

# Bolivar

PENINSULA



IT'S A 27-MILE  
STRETCH OF PARADISE  
RICH IN HISTORY

*"a sand between your toes kinda place"!*

PHOTO: DAVID HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

[www.bolivarpeninsulatexas](http://www.bolivarpeninsulatexas.com)

.com



# Tourism Guide

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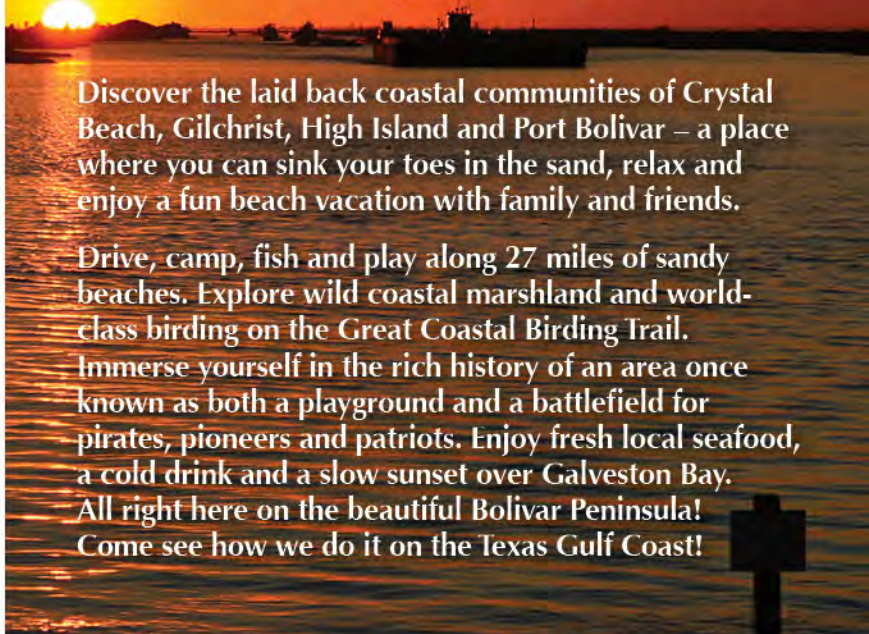
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for Tomorrow's Success.

# Like nowhere else on the *Texas Gulf Coast!*



Discover the laid back coastal communities of Crystal Beach, Gilchrist, High Island and Port Bolivar – a place where you can sink your toes in the sand, relax and enjoy a fun beach vacation with family and friends.

Drive, camp, fish and play along 27 miles of sandy beaches. Explore wild coastal marshland and world-class birding on the Great Coastal Birding Trail. Immerse yourself in the rich history of an area once known as both a playground and a battlefield for pirates, pioneers and patriots. Enjoy fresh local seafood, a cold drink and a slow sunset over Galveston Bay. All right here on the beautiful Bolivar Peninsula! Come see how we do it on the Texas Gulf Coast!

## Guide Highlights

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PHOTO: DAVID HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO: DAVID HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY



## *Tourism & Visitors Center*

Bolivar Peninsula Tourism and Visitors Center is the official information source for the Bolivar Peninsula, including the towns of Port Bolivar, Crystal Beach, Gilchrist, Caplan and High Island.

Stop in for information on area businesses, Galveston County, local events and attractions and much more. We're always happy to welcome visitors to our area and we would love the opportunity to meet with you.

Our office offers a conference room for those who need one, complete with full media hookups and a 55 inch display for all to see. We also offer copy, fax and notary services. See you soon!

**2275 Hwy 87 Suite 10  
Crystal Beach, Texas 77650**

**Phone: (409) 684-6231**

**E-mail: [info@bolivarpensulatexas.com](mailto:info@bolivarpensulatexas.com)**

**[www.BolivarPeninsulaTexas.com](http://www.BolivarPeninsulaTexas.com)**



# ANNUAL Events

PHOTO: JOE WINSTON PHOTOGRAPHER

Jump into some of the fun and unique events going on here at the beach!

