

Lone Star Stay; The Westin La Cantera Resort

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Any local will tell you that everything is bigger in Texas. And, while each state has its own motto, the Lone Star state certainly lives up to its reputation.



The most visited city in Texas, San Antonio is known for its legendary past (think the Alamo) and generational residents. Like its famed forefathers, everything within San Antonio has a story that locals love to share. Though it was built in 1999, The Westin La Cantera Resort's history dates back 500 years when Spanish conquistadors first discovered the land. It was their legends that inspired the 440,000-sq.-ft. resort that sits atop one of the highest points in San Antonio.

After celebrating its 10-year anniversary with a \$12 million renovation, the resort's original white stucco walls, red roof tiles and soaring double doors still greet guests upon arrival. Inside, a warm color palette, oversize plush chairs, exposed wood ceiling beams, blue slate floors and a crackling fire help to set the mood while checking in.

The seven stories of 508 newly refurbished guest rooms include 24 suites and 11 well-appointed "little houses" within the exclusive Casita Village. Each Texas Colonial-inspired villa is nestled in the hillside and named after a working Texas ranch. The casitas afford guests more privacy, a walk-out patio and exclusive access to their village's own pool and hot tub. Each plush resort room commands views of the bustling city below or cascading hilltops above and are affixed with Westin's signature Heavenly beds and showers. Come morning, Brannon's Café offers a tasty breakfast. Word around the resort is that the chef's frosted flake-battered French toast is out-of-this-world good.

After a hearty morning meal, guests are encouraged to take full advantage of the resort's many indoor and outdoor activities. Outlining the property are two championship golf courses: the 18-hole Resort Course at La Cantera, which was home to the PGA Tour's Valero Texas Open, and the Arnold Palmer-created Palmer Course at La Cantera. Indoors, the Castle Rock Health Club and Spa offers a 7,600-sq.-ft.

WestinWORKOUT fitness center as well as two exterior tennis courts, jogging and walking trails, a separate children's pool, The Lost Quarry Pools, and a water recreation area that has five outdoor pools, two hot tubs and a water slide.



The soothing alternative to teeing off or working out is a stop at the luxurious spa located next door to the fitness facility. Offering a bevy of body treatments, facials and massages, the spa provides the perfect place to regroup and rejuvenate. Its signature Elemental Nature Massage offers the ideal escape: a personalized experience based on the Aveda elemental nature philosophy and your favorite Aveda aromas.

Off property, and accessible by the Westin's hourly shuttle system, are Six Flags Fiesta Texas and The Shops at La Cantera. Great for youngsters—and kids at heart—the theme park provides an afternoon of thrill-seeking entertainment. On the opposite side of the park is the area's newest attraction, The Shops at La Cantera. The outdoor mall is anchored by San Antonio's first Neiman Marcus and Nordstrom stores and complete with upscale boutiques, waterfalls and quaint sitting areas.

For a more adventure-filled foray, 20 minutes from the resort in historic Boerne, Tex., is an interactive trek into two caves: Cascade Caverns, the only cave with a 100-foot waterfall, and Cave Without a Name, the seventh largest in Texas. The one-hour guided tours bring you deep into the much-admired underground caves and provide a brief history as to how the natural wonders came to be.

After a packed day, Westin offers several ways to refuel. The Westin La Cantera's many restaurants dish up distinctive menus that appeal to all taste buds. While deciding between Francesca's at Sunset's exquisite farm-to-table menu that includes plantain-hazelnut-crust mero sea bass and Brannon's Café's more casual eating options like fresh salads and burgers, enjoy a cocktail at Steinheimer's Bar. Or, because no trip to Texas is complete without a taste of its savory Southwestern cuisine, get to Aldaco's Mexican Cuisine. Located in Downtown San Antonio, the restaurant is a favorite feasting spot for locals looking to enjoy unique margaritas (like its famous avocado variety) and tasty chicken enchiladas. Plus, every seat in the house overlooks the city's breathtaking twinkling lights.

Back at the resort, the lobby offers the perfect stopping point before bed. Grab a nightcap or a glass of wine (Texas is home to 400-plus wineries and vineyards and the resort offers a large selection of local bottles) from the corner bar and sit by the roaring fire. The soothing environment will help calm the mind and relax the body after a Texas-size day of activity.

To Learn More:
The Westin La Cantera Resort
www.westinlacantera.com.