

## Dear J-Law, I need your help. Sincerely, Bobby

“She might give me advice about the way a scene is going or the way I should play something; I’m pretty easy about that stuff.”

— Robert De Niro, on receiving acting tips from “Joy” co-star Jennifer Lawrence, to Haute Living Los Angeles



# LIVING

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AFFILIATED WITH



ANTIQUES

## Old chair is more than a place to sit

By Terry and Kim Kovel  
*Wire Services*

The Windsor chair was first made in the late 17th century in England and about 1730 in America. The chairs are similar, but the English chair legs are less splayed and only the English chair has a splat (a shaped piece of wood) as part of the back. American chairs are made with spindles for the back and to hold the arms. There are many kinds of Windsor chairs with descriptive names like brace back, hoop back, arrow back, fanback, bow back, low back, comb back and scroll back. And some have added parts like rockers or writing arms. Early chairs usually were painted because several types of wood were used. “Brown furniture” from the 18th and 19th centuries is selling for low prices today. The best have original paint, but watch out for repaints. The chair with a nine-spindle back probably is older than one with four spindles. The more spindles on an antique Windsor, the earlier and better the chair.



This comb-back Windsor chair was made in Pennsylvania in the late 18th century. It auctioned in 2015 for \$1,003 even though it had some breaks in the wood and added metal braces used for repairs. (COURTESY OF THE KOVELS)

**Q: I’m hoping you can shed some light on a floor lamp I have. The base is stamped “Miller Company” and one of the parts is stamped “Miller U-Dezine.” The base and column are made of pot metal or bronze. Can you give me any information about this lamp and its maker?**

A: Edward Miller founded this lamp company in Meriden, Conn., in 1844. Candlesticks, lamps and other products were made. A metal rolling mill was built later. A 1930 ad for Miller’s “U-De-Zine” read “You design the lamp you want,” and called it “The Lamp That Is Made In Separate Parts For You To Put Together.” There were several ways to assemble the parts. A table lamp could be changed to a floor lamp, or a floor lamp to a bridge lamp. In 1985, the lighting division was sold. The company was bought by an affiliate of Diehl Metall, a German company in 2000.

**Q: My Lane cedar chest pictures Molly Pitcher firing her husband’s cannon after he collapsed. The serial number is 2575150. Can you tell me when it was made?**

A: You can find out when your Lane chest was made by reversing the serial number. Your chest was made on May 15, 1975 (05/15/75) at factory No. 2. Lane cedar chests made before 1987 have the old style locks that can latch shut and trap a child inside. If you haven’t already replaced the lock, you should contact the manufacturer and they will send you a new replacement safety lock. You can find the form to request a replacement at [lanefurniture.com/about/product-safety](http://lanefurniture.com/about/product-safety).

TIP FROM THE KOVELS

### How to clean a wall trophy

Clean the hard parts of stuffed animal trophies like antlers, teeth or hooves with a cotton swab dampened in isopropyl alcohol. If fur, feathers or skins are damaged, look for mites, moths or carpet beetles and spray with an insecticide, or see a taxidermist.



The Nuevo Santander Gallery is less than 20 years old, but was designed to resemble a 1700s Spanish mission. (PHOTOS BY NICOLE PENSIERO)

TRAVEL

## Birding along the border

By Nicole Pensiero / For South Jersey Times

As a person who thoroughly enjoys travel, I’ll admit: I don’t usually venture too far out of my comfort zone on the road. Sure, I’ve gone parasailing in the islands, and kissed the Blarney Stone in Ireland ... but traveling halfway across the country to go birding when I’m not a birder? That, to me, would be a stretch.

Yet, there I was, heading to the southernmost tip of Texas in November for a three-day, avian-themed getaway. I could say a friend talked me into it, but that’s not completely true. Sure, the warm weather of the so-called “Texas Tropics” held special appeal in November, but the “sales hook” was learning that the Rio Grande Valley is home to many tropical bird species not found anywhere else in the U.S. I knew this would be an unusual adventure, despite my limited birding experience.

The Rio Grande Valley — along with being a major bird migration corridor — is also home to the acclaimed World Birding Center, a collection of nine distinct South Texas locations that cater to serious birders, as well as those who are merely curious, like me.

