

WE'VE HEARD
IT SAID OF THE
BAYOU MAN
THAT HE IS SO SINGULAR HE DEFIES BEING
CATEGORIZED;
THAT, IN SUM OR IN PART,
HE RADIATES THE PARTICULAR
"JE NE SAIS QUOI"
USUALLY RESERVED FOR
SCALAWAGS OR STATESMEN.

UPON OBSERVATION, WE ADMIT THAT
IT MIGHT BE TRUE.

BUT THOUGH HE MIGHT NEVER BE CAPABLE
OF BEING PIGEONHOLED
HE AT LEAST CAN **LEND HIMSELF**

TO A LITTLE DESCRIPTION,
ALBEIT THAT PAINTED IN
BROAD STROKES.

BY HOLLY BERETTO, BRUCE FARR, LIBBY INGRASSIA, MICHELLE JACOBY AND JESSICA MEBANE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK LIPCZYNSKI

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BARBERY IS BIG

By the looks of the latest fashion magazines and big-screen blockbusters (“American Hustle,” anyone?), beards and ’staches are back with a vengeance. But how long they’re here, who’s to say?

A visit to Salon & Barber at Traci Scott on West Gray will tell you that despite what the Hollywood boys are doing, the Bayou Man is all about a clean shave. Owner Traci Duff’s antique barber tool collection and turn-of-the-century photo of a mustachioed Victorian gentleman posing the question, “When was the last time you had a proper shave?” convinced us we were on the right track.

If the old fashion trope, “everything old is new again,” ever had more resonance than it does now, stepping into her salon’s oh-so-masculine barber and shave area (with impeccable shoe shine service offered by her and fellow barber David Anthony, we might add) will give one a strong sense of old-world charm polished up with modern expertise.

When Duff and Anthony initially decided to get the requisite barber’s licenses necessary to give straight-razor shaves and such, they struck out for a European adventure and visited dark-leather appointed barber shops in London, Rome and Paris. After painstaking research—and one very instructive, steeped-in-ritual shave experience for Anthony from world-famous Italian *barbiere* Silvano—they returned home to take the

KNOW YOUR SHAVE

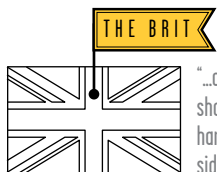
Not all shaves are created equally. Traci Duff takes you around the world with her menu of straight-razor shaves.



“A hot foam straight razor shave, in and out the door quickly!”



“...a scalp massage and haircut, paired with a luxurious straight razor shave and hot towel spa facial.”



“...a fragrant straight razor shave with a hot towel facial, hand/arm massage and sideburn/neck trim.”



“A classic straight razor shave with brush and hot towels.”

Houston male beauty scene by storm, one close shave at a time.

“I think I’ve always liked facial hair on a guy. I don’t know if it’s because my father always sported it or what, but we’re seeing lots of businessmen and sporty guys alike coming in with major beards,” Duff says. “We’ve really tried to give our clientele a feel for what a good wet or straight-razor shave should be. And it’s so relaxing that we’ve had a few guys fall asleep while we’re giving the hot towel facials.”

A client can choose from the Texan, Italian, British or Parisian shaves, and will feel refreshed, as well as exquisitely manicured. Both the British and Parisian options include a hand/arm massage, and prices range from \$25 (Texan) to \$100 (Parisian). While this experience may represent more of a splurge than a weekly ritual opportunity for some, Duff and Anthony try to educate all bearded and mustachioed clientele about good beard maintenance.

“Rule No. 1 that we picked up on our travels is to shave with the grain. Aside from that, you need a brush and beard conditioner,” asserts Duff. “I’ve been telling guys who don’t want to have a go at their own mugs with a straight razor to leave that to us, and just maintain things with a double, not triple or four-bladed, razor in between salon visits.” -JM

: FACIAL HAIR :

The long and short of it,
in the words of **TRACI DUFF**

Since opening Salon & Barber at Traci Scott, owner Traci Duff has learned a thing or two about beards and mustaches, especially what looks today's Houston man is sporting.



