

If you go

- Texas Ranch Life
(979) 865-3649
www.texasranchlife.com
- Washington County Chamber of Commerce
(888) Brenham
(273-6426)
www.brenhamtexas.com
- Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site
www.birthplaceof texas.com
(969) 878-2214
- Burton Cotton Gin & Museum
(979) 289-3378
www.cottonginmuseum.org
- Monastery of St. Clare Miniature Horse Ranch
(979) 836-9652
www.monasteryminiaturehorses.com (tours only on weekdays)
- Blue Bell Creameries
(800) 327-8135
www.bluebell.com (tours only on weekdays)

HOME AT THE RANCH

Getaway has all the ambience of a traditional Texas spread, the charm of a small town and the comfort of a luxurious B&B

STORY AND PHOTOS BY RONA DISTENFELD/SPECIAL TO THE EXPRESS-NEWS

“We’re going to the ranch.” It conjures up feelings of family and tradition and land, images of cattle and horses and wide-open spaces. It’s what Texas Ranch Life is all about. Add roaming buffalo, hearty breakfasts, exquisitely restored historic homes filled with antiques, leather couches and comfortable beds, and you’ve found a place you and your family and friends will love to gather.

BELOW: The Heritage Cattle Drive in Bellville each May features cowhands driving the longhorns right through town.



Historic Texas: The 1,800-acre Lonesome Pine Ranch was settled in 1823 by one of Stephen F. Austin’s ‘old 300.’ This working ranch is home to quarter horses, American bison, abundant wildlife and one of the country’s largest registered Texas Longhorn herds.



Miniature horses are available for viewing and oohing at the Monastery of St. Clare.

Texas Ranch Life, one of Texas' newest bed-and-breakfast communities, is set on a working ranch near Brenham and was made for family reunions or a weekend getaway. You can choose from nine different authentically restored Texas homes, dating back to the 1850s and updated with top-of-the-line kitchens, bathrooms and central heat and air conditioning. Couples can opt for the one-bedroom cabin while larger groups can have the six-bedroom, four-and-a-half-bath lodge all to themselves.

Anglers can stay in the Lake House, with a stocked pond in its back yard. Or get a touch of Mediterranean romance with a weekend in the Hacienda at the top of a hill. When you sit in the courtyard with its running fountain and a glass of wine, you can eas-

ily imagine yourself in Spain or Italy (except for the longhorns roaming nearby!).

There's no shortage of things to do, either. The ranch also offers trail rides, riding lessons, hiking and bike riding, hunting (dove, quail, deer, raccoon and coyote, depending on the season), birding, bald eagle tours, chuckwagon meals and campfire music, and more. You can even work cattle.

Take a trip to town

Venture into the nearby towns of Brenham, Burton and Bellville for a visit to the past. Take a tour of the Burton Cotton Gin and see how cotton made it from the field to the textile companies. The nearby historic shoe repair store is a glimpse back to a time when nothing was disposable and har-



The Hacienda, one of nine restored homes at Texas Ranch Life, has a Mediterranean air and sits atop a hill.

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Technical Assistant #07-003: Associate's degree or 60 college semester hours or high school diploma/GED with two years closely related experience required. this is a full-time hourly paid position. Duty hours will be Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm with some weekends/evenings/holidays.

Apply in person or submit cover letter with salary requirements, resume with copy of college transcript showing seal of school and registrar's signature and contact details of three references to the Director of Human Resources, SFBR, PO Box 760549, San Antonio, TX 78245-0549. www.sfbr.org

Apply at Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research, 7620 NW Loop 410 at Military Drive West, Monday through Friday - 8:30 - 11:30 a.m. or 1:30-4:30 p.m.

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nesses and saddles were mended right alongside shoes and boots.

Come in May for the Heritage Cattle Drive in Bellville and cheer the cowboys as they drive a herd of cattle right through town, just the way they did a century ago. More than 200 longhorns make the trip from Lonesome Pine Ranch, along scenic county roads, through Bellville herded by local cowboys and cowgirls and a team of *vaqueros* from Mexico.

Love horses? The nuns at the Monastery of St. Clare are happy to show you the miniature horses they raise and sell. People come from around the world for these little treasures.

A little farther up the road is

Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site, where Texas was born. Take a ranger-led tour of the site where our founding fathers declared Texas independent from Mexico, and visit the Barrington Living History Farm to see what life was like back then.

And don't forget to visit the Blue Bell Creamery for a tour and a taste of some of the best ice cream in the country!

Just about two hours east of San Antonio, off U.S. 290 and north of Interstate 10, Texas Ranch Life is like a home away from home, the family ranch most families will never have, with all the romance and none of the work.



TOP: Antiques are part of the furniture mix in the Ranch Life lodgings, and the beds are all large and comfortable. **ABOVE:** The Old West is depicted on a headboard.