## **Mardi Gras Parade**

February-March, Saturday before Mardi Gras

## **PBVFD Oyster Fry**

March

## **Easter Sunrise Service on the Beach**

March-April, Easter Sunday at Sunrise

## **Stingaree Saltwater Slam Fishing Tournament**

April

## **Texas Crab Festival**

Mother's Day Weekend in May

## **Go Topless Jeep Weekend**

May

## **Ladies Casting for Conservation Fishing Tournament**

July

## **Lions Club Golf Cart Poker Run**

August

## **Brad & Big Rich's Cajun Chef's Cook-off**

Last Saturday in October

## **Big Store Halloween Trunk or Treat**

October, Saturday Before Halloween

## **Crystaland Christmas Parade**

2nd Saturday in December

## **Bolivar Snow Fest**

First of December



# LIVE *Music*

PHOTO: DAVID HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

Great music and good times are always going down on the Gulf Coast!



PHOTO: SANDI SIMPTON-SMITH

After the beach catch some *Great Live Music!*

Visitors come to the Bolivar Peninsula for many reasons, but for a lot of folks it's the live music scene. Crystal Beach is host to an impressive lineup of Texas Red Dirt bands, Nashville headliners and Southeast Texas favorites. So grab your partner or just grab a cold one and watch the sun dip into the bay to the sound of some great music.

*Check out the latest listings online at:*  
[www.bolivarpeninsulatexas.com/Activities/Live-Music](http://www.bolivarpeninsulatexas.com/Activities/Live-Music)



PHOTO: DAVID HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY



**bolivarpeninsulatexas**.com

The Bolivar Peninsula...

# Great Bird Watching

from One End to the Other

When you arrive on the Bolivar Peninsula you will quickly see why it is an internationally famous bird watching destination. There are birds everywhere!

If you come across the ferry pelicans, gulls and terns will greet you at the ferry landing. The pond in front of the lighthouse may be full of ducks or herons, spoonbills and egrets.



Driving down 17th street in Port Bolivar towards the gulf will take you the North Jetty, a perfect place to view Houston Audubon's World Famous Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary, where thousands of birds feed and roost year round. If it is low tide you may get an up close view of some of those thousands of birds from the jetty.

A drive down the beach will introduce you to many species of beach birds



that call Bolivar home. A drive down many of the streets on the other side of the peninsula that take you to the Intracoastal Waterway, like Bob Rd. and Yacht Basin Rd., will give you good looks at marsh birds.

Stop at Rollover Pass on the bay side and look out over Rollover Bay, there you may be treated to close looks at thousands of birds who feed and roost on the mud flats.

If you are on the east end of the peninsula in the spring, treat yourself to a trip to Houston Audubon's High Island sanctuaries, where birders from all over the world come to see migrating bird in the woods and nesting herons, egrets and spoonbills in the sanctuary ponds. To find out more about Houston Audubon's Bolivar Peninsula sanctuaries visit the website at [www.houstonaudubon.org](http://www.houstonaudubon.org)

The wonderful thing about Bolivar bird watching is that all you need is a pair of binoculars and a bird book to have a spectacular day.

**Article by Winnie Burkett**  
**Photos by Greg Lavaty**



PHOTOS: DAVID HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY



© David Harris Photography

## *Coastal Birding Adventure*

The entire length of Bolivar Peninsula as well as High Island and the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge are a part of the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail. On the west end, Bolivar Flats hold the highest rated designation in the birding world as a Globally Important Bird Area and is an International Site in the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. Here you can reliably spot pelicans, gulls, roseate spoonbills, sandhill cranes, large herons, osprey, crested caracara and more. At the far East end of the peninsula are the world-renowned Smith Oaks and Boy Scout Woods Bird Sanctuaries in High Island. During the spring and fall, birding enthusiasts from around the globe flock to High Island as hundreds of species of birds stop all along the coastal marshlands to rest, nest and mate before continuing on their cross-continental journeys.

Just up the road from High Island is the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. Walk along trails through the 34,000 acres of meandering bayous and coastal marshland to spot an abundance of wildlife. River otter, ibis, alligators, opossum, raccoons, ducks and a multitude of waterbirds can be spotted at the refuge throughout the year. Fishing, boating and managed hunting are all allowed within the park.

