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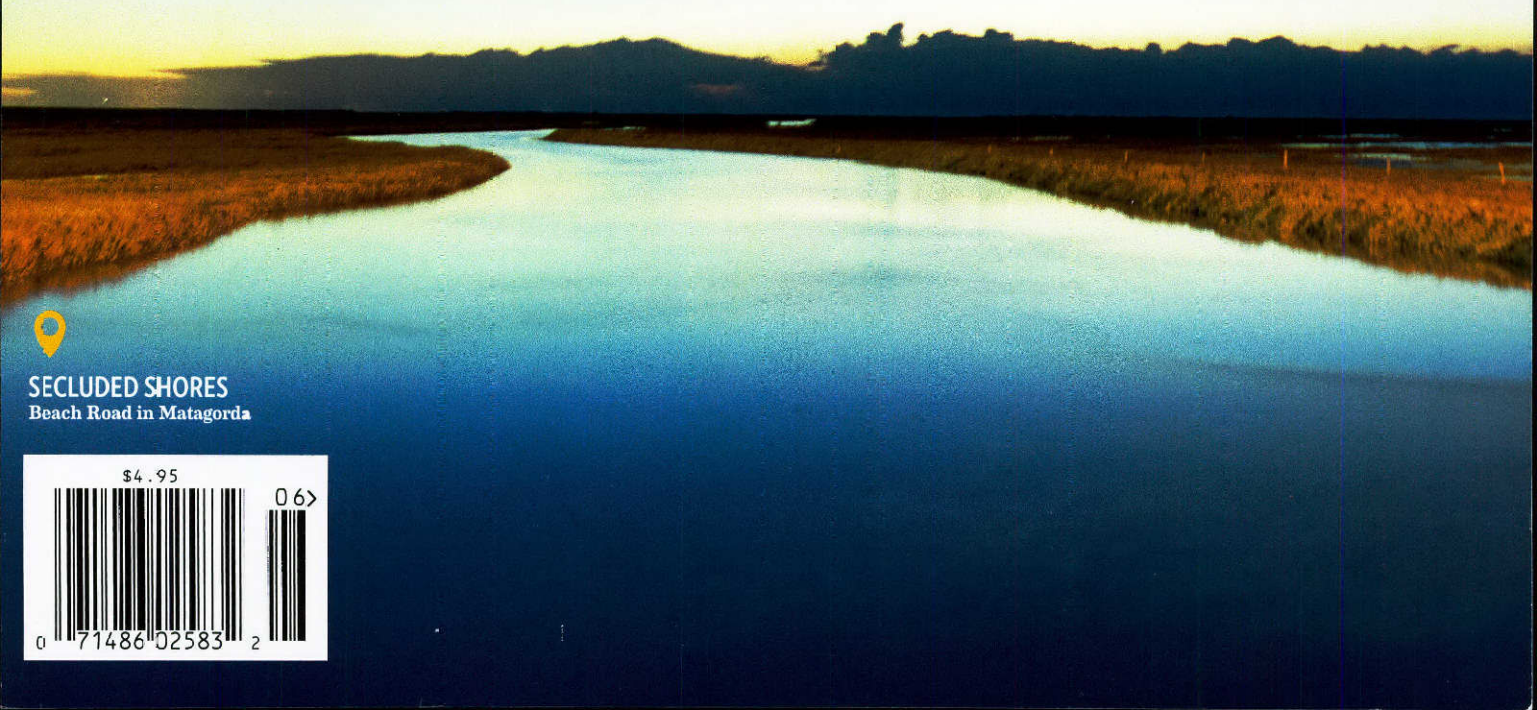
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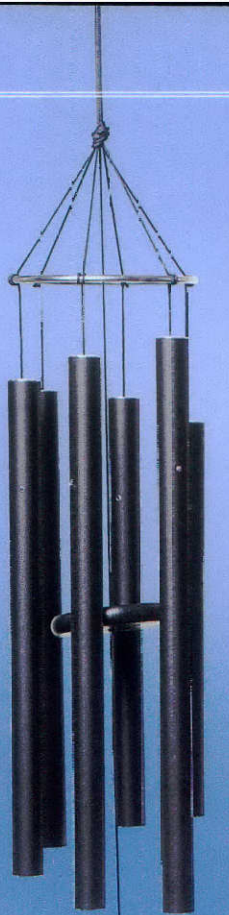
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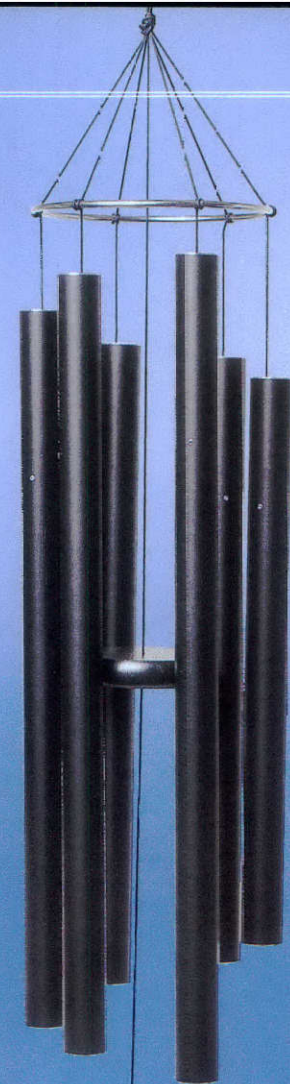
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EDITOR'S NOTE



A Toast to the Coast

WITH MORE THAN 350 MILES of coastline to explore—from Port Isabel and South Padre Island to Port Arthur and the Louisiana border—the Texas coast offers visitors many experiences unique to its shores. For starters, the coastal region rewards avid birders with more species of birds than any other area in the country, including many endangered species like the whooping crane. The Gulf's warm, relatively calm waters make swimming and water sports enjoyable pursuits nearly year-round. And the Padre Island National Seashore boasts the longest stretch of undeveloped barrier island in the world, which Texas State Aquarium President Tom Schmid says "offers a wonderful opportunity to experience what the area was like 100 years ago."

Preserving and maintaining the coast and its wildlife for future generations is a driving force for Schmid and his team. The Corpus Christi-based aquarium donates up to 20 percent of its net income to research and conservation efforts, from wildlife

rehabilitation to endangered species sanctuaries and educational efforts. Part of these educational efforts focus on practical ways the public can join the aquarium in its conservation goals. "One of the key things we're trying to eliminate is single-use plastics—plastic water bottles, spoons, forks, knives—to reduce the amount of plastic in the ocean," Schmid says. Beyond its conservation pursuits, the aquarium recently celebrated the opening of a new expansion that triples its size. Writer Darl Oko explores the expansion and other Corpus Christi destinations starting on Page 38.

Elsewhere we explore the hidden treasures of Matagorda Bay, the unflappable of Texas surf culture, and the unspoiled wildness of Laguna Atascosa, giving you many options to revel in the distinctive beauty of the Texas coast this summer.

Emily Roberts Stone

EMILY ROBERTS STONE, *Editor*

THIS IS WHERE STARS SHINE BRIGHTEST



Lubbock's musical heritage inspires talent in every genre, from Texas Country to Opera. Whether you take in a music festival like Josh Abbott Band's JABFest or explore the history of local legend Buddy Holly, you'll find the distinct music of West Texas around every corner.

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Texas Country Music Artist Josh Abbott

JUNE

38

Oceans of Fun

The Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi unveils its \$58 million expansion, a journey to the Caribbean that triples the size of this coastal aquarium.

Story by **DAN OKO**
Photographs by
NATHAN LINDSTROM

46

My (Secret) Coast

Prepare to be enchanted in resplendent, history-rich Matagorda, where the Colorado River empties into Matagorda Bay.

Story by **SUSAN L. EBERT**
Photographs by
KENNY BRAUN

56

Bohemian Rhapsody

Dive in to the history and culture of Fayette County, a land of tasty kolaches, painted churches, and more vintage dance halls than any other county in the state.

Story by **MICHAEL CORCORAN**



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JUNE



DEPARTMENTS

- 7 MERGE**
- 8 SCENIC ROUTE**

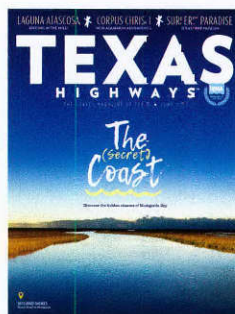
DRIVE

- 11 Texas Wild**
A cycling tour of Laguna Atascosa
- 15 Detour**
The Texas Surf Museum in Corpus Christi
- 19 Stay**
Hospitality in Hico
- 23 Souvenir**
Fort Worth's National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame

PLATES

- 27 Travel**
Discover a taste of Vietnam in Palacios
- 31 Drink**
Say hello to Hye on the 290 Wine Trail
- 35 Eat**
Soulful comforts in Jacksonville

- 67 HIT THE ROAD**
Country-fried charm in Wharton
- 73 TRUE TEXAS**
Big-time history with little ship models
- 79 EVENTS**
World-class music in Round Top
- 91 DAYTRIPPER**
New Braunfels offers more than tubes and tunes
- 92 TRAVEL MATTERS**
San Antonio poet Carmen Tafolla
- 93 SIGHTSEER**
A lazy river in a ballpark?
It's a whole new ballgame.



COVER
Marshes off Beach Road in Matagorda.
© Kenny Braun

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Greg Abbott

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EXCLUSIVE
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CONTENT

JUNE

Hightail It to Hico

June Naylor's take on Hico's Midland Hotel (page 19) will inspire you to travel there. Before you go, read her bonus tips on shopping, dining, and more, found just beyond the hotel doors.

GET TO THE POINT

The Point has been a long-standing fixture in Palacios. Writer Mai Pham visits this family-owned bait shop/restaurant to uncover the story behind its rave reviews.

FATHER'S DAY

Give dad what he (and you) really wants—more quality time together. Go online to find ideas that'll make that easy.

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Season's Pickin's

Whether in your hometown or on the road, farmers markets are prime spots for absorbing local flavor. We share what's in season this month and offer a few recipes, too.



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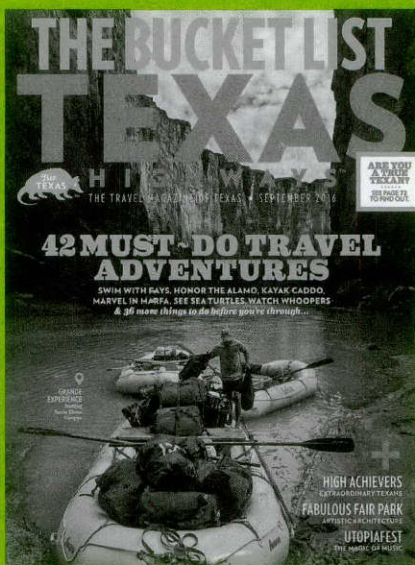
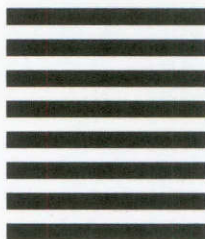
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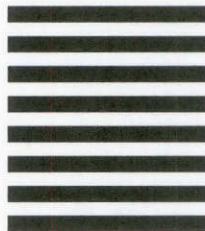
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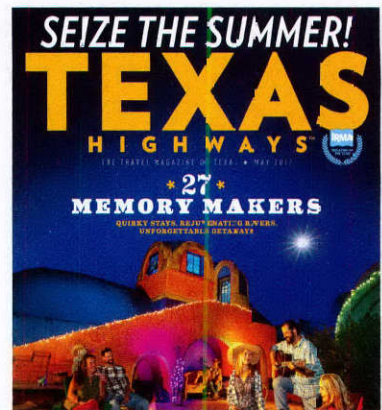
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MERGE

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

I first saw bluebonnet season in Texas in 1994. The flowers were beautiful, and the ladies who posed for photos among the roadside flowers in their Sunday best even more so.

JOSEPH MAGUIRE, PORTLAND, OREGON



OUR FAVORITE SOCIAL MEDIA OF THE MONTH



I had lunch at Cupp's Drive Inn (April) many times while at Baylor in the late '60s. It's a great old-fashioned, greasy burger with hand-made fries. Tasty!
ANN CORNWELL PRICE

The Carrie Rodriguez interview (April) is a lovely article about a lovely person.
KARL A. KRAMER, CINCINNATI, OHIO

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Rocky the Rooster

How did the photographer get Rocky the barn rooster to pose so beautifully? I want to know his magic.

Lu Hollander, Brenham



TH: "I whispered in his ear and told him how handsome he was. They like to hear that," photographer Kenny Braun says of his rooster photo in the April feature about Washington County. "It was a pretty active barnyard with lots of hens and a couple of cats. I was hanging out, and they got used to me. Rocky was in place, and I was close to the ground on his level. It was just one of those shots that worked. Most of them didn't, but that one did."

Wildflower Surfing

We were able to make only one bluebonnet drive this spring so ended up doing a lot of virtual viewing online. The loveliest photo I came across was on the *Texas Highways* Facebook page, taken near Nelsonville up toward Round Top.

Bill Gould, Houston

TH: Photographer Don Allen's sunrise photo of a wildflower-blanketed pasture served as the opening image of the April wildflower feature. *Texas Highways* Creative Director Mark Mahorsky says he selected the image because of its striking colors. "The combination of the fiery orange sky and the deep blue of the wildflowers made for a colorful composition."

Mission Espada

If you visit San Antonio, it would be a sin not to visit the Alamo (April). But you would be doing yourself a disservice if you don't make the effort to see all the missions along the trail. And trust me, the "If you've seen one, you've seen them all" mentality is so untrue. Each and every mission stands on its own merits. Mission Espada, the smallest and farthest out from downtown, is in my opinion the most beautiful of all the missions. The chapel is still in use, as is the *convento*. In the spring, or any time there are flowers in bloom, it's the most beautiful spot in San Antonio.

Pete Sommers, Bastrop

READER'S FAVORITE

Terlingua Milagro

We thoroughly enjoyed the article on *Quirky Stays* in your May edition. We can't decide where to stay first! My wife and I did want to point out a very quirky stay out west. *La Posada Milagro* in Terlingua is the ultimate "gem in the desert." We really enjoy staying in the Ghost Town village. The accommodations are gorgeous, and the folks are so warm and friendly. One won't find a TV here, but lots and lots of stars.

MARK HALL, San Antonio

La Posada Milagro Guesthouse and Casitas is at 100 Milagro Road in Terlingua. Call 432/371-3044; www.laposadamilagro.net.

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



SCENIC ROUTE

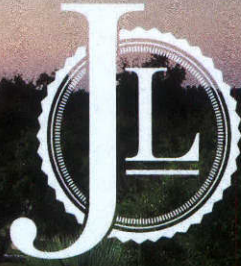
Summer Sunrise

26° 34' 08.19" N
97° 25' 43.82" W

SUMMER COASTAL drives offer ample opportunities to see spectacular sunrises and beautiful coastal prairie views. Early birds can revel in the breaking dawn at Fred Stone Park's fishing pier along North Bayshore Drive in Port Mansfield. Fishing—including the Port Mansfield Fishing Tournament in July—and birding draw visitors to the area. For more information, visit www.port-mansfield.com.







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DRIVE

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Biking with Birds

Explore the Laguna Atascosa
National Wildlife Refuge by bicycle

story by Daniel Blue Tyx



Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge's 97,000 acres of protected land includes 75 miles of trails open to bikes.



NOT A HALF-HOUR INTO MY DAYLONG ADVENTURE, in the middle of a prairie of sea lavender and leatherleaf, I stopped my bike in wonder. A few dozen yards from the pavement, dozens of sandhill cranes comingled with a flock of ivory snow geese, completely ignoring my entrance into this unspoiled coastal scene.

I had hoped for such moments when I decided to explore Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge by bicycle. Maybe the famous avian residents—and even its mammals—wouldn’t notice me like they would if I arrived in a noisy car? At the same time, I could pedal to some of the refuge’s more far-flung attractions—and there was a lot of ground to cover.

At 97,000 acres, Laguna Atascosa is by far the largest preserved patch of wilderness in the Rio Grande Valley. While most visitors tour the refuge by car and hiking trails, its size alone makes it an ideal destination for cyclists. Altogether, the refuge has 75 miles of trails open to bikes with surfaces ranging from pavement to gravel and dirt.

“You can do as much or as little as you want, and plan different

Maybe the famous avian residents—and even its mammals—wouldn’t notice me like they would if I arrived in a noisy car?

trips,” Park Ranger Marion Mason told me when I first arrived at the Visitor Center. She’d handed me a well-marked trail map and suggested a variety of different loops. “There are so many options, which is what makes it great.”

Laguna Atascosa’s setting along Texas’ southern Gulf Coast makes it an unrivaled place for seeing wildlife. The refuge has recorded sightings of 417 bird species here, the most of any national wildlife refuge in the country.

Laguna Atascosa’s coastal environment makes for prime bird watching—and potentially windy conditions.



Roseate spoonbill

The refuge is also one of the only places nationwide where you might catch a glimpse of an endangered ocelot, often known as “little leopards” on account of their spots.

“Ninety-five percent of the Valley’s native habitat is gone,” Mason said. “This is the biggest piece that’s left and that’s why we can still have populations of ocelots and cougars and some of the bigger animals that once roamed throughout the Valley.” While



THE LAGUNA ATASCOSA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

is 20 miles northwest of South Padre Island and 25 miles east of Harlingen-San Benito. The Visitor Center is at 22688 Buena Vista Road, north of Los Fresnos. Entry is \$3 per vehicle. Call 956/748-3607; www.fws.gov/refuge/Laguna_Atascosa.

the ocelot population remains in grave danger, biologists found a welcome surprise in April 2016: a den containing a three-month-old kitten, the refuge’s first discovery of a den in over 20 years.

Talking with Mason had left me eager to hit the trails, but she also cautioned that it was important to be prepared for the elements, perhaps inferring from my jeans and button-up shirt that I wasn’t the world’s most experienced off-road cyclist.

“You have to think about conditions and plan accordingly,” she said, reminding me to carry lots of water and a tube patch kit in case a South Texas thorn punctured one of my tires. Mason also warned me about the

strong southeasterly wind I was likely to encounter on my way to catch a view of the Laguna Madre coast.

On the first leg of my tour, thorny thickets of ebony and granjeno shielded me from the wind as I watched for the reclusive ocelot (although they’re usually seen only at dawn and dusk). By the time the forest opened up into prairie, where my jaw dropped in amazement at all the birds, Mason’s admonition was long forgotten.

Then, a wall of wind slammed against me, sending me stumbling backward. The cranes and geese took flight in a magnificent chorus of honking and the whoosh of beating wings. I pedaled as furiously as I

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could, only to feel as though I were on an exercise bike, wheels spinning but not actually going anywhere. Nature's reminder: Nothing worthwhile comes without effort.

But, oh, was it worth it. Nearly four miles later, just when I thought I couldn't pedal another instant, I ascended a hill, turned a corner, and found a new landscape of surreal and awesome beauty. From a wooden overlook called Plover Point, the Laguna Madre stretched for miles in either direction. Distant egrets and herons fished in ankle-deep water—the Laguna's average depth is only a meter—producing an optical illusion that made them appear supernaturally tall. Overhead, a bright pink flash heralded the passing of a roseate spoonbill. On land, curvy Spanish dagger yucca dotted miles of dunes, resembling the bright-colored tufts of the *Truffula* trees in Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax*.

As I sat at the overlook and enjoyed the sandwich I'd packed for lunch, a huge buck, antlers held high, meandered onto the beach. He foraged in the sand while I enjoyed the serenity of birdsong and waves lapping onto the shore. Biking isn't the only way to enjoy the waterfront: The refuge also periodically offers guided kayak tours, and anglers and campers can head to the lighted piers and boat launch at Adolph Thomae Jr. County Park, located within the refuge.

The wind now at my back, I zipped through a six-mile jaunt to reach the refuge's many inland lakes. These freshwater oases are vital for migratory songbirds that stop over to rest and refuel before continuing along their transcontinental journeys. The lakes also host hundreds of thousands of ducks during the winter. Cycling along the shores of the 5,000-acre Laguna Atascosa, I saw hundreds

of aptly named redheads bobbing on its surface.

I completed my last loop, proudly calculating that I'd covered nearly 25 miles, and prepared to head back to the Visitor Center on the main road. But before I called it a day, I stopped at one last overlook. An osprey swooped overhead while a tricolored heron foraged for lunch among a crowd of coots. I was suddenly aware of the presence of an unfamiliar quiet—the sublime silence of no traffic at all. I lingered a few minutes longer, feeling grateful that wild places like this still exist, where it's truly possible to get away from it all, in the company of so many feathered friends. **L**



NATURE TOURS

Laguna Atascosa NWR offers habitat and bird tours in the fall and winter. Ocelot Conservation Day is held annually on the first Saturday of March.

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Carving in Corpus

Hang loose at the Texas Surf Museum

story by **Dan Gentile**

IF YOU'D LIKE TO MEET A FRIENDLY TEXAS SURFER, park a two-wheel drive vehicle along the shore of Parkery Channel between North Padre and Mustang islands. You'll probably get stuck, but that'll give you the opportunity to meet an outgoing surfer like Smokey, a fedora-wearing Corpus Christi native who'll tow you to firmer ground using his truck and a frayed rope.

Don't worry, he's not in a hurry to hit the waves—the ocean here boasts about as many swells as a kiddie pool. But what Texas surfers lack in killer waves, they make up for in community and a reverence for their shared history, cataloged at Corpus Christi's Texas Surf Museum.

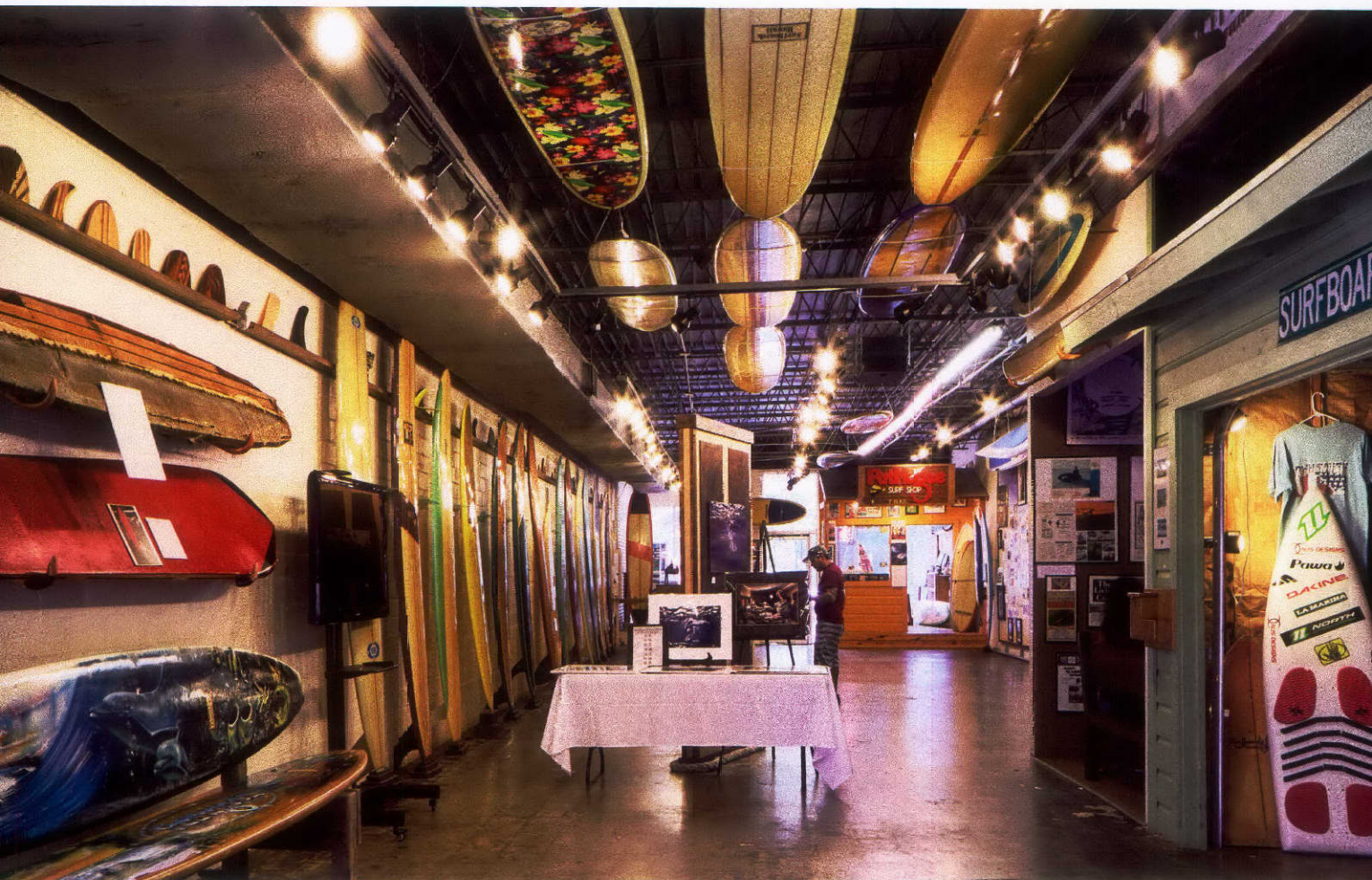
Opened in 2005 to showcase memorabilia collected by area

What Texas surfers lack in killer waves, they make up for in community and a reverence for their shared history.

surfers, the Texas Surf Museum feels like it was curated by someone wearing sandy flip-flops—and in fact that's the preferred footwear of museum founder Brad Lomax, who explains, "Basically, we have a bunch of cool, old stuff that encompasses Texas surfing." The exhibits focus heavily on history, but they're presented less like lessons and more like stories you'd hear by sharing a pint with a weathered surfer. Perhaps not coincidentally, the museum is located adjacent to Executive Surf Club, a watering hole popular with both surfers and Corpus Christi residents simply looking to unwind.

At roughly 1,500 square feet, the museum makes up for its small size with the density of its collection. Vintage surfboards deck the walls from

Corpus Christi's Texas Surf Museum celebrates the culture and history of surfing in the state.



floor to ceiling, with examples of nearly every type of board ever to enter the water, including priceless vintage longboards crafted by California surf legend Greg Noll. Framed surf-film posters look like they came straight out of a teenager's bedroom in the 1960s, ranging from faded promos for campy flicks like *La Fiesta de los Bikinis* to a signed print from the iconic 1966 surf documentary *Endless Summer*.

Locals donated much of the museum's collection, including the original signage from Port Aransas institution Pat Mcgee's Surf Shop, which features a brightly painted parrot perched on a wave. Newspaper clippings chart

the history of the surfing scene on the Texas coast, with a large area devoted to the epic waves created by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. A kitschy, 3-D beach diorama sits in a window, given to the museum by a surfer who died shortly after he donated it to the museum. It's the type of personal memorial you'll learn about on an informal tour by Lomax, who happily shows visitors around.

The wall of vintage, beach-scene photos proves that Texas had its fair share of long-haired surfing hippies, but the museum isn't content to rest its laurels on nostalgia. Lomax regularly updates the collection, be it with

Locals donated much of the museum's collection, which includes vintage surfboards, educational exhibits, and surf cinema memorabilia.

temporary exhibits like a series of avant-garde surf cinema in coordination with art nonprofit Ballroom Marfa, or permanent assets like an interactive station where visitors can monitor the location of tagged sharks.

Plenty of adults visit the museum, including a surprising amount of foreign tourists, but Lomax hopes the new exhibits also inspire a new generation of surfing enthusiasts.

"We're starting to focus on the education component of our mission statement, which is to encourage, enlighten, and educate people on Texas surfing," Lomax says.

A crucial part of that education is instilling the next generation with a sense of stewardship. An eye-catching exhibit of hundreds of drinking straws, the most common form



SURF THE TEXAS COAST

Texas Surf Museum, 3094 N. Water St., Corpus Christi, is open Mon-Sat 11 a.m.-7 p.m., Sun 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission is free. Call 361/882-2364; www.texasurfmuseum.org.

Dockside Surf Shop is at 10306 S. Padre Island Drive, Corpus Christi. Call 361/937-5451; www.docksidessurf.com.

For more information on **Texas Surf Camps**, call 361/749-6956; www.texasurfcamps.com.

of debris found on Texas beaches, reminds visitors of human impact on the oceans. That sense of responsibility is also stressed at Texas Surf Camps, which has three locations in nearby Port Aransas and Galveston. Unaffiliated with the museum, these programs teach the basics to children and adults of all ages with hopes that they'll also develop a reverence for the natural environment.

"Every time I surf here, it's different," says 18-year-old surfer Christian Villegas, who learned the sport at age 11 and now works as a Texas Surf Camps instructor. "You're always learning new things. Not even professionals can perfect it—you're surfing with Mother Nature. That's what makes it so fun; every day is different."

Young surfers like Villegas are likely to be found hanging out at Corpus Christi's Dockside Surf Shop. It's

a scrappy, informal clubhouse where surf videos play on an old CRT TV as a peanut gallery of regulars leisurely while away their afternoons.

A common refrain among Texas surfers is if you can figure out how to surf here, you can surf anywhere.

Owner Tippy Kelly has been a fixture of the surfing scene since the '60s (you can see a photo of her wearing a vintage swimsuit at the museum), and she still surfs most mornings before coming to work.

"There's just no way we're going to quit," Kelly says. "I'll go three days without going out there, but I can't stand it. I've gotta go back out surfing. It's a total addiction."

