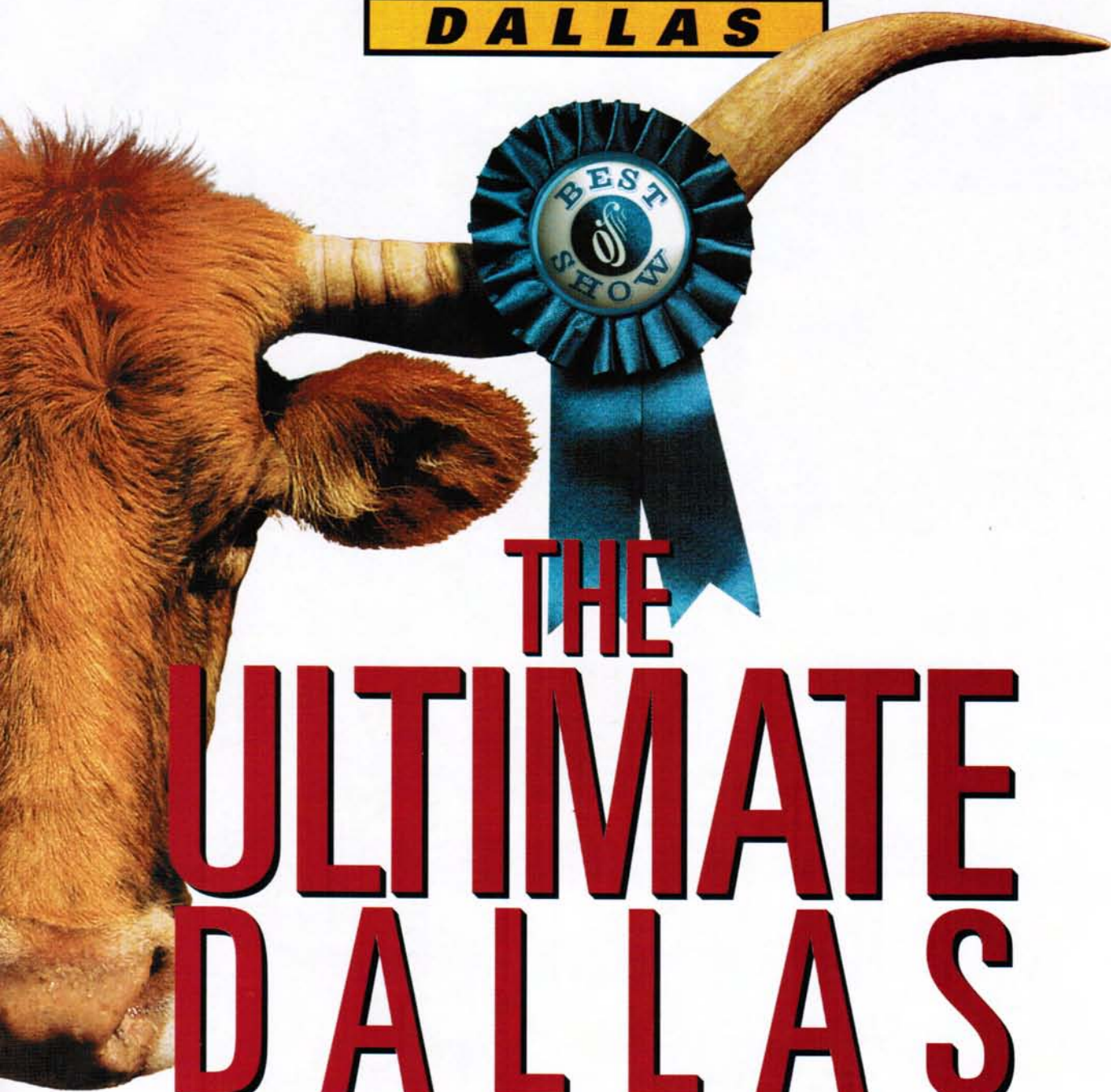


YOUR BEST SOURCE FOR SHOPPING, DINING, ENTERTAINMENT & MAPS

APRIL 2000

WHERE

DALLAS



THE ULTIMATE DALLAS

Our annual compendium of the **BEST**, the most **EXCESSIVE**, the **HOTTEST**, the most **USEFUL**, the most **INTRIGUING**, the most **CURIOUS**, and the just plain **QUIRKY** stuff in and around the city.

