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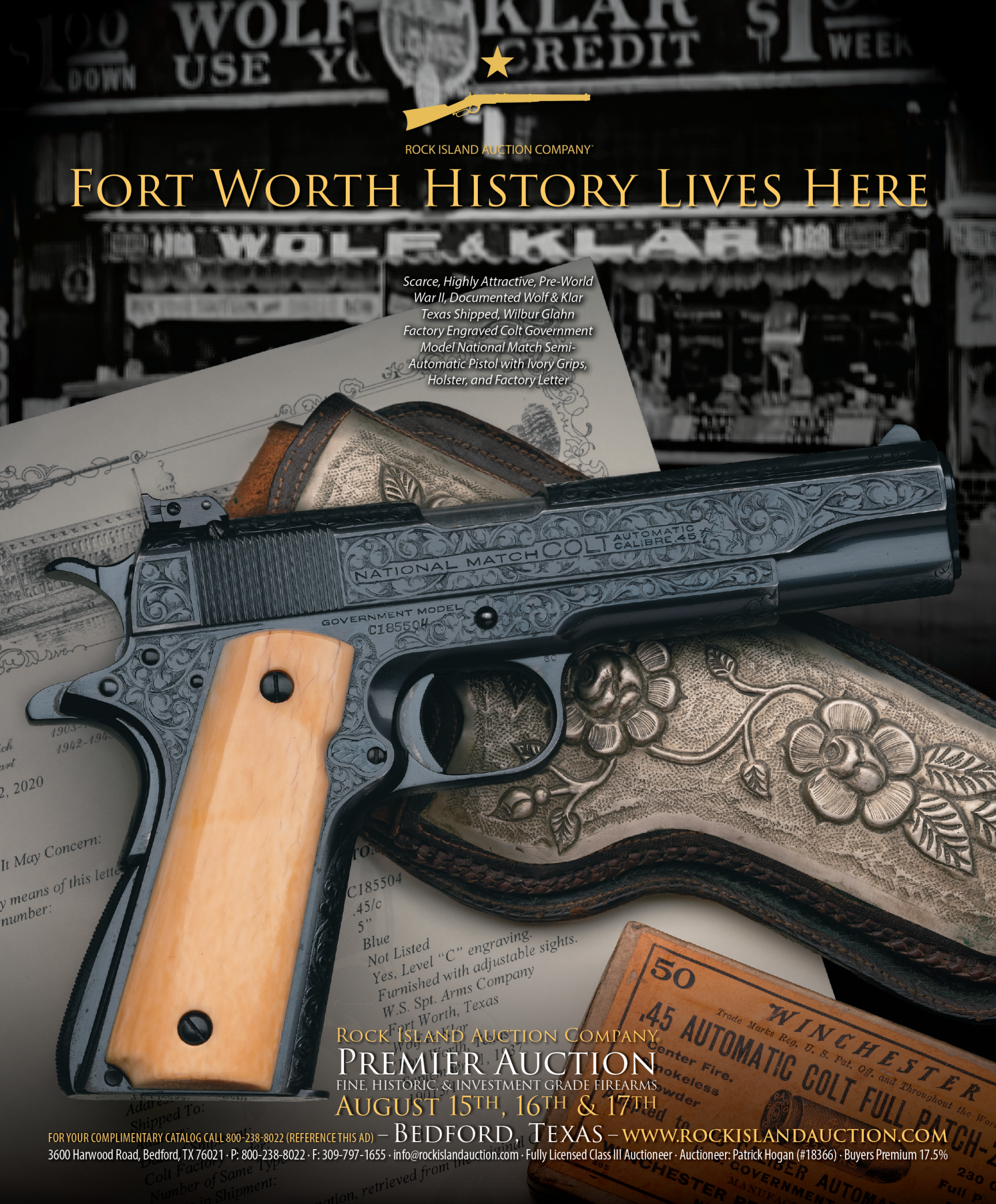
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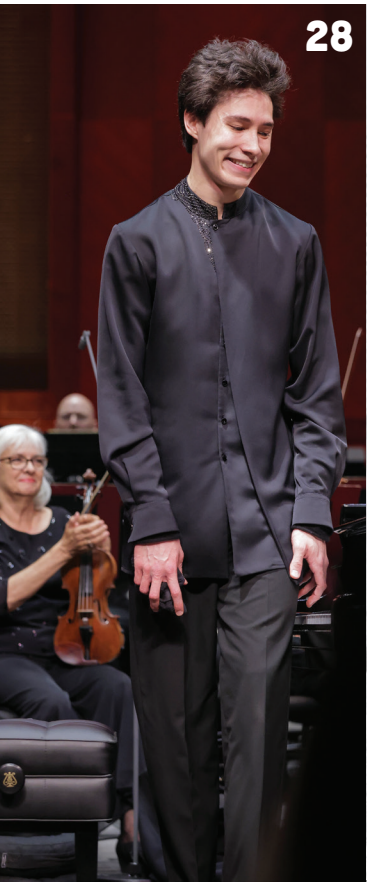
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Searching for hog heaven and wondering what to do with those deep pockets of coinage? Let us help. This handy guide takes you to that exclusive spot where the wine is vintage, the dress is designer, and money is no object.
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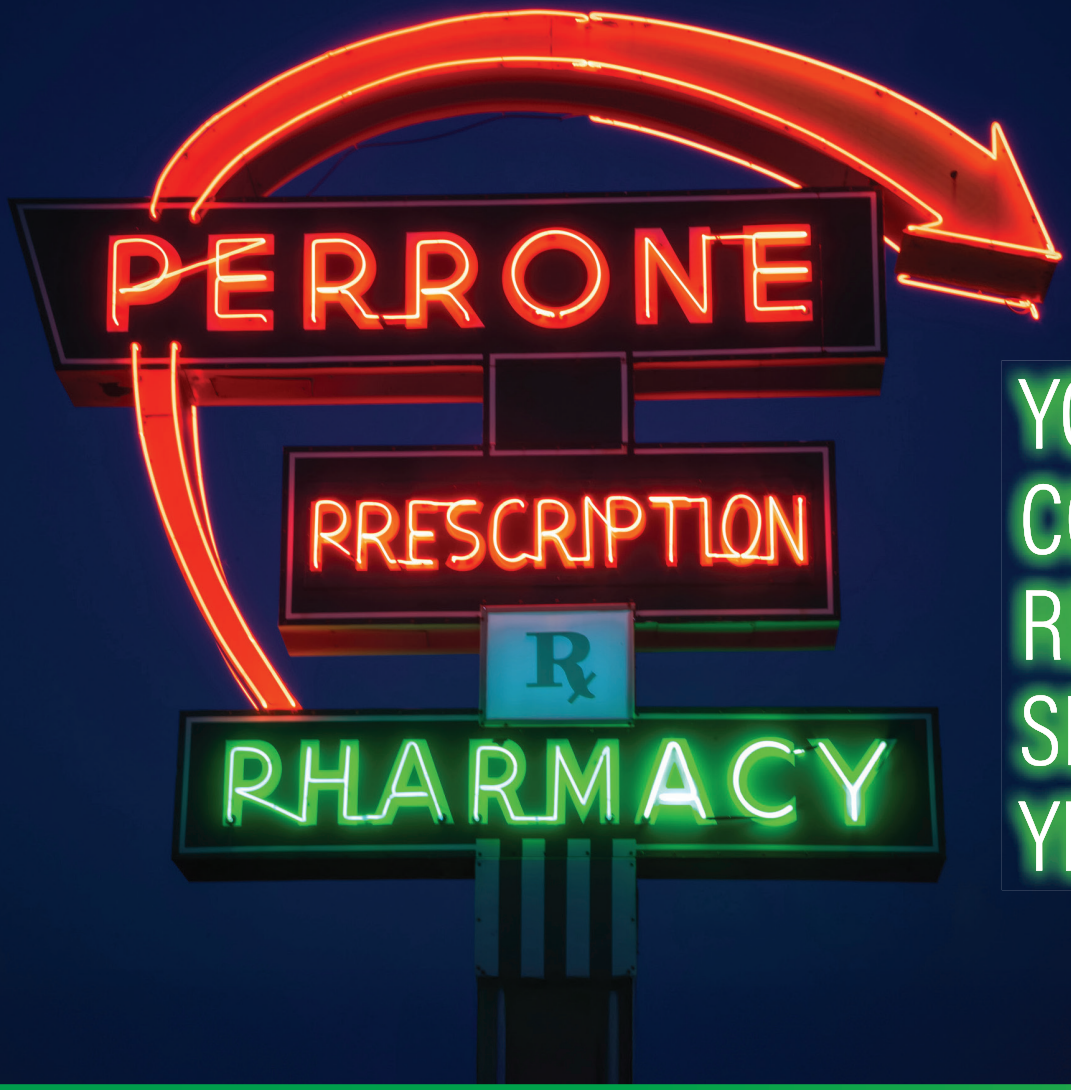
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We Won an Award

I always worry that sharing good news might come across as gloating, but here I go anyway.

We won a National City and Regional Magazine Award — specifically, for cover excellence.

This is when I normally start to feel a little embarrassed and say, "I mean, it's not that big of a deal." Except it is. It is a big deal. Thankfully, I'm behind my keyboard, which does a decent job of masking my hesitation.

To nominate our covers for consideration, we submitted what we believed to be our magazine's three best covers from 2024. And, yes, our three covers — January, February, and June — were honored as the best within our circulation size. For us city magazine folk, receiving such an award from the City and Regional Magazine Association during its annual conference is akin to getting an Oscar — or at least a SAG Award.

Mind you, there were many other awards that night won by many other fine publications. While we were a finalist in a few other categories, we weren't exactly "Titanic" up there sweeping the awards like it was 1998. That distinction went to our in-state friends *Texas Monthly,* who took home a gazillion but are thankfully not within our circulation category.

Our magazine's other finalists included a September feature by Malcolm Mayhew on the Westwood Baptist Church shooting, "A Tragedy Revisited"; the January 2024 feature package on the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo, "Lock, Stock Show, and Rodeo"; and a profile I wrote on musician Koe Wetzel, "How to Survive a Night Out With a Rock Star." Malcolm and his wife, Julie, I should note, attended the awards banquet with me at the conference in Denver on June 6.

While I was fortunate enough to represent *Fort Worth Magazine* at the banquet to accept the award, it unfortunately wasn't the type of awards ceremony where one could give an acceptance speech — perhaps taking mercy on the editors whose public speaking prowess is lacking (raises hand). So, in lieu of such a speech to fellow magazine industry professionals, I'll remain in my comfort zone and write a long-winded kudos to all those who had a hand in making this possible.

Just kidding, I'll keep it brief.

Of course, our entire magazine staff — top to bottom, left to right, creative to sales — just flat-out rocks. We chose a demanding and unforgiving industry, but I'll be damned if we don't pour our hearts into it. The gig has few rewards outside of feeling good about what we're doing, and every person in our Fort Worth office has a hand in producing an incredible, award-winning publication. Special shout-outs to creative director Craig Sylva's design work, *Fort Worth Inc.* editor John Henry's cover blurb brainstorming, and copy editor Sharon Casseday's typo-proof — well, proofing.

Outside of the magazine, designer Lauren Deitzer's fingerprints are all over the January and February covers. In fact, January 2024 (which features a phenomenal photo by Click Thompson) marked the first cover she ever designed for us. A regular Delbert Mann over here — proud if you got that reference. And Crystal Wise, a creative force who was also nominated for a CRMA Award last year, snapped the jaw-dropping Koe Wetzel-in-the-pool photo, which graced our June cover. The award, quite literally, belongs to them as much as us.

While we're not in this job for awards, I can't deny it personally gives me a sense of validation; we're doing well. And I hope it gives you confidence that you're reading one heck of a great magazine.





Brian Kendall
EXECUTIVE EDITOR



ON THE COVER:
It was too early in the day for a glass of wine, but don't worry, no cabernet was wasted or harmed during the making of this cover, which features the elegant Julie Siratt at the luxurious Chumley House in the city's Cultural District. Photo by Thanin Viriyaki.

CORRECTIONS? COMMENTS? CONCERNS?
Send to executive editor Brian Kendall at bkendall@fwtexas.com.

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If you could plan your dream July 4 celebration anywhere in the U.S., where would it be and what would it include?

I know the question is wanting a place in the U.S., but I'm going outside the borders. My dream celebration would take place in Cabo and include dinner on the patio at the Hacienda Beach Club resort overlooking Medano Beach with dramatic views of Land's End and its Golden Arch. The celebration would include margaritas at sunset and the best fireworks display this side of the Baja Peninsula.

Too bad this query doesn't include *anytime* in the U.S., 'cause a trip to Philly in 1776 to witness the adoption of the Declaration of Independence would be a (likely to forever remain literal) dream vacation.

Fort Worth's Fourth delivers everything for a dream celebration — the simple joy of a picnic with family, live music, and spectacular fireworks along the banks of the Trinity River.

It would take place in my home state of Alabama. And having come from a military family, it would include a family reunion with lots of good food, fun, and fireworks.

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I would love to spend the 4th of July with my whole family watching fireworks from a luxury yacht somewhere with beautiful beaches and sunsets: Crab Island in Destin, Florida, or the various beaches of the Virgin Islands.

A memorable July 4th would be to visit Boston and all its history and then head up to Mount Washington Resort, an old hotel in New Hampshire, and watch the fireworks show from the balcony that extends the length of the hotel. This was my July 4th celebration in 2024. I loved it.

Spending the Fourth with Taylor Swift, Travis Kelce, and their friends at Holiday House in Westerly, Rhode Island, eating endless amounts of Friendly's Wattamelon Sherbet Cake. (Yes, that is the correct spelling of Wattamelon.)

Cozy Northeastern beach town with a bonfire, friends, cuddly blankets, sparklers, fireworks, and grilling food.

My dream 4th of July would be spent with friends in Austin, probably attending a music festival or a local concert somewhere outside where we could watch the fireworks.



DIGITAL EDITION:
The virtual editions of both current and previous issues are available on our website. Flip through the pages to read more about the great city of Fort Worth by visiting fwtx.com.

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HELLO, KITTY
In Casa Mañana's rendition of "Cats," Andrew Lloyd Webber's Jellicles ponder the afterlife on the streets of the Fort Worth Stockyards.

WHAT WE'RE WRITING ABOUT THIS MONTH:
On page 22 What's going on in July. **On page 24** Isabella Breedlove's creative story is all her own. **On page 28** Aristo Sham leaves the Cliburn wearing gold after pulling Mendelssohn out of his hat. **On page 30** Touring Athens, Texas — home of the original hamburger. **On page 36** Fort Worth's "dime-store Dostoevsky," Jim Thompson. **On page 38** Commissioners Court throws shade at conservatism.



by
Stephen Montoya

Photography by
Matthew Murphy and Evan Zimmerman

Setting Bass Ablaze

Fort Worth native lights up the stage in 'Moulin Rouge!'

There are moments in life that feel like a scene from a movie you've waited your whole life to be part of. The opening night of "Moulin Rouge! The Musical" at Bass Hall was exactly that.

This wasn't just a show. This was a vibe. Performers in decadent cabaret garb slinked around the iconic neon Moulin Rouge sign, and the line between stage and real life blurred in the best way.

And then — boom — Fort Worth repped in the spotlight.

Jay Armstrong Johnson, a Fort Worth native playing the love-struck Christian with the kind of electricity that takes years to master, wasn't the only hometown performer to take the stage. Fellow Fort Worthian Rodney Thompson played Baby Doll with a kind of grace that made every glance count.

When Johnson took the stage in his co-leading role, his entrance triggered the kind of applause usually reserved for playoff wins.

"I've had at least three or four Whataburgers since we hit Austin," Johnson says with a grin, still buzzing from the night before. "It just feels good to be home."

Based on Baz Luhrmann's dazzling 2001 film "Moulin Rouge!"— which racked up eight Oscar nominations (including Best Picture) and took home two — the jukebox musical burst onto Broadway in 2019 to rave reviews.

It dominated the Tony Awards with 14 nominations and walked away with 10 wins, including Best Musical. The musical brought four Tony winners to Fort Worth: director Alex Timbers, book writer John Logan, music supervisor Justin Levine, and choreographer Sonya Tayeh.

This was a full-throttle Broadway knockout that made a grand entrance.

Set in turn-of-the-century Paris, "Moulin Rouge!" is a remix of eras, colors, and chart-toppers, spliced together with an emotional precision that sneaks up on you. The Elephant Love Medley between Johnson and co-star Arianna Rosario (Satine) was full of cheeky pop references and real romantic ache. It was like watching two people flirt in subtitles made entirely of lyrics. And, yes, Rosario's "Firework" — sung solo during a poignant scene change — absolutely soared.

"It's so well directed by Alex Timbers," Johnson says. "But the musical version was tough for me. I knew the movie version so well that I kept wanting to go back to it."

Rosario nods: "The trick is finding the truth in all those songs. Each one's a tactic in this flirty chess match. We want it to feel fresh and funny — but also grounded."

Watching them perform and then hearing them talk about the work behind the glamour reminded me of why live theater still matters. It's sweat. It's memory. It's timing. It's trust. It's a little bit of Broadway magic and a whole lot of real people giving everything they've got, eight shows a week.

And for this first-timer? It was unforgettable.

When Johnson belted out "Roxanne," in the crowd was a 40-something grinning like a teenager at his first Springsteen show, scribbling notes in the dark, whispering to himself.

"So, this is Broadway." FW

Meows and Yeehaws

When 'Cats' Went to the Stockyards.

When it comes to attending "Cats," I like to think I've entered veteran territory. My first-ever Broadway experience was catching a performance of the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical at the Fox Theatre in Atlanta when I was 7, and I've since gone to more performances than I care to remember.

So, yeah, this wasn't my first rodeo. But, if you'll pardon the obvious pun, the performances of "Cats" at Casa Mañana, which ran from May 31 to June 8, was very likely the first "rodeo" for Macavity and company.

In other words, this incredible production was positively steeped in Texas twang, cowboy culture, and Fort Worth-isms — Whataburger cups and line dancing to boot. Oh, and boots, too.

When Wally Jones, president and artistic director of Casa Mañana, introduced the first performance, he alluded to the fact that, when local theaters perform such celebrated intellectual property, it comes with certain restrictions. In this case, Casa Mañana was forbidden from using the musical's typical setting of a junkyard.

Well, given the results, we'd call this a blessing in disguise.

Seeing an opportunity to add a little local flair to the popular musical, the creative decision-makers changed the setting to the Fort Worth Stockyards. A brilliant and crowd-pleasing choice. While the performances are superb with cowboy-laden costumes, the detailed set depicting the Stockyards is a literal scene stealer.

The set was designed by Seth Byrum, an architect and freelance set designer based in New York. His wife has family in the area, so it's a natural fit for him to offer his services to the zealous Casa Mañana, which he does frequently. But few projects have been as ambitious as this one.

"The scale is bigger, the ambitions are bigger, and it's just been very specific to Fort Worth," Byrum says. "I think Wally [Jones] was instrumental in bringing this really unique Fort Worth take to the project, so it's been a blast to kind of ideate on that."

According to Byrum, transforming the Casa Mañana stage was a couple years in the making.

In 2023, Byrum, Burns, and "Cats" director Parker Esse, convened in Cowtown and, taking Burns' kernel of an idea, took a drive out to the Stockyards.

"Funnily enough, it was downpouring," Byrum says. "It was this insane stormy night, which gave this moody, hazy, cat-like environment where all the neon was glowing through the fog. And we were, like, 'Wow, this is perfect.' It all started gelling from there."

Could we see more of these hometown nods for future Broadway shows? According to Byrum, it depends on the production.

"It's a bit of a joke that 'Cats' is sort of an open plot with a series of vignettes and characters, which opens it up to be more open to interpretation, to bring personal touches to it. Whereas a 'Phantom of the Opera' is such a specific story where doing something like that [basing it in Fort Worth] could feel like a put-on."

Fair enough. We're just wondering when the Broadway revival will have a neon M.L. Leddy's sign as set décor. fw — *Brian Kendall*

Saluting the Army

Fort Worth marks 250th birthday of the U.S. Army.

The 250th birthday of the U.S. Army in June naturally took on special meaning in Fort Worth, Texas.

It was West Pointer Ripley Arnold, commander of the Army's F Company, 2nd Cavalry, who pitched tents and established a military fort at the confluence of the West Fork and Clear Fork. Many of those men, like all the other men and women since, made that trek to North Texas at great personal sacrifice.

Without that event, there would have been no Fort Worth. There would have been something else undoubtedly at some point, but it wouldn't have had those same foundations or the same character.

The city marked the occasion of the Army's birthday with a celebration of remarks and cake on June 13, a day before the formal anniversary.

"I get to do a lot of these as a councilwoman, but this is definitely one that is special and might be my favorite," says Councilmember Elizabeth Beck, a veteran of the U.S. Army who served in Iraq. "Having spent eight years in the Army, some people know me as Sgt. Beck. That time is invaluable to me. It made me who I am today. The Army teaches us selfless service, and it's something we carry with us day in and day out."

Somewhere, too, our man Col. Abe Harris was looking on pleased. He must have been a colorful character. Harris, who served under Arnold in Mexico and beyond, was among those present at the founding. With a background in carpentry, Harris helped build the barracks and officers' headquarters of the fort.

According to Harris, Fort Worth saw only one skirmish involving Native Americans. A group of Tonkawas, under attack by Comanches and Caddos, sought refuge at the fort. Commander Arnold allowed them inside, and the conflict was peacefully resolved when the Comanches and Caddos were persuaded to lay down their arms in exchange for food. Harris called it "the peaceful outcome of the only hostilities Fort Worth ever experienced."

Harris, who took a detour to the Confederate States of America, eventually returned to Fort Worth. He made an act of contrition for his dive into rebellion against the U.S., eventually calling secession a terrible mistake.

In the early 1900s, he was an advocate for an appropriate memorial to Arnold in Fort Worth. He finally got it more than 100 years later.

