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Frisco Style BEST of FRISCO 2004

And the winner is ...

By Natalie Medigovich

photos by Chris Johnson unless noted

While there were no votes or polls, the following are those things that make Frisco the Best place to grow. Of course, we do not consider ourselves to be all-knowing and would love to hear from you if you have your own ideas. With that in mind, here's what we came up with for the Best of Frisco, 2004.

Best Place to See a Waterfall ... Central Park

In addition to the Southwestern art and the looming bronze sculptures of several longhorns stampeding away from their captors, the intricate waterfall patterns down the front and rear, and dual fountains at the peak of the Park's hill can soothe away anyone's road rage if you sit still long enough to listen to the sound of running and dripping water.

Several weatherproof benches and grassy areas invite you to take a break from the rat race, or life in general, and just be. Share a ledge with the many geckos that claim the spot as their own little piece of heaven and listen to the streaming and meandering water on the stones. Take a deep cleansing breath, hold for three seconds, release. Aaaaahhhh. Or, just sit and do nothing.

Located at the northwest corner of Parkwood Boulevard and Warren Parkway. For more information call 972.335.5517.

**“Frisco is the
best place to
Live, Work,
Play and
Grow...”**



Best Apple Pie ... The Abbey

Okay, so you've stood in line like many of us on a Sunday morning hoping to dine on some of the food in this historic building's wonderful brunch buffet. You ponder, as you glance over the full parking lot, will any food be left for you and your family? Did you know that many people come to the

Abbey just for dessert and don't ever have to worry about lines or waiting?

Served with brandy butter and 3% cream ice cream, these mouth-watering slices may make Mom want to gussie up her own recipe! This signature item, created by Chef Darzi 12 years ago when the restaurant opened, is one of the top sellers during holidays when whole pies are most often purchased. Easy to remember: A is for apple and Abbey.

Located at 7185 Main Street, Suite 100. For more information call 972.335.3812, or go to www.abbeygrill.com.

Best Carousel Ride ... Stonebriar Centre Mall

It is the only wonderful 32-horse musical light up kiddie ride around to provide that "old timey" feeling for only \$1. A San Francisco company designed the 24,000-light carousel with traditional western saddle horses, futuristic silver-armored steeds and dramatically decorated chariots for tots (and parents who ride free with their little ones). Heck, anyone can ride free if they get a free token from the ride's new sponsor First National Bank Southwest.

An average of 700 rides per day and two to four birthday parties booked per month demonstrate this was brilliant strategic planning for Frisco as well as the Mall. It can be used as a reward for tots letting mom get some shopping done or just as a fun thing to do.

Located at 2601 Preston Road. For more information call 972.668.6255, or go to www.shopstonebriar.com.



Best Wine List ... Eddie Merlot's

Though merlot wines are their best seller and sell three times faster than the sweeter/dryer wines, a patron can order just about any vintage here (even the heralded Chateau Petrus circa 1983 that goes for a whopping \$1,198 a bottle) and be pleasantly satisfied.

This Indiana-based restaurant boasts 63 different wines by the glass and a staff who know grapes are more than just raisins. Each is versed in the hundreds of bottles available (primarily from the US) with some wines available in the half bottle, or 375 ml size.

There always seems to be a rehearsal dinner, anniversary party or some other celebration taking place at the charming upscale dining establishment. You can see wine connoisseurs perfecting their palates or wine newbies learning how to use their nose to smell the different florals and fruits in the glass offered for their sampling pleasure.

Located at 8650 State Highway 121. For more information call 214.618.6335, or go to www.eddiemerlots.com.





Best Field of Dreams ...

Legacy Christian Academy's New Baseball Park

Build it and they will come! The fighting Eagles are in the process of breaking in their beautiful new baseball field, which officially opened March 4th.

Up to 600 fans can sit in the shiny new bleachers and marvel at the regulation big league dimensions, 45-foot bricked dugout and warming track, or choose to sit on the grass berm at the right and left field lines. Several celebrity athletes from the Texas Rangers and RoughRiders have come to the Park to witness just how perfect this field is for a baseball game. For \$5 per adult and \$2 for kids, it's a cheap night out no matter how you measure it.

Located at 5000 Academy Drive. For more information call 469.633.1330, or go to www.legacyca.org

Best Skateboard Park ...

Skateboard Park at Centennial Park

Unless you are a regular for the library's story time or maybe just enjoy driving by the old red caboose on display, you may not have noticed the strange court that was revamped about two years ago.

As a result of requests from local teenagers and the 20-plus year-old tennis courts that were getting little use, the city decided to overhaul the space and put in an outdoor, enclosed, skateboard park, equipped with a new paved parking lot.

