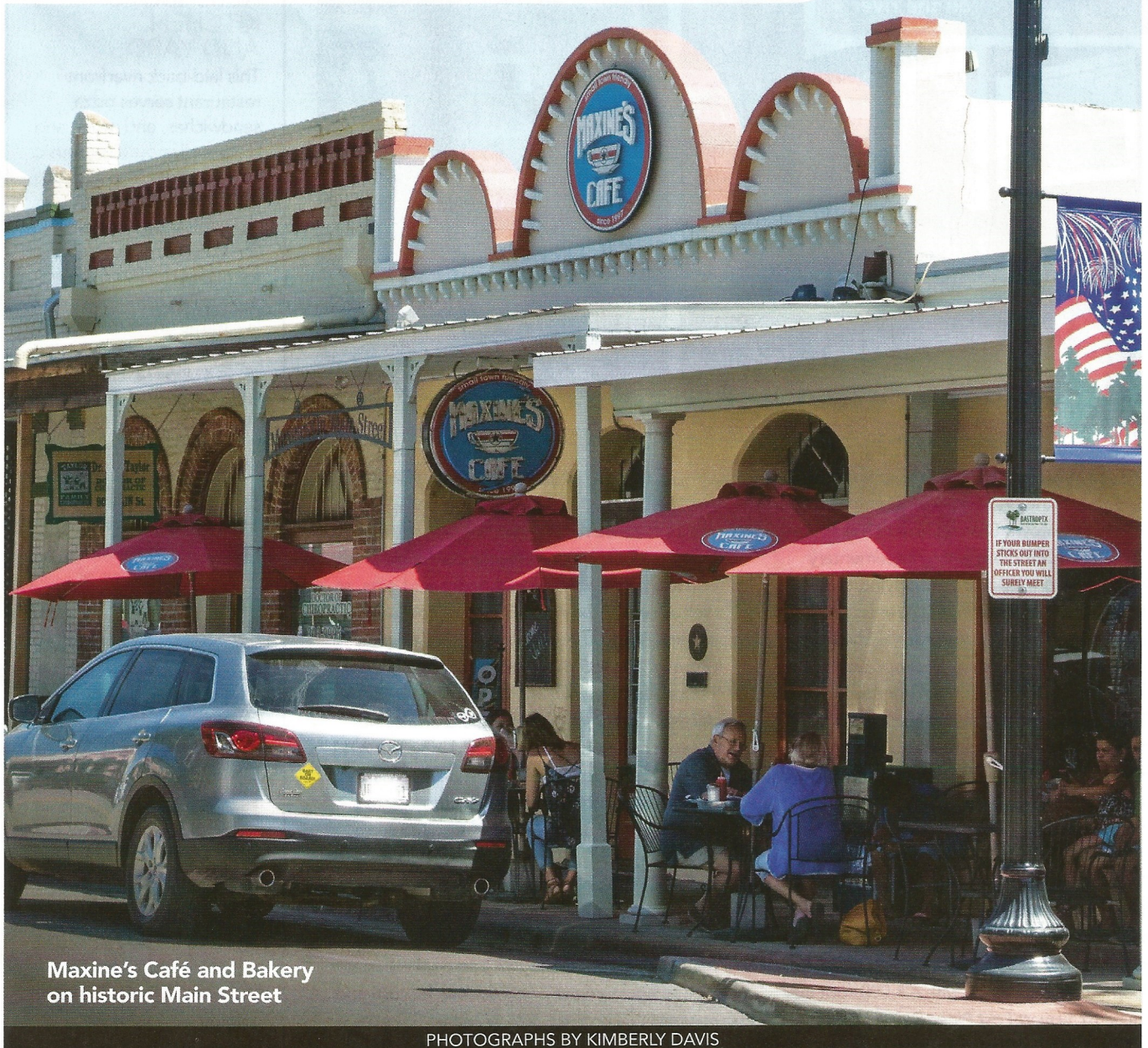
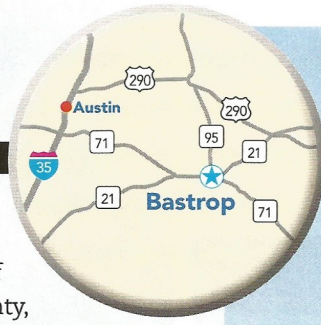


