

THE AUSTIN CHRONICLE

Day Trips: Chandler Guest Ranch, Dryden

Former fishing camp still an oasis on the Pecos River

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Photos by Gerald E. McLeod

Chandler's Fishing Camp between Sheffield and Dryden was a not-so-well-kept secret swimming hole in West Texas for nearly 50 years. If you lived between Del Rio and Midland then you probably went on a family, school, church, or scouting trip to Chandler's before it closed in 1990.

Joe and Mildred Chandler's descendants have reopened the guest ranch on a limited basis. The three cabins can accommodate a maximum of 14 guests at the oasis on **Independence Creek**.

"Our neighbors have oil [on their land], we have water," says granddaughter **Anne Rowse**.



Charlie Chandler, a true Texas cowboy, settled on the ranch in the early 1900s. His youngest son inherited the old home place and decided it was easier to wrangle tourists than livestock. In arid West Texas, folks flocked to the shade of the westernmost live oak trees along the spring-fed creek. Joe added Terrell County's first and only private golf course, which is gone now, in 1964.

The new **Chandler Guest Ranch** is as Texan as a well-worn pair of fancy custom-made cowboy boots. The rooms in the cinder block fishing-camp cabins are spacious, well-appointed, and modern. Guests can fish in the ponds, creek, or river; swim in the spring-fed pool; hike the hills; kayak the river; or drive the ranch roads on ATVs.



The ranch is BYOB, but the resident chef keeps visitors well-fed with delicious meals in the game room stocked with billiard and pingpong tables. At the end of the day the hummingbirds are the entertainment until sunset colors the sky.

Chandler Guest Ranch is about five hours from Austin and a special place like no other. For reservations, call 713/703-6615 or go to www.chandlerranch.com.