



**SMOKIN' CUBAN** Above, clockwise from top: San Antonio's Cuba-chic Hotel Havana, which has expanded its buzzy new lounge and restaurant called Ocho; Il Sogno at the Pearl Brewery; and the Mokara's spa

# Stay the Night

Here are 12 timely tips for getting away, going out and living it up in Austin, Dallas and San Antonio now!

| By Jeff Grawtman & Jeff Sobrad |



## Audacious Austin

**1. EW** At star chef David Bull's new uber-fine-dining **Congress** (200 Congress Ave., 512.827.2760), three- and seven-course seasonal tasting menus served up in a small, elegantly modern space might start with silky citrusy carrot mousse topped with caviar and end with artfully plated feta chocolate by former Houstonian fancy chef Plinio Sandalia. A block away at **Trace** at the **W Austin** hotel (200 Lavaca St., 512.542.3600), elite young chef Paul Hargrove sources ingredients from the nearby farmers market and serves staunchly rustic but truly fascinating fare such as fried squash blossoms stuffed with



ratatouille and served with polenta and "two hour" slow-cooked eggs. **2. EBP** Rarely six months old, the **W** (512.542.3600) is the minimalist haunt everyone predicted it would be. A mod-meets-Moroccan décor scheme in which concrete



**CAPTA** (EW) Above, clockwise from top: Washington, D.C. based in a soup can at Foreign & Domestic, and Congress; W, left and below; The W's adjoining Moody Theater and its Secret Bar.

and wood get hipped up with colorful rugs and accents bursts to life. There's great music—the hotel-wide sound system is epic, and the always mood-appropriate funky-hipster music library is enormous—and a lively crowd of pretty people. Guests sipping vodka-spiked cucumber-alopeto kombucha, most of them appearing to be slightly dressed-down fashion models, move toward through several intimate parlors, to the windowless, red-lit **Secret Bar**. Bar-hoppers and concertgoers spilling out of the adjoining new Moody Theater who might be up for an artisan-cocktail nightcap in a pubby restaurant bar—one that makes you imagine rained-out scenesters taking over a pheasant-hunting club—should jump into one of the rickshaws lined up outside and take a beery ride to new **Haddingtons** (601 W. 6th St., 512.992.0204).

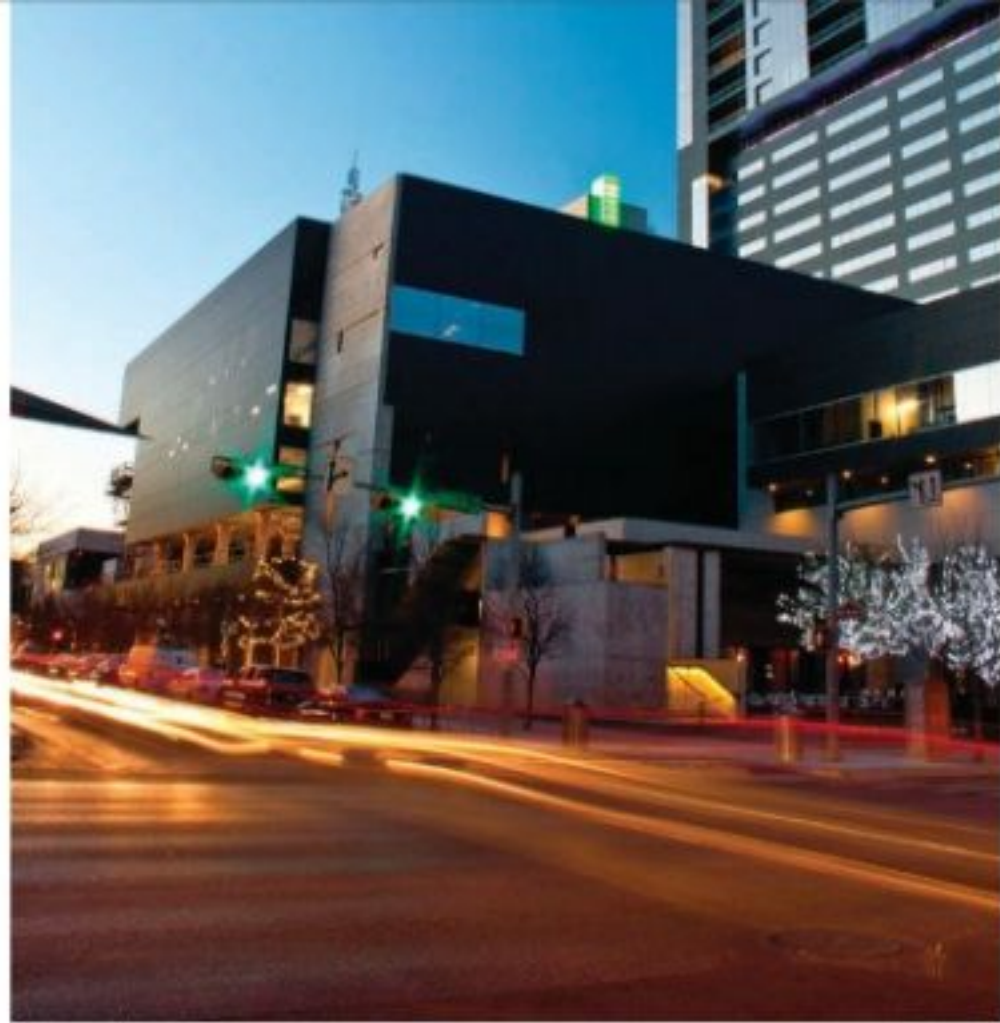
**3. BUCH** Sleep in at the **W** and have room service for breakfast—*slow* fine ham and eggs—and hit the hotel's waxy-sexy pool deck, or its **Away Spa**, where the new Led Zeppelin-inspired "Over the Hills and Far Away" treatment combines a salt scrub, a heated foot wrap and

