

SAN ANTONIO

TASTE

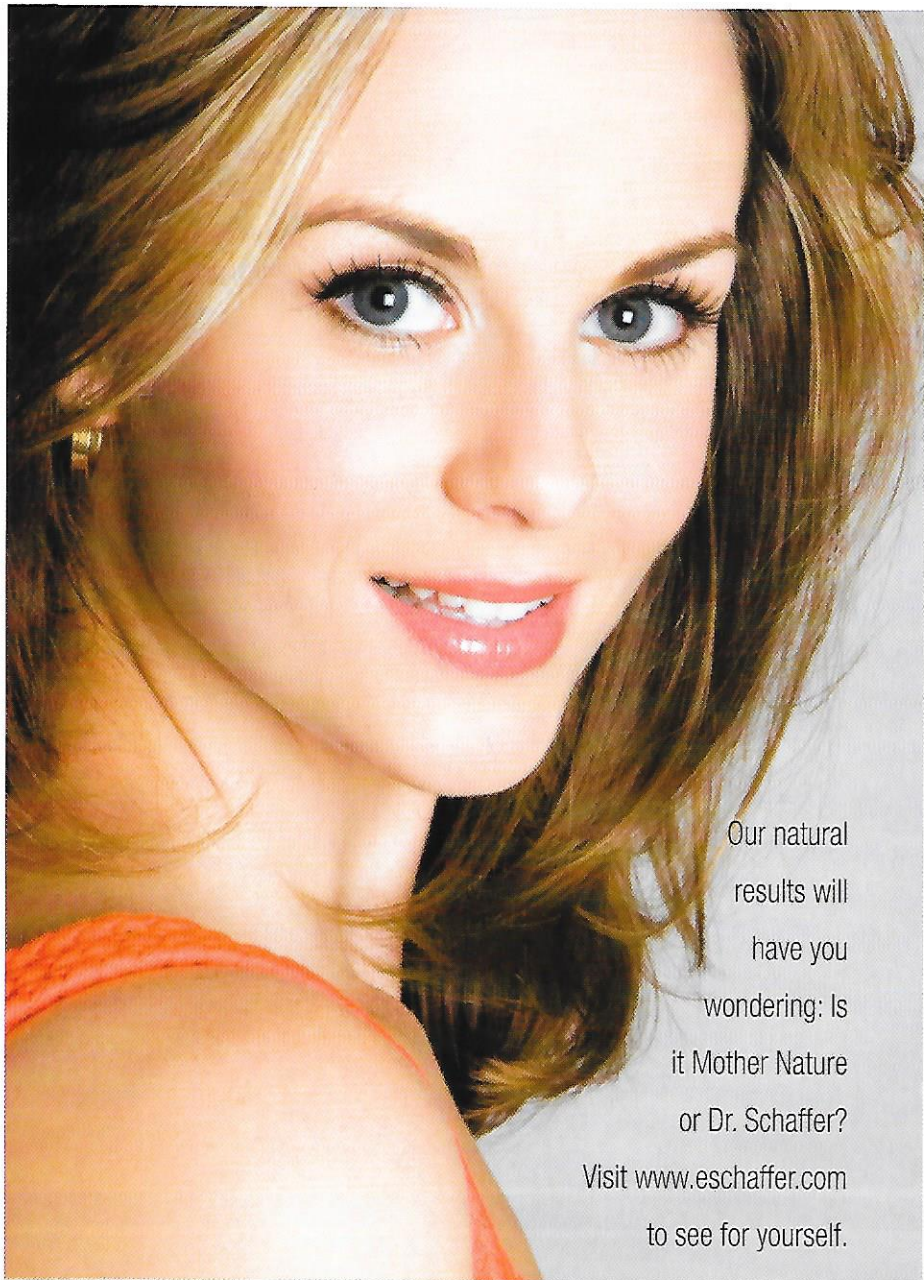
A culinary & design magazine



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A culinary & design magazine

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FEBRUARY/MARCH 2012

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NOTE

from the editor

As a native Texan who has moved around the Lone Star state, I was excited about the opportunity to relocate to South Florida several years ago. It wasn't that I disliked Texas — I just yearned for a new experience. So, I embraced the culturally diverse gateway to Latin America, hunkered down during hurricanes, and hung out at the beach. There were dinners in Miami and shopping in Boca Raton. And boy, did I have a great tan.

