

Southern Living

Mmm!
**Nutter
Butter
Banana
Pudding**

CHARLESTON:
*Editors' Guide
For Where To
Eat Now*

**A Family
Friendly
Front Yard**

**SUPERFAST
SUPPERS**

**Light & Bright
Colorful
Rooms**



Travel

One piece of advice about the Big D: Find a local. A maxim for nearly all occasions, it's especially relevant here. A sprawling metropolis that's the least cowboy of Lone Star cities, Dallas can be a misunderstood urban jungle without an insider's guidance. Bright-eyed locals steer us beyond the book depository and the flagship Neiman's to the places where the true town lives and plays. Come with me as I follow this host of real-deal Dallas kindreds.

1 CITY OASIS: Beck Park

FIND DOWNTOWN'S HIDDEN GARDENS
Dallas today is all about the green—pockets of garden oasis spring up throughout town. From the lauded Nasher sculpture sanctuary to Fountain Place's cascades, downtown boasts numerous tranquil spaces. Tres Fromme, a Dallas landscape designer and former planning and design leader at nationally renowned Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania, mentions Beck Park as one of the most intriguing. "With live oaks overhead, there's always shade in the series of rooms," Tres says.

LOCAL THOUGHT: City officials broke ground on the city-block-size, \$17-million Main Street garden last October.

INFO: *Henry C. Beck, Jr. Park, North Akard Street and Munger Avenue; Fountain Place, 1445 Ross Avenue; Nasher Sculpture Center, www.nasher-sculpturecenter.org. (All are within three blocks.)*

Dallas Like

A man with glasses, wearing a bright red sweater and light-colored trousers, stands with his arms crossed in a narrow opening of a large, grey concrete wall. The wall is composed of large, rectangular panels with visible joints and small circular indentations. The man is looking towards the camera. In the background, through the opening, a green lawn, a tree, and a building with blue vertical slats are visible. The overall scene is an architectural detail in a modern setting.

Plan your next trip to Dallas with our online guide:
southernliving.com/dallas

A Local

You won't find this stuff by accident. Let the hometown crowd show you their city's hidden gems. By **Taylor Bruce**, photography **Art Meripol**

2 HOTEL: The Stoneleigh Hotel & Spa ▶

REST IN STYLE Friends tell me that the old Stoneleigh bar, an oak-laden Elvis hangout, was once as moody as Scotch at midnight. After its \$36-million renovation, the lions of Dallas now see more of the sun in the Maple Avenue hotel. Spacious rooms at The Stoneleigh can be steep in price, but they're quite generous in comfort.

LOCAL THOUGHT: Before Mavs games, the hopping lounge and bar might as well be the unofficial uptown NBA tip-off club.

INFO: Call (214) 871-7111 for a one-night Southern Irving studio suite rate of \$229 (based on availability); www.stoneleighhotel.com



5 REDUX: Tillman's Roadhouse ▲

DINE LIKE CULTURED COWBOYS This might be the only roadhouse in the universe to feel both Marlboro and Milan. Wooden deer heads mingle with Murano glass chandeliers, while vintage movies roll on the bar's wall. A Texas appetite will revel in the Venison Frito Pie, peach-glazed quail, and truffle-oil popcorn.

LOCAL THOUGHT: Owner Sara Tillman forged an early path into the artsy-cool Oak Cliff neighborhood.

INFO: 324 West Seventh Street; www.tillmansroadhouse.com or (214) 942-0988

3 LANDSCAPE: Trinity River Audubon Center

EXPLORE A FORGOTTEN FOREST A tree grows in Dallas. In fact, 6,000 continuous acres of trees do. I'm willing to bet you didn't know that what may be the largest urban hardwood forest in the U.S. lives a birdsong from downtown. With the opening of an architect-chic, \$14-million Audubon Center, perhaps you'll visit this natural wonder only eight minutes away. If not for your kid's ecological curiosities and adventures, go for a serene yoga class. Pretty soon the place will grow on you.

LOCAL THOUGHT: Going Green at home is easier said than done. Learn sustainability tricks and organic gardening tips in a monthly "Living Green" course (\$20).