Street hockey players, BMX bike demonstrators and skateboarders love the new 120' x 110' concrete surface with 3 1/2' softboard containment perimeters for camps and shows and just as a local hangout to learn new tricks. Lights are on at the park until 10 pm if you want to dust off your old skateboard and give it a whirl; but don't forget your elbow and kneepads and helmet!

Located at 9349 Sunset Drive. For more information call 972.335.5517, or go to www.friscotexas.gov.



Best Kids' Store ... Toys R Us

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that whoever decided to put this store in Frisco made a lot of people very happy on both ends of the business. Frisco should consider itself lucky to have the second largest Toys R Us in the country.

Unique features of this toy store include a play area where weary parents can sip a gourmet cup of coffee while watching their child burn some energy; a hair cut parlor, photo studio and party rooms available for rent. A children's clothing line and an electronics division round out the kids' paradise. This store is one of only six "Geoffrey Toy Box" stores in the country – meaning it is equipped with all amenities above – so how can you beat that?

Located at 2871 Preston Road. For more information call 972.712.0054, or go to www.toysrus.com.

Best Kept Musical Secret ... Ryan Yuhas

He's lived in Frisco since 1996, is almost 50 years old, but wrote his first song and had his first public performance at the tender age of 14. After years of writing and performing, the self-proclaimed James Taylor/Steve Winwood sounding musician has finally released his trip-down-memory-lane CD (for those over 30) that is easy on the ears.

You'll also hear his original song "Knock The Ball (Outta This Park)" played at the RoughRiders' summer baseball games this year, guaranteed to rev up fans of all ages. The talented Yuhas plays acoustic, electric (and double-necked electric) guitar, harmonica and mandolin on his tracks. The artist moonlights by day as a management consultant, and offers his musical services free to charity and non-profit organizations.

For more information call 972.841.0226, or email ryan@ryanrocks.com.



"Knock The Ball (Outta This Park) can be heard at RoughRiders games this summer."





Best Place to Ride a Longhorn ... Central Park or Centre at Preston Ridge

You don't have to drive to Fort Worth or sign a liability waiver because these cattle are sculpted out of bronze. Cheesy or not, several of us have had our Christmas card photo taken here thinking we were so original until we received a similar one from a friend!

Choose a longhorn that is running down the hill from a cowboy in hot pursuit at Central Park, or busting through a brick wall trying to escape a lasso, or moseying on past Target and Half Price Books away from the chuck wagon diners camping out near Gloria's at the Centre of Preston Ridge. Beautiful art no matter what your age.

Located at the northwest corner of Parkwood Boulevard and Warren Parkway, and down the main road in front of the Target shopping center. For more information call 972.335.5517.

Best Place to Fly a Kite ... Warren Sports Complex

With such a vast open area to choose from and various ground levels available, no matter how many sporting competitions are taking place (and it is busy on weekends), many Friscoans love to fly their kites on one of the open fields, especially during the lovely spring weather.

If you are a kite fanatic, ignore the four baseball fields, rule out the 14 soccer/football fields, and make obsolete the two tennis

and basketball courts to become one with your string and flying diamond in the air.

Located at 11225 Rogers Road. For more information call 972.335.5517, or go to www.friscotexas.gov.

Best Place to Wet a Hook ... Warren Sports Complex

This lake was originally used for watering cattle in the late 1960s and continued to be used for that purpose until just before the huge chunk of 110-acre parkland was purchased in 1994.

Only bugs and birds are native to this grassy rolling area now. This serene 8-acre, 16-foot deep lake is also stocked with large mouth black bass, channel catfish and numerous sunfish ranging from bluegills to red ears. Though swimming and wading is strictly prohibited, the fishing is catch and release. Residents can enjoy sitting and contemplating life on either of the two wooden piers, or have a picnic at one of the many clean wooden picnic tables provided. You can always sneak out for a quiet nap too, and listen to the wind whip the cattails.

Located at 11225 Rogers Road. For more information call 972.335.5517, or go to www.friscotexas.gov.

Best Place to Feed the Ducks ... Plantation Resort Lake

Thankfully anyone with a toddler or small children has spread the word about the wonderful nature opportunity to feed one of about 50 very spoiled and mostly mallard ducks who have decided to make this little lake their home.

Plantation Golf Course staff swears they didn't stock the ducks, but does put out breadcrumbs, the old softies, and admits knowing of a couple of residents who moved and left behind their Ginny hens to join the flock. (This explains the two unusually colored ducks that don't seem to fit in; must be Yankees.) The staff has also noted that sometimes all nine lakes on the golf course will have ducks camping out and ruling the roost. They often find duck eggs and delight in new babies (four hatched recently). It's a good life to be a duck in Frisco.

