# GALVESTON **STILL RISES**

the island open to the public as a museum. Built by the prominent Gresham family before becoming a property of the Catholic Church for decades, every niche, cranny and chandelier in the mansion is a work of art. The magnificence and visitors understand have a main staircase quite like the one they

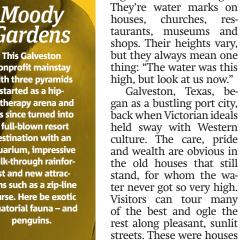
**PLUS** 

For the family

Bishop's Palace **Bishop's Palace is one** of a few grand old Victorian homes on

## Moody Gardens

nonprofit mainstay with three pyramids started as a hippotherapy arena and has since turned into a full-blown resort destination with an aquarium, impressive walk-through rainforest and new attractions such as a zip-line course. Here be exotic equatorial fauna – and penguins.



**Engulfed.** After

each hurricane,

Texas' eastern

vacation spot

remakes itself

better than ever.

high. 2008 — this high."



Downtown Galveston is a popular shopping area, with numerous boutiques and historical attractions situated in grand old buildings close to the cruise docks and bay. / provided by Galveston Island convention & visitors bureau

demarcates the high-water lines from various hurricanes. The mark from 1900 sits far above the others. KATE THOMAS. METRO

Students of history know it didn't last. The last year of the 19th century brought with it a hurricane that still holds the record as the deadliest natural disaster in United States history. Thousands died and the island was

flattened. Those few homes that still stand were saved when the smashed detritus of every other building in the vicinity created a de facto sea wall around them.

But Galveston rebuilt. Engineers raised the entire grade of the island. Buildings were built higher and sturdier. Community pillars donated vast sums, and officials and residents banded together to make the island great again. And when the next hurricane hit, and the next, they cleared away the rubble and started over.

When Hurricane Ike hit in 2008, the island took it hard. But, as is the Galveston custom, residents rebuilt better and sturdier. Six years later, there are few signs that troubled waters ever swept across the city — except the ones that residents display on their walls, porches and stilts, markers of human resilience.



### Covered trolley if by land, dolphin tour if by sea

**Tours** across the island

When vacationers get tired of lying on the sand beneath the grand expanse of Texas sky, they can ex-

built on the premises of in-

vincibility and optimism.

plore the island on several sorts of tours, whether viewing charming neighborhoods or taking a boat out onto the bay to see offshore oil rigs being built while catching glimpses of

playful pods of bottlenose dolphins gliding alongside the boat.

It's a busy stretch of sea, but the dolphins, terns and pelicans don't seem to mind.

#### Where to eat

Best breakfast

#### Sunflower **Bakery & Cafe**

One of the glories of Texan cuisine is the state's take on breakfast, and this place delivers, with an extra side of shoreside specialty. Migas? Got it. Crab cakes? Got it. Southern-style eggs served over corn cakes with ranchero sauce and cheese? Yes, PLEASE. This is the real thing, and the real thing is delicious. And yes, they do brunch.

#### Best seafood dinner

#### Gaido's Seafood Restaurant

This is about as historical and blue-blood as a restaurant can make itself. and it takes its reputation as seriously as it takes its seafood (and its pecan pie). The menu delves

deeply into the spicy, rich Creole tradition, reminding visitors that the Gulf-kissed island often has as much in common with New Orleans as the rest of the state's more Southwestern flair

Want to go all out?

#### Number 13 **Prime Steak** and Seafood

Standing out from the generally beach-centric, relaxed atmosphere of the island is this new establishment, which, with its attention to ingredient acquisition and the upscale atmosphere, would feel at home along some taxiriddled big-city avenue - if it weren't attached to a marina. This isn't a place to take the kids, but it does spectacular things with such sundries as cocktails and gnocchi, and this place knows steak.



Go for the pecan pie at Gaido's Seafood Restaurant. /