

AVANT- GARDE IN AUSTIN

Cowboy boot historian / aficionado and native Texan Evan Voyles, a glorious eccentric and tatterdemalion, always appears to have just blown in with the tumbleweeds, even while relaxing at his Lazy Neon Ranch. This man can out-Cadillac Larry McMurtry's character Cadillac Jack any ole day of the week. Not one to chuck anything out, Evan is certified by the *Guinness Book of Records* as having the largest collection of cowboy boots on the planet. He does. Sadly, this decades-long obsession caught fire eight years ago, but the seven-hundred-plus-pair collection is still intact—charred and distorted leather sculptures on heels. This wonder wall of boots awaits a possible second life in a proposed art book called "Burnt Boots."

As a "neon artist" Evan is in great demand, filling exterior sign and interior art piece orders from coast to coast. An adroit imagineer, Evan's specialty is duplicating classic replicas from the

"The Flying Twins" are the guardian angels of this backyard bedroom: a private space of irresistible spirit—poetry for the eyes. This eccentric sanctuary crosses easily into the theatrical. It serves as a diner, if you will, offering not only lunch but also a full menu of the absurd and wonderful—enough for any appetite! The 1954 Silver Streak trailer doubles as guesthouse and storage unit.





golden age of neon in metal, glass, and layers of aged paint. One man's "neon jungle" is another man's incandescent desert. Evan's philosophy is that all you really need to live in Texas is a pair of Levi's and a pair of cowboy boots. He also says of Texas, "People are so friendly and neighborly, they will give you the shirt off their back. Seriously, the sky's the limit here; anything is possible. Texas in essence is the American Dream." Evan agrees with his lovely wife, Gail, a transplant from New Jersey whose favorite things about living in Texas are "cowboy boots, loads and loads of space, and a healthy attitude in general that absolutely anything is doable."

As a fashion maven, Gail's store, Blackmail, is racked with—what else?—miles of black clothing, gifts, accessories, and vintage cowboy boots relegated to one another for their bright and colorful inlaid designs. The Voyleses' life together is a dizzying topsy-turvy walk on the wild side. A little wonky and a lot wonderful, they are two charismatic characters and members of the avant-garde in Austin. "Object archaeology," the ability to salvage and spotlight the found and the forgotten, is a common interest.

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and I for one am beholden to the Voyleses for continuing the live-and-let-live lifestyle synonymous with our great Texas artists and eccentrics.

LEFT: Common and uncommon hold hands, and strange objects become beautiful. On the porch a solitary "6" hangs above a vintage bait bucket turned vase, brimming with wildflowers.

OPPOSITE ABOVE: Gail and Evan prefer and revel in Dilapidated Chic. Barn red and cactus green are the banners for this wonderfully weathered farmhouse retreat. That telltale odd combo of crusty and smooth patinas can come only from passing decades of repetitive use or haphazard neglect. A tactile draw is undeniable in most of us as we stroke and ponder old objects and family heirlooms; they feed our souls.



RIGHT: A crusty corrugated-metal wall creates the set. A funky amalgam of oddities, curiosities, folk art, signage, and outsider design is strictly American archaeology pre-1950 / Route 66 marries Texas bohemia. It's a vision as comfortable as an old pair of boots!

FOLLOWING PAGES: Haunting kachina dolls keep a watchful eye over this uncluttered primary-colored kitchen where five bare bulbs illuminate a collection of vintage coffee tins.



T
es
by
N
itself. R
large liv
that Tex
Tyle
of Texa
featur
introdu
aficiona
in beau
Texan s
the bes
explori
buildin
unconv
culture
Mexica
and de
comfor
always
of fron
furnitu
homes
the Ar
iron—
terrace
Vil
transp
countr
mansio
captur
Star li



How to dress your windows:

1. visit Cush Cush
2. we'll help you choose
3. and design
4. we'll fabricate
5. then install



Custom window coverings from Cush Cush are easier and more economical than you may think. Schedule your in-home consultation with one of our design consultants.

cush-cush

916 A W. 12th St. # Lamar 478-cush



Open a window to the tradewinds.

Casual, handcrafted elegance for the upscale home. Jaya. Unique furniture and exotic home décor—all in the store where East meets West.

Jaya

AUSTIN • DALLAS • HOUSTON
902 N. LAMAR AT 9TH ST. • 457-1255 • OPEN 7 DAYS

May We Show
You to Your Table?

Table Linens
Sale



Provencal Home

for your ranch, villa, or chateau

The Village at Westlake, Austin, Texas

Bee Cave Rd. @ Loop 360 • 512-366-9442 • www.spartanryfrench.com

Peek inside some



Jack Parsons photos

Evan and Gail Voyles have a trailer that serves as a guest house in their back yard.



James David and Gary Peeze have distinctive gardens and even a distinctive garden shed.

POSH AUSTIN HOMES

The book 'Lone Star Living' opens the doors of several dreamy dwellings

By Allison Hall-Beach

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

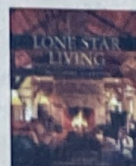
Just in time for holiday giving comes a book that takes you inside the ranches, mansions, cottages and lofts of assorted well-heeled Texans, including several Austinites.

"Lone Star Living: Texas Homes and Ranches" (\$40, Bulfinch Press), written by Tyler Beard with lovely color photographs by Jack Parsons, offers 220 pages showing the huge range of home styles in our fair state.

Here's a quick look at the Austin area homes that are featured:

■ "Neon artist" Evan Voyles' and wife Gail's avant-garde farmhouse retreat, described as an eccentric place where Route 66 meets Texas bohemia. Sitting in the back yard: a 1954 Silver Streak trailer that doubles as a guest house and storage unit.

■ The "Austintatious" Beverly Hills-style mansion owned by "Dellionaire" Jim Stone and his wife, Patti. The stucco and limestone home, designed by David Shiftlet in a mix of Italianate and French styles,



Tyler Beard
signs his
book, 'Lone
Star Living'

When: 3-6 p.m.,
Saturday

Where: Gardens,
1818 W. 35th St.,
451-5490

boasts fabulous views of Town Lake and downtown Austin.

■ The two-acre homesite in the hills west of Austin belonging to Gardens owner James David and Gary Peeze. The book describes the tasteful, beautifully landscaped setting as "a vision plucked from the bucolic countryside — yet right at home in Texas." The home was designed by Mell Lawrence.

■ The sun-drenched Driftwood home formerly owned by Austin lawyer Dean



This house in Driftwood was designed by Austin architect Paul Lamb.

Kilgore and his wife, Sydney. Designed by Austin architect Paul Lamb, the house features a stone exterior that was influenced by "the missions of San Antonio, South Texas ranch houses and trips to Santa Fe," Sydney Kilgore says.

abeach@statesman.com; 445-3689.