



Texas

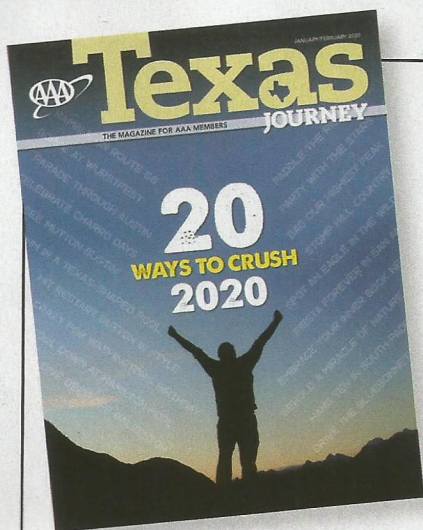
THE MAGAZINE FOR AAA MEMBERS

JOURNEY



Lone Star LODGING

Five hotels that embody the spirit of Texas



>>Putting the *hay* back in Mexia

I read the article “Tex-Speak 101” [My Lone Star Life, January/February]. I’ve lived in Central Texas most all my life and have been going to Mexia for much of that. I’ve never heard anyone pronounce it muh-HAYZ-uh. There is no “s” or “z” sound. It’s pronounced muh-HAY-uh. I’ve also heard some real old-timers call it muh-HAY-er (like “my hair”), and I’ve even heard some non-locals call it mex-EE-uh. But never in all my years have I ever heard anyone call it muh-HAYZ-uh.

MELISSA DANYSH, MARQUEZ (PRONOUNCED MAR-KAY)

You really got the pronunciation of Mexia wrong! It is NOT muh-HAYZ-uh! It’s muh-HAY-uh! You’re gonna really get hammered on that one!

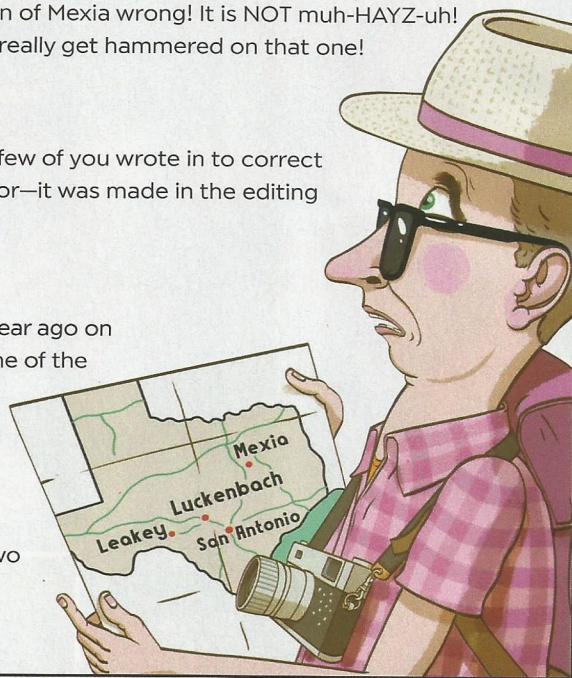
LINDA CRAWFORD, SUGAR LAND

EDITOR’S NOTE: Oh, we got hammered, alright. More than a few of you wrote in to correct our pronunciation of muh-HAY-uh. Not only do we regret the error—it was made in the editing process—but we’re ex-TREEM-lee grateful for your feedback.

>>An illuminating trip to Marfa

I’m a AAA member who was passing through West Texas about a year ago on a cross-country trip when I made a stop in Marfa for a few days. One of the highlights was a Marfa Lights tour. I’d never heard about the lights until hours before my arrival. Upon one local’s recommendation, I took the tour, and that evening, I met the men you mention in your January/February 2019 article [“Magical Mystery Lights”], Kim Thornsburg and Mike Shurley. (Mike showed me your article, which helped to give some more background on the lights.) They were two authentic Texas characters right out of a Larry McMurtry novel.

BRIAN BRAGDON, LAKE CITY, SOUTH CAROLINA



ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Cynthia J. Drake

CHECKING INN (P. 32), AMAZING AMENITIES (P. 41)

Austin-based travel writer Cynthia J. Drake is the author of *Budget Travel for the Genius*. She has spent the last seven years exploring big cities and small towns across Texas, delighting in her discoveries along the way: *kolaches*, mesquite beans, *lonchas*,



ballet *folklorico*, cowboys, and chachalacas. On a recent solo road trip, she stayed in an allegedly haunted hotel; while she tried to sleep, the lights kept turning on and off. She left the ghost an offering of Topo Chico. You can find her online at cynthiadrake.com and on Instagram at [@cynthiadrake](https://www.instagram.com/cynthiadrake).

