

# THE BUCKET LIST TEXAS



## HIGHWAYS™

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS ★ SEPTEMBER 2016

**ARE YOU  
A TRUE  
TEXAN?**

\*\*\*\*\*  
SEE PAGE 72  
TO FIND OUT.

## 42 MUST-DO TRAVEL ADVENTURES

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MARVEL IN MARFA, SEE SEA TURTLES, WATCH WHOOPERS  
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## EDITOR'S NOTE



### It's All About the Experience

**W**HEN SUGAR LAND RESIDENT Sandy Levin donated a series of bronze sculptures to the city earlier this year, including a whimsical depiction of two teenagers taking a selfie, he inadvertently ignited a conversation about public art and millennial self-absorption that went viral. Is it art? Does it validate youthful narcissism? Or does it, as the donor intended, simply portray a common activity at Sugar Land Town Square, one of the city's most popular tourist hubs? As anyone who travels knows, when the vacation's over and the realities of daily life encroach, a photo—selfie or not—can help you re-live those invigorating experiences over and over again.

Our September issue, in fact, is all about experiences. We've even refreshed the design and added some new stories to our lineup to keep the good times rolling. Our annual round-up of Extraordinary Texans showcases people who have accomplished

noteworthy feats like resurrecting a father's legacy, reimagining the movie-going experience, visiting every state park in Texas, and organizing the largest cultural celebration in the state. And since it's *Texas Highways'* 42nd birthday this year, we've also got a bucket list of 42 experiences we think are paramount for any adventurer, including floating a Hill Country river, spotting whooping cranes on the Gulf Coast, spray-painting some Cadillacs in Amarillo, and watching just-hatched sea turtles scamper to the surf. We also had a lot of fun designing a quiz that should determine if you're a True Texan (and if you're not, that's okay, too—we'll help you get there).

Go ahead: Give it your best shot.

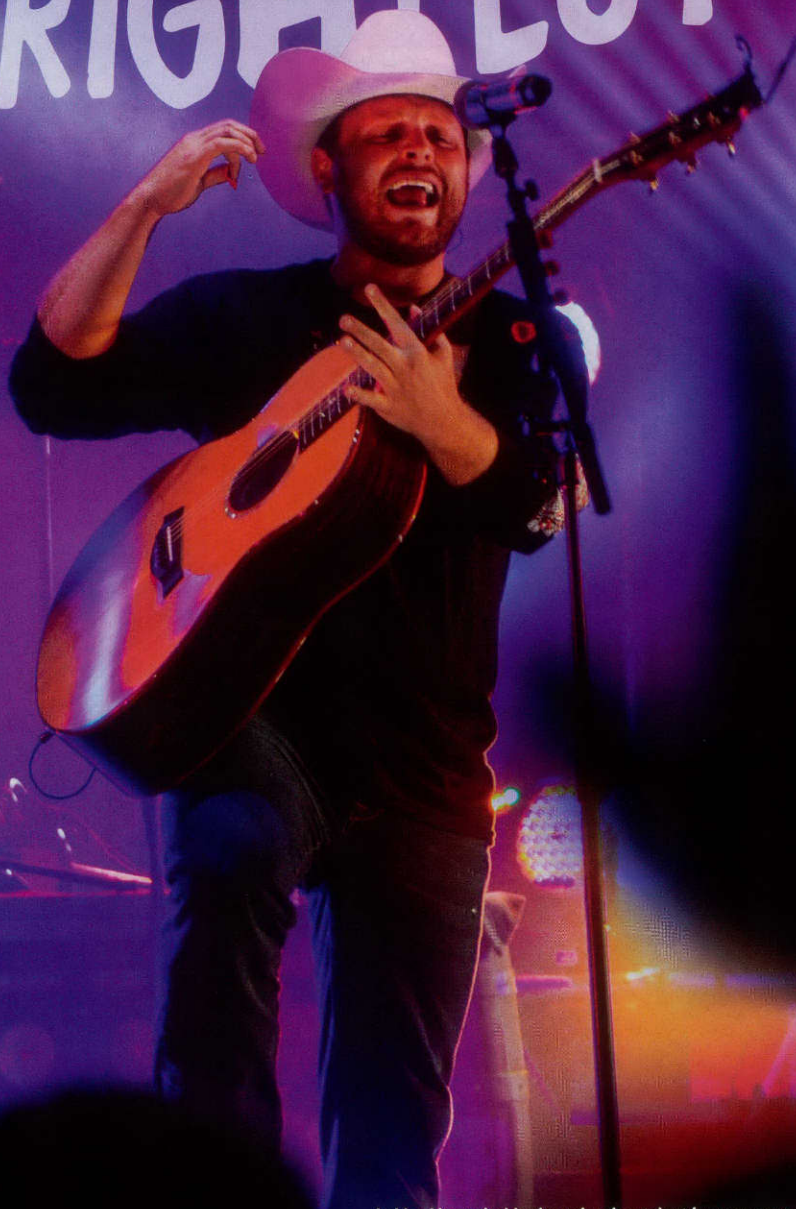
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori Moffatt".

**LORI MOFFATT**, *Interim Editor*

Searching for chachalacas—also known as Mexican tree pheasants—at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park.



# 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



# SEPTEMBER



## 52

### Texas Bucket List

Vast and diverse, Texas boasts a surplus of adventures, experiences, and travels. Find something for everyone in our quintessential bucket list of 42 Texas must-dos before you're through.

*Text by* MELISSA GASKILL

## 40

### Extraordinary Texans

Our salute to the extraordinary among us—the storytellers and travelers, the champions of culture and craft beer—whose creativity and dedication brighten the Lone Star State for everyone.

*Text by* CLAYTON MAXWELL  
*Photographs by* WILL VAN OVERBEEK

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### Are You a True Texan?

Take this quiz to determine if your Texan credentials are honorable or horse-hockey. Whether you find it easy as pie or axle-dragging tough, you're fixin' to have more fun than you can shake a stick at.

*Text by* LOIS M. RODRIGUEZ



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# SEPTEMBER



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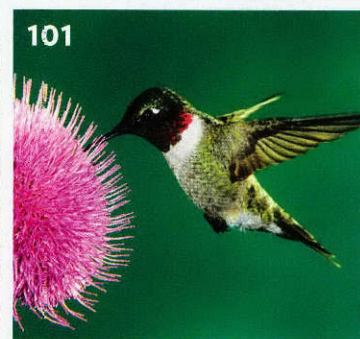
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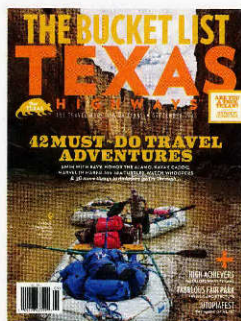
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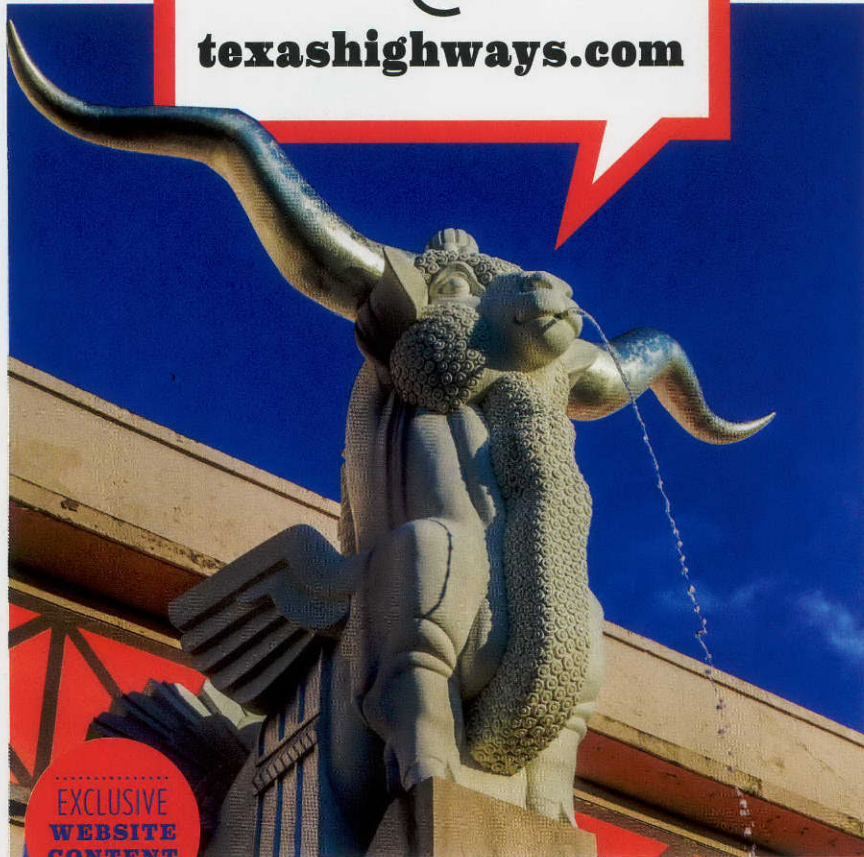
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#### COVER

For your Texas bucket list: Rafting Santa Elena Canyon at Big Bend National Park. Photo © Laurence Parent



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CONTENT

SEPTEMBER

## The Art of Fair Park

### MORE IMAGES FROM DALLAS' FAIR PARK

Photographer Will van Overbeek's pictures of historic art and architecture at Dallas' Fair Park were more than we could contain in the pages of our September issue. Continue the fabulous photo tour online.

### RIISING TO THE OCCASION

Follow the polka beat to the Czech-inspired WestFest, Caldwell Kolache Festival, and the Kolache Fest and Parade in Hallettsville in September. We share recipes for making your own kolaches, too.

### HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Hispanic culture is intricately woven into the fabric of Texas, and this month (September 15-October 15) is set aside to honor and celebrate its gifts and influences.

## LABOR DAY *in* PLAY

It won't take much work to find Labor Day activities, but we highlight a few events to help pack your weekend with fun.



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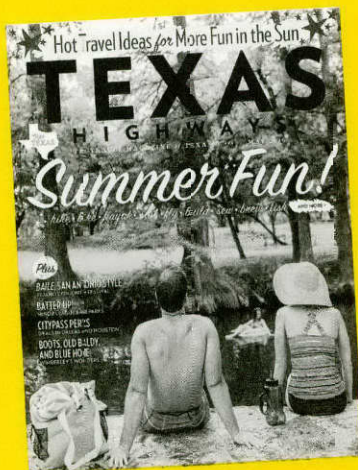
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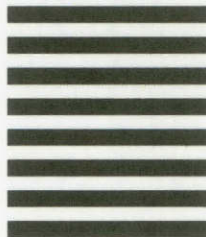
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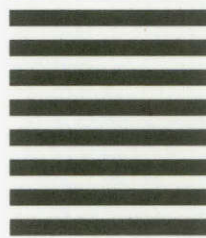
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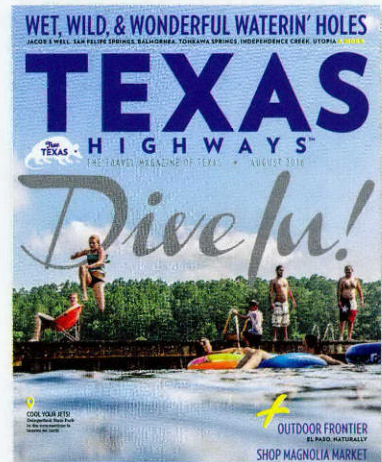


# MERGE

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

*To this day, I have to eat a ham sandwich and chips with a Coke when on a road-trip vacation. Thank you Daddy & Mama!*

TERESA PARKINSON ARMSTRONG, TH FACEBOOK FAN



OUR FAVORITE SOCIAL MEDIA OF THE MONTH



I don't remember any of the movies I have seen at the drive-in [August], only the fun experiences I had as a kid.  
DEBBIE BUNTON PARKER, HOUSTON



Blue skies and black tops #texashighways.  
@jwadehoward, TAHOKA



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## Texas Pearl

Michael Corcoran's article on Janis Joplin's Texas roots [August] brought back many fond memories. I've had many a good conversation and good home cooking at Threadgill's on North Lamar in Austin. You can't help but escape back to the old days when you look at the memorabilia on the walls. Just for old times' sake, I got out my suitcase of old eight-tracks and pulled out *Pearl*. No one could sing "Me and Bobby McGee" like she could.

**Don Keener,**  
Mason

## San Marcos River

In the Spring Lake moonlight kayaking article [August], I learned that the San Marcos River had been rerouted. It is now only 4.5 miles from Spring Lake to the Guadalupe River. When I used to paddle that section, I always thought it was closer to 80 miles.

**Herb Nordmeyer,**  
San Antonio

*Good catch, Herb. According to the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority, the San Marcos River flows about 4.5 miles from its headwaters at Spring Lake to its confluence with the Blanco River. From there, the San Marcos flows another 75 miles to its confluence with the Guadalupe River near Gonzales.*

## CCC Legacy

My connection with the CCC [July] was some 40 years later in a federal government program called Youth Conservation Corps. I worked at

Double Lake Recreation Area outside of Coldspring. We lived in an old CCC barracks for the summer and worked on various projects around the recreation area and the Sam Houston National Forest. YCC was patterned after the CCC and hired teenagers from age 15 to seniors in high school. I still tell people it was not only my first job, it was the best job I've ever had. I doubt it would ever have happened without the CCC.

**Keith Broyles,**  
via [texashighways.com](http://texashighways.com)

READER'S FAVORITE

## Local Coffee

*A few years ago, I discovered the beautifully refashioned Pearl Brewery. How happy I was to find the article "The Crown Pearl" about the Hotel Emma [May], but it did not mention the coffee shop at the Pearl, Local Coffee. My husband and I always seek out quality espresso locations in our travels, and Local Coffee ranks as one of the best.*

FRANCES BACON, Friday Harbor, Washington

Local Coffee has five locations in San Antonio, including the Pearl Brewery shop at 302 Pearl Parkway, No. 118. Open daily. Call for hours, 210/248-9133; [www.localcoffeesa.com](http://www.localcoffeesa.com).

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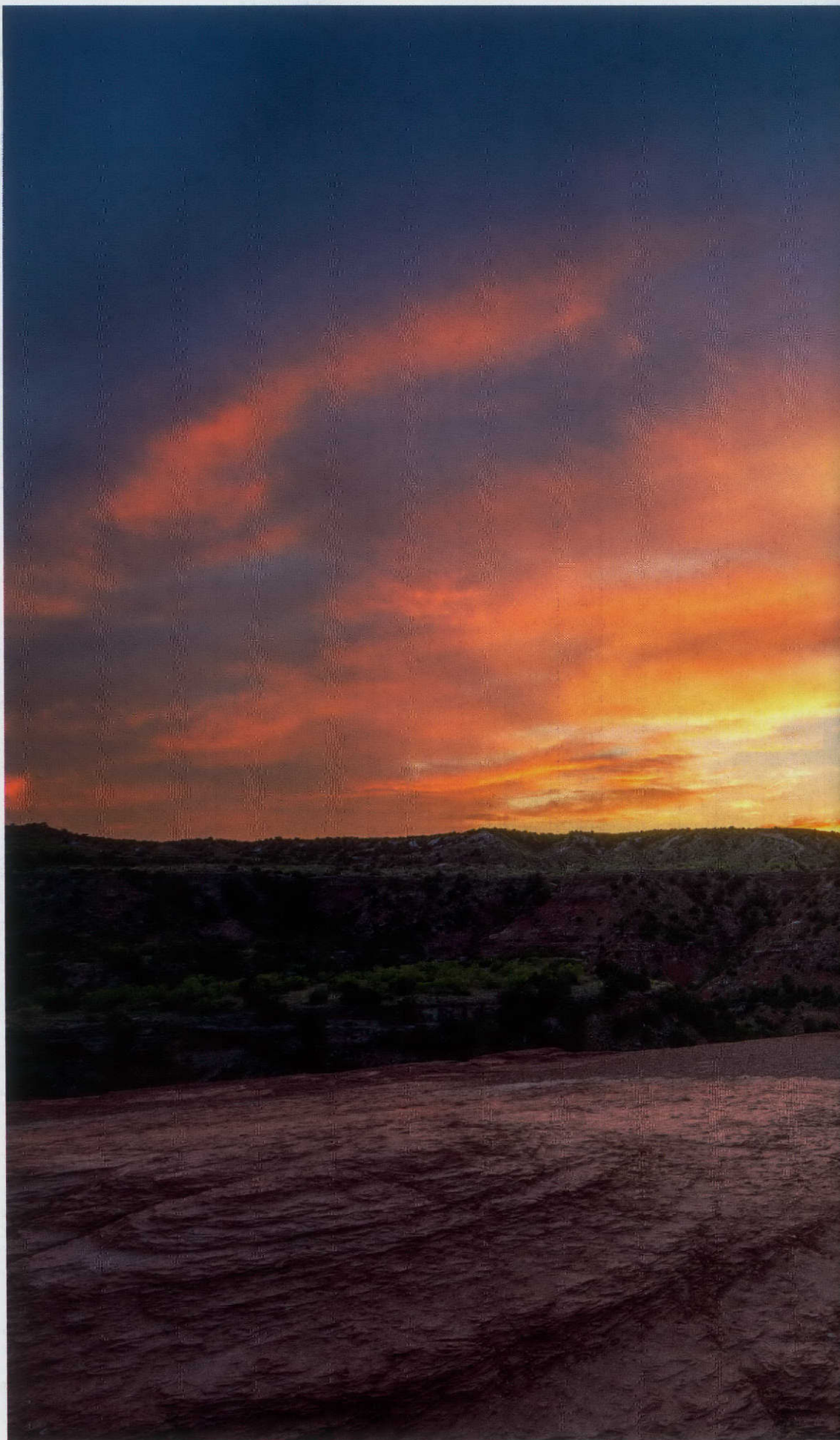


## SCENIC ROUTE

### Panhandle Plains

34° 56' 11.24" N  
101° 41' 48.28" W

**PALO DURO CANYON'S Lighthouse formation** is likely the most recognized landmark within the second-largest canyon in the United States. The approximately 120-mile-long canyon is home to Palo Duro Canyon State Park, which boasts 30 miles of hiking, biking, and equestrian trails, one of which—the Lighthouse Trail—winds 2.72 miles from the trailhead off Park Road 5 to the formation. [www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/palo-duro-canyon](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/palo-duro-canyon)



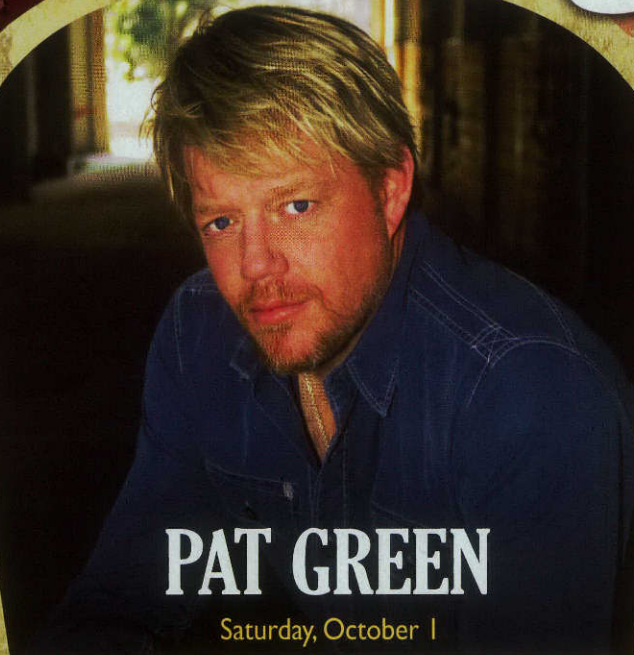






# BOOTFEST

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# DRIVE

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## Live From the Hills

Utopiafest's bid for music-festival perfection

text by Matt Joyce

Calliope Musicals performs on the Cypress Stage at last year's Utopiafest. The band returns this year.





**F**ROM A RISE OVERLOOKING THIS Hill Country valley, the elements that create Utopiafest's celebration of music and place come into focus: A band rocks a stage to the cheers of a bobbing crowd. Nearby, mountain-bikers saddle up for a ride and disc-golfers navigate a rocky hillside course. Hemming the festival grounds, campers lounge around their tents in live-oak groves that stretch to the valley's edge.

Utopiafest strives for music-festival bliss worthy of its name, which it takes from the neighboring hamlet of Utopia. Happening September 29-October 2 this year, the festival features about 25 bands on two stages over two days (along with a Thursday night pre-party). The eclectic lineup showcases independent bands in genres ranging from rock to hip-hop, folk to funk, and bluegrass to soul. This year's performers include virtuosic jazz-jam bassist Victor Wooten, San Francisco indie-folk rockers Thao & the Get Down Stay Down, baritone rapper Chali 2na (from Jurassic 5), and Austin standouts

**“We want it to be as seamless and enjoyable and stress-free as possible for everyone here. That’s our main goal.”**

like The Deer, Golden Dawn Arkestra, Balmorhea, Warren Hood, and Ruby and The Reckless.

“I don’t know of a genre we wouldn’t have, as long as they have a great, positive-thinking crowd and a live show that floors you,” says Aaron Brown, the festival’s director. “We want the live show aspect to be paramount, and we want to book bands that fit our vibe, which is thoughtful and caring, and that leave audiences with an experience they’ll never forget.”

To prevent the hassles sometimes associated with music festivals, Utopiafest caps ticket sales at 2,000 weekend passes. The results are navigable crowds, accessible stages, short or nonexistent lines for concessions and bathrooms, and plenty of camping space. The schedule alternates bands between the two stages to prevent overlaps, so fans can watch each performance without sound bleeding between them and without having to choose between acts. Also, the festival allows campers to bring their own food and beverages.

“We want it to be as seamless and enjoyable and

A prop plane riles the crowd at Utopiafest’s Arrowhead Stage during sunset.



Travis Sutherland, who founded the festival in 2009 on his family's century-old ranch, called the Four Sisters Ranch. "That's our main goal."

Sutherland, Utopiafest's "chief experiential architect," produces the festival with Brown and his brother, Jamie Brown, the principals of Austin-based Onion Creek Productions. Located in Bandera County about six miles northwest of Utopia, the ranch is part of the Sabina River Valley, characterized by rugged peaks thick with sotol and juniper, grassy valleys, and rocky limestone creek beds.

"The setting is the start of everything," Aaron Brown says. "When we create a vibe, location is the most important thing to begin with. We have the best. It all has to fit here, but irony is a huge part of what we do, because you can bring [rapper] GZA from Wu-Tang Clan and put him in the middle of the Hill Country—and it works."

"We're rooted in this Texas music scene," he adds. "But it's not your typical cookie-cutter Texas lineup. We want bands coming in from Mexico, Australia, Japan, and Europe. It's amazing to get those bands to Utopia, and then you mix in the Austin scene. A lot of the bands we have out here, it's their *quinceañera*—let's introduce you to the core Texas music-lover audience, and then from there it's a springboard."

During last year's festival, the crowd grew in size and energy on each day as the blazing sun waned and eventually set over the hills. Highlights of the weekend included a revelational rock-and-roll blast from Canadian band the Sheepdogs (as the Sheepdogs played, a prop plane flew over and dropped festival panties, koozies, T-shirts, and bandanas); Colorado-based Leftover Salmon's sizzling bluegrass-rock jams, which hit a fever pitch when Austin fiddler Ruby Jane jumped on stage; an

unannounced 30-minute surprise performance by breakout indie-troubadour Shakey Graves of Austin; a hillside wedding ceremony for two festival regulars, followed by their on-stage first dance during a performance by Austin band Wild Child; and a hypnotic sonic journey with Explosions in the Sky (famous partly for their songs on the *Friday Night Lights* soundtrack). During Explosions in the Sky, a laser-light show illuminated the hills encircling the amphitheater and culminated in a finale of fireworks over the stage.

The music gets underway in the early afternoon on Friday and Saturday, which leaves time in the morning for activities and exploration of the surrounding countryside. In the shade of a spacious event tent, yogis gather on their mats for morning yoga, complete with the soothing tones of a gong. Meanwhile at Camp REI, which occupies a corner of the festival grounds, the

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corner of the festival grounds, the REI Outdoor School leads free guided hikes and mountain-bike rides (bikes and helmets provided). The two-mile hike ascends a nearby hill for a scenic view of the festival valley. (Watch out for errant frisbees from the disc-golfers on the nine-hole course!) The five-mile bike excursion follows an old two-track road that ventures into the hills, over rocky Spring Branch Creek, and across grassland pastures dotted with sotol, flameleaf sumac, mountain laurel, and prickly-pear cactus.

Spring Branch Creek flows into the Sabinal River, whose headwaters emerge about 14 miles north of the festival near Lost Maples State Park, a prime destination for hiking and camping. Flowing south to Utopia, the Sabinal provides a convenient opportunity for a refreshing dip in town at Utopia Park, where a dam corrals the river into a deep, clear swimming hole shaded by

bald cypress and live oaks. Also nearby, about 20 miles west of Utopiafest, Garner State Park is a picturesque haven for a hike along the Edwards Plateau and a swim in the Frio River.

Utopiafest schedules children's activities throughout the festival, such as a fossil hunt and a hula-hoop jam, as well as informative presentations, including a tree talk by the Texas A&M Forest Service and a lesson on the history of the Four Sisters Ranch presented by the four sisters who own the ranch. Founded in 1918 by Sutherland's great-great grandparents, Will and Mattie Fisher, the ranch raised angora goats historically but now runs cattle and is branching into ecotourism, including two rental cabins, primitive campsites, and—beyond what the Fishers could ever have imagined in 1918—Utopiafest.

"Frankly, we were a little taken back with the idea of a festival," says Diane

Causey, Sutherland's aunt and one of the ranch's namesake sisters. "The first festival, we were pretty sure terrible things were going to happen, but none of them did, so we've been very pleased with the crowd that's come and how they've treated our ranch. We've found that people are very appreciative of us sharing this beautiful spot." 🐾



**UTOPIAFEST**

takes place Sep. 29-Oct. 2 at Four Sisters Ranch, 1555 Lemond Rd., about six miles northwest of Utopia. Tickets range from \$169-\$199, including parking and tent camping; car-camping passes are \$79; RV passes are \$109. A ticket to the Thursday night pre-party is \$49. Tent rentals available. Check out [www.utopiafest.com](http://www.utopiafest.com) for a full schedule of bands and activities.

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## A Place of Refuge

Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge

text by Dale Weisman

**F**ROM A LIMESTONE PRECIPICE AT THE CREST OF THE Rim-rock Trail, I catch my breath and gaze across an unspoiled vestige of the Texas Hill Country. The only sliver of civilization in sight is the ranch road that delivered me to this peaceful refuge. Verdant hills stair-step like balconies above a grassy, oak-dotted valley. When Spanish explorers saw hills like these in the 1750s, they described the terraced terrain as “*los balcones*,” a region we now call Balcones Canyonlands.

I’ve come to Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge, an hour’s drive northwest of booming downtown Austin and beyond the

**“People sometimes refer to this as a park, but it’s not a park. Parks are for people. Refuges are for wildlife.”**

city’s suburban sprawl, to explore Hill Country hiking trails and find refuge in the fullest sense of the word.

Straddling Travis, Williamson, and Burnet counties and bounded by Lago Vista to the east and Marble Falls to the west, the 25,000-acre patchwork of land is the only wildlife refuge in Central Texas and one of 21 in the state. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service established the refuge in 1992 to conserve critical nesting habitat for two endangered migratory songbirds, the golden-cheeked warbler and the black-capped vireo.

“The refuge is important not only for protecting endangered species,” says David Maple, deputy refuge manager, “but also for preserving habitat for other plant and animal species and for aquifer recharge and water quality.”

With its visitor’s center on Ranch-to-Market Road 1431, five miles west of Lago Vista, as well as three other public-access areas, Balcones Canyonlands has a park-like quality that belies its true purpose: habitat preservation. “People sometimes refer to this as a park, but it’s not a park,” Maple explains. “Parks are for people. Refuges are for wildlife.”

Dub Lyon, president of the Friends of the Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge, adds, “In wildlife refuges, the plants and animals come first, and people come second. Since we have two endangered birds here, the Endangered Species Act determines how we operate. We have to abide by the rules.” Those rules allow for wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, interpretation (such as youth programs), and hunting (for

Spring rains boosted Cow Creek in the Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge.





deer, wild hogs, turkey, and doves).

Balcones Canyonlands is hugely popular with birders, and the National Audubon Society has recognized the refuge as a “Globally Important Bird Area” for its role in protecting golden-cheeked warblers and black-capped vireos. The two songbirds arrive at the refuge in mid- to late-March to mate and build their nests, and then migrate in July and August to Central America and Mexico, respectively.

More than 280 avian species have been recorded in or near the refuge. While some species inhabit the area year-round, others pass through during their migrations. Balcones Canyonlands provides a natural stopping point

and breeding ground for neotropical migrants that spend their winters in Latin American countries south of the border.

The refuge’s four public-access areas include more than eight miles of hiking trails. The visitor’s center offers maps and trail guides, as well as an idyllic walk leading to a spring-fed creek, a “pollinator path” for butterfly watchers, and a cave-like photo blind with a water feature to attract songbirds. At the nearby Warbler Vista area along RM 1431, 2.5 miles of trails meander through prime golden-cheeked warbler habitat of oak-juniper woodlands; and a shady trail and graded road lead to the Sunset Deck, a

**The Warbler Vista**  
Observation Deck overlooks Hill Country scenery and Lake Travis.

lovely spot for birdwatching and soaking up the last rays of sunlight over Lake Travis.

The Doeskin Ranch Public Use Area, the largest of the public-access units, offers more than five miles of trails, ranging from gentle paths along a purling creek and through prairie and woodland habitat to the more challenging, stair-stepping 2.2-mile Rimrock Trail.

The refuge’s best area to watch for black-capped vireos is the Shin Oak Observation Deck on Ranch Road 1869, nearly nine miles west of Liberty Hill. Scrubby, head-high shin oak surrounds the deck, forming a dense habitat for the nesting vireos each spring. The deck is closed for several weeks in March and April when the



**BALCONES CANYONLANDS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

protects a patchwork of land northwest of Austin, including four public-access areas. The visitor’s center, located five miles west of Lago Vista on RM 1431, opens Mon-Fri 8-4:30. The Warbler Vista, Doeskin Ranch, and Shin Oak access areas open daily from sunrise to sunset. Free. Call **512/339-9432**; [www.fws.gov/refuge/balcones\\_canyonlands](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/balcones_canyonlands).



vireos arrive from Mexico to breed.

To attract birders and raise funds for the refuge, the refuge's friends group hosts events throughout the year, including Sparrowfest in February, the Balcones Songbird Festival in April, Swift Fest in August, Refuge Week in October, and an annual Christmas bird count. This year's Songbird Festival, the refuge's signature event, drew 300 attendees from 13 states and from as far away as Alaska and Canada. "Birders get so excited over feathers," says Sharon Macut, chairwoman of the friends group's songbird festival committee. "They travel hundreds and thousands of miles to see birds out in the field with our accomplished guides."

Dozens of volunteers donated hundreds of hours to support the Songbird Festival. Such dedicated volunteerism is the lifeblood of the refuge. With a dearth of federal funding in recent years, the refuge relies on its friends



### REFUGE WEEK

The Friends of Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge will host Refuge Week on October 15 with family-oriented activities highlighting the importance of pollinators in the ecosystem.

[www.friendsofbalcones.org](http://www.friendsofbalcones.org)

group as well the Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, and private donors to help fund ongoing land acquisition, Maple says.

The Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge still has a long way to go to reach its federally chartered goal of protecting up to 46,000 acres—or 72 square miles—of endangered songbird habitat. "Right now the refuge is a patchwork of land that looks haphazard on a map, like a puzzle with many missing pieces," says Maple. "It will take years to build out the habitat in the acquisition area."

Deborah Holle, who retired as refuge manager in 2015, fears that people will forget about the Hill Country's natural origins if places like the Balcones Canyonlands are not protected. "They'll forget about the Comanche Indians, cattle ranching, and how hard life was for early settlers," she says. "Mostly, they'll be disappointed we didn't save more of this beautiful area for wildlife and as a respite to enjoy nature."

While hiking the Indiangrass Trail through tawny hills on Doeskin Ranch, beyond the reach of cell service and traffic noise, I hope that more of this gorgeous land will be preserved for future generations to appreciate and enjoy. Willa Cather, the great novelist of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, said it best: "The land belongs to the future. ... We come and go, but the land is always here. And the people who love it and understand it are the people who own it—for a little while." 🐾

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## A Painter's Plantings

Chandor Gardens in Weatherford

text by **Celestina Blok**

**P**AINTER DOUGLAS CHANDOR WAS AS CHARMING as he was creative. I'm standing in the foyer of the prestigious artist's historic Weatherford home, a 5,600-square-foot dwelling adorned with his sketches, prints, and original works. Staff docent Martha Lott tells me that Chandor, whose paintings of Herbert Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill hang in the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, was at a dinner party in New York City in the early 1930s when a striking Texan with red hair and a provocative dress caught his eye.

**Chandor Gardens is a popular spot for parties and wedding receptions.**

"He said, 'You have a lovely back. I'd love to paint it sometime,'" Martha tells me.

