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BUTTE

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FRUITION  
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*simple ways*  
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footprint



Chef Matt Vawter uses Fruition Farms ricotta, foraged miners lettuce and a snap pea caper vinaigrette in Fruition's Spring Asparagus Salad.

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# Lone Star Loveliness

Refined elegance meets Texas charm

BY KRISTIN MILLER

Ever since I purchased a pair of cowgirl boots a few years ago, I've been waiting for the right opportunity to wear them. I am not the cowgirl sort in my daily life. However, a recent visit to central Texas Hill Country had me packing my boots, eager to channel my inner cowgirl.

After landing in Houston, I embarked on an hour and a half drive to our destination, a

town called Washington. Gazing out over the landscape, I watched the busy urban cityscape transform to graceful, rolling, meadowland. This idyllic countryside, I was told, is known as Washington-on-the-Brazos, an unincorporated area along the Brazos River in Washington County. Designated as the "Birthplace of Texas," this historically significant area was the site of

## { Need to Know }

The Inn at Dos Brisas

979.277.7750

[dosbrisas.com](http://dosbrisas.com)

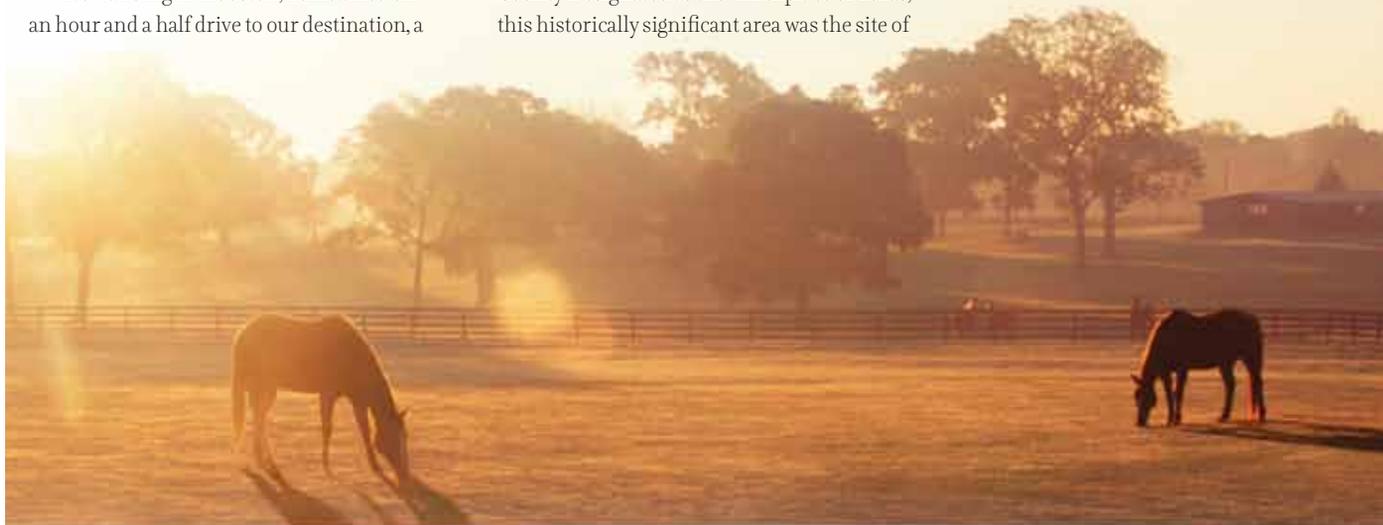


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE INN AT DOS BRISAS



the Convention of 1836 and the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence, officially separating the state from Mexico.

Nestled along this gentle landscape is the five-star Inn at Dos Brisas. Purchased in 2000 and used as a private family ranch retreat, the property has evolved into a well-appointed Relais & Chateaux guest ranch teeming with luxurious rusticity, encompassing 313 acres and accommodating nine Spanish-style casitas and haciendas. Passing through the private gated entrance, I tried to imagine how the grounds appeared to the Union soldier prisoners, cotton farmers, horse trainers and cattlemen who inhabited the area centuries ago.