An hour south by plane from Dallas, Texas, McAllen, with 140,000 residents, is the largest city in the Rio Grande Valley. Its main hub appears primarily as a collection of retail stores and mid-sized hotels, but the City of McAllen — located just across the river from Reynosa, Mexico — is surrounded by equally unspoiled nature reserves. We found some art galleries, museums and restaurants in the McAllen area, but birding is undoubtedly the region’s biggest tourism attraction, with thousands of visitors from around the world converging here each fall and spring.

### Fine dining

Arriving in the late afternoon, we kicked off our Texas trip with a relaxing gourmet steak dinner at the acclaimed Patio on Guerra, in the heart of McAllen’s arts district. This upscale, yet welcoming restaurant is owned by a prominent McAllen couple, Che and Becky Guerra, who also run a beautiful art gallery,

which we visited on our last day.

Communing with nature got underway on our first full morning, with a visit to Quinta Mazatlan, a World Birding Center site considered one of the city’s greatest gems. For much of its existence, this Spanish Revival Style mansion, built in 1935, was a private residence. But it fell into disrepair and was put up for sale at an auction. The City of McAllen saved it from the wrecking ball in 1998 and a few years later — after a hefty restoration — Quinta Mazatlan opened as a “Mansion with the Mission,” as its slogan says. Today, the original home and its surrounding 20 acres of trails are popular with nature-lovers of all ages. The home itself — with its spacious rooms and dramatic pool area — has a magical feel to it, and I was especially taken with its extensive collection of colorful Mexican folk art.

From there, we checked out McAllen’s Smithsonian-affiliated International Museum of Art & Science (IMAS), which houses an impressive permanent exhibit, “Science on a Sphere,” that illustrates planetary and celestial activity on a three-dimensional, six-foot wide globe. We also enjoyed IMAS’ Louis Comfort Tiffany exhibit, “Sacred Visions,” a collection of 20 brightly lit stained-glass windows.

We closed out our day in nearby Edinburg at the Museum of South Texas History, known for its impressive Rio Grande Legacy historical exhibit. Nearby is the 40-acre Edinburg Scenic Wetlands, an urban oasis with year-round wildlife viewing.

On the second day, I finally spotted the one bird I really came to see: a Green Jay, native only to South Texas, Mexico, and parts of Central and South America. Brilliant green, with a blue head, black breast, and



An extensive collection of folk art, donated by McAllen, Texas collector Anne Maddox Moore, is on display at Quinta Mazatlan.

yellow underbelly, this bird is strikingly beautiful — and we saw plenty of them at the Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park, one of the country’s top birding destinations. More than 325 species have been seen here, and it’s a nearly full-day adventure. Its visitor’s center has a bilingual exhibit hall and park ranger-hosted tram tours are offered as one way to get around. We spent a full hour admiring the Green Jays at one of the many secluded feeding spots set up inside the park.

### More adventures

No trip to South Texas is complete without a visit to one of the six Delia’s Tamales locations in and around McAllen. Originally started as a door-to-door business in 1998, the business has grown to include a mail-order operation. This is a South Texas tradition, and for less than \$8 for a dozen tamales, we were able to sample several varieties including spicy chicken & cheese and sweet dessert

tamales. We also enjoyed a savory meal at the Spork Restaurant, where Chef Robert Delgado has created a buzz for his innovative culinary skills.

On our last day, we paid a visit to the Guerra family’s elegant Nuevo Santander Gallery. We were amazed to learn that this dramatic-looking building — designed to resemble a Spanish mission from centuries ago — is only 18 years old. The building itself is a work of art; its grand entryway graced by doors and colonial ironwork from Mexico. Inside, we found an extraordinary collection of art in a setting that can only be described as breathtaking.

It was a whirlwind three days, and I realized that my Texas birding adventure had taken hold during my return layover in Dallas. There, at an airport kiosk, I began reading up on (by way of Google) some of the many fantastic birds — Green Jays, Chacalacas, and Great Kiskadees — I’d been lucky enough to see up close. For more information, visit: [worldbirdingcenter.com](http://worldbirdingcenter.com) or [mcallencvb.com](http://mcallencvb.com).

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