

# The Westin Stonebriar

This holiday season, head to Frisco for a weekend of shopping, golf and spa treatments.

*By Rebecca MacDonald*



The Westin Stonebriar Resort is only a short drive from the largest mall in North Texas.

located near Stonebriar Center, the largest mall in North Texas with over 160 stores. A short drive away are the Shops at Legacy, home to Empowered Women's Golf, and the shops at Willow Bend. With so many options close at hand, you'll be able to zip through your shopping list and still have time for a relaxing round at the Westin's Tom Fazio-designed golf course. Follow it up with a luxurious treatment at the Face & Body Resort Spa, and you've found the perfect way to ward off holiday stress.

**I**f you've got holiday shopping left to do (who doesn't?), and are longing instead to escape for a round of golf, do yourself a favor and book a weekend at the Westin Stonebriar Resort in Frisco. Just 30 minutes north of downtown Dallas, the resort is conveniently

Fifteen years ago, Frisco was a small bedroom community north of Dallas, population 6,138. Today, it's one of the fastest growing cities in Texas, with a projected 75,825 residents by January 2005. Home to the corporate headquarters of the Dallas Stars hockey team, the Frisco Rough Riders (AA franchise of the Texas Rangers) and a championship cycling track, Frisco has become a destination in its own right.

In the heart of Frisco is the Westin Stonebriar Resort, a luxurious, fashionable hotel that combines the Westin's legendary service and comfort with Texas-style décor and dining. The large lobby incorporates native Texas woods and stone, giving the hotel a warm, local feel. Rooms are spacious, and in true Westin style, every detail counts. The staff are welcoming and friendly, and eager to answer any questions you may have and point you in the right direction.

### Heavenly accommodations

After checking in, we headed to the elevators and our suite, which was elegantly appointed with granite, marble and wood accents. In addition to its regular rooms, the Westin includes 13 of these suites, with separate living room and bedroom, a large glass-enclosed shower and a raised tub that invited a good soak. The centerpiece is Westin's signature Heavenly Bed, an all-white, 10-layer affair that is so popular, the company has begun offering the beds and linens to retail customers. A catalogue in the room provides pricing. Another nice feature is the Service Express, which lets you touch a single button on the room telephone to access any service—no more hunting for the right extension to call, simply press a button to order room service, arrange a wake-up call,

make reservations at the restaurant or anything else you need.

### On-site spa

We had decided to begin our relaxation well before our round, which was scheduled the following morning, and headed for the Face and Body Resort Spa. The Golfer's Advantage treatment includes a 75 minute herbal stone massage, plus a 45 minute facial. The therapeutic massage was a relaxing treatment that soothed tight muscles and helped us loosen up for our round the next day. The purifying facial was a treat, the perfect combination of massage and beauty treatment that lasts 45–60 minutes. The atmosphere in the spa is gentle and inviting, with soft lighting and music playing softly in the background. The staff are courteous and gentle. The facial technician always told me what she was doing before she did it, to eliminate those unpleasant surprises. My skin was glowing and radiant when we were done, my only trouble was leaving the comfort of the chair. Fortunately, we had planned well and had time for a nap before dinner.

### Dining al fresco at Legacy Grill

The Legacy Grill is a richly appointed restaurant where more warm welcomes awaited from the friendly staff. It was a balmy night, so we chose to



The Legacy Grill patio overlooks the lagoon-style pool.

sit out on the broad stone patio, which featured wrought iron furniture and ceiling fans circling lazily above our heads. We ordered a bottle of wine from the well-stocked list, and settled in to peruse the menu. We began with the beef tenderloin carpaccio, thin shavings of raw tenderloin with a smoked salt-herb crust served with delicate micro-greens. Fried fingerling potatoes added substance to the dish. Other choices from the brief appetizer list included Wild Mushroom Beignets with Brie, and the Legacy Lobster "Shooter" with Tequila-Lime Consomme. The salads offered more variety, ranging from a butter lettuce with red pears, toasted almonds and blue cheese to a more typical house salad of greens, red onion and tomatoes. The warm spinach salad was a standout,



The Fazio course features rolling terrain amid peaceful countryside.

featuring pickled eggplant, bacon and warm balsamic vinaigrette.

For entrees we chose the Cowboy Spiced and Grilled Beef Tenderloin and the Fennel Crusted Salmon, which came with a spinach and portobello mushroom-lobster fricassee, in a “broasted” tomato and herb broth. Both were excellent. The steak arrived cooked perfectly medium-rare in a mushroom-morel cream sauce, accompanied by chive whipped potatoes and poached baby carrots. The salmon was dusted in fennel and swimming in a broth that was light but rich in flavor.

It flaked easily and was also cooked perfectly, not at all dry. For dessert, we chose a superb crème brulee to finish the wonderful meal.

#### **Rolling terrain**

Our tee time was at 9:00 am the next morning, and we awoke early enough to warm up at the resort’s driving range. It’s a bit of a drive from the pro shop. The practice green was very small by country club standards, with not much room to practice. A small shack serves as the starter’s home, you check in there and can load up on drinks before the round.

After a brief warmup, we headed for the first hole.

The Fazio course offers two sets of forward tees, from the red tees the course plays 5,208 yards, from the green tees it’s 5,896 yards. The topography is the star of this course. According to the yardage guide, over 600,000 yards of dirt were moved to create the rolling terrain and berms that increase the challenges on the course. The greens are also undulating and very quick, a misplaced approach shot might hit the green and still land you in trouble.