I PERSONALLY LIKE A **BIT OF SCRUFF**, SOMETHING A LITTLE LONGER THAN A 5 O'CLOCK SHADOW, BUT WE'RE ALSO SEEING BOTH **BUSINESSMEN AND CASUAL GUYS** SPORT FULL-ON LUMBERJACK VERSIONS THAT WHEN **PROPERLY MANICURED**, LOOK GREAT. SOUL PATCHES ARE STILL IN, BUT NOT THE LONG SIDEBURNS. IT'S A FINE LINE BETWEEN **A COOL BEARD** AND '70S REFUGEE.

A MAN AND HIS BOOTS

ONE BAYOU MAN'S PERSPECTIVE

As told by Walter Pye

Walter Pye knows a thing or two about boots. As chief executive officer of Pinto Ranch, and before that, as CEO and buyer for his family's eponymous retail company, he is an experienced merchandiser and buyer, and has a national reputation as a respected merchant and businessman. Who better to tell us about that special relationship between a man and his boots? Here's what he had to say.

"Wearing cowboy boots is a way of life that has grown from the early days of our Texas history. We've grown up with it, especially in Houston. Houston has more of a western feel, even more so than Dallas and other large Texas cities. Ranching and rodeoing is ingrained in our culture. It's a true American lifestyle and Houston has really embraced it.

Growing up, my high school basketball team wore jeans, a white shirt and boots to events and functions. It was like our second uniform. Back then, boys emulated their fathers and grandfathers. If a boy's dad wore boots, he'd wear them, too. Fathers would even pass down their boots to their sons and so on. We've had customers bring in boots that have been handed down from generation to generation to be resoled. You can do that with a good pair of handmade boots.

People have a misconception that boots are uncomfortable, but if you find the right fit, you're set. You'll get the best fit from a pair of handmade Western boots. There's a big difference between these boots and machine-made boots. Western boots have thicker soles made of leather. They're also made without nails. You're basically walking on an inch of leather.

Because boots were meant to be worn all day working on the ranch, they were handmade with care. But even though they've made the transition from the ranch to the board room, wearing boots is still a western tradition that the real Houston man will keep alive for generations to come."



PINTO RANCH

FASHION DO'S AND DON'TS

DO wear the occasional T-shirt for casual events. After all, the Bayou City is sub-tropical for most of the year.

DO consider investing in a classic watch even though you're blissfully wedded to your smartphone; it's what gentlemen do to show off their manly wrists when a lady asks the time.

DO wear a great button-down that signals your appreciation for the resurgence of preppy cool.

DO invest in a tuxedo, says Murry Penner of M Penner. Particularly in Houston with all the black-tie charity events and so many people active in raising money for great causes, you have to have a great-fitting tuxedo.

DO update your wardrobe regularly and try something different, agree both Penner and Hite. Penner suggests brown shoes and belt with a navy suit or a pocket square any time you put on a tie for a dash of individualism. Hite sees men trying a bow tie or a dressier knit shirt—even one with a collar that you can pair with a tie and jacket.

DO wear nice, not grungy, athletic shoes on occasion to set off a baggy-cut pair of trousers and good shirt. It says your style is edgy and youthful without getting all fashion-victim-y about it.

DON'T buy anything so small that it looks like you rifled through your niece's jewelry box, especially since Dick Hite of Norton Ditto says that larger faces on watches are definitely on trend.

DON'T let that T-shirt be anything rumpled, holey or overly lascivious.

DON'T wear one that's oversized or poorly fitted.

DON'T (ever) wear that Ed Hardy-inspired, scroll-and-skull embellished long-sleeved shirt thing again. Ever.

DON'T wear those extra-pointy, scuffed ostrich boots in "silver-dollar gray" from the back of your closet with a suit because it's rodeo season and you're in Texas. J.R. Ewing is dead, God rest his soul, and you're living in one of the fashion meccas of the world, cowpoke. Update your style, polish your boots and dress accordingly.

DON'T let different mean sloppy, says Penner. No torn jeans, nothing too baggy or too long.

