

PLANET GOLF

REVIEW

ISSUE 3

SPOTLIGHT ON
BRAZIL

20
16

TRAVEL

Brazil
Portugal
Cuba

EQUIPMENT

Mizuno MP-5
JPX EZ and MPx
Wilson PMP Wedges

HOTEL & SPAS

Brazil
Portugal

VIEW.com

WELCOME

It's that time of year again when we see azaleas, magnolias in full bloom and the bright green grass and the manicured fairways of Augusta National. The European and PGA Tours may have wraparound seasons, but the Masters always signals the start of the golf season for us mere mortals of the game of golf.

This year sees golf back in the Olympics for the first time since 1904 and we bring you all you need to know in our "Spotlight on Brazil" section, an insight from the people at grassroots level talking about Brazil's Golf Legacy, a review of the Olympic course, where you can play on your visit to Brazil. John Hinchliffe takes you on a tour of Brazil and Teresa Barnett brings you comprehensive reviews on places to stay, spa, eat and drink.

MEET THE TEAM

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As usual Charmaine brings you two hotel and spa reviews, this time from Lisbon to link in with our Lisbon golf feature and Larry Berle gives you an American perspective of his visit to Cuba. Of course there is the latest golf equipment and apparel reviews from Mizuno, Wilson Staff, Sundog Sunglasses and Sun Mountain.

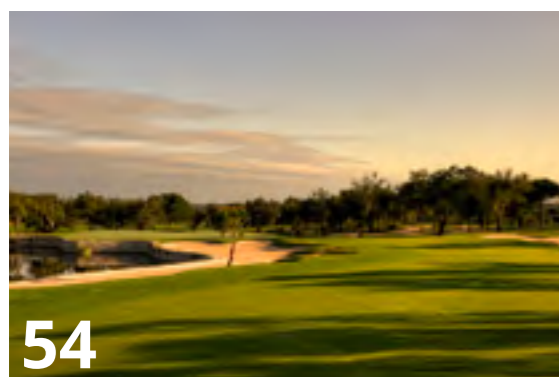
A packed issue, but you have plenty of time to read it before our next digital offering that comes out the week of the Open Championship in July, happy reading and see you then.

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REVIEW



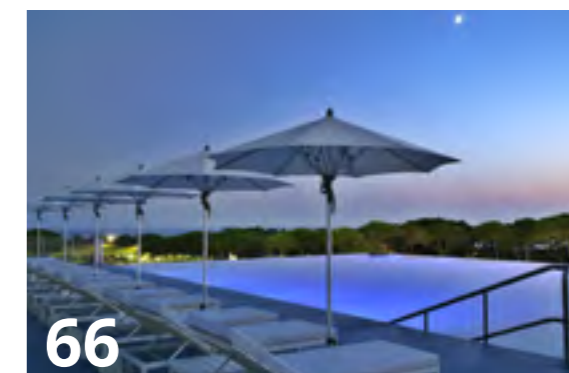
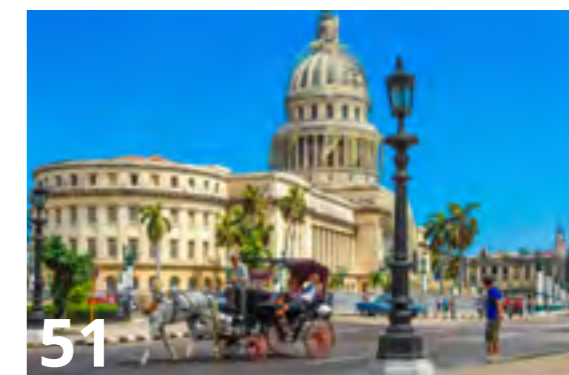
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- p 5 Spotlight on Brazil**
From its Olympic golf legacy and Olympic course to what to do, where to stay, play, spa and eat
- p 38 Equipment Reviews**
With reviews of new Drivers, 3-wood, hybrid, irons and ball from Mizuno and Wilson Staff new wedge system
- p 51 Cuba**
Larry Berle becomes one of the first official American tourists to visit this wonderful island
- p 54 Lisbon, Portugal**
James Mason gives you the lowdown on the courses within easy reach of this beautiful and historic capital
- p 66 Hotel & Spas**
Charmaine Hibbert brings you two stunning hotels for you to chose from during your stay in Lisbon, Portugal
- p 72 Golf Apparel**
This issue features Sunglasses from Sundog and golf travel bags from Sun Mountain

PLANETGOLF

REVIEW



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RIO DE JANEIRO

YOUR NEXT GOLF DESTINATION

5 GREAT GOLF COURSES
WAITING FOR YOU

RIO: THE HOME OF OLYMPIC GOLF

View of Gavea Golf Course from the Royal Tulip Hotel
Photo Panorâmio | Leo Rubeiz de Lima

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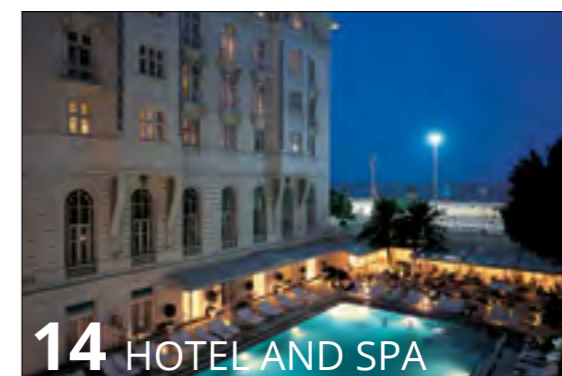


- 6** RIO'S OLYMPIC LEGACY
- 10** BRAZIL BECKONS!
- 27** WHERE TO EAT IN RIO
- 30** FIELD OF DREAMS
- 32** BRAZILIAN GOLF COURSES
- 36** TAPPING THE GOLF MARKET

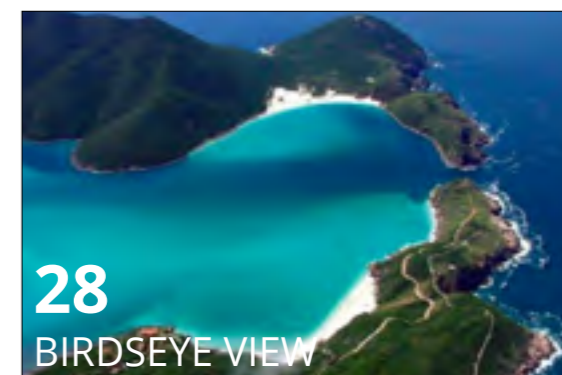
VIEW.COM

BRAZIL SPECIAL

REVIEW



14 HOTEL AND SPA



28 BIRDSEYE VIEW



29 FALLS GOLD



RIO'S OLYMPIC LEGACY



Left and Right:
Jair taking lessons
on the range and
putting green at
Japeri Golf Club



With golf making a welcome return to the Olympics for the first time since 1904 James Mason travelled to Rio to find out what Brazil's golf legacy will look like after the curtain drops on the 21st August.

I think every golfer in the world was happy when the Olympic committee announced that golf would be included in the Rio 2016 games thus ending an absence of 112-years when Canadian George Lyon won the gold medal and the US winning the team event at the 3rd Olympiad 1904 games in St Louis, Missouri.

For golf to become an Olympic sport with all that it entails' I am hopeful that the participating countries start to invest in youth and grassroots golf around the world and bring

our wonderful game to a new generation thus ending the perception that it is a game just for the elite in society.

I have always felt golf gives you the skills that you need in life to succeed and teaches you invaluable life lessons along the way. It is a journey I know only too well and is the main reason why I am sitting across the table from Vicky Whyte whose father was one of the founding members of the Brazilian Golf Association – which later became known as the

Brazilian Golf Confederation – and who herself has also been involved in the Confederation and Francisca de Orleans e Bragança whose father was also part of the Brazilian Golf Confederation. Both Vicky and Francesca played top amateur golf and represented their country in tournaments around the world.

The main reason I am here in Rio is to find out about Brazil's golf legacy after the Olympic games and how and if the Brazilian government are funding golf now it is an Olympic sport. →



Interview

How did you feel when you realised that Rio had won the bid to host the 2016 games, but also the fact that golf would be back as an Olympic sport and showcased to the world at Rio2016?

Vicky Whyte: I was elated and thrilled, but also quite frightened at the same time because we didn't have a course in Rio suitable for the top level of players, which meant we would have to go outside of Rio to Sao Paulo that has many great courses or build one. That was our first big worry but thrilling to have it here in Rio and I think having golf in the Olympics is not only going to do a lot for golf in Brazil, but also golf in South America.

Golf is a complicated subject in Brazil, as it is very much a sport for the elite. There are no municipal courses like in the US or Europe where you can just turn up and pay a green fee and play. People here didn't understand why money was needed to build another golf course and why existing courses wouldn't do.

After the Olympic games what happens to the new course, will people be able to turn up and pay a green fee or will it become just another course for the Brazilian elite?

VW: It will be a public course where

Below: Vicky and Francisca after competing in a recent tournament



people can turn up and play.

Francisca de Orleans e Bragança:

The talk is that it will be semi public with a few members, which will help fund the maintenance of the course.

