



From top right: Guest rooms at The Stella feature Frette linens and Lather bath products; Dallas-based architectural firm FAB Studio designed the 176-room boutique hotel; a peek inside Campfire, the property's on-site restaurant.



BRYAN

BRYAN RISING

Aggieland goes chic with the debut of The Stella, the area's first independent full-service hotel.

By Becca Hensley // Photography by Nick Simonite

Already a utopia for Aggie sports lovers, not to mention a destination of note for Texas wine aficionados, Bryan steps it up a notch with The Stella—a bona fide boutique retreat. Showcased in Lake Walk, Bryan-College Station's emergent, 180,000-square-foot town center and planned community, the hotel lies adjacent to Texas A&M University as an extension of Traditions Club. Officially opened in April, The Stella is complemented by a 5-acre lake, waterfront park and pavilion, observation tower, and more than 2 miles of hiking and biking trails. The Stella—managed by Trust Hospitality—is new and bright, adding inviting gravitas to the waterside community and entertainment district.

Borrowing from Texas roots, FAB Studio brought clean silhouettes to play when envisioning and constructing the hotel. The Dallas-based architectural firm contrasted the bucolic landscape and its wide-open spaces with sleek, contemporary lines. They interacted with the countryside by framing views with huge panoramic windows. Both the lake and the Brazos Valley feel like elements in the edifice at large. Free of pretension

or fussy details, the interiors feature locally sourced materials such as wood, corrugated metal and exposed concrete.

Design DMU, the Dallas firm responsible for the interiors, utilized a color palette borrowed from the surrounding terrain, including pops of color that run the gamut from Texas' bright, blue sky to the fiery hues of the horizon at both dawn and dusk. Earthy tones and casually elegant furniture impart a tranquil vibe. Sensorial, the hotel brings to mind the coolness of an afternoon breeze, the smell of morning dew and the inviting repose of a relative's old-fashioned porch. "It's the sort of place where you feel comfortable putting up your feet," says Peggy Trott, The Stella's general manager.

Whether it's a football game or the winery that takes you there, The Stella also entices with its craft cocktail bar, Hershel's, reminiscent of a speak-easy; its seasonal restaurant, Campfire; its Watershed pool; and a lawn christened The Back Yard, a picnic space so huge it will make your granny tell tales. *One-bedroom suite from \$299 per night, thestellahotel.com*