We hate to be the bearers of bad tidings, but there are more than a few fashion faux pas out there. To help fashion-conscious Bayou Men stay clear of the worst examples and find their way into the best looks, here are some tips. -LI, JM

: CUSTOMIZE IT :

Houston haberdashers say that custom fit is what the Bayou Man wants.

Customization represents probably the biggest trend in menswear. Murry Penner, co-owner of M Penner, says that “made to measure” clothing—suits and shirts that are completely personalized for a customer, but based on an existing pattern—is a huge part of their business. And while they’ve been focused on it for years, it’s the fastest growing part of the menswear business because it gives consumers the chance to get exactly what they want, something Penner feels the independent-minded Bayou Man particularly likes.

“Every detail is customizable, from picking their own fabric to how the pockets are done, and that’s how the men want to dress,” he says. “Suits, shirts, formal tails, even shoes can be made to measure so that the customer can be an individual. It fits Houston to do business that way: From the beginning, Houston has been a can-do, entrepreneurial, individual city and it makes sense that the men like their clothes, their cars, their business the way they want it.”

Of course, choosing to go custom or made-to-measure is also about the fit, vital when shopping for suits and shirts.

“Proper fit makes a huge difference and it’s often difficult or impossible to achieve that in off-the-rack clothing,” says David Hamilton, co-owner of Hamilton Shirts. “Well made, custom shirts will last for years and be the most frequently worn items in your closet.”

As the saying goes, the clothes make the man. And style is form of communication.

“Having a sense of personal style is a way of representing that you know and are comfortable with yourself,” Hamilton says. -LI

...AS LONG AS I GOT MY SUIT AND TIE

The face is handled. You’ve got your boots. So, let’s talk wardrobe.

It’s a bit unwieldy during certain seasons and humidity levels to break out the wool suits every day, but most guys here don’t let that limit their day-to-day panache. Take a brisk walk around downtown on any given weekday, and you’ll definitely feel the resurgence of crisp elegance over hipster-centric throwaway looks.

If Tom Ford’s 2014 menswear collection were any indication, we’d be seeing lots of whites and outrageous colors in men’s fashion. But more than likely, your average Bayou Man will wear a more low-key version than Ford’s hot pink shawl-collared blazer with matching pants. Still, double-breasted jackets are back...as long as it’s comfortable. Then we’ll see a sexy profile of exquisitely tailored shirts and torso-skimming vests over cuffed and single-pleat trousers.

“Both major and boutique firms are going back to suits or blazers, sport coats,” says Dick Hite, principle owner and CEO of Norton Ditto. “And as long as the weight is right—8½ to 9 ounces—wool suits or jackets can be year-round. Another suit that has been

really popular for the southern gentleman is a light tan suit.”

Murry Penner, co-owner of M Penner agrees. “Men are wearing suits again—not just young guys, but men of all ages.”

He suggests that the trend toward softer constructed jackets offers a fusion of dress clothing and sportswear, and is very popular.

Because comfort is important to the customers, it’s also a primary criterion for what they show in the store, says Penner.

“Slimmer silhouettes, shorter jackets and trimmer pants are the trend, and a lot of Houston men are starting to adopt that as long as it’s still comfortable.”

Any good start to one’s personal style revamp should, however, include a great shirt. And while the classic shirt is, well, a classic, there are always new trends in men’s shirts.

“A more tailored fit has been trending for a while now and that looks to continue,” says David Hamilton, co-owner of Hamilton Shirts in Houston. “Today’s men are also looking for a softer, more relaxed style, as well as prints and color in patterns.” -LI, MJ, JM

“Juice it up,” says Hite. Try a bow tie or wear some of the purple that’s popular in shirts and ties. “People have bought a lot of solid suits in the past few years because they weren’t wearing as many suits and [solid suits] are more versatile. But now it’s important to add some stripes, checks, shirts with color.”

NORTON DITTO



BEYOND STEAK AND POTATOES

Move over, steak and potatoes. If you're looking for comfort food, it's time to go outside the box. Yes, you'll still get those rich flavors and filling dishes that remind you of the best home cooking. But before you order another New York strip, consider these options.

