

MAURITIUS

Cake, breakfast, wine and golf
by the ocean

NEW ZEALAND

The sound of silence and nature

CALIFORNIA PT2

Our tales from the Pacific
Coast Highway continue – this time
in a red convertible Ford Mustang

PLANET GOLF

REVIEW

ISSUE 25

STAY, PLAY & SPA

Weekend or short stay getaway?
We bring you hotel & spa reviews
from England, Ireland and Scotland

EQUIPMENT & APPAREL REVIEWS

Abacus Sportswear, Callaway, GolfStream, Ram, TravisMathew

VIEW.COM

THE OPEN

Our review and betting
guide to golf's final Major
Championship of the year

WELCOME

Summer is finally here and I hope some of our past features in previous issues have helped you with your choice of destination over the next few months. It is also not too late to bag yourself a late deal or start planning for a winter break or next year's trip. With that in mind and depending on which hemisphere you live, both Jane and Peter hit the road as we bring you part two of Peter's cruise along the Pacific Coast Highway and Jane hits the highways of New Zealand's South Island.

If you are looking for something more relaxing, you can follow Charmaine's lead and just chill out on the beautiful beaches of Mauritius or, like me, hit the fairways of some of the island's stunning golf courses. It really is a must-visit

destination for golfers.

For long weekends away or short breaks, check out our Play, Stay and Spa section. We give you a selection of three hotels, spas and golf in England, Ireland and Scotland.

For those new to the game of golf or those looking to update their equipment and apparel, we bring you reviews of the latest offerings from Abacus Sportswear, Callaway, GolfStream, Ram and Travis Mathew. Last but by no means least, our world renowned golf betting tips for this year's final Major Championship, The Open.

As always it has been a pleasure working with the team and putting this issue together. We hope you enjoy it as much as we have bringing you these destination ideas and reviews.

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REVIEWED



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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



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Another look through Peter Ellegard's Canon camera lens as he treks around Andalucía
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PLANET

REVIEW





Rolex/Jan Kruger

TWO TRIBES THE REMIX!

From predicted tensions at The Masters Champions dinner and now arriving at The Open the final Major of the year and what now looks like a partnership agreement between PIF and PGA/DP World Tours. It has certainly been an interesting year in golf and for whoever is named “Champion Golfer Of The Year”

RORY MCILROY

7|1



TaylorMade

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER

9|1



TaylorMade

JON RAHM

12|1



Rolex

We started the first Major Championship of the year wondering what the interaction would be like at the Masters Champions dinner between the PGA Tour and LIV Golf players. As we arrive at Royal Liverpool for The Open and the final Major Championship of the year with LIV Golf player Brooks Keopka the reigning PGA Champion and what seems like an agreement to work together between the PIF fund and the PGA Tour. The partnership would see the Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan being given the final decision if LIV Golf continues and if not, then having to decide if the players who defected to LIV Golf will be integrated back onto the PGA/DP World Tours and having to pay fines or pay fines and work their way back through the →

SHANE LOWRY

33|1



Srixon

TOM KIM

55|1



Wyndham Championship

BYEONG HUN AN

200|1



Volvo China Open-Richard Castka Sportpixgolf.com

different feeder tours. It certainly all makes for an interesting 151st Open Championship.

TIPS TO WIN

Coming into this week on the back of his Scottish Open victory and back to a course where he won his only Open Championship **Rory McIlroy 7/1 – with BetUK** – will be buzzing when he arrives in Liverpool and if he manages to get that putter working I can't see anyone beating him

Like Rory, **Scottie Scheffler 9/1 – with Ladbrokes** – seems to store his putter in a freezer overnight, which shows how good the rest of his game is at the moment. Scottie has not been outside the Top 5 in his last six starts and he will be right in the thick of it again come Sunday

I think the only reason why **Jon Rahm 12/1 – with Ladbrokes** – odds are this high at the moment is because he hasn't played since missing the cut at the Travelers Championship, and it was a tournament he didn't really want to

play in – the only reason he did was because it was a designated event. Jon has two Irish Open wins both on links courses and I'm sure he will be looking forward to this week

MY EACH-WAY TIPS

2019 Champion Golfer Of The Year **Shane Lowry 33/1 – with BetVictor** – didn't have a great final round at the Scottish Open, but I think his rounds of 64 and 65 on Friday and Saturday show where his game is right now. Shane has only been outside the Top 20 once in his last six starts on the PGA Tour and with his short game looking at its best as he comes into this week the Irishman will be looking to add another claret jug to his trophy cabinet

An unfortunate finish to **Tom Kim 55/1 – with BetUK** – Scottish Open 3-putting the final green costing him outright third-place, but I don't think that will effect him this week. It has been a tough few weeks for Tom as he has missed three cuts in his last six starts, but I am sure being in contention this week we will see him back to his best and in the thick of it again

come Sunday

OUTSIDE TIP

A course record on the first day of the Scottish Open and a Top 5 finish to secure his place at The Open Championship **Byeong Hun An 200/1 – with LiveScoreBet** – will be in buoyant mood come Thursday. It has been an up and down season for Byeong, but he has seven Top 25 finishes from his sixteen-starts this season on the PGA Tour and two of them now being Top 6 finishes and I think these could be good odds for the Korean

LONGER ODDS TIP

Try **Rasmus Hojgaard 250/1 – with BetVictor**

We would like to emphasise that betting should be for fun and not a way to make a living. We see it as a way of adding excitement to a tournament while you watch and hopefully this guide will help you make an informed choice.

As always good luck and have fun!



Rolex/R&A Getty Images

Right: Red bricked
Royal Liverpool GC
Clubhouse

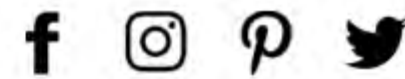
LATEST FIRST ROUND BETTING ODDS FOR THE OPEN FROM LADBROKES

Rory McIlroy 13/2
Scottie Scheffler 9/1
Jon Rahm 12/1
Cameron Smith 16/1
Brooks Koepka 18/1
Jordan Spieth 20/1
Rickie Fowler 20/1
Tyrrell Hatton 20/1
Viktor Hovland 20/1
Patrick Cantlay 22/1
Tommy Fleetwood 22/1
Xander Schauffele 22/1
Collin Morikawa 25/1
Dustin Johnson 28/1
Shane Lowry 28/1
Matt Fitzpatrick 30/1
Bryson DeChambeau 40/1
Cameron Young 40/1
Justin Rose 40/1
Tom Kim 40/1
Tony Finau 45/1
Justin Thomas 50/1
Max Homa 50/1
Min Woo Lee 50/1
Robert MacIntyre 50/1
Sam Burns 50/1
Wyndham Clark 50/1
Hideki Matsuyama 55/1
Adam Scott 66/1
Jason Day 66/1
Sungjae Im 70/1
Louis Oosthuizen 80/1
Patrick Reed 80/1
Talor Gooch 80/1
Branden Grace 90/1
Corey Connors 90/1
Keegan Bradley 90/1
Joaquin Niemann 100/1
Padraig Harrington 100/1
Russell Henley 100/1
Ryan Fox 100/1
Si Woo Kim 100/1
Denny McCarthy 125/1
Lucas Herbert 125/1
Sahith Theegala 125/1
Adrian Meronk 150/1
Alex Noren 150/1

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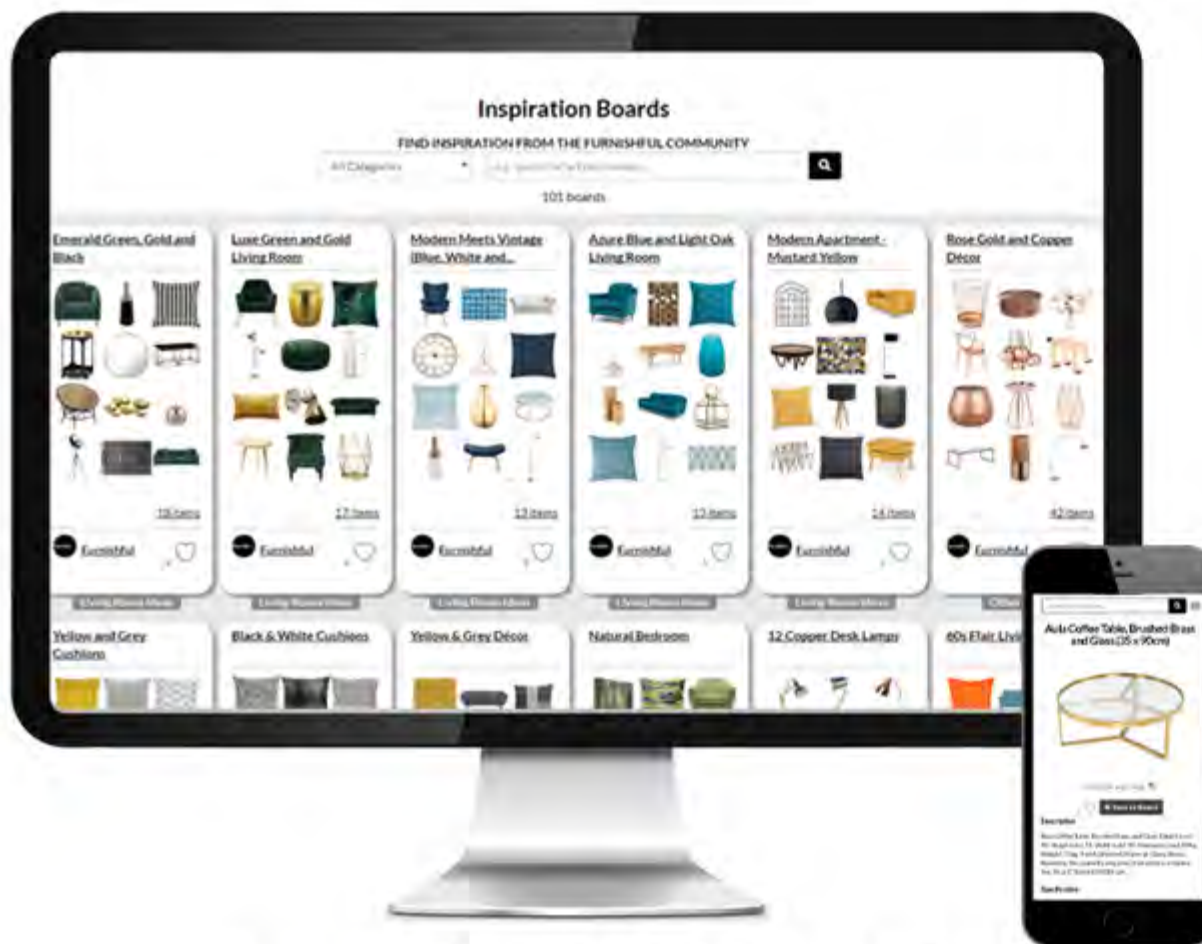
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IMPRESSIONS FROM ANDALUCÍA



Left: Bodega Gonzalez Byas, Jerez
Below: Alhambra Palace, Granada



Left: Alhambra
Palace,
Granada

Left: Alleyway,
Arcos de la
Frontera
Right: Bodega
Gonzalez Byas,
Jerez



Left: Bridge over
the Guadalquivir
River, Sevi

Below: View from San Pedro Church,
Arcos de la Frontera
Right: Tabanco El Pasaje, Jerez



Above: Statue,
Arcos de la Frontera
Right: Spiral
staircase, Jerez
Cathedral



Above: Plaza de España, Seville



Left: Real Escuela
Andaluza del Arte
Ecuestre, Jerez

IMPRESSIONS FROM ANDALUCÍA

Right and far right:
Feria de Sevilla,
Seville



IMPRESSIONS FROM ANDALUCÍA

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

Right: Magnificent
seven horse riders
at Feria de Sevilla,
Seville
Below: Flamenco
dancers, Marbella



Above: Feria de
Sevilla, Seville
Right: Flamenco
guitar player, Seville



Above: Flamenco show, Tabanco El Pasaje, Jerez
Right: Flamenco show, Tablao Flamenco, Granada



Join Jane Finn for an Epic Road Trip as she navigates the highways and byways of New Zealand's South Island

THE SOUND OF SILENCE



Vincent Lammin

WORDS BY JANE FINN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAN HELEBRANT

It's 6:45 in the morning, and the rain continues to beat a constant tattoo on the roof of our camper van. We had planned to leave Wellington yesterday, but the seas were running so high that our ferry crossing was cancelled. Instead, we've spent the night on the dock, wedged between two transport trucks, somewhat buffeted by the fierce winds ripping through New Zealand's capital. Patiently waiting in the queue, I cross my fingers and pray that the weather gods will cooperate, and within minutes the horn sounds, signalling it's time to commence boarding.

Typically, once we're aboard, I race for the upper deck to get an unobstructed view, but today the skies are gray and gloomy, and I'm beginning to feel a bit dull. Rather than brave the elements, this time, I opt for a seat in the cabin where it's warm and dry.

Our voyage across the Tasman Sea is uneventful, and as we approached Picton Harbour, I wandered outside. That's when I realise it has been more than a week since I last saw the sun, and then, suddenly, the clouds part and my energy shifts. I look at the crowd waiting to disembark; everyone is beaming as brilliantly as the noon sun that has decided to grace us with her presence. It's a good omen, and now I'm excited to get ashore and start exploring Te Waipounamu, New Zealand's South Island.

"Afoot and lighthearted, I take to the open road, healthy, free with the world before me." – Walt Whitman

Since I was a teenager, I've followed the road less travelled, but since then have also acquired enough wisdom to know that freedom has its price - delays, detours and disappointments. →

Right: Walking trails serving up panoramic views of the mountains and ocean, leading to a lighthouse and a seal colony



“There is only one road between Te Anau and Milford Sound, including a stretch known as the Avenue of the Disappearing Mountain. Despite its growing popularity, this remains a wild and remote part of the country”

Sometimes you need to modify your itinerary or skip a destination altogether. Still, if you can go with the flow, you may stumble upon a hidden treasure and return with a memory that will last a lifetime.

My first disappointment was learning that we’d lost our spot at Abel Tasman National Park due to our late arrival. Fortunately, our motor home is self-contained, and we discovered that we can roadside at designated Department of Conservation sites, which opens a whole new realm of possibilities. So, with no destination in mind, we headed west in search of a place to stay the night, and what first appeared to be a tragic start to our vacation turns out to be a blessing in disguise.

The sun is setting when we arrive at Cape Foulwind, and we quickly set up camp near the cliffs that dominate the shoreline. In Nelson, I snagged some of the biggest, freshest scallops I’d ever seen, and as they sizzle in the cast iron pan over an open flame, the stress of the past few

days melts away. Slowly the night grows darker, and the inky black sky provides the perfect backdrop for the myriad of stars shimmering overhead. With not another soul in sight, it is easy enough to imagine that we are 15th-century explorers as I drift off to sleep lulled by the sound of waves rolling into shore. It is a gentle reminder that sometimes it can be an unexpected gift when things go awry.