Rome wasn't built in a day. Neither was the memorial to Ripley Arnold. fw — *John Henry*

by
John Henry



Call of the Wild

Ramona Bass celebrates 40 years of transforming the Fort Worth Zoo.

Ramona Bass grew up around ranching and conservation in and around San Antonio. She remembers like it was yesterday making her first visit to the Fort Worth Zoo four decades ago.

There was no hiding the neglect that comes with limited resources that had taken its toll over the years.

"I was just pretty horrified by what I saw. It was just sort of a forgotten little old-timey looking zoo with concrete pads and just big cats in tiny, tiny sort of cages," she says. "I just was horrified."

The zoo, of course, isn't simply animals in cages. The zoo falling into disrepair isn't just losing a local treasure. It's science. It's a living classroom where children get an opportunity to see the world beyond their neighborhood, in many instances, for the first time.

She spoke to her husband, Lee, about it.

"He said, 'Well, why don't you do something about it then,'" Bass says.

And, so, she did.

Ramona Bass is celebrating her 40th year with the Fort Worth Zoo. Bass, with her family's resources and a personal commitment, has transformed the zoo like a river carving a canyon. Today, people all over the world come to Fort Worth simply to see the zoo.

The zoo began to take off in the early 1990s with the consummation of a unique public-private partnership in which a new nonprofit, Fort Worth Zoological Association, would operate the zoo. There would not only be new resources from her family and a willing donor base, but a new mission that recognized the shared interests between humans and animals.

Since its transfer from public management, the nonprofit has raised more than $300 million and loads of new exhibitions. The zoo is a world-class institution.

Among those who have played pivotal roles is Michael Fouraker, who joined the zoo in 1993 and became executive director in 2001. He is, Bass says, "the greatest zoo director ever."

"He understands science and wildlife, but he also understands economics," Bass says. "I think that's where a lot of zoos get in trouble. You have people that only understand animals, and they're just spending gazillions of dollars and not thinking about … we have to survive as a nonprofit and we have to make money to support the zoo."

That is done not only through philanthropy but through visitors. And thanks to Ramona Bass, more people want to come to the Fort Worth Zoo than ever before.

"I'm from San Antonio, but Fort Worth is such a great town and such a wonderful community and so supportive," Bass says. "It's been really a treat over these last 40 years. I had a lot of help with a lot of good people, and our staff here is amazing." fw

Around Cowtown in 8 Seconds

A smattering of things you might've missed

1. New Voice in District 6: Mia Hall joins the Fort Worth City Council dais after earning a place through a runoff victory over Daryl Davis in June. She succeeds Jared Williams, who chose not to seek reelection.

2. Returning "Home": At 97, retired Fort Worth firefighter Wayne C. Brown returns to his old firehouse, Fire Station No. 5 — now The Nobleman Fort Worth luxury hotel — to revisit the place where his career began in 1950. Though the old sights, sounds, and scents had given way to designer finishes, the memories still burned bright.

3. Taking Flight: Cmdr. Chris Meek, a Navy aviator who once roamed the halls of Nolan Catholic High School, has been named the executive officer of the Navy's Blue Angels.

4. Jury Finds for Arlington Firefighter's Family: A Tarrant County jury returns a $31.2 million verdict against the ownership and management companies of the Royalton Chic resort in Cancun, finding the property negligent for the tragic death of 35-year-old Arlington firefighter Elijah Snow in 2021.

5. Summer Tripping: "Do Something Good For Your Neighbor," a public artwork created by RDG Planning & Design and installed in Fort Worth's Como neighborhood in 2021, is going to Italy. The work has been selected for inclusion in the United States Pavilion at the 2025 Venice Architecture Biennale.

6. He Said It: "Having the big city of Dallas, the sports city of Arlington, and how culturally authentic Fort Worth is, this is going to be a world-class experience for fans to come visit here." — Dan Hunt, president of FC Dallas, on his pitch to FIFA for North Texas' World Cup bid. The beautiful game comes next year.

7. Betsy Gets Her Name in Lights: Fort Worth cut the ribbon on the Betsy Price Community Center in north Fort Worth with live entertainment, food trucks, and art displays. "It's really strange driving up seeing your name up on the side of the building," Price says.

8. Hallelujah! After spending years in financial crisis, Fort Worth's Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President David Dockery tells the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas that his institution is now in a "good place."









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July

4

Fort Worth's Fourth

Nothin' beats the Texas heat like a heap of fireworks, fried festival foods, live music, and a heck of a lot of national pride. This marks America's 249th birthday and the 18th year Panther Island Pavilion's hosting the party.
Panther Island Pavilion
fortworthsfourth.com

11

Sixpence None the Richer

The alternative rock band whose heyday in the late '90s brought us such earwormy hits as "Kiss Me" and a cover of The La's "There She Goes" comes to Fort Worth after a recent reunion and release of "We Are Love," the band's first single in 12 years.
Tannahill's Tavern and Music Hall
tannahills.com



15-20

'The Wiz'

The 1974 Tony Award-winning Broadway musical, which would become a 1978 film starring Michael Jackson, is a modern retelling of L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz*. The musical was an early example of a Broadway performance featuring an all-Black cast.
Bass Performance Hall
basshall.com

16

Goo Goo Dolls with Dashboard Confessional

Two of the biggest rock acts from the late '90s and early 2000s, Goo Goo Dolls and Dashboard Confessional have also shown to possess some staying power. Both groups continue to release new music and headline national tours.
Dickies Arena
dickiesarena.com



17

Broncho

The quartet from Norman, Oklahoma, have produced some of the catchiest indie rock songs of the past 10 years and have developed a big North Texas following. They're touring behind their fifth studio album, *Natural Pleasures*.
Tannahill's Tavern and Music Hall
tannahills.com



26-Jan. 4

Seven Days: The Still Lifes of Chuck Ramirez

One of San Antonio's most influential artists, Chuck Ramirez (1962-2010) was known for capturing the beauty of inanimate objects we often dispose of. This exhibit will feature seven still-life photos of half-eaten dishes and haphazardly placed popular food items — a veritable I Spy of trash.
Amon Carter Museum of American Art
cartermuseum.org

29-Aug. 3

'Shucked'

With music and lyrics co-written by Mineral Wells native Shane McAnally, this is a Broadway musical that, despite its subject matter (corn), might hit close to home. Nominated for nine Tony Awards, this writer attests it's one of the funniest musicals you'll ever see.
Bass Performance Hall
basshall.com

30

Jim Milan's Bucket List Jazz Band

Despite founder Jim Milan's death in April 2023, this local outfit of incredible jazz musicians continues to hit the stage regularly at Fort Worth venues in tribute to the band's namesake, who started the band at the age of 87.
Tulips
tulipsftw.com



30-Aug. 17

'The Heart Sellers'

A pair of women new to America, Jane and Luna meet for the first time on Thanksgiving Day in 1973 and, as one might say, immediately hit it off. One of the top produced plays in 2024, "The Heart Sellers" perfectly captures the hopes and fears of the immigrant experience.
Amphibian Stage
amphibianstage.com

photos provided by Tannahill's Tavern and Music Hall // Dickies Arena // Amon Carter Museum of American Art // Amphibian Stage

July 19

The American Performance Horseman

Nothing tests the relationship of man and horse like reining, cutting, and reined cow horse. And this one-of-a-kind event includes competitions for all three. This Teton Ridge production will include a live music performance from Brothers Osborne.

Dickies Arena | *dickiesarena.com*



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Isabella Breedlove

Artist

By **Brian Kendall** Photo by **Asia Eidson**

FROM THE FEED















1. Isabella with her grandparents, Jody and Lanny Lancarte. "My biggest supporters have always been by my side." **2.** "My favorite people in this world celebrating my five years of sobriety." **3.** With mother, Kelly Lancarte. "I wouldn't be the woman I am without her." **4.** "My brothers, my best friends, my whole heart." **5.** With Aron Marquez, Mark Wahlberg, and Abraham Ancer. "Coolest part of this photo, Marky Mark has my painting hanging in his home office." **6.** "Hard launching me and the love of my life." **7.** Isabella in a homemade dress during her second collection release, "The Other Half."

Chatting with Isabella Breedlove, a local artist and self-described Topo Chico obsessive, brings to mind a famous quote often attributed to Mark Twain: "Never let your schooling interfere with your education."

In other words, intense structure and processes not only don't work for everybody, but they can be downright detrimental for those with a certain creative drive. Education comes in many forms, and not everyone needs to toil in the rigid system. Isabella certainly didn't.

Born and raised in Fort Worth, Isabella attended Trinity Valley until high school, when she decided she'd experienced enough of the academic life and begged her mom to homeschool her.

"It was the social aspect, but it was also just not liking schoolwork itself," Isabella says. "I'm so creative brained. Like, why do I need to know what the third line in the Declaration of Independence is?"

While there were some hardships and rough patches along the way, the permanent ditching of school seems to have paid off. Isabella, now 24, is one of Fort Worth's most prolific and imaginative artists. And her freeform paintings — unstructured, unpredictable, and flowing — make it even clearer how incompatible she is with the stiffness of school.

When she paints, it's pure intuition.

Isabella says, "My actual process when I'm in [my studio] is to turn my music up as loud as possible, dance around, and sing at the top of my lungs while I paint. And I drink so many Topo Chicos. That's it.

"But I draw a lot from my journals."

As a tool to cope with life's cruel curve balls (parents' divorce, battling addiction, illnesses, loneliness) and draw inspiration, Isabella has journaled for most of her life.

"The only way I could get through [my early hardships] was journaling," she says. "I have journals from 2010 just pouring my heart out onto paper and drawing and creating and painting." It was her release valve – her whistling spout to let a little steam out.

While she'll occasionally look at older journals, Isabella says she prefers to ignite creative sparks with more recent entries and chooses to focus on journals she's kept since becoming sober five years ago. This sobriety is something she calls "the best gift" of her life, and it wasn't too long after her sobriety that she decided to go all-in on pursuing a career in art.

Of course, the career choice would lead to a 300-square-foot apartment and eating popcorn for dinner most days — a small price to pay. "I was so broke," Isabella says. "But every single dime I had was going to my career. To painting, to supplies, everything. And I was, like, 'No, I'm going to do this. This is what I want to do with my life, and I can't imagine doing anything else.'"

Impressed with her resolve, Isabella's mother and grandparents cleared out some space in an unair-conditioned warehouse behind the world-famous Joe T. Garcia's restaurant to create an art studio for Isabella. If you're wondering why the space is next to Joe T's, it's because Isabella's grandfather, Lanny Lancarte, co-owns Joe T's. Yeah, I should mention Isabella's family is what one might call Fort Worth royalty.

Lack of AC aside, in this warehouse, Isabella has found both an ideal creative space and an inspiring creative partner in her grandfather. In case you didn't know, Lanny Lancarte also dabbles in painting.

"I don't think anyone supports me more in my career than my mom and my grandparents," Isabella says. "And what a beautiful thing that I get to do what I love every day."

Sounds like she's had one hell of an education. FW

BY THE WAY....

Local Artists Who Inspire Me

John Holt and Ginger Walker: "Some artists can be gatekeepers, which I can respect, but neither of [John nor Ginger] are that way at all. They're the first ones to lend a helping hand. They don't see me as competition but, instead, as our being part of the same artist community."



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Aristo Sham wins the quadrennial piano competition, and the $100,000 prize that comes with it.

by **John Henry**

Photos by **Brandon Wade**

Sham Wow

With Mendelssohn in hand and charm to spare, Aristo Sham walks out of the Cliburn gold-plated.

Upon reading a review of his daughter's solo vocal performance, give 'em hell Harry Truman went full WWE dad mode, doing his best Little League parent rendition.

"Someday I hope to meet you," the president wrote to the *Washington Post* critic. "When that happens, you'll need a new nose, a lot of beefsteak for black eyes, and perhaps a supporter below."

Look out below.

We'd just as soon turn loose that presidential pistol, as well as a perfectly flung Stockyards cow pie, on the critic who dared to call the 17th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition "dreary."

It is true there were no showstoppers like Yunchan Lim, who blew the doors off Bass Hall in 2022 with such a performance of Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 30 that some longtimers believed that his might have been the best performance ever at the Cliburn.

Otherwise, we're giving the critic a grade of poppycock. I, for one, thought Mendelssohn a perfect placement for this time and place. Well, for any time and place.

"This concerto is so much fun," says Aristo Sham of his rendition of Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 25 during his first swing through a two-round finals performance. "I'm struck by the quality of the craftsmanship. It's perfect from beginning to end.

"It's classic Mendelssohn whimsy, dazzling virtuosity, irresistible lightness. At the end of the second movement, it's like this overwhelming feeling that no matter what happens in the world, everything will be OK. And I feel that so much with Mendelssohn, and I think that really is his music's worth."

That performance marked the first time Mendelssohn — the German composer, pianist, conductor, and one of the leading figures of early Romantic music — had ever been brought to life in the Cliburn.

Sham put it to good use. The 29-year-old from Hong Kong closed with it and Brahms Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 83 — both played in concert with the Marin Alsop-conducted Fort Worth Symphony — to win the prestigious Cliburn Competition in the first week of June.

"You just never know what the variables are," Sham said afterward. "What I try to do is just be the absolute best version of myself and present that. And I could not control anything else. I just focused on my stuff and tried to be the best that I can."

The judges liked it.

Sham exited Fort Worth a better musician with a gold medal — plus the $100,000 prize that accompanies it. He also won the $2,500 audience award.

America the beautiful is still waiting for a Cliburn winner. No American has won the prized contest since the quadrennial festival began in 1962. We had a few knocking on the door in 2025. Evren Ozel, 26, a Minnesota native placed third.

American Angel Stanislav Wang and Carter Johnson, a Canadian/American, were among the six finalists.

Russian-Israeli Vitaly Starikov was the runner-up.

I personally took a shine to Wang,

born in Los Angeles but who has lived in Russia the past 11 years studying music.

"I'm a little nervous," the 22-year-old, soft-spoken, lanky, devilishly handsome, warm and charming American said of this and a preceding interview.

Wang had just come off the stage after a remarkable semifinal performance in front of a full concert hall and hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, more viewing worldwide. But this makes him nervous?

In those Cliburn semifinals, Wang treated us to Beethoven's fiery "Appassionata," a pair of bold pieces from Bolcom's 12 New Etudes — "Fast, furious" and "Hymne à l'amour" — and Mussorgsky's epic Pictures at an Exhibition.

A silver medalist at the 2023 Tchaikovsky Competition and winner of more than 35 international contests, Wang regularly performs across the United States and Europe, including Germany, Russia, Switzerland, Austria, Spain, Italy, and Croatia. His appearances include prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Musikverein in Vienna, all three major halls of the Moscow Conservatory (Great, Small, and Rachmaninov), the Mariinsky Theatre Concert Halls in St. Petersburg, and the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow.

His mother began teaching him piano seriously when he was 5. It quickly became apparent he had something special. Wanting him to study the same rigorous tradition she had, she moved him to Moscow in 2013. There, he lived with his grandparents and enrolled at the prestigious Gnessin Moscow Special School of Music, studying under Tatiana Zelikman. He later joined Natalia Trull's studio at the Central Music School and, in 2020, entered the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, where he continues his studies today.



Marin Alsop conducts the Fort Worth Symphony, which works in concert with Sham during his finals performance.

"My father was totally against it," Wang says of moving to Russia. "He finally agreed in the last moment."

Mom won out in the end, naturally. It's been a good decision. Wang today speaks English, his native tongue, Russian — which he didn't speak a lick of 11 years ago — and he has a strong familiarity with Mandarin.

And, most recently, he came within earshot of winning the competition named in honor of his idol, Van Cliburn. In fact, Wang has more than a passing resemblance of the iconic pianist — all arms and legs, with long, nimble fingers made for piano, jumping across the keyboard like a leaping spider.



And he's a sweetheart of a guy.

Sham, too, shares some similarities with another genius: Mendelssohn, considered a child prodigy of the early 1800s.

Sham's mother taught piano in their Hong Kong home. So, he says, "I was enveloped in the environment of the piano even before I was born."

Nature and nurture, all of the above.

Sham showed an "immense curiosity" toward the piano when he was a toddler and started in lessons at 3 years old. At the age of 10, he began competing and concertizing. Sham was featured in the documentary "The World's Greatest Musical Prodigies."

Sham, who has dual degrees from Harvard and the New England Conservatory, went to the Ingesund School of Music in Sweden, where he still lives, to study under Julia Mustonen-Dahlkvist. He has even performed for royalty, including King Charles, who could only hope to be as interesting as these guys.

No offense, Your Majesty.

"I am incredibly fortunate to have enjoyed vast experiences in life and an extremely varied education, both in music and otherwise," Sham says. "I hope to draw from my expressive, emotional, and intellectual capacity, to project an artistic voice and create unique experiences that resonate with our audiences of today."

Dreary, Mendelssohn's ass. FW



Athens is maybe, perhaps, somewhat likely the birthplace of the hamburger.

by Shilo Urban

Athens, Texas

Population: 13,503

An East Texas town with a very Greek name, Athens is the birthplace of an American icon known around the world: the hamburger. As the story goes, sometime in the 1880s, "Uncle" Fletcher Davis began serving ground beef on Texas toast at a café on Athens' courthouse square (there's a historical plaque there today). Locals loved the new sandwich, so Davis took it to the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair.

The crowd there loved it too … for the most part. For German immigrants, it recalled the unsophisticated dining customs of some of their countryfolk, who gobbled down large amounts of beef by the handful, both cooked and raw. It was a common practice around the German city of Hamburg — so they called the sandwich a hamburger. One can imagine their chuckles of derision at the barbaric new burger … and their surprise years later when it became one of the most popular foods on the planet.

Like almost every famous dish, the burger's origin story is disputed. But the Texas State Legislature and McDonald's Hamburger University have both put their stamp of approval on Athens. You can celebrate the burger in its Texas birthplace every September at Uncle Fletcher's Burger Fest, a cookoff extravaganza with turtle races and a mooing competition. It's part of the multiday Black-Eyed Pea Jamboree; Athens also claims the title of Black-Eyed Pea Capital of the World.

Texas settlers found the landscape's fertile, rolling hills ideal for growing peas, corn, tomatoes, and cotton. Ducks and deer liked the area too. Dallas elites made it their favorite hunting ground, an easy 80-minute drive for a weekend getaway. After Lake Athens reservoir was completed in 1963 and stocked with largemouth bass, white bass, crappie, and sunfish, it became a prime fishing and boating destination. Today, it's not uncommon for fishers to pull trophy-size bass from the lake.

Ponder the underwater world at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, which is on track to reopen this June after an $8 million renovation and upgrade. The facility has



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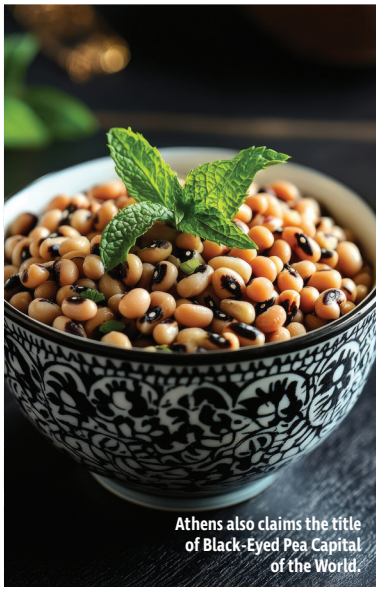
If you'd rather go diving yourself, try the crystal-clear lagoon at Athens Scuba Park. Built in an old brick quarry, the spring-fed lake has over 20 sunken wrecks to explore, including jetliners and Clint Eastwood's triple-decker houseboat. The park also offers a pro shop with gear rentals, diving lessons, and campsites for an all-inclusive scuba adventure. Come dinnertime, light a fire on the grill and slap down some barbaric beef patties — and give a nod of thanks to the small Texas town where the burger was born. FW



Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center



Henderson County Courthouse



Athens also claims the title of Black-Eyed Pea Capital of the World.

Explore Athens

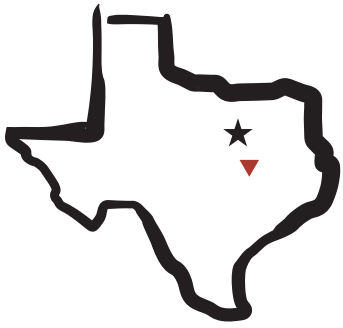
Savor: Now that you're hungry for a hamburger, head to Athens Brewing Co. on the courthouse square. Go classic with cheddar cheese or get flashy with pork belly and onion jam. Microbrews include a mango sour and a citrusy Belgian-style beer called Final Zestination. Also on the square is Freelancers Café, a gaming cyber-lounge with a robotic barista. Cherry Laurel Bakery has been a comfort food favorite for breakfast and lunch since opening in 1990. Cakes are its specialty, so save room for a slice of strawberry or its signature butter-rum. Outside of town, three wineries host tastings and various culinary events: Castle Oaks Winery, 3 P's in a Vine, and Tara Vineyard & Winery (be sure to check the hours before you go).

Shop: Athens Farmers Market pops up every Saturday and Wednesday morning from mid-April through November. Local pride is on full display, with more than two dozen farmers and craftspeople selling shiny blackberries and just-picked vegetables. Pick up a bottle of cherry chocolate salsa from Jose Madrid or some maple syrup from Sticky Pete. Eclectic Atticus & Co. boutique is loaded with Texas-made gifts for men and women, such as leather goods from San Antonio's Mission Mercantile and outdoor gear from Howler Brothers in Austin. Next door, 211 Gallery showcases 40 artists' creations in painting and photography.

Enjoy: In addition to the Black-Eyed Pea Jamboree/Uncle Fletcher's Burger Fest, big events include the Juneteenth Black Rodeo every summer and the Old Fiddlers Contest & Reunion in spring, which has been around for almost a century. Catch tribute bands and musical bingo at the Texan, a converted 1948 movie theater with barbecue lunches on Fridays. Get a dose of nature on Lake Athens and in the gardens of the East Texas Arboretum — or an adrenaline rush at Athens Motocross Park and New York Texas Zipline Adventures (in the nearby town of New York, Texas). Animal lovers may want to see Black Beauty Ranch, a world-renowned animal sanctuary for hundreds of rescued critters, domestic and exotic. The nonprofit offers public tours once or twice a month (check Facebook for the current schedule) and also arranges private visits.

