

# NORTHERN IRELAND

Empty roads, amazing views,  
great golf and compelling history

## CANADA

New world, new wines, discovering  
the vineyards of Canada

## MOROCCO

Discover the colours and  
mystic of this wonderful  
country

## SWITZERLAND Pt1

Sustainability in the Alps

# PLANET GOLF REVIEW

ISSUE 20

## EQUIPMENT & APPAREL REVIEWS

The latest releases from  
Bushnell, Ping, Skechers  
and Titleist

## PRO TIPS

Driving into the wind  
grip pressure

## CHRISTMAS GIFTS

24 Gadgets, golf and  
sustainable gift ideas

## STAY, PLAY & SPA

Featuring Death Valley  
California and Kohler Resort  
Wisconsin

# VIEW

.COM



# WELCOME

It has been a tough twenty months, but Christmas always brings joy, hope and a renewed positivity that the new year will be full of wonderful experiences to create lasting memories, I must admit I didn't know whether to laugh or cry when I arrived at the airport for my trip to Northern Ireland. I hadn't realised lockdown had affected me that much and it was at that moment I understood how much travel is not just important to stimulate our minds, but also how important it is to our mental well-being.

With that in mind we bring you Jane's wine tasting trails in Canada and some recommendations for your Christmas table, Peter brings you some amazing photos of Morocco and

also his reviews of hotels in Death Valley and Destination Kohler Resort from the US. Charmaine and myself bring you our trips to Northern Ireland and part one of our journey to Switzerland. We also bring you three pages of Christmas gift ideas and 10 pages of reviews of the latest equipment, apparel and tech, while our new "Pro Tips" section will help all you golfers out there.

All that is left for me to say on behalf of everyone at PGR Magazine is to wish you all a merry, healthy Christmas and a New Year full of new experiences and we hope our reviews give you some ideas to create some new special memories.

## MEET THE TEAM

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# PROTOD

# REVIEW



## Interactive links

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There are also links that will take you to video reviews and links on our adverts that will take you directly to their websites. All this means you don't have to scroll through the magazine – unless you want to – just a click will take you to the feature you are looking for.



- p 4 Christmas gift ideas**  
Three pages of amazing gadgets, golf and sustainable gift ideas
- p 7 Morocco In Focus**  
This issue Peter takes his Canon camera and captures the colours, tastes and mystic of this wonderful North African country
- p 11 Canadian wine trail**  
With Christmas just round the corner, Jane takes you on a wine tasting trail with some tasty tips on tipples for your festive dinner
- p 16 Northern Ireland**  
James Mason and Charmaine Hibbert come out of lockdown for a road trip in Northern Ireland and discover the beautiful A2 coastal road
- p 24 Switzerland part one**  
Planes, trains, but not automobiles as James and Charmaine arrive at a sustainable town in the Swiss Alps
- p 30 Equipment & Apparel Reviews**  
Featuring the latest releases from Bushnell, Ping, Skechers and Titleist
- p 40 New: Pro tips**  
Two golf tips from our PGA Professionals
- p 42 Stay, Play & Spa**  
With reviews from Death Valley in California and home of this year's Ryder Cup, Kohler Resort in Wisconsin

# STENZEN

# REVIEW



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# 24 gift ideas

Searching for the perfect golf, travel or sustainable gift? Don't worry we've got you covered



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**Portable Espresso Maker**

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**TOM FORD Leather T Belt**

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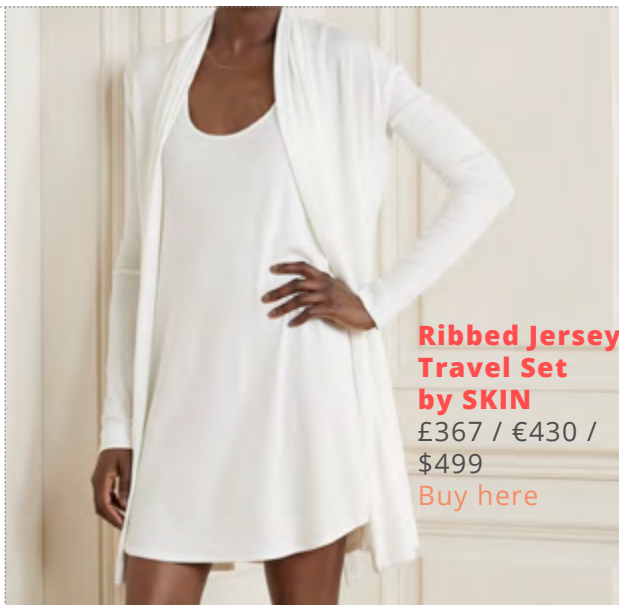
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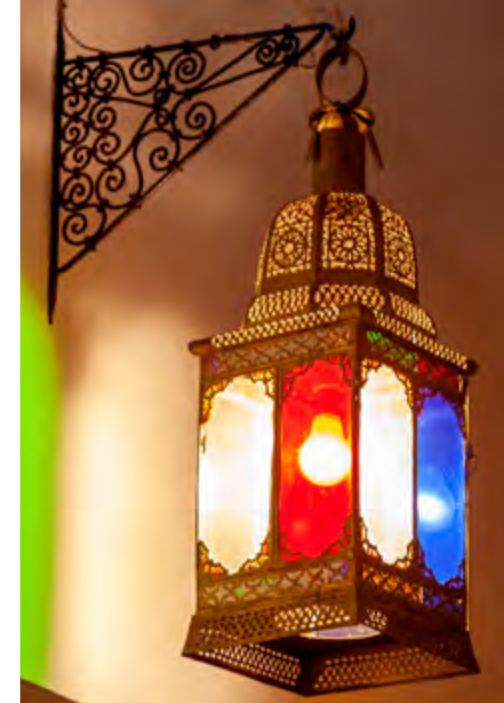




# IMPRESSIONS FROM MOROCCO



Left: Time for a chat, old medina, Marrakech  
Below: Crushing argan nuts to produce argan oil, Marjarana Cooperative, near Essaouira



Left: Ornate lamp, Bahia Palace, Marrakech



Left: Fishing boats on the Bou Regreg river, Rabat  
Right: City walls, Rabat



Right: Street sign, old medina, Rabat  
Far right: Agadir marina





Below: Fig dish in a  
riyadh restaurant,  
Rabat medina  
Right: Door and  
shadows, Royal Golf  
Meknes, Meknes



# IMPRESSIONS FROM MOROCCO

Above: Gnaoua  
musician, Kasbah  
of the Udayas,  
Rabat  
Right: Kasbah of  
the Udayas, Rabat



Above: Hassan  
Tower, Rabat



Left: Kasbah of  
the Udayas, Rabat  
Left: Horse-drawn  
calesh, old medina,  
Marrakech





Left: Ornate doorway in the old medina, Fez  
Below: Water seller, Djemaa el Fna square, Marrakech  
Bottom right: Royal Palace gates, Marrakech



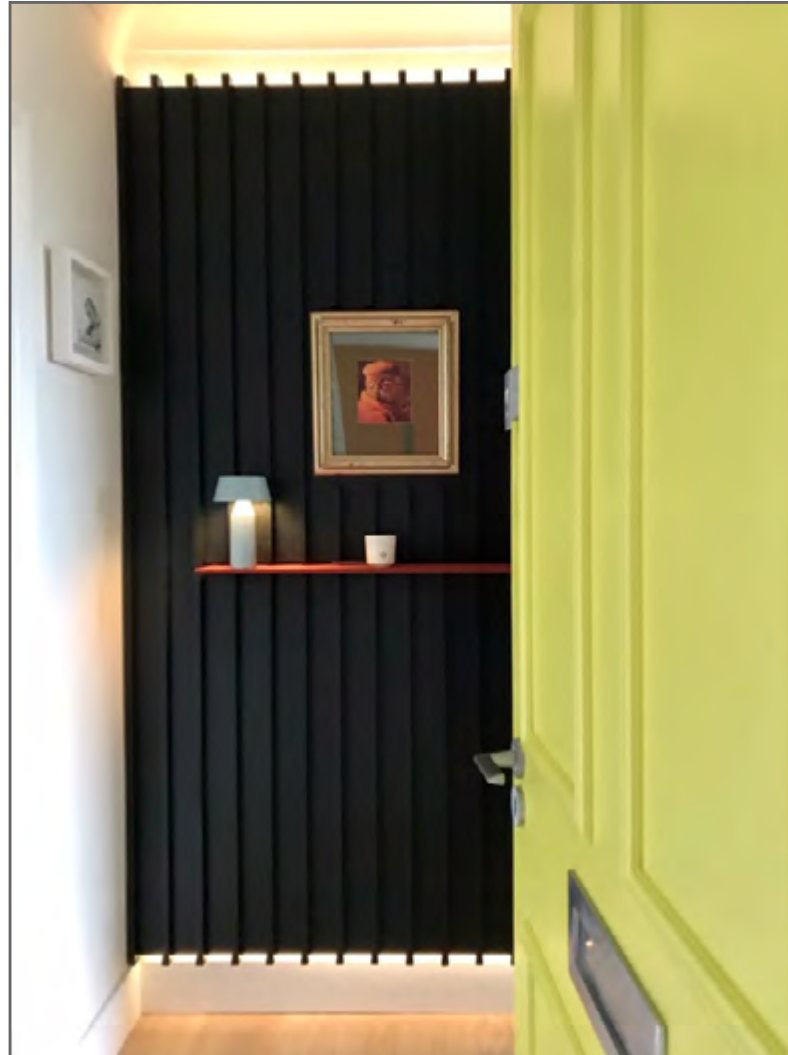
Above: Old medina, Fez  
Left: Guard, Mohammed V Mausoleum, Rabat  
Right: Slippers in the old medina, Fez  
Below: Middle Atlas Mountains, Michlifen



# IMPRESSIONS FROM MOROCCO

See more of Peter Ellegard's work on Instagram  
@peterellegard or peterellegard.co.uk





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# MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

"A bottle of white, a bottle of red, perhaps a bottle of rose instead." Join Jane Finn as she savours the flavours and philosophy of Canada's Wine Country



Writing this article was a challenge. Not because I had to sample so many delectable wines to make sure you would be delighted with my picks, but because Canada's wine scene is as varied and diverse as the country's landscape. From coast to coast, I've had the privilege of meeting passionate growers and world-class winemakers. I've walked with them in their vineyards, visited their cellars and spent more than a bit of time in their tasting rooms learning how to pair, serve, buy and enjoy a good bottle of wine. I've also gained a whole new appreciation for the vision, grit, and determination it takes to produce award-winning wines by listening to the stories of people who make a life and a living, sharing their labour of love.