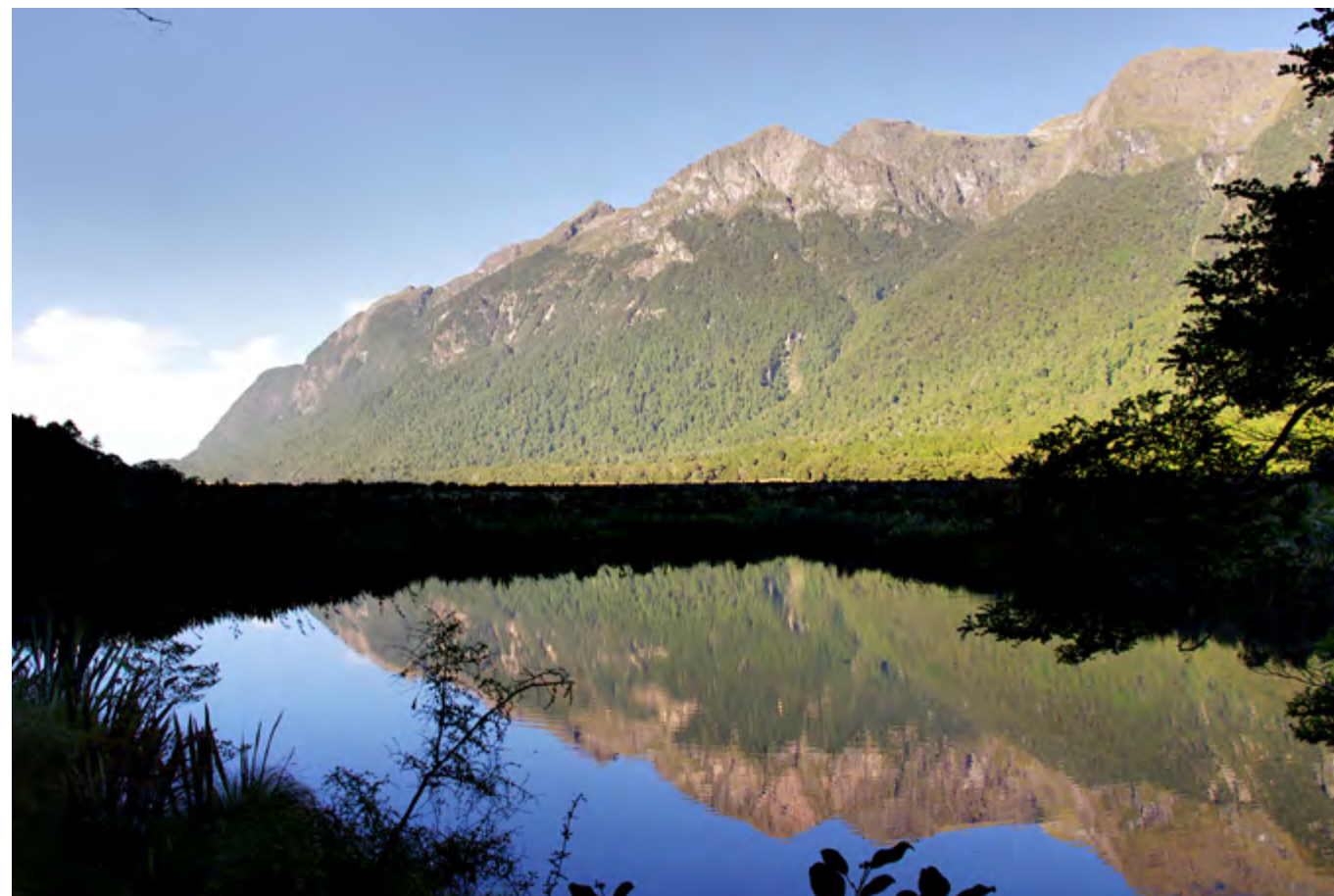
I wake to a faint barking that becomes louder and more insistent as I traverse the rocky headland en route to the lighthouse. Halfway there, the din grows so loud that I drop to the ground and inch my way toward the edge of the cliff to determine the source. Beneath me, I find a massive colony of fur seals. It’s spring, and hundreds of newborn pups are being tutored by their mothers. I’m filled with a sense of renewal and appreciation for this moment I would have missed had circumstances and chance not led me here.

ROAD TRIP

After discovering the sheer joy of road siding, we slow our pace and adjust our schedule accordingly. I’m not prepared for the awe-inspiring scenery I encounter around every bend and understand why my driving speed averages 30 to 50 kilometres per hour. I’m mesmerised by the sapphire seas and ancient outcroppings like Pancake Rocks. We stop so often that it’s no wonder it takes five hours to complete what should have been a two-hour drive.

As we move inland slowly, the topography changes. Soon, I’m overwhelmed by the vastness of Fox Glacier, the shadows cast by Mount Cook and the perfect reflection of the Earl Mountains in the calm, crystalline waters of Mirror Lakes. There is only one road between Te Anau and Milford Sound, including a stretch known as the Avenue of the Disappearing Mountain. Despite its growing popularity, this remains a wild and remote part of the country. So enthralled am I by the naturally occurring

Left: Pancake rocks
Below: Mirror Lake with its reflection of the Earl Mountains



“If we aren’t on the move for the next seventy-two hours, we are sleeping or fuelling up for another day of adventure. We join Trips & Tramps and gleefully trek from Sandfly Point to the Giant’s Gate, then soar over Doubtful Sound in a six-seater plane”



Left: Milford Sound is a rugged fiord stretching 16 km/9.94 miles to the open sea

optical illusion that cause the majestic mountain before us to grow smaller as we approach until it sinks below the horizon that I wanted to double back and do it again, but the niggling voice in my head says press on. It’s not until we reach Thornton Burn at the tip of Fiordland National Park that I hear my inner voice again and throw my agenda out the window.

I thought I had done my homework and one day at Milford Sound would do it justice, but I was wrong! I’d read about the 53.5-kilometre trek over McKinnon’s Pass that I might have attempted if I was 20 years younger, but, in my heart, I know those days are behind me as I no longer have the stamina or rock-scrambling skills to complete such a journey.

Around the campfire at Thorton Burn, I listen with envy to the tales of those who had made the trek. Still, hope springs eternal, and after sharing my dreams with my fellow travellers, they make me aware that my limiting beliefs are holding me back as they share several options that would allow us to experience nature’s magic and mystery in this corner of the world, our way. That’s when our planned overnigher turns into a three-day odyssey.

If we aren’t on the move for the next seventy-two hours, we are sleeping or fuelling up for another day of adventure. We join Trips & Tramps and gleefully trek from Sandfly Point to the Giant’s Gate, then soar over Doubtful Sound in a six-seater plane. On our last day, we board Real NZ’s small ship to float by sky-scraping mountains and cruise beneath cascading waterfalls, so close that I feel the misty breath of Lady Bowen Falls as we explore the depths of Milford Sound.

I love every minute, but my biggest highlight is under the spectre of Mitre Peak when a pod of dolphins appears on our starboard side and led us to the nurse sharks’ nesting grounds. The children on board squeal with delight as the sharks circle the boat, drawing us into their dance, making us feel alive and present.

WELCOME TO QUEENSTOWN – THE ADVENTURE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

For as long as I live, I will remember how calm everyone was as we take our places in the jetboat and how within seconds, our united voices reach a high-pitched crescendo of excitement tinged →

“Some consider fear a weakness, but sometimes it serves us well. In certain situations, it alerts us to potential danger, but when we travel, we must ensure that it doesn’t limit our faith in our abilities”

Right: Shotover River. Middle top: Skipper Canyon. Middle bottom: Mother Rapids white water rafting. Far right: Taking the plunge at the world famous Bungy Jump.



with fear as we careen towards a limestone cliff. An audible sigh of relief follows when the captain deftly pivots, executes a perfect 360° turn, then stops on a dime before propelling us at record speed further along the Shotover River. This pattern repeats itself several times over the next thirty minutes as we complete the first leg of The Triple Challenge.

Next, with the adrenaline still pumping, we all sprint up the hill, where two choppers are waiting to whisk us off the ground. I grab the seat next to our pilot, and within seconds, we are racing down Skipper’s Canyon, banking left then right before ascending the sheer walls of the Gorge and head for the clouds. We begin drifting backwards at one point, and I find myself looking out through the top of the

helicopter. Mindboggling, but there is no time to ponder physics before we land on the beach and load ourselves into the rafts that will carry us downriver. Yes, you guessed it, whitewater rafting is our final challenge.

The first 20 minutes are calm and serene as we meander along a wide stretch of the Gorge through unbroken waters, gazing at the cliffs and the clear blue skies. The first set of rapids is a cakewalk as the rafts barely ripple on their way through, and our group begins to wonder if this is how we would finish the day, but the best is yet to come. Within seconds, we are battling to maneuver ourselves around a pile of rocks that spring up from nowhere. Next, it is down the Mother, a series of five successive rapids, including the Toilet Bowl, before circumventing

Jaws, slipping down Oxenbridge Tunnel, a 170-meter old miners’ shute and over the Cascades before landing on the beach—some of the best whitewater rafting I’ve ever done and an undeniable rush.

LIVE MORE FEAR LESS

Queenstown is also the home of the original Bungy Jump, and if ever there was a time for me to do it, the time was now. I found a perch on the bridge, and clutching their brochure claiming “Live More Fear Less,” I spent the entire afternoon watching one person after another take the 43-metre plunge and touch their fingers to the cool glacial water flowing far below. I close my eyes and listen to the countdown...3...2...1. before cheering their fluid dives. I know it is

safe and see the exhilaration on the faces of those who have conquered their fear, but much to my chagrin, I cannot pluck up the courage to take that leap of faith.

Some consider fear a weakness, but sometimes it serves us well. In certain situations, it alerts us to potential danger, but when we travel, we must ensure that it doesn’t limit our faith in our abilities.

I’m never foolhardy when I travel, but I’ll continue exploring the road less travelled while learning how to tend and befriend fear and uncertainty. And when I return to Queenstown, I’ll take that plunge and revel in the sheer joy of doing something I’ve never done before!

GETTING THERE
Bluebridge Cook Strait Ferries
W: bluebridge.co.nz
T: +64 4 471-6188

WHAT TO DO:
Milford Sound

Real NZ Tours
W: realnz.com/en
T: +64 3 249 6000

Trips & Tramps
W: tripsandtramps.com
T: +64 3 249 7081

QUEENSTOWN
Kawarau Bridge Bungy Jump
W: bungy.co.nz/

The Triple Challenge
W: tripgrab.com

GENERAL CAMPING INFORMATION
Department of Conservation
W: doc.govt.nz/



GOING TO CALIFORNIA

Pacific Coast Highway part 2

Resuming his California road trip along the legendary Pacific Coast Highway, Peter Ellegard encounters lumbering elephant seals, the stunning Big Sur cliffs, quaint Carmel and eclectic San Francisco

“More than 30 years since I first fell in love with California’s Highway 1, I’m back to experience the delights of this special road that’s also known as the Pacific Coast Highway and hugs the state’s coastline for over 650 miles”

PHOTOS AND WORDS BY PETER ELLEGARD

More than 30 years since I first fell in love with California’s Highway 1, I’m back to experience the delights of this special road that’s also known as the Pacific Coast Highway and hugs the state’s coastline for over 650 miles.

With my partner Julie joining me on my latest journey that began in quirky Los Angeles neighbourhood Venice Beach, we continue north from Central California’s charming Morro Bay to explore the highway’s Northern California section.

ENCHANTED HILL

A must-visit on the Central California coast is Hearst Castle in San Simeon. Built by newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst on his ranchland estate over three decades from 1919, the hilltop castle is a collection of whimsical and lavishly-decorated buildings filled with architectural and art wonders from around the world as well as over 120 acres of terraced gardens, fountains and pools.

We spend a couple of hours on one of several different guided tours you can take of what he called La Cuesta Encantada – the Enchanted Hill. It certainly enchants us, our favourite feature being the ostentatious Neptune Pool surrounded by Romanesque statues, sculptures, a colonnade and an ornate temple. The main house, La Casa Grande, has an elaborate Roman Pool in the basement that features mosaic tiled walls and ceiling and statues of Greek and →

Right: Swapping the little red Corvette for a modern-day Ford Mustang



“A few miles farther on and you are into the Big Sur coastline. The most spectacular section of the Pacific Coast Highway, the single-lane road twists and turns for 90 miles atop huge, rugged cliffs”



the-sea as it is officially called – is famous as the place where Clint Eastwood was once mayor. I had always driven through it without stopping and imagined it to be somewhat snobbish.

Far from being aloof, it is a very welcoming town and its people very friendly, as we discover when we stop for a night at the delightful Tradewinds Carmel boutique hotel and explore the compact town on foot.

Carmel is both quaint and quirky. On-street parking is free as there are no parking meters. It also has no street lights, no fast-food restaurant chains, no pavements beyond its downtown streets lined with boutique shops and intimate cafes, and its neatly-kept cottages and houses all have names but no numbers. A permit is also required from City Hall to wear high heels, although it's free. I'm glad I didn't bring mine...

Among the numerous independent eateries →

Top: Squabbling elephant seals at Piedras Blancas

Far left: Hearst Castle's Neptune Pool

Left: Bixby Bridge and Big Sur's coastline

Below: Casanova restaurant, Carmel

Roman gods and goddesses.

SEAL CRAZY

Close to San Simeon, Piedras Blancas is home to around 7,000 magnificent elephant seals that haul up onto sandy beaches to breed, moult, pup or just laze in the sun. A free viewing area just off Highway 1 allows you to see these lumbering monsters at close quarters year-round, the males sporting bulbous snouts that look even more ridiculous when they raise themselves up on their front flippers and square up to each other.

A few miles farther on and you are into the Big Sur coastline. The most spectacular section of the Pacific Coast Highway, the single-lane road twists and turns for 90 miles atop huge, rugged cliffs. Allow plenty of time as the traffic can be very slow, particular in summer months. You will also want to stop off for Kodak

moments and selfies at clifftop viewing points along the way.

A favourite haunt for the rich and famous is the luxury Post Ranch Inn perched 1,200 feet on the cliff edge. I stayed there on one PCH trip, my suite looking straight out over the Pacific through floor-to-ceiling windows from on high. Huge California condors have been reintroduced to forest parks in Big Sur and I was lucky enough to see one glide effortlessly past while sitting on my patio.

One of the most popular places to stop for photographs is Bixby Bridge, which spans a canyon high above a river where it meets the ocean. There are parking areas either side of the road on the northern side of the bridge.