VW: They haven't yet established a green fee, which they will have to start thinking about now because of golf tours etc after the Olympics. But the idea is to make it a public course with an academy.

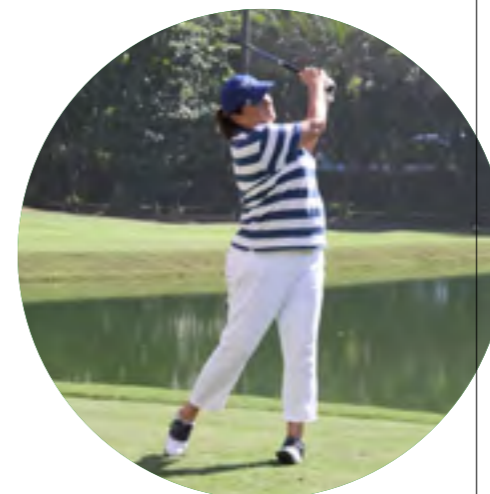
Has there been anything established yet on how they will bring Children into the game?

VW: The Brazilian Golf Confederation has a scheme called "Golf for Life" and they go into schools with professional golfers and show the instructors who run the physical education classes how to teach golf to children, with the plastic clubs and big soft balls just teaching them the very basics. The Golf for Life programme will be based at the Olympic golf academy and hopefully they will progress from there.

Vicky, I know you run a programme at Japeri Golf, how did that start?

VW: That started in 2000 and I just happened to be at the right place at the right time. Jair Medeiros was a caddy at Gavea Golf & Country Club and he and his

Top: Vicky Whyte
Right: Francisca de Orleans e Bragança



"I asked who they were and he said they were nephews and nieces and kids from the area and we are just keeping them off the streets"

friends decided they needed somewhere to practice when they weren't caddying. They went to the local Mayor who was a man of great ideals and asked to build a driving range, the Mayor said he would give them the land to build a course if it could house 300/500 public housing, but he also wanted to bring rich people into the area and he saw this as a way of achieving that.

I was with the Rio Golf Association at the time and the Mayor said to Jair and myself "If I give you the land will you build me a golf course, I want rich people spending money in my town. And that is how Japeri golf started.

Finance was hard and we had to cut back on our original plans as we had huge ideas of building an 18-hole course, then it

went down to 9-holes.

On my periodic appearances up there I could see all these children going out with their little golf clubs and just having fun. Speaking to Jair I asked who they were and he said they were nephews and nieces and kids from the area and we are just keeping them off the streets.

So we made the golf school official in 2006, since then we have had a thriving golf school with up to 120 kids, all the caddies that used to work at Gavea GCC became instructors.

Do they give their time for free?

VW: They used to but now we employ them, at the beginning they gave their time for free and they would help out with the construction of the course and we used →



to pay them with meals during the day. On a Wednesday they all used to come up and help out for free on the promise that we would give them lunch and they would be able to play for free for the rest of their lives.

Since the announcement of the games coming to Rio, has anyone from the government or sports ministry been out to see what you do and help out with funding?

VW: The government aren't the slightest bit interested in what is happening out in Japeri, the basic facts are they don't see the point of it, there are hardly any sports programmes for the poor in Brazil, it is not like the US or Europe where there are huge sports programmes. Everyone knows and the facts back this up that sport keeps kids off the streets.

FB: There are no sports programmes in the schools at all, no individual or team sports, there is nothing to incentivise children to be part of a team. Only the American and British schools here in Brazil have those types of programmes.

Since the announcement of the games coming to Rio has there been any investment in Golf?

FB: When you go around Brazil you can see football pitches everywhere from the sand to the streets everywhere the culture here in Brazil is all about football and the government provide a lot of facilities for that.

VW: The Brazilian Olympic committee are investing vast amounts of money in the top level of all sports, all the sports governing bodies are doing that, but it's only at the top level so we can win medals. But there is no money for the grassroots programmes, no money for the beginners and no money for the federations so they can build those programmes to help bring kids into sports.

The legacy that was promised in the Olympic bid, you don't see happening?

VW: No

VW: We had the Pan-American games in 2007 and all the beautiful stadiums and swimming pools have all gone, →



FAVELAS TO FAIRWAYS Japeri players to look out for

CRISTIAN BARCELOS DA SILVA

21 years old.

Started at Japeri Golf in 2006 at 11 years old.

HONOURS

- Brazilian Junior Champion in 2012
- The first ever black champion, not coming from a private elite golf club.
- Represented Brazil in Chile and Portugal in 2013
- Junior Orange Bowl Championship in Miami Florida in 2012.
- 2nd in Rio de Janeiro state ranking
- 13th in Brazilian national ranking.

BACKGROUND

Parents separated
Not a good student but went back to school when he realised education was a condition for continuing with golf.
Now works as an Instructor at Japeri Golf helping younger kids.

THUANE OLIVEIRA DE SOUZA

HONOURS

- Thuane was in 1st in state junior ranking
- 2nd in national junior ranking until the end of 2015
- She currently is in 2nd in state ranking and 6th in women's national ranking.
- Played for Brazil in the South American Junior Championships in Paraguay.
- Played for Rio in the state team for the last 3 years.

BACKGROUND

Parents separated when she was very young. Mother has to work as a domestic servant in Rio with long hours so her grandmother has brought her up.

Graduated from high school in December and is now studying in radiology.

VITÓRIA DE ARAUJO MONTEIRO

HONOURS

- Vitoria is currently 1st in state junior ranking.
- Has played for Brazil in the South American Junior Championships in Chile.
- Plays the Brazilian Junior Tour and is currently in 6th place.

BACKGROUND

Difficult family situation with no mother present

Still in high school and doing well. Vitória intends to go to university to study law so she can work against crime in Brazil.

VITÓRIA DE ARAUJO MONTEIRO and THUANE OLIVEIRA DE SOUZA

Just won the state doubles championship.



RIO'S OLYMPIC LEGACY

all been torn down.

FB: All the stadiums that were built for the world cup have all been abandoned, there is no planning all that money gets spent and there is no planning for the future.

After the Olympics do you feel that there won't be a lasting legacy for any sports not just golf?

VW: I don't see how there can be, they don't have the money to maintain the stadiums, courses or swimming pools. How can there be a legacy if they don't invest any money in sports programmes to uphold them.

How could the government help develop the golf Olympic legacy?

VW: The Brazilian Golf Confederation have the "Golf for Life" programme and hopefully that will spread, but we need funding to make it work and if there is to be a legacy we need a lot more funding.

One way the government could help golf is by lowering the taxes on equipment that could be shown that it is going to the "Golf for Life" programme and the programme at Japeri.



"Unfortunately I think that it will be without the involvement of the Brazilian Olympic Committee and the government and their lack of foresight"

FB: Everything to do with golf is double, triple the price you would pay anywhere else in the world, so it is hard for kids to start the game and lowering the tax on equipment going into programmes would definitely help.

I know we have talked about the obstacles but are you optimistic about the future of golf in Brazil, will we see kids from the Favelas coming through, even with the government's reluctance to help?

VW: We are already seeing it, we have 5/6 top players from our school at Japeri and 3 of them have played for Brazilian junior teams. That is one example of kids taking an opportunity that is offered to them and they have grasped that opportunity to make a better life.

It is also happening down south with a programme that started later than ours, but they have some great kids coming through, one was the number one junior Brazilian player and he came from a family of 7 with no father and the federation picked him up and sponsored him.

So you see it can happen, but we just

need more involvement on all levels and it is a pity that the Olympic committee will only let funds go to the top level athletes', but we need to develop the grassroots, that is where we need the money right now.

CONCLUSION

I visited Japeri myself to see Jair and some of the kids learning the game, I also had a nearest the pin wedge competition with one of the older boys that Jair started teaching 8-years ago and he is a very competent player. Jair and his fellow caddies along with Vicky have achieved great things in spite of the lack of government investment in grassroots golf.

My hope when Rio won the games was that we would see a young boy or girl from the favelas come through and make it as a professional in 10-years time as a result of Rio winning the Olympic bid. And with only 0.8% of people, who take up football in Brazil actually making a living from the game, this was the perfect opportunity of giving the children who live in the favelas another sporting option.

With people like Jair, Vicky and Francisca and the Brazilian golf federations "Golf for Life" programme in place I am hopeful, unfortunately I think that it will be without the involvement of the Brazilian Olympic Committee and the government and their lack of foresight and short-term quest for medals.

If you would like to help grassroots golf in anyway please contact Vicky at:
contatojaperi@gmail.com

W: japerigolfe.com.br
T: +21 98115-0169 or 2664-4229
E: golfejaperi@gmail.com



DREAM MAKER

JAIR MEDEIROS ZEFERINO
42 years old.
Born Japeri, Brazil

EDUCATION:

- High School
- 2008 PGA Brazil Golf Professionals Course
- 2012 Golf for Life CBG Instructor Course

WORK EXPERIENCE:

- 1987-1989 Waiter
- 1989-2007 Caddie at Gavea Golf & Country Club, Rio de Janeiro
- 2007 to present Chief Instructor at Japeri Golf

PLAYING EXPERIENCE:

- Won several caddie tournaments
- 2005 to 2007 Unofficial instructor at Japeri Golf tutoring 120 kids

BRAZIL BECKONS!