**Birders flock to Bolivar for some of the best bird watching opportunities in the world!**

# *Birding*

# LIVING & *Lodging*



Whether you're looking for a weekend rental, a summer getaway or a home at the beach, find your place in the sun on the Bolivar Peninsula.



## Dive into our laid-back *Coastal Lifestyle!*

Life just seems better at the beach. A world away from the hustle and bustle of the city, time is measured by the tides; by sunrises and sunsets.

From quaint, bayside fishing cabins to fabulous, luxury beachfront developments, from weekend rentals to dream retirement homes, you're sure to find your perfect spot on the beach.



PHOTOS: DAVID HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY



*www.*  
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*.com*



# RV

# Parks

PHOTO: DAVID HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

You'll find many quality RV Parks on Bolivar; beachfront, bayside and in-between, with great amenities like a resort-style pool and golf cart rentals.

Home away from home...

## *Great RV Parks!*

We are home to a variety of quality RV Parks that are sure to fit your lifestyle. Want to dip your line in the Intracoastal canal for some bayside fishing right outside your door? Perhaps you'd prefer to relax by the pool or go kayaking with the kids? Or maybe you'd like to wake up just steps from the ocean. Bolivar has an RV Park for you.



PHOTO: DAVID HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

## See why so many are *Winter Texans!*

A year-round moderate climate and laid-back beach lifestyle make the Texas Gulf Coast a popular destination for many "snow birds" seeking to escape chillier weather.

Fall and Winter on Bolivar finds visitors taking long walks along the quiet shoreline, watching the sunrise over the Gulf with coffee on the patio; hunting, fishing and enjoying the many benefits of a less-hectic beach vacation.



PHOTO: SANDI SIMPTON-SMITH

*Winter*  
**bolivarpensulatexas**

*.com*

# UNIQUE. *Shopping*

PHOTO: DAVID HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

Take a break from the beach chair to browse our unique shops for coastal-inspired furniture, surfer styles, souvenirs and eclectic art.



Bolivar is still a place to  
*Find Treasures!*

The Bolivar Peninsula is blessed with an abundance of artistic talent, evident in our local shops. Find a unique treasure to keep a piece of the coast close to your heart. Get into your beach groove with the latest surf styles. Or stock up the beach house or boat with everything you need from groceries to grilling supplies to adventure gear...all right here!



# Dining

PHOTO: DAVID HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

Discover fabulous fresh seafood, friendly faces and spectacular views at our many fine local family restaurants.



PHOTOS: DAVID HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

Seafood, Steaks, Burgers...

*It's Your Craving!*

To cure your craving on Bolivar Peninsula you won't have to travel far. Overlooking the Bay or on the main drag....each with it's own style and Gulf Coast flavor!



David Harris Photography

**Bolivar**  
Peninsula, Texas  
*Tourism & Visitors Center*

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GULF OF MEXICO

Bolivar Pointe Lighthouse



Port Bolivar

North Jetty

Fort Travis Seashore Park

# Bolivar Peninsula



They don't call us the "Big Store" for nothing - find just about everything under the sun, from groceries to gifts to grilling supplies! We have everything to make your beach vacation a blast, your house a home and your next dinner party a hit!

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[www.TheBigStore.us](http://www.TheBigStore.us)





# Music, Art & CRABS

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Gregory Park, 2292 Hwy 87, Crystal Beach, Tx 77650



## Live Music All Weekend Long!

Jason Allen ~ Bag of Donuts ~ The Cadillacs  
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[www.texascrabfestival.org](http://www.texascrabfestival.org)

100% of net proceeds fund Texas Crab Festival Charities 501(c)3

Dive into a full weekend of Gulf Coast style Music, Art and Crabs, featuring live music, coastal arts and crafts, a crab gumbo cook off, a certified 5K/1K run, crab races, ferris wheel and booth after booth of fresh local seafood and festival favorites!