Located at 4701 Plantation Lane. For more information call 972.335.4653, or go to www.plantationgolf.net.



Best Place to Play ... Friendship Park

Most parents have had to endure the whining of their children when they found out this four-year-old beloved park closed last summer for expansion and renovation. The Parks and Recreation department swears it will be worth the wait when the all-wooden play area, a class project for Leadership Frisco II, opens this June. (Yes, June! Tell your friends – the wait is almost over!)

Though the 62.7 acre site is properly known as Frisco Commons, the play area got its name from a fundraiser poll taken from local kiddos, and voila, "Friendship Park." These same children were asked what would be a perfect playground and once a pet shop and waterslide were nixed, the rest – including a puppet theater, train and clubhouse, were incorporated and built by local volunteers.

Get ready for no more Port-A-Potties when the new restroom facilities open along with a large and small covered pavilion, concrete hike and bike trail, four-acre lake (planned to be stocked with fish for catch and release), an amphitheater, more benches and picnic tables, and intense landscaping sure to give the Dallas Arboretum a run for its money (ok, maybe not during the "Blooms" event weeks). The pride of the \$4.2 million makeover is a huge granite ball inscribed with the names of all War Veterans as a hands-on memorial you can turn with your fingertips on a thin layer of water; a true must see and do!



Located at 6000 McKinney Road. For more information call 972.335.5517, or go to www.friscotexas.gov.

Best Place to Get a Harley Fix ... Denton County Choppers and Texas Stardom

That's right, this suburban playground has several followers of black leather and souped up choppers that you might not know about if you didn't happen to stop in at Texas Stardom on a Thursday night or drive west on Main Street near the railroad tracks to spot the cool motorcycles parked outside the Denton County Choppers store at any given time. What started as a request for a few local riders to use as a hangout has turned into a family night (kids eat free, some free rides and tours of the custom machinery) gone wild—pun intended, at Texas Stardom, has also turned into a joint partnership for both places after the restaurant management asked the local Harley place if they wanted to join in on the fun.

Custom bike night also has some revved up classic and custom hot rod cars on display as well for your viewing pleasure, and sometimes it's so busy Texas Stardom has to hire a valet service to ensure patrons get their fill of live outdoor entertainment and hot off the portable smoker food. Prizes and gift certificates are awarded to these proud custom or classic vehicle owners, most of which are family members who are preppie businessmen by day and leathered-out come Thursday nights. More than 100 riders display their "babies" with an equal number of motorcycles and cars on average, and many talented artists who create and repair (along with sell any motorcycle accessories) at Denton County Choppers gladly show up to talk about chrome.

Who knew what started as a garage business in Little Elm a few years ago would have such a following in the Frisco area that DCC would need a bonified place of business?

Located at 2390 Parkwood Boulevard. For more information call 972-668-8108, or go to www.texasstardom.com. Denton County Choppers is located at 6427 Main Street. For more information call 972-712-0300.

Best Place to go Off Road ... Land Rover Test Track

Have you rubbernecked while driving down Preston Road wondering what the heck that hilly thing is on the north side of the Land Rover dealership's lot? Have your kids shouted "Oh, coool! Can we drive over that?" while you gratefully thanked God that your vehicle was not made to climb those 38-degree angles that would tip over most drivers?

Only trained professionals at the dealership can safely navigate the 135-foot test track to show off the capability of the Range Rovers (which can handle a 45 degree angle, by the way). Though some patrons ask if they can drive the Rovers over the test track's articulation humps (used to show the ability of a Rover to maintain a level ride), kids can hop in with their parents and staff-assigned



"Have your
kids shouted ...
Oh, cool!
Can we drive
over that?"

driver and get ready for an adrenalin rush. Dads and kids ask to do it again and are obliged. Note: a Range Rover cannot flip over!

Located at 5935 Preston Road. For more information call 972.370.2345, or go to www.landroverfrisco.com.

Best Free Public Art ... Hall Office Park

Tidbit of info for ya – the City of Frisco does not own the 37 wonderful outdoor works of art on display in Hall Office Park. It is borrowed from the personal collection of generous and community-minded Craig Hall, who owns Hall Office Park, and the reason climbing on and touching the art is strictly prohibited.