## TIDE & VINE

It's a sparkling summer day as I make my way to our table on the Crush Pad patio. Beyond the rows of grapes glistening in the summer sun, I can see the cliffs at Minas Basin. Earlier that day, I had hiked Burntcoat Head to explore the legendary tides in the Bay of Fundy. It was breathtaking to watch the waters crest to more than 47 metres and then recede to reveal unique rock formations, including sea stacks, submerged caves and tidal pools brimming with periwinkles, rock crabs and tiny, Tommy codfish. I thought nothing could match the energy of the pounding sea until I met up with Pete and Geena at Lockett Vineyards, who have a knack for making strangers feel like friends.

Pete is a Nottinghamshire transplant, visionary and entrepreneur who has long declared he "is in the feel-good business, not the food and wine business." That this is more than a mission statement is evident as he and daughter Geena make their way around the tables; their infectious laughter and down-home East Coast charm have everyone in the crowd beaming.

I'm here to catch up with old friends. Within minutes of sitting down, a charcuterie

board ideal for sharing arrives at our table, accompanied by a perfectly chilled bottle of Buried White. The conversation flows, and before we know it, the afternoon has turned to evening, and our ride is waiting to take us back to Halifax. Before hopping in the car, I take one more look around. There's a line-up at the bright red British Telecom phone box that sits squarely in the centre of the vineyard, where guests can call anywhere in the world for free. Judging from the queue, it's evident that Lockett wines "are worth phoning home about!"

In Nova Scotia, no vineyard is located more than 20 kilometres from the sea. This fact inspired local winemakers to collaborate in creating Canada's first appellation vintage - Tidal Bay. Each year, only 12 wineries are selected to make this bright, crisp wine. Each must follow a strict set of standards, though each winemaker can put their unique stamp on the product. After I learned the history of Tidal Bay, I decided to make it my mission to taste every contributor's brand, and I'm glad I did. Some were more acidic, more minerally or more fruit-forward than others, but all were delicious. It's so hard to choose, but in the end, a bottle from Lightfoot & Wolfville and another from Benjamin Bridge accompany me home, along with boxes of live lobster, Digby scallops and fresh mussels – for a family feast when I land.

## NEXT STOP – CENTRAL CANADA

I live within striking distance of the Niagara Peninsula, part of a UNESCO biosphere and one of the country's most prolific wine regions. It's home to the powerful, raging Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake – a historic site, considered the 'prettiest town in Canada.' It's a region where luxury is the norm, with an incredible array of wineries from small boutiques to grand estates, quaint shops, Victorian inns and exceptional eateries that →



Left: Visitors can stand in the vineyard at Lockett's and call anywhere in the world for free to share their experience  
Below: A bottle of crisp Tidal Bay pairs beautifully with a charcuterie board brimming with locally produced artisan meats, cheeses and preserves

"Each year, only 12 wineries are selected to make this bright, crisp wine. Each must follow a strict set of standards, though each winemaker can put their unique stamp on the product"





keep travellers, myself included, coming back for a day, a weekend or a week of exploration, relaxation and rejuvenation.

**ONTARIO’S BEST KEPT SECRET**

Thirty Bench Winery sits on the Beamsville Bench, a narrow plateau that slopes gently from the Niagara Escarpment to four separate vineyards situated on 57 acres. The picturesque venue makes ‘Bend and Bubbles’ - yoga in the vineyard, followed by a brunch box and a glass of sparkling Riesling, the perfect start to my day. From the Wood Post Lot, it’s a short stroll to The Cottage for a ‘Back Vintage’ tasting experience and the chance to catch up with winemaker Emma Garner. As I sip a glass of Wild Cask Riesling 2016, Emma guides my tasting experience so I can fully appreciate the honeyed notes of fruit and crisp acidity of this wonderfully aromatic wine. Renowned for their ‘small lot’ vintages, often less than 300 cases each year, I’m reminded that “Thirty Bench wines are hard to find. And, they are also hard to forget!” and I leave with more than one bottle tucked into my bag.

Strewn Winery makes an outstanding Chardonnay, one of my husband’s favourites, but Strewn initially got my attention because it was Canada’s first wine cookery school. I’ve spent many a Saturday morning in their bright, modern kitchen overlooking the herb garden and BBQ patio. The space is ideal for eight people who love food and wine to make a shared meal. I’m proud to say that every summer when local produce is at its peak, I’ve been able to replicate the Strawberry Arugula Salad to a tee, and it’s now my signature picnic dish.

Canada may not have invented icewine, but Ontario can justifiably claim to be the world’s largest producer. Traditionally icewines are made from Vidal grapes, but thanks to the recommendation of a good friend, the Cabernet Franc variety has become a luxury gift I love to give and receive. Strewn produces a vintage founder Jane Langdon describes as voluptuous. It’s a beautiful pinkish colour, not too sweet and more complex. It paired wonderfully with the strawberry rhubarb crisp we made. When I want a sweet indulgence at home, I drizzle it over vanilla ice cream and enjoy every bite

while reminiscing about my last visit and planning my next.

**MOUNTAINS, LAKES AND DESERT?**

When asked to describe BC, majestic snow-capped mountains, glittering lakes, dense rainforests, and the rugged Pacific Coast are the images that immediately spring to mind. That is until I make my way to Oliver, the self-proclaimed Wine Capital of Canada, and discover a whole new part of my country I didn’t know existed. As I drive through the Okanagan Valley, it’s as rich and fertile as I remembered it, but the landscape changes dramatically as I near the southern tip. Perched on the edge of the Sonoran Desert, I’m now in Osoyoos. Gone are the green fields, fruit trees and flowers, replaced by red earth, boulders and cacti. There’s even a difference in the air, and I am full of anticipation about what lies ahead.

My first stop is the Oliver Tourism Office because I have to ask how this little town of fewer than 5,000 people came to be known as the Wine Capital of Canada. The story goes that in 2001 when Kenn Oldfield, one of the



Top Right: Flowers cascade along the boulevard amongst the restaurants, boutiques and art galleries on Queen Street in Old Town Niagara-on-the-Lake



Right: Enjoy delicious seasonal dishes and a great wine selection at The Epicurean  
Below: The majestic Horseshoe Falls, the largest of the triad you can view in Niagara Falls



Peter Miller



“Kenn Oldfield, one of the founders of Tinhorn Creek Vineyards and then President of the Chamber of Commerce, discovered Oliver had two more wineries than Niagara-on-the-Lake, he declared Oliver the country’s Wine Capital, and the moniker stuck”

founders of Tinhorn Creek Vineyards and then President of the Chamber of Commerce, discovered Oliver had two more wineries than Niagara-on-the-Lake, he declared Oliver the country’s Wine Capital, and the moniker stuck. That’s a pretty bold and brash statement that’s both inspirational and aspirational for more than 40 wineries that make the Osoyoos a premier wine destination.

It’s too early to check into my hotel, so I take advantage of the time to visit the newly opened, ultra-modern District Wine Village, a cluster of 13 micro wineries, a craft brewery, a distillery and an eatery built around a sunken, 600-person amphitheatre. In Canada, a first of its kind, each vendor presses, ferments, and bottles their wine on-site, making it all too easy for me to while away the afternoon people watching as I hop from one establishment to another.

When I check in to Spirit Ridge, it’s dusk, and my timing couldn’t have been better. The dancing flames radiating from the giant, gorgeously hand-crafted firepit illuminate the entranceway, speak to my soul and fire up my imagination. As my head hits the pillow, I find myself dreaming of possibilities as I allow the desert to weave her magic.

I awake to infinite blue skies, and I am soon walking the Chopaka Lookout Trail for a bird’s eye view of the valley and nearby mountains. As I approach Chief’s Lookout, the stillness



of the morning gives way to the excited voices of a group of climbers preparing to rappel down a 65-metre cliff to the desert floor. Their enthusiasm is palpable, and my adrenaline is pumping as I watch them descend, but I have to admit that the fact I didn’t have a reservation saved me from having to decide if I had the nerve to make that leap of faith.

My heartbeat slows as I leisurely make my way back to the Nk’Mip (in-KA-meep) Desert Cultural Centre. The heady scent of sage rises to greet me as my legs brush the plants that line

the trail, and I can feel its cleansing healing power. The next few hours are a gift as I take a deeper dive into the Osoyoos First Nations culture, heritage and traditions. I’m fascinated by the legends of Coyote – Sen’Klip – the ‘Great Trickster’ who according to ancient lore teaches us not to take ourselves too seriously. At the same time, still, be respectful to people and the planet.

There was so much to discover that I’m reluctant to pull myself away. Still, I don’t want to be late for my tasting session with →

Top: Nk’Mip Cellars  
Bottom Left:  
Jill Richardson  
Brandby introduces  
world-class wines  
Middle: Grapevines  
thrive in the  
Osoyoos Desert  
Below Right:  
Welcome to Oliver,  
Canada’s wine  
capital!





winemaker Justin Hall at NK’MIP Cellars, North America’s first Indigenous-owned and operated winery. Today, he’s serving up a flight from their premier series – Qwam Qwmt that translates as “achieving excellence.” There is no doubt that these are award winners, but that’s only one part of the story. What’s even more spectacular is the entire team’s commitment to protecting the environment for those who will follow in our footsteps.

When Justin speaks, his face lights up not with pride but with joy as he describes, in one simple sentence, the spirit of their venture: “The land teaches us the power of patience and the pleasure of sharing.”

TRULY A FAMILY AFFAIR

At Quails’ Gate, near Kelowna, this same spirit is evident. When ‘Poppa Dick’ purchased this little piece of heaven on earth in 1956, he sowed

the seeds of generosity that would support his family and left his mark on the community. Hardworking and humble, Dick Stewart had the foresight to plant blocks of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes that are now some of the oldest in the Okanagan Valley. He and his children have also led the way in introducing and expanding sustainable growing practices, reinforcing the family’s guiding principle to “always be a gracious host” - not only to the visitors they serve but the land itself.

I arrive at Quails’ Gate just in time for the last Vineyard Tasting of the day. As we move between pergolas sipping on the newest releases, I’m also drinking in the panoramic views of Okanagan Lake and the adjacent estates that stretch as far as the eye can see. Then we’re off to dinner at the Old Vines Restaurant, which in my opinion, has to be one of the most romantic restaurants in the

country. The architecture is stunning, the food and wine are remarkable, but it’s the service and attention to detail that make you feel like you’re alone in a crowd—a truly fitting ending to a seven-day vacation in BC Wine Country.