John Hinchliffe samples modern town planning in Brasilia, Fortaleza's history and São Paulo's street hawkers and the smells of 62 different cuisines

Anyone's first visit to a new country brings surprises but my first visit to Brazil introduces me to a whole new cocktail of cities, food, racial mixes and, well, cocktails! As the world's fifth-largest country, by both geographical area and total population, it's perhaps no surprise that homogeneity is nowhere and variety is everywhere.

I'm not only in Brazil for the first time but South America too and it's an exciting whole new developing world of optimism, consumerism, Latin temperament and efficiency. The mass media doom-sayers warning of inadequate infrastructure, riots in the favelas and personal danger seem to have written the wrong script. →

Above: The beach at Fortaleza



BRAZIL BECKONS!

BRASILIA

I start my journey in the capital Brasilia, deep in the central Brazilian highlands, relocated to be pretty much in the centre of the country - in theory taking the notion of equality of access for the whole nation to a new level but in practice less successful; given that access by road and rail is limited it makes air travel from most of the country a necessity. Built from scratch, work started in 1956 to the designs of the architect Oscar Niemeyer, urban planner Lucio Costa and the landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx under the instruction of Juscelino Kubitschek, President of Brazil from 1956 – 1961 and was formally founded in 1960. Every building and every person here has a history of no more than 55 years.

The city is a tour de force of town planning and, like most new towns, has the benefits and downside of a totally planned urban form. On the plus side, it's aspirations are based on utopian ideals, the internal road systems are structured into hierarchies to get you around the city and it is neatly laid out into neighbourhoods, which each have their own designated local shopping street.

On the downside, the environment is a touch sterile and the strict planning zones do not allow for organic growth of enterprise or, more importantly, bars. As I walk around the Monumental Axis of the civic and government zone in the midday sun, as most visitors will do, I start to realise this is thirsty work but there's no sign of a cafe or even a street vendor to quench your thirst. I suffer for my cultural quest but the unique sights of a complete landscape of monumental modernist architecture from the 50s and 60s is well worth the pain. It may not be ancient but UNESCO has recognised its uniquely artistic urban planning and inscribed it as a World Heritage Site as "... the definitive example of 20th century modernist urbanism."

The Monumental Axis, with the cathedral and governmental spheres is the big draw but my highlight is the Church of St Don Bosco, a mere concrete and glass box from the outside but an awe-inspiring mirage of blue hues on the inside. My host in Brasilia is Jose, an AirBnB booking who could not be more helpful, even collecting me from the airport and taking me on tours out of the city and way off the main tourist routes. →



Top: Domed Exhibition Hall on Monumental Axis. Left: The Brazilian Congress



Far Left: The Brasilia Metropolitan Cathedral. Left: Interior of Church of St Don Bosco.

JOURNEY PLANNER

PLACES TO STAY

Rio de Janeiro

Copacabana Palace

W: belmond.com/copacabana-palace-rio-de-janeiro

T: +55 21 2548-7070

Royal Tulip

W: royaltulipriodejaneiro.com

T: +55 21 3323-2200

Buzios

Casas Brancas

W: casasbrancas.com.br

T: +55 22 2623-1458

Foz Do Iguaçu

Wish Golf Resort

W: wishgolfresort.com

T: +55 (45) 3521 3400

PLACES TO EAT

Rio de Janeiro

Oswaldo's

W: bardoswaldos.com.br

T: 55 21 2493-1840

Casa da Feijoada

W: cozinhatipica.com.br/?content=restaurante&id=4

T: +55 21 2247-2776

Buzios

Rocka Beach Bar

W: rockafish.com

T: +55 (22) 2623 6159

Rincon

FB: facebook.com/RinconBuzios

T: +55 (22) 2623-4644

Mistico

W: abracadabrapousada.com.br

T: +55 (22) 2623 9046

74 RESTAURANT

W: casasbrancas.com.br

T: + 55 (22) 26231458



BRAZIL BECKONS!

Top: Fishing boats and high-rise at Fortaleza.
Right: The Centro de Turismo, a converted 19th-century jail.
Far right: Modern skyline and beach at Fortaleza.



FORTALEZA

Next up is Fortaleza, on the NE coast, a port with a fort for the Portuguese colonists from 1500 but now outgrown and mostly wiped away the evidence of its colonial origins. Its European origins, history of slavery and easy access to the Amazon forest have resulted in over 57% of the population classify themselves as “Pardo”, the tri-racial descendants of Europeans, Amerindians and Africans - and all seem to swim along harmoniously.

Fortaleza is now the 5th city of the country, a retail heaven or hell and a beach resort of modern tower block hotels along the strip and a welcoming tropical climate. It's a place where street hawkers of the world unite to offer anything a visitor might need at cut-price but thankfully without any pressure to buy. As I relax on the beach soaking up some afternoon sun, I don't have to move to far to bag myself a lobster or some sunscreen from the vendors on the beach and with street food and Caipirinhas available on the streets and yellow Brazil shirts everywhere by the thousand, it's moments like this that you can just sit back, relax and smile to yourself at how beautiful Brazil can be. Tip of the day has to be; Why pay extra to drink in a bar or eat in a restaurant when you can get twice as much for half the price from a street vendor? Some even bring their own disco set-up so you can dance in the street too. →



SÃO PAULO

My final journey takes me to São Paulo - one of the world's great metropolises with its staggering 21million population and an urban sprawl to match. It may not be as sexy as Rio but it's culturally alive with music, art, fashion and beautiful people. It was founded on gold, coffee and sugar but now it's a self sustaining world within a world. A little shabby and rough around the edges but it has corporate HQs and international events as well as friendly crowds and quiet neighbourhoods. My host is an old friend who married a Paulistana, Danny is a DJ and informs me he will be playing at a business promotional event when Prince Harry visits.

To suit its multinationalism and incredibly diverse national food sources São Paulo reputedly has 62 different cuisines across 12,000 restaurants, so visitors are spoilt for gastronomic choice. I am standing on the corner of the magnificent Mercado Municipal and you can't help but be enticed by some of the unique herbs and spices that play with your taste buds and your senses. Of course there are conventional restaurants but two Brazilian specialities are not so much the food, but the system of paying.

There are churrascaria, Brazilian steak houses where you pay a set price but then eat as much as you can - a recipe for gluttony if ever there was one and now spreading across the UK. For the more careful, there are also restaurants where you put what you want on your plate - from a seemingly endless choice of dishes - and then you pay for it by weight - beware of a potential surcharge if you only load up meat and swerve the veg!

Top: Art Deco Bank of Sao Paulo.
Below: Sao Paulo Street Party. Below Right: Fruit Stall in Municipal Market.
Bottom: Sao Paolo urban sprawl at sunset from rooftop cocktail bar



JOURNEY PLANNER

PLACES TO EAT

Foz Do Iguacu

Wish Golf Resort

W: wishgolfresort.com

T: +55 (45) 3521 3400

THINGS TO DO

Buzios

Boat Trip

W: portoveleirobuzios.com.br

T: + 55 (22) 26232470

Buzios Trolley

W: tourshop.com.br

T: +55 (22) 2623 4733

Helicopter Tour

W: avalontaxiaereo.com

T: +55 (22) 9999 25777

Foz Do Iguacu

Rafain Churrascaria Show

W: rafainchurrascaria.com.br

T: Tel. +55 (45) 3523-1177

Helisul Taxi Aereo

W: helisul.com

T: +55 45 3529-7474

Parque Des Aves

W: parqueadasaves.com.br

T: +55 45 3529-8282

Tour Shop

W: tourshop.com.br



BELMOND COPACABANA PALACE HOTEL

Copacabana, Brazil

By TERESA BARNETT

When it comes to short trips, holidays and everything in between, my suitcase is usually packed before the finer details have been confirmed, in fact I've been known to pack prior to booking; yes I am a fully paid up member of the wanderlust club. So when James Mason, the Editor of Planet Golf Review suggested travelling to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil my suitcase was packed and left at his home two weeks before departure. Rio de Janeiro has a particular draw for me having travelled here 16 years previous. Returning sans best friend and trusty backpack, to the city that had introduced me to the Sambódromo, Brazilian bikinis, fresh coconut water mixed with vodka, tangy tasting heart of palm salad and Feijoada filled me with an excitement not even a short-haul flight from Heathrow to Lisbon followed by a long-haul flight to Rio de Janeiro could dampen.

