

AUSTIN WAY

MEN'S ISSUE

*WHERE TO DINE
(WITH THE BEST
WINE) IN THE CITY*

*AUSTIN OVER
HOLLYWOOD*

*From Robert Rodriguez to
Jesse Plemons, eight leading
men discuss the film scene.*

*FULL SPEED
AHEAD WITH
FORMULA ONE!*

PLUS
ANDY RODDICK
LAURA BUSH
NORMAN LEAR
LEON BRIDGES

*Gary
Clark Jr.*

*AUSTIN'S NATIVE SON ON HIS
NEW ALBUM, ACL MUSIC FEST,
AND BRINGING BACK ANTONE'S*

THE LEADING MEN

They can work wherever they want. They live in Austin because they can. These exciting players in movies

and TV—both behind the scenes and in front of the camera—reveal why this

community can't be replicated anywhere else, even Hollywood.



*THE
HOMETOWN HERO*

AUSTIN NICHOLS

Why Austin: When Austin Nichols graduated from McCallum High School, he was gung-ho for UT. But when a manager persuaded him to move to Hollywood, he ate his enrollment fee and headed to the University of Southern California instead. Since then, Nichols—who starred in the beloved teen drama *One Tree Hill* before bumping up to the adults' table on *Ray Donovan* and now *The Walking Dead*, as the cagey Spencer Monroe—has created his own Texas community out West. He gathers with other Texan ex-pats to watch UT games on TV, and while he continues to divide his time between LA and Austin, it's still Texas that holds his heart. Here it's just a hustle between JuiceLand, Tacodeli, and Barton Springs.

What's Next: Inspired by his hometown, Nichols shot his first short film, *Stroker*, a 2014 Austin Film Festival entrant, in town using a local crew, and he hopes to direct future projects here. But first keep an eye on him on *The Walking Dead*, which returns for season six on AMC on October 11, and don't be surprised if you see *Nostradamus*, a short that Nichols starred in about a military drone program, in the next Oscar competition.

Dream Projects: Nichols is shopping around a dark comedy pilot about a 1980s game-show host that he cooked up with his writing partner. As busy as he is, though, Nichols would love to do something with local heroes Robert Rodriguez and Richard Linklater in the future. "I would die to work with those guys, but I want to meet them organically," he says. Spoken like a true Austinite.

IN HIS WORDS:
"The second I get to Austin, I take a deep breath and all the tension goes away."

by KAREN VALBY
photographs by SHANE MCCAULEY

THE
WRITER

JUSTIN MARKS

Why Austin: Screenwriter Justin Marks attributes much of his success in Hollywood to his decision to move from there to Austin two years ago with his dogs and wife, Rachel Kondo, a fellow at UT's Michener Center. Marks—who wrote the script for Disney's upcoming live-action adaptation of *The Jungle Book*, starring Scarlett Johansson, Idris Elba, and Bill Murray—is now writing the much-anticipated sequel to *Top Gun*, which will bring back Tom Cruise as Maverick. He and Kondo have laid down roots in Crestview, where, every day, Marks rides his bike to Little Deli for lunch. "It provides this true peace," he says. "You get up in the morning and it's quiet, and you go grab a coffee and feel like you see the same faces every day. It's the place to write."

His Destiny: Growing up in Houston, Marks saw *Top Gun* in the theater seven glorious times. "From the opening frame, the sound of the score, and the way the carrier was shot in the magic hour of light, I knew then that I'd never seen any experience like what a movie could be, and I wanted to write them," he says. "I've kind of been writing the movie my whole life."

What's Next: While in Austin, Marks got into a magical rhythm and churned out the script for the upcoming Starz series *Counterpart*, an espionage thriller starring Oscar winner J.K. Simmons, set to go into production early next year. With showrunner added to his résumé, Marks has never been busier. Good thing Thunderbird serves strong coffee.

Cotton Polo, **Ermenegildo Zegna** (\$275). **Neiman Marcus**, *The Domain*, 512-719-1200; zegna.com

OPPOSITE PAGE: Jacket, **Coach** (\$795). **Barton Creek Square**, 512-330-9929; coach.com. Shirt, **DSquared2** (\$580). **Saks Fifth Avenue**, North Star Mall, San Antonio, 210-341-4111; saks.com. Black denim pants, **Dolce & Gabbana** (\$675). **Neiman Marcus**, SEE ABOVE; dolcegabbana.com. Sunglasses, stylist's own

IN HIS WORDS: "I've never done writing in my life like I've done when I'm in Austin."