The Ultimate Dallas

Our annual compendium of the best, the most excessive, the hottest, the most useful, the most intriguing, the most curious, and just plain quirky stuff in and around the city.

You want to eat the best of Dallas's quintessential cuisine? This editor reveals where the

best places are to nosh on chips

'n salsa, down a frozen

margarita, and grab

some post-party

grub. We name the

restaurants with

the fastest service,

best views, and

most mysterious

concepts. But that's

not all. Here you'll find

everything from the trendiest

shopping street to five

free museums.

Wanna know where to go blonde? Buy a bluebonnet painting? Hear amazing jazz? Divulge your Kennedy conspiracy theories? See the beautiful people? 10 spots to get a Texas-sized belt buckle? And much much more . . .

by Charmaine Cooper Hussain



The working title for *Citizen Kane* was *American* — but that doesn't get us any closer to the Asian fusion served at Citizen.

PHOTO BY ASHLEY SLADE CRUMPTON

BEST OF DINING

MOST MYSTERIOUS RESTAURANT

ENIGMA, FITTINGLY ENOUGH. THOSE WHO run the place (the rumor is that Elton John is the owner) regularly refuse all opportunities for editorial — much less advertising — and there's no sign. But beyond being press-shy, the Enigma experience is akin to taking tea with the Mad Hatter. The gorgeous table settings (many by Versace) are mismatched and askew; the menu goes on for pages but the kitchen has no freezer; and there are enough Bill Mack bronze nudes to populate what one local weekly called a "bordello yoga class." If you're feeling adventurous, call (214) 999-0666 and make a reservation. (3005 Routh St.)

PHOTO BY ASHLEY SLADE CRUMPTON



The only reason we were granted access to photograph Enigma is because *WHERE* targets the visitor market — the owner would prefer that not a single Dallasite knew this restaurant existed. And many don't.



Primo's Margarita

PHOTO BY ASHLEY SLADE CRUMPTON

FARTHEST STRETCH FROM CONCEPT TO CUISINE

CITIZEN. MICO RODRIGUEZ, WHOSE M Crowd Restaurant Group also owns Mi Cocina and Taco Diner, is an Orson Wells freak. The Mercury is named after Wells's production company, The Mercury Theater, and you can guess what Citizen is named after. So will you find breast of chicken infused with rosebud essence? Hardly — try Euro-Asian fusion, with lots of sushi. See if you can make some sort of sensible connection — I sure can't. (3858 Oak Lawn Blvd., (214) 522-7253)

BEST SAMPLES

EATZI'S. IT'S NOT EXACTLY A GROCERY STORE, but if whole-milk ricotta, imported biscuits from England, and chocolate croissants regularly pop up on your shopping list, it'll suit your needs. And it's not really a take-out joint, what with the opera music and the chance to sip a glass of wine while you browse...

So why is the place constantly packed with the well-heeled set? To nosh on the samples! Hunks of four-cheese bread, tortilla chips dipped in D.L. Jardines's sweet-and-spicy raspberry chardonnay salsa, and miniature French pastries are devoured as fast as shoppers can juggle the flowers, fromage, and fumé blanc they're picking up for that evening's company. (3403 Oak Lawn Ave., (214) 526-1515)

BEST ALL-NIGHT OPTION

CAFÉ BRAZIL. THE ONE ON CENTRAL Expressway never closes, and it's the per-

fect place to conclude a night of clubbing and consumption or begin the morning with your mother-in-law. The hungrier and more tired you are, the more fabulous everything here tastes (and it's already pretty decent to begin with). Shuffle over to the self-serve bottomless coffee station, and order the Mexican omelet, heavy on the chorizo. The caffeine and cayenne will give you a kick-start regardless of the hour. (420 N. Central Expwy., (214) 691-7791)

BEST RENDITIONS OF UBIQUITOUS RESTAURANT FARE ... CHIPS AND SALSA

BLUE MESA GRILL BRINGS OUT BOWLS OF flawless tortilla triangles — multicolored for visual interest — topped with a layer of addictive sweet-potato chips. As for the salsa, it was voted best in the city by a group of Dallas firefighters — get it? (5100 Belt Line Rd., (972) 934-0165; 7700 W. Northwest Hwy., (214) 378-8686)

... MARGARITA

THERE'S SOME CONTROVERSY ABOUT WHERE the margarita was actually invented, but as far as Dallasites are concerned, it was at Mariano's Restaurant and Cantina on Greenville Avenue in 1971. Others babble on about somewhere in Mexico...

