/516-6016

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

EAGLE PASS: Memorial Day Ceremony May 30. Maverick County Lake. 970/415-6224

GOLIAD: 19th-Century Trade Day May 14. Presidio La Bahia. 361/645-3752

LAREDO: Laredo Northside Market May 7. Laredo Northside Market. 956/763-0138

SAN ANTONIO: *Splendor on the Range: American Indians and the Horse* Through August 21. Witte Museum. 210/357-1910

SAN ANTONIO: *Memphis* April 8-May 8. Woodlawn Theatre. www.woodlawntheatre.org 210/267-8388

SAN ANTONIO: *Born Yesterday* April 29-May 22. The Classic Theatre of San Antonio. www.classictheatre.org 210/589-8450

SAN ANTONIO: *Charlotte's Web* April 29-June 12. The Magik Theatre. www.magiktheatre.org 210/227-2751

SAN ANTONIO: *Rivane Neuenschwander: Secondary Stories* April 30-July 29. SPACE Gallery. www.lindapacefoundation.org

SAN ANTONIO: *Motown The Musical* May 3-8. Majestic Theatre. www.majesticempire.com

SAN ANTONIO: *A Chorus Line* May 6-June 5. The Playhouse San Antonio. www.theplayhousesa.org 210/733-7258

SAN ANTONIO: San Antonio Symphony in Concert May 6-7. The Tobin Center. www.sasymphony.org 210/554-1010

SAN ANTONIO: Texas Giraffe Day May 10. Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch. www.wildliferanchtexas.com 830/438-7400

SAN ANTONIO: *Coney Island: Visions of an American Dreamland, 1861-2008* May 11-September 11. McNay Art Museum. www.mcnayart.org

SAN ANTONIO: *Born in the USA: Patriotic Pops* May 13-15. The Tobin Center. www.sasymphony.org 210/554-1010

SAN ANTONIO: Alfredo Rodriguez in Concert May 13. Carver Community Cultural Center, Jo Long Theatre. www.thecarver.org 210/207-7211

SAN ANTONIO: *Maya: Hidden Worlds Revealed* May 14-September 5. The Witte Museum. www.wittemuseum.org

SAN ANTONIO: Musical Evenings At San Fernando Cathedral May 15. San Fernando Cathedral. 210/464-1534

SAN ANTONIO: Culinaria Festival Week May 19-22. Various locations. www.culinariasa.org 210/822-9555

SAN ANTONIO: San Antonio Symphony in Concert May 20-21. The Tobin Center. www.sasymphony.org 210/554-1010

WESLACO: Alfresco Weslaco Music and Art on the Street May 19. Historic Downtown. www.facebook.com/AlfrescoWeslaco 956/959-0838

WANT MORE?

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FOR A FREE PRINTED COPY of an even more detailed, quarterly schedule of events, write to *Texas Highways 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.

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upcoming events!

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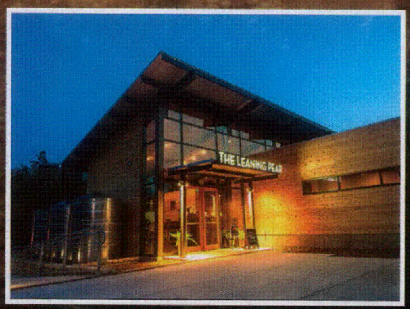

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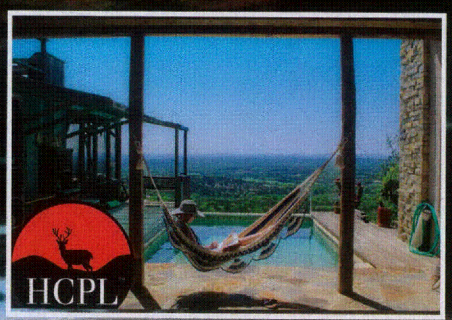

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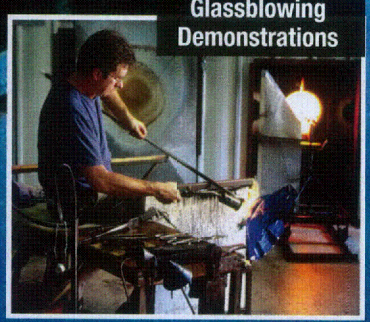

