

Katy's Hidden Treasures

Discover these fabulous local gems just off the beaten path

Written by Susanna Donald

BOOK NOOKS

The Bookworm Shop

22764 Westheimer Pkwy.
281-693-7323

Enjoy a cup of complimentary coffee and curl up in one of the cozy reading areas in this charming little store. The one-on-one attention owner Sandi Petty gives her customers makes shopping here a great experience. The store also offers reading level assessments for preschoolers and elementary students, book readings, and book signings.

Katy Budget Books

2450 Fry Rd.
281-578-7770

See ad on page 143

The huge selection of new and used books is just a small part of the allure of this one-of-a-kind Katy independent bookstore, they also offer gifts and accessories. Book clubs, children's story time, frequent book signings and author visits, sale prices for teachers, and other special events make Katy Budget Books a great place for everyone, from the beginning reader to the most ardent Katy bibliophile.

Local Libraries

Cinco Ranch Library
2620 Commercial Center Blvd.
281-395-1311

Katy Library
5414 Franz Rd.
281-391-3509

Maud Marks Library
1815 Westgreen Blvd.
281-492-8592

Katy's libraries are - of course - great places to check out books, but did you know they offer programs like book clubs, art projects for kids, crafting, tax assistance, story time for children, and computer classes? Take a trip to your neighborhood library for a quiet retreat from the daily grind, a chance to learn a new skill, or an opportunity for some quality family time together.

BOUTIQUE HOPPING

Beau Kisses

23501 Cinco Ranch Blvd.
281-395-4445

See ad on page 89

Looking for a special gift for the college graduate, birthday girl, or perfect anniversary? Beau Kisses is the place to go. They offer unique items that are great for any woman and any occasion. Whether you're updating a Pandora bracelet or looking for a jaw-dropping holiday gift, Beau Kisses has it all.

Hauerland's

1648 S. Mason Rd.
281-395-4595

Hauerland's is an ideal place to get that special decoration you've been in need of. Their ever-changing inventory will entice you to come back month after month. This tucked away shop is also the home of interesting trinkets for that special someone. They offer an array of Brighton accessories as well.

Texas National Outfitters

3522 S. Mason Rd.
281-392-2668

See ad on page 119

Specializing in handmade cowboy boots, western wear, wine barrels, and Texas gifts, Texas National Outfitters offers customers a one-of-a-kind shopping experience. Each product is made with care and a heaping helping of Texas pride, ensuring that whatever



Kids will enjoy playing on the playground at Vida Loca



Kyle and dad at Katy Budget Books



The Katy area libraries offer programs like book clubs, art projects for kids, crafting, story time for children, and so much more



There is something for everyone at Beau Kisses

you purchase will be truly special. There are plenty of places to buy boots in Texas, but none are quite like Texas National Outfitters.

DESSERT DESTINATIONS

Araya Artisan Chocolate
1575 W. Grand Pkwy. S.
281-395-1050

Watch as premium Venezuelan chocolate is crafted into a feast for the eyes and the tastebuds at this local laboratory and chocolate shop. Araya's line of 35 gourmet chocolates pushes the boundaries of mere candy. Each piece of chocolate is its own work of art, nestled in gorgeous packaging decorated by local artists. If life is like a box of chocolates, let's hope it's a box from Araya.

Sweet Things
1251 Pin Oak Rd.
281-391-5423

It would be easy to dismiss Sweet Things as "just another ice cream shop" - if you've never been inside. An ice cream connoisseur's dream, this locally owned shop draws inspiration from its customers to make their super premium artisanal ice cream on site. Pay by the ounce for delectable and unusual flavors like White Chocolate Lime Cookie, Shiner Bock, and Maple Bacon. You'll always find new flavors and friendly faces at Sweet Things.

FOR THE FOODIES

Farmer's Market at LaCenterra
281-395-5533

See ad on page 186
Each Saturday, rain or shine, the southwest parking lot of LaCenterra comes alive with vendors selling seasonal produce and handmade products. Find local honey, Texas olive oil, fresh baked breads, free-range eggs, grass-fed beef, jams and preserves, natural pet foods, and more among

the offerings from local farmers and crafters.

