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# San Antonio Express-News

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## Texans among dead from severe storms

Floods, high winds fatal in other states

By Amy B. Wang  
WASHINGTON POST

CANTON — At least a dozen people were killed and dozens more injured over the weekend after tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and floods ripped across

Texas, Missouri, Arkansas and other areas in the South. In East Texas, the National Weather Service confirmed that four tornadoes swept through Henderson, Van Zandt and Rains counties, covering an area about 60 miles southeast of

Dallas. The agency said damage surveys Sunday would reveal whether there were additional tornadoes.

Search teams were going door to door Sunday after the tornadoes the day before flattened homes, uprooted trees and



Andy Jacobsohn/Tribune News Service

flipped several pickups at a now-demolished Dodge dealership in Canton. Images of the dealership along Interstate 20 showed overturned cars, piles of

debris and a destroyed building. "It is heartbreaking and upsetting to say the least," Canton Mayor Lou Ann Everett said. **Tornadoes continue on A2**

Andy Teague cleans up his home's living room after a tornado hit Fruitvale in East Texas' Van Zandt County. Four tornadoes swept through that county and two others nearby.



Girls play at the Children's Shelter, which cared for 343 children in its past fiscal year, from infants to age 16. Photos by Lisa Krantz / San Antonio Express-News

## CARE AND COMFORT

At the Children's Shelter, abused, neglected kids are given refuge

By Vincent T. Davis  
STAFF WRITER

When Maya Crenshaw reports to work at the Children's Shelter, she's ready for a day of playful conversations with youngsters, keeping order and soothing fears.

For the past two years, she's worked as an assistant supervisor at Zachry Cottage, a 66-bed emergency dorm for children, from birth to 16 years of age, removed from their homes by Child Protective Services or local law enforcement officers. On this day, her first stop was tending to a toddler with a cold, his T-shirt read, "Don't worry, I'm invincible."

"Come on, papa," Crenshaw said as she led him to the medical room. "Come over



here so I can take your temperature." A digital thermometer flashed a reading of 99.4 degrees. She had him drink a small cup of honey and lemon juice before a staff member walked him to the clinic. By the time Crenshaw had settled behind the front desk, she had hugged several chil-

dren, helped talk a boy down from a table top and brokered a truce between two preteen girls. Each shift presents ever-changing scenarios for Crenshaw and fellow staff members who work hard and fast to build relationships with the youths. They tailor their ap-

proaches to each child. Celeste Longoria feeds a 3-month-old who had just arrived at the shelter. **Children's continues on A12**

## Old style part of new look at renovated Hotel Valencia

By Steve Bennett  
STAFF WRITER

The more than 100 glass oranges are signed by celebrities from Alice Cooper to Carrie Underwood with something in common: They have all been guests at San Antonio's Hotel Valencia River Walk in its 14-year history.

The oranges (Valencia, get it?) are hand-blown by local artist Gini Garcia, and in the glass cabinet where they are lined up in the hotel lobby, space is a little tight.

"We host many of the NBA teams and lots of celebrities, as you can see," sales and marketing director Stacy Seaborn said. "The hotel is service-oriented and out of the thick of things, but still on the River Walk. It's what guests who don't want to get bombarded by people are looking for."

While Garth and Trisha or the Stone Temple Pilots may not have noticed, the hotel — opened in 2003 — was beginning to look a little rough around the edges, maybe a little dated, before work began late last year on a \$10 million renovation completed recently.

From the orange trees in terra cotta urns along the Houston Street facade to Naranja, the new bar and cafe on the second floor, the public spaces of the hotel have been thoroughly reimagined.

"Everything is brand-new," said General Manager Trent Freeman of the Houston-based Valencia Group property, which is considered San Antonio's first boutique hotel — part of a trend toward small, upscale and uniquely themed hotels that began in the 1980s. "The hotel has been 100 percent reimagined. We wanted to bring more of the Spanish heritage of San Antonio to the hotel, while maintaining that sense of modern

**Valencia continues on A10**



An arched water feature by the front door is part of the recently completed \$10 million renovation of Hotel Valencia, which is considered the city's first boutique hotel. **Valencia continues on A10**

Jerry Lara / San Antonio Express-News

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## FROM THE COVER

### VALENCIA

From page A1

luxury. It's timeless and unique, all part of making the hotel a destination in itself."

Using an earthy palette of browns, tans, grays, golds and reds, along with rich dark wood and black wrought-iron accents, original artwork, dramatic lighting, and limestone, oak and tile flooring, the hotel strikes a balance between Spanish Colonial and Mediterranean style.