QUAINT AND QUIRKY

Just 15 miles beyond, Carmel – or Carmel-by-



Right: Cruising 17 Mile Drive
Far right: Beach and lifeguard tower at Carmel
Below right: Lone Cypress Tree on 17 Mile Drive



“It was at Santa Cruz where visiting Hawaiian princes first introduced surfing to the US mainland in 1885. The sheltered water and reliable waves by its pier, another favourite place for sea lions to congregate”

is Casanova, just a couple of blocks away from our hotel and set in a house once owned by Charlie Chaplin’s personal cook. We eat there, enjoying a lovely meal and chatting to the staff and some fellow diners. Beforehand, we quaff a bottle of bubbly in our hotel room, looking out over the beautiful Asian-themed meditation garden and listening to the serene tinkling of a fountain.

17 MILE DRIVE

Back on the road, we stop at Carmel Mission, one of California’s historic missions where a wedding is taking place, get sand between our toes on Carmel’s crescent-shaped beach and enjoy a slow ride on the Monterey Peninsula’s stunning 17 Mile Drive, a coast-hugging toll road that is worth every cent of the \$11.25 fee per vehicle. Even more so if you’re driving a convertible, as I have in the little red Corvette from my first Highway 1 experience and an equally bright red Ford Mustang on a subsequent trip.

Starting from Carmel, 17 Mile Drive skirts

several of California’s most revered golf courses – among them Pebble Beach, Spyglass Hill, the Links at Spanish Point and the ultra-private Cypress Point – as well as picturesque coves, rock outcrops and the 250-year-old Lone Cypress, standing tall on a granite headland. Sadly, there is no time to play golf on this visit.

Where fisherman once landed huge quantities of sardines for the 13 canneries to process, earning Monterey the moniker Sardine Capital of the World, tourists now roam its famous Cannery Row. It’s a lot tackier than when I first stayed in a hotel on Cannery Row in the early 1990s. I much prefer the Old Fisherman’s Wharf and marina a little further along.

Make sure you visit Monterey Aquarium, though. The inspiration for Disney/Pixar animated movie Find Dory, in which it was depicted as the Marine Life Institute, it offers an amazing window into the rich marine life of Monterey Bay, notably with its towering kelp forest exhibit. On my first visit there, I joined staff on a dive into the shark-filled tank to help clean the 35-foot-high viewing windows,

waving to surprised visitors looking in from the other side.

At the opposite end of Monterey Bay, Santa Cruz is a fun California beach town with a traditional wooden roller coaster among rides and attractions in its Beach Boardwalk funfair.

It was at Santa Cruz where visiting Hawaiian princes first introduced surfing to the US mainland in 1885. The sheltered water and reliable waves by its pier, another favourite place for sea lions to congregate, make it a popular place to learn to surf, as I did – promptly retiring after successfully standing on my first two waves! At Lighthouse Point on the headland, watch the experts ride thundering Pacific rollers.

CITY BY THE BAY

San Francisco is one of my favourite cities, and somewhere I never tire of visiting.

Its main tourist area is Fisherman’s Wharf and we stay just a couple of blocks away at the chic and contemporary Hotel Zoe.

Just along the waterfront, cruise tours operate to infamous prison island Alcatraz and beyond →



Below top: Cable cars in San Francisco
Middle: Classic Chevrolet at San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf
Bottom: San Francisco skyline from a Bay tour cruise
Below right: Alcatraz at dusk
Below far right: Turkovitch wine tasting room, Winters

to the Golden Gate Bridge from Pier 39. Visiting Alcatraz is well worth doing, but this time we take a sunset cruise past the island and under both Golden Gate and Oakland Bay bridges, watching San Francisco's skyline sparkle in the pinky-gold dusk light.

On one visit, I fly both over and under the Golden Gate Bridge on a thrilling helicopter ride.

Hotel Zoe, and its sister property Argonaut next to the wharf, offer free rental bikes to guests. You can cycle alongside San Francisco Bay to and across Golden Gate Bridge, although we opt to drive over it. The city is also walkable, if you don't mind trekking up and down its steep hills.

By far the most enjoyable way to get around San Francisco, however, is riding its wonderful streetcars and cable cars. Streetcars are enclosed and are connected by poles to overhead wires, while the open-sided cable cars use underground cables and passengers can ride them standing on

outside footplates. At the end of each line, the cable cars are manually turned to face the correct direction on turntables set into the streets.

We hop off a cable car by Union Square to savour cheesecake and bubbles at the Cheese Cake Factory's open-air patio on the rooftop of Macy's store overlooking the square. After a ride on a bright yellow F Line streetcar we walk up to Alamo Square for one of the city's most photographed views, of the Painted Ladies houses.

JUST CAPITAL

Leaving San Francisco, we head away from the coast to spend a few hours in state capital Sacramento, strolling the boardwalks of the Old Sacramento historic district and watching revellers on boats celebrate Independence Day from its waterfront.

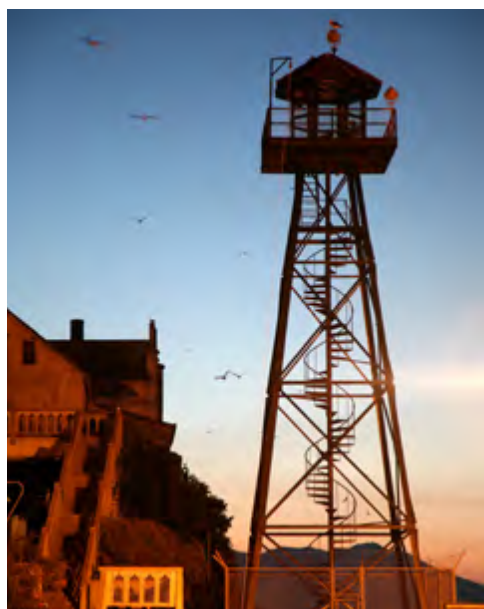
The charming town of Winters, in upcoming wine region Yolo County, is home for our final

night, spending the night in the new, boutique Hotel Winters after trying some excellent local wines in the next-door tasting room of Turkovich Family Wines with our hostess, Gwen.

Yolo's vineyards already supply grapes to many leading California wine makers for blending, but it will soon be rivalling established wine regions Napa Valley and Sonoma as the next big thing for wines and wine tourism in its own right.

On our final day, we drive through the vineyards covering Sonoma's rolling hills and stop for a picnic in the town's pretty Sonoma Plaza park, returning to the coast for the exquisite Shoreline Highway northern section of Highway 1 back down south to San Francisco and our flight home.

If you are thinking of doing an America road trip, the Pacific Coast Highway should top your list. It will live up to all your expectations. And so much more.



JOURNEY PLANNER

HOW TO GET THERE

Direct flights from around the world to Los Angeles. Fly back from San Francisco.

WHERE TO STAY

Tradewinds Carmel

Mission Street at 3rd Avenue
 Carmel, CA 93921

T: +1 831 624 2776

W: larkhotels.com

Hotel Zoe Fisherman's Wharf

425 North Point Street
 San Francisco, CA 94133

T: +1 415 561 1100

W: hotelzoesf.com

WHERE TO EAT:

Casanova Restaurant

5th Ave, Carmel-By-The-Sea, CA 93923

T: +1 831 216 3811

W: casanovacarmel.com

WHAT TO DO:

Hearst Castle

750 Hearst Castle Road
 San Simeon, CA 93452

T: +1 833 448 7287

W: hearstcastle.org

Blue & Gold Fleet

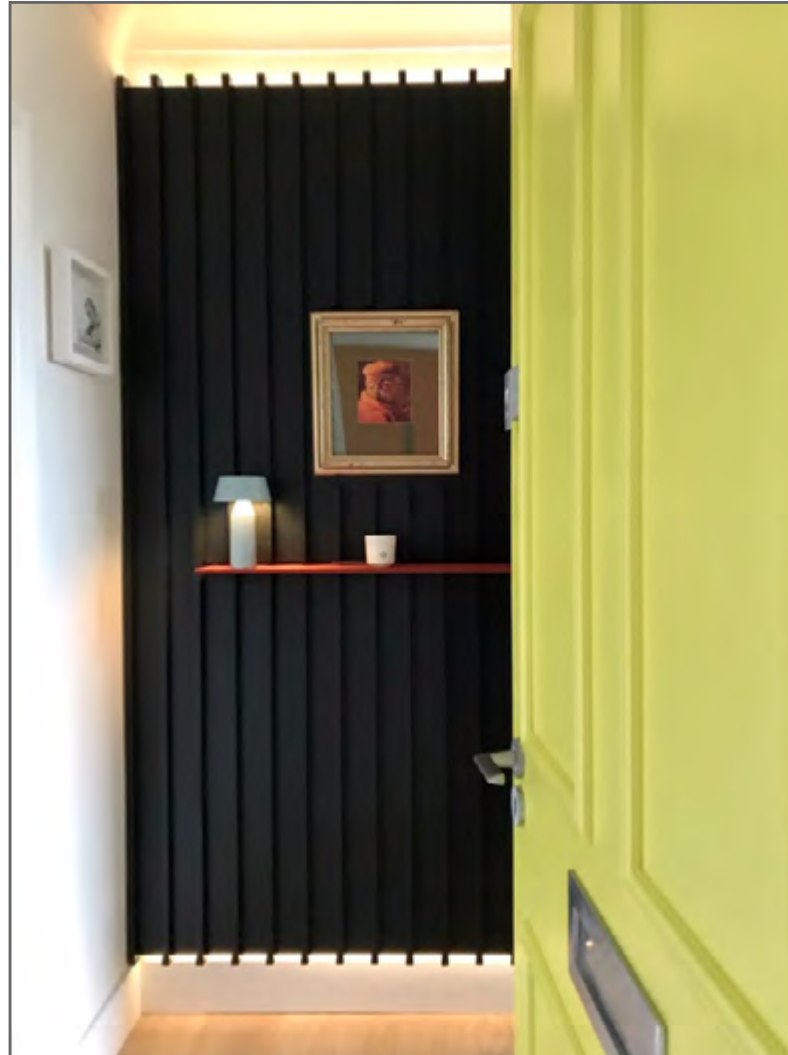
San Francisco Bay cruise

Pier 41
 San Francisco, CA 94133

T: +1 415 705 8200

W: blueandgoldfleet.com

* Highway 1 remains closed at Big Sur due to a huge landslide caused by storms as Planet Golf Review went to press. The road is unlikely to fully reopen to through traffic until at least autumn 2023.



JOHN WILSON DESIGN

Finest Bespoke Interiors

info@johnwilson.design

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Instagram [john_wilson_design](https://www.instagram.com/john_wilson_design)

CAKE BY THE OCEAN

On his second visit playing golf in Mauritius, James Mason finds himself playing along the white sandy beaches of the Indian Ocean with its alluring warm azure waters and decides you really can have your cake and eat it!

BEACHCOMBER PARADIS GOLF

After a warm up on the range which is just outside the clubhouse and standing on the first tee it certainly seems tight with the trees being so close, but I smash my drive at the bunker and my ball lands in the middle of the fairway. It's as you come out of the trees that surround the first tee that you realise there is more room than it looks and this seems to be a feature as I reach my ball on the 2nd fairway.

Dominating the course as a backdrop is the Le Morne mountain; it's a beautiful sight as you make your way around and really comes into its own on the par 3, 6th hole, which I am told is apparently Sky Sports' commentator and ex professional Tony Johnson's favourite par 3. It is the second par 3 on this nine with the first coming at the 3rd hole. But, Le Morne looks down on the green on the 6th like its protector, weighing in at 142-yards and playing slightly uphill it really is a stunning golf hole.

I love the run of holes from here to the turn, the dogleg right par 5, 7th which plays to a raised green, with a water feature on the right, the very tight drive on the 8th and the second shot played over water to another raised green that gently slopes back to front and encircled by three bunkers, and the stunning 9th with water running along the right with its risk and reward second shot.

After a refuelling stop at the half way hut, the pace doesn't stop, driving over water on the 10th with it continuing down the right-hand side. The 12th has an ocean backdrop behind the green, which also runs along the side of the 13th. The first of the par 3s arrives at the 14th with the second coming at the 17th which plays through a funnel of palm trees. But before that is the stunning 16th, which is all risk and reward from the tee and biting as much of the



Indian Ocean as you dare and then playing to a peninsula green.

The dogleg right 18th is played over water and then to another raised green surrounded by palm trees with bunkers front left and right. It's been a great day, with so many wonderful golf holes, I can't wait to go again tomorrow. →

DOMINATING THE COURSE AS A BACKDROP IS THE LE MORNE MOUNTAIN; IT'S A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT AS YOU MAKE YOUR WAY AROUND AND REALLY COMES INTO ITS OWN ON THE PAR 3, 6TH HOLE, WHICH I AM TOLD IS APPARENTLY SKY SPORTS' COMMENTATOR AND EX PROFESSIONAL TONY JOHNSON'S FAVOURITE PAR 3



COURSE
VIDEO

Top left: Aerial view of the course
 Top right: Looking back down the 1st
 Above middle: 13th green and ocean
 Above: 18th green surrounded by palm trees
 Left: Peninsula green at the 16th



COURSE
VIDEO 

Above: 15th
and the courses
signature hole
Right: 17th green
looking across to
the clubhouse and
18th fairway
Far right top:
Looking down the
6th from the tee
Far right bottom:
9th fairway, green
and clubhouse



**I LOVE THE WAY THE PERFECTLY
MOWN EMERALD GREEN FAIRWAYS
WEAVE THEIR WAY THROUGH THE
DARK VOLCANIC ROCK, WHICH IN
SOME AREAS HAS BEEN USED AS
WASTE BUNKERS AND IT'S THESE
JUXTAPOSED COLOURS THAT GIVES
MONT CHOISY A VERY DISTINCTIVE
LOOK**



MONT CHOISY LE GOLF

After following Branden Stone and Niklas Nørgaard Møller around for the final round of the AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Open at Mont Choisy on Sunday, I was looking forward to seeing how far behind them I was off the tee!

After smashing my driver down the middle on the first from the championship tees, I am left with a 9-iron in. To put that into prospective Niklas hit 2-iron, gap wedge! It is a beautiful starting hole with a wide fairway, but it is the greens that I knew would be tricky. Not only are they relatively small, there are many green complexes to negotiate. And if you miss the green then you will see your ball disappearing down some steep run-offs.

I make my way to the second after my opening par. The course meanders through the land and I love the way the perfectly mown emerald green fairways weave their way through the dark volcanic rock, which in some areas has been used as waste bunkers – and it's these juxtaposed colours that give Mont Choisy its very distinctive look.

The first of the par 3s on the front nine arrives at the 4th, a well-designed hole with some wonderful views and a green that could have you tearing your hair out if you are in the wrong section. I give up comparing my drives on the par 5, 5th hole. I am so far behind Niklas's drives I would need to call in the army with a rocket launcher just to keep up!

It is hard to pull out individual holes as they all deserve a mention and the run of holes from the 6th to the 9th offers some wonderful golf. Making my way around the back nine it has a slightly different feel to the front nine, but that is certainly not to its detriment. As I step onto the 11th, the first of the par 3s on the back nine, it reminds me that there are no weak short holes on the course. The other par 3s on this nine are the 15th, and the course's signature hole which is played from an elevated tee to an island green, with a third one coming at the 17th that is another well design golf hole.

