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The TRAVEL MAGAZINE of TEXAS *** JANUARY 2016

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destinations and man's
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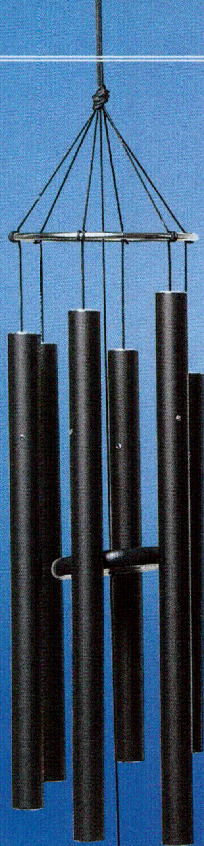
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WHERE WE'LL BE NEXT MONTH:

Park it here in February, as we celebrate the great outdoors and the centennial of our national parks system. Find hidden gems, like the Salt Basin Dunes at Guadalupe Mountains National Park and Air Force One-Half at LBJ National Historical Park, and save the dates for special events, from Big Thicket tree plantings to Big Bend's birthday bash. We'll also go crumb-cake crazy in Forney, hike Austin's Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve, and day-trip Schulenburg.



ANY TIPS ON THESE SPOTS? LET US KNOW ON FACEBOOK, TWITTER, OR INSTAGRAM

Take the Long Way There

A new year. A fresh start. And for many of us, a mostly open engagement calendar. Now's the time to book an adventure or two in 2016 before that daily to-do list takes over. And while you're at it, consider adding a couple of extra days to take the long way there.

That's certainly *TH* Associate Editor Matt Joyce's MO, whether he's exploring the Panhandle for a story on Dust Bowl history, wandering the Piney Woods for a piece on the Timber Trail, or pulling the family camper on a road trip to the coast. This month, our resident Clark Griswold shares his recent westward excursion on US 90 from Brackettville to Sanderson, along which he discovered refreshing Fort Clark Springs, mysterious Pecos River rock art, and the land of Judge Roy Bean at Langtry.

"Two of the things I love most about road-tripping around Texas are the beautiful countryside and the interesting small towns where people are experiencing all sorts of variations of daily life in Texas," says Matt, who recently won a bronze award for Writer of the Year from the International Regional Magazine Association. "The US 90 route to Big Bend is rich with both of these—awesome scenery and fascinating small towns."

A fellow roamer, Photography Editor Brandon Jakobeit trekked a fair amount of South and West Texas for this issue, capturing glorious images for Gene Fowler's story on adobe, from the magical Indian Lodge at Fort Davis, with ceilings made from Rio Grande reeds, to exquisite Quinta Mazatlan, a World Birding Center site in the Rio Grande Valley. With so many adobes and so little space in these pages, Gene has provided a roundup of other earthen structures at texashighways.com/webextra. Look there, too, for Art Director Jane Wu's related write-up on papercrete, a building material similar to adobe that uses paper as an insulating material.

While reviewing Gene's article, I spent some time on the Presidio-based Adobe Alliance's website (www.adobealliance.org), where I found a favorite quote of the late master adobe architect Hassan Fathy. Fathy's interpretation of the words (from a verse penned by 19th-Century Scottish author William Maccall) most likely resonated with his sense of discovery, and they also nicely sum up the rewards of a backroads ramble: "Straight is the line of duty. Curved is the line of beauty."

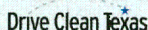
We hope you enjoy some curvy excursions this year.

Jill Lawless, Editor



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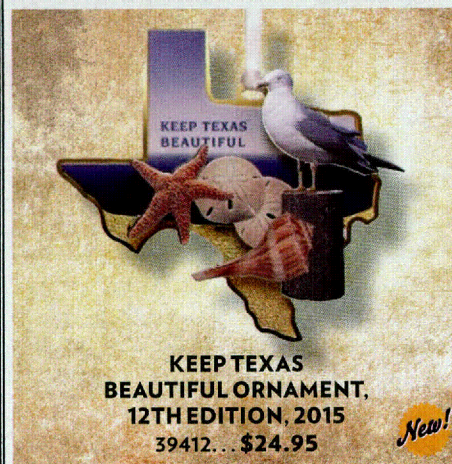


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JANUARY 2016

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FEATURES



32 *Simply Adobe*

Few of us may ever call an adobe hacienda home, but we can all experience the natural harmony of these earthen structures with a photo tour through South and West Texas.

Text by **GENE FOWLER**

Photographs by **BRANDON JAKOBEIT**

40 *The Journey Abides*

From spring-fed oases to ancient pictographs and Wild West towns, US 90 traverses an oft-overlooked but fascinating section of Southwest Texas. Time for a road trip.

Text by **MATT JOYCE**

Photographs by **LANCE ROSENFELD**

48 *Literul(ly) San Antonio*

San Antonio has inspired writers for centuries. We jump from the page to the street for a walking tour of literary San Antonio.

Text by **GENE FOWLER**

with **BRYCE MILLIGAN**

Photographs by **AL ARGUETA**



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A photo gallery of Grapevine's Nash Farm, which interprets 19th-Century Texas farm life

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JANUARY 2016

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



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9) Made in Texas

Stylle Read's bold Western murals

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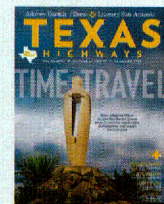
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ON OUR COVER

Enduring Spirit, a 14-foot limestone carving by Kerrville artist Dean Mitchell, rises above the Lower Pecos Canyonlands at the Rock Art Foundation's White Shaman Preserve. Photo © Lance Rosenfield

Scenic ROUTE

30° 35' 35.05" N
103° 56' 36.96" W



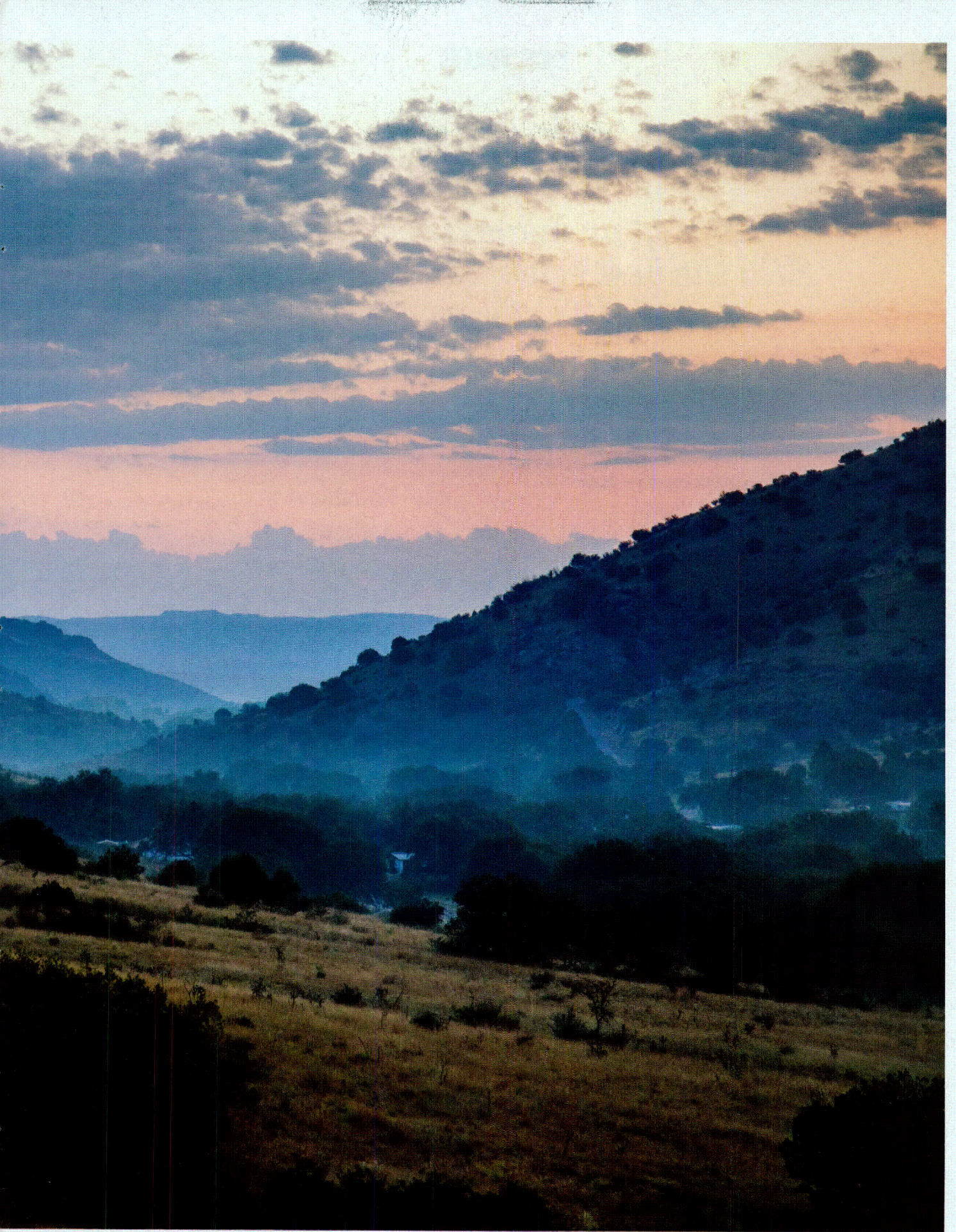
Big Bend Country

Inside Davis Mountains State Park at the end of Park Road 3, the historic Indian Lodge hotel offers spectacular views of the park, including this Keesey Canyon vista taken from a walkway on the east side. Constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, the lodge is a stunning building of adobe blocks and hand-hewn pine beams tucked into the hillside.



For more information on Indian Lodge, visit www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/indian-lodge.



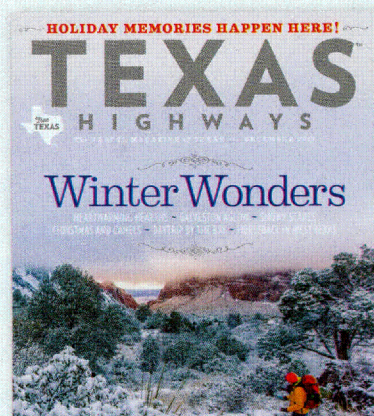


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GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

Love your magazine. Still the best celebration of Texas ever!

NIKIE GARNER COTTER, TH Facebook fan



OUR FAVORITE SOCIAL MEDIA OF THE MONTH...



Mary's Cafe in Strawn is the best! Used to tell the Mrs. we were going hunting. But that was just an excuse to stop in Strawn for chicken-fried steak!
Lewis Griffin



I'm VERY disappointed that the November comfort food issue isn't scratch & sniff.
Christopher Wilson,
@CDub06



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Good for the Hearth

I have enjoyed campfires [December] in many places and with many people. One favorite was a night alone on our acreage with just my two dogs—one little poodle snuggling on a cot with me and the other sleeping under my cot. We had a tree stump to burn as we cleared the property. I dozed but mostly was awake enjoying the peace and night sounds around me. Nature heals!

BEVERLY BARNT
Kerrville

Sometimes you don't even need a fire. One of the most magical places I have ever stopped was at the rest area on I-10 West just before Van Horn. I was amazed at how dark it was. I looked up and I could see every star in the heavens. What a show that was! When I looked west, I could see the glimmering lights of Van Horn four miles away. The lights flickered and beckoned like an oasis in the dark desert night. It was like a fairy tale. Sometimes the most

beautiful and solitary experiences are also the simplest. I have driven across Texas at least 40 times and West Texas has a charm and a magic to it that is unlike any other place in the nation. This is the place to come to clear your head and heal your soul.

DON HOLLOWAY
Knoxville, Tennessee

Raising Cane

"Raising Sugar Cane" [November] brings back memories of when my dad raised a small patch of cane and made what we called molasses. This was in South

Texas (Pleasanton). He had the mill—mule-drawn—and the cooking vat set up under an oak tree on our farm. It was probably in the 1930s or early '40s, when I was a kid. I used to like making the mule go around while someone fed the stalks into the mill and collected the juice. My dad would do the cooking just as described in the article. We always ate a lot of the syrup with biscuits, homemade bread, etc. It is good for you—has lots of iron! I recently moved to Colorado but my roots are in Texas.

DOROTHY ARNOLD
Fort Collins, Colorado



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PETE SOMMERS, Bastrop

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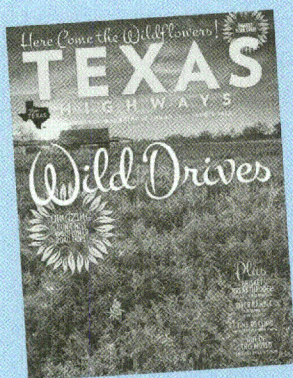
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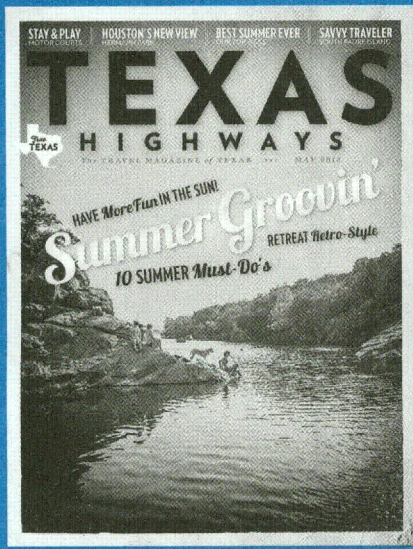
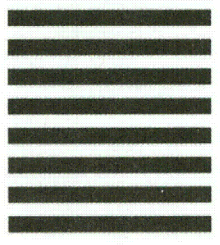
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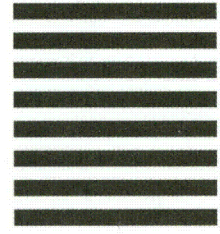
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THE ARTWORK
OF TEXAS MURALIST
STYLLE READ

text by GENE FOWLER



Stylelle Read's *Wild Frontier, Trail Dust, and Rails* mural at Wright Plaza in Cleburne



The Herd Quitter at Mills County State Bank, Hico

STYLLE READ TOOK AN INTEREST IN re-creating old-time Texas with colorful artwork while growing up in Lufkin in the 1950s. “It was the decade of Davy Crockett on TV’s wild frontier and the John Wayne Alamo movie,” he explains. “I was hooked on history from a very young age.”

Born in 1953 “with a palette and brush in my hand,” Read was influenced by his father, Sleepy Read, whose paintings range from abstracts to Texas landscapes. The youngster began mixing his love of art and history in junior high school, when he painted a scene of the Battle of the Alamo after a trip to San Antonio.

Today, Read’s murals depicting scenes of Texas history and culture make him one of Texas’ most recognizable painters. About 150 of Read’s murals can be found across the state (30 of them outdoors), especially in towns with an affinity for



STYLLE READ

For more on Styllé Read, including information about where to see some of his murals, along with photos of them, visit www.stylleread.com.

their Old West and ranching heritage, such as Alpine, Fort Worth, San Angelo, and Read’s home base of Cleburne.

Often portraying working cowboys, rugged landscapes, noble Longhorns, and frontier settlers, Read’s style draws inspiration from post office muralists of the 1930s and ’40s, including Tom Lea of El Paso, as well as the famous Mexican muralist Diego Rivera. Read also credits one of his professors at the University of North Texas, Bob “Daddy-O” Wade—known for outsized pop art such as the huge cowboy boots at San Antonio’s North Star Mall—for his fondness for large works of art. And Read notes, “There’s nothing like a [C.M.] Russell,

the first real cowboy artist.”

When I caught up with Read this summer, he was heading out to paint his seventh mural in Alpine. Read's murals in the West Texas town include the *Mercado Mural*, a Mexican market scene on a railroad warehouse that he created with volunteers as part of the Alpine Artwalk's Historic Calendar Mural Series. When *Mercado Mural* was completed in 2014, the *Big Bend Courier* toasted the citywide gallery of Read creations: “As St. Louis is known for Scott Joplin and Chicago/Oak Park is known for Frank Lloyd Wright,” wrote Bryon Garrison, “Alpine will indubitably be known for the beautiful murals created by Stylee Read.”

Big Brewster, a mural collage on an exterior wall of Alpine's Kiowa Gallery, pays tribute to Texas' biggest county and features area notables such as Everett Townsend, who led the effort to create Big Bend National Park, and pioneer rancher Milton

Faver, shown driving cattle across the Rio Grande in a canyon scene drenched with midnight blue. Alpine's Quality Inn features a Read work that includes the Trans-Pecos legend of the “murder steer,” a tale of a maverick branded with the word “murder” after a wrangler was killed in a dispute over the steer.

A mural in Alpine's Reata Restaurant, which takes its name from the famous home of Rock Hudson and Elizabeth Taylor in the 1956 movie *Giant*, depicts cast member James Dean in front of the house on horseback, looking back toward the viewer with a classic Dean expression.

Read's expansive creations are a

common fixture during the annual Alpine Artwalk. Held annually on the Friday and Saturday before Thanksgiving (November 18-19, 2016), the event features about two-dozen local galleries and shops along with art vendors, a parade, a street dance with live music, and food booths. Organizer Keri Blackman, owner of the Kiowa Gallery, says, “Stylee's dedication to historical accuracy and his unique Southwestern style make his murals favorites with local folks and visitors alike. People come and sit in lawn chairs to watch him paint.”

About 150 of Read's murals can be found across the state (30 of them outdoors), especially in towns with an affinity for their Old West and ranching heritage.

The Trans-Pecos region is a second home for Read. In the 1980s, he spent four years there, for a time stretching out on a saddle blanket in the semi-ruin of the legendary Perry Mansion built during Terlingua's mining days. Nearby, Read's *Spirit of Terlingua* mural in the Starlight Theatre Restaurant and Saloon portrays a night scene of locals from the town's different eras—miners, cowboys, bandits, chili heads, and river outfitters—gathered around a campfire.

Fort Worth rivals Alpine for its concentration of Read murals. A large *Welcome to Cowtown* painting greets folks in the Stockyards Visitor Center, depicting a bird's-eye view of the historic district and the twice-daily cattle drives down Exchange Avenue. Two cowboys ride hard across the prairie in Read's mural on an outside wall of Maverick Fine Western Wear in the Stockyards. At the Historic Camp Bowie Mercantile, Read captures a different Texas era with his interpretation of 1920s life along Fort Worth's Camp Bowie Boulevard.

Read's largest work spans all 216 feet of the parking lot wall of Cleburne's Wright Plaza. Anchored by a portrait of town namesake Confederate Major General Patrick Cleburne, the work covers local history from Caddo settlements and early explorers to pioneers, the Chisholm Trail, the railroad, court-houses, and 21st-Century gas drilling. One section highlights Slat's Rodgers, the maverick Cleburne airman who in 1912 constructed one of the first airplanes built in Texas.

When not on the road for painting jobs, Read hangs his 12-gallon Stetson on the outskirts of Cleburne, where he and his wife, Nancy, keep a few Longhorns, raise horses, collect saddles, and indulge a love of classic cars. “I like to restore early 1950s Cadillacs,” Read says.

In 2016, you can find Read in Midland creating a mural on the landmark Yucca Theater. A collage of area history, the work will include both Bush presidents outside of their Midland home of the 1950s. The artist will also return to San Angelo—already home to four of his murals that are part of the Historic Murals of San Angelo project—to create a depiction of rock-and-roll history at the former recording studio where one-hit wonders J. Frank Wilson and the Cavaliers recorded the classic “Last Kiss.” Also this year, Trans-Pecos folks can watch for Read back in Alpine, where he's scheduled to paint another mural, this one portraying the regional music scene and famous musicians—from Elvis to Willie Nelson—who have played in the Big Bend.

