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FEBRUARY 2022

**NAJAH
CLAY**

NOT A TYPICAL
BEAUTY QUEEN



THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS
BREEDS CHAMPIONS

VASAVI KUMAR'S
AFFIRMATIONS

WHO I AM
THROUGH MY ACTIONS



Texas Three Step

Whether you're looking to book a last-minute Valentine's getaway or plan for a Spring Break outing, here are three very different and very comfortable Texas tourist gems full of Texas charm!

By: Marika Flatt

Miraval Austin

In the hill country west of Austin, Miraval Austin, now owned by Hyatt, is all about intentional health for mind, body and spirit. They are hosting the Miraval Austin Bluebonnet Festival Feb. 15 – March 31, where they celebrate the iconic Texas flower and offer wildflower-themed programming. Exclusive offerings include Wildflower Meditation, Be Like the Bluebonnet: Fostering Resilience and Renewal in the New Year, Beauty in the Garden: Finding Beauty in Imperfections and more.

You're encouraged to really slow down and notice the beauty around you, such as the birds singing in the trees and the rosemary growing along the path.

Design your personalized itinerary upon arrival with the concierge (Experience Planner). Keep in mind that it's great to try classes that you've never experienced, but don't fill up your schedule so that you can't enjoy the property and downtime at the pools. You'll also sign up for dining reservations.



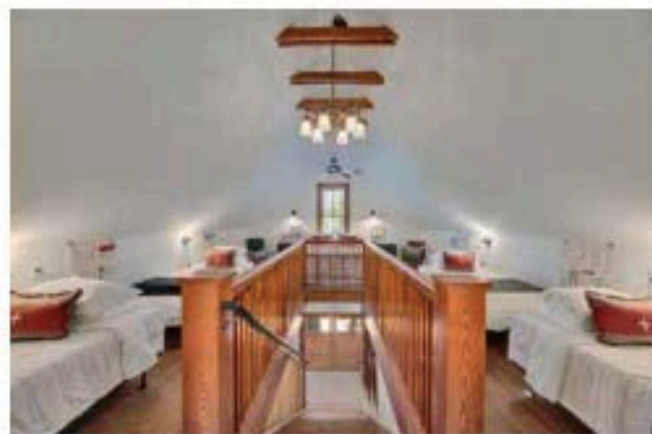
We all know how important sleep is to our overall health. The beds at Miraval are like soft clouds, allowing guests to sink into their marshmallow abandon. The slumbering perfection makes it hard to roll out when your alarm goes off for your first class. (The cutest aspect is the cell phone sleeping bag, which tucks snugly in the wooden cell phone bed on the chest of drawers in your room.)

Hilltop Crossings Kitchen, a throwback to the original property, which was a wellness retreat called The Crossings (later, Travaasa), is the onsite restaurant where the food is fresh, healthy, delicious and hearty.

Enjoy classes like Low Back Love, Yin Reiki, Digital Mindfulness workshop and Floating Meditation.

Take advantage of their spa, ideally booking your appointments toward the end of the day.

Treat yourself to a spiritual warrior facial or deep-tissue massage, both of which will be gifts to the body that you ask so much of on a daily basis. Outside the spa, there is a tranquil outdoor pool that looks over the hill country, with a hot tub nearby. The quiet setting adds to the relaxing ambience of the spa experience.



The Stanley in Austin

It's sometimes hard to mix history and comfort when it comes to home rentals and travel destinations.

Taking up a large corner lot in the heart of Austin, Lodgewell's The Stanley is a historic home between South Congress and South First Street. This uber-interesting home also features a one-room cottage in the backyard, a great courtyard for dining and chilling and an above-ground pool.

Take a trip back in time and get transported to Tuscany with this lavish 1894 home that sleeps 12. The original stone walls and beautiful woodwork throughout the 3600-square-foot property will make your stay one of unique charm and comfort.

The main bedroom has a French-inspired design, with a stately chandelier, bookshelves abounding and intricately designed doors. On the main floor, you'll find a full kitchen and dining area. One floor below, guests will enjoy a cave-like room with a double bed, a full bath and a living area. Above the main floor is an open loft bunk room, offering four single beds and one king-size bed, also with a full bathroom.

If the design and style of this historic four bed, four bath home isn't enough to entice you to book your stay, the house cocktail, The Texas Tea, is sure to bring you home. At The Stanley, you'll feel like you've traveled all over the world (without leaving Austin) and still have that Texas charm.

Camp Comfort

Camp Comfort, named in the April 2021 issue of *Southern Living Magazine* as one of the South's best places to visit, is one of only two listed from Texas. I was immediately impressed with this property, tucked into a beautiful spot along Cypress Creek in the quiet small town of Comfort, a place that just sounds like somewhere you'd like to cuddle up.

A stylish take on a camping experience, Camp Comfort has so many aspects of Texas coolness that other places and states would love to emulate. Originally an athletic camp, Camp Comfort pays homage to the heyday of camp sports. (You can view black-and-white images of the good 'ol days in their Social Hall.) When you walk onto the property, you think "rustic," seeing the vintage van mascot sitting in front. There are wooden structures throughout, from the aforementioned Social Hall, to the bandstand stage overlooking the

large courtyard and the refurbished two-lane bowling alley, dating to 1910, that's been converted to four Alley Suites.

These lined-up Alley Suites boast a shabby-chic interior featuring chandeliers made from wire and glass bottles and other fun and funky furnishings, a large "motel type" room with sitting area and plenty of space for relaxing. They offer a super unique Texan aura with the old Texas ghost town exterior and rooms filled with colorful modern furniture and luxuries like air-jet tubs that put the "comfort" in Camp Comfort.

Nearby, you'll find five cabins offering beds of all sizes. Cabin six has a loft with two twins, cabin five has two queens and there are three Bunkie cabins with a queen and two bunks. For an even more unique experience, there's the Airstream Bambi with a full bed. Fire pits pepper the courtyard, giving Camp Comfort its namesake.

If you've got a group of 10, the three-structure compound on the backside of Camp Comfort is absolutely ideal, giving you some thrill with your chill. Surrounded by a fence, there's a house (531 Water St.) with three bedrooms (a king and two queens), a full kitchen with living room and one bathroom. In the backyard, there is a small cabin with a set of bunk beds and one small bathroom. The third structure is the Gypsy Rose Airstream with two twins. All three are fantastically accommodated with comfortable bedding (high thread-count sheets) and surround a large fire pit and a small concrete below-ground pool (for the Texas summer months). This courtyard overlooks the beautiful banks of Cypress Creek.



Marika Flatt, named Outstanding Austin Communicator 2021, is the travel editor of Texas Lifestyle Magazine. She can be seen on TV shows across Texas offering travel tips, in addition to her long-running "Weekend Trip Tip" on NPR's Texas Standard.

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