#### Admission:

\$10 Friday, \$10 Saturday, FREE on Sunday  
 Kids 15 & Under FREE



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# Bolivar through the *Photographer's Eye*

by Joe Winston

PHOTOS: JOE WINSTON

The light on the upper Texas Gulf Coast is inspirational and challenging, luring me to return time & time again. I have agreeably spent a good portion of my life down here making photographs. Aside from the surf and sand, we have a large population of birds, fishing, free sunsets & moonrises, and the most interesting characters; all worthy of their own study in the camera.

A few things I have learned while photographing on the Bolivar Peninsula.

Bring your camera, the good one. Make sure you pack the tripod, extra batteries, cards and plenty of lens cleaning supplies - it's a long way to the camera store.

A change of clothes on any expedition is a must. You never know when you are going to slip in the mud or want to wade over into shallow water for that extra special

camera angle. A wading stick is advised if you do, hard sand can turn to soft mud on the bayside.

If you plan on chasing the birds you will want to have your waders with you or rubber boots at least. We like white shrimp boots in these parts. You can grab those at the Big Store if you forget yours.



Bugs, yep it's an estuary. The mosquito is just at home here as you will be, lucky for you they make bug spray. Heck I'll even give you the olde-timer tip, find a bar of Sulfur Soap on (Amazon) that'll help too. 100% deet and long sleeve shirts and pants will be the field dress for the marsh.

Sunrise is on the beach, so you'll have to control the urge to stay up and photograph the stars and moon all night. Plan your trip around a full moon here, they are something to behold.

Sunset is over the bay, you can catch a great view and a fantastic meal at Stingaree at the same time. Tell the hostess you're looking for a camera friendly spot and enjoy the west deck for dessert.

Winter time is by far my favorite season. The low angle of light and cooler temps make it possible to photograph all most every hour of the day.

Watch the weather- a cloudy morning will turn into a partly sunny day in the blink of an eye and you will want to capture that drama.

Explore every place you have time to. Don't worry too much about the special

spot, explore all you can. The locals are friendly and if you tell them you're driving down that dead end road to take pictures, they'll mostly smile and wave. But it's Texas, if it's posted 'No Trespassing', or you see a post painted purple, turn around. That is not the spot you are looking for.

One of the best places on the Peninsula to capture our colorful Roseate Spoonbill is in High Island Bird Sanctuary. The dense forest makes it a great place to spend the midday sun.

Booking a local fishing guide is another way to explore the area even if you don't care to fish. Most guides are knowledgeable about the local ecosystem and are happy to show you places around the bay.

Most of all relax, enjoy and be sure you get a picture with your toes in the sand.

If you have any questions about photographing our local treasure, just drop me a line.

[JoeWinston@bolivarpensulataxas.com](mailto:JoeWinston@bolivarpensulataxas.com)



PHOTOS: JOE WINSTON



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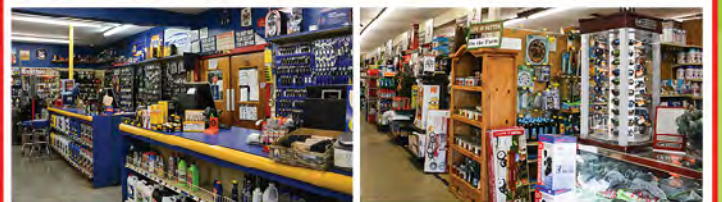
## LARRY'S OLD TIME

