

Austin Expands with Hotels, Attractions, Restaurants

Austin caters to a diverse audience of music fans, art aficionados, history buffs, sports enthusiasts, politicians and more. As the city's popularity as a travel destination grows, so does the demand for entertainment, new attractions and distinct accommodations. And Austin answers the demand with new hotels, museums, restaurants and retail projects.

HOTELS/ LODGING

NEW PROPERTIES

Kimber Modern (*now open*) – This European-style bed-and-breakfast features seven modern guestrooms located just off South Congress Avenue, within walking distance of eclectic dining, vintage shopping and live music. Urban design, natural light and do-it-yourself amenities cater to urban travelers, who enjoy everything from keyless entry to wireless internet and iPod docks in each room. Centered around an expansive patio, the Kimber Modern invites guests to socialize with one another. www.kimbermodern.com

Hotel Saint Cecilia (*now open*) – Bunkhouse Management and Clayton, Levy & Little Architects have turned the former Miller-Crockett House into a boutique, 14-room hotel just off South Congress Avenue, in Austin's hippest neighborhood. Named in honor of the patron saint of music, the hotel offers private bungalows, a new pool and modern lounge. www.bunkhousegmt.com

AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center at the University of Texas (*now open*) – The newest meeting facility on the University of Texas campus includes a 300-seat amphitheatre, 800-seat divisible ballroom, classrooms, conference rooms and breakout rooms. In addition, the center houses 297 guestrooms and three dining outlets. www.meetatatexas.com

Aloft at the Domain (*under construction, scheduled to open November 2009*) – Located next door to the upscale shopping complex, The Domain, Aloft offers 140 guestrooms and more than 1,500 square feet of meeting space. The hip guestrooms are designed with high ceilings, free wi-fi, 42" high-definition plasma televisions, iPod docks and more. Guests can also enjoy a fitness center, bar, pool and café. www.aloftaustin.com

The Westin at The Domain (*under construction, scheduled to open in March 2010*) – White Lodging is soon to start construction on an eight-story, 340-room Westin Hotel as part of the large-scale Domain retail project. The project will also include an urban American bistro, WestinWorkout[®] fitness facility and 14,000 square feet of meeting space, as well as retail shopping anchored by Dick's Sporting Goods and Neiman Marcus. Some residential units will also be included. www.westin.com

Block 21/W Hotel (*under construction, scheduled to open mid-2010*) – W Hotel anchors this \$225 million project in the 2nd Street District. The space will also include 200 luxury

condominiums, new studios for *Austin City Limits* and a nightclub co-owned by ACL's pilot star, Willie Nelson. Shoppers can browse among 50,000 square feet of street-level retail as well. www.stratusprop.com

Hyatt Place Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (*announced, construction start date TBD*) – Global Hyatt Corp. has plans to build a Hyatt Place at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, at the intersection of Highway 71 and Thornberry Road. The new hotel is part of a 200-hotel project across the United States. The property aims to accommodate business travelers, with free Wi-Fi access, sleeper sofas, oversized desks, ergonomic chairs, flat-screen TVs and more. www.hyatt.com

The Seaholm Plaza Hotel (*announced, construction start date TBD*) – A large-scale, \$117 million redevelopment of Austin's Seaholm Power Plant integrates the plant's Art Deco facade into a new center for retail, restaurants, offices and meeting and event space. A 160-room upscale hotel with two restaurants, bar, pavilion and meeting space serves as the hub of the project. The complex will offer direct trolley service to the Austin Convention Center. www.seaholm.info

RENOVATIONS/UPDATES

Hyatt Regency Austin, Downtown on the Lake (*renovation complete*) – The Hyatt's premier downtown property has upgraded the lobby and public areas, including installation of a coffee shop accessible from the hiking trail outside the hotel. In addition, guests can now sip signature cocktails in a new bar, Marker 10, and watch the sun set from a new patio. The property has also renovated its meeting spaces and the ballroom, as well as a new restaurant, Southwest Bistro. www.austin.hyatt.com

Holiday Inn Town Lake (*renovation underway*) – Located on the shores of Lady Bird Lake (but retaining the former name of the lake), this Holiday Inn features updated guestrooms with flatscreen TVs, new bedding and furniture, renovated meeting space and a refurbished lobby. www.holidayinn.com/austintownlake

BUSINESS/ATTRACTIONS

Cedar Park Center (*under construction, opening scheduled for September 2009*) – This new 181,640-square-foot sports facility and concert venue will soon be home to the Texas Stars Hockey Club. It will be the third-largest facility in Central Texas, configured with 6,700 seats for hockey games and 8,700 seats for concerts, as well as 24 private luxury suites on an upper level. Fans with seats further from the action can watch on high-definition screens above the center of the floor. www.cedarparkcenter.com