It's always good to get away, and often times even better to come back. That's the beauty of visiting someplace different. And do you know what I missed most about Texas? The food. Although I reveled in Café Cubano, plantains, Peruvian-style ceviche and soft, chewy bagels (thanks to our transplanted neighbors from the Northeastern U.S.), when my plane touched ground on Texas soil, I made a beeline for the nearest Mexican restaurant. I craved good ol' Tex-Mex and a real-deal margarita. For my son, it was Blue Bell ice cream, which had not been available on grocery shelves so far outside the little creamery in Brenham. I also recall my English friend, Lynda, being comforted to find Branston Pickle on the British isle at our local Publix. A Ploughman's lunch was just the taste of home she needed. In our "Priority Mail" story, we reunite you with your favorite foods, if only by way of a shipping carton (page 48).

Barbecue sauce might be quintessential Texas or Kansas City fare, depending on who you ask. The same goes for chili. Recognizing chili as a science was part of my initiation into the McMurry family when my husband Doug and I married. My father-in-law, Fred McMurry, conducted years of "chilological" research, invoking "Chiligula," the legendary god of chili, before earning Louisiana State and Houston Championship chili cook-off titles. If there's one takeaway for me, it's that real Texas chili mustn't ever involve beans, and I have yet since uttered the "b" word. As rodeo season approaches, we pay homage to this beloved dish and the cowboys who popularized it while trail blazing the Wild West (see "Home on the Range," page 82).

There is something to say for the expression "grow where you're planted," and for planting and growing food in your native soil. We talked with Green Spaces Alliance of South Texas and Slow Food South Texas about how community gardening is taking root in San Antonio neighborhoods (page 20). We're learning that even what we put on our skin is best derived from nature ("Becoming a Natural Beauty," page 53). Truffles, however, you'll need to seek beyond the backyard plot, despite a Frenchman's efforts to establish Texas' first truffle orchard in the 1980s. Read about this often misunderstood culinary delicacy and its myriad uses on page 30.

Also in this issue, two amazing women welcome us into their home kitchens. Ilsong Garden owner Young Cacy showcases *banchan*, the traditional accompaniments to Korean cuisine. Alicia Haynes, owner of the Gage Hotel in Marathon, offers a glimpse of her San Antonio high-rise retreat.

Finally, February is the month for *l'amour*, so why not indulge in breakfast in bed? We turned to downtown's Hotel Havana and A Yellow Rose Bed and Breakfast in King William for ideas on setting the table and the mood. Or discover the romance of making your own bread. It's all about ingredients, patience and instinct ("Rediscovering Old World Breads," page 40). Do you have bread sense? **Let us know at www.facebook.com/sataste.**



Michele McMurry

Michele McMurry
Editor-in-Chief

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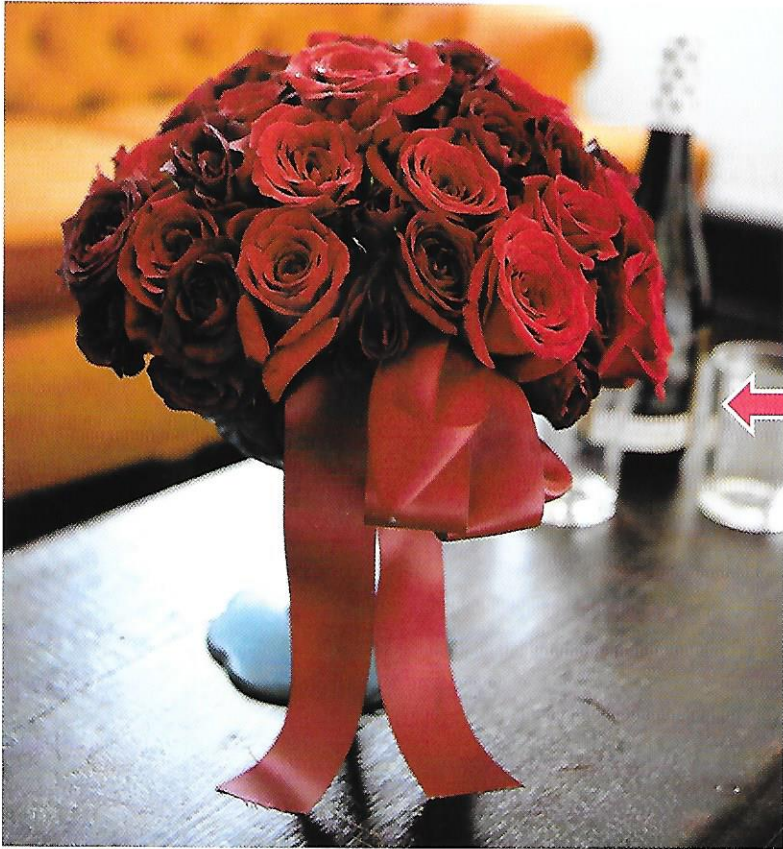
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YOUR TURN

In our article "Renovations Restore Timeless Kitchen" (Dec-Jan 2012), the architect mentioned on page 80 should read "Israel Peña."