The 18th is a fitting finale to what has been a wonderful day's golf with Sebastien Espitalier-Noël, who is the Sports and Golf Manager at Beachcomber's Trou Aux Biches. Although I miss my short birdie putt on the 18th I am not disappointed as I have enjoyed every moment on playing Mont Choisy, and I know you will too. →

AZURI THE NINE

After a quick scout round and playing a few holes yesterday I couldn't wait to get to playing The Nine properly today. It's when you step onto the 1st tee that you realise this isn't any ordinary par 3 course. It reminds me of the short courses on the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail in Alabama.

You will notice the two different colour flags on the greens, as it gives you a different option to play to if you decided to go round again and play 18 holes. And from yesterday's experience, I know that will be on the cards for almost everyone that plays here.

With deep fescue rough on the left giving the course a heathland feel and two bunkers protecting the left side of the green, aiming at the right side of the green is your best option. As I make my way onto the green, you can tell by their size, they have been designed to accommodate the two flag options and the manicuring and pace of the greens and contours are what you would expect to find on a top-ranked 18 hole course.

The 2nd is a beautifully designed hole playing from an elevated green, with →

Right: Sunset over the 8th hole
 Below: Looking down on the 2nd green

COURSE VIDEO 



NOT ONLY IS IT A GREAT TEST OF GOLF, FOR THOSE WHO PLAY REGULARLY – YOU WILL BE PLAYING SOME FANTASTIC GOLF IF YOU GO ROUND UNDER PAR. BUT, FOR THOSE IN MAURITIUS ON HOLIDAY, THINKING ABOUT TAKING UP GOLF, THE NINE IS THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY AND SEE IF YOU WILL ENJOY THE GAME. IT'S A FUN COURSE AND WOULD BE A GREAT WAY TO START YOUR GOLF JOURNEY

bunkers protecting the left side of the green and weighing in at 138 yards.

And don't think this is just a pitch and putt course on the 4th and 5th holes. With today's wind conditions I have just hit 5 and 4-irons respectively, and with water on the left of the 5th green it certainly makes it a tough hole.

As you will see when you arrive, the 5th is

not the only hole that has water as a hazard. The 9th has an island green and depending on flag and wind conditions can affect your club selection; I played PW on my scout round yesterday and I am hitting 6-iron today.

Another nine holes sir? I don't mind if I do!

Sitting in the bar with a nice cold beer in hand and looking back up the 9th hole I reflect on the

course. Not only is it a great test of golf, for those who play regularly – you will be playing some fantastic golf if you go round under par. But, for those in Mauritius on holiday, thinking about taking up golf, The Nine is the perfect opportunity to play and see if you will enjoy the game. It's a fun course and would be a great way to start your golf journey.

Below: the 9th, a fitting finale for a wonderfully designed golf course



JOURNEY PLANNER

WHERE TO STAY

Paradis Beachcomber Golf Resort & spa

T: +230 401 5050

W: beachcomber-hotels.com

Trou aux Biches Beachcomber Golf Resort & Spa

T: +230 204 6800

W: beachcomber-hotels.com

Radisson Blu Azuri Resort & Spa

T: +230 402 3700

W: radissonhotels.com

WHERE TO PLAY

Paradis Beachcomber Golf

T: +230 401 5050

W: beachcomber-hotels.com

Mont Choisy Le Golf

T: +230 269 6430

W: montchoisy.com

Azuri The Nine

T: +230 5423 1921

W: azurigolf.mu

WHERE TO EAT

La Palma

T: +230 401 5050

W: beachcomber-hotels.com

Blue Ginger

T: +230 204 6800

W: beachcomber-hotels.com

Mahiya

T: +230 204 6800

W: beachcomber-hotels.com

The Black Rock Bar & Grill

T: +230 402 3700

W: radissonhotels.com

Cafe Gioia

T: +230 402 3700

W: radissonhotels.com

PARADIS BEACHCOMBER GOLF RESORT & SPA

Le Morne Peninsula, Mauritius

By **CHARMAINE HIBBERT**



DREAM A DREAM

We've all been there, thumbing through holiday brochures when it's cold and snowing outside, imagining ourselves relaxing on those beautiful beaches.

Charmaine Hibbert feels like she's just stepped into one of those magazines as she visits Beachcomber's Paradis Golf Resort & Spa

An hour's drive from the north of the island after the Mauritius Open golf tournament and we arrive at Beachcomber Paradis Resort with myself, James and the taxi driver all engrossed in the World Cup final. We would all love to see Argentina win it for Messi.

Thankfully the check-in is swift and I draw a sharp intake of breath when the man who is taking my bags to my room opens the door, which is accessed via the balcony that looks right onto the beach. It is night now and I can't wait to see that view properly in the morning.

The room looks sharp, large with lots of white and wood interspersed with shots of azure blue – I am hoping that is not an omen when it comes to the football. The bathroom is large enough for a five-a-side football team and the tub could certainly hold a few of the players, it's that big. The face dive will have to wait until after the match as James is already banging on the door – I swear he must have just thrown his golf clubs and suitcase into the room and closed the door!

I am now heading back to the room after a few local rum and cokes →

Above: Paradis' clear waters and beaches

Left: Room with a view



Far Left: Hotel reception
Left: swimming pool
Middle: Just a step away from your room you will find a beautiful beach
Bottom left: Hotel bar with amazing views
Bottom right: La Palma restaurant



in a fantastic mood at seeing Messi lift the World Cup – how long was that presentation ceremony! I nearly forget the face dive into the pillows, but to be honest this time I nearly fell asleep on the crisp linens.

I wake to birds calling me and the waves gently crashing onto the beach, as I had decided to leave my doors open during the night and turn the AC off. Before my shower I sit on the balcony and just soak up the beautiful crystal-clear jade and azure Indian Ocean just lapping the white sandy beach.

After showering I meet James and head down to breakfast. We sit right at the front with just a path between us and the beautiful sandy beach, watching the boats ready for their day's excursions. Fresh fruit, omelettes and patisseries, fruit juice and coffees later and we haven't said more than 10 words between us. We are both mesmerised by the ocean, the seduction of those waves gently hitting the shore and that view.

ACTIVITIES

James is heading off to play golf on the resort's golf course and I am heading off to what I do best and scout the property before finding a lounge on the beach – for those of you who know me, yes I am foregoing the pool to be on the beach. I can't explain why, but when you arrive here you will know; you just feel the sand and ocean calling you.

I am shown around the well-equipped gym, tennis courts and my guide explains the many organised classes they put on for guests. There is also a beautiful spa here that offers a variety of treatments using local products.

Watersport activities include water skiing, windsurfing, sailing, optimists, lasers, hobie cats, glass-bottom boats, snorkelling, pedalos, kayaks, stand-up paddle boards, aquagym and at an extra cost you can also do kitesurfing, scuba diving and wakeboarding.

Land-based sports are bocceball, six floodlit tennis courts, table tennis, football, jogging tracks and at an extra cost mountain biking and tennis and golf coaching

RESTAURANTS

There are eight restaurants to choose from as you also have the option of dining at the hotel Dinarobin, but we have chosen to go all Italian tonight at La Palma and have let the waiter decide our menu. As you can imagine we are now stuffed. The food and service has been excellent and after watching the sunset dip below the horizon on the beach today, this has been a wonderful ending to a perfect day in paradise.

CONCLUSION:

You are going to be mesmerised by the ocean and the sand; you can't help not be, but the service is excellent and the gastronomy, amazing. With a wide choice of cuisines to satisfy every palette. We didn't get to see much of the nightlife, but they do have live entertainment each night and the sports and spa facilities give you everything you need for a memorable stay – and one that I am sure, like mine, will stay with you for a lifetime.

Paradis Beachcomber Golf Resort & Spa
Le Morne Peninsula
Mauritius

T: +230 401 5050
W: beachcomber-hotels.com

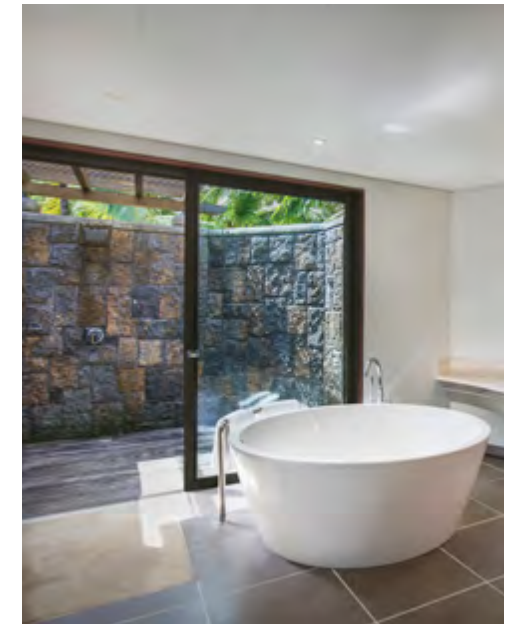
TROU AUX BICHES BEACHCOMBER GOLF RESORT & SPA

Triolet, Mauritius

By **CHARMAINE HIBBERT**

BREAKFAST IN MAURITIUS

Charmaine Hibbert feels Supertramp made a mistake in heading to America and should have had breakfast watching the beautiful clear waters of the Indian Ocean lapping the white sandy shores of Mauritius and its stress-free, relaxed atmosphere



Below: One of the suite options



I was quite excited as we made our way from Beachcomber Paradis to Trou Aux Biches. James had been eulogising about it after being invited with a few other journalists that were covering the Afrasia Bank Mauritius Open.

James had certainly been spoilt on that visit, as he seemed slightly underwhelmed by his room. But we both had the same room type and although it wasn't a beach/sea view, the room is large and well-appointed with a kings-sized bed, and a terrace with tables and chairs. The bathroom is massive with a large soaker tub similar to the one at Paradis while the shower is like a mini wet room without the walls and, to top it all, an

outside shower.

The nose dive into the pillows again revealed crisp, fresh linens and beautiful large pillows, perfect for sitting up in bed reading with the mini reading light. It also had the usual well-stocked mini bar, Wi-Fi, safe and large wardrobe and writing desk, but I am actually writing this review from the terrace.

RESTAURANTS:

Our first night here we ate at the Blue Ginger restaurant, which serves Thai cuisine, and the food was wonderful – especially the chicken and crab dim

Right: One of the spacious room options
Below right: Entrance to Blue Ginger



sum and the yakitori chicken with Japanese BBQ tonkasu sauce, and the signature Blue Ginger pad Thai with shrimps.

Tonight it's the Mahiya restaurant and, like the Blue Ginger, we walk across a water feature with each restaurant on the left and right, so again we are sitting outside in a wonderful setting. We have both decided on the Salmon tikka, which is marinated in white spices, and for mains I have the Delhi butter chicken, which is marinated in garlic and ginger and served with a spicy tomato sauce. James has opted for the Kadhahi lamb chops, a spicy rack of lamb grilled in tomato, onion and homemade spices. Dessert is a selection of sorbets that includes mango, passion fruit and raspberry. →

The food is amazing, as is the service. I would highly recommend you book these restaurants before you arrive as they can get booked up very quickly.

We have had breakfast at La Caravelle both days we have been here, as it is right by the beach. And this morning being our last day we just wanted to soak up the views. Breakfast here is buffet-style with lots of fresh fruits and fruit juices. You can have eggs any style you like and there is both hot and cold foods and of course cheeses, ham and a wonderful selection of freshly-baked breads and patisseries.

ACTIVITIES

James is off to play Mont Choisy before we head off to our next destination, which hosted the Mauritius Open at the weekend, and you can get a reduced rate and transfers to the club from the hotel. For watersports there is water skiing, windsurfing, sailing, hobie cats, glass-bottom boats, pedalos, kayaks, snorkelling, stand-up paddle boards, aquagym and wakeboarding and at an additional charge there is initiation into scuba diving, scuba diving and deep-sea fishing. Land-based sports there are six floodlit tennis courts, table tennis, beach volley, bocciball and with additional charge there is mountain biking, and private tennis coaching. There is also a well-equipped gym and spa.

CONCLUSION:

The moment you enter Trou Aux Biches you know you are going to have an amazing time. The design of the rooms, the food and facilities are what you would expect from one of Beachcomber's top hotels, from chilling by the pool or lounging on the white sandy beach to the food and evening entertainment. I looked forward to each new day with excitement and a smile on my face and, most importantly, wanting to stay longer when it was time to leave.

Trou aux Biches Beachcomber Golf Resort & Spa
Royal Trou Aux Biches Rd
Triolet, Mauritius

T: +230 204 6800
W: beachcomber-hotels.com

Right and below:
Various views of the
hotel, reception,
suites, restaurants,
bars and beaches



RADISSON BLU AZURI RESORT & SPA

Riviere du Rempart, Mauritius

By CHARMAINE HIBBERT

MR BLU SKY

All the facilities of the hotel, but in a three-bedroomed apartment, **Charmaine Hibbert** gets to choose between chilling out in her own private garden and terrace or heading to the hotel's private beach





Top left: Chilling on the beach
Top middle and right: The Black Rock Bar & Grill
Left: Pool at the Radisson Blu
Right and far right: More dinning options at the Radisson Blu



It has taken us roughly 25 minutes to drive from Trou Aux Biches to the Radisson Blu Azuri Resort & Spa. After a brief chat with the security guard, the driver is heading into a mix of residential and holiday apartments. In the centre sits the hotel with all its amenities, but we won't be staying in the hotel as we have been allocated a three-bedroom apartment, which is run through Blu Azuri.

Heading into the apartment, we walk straight into the lounge/kitchen/dining area which is all opened planned and well designed with sliding doors opening out onto a patio area with furniture and then onto the garden area.

The main bedroom has an en-suite that I have already grabbed and also has sliding door access to the garden. The second bedroom has access to a large terrace. There is also a further bedroom with double bed and shared bathroom.

The décor is modern, clean and crisp with white linens, and there are also full kitchen facilities and washing machine.

FACILITIES:

While I do love the convenience of hotel living, for families coming away this is the perfect set up and only a few minutes walk away from the beach and all the main facilities.

Guests staying at the Radisson Blu Azuri Resort & Spa have access to a wide range of complementary land and watersports, as well as complementary green fees at The Nine once per day, either nine holes or 18 holes..

Guests staying in the Azuri Residences have access to most activities as well, but these would be at a nominal charge. Green fees at The Nine are also available at a reduced rate.

RESTAURANTS:

With a table overlooking the beach, I am ordering a rum and coke as Mauritius produces some wonderful rums and James has ordered a local beer. Black Rock Bar & Grill is known as a meat lovers' paradise and with

steak on the set menu we have both decided on that option.