Snooze: Stay in a historic 1880s mansion amid rows of Blanc Du Bois grapes at Tara Vineyard & Winery. Four B&B-style rooms evoke Old World elegance and have perks like gas fireplaces and jacuzzi tubs. There's also a separate cottage and cabin, and the restaurant receives top marks. For something funkier, try the tiny luxury cabins and geodesic domes at Selah Place. The charming hideaways are nestled on wooded land and come equipped with king-size beds and kitchenettes.

How to Get There: Drive south out of Fort Worth on Highway 287 for 60 miles until it merges with Interstate 45 just past Ennis. Continue on I-45 S for 16 miles to Corsicana, then take Exit 231 for TX-31 E toward Waco/Athens. Turn left on TX-31/Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and drive for 32 miles to Athens. The trip takes about two hours with no traffic.



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- Revisions Skincare
- Salt Facial
- Sculptra/Radiesse
- SkinPen Microneedling
- Wrinkle Relaxers
- ZO Skin Health

Cosmetic Surgery Center:

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- Brachioplasty
- Breast Augmentation
- Breast Reduction
- Breast Lift
- Facelift/Necklift
- Liposuction
- Mommy Makeover
- Thighplasty
- Tummy Tuck

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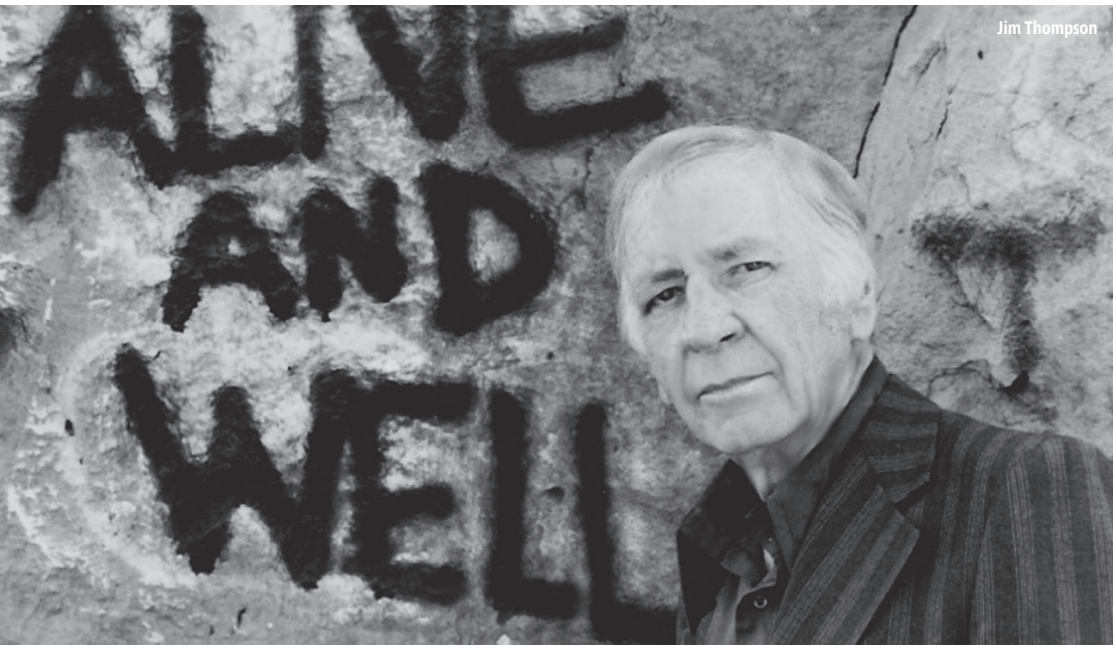
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Jim Thompson

by
Michael H. Price

A Life of Crime Writing

The booze-addled brilliance of "The Killer Inside Me" writer Jim Thompson

From liquor- and dope-peddling bellhop-turned-hustler (during Prohibition, yet) at Fort Worth's historic Hotel Texas, to off-brand pulp-fiction author of unexpected literary immensity, Jim Thompson forged a career like few others in crime fiction: He might as well have been one of his own misbegotten characters. His legacy has found him popularly regarded as a "dime-store Dostoevsky," as the critic Geoffrey O'Brien has termed the tormented author.

In a biographical study called *Difficult Lives* (Gryphon Books, 1993), the novelist James Sallis emphasizes O'Brien's likening of Thompson to Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881), the influential and provocative Russian author.

Parallels are self-evident in the respective writers' courtship of controversy; in their touches of autobiography in their more problematic fictional personalities; and in their confrontational approaches to social criticism.

Both lived as outsiders, popular recognition notwithstanding. Dostoevsky toiled in a higher literary realm, though hounded by repression and legal woes. Thompson courted the bottom-feeder market of pulp magazines and original paperback novels — lurid emotionalism and impulsive violence, yielding fevered reading at 15 cents or a quarter per copy. Both wrote fearlessly, although Dostoevsky would have cringed from the undignified pulp-thriller marketplace of the mid-20th century. Thompson approached the arena subversively.

Thompson wallowed in a deceptive mire of cheap sensations and disposable anti-literature, with a detox-and-retox cycle of alcoholism as a chronic muse. His ideas were bigger than his medium: Filmmaker Stephen Frears, who adapted Thompson's 1963 novel *The Grifters* in 1990, has hailed the elements of Greek tragedy in the books.

James Myers "Jim" Thompson (1906-1977) wrote more than 30 hard-boiled crime novels, mostly paperback originals, from the late 1940s through the middle 1950s. Sporadic critical nods aside, Thompson was seldom recognized as a literary figure during his lifetime. Only after his death did his stature grow.

His more memorable works include *The Killer Inside Me, Savage Night, A Hell of a Woman* and *Pop. 1280*. These titles find Thompson transforming the crime genre into a medium of challenge, with erratic narrators, dreamlike narrative structures, and the erratic impulses of dying or deranged characters. Such more dignified authors as Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, and Horace McCoy never attained the raw-nerve extremes of Thompson. In an introduction to a modern-day edition of the bleak, near-autobiographical *Now and on Earth* (a début novel from 1942), Stephen King characterized Thompson as "absolutely over the top … didn't know the meaning of the word 'stop.'"

Thompson praised his father, lawman-turned-oilman James "Big Jim" Thompson, in such books as *Bad Boy and King Blood* — after having reviled the man (by proxy) with near-pathological anger in *The Killer Inside Me*.

Born in Anadarko, Oklahoma — his sheriff-father fled for Mexico after an accusation of embezzlement — Jim Thompson found his family reunited by 1910. The Thompsons resettled in Fort Worth. Jim began writing in earnest as a schoolboy but made his earliest popular impression as a Hotel Texas bellboy capable of supplying drugs and liquor for guests intent upon bending the law. He claimed earnings of $300 a week, in addition to his official $15 a month.

Thompson's own indulgences left

him an alcoholic at 19, with a nervous collapse to show for it. While working at age 26 as an oilfield laborer, he joined his father in a drilling operation that went from boom-to-bust in a few years. Thompson renewed his literary momentum in Fort Worth, then enrolled in the University of Nebraska — only to drop out in 1931. He researched criminal cases for true-crime magazines, not as a journalist but rather as a sensationalist, imposing a first-person narrative voice as if from direct observation.

Popular recognition eluded him, and by now Thompson had a family to support. He entered the low-prestige but better-paying genre of crime fiction with a novel called *Nothing More than Murder*. Lion Books, a small-time paperback publisher, offered creative freedom in exchange for Thompson's ability to make a typewriter smoke. Thompson became a reporter with the *Los Angeles Mirror* during 1948-1949 — just long enough for his novels to develop momentum.

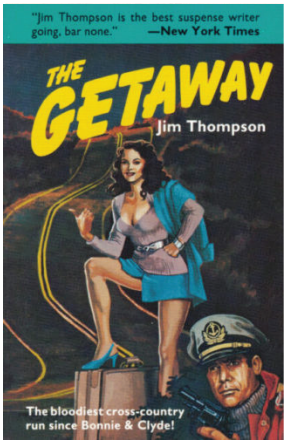
A breakthrough with *The Killer Inside Me* (1952; twice filmed, in 1976 and 2010) encouraged a pace of five novels a year during 1953-1954. In keeping with the homicidal protagonist of *The Killer Inside Me*, 1953's *Savage Night* introduced a hired gunman, foredoomed by disease, whose parallel mental collapse triggers a surreal ending. Such an experimental approach is unusual in a paperback designed to be read once and then discarded.

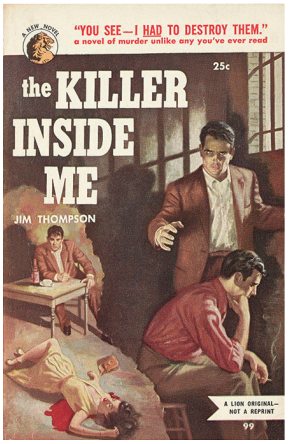
A hitch with screen director Stanley Kubrick found Thompson assigned to adapt a Lionel White novel, *Clean Break*. Kubrick called the film "The Killing" (1955) and claimed screenplay credit, acknowledging Thompson for additional dialogue. Kubrick and Thompson would collaborate again, on "Paths of Glory" (with Calder Willingham) and on an abortive effort called "Lunatic at Large," which collapsed after Kubrick moved into epic-scale assignments with "Spartacus."

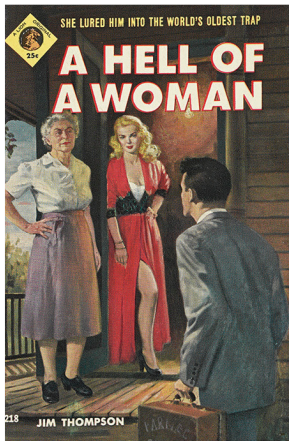
From the mid-1950s through the 1960s, Thompson completed one novel a year. The paperback field was dwindling, overshadowed by television. Thompson ditched the crime-thriller books but persisted with a sideline in scripts for such television serials as "Mackenzie's Raiders" and "Convoy."



Thompson with Robert Redford and Tony Bill







Thompson's most formidable novel of the waning 1950s, *The Getaway*, would become a filmmaking project for Sam Peckinpah, though compromised by interference from star player Steve McQueen, who demanded thrilling action over Thompson's provocative dialogue. Meanwhile, Thompson's more obscure novels were finding acclaim among the French literati, pointing toward a mass-market rediscovery in America.

And why the recurring interest in an author who summoned miserable fringe-dwellers and dwelt on the inner workings of their warped minds? What's with the attention to a chronic drunkard who plotted his yarns as if literalizing the 3-D delirium tremens into sentences and paragraphs?

Thompson avoided good-guy characterizations, for the most part, and the occasional impulse of common decency is scarcely a match for rampant opportunism and fraudulence. The redeeming quality is the opportunity to follow a daring literary experimentalist/extremist as he challenges the rules of narrative fiction — sometimes sloppy, as if in haste to get everything down before the thought dissipates, and often willing to test the reader's patience by blurring the lines between imagination and reality. Jim Thompson wrote as he lived, without a safety net of restraint, and don't try this at home. **FW**

by
John Henry



Rush to Redraw Is a Middle Finger to Conservatism

More has been written about the Tarrant County Commissioners Court in the past two years than the past 25.

And — brace yourself — here comes more.

The burial customs of Eskimos and the practical uses of horse manure seemed more compelling topics, but here we are.

The court found itself the center of news coverage in June over the rushed mid-decade redistricting of the county's precinct borders. It was led by Judge Tim O'Hare and two Republican colleagues on the court, Matt Krause and Manny Ramirez.

It was sold as an intentional packing of the court to ensure another "conservative" member on it. Under scrutiny by critics, O'Hare asserted that had the shoe been on the other foot and Democrats had the same opportunity, they would take it.

And it's certainly true. Democrats gerrymandered in the U.S. Congress for decades. And at the county level, they have gerrymandered at every opportunity. One need only look east in Dallas County to see it.

It makes you wonder: What other "great" Democrat ideas might appear on a Tarrant County Commissioners Court Agenda?

Yes, gerrymandering is an unavoidable feature of partisan politics. It's in the playbook of both parties.

However, whatever is said about Tarrant County's redistricting — it took opponents seeming minutes to file a lawsuit alleging racial gerrymandering, which is illegal — it is decidedly not conservative.

Certainly not a conservative who supports tradition and continuity — redistricting is done every 10 years with updated census figures — and is opposed to government overreach and rightly skeptical of radical change. In this case, rushed radical change.

"A conservative is someone who stands athwart history, yelling 'Stop,' at a time when no one is inclined to do so, or to have much patience with those who so urge it," William F. Buckley Jr., the voice and brain of the 20th century conservative movement, said many moons ago.

As Calvin Coolidge once said of the job of a good legislator: "It is much more important to kill bad bills than to pass good ones."

A conservative, Buckley wrote, is one who persuades and engages people with ideas, not enforcing purity or isolating dissenters. That is an approach we have seen from the ideologues on the left. And it has failed spectacularly. One changes minds through clarity, wit, and logic, not rage or rigidity.

You don't make believers as Mr. Rev. J. Frank Norris tried to do in another time, pounding his pulpit: You shall have no other gods before me, the Rev. J. Frank Norris.

Conservatism is supposed to be rooted in reality, not ideology. It is ideological purity, Buckley argued, that always leads to extremism. It was Buckley who denounced Robert Welch, founder of the John Birch Society, in the early 1960s. Welch had once accused President Eisenhower of being a Communist agent. (We've actually heard something like that more recently.) Such conspiracy theories and rigid orthodoxy made the "movement look unserious and unfit to govern."

This type of stuff is but one reason there literally is no Democratic Party in Tarrant County. They rarely appear serious. Moreover, Alisa Simmons, the commissioner targeted for defeat by the redistricting, at one point with all the grace of a royal wave, unfurled her hand and elevated the middle finger — that international sign for "please go straight to hell" — at O'Hare.

Right there on the dais. This is not a serious way to govern.

Allison Campolo — who is running for the Democratic Party chair in Tarrant County, presumably under the impression she can stitch shreds back together — appeared to speak at the meeting of the Commissioners Court. She vowed that Republican commissioners in support of the scheme would pay a heavy price for this alleged malfeasance by being voted out of office.

That, of course, is preposterous. Who needs redistricting to water down elections when you have the voter? No one devalues the right to vote quite like voters, who rarely bother to show up for nonpresidential elections.

Partisan politics is a necessary evil, but there can be no mistaking that it is poison in the well, particularly in local government. It is, flatly, not helpful.

In the lead-up to all of this, the Democratic members of the Fort Worth City Council — a nonpartisan body with partisan members — passed a resolution in opposition to the county's planned measure, arguing that it was deliberately weakening the voting power of racial minorities.

There are already rumblings that the Republican Commissioners Court is eager and willing to not participate in economic development matters in council districts that supported the resolution, just as a matter of political retribution.

This is no way to live. And this is how big cities get in trouble.

Buckley had another piece of wise counsel: "Decent people should ignore politics, if only they could be confident that politics would ignore them." fw



777

PETROLEUM CLUB

FORT WORTH

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Est. 1953

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High above downtown on the 40th floor of 777 Main, the Fort Worth Petroleum Club is entering a bold new era. Founded in 1953 as a hub for oil and gas pioneers, it is now evolving into a modern Lifestyle Club that welcomes today's diverse leaders, innovators, and tastemakers across all industries. Blending business, culture, and lifestyle in an unmatched setting, the club offers elevated experiences—from client meetings to sunset cocktails—delivered with personal service and legendary Texas hospitality.

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Updated Ballroom – Perfect for member socials and private celebrations
Live Entertainment – Music and shows throughout the club

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Beef Wellington and Long Bone Lamb Tandoori await guests at The Chumley House.

Please Join *US*

for a *Luxurious Tour* Through Cowtown

WORDS BY
TIFFANY BLACKMON,
MALCOLM MAYHEW,
AND BRIAN KENDALL

DESIGN BY
LAUREN DEITZER

From what to buy, where to eat, and how to dress, this is your ultimate guide to spending dough in the Fort.

While Cowtown isn't a nickname that calls to mind luxury, one might be surprised to learn that the world of finer things has carved out quite the footprint in Fort Worth — that is, if you know where to look. While posh, swank, and couture are words normally associated with the city to the east, we're far from a town that's all grime and no glam. Quite the contrary; we've got glitz by the truckload. Of course, that's not to say Fort Worth bends to the will of truffle-infusions and exotic furs. No ma'am, we haven't traded in our boots for caviar just yet. Fort Worth toes that ever-important line between luxury and humility, and it ain't ever gonna change.

01 Shop

Fort Worth's luxury scene is flourishing with fabulous boutiques, designer brands, and refined experiences that are reimagining sophistication across our city.

FASHION

Chieffalo Americana

A mix of classic American and Western styles with a fresh, modern touch. Think quality, timeless craftsmanship, and style blended with an authentic Texas feel to bring an elevated Western flare to your everyday look.
4698 Camp Bowie Blvd. | chieffaloamericana.com

David Hunt Furs

This family-owned Fort Worth icon is known for timeless elegance and impeccable quality. From classic mink to modern shearling, David Hunt Furs offers expert craftsmanship for statement pieces.
4516 Hartwood Drive | davidhuntfurs.com

Fifth Avenue Club at Bowie House

A personalized, by-appointment experience that brings the glamour of Saks Fifth Avenue to the Cultural District. Enjoy luxury fashion in an intimate, curated setting — it's an elevated way to shop, right in the heart of the city.
3700 Camp Bowie Blvd.


City Boots

Seven Boutique

Seven Boutique offers a curated selection of gently loved designer pieces, making high-end style more accessible. Whether you're shopping or selling, it's the perfect place to refresh your wardrobe with timeless luxury finds.
4933 Camp Bowie Blvd.

SWB Agency

The secret to elevating your closet, the SWB Agency is a premier fashion consulting and personal styling firm. Known for curating effortlessly chic looks, SWB offers wardrobe styling and personal shopping tailored to each client.
shopwithbonnie.com

You Are Here

The ideal destination for elevated clothing, chic accessories, and fine jewelry. The boutique features a thoughtfully curated collection of timeless pieces and modern must-haves from high-end designers.
4804 Camp Bowie Blvd. | youareherefw.com

ACCESSORIES

Jo Latham

Every jewelry lover's dream. Located inside You Are Here, this luxury boutique showcases a stunning collection of fine jewelry that perfectly blends classic elegance with unique, eye-catching designs.
4804 Camp Bowie Blvd. | jolatham.com

JAG Jewelry + Goods

JAG is a refined destination for timeless, sophisticated accessories and carefully sourced fine jewelry. It's the perfect spot to discover elegant designs that effortlessly elevate any look.
3924 W. Vickery Blvd. | jagjewelryandgoods.com

LOCAL Design Studio

A creative home to eight female-owned businesses, including City Boots, C+B Collections, and Kori Green Jewelry. The artistry and craftsmanship within this space is second to none.
3610 W. Vickery Blvd. | localdesignstudios.com

COURTESY CRYSTAL WISE


Jenya Renée

COURTESY JENYA RENÉE

Jenya Renée

Jenya Renée offers limited-edition bags crafted from exotic skins, premium leathers, and exceptional materials. Each piece is a statement that exudes quiet luxury.
jenyarenee.com

The Best Hat Store

The name speaks for itself. Offering cowboy hats of the highest quality, these statement pieces effortlessly elevate your look and bring authentic Western flair to any closet.
2739 N. Main St. | besthatstore.com

Wild Silks

Handcrafted silk scarves and twills that blend tradition, artistry, and luxury. Made in Texas, each piece is thoughtfully designed to celebrate the spirit of the West while adding a refined touch to any outfit.
wild-silks.com



HOME & INTERIORS

PS The Letter

Fort Worth's go-to spot for beautifully curated gifts, paper goods, and timeless home accents. Fully stocked with everything from elegant home decor additions to elevated hostess gifts and so much more.

2100 Hulen St. | pstheletter.com

Simple Things

The perfect partner to help make your home effortlessly elegant and inviting. Its sophisticated blend of timeless design, artisan craftsmanship, and standout pieces will make your house feel like a home.

7401 West Vickery | simplethingsfurniture.com

Artspace111

Filled with high-quality local art — paintings, sculptures, and more — this gallery offers a thoughtfully curated experience that blends modern creativity with Fort Worth's rich artistic roots.

111 Hampton St. | artspace111.com

Marty & Pat's Frame Shoppe

A personal go-to of mine for years, Marty & Pat's specializes in custom framing that transforms artwork, photos, and keepsakes into beautifully preserved pieces ready to display.

5025 Camp Bowie Blvd.

KIDS

Babies on the Boulevard

Cowtown's beloved boutique for stylish, high-quality baby gear, clothing, and essentials. From adorable outfits to carefully selected nursery items, it offers everything parents need to welcome little ones in elegant style.

6323 Camp Bowie Blvd., Ste. 145 | babiesontheboulevard.com

Covey House

Known for timeless designs and quality craftsmanship, this charming boutique offers a carefully curated collection of stylish children's apparel, accessories, and lifestyle essentials.

4818 Camp Bowie Blvd. | coveyhouse.com

Collins & Conley

While this boutique has a wonderful selection of stylish and high-quality clothing for children, it also offers toys and gifts, making it a one-stop shop for all your child's needs.

5254 Monahans Ave. | collinsandconley.com

THE SHOPS AT CLEARFORK

The hub of Fort Worth's finer things

Combining world-class brands with Texas hospitality, Clearfork redefined the luxury shopping experience when it opened in 2017.

The upscale Shops at Clearfork, which also includes its fair share of high-end dining choices, blends sophistication and style in an open-air setting. Anchored by the world-famous Neiman Marcus, the shops also include a curated mix of the world's top fashion houses and designer boutiques, making it a haven for sophisticated shoppers. Visitors can explore iconic brands like Burberry, Louis Vuitton, Tiffany & Co., Saint Laurent, and Gucci. Recent additions like Chanel Fragrance & Beauty and CH Carolina Herrera elevate the center's status, bringing to Fort Worth brands typically found in global fashion capitals.