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On the cover
Alfajores from Tatakúa
Photo by Pauline Stevens

Alfajor, Por Favor

BY MICHELE MCMURRY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAULINE STEVENS

There's a new pastry in town, which has found its way to an Alamo Heights storefront by way of a repeat customer. Tatauá Alfajores, started six years ago in Monterrey, Mexico by a Paraguayan couple, maintains its small family-like South American-style cookie operation of 12 employees now with two Monterrey locations and the first U.S. distributorship in San Antonio, run by Carmen Tarragona and husband Adrian G. Rosas.

How did you get involved with Tatauá Alfajores?

"You're not going to believe this," Tarragona laughs. "We were customers at first. I was searching online for a unique First Communion gift; I didn't want the typical gift. We thought it was a great concept. They shipped them to our event in Mazatlan and we just fell in love with the product."

How did you go about opening the first distributorship in the U.S.?

"When we moved to San Antonio, we approached the couple about the idea of letting us open and run a distributorship here. It took over a year's work to open — they were not a very well-known product in the U.S.; people didn't know what it was. We had to obtain insurance and USDA registration, and are now the legal importers. They are also kosher certified."

What brought you to San Antonio?

"We own a pecan orchard in Mexico, and for the past 15 years our harvests have been bought by a U.S. company. Starting

this year, a company in Fabens, TX shells and processes our pecans — praline, cinnamon and chocolate-covered — that we also sell in our store.

"We have always loved San Antonio; it is a friendly, warm, welcoming city. I attended Camp Arrowhead since I was 10, so ever since I can remember I've come to San Antonio."

How's the response so far?

"People are very intrigued; they love the concept. They say, 'they taste as good and even better than they look!' We couldn't be happier."

You can special-order alfajores through Carmen Tarragona or visit her shop on Broadway for in-store product. They sell quickly. Allow two weeks for delivery, as cookies must clear U.S. customs. Product is preservative-free, and freshness is guaranteed for four weeks.

Tatauá Alfajores USA
5941 Broadway, Suite 100
210-995-6314
www.ttkua.com

Alfajores facts

- An alfajor, with ties to Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, is a small sandwich cookie filled most commonly with dulce de leche, and then covered in dark or white chocolate and topped with grated almonds or coconut. Alfajores are hand-made and elaborately decorated for any occasion.
- Tatauá means "clay oven" in Guaraní, an indigenous dialect of South America. The name "Tatauá Alfajores" reflects the proprietors' Paraguayan heritage and adherence to traditional preparation techniques, although today's alfajores are baked in a regular oven.





Summit Living

BY MICHELE MCMURRY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN GEIL

Most of us, Alamo Heights residents in particular, recall the news story that dominated local headlines in 2005 when the owners of Earl Abel's Restaurant – a landmark at Broadway and Hildebrand for more than 60 years – sold the property to San Antonio developer Koontz McCombs. With due ambivalence, we bid farewell to the familiar, while anticipating the coming of a brand spanking-new high-rise. Earl Abel's relocated under new management, and, after three years of construction, the 20-floor Broadway San Antonio emerged.



The first resident moved in September 2010. At press time, the four penthouses remained available, while junior suites on floors 16-19 flirted with 100-percent occupancy.

The demographic is a local one, according to Jenifer Brown, vice president of The Broadway. "They are from here and know San Antonio," she says. Residents seek the tranquil, vacation-style pool area and "summer kitchen" – modeled after the Four Seasons Resort in Maui – along with round-the-clock concierge and building management. "They truly want the walk-and-leave lifestyle."

Alicia Bryan Haynes, owner of the Gage Hotel in Marathon, claims Alpine as her primary home and The Broadway an urban getaway from rural West Texas with husband Justin van Aken Haynes and their four children.

"I have always had a connection to San Antonio," Haynes says. "For our family, it's nice to have a second home that's safe and where we can enjoy



all the conveniences and amenities. It's a nice change from our West Texas way of life."