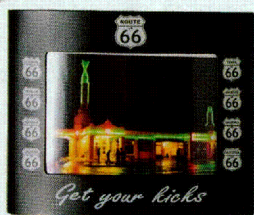
Asked if he wants to be remembered like his artistic heroes, Read says, “I just hope my work lasts like those guys' has. I want folks to enjoy it for a long, long time.” ★



THE ALPINE ARTWALK

is scheduled for Nov. 18-19, 2016.

Learn more about the event and its Historic Calendar mural project at www.artwalkalpine.com.



Illinois to California, but most stretches of the road had disappeared from “official” maps by the 1980s. But in Texas, as in other states, history buffs like to retrace the route for its nostalgia value. In Texas, the route encompasses less than 200 miles, more or less bookended by the towns of Shamrock on the east and Glenrio on the west. In Shamrock, the Art Deco-style U-Drop Inn serves as a visitor center and informal Route 66 museum, welcoming legions of fans annually. Last year, according to staff member Diane

Get Your Kicks (and Souvenirs)

A DRIVE ALONG THE MOTHER ROAD—ROUTE 66

text by **Scott Jarrett**

HOW CAN ONE EXPLAIN THE neon magnetism of Route 66? Before this summer, I could quote a few lines of the famous 1946 Bobby Troup lyric, but if pressed, I had trouble pinpointing on a map precisely where you could “get your kicks.” And like most dads of the new millennium, I’ve seen the movie *Cars*—which features fictional towns on the route—at least a dozen times. So in late June I set out to acquaint myself with America’s most famous transcontinental highway, packing my wife and two small kids into the car and heading north from Fort Worth to drive the piece that cuts across the Texas Panhandle. A little more than four hours later, we found ourselves 14 miles this side of the Oklahoma border in the sleepy Panhandle town of Shamrock.

Also known as “The Mother Road,” Route 66 was established in 1926 and once traversed more than 2,400 miles from

Clonts, some 12,000 people—half of them travelers from abroad—signed the visitor’s log.

“The Europeans often tell us two things,” says Diane. “To them, Route 66 represents freedom. To be able to go such long distances, through so many states; they love that. The other thing they mention is the expansiveness. The stretch in Texas is really vast and beautiful.”

On the day we stop by, Diane and her colleague Becky Adams are excited about the impending arrival of William Shatner, due to roll through soon on a futuristic motorcycle prototype called the Rivet. Shatner’s visit fits with the long parade of classic car clubs, tour buses, and the occasional television crews that stop in Shamrock to “shoot and scoot,” says Larry Clonts, Diane’s husband and the town’s main tourism booster. He tells me that a crew from The Food Network had just been by after filming an episode at Amarillo’s Big Texan.

Built in 1936 as a Conoco service station and restaurant, the U-Drop building had fallen into disrepair by the early 1990s. But the design of architect J.C. Berry (who hailed from nearby Pampa),



THE U-DROP INN
and Shamrock Visitor Information Center is at 105 E. 12th St. in Shamrock. Call 806/256-2501; www.shamrocktexas.net.

which features a signature tower embellished with green and red neon, proved to be its saving grace. Over the years, residents and tourists alike rallied for its restoration, and a \$1.7-million Texas Department of Transportation grant helped restore the structure to its original appearance in 2003 and 2004.

As we take in some of the museum exhibits, which include historic photos and memorabilia ranging from matchbook covers and vintage postcards to 1930s oil cans, a lone Harley rumbles in, its rider dressed in black leather. I learn that he is a soft-spoken Swiss man named Rob Vrijhof, who is celebrating his 60th birthday by spending nearly three weeks traveling Route 66 throughout the United States. "Art Deco has been one of my hobbies for 25 years," he tells us. "I love this building."

These days, a lot of visitors recognize the U-Drop Inn as the inspiration for Ramone's Body Shop in Pixar's 2006 movie *Cars*. Our son Christopher enjoys

a small theater area where the movie plays—a welcome diversion for parents who want to meander. Outside in the parking lot, a replica of "Tow Mater," the rusty yet trusty tow truck from the movie, invites folks to climb on for photos (and plenty do).

In Shamrock, the Art Deco-style U-Drop Inn serves as a visitor center and informal Route 66 museum, welcoming legions of fans annually.

The U-Drop Inn features myriad Route 66 souvenirs, including drawings of the building by local artist Faye Connor and beautiful hand-sewn handbags designed by area resident Della Mae Stokes. But Becky Adams tells me that the best sellers by far are T-shirts made from locally grown organic cotton by third-generation farmer Gary Oldham. Oldham's "S.O.S. From Texas" designs celebrate the route

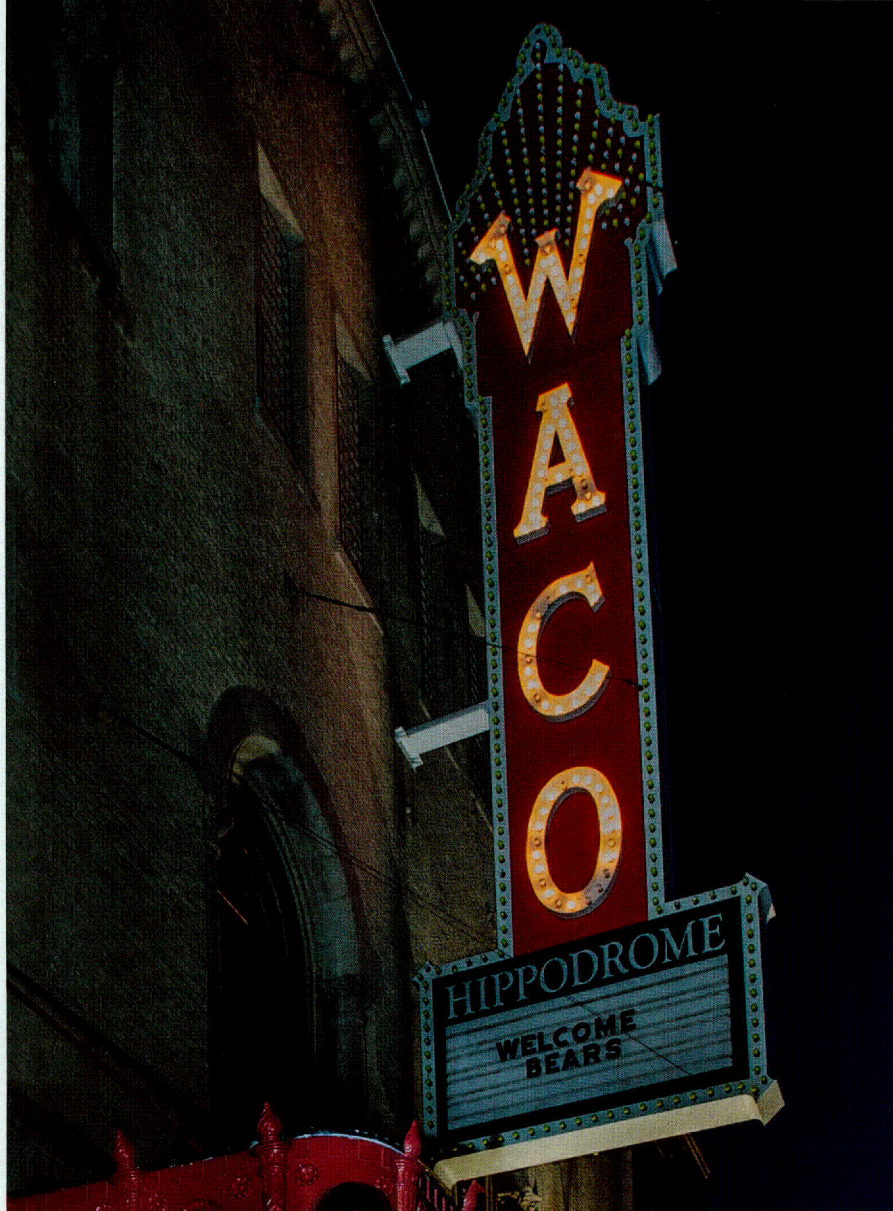
itself and the U-Drop Inn. Oldham says that "S.O.S." stands for "Save Our Soil," a slogan adopted after his family switched to organic farming in 1992.

"They really soften as they age," says Oldham. "They're premium cotton shirts that will wear for many years. They're hard to beat."

Oldham's farm sprawls out 15 miles south of Shamrock. For most of his life, he has lived in a house his grandfather built here. He remembers his teenage years cruising Route 66 with fondness. "In the 1960s, it was the main drag. There was so much neon you'd have thought you were in Vegas," he says. "I think it's popular today because people have nostalgia for simpler days."

After we depart, we turn our car wheels onto the storied road and drive west a few more miles, taking in the wide vistas. If it weren't for an impatient toddler and obligations at home, I like to think we'd still be getting our Route 66 kicks heading west. ★

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Hip, Hip, Hooray!

WACO'S HIPPODROME SPURS DOWNTOWN'S REVIVAL

text by **Sofia Sokolove**

THERE'S A NEW SENSE OF ENERGY and possibility on the streets of downtown Waco—not a boom, exactly, but a steady drumbeat led by some determined entrepreneurs whose vision of the future is infused with an affectionate regard for the city's past. Taking in the city's small downtown on a recent visit, I got the sense that it's both reinventing itself and staying true to its roots.

Up and down Austin Avenue, Waco's main street, long-abandoned brick buildings have come back to life as hip cocktail bars, art galleries, and live music venues.



THE WACO HIPPODROME THEATRE

is at 724 Austin Ave. in Waco.
Call 254/227-6723;
wacohippodrome.com.

"Twenty years ago, you did not come to downtown," says Casey Turner, an outgoing fourth-generation Wacoan with a slight Texas twang. Casey, along with her husband Cody Turner and brother-in-law Shane Turner, has played a major role in changing that, by renovating and reopening the century-old Spanish Revival-style Hippodrome Theatre at 724 Austin Avenue. The theater is at the literal and figurative heart of downtown Waco's revival.

Built in 1914 as a vaudeville house, the theater has seen its fair share of ups and downs. Opening night featured a live seal act; a half-century later, Elvis Presley graced The Hippodrome. Some accounts claim that Presley performed, others that he watched a movie.

Those were some of the highlights. Other moments weren't as grand. In 1928, a projection booth fire destroyed the front of the building, and a tornado in 1953 blew straight through Waco's then-thriving downtown. Casey puts it this way: "There were a lot of openings and closings." When the Turners reopened the Hippodrome in late 2014, it had been empty for almost five years.

Old buildings are Cody and Shane Turner's thing. Born in nearby Groesbeck and both graduates of Baylor University, the brothers have been buying and converting old buildings into luxury lofts up and down Austin Avenue since 2006. Buying The Hippodrome Theatre in 2012 to bring entertainment back downtown seemed like an obvious next project.

After a 30-month renovation, the Hippodrome marquee lights were illuminated once again in 2014, its centennial year. So much goes on at the theater—including live music, comedy shows, first-run movies with dinner and drinks service, and Alamo Drafthouse-hosted sing-a-longs—that Cody jokingly calls it "an entertainment mall."

There's also more space at the theater than ever before. By installing a retractable screen and movable sides that can seal the balcony off from the orchestra level of the theater, the Turners created a

second theater space. These days, the theater can show two first-run movies in separate theaters one night, then reopen the space for a big musical act the next night.

Walking through the lobby across red and gold carpet that was salvaged from the Hippodrome of the 1980s, Casey explains what's old and new. A lot stayed—the dark walls date to the 1980s, and vintage movie posters and photographs from the theater's past incarnations hang on the walls. There are even relics from another old Waco theater, the long-gone Orpheum, including the long, red awning that hangs prominently out front. Even relics like a 1950s movie-reel autowinder find their place in the new Hippodrome in the small downstairs museum space.

One of the best parts of the newly reopened Hippodrome is this balance between old and new. On the second level, in the Bar and Lounge, whiskey flows to a soundtrack of 1920s show tunes. Having

a pre- or post-show drink there feels charmingly old fashioned, and tends to encourage lively conversations about what's screening downstairs. Adjacent to the theater, a stage anchors a green space that used to be a city park. "We've got a digital projector out here, and we show movies at night, often free family movies," says Casey. "We wanted to give people a place to play."

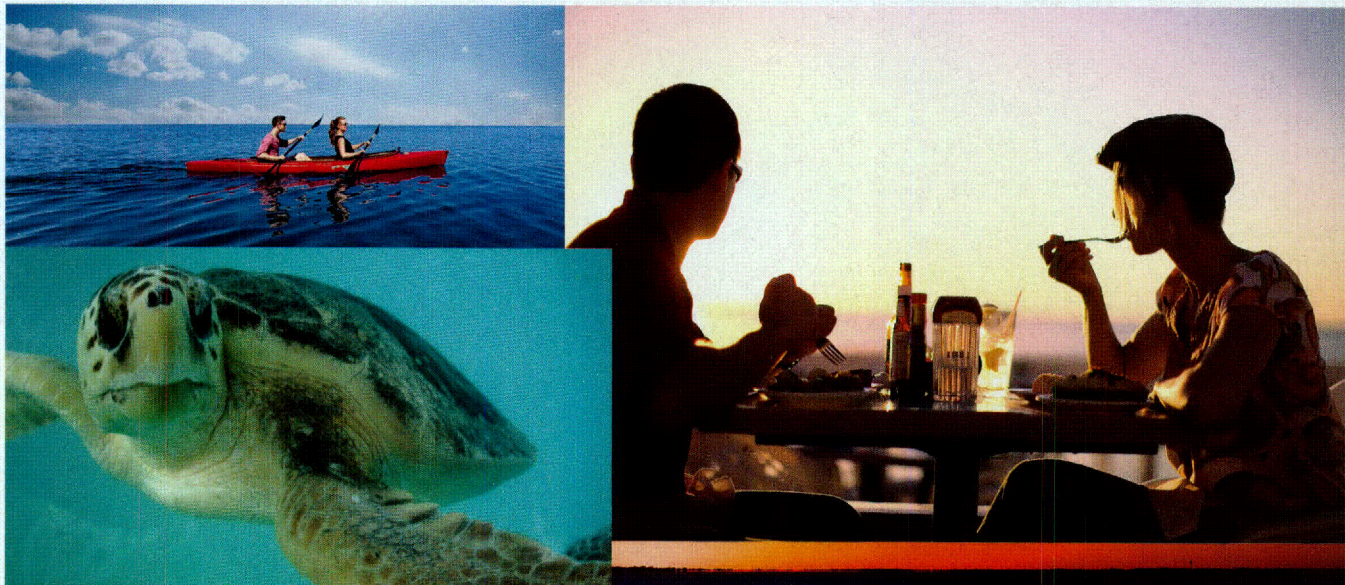
That sentiment has been contagious. "Everything here is new," says Casey, gesturing up and down Austin Avenue. There's even a guy, she says, "who sells hotdogs from a cart—it reminds me of New York!"

Food trucks have been popping up, including an Asian-fusion truck named "Club Sandwich" where you can get a delicious "trashbowl rice" dish of Thai-style sticky rice, tangy lemongrass pork, and shredded carrots. If a proper table is more your style, Portofino's, a no-frills Italian joint across from the theater,

serves up classic dishes like creamy chicken Alfredo and meat lasagna on tables spread with plastic tablecloths.

Down the street from the Hippodrome at Dichotomy Coffee & Spirits, a clean, minimalistic esthetic lights up a narrow room flanked by a long bar. Exposed interior brickwork helps create a warm, easygoing vibe, but don't be fooled—the baristas and bartenders are serious about their craft. During the daytime, baristas carefully create iced coffees and other caffeinated treats, and at night, you may want to return for a classic craft cocktail. Whatever time of day you visit, make sure to bring your beverage upstairs to the roof for a panoramic view of the city. To the right is Waco's ALICO building—one of the first skyscrapers in Texas—and straight ahead, you'll have a clear view of the 1901 McLennan County Courthouse.

"Things are definitely getting a lot cooler down here," says Casey. ★



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Songs in the Key of T

THE TEXAS MUSICIANS MUSEUM IN IRVING

text by **Helen Anders**

A GUITAR-BRANDISHING FIBER-glass jalapeño beckons from the sidewalk in downtown Irving. Walk a few paces more and you'll find a keyboard painted on the walkway, and beyond that, a glass door etched with the names of famous songs, from "Tumblin' Tumblweed" to "Woolly Bully" and "I Want to Take You Higher."

Enter through that door into a former Toyota dealership, and you'll discover that the story of Texas music has made its home right here in Irving, the Dallas suburb probably best known as the home of the Byron Nelson Golf Classic

The museum embraces multiple genres—country, rock, blues, funk, heavy metal—even Barney the Dinosaur.

and the long-gone Texas Stadium.

The one-story museum, located on Irving Boulevard just a block east of Big State Fountain Grill (a classic local diner), houses a collection of records, clothes, instruments, posters, handwritten notes, and more amassed by Thomas Kreason since the 1980s, when he worked setting up concerts in Dallas and curated memorabilia for the Hard Rock Cafe.

Kreason's first bit of memorabilia, he recalls, was a Dolly Parton autograph



A vintage Silvertone turntable, and in the background, Steven Fromholz's jacket, guitar, and boots.



THE TEXAS MUSICIANS MUSEUM,

at 222 E. Irving Blvd. in Irving, opens Tue-Thu 10-6 and Fri-Sat 10-9. Admission: \$15 for adults; \$10 for seniors, military, and children 12 to 17. Call 972/259-4444; www.texasmusiciansmuseum.com.

he scored in the 1980s as a member of a lighting crew at the Anatole Hotel, which hosted concerts in those days.

"I ran into her backstage," recalls Kreason, the museum's founder and director. "She said, 'Hey.'" He reported this to his crewmates, who asked if he'd gotten an autograph. He had not.

"Doesn't count if you didn't get any autograph," they told him. "So," he says, "I went back after the show and got it."

Kreason, who eventually honed his collection to focus on Texas, opened the Texas Musicians Museum in Hillsboro in 2007, moved briefly to Waxahachie in 2010, and then opened this past summer in Irving, where the city agreed to redevelop the former dealership building and lease it to the museum as part of city efforts to revitalize the Heritage Crossing area.

The 9,800-square-foot building revels in music, from the signs shaped like guitar picks that mark the exits to the dirt from legendary Texas music locations—Luckenbach dance hall, Austin's Broken Spoke honky-tonk, and Stevie Ray Vaughan's family home in the Oak Cliff neighborhood of Dallas—sprinkled around the outdoor music garden and under the stage that hosts weekend concerts. (During cold weather, acoustic shows are held indoors.)

Along with Kreason's own collection, the museum displays contributions from former KZEW Dallas radio Program Director George Gimarc, including a portable field recorder that folk music collector Alan Lomax used. There are also items donated by musicians' families and others. Bob Wills' family loaned a fiddle that Wills bought for \$30 in 1939 (when Bob was 34 years old), along with the bill documenting the sale.

The Texas Musicians Museum is full of stories. A 45-rpm Duane Eddy record, "Detour," is the one Waylon Jennings played in the '50s when Jennings was a disc jockey at radio station KLLL in Lubbock. Ironically, at the time, Eddy was married to Jessi Colter, whom Jennings would eventually marry. Nearby sit Jennings' boots and notepads that he

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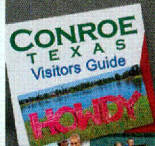
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had printed with the inscription, “This is no dress rehearsal. We are professionals, and this is the big time.”