Regardless of its origins, the best margarita is at Primo's, an unassuming Mexican restaurant with a thriving late-night scene. It's not too sour, not too limey, not cold enough to give you brain freeze, and not too toxic. (3309 McKinney Ave., (214) 220-0510)

... MICROBREW

THE MARGARITA WOULD SURELY BE THE STATE cocktail were it not for beer, and you won't find better brewskis than at Routh Street Brewery. The regulars at Routh's Thursday happy hours appreciate the lack of beer snob attitude and especially the great price on pints. (3011 Routh St., (214) 922-8835)

... BARBECUE

SONNY BRYAN'S. FOR ALL ITS LOCATIONS, Sonny Bryan's maintains consistency with what it does best: melt-in-your-mouth brisket, sub-zero beer, and outstanding onion rings. For extra ambiance, try the original location on Inwood Road, where you have to squish into the school desks that constitute tables. (2202 Inwood Rd., (214) 357-7120)

BIGGEST BEER GLASSES

Love and War in Texas only taps its Texas brews into whopping 34-ounce glasses. That's more than a quart — and it looks like a half gallon! Are you thirsty? (601 E. Plano Pkwy., (972) 422-6201)

MOST EXTRAVAGANT MEAL THAT'S WORTH EVERY PENNY

THERE AREN'T ENOUGH SUPERLATIVES IN A food writer's vocabulary to describe the experience at The French Room, so I'll be succinct. The cuisine is sublime; the service unprecedented; the surroundings exquisite; and the total bill in the three digits. Splurging has never been quite so justifiable. (Hotel Adolphus, 1321 Commerce St., (214) 742-8200)



The New York Times once referred to The French Room as a "Louis XV fantasy on the prairie."

BEST PLACE TO GRAB LUNCH ALONE IN A 10-MINUTE TIME PERIOD

TIN STAR. IT'S FAST, CHEAP, EASY, AND BETTER for you than anything that begins with Mc. Order the chicken-fried steak, the vegetable chile relleno, or a couple of tacos, and before you know it, your beeper coaster signals that your food's ready. You're in and out before anybody even realizes that you're a "table for one," and for less than \$10 to boot. (2626 Howel St., (214) 999-0059)

FIVE FREE MUSEUMS

With the exception of special exhibits (like the recent O'Keeffe show at the Dallas Museum of Art), admission to the permanent collections of these museums is always free:

- ◆ **Crow Collection of Asian Art** — real estate mogul Trammel Crow's private collection includes unbelievable jade
- ◆ **Dallas Museum of Art**, known for its pre-Columbian collection
- ◆ **Irving Arts Center** — ever-changing exhibits of contemporary art in several galleries and a sculpture garden
- ◆ **Meadows Museum** — an amazing assemblage of Spanish art
- ◆ **African American Museum**, with one of the largest collections of African-American folk art in the United States

BEST 360-DEGREE VIEW

ANTARES IN THE REUNION Tower, which makes a complete revolution around the city every 65 minutes. The north/south/east/west signs on the windows (which thankfully don't move) are helpful in establishing orientation. (300 Reunion Blvd., (214) 712-7145)



Priceless works at the priceless Crow Collection

BEST CULTURE

BEST MUSEUM OPEN AFTER 5 P.M.

OKAY, SO IT'S THE ONLY MUSEUM OPEN AFTER 5 p.m., except on Thursdays, when many museums such as the Dallas Museum of Art stay open until 9 p.m. But the McKinney Avenue Contemporary — a.k.a. the MAC — refers to itself as the place for "art after dark," hosting thoughtful, cutting-edge exhibits from emerging artists that are on view until 10 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays.

MOST SOBERING MUSEUM YOU STILL SHOULDN'T MISS

THE SIXTH FLOOR MUSEUM, LOCATED IN THE former Texas School Book Depository, is a dignified and extremely sobering explo-

ration of the events leading up to and immediately following Kennedy's assassination. Although many of the familiar symbols — the Zapruder film, the eerie reconstruction of the Oswald's perch, and the Cronkite announcement — pack a emotional whallop, exhibits such as JFK's luncheon place setting and the original mockup for that afternoon's edition of the *Dallas Times Herald* (pre-assassination) are extremely moving. Yes, it's depressing, but it's an important event in both our country's and our city's history, and visitors shouldn't miss it. (411 Elm St., (214) 747-6660)



