

Henderson boasts unacknowledged landmark

# Oldest Dairy Queen in Texas still serves it up

By MICHAEL PLUMER

The Battalion

Philadelphia has the Liberty Bell, San Francisco has the Golden Gate Bridge and San Antonio has the Alamo. But Henderson, Texas has all three beat.

In this sleepy little town 125 miles north of College Station lies a Dairy Queen. But not just the ordinary run-of-the-mill Dairy Queen.

It's the oldest Dairy Queen in the state of Texas, dishing out ice cream since the 1940s.

Usually a small town is defined by how many stoplights it has, but not Henderson. Judgment on this town can only be passed after sampling the cuisine at DQ. To do this, a hungry traveler has double the opportunities.

Henderson has not one but two Dairy Queens.

In any other town, this could present a difficult choice but here there's no contest. The historical landmark is located off the world-famous Henderson "Traffic Circle."

The same Traffic Circle where old men and women from Oklahoma have spent hours, sometimes days, trying to figure how to get off it. The same Traffic Circle where an elderly from Arkansas went around backwards. Twice.

Their reward for negotiating the terrible curve on Highway 79 is a creamy treat at Dairy Queen.

Customers have said that having the oldest Dairy Queen in Texas gives Henderson a touch

of class that not many other towns can claim. Culture comes in many forms and Dairy Queen offers the experience of a lifetime. No silk napkins or fine silverware. Paper napkins and plastic forks are the norm in this establishment, thank you very much.

Eating at such a historical landmark is like taking a trip back into time, to a point where there is no return.

Yes, Henderson is definitely DQ country. The Liberty Bell is cracked, the Golden Gate Bridge could topple at any minute and the Alamo has bullet holes in it. There are no such problems with this Dairy Queen.

Serving Peanut Parfaits like there is no tomorrow, the friendly folks who work the counter try to make one feel at home amongst the Hunger-Buster posters and Texas Basket advertisements.

Service can be a little slow but that is to be expected. Some of the original staffers still work there, dishing out soft-serve ice cream cones dipped in a smooth chocolate sauce. The chocolate just melts in a customer's mouth.

The best thing on the food portion of the menu has to be the Texas Basket. Rumors abound that the chicken sticks that are served were from the original Dairy. But management has given its assurances. Those rumors were unfounded.

The restrooms are clean and seem to have a sparkle to them that most Dairy Queen bathrooms don't possess. The tables are usually cleared but every now and then a stray tomato

can be spotted. No problem, though, because this is history.

Eating at the oldest operating Dairy Queen in the free world (or at least Texas) is an experience that can not be taken for granted. To properly enjoy, there are a few ground rules.

First of all, before ordering, sit down for a couple of minutes and enjoy the atmosphere. You can smell the history, or is that grease? Soaking up the surroundings is a must because once one departs, the feeling could be lost forever.

Secondly, order a milkshake. Sure, it will take a while because the original machine is still used. But that is not the point. The shakes are rich and creamy and really will hit the rock bottom portion of the stomach. These few extra minutes allow you to enjoy the history (aroma of burning grease) even more. Thank goodness also for the clean bathrooms.

Thirdly, talk to the locals. They won't bite, except for a few possible exceptions. Ask questions. Don't be shy.

And finally, take a lot of pictures. There is a big sign out front proclaiming the news that Henderson is officially the home of the oldest Dairy Queen in Texas. If there are no pictures, how will you convince your friends that you actually ate at such a historical place?

Sure, a trendy restaurant like The Mansion on Turtle Creek in Dallas is a happening place. But The Mansion has no history. Dairy Queen symbolizes Texas and hard work.

So drop in and order up a piece of history on me.

# Alan Jackson says he's "just a guy that sings"

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The most dressed-down person at an Alan Jackson concert has to be Alan Jackson.

The men in the audience are more dressed up than the star, determined to stand out in their Garth Brooks uniforms.

The women split between cow-poke dress, and more rock 'n' roll inspired clothing.

Jackson, a good-looking 34-year-old native of Newnan, Ga., can barely get a word — much less a song — through the sea of adoration.

"I am constantly trying to remember that I am just a guy that sings," Jackson said during an interview.

"I'm just a regular guy and I always have been."