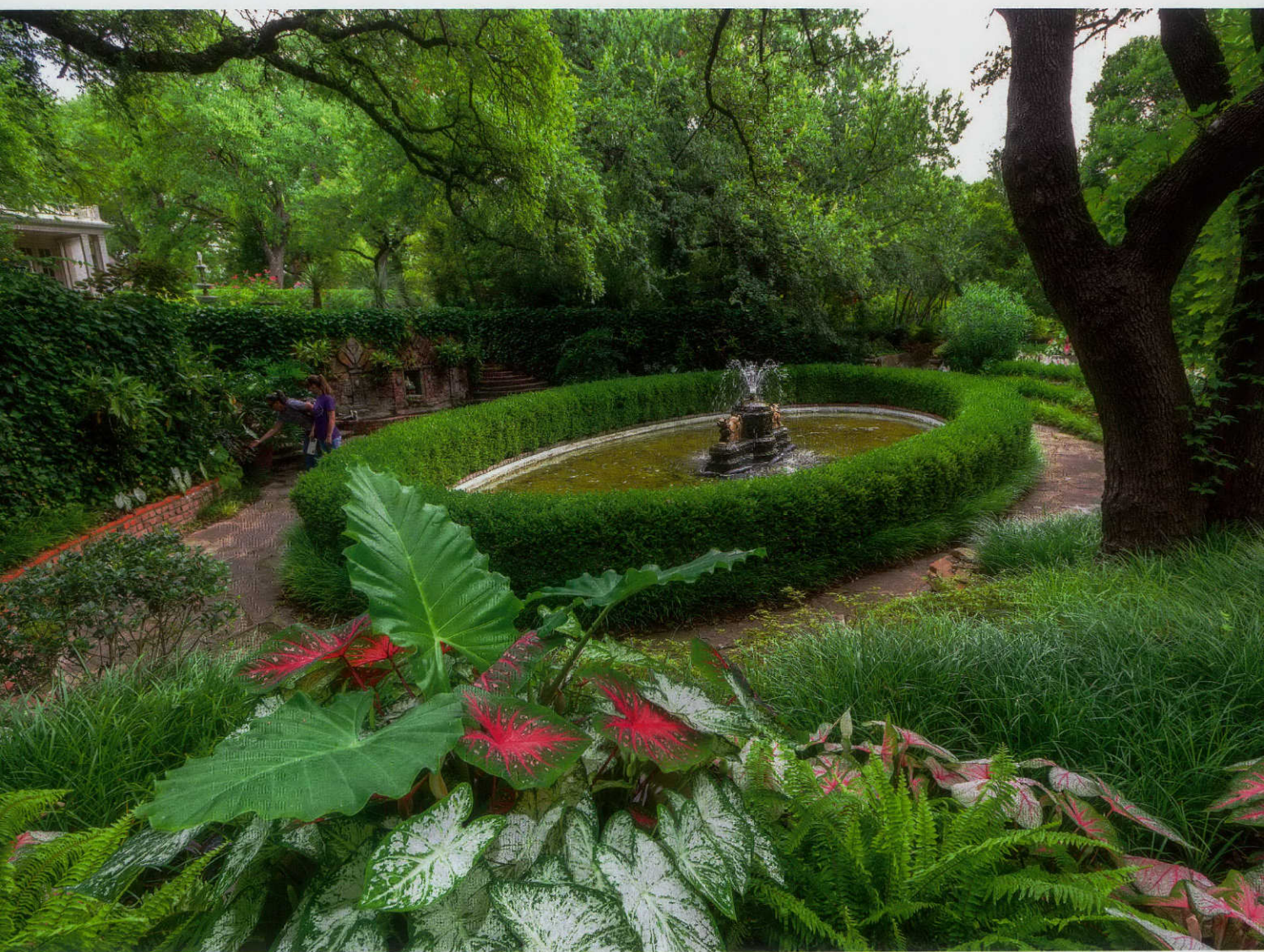
The redhead was Ina Kute-man Hill, a Weatherford socialite, and she was immediately enamored with the tall English gentleman. After a short courtship, Douglas asked Ina to marry him, and she agreed with the condition that they reside in her hometown in Texas. After Ina's mother gave the couple almost four acres of land adjacent to her own in Weatherford, the Chandors built a home on the property, and in 1936 began work on a colorful maze of lush greenery and flowers, intricate water features, brick pathways, and whimsical statues. Originally, the couple named their garden White Shadows.

While the Chandors frequently left Weatherford so that Douglas could paint dignitaries and politicians in New York City and Washington, D.C., the garden was a priority when they were home in Texas. "He said God gave him the ability to paint so he could afford to garden," Martha tells me. The couple spent nearly two decades here before Douglas' death in 1953, after which Ina renamed the estate Chandor Gardens.

These days, Chandor Gardens—recently listed in the National Register of Historic Places—opens to the public for self-guided tours and is a popular spot for parties and wedding receptions. With my map in hand, I embark on a journey through the garden's imaginative spaces—17 in all—crossing tiny footbridges, traipsing stones across a trellis-shaded pond, and admiring fanciful figures, fountains, and hidden nooks along the way.

In the 1930s, English painter Douglas Chandor created a magnificent garden at his new home in Weatherford.





I exit the courtyard, bordered by an Italianate pergola and shaded by a colossal cedar elm, and hear trickling water from a three-tiered copper fountain in the center of the property. It's a peaceful spot with sweeping views of Japanese maple trees, blooming Indian hawthorn shrubs, pink peonies, and other brightly colored flowers, all nestled beneath stately elms and live oaks. I hear doves coo and notice a hawk soaring overhead.

As I approach the regal bowling green, I envision the Chandors hosting chic cocktail parties around the grassy pathway, where guests played bocce ball and croquet. Lined with a short stone wall and greenery, the long

lane of smooth turf is now popular for wedding ceremonies. I follow a stone pathway toward a rock grotto and notice red bricks inlaid to spell a message

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**I envision the Chandors hosting chic cocktail parties around the grassy pathway, where guests played bocce ball and croquet.**

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to Ina Chandor in Latin: "May this little garden flourish, consecrated to Ina in the year of Our Lord Edward the Eighth, forevermore."

Ahead, two bronze Chi Lin sculptures sit back-to-back in the middle of a larger fountain made from Coke

and 7-Up bottles and colored marbles. These mythical Chinese dragons are replicas of the antique ceramic originals that Douglas Chandor bought in New York City, which visitors can now see inside the home. Sunlight peeks through the trees here and reflects off the shimmery water. It's my favorite spot so far—until I arrive at Mount Cox, a boisterous, 30-foot waterfall on the northeastern edge of the gardens, which honors Ohio Governor James Cox, who funded the falls' construction after sitting for a portrait. Unfortunately, Douglas Chandor never got to see the waterfall himself; he died before it was completed.

After Ina passed away in 1978, the

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The Chandors filled nearly four acres in Weatherford with fountains, pergolas, footbridges, koi ponds, and stone walkways, plus trees and foliage galore.



In 1934, Douglas Chandor painted debutante Aileen Westbrook in her Fort Worth home. The same architect who designed the Westbrook Mansion later designed the Chandors' home.



see their gardens preserved and bringing such joy to the community.

Perhaps Douglas liked to smoke his pipe in the boxwood garden or stroll with his wife over the curved canal bridge, which features Chinese symbols of luck, peace, prosperity, and happiness. I study my map, which shows a black-and-white photo of the couple: Douglas in a double-breasted suit, holding gloves and a cane with a pipe at his lips, arm-in-arm with Ina, who wears an elegant tea-length dress with a white collar and heels. For a moment, standing in their majestic surroundings, I'm transported to the 1940s. 📍

property sat vacant, Lott tells me. The gardens grew unruly and overgrown, and parts of the acreage became a dumping ground for appliances and other trash. But in the early 1990s, Melody and Chuck Bradford, a ranching couple from nearby Aledo who had visited the gardens as children, bought and restored the property, and re-opened it to the public. In 2001, though, they opted to move on. When developers eyed the gardens, the city of Weatherford stepped in instead, purchasing Chandor Gardens in 2002 and re-opening it to the public as part of the parks and recreation department.

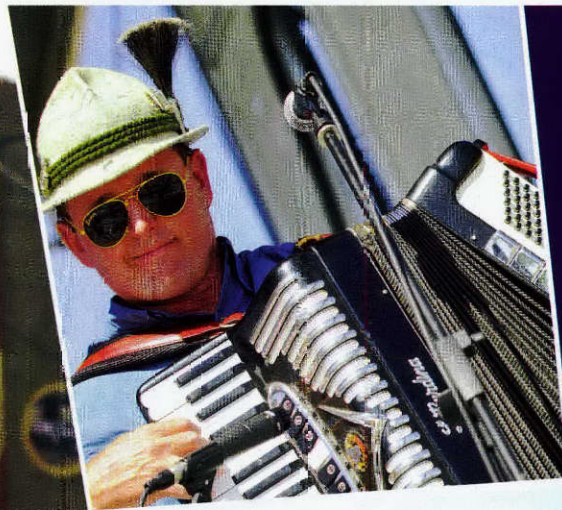
As I carefully step across stones in

a koi-filled pond shaded by a wisteria-heavy trellis, I notice a young woman posing for bridal portraits, seated in a circular opening of a nearby stone wall called Moon Gate. I can't help but think how happy the Chandors would be to



**CHANDOR GARDENS**

is at 711 W. Lee Ave. in Weatherford. Adult admission: \$5. Call **817/613-1700**; [www.chandorgardens.com](http://www.chandorgardens.com).



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# Handsome Hides

The Tandy Leather Museum in Fort Worth

text by **Gene Fowler**

**E**NSCONCED AT HIS RANCH IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA, legendary leather wizard Al Stohlman was focused on his leather craft. *Really* focused.

“There was only one day a week when he would take phone calls,” says Charlie Davenport, curator of the Tandy Leather Museum in Fort Worth. “And if we needed to see him in person, somebody had to go up to Canada. He had everything he needed there, and he was engrossed in his work.”

Stohlman’s craftsmanship is a centerpiece of the Tandy Leather Museum, located at the headquarters of Tandy Leather, a company that sells leather and leather-crafting tools and supplies. The 2,200-square-foot museum showcases the works of 18 artists and chronicles the

development of modern leatherworking over the past century—a craft intertwined with Fort Worth’s legacy as a center of the cattle industry. In addition to decorative designs and representations of people, landscapes, and animals, the master leatherworks on display include utilitarian items such as saddles, a guitar case, and a golf bag. Exhibits also reflect the history of Tandy Leather’s popular leather-craft kits and instruction materials.

Stohlman, who died in 1998, started working with leather during World War II while stationed in New Guinea with the U.S. Army. Experimenting with

**The museum showcases the works of 18 artists and chronicles the development of modern leatherworking over the past century.**



Leatherworker Christine Stanley crafted this bag using Tandy Leather’s “Four Seasons Handbag” kit.



a pocketknife and filed nails on a GI-issue leather belt, he learned that different tools would produce a variety of results and that employing a mallet or striking stick would provide greater depth and detail to his carvings. He honed his craft after the war, becoming one of the United States' most accomplished leatherworkers and developing new tools and an influential set of instruction manuals for Tandy Leather.

The museum's *Al & Ann Stohlman Collection* includes original drawings and technical details for many of Al's instructional manuals, such as *Belts Galore*, *How to Make Holsters*, and the 1962 *Al Stohlman Home Study Course for Tandy*. The latter has helped hundreds of thousands of burgeoning artists learn to express themselves through leather craft. The display of four Stohlman-made saddles with different styles of horns, cantles, and rigging supplements original drawings and instructions for his three-volume *Stohlman's Encyclopedia of Saddle Making*. Tandy still publishes some of Stohlman's manuals, which are popular with both master crafters and beginners.

Other outstanding Stohlman pieces on exhibit include a guitar case decorated with roses and a leather golf bag, both made by hand. A hand-carved leather artwork entitled *The Brush Popper*, set in a leather frame, depicts a cowboy on horseback herding strays from the brush in a rugged valley. In addition to layers of leather, the three-dimensional work incorporates silver conchos, buckles, and spurs. The work measures 43-by-27 inches, and the carving alone took Stohlman two months.

Another of the museum's exhibit cases features the work of the late Elizabeth "Liz" Freriks of Detroit. Her leatherwork, as described by exhibit text, was "more artsy" than most, encompassing "chic millinery creations." She used a swivel knife to "brush" or "paint" on leather. Her work included contemporary design for purses, which she carved as art

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pieces. A representative leather-brimmed hat and handbag set is included in the case. Freriks also created custom leatherwork for car interiors, embellishing the automobiles of such stars as the singing-cowboy couple Roy Rogers and Dale Evans.

“My interest has always been to help people find ways to use leather in every way,” Freriks is quoted in museum text. “Virtually anything and any art form can be adapted into leather, even jewelry.”

Her display case also includes a 1956 *Detroit Times Pictorial Living* article entitled “Leather Is Jack of All Hobbies,” along with several of Freriks’ personal tools, such as a stamp, wooden mallet, rotary punch, safety beveler, and swivel knife.

“The tools haven’t changed much at all since she used them in the 1950s and ‘60s,” says Davenport. “Those are exactly like the tools we use today.”



**THE TANDY LEATHER MUSEUM & GALLERY,**

located at 1900 SE Loop 820 in Fort Worth, opens Mon-Fri, 9-3. Free.

Call 817/872-3200; [www.tandy-leather.com/en/museum-of-leathercraft.html](http://www.tandy-leather.com/en/museum-of-leathercraft.html).

And speaking of tools, the museum exhibits also include the master set of leather-crafting tools from the first production run created by tool machinist Oliver Sturdy for the Craftool Company. Dick McGahen, who founded Craftool in 1947, wanted to make leatherworking tools affordable to the general public. He asked Sturdy to make the first set and proposed an initial production run of 5,000 sets. Sturdy opined that 5,000 sets would never sell, but leatherworking soon caught on.

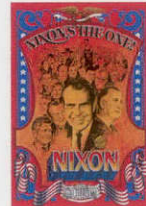
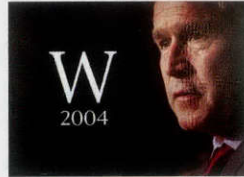
Davenport says the craft is healthier than ever today. The popular Comic Con gatherings of cartoon and fantasy fans are partly responsible for a recent

surge in leatherworking popularity as enthusiasts try to re-create their favorite figures and invent new characters in leather.

If you’ve already seen the museum, don’t hesitate to return. Davenport says the display contains only half of Tandy’s overall collection, and the museum continues to expand its exhibits. Plan on spending some time to marvel at the detail of the leather artists’ works. As Al Stohlman once said, “I have often been asked what it takes to create a leather picture. More than anything else, it takes ideas. And being a realist, I feel a picture must be authentic in detail, so it takes time. Lots of time.”

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## Navigating the Past

Time-travel at Edinburg's Museum of South Texas History

text by **Daniel Blue Tyx**

**T**HE FIRST WORDS OUT OF MY SON BYRDIE'S MOUTH when I pick him up from school are usually, "Did you know that...?", followed in turn by the latest astonishing facts he's discovered in kindergarten that day. Lately, he's been interested in history—especially dinosaurs and ancient civilizations—and so my wife Laura and I decided it would be a good time to take him and his sister Ana to the Museum of South Texas History, which chronicles the heritage of the Rio Grande Valley from the Cretaceous Period to the present day.

Situated on a corner of Edinburg's downtown square, the museum opened in 1967 in the century-old Hidalgo County Jail and has since expanded to include three main exhibit areas. With its white stucco walls, clay-tile roof, and picturesque 75-foot Great Tower—all characteristic of early 1900s Spanish Colonial Revival architecture—I had the sense of going back in time before we even stepped inside.

The time-travel vibe was only heightened when we passed through

**I had the sense of going back in time before we even stepped inside.**

the native mesquite doors into the cavernous lobby directly beneath the tower. There, Laura and I found ourselves staring up at a massive chandelier, hand-crafted of steel and copper, and decorated with South Texas animal motifs. We couldn't linger long, though, because Byrdie and Ana were already darting off to the aptly-named Grand Staircase, headed for the first exhibit hall.

After paying for our tickets, I caught up with the other three upstairs at the Reading Ranch, a sunlit library where kids can read while straddling a real leather saddle atop a cowhide rug. Appropriately, Byrdie was immersed in a picture book about cattle-driving vaqueros. But Ana was ready to go, so I

**Three exhibit areas** chronicle the heritage of the Rio Grande Valley from the Cretaceous Period to the present day.



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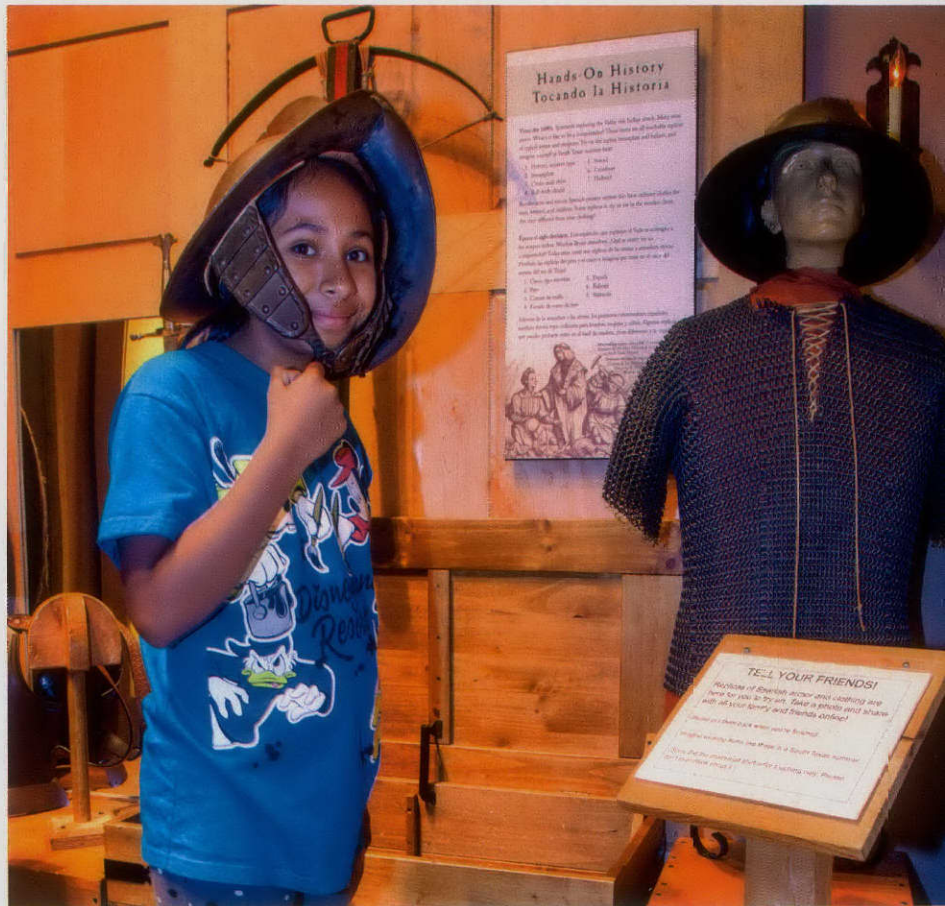
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followed her around the corner to *Rio Grande Legacy*, the museum's bilingual signature exhibition.

I was just reading the introduction to part one (*River Frontier*, covering pre-history through the Spanish land-grant era) when I heard Ana emit a scream up ahead and then fall atypically silent. With her head upturned at a 45-degree angle, she regarded in wonder and a dash of fear the skeleton of an imposing mammoth that once roamed the Valley's coastal plains along with bison, camels, and saber-toothed cats. She stayed frozen for 30 seconds or so, until her brother appeared beside her. "Just imagine," he told her, sizing up the ancient mammal, "I might be able to fit inside its rib cage. Wow."

"Come with me," Ana said, tugging on his hand with renewed courage. "I know where the cool stuff is."

By the time Laura and I could finish reading about the Coahuiltecan hunter-gatherers famously encountered by 16th-Century Spanish explorers, the kids had found a wooden chest

**Kids can try on the heavy armor of the Spanish conquistadors who first explored southern Texas.**

beneath a sign that read, "Try on the replica breastplate and helmet and imagine yourself in the South Texas summer heat." Soon, Byrdie was in full conquistador armor, while Ana played the part of a Spanish sea captain by showing off a dashing tricorne hat. "It is hot," Byrdie informed me, as he used all of his strength to displace the helmet from his head.

From the militant opulence of the conquistadors—the room also included intricate scale replicas of three ships commanded by the explorer Alonso Álvarez de Pineda, perhaps the first European to set sight on Texas—we moved next to the *Ranch Compound* area, where we found an *horno*, the adobe bread oven used by Native Americans and later adopted by early European settlers. As the four of us reached out our hands, pretending to be warmed by the electronically blinking embers, I enjoyed a quiet interlude



to reflect on the way that history is shaped by outsized personages and humble laborers alike, in moments of both conflict and convergence.

This theme was further developed as we moved into part two of the exhibition, *River Highway*, which focuses on the 19th-Century military campaigns that defined the Rio Grande as a border dividing two nations, and on the river's role as a "highway" linking the United States and Mexico together with the rest of the hemisphere. Byrdie and Ana skipped past the muskets and color-coded uniforms and headed straight to the impressive two-story replica steamboat at the center of the hall. They explored the boiler room and a model kitchen while Laura and I read about the boats that transported whiskey, textiles, figs, and tobacco up and down the Rio Grande—then much more grand than it is today—from the frontier outpost of Roma to

the river's "little mouth" at Boca Chica.

In the company of two fast-moving young children, our trip to a history museum—even one as thoughtfully designed as this one—could be a little disorienting, as centuries are compressed into a single room, and time hurtled by at breakneck speed with each advancing step. But I gained a degree of big-picture perspective, discovering unexpected connections between past and present and appreciating the courage and resilience of those who forged a better future for generations to come. Nowhere did I feel this more deeply than in *River Crossroads*, the final, 20th-Century installment of *Rio Grande Legacy*, located downstairs in a separate wing of the museum. As Byrdie and Ana typed "m-o-m" and "c-a-t" on a real telegraph machine and ventured into a model packing shed to learn about the rise of commercial agriculture,

Laura and I found ourselves captivated by the story of the Civil Rights pioneers who founded organizations including the American G.I. Forum, the Texas Farm Workers Union, and the Mexican American Youth Organization to advocate for equal rights, educational opportunities, and fair pay for all Valley residents.

As we left the exhibit hall, having completed our journey back to the present day, Byrdie was already looking ahead to the future. "So," he began, as he reluctantly followed us in the direction of the exit, "when are we going to come back again?" 🐾



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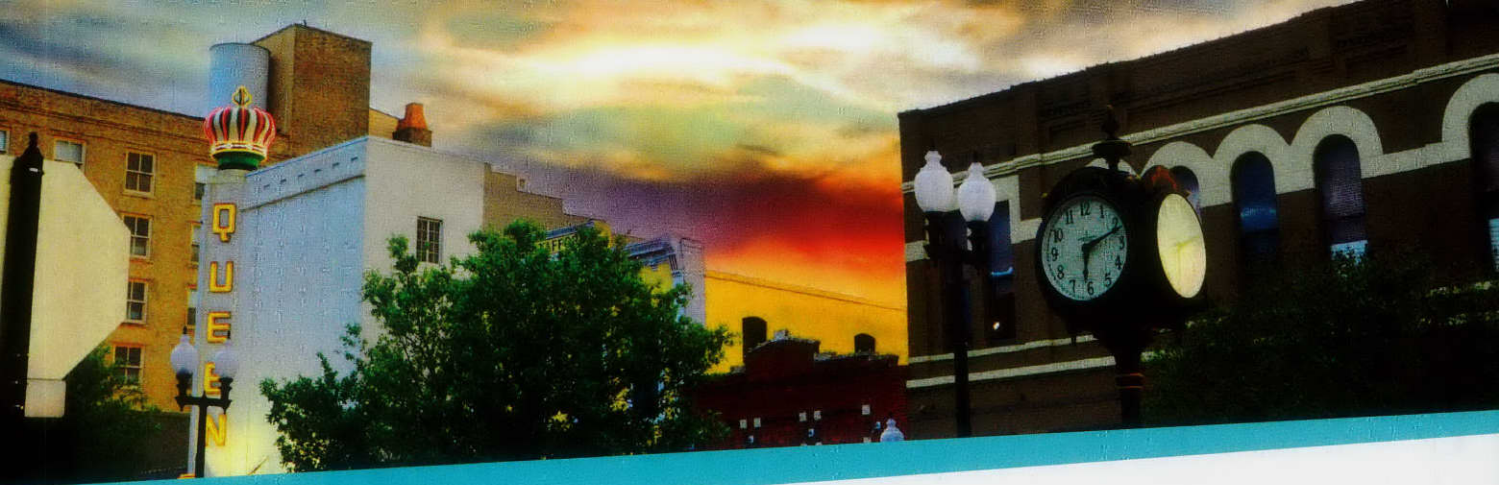


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# PLATES

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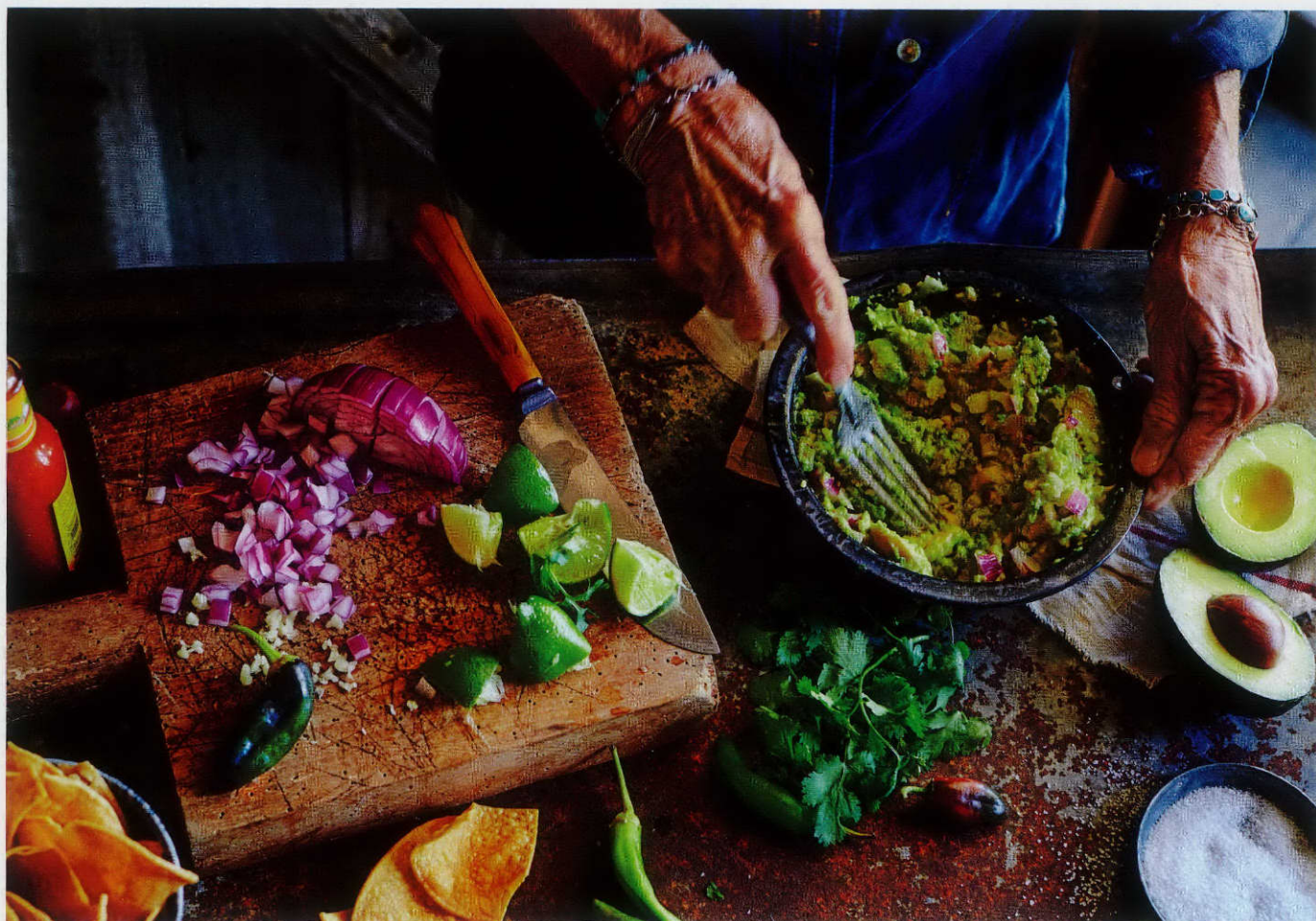
## Chilaquiles

The skinny on a Texas classic

text by **Lori Moffatt**

Jessica Dupuy's fourth cookbook, *United Tastes of Texas*, explores the state's culinary history.





**I**N TEXAS HIGHWAYS' NEW PLATES/COOK department, which debuts with this story, we'll aim to explore Texas' vast culture of cooking—including recipes, techniques, and tips—and we think there's no better place to kick it off than with fourth-generation Texan Jessica Dupuy's latest cookbook, *United Tastes of Texas: Authentic Recipes from All Corners of the Lone Star State*.

Originally, Dupuy tells us, the publisher approached her about writing a Tex-Mex book. "Instead," she says, "I suggested that it would be much better to look at the state from a historical perspective, organized around how and where it was settled. Tex-Mex is only a fraction of what our food is about."

And so *United Tastes*—divided into the state's five distinct culinary regions (Central, Coastal, East, South, and West)—presents a geographical guide to recipes and techniques any true Texan should have on hand, ranging from San Antonio puffy tacos to Texas pralines (crunchy, never chewy!). The list includes *chilaquiles*, a classic Mexican breakfast casserole that proves supremely adaptable. "Chilaquiles are all about using leftovers," says Dupuy, whose recipe (see page 31) highlights the satisfying

***United Tastes of Texas* presents a geographical guide to recipes and techniques any true Texan should have on hand, ranging from San Antonio puffy tacos to Texas pralines.**

alchemy of tortilla chips, tomatoes, cheese, eggs, and jalapeño. "I like it because it's easy, and it's a way to spice up your average fried eggs for breakfast," says Dupuy. "Once you get a feel for it, you can be creative."

A lot of the recipes in *United Tastes* are family recipes, including a beef brisket recipe passed down by Dupuy's father and gumbo and jambalaya concoctions from her husband's kin in Louisiana. "Food is about coming together," says Dupuy. "In my family, when we plan a gathering, the first question everybody asks is, 'What are we going to eat and who's bringing what?'" Fittingly, the book's final chapter, "Texas Shindigs," includes a lineup of cocktail recipes featuring Texas ingredients followed by suggested menu items for gatherings on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and other holidays.

Throughout the course of her research, Dupuy unearthed a cornucopia of misunderstandings about Texas cuisine, as well as a few things that Texans take for granted in the kitchen—or at the grill. "I went with my dad's brisket recipe because it's what I grew up with," says Dupuy. "And when I sent it off to the test kitchen, I said that it's

A classic Tex-Mex larder: tortillas, onion, jalapeño, lime, cilantro, avocado.



imperative we use an offset smoker. That became a bone of contention, and finally I told them that I would be kicked out of the state and written out of my dad's will if we didn't."

Texas' culinary pride revealed its multicultural complexity as Dupuy investigated chili (the state dish; no beans here, please!) potato salad (mustard-based or oil-based?), the nebulous history surrounding the classic King Ranch Chicken casserole (it's not from the King Ranch, y'all), and seemingly simple dishes like the nacho. "Contrary to what many may think," writes Dupuy, "an authentic nacho is a simple tortilla chip topped with a slice of Cheddar cheese and, oftentimes, a slice of fresh or pickled jalapeño. That's it."

And what about the popular Texas tradition of eating black-eyed peas on New Year's Day for good luck? Not only does Dupuy highlight the work of New Yorker-turned-Texan Helen

## RECIPE

### CHILAQUILES

As Jessica Dupuy writes in her book, *United Tastes of Texas*, the only complicated thing about chilaquiles—pronounced roughly as "chill-ah-kee-les"—is its name. Dupuy makes the point that the flavor is similar to nachos, though I'd say it's more like "breakfast Frito pie." This recipe is slightly adapted from the recipe in the book.

Makes 8 servings.

- ◆ 1 onion, chopped
- ◆ 2 jalapeño peppers, seeded and chopped
- ◆ 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ◆ 1/4 cup vegetable oil, divided
- ◆ 2 14.5-oz. cans diced tomatoes, with juices
- ◆ 5 oz. tortilla chips
- ◆ 3 cups shredded Mexican four-cheese blend
- ◆ 8 large eggs
- ◆ Toppings, as desired: sliced avocado, salsa, cilantro

**1.** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large, nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, sauté onion, jalapeño peppers, and garlic in 2 T. oil for 5 minutes or until tender. Stir in tomatoes, reduce heat to medium, and cook 10 minutes until thickened.

**2.** Arrange tortilla chips in a greased 13-by-9-inch baking dish. Pour tomato mixture over chips,

and sprinkle with cheese.

