

Cozy,
Sexy,
Cool
by ELYSE GLICKMAN



FREDERICKSBURG, TX





THIS PHOTO
Fine dining at
Hoffman Haus.

IN RECENT YEARS, several towns in Texas Hill Country, ducking and hiding along the roads between Austin and San Antonio, have attained destination status — as small towns big on ideas. There's a certain magic that happens when you take a historic downtown and fill its several blocks with art and antique galleries, home décor emporiums, boutiques and eateries. When nearby wineries are factored in, it all comes together as a vacation Utopia where life is as it ought to be.»



FREDERICKSBURG IS THE shining star among these Wine Country gems, transcending its historic German underpinnings and drawing a cosmopolitan group of visitors, including many from outside Texas. Families and individuals with long-standing Fredericksburg roots have played different roles in carrying the town's culinary soul into the 21st century. A few new entrepreneurs, meanwhile, have used Fredericksburg as a canvas, integrating just the right amount of international flair into this Texan-German hybrid.

Throughout the city centre, you can see, smell and taste the impact local families are making. The charge is today being led by John and Evelyn Washburne, who met in college and decided to bring new energy to John's hometown. His parents, Leslie and Hugh, and sister, Sarah, operate Hoffman Haus, an exquisite »

PHOTOS THIS SPREAD
FROM TOP LEFT Fischer & Weiser jams, mustards and sauces; Fresh Texas peaches.



«assemblage of traditional Texas-German-style cottages. Every cabin is a detail-oriented delight, decorated with chic homespun furnishings and appointed with locally crafted amenities such as San Saba soaps and lotions. The resort's kitchen has earned a stellar reputation for catering high-end weddings and relaxed business retreats. The aromatic made-to-order in-room breakfast baskets are also a worthy indulgence, filled with a mix of fruit, scones, quiche, muffins and whatever strikes the fancy of the Washburne's bakers that day.

“I had been around restaurants my whole life, and my uncle had restaurants in Dallas, so opening restaurants was second nature for me,” said John, as he prepped for a wine tasting comparing Texan, French and Italian varietal wines at La Bergerie, the family's wine shop and tasting room. “I majored in literature and Slavic studies, so I was either destined for academia or the service industry,” John explains. “Even as far back as college, I would have wine-and-cheese and cocktail parties for my friends. As I also love coffee and had a passion for coming up with new ways to create and serve beverages and food, it informed the businesses Evelyn and I would be involved in.”