Unlike in California where steady ocean currents guarantee big waves

year-round, Texas surfers rely on weather forecasts. The direction and strength of wind determines which beaches have waves, so surfers study tropical storms on sites like SwellInfo.com with morose anticipation. The museum recently added a wave simulation installation that shows the science behind ocean hydrodynamics, helping further educate local surfers who joke that they've basically earned minors in meteorology.

Still, no amount of weather-watching or museum exhibits can turn ankle busters into epic swells. A common refrain among Texas surfers is if you can figure out how to surf here, you can surf anywhere.

"You have to be an optimist with low standards to be a Texas surfer," Lomax says. "There are guys in California who wouldn't even paddle out for some of the stuff we're excited about." **L**

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San Antonio, Texas

Hico's Hospitality

Rise and shine at the Midland Hotel

story by **June Naylor**

ON TRIPS TO THE HAMILTON COUNTY TOWN OF Hico over the years, I'd wondered why the handsome 1896 Midland Hotel building had remained sorely neglected. An imposing corner building at the center of a charming vintage downtown, the two-story brick landmark had clearly been a showplace in its heyday.

Happily, though, on recent getaway trips to Hico—an easy escape from my home in Fort Worth for a weekend of shopping, roadhouse dining, and stargazing—I watched with anticipation as the Midland began showing signs of renewal. Purchased by

Input from area residents helped the owners bring the hotel's theme to life: telling the story of the region.

a local development group in 2014, the relic began to slowly transform. When the hotel reopened in January after two years of careful restoration and renovation, I made plans to stay overnight and delight in all the discoveries.

Much of the credit goes to Roy Ward, the chief financial officer for the development company and now Midland Hotel's general manager. After negotiating the deal, Roy threw himself into the 13,000-square-foot project, a formidable task. The hotel's second floor had served as a rooming house but sat empty since the late 1970s; the ground floor had been rented here and there to various retailers. Though the exterior survived the years well, none of the interiors had been maintained.

"We had to do demo upstairs and down, taking the place apart, piece by piece," says Roy, who joins me for coffee with his wife, Mary Ann, who handled the decor and design details on the project. "First we put a new roof on," he continues, "then we figured out what we could salvage."

Bead board from ceilings and walls remained in good shape, as had the guest room doors and transoms, which were restored and are in top form now. The Wards even found the door to the newspaper office that once operated on the ground floor; it's now the entrance to the guest business center off the lobby.

Both Roy and Mary Ann sought local input every step of the way, beginning with their choice of architects for the project. Roy praises the wagonload of help provided by Stephenville architect Fred Parker, who grew up on a nearby ranch.

"Fred not only drew new floor plans, he also shared extensive knowledge about the area and its history, which was so valuable to us," Roy says, explaining that he and Mary Ann settled in Hico after years of splitting time between homes in Fort Worth and New Mexico.



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The Wards leaned on Parker and other area natives to help them bring the hotel's theme to life: telling the story of the region. To do that, Mary Ann shaped each of the 14 guestrooms (13 upstairs, with an ADA-compliant room on the ground floor) into a local history lesson. As construction on the hotel's reinvention progressed, Mary Ann pursued vintage photography, newspaper clippings, maps, books, and mementoes to create individual personalities for each room and public space.

"Because we wanted to connect the hotel with the community, we named the rooms for founding families or for nature and heritage found in Hico and Hamilton County," Mary Ann explains, noting that local lore added color and texture to her research. She

points out the window of the Connally & Company Suite, which was named for a furniture store that once operated across the street. "One tale I heard was that when Clyde Barrow was rumored to be visiting family here in Hico, the law—hoping to catch him—would hide in baskets made there in the store," Mary Ann says.

Some of the design touches take whimsical form: The Wiseman Suite takes its name from a photographer whose early-1900s photos of Hamilton County hang all over the hotel. The Railroad Station suite is outfitted with a train station bench Mary Ann found at a shop in Waco. And the bed in the Texas Ranching Room sports a headboard fashioned from a ranch gate.

My favorite is the Caulder Suite, named for Nelda Caulder, the last

Wood floors, original stone walls, and local artwork create a warm vibe at the hotel's restaurant, The Chop House.



rooming-house resident to leave in the late 1970s. Here are photos of Ms. Caulder as a girl and as a young woman, along with a framed family brand. The bed boasts a brightly striped spread and an embroidered blanket and pillows with Latin American styling; the windows are fit with

Locally found antiques figure into public spaces, like in the atrium area upstairs, with comfortable seating where you can read a book or take in the hubbub in the dining room below.

antique panes of beveled, stained glass. Best of all, a door leads to a wide balcony overlooking the street, complete with rocking chairs ready for timeout with a glass of wine.

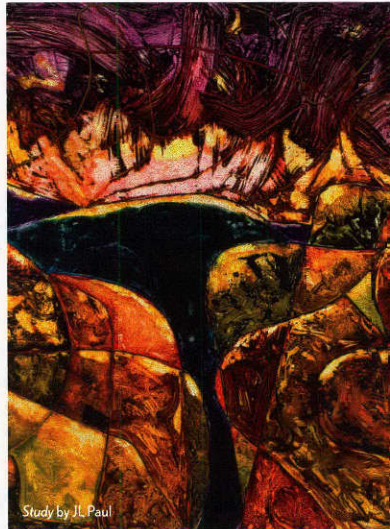
Mary Ann found tables, lamps, and other accent pieces at stores right outside the hotel's front door, such as Blue Star Trading Co. and Hill Country Dwellings. Several of her local finds figure into public spaces, like in the atrium area upstairs, with comfortable seating where you can read a book or take in the hubbub in the dining room below. I find myself smiling at a large photograph of two curious dogs poking their noses through a barn door; the photo was taken by a local teenager whose effort won a ribbon at the State Fair of Texas.

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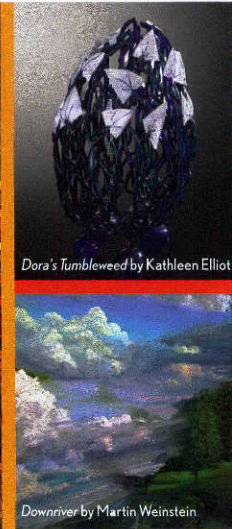
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Another artfully decorated public space features a vivid painting of prickly pear cactus, framed by a large section of worn fencing cut into a half-moon shape. Another nine paintings of cattle, horses, and other scenes (including a high school football scoreboard) hang on the soaring limestone walls throughout the ground floor of the hotel. They're the work of local artist Jerry McAdams, who paints at his ranch just south of town.

"I'd had several of the local-scene paintings in mind for a long time, and the hotel was the perfect opportunity for doing them," McAdams says. "I'm appreciative of the chance to do those."

McAdams, who also publishes Hico's weekly newspaper, *The Hico News Review*, appreciates what the Midland's opening means for Hico, noting a significant ramping up of overall activity downtown, particularly on weekends.

"It's surreal to drive through down-

town Hico after dark and see businesses with all their lights on and all the parking spaces full," McAdams says. "Having the restaurant open there has brought a lot of people downtown in the evenings, and it's a boost to other businesses up and down the block."


The hotel's restaurant, The Chop House, serves three meals daily, with a menu ranging from omelets and banana pancakes to burgers, shrimp cocktail, and steaks. In addition, locals and visitors alike can enjoy cocktails and wine at the attached 1896 Saloon.

Chef-restaurateur and sommelier Phil Greer, who runs a restaurant in nearby Stephenville called Greer's Ranch Café, developed The Chop House's menu and is frequently found in the kitchen. At dinner with my mom, I'm especially taken with the tender, supple "baseball cut" sirloin



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steak, cooked exactly to my requested temperature, topped with herbed butter and served with loaded mashed potatoes. The pairing with a big, deeply purple cabernet sauvignon from Washington's Disruption Wines is a welcome surprise.

That's just a sample of the Midland's effect on the town and on folks stopping by. As visitors pop in for the impromptu tour that the Wards and staff are forever leading, we overhear folks say they'd like to come back for a family reunion or just the next weekend getaway. We'll be back to Hico sooner rather than later; you'll find us rocking on the balcony and enjoying that glass of wine. 

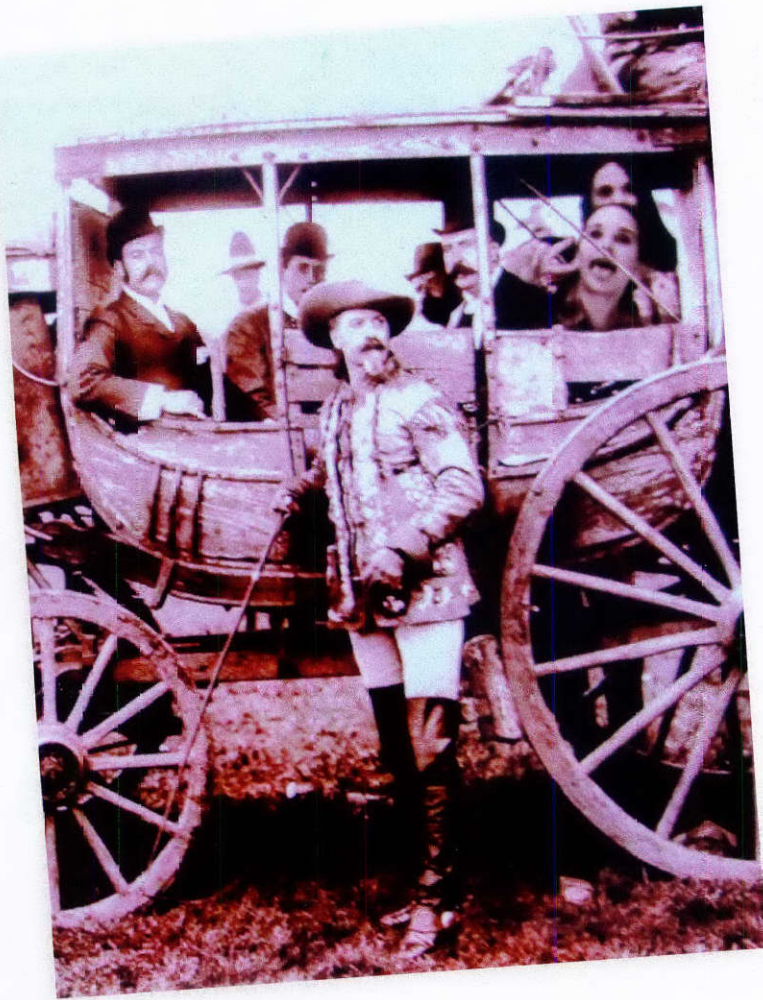
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Saddle Up ... and Say Cheese!

Vintage selfies at the
National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame

story by **June Naylor**

DURING FORT WORTH'S RODEO SEASON IN JANUARY and February, I'm the most popular person in my family and circle of friends. That's because my home is just two blocks from Will Rogers Memorial Center, home to the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo. Folks come from all over Texas and beyond to attend the world's original indoor rodeo, and weekends bring visitors in droves to the fairgrounds and museums surrounding the rodeo arena—more than a million people each year. For my nearest and dearest, my driveway becomes a coveted free parking spot within easy walking distance of all that fun.

It's also the time I get to see my 12-year-old niece, Madison, shirk her softball-pitcher persona and dress up like a cowgirl in

There's a photo booth with a green-screen backdrop that transports you to the Wild West period via clever use of technology.

jeans and boots. So when I realized this year that Madison and her mom, Kelli, hadn't visited one of the rodeo district's greatest assets, the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame, I set out to give them an even greater appreciation of American Western history.

The Cowgirl, as it's called for short, honors exceptional women who have conquered the West and provides a fascinating lens through which to examine female fortitude. I first enjoyed its remarkable display of exhibits back in the 1980s, at its original home in the Panhandle town of Hereford. A far grander version is the expanded one we enjoy today in Fort Worth, which opened in 2002.

The exterior alone gives reason to pause, certainly for anyone who finds allure in the romance of the Old West. Designed by architect David M. Schwarz—whose other Fort Worth works include Bass Performance Hall and Sundance Square Plaza—the sandstone-and-brick edifice blends amiably with the Art Moderne design of the neighboring Will Rogers Memorial Center. Detail work catches the eye, too, with wild rose finials and six intricate bas-relief panels carved by Janice Hart, including one called "Always Saddle Your Own Horse," in which a mother teaches her daughter the value of self-reliance; and "Round-Up," depicting courageous women working cattle. A magnificent mural by artist Richard Haas on the east side of the building depicts five cowgirls on galloping horses, leaping from the wall. And at the museum's entrance, there's "High Desert Princess," a life-size bronze by horse trainer-turned-sculptor Mehl Lawson, who offers a contemporary cowgirl standing with her quarter horse.

Inside, a greater conversation about the cowgirl ideal and spirit unfolds. My favorite recent addition is a gallery called *Hitting the Mark*, which tells the story of performers like stuntman

The National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame highlights Western-style female fortitude in the rodeo ring, on the ranch, and in life.



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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Several green-screen photo stations allow visitors to insert themselves into period images and vintage Western movie posters.

Buffalo Bill Cody and diminutive sharpshooter Annie Oakley, who played to enormous audiences at Wild West shows worldwide. Digitally enhanced photography and artful presentations of artifacts showcase the gritty but graceful Annie Oakley; her stories come alive through vivid holograms in which she tells tales of her extraordinary life—words borrowed from her letters and memoir.

In this gallery, Madison and her friend Ellie find a serious source of fun: There's a photo booth with a green-screen backdrop that transports you to the Wild West period via clever use of technology. Using a touchscreen, the girls choose a vintage photo in which to insert themselves, then move around until they're realistically placed in the vintage image and—click!—their photo is shot. In a few seconds, a print pops out beneath the touchscreen or can be

emailed or texted. Within a few minutes, Madison and Ellie have images of themselves in one of Buffalo Bill's stagecoaches and attempting to grab the horns of a bucking bull. Of course, the two girls ham it up the whole time, making peace signs with their fingers and broadcasting big grins few people wore in 1883. No wonder it's the museum's most popular interactive exhibit.

"Anytime I go into the gallery, there's a group of people by the photo booth, taking all the shots they can," says Diana Vela, associate executive director of the Cowgirl. "If you play with it long enough you can get really good at placement. For special events, we bring in hats, chaps, and other



We're studying the hundreds of Cowgirl Hall of Fame honorees—women who worked as trick riders or barrel racers, singers or writers or artists—captured in photos and video projected on hundreds of moving digital tiles.

as trick riders or barrel racers, singers or writers or artists, ranchers or pioneers—captured in photos and video projected on hundreds of moving digital tiles. On the opposite sides of the tiles we see the Hall of Fame motto, “The women who shape the west change the world.”

After climbing the stairway to the Cowgirl's second floor, we explore a gallery illustrating women's work outdoors and indoors. Just around the corner, the girls find an exhibit called *Be a Star!* Here's another green screen where the girls insert themselves in

posters for old movie Westerns; they'll pick up the photos downstairs in the gift shop.

For certainly no visit to the museum is complete without a spin in the gift shop, which is expertly curated with relevant gifts from around the country. Madison and Ellie try on various hats and thumb through a few books while Kelli and I admire handbags of all sizes, each with beautiful Western-style tooling. My favorite items for purchase are wooden cutting boards bearing the slogan “Always saddle your own horse.”

Wise advice. 

props for people to wear in the photos.”

In the Grand Rotunda, we cast our eyes upward to the high-tech mobile suspended far above us. We're studying the hundreds of Cowgirl Hall of Fame honorees—women who worked



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Pho- nomenal

Vietnamese Food
in Palacios

story by **Mai Pham**



ABOUT 10 MILES NORTH OF THE TOWN OF Palacios and Matagorda Bay, the scenery along Texas 35 begins to change. Nondescript coastal scrub morphs into something greener, and the air begins to carry a faint salt tang. To the east, colorful farmhouses punctuate verdant pastures where cattle graze beneath fluffy cloud formations. To the west, rows upon rows of neatly manicured crops—mostly corn but also soybeans and sorghum—glisten in the afternoon sunlight, like a blanket of green leaves covering the soil beneath.

Founded around 1909, Palacios faces Matagorda Bay and lies roughly midway between Galveston and Corpus Christi. A relaxed town of about 4,700 residents, Palacios is so well-known for its shrimping industry that its slogan is “The Shrimp Capital of Texas.” But the town also has a lot of charm for visitors: A historic hotel called The Luther still offers lodging, and there are hike-and-bike trails and birding opportunities, as well as a 1.5-mile stretch of walkway that hugs the coastline overlooking Tres Palacios Bay.

Most visitors come here to escape the hustle and bustle of city life. Some come with a specific plan, such as fishing or birding.

The menu is written entirely in English, and strictly speaking, it's not just a Vietnamese menu, but an Asian menu adapted to the tastes of the locals.

Others are content with simple pleasures such as sitting on the porch of their hotel or beach cottage, reading a book. I've come from Houston—about 100 miles away—with one predetermined purpose: To follow in the footsteps of chef, author, and TV personality Anthony Bourdain in a search to find the town's best Vietnamese food.

As part of the 2016 “Unknown Houston” episode of Bourdain's CNN series, *Parts Unknown*, the star and his crew ventured to both Houston and nearby Palacios to explore the multiculturalism in both locales. In Palacios, he connected with Vietnamese refugees who immigrated to the United States in the 1970s, rode along with a Vietnamese shrimper on Matagorda Bay, and visited a convenience store called The Point for a meal of tacos and *pho*, the latter a traditional Vietnamese beef noodle soup.

There are several restaurants that serve Vietnamese food in Palacios, but Tran's Restaurant is the oldest. Here, I meet Johnny Tran, who is the lead wok chef at his family restaurant and also serves as Palacios' mayor pro tem. The affection and love he has for Palacios, where he was born, raised, and educated, is evident as he shows me the town.

Tran's mother was in her late teens



Tran's Restaurant bustles with diners seeking authentic Vietnamese cuisine—plus juicy burgers, fried shrimp plates, and sometimes steaks.

when she arrived to Texas with her family after the fall of Saigon; they were one of the first five Vietnamese families to come to Palacios. Tran's parents met in Palacios and married here in early 1978; Tran was born later that year and grew up working on a bay shrimping boat, back when people could still make a good living off of bay shrimping.

By 2005 or so, bay shrimpers—hit by a combination of factors that included strict regulations and high fuel costs—were barely getting by. Tran's dad sold his shrimping boat and bet big on his next venture: Tran's Restaurant, which opened in 2004.

Tran, the oldest of seven siblings, now runs the place with sisters Chi and Thuy Tien, his brother Chinh, his aunt Hang, and his mother, Anna. His brother Andrew, the baby of the family, is studying aviation technology in Houston but still comes back most weekends to help out.

"My mother still makes the egg rolls fresh every morning," Tran says. "I'm on the woks with my sister. We do all the stir fries and, of course, the burgers. Chinh is doing the crawfish when it's in season. And my aunt has been with us from the beginning. She's our fry cook."

The restaurant itself looks timeworn from the outside but is clean and comfortable once you step inside. The east wall features a series of square acrylic paintings made by Tran's siblings: simple illustrations such as a rice bowl with chopsticks or a boat on choppy water. Two large ornamental fans hang on the main wall in the back of the room, which is painted a deep red. Behind the cashier, a framed black-and-white family portrait evokes pride of place.

The menu is written entirely in English, and strictly speaking, it's not just a Vietnamese menu, but an Asian menu adapted to the tastes of the locals. Chinese-American dishes such as egg foo young and sweet-and-sour chicken—the latter starring deep-fried chunks of chicken finished off with a dark red glaze—are favorites. Some customers order fried rice and shrimp plates

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while others go for the juicy burgers. “We do a 60-day, wet-aged, rib-eye steak special with hand-cut fries once in a while, too,” Tran says.

The Vietnamese dishes are hidden in plain sight on the menu, under names like “beef noodles,” “beef tips,” and “pork and shrimp.” It’s been like that from the beginning, and Tran hasn’t seen the need to change anything. Common Vietnamese entree names like *pho* or *bun* (rice vermicelli noodles) or *com* (rice), are nowhere on the menu, so if you want those dishes, you’ll have to ask your server what to order.

The fried dishes are a good place to start. Mama Tran’s egg rolls (\$3.80 for three), served on leaves of lettuce with a small saucer of spicy-sweet dipping sauce, prepare your taste buds for what’s to come. Fried shrimp are jumbo beauties straight from the Gulf. The fried calamari, or *muc rang muoi*, is knock-your-socks-off delicious, the

tender tentacles encased in a light, flour-based batter that is as delicate as a tempura.

Tran’s mother grew up in a North Vietnamese household, and her version of *pho*, the menu item called “beef noodles” in the soup section, reflects that. Unlike specialty *pho* restaurants where you can choose different beef toppings, there is only one version here, a soup topped with sliced brisket and thin slices of eye of round, accented with bean sprouts, chiles, herbs, and lime. The broth is clean, with a pronounced beefy flavor, and aromatics such as star anise are very subtle.

Tran’s version of *bo luc lac*, a marinated cube-steak dish (\$9.99), is presented as a mouthwatering mound of stir-fried beef strips in a shiny, garlicky brown sauce with fresh tomatoes as garnish. Whether you make a meal of it by ordering it on a bed of white rice, or eat it as an appetizer, it’s a hearty, easy kind



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is at 1009 Henderson St. in Palacios. Call **361/972-1008**. For details about Palacios, visit www.palacioschamber.com.

of dish that most anyone would love.

There’s a hungry man’s version of the Vietnamese pork chop rice plate you’ll find all over Vietnam. Here, it’s Texas-size, with not just one but two succulent, pan-seared pork chops and a perfectly cooked fried egg on top.

The standout dish, however, is the sautéed shrimp rice vermicelli noodle, or *bun tom* (\$10.99). Tran and his cooks purchase shrimp locally, cook it in caramel-colored brown sauce, and serve it with herbs and condiments in a bowl over springy rice noodles. I’d return to Palacios again and again for this dish, as it exemplifies the best of fresh-off-the-boat Gulf Coast shrimp and good old-fashioned Vietnamese cooking. 🍴

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The Hye Life

Say hello to Hye, the tiny Texas town on the 290 Wine Trail

story by Jane Kellogg Murray

DOES AN OENOPHILE'S PARADISE EXIST IN TEXAS? While some wine-lovers may pine for the Provençes and Willamette Valleys of the world, for me, it's the hamlet of Hye.

This no-stoplight town pops up on the map about an hour west of Austin, halfway between Johnson City and Fredericksburg. Locals have had their fun with the name—for awhile, “Hye, bye” became the unofficial greeting as tourists passed through, most on their way to the cluster of wineries in picturesque Fredericksburg. Hye is named for Hiram “Hye” Brown, who established the first store here in 1880; a post office came in 1886 (President Johnson mailed his first letter there at age four), but until recently, there really wasn't much else to see.

And then on one of our regular weekend wine excursions to Fredericksburg, my husband and I decide to make an early detour. We'd heard murmurings about Calais, a boutique winery in

Hye that was worthy of a pit stop, so we call ahead to reserve a spot at the tasting counter. Driving up, I wonder if we perhaps typed in the wrong address. Google Maps says we're there, yet we can't find a sign. “Oh wait, is ... is *that* a sign?” I ask my husband from the passenger's seat. “Yes, that must be the sign; turn around!”

Gravel crunches beneath our tires as we make the turn around the bend of Calais' driveway. We land at what could easily be mistaken for a doomsday prepper's underground bunker if it weren't for a beautiful reclaimed wood entrance. The owner, French expat Ben Calais, greets us at the bottom of the ramp and guides us inside the chilly, 62-degree wine cave, which smells of rich oak and fresh bread he baked earlier that morning. “This is how we build wineries in

“We've been trying to get out of Hye all day, but we just can't.”

William Chris Vineyards believes in the future of Hye so much, the owners trademarked the name of their wine club: Hye Society.

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France,” he explains without my asking. “My electric bill for August last year was \$37.” Surrounded by more than 100 stacked barrels of wine, he leads us through a tasting of his current releases, mostly Bordeaux varietals such as the 2015 Cuvée de Cantegral—a cabernet Franc grown in the Texas High Plains.

Calais speaks more like a winemaker than a businessman, with deep pride in how his grapes are grown entirely in Texas. “I believe that a wine has a sense of place, and when you start mixing 25 percent California wines in all your [Texas] wines, you lose it,” he declares. Calais enjoys experimenting, so much so that in April he unveiled a rum distillery just three miles down the road: Hye Rum (the wordplay on Hiram was unintentional, he says). I make a mental note to check out the distillery on a return trip.

At Compass Rose Cellars, wine-loving tourists can enjoy stellar sunset views before checking in to one of three modern casitas on the property. Below, Ben Calais (pictured) built his boutique wine cellar into a hill—stopping only when he hit limestone about 11 feet underground.

I’d heard about Calais through the grapevine, so to speak: During a tasting earlier this year at Spicewood Vineyards, owner Ron Yates encouraged me to explore the wine evolution happening in this tiny Texas town. He’s betting on Hye’s success: Earlier this year Yates unveiled his eponymous 6,000-square-foot winery—a stone’s throw from Calais’ cellar—and is already expanding with a 6,000-square-foot tasting pavilion. One day, Yates says they’ll add rentable cabanas and a swimming pool to compete for the bachelorette party crowds. But for now, his new winery remains a quiet respite just off the busy



highway, with plenty of acreage to grow his favorite grape, tempranillo.

The wine spark in Hye can be traced back to Chris Brundrett, who started William Chris Vineyards in 2008 with viticulture industry veteran Bill Blackmon. They opened their tasting room in 2010. We head to his winery next. It's just three minutes away unless you stop for gourmet sandwiches across the street at Hye Market Restaurant & Tasting Room, housed in the historic post office, which you should.

Today William Chris' wine club boasts more than 3,000 members—impressive considering the town's population is 105, give or take a few. ("The sign hasn't changed since I've had both my kids," Brundrett points out.)

Visitors are drawn to wineries like this one for its relaxed atmosphere, but don't mistake the laid-back attitude for a lack of passion—Brundrett is eager to share his love for farming grapes in Texas' fickle soil. "Wine is all about where it's grown," he says. "The joy, for me, is tasting different wines and knowing what these different areas of Texas and the world taste like."

You can take a tour of Texas through William Chris' wine list alone, which features grapes grown entirely in Texas, including petit verdot, mourvèdre, and trebbiano Toscano. As he pours his signature wine, the 2011 Enchanté—a blend of cabernet, merlot, and malbec made from grapes grown at Granite Hill Vineyards in Willow City—he waxes poetic about the diverse geology that produced its complex character, pointing to the vein of decomposed granite that runs across the state, the result of volcanic eruptions in Texas more than a billion years ago. "This is what 25 minutes from here tastes like," he says proudly.

Like Calais and Yates, Brundrett is experimenting with his growers, planting varieties he thinks are well-suited to Texas' extreme climates, in an attempt to define the true grape of Texas—a question that can generate five different answers from five

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different winemakers. He's also making fortified wines, like a roussanne aged 18 months in neutral barrels and fortified with brandy.

It's easy for me to understand why people are quickly falling in love with Hye, an old town so new to the tourism industry that it doesn't yet have a proper hotel. Our morning pit stop in Hye has expanded into a full day, so Brundrett directs us to his neighbors across the highway, Compass Rose Cellars, which last year built three modern casitas for wine-weary travelers. "I can't tell you how many people have told me, 'We've been trying to get out of Hye all day, but we just can't.'"

As we navigate our way down the well-worn road toward Compass Rose, our last stop of the day, we're met with a traffic jam: A pair of burros have somehow found their way to freedom on US 290. We watch as a few friendly drivers pull over and quickly corral



THE HYE ROAD

Calais Winery is at 8115 US 290. Call **830/213-2124**; www.calaiswinery.com.

Compass Rose Cellars is at 1197 Hye Albert Road. Call **860/868-7799**; www.compassrosecellars.com.

Garrison Brothers is at 1827 Hye Albert Road. Call **830/392-0246**; www.garrisonbros.com.

Hye Market is at 10261 US 290. Call **830/868-2300**; www.hyemarket.com.

Hye Rum is at 11247 US 290. Call **830/265-5644**; www.hyerum.com.

Ron Yates is at 6676 US 290. Call **512/585-3972**; www.ronyateswines.com.

William Chris Vineyards is at 10352 US 290. Call **830/998-7654**; www.williamchriswines.com.

the donkeys to safety. It's not an uncommon sight, says Compass Rose owner Mark Watson: Just two days earlier, his electric fence malfunctioned—he found out when he got a call from the sheriff's department saying three of his cows were wandering down the road outside of Garrison Brothers whiskey distillery.

As we arrive at Compass Rose and

stroll onto the terrace overlooking the Pedernales River valley, a rockabilly band strikes up a rhythm as about a hundred people settle in to enjoy one of the best sunset views in town. For this city gal, it's the perfect example of the Texas life I was hoping to taste today. Watson holds up his glass to me and signals a cheer: "We're living the Hye life, my friend." 🍷

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Southern Comfort

Sylvia Mae's Soul Food in Jacksonville

story by Dana Goolsby

I KNEW THE FIRST TIME I PULLED UP TO SYLVIA Mae's Soul Food in Jacksonville that there was more than meets the eye. Sylvia Mae's, which occupies a ramshackle, metal-sided building with red trim and a lopsided front porch, isn't fancy. But it's not supposed to be: Owner Sylvia Jones envisioned it as a soul-food sanctuary, and one visit will make you a believer.