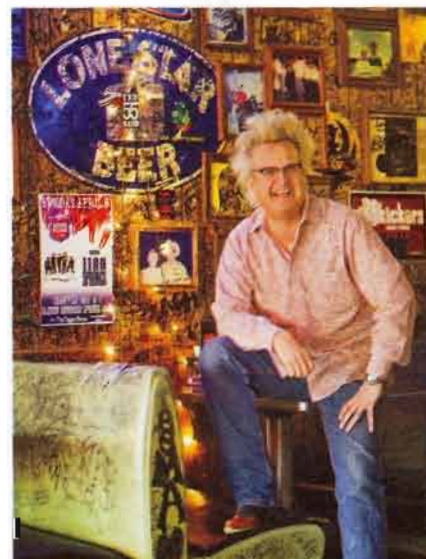
INFO: 6500 South Loop 12; www.tx.audubon.org/trinity.html or (214) 398-8722

4 LIVE MUSIC: Adair's Saloon ▶

TAP ALONG TO TWANG By day, Adair's Saloon sells a jalapeño-topped burger that rivals any in Dallas. By night, live string bands make the space thump like any good dance hall should. The Dixie Chicks have stopped by, and local Don Henley used the joint for a video. If the music doesn't entertain you, just explore Adair's interior. History lives in the ink messages on the walls.

LOCAL THOUGHT: Players gather at 2 p.m. on Sundays for a public picker's jam. "Adair's is a true Texas honky-tonk," says Americana singer-songwriter Jimmy Baldwin.

INFO: 2624 Commerce Street; www.adairssaloon.com



Jimmy Baldwin rocked the Americana charts with his 2005 album, *Somebody's Nobody*.

6 BAR: Lee Harvey's

TELL STORIES AT A CLASSIC PUB Lee Harvey's, a true hole-in-the-hood less than a mile from city hall, is not at all what I expected from buttoned-up Dallas. If anything, as I shared a bottled Shiner with a local pastry chef, a gallery owner, a fashion photographer, and a *Dallas Morning News* writer, all a roaring good time, I thought I was in Austin. I urge you to snag a fireside picnic table with friends and share the tab at the 50-year-old bar.

LOCAL THOUGHT: Lee Harvey's owner Seth Smith named his pup Ruby. The neighbor's goes by Jack. "We don't take ourselves too seriously," he says.