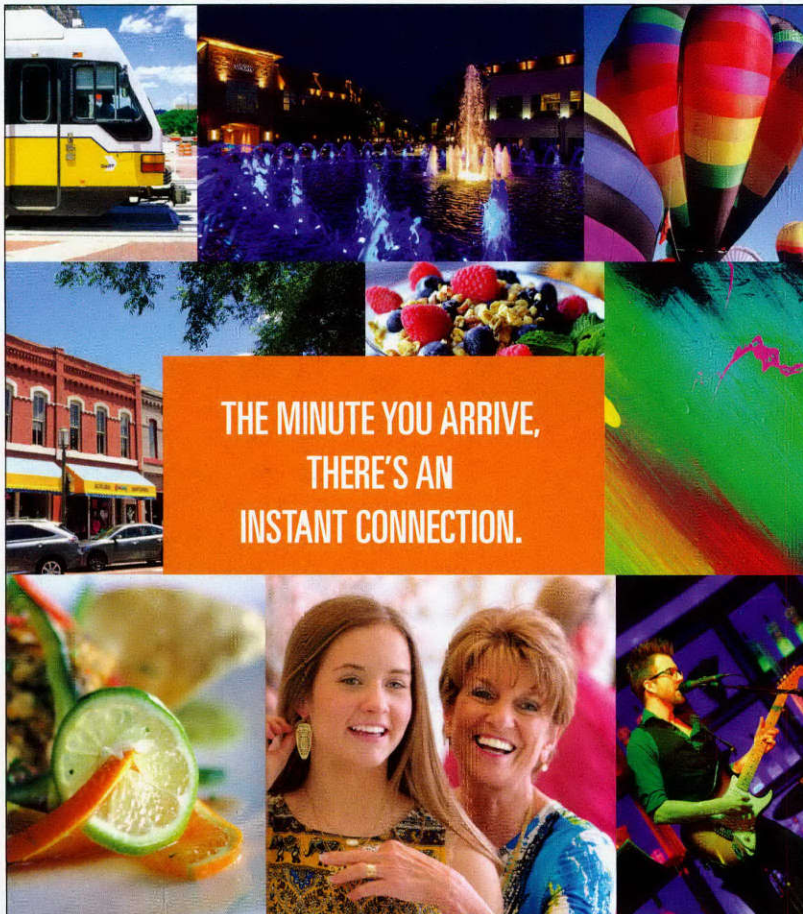
**3.** Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes or until cheese is bubbly.

**4.** Meanwhile, heat 1 T. oil in a large, nonstick skillet over medium heat. Gently break 4 eggs into the skillet and cook 2-3 minutes or to desired degree of doneness. Remove from skillet and repeat with remaining eggs and oil.

**5.** Cut casserole into 8 squares,

and top each with a fried egg. Serve warm with salsa, avocado, cilantro, and other toppings as desired.

Find *United Tastes of Texas: Authentic Recipes from All Corners of the Lone Star State (Oxmoor House, an imprint of Time Inc. Books)* at bookstores or online.



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Corbitt in elevating the humble black-eyed pea to society status with her famous “Texas Caviar” recipe, but she also credits the late pea-lover (and father of actor Rip Torn) Elmore Torn of Taylor with reviving the “eat peas for good luck” tradition as part of his founding role in the International Black-Eyed Pea Appreciation Society. “One of my favorite chefs to

interview was Melissa Guerra,” says Dupuy. “Her ranch in South Texas has been part of Mexico and then part of the United States multiple times in its history.” Guerra, who has written several cookbooks herself and operates a housewares shop in San Antonio called Latin Kitchen Market, contributed her family recipe for tamales, which makes three dozen. And so

Dupuy faced another challenge in the test kitchen, as it’s unusual for cookbooks to feature recipes that make three dozen of *anything*. “We couldn’t tweak the recipe so it makes a dozen,” Dupuy says. “That would undermine the whole reason that people make tamales! Tamales are very much about getting together as a community.”

Melissa Guerra receives a dedicated profile in the book, where she shares her view of the evolution of South Texas cuisine, noting, “Food has always been about more than sustenance. It has a story to tell. It follows the history of what kept people alive, not what killed them.” Other chef profiles include Jack Allen of Austin, Johnny Hernandez of San Antonio, and Buffalo Gap chuckwagon chef Tom Perini, who says, “When you get a good piece of beef, season it with a little rub and cook it over a mesquite flame. All of a sudden, you have something magical.” Seventh-generation rancher/chef Lou Lambert weighs in, too, noting of his stints in New York and Chicago: “Being away from home made me realize what a rich food culture we really have in Texas.”

Join us as we explore that rich food culture. There’s a spot for you at the table. **L**

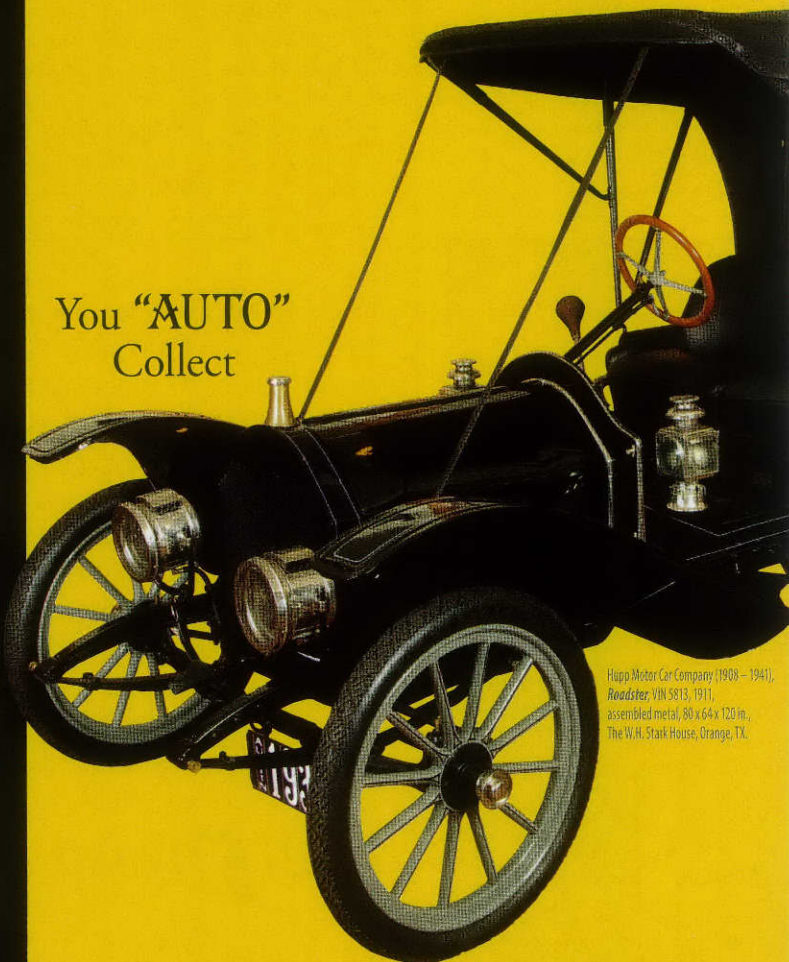
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### PACO'S CHILAQUILES

It would be a noble exercise to compare chilaquiles in every restaurant across the state, but the research would take a lifetime or more. And if you ask 100 people what makes a good plate of chilaquiles, you’ll get 100 answers. The chilaquiles at Paco’s Tacos in Austin, a ramshackle joint on 51st Street just north of the Dell Children’s Medical Center, are just about perfect. Strips of corn tortillas are lightly fried in oil then simmered in a blend of the restaurant’s green and red salsas until they’re soft but still maintain texture (the “al dente” of tortillas), then served with an egg over-easy and a choice of rice or refried beans. Are chilaquiles the Frito pie of breakfast fare? You be the judge.

**Paco’s Tacos** is at 1304 E. 51st St. in Austin.  
Call 512/323-6206; [www.pacosaustrin.com](http://www.pacosaustrin.com).





## Lockhart Turns the Key

There's more to this small town than barbecue

text by **Veronica Meewes**

**L**IKE MOST TEXANS, MY MAIN EXPERIENCES with Lockhart have always revolved around barbecue, whether that meant a birthday brisket throwdown at Kreuz Market or a pit stop for Smitty's Market sausage on the way back from the beach. So naturally, when planning a day exploring the quickly developing town 30 miles south of Austin, I took my husband's barbecue order before hitting the road.

However, smoked meat was to take a back-seat for the majority of this visit. After a 30-minute zip down US 183 and the SH 130, I'd arrived in

**"This town is on the brink of busting loose. Lockhart's not just for barbecue anymore."**

Lockhart's idyllic main square. Thanks in part to the many restored 1880s buildings, a number of movies and television shows have filmed scenes here, including *Honeysuckle Rose*, *Red Headed Stranger*, *Waiting for Guffman*, *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*, and most recently, HBO's *The Leftovers*.

Contrasted against a brilliant blue sky, brick-red and white-frosted gingerbread storefronts face Caldwell County's 1894 courthouse, a regal three-story structure boasting a 900-pound bell and a clock that was restored in recent years by the neighboring Southwest Museum of Clocks and Watches.

"It's about five minutes off, but I feel like that's kind of appropriate for a town that doesn't worry too much about time," says Austin Burge with a smile. Last fall, Burge and his wife Taylor signed a lease for a shop space on the square and put in an application for a house around the corner on the very same day. This past spring, they opened

Savanna Schneider serves platters of shrimp-and-grits and pork loin at Lockhart Bistro, one of the town's new eateries.

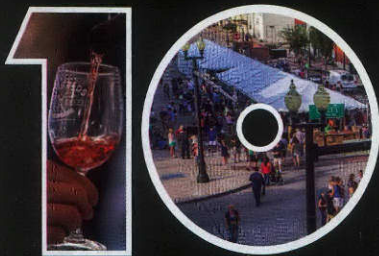




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Johnny Juarez supervises the smoker at Smitty's Market, which helped create Lockhart's reputation as a barbecue town.

Chaparral Coffee with their friends and business partners Johnny Musselman and Shane Renfro.

“When we moved to Austin, we were looking for a slower-paced life, but we ended up having to work more to afford the lifestyle we had become comfortable with,” explains Burge, a musician and new dad with 12 years of barista experience. “So when we moved out here to Lockhart and started this place, it was like we could take it easy a little bit. Lockhart has a slower feel to it.”

“A lot of artists are wanting to move out here because it’s so cheap,” adds Musselman. “Lockhart’s becoming more attractive because there’s a bit

more of a scene here than there used to be even three years ago.”

Chaparral Coffee, with its Talavera-tiled bar front, potted plants, and veladora candles, looks like the perfectly sparse backdrop for a bohemian lifestyle photo shoot. In addition to a regular menu of coffee beverages, Chaparral makes a sweet and creamy pecan toddy, a spiced drinking chocolate, seasonal cold brews (like a recent orange zest and cardamom-infused brew blended with coconut milk), and locally sourced yaupon tea (the only naturally occurring source of caffeine in Texas). Today, a lilting, acoustic Townes Van Zandt ballad fills the space, but any given day could bring live folk or bluegrass provided by Chaparral’s large network of musician friends.

“People are also drawn out here because of the architecture,” says



Burge, who recalls peeling away three layers of flooring to get to the original Bastrop pine of this former 1800s barber shop, which he sanded and stained with leftover cold-brewed coffee. "Our motto was 'out with the old and in with the older.'"

Just a couple of doors down, a café and herbal shop called Market Street Cafe & Apothecary occupies a former bank building. The space's original tri-color hexagonal tile still paves the floor, and the old safe, which boasts an intricate handpainted door, now acts as the restaurant's dry storage. Across the square, Lockhart Bistro fills a capacious space that once housed a popular department store.

"This used to be the only place in town that sold Levi's—lots of people still remember it," says Lockhart Bistro chef and owner Parind Vora, who pared away 1950s-era stucco to reveal the building's original limestone wall,

a contrast to the rest of the renovated space, where cherry-red barstools and pendant lights pop against a cool turquoise accent wall.

In 2006, Vora moved from New Mexico to Austin, where he opened and ran restaurants for almost a decade before opening up Lockhart Bistro last fall, one of the first of nine new bars and restaurants to open on the square in less than two years. Six months earlier, hoping to escape Austin's urban sprawl, he had relocated to 20 acres of land between Lockhart and Bastrop.

"I moved out here to get away from the traffic and expense of living in the city," says Vora. "Ninety percent of my commute now is with cows and horses, so that definitely helps me decompress ... they're not always pulling in front of ya."

When Vora discovered Lockhart by making a wrong turn one day, he was immediately enthralled. When he investigated the price of opening

a restaurant on the square, the choice seemed like a no-brainer. Within four months, he was able to open Lockhart Bistro.

"When I moved to Austin in 2006, I was able to open up without any investors—I was the real owner," he recalls. "And in Lockhart, you're still able to do that, which is why we're seeing such a renaissance. It's a little bit of that American spirit, and that's what's nice—seeing people live out their dreams."

With an expansive open kitchen and multiple walk-in refrigerators, Lockhart Bistro is capable of catering off-site events for up to 10,000 people. Vora has also reopened the fourth incarnation of his passion project, Jezebel, in an intimate dining room connected by a window to the kitchen, where he improvises the night's menu depending on diners' preferences. His mother's saris drape over certain tables, which are set with silver candlesticks



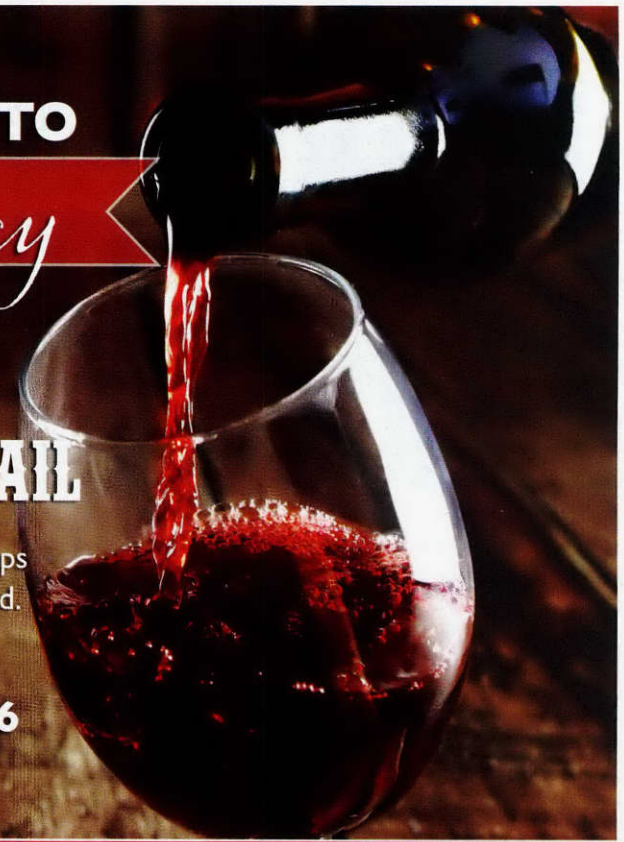
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and handblown glass, while Astroturf gives the space a playful edge. Vora has been drawing diners from Austin, Bastrop, San Marcos, and beyond both for Jezebel's wine-pairing experiences and for Lockhart Bistro's diverse menu, which includes items like shrimp scampi, frog legs with green Thai curry, and a popular house-ground brisket burger. And, with two major housing developments bringing nearly 3,000 new homes to the Lockhart area in the next four years, business is on the rise.

"Lockhart is booming," says realtor and Lockhart native Ronda Reagan. "We're getting into bidding wars again, sort of like Austin. There's not a lot of inventory, but if it's priced right, it sells fast."

The vacancies that sat latent on the square for years are now full, and there are whisperings of a brewpub, a boutique hotel, and another upscale



**LOCKHART**

For details about Lockhart restaurants, shops, events, and lodging, contact the Lockhart Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center at **512/398-2818**; [www.lockhartchamber.com](http://www.lockhartchamber.com).

restaurant opening in the town's historic buildings. Reagan recently restored a space to open The Pearl, a cocktail bar featuring live music.

Located right across the street from The Pearl is Desiderata Estates, the wine bar that led the resurgence when it opened in spring of 2015, serving a vast selection of wines from across the state by the glass or bottle. A stage with a sophisticated sound system allows for live music most nights, and owner Tony Bowen is in negotiations to take over booking for Cedar Hall, one of the town's biggest venues, located a couple of miles from the square.

Lilly's, the town's beloved dive bar, recently relocated to a bigger space with an expanded grill menu and games like pool, foosball, and pinball. And just across the square, two more dives—Risky Business and Killin' Time—recently opened their doors, gaining instant regulars.

"There's definitely a newer heartbeat that's coming out of the square and a community that's being realized down here," says Burge, who says that it's not uncommon for visitors who grew up in Lockhart to stop in to Chaparral Coffee and thank them for being a part of the town's revival.

"It's a pretty great little town and there's some interesting stuff going on right now," says Bowen. "This town is on the brink of busting loose. Lockhart's not just for barbecue anymore."

His words echo in my head on the drive back to Austin, when I realize I completely forgot the brisket. **L**

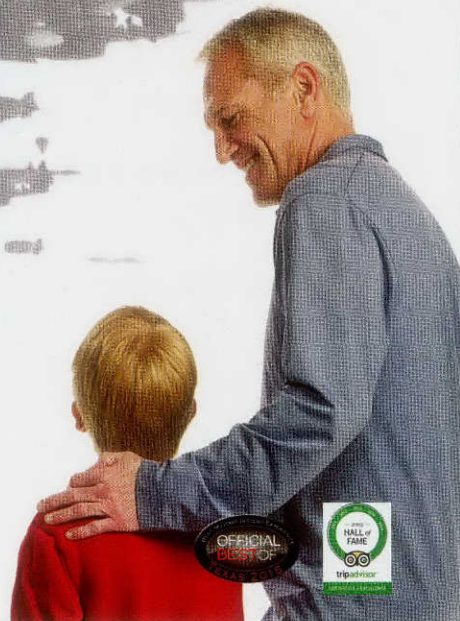
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## Sweet Shop

Blooms Candy & Soda Pop in Carrollton

text by Jennifer Babisak

**S**OME MEAT-LOVERS CLAIM THAT BACON PAIRS well with almost every other food. I consider this point of view as I pop tiny bits of a confection called “Sizzling Bacon Candy” in my mouth. This candy’s “sizzle” involves bursts of bacon-tinged carbon dioxide, which tickle my tongue with the taste of fizzy smoked meat. “Sizzling Bacon Candy” is only one of the many curious bacon items available at Blooms Candy & Soda Pop Shop in Carrollton. The shop also stocks bacon cotton candy, bacon lip balm, and bacon air freshener.

**“I want fun, goofy, oddball stuff that’s unique and quirky and makes you laugh.”**

The candy shop, located in a century-old building on Carrollton’s newly revitalized historic downtown square, brims with candy and soda covering the spectrum from nostalgic (Chiclets and bubble gum cigars) to gourmet (Violet Crumble), along with an assortment of novelty gifts like temporary tattoos and bobble-head dolls. An oversize mobile made of vintage lunch boxes hangs above a display of glass jars and boxes brimming with vintage candies like sugar-filled straws, Turkish Taffy, and Sugar Babies.

I’m surprised to find a couple of varieties by Atkinson’s Candy (headquartered in my hometown of Lufkin) that I hadn’t heard of before—Slo Poke and Black Cow caramel bars. Nearby, a towering stand filled with rainbow-colored lollipops adds more whimsy to the space.

Sugar-induced nostalgia runs rampant here. I overhear excited adults exclaiming to their shopping companions, “Do you remember these?” as they spot Nik-L-Nip wax bottle candies and packets of Big League Chew bubble gum. Plenty of items make me smile wistfully as well. Bins of saltwater taffy (75 flavors!) bring to mind family trips to the beach. A packet of lemon drops—those delicious, sugar-coated hard candies—reminds me of when my mom would dole them out to soothe a sore throat. And a SPAM lunchbox brings a chuckle as I remember my dad’s attempts at home-cooked meals.

These nostalgic treats, combined with modern delicacies such as organic hard candies and peanut-free, chocolate-covered sunbutter cups, comprise the shop’s inventory of more than 800

**Blooms carries more than 800 types of candy and 250 sodas from throughout the world.**



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**Blooms specializes in quirky and nostalgic treats, and even maintains a database of “antique” candies that may someday re-enter the market.**

different types of candy and 250 sodas from throughout the world, including more than 50 varieties of root beer alone.

The shop's name harkens to its initial foray as a flower shop. In 2008, co-owner Nicole Meadows and her partners—her husband John and friend Sid Iraheta—purchased the flower shop, and since it had two entrances, decided to add a candy shop. By fall of 2010, the candy business had weeded out the flowers altogether.

The shop's website categorizes candy by decade, with extensive descriptions of each. It even lists “retired” candies such as Bit-O-Licorice and Gatorade Gum, noting if there is a projected date for any of those candies to return to the

market. From this rich treasure trove of candy trivia, I learn that several varieties of common candy, including the popular Tootsie Roll, Bit-O-Honey, and Dubble Bubble gum—originated before 1930. In fact, Tootsie Rolls are one of the oldest currently available commercial candies, dating to the early 1900s and still produced to the tune of 64 million per day.

Meadows explains why some vintage candies disappear for a while before being reintroduced years later. “Just like the rest of the food industry, big companies buy out smaller ones, and items fade away when they are not profitable,” she says. But sometimes, a new company comes along, buys the rights, and reintroduces the candy.

Meadows enjoys the hunt. “I love weird fun stuff,” she says. “Before I got into this, I was a really good gift buyer, and this translated into the store. I want



fun, goofy, oddball stuff that's unique and quirky and makes you laugh."

After browsing the madcap gift items, my kids and I select a six-pack of assorted sodas and head across the street to a picturesque park on the downtown square alongside two bubbling fountains. We taste an orange cream soda with a smooth, citrusy flavor and a caramel apple soda that delivers a sweet flavor of fall. From the dozens of root beers, we try a bottle of Bundaberg Root Beer from Australia, which delivers an authentic taste of sarsaparilla. More international flavor comes from England's Curiosity Cola, which sets its taste apart from other colas through the addition of ginger and herbal extracts.

Meadows tells us that Faygo Rock & Rye is her favorite soda in the shop, especially as it hails from her hometown of Detroit. She says that candy and soda have an intensely regional

following, and she labels many of the sodas with their place of origin. "When people come in and they gravitate to a certain brand, I can almost always tell where they're from," she says.

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**Some of the soda varieties earn their merit for novelty rather than taste, and while they may be ill-advised, they are difficult to resist.**

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We experience this phenomenon ourselves while browsing the soda selections. I hear a teen yell to his mom, "Mom! Look! They have Cheerwine!" The boy's enthusiasm piques my interest, and so I ask his mom about the beverage. She explains that Cheerwine, an extra-carbonated cherry cola, hails from their home state of North Carolina, where it enjoys a cult following.

Some of the soda varieties earn their merit for novelty rather than taste, and

while they may be ill-advised, they are difficult to resist. My son Caleb selects a bacon-flavored soda, but after tasting it, declares, "I would rather taste baking soda than bacon soda." Meadows laughs and confides, "That soda tastes horrible, but we sell a ton of it—almost always on a dare."

Whether you're inclined to try an outlandish treat or stick to tried-and-true candies that have delighted sweets-seekers for decades, it's hard to resist the wacky wonderment of Blooms. And if you're worried about all that sugar's impact on your teeth, you could always pick up some of their bacon-flavored toothpaste. 



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EXTRAORDINARY

# TEXAS

## THESE PEOPLE HELP MAKE TEXAS SPECTACULAR

**W**hat does it take to be extraordinary? The Texans in these pages have each made their marks in vastly varied fields—from winemaking and writing to inventing a new way to watch movies—and they share characteristics essential to any true trailblazer: the bravery to try something different and the perseverance to carry their visions through. And for that, we salute this year's Extraordinary Texans.

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TEXT BY CLAYTON MAXWELL  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILL VAN OVERBEEK



# A N T S



State-park traveler Dale Blasingame and his dog Lucy at Onion Creek.



THE  
EXTRAORDINARY  
SUSAN AND ED AULER

TEXAS WINE AMBASSADORS

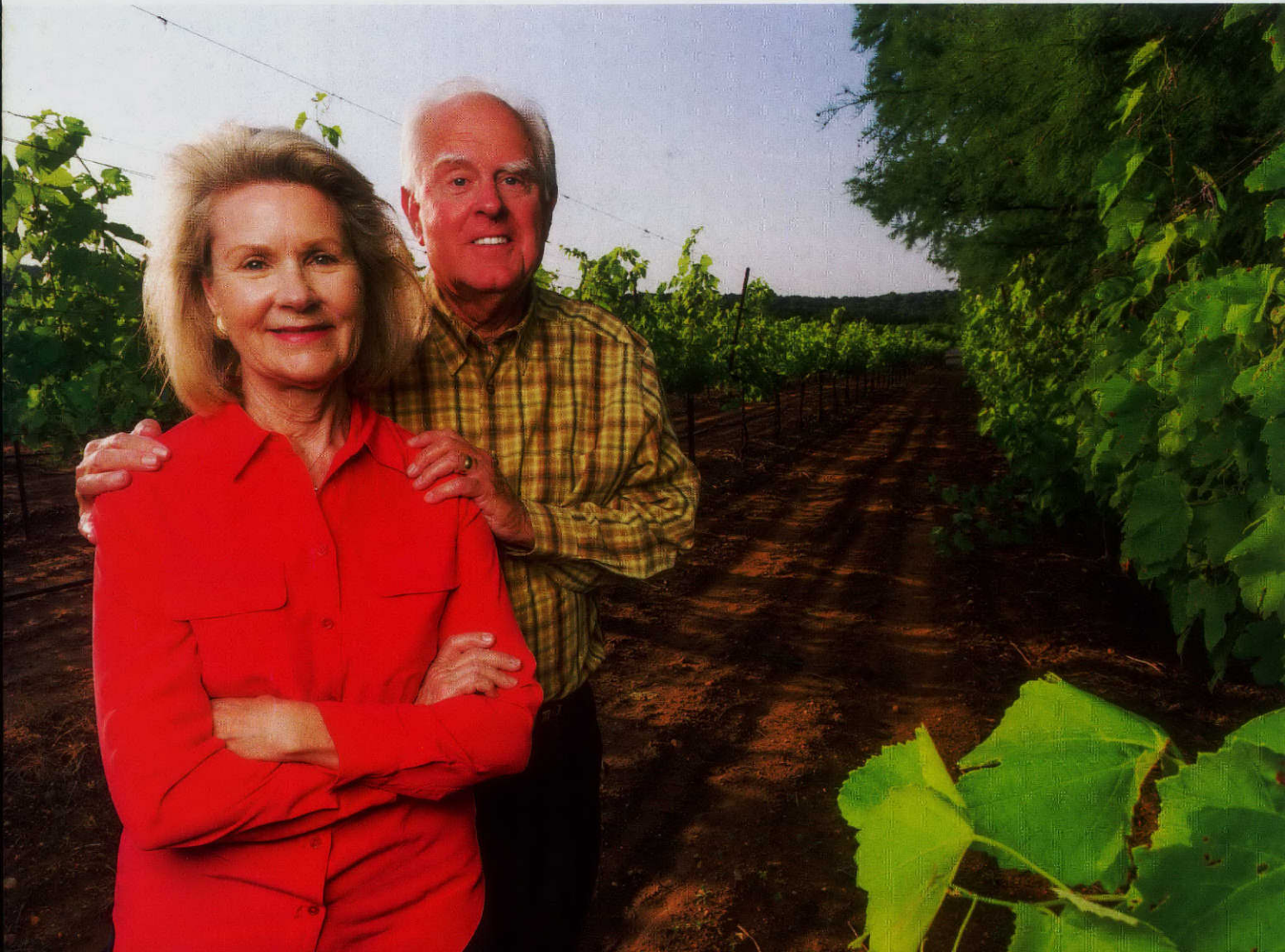
“I wonder if anyone has tried growing grapes in the Hill Country?” Ed Auler remembers asking his wife, Susan, while driving through France in 1973, noting similarities in the terrain. And thus began a life-long passion. On that trip, they learned everything they could about wine, and when they returned to Texas, the couple began researching how to plant grapes on their ranch in Tow, which eventually became home to Fall Creek Vineyards. A little more than 40 years later, with award-winning wines that have been served to presidents and princes, the Aulers are at the forefront of the Texas winemaking movement.

The Aulers, who in 2015 opened a second Fall Creek Vineyards location in Driftwood, are committed to refining winemaking in the region as a whole. In 2013, they hired Sergio Cuadra, a world-class winemaker from Chile, to cultivate their vineyards and bring an international perspective to

their wines. Cuadra has dispelled many of the myths about Texas winemaking, proving that almost any grape can grow here and that plants can adapt to the heat; it’s a matter of matching the right grapes with the right soil.

“There is an explosion of wineries and vineyards in Texas,” says Susan Auler, “but not all of them are getting the right technical information on how to grow and make wine. We want to share what we have learned to help others, and we want to raise the bar for all of Texas.”

The Aulers believe that winemaking should be a collaborative endeavor. “The wine community in the Hill Country is very supportive: If we run out of filters or something, there is usually someone nearby who can fill in, and vice versa. It’s been so heartwarming—the people and the experiences that we have had over the past 40-plus years in the winemaking world. Wine is like a magnet: it draws people together.”





THE  
EXTRAORDINARY  
RUBY AND THE RECKLESS

GENRE-BREAKING MUSICIANS

**L**ead singer of Ruby and The Reckless, Austin-based Ruby Jane Smith has been a fiddle sensation since she was eight. At age 10, she was the youngest fiddler ever to take the stage at the Grand Ole Opry; at 14 she toured with Willie Nelson and Ray Benson; at 15 she was playing the Austin City Limits Festival with Blues Traveler.

Now, at the ripe old age of 21, she is exploring new musical terrain. Smith, the fiddle prodigy who seems wise for her age, has stepped into a new role: Lead fiddle and singer for a five-person band that defies easy categorization.

“We are psychedelic indie music with a jazz-funk overtone led by a fiddle,” says bassist Austin Simmons. In 2015, the band won the prestigious Black Fret grant, and Smith has been writing and arranging new music with Simmons, drummer Chris Copeland, and the other two members of The Reckless to find a new collaborative sound. The

band’s latest record will be released this fall. “Honestly, I am more passionate about the music we are doing now than I ever have been,” says Smith, who was born in Dallas and raised in Mississippi. “I never wanted to be just a fiddle, swing, or jazz person. I’ve always wanted to play music that reaches a bigger group of people. I’m excited for this partnership, the writing we are developing and the music we are creating now.”

With influences that range from Erykah Badu and Jill Scott to Wilco, Ruby and The Reckless may defy easy categorization, but whatever you may call their music, the energy the band creates together on stage is irresistible—it’s music that makes you want to dance. Ruby Jane Smith may always be a fiddling phenomenon, but with Ruby and The Reckless, she and her bandmates are pushing their limits and making music that has come of age.





THE  
EXTRAORDINARY  
DONNA HOWELL-SICKLES

NORTH TEXAS VISIONARY AND COWGIRL PAINTER

**N**orth Texas artist Donna Howell-Sickles is a woman of persistence. For more than 40 years she has been painting cowgirls—playful, energetic portraits that convey the spirit of women with grit. Her persistence also shines in another one of her passion projects—revitalizing the Red River valley town of Saint Jo, where she lives with her husband John Sickles. Together, they are bringing fresh life to this rural outpost one renovated building at a time.

While the subjects of her portraits are cowgirls, Howell-Sickles is most interested in conveying the friendship and humor of strong women. “I decided forever ago that I wanted to be drawing women who know how to celebrate the joy that life holds,” she says.

Howell-Sickles—who grew up in the rural community of Sivells Bend, about 35 miles northeast of Saint Jo—had originally thought about buying land in Wyoming, but in 1995, she and John drove through Saint Jo. The land was so beautiful

they decided to buy a ranch there, and then relocated to the little town of about 1,000 residents in 2000. She later discovered that her great-grandfather, John Houston Howell, was the younger brother of Joe Anderson Howell, the co-founder of Saint Jo.

The town was so sleepy in 2007 that you couldn’t even buy gas there. Howell-Sickles and her husband made a leap of faith and slowly began renovating historic buildings on and around the town square, and in 2010 they opened an art gallery and gift shop. Now the town is abuzz with fresh energy and a dynamic chamber of commerce.

Because Saint Jo is only about 80 miles northwest of Fort Worth, Howell-Sickles believes this picturesque little town will be an inviting rural escape for city dwellers. “It’s an exciting project with a lot of fun people,” she says. “Saint Jo is a nice place to be and it’s a nice time to be here.”

Howell-Sickles has as much determination and *joie de vivre* as the cowgirls she is famous for painting.





THE  
EXTRAORDINARY

JO ANN ANDERA

DIRECTOR OF THE TEXAS FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL

It's a small world, after all. Or at least that's the way it can feel at the Texas Folklife Festival, the largest cultural melting pot celebration in the state, where you can watch Polish dancers, eat Pakistani *pakoras*, and learn how to throw a pot with Texas clay masters all in the course of an afternoon. Hosted every summer by the Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio, such worldly adventures can be yours thanks to Jo Ann Andera, the festival's director, who deftly coordinates the more than 300 participants, an army of volunteers, and some 40,000 annual festival-goers.

"Everyone needs a voice," says Andera. "Some of our new immigrants in Texas are struggling. With the Folklife Festival, we bring them into a setting that is very welcoming and showcase their cultures. You see that people you might only hear about on the news are regular people just like you. It's an obligation we have as a festival to give all groups a voice, whether they are new to Texas or old-timers—

and the Institute of Texas Cultures certainly does that."

Andera, the daughter of Lebanese immigrants, knows a thing or two about finding a voice. Born and raised in San Antonio, Andera began working as a multilingual guide at the Institute of Texan Cultures in 1972. A few years later, she joined the nascent festival's Lebanese dance troupe. In 1981, she moved up to direct the entire event, a role that she has filled so well it's hard to imagine the festival without her.