Jones has been cooking since she was seven years old. "I just love cooking, and I love to feed people," she says. Growing up in Rosebud, a small community about 25 miles east of Temple, Jones and her seven siblings all pitched in doing daily chores, and Jones found her skills in the kitchen. After leaving home

Owner Sylvia Jones envisioned her restaurant as a soul-food sanctuary, and one visit will make you a believer.

at age 18, she followed a career path in the Texas food service industry that has spanned 50 years.

"Back in the day, in the late 1970s or early 1980s, when I worked at the Charcoal Inn in Temple, my boss asked me when I was going to open up my own restaurant, and what I would call it," Jones says. "I spouted off 'Sylvia Mae's Soul Food,' but I never really thought I would own a soul-food restaurant." But a seed had been planted, and Jones was a quick learner. "My boss encouraged me to get my GED, and he taught me how to do business and how to put customers first," she says.

Eventually, Jones moved to East Texas, and in November 2012 she opened her restaurant in Jacksonville. "I saw this place for rent in August, and each time I got paid I'd fix it up a little bit or buy something for it. By November I opened Sylvia Mae's," Jones says.

On a recent lunchtime visit, I brought friends along for the discovery. As we pulled into the red dirt parking lot, the neon "Open" sign welcomed us from the window. We opened the door to hear someone call out, "Y'all come on in." Inside, photos of happy customers covered the walls, and diners huddled at red-and-white oilcloth-covered tables over heaping plates of hearty fare. Jones stood behind the counter, waiting to take our order. She is as friendly and hospitable as anyone I've ever met.

The menu features Southern staples like smothered pork chops, liver-and-onions, chicken-fried steak, fried ribs, fried catfish, and fried chicken, complete with tantalizing Southern sides—cornbread, fried okra, yams, mixed greens, purple hull peas, butter beans, macaroni and cheese, and mashed potatoes. Daily specials include gumbo, oxtail stew, meatloaf, and chicken and dumplings.

After looking the menu over

Southern favorites like chicken-fried steak with green beans and french fries await diners at Sylvia Mae's in Jacksonville.

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thoroughly, I ordered Sylvia's chicken-fried steak with mashed potatoes and green beans (\$9). This particular trio of comfort food is my all-time favorite, and my expectations surged when I inhaled the aromas coming from the kitchen. My friends ordered smothered pork chops (\$9) and a "Soul Food" burger (\$7), then Jones handed us glasses of ice and directed us to dispensers of sweet tea, Kool-Aid, and lemonade on the counter.

Jones disappeared into the tiny kitchen where she makes big magic happen. We could hear her singing and humming in the kitchen, and she

confided later, "Singing eases my mind and helps me concentrate."

While we waited for our meals, my friends and I looked at the range of photos on the walls, some signed with complimentary comments. "Sylvia, we love you and your soul food," read one. When I asked Jones about it later, she smiled and said, "We have everyone from politicians to plumbers and mechanics. Plus police officers, teachers, coaches, firefighters, pastors, and hairdressers.

"I always like to visit with my customers and find out where they are from," Jones continued. "A lot of folks



Sylvia Jones' five decades in the food service industry pay off with both delicious food and warm hospitality.

find us as they are passing through, so I get to meet people from all over.” She told us a man from California stopped in recently and called his wife while he was eating. “His wife told him not to come home without hot water cornbread, so I made him some to go.”

We could hear Jones singing and humming in the kitchen, and she confided later, “Singing eases my mind and helps me concentrate.”

Jones soon emerged from the kitchen with our order. My plate was covered with cube steak dredged in flour then pan-fried, perfectly positioned next to mashed potatoes blanketed in white gravy beside a helping of green beans cooked with ham hocks and onions. My friend’s smothered pork chops looked delicious, too, and the Soul Food burger, a tower of beef, sausage, egg, cheese, and all the trimmings awaited my other friend. We had our work cut out for us, so we dug in.

A few minutes later we heard Jones call out to us, “How is everything?” Our mouths were full but we all gave her the universal nod of approval. Jones advised us to save room for banana pudding or peach cobbler, but we all knew it was too late. We would need to return another time for dessert.

After we paid our checks, Jones asked if she could take our photo to put on Facebook. We gathered, smiled, and went on our way. A few days later, as I was scrolling through Facebook, I saw my friends and me smiling from ear-to-ear, and I knew we’d been added to the wall of happy customers. 📷



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STORY BY
DAN OKO

Oceans of Fun



The Texas State Aquarium's new *Caribbean Journey*
enhances Corpus Christi's coastal attraction

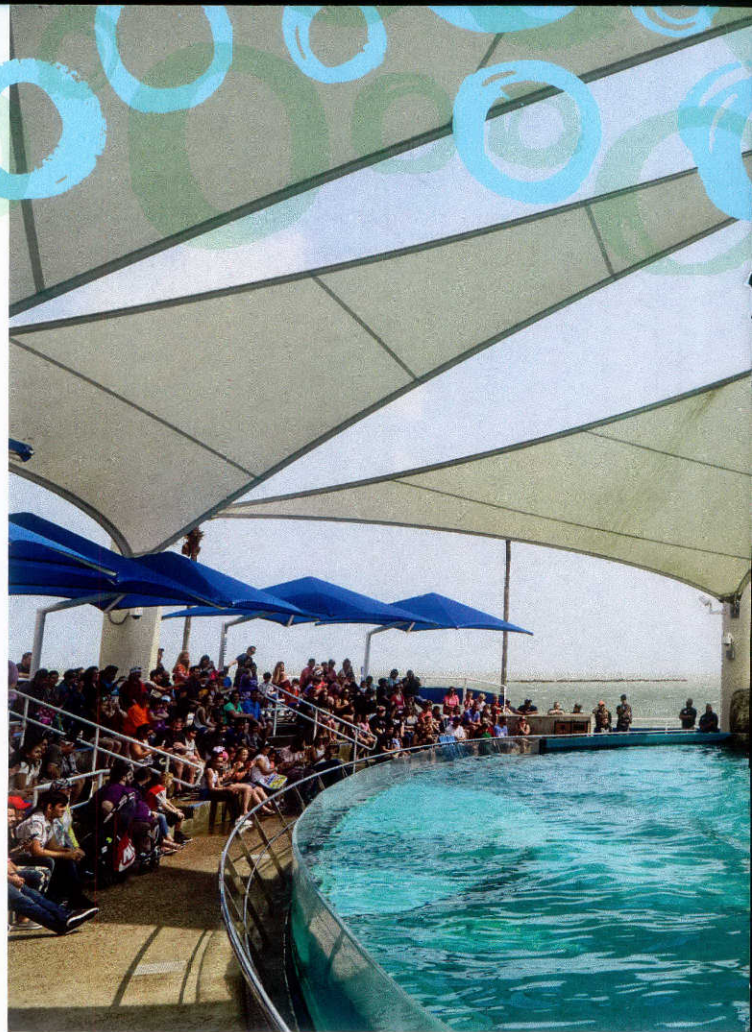
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
NATHAN
LINDSTROM

On

the deck of the Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi, on a bright afternoon this spring, a group of school kids in matching red polo shirts pressed their noses against the glass to spy river otters playing in the artificial stream that courses through *Otter Creek*. The otters slid and skittered in the water, occasionally posing for snapshots as the children pointed and laughed at their antics. Nearby in the aquarium's 400,000-gallon saltwater *Dolphin Bay* exhibit, a pair of playful Atlantic bottlenose dolphins surged and dove, competing for the visitors' attention. Later, trainers stopped by with fish for the tricksters, who leapt and danced for treats.

This sort of wildlife action made me feel young at heart, leaving me giddy despite my regrets over leaving my nine-year-old at home in Houston. It was my first visit to the aquarium, and more remarkable than the sight of these aquatic mammals frolicking was the chance to explore the facility's nearly complete \$58-million, *Caribbean Journey* expansion. While the expansion opened May 13, a preview was my excuse to spend a couple of days in March discovering our official state aquarium and acquainting myself with the charms of Corpus Christi, the little city on the bay.

“WHAT WE WERE TRYING TO DO IS RECREATE THE EXPERIENCE OF SCUBA DIVING A WRECK IN THE CARIBBEAN,” SCHMID SAID.



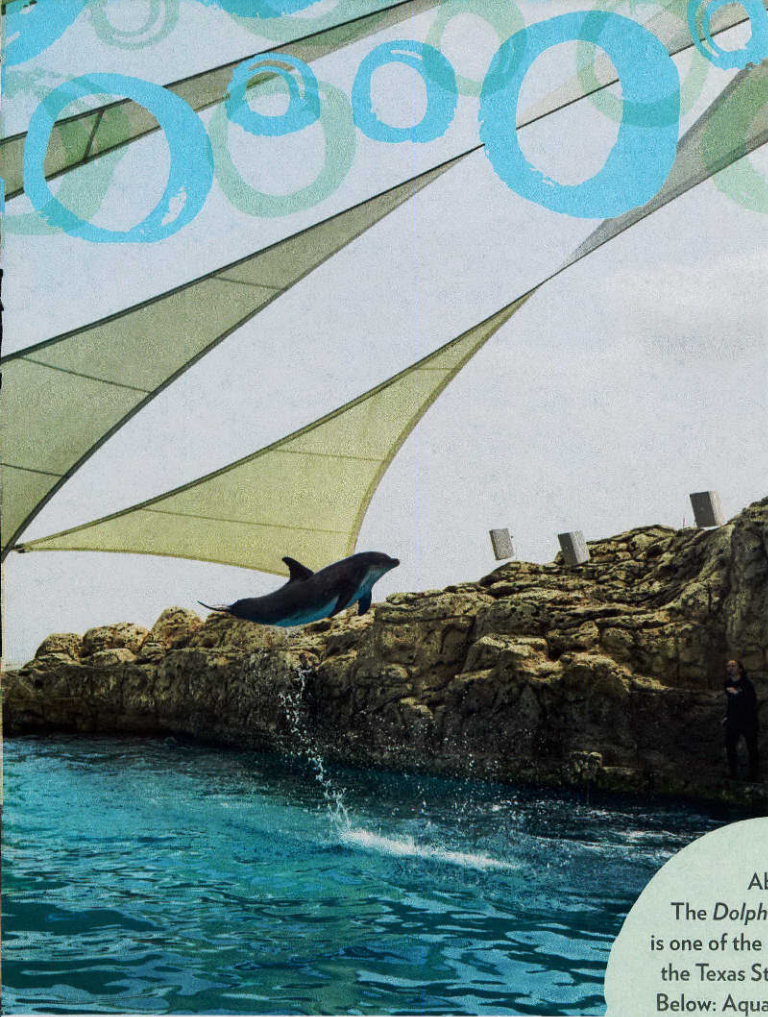
Aquarium Adventures

The 71,000-square-foot *Caribbean Journey* has tripled the size of the aquarium, which between school groups and out-of-town guests is already a top attraction in the Coastal Bend with more than 500,000 visits a year.

“The whole idea is to take people on a journey to the Caribbean,” explained aquarium President and CEO Tom Schmid, who led me on a hard-hat preview of the new space. The first tropical fish, including some enormous rays, had been introduced to a few tanks. A Florida native who studied sharks as a graduate student in marine biology before moving to Texas a decade ago, Schmid said the new attractions will help to underscore the many connections between the stretch of the Texas Coast he now calls home, the extended reach of the Gulf of Mexico, and far-flung points south of Cancun emphasized in *Caribbean Journey*.

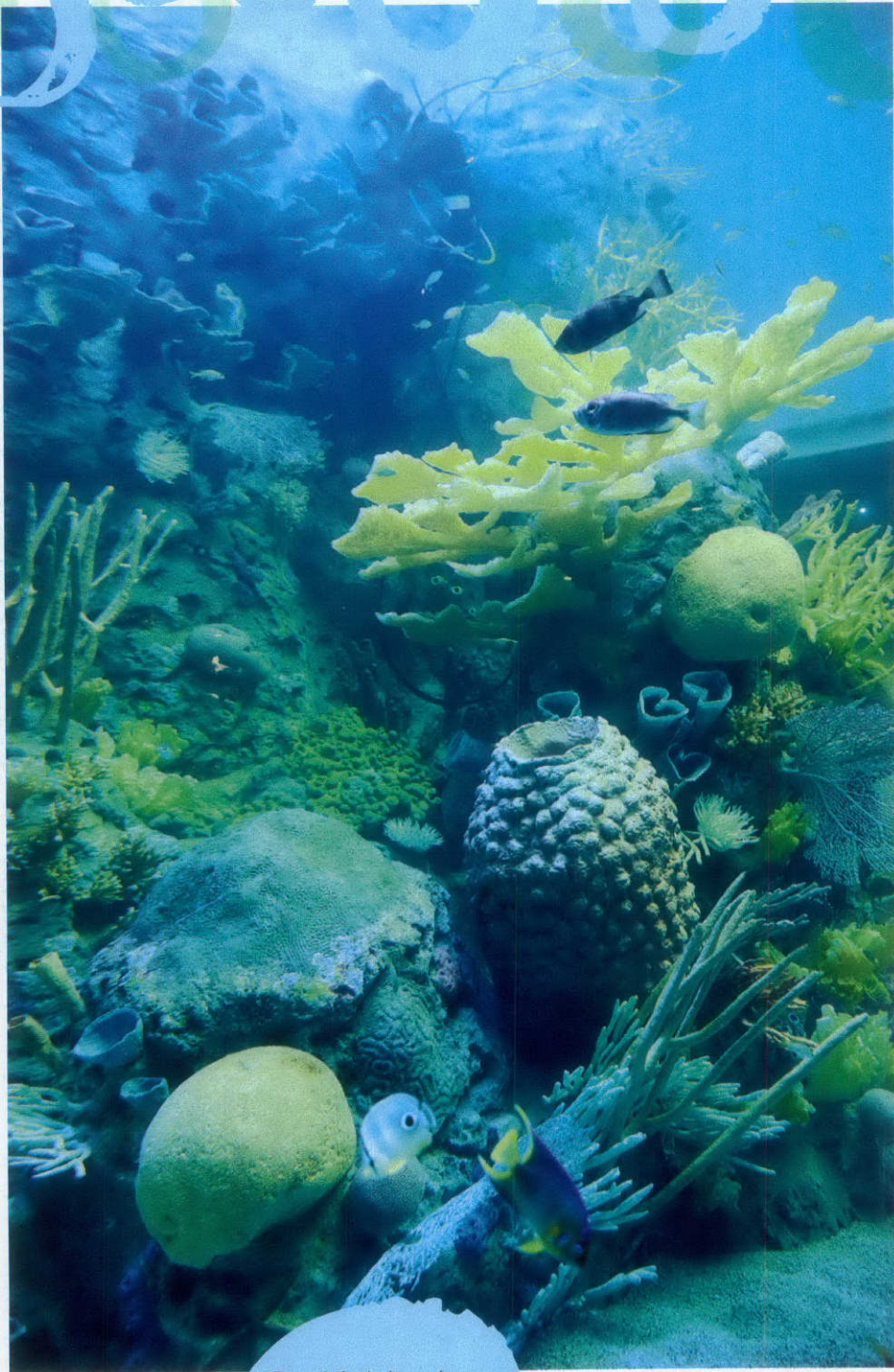
One of the main centerpieces of *Caribbean Journey* is a new shark gallery, which features a realistic, life-size partial shipwreck. Similar in size to *Dolphin Bay*, the display holds 400,000 gallons and features a 68-foot-long, 12-foot-tall window, which its California-based manufacturer claims is the longest acrylic portal in the country. Visitors may also enjoy breathtakingly up-close views from a secondary tunnel along the backside of the tank, one of several new immersive experiences.

“What we were trying to do is recreate the experience of scuba diving a wreck in the Caribbean,” Schmid said. “That’s not something a lot of people get to experience in real life,

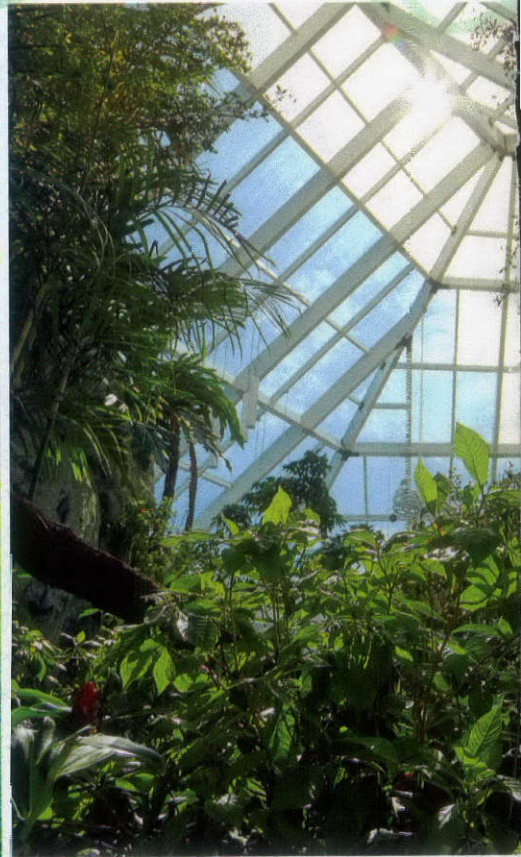


Above:
The *Dolphin Bay* exhibit
is one of the most popular at
the Texas State Aquarium.
Below: Aquarium President
Tom Schmid unveils the
new *Caribbean Journey*
expansion.

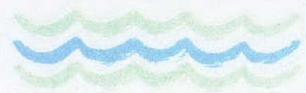




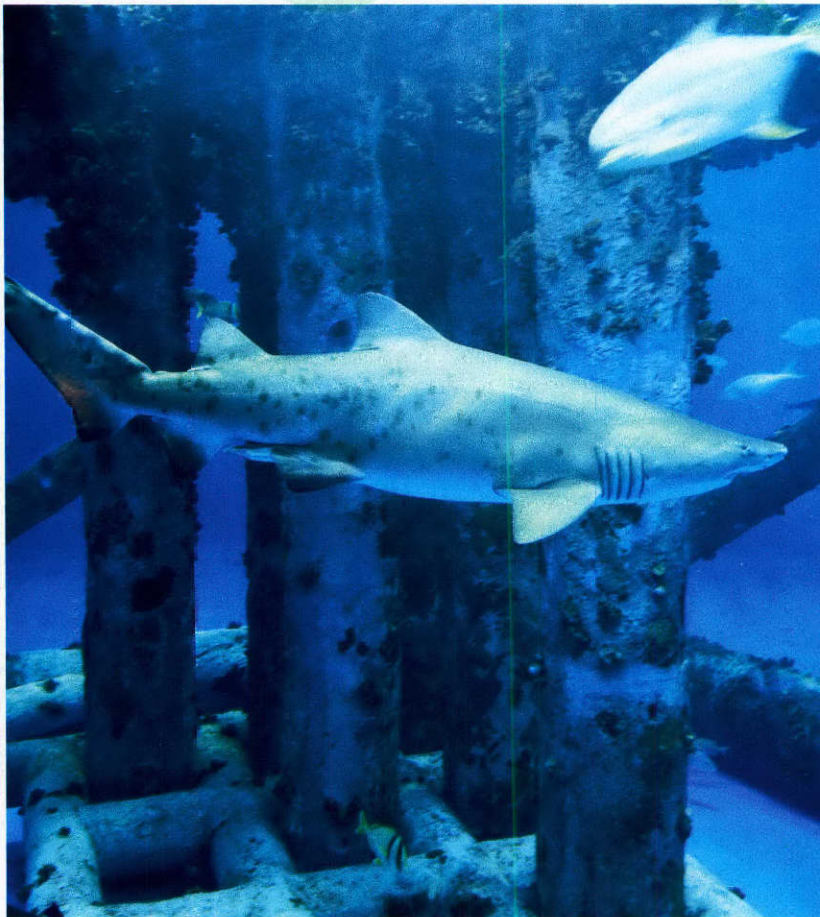
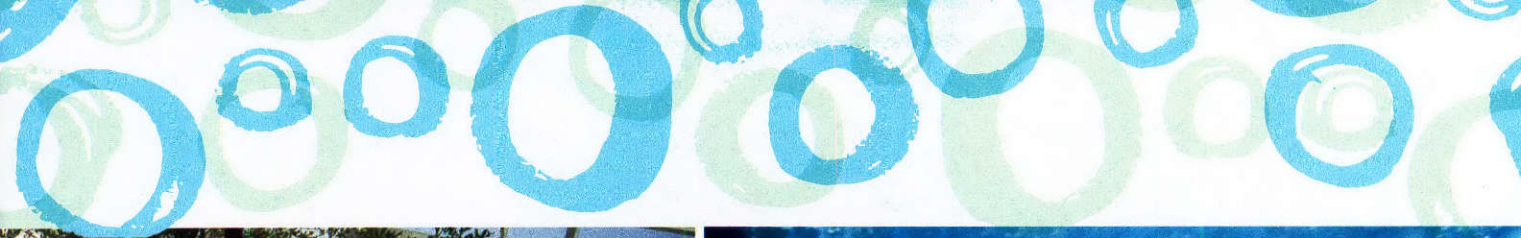
From left: A diver cleans coral in one of the tanks at the new *Caribbean Journey*; fresh foliage in the new expansion; a sand tiger shark and crevalle jacks swim around the *Islands of Steel* exhibit.



ASIDE FROM ITS MARINE DISPLAYS, THE WILDLIFE AT THE CARIBBEAN JOURNEY INCLUDES CRITTERS BETTER KNOWN FOR THEIR FUR AND FEATHERS.



so this is probably as close as most of them will ever get.” There are a variety of other enclosures for observing the charismatic creatures of the expansive *Caribbean Journey* addition. With two levels of viewing platforms, upstairs and downstairs, visitors can peer down into deep pools and also enjoy a taste of the tropical forest canopy found along Mexico’s southern coast. New galleries imitate the mangrove swamps of the Yucatan Peninsula and the Sian Ka’an Biosphere Preserve in Tulum, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its biodiversity; and a “living, coral reef laboratory,” which according to Schmid will allow researchers to grow and study



corals in what one day could be the largest coral installation at any U.S. aquarium. “Eventually we will have as much living coral as we have synthetic coral,” he said, noting that the cultivation areas will also be on view.

Aside from its marine displays, the wildlife at the *Caribbean Journey* includes critters better known for their fur and feathers. In addition to assorted free-flying birds, a keel-billed toucan—those bright-beaked rainforest denizens best known as a model for the Kellogg breakfast-cereal mascot Sam—perches and preens in the jungle aviary (apparently, toucans are not friendly in real life). Another display features habitat for the Mexican or Morelet’s crocodile, a toothy freshwater reptile found in southern Mexico, Belize, and Guatemala that can grow up to 10 feet in length—rivaling long-time aquarium favorite Eo, the American alligator in the *Swamp Tales* outdoor pool. Elsewhere, vampire bats occupy a new mock-up of an ancient Mayan ruin, while sharp-eyed visitors can search the canopy for Zena, a two-toed sloth.

The success of the new expansion affirms the aquarium’s recovery from a tragic 2015 accident that resulted in the death of nearly 400 fish due to a mislabeled chemical being introduced into a display tank. In 2016, the aquarium won a lawsuit

against the chemical’s distributor and no longer does business with the company.

Seeing the longstanding Gulf Coast exhibits alongside the brand-new *Caribbean Journey*, Schmid said, will ideally help visitors make connections between conservation challenges faced in Texas—as well as successes like the American alligator—and those faced in communities beyond the horizon. He pointed to recent die-offs documented in the reefs of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, a popular dive spot about 75 miles offshore from Galveston, and some of the bleaching events that are damaging Australia’s Great Barrier Reef. “We’re at the point where a trip to the aquarium becomes a conservation act,” he said. “The more people we can bring in, the more money we can raise for wildlife.”

That evening at the Emerald Beach Hotel, I ordered a drink at the outdoor Kokomo’s Bar and considered Schmid’s hopeful message. I find it fascinating that the aquarium uses water drawn from Corpus Christi Bay for its saltwater exhibits, filtering and circulating it through the galleries. Overlooking the beachfront I was stuck at the strange symmetry of Texas seawater sustaining the Caribbean exhibits. It had taken years of planning and serious fundraising to complete the project, and now the aquarium boss was already turning his attention to the future.



Searching for Selena

After studying ocean life at the Texas State Aquarium, I had planned to fish for some with local guide Captain Mike Morales down by the Padre Island National Seashore, but storm predictions scuttled our plans.

The protected 70-mile seashore, part of the National Park System, is the longest barrier island in the world, where sea turtles nest and beachcombers congregate along the dunes. A kayak-fishing specialist and owner of Fin Factory Charters, Morales also runs motorized shallow-water trips in pursuit of redfish, black drum, and sea trout, the main targets for Coastal Bend anglers. About a year ago, Morales and I had taken a couple of kayaks out to Bird Island Basin off the seashore, where we had caught just a handful of fish. Now, the weather refused to cooperate for the rematch I desired. “Corpus Christi is a great destination not just for fishing, but for people who just want to enjoy nature,” Morales reminded me.

Meanwhile, kids splashed in the indoor pool at the hotel, while beyond the rock jetties wind surfers and kite boarders skimmed the surf as the breeze picked up. The Emerald Beach Hotel held a certain low-key, mid-century modern charm—the late Las Vegas casino developer Wilber Clark commissioned the property in the 1960s—and it served as the perfect perch to ponder my next move.

It turned out I didn’t need to look far to find more fun. My aquarium tour happened to coincide with the third-annual Fiesta de la Flor, a two-day music festival celebrating the legacy

SELENA REMAINS AN OBJECT OF DEEP DEVOTION IN CORPUS CHRISTI, THE CITY SHE CALLED HOME.



of slain Tejano singer Selena Quintanilla. Selena, as she is universally known, remains an object of deep devotion in Corpus Christi, the city she called home until the president of her fan club shot and killed her in 1995 at the age of 23. Even before the fiesta got under way, I spotted dozens of aficionadas taking wind-blown selfies in front of the bronze Selena Memorial Statue by the bay, a reflection of how the departed star’s magnetic allure still pervades the town.

So, the following morning, I hustled myself to the busy Hi Ho Restaurant, one of the recommended stops for anybody interested in Selena (or outstanding breakfast tacos). A favorite of the entire Quintanilla clan, the restaurant boasts an impressive array of Selena posters and memorabilia as well as photos and concert posters from other popular Tejano recording artists, at least two former presidents, and assorted celebrated South Texas athletes. My *huevos rancheros* with a fluffy flour tortilla hit the spot, while the service was warm and welcoming.

Fueled up, I headed across the way to discover the treasures hidden in the Selena Museum. The museum occupies a series of renovated automotive workshops Selena’s father, Abraham, transformed into a recording studio and rehearsal space for Selena and her band, which included her older brother,



From left: Mike Morales of Fin Factory Charters leads fishing excursions off Bird Island Basin on the Padre Island National Seashore; a fan poses at the Selena Memorial Statue on Shoreline Boulevard; crowds gather at the annual Fiesta de la Flor in March.



Abraham III, on bass guitar and her sister, Suzette, on drums. In a surreal moment, Suzette popped out of her office near the costume display—the Quintanillas still own the property—to greet veteran Hollywood actress Jackie Guerra, who played the drummer in the 1997 film biopic *Selena*, which featured Jennifer Lopez in the starring role. As the two women hugged, they reminisced and recited lines from the film to the delight of the crowd. “I don’t want to play the drums! Forget it!” they laughed.

None of this quite prepared me for the Friday night performance I attended, as thousands of faithful fans gathered at the fiesta site along the seawall to hear contemporary Tejano artists pay homage to Selena. While I was at the concert, none received a warmer ovation than La Mafia, a Houston-based band that had collaborated with Selena and packed their set with covers of some of the singer’s biggest hits. It stirred my heartstrings to stand among the throngs, young and old, dancing and singing in tribute to a talent taken from the community much too soon.

As I made my way to the exit, I noticed that many in the crowd wore shirts bearing the same quote attributed to Selena: “The goal isn’t to live forever but to create something that will.” Strangely, nobody knows whether the singer actually said such a thing. Reflecting on what Schmid has accomplished at the aquarium, however, I thought it a fitting credo for Corpus Christi’s multiplying claims to fame. **L**

Freelance writer Dan Oko covers outdoor recreation, active travel, and environmental affairs from his home base in Houston.

When not on the road, he helps coach his daughter’s soccer team and enjoys riding his bike. Photographer Nathan Lindstrom runs his own commercial studio in Houston. When not traveling the country for work, Lindstrom spends time tinkering in his garage wood shop, chasing his son around the house, and helping his wife clean up after their perpetually shedding dog.

ESSENTIALS CORPUS CHRISTI

The **Corpus Christi Convention and Visitors Bureau**, 101 N. Shoreline Blvd., Ste. 430. Call **361/881-1888**; www.visitcorpuschristitx.org.

Emerald Beach Hotel, 1102 S. Shoreline Blvd. Call **361/883-5731**; www.hotelemeraldbeach.com.

The **Texas State Aquarium**, 2710 N. Shoreline Blvd., is open Mon-Sat 9-5, Sun 10-5. Call **800/477-4853**; www.texasaquarium.org.

The **Selena Museum**, 5410 Leopard St., Corpus Christi, is open Mon-Fri 10-4. Call **361/289-9013**; www.q-productions.com/ruseum.


Hi Ho Restaurant, 3703 Morgan Ave. Call **361/888-4992**.