INFO: 1807 Gould Street; www.leeharveys.com



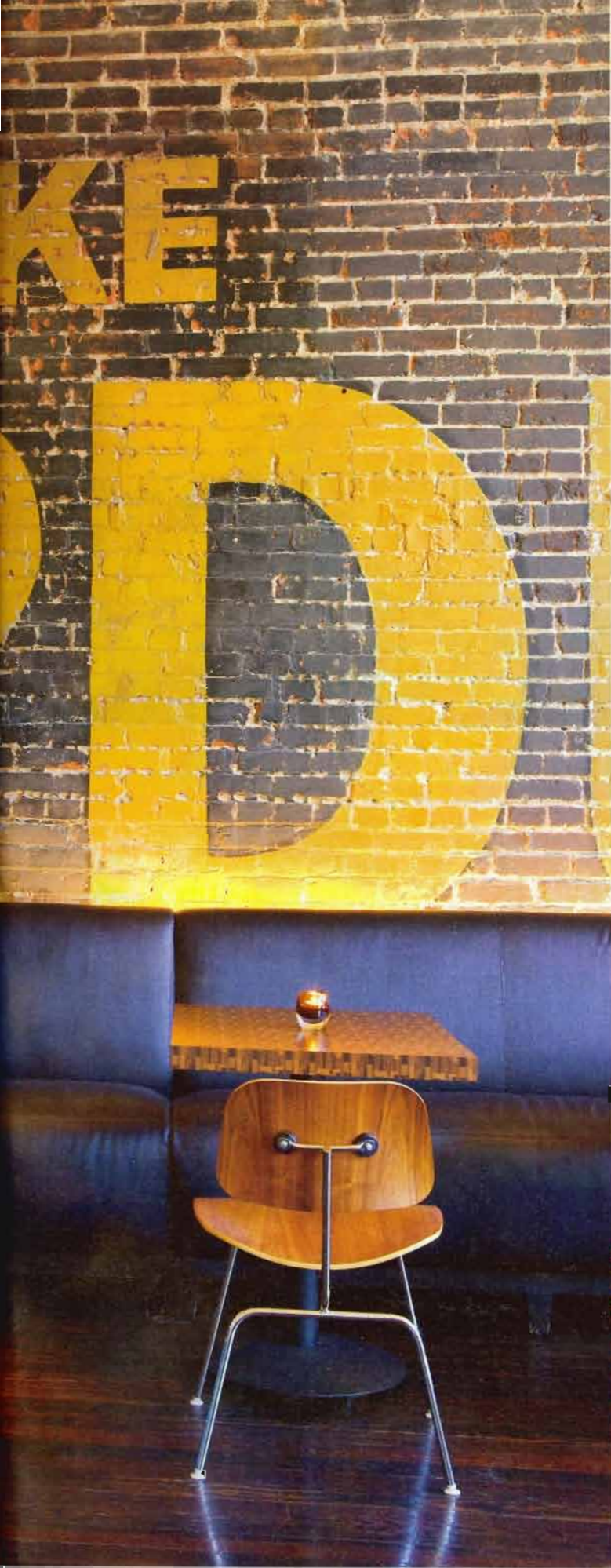
7 LUNCH COUNTER: Stephan Pyles ▲

EAT, DRINK, AND BE GLOBAL Chef Stephan Pyles's Arts District restaurant is lost: It belongs in Barcelona. Evidence: the tapas-ceviche counter and a geometric-laden look Mr. Picasso would admire. Foodwise, it is tough to go astray here, but, for lunch's sake, sit at the 12-seat tapas bar. It's intimate; it's lively; and it's warm. A wood-burning oven fires pesto-chicken pizzas just a few feet away, and the barside ceviche-maker is like a gourmet artist. You'll get lost just watching the lime-infused process. No doubt, there is no better place to have lunch solo in the entire city.

LOCAL THOUGHT: Chef Stephan Pyles's bio reads like a culinary philanthropist's. He has helped found three remarkable food organizations, including The Hunger Link, a Dallas program that matches hotels and restaurants with 27 feeding agencies.

INFO: 1807 Ross Avenue, Suite 200; www.stephanpyles.com or (214) 580-7000





◀ 8 FARE: LOCAL

TASTE AN ARTISAN'S MENU LOCAL is the type of restaurant where the owner-chef Tracy Miller still answers the phone. The Dallas-born epicure sticks to what makes the former hotel so special—its hand-wrought menu. Fried green beans, foie gras on Texas toast with fig-Madeira compote, panko-and-cornflake-crusted sea bass, and her macaroni and cheese. She's a star among 21st-century Southern chefs, and I recommend calling her.

LOCAL THOUGHT: "In Deep Ellum [the neighborhood due east of downtown], we are destination dining," Tracy says. "People love the mystery of finding somewhere."

INFO: 2936A Elm Street; www.localdallas.com or (214) 752-7500

9 SKYLINE: Belmont Hotel's terrace

TOAST A STELLAR VIEW On Thursdays, singer-songwriters play with a city view backdrop second to none in Dallas. Music or not, the BarBelmont's terrace space in Oak Cliff is the place to gaze.

LOCAL THOUGHT: Because of the short winters, the hotel's "Barefoot" poolside outdoor concert series usually begins in mid-March.

INFO: 901 Fort Worth Avenue; www.belmontdallas.com

10 KIDS PLAY: The Soda Gallery ▼

FIZZ ALL AFTERNOON Soda is the new thing in the Bishop Arts District. This funky spot serves up almost 200 colas, every kid's caffeinated dream, from countries such as Japan, France, and Mexico. Parents may recognize Orangina from Euro travels or NuGrape and Nesbitt's from their childhoods.

LOCAL THOUGHT: Buy one and drink it outside; or mix and match your own sixer to go.

INFO: 408 Bishop Avenue, www.thesodagallery.com; www.bishopartsdistrict.com ●



Who Are They?

Our numerous Dallas informants included a fashion photographer, Americana musician, gallery owner, furniture-maker, hotel manager, newspaper reporter, pastry chef, landscape guru, and graphic artist. Not to mention many a bartender, concierge, and cab driver. All are very proud of their city.