

golf getaway

HYATT REGENCY HILL COUNTRY'S Extreme Golf Makeover

By Rebecca MacDonald



The Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort in San Antonio recently underwent an extreme makeover. Located on 200 scenic acres on the west side of San Antonio, just down the street from Sea World, the resort has added nine holes to its existing 18-hole layout, and completed a \$13 million renovation of its hotel accommodations. Add to that a full-service spa, award-winning dining, and a four-acre water park, complete with a 950 foot long “Ramblin’ River,” and you get a world-class vacation you can enjoy right here in Texas.

27 holes of Hill Country heaven

The former 18-hole golf course is now divided into three new 9-hole courses, named the Lakes, Oaks and Creeks. Arthur Hills, who created the original course, was also commissioned to work on the new design. Carved out of the existing Hill Country terrain and enhanced by Hills’s inspired touch, the course appeals to the traditionalist and modern golfer alike. Rather than building an entire new nine holes, Hills incorporated the new nine with the existing 18 holes, to allow for all three nines to begin and end at the Hill Country Clubhouse. The new holes include number seven on the new Creeks Course and two more on the Lakes Course, giving the entire golf course a new feel.

In addition, several of the existing holes have been enhanced with the strategic placement of new bunkers and more risk-reward opportunities. Five tee placements, including one for juniors, offer enjoyment for golfers of all skill levels. Reachable par-5s make for some good birdie opportunities, while Hill’s signature greens still offer up the subtle contours that challenge even the best players. Other changes to the course include the reintroduction of native plants and a new man-made lake, giving the course a unique personality.

“Every hole is presented before you, there are no tricks or gimmicks,” says Susie Davis-Womack, PGA, the resort’s director of golf. “This is an extremely playable course that makes for a leisurely round. Golfers walk away with a good feeling.”





New layout combines beauty and challenge

The courses are very well marked, with plenty of signage to point the way to the next hole. That comes in handy, it's a long drive between holes 1 and 2 on the Creeks Course, and again between holes 8 and 9. This course has a true Hill Country feel. It blooms with wildflowers in the spring, and there are plenty of live oak trees and vegetation lining the fairways. As a result, if you are unlucky enough to hit your ball out of bounds, chances are you won't find it, so place your tee shots carefully.

The number 4 hole offers a beautiful challenge. A 488-yard par 5 from the red tees, it begins at a slightly elevated tee box and curves first left then back right. The approach curves around a small lake, with the green tucked behind. A deep bunker guards the left approach to the green, while a beautiful rock wall separates the right front of green from the water. The green is narrow and long. A small hill behind will catch an overly aggressive approach shot,

but the chip back towards the water from here can be tricky.

On number 6, be sure to plan your shots carefully. A short par 4, it begins with a downhill shot from the tee that requires you to lay up in front of the creek that crosses just in front of the green. A fairway bunker guards the left side, so you have to either fly that bunker or place your tee shot to the right of it. However, a few strategically placed oaks guard the right approach to the green. Hit a layup shot just in front of that creek on the left side over the bunker, and you'll be in perfect position to approach. The elevated green rolls off steeply on all sides, so an accurate approach shot is a must to make par.

On the Lakes course, the water is still very much in play. On the par 4 seventh, it runs down the right side of fairway. The red tees are set just at the left edge of the water, so you have to carry some water with your drive. The green is set straight ahead at the opposite end of the hazard, tempting long hitters to go in that direction. However,

it's a 175-yard carry to the fairway. The safer shot is to cut off the left edge of the water and put it out in the middle of the fairway, yet this leaves you with a much longer second shot to the green. This is definitely a risk-reward hole.

New golf carts feature the Up-Link Global Positioning System, which serves as a "caddy in the sky," offering tips along the course. No more guessing how far you smacked that drive, this system will automatically calculate the yardage, as well as the distance from hazards or the green. The system also allows golfers to order lunch for dining 'al fresco' on the course.

Renovated guestrooms reflect land's history

In addition to the golf course renovation, the Hyatt Hill Country recently completed a \$13 million guestroom remodel. All 500 guestrooms and suites have been updated with modern accommodations that include sophisticated décor, as well as high-speed Internet and Wi-Fi access. The Hill Country

Suites include luxurious leather sofas, which fold out to a full-sized bed. A generously sized leather lounge chair and reading lamp provides an added place for guests to relax in comfort. The wall art reflects the history of the Rogers-Wiseman ranch, now the home of the Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort and Spa, and incorporates vintage family photos with hand-tinted backgrounds.

Each room also incorporates Hyatt's signature Grand Bed, featuring the Sealy Posturepedic 720 Series mattress with a thick pillow-top, covered with 250-thread count triple-sheet bedding. A luxurious, decorative "Texas Star" silk throw, made exclusively for the resort, placed at the foot of the bed replaces the typical hotel bedspread to give the bedding ensemble a "turned-down" look and feel.

Spacious clubhouse invites you to relax

In addition to room upgrades, the resort has added several new treatments at Windflower—The Hill Country Spa. While guests can still enjoy a traditional massage or facial, treatments such as "Synchronized Massage," where two therapists massage in tandem, offers the ultimate indulgence. The spa's men's line of services has also been enhanced with treatments such as the "Ultimate Shave," where gentlemen can enjoy a traditional "barber shop" shave in spa luxury.

The clubhouse, which serves resort, golf and tennis patrons, provides men's and women's locker rooms; a 100 square-foot attended bag storage area; and a golf/tennis pro shop. The clubhouse also features the Cactus Oak Tavern and Antlers Lodge, a destination restaurant with Hill Country and West-

ern decor and cuisine. Also housed here is the pro shop, where several up-scale retail lines have been added. Women golfers take note: *Golf Shop Operations* consistently touts it as "One of America's 100 Best Golf Shops."

Certified Audubon Sanctuary

Nature lovers will be pleased to learn that the Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort has retained its designation as a "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary" by the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System (ACSS), the educational division of Audubon International. It is one of only 392 courses in the world to receive the honor. 🦋

For more information about the Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort, visit www.hillcountry.hyatt.com.

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EVENT DAY SCHEDULE:

8:00 am — Depart Austin via luxury Coach from The Golf Club at Circle C
11:00 am — Tee times begin
1:00 pm — Lunch at the turn
4:00 pm — Golf concludes
4:30 pm — Coach departs host venue
5:00 pm — Happy hour!
7:00 pm — Coach departs happy hour for Austin
8:30 pm — Arrive Austin @ Circle C

*All tours depart from **The Golf Club at Circle C** in Austin