Beyond shopping, The Shops at Clearfork offers beautifully landscaped walkways, public art installations, and an array of fine dining options. The center also features public art installations, a luxury theater, and even a place to bowl or play bocce — in case you have the kids in tow — transforming a shopping trip into a day of indulgence and leisure.

Clearfork also thoughtfully incorporates local businesses into its vibrant community. The Clearfork Farmers Market features more than 25 local vendors offering fresh produce, artisanal foods, and handmade goods. In addition, pop-ups give local entrepreneurs the opportunity to showcase their products alongside prestigious national brands, ensuring Clearfork remains a dynamic destination that supports both luxury and local commerce.



COURTESY CLEARFORK

ELEGANCE MEETS INDIVIDUALITY

The art of dressing properly in Fort Worth

By Tiffany Blackmon

In a city known for its vibrant culture and sophisticated spirit, understanding how to dress with class and elegance while staying true to yourself is essential for both men and women. Fashion is a sense of self expression. True style is not about following every trend, but about curating a wardrobe that reflects your individuality while embracing the timeless principles of refinement and grace.

Dressing with class isn't about following rigid rules or sacrificing comfort for appearance. It's about presenting yourself with care, confidence, and attention to detail. Clean, well-maintained clothes, proper grooming, and thoughtful accessorizing are the pillars of an elegant look. Classic styles of tailored blazers, crisp shirts, well-fitted trousers, and timeless dresses never go out of style and flatter every body type. Neutral colors and simple shapes exude sophistication, while a good posture and self-assured demeanor complete the picture of true elegance.

While elegance sets the tone, your wardrobe should also be a canvas for your personality. Fashion is a powerful form of visual communication, allowing you to express who you are and what you stand for without saying a word. Whether it's a pop of color, a bold accessory, or a unique print, these elements let your individuality shine. The key is to experiment and find what makes you feel authentic and confident—because confidence is always in style.

In both social and professional settings, dress codes serve an important purpose. They are not about stifling creativity, but about showing respect for the occasion and the people hosting. Adhering to a dress code demonstrates that you understand and honor the expectations of your host or organization, and it helps create a sense of unity and occasion among attendees. Always remember, whether it's a black-tie gala or a business meeting, dressing appropriately shows that you value the event and the community you're part of.

The art of dressing well lies in finding harmony between self-expression and situational appropriateness. You should infuse your style with personality, while also keeping the context in mind. Respecting dress codes, maintaining good grooming, and choosing classic, well-fitted pieces are the foundation. From there, let your accessories, color choices, and unique details tell your story.

True style is about more than just clothing—it's about confidence, respect, and authenticity. Dress with class and elegance, and never be afraid to let your personality shine through. In doing so, you not only elevate your own presence but also contribute to the grace and vibrancy of every occasion you attend.

All that being said, we still recommend you own a felt cowboy hat and pair of boots.

FORT WORTH SHOPPING BAG

Discover the essence of Fort Worth luxury with my curated shopping bag, featuring five dream items that blend our city's Western heritage with high-end style.



Designer Handbag

A statement handbag from Saint Laurent, Gucci, or Neiman Marcus, or local favorite Jenya Renee — both offering fabulous collections and classic pieces — can instantly elevate any look with a touch of luxury and personality, making it the perfect accessory for any occasion.



Custom or Vintage Cowboy Boots



Fort Worth's Western roots make luxury cowboy boots a must. Shops like Chieffalo Americana and Maverick Fine Western Wear offer handcrafted and even upcycled boots, including styles that incorporate luxury materials and designer touches.

Elegant Statement Jewelry

Jo Latham curates fine jewelry from visionary designers, blending traditional and unique statement pieces known for their bold, conversation-starting styles. Maverick Fine Western Wear stands out for its turquoise earrings and necklaces, adding local flair and luxury to any look.



Outerwear or Statement Jacket



David Hunt Furs specializes in premium furs and leathers, offering both classic and modern styles for luxury outerwear. For a statement piece, C+B Furs features exclusive designs that add glamour to any look.

Custom Felt Hat

The Best Hat Store offers expert custom fitting and hand shaping of hats to each customer's preferences, with a wide range of shapes and styles. Staff shape the brim and crease to your liking while you watch. The store features a large selection of high-quality hats from American Hat Company.



Wellness 02

In this day and age, wellness is more than a trend; it's a lifestyle defined by luxury, innovation, and personalized care. From state-of-the-art med spas and health clubs to expert beauty professionals and boutique fitness studios, Fort Worth's top wellness destinations offer transformative experiences designed for those who desire the very best.

121MD

Forget cold and impersonal hospital or clinic visits. This premier family medicine practice is focused on personalized, patient-centered care that eschews long appointment wait times for monthly retainer fees for convenient access to your doctor. Serving as familiars as much as doctors, 121MD prioritizes building strong relationships to support your health journey at every stage of life.

5450 Clearfork Main St., Ste. 460 | 121md.net

Blue Mercury

Offering a curated selection of luxury skin care, makeup, and wellness products, Blue Mercury is the ultimate stop for beauty lovers. Whether stocking up on tried-and-true favorites or discovering new top brands and products, this is an elevated shopping experience tailored just for you.

1701 River Run, Ste. D101 | bluemercury.com

Canyon Ranch

No spot in Cowtown exudes tranquility more than Canyon Ranch, the premier luxury destination for spa treatments, fitness, and wellness experiences. From indulgent beauty services to expert health programs, this incredible retreat rolls top-of-the-line spa and wellness programs into one relaxing and restorative experience.

850 Van Cliburn Way | canyonranch.com

Fort Worth Brows

The go-to spot for aesthetic brow and lash services designed to keep you looking polished and perfectly manicured. Whether seeking enhancements to your natural shape or the addition of an eye-catching touch, this expert team delivers flawless results. Remember, brow and lash beauty make a lasting impression.

1633 Rogers Road, Ste. B | ftwbrows.com

Fort Worth Plastic Surgery & MedSpa

No need to wince when you see the term "plastic surgery" — advanced aesthetic treatments are designed to enhance your natural beauty, making it the ultimate form of self-care. No matter your needs or aesthetic wishes, Fort Worth Plastic Surgery combines cutting-edge technology with compassionate service to help you look and feel your best.

800 12th Ave., Ste. 100 | fortworthmedspa.com

Kari Does Makeup

A professional makeup artist with over 17 years of experience, Kari Does Makeup is dedicated to helping you look and feel your most beautiful for any occasion — wedding, special event, or just because. Kari brings expert skill and a passion for detail to every look, making clients feel confident and radiant.

6201 Sunset Drive | karidoesmakeup.com

Restore + Revive

A local, state-of-the-art wellness partner that blends medical expertise with a functional, results-driven approach. Restore + Revive focuses on restoring balance and enhancing overall well-being through advanced treatments and personalized care. My favorites? Its rejuvenating IV drips and detox foot soaks.

4927 Byers Ave. | restoreandrevivefw.com

Schmidgall Dental Aesthetics

Aesthetically, few things are as important as maintaining your pearly whites. If only a visit to the dentist felt more like a day at the spa could such goals be easier to reach. Specializing in cosmetic dentistry, Schmidgall Dental Aesthetics accomplishes just that: a relaxed environment with incredible results. Achieving a Hollywood-worthy smile has never been easier.

5656 Edwards Ranch Road, Ste. 101 | schmidgalldental.com

Watts Fitness

Nothing says elegance and refinement like a well-sculpted body and good cardio. With a helpful mobile app that creates customized programs, Watts is dedicated to helping you reach your health and wellness goals without ever having to step into a locker room or sweat-filled gym. Watts' supportive team makes every workout count.

3700 Hulen St. | wattsfitness.com

COURTESY BLUE MERCURY





COURTESY CANYON RANCH

03 Eat & Drink

Explore the city's most crave-worthy, high-end booze and bites.

FINE DINING IN THE FORT

Fort Worth's top fine dining restaurants offer unparalleled cuisine and ambiance, proving our city is a true destination for gastronomic excellence.

61 Osteria

CUISINE: ITALIAN

Opened two years ago on the western tip of downtown, on the ground floor of the First on 7th building, 61 Osteria comes from the same culinary team behind Grace: owner Adam Jones and executive chef Blaine Staniford. 61 Osteria is their love letter to Italian cuisine. Dishes such as octopus carpaccio and lobster gnocchi are made with seasonal ingredients, often sourced from local farmers. The restaurant itself is a visual masterwork, with its architectural elements etched from handsome red oak paneling and rainforest green marble. Above the dining room hangs a remarkable rectilinear sculpture, fashioned from anodized aluminum chain fabric imported from Spain — quite the sight.

What to order: Pastas are made in-house and best exemplify the talents of Staniford and his team. The unique serpente — ricotta-stuffed pasta coiled like a snake — is our go-to.

Good to know: A happy hour menu consisting of snacks, glasses of wine, and craft cocktails is available every day 4:30-6:30 p.m.

500 W. 7th St. | 061osteria.com



COURTESY 61 OSTERIA

Caterina's

CUISINE: ITALIAN

Your phone will be put in a pouch, and, guys, you gotta wear a jacket. Such are the rules at this classy Italian spot owned by Fort Worth chef Tim Love. Some may say the rules are silly, but any time we can hark back to a world before iPhones, dress up nice, and enjoy a dynamite meal is just fine with us. And you will dine well on dishes such as poached veal with capers and a plate-engulfing two-bone pork chop. The romantic atmos makes it a good choice for date night, whether it's your first or 50th.

What to order: The simple yet delicious spaghetti with pancetta.

Good to know: Jackets aren't required at lunch.

128 E. Exchange Ave. | caterinasftx.com

Grace

CUISINE: NEW AMERICAN

Adam Jones helped bring fine dining downtown, and Grace, the first of three restaurants he has opened in the area, is a master class in the form. From the exquisitely decorated dining room to the top-notch service to executive chef Blaine Staniford's dizzyingly good cuisine, Grace is a first-class experience from beginning to end. What will strike you the most is the service, which seems modeled after Jones himself: warm, personable, and very, very Fort Worth. We need more Adam Joneses in the world.

What to order: Colorado rack of lamb, whose decadence is illustrated by artful presentation, with one upright bone of succulent meat resting on another. The scallops are a must, too. Yes, you can have scallops anywhere, but here they're draped in a vehemently decadent caviar butter sauce.

Good to know: Maybe the best wine list in town.

777 Main St. | gracefortworth.com

Maiden

CUISINE: VEGAN

Those who think vegan food lacks a certain culinary pow have yet to dine at Maiden, one of the few fine dining vegan restaurants in the country. Within a posh, understated atmosphere, the food's exquisite flavors are matched only by their presentation, with ingredients artfully arranged, like tiny paintings. There are several ways to dine at Maiden: There are two tasting menus, a five-course and an eight-course, an a la carte menu, weekend brunch, and a separate bar menu.

What to order: Maiden is not at all what many think it is; there aren't dishes made up solely of tomatoes and cauliflower. Rather, the restaurant serves vegan renditions of American classics, like steak frites, salmon, pastas, and eggs Benedict, all made with seasonal ingredients and meat and dairy-free products.

Good to know: On the last Saturday of every month, Maiden hosts its version of afternoon tea, with towers of sweet and savory scones, pastries, and finger sandwiches. Reservations are required.

1216 Sixth Ave. | maidenvegan.com



COURTESY RICHARD RODRIGUEZ

Paris 7th

CUISINE: FRENCH

One of the city's best restaurants, Paris 7th offers an authentic French dining experience that seamlessly blends classic elegance with modern sophistication. Under the culinary baton of chef Mark Hitri and the attentive eyes of front of house master of ceremonies Chris Salvador, the restaurant has become a haven for those seeking refined French cuisine in a charming, lively atmosphere. From delicate amuse-bouches to expertly crafted main courses like dover sole, each dish reflects a dedication to traditional techniques done with a contemporary flair.

What to order: The restaurant's signature dish is duck two ways: duck confit and magret duck breast. It's a stunner.


Paris 7th

COURTESY RICHARD RODRIGUEZ

Good to know: Those who prefer to drink their desserts will swoon over the Brandy Ice, comprised of housemade vanilla ice cream blended with brandy and creme de cacao.
3324 W. 7th St. **/** *paris7th.com*

The Blue Room at Emilia's

CUISINE: MEDITERRANEAN/AMERICAN

Perhaps the most luxurious dining experiences in Fort Worth happen within the blue-imbued walls of The Blue Room, the restaurant-within-a-restaurant at Emilia's, The Crescent Hotel's on-site restaurant. While it's not exactly private dining, it's pretty close: Accessible only through a speakeasy-inspired entrance, the dining room is independent of Emilia's, and executive chef Preston Paine curates a multicourse tasting menu also separate from that of the mothership restaurant. Servers dote, wiping away crumbs, providing vivid explanations of the food; somms roam, promoting top-grade wines; and Paine himself often makes an appearance — a nice touch that adds to the premium vibe.
What to order: As is often the case with tasting menus, Blue Room's multicourse menu changes often. Some recent dishes have included roasted duck in a mole sauce; Navajo fry bread served with smoked white fish and baba ganoush; and Gulf grouper with blue crab remoulade.
Good to know: For the summer, The Blue Room is open only Friday and Saturday nights. Reservations are highly recommended.
3300 Camp Bowie Blvd. **/** *emiliasfortworth.com/blue-room*

The Capital Grille

CUISINE: STEAK HOUSE

One of several high-end steakhouses in downtown, The Capital Grille stands out for its classy vibe, expertly prepared steaks and attentive service. A sleek atmos — African mahogany paneling and deco chandeliers — sets the stage for a memorable meal, whether you're meeting with business associates to plan your next company downsize, celebrating a special occasion, or simply enjoying a lux night out.
What to order: You'd be remiss not to order a dry-aged steak, one of the chain's specialities.
Good to know: There is a dress code. No athletic shorts, leggings or sweatpants, nothing revealing. Men's shirts must have sleeves.
800 Main St. **/** *thecapitalgrille.com*


The Capital Grille

The Chumley House

CUISINE: EUROPEAN

Fort Worth sometimes doesn't take too kindly to Dallas-based restaurants invading our turf, but FW has wholeheartedly embraced this Dallas-born, European-inspired restaurant, whose handsome decor, bend-over-backward service and outstanding, globe-spanning food is transportive dining at its absolute finest. You'll swear you're somewhere else — anywhere else — as you dine on blue crab pot pie, tenderloin stroganoff, tallow popovers, lamb tandoori, and other dishes you don't normally see in Fort Worth. Nor is the atmos the same ol'. Old World charm abounds amid rich mahogany woods, custom fireplaces, Scottish plaid rugs, and luxurious banquettes; you'll want to stay forever.
What to order: The beef Wellington, a puff pastry filled with tenderloin, tasso ham, and duxelles, a savory paste made from chopped mushrooms, herbs and shallots. It's big enough for two.
Good to know: Save room for the excellent sticky toffee pudding laced with a rum caramel sauce.
3230 Camp Bowie Blvd. **/** *thechumleyhouse.com*



The Chumley House


Maiden

COURTESY THE CAPITAL GRILLE | COURTESY THANIN VIRIYAKI | COURTESY MAIDEN

OTHER OPULENT DISHES

Decadent dishes you can enjoy outside of velvet ropes and fine dining rooms.

Kobe ribeye *at B&B Butchers & Restaurant*

Kobe ribeye, a highly prized and luxurious steak from Japan's Hyogo Prefecture region, is celebrated for its incredible marbling, rich flavor, and melt-in-your-mouth tenderness, all stemming from the specialized raising of Tajima-gyu Wagyu cattle. A four-ounce serving of it here costs $230.

Codorniz en Mole Poblano *at Don Artemio*

Quail's not difficult to come by in these parts, but upscale Mexican restaurant Don Artemio gives it a unique twist, stuffing it with pecan-almond rice, a rich, housemade mole poblano sauce, oven roasted potatoes, queso fresco and toasted pumpkin seeds.

donartemio.us

Broken Arrow Ranch Antelope *at 97 West Kitchen & Bar*

Antelope is given the high-end treatment here, sliced into small bites, a la steak frites, and drizzled with elderberry marmalade punched up with balsamic vinegar. Comes with a side of goat cheese grits dotted with tasso ham.

97westkitchenandbar.com

Tomahawk ribeye *at Toro Toro*

There are tomahawks and then there's this 52-ounce monster. A "mini" version weighs in at 32 ounces.

torotorofortworth.com

Seafood tower at Walloons

Stacked with poached shrimp, a dozen oysters, tuna crudo, and chef's choice of other fresh seafood bites from the restaurant's raw bar.

walloonsrestaurant.com

AFTER-DINNER COCKTAILS

Post-dinner sips and suds served in swank atmos.

The Bar at Bowie House

Amid a backdrop of Fort Worth movers and shakers, see and be-seeners, The Bar at the Bowie House hotel offers a vast selection of exceptional whiskeys, expertly crafted martinis, and late-night snacks, in a ranch-meets-the-Ritz setting.

3700 Camp Bowie Blvd. | aubergeresorts.com/bowiehouse

Thompson's Bookstore

Outlined in warm woods and shelves full of books (a nod to its bookstore bones), and outfitted with antique-style furniture, Thompson's offers a quiet, classy, sit-and-sip atmosphere. It's the ideal setting for nursing the bar's signature cocktail, the Grapes of Wrath, a unique drink that blends Chateau St. Michelle Syrah red wine, egg white, house-made simple syrup, freshly squeezed lemon juice, and TX Whiskey.

900 Houston St. | thompsons-bookstore.com

The Usual

Pioneering mixology bar The Usual opened in 2009 as Fort Worth's first craft cocktail bar. Against an attractively designed, rustic-mod backdrop, bartenders spend copious amounts of time developing new drinks and tweaking classics based on Prohibition-era recipes.

1408 W. Magnolia Ave. | theusual.bar

The Veranda Bar at Hotel Drover

If you're hanging in the Stockyards, sooner or later you'll wind up at the Drover's swank inside/outside bar, replete with cush seating and ringside views of the live entertainment on the Drover's Backyard stage.

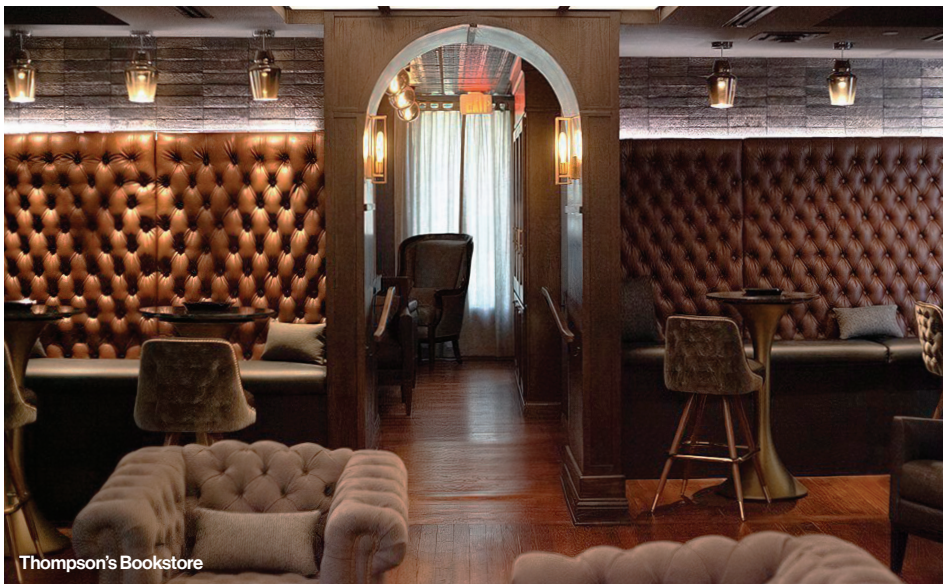
200 Mule Alley | hoteldrover.com

STEWART'S

Luxury for the masses

Fort Worth restaurateur Tim Love recently introduced his 14th concept, Stewart's Croquet & Cocktails, setting a new standard for luxury dining in Fort Worth. Named in honor of his father, Stewart's is designed to evoke the fanciest of the fanciest country clubs, blending a Great Gatsby vibe with upscale eats in a way only Love could dream up. The menu is a testament to his vision, as it features caviar, including 5G Black and 5G Platinum, zucchini carpaccio, a lavish lobster roll and a photo-worthy skirt steak frites. The star of the show may be the martini cart, in which bartenders craft your martini tableside. Choose from premium vodkas and gins, dry vermouth, and a selection of six custom bitters, all finished with your preference of a twist or olives. While the intimate indoor space accommodates a select 28 diners, fostering an air of I'm-on-the-list exclusivity, the sprawling 15,000-square-foot outdoor lawn offers a unique recreational indulgence: croquet, a bygone sport — consisting of knocking wooden balls through hoops using oversized mallets — that Love played as a kid with his pop.

4424 White Settlement Road | stewartscocktailclub.com



Thompson's Bookstore

COURTESY STEPHEN MONTOYA



COURTESY STEWART'S

04 Country Clubs

CIVIC BY DESIGN

Fort Worth's private clubs helped shape community.

By John Henry

In 1942, Marvin Leonard decided to sell Colonial Country Club to membership. It was essential to original vision.

"Colonial can be a much bigger civic asset under the ownership and management of membership," Leonard said.

By turning over ownership and management to the membership, Leonard likely saw Colonial not just as a private club but as an institution with the potential to serve the broader Fort Worth community through major events — like the U.S. Open and the PGA Tour — charitable initiatives, economic impact, and social connectivity.

Colonial has been exactly that institution, a civic treasure whose tentacles reach across all of the city.

The PGA Tour's Charles Schwab Challenge alone has an annual financial footprint in the tens of millions, including a $5.5 million economic impact. This year's event is also expected to eclipse the record $20 million the club's philanthropic arm, Birdies for Charity, divvied out to various nonprofits in the city.