# TRADE DAYS

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## STRATTON'S

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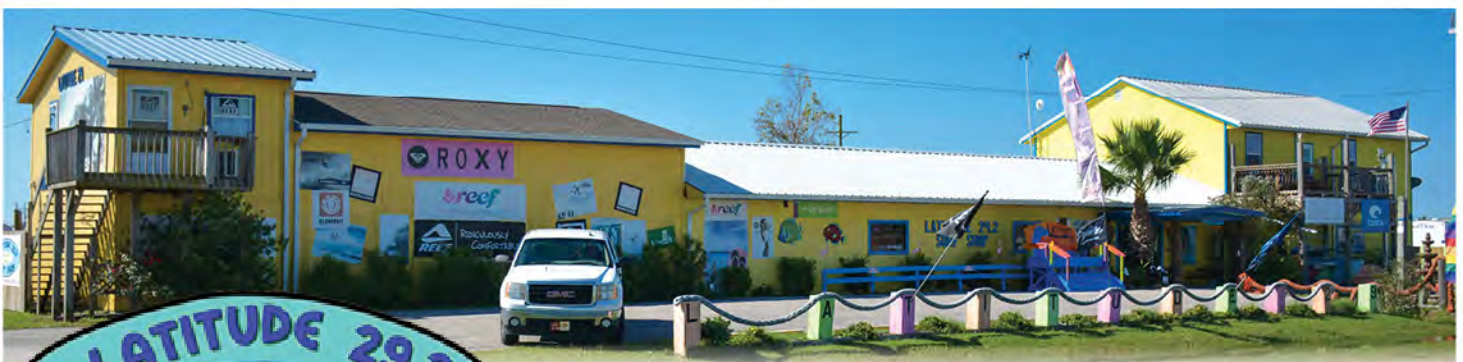


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# Fort Travis



PHOTOS: SANDI SIMPTON-SMITH

## SEASHORE PARK

Bolivar Peninsula has a long history of military fortifications. As early as 1814, the peninsula became a center of filibustering strategies and encampments. Two 1816 Mexican Manuscript maps show encampments on the gulf side of the peninsula in a grove of trees near the Fort Travis location. During the Civil War, Fort Sulakowski on the bay side of Bolivar Point was established as a Confederate fortification. Federal troops took control of the fort and the peninsula in November of 1862.

On April 8, 1898, with federal development of the Port of Galveston, Fort Travis was constructed on the current site at Bolivar

Point. It was named in honor of William B. Travis, hero of the Alamo. The fort was completed in October 1899.

During World War I, Fort Travis was used as a garrison for troops defending the Galveston coastal waters and the vital Port of Galveston.



Two batteries were constructed in 1898. Battery Davis was named after Lt. Thomas Davis and contained two eight-inch, breech loading guns of the “disappearing” type. The second, Battery Davis was named after Lt. Rudolph Ernst and contained three small caliber “rapid fire”

pedestal guns with searchlights.

The first public Galveston/Bolivar ferry was opened in 1930. The Rudolph Ernst Battery was the docking site on the Bolivar side.



PHOTO: SANDI SIMPTON-SMITH

Records indicate it was no longer used as a ferry landing by the 1950's.

In 1917, construction of a third battery, Battery Kimble began and was completed in October 1922. Its 12-inch guns could be elevated to gain a range of 17 miles. With the advent of accurate aerial bombing, it became vulnerable to aircraft and was abandoned and its guns sold for scrap.

In 1942, Fort Travis was enlarged and some 2500 troops were stationed at the fort to provide coastal defenses for the area. Battery 236 was designed to primarily to defend the approaches to Galveston harbor. It became obsolete as soon as it was completed and abandoned at the end of World War II.

The 60 acre park was acquired through a Moody Foundation grant for \$200,000 in March 1976. In December 1975, The Galveston County Beach Park Board received notification of approval of an acquisition/development grant from the National Park Service to develop Fort Travis Seashore Park.



PHOTO: DAVID HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

Rollover Pass earned its name from the practice of smugglers who, from the days of Spanish rule through prohibition, avoided the Galveston customs station by rolling barrels of whiskey and rum over the narrowest part of the peninsula. A man-made strait now links the Gulf of Mexico with East Bay. Fish run through the pass, making Rollover bridge a popular park-and-fish hot spot.

## Bolivar Light House

The Bolivar Lighthouse was built in 1852, dismantled during the Civil War and then rebuilt in 1872. During the devastating hurricanes of 1900 and 1915, the lighthouse served as refuge to residents who took shelter inside, saving hundreds of lives. The light that once shone there was retired to the Smithsonian in 1933, but the lighthouse remains. Not open to the public, it is still a beautiful site to see and an amazing photo op.