Now I know James is going to ask for his steak Pittsburgh-style and I go for medium/rare, which is normally a bit of a test as not many restaurants outside the US can cook a steak Pittsburgh-style. But, James seems very impressed with how well the chef has done, to the point that he is asking for bread so he can mop up the combined juices of the steak and mustard mash, which I have to say was a perfect accompaniment to the steak along with the green beans.

It is our last day in Mauritius, and we are heading for lunch to Cafe Gioia, which offers traditional Italian cuisine. They also serve homemade pastries, amazing cakes, which we saw earlier when their Christmas cakes went on display, as well as gourmet breakfasts and, of course, coffee.

I have decided on a pizza and James has gone for a bbq chicken baguette, which comes with fries and we decide to split our food as they both look and taste so nice. →

THE SPA BY RADISSON BLU AZURI

James decided to bag the spa treatment as he wanted to sample the deep tissue massage for golfers and here is his review: After filling in a couple of forms and changing into a robe and special shorts, I am now face down on the massage bed and Soomitra my masseuse is using a blend of essential and base oils (peppermint, eucalyptus, ginger and almond) which are designed to treat joint pain, inflammation and help promote well being and relaxation.

Soomitra has already asked if I want a soft, medium or deep massage. I have gone for the deep massage and after just finishing playing golf 30 minutes ago I can feel my body starting to appreciate the work that she is putting in.

The initial tension starts to disappear and not only can I feel my whole being start to relax, I can also hear myself starting to snore and then suddenly jolting myself awake! I decide to just give in to those feelings and drift off to sleep and every so often jolt myself awake again as Soomitra hits a sensitive spot or asks me to turnover so she can start my front, head and face.

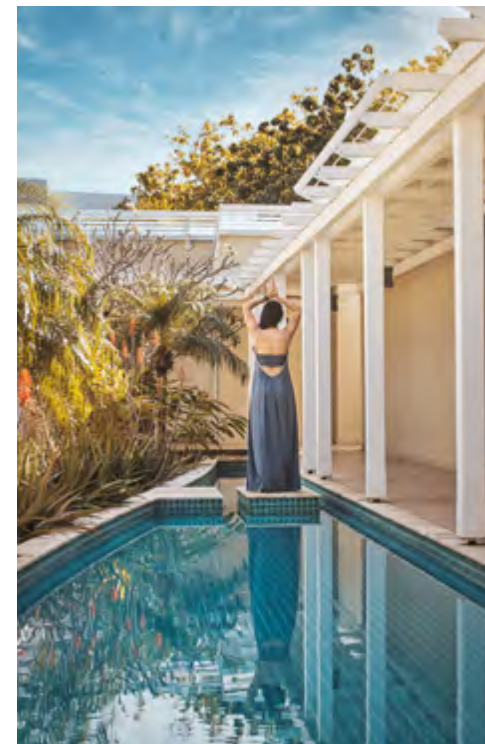
The 60 minutes just seems to fly by, but I am left feeling so relaxed I can hear Soomitra in the distance telling me to take some time and drink the water she has left for me. I feel like I could just turn back over and crash out for the next couple of hours, which I do when I get back to the apartment!

I would certainly recommend booking a deep tissue massage after a round of golf. When Soomitra first started it was like having a bowl of Rice Krispies under my skin, my shoulders were snap, crackling and popping so much. But as she began her work these sensitive areas were soon taken care of. It is not until you walk out of the treatment room do you realise how much tension golf builds up in your body.

Radisson Blu Azuri Resort & Spa
MU, Coastal Road, 31201,
Mauritius

T: +230 402 3700
W: radissonhotels.com

Right: Chilling by the
warm sea
Below left to right:
Photos of The spa by
Radisson Blu Azuri



36
CALLAWAY
PARADYM DRIVER



43
ABACUS
SPORTS
WEAR



41 RAM GOLF BALLS



39
RAM FX FAIRWAY
WOODS



45
TRAVIS MATHEW
GOLF SHOES



47
GOLFSTREAM
VISION

EQUIPMENT & APPAREL

REVIEW

VIEW.COM



Farleigh



Flexible Membership

Perfect for those who need to balance other commitments with occasional rounds, or those who love their golf but don't want to play in club competitions or commit to a traditional golf membership. Farleigh's Flexible Membership is a great way to play at one of Surrey's top golf clubs, without the long term commitment.

Option 1 £310

£310 in green fee credit
plus 1 x complimentary
green fee voucher

Option 2 £630

£630 in green fee credit
plus 3 x complimentary
green fee vouchers

All complimentary green fee vouchers are redeemable
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Limited memberships available.
Be quick to avoid disappointment:
Register online at [www.farleighfox.co.uk/
membership/flexiblemembership](http://www.farleighfox.co.uk/membership/flexiblemembership)



Contact Michael Day on 01883 627711
or email enquiries@farleighfox.co.uk

TONIGHT THERE'S GOING TO BE A...

JAILBREAK AI

With Phil Lynott's words ringing in his ears, James Mason heads to Ireland to see if Callaway really have changed the Paradym

Below: Callaway's 360° carbon chassis, 15g sliding weight track and new AI Jailbreak face technology



CLUB TESTED ▶

Callaway Paradym Driver

LOFT 9°

LOFT SET UP 10°

SHAFT Project X HZRDUS Gen 4

Silver 50 Graphite

FLEX stiff

WEIGHT SET UP Neutral

RRP £599 / €649 / \$599.99

TECHNOLOGY

Callaway have produced a 360° carbon chassis this has helped them redistribute weight and by utilising a triaxial carbon crown with a forged carbon sole they have been able to make the driver 44% lighter. These weight savings have been repositioned, giving the driver a higher MOI, increased forgiveness and help maximise distance.

This all works with the club's new

Jailbreak AI design, which provides the clubs stability, both horizontally and torsionally. This new design is 33% lighter while also helping with enhanced stability for faster ball speeds.

There is also a new AI designed forged titanium cup face. The AI has helped Callaway optimise ball speed, launch angle and spin, while the forged titanium face combination provides a higher transfer of energy

from the face into the ball so it releases faster, helping with distance gains.

The refined driver head shape allows for adjustable perimeter weighting that sees the introduction of a 15g sliding weight and working with the OptiFit hosel, golfers can optimise their ball flight, launch angle with an average of 12 yards of shot shape correction available.



CONCLUSION

I did like the way the club sat behind the ball and I think the blue tinge to the finish made it aesthetically pleasing on the eye. I also loved the adjustability of the driver. As I have stated before, AI technology can only be a good thing as there will be incremental improvements on each generation.

But, the big question is how much of an improvement has there been in a year between the Rogue ST and the Paradym. Having tested them both I would say minimal at most and this would be mainly in the forgiveness of the club and not an increase in distance. I have the Rogue ST in my bag and I see no need to swap it out.

Now don't get me wrong. If you haven't purchased a new driver in the past five years, then I would say put both the Rogue ST and Paradym on your testing list. You will certainly see an increase in both distance and forgiveness from both. But, if you have purchased a new driver in the last couple of years then I would suggest you give it another couple of years before you start testing new drivers and I will certainly let you know if a game-changer hits the market before then.



RAM IT HOME

After testing the Ram FX 77 Irons, James Mason was looking forward to putting Ram's FX Fairway Wood through its paces

TECHNOLOGY

The Ram FX fairway woods combines an aerodynamic premium stainless steel shaped head to help with increased club head speed, while utilising an oversized sweet spot for more consistent shots, which also helps with forgiveness.

The head design allows for a low and forward centre of gravity, so not only helping with distance, but helping you launch the ball higher for increased distance.

Ram have also used a custom sole design that helps with turf interaction, reducing turf drag and twist for longer straighter shots from the fairway.

The shaft is a UST dRVR graphite shaft which comes in regular, senior and stiff flexes options, and in regular and one-inch longer-than-standard lengths

CLUB TESTED ▶

Ram FX Fairway Wood

LOFT 15°

SHAFT UST dRVR

FLEX stiff

RRP £69.99 / €79.99 / \$99.99

CONCLUSION:

I tested this in Ireland and really enjoyed playing with it. I did feel the stiff shaft was a bit to whippy for me and so I slowed my swing down to compensate, but after doing that the strike and ball flight were excellent.

I like the design and the look of the club at address and felt the design of the sole and the low and forward COG would certainly benefit a lot of new players and higher handicapped golfers with turf interaction and launch angle.

The most impressive part of the club is the price. If you're on a budget or new to the game and looking for fairway woods that are well designed and will help you improve your game, while still being friendly on your pocket, then I would certainly recommend the Ram fairway woods

YOU SPIN ME ROUND

For mid to high handicapped golfers, golf balls are probably the biggest ongoing cost and losing a few golf balls each round those costs can soon mount up. James Mason tests two new golf balls from Ram, whose philosophy is to make savings on fancy marketing and packaging to help produce a quality golf ball at an affordable price



Now more than ever before, new golf ball manufacturers are popping up all over the web and with most golf balls being produced in China it is not hard for companies to reproduce golf ball designs with their own logo on them.

However, until you get to the premium ball market, can you really tell the difference? Well, to be honest most of the time you can't, but I have tested balls that don't shape up when compared to other balls.

RAM's golf marketing strategy makes total sense, especially when you look at the price. Under £39.99/\$49.99 for three dozen of their premium golf balls and £27.99/\$34.99 three dozen of their Laser spin golf balls. Cut out all the marketing, sponsorship deals, fancy branding and packaging and you are going to save a lot of money.

BALLS TESTED

Ram Golf

Tour spin golf ball

Laser spin golf ball

RRP Tour spin 3-dozen balls

£39.99 / €45.99 / \$49.99

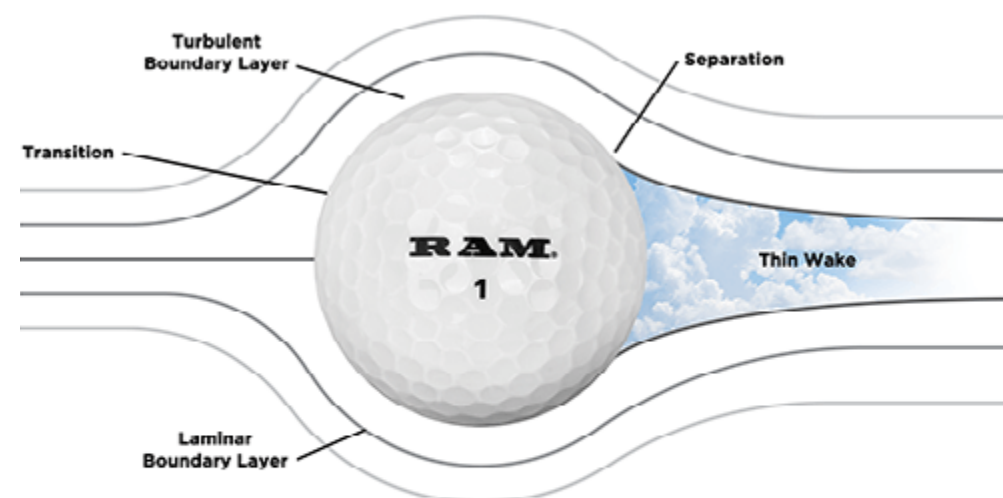
RRP Laser spin 3-dozen balls

£27.99 / €32.50 / \$34.99

TECHNOLOGY:

The RAM Tour Spin is a 3-piece construction ball with an 85 compression and uses a durable DuPont Surlyn cover, which has a 392-dimple pattern that helps the ball produce added lift and a stable trajectory. The ball has been engineered to balance carry, spin and control.

The RAM Laser Distance is aimed at golfers looking for added distance that have a medium to fast swing speed. The ball has a 2-piece construction with a 90-compression and again utilises the 392-dimple pattern for lift and stability and also uses the DuPont Surlyn cover.



Our 392 icosahedron dimple pattern reduces drag to produce long, high ball flights.



CONCLUSION:

Arriving in a no-fuss brown box, with 12 balls rattling around inside did bring a smile to my face. Yes Ram Golf have certainly saved money on the fancy packaging.

From the tee there really isn't much difference in distance but there is a slightly softer feel from the Tour spin to the Laser spin, but it's when you get around the green that you notice the difference and it's all in the cover that is used. A Surlyn cover is harder and more durable and I was surprised that Ram didn't opt to use a Urethane

cover on the Tour Spin to give the ball a softer feel on those control shots around the green, but no doubt that is where the cost savings come in.

The three-piece design of the Tour Spin gave me slightly more control around the green than the laser spin, but I didn't feel there was much in it. Don't get me wrong. I played with the Tour Spin in several competitions and was happy with the performance.

But in a nutshell if you are looking for a ball that performs well off

the tee and is durable and comes at great value then I would say definitely give the Ram balls a try, and for a little more control around the greens go for the Tour Spin.

But if you're looking for a softer feel off the club face, control and more spin around the greens, then you should be looking for a Urethane covered ball, although that is where the extra cost comes into play. But there is no doubt the Ram golf balls are great value.

COOL SUMMER

Golf is all about confidence and looking good as you step onto the tee adds to you feeling mentally prepared. Over the last couple of month James Mason has tested Abacus Sportswear in various climates including England, Ireland and Sri Lanka

TECHNOLOGY

It's the little touches that let you know that the person who has designed some of the Abacus Sportswear golf range have actually played golf. Such as the piece of silicone tape in the right hand back pocket of the Mellion shorts to stop your scorecard from slipping out. The anti-slip elastic tape to hold your shirt in place. The stretchable, breathable lightweight materials with moisture wicking properties so your swing isn't restricted and your apparel works with you

rather than against you.

The drycool features on hot summer days and fleece linings for when it starts to cool down when you are playing a twilight round and you need a mid layer just to keep that little chill off.

Breathable hybrid vests that protect you from wind, light rain, keeping your back muscles warm so you can keep your swing speed up. The designers at Abacus have used some great technology in their current range, so you can just concentrate on your golf game



MELLION STRETCH TROUSERS
£79.90 €99.90 \$101.99



HUNTINGDALE SHORTS
£79.90 €99.90 \$101.99



BALLY CAP
£19.90 €29.90 \$24.99



DRUIDS WINDVENT TROUSERS
£99.90 €129.90 \$127.99



MELLION STRETCH SHORTS
£69.90 €89.90 \$88.99



HAMMEL POLO SHIRT
£49.90 €59.90 \$63.99



CONCLUSION

I have been testing the Abacus range since last winter and then into their summer range and from keeping me warm and dry during a wet British winter to keeping me cool and dry with their moisture wicking and drycool materials playing in the heat of the Sri Lankan Open and a mixture of both in Ireland, I tip my hat to the designers.

The garments stood up to whatever mother nature wanted to throw at me, both winter and summer. Being able to mix and match outfits especially with the weight restrictions on airlines and with the design of the apparel looking just as good off the course meant that I didn't have to pack for on and off the course outfits.

If you are looking to freshen up your golf apparel wardrobe for this summer then I would recommend choosing several outfits from the Abacus Sportswear golf range that can be mixed and matched. Not only will you look good, but the technology used will keep you cool and dry.