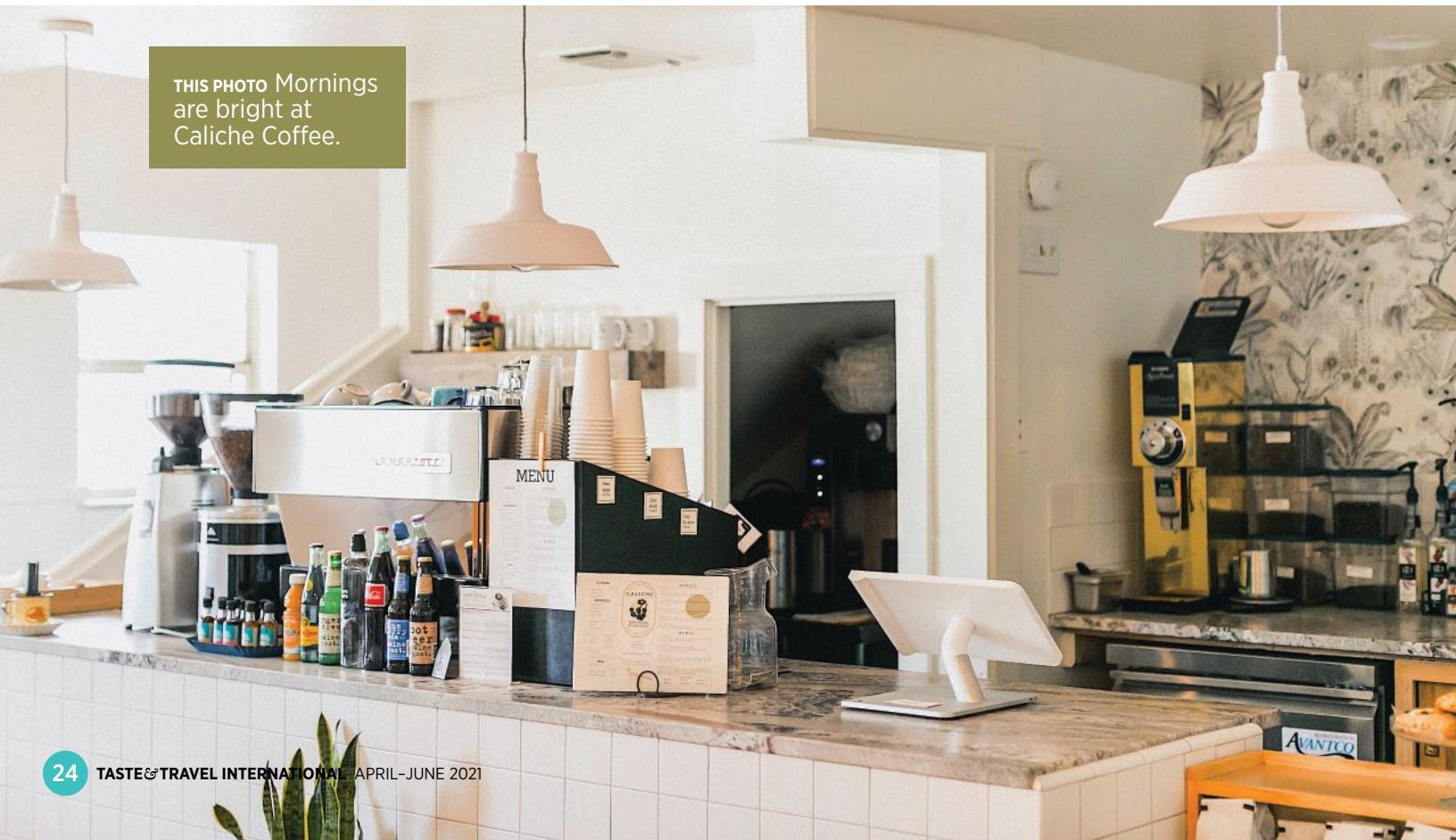
“I was majoring in city government, with an emphasis in Latin American politics, (but) as time went on, I wasn't sure what the job prospects were for that,” recalls Evelyn. “I also realized my true passion was in retail when I had the opportunity to work for a woman who was opening

Schreiner Goods, a beautiful store in neighbouring Kerrville, and the experience inspired me to create destination retail experiences, whether it involved food, clothing or home goods. I became focused on creating an ambiance with all of our businesses that was authentic to the small town in which it was located. While it was important for me to bring in (visitors) from all walks of life, I was also dedicated to creating job opportunities for the community.”

In bringing new life to Otto's German Bistro in 2013, the couple joined forces with chef Adam Yoho to develop refined menus that appeal to long-time Fredericksburg residents but are also updated in ways that appeal to younger adults visiting town or moving in from larger Texan cities. Familiar German preparations are updated with farm-to-fork ingredients from local purveyors and the beverage menu features cutting-edge cocktails and biodynamic and organic wines. Tapping into that success, they took their paintbrushes and globally inspired comfort food ideas to the bungalow next door, transforming it into Tubby's, a festive indoor-outdoor eatery with American burgers, loaded pulled pork fries and Mexican street-food inspired snacks, some with creative Indian and Thai spins.