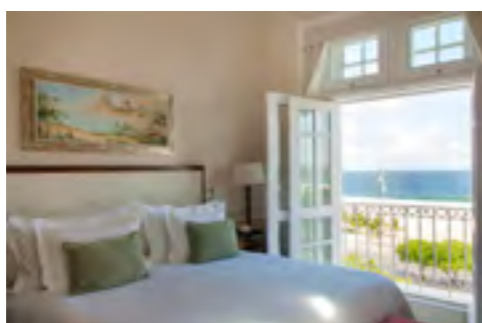
Rio is a glorious combination of ocean, beaches, rain forest and a strikingly beautiful cast of tourists and locals alike. Every box for paradise is ticked, from the white sands of Copacabana beach and the deepest aquamarine waters of the Atlantic Ocean to the beach bars serving intoxication inducing caipirinhas running from Copacabana to Ipanema, Rio has it all. Resting our heads at the Belmond Copacabana Palace Hotel was an easy choice. This imposing 5 star hotel dominates the top 5 hotels to stay in Rio year after year and for good reason. As I walk up the steps into the grand lobby I am greeted by what I can only describe as old world opulence, an arresting flower arrangement begs to be admired and cheekily sniffed, I duly oblige and my nostrils are filled with the sweet scent of flower varieties I had never smelled before much less seen. After a 13 hour flight excluding the 2 hour →

Above: Copacabana palace
swimming pool at night and
below the iconic frontage

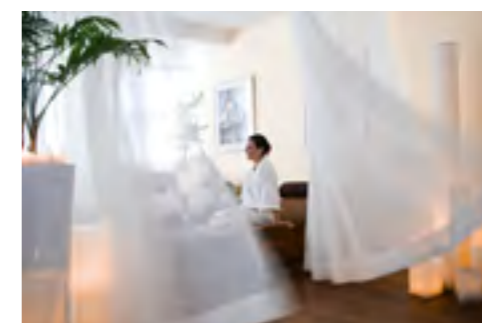
GIMME SHELTER

Teresa Barnett checks in days after the Rolling Stones check out and finds out why the Belmond Copacabana Palace is home from home for Britain's Rock Royalty





Right opposite the beach, you really wouldn't want to stay anywhere else when you're in Copacabana



After drinks on the beach until the early hours, what better way to start the day than a relaxing spa

stopover check was be mercifully swift. I was informed Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones had checked out two days prior to our arrival; in fact the Rolling Stones have chosen to stay at the Belmond every time they play in Rio. Celebrity chef Ken Hom also chooses to stay here as do the Duke and Duchess of Kent; well if it was good enough for rock stars and royalty it was good enough for me.

ROOMS AND SPAS

Built in 1923, this 93 year old Art Deco hotel was renovated in 2012. The 239 rooms are a mix of rooms with beach, or city views, suites and penthouse suites. My spacious room was bright, full of period furniture in keeping with the establishment and overlooked the semi Olympic swimming pool. The room was fairly neutral in colour with a king size bed that begged to be shared. With no such luck on the horizon I dived on headfirst and was welcomed by baby soft sheets and a sturdy mattress. The writing desk although positioned in the corner of my room was able to catch the morning rays of the sun as I sat on my bed breathing a sigh of

true contentment. My marble bathroom came equipped with a rainfall shower large enough to comfortably fit 2 or 3 people, a double sink and bath.

Human enterprise plays a momentous part to deliver the impeccable and attentive service I experienced. The hotel employs over 600 staff excluding sub-contractors to ensure that all needs, wants and quirky desires are catered for. The hotel's three restaurants; Cipriani that serves highly rated Italian Cuisine; Ken Hom's one Michelin starred and equally raved about Pan-Asian Mee and the informal Pergula cater for diners afflicted with even the fussiest of tastes. My first need was for food, in particular an impressive buffet breakfast consisting of the freshest tropical fruits and chilled yoghurt which was savoured poolside on the veranda of the restaurant. The Pergula with its unflappable waiting staff, serves Brazilian and International dishes, I recommend the duck in orange sauce with garlic rice.

At the Copacabana Palace Spa which has 5 individual treatment rooms, 2 couples treatment rooms, sauna and steam bath, I opt for a 60 minutes Aroma Quente massage which involves slow movements and pressure on tense zones of the body. This begins with me choosing the AYA organic

oil, which is then warmed and applied. I decided on Harmony the scent of which coupled with music by Yiruma was sufficient to transport my mind to a Zen like state. Zilma, my therapist started by wrapping my feet which embarrassingly, were overdue a pedicure, in a warm towel before massaging my legs with firm but consistent pressure. The pressure increased as she reached my troubled lower back which I imagined to be in a ball of knots that Zilma was thoroughly straightening out. The Spa which was renovated 8 years ago is managed by Alina who knows her treatment menu well and can make suggestions depending on how you feel at the time and how you want to feel afterwards, there are 2 relaxation areas which I would suggests post treatment are utilised for at least 45 minutes. The Spa offers half and full day experiences, facials, body treatments and has a hair salon is open to the public and as I saunter back to my room walking on air, I truly recommend you do the same.

W: belmond.com/pt-br/copacabana-palace-rio-de-janeiro/
T: +55 21 2548 7070



CASAS BRANCAS BOUTIQUE HOTEL AND SPA

Buzios, Brazil

By TERESA BARNETT

TEQUILA SUNSET

Casas Brancas has a ringside seat as the sun goes down over Caboclo Island, Teresa Barnett samples the delights of the white houses.

As we pull into the driveway I fall in love with Casas Brancas simple beauty and its wonderful setting. The journey from Rio to Buzios took 2.5 hours and was worth every one of those 150 minutes of my life. Trees carpet the hills surrounding the roads we drove across like a crushed green velvet blanket.

Buzios for the uninitiated is a sun worshippers paradise. It has grown from being a fishing village with 6,000 inhabitants to a popular holiday destination courtesy of Brigitte Bardot's visit in 1964; the result? Some 30,000 inhabitants; a number that soars five times during the summer season. With over 23 beaches, 150 restaurants and a Pete Dye designed golf course this little taste of paradise has put itself firmly on the map. 70% of the hotels in Buzios are in Joao Fernandes beach and 80% of the tourists are from Argentina. My eyes feast on the golden bodies, 1 km of coarse golden sand and three tier shades of sparkling blue sea.

Casas Brancas Boutique Hotel and Spa with its Mediterranean inspired white washed walls, panoramic ocean views and Zen like ambience is the hotel I know will re-centre me after a stressful few weeks. Although the hotel was booked to capacity, due to its multi level design I was unaware of this and the hotel maintained the serenity I felt as I crossed the →



Top and right, rooms with a view at Casas Brancas



Indulge yourself in a half or full days spa treatment



threshold. For those still connected to reality there is wifi throughout and the rooms have an LCD TV and DVD player. Casas Brancas is enviably located near everything, a short walk downtown and there is an array of shops, restaurants, bars and nightclubs. The brother and sister team who run the hotel continue the legacy left by their parents faithfully updating and improving. They offer free yoga classes thus improving the sleep and relaxation of their guests.

TIME TO EXPLORE

I decide to explore my surroundings; the scent of Amendoa fruit fills the air on the short walk from road to beach. There are various ways to explore Buzios and a boat tour whispered my name on the wind. The walk along the hot cobbled stones to the dock delivers the smell of freshly steamed mussels. We boarded the large open deck of our boat the Aloha Buzios to the pulsating beat of Rihanna's 'We got right now'.

Sailing past Pria dos Ossos which translates as "Bone Beach" the first stop was at Azeda beach which led on to Azedina beach. It was time for a pit stop

and I dive straight into the azure sea. I'm not the strongest swimmer and was soon calling out for a tubular shaped float, embarrassed much? A few steps later and I'm back on dry land.

Exploring Buzios by sea was not enough and a land tour beckoned. Buzios Trolley departs from Pria de Armacao – this is not a beach as such despite its name. As the trolley bus gathered momentum, Monica our tour guide does well to conduct the tour in English and Portuguese.

She points out the bronze statue of Brigitte Bardot made by Christina Motta who was also commissioned to produce the three fishermen statue. Monica further points out the statue of the former Brazilian President Juscelino Kubitschek who would bring his various lovers to Buzios and dine at the Solitaire restaurant. Although now dead he remains a permanent fixture outside his favourite eatery.

So what do you do when you're a golf widow with time on your hands? Casa Brancas with their most ethereal spa has the answers. Sofia speaks English which is helpful, the spa is not the largest on this trip but what it may lack in size is certainly made up by the panoramic views of the sea

from the jacuzzi in the relaxation room. With two single treatment rooms, two bathrooms and one dual treatment room this luxurious sanctuary has a range of wellness rituals to restore the work frazzled and time poor. Choose from the five packages, Wellness, Relaxation and Luxurious together with a half or full day spa. All packages come with a gift of Ipanema flip-flops and a swimsuit. Having changed into the bikini provided and wrapped myself in a robe I meet with Ale my masseuse and choose the 50 minute Bamboo Massage which Ale executes perfectly, and I slowly drift off to sleep.

The spa uses the latest techniques to get your body and skin in shape and in addition to the packages they offer nine different types of massage, facial treatments and body treatment. I cannot envisage anyone coming to this hotel and not wanting to relax. I would recommend making a day of the spa with the Luxurious package, before winding up your day drinking herbal tea in the jacuzzi overlooking the sea, and that my readers is the epitome bliss.