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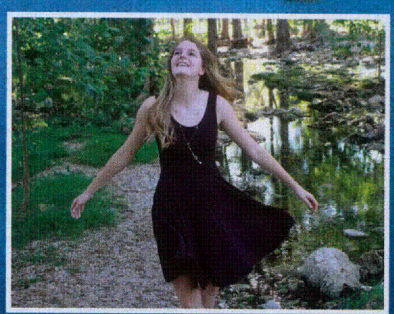

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Rockin' the Rock

When visiting Texas' capital city, some may be tempted to spend all of their time exploring within the confines of the famous Austin city limits. But those who know better will roll up Interstate 35 to visit a different Texas town where the history, sports, and donuts will rock your socks.

8:00 A.M. Eating breakfast at **Round Rock Donuts** is a mandatory activity for tourists and locals alike. With the drive-through line stretching down the block, I walked inside to the heavenly smell of hot grease and warm glaze. While the donuts' signature orange-yellow color may be hard to fathom, their popularity is not. And my Texas-size appetite called for nothing short of the "Texas Donut," which is cut with a custom bucket and fills an entire box.

9:00 A.M. I headed to **Main Street**, where shops and restaurants now occupy the historic buildings. It was on this street in 1878 that famed outlaw Sam Bass met his end in a blaze of glory and gunfire. Bass is buried in Round Rock Cemetery northwest of downtown.

10:00 A.M. To explore a more recent story, I headed to **Hairy Man Road**. This curvy, woodsy passage along Brushy Creek is named for a fictional old hermit who hated trespassers so much that he would hide in the trees and jump out to scare them. A local boy reportedly created the hairy man tale to scare his sisters, but some believe he still haunts the road. Luckily, I didn't see anything too frightening in the daylight, but I might think twice about returning at night.

11:00 A.M. I followed **Brushy Creek** to Chisholm Trail Road and found sculptures memorializing the cattle drives and pioneers who settled this area. To my amazement, I found the actual "round rock," a circular stone rising out of the creek bed that was once used by cowboys and caravans as a geographical marker on the Chisholm Trail. As I forged the creek to stand on top, I found deep grooves in the limestone creek bottom formed by rock-loaded carts that once made the crossing.

12:30 P.M. For lunch, I headed to **The Blind Squirrel Sandwiches**, which are neither made by squirrels nor with squirrel meat. However, the sandwiches are far from ordinary with delicious twists on old classics. I opted for "The Paris, Texas," a confit of beef brisket on Texas toast that put a French spin on a Lone Star original. It was fantastic, but I truly went *nuts* over the peanut-butter-bacon cookie I had for dessert.

2:00 P.M. Things got sticky as I headed to **Round Rock Honey** for one of the bottling and tasting tours (Saturdays only). Educating me on all things honey, the tour had me buzzing like a bee. Best of all was the tasting session featuring honeys from across the globe, each tasting drastically different based on the diet of the bees.

