



Experience Texas

presented by: **Haley Insurance**

Miles and miles ... of miles and miles

Larry Gore

Most articles about west Texas center around Big Bend National Park. It is an awesome place to visit. I have been there 4 or 5 times and will continue to return many times in the future.

The problem has been that most trips have been too short to include much more than just visiting Big Bend.

Marathon

The Gateway to Big Bend. This town of 600 boasts the Gage Hotel – a personal favorite. The Café Cenizo Restaurant at the Gage has

continues to offer fine dining such as one would expect to find only in a Houston or a Dallas. Chef Paul Petersen's menu will have you staring at it for a long time as you try to choose from among many mouth-watering choices. On our most recent visit we enjoyed the Pepper Crusted Elk Medallions and it was one of the best entrees I have ever had. Anywhere.

Although we swore we would never be hungry again, the following morning the Marathon Coffee Shop served up gourmet coffee along with some very excellent breakfast choices.

Alpine

A few miles west of Marathon is

Alpine with over 400 hotel rooms and a number of restaurants, it is a favorite place among bikers who travel in west Texas. Alpine is the hub of the Big Bend area. Big enough to provide you lots of choices, small enough (or maybe smart enough) not to have a Wal-Mart. From Alpine almost any area in Big Bend or the Davis Mountains can be reached within an hour or two. This makes it an ideal place to stage a chase vehicle if you are part of a diverse group that tends to fan out in many directions.

Marfa

*"The stars at night,
are big and bright,
deep in the heart of Texas,*

Experience: Texas

*The prairie sky is wide and high,
deep in the heart of Texas.
The sage in bloom
is like perfume,
deep in the heart of Texas."*

Whoever penned those words might well have had Marfa in mind. Here the skies are some of the clearest of anywhere in the United States, which is why the McDonald Observatory was placed in nearby Fort Davis.

If you get a sense of *deja vous* about Marfa it might be because it is where Warner Brothers filmed their movie extravaganza *Giant* in 1955.

Liz Taylor, Rock Hudson and James Dean made the local Hotel Paisano

their headquarters during the filming and the exterior of the hotel appeared as a backdrop in some of the movie scenes. After being closed for many years the Hotel Paisano was purchased in 2001 and has been restored to its original beauty.

Crowds gather in the evenings just outside Marfa to try to get a glimpse of the Mysterious Lights of Marfa. Sightings have been reported since 1883 as lights that appear to be 1 to 10 feet in diameter dance about the sky in the Chinati Peak area. Although they have never harmed anyone there have been reports of people being chased by the lights. Whatever the source the lights have proven to be an excellent source of tourism for Marfa as people gather

to view the lights from a roadside vantage point on Hwy 90 just east of Marfa.

The Davis Mountains

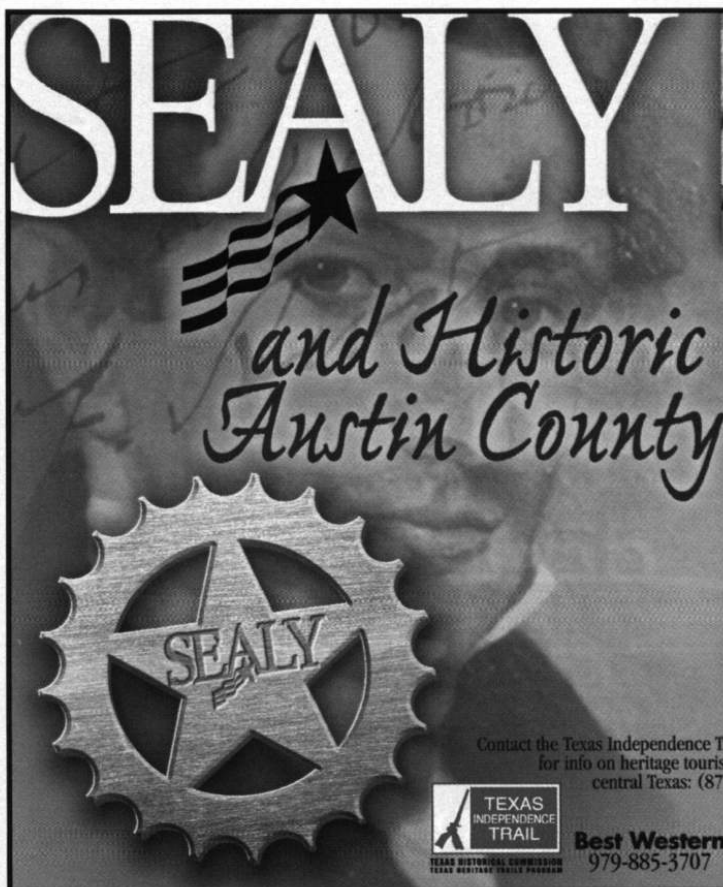
At 5,050 feet Fort Davis is known as the highest town in Texas.