These are only a few of my highlights, but trust me, don’t be afraid to venture out and nudge yourself in new directions. You’ll meet incredibly talented vintners, make new friends and discover your personal favourites while creating memories along the way.

I’m not sure who said it, but someone once told me there is more philosophy in a bottle of wine than all the books in the library. Now I know that’s true as I uncork that bottle of Nk’Mip’s Dreamcatcher that’s been calling my name and plan my next trip in search of the nectar of the goddess.

Far left: Strolling through a vineyard at night is a stellar experience  
Top Middle: The Old Vine Restaurant  
Bottom Middle: Spending time in a barrel room is a heady experience  
Bottom Right: Quails’ Gate with views of Lake Okanagan and the Columbia Mountains

“I’m not sure who said it, but someone once told me there is more philosophy in a bottle of wine than all the books in the library”



JOURNEY PLANNER

WHERE TO STAY

**Spirit Ridge**  
T: +1 250-495-5445  
E: spiritridge.reservations@hyatt.com  
W: hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/canada/spirit-ridge/ylwub

WHERE TO EAT

**Crush Pad Patio at Luckett Vineyards**  
T: +1 902-542-2600  
W: luckettvineyards.com

**The Epicurean**  
T: +1 905-468-3408  
W: opentable.ca

**Old Vines Restaurant at Quails’ Gate Winery**  
T: +1 250.769.4451  
Reservations: opentable.ca  
W: www.quailsgate.com

THINGS TO DO

**Burntcoat Head Park**  
T: +1 902-369-2529  
W: burntcoatheadpark.ca

**Thirty Bench**  
T: +1 905-563-1698  
E: info@thirtybench.com  
W: thirtybench.com

**Strewn Winery & Cooking School**  
T: +1 905-468-1779

**Oliver District Wine Village**  
T: +1 250-535-1575  
E: info@districtwinevillage.com

**Nk’ Mip Desert Cultural Heritage Centre**  
T: +1 250-495-7901  
W: nykipdesert.com and www.corporateheights.ca

**NK’MIP Cellars**  
T: +1 250-535-1575  
E: info@nkmipcellars.com



# THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

Stunning views, empty roads and wonderful gastronomy – what better way to come out of lockdown than a golf road trip to Northern Ireland

The Mourne Mountains



BY JAMES MASON  
 PHOTOGRAPHY TOURISM IRELAND

I must admit I have been pretty excited about this trip since it was first mentioned, not only because I know I'm about to play some great golf courses, but after nearly 18-months since my last trip to the Philippines due to the pandemic and not being able to travel, I wouldn't say stir crazy is the correct analogy as I have been able to cycle with no cars on the road, play golf and breath unpolluted air, but there is something about stepping onto an aircraft and landing in another part of the world that makes the soul sing.

Now I know before everyone jumps on me for the hypocrisy between the statement of breathing unpolluted air and jumping on a plane - I totally agree it is. The quicker the aircraft manufacturers can move over to electric or some form of hybrid technology the better for the planet and everyone.

The dilemma is we now live in a world where travel is a big part of helping people's mental

health, as well as helping economies around the world. I didn't understand the mental health side of things until I arrive at the airport. The feeling of elation really did take me by surprise.

After picking up my golf clubs, luggage and hire car I am making my way to Ardglass Golf Club the first of three golf courses I will be playing this week. To my surprise the roads are relatively empty and the scenery is stunning. I'm just soaking up the wonderful views of hills, valley's, gorse, heather and livestock, driving along taking in the Irish countryside - it's a tourist destination in its own right.

### ROAD TRIP

During my three-day stay each journey to the different courses just kept enhancing my love for the road trips, let alone playing the golf courses, particularly the A2 road that has so many amazing views of the Irish Sea.

A special mention must go to Billy Scott who

took me on a taxi tour of all the monuments and murals that depict the history of Belfast. His unbiased commentary and hilarious antidotes really was two hours well spent and I certainly recommend you take the chance to see it as you will see parts of Belfast off the beaten track that are important to understanding the city.

Eating is also a big part of enjoying any trip, whether like me you are by yourself, in couples or in large groups. If you get up to Newcastle, County Down make sure you visit Brunel's Restaurant and its award winning, locally sourced produce. If you're staying in Belfast then I would recommend you head to Deanes Meat Locker on Howard Street for more locally sourced produce and meats and if you're lucky enough to be staying at the Ten Square Hotel then head up to the residents only loft bar, it's the perfect way to end a wonderful trip.

**Left: Looking down on Warrenpoint**  
**Middle top: Driving through the Mourne Mountains**  
**Middle bottom: Ten Square hotel loft bar.**  
**Right top: Bobby Sands MP mural, Belfast**  
**Right bottom: Titanic Belfast**

"During my three-day stay each journey to the different courses just kept enhancing my love for the road trips, let alone playing the golf courses, particularly the A2 road that has so many amazing views of the Irish Sea"



Jennifer Boyer



Gandalf Grey



Colum McCann







Top left: Time for a break. Left: The dark hedges. Top right: Oxford Island at sunset. Right middle: The Giant's Causeway. Right: Titanic Belfast

## JOURNEY PLANNER

### WHERE TO STAY

#### Slieve Donard Resort & Spa

T: +44 (0) 28 4372 1066

W: [hastingshotels.com/slieve-donard-resort-and-spa](http://hastingshotels.com/slieve-donard-resort-and-spa)

#### Ten Square Hotel

T: +44 (0) 28 9024 1001

W: [tensquare.co.uk/home/About-the-hotel](http://tensquare.co.uk/home/About-the-hotel)

### WHERE TO EAT

#### Brunel's Restaurant

T: +44 28 4372 3951

W: [brunelsrestaurant.co.uk](http://brunelsrestaurant.co.uk)

#### Deanes Meat Locker

T: +44 (0) 9033 1134

W: [michaeldeane.co.uk/meat-locker](http://michaeldeane.co.uk/meat-locker)

### WHERE TO PLAY

#### Ardglass Golf Club

T: +44 (0) 28 4484 1219

W: [ardglassgolfclub.com](http://ardglassgolfclub.com)

#### Warrenpoint Golf Club

T: +44 (0) 28 4175 3695

W: [warrenpointgolf.com](http://warrenpointgolf.com)

#### Clandeboyne Golf Club

T: +44 (0) 28 9127 1767

W: [cgc-ni.com](http://cgc-ni.com)

### THINGS TO DO

#### Belfast Taxi Tour

T: +44 (0) 77 9860 2401

W: [touringaroundbelfast.com](http://touringaroundbelfast.com)

#### Silent Valley

W: [discovernorthernireland.com/things-to-do/silent-valley-mountain-park-p697101](http://discovernorthernireland.com/things-to-do/silent-valley-mountain-park-p697101)



## ARDGLASS GOLF CLUB

W: [ardglassgolfclub.com](http://ardglassgolfclub.com)

As I step out of the car I take a deep breath of that fresh, crisp Irish air with its slightly salted tinge and the sounds of the waves crashing against the rocks, the hairs along my arms bristle with anticipation as it's another links course, which is my favourite type of golf course. When I spot the first tee perched right outside the clubhouse on the rocks with the Irish Sea crashing against

them I have to smile to myself, I take a look up the fairway and spot the green between some dunes protected by a bunker. What a perfect way to start a round of golf.

I try to contain my excitement as I check in with Paul Vaughan who is the professional here and after a refreshing drink in the bar, I am off and standing on that very tee and crash my drive up the fairway. What I didn't see on my arrival at the green, but comes into view in spectacular fashion is the backdrop to that 1st green; my eyes light up at the wonderful vistas. Of course, there's only one way to follow that opening hole and that is to have a par 3, played over an

inlet with the sea glistening in the background. Ardglass you certainly know how to make a statement.

I have to say, I am not even sure that the 2nd is the best par 3 on the course, the 10th played downhill with the sea and village as a backdrop, the 12th again played from an elevated tee with more sea views and the 7th with its tiny white cottage to the right of the green again with those stunning sea views.

They are all amazing golf holes, but it's hard to pick a favourite hole on this course. The 11th, a beautifully designed par 5 that runs along the edge of the sea and follows the shore line which

moves gently round to the right, could just pip it for me.

I know a lot of people don't like blind holes and there are several here where you take your line from the white stones, but to be honest when you stand on the elevated tee on the 18th looking down to the green and the clubhouse beyond with the 2nd tee just to your right, I'm sure I am not the only one to think, let me just pop over there and go again. Ardglass, the pleasure has certainly been all mine. Thank you for some wonderful memories. →

**"ARDGLASS THE PLEASURE HAS CERTAINLY BEEN ALL MINE. THANK YOU FOR SOME WONDERFUL MEMORIES."**

COURSE  
VIDEO



Far left: Looking up at the 1st green  
 Left: Looking back to the tee on the 2nd. Bottom left: The stunning par 3, 10th hole. Below: The par 5, 11th played around the shoreline



All photos James Mason



## WARRENPOINT GOLF CLUB

W: [warrenpointgolf.com](http://warrenpointgolf.com)

The majority of the journey down from Newcastle to Warrenpoint is along some wonderfully deserted country lanes with glens and gorse-covered hills each side of the road. But then just before you hit Warrenpoint the sea appears like some mirage between two hills and beckons you on.

After a brief chat with Nigel the professional who gives me a lowdown on the course, I am crashing my drive down the tight tree-lined par 5, 1st hole; a five iron in and two putts and I am off to a great start. The 2nd is a wonderfully designed par 3 at 181 yards with a raised green that is protected by two bunkers at the front and two at the back with pine trees surrounding the back of the green. There are five strong par 3s on the course, but the pick of them is the 6th that is played from an elevated tee, to a raised green with a runoff at the front and four deep bunkers: two left and two right with the hills as a backdrop. It really is a stunning hole.

The original 9-hole course was designed in 1893 and extended to 18 holes back in 1920. The latest redesign was undertaken by Pat Ruddy & Tom Craddock and all have used the topography of the land really well, especially the part of the course that is known locally as “Amen Corner” which starts at the 11th with a 282-yard driveable par 4, but if you are off line you will certainly pay the price. I loved the movement of the land on the 12th, 13th and 14th holes and local knowledge will certainly come into play here, but remember there is more room right than what you see from the tee.