"It has a financial impact on the city," says Marty Leonard, daughter of the club's founder. "It brings in a lot of money, not just to Colonial, and of course that means then that the charities get more. It's just unique, and, of course, back in those early days before there were so many other golf courses, Colonial was ranked right up [among the best] golf courses in the country.

Marvin Leonard in 1958 built Shady Oaks Country Club, purchasing 1,200 acres out of the estate of Amon Carter, who died in 1955. The two men, Marty Leonard reminds, had discussed a club there. Leonard almost picked California for his next golf masterpiece.

"I'd go with my dad to look at beautiful countrysides in California … in that northern part of California," Marty Leonard says. "Not long after that, Jenkins Garrett, daddy's lawyer and right-hand man, called him and said that Mr. Carter had provided some way to give Marvin the opportunity to buy the property. Of course, it took him about two minutes to do that."

The granddaddy of 'em all is River Crest, opened in 1911 by a group of cattlemen, cotton merchants, railway executives, and bankers, among others.

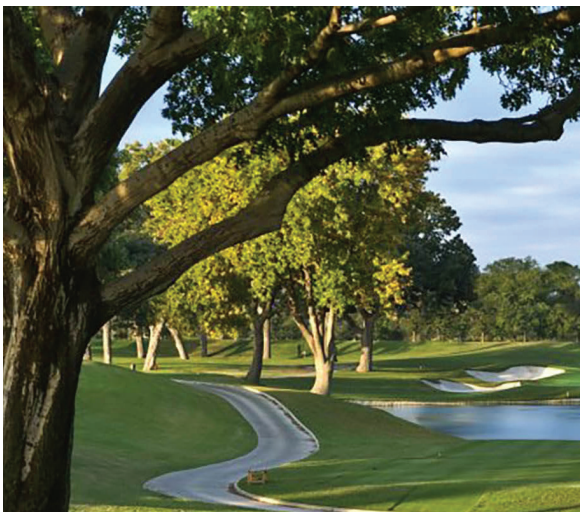
All three have had a significant impact on the city, particularly when it comes to its image. The clubs are symbolic of the Western grit, wealth, and elegance — often understated —

COURTESY SHADY OAKS COUNTRY CLUB



Shady Oaks

COURTESY COLONIAL COUNTRY CLUB



WANNA JOIN THE CLUB?

Here's a breakdown of initiation fees and monthly dues.

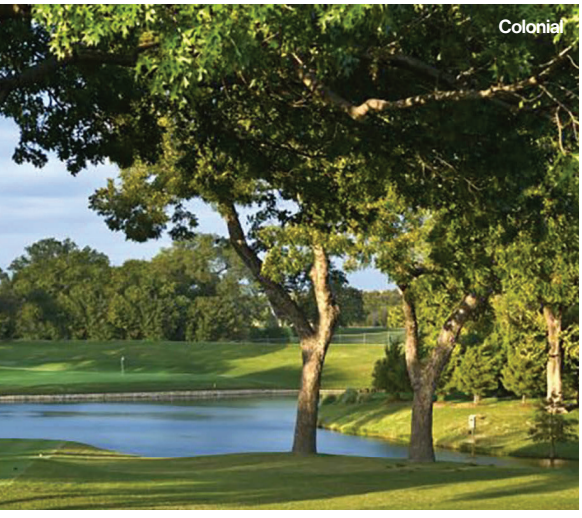
Country Club	Membership Initiation Fee (with Golf)	Membership Dues (with Golf)	Junior Membership Initiation Fee	Junior Membership Dues	Social Membership Initiation Fee	Social Membership Monthly Dues
Colonial Country Club	$100,000	$1,005	$15,000	$920	$35,000	$685
Diamond Oaks Country Club	$5,000	$450	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Mira Vista Country Club	$80,000	$867	$30,000	$625	$10,000	$523
Ridglea Country Club	$62,000	$870	$25,000	$630	–	$535
River Crest Country Club	$75,000	$878	$15,000	$589	n/a	n/a
Shady Oaks Country Club	$150,000	$1,100	n/a	n/a	$50,000	$650
Timarron Country Club	$50,000	$1,165	n/a	n/a	$1,000	$230
Trophy Club Country Club	$30,000	$880	n/a	n/a	$500	$250
Vaquero Country Club	$325,000	$3,542	n/a	n/a	$100,000	$0
Fort Worth Boat Club	$7,500	$455	$5,000	$332	–	–

Private Club	Membership Initiation Fee	Membership Dues
The Fort Worth Club	$2,500	$300
City Club of Fort Worth	$250	$165
Petroleum Club of Fort Worth	$2,170	$335

Data for chart was retrieved from clubs when obtainable. When not retrieved directly from club, editors used other sources, including data from current members and other publications, to provide information.


River Crest

COURTESY RIVER CREST COUNTRY CLUB


Colonial

that permeate for more than 100 years. They are also representative of some of the city's defining personalities, like, for example, Carter and Ben Hogan. The clubs have also humanized these civic giants, through lore and myth.

The city clubs are also those same kinds of institutions. Many of the city's most consequential and historic events occurred at these places. For example, hammering out the agreement for Dallas Fort Worth International Airport or bringing the Washington Senators to North Texas.

The Fort Worth Club's roster is a who's who. Amon Carter was the club's president for more than 20 years, from 1919 to the 1940s or even maybe the 1950s. Carter and Sid Richardson used the place to court Eisenhower to run for president in 1952. Charles Lindbergh, Franklin Roosevelt, Lyndon Johnson, Bob Hope, and Gen. Douglas MacArthur were among the many others.

The club founded in 1885 is celebrating 100 years on Seventh Street in 2026.

"Fort Worth is a friendly town to get acclimated in," says Walter Littlejohn, the longtime general manager of the Fort Worth Club. "I hear that all the time from people who move here: 'It's easy to get acclimated here.' You don't see that everywhere."

"I'll tell you the thing about Fort Worth that I've always liked, and Mayor [Bob] Bolen said this 40 years ago, Fort Worth probably has more volunteers who support the city than any other city in the country."

A lot of that — as well as all the other stuff with public consequences — begins through the networking that goes on in the private clubs.

Behind the Velvet Rope

05

Cowtown's a welcoming place — there are no two ways about that. But somehow, with the following VIP spots serving as examples, Fort Worth manages to be inclusive and exclusive at the same time. After all, a city's friendly nature doesn't preclude a room or two (or three or four) from being cordoned off with velvet ropes and guarded by 6-foot-5 men in black tees. Such clubs are the city's meccas for luxury and excitement, the spaces within places where bouncers request you keep that smartphone in your pocket for fear you might get trigger happy with the camera. If you have some innate desire to be where "it" is happening — whatever "it" might be — you'll wanna get behind these velvet ropes.

La Loteria

Located on the mezzanine of Tannahill's in the Stockyards, La Loteria is a private club of hand-selected individuals who, according to its website, "share a passion for the best things in life." In other words, not everyone with a millionaire's line of credit can get in; you gotta have some swagger to back up that bank account. The bougie high-end club is a relaxed lounge environment with Tim Love catering and tippy-top-of-the-shelf liquors. Other member perks include fingerprint access and priority seating to all shows at Tannahill's. We can't tell you much more.

122 E. Exchange Ave., Ste. 280 | laloteriaftx.com

Ralph's

The previous owner of the land where the Crescent Hotel sits, oil tycoon and philanthropist Mary Ralph Lowe, had one stipulation before she sold to developer John Goff: Somewhere in that hotel, there has to be a Ralph's Bar. Given its undemanding name, one might be surprised by the private bar's exclusivity, high-end choice of liquors, sweeping views of the city, and lush and elegant interior that includes camel-emblazoned barstools — an ode to a 1967 event when Lowe bought her mom a camel to lift her spirits after the passing of her husband — Lowe's father, Ralph Lowe. It's the perfect mix of comfort and class. After all, in Goff, it has the golden touch of a billionaire.

3300 Camp Bowie Blvd.

Reliant Club, Dickies Arena

Where were you on Bulls' Night Out? Like the bulls, every Fort Worthian with alligator boots happens to visit Dickies Arena on this iconic night of the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo. While we won't conjecture where you were, we can tell you where you wanted to be: Reliant Club. On the south end of the stadium — where the rough stock play dirty — this exclusive, two-story bar, lounge, and eatery is where the who's who of Cowtown mingle and occasionally glance at the jumbotron. Open to all suite, loge box, rodeo box, and club seat holders, the Reliant Club is a far tamer version of Will Rogers' Backstage Club (see below).

1911 Montgomery St.

Cattlemen's Club *(Coming Soon)*

The days of Cattlemen's being known as the best spot in town for mediocre steaks and decently battered calf fries are likely in the rearview. Sporting a new ownership group that includes cowboy filmmaker Taylor Sheridan, news recently broke of a planned overhaul, which includes an updated interior, better beef, and a private club — Cattlemen's Club. The 130-person-capacity space will include a private elevator and an atmosphere that indulges in the American West.

2458 N. Main St.

REMEMBERING THE BACKSTAGE CLUB AT WILL ROGERS

Dare we say the most iconic and infamous VIP room west of the Mississippi?

If the walls of the Backstage Club could talk, we reckon their revelations would make the Nixon White House tapes seem tame by comparison. Soon after the members-only bar and restaurant opened on the west end of the Will Rogers Coliseum in the 1950s, it became a rodeo retreat for high rollers and cowboys alike. The result, supposedly, was a debaucherous swell of boozy brawling and other highly questionable behavior. In 1958, the then-director of the Southern Baptist Convention, Paul M. Stevens, shared his thoughts on the club and referred to it as "a subterfuge of the most obvious sort."

In late 2019, coinciding with the Stock Show and Rodeo's move to Dickies Arena, the Backstage Club said adios to exclusivity and serving alcohol and transformed into one of the Reata's service venues for the annual event.



COURTESY CRESCENT HOTEL

A Word on Cowtown Class

06

In Fort Worth, true elegance is defined by humility and charity.

By Tiffany Blackmon

Fort Worth is more than a city; it's a community bound by tradition, resilience, and a spirit of generosity that runs deep in our veins. I have witnessed firsthand the unique blend of grit and grace that defines what I call "Cowtown Class." This isn't about fancy labels, extravagant displays, or glamorous lifestyles — it's about embodying humility and charity in everyday life, values that make our city truly shine.

Cowtown Class is rooted in the legacy of Fort Worth's rich history, from the vibrant neighborhoods where families gather and support one another to the world-famous Stockyards. It's in the way we celebrate our culture while extending a helping hand to those in need. Whether it's participating in the Cowtown Marathon benefiting the C.A.L.F. (Children's Activities for Life & Fitness) Program or joining the Cowtown Great American Cleanup to beautify our city, these acts of service are the threads that weave our community closer together.

Humility is the cornerstone of Cowtown Class. In Fort Worth, we recognize that regardless of accomplishments, hardships, or economic circumstances, we are all connected and have a responsibility to uplift and support others. In my journey I've learned that true influence comes not from ego, but from kindness, courtesy, and a willingness to listen and serve. Business is business, but life is about relationships and impact. This mindset has guided me to embrace challenges with grace and to always give back to the communities that have given us all so much.

Charity in Fort Worth goes beyond donations; it's about active involvement and genuine care. Organizations like the National Charity League exemplify this spirit by fostering mother-daughter bonds through community service and leadership development. Its commitment to serving together and learning from one another inspires me (and my daughter) deeply, reminding us that charity is a shared journey that enriches both giver and receiver.

As a mom and wife, I strive to instill the values of Cowtown Class in my family — teaching my daughter, Kennedy, and our grandchildren the importance of humility and the joy found in giving. Fort Worth's culture of generosity is a legacy worth passing down, ensuring that Cowtown Class continues to thrive in future generations.

In a world that often celebrates self-promotion, Fort Worth stands apart with its quiet strength and genuine heart. Cowtown Class is about showing up with humility, offering charity without expectation, and embracing the community with open arms. It's about living a life that reflects the true spirit of Fort Worth — where kindness is currency, and every act of giving is a step toward a better tomorrow.

To be a part of this community is a privilege and a responsibility. I invite you to join me in celebrating Cowtown Class by living with humility, giving generously, and cherishing the connections that make Fort Worth home. **FW**



COURTESY CRESCENT HOTEL

THE GUY WHO WRITES COUNTRY SONGS

(AND DOES IT REALLY, REALLY WELL)

He's penned country hit after country hit, but Shane McAnally's most fulfilling work? It's not what you'd expect.

By Brian Kendall



FIRST, A LESSON IN BEING HUMBLED: According to transcript time stamps, it was near the three-minute mark of our first interview that Shane McAnally dropped two numbers on me that, when combined, redefined what I thought was possible in the music industry. The numbers were 50 and one.

Granted, I was embarrassed I was unaware of this impressive detail — or, feat, I should say. We proud journalists typically scour the internet and peek under every virtual rock in search of nuggets of info to pose questions around. That random event in 7th grade theater class? Let's hear about it.

Don't get me wrong, I had done my fair share of research and was entering the interview with plenty of biographical information to throw him questions out the wazoo.

I read McAnally calls nearby Mineral Wells his hometown. I saw he's won four Grammys as a country songwriter and started his own music publishing company, SMACKSongs, in 2012. I was surprised to see he co-hosted a primetime NBC songwriting reality show called "Songland." It's also not hard to uncover the detail that he co-wrote the music and lyrics for the Tony-winning Broadway musical, "Shucked." I read his bio on Apple Music and several articles, most of which referenced the huge hits McAnally's written for the likes of Reba McIntyre, Kenny Chesney, Morgan Wallen, Keith Urban, Kacey Musgraves, and more. And, yes, I knew some of those hits even topped the charts.

What I didn't know was exactly how many McAnally-penned songs had reached such a summit.

Fifty.

That's right, 50 No. 1 hits on the Billboard country charts.

But what caught me equally off-guard was the nonchalant way McAnally dropped this hearty bit of information.

"After 14 years of trying to do [the whole songwriting thing], I got my first song recorded, and that turned into a windfall," he says. "It's kind of crazy; I've had 50 No. 1s."

"Fif … *fifty*?" I asked, so stunned by the number that I assumed I misheard him.

"Yeah."

"Shane, is that unheard of? Is that some sort of record?"

"Yeah, kind of."

He could take the credit — the feat is as uncommon as a Fort Worthian who doesn't have an opinion on brisket (in other words, two; there are two songwriters in the history of tracking the popularity of music who have 50-plus No. 1 hits, and McAnally is one of them) — but he doesn't bite.

Instead, McAnally explains how the charts have altered over the past 15 years. He suggests he has an unfair advantage because of a change in the system and country playing nice as a collective, thus songs no longer stay at No. 1 for long. As he puts it, he just happened to hit when this shift occurred.

"Statistically, on paper, if you just use the numbers game, it would look like I've done more than [fill in blank with classic country artist]," McAnally says. "But it's hard for me to say, 'Oh, I'm the only one who's done this,' because there are the Kris Kristoffersons of the world who maybe had four No. 1s, but you can't devalue someone's catalog or their life's work just because this strange number system started happening in the last 15 years."

He's also quick to point to his collaborators who help pen songs. In the prolific production facility that is Nashville country, it's always a team effort, and McAnally has worked with countless A-list singers and songwriters to produce tunes that manage to rise above the cacophony of countless releases that go out at any given time.

But in the same breath, he admits he's damn good at what he does. There's a reason he has so many songs that stand out. And, yes, talent has a lot to do with it.

"I worked really hard at [songwriting], but it was also my gift," he says. "It was what I was supposed to be doing. At a very early age, I knew how to mathematically do songs. I don't know. I look back at some of the things that I wrote early on and that it didn't make sense that I knew how to do it."

This dichotomous combination of humility and confidence appear to be two of the main ingredients that make up McAnally's personality and, when combined with his talent and perseverance, are reasons for his success.

I've admittedly never met McAnally in person. We had a couple of hour-long conversations over the phone, in which he's as gracious and engaging as anyone, but his current Santa Barbara residency kept us from shaking hands and chatting over coffee or the like.

So, rather than visual things like stature, hairlines, or mannerisms, my first impression was based solely on voice.

While he's hopped a couple times between Nashville and California since his early 20s and has technically lived longer outside Texas than in Texas, his accent remains more Lone Star twang than Tennessee drawl. After all, once one gets west of Highway 360, the accent starts to thicken as the longitude increases. And given Mineral Wells is a one-hour drive west, we suspect McAnally will always carry his twang as a Texan tell.

And McAnally readily acknowledges his ability to tap into the Texas mindset. While I was asked not to give away too many details, I can say he is working on a project where this skill will suit the task at hand. "I am a really proud Texan," he says, "but I also have that wink of 'it's another planet.'"

This unnamed project will serve as the follow-up to "Shucked," the 2023 Broadway musical in which McAnally co-wrote the music and lyrics with Brandy Clark, one of his frequent collaborators. Robert Horn provided the book. And this zany musical about, of all things, corn, will make its Fort Worth debut at Bass Performance Hall Tuesday, July 29, and will run through Aug. 3. Being only an hour away from Mineral Wells, it's a hometown show for one of the production's creative minds.

"I'm trying to [make it to the showing]," he says. "I haven't been to any of the [traveling] shows except for Nashville, and my Memaw, who lives in Azle, is really wanting me to come in so I can go with her and her friend." But juggling so many creative projects is no doubt time consuming and taxing.

Regardless, it will give Fort Worthians an up-close and live view of McAnally's talents with words and melodies. Then again, we have little doubt you've already heard and his songwriting, even if you didn't recognize it at the time. Fifty chart-topping country tunes don't vanish or go unheard, especially in Fort Worth. Not only have you heard his music, you've likely sung along — loud and off key.

MCANALLY WAS SLEEPING ON HIS SISTER'S COUCH IN NASHVILLE WHEN HE FOUND OUT A SONG HE'D CO-WRITTEN WITH J.T. HARDING HAD MADE IT TO NO. 1 ON THE BILLBOARD COUNTRY CHARTS, KENNY CHESNEY'S "SOMEWHERE WITH YOU."

As McAnally puts it, it was many years of nothing — writing songs into the ether and battling drug and alcohol addiction and financial woes.

"He had lost his car, his home, his record deal," McAnally's mom, Margaret Terry, says. "But he never gave up. I mean, he was still singing and trying to make it. And I knew he was going to make it because he wasn't giving up at 35."

Despite not coming from a musical family or having any "pedigree" in the industry, there was always a sense that McAnally wasn't just going to survive but soar. That, no matter how long it took, he'd eventually catch his break, be discovered, and the rest would be history.

"I always knew it was going to work out for him," his younger sister and best friend, Tiffany Young, says. "I knew he was too talented, and, also, he wasn't good at anything else. He needed this to work out for him because he was just so good at it, and that's what fueled his fire."



Receiving the Grammy for Best Country Album with Kacey Musgraves, whose debut, 'Same Trailer Different Park,' McAnally co-produced.

Yeah, McAnally was all-in on songwriting from … you know what? Forget the word "go." He was likely all-in on songwriting since he could form his first words, whatever those might've been.

According to Margaret, McAnally would frequently visit his grandparents as a kid, where he started listening to country music at the age of 3. "He would listen for hours at a time," she says. "Barbara Mandrell was his childhood idol and still is."

He'd start writing songs when he was 6 and performing at 12. By the age of 15, McAnally was a featured performer at the Texans Theater in Branson, Missouri. And the following year, he'd perform at Johnny High's Country Music Review here in Fort Worth.

"He could light up a room," his sister, Tiffany, says about his early years in Mineral Wells. "He was an entertainer from the start, whether it was singing or making people laugh, or he could just walk into a room and command it."

Despite all the signs pointing to a career in music, McAnally decided to give higher education a shot and attended UT in Austin for one year. And one year is all it would take for him to pack his guitar case and head to Nashville.

"I spent my whole year basically writing songs," McAnally says. "I had never had the freedom to just [do what I wanted], even though I was supposed to be in class. But I didn't have a parent over me saying, 'Go to school.' So, I just sat in my dorm room and wrote songs."

He failed every class his second semester and moved to Nashville. He'd snag a record deal, a couple of publishing deals, and released his debut solo album in 2000, the self-titled *Shane McAnally*. But, beyond one song that squeaked into the Top 40 on the country charts, nothing was moving the needle. "So, I moved to LA to try to make something happen," he says, before he ended up back in Nashville.

Tiffany, who had attended to Middle Tennessee State University, was also living in Nashville at the time. She'd offer up her couch and helped him get a job as a waiter where she worked.

Before McAnally's first No. 1, he co-wrote "Last Call," which appeared on Lee Ann Womack's 2008 album *Call Me Crazy*. The song did well, peaking at No. 14.

"He loved Lee Ann," Tiffany says. "She was one of his favorites, so that was a huge deal. I don't remember what number it went up to, but that was, like, 'Okay, we've got some traction.'"

He'd follow this up with songs for Luke Bryan and Kenny Chesney, and the rest is, indeed, history.

"I remember the first time he played me that song ['Somewhere With You']," Tiffany recalls. "[My brother and I] were in a parking lot and would always play songs. He had an iPod, and he would bring it home, and we would listen to mixes. And when he played me that song, I had full-blown chill bumps on my arms. I said, 'Well, this is it. This is a huge hit.'"

Tiffany confirms that her chill bumps have been historically accurate in predicting No. 1 songs, which started occurring at a rapid pace.

"It was 14 years of nothing," McAnally says, "and then it just sort of retroactively started to happen."

According to Tiffany, "Shortly after ['Somewhere With You'], he had another No. 1 hit. And then another one. And then another."

In 2012, McAnally started his own publishing company, SMACKSongs, which now has 28 songwriters and offers management and artist development. As the company was just getting off the ground, McAnally hired Tiffany. "It was always kind of our dream to work together," she says. "They hired me, and I don't really think they quite were to the point that they needed me full time, but they made it work … probably a little sooner than they thought they would."

There are few country artists — at least those in the upper echelons of stardom — who have yet to work with McAnally. And, it's not necessarily just because he's a walking, talking hit factory.