Sprouts Farmers Market
23105 Cinco Ranch Blvd.
281-769-0444

Colorful, fresh produce, a full-service meat counter with freshly made burgers and sausages, and hundreds of bulk bins call to mind an old-fashioned general store - only bigger. That's what you'll find at Sprouts. Even though it isn't exactly "hidden," it's brand-new to Katy, and you're likely to find all kinds of healthy treasures inside.

Whole Foods
6601 S. Fry Rd.
281-769-5670

A 37,000-square-foot store on a well-traveled road doesn't make much for a hidden treasure, but this Whole Foods is brand-new to Katy and quite off the beaten path for Katyites who don't often traverse the Grand Parkway. This leading retailer of natural and organic foods - and America's healthiest grocery store, according to *Health* - is a new and exciting destination for any Katy food-lover.

World Market
6625 S. Fry Rd.
281-391-1700

World Market may be a popular chain, but foodies will be surprised by the eclectic selection of gourmet global foods, wine, tea, and coffee available here. Think Vegemite and ebelskivers, Jammie Dodgers and marmalade - affordable and authentic, the food and drink selection from over 50 countries around the world will transform any World Market shopper into an explorer.

GREAT OUTDOORS

Katy Prairie Conservancy
3015 Richmond Ave.
713-523-6145

Step back in time and see a very special part of west Harris County - a patch of pristine prairie in the middle of Katy's vast suburban sprawl. Very little of the original Katy prairie land remains, so a visit to the Katy Prairie Conservancy's Wildlife Platform at Warren Lake (open 365 days a year) yields quite a treasure, indeed. Keep an eye out for red-tailed hawks, meadowlarks, or even the occasional wintering bald eagle. You might even spot a beaver cutting a silent swath through the water or deer feeding quietly in the prairie grasses.

Thomas Park
Third St. and Ave. D
281-391-4840

In a town full of wonderful parks, Thomas Park's quiet, tranquil environment sets it apart. Visitors are drawn to this out-of-the-way setting for outdoor weddings or family photographs because of its picturesque landscape and lovely gazebo area. Smaller children enjoy the playground while their parents relax in the shade of the park's towering trees.

VFW Park and Community Center
6202 George Bush Dr.
281-391-4800

Katyites who frequent this quiet creekside park jokingly call it their "secret park," but that joke isn't too far from the truth. With newer parks and playgrounds like Mary Jo Peckham, the VFW Park is often forgotten. Recent renovations to the park include a children's play area, picnic pavilions, a jogging trail, and a museum of Katy history.

HOMETOWN CAFÉS

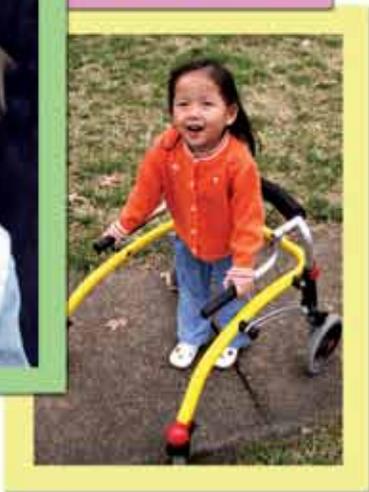
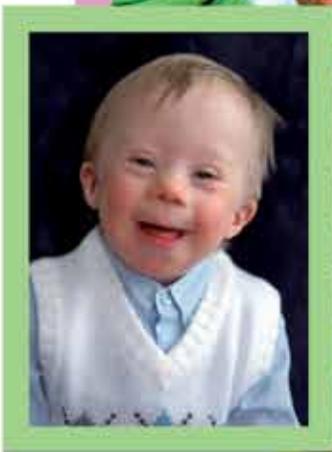
The Bagel Café
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If you've never ventured to the back corner of the shopping center at the corner of Mason Rd. and Kingsland Blvd., you've probably missed The Bagel Café. Freshly baked bagels, signature sandwiches, and a friendly staff make this a great place to enjoy breakfast or lunch with friends. Scratch-baked bread, pastries, and handmade toasted bagel chips are also among the scrumptious offerings from this local eatery.

