

San Antonio's JW Marriott, TX



If everything's bigger in Texas, proof positive might be the San Antonio Hill Country Resort, outside San Antonio, which is one of the largest JW Marriott hotels in existence. What's not oversized is the drive to the resort, just twenty minutes from the airport. So grab your National rental car, and before you know it, you'll be luxuriating on six hundred pristine acres.

Here's the difference between a Marriott (good) and a JW Marriott (better) hotel. The JW brand is the highest level of luxury that carries the Marriott flag. Typically, some of the extra amenities might include a golf course (or in this case, two courses) a spa, and a fine dining element. These properties are a little glitzier, with a few more bells and whistles. To put it in perspective, out of approximately three thousand Marriott properties worldwide, less than fifty are designated as JW

Marriott hotels. There is so much going on here that it's no chore to visit for an extra-long weekend and never leave the grounds, there are that many options, diversions and amenities.



AT&T Canyons Course

Two of the most buzz-worthy golf courses in Texas are on the grounds, the [AT&T Oaks Course](#) and [AT&T Canyons Course](#), two notable designs courtesy of Greg Norman and Pete Dye, respectively. The Oaks plays host to the PGA Tour's Valero Texas Open, captured by Jimmy Walker this past April. The Dye designed Canyons will be hosting the Champions Tour in the AT&T Championship once again this October, with Michael Allen returning as defending champion. Past champs here include marquee names like Fred Couples and Kenny Perry. This makes the San Antonio property in an elite group that hosts both the PGA Tour and Champions Tour in the same calendar year.



AT&T Oaks Course

Environmental concerns played a key part in how this project was approved, and the highlight is an environmentally-sensitive closed-loop irrigation system that corrals all runoff for reuse on each course. Both courses are different in terms of design and topography, but both close in dramatic fashion, including short par-4s and picturesque par-3s. The 16th of the Oaks course featuring a bunker in the center of the green, reminiscent of LA's storied Riviera Country Club. They're both tough tracks, but the difficulty is more evident on Norman's design, particularly with its puzzling putting surfaces. It features sharply contoured green complexes with runoff areas and a maximum yardage beyond 7,500 yards, which will likely make it one of the toughest courses in Texas. The Canyon Course by contrast, earmarked for the over-fifty set and designed by the nearly ninety year old Hall-of-Fame architect Dye, is a bit easier, but not by much. In

tandem, they are dual attractions at one of the most modern and capacious golf resorts in the largest state in the Union.



San Antonio Riverwalk

The golf is superb, but a hotel guest would be well served to get off campus, and visit one of the most intriguing cities in America, just twenty minutes away. San Antonio is the most popular tourist destination in Texas, and it's not hard to understand why. The chief attraction is the River Walk, which meanders through the downtown area, lined with a wide range of shops, bars, and restaurants, all winding their way adjacent to the San Antonio River. The Alamo is one of the nation's most important historical sites and the top tourist attraction in the state. The old fort served as the last stand in the 1836 Battle of the Alamo, a pivotal event in the Texas Revolution, which involved familiar names from the American West like Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie.



JW Marriott San Antonio

Back at the resort, the number of on-site diversions don't quite equal the thousand guest rooms on property, but it's close. There's a 26,000 square foot spa, a 5,000-square-foot organic garden that helps supply the resort's seven restaurants, a six-acre water park, and ceilings that appear to be a hundred feet high, giving the hotel a feeling of airy spaciousness that's uniquely appealing.

Crooked Branch is the largest and most lively of the seven resort dining options, while the signature restaurant is Cibolo Moon, offering casual Texas cuisine in a stylish atmosphere. A step up from Cibolo Moon into the fine dining category is 18 Oaks at the TPC clubhouse, dimly lit and serving a wide selection of wines and steaks.