Another case holds a receipt for five suits, costing \$335 total, for Buddy Holly’s band in 1957. Wait: Buddy Holly had only three other guys in his band. Kreason explains that manager Norman Petty had declared, “If you’re getting a

new suit, I’m getting one, too.” The museum also displays a 1949 school yearbook with Holly’s photo, “King of the sixth grade” printed beneath.

Costumes play a big role. Here’s Willie Nelson’s denim vest, along with Tanya Tucker’s red silk jumpsuit with a fringed neckline, Barbara Mandrell’s heavily beaded multicolor dress, Janis

Joplin’s embroidered black muumuu, Bobby Patterson’s brown wool suit with tiger-striped trim, and Jeannie C. Riley’s yellow polyester top and pleated tulle miniskirt from the ’60s, when her “Harper Valley PTA” was a hit.

The museum embraces multiple genres—country, rock, blues, funk, heavy metal—even Barney the Dinosaur, represented by a poster and stuffed Barney.

On and on the memorabilia goes: rows of platinum albums including Erykah Badu’s 1997 “Baduizm”; the poster from Selena’s last major concert, held in the Houston Astrodome on February 26, 1995; The Big Bopper’s music videos—some of the first music videos ever—including 1959’s “Chantilly Lace.”

At the back of the museum sits the little Neon Armadillo Cafe, serving beer, wine, margaritas, and small bites like hot dogs and chips and queso.

The museum’s gift shop offers guitars, T-shirts, and posters, some of them signed—including a late ’60s Harmony electric guitar signed by Los Lonely Boys and priced at \$750—all beneath a 58-foot-long, brightly painted plywood guitar that was a stage ornament during Eric Clapton’s 2004 “Crossroads” concert at the Dallas Cotton Bowl. Clapton, of course, is not a Texan. But when Kreason had the opportunity to claim the huge prop, his answer was simple: “Sure.”

Kreason says the museum’s collection of thousands of pieces of memorabilia will be rotated in and out of display to showcase the many aspects of the state’s musical history. After all, he says, “There’s no place music could develop and evolve more than it has here in Texas.” ★



BUDDY AND THE BIG BOPPER

In January and the first half of February, the Texas Musicians Museum presents an exhibit about “The Day the Music Died” with displays on Buddy Holly and J.P. “The Big Bopper” Richardson, including the casket used for Richardson’s original interment.

PLATES

EAT + DRINK + TRAVEL

TRAVEL

Gap Time

PERINI RANCH STEAKHOUSE
IN BUFFALO GAP

text by JUNE NAYLOR



FAMILY STYLE

Steaks dominate the menu at the Perini Ranch Steakhouse, but you'll also find quail, catfish, burgers, and sides like green chile hominy and baked zucchini.



PURE PERINI

One of the restaurant's most popular dishes, the bone-in "Cowboy" rib-eye is available at lunch and dinner. Owners Tom and Lisa Perini frequently make the rounds of diners' tables, contributing to the convivial vibe.

EACH VISIT TO BUFFALO GAP proves more rewarding than the last. This tiny burg (population about 460) sits in a woodsy hollow less than 10 miles south of Abilene, and reassures me that there are still places whose charm stems from old-fashioned simplicity. Equally removed from modern-world worries is a refuge known as Perini Ranch Steakhouse, the primary reason I bothered to find Buffalo Gap in the first place.

This visit, I'm introducing my husband to a weekend of Perini Ranch pleasures, starting with lunch at the steakhouse on a sunny Saturday afternoon. As we nab a picnic table on a patio shaded by towering cottonwoods, I'm reminded why I was so taken with this very spot well more than a decade ago: There, at another table, sit proprietors Tom and Lisa Perini, enjoying a meal with a couple of their employees.

Though the Perini Ranch Steakhouse has claimed a coveted



MAKE IT!

Perini Ranch Steak Rub recipe at texashighways.com/recipes-sides-sauces.

James Beard Award, as well as numerous statewide honors for its food and wine offerings, the Perinis rest on no laurels. Remaining steadfastly down-to-earth, Tom and Lisa can typically be found balancing work duties and friendly chats with crowds of friends seated in the cozy dining rooms. That is, however, when they're not off catering dinners in Colorado, Washington, D.C., Vermont, or other far-flung destinations.

We settle into seats at a shared table and order. Marshall declares his fried catfish some of the best he's tasted, while I sink my teeth into the Ranch Burger, a sandwich piled with grilled mushrooms, green chiles, and cheddar cheese. In 2013, *Food & Wine* magazine named it one of the country's top

burgers. Tom could be confident that the kitchen produces a great burger this and every day, but still he asks: "You enjoying that burger? Is it cooked the way you like?"

In 1983, when Tom converted a barn on his family's longtime cattle ranch into a restaurant, he knew that his restaurant needed to be exceptional if he hoped to draw people out of their way to come there. "You always hear that everything's about location, location, location, and we knew we had to make this a real destination restaurant," Tom says. "We're true to the mission of selling good beef, but we update things to keep it fun, so nothing about eating here becomes mundane."

I'm among plenty of people who never tire of eating at Perini Ranch Steakhouse, which is why Marshall and I have built our weekend around meals there.

After our ample lunch, we wander a short distance across the Perini Ranch property to the Camp House, one of two lodgings they collectively call the Guest Quarters. Tom, who Lisa describes as a "closet architect," designed the cozy Camp House and larger Guest House to accommodate visitors who want to hang out for a few days in the Gap. Marshall and I particularly enjoy the Camp House's wrap-around porch, where we can sip coffee while listening to birds awakening and watching the sun come up in the morning.

Comfortable with unfussy décor but luxurious with high-end bedding and bath linens, the two houses stay booked almost all the time. In fact, we're only able to reserve one of the houses for one night, so we spend our other night nearby at Buffalo Gap Bed & Breakfast. The rustic one-room cabin found at the entrance to town provides all the comfort we need, and we especially like the back deck, a quiet place to sip wine and watch the sun set over the beautiful hilly wilderness.

Between meals and deep sleeps in the country stillness, we wander around, first driving just four miles southwest

of the village via Farm-to-Market Road 89 to Abilene State Park. Strolling the half-mile Bird Trail, we follow an old Civilian Conservation Corps road that leads to a bird blind, where we watch for roadrunners and cardinals. We especially admire the beauty seen in the park's CCC craftsmanship, most notably the red stone tower that once held 5,800 gallons of water.

**The James Beard House
foundation members
so appreciate the Perini Ranch
Steakhouse operation that
they bestowed the business
the America's Classics
Award in 2014.**

Back in the heart of Buffalo Gap, there's a historic pioneer village that represents life in the 1880s. The area sits on an old buffalo-hunting route used by the Tonkawa and Comanche, which later served as a path for cattle drovers pushing Longhorns northward along the Western and Goodnight-Loving trails. We walk throughout the village, exploring a couple of wooden houses, a 1900s doctor's office, railroad depot, blacksmith shop, and chapel. Other structures—a schoolhouse, gas station, bank, and print shop—illustrate the 1920s.

After a full day of exploring the area, we return to the steakhouse for dinner, when the menu focuses on a solid selection of steaks. I frequently talk to folks at the restaurant who drive from Fort Worth or Austin just for the Perini rib-eye, and to others who plan trips across West Texas with a scheduled stop for Tom's mesquite-roasted prime rib and a side of his green chile hominy.

Many of those favorites figure among the pages in his cookbook, *Texas Cowboy Cooking*, released in 2000. Now in its seventh printing, more than 130,000 copies have been sold from the restaurant and in stores around the globe.

More than a few diners come from New York to eat the Perinis' food, as

Tom and Lisa have become regular guest chefs at Manhattan's James Beard House, the culinary foundation's celebrated dinner destination. The James Beard House has hosted the Perinis seven times, and foundation members so appreciate the Perini Ranch Steakhouse operation that they bestowed the business the America's Classics Award in 2014.

Like those New Yorkers and others who enjoy good food and wine, I'm always impressed with the two wine lists Lisa puts together for the steakhouse. There's the permanent one with better-known, popular selections, but I'm most interested in Lisa's List, a weekly lineup of new discoveries, both expensive and affordable. For our dinner tonight, we're indulging in a 2009 Napa Nook red blend, perfect with that prime rib and the peppered strip steak.

"I love finding interesting wines on our trips to California and around Texas, and from other places we've traveled, like South Africa," says Lisa, who earned her Level I sommelier certification in 2014.

Before heading home, we vow to return for the Buffalo Gap Wine & Food Summit, a popular annual gathering that the Perinis host in late April. But we're not likely to wait that long. ★

BUFFALO GAP



The **Perini Ranch Steakhouse and Guest Quarters** is at 3002 FM 89 in Buffalo Gap.

Call 325/572-3339; www.periniranch.com.

Buffalo Gap Bed & Breakfast is at the intersection of FM 89 and FM 1235 in Buffalo Gap. Call 325/572-3145; www.buffalogapbedandbreakfast.com.

Abilene State Park is at 150 Park Rd. 32 in Tuscola. Call 325/572-3204; www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/abilene.

Buffalo Gap Historic Village is at 133 William St. in Buffalo Gap. Call 325/572-3365; www.buffalogap.com.

Gardens of Beer

AUSLÄNDER AND BANGER'S KEEP TRADITION ALIVE

text by **Bill Tucker**

HALFWAY THROUGH A pumpkin porter and a bluegrass song, my Thursday night is humming along nicely. I'm sitting outside at a long wooden table at Banger's Sausage House & Beer Garden in the heart of Austin's Rainey Street. The band has just finished a set, and a crisp breeze speaks of changing seasons. The mouthwatering aroma of smoky bratwurst lingers in the air.

Beer gardens like Banger's tend to be cozy yet lively—places where strangers become friends over Bavarian lagers, smoked sausage, and conversation. The week before, I had visited the Hill Country village of Fredericksburg to check out The

Beer gardens like Banger's tend to be cozy yet lively—places where strangers become friends over Bavarian lagers, smoked sausage, and conversation.

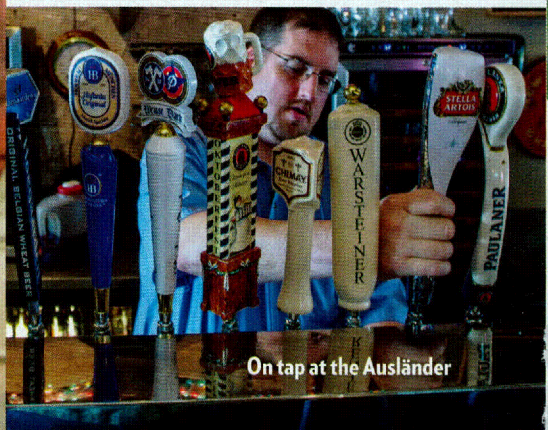
Ausländer Restaurant and Biergarten, a popular beer-drinking destination in one of Texas' most German-steeped towns. Despite being separated by 75 miles and 90 years, the two spots have a lot in common.

Settled by German immigrants in 1846, Fredericksburg today boasts hundreds of bed-and-breakfast lodgings, many that originated as early 20th-Century "Sunday houses." These were simple lodgings that served area farmers, who would travel to Fredericksburg from the countryside on Saturday to shop, stay overnight, and attend church the next morning.

In the mid-1930s, one Sunday house on Main Street was converted into a restaurant named Betty's Café. In the 1960s, out-of-towner Mike Clark moved to Fredericksburg and bought the restaurant. Being a newcomer to the tight-knit community, Clark renamed it The Ausländer, which translates from German as "the outsider."

The Ausländer's stone entrance opens up to a large and inviting open-air dining hall. German flags lead to a shaded patio, where I made myself at home with an Oktoberfest ale. With a dozen imported beer taps and 55 bottle selections, The Ausländer boasts one of the area's most interesting beer selections. Full of mostly German varieties with a sprinkling of Belgian wits, the list has a decidedly European feel. The Paulaner Oktoberfest is full of rich, woody malt, and the Westmalle Tripel is one of the best Trappist-style Belgian beers available anywhere.

The Ausländer's menu—virtually unchanged from the days of Mike Clark—



On tap at the Ausländer



AUSLÄNDER AND BANGER'S

The Ausländer Restaurant and Biergarten is at 323 E. Main St. in Fredericksburg. Call 830/997-7714; www.theauslander.com.

Banger's Sausage House & Beer Garden is at 79 Rainey St. in Austin. Call 512/386-1656; www.bangersaustin.com.

focuses on the dishes and flavors of Germany's Bavarian region. Local favorites include the jägerschnitzel, a traditional, handmade schnitzel smothered in a red wine mushroom sauce, and the spicy Kasewurst sausage. My pick would be the decadent Krauterbutter Lendenstück, a nine-ounce beef tenderloin roasted with butter and herbs, served atop a bed of grilled mushrooms. Rich, tender, and earthy, it's a deceptively simple yet delicious dish. And if you're not in the mood for German fare, the Ausländer also offers up American favorites like spinach-stuffed salmon and stuffed portabella mushrooms.

The Ausländer hosts live music every Friday and Saturday night, and the restaurant is one of the few places in town that welcomes pets. From the food to the beer to the vibe, the locals have been loving this Fredericksburg original for more than 80 years.

Some 75 miles west, in the heart of Austin's commercially rezoned Rainey Street neighborhood, Banger's Sausage House & Beer Garden brings a taste of German heritage to the Texas capital. Inspired by the late-night foodstuffs of his college days at the University of Texas, owner Ben Siegel renovated a 1930s bungalow and opened the sausage house of his dreams in summer 2012. The menu here draws on global influences to keep things interesting and fresh. The chunky German potato salad benefits from balanced acidity, while the currywurst, a combination plate of sliced sausage atop a pile of French fries topped with curry ketchup, dances between savory-sweet and spicy. Banger's even offers [continued on page 58 »

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Howling for Barbecue

GLEN ROSE'S LOCO COYOTE

text by June Naylor

AT 5:30 ON SATURDAY afternoon, my husband and I turn off US 67 onto twisty, narrow Somervell County Road 1004 southwest of Glen Rose. About a mile down the way, we come upon a ramshackle barbecue joint where pickup trucks, SUVs, and an assortment of Harleys and other motorcycles

are parked beside a cedar-post fence. After we park the car, we walk beneath branches of gnarled, spreading oak trees toward the hostess stand beside Loco Coyote's front door. The teenage hostess greeting us beams a pretty smile as she delivers the news. "It's a 45-minute to one-hour wait for a table, and then it's up to an hour for your food," she says, sweetly and unapologetically. We're staying. We've made an hour's drive from our Fort Worth home to eat at this wildly popular destination found way out in the countryside, and we're already seduced by the oak-smoke aroma wafting from the pits out back. The hostess urges us to mosey over to the bar and find a place to sit in the shade, and we do. My husband fetches an icy bucket of longneck beers from a bartender wearing a cowboy hat, and we snag a pair of chairs on the creaky wooden porch and think how lucky we are to enjoy a pleasant breeze. "You make a commitment when coming to eat here, don't you?" Marshall muses. A three-piece band begins playing country tunes on Loco Coyote's open-air deck a few yards away, and we delight in the beautiful evening and people-watching. On the expansive green lawn extending from Loco Coyote's weathered assemblage of wooden buildings toward the sunflower-filled back forty, parents toss Frisbees with kids, teenagers in baseball uniforms play tag, and groups of friends play informal games of horseshoes. The real eye candy, however, is the steady flow of platters laden with massive ribs, steaks, burgers, tacos, and onion rings headed to picnic tables full of happy diners. Keeping our eyes on the prize, we find our internal well of patience, and we admire the same in the people standing in line at the bar for beer buckets and Mason jars filled with frozen margaritas. The music, bar, and long waits all figure among new developments at Loco



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EAT

Coyote, a place that has enjoyed a loyal following since the 1960s. Changes came when proprietors Loyd and Becki McClanahan bought the place in early 2013, moving from Arlington to reside in the old homestead they renovated on the property. Regular customers for years, they were thrilled to learn the place was for sale, as they'd been hankering to try an altogether new line of work they could run together.

A three-piece band begins playing country tunes on Loco Coyote's open-air deck, and we delight in the beautiful evening and people-watching.


Leaving his life as a country-club golf pro to learn the ways of the pit master deposited Loyd in strange territory, though. When he took the helm, Loyd was a longtime home cook who knew little about running a restaurant. To honor the Loco Coyote heritage, Loyd persuaded local barbecue legend and original Loco Coyote owner Tom Hammond into sharing some of his secrets.

The learning curve was steep, but just one look at the crowds that pack the place—which includes the cramped interior with its sawdust-covered floors and Willie Nelson posters, as well as the large deck, all with community seating—tells us the McClanahans got things right.

“We’re getting the hang of it now,” Loyd says, stopping by our table on the airy deck to thank us for enduring the long wait for supper. “We hope you think it’s worth the wait.”

We offer heartfelt assurance. The food is better than ever, and I’ve been dining here for a couple of decades.

Star of the barbecue show, the massive ribs measure nearly three inches wide and bear a thick, dark, and spicy-sweet crust. We like them best as part of a three-meat platter weighty with



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EAT

tender, sliced beef brisket and locally made sausage, all redolent from smoking over oak logs. There's an appealingly tart barbecue sauce alongside, but this is barbecue so good you can do without the accessorizing.

The small chicken-fried steak looks to be the size of a hubcap. Its airy, crunchy, golden envelope of a crust holds up admirably under the smooth creamy gravy, appropriately salted and peppered. Beneath, the tenderized cutlet cuts easily with a fork. The best companion for that is the mountain of giant onion rings, covered in bronzed, crispy jackets of crust. With the barbecue, we lean toward smoky pintos and fresh, light cole slaw as sides. Planks of buttery, garlicky Texas toast adorn both our dinners.

I watch, amazed, as a nearby couple gamely attacks the Howling Coyote burger, a monster that covers its large plate. Piled high with grated cheese, chili, bacon, grilled onion, and grilled jalapeño between halves of a toasted, buttered bun, it looks as though it could easily feed four.

Doing our best, we still take home two-thirds of our food to enjoy the following day. And we vow to return someday for Sunday lunch, when tattooed bikers mingle amiably with the after-church crowd, falling easily into conversation over icy longnecks and tall, red tumblers of iced tea.

On the way out, we catch Becki, who runs the front-of-the-house while Loyd and the kitchen staff push out food. We offer her praise for handling the masses with grace.

"Well, we used to downplay the long wait, but people don't want you to sugar-coat it. We appreciate people's patience," she says with a smile.

We tell her we're glad we stuck around. It's just good to arrive with commitment. ★



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Five things to do in Glen Rose at texashighways.com/webextra.

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Next Weekend

WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR FUN?

Keeping Up With *the Johnsons*

JOHNSON CITY EVOLVES AS A
HILL COUNTRY HAVEN FOR CULTURE AND SCIENCE

text by CLAYTON MAXWELL



DAZZLED BY SCIENCE

*The Hill Country
Science Mill's
Fractarium
display includes a
replica of a large
head of Romanesco
broccoli inside
a renovated
grain silo.*

“What is going on here?” The question applies not just to the impressive offerings and architecture of the Science Mill, but to Johnson City as a whole.

R

OMANESCO BROCCOLI, I JUST LEARNED, IS THE ultimate fractal vegetable. On a visit with my children to the new Hill Country Science Mill in Johnson City, we gaze into a supersized glowing head of broccoli. Its multicolored geometric shapes swirl down from a 40-foot silo, giving us a glimpse into the world of fractals, those repeating patterns in nature that can be found in everything from snowflakes to seashells.

Now, my children are curious to learn more. Now, the word “fractal” will have an association for them. Now, just maybe, they will eat their broccoli.

The primary mission of the Science Mill, a children’s museum set in a renovated 1880 gristmill, is to engage kids with the relevancy of science and technology in

ACTIVE LEARNERS
Students play tug of war against their classmates at the Hill Country Science Mill’s Giant Lever, an exhibit that demonstrates the physics of leverage.

