

Editor's Picks

A round-up of this year's favorites

BEST OUTDOOR SPACE

Lone Star Court

Lone Star Court is a retro-inspired court concept hotel nestled within The Domain at Austin. The 123-room boutique property was built by Valencia Hotels and draws upon the golden age of family road trips and motor court hotels.

Lone Star Court is an editor's pick quite simply because my family and I had an absolute blast at the property during a recent business trip. The trip involved lengthy indoor meetings off-property, which made the courtyard at the hotel a welcome retreat. Once on the Lone Star Court property, I had to remind myself that I was indeed in the middle of a bustling retail district in a city of nearly one million people. It was that peaceful!

The courtyard at Lone Star Court is a long oval flanked by inward-facing guest rooms, the hotel's restaurant and bar, the Sisterdale School House and Tack Room event buildings, and a stone office building. There are a few gated walkways leading out of the space but virtually no direct line-of-sight to the outside traffic. A swimming pool with flagstone deck is the focal point of the landscaped courtyard, and there is easy access to a pavilion, fire pits and the restaurant's outdoor seating. The landscaping was designed to echo the surrounding Texas Hill Country with native trees and shrubbery, vines growing along the outdoor stairwells and railings, and an arroyo that actually functions to channel water through the property during rainstorms.

The guest rooms are appointed with vintage-inspired décor and custom-built furnishings designed by Houston-based Rottet Studios. Local snacks and beverages are stocked in retro-looking Smeg refrigerators in each room—and I mean *fully stocked*.

Despite my meetings, I was able to get in some very refreshing reading and swim time at the pool. My family staged a corn hole tournament on the lawn. Our last night was possibly the best; we enjoyed great food, drinks and live music at The Water Trough, the hotel's restaurant.

We had so much fun being outside and spending time with each other, we were already planning a return trip as we loaded our luggage into the SUV.

lonestarcourt.com; 512.814.2625