Haynes' 19th-floor junior penthouse reflects this style of blending the best of both worlds. A part-time interior designer and proprietor of Bella Casa Designs, Haynes incorporated a sleek design for condominium living, drawing from the same palette in her West Texas home. "I went with a more contemporary environment, comfortable and livable," she says. "The beautiful floor-to-ceiling windows set the stage for a more contemporary theme.

"In all my design work, whether contemporary or traditional, there is always

an element of old and new," she adds. "There is an old-world element to even my sleekest designs. In my residence at The Broadway, my vineyard table from Provence set the stage. I worked in a beach wood theme of colors, which played along with the patina throughout the house."

Being a restaurant overseer with extensive culinary training that includes time spent with Jacques Pépin, it's no surprise to learn the kitchen is among her favorite rooms – "State-of-the-art appliances and features mixed with drama!"

The sleek, modern kitchen features high gloss, white lacquered cabinets from the



“In this house I went with a Hollywood glamour style. It was fun for me to do something completely different from my West Texas home.”

Italian Pedini line, Quartzite countertops and a backsplash in white glass. Smoky wide-plank wood floors and gray walls offer contrast to the monochromatic theme. “I love the way the light changes the mood in the room during different times of the day,” she says.

Back in Alpine, the Haynes spend five days a week cooking and planning recipes of elk and wild boar for the Gage Hotel’s “12-Gage Kitchen.” The restaurant continues to harvest its onsite garden for use in many signature dishes, and an exclusive wine label is in the works.

In San Antonio, it’s a different vibe. “I love being with my family here at The Broadway, whether hanging out at the pool or enjoying our home,” Haynes says. “It is great to be back in San Antonio; the city is a booming gem packed with art, architecture, food and shopping.”

Custom suite

Many high-rise dwellers prefer to select their own finish-outs, says Jenifer Brown of The Broadway San Antonio. “That’s really a unique opportunity to bring in what you want for your lifestyle experience.”

Alicia Haynes custom designed her junior penthouse suite located on the 19th floor summit level.

Custom designer dream kitchen

- Custom high gloss white lacquer cabinetry Pedini Integra line
- White glass backsplash
- Quartzite countertop in Luna
- Built-in stainless appliances by Miele to include five-burner gas cook top, wall oven/speed convection oven and coffee center
- Side-by-side Sub-Zero refrigerator and freezer with white lacquer panels

Home on The Range

BY MICHELE MCMURRY

As rodeo time nears in San Antonio, we tip our hats to the Wild West and our cowboy heritage. Life on the trail was rigorous, and the antidote to fatigue and loneliness was a hot meal served around the chuck wagon – a post-Civil War food truck, if you will; a true mobile kitchen ahead of its time.

Camp cooks worked the longest days of any on the cattle drive. Cooking was about survival. Recipes were hearty and practical. Though basic, they provided a culinary road map of the dishes we enjoy today. The term “sourdough,” for example, came from using a piece of the day’s bread to “start” the next day’s loaves. Strong, hot coffee jump-started weary campers, and Dutch ovens brimming with beans and stews beckoned them to go on.

Simmering the previous day’s beef harvest with Mexican spices helped mask the meat’s toughness and off-flavor. Chili, savored then and now, can divide Congress over its proper ingredients and preparation. Cowboy poet and seasoned chili championship competitor F. Jackrabbit McMurry shares his award-winning recipe and thoughts about the sacred elixir.





The Don Strange Ranch, Welfare. Photos by Kevin Geil

**McMurry's Secret Formula
72-FYM Chili**

Remove all fat and gristle from 6-8 pounds choice of the round. Use exactly 5 pounds after trimming.

Chill one six-pack of beer to 1 degree Celcius.

Chop meat into small bite-size pieces. Never grind beef for chili.