"He's a great songwriter," Tiffany says. "But, really, what I'm most proud of is the way that he treats people. When people are working with him, he will make them feel like they're the most important thing. He has this way of making people feel good, and he believes in people. If he's going to work with you, it's because he believes in your talent and who you are as a person."

CIRCA 2013: JUST A COUPLE YEARS AFTER HIS FIRST NO. 1, EVERY OTHER SONG ON THE COUNTRY STATION SEEMINGLY HAS SHANE MCANALLY AS ONE OF ITS WRITERS. Many of these hit songs were co-written by Brandy Clark, a singer-songwriter who'd released an independent album, *12 Stories*, that happened to catch the ear of Robert Horn, who had been tasked with writing a musical adaptation of the TV variety show, "Hee Haw."

For those who don't know, "Hee Haw" is an amalgamation of a country fair, a dad joke convention, and a fever dream stuck inside a hay bale. Somehow the show lasted 25 years, and the Grand Ole Opry, who owned the rights, wanted to do a musical based on the characters from the show. So, Horn was tasked with creating a narrative out of variety show characters, and he wanted Clark and McAnally to pen the music and lyrics.

After five years of creating, recreating, writing, rewriting, and hiring a revolving door of producers, they finally opened the musical "Moonshine" in Dallas. While the "Hee Haw" title had gone, McAnally says the musical was still based on the show's characters. Despite a successful run in the city to the east, the performances did not result in an invitation to Broadway, or even off-Broadway, or even off-off-Broadway.

But what seemed like a creative swing for the fences that would ultimately fizzle reignited two years later thanks to some six-degrees-of-separation Broadway contacts. A producer would get his hands on a script, sing it with praises, and pick it up for Broadway.

"The producer rights, at that point, had expired," McAnally says. "So, we had to rewrite most of it." The collective efforts of Horn, Clark, and McAnally resulted in "Shucked," a high-concept musical whose concept is … corn.

Yes, corn.

The story, which takes place in a small town populated by honest, if simple, folk, follows Maizy (get it?), appearing as the sole plucky resident of her community who leaves county lines in search of help when the town's corn starts mysteriously dying.



At the Grand Ole Opry with Musgraves. Her album, 'Same Trailer Different Park,' has sold over 1 million copies to date.

I was fortunate enough to catch a performance when the show came through Dallas in late 2024. And, without giving too much away, those who plan on seeing it are in for a real treat.

Though the musical takes place in the fictional Cobb County, USA [somewhere north of south and south of north], I didn't think it a stretch to wonder if anything in the musical paralleled Shane's life in Mineral Wells — whether there was anything biographical in the story or lyrics. So, I asked his sister and mother whether they saw his upbringing as inspiration.

After a minute of thought, they both responded, "No."

And it's true, I can't find any evidence that McAnally had a childhood affinity for corn.

McAnally grew up in a single-parent household, with his mother, Margaret, taking care of him and his sister, who's nine years McAnally's junior.

"I mean, we were just a very typical Texas family, except it was just my mom," McAnally says. "But that wasn't atypical either. I mean, there's a lot of single moms raising kids."

Margaret worked at a boutique clothing store with McAnally's grandmother. This was one of four or five jobs she had at all times.

"With Shane being nine years older [than Tiffany], when he got into high school, she was still in elementary school, and he was able to help me a lot," Margaret says. "He knew he had to pitch in."

For McAnally, one of his deeper struggles was feeling unable to live openly and authentically in Mineral Wells. And soon after he left home for college, he would come out as gay to his mom and sister.

"I was a gay kid who felt very outside [in Mineral Wells]," McAnally says. "Really, I just wanted to be cool and found myself chasing that true Texas thing. I had this idea of what it meant to be a man or a Texan or a rancher or a football player. And all of those things are still a part of me, but I can see now that they aren't natural to me. But I understand. I was brought up in a place where that's what was important, and I don't have any ill feelings."

Speaking to his mom and sister about the moment McAnally came out, their responses were understandably different from one another, but both emphasized they love and accept McAnally for who he is.

"I am just so proud that he was able to be honest about who he was," Tiffany says. "And I think a lot of his success could not have come until he did that."

Margaret admits it took her a little while longer.

"I mean, I didn't understand," she says. "But it all worked, and I couldn't be prouder of Shane and his husband, Michael. I love them both so much." Margaret's fears also concerned potential negative reactions among her neighbors in Mineral Wells.

"How is everybody else going to take this? I knew I was okay with it, but what is my best friend going to say?"

"So, what was the reaction?" I ask.

"Everybody said, 'It's going to be fine. Shane is Shane. We're not going to love him any less.'"

And within the country music industry, where McAnally's open about his sexual orientation, he's clearly a hit songwriter before anything else, which is exactly how he prefers it.

"I mean, I wasn't just gay," McAnally says. "I was also the biggest songwriter in Nashville. And it's been interesting because those are two things that seem like they shouldn't go together. But I was able to establish myself as a songwriter first, which is what I always wanted. The gay thing is just a part of who I am, but I don't want it to be the lead."

McAnally now lives in Santa Barbara with his husband, Michael, and their 12-year-old twins, Dash and Dylan. And he has more projects — songs, musicals, comedy shows — in the works than one can possibly keep track. Perhaps it's the result of forever chasing the thrill of his biggest career accomplishment: the opening night of "Shucked" on Broadway.

"It felt like all 50 of those No. 1s happening at one time," McAnally says. "It was unbelievable. I mean, I say it's the best and worst thing that ever happened to me because it's a high that I will chase probably until it either happens again or I die."

Our money's on the former. **FW**





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CHOWTOWN

LOCAL **EATS** AND RESTAURANT **NEWS**



72

Turning a Corner
The tiny gas station restaurant on the city's east side has gone full brick-and-mortar. Chef's Corner features freshly made Cajun and soul food staples, including this crab leg-studded bowl of gumbo.
By Malcolm Mayhew

WHAT WE'RE CHEWING OVER THIS MONTH:
On page 68: The Christmas lights are twinkling and the model train has kept a-rollin' at the recently resurrected Campo Verde Mexican restaurant in Arlington. **On page 70:** Two area chefs team up for a royal culinary affair at Duchess in the South Main area.



Arlington's Christmas-loving Mexican restaurant Campo Verde has reopened.

by
Malcolm Mayhew

Photos by
Thanin Viriyaki

Christmas in July

Arlington Tex-Mex staple Campo Verde has returned with a new menu, new queso, and the dazzling Christmas lights that made it a mainstay for four decades

When Arlington Mexican restaurant Campo Verde closed earlier this year, after an impressive 40-year run, many longtime customers shrieked in horror, while others undoubtedly asked, "Well, what took so long?"

Few restaurants had caused as much divisiveness as this insanely unique Tex-Mex joint on Pioneer Parkway. Decorated year-round in Christmas lights, it had become an institution for many North Texans, its blitzkrieg of colorful, twinkling lights bringing smiles to faces of all ethnicities and ages at all times of year; even in the dead of summer, when it was 102 degrees out, it was Christmas at Campo Verde.

A model train mounted to the wall brought even more happiness, as the train cars zoomed from one end of the dining room to the other — a simple toy transformed into a mesmerizing spectacle.

But Campo Verde, as its critics attest, had many problems, starting with the food — bland, unimaginative, it was called — and extending to the very thing that others loved: the decor. Some found it too kitschy and over the top, while others wondered, aloud and online, when was the last time the lights had been cleaned? Or the floors for that matter?

Arlington-based chef Mouhssine "Moose" Benhamacht, like many, had mixed emotions when the restaurant closed in January. On one hand, the chef who opened Arlington's wildly popular Cafe Americana knew the food had gone downhill and that the place was in dire need of a major cleaning. On the other hand, Campo Verde meant so much to so many people, he hated to see it go.

Looking for a new project, Benhamacht and his partner, Liesl Best, decided to take over the restaurant.

But not just take it over. They wanted to redo it. But not just redo it. They wanted to reimagine it.

"It would not have made any sense to us to just reopen it the way it was," he says. "It was in bad shape. It needed to be completely redone. But we also wanted to put our spin on it, and that meant doing things a little differently than they'd been done before."

Reopened in early June, Benhamacht and Best's reincarnation of Campo Verde barely resembles its previous self. The restaurant is now bright and airy, filled with gorgeous flowers and plants, some cool art here and there, all new floors, all new kitchen equipment — and of course, all new Christmas lights.

But the two, wisely, scaled back on the lights. They're still a major presence, but they're not as in-your-face — and in your hair and in your way — as they used to be.

"It's definitely more tasteful now," Best says. "I think there are just enough to appease the people who know and love the lights while also not overdoing them. Now they look like they have a purpose, as opposed to this jungle of lights you once had to walk through."

The menu, too, got an upgrade. In addition to classic Tex-Mex fare, the two have added more upscale dishes, such as steak flambe, cilantro lime grilled salmon, garlic-tequila shrimp, a fried snapper sandwich, and seasonal salads. For dessert, there's freshly made RumChata cheesecake and tres leches dotted with Biscoff.

Another point of contention at Campo Verde has focused on, oddly enough, one dish: queso. Offered free with chips and salsa, the queso was often cited as the best thing about Campo Verde — and, toward the restaurant's end, the worst thing about it.

"The recipe had changed over the years, and people did not like it," Benhamacht says. "It's been crazy — people have been like, 'Are you going to change the queso back?' 'Bring the old queso back.' Out of all the things people could be asking about, most of the questions and feedback have been about the queso."



Mouhssine "Moose" Benhamacht

Currently, the restaurant offers three quesos: a straightforward queso, another with chorizo, and another with brisket and hatch chiles. On June 28, the restaurant will host a queso-tasting event in which one of those three will be deemed, by customers, the official Campo Verde queso.

"We thought we'd have a little bit of fun with something that people feel so passionate about," Best says.

The model train is rolling again, too, after years of either lying dormant or in disrepair.

"The guy who worked on the original train somehow heard that we were reopening the restaurant, and he reached out to ask if we needed help with the trains and tracks," Best says. "We don't know anything about model trains, so of course we loved the idea of him coming back to get it going again." The train now circles the entire restaurant, from one room to another, just like it did years ago.

"What we love about this restaurant and this project is how much happiness it brings to people," Benhamacht says. "It's not just a restaurant, it's a place where people grew up. People brought their kids here, and now those kids are bringing theirs — and they all want to see the Christmas lights. That's why we decided to reopen it — it means so much to the community." fw

Campo Verde, 2918 W. Pioneer Pkwy., Arlington, thecampoverde.com



Charred eggplant dip and fried onions

by
Malcolm Mayhew

A Majestic Duo

Two North Texas chefs are leading the kitchen at Duchess, the cool new restaurant inside a historic fire station in the South Main area.

On a recent night at Duchess, the in-house restaurant at the newly opened Nobleman Hotel in the booming South Main area, celebrity chef Casey Thompson makes her way from the kitchen to the dining room to the bar area to the lobby — and back again. It's opening week of one of the city's most high-profile restaurants, and Thompson, who has lent her name and culinary talents to the project, has people to meet, hands to shake, pictures to pose for — and, of course, food to cook.

Clearly exhausted, she pauses for a moment to tell some guests their food may be coming out slow. "It's just me cooking tonight," she says. "I had to give my sous-chef the night off. He's been here nonstop, open to close. He's been a real lifesaver."

For the past 16 years, Marcus Kopplin has been saving restaurants from disastrous service, one plate and one calm nerve at a time. Starting out as a server and prep cook at Chuy's, he has wound his way through some of the city's most celebrated restaurants, sharpening his skills at restaurants like Shinjuku Station and Clay Pigeon, his skill and composure a welcome respite from the chaos that ensues in most kitchens.

This is exactly why Kopplin, a "chef's chef" with a reputation for unwavering grace under pressure, was the chef Thompson called upon when she was putting together her small staff at Duchess.

"I had heard that she was opening a restaurant here, and ready for a change, I reached out to her on Instagram. I didn't have her phone number — she's a celebrity. But I sent her a message on Instagram, and surprisingly, she got back with me and we started chatting."

The two vibed so well that Thompson hired the Arlington native as the restaurant's sous-chef. Initially, it looked as though Duchess may have been just another sous-chef gig — happy to have it, Kopplin would be. That's how he started here a few weeks ago, watching and learning the ropes of Thompson's food, executing her dishes with precision and flair.

But in mid-June, the restaurant announced Kopplin would take over as executive chef, while Thompson would continue on a consulting basis. Kopplin has now found himself as executive chef for one of the city's hottest restaurants.

"It's kind of unbelievable," he says. "But Casey and I work really well together. We're constantly texting and talking about new dishes. It's a good relationship."

For Thompson, and for diners old enough to remember her previous Fort Worth venture, the opening of Duchess surely sparks a feeling of déjà vu. Fifteen years ago, the Dallas native, riding high on the success of her appearances on the popular reality cooking competition "Top Chef," opened the fine dining restaurant Brownstone in another then-emerging cultural hotspot, the West 7th district.

Brownstone was an immediate

hit, equally admired for its handsome decor and Thompson's farm-to-table aesthetic — at the time, still somewhat of a new culinary philosophy in Fort Worth. A year after opening, though, Thompson left the restaurant; Brownstone closed a few years later but not before it helped popularize the West 7th area.

Developed by Jeff Blackman of Bedford Lodging, The Nobleman and Duchess are cleverly integrated into the restored No. 5 Fire Station on Bryan Avenue. The station's 114-year-old bones and original facade serve as the hotel's core, containing guest check-in, lobby areas, and a second-floor lounge. More than 150 guest rooms wrap around the old station, along with an outdoor pool, bar, and patio dining area.

Thompson says she jumped at the chance to return to Fort Worth to head up the hotel's in-house restaurant, which is currently open for breakfast and dinner and bar snacks.

"Growing up in Dallas, I always kind of secretly loved Fort Worth," she says. "It's just so warm and welcoming, and it has this great small-town feel. When Jeff told me about the concept, how it incorporates such a beautiful old building with so much history attached to it, I knew I wanted to be a part of it."

Thompson developed unique, playful menus that incorporate elements of both casual eats and fine dining. For dinner, there are three steak options and two house-made pastas, such as an excellent tagliatelle with beef shin ragu; an Oklahoma-style, griddled jalapeno and onion burger; and buttermilk-brined roasted hen served with cilantro sauce and chicken gravy.

One of the more inventive dishes is the Lucky Pig, a fun, sharable build-your-own tacos platter filled with sliced pork belly, pickled onions, housemade chicharrones, shredded lettuce, and freshly made flour tortillas. A bottle of house hot sauce comes on the side, along with a pile of roasted peanuts — a whimsical and welcome touch.

Appetizers include a red snapper crudo, charred eggplant and fried onion dip, fresh oysters, and beef carpaccio on hashbrowns, the latter a clever mashup of nostalgic flavors.

"I'm calling it a fresh take on Texas," Thompson says. "It's a little bit Texas, a little bit California, a little bit coastal. I love chasing down the best ingredients and trying to do cool, interesting things with those ingredients."

Kopplin says that while he's carrying out Thompson's menu, he'll be working on dishes of his own.

"That's the thing about Casey — she's got an open mind and when it comes to this restaurant and this food, we're on the same page," he says. "We have a lot of great things planned for this place." fw

Duchess at The Nobleman Fort Worth, Tapestry Collection by Hilton, 503 Bryan Ave., hilton.com



Duchess' excellent burger and fries



Rainbow trout with brown butter, toasted peanuts, green beans and herbs

The Chowtown Lowdown

I'd been wondering if the old Shinjuku Station space in the Near Southside would ever be occupied again. **Yoichi** just answered my question. Opening later this summer, this new Japanese spot will be the city's first omakase restaurant — a style of dining similar to a prix-fixe or tasting menu in which you pay one price to be served dishes of the chef's choosing; you sort of leave yourself in the hands of the chefs. You'll be in good hands, though. According to CultureMap, owners Ian Kim, Ilwon Suhr, and Mark Kim are all expats from Crown Block, Reunion Tower's sky-high restaurant. Suhr also owned Fujiyama, a sushi restaurant in Carrollton, and Kim worked as a chef at Sushi by Scratch, an omakase restaurant at the Adolphus Hotel in downtown Dallas, according to CultureMap. The restaurant's 12-course omakase menu will consist of various forms of sushi and sashimi maki, two appetizers, and a dessert. Look for it in July or August. 711 W. Magnolia Ave.

Another Japanese concept will open in the same area this summer, just a few blocks away. **Ichiro Izakaya Diner and Bar** is taking over a portion of the Bryan Avenue space that Funky Town Picnic Brewery & Cafe recently vacated. The restaurant will share walls with a still-unnamed new concept from brothers Alessandro and Alfonso Salvatore, the owners of **Bocca Osteria Romana**. Alessandro says the restaurant will revolve around Neapolitan-style pizza with some Caribbean and Mexican influences. Both restaurants will open sometime later this summer or early fall at 401 Bryan Ave.

Opened this April, **The Yard at Bowie House** is the luxury boutique hotel's chill new outdoor restaurant. Developed by the resort's executive chef Antonio Votta, the menu includes dishes large and small, from shareables like pita chips and dip and fresh oysters to bowls and burgers. Every Thursday, there's live music. aubergeresorts.com/bowiehouse

Restaurants come and go — that's the nature of the food and bev business. But lately there's been a rash of high-profile closings that's beginning to make me wonder if we're heading into a culinary recession of sorts. Among those that have recently closed include the excellent pizza joint Pizza Verde; two very good Southern comfort restaurants, the long-running Old Neighborhood Grill on the south side and Campfire Grill in Watauga; Ben Merritt's fine dining west side spot The Fitzgerald; Lili's Bistro on Magnolia, which had been open 20 years; the Arlington location of Bodacious BBQ, open for 40 years; and the list goes on. Each closure is a painful loss, a favorite dish we'll never taste again. But even in this question mark of an economy, the spirit of our food community flickers. Maybe from these ashes, new flavors will emerge. The question isn't whether we'll mourn what's lost, because we will, but how we'll cultivate what's next.

Malcolm Mayhew writes about food and culture. Reach him at malcolm.mayhew@hotmail.com.



A Chef's Corner turkey leg, topped and stuffed with grilled shrimp and Cajun rice

by
Malcolm Mayhew

Photos by
Thanin Viriyaki

Turning a Corner

Chef's Corner, an east side gas station restaurant that went viral on TikTok, has upgraded to a full-on brick-and-mortar.

Last year, if you wanted to enjoy one of the city's best new restaurants, Chef's Corner, you had to jump through a few hoops. First, you had to walk around the Twinkies.

A year ago, Fort Worth-based chef Mike Douresseaux was working out of a gas station on the far east side. In a scene that was both surreal and a little comical, Douresseaux was making fantastically imaginative Cajun and soul food in a makeshift kitchen inside the station, right next to the soda machines, packaged muffins, and 12-packs of Red Bull.

His tiny business became a local sensation when area TikTok-ers caught wind of his food and posted videos of it, like a majestic chicken and waffles and a lamb shank one might find in any five-star restaurant. People lined up inside and outside and hung around the station's air and gas pumps waiting for his food, which he humbly served in clamshell to-go containers because, well, it was a gas station and there wasn't anywhere to sit.

Those days came to an end when the Louisiana-born chef moved into a brick-and-mortar earlier this spring. Douresseaux is now serving his terrific soul food and Cajun cuisine out of an east side space once occupied by soul food restaurant Turkey Den. Some of Turkey Den's menu is still available, including the restaurant's namesake turkey legs, so huge they'll feed two, and some of that restaurant's staff is still working there — a friendly, attentive bunch. At press time, Turkey Den's sign was still up, too.

But while he waits for a sign, he's intent on making a name for himself here, in this nicely decorated strip mall space on Oakland Boulevard, his ground zero for a new life and rejuvenated culinary career. As we wrote about in a previous profile, he spent years as a corporate chef before demons and addictions got the best of him, causing a fall from grace.

Fueled by the need to help his daughter get through school and life, he mounted a comeback that has culminated with this new brick-and-mortar location. He's no longer hand-delivering clamshell containers. Instead, his creations arrive on artfully arranged plates, as they should.

His spectacular gumbo, still studded with massive snow crab legs and succulent blue crab, now simmers for hours, its rich aroma filling the air. Lamb shank comes with a refined mushroom risotto. And the chicken and waffles, drizzled with burnt butter caramel, feel less like a gas station surprise and more like a gourmet indulgence.

"It still doesn't make that big of a difference where I'm cooking," he says. "What matters to me is, do people like what I'm doing?"

So far, they seem to. During two recent visits, the place was nearly full — and it takes a lot to fill this spacious restaurant, with its split dining room and huge patio. Many followed him from the gas station, while others are getting to know him through Turkey Den's food.

"The idea is, maybe they'll order a turkey leg, but then get something I made," he says. "The idea is to keep the people who love Turkey Den happy but also get them to branch out and try something new." fw

Chef's Corner, 1201 Oakland Blvd.



Mike Douresseaux

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Twelve Cowboys Way Some big names watch this TV on gameday, so the Interior Designer required perfection and we delivered. This TV surround was a custom feature to compliment the elegant outdoor setting.



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78

LA MAISON
Can one of the city's most exclusive builders level up one of its most breathtaking homes?
By Brian Kendall



Dan Thomas built the French-inspired home for Reagan and Michelle Horton in 2006.

Cowtown Chateau 2.0

Fifth-generation builder Matt Adams upgrades a stone-clad mansion that's making the old new again.

By **Brian Kendall**
Photos by **Ryan Davis**





Matt Adams

One need only trek down a narrow private road — albeit one routinely filled with work trucks — in west Fort Worth to escape to a French estate. You know, one of those chateaus in Burgundy or Auvergne (don't worry, I can't pronounce it, either). In fact, if one squints and avoids the neighborhood in July, River Crest could easily pass for a suburban quartier.

Local builder Dan Thomas built the cozily situated stone house in 2006 for owners Michelle and Reagan Horton. Reagan is the youngest son of Donald R. Horton, founder of D.R. Horton. While exact square footage and property acreage are unknown, I'll simply refer to it as massive and express my admiration for its well-manicured landscape, courtesy of Harold Leidner out of Dallas.

