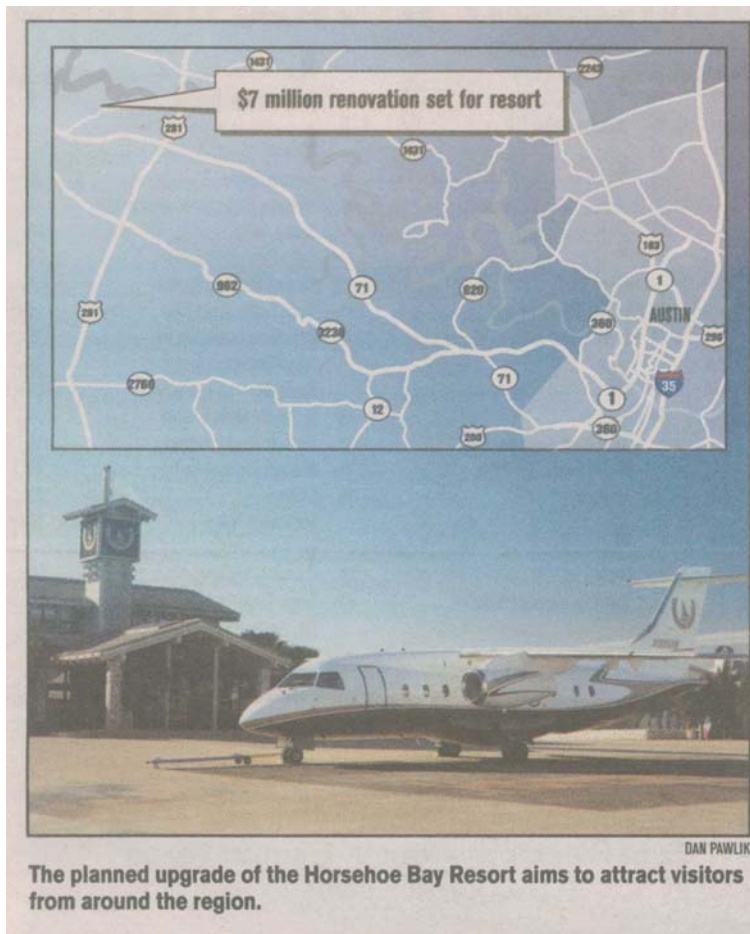


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"Horseshoe Bay gets upgrade"

By Chantal Outon



For 30 years, the jet center and private airport at Horseshoe Bay Resort have provided members with a unique indulgence: the ability to touch down a private plane and, within minutes, tee off at one of the resort's three championship golf courses.

Now the Hill Country resort is undergoing a \$7 million airport renovation that will result in a state-of-the-art transportation hub complete with technological advances and upgrades that could help put the airport on the maps of aviators across the country.

But with work having started months ago, the resort -- about an hour west of Austin -- is not revamping the airport on the fly. Jordan Jaffe, president of Comtran International Inc., has long had a vision of combining his family's two business passions: hospitality and aviation.

Jaffe, who is spearheading the airport renovation at Horseshoe Bay Resort, is also the brother of resort CEO Douglas Jaffe, and the son of aviation tycoon Morris Douglas Jaffe II, who operates San Antonio-based Jetran International Ltd., an aircraft sales and leasing firm.

The Horseshoe Bay Resort Airport, which was originally used for private jet operations, is now one of the largest private airstrips in the state. And in addition to improving the airport grounds, adding an 8-foot deer-proof perimeter fence and a private road that will link up with Hwy. 71, Jordan Jaffe is updating the navigational and lighting systems, adding taxiways and bringing in new fueling facilities and advanced surveillance systems. The airport's terminal is also being renovated.

Though the airport and terminal were due for an update, Jordan Jaffe says a key reason for making such an investment in the property is so the facility can support the addition of a new private charter-jet service.

"It was a dated facility, and we wanted it to be able to support our new developments in aviation as well as those on the residential side, and increase traffic for the resort," Jordan Jaffe says.

All of the renovations to the airport should be complete by May, when the private charter service debuts. The service, which will be called Air Horseshoe, will be available to resort guests and members, and is launching nationwide. And soon after, a public charter service will also be launched, initially focusing primarily on the Texas market.

"As far as launching a public charter service, we have the capacity to do that now, but we're not prepared infrastructure-wise," Jordan Jaffe says. "But we'll work out the kinks and probably have a public charter service available within a year."

The new Horseshoe Bay Resort private charter service will feature three Dornier 328 aircraft: two 30-passenger jets and one 12-passenger elite executive jet with personal LCD screens, rotating oversized leather chairs, an expanded lavatory and a deluxe galley.

According to MyAFD.com, an airport directory that tracks the Texas aviation industry, there are more than 1,500 private airports in the state, nearly four times the number of public airports. But few, if any, of the private airports are able to offer access to the types of amenities available at Horseshoe Bay Resort, Jordan Jaffe says.

And though no projections have been made as to how the airport changes will financially affect the resort, Jordan Jaffe expects that the marketing team at the resort's Hill Country Marriott Hotel will have to enhance its goals and targets once the new services and amenities are available.

Resort CEO Douglas Jaffe adds that the addition of the private charter service will provide guests a more convenient method of travel to the resort.

"Our decision to integrate our family's aviation business into the resort was fueled by the inconvenient nature of today's commercial airline industry," he says. "It is a time-consuming and burdensome process to check in at large public airports."

The airport renovations are topping Horseshoe Bay Resort's list of recent remodels, but they are hardly the only changes being made. The resort has been working with a Fredericksburg firm on updating its brand, and additional real estate developments are popping up all over the resort property.

The Waters, a 10-building set of luxury villas situated resort-side on Lake LBJ, will be available for rental by resort guests. Construction is well under way, and many of the condos are still available for purchase.

Additionally, Horseshoe Bay Resort, which is known for its three championship golf courses, is adding another. This one, an 18-hole Jack Nicklaus course, will be part of a new 1,600-acre residential project called Skywater. Located adjacent to the Horseshoe Bay Resort Airport, the fly-in community will feature many homes with attached airplane hangars. The property will also have a community center, and swimming and tennis facilities, and is valued at about \$1 billion.