

HOUSTON PeTTalk

January/February 2021

WHAT
NOW
?

2021

REFLECT

EXPLORE

LEARN

RENEW

THE HAVE-IT-ALL GETAWAY:

By Michelle Mantor



LONE STAR COURT AMENITIES

- Outdoor swimming pool
- Spacious outdoor courtyard
- Fire pits
- Ping-pong tables
- Corn-hole game
- Board games
- Rocking chairs
- Bicycles
- Located within walking distance of shopping at The Domain
- The property is COVID Compliant



Our Check-In Gift!

I've always considered Houston fortunate to have Austin and vice-versa. Why? Because both cities are so uniquely different that traveling to either one gives you a total different experience, which is what a vacation should be! For Houstonians, traveling just 2.5 hours by car to the Texas capitol and beautiful sights of the hill country is the perfect getaway (and definitely less hassle than air travel during these pandemic times). Plus, the big bonus is that you can take your pet along, making the trip even more fun and memorable.

I recently had the opportunity to take a weekend getaway and I didn't hesitate to choose Austin. I love the eclectic restaurant scene, hiking the limestone-laden hills, kayaking on Town Lake and just the general "young vibe" of the city. Although there are a number of pet-friendly accommodations in Austin, I had heard about Lone Star Court by Valencia Hotel Group and wanted to give it a try. The boutique-chic hotel located at the trendy Domain area did not

disappoint!

We arrived on a sunny Saturday afternoon and the parking and check-in process was super-easy. My rambunctious Briard, Jeda, and my senior citizen, Friday (she is 16), both were more than happy to get their arrival treat in the goody bag we received, which also included waste pick-up bags and a chilled bottle of Chuck Norris' CForce Water (see inset photo). We settled into our room which was both perfect for pets with concrete floors and cozy for us two-loggers with a king bed, sofa and vintage Austin decor, including a retro, fully stocked fridge and snack basket. Unlike most hotels, Lone Star Court is a two-story structure with all rooms facing the well-manicured courtyard and pool area, giving it a unique, nostalgic feel harkening back to the retro "court" concept. Outside each front door are two comfy rocking-chairs which allow you to relax and take in the activity of the courtyard with your pups right at your feet.



Photos by Austin Star Court

The courtyard also offers a pavilion for live music at night which we thoroughly enjoyed after our dinner, but more on that later. Next to the pavilion is a large play area for both kids and dogs, and there are even a few toys for the 4-legged to enjoy a game of fetch. After we were settled and the dogs walked, we headed to the pool. Our visit was in October and the weather was still warm so relaxing by the pool with a beverage of choice was top on my to-do list. The pool area adheres to COVID protocols and guests are limited to the area via a sign-up sheet and reservation process. We were able to get right in and enjoyed the music and pool-side beverage service and honestly I just loved the opportunity to be pampered!

We eventually of course had to move on with the day and do a little exploring as well. We got the dogs and took off on a long walk around the area, which is perfect for exercising the dogs and sightseeing too. If you haven't experienced The Domain development, it's a not-to-be-missed area of Austin, particularly if you love restaurants and shopping. Often referred to as Austin's "second downtown", this 300-acre mixed-use development on the Northside of town includes many national brands of dining and shopping that you've certainly heard of before as well as unique, locally owned

Austin's Lone Star Court

shops and restaurants that offer something you can't experience in Houston. From luxury shopping like Coach and Louis Vuitton to trendy stores like H&M, you'll find just about anything your heart desires. There are also plenty of choices for dining, including Flemings and Maggiano's, but we had our hearts set on enjoying the amenities and dining at Lone Star Court's The Water Trough, so we headed back to our room to clean up and have a cocktail in our rocking chairs...ahh, so relaxing!

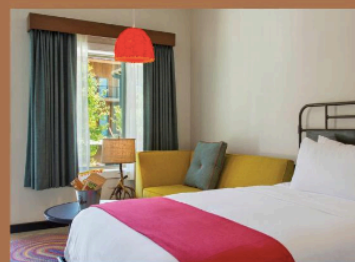
I was looking forward to "local grub" and I was hungrier than normal due to the long walk so when my Salmon En Papillote arrived, I was ready to dig into this yummy dish with lemon and garlic butter over the salmon baked in parchment with a side of roasted vegetables. We sat in the outdoor dining space because the weather was Austin perfect! I may go without saying that I ate ALL of my entree and still wanted dessert. I decided on the Pineapple-Ginger Mom & Pop Cicle (other options were Strawberry-Lemonade or Chile-Mango). It was the perfect finale to a great meal.

Lone Star Court is known for its great location, pet-welcoming amenities and retro design, but it is also the master of entertainment areas that just say "good 'ol fashioned fun" including a fire pit (think smores), corn-hole, bicycles

and board games plus great live music. We gathered around the pavilion area, dogs in tow, and enjoyed the music of local talent, Tyler Cannon. Even my little Friday, who is normally quite shy, had a great time getting attention from the guests as all 3 lbs. of her explored the area. Kids were happily playing in the courtyard with games as parents enjoyed a drink and the music - a perfect scenario for a family getaway. You literally never need to get into your car once you arrive, which is a big bonus in my mind.

After a long day, it was time to crawl into the beckoning King bed. Now, for those of you that have read my travel articles before, you know that I am PICKY about bed linen. I'm all about luxury cotton and great pillows. The sheets need to be cool and soft against my skin, the duvet filled with luxurious goose-down feathers. Not only was I happy with the bed and linens, I was in love. Truly wasn't sure I would get up the next morning. Slept like a baby.

But alas, I have dogs to walk in the morning just like most of you reading this LOL! We figured we might as well take advantage of a beautiful morning. We grabbed a latte and took off in the opposite direction of The Domain area, having no idea where we were headed. We turned a couple of corners and found ourselves



In the CUTEST little section of town that offered art-infused streetscapes, bars, restaurants, and coffee shops. We eventually learned the area is Rock Rose District. Definitely on our list of places to visit for nightlife on our next Austin trip.

Our check-out time was looming but we made the most of every moment, including one last stint enjoying the loungers by the pool. To say we didn't want to leave would be an understatement but that is also a good thing - I never get tired of Austin. To have such a vibrant city so close by is definitely a blessing and each time I visit, I discover something new and fun. That desire to return and explore (it's what I call

the Austin enigma) is a testament to the city's diversity and culture. And, to spend quality time with my pets on the trip is the icing on the cake. Although we were only gone for two days, it was the perfect trip for a "recharge" and to add that little something extra we all need to remind ourselves to slow down and enjoy life.

If you are looking for an easy getaway that can include your furry ones, check out Lone Star Court and all of the great amenities they have to offer with a location that can't be beat. Find them online at LoneStarCourt.com or on social media at facebook.com/LoneStarCourt or Instagram: @lonestarcourt. Call for reservations at 512.814.2625.



Photo by Maura the Corgi (@maurathecorgi)



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