W: casasbrancas.com.br

T: +55 22 2623-1458



LIFES A BEACH

Teresa Barnett checks into the England football teams home from home for the 2014 World Cup Finals

ROYAL TULIP

São Conrado, Brazil

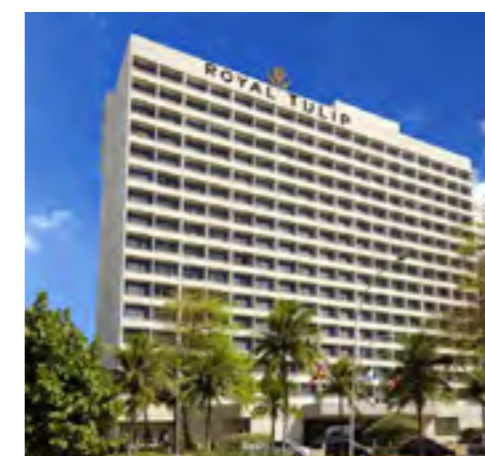
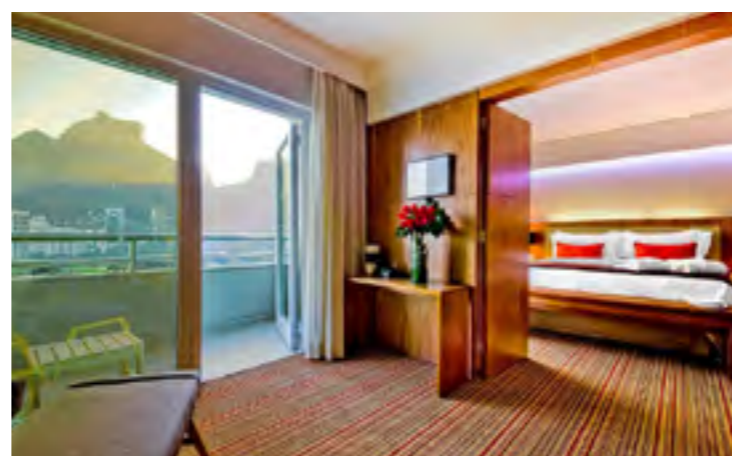
By TERESA BARNETT

The drive from Buzios to The Royal Tulip hotel takes us through Barra Da Tijuca home to the The Tijuca Forest which was declared a National Park in 1961. This tropical rainforest in Rio de Janeiro, claims to be the world's largest urban forest although this claim is in dispute and has a contender to that throne in the form of the urban forest of Johannesburg in South Africa. My mind is transported back almost 16 years to the day when as a student I entered the National Park with a dear friend desperate to explore and after getting terribly lost believed we would never get out. Thankfully that story had a happy ending.

I spot my hotel in the distance; it's a large structure that can be seen from the main road minutes before we reach it. I'm not really a fan of large hotels, boutique, preferably 50 rooms or less is my natural default. The reception area is large and ideal for business travellers with an H Stern jeweller shop, ideal if you've forgotten to buy the Mrs a decent gift. Check in was a bit laborious but only because my room had been upgraded so that I was on the same floor as my Editor. Andres, the Front of House manager provided us vouchers to obtain a drink of our choice at the hotel bar while we waited.



Left and below: São Conrado beach and Gavea Golf & Country Club are some of the wonerful views of offer at the Royal Tulip



I'm still craving coconut water and promptly order myself one. Waiting in the cool modern air-conditioned bar, I watch the waves of the ocean gently lap the sand on São Conrado beach which is opposite the hotel.

I'm soon handed two key cards to my Executive room and we're in the lift to the 16th floor. 1608 is where I will be laying my head for a few days at least. To say my room was sizeable is a bit of an understatement but I did feel I was in a cozy homelike atmosphere. My room came with a separate lounge area, a spacious bedroom with a king size bed, walk in wardrobe and shower large enough for 4 people; only when I step in do I realise that I can see directly into the bedroom, I'm grateful there is no one staring back at me.

ROOM WITH A VIEW

My lounge in this five-star hotel faces São Conrado beach and from my bedroom I can also see the colossal statue of Christ the Redeemer on top of Corcovado Mountain. By day it looks solid and imposing but by night it's as if this monolith is floating in the night and I imagine it walking on water. I am given complementary coconut water and my mini bar is well stocked.

The hotel has a spa which regrettably I did not visit. There is a state-of-the-art gym for the body conscious and for the salad dodgers and carb lovers the hotel's American style burger bar serves a decent hamburger until 1am. The 9th and 10th floors underwent a £2 million refurbishment in 2014 as the England World Cup squad stayed here. I guess after landing in Rio they thought they were in heaven and forgot they had a job to do, that's the only reason I can think of for such a dismal performance.

If the rainforest which houses a number of attractions to include the Cascatinha Waterfall and the Stone of Gávea, doesn't wet your sightseeing buds there is the Fashion Mall which is a 5 minute walk away and the beach which you can cut through to from the piano bar, for the energetic and adventurous you could always hire a bike and cycle along the dedicated cycle path to the bars and restaurants of Ipanema, at least you can burn off all those calories on the cycle back!

W: royaltulipriodejaneiro.com

T: +55 21 3323-2200



WISH GOLF RESORT IGUAÇU

Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil

By TERESA BARNETT

The drive from Foz do Iguaçu airport to the Wish Golf Resort Iguaçu was thankfully short. I was hot and tired when we landed and was pleased that our driver arrived with ice cold water, cold towels and fruit.

Wish Result Golf and Convention centre was my home for the next few days a 15 minute drive from Foz do Iguaçu airport. Check in was a smooth process and I'm struck by how attractive the lobby of hotel is.

A quick drive in a golf cart and I'm entering my room. Sliding doors seem to be a big feature in Brazilian hotel rooms. My spacious room is full of dark wood furniture with neutral coloured walls. The mini bar has a decent selection of everything I like in the middle of the night, the bed firm but comfortable and the sofa is large enough to put my feet up and read. The short walk to the restaurant later reveals the many warm water swimming pools set in the vegetation rich grounds. The grounds are worth the walk. →

WISHING ON A STAR

With the falls, dam, helicopter rides, Paraguay and Argentina all within easy reach, Teresa Barnett finds the perfect spot to rest your head after a day of adventure

Above and right,
Wish resorts main
swimming pool,
gym restaurant and
reception buildings





Breakfast is a large buffet with a chef on hand to make fresh omelettes to order. There are a number of gluten free products to eat which pleasantly surprised me. Lunch is a more refined a la carte affair with dinner returning to buffet style.

The hotel bar with its club chairs looks out on to the grounds of this golf resort making even the most formal meetings feel relaxing.

Iguaçu is built around the dam and the falls, and there is plenty to do, viewing the dam can be an all day event and as you will read from my other reviews Iguaçu Falls can viewed, by air, foot or boat and all are great ways to see this stunning, powerful natural wonder.

For the more adventurous and passport stamp collectors among you, Paraguay is only a 20 minute drive away and I am told their tax free shopping malls are a must for bargain hunters.

The Parque Des Aves, bird sanctuary is a must see as is the night time Rafain Churrascaria Show, before returning to Wish Golf Resort for that well deserved nightcap in the bar.

W: wishgolfresort.com

T: +55 (45) 3521 3400



Top Left to Right:
Restaurant, reception
and computer room.
Right Iguassu Golf Club



FASANO SPA

Ipanema, Brazil

By TERESA BARNETT

The Fasano Hotel, Ipanema was designed inside and out by famed French designer Philippe Starck in 2007 and has been frequented by rock royalty in the form of Madonna. I am uncharacteristically early for my appointment at The Fasano Spa which is nestled on the second floor, down a candle lit corridor, I decide to have a drink in the model littered Baretto-Londra bar where wood, glass and marble feature heavily reminding me of Berners Tavern in London.

I am met by Walter and Martin, offered tea and given a comprehensive form to complete. The enticing array of options from scrubs to facials, baths and yoga has something to offer everyone. The Fasano provides a menu of essential oils that details the benefits of each one and includes Orange, Lavender, Lemon Thaiti, Peppermint, Patcholi and my favourite Geranium.

Blues, Piano and Lounge music are on offer and I select Piano before being led to the bijou changing room where the lockers contain slippers and robes. Having changed into the snug robe I am led down the Balinese inspired corridor into a Geranium scented treatment room where an intricately cut crystal stool and a large free standing bath awaits. Once comfortably perched, Christini, my therapist, fills a bowl with hot →

Top and below: A spa with a view,
the perfect way to relax

FRENCH CONNECTION

Not for the first time Teresa Barnett finds herself following in the footsteps of rock royalty on her recent trip to Brazil





Left and Right: The many treatment and relaxation areas at Fasano Spa



water, to which she adds Geranium oil and peach rose petals.

My feet are bathed and my head, neck and shoulder are gently massaged. The treatment does not end there, no that was simply my entrée and I am already walking on air as I am directed to another massage room where hot towels are paced on my feet and back before I am given a hot oil massage, a nice touch.

Christini slowly pulls and stretches my limbs. My arm is contorted above my head and then behind my back. My left leg is gently lifted up and then crossed behind me over my right leg. I feel like a gymnast albeit that I am not doing any of the moves of my own volition. Is this treatment relaxing; in a word no, I did not leave feeling as though I was on cloud nine; indeed I described it to a friend as a chiropractic massage but I did feel as though every knot in my neck and back had been straightened and that I was 2 inches taller. Would I have the same treatment again? Absolutely

Male spa aficionados are well catered for with a number of male only experiences ranging from the 50 minute Executive Ritual for Hair/

Hands/Feet or Eyes and Face to the 2 hour 20 minute Marco Antonio Bath developed for men.