A short jaunt from the block with Otto's, Tubby's and La Bergerie, John and Evelyn and their crew jump-start mornings at Caliche Coffee and Ranch Road Roasters with innovative breakfast creations such as an updated lox-and-bagel, avocado toast with mango pico de gallo, poached

THIS PHOTO Mornings are bright at Caliche Coffee.





SERVES 4-6

Jaegerschnitzel

"JAEGER" MEANS "HUNTER" IN German, explains Case Fischer. And while a lot of dishes in rustic times probably got the name, it has mostly attached itself to a delicious schnitzel served with mushroom gravy.

Pork Loin 1 x 1 1/2 lbs, cut into 6 oz slices

All-Purpose Flour 1 cup

Salt 1 Tbs

Freshly Ground Black Pepper 1 tsp

Garlic Powder 1 tsp

Lemon Pepper 1 tsp

Paprika 1 tsp

Egg 1

Milk 1/2 cup

Fischer & Wieser Brat Haus Beer Mustard¹ 2 tsp

Dry Breadcrumbs 1 cup

Bacon 1/2 lb, diced

Yellow Onion diced, 1/2 cup

Button Mushrooms sliced, 2 cups

Mom's Brand Spaghetti Sauce² 1 cup

Red Wine 1/3 cup

Olive Oil for frying

Beef Broth 2 cups

Butter 2 Tbs, room temperature

Fresh Parsley chopped 2 Tbs

¹ Or honey mustard.

² Or other tomato-based spaghetti sauce flavoured with basil.

1 BETWEEN pieces of plastic wrap, pound the pork slices till they are 1/4 inch thick. Mix the flour in a bowl with the seasonings.

2 IN a separate bowl, combine the egg with the milk and mustard.

3 PLACE the breadcrumbs in a third bowl.

4 TAKE each pork slice and dredge in the flour, shaking off excess, then coating in the egg mixture and finally coverwith crumbs. Set on a baking sheet until all pork is ready for cooking.

5 COOK the bacon until crisp in a large pan and drain on paper towels. Crumble the bacon.

6 USE the bacon grease to lightly caramelize the onion, then stir in the mushrooms and cook until tender.

7 ADD the spaghetti sauce and wine and cook until reduced and thickened, then add the beef stock and reduce again.

8 ADD the crumbled bacon. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

9 HEAT the olive oil in a large skillet and cook the pork evenly, about 5 minutes on the first side then 3-4 minutes on the second, until golden brown.

10 REMOVE pork to a platter.

11 STIR the butter into the sauce until it's melted. Cover the pork schnitzels with sauce and serve sprinkled with parsley.



PHOTOS THIS SPREAD
FROM TOP LEFT Tubby's globally-inspired tacos; A former bungalow now houses Tubby's casual eatery.

egg, and feta; an original Ranch Road Bowl with local beef barbacoa, seasonal greens and veggies, feta and a poached egg; and Granola Toast with peach chutney and whipped ricotta. The couple also have their eye on a former wine bar, which they plan to transform into a destination restaurant specializing in authentic Italian cuisine.

"I really see Fredericksburg becoming a small city because of how our population has grown," says John. "Although the German language is no longer being spoken and a little bit of the original culture has faded in some ways, there is a pioneer spirit and work ethic. Some of our neighbours have 9-to-5 jobs and then raise cattle or run a farm in their spare time. While (many creative people are) getting priced out of bigger

cities, here they can afford to pursue dreams, and it raises the bar for all of our businesses, including restaurants."

Some argue that Fredericksburg's high-end, home-grown lifestyle has been incubating since 1969, thanks to Mark Wieser, Case D. Fischer and their respective families. As I sampled several of the ways peaches could be expressed in sweet and savoury accompaniments for cheese, the sprightly Wieser launched into the story about how he first tested the entrepreneurial waters by operating a roadside stand selling fresh peaches and homemade preserves. By 1976, he took a leap of faith — across the street from his stand — and bought an old building that would be transformed into Das Peach Haus. The structure was an apt investment for the future food



retailer, as it previously served as a brewery warehouse, and later, a wholesale grocery warehouse where his mother (whose fruit jelly and jam recipes became the stuff of local legend) worked as an accountant.