Twenty-two miles north of Marfa, Fort Davis one of the best preserved "Buffalo Soldiers" forts in the west. Partially and fully restored buildings are scattered throughout the 474-acre grounds. Military historians from all over the country visit the Davis Mountains just to see Fort Davis.

Just outside the fort you can pick up the Davis Mountain loop. This is 76 miles of intense motorcycle riding.

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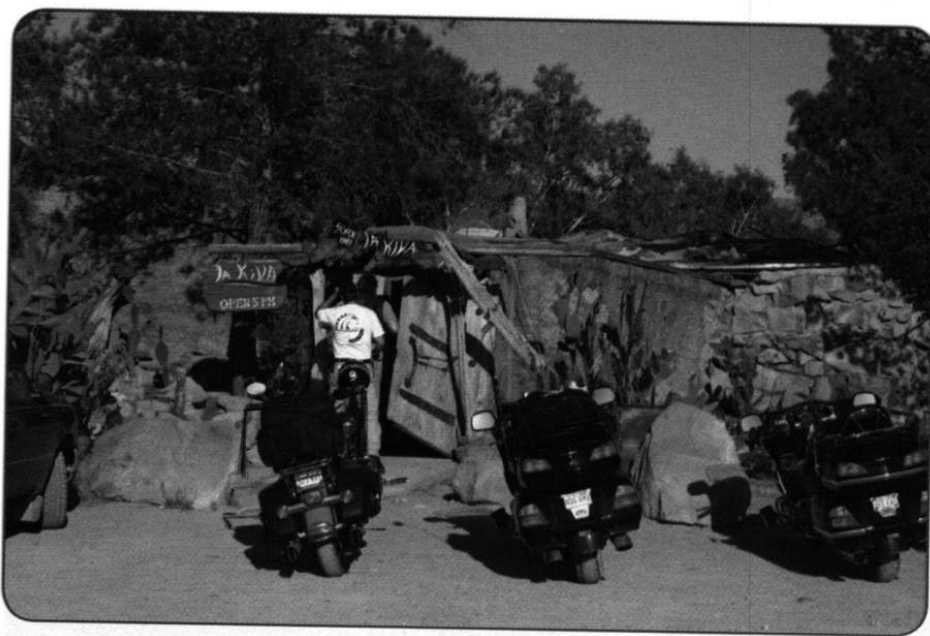
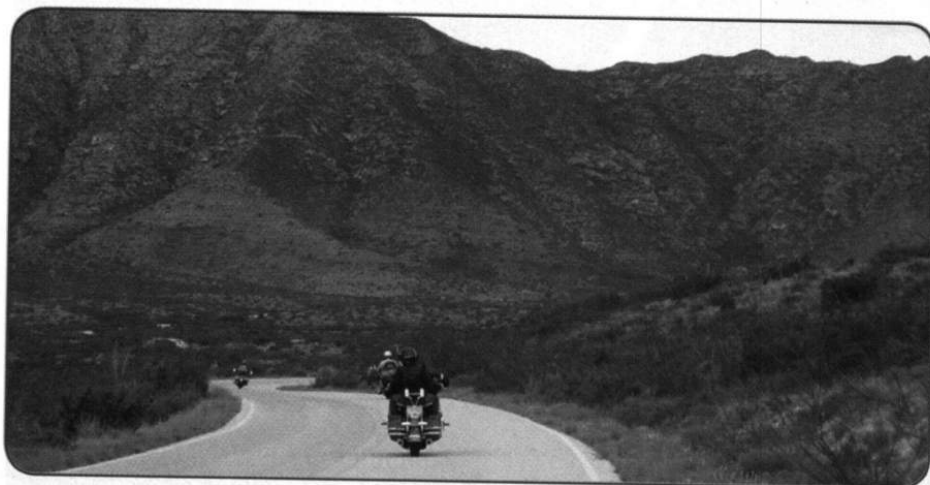
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If you want to enjoy the spectacular scenery you will want to pull off the road and stop, the roads are so challenging here that you will need to give them your full attention. Also watch for wildlife and farm animals. Some of these roads cut across ranches and the animals are not fenced away from the roadway. It is amazing just how large a deer with a large rack looks when you are bearing down on him at a high rate of speed. The loop includes the highest road in Texas at 6,700 feet.