A ritualistic pampering consisting of a massage, facial and a hot bath at the Fasano Spa is the ultimate way to spend an evening.

W: fasano.com.br/hotelaria/hotel/spa

T: +55 21 3202 4044



DREAM STATE

Finding her namesake in Rio, Teresa Barnett finds the path to divine intervention runs by the side of the outdoor pool



Above Right: The hotel entrance Right: The outdoor pool leads you to Le Spa

SANTA TERESA HOTEL AND SPA

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

By TERESA BARNETT

It's a bumpy and twisty road up to the Santa Teresa Hotel and Spa with direct views of Sugar Loaf Mountain and glimpses of Cristo Redento along the way. Getting there proved a little tricky a 9-hour rainstorm the night before had left a tree uprooted and laying in the middle of the road with no way around it.

Taking a longer detour up the steep and at times narrow cobbled streets crossing the tracks for the Santa Teresa tram – the last working tram in Rio De Janeiro that takes you to Lapa, which is a lively neighbourhood in the centre of Rio famed for the Arcos da Lapa which translates as Lapa Arches, an 18th-century aqueduct built by colonial leaders.

The route to Santa Teresa is loud with colourful buildings. The mansions I pass along the way could do with a lick of paint, but rather than looking dilapidated they look lived in and thoroughly enjoyed.

My car pulls up outside the hotel and I'm mildly surprised, I did not expect a hotel to be situated this far up Santa Teresa Hill and surrounded by favelas. For those of you who are wondering, yes I do feel safe, the →



Right: Time to relax
Left: The earthy colours and the hot tub with oils and rose petals



views are fabulous and the smell of fresh rain permeates the air, I inhale deeply not just the air but the view.

The path to Le Spa passes the outdoor pool and a feeling of tranquillity fills me. It is steep, although fine for me it does cross my mind that this hotel may not be suitable for those advancing in years, that is until I see a couple I guess to be in their late 60's full steam ahead up the steps. I'm panting going downhill and they were having a lively conversation.

TIME TO RELAX

Queila da Silva, my spa therapist greets me. She shows me to one of the two bathrooms to get changed. I walk past the relaxation area that is reminiscent of the spas I visited in Thailand and Cambodia and four individual treatment rooms. This is an earthy spa, full of dark natural wood, candles and muslin and in keeping with its surroundings.

I meet Queila outside the couple's treatment room that has two baths, at first glance I thought they were for the petite. I'm introduced to the SPA Dream and dream I did. This package starts with a full oil body

massage and is then followed by a choice of body scrub or body mask. For me there was no decision, scrub all the way, a hot tub bath with essential oils and rose petals was next. I promptly fell asleep once I realised the tub was more than deep enough to accommodate me. I lazily opened one eye as Queila set a glass of fresh juice and a bowl of fruit salad beside me, 5 minutes later refreshments consumed I dose off.

Natura is the brand of choice although not for all treatments. You can enjoy your treatment and tick that eco friendly box too, as this company sources over 70% of its dry ingredients from natural sources. They have traditional Brazilian fruit smells like passion fruit.

There was only one fault and it was not a negative as such, rather an act of god or more likely climate change. The 9-hour thunderstorm had left a couple of watermarks, nothing a drop of paint wouldn't rectify and a quick steam of the shower area. I'm sure by the time you get there Le Spa will be back to its best.

Le Spa is open to non-guests and the prices are reasonable. See for yourself.

W: santa-teresa-hotel.com/pdf/spamenueng.pdf

W: santa-teresa-hotel.com

T: +55 21 3380-0200



HOUSE OF WINDSOR

Teresa Barnett finds there is only one way to relax after a 2.5 hour journey stuck in the back of a car between a suitcase and her editor

WINDSOR ATLANTICA

Copacabana, Brazil

By TERESA BARNETT

I've spent most of the day sat in the back of a car huddled in between a suitcase and my editor. After checking into the Royal Tulip Hotel I feel wired and James Mason, Editor of Planet Golf Review suggests I go to a spa for a massage. I don't need to be told twice and so we head to the Windsor Atlantica Spa. I am curious to see where the England World Cup 2014 squad were going to stay before that plug was pulled and they took up residence away from the fun and frolics of Copacabana beach

Windsor is the largest chain in Rio de Janeiro with over twenty, four and five star hotels. We arrive at the Windsor Atlantica, the lobby of which is spacious with an ornate chandelier above a basin of orchids. The spa is situated on the 38th floor of the hotel providing a fabulous view of Copacabana beach. There are two couples spa suites and three single treatment rooms. They have a bridal spa suite named Londres – home from home – which has breathtaking views of Sugar Loaf Mountain in the distance. I could have happily taken a nap there and then.

It would be easier to list what they don't have, apart from the usual steam room, jacuzzi and sauna, a Turkish shower with hydro jets occupies



Left: Relaxation and hot tubs. Below left: The Turkish shower hydro jets. Below right: view from the couples massage room



one room and a hair salon and beauty room are housed in the others. There is a well-equipped gym and Pilates studio.

The women's changing room has two rainfall showers and lockers containing a towel and a fluffy towelling robe, once cocooned in my robe I meet my therapist at reception to be taken to the treatment room. I'm surprised to see James ambling in and then another therapist joins us and it looks like we are going to sample the couple's treatment.

My masseuse oils my back using the Brazilian produced Vyvedas aromatherapy oil and begins the massage. The therapist is excellent and the stress of the journey from Buzios is slowly massaged away and I manage to relax sufficiently enough that I doze lightly before being tapped softly awake.

If I was staying at the Windsor Atlantica I would happily head up to the spa, enjoy the treatments on offer. The spa menu is not as extensive as I assumed it would be but there is a sufficient number of massages, facial treatments and spa experiences to indulge in. Once relaxed air walk to the roof top bar to enjoy a cocktail as the sun sets over Christ the Redeemer for this is paradise regained.

W: windsorhoteis.com/
T: +55 21 2195-7800



Teresa Barnett is transported back in time as she enters the Sheraton Grande, in Rio de Janeiro and finds it's her time to Shine

TIME TO SHINE

Above: Stunning views from the massage rooms. Below: The entrance to Shine



SHERATON GRANDE

Leblon, Brazil

By TERESA BARNETT

A well heeled step into the lobby of the Sheraton Grande, Rio, with it's chandeliers, marble floors and I feel as though I've been transported to a bygone era, I was expecting to see Audrey Hepburn gracefully step out of the elevator at any minute. I already know I am in for a treat at the Shine Spa.

Shine has four treatment rooms to include Bright, Radiance and Glow, two of these rooms are dual treatment rooms so you can enjoy some relaxing couple time. The marble sauna and steam room add to the decadent experience. If guests have forgotten to bring their personal items then razor, toothbrush kits and shower caps are provided.

Isabelle a pleasant and knowledgeable woman meets me and once the obligatory forms are completed I find myself being led to the ladies changing room with their LED light changing aromatherapy showers. My locker reveals an embossed robe, slippers and bathing products.

I slip the robe over my shoulders before returning to the sun filed "co-ed" lounge – The co ed lounge is stark white but suitably softened with gold and green accents. Gold features in the mosaic wall, green in the two Chesterfields and four retro style chairs – I perch on one of the upholstered Chesterfield style sofa's that matches the mosaic tiles in the bathroom.

I help myself to ice water and enjoy the views of the sea as it sparkles in the sunlight. I soak up the sights of Ipanema, Leblon and sugar loaf mountain from this idyllic vantage point. Outside I can see a circular daybed, perfect for a post massage snooze in the sun.

Natalia my therapist leads me to Bright, where my treatment commenced with a footbath. I close my eyes as my feet soak in a bath with warm water, peach rose petals and sugar. My feet really are made for walking and the massage I'm given is greatly received.

Classical music fills the treatment room along with the sound of rolling waves of the Atlantic. Natalia's petite frame belies the strength in her hands as she gets down to the unenviable task of undoing the sailor knots in my neck. I drift to a far off place telling myself that I would come back to Natalia one day. I did not want to wake, neither did I want to leave, but it was over all too soon.

A cup of mint tea is served while I relax once again in the co-ed room and I'm struck by the quietness and intimacy of the spa especially in light of how big the Sheraton Grande is. Shine is a white light oasis in the heat of Rio de Janeiro. Step in and drift away.

W: shinespa.sheratonrio.com

T: +55 21 2529 1103



BAR DO OSWALDO

Barra da Tijuca, Brazil

By TERESA BARNETT

TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED

Teresa Barnett shares cocktails with a Ju Jitsu legend and owner of Bar do Oswaldo and a Brazilian national dish with one of the three partners of Casa da Feijoada



Above: Rommel Cardozo with his fathers portrait in the background.

Right: Gilberto with two of his staff and outside of Casa da Feijoada

Satisfying my need for traditional food left me feeling thirsty; a short ride from Ipanema to Barra da Tijuca takes me to the hidden gem that is Bar Do Oswaldo. This family run bar was established in 1946 and at 70 years is one of the oldest family run bars in that area. It's a buzzing yet down to earth bar serving distilled vodka and cachaça "batidas" Portuguese for cocktails.