The effects of all that earth moving are apparent on the first hole, a

249 yard par 4 with a fairway that slopes downhill toward the green. Hills lining either side of the fairway give it almost a bowling alley effect, albeit a bumpy one. The good news is that shots hit left or right tend to roll back to center. When we reached the first green, we discovered that it was much faster than the practice green, where the grass had been allowed to grow longer and putts rolled considerably slower. It took us a few holes to adjust to the pace.

## **The Fazio course is built around a 5 acre lake, and water comes into play on about half of the holes.**

After another short 277 yard par 4, we reached the number three hole, a 396 yard par 5, guarded by trees all down the right side of the fairway. Better to stay left on this hole, but watch out for the fairway bunkers on this side. Two more bunkers on the left side of the green guard the approach, shots hit short from this side will have you pulling out your sand wedge.

Number five is a 313 yard par 4 that offers a straight fairway with bunkers on either side, the one on the left is more in play from the red tees. Another bunker guards the front right of the green, but there is a wider area to the left where you can miss safely. The first par 3 hole comes on number six, and is only 90 yards from the red tees. There is no water, but again a large bunker looms to the right front of the green, so if your swing has a tendency to fade, it’s a good bet to aim to the left on this hole.

The Fazio course is built around

a 5 acre lake, and water comes into play on about half of the holes. On number seven, a 434 yard par 5, water runs all down the left side. The tee shot is the first forced carry from the red tees over a wetland area. Staying to the right is the safe play here, even a shot hit up onto the hill on that side is still playable. A deep bunker awaits on the left front side of the green, with two more on the right, so plan your approach carefully. You can reach the green in two on a dry day with a ball that bounces and rolls, but unless you're accurate, you'll be facing a sand save.

The second par 3 on number eight is a longer, 148 yard shot with another forced carry over a pond. You can aim to the right and stay clear of the water, but the green is tucked back around to the left. Shots that clear the water still have to clear a bunker that wraps around the green to the left. There is a chipping area to the right for those who play it safe.

The back nine starts off with a 113 yard par 3. A large bunker traps shots that fall short and to the right. Adding to the challenge, the green slopes from left to right toward that bunker, so shot placement is critical here. Native grasses that surround the green quickly swallow up errant balls.

More water awaits on the number 11, a 323 yard dogleg right. The 5-acre lake runs all along the right side of the hole, and a very large bunker lies between the water and the fairway. The green slopes sharply downhill toward the water, with only a short bit of grass standing between the green's edge and the hazard. More native grasses on the left make it critical to place shots accurately on this hole.

The very scenic number fourteen is a 340 yard par 4 with water all down the right side. The fairway slopes

left to right, and tee shots aimed to the left will roll back to center. However, two fairway bunkers guard the left side, making this a difficult shot. The two-tiered green rolls off on all sides, although a bunker between the green and the water hazard on the right will catch balls that roll in that direction—small consolation. A rock wall facing the right side of the green makes this a beautiful, if challenging, hole.

## There are few homes built along the course. The result is a peaceful, secluded round played in the Texas countryside.

As we made our way to the par 3 fifteenth hole, we remarked at the stunning homes lining the adjacent fairway of the Stonebriar Country Club course. That's when we realized that there were very few homes built along the Fazio course, they mostly border the country club course. The result is a peaceful, secluded round played in the Texas countryside. The 2,500 mature trees planted during the creation of the course, including 1,500 pines, add to the park-like feel.

A second lake borders number 17, a 321 yard par 4 with a narrow fairway that curves to the left around the water. The red tee box is positioned off to the right but points at the water, so be careful how you set up. The scenery softens the challenge with a pretty little bridge that crosses the water.

The finishing hole is another dogleg right. The red tees, however, are set off to the left, making it easy to aim a drive down the left side of the fairway. This setup helps you avoid the four

fairway bunkers that line the right side of the hole.

### Post-round relaxation

After the round, we headed back to the hotel and Ernie's, the dark, wood-paneled bar that serves sandwiches and salads. A sitting area at the back resembles a library, with book-lined shelves and comfortable armchairs. There is also poolside service at the Aquabar and Grill.

If the fall weather permits, take a dip in the lagoon-style pool. If the weather is cooler, a soak in the outdoor whirlpool is just the ticket for tired muscles. When it's time to check out, you'll leave reluctantly, but knowing that you accomplished what you came for—productive shopping combined with great golf and the ultimate in relaxation. It's the perfect gift to give yourself for the holidays. 🏡

### About The Westin Stonebriar

#### From the Forward Tees:

Par: 72      Length: 5,208 yards  
Rating: 71.0      Slope: 121

Course open only to hotel guests.

#### RATES:

**Before 3:00 p.m.:** \$115 guest fee, includes cart and range balls.

**After 3:00 p.m.:** \$49, includes cart and range balls

Special stay & play packages available

**Deluxe Room:** \$169/night

**Suite:** \$249/night

**Dining:** Full-Service: Legacy Grill  
Casual Fare: Ernie's

#### Reservations:

972.668.8000

1549 Legacy Drive, Frisco, 75034

[www.westinstonebriar.com](http://www.westinstonebriar.com)