Davis Mountains State Park with its 1,000-feet of elevation change within the park borders. The park's overlooks are popular places for nighttime star watching. You will have to book months in advance to get a room at the Indian Lodge, a pueblo-style adobe hotel built in the 1930's. Some rooms have hand-made furniture. Relax by the pool, enjoy the landscaped grounds, the patios, and dine in the Black Bear Restaurant.

Further into the loop visit the McDonald Observatory. The three huge white domes can be seen for miles. Operated by the University of Texas, the observatory on 6,600 foot Mount Fowlkes contains the 432-inch Hobby-Eberly telescope.

Back in the town of Fort Davis consider staying at the Hotel Limpia, on the square. Built in 1912 and fully restored with period furnishings and private baths, even a pool has been added. The Hotel is a comfortable romantic getaway from the hustle and bustle of modern life as you enjoy the courtyard garden, the





fragrances of flowers, have a cup of coffee and relax in a rocker on the glassed-in veranda. This is the tranquility of a by-gone era of Texas.

Shops and Stops

Country Inn #1 Steakhouse

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www.SomervilleSteakHouse.com

Texans love beef! Maybe it is a special code that is part of DNA or maybe it is just a long, colorful history of cattle ranches, cattle drives and cattlemen.

In a recent issue we explained the "chicken fried steak" for the benefit of you foreigners who do not



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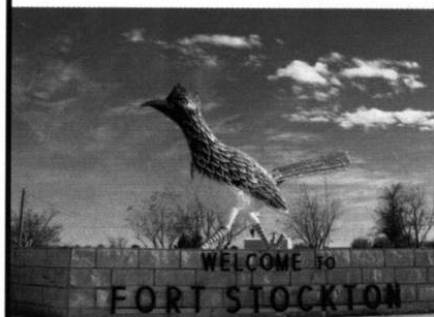
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have the privilege of living in Texas. Somerville is the home of one of the best steakhouses in Texas. All of their steaks are incredible as evidenced by many of our friends who have done research at the Country Inn #1 Steakhouse.

And it isn't just among the biker crowd that it is popular; Country Inn was recently featured on PBS as one of the "Best in Texas" for Chicken Fried Steak. If you aren't real hungry try the small (2 to 2.5 pound) sirloin for only \$19.59 or a large, 3-plus pounds one for \$27.39. Eat well, expect to wait for a table, and enjoy one of Texas' best steakhouses.

T & T Cycles
Del Rio, TX
www.TTCycles.com

When you are traveling by motorcycle things that are minor inconveniences for a car are major problems. One example is a flat tire. If you get a flat on your car you simply put on the spare and you are on your way. You might be a little hot, somewhat dirty and maybe even thirsty, but at least it does not bring your trip to an abrupt halt.

To prepare for a motorcycle trip most of us thoroughly inspect our bikes and fix or replace anything



that might cause a problem.

Unfortunately the one thing that we cannot prevent with pre-trip maintenance are flat tires caused by road debris. This happens to every motorcycle rider sooner or later and you stop where you are.