The
DISTANCE
to
JOHNSON CITY



Austin
50 miles;
1 hour

San Antonio
65 miles;
1.25 hours

Houston
210 miles;
3.5 hours

Fort Worth
205 miles;
3.5 hours

Midland
290 miles;
4.5 hours



their lives and their futures. “We want to make the invisible visible,” explains Executive Director Renee Williams. “We want to ignite the curiosity of children of all ages and get them asking, ‘What’s going on here?’”

As I experiment with sending a text message into the *Cell Phone Disco*—an installation that demonstrates how the invisible electromagnetic waves of a cell phone trigger reactions on a wall of LED lights—I, too, am thinking, “What is going on here?” The question applies not just to the impressive offerings and architecture of the Science Mill, but to Johnson City as a whole.

Scouting by on US 290, I’ve always appreciated the gristmill silos and the Hill Country appeal of Johnson City, hometown of our nation’s 36th president. But I’d never bothered to stop. However, when I learned that scientist and entrepreneur Bonnie Baskin, the former CEO of two successful biotech companies, had bought the old mill and opened it as a science museum this past February, I could forestall my visit no longer.

Though Johnson City will always be linked to Lyndon B. Johnson and his family, the modern-day town is home to an eclectic swath of personalities, from a young realist painter to retired CEOs like Baskin and an innovative photographer who has organized spirited art installations throughout town, including the world’s largest cyanotype.

“There are a lot of people here interested in cultivating the creative side of life,” says Patty Elliott, half of the husband-wife team behind Pecan Street Brewing, located on the Blanco



County Courthouse square. “We prefer to keep the big box stores out and are proud to support the local businesses run by our community. Johnson City strikes a balance between history-rich ranching families and free-thinking artists who are inspired by this area.”

Patty and her husband Tim landed here after their Houston export and packaging business suffered a crippling fire in 2002. When the charming old Blanco County Supply building went up for sale in 2008, they decided to buy it and pursue their interest in a brewery, even sending their son Sean to Europe to study the brewing craft.

Sean Elliott’s cross-Atlantic training deepens the brewpub’s endearing mash-up of Hill Country style with European pub culture. In the pub’s lively bar, you’ll find hunters in camouflage sitting near both a Texas flag and arrow signs that read: “Munich 8832 KM, London 4967 miles.” Visible behind the bar, the brewery’s large shiny tanks perform the sacred alchemy of turning hops, oats, wheat, and barley into tasty brews with names like Ladybird’s Wit (a Belgian white) and County Jail Pale Ale (an American ale). This coexistence of Old World and New is evident in the pub menu, too, with such offerings as

brick-oven pizza, crispy fish and chips, and good ol’ chicken-fried steak.

The buzz of the brewpub and the Science Mill has proven contagious in this town of about 1,600 people. “They have definitely brought more movement and interest to this little crossroads area,” says Lee Casbeer, a painter and muralist with a studio and gallery on Nugent Avenue, a downtown street intersecting 290 with a concentration of galleries and shops.

“For the past three years, we’ve been coordinating fun art walks on the last Saturday of the month,” says Casbeer, who’s known for his lifelike portraits, and realistic yet imaginative portrayals of people, animals, and places. “I’d say we’ve seen a well-established artists’ community really take shape here.”

Also on Nugent Avenue, a gallery called Texcetera, set in the limestone building that once housed the city library, showcases Texas artists and their creations, such as hand-painted gourds, shibori-dyed scarves, clay pottery and sculpture, fused glass, wood turnings, and Texas-inspired paintings and furniture. Nearby, Black Spur Emporium & Coffee Shop boasts colorful metalwork, eclectic handmade gifts, and home décor. An espresso



Lee Casbeer paints at his gallery



Hahne Estates Winery

machine serves a tasty menu of caffeineated drinks.

And then there's A Smith Gallery, where Amanda Smith and Kevin Tully feature artist-juried photo exhibitions that bring fresh energy to contemporary photography in Central Texas. Smith and Tully are also the masterminds behind the aforementioned "world's largest cyanotype" in which a cast of characters from the community

all lay down together on a 30-by-90-foot piece of photo-sensitive fabric to have their forms outlined by rays of the sun. The resulting piece, titled *Big Blue* (in storage at press time), is visual testimony to how artists, kids, ranchers, grandparents, and everyone else are invited into the fold of playful creativity in Johnson City.

With all of this science, art, and good coffee now percolating in the heart of Johnson City, you might wonder if the town's most famous son has become an afterthought. Not a chance. You can feel the Johnson legacy distinctly when visiting LBJ's boyhood home or strolling through the tall grasses of the 1350s Johnson Family Settlement. Both are National Park Service sites within a stone's throw of the town center. Press the button on a display at the old dogtrot

cabin of LBJ's grandfather to hear a recording of Luci Baines Johnson's animated story of a Lipan Apache raid that her great-grandmother endured there.

I also gain lively LBJ insights at the new Hahne Estates Winery tasting room, located next to Pecan Street Brewing. Winemaker Gary Hahne's parents were friends of the Johnsons and catered huge barbecues and other events at the LBJ ranch. (The ranch, located 15 miles west of Johnson City, is now a National Historical Park.) During LBJ's presidency (1963-1969), Associated Press journalists stayed at the Hahne family's motel in Stonewall. Photographers built a darkroom there and would toss the unneeded black-and-whites of LBJ into the trash. Hahne's father saved the old images, and now they line the walls of the tasting room.

These rare photos, a scrapbook that Lady Bird gave Hahne's mother, and personal correspondence from the Johnsons help paint a rich picture of the Johnsons' deep connections with the local community. But unlike a museum, you can learn all of this while sipping one of the five varieties of Hahne's tasty Hill Country wines.

For a taste of the natural Hill Country setting that the Johnson and Hahne families encountered here in the 19th Century, I spend a night during my visit at Songbird Meadows Bed and Breakfast, a collection of three cabins on 16 wooded acres. The property, covered with trees like live oaks, junipers, and chokecherries, is popular with birders, as more than 100 species have been documented here. Owners Patrick and Patti McLead make sure you feel cared for, from the breakfast basket with freshly baked quiche and banana bread left on your front porch to the cabins' tidy kitchens and the thoughtful walking path, which even has a spot for throwing china plates at a pile of wood in order to relieve stress.

One can only imagine that the Johnsons would be delighted to see their eponymous town on the move, rather than solely replaying its presidential past. In fact, old and new seem to get along quite well here. After all, the town's architectural icon, if you recall, is a funky old mill from the late 1800s that is now a state-of-the-art science museum designed to spark young people's imaginations about the future. ★



JOHNSON CITY

For Johnson City visitor information, including events and lodging, call the Johnson City Chamber of Commerce, 830/868-7684; www.lbjcountry.com. The Johnson City Visitor Center, at 100 E. Main St., opens Wed-Sun, 9-4.

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LaMardi Gras

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April
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May
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Babes on the Bay
Fishing Tournament
Rockport Festival of Wine & Food

June
Texas Game Warden
Fishing Tournament

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PHOTOGRAPHY: DIANE LOYD

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SIMPLY ADOBE

ARCHITECTURE EMERGES FROM
THE LANDSCAPE AS NATURALLY
AS OCOTILLO AND AGAVE

text by
GENE FOWLER
photographs by
BRANDON JAKOBEIT





FEW THINGS EVOKE THE ROMANCE OF THE OLD Southwest more than adobe. Houses made of earth seem timeless, older than the river that flows between Texas and Mexico. They appear to have simply emerged from the landscape as naturally as ocotillo and agave.

According to archeologists with the Texas Historical Commission, indigenous Texas cultures used adobe to create shelters as early as 700 A.D. Centuries later, Apache and Jumano adobe traditions influenced construction techniques in Texas, as did the adobe architectural styles of Pueblo Indians, Spaniards, and Mexicans. Even the original Alamo church in San Antonio was constructed of adobe bricks—a mixture of mud, water, and grass or straw formed in molds and dried in the sun—before the present stone structure was begun in the 1740s.

Adobe structures fare best in drier climates, so most of Texas' earthen architecture was built south and west of San Antonio (and of course, in the Alamo City itself) and in the Panhandle. The dried mud bricks were used to build not only homes, but also churches, saloons, hotels, forts, schools, stagecoach stops, jails, and courthouses. Especially in far West Texas, where adobe construction was common, adobe ruins adorn the terrain, as the earthen walls slowly tumble back to their origins within the soil.



CIBOLO CREEK RANCH, SOUTH OF MARFA:

Spend the night in one of three historic adobe forts at this remote resort that offers fine cuisine, spa therapies, hunting, and exploring on 30,000 acres of wild West Texas borderlands. www.cibolocreekranch.com.

Many historic adobes have been carefully restored, though. Archeological investigations conducted by an Illinois State University field school in the late 1960s and by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department archeologists in the early 1970s guided restoration at Fort Leaton, near Presidio on the Rio Grande. Historians say construction at the site probably began in the 1830s. Regarded as Texas' largest extant adobe structure, the fort—with 31 rooms and walls ranging from 18 inches to 44 inches thick—opened to the public in 1978 as the Fort Leaton State Historic Site.

Several adobes still stand at Fort Davis National Historic Site in the Davis Mountains, including the 1867 Enlisted Men's Barracks, the 1880s Officer's Quarters, and the 1878 Chapel. The barracks adobe is whitewashed with a lime compound, while the two-story Officer's Quarters remain bare adobe. Only one wall of the Chapel still stands.

"The Chapel was the social center of the fort, hosting weddings, plays, and concerts," explains Fort Davis National Historic Site Superintendent John Morlock. "The adobes at Fort Davis contain no straw but are made of earth, sand, and natural cement, a non-hydraulic type of cement made by heating lime rock to break it down into a powder. Another interesting feature here is that the plaster applied to the adobe in the Chapel was found to contain horsehair."

Seen as hovels fostering poor hygiene and as stumbling blocks to progress, many adobes were torn down in the late 1800s and replaced with structures of brick, concrete, wood, and stone, especially after far-flung locales like El Paso were connected by rail. "The removal of the ancient adobe with all their bad associations means a new life for El Paso," editorialized the *El Paso Times* in 1883. While dispatched to the border to deal with Pancho Villa, General John J. Pershing's troops are said to have assisted El Paso authorities in demolishing "germ-infested" adobe homes in El Paso's Chihuahuaita neighborhood. At some point, demolition teams encountered fire from Chihuahuaita snipers. Other communities also banished adobe construction.

Those perspectives are a thing of the past, though, and today even the high-toned art world embraces adobe. *Prada Marfa*, an avant-garde artwork constructed of adobe by artists Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset in 2005, sits on US 90 near Valentine. The 15-by-25-foot sculpture of an upscale Prada shop is complete with handbags and shoes displayed inside.

Adobe is more popular than ever in the art mecca of Marfa. A 19th-Century fixer-upper was recently offered for \$162,000, while a 680-square-foot adobe home, advertised as "just about the last bargain left in Marfa," was on the market at \$65,000. From there, sale prices ran all the way up to a 100-year-old adobe dance hall "transformed into a serene minimalist Modern home" priced at \$895,000.

Adobe enthusiast Simone Swan, a former director of Houston's Menil Foundation, moved to the outskirts of Presidio in the 1990s after discovering nearby Fort Leaton during a Big Bend vacation and later assisted its ongoing restoration. She built an adobe hacienda with Nubian vaults and founded the nonprofit Adobe Alliance, with an educational program active on both sides of the Rio Grande.

Swan studied and apprenticed in Cairo with master adobe architect Hassan Fathy, who is credited with rediscovering the

Nubian vault technique, and points out in her writings that "the English word adobe comes from the Spanish assimilation of *al-tub*, Arabic for sun-dried bricks of mud." Whenever someone expresses pessimism about the permanence of adobe construction, she displays images of Middle Eastern structures and retorts, "Well, these have lasted for 3,000 years."

Let's visit some more "adobe haciendas" from McAllen, down in the Rio Grande Valley, to El Paso on Texas' western edge. ★

Austin-based writer Gene Fowler daydreams of hanging his hat in his own adobe hacienda. Photography Editor Brandon Jakobeit enjoyed the stillness of early mornings and late evenings while out shooting these historic structures.



WEB EXTRA

More on Texas adobes at texashighways.com/webextra.



SOCORRO MISSION, JUST EAST OF EL PASO:

Along with adobe chapels in Ysleta and San Elizario, Socorro Mission forms the Mission Trail on Socorro Road. The current structure was completed in the 1840s, replacing two earlier chapels, the first dedicated in the 1690s, that were swept away by the flooding Rio Grande.
www.visitelpasomissiontrail.com.



ANNIE RIGGS MEMORIAL MUSEUM FORT STOCKTON (*top and left*):
Built in the early 1900s in the Territorial style, a mixture of Pueblo and Victorian architectural styles, the museum originally served as a hotel. Locals say the adobe bricks have held up well with only minor maintenance, partly due to the walls' protection by an overhanging porch roof. www.annieriggsmuseum.org.

MAGOFFIN HOME STATE HISTORIC SITE EL PASO (*right*):
The 1875 Territorial-style home was built by Joseph Magoffin, a four-term mayor of El Paso. A 2011 restoration revealed that the two- to three-foot-thick adobe walls also extended about two feet into the ground, making it difficult to distinguish between the earth and the structure's foundation. www.visitmagoffinhome.com.



INDIAN LODGE, DAVIS MOUNTAINS STATE PARK:

Built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the mid-1930s, the original 16 rooms of the Pueblo-style lodge have adobe walls a foot-and-a-half thick. Pine crossbeams in the rooms were harvested locally, and the ceilings were made from Rio Grande reeds.

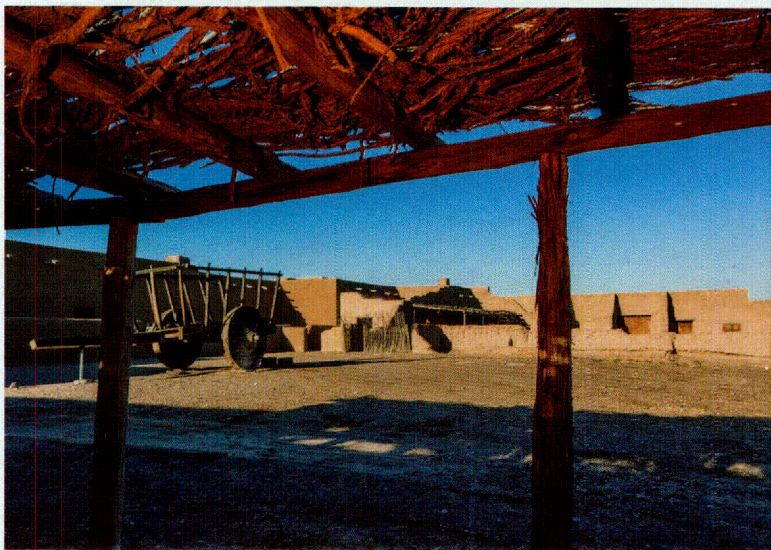
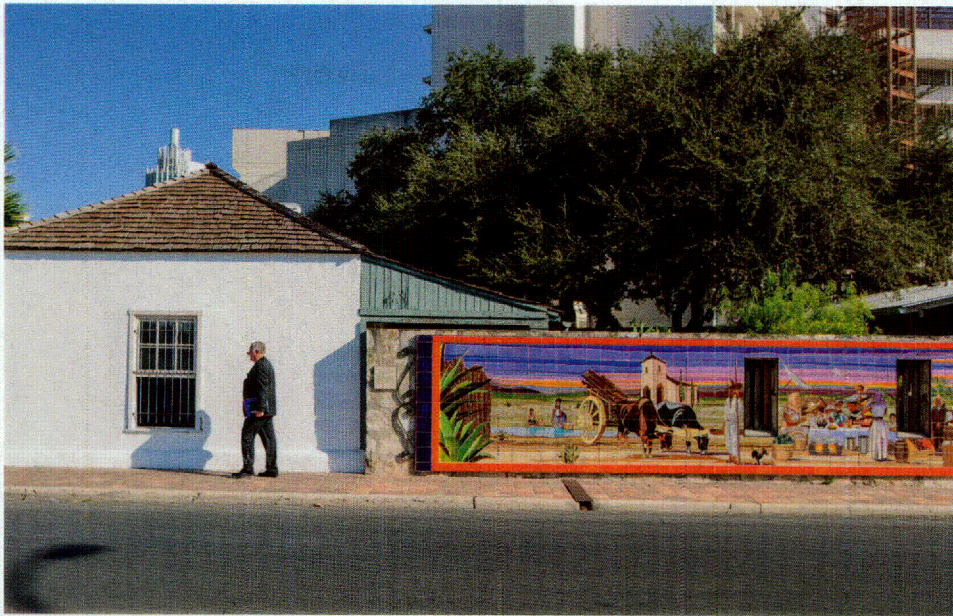
www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/indian-lodge.





CIBOLO CREEK RANCH, PRESIDIO COUNTY:

The ranch includes three adobe forts—El Fortin del Cibolo, El Fortin de la Ciénega, and El Fortin de la Morita—built by trader and rancher Milton Favor in the 1850s. The Big Bend-area pioneer may have been the inspiration for the character Gil Favor on the popular TV show Rawhide.
www.cibolocreekranch.com.

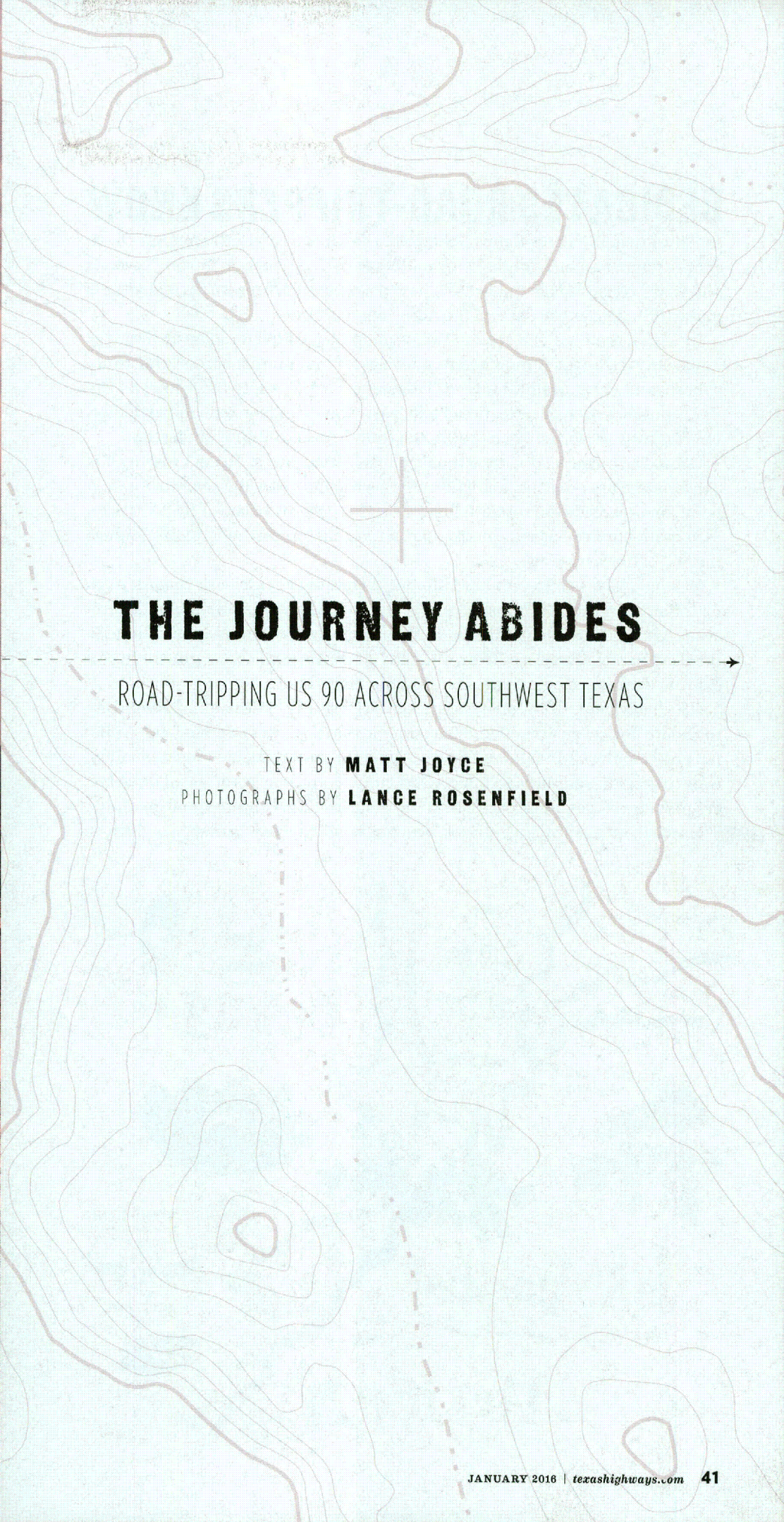


CASA NAVARRO STATE HISTORIC SITE, SAN ANTONIO (top):
A signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence, José Antonio Navarro built his adobe, caliche block, and limestone home in the mid-19th Century. www.visitcasanavarro.com.