But even a showstopper of a home requires the occasional upgrade — lest we fall out of fashion.

Thus, it was a few years ago when the Hortons first hired Matt Adams, a Fort Worth-based custom builder with one heck of an impressive portfolio, to tackle a renovation of their son's bathroom. Well, one can surmise that Adams did a bang-up job on the renovation, as the Hortons began handing Adams project after project — kitchen, pool house, living room — all standard fair for remodels and renovations.

Then, one day, Reagan approached Adams with a photo of a French barn — we're imagining aged wood and 17th century wheelbarrows. According to Adams, "He looked at me, and he goes, 'Matt, I want a workout room that looks like a French barn in Europe.'"

Not standard fair, but the ensuing project would be, we suspect, unlike anything this side of the Atlantic. The unique concept, something they call a dojo, would include a large gym replete with free weights and workout equipment, a sauna, and a meditation room with pillow top ceilings — a popular choice in Europe. The façade would include antique fir — don't call it wood — sourced from old barns and buildings all over the U.S. and Europe.

The effect doubles-down on the French Provincial architecture and aesthetic of the property. "Because of the barn feel of the dojo," Michelle says, "the house almost looks like it's been here a lot longer, too."

And for a project this outside-the-box and, well, European, Adams was the ideal builder.

A fifth-generation Fort Worth home-builder — yeah, his great-great-grandfather, George Fletcher Adams, was a builder right here in Cowtown — one can say Adams has building in his blood. Or, at least, he sure as heck took to it like it was in his blood.

Adams says he's technically been in the business since he was 13 when he'd skip school, which probably wasn't doing him much good anyway, to bask in a construction site. "I'd ride my bicycle to school, and I would take a detour to my dad's job sites," he says. He'd spend his teenage years studying architecture in Europe. And his hands-on approach is because he's mastered nearly every trade — he can literally do the work.

"I've worked with each trade for at least

six months," Adams says. "Anything from the guys that do the grating to the guys that put on the slate and the tile roofs, or the master carpenters. I mean, every single one of them."

His office is wherever he's building or renovating or remodeling at the time. "And it's not like he's just pointing and directing," Michelle says. "He's getting his hands dirty and breaking a sweat working on the home."

Adams has the freedom to be very selective. He doesn't require the compensation of such brutal work. He does the work because he genuinely loves the work. "I would pay you to let me do this if I had too," he says.

And he isn't kidding. Such a mindset gives Adams the freedom to be picky with his projects, of which he has three at the moment, including a new Victorian build across from River Crest. While he loves the work, he also won't accept a project unless the client is equally invested — no cutting corners for the sake of saving a penny (or anything that is likely exponentially more than that).

This is what makes Adams and the Hortons an ideal pairing of client and professional; they share a deep passion for the project. And such passions can occasionally ignite disagreements. But, at the end of the day, the results speak for themselves.

"I like [Adams'] knowledge, and I like his desire to try new things," Michelle says. "And he listens to me. But, like I said, we do butt heads on certain things."

"But that's not such a bad thing," I respond.

"Oh, absolutely! I push him, and he pushes back on certain things. [Adams] would probably say that I can be a builder's or a contractor's worst nightmare, or I could be their best advocate — I'm 100% invested."

With the dojo completed and about half of the Horton's home remaining, Adams suspects he has a couple years' work remaining before he completes the entire house.

"I mean, when [Michelle] hired me, we did a little laundry room and bathroom first," Adams says, "and then we did the kitchen and living room. And then she got to a point where she says, 'I want you to redo every room in the house.'" FW



Earthy neutrals is the color palette of the living room, which features a timeless hand-carved limestone fireplace, a backlit TV cabinet, and cedar beams across the ceiling.





All kitchen cabinets are flush and hand-built in what Adams calls a one-off design with no fasteners.



A bar area just off the kitchen is clad in black marble, lacquer-glossed ceiling and cabinets, and a black-and-white-checkered floor.



"When [Michelle] hired me, we did a little laundry room and bathroom first," Adams says, "and then we did the kitchen and living room. And then she got to a point where she says, 'I want you to redo every room in the house.'"





Butting up to River Crest Country Club, the Hortons' property has an unmistakable French feel. In addition to renovating the home, Adams also renovated the pool house with a slab limestone bath, a hand-cut glass ceiling above the shower, and stainless steel cabinetry.



The walls are lined with real grass cloth wallpaper — yes, it's real grass — and the back wall is white limestone, a rare color for sedimentary rock.



Adams tells us the sauna is identical to the kind one would see in Europe, and it includes materials imported from the continent. "It's the real thing," Adams says.



The flooring throughout the dojo is heated, something Adams says is now customary for all luxury homes.



According to Michelle, the Hortons had long thought about putting a gym in the house and never considered building onto the house. They ultimately decided on a separate space.





The dojo's facade is made of antique fir with oak beams supporting the overhang. The fir and oak were sourced from all over the U.S. and Europe.

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Behind the Design: Home Projects

Explore stunning imagery of remarkable local home projects. Each project's unique character, craftsmanship, and vision are vividly showcased on the following pages for your inspiration. Dive into the world of design, architecture, finishes, fixtures, outdoor spaces, and more, where the beauty and inspiration behind each home are expertly captured. *The information in this section is provided by the advertisers and has not been independently verified by* Fort Worth Magazine.





Buzz Custom Fence

2025 Dream Home in Montrachet

The 2025 Dream Home in Montrachet demanded a one-of-a-kind, custom-built fence and gates to enhance the look of the incredibly beautiful, classic 7,000-square-foot home. Buzz Custom Fence enclosed the 1 ½-acre lot and homesite with a high-end, custom iron fence. What makes this project memorable and striking is the back fence style and design that enhances the incredible view of downtown Fort Worth as well as the existing trees and tree lines. Since this sloped lot is located on solid rock, it was challenging to complete all digging requirements to set posts and anchors while maintaining a straight-line look of the fence. It required ingenuity and usage of intricate fence components. The wow factor in this project is the way fence blends in with the surroundings, landscape, and the home itself. It enhances the look of the lot and design of the house. This project showcases Buzz Custom Fence's ability to design, build, and install a unique custom fence to fit any style of architecture or lot configuration regardless of the terrain or other difficult environmental challenges.



Buzz Custom Fence
5104 W. Vickery Blvd.
Fort Worth 76107
817.263.9788
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Rhino Shield

A 139-Year-Old Home's Transformation

When a fresh coat of paint failed this 139-year-old historic home, Rhino Shield stepped in. Peeling, flaking, and dry rot were no match for our advanced ceramic coating. Purchased four years ago, the homeowner initially opted for a big-box store paint product to refresh the exterior. However, within just three years, the paint began peeling and flaking, exposing the vulnerable wood beneath. Disappointed with the failing paint and weary of constant repainting, the homeowner sought a long-term solution. We knew that our coating was perfect to not only protect all the replaced rotted wood, but it would also give the customer peace of mind that his entire home will be protected and he won't have to worry about it for decades to come. With our 25-year non-prorated warranty, our coating is water resistant, helps insulate (offering a 6.9 R-Factor), and is breathable. Rhino Shield's coating will protect old wood from rotting and offers years of lasting protection. Its breathability makes it ideal for various exterior surfaces, including wood, brick, stucco, Hardie, and metal. This project quickly became a focal point for the local community. As preservation enthusiasts and neighbors watched closely, Rhino Shield's team meticulously repaired the home's rotting wood, applying the Rhino Shield coating with precision. The result is a breathtaking, fully restored historical home that stands resilient against the elements for decades to come.



Rhino Shield
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Arlington 76011
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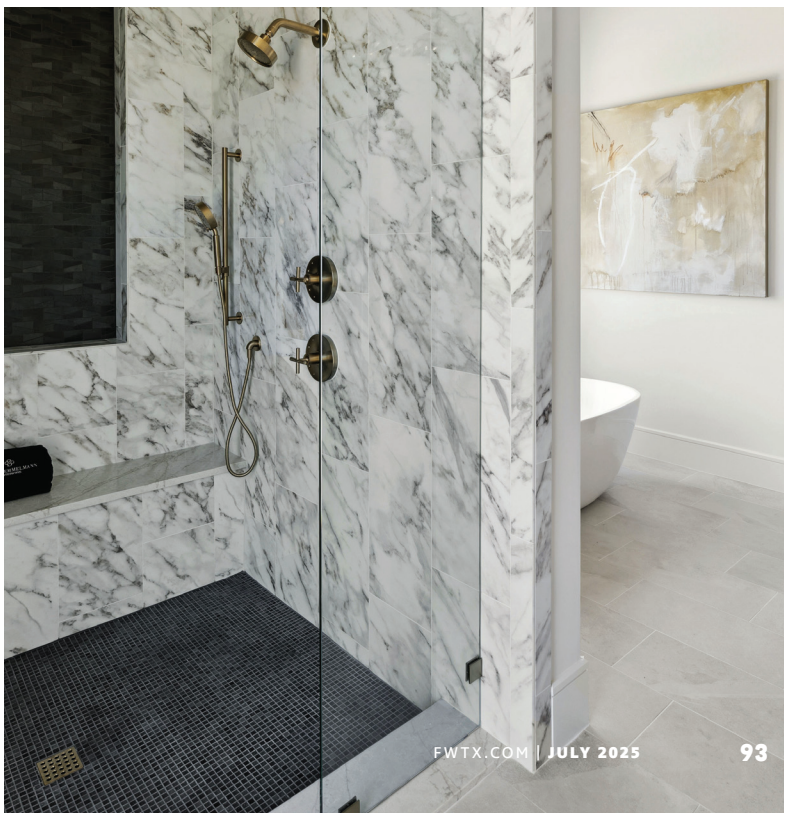


Vintage Floors + Finishes

Flooring Artistry in the 2025 Dream Home

The *Fort Worth Magazine* 2025 Dream Home is a triumph of teamwork, where artisans, designers, and craftsmen combined their unique strengths to create a cohesive, luxurious, and highly functional residence. Balancing precision craftsmanship with firm deadlines demanded exceptional coordination and adaptability from our team at Vintage Floors + Finishes. The home's design embraces an intentional connection to nature using natural materials. European white oak floors anchor the space while expansive floor-to-ceiling windows invite abundant natural light, seamlessly blending the indoors with the outdoors. The home features pre-finished, 7.5-inch engineered white oak wood floors — with a UV aluminum oxide topcoat — used in the kitchen and throughout the living areas.

In total, approximately 5,500 square feet of premium wood enhances the space. Thanks to the dimensional stability of engineered wood, these floors resist the typical expansion and contraction found in traditional wood, ensuring lasting beauty and performance. The master bathroom is equally impressive. A porcelain tile floor, in a matte finish, is installed in a classic brick-lay pattern, lending an elegant, timeless aesthetic. This design theme is carried through the porcelain marble-look shower walls — which also follow a brick-lay arrangement — and a porcelain mosaic shower floor that adds rich texture and visual interest. Porcelain proves to be both a workhorse and a showpiece: extremely durable while maintaining an enduringly beautiful appearance.



Vintage Floors + Finishes
5136 Camp Bowie Blvd.
Fort Worth 76107
817.877.1564
vintagefloorstx.com





Absolute Stone & Tile, Inc.

A Sophisticated, Napa Valley-Inspired Countryside Estate

Inspired by the serene beauty of Napa Valley, this home exemplifies elegance with its curated stone and tile selections, meticulously crafted by Absolute Stone & Tile, Inc.—one of the premier stone manufacturers in North Texas. The kitchen serves as a striking focal point, where the Vent-A-Hood, set against large tile surfaces, harmonizes effortlessly with the cool, gray-toned palette. The island countertop acts as the heart of the space, uniting color, texture, and functionality into one breathtaking composition. The various granite combinations of colors, and how they all flow together make this project unique. However, the undeniable showstopper is the sunken wet bar in the main area of the home and the impact it makes as you enter the home. Absolute Stone & Tile, Inc. worked in close partnership with both the designer and homeowner, transforming dreams into reality.

Absolute Stone & Tile, Inc.
11661 Alta Vista Road
Fort Worth 76244
469.621.8387
absolutestoneusa.com



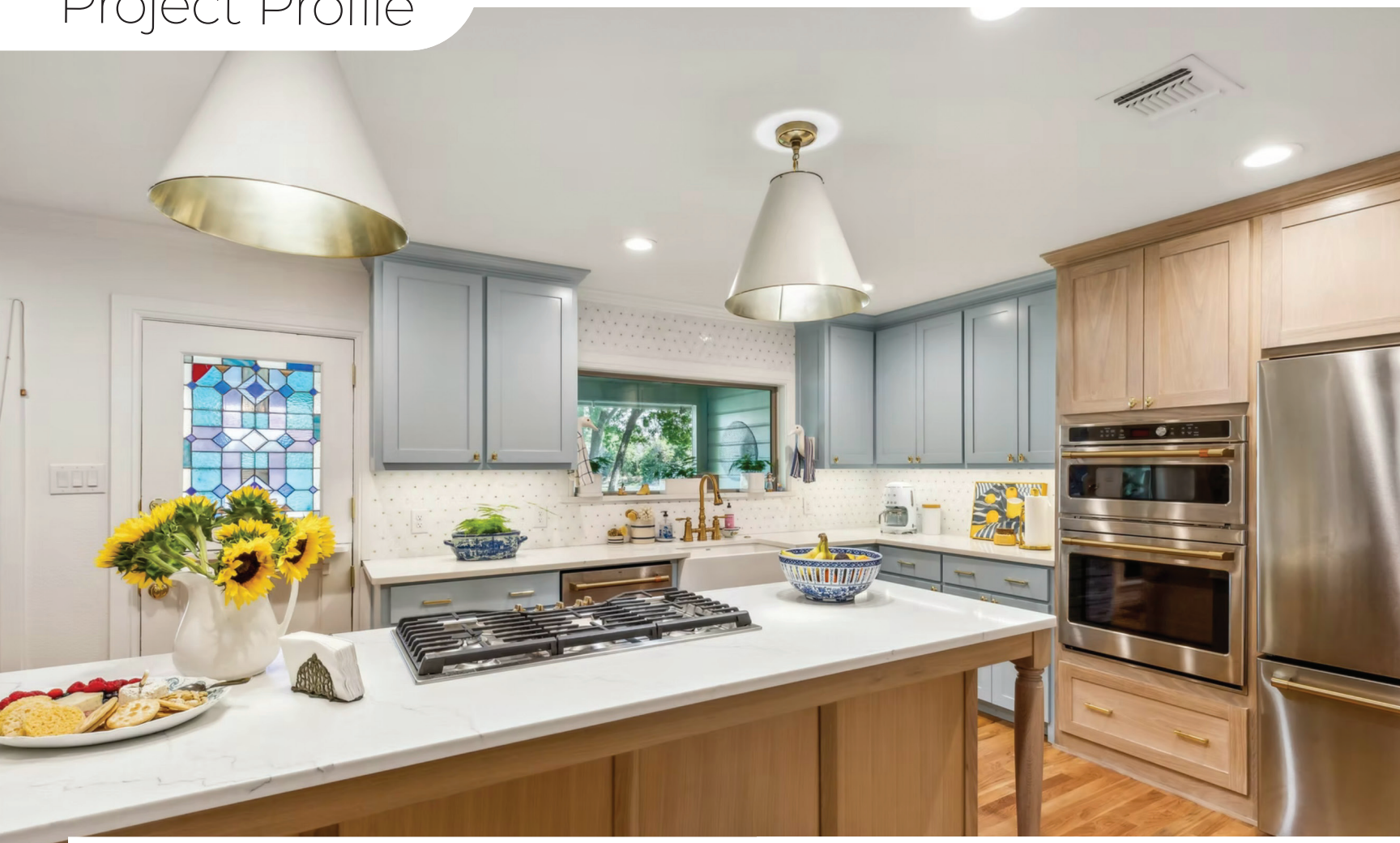
Fashion Glass & Mirror

Transforming Spaces with Custom Glass and Mirror Designs

This home's design beautifully balances Napa Valley's rustic charm with modern and traditional elements, creating a harmonious blend that reflects its surroundings. For Fashion Glass & Mirror, this project stands out as an extraordinary fusion of innovation and craftsmanship — where everyday design elements evolve into striking, artistic statements. The inclusion of our antique mirror adds a timeless elegance and character, while the custom shower glass brings a sleek, modern edge — together showcasing our ability to elevate functional glass and mirror products into truly refined design features. Our focus on custom solutions and attention to detail reflects our passion for transforming spaces through sophisticated glass and mirror designs that elevate any environment, showcasing our signature blend of creativity and precision.



Fashion Glass & Mirror
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972.223.8936
fashionglass.com



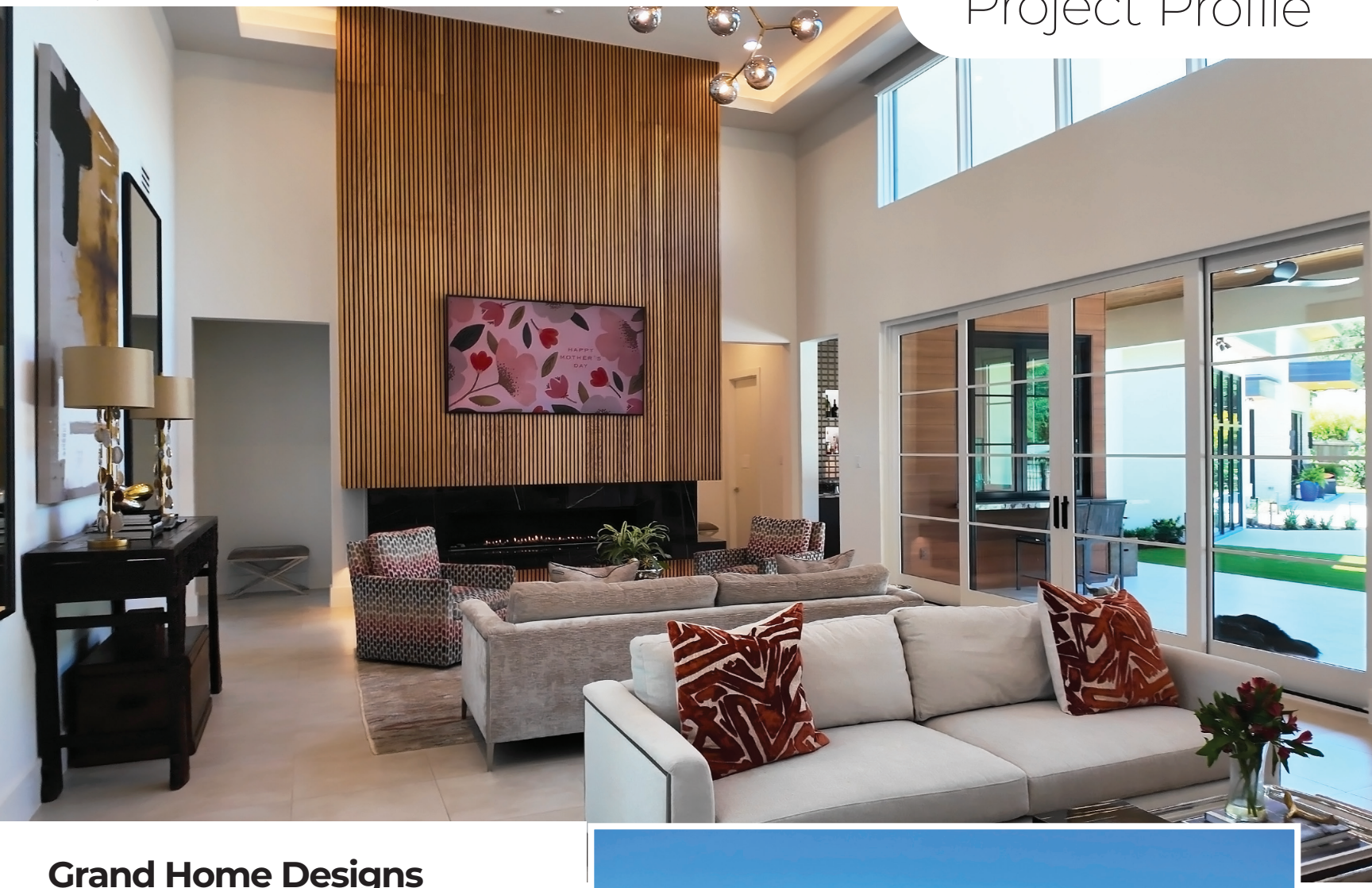


Gus Gutierrez
Gutierrez Painting

Kitchen Revival

Gutierrez Painting brought this midcentury modern kitchen to life with a fresh look. The upper cabinets, painted a soft blue-gray, exude a calming elegance while offering a refreshing contrast to the island base's warm, light wood tone. This two-tone effect anchors the space, highlighting the kitchen's architectural beauty. White walls and trim brightened the space, paired with a satin finish for durability. These choices harmonize beautifully with vintage elements like a stained-glass window and gold hardware, creating a seamless blend of retro charm and modern functionality. Each surface was meticulously sanded and layered to ensure a flawless, blemish-free finish, meeting the high standards of this upscale remodel. Gutierrez Painting turned this space into a testament to craftsmanship — where vintage meets modern in perfect harmony.

Gutierrez Painting
817.829.9524
gutierrezpainting.net



Grand Home Designs

A Seamless Design for Inspired Living

This modern Fort Worth residence blends form and function with a striking, functional layout tailored to its unique lot. The sculptural steel-and-wood staircase anchors the foyer, connecting upper-level bedrooms and a game room to a wine lounge and climate-controlled cellar below. The open kitchen, dining area, and family room feature large windows framing scenic backyard views. A wet bar serves both indoor and outdoor spaces, perfect for entertaining. The detached guest casita offers privacy and direct pool access, creating a resort-style atmosphere. What makes this project particularly striking is the seamless integration of spatial flow with a carefully curated material palette and thoughtfully articulated exterior elevations. This project reflects our design philosophy of translating each client's unique needs and aspirations into a home that is both visually compelling and highly functional, regardless of the aesthetic style.