To book a guided fishing tour, contact **Fin Factory Charters** at **817/832-1045**; www.finfactorycharters.com.



My
(secret)
Coast

BY SUSAN L. EBERT
PHOTOGRAPHS BY KENNY BRAUN



Matagorda has mesmerized me with her charms, drawing me back again and again.

No coastal highway passes through Matagorda.

But when you follow Texas 60 south from Bay City to its terminus where the Colorado River empties into the Matagorda Bay, prepare to be beguiled.

Here, the mighty Colorado River watershed feeds vast marshes laced with leveed rice paddies and jungle-like wetland preserves such as Mad Island Wildlife Management Area and the Big Boggy and San Bernard national wildlife refuges.

Back when Spanish cartographer Alonso Álvarez de Pineda first mapped the Texas coast in 1519, the Colorado River percolated its red clay-tinted waters into a large bay through hundreds of square miles of marsh filled with impenetrable canebrakes, thus both the bay's and the river mouth's appellation of "thick bush" (*mata gorda* in Spanish). Shielding Matagorda Bay from the Gulf of Mexico is a 65-mile-long barrier peninsula that arcs from Pass Cavallo at its southernmost point to the mouth of Caney Creek at its northernmost—also bearing the Matagorda moniker.

Spanish explorer Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca shipwrecked near the Matagorda Peninsula in 1528. As he wrote in *La Relación*, his 1542 book about his expedition, he took solace among the indigenous Karankawa people, who sympathized so deeply with his loss of crew and ship that they sat on the shoreline and wept along with him. Descendants of natives dating to 10,000 B.C., the tall, lithe Karankawas adorned themselves with lip and nipple piercings, elaborate tattoos, and a thorough smearing of alligator or shark grease to repel mosquitos. The Karankawas—fierce warriors when the situation demanded it—resisted assimilation, fled southward, and were last seen in Tamaulipas, Mexico, in the mid-1800s before vanishing entirely.

In 1827, Stephen F. Austin gained permission from Mexico to establish

Opening spread: Marshes off Beach Road, Matagorda. With about 500 residents and abundant coastline to explore, Matagorda attracts visitors searching to unwind.



a town at the mouth of the Colorado, using one of the deeper cuts through the canebrakes to establish the port of Matagorda. A customs house, built in 1831, processed the paperwork for shipments of colonists, soldiers, and supplies. By 1834, Austin's settlement at Matagorda boasted 1,400 residents, making it the third-largest town in Texas.

These days, it's a bit smaller.

Saturday on the Town

Matagorda now has about 500 full-time residents, and judging by the crowd as I enter the Volunteer Fire Department's banquet hall on a Saturday night, it appears that everyone from toddlers to octogenarians has showed up for the all-you-can-eat spaghetti fundraiser. As the band hauls in equipment and folks queue up in the serving line, I scan the room for outdoors guide Christy Bishop, who had taken me out on an exhilarating marsh tour via kayak earlier. Since she and her husband, Clay, are both volunteer firemen, I'm here at their fundraiser so we could visit some more.

While I wait for Christy, I chat with several of the shopkeepers I had met that afternoon. My husband, Shannon, and I had enjoyed a delightful lunch at Riverbend Restaurant, our table on the outdoor patio affording a sweeping view of the Colorado River. Shannon had devoured his cheeseburger while I sampled several items from the appetizer menu, including deep-fried jalapeños, as plump as pillows with a stuffing of fresh crabmeat; and "oyster babies," fried fresh oysters tossed in garlic butter and blanketed with Monterey Jack cheese. After lunch, we'd been exploring the village's side streets and historical markers when a bank of fog had rolled in, thick as pea soup. This was Shannon's signal to grab a well-earned nap, and mine to do what any red-blooded Texas gal would do while unfettered in a coastal town: explore the shops.





MATAGORDA WHERE TO EAT, PLAY, AND STAY

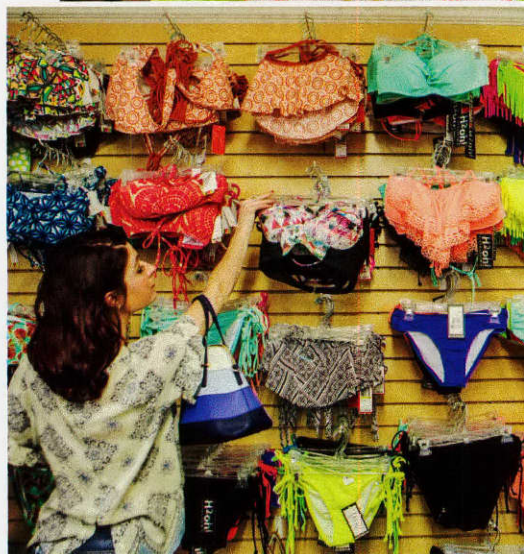
DINING

Locals and savvy tourists head to **Lighthouse BBQ and Cafe** for a dose of home-style country goodness. Try the Texas Trash for a stick-to-the-ribs breakfast, or pop in for authentic barbecue for lunch or supper. 18411 Texas 60. Call 979/863-2328.

Chef Edie Lanier infuses her **Spoonbills** restaurant with a passion for impeccably fresh coastal cuisine. As Lanier uses locally harvested fruits, vegetables, and seafood, her menu changes frequently, but the Nut-Crusted Fish is a perennial favorite, as is the Fried-Green Tomato Tower appetizer with shrimp, crab claws, and house-made remoulade over fried green tomatoes. 773 Cypress St. Call 979/863-7766; www.spoonbillsrestaurant.com.

Poco Playa Restaurant & Bar showcases local seafood with daily specials. The staff will also fry, blacken, or grill your cleaned-and-filleted catch. 582 Fisher St. Call 979/863-7308; www.pocoplaya.com.

Riverbend Restaurant & Tavern sports a covered back deck overlooking the Colorado River and moorings for those arriving by boat. The burger and seafood offerings are fresh and ample, but don't pass up the house-made breaded and crab-stuffed fried jalapeños. 1427 Beach Road (FM 2031). Call 979/863-7481; www.matagordabay.com/riverbend.



I first headed to Stanley's Market for a \$10 Matagorda County permit to drive on the beach—and to marvel at the awesomeness that is Stanley's. After more than a half-century of serving both locals and tourists, the staff at Stanley's has developed an uncanny ability to stock whatever it is that visitors forget to bring, plus fishing licenses and tackle, ice chests, crab traps, fresh produce, groceries, apparel, beachwear, boogie boards, soft drinks, wine, beer, and a full-service deli counter with delicious cheeseburgers.

Fisher Street, Matagorda's main artery, is lined with historic homes and churches as well as an eclectic mix of shops. First, I strolled through the tropical courtyard of Poco Playa Village Shops, making a mental note to return to Poco Playa Restaurant for some of its seafood specialties. Then I popped into The Spot at Matagorda, where I visit with proprietors Tom and Susan Davis. "This building was Matagorda's main mercantile; it's at least 100 years old," Susan said. "It was vacant for 40 years before we purchased it." Brushing back a wisp of hair with a sigh, she commented that the restoration of an old building is a seemingly endless process, but one she and her husband find rewarding. Interesting items here include long-sleeved, SPF-rated fishing shirts embellished with intricate embroidery work depicting redfish, owls, and school mascots. (If you'd like your own design, custom embroidery orders take only a week to complete.)

An easygoing beach vibe permeates the shops and accommodations. Clockwise from top, scarves at **The Spot**, luxe lodging at **Cattails at Karankawa Village** and beachwear at **Polka-Dot Bikini and Tropical Maniac**.



A Matagorda-style "American Gothic" at Stanley's.

A short stroll up Fisher Street landed me at Tropical Maniac, a riotous delight of artwork, apparel, beachwear, and home decor where I was particularly smitten with a larger-than-life pink flamingo crafted from hammered metal.

Just past the Full Stringer Realty office (which can provide information on rentals in the area), I slipped into Polka-Dot Bikini, a boutique featuring designer swimwear, sassy sundresses, and summery sandals. The shop carries top-of-the-line fishing apparel for men and women, as well as several racks of chic tropical menswear.

Next, I admired the assortment of leather sandals, whimsical tees, and sundresses at Purple Palm Boutique before hopping in the Jeep to drive a mile up Texas 60 to Cattails at Karankawa Village. Owner Sue Milberger gestured to the racks of cotton sundresses and beach coverups. “They’re all 50 percent off,” she said, “as I’m making room for the summer 2017 styles.” I browsed those, as well as the tastefully curated beach-themed jewelry, watercolors, and oil paintings. Milberger also stocks an extensive selection of wine and cigars, but I succumbed to the aroma of coffee wafting from behind the counter. “Best cup of coffee in Matagorda,” she claimed as she handed me a mug, and after the first sip, I nodded in agreement.

One question is on everyone’s lips this afternoon: “Goin’ to the fire department tonight?” And so after exploring the area’s retail offerings, I headed back to the lodge to wake Shannon and make our way to the VFD Hall.

Nearly everyone I’d met this afternoon has come to the VFD’s fundraiser tonight—a testament to the bonds so integral to a small town’s survival. By the time Christy arrives, I’m deep in conversation with newfound friends, but I break away to visit with her and relive our morning in the marsh.

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Marsh-Mellow Memories

We had met in the predawn hours on the shoulder of Beach Road just past Rawling’s Bait Camp. Across from the bait camp, a popular kayak launching spot called Rawling’s Cut meanders through the marsh into East Bay. While I settled into a kayak to have my camera at the ready, Christy stood atop a sleek paddleboard bearing her distinctive mermaid logo. The sun had barely breached the horizon as we pushed off, sending kaleidoscopic splinters of refracted light across the glimmering bay.

We paddled east into the sunrise as big-shouldered redfish cut deep V-shaped wakes both to the port and starboard, shrimp and baitfish skittering in frenzied alarm. Directly ahead, a flock of roseate spoonbills rose from the marsh, their rose-hued wings translucent against the rising sun. A reddish egret, its long, beard-like breast feathers undulating in the gentle breeze, held its wings aloft umbrella-like, creating a shady spot to attract hapless baitfish escaping the sun’s glare. Great blue and little blue herons, white ibis, wood storks, and several species of egret hunted in pickets along the channel’s edges while rafts of ducks—blue-winged teal, redheads, gadwall, and wigeon—sailed skyward at our approach, only to circle back and splash down again after we passed. Squadrons of brown pelicans flew in formation overhead while shorebirds, including plovers, whimbrels, black-necked stilts, and impossibly-long-billed curlews, probed the mud for mollusks, crustaceans,



and aquatic invertebrates. Small wonder that birders swoon over Matagorda, where at least 248 species have been cataloged to date.

We paddled southeast into Three Mile Lake, a large marsh-rimmed lake on the backside of Matagorda Beach known for its spectacular fishing and birding. I studied three wade-fishermen plying the edges of a shallow oyster reef with enviable success, and I watched a kayak angler, his craft bristling with an array of rods, paddle purposefully into a slough. I made a mental note to bring rods on my next trip. With no motorized boats in the shallow marsh, anglers have both stealth and solitude on their side.

Although I'm an experienced kayaker, the watery ribbons veining the marsh became an impenetrable labyrinth of sameness to me, even with

Stuffed crab, fried shrimp, and sides at Spoonbill's; beach-bar-bummin' at Poco Playa; browsing at The Purple Palm Boutique.

the rooftops of the Beach Road stilt houses in sight. Thankfully, these waterways are familiar neighborhood roads to Christy.

This evening at the Firemen's Hall, I thank her again for the splendid morning we shared, and I vow to return soon.

Sunday morning, Shannon and I are up and out the door by sunrise, cameras and binoculars in tow. First, we drive the beach, creeping along in hopes of finding some of the rarest shorebirds. A few beach strollers, shell-seekers, and a handful of surfcasters revel in the early spring warmth as

ADVENTURING

Kayaking and Stand-Up Paddleboarding: Christy and Clay Bishop of Matagorda Adventures Company offer guided kayak and SUP tours and rentals, as well as kayak fishing, paddling classes, and yoga. Call 832/779-4157; matagordaadventures.com.

Bay and Offshore Fishing: USCG Captain Bink Grimes works the East and West Matagorda bays and the Matagorda and Port O'Connor jetties, and also offers offshore fishing trips and waterfowl hunting excursions. Call 979/241-1705 or email binkgrimes@sbcglobal.net.

Birding and Wildlife Viewing: The Lower Colorado River Authority's 1,600-acre Matagorda Bay Nature Park is anchored by the Natural Science Center and has about two miles each of Gulf beachfront and Colorado River frontage, plus hundreds of acres of coastal marshes and dunes. Restrooms and outdoor showers serve anglers, beachgoers, RV campers, and tent campers. Call 979/863-2603; www.lcra.org/matagorda.

Beachgoing: Matagorda boasts clean, sandy beaches, stellar shelling, superb surf-casting, and outstanding shorebird viewing. Cruise along the 22-mile-long public beach after purchasing a Matagorda County permit (\$10) from one of the local merchants. Use of four-wheel drive and good judgment is advised; should you lack either or both, contact the Matagorda Beach Wrecker: 979/320-7969.

Horseback Riding: T&D Adventure Parks, LLC., across from the entrance to Matagorda Bay Nature Park, offers hour-long horseback rides on the beach daily, by reservation only. Call 979/824-3327; www.horsesonthebeachmatagorda.com.

graceful plovers, willets, and other sandpipers dance ballerina-like at the surf's edge.

We've worked up an appetite, and we know just where to go: up Texas 60 to the Lighthouse BBQ & Cafe, which occupies a small frame cottage in front of an RV park. We opt for the Sunday breakfast buffet, a bountiful home-style spread of fresh fruit, bacon, sausage, hash browns, pancakes, and eggs to order.

Later that morning, we drive down the road to the left of the Matagorda Bay Nature Park's Natural Science Center, which features exhibits of shells and sea life common to the area. While Shannon photographs birds, I pause on the jetties, watching the shrimp boats and offshore anglers heading out the channel into the open Gulf. This channel, I learn, is relatively young.

"Up until the 1920s, Matagorda was all one big bay," Matagorda County Extension Agent Bill Balboa says. "Gulf of Mexico traffic to and from Matagorda had to enter the Bay at Pass Cavallo, 34 miles to the west, or at the smaller, less reliable Mitchell's Cut at the east end of the bay near Sargent. In the 1920s, Matagorda officials dredged a channel for the Colorado, using the spoil material to build what is now Beach Road, cutting Matagorda Bay in half and creating East and West bays."

Matagorda has seen more changes in the past century. The section

of the Intracoastal Waterway between Galveston Bay and Corpus Christi wasn't completed until 1941. Until 2009, in fact, a single, floating swing bridge cobbled together from a retrofitted barge provided the only vehicular

access to the peninsula, as well as the only way mainland ranchers could drive their herds to the winter grazing grounds they relied upon before the Intracoastal sliced through their ranches. The unreliable and costly system required frequent repairs and around-the-clock operators, so the Texas Department of Transport-



Matagorda clings to its roots and celebrates its history, as delicate as its shorebirds, as tough as its canebrakes, as enduring as its tides.

ESSENTIALS

Visiting Matagorda

For more information about lodging, attractions, and activities, see Matagorda County Convention & Visitors Bureau's website, www.visitmatagordacounty.com. Other helpful websites include www.matagordabay.com, www.matagordatexas.com, and www.matagordabaytexas.com.

Local shops to check out:

Stanley's Market, 725 Market St.
Call 979/863-7613.

The Spot at Matagorda, 811 Fisher St.
Call 817/713-2227.

Tropical Maniac, 455 Fisher St.
Call 979/240-9058.

Polka-Dot Bikini, 244 Fisher St.
Call 979/863-5005.

The Purple Palm Boutique,
1303 Fisher St. Call 979/557-2868;
www.purplepalminn.com.

Cattails at Karankawa Village,
22996 TX 60. Call 979/863-7737;
www.karankawavillage.com.



tation determined to replace it with a soaring modern bridge.

In the process of building the 3,387-foot-long, 73-foot-high structure, disaster loomed in the form of 2008's Hurricane Ike, which was predicted to hit Matagorda while the partially built bridge was in full cantilever. Fearing that the entire cantilevered section could be lost, engineers worked feverishly with cables to secure the structure and prevent it from cracking.

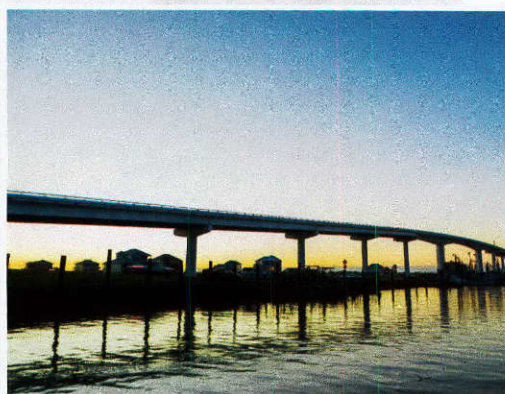
Paddleboarding as the sun hovers on the horizon; a reddish egret surveys the scene; and the striking Matagorda Bay Bridge.



Fortunately for Matagorda, Ike veered north just before landfall, sparing the nascent bridge.

The bridge earned its Matagorda chops that day, I think to myself. For this feisty little town, so rich in history, so warm in heart, so resplendent with natural resources, could have vanished like the town of Indianola had years ago—simply scoured away by repeated hurricanes. Instead, it clings to its roots and celebrates its history, as delicate as its shorebirds, as tough as its canebrakes, as enduring as its tides. **L**

Writer Susan Ebert specializes in outdoor adventure, conservation, and environmental issues. In her spare time, she enjoys fishing, hunting, and gardening. Multitalented photographer Kenny Braun's portfolio includes sports, portraiture, barbecue, and nature.



LODGING

A colorful tepee adorned with leaping redfish marks the entrance to **Karankawa Village**. The Lodge features eight rooms and connects by a boardwalk to Cattails, a mercantile carrying coastal apparel, home decor, gourmet foods, coffees, and wine. 22996 Texas 60.

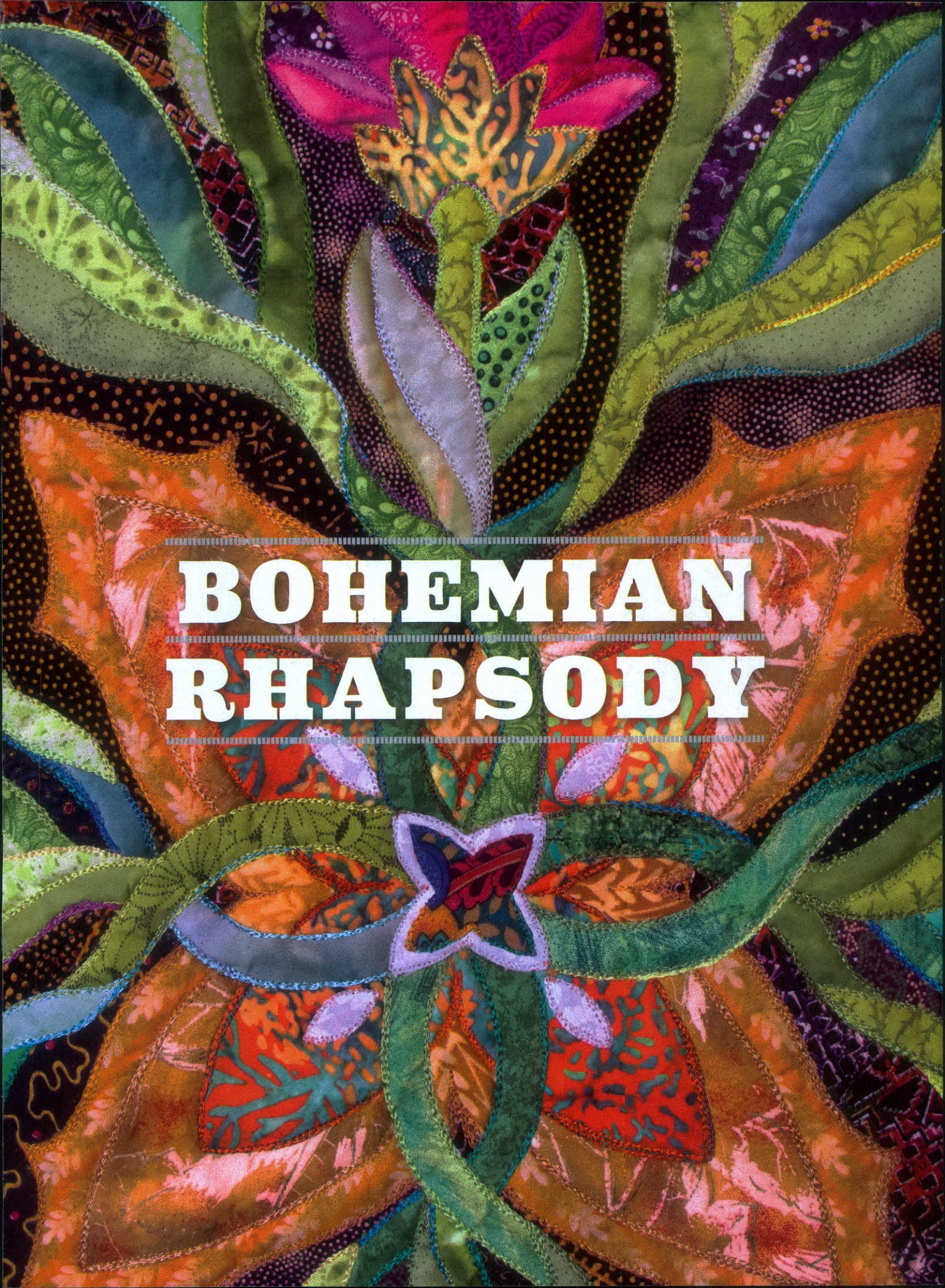
Call 979/863-7737;
www.karankawavillage.com.

Matagorda Sunrise Lodge has 11 bedrooms in two side-by-side stilt houses on the Colorado River, plus a lodge building for entertaining large groups. 190 St. Mary's Slough. Call 979/241-1705;
www.matagordasunriselodge.com.

Luxuriate in 1890s splendor in the two second-floor rooms at **The Purple Palm Inn**, upstairs from the Purple Palm Boutique. 1303 Fisher St. Call 979/557-2868;
www.purplepalminn.com.

Stanley-Fisher House Bed & Breakfast is a Texas Historic Landmark, built in 1832 by Samuel Rhoads Fisher, one of the signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence and colleague of Stephen F. Austin and Sam Houston. 107 St. Mary St. Call 979/863-2920;
www.stanley-fisher.com.

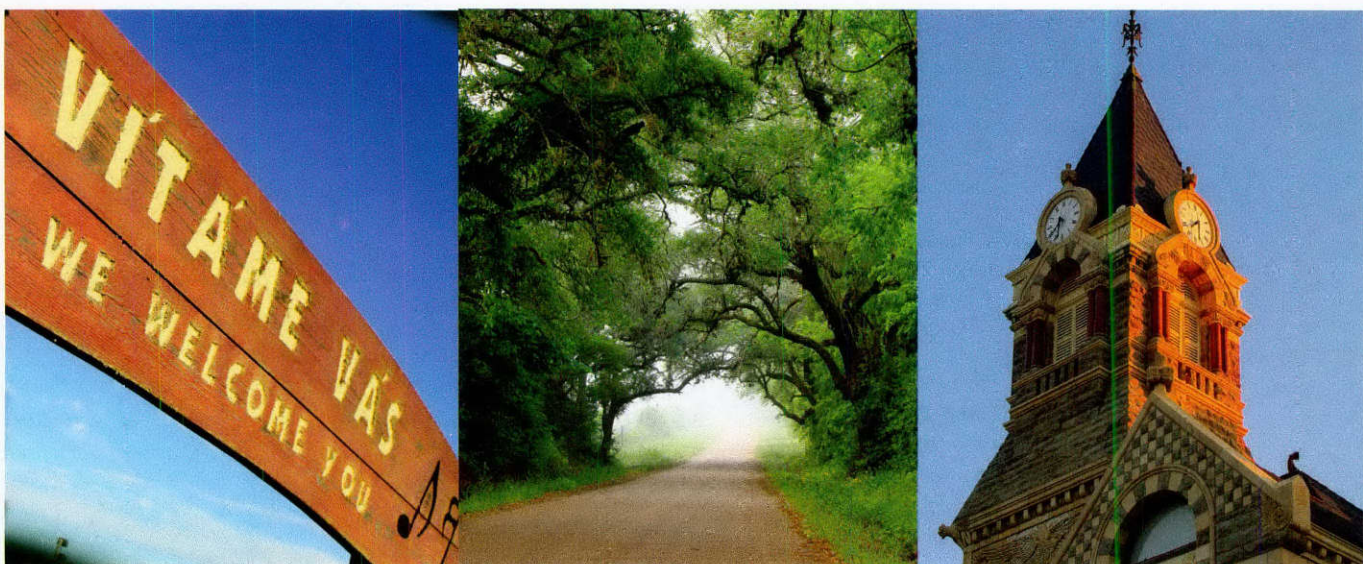
Want to just saunter over the dunes to the beach? Rent a big river house where you can fish and crab right outside your door? Stay in town, near shops and restaurants? **Full Stringer Rentals** has rental listings to suit every taste and budget. 258 Fisher St. Call 979/863-1143;
www.fullstringerrentals.com.



**BOHEMIAN
RHAPSODY**



the
TEXAS-CZECH
culture of Fayette County




story by

MICHAEL CORCORAN



WHO NEEDS TO GET ON AN AIRPLANE TO DANCE WITH A FOREIGN CULTURE?



Between Houston and Austin, a 90-minute drive from each, is Fayette County, “the cradle of Czech immigration.” In the 19th century, Czech immigrants settled in pockets around Texas—just follow the kolaches—but the concentration of new arrivals in Fayette County created a rich Czech tradition that persists today in the region’s music, food, and culture.

Fleeing persecution in their homeland, a pioneering group of 16 families from Bohemia landed in Galveston in 1852 and made their way to Central Texas, according to the *Texas Almanac*. By the Civil War, about 700 Czechs called the region’s rich farmland home.

Predominantly Catholic, the Czechs settled in such Fayette County towns as La Grange, Fayetteville, Schulenburg, Dubina, Moulton, Hostyn, and Praha. They brought polka, kolaches, and dumplings—music

and food that reminded them of home. But at the same time, these Czechs, along with their German and Polish neighbors, became Texas pioneers, working the fields, raising livestock, and mixing country music into their Saturday night polka dances. Unlike other immigrant groups, they didn’t migrate to the cities in great numbers.

I ATTENDED LAST YEAR’S HERITAGE FEST AND RECEIVED A FULL SERVING OF CZECH CULTURE IN TWO HOURS. POLKA DANCING? CZECH. CHICKEN AND DUMPLINGS. PLUS KOLACHES? CZECH. VINTAGE TRACTOR DISPLAY? CZECH.

The Texas-Czechs built community centers with dance floors and stages, including the first SPJST hall, built in 1887 in Fayetteville. Although people joke that SPJST stands for “Some People Just Sit There,” the letters come from the Czech words for “Slovak Benevolent Order of the State of Texas.” There are now 103 SPJST lodges in Texas (offering insurance and other financial services for members) but the original—SPJST Lodge No. 1—remains in downtown Fayetteville, opening occasionally as a meeting hall and event venue.

Fayette County has 30 vintage dance halls that are still standing, more than any other county in Texas, says Steve Dean, co-founder of Texas Dancehall Preservation Inc. “Texas has a cultural identity all its own—the music, the food, the dancing. And it all grew out of the dance halls,” Dean says. “The

people of Fayette County dance differently. They still do the traditional steps.”

The Czech pioneers also erected churches modeled after European cathedrals, with elaborately painted walls and opulent altars. More than 20 “painted churches” were built throughout the region, including striking examples in Praha (St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption, 1895), Dubina (Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church, 1912), Ammannsville (St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, 1918), and High Hill (St. Mary Catholic Church, 1906). The churches keep their doors open during the day, so anyone can visit.

In the summer, the churches host their annual picnics, which serve as reunions and community fairs. Besides feasts of fried chicken, sausage, and beef stew, the church picnics feature morning Masses in native Czech, livestock shows, amusements such as miniature train rides for the kids, and polka bands and dancing.