a soundtrack of Lucinda Williams and Willie Nelson.

**4. R-30** There are limited bars-of-the-dog options at year-old indie smooch **Foreign & Domestic** (306 E. 53rd St., 512.699.1010)—the Brass Balls is a tangy Tecate with Michelada spices—and yet the new brunch menu is worth venturing to the sparsely-chic space north of downtown. Think pumpkin bread baked in a soup can, followed by white bean stew as a vehicle for soft eggs and baby octopus.

## Decadent Dallas

**1. EW** After a brief Houston foray, chef John Tesse's back in Big D. His newest, **The Commissary** (1722 South St., Ste. 102, 214.663.6657), equal parts wine bar and restaurant, runs entries like seared diver scallops with sun chokes and black trumpet mushrooms, as well as small plates like caviar topped deviled eggs and ceremonial-friedysters (which are paired well with the cergita char comes in a punch bowl). Meanwhile, new 36-seat, family uncles-appointed **Lucia** osteria (408 W. 8th St., 469.979.9797)...



## Audacious Austin

**1. EAT** At star chef David Bull's new über-fine-dining **Congress** (200 Congress Ave., 512.827.2760), three- and seven-course seasonal tasting menus served up in a small, elegantly modern space might start with silky citrusy carrot mousse topped with caviar and end with artfully plated feta cheesecake by former Houstonian pastry chef Plinio Sandalio. A block away at **Trace** at the **W Austin** hotel (200 Lavaca St., 512.542.3660), cute young chef Paul Hargrove sources ingredients from the nearby farmers market and serves staunchly rustic but truly fascinating fare such as fried squash blossoms stuffed with



ratatouille and served with polenta and "two hour" slow-cooked eggs. **2. PARTY** Barely six months old, the **W** (512.542.3600) is the must-hit haunt everyone predicted it would be. A mod-meets-Moroccan décor scheme in which concrete



**CAPITAL IDEA** Above, clockwise from top: Haddingtons, bread baked in a soup can at Foreign & Domestic, and Champagne tones at Congress. At left and below: The W's adjoining Moody Theater and its Secret Bar.

and wood get hippped up with colorful rugs and accents bursts to life. There's great music—the hotel-wide sound system is epic, and the always mood-appropriate funky-hipster music library is enormous—and a lively crowd of pretty people. Guests sipping vodka-spiked cucumber-jalapeño lemonades, most of them appearing to be slightly dressed-down fashion models, move inward through several intimate parlors, to the windowless, red-lit **Secret Bar**. Bar-hoppers and concertgoers spilling out of the adjoining new Moody Theater who might be up for an artisan-cocktail nightcap in a pubby restaurant bar—one that makes you imagine tattooed scenesters taking over a pheasant-hunting club—should jump into one of the rickshaws lined up outside and take a breezy ride to new **Haddingtons** (601 W. 6th St., 512.992.0204).