As the director for 35 years, Andera has ample experience with all of the generosity, competition, and quirks that come with such a multicultural crowd. "The Ukrainians come in from Dallas, the Italians from Galveston, the Chileans from Houston. They all get to know each other; you see them hugging," she says. "And there is also a bit of competition as they try to outdo each other. One year, the Ukrainians did these jumping dances, and the next year, several other groups incorporated jumps into their performances."





THE  
EXTRAORDINARY

JOE LANSDALE

EAST TEXAS STORYTELLER

**W**ith the 2014 film *Cold in July* under his belt and his celebrity-packed series *Hap and Leonard* now a top show on SundanceTV, you might think that East Texas writer Joe Lansdale was just now getting the attention that his knuckle-biting novels deserve. But in reality Lansdale has been a writing success since the late 1980s, and his character-driven, darkly comic stories have long earned him a cult following and the adoration of fans as far afield as Italy and Germany, where he has been immensely popular for years. “Critics have been enormously kind to me,” says Lansdale, who was born in Gladewater. Before he became a successful full-time writer in his late 20s, he worked as a janitor, a field hand, and a farm worker, just as his lovable characters Hap and Leonard do in the eponymous novels-turned-TV series.

With a new book coming out on Little Brown and Co.’s

Mulholland Books imprint next year, Lansdale is busy and prolific, but that doesn’t mean he writes all day. A dedicated family man and a veteran martial-arts specialist who runs his own academy in Nacogdoches, Lansdale has too many other things to do. “I work for about three hours a day,” says Lansdale with his endearing East Texas twang. “I’ve got too much life to live. And living life is what makes the writing fun. When I’m out in it, that’s what gives the writing its juice.”

And although his career often keeps him on the road—from Los Angeles film sets to book tours in Italy—Nacogdoches is his home. His stories, taut with humor and insight into the racial and social tensions of his hometown, rise up from the sultry Piney Woods he loves. “I grew up in East Texas. It’s what I know, what I love. I don’t want to live where there aren’t trees. East Texas has a darker feel about it—it’s where my work is rooted. It’s my refuge.”





THE  
EXTRAORDINARY

GLENDA JOE

DIRECTOR OF LUNAR NEW YEAR HOUSTON

If you would like to see a hundred lions and dragons dancing amid the roar of one million Lucky Red Firecrackers, then get yourself to Lunar New Year Houston, one of the largest such festivals in the world and one of the few that still uses fireworks, which are now banned in most public celebrations. But thanks to Glenda Joe, the Chinese-Irish-Texan cross-cultural communicator who organizes this epic celebration, the firecrackers still explode in Houston.

In January or February each year, Glenda Joe directs TexAsia's annual nonprofit event, Lunar New Year Houston, attracting 60,000-plus Houstonians of all backgrounds. TexAsia's mission is to preserve and present authentic arts traditions for Houston. She also heads the Houston Language Bank, a nonprofit project that delivers vital public information to underserved immigrant and refugee communities. "We need to change the way we communicate," says Joe. "We

believe that the delivery of shared information builds shared values—and this is the cornerstone of American vitality and the foundation of community cohesion."

Glenda Joe's background in finding common ground amid cultural difference is long and varied. The Joe family patriarch, Jim Joe, settled in Houston in 1882 and started one of the first Chinese businesses in the city. Joe grew up working in her father's store and observed at a young age how her African-American and Hispanic neighbors were treated differently. When she saw how miscommunication triggered violence, she wrote a "how-to" cultural-awareness resource titled *The Asian Merchant's Handbook*, which was distributed nationwide. In 1967, she organized her first civil rights rally and coaxed her dad to speak at it. How can Texas' different cultures get along and find common ground? "Listen," she says. "Learn empathy. Walk a mile in their shoes."





THE  
EXTRAORDINARY

DALE BLASINGAME

STATE PARK ADVENTURER

**F**rom July 2014 to July 2015, Dale Blasingame, a journalism lecturer at Texas State University in San Marcos, put about 45,000 miles on his new car in a quest to visit each of Texas' 100 or so state parks. With his dog Lucy in tow, this Harlingen native crisscrossed the state, sometimes visiting as many as 18 parks in one trip.

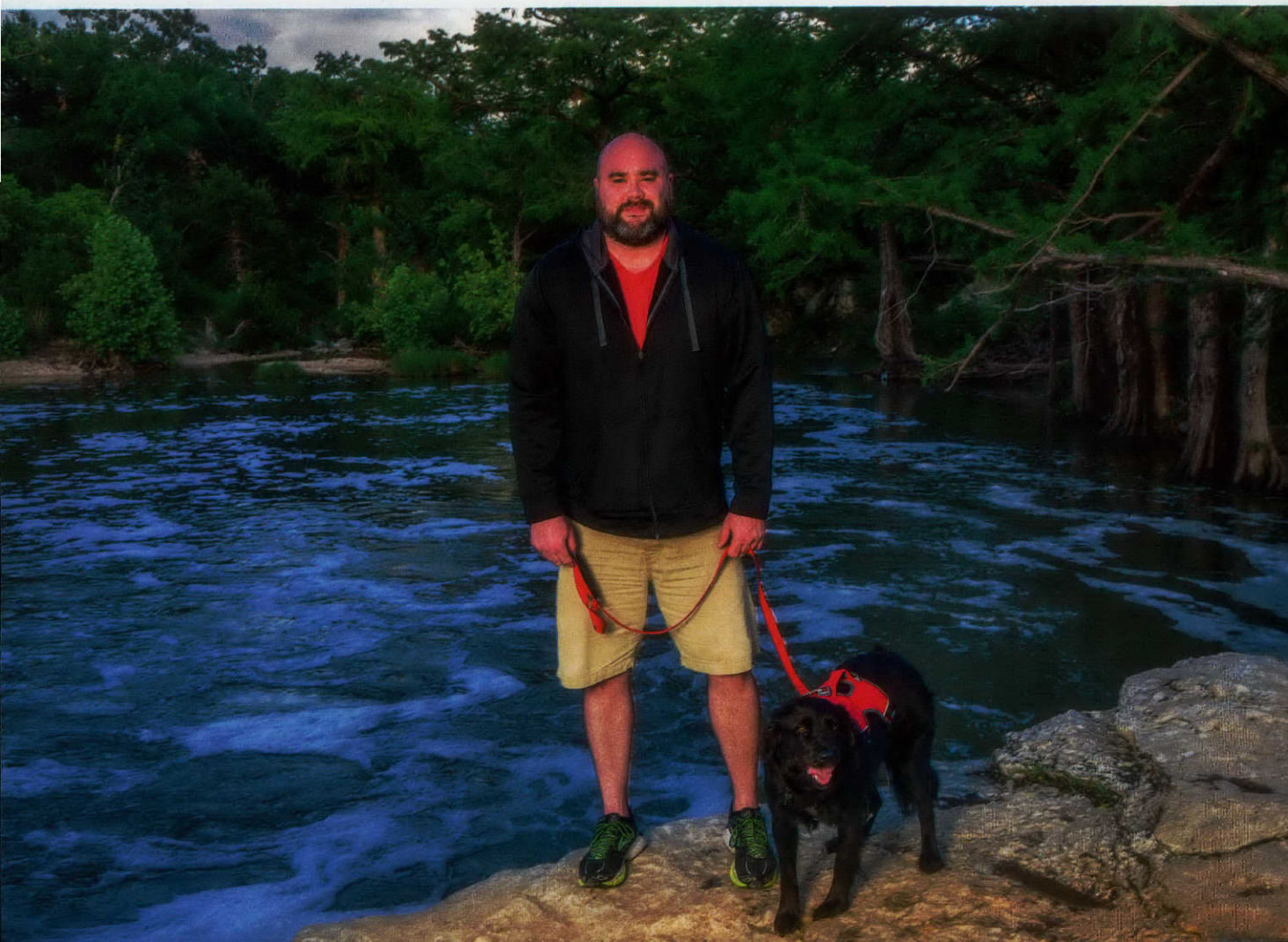
A man who loves a mission, Blasingame fell in love with the parks of Texas. "When I'm outside, that's my decompression time to get away with my dog. I love it. I sometimes wonder what I did with the first 36 years of my life."

Because he visited so much of Texas in just one year, Blasingame saw up-close the extreme diversity of the state's landscapes and what precious resources they are. He still gets chill bumps thinking about the night he lay on top of his car watching a lightning storm roll in over the desert near Marfa, or his first glimpse of the lush Gorman Falls in Colorado Bend State Park.

"We are so lucky to live in a state that has anything you want," says Blasingame. "If you want canyons, we have a park for that. Or if you want beaches, or swamps, or mountains... Texas has almost every kind of setting."

Blasingame is now teaching a class with help from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, marrying his passion for Texas parks with his career as a professor of new media. This past spring, he took 15 students, many of them first-time campers, to Garner State Park, where they used their talents to produce social video content to promote the park system. "The students loved it. The more people experience these parks, the more they are going to want to protect them," says Blasingame, who hopes to create more awareness about these local treasures.

A man who is driven by improbable quests, Blasingame is now in the process of visiting all 410-plus national park properties. "This project I know will take forever, but that's fine with me."





THE  
EXTRAORDINARY  
CHRISTINE AND DAYTONA CELIS

## BREWING BELLWETHERS

**A** Belgian-born Texan and the daughter of the late Pierre Celis, the legendary brewer who opened Austin's first craft brewery in 1992, Christine Celis is the Lone Star State's First Lady of Craft Beer. Currently working with Uncle Billy's Brewery in Austin, she and her daughter Daytona, along with master brewer Kim Clarke, plan to open a new brewery in Austin in early 2017, rescuing Pierre Celis' famous Old World *witbier* while also creating original New World beers with daring tastes of their own.

As a child in Hoegaarden, Belgium, her father's brewery—with its open mash tun and copper kettles—was her play-scape. "I can still smell the spent grains, the sweetness of the orange peels," says Celis. "Every time I walk into a brewery, I get flashbacks to when I would hang out with my dad when he was brewing. It's great."

Pierre Celis was renowned in Belgium for reviving the Hoegaarden *witbier*, which was brewed locally since the 1400s

but was lost when the last *witbier* brewery closed its doors in 1955. When Pierre came to Austin and opened Celis Brewery in 1992, he brought a similar *witbier* recipe with him; named Celis White, it and other Celis beers introduced many Texans to the world of craft beers. In 2000, however, the brewery was bought by the Miller Company, which closed Celis within a year.

But now the beer maven is back. For the new enterprise, the Flemish Fox Brewery & Craftworks, the Celis women are transporting Pierre's original brewing equipment from Hoegaarden to Austin. Eventually, it will form part of a beer museum, and the Celises hope to use the antique machinery to educate others on the history of beer-making—and occasionally crank it up for a fresh batch of *witbier*. "By making the beers that my dad used to brew, I want to bring back a piece of history, part of Austin's very first craft brewery," says Christine. "And I am so happy that Daytona has caught the brewing bug, too."





THE  
EXTRAORDINARY  
TIM AND KARRIE LEAGUE

FILM BUFFS AND FOUNDERS OF THE ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE CINEMA

**W**ired magazine called the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema “the coolest movie theater in the world.” With more than 20 Alamo Drafthouses now operating throughout the United States, it’s clear that the Alamo is a theater experience that film fans can’t get enough of. Once you’ve seen a movie at the Alamo, it’s hard to go back to the standard shopping-mall multiplex.

The Alamo Drafthouse chain sprang from the passion of film buffs Tim and Karrie League, who left their science careers in 1994 to revamp a beat-up theater in Bakersfield, California. Soon thereafter, they moved to Austin, opened their first Alamo in 1997, and set to work creating the kind of interactive and experimental movie-going experiences that they wanted to have for themselves and their friends.

Their vision has morphed into a cinema revolution. At the Alamo Drafthouse, not only can you tuck into a gourmet

pizza or sip a craft IPA or cocktail while screening a film, you can also sing along to your favorite musical or participate in a quote-along with classics like *The Princess Bride*. To really blur the lines between film and food, the Alamo curates menus to enhance the movie-watching experience; for example, *Titanic* viewers enjoyed a menu inspired by the one served on the last night of that doomed voyage. The Leagues have invented a one-of-a-kind movie experience, an endlessly creative mash-up of film, food, music, and place.

“The most fun thing about our work is being able to act on fantastic ideas for making great movies even more special by putting together complementary menus, or lining up amazing musicians to create new scores, or finding perfect locations for outdoor events,” says Karrie. She and Tim have redefined the film experience, and movie-watching will never be the same again.





THE  
EXTRAORDINARY

CROCODILE LILE

ROUTE 66 BOOSTER AND “CADILITE” INVENTOR

“We have a saying here on Route 66,” says Crocodile Lile, longtime officer of the Texas Old Route 66 Association and owner of Lile Art Gallery in Amarillo: “Friends don’t let friends drive the Interstate.’ It’s true. On the interstate, you never meet anybody and never see a thing. Life begins on the off ramp.”

Crocodile Lile, also known as Bob Lile or “Croc,” received his reptilian nickname while leading a Boy Scout trip to Australia. He has cruised Route 66 too many times to count and knows nearly every character along the way. He is now a Route 66 guide for Gilligan’s Tours out of New Zealand, and twice a year he leads a convoy of shiny Mustangs for a three-week, get-your-kicks tour from Chicago to Los Angeles. Recently, he introduced a van tour for people who don’t want to drive.


Even his current artistic creation, “Cadilite” jewelry,

pays homage to Route 66—in miniature, wearable form. Inspired by the look of Fordite, which is jewelry made from Ford Motor factory paint chips, Crocodile Lile retrieves paint peelings from Cadillac Ranch, the famous assemblage of inverted Cadillacs on I-40, a few miles west of Amarillo. In a meticulous process, he shaves the paint pieces until they reveal a color range he likes, and then he transforms the ‘Cadilite’ into necklaces, rings, and earrings.

When he’s not on the road, Lile champions the thrills of the Mother Road and sells these pretty, upcycled nuggets of Route 66 culture from his gallery on “Antique Road,” aka S.W. 6th Street—about 10 blocks of shops, restaurants, and galleries on old Route 66 in Amarillo. If he’s not there when you stop by, call the number in the window. If he’s in town, he’ll come on down to see you. **L**







# TEXAS BUCKET

## FORTY-TWO BEFORE YOU'RE THROUGH

**T**exas is tailor-made for bucket lists. Covering some 268,000 square miles, the Lone Star State brims with interesting, exciting, historical, relaxing, and fun things to do and see. And considering Texas' environmental and cultural diversity, the state lends itself to customized personal inventories of sights to see, thrills to experience, and challenges to conquer.

Despite living in and traveling around Texas my entire life, I frequently encounter new additions to my Texas bucket list. At this rate, I'll need to live at least 100 years.

To mark *Texas Highways'* 42nd anniversary, we picked 42 of our favorites to create this quintessential Texas bucket list. If you keep your own tally, grab a pencil and get ready. If you don't, well, what are you waiting for? We just made it easy, with these 42 must-dos before you're through.

TEXT BY MELISSA GASKILL





# KET LIST



## FLOAT A HILL COUNTRY RIVER

**I**n the heat of summer, nothing feels better than hopping into a big, inflatable tube and letting a cool river carry you away. I first experienced the time-honored tradition of “toobing” on the Llano River and later shared the fun with my children during regular trips down the scenic Frio River. In warm-weather months, multiple Frio River outfitters offer tube rentals and shuttle services for a variety of routes, many of them secluded. My favorite is the three-mile float through Garner State Park, beneath towering cypress trees, over limestone rapids, past gravel beaches, and through deep swimming holes. You can camp overnight and do it all over again next day.

The Medina River near Bandera offers another chilly, cypress-lined beauty of a float, typically lasting between 45 minutes and four hours—all without the crowds sometimes found on other rivers. Near Martindale, Don’s Fish Camp rents tubes and runs a fleet of school buses ferrying tubers for three-hour floats on the pecan- and oak-shaded San Marcos River. And in the New Braunfels area, join the summer revelry on the Guadalupe River, home to multiple outfitters. Don’t mess with Texas—pack out all your trash!







## 2 ROCK OUT AT AN AUSTIN CITY LIMITS TAPING

**A**t Austin's 2,700-seat Moody Theater, banks of colored lights illuminate a stage jammed with musical instruments beneath the iconic, stylized rendering of the downtown Austin skyline. People pack the floor in front of the stage and fill rows of chairs as an animated buzz of anticipation fills the air.

Welcome to Austin City Limits, the longest-running music series in American television. Austin public television station KLRU-TV created the show in 1974, and today it broadcasts on dozens of stations across the country. Music fans who attended free tapings as college students now bring their grown children and even grandchildren to see performances from a diverse cast of artists, ranging from Willie Nelson (who performed on the show's pilot) and Asleep at the Wheel (above) to Leon Bridges and Pearl Jam.

While the broadcast is a special treat for music lovers, nothing compares to being here in person. The performances last two hours but are condensed to 57 minutes for the show, and the setting often brings out the best in performers.

You can't buy a ticket, though; sign up for the ticket lottery online ([www.acltv.com](http://www.acltv.com)) and keep your fingers crossed.



## PADDLE CADDO LAKE

**A** maze of sloughs, bayous, and ponds, Caddo Lake covers some 26,800 acres in northeast Texas, averaging about nine feet in depth. This swampy body of water straddles the Texas-Louisiana state line and forms the centerpiece of Caddo Lake State Park, located on Big Cypress Bayou.

The park's headquarters offers canoe and kayak rentals year-round and provides access to several Texas Parks and Wildlife paddling trails. Explore another world in the park's quiet, tea-colored backwaters, stately bald cypress trees draped with Spanish moss, and floating lotus and lily pads.

Listen for the plop of turtles dropping into the water from their perches in the sun, and keep your eyes peeled for alligators, frogs, herons, kingfishers, and beaver. Bring along your fishing pole, too: The lake contains 71 species of fish, including crappie and bass. Remember that getting lost is a very real possibility—be sure to take a map and plenty of supplies, and pay attention to your surroundings.

Back on land, explore bottomland hardwood forests and upland forests of pine, oak, and hickory via almost three miles of trails. Watch for rare migratory birds such as red-eyed vireos, prothonotary warblers, and northern parulas.





## THE VIEW FROM THE SAN JACINTO MONUMENT

**T**he San Jacinto Monument's 489-foot-high observation floor takes in a broad swath of Texas' past, present, and future. The tower gets its name from the legendary battleground below, where, on April 21, 1836, Texian rebels defeated Santa Anna's Mexican army in the Battle of San Jacinto to clinch Texas independence.

Also visible from the observation tower (which is accessible by elevator) is the Battleship *Texas*, a veteran of both World Wars. It now welcomes visitors as a state historic site. Beyond the battleship lies the Houston Ship Channel, one of the busiest channels in the world, always churning with international freighters. In the distance, the metropolis of Houston glints in the Gulf Coast sun.

Dive into more than 400 years of Texas history at the San Jacinto Museum of History, located in the base of the tower. The monument grounds also include a reflecting pool and a trail through native prairie, tidal marsh, and bottomland forest. Granite markers designate strategic points of the historic battle, including the locations of the Texian and Mexican camps and the advance by Texian forces.

Another noteworthy fact: The San Jacinto Monument stands a total of 567 feet tall, 12 feet higher than the Washington Monument in our nation's capital.





# PADDLE THE BRAZOS WITH GOODBYE TO A RIVER

**I**n 1957, Texas writer John Graves paddled 175 miles down the Brazos River between Possum Kingdom Dam and Lake Whitney. An article he wrote about the journey became a book, *Goodbye to a River*, exploring the relationship between humans and nature and serving as something of a eulogy to a river Graves feared would soon be destroyed by additional dam projects. Accompanied by his dachshund, which he referred to as “the passenger,” Graves camped on sandbars and shores, and fished and hunted for his supper along the way.

The Brazos rises in Stonewall County and flows 840 miles, emptying into the Gulf of Mexico near Freeport. The waterway played a prominent role in early Texas history and once was navigable 250 miles up from the Gulf to the town of Washington, where the Republic of Texas declared its independence. Graves’ journey may run a bit long for most, but you can retrace portions of it.

Rochelle’s Canoe Rental in Graford offers trips from a half-day to a week on the Brazos below Possum Kingdom to US 180 just west of US 281. Although Graves didn’t continue downstream to Waco, you also can get a taste of paddling the Brazos in Waco on Texas Parks and Wildlife’s Bosque Bluffs and Brazos Bridges paddling trails.





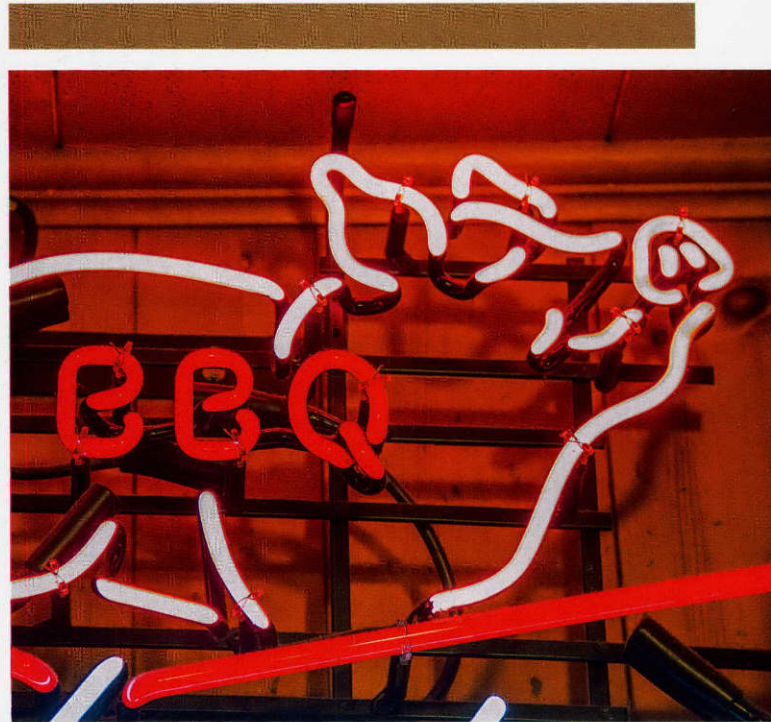
## BEHOLD THE ROCK ART OF THE LOWER PECOS CANYONLANDS

# 6

In southwest Texas, the Lower Pecos Canyonlands—formed by the Rio Grande, Devils, and Pecos rivers—provide a shady haven on the fringe of the Chihuahuan Desert. Thousands of years ago, hunter-gatherers lived in shelters among the canyons and decorated the rock walls with colorful paintings that represented their art, symbolism, and lifeways.

More than 2,000 archeological sites have been recorded in the region, including about 300 Lower Pecos pictograph sites within a 90-mile radius of the juncture of the Pecos River and Rio Grande.

Amistad National Recreation Area is home to two public sites to view rock paintings—Panther Cave and Parida Cave. Take a boat about 10 miles by water from the Pecos River boat ramp to Panther Cave, which overlooks the Rio Grande near its juncture with Seminole Canyon. Visitors are rewarded with hundreds of images and a spectacular red panther-like figure that stretches 10 feet. You can also see Panther Cave from the opposite cliff of Seminole Canyon within Seminole Canyon State Park. The overlook is part of the 7.5-mile round-trip Canyon Rim Trail (bring binoculars).



## FEAST ON BARBECUE IN LOCKHART

# 7

Humans have matched food with fire for millennia, but the smoking of meat didn't achieve its highest potential until Texans set about perfecting the practice as barbecue. Resolutions from both the Texas House and Senate have declared the Central Texas town of Lockhart the official "Barbecue Capital of Texas." Taste for yourself at one of four famous establishments.

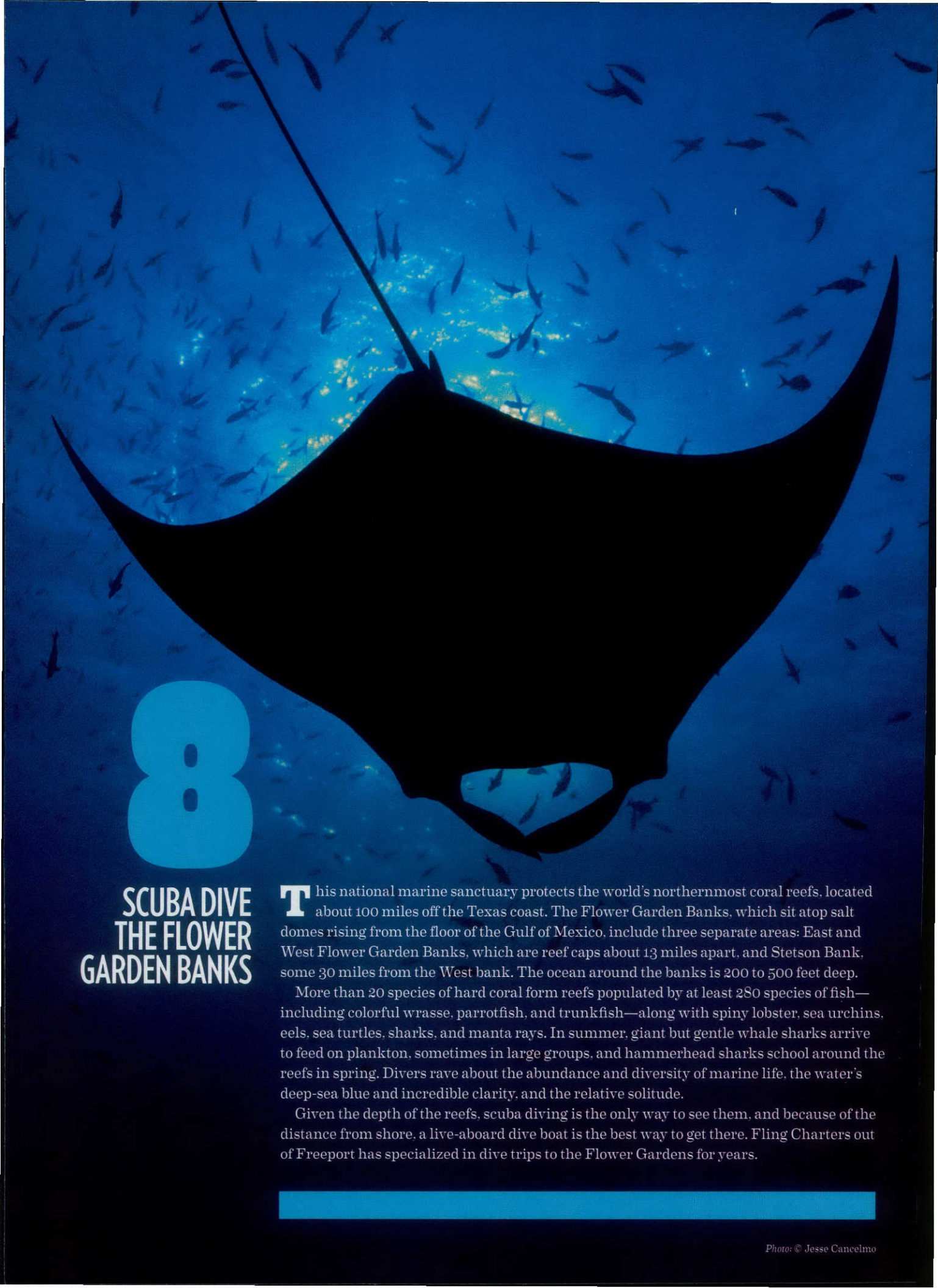
Black's BBQ, opened in 1932 and continuously owned by the same family longer than any 'cue joint in Texas, slow-smokes its meat over post oak with a simple rub. Nearby, the locally popular Chisholm Trail Barbecue's cafeteria-style selection includes fajitas in addition to smoked

sausage, brisket, ribs, turkey, and chicken.

Kreuz's history is a bit more complicated: Charles Kreuz opened Kreuz Market on the town square in 1900. Employee Edgar "Smitty" Schmidt bought the business in 1948 and sold it to his sons Rick and Don in 1984. Rick moved the joint a few blocks north in 1999, taking along coals from the original pit. Pit boss Roy Perez smokes meat in the traditional German style, served with no sauce and no forks.

Meanwhile, Smitty's daughter, Nina Schmidt Sells, opened Smitty's Market in the original Kreuz Market building. Her son John Fullilove now keeps the tradition alive as pitmaster.





8

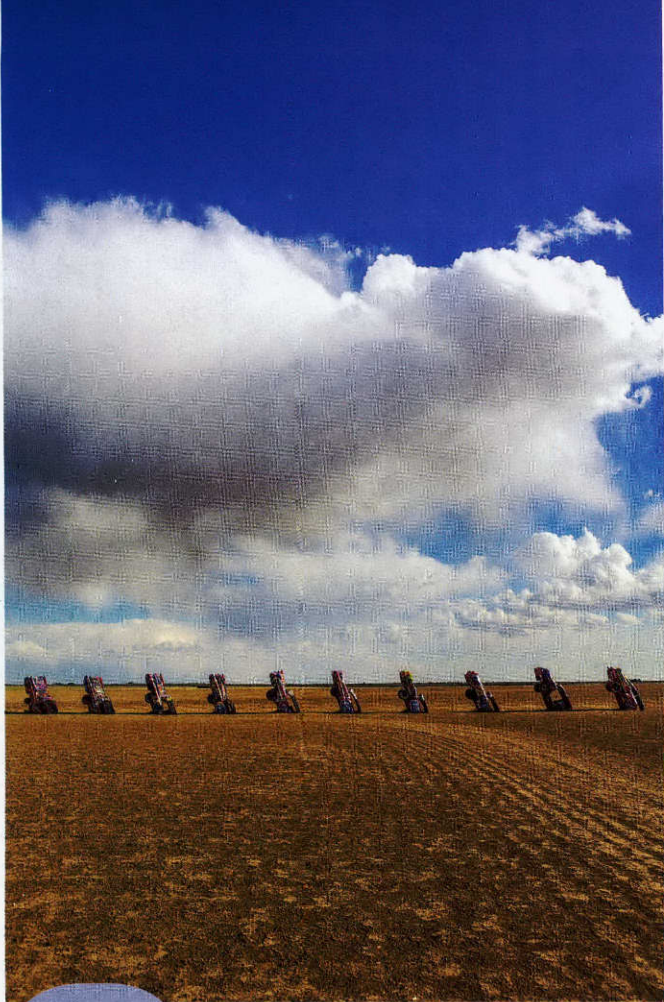
## SCUBA DIVE THE FLOWER GARDEN BANKS

**T**his national marine sanctuary protects the world's northernmost coral reefs, located about 100 miles off the Texas coast. The Flower Garden Banks, which sit atop salt domes rising from the floor of the Gulf of Mexico, include three separate areas: East and West Flower Garden Banks, which are reef caps about 13 miles apart, and Stetson Bank, some 30 miles from the West bank. The ocean around the banks is 200 to 500 feet deep.

More than 20 species of hard coral form reefs populated by at least 280 species of fish—including colorful wrasse, parrotfish, and trunkfish—along with spiny lobster, sea urchins, eels, sea turtles, sharks, and manta rays. In summer, giant but gentle whale sharks arrive to feed on plankton, sometimes in large groups, and hammerhead sharks school around the reefs in spring. Divers rave about the abundance and diversity of marine life, the water's deep-sea blue and incredible clarity, and the relative solitude.

Given the depth of the reefs, scuba diving is the only way to see them, and because of the distance from shore, a live-aboard dive boat is the best way to get there. Fling Charters out of Freeport has specialized in dive trips to the Flower Gardens for years.





# 9

## SPRAY PAINT CADILLAC RANCH

In the early 1970s, an artist group known as the Ant Farm approached eccentric Amarillo millionaire Stanley Marsh 3 about funding their idea—10 Cadillacs half-buried in a field. Marsh reportedly expressed concern that the installation would be perceived as junk rather than art, but he funded the project anyway. Cadillac Ranch, created in 1974, now ranks as one of Amarillo's biggest claims to fame.

The Cadillacs, including models from 1949 through 1964, are buried nose-down in a field, supposedly at the same angle as the Great Pyramid of Giza. People almost immediately began spray-painting the cars, which became part of the experience. Bring your own paint; the brighter the color, the better. Rumor has it the nearby Home Depot at Interstate 40 and Soncy Road sells more spray paint than any other location. Just remember the old adage: Don't, um, spray paint into the wind.

Cadillac Ranch is accessible at all times (no charge). Enter the field from the south access road of Interstate 40 just east of Arnot Road.

## STRADDLE THE TEXARKANA STATE LINE

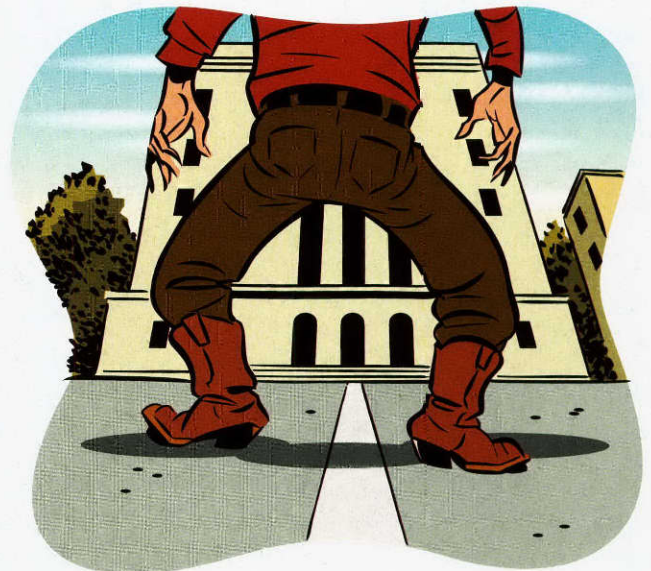
# 10

The circa-1933 Beaux Arts-style Federal Courthouse in Texarkana is the nation's second-most photographed, behind only the U.S. Supreme Court Building in Washington, D.C. Such fame results from its status as the only federal building in the nation straddling a state line, the one between Texas and Arkansas.