Weiser also worked as a teacher and tennis coach at the local high school, where he hired Fischer, then one of his students, to help harvest berries and peaches during the summer. Although Fischer left Fredericksburg to study food science and marketing at Texas A&M University in the mid-'80s, he returned to help expand Weiser's jam and jelly business into something greater than the sum of its parts.

Weiser's original investment is now the company's second kitchen and the former peach orchard where it stands was expanded into a compound. The empire itself includes the Culinary Adventure Cooking School, a catering division, a cookbook, the "F&W on Main" boutique and several unusual B&B accommodations. A new distillery on the grounds is now in the works for a 2021 opening.

While many of Fischer and Wieser's original fruit preserves, mustards and cooking sauces were shaped by family recipes, the business continued to expand over the decades to include a world of sauces, seasonings and other condiments devised for a variety of restaurants, fancy food stores, retail website and a widening pool of customers with ever-widening palates.

Other Fredericksburg highlights on and around Main Street include Bejas, known for its fresh modern Mexican cuisine and margaritas, white tablecloth restaurant August E's, which not only offers modern steakhouse dishes, but also a sushi menu (informed by the owners' five years in Japan) and "Thai Tuesdays," which have become a local institution. Between meals, sweets lovers can always count on the Clear River Ice Cream and Bakery to offer tempting cases of baked goods and ice cream that recall the Main Street Texas/USA vibe of Fredericksburg of 50 or even 100 years ago.»



MARCO VERCH

SERVES 4-6

Milchreis

Sweet German Rice

White Medium-Grain

Rice 1 cup

Sugar $\frac{1}{4}$ cup

Salt $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp

Milk 4 cups

Vanilla Extract 1 tsp

Cinnamon to taste

1 MIX the rice, sugar and salt in a large sauce pan. Stir in the milk and vanilla.

2 PLACE over a medium heat and bring to a boil, stirring often. Reduce the heat and simmer for 30 minutes or until the rice is soft and the milk begins to thicken.

3 TOP with cinnamon and sprinkle with sugar and serve hot.

USA



PHOTOS THIS SPREAD FROM TOP
LEFT Das Peach Haus
facade; Dining at Otto's;
Scooping fresh beans at
Caliche Coffee; Boutique
shopping is a popular
activity in Fredericksburg;
Historic buildings line
Main Street; John
Washburne; La Bergerie.





August E's
www.august-es.com

Caliche Coffee & Ranch Road Roasters
www.calichecoffee.com

Das Peach Haus | Fischer & Wieser
 Specialty Foods
www.jelly.com

Fredericksburg Brewing Company
www.yourbrewery.com

Heath Sparkling Wines
www.Heathsparkling.com

Hoffman Haus
www.hoffmanhaus.com

Otto's German Bistro
www.ottosfbg.com

Stout's Trattoria at Grape Creek
www.Stoutstrattoria.com

Tubby's Ice House
www.tubbysfbg.com

«In the heart of the wine country along Fredericksburg's outskirts, Heath Sparkling Wines has brought a touch of French culture into the heart of Texas through its small production of sparkling wines in the *Méthode Champenoise* style of secondary fermentation and *sur lie* aging. Four distinctive styles — Euphoria, Ebullience, Euphoria and the Adoration rosé — with their own special flavour profiles impress with a quality that's on a par with many of the most recognized French labels. Better still, the wines can be purchased on line individually or through Heath's wine club. The versatile, drinkable wines can be mixed and matched with a variety of desserts and cheese plates, and make a perfect gift for wine lovers looking to expand their horizons. It adjoins the Grape Creek Winery and its always reliable Stout's Trattoria, serving artisanal pizzas, sandwiches, share plates and wine tastings.

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