Sarah Ferone

AMAZING AMENITIES (P. 41)

Sarah Ferone is an award-winning illustrator based in Philadelphia. Her work can be seen in all sorts of projects, including books, magazines, playing cards, and children’s products. Sarah



likes to fuel her creativity by eating delicious vegetarian food, relaxing in yoga class, and seeking out adventure through travel—only now with a baby in tow.

SEND US YOUR COMMENTS ...

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length and clarity.

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THE GEORGE

Paying homage to the late President George H.W. Bush, The George in College Station celebrates Texas' style and sophistication.





CHECKING INN

Five hotels that embody the Texas spirit

By Cynthia J. Drake

Texas' lodging game is strong. Each year, Lone Star State hotels roll out the welcome mat for an estimated 72.5 million out-of-state guests—and plenty of locals, too. Many hotels capture our state's unique character. We've selected five properties that embody the history, romance, and playful spirit of Texas. The next time you're staying local, consider a night in one of these hotels. You won't soon forget it.

[INDUSTRIAL CHIC]

CHECK IN:

136 E. Grayson
Street
(210) 448-8300
thehotel
emma.com

RATES:

From \$350
per night

COOL

AMENITIES:

Margarita
upon check-in;
guayabera
robes in rooms;
cruiser bikes
available for use;
3,700-volume
library



HOTEL EMMA

SAN ANTONIO

Stroll into the handsome lobby of Hotel Emma and you're reminded of the building's industrial past. Built in 1894, it once housed the Pearl Brewhouse. Inside the brick walls today, spread among the leather chairs and other elegant decor, are original, weathered industrial pieces that speak to the brewery's storied past. The hotel's 146 rooms don't shy away from that history, either, with paint-chipped patinas, bare-brick walls, clawfoot bathtubs, and exposed rafters. "Emma" refers to Emma Koehler, who is credited with rescuing her brewery during Prohibition—it was the only plant to survive those dry days in San Antonio—by diversifying her business until Prohibition ended. You could while away hours reading in the hotel's library or sipping cocktails in the atmospheric bar—both located just off the lobby. And you'll want to allow plenty of time to explore the Pearl District just out the front doors: It's home to thoughtfully curated boutiques (don't miss The Tiny Finch), great restaurants (be sure to try Cured), and a happening jazz club (JazzTX).



**CHECK IN:**

112 Academy
Drive
(512) 852-2400
hotelsaint
cecilia.com

RATES:

From \$285
per night

COOL**AMENITIES:**

In-room Rega
record players;
vintage LP
lending library;
custom kimono
bathrobes
in rooms



HOTEL SAINT CECILIA

AUSTIN

It's fitting that in the Live Music Capital of the World, this chic boutique hotel located a short walk from Austin's South Congress Avenue is named for the patron saint of music. The hotel even goes so far as to host an annual Feast Day in her honor under the two 300-year-old live oak trees in the courtyard. But that's only one of many thoughtful touches. Guests at the 14-room hotel can select a record from the lobby's vinyl collection to play on in-room record players or groove to a seasonally curated digital playlist (songs from the Chocolate Watchband, Nick Drake, and Jimi Hendrix were featured on one recent list). The property's main building was constructed in 1888 as a home for a descendant of Davy Crockett. Guests can stay in this main building or in one of the more modern bungalows added in 2008. They can lounge at the pool, punctuated with a neon sign spelling out SOUL, or enjoy a drink inside the turquoise, incense-scented bar, which if you're so inclined just might inspire your next great poem or song.

[HISTORY MEETS HIGH-TECH]