BASTROP

BY CYNTHIA J. DRAKE

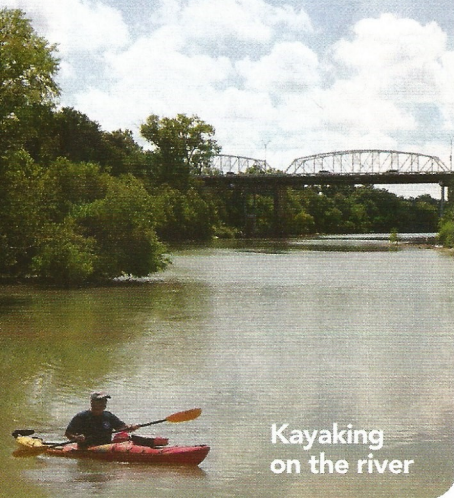
Located 33 miles southeast of Austin, Bastrop has seen its share of highs and lows. In the early 1830s, no less than the “Father of Texas,” Stephen F. Austin, helped to found the town on the banks of the Colorado River. In 2011, a wildfire ravaged parts of Bastrop County, consuming nearly 1,700 homes and businesses, more than 32,000 acres of ancient loblolly pines, and most of Bastrop State Park. But the town’s historic core survived, including 131 buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Today, resilient residents work hard to preserve the infectious charm of what some have called the “Most Historic Small Town of Texas.”

MORE >>>

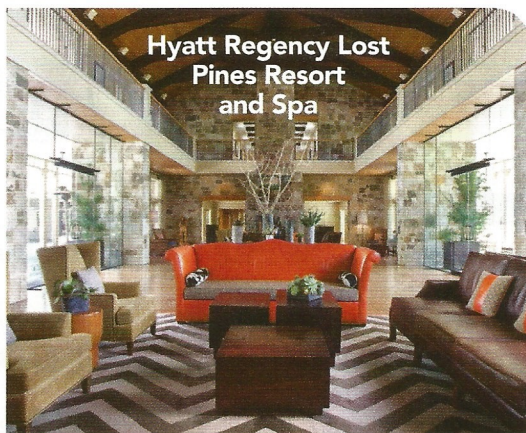


Maxine's Café and Bakery on historic Main Street

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KIMBERLY DAVIS



Kayaking on the river



Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort and Spa



Italian Cowboy Food and Provisions



First Friday Art Walk

DO Consider timing your visit with the first Friday of the month, when downtown Bastrop hosts **First Friday Art Walk**, complete with complimentary treats and drinks, artists displaying their work, and live music in restaurants. bastropdowntown.com/artwalk. The river offers abundant recreational opportunities—particularly during warmer months—including canoeing, stand-up paddling, tubing, and kayaking. **Bastrop River Company** outfits visitors for all of the above and leads full-moon paddling excursions from May to September. 601 Chestnut Street. (512) 321-4661; bastropriverco.com. The 405-acre **Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort and Spa** has a full slate of outdoor activities, from horseback riding and zip-lining to hiking. In addition, the property is home to a water park with a 1,000-foot lazy river. 575 Hyatt Lost Pines Road, Lost Pines. (512) 308-1234; lostpines.regency.hyatt.com.

SHOP Treasure hunting in Bastrop yields surprising finds. Check out **Lost Pines Art Bazaar**, a 6,000-square-foot boutique with an eclectic collection of fine art, home accents, stationery, and gifts, as well as one of the nation's largest collections of hand-knotted Persian rugs. 603 Chestnut Street. (512) 985-6403; lostpinesartbazaar.com. **Relics Jewelry and Gift Emporium** is a Bastrop comeback story: Owners Richard and Anne Smarzik suffered property loss during the 2011 and 2015 Bastrop wildfires but have remained committed to their store, which showcases Anne's jewelry and metal designs. 925 Main Street. (512) 581-5399; relicsjewelry.com. **Italian Cowboy Food and Provisions** is named for proprietor Deidra Ciriello's grandfather, the original Italian cowboy. The shop stocks hard-to-find Italian cheeses and cookware, as well as house-made treats such as biscotti and scrumptious cookies. 928 1/2 Main Street. (512) 988-2006; italiancowboyfoods.com.

EAT

MAXINE'S CAFÉ AND BAKERY

Start your day at Maxine's, where the *Texas Monthly Stacker*—a dozen pancakes and a quarter pound of bacon—will feed your entire party and earn you new friends at the nearest table. The dish was featured on the magazine's cover in 2011. 905 Main Street. (512) 303-0919; maxinescafe.com.

NEIGHBORS KITCHEN AND YARD

This laid-back riverfront restaurant serves pizza, sandwiches, and more, and features live outdoor music. 601 Chestnut Street. (512) 988-7036; neighborstx.com. Stop by Copper Shot Distillery next door for mixed drinks or a free moonshine sample—and live music on weekends. 601 Chestnut Street, Unit E. (512) 412-6414; copper-shotdistillery.com.

VIEJO'S TACOS Y TEQUILA

This funky, rustic spot has appetizers, tacos, and more. On the second and fourth Sundays of the month, Viejo's hosts a gospel brunch. 912 Main Street. (512) 988-7544; viejosbastrop.com.



Be sure to designate a driver if you plan to drink alcohol.