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## A Magazine

"Joining the Club"

By Chantal Outon



*Photo by Sarah Kerver*

*Horseshoe Bay Resort's CEO arrives in style on Central Texas' business and social scenes.*

A FEW YEARS back, when Douglas Jaffe III was a precocious teenager growing up on Applehead Island, he rarely missed an opportunity to spend a day on the peaceful waters of Lake LBJ.

"When I was a kid, I was extremely mischievous, but I've grown up a bit since then," says Jaffe, the 26-year-old CEO of Horseshoe Bay Resort, and heir to the 7,000-acre vacation destination situated among the green hills and tranquil Highland Lakes of the Texas Hill Country.

Though many his age would be just setting sail on a career, Jaffe has traversed an ocean of commerce and enterprise. After graduating with a finance degree from St. Edward's University in 2004, Jaffe became vice chairman of Jetran International Ltd., an aircraft company run by his father, M.D. Jaffe Jr.

### True to His Roots

But Jaffe knew this career aspirations lay with Horseshoe Bay Resort, the upscale members-only club his father bought in 1996.

These days, Jaffe spends the bulk of his time conducting meetings, taking phone calls and jetting from one competing high-end property to the next, all in an attempt to increase the appeal of Horseshoe Bay Resort. “Ultimately, we strive to be a five-star resort across the board,” Jaffe says. “Everything is strategically planned here, and the next five years are going to be absolutely remarkable. I think, even within the next year, Texas is going to be blown away by what occurs out here.”

Despite having been born into a well-respected Central Texas family, growing up with an enviable lifestyle and becoming the leader of an exclusive resort, much mystery surrounds Jaffe. He’s an elusive character, often accompanied by handlers, bodyguards and family. But there’s also a fascinating and engaging quality about Jaffe that bewitches many of the resort’s guests and members.



Lake LBJ is visible for miles from the resort’s yacht club. *Photo by Sarah Kerver*

When he rambles across the Horseshoe Bay property, often at a brisk pace from one meeting to another, Jaffe attracts throngs of onlookers and well-wishers, who always smile and address him as “sir.” But his youthful charm is disarming, and Jaffe takes time to talk to his employees and guests, asking about their families and golf scores, although he doesn’t play the game.

“I’m not a big golfer. I’ve always loved being around the water and boating,” says Jaffe, who tells the story of spending the new year on Microsoft Corp. co-founder Paul Allen’s yacht with celebrities such as Martha Stewart, Russell Simmons, and Luke and Owen Wilson.

But the names aren't important to Jaffe. In fact, he speaks about celebrities in the same tone he uses for talking about his employees. He's more interested in getting to know people on a fundamental level, at work and play. "Dealing with people is my favorite part of business," says Jaffe, who signs every Horseshoe Bay Resort employee's paycheck. "I enjoy seeing people here grow. Every day it's all about the people. Without the right people, I can't do my job effectively. My success all comes as a result of them."



Golfers playing the picturesque 14<sup>th</sup> hold on the Slick Rock Golf Course nicknamed the "Million Dollar Hole," must cross over a creek to reach the fairway. *Photo by Sarah Kerver*

## All Work and No Play?

Although Jaffe spends about 70 percent of his time working at the resort, the remaining 30 percent is spent traveling. In fact, he's even logged 80 hours piloting a variety of aircraft, one of the many skills he credits his father with exposing him to. "I learned a lot through flying with my father," Jaffe says. "We'd go to Paris and London for air shows, and to South America, Romania, Europe. And on the business side, I was afforded the opportunity to sit in on some of my father's meetings and absorb a lot."

If it weren't for his responsibilities at Horseshoe Bay, Jaffe would likely be involved in the world of mergers and acquisitions. "I'd definitely be in the Middle East or New York doing investment banking," he says.

But growing up in Horseshoe Bay enabled Jaffe to develop a passion for his executive role, his handlers say. It's that passion, combined with the tutelage of his father, that makes Jaffe so accomplished at his job.

## Open to the Public

For the majority of its 35 years, Horseshoe Bay Resort has been a members-only club. But the addition of the \$50 million, 349-room Texas Hill Country Marriott Hotel in 2004 opened up the property to the public.

The resort boasts three Robert Trent Jones, Sr. golf courses, a par 72 putting course, three swimming pools, a white-sand beach and a 27-person hot tub. Additionally, there is a spa and fitness center, a full-service marina on Lake LBJ, 14 tennis courts and three restaurants.

And for visiting guests, the best attraction is access to the members-only amenities.

"The resort is really an oasis in the middle of the Texas Hill Country," says Mark Woelffer, general manager of the Marriott Hotel on the property. "When guests come to the Marriott, they can enjoy all the privileges that members do, so they can still feel like they're having an exclusive getaway."

Horseshoe Bay is embarking on a renovation that will bring the resort—founded in 1971—into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

"These are elements that continue to brand the resort and the hotel as a memorable, chic Hill Country haven," Woelffer says.

And Horseshoe Bay Resort's private airport, which allows guests and members to touch down on the 6,000-foot runway and be teeing off at a neighboring golf course within minutes, will likely become even more popular in coming years.

The resort plans to soon roll specific aircraft businesses into the Horseshoe Bay brand. And resort CEO Douglas Jaffe has teamed up with aviation pioneer Sino Swearingen to develop the SJ-30-2 corporate jet, of which 280 have already been pre-sold at about \$6.5 million a piece.

"We view those things as great tools to market Horseshoe Bay," Jaffe says.