The federal government built the split courthouse intentionally, placing it in the center of State Line Avenue, which cuts north-south through Texarkana along the state boundary. In addition to two federal courts and various federal offices, the building houses the only post office in the country without a home state.

Want to be two places at once? Find the prominent sign marking the state line on Photographer's Island on the building's south side. Here, you can put one foot in Texas and the other in Arkansas, or your feet in one state and your head in the other, yourself in Texas and your spouse in Arkansas—you get the idea.

Parking is readily available on the street around the area, with a variety of restaurants, museums, and other attractions nearby.



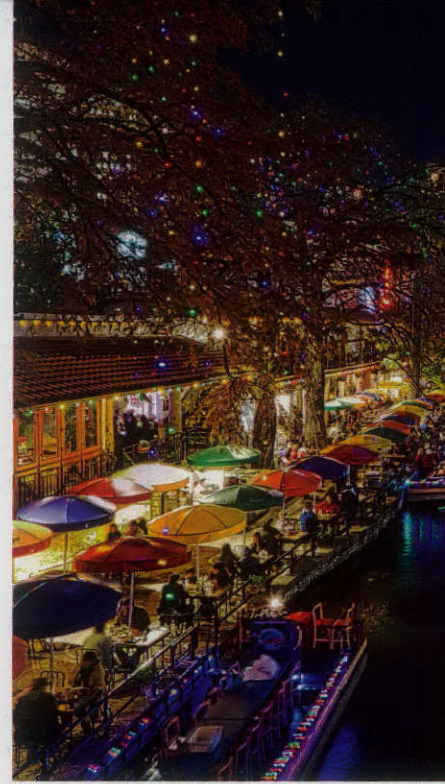


## 11 GLOW IN THE RIVER WALK'S HOLIDAY SPARKLE

**D**uring the holidays, lights transform San Antonio's River Walk into a magical esplanade ideal for a festive stroll. More than 2,000 luminarias illuminate the sidewalk along the 2.5-mile downtown section of the River Walk from dusk to dawn during the first three weekends in December. Overhead, more than 100,000 lights twinkle from towering trees from the day after Thanksgiving until just past New Year's.

Beginning this year, says Paula Schechter of the Paseo del Rio Association, luminarias created with LED lights in waxed paper bags will replace the traditional Mexican Christmas lanterns made with candles nestled in sand inside paper bags. The electric versions will glow all night, rain or shine.

Amble among the lights or catch one of Rio San Antonio Cruises' river tour boats and enjoy the spectacle from the water. Available at five stations including the Shops at Rivercenter, the boats operate daily until at least 9 p.m. Cap the evening with a hot drink in one of the many restaurants and bars along the river.



## 12 SEE THE SEA TURTLES

**E**ndangered Kemp's ridley sea turtles nest primarily on beaches fronting the Gulf of Mexico, and Padre Island National Seashore is the best place in the United States to see them. To help bolster the population, the park keeps sea turtle eggs in a protected area, then releases hatchlings on the beach from mid-June through August. Some releases are open to the public, held at 6:45 a.m. on Malaquite Beach. Public releases only happen when compatible with hatchling needs, so for the best chance to see one, plan a visit of several days when multiple nests may hatch.

Park rangers release hatchlings high up on the beach, re-creating how the little turtles would naturally crawl from a nest to the surf. This crawl allows the rangers to assess whether the turtles are ready to survive on their own, and also probably contributes to imprinting, a process where the brains of the baby turtles record unique characteristics of the beach. This makes it possible for female sea turtles to return many years later and from many miles away to lay their eggs on the same beach. It also happens to provide an opportunity for people to watch the tiny turtles' mad scramble to the water.







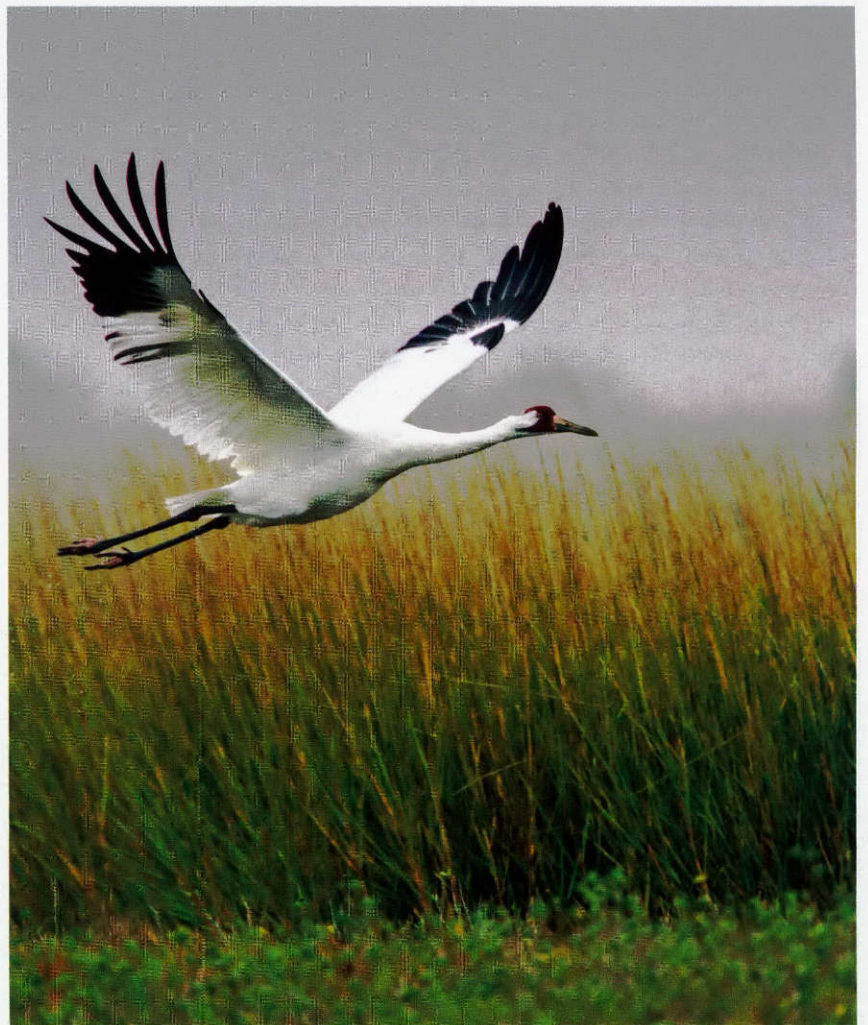
## SPOT THE WHOOPING CRANES

**Y**ou'll know it when you finally set your eyes on an endangered whooping crane. The tallest bird in North America at nearly five feet, whoopers have seven-foot wingspans, large snow-white bodies, distinctive jet-black wing tips and crescents, and red patches on their heads.

Your best chance to see these majestic whoopers is at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, where they winter from mid-October through March. All the wild and captive whooping cranes alive in the world today, in fact, descended from 15 cranes that wintered here in Texas in 1941.

The birds fly 2,500 miles from their nesting grounds in northern Canada's Wood Buffalo National Park to the Texas coast, where they're nourished by blue crabs, wolfberries, crawfish, frogs, large insects, and acorns for their long trip back to Canada.

The refuge's Heron Flats Observation Deck provides a whooping crane vantage point. They also appear frequently at Goose Island State Park and the public road along St. Charles Bay in Rockport. Boat tours offer the best chance to see the birds up close, though. Guides in both Rockport and Port Aransas lead outings to see the birds.







## THE WYLER AERIAL TRAMWAY IN EL PASO

**S**wiss-made, bright yellow gondolas board at an elevation of 4,692 feet in Franklin Mountains State Park and travel along a 2,600-foot-long steel cable to the top of Ranger Peak, elevation 5,632 feet. On the four-minute ride, the cars sway at a height of up to 240 feet above the ground and pass above 600 million years of geologic history, a variety of cacti, and wildlife such as mule deer.

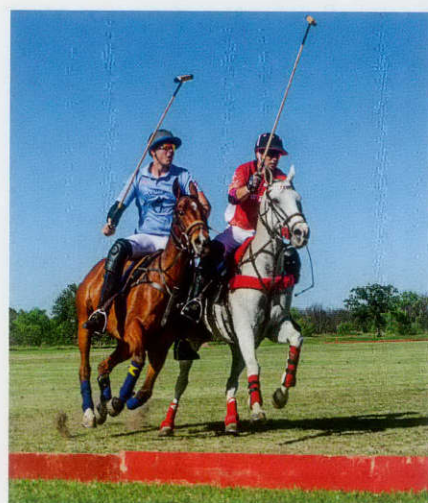
You can see 7,000 square miles from the peak on a clear day, overlooking Texas, New Mexico, and Mexico all at once. The truly intrepid can hike to the peak instead.

The tramway opens Friday through Sunday and on major holidays.



## GREASY-SPOON ENCHILADAS AT H&H CAR WASH

**S**ince 1958, El Pasoans have showed down on homemade Tex-Mex at H&H Car Wash, leaving with full stomachs and clean cars. Syrian immigrant Najib Haddad came up with the winning idea of combining a car wash with a café; his son Maynard now runs the establishment, and granddaughter Julie helps out. Order chicken enchiladas on Wednesday—chicken day—and cheese or beef on other days with homemade red sauce and an egg on top. On Fridays, you can get enchiladas with red or green sauce. H&H opens Monday through Saturday, 7 a.m.-3 p.m., at 701 E. Yandell Drive.



## POLO ON THE PRAIRIE IN ALBANY

**W**hen Mary Anne McCloud wanted to share her passion for the work done at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, her son-in-law, Henry Musselman, suggested a polo tournament. Musselman built a polo field in a pasture on his family's Lazy 3 Ranch in Albany, and in 1986, Polo on the Prairie began. Amateur and professional players now come from all over the world for the annual April match.

No horse? No problem! Festivities also include barbecue, live music, and fireworks.

So far, the event has contributed nearly \$6 million to cancer research and patient programs at MD Anderson.

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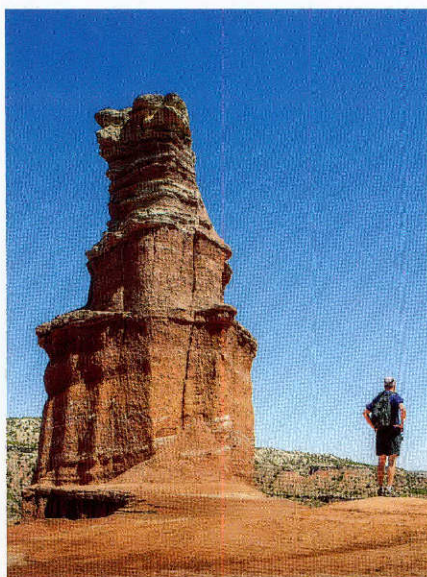
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## THE MYSTERIOUS MARFA LIGHTS

**A**fter several unsuccessful earlier attempts, some years ago I took my two daughters to the Marfa Lights Viewing Area on US 90, nine miles east of town. Looking across the dark expanse of desert before us, I sputtered, “Someone built a house out there! Their porch lights ruin everything.” Then it hit me—I had just joined the club, those lucky visitors who have seen these random, distant, moving spots of glowing red, blue, or white. Recorded sightings of the mysterious lights date to the 19th Century. Their source, indeed their very existence, remains contentious, but come judge for yourself.



## THE LIGHTHOUSE AT PALO DURO CANYON

**P**alo Duro Canyon, the second-largest canyon in the United States, runs some 120 miles long, 20 miles wide, and 800 feet deep. Its walls reveal four geologic layers reaching back about 250 million years, exposed over time by the Red River’s Prairie Dog Town Fork.

This park’s most iconic sight, a shale and sandstone pinnacle called The Lighthouse, rises 310 feet, formed by uneven erosion rates of different rock layers.

The 2.72-mile Lighthouse Trail passes colorful rock formations and crosses *arroyos*, ending at the base of the pinnacle. The final leg requires some serious scrambling.



## CUSTOM COWBOY BOOTS

**T**exas citizenship practically requires a pair of cowboy boots, ideally custom-made. But ever-increasing demand means you need patience when ordering your custom pair.

Today’s cowboy boots represent the refinement of 17th-Century English riding footwear. During the cattle-drive era, Texas was home to some of the country’s best-known bootmakers.

Custom bootmakers operate in every corner of the state, and costs vary widely. Expect to spend about an hour on a fitting, from measuring your feet to selecting leathers, colors, stitching style, heel, toe shape, and soles. Then you wait. It can take three months or longer for the bootmaker to complete your order. But it’s worth the wait—just ask anyone wearing a custom pair.

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## RAFT SANTA ELENA CANYON

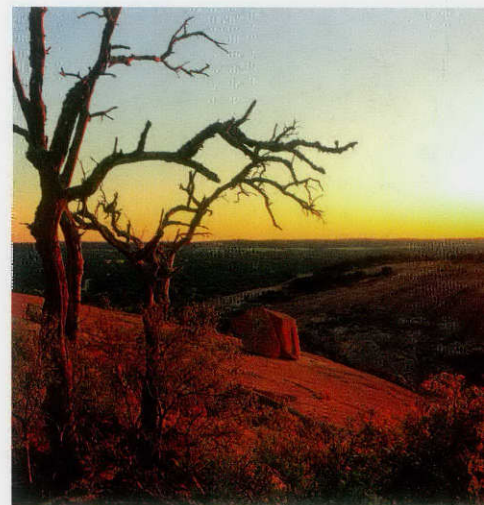
**O**ne of the best ways to experience Big Bend National Park's dramatic Santa Elena Canyon, a 17-mile gash in the massive Mesa de Anguila Mountains, is from the Rio Grande, the river that created it. Two-day trips with Big Bend River Tours in Terlingua include camping at the canyon mouth beneath never-ending stars after a hearty supper, then floating between canyon walls that tower 1,500 feet overhead and running a few rapids, including the short-but-exciting Rock Slide. Outfitters provide gear and meals. Celebrate with margaritas at Terlingua's Starlight Theatre Restaurant and hit the hay at La Posada Milagro Guesthouse next door.



## TWO-STEP IN LUCKENBACH

**A**h, the Texas two-step; a simple yet engaging dance, easy to learn, but capable of complexity, depending on the dancer. And it fits, foot-in-boot, with most any country song.

A lot of two-stepping happens in Luckenbach, the tiny Hill Country town with a legendary eponymous dance hall. Established in 1849, the town was acquired by Texas characters Hondo Crouch, Guich Kooch, and Kathy Morgan in 1971. In 1973, Jerry Jeff Walker recorded his album *Viva Terlingua!* here. Four years later, Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson's song "Luckenbach, Texas (Back to the Basics of Love)" really put the hamlet on the map. The dance hall still hosts some of Texas' best musicians, and if you haven't two-stepped here, you haven't really two-stepped.



## ENCHANTED ROCK SUNRISE

**D**eep in the Texas Hill Country, Enchanted Rock's pink granite dome covers 640 acres and rises 425 feet. Its size, elevation, and location make it the perfect place to watch the sunrise. Get to the Summit Trail when it opens 30 minutes before daylight, climb about halfway up, circle around counterclockwise until you are facing east, and enjoy. You'll need to camp overnight at the park, and be sure to make note of sunrise times before you head out into the wilderness.

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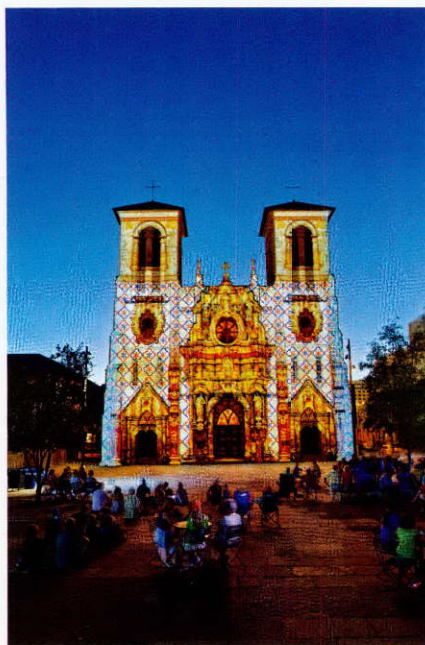
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## FEED GIRAFFES AT THE HOUSTON ZOO

**T**he Houston Zoo's Masai giraffes show a keen interest in the fresh lettuce offered up by visitors. Some of the long-necked animals, native to the wild in Tanzania and Kenya, politely take the lettuce with their lips. Others reach out with their 20-inch tongues, which can wrap around a morsel with ease. The zoo offers chances to feed the animals daily at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., weather and giraffes permitting, from a shaded, giraffe-head-high platform. Feeding only takes a few minutes, leaving time to explore the rest of the zoo. Tickets for giraffe feedings, available at the Feeding Platform kiosk, cost \$7.



## THE SAGA LIGHT SHOW

**S**an Fernando Cathedral, built between 1738 and 1755, ranks as the oldest operating sanctuary in North America and anchors San Antonio's Main Plaza, one of only four colonial plazas remaining in the country. On certain nights, the cathedral's intricate façade becomes the canvas for *San Antonio | The Saga*, a 24-minute projection of artwork and music designed by French artist Xavier de Richemont. The installation tells the complex and remarkable history of this part of Texas in a series of swirling, cascading figures, symbols, and faces in vibrant colors. Scheduled to show through 2024, *The Saga* takes place at 9, 9:30, and 10 on Tuesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights.



## THE STATE FAIR OF TEXAS FERRIS WHEEL

**F**air Park in east Dallas has hosted the State Fair of Texas since 1905. When the Star Ferris Wheel debuted at the 1985 fair, it was the largest Ferris wheel in North America, and it still is the tallest in Texas. Hop into one of its 35 gondolas with up to five of your friends to enjoy a bird's-eye view of the State Fair and the downtown Dallas skyline from the ride's 212-foot peak—about 20 stories high. On clear days, you can see downtown Fort Worth, 40 miles away. At night, the wheel's red, white, and blue lights spin in a lovely Lone Star blur.

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## TAKE A SELFIE WITH PARIS' EIFFEL TOWER

**T**exans have a way of making things their own—case in point, the Eiffel Tower in Paris. The boiler-makers union at a local manufacturing plant built the tower in 1994, and four years later, a 10-foot-diameter, red cowboy hat was added.

The Paris tower stands 65 feet tall, located between this northeast Texas town's civic center and the Red River Valley Veteran's Memorial. Night is a great time for photos, when the tower lights up, or daytime when sunshine hits the tooled gold feather in the rim of the hat. Chances are that other tourists or friendly locals hanging around can snap a photo for you, or bring your friends and take a group picture.



## BIG THICKET NATIONAL PRESERVE

**F**orty miles of hiking trails explore the roughly 105,000 acres of the Big Thicket National Preserve, a patchwork of protected land and water corridor units in southeast Texas. The preserve is home to 85 species of trees, 60 shrubs, 26 ferns, 20 orchids, four carnivorous plants, 185 species of birds, and 50 reptiles.

The 5.4-mile Woodlands Trail crosses Big Sandy Creek floodplain and a dense hardwood forest of sweet gum, oak, tupelo, and holly in low areas, with beech, magnolia, and pine higher up. The 1.5-mile Sundew Trail traverses wetland savannah, grasslands, and scattered pines—it's a great location to see wildflowers in season and carnivorous pitcher and sundew plants.



## TEXAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY

**E**ver wonder what it feels like to hurtle around a NASCAR track like the pros? The Team Texas High Performance Driving School at the Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth offers the chance to experience the thrill in actual racecars at speeds of up to 160 miles per hour. Ride-alongs start at \$125, and for prices starting at \$270, you can actually take the wheel for five laps.

If you'd rather stick to the bleachers or the infield, expect plenty of thrills in watching races, especially the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series events, held annually in April and November. The races reach speeds of up to 200 mph and routinely rank as the largest sporting events in Texas and among the largest single-day events in the country.

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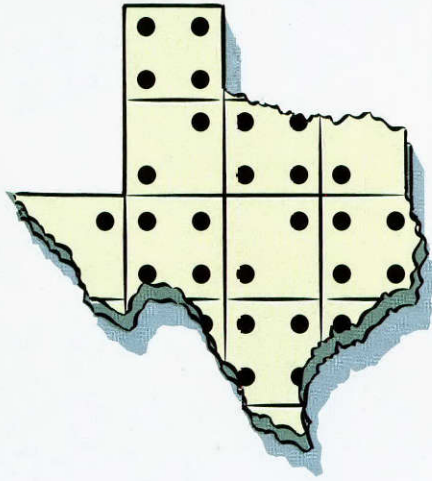




## FALL FOLIAGE AT LOST MAPLES STATE PARK

**T**his park contains a magnificent stand of Uvalde Bigtooth Maples that, given the right conditions, blazes brilliant red shades in fall. On the Maple Trail along the Sabinal River, the red leaves pop against limestone cliffs and pale green water. Maples also grow along the West and East trails, where walnut, sycamore, and oaks add splashes of orange and yellow.

Peak season generally falls within the first two weeks of November. Check the online foliage report, and if possible, visit on a weekday to avoid waits of two to three hours to get into the park.



## PLAY 42

**T**he first weekend in March, Hallettsville hosts the Texas State Championship "42" Domino Tournament, with warm-up games Friday night and qualifying on Saturday morning, followed by the big game. Not ready for intense competition? Round up three buddies and play for fun. Two pairs of teams face off in this bidding game and attempt to win the most points using a standard 28-piece domino set. Legend has it that two Parker County boys, ages 12 and 14, invented the game in 1887 after catching trouble for playing cards, which was taboo in their strict Baptist community. The Texas House designated 42 Texas' official state domino game in 2011.



## HEAR THE CHACHALACA'S SONG

**H**alf the fun of looking for chachalacas is simply saying their name. In the United States, the olive-brown Plain chachalaca, named for its loud, raucous call, lives only in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. And a great place to see (and hear) the birds is Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park in Mission.

Located along major bird migration routes, the park has recorded sightings of more than 358 bird species, drawing birders from all over to see green jays, buff-bellied hummingbirds, great kiskadees, and Altamira orioles.

Chachalacas prefer thorny thickets, scrubland, and second-growth forest edges, where they feed on leaves, berries, and seeds. They fly only in short bursts so look for them running around on the ground and in the trees.

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### DR PEPPER FLOATS!

**C**elebrate this beloved Texas drink, invented by a Waco pharmacist in 1885, with a float made at the Dr Pepper Museum's soda fountain in Waco. The only ingredients: handmade Dr Pepper—including cane sugar syrup and carbonated water—and Blue Bell Homemade Vanilla ice cream.

### THE SPOETZL BREWERY

**T**he Spoetzl Brewery, which opened in Shiner in 1909 to serve the local Bohemian settlers, crafts every drop of Shiner beer, all dozen varieties, from White Wing Belgian White to the popular Shiner Bock. Complimentary tours and refreshments—we'll drink to that!

### SIXTH FLOOR MUSEUM

**E**xplore the tumultuous 1960s, the life of John F. Kennedy, and one of the darkest days in Texas history at the Texas School Book Depository's Sixth Floor Museum in Dallas. On cell-phone narrated walking tours of Dealey Plaza, linger on the infamous grassy knoll.

### THE SPECTACLE OF BAT FLIGHTS

**O**n summer evenings, millions of Mexican free-tailed bats emerge en masse from Texas caves for their nightly insect hunt. Catch this impressive sight at Austin's Congress Avenue bridge or one of Texas' many caverns, from Devil's Sinkhole State Natural Area to Old Tunnel State Park.

### THE TEXAS STATE CAPITOL

**O**ur granite capitol in Austin rises about 15 feet higher than the one in Washington, D.C. Stand with pride beneath its central dome on terrazzo images of six flags that have flown over Texas. Daily guided tours (free) cover a remarkable breadth of Lone Star history.





# 37

## THE MCDONALD OBSERVATORY

**L**ocated in the Davis Mountains, home to some of the country's darkest skies, the University of Texas' McDonald Observatory stretches the boundaries of astronomical science and invites the public to explore with expert-guided star parties.

# 38

## THE HOTTER'N HELL HUNDRED

**T**he Hotter'N Hell Hundred in Wichita Falls, one of the country's oldest and largest cycling events, includes routes of 25, 50, 75, and 100 miles, plus a mountain bike race and trail run. Did we mention it's on August?

# 39

## US 290 WINERIES

**M**ore than 15 wineries line this Hill Country "wine road," with scenic tasting rooms, beautiful views, shady decks, grassy lawns, and even guest cottages. And of course, award-winning wines. Book a limo and make a day of it!

# 40

## CHILI-HEADS UNITE

**E**very November, Terlingua celebrates this classic, spicy Texas dish with a championship chili cook-off, complete with live music plus salsa and margarita competitions—but no beans. Come and get it.

# 41

## CATCH AND EAT

**T**he only thing better than landing a big, beautiful fish? Eating it—especially when a pro cooks it. Many coastal eateries will cook your catch, from Pier 19 in South Padre to Waterman's in Galveston. *Buen provecho!*

# 42

## REMEMBER THE ALAMO! *You thought we forgot?*

No Texas bucket list would be complete without a nod to the Alamo, Texas' most enduring symbol of liberty. Walk these hallowed grounds—and you'll never forget either. **L**



Don't mess with Texas

# ARE YOU A True TEXAN?



TAKE THE QUIZ & FIND OUT!

By Lois M. Rodriguez

**I**t's impolite to ask people where they are from. "If a man's from Texas, he'll tell you. If he's not, why embarrass him by asking?" the late journalist and author John Gunther once quipped. And he's right. Besides, there are easier ways to tell if you're dealing with a true Texan.

Spotting true Texans, whether native or adopted, is like studying creatures in the wild. You have to listen to their speech patterns, see what they eat, note how they interact with others, and observe various other habits and traits before you know you've encountered a real one.

For example, when Texans tell you they are "fixing" to do something, it means they are about to embark on a task or journey. They aren't planning to

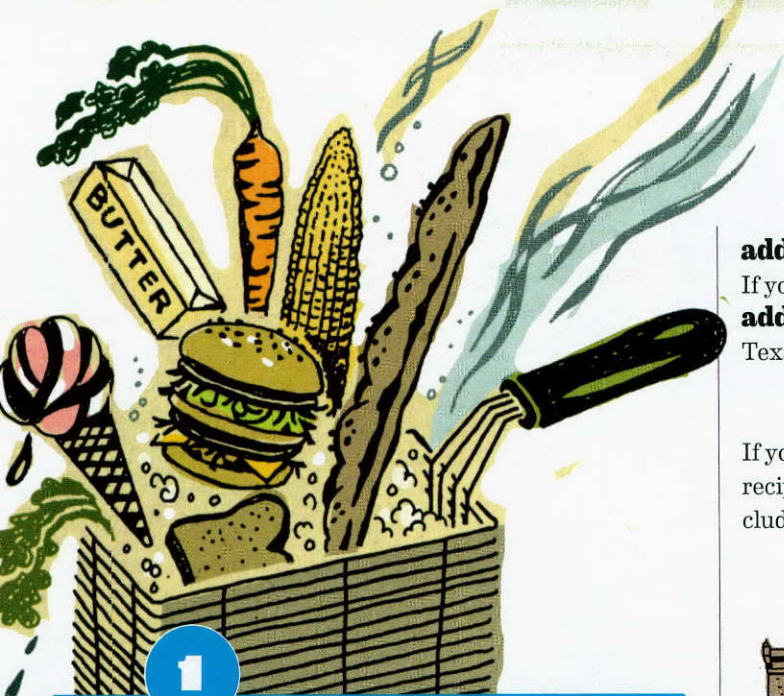
repair anything ... that is, unless they say they are "fixing to work on the car" or something like that. "Fixings" are also a noun—all the good sides that complete a barbecue meal. Note: Texans would actually pronounce this "fixin'." Texans have pockets full of unused "g"s.

Texans can look you in the eye and say, "Why, bless your heart!" And even if you can't tell if they are being empathetic or snarky, they still manage to make you feel a little warm on the inside.

If you let a Texan set an ideal menu, it will likely include some of the key Texas food groups—chicken-fried steak, barbecue, Tex-Mex, and chips & salsa.

Furthermore, you can spot a Texan running around in shorts in the dead of winter. After all, the weather's quite nice then.





**1**

If you can name something that cannot be deep-fried, **subtract 5**. *Everything can be deep-fried.*

**2**

If you know someone named Bud, **add 5**. If you are Bud, **add 10**. If your wife's name is Sissy, **add 15**. If you know which movie features Bud and Sissy, **add 20**.

**3**

If your knee-jerk reaction is to clap four times after hearing "The stars at night are big and bright," **add 10**. If you follow that by enthusiastically shouting "Deep in the heart of Texas!" **add 10 more**. If you think it's just an invitation to grab your telescope or go stargazing, **subtract 10**.

**4**

If you've taken photos of friends, family, and/or yourself in bluebonnets, **add 5**. If you balk at the idea because there might be snakes, **subtract 5**. If you dare not for fear of damaging even one bluebonnet, **add 10**.



**5**

If you know who Ma Ferguson is, **add 5**. If you think she's that ol' lady who made moonshine out back, **subtract 5**.

**6**

If you offer a friendly wave to someone who let you into their lane on the road, **add 10**. It's just good manners! If you don't, **subtract 20**.

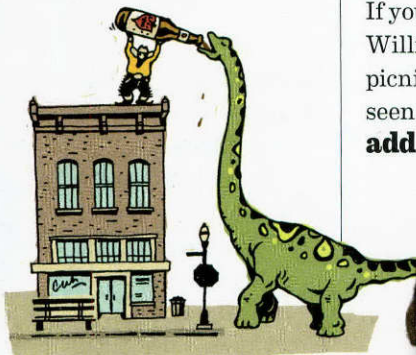
**7**

Someone asks, "How far is it from Houston to Austin?" If you answer "165 miles,"

**add 1** for being accurate. If you say "about three hours," **add 5** for thinking like a Texan.

**8**

If you have a signature chili recipe, **add 5**. If the recipe includes beans, **subtract 10**.



**9**

If you think a longneck refers to a Brachiosaurus, well aren't you smart ... but you still **subtract 5**. If you think it refers to a cold one, **add 10**.

**10**

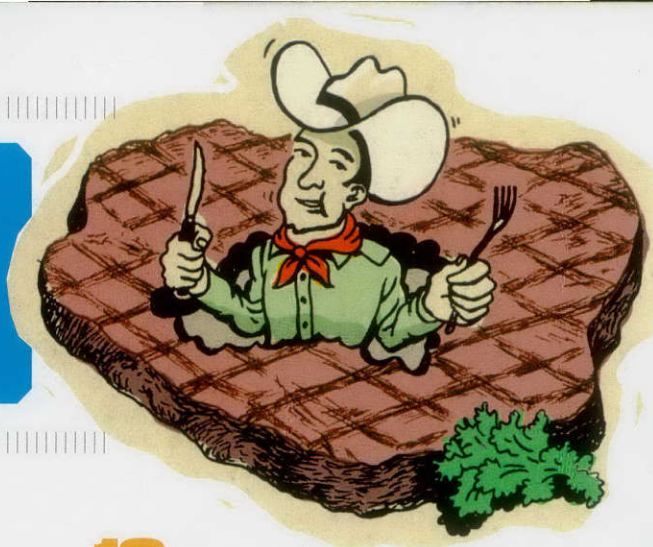
If you've ever been to a Willie Nelson 4th of July picnic, **add 10**. If you've seen him at Floore's, **add 15**.





11

If you know someone who's eaten (and finished) the 72-ounce steak at The Big Texan Steak Ranch in Amarillo, **add 5**. If YOU finished the steak, **add 15**. If you just ordered the salad, **subtract 10**.



12

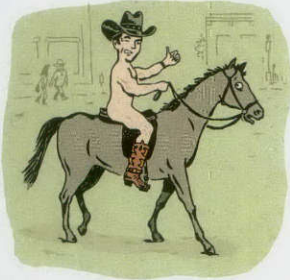
If you arrange your fall around the football schedule, **add 5**. If you checked the football schedule before planning your wedding, **add 10**.

13

If you've ever had a nice, long conversation on the phone, **add 5**. If it started off as a wrong number, **add 10**.

14

If you wear a cowboy hat and boots, **add 5**. If you wear them while riding horseback, **add 10**.



15

If you can name all 50 states, **add 5**. If you get stumped after answering "Texas," **add 10**.

16

If you can pronounce Mexia, Bexar, Gruene, Borne, Study Butte, and Burnet without raising a true Texan's eyebrow, **add 10**. If you insist on challenging the rogue "R"s that are heard in the names Pedernales, Refugio, or Kuykendal (Per-da-nales, Re-fury-oh, Kirk-en-doll), **subtract 10**.

17

If you've helped a customer at the hardware store, **add 5**. If you didn't work there, **add 10**.

19

If you've ever enjoyed a snow day based on forecast alone, **add 5**.



20

If you've ever ridden a bull, **add 5**. If it wasn't mechanical, **add 15**.

21

If you like your steak rare to medium, **add 5**. If you're a vegetarian, well ... to each his own, and we'll try not to judge, so no deductions.

22

If you think boots are perfectly fine footwear for a formal event, **add 5**. If you have boots for different occasions (work, rodeo, dress,

casual, hunting), **add 10**. If you plan to be buried in your boots, **add 15**.

23

If you fly the American flag, **add 5**. If you also fly the Texas flag, **add 10**.

