

ESCAPE



THE DRISKILL'S LOBBY FEATURES A CUSTOM INVERTED GLASS DOME MADE BY THE WACO, TEXAS-BASED STANTON GLASS STUDIO.



QUICK TRIPS

Heart of TEXAS

The Driskill presents a slice of Lone Star HISTORY and HOSPITALITY

By Mary Murray



CATTLE BARON SUITE

Long before Austin, Texas, gained a worldwide reputation for eclectic art, ample live music, and festivals such as South by Southwest and Austin City Limits, it helped to define the very essence of the Lone Star State. Now the eleventh largest city in the U.S., Austin boasts a vibe all its own, one steeped in tradition yet on the cutting edge of all things tech and culture.

As Austin began evolving in earnest in the second half of the 1800s, it grew around three primary institutions: the state capital building, the University of Texas, and The Driskill Hotel (driskillhotel.com). From the impressive columns that greet you at the entrance to the stained-glass dome in the lobby, The Driskill drips with a sense of sophistication that harkens back to its original splendor.

The Driskill's extensive history, and commitment to fine Texan hospitality, is apparent throughout. A portrait of namesake and founder Jesse Driskill still boasts the bullet holes it earned during a Wild West-style shootout. The hallways were designed to be particularly wide in order to accommodate the large dresses that were all the rage in the 1880s. In 1934, the Texas Rangers plotted the

capture of infamous crime couple Bonnie and Clyde in the hotel's Jim Hogg Parlor. A suite bears the name of President Lyndon B. Johnson, who had his first date with his wife at The Driskill and watched the returns of many elections there, as well.

While The Driskill was also the site of one of the first indoor bathrooms in Austin, this luxe property has come a long way in the accom-



LYNDON B. JOHNSON SUITE



ENJOY A TEXAS BREAKFAST AT THE DRISKILL'S 1886 CAFÉ & BAKERY BEFORE VISITING THE UMLAUF SCULPTURE GARDEN.



modations department. Its 189 rooms feature custom furniture, vintage-inspired touches, and demure shades of steely gray, plum, beige, and gold. The 14 suites take the theming a step further; the top-tier Cattle Baron Suite is awash in worn leather and rustic details, while the aforementioned Lyndon B. Johnson Suite serves up presidential blue hues and a bathroom dedicated to Lady Bird Johnson's penchant for Texas bluebonnet flowers.

The hotel's communal areas take a page out of the history books, too. At the 1886 Café & Bakery, guests can indulge in Texas-shaped waffles and a signature chocolate cake amid Victorian furnishings. The Driskill Bar is quintessential Texas, complete with cow hides and a Barvo Walker bronze sculpture entitled *The Widow Maker*.

The Driskill Grill honors the state in its farm-to-table philosophy, culling the majority of its ingredients from within 10 miles. The divine charcuterie appetizer, for example, includes selections from Salt & Time, an Austin-based butchery that specializes in artisan dry-cured



meats. Continue with dry-aged Wagyu ribeye and a side of lobster mac and cheese for the ultimate in cowboy hedonism. As of press time, the grill is currently closed due to COVID-19, so contact the hotel directly for more information.

Although the pandemic has put a pause on Austin's robust live music, there is still plenty to do across a long weekend in this hip haven. First up: food.

Austin is renowned for its breakfast tacos, and one of the food trucks leading the charge is Veracruz All Natural (veracruzallnatural.com). Any day that starts with a Migas Originales (eggs, tortilla chips, cheese, cilantro, tomato, onion, and avocado folded inside a homemade flour or corn tortilla) is bound to be a great one.

Another cornerstone of the local cuisine scene is barbecue—and the king is Franklin (franklinbbq.com). In a pre-pandemic world, foodies would line up for hours (literally) to score slabs of ribs and melt-in-your-mouth brisket. At press time, Franklin is operating a curbside pickup model better suited to social distancing. Still, order far ahead of when you actually want to eat because when it's gone, it's gone. Complete the Austin taste trifecta by sampling some of the city's premier craft beers. Zilker Brewing Company

(zilkerbeer.com), with mainstays like the Heavenly Daze and Coffee Stout as well as seasonal offerings, is an excellent option.

Film buffs should flock to the iconic Alamo Drafthouse Cinema (drafthouse.com), which recently reopened with new social distancing and sanitation guidelines. Stop by for indie flicks, popular releases, and a full food-and-drink menu. There's also the Umlauf Sculpture Garden (umlaufsculpture.org), an outdoor display of works by twentieth-century artist Charles Umlauf. Since reopening in mid-August, this tranquil destination has been limiting occupancy to 30 visitors at a time. Another socially distant activity to embark upon is a tour of the city's famed murals. Head to South Austin to visit favorites like "Greetings from Austin" and "I Love You So Much" before circling back to Allens Boots (allensboots.com) to pick up the epitome of ranch-ready couture. ◀◀



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ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE