

SECRETS of THE
BIRD-DOG WIZARD

THE FUNNY LIFE of
DAVID SEDARIS

A WEEKEND AT
BARBECUE CAMP

GARDEN & GUN

SOUL of the SOUTH
JUNE / JULY
2018

SOUTHERN LAKE

ESCAPES

10 SUMMER
GETAWAYS

from a GEORGIA
MOUNTAIN HIDEOUT
to a TEXAS HILL
COUNTRY STUNNER
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The
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LEGACY of
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Plus:
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ADVANCED *Retreat*

Luxe digs make savoring this Texas Hill Country recreational paradise a breeze

WHY WE LOVE IT: From a satellite's view, Lake Travis looks like an emerald snake wriggling its way through Texas's lush midsection. Its skinny sixty-five-mile-long body is notched with gullies and inlets, and its sizable tributaries, if you let loose your imagination, conjure up a dragon's tail and wings. Though it can seem like a river gone wild, Lake Travis is, like so many lakes, a river tamed. For generations, the Colorado River ran amok in the verdant Hill Country, until a series of dams arose in the thirties and forties, creating a chain of six reservoirs called the Highland Lakes. Lake Travis, along Austin's northwestern edge, is the one most likely to lure you into staying a good long while.

LOCATION:
TRAVIS AND BURNET
COUNTIES, TEXAS

SIZE:
18,930 ACRES

SHORELINE:
270 MILES

ELEVATION:
681 FEET

Officially, Lake Travis came into being to control floods and build up water reserves and churn out hydroelectric profits. But tell that to the sailors, divers, skiers, wakeboarders, windsurfers, paddlers, anglers, and skinny-dippers (more on them later) who delight in its nearly 19,000 watery acres. Or to the hikers, birders, rock hounds, golfers, tennis players, and oenophiles who enjoy the land-based delights along its 270 miles of shoreline. Or to Willie Nelson, longtime area homeowner, who can drive from his working ranch to the water's edge in four minutes. Not only is Lake Travis rich in recreation and natural amusements—near-hairpin curves, dramatic limestone cliffs, underwater canyons—but the amenity-laden resorts that have set up camp here make relishing the lake's "come as you are, do as you want" disposition effortless.

HOW TO DO IT: So few lakes have true resort experiences—so skip the vacation rental sites and check in to one of the got-it-all luxury options that offer waterfront views and robust itineraries. At the **Lakeway Resort and Spa**, kids have the run of three pools and a looping waterslide, while parents can enjoy the spa or one of two golf courses nearby. The adjacent **Lakeway Marina** will get you into your preferred watercraft (kayak, paddleboard, Jet Ski, run-about) and out on the lake in next to no time. Groups who like a little more room can rent a cabin at the **Reserve at Lake Travis**, where guests have access to the same lazy river, tennis courts, and marina that year-round residents use.

Right: Dog paddling. Opposite, clockwise from top left: A pool at Lake Austin Spa Resort; dock duds; Lake Travis coves; on the water; the garden at Lake Austin Spa Resort; the Oasis restaurant.

For a restorative, adults-only getaway, consider **Miraval Austin**, an immersive wellness retreat set to open in the fall. Formerly **Travaasa Austin**, the secluded property, which is perched on a hilltop amid the **Balcones Canyonlands Preserve**, is expanding to 120 rooms, and its upgraded

spa will offer pampering massages and ayurvedic therapy sessions. Though technically on the next lake over, the forty-room **Lake Austin Spa Resort** is close enough to entice. In between head-to-toe treatments and organic meals, you can hike nearby trails, practice yoga on the dock, or take a water bike for a spin.

At any of these resorts, you'll run the risk of never wanting to leave your sybaritic confines. But Lake Travis beckons. Its wide basin alone offers an ample buffet of adventures: prime windsurfing at **Bob Wentz Park**, scuba diving among sunken sculptures at the adjacent **Windy Point Park**, naked sunbathing at **Hippie Hollow**, the state's only clothing-optional public park. Of the more than a dozen marinas, two of Lake Travis's oldest are **Commanders Point Yacht Basin**, where you can rent a sloop or charter a pontoon to take you out to raucous **Devil's Cove**, and the **Austin Yacht Club**, which caters to both students and spectators with its sailing school, regattas, and "beer can" races.

The lake's signature limestone cliffs make for dramatic vistas, whether you're speeding along a skinny galvanized cable from twenty stories up at **Lake Travis Zipline Adventures** or peering out from your tent at **Pace Bend Park**, a particularly scenic expanse with more than nine miles of shoreline and several swimmers-only coves. In the evenings, everyone jockeys to get into position to see the sherbet-hued Hill Country sunsets. You can watch the show with margarita in hand from the tiered deck at **the Oasis**, a Tex-Mex restaurant high above the water. Or you can book a private cruise (try **Sail Austin Charters** or **Outbound Sailing**) and have your captain navigate you to one of Lake Travis's tranquil nooks while you sip champagne, glide by the palatial waterfront estates, and begin to calculate how exactly to parlay your visit to this five-star lake into a perma-vacation.

LOCALS KNOW: Like Mallorca's rocky coastline, Lake Travis's limestone overhangs are ideal for the type of rock climbing known as deep-water soloing. The pros at **Rock-About Climbing Adventures** will take you to their secret spots and show you the ropes of this ropeless sport.—**Jordan Breal**



•• One More Great Lake **Oconee** GEORGIA

The main draw on bustling Lake Oconee, just over an hour east of Atlanta, lies behind the gates of the refined Reynolds Lake Oconee, a 10,000-acre resort community that includes vacation rentals, 117 holes of golf, a five-diamond Ritz-Carlton hotel, and ten restaurants, such as the **Linger Longer Steakhouse**, which fires up a wood-burning grill to sear the likes of filets and scallops, and **Georgia's**, which serves locally sourced comfort food such as bacon-wrapped meat loaf. Practice your shot at the new **Sandy Creek Sporting Grounds**, complete with a twenty-station sporting clays course and an archery field; relax at the spa with treatments that use regional elements like red clay, sweet tea, and magnolia; plunge into the infinity pool; or roast marshmallows at fire pits by the lake as evening sets in.—**C.S.**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY WYNN MYERS