
Gladewater Economic Development

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Texas Three-Step

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Explore these hidden gems in our own backyard

No need to travel far and wide in search of undiscovered treasure. Take a statewide sojourn to these unique Texas spots.

Home on the Range

As palaces are to kings, ranches are to Texans. Nearly everybody I know has a ranch or knows someone who does—even if that rural outpost happens to be a shack-studded sliver of land where the family gathers for weekend barbecues. But not every ranch is created equal. Take the [Inn at Dos Brisas](#), a compound spanning more than 300 pastoral acres, which is located about 100 miles east of Austin in Washington. Now an intimate Relais & Chateaux resort, this one-time family horse farm still boasts a show barn and arena so immense that it ranks as one of the largest equestrian facilities in Texas. Here, guests can enjoy a dude ranch ambiance with all the blue-blood fixins. Frette linens, outdoor showers, electric king-sized fireplaces, personal plunge pools and red-roofed, 3,000-square-foot luxury haciendas take the rustic up a notch, while spur-jangling cowpokes, organic gardens and limpid ponds teeming with fish keep the property authentic.

My family embraces the inn as its own personal summer camp. We brandish guns to shoot clay pigeons and ride steeds along well-hoofed trails under the tutelage of twang-talking wranglers. We duke it out on the tennis courts, look for Civil War artifacts and rumored ghosts on the verge and splash in the oasis-worthy infinity pool. For chow, Dos Brisas' farm-to-fork restaurant, Texas' only Forbes five-star eatery, steals the show. For its French-Tex cuisine, the restaurant forages from the ranch's generous organic gardens and draws from a herd of USDA-certified cattle. Hankering for the cowboy spirit? Saddle up. Dos Brisas awaits.

Something Old, Something New

Don't be afraid to barter in Gladewater, the official "Antique Capital of East Texas," located 255 miles northeast of Austin. Crammed with stalls, kiosks, stores, arcades and malls, which hawk antiques and collectibles from as far away as Europe, the city attracts throngs of bargain hunters who scrutinize the bounty peddled by its infinite vendors. Quaint and lovingly restored, this former oil boom town, once a dying hamlet, boasts both National Main Street and Texas Main Street status, attested by old-time storefronts and period streetlamps. More than 30 shops or barn-like halls encompass around 200 independent sellers, all located in close proximity to one another. To shop here is to trigger nostalgia. Go prospecting for items ranging from 15th-century medieval tools to mid-century modern lounge chairs. Looking for that missing piece of your great aunt's silver? It's probably here somewhere. Jam-packed with items such as pristine Barbie dolls, McCoy pottery, Victorian jewelry, rough-hewn church pews and bits of castle turret, each store portrays a distinct personality. A few contemporary boutiques jazz up the town's antiquarian vibe, as do entertainment venues and restaurants urbane enough for city slickers. Hang your hat for a night at [Centaur Arabian Farms](#), nestled amid oak trees just 45 minutes from downtown Gladewater in Flint.

Grape Expectations

Think of it as a pub crawl for oenophiles. The [Way Out Wineries](#), a coterie of about a dozen idiosyncratic vineyards, each fueled by its passion for grape alchemy, invites you to leave the Hill Country behind and head its way. Dotted an undulating route that leads past nostalgic Texas hamlets, the wineries lure you to a network that stretches from Central to East Texas. Growing grapes as varied as Viognier and Nero d'Avola, each vintner has carved out a unique experience for wine tasters. Soak in the scenery at Brennan Vineyards, a cozy complex that has been the site for Ralph Lauren photo shoots, and stay all afternoon on the Texas-accented porch of the ranch house at Alamosa Cellars. Hit them all in a multiday road trip, and take repose midway in [Star of Texas B & B](#) in Brownwood, where you'll dream about tomorrow's tastings in your whimsical teepee or treehouse room. Though you can explore the WOW group anytime, take advantage of themed excursion weekends held seasonally. For one price, receive entrance to all tasting rooms, wine-paired noshes, prizes, souvenir wineglasses and beaucoup joie de vivre.

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