May and October are always big in Fayette County, with various Maifest and Oktoberfest blowouts. The Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center near the Fayette County Fairgrounds hosts the Slavnost celebration May 19-21



CZECH THIS OUT

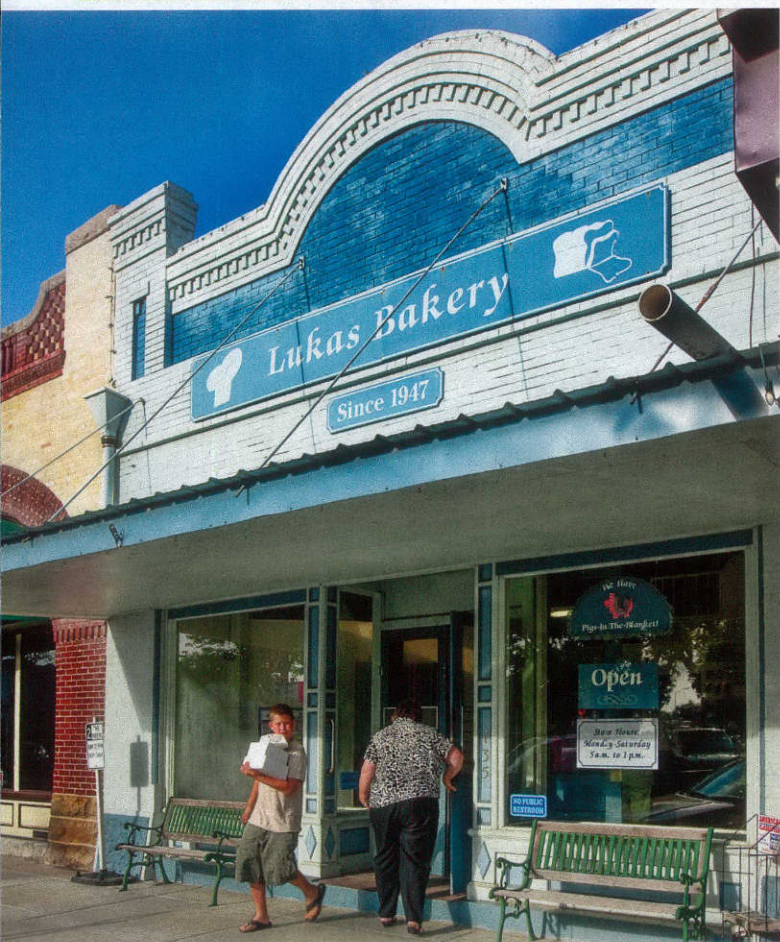
Opening spread: The Texas Quilt Museum; Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center in La Grange; Middle Creek Road near Schulenburg; Fayette County Courthouse. Opposite: Laddie Janik of the Shiner Hobo Band at the Heritage Fest & Muzicky.



PICK-UP
ORDER
HERE

Czech
Life

Polka
On!





and the Heritage Fest & Muziky on the third weekend in October (October 20-21, 2017). I attended last year's Heritage Fest and received a full serving of Czech culture in two hours. Polka dancing? Czech. Chicken and dumplings, plus kolaches? Czech. Vintage tractor display? Czech. All this unfolded to the sounds of the Shiner Hobo Band pumping out the oom-pah-pah beat for dancing couples.

The cultural center campus includes a genealogy library and a Texas-Czech village with historic houses, a replica tavern/store, and the Zapalac Sawmill, built around 1895. You'll also find the Czech Music Museum of Texas, set in a restored 1890s Texas-Czech farmhouse, with memorabilia from three genres of Czech music in addition to polka: classical, spiritual, and brass. The fair pavilion, a 1925 dance hall, hosts public dances and private events.

Fayette County measures 950 square miles, but the population is only around 25,000, so there's a lot of driving between communities. The La Grange downtown square offers two options to fuel up: Latte On the Square, which serves coffee drinks and food, including a Czech cabbage soup with potatoes and *kielbasa* that turns La Grange into Prague on first taste; and Big State Coffee House & Roastery, where customers can watch (and smell) the roasting of coffee beans.

The Fayette County Courthouse, built in Romanesque Revival style in 1891 and beautifully restored in 2005, dominates the downtown square. Self-guided tour pamphlets are available in the courthouse, and docents with the La Grange Visitors Bureau offer tours on Saturdays.



LIFE IN LA GRANGE

Clockwise from top left: Migl House at Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center; Heritage Fest & Muzicky; cabbage soup at Latte on the Square in La Grange; ruins of the Kreische Brewery near La Grange; Lukas Bakery in La Grange.

For aspiring chefs, the first stop on the square is Le Petite Gourmet Shoppe, which carries cookware, cutlery, spices, and kitchen gadgets. If you'd rather pay for skilled cooking by others, there's Prause's Meat Market, established on the square in 1904 and still a draw for raw meats and great barbecue. Lukas Bakery serves tasty kolaches, and the homey Bistro 108 serves locals and day-trippers from the big city with its chef-prepared dishes ranging from chicken-fried pork chops to hearty salads and grilled catfish.

Just off the square, the Texas Quilt Museum displays rotating exhibits of artful quilts in a building that was constructed as a furniture store in 1893. The original clay bricks, longleaf pine floors, and broad bay windows create an airy atmosphere in the 10,000 square feet of exhibit space. Next door, the museum's Grandmother's Flower Garden features plants that would have been found in a Texas garden in the 1893-1930 time frame, such as purple coneflower and bachelor button.

"Gardening and quilting are kindred arts," explains Julie Maffei, manager of the Quilt Museum.

If you're coming from the Houston area, be sure to hit Hruska's in Ellinger for fantastic kolaches and sausages. You can eat there or find prime picnicking at Monument Hill & Kreische Brewery State Historic Sites, located about one mile south of La Grange. Set on a 200-foot bluff overlooking the Colorado River, the park offers walking trails; tours of Monument Hill (where a tomb holds the remains of Texian soldiers who were killed during the Republic of Texas period); the 1850 home of Saxony immigrant Heinrich L. Kreische; and the ruins of an 1860 brewery built by Kreische—one of the state's first commercial breweries.

My favorite drive in all of Texas is US 77 from La Grange to Schulenburg, a distance of 17 miles that will take three hours if you do it right by taking a few detours. I usually start at Weikel's Bakery in La Grange. It may look like another gas station, but Weikel's serves delicious sandwiches on fresh-baked wheat bread, as well as an assortment of fruit kolaches and their sausage cousins, *alobasniky*.

I like to save St. Mary Catholic Church in High Hill, known as "the Queen of the Painted Churches," for the grand finale. So, a side trip I recommend is a detour starting on Farm-to-Market Road 1383, first through Ammannsville and then to Dubina, the first all-Czech settlement in Texas. To show that the good ol' days weren't always better, Dubina's ornate painted church, Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church, has preserved its primitive outhouses, with "Men" and

**FAYETTE COUNTY
MEASURES 950
SQUARE MILES. BUT
THE POPULATION
IS ONLY 25,000. SO
THERE'S A LOT OF
DRIVING BETWEEN
COMMUNITIES.**





“Women” written in Czech. These are just for show, not to go.

At the church, take a right on FM 615 (Piano Bridge Road). The route from Dubina to High Hill is especially soothing, as you’ll cross the historic Piano Bridge (built in 1885) over the Navidad River. It used to sound like your tires were tickling the ivories before the boards were reinforced.

Enough build-up, you’re ready for St. Mary’s, which differs from other turn-of-the-century Texas-Czech churches in that the paintings—depicting angels, lambs, and other religious subjects—were done on canvas first, then glued and hot-ironed to the walls. It’s like the Sistine Chapel in a prairie ghost town!

Just three miles south of High Hill is Schulenburg, a town developed by German and Czech settlers. Schulenburg is partly known for the Stanzel Model Aircraft Museum, which tells the story of Victor and Joe Stanzel, brothers from Schulenburg who started a model and toy plane company in the 1930s.

But in the past decade, with the openings on Main Street of the beautifully restored Sengelmann Hall—a restaurant, saloon, and dance hall—and the Texas Polka Music Museum, Schulenburg has taken on the nickname of “the jewel of the Polka Belt.”

The Polka Museum is a must-stop on this trip, not only to read about some of the area’s musical pioneers, such as the Baca Band, which celebrated the World War I victory in 1918 with a blowout dance at the SPJST No. 1 in Fayetteville, but also to pick up some authentic music for the drive. The Polka Museum carries CDs from most of the bands in Fayette County, including the Dujka Brothers, Jerry Haisler and the Melody 5, The Czechaholics, and the Praha Brothers.

Once you get your fill of dance halls and painted churches, Fayette County offers other attractions that draw visitors from across the state. For some, a perfect La Grange day could be

golfing at Frisch Auf! Valley Country Club followed by a concert at The Bugle Boy, the best little listening room in Texas. (It’s practically state law to use “best little ... in Texas” quips when the topic is La Grange, former home of the notorious Chicken Ranch bordello.)

And in northern Fayette County, Round Top is home to world-famous antiques fairs and the Round Top Festival Institute, which hosts a Summer Festival with concerts by classical musicians in town for six weeks of concentrated training. Nearby, the University of Texas’ Shakespeare at Winedale program hosts renditions of the Bard’s repertoire in July and August in the Winedale Theater Barn.

Fayetteville is another historic Czech town with tons of charm, plus two great cafes in Orsak’s (country cooking and burgers) and Joe’s Place (steaks and seafood). The historic Country Place Hotel on the Fayetteville town square takes guests back in time with comfort and charm. The 1900 hotel was faithfully restored in 2003, including a second-story balcony with rocking chairs overlooking the square.

The most satisfying getaways often mix the exotic with the familiar, and a tour of Fayette County will give you both. For me, the fun part is exploring all the little stops in-between. **L**

CZECH-IN TO FAYETTE COUNTY



For information about Fayette County travel destinations, contact the local tourism offices:

The **Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce**, 123 N. Washington St.
Call 979/378-4021; www.fayettevilletxchamber.org.

The **Round Top Area Chamber of Commerce**, 110 Schumann Lane.
Call 888/368-4783; www.roundtop.org.

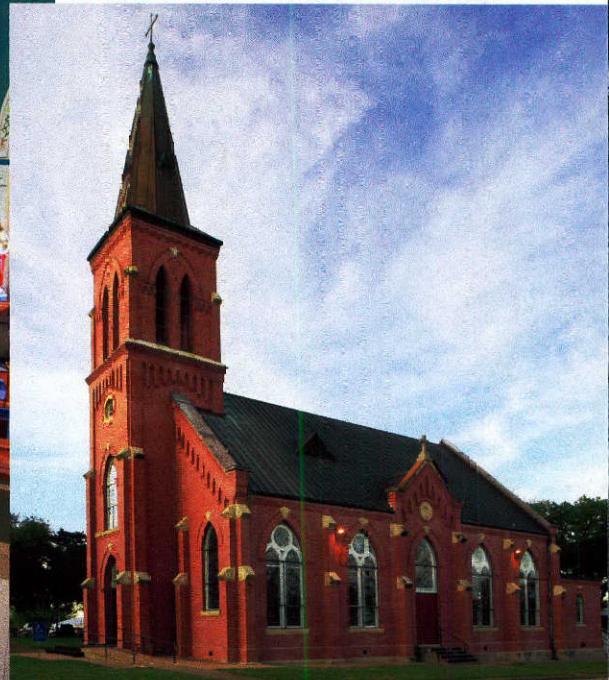
La Grange Main Street & Visitors Bureau, 254 N. Jefferson St.
Call 979/968-3017; www.visitlagrangetx.com.

The **Greater Schulenburg Chamber of Commerce**, 618 N. Main St., offers guided tours of the painted churches, as well as maps for self-guided tours. Call 866/504-5294; www.schulenburgchamber.org.

Journalist Michael Corcoran is the author of the newly released All Over the Map: True Heroes of Texas Music (UNT Press). When he moved from Austin to Smithville in 2007, he didn't see his new home as 45 minutes from Austin, but as 10 minutes from Fayette County.

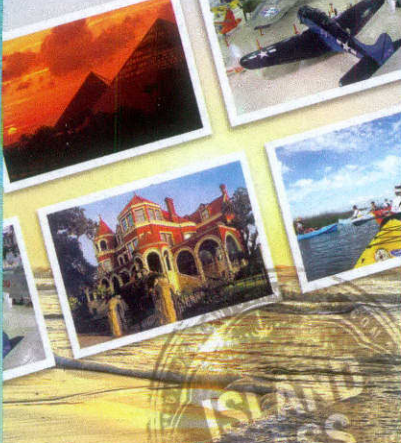
PAINTED CHURCHES

Clockwise from top: St. Mary’s in High Hill; Sengelmann Hall in Schulenburg; St. Mary’s in High Hill; Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church in Dubina.



GALVESTON ISLAND PASS

SAVE UP TO 40% OFF ATTRACTIONS!



SAVE UP TO 40% OFF ATTRACTIONS

The Galveston Island Pass is your passport to adventure and savings! With the pass, you can experience multiple attractions in Galveston while saving up to 40% off retail admission prices. Purchase your Island Pass at www.galvestonislandpass.com!



TAKE AN "ISLAND TIME" BREAK THIS SUMMER

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

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

No longer just a beach town, Galveston is a thriving vacation destination because of its diversity – from its large collection of Victorian architecture and historical sites to its family attractions, culinary experiences and cruise port. Just recently, Galveston became home to The Bryan Museum, housing the world's largest collection of southwestern artifacts, unveiled a completely renovated Moody Gardens aquarium and created a brand new beach along the eastern part of Seawall.

Plus, it seems "new" has become a yearly buzzword for the island as the new attractions, new hotels, and new restaurants just keep coming.

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

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

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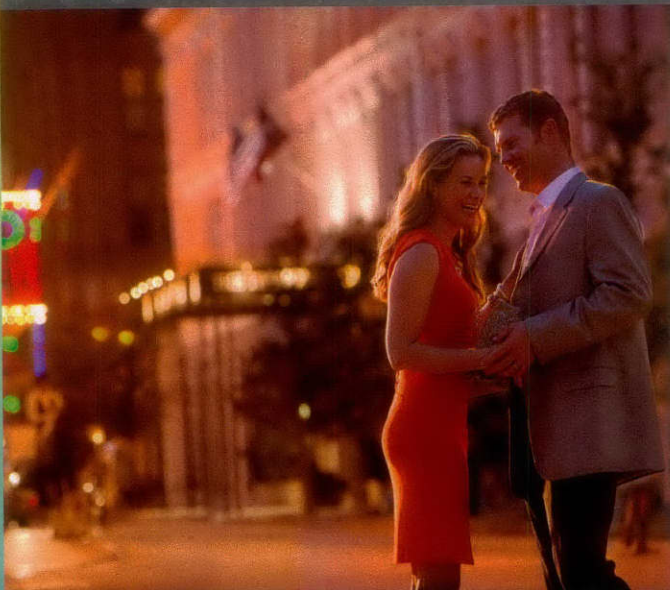
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DESTINATION: WHARTON

Small-Town Stories

Country-fried charm abounds in Wharton

story by Clayton Maxwell

WHARTON IS THE KIND OF TOWN THAT invites you to relax on a wraparound porch with an old friend, sip an iced tea—or something stronger—and reveal some secrets. At least that's what I wanted to do when visiting for a weekend last spring, standing on the front porch of Wharton-born playwright Horton Foote's childhood home, peeking in at all the old photos on his mantel, and then looking out at the blossoming azaleas and old oak trees that adorn the front yard.

Foote, who won Academy Awards for his screenplays of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Tender Mercies*, died in 2009 at the age of 92, but he lives on through



- **El Campo**
15 minutes
- **Houston**
1 hour
- **San Antonio**
2.5 hours
- **Dallas**
4.5 hours

his plays and films, which break your heart open with their simple beauty. He knew how to tell piquant, wistful stories about small-town Texas, and many of those stories took root right here on this front porch, right here in Wharton.

During my visit to Wharton, I could imagine how Foote found inspiration in his hometown. Everywhere I went, I discovered interesting stories. I heard them while clutching my vintage coffee mug at the down-home Milam Street Coffee and Wall-2Wall Words Used Books shop, trying to wake myself up. Linda King, the woman with short white hair and comfy sandals who made my Americano,

scoted around, rearranging the chairs from last night's Java Jams music show. Her husband, Carl King, sat in his cowboy hat and Wranglers at a nearby table, chatting with a friend—about the packed house the night before; about the dancing that broke out when band-leader Joe Flores closed the night with *La Bamba*. Every Texas town needs a gathering place, and this is Wharton's.

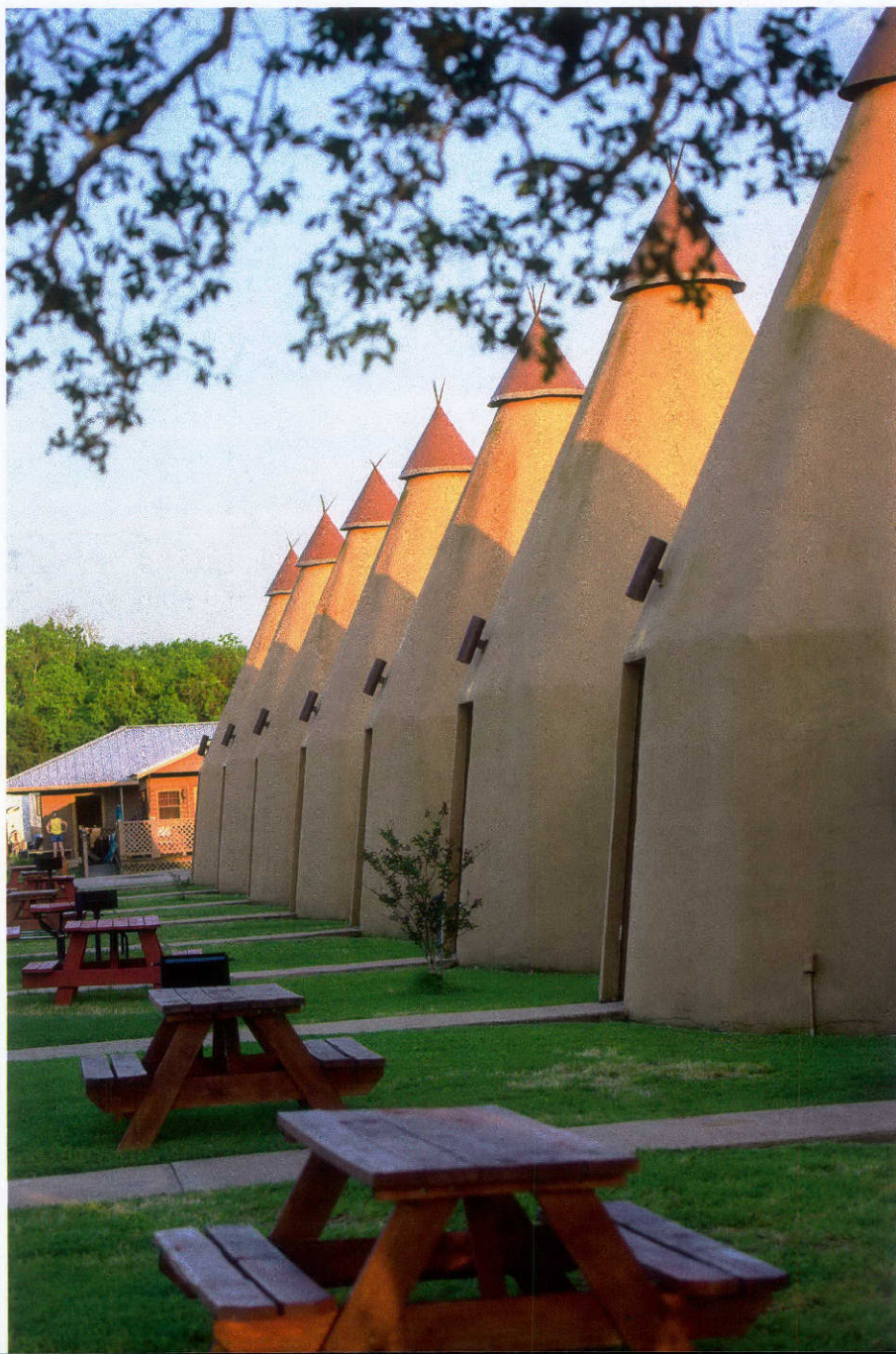
Located on the Colorado River about 55 miles southwest of Houston, Wharton is no longer the agricultural

boomtown of Horton Foote's youth in the 1920s, when cotton, corn, and sugar cane prospered. The once-busy train station has closed and morphed into a weekends-only museum, many of the town's grand homes now look hungry for repair, and the arrival of Wal-Mart made survival impossible for the beloved local grocery and department stores that once kept the main square bustling. But it has maintained a notable thread of kind, no-nonsense authenticity, something you see in many Horton Foote characters

During my visit to Wharton, I could imagine how Horton Foote found inspiration in his hometown.

like Mac Sledge from *Tender Mercies*.

A shop owner named Mary Lee from Selections gift shop across the square popped in for coffee while I was telling Carl and Linda that I had stayed the night at Wharton's kitschy Teepee Motel, one of the tepee roadside motels that sprang up along U.S. highways in the 1940s. The three of them regaled me with Teepee scoop: how Willie Nelson stayed there when he was a boy picking cotton; how it



Photos: Kevin Stillman

was rescued from disrepair by a guy from Eagle Lake who won the lottery; and how ladies from Katy like to rent out all 10 tepees and stay up until the wee hours drinking and telling stories around the fire pit.

While I could not corroborate Willie's stay at the Teepee Motel, it is definitely true that the quirky landmark came back to life thanks to Bryan Woods buying that winning lottery ticket at J&K's convenience store in Eagle Lake in 2003. He used part of his \$49 million win to realize his wife's dream of returning the motel to its former glory.

I parted ways with the coffee shop trio and headed one block up the street to a very different community hub—a new restaurant in Wharton so healthy, stylish, and tasty it would be at home in New York or Napa. Named “Provisions” because it was originally envisioned to be primarily a market for natural foods like homemade yogurt and organic butter, this little gem is somewhere I could waste away hours noshing on its fresh-made breads,

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:

Wharton's Teepee Motel;
new restaurant Provisions; local gathering
place Milam Street Coffee.



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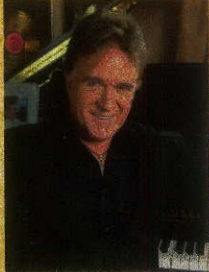
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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:

The Plaza Theatre in downtown Wharton; the Wharton County Historical Museum; Dan Rather's childhood home on museum grounds.

soups, and salads while watching the way the light pours in through its floor-to-ceiling windows.

Debra Medina, the visionary and “real food” advocate who brought Provisions to life, is a great talker in addition to being a savvy restaurateur. Particularly since, as the owner of a medical billing firm with a back-

For a minute there, it felt like all of the spirits of this old building were joining us at the bar, telling their tales.

ground in politics, she'd never opened a restaurant before. While I sat at the bar, she filled me in about the renovation of this gorgeous 1897 property with towering ceilings and exposed brick.

As I sampled from the Texas wine list, Debra pulled out a big white binder with photos that showed how this architectural beauty had originally been a bank owned by local resident R.T. Erwin; although a disgruntled customer shot Erwin down in a Wharton bar, the building remained a bank for decades.

Debra pulled out another relic for me from the binder: a letter from J. Edgar Hoover dated 1938 that had been found stuffed in the building's crown molding. It reported that a fugitive the FBI had been pursuing had been apprehended. For a minute there, it felt like all of the spirits of this old building were joining us at the bar, telling their tales, and I wished that Horton Foote were around to write it into a play.

I should mention that Foote is not even the most famous son of Wharton; another, different kind of storyteller grew up here, too—Dan Rather. You can visit his very tiny white childhood home while on the grounds of the Wharton County Historical Museum, which is another rich repository of local lore. Looking at the old photos of Wharton's cotton-picking and Brahman cattle-raising past, you get an idea of how the town sits on the agricultural and cultural border between the Old South and South Texas.

Housed in the same building is the



20th Century Technology Museum, a storehouse of techno-gadgets that will shock your kids with tactile proof of what a telephone used to look like. The owners, Art and Sharon Schulze, own 80 to 90 percent of the treasures on display; to get the most of the experience, make sure you are there when Art is available to show you around. His enthusiasm for a Wurlitzer and other artifacts is contagious.

My adventures in Wharton came full circle when, back at Provisions, Debra introduced me to a pair of handsome men sitting at a nearby table. One of them, Van Broughton Ramsey, is a Wharton-born, Emmy Award-winning costume designer whose extensive oeuvre includes the *Lonesome*

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Dove miniseries, Horton Foote plays in New York, and *The Trip To Bountiful*, a 2014 TV movie based on Foote's play.

Although Wharton is much changed since Van's days growing up here, he and his partner, Robert Nelson, who live half the year in upstate

"I've never seen so many fish fries or pancake breakfasts in my life," Robert said. "There is always something going on here to raise money or support someone."

New York, remain dedicated to this town and the sense of place it carries. They told me about the time Fidel Castro came through to pick up a horse promised to him by local rancher J.B. Ferguson, the owner of champion quarter horse Go Man Go. We talked about the very active local company at the Plaza Theater, where I had just attended a raucous, full-house performance of the comedy *Noises Off* the night before. They intrigued me with tales of international church trips, lively dinner parties, and the Beautification Commission. "I've never seen so many fish fries or pancake breakfasts in my life," Robert said. "There is always something going on here to raise money or support someone."

It seems that Horton Foote is not the only one who has found, woven deep into the fabric of this little town, a wellspring for good stories and nostalgia for home. And if you spend a little time here amid Wharton's old front porches, tepees, and friendly community gathering spots, you'll undoubtedly end up with stories of your own to tell. **L**



WHARTON

For Wharton visitor information, call the Wharton Chamber of Commerce at **979/532-1862**; www.whartonchamber.com.

TRUE



REAL TEXAS STORIES BORN AND BRED

It's a Small World

Sailing back in time
with artistically detailed
miniature replicas

story by **Matt Joyce**

Glenn Grieco adjusts the rigging on his model of the US Navy Brig *Jefferson*, a War of 1812 ship, at Texas A&M University.

IN A SMALL WORKSHOP ON THE GROUND FLOOR of Texas A&M University's Anthropology Building, broad windows illuminate a faint dusting of sawdust covering tools, computers, and supply shelves. Three historical ship models rest on worktables in the center of the room: *La Belle*, a French sailing ship that sank in Matagorda Bay in 1686, and two versions of the *Heroine*, a steamboat that sank in the Red River in 1838. In various stages of completion, the models are so detailed they look like they could've sailed in from the past and docked right here in College Station.

The models are the handiwork of Glenn Grieco, director of the Ship Model Lab in A&M's Center for Maritime Archeology and Conservation, part of the Nautical Archeology

The allure of the miniature creations lies in their artistic beauty and portrayal of intriguing historical tales.

Program. One of the rare craftsmen to build ship models for a living, Grieco spends his days sawing, rigging, studying, and generally bringing to life miniature replicas of historic ships excavated by the university's nautical archeologists. His ship models and those found in museums across the state interpret the world's maritime history and provide thought-provoking portrayals of the life and times of our seafaring ancestors.

"In addition to what we learn about the actual construction techniques used to create the vessels that mankind has used for thousands of years, we also get a good look at what life was like for the people using the vessels," Grieco says. "Understanding ships and the shipbuilding industry teaches us a lot about the economy and life at a specific time."

FROM LEFT:

At Texas A&M, Glenn Grieco lays planking on the frames of a six-foot model of *La Belle*. At the Houston Maritime Museum, a model of the *HMS Victory* recalls the might of the British Royal Navy in the 18th and 19th centuries.





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UNIVERSITY NAUTICAL
ARCHEOLOGY PROGRAM**

is in the Anthropology Building,
340 Spence St. in College Station.
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<http://nautarch.tamu.edu>.

Grieco's models make their way into collections around the country, including several that are on display in the Nautical Archeology Program hallway on campus and at Texas museums. Visitors are welcome in the Anthropology Building, where glass cases exhibit everything from artful, two-foot wooden models of Chinese Yangtze River junks to an elaborate, six-foot Grieco model of the US Navy Brig *Jefferson*—which patrolled Lake Ontario during the War of 1812—and artifacts from an 11th-century Byzantine Empire shipwreck excavated by A&M archeologists on the coast of modern-day Turkey.

At the Bullock Texas State History Museum in Austin, a second Grieco model of French explorer La Salle's *La Belle* complements an exhibit of the rebuilt hull of the ship that wrecked in



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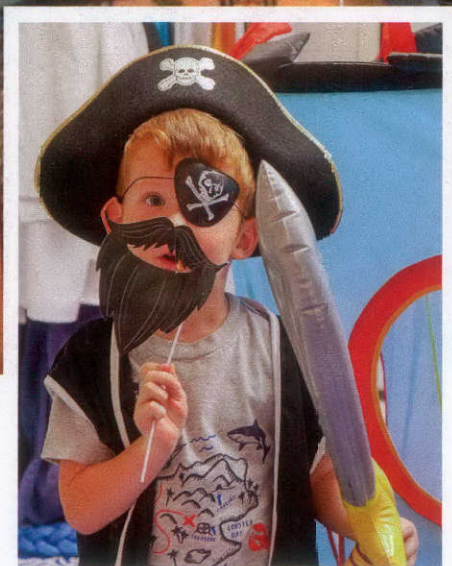
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Matagorda Bay. At the Texas Maritime Museum in Rockport, a third Grieco *La Belle* rounds out an exhibit about La Salle's ill-fated attempt to establish a settlement at the mouth of the Mississippi River. While La Salle's expedition failed, news of the French foray into *Nueva España* prompted 18th-century Spain to expand its control over territory that would eventually become Texas.