24

If you've visited the Texas State Cemetery in Austin, **add 5**. If you're there to see interred relatives, **add 15**. If you can trace your Texas roots back three generations, **add 10**. Six generations, **add 15**. If you got here as soon as you could, Welcome! **add 5**.

25

If you got married in Texas, **add 10**. If you stayed in Texas for your honeymoon, **add 15**.

26

If you can name four famous Texans, **add 5**. If you knew them back in the day, **add 10**. If you are related to them, **add 15**. If you are a famous Texan, **add 20**.

18

If you've taken a date to Whataburger, **add 5**. If you've had a Whataburger at the chain's original location in Corpus Christi, **add 10**. If you pronounce it "What-a-burger," instead of the Texan "water-burger," **subtract 5**.

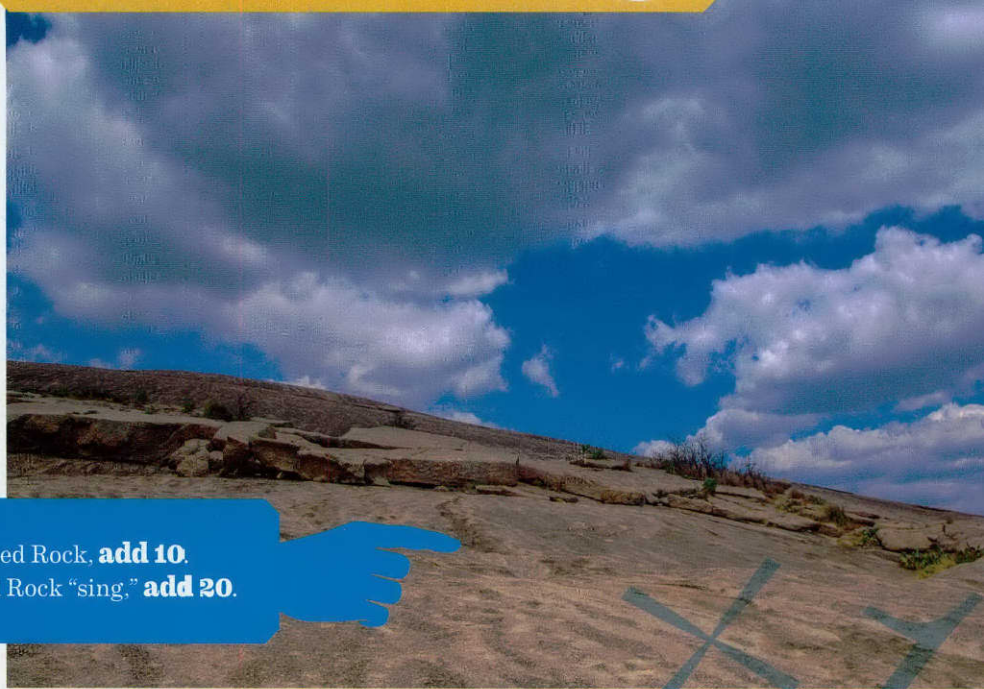






If stopping for kolaches is a road-trip tradition, **add 5**. If you pick up an extra dozen for home or the office, **add 10**.

**27**



**28**

If you've climbed Enchanted Rock, **add 10**. If you've heard Enchanted Rock "sing," **add 20**.

**29**

If you know the origin of the word "Texas," **add 5**. If you know what "Don't Mess with Texas" means, **add 10**. If you think either are fightin' words, **subtract 5**.

**30**

What follows the word "breakfast?" If you said "in bed," **subtract 5**. That sounds nice, but it's not exclusively a Texan indulgence. If you said "taco," **add 5**.

**31**

If you've attempted to climb to the top of Guadalupe Peak, **add 5**. If you reached the top, **add 15**.

**32**

If you've been known to shed a tear while listening to George Jones, **add 5**. If you've mowed lawns with George Jones, **add 15**.

**33**

If you've seen George Strait perform, **add 5**. If you've

seen him perform in San Marcos with the Ace in the Hole Band, **add 10**.

**35**

If you can sing Freddy Fender's "Before the Next Teardrop Falls" in English AND Spanish, **add 5**. If you know the singer's given name, **add 10**.

**36**

If you've seen a football game at the Astrodome, **add 10**. If you think Bum

Phillips is a messed-up screwdriver, **subtract 5**.

**38**

If you not only remember the Alamo, but you've also visited it, **add 10**. If you felt a deep reverence when you entered, **add 5**. If you asked directions to the Alamo basement while there, **subtract 10**.

**39**

If you've visited the Selena Memorial in Corpus Christi,

SPEED  
LIMIT  
85

**34**

If you've driven 85 mph—legally—on Texas 130, the highest speed limit in the nation, **add 5**.

**37**

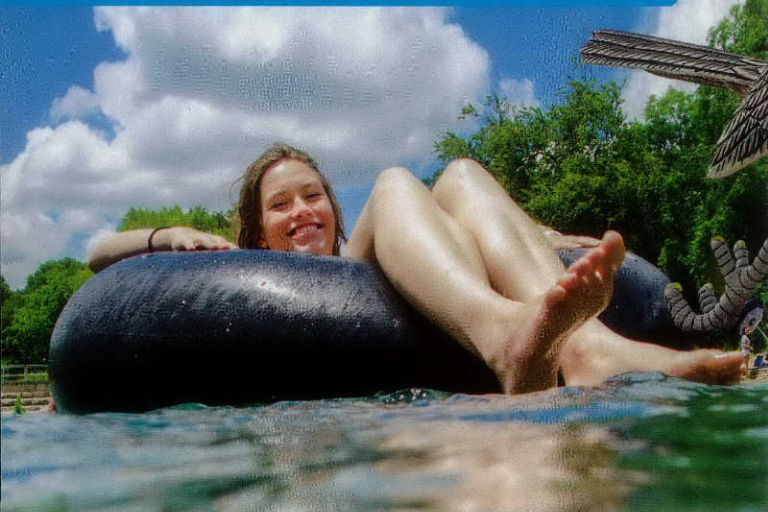
If you've been stung by a jellyfish on a Texas beach, **add 5**.





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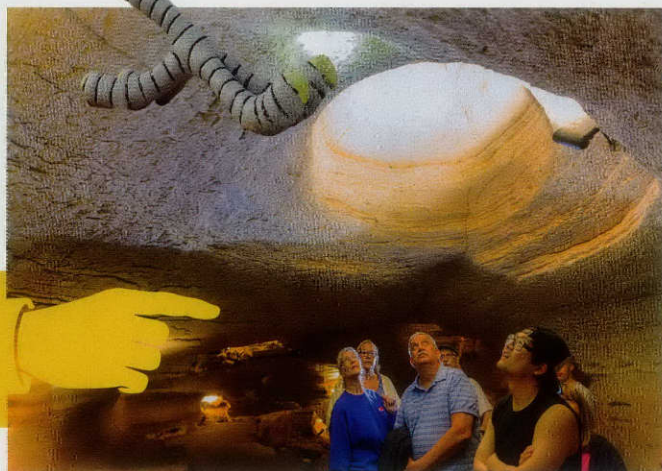
If you've tubed a Texas river, **add 5**.  
If you've read *Goodbye to a River*, **add 10**.



+5

47

If you've taken a selfie with Paisano Pete in Fort Stockton or some other kitschy Texas landmark, **add 5**.



41

If you've toured one of Texas' beautiful caverns, **add 5**. If you did it without a flashlight, **add 10**.  
If you emerged without a panic attack, **add 15**.

**add 5**. If you just started singing one of her many hits in your head, **add 10**. If you're still wondering "who's Selena?" **subtract 10**.

42

If you've driven from border to border, **add 10**. If you did it without stopping, **subtract 5**. If you spent at least a week checking out cool towns along the way, **add 15**.

43

If you've ridden a roller coaster at a Texas amusement park, **add 5**. If you've ridden Texas' biggest coasters, **add 10**. If you did it within 20 minutes of eating

a corn dog and funnel cake, **add 15**.

45

If you've worn shorts on Christmas day, **add 5**. If you got a tan on Christmas, **add 10**.



46

If you know who made the town of Turkey famous, **add 5**. If you think we're

talking about a bird, **subtract 5**.

48

If, when someone is perplexed by your loyalty to the Lone Star State, you steal a line from Lyle Lovett and say, "That's right, you're not from Texas," **add 5**.

49

If you've waited in line for tried-and-true barbecue, **add 5**. If you made a life-long friend in that line, **add 10**. If you've perfected your own barbecue, **add 15**.

50

If you subscribe to *Texas Highways* magazine, **add 5**.

For every year you've subscribed, **add 1**. For every gift subscription you have given, **add 1**. If you currently live outside of Texas, but still subscribe to *Texas Highways*, **add 5**.

**Find the quiz at [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com) and share with friends for a bonus 5 points.**

**QUIZ KEY**

1. Find all things fried and true at the State Fair of Texas ([bigtex.com](http://bigtex.com)).
2. The key question in the movie *Urban Cowboy* is, "Are you a real cowboy?"
3. Miriam Amanda Wallace "Ma" Ferguson, the first female governor of Texas, served terms from 1925-1927 and from 1932-1935.
4. In 1976, San Marcos' Cheatham Street Warehouse owner Kent Finlay sang a song that has been sung at many chili cook-offs since. Its title: "If you know beans about chili, you know that chili has no beans."
5. That's a 4.5-pound steak,

44

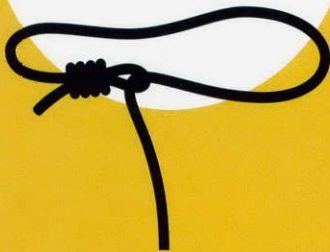
If you drive a pickup truck, **add 5**. If your truck has a name, **add 10**.





## QUIZ RESULTS

**Below  
Zero**  
Get a rope!



Well, bless your heart!

Don't mind the rope. We wouldn't actually cause you any harm. We're too polite for that, but you have to decide if you're in or if you're out. We'll take you in and show you the ropes, but you have to want it. Being Texan starts with attitude and a positive one at that. By taking the test, you've shown initiative. Well done! Now brush up on the history, geography, and culture of Texas' incredible people and places. It's a lot, but you can handle it. Now, put a little swagger in your step and hold your head high. You're well on your way to becoming a true Texan. We'll gladly teach you a few things over barbecue and a longneck.

**0-149**  
**Texan In  
Training**



Maybe you're a native who takes "being Texan" for granted (Gasp!). We forgive you, but it's time to count your blessings and get on board. Or, maybe you weren't born here, but you got here as quickly as you could. We embrace you as our own. After all, Dairy Queen started in Illinois, but we love it like our own. Either way, you have the right attitude. You're polite, and you eat, drink, and walk like the natives. You never met a stranger. You love the diversity of the state's landscape and people. You think big, work hard, and play hard. You don't just want to be a Texan, you were born to be a Texan. Claim your birthright.

**150+**  
**True Texan**



You are Texas, through and through, with roots deep in the Lone Star State! You're proud of your Texas heritage, and you wear it like a badge wherever you go. You're polite and respectful—"yes sir" and "yes ma'am," included—because your momma raised you right, and you care about how you reflect the Texas mystique. You don't just talk big, you can back it up. As they say, it's not bragging if it's true.

You're in the ranks with Willie Nelson, armadillos, and Friday night football. You have sweet iced tea running through your veins. And it wouldn't surprise us, in the least, if you came out of the womb with a hearty "Howdy, y'all!" 🤠

baked potato, shrimp cocktail, salad, and a roll. Gulp! ([bigtexas.com](http://bigtexas.com)).

**16.** If you need help with any of these names, visit the *Texas Almanac Pronunciation Guide*. <http://texasalmanac.com/topics/population/texas-pronunciation-guide>.

**24.** The Texas State Cemetery is an impressive place to visit for Texas history insight. [cemetery.texas.gov](http://cemetery.texas.gov).

**26.** Here are a few famous Texans. <now any? <http://www.biography.com/people/groups/born-in-texas>.

**28.** It's a great hike up the mystical batholith. <http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/enchanted-rock>.

**29.** "Texas" means "friendship"

and, in a friendly way, we ask that you "Don't Mess With Texas" by keeping it litter-free. It's the respectful thing to do. [dontmesswithtexas.org](http://dontmesswithtexas.org).

**32.** There are many stories about George Jones' reputation for drinking. Here's a notable one: After his wife hid the car keys to keep him from alcohol, Jones rode a lawnmower for about an hour-and-a-half to make the eight-mile trek to a Beaumont liquor store. Oh, George!

**33.** On October 13, 1975, George Strait and Ace in the Hole performed for the first time ever at Cheatham Street Warehouse in San Marcos.

**34.** Texas 130 was built to relieve

Interstate 35 traffic through the San Antonio-Austin corridor. The speed limit is at least 80, but the toll section between Mustang Ridge and Seguin has the highest posted speed limit—85 mph—in the nation.

**35.** Baldemar Huerta doesn't sound as catchy as Freddy Fender, but few can match the sound of his amazing voice.

**36.** The late Bum Phillips was a beloved Houston Oilers coach from 1975-1980 with a Texas-sized personality. RIP, Bum.

**37.** Texas Parks and Wildlife recommends: If you are stung by a jellyfish, splash the area with salt water,

then apply a paste of unseasoned meat tenderizer. Don't press the skin. The pain should go away within an hour. Regular vinegar or a solution of one part bleach to 10 parts water also work to alleviate pain.

**39.** Selena Quintanilla, the "Queen of Tejano Music," was deeply loved and admired, then memorialized after she was murdered in 1995 by her fan club president. Incidentally, pop singer and native Texan Selena Gomez was reportedly named after the Tejano singer.

**46.** Go to Turkey in April to celebrate Bob Wills Day. How's that for a hint?





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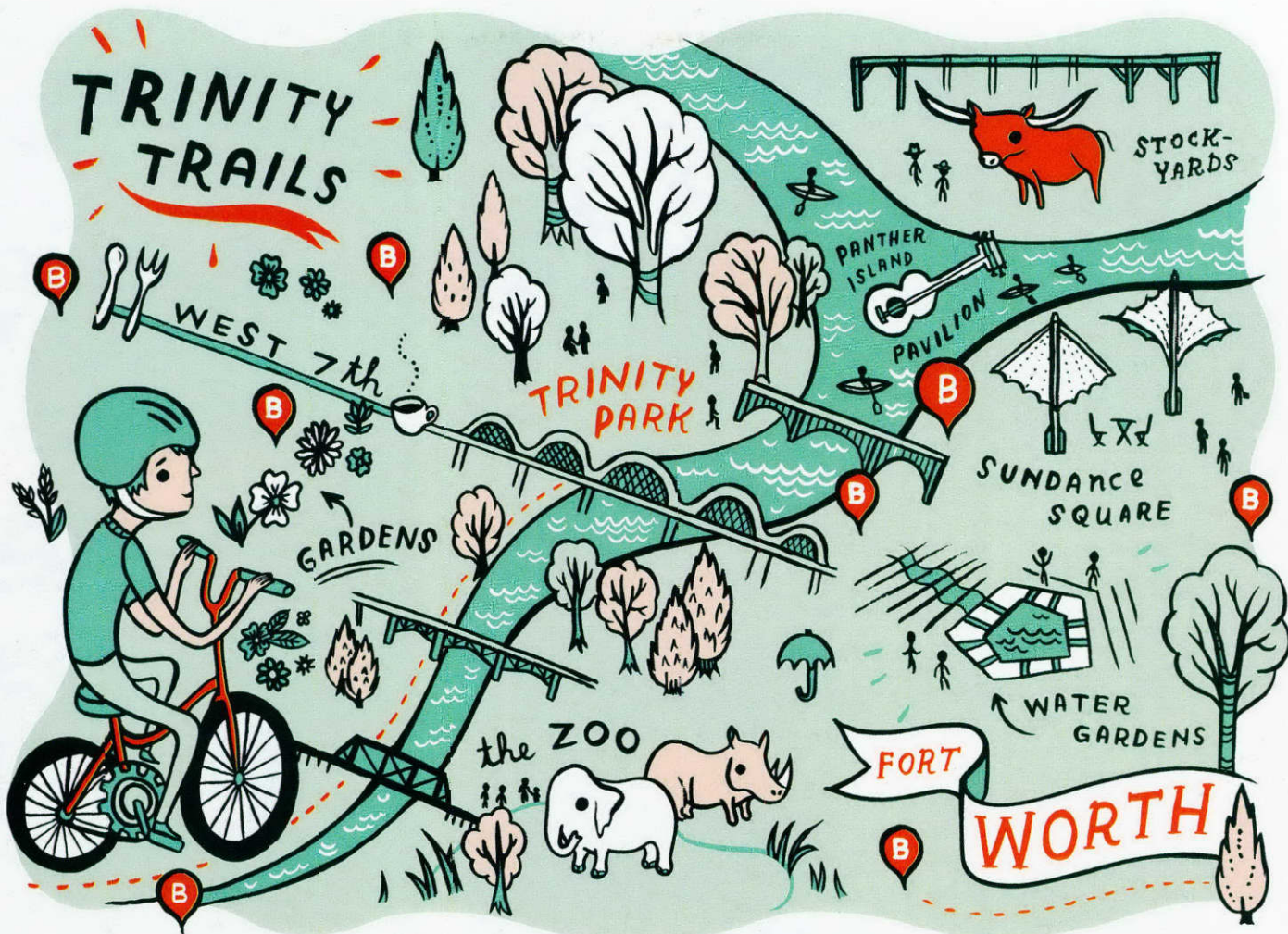
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## Trinity Tales

Exploring Fort Worth's Trinity Trails

text by **Melissa Gaskill**

**F**ROM MY SEAT ON THE SHADED PATIO AT Woodshed Smokehouse, the view takes in a wall of leafy green trees and rippling water that glimmers in the sun. This restaurant overlooks the Clear Fork of the Trinity River and Fort Worth's Trinity Trails, 40 miles of paved and crushed-limestone routes suitable for hikers, bikers, runners, and equestrians. The trails connect many of the city's parks and attractions, setting the stage for my weekend of outdoor recreation, dining, and relaxation—all without a car.

I've started my Trinity Trails adventure with a hearty lunch. Chef Tim Love draws on a variety

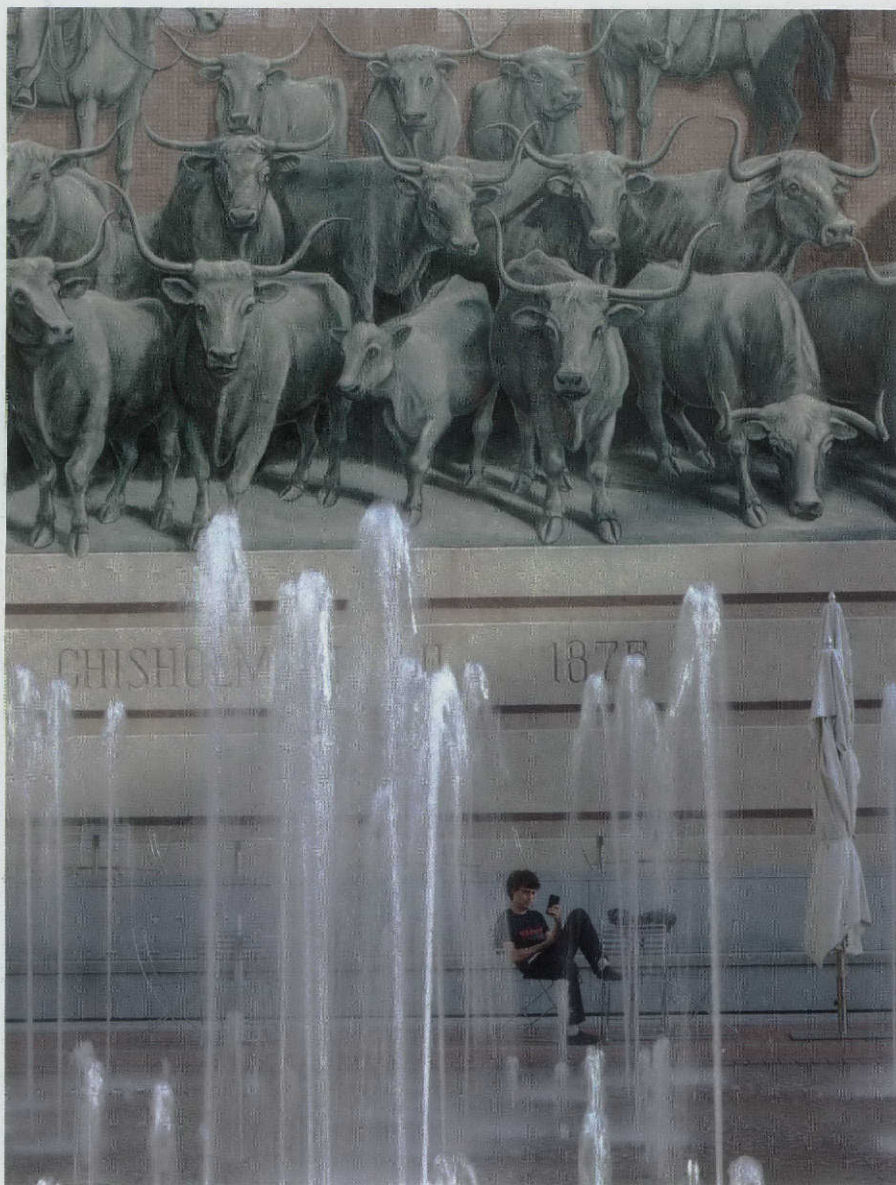


- **Houston**  
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- **Austin**  
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- **Amarillo**  
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- **Texarkana**  
3.5 hours
- **Abilene**  
2.25 hours

of woods like mesquite and pecan stored in on-site sheds for his expertly grilled, roasted, and slow-cooked meats, fish, and vegetables. I order the butcher's sandwich, piled high with brisket, pulled pork, sausage, coleslaw, house pickles, and mustard, along with a side of Mexican roasted corn. It's more than adequate fuel for the bike ride ahead of me.

The Trinity River rises from four tributaries—the East Fork, Elm Fork, West Fork, and Clear Fork. Near downtown Fort Worth, the Clear Fork empties into the West Fork, which then runs toward downtown Dallas, where it meets the Elm





Fork. The East Fork starts north of Dallas, skirts east of the city, and joins the West Fork south of town. From that junction near the community of Rosser, the Trinity then flows 423 miles to the coast, making it the longest river entirely in Texas.

Historians believe Spanish explorers gave the Trinity its name in 1690. In the 1800s, steamboats plied the river carrying people and goods, including cotton. Railroads later supplanted the steamboats, and in the 1950s, a flood-control project channeled the Trinity's routes through Fort Worth and Dallas. For decades, both cities mostly ignored the tamed river, but more recently, each community has realized its recreational potential. Fort Worth developed

the Trinity River Vision, a master plan for the river, and the Tarrant Regional Water District built the Trinity Trails system as part of that plan.

**Fort Worth's B-cycle bike-sharing program has 44 stations around town. Learn more and sign up for the program at <https://fortworth.bcycle.com>.**

My meaty sandwich devoured, I check out a bicycle at the B-cycle station next to the restaurant and head out to explore the network of trails. I ride toward downtown, about three miles away, slipping under bridges, past forests of sycamores, willows, oaks, red-buds, and junipers, and in the water,



herons, egrets, ducks, and turtles. The trail traverses Trinity Park, home to a duck pond, several playgrounds, and a fishing pier. As the Forest Park Miniature Railroad train crosses the trail, I stop briefly as passengers wave merrily.

I detour through the park, leave my trusty two-wheeler at another B-cycle station, and walk a short distance to the Fort Worth Botanic Garden. This jewel features more than 2,500 species of plants in 23 themed gardens—rose, Japanese, fragrance, perennial, seasonal, and water conservation among them—as well as a conservatory. I opt for the Texas Native Forest Boardwalk, an elevated path with platforms that provide views of the garden's major features. Active educational exercises





**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:**

Fountains and the Chisholm Trail Mural at Sundance Square; kayaking the Trinity River; and bicycling past the Mark Twain sculpture on the Trinity Trails.

entertain along the way, like walking on balance beam logs, using spotting scopes, and crawling through hollow tree replicas.

Back astride another bicycle, I continue on my way, stopping to refill my water bottle at one of the fountains dotting the route. Several times, I pause to watch people trying their luck at one of the trail's fishing areas. Matt Oliver, public information officer with the Trinity River Vision Authority, informs me that people catch yellow and blue catfish, crappie, and largemouth and black bass. (The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department releases fish periodically to improve anglers' chances.)

The afternoon almost gone, I swing into downtown on Taylor Street, return my bike—more than a dozen stations in the downtown area and 44 in all make it easy—and pop into my lodging for the weekend, the Courtyard by Marriott, to clean up. Then it's a short walk to Panther Island Pavilion, a beach and waterfront stage on the Trinity that hosts a variety of events year-round. During the summer Rockin' the River concert series,

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photo by Kathy Tate



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live bands play to a crowd lounging in tubes on the river. I'm here for Oktoberfest Fort Worth (September 22-24, 2016), a line-up of live music, traditional German beer and cuisine like schnitzel and strudel, keg rolling, stein hoisting, and a dachshund parade.

All this fun has me ready for a good night's sleep. My hotel, originally called the Blackstone Hotel, opened in 1929 and hosted famous guests including Richard Nixon and, according to rumor, Clark Gable. Restored in the late 1990s, the hotel became a Courtyard by Marriott. Most of the original interior is gone, but a small set of original terrazzo steps remains in the lobby—nicknamed “the steps to nowhere.” And the exterior retains its historic Art Deco look—23 stories of bricks and windows with original spires and terraces. Best of all, the hotel is in the heart of downtown and only about 10 blocks from the Trinity Trails.

Next morning, I hop on another Bicycle and pedal a little more than a mile to the West 7th District, a trendy, pedestrian-friendly area covering nearly five blocks. I meet a friend for breakfast at Righteous Foods. Formerly Lanny's Alta Cocina, this brainchild of Chef Lanny Lancarte serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner crafted from locally sourced ingredients. My “slow coffee” tastes rich and smooth, and I devour the Ranchero Green Eggs and Ham—organic eggs, corn tortillas, pork shoulder, tomatillo, and queso fresco—along with a side of crisp, flavorful uncured bacon.

After lingering over another cup of coffee, I ride back to Panther Island Pavilion to rent a kayak from Backwoods Paddlesports, which offers single and tandem kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards. I paddle upstream on the West Fork for about an hour, checking out birds and turtles before turning my boat around and encountering beautiful, photo-worthy views of the Fort Worth skyline.

I turn in the kayak and pedal to downtown's Sundance Square Plaza,

a recently renovated outdoor space that serves as the centerpiece for a 35-square-block entertainment and business district. A Chisholm Trail-themed mural covers a two-story wall, giant umbrellas shade outdoor tables and benches, and 216 individual fountains spray from the ground, prompting more than a few kids to soak their clothes. At Bird Café, located in the 1889 Land Block Title Building on the corner of the square, I admire the walls and their watercolors of birds painted by Fort Worth artists Scott and Stuart Gentling. The café's lunch menu carries tantalizing salads, lunch plates, and a selection of sandwiches. I opt for smoked chicken salad on a croissant, and I'm delighted to find watermelon and goat cheese in my side salad.

Next, I spend the afternoon exploring other parts of the Trinity Trails by bicycle, riding up to the famous Fort Worth Stockyards, northwest of downtown, then pedaling east along the West Fork. Back downtown, I descend into the Fort Worth Water Gardens, several city blocks of various water features, from a still pool to fountains and, my favorite, the Active Pool, a series of steps and terraces that descends four stories from street level, covered in cascading water.

As I make my way back toward my hotel for the night, I stop along Main Street for dinner at Grace, a posh eatery set in a refined yet comfortable space, which takes a sophisticated spin on classic American cuisine. Then—why not?—I splurge on dessert with the chocolate-and-hazelnut tart, with candied huckleberries, marshmallows, and chocolate mousse and ice cream. It seems a fitting conclusion to my active Fort Worth weekend. I've earned it. **L**

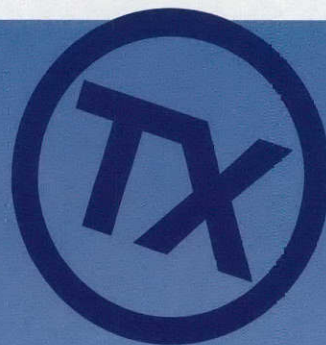


## TRINITY TRAILS

For information, including maps, check out the online forum [www.trinitytrails.org](http://www.trinitytrails.org) and the Tarrant Regional Water District, [www.trwd.com/fort-worth-trinity-trails-map](http://www.trwd.com/fort-worth-trinity-trails-map).



# TRUE

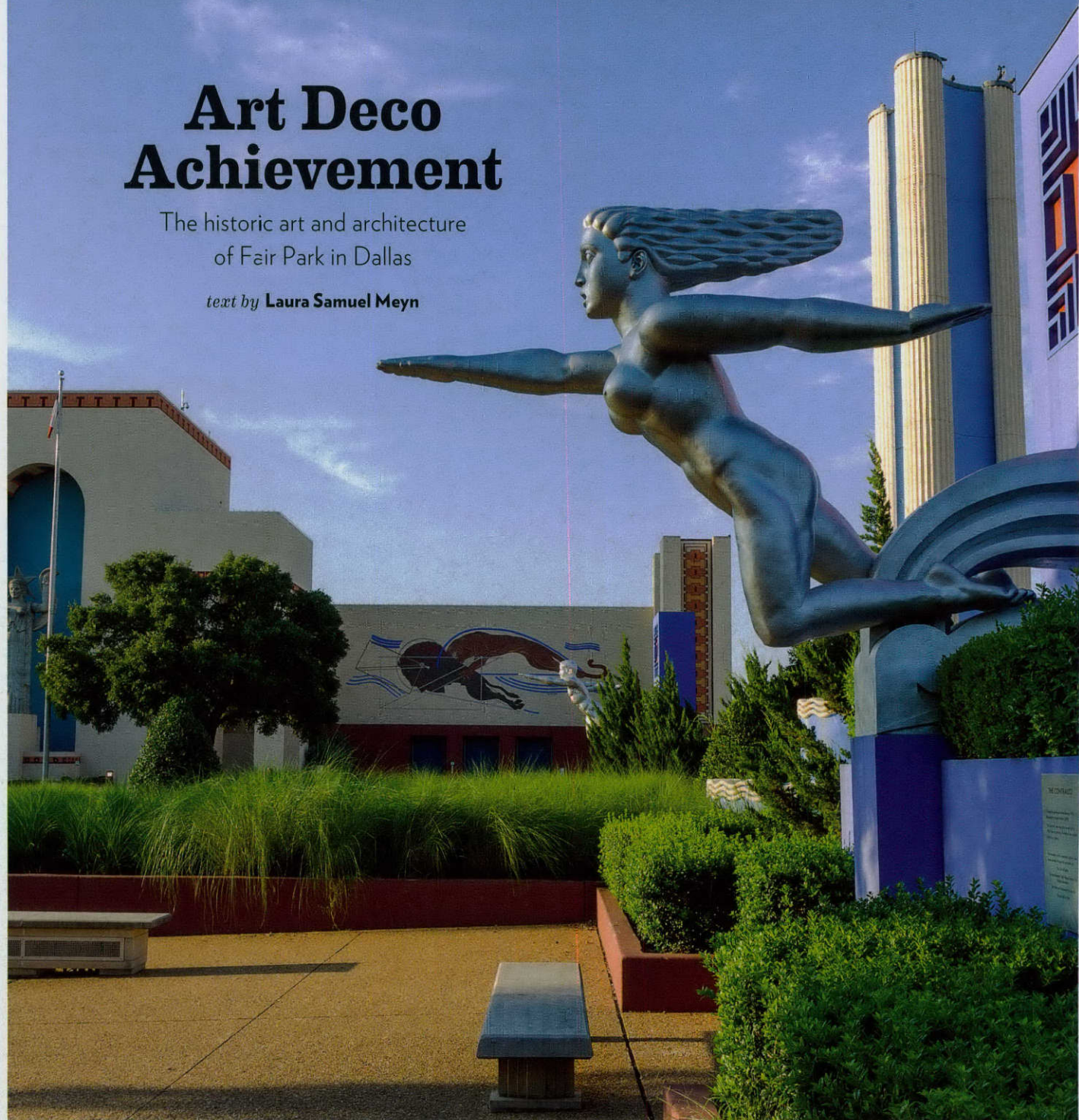


REAL TEXAS STORIES BORN AND BRED

## Art Deco Achievement

The historic art and architecture  
of Fair Park in Dallas

text by **Laura Samuel Meyn**



At one end of the Esplanade are David Newton's re-creations of Laurence Tenney Stevens' original sculptures—*Contralto* in the foreground and *Tenor* in the background.



**L**ET'S SAY YOU'RE AMONG THE MILLIONS OF people who visit Fair Park in Dallas for the State Fair of Texas each year. Maybe you've admired the prize livestock and indulged in the over-the-top culinary concoctions (fried Oreos, anyone?). Maybe you've taken in a bird's-eye view of the festivities from the 212-foot-tall Texas Star Ferris wheel, or strolled through the automobile building dreaming of a new ride.

But if you've only been during the State Fair, you probably haven't really *seen* Fair Park. Playing host to all the action is the world's largest collection of Art Deco exposition buildings in existence. Add to that an impressive array of painted murals, sculptures, and bas-reliefs across the 277-acre campus, and you have a noteworthy concentration of art and architecture that can be enjoyed any time of year. Preferably on a day when there are no corny dogs in sight.