Lance Armstrong Bikeway (*under construction, completion scheduled for August 2009*) – The long-anticipated bikeway will enable bicyclists to travel east and west on a dedicated route through downtown. The path consists of a combination of off-street concrete trails, on-street striped bike lanes and on-street signed bike routes. <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/publicworks/armstrong.htm>

Green Fern Events (*now operating*) – Austin’s newest event planning firm exclusively produces green meetings and events, and also provides eco-consulting services. Green initiatives are applied during site selection, energy use, food and beverage, and more to provide a sustainable option for environmentally-conscious groups. www.greenfernevents.com

Bass Concert Hall at the University of Texas Performing Arts Center (*now open*) – UT’s flagship 3,000-seat theatre recently completed a \$14.7 million renovation. A new glass facade shows off a five-story, light-filled lobby with an elegant restaurant. The theatre itself has new seating and flooring, state-of-the-art acoustics, lighting and other updates. www.utpac.org

The Backyard at Bee Cave (*announced, scheduled to open mid-2010*) – The re-opening of one of Austin’s favorite live music venues, The Backyard, will bring a new look to the classic amphitheatre. Design will incorporate the Texas Hill Country and implement sustainable materials and energy sources. The venue, which will be located on 75 acres in southwest Austin, will be able to accommodate up to 7,500 concert-goers. www.directevents.net

2nd Street District (*now open, development continues*)—Six blocks of street-level retail surrounding the new Austin City Hall feature restaurants, coffee shops, boutiques, galleries and trendy furniture stores. Development continues as St. Bernard Sports, La Condesa, Yu Sushi Izagaya and other restaurants and shops open their doors. The district is also home to the Block 21 project, which will include a W Hotel, new *Austin City Limits* studio, a nightclub operated by Austin’s own Willie Nelson and additional street-level retail. www.2ndstreetdistrict.com

RESTAURANTS/BARS

Frank (*now open*) – This “purveyor of artisan sausage” brings new life to an old standard. The urban-rustic ambiance offers truly upscale comfort food – with meat infused into almost everything. Menu highlights include the Jackalope, an antelope and rabbit sausage served with huckleberry compote, sriracha aioli and applewood smoked cheddar cheese; a Portobello cheesesteak sandwich for vegetarians and the Triple Crown cocktail, made with bacon-infused Maker’s Mark bourbon, Blenheim ginger ale and fresh lemon. www.hotdogscoldbeer.com

The Roaring Fork – North Austin (*now open*) – With a new location in north Austin, the Roaring Fork offers contemporary American cuisine in a modern, elegant atmosphere. Guests enjoy prime steaks and innovative regional appetizers (make sure to try the fried avocado with crab), all with a beautiful view overlooking the water. www.roaringfork.com

El Sol y La Luna (*now open*) – In its new location at Sixth Street and Red River, El Sol y La Luna offers healthy and traditional Mexican cuisine in close proximity to downtown hotels and the Austin Convention Center. The restaurant offers live music weekly and salsa dancing on weekend nights. Sunday brunches are popular, too. Closed Mondays. www.elsolylalunaaustin.com

La Condesa (*now open*) – Upscale Interior Mexican cuisine and a swanky atmosphere in the 2nd Street District highlight the lineup at this new, hot restaurant. www.lacondesaaustin.com

Maria Maria (*now open*) – Carlos Santana’s Mexican restaurant chain opened its Warehouse District location in fall 2008. Visitors enjoy traditional salads, tacos, ceviches and desserts.
www.mariamariarestaurants.com

The Good Knight (*now open*) – Housed in a historic building on East Sixth Street, The Good Knight boasts a small but gourmet menu of classic cocktails (Pimms Cup, Old Fashioned, Sazerac, Harvey Wallbanger) and small plates (cheeses, chicken pot pie, flatbreads).
<http://www.yelp.com/biz/the-good-knight-austin>

Lustre Pearl (*now open*) – This hip, new spot along I-35 at Cesar Chavez Street offers a shaded patio with a cool cocktail menu. The historic-home-turned-old-school-bar is a favorite among young urbanites, offering hula hoops, beer pong and other fun amenities.
<http://lustrepearlaustin.com/>

Perla’s Seafood & Oyster Bar (*now open*) – Locals and visitors alike can enjoy a high-end seafood menu in a casual atmosphere at this new restaurant on South Congress Avenue.
www.perlasaustin.com

###

Last updated 7/15/09