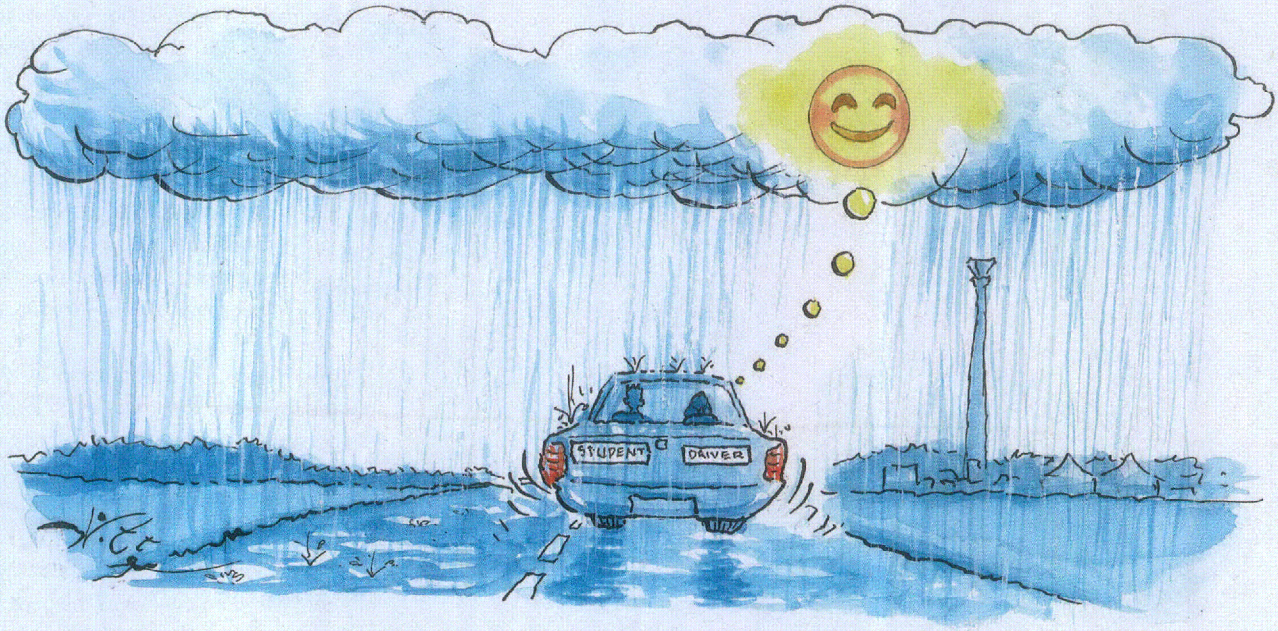
4:00 P.M. I stopped at **Old Settlers Park** and explored field after field for everything from baseball to kiteflying to cricket, making it clear why this town is the official "Sports Capital of Texas." Prepared for the occasion, I grabbed my bag of discs and hit the 18-hole disc golf course that weaves around the park.

6:30 P.M. At **Dell Diamond**, home of the **Round Rock Express** minor league baseball team, I joined the crowd on the grassy hill in left field and grubbed down on a Big Kahuna hot dog topped with pineapple mustard, mango salsa, and avocado. It was certainly a non-traditional meal for America's most traditional pastime.

As the fans stood up for the seventh-inning stretch, I reflected on my "home run" of a day trip. Next time you get the chance to visit the area, don't roll past Round Rock, because you'll miss a rockin' good time. So whether you follow my footsteps or forge your own path, I hope to see you on the road. ★

Contact the Round Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau, 512/218-7023; www.sportscapitaloftexas.com.

PHOTO: © Hogaboom Road, Inc.



New *Driver*

LIFE LESSONS BEHIND THE WHEEL

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

MY SON HAS TRAVELED WITH me since he was an infant, making his first journey at the age of six weeks, tucked into the bow of a canoe as I paddled in upstate New York. Journeys all over the world followed, but when we moved back to my hometown of Fort Worth, most of our travels became Texas road trips.

Though Elliott was always a boon travel companion, my company became exponentially less desirable to him from the day he turned 13. But like Odysseus, your teen comes back to you in time. What triggered a return for Elliott was his desire to obtain a driver's license. Practicing for his test returned us to our weekend ritual of discovery drives.

Early this spring, the rain relentless, I suggested he needed experience driving on wet roads. I said I felt like heading out to Thurber, the ghost town west of Fort Worth that was once famous for manufacturing bricks and mining coal. After about 20 minutes of companionable silence, my son began regaling me with his favorite travel memories. As he talked, I relaxed into a style of traveling that's new to me: soaking in the view out the side window as someone else drives.