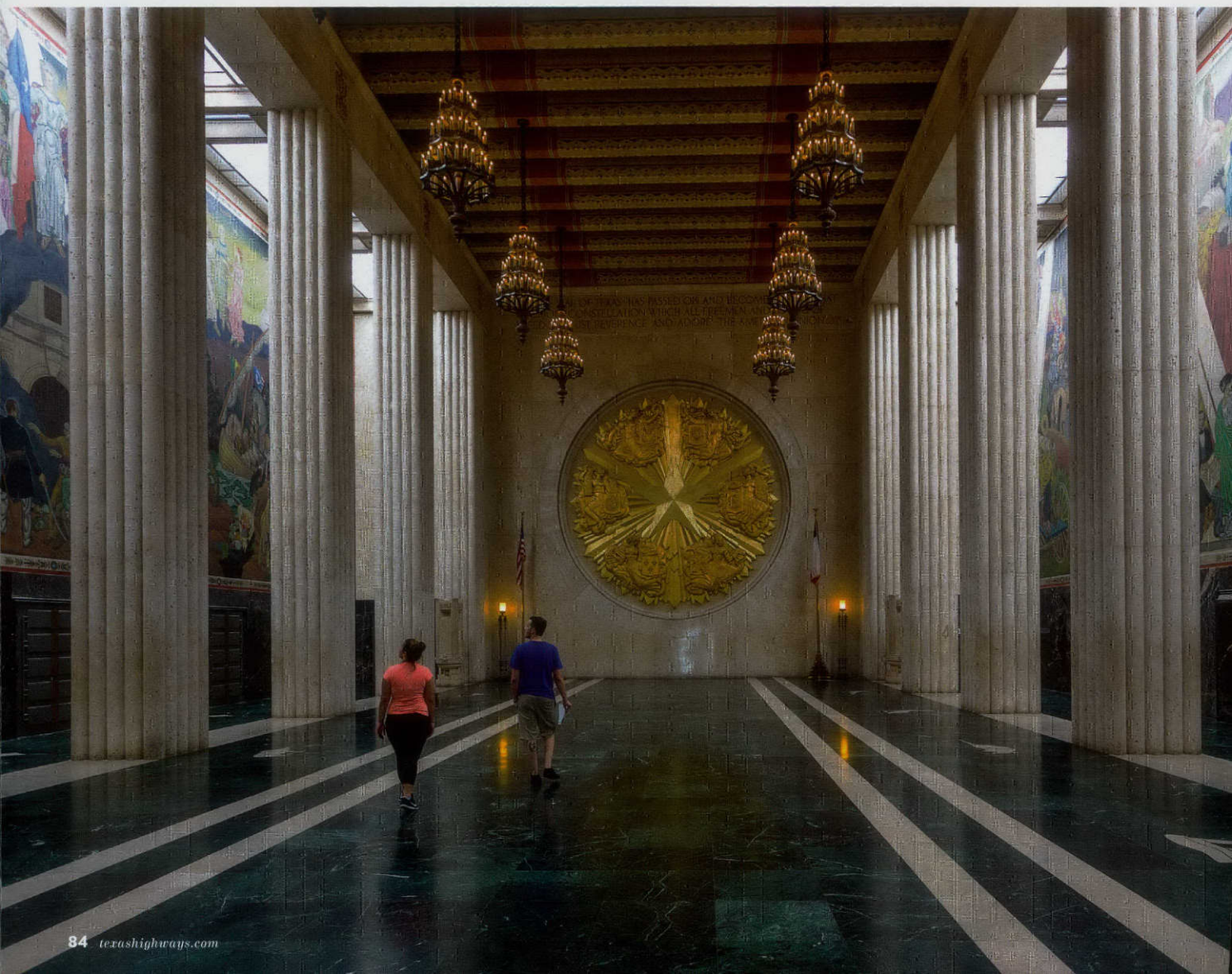
"During the fair, most of it's covered up with stuff," says Craig Holcomb president of Friends of Fair Park, the non-profit dedicated to preserving Fair Park and supporting its

**If you've only been during the State Fair, you probably haven't really seen Fair Park. Playing host to all the action is the world's largest collection of Art Deco exposition buildings in existence.**

year-round use. "If it's a regular day, Fair Park is a quiet, bucolic place; there are people jogging through it, it's a lovely park."

The site was used as fairgrounds as early as 1886 and its oldest buildings date to 1905, but Fair Park as we know it was built in 1936 to host the Texas Centennial Exposition, a world's fair celebrating the 100th anniversary of Texas' independence. Dallas architect George Dahl led a team of colleagues in the ambitious charge to update existing buildings with Art Deco facades and to create dozens more from the ground up, many adorned by the work of notable contemporary artists.

Standing at the Parry Avenue gate, where DART rail cars have replaced



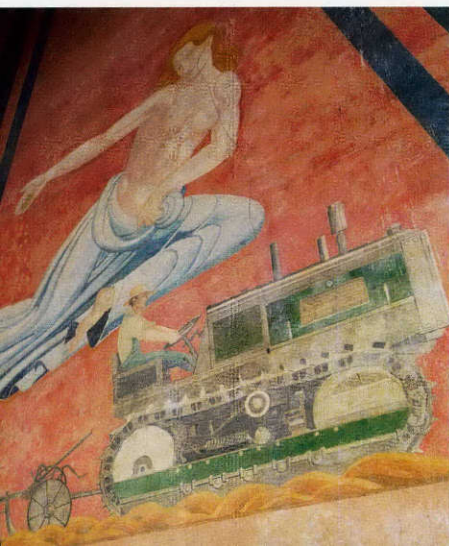


the street trolleys that once delivered visitors to Fair Park, it's easy to appreciate Dahl's vision. Guests first encounter the grand esplanade, anchored by a 700-foot-long fountain with hundreds of water jets that put on regular shows set to songs like "The Yellow Rose of Texas." Looking between parallel rows of live oaks, beyond the fountain, the imposing Hall of State emerges into view. While many Fair Park buildings were fashioned of concrete blocks—an upgrade from the intentionally temporary construction techniques common to world fairs of the day—the Hall of State was built of Texas limestone.

"The Hall of State is considered to be one of the best examples of Art Deco architecture in Texas. All local materials were used, and all the decoration is about celebrating Texas," says preservation architect Nancy McCoy, who has worked on numerous restorations in the park. "The esplanade is the central, most important space. The buildings are Art Deco—or even Moderne—in style, but the planning is Classical, with the most important building raised with a processional experience from the front gate, past a series of other things on the way to the real prize—the Hall of State."

Art and architecture buffs can ac-

The Hall of State's Great Hall (left) and Carlo Ciampaglia's *Traction and Motion* mural on the Centennial Building. See more Fair Park photos at [texashighways.com/true](http://texashighways.com/true).



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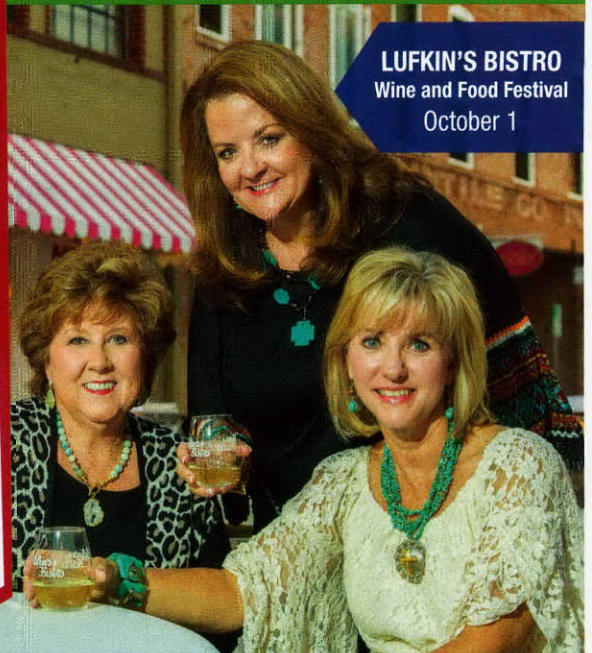
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cess a self-guided tour from the Friends of Fair Park website. There's also a cell-phone tour—look for the blue-and-white signs—for those who want to hear historical highlights at any of 63 stops within Fair Park. At press time, a Fair Park app was nearing release, too.

But a more personal experience can be found in the Dallas Center for Architecture's free monthly tours. "Art Deco was sort of like Gothic in that you're shooting for the sky. Art Moderne emphasizes transportation's curved lines," explains Greg Brown, DCFA tour guide. Of the color palette, he adds, "Frank Lloyd Wright had his Cherokee red; Dahl's favorite color was pumpkin."

Noticeable symmetry emerges along the esplanade. All together, six porticos face the fountain, three per side, each with a sculpted stone figure representing one of the nations that has flown its flag over Texas—Spain, France, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the

Confederacy, and the United States. Throughout Fair Park's art and architecture, references to these six flags fly up time and again.

There's a distinct difference between the left and right sides of the fountain. Wander first up the left side of the esplanade, where the covered walkway along Centennial Hall features a series of large murals by Italian artist Carlo Ciampaglia depicting various modes of transportation. In a cringe-inducing historical moment, they were painted over shortly after the 1936 exposition. But a renovation in 2000 uncovered many of the original murals, which had been well preserved under numerous layers of paint. Scenes include statuesque bare-breasted women, typical of the Art Deco style, unfurling scrolls that reveal the evolution of automobile designs; muscular men in a vignette of historic and modern train travel; and, incredibly for the day, a rocket ship blasting out from earth

into the atmosphere, guided by angels.

On the right side of the esplanade, the Automobile Building bears recreations of murals painted by Pierre Bourdelle; they celebrate industry—from wildcatters to ironworkers. This building was rebuilt after a fire in 1942 and renovated again in 1985. (Some of Bourdelle's original bas-reliefs are still intact on the Centennial Hall side.)

At the end of the esplanade fountain, the silver-finished *Tenor* and *Contralto* bronzes—depicting muscled male and female nudes—spring from the pylons on either side. Lawrence Tenney Stevens created the bronzes for the Centennial, but they were removed not long after the exposition. Friends of Fair Park commissioned David



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Newton to re-create the dynamic duo based on photographs of the originals; they were installed in 2009.

From the fountain's end, it's a short walk across the street to reach the aforementioned architectural prize—the Hall of State. The product of a consortium of prominent architects who Brown says couldn't agree on anything, the Hall of State was brought together in the end by architect Donald Barthelme. Brown points out that while Barthelme didn't get credit for

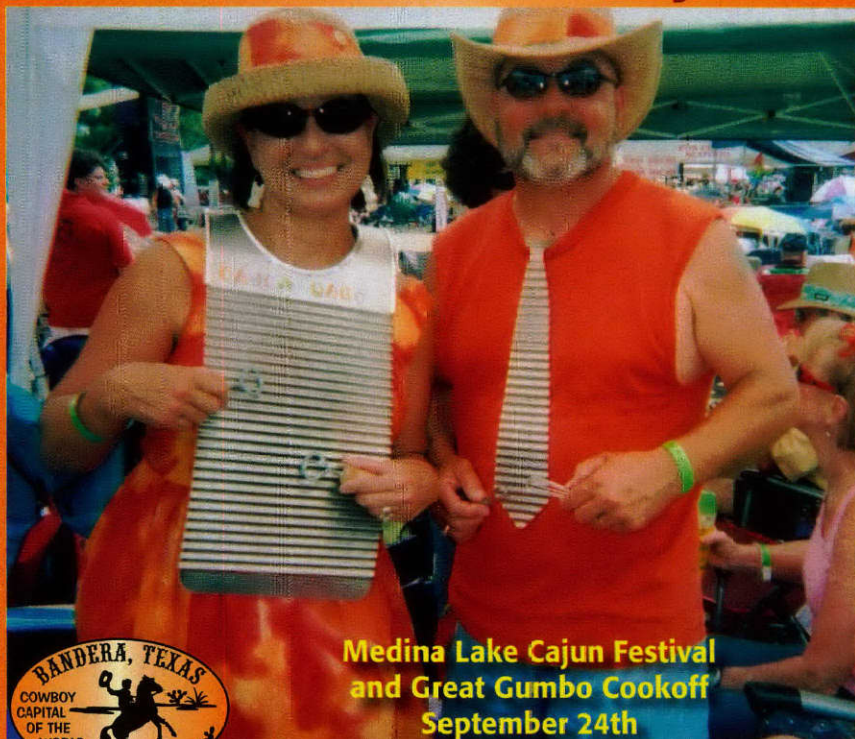
**Leonhardt Lagoon has a pair of giant sculptures, a tangle of wide, flat tentacles—Patricia Johanson's *Sagittaria platyphylla* (Delta Duck-Potato) and *Pteris multifida* (Texas Fern)—that curve around and into the water; they serve as snaking paths.**

the building at the time, he nearly managed to spell out his last name on its frieze—if you follow the first letter of the Texas heroes' names across it (Burleson, Archer, Rusk, Travis, and on). Also notable on the building's exterior is the larger-than-life *Tejas Warrior*, a statuesque bronze covered in gold leaf by Allie Tennant

Inside, the Hall of State displays a visual feast in celebration of Texas. Straight ahead is a massive gold seal with the Texas star; on either side of the Great Hall, with its 46-foot-tall ceilings, Eugene Savage's murals detail Texas history. The works are so large, says Brown, that Barthelme created columns along the sides of the room to frame the mural scenes—from the arrival of the Europeans in the 1500s through 1936—into more manageable bites.

When it's time for lighter fare, a short walk southeast leads to Fair Park's scenic Leonhardt Lagoon. During the Centennial, visitors test-drove Ford's latest models around the lagoon. Today it has a pair of giant sculptures, a tangle of wide, flat

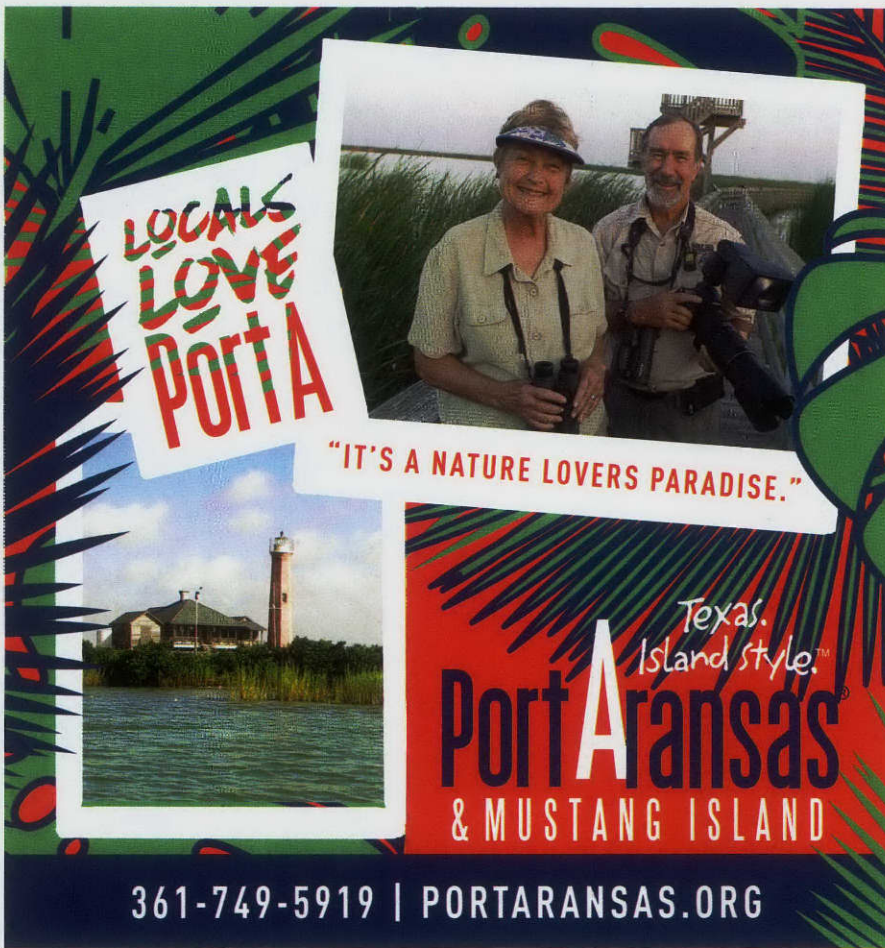
**We are Texan, We are Cowboy,  
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### THE STATE FAIR OF TEXAS

takes place Sep. 30-Oct. 23, but the grounds open daily year-round, including for many special events on weekends. Friends of Fair Park offers information and maps for self-guided walking tours (cell-phone narration available) on its website, [www.fairpark.org](http://www.fairpark.org). The Dallas Center for Architecture leads free Fair Park walking tours on the third Wednesday of the month, Feb-Jun and Sep-Nov. [www.dallasca.com](http://www.dallasca.com).

tentacles—Patricia Johanson's 1986 *Sagittaria platyphylla* (Delta Duck-Potato) and *Pteris multifida* (Texas Fern)—that curve around and into the water; they serve as snaking paths. On weekends, the park rents swan-shaped paddle boats on the lagoon. Nearby, more Art Deco buildings house year-round attractions, including the Children's Aquarium at Fair Park, with piranhas and small sharks whose feeding time proves entertaining, and the Texas Discovery Gardens.

It's hard to believe that Fair Park could feel empty when it brings in roughly 5 million visitors annually, but the sprawling campus does feel a bit like a ghost town at times. Yet in addition to the State Fair and about a dozen annual festivals, fans regularly pour into the Cotton Bowl for football and soccer, into Gexa Energy Pavilion for rock and country concerts, and into the Music Hall for Dallas Summer Musicals and other shows (heads up: Leon Bridges plays September 18).

While it might be difficult to fully appreciate the details of Fair Park during the bustling State Fair, it's worth making a visit specifically to tour the park or planning an early arrival to stroll the esplanade before a concert or game. Drink in the curved lines and the symbolic detail found at every turn. "It will sound like boasting," says Holcomb, "but I've given tours to Russian museum directors, to people from all over the world, and they are completely amazed." 🐾



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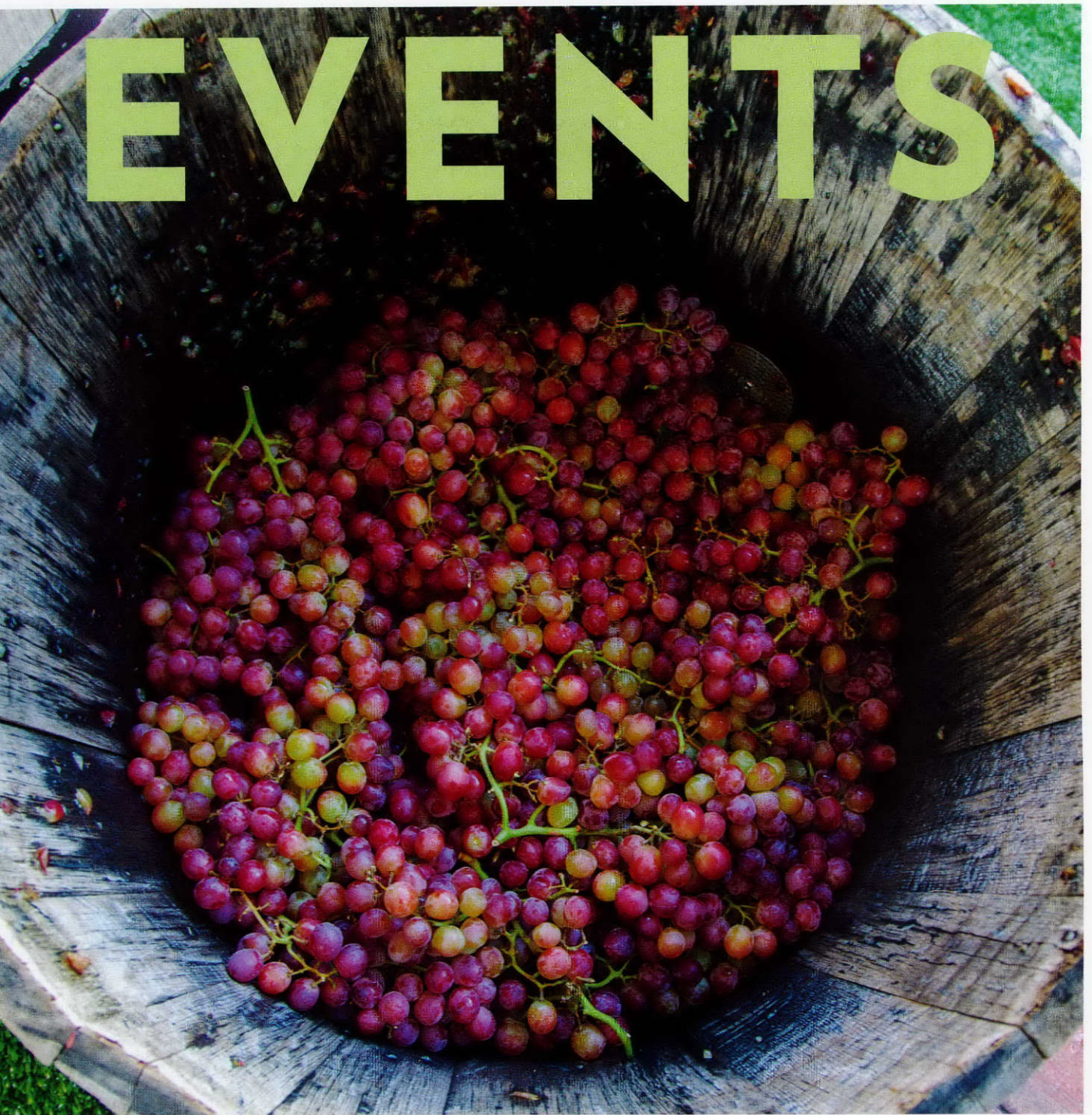
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f t y i p g



# EVENTS



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## SEPTEMBER'S TRAVEL SPOTLIGHT:

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**PRAIRIES AND LAKES** > Grapevine

### **Grapevine GrapeFest**

**T**AKING PLACE A FEW WEEKS AFTER THE GRAPE HARVEST, Grapevine's annual GrapeFest celebrates all things wine with four days of tastings and festivities. The 30th annual edition of GrapeFest (September 15-18) features Texas wines, as well as wines from the California Central Coast and Australia's Barossa Valley. In between sips,

try your hand (or foot, rather) at the popular GrapeStomp, check out the bands on three stages, and fuel up with food vendors. For children, GrapeFest offers a carnival and interactive play stations with Grapevine's LegoLand Discovery Center and Sea Life Aquarium. [www.grapevine.texasusa.com/grapefest](http://www.grapevine.texasusa.com/grapefest).

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



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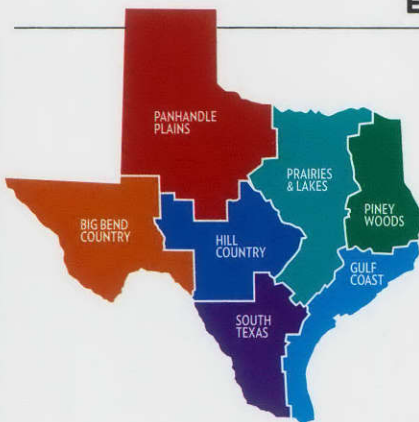
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### BIG BEND COUNTRY

**EL PASO:** Chopin Music Festival September 17. [elpaso.chopinmusicfestival.com](http://elpaso.chopinmusicfestival.com) 915/533-0348

**FORT STOCKTON:** Fort Stockton Fall Festival September 30-October 2. [www.historicfortstockton.com](http://www.historicfortstockton.com) 432/339-2264

**MCCAMEY:** Wind Energy Capital of Texas Cook-Off and Festival September 23-24. [windenergycapitaloftexas.cookoff.com](http://windenergycapitaloftexas.cookoff.com) 432/652-8202

**MONAHANS:** Desert Reflections Car Show September 10. Hill Park. [monahans.org](http://monahans.org) 432/943-2187

**ODESSA:** Permian Basin Fair September 9-17. [www.permianbasinfair.com](http://www.permianbasinfair.com) 432/550-3232

**ODESSA:** Buffalo Battle Odessa 5K Mud Obstacle Race September 24. [www.buffalobattlebegins.com](http://www.buffalobattlebegins.com) 432/368-3548

### GULF COAST

**BEAUMONT:** Neches River Rally September 10. [www.bigthicket.org/neches-river-rally](http://www.bigthicket.org/neches-river-rally) 409/790-5399

**BEAUMONT:** Smithsonian Museum Day Live! at Gladys City September 24. [www.spindletop.org](http://www.spindletop.org) 409/880-1750

**BEAUMONT:** Lace, Grace & Gears Motorcycle Rally September 30-October 2. [www.lacegracegears.com](http://www.lacegracegears.com)

**BROWNSVILLE:** Freddie Gomez Memorial Conjunto Concert September 3. [conjunto.org](http://conjunto.org) 956/545-8446

**BROWNSVILLE:** Oceanarium September 10. [www.gpz.org](http://www.gpz.org) 956/546-7187

**BROWNSVILLE:** Brew at the Zoo September 23. [www.gpz.org](http://www.gpz.org) 956/546-7187

**CORPUS CHRISTI:** A La Mano September 30. [www.facebook.com/corpuschristi](http://www.facebook.com/corpuschristi) visitorinformationcenter 361/561-2000 ext. 201

**FREEPORT:** Summertime Blues Fest September 2-3. [www.freeportsummertimebluesfest.com](http://www.freeportsummertimebluesfest.com) 979/482-2036

**GALVESTON:** Brewmasters Craft Beer Festival September 2-4. [www.brewmastersbeerfest.com](http://www.brewmastersbeerfest.com)

**GALVESTON:** Marine Biology Tours September 3. [www.galvestonhistory.org](http://www.galvestonhistory.org) 409/763-1877

**GALVESTON:** The Tremont Afternoon Tea September 11. [www.thetremonthouse.com](http://www.thetremonthouse.com) 409/763-0300

**GALVESTON:** Galveston Island Wild Texas Shrimp Festival September 23-25. [www.galvestonshrimpfestival.com](http://www.galvestonshrimpfestival.com)

**HOUSTON:** National Beer Mile September 3. [www.visithoustontexas.com](http://www.visithoustontexas.com)

**HOUSTON:** Hispanic Heritage Celebration September 15. [www.visithoustontexas.com](http://www.visithoustontexas.com)

**HOUSTON:** Picasso: The Line September 16-January 8. [www.menil.org](http://www.menil.org)

**HOUSTON:** Houston Antiques + Art + Design Show: Fall Edition September 16. [www.visithoustontexas.com](http://www.visithoustontexas.com)

**HOUSTON:** Craft Texas 2016 September 23-January 8. [www.crafthouston.org](http://www.crafthouston.org) 713/529-4848

**HOUSTON:** Houston Art Fair September 29-October 2. [www.houstonartfair.com](http://www.houstonartfair.com)

**INGLESIDE:** IFR Fishing Tournament September 10. 361/776-7422

**LAKE JACKSON:** Abner Jackson Plantation Site Tour September 3. [www.lakejacksonmuseum.org](http://www.lakejacksonmuseum.org) 979/297-1570

**LAKE JACKSON:** Bird Banding September 17. [www.gqbo.org](http://www.gqbo.org) 979/480-0999

**LAKE JACKSON:** Peace Officers 5K September 17. [brazoriacountypoa.com](http://brazoriacountypoa.com) 979/864-2220

### HILL COUNTRY

**AUSTIN:** Journey Into Big Bend Through September 18. [www.thestoryoftexas.com](http://www.thestoryoftexas.com)

**AUSTIN:** Goya: Mad Reason Through September 25. [www.blantonmuseum.org](http://www.blantonmuseum.org) 512/471-7324

**AUSTIN:** Lone Star Le Mans September 15-17. [www.circuitoftheamericas.com](http://www.circuitoftheamericas.com)

**AUSTIN:** Capital of Texas Quiltfest September 16-18. [www.captxquiltfest.org](http://www.captxquiltfest.org) 512/694-6478

**AUSTIN:** Lone Star Book Festival September 24-25. [www.LoneStarBookFest.com](http://www.LoneStarBookFest.com) 512/554-9560

**AUSTIN:** Texas American Indian Heritage Day September 30. 512/371-0628

**AUSTIN:** Austin City Limits Music Festival September 30-October 2, 7-9. [www.aclfestival.com](http://www.aclfestival.com)

**BANDERA:** Celebrate Bandera September 2-4. [www.MayhemOnTheMedina.com](http://www.MayhemOnTheMedina.com) 830/796-4447

**BANDERA:** Bandera Market Days September 3. [www.banderatexasbusiness.com](http://www.banderatexasbusiness.com) 830/796-4447

**BANDERA:** Rumble on the River Biker Rally September 16-18. [www.bikerralliesoftexas.com](http://www.bikerralliesoftexas.com) 936/776-1699

**BERTRAM:** Oatmeal Festival September 3. [www.oatmealfestival.org](http://www.oatmealfestival.org) 512/244-6357

**BOERNE:** Kendall County Fair and Rodeo September 2-4. [www.visitboerne.org](http://www.visitboerne.org)

**BOERNE:** Boerne Market Days September 10-11. [www.visitboerne.org](http://www.visitboerne.org)

**BOERNE:** Second Saturday Art and Wine September 10. [www.visitboerne.org](http://www.visitboerne.org)

**BOERNE:** Fall Equinox with Celebration Circle September 17. [cavewithoutaname.com](http://cavewithoutaname.com)

**BRADY:** World Championship Barbecue Goat Cook-Off September 2-3. [www.bradytx.com](http://www.bradytx.com) 888/577-3491

**BULVERDE:** Tejas Rodeo September 3, 10, 17, 24. [www.visitboerne.org](http://www.visitboerne.org)

**BULVERDE:** Bulverde Jubilee Freedom Festival September 17. [www.facebook.com/BulverdeJubilee](http://www.facebook.com/BulverdeJubilee) 210/240-9694

**BURNET:** Bluebonnet Airshow September 10. [bluebonnetairshow.com](http://bluebonnetairshow.com) 512/756-2226

**BURNET:** Burnet Art Festival September 15-17. [www.artburnet.com](http://www.artburnet.com) 830/613-1055

**BURNET:** Bluegrass Festival September 17. [www.cityofburnet.com](http://www.cityofburnet.com) 512/756-2402

**BURNET:** Burnet BBQ Cook-Off and Music Festival September 23-24. [www.burnetchamber.org](http://www.burnetchamber.org) 512/756-4297

**BURNET:** Day Out with Thomas September 30-October 2. [www.austinsteamtrain.org](http://www.austinsteamtrain.org) 512/477-8468

**COMFORT:** Art Festival and Barbecue September 17. [www.comfort-texas.com](http://www.comfort-texas.com) 830/995-3131

**DRIPPING SPRINGS:** Dripping with Taste September 10. [www.drippingwithtaste.com](http://www.drippingwithtaste.com) 512/858-4740

**FREDERICKSBURG:** First Friday Art Walk Fredericksburg September 2. [www.ffawf.com](http://www.ffawf.com) 830/997-6523

**FREDERICKSBURG:** Vereins Quilt Guild Show September 2-3. [www.verainsquiltguild.org](http://www.verainsquiltguild.org) 830/997-5597

**FREDERICKSBURG:** Grape Stomp at Chisholm Trail Winery September 3. [www.chisholmtrailwinery.com](http://www.chisholmtrailwinery.com) 830/990-2675

**FREDERICKSBURG:** USO-Style Hangar Dance September 3. [www.hangarhotel.com](http://www.hangarhotel.com) 830/997-9990

**FREDERICKSBURG:** Fredericksburg Professional Bull Riders September 10. [www.gillespiefair.com](http://www.gillespiefair.com) 830/997-2359

**FREDERICKSBURG:** Fredericksburg Trade Days September 16-18. [www.fbgradedays.com](http://www.fbgradedays.com) 830/990-4900

**FREDERICKSBURG:** Nimitz Foundation Symposium September 17. Steve W. Shepherd Theater. [www.pacificwarmuseum.org](http://www.pacificwarmuseum.org) 830/997-8600 ext. 205

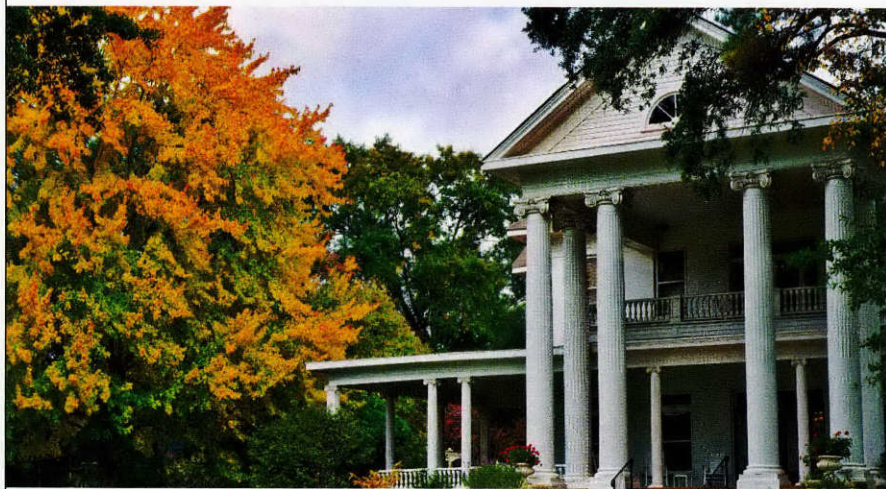
**FREDERICKSBURG:** Oktoberfest September 30-October 3. [www.oktoberfestinfbg.com](http://www.oktoberfestinfbg.com) 830/997-4810