BEST GALLERY TO SPOT AN EMERGING STAR

THE DALLAS VISUAL ARTS CENTER, which with its annual Critic's Choice juried competition brings the best Texas artists together for an exhibition every June. Up-and-comers are featured in exhibitions year-round in one of DVAC's two galleries. (2917 Swiss Ave., (214) 821-2522)

BEST GALLERY THAT YOU WISH HAD A BLACKLIGHT

THE THOMAS KINKADE GALLERY AT WEIR'S HAS one of the largest collections of America's most collected living artist. Kinkade's signature subjects — charming scenes of a simpler life — feature lighting effects so unique that skies, lamps, and lit windows seem to glow. Imagine what blacklighting could do . . . (3219 Knox St., (214) 528-0321)

BEST REASON TO COMMISSION A REPRODUCTION

RUSSIAN IMPERIAL ART, WHICH OPENED LAST year, accepts commissions on behalf of the artists working in the Painting Restoration Department of The Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. Because the state can hardly afford to pay these artists regularly — and when they are paid they receive a paltry 35 rubles a month — the Hermitage has quietly allowed them to begin accepting commissions for replicas, lest they leave the museum to seek other work. So you receive a

stroke-by-stroke reproduction of a masterpiece from the Hermitage's celebrated collection, and the artist is elevated above starving status. (2611 Worthington St., (214) 871-7277)

BEST SHOPPING

BEST PLACE TO GO BLONDE

TONI AND GUY'S DALLAS LOCATIONS (THERE are 12) use more blonde color than all of its other American and international locations combined (and there are a lot more than 12). You can trust your tresses to the Mascolo brothers, who brought their vision "straight" from England to Dallas back in 1984. (6030 Sherry Ln., (214) 696-3825)

BEST SPA IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO DFW AIRPORT

AS IF PROXIMITY TO THE AIRPORT IS A GOOD excuse — you don't need a reason to indulge at the Mirabella Spa in the La Plaza Wellness Center. The staff is professional, friendly, and considerate — there's a

Artists at The Hermitage Museum place originals like Rubens's masterpiece *Statue of Ceres* (1615) next to their easels to create reproductions now available through Russian Imperial Art.



whole choreographed routine for keeping private parts private during wraps, scrubs, and massages — and every product they use smells absolutely scrumptious. (800 Village Park, Colleyville, (817) 428-6691)

**BEST AMUSEMENT PARK
DISGUISED AS A STORE**

BASS PRO SHOPS OUTDOOR WORLD. WHAT'S the appeal? The size alone is staggering — 200,000 square feet — but you can do a lot more here than stand around while Dad looks at rods and reels. There's a 30,000-gallon aquarium with a waterfall in the center of the store, where fisherman actually catch and release fish before your eyes to demonstrate the effectiveness of lures and fishing gear. There's also a rifle range, an archery range, a driving range and a putting green, and a neat laser arcade shooting gallery. Hungry? Hit the snack bar. Who needs Six Flags Over Texas? (2501 Bass Pro Dr., (972) 724-2018)

**BEST THEME
BOUTIQUE**

LA CHEMISE BLANCHE MEANS "WHITE SHIRT" in French, and that's the only thing you'll find here. With cuffs, without cuffs, or with French cuffs, it's the most sensible spot to begin the building blocks of a wardrobe. (5450 Lovers Ln., Ste. 131, (214) 956-0800)

TRENDIEST STREET

LOVERS LANE. YOU'LL MAKE OUT ALL RIGHT — like a fashionista after visiting such chichi boutiques as Byzantine, Dominic, Elements, Franchesca's, and Spicy Couture.

**10 PLACES TO GET
A TEXAS-SIZED
BELT BUCKLE**

- ◆ Western Warehouse
- ◆ Boot Town
- ◆ Just Justin
- ◆ Cavender's Boot City
- ◆ Will Bill's Western Store
- ◆ Lone Star Boot Outlet
- ◆ Shepler's Western Wear
- ◆ Sargeant's
- ◆ Boots for Less
- ◆ Wells Boot Center



(5500, 5600, 4400, 5450, and 5600 Lovers Ln., respectively; (214) 904-9086, (214) 350-3883; (214) 987-0837; (214) 358-2226; and (214) 357-6555, respectively)

**BEST ALTERNATIVE
TO LANGUISHING
AT THE AIRPORT**

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH HANGING around DFW — after all, it has a fully functioning winery (La Bodega, in Terminal A, Gate A15) on the premises. But the shuttle service to **Grapevine Mills Mall** is just too tempting to resist if you're stuck with a four-hour layover. Any residual air rage will be under control in no time. (Call (817) 329-3846 for shuttle information)