This has long been a gathering place for locals and tourists alike looking to relax and unwind after a long day. I sit outside with James the Editor of this magazine and two of our hosts Eric and Michael enjoying my first ever coconut batida, a creamy iced vodka based cocktail that goes down all to well. Two batidas and a sugarless (my choice) maracuja caipirinha later I spot a local man across the road. Blue t-shirt, faded combat shorts in conversation with a young girl, he then proceeds to walk over to our table.

The man before me turns out to be Rommel Cardozo, co-owner of this gem of an establishment and also twice crowned Brazilian ju jitsu champion, two-time ju jitsu world champion runner-up and Pan American games runner-up. Rommel is a third degree black belt Brazilian ju jitsu champion, respected businessman, ju jitsu instructor and politician.

So why do I love this particular bar so much considering it does not overlook the sea, there is no pool, in fact no water in sight at all? This is not a sleek bar, no murals adorn the walls, there are no ornate carvings or delicate chandeliers but what resonates is that this is a bar that caters well for women; the drinks mixed and served here are inexplicably smooth. Rommel's father perfected his recipe for batidas over time – as I try a chocolate and vodka version, Elysian Fields I'm home!

This really is a heavenly drink despite my initial reservations and that is why I fell in love with this bar, I have a longstanding dislike for chocolate if it's not in solid form. In my mind chocolate should be consumed in solid form and preferably covering biscuit, toffee, nut or fudge. I also have a childhood aversion to coconut in all its incarnations but the smoothness of these cocktails has me indulging with delight.

My three companions drank the bar dry of Bohemia beer before switching to this heavenly drink during which time Rommel came over to speak to us giving me a brief history of the bar and telling us about his father whom he clearly misses. It is his father's portrait that is proudly displayed on the building despite Rommel's achievements.

His father would affectionately call his single female patrons "my dear girl" and took time to speak to them. According to Rommel many relationships have started in Bar Do Oswaldo from the time it opened. I contemplate this as I sip on a super food packed with vitamins and infused with vodka also know as an acai batida, and think about my bubbly blonde Norwegian friend.

For ladies that wish to strengthen their bodies and free their minds prior to pickling their livers there is a yoga studio around the corner. I've already convinced my friend to travel to Brazil, a day of dynamic yoga followed by a night of super fruit cocktails.

Rommel may have placed runner-up a few times in his professional fights but with Bar do Oswaldo he can proudly stand on top of the podium.

FB: facebook.com/Bar-do-Oswaldo-138093479546/?rf=136333813099042
T: +55 21 2493-1840

CASA DA FEIJOADA

Ipanema, Brazil

By TERESA BARNETT

Rio de Janeiro's close proximity to the Atlantic Ocean makes me crave seafood in all its forms. fish, lobster, squid and octopus and yet I'm surrounded by meat, grilled meat, fried meat and barbecued meat. My decision to opt for a traditional meal leads me to Casa da Feijoada.



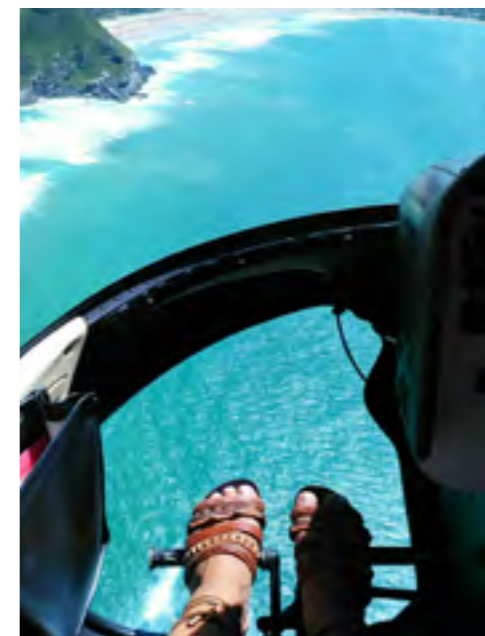
This dish traditionally eaten on a Saturday is intrinsically linked to Brazil's history with slavery. Black beans are plentiful in Brazil and the slaves would make this dish using the leftovers of the pork they received from their masters who would eat the "noble parts". The slaves received the ears, tail and feet of the pig in essence the parts their masters would not consume.

With such a back-story why do I find myself sitting in this traditional restaurant smiling across at a family from France? I'm not sure but I order this pork and black bean stew anyway, noble parts only. A feast is laid out before me. Black bean soup with sausage, a thick salty dish that reminds me of my grandmothers kidney bean soup, this is followed by the feijoada which has sausage, pork pieces and beef and served with rice, couve similar to spring greens and farofa, which is manioc flour toasted with butter. I probably should have stopped there but could not resist dessert and was genuinely grateful for the digestion aiding slices of orange provided with the meal.

Leonardo and Gilberto two of the three restaurant owners are on hand to tell me more about the dish albeit with the assistance of one of our hosts Marcos. They are undoubtedly very proud of their restaurant in Ipanema and with a dish like this they have every right to be, it may not sound appetising, but trust me if you are visiting during the Olympics or anytime after a visit to Casa da Feijoada needs to be on your itinerary.

A: R. Prudente de Moraes, 10B - Ipanema, Rio de Janeiro - RJ, 22420-040, Brazil
T:+55 21 2247-2776





Left and below:
Aerial view of
Buzios. Bottom:
Sergio's helicopter
on its pad



Having explored Buzios on foot, by sea and by bus there was only one further option, Air!

W: avalontaxiaereo.com
T: +55 (22) 9999 25777



One of my favourite pastimes is packing my suitcase before jetting off somewhere, but a helicopter tour is completely different and although excited I was filled with trepidation as I had never flown by helicopter before.

Our Pilot and the owner of Avalon Taxi Aereo, Sergio Nascimento started his company in December 2015, his sightseeing tours takes you over Joao Fernandes beach and is based next door to the Buzios Golf Resort. He also flies extended tours to and from Rio and it is well worth considering if flying into Rio de Janeiro International Airport, instead of driving the 2.5 hours to Buzios you can be sipping your caipirinha on one of the many beaches 30 minutes later. Sergio's Bell 206-Jet Ranger III helicopter can transport 4 passengers with up to 113kg in luggage.

Sergio is slim and wiry with a confident yet calming manner, perhaps he senses the

mild unease that I am trying to mask. He has an impressive CV with over 36 years flying experience and 20,000 flight hours. A specialist in internal loads, in a previous life did heli-fire fighting and logging. He has flown through the dense Amazon forest and loves his work. Rafael his assistant helps with the embarking and disembarking of the helicopter.

The noise emanating from the tail rotor is strangely reassuring and it takes a while before I decide to put on my noise reducing headphones. Sergio's calm voice enters my ears, "okie dokie", he says "here we are flying" and as I look out of the side window I realise that we really are, flying that is. Do I feel safe? Absolutely.

Although on average he flies at 500ft Sergio takes us up to 700ft and hovers like a hummingbird. The golf course looks like a miniature snakes and ladders board with pin size people and apple candyfloss trees fill the

landscape. From this vantage point the tree-lined mountains offer an array of colours that delight the eyes, Buzios is incredible to look at from the air.

The descent was so smooth, I knew I was landing but I couldn't feel it when the helicopter final touched terra firma. A brief chat with Sergio and I am walking the path to the car.

James, my companion on this trip mentions we hit a spot of turbulence in the air and Leo, Buzios' Tourism Secretary agrees he felt it. I didn't notice and while I would like to think it was because I'm unflappable whatever the situation honesty dictates that I can only attribute credit to Sergio's masterful handling of his flying machine.

As I approach the car the sounds of crickets buzz and a variety of birds that almost look like little sparrows merrily chirp away and as I watch one of them take flight, I start to wish I was starting my ascent again.



FALLS GOLD

The perfect match, a natural wonder meets woman made skills

A chilly and windy morning greets me for my panoramic helicopter tour of Iguacu Falls. This is my second helicopter tour but with the change in weather; with rain now hammering my face and body, I did not think the helicopter ride would go ahead today.

My doubts were unfounded as I find myself running across the grass to the helicopter stand with five other people. As I climb in I note that this is very upmarket, my bottom sinks into the leather padded seats that help me feel secure and then we are up up and away.

We fly over Iguacu falls and our pilot, a highly skilled female flier whose name I shamefully

failed to note, banks to the left and then to the right. We tip forward, almost in a downward dog position and I am awestruck at the wonders of nature.

The falls are stunningly beautiful it is hard to put into words the feeling of power and beauty, as the water thunders down the fall – and even from this high vantage point you can hear the roar of the water as it tumbles down to the river below – a tiny part of my mind is also dumbstruck by the talent of my pilot.

Unfortunately the bad weather was too much for me and I desperately wanted to be on solid ground rather than flying with the birds. The

descent was rocky and the landing bumpy but rainy weather does that I guess. I would love to see the falls from that height on a sunnier day and I hope you have better luck with the weather on your visit than I had, but no matter the weather, viewing the falls from a helicopter was not only great fun, but a magnificent sight and one that will live long in my memory.