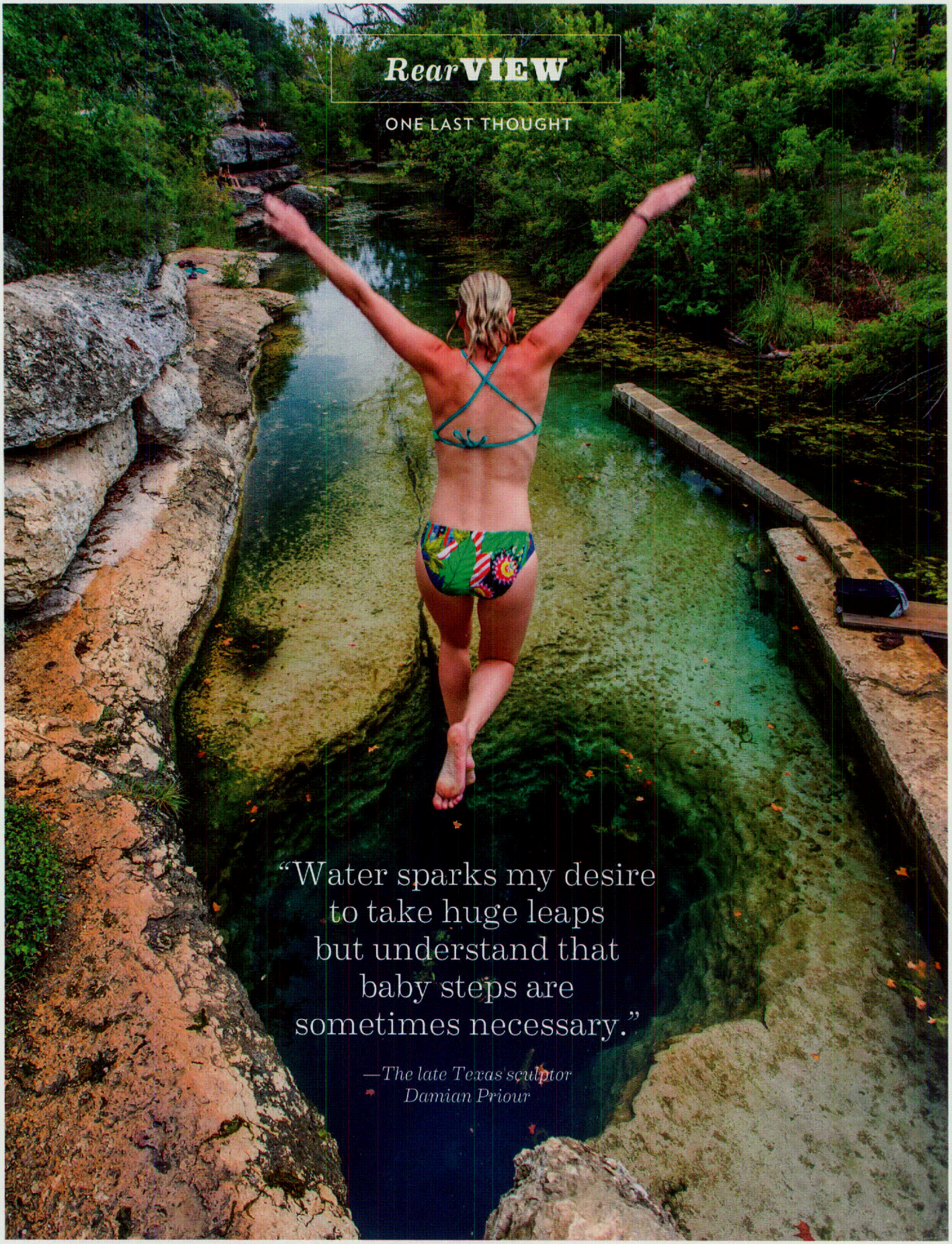
But as we exited at Thurber, he jolted to a stop. In the middle of the access road. My assertion that Thurber is now little more than a wide spot boasting a population of four was not something he expected to be literally true. Pulling off Interstate 20, he focused on the town's solitary brick smokestack; nearby, the cinematic neon of the SmokeStack Restaurant flashed through the streaming rain. The scene stopped him in his tracks. "You do realize you are still on an active roadway, son?" I asked, just as an aggressive horn blast motivated him to hit the gas.

An exploration of the historic Thurber cemetery followed, and the SmokeStack's stew and famed buttermilk pie rounded out our remarkable day. Lessons were learned about steering into a skid, keeping your wits about you when rain turns to hail, when to pull over, and when to keep going.

I learned something, too. I realized during that muddy spring adventure that a driver's license will untether my son. He is poised for adventures that are exclusively his own to chart. I think he's ready. So am I. ★

The scene stopped him in his tracks. "You do realize you are still on an active roadway, son?" I asked.

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



JUMP IN *to Jacob's Well near Wimberley for a cool way to pass a hot summer day.*

PHOTO: © Michael Hanson/Aurora Photos

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