**3. DETOX** Sleep in at the **W** and have room service for breakfast—damn fine ham and eggs—and hit the hotel's way-sexy pool deck, or its **Away Spa**, where the new Led Zeppelin-inspired "Over the Hills and Far Away" treatment combines a salt scrub, a heated foot wrap and

a soundtrack of Lucinda Williams and Willie Nelson.

**4. RE-TOX** There are limited hair-of-the-dog options at year-old foodie smash **Foreign & Domestic** (306 E. 53rd St., 512.459.1010)—the Brass Balls is a tangy Tecate with Michelada spices—and yet the new brunch menu is worth venturing to the spartan-chic space north of downtown. Think pumpkin bread baked in a soup can, followed by white bean stew as a vehicle for soft eggs and baby octopus.

## Decadent Dallas

**1. EAT** After a brief Houston foray, chef John Tesar's back in Big D. His newest, **The Commissary** (1722 Routh St., Ste. 102, 214.643.6557), equal parts wine bar and restaurant, touts entrees like seared diver scallops with sun chokes and black trumpet mushrooms, as well as small plates like caviar-topped deviled eggs and cornmeal-fried oysters (which are paired well with the sangria that comes in a punch bowl). Meanwhile, new 36-seat, funkily antiques-appointed **Lucia** osteria (408 W. 8th St., **CONTINUED...**)



**DALLAS STARS** From top: the revamped Dragonfly restaurant at Hotel ZaZa, a Prohibition-era cocktail at new Cedars Social, and party time at Sfuzzi pizzeria in Uptown, whose raucous brunch is a must-hit.

with a bottle of Cristal and costs \$400. When in Dallas...

## Sexy San Antonio

**1. EAT** New businesses continue to pop up in the trendy Historic Pearl Brewery area, where hot chef Andrew Weisman has followed up housemade ravioli at his fine

Italian **Il Sogno** (200 E. Grayson St., Ste. 100, 210.223.3900) with bright white wine, caviar, oysters from the East and West Coasts, and whole fried fresh fish at his newer **Sandbar Fish House** (200 E. Grayson St., Ste. 117, 210.222.2426).

**2. PARTY** A year ago, the Austin-based high priestess of Hill Country hip, hotelier Liz Lambert, restored and reopened **Hotel Havana** (1015 Navarro St., 210.222.2008). But she wasn't done tinkering. Late last month, she expanded the hotel's small, locally beloved, candlelit basement bar, **Ocho**, taking over the birdcage-recalling, steel-and-glass-encased space next door. Painted Tiffany blue, the newly adjoining upstairs spread has indoor and outdoor seating overlooking the Riverwalk. Chef Larry McGuire of Perla's in Austin and Liz's restaurateur brother Lou created pan-Latin food and cocktail menus to serve there, with cocktails like the Martinique Punch—with Clement Creole d'Orange, rum brandy, fresh fruit and cava—and bites like shrimp-

and-crab campachena. And back in the basement, there's a large selection of mezcal.

**3. DETOX** Stumble up to your room at the small, midcentury-Cuba-inspired Havana and, the next morning, walk 10 easy minutes to **Mokara Hotel and Spa** (212 W. Crockett St., 210.396.5840) for an aromatic River Walk Foot Fix foot massage, a nice add-on to the Texas Two Step, a four-hand, full-body rubdown.

**4. RE-TOX** Cheese grits, fried green tomatoes and inventive pork-pushing plates pop up on the intimate midcentury-mod gastropub **The Monterey's** (1127 S. St. Mary's St., 210.745.2581) ever-changing brunch menu. Chase it all down with a craft beer from the well-curated selection. Or, head back to the Pearl Brewery for authentic Mexican street fare and potent margaritas at new casual-cool **La Gloria Ice House** (100 E. Grayson St., 210.267.9040), which heaves with die-hard fans who love chef Johnny Hernandez's slow-cooked pork tortas and crispy chicken tacos. **■**