



JUDGES' COMMENTS:

"Beautiful facility with a wide range of program offerings, unusual for a private club."

BEST COUNTRY CLUB/SWIM CLUB (Class 20)

The Houstonian Hotel, Club & Spa, Houston

It's a hotel, it's a country club, it's a family pool — all wrapped in one. With five pools, a variety of classes and programs, and high-end facilities, the Houstonian Hotel, Club & Spa focuses on giving something to everyone. This Houston club comes with a 228-room hotel, tennis courts, gym, spa, boxing ring, rock climbing wall, conference facilities, ballroom and fine cuisine — in addition to five pools. It caters to the area's well-heeled, who also are looking for a good aquatics program.

As its membership has grown, so has the popularity of aquatics at the club. However, its old facilities — a kidney-shaped pool for adults only, a lap pool and a 75,000-gallon family pool — were difficult to cool down in the hot Texas weather and rarely used by members. In 2004, the club demolished its existing pools and created a 250,000-gallon recreation pool with waterfalls, slide, geysers and hot tub. Another lap pool was built with a chiller system to maintain the pool at 80 degrees, and the 75,000-gallon family pool was kept as a therapy and swim lesson venue. A kiddie pool caters to the club's little ones, and there's also a therapeutic float pool at the spa.

The facility provides space and coaches for the local middle school and high school swim teams. Parents volunteer extensively during swim meets and swim team parties, and are trained by the head coach. The Houstonian also has instructors who have experience in teaching the adaptive aquatics community. Case in point: One child, who has part of a left leg and only three fingers on each hand, recently swam a mile without stopping in 32 minutes. — *Rin-rin Yu*

FACILITY HIGHLIGHTS: Five pools to serve different purposes • Extensive programming for a club • Emphasis on providing a healthy lifestyle and attitude to its members

FEATURES: 1 outdoor pool • 3 leisure pools • 1 therapy pool • 1 hot tub • 1 water slide

PROGRAMMING: Learn-to-swim • Lifesaving • Water aerobics • Water yoga • Water therapy • Competitive swimming • Masters Swimming • Scuba • Snorkeling • Adaptive aquatics