Models have been construction tools since ancient times, when shipbuilders used them as blueprints for the

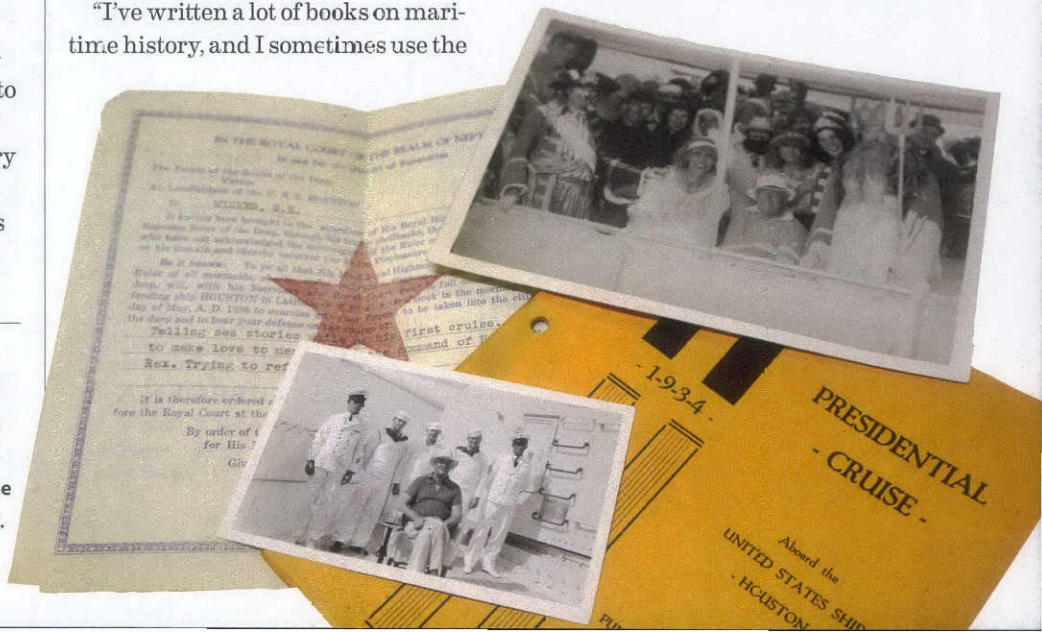
construction of new vessels. Similarly, contemporary maritime engineers build models to test the performance of new designs in high-tech basins. But for most hobbyist craftsmen and for those of us who encounter ship models in museums, the allure of the miniature creations lies in their artistic beauty and portrayal of intriguing historical tales.

"I've written a lot of books on maritime history, and I sometimes use the

models as a way of learning more about how the ships operated," says Mark Lardas, president of the Gulf Coast Ship Modelers Society. For example, Lardas built a model of *La Pinta*—one of the ships Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean in 1492—to help resolve questions he had about *La Pinta's* rigging.

CLOCKWISE:

At the Houston Maritime Museum, fun in Kids Cove; photos and documents from President Franklin Roosevelt's first cruise aboard the *USS Houston*; and a model of the deepwater oil-drilling ship *Glomar Atlantic*.



"I enjoy getting away from computers for a while and working with my hands," says Lardas, an engineer by day. "Plus it's an opportunity to tell a story because I tend to build dioramas of ships, rather than just the ship."

Members of the Gulf Coast Ship Modelers Society meet once every two months at the Houston Maritime Museum to give presentations about their work and exchange tips and ideas. It's a natural setting for the group, considering the museum is home to the state's largest display of ship models with 178 in its exhibit rooms (and dozens more in storage). Society members have contributed models to the museum's collection and also help maintain the small-scale vessels, which range from tiny ships in bottles to models that are as big as six feet long and equally as tall.

In nine galleries, the Houston Maritime Museum explores the progression of seafaring history with models, artifacts, and information. The museum's galleries trace the history of sailing

from Egyptian and Roman trading boats to elaborate sailing ships of the Age of Exploration to World War II battleships and contemporary research vessels. Models accompany each chapter of the story. One of the most striking is a six-foot-long model of the British Navy's 1778 HMS *Victory*, with at least a dozen sails and 104 cannon guns poking out from four wooden decks.

The Houston Maritime Museum also highlights its hometown's vital link to the maritime world with the exhibits *Energy Industry* and *Houston's Story: From Bayou to Ship Channel*.

"Many people in Houston don't even know that we have a port, but the origins of Houston are a maritime story," Director Leslie Bowlin says. "The exhibit talks about the progression of Buffalo Bayou into the Ship Channel it is today. That's really Houston's gateway to the rest of the world."

A model of the paddleboat *Laura* recalls the efforts of Houston founders August and John Allen to prove that Buffalo Bayou was commercially



THE HOUSTON MARITIME MUSEUM,


2204 Dorrington St., opens Tue-Sat 9-5 with docent-guided tours until 4 p.m. Entry costs \$8 (13 and older) or \$5 (3 to 12, seniors); free for military members and veterans. Call **713/666-7910**; www.houstonmaritime.org.

navigable. In 1837, they orchestrated *Laura's* voyage from Galveston Bay to Houston. The exhibit also chronicles Houston's role as a shipping port in 19th-century cotton trade; the opening of the Houston Ship Channel on Buffalo Bayou in 1914; Houston shipbuilders' contributions to World War II; and modern-day shipping commerce. Intricate models of a WWII infantry landing craft, a channel pilot boat, tankers, and barges illustrate the story.

Bowlin says the ship models give visitors a better understanding of the scale of historical sailing vessels and how they operated and evolved over time. "From an artistic standpoint, they're quite beautiful," she says. "People really enjoy looking at them, and they're cool aids for explanation."

Back in College Station, Grieco is shipping his two models of the steamboat *Heroine* to museums in Oklahoma, and his latest *La Belle* model is taking shape for display at A&M. He's also working on a model of a Colonial-era Hudson River sailing ship. After the attacks of September 11, 2001, excavators found the sloop's wreckage buried under the site of the World Trade Center towers; archeologists believe the boat was junked in the 1790s and used as landfill.

With each model, Grieco explores another slice of history through the prism of boats.

"One of the interesting things about it is that all of the technology of the day was incorporated into a ship," Grieco says. "A large ship was a society in itself. If it was a large enough ship, you needed to have a blacksmith, a cook, doctors—it incorporated everything." 



THE HOUSTON MARITIME MUSEUM SETS SAIL TO BUFFALO BAYOU

The Houston Maritime Museum is plotting a move to the banks of Buffalo Bayou, a fitting home that will expand 10-fold the museum's space for events, archives, and exhibits, including a workshop dedicated to ship models.

The museum plans to break ground on the \$50 million, 58,000-square-foot building in the first quarter of 2018 and open the new museum in the third quarter of 2019, Director Leslie Bowlin says.

"The growth of our museum is more than just as a repository for some nice artifacts and models," Bowlin says. "It's about the story we're going to tell—how Houston fits into maritime history, how we arrived where we are, and what's going on in the present and future."

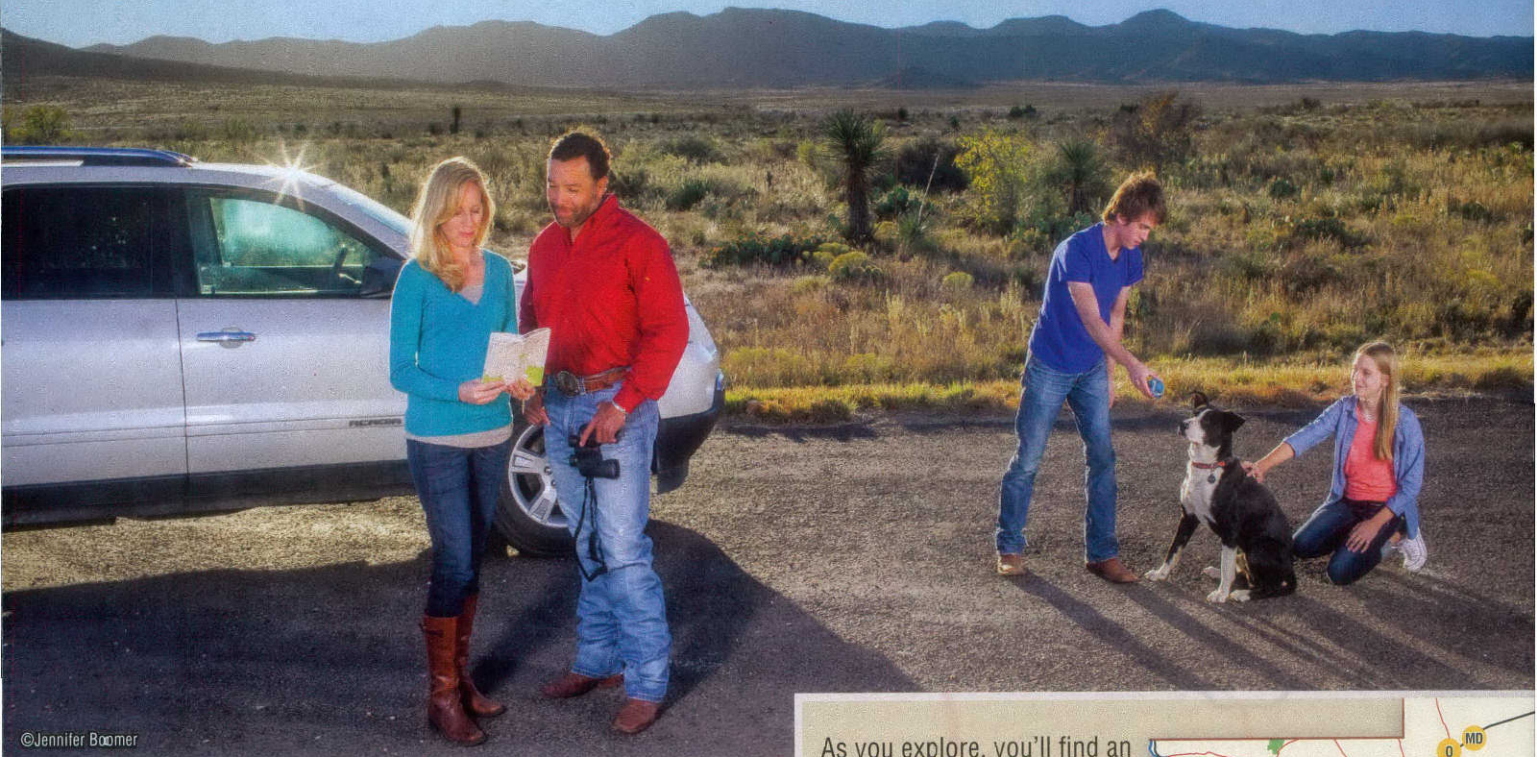
Naval architect Jim Manzollilo opened the Houston Maritime Museum near the Texas Medical Center in 2000 in a building that was once a residential home and a Greek restaurant. The museum has grown over the years and garnered the support of the local maritime industry, which is helping to fund the expansion.

The Houston Maritime Museum will be an anchor of the new East River mixed-use development, which will occupy the former KBR headquarters location on Buffalo Bayou, Bowlin says. The 150-acre site is on the north bank of Buffalo Bayou, about one mile east of downtown Houston.

Along with exhibits chronicling the world's maritime history, the new museum will feature an interactive touch wall, a library, a workshop where visitors can watch ship-modelers at work, a restaurant, an event space that will host the museum's popular lecture series, and an outdoor boat pond for remote-control boats and model sailboats.

"Houston was founded as a result of its connection to the maritime world," Bowlin says. "So our mission is to tell Houston's story and how it relates to the maritime world."

WEST TEXAS ROAD TRIP



©Jennifer Boomer

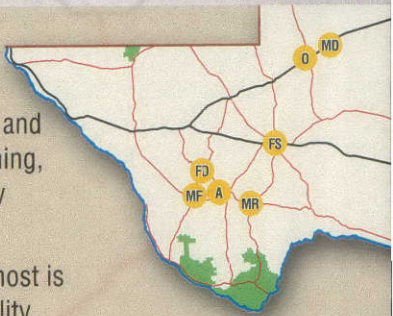


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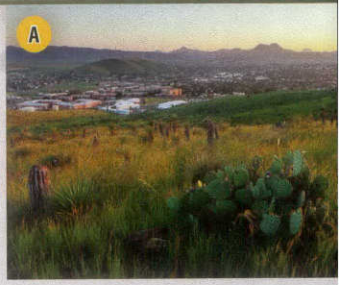
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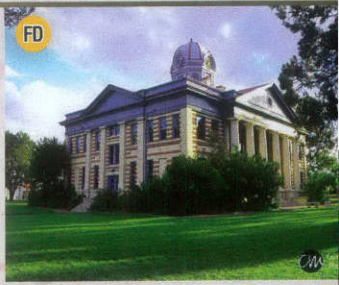
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MF

EVENTS



JUNE'S TRAVEL SPOTLIGHT:

PRAIRIES AND LAKES > Round Top

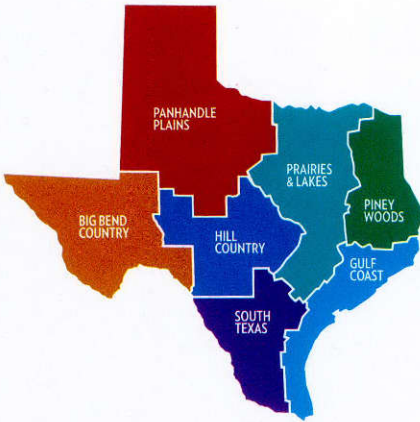
Round Top Music Festival

FOR SUCH A SMALL TOWN—a 2010 census counted just 90 full-time residents—Round Top is home to an unlikely music series. Every summer since 1971, the Round Top Music Festival Institute has curated a world-class series of classical concerts, which have been held in the acoustically stunning Festival Concert Hall since 2007. This year, 90 young musicians were accepted to perform the six-week program (June 4–July 16).

out of hundreds of applicants from more than 23 countries, including Belgium, Nigeria, Japan, and Finland. And each week, the orchestra will train with guest conductors hailing from across the globe as well—from China to Brazil. The festival owes its existence to founder and artistic director James Dick, who will perform Beethoven's "Concerto for Violin, Cello, and Piano" on June 10. www.festivalhill.org

Want more? Go to the Events Calendar at texashighways.com.

EVENTS



BIG BEND COUNTRY

FORT DAVIS: Coolest Fourth of July Jun. 30-Jul. 2. Jeff Davis County Courthouse. fortdavis.com 432/426-3015

ODESSA: Brian Rejan Jun. 6. Wagner Noel Performing Arts Center. wagnernoel.com/events/brian-regan 800/514-3849

SAN ELIZARIO: Billy The Kid Festival Jun. 2-4. San Elizario Historic District. billythekidfestival.com 915/851-0093

VAN HORN: Frontier Days Jun. 23-24. Downtown. vanhorn-texas.us 432/283-2682

GULF COAST

ARANSAS PASS: Shrimporee Jun. 9-11. Johnson Community Park. aransaspass.org 361/758-2750

BEAUMONT: Spindletop Spin Jun. 3. The Event Centre. spindletopspin.com 409/839-2332

CLUTE: Planetarium Show Jun. 6, 13, 20, 27. Center for the Arts & Sciences. bcfas.org 979/265-3376

CORPUS CHRISTI: *Wildlife in Focus* Photography Exhibition. Through Sep. 30. South Texas Botanical Gardens and Nature Center. stxbot.org 361/852-2100

CORPUS CHRISTI: Advanced Birding Specialties: Dynamics of Migration Jun. 3. South Texas Botanical Gardens and Nature Center. stxbot.org 361/852-2100

CORPUS CHRISTI: "Focus" on Nature: Adult Photography Workshop Jun. 24. South Texas Botanical Gardens and

Nature Center. stxbot.org 361/852-2100

EAST BERNARD: Czech Kolache Klobase Festival Jun. 10. Riverside Hall. kkfest.com 979/335-7907

FREEPORT: Schuster Home Open House Jun. 24. Schuster Home. 979/297-0868

FREEPORT: Fishin' Fiesta Jun. 28-Jul. 2. Freeport Municipal Park. fishinfiesta.com 979/233-5137

GALVESTON: AIA Sandcastle Competition Jun. 3. Galveston Beach. aiahouston.org

GALVESTON: Juneteenth Celebration Jun. 4-19. Various locations. galveston.com/africanamerican guidebook

GALVESTON: *Clear to Partly Crazy* Jun. 24. The Grand 1894 Opera House. thegrand.com 800/821-8194 or 409/765-1894

GALVESTON: Vince Gill in Concert Jun. 29. The Grand 1894 Opera House. thegrand.com 800/821-8194 or 409/765-1894

HOUSTON: *Freaky Friday* Jun. 2-Jul. 2. Alley Theatre. alleytheatre.org 713/220-5700

HOUSTON: Free Press Summer Fest Jun. 3-4. Eleanor Tinsley Park. houstontx.gov 832/394-8805

HOUSTON: *Something Rotten!* Jun. 6-11. The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. thehobbycenter.org 713/515-2525

HOUSTON: *Once on this Island* Jun. 7-10. Miller Outdoor Theatre. milleroutdoortheatre.com 832/487-7102

HOUSTON: Jimmy Buffett in Concert Jun. 8. Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion. woodlandcenter.org 281/363-3300

HOUSTON: *Circus 1903* Jun. 9-11. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts. joneshall.org 713/227-3974

HOUSTON: Immanuel and Helen Olshan Texas Music Festival Jun. 10-Jul. 1. Moores Opera House, University of Houston. tmf.uh.edu 713/743-3167

HOUSTON: Metallica in Concert Jun. 11. NRG Park. nrgpark.com 832/667-1400

HOUSTON: Juneteenth Fest at Emancipation Park Jun. 17-18. Emancipation Park. 713/284-1911

HOUSTON: The Suffers with the Houston Symphony Jun. 17. The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion. houston-symphony.org 713/224-7575

HOUSTON: VegFest Houston Jun. 17. vegfesthouston.com

HOUSTON: Chicago and The Doobie Brothers in Concert Jun. 18. Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion. woodlandcenter.org 281/363-3300

HOUSTON: Pride Houston Festival and Parade Jun. 18-25. Downtown Houston. pridehouston.org

HOUSTON: *Simply Simone* Jun. 24-Jul. 30. The Ensemble Theatre. ensemblehouston.org 713/520-0055

HOUSTON: Wine and Food Week Jun. 5-11. Various locations. wineandfoodweek.com 713/557-5732

LAKE JACKSON: Brazos Valley All Stars Concert Jun. 2. Lake Jackson Civic Center Plaza. lakejackson-tx.gov 979/415-2600

LAKE JACKSON: Abner Jackson Plantation Site Tour Jun. 3. lakejacksonmuseum.org 979/297-1570

LAKE JACKSON: The Karz Concert Jun. 9. Lake Jackson Civic Center Plaza. lakejackson-tx.gov 979/415-2600

LAKE JACKSON: Satisfaction—Rolling Stones Tribute Concert Jun. 16. Lake Jackson Civic Center Plaza. lakejackson-tx.gov 979/415-2600

LAKE JACKSON: Bird Banding Jun. 17. Gulf Coast Bird Observatory. gcbbo.org 979/480-0999

LAKE JACKSON: Pool Daze of Fun Jun. 18. Lake Jackson Outdoor Pool. lakejackson-tx.gov 979/297-4533

LAKE JACKSON: The Spinations Concert Jun. 23. Lake Jackson Civic Center Plaza. lakejackson-tx.gov 979/415-2600

ORANGE: *The World War I Homefront: Orange Goes Over the Top*. Through Jul. 14, 2018. The W.H. Stark House. starkculturalvenues.org/whstarkhouse 409/883-0871

ORANGE: *Branding the American West: Paintings and Films, 1900-1950*. Through Sep. 9. Stark Museum of Art. starkculturalvenues.org/starkmuseum 409/886-2787

ORANGE: Bassmaster Open Jun. 14-17. City Boat Ramp. orangetexaschamber.org

ORANGE: Up Close with Nature Jun. 24. Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center. starkculturalvenues.org/shangrilagardens 409/670-9113

PALACIOS: Pirate Festival Jun. 23-24. 713/806-3219

PORT ARANSAS: CCA Take A Kid Fishing Tournament Jun. 2-3. Woody's Sports Center. woody-spa.com 361/749-5252

PORT ARANSAS: Powderpuff Tournament Jun. 17. Woody's Sports Center. woody-spa.com 361/749-5252

PORT ARANSAS: Hope Devlin Kid's Fishing Tournament Jun. 30-Jul. 1. Roberts Point Park. 361/816-5282

PORT ARTHUR: Garden Festival Jun. 3-4. Buu Mon Buddhist Temple. buumon.org 409/982-9319 or 409/543-2803

PORT ARTHUR: Juneteenth Jun. 19. portarthurjuneenth.weebly.com 409/332-1709

PORT ARTHUR: Elite Redfish Border Wars Tour Jun. 29-Jul. 1. Pleasure Island. theredfishseries.com 409/985-7822

RICHMOND: Tea Parties at the Historic Moore House Jun. 2-3. Fort Bend Museum. fortbendmuseum.org 281/342-6478

RICHMOND: *Preserving Fort Bend County through the Arts* Jun. 6-Jul. 8. Fort Bend Museum. fortbendmuseum.org 281/342-6478

RICHMOND: Hands-On Summer History Jun. 6-Aug. 26. George Ranch Historical Park. georgeranch.org 281/343-0218

RICHMOND: Behind-the-Barrier Blacksmithing Class Jun. 17. George Ranch Historical Park. georgeranch.org 281/343-0218

RICHMOND: Father's Day Frontier Survival Class Jun. 17. George Ranch Historical Park. georgeranch.org 281/343-0218

RICHMOND: Juneteenth Celebration Jun. 17. George Ranch Historical Park. georgeranch.org 281/343-0218

ROCKPORT: LAC Attack "C.P.R." Kayak Fishing Tournament Jun. 2-3. rockport-fulton.org 361/729-6445

ROCKPORT: Texas Game Warden Fishing Tournament Jun. 16-17. Fulton Harbor Park. twgajustgofishin.com 361/815-5752

ROCKPORT: TSA Youth Sailing Rockin' Rockport Jun. 17-18. Rockport Yacht Club. rockportyachtclub.org 861/729-3115

SAN BENITO: Texas Conjunto Music Hall of Fame Induction Awards and Dance Jun. 17. Knights of Columbus Hall. texasconjuntomusic.org 956/245-1666

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: Dargel Boats Owners Tournament Jun. 3-4. South Padre Island Convention Centre. dargel.com 956/464-2263

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: Summer Longest Causeway Run and Fitness Walk Jun. 3. South Padre Island. sopadre.com 800/657-2373

SUGAR LAND: *Sweet: A Tasty Journey* Through Aug. 6. Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land. hmns-at-sugar-land.com 281/313-2277

SUGAR LAND: Lyrics and Lawn Games Jun. 3. Sugar Land Town Square. sugarlandtownsquare.com 281/276-6000

SUGAR LAND: Opry on the Square Jun. 9. Sugar Land Town Square.

sugarlandtownsquare.com 281/276-6000

SUGAR LAND: Sugar Land Skeeters vs. Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Jun. 9-14. Constellation Field. sugarlandkeeters.com 281/240-4487

SUGAR LAND: Dancing under the Stars Jun. 16. Sugar Land Town Square. sugarlandtownsquare.com 281/276-6000

SUGAR LAND: Sugar Land Superstar Round 1 Jun. 17. Sugar Land Town Square. sugarlandtownsquare.com 281/276-6000

SUGAR LAND: John Mellencamp in Concert Jun. 22. Smart Financial Centre. smartfinancialcentre.net 281/207-6278

SUGAR LAND: Paleo Under the Microscope Jun. 22. Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land. hmns.org/hmns-at-sugar-land 281/313-2277

SUGAR LAND: NOLA Nights Jun. 23. Sugar Land Town Square. sugarlandtownsquare.com 281/276-6000

SUGAR LAND: Sugar Land Skeeters vs. Long Island Ducks Jun. 23-29. Constellation Field. sugarlandkeeters.com 281/240-4487

TEXAS CITY: Kite Festival Jun. 10. Texas City Dike. texascitykitefestival.com 281/508-6485

TEXAS CITY: Tackle Time Fishing Tournament Jun. 30-Jul. 9. First Lady Pavilion. tclmjaycees.com 409/457-3491

VICTORIA: Victoria Bach Festival Jun. 6-10. Various Venues. victoriabachfestival.org 361/570-5788

HILL COUNTRY

AUSTIN: *Stories to Tell: Selections from the Harry Ransom Center* Through Jul. 16. Harry Ransom Center at The University of Texas at Austin. hrc.utexas.edu 512/471-8944

AUSTIN: *Deep in the Vaults of Texas: A Campus Collaboration* Through Sep. 6. LBJ Library. ljblibrary.org 512/721-0200

AUSTIN: *Circus 1903: The Golden Age of Circus* Jun. 6-8. The Long Center. thelongcenter.org

512/474-5664 or
800/735-2989

AUSTIN: Central Texas
Juneteenth 2K Parade,
and Celebration Jun. 17.
Downtown Austin.
juneteenthcentraltexas.com

AUSTIN: Sarah and
Ernest Butler Texas Young
Composers Concert Jun. 17.
Long Center for the
Performing Arts.
austinsymphony.org
512/476-6064

AUSTIN: Father's Day
in the Park Jun. 18.
Zilker Hillside Theater.
austinsymphonicband.org
512/956-7420

AUSTIN: African American
Book Festival Jun. 24.
George Washington Carver
Museum and Cultural Center.
aabookfest.com
512/974-4926

AUSTIN: Keep Austin
Weird Fest and 5K Jun. 24.
Long Center for the
Performing Arts.
keepaustinweirdfest.com
512/524-2953

AUSTIN: Unplugged at
the Grove. Through Sep. 22.
Shady Grove.
theshadygrove.com
unplugged 512/474-9991

AUSTIN: ATX Television
Festival Jun. 8-11. Downtown
Austin. atxfestival.com
512/551-1330

BANDERA: Cowboys on
Main Jun. 3, 10, 17, 24.
Downtown Bandera.
banderacowboycapital.com
830/796-3045

BANDERA: Flying L
Chuckwagon Dinner Jun. 3,
10, 17, 24. Flying L Hill
Country Resort.
flyingl.com 800/292-5134
or 830/460-3001

BANDERA: Market Days
Jun. 3. Bandera County
Courthouse. banderatexas-
business.com 830/796-4447

BANDERA: Cowboy Capital
Opry Jun. 6. Silver Sage
Community Center.
silversagecorral.org
830/796-4969

BANDERA: Second Sunday
Music Fest Jun. 11.
Frontier Times Museum.
frontiertimesmuseum.org
830/796-3864

BANDERA: Riverfest
Jun. 24. Bandera City Park.
banderariverfest.com
830/796-4447

BOERNE: Family Fish
Jun. 3. Boerne
City Lake Park.
visitboerne.org
830/249-9511 Ext. 5

BOERNE: Hot Rod Night
Jun. 3, 24. Soda Pops.
visitboerne.org 830/351-8799

BOERNE: Abendkonzerte
Jun. 7, 20. Main Plaza.
visitboerne.org
830/249-9511 Ext. 5

BOERNE: Kuhlmann-King
Museum Tour Jun. 10.
Kuhlmann-King Museum.
visitboerne.org 210/823-9171

BOERNE: Market Days
Jun. 10-11. Main Plaza.
visitboerne.org 210/844-8193

BOERNE: Neo
Camerata Jun. 10.
Cave Without a Name.
cavewithoutaname.com
830/537-4212

BOERNE: Summer Solstice
Jun. 17. Cave Without a
Name-Throne Room.
cavewithoutaname.com
830/537-4212

BOERNE: A Thirst
for Nature Jun. 22.
Cibolo Nature Center.
visitboerne.org
830/249-4616

BOERNE: Boerne Concert
Band Special Patriot Concert
Jun. 25. Main Plaza.
visitboerne.org
830/249-8918

BULVERDE: Tejas Rodeo
Jun. 3, 17. Tejas Rodeo Co.
visitboerne.org
830/980-2226

BURNET: Burnet County
Fair Jun. 9-10. Burnet
Community Center.
burnetcountyfair.com
512/525-1289

BURNET: Summer
Concert Series Jun. 17.
Haley Nelson Amphitheater.
cityofburnet.com
512/756-4297

BURNET: Barbecue Cook-
Off and Bulldog Thunder
Truck and Tractor Pull
Jun. 23-24. Burnet
Fairgrounds.
burnetchamber.org
512/663-2856

CEDAR PARK: Texas 4000
Atlas Ride Jun. 3. Various
locations. texas4000.org/
events/atlas-ride

COMFORT: Music in the
Park Jun. 13. Comfort Park.
comfort-texas.com
830/995-5131

DRIPPING SPRINGS:
Tomato Round-up Jun. 24.
The Triangle at Veteran's
Memorial Park.
cityofdrippingsprings.com
512/858-4725

FREDERICKSBURG:
First Friday Art Walk
Fredericksburg Jun. 2.
Various locations. ffawf.com
830/997-6523

FREDERICKSBURG:
Masonic Open Car Show
Jun. 3. Marktplatz.
fredericksburgmasons.com
830/992-3333

FREDERICKSBURG:
Antique Tractor and Engine
Show Jun. 10. Gillespie
County Fairgrounds.
rustyiron.org 830/889-9348

FREDERICKSBURG:
Summer Barbecue Jun. 10.
4.0 Cellars. fourpointwine.com
830/997-7470

FREDERICKSBURG:
Bach at the Bach Jun. 15.
Luckenbach Texas.
fredericksburgorchestra.com
806/549-2483

FREDERICKSBURG:
Guys and Dolls Jun. 16-Jul. 2.
Steve W. Shepherd Theater.
fredericksburgtheater.org
830/997-3588

FREDERICKSBURG:
Fredericksburg Trade Days
Jun. 16-18. fbqtradedays.com
830/990-4900

FREDERICKSBURG: Hill
Country Food Truck Festival
Jun. 24. Luckenbach Texas.
luckenbachtexas.com
830/997-3224

GEORGETOWN: Festival
of the Arts Jun. 1-3.
San Gabriel Park and
Southwestern University.
gtownfestival.org
512/639-0433

