



## San Ygnacio

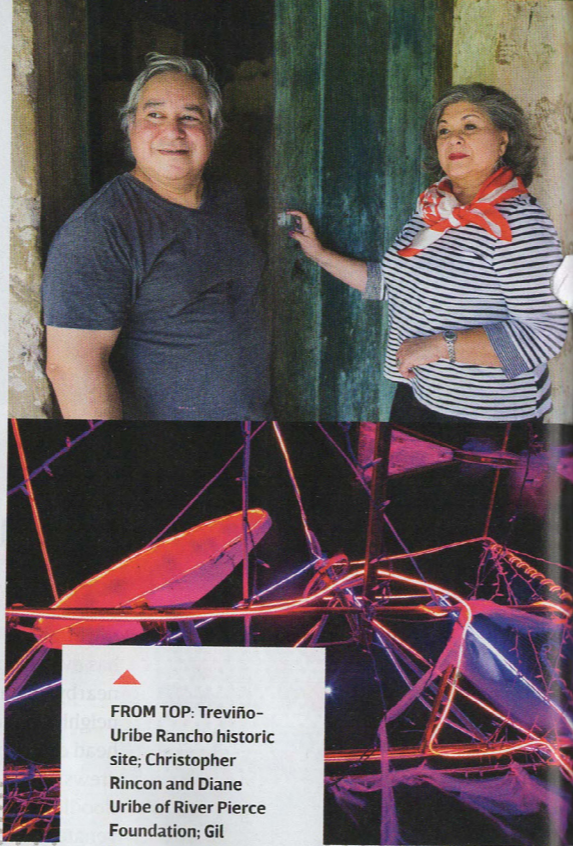
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**A community of artists, rich history, and nature blend together** in the tiny town of San Ygnacio along the Rio Grande. Artists have been drawn to the historic architecture since the 1970s. Noted painter and sculptor Michael Tracy created the River Pierce Foundation, which has worked to preserve San Ygnacio's historic buildings, including the 1830 Treviño-Urbe Rancho. Catering to birders, bed and breakfast Posada Paloma opened this year, along with the River Pierce Foundation Visitors Center & Museum. "It's a very historic town that just feels like it's out of this era," says Nydia Tapia-Gonzales, director of Texas Birding and a Preservation Texas board member. "It's quiet, and there are no stores and no traffic." —*Cynthia J. Drake*

**Stay:** Posada Paloma offers rooms and casitas for rent, with breakfast included.

**Eat:** You won't find any restaurants in San Ygnacio, but 15 miles away in Zapata, Tacos El Tejano is known for guacatacos and papas asadas. Mexican-style loaded baked potatoes.

**See:** Visit the town square to see historic buildings in various states of renovation, and bring your binoculars to try for a rare sighting of a Morelet's seedeater, which lives in the cane along the Rio.



▲ FROM TOP: Treviño-Urbe Rancho historic site; Christopher Rincon and Diane Uribe of River Pierce Foundation; Gil Rocha's *South Texas Phototaxis*.



## CULTURAL TREASURES

### HALLETTSVILLE, POP. 2,625

That fiddles, kolaches, polka, and sausage all have their own festivals in Hallettsville pretty much sums up the Lavaca County seat. This is Czech/German country, with a painted church (St. Mary's) and the impressive Lavaca Historical Museum. The best time to visit is on the fourth weekend of April, when the Knights of Columbus Hall hosts the Texas State Fiddle Championship, known as the Fiddlers Frolics. The KCs also host the state straight domino tournament, which started in the early 1950s and draws

upwards of 200 players in late January.  
—*Michael Corcoran*

### CARTHAGE, POP. 6,521

As the old homeplace of Tex Ritter and Jim Reeves, as well as one of the best white bass runs in Texas, Carthage deserved to be recognized long before mortician Bernie Tiede shot wealthy widow Marge Nugent and stuffed her into her own freezer—the true tale behind Richard Linklater's 2011 movie *Bernie*. Regardless, the headliner for music fans is the Texas Country Music Hall of Fame & The Tex Ritter Museum, a 13,000 square-foot showcase of memorabilia such as one of singing cowboy Gene Autry's Western suits and the leather jackets and pants Kris Kristofferson

wore in the 1973 film *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*.  
—*Susan L. Ebert*

### ARCHER CITY, POP. 1,744

Clinging to the wind-scoured Panhandle Plains, Archer City could well have fallen into obscurity save for native son Larry McMurtry, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Lonesome Dove*. The 1971 film based on McMurtry's third novel, *The Last Picture Show*, was filmed in Archer City and precipitated the restoration of the Royal Theatre that starred in the movie's title role. Nearby, the 83-year-old McMurtry himself presides over Booked Up, a shop with nearly 200,000 books. "Booked Up exists because books improve the culture, wherever they

may be," McMurtry says. "And the citizens of Archer City, my hometown, deserve to have books in their lives." —*Susan L. Ebert*

### CLIFTON, POP. 3,453

A budding art scene in Clifton, a former railroad town located 33 miles northwest of Waco, radiates from Clifton Art Alley, a vibrant mural collaboration curated by local writer and farmer Kaye Callaway. The alley is also home to The Cell Block, a 1930s two-cell jailhouse converted into a boutique hotel. While in town, catch a film at the refurbished art-deco ClifTex Theatre and take a stroll to browse antiques at Bosque County Emporium and locally made goods at 219 Artisan Market.  
—*Veronica Meewes*



◀ The San Ygnacio Bird Sanctuary.

Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr., Illustration: Peter Arkle