The short rib that chef Kevin Bryant is serving up at Eleven XI is tailor-made to hit all the guy taste buds. Served "caveman style," it's a nine-inch beef rib on the bone and arrives at your table looking like something out of "The Flintstones."

"This is what we call a 'wow' plate," says Bryant. "When it comes to your table, other people look at it and go, 'What's that?' It's a really great dish."

Slow braised for 12 hours and laced with Dublin's Black Cherry Cola syrup, the massive meal comes with grilled asparagus and sautéed oyster mushrooms. Bryant says it's like grandma's cooking, with its own twist.

"It may make you think of a great beef stew or a pot roast, but it's got so much more flavor than either of those," Bryant says. "And all the comfort you remember from those dishes is still there."

Someone else doing a great take on Grandma's comfort food is chef Brandi Key, whose Spaghetti Carbonara over at Coppa Osteria in Rice Village is a thing of beauty. She keeps the rich, white Parmesan cream sauce, but swaps out crunchy bacon for tangy, savory, chopped salumi, then adds in black pepper and parsley. The whole thing is tossed with an egg yolk tableside, making for a cool presentation and promising you'll come away with a new take on Italian food.

Still craving something smoky and down-home? You want the sliced brisket barbecue at the Carriage House Café. Slow smoked for 16 hours, with a terrific "dew" around the edges, it scores big points for its flavor and unpretentious presentation.

And if all that isn't enough to get you out of your comfort zone, remember, the 20-ounce Game Day Cut of prime rib at Lorenzo's is a thing of beauty. -HB



KEVIN BRYANT

Executive chef, Eleven XI



BRANDI KEY

Executive chef, Coppa Osteria

: HUNGRY FOR MORE :

Any Bayou Man worth his weight in salt will have no problem polishing off chef Kevin Bryant's beef rib dish. In fact, he may be left hungry for more. If so, Bryant offers up his recipe for a baby back rib sandwich. Bon appétit!

- 1 full rack of ribs, smoked until fork tender
- 1 cup of your favorite barbecue sauce
- 4 slices horseradish Cheddar cheese
- 2 cups homemade or store-bought coleslaw
- Bread of your choice [jalapeño Cheddar roll recommended]

Pull all the meat from the ribs and add to a hot sauté pan with the barbecue sauce. While mixture is heating, lightly warm your bread in a 450-degree oven. Remove bread from oven. Place a light layer of coleslaw on the bread and top it with the hot rib meat. Place the horseradish cheese on top of the meat and return to the oven until the cheese has melted. Remove from the oven, grab a knife and fork, and dive in!



WHERE Cocktails and Whiskey MEET

For the Bayou Man, it's not only about beer. Sure, he knows his brew. But give him the chance and he'll tell you a thing or two about cocktails, as well. Case in point: the craft cocktail.

If you think the days of craft cocktails are over, think again. While the high-sugar, girly drinks have gone out of fashion, in their place come more masculine, savory libations, manly enough for even the guyest of guys to pony up to the bar and order them. More often than not, these drinks are crafted with whiskey, something with so much guy street cred, no one ordering one could ever be accused of getting in touch with his feminine side.

"Drinking whiskey is a manly thing to do," says Curtis Childress, bar manager at Rosemont Social Club. "And it's been like that throughout history. Think about cowboy movies; they were always drinking whiskey, and when I was growing up we thought that was cool."

Childress opened Rosemont nine months ago, and one of the drinks out of the gate was the Kentucky Mule, a remix of the classic Moscow Mule and described by Childress as what would happen if a Moscow Mule and a mint julep got together and had a kid.

"I love this because it's simple," he says. "This is a really accessible cocktail, and the flavors work so well together." -HB



KENTUCKY MULE

Blend 1.5 ounces of rye whiskey or bourbon with 1 ounce of juice, half an ounce of turbinado syrup and a small handful of mint.

Shake and strain into a glass, and top with 1.5 ounces of ginger beer.



SALUTE TO THE CHEF

Maybe you like watching Andrew Zimmern eat all those bizarre foods and seeing Anthony Bourdain trek off to parts unknown. But, deep down, you know you want to be the guy in the kitchen, putting it all together like some Iron Chef rock star. Where do you start?