FORT LEATON STATE HISTORIC SITE, PRESIDIO (bottom left):
The mid-19th Century trading post and private fort of Ben Leaton was long believed to be built on the ruins of an 18th-Century Spanish mission and presidio. But recent archeological work places the earliest human occupation at the site in the 1820s. www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/fort-leaton.

QUINTA MAZATLAN, MCALLEN (bottom right):
The 1930s adobe hacienda was built by eccentric adventurer Jason Matthews, who is said to have coated the walls with aluminum sulphate paint to prevent radar waves from penetrating his home. Today, Quinta Mazatlan is one of nine World Birding Center sites in the Rio Grande Valley. www.quintamazatlan.com.





THE JOURNEY ABIDES

ROAD-TRIPPING US 90 ACROSS SOUTHWEST TEXAS

TEXT BY **MATT JOYCE**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **LANCE ROSENFELD**

DEDICATED ROAD-TRIPPERS KNOW

that the greatest journeys enrich their final destinations—and sometimes even eclipse them. Famous sightseers from Robert Louis Stevenson to Jack Kerouac and Clark Griswold have shown us how an expedition's pleasures and pitfalls make the entire experience all the more memorable.

In Texas, the Big Bend region is a common inspiration for lengthy highway hauls, attracting far-flung visitors with desert mountains, borderland atmosphere, and curious small towns. There are several westward routes to Big Bend, but in search of a great road trip, we set out to explore one in particular: US Highway 90, focusing on the stretch from Brackettville to Sanderson.

US 90 traverses the prickly, sunbaked hills of Southwest Texas, crossing box canyons and dry creek beds as it links the occasional town, Border Patrol checkpoint, and roadside attraction. Though it may appear desolate at first, there's a rare beauty to this rugged countryside, which has supported human life since the end of the last ice age.

"It would have been a very hard life, but the native people clearly made it work for them," says Jack G. Johnson, park archeologist for Amistad National Recreation Area. "There are numerous seeps and springs in this area, in addition to the Rio Grande, the Pecos River, and the Devils River all converging here. We also have three ecological regions all coming together."

US 90 navigates this scenery, skirting the Edwards Plateau as it flattens into the South Texas brushlands and then tracing the Rio Grande across Lake Amistad and into the Chihuahuan Desert. Along the way, roadside museums illustrate the region's borderland history and culture, and a series of springs and rivers provides recreational oases for swimming, hiking, camping, and boating.

Harried travelers might overlook US 90 in favor of speedy interstate highways,

but this route provides an adventure in its own right, one that sets the historical, cultural, and environmental stage for the Big Bend and points west. You won't regret tacking a couple of extra days onto your itinerary. The proof is in the journey.

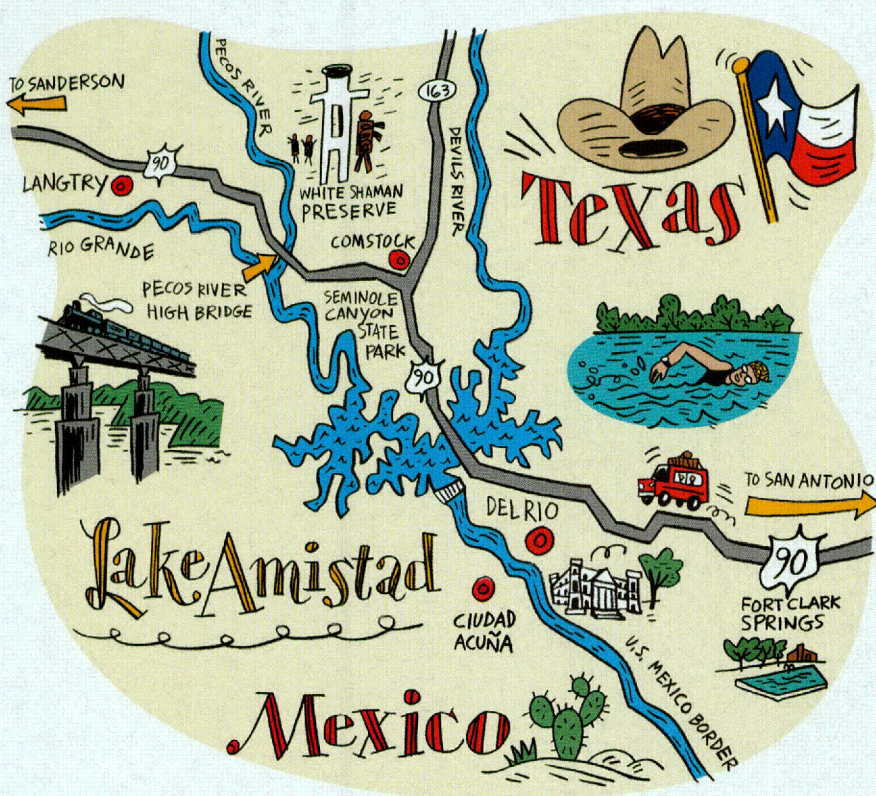
FORT CLARK SPRINGS

Located about 125 miles west of San Antonio, Fort Clark Springs grew up around Las Moras Spring. In the 1800s, Comanches camped at the spring along one of their raiding trails. The Army saw its strategic value and in 1852 claimed the site for a post, in large part to protect the stagecoach roads to El Paso—the predecessors of US 90.

The Army deactivated the post in 1946, and these days, Fort Clark Springs is a 2,700-acre resort and residential community with a motel (set in a renovated barracks), restaurant, golf course, RV park, hiking trails, and dozens of beautiful old limestone-and-wood buildings (all included in a walking-tour brochure). Don't miss the chance for a swim in the spring-fed swimming pool, which is surrounded by a verdant park of live oak, pecan, cypress, and mulberry trees. (*Las moras* is Spanish for mulberries.)

Fort Clark Springs' Old Guardhouse Museum, set in a stout 1870s structure, chronicles the fort's history. Vintage weapons, uniforms, and gear, along with photos, maps, and dioramas, recall the fort's cavalry era; such notable officers as General Jonathan M. Wainwright; and famous local units, including the Black Seminole Scouts, a key military detachment during the Indian Wars.

Particularly fascinating displays include a pastoral mural of a shepherd and his flock painted in 1944 by a Nazi prisoner of war held at Fort Clark; and in front of the building, a large metal megaphone—about four feet long and three feet in diameter on its wide end—which the bugler used to broadcast his musical signals.





ON THE ROAD *From top: The view south from the scenic overlook at the US 90 Pecos River Bridge; the Border Radio exhibit at the Whitehead Memorial Museum in Del Rio; the spring pool at Fort Clark Springs.*



THE WHITEHEAD MEMORIAL MUSEUM, DEL RIO

Natural springs are also a cornerstone of Del Rio, a city of about 38,000 located on the Mexican border, 30 miles west of Fort Clark Springs. The San Felipe Springs have long been a refreshment point for travelers, with historical mentions dating to the Spanish explorers. A popular swimming hole is located at Horseshoe Park, just off US 90.

An 1870s canal system distributes spring water to farms around the area and gives Del Rio's historic neighborhoods the feel of a tree-lined oasis. One of the irrigation canals runs across the grounds of the Whitehead Memorial Museum, a two-acre property circled by small buildings containing exhibits about various aspects of local history.

Visitors enter the Whitehead museum through the original wooden doors of the 1871 Perry Store, a limestone mercantile building. The exhibits

run the gamut, from ranching and pioneer life to the railroad, Laughlin Air Force Base, religion, and medicine. The winemaking exhibit displays 19th-Century presses used by Italian immigrants who grew grapes in the area. (Val Verde Winery, established in 1833, is a half-mile from the museum and offers tastings and tours.)

The museum also tells the story of Judge Roy Bean, the opportunistic 19th-Century saloon owner and lawman of nearby Langtry (more on Bean later). Bean is buried on the museum grounds, and a series of dioramas and artifacts relates his Wild West tale, including the 1910 traveling piano of the English actress Lillie Langtry, for whom Bean professed a proud infatuation.

LAKE AMISTAD

Traveling north out of Del Rio on US 90, drivers come quickly upon Amistad National Recreation Area. The Amistad Visitor Information Center, located six miles from town, provides advice on exploring the scrubby hills surrounding Lake Amistad, along with the picnic sites, campgrounds, hiking and biking trails, swimming coves, and boat ramps that access the water. Angling for bass and catfish is the most popular activity on the lake, rangers say.

The Visitor Center houses exhibits on the native people who inhabited the area and their various styles of rock art. A large reproduction of the Panther Cave pictograph site in Seminole Canyon offers a close-up view for those unable to make the boat trip that's required to see the remote site in person.

A few miles west on US 90, the road makes its first pass across Lake Amistad. Depending on the weather, the water shimmers with every shade of blue imaginable, from bright cobalt under a brilliant afternoon sky to a marbled blue-gray under morning clouds. Amistad Dam, a joint project of the United States and Mexico, collects the water of three rivers: the Rio Grande, the Pecos, and the

Devils. The two nations built the dam in the 1960s, spurred to action by Hurricane Alice of 1954, which caused catastrophic flooding on both sides of the border.

Located a couple of miles west of the Visitor Center, the Diablo East area has a boat ramp, restrooms, and a 1.5-mile loop trail with a cliff view overlooking the water. If you've got a boat, Amistad's Pecos River boat ramp—another 30 miles to the west—provides a serene opportunity to paddle under the towering US 90 bridge and limestone canyon walls, and to explore tranquil hidden coves. Watch for kingfishers, coots, osprey, and herons, and listen for the odd shouts of free-range goats bleating across the canyon.

SEMINOLE CANYON STATE PARK/WHITE SHAMAN PRESERVE

West of Del Rio and the main body of Lake Amistad, US 90 enters vast desert-like terrain, punctuated by spindly sotol and lechuguilla stalks, and softened by the grays and greens of cenizo and huisache. The road undulates with the landscape, passing through stratified road-cuts that reveal 100 million years of geologic history. When the highway crests above the surrounding desert, its vistas extend across boundless rolling hills and to distant Mexican mountain ranges.

The drive creates a sense of timelessness and isolation that's fitting for a visit to Seminole Canyon State Park and the Rock Art Foundation's White Shaman Preserve, where colorful 4,000-year-old paintings on canyon walls illustrate the art, symbolism, and lifeways of the Lower Pecos people. About 300 Lower Pecos pictograph sites have been recorded within a 60-mile radius of the juncture of the Pecos River and the Rio Grande.

At the White Shaman Preserve, located about 10 miles west of Comstock, the nonprofit Rock Art Foundation offers tours to the oldest of these sites every Saturday at 12:30 p.m. (September through May). The 1.5-mile, round-trip

DESERT ART *Clockwise: "The Maker of Peace," a bronze sculpture by Bill Worrell at Seminole Canyon State Park; the White Shaman pictograph at the White Shaman Preserve; fishing on Lake Amistad.*





ABOUT 300 LOWER PECOS PICTOGRAPH SITES HAVE BEEN RECORDED WITHIN A 60-MILE RADIUS OF THE JUNCTURE OF THE PECOS RIVER AND THE RIO GRANDE.



hike descends into a side canyon overlooking the Pecos River and the dramatic US 90 bridge over the Pecos. Along the way, guides like Jack McDonald, a foundation board member, describe the hunter-gatherer lifestyle of the Lower Pecos people and how they survived in such a tough environment. For example, the ubiquitous sotol plants provided food—its roots were baked in earthen ovens—and fiber for weaving material.

The White Shaman Pictograph Site is set in a sheltered grotto. Tour participants get a breathtaking view of the mysterious figures, including the namesake White Shaman, a human-like figure with deer horns and an atlatl spear, a serpent figure, and a person on a boat.

“What we’re looking at right here is

the oldest book in North America,” McDonald says. “For the people who drew this 4,500 years ago, it is their belief of the genesis of mankind. All over this you see death and rebirth. It’s no different that any other belief system. It’s just not written in words. It’s written in pictographs.”

At Seminole Canyon State Park, located 1.5 miles east of the White Shaman Preserve, park rangers and volunteers lead tours to the Fate Bell Shelter (Wednesdays-Sundays). Tours depart from the park headquarters, and it’s worth arriving early to check out the museum, which chronicles regional history from the arrival of humans about 12,000 years ago to the construction of the Southern Pacific Railroad in the

1880s and the sheep- and goat-ranching industry of the 20th Century.

The two-mile, round-trip hike to Fate Bell Shelter navigates a steep limestone staircase to the floor of Seminole Canyon, where pictographs in red, yellow, white, and brown depict human-like figures, a feline with a tail that arches over its back, and what appears to be a sotol plant. Yucca and sotol were paint ingredients, Park Ranger Tanya Petruney notes, as the Lower Pecos people mixed the plants' saponin extract with colored ochre from crushed rocks and deer bone marrow.

Departing the canyon, a Texas earless lizard skitters across the path. Archeologists say the Lower Pecos people would have eaten such lizards. So would the red-tailed hawk circling above the canyon, its underwings radiating a bright-white translucence against the desert sun.

LANGTRY

Perched on a dusty ridge overlooking the Rio Grande, the tiny town of Langtry lies in the thick of the Lower Pecos Canyonlands, about 18 miles west of the Pecos River. Langtry sprang up in 1882 as a railroad camp during the construction of the Southern Pacific line. Among the profiteers following the railroad was Roy Bean, a tent-saloon operator who would come to symbolize Langtry's Wild West roots.

In an effort to quell the lawlessness in area railroad camps, the Pecos County Commissioners Court appointed Bean as the Justice of the Peace in August 1882. The grizzled Bean relished the position, branding himself "The Law West of the Pecos" and holding court in his saloon alongside the railroad tracks.

The Judge Roy Bean Visitor Center (a TxDOT Travel Information Center) preserves Bean's 120-year-old wooden saloon and his adobe home. Visitors can walk inside both structures to see the wooden bar and period furnishings. Other Bean artifacts are displayed inside the Visitor Center, including his weathered copy of the 1897 *Texas*

Revised Statutes book and his 2.5-foot ornately carved walking stick.

Inside the saloon's billiard hall, newspaper clippings and historical photos chronicle what was perhaps Bean's most famous exploit—hosting the Fitzsimmons-Maher heavyweight world-title boxing match on the Mexican bank of the Rio Grande in 1896. Violating both Texas and Mexican bans on the fight, Bean built the ring and a footbridge across the river for the boxers, spectators, and reporters who had come to Langtry by train. Visitor Center staffers can point you to a nearby historical marker overlooking the river-bottom site of the bout, tucked against jagged yellow limestone cliffs.

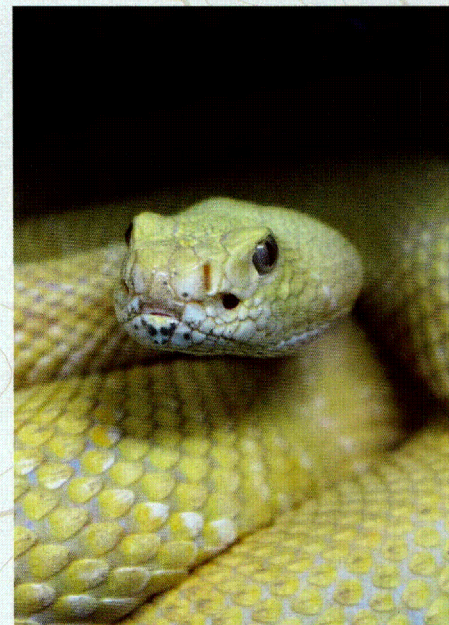
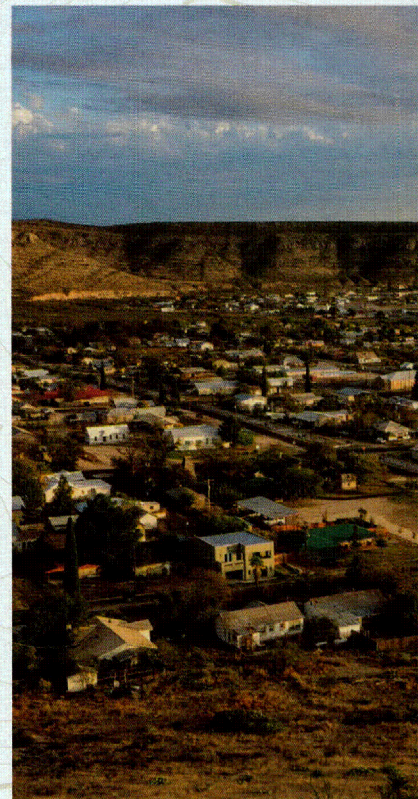
"These eastern sportswriters had never seen a character like Roy Bean," says Jack Skiles, a Langtry native who wrote the book *Judge Roy Bean Country*. "When I was growing up, all the old-timers referred to him as 'that old reprobate.' But he was good in lots of ways too. He saw to it that local widows had wood to keep them warm during the winter and to cook with, and that the local school got help when it needed it."

SANDERSON

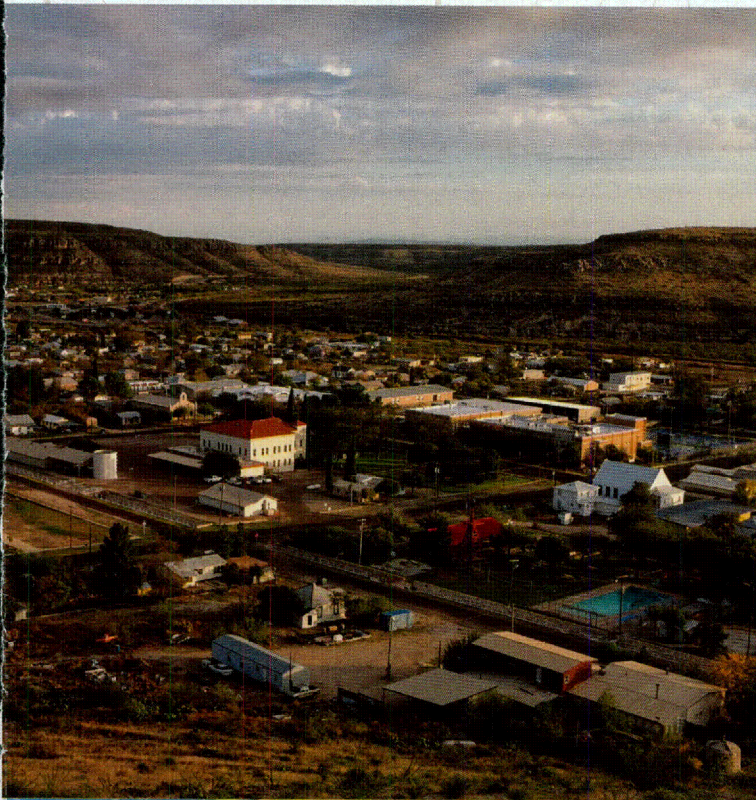
Roadside development thins beyond Langtry as US 90 pierces the Chihuahuan Desert. About 60 miles west of Langtry, the little town of Sanderson also owes its existence to the Southern Pacific Railroad.