Stir in other ingredients:

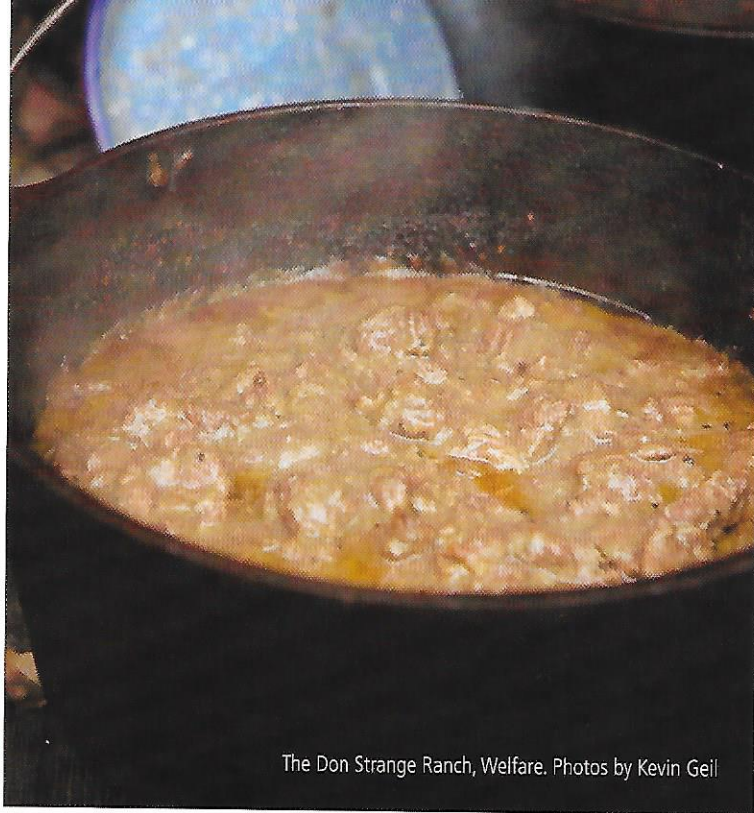
- 15.7 ounces unsweetened tomato paste
- 2.8 heaping teaspoons (Ht) salt, or less
- Hot water to make it liquid
- 1.3 white onions, chopped
- Powered red chili mix, any good standard brand
- Spice it up with powdered chipotle pepper to desired hotness on the Fowler Scale: .7 Ht for False Alarm chili; 1.0 Ht for Ding-a-ling chili; 1.3 Ht for 1-Alarm; 2.6 Ht for 2-Alarm; 3.7 Ht for 3-Alarm; 5.2 Ht for 4-Alarm; 6.5 Ht for 5-Alarm (3.8 Alarm is best it will boil gently on a cold stove).
- Add your own secret ingredients to taste (cumin, thyme, oregano, coriander, prickly pear cactus; be creative within limits. NO BEANS)
- Add 6 ounces premium beer (rest to be taken internally while cooking)
- Add fresh hot peppers, cut into 1/2-inch pieces: 3.3 jalapenos; 2 poblanos
- Maybe 1 red bell pepper for color
- 1 can beef broth

Simmer for 349 minutes, stirring with mesquite spoon. Taste and make minor adjustments. Thicken as needed with masa mixed with hot water to form thick, smooth liquid. Refrigerate overnight if possible (chili is always better if allowed to cool 21 hours or more).

Serve with hot peppers, cold beer, guitar music and conversation. (In no case may beans ever be put in the chili – that's illegal in Texas, and immoral and unsafe anywhere). Some chili-heads serve tortilla chips, grated jack cheese, hominy or grated onions.

Makes 8 quarts, enough for 14 hungry cowboys.