This regular guy has three platinum albums, including the current "A Lot About Livin' (And a Little 'bout Love)," and 10 No. 1 country singles.

His jeans may be casual, but there's little ordinary about his state-of-the-art, video and lighting enhanced performances.

He attributes his flashy stage show to a need to compete with more dramatic performers, like Brooks.

"I need elaborate stage lighting because some acts are more entertainer types. I don't get up there and dance around a lot."

As a young man, cars far outshone music as a love. The closest thing the former forklift driver, construction worker, and mail-room employee at The Nashville Network ever had to a career was being a car salesman.

"I never really listened to a lot

of music," Jackson said. "I enjoyed it but never bought new records or went to concerts."

That unassuming perspective may be what separates Jackson's traditional, but sleek, honky-tonk from the pack of hats he competes against.

"I'm not real intellectual and I don't read much. I never had that big a vocabulary so a lot of my stuff is real limited and it's the way I'd say it if I was just talking to somebody."

Jackson has a knack for writing personal songs that connect.

"Working Class Hero" was written after his father retired from a Ford plant and hails blue collar workers as heroes.

Jackson has never heard John Lennon's bitter class-system denouncement of the same title, and doesn't seem to be in any hurry to do so.

"I never did really know much about the Beatles. I was thinking of him (his father) and so many people like him," Jackson said.

"All they do is punch a clock all their life. At that time I was getting all this recognition for my songwriting and singing and record sales and all."

"The working people are really the backbone of the country to me. I wouldn't be sitting here if it weren't for people like that."

Jackson likes to think he's still part of that backbone.

"It's hard work, even though it's routine. You still have to always work at it," he said.

"I think that's why I got bored with other careers — I'd be interested and then I'd get to a certain point and you've done all you can do with it."

"I think this job will always be a challenge."



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## Pear Shape



| Weight | Color | Clarity | Price                |
|--------|-------|---------|----------------------|
| 1.02   | F     | Si1     | \$3575 <sup>00</sup> |
| .73    | G     | Si2/I1  | 2178 <sup>00</sup>   |
| .71    | H     | Si2     | 2250 <sup>00</sup>   |
| .42    | H     | VS1     | 820 <sup>00</sup>    |

## Oval



| Weight | Color | Clarity | Price                  |
|--------|-------|---------|------------------------|
| 2.81   | H/I   | Si21    | \$11,977 <sup>00</sup> |
| 1.53   | I/J   | Si2     | 5800 <sup>00</sup>     |
| 1.09   | H     | Si1     | 3631 <sup>00</sup>     |
| 1.03   | I/J   | Si1/VS2 | 3512 <sup>00</sup>     |
| .77    | I     | Si1/Si2 | 2267 <sup>00</sup>     |
| .71    | E     | Si      | 2586 <sup>00</sup>     |
| .56    | G     | Si2     | 1175 <sup>00</sup>     |

## Marquise Cut



| Weight | Color | Clarity  | Price                |
|--------|-------|----------|----------------------|
| 1.47   | I/J   | Si2/I    | \$4800 <sup>00</sup> |
| .90    | F/G   | Si2      | 3500 <sup>00</sup>   |
| .89    | I     | Si2/I1   | 2414 <sup>00</sup>   |
| .83    | D     | Si2      | 3900 <sup>00</sup>   |
| .75    | G     | VS1/VVS2 | 3500 <sup>00</sup>   |
| .71    | F     | Si2      | 2750 <sup>00</sup>   |
| .62    | I     | Si2/Si1  | 1900 <sup>00</sup>   |
| .61    | F     | Si1/VS2  | 2080 <sup>00</sup>   |
| .58    | F     | Si1/Si2  | 1700 <sup>00</sup>   |
| .57    | E     | VVS1     | 2565 <sup>00</sup>   |
| .54    | H     | Si2      | 1590 <sup>00</sup>   |
| .46    | H     | Si1/Si2  | 1354 <sup>00</sup>   |
| .46    | I     | Si2      | 1125 <sup>00</sup>   |