As the halfway point between San Antonio and El Paso, the railroad located a division office here in 1882. Roy Bean opened a saloon here, too, but he left soon after local competitor Charlie Wilson spiked Bean's whiskey barrels with kerosene, says Bill Smith, a walking encyclopedia of Sanderson history who runs the Terrell County Memorial Museum and the Terrell County Visitor Center.

Most of Sanderson's historic railroad structures are gone, but the town retains its 1930 Mediterranean-style Terrell County Courthouse and several stops rich in local history. The 2.2-mile Cactus Capital Hiking Trail (named



WILD WEST Clockwise from top: Sanderson from the Cactus Capital Hiking Trail; the Jersey Lilly Saloon in Langtry; an albino Western Diamondback Rattlesnake at the Outback Oasis Motel.



kingsnake—an elusive, non-venomous snake striped orange, gray, black, and white and found only in this region—and several kinds of rattlesnakes.

Kept in secure glass tanks, the rattlers are prone to vibrating their tails when visitors step close. With multiple people in the room, the symphony of rattles seems to emanate from every direction.

Some might find this unnerving. But it's worth hearing if for no other reason than to be alert while walking the rugged countryside of Southwest Texas and the Big Bend. Owner Roy Engeldorf notes that it's easy to avert danger if you encounter a rattlesnake in the wild—simply take a step back and walk away.

There's plenty of ground still to cover, anyway. The journey abides. ★

TH Associate Editor Matt Joyce feels most natural headed west. Says photographer Lance Rosenfield, who recently returned to Austin after three years in Washington, D.C., "This trip was the perfect reintroduction to my home state."

for Terrell County's abundance of cactus) climbs a flattop mesa and provides a bird's-eye view of the town, including Sanderson Canyon, the normally dry arroyo that flash-flooded on June 11, 1965, wiping out much of the town and killing 26 residents.

Memories of the flood are still fresh at the Visitor Center, which carries books and pamphlets about the tragedy and which this summer opened a Heritage Garden, its esperanza and pride-of-Barbados flowers memorializing the flood

victims. The Memorial Museum, which is set in a 1907 home, displays the June 18, 1965, edition of the *Sanderson Times*, the first edition published after the flood, among its collection of artifacts covering a wide swath of local history.

Down US 90 from the Visitor Center, the Outback Oasis Motel offers clean and comfortable lodging, as well as a lesson in herpetology at The Snake House, a display of 35 different snakes in a room adjacent to the front lobby. The collection includes a gray-banded

ESSENTIALS US 90 DESTINATIONS

Fort Clark Springs, Call 830/563-2493; www.fortclark.com.

Whitehead Memorial Museum, Del Rio. Call 830/774-7568; www.whiteheadmuseum.org.

Amistad National Recreation Area, Call 830/775-7491; www.nps.gov/amis.

Seminole Canyon State Park, Call 432/292-4464; www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/seminole-canyon.

The Rock Art Foundation, Call 210/525-9907; www.rockart.org.

Judge Roy Bean Visitor Center, Langtry, Call 432/291-3340.

Terrell County Visitors Center, Sanderson, Call 432/345-2324; www.facebook.com/Terrell-County-Visitor-Center-902145083149049.

Terrell County Memorial Museum, Call 432/345-2936; <http://terrellmuseum.info>.

The Snake House at the Outback Oasis Motel, Call 432/345-2850; www.outbackoasismotel.com.

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LITERAL(LY) SAN ANTONIO.

Charmed by its beauty, history,
and character, writers have found inspiration
in San Antonio for centuries

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text by Gene Fowler with Bryce Milligan

photographs by Al Argueta



ON A 1709 EXPEDITION into the unsettled territory north of the Rio Grande, Fray Isidro Espinosa of Nueva España wrote in his diary about the springs and river that later gave rise to the city of San Antonio, noting that the river could “supply not only a village but a city” and that “we called it the river of San Antonio de Padua.”

In the three centuries since the Spanish priest recorded those impressions, a multitude of authors have sought to capture and convey the city’s mystery and charm. I spent a stimulating afternoon last spring learning about those works and their creators, both historic and contemporary, from my San Antonio *amigo* Bryce Milligan. Poet, novelist, playwright, and all-around authorial top hand, Bryce edited the forthcoming book *Literary San Antonio* (Texas Christian University Press), an anthology that spans three centuries of writing about Texas’ *numero uno* travel destination.

We convened on the San Antonio River, of course, or more specifically, at the Commerce Street Bridge above the famed San Antonio River Walk. On the riverside walkway beneath us, visitors from all over the world strolled past shops, restaurants, and grand hotels, anchored since 1946 by Casa Rio, where the Mexican cuisine still draws crowds. A few doors down from where we stood on Commerce Street, Schilo’s, which dates to 1917, offers fare from another important ethnicity in San Antonio history, the Germans.

“It’s important to understand,” Bryce pointed out, “that the abundance of water here drew native peoples to the area long before the Spaniards established the five

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“It’s important to understand,” Bryce pointed out, “that the abundance of water here drew native peoples to the area long before the Spaniards established the five missions along the river between 1718 and 1731.”

missions along the river between 1718 and 1731.” Collectively declared a World Heritage Site this past July, the missions will soon reflect an even greater degree of preservation and interpretation.

One of the earliest American chroniclers of the city’s water sources, Frederick Law Olmsted, the landscape architect of New York’s Central Park and the United States Capitol grounds, wrote in his 1857 book *A Journey through Texas*: “The San Antonio Spring may be classed as of the first water among the gems of the natural world. ... You cannot believe your eyes, and shrink from sudden metamorphosis by invaded nymphdom.”

Just as Bryce and I were doing, many visiting writers surveyed the daily passage of San Antonio life from the Commerce Street Bridge. At various times the span has been named for both the poet Sidney Lanier and the short-story master O. Henry, who lived briefly in San Antonio in the 1890s while publishing his paper the *Rolling Stone* under his real name, William Sydney Porter. In 1894, *The Red Badge of Courage* author Stephen Crane reportedly jumped from the bridge to save a girl from drowning. According to his biographer Thomas Beer, before Crane’s death at age 28, he had intended to return to San Antonio and write



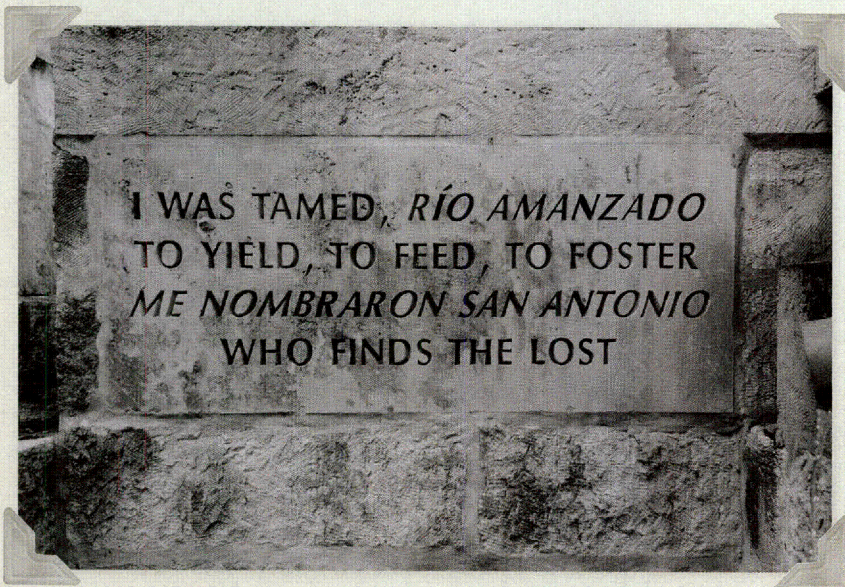
Commerce St. Bridge



Mission Espada



O. Henry house



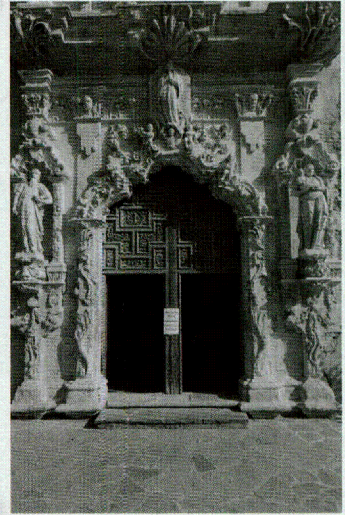
Plaque along the River Walk



Mission Espada interior



San Pedro Springs Park



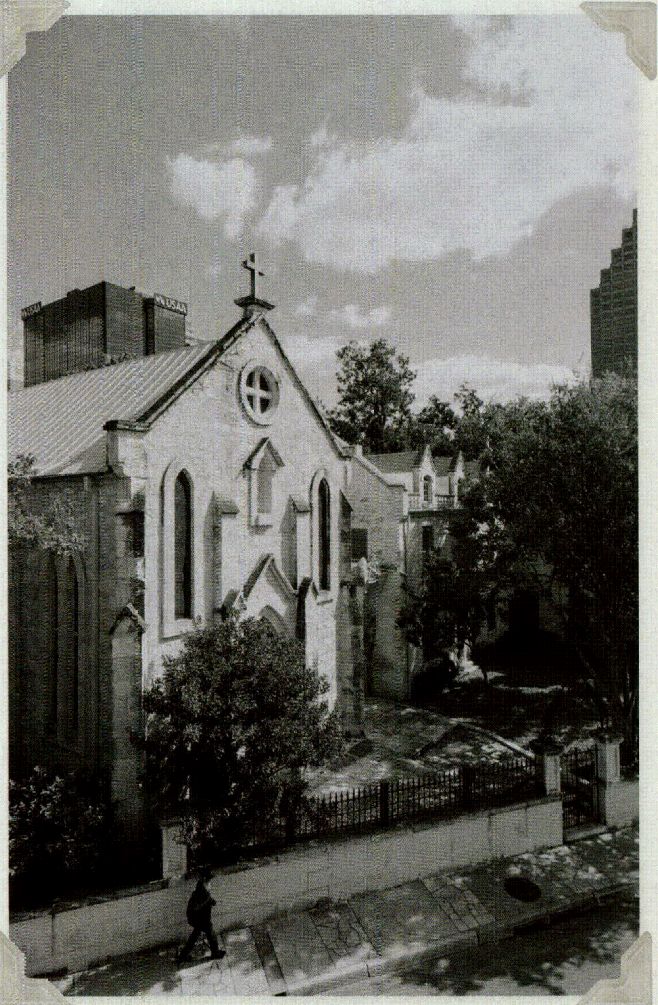
Mission San José



Menger Hotel



Aztec Theatre



Southwest School of Art chapel



another war novel, this one about the Alamo.

Sidney Lanier arrived in the city in 1872, drawn to San Antonio's climate as a possible cure for tuberculosis. Though the disease eventually claimed his life, the Alamo City's character proved something of a temporary elixir. "If peculiarities were quills, San Antonio de Bexar would be a rare porcupine," Lanier marveled in *Southern Magazine* in 1873, noting that the city "bristles with striking idiosyncrasies and bizarre contrasts."

As our own jaunt along the river neared the old Ursuline Academy and Convent, Bryce noted that San Antonio provided the setting for six O. Henry stories. A story titled "The Enchanted Kiss" is set at the convent, where a lovesick drugstore clerk, under the influence of absinthe, hallucinates such things as a 400-year-old cannibal masquerading as a Spanish nobleman masquerading as an Alamo plaza chili merchant. Today, the convent houses the Southwest School of Art, host to year-round exhibitions open to the public. Architectural historians believe that the site's oldest structure, built in 1851, is the oldest extant example of *pisé de terre* work (a rammed earth construction technique) in the state. Other 19th-Century buildings at the school are made of native stone in a Gothic Revival style.

Several blocks to the southwest, at the corner of Laredo and Dolorosa streets, Bryce pointed out the small private house where O. Henry rested his head in San Antonio. Though marked with signage, it sits today looking relatively lonely and forlorn.

Bryce soon decided it was time to remember the Alamo, and we headed several blocks east to the shrine of Texas independence. Standing on the plaza by the iconic structure with its familiar parapet, we agreed that one of the best accounts of the battle ever written was the 2000 novel *The Gates of the Alamo* by Stephen Harrigan. Critics noted that even though readers knew the battle's outcome beforehand, the story transcended spoiler alerts because Harrigan made the reader care about his characters on both sides of the tragic clash.

"Ever since I first saw San Antonio at the age of seven, it has been a magical city to me," Harrigan replied when asked about

his works set in the Alamo City. "As far as I'm concerned, there's no place in Texas that feels more ancient or more mysterious." That sense of mystery and magic is also evident in Harrigan's 2011 novel *Remember Ben Clayton*, which features some terrific scenes in the bar of the storied Menger Hotel, just south of the Alamo.

Open since 1859, the Menger has hosted many noted authors. Oscar Wilde stayed at the hotel in 1882, when he came to lecture San Antonians on "Decorative Art." The *San Antonio Light* reported that the English author was attired in "a drab velvet jacket" and wore "white lace ruffles" and "scarlet stockings."

Though less flamboyant, Robert Frost pondered his famous verses about "the road not taken" while staying at the Menger during several visits from the 1920s to the '40s. The poet spent a lot of time at the now-defunct Rosengren's Books, which in the 1930s was located on the ground floor of the Milam Building at Travis and Soledad streets. During one visit, he wrote to his colleague Louis Untermeyer, "I am deep in Texas history and don't want to be bothered by any but the ghosts of Goliad and the Alamo." Frost inscribed a photograph for the store, "Wishing to be remembered in the best of bookstores." It's now in a private collection. Later housed in the Crockett Hotel by the Alamo, the beloved bookshop closed in 1987.

But Frost would be glad to know that the art of writing in San Antonio is alive and well. "San Antonio was the first city in Texas to name its own poet laureate," Bryce told me. "And the *San Antonio Express-News* is the rare daily to publish poetry on its Sunday book review page."

The city's first poet laureate, Carmen Tafolla, also served as the 2015 Poet Laureate of Texas. Her books include *Curandera*, *Sonnets and Salsa*, *Rebozos*, and *This River Here—Poems of San Antonio*. The last title, from Bryce's publishing company Wings Press, is filled with rich evocations of San Antonio places, from the popular taverns called ice-houses to the Mission San José. One poem recounts the mid-1700s treaty between San Antonio authorities and the Apache nation, which the two parties supposedly made official by burying weapons and a live horse in

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Waterfall along the River Walk in San Antonio

one of the downtown plazas. A plaque on the front of the Bexar County Courthouse commemorates the event. And again and again, Tafolla's work returns to the meandering flow of the San Antonio River.

Today, the River Walk has been extended to create a 15-mile "linear park" in the heart of the city. Planned to eventually reach the Witte Museum, the "Museum Reach" section extends to the San Antonio Museum of Art and the Pearl, an eclectic dining, lodging, and shopping complex at the site of the former Pearl Brewery. The "Mission Reach" section includes hike-and-bike trails to four of the Spanish-Colonial missions along the San Antonio River to the south.

Another San Antonio poet published by Wings Press, Rosemary Catacalos describes herself as "an East Side Meskin Greek" in her poem "Swallow Wings." Known for blending the history, folklore, and mythologies of her dual Mexican-Greek heritage into poems that often have San Antonio settings, Catacalos was the 2013 Poet Laureate of Texas. In poems like "Homesteaders," dedicated to the Edwards Aquifer, she too pays homage to the life-giving resource that led to the city's founding. "They came for the water ..." she writes in the poem, "water flushed pure through the spine and ribs of the birth of life."

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Another poem, "Restoration of the Cathedral," honors the preservation of the mid-1700s San Fernando Cathedral on Main Plaza. Imagining that the historic site inspired Frost, Lanier, and countless other poets enriched the visiting experience on my most recent trip.

The last place Bryce and I visited on our rounds of San Antonio's literary landmarks really blew up my boots. Today, the Aztec Theatre is a one-of-a-kind downtown music venue, hosting artists like Buddy Guy, Todd Rundgren, and George Clinton & Parliament-Funkadelic. John Phillip Santos, the first Mexican-American Rhodes Scholar, immortalized the 1926 venue in his remarkable 1999 memoir, *Places Left Unfinished at the Time of Creation*.

"On Saturdays," Santos wrote, "all day long, with brothers, cousins, and friends, we watched Kung Fu triple features at the Aztec Theatre, a cinema palace in downtown San Antonio. The walls of the theater were decorated with colorful panels of Mayan and Aztec glyphs, interspersed with the faces of various gods, all presided over by the Feathered Serpent God Quetzalcoatl, whose image surrounded the screen as Bruce Lee threw slow-motion aerial drop kicks. Coyolxauhqui, the moon-faced Mexican night goddess, her face pierced and gilded, stared down at us in the red light of the exit signs."

What mere words, I wonder, could possibly be more *puro San Antonio* than that? ★

Gene Fowler will speak about his book Mavericks—A Gallery of Texas Characters at the Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio on January 10. Bryce Milligan's Wings Press celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2015. Al Arqueta lives in Austin and specializes in travel photography.



ESSENTIALS

SAN ANTONIO BY THE BOOK

For details on San Antonio festivals, tours, lodging, restaurants, and attractions, call the San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau, 800/447-3372; www.visitsanantonio.com.

EVENTS

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

January's travel spotlights:



GULF COAST > Houston

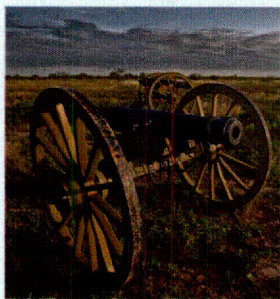
MLK Day

The spirit of civil-rights icon Martin Luther King Jr. lives on in Houston—a city he visited less than six months before his assassination—where two MLK Day parades will celebrate his legacy on January 18. The Black Heritage Society's MLK Birthday Parade takes place downtown, while the MLK Parade Foundation's MLK Grande Parade is in Midtown. The parades culminate several days of activities, including children's parades organized by both groups, the Heritage Society's Gospel Fest, and the Parade Foundation's marching-band contest at Rice Stadium. www.blackheritagesociety.org; www.mlkgrandeparade.org.

PRAIRIES AND LAKES > Fort Worth

Texas Folk Art

Texas Folk Art, at the Amon Carter Museum of American Art through September 19, features paintings and sculptures by nine self-taught Texas artists, including Clara McDonald Williamson, H.O. Kelly, Velox Ward, and Rev. Johnnie Swearingen, among others. The artworks often reflect the artists' daily influences and inspirations, chronicling their impressions of subjects like rural life and community rituals. "These artists were unfettered by academic training or the traditional guidelines of art making," says curator Shirley Reece-Hughes. "There's such a freedom to their expression because relaying stories and ideas was their primary concern." www.cartermuseum.org.