The course comes to a fitting finale at the 440 yards, par 4, 18th which is played from an elevated tee. The hole doglegs left and the green sits next to the fountain that really shouldn’t come into play. The fairways have subtle undulations and the greens have been designed to offer some very tricky pin placements with lots of movement and complexes in them.

When you are on the course playing you get lost in the beauty of the course and it really is a little hidden gem. There is a large main road at the bottom of the course, but to be honest as I walk off the course I enjoyed it so much it didn’t even bother me and I know you’ll going to feel the same way.

### COURSE VIDEO

Right: Looking up the 8th hole

Bottom left: Stunning views at the 11th hole

Bottom middle: Looking back up the 15th hole

Bottom right: The fountain to the right of the 18th green

**“ESPECIALLY THE PART OF THE COURSE THAT IS KNOWN LOCALLY AS “AMEN CORNER” WHICH STARTS AT THE 11TH WITH A 282-YARD DRIVABLE PAR 4, BUT IF YOU ARE OFF LINE YOU WILL CERTAINLY PAY THE PRICE.”**



All photos James Mason



## CLANDEBOYE GOLF CLUB

W: [cgc-ni.com](http://cgc-ni.com)

It's my last golf day in Northern Ireland and as I drive to Clandeboye GC. I am both excited and sad. I have heard a lot about this course and been told how good it is and my obvious sadness comes because it's my last day here.

After initial introductions, I head to the 1st tee and I suddenly understand why the course is rated so highly. The opening hole is played from an elevated tee but the views out to the sea do take you by surprise if you are not ready for them and the heathland feel of the course certainly makes a great first impression.

The downhill 3rd and the strategic 4th hole are wonderful golf holes, the 4th especially as you will need to place your drive to the right to get a look at the green that is below the fairway which you play to over gorse and bracken with just a seven-foot gap to walk through to get down to the emerald carpet; and I understand why this is the hardest hole on the course.

The 6th is the only par 5 on the front nine and is played from an elevated tee. It can be reached in two, but you have to be careful of the ditch that crosses the fairway with your drive. The front nine comes to a close with a blind tee shot then played uphill to a green that's protected by three bunkers.

The back nine opens up with a wonderful par 4 where you play to the top of the hill and down to a raised green. The first of the par 3s on the back nine arrives at the 11th and I have to say the par 3s on the back nine are both great holes. The 11th is named "Stags Leap" and is played to a raised green that is surrounded by bunkers and if you miss the bunkers, then the runoffs will get you, if you are not spot on with your short iron.

The other is Ballyleidy and at 176 yards from the back tees it's all carry with water and a pot bunker protecting the front and played to a green that slopes back to front!

I loved the run of holes home. The view from the 16th green is fantastic and there is a standing stone to the left of the green. There is also another large stone to the right of the 18th green known as Conlig Standing Stone. The name Conlig translates as 'the hound stone,' local names for the site being 'hound hill' and 'runestone hill.'

Standing on the 18th green looking out to Belfast Lough watching the ships slowly make their way across the horizon, I reflect on an amazing three days of golf on three very different golf courses. What they do have in common is each represents a wonderful and unique challenge and I know you will love all three of them. "Go mbuailimid le chéile arís."



All photos James Mason

Top far left: Looking down on the 1st green  
 Bottom far left: The upturned saucer 3rd green. Left: Amazing views out to the Belfast Lough at the 17th. Bottom left: Looking back down the 15th. Bottom right: The Conlig Standing Stone to the right of the 18th green

COURSE VIDEO



**"THE VIEWS OUT TO THE SEA DO TAKE YOU BY SURPRISE IF YOU ARE NOT READY FOR THEM AND THE HEATHLAND FEEL OF THE COURSE CERTAINLY MAKES A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION"**



# SLIEVE DONARD HOTEL & SPA

Co Down, Northern Ireland

By CHARMAINE HIBBERT



## SLIEVE TO LOVE

After a wonderful journey along the A2 coastal road **Charmaine Hibbert** discovers her own pot of gold at the end of a rainbow with views out to Irish Sea that will have you mesmerised

We're heading to Newcastle, County Down on our way from Ardglass Golf Club and the A2 road has taken us along some wonderful coast roads with views out to the Irish Sea and through yellow and purple gorse-covered hills. I know the 30-minute journey is coming to an end as I spot the red brick hotel sitting on the bay that seems to jut out into the sea. While I am excited to see my room, I am slightly disappointed that the road trip part is coming to an end. Sitting back watching the Irish countryside pass by has certainly been food for my soul after so many months in lockdown.

The check-in was very swift and the staff couldn't have been more friendly. I make my way to the room which just so happens to be right next to the spa and I can feel a nice deep sauna and steam room calling me. James said he's going to the gym but I think I will give that a miss today and trade that for a lounger looking out to the bay!

When I open the door to my room I couldn't have asked it to be more perfect. A walk through the small corridor which has the bathroom on my right and wardrobes to the left, I enter the room to a king size bed to my →

Left: Slieve Donard hotel at night with the wind and sea statue



right and a writing desk to the left, but it's the three near-floor-to-ceiling windows that have got me transfixed and how the bay and sea fill them. I sit down just to take a longer look and it's only then that I realise that I also have my own little sitting area of two double sofas just to relax and soak up those views.

It takes me a while to pull myself away from the views to take the obligatory nose dive into the bed. I check out the bathroom which has a deep soaker tub that looks extra long and a walk-in shower with a rainfall shower head and an additional hand held shower head.

### FACILITIES

I head down to the spa and pass the gym where I can see James on one of the spinning bikes and find myself a nice lounge looking out to the bay. Just behind me are the sauna and steam rooms, including a warm shower and a cold one. The swimming pool is calling me but with the controlled numbers allowed in I can just relax for the next couple of hours.

Originally built by the Belfast and County Down Railway, as an 'end of line' luxury holiday destination, the hotel opened on 24th June 1898 at a cost of £44,000! The hotel sits right next to the world famous Royal County Down Golf Club and had its own bakery, vegetable gardens, pigs, laundry and a power plant, which also provided electricity for the railway station. Walking round the hotel some of the old drawing, coffee, reading and writing rooms have survived modernisation and you can just sit and relax and soak up those wonderful views.

### BRUNEL'S RESTAURANT

Less than a minute from the gates of the hotel is the refurbished Brunel's award-winning restaurant which opened in 2017. As we enter I am already impressed by the exposed brick work and piping.

The service couldn't be friendlier or more attentive, with our drinks order being taken straight away. Unfortunately we both chose the same starter and mains so I can't report back on any of the other dishes, but the chicken liver parfait with apricot chutney and charred focaccia starter and the lemon sole with spinach, peas, lemon, capers and butter for our main, both went down a treat.

Looking around I could tell from the atmosphere and conversations everyone was enjoying the food and with so many locals – who it seems are regulars – it shows that people enjoy eating here and the mantra of only using fresh regionally-sourced ingredients is certainly working wonders for the owners.

Dessert for us both turns out to be the pistachio and strawberry tart and again it has the taste buds dancing in delight. We did however deviate on the alcoholic beverages. James was raving about the Galway Bay IPA and I have to say the Fernlands Sauvignon Blanc with the lemon sole worked perfectly together. To cap off a wonderful evening, the short walk back to the hotel on a warm summer evening with that slight sea breeze was the perfect way to end our last night in Newcastle before heading to Belfast tomorrow.

Slieve Donard Resort & Spa  
 Downs Rd, Newcastle  
 Northern Ireland  
 BT33 0AH

T: +44 28 4372 6166  
 W: [hastingshotels.com/slieve-donard-spa](https://hastingshotels.com/slieve-donard-spa)



Top row left to right:  
 Hotel bathroom, yoga  
 with a view, swimming  
 pool with more views  
 Bottom row left to  
 right: Hotel suite, on-  
 site Percy French Inn,  
 Brunel's restaurant  
 interior, Brunel's  
 ricotta starter





# ANDERMATT: SWINGING IN THE ALPS

BY JAMES MASON AND CHARMAINE HIBBERT

PHOTOGRAPHY ANDERMATT SWISS ALPS

**Part one of our recent trip to Switzerland, discovering Andermatt and its quest to become a sustainable tourist destination both on and off the golf course**

I know Charmaine has touched on it in her hotel review, but the journey from Zurich airport to Andermatt is too amazing not to mention it again. With some spectacular views, we are jumping from window to window as we spot more fantastic sights – this is part one of our journey and the second part will feature in the April issue of PGR magazine.

Andermatt is a hive of activity and for centuries because of its position between the North and South was always known as a trading town. But as with all these things progress came and goods were moved by train and now air. Also, with that change Andermatt became a base for the military; there are many caves in the mountains including some that could hold up to 10,000 soldiers which have now been turned into museums.

Now with the military gone Andermatt is again changing, this time to become, as much as possible, a sustainable town. There are new buildings and apartments going up that will have some amazing views, but have also been built with sustainability in mind. The town sits between two mountain ranges and not only offers some fantastic skiing and snowboarding in the winter months, but with its golf course, fishing, hiking trails, mountain biking, cycling, swimming, tennis, paragliding and nature

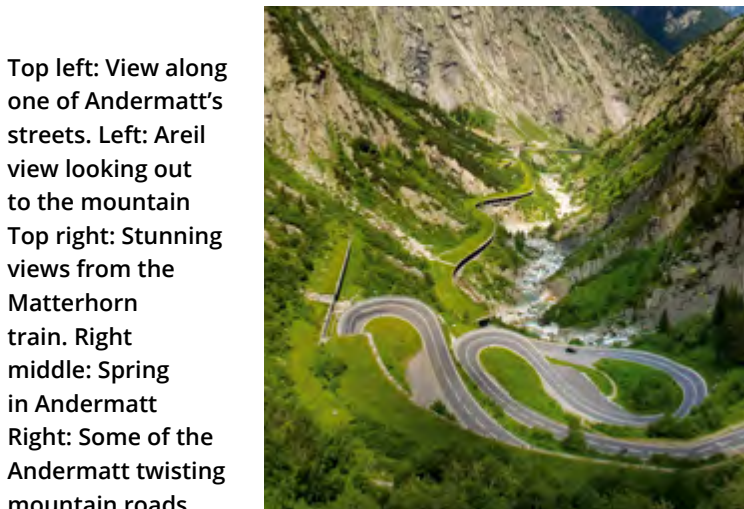
walks has become a strong summer destination for those who love nature, but also want their creature comforts.

