

# Two of a Kind

By Rebecca MacDonald

The Houstonian Hotel and Redstone Golf Club offer guests the chance to experience the country club lifestyle.

If you're a daily fee golfer wondering what it would be like to have an exclusive country club membership, a weekend at the Houstonian Hotel is the perfect way to find out.



A large stone fireplace graces the Houstonian Hotel lobby, where music plays nightly.

Stay at the hotel, and you get access to the Houstonian Club, one of the top 10 health and fitness facilities in the country. Then, play a round of golf at Redstone Golf Club, a private course owned by Redstone Golf Management, which also owns the hotel. As an added bonus, when the PGA TOUR's Shell Houston Open is played on the course in April, you'll be able to watch and brag to your golf buddies that you've walked those same fairways.

During the week, a stay at The Houstonian will set you back \$299/night. On weekends, however, rooms often start as low as \$129/night, perfect for a golf getaway. If your budget allows, book one of the Concierge level suites, and you'll have access to a separate dining room where complimentary continental breakfast is served in the morning, and cocktails in the evening.

The hotel is nestled among the tall trees and mansions that line Post Oak Lane in west Houston. Although it's just a stone's throw from I10 and Highway 610, the property sits on a secluded 18 acres. The result is the feel of a bed and breakfast getaway, but with all the posh luxury of a 5 star hotel. When you pull into the circular drive for valet parking, you may find yourself nodding to the Sidewalk Judge before you realize that he is in fact a statue, seated on a bench leading up to the entrance.

### Choose your relaxation

The lobby is a Texas-sized room featuring an enormous stone fireplace, and a grand piano where a musician plays nightly. If you're feeling energetic, take advantage of the Houstonian Club fitness center, which is consistently ranked one of the top 10 health and fitness clubs in the country. This is not your typical hotel gym, scattered with a few token machines and a TV. Instead, you'll find 125,000 square feet of equipment, including over 200 cardio and strength training machines, three heated pools, and a rock climbing wall. Membership is \$10,000 and up, but guests of the hotel are able to use the facility for free. There is even supervised child care, so you can enjoy your workout while the kids engage in one of the specialized



The Trellis Spa features an indoor float pool, where guests can relax while they wait.

youth programs.

Feeling like something more relaxing? Take a short stroll down the gravel jogging path that circles the property to the spacious Trellis Spa, where 19 treatment rooms, including two just for couples, await to take your stress away. Arrive early for your appointment and bring a bathing suit so you can enjoy the indoor float pool, which extends the width of the first floor of the spa, while you wait for your treatment. Then, snuggle into a fluffy robe and proceed upstairs to the Tranquility Room, where soft lighting and music lull you to relax. Treatments range from typical massage offerings to hot stone massage, firming masks and body bronzing (self-tanning application). In the spa's Vichy Shower and Hydrotherapy rooms, special air and water jets gently massage away tension.

## The Houstonian Club is rated one of the top 10 health and fitness facilities in the country.

### Sample the flavors of the Mediterranean at Olivette

Once you've had a chance to relax, you won't want to leave the hotel and battle traffic to get to dinner. Luckily,

the Houstonian offers a superb dining venue right on site. Olivette features an intriguing mix of American cuisine with a Mediterranean accent in a warm, welcoming setting. Oak beams crisscross the ceiling, and the menu and table settings are accented with copper.

The wine list is extensive, offering a wide range of international and domestic vintages. The menu is more manageable, but no less diverse. From the appetizers, we chose the stuffed Texas quail (\$9) filled with figs and prosciutto, and the wild mushroom tart, a flaky, mini-pie crust filled with earthy mushrooms and served with a Spanish onion marmalade (\$7). Both dishes were very rich, and completely delicious. Other intriguing starters included butternut squash soup, and rosemary creamed shrimp with quince relish.

After such a wonderful beginning, we looked forward to the entrees, and they did not disappoint. Seared sea scallops were plentiful and cooked perfectly, lightly crusted on the outside and meltingly tender on the inside. Served in a pumpkin agnolotti with cauliflower florets and brown sage butter, the dish was delectable and satisfying. Seared loin of venison was also a hit. The intense, rich flavor of the meat was enhanced by a red wine huckleberry sauce. A side of maple scalloped sweet potatoes, a

tower of sliced potatoes layered with cheese, was almost too sweet for the already rich dish, but tasty nonetheless. The varied menu selections also included roasted halibut with fingerling potatoes, and truffled mushroom risotto with grilled vegetables.