Head back to class. At Culinary Institute LeNotre, the Chef's Club weekend courses allow you to create multi-course meals, while the associate's degree programs and diploma coursework are designed to put graduates into a kitchen, armed with the culinary arts skills necessary for a professional setting.

Jan Robertson, who's in charge of the Chef's Club, says that each of those courses are stand-alone and provide a taste of how classical training works.

"We usually have between seven and 15 people to a class, so there's a lot of individual attention," she says, adding that a bonus to taking the courses is that it gives you an idea of what being in a professional kitchen is like.

"In our current regular degree programs, we have several people from our Chef's Club who've enrolled and decided to do this for a living," says Robertson. -HB



THE GRILL ALTERNATIVE: CRAWFISH BOIL

When you think of kicking back in the backyard with some buddies, you might immediately think barbecue. While grilling out is always in style, right now is peak season for crawfish.

Greg Drouin, aka the Crawfish Man (thecrawfishman.com), says he's been around mudbugs his

whole life. Growing up in south Louisiana, he says crawfish boils were a regular thing. When he came to Houston in the mid-1990s, he brought his crawfish-boil hosting talents with him and he's spent the last two decades running events for organizations and individuals who want a little



taste of his slice of Louisiana.

“Having a crawfish boil is all about socializing,” he says. “It’s different from a barbecue. With a crawfish boil, you eat a little, you drink some beer, you hang out and you eat a little more. There’s no such thing as one serving time.”

Jim Gossen, chairman of Sysco Louisiana Foods, agrees: “There’s something primitive about it, eating with your hands, the ritual of making the crawfish.”

Gossen came to Houston in 1975 and opened a string of restaurants, including Willie

G’s (now part of Landry’s) and Magnolia Bar & Grill, where he hosted regular crawfish boils on the restaurant’s porch. At one point, he estimates they were going through nearly 7,000 pounds of crawfish each week.

Both Gossen and Drouin have been involved with the annual Crawfish Festival in Spring, and they say hosting a boil of your own is pretty easy. Boil crawfish, serve up potatoes and corn, and open up a cold beer. If that’s not your style, Drouin says you can always call him. -HB

: CRAWFISH BOIL 101 :

Perfect a do-it-yourself, back yard boil

WHILE ALL CRAWFISH BOILS ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL, THE PREMISE IS JUST ABOUT THE SAME. GREG DROUIN, OWNER OF THE THE CRAWFISH MAN CATERING COMPANY, SHARES HIS MUDBUG KNOW-HOW WITH THIS RECIPE:

Fill an 80-quart pot about halfway with water and bring to a boil. Add one 4 ½-pound bag of Louisiana Seasoning.

As it starts to dissolve, squeeze in fresh lemon juice to taste, along with 16 ounces of liquid crab boil and 1 pound of butter. [At this point, you can also add one whole onion, cut in halves, and cayenne pepper to taste.]

Bring to a second boil and allow the flavors to blend for 5 to 10 minutes.

Add in one 35-pound sack of crawfish (you may have to do it in batches) and cover, bringing to a final boil. Turn off the burner or remove the pot from heat and let sit for five minutes.

Remove crawfish from pot and transfer to an ice chest, sprinkle with seasoning to taste. The crawfish will keep for a few hours.

Serve with boiled corn on the cob and potatoes, and your beer of choice.

– Courtesy of Greg Drouin



GREG DROUIN

“Having a crawfish boil is all about socializing.”





THE FAMILY MAN

The redesigned **TOYOTA HIGHLANDER** has gone upscale for 2014, from its premium interior to its longer and wider, more chiseled exterior. Steering response is crisper, the cabin is much quieter and user-friendly, with storage space and technology galore. The standard configuration is seven passengers plus driver, so the Highlander can haul the kids, their friends and/or relatives. Or you can get captain's chairs for the second row. The Hybrid version is rated at 28 mpg overall. The Highlander starts at around \$29,215; \$47,300 for the hybrid.



