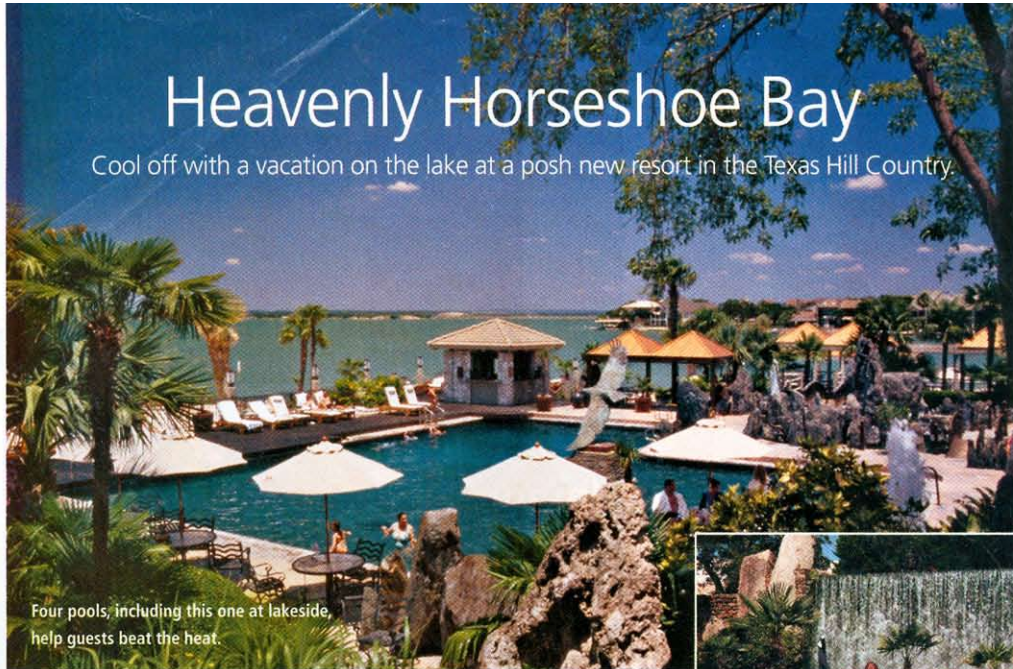


Southern Living

The heart of Southern life



Heavenly Horseshoe Bay

Cool off with a vacation on the lake at a posh new resort in the Texas Hill Country.

Four pools, including this one at lakeside, help guests beat the heat.

It's first light on a summer morning. When I look out on the silvery waters of the lake, I feel like asking the same question that ballplayer asked in the movie *Field of Dreams*: "Is this heaven?"

No, it's Texas. But a getaway at the Horseshoe Bay Resort Marriott on the lake cupped in granite hills comes close to a heavenly experience. The new hotel crowns 6,500-acre Horseshoe Bay near Marble Falls, an hour west of Austin.

Here mortals live like J.R. Ewing here. Dine beneath the stars at the elegant Yacht Club, or sunbathe on a white-sand beach. Unwind with 26 of your closest friends in a huge hot tub sculpted with volcanic boulders. Tennis buffs can hone their serves on 14 courts.

Golf is the biggest draw—but it's more devilish than heavenly. If you can make it through 18 holes without blurring a bad word, you're a saint. Three



challenging courses—Ram Rock, Apple Rock, and Slick Rock—careen through the hills. There are 82 sand traps and water hazards on just 12 of the holes on Slick Rock, and it's the most forgiving. Ram Rock often wins the vote for the most difficult course in Texas.

The 18-hole Whitewater Putting Course nestles next to the resort hotel. Set in a park that holds Chilean flamingos, African cranes, and a waterfall, it's as beautiful as a garden walk.



PHOTOGRAPHS: GARY CLARK

above: An 18-hole putting course brings golf down to size. left: The resort features comfortable, spacious rooms and suites.

There's plenty of room for families to spread out. More than 100 of the 349 guest rooms are suites. The largest accommodations are bungalow-style one-, two-, and three-bedroom Paseo suites with kitchens.

All the activities fill a day with fun. Is this heaven? Well, maybe. —LES THOMAS

While You're Here

Take a side trip to nearby Marble Falls for shopping, food, and entertainment. Have breakfast or homemade pie at the Blue Bonnet Cafe, one of the best cafes in the state. Shop for handmade Texas rockers and other gifts at shops on Main Street. Follow Ranch Road 1431 for a scenic drive with some spectacular overlooks.

For more information contact the Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce at 801 U.S. 281, Marble Falls, TX 78654; 1-800-759-8178 or www.marblefalls.org.

Horseshoe Bay Resort Marriott: toll-free 1-866-799-5384 or www.horseshoebaymarriott.com. **Rates:** start at \$189. Rates for Family Fun Packages with accommodations in a Paseo bungalow suite range \$289-\$369. Golf packages begin at \$315.