Breathable hybrid vests that protect you from wind and light rain keep your back muscles warm so you can keep your swing speed up. The designers at Abacus have used some great technology in their current range, so you can just concentrate on your golf game.

SHERWOOD HALFZIP FLEECE
£69.90 €84.90 \$88.99



TENBY LONGSLEEVE
£37.90 €47.90 \$48.99



CYPRESS LONGSLEEVE
£59.90 €69.90 \$76.99



GLENEAGLES THERMO MIDLAYER
£99.90 €119.90 \$127.99



GROVE HYBRID VEST
£114.90 €139.90 \$145.99



KINLOCH MIDLAYER JACKET
£84.90 €99.90 \$108.99



VAMOS RAHMBO

With Jon Rahm sporting TravisMathew's Cuater's The Ring golf shoe to win his first green jacket, James Mason heads out to play in the Sri Lankan Open hoping to emulate the Spaniard's victory by donning The Ring and Moneymaker golf shoes during the tournament

TECHNOLOGY

TravisMathew's The Ringer golf shoe has a modern versatile and athletic waterproof design. The shoe is Cuater's premium performance softspike tour golf shoe offering lightweight support and uses a SweetSpot cushioning system, utilising layers of moulded foam for cushioning and support.

This all works with an air-mesh lining for breathability and moisture management.

And the spiked shoe uses removable Softspikes Pivix cleats, that feature spring flex soft spikes for traction and stability throughout your golf swing.

The Moneymaker is the premium performance spikeless tour golf shoe, this also comes in a versatile, lightweight athletic design. The shoe has a waterproof fabric upper with fused support overlay giving the shoe a thin & light feel. The fabric has also been treated to make it stain-resistant.

Like The Ringer golf shoe this also comes with the SweetSpot cushioning system, with an ultra-light midsole using layers of foam for comfort and a high rebound. The TPU spikeless sole design offers versatility, stability and traction. The spikeless sole design offers versatility and traction.



CONCLUSION

Standing on the first tee at the Sri Lankan Open sporting white The Ringer golf shoes, I have to admit they did look good and after 18 holes they and my feet were probably the only thing surviving the heat. Day two saw me in the Moneymakers and again the grey athletic style looked great. I loved the design of both shoes and the fit. On a personal note I do prefer soft spikes as I feel more confident that they won't slip during my swing, but there was no problem with stability and sureness of footing with the Moneymaker. The Moneymaker shoes do need a round or two to wear them in while The Ringer was ready to go straight from the box.

If you are looking for a new pair of shoes for the summer, both of these TravisMathew golf shoes look amazing, feel great and perform even better when trying to give that driver a bit of extra oomph

GOLF SHOES TESTED

TravisMathew/Cuater

The Ringer

The Moneymaker

RRP The Ringer

£149.99 / €175.95 / \$199.95

RRP The Moneymaker

£119.99 / €140.95 / \$159.95



Left top to bottom:
The Moneymaker
shoes, heel, sole, front,
side and top views
Right top to bottom:
The Ringer shoe, heel,
sole, front and side
views



EASY LIKE SUNDAY MORNING

James Mason discovers with one press the GolfStream Vision is ready to go whether it's a Saturday/Sunday competition, swindle or just a fun midweek round with friends



CONCLUSION:

Having tested the GolfStream Vision at Farleigh Golf Club with its various hills and slopes over the last few months from muddy winter conditions at the end of March to the start of summer through June, the Vision trolley has performed amazingly. The non-clog front wheel with all the rain we had on the golf course at the beginning is an

amazing piece of design – no more trying to scrape mud out so the wheel could turn!

The quick fold or unfold ease of setting up the trolley is the obvious big selling point, but for me it was the quietness of the motor and the design that helped keep my very large bag secure and still instead of slipping all over the place that mattered the most to me. Getting

some room back in the boot of my car, was an added bonus.

Then of course in the current climate the price point is another great selling point. I feel when you add in the price and what the GolfStream Vision has to offer, it sells itself and I would definitely recommend it.



TROLLEY TESTED

Golf Stream wVision

RRP 36 HOLES £549 / €631 / \$679

RRP 18 HOLES £499 / €575 / \$615

WITHOUT BATTERY £399 / €459 / \$495

TECHNOLOGY:

GolfStream state that their new 2023 Vision electric trolley that has the smallest fold down height of any trolley on the market and comes with a new 3-inch, super clear, large digit LCD display.

The LCD display is easy to read and has a white background with large black numerals enabling easy reading in even the brightest sunlight. There is a distance control function so you can send your trolley onwards on its own towards

the next tee and the speed can be adjusted by 0.5 increments to match your walking pace.

The trolley measures just 595mm (W) x 285 (H) x 865mm (L) and lightweight at just 9KG. It is easily folded or unfolded in one simple easy motion and the 180w whisper-quiet motor helps carry your clubs with ease. Your golf bag rests in a cradle situated on the main spine and is designed to remain firmly in place throughout the round without twisting or buckling, even over

rough terrain.

Made from a strong, lightweight aluminium, the new Golfstream Vision boasts a compact 3-wheel design with easy on/off main wheels for quick maintenance and has a non-clog front wheel design which I think we would all agree after the past winter conditions is a godsend.

There is a two-year guarantee on the trolley and three years on the battery and comes with customer care as standard.



PRO TIP



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**ALGARVE COACHING TRIP
WITH PAUL BABBAGE**
October 2023

4-NIGHT ITINERARY:

Day 1 - arrive - Welcome dinner
Day 2 - 3 hours coaching (driving range & short game), followed by lunch, then 18 holes
Day 3 - 3 hours coaching (driving range & short game), followed by lunch, then 18 holes
Day 4 - 3 hours coaching (driving range & short game), followed by lunch, then 18 holes and a Farewell dinner in the evening
Day 5 - depart

FULL DETAILS CONTACT:
E: natalie@front9travel.com
T: 01342 653093
W: front9golf.com

FLY LIKE AN EAGLE

With more run on the fairways, par 5s now become reachable in two,, but control and stopping the ball on faster greens is also important, **Paul Babbage** explains how to get a better strike and more height with your fairway woods



Step one: Feet shoulder width apart and aligned a few yards to the left of target



Step two: Ball position halfway between centre and left leg and clubface aligned slightly right of target



Step three: Swing as normal but feeling a slightly more downward hit on the ball



Video watch: A smooth swing, balance, rotating the body and focusing on the ball are keys to a crisp contact

PRO TIP



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Twitter: [@shainJGolf](https://twitter.com/shainJGolf)
YouTube: [shainjohnsongolf](https://www.youtube.com/shainjohnsongolf)

OVER THE TOP

Alignment stick drill; **Shain Johnson** explains how he uses this drill to help his clients who struggle from swinging over the top, resulting in big slices.

This drill is easy to set up either on grass or if you are at the driving range hitting off a mat. All you need is an alignment stick and a basket.

Step one: You want to place the alignment stick directly behind the ball. You can push it into the turf or place it in a basket.



Step two: Once you have set this up, it becomes pretty simple and clear if you come over the top as you will result in striking the stick on the way down.



Step Three: If you swing correctly on an arc, you should miss the stick and strike the ball, creating a more in-to-out swing path.

“This is a great drill for instant feedback on swinging over the top”



Video watch: Practice is key to creating a solid, powerful strike

LONDON CALLING

Well Kent & Surrey Golf Alliance really but why let that get in the way of a good headline!

KASGA (Kent & Surrey Golf Alliance) is a charitable golf society with over 70 members. We support the charity CALM who are tackling men's mental health and suicide. [Find out more by clicking here...](#)

We are looking for companies who wish to get involved in sponsoring us, partnering with us or wish to donate prizes for our charity raffles. All money we raise goes to CALM via our JustGiving page [click this link here](#)

Our events for 2023 are as follows:

- Westerham Golf Club – 8th July 2023
- Galway – 15th – 17th September 2023
- Lydd Golf Club – 4th November 2023
- Princes Golf Club – 1st December 2023

Any support would be appreciated and will help us to raise more money and awareness for this worthy cause.



Website: kasga.co.uk/#Get-in-touch

Instagram: [@kasga2020](https://www.instagram.com/kasga2020)



53 SCOTLAND



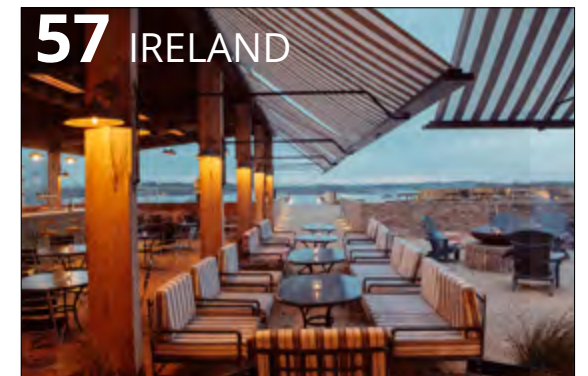
63 ENGLAND



VIEW.COM

STAY, PLAY & SPA

REVIEW



57 IRELAND



FAIRMONT ST ANDREWS

St Andrews, Scotland

By PETER ELLEGARD

LET IT BEE

Peter Ellegard is left buzzing after a stay at the Fairmont St Andrews in Scotland's Home of Golf and meeting the hotel's very own bee keeper and grower of some of its home produce, who no doubt talks to the plants with his own words of wisdom!



Standing proud on a clifftop less than four miles from the historic town of St Andrews, the Fairmont St Andrews is a beacon of luxury where you can spoil yourself rotten.

Tiger Woods chose to stay in its sumptuous Kingdom of Fife Suite when he was in town in July 2022 to play in the 150th Open Championship on St Andrews’ famous Old Course.

Lesser golfing mortals might not enjoy the same opulence as the 15-time Major champion’s presidential retreat, but they can still savour the same views over gorse-lined fairways and craggy bays to the Home of Golf from their Scottish-themed rooms as well as the hotel’s extensive leisure facilities and its delectable fare.

On arrival, you are met by a friendly, uniformed doorman and instantly made to feel welcome, as you are by all the hotel staff.

Sustainability is key to the hotel’s ethos. It has partnered with the Eden Project to provide plastic-free compostable and biodegradable coffee capsules, while refillable glass bottles have replaced disposable plastic bottles in

rooms. All unused soaps and hygiene products are recycled and all food waste is turned into compost that is used to help produce home-grown vegetables and herbs used in the hotel’s kitchen.

I visit the greenhouse and meet the resort’s head gardener and head greenkeeper John Mitchell, who is tending young tomato plants, to chat about his work. A champion bagpipe player who played several times for the Queen, green-fingered John is also the beekeeper, looking after several beehives where native Scottish bees produce the Fairmont’s own honey – although not yet enough to supply all its requirements.

ROOMS

Originally opened in 2001 as the St Andrews Bay Golf Resort & Spa, the five-star hotel has been managed by Fairmont since 2006 and has 212 guest rooms and suites.

There are also two on-site Manor Homes, featuring four ensuite bedrooms, a kitchen and communal living area.

My third-floor Deluxe Sea View room is

“A champion bagpipe player who played several times for the Queen, green-fingered John is also the beekeeper, looking after several beehives where native Scottish bees produce the Fairmont’s own honey”

just a few doors along the same corridor in the north wing as Tiger’s suite and, while nowhere near as big, it is spacious and decorated with tartan hints and Scottish art.

I have a fabulous view over several holes of the resort’s two golf courses to the clubhouse and St Andrews Bay beyond from a large window, to the side of which is a comfy armchair (why do hotel rooms rarely have two...?) and a small table. There is also a desk and swivel chair. The king-size bed is wonderfully comfortable, as are the pillows. I resist doing a face plant when I first enter the room, though.

The bathroom has a heated floor, a walk-in shower and a bath. Robes and slippers are supplied, with room amenities also including a

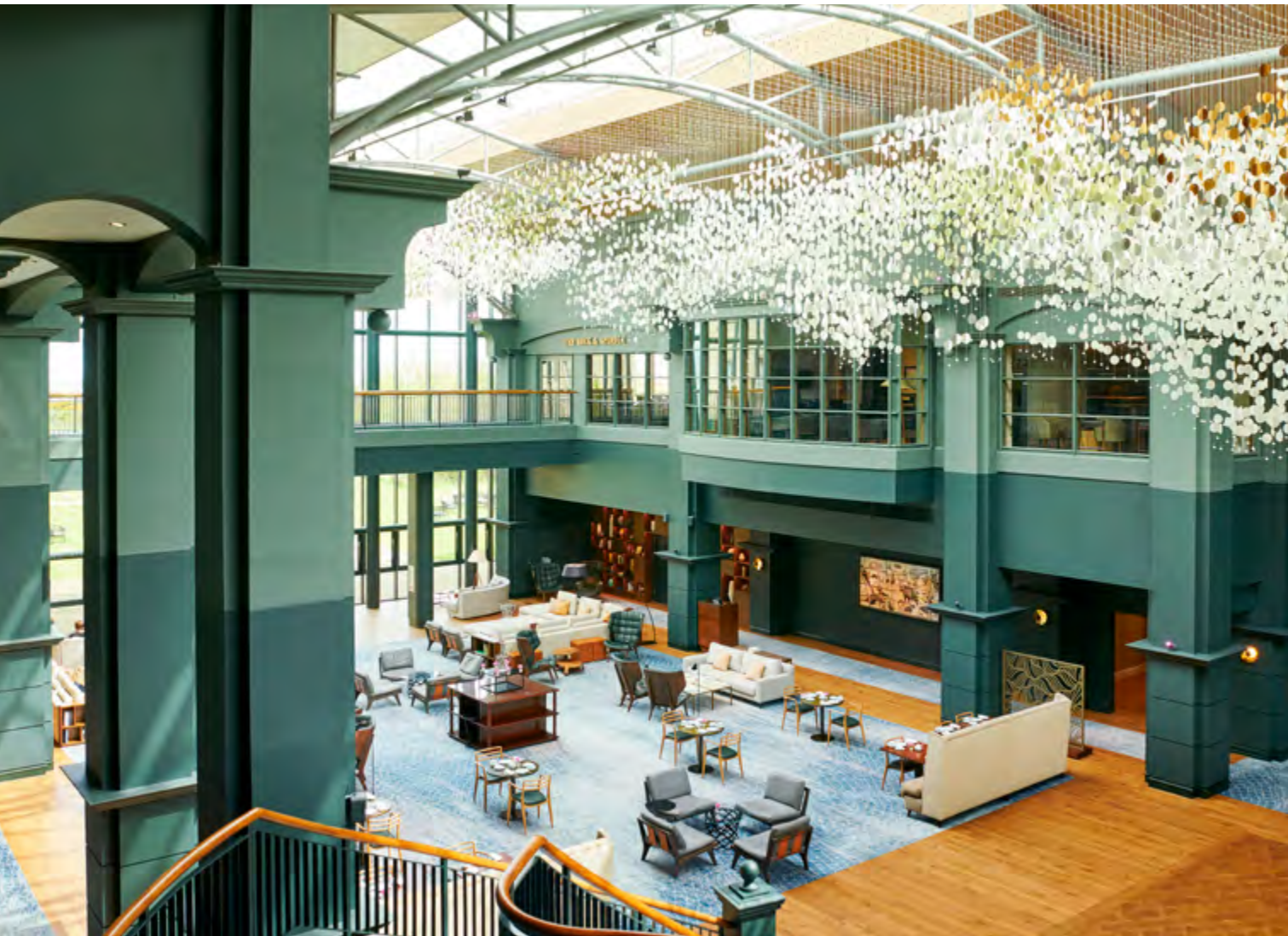
hairdryer, iron and ironing board, a Nespresso machine, minibar, safe, satellite TV and free Wi-Fi.

