

# DIVE INTO DOWNTOWN

By Jordan Gass-Poore  
Photos William Bowling

The San Marcos Square continues to keep up with the times while maintaining its historic integrity.

Mom and pop stores still constitute a majority of the stores downtown. Though the Palace Theatre and Hills Auto Supply (the first of its kind in San Marcos) have long closed, the LBJ Museum and Nephews are now housed in their place, respectively. San Marcos' first tavern, opened in the 1800s, was in the building that now houses Valentino's Pizza.



**RANDOM CUTENESS** Since 1978, **Paper Bear** has sold eclectic gifts made from the heart. The store, although it has downsized, continues to live up to its Texas-sized title for the variety of goods offered. **Vagabond** has a similar vibe with its selection of vintage merchandise for men and women. David Marrs, owner of Vagabond, runs his store with his tongue very much in cheek. An online ad for the store proclaimed an everyday, ladies-only no shirt, no shoes discount. The men have to bring a six pack.

**SPILL THE BEANS** It's no secret

that **Root Cellar Café** serves a mean cup of joe while its employees maintain a kind demeanor. The café resembles something out of a Jean-Luc Godard movie. Across the street is **Stellar Café**, a cozy venue for those who want to escape from the world for a few hours.

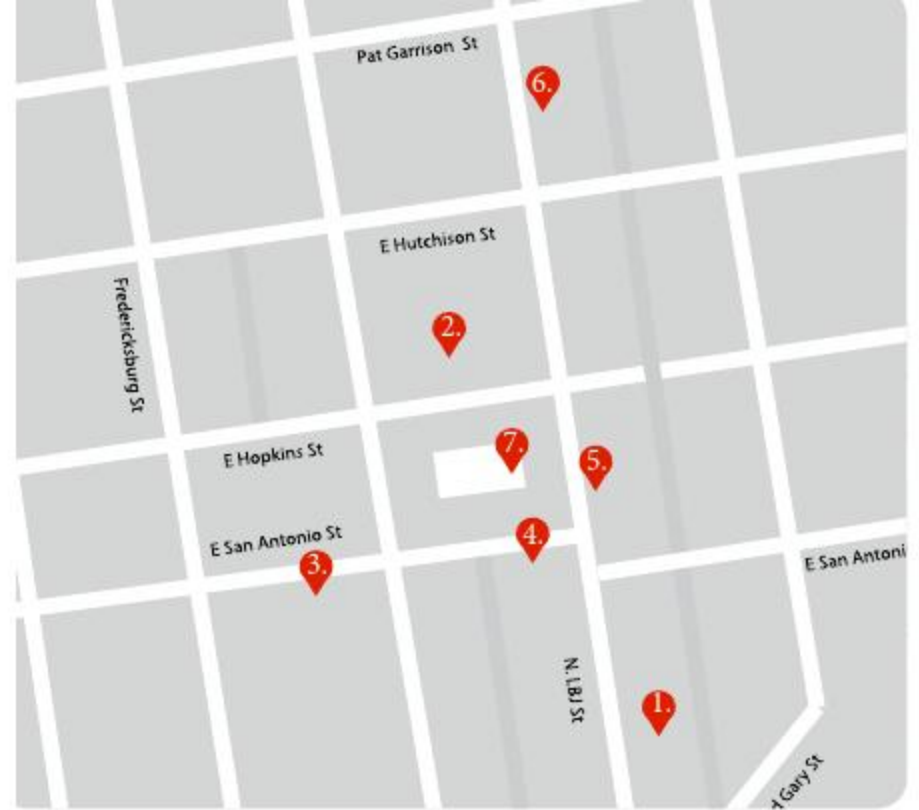
**BREAD AND BUTTER** Find salvation at **Alvin Ord's**, or at least a meat-lovers sandwich called the Salvation that people swear by. Get any sandwich bigger than a small and you're guaranteed leftovers for the next day. If people describe you as cheesy, then maybe **Valentino's** is more for you. Pete Thompson, owner of the Hungry Gamer and a self-described pizza snob, describes this pizza joint as the closest he's come to the Chicago-style pizza of his youth.

**SWEET TOOTH** Rhea's **Ice Cream** has been described as intimate and quirky. There's a suggestions box for customers to write what they think should be the next flavor of the month. Rhea, a Texas State alumna, chooses the winner, who gets their picture on the store's wall, and makes that ice cream flavor.

**BOTTOMS UP** The luck of the Irish can be felt by patrons of **Sean Patrick's**, whether that's in love, a good drink special or dart game. Fido can even join in on the fun on the outdoor, covered patio. Heartstrings can also be plucked at **Harper's**, where customers can down a slice of brick oven pizza and a Jager Bomb. Elevate your mind at **Shade Rooftop Patio** by studying and sipping on a craft cocktail in a peaceful setting.