THE SINCLAIR

FORT WORTH

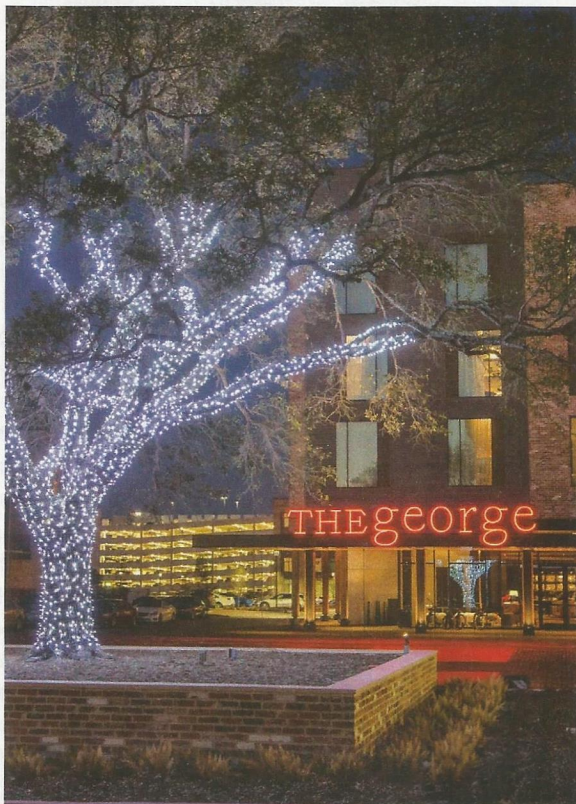
The 164-room Sinclair—a Marriott Autograph Collection hotel—resides in a 90-year-old art deco building that once housed the offices of Sinclair Oil Company. Here, old and new blend artfully. You see the history in the ZigZag Moderne exterior, the green marble lobby with gilded ceilings, and the original elevator facades. But the hotel embraces the new, too. For starters, it's one of the first in the world to employ a backup lithium battery instead of a diesel generator in case of power outages (“It’s like three Teslas in the basement,” said the hotel’s Courtney Towson). And guest rooms are teched out: You can set your shower to your exact temperature preference by touching a screen, call room service or the valet from the bathroom mirror, or set the mood in the room by raising and lowering the shades with digital presets. Other fine arguments to stay here: You can dine in the Wicked Butcher Restaurant in the basement, sip a cocktail at the lobby bar (with a podcasting studio in the corner), or zip up to the 17th floor’s rooftop bar to take in the Fort Worth skyline.

CHECK IN:
512 Main Street
(82) 231-8214
thesinclair
hotel.com

RATES:
From \$279
per night

COOL AMENITIES:
Digital control of showers; in standard rooms, touchscreen mirrors in bathrooms can play music and display TV channels

[RUSTIC CHARM]



THE GEORGE

COLLEGE STATION

Paying homage to the late George H.W. Bush, whose presidential library and final resting place is located 3 miles away, The George embraces its strong Texas identity with equal parts sophistication and swagger. Guests of the 162-room hotel are greeted with a bold wall-spanning Texas flag art installation, created from 10,000 old books with red, white, and blue jackets from around the state. With views of Texas A&M University, the hotel resides in Century Square, a popular shopping and dining district, and it abuts The Green, which hosts musical events and pop-up picnics throughout the year. Next door, you’ll find Valencia Hotel Group sister property Cavalry Court. Both hotels are popular with travelers who are in town to visit the university. Be sure to dine at The George’s Poppy Restaurant, which is another nod to the 41st president: It bears the nickname his grandchildren called him. The waitstaff wear wacky socks to honor the president, who was known for his colorful hosiery. Want to keep the playful spirit alive? Take home a pair of your own fun socks from the gift shop.

MORE >>>

CHECK IN:
180 Century
Court
(979) 485-5638
thegeorge
texas.com

RATES:
From \$120
per night

COOL AMENITIES:
Free Wi-Fi;
50-inch
flat-screen TVs;
complimentary
use of bicycles

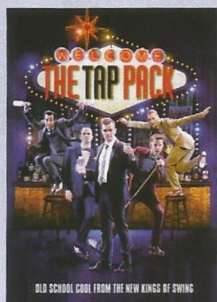
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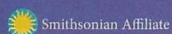
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Irving Las Colinas



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[RUGGED LUXURY]



THE GAGE MARATHON

Located under the vast, dark skies of far West Texas, close to Big Bend National Park, resides the historic Gage Hotel. Owner J.P. Bryan likes to say the property is “as close to heaven as you can get and still be in Texas.” The hotel opened in 1927, and while the fortunes of Marathon have ebbed and flowed over the years, The Gage endures, drawing visitors looking for that quintessential rugged Western experience. Designed by architect Henry Trost, the 47-room hotel includes a two-story brick building that leads to an adobe-walled courtyard and rooms appointed with cowhide rugs, Saltillo tile floors, and vibrant splashes of color—apropos for a place where nothing is quite what you’d expect. The hotel is known for its popular White Buffalo Bar (be sure to order an off-menu J.P. margarita) and its 12 Gage Restaurant, where the late traveler-chef Anthony Bourdain dined during the final season of his CNN show, *Parts Unknown*.

CHECK IN:
102 NW First Street
(432) 386-4510
gagehotel.com

RATES:
From \$138
per night

**COOL
AMENITIES:**
Adjacent game
lot includes sand
volleyball court,
horseshoes, and
boccie ball

Austin-based travel writer **Cynthia J. Drake** reminds you to tip your hardworking hotel housekeeping staff on your next trip.