There is a range of hotels and apartments to choose from for your stay in Andermatt. The town offers some mouthwatering gastronomy or you can just relax with a nice glass of wine or beer in one of the many bars. In the main square you can see music performances, comedy and theatre productions. Andermatt is a walking town and car free. There is plenty of space for your vehicle in the underground car park and from there everything is accessible by foot.

Andermatt is the tenth-sunniest place in Switzerland and if all those summer sports aren't your thing then you can always hire a car and drive through the Alps passes to explore over 40 mountain lakes and visit some of the nearby historic villages.

The mantra for Andermatt was to preserve the nature of this wild and mystical valley while developing it as a tourist destination, working with Egyptian investor Samih Sawiris. It looks to me like the next stage of Andermatt's journey from military town to tourist destination is well and truly on its way and with its sustainable credentials it certainly looks like they will create that balance of keeping the wild and mystical while transforming the town once again. →





Top left: View along one of Andermatt's streets. Left: Aerial view looking out to the mountain  
Top right: Stunning views from the Matterhorn train. Right middle: Spring in Andermatt  
Right: Some of the Andermatt twisting mountain roads

# JOURNEY PLANNER

## WHERE TO STAY

**Raddison Blu Reussen**

T: +41 41 888 11 11

W: [radissonhotels.com](https://www.radissonhotels.com)

## WHERE TO EAT

**Biselli**

T: +41 58 200 69 05

W: [undermatt-swissalps.ch](https://www.undermatt-swissalps.ch)

## WHERE TO PLAY

**Undermatt Swiss Alps GC**

T: +41 41 888 74 47

W: [undermatt-swissalps.ch](https://www.undermatt-swissalps.ch)

**Realp Golf Club**

T: +41 41 887 01 62

W: [golf-gotthard.ch](https://www.golf-gotthard.ch)





Top left: The 6th green with view out to the course.  
Right: Panoramic view of the course and mountains

COURSE VIDEO 



Left: Stunning view from the elevated back tee at the 14th hole. Right: Elevated tee at the par 3, 13th hole



## Sustainability on the Andermatt Swiss Alps Golf Course

100%

Thoughtful and restrained lawn care on playing surfaces

100%

Green electricity from locally produced hydro and wind power

40%

Pristine playing surface thanks to integrated nature reserve

Awarded the globally recognised GEO Certification

## ANDERMATT SWISS ALPS GOLF COURSE

W: [anderlatt-swissalps.ch](http://anderlatt-swissalps.ch)

If I thought the Audi golf buggies were special, then arriving at the range to warm up just left me with a big grin on my face as I look in wonder between the two mountains as a backdrop as I bash my 8-iron at the 150-metre mark.

Standing on the first tee watching my drive soar through the air, it's at moments like this you appreciate the extra distance being at a higher altitude gives you and with the wind behind, I think I may even give DeChambeau a run for his money!!

The fairways are like a lush carpet and wide so even casual golfers will enjoy playing here. Making my way onto the green, they may be big but I can already see the subtle contours in them and they can certainly make life difficult for players with certain pin positions.

The 3rd is played uphill, the 4th is played to a very long and narrow green and the par 3, 5th is a wonderfully designed golf hole played from an elevated tee, but putting out on the 9th green that is shared with the 18th I feel like I've just been beaten up. The run of holes from the 6th offer elevated tees and amazing views, but what they also offer is tough golf holes and I would be laying up on the 195 yard, par 3, 9th if I was playing in a tournament as there is so much risk missing the green right.

The 10th and 11th give you a bit of a breather, but from the 12th on the course has my pulse racing again. Make sure you at least take a look from the very back tees on the 14th and 17th holes. There's nothing better than watching your ball sail through the air from an elevated tee.

Sitting outside the clubhouse, which is situated behind the 9th and 18th twin green, with a cold beer in hand and looking back down the course, I just want to get out there and play it again. Andermatt golf course offers plenty of different teeing options so everyone can enjoy it and believe me if you aren't playing well, those views will help soothe your soul. But from the tips it's one amazing test of golf set in a beautiful space between two mountain ranges. You really will love every minute of playing here.

**“Make sure you at least take a look from the very back tees on the 14th and 17th holes. There's nothing better than watching your ball sail through the air from an elevated tee”**



# ANDERMATT REALP GC

W: [golf-gotthard.ch](http://golf-gotthard.ch)

As I am warming up on the range Donny – the Andermatt and Realp Director of Golf – points out the road that runs through the course and informs me that is where the car crash scene in the remake of the James Bond classic *Goldfinger* was filmed. Playing my second shot to the 1st I realise how small the greens are here and like Andermatt yesterday they have a lot of subtle contours to them.

But, if I thought the views yesterday were

amazing this little gem of a course has those beaten and as I make my way around in a buggy – which I’ve been informed were only available from last year! – my jaw nearly hits the floor. You really would have to be a very fit player to walk this course, but to be honest it is certainly worth the effort.

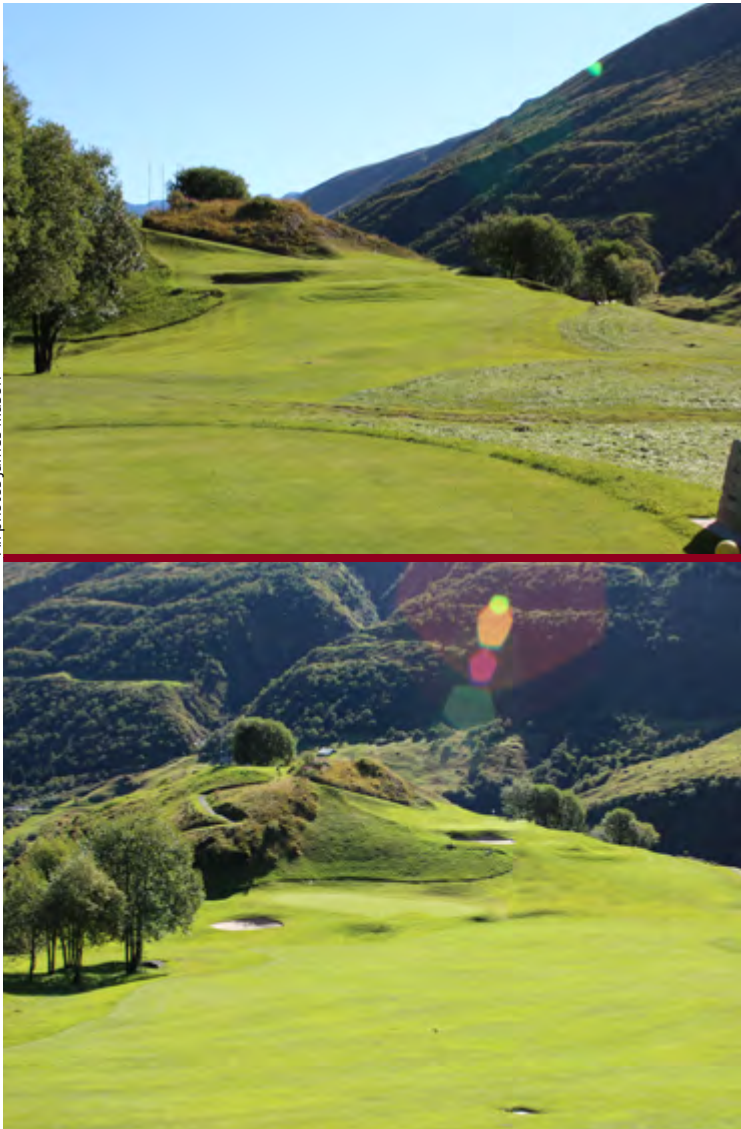
As I step on to the tee of every hole the views really are spectacular and like yesterday watching my ball sail through the air with those mountains as a backdrop just gave me goosepimples.

The 7th hole brings you to the highest point on the course and you get a great view of that bend where they filmed the James Bond movie. The course’s signature hole comes at the 9th/18th –

it’s a nine-hole course so you can go around twice if you feel up to the walk! It’s a par 3, played down to a distant green, which looks tiny from this height and what is even better there is an old ski lift chair that you can sit on to watch the rest of your playing partners attempting to hit the putting surface.

It’s a great way to end a round of golf and as I putt out the overwhelming thought that comes to mind was how much fun I just had. Yes the views are amazing and there are some testing golf holes here, but if you are visiting Andermatt then Realp GC needs to be on your to play list, too, as it really is a wonderful place to play golf.

“As I putt out the overwhelming thought that comes to mind was how much fun I just had. Yes the views are amazing and there are some testing golf holes here, but if you are visiting Andermatt then Realp GC needs to be on your to play list”



Left: Don’t miss right at the Par 3, 2nd/11th hole  
Right: Amazing views looking back down the valley from the 3rd/12th green

COURSE VIDEO

Left: 4th fairway with the 2nd green and 3rd tee in the background  
Right: View of the par 4, 8th/17th from the elevated tee  
Far right: Looking down on the 9th/18th green from the lofty elevated tee





# MODERN WORLD

Modern sleek and elegantly designed with sustainability at its heart,  
**Charmaine Hibbert** finds a warm welcome at the Raddison Blu in Andermatt



## RADDISON BLU ANDERMATT

**Andermatt**, Switzerland

By CHARMAINE HIBBERT

As we walk the five minutes it takes from Andermatt station to the Raddison Blu hotel, my mind is still trying to process the fact I had four train changes from Zurich Airport to Andermatt and each train arrived on time – which also means I arrived here on time. Now try telling anyone from the UK they have to change trains four times and not one train will be late or cancelled and you will arrive exactly as scheduled and they will be calling men in white coats to come and pick you up!

Entering the hotel from the square where a stage is erected for weekend entertainment, there's a welcoming glow from the circular fire and bar in the foyer and friendly staff who make checking in very swift. Coming out of the lift the lights come on as I make my way down the corridor to my room, but I am already impressed by the lighting and colour scheme designs and entering my room has me smiling, especially at the extra large black and white photo of a polar bear hanging above the bed.