GEORGETOWN:
Williamson County Sheriff's
Posse Rodeo Jun. 23-24.
Sheriff's Posse Arena.
georgetownrodeo.com
512/639-4206

GRUENE: Gospel Brunch
with a Texas Twist Jun. 11.
Gruene Hall. gruenehall.com
830/629-5077

GRUENE: Come and Taste
It Jun. 15. The Grapevine.
grapevineingruene.com
830/606-0093

GRUENE: Old Gruene
Market Days Jun. 17-18.
Gruene Historic District.
gruenemarketdays.com
830/832-1721

INGRAM: Doublewide,
Texas Jun. 16-Jul. 1. Hill
Country Arts Foundation.
hcaf.com 830/367-5121

JOHNSON CITY: Art Walk
Jun. 24. lbjcountry.com
830/868-7684

JOHNSON CITY: Market
Days Jun. 24-25. City Park.
lbjcountry.com 830/868-7684

JUNCTION: Cowboys
and Cajuns Jun. 3.
junctiontexas.com
219/289-2982

kerrvillefolkfestival.org
830/257-3600

KERRVILLE: Southwest
Gourd Fine Art Show
Through Jun. 25. Kerr Arts
and Cultural Center.
kacckerrville.com
830/895-2911

KERRVILLE: Shakespear
in the Park: *Antony and
Cleopatra* Jun. 2-3.
Louise Hays Park.
playhouse2000.com
830/896-9393

KERRVILLE: Hill Country
Swap Meet Jun. 3. Kerr
County Hill Country
Youth Event Center.
kermarketdays.org
830/459-6198

KERRVILLE: Kerr County
Market Days Jun. 3.
Kerr County Hill Country
Youth Event Center.
kermarketdays.org
830/895-7524

KERRVILLE: Hometown
Crafts Teachers Show
Jun. 29-Jul. 23.
Kerr Arts & Cultural Center.
kacckerrville.com
830/895-2911

KERRVILLE: *Carousel*
Jun. 30-Jul. 15. Cailloux
Theater. caillouxtheater.com
830/896-9393

KERRVILLE: TAGRA Show
and Sale and Fiber Show
Jun. 30-Jul. 1. Kerr County
Hill Country Youth Event
Center. 830/688-1391

KYLE: Market Days
Jun. 10. City Square Park.
cityofkyle.com/recreation
512/262-3939

LAMPASAS: Trade Days
Jun. 24. Marigold's Antiques
& More. lampasatradedays.
com 512/734-1294

LEAKEY: July Jubilee
Jun. 30-Jul. 2. Frio Canyon
Chamber Arena and
Downtown Leakey.
friorcanyonchamber.com
830/232-5222

LLANO: Open Pro Rodeo
Jun. 2-3. John L.
Kuykendall Event Center.
llanoeventscenter.com
325/247-5354

MARBLE FALLS: Soapbox
Classic Jun. 16-18.
Historic Downtown.
adultsoapboxderby.com
830/385-9289

MOUNTAIN HOME:
Hill Country Cowboy Camp
Meeting Jun. 4-10.
cowboycampmeeting.net
800/603-0157

ROUND ROCK: *Around the
World in 80 Days* Jun. 1-24.
Round Rock Amphitheater.
penfoldtheatre.org
512/850-4849

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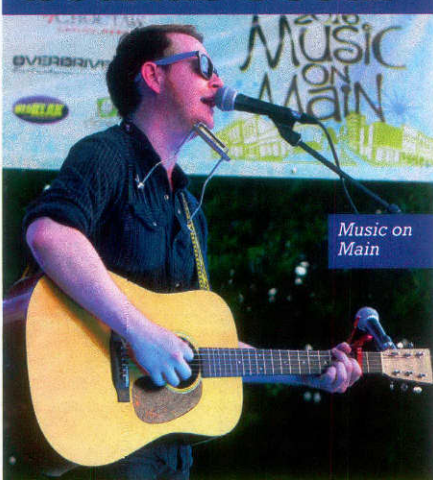


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denisontexas.us
denisonlive.com
903-465-1551



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SONORA: Outlaw Pro Rodeo and Sutton County Days Jun. 23-24. Sutton County Civic Center. sonoratexas.org/events 325/387-2880

STONEWALL: LBJ Fishing Day Jun. 3. Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site. tpwd.state.tx.us 830/644-2252

STONEWALL: Peach Jamboree and Rodeo Jun. 16-17. Stonewall Chamber of Commerce. stonewallchamber.com 830/644-2735

TAYLOR: International Barbeque Cook-Off Jun. 2-3. Murphy Park. taylorchamber.org 512/352-6364

TAYLOR: Stomp 'N' Holler Taylor BBQ + Music Fest Jun. 3. Heritage Square Park. stomphollerfest.com 512/352-6364

UVALDE: Fishing Derby Jun. 3. Uvalde National Fish Hatchery. fws.gov 830/278-2419

UVALDE: Four Square Friday Jun. 9. visituvalde.com 830/278-4115

UVALDE: Senior Citizens and Veterans Fishing Derby Jun. 17. Uvalde National Fish Hatchery. fws.gov 830/278-2419

WIMBERLEY: West Side Story Jun. 2-Jul. 2. EmilyAnn Theatre & Gardens. emilyann.org 512/847-6969

WIMBERLEY: Market Days Jun. 3. Lions Field. shopmarketdays.com 512/847-2201

WIMBERLEY: Book Festival Jun. 10. Wimberley Community Center. wimberley.deartexas.info 512/210-0568

WIMBERLEY: VFW Rodeo Jun. 30-Jul. 2. Veteran of Foreign Wars Post No. 6441. wimberleyvfwrodeo.com 512/847-6441

PANHANDLE PLAINS

ABILENE: Texas High School Rodeo Association State Finals Jun. 5-10. Taylor County Expo Center. ttsra.org 325/677-4376

ABILENE: Children's Art and Literacy Festival Jun. 8-10. Downtown Abilene. abilenecac.org 325/677-1161

ABILENE: Stars Over Abilene Quilt Show Jun. 9-10. Abilene Convention Center.

abilenequiltersguild.org 325/893-4699

ALBANY: Cell Series: Joel Sampson Jun. 3-Aug. 26. The Old Jail Art Center. theojac.org 325/762-2269

ALBANY: Andy Warhol: Prints and Polaroids Jun. 3-Aug. 26. The Old Jail Art Center. theojac.org 325/762-2269

ALBANY: Showtime: Photographs of Music Legends by Watt Casey Jr. Jun. 3-Aug. 26. Old Jail Art Center. theojac.org 325/762-2269

ALBANY: Fort Griffin Fandangle Jun. 16-17, 23-24. Prairie Theater. fortgriffinfandangle.org 325/762-3838

AMARILLO: Nacidos Charros: Born Charro Through Jul. 29. American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame and Museum. aqha.com/museum 806/376-5181

AMARILLO: Polk Street Cattle Drive Jun. 1. Downtown Amarillo. visitamarillo.com 806/374-1497

AMARILLO: Coors Cowboy Club Ranch Rodeo Jun. 2-3. Amarillo National Center. coorsranchrodeo.com 806/376-7767

AMARILLO: First Friday Art Walk Jun. 2. The Galleries at Sunset Center. amarilloartists.com 806/433-9648

AMARILLO: Annie Get Your Gun Jun. 29-Jul. 2. Globe-News Center for the Performing Arts. amarilloopera.org 806/372-7464 or 806/378-3096

AMARILLO: Explode! Jun. 30. Don Harrington Discovery Center. dhdc.org 806/355-9547

AMARILLO: Will Rogers Range Riders Rodeo Jun. 30-Jul. 2. Will Rogers Range Riders Outdoor Arena. wrrangeriders.com 806/622-2102

BIG SPRING: Cowboy Reunion and Rodeo Jun. 15-17. Big Spring Rodeo Bowl. bigspringrodeo.com 432/267-5053

BIG SPRING: Funtastic Fourth Jun. 23-24. Downtown. bigspringdra.com

CANYON: You are Here: Maps from the PPHM Collection. Through Aug. 26. Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum. panhandleplains.org 806/651-2244

CANYON: When Georgia Was Here. Through Feb. 24, 2018. Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum. panhandleplains.org

CANYON: TEXAS Outdoor Musical Jun. 2-Aug. 19. Pioneer Amphitheatre, Palo Duro Canyon State Park. texas-show.com 806/655-2181

CISCO: Pie Fest Jun. 9-10. Downtown Cisco. ciscotxpiefest.com 254/442-2537

CLARENDON: Whistle-Stop Trade Days and Farmers Market Jun. 3-4. 806/206-6815

COLEMAN: PRCA Rodeo and Parade Jun. 8-10. Coleman Rodeo Grounds Complex. colemandrodeo.com 325/625-2163

CROSS PLAINS: Robert E. Howard Days Jun. 9-10. Robert E. Howard Museum. rehupa.org 254/725-4993

DALHART: Dalhart Cruzers Muscle Car Show Jun. 2-3. Rita Blanca Coliseum. 806/333-5655

DALHART: The Purpose Market Jun. 3, 17. Purpose Coffee Co.. 806/249-0099

DALHART: XIT Rangers Barrel Race Jun. 10-11. XIT Rangers Arena. xitrangers.com 806/249-2791

DALHART: XIT Ranch Rodeo Jun. 16-17. XIT Rodeo Arena. dalhart.org 806/244-5646

DALHART: Dalhart Area Chamber of Commerce Steak Cook-Off Jun. 17. Rita Blanca Park. dalhart.org 806/244-5646

GRAHAM: Food Truck Championship of Texas Jun. 3. Graham Downtown Square. foodtruckchampionshipoftexas.com 866/549-0401

GRAHAM: World Series Team Roping Jun. 8-11. Young County Arena. youngcountyarena.com 940/550-8790

JACKSBORO: Jack County Museum Pioneer Day Jun. 3. Jack County Museum. jacksborochamber.com 940/567-2602

JACKSBORO: TNT Fest Jun. 24. Jacksboro Lake. jacksborochamber.com 940/567-2602

LEVELLAND: Sip and Swirl Jun. 22. Downtown

levelland.levellandtexas.org 806/894-9079

LUBBOCK: West Texas Watercolor Society Spring/Summer Show Jun. 2-30. Lubbock Municipal Garden and Arts Center. wtwvs.org

LUBBOCK: NRHC Summer Youth Classes Jun. 5-9. National Ranching Heritage Center. ranchingheritage.org/summer-youth-classes 806/742-0498

LUBBOCK: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer. Jun. 9-10, 16-17, 23-24, 30. Jul. 1. Moonlight Musicals Amphitheatre. lubbockmoonlightmusicals.org 806/638-5706

LUBBOCK: Summer Stampede Art and Gear Show Jun. 17. National Ranching Heritage Center. ranchingheritage.org 806/834-0469

MORTON: Texas' Last Frontier Heritage Celebration and Texas Buffalo Soldier Living History Encampment Jun. 24-25. Cochran County Park. facebook.com/texaslastfrontier 806/598-9140

PERRYTON: Fiesta! Jun. 15. Downtown Perryton. perryton.org 806/435-6575

SAN ANGELO: San Angelo Ceramic Invitational Exhibit. Through Jul. 2. San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. samfa.org 325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: Art Thursday Jun. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29. San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. samfa.org 325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: Beehive Jun. 2-4, 8-10, 16-18. Angelo Civic Theatre. angelothheater.com 325/949-4400

SAN ANGELO: Lions Balloonfest Jun. 9-11. Glenn Middle School. sanangelolionsballoonfest.com 325/280-0461

SAN ANGELO: Downtown and Cultural District Stroll Jun. 15. San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts. samfa.org 325/653-3333

SAN ANGELO: American Plains Artists Show Jun. 29-Jul. 30. Fort Concho National Historic Landmark. fortconcho.com 325/657-4444

SAN ANGELO: Salmon Sculpture Competition. Through Aug. 7. Sunken Garden Park. samfa.org 325/653-3333

SNYDER: West Texas Western Swing Festival Jun. 7-10. The Coliseum. snyderchamber.org 325/573-3558

STANTON: Old Sorehead Trade Days Jun. 10-11. Downtown Streets and Community Center Complex. stantontex.com 432/756-2006

VEGA: Magnolia Station Music Night Jun. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29. Historic Magnolia Filling Station. oldhamco.org 806/267-2828

WICHITA FALLS: Oil Bowl All-Star Football Game Jun. 10. Memorial Stadium. oilbowl.com 940/720-3039

WICHITA FALLS: Legends of Western Swing Music Festival Jun. 15-17. Ray Clymer Exhibit Hall. thelegendsofwesternswing.com

WICHITA FALLS: Animania Jun. 24-25. Ray Clymer Exhibit Hall. animaniawf.com

WICHITA FALLS: Art and Soul Jun. 24. Downtown Wichita Falls. downtownproud.com 940/322-4525

WINDTHORST: St. Mary's Faith and Family Celebration Jun. 9-11. Windthorst School and St. Mary's Catholic Church. stmarysstboniface.org 940/237-6717

PINEY WOODS

CROCKETT: Dancing in the Pines Jun. 10. Crockett Civic Center. crockettareachamber.org 936/544-2359

GLADEWATER: Round Up Rodeo Jun. 7-10. Rodeo Arena. gladewaterrodeo.com 903/845-5126

HUNTSVILLE: Junk-a-Palooza Jun. 17. Downtown Huntsville. huntsvillemainstreet.com 936/291-5920

JACKSONVILLE: Tomato Fest Jun. 10. Downtown Jacksonville. jacksonvilletexas.com, tomato-fest 903/586-2217

JEFFERSON: Flea Market Jun. 2-3, 16-17. Jefferson Flea Market. jeffersonfleamarket.net 903/431-0043

JEFFERSON: Flag Day Jun. 10. Historic Jefferson Railway. jeffersonrailway.com 866/398-2038

JEFFERSON: Father's Day Express Jun. 17. Historic

Jefferson Railway. jeffersonrailway.com 866/398-2038

JEFFERSON: Flea Market Jun. 30-Jul. 1, 14-15. Jefferson Flea Market. jeffersonfleamarket.net 903/431-0043

KILGORE: Texas Shakespeare Festival Jun. 29-Jul. 30. Kilgore College. texasshakespeare.com 903/983-8119

LONGVIEW: Big Pines Blues Festival Jun. 2-3. Maude Cobb Convention Center. visitlongviewtexas.com 903/753-3281

MARSHALL: Juried Art Show and Membership Drive Jun. 29. marshallartscouncil.org 903/935-4484

NACOGDOCHES: Blueberry Bluegrass Concert in the Park Jun. 9. Festival Park. tbf.nacogdoches.org 936/560-5533

PALESTINE: Art Tracks Nov. 1, 2016-Oct. 31, 2017. The Redlands Historic Inn. visitpalestine.com 903/729-6066

TYLER: Hit the Bricks Jun. 10. Downtown Tyler. visitytyler.com 903/592-1661

TYLER: Downtown Tyler Wine Swirl Jun. 24. Downtown. cityoftyler.org 903/592-1661

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

ADDISON: Summer Series Jun. 3, 10, 17, 24. Beckert Park. addisontexas.net 800/233-4766

ADDISON: Vitruvian Nights Live Jun. 1, 15, 29. Vitruvian Park Amphitheater. vitruvianpark.com 800/233-4766

ARLINGTON: *Legally Blonde: The Musical* Through Jun. 4. Theatre Arlington. theatrearlington.org 817/275-7661

ARLINGTON: Metallica in Concert Jun. 16. AT&T Stadium. attstadium.com 817/892-4000

BELLVILLE: Market Day on the Square Jun. 3. Downtown. bellville.com 979/865-3407

BELLVILLE: Summer Music Festival and CPRA Rodeo Jun. 24. Austin County Fair Grounds.

austincountyfair.com 979/865-5995

BELLVILLE: Texas Bluegrass Music Show and Jam Jun. 24. Coushatta Recreational Ranch. tbluegrassmusic.com 936/697-5949

BELTON: Bacon, Blues, and Brews Jun. 10. Downtown Belton. seebelton.com 254/933-5849

BONHAM: Highway 82 Yard Sales Jun. 2-3. U.S. 82. visitbonham.com 903/583-9830

BREMOND: Polish Festival Days (Polski Dzień) Jun. 23-24. Main Street. bremondtx.com 254/746-7656

BRENNAM: *Loading Ladies* Jun. 1-18. Unity Theatre. unitybrennam.org 979/830-8358

BRYAN: XYZ Atlas. Through Aug. 30. Downtown Bryan. xyzatlas.org

CADDO MILLS: Speeding for Scholarships Jun. 16. Dallas Karting Complex. 972/636-5000

CALDWELL: Free Wine Tasting Jun. 3. Royalty Pecan Farms. royaltypespecans.com 979/272-3904

CAT SPRING: Cat Spring Agricultural Society Fest Jun. 3. Cat Spring Agricultural Hall. catspringagsociety.org 979/865-2540

CELINA: Garden and Market Tour Jun. 10. Various locations. celinagardenclub.org 469/202-2193

CLIFTON: Quilt Show Jun. 2-4. Bosque Arts Center. bosqueartscenter.org 254/675-3724

CLIFTON: Music at the Mill Jun. 16. Market at the Mill. clifontexas.org 254/675-3720

COLLEGE STATION: *The Legacy of Ranching: Preserving the Past, Embracing the Future* Through Jan. 8, 2018. George H. W. Bush Presidential Library. bush41.org 979/691-4000

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COLLEGE STATION:

Starlight Music Series
Jun. 10, 24. Wolf Pen Creek
Amphitheater.
cstx.gov/starlight
979/764-3486

DALLAS: *Shaken, Stirred,
Styled: The Art of the
Cocktail.* Through Ncv. 12.
Dallas Museum of Art.
dma.org 214/922-12C0

DALLAS: *Maya: Hidden
Worlds Revealed*
Through Sep. 4. Perc
Museum. perotmuseum.org

DALLAS: *México 1920-
1950: Diego Rivera, Frida
Kahlo, José Clemente Orozco,
and the Avant-Garde.*
Through Jul. 16. Dallas
Museum of Art. dma.org
214/922-1802

DALLAS: *ZimSculp.*
Through Jul. 31. Dallas
Arboretum and Botanical
Garden. dallasarboretum.org
214/515-6525

DALLAS: *Roni Horn.*
Through Aug. 20.
Nasher Sculpture Center.
nashersculpturecenter.org

DALLAS: *In Your Dreams*
Jun. 2-4. Dallas City
Performance Hall.
dallascityperformanceshall.com
214/671-1450

DALLAS: Canada's Ballet BC
Jun. 3. Winspear Opera
House. 214/271-1086

DALLAS: Domain and
Terrain - Home and
Design Show Jun. 9-10.
Kay Bailey Hutchison
Convention Center Dallas.
dallasconventioncenter.com
405/242-3290

DALLAS: *Mufaro's Beautiful
Daughters: An African Tale*
Jun. 23-Jul. 9. Dallas
Children's Theater.
dct.org 214/740-0051

DECATUR: Eighter from
Decatur Barbecue Challenge
Jun. 2-3. Joe Wheeler Park
at Wise County Fairgrounds.
940/627-8767

DECATUR: Cruise Nights
on the Courthouse Square
Jun. 3. Historic Downtown.
decaturmainstreet.com
940/399-9558

DECATUR: Eighter
from Decatur Food Truck
Challenge Jun. 3.
Decatur Chamber. eighter
foodtruckchallenge.com
940/627-3107

DECATUR: JW Hart PBR
Challenge Jun. 3. Wise
County Fairgrounds.
wcchallenger.org
940/627-8767

DENISON: Music on
Main Jun. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30.
Heritage Park.
denisonlive.com
903/464-4452

DENTON: First Fridays:
Arts Grants Awards Jun. 2.
Patterson-Appleton Arts
Center. dentonarts.com
940/382-2787

ELGIN: Western Days
Festival Jun. 20-24.
Downtown Elgin.
elgintxchamber.com
512/285-4515

ELGIN: Sip, Shop, and Stroll
Jun. 8. Historic Downtown
Elgin. elgintx.com

ELGIN: Juneteenth
Street Dance, Parade, and
Celebration Jun. 9-10.
Historic Downtown Elgin.
elgintx.com 512/963-2721

ELGIN: Western Days
Jun. 18-24. Elgin Memorial
Park. elgintxchamber.com
972/878-7529

ENNIS: *Wait Until Dark*
Through Jun. 3. Ennis
Public Theatre.
ennispublictheatre.com
972/878-7529

ENNIS: Super Chevy Show
Jun. 3. Texas Motorplex.
texasmotorplex.com/
972/878-2641

ENNIS: *Mojave* Jun. 9-25.
Theatre Rocks!
theaterocks.com
972/878-5126

ENNIS: UnityOne Summer
Music Festival Jun. 10.
Downtown Ennis.
visitennis.org 972/878-4748

FARMERSVILLE: Farmers
and Fleas Market Jun. 3.
The Onion Shed.
farmersvilletx.com
972/784-6846

FORT WORTH: *Focus:*
Katherine Bernhardt
Through Jul. 9. The Modern
Art Museum of Fort Worth.
themodern.org 817/738-9215

FORT WORTH: Van Cliburn
International Piano
Competition May 25-Jun. 10.
Kimbell Art Museum.
cliburn.org 817/332-8451

FORT WORTH: *Rockin'*
The River: Live on the Trinity
Jun. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29.
Panther Island Pavilion.
pantherislandpavilion.com/
rockintheriver
817/698-0700

FORT WORTH: Concerts
in the Garden Jun. 2-Jul. 8.
Fort Worth Botanic Gardens.
fwsymphony.org/concerts/
citg_main.asp
817/665-6000

FORT WORTH: NASCAR
Camping World Truck
Series Jun. 8-10.
Texas Motor Speedway.
texasmotorspeedway.com
800/515-2171

FORT WORTH: Friday
Night Drags Jun. 23.
Texas Motor Speedway.
817/215-8500

FORT WORTH: Mimir
Chamber Music Festival
Jun. 26-Jul. 7. PepsiCo
Recital Hall.
mimirfestival.org
817/984-9299

FRISCO: Jimmy Buffett and
the Coral Reefer Band in
Concert Jun. 10. Toyota
Stadium. visitfrisco.com
214/705-6700

FRISCO: Texas League
All-Star Game Jun. 27.
Dr Pepper Ballpark.
visitfrisco.com
972/731-9200

GARLAND: The
Marketplace Downtown
Square Jun. 3, 17.
Historic Downtown.
themarketplacedfw.com
469/275-9616

GARLAND:
Urban Flea Jun. 10.
resurrecteddesigns.com

GLEN ROSE: Discovery
After Dark Jun. 9. Fossil Rim
Wildlife Center. fossilrim.org
254/897-2960

GLEN ROSE: Photo Tour
Jun. 10, 24. Fossil Rim
Wildlife Center. fossilrim.org
254/897-2960

GLEN ROSE: Shorthorn
Cattle Show Jun. 10-11.
Somervell County Expo
Center. 254/897-4509

GLEN ROSE: Two-Day
Photo Workshop
Jun. 10-11. Fossil Rim
Wildlife Center.
fossilrim.org
254/897-2960

GLEN ROSE: D&D Barrel
Race Jun. 16-18. Somervell
County Expo Center.
254/897-4509

GLEN ROSE: Father's Day
Sunset Safari Jun. 17.
Fossil Rim Wildlife Center.
fossilrim.org
254/897-2960

GLEN ROSE: Girls' Night
Out Jun. 17. Downtown.
307/631-4106

GLEN ROSE: Third
Weekend Bluegrass Jun. 17.
Oakdale Park.
254/897-2321

GLEN ROSE: World
Giraffe Day: Family
Fun Day Jun. 24.
Fossil Rim Wildlife Center.
fossilrim.org 254/897-2960

GLEN ROSE: S.W. Mini
Horse Show Jun. 30-Jul. 2.
Somervell County Expo
Center. 254/897-4509

GRAND PRAIRIE: Spring
Thoroughbred Season.
Through Jul. 30.
Lone Star Park.
lonestarpark.com
972/263-7223

GRAND PRAIRIE: NCAA
Division II Championship
Jun. 1-3. Texas
AirHogs Stadium.
airhogsbaseball.com
972/521-6730

GRAND PRAIRIE: Live
Thoroughbred Racing
Jun. 2-Jul. 30.
Lone Star Park.
lonestarpark.com
972/263-7223

GRAND PRAIRIE:
Crawfish Boil Jun. 3.
Farmers Market.
gptx.org/farmersmarket
972/237-8100

GRAND PRAIRIE:
The Phat Pack Jun. 3.
Uptown Theater.
uptowntheatergp.com
972/237-8786

GRAND PRAIRIE:
Summer Kick-Off Tejano
Music Festival Jun. 4.
Traders Village.
tradersvillage.com/
grand-prairie
972/647-2331

GRAND PRAIRIE: John
Mellencamp in Concert
Jun. 21. Verizon Theatre.
verizontheatre.com
972/854-5111

GRAND PRAIRIE:
Country Concert Series
Jun. 24. Traders Village.
tradersvillage.com/
grand-prairie
972/647-2331

GRAPEVINE: First Friday
Fun and Games Jun. 2.
Nash Farm. nashfarm.org
817/410-3185

GRAPEVINE: Dairy Day
Jun. 3. Nash Farm.
nashfarm.org
817/410-3185

GREENVILLE: Cotton
Boll ArtFest Jun. 3-4.
Audie Murphy/American
Cotton Museum.
amacmuseum.com
903/450-4502

HALLETTVILLE:
Texas in World War I
Through Nov. 30, 2018.
Friench Simpson Memorial
Library. hallettsvillelibrary.org
361/798-3243 ext. 208

HOLLAND: Corn Festival
Jun. 15-17. Holland
City Park. hollandcornfest.org
254/657-0000

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LA GRANGE: DNT Trade Days Jun. 10-11. Fayette County Fair Grounds. dntradedays.com 979/476-8338

LA GRANGE: Aztar Dance Extravaganza Jun. 17. Historic Casino Hall. visitlagrangetx.com 979/968-3017

LOCKHART: Chisholm Trail Roundup Barbecue Cook-Off Jun. 2-3. Lockhart City Park. chisholmtrail-roundup.com 512/398-2818

LOCKHART: Chisholm Trail Roundup and Rodeo Jun. 8-10. Lockhart City Park. chisholmtrailroundup.com 512/398-2818

LULING: Luling Watermelon Thump Jun. 22-25. Downtown Luling. watermelonthump.com 830/875-3214 ext. 333

MADISONVILLE: Jet Ski Races Jun. 16-19. Lake Madison Park. txh2oracing.com 936/581-3543

MCKINNEY: McKinney Square Book Festival and Concert Jun. 3. McKinney Performing Arts Center. mckinneyperformingartscenter.org 214/544-4630

MCKINNEY: Third Monday Trade Days Jun. 16-18. Third Monday Trade Days. tmttd.com 972/562-5466

MCKINNEY: Killis Melton Ice Cream Crank-Off Jun. 25. Chestnut Square Historic Village. chestnutsquare.org 972/562-8790

MELISSA: Celebration of Freedom Jun. 24. Zadow Park. melissatx.org 903/227-4538

MESQUITE: Mesquite Creative Artists Jun. 1-30. Mesquite Arts Center Main Gallery. mesquiteartscenter.org 972-216-6444

MESQUITE: Mesquite Rodeo Road Rally Jun. 3. Mesquite Exhibit Hall. rodeoroadrally.com 972/284-9411

MESQUITE: Always a Bridesmaid Jun. 9-11, 15-18, 23-25. Mesquite Arts Center Black Box Theatre. mesquitecommunitytheatre.com 972-216-8126

MESQUITE: Summer Sizzle Festival Jun. 10. Paschall Park. cityofmesquite.com/summersizzle 972/216-6499

MESQUITE: Summer Nationals Jun. 15. Devil's Bowl Speedway. devilsbowl.com 972/222-2421

MESQUITE: Opal Lawrence Historical Park Tours Jun. 24. historicmesquite.org 972/216-6468

NOCONA: Chisholm Trail Rodeo Jun. 9-10. Chisholm Trail Arena. nocona.org 940/841-2310

NOCONA: The Old Chisholm Trail - Songs and Tales of the Cattle Trails Jun. 10. Mary Davis Park. nocona.org 940/825-3526

PLANO: Night Out on 15th Jun. 3. Historic Downtown Plano. visitplano.com 972/468-1588

PLANO: Who's Under Where? Jun. 8-Jul. 1. Rover Dramawerks. roverdramawerks.com 972/849-0358

PLANO: Downtown Plano Art and Wine Walk Jun. 8. Historic Downtown Plano. visitplano.com 972/468-1588

RICHARDSON: Shaping Sound Jun. 8. Eisemann Center. eisemanncenter.com 972/744-4650

ROCKWALL: Rockwall Country Fair Jun. 10. Rockwall Country Courthouse. rockwallcountryfair.com 972/843-1130

SEALY: Sealy KC June Music Fest Jun. 25. Sealy Knights of Columbus Hall. sealykofc.org 979/885-6370

SHINER: Half Moon Holidays Jun. 30-Jul. 1. Green-Dickson Park. shinertx.com 361/594-4180

SULPHUR SPRINGS: Hopkins County Dairy Festival Jun. 9-Jun. 17. Various locations. hopkinscountydairyfestival.com

SULPHUR SPRINGS: Texas Championship Ice Cream Freeze-Off Jun. 10. Hopkins County Civic Center. sulphursprings-tx.com 903/885-6515

TERRELL: Tractor and Engine Show and Pull Jun. 10-11. Ben Gill Park. north-texas-antique-tractor-and-engine-club.org 214/649-5478

WACO: Speed: Science in Motion May 27-Sep. 3. Mayborn Museum Complex. maybornmuseum.com 254/710-1110

WACO: Brazos River Sharkfest Swim Jun. 25. Brazos River. sharkfestswim.com

WACO: Celebrity Pro-Am C.A.S.T. for Kids Bass Fishing Tournament Jun. 30-Jul. 1. Lake Waco and the Texas Sports Hall of Fame. castforkids.org

WAXAHACHIE: Gingerbread Trail Historic Home Tour Jun. 3-4. Ellis County Museum. gingerbreadtrail.net 972/937-0681

WAXAHACHIE: Pancake Breakfast Fly-In Jun. 5. Mid-Way Regional Airport. mid-wayregional.com 972/923-0080

WAXAHACHIE: Cow Creek Country Classic Bike Ride Jun. 24. Waxahachie Ninth Grade Academy. cowcreekcountryclass.com

WEATHERFORD: Summer Concerts at the Texas Opry Theater Jun. 3, 24. texasoprytheater.com 817/341-1000

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

EDINBURG: Texas Cook 'Em: High Steaks in Edinburg Jun. 30-Jul. 1. Edinburg Municipal Park. edinburg.com 956/383-4974

FLORESVILLE: Opry Jun. 1. Wilson County Show Barn. facebook.com/floresvilleopry 830/591-4344

GOLIAD: Wayback Wednesdays Jun. 7, 14, 21, 28. Presidio La Bahia.

presidiolabaha.org 361/645-3752

GOLIAD: Market Days Jun. 10. Goliad Historic Downtown Square. goliadcc.org 361/645-3563

GOLIAD: Berclair Mansion Tours Jun. 25. goliadcc.org 361/358-3859

SAN ANTONIO: Art in the Garden—Alyson Shotz. Through Jun. 19. San Antonio Botanical Garden. bluestarart.org/exhibitions/art-in-the-garden-alyson-shotz 210/536-1400

SAN ANTONIO: Natural Beauty: Fiesta of Land, Water, and Sky Through Aug. 13. Witte Museum. witemuseum.org 210/357-1900

SAN ANTONIO: An Evening with Christopher Cross Jun. 3. H-E-B Performance Hall at The Tobin Center. sasymphony.org 210/223-8624

SAN ANTONIO: Cirque de la Symphonie Jun. 9-11. H-E-B Performance Hall at The Tobin Center. sasymphony.org 210/223-8624

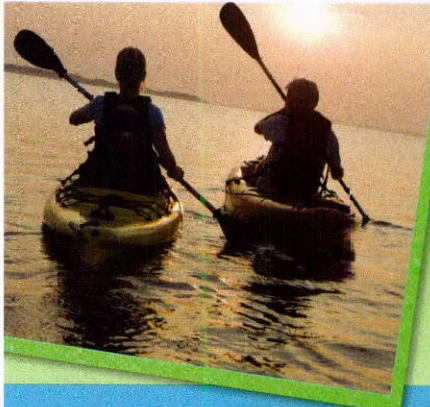
SAN ANTONIO: Art in the Dark Jun. 20. Sheraton Gunter Hotel. salighthouse.org/events 210/531-1533

SAN ANTONIO: Fourth of July Artisan River Walk Show Jun. 30-Jul. 3. San Antonio River Walk. thesanantonioriverwalk.com 210/227-4262



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by that ability to use different vehicles to express what I needed, and sometimes literary genres can help us too, to express something better in one way than another. Currently, I have a children's chapter book called *The Prince of Chocolate* almost ready, and I have been at work on the biography of Texas labor leader and civil-rights organizer Emma Tenayuca with my co-author and Emma's niece, Sharyll Teneyuca.

