



# Live Oak Lodging

## CLIENT INFORMATION

Based out of Marble Falls, Texas, Live Oak Lodging looks for more than just beautiful properties to invest in, manage, and develop. They look for that unique guest experience—one that will have visitors coming back time and time again. The Inn on Barons Creek in Fredericksburg at 90-rooms, and the Lighthouse Inn at Aransas Bay in Rockport at 78-rooms are two of their owned properties that perfectly define that unique experience within the leisure hotel market.



*“We conduct our business with the firm belief that ‘one size does not fit all.’ Because SHR gets this, we get solid technical muscle that can be configured to fit our needs.”*

—Paul Thomas, Vice President of Operations, Live Oak Lodging

## SPECIFIC PRODUCT/SERVICE

Windsurfer® CRS, Booking Engine, GDS

## SITUATION

Working within the leisure market, Live Oak found itself dealing with several issues that revolved around seasonal and weekend rates—always with the challenge of picking up RevPAR. According to VP of Operations, Paul Thomas, and Director of Marketing, Nikki Patterson, their distribution system was not living up to their needs or expectations. “We were experiencing static and sometimes non-working technology, and our package building was very limited,” Paul said. “Our hotels fill up on the weekends on their own without help from the OTAs,” added Nikki. “With our old system, we were finding it very hard to close our OTA channels when needed, especially during really heavy peaks, such as spring break through the end of October.”

## OUTCOME

Upon switching over to Windsurfer, they’ve noticed both expected and unexpected improvements. “For instance, now when we make a change at the property level, it’s one click and done with Windsurfer,” Paul said. For Nikki, it’s the flexibility that Windsurfer has brought to their marketing. “We do a lot of email campaigns at the Lighthouse property. Before Windsurfer, we had to drop the rates too low because we had a limited number of rates we could set,” she explained. “Now, we can put out an email special to sell different rooms on different dates, and just leave the special running all weekend because we can set multiple rates in advance.”

Ease of use and customer support is also huge for Live Oak. “When we switched over to SHR in November of 2016, I missed all the onboarding,” Nikki said. “But when I came back, I opened up Windsurfer cold, and pretty much figured everything out on my own.” When they do need help, SHR is there. “With our rep, Kameron, when we ask a question, there are no ‘crickets,’” Paul said. For Nikki, it’s all about building the perfect guest offerings. “I’m in Windsurfer every day, building new packages that used to take forever in our old system,” she explained. “Now, one call to Kameron, five clicks, and I’m out.”



## THE FUTURE

Live Oak’s Q1/2017 numbers show measurable improvements. “Our cost for online reservations for both properties has decreased 30% YOY, OTA commissions have decreased by 65% for Barons Creek and 80% for the Lighthouse due to a strong shift toward direct bookings, and RevPAR for Barons Creek has grown by 4.2%,” Nikki reported. Looking back, Paul remembers being cautiously optimistic. “As they say, the devil that you know is still better than the one you don’t,” he said, referring to his old system. “Now I know better.” As proof, Live Oak Lodging is currently bringing on a third property with SHR—the 56-room Inn at Circle T in Hamilton Texas.

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