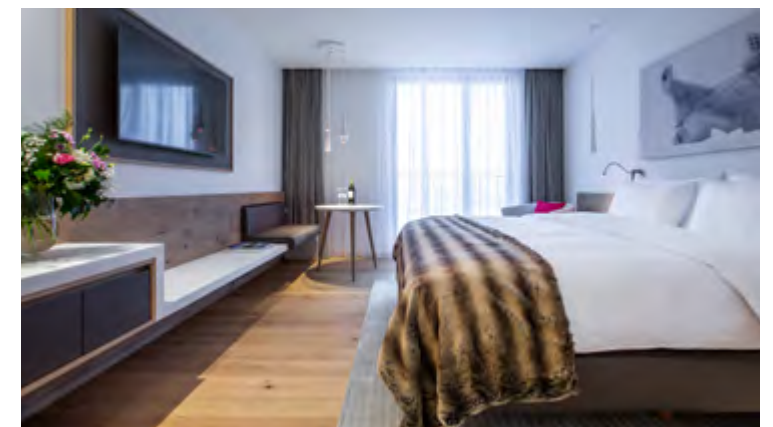
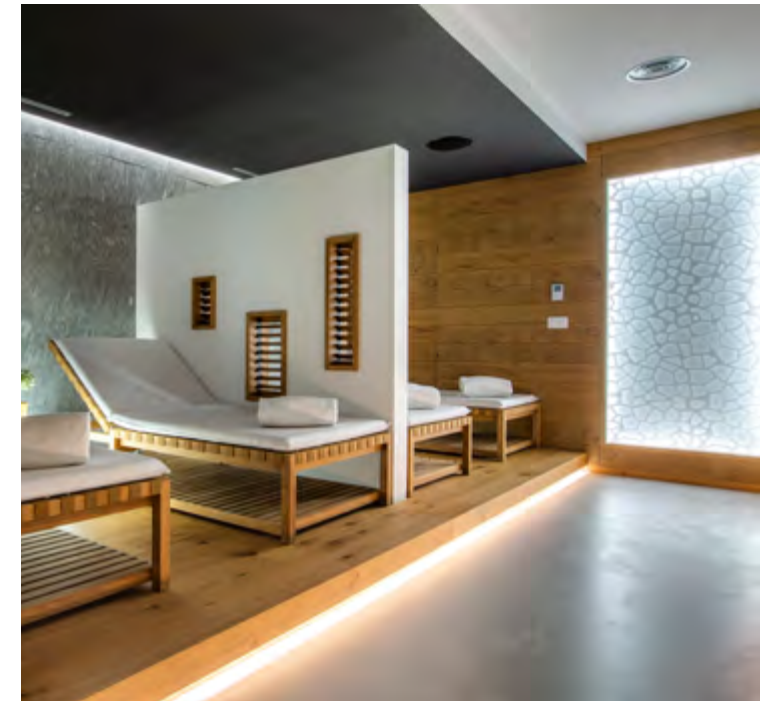
The obligatory face dive onto the bed reveals a nice firm bed and crisp duvet cover and pillow cases, the simple modern design with a splash →

Above Right: Warm  
welcome from the  
circular fire Right:  
Mountain views from  
the hotel and pool





Left: The 25m pool with its amazing views  
Top right: Time to relax in the Alpine-chic spa. Bottom right: One of the modern and elegantly designed rooms



of orange is perfect. Heading into the bathroom, it's a modern, elegant and clean design with walk-in glass shower and sumptuous towelling bathrobes.

## FACILITIES

While I head to chill out in the steam room - they do have a Finnish sauna and sanarium as well – the 25m pool is always set at 29°C where you can take in the amazing mountain scenery as you work out. The wellness and treatments rooms are designed with Alpine-chic in mind and as well as a full menu of treatments there are also couples treatment rooms that have their own private sauna.

James has headed for the gym and informs me that they have everything he needs and apart from using the cross-trainer, bikes and treadmill, there was also various weight machines and a large area set

aside for yoga, pilates, stretching and any mat work that people wanted to use for floor exercises.

## RESTAURANT

While we didn't have any main meals in the restaurant – you can have lunch and dinner inspired by chef Gerd Rentz whose style has Italian and French influences – we did go there for breakfast and my eyes pop as I see all the beautiful pastries on display as I walk in. I start with the fresh fruit and of course the egg station for omelette and crispy bacon but you can choose from all the usual, fried, poached eggs, bacon, sausages, beans.

For me, when you are away on business or pleasure breakfast isn't complete without patisseries and coffee. It's an indulgence... but then there is that 25m pool or gym I can go and look at!!

**Raddison Blu Reussen**  
Bärengasse 1, 6490  
Andermatt, Switzerland  
T: +41 41 888 11 11  
W: [radissonhotels.com](https://www.radissonhotels.com)



**32** PING G425



VIEW.COM

# EQUIPMENT & APPAREL

REVIEW



**36** SKECHERS  
TORQUE TWIST







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# HAMMER OF THE GODS

The PING G425 driver may not sound pleasing at impact, but boy does it pack a punch



## TECHNOLOGY

I tested the PING G425 Max which is the primary model in the range, but there are also the LST (Low Spin Technology) and the SFT (Straight Flight Technology) versions, so it is important that you get fitted to find the best version for your golf swing.

The PING engineers have taken the technology that was available in the G400 and G410 Plus and improved on that, increasing the MOI in the new G425 for some extra forgiveness. This has been achieved by weight savings in the driver's dragonfly crown technology that has enabled them to add a 26-gramme tungsten movable weight at the back of the driver. The moveable weight helps you adjust the centre of gravity so it can be positioned lower and further back without sacrificing

the overall performance of the driver.

The moveable weight has three settings – neutral, draw or fade – and the average MOI increase is 14% across the three weight positions compared to the G410 Plus. This all helps increase the drivers forgiveness and shot shape.

All three models share PING's other innovations, including turbulators which help reduced aerodynamic drag and the proprietary T9S+ forged face to accelerate face flexing for more distance. The internal rib structure in the Ti-8-1-1 body helps improve the driver's acoustics at impact and all three models utilities the 8-position hosel to increase or decrease the loft by plus or minus 1.5° and lie by up to 3° flatter.

## CONCLUSION

I took this driver with me to test in Northern Ireland, so I could see how it performed on three different styles of golf courses – Ardglass GC is a links course, Warrenpoint GC is a parkland course and Clandeboyne is a heathland course – and it certainly passed with flying colours.

Now, the sound at impact doesn't come across on my video footage, but to be blatantly honest I really didn't like it. To my ears it was a bit of a dull thud, but the question should be, would I sacrifice that sound at impact for how the driver performed? And the answer is yes, I certainly would.

The G425 looks great at address, I love the matt black finish and the turbulators certainly give it a no nonsense, mean look. One of

the lads at my golf club who plays off a 4 handicap loves it and he certainly smashes it a long way.

After tinkering with the settings I opted to have the moveable weight in the fade bias position and kept the hosel setting on 10.5° and set up to play a fade. I loved that combination as it proved perfect for me and gave me a high penetrating ball flight with plenty of distance.

Moral of the story? Don't let the sound at impact cloud your judgement; the evidence will be in the numbers when you get fitted and you should definitely get fitted. Once you have the perfect combination for your swing and swing speed you'll be more than happy with the distance and forgiveness that the G425 range has to offer.

### CLUB TESTED VIDEO

#### PING G425 Driver

SHAFT PING Alta CB Slate

FLEX Stiff

LOFT 10.5°

WEIGHT POSITION Fade

RRP £399 / €499 / \$549



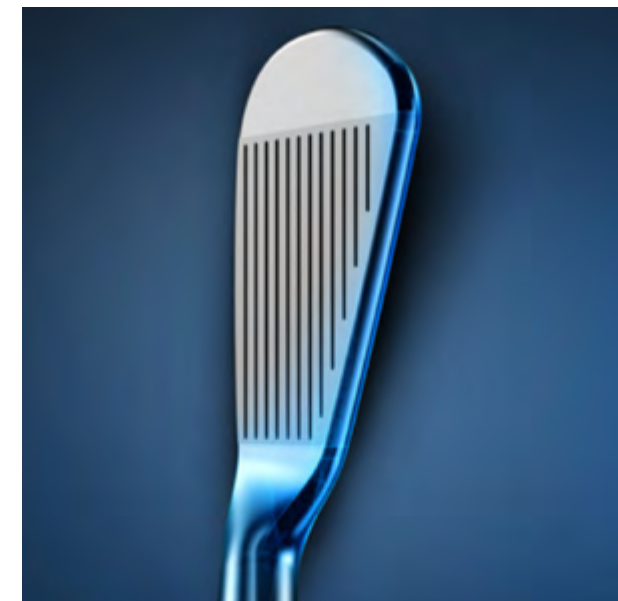




# KILLING IT SOFTLY

Muscle channel, high launch, strong lofts and a soft feel at impact – James Mason finds out what's special about the T100s





## TECHNOLOGY

The new Titleist T100s forged face irons are basically the T100 iron, but have been designed with 2° stronger lofts. This obviously gives you more distance but because of the new muscle channel which adds speed and launch angle at impact they still maintain that soft feel at impact.

The T100s utilise a denser D18 tungsten weighting system and with the weight saving from the muscle channel the designers have been able to lower the CG, which not only gives you that higher launch angle, but has also increased the clubs' MOI to improve forgiveness.

The irons also use a continuous cradle construction and this seamless striking surface and the uniform leading edge combined with the tour-contoured sole helps improve the irons' turf interaction. The cleaner blade design has a thin topline, minimal offset and comes in a matte brushed chrome finish.

## VIDEO REVIEW

**CLUB TESTED** Titleist T100s  
**SHAFT** True Temper AMT Tour White  
**FLEX** X100  
**RRP** £1,148 4-PW / €1,465 4-PW / \$1,749.99 4-PW

## CONCLUSION

When I first picked up the T100s what struck me most was the clean design and the way they sat behind the ball and I love the thin topline. It gives you that feeling of being in control. What I wasn't prepared for was how soft the club felt at impact. The strike was pure and the ball flight was certainly higher than how I normally hit the ball. As the ball sailed towards the green my initial fear because of the height was that I would lose distance, but when



Top left to right: Muscle channel. D18 tungsten weights. Cradle construction for seamless face design. Thin topline at address. Left: Forged design

the ball hit the putting surface and near enough stopped dead I could see how that height could be a real asset.

Knowing your distances in golf is key to playing well. The closer you can get the ball to the pin obviously gives you a shorter putt and having the confidence in an iron knowing that it may be a higher launch but comes with a strong trajectory and can stop quickly, then that gives you more distance control going into the green.

I was really impressed with the look of the irons. That soft feel at impact was really nice and that high penetrating ball flight that got the ball to stop quickly certainly impressed me. Fitting is all important when it comes to golf clubs and especially a bladed iron. You really need the right shaft to get the most out of this club and when you do, you will love every minute of playing the T100s.





