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BUZZ

At Your Service | The Weekender

Austin

Living it up in Texas's capital, a smart, music-obsessed city within reach of the state's lush Hill Country **BY JOHN MORTHLAND**

With the beatific smile of Willie Nelson beaming down from the stage on many a weekend in the '70s, hippies and rednecks at Austin's bygone Armadillo World Headquarters merged, creating what people called cosmic cowboy culture. The tech boom of the '90s ushered in New Austin, which brought high-rise condos and more sophisticated dining to a city that had lived on barbecue and Tex-Mex. It also broadened Old Austin's vaunted music scene, with modern rock acts outnumbering roots and country groups. Combining conferences and festivals for music, film, and interactive media into a massive ten-day trade event, South by Southwest unites both sides of the city. This year's begins March 11, and come September there's the Austin City Limits Music Festival, the public music-and-arts bash that was spun off from the acclaimed PBS show.

» Afternoon

A quintessentially Texan lunch, the brisket at **FRANKLIN BARBECUE** (512-653-1187 or franklinbarbecue.com) is so moist, you could almost bathe in it. **PERLA'S SEAFOOD AND OYSTER BAR** (512-291-7300 or perlasaustin.com) in SoCo has the freshest selection of fish and oysters in town. Sample the city's blossoming arts scene at the **ARTHOUSE AT THE JONES CENTER** (512-453-5312 or arthousetexas.org), a sleek exhibition space downtown. The ten smart-ass members of the **OKAY MOUNTAIN COLLECTIVE** (512-293-5177 or okaymountain.com), who pillage consumerism and mock pop art even as they embrace it, curate like-minded works by other artists at their East Side gallery. The University of Texas campus can fill an afternoon by itself. Its **LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY & MUSEUM** (512-721-0200 or lbj.library.org) offers a surprisingly two-sided view of that Texan's embattled presidency. The school's **HARRY RANSOM CENTER** (512-471-8944 or hrcc.utexas.edu) displays the first photograph ever taken (France, 1826) and one of the five Gutenberg Bibles (circa 1450) in the United States, while the **BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART** (512-867-3080 or blantonmuseum.org) boasts a renowned Latin American collection. No visit to Austin