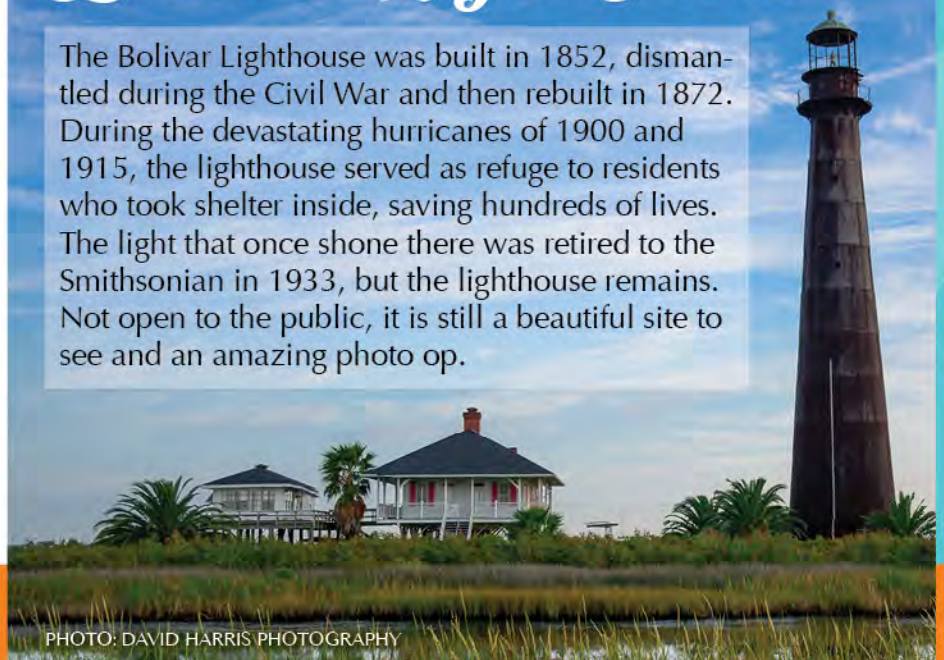


PHOTO: DAVID HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

# REDISCOVER

## *Bolivar Peninsula*



DISCOVERBOLIVAR.COM



*like you've never seen.*

Those who know Bolivar know it's no ordinary destination. Nestled just east of Galveston, Bolivar Peninsula is its own Texas treasure. A national refuge for coastal birds and fishing, the area has become a vacation destination for families and tourists across the state. With beautiful vacation homes, peaceful beaches and endless local fun—some say it's Texas' best kept secret.

*Bolivar*  
PENINSULA



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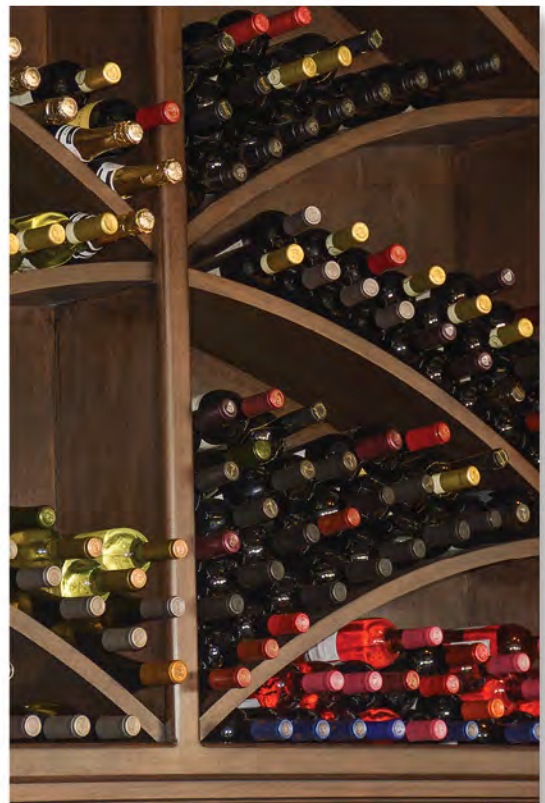
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