GULF COAST > Brownsville

Battlefield Tours

The U.S.-Mexican war broke out in May 1846 among the scrubby prairies and ditches of the Rio Grande Valley near present-day Brownsville. Today, Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park preserves the sites of the war's first two battles—Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma—and offers wintertime ranger-led walking tours that explore the battles' dynamics and personalities. Through March, Palo Alto tours are at 10 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Sunday; Resaca de la Palma tours are at 2 p.m. Thursday. Call first. www.nps.gov/paal/index.htm; 956/541-2785, ext. 333.

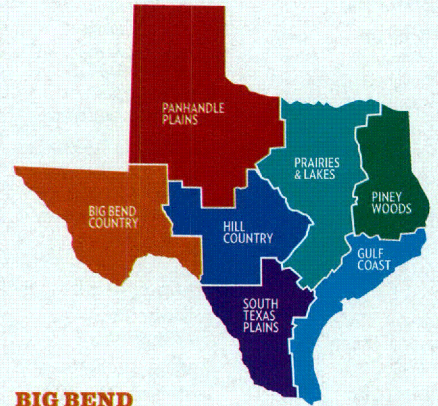
PRAIRIES AND LAKES > Clifton

The Parkers' Paradox

At the Bosque Museum in Clifton, *A Woman Of Two Worlds and a Man In Two Worlds* relates the frontier story of Cynthia Ann Parker and her son, Quanah. The exhibit's 48 photos chronicle the ordeal of Cynthia Ann, who was captured as a girl during an 1836 raid and then lived as a Comanche for 25 years before being forced back into American society. Her son, Quanah Parker, was a prominent Comanche warrior during the tribe's final days of resistance and played a pivotal role in the tribe's attempts to adjust to reservation life. January 11 to March 4. www.bosquemuseum.org.



PHOTOS: (from top) Courtesy MLK Grande Parade; Velox Ward, *Please Feed Me*, Collection of Otis and Nancy Welch; J. Griffith Smith; courtesy Library of Congress.



BIG BEND COUNTRY

ALPINE: *Tom Lea Retrospective* Through March 20. 432/837-8145

FORT STOCKTON: Pecos County Livestock Show January 8-9. 432/336-2541

MONAHANS: Resolution Run January 9. www.monahans.org 432/943-2187

ODESSA: Sand Hills Indoor Rodeo January 7-16. www.sandhillstockshowandrodeo.com 432/366-3951

ODESSA: Arenacross and Freestyle Championships January 22-23. www.jackalopes.org 432/552-7825

VAN HORN: Culberson County Stock Show January 9. www.vanhorn-texas.us 432/283-8440

GULF COAST

ARANSAS PASS: Texas Winter Market I January 9-10. www.texasmarketguide.com 888/225-3427

BEAUMONT: Spindletop Anniversary Celebration January 9. www.spindletop.org 409/880-1750

BROWNSVILLE: Living History January 2. Palo Alto Battlefield NHP. www.nps.gov/paal/ 956/541-2785 x333

CLEAR LAKE AREA: Yachty Gras Boat Parade January 30.

www.yachtygras.com 713/882-4040

CORPUS CHRISTI: Polar Bear Plunge January 1. 361/549-3662

CORPUS CHRISTI: Winter Lecture Series January 6-February 24. www.stxbot.org 361/852-2100

CORPUS CHRISTI: Blacklock's Intro to the Exciting World of Birds January 19. www.stxbot.org 361/852-2100

EDNA: Brackenridge Winter Carnival & Snow Day January 16. www.brackenridgepark.com 361/782-5456

FREEPORT: MLK Celebration Parade and Rally January 18. www.mlccc.org 979/297-2801

GALVESTON: *Ice Land: Ice Sculptures with SpongeBob SquarePants* Through January 10. www.moodygardens.org 800/582-4673

GALVESTON: Yaga's Chili Quest and Beer Fest January 15-16. www.yagaschiliquest.com 409/770-0999

GALVESTON: Mardi Gras Galveston January 29-February 9. www.mardigrasgalveston.com 409/770-0999

GALVESTON: ArtWalk
January 9.
www.galveston.com/artwalk
800/821-1894

HOUSTON: KLUTZ®
Amazingly Immature
Through January 5.
www.cmhoustons.org

HOUSTON: 2016
International Watercolor
Exhibition and Workshop
Through March 31.
www.watercolorhoustons.org
713/942-9966

HOUSTON: Mark Rothko:
A Retrospective
Through January 24.
www.mfah.org
713/639-7300

HOUSTON: Asian
Americans in Houston:
A Kaleidoscope of Cultures
Through January 16.
www.heritagesociety.org

HOUSTON: Pleasure and
Piety: The Art of Joachim
Wtewael (1566-1638)
Through January 31.
www.mfah.org

HOUSTON:
Magical Winter Lights
Through January 10.
www.magicalwinterlights.com
713/496-0556

HOUSTON: Contingent
Beauty: Contemporary Art
from Latin America
Through February 28.
www.mfah.org

HOUSTON: ROCO
Connections: Beer
and Brass January 7.
www.rocohoustons.org/
performances/beer-brass/
713/665-2700

HOUSTON: Houston
Marathon January 17.
www.chevronhoustons
marathon.com
713/957-3453

HOUSTON: Space Center
Houston's Independence
Plaza Grand Opening
January 23.
www.spacecenter.org/
independence
281/244-2100

ROCKPORT: Gospel Music
Festival January 7-10.
www.gospelforce.org/
festival.html
361/205-2789

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND:
Polar Bear Dip and
New Year's Day Beach Party
January 1.
www.claytonsbeachbar.com
800/767-2373

SUGAR LAND:
Biodiversity in the Art
of Carel Pieter Brest
van Kempen
Through February 14.
www.hmns.org
281/313-2277

VICTORIA: Victoria
Comic Con January 23-24.
www.victoriacomicon.org

HILL COUNTRY

AUSTIN: Ladies and
Gentlemen ... The Beatles
Through January 16.
www.lbjlibrary.org

AUSTIN: The Nazi
Olympics: Berlin 1936
Through January 29.
512/471-0995

AUSTIN: Donald Moffett
Through February 28.
www.blantonmuseum.org

AUSTIN: Moderno:
Design for Living in
Brazil, Mexico, and
Venezuela, 1940-1978
Through January 17.
www.blantonmuseum.org

AUSTIN: The Crusader
Bible: A Gothic Masterpiece
December 12-April 3.
www.blantonmuseum.org

AUSTIN: Citywide
Garage Sale
January 2-3, 30-31.
www.cwgs.com
512/441-2828

AUSTIN: Life and Death
on the Border 1910-1920
January 23-April 3.
www.thestoryoftexas.com
512/936-8746

BANDERA: Cowgirl
Round-up and ShowDeo
January 1. www.bandera
cowboycapital.com
830/796-4413

BANDERA: Cowboy
Capital Opry January 5.
www.silversagecorral.org
830/796-4969

BANDERA: Bandera
100K, 50K, and 25K
January 9.
www.tejastrails.com/
Bandera 830/796-4413

BANDERA:
Frontier Times Museum
Cowboy Camp
January 10. www.
frontiertimesmuseum.org
830/796-3864

BANDERA: 11th Street
Cowboy Mardi Gras
January 28-30. www.
11thstreetcowboybar.com
830/796-4849

BANDERA:
Wild Game Dinner
January 30.
830/796-3091

BOERNE: Kendall County
Jr. Livestock Show
January 8.
www.visitboerne.org
830/249-9343

DRIPPINGS SPRINGS:
Hays County Livestock Show
January 26-28.
www.hayscountylivestock
show.com 512/858-4725

FREDERICKSBURG:
Tom Lea, LIFE Magazine
and World War II
Through January 16.
www.pacificwarmuseum.org

FREDERICKSBURG:
First Friday Art Walk
January 1. www.ffawf.com
830/997-6523

FREDERICKSBURG:
Fredericksburg Trade Days
January 15-17.
www.fbtradedays.com
210/846-4094

FREDERICKSBURG:
Luckenbach Blues
Festival January 23.
www.luckenbachtexas.com
830/997-3224

FREDERICKSBURG:
Hill Country Indian Artifact
Show January 30.
www.hillcountryartifacts.com
830/626-5561

GRUENE: Hair of the Dog
Day January 1.
www.gruenehall.com
830/629-5077

JOHNSON CITY: Blanco
County Youth Stock Show
January 14-17.
www.blanco.agrilife.org
830/868-7167

KERRYVILLE: First Friday
Wine Share January 1.
www.storkcountry.com
830/200-1483

KERRYVILLE: Hill Country
District Junior Livestock
Show January 15-23.
www.hcdjls.org
830/792-4102

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

NEW BRAUNFELS:
Antique Show
January 8-10. www.
heritageeventcompany.com
918/619-2875

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

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

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

STONEWALL: Black-Eyed
Pea and Cornbread
Cook-off January 1.
www.torredipietra.com
830/644-2829

UVALDE: Four Square
Friday January 8.
www.visituvalde.com
830/278-4115

PANHANDLE PLAINS

ALBANY: Texas Moderns:
Bror Utter Through
February 7.
www.theoldjailartcenter.org
325/762-2269

ALBANY: Cell Series:
Linda Ridgway
Through February 7.
www.theoldjailartcenter.org
325/762-2269

CANYON: Hunting the
Perfect Accessory
Through January 9.
www.panhandleplains.org
806/651-2244

CANYON: Wildlife and
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the Panhandle-Plains Region
Through February 6.
www.panhandleplains.org

CANYON: Philip R.
Goodwin: America's
Sporting & Wildlife Artist,
A Private Collection
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www.panhandleplains.org

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Paintings from the Sarah
Campbell Blaffer Foundation
Through January 10.
www.samfa.org
325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: Views of
Venice by American Artists
from the Graham D.
Williford Charitable Trust
Through January 10.
www.samfa.org
325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO:
Family Day: Drama
January 9. www.samfa.org
325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: Cactus
Market Days January 16.
325/949-6200

SAN ANGELO:
Downtown Art Walk
January 21.
www.samfa.org
325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: Salmon
Sculpture Competition
Through August 7.
www.samfa.org
325/653-3333

PINEY WOODS

JEFFERSON: Quilts
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www.jeffersonquiltshow.com
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New Orleans: Mardi Gras
Celebration January 30.
www.visitpalestine.com
903/723-3014

THE WOODLANDS:
Taste of the Town
January 28. www.tasteof
thetown.org 281/367-5777

THE WOODLANDS:
Winter Wonderland and
the Woodlands Ice Rink

Through January 18. www.
holidayinthewoodlands.com
877/963-2447

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

ARLINGTON: Modern
Masters: Warhol, Pollock,
Lichtenstein, Rauschenberg,
de Kooning, Motherwell
Through February 21.
www.arlingtonmuseum.org

BASTROP: Big Chill
Adventure Race January 24.
www.toocoolracing.com/
big-chill 512/775-1503

BELTON: Citywide Garage
Sale January 9-10. www.
cwgs.com 512/441-2828

BELTON: Sami Show
Marketplace January 23-24.
www.samishow.com
512/441-7133

BONHAM: Sam Rayburn
Day Celebration January 9.
www.visitsamrayburnhouse.
com 903/583-5558

CANTON: First Monday
Trade Days December 31-
January 3, 28-31.
www.firstmondaycantons.com
903/567-6556

CLARKSVILLE: Music and
Art Expo by Red River
Revue Center for the Arts
January 9. www.redriver
revue.weebly.com
903/739-0659

DALLAS: Alexander Gorlizki:
Variable Dimensions Through
March 20. www.crow
collection.org 214/979-6430

DALLAS: Giuseppe Penone:
Being the River, Repeating
the Forest Through
January 10. www.
NasherSculptureCenter.org

DALLAS: Sightings: Alex
Israel Through January 31.
www.NasherSculpture
Center.org

DALLAS: Creatures of Light:
Nature's Bioluminescence
Through February 21.
www.perotmuseum.org
214/428-5555

DALLAS: Jackson Pollock:
Blind Spots Through
March 20. www.dma.org

DALLAS: Lone Star Circus
December 26-January 3.
www.dct.org 214/740-0051
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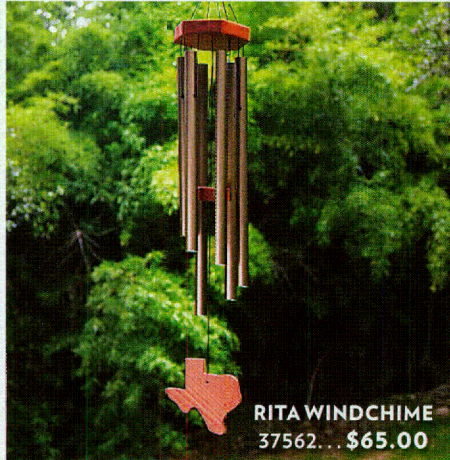
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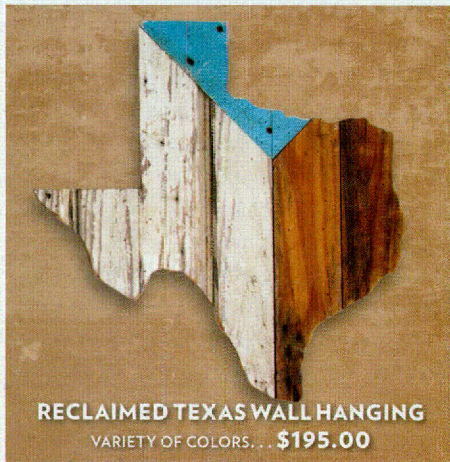
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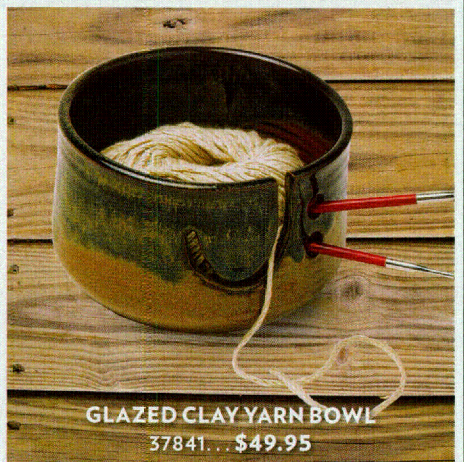
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DALLAS: Deep Ellum Outdoor Market January 16. www.deeplummarket.com

DALLAS: DFW Winter Boat Expo January 29-February 6. www.dallasboatexpo.com 972/247-1369

DALLAS: Big D Climb January 30. 972/996-5900

ELGIN: Sip, Shop and Stroll January 14. www.elgintx.com 512/281-5724

FARMERSVILLE: Farmers and Fleas Market January 2. www.farmersvilletx.com 972/784-6846

FORT WORTH: Pasture Cows Crossing Indian Creek Through May 30. www.cartermuseum.org 817/738-1933

FORT WORTH: Remington and Russell, Retold Through January 10. www.sidrichardsonmuseum.org 817/332-6554

FORT WORTH: Laura Wilson: That Day Through February 14. www.cartermuseum.org 817/738-1933

FORT WORTH: *Gustave Caillebotte: The Painter's Eye* Through February 14. www.kimbellart.org 817/332-8451

FORT WORTH: FOCUS: *Joyce Pensato* Through January 31. www.themodern.org

FORT WORTH: Cowboys of Color Rodeo January 18. www.fwssr.com 817/877-2420

FORT WORTH: FOCUS: *Glenn Kaino* January 30-April 17. www.themodern.org

FRISCO: Taekwondo America National Tournament January 15-17. www.taekwondoamerica.org

GARLAND: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade January 16. www.garlandtxnaacp.org 972/381-5044

GLEN ROSE: Birding: Beak to the Basics December 14-January 5. www.fossilrim.org 254/897-2960

GRANBURY: First Saturday Bird Walk January 2. www.actonnaturecenter.org 817/326-6005

GRANBURY: Music, Massage and Merlot January 8, 29. www.dvinewineusa.com/

locations/texas/granbury 817/573-7200

GRANBURY: Last Saturday Gallery Night on the Square January 30. www.facebook.com/gallerysofgranbury 817/579-7733

HALLETTSVILLE: Antique Tractor Show and Pull January 15-16. 361/772-4619

HALLETTSVILLE: State Championship Domino Tournament January 24. 361/772-0084

MCKINNEY: *Dinosaurs Live! Life-Size Animatronic Dinosaurs* Through February 21. www.heardmuseum.org 972/562-5566

MCKINNEY: Second Saturday Bird Walk January 9. www.heardmuseum.org 972/562-5566

MCKINNEY: Third Monday Trade Days January 15-17. www.tmttd.com 972/562-5466

PLANO: Dallas Area Train Show January 17-18. www.dfwtrainshow.com 817/721-5064

SHERMAN: Red River Mardi Gras and Jazz Festival January 29-30. www.downtownsherman.com 903/816-2811

SMITHVILLE: Bastrop County Martin Luther King Holiday Walk January 18. www.smithvilletx.org

TEMPLE: *Beautiful Berbers Watercolors Exhibit* January 15-March 18. www.cacARTS.org 254/773-9926

TEMPLE: Cultural Activities Center Art Competition January 15-March 18. www.cacARTS.org 254/773-9926

THE COLONY: Polar Open Disc Golf Tournament January 23.

www.visitthecolonytx.com 972/625-1106

WACO: RAM Texas Circuit Finals Rodeo December 31-January 2. www.extracoeventscenter.com

WASHINGTON: *Enduring Spirit: African Americans in 19th-Century Texas* Through February 15. www.starmuseum.org 936/878-2461

WAXAHACHIE: Martin Luther King Day Parade January 18. www.waxahachiechamber.com 972/937-2390

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

EAGLE PASS: Maverick County Junior Livestock Show January 24-30. www.maverick.agrilife.org

GOLIAD: Fort Defiance Garrison January 9. www.presidiolabahia.org 361/645-3752

GOLIAD: *El Soldado de Mexico* January 16. www.presidiolabahia.org 361/645-3752

LAREDO: Laredo Northside Market January 2. 956/763-0138

LAREDO: Washington's Birthday Celebration January 21-February 22. www.wbcaredo.org 956/722-0589

SAN ANTONIO: Alamo Bowl January 2. www.alamobowl.com

SAN ANTONIO: Martin Luther King Jr. March January 18. www.visitsanantonio.com

WESLACO: Alfredo Weslaco Music and Art on the Street January 21. www.facebook.com/AlfredoWeslaco 956/969-0838

DRINK

Gardens of Beer

« continued from page 23] poutine, that classic Canadian street food comprised of fries, cheese curds, and mushroom gravy.

The list of more than 30 specialty sausages is equally impressive. Gourmet options like the incredibly complex links made of duck, bacon, and figs complement classics like spicy Cajun andouille and mild bratwurst. Topped with crisp sauerkraut and backed by the horseradish burn of homemade mustard, the brat is a balanced bit of sausage heaven.

And what goes better with sausage than beer? With more than 100 taps, the Banger's beer list is one of the largest in Austin. Curated by a committee of beer-loving employees, the tap wall features everything from local favorites like the citrusy Live Oak Hefewizen to hard-to-find Belgian quads and West Coast double IPAs.

The Banger's experience doesn't stop with food and drink. The restaurant features regular live music, as well as a small off-leash dog park. At night, the outdoor space glows warmly thanks to strings of yellow lights. With a band on stage, pups playing in the dog park, and the smell of smoked meat wafting through the air, Banger's feels like a haven from the Rainey Street crowd. According to Siegel, that's the entire point.