**BEST SHOP TO
BE A KID IN**

FROGGIE'S 5 & 10. IF YOU KNOW WHO POKY and Gumby and Betty Boop are — and you really miss them — they're all here, waiting to chastise you for throwing them away in the first place when now they'd be really, really valuable . . . (3211 Knox St., (214) 522-5867)



BEST NIGHTLIFE

**BEST PLACE TO BE
AMAZED AT THE
BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE**

GOD'S MOST GORGEOUS CREATURES GATHER in unusually high concentrations at **Sipango** and **Samba Room**, which are conveniently located right across the street from one another. (4513 Travis St., (214) 522-2411; 4514 Travis St., (214) 522-4137, respectively)

**BEST JAZZ
SPOT IF YOU'D
RATHER HEAR
THE BAND
THAN
CONVERSE**

SAMBUCA. THE ADDISON LOCATION of this supper club attracts jazz luminaries like Branford Marsalis, Chuck Mangione, Terrance Blanchard, and living legend Pharaoh Sanders. The one in

**FIVE GALLERIES
WHERE YOU
CAN BUY A
BLUEBONNET
PAINTING**

- ◆ **Southwest Art Gallery**, for W.A. Slaughter, Kay Walton, Manuel Garza, Cal Gaspard
- ◆ **Texas Art Gallery**, for Paul Untersee, Milbie Benge, Mark Haworth
- ◆ **Monticello Gallery**, for Earline Burgess, W.R. Thrasher, prints from W.A. Slaughter
- ◆ **David Dike Fine Art**, for Porifirio Salinas, Robert Wood, the occasional Julian Onderdonk
- ◆ **Florence Art Gallery**, for Kathy Hinson, Henrietta Milan, Jay Miller



W.A. Slaughter's Texas Panorama

Deep Ellum might see a rare appearance by Roy Hargrove or even Wynton Marsalis, who unexpectedly got up on stage one night to jam. Would you want to blab through a set from one of these guys? No? Then shut up and listen. (15207 Addison Rd., (972) 385-8455; 2618 Elm St., (214) 744-0820)

**BEST BAR AT
WHICH TO HASH
CONSPIRACY THEORIES**

LOCATED IN THE BACK OF THE SWANKY RED Jacket lounge, the **Ruby Room** serves up a twisted tribute to the infamous Dallas nightclub owner who shot Lee Harvey Oswald. The kitschy touches here include an artificial grassy knoll and Kennedy silver dollars doled out as change. Don't worry if you're favorite conspiracy theory is a tad half-baked — you won't get anyone here to take you seriously anyway. (3606 Greenville Ave., (214) 823-8333)

BEST PATIO PARTY

THE BONE, WHICH DOES THE PSEUDO-French-Quarter balcony thing on the corner of Elm and Crowds in Deep Ellum. Roof-Deck Happy Hours start at 5 p.m.

Fridays and Saturdays, so stake your claim along the rail for great people watching below and a view of the Dallas skyline beyond. (2724 Elm St., (214) 744-2663)

BEST DANCE CLUB WITH A SPLIT PERSONALITY

LIZARD LOUNGE. IT'S FOR THE OVER-18 SET one night and the goth crowd the next. The Church, as the Lizard Lounge is so called on Sunday nights, is one of the longest running event nights at any club in town, since 1994. (2424 Swiss Ave., (214) 826-2249)

BEST ODDITIES

BEST HOLE IN THE WALL

THE BLUEPRINTS FOR THE TEXAS COMMERCE Tower downtown originally called for a much larger porthole up top — until someone figured out that the size was just big enough to get daredevil pilots to thinking. Now the porthole is more like a peephole, and daredevil pilots will have to be content buzzing the Reunion ball. (2200 Ross Ave., (214) 979-6386)

THE ARCHITECT'S HALL OF FAME

One of the advantages of being a relatively new city has been our access to the world's most prominent architects, who designed the post-modern masterpieces we cite here:

- ◆ **I.M. Pei:** City Hall, the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center, and the First Interstate Bank Building
- ◆ **Frank Lloyd Wright:** The Dallas Theater Center
- ◆ **Philip Johnson:** John F. Kennedy Memorial Plaza, Thanks-Giving Square, and Crescent Court
- ◆ **David Schwarz:** Bass Performance Hall, The Ballpark at Arlington, and the now-under-construction American Airlines Center



The Dallas Theater Center is the only free-standing theater built to the specifications of Frank Lloyd Wright's design.