## Emerald/Princess



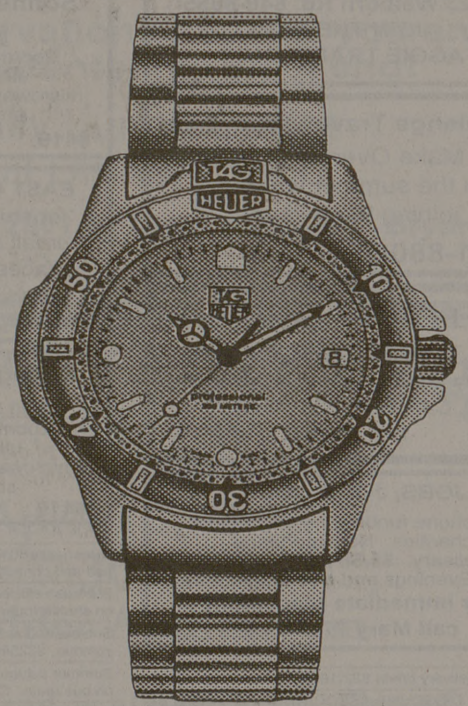
| Weight | Cut          | Color | Clarity | Price                |
|--------|--------------|-------|---------|----------------------|
| 1.14   | Emerald Cut  | H     | VVS2    | \$5600 <sup>00</sup> |
| .66    | Princess Cut | H     | VVS2    | 1850 <sup>00</sup>   |

## Round Diamond

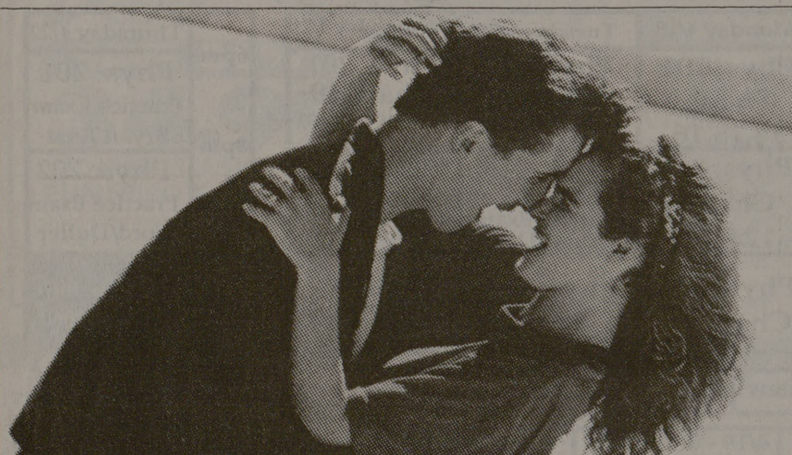


| Weight | Color | Clarity  | Price                  |
|--------|-------|----------|------------------------|
| 9.51   | K     | I1/I2    | \$29,500 <sup>00</sup> |
| 2.48   | F     | I1       | 9610 <sup>00</sup>     |
| 2.34   | J     | Si2      | 8900 <sup>00</sup>     |
| 2.10   | H     | Si2      | 10,500 <sup>00</sup>   |
| 1.64   | J     | Si1      | 6600 <sup>00</sup>     |
| 1.37   | K     | VS1      | 4795 <sup>00</sup>     |
| 1.12   | D     | Si2      | 4500 <sup>00</sup>     |
| 1.03   | G     | VS1/VVS2 | 5300 <sup>00</sup>     |
| .96    | E     | Si2      | 3900 <sup>00</sup>     |
| .92    | I     | Si1/Si2  | 3208 <sup>00</sup>     |
| .86    | I/J   | VS2/VS1  | 2932 <sup>00</sup>     |
| .75    | E     | VS1/VVS2 | 3475 <sup>00</sup>     |
| .72    | D     | Si1      | 2700 <sup>00</sup>     |
| .72    | G     | Si1/Si2  | 2300 <sup>00</sup>     |
| .71    | J     | Si2      | 1850 <sup>00</sup>     |
| .71    | G     | Si2/I1   | 1750 <sup>00</sup>     |
| .65    | H     | Si2      | 1763 <sup>00</sup>     |
| .52    | J     | Si1      | 1108 <sup>00</sup>     |
| .52    | H/I   | Si2/I1   | 700 <sup>00</sup>      |
| .50    | J     | VS2      | 1065 <sup>00</sup>     |
| .46    | J     | Si2      | 980 <sup>00</sup>      |
| .47    | G     | Si2      | 890 <sup>00</sup>      |

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