J-Dub's Burger Barn

5415 E. Fifth St.
832-437-9701

This locally owned and operated restaurant is only a hidden treasure because it is so new to the Katy scene - and it won't stay hidden for long! Katyites who have already discovered J-Dub's are calling the freshly ground all-meat burgers "the best in town." Sit on the porch and enjoy your burger with some golden onion rings, crispy french fries, or delicious fried pickles. Don't worry if you can't try everything on the menu - you'll be back.

Kay's Tea Parlour

5617 Second St.
281-392-7970

Discover this European-style teashop and café tucked away in the heart of downtown Katy. Sip one of the specialty teas or coffees from delicate china teacups, or order one of their homemade pies, pastries, or cakes. Hot and cold lunch specials are served daily - and sources say the chicken pot pie is not to be missed.

Snappy's Café and Grill

5803 Highway Blvd.
281-391-8163

If you're craving comfort food from an old-fashioned diner, Snappy's is dishing it up. Tucked into a strip center in old Katy, this little café would be easy to miss. They serve breakfast and lunch and feature home-style entrees like pecan and blueberry waffles, pork chops and eggs, country fried steak, and heaping sides of green beans, mashed 'taters, and fried okra.

MEXICAN FLAIR

El Jarrito

21724 Highland Knolls Dr.
281-579-8844

With their authentic tasting Mexican food and perfect patio, El Jarrito is an ideal lunch or dinner spot. The food is always fast and fresh at this family-owned restaurant and you really can't beat the homemade flour and corn tortillas. Be sure to check out their website and print out one of their many great coupons.

La Finca

23930 Westheimer Pkwy.
281-693-0140

From tamales to stuffed avocados to grilled quail, the range of food selections is spectacular at La Finca. Come enjoy \$1.99 margaritas every Monday and Tuesday and free ice cream for kids on Sunday.

Las Mananitas

9825 S. Mason Rd.
281-762-7398

Decorated with bright colors and a grass-roofed bar, this restaurant is sure to make you feel like you're on a weekend

getaway in Mexico. One can't leave without sampling the fajitas and queso. This is the perfect spot for family birthdays or company gatherings.

Vida Loca

21810 Kingsland Blvd.
281-600-9600

See ad on page 145

Whether you're going for happy hour or to entertain the kids, Vida Loca is the place to be. With build-your-own-combo plates, a playground and volleyball court, and even healthy food options, this is one hot spot the whole family will love. They even offer brunch on the weekends.

SOMETHING SPECIAL

Brookwood

1752 FM 1489
281-375-2100

The Brookwood Community is a non-profit residential and vocational facility for adults with special needs - but it's also home to one of the Katy area's best opportunities for shopping and dining. Discover the perfect gift at the upscale Gift and Garden Center or enjoy a stunning garden view while dining in

The Café at Brookwood. When you shop or dine here, you get more than a lovely gift or a delicious meal; you help support the more than 100 adults with special needs who call Brookwood home.

Katy Christian Ministries' Boutique

333 1/2 S. Mason Rd.
281-599-7929

5510 First St.
281-391-0003

High-end fashions from names like Chanel, Diane Von Furstenberg, Escada, Coach, and more are hidden away inside little boutiques such as the KCM resale shops with two locations. Believe us, it isn't your typical resale selection. Browse the racks in the store or online and find the perfect designer sweater, dress, bag, or accessory, all while supporting the mission of KCM to "make a difference in the lives of others through God's grace and the goodwill of the community."

Multiplicity

1306 Ave. A
832-437-2442

See ad on page 93

Hidden in a rustic, century-old home in historic downtown Katy, Multiplicity is truly one-of-a-kind combination art store, jewelry and accessory boutique, and home décor shop. Browse the shelves to find the perfect gift for someone special or sign up for an art class or artisan workshop and learn things like jewelry making, cake decorating, or metalsmithing from local experts. Get together with the girls for Multiplicity's monthly "Ladies Night," a complimentary evening (RSVP necessary) with food, drinks, and crafts, or plan your own special event among the stately pecan trees and beautifully landscaped gardens - Multiplicity has it all. KM

SUSANNA DONALD enjoys being part of Katy Magazine's editorial team and exploring Katy with her husband and 2-year-old son.

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