

West of Fort Worth, Texas restaurant pioneer Stephan Pyles dials his 'greatest hits'

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STEPHENVILLE

Chef [Stephan Pyles](#)' unmistakable Texas cuisine has a new home, and this one is an easier drive from Fort Worth.

[The Seeker](#), serving Pyles' familiar honey-fried chicken, steaks and lobster tamale pie, is open inside the [Interstate Inn](#), a restored 1960s-era motor hotel in Stephenville

It's an hour's drive away — take Interstate 20 west and U.S. 281 south to 809 East Road — but the stress level and free parking make it a far better trip for Fort Worth diners than Pyles' [landmark Dallas restaurants](#) of the past 40 years such as Baby Routh, Star Canyon and Stampede 66.

The Seeker is a charming fit inside the Interstate Inn, built in the 1960s as a Caravan Interstate Inn and restored to its roadside-Americana glory as a destination hotel and attraction in the ["Cowboy Capital of the World."](#)

The Seeker restaurant in Stephenville brings the rich western decor of a Stephan Pyles restaurant to a restored motor-court hotel. Bud Kennedy bud@star-telegram.com

Pyles is circling back to his childhood in a Big Spring truck stop.

"I never thought I'd be here, but with everything that's happening in Stephenville, it's an exciting place to be," he said recently.

The hotel decor plays off its 1960s past. It opened as the Caravan Interstate Inn, an optimistic name since no interstate highway goes to Stephenville.

But the Seeker's decor is more Western, like Pyles' contemporary Texas restaurants of years past.

Dallas chef Stephan Pyles, a pioneer of Southwestern cuisine, opened a new restaurant, The Seeker, at the Interstate Inn in Stephenville, Texas. *Courtesy of Interstate Inn*

The menu features a bone-in rib-eye with red chile onion rings and a bean-mushroom ragout, an example of Pyles' updated Texas cooking.

There's a coriander-cured tenderloin with a potato pancake or a short rib with tongue-in-cheek-named "Ol' Redneck" cheddar mac-and-cheese.

The sides are both distinctive — squash bisque, an esquites-crab salad, a pork-belly huarache de nixtamal with apple-mint chutney — and familiar — green beans, tots and buttermilk biscuits.

The pork-belly huarache de nixtamal with apple-mint chutney at The Seeker restaurant.

Courtesy of The Seeker

"There's some pretty standard things, but in the style of the other restaurants," Pyles said.

"Most things on the menu are 'greatest hits.' But it's local. We're using 12-15 local farmers," he said. "We're probably the only restaurant here doing our own nixtamal," he added, referring to the process that purifies corn.

The lobby of the newly remodeled Interstate Inn motor court hotel in Stephenville, Texas.
Courtesy of Interstate Inn

The Seeker joins a cowboy-country upscale dining scene that includes Oma Leen's in Hico, Newton's Saddlerack in Stephenville, Second Bar + Kitchen in Mineral Wells, Rough Creek Lodge in rural Erath County and Bosque Cantina in Walnut Springs.

The Seeker is offering a three-course Valentine's weekend dinner for \$75 with tables available Feb. 13 or 15.

An esquites-crab salad at The Seeker restaurant. *Courtesy of The Seeker*

The Interstate Inn is offering a Valentine's weekend special with a room, a Pyles cooking class on "Foods of Passion," dinner and Sunday brunch for \$2,500 per couple.

The Seeker is open for dinner only Tuesday through Saturday; [254-964-3550](tel:254-964-3550), theseekertx.com.

Lobster tamale pie at The Seeker restaurant in Stephenville. *Courtesy of The Seeker*

The swimming pool at the Interstate Inn, a newly restored motor court hotel in Stephenville, Texas. Bud Kennedy bud@star-telegram.com

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