Q: How did growing up in San Antonio influence your literary style?

A: The West Side of San Antonio is where I heard my earliest stories. It is also where, as a young college grad, I got a summer job collecting folklore from elderly people. There, I developed and polished the nuances and rhythms of spoken literature that later became a characteristic part of my style of prose, poetry, and dramatic performances. The central themes, characters, values, and idiomatic expressions are based on San Antonio and South Texas.

Q: What hometown sites do you like to show visitors?

A: I love the missions—it's hard not to feel at home when you stand inside those centuries-old walls. I love Brackenridge Park too, especially the Brackenridge Eagle train. The cultural arts centers here have some topnotch talent, and walking through the *mercado* at Historic Market Square downtown is a "have-to." Riding the barges down the river gives a whole different perspective.

Q: What are some of your other favorite places in Texas?

A: Last year, I built an initiative to take poetry workshops to 22 of the poorest school districts in the state. It took me to some amazing places. I found the physical beauty of Terlingua dramatic and enchanting. I worked with students in Ysleta, where the Tigua Indians have maintained their cultural identity and traditions, and in Rio Grande City, Alice, inner-city Fort Worth, rural

Hutto, El Paso, in whose rich border culture I have always delighted, and so many other magical places.

Q: Food has been an important ingredient in some of your writing. What are your favorite restaurants?

A: In San Antonio, I love Peter El Norteño for its tortillas, and Panchito's for its shredded chicken taco with avocado slices. I like the *enchiladas suizas* at Rosario's, and the *bánh xèo* at Snow's Viet-Nam Restaurant. La Focaccia Italian Grill is amazing, and Capparelli's on Main is hard to beat for eggplant parmigiana. When I travel to the Valley, I always try to get a bean-and-cheese *pato* from El Pato.

Q: Can you recommend any good bookstores or literary venues?

A: Anyone in San Antonio should try to catch a reading at the Jazz Poets Society or the Sun Poets Society. Gemini Ink and the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center regularly host readings, as does our favorite independent bookstore, The Twig.

Q: Why is poetry still relevant in today's society?

A: The Aztecs said that poetry was "the ultimate truth," and I think they were on to something. I believe that the role of the poet is to be the "prophet" of society—someone who sees clearly what is happening and paints it in words, so that we can see and understand our lives. The amazing author Gabriel García Márquez said that every writer is a revolutionary, and he truly understood that writers want to change the world. I hope that my writing will reach Texans of all ages and help them love the cultures and characteristics of this state, in all our beautiful diversity and humanity. **L**

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THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

Reader Service Guide to Advertisers

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1. Abilene Convention & Visitors Bureau pg. 25
2. Amarillo Convention & Visitors Council pg. 21
3. Andrews Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau pg. 84
4. Bandera County Convention & Visitors Bureau pg. 85
5. Bastrop Art in Public Places pg. 72
6. Beaumont Convention & Visitors Bureau pg. 33
7. Brady/McCulloch County Visitors Center pg. 84
8. Bullock Texas State History Museum pg. 75
9. City of Angleton pg. 75
10. City of Gonzales pg. 36
11. City of Grand Prairie pg. 32
12. City of Longview - Tourism pg. 20
13. City of Portland pg. 85
14. City of San Saba pg. 70
15. Denison Chamber of Commerce pg. 82
16. Galveston Island Section pg. 64-66
The Bryan Museum
Casa del Mar
Galveston Island Convention & Visitors Bureau
Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier
Hotel Galvez & Spa and Tremont House
Ocean Star Offshore Drilling Rig Museum and Education Center
The San Luis Resort, Spa and Conference Center
17. Glen Rose Convention & Visitors Bureau pg. 82
18. Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau pg. 69
19. Greater Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau pg. 4
20. Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce pg. 22
21. Irving Arts Center pg. 21
22. Irving Convention & Visitors Bureau pg. 30
23. JL Bar Ranch & Resort pg. 10
24. Kerrville Convention & Visitors Bureau pg. 29
25. Krause's Café pg. 71
26. Laredo Convention & Visitors Bureau pg. 37
27. Moody Gardens pg. 34
28. Paris CVB/Lamar County Chamber of Commerce pg. 81
29. Plano Convention & Visitors Bureau pg. 17
30. Port Aransas Chamber of Commerce pg. 33
31. Port Arthur Convention & Visitors Bureau pg. 71
32. Rockport-Fulton Area Chamber of Commerce pg. 69
33. San Angelo Chamber of Commerce pg. 72
34. Sonora Chamber of Commerce pg. 83
35. South Padre Island Convention & Visitors Bureau pg. 14
36. Texas Gulf Shrimp pg. 26
37. Texas State Aquarium pg. 13
38. The Colony Convention & Visitors Bureau pg. 24
39. Village of Surfside, Texas pg. 83
40. Visit Big Bend pg. 29
41. Visit Houston and Beyond pg. 90
City of Baytown
City of Deer Park
Visit Houston & Beyond
42. Visit Lubbock pg. 2
43. Waxahachie Convention & Visitors Bureau pg. 37
44. West Texas Co-op pg. 78
City of Alpine
Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce
Fort Stockton Convention & Visitors Bureau
Marathon Chamber of Commerce
City of Marfa
Midland Convention & Visitors Bureau
Odessa Convention & Visitors Bureau
45. Witte Museum pg. 18

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HORSE ARTFOLIO
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38305 TEXAS IS HOME



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Texas-strong women from Willis run Texas Sweet Tees. This creative, spunky group has a love for the Lone Star State and quality T-shirts. Available in adult sizes S-XXL.

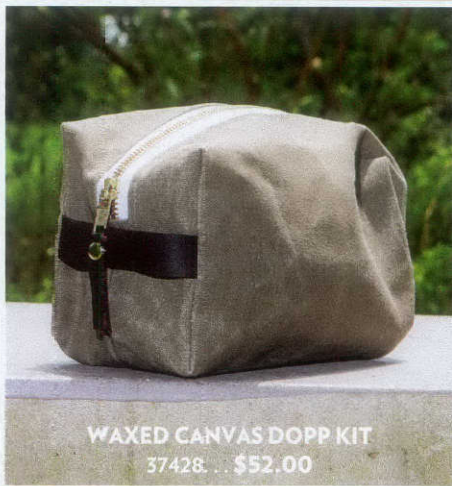
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**FRENCH
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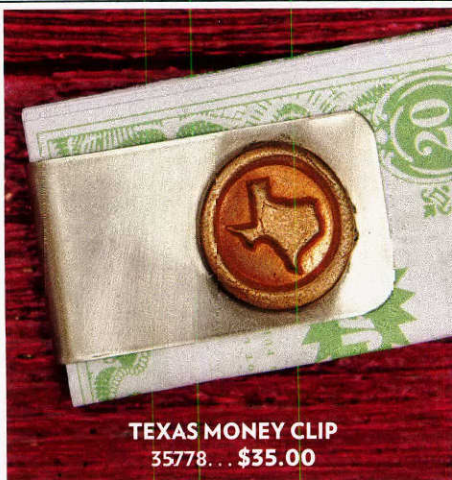
TRUE TEXAS BATCH BOX
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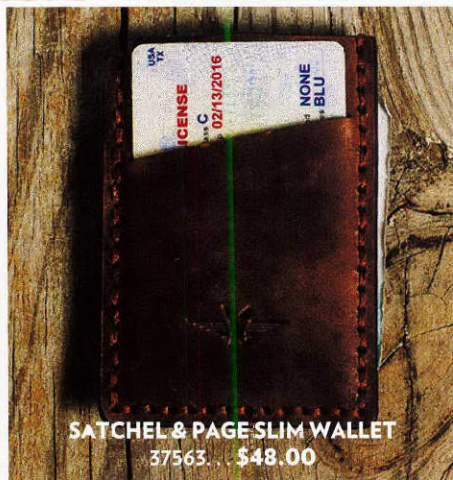
LONGHORN STUFFED ANIMAL
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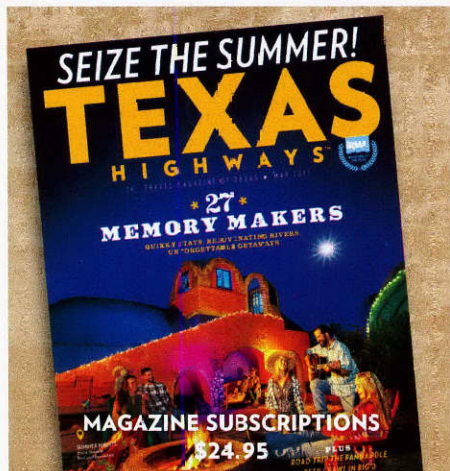
**FOREST GREEN
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**TWISTED SASSAFRAS
WALKING STICK**
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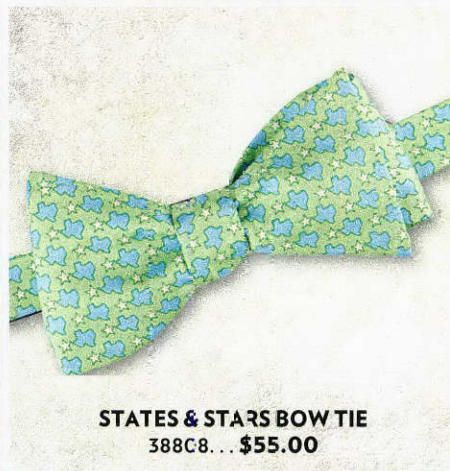
MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS
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**STATE OF TEXAS
W/FLAG HITCH
RECEIVER COVER**
37559... \$39.95



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THE TEXAS HIGHWAYS GIFT SHOP is your one-stop shop for the perfect Lone Star-themed gift. Look for our True Texas line, which highlights the exceptional creativity of Texas-based artisans with products designed and manufactured in Texas. Shop with us for clothing, books, home décor, and more ... all sure to please your favorite Texan!

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BAYTOWN CONROE HUNTSVILLE SUGAR LAND TOMBALL



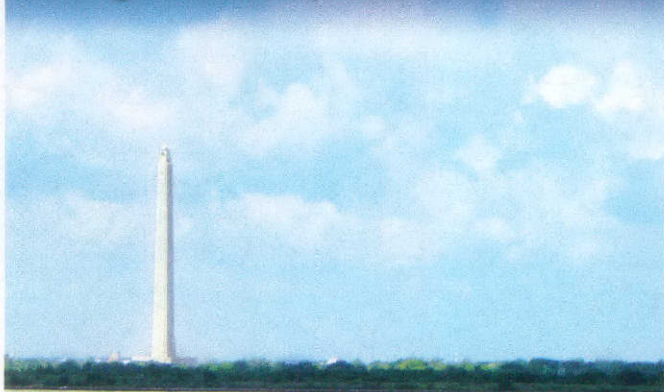
VISIT HOUSTON AND BEYOND

Just beyond Houston's big-city lights, there's fun and adventure for all! Come explore Houston and Beyond where you can find small town main streets, nature preserves, Texas history, beaches, amusement parks, and so much more. Our fourteen unique destinations, all within short drives from central Houston, offer wide-ranging experiences that will make your trip truly unforgettable.

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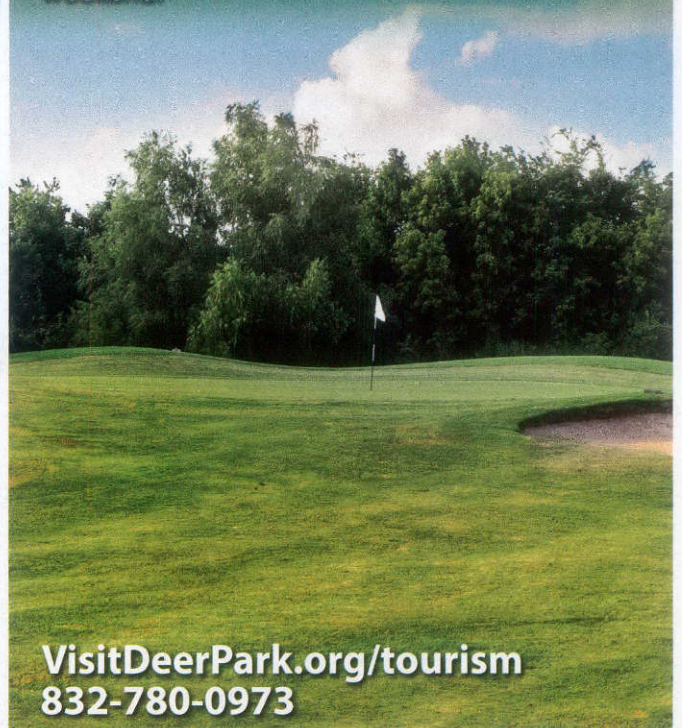
Ever dream of kayaking in the reflection of the San Jacinto Monument? Come see all of the exciting excursions Baytown has to offer.



VisitBaytown.com
281-420-5343

DEER PARK

Deer Park is fun for everyone, with history, great shopping and dining, and our beautiful Battleground Golf Course! Come stay with us this weekend!



VisitDeerPark.org/tourism
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THE DAYTRIPPER

WITH CHET GARNER



Das Beste Daytrip

NATIVES AND VISITORS LOVE NEW BRAUNFELS for its crystal-clear rivers and the thrilling slides of Schlitterbahn. And while these top tourist attractions are great reasons to go tripping, there's much more to this German burg than many people know. I decided to take a trip to this Texas-style Bavaria and see what I could uncover.

9 A.M. To start my day, I needed a breakfast as historic as New Braunfels itself and headed to **Naegelin's Bakery**. Touted as the "Oldest Bakery in Texas," this institution has served up authentic German-style baked goods for over 100 years. My warm apple strudel practically melted in my mouth, and my *pfef-fernesse* cookies were like an anise-laden trip to Germany for my stomach.

10 A.M. Eager to learn how New Braunfels got its rich German roots, I headed to the **Sophienburg Museum and Archives** and learned the story of Prince Solms-Braunfels, who sailed to Texas to establish a new German utopia. He picked the location and name (of course) but then headed back to Germany never to return again. However, despite his absence this town thrived and the museum is proof, displaying the artifacts and early traditions of New Braunfels, many of which are still practiced today.

11 A.M. The day began to heat up,

and I knew the river would soon be packed with tubers. To beat the rush, I headed straight for **Prince Solms Park**, rented a tube from **Rockin' River Rides**, and headed toward the **Comal River**. I stood on the bank and readied myself for the hardest part—getting in the frigid, spring-fed water. But with a deep breath and a dose of courage, I plunged in and let out

the obligatory scream, "Wooohooooo!" I tell you this water is better than coffee. The next hour consisted of nothing more than sitting in an inflated tube and letting the current push me along—a ritual that should be part of every proper Texas summer.

1 P.M. I emerged from the Comal starving and headed to **Krause's Biergarten & Cafe** to quiet my growling stomach. Originally opened in 1938, this icon of the New Braunfels dining

Chet Garner is the host of *The Daytripper*® travel show on PBS. To view the New Braunfels episode visit thedaytripper.com

scene is now back after a 20-year hiatus. I opted to sit in the giant *bierhalle* where I devoured a crisp *jägerschnitzel* and washed it down with a frosty German beverage. *Prost!*

2:30 P.M. Not quite ready to leave the water and sunshine behind, I headed to the **Texas Ski Ranch**. Using an innovative cable-system to pull riders around a circular lake, this park helps visitors learn to wakeboard without a boat. I quickly realized that it isn't as easy as it looks. But after a few face plants and water injections up my nose, I flew around the loop with style.

5:30 P.M. I decided to stay on the highway and visit one of Texas' most well-known roadside attractions—**Animal World and Snake Farm Zoo**. I could feel the black mamba, king cobra, and pythons watching my every move, which made me very thankful for the barrier of glass between us. Soon it was dinner time in the gator pit, where I watched the tour guide hand-feed raw chicken to a dozen or so massive alligators. It was awesome but reminded me it was dinner time for this tripper, too.

6:30 P.M. To end my day, I opted for a truly Texan meal at the downtown **Phoenix Saloon**. Among its historic accolades, this bar is reported to be the first in Texas to officially serve women and the spot where chili powder was invented in 1894 by proprietor William Gebhardt. I ordered up a big bowl of "double shot" red

chili that came topped with fresh jalapeños and habaneros. It stung like a rattlesnake bite to the face, but in the best of ways.

No town in Texas has the same mix of history, food, and adventure that trippers can find in New Braunfels. From authentic grub to relaxing river floats, my trip through this German utopia was truly *das beste*. So whether you follow my footsteps or forge your own path, I hope to see you on the road. **L**

Contact New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce at 800/572-2626; www.innewbraunfels.com.



Lyrical Herencia

The poetry of Carmen Tafolla

story by Heather Brand

NEARLY EVERY YEAR SINCE 1932, THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE has named a State Poet Laureate to honor significant contributions in the field of poetry. In 2015 that distinction went to San Antonio native Carmen Tafolla, a celebrated Chicana literary figure. Just three years prior, Tafolla was named the very first poet laureate of San Antonio, where her family has resided since the 1700s. Tafolla published her first poetry book, *Get Your Tortillas Together*, in 1976 and cemented her reputation with collections such as *Curandera* (1983), *Sonnets to Human Beings* (1992), *Rebozos* (2012), and *This River Here: Poems of San Antonio* (2014).

Not one to shy away from other genres, Tafolla has also written books of short fiction, cultural histories, and tales for young adults and children. The thread that ties her writings together is the Tex-Mex culture that she experienced while growing up on the West Side of San

I was born into a family that gathered in the backyard on Saturday nights, with tamales and Big Red, watching the fireflies and telling stories of Texas snakes or ancestors' struggles.

Antonio in the 1950s and '60s. The people, places, traditions, cuisine, and language of the barrio permeate her stories, giving them a distinctive flavor. Tafolla has penned odes to her hometown—its missions, river, and history—as well as poems depicting the daily lives of Mexican-Americans. Her nonfiction works range from such topics as the sociopolitical struggles of her ancestors to the vibrant history of tamale-making parties known as *tamaladas*.

Tafolla is recognized particularly for her strong female characters, several of whom she has portrayed as part of her traveling one-woman show *My Heart Speaks a Different Language*. With more than 20 books to her name, Tafolla is also a professor of transformative children's literature at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Her stories help keep the spirit and heritage of her ancestral city alive.

Q: Why did you start writing?

A: I was born into a family that gathered

in the backyard on Saturday nights, with tamales and Big Red, watching the fireflies and telling stories of Texas snakes or ancestors' struggles. I grew up in a poverty-stricken barrio, where there were few children's books available, and nothing in our schools or our libraries that reflected our heritage or our personal experience. When I started to write, it was in order to document the beauty of the culture that surrounded me.

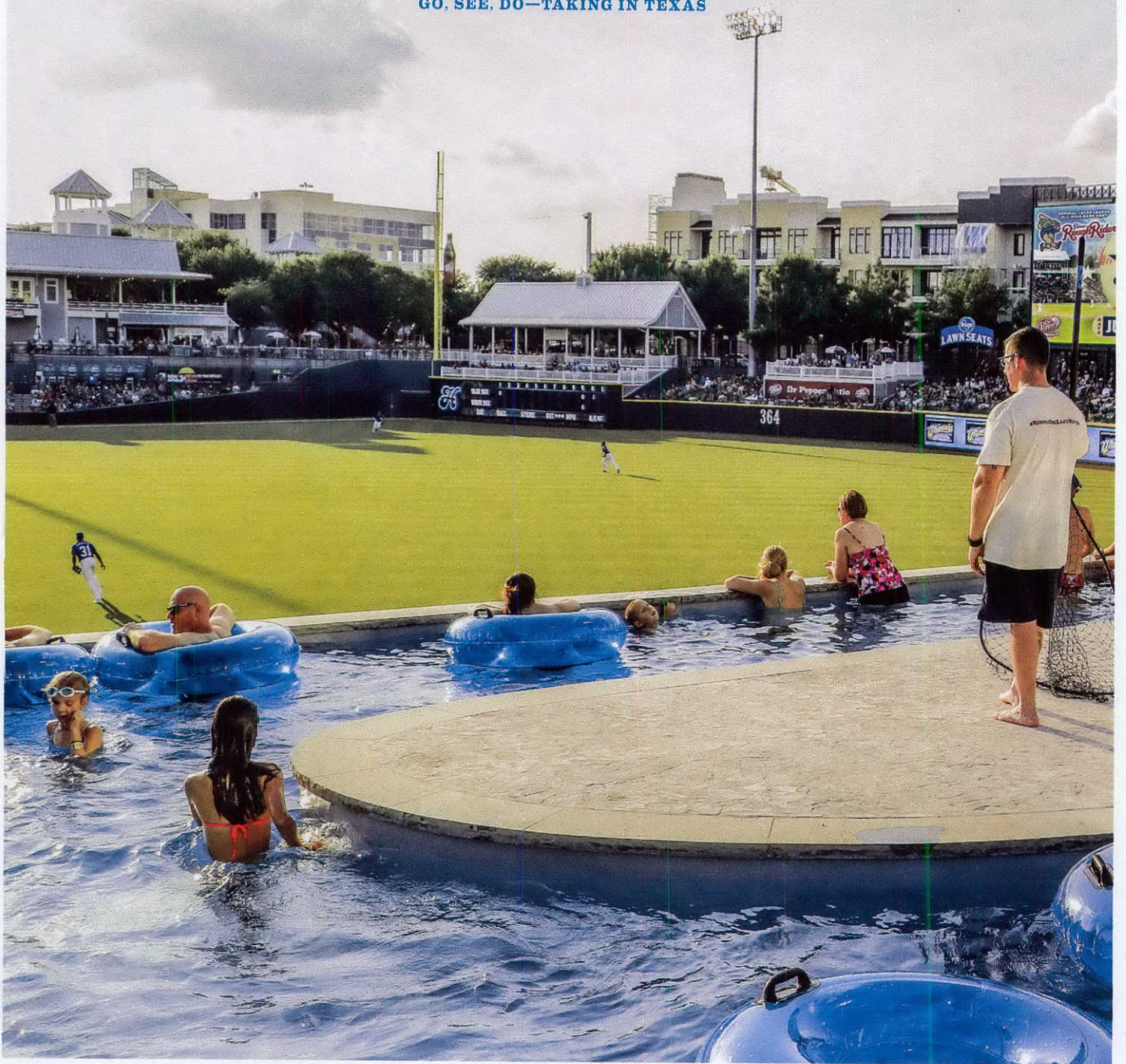
Q: Why do you write in so many different genres?

A: Growing up speaking English, Spanish, and Tex-Mex, I became spoiled > continued on page 86

Keep up with Carmen Tafolla's new works and upcoming appearances at www.carmen Tafolla.com.

SIGHTSEER

GO, SEE, DO—TAKING IN TEXAS



WHAT: CHOCTAW LAZY RIVER **WHERE:** DR PEPPER BALLPARK, HOME OF THE FRISCO ROUGHRIDERS
WHEN: HOME GAMES TAKE PLACE EVERY OTHER WEEK THROUGH LABOR DAY WEEKEND.

Rough Life

The sparkling Choctaw Lazy River in Dr Pepper Ballpark, home of the Frisco RoughRiders, brings a whole new meaning to the lazy days of summer.

What's better than enjoying a nice summer day at the ballpark? Perhaps when it involves watching the action from an inner tube floating in Dr Pepper Ballpark's new Choctaw Lazy River. The \$1.5-million development opened in June 2016: a 3,000-square-foot pool in the shape of a figure eight, just beyond right field. For \$39 apiece, fans can float in their swimsuits during Thursday and Sunday games, complete with all-you-can-eat food, cabanas, and views of the entire ballpark. On other game nights, the ballpark books the lazy river for groups of 25 to 250. It's a whole new ballpark. www.ridersbaseball.com.

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Visit texashighways.com/freepubs or call **877-252-8150** and request Package 2.

**FREE
TRAVEL
INFO**

GULF COAST

COAST INTO VACATION

THERE IS SOMETHING MAGICAL ABOUT A VISIT TO "THE COAST," ALL CARES AND WORRIES ARE WASHED AWAY WITH THE TIDE, AND THE ONLY REQUIREMENTS ARE TO RELAX AND ENJOY THE VISIT. There are plenty of places to embrace this feeling because the Gulf Coast region offers hundreds of miles of shoreline, stretching from Orange near the Louisiana border to Brownsville and the Mexican border. Often the hardest decision to make is whether to lie on the beach or play in the waves, fish or kayak. While there are plenty of fun activities, the region is not without a serious side. Museums and historical sites offer explorations of science, art and nature. So come to the Texas Gulf Coast to discover, unwind and enjoy.

HIT THE BEACH

Beaches, of course, are popular destinations for travelers. There are many options from the sandy marsh grasses at Port Aransas State Park to the white, sandy shores of Isla Blanca Park on the southern coast with Padre Island. Matagorda Beach is in Bay City; Bryan Beach, Port Aransas and Quintana Beach in the Port Area; and Sylvan Beach in Laguna Vista. Some of the popular beaches along the coast are in Corpus Christi, Galveston, Laguna Atascas and Rockport. Get up early in the morning to see the sand underfoot as the sun rises over the water. Seabird hunters can comb

The SIGHTS

- 1 PADRE ISLAND NATL. SEASHORE
- 2 NASA SPACE CENTER HOUSTON
- 3 COASTAL BIRDING TRAILS
- 4

the beach while others relax on the sand. Padre Island, take a walk to learn to shape also is available. Surfside Beach, Padre Island, Hidden gem The Flowering Pine Sanctuaries land offers a view of massive mud and

TEXAS HIGHWAYS EVENTS CALENDAR WINTER 2016-17

2017 OFFICIAL TRAVEL MAP

TEXAS

It's like a WHOLE OTHER COUNTRY

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PLACE**

at the