Grand Home Designs
114 Sproles Drive, Ste. 103
Benbrook 76126
817.696.0520
grandhomedesigns.com





Grand Openings Windows & Doors

Light Gray Window Elegance

This stunning residence incorporates tons of natural light and bold color contrasts. Departing from the conventional black window color palette, the light gray windows introduce a fresh, modern aesthetic that enhances the home's distinctive character. The thoughtfully chosen window colors and divided lites add another layer of uniqueness, setting this project apart. The exceptional build team brought a clear vision to life, ensuring the window and door package complemented the architectural intent. Their meticulous attention to detail and commitment to originality resulted in a home that stands out from the ordinary cookie-cutter designs. Built to specification from an almost endless combination of options, Grand Openings Windows and Doors bridge the gap between normal and distinctive.

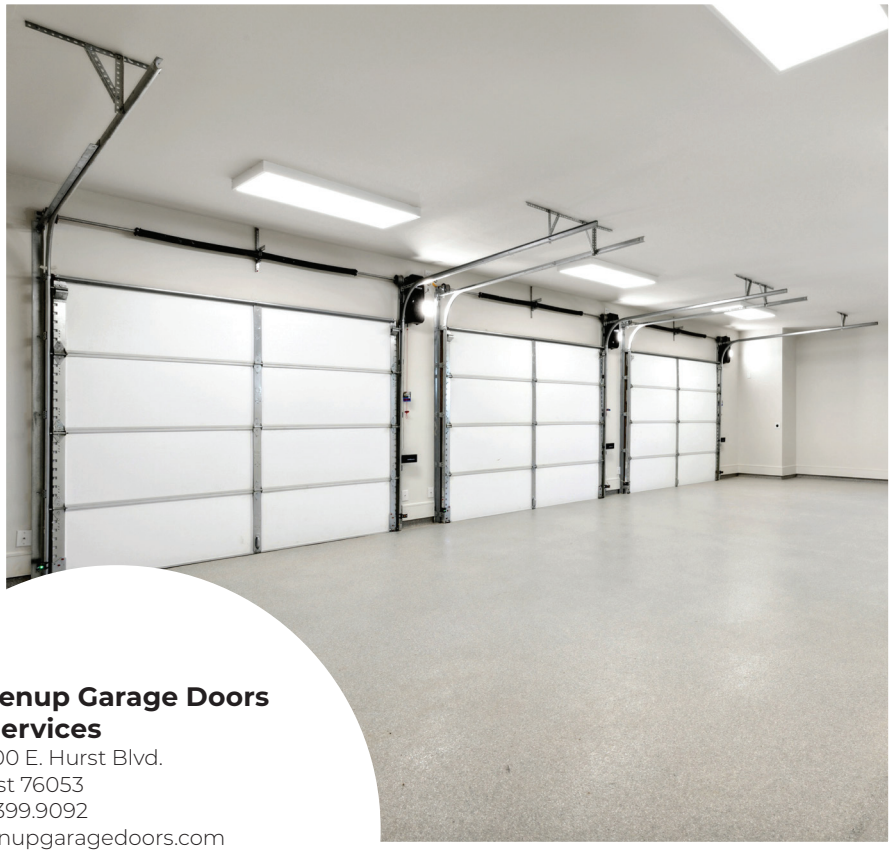
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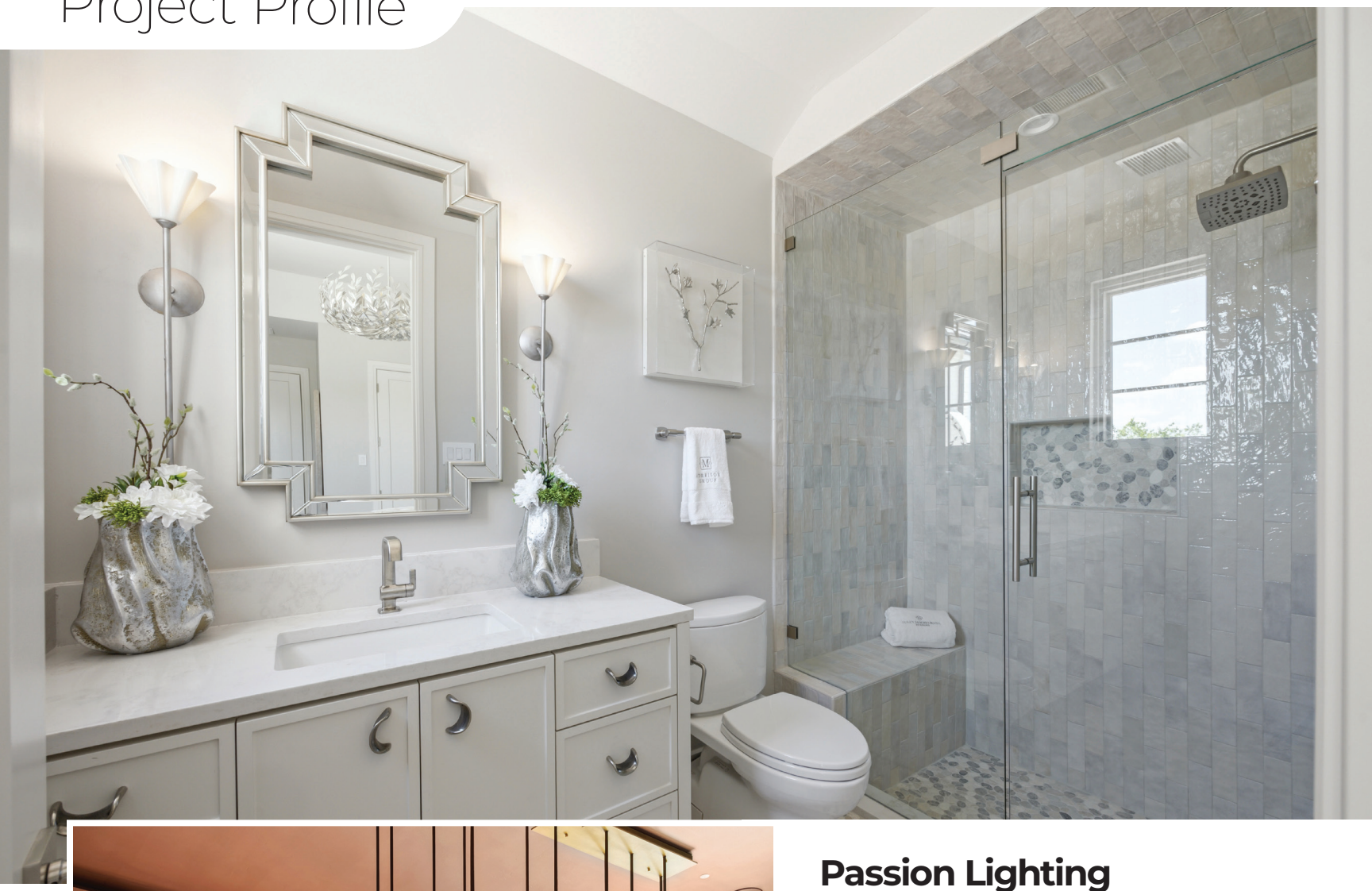
Openup Garage Doors

Cedar Wood Overlay Garage Doors

The detailed craftsmanship sets these garage doors apart, blending innovation with timeless aesthetics. The vertical plank design with square edge grooves enhances the contemporary appeal, seamlessly combining with the overall Dream Home aesthetic. The three 9-by-8-foot garage doors, with custom milled penny gap premium cedar, are installed with a high lift option and Liftmaster side mount motors. The decision to use custom milled penny gap premium cedar (after reclaimed wood proved impractical) allowed Openup Garage Doors to achieve the desired look while ensuring durability and precision. The overlay design adds a standout feature that elevates the home's exterior. The high lift installation maximizes space and functionality. Additionally, using industrial-grade glue and hidden screws ensures longevity while maintaining a nail-free front appearance.



Openup Garage Doors & Services
10500 E. Hurst Blvd.
Hurst 76053
817.399.9092
openupgaragedoors.com





Passion Lighting

Lighting the Dream Home

When visitors toured this year's Dream Home, they were surrounded in a luxury experience shaped by meticulous design and craftsmanship. Part of this breathtaking ambiance was Passion Lighting, whose professional input ensured every fixture contributed to the overall vision. Drawing inspiration from California's Napa Valley, the project embraced a "rustic meets contemporary" style. The lighting choices played a pivotal role in bringing this vision to life, with fixtures featuring visually captivating textures and shapes that left a lasting impression on guests. Among the many highlights of the home, the dining room stood out as a true showstopper. Here, two stunning linear chandeliers mirrored each other, creating a trendy and awe-inspiring focal point. This bold, innovative lighting design underscores Passion Lighting's ability to craft chic, impactful environments that resonate with contemporary luxury.

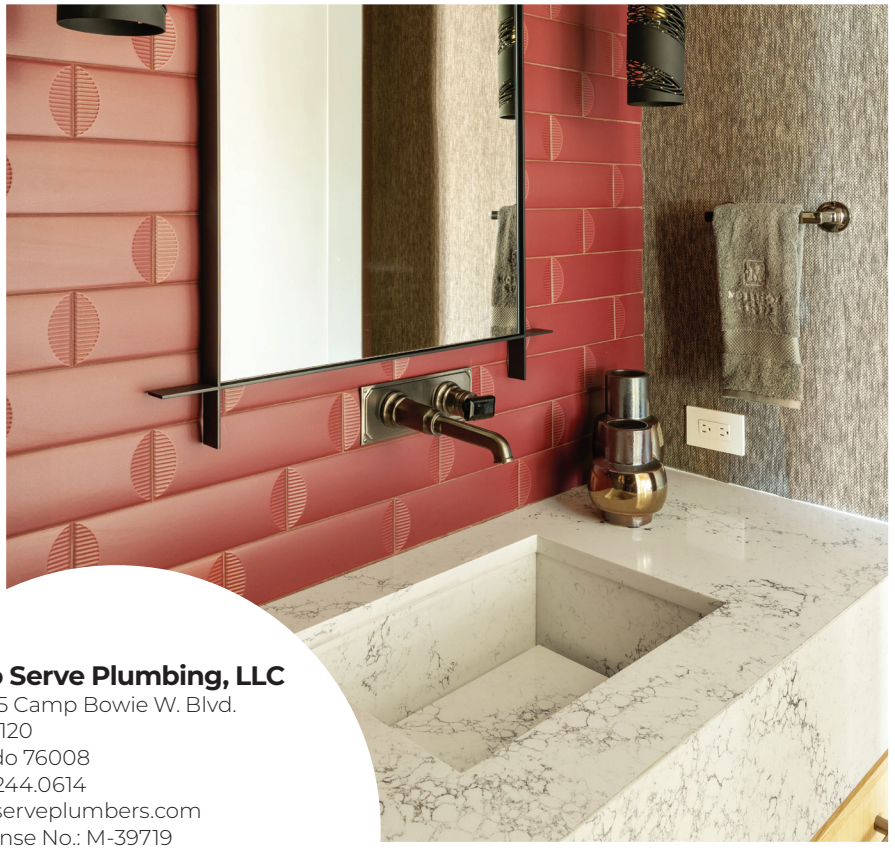
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Grapevine 76051
817.310.3261
passionlighting.com



Pro Serve Plumbing, LLC

Elevating Luxury with Flawless Plumbing

This year's Dream Home is a testament to elevated luxury and creative design. The home captivates with its elegant modern features and unique design elements throughout. The master bath exudes modern elegance with the freestanding tub situated near the large window which helps integrate the indoor space with the outdoor space. Adding a playful contrast to the home's overall elegance, the powder bath boasts a funky flair that elevates its character and visual charm. This project provides a tremendous amount of exposure and the ability to showcase our creativity. At Pro Serve Plumbing, we pride ourselves on exceptional quality and an unwavering attention to detail. Our goal is to instill confidence in every customer by delivering the same professional service that we practice on every project.



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Rick's Hardware & Decorative Plumbing
6040 Camp Bowie Blvd.,
Ste. 3105
Fort Worth 76116
817.552.4057
rickshardware.com

Rick's Hardware & Decorative Plumbing

Modern Classic

This project designed by Jessica McIntyre Interiors combines timeless elegance with modern functionality, balancing warm natural textures and clean lines. The kitchen, anchored by warm brass accents, exudes a welcoming ambiance, while the bathroom offers a serene retreat with sleek finishes and refined fixtures. Together, these spaces embody a cohesive aesthetic that is both sophisticated and approachable. The mix of luxe materials—like brass, marble, wood and bronze—makes this project unforgettable. The intentional use of brass and dark bronze elements throughout makes this project unique. The project's design aesthetic is modern transitional with a touch of glam. It blends classic silhouettes with current materials and finishes, leaning into clean lines, neutral tones, and strategic pops of warmth. Sophisticated yet livable, this project is an unforgettable expression of refined style.

Project Profile



WinterGreen Synthetic Grass

Luxury Backyard Putting Green

This project is a professional-grade backyard putting green designed for both entertainment and short game practice. It features two distinct putting areas with multiple holes and several turf bunkers for chipping. To meet the client's request for a seamless integration with the existing landscape, we designed the layout around the property's mature trees. The client now enjoys a luxury green nestled in what feels like a private forest. Our approach to putting green installations isn't based on a single aesthetic — we focus on tailoring each project to the client's space and preferences while ensuring quality products are used. We prioritize clean design, expert craftsmanship, and premium materials to create a high-end putting experience. The goal is always a seamless blend of beauty and performance that elevates both the landscape and the game.



WinterGreen Synthetic Grass
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wintergreengrass.com

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photos by **Asia Eidson with Photobyjoy**

Dream Home VIP Party

Fort Worth Magazine


Colton Horn, Kason Horn



On May 29 the Dream Home VIP Party provided attendees a chance to grab a sneak peek of the 2025 *Fort Worth Magazine* Dream Home in the Montrachet development in west Fort Worth. Guests were treated with dinner from their choice of two food trucks: Gepetto's Pizza and Two Horns Tex Mex, and entertained by local musician Sean Russell of Cut Throat Finches.

The home, designed and built by The Morrison Group, is a stunning showcase of modern luxury living and includes immaculate interior design from Semmelmann Interiors. The official Realtor for the house is The John Zimmerman Group.

Proceeds from touring benefit a Wish with Wings, a local charity that grants wishes to children with life-threatening medical conditions.

Special thanks to platinum sponsors Sewell and Fiber-Seal Systems, and development sponsor Montrachet.



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The Cigar Smoker

Fort Worth Public Library Foundation

Since 1997, The Cigar Smoker has served as the Fort Worth Public Library Foundation's largest annual fundraiser. The May 7 event at the Fort Worth Club featured both silent and live auctions, as well as unique experiences like Cuban cigar rolling, tastings from La Pulga and Acre Distilling, and the debut of an exclusive Silver Leaf La Aurora cigar.

Proceeds from The Smoker have a direct impact on the community, helping the Library remain a hub for learning, exploration, and personal development. When you support the Foundation, you're investing in the Library's future—and the future of Fort Worth.



Becky & Stephen Tobin, Greg & Catherine Nicholas


Chris Beauchamp, Stefon Rishel, Zachary Campbell


Sajade Miller, Victoria Puente-Peters, Tim Butler


Tom Tzobanakis, Dean Tzobanakis


Top Left- Bond Malone, Andrea Ash-Stinson, Carey Stinson / Bottom Left- Dana Burghdoff, Dianna Giordano, Midori Clark, Matt Davis


Don Duke, Darren George, Harry Dombrowski, Ben King



Seeking Candidates for *Fort Worth Inc.'s* 40 Under 40 Awards Program

We're looking for professionals under 40 who are making an impact in their careers and giving back to their communities. Nominate someone — or apply yourself — to be recognized among Fort Worth's rising leaders.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Must be 39 or younger by Feb. 1
- Must live and/or work in the following counties: Tarrant, Parker, Johnson, Hood, Wise, Denton
- Anyone may be nominated regardless of vocation, business or sector
- Cannot have been a previous honoree

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photos provided by **The American Heart Association**

Go Red for Women

American Heart Association

On Feb. 28 over 500 guests dressed in red and Western attire attended the 2025 Tarrant County Go Red for Women Luncheon at The Worthington Renaissance Fort Worth Hotel, united to give women's greatest health threat "the boot." The luncheon featured notable appearances by Bianca Castro, NBC5 DFW as emcee for the day; Keely Henry, champion Texas Barrel Racer, and the day's featured survivor; survivor and program host, Dr. ShantaQuilette D Carter-Williams; advocate Annette Addo-Yobo, Miss Texas 2024-2025, and fellow titleholders from the Miss Texas organization. Various activities combined education with entertainment, ensuring a fun and engaging experience for attendees of the annual event.



Melissa Huffman, Monika Mathur, Amy Papst, Becky Renfro Borbolla



Lily Roberts, Deya Williams, Annette Addo-Yobo





Chad & Melody Henry, Keely Henry



Peggy Booher, Cristy Cooper, DeLynne Crofford, Caroline Daniel, Patty Garsek, Judy Jones Rotzell, Michele Reynolds, Leah Saurenmann, Beth Sims, Kathy Jo Zeigler



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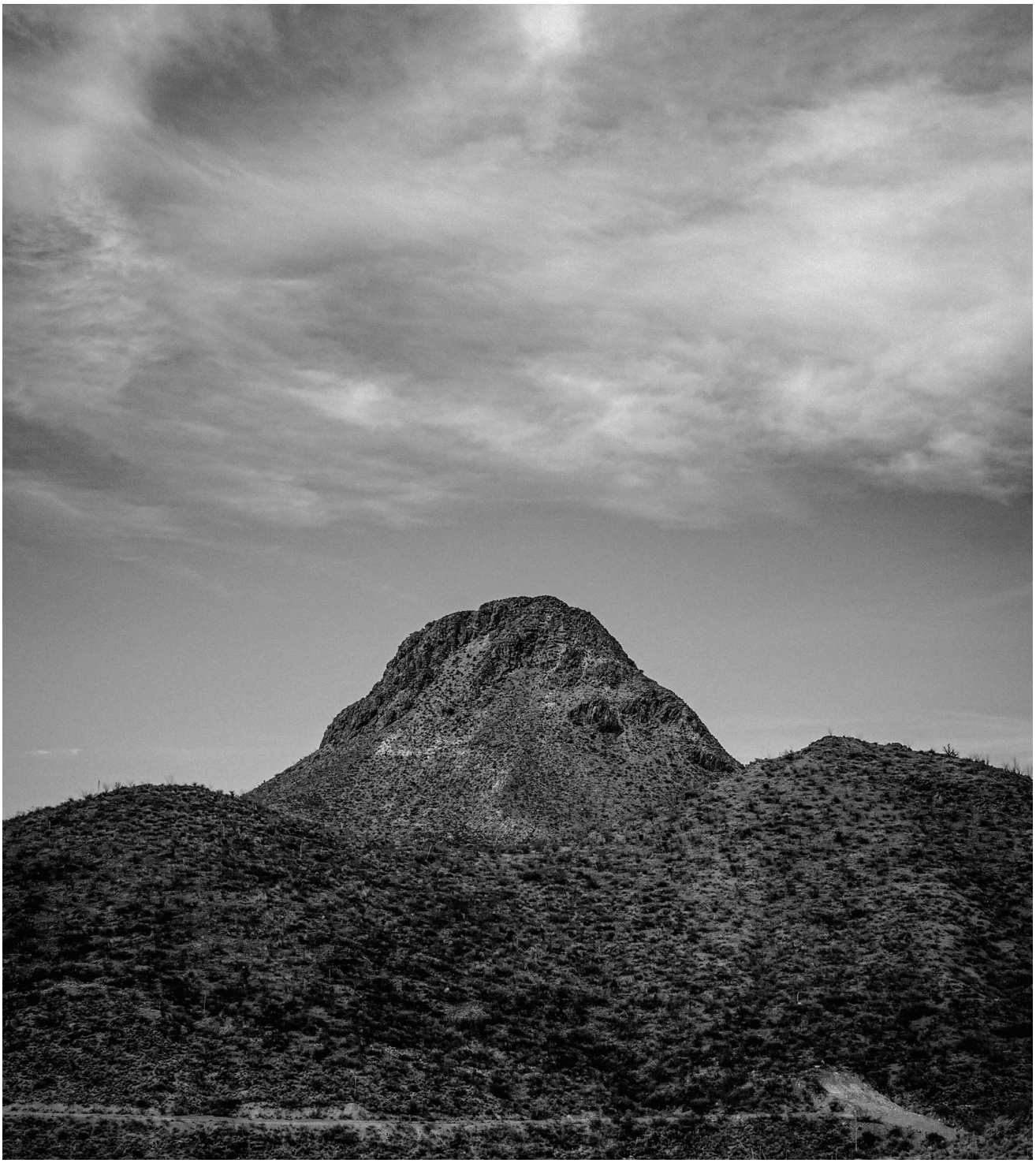
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PURCHASE IMAGE

FULL STORY

Captured on a 10-day road trip throughout the state of Texas, an adventure that became the cover story for our March 2024 issue, this is a photo of the Chinati Mountains off Pinto Canyon Road, south of Marfa. **From the feature:** *"Russell tells me about a road few people know about that offers some of the best views in Texas. 'It goes all the way to the Rio Grande,' he says, 'but it turns into a dirt road halfway there.' The road in question is FM 2810 — appearing as the faintest of faint lines on any map. About 30 miles in (having never seen another car), the road does turn into a dirt road — and a rough dirt road, at that. And Russell wasn't lying when he spoke of the breathtaking views. With any remnant of civilization gone, the rocky road zigzags up and down and through jaw-dropping vistas and leads us to Ruidosa, a quiet village on the Rio Grande."*

Scan the QR codes to purchase a print of this image or to read the full story, "The Great Texas Road Trip," by Brian Kendall.



@bkendall4
PHOTO BY BRIAN KENDALL



Pictured: **Justin Rudd,** GM Platinum Chevrolet
Mike Brown, GM, Pegasus Chevrolet
Stephen Gilchrist, Dealer Operator, Gilchrist Automotive
Stephen Jimenez, GM, Spur Chevrolet

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