"Some of the highest compliments we get are when people tell us, 'this is the first place we take out-of-town guests.' Weaving our way into the fabric of Austin is incredibly exciting and gratifying to us," he says.

And that's what connects the old and the new: a devotion to the communities they serve. The Ausländer pays tribute to the area's rich German heritage while Banger's keeps true to Austin's easygoing culture in the midst of massive expansion. Yet the missions of both restaurants go hand in hand: to create a place where longtime friends gather and new friendships are made, all fueled by good food and great beer. Saddle up to a bench and grab a pint. Your new favorite beer garden awaits. ★



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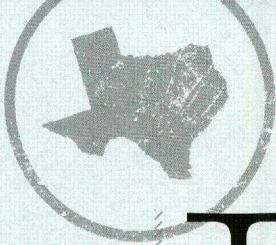
BUTCHERING AND CURING A HOG
AT GRAPEVINE'S NASH FARM

Text by MATT JOYCE



TIP TO TAIL

Scraps from the butchered hog are ground, wrapped in cornhusks, and hung in the smoke-house to make breakfast sausage.



CUT HERE

Below: Nash Farm Manager Jim Lauderdale, center, explains how to butcher a hog. Opposite page: Lauderdale and volunteer teacher Mike Franklin scald the hog's body in steaming water.

LIKE MOST TEXANS, I GREW UP LOVING PORK: BACON, bratwurst, ham, carnitas, chops, loin, hot dogs, baby-back ribs, breakfast patties, chorizo, and so on. But also like most people in this urbanized state, my primary contact with pork has been the plastic-wrapped products in grocery stores. When my grandpa tells one of his favorite stories about growing up on a farm in Wharton County—the one about chasing down a fugitive hog that had somehow escaped his father's initial slaughter attempt—I'm struck by my ignorance of the nitty-gritty of raising, butchering, and preparing meat for the dinner table.

That's why I'm here at Nash Farm in Grapevine on a brisk January morning, gathered with about 30 other people around a pig carcass, notebooks and cameras in hand. The Hog Butchering and Curing Workshop is part of the heritage farm's historic foodways program, a series of classes demonstrating how farm families of 19th-Century Texas made staples like canned produce, bread, and cheese. The hog workshop takes place annually on the third weekend of January.

"These skills are in danger of being lost, much like blacksmithing and many other heritage skills, if people don't continue to use and teach them," says Farm Manager Jim Lauderdale, decked out in a full-brimmed felt hat and brown overalls. "The workshops serve as good reminders to people of where we came from and where we're



NASH FARM

is at 626 Ball St. in Grapevine. Hours vary seasonally. Call 817/410-3558; www.nashfarm.org.

FIND MORE ONLINE

For more photos of Nash Farm, visit texas.highways.com/true.



going, and to teach skills that people can still incorporate into their lives today.”

In a yard between the restored 1905 barn and 1869 farmhouse, volunteers stoke a fire at the base of a steel drum filled with hot water, puffing smoke and steam into the dry winter air. Lauderdale pulls on leather work gloves and motions to the 200-pound cinnamon-colored hog, a Duroc breed, hanging upside down from a stout mesquite tree branch. (Lauderdale had killed the sow with a .22 rifle that morning before the workshop.)

“Butchering is a skill that has been used since civilization began,” Lauderdale says, relating the skill to 1800s frontier farm life. “A lot of times we think of Texas as a beef state, but in this time period, your average rural family would be much more likely to eat pork.”

And with that, Lauderdale calls for helpers to hoist the hog’s body using ropes and a pulley into the steel drum’s scalding water—a technique used by 19th-Century farmers to help them scrape the hog’s hair before butchering. (Farmers of that time didn’t skin the pigs, as modern hunters would do, because the hide contributed to the meat’s preservation in the curing process.) With the steaming sow stretched out on a worktable, I step forward and grab one of the bell scrapers. Though I scrape with all my might, I dislodge only a small patch of the coarse hair before yielding my scraper to another workshop participant. It’s hard work: The pig is scalded several times, and it takes the group about 90 minutes to scrape the carcass clean of hair.

With the naked pig again hanging upside down from the mesquite branch, Mike Franklin, an experienced wild-game butcher, eviscerates the animal, demonstrating how to carefully excise the organs without tainting the meat. The rank smell of fresh animal guts wafts across the yard as the organs and intestines are collected in a bucket. Franklin then handsaws down the backbone, splitting the hog into two symmetrical halves. Franklin and Lauderdale then coach participants



The Hog Butchering and Curing Workshop is part of the heritage farm’s historic foodways program, a series of classes demonstrating how farm families of 19th-Century Texas made staples like canned produce, bread, and cheese.

through the process of butchering the halves. The resulting cuts start to resemble the packaged products I’m accustomed to seeing in the supermarket.

It’s an eye-opening start to the workshop, a two-day, step-by-step lesson in the methods our ancestors used to process and preserve hog meat to feed their families throughout the year. On day two, the class covers making link sausage and breakfast sausage with the meat trimmings; rendering the lard in a cast-iron pot for future use in cooking or to make soap; frying cracklings with fat and skin; coating the meats in sugar cure to withdraw moisture for

preservation; cold-smoking the meats in the smokehouse to repel insects; and aging the hams for flavor and preservation.

“You don’t have to have any formal training to do this,” Lauderdale says as he rubs Morton’s sugar cure (a blend of salt, sugar, and food preservatives) into one of the hog’s 25-pound hams. “When I first started doing this program, all I had was a curing guide and an interest.”

Located less than a mile from historic downtown Grapevine, Nash Farm traces its roots to 1859, when the Nash family emigrated from Kentucky and bought the original 110-acre spread. The Nash family sold the farm in the 1920s, and by 1995, the property was targeted for development as multi-family housing. That’s when the Grapevine Heritage Foundation stepped in and bought the farm, beginning a years-long process of restoring the barn and farmhouse to their historical specifications.

In 2008, Nash Farm opened to the public as a 5.2-acre heritage farm with the mission of “preserving, protecting, and visually reflecting” 19th-Century



Breakfast sausage

farm life in Tarrant County. The farm hosts events throughout the year, such as the “Spring into Nash” festival on April 16, monthly “First Friday” workshops on skills like weaving and campfire cooking, and a “Frugal Farm Wife” series that focuses on domestic duties like preserving, candle-making, washing, and gardening. The farm grounds also open daily to visitors for self-guided tours of the crop fields, the barn with Gulf Coast sheep, and the chicken coop with heritage speckled Sussex hens. (The buildings, including the farmhouse and the smokehouse, are open during guided tours and special events).

Nash Farm schedules the Hog Butchering and Curing Workshop in January because in the 1800s farmers would butcher hogs when the temperature was below 44 degrees. A farming family’s diet was seasonal, and pork is a prime example. In the hours and days after butchering, the family would eat the cuts that are best fresh—tenderloin, ribs, and chops.

“If you butcher when it’s cold and nature is your refrigerator, you can eat

Attendees tend to be a mix of back-to-the-basics foodies, dedicated home cooks, hunters, and the occasional doomsday prepper.

those fresh cuts while they’re still fresh, and then the meat that’s being cured and preserved, you eat that later in the year,” Lauderdale says. “When it comes to our tradition of eating picnic hams at Easter and baked ham at Christmas, the timing truly does come from the preservation of the meat.”

Cold temperatures also allow the scalded hide and butchered meats to chill overnight; the next morning, farmers would start curing the preserved cuts—the belly as bacon, the hindquarter as country ham, the shoulder as Boston butt or picnic ham, and the scraps as sausage. Kept in a dry place under 90 degrees, cured and smoked bacon, sausage, and picnic hams can last for months, while aged country hams can last for a year or longer.

Unfortunately for participants, food-safety regulations prohibit Nash Farm from serving the workshop’s meat products. Rather, the farm uses the meat as part of its foodways demonstrations throughout the year. For example, at its First Friday foodways program in February, the farm fires up its vintage wood-burning stove to prepare a typical 1800s Texas farmhouse meal: fried pork chops, cornbread, and seasonal collard and turnip greens from the garden.

But the workshop participants don’t come to eat, anyway. Attendees tend to be a mix of back-to-the-basics foodies, dedicated home cooks, hunters, and the occasional doomsday prepper.

“Cooking is my primary hobby, and I’m interested in doing some curing,” says Danny Owen from Colleyville, wearing a T-shirt with a diagram of pork cuts. “I wanted to start to get some experience with that and understand what it’s about.”

Charles Manning, who lives near Sanger, says he doesn’t trust the practices of agribusiness, especially when it comes to raising and preparing meat. “I like the traditional way of doing things,” Manning says. “I’m interested in possibly raising hogs where I live, and this would be a part of it. I want to learn how to process them.”

Me? I depart Nash Farm hungry for a plate of pork chops with a side of bacon and sausage, as well as a renewed appreciation for pigs and the endless labor of my farming ancestors. They had no choice but to toil from dawn until dark just to put food on the table. ★



BUTCHERING BASICS

Nash Farm’s Hog Butchering and Curing Workshop is January 16-17 (\$20 per day). Register online at www.nashfarm.org. Participants must be 16 or older.

Other winter hog-butchering workshops will be held at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site near Navasota on January 9-10 and at Green Gate Farms in Bastrop on January 17.

the Daytripper™

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historic buildings and pieces of farm equipment staged around a giant concrete pit originally created to hold a million barrels of “Texas-T.” Built in 1928, the tank leaked and, because of high taxes on stored oil, was abandoned within a couple of years. In 1958, it served as a water park for one day because—well—it leaked again. I wandered into one building and found a museum dedicated to the “Rattlesnake Bomber Base” of nearby Pyote (pronounced Pie-yote), which served as a training ground for U.S. bomber crews during World War II. It earned its nickname from the thousands of rattlesnakes uncovered when it was constructed in 1942.

Beachin’ It in West Texas

There are times when the highways of West Texas seem to go on forever. Small towns and rest stops flash by with seemingly little to differentiate one from another. However, each highway exit offers a call to discover something distinctive, which is exactly what happened when I pulled off into the desert oasis of Monahans.

8:00 A.M. As I pondered the endless blue sky and brown earth that surrounded me, I was overcome with a single thought: “Where am I gonna find breakfast?” Luckily, I found **Angela’s Restaurant**, where I gobbled down a tasty breakfast burrito stuffed with chorizo and egg.

9:15 A.M. With a full belly, I headed to **Monahans Sandhills State Park**, an expanse of the Chihuahuan Desert that looks more like the African Sahara. I crested the first hill to gaze on layers of sand dunes stretching as far as the eyes can see. At first glance, I understood why some call the landscape “Texas’ largest beach without an ocean.” I spotted the highest peak in sight (about 30 feet tall) and grabbed the sand disc I had rented at the front desk. Trudging my way to the dune-top, I took a deep breath and launched myself down the hill on my plastic disc of speed. After a few good

rides, I hiked back to my car and dumped an entire dune out of my boots.

1:00 P.M. Nothing suits a West Texas day like a plate of West Texas barbecue. I walked the line at local favorite **Pappy’s Bar-B-Q** and filled my plate with smoked meat and sides. My unexpected favorite was the chicken, flavored with just the right amounts of spice and smoke. Mmm!

2:15 P.M. As I drove through town, I could feel the authentic grit of West Texas seeping into my soul. The vintage storefronts and weathered motels along the old highway whispered the story of Monahans’ history and what it’s like to ride the boom-bust cycle of oil in the Permian Basin.

3:00 P.M. Attracted by a sign reading “Million Barrel Museum,” I found the **Ward County Museum** complex, comprised of

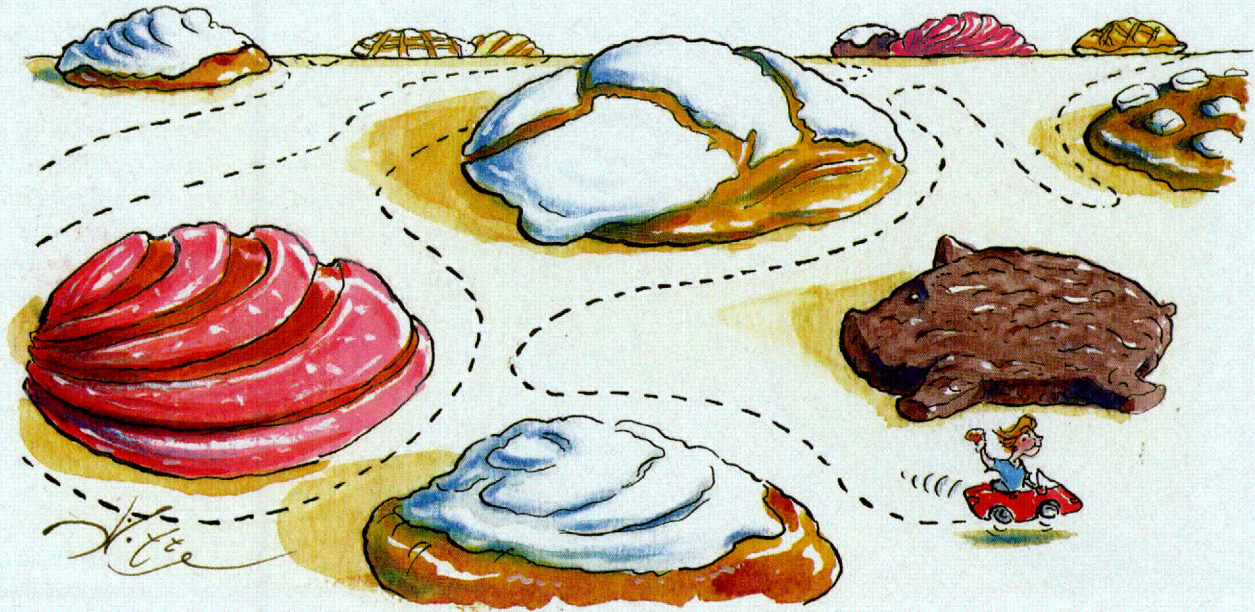
5:30 P.M. While the base is gone, that didn’t stop me from driving 15 miles west along Interstate 20 to **Pyote**. From the highway I could barely make out the walls of the old main hangar, which once held B-17s and B-29s. I was tempted to walk through the field for a closer look; however, I remembered the base’s nickname and quickly decided to stick to the road.

7:00 P.M. Back in Monahans, I found the **Jazz Café**, housed in a renovated theater and focused on bringing big-city flavors to small-town Texas. While the smooth sounds of jazz music tickled my ears, the sultry flavors of a seared-to-perfection rib-eye danced on my tongue.

I cut open the “dessert of the day”—a dumpling with cinnamon caramel sauce—to reveal an entire apple hidden inside its flaky crust. I thought to myself, “Ain’t that just like day tripping? Sometimes you never know what you’ll find inside a town until you jump in and start exploring.” So whether you follow my footsteps or forge your own path, I hope to see you on the road. ★



Contact the Monahans Chamber of Commerce at 432/943-2187; www.monahans.org. More on Monahans Sandhills State Park at www.tpwd.texas.gov.



Pan Dulce Dreams

THE SWEET PAYOFF AT JOURNEY'S END

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

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, MY younger brother and I were loaded into the family car at least once a year for an eight-hour endurance trip to visit relatives in Nuevo Laredo. It was a journey punctuated by backseat brawls and front-seat threats. When a battle squeal shocked my father into hitting the brakes once too often, my mother would issue the ultimatum: one more peep and no *pan dulce*. On these trips, the promise of Mexican sugar buns kept my brother and me from killing each other.

The first stop we made once we crossed the international bridge was our favorite *panadería*. Here, the thick egg-yellow braids and buns were as uniformly sweet and generic in texture as brands of bubblegum. But the *marranitos*, plump pig-shaped cookies gorged with ginger and anise, were heads and tails above the others. *Empanadas*, cinnamon-brown turnovers filled with pineapple or sweet potato, ran a close second.

When my grandmother died, the trips to the border ended. Ten years passed before I rediscovered those sugared breads. In San Antonio to meet a friend from *The New York Times* who

was interested in exploring the city, I suggested we eat at Mi Tierra, a restaurant recommended for its chiles rellenos and year-round Christmas decorations. The warm smells of baking filled the parking lot—and it was with a whiff of anise that I was transported back to childhood gluttony. Lining an entire wall was a glass case brimming with *pan dulce*, and overrunning the bottom tray were my dream pigs.

In Texas, most Mexican bakeries offer a limited variety of high-demand items. Any *panadería* worth its anise bakes *conchas* and *marranitos*. In addition to the familiar *pan de huevo* (“egg bread”), masterful bakers produce *pan finos*, delicate puff pastries like *campechanas* (“hammocks”) and *besos* (“kisses” of strawberry jam between flaky layers). Others fill their cases with dozens of different pastries, from the devil’s food *chamucos* (“scorched” cakes) to *alamares*, a twisted *pan fino* named for the loop and button closures known as “frogs.”

Wherever I roam, I cannot pass a *panadería* without stopping in. Always I buy a *marranito* to later dunk in a cup of coffee—my salute to family road trips. ★

The *marranitos*, plump pig-shaped cookies, were heads and tails above the others.

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



RearVIEW

ONE LAST THOUGHT

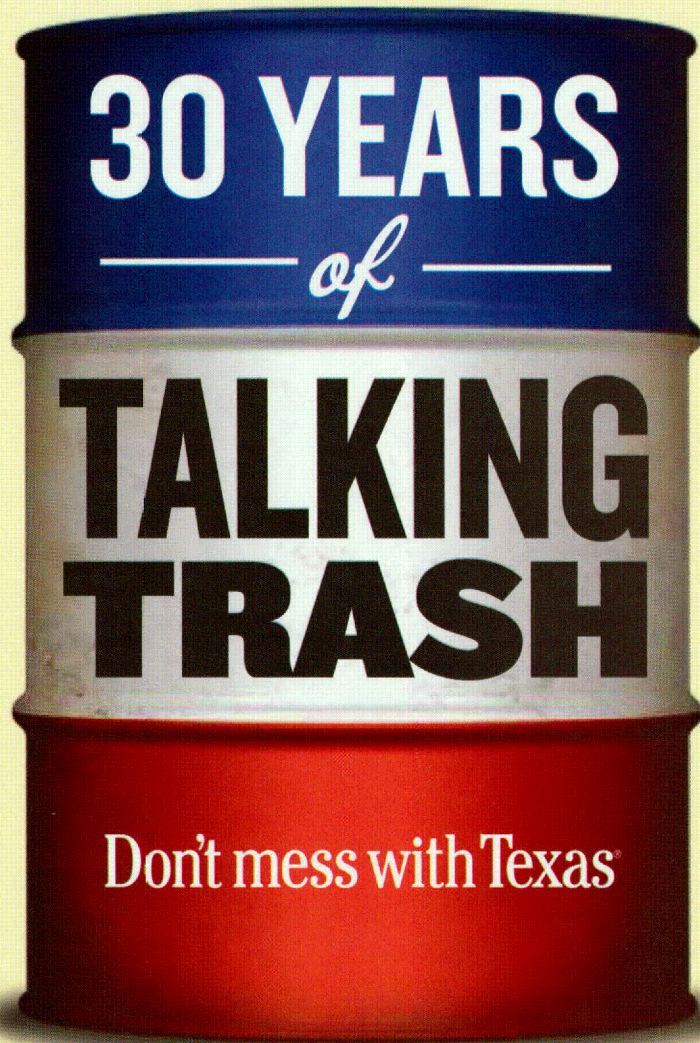
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—Louise Massey and Lee Penny,
“My Adobe Hacienda”

INDIAN LODGE at Davis Mountains State Park incorporates adobe blocks and pine beams made in the 1930s.

PHOTO: Brandon Jakobeit

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