Other accommodation categories range from still-spacious Fairmont Rooms and Fairmont View Rooms to Studio, Junior, Deluxe and Executive Suites plus the Kingdom of Fife Suite that boasts a huge bedroom, living room with fireplace and dining room, and its own private balcony.

RESTAURANTS AND BAR

La Cucina is the hotel’s flagship restaurant, giving a contemporary twist to a classic Italian trattoria and serving top-notch cuisine.

Kittocks Den doubles as both a bar – make sure you try bar manager Bartley Horan’s →



Above: The hotel’s soaring Atrium
Far left: Tending one of the bee hives
Left: Dressing dishes from the greenhouse

own Kittocks Old Fashioned – and a restaurant where you can have snacks, lunch and dinner. My favourite lunch dish is haggis, neeps and tatties. Several Scottish dishes are combined for a Taste of Scotland feast for us. While not a menu offering currently, it might be soon.

The Squire restaurant, named after Grand Slam winner Gene Sarazen, is where breakfast is often served, although during my stay it is in the Atrium, with its 80ft high glass-topped ceiling. Local breakfast specialities include Scottish bacon, haggis and black pudding.

You can also dine with spectacular views over fairways, greens and sea in the St Andrews Bay Clubhouse & Grill, which specialises in Scottish steak and seafood.

Post-dinner, head to the Zephyr Sports Bar for a rematch with your mates or partner on its golf simulator. It also has a pool table, darts and a TV screen showing live sports.

SPA AND WELLNESS

After a gruelling round of golf on The Kittocks course in the rain, I don my robe and slippers to head down to the Fairmont Spa for a rejuvenating massage.

The spa has 10 Scottish-themed treatment rooms including a couple’s suite and male grooming room. I love the way locally-collected driftwood has been used to decorate the wall of the corridor linking the rooms and in furniture in the main reception area.

I opt for a deep-tissue massage to ease my knotted muscles but you can also have specialised golfers’ treatments, the St Andrews 90-minute signature massage or the Highland Fling Massage, which I’d like to think involves a caber. Holistic experiences and facials are also offered, using treatments by ESPA and natural skin care made from hand-harvested Hebridean Islands seaweed.

The hotel’s health club has a 16-metre-long indoor pool, a Jacuzzi, aromatherapy steam room and sauna. Fitness equipment includes spin bikes, cardiovascular machines, cross-trainers, treadmills, step and squat machines, weights and kettle bells. Group exercise classes are offered throughout the day and include pilates, step and aqua aerobics.

ACTIVITIES

The Fairmont St Andrews estate spans 520 acres and incorporates two testing 18-hole →

Right: Suite dreams
Far right: View from the Kingdom of Fife balcony
Below, middle and bottom: La Cucina restaurant
Below right: The health club pool



“I get to take home my own gin creation, which I call Buck Rogers Rides Again as buckthorn is one of the botanicals I use, and it tastes remarkably good if I say so myself!”

golf courses – The Kittocks and The Torrance, which was designed by Scotland’s Ryder Cup captain Sam Torrance – that run along the coast and encircle the hotel. We play both, in the rain.

The resort’s owners have applied for permission to create a must-play, top-100 course that could host DP World Tour events by combining the best elements of both existing courses. There is no timing for that as yet.

St Andrews has a host of notable golf courses to play. Among them are the neighbouring Castle Course, one of the St Andrews Links Trust’s seven courses that include the revered Old Course, and Kyle Phillips-designed coastal links gem Kingsbarns, five miles in the opposite direction, which I also play.

Just next to that is the Kingsbarns Distillery (kingsbarnsdistillery.com), which opened in 2016. It the brainchild of Kingsbarns’ golf

course caddie Doug Clements, who helped found it before becoming the visitor centre manager. He has now returned to golf and still occasionally caddies.

I and my colleagues are given a tour of its whisky production facilities and get hands on learning about distillation and crafting our own gin in the gin school at sister distillery Darnley’s Gin, also housed in the same farm.

I get to take home my own gin creation, which I call Buck Rogers Rides Again as buckthorn is one of the botanicals I use, and it tastes remarkably good if I say so myself!

The Fife Coastal Path runs along the cliffs past the clubhouse, heading to Kingsbarns and beyond in one direction and St Andrews, an hour or so’s stroll, in the other.

The hotel also offers a free hourly shuttle to and from the town up to 6pm so you can explore St Andrews to visit attractions that

include the R&A World Golf Museum and the ruins of St Andrews Cathedral, enjoy a pint or dram in one of the many pubs and bars, or dine at eateries such as newly-opened restaurant The Bothy, which is an absolute delight.

CONCLUSION

For a stylish taste of Scotland that offers superb golf, both on property and on its doorstep, plus so much more, you can’t do better than follow Tiger’s lead and stay at the Fairmont St Andrews.

I’d take the high road back there any day.

Fairmont St Andrews
St Andrews, Fife
Scotland KY16 8PN

T: +44 1334 837000
W: [fairmont.com/st-andrews-scotland](https://www.fairmont.com/st-andrews-scotland)



Far left: Stile on the Fife Coastal Path
Top left, top right and middle left: Kingsbarns Distillery
Left: Peter Ellegard with his gin

GLASSON LAKEHOUSE

Co. Westmeath, Ireland

By JAMES MASON and CHARMAINE HIBBERT

ONE STEP FROM PARADISE

The Tokyo Olympics' only vinyl album is pumping out from **Charmaine Hibberts'** personal turntable and speaker, while **James Mason** follows in the footsteps of Open Champion Shane Lowry as Glasson Lakehouse becomes home for the next couple of nights





We are walking through Dublin airport with slight trepidation and wondering how long the queues will be at passport control for non-EU citizens, but to our surprise we were straight through and allowed to use the electronic barriers and the baggage arrived in no time.

The journey from the airport to Glasson Lakehouse takes about 90 minutes and with the early start I spent most of it asleep, but fortunately I was awake when we turned off the road and entered the estates gates to be met by the magnificent views of Lough Ree. Strangely, the dark grey and black stonework of the building seems to blend in perfectly with the Lough and the golf course that meanders around the hotel.

It’s midday on a Monday and those who have been staying for a long weekend are checking out, so we head to Bonnie’s Restaurant for lunch.

Inside the hotel there is lots of wood and warm colours for the décor, which offers a

country charm while having a modern feel, but it’s the view of the lough that draws you in and dominates the wall of windows at the end of the restaurant, its beauty shimmering in the midday sunlight.

Restaurant

A large table is already prepared for us and I grab one of the seats looking straight out over the lough. As I do I spot the infinity pool surrounded by loungers and smile to myself as I could just see myself relaxing there in the summer with a few cocktails and an umbrella for shade.

But back to the food and by a process of elimination in my head! I am tucking into fish and chips washed down with a pint of Guinness. Yes, I have been persuaded by James to give it a try and of course he has insisted on the pint so he can drink it if I don’t enjoy it. But to his surprise and mine, I find it refreshing, but one is enough for me at the moment. →



Top: View across Lough Ree to Glasson Lakehouse in winter
Left: A warm welcome and time to relax by the open fire in the lobby



Rooms

After lunch we head to the rooms and the golfers are off to play the course, leaving me to explore the hotel. Now it wasn't the view that made me smile as I entered the room, although the view of Lough Ree is stunning, but it's the old record player with some selected vinyl that have got me excited to the point I nearly forget the nosedive into the pillows and the sweet smell of crisp linens. The hotel has selected Tokyo Olympics for me, who turn out to be an Irish band from Dublin and side one Radio, with its Japanese influenced rock melody, starts pumping out the small speaker followed by Cruisin, Heaven and and some funky guitar rhythms on One Step From Paradise. Behind the king size bed is a mixture of art including some wonderful pop art.

Heading into the bathroom, my eyes light up as I am confronted by the claw-footed, deep soaker bathtub and to my left is a walk-in shower with rain shower head and sinks to my right.

A fully-stocked mini bar with some amazing treats that could set you back quite a few euros and a two-person open wardrobe completes the room. I couldn't be happier; the interior designers have certainly put a lot of thought into not just the main themes but the little details that mean so much.

Facilities:

There is a Brooks & Co. Spa which unfortunately I didn't get to sample, but it offers a variety of treatments, packages and pamper days. There are three hot tubs with views out to the lough which are bookable, kayaking, paddle boarding, rowboats, motorboats, cycling, walking or you can head to the power gym with its two floors of state-of-the-art equipment. Or like me you can just order yourself another pint of Guinness and soak up the views of the lough and simply drift away with a book on one of the many seats and benches scattered around the grounds.

Glasson Lakehouse

Killinure, Glasson
Co. Westmeath
Ireland,
N37 HX45

T: +353 90 640 9072

W: glassonlakehouse.ie →





Top: Mist on Lough
Ree and the 17th
green
Below left: Looking
back up the 16th
Below: Aerial view of
the 18th

GLASSON LAKEHOUSE GC

After a wonderful lunch and a few pints of Guinness, I am standing on the opening hole of the Glasson Lakehouse golf course which was designed by Ryder Cup legend, Christy O'Connor Jnr. It is a generous opening hole with a wide fairway, and I think Christy must have had in mind that a few alcoholic beverages may have been consumed in the bar before guests hit the course!

As I make my way round the course it really is all about the views, especially from the 3rd green, 4th tee, 5th green and 6th tee. Hopefully like me today you don't have anyone behind you so you can just take your time to soak it all in.

The 13th brings you to the holes that you see as you enter the property and those stunning views over Lough Ree.

It plays uphill to a raised green, I can't help looking out over to the lough. Make sure you go to the back tee on the 14th; the elevation makes this a wonderful risk and reward hole especially for the longer hitters. But I think the tee shot on the 16th tops them all. It may not be as elevated as the 14th but it sees you playing down towards the lough and with water on the left it certainly gets the heart rate pumping.

Also make sure you play from the back tee on the par 3, 17th which is played over water and reeds with the lough on your left. It is all carry and not only a well-designed golf hole, but great fun to play. The 18th brings you back up to the hotel and is a fitting finale to what has been a wonderful day's golf with some amazing views. →





Right: Risk and reward at the par 5, 17th
Far right: The perfect setting for a par 3
Below: 4th hole with the 5th hole in the background



PORTUMNA GC

Arriving at Portumna Golf Club we are shown around some of the new clubhouse facilities that are currently being built and after a wonderful lunch we are heading to the first tee, which is slightly elevated. A pulled tee shot sees me laying up and chipping on, but as I arrive at the green, I am slightly taken back as the green at the front has no fringe. As we make our way round, it seems to be a feature. The sides and the back are fringed,, but at the front they go straight from fairway to green with no fringe!

The first of the par 3s arrives at the 2nd and plays to a raised green with bunkers protecting the front and a very tricky green. Before you reach the second par 3 on this nine, there are two solid par 4s and I love the round stoneworks to the right of the 4th green. The par 3, 5th is played from an elevated tee to a green that is surrounded by pines that funnel back up towards the tee, giving it a very tight feel. The first of the par 5s on this nine comes at the 6th, which is a

wonderful golf hole topped off with an old stone house to the left of the green.

The back nine closes with a slightly blind tee shot where you aim between the two mounds. But as I arrive at my ball and take in the view of the green, it really is a well designed hole. The green is slightly raised with two bunkers one on the right and one left and three trees framing the hole – although they are further back than you think from the fairway.

The back nine opens with a par 3. As I reach my tee shot on the 474 yard, par 5, 12th hole which is a dogleg right, I stop and just stare at the beauty of the hole, with tall pines now funnelling me towards the raised green.

Standing by my tee shot on the 14th hole, I am now starting to feel the back nine is all about the shots into the green. This time I am playing down to the green that is surrounded by trees with two bunkers protecting right and left that also slightly wrap themselves round each side of the green, with a tree right in the middle of the right hand bunker. You

I am playing down to the green that is surrounded by trees with two bunkers protecting right and left that also slightly wrap themselves round each side of the green, with a tree right in the middle of the right hand bunker. You really don't want to be behind that!



really don't want to be behind that!

Just cutting my tee shot fine with all the trees down the right hand side, I am playing up to another raised green, but it's only when I get to the green that I realise how narrow it is, as the trees on the left are very tight.

The 17th I am told is the course's signature hole. It's a blind tee shot so it is not until I walk over the hill that the hole opens up and I get to see the green and the water that runs down the right and protects the green with its stone wall and two bunkers at the back. At 547 yards, it's all risk and reward at this point if you want to go for the green.

With the green sitting right outside the clubhouse, I am sure there have been many dramatic finishes on this 195-yard par 3. Played to a plateau green with two deep bunkers on the right and a tree on the left with a raised bank at the back, it really is a fitting finale to what has been another beautifully designed golf course. →

ESKER HILLS GC

I think everyone was looking forward to playing the course where the 2019 Champion golfer of the year Shane Lowry learned to play the game. I am teeing it up with the secretary of the Club, Ray, and on the first tee he explains to me how Shane used to smash his drive over the club's logo, which would see the ball fly over trees and deep rough and land just short of the green on this 504-yards, par 5. I am sure he would have probably driven the 354-yard, par 4, 2nd which plays downhill to a green that slopes from back-to-front and no doubt at some point started his

round eagle, eagle!

The course's signature hole arrives at the 4th which plays uphill with the fairway slowly doglegging from left to right and then you play your second downhill to a raised green. It really is a stunning golf hole and believe me, a par 4 on this hole is a good score. The first of the par 3s arrives at the 5th and is played from an elevated tee and has water protecting anything long and right.

The second par 5 on the front nine is the 6th and it certainly gives the signature hole a run for its money with the second shot having to be played over water. It is

all risk and reward with your second shot.

The drive from the elevated tee on the 7th sees water come into play on the left and the beautiful 8th is played from another elevated tee then to another raised green – it isn't called Esken Hills for nothing! – followed by the final par 3 on this nine that plays slightly uphill and brings a wonderful front nine to a close.

The 10th at 303 yards from the back tees is another great risk and reward hole. You may fancy your chances of driving the green here, but there is water and a stone wall protecting the green at the front.