# THREE STEPS TO HEAVEN

On testing trips to Northern Ireland and Switzerland, James Mason discovers Skechers' Torque Twist golf shoe has more under its synthetic rain jacket skin than just good looks.







## TECHNOLOGY

The new Torque Twist golf shoe from Skechers was inspired by their running and lifestyle divisions and developed with insight and feedback from tour players that included Matt Kuchar, Colin Montgomerie and Billy Andrade.

The Torque Twist golf shoes utilise Skechers' ULTRA GO® and ULTRA FLIGHT® midsole technology, which is a lightweight

responsive cushioning that was first developed for the GO RUN™ shoes. The Torque Twist is a sporty, lightweight design that uses a twist-dial closure system to replace laces to help provide a more comfortable fit.

Skechers ULTRA GO™ cushioning helps give the shoe plenty of support during the golf swing while also giving the player comfort, which also comes from

the use of GOGA Max® high-rebound insoles, again helping to give your feet lots of comfort. And the shoe uses replaceable soft spikes helping give you lots of traction in all types of playing conditions.

The smooth uppers use a synthetic rain jacket constructed of moulded panels for complete waterproof protection.



## SHOE TESTED

**Skechers Torque Twist**

**SIZE** 10

**COLOUR** White with grey trim

**RRP** £110 / €118 / \$84.99

[Click here to Buy](#)



## CONCLUSION

Shall I just say I love these golf shoes! From the easy-to-use twist dial system, so you can get the shoes nice and tight, to the lightweight feel when they are on your feet, they really do feel like a snug pair of slippers.

With the shoe being so light this also came in handy when I travelled to Northern Ireland

and Switzerland for testing and helped keep me under the airline's weight limit. What I also loved about the synthetic upper construction was how it kept the shoes looking brand new and when they did get a bit dirty a quick wash down brought them back to looking new again.

I wore the Torque Twist

in a 36-holes tournament at Blackmoor GC and I have seen guys in blisters walking off the course in some of these events. But 36-holes was not a problem and again the lightness of the shoes and the cushioning inside meant my feet were not only in one piece at the end of the event, but they didn't even feel tired.



# Lighting the way

James Mason falls in love with one of Bushnell's new functions on their V5 Tour Slim while testing in Northern Ireland and Switzerland







## TECHNOLOGY

Bushnell release their V5 Tour Slim Edition and the V5 Shift Slim Edition and have moved the battery compartment to the back of the rangefinder under the viewfinder which has helped them make the unit slimmer and more ergonomic so it fits perfectly in the palm of your

hand.

The PinSeeker JOLT technology now comes with a red ring that flashes as JOLT vibrates, giving you more confidence knowing that the laser is locked on the flag. The V5 Slim Edition also comes with "BITE" technology, which is designed to securely

attach the rangefinder to a golf cart and has a pull strength of 7lbs, giving you confidence that your rangefinder isn't going to fly off the buggy as you drive down the fairway.

The unit also comes with the usual Bushnell feature of Slope-Switch technology on the Tour V5

Shift, accurate to within one yard, up to 1,300-yard range performance (400+ yards to a flag), 6x magnification, bright, clear optics, fast focus system, rain proof and a two-year warranty.

## CONCLUSION

One of the first things I noticed was how snugly the V5 Tour Shift Slim fitted into my hand, which also made it easier just to shoot and focus on the numbers that were showing up on the screen. What I wasn't prepared for but which was a nice surprise was the red ring that flashes as the JOLT locks on the pin. I am

sure like me many of you have lasered the tree behind the pin etc, so it was great to know that the JOLT and flashing light meant I had locked on the pin.

An old technology but one that comes in very handy is the slope technology. Getting to know the subtle slopes on your home course certainly gives

you an advantage when playing competitions and you have to turn the slope technology off. Some holes on my home course look flat from the fairway, but you soon realise there is a few yards' incline that can make all the difference in club selection.

I would recommend every golfer choose a rangefinder over

a GPS as I do feel they are more accurate and I am certainly lost without one now. Knowing the distances of each of my clubs and then having the feedback from the V5 Tour Shift Slim has made my club selection so much easier.

**RANGEFINDER TESTED**  
**Bushnell V5 Tour Shift Slim**  
RRP £359 / €439 / \$399

[Click here to Buy](#)



## PRO TIP



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# UNDER PRESSURE

Grip pressure is all important when trying to hit a golf shot. **Shain Johnson** gives you the perfect routine to keep your grip pressure light, but tight



**Step one:** Allowing your arms to be nice and relaxed, extend your arms to form a butterfly with your hand. Grip the club from above



**Step three:** As per your lead hand take your trail hand and create a butterfly, keeping the angle between forearm and hand. Ensuring the tension is at a minimum, place the trail hand from above on the club allowing it to sit on top of your lead thumb. It is important that you do not come from the side or from underneath



**Step two:** Set the club between your palm and pinky finger wrapping remaining fingers around the club, keeping the angle between the forearm and back of hand



**Video watch:** You will be shocked how lightly you can hold a golf club and still have control, providing you allow your wrists to work naturally.



## PRO TIP



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# AGAINST THE WIND

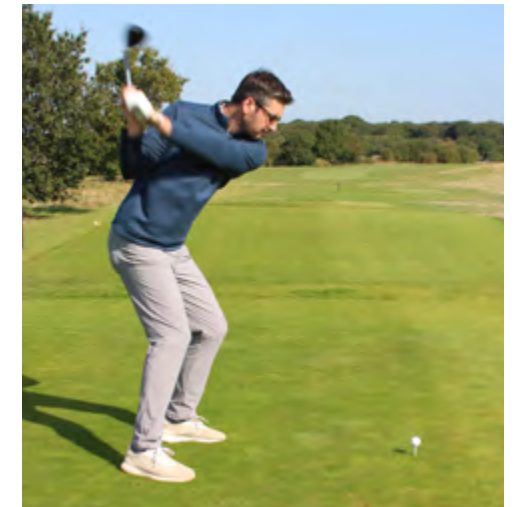
Winter has arrived bringing a new set of problems for golfers to solve. In this issue **Paul Babbage** shows you how to control your balance, ball flight and trajectory while hitting driver into the wind



**Step one:** Keep the ball at the front of your stance to make sure you hit the ball on the up curve of your swing, therefore reducing backspin



**Step two:** Tee the ball slightly higher than usual to get the strike slightly higher than the middle of the clubface, again to reduce the amount of backspin



**Step three:** Swing smooth, without too much acceleration, so to gain a better strike and reduce side or backspin







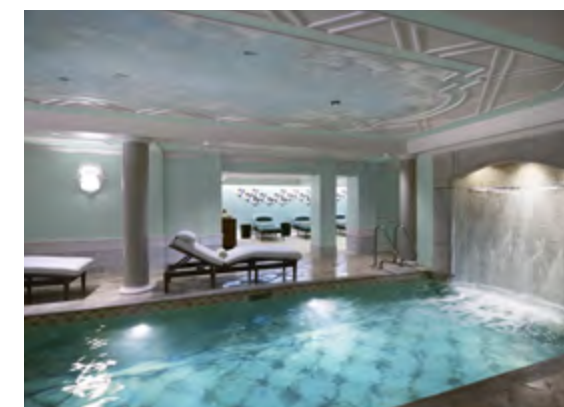
**43** OASIS AT DEATH VALLEY



REVIEW



**47** KOLHER RESORT



VIEW.COM

STAY, PLAY & SPA



# THE OASIS AT DEATH VALLEY

California, USA

By PETER ELLEGARD

## HOT STUFF

It seems it's not just mad dogs and Englishmen that go out in the midday sun. **Peter Ellegard** heads off to Death Valley and finds the Europeans have also got a taste for the desert heat





Fed up after 2021’s non-event UK staycation summer? Then how does a holiday in hell sound?

Well, not exactly hell but the hottest place on earth, in the heart of California’s Death Valley National Park.

You might wonder why anyone would want to stay somewhere called Furnace Creek. It truly lives up to its name, with the thermometer hitting a scorching 130°F (over 54°C) this July – the highest temperature ever reliably recorded to match a peak it reached in August 2020, although the official record stands at a disputed 134°F (almost 57°C) set there in 1913.

Yet The Oasis at Death Valley is a relaxing resort that is open year-round and comprises two hotels set amidst lush gardens, both of which I have had the pleasure to stay in and would return to in a flash. You can even play golf on its 18-hole course, which at 214 feet (65 metres) below sea level is the lowest golf course in the world.

Formerly called Furnace Creek Resort after its location, The Oasis at Death Valley is spread out below the grave-sounding Funeral Mountains and has recently undergone a \$100 million refurbishment.

Despite the ferocious heat, it is particularly popular with British and European guests in both spring and summer. It seems we regard it as something of a badge of honour to brave such temperature extremes. On one stay in mid-April, the mercury topped 110°F (43°C) by noon yet I was playing golf a couple of hours earlier.

Besides being the world’s hottest place, Death Valley is also North America’s driest, receiving less than two inches (5cm) of rain on average each year.

I find desert climates more bearable than the steamy summers of America’s Deep South, even if it feels like being in an open-air oven. You just need to avoid the sun in the heat of the day, taking heed of signs in nearby tourist spots warning not to hike after 10am, and ensure you are well hydrated.

Whatever you do, don’t take your rental car off the main highway onto a remote dirt track as I stupidly once did attempting a short cut when driving from the resort, almost getting bogged down in a sand-drift and with just half a bottle of water with me... in the middle of →



*“Despite the ferocious heat, it is particularly popular with British and European guests in both spring and summer. It seems we regard it as something of a badge of honour to brave such temperature extremes”*



Above: The Inn’s tiled pool at sunset  
Below left: Standard king room at The Inn  
Below middle: The Inn’s poolside bungalow  
Below right: Bathroom with shower



***“The Inn at Death Valley is an elegant 88-room hideaway dating back to 1927 that has welcomed Hollywood legends including Clark Gable, James Cagney, John Wayne and Marlon Brando, whose ashes are partly scattered there”***

the desert with no mobile phone signal, having not let the hotel staff know where I was going!

I rightly deserved the stern admonishment I got from a national park ranger later. It could easily have cost me my life, as such folly has done for several others in recent years.

