

FROM THE COVER

A TEXAN HILL COUNTRY TOWN...WITH A GERMAN ACCENT

Fredericksburg Offers The Richness Of The Past And A Positive Future

—By Travel Editor, Bill Finley—

The bigger cities of Austin and San Antonio join Fredericksburg to make a triangle of rolling green hills with black cattle nibbling in the shade of regal oaks and giant pecans. While beef on the hoof is the biggest cash crop, luscious summertime peaches are the tastiest. Whatever one can make with peaches, they do it, from cobblers to ice cream to preserves!

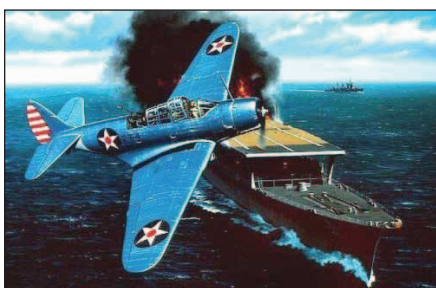


The best way to get a complete overview of their town is to go to their Visitor's Center and view a short video of what makes this a charming getaway for folks from San Antonio and Austin and for the new retirees who find it just the right size to relax and re-start a new life.

Over 200 gingerbreaded cottages and Victorian mini-mansions have been turned into gracious Bed N' Breakfasts offering a variety of sleep-inducing flowery bedrooms and more-than-ample breakfasts in their private sitting rooms. Twinkling lights and friendly hosts make their stay memorable and worth a return visit.



At the **Town Creek's Sydney Cottage**, owned by Connie and Tom Gikas, we were met each day with morning gourmet treats including Eggs Benedict and warm peach-soaked crepes. Their private cottages and perfect accommodations made relaxing easy. Secluded from the bustle of thriving Fredericksburg, they are a romantic getaway spaciouly located on a landscaped acre of land adjacent to the Historical District and only 3 blocks walking distance from the Town Center. Check out their website and make a date to stay and rejuvenate. www.towncreekfredericksburg.com



A Sailors' Delight

Navy buffs will revel in the exhibits and stories told in the **National Museum of the Pacific War**.

Because it is the home of the famous 5-star Admiral Chester Nimitz, it was a natural for Fredericksburg to share and enhance the enormous role Nimitz played in the war against Japan.



The museum's vast array of WWII memorabilia includes a medium bomber, the B-25, partially known for General Jimmy Doolittle's daring raid on Tokyo by launching a small group of Air Corps bombers zapping off the deck of a carrier, the **USS Hornet**. While the attack's results were minimal, it served the purpose of informing the insular Japanese that the US forces were coming!

Other features are a full sized PT Boat made famous by the young John F. Kennedy, a Japanese mini-submarine and a delicate Peace Garden presented by the people from the land of the Rising Sun. www.tpwd.state.tx.us/parks/nimitz



A Renaissance Genius Creates an Astounding Old World Village

Vogue magazine called the Trois Estate at Enchanted Rock one of the must-sees in Texas! This four-year old destination seems like a European-Mexican assemblage of curvilinear desert shapes that enclose a potpourri

Rebecca Rather: Texas Hill Country's Pastry Queen

Native Texan Rebecca Rather began her career as a private caterer in Houston, before moving on to become a pastry chef for Houston restaurants. After working as executive pastry chef for research and development for cafes, she decided to start her own business in 1999 in Austin.

Rather Sweet Bakery (known as "the best little from-scratch bakery in Texas") was an immediate success and Rebecca then moved the bakery to the scenic Hill Country town of Fredericksburg, Texas, expanded to serve lunch daily and dinner on weekends. She has been featured in *Texas Monthly*, *Gourmet*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Food & Wine*, *Southern Living*, and many other lifestyle and food publications.

An avid horsewoman, who rarely arrives at her local stable without treats for her equine buddies,



she's a dedicated member of the board of CANTER of Texas, a non-profit group that places retired race horses in caring homes. When she isn't up to her elbows in dough or on horseback, she's enjoying the sweet life in Fredericksburg, where she lives with her daughter, Frances.

On a recent press trip, we met Rebecca at her Rather Sweet Bakery & Café and was privileged to sample her specialties. Her charming little bakery was filled with the most delectable delicacies, with customers pouring in to sample and eat. The Tuxedo cake, shown on the cover, is a popular birthday and celebration cake and one that Rebecca created. People order it from all across the U.S. and continue to come back for more. You can order her book, "The Pastry Queen," at your local bookstore or amazon.com



of activities: an elegant dining room and roof-top wine bar, a full-scale beauty/health spa, a one-bell wedding chapel, baroque bedrooms for breakfasts, carriage rides over the mesquite and unbelievable collections of bottles, guns, paintings and interior design wonders.

The owner-artist-real estate tycoon-collector, Charles Trois and his enthusiastic and beautiful wife, Rebecca, are a whirlwind of antique collecting and selling, gourmet restauranting, children-raising and hosting visitors to this exciting center overlooking the flat gigantic dome of the Enchanted Rock, a Texas-size natural wonder. They continue to expand and create. The elegance and old world charm entices you around every corner. Be amazed and astounded at what they have created in the hills of Texas. You can't travel to Texas without making this one of your destinations. www.troisestate.net

Chocoholics Unite!

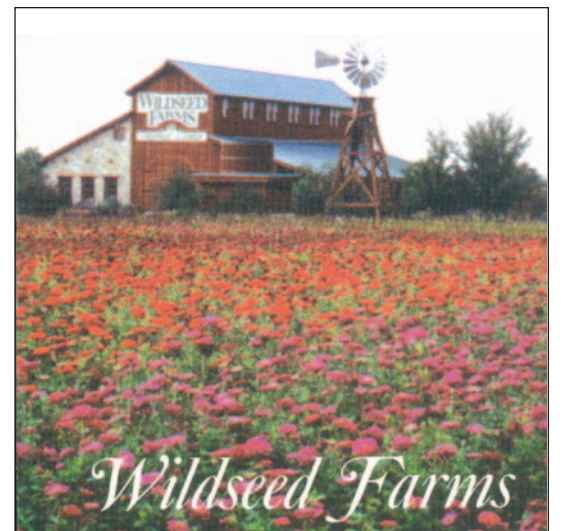
A dream of every chocolate lover is to be left alone in a factory dedicated to creating the rich, delicious brownish candies and being appointed Chief Taster! Twenty years ago, Lecia Duke, an attractive, slender, vibrant entrepreneur founded a store-front epicenter of creative chocolate right downtown on Main Street.



She decided to specialize in those dare-devil taste treats, the liquid-filled bon-bons containing liqueurs, fruity flavors, whiskey-drenched, habit-forming gustatory delights.

How to get the liquid into the hollow chocolate? That was the question.

Her inventive powers discovered a European trick, perfected it, created a secret new machine and now sells thousands to corporations and fancy shops all over. I could hardly wait for her to offer us a sample. When I chose Jack Daniels, the crash of flavor was too much and too little. I wanted more, but discipline prevailed, and that is now only a moment of chocolate perfection. www.chocolat@ctesc.net



Lady Bird's Dream

No matter what you thought of Lyndon Johnson, everyone seemed to admire his wife. Her finest achievement was to initiate a massive wildflower program for the rolling hills of West Texas. Now, in the Spring and Summer, driving through the open lands of that area is a visual delight.

The vast array of reds, purples and especially, the State flower, the Blue Bonnet, cover back to the horizon in a rainbow of nature's bounty. Seven