Today, visitors can create an action-packed vacation with numerous outdoor pursuits or take advantage of the second-largest privately owned indoor riding arena in Texas and accompanying equestrian activities. Conversely, private accommodations provide exclusivity for those seeking a quiet, low-key escape. The Inn offers four intimate casitas and five exquisitely decorated haciendas. The latter feature open living and dining areas, a large kitchenette and an enormous bathroom, all finished with granite countertops, French Oak floors, vaulted wood ceilings, enormous stone fireplaces, meticulous tile details and antique furnishings. Along with providing every comfort of home, the spacious



Above top: Steeped in history, The Inn at Dos Brisas epitomizes the graceful charm of Texas Hill Country. Above: A private outdoor patio includes a heated plunge pool, perfect for a late afternoon soak.

haciendas offer some extravagant extras as well. A screened-in porch invites guests to sink into plush patio furnishings while enjoying a quiet breakfast and a comfortable double lounge swing allows guests to relax the day away.

As if these extra amenities weren't enough, the staff excels in paying close attention to every detail. The accommodations seem to be

thoughtfully arranged to anticipate guests' every need. Following an active day spent exploring the grounds, riding horses, fishing, biking or clay shooting, guests can take an aromatherapy soak in an oversized Roman-style bathtub. Conveniently arranged next to the bath is a tray of soaking salts geared for specific therapeutic experiences including a Himalayan Dream,



Clockwise: Gourmand guests have exclusive opportunities to experience cooking classes alongside Executive Chef Zachary Ladwig. The Inn at Dos Brisas offers a serene atmosphere for guests seeking R & R. One of the many delicious farm-to-table salads offered at The Inn.



## MIX IT UP

Guests of The Inn at Dos Brisas can try their hand at creating savory seasonal cocktails with a Mixology Class offered by The Inn's Sommelier and Mixologist extraordinaire, Thomas Perez. Using fresh, in-season ingredients to create made-from-scratch Bloody Marys and flavorful martinis, guests are treated to an hour of instruction, sampling and Perez's expert advice. Below is one such tasty treat to try at home.

### Blood Orange Martini

- 2 oz. Tito's Vodka
- 1/2 oz. fresh blood orange juice
- 1/4 oz. Meyer lemon juice
- Dash of simple syrup

Pour all ingredients into a pint glass full of ice and shake. Strain into a martini glass and enjoy.

Muscle Soak, Cold and Flu Vitamin Soak and Pure Skincare. Other details include a mini refrigerator stocked with classic Southern favorites such as homemade iced tea, Dublin Texas Root Beer, Dublin Tart-n-Sweet Lemonade and Orange Cream Soda, as well as a butler's pass-through in the kitchenette for discreet room service delivery.

While a wide selection of outdoor activities is at your disposal at The Inn, one unexpected element of the property is its emphasis on providing a sophisticated culinary experience. As the only *Forbes* five-star dining experience in the state, The Inn's restaurant and accompanying 7,000-bottle wine cellar are the result of well-traveled owners with a desire to bring their epicurean passions to unassuming Texas Hill Country. Consequently, guests are treated to the gastronomic genius of Executive Chef Zachary Ladwig, who crafts exquisite menus that fuse French cuisine with Texas ingredients. Stand-out entrees, such as Miyazaki Beef, Maine Lobster Ballotine or East Coast Fluke, are richly complemented by fresh herbs, vegetables and fruits harvested from the property's extensive organic gardens and greenhouse. Seasonal, daily-shifting menus, as well as an eight-course Grand Tasting menu, are presented in the elegant atmosphere of a dining room that evokes a Spanish country manor.

For gourmand guests curious as to the inner workings of the 24-acre farm at The Inn, informal gardening lessons are available. During my visit, I had a unique opportunity to tour the farm alongside Farm Manager Jason Coleman, to see firsthand where certified organic herbs, tomatoes and peppers are grown in the greenhouse and fruit trees, including peach, persimmon, apple and pear, are grown in the orchards. I tasted edible flowers; harvested lettuce, kale and carrots from the garden; and discovered the varied flavors of five different heirloom varieties of garlic. Later that same afternoon, I was treated to a delicious lunch involving a BLT sandwich, homemade potato salad and kale chips, all crafted from the veggies we harvested earlier that morning.

Whether you arrive at The Inn at Dos Brisas with the intention of enjoying sports and recreation, equestrian elements, organic farming, exquisite food and wine, simple relaxation or all of the above, you're sure to unearth an unforgettable experience that goes beyond typical expectations of a Western ranch-style vacation. 