DOG'S BEST FRIEND

SUBARU FORESTER is the Labrador retriever of cars: a dependable companion that's ready and willing to go anywhere, anytime. It's a "field dog" that we've taken out on trails you'd think are more suitable for Jeep Wranglers, while enjoying smooth jazz on the satellite radio. So it should gobble up Houston's potholes with ease. Redesigned for the 2014 model year, this affordable beast (starts at around \$22,000) gets up to 32 mpg on the highway and 24 around town.



LAP OF LUXURY

The **AUDI A7** is the automotive equivalent of an Italian power suit. The clean, flowing lines of this coupe-like four-door are a visual treat. But it's when you tickle the accelerator that its true character and athleticism are deliciously revealed. The A7 starts at \$64,000. If you've got an extra \$50K burning a hole in your portfolio, order yourself the over-the-top RS7 variant, a 560-horse work of art.

HOW THE ROLLS



Dressed, fed and into the vehicle. For the man behind the wheel, Jeff Yip, automotive journalist who's written for the Houston Chronicle, Los Angeles Times and The New York Times, offers up his take on what the Bayou Man is driving.



PICKUP, TRIED AND TRUE

The new-for-2014 **GMC SIERRA 1500** packs a combination punch of versatility, style, capability and civility. Then there's the operating cost. The 4.3-liter V6 produces 305 lb.-ft. of torque, but has an EPA rating of 18/24 city/highway mpg. If you aren't in a time bind, you might do well to check out GMC's new mid-size 2015 Canyon when it arrives this fall. Its 3.6-liter V6 will have close to the same power as the Sierra full-size, but just as important in urban settings, parking will be a whole lot easier.



SUPER HOT HYBRID

The gutsy **TESLA MODEL S** electrified the marketplace by proving that green cars needn't be goofy. Starting at \$63,570 and built like tanks, Tesla's sexy four-door offers blistering acceleration, especially with the performance package. Range anxiety hardly raises its head since the Tesla can go up to 300 miles per charge. The other charge? Zipping by gas stations with impunity because the Tesla S uses no gasoline and puts out no greenhouse gases.



MONEY IS NO OBJECT

The **MERCEDES-BENZ SLS AMG GT FINAL EDITION** is literally and figuratively the ultimate power statement. To mark the end of a magical era, this instant collectible will be limited to a run of 350 coupes (gullwings) and roadsters. Sticker north of \$220,000, those able to latch on to a Final Edition will need to be as well heeled as they are lucky. The car gets special aero touches, but will be powered by the standard 583-horsepower 6.3-liter hand-assembled V8.



: SLOW BURN :

Why the Bayou Man "kneads" a good massage.

Following the rigor of sports activity, the Bayou Man views a massage as a necessary means to an end, the perfect way to bring everything back down to a resting pulse rate. And that's true whether the sport in question is a brisk match of bocce ball, a bouldering adventure at the Hueco Tanks or anything in between.

Fortunately for all, as the masseuse's art has evolved over the years, it's been refined to the level of a science.

"Years ago, sports massage was reserved just for athletes," says Patrick Jarvis, lead therapist at Massage Heights in Washington Heights. "That was when the average guy who wanted to play sports went out in the back yard and tossed a ball around with the kids or, at most, had a pickup basketball game with the guys down the street."

Nowadays, Jarvis points out, men (and women) from all walks of life and professions push themselves to far greater tests of their mettle.

"They run marathons, they're triathletes, they bike and do the MS 150. What you end up with is more so-called 'average' people being as well-conditioned as athletes and in need of sports massages. I'm doing massages today that I used to only do when I worked for the athletic department at a university," Jarvis says.

Under the catchall rubric of "sports massage," the treatment can get very specific and particular to the muscle group that the sport exercises, Jarvis explains.

"If it's a golfer, we're going to want to work primarily on flexibility. If he tells me he's going to be doing a triathlon, that lets me know I'm going to want to work his IT (iliotibial) band, quads, calves, his shoulders for the swimming portion of it. It just depends on what sport is involved and his level of engagement in it," he says.