### **Walk in the pros' footsteps**

The complimentary continental breakfast provided a quick but satisfying start the next day before our round of golf. We drove north from the hotel to Humble, in northeast Houston, where Redstone Golf Club awaited. The course was designed by Peter Jacobsen and Jim Hardy, and was home to the Shell Houston Open in 2004. The tournament will be played there again through 2006, when it will move to the new, adja-

cent public course being built this year. Both the course and the clubhouse echo the secluded feel of the Houstonian, and are surrounded by natural wetlands, lakes and towering pine trees.

This year, Redstone will also become the second home to the Dick Harmon (brother of Butch Harmon) School of Golf. Harmon currently teaches at the Houstonian Country Club. Recognized in his own right as one of America's best teachers by *Golf Magazine* and *Golf Digest*, Harmon has provided professional instruction to both PGA and LPGA TOUR players.

### **No tricks here**

Redstone is the antithesis of the modern trend toward "tricked up" courses, where even perfectly struck shots

can still go awry. Here, it's mostly flat terrain (this is Houston, after all) and straight fairways that combine to provide a very fair test of golf. If you were one of the lucky ones who got a new driver for Christmas that you can't wait to try out, this is the course for you.

In fact, many of the holes have a similar look and feel—there are no sharp doglegs or slanting fairways, only a few of the holes curve gently left or right. You'll still need your accuracy, however. The challenge at Redstone is in keeping the ball from going into the tall pines that line the fairways, trailing Spanish moss from their limbs. Even when your ball does find its way into the trees, you're likely to find it, unless you hit the water that comes into play on only six of



Redstone Golf Club is set amid natural wetlands, lakes and towering pine trees.

the holes. Fairways are overseeded in winter, providing a lush, firm carpet. The greens echo the fairways—they offer excellent conditions, and lack the steep undulations and unreadable breaks that can frustrate even the best short game artists. As a result, putts roll true, making for a fun, relaxing round of golf.

One unusual and most welcome feature at Redstone: a full three sets of tees are rated for women. From the forward yellow tees, the course measures 4,911 yards and has a slope of 117. Longer hitters will enjoy playing from the red tees at 5,531 yards and a slope of 123, while the white tees offer an even bigger challenge at 6,084 yards and a 127 slope rating. Thank you, Redstone, for recognizing the distinction between “forward” and “ladies” tees!

### Clubhouse welcomes non-members

After your round, enjoy lunch in the 33,000-square-foot limestone and flagstone clubhouse, which preserves its private club status by offering separate facilities for members and non-members, including spacious locker rooms, grill and bar areas, and two complete full-service pro shops. The pro shop has an extensive collection of women’s golf apparel, with a variety of offerings from EP Pro, Jamie Sadock, Burberry and more. It’s a welcome change from the typical, tucked-away corner of meager women’s golf offerings. Of course, it doesn’t hurt that Vicki Bernstein, Redstone’s vice president of retail operations, is also the president of the American Golf Merchandisers Association.

Together, The Houstonian Hotel and Redstone Golf Club put together an experience that makes women golfers feel wanted and welcome. It’s an attitude worth rewarding with your business. 

### The Houstonian Hotel

Check with hotel for pricing and special packages:

111 North Post Oak Lane  
Houston, TX 77024  
800.231.2759  
[www.thehoustonian.com](http://www.thehoustonian.com)

### Redstone Golf Club

Course open only to members and hotel guests.

From the Yellow Tees:  
Par: 72      4,911 yards  
Rating: 67.7    Slope: 117

### RATES:

Tues-Thurs: \$115. Twilight: \$80  
Friday-Sun: \$130. Twilight: \$15  
Cart rental extra: \$15

### Reservations:

5860 Wilson Road,  
Humble, TX 77396  
281.459.7800  
[www.redstonegolfclub.com](http://www.redstonegolfclub.com)

Created for woman by women  
that understand the importance  
of pairing modern technology  
with great style.



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