Perhaps the most dramatic changes have come upstairs. In place of Citrus is the new restaurant Dorrego, which is Argentinian-themed, and Naranja, a cafe and bar where guests can enjoy a continental breakfast in what was the V Bar, a popular happy-hour hangout for years.

The hotel engaged the Houston-based Rotet Studio, an architectural interior firm whose hospitality work ranges from Aspen to Hong Kong and includes the Beverly Hills Hotel and the Driskill Hotel in Austin.

"For the Hotel Valencia, we created a concept that blends Old World Spanish Colonial, to reflect San Antonio and its missions, with modern Mediterranean, to recall the building's Tuscan-style architecture and the hotel's namesake of Valencia, Spain," said Rotet designer Anja Majkic during a recent tour of the hotel.

Visitors enter a two-story foyer with a raked, terra cotta-colored concrete ceiling.

This space is much lighter — and much less '80s — than before, with limestone tile replacing dark carpeting and a massive wrought-iron chandelier hanging over a gurgling fountain.

Four cow skull artworks decorated with black-and-white mosaic patterns by Northern California artist Shannon House hang in the elevator alcove seen through an open archway behind the fountain. A custom wrought-iron railing on the rising U-shaped stairs replaces a dated glass barrier.

"This is the most photographed room in the hotel," Seaborn said of the hotel's foyer. "A lot of selfies are taken here."



Hotel Valencia's "living room," with couches and a fireplace, separates Naranja cafe and bar from Dorrego restaurant.

A new library with a coffered walnut ceiling and walls has been carved out of an alcove at the top of the stairs. It is decorated with paintings of flamenco dancers and a grouping of sepia-toned photographs of the city's bridges over the San Antonio River. On the spines of books in bookshelves along one wall, Houston artist Maksim Koloskov has painted an early map of San Antonio.

"We wanted an old-style cigar bar, gentlemen's lounge feel to the library," Majkic said. "People really seem to enjoy having their coffee and reading the newspaper there."

The reception area now features light oak flooring and a dark walnut desk. A large, laser-cut leather tapestry hangs on a wall of reddish brick. The long corners of the bricks have been rotated to the outside rather than stacked atop each other, creating a more dynamic look.

"The patterned plaster work behind the reception desk is an Alhambra-style treatment called esgrafiado, which is a historic technique used in a lot of Spanish Colonial design," Majkic said.

The reception area flows into the Naranja bar, which features light hexagon floor tiles and original concrete columns that give the space an industrial flavor.

Naranja features a long curved bar under large windows overlooking the river, while the elevator bank walls have been covered in white,

patterned tin. The intended effect is much lighter, more streamlined.

"The V Bar used to be the hottest spot on the river at night, but we wanted to make it into a space that is used all through the day," Seaborn said.

The "living room" separates Naranja from Dorrego; it's a comfortable space for guests killing time, with a velvet painting of two fighting bulls hung over a white fireplace that replaces one of the hotel's formerly most famous features, the wall of candles.

Dorrego, which chef Anthony Mesa said is named for Plaza Dorrego, a public square in the historic San Telmo neighborhood of Buenos Aires, is open and serves a limited Argentinian menu, as it's still in the soft opening phase. Plans call for the full menu rollout, including Italian and French influences, and grand opening May 15.

"Of course, there will be beef," Mesa said.

He said a weeklong visit in January to Argentina, where he worked the line in a restaurant, was "an amazing experience."

"Their service is some of the best I've ever encountered anywhere in the world," he said.

"They are attentive, but not aggressive — alert. That's what we want to model ourselves after."

The restaurant, with spartan white Venetian plaster walls and dark wood banquettes with brown leather seating, features a second bar. It has a gray mar-



ABOVE: Hotel Valencia, which opened in 2003, sits on East Houston Street along the River Walk.

LEFT: Cow skull artworks with mosaic patterns decorate the elevator alcove. A \$60 million renovation project for the hotel began late last year and ended recently.

ble top 25 feet long on a black steel base with silver rivets. There is a new private dining room with seating for a dozen at a big table and a glass-encased "wine cellar" in metal racks along one wall.

Dorrego is lighter and brighter than Citrus, with light-

patterned tile flooring and a blue-and-white talavera tile border over an archway that leads into the kitchen.

"The designers did a great job of getting the feel of Argentina in here," Mesa said.

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