In sum, as the Bayou Man would certainly agree, if the investment in the sport is worth anything at all, it's worth the price of a premiere massage. -BF

WORKOUT WARRIOR

If the Bayou Man does anything, he does it with conviction. Especially in situations when he's pitting his prowess—his brain, might and muscle—against the elements. Never to be perfectly pinned down or typecast, there's an entire spectrum of Bayou Man personas on the course, the field, the track or the gym. Here are just a few.

1 The "to the limits" male specimen regularly puts it all on the line. Every day, with merciless self-punishment, he's busy doing wind sprints and hitting the hard bag, prepping for his next Tough Mudder competition.

If not that, then he's investing every muscle and sinew into the newly legendary Spartan Race, about which its promoters say: "There's a fire in everyone; they have it in them and they need an outlet to prove that they have that 'Spartan spirit.'"

Round out these two ultimate endurance tests with an Ironman competition or two, and you what we mean when we say that this category of Bayou Man knows no boundaries.

2 Next up are those who take it down a notch—the man who might not be pushing himself to the absolute limits of his endurance, but who still risks hitting his own personal wall at a CrossFit gym or

as a boot camp competitor. CrossFit—a branded concept involving the holy trinity of movement, fitness and nutrition—has swept Houston and the country at large, making believers of the thousands of fitness disciples who sign up for the conditioning ride of their life. And a glance at the burgeoning bevy of fitness boot camps in the Houston area are testimony to the dedication with which the Bayou Man approaches his fitness.

3 Then there's the old standby, the Bayou Man whom we find religiously working it (and checking it) at the local LA Fitness or 24 Hour Fitness. Look around, the man we're talking about will be the one who's using the treadmill or elliptical machine to the limits, getting the most of his early-morning, pre-work workout or his after-work escape where he can sweat the day's pressures away.

4 And let's not forget the spiritual side of the Bayou Man, the blissful zen practitioner who's seeking his "chi" in intense meditation or a "Mayurasana" (peacock pose) or other impossibly difficult yoga posture. There's nirvana out there, and the Bayou Man is determined to find it. -BF

CrossFit has swept the Bayou City, making a believer out of the Bayou Man, who signs up for the conditioning ride of his life.



ON THE Hunt

For many Bayou Men, the thrill of the hunt is one of the most irresistible experiences they can imagine. Some would argue that the hunting spirit is so deeply rooted in the human psyche that it's aboriginal—primal. They say, we are gatherers, certainly, but also hunters. Not every Bayou Man embraces hunting, but it is bigger than you may realize. If you don't own your own lease, but still want to get in on the experience, here are some ideas.

In and around Houston, hunting bigger game isn't a readily available option for most Bayou Men, but, fortunately, a handful of hunting clubs that offer their members a premiere waterfowl hunting experience are springing up in several locations. One of the longest-running clubs of this kind is the Thunderbird Hunting Club and Lodge. Since

1986, the club has offered membership to men and women, inviting them 80 miles southwest to El Campo, where they'll tramp about in a meticulously groomed, 20,000-acre wetlands tract. The spacious site invites a wide assortment of wild duck and geese species, and even some sandhill cranes that are fair game in Texas.

Todd Steele, who co-founded the club with his business partner Paul McDonald, says the lure of this experience is undeniable.

"It's almost an addiction, when people get involved in this kind of hunting," he says. "[Club members] come here, get up in the morning and it's cold, the wind is howling, it's wet. But they inevitably get pumped about duck hunting. It's all about getting into the elements and down to Mother Nature."

Steele points out that, unlike some hunting clubs where the game is farmed on the premises and set free just prior to the hunt, the game at his club is completely wild—migratory birds that fly south from Canada.

"We create the habitat that attracts them and they flock to it," he says.

Some Bayou Men prefer scanning the horizon for clay pigeons to those fluttering on the wing. It's all a matter of taste. In that regard, Houston's American Shooting Center in George Bush Park has been a sport shooter's paradise since 1989. Situated on 563 spacious acres, the club offers rifle and pistol range shooting with more than 200 positions, and—separately—skeet, trap and clay fields, all supported by quality staff. -BM ♦



TODD STEELE



*"It's all about getting into the elements and down to Mother Nature."
- Todd Steele*