On a recent trip to Texas' Big Bend National Park one of our group heard the ominous hissing of escaping air while stopped at a roadside park. Sure enough, a small piece of metal made sure that the riding was done for the day. The bike was loaded on the chase vehicle (when some-



thing breaks it is always nice to have a chase vehicle) and transported to Del Rio for the overnight stop. It was too late to find a bike shop open so the order of business for the next morning was to find a shop to repair or replace the tire.

Calls to several local shops brought only discouraging responses;

"we don't work on that brand..."

"we don't it in stock..."

"we are too busy to get to it..."

Finally a call to T&T Cycles of Del Rio. When they found out we were on the road they said bring it right over and they would give it priority attention. We had the bike at the shop shortly after they opened and, as promised, they juggled their schedule and immediately began fixing our problem.

Owners Alma and Oscar Torres have made T & T Cycles is a neat, friendly little shop run by some of the friendliest, most helpful people you will ever meet. Opened just over 4 years they stock the basic parts, accessories, supplies and equipment to get your Harley back on the road with a job done right.

Thanks Alma, Oscar and crew for taking care of some road weary travelers.

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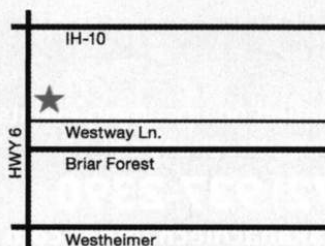
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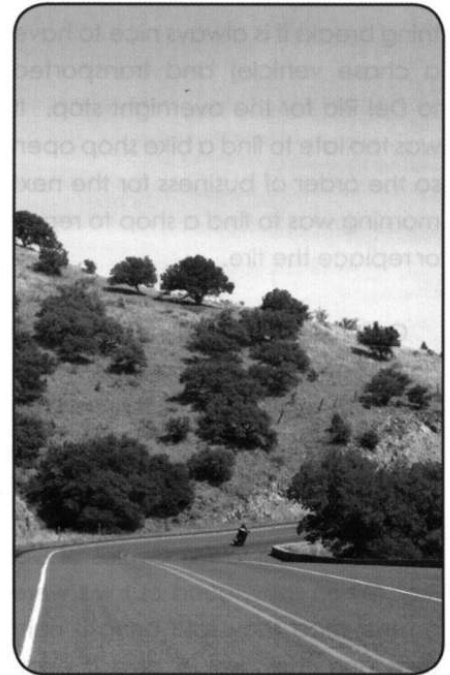
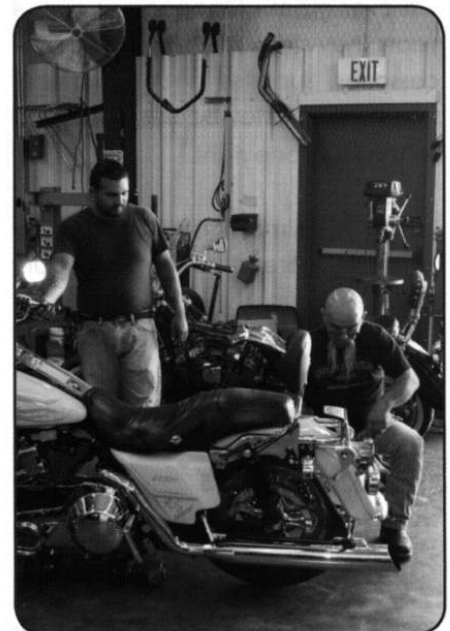
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ting the occasion. Their front lot was crammed with vendors, bands, entertainment, concessions, lots of free food and beverages and thousands of people who came for the festivities. The skies promised rain – and later fulfilled on the promised – but even the occasional deluge was not enough to dampen the spirits of the

crowd or to ruin the party.

San Jacinto H-D, located in the Pasadena area of Houston, fills a void in the southeast and eastside of Houston for a conveniently located dealership. Stop in and say “hi” to Jerry Stubbs and the gang you will enjoy seeing this brand new store.



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