**GRUENE:** Old Gruene Market Days September 17-18. [GrueeneMarketDays.com](http://GrueeneMarketDays.com) 830/832-1721

**HARPER:** Harper Frontier Days Celebration September 2-3. [www.harpercommunitypark.org](http://www.harpercommunitypark.org) 830/864-5048



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**HONDO:** South Texas Maize September 17-November 20. [southtexasmaize.com](http://southtexasmaize.com) 830/741-3968

**JOHNSON CITY:** *We Got Yer Goat* September 9-10. [www.wegotyergoat.com](http://www.wegotyergoat.com) 830/868-7684

**JOHNSON CITY:** Art Walk September 24. [www.asmithgallery.com](http://www.asmithgallery.com) 830/868-7684

**JOHNSON CITY:** Market Days September 24-25. [www.lbjcountry.com](http://www.lbjcountry.com) 830/868-7684

**KERRVILLE:** Kerrville Fall Music Festival September 2-4. [www.kerrville-music.com](http://www.kerrville-music.com) 830/257-3600

**KERRVILLE:** Labor Day Star Party September 2-5. [www.ubaru.org](http://www.ubaru.org)

**KERRVILLE:** Kerr County Market Days September 3. [www.kerrmarketdays.org](http://www.kerrmarketdays.org) 830/895-7524

**KERRVILLE:** Kerrville Traders Fest and Open Car and Bike Show September 24-25. [www.kerrvilletradersfest.com](http://www.kerrvilletradersfest.com) 830/739-6700

**KERRVILLE:** Kerrville Triathlon September 24-25. [www.kerrvilletri.com](http://www.kerrvilletri.com)

**KERRVILLE:** Texas Heritage Music Day September 30. [www.texasheritagemusic.org](http://www.texasheritagemusic.org) 830/792-1945

**KYLE:** Kyle Market Days September 10. [www.cityofkyle.com](http://www.cityofkyle.com) 512/262-3939

**LAKEHILLS:** Cajun Festival and Gumbo Cook-Off September 24. [www.cajunfestival-medinalake.com](http://www.cajunfestival-medinalake.com) 830/751-3130

**LAMPASAS:** Lampasas Trade Days September 23-25. [lampasastradedays.com](http://lampasastradedays.com) 512/734-1294

**MARBLE FALLS:** Main Street Market Day September 17. [www.marblefalls.org](http://www.marblefalls.org) 830/693-2815

**MARBLE FALLS:** Fiesta JAM September 24. [fiestajam.org](http://fiestajam.org)

**NEW BRAUNFELS:** 13th Annual Comal County Fair BBQ Cook-Off September 16-17. [www.innewbraunfels.com](http://www.innewbraunfels.com) 830/625-1505

**NEW BRAUNFELS:** Comal County Fair and Rodeo September 20-25. [comalcountyfair.org](http://comalcountyfair.org) 830/625-1505

**NEW BRAUNFELS:** Liberty Gun Show September 24-25. [libertygunshow.com](http://libertygunshow.com) 512/774-4867

**ROCKSPRINGS:** Camp Eagle Classic Mountain Bike Festival

September 2-4. [www.tmbra.org](http://www.tmbra.org) 830/896-6864

**SAN MARCOS:** Mermaid Week SMTX September 10-17. [www.mermaidsociety.smtx.com](http://www.mermaidsociety.smtx.com) 512/393-8400

**SAN MARCOS:** Junior Texas Water Safari September 17. [www.texaswatersafari.org](http://www.texaswatersafari.org) 512/738-6607

**STONEWALL:** Grape Stomp September 3-4. [www.beckervineyards.com](http://www.beckervineyards.com) 830/644-2681

**TAYLOR:** 9/11 Patriot Day March and Program September 11. [www.taylorchamber.org](http://www.taylorchamber.org) 512/352-6992

**TAYLOR:** Taylor SPJST Barbecue Cook-off September 24-25. 512/365-1110

**UVALDE:** Palomino Fest & Pro Rodeo Labor Day Weekend Celebration September 1-4. [uvaldecountryfairplex.com](http://uvaldecountryfairplex.com) 830/591-9040

**UVALDE:** Four Square Friday September 9. [visitualde.com](http://visitualde.com) 830/278-4115

**UVALDE:** Dove Expo September 24. [visitualde.com](http://visitualde.com) 830/278-4115

**WIMBERLEY:** Market Days September 3. [www.shopmarketdays.com](http://www.shopmarketdays.com) 512/847-2201

## PANHANDLE PLAINS

**ABILENE:** West Texas Fair and Rodeo September 8-17. [www.taylorcountyexpcenter.com](http://www.taylorcountyexpcenter.com) 325/677-4367

**ABILENE:** West Texas Book Festival September 19-24. [www.abilenetx.com](http://www.abilenetx.com) 325/676-6017

**ABILENE:** Big Country Balloon Fest September 23-24. [www.hotairballoon.com](http://www.hotairballoon.com) / Big-Country-Balloon-Fest 325/795-0995

**ABILENE:** *Spanish Texas: Legend and Legacy* September 24-March 11. [thegracemuseum.org](http://thegracemuseum.org) 325/673-4587

**ABILENE:** KLG D Shrimp and Wine Festival September 24. [kugd.frm](http://kugd.frm) 325/701-7820

**ALBANY:** *Texas Moderns: Sallie Gillespie, Blanche McVeigh, Evaline Sellors, and Wade Jolly* September 17-February 11. [www.theojac.org](http://www.theojac.org) 325/762-2269



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**AMARILLO:** America's Horse in Art Show and Sale Through October 15. www.aqha.com/museum 806/378-4718

**AMARILLO:** Good Times Celebration Barbecue Cook-Off September 8. www.amarillo-chamber.org 806/373-7800

**AMARILLO:** Tri-State Fair and Rodeo September 16-24. www.tristatefair.com 806/376-7767

**BIG SPRING:** Comanche Warrior Triathlon September 10. visitbigspring.com 432/263-8235

**BIG SPRING:** Howard County Fair September 22-24. www.hcfair.org 432/267-5053

**BOYS RANCH:** Cal Farley's Boys Ranch Labor Day Rodeo September 3-4. calfarley.org 806/533-1200

**CANYON:** You are Here: Maps from the PPHM Collection Thorough August 26, 2017. panhandleplains.org 806/651-2244

**CLARENDON:** Col. Charles Goodnight Chuckwagon Cookoff September 24. www.saintsroostmuseum.com 806/874-2746

**CROSS PLAINS:** Trade Days in Cross Plains September 17. 254/270-0568

**GOODNIGHT:** Goodnight Under the Stars September 3. www.goodnightunderthestars.com 806/226-2187

**GRAFORD:** TRIFECTA Triathlon September 18. trifectatriathlon.com 512/386-7966

**GRAFORD:** Possum Fest Barbecue and Chili Cook-Off September 30-October 1. possumkingdomlake.com 940/779-2424

**LUBBOCK:** National Cowboy Symposium and Celebration September 9-11. www.cowboy.org 806/798-7825

**POST:** Silent Night Village Market Days September 3. 806/670-0651

**POSTOAK:** Busy Bee Quilt Show September 23-24. www.postoakquilters.com 940/567-2771

**QUANAH:** Quanah Dove Fest September 5. 940/674-5029

**QUANAH:** Quanah Fall Festival September 10. 940/663-2222

**RALLS:** Ralls Cotton Boll Festival September 10. www.rallschamberofcommerce.com 806/253-2342

**RANGER:** Roaring Ranger Day Festival and Parade September 16-17. 254/647-1700

**SAN ANGELO:** Cowboy Gathering September 9-10. www.sanangelocowboygathering.com 325/653-7785

**SAN ANGELO:** The Art of Frank Reaugh, A Texas Master September 15-November 27. www.samfa.org 325/653-3333

**SAN ANGELO:** Downtown Stroll September 15. www.samfa.org 325/653-3333

**SAN ANGELO:** Stripes Riverfest September 16-17. www.cosatx.us 325/655-4136

**SAN ANGELO:** Archaeology Fair at National Museum Day September 24. www.fortconcho.com 325/481-2646

**SAN ANGELO:** Gun & Blade Show September 24-25. www.silverspurtradeshows.com 806/253-1322

**SAN ANGELO:** Lilyfest September 24. www.internationalwaterlilycollection.com 325/212-0276

**WICHITA FALLS:** Sheppard Air Force Base Air Show September 17-18. www.sheppard.af.mil/AirShow/BackgroundHistory.aspx 940/676-1330

**WICHITA FALLS:** Quilting in the Falls Quilt Show September 23-24. wichitafallsquiltguild.org 940/761-1018

**WICHITA FALLS:** Top of Texas Market September 23-25. www.topoftexasantiques.com 940/723-0623

**WINTERS:** Winters Dove Fest 2016 September 3. www.facebook.com/wintersdovefest 325/365-6426

**PINEY WOODS**

**AVINGER:** Avinger Wine Festival September 17. www.avingerwinefestival.com 952/562-2256

**GLADEWATER:** Arts and Crafts Festival September 17-18. www.gladewaterartsandcrafts.com 903/845-5501

**HUNTSVILLE:** Huntsville Antique Show September 17-18. www.huntsvilleantique.com 936/295-4162

**JEFFERSON:** Labor Day Steam Train Special September 3. www.JeffersonRailway.com 866/398-2038

**JEFFERSON:** Fire Brigade Benefit Classic Car Show September 10. www.VisitJeffersonTexas.com 903/742-9449

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**LUFKIN:** Texas State Forest Festival September 21-25. [www.texasstateforestfestival.com](http://www.texasstateforestfestival.com) 936/634-6644

**MARSHALL:** Second Saturday September 10. [www.visitmarshalltexas.org](http://www.visitmarshalltexas.org) 903/702-7777

**PALESTINE:** 2016 Camino 205 presented by American Classic September 24. [www.camino205.com](http://www.camino205.com) 903/723-3014

**SAN AUGUSTINE:** An American Main Street Patriots Day September 11. 936/201-9798

**TRINITY:** Trinity Community Fair/Youth Livestock Show/Auction September 30, October 1. [www.trinitycommunityfair.com](http://www.trinitycommunityfair.com) 936/662-5082

**TYLER:** Downtown Tyler Film Festival September 21-24. [www.tylerfilmfest.com](http://www.tylerfilmfest.com) 903/593-6905

**TYLER:** East Texas State Fair September 23-October 2. [www.etstatefair.com](http://www.etstatefair.com) 903/597-2501

**WINNSBORO:** 2016 Fall Gun Show September 17-18. 903/342-3666

**WINNSBORO:** Autumn Trails September 24, October 1, 8, 14-16, 20-22. [www.winnsboroautumntrails.com](http://www.winnsboroautumntrails.com)

## PRAIRIES AND LAKES

**ADDISON:** Addison Oktoberfest September 15-18. [www.addisonoktoberfest.com](http://www.addisonoktoberfest.com) 972/450-2800

**ALVARADO:** Pioneer and Old Settlers Reunion September 7-10. [www.alvaradopubliclibrary.org](http://www.alvaradopubliclibrary.org) 817/538-2337

**ARLINGTON:** *Uterior Motifs* August 26-October 23. [arlingtonmuseum.org](http://arlingtonmuseum.org)

**BASTROP:** WWII/Camp Swift Exhibit September 1-December 31. [www.bastropcountyhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.bastropcountyhistoricalsociety.com) 512/303-0057

**BEDFORD:** Bedford Blues and Barbecue Festival September 2-4. [www.bedfordbluesfest.com](http://www.bedfordbluesfest.com) 817/952-2128

**BELTON:** A Sami Show September 10-11. [www.samishow.com](http://www.samishow.com) 512/441-7133

**BELTON:** Discovery Day with Charley Chisholm September 17. [www.bellcountymuseum.org](http://www.bellcountymuseum.org) 254/933-5243

**BONHAM:** Farming Heritage Day September 24.

[www.samrayburnhouse.com](http://www.samrayburnhouse.com) 903/583-5558

**BRENHAM:** Washington County Fair September 10-17. [www.washingtoncofair.com](http://www.washingtoncofair.com) 979/836-4112

**BRIDGEPORT:** Taste of Bridgeport September 30. [www.bridgeportchamber.org](http://www.bridgeportchamber.org) 940/683-2076

**BRYAN:** Texas Reds Festival September 23-25. [texasredsfestival.com](http://texasredsfestival.com) 979/822-4920

**BUFFALO:** Buffalo Stampede and Barbecue Cook-Off September 17. [www.buffalochamberofcommerce.org](http://www.buffalochamberofcommerce.org) 903/322-5810

**BURTON:** La Bahia Antiques Show and Sale September 23-October 1. 979/289-2684

**BURTON:** White Linen Night September 24. [www.facebook.com/Burton-White-Linen-Night](http://www.facebook.com/Burton-White-Linen-Night) 937/215-4732

**CAT SPRING:** Cat Spring Antique and Garden Show September 10-11. [www.ruraltexasantiques.com](http://www.ruraltexasantiques.com) 979/865-5618

**CLEBURNE:** Antique Alley Texas and 30 Miles of Shopping September 16-18. [www.AntiqueAlleyTexas.com](http://www.AntiqueAlleyTexas.com) 817/240-4948

**CLEBURNE:** Cleburne Wine & Art Festival September 24. [www.theclburnewinefestival.com](http://www.theclburnewinefestival.com) 214/402-3597

**CLIFTON:** Bosque Art Classic September 10-24. [www.BosqueArtsCenter.org](http://www.BosqueArtsCenter.org) 254/675-7234

**CLIFTON:** Burgers, Blues & Brews September 17. [www.cliftontexas.org](http://www.cliftontexas.org) 254/675-3720

**COLLEGE STATION:** *Driven to Drive: Defining our Identity* Through January 8. [www.bush41.org](http://www.bush41.org) 979/691-4000

**COLLEGE STATION:** *Remembering Our Fallen* September 9-14. [americangimuseum.org/events](http://americangimuseum.org/events) 979/446-6888

**COMANCHE:** Annual Powwow September 24-25. [www.comanchechamber.org](http://www.comanchechamber.org) 325/356-3233

**DALLAS:** *Tinkertoy: Build Your Imagination* Through September 10. [crsmithmuseum.org](http://crsmithmuseum.org)

**DALLAS:** *The Great Contributors: "The Artistry in Nature"* Through November 27. [www.dallasarboretum.org](http://www.dallasarboretum.org) 214/515-6500

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## EVENTS

**DALLAS:** *Clay Between Two Seas: From the Abbasid Court to Puebla de los Angeles* September 17-February 12. crowdcollection.org 214/979-6430

**DALLAS:** Autumn at the Arboretum and Pumpkin Village September 17-November 23. www.dallasarboretum.org 214/515-6500

**DALLAS:** Blues Under the Stars and Art Show September 17. www.labyrinthwalkcoffeehouse.com 214/475-0638

**DALLAS:** Tour des Fleurs September 17. www.tourdesfleurs.com

**DALLAS:** State Fair of Texas September 30-October 23. www.bigtex.com 214/565-9931

**DENISON:** U.S. National Aerobic Championship September 23-30. www.iac.org 903/465-1551

**DENTON:** Arts & Autos Extravaganza September 10. www.dentonmainstreet.org 940/349-8529

**DENTON:** Denton Blues Fest September 17-18. www.dentonblackchamberonline.org 940/382-9100

**DENTON:** Oaktopia Fest September 22-24. www.oaktopiafest.com 940/367-4304

**DENTON:** GreenFest September 24. www.friendsofthegreenbelt.org 682/365-8677

**ENNIS:** 2016 NHRDA World Finals September 30-October 1. www.nhrda.com 972/878-2641

**FARMERS BRANCH:** Pickups-N-Panels Annual Car/Truck Shootout September 10. www.pickupspanels.com 972/406-0184

**FARMERS BRANCH:** Encounters from the Past: Living History Cemetery Tours September 16-17. 972/406-0184

**FARMERSVILLE:** Farmers and Fleas September 3. www.farmersvillex.com 972/784-6846

**FAYETTEVILLE:** Antiques on the Square September 17-26. 318/465-1603

**FORT WORTH:** *Texas Folk Art* Through September 19. www.cartermuseum.org 817/738-1933

**FORT WORTH:** *Frank Stella: A Retrospective* Through September 18.

www.themodern.org 817/738-9215

**FORT WORTH:** Fort Worth's Oktoberfest September 22-24. pantherislandpavilion.com/oktoberfest 817/698-0700

**FORT WORTH:** Goodguys Lone Star Nationals September 30-October 2. www.good-guys.com 925/838-9876

**GAINESVILLE:** *The Sky's The Limit* Balloon Spectacular September 9-10. www.theskyslimit.org 940/612-8463

**GARLAND:** Garland Labor Day Parade September 5. www.garlandlabordayevent.com

**GARLAND:** Urban Flea September 10. www.resurrecteddesigns.com

**GARLAND:** The Marketplace Downtown Square September 17. www.themarketplacedfw.com

**GARLAND:** Taste of Firewheel September 24. www.visitgarlandtx.com

**GIDDINGS:** Texas Word Wrangler Book Festival September 9. www.texaswordwrangler.com 979/542-2716

**GIDDINGS:** Annual Wendish Fest September 25. texaswendish.org 979/366-2441

**GLEN ROSE:** *The Promise* September 2-October 29. www.thepromiseglenrose.com 254/897-3926

**GLEN ROSE:** Joe Beaver Calf Roping September 3-5. 254/897-4509

**GLEN ROSE:** Whipp Farms Gun Show September 3-4. 254/897-4509

**GLEN ROSE:** Discovery After Dark Program and Tour September 16. fossilrim.org 254/897-2960

**GLEN ROSE:** Texas Time Trials (Bike Race) September 22-24. tt24tt.com

**GLEN ROSE:** Paluxy River Fall Bluegrass Festival September 28-October 8. 254/897-2321

**GONZALES:** Come and Take It Celebration September 30-October 2. www.gonzalex.com 888/672-1095

**GRANBURY:** Labor Day Weekend Celebration September 3-5. granburysquare.com 682/936-4550

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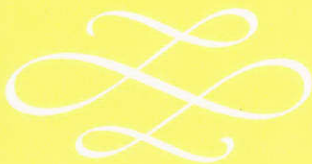
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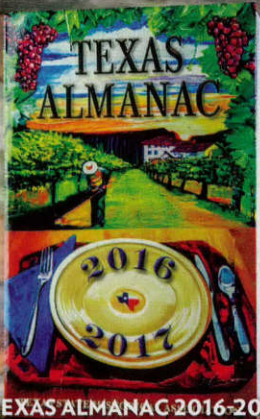
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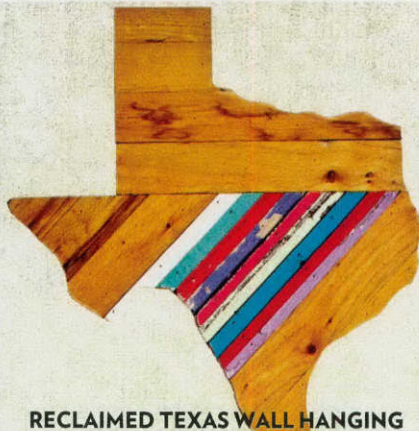








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**GRANBURY:** Carnival Americana September 19-October 4. granburysquare.com 682/936-4550

**GRAND PRAIRIE:** Farmers Market September 3. GPTX.org/FarmersMarket 972/237-4599

**GRAND PRAIRIE:** Celebrity Cook-Off September 10, 17. GrandFunGP.com 972/237-8115

**GRAND PRAIRIE:** Fiestas Patrias September 10. tradersvillage.com 972/657-2331

**GRAND PRAIRIE:** Fall Meeting of Champions September 16-17. lonestarpark.com 800/795-7223

**GRAND PRAIRIE:** Native American Pow Wow September 16-18. tradersvillage.com 972/647-2331

**GRAND PRAIRIE:** Flight of the Monarch Celebration September 24. www.grandfungp.com 972/237-8107

**GRANDVIEW:** Antique Alley Texas and 30+ Miles of Shopping September 16-18. www.antiquealleytexas.com 817/240-4948

**GRAPEVINE:** First Fridays at the Farm September 2. www.NashFarm.org 817/410-3185

**GREENVILLE:** Rally Round Greenville September 16-17. www.greenvillechamber.com 903/455-1510

**HALLETTVILLE:** Kolache Fest September 24. hallettville.com 361/798-2662

**LA GRANGE:** Texas Heroes Day September 17. Monument Hill State Park. 979/968-5658

**LEWISVILLE:** Western Days Festival September 23-24. www.LewisvilleWesternDays.com 972/219-3401

**LINDSAY:** Antique Tractor and Farm Machinery Show September 3-4. www.antiquetractorshow.net 940/665-6823

**MANSFIELD:** Wurstfest September 10. www.visitmansfieldtexas.com 817/728-3680

**MARTINDALE:** Texas Mamma Jamma Ride September 24. mammajammaride.org 512/765-5526

**MCKINNEY:** Third Monday Trade Days September 16-18. www.tmtd.com 972/562-5466

**MCKINNEY:** Dinosaurs Live! September 17-February 19. www.heardmuseum.org 972/562-5566

**MCKINNEY:** Oktoberfest September 23-25. www.downtownmckinney.com 972/547-2660

**MESQUITE:** Devil's Bowl Speedway Auto Races September 3. www.devilsbowl.com 972/222-2421

**MESQUITE:** Mesquite Championship Rodeo September 3, 10, 17, 24, October 1. www.mesquiterodeo.com 972/285-8777

**MESQUITE:** Taste and Trade September 27. www.mesquitechamber.com 972/285-0211

**NEW BERLIN:** Annual Sausage Festival September 4. 830/420-3185

**NOCONA:** Tales 'n' Trails Museum Shebang September 17. www.talesntrails.org 940/825-5330

**NOCONA:** Wheels and Grills Barbecue and Chili Cookoff September 22-24. www.wheelsandgrillscookoff.com 940/249-7810

**PLANO:** Ethiopia Day/Taste of Ethiopia September 3-4. www.ethiopiancommunitydfw.com 214/321-9992

**PLANO:** Plano Muscle Car Show September 3. www.monthlymuscle.com 214/707-6348

**PLANO:** Downtown Plano Art and Wine Walk September 8. www.visitdowntownplano.com

**PLANO:** Heritage Farmstead Museum: Young at Heart September 12. www.heritagefarmstead.org 972/881-0140

**PLANO:** In Touch Credit Union Plano Balloon Festival September 23-25. www.planoballoonfest.org 972/867-7566

**POTTSBORO:** Frontier Day September 24. www.pottsborchamber.com 903/786-6371

**RHOME:** Rhome Fall Festival September 30-October 1. www.cityofrhome.com 817/636-2826

**ROUND TOP:** Round Top Fall Antique Show September 16-October 1. www.roundtop.org 979/249-4042

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**ROUND TOP:** Schutzenfest  
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**SALADO:** Chocolate &  
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www.salado.com  
254/947-5040

**SALADO:** Royal Street Art  
Walk (RAW) September 23.  
royalstreetartwalk.com  
254/947-0339

**SANGER:** Sanger  
Sellastration September 10.  
www.sangertexas.com  
940/458-7702

**SEGUIN:** *Fiestas Patrias,  
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www.seguinhispanic  
chambertx.org

**SEGUIN:** Seguin Cowboy  
Gathering September 17.  
seguincowboygathering.org  
830/491-8888

**SEGUIN:** Alamo Area  
Pontiac Club Classic Car  
Show September 24.  
www.classicpontiac.org  
210/695-1504

**TEMPLE:** Hometown  
History Day September 3.  
www.rhfm.org  
254/298-5172

**TEMPLE:** Pumpkin Patch  
2016 September 17-  
October 30. www.the  
robinsonfamilyfarm.com  
254/931-9564

**WACO:** Homestead Heritage  
Labor Day Festival  
September 5.  
www.homesteadheritage.  
com 254/754-9600

**WACO:** Heart Of Texas  
Airshow September 17-18.  
www.HeartOfTexasAirshow.  
com 303/862-2869

**WACO:** Waco Cultural Arts  
Fest September 23-25.

www.wacoartsfest.org  
254/723-6830

**WAXAHACHIE:** Waxahachie Oktoberfest  
September 17. www.  
stjosephoktoberfest.com  
972/937-0956

**WAXAHACHIE:** Screams  
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www.ScreamsPark.com  
972/938-3247

**WEATHERFORD:** Cruisin 1  
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weatherfordtx.com  
817/598-4338

**WEST:** West Fest  
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www.westfest.com  
254/826-5058

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www.alicetxchamber.org  
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**PHARR:** *Diez y Seis de  
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- Oct. 8 - Crazy Water Festival
- Oct. 15 - Mineral Wells Crazy Kicker
- Oct. 22 - Crazy Fossil Dig & Color Run
- Oct. 29 - Red Pepper Party



continued from page 100

**A:** I'm really pleased with the growth of baseball in Texas over the years and the competitiveness we've seen now between the Texas Rangers and the Houston Astros. I think it [the Astros joining the Rangers in the American League West in 2013] has created a good rivalry here within the state and also gives the fans an opportunity to see both Texas

teams now in the same division.

**Q:** What is your favorite Texas ballpark?

**A:** I think we're very fortunate that we have both the stadiums, the one in Arlington and the one in Houston, but I think that because of the heat in Texas, the roof gives the fans in Houston the opportunity to have a lot more comfort as far as sitting through ballgames, so I really feel like from a fan

standpoint that the nod would have to go to Minute Maid.

**Q:** When you travel for leisure or recreation in Texas, where do you like to go?

**A:** Well, it depends on the season. In the late winter or early spring I think Big Bend's a great place to go before it gets too hot. And then in the early summer, I like to go to Port Mansfield and fish or go to Port Aransas to the beach. And then I enjoy going to the Hill Country, whether it's the Fredericksburg area or elsewhere.

**Q:** What are some of your favorite Texas restaurants?

**A:** One of my favorite restaurants in San Antonio is Bohanan's. I think their steaks are awfully hard to beat. And the same with Del Frisco's in Fort Worth. And in Georgetown, The Hollow, right on the square. The menu changes every night, so it depends on what they're featuring on the menu.

**Q:** When will a Texas team finally win the World Series?

**A:** You know, once you get into the postseason, you never know how they're going to do, because it really depends on what team offensively gets hot. It has to do with which team is the healthiest as far as injuries are concerned, and also which team has the strongest front-line pitching, because in a short series your first and second starters have a real impact on how well you do in the postseason. It's hard to predict, but there are obviously some teams that have more depth in their lineup and that certainly plays a role. When I look at the Astros and Rangers ball clubs, I think that they have a chance to get into postseason. But do I look at them as exceptionally strong teams? No. **L**

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# THE DAYTRIPPER

WITH CHET GARNER



## Back to Blanco

**T**HE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY is full of small towns that motorists can either zoom through in five minutes or choose to explore all day. Those who slow down to see the sights will be amazed at all there is to discover. I recently tripped through Blanco (pronounced “Blank-O”) and discovered that this town is anything but blank.

**10:00 A.M.** I rolled into downtown to discover a bucolic collection of historic buildings surrounding the **Old Blanco County Courthouse**. This confused me, as the official county seat is up the road in Johnson City. I learned that this 1886 building was the original courthouse until 1890, when the government moved for political reasons. Since then, this building has served as everything from a high school to a hospital, and it even served as a set for the 2010 film *True Grit*.

**11:30 A.M.** I exited the courthouse and noticed folks crowding the door of John and Jan Brieger’s **Redbud Café**. I knew instantly what I was doing for lunch. Inside this renovated hardware store, I found a restaurant that is equal parts sandwich shop, craft beer bar, and bakery. Feeling brave,

I ordered the “Blaze of Glory” burger, with grilled jalapeño and serrano peppers atop a jalapeño sourdough bun. It was delicious, and luckily the café served homemade lavender lemonade to quell the fire.

**12:30 P.M.** Attached to the café, I found **Brieger Pottery**. This small shop was full of handmade pots and crafts from across the Hill Country, including lotions, salves, and other products made of locally grown lavender. It was fitting for a town known as the “Lavender Capital of Texas.” I think I tried enough samples to smell like lavender for many day trips to come.

**1:00 P.M.** Texas is experiencing a craft beer explosion, and one of its leaders is here in Blanco—**Real Ale**

**Brewing.** After touring the brew house and bottling room, I visited the tasting room, where I grabbed a flight of beers, including some that have aged for months in wine barrels. I spent the next couple of hours like a true connoisseur, sniffing and swirling beers like fine wine.

**3:00 P.M.** As a lover of all museums from the historic to the strange, I couldn’t pass up the **Buggy Barn Museum**. A cowboy-clad tour guide explained the history of the horse-drawn buggy as I admired more than 100 historic buggies. Some had even appeared in films like *Gone With the Wind* and *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*.

**4:00 P.M.** I was ready to slow down a bit, and the best place to do that is the Blanco River, which runs straight through **Blanco State Park** just a stone’s throw from the square. I never travel without my swimsuit, so I headed immediately for the sparkling Hill Country water. Ahhhhh! It was an excellent reprieve from the Texas sun.

**6:30 P.M.** I realized that I was hungry, so I headed to **Old 300 BBQ**, which takes its name from the original 300 settlers that Stephen F. Austin brought to Texas. I ordered a little

bit of everything, including some special Akaushi brisket, which is available on Saturdays only. And though I’m not usually one to sauce my meat, the homemade sweet barbe-

cue sauce on the ribs made them over-the-top delicious, as was everything else on my platter.

As I buried my spoon into a bowl of delicious banana pudding, I thought about the many travelers who have never stopped to explore this town. While “blanco” means “white” in Spanish, this town’s crystal-blue waters, rolling green hills, and purple lavender flowers provide a vibrant backdrop to any day trip. So whether you follow my footsteps or forge your own path, I hope to see you on the road. **L**

**Chet Garner** is the host of *The Daytripper*® travel show on PBS; [www.thedaytripper.com](http://www.thedaytripper.com).

Contact the Blanco Chamber of Commerce at 830/833-5101; [www.blancochamber.com](http://www.blancochamber.com).



# TRAVEL MATTERS

TRAVEL TALK WITH TRUE TEXANS



## All Aboard the Ryan Express

Fastballer Nolan Ryan on Texas, beef, and baseball

text by Matt Joyce

**N**OLAN RYAN DOESN'T PITCH MUCH THESE DAYS, unless you count the occasional honorary first toss, bits of sage advice for up-and-comers, and games of catch with his grandkids. But the legendary Texas fastballer keeps plenty busy with his business pursuits, drawing on the same energy and competitive spirit that made him a first-ballot Hall of Famer after he retired from a 27-year major-league career—including nine seasons with the Houston Astros and five seasons with the Texas Rangers—in 1993.

Now a resident of Georgetown, Ryan is an executive adviser to the Houston Astros, where his son Reid is the president of business operations. Ryan is also principal owner of the Round Rock Express, the Texas Rangers' Triple-A affiliate; an investor in the Nolan Ryan All-Natural Beef brand; and a cattle rancher with operations in Brazoria, Gonzales, McMullen, Live Oak, and Sutton counties. "As long as I can remember, I always was interested in the cattle business and wanted to be in ranching," he says.

**"I'm really pleased with the growth of baseball in Texas over the years and the competitiveness we've seen now between the Texas Rangers and the Houston Astros."**

It's been a thrilling journey for Ryan, the youngest of six children growing up in Alvin, where his mother cared for the brood and his father worked as a supervisor for Pan American Petroleum. Alvin was the original home for the Nolan Ryan Foundation, which raises funds for children, education, and community development. The foundation is moving to Round Rock this year, and its companion museum, the Nolan Ryan Exhibit Center, became part of the Texas Sports Hall of Fame in Waco in March. The display chronicles Ryan's life and career with memorabilia like early scouting reports, uniforms, and baseballs from his each of his seven no-hitters.

The "Ryan Express" recently took a few minutes to discuss his life in Texas and the game he loves.

**Q:** *How was growing up in Alvin?*

**A:** During the period of time that I grew up in Alvin it had a very small-town atmosphere—it was a community of 5,000 to 7,000. The fact that it was a small town meant that you knew so many people, and so many of your activities were centered around the school and youth sports.

**Q:** *While playing out of state, did you seek to take your career back to Texas?*

**A:** We had continued to make our home in Texas in the off-season, and so when I had the opportunity to become a free agent and sign with Houston, I did that by design, so that we could continue to live in Alvin. Our children were getting to be school-age.

**Q:** *What's your perspective on the strength of the game and its popularity in Texas?* > continued on page 98



# SIGHTSEER

GO. SEE. DO—TAKING IN TEXAS



**WHAT:** THE RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS' FALL MIGRATION **WHERE:** ROCKPORT-FULTON **WHEN:** SEPTEMBER 15-18, 2016

## HummerBird Celebration

Coinciding with the ruby-throated hummingbirds' fall migration, Rockport-Fulton's 28th annual event features birding tours, speakers, vendors, and artists.

Rockport-Fulton welcomes birds and their admirers for the HummerBird Celebration, held annually during the fall migration of the ruby-throated hummingbirds. About 25 local homes hang extra birdfeeders and cultivate their gardens to attract the hummers as the birds fuel up for their southbound flights across the Gulf of Mexico. Hundreds of hummingbirds swarm each lush yard, a spectacle featured on group and self-guided tours. Regional birding expeditions, expert speakers, a hummingbird-banding project, thematic vendors, and children's programs round out the weekend. [www.rockport-hummingbird.com](http://www.rockport-hummingbird.com).





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Christmas in the Park • Christmas in D...

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