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Southern Living

"Heavenly Horseshoe Bay"

By Les Thomas



Four pools, including this one at lakeside, help guests beat the heat. *Photo by Gary Clark*

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.

Mere 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 blurting 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.

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.