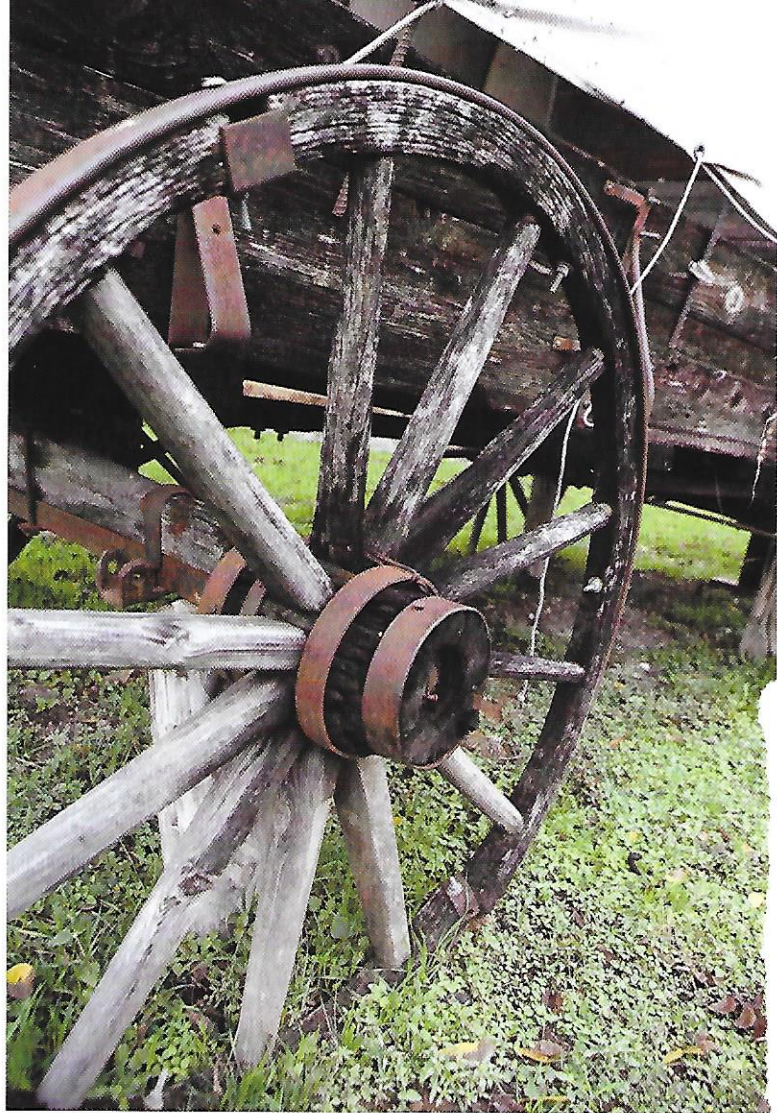
Source: "You Gotta Love Cowboys, Their Poems & Their Lore" by F. Jackrabbit McMurry



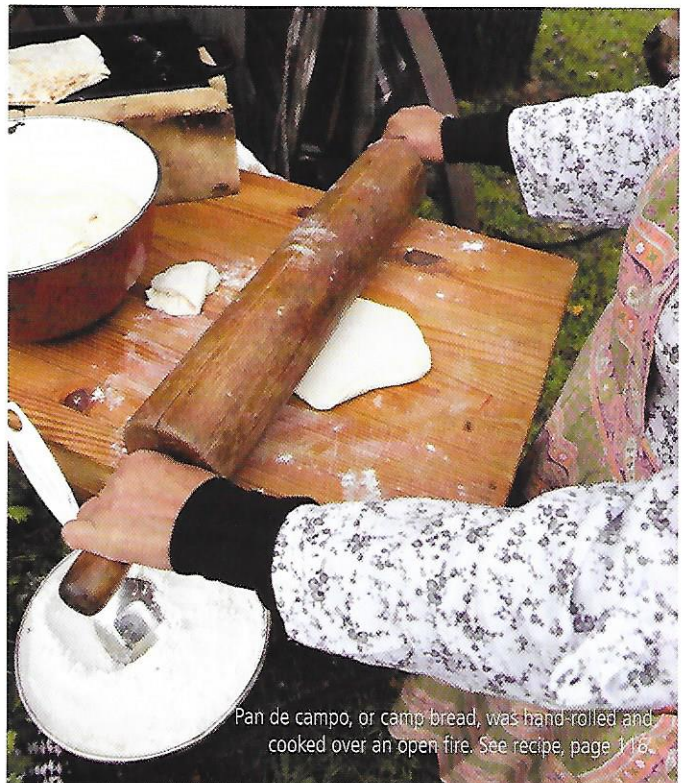
The Don Strange Ranch, Welfare. Photos by Kevin Geil



The stitching on cowboy boots kept leather from buckling on the trail; pointed toes helped the foot ease into the stirrup. Selection pictured from Ranch at The Rim. Photo by Jamie Karutz



The Don Strange Ranch, Welfare. Photos by Kevin Geil.



Pan de campo, or camp bread, was hand-rolled and cooked over an open fire. See recipe, page 116.



The Don Strange Ranch, Welfare.
Photos by Kevin Geil.



Off the range

American Chuck Wagon Association – Cowboy Country Round Up
Feb. 25, Hondo
www.americanchuckwagon.org

San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo
Feb. 9-26
www.sarodeo.com

Tejas Rodeo Company
Rodeo runs every Saturday evening from March 3 through November
Cibolo Livery Stables, Bulverde
Pre-show grub: Tejas Rodeo Smokehouse; Tejas Steakhouse & Saloon
www.tejasrodeo.com;
www.tejassteakhouse.com

26th Annual Texas Cowboy Poetry Gathering
Feb. 24-26, Alpine
www.cowboy-poetry.org