BEST PLACE TO WATCH A SUNSET OR A THUNDERSTORM

THE CHAPARRAL CLUB, ON THE 38TH FLOOR of the Adam's Mark Hotel, has one of the best views of the city. Even if you're not dining there at the exact moment the sun falls on the horizon or the first lighting bolt flashes across the sky, you can still catch a glimpse of nature's wonders from the small sitting area near the elevators. But hurry! (400 N. Olive St., (214) 922-8000)

BEST PLACE TO FROLIC

THE CENTRAL COURT FOUNTAIN, PART OF the Fountain Plaza water park outside of Fountain Place, comprises 360 computer-controlled water jets that spurt out from the ground in unpredictable patterns and at unpredictable intervals. Trying to sprint across without getting splashed is one of the most refreshing and fun things you can do in Dallas on a hot afternoon, and the bubbler fountains and lush treed canopies make a picturesque backdrop for photos. (1445 Ross Ave., (214) 855-7766)

MOST LIKELY SPOT TO HEAR BAGPIPE MUSIC

A wacky but affable fellow named Sonny Lacey is rather fond of donning a kilt and practicing his bagpipes on Saturdays in Lakeside Park, located across from some of Highland Park's most opulent homes. But even without a blowhard to provide the entertainment, the lush landscaping and serene creek make for one of Dallas's best places to have a picnic, sketch, lay about, go for a run, or walk the dog. (Lakeside Drive, between Beverly Dr. and Armstrong Ave.)

MOST LIKELY EXCUSE FOR BEING LOST

EVERY HIGHWAY IN THE METROPLEX GOES BY (at least) two names: an official department of transportation designation (the one that uses a number) and an honorary designation (usually ending in freeway or expressway). Both names are used interchangeably by locals, traffic copter guys, and even sign makers. Are you trying to confuse visitors so much that they'll never return? Of course not: here's a handy chart to cross reference against your map:

- ◆ Central Expressway/Highway 75
- ◆ Julius Schepps Freeway/I-45
- ◆ Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) Freeway/I-635
- ◆ Stemmons Freeway/I-35
- ◆ R.L. Thornton Freeway South/I-35 East
- ◆ R.L. Thornton Freeway East/I-30

FIVE PLACES TO SPOT A DALLAS SOCIALITE

- ◆ **Highland Park Village**, especially at Lilly Dodson
- ◆ **The Zodiac Room** at Neiman Marcus downtown, carrying on Mother's tradition
- ◆ Taking afternoon tea at **Lady Primrose's Shopping English Countryside** — über-socialite Carolyn Rose Hunt owns the place
- ◆ **The Verandah Club** at the Wyndham Anatole, for a massage and a round of croquet
- ◆ The Bar at **The Mansion on Turtle Creek** — before the benefit that night

- ◆ John W. Carpenter Freeway/Highway 114 and Highway 183
- ◆ Airport Freeway/Highway 183 and Highway 121

BEST REASON DALLAS CAN NO LONGER BE THOUGHT OF AS THE "CITY OF HATE"

ALTHOUGH THE AWFUL MONIKER "CITY OF Hate" was borne entirely out of a nation's grief — it's not like Oswald was the mayor, or that it was legal in Dallas to walk around killing presidents — after nearly 40 years the city is still attempting to shake the unfortunate and untrue nickname.

Given the emotional reaction to the assassination of President Kennedy that spawned the question, "What kind of place is Dallas?" may I counter with some very unemotional facts related to safety (i.e., what are your chances of being assassinated here) and what's important to American presidents (the economy, stupid).

In a December 1997 *Money* magazine poll of the safest and most dangerous cities in America, Plano, Texas achieved the highest ranking for safety of any mid-sized city in America (only small cities rounded out the rest of the top 10). In the 1996 poll, Dallas ranked 173 out of 202 cities, safer than Portland, Oregon, and there were an astounding six metroplex suburbs on the list — Plano, Mesquite, Irving, Garland, Grand Prairie, and Fort Worth.

As for the economy, *Fortune* magazine's annual ranking of the best cities for business came out on December 20, 1999. And what was the number one "hottest corporate location" in the country? Dallas. So instead of City of Hate, let's coin a new name: City of Safe, or City of Freight. ☑