**CHILL PILL** **SpaceLab** is an event venue and art gallery in an alleyway downtown. It has a cool vibe and showcases local bands. Between the music and art on its walls, it has become a special creative space. Above SpaceLab is **Blazing Heart Yoga**, whose owners and teachers have been described by clients as passionate and kind. They make it a point to get to know their clients, and it's donation based, which is nice for first-time yogis.

**SCENE AND HEARD** "If you're a regular on 'the scene,' **Triple Crown** is the castle on the hill," David Marrs, owner of Vagabond, says. Triple Crown is a simple, comfortable bar and music venue that sometimes partners with KTSW 89.9 FM, the Texas State student radio station, for events. **Superfly's** Lone Star Music Emporium has in-store performances from local bands, often with beer samples, and a solid selection of records. **Tantra** gets back to its roots with Tuesday Bluegrass Nights (and mini-pitcher deals). Wednesday's are celebrated during **Taxi's** weekly Hump Day events that feature cover bands. **Cheatham Street** Warehouse has a long and well-established music history in San Marcos. The venue prides itself on being the place that many great country acts got their start (think George Strait and Ace in the Hole, **Read more on P.12**).



## THE COOL LITTLE PLACES IN SAN MARCOS YOU SHOULD KNOW AND VISIT

"Graffiti Alley"  
Near 145 S. LBJ Dr.  
#1

**HUB Bicycle Lounge**  
119 E Hopkins St  
#2

**Blue Moon Optical**  
121 W San Antonio  
#3

**Accent Lighting Designs**  
114 E San Antonio St  
#4

**Hill Country Humidor**  
122 N LBJ Dr  
#5

**Rhea's Ice Cream**  
318 N Lbj Dr  
#6

**The Old Courthouse**  
The Square  
#7



## DOWNTOWN PARKING MUST KNOWS

▶ **FREE** 1 to 2 hour on-street parking is available around the Courthouse Square, North LBJ Drive, Guadalupe and some on Hutchison Street. Check the signs for parking times.

▶ **DO NOT PARK** in private parking lots, like Nelson Center. Your car will be towed if you walk off site!



▶ People going to Texas State University for class or for the day are asked NOT to park downtown and to leave spaces for business customers. Illegal parking will be subject to tickets or towing.





## DINING IN HISTORY

For 20 years, the Charles S. Cock House Museum has been home to the Cottage Kitchen.



Flaky pie crust held chunks of apple like a jewel-encrusted brooch. It sat on a plate among other baked goods made from family recipes, waiting to be served during a Heritage Association of San Marcos-sponsored Cottage Kitchen lunch.

The mid-19th century Greek Revival structure is the oldest remaining residential building in San Marcos.

It's places like this that help bring perspective and insight to the history of the city and state.

That's why the Heritage Association, chartered as a nonprofit in 1975, exists, to tell the stories of former San Marcans, from pre-historic times to the city's pioneers.

The Friday luncheons take place at the Charles S. Cock House Museum and provide funds for the association's preservation and beautification efforts.

Community volunteers serve the lunch, which includes an entrée, side, tea and dessert. Many of the proceeds from the lunches have gone toward restoring and furnishing the museum.

The organization encourages the restoration of buildings owned by private entities, sponsors tours of historic homes and initiates protections for the San Marcos River, among other projects.

Membership is open to anyone who wants to explore the relationship between the past and present, to anyone who has a desire to preserve San Marcos traditions and culture.



# HOW SMTX ARE YOU?

1. You think a café and car wash makes a great combination
2. Being called a "San Martian" doesn't make you cringe
3. You embrace the 666 in the 78666 San Marcos ZIP code
4. You refuse to pay more than \$2 to see a movie at a theater
5. You know how to pronounce and spell Colloquium
6. You've been night swimming in the San Marcos River.
7. You're not surprised when people are nice to you
8. You've had a delicious breakfast taco for under \$2
9. You know what tow signs at local businesses have expired
10. You've stopped your car to let a turtle cross
11. You pronounce the city's name San Marcus
12. You know that "Eat 'Em Up" has nothing to do with food
13. You've had a Shyster from Jo on the Go
14. You don't go to coffee shop chains
15. You're not afraid to drink water from the SM River
16. You know what a nutria looks like
17. You've explored the Wonder Cave
18. You read books in your bathing suit outside from April until November
19. You've eaten a kettle biscuit
20. You frequent the little HEB
21. You walk to the grocery store
22. Your favorite coffee is Jack Coffee Hays
23. You've driven to Devil's Backbone at night
24. You know the time of Tantra's Mini Minutes
25. You've been to a poetry reading at Wake the Dead
26. Your wardrobe mainly consists of flip-flops, tank tops and shorts
27. You've seen a scuba diver on an Aquarena Glass Bottom Boat tour
28. You have a sorting system for recyclables
29. You know that Crickets isn't an insect
30. If it's a mile or less away, you'd rather walk to your destination



COMMUTER: 1-10 | RESIDENT: 11-23 | LIFER: 23-30