The Texas Sculpture Garden is just part of a larger art collection housed inside many of the lobbies of the office buildings on the four-acre art exhibit located in Hall Office Park. Unlike their outdoor counterparts, most of the indoor beauties come from all over the world, hailing from places like Austria, Israel, France and South Africa. But like the works of art created by Texans outside, all the art strives to stimulate your mind and sense of art appreciation. Stroll the winding sidewalks and pop inside the gorgeous entries of the buildings and see if you can spot the glass blue bonnets inside and the huge eyeball outside. Keep your own eyes on the lookout for three new International Collection additions this summer.

Located at 6801 Gaylord Parkway. For more information call 972.377.1100, or go to www.hallfinancial.com.

Best Place for a Date (Over 50) ... Double Dip Frozen Custard Parlor, (20-50, Are you kidding? Who has the time?)

Now that we're on the same page about the middle age group being too busy with kids, jobs and other life instances, let's concentrate on the first category. Double Dip was a welcome addition when residents mourned the loss of the old Dairy Queen that once stood in its place.

Though weekends and summers are obviously the busiest time, driving past on any particular night you will often see children's sports teams in uniform enjoying the 10% milk fat mouthwatering, creamy, (Get the picture? Hold that thought, I have to run through the drive through) frozen custard treats. Anyone who comes here is not on a diet, or is cheating if they are, and is always very, very happy.

They serve only chocolate and vanilla custard with a zillion combinations of toppings, try the Gizmo – you'll be hooked! Patrons also enjoy the pretty flowers, planted by the owners, while sitting on one of the plentiful iron benches and let the day or night drift away regardless of what gastronomical treat they are enjoying.

Located at 7511 Main Street. For more information, call 972.377.8668.



photo courtesy of Hall Office Park



Best Local Weekend Getaway ... The Westin Stonebriar Resort

You've just got to try the signature "heavenly bed and bath" amenities at the plush Westin. Beds are double pillow-tops, with cotton duvets and Egyptian sheets to make it feel like your own little nest you never want to leave. The oversized bathrooms have dual showerheads, huge, soft, bath "sheets" (they don't like to call them just towels), and bowed shower curtains that never get in the way or stick to your wet body – and that's just in your room!

Treat yourself to pampering at the full-service Face and Body Resort Spa or shoot a round of golf on the Tom Fazio-designed 18-hole course out back. When your stomach starts to growl, head to The Legacy Grill for a Cowboy rib eye or any of the delicious daily hand prepared specials a la Chef Wiley Bates III. Of course, you can always order in-room dining as well.

Weather permitting, take a few laps in the 200-foot outdoor lagoon-style pool complete with water slide (you don't need kids to have fun, right?) Special requests are treated like they are expected, not like you are "just one of the guests" of the 301-room resort.

Located at 1549 Legacy Drive. For more information call 972.668.8000 or go to www.westinstonebriar.com.



Best Place to Get Married ... Downtown Gazebo

The clean white paint and double-decker shingled roof offers a quaint setting for wedding photos and the occasional wedding ceremony.

The Gazebo has a front and rear entrance, two sets of curved benches and a little parking lot behind it making the sweet little wooden structure perfect for small special events. There is even an electrical outlet, lovely landscaping and multi-colored brick walkways. Just look for the tall antique-green roman numerated clock that accents the darling park. The City provides use of the gazebo free of charge, but requests you use it after 5 pm or on weekends (to avoid traffic delays).

Located just east of 6891 Main Street. For more information call 972.335.5517.

Best Family Summer Night Out ... Frisco RoughRiders Game



Opening day was April 3rd, but you still have the rest of the season to enjoy several hours of entertainment. Numerous special events ranging from firework shows to two visits from the Famous Chicken (the only Texas visits for the big yellow bird mascot, thank you very much), and special appearances by fan favorites the Zooperstars, Reggie, Birdzerk and the Sky Dogs are planned at the Dr. Pepper/7-Up Ballpark. All this and not a bad seat in the architecturally aesthetic house for any of the 9,300 plus attendees per game. New for groups this year are the Covered Wagon and birthday areas. Get your Thundersticks ready for a great time!

Located at 7300 RoughRiders Trail. For more information call 972.731.9200, or go to www.ridersbaseball.com.

Best Place to See the Stars ... Warren Sports Complex

If you're lucky, you can borrow the fancy telescopes and learn from knowledgeable local astronomers from Starfest. Go stargazing one of the weekend nights (usually one Saturday per month) and join the group as they set up their gear for all to borrow and ponder the heavens above.

For more information, email starfest@comcast.net.