**ROOMS**

Originally a 1930s working ranch built in a desert oasis fed by a natural spring, The Ranch at Death Valley is a low-rise, family-friendly hotel offering 224 rooms and a town square complete with a fountain towered over by date palms and Spanish mission-style architecture at its hubs. The spacious rooms all have a mid 20th-century feel, with many of them offering patios and some first-floor rooms having balconies overlooking lawns and fairways.

From early 2022, 80 new cottages will open next to the main hotel.

Just up the road in a secluded hillside location, The Inn at Death Valley is an elegant 88-room hideaway dating back to 1927 that has welcomed Hollywood legends including Clark Gable, James Cagney, John Wayne and Marlon

Brando, whose ashes are partly scattered there.

Much of the resort’s recent investment went into reviving the glamorous essence of the historic hotel. It boasts several different room and suite styles, all sumptuously furnished and with views looking out to its oasis garden, the desert or mountains, and a poolside bungalow. The 22 new, luxury casitas are shaded by date palms and each one comes with a golf buggy for guests to get around the resort.

**RESTAURANTS AND BAR**

The Last Kind Words Saloon, a throwback to the Wild West complete with cowboy-style swinging doors and wagon-wheel chandeliers, is one of several Ranch restaurants. It also offers The Ranch 1849 Restaurant in the town square and the seasonal, open-air 19th Hole next to the golf course clubhouse.

At The Inn, the updated lounge area features a new bar decorated with paintings that tell the story of early Death Valley pioneers. The Inn Dining Room serves up fine dining with ingredients such as cactus, dates, citrus and pomegranates from the hotel garden. It is

closed from May to September, as is the pool café.

**SPA AND WELLNESS**

The Inn’s new spa offers a range of body treatments besides services such as reflexology, massages for mothers-to-be, hot stone massages, salt scrubs and aromatherapy. It also has a fitness centre kitted out with the latest equipment.

**ACTIVITIES**

The Ranch features a kids’ playground, an outdoor pool fed by hot springs, communal fire pits, tennis courts, rental Jeeps to explore the national park, and horse-riding and carriage tours in the desert. There is also a general store and gift shop where scorpion lollipops are among unusual treats to buy.

Guests at The Inn can enjoy peace and quiet in its new library or lounge in style by its famous tiled pool. You can still gaze at stars and heavenly bodies, too. Celestial ones, that is. Death Valley is a gold-tier International Dark Sky Park and stargazing through a telescope →

Right: The Last Kind Words Saloon  
Far right, top: Patio dining with a view at The Inn  
Right middle: Spa treatment room  
Far right bottom: The Inn’s fitness centre





is a popular activity at the resort. Sadly, the day I was due to do it a strong desert wind meant it was unsafe to use the telescope.

Lined by palm and tamarind trees, the Perry Dye-designed Furnace Creek Golf Course is a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary and its reed-edged ponds, fed by springwater, teem with birds and wildlife. On my last round, a coyote casually loped across a fairway right in front of me.

You can also discover the area’s mining history in the on-site Borax Museum, while the adjacent National Park Service-run Furnace Creek Visitor Centre is a mine of information about Death Valley.

There is plenty to do beyond the resort. Death Valley attractions include saltwater flats at Badwater Basin, North America’s lowest point at 86 metres (282 feet) below sea level; Artist’s Drive, a nine-mile scenic loop through multihued hills; the tortured badlands rock formations of Zabriskie Point that featured in the 1970 movie of the same name; and mountaintop Dante’s View, with spectacular vistas over Death Valley. There are also abandoned mines, mining equipment and ghost towns to visit.

There’s even a Devil’s Golf Course. Forget taking your clubs there, though. It is purely named for the scattered rocks said to resemble giant golf balls.

CONCLUSION

Some like it hot, as they say. The Oasis resort’s two hotels are guaranteed to make you love it hot, and you can keep your cool thanks to air conditioning throughout. It’s one hell of a place for a stay with a difference.

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Right: Explore Death Valley in a Jeep  
Right below: Desert horse-riding  
Far right: The Ranch town square and fountain



Right: The Inn and pool at dusk  
Far right top: Go cycling in Death Valley from the resort  
Far right bottom: Old stagecoaches at The Ranch



Peter Ellegard



# DESTINATION KOHLER RESORT

Wisconsin, USA  
By PETER ELLEGARD

## IMMIGRANT SONG

After the battles of the American and European Ryder Cup teams at Whistling Straits, **Peter Ellegard** finds out how European immigrants were the original guests of what is now the modern day Kohler Resort



Right: Lake Cabin  
bedroom

Below: Kohler  
Waters Spa pool and  
relaxation area







Top left: Immersion Suite, Carriage House  
Bottom left: In-room fitness equipment in The American Club  
Middle: The American Club hotel in winter  
Top right: Seating area in the Pond Cabin  
Bottom right: Sheer indulgence in the Eau de Vie Suite

Set on a rugged, two-mile crescent of Wisconsin's Lake Michigan shoreline, it is where the golfing stars of the USA prevailed over Team Europe in September's delayed Ryder Cup. It has also hosted three gruelling PGA Championships and a US Seniors Open in the last two decades.

Yet while the Straits course at Whistling Straits is a bunker-strewn battleground that has left many top golfers shell-shocked, it is just one element of a refined resort that otherwise pampers the soul and soothes the senses.

The Straits is one of four Pete Dye creations that form part of the Destination Kohler resort an hour north of one-time US beer capital Milwaukee in the purpose-built village of Kohler – created over 100 years ago by industrialist and former Wisconsin governor Walter J Kohler.

From 1918, a mock-Tudor dormitory built on 21 acres of farmland housed immigrant workers from countries including Austria, Holland, Germany and Russia at his new Kohler Co plumbing factory nearby, along with a pub, bowling alley and barbershop. For \$27.50 a month they were provided with a private room, laundry service and three meals per day, as well as lessons in the English language and American citizenship.

Fast forward half a century to 1981 and the disused building, by now on America's National Register of Historic Places, was reborn as a striking

and elegant hotel called The American Club at the behest of Walter's grandson, Herbert V Kohler, ignoring advice from consultants that it wouldn't work.

Today, The American Club is the beating heart of Destination Kohler while accommodation options have been expanded over the years and now range from the full-service, five-star hotel and its luxury Carriage House to secluded cabins and a three-star inn.

## ROOMS

The American Club has 241 rooms and suites spanning several categories, each step up offering more space, comfort and amenities. Even the standard rooms are large and feature a king bed or two doubles, together with a desk, armchair and ottoman.

The Carriage House, close to the main hotel, is above the spa. Its rooms and suites feature in-room fitness equipment including a Peloton exercise bike and weights and offer free access to the spa and yoga, indoor cycling and fitness classes.

With the addition of two new cabins overlooking Lake Michigan in 2020 there are now four in total, all offering rustic luxury and privacy surrounded by nature but with access to all the resort's facilities.

The three-star Inn on Woodlake has 138 boutique-style rooms, 10 of

which are multi-bedroom suites perfect for families or golfing groups.

## RESTAURANTS AND BAR

Guests are spoilt for choice with 12 restaurants, cafes and bars. Destination Kohler's crown jewel is the Immigrant Restaurant, serving up contemporary American cuisine with modern European influences in an intimate setting within The American Club. The elegant atmosphere of the hotel's Wisconsin Room belies its origins as the original dining hall for immigrant workers at Kohler Co. It specialises in innovative, farm-fresh cuisine.

The Whistling Straits Restaurant, located in the clubhouse for those two courses, is designed as an old Irish farmhouse and its cuisine has British and Irish influences, while the Blackwolf Run Restaurant is in the clubhouse overlooking the other two courses and is an American grill.

Other dining locations include the Horse & Plow tavern, once the taproom for Kohler Co workers, and River Wildlife, set in a log cabin bordering dense forest. My favourite venue, though, is The Greenhouse – an antique solarium with stained glass windows that was shipped over from Chorley in Lancashire and serves as a serene garden café in a courtyard of the main hotel where you can enjoy tea and cakes or sip evening cocktails.

## SPA AND WELLNESS





The flagship of five Kohler Waters Spas around the world offers the latest hydrotherapy treatments and other body and facial services, based on Kohler Co's long experience and knowledge of working with water. Massages and therapies also feature seasonally-focused treatments.

Facilities include men's and women's respite rooms with lockers, a relaxation area, powerful showers, plunge pool, whirlpool, steam room and sauna, use of robes and sandals, relaxation pool with waterfall, rooftop deck with whirlpool and fireplace, lounge areas and free snacks and soft drinks.

Among wellness experiences are a yoga studio with a lakeside, outdoor yoga platform and an indoor cycling studio.

ACTIVITIES

The Straits is one of two Whistling Straits championship courses, the other being The Irish, just inland from Lake Michigan. Whistling Straits was named after the sound of the wind whipping off the lake in gales. Caddies often stop to feed the sheep that wander its fairways. Blackwolf Run, laid out in a river basin, has Destination Kohler's two other 18-hole courses – River and Meadows Valley, the former hosting the 1998 and 2012 US Women's Opens. June saw the opening of the 10-hole Baths of Blackwolf Run par-3 course and a two-acre putting course.

The resort's golf courses are closed for winter, typically November to late April. However, lessons are available then at the Kohler Golf Academy, while the Kohler Swing Studio has an indoor golf simulator.

Guests can try their hand at salmon and trout fishing as well as rent canoes and kayaks on the Sheboygan River, go stand-up paddleboarding on a sheltered lake, hike through woodland, and swim and play tennis in its Sports Core private club that gives guests temporary membership. The John Michael Kohler Arts Centre showcases contemporary American art and there are guided tours of the gardens, the Kohler factory and its museum – who knew that bathroom fittings could be so fascinating!

Meanwhile, chocoholics can indulge themselves on handcrafted Kohler Original Recipe Chocolates at The Shops at Woodlake.

A regular, free shuttle service takes guests from their accommodation to the golf courses, restaurants and other resort locations.

CONCLUSION

It may cost you rather more to stay in The American Club these days than it did for the European immigrant workers a century ago, but from the moment you are welcomed by the smart bellman you are cosseted in style. From its timeless centrepiece hotel to all its other offerings, Destination Kohler is a gloriously restful retreat – particularly after battling the elements and the 1,000 bunkers of Whistling Straits!

Destination Kohler

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Top right: The Straits course - setting for the Ryder Cup

Top left: The Straits Chapel is popular for weddings

Middle right: Outdoor yoga

Middle left: Indoor cycling studio

Bottom: Back to nature in Kohler's 500-acre wilderness preserve, River Wildlife



Peter Ellegard





# dmd

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