The 11th brings you back to the

clubhouse, but it's the 14th that starts a run of great holes. Played from an elevated tee into a valley and then back up to the raised green and the final par 3 comes at the 15th, again played from an elevated tee. You certainly don't want to miss the green here as the run offs and bunker on the right mean you could be racking up a big number.

Putting out on the 18th which is another raised green, two things come to mind. Firstly it has been another wonderful day of golf on a well designed golf course and you can see why Shane has a very good short game; you certainly need it around

here. Secondly, I definitely recommend you get yourself a buggy!

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Portumna GC

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Esker Hills GC

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COURSE VIDEO

Above: The signature par 4, 4th hole. Right: Water at the par 3, 5th hole. Middle: Looking back up the 6th hole. Top far right: Playing up to the raised par 4, 8th green. Far right middle: Risk and reward at the 10th hole. Far right bottom: The tough par 3, 15th hole



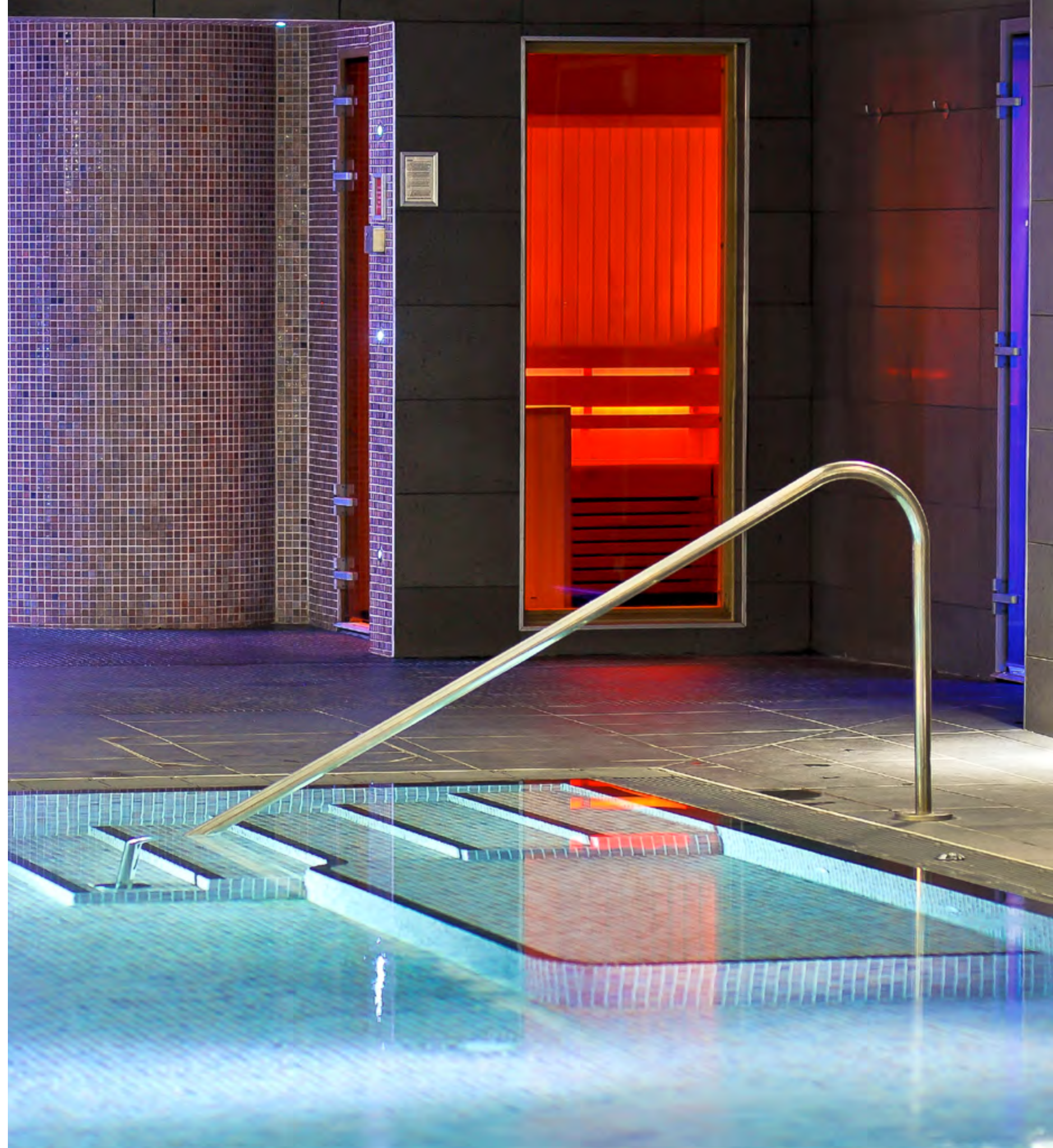
CONGHAM HALL HOTEL & SPA

Norfolk, England

By JAMES MASON and CHARMAINE HIBBERT

COUNTRY HOUSE

Just over a two-hour drive from London and **James Mason** and **Charmaine Hibbert** find themselves relaxing in the Norfolk countryside and while Charmaine indulges in the spa and personal outdoor soaker tub, James hits Congham's Golf Coast trail



After a quick check-in Ruby is showing us to our rooms. On our way she points out various rooms as we pass by the library/sitting rooms and a private dining room that looks amazing, then we head past the bar and restaurant where all meals are served.

We then head out onto a beautiful little courtyard garden where the entrance to the Spa is located, heading round the back of the spa where we can see the pool and the outside sunken wooden hot tub with its steam streaming into the cool Norfolk air.

There are five new cabins that have been designed with seclusion in mind. Ruby shows me into my cabin and the first thing I notice is the traditional chrome deep soaker roll-top bath with overhead heater, which is the other side of the floor to ceiling windows and sits outside on a little patio next to a table and chairs. I didn't realise I had squealed with delight but Ruby laughed at my obvious joy. The thought of

just lounging in that tub looking out over the beautiful apple orchard with a glass of wine, made the journey and those London traffic jams just disappear.

There's suddenly a knock on the door and it's James. He had the same thoughts as me about heading to the spa; I am sure that man just throws his case in and goes! I tell him I will see him there as I have the face dive to do and need to change and take in the rest of the room details.

Back to the room which is very spacious and contains a king-size bed, a large purple sofa with a coffee table and attached to the wall is a work station and a long shelf that is wide enough to hold a cabin-sized suitcase. The décor is modern using lots of blue/greys, purple and whites. I then enter the bathroom and can't believe there is another roll-top deep soaker tub this time with a purple finish to complement the white enamel. There is also a walk-in shower with a rainfall shower head and beautiful thick towelling robes

hanging behind the door next to the full-length mirror. I am told that I need to take the robe with me to the spa with me if I want the use of one while I am there.

After an afternoon of chilling between different heated saunas and steam rooms, a swim in the pool and lounging in the hot tub, it's time to have a nap before dinner. The spa does offer a full menu of treatments and massages.

Sapphire Restaurant

We decide to have a drink at the bar before dinner and while there we are given both the food and wine menus, with the wine list coming in the form of an electronic tablet so you can read full details of each wine. I have decided to go for the Gressingham Duck Breast with asparagus, woodland mushroom and wild garlic and James has gone for the lamb rump and braised lamb breast with roasted fennel, aubergine and fondant potatoes and both turn →



On the lower floor there is bar area surrounded by a carousel of chairs which slowly moves around the bar, giving you an ever-changing view



Above: Congham Hall
Far left: Floor to ceiling view from my cabin
Left: Outside dining perfect for summer evenings

out to be amazing.

The desserts are a joy; we have gone for the Congham Hall's mini pudding which basically turns out to be a selection of all the desserts on the menu with a choice of sorbets. I have to be honest, my eyes light up when I see both the dark chocolate marquise and sticky toffee pudding along with all the other puddings. To say I was contented would be a major understatement. I went off to my room a very happy woman.

Our second night at the restaurant we were so happy with the meals we had last night that we have decided to swap and James is having the duck while I am having the lamb, but when it

comes to desserts we decide to give the selection of British farmhouse cheeses a go. I think two nights of the complete selection of Congham Hall's puddings would have needed me hitting the gym for the next two months!

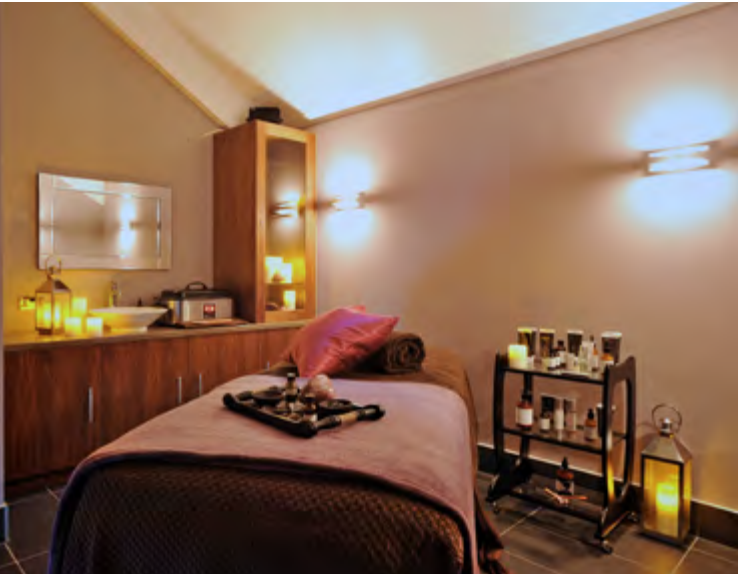
Conclusion:

I am sitting in the library relaxing after another scrumptious breakfast while James heads off to Sheringham Golf Club. It has been a wonderful stay at Congham Hall and a stay here can be anything you want it to be. For James it was a base to play some great golf courses on Congham's Golf Coast trail. For me it has been

time to just chill out and relax in the spa and my own personal outside soaker tub, with views that soothe your soul. The food is amazing and the cabin rooms are beautifully designed. So whether you want a base to play or just relax I would certainly recommend a few days or a long weekend at Congham Hall.

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Top left: Spa treatment room
Top right: Sapphire Restaurant
Bottom left: Outdoor traditional soaker tub
Left: Pre-dinner drinks in the bar
Top right: 8th hole at Royal Cromer GC

ROYAL CROMER GC

Ever since this trip was organised, I had been looking forward to teeing it up at Royal Cromer GC and even though the skies are dull and grey as I look down the 1st hole and its wide fairway, the manicured fairways look in wonderful condition. I smash my drive to the right side of the fairway and a solid 6-iron leaves me a birdie putt that I leave short, but looking at the green and its subtle movement I am not sure that would have been possible in the summer when they are mown shorter.

The 2nd brings up the first elevated tee and I get a glimpse of the rest of the course and I must admit I am thankful that it's a relatively calm day, because as I

look out across the links, there are some wonderful crops of pine trees. But apart from those the course is totally open to the elements. And those beautiful dark wooded pines surround the 3rd green which is raised from the fairway, giving it its aesthetic beauty.

The elevated tee on the 4th opens up the views and I can just imagine this view on a summer's day with blue skies and the sunlight bouncing off the sea, even on a grey dull day it's a truly stunning view.

Each hole has its own name and with the front nine coming to a close with holes called Cliff Hanger, Punch Bowl and Target Hill, that should give you the perfect description of the battle you will be up against! →

The only par 3 on the front nine comes at the 9th and again played from an elevated tee to a green 157 yards away and surrounded by no less than seven bunkers, three left and right and one at the front. No wonder they call this hole Wembley – it feels like I’m taking a penalty, although I am not sure the green is much wider than a goal from this angle!

The back nine starts with Over the Hill, Long’Un, The Plateau, Windy Ridge, Lighthouse, Valley and Hogs Back. All pretty accrete descriptions for each hole. What the names do not reveal is the wonderful views that you will be soaking in and no doubt eulogising about in the bar and to your friends when you tell them the day you played Royal Cromer GC.

I am now sitting in the bar looking at some of the amazing trophies, portraits and historic letters on display with a smile on my face. Royal Cromer not only lived up to my expectations, but surpassed them.



No wonder they call this hole Wembley – it feels like I’m taking a penalty, although I am not sure the green is much wider than a goal from this angle!



COURSE VIDEO

Top left: Aerial view of Royal Cromer GC
Left: Pines surround the 3rd green
Bottom left: Bunkers surround the 9th
Bottom middle: View of the lighthouse from the 14th tee
Below: Bunkering around the 18th green



Right: Looking across Sheringham GC with the North Sea on a calm day



SHERINGHAM GC

It was about an hour’s drive from Congham Hall Hotel to Sheringham GC and after spotting the wonderful practice area I jump in my buggy and take the chance to have a decent warm up. I then proceed to pull my driver down the 1st which is right outside the clubhouse. So much for my warm up!

Fortunately, the 1st is only 324 yards and played to a raised green, so a wedge out of the rough gives me two putts for par. Making my way to the tee on the 2nd gives me a wonderful view out over the town and the North Sea, but that view pales into insignificance as I stand on the elevated tee of the par 4, 5th hole. From here I have the North Sea on my right that has some wonderful cliff views and walks.

Now don’t get me wrong. The holes in between the 2nd and 6th holes are all well-design golf holes, but it’s the surroundings that I am playing in and →

But that view pales into insignificance as I stand on the elevated tee of the par 4, 5th hole. From here I have the North Sea on my right that has some wonderful cliff views and walks

these amazing views that are making all my senses dance in delight.

The par 3, 6th continues those views and now you begin to look right across the whole of the golf course and I can feel my face just beaming with delight.

Another wonderful par 3 arrives at the 8th and is played uphill while the 9th has a blind drive and second and brings the front nine to a close.

I am standing on the 10th tee breathless, not from exhaustion, but from the pure beauty of my surroundings. I have now joined up with three corporate members to play the back nine.

Played from an elevated tee and then up to a raised green, at 468 yards it's a tough start to this nine. The first of the par 3s on this nine arrives at the 11th which is surrounded by five bunkers and run-off areas. The guys tell me there is another tee further up on the 12th and as I reach it more amazing views await me. The 14th is the furthest point from the clubhouse and from there you start to make your way back in, with the Poppy Line steam railway to your right. Still in operation, a steam train chugs past every now and again. Walking off the 18th fairway I reflect on another wonderful golf course in Norfolk. I know I have been lucky with the weather; Sheringham is a tough enough course without the wind, but with it, I can only imagine what a brute this must become. A wolf in sheep's clothing it certainly is, but I know those magnificent views will always give me wonderful memories of my day teeing it up at Sheringham Golf Club.

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A wolf in sheep's clothing it certainly is, but I know those magnificent views will always give me wonderful memories of my day teeing it up at Sheringham Golf Club



**COURSE
VIDEO**

Top left: Looking back down the 7th fairway with views of the 6th tee and 5th green
Top right: View from the tee on the par 3, 8th hole
Top left: Wonderful views at the 10th
Bottom left: Playing to the raised green at the 17th
Left: The 15th green protected by gorse and bunkers

dmd

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