*"Friendship
Park ...
Tell your
friends the
wait is
almost over."*



photo by Ryan Yuhas

Best Place to Invest a Quarter ... North Dallas Tollway Extension

Recently completed a few weeks ahead of schedule to much jubilation, the addition of roughly a mile-long extension of concrete has already eased some traffic congestion for those traveling to or from Frisco and beyond. An estimated 1.5 million visitors are expected to use the new lanes, including the three-level interchange at State Highway 121 and Dallas Parkway, which now extend from Legacy Drive to Gaylord Parkway. No more idling while waiting to inch forward so you can idle while waiting to inch forward, while...(you get the picture).

In fact, there are plans to eventually extend the Tollway even further to Main Street and on to Eldorado Parkway, and eventually Hwy 380. If time is money and traffic is a waste of time, your quarter is worth more than 25 pennies if you think about it...

For more information call 972.335.5555 or 214.461.2000, or go to www.ntta.org.

Best Networking Opportunity ... 7:46 am Thursday Chamber Meeting

If you want to rub shoulders with like-minded people or get your name out in the business world, or if you're just looking for a darn good breakfast (cost is \$1, and a business card, to offset the price of coffee for the 80-110 people who show up each week), this is the place to be to give your 30-second spiel about your business.

Speaking of breakfast, caterers who sponsor the breakfast and have to wait months before being granted the honor, are given the coveted seven minutes to tout their gourmet spreads, which is a lot of time considering the group adjourns at 9 am.

Located at 6843 Main Street. For more information call 972.335.9522 or go to www.friscochamber.com.

Best Way to Give Back to the Community ... Volunteer or Donate to Frisco Family Services

Though their name has changed three times in recent years, this local non-profit charity has always provided aid for Frisco residents through its fundraising. With a resale shop at one end and a social service unit (complete with food pantry) at the other, these do-gooders are always looking for others who want to do good.

About 12,000 pounds of food per month and about \$100,000 per year in emergency service aid is provided. Last year they served 625 client families, an increase of 32% over the previous year.

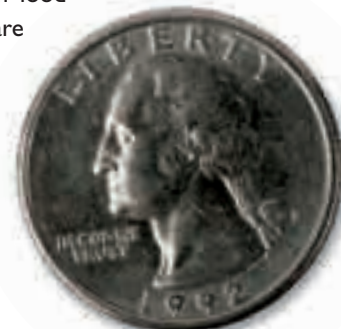




photo courtesy of friscoheritage.org

Help is always welcome in the form of stocking the food pantry shelves, working at the Resale Store, answering phones, data entry or writing thank you letters. The four-person fulltime staff cannot do it alone, and welcomes any time you can give, even if it's only one hour a month. Donations, be they financial or a food staple such as flour or cereal or much needed hygiene and baby items, are always accepted.

Located at 8780 Third Street. For more information call 972.335.9495 or go to www.friscocenter.org.

Best Place for a First/Blind Date ... Dave and Busters

When considering a place to meet for a first date or blind date,

Dave and Busters is sure to please if your companion turns out to be boring or someone you'd rather not spend time getting to know better. And, it's perfect if you are with someone you do enjoy. There are seven classic billiard tables, one shuffleboard game, two full bars with 12 complete TV domes each, and a million dollar midway with prizes like drills, table saws, coffee makers and flat screen TVs. You can also win a Game Cube or a Play Station game. So, if Don Quiote makes you want to scream, go have a ball instead of waiting for your mobile phone to magically ring to release you from a dull dinner table.

Located inside Stonebriar Mall. For more information, call 214.387.0915, or go to www.daveandbusters.com.

Best Way to Honor/Memorialize a Loved One ... Plant a Memory in the Grove of Trees at Warren Sports Complex

Sponsored by the Heritage Association and the Rotary Club, this environmentally friendly gift that keeps on giving is a great way for generations to enjoy and remember a loved one. Trees are dedicated in the fall, with a formal ceremony attended by the Mayor, friends and family of the honoree. Biographies are read, photographs are taken and a memorial certificate or plaque naming the hardwood tree is presented. The tree purchases also serve as fundraisers for the groups to help provide Meals on Wheels. Up to 24 trees, bald cypress, live oak or red oak, can be planted per season in an effort to keep the ceremony simple and work with the surrounding ecosystem.

The fee for the Memory Tree is only \$300 and the city also agrees to maintain, fertilize and water the tree "forever," and if it dies, will replace it free of charge.

Located at 11225 Rogers Road. For more information call 972.335.9255, or go to www.FriscoHeritage.org.

Hope you have enjoyed our picks for some of the "Bests" in Frisco. If you have something you think is the best in Frisco, or is better than our "Bests" let us know. We'll check it out and maybe it will appear in next seasons Best of Frisco.

"Biographies are read, photographs are taken ... and a plaque naming the tree is presented."