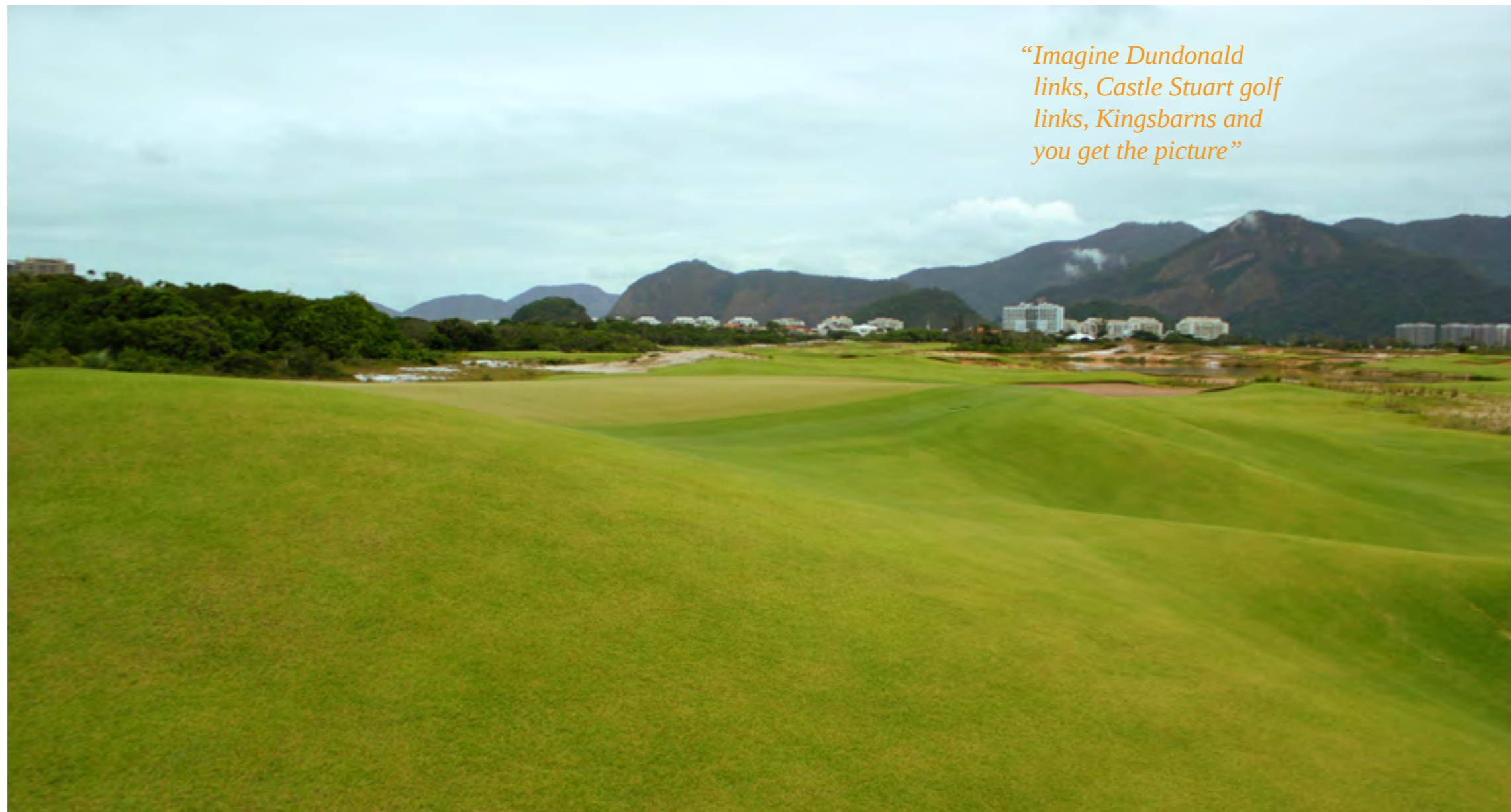
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Left and above:
You can feel the
shear power of the
falls from the air



“Imagine Dundonald links, Castle Stuart golf links, Kingsbarns and you get the picture”

James Mason finds the Olympic course ready and waiting for the worlds best golfers

I am waiting on the steps of the newly built clubhouse and looking out over what looks like a very modern day links course – imagine Dundonald links, Castle Stuart golf links, Kingsbarns and you get the picture – Mizuno JPX EZ driver in hand waiting for the superintendent to pick me up. A mini tracker/pick-up type truck pulls up and I am introduced to a decidedly grumpy Neil Cleverly who is the superintendent and turns out be from just down the road from me in Docklands, London and Antonio Carlos Miranda who is project manager of Progolf who is from Argentina.

Neil takes one look at the golf club in my

hand and says abruptly “What’s that for” I explain just in case I am allowed to hit a couple of drives, “well you can leave that here, you wont be needing that” was his retort.

I later find out that his ire is with the grass that has been laid round the clubhouse without any irrigation having been put in place because the sports minister was turning up and someone wanted it to look nice, a day after one of Rio’s legendary downpours I could understand Neil’s annoyance, it certainly didn’t look nice anymore and he was the one who was going to have to dig it all up and start again.

As we make our way down the 1st Neil →

**Run-offs at the Olympic courses
4th green**



FIELD OF DREAMS

is explaining to me that it will be a par 5 and I later find out the 10th is also a par 5 which should help get players off to a good start, well until you see how tricky the greens are. The 1st holes green is very small so anyone going for that in two will need to come in very high to try and get it to stop or the ball will be hitting one of the many run off areas and collected into some very deep bunkering. The 10th especially as the green is only 10-yards deep but 40/50-yards wide – players maybe better off laying up before the lake and taking a longer shot into the green so they have more to aim at.

OPTIONS

The 4th is the first par 3 on the course and at around 190-yards – there are several teeing options that will be used throughout the Olympic tournament – it seems relatively benign until you get to the green that is, with its three tiers and more twist and turns than a rollercoaster throw in some very deep bunkers to negotiate and it suddenly doesn't seem so benign after all.

My favourite holes turns out to be the 14th and 15th with the later starting a truly great run of finishing holes that contain the driveable 16th another tricky green for the par 3 17th and then the tough 18th and when you look at that hole from the back bottom tee, it really is

Below: Tough finishing hole, this is the view from the 18th tee



Right: The 6th fairway



“It seems relatively benign until you get to the green that is, with its three tiers and more twist and turns than a rollercoaster”

Below: Bunkering at the 15th hole



a scary drive. To be fair it is a bit of an optical illusion as the fairways here are wide and generous and if the wind is down there will be some low scores. But being only 200-yards away from the sea the wind will be a big factor here and coming down that stretch and especially that tough long 18th with the wind in your face making par will be difficult indeed.

But the good news is the course is ready to play now and was in perfect condition when Neil and Antonio showed me round, the guys have done a tremendous job and hats off to Gill Haas it certainly is a great design and has a wonderful natural feel to it. Maybe when the opening shot of the 2016 Olympic Golf Tournament is struck, we may see a smile on Neil's face, ok maybe not!!



BRAZILIAN GOLF COURSES

Right: Ariel view of
Pete Dye's design



Pete Dye is no stranger to an island green and James Mason finds this 17th tougher than the one at Sawgrass

BUZIOS GOLF RESORT ▶

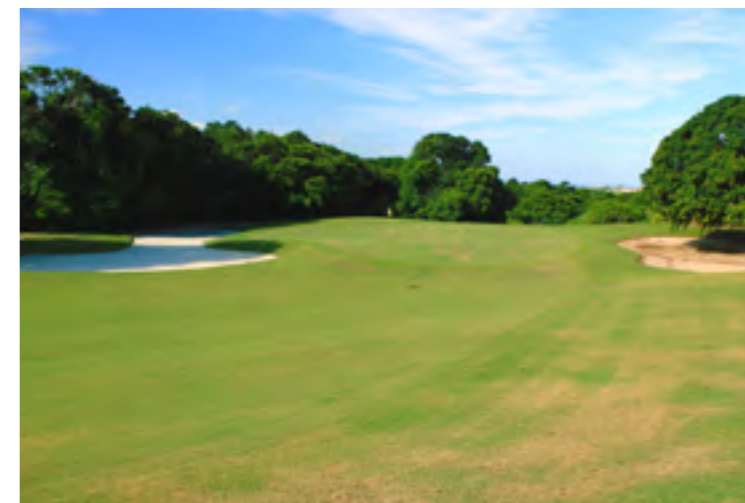
After a 2.5 hour car journey from Rio I arrive at the Buzios Golf Resort and I have to admit as we passed through the white concrete blocks that have seen better days and head up the dirt track my heart is slowly sinking and a sense of foreboding fills me.

I meet with Victor the professional and he explains the course was designed by Pete Dye in 1996, as I gaze out from the clubhouse you don't really get a look at what you are about to play. Victor is going to drive me around and as we head up to the 1st tee I can see what turns out to be the 9th green and my heart lifts a little, but it's not until I climb the stone steps to the back tee on the 1st that my heart leaps with joy, my trepidation dissipates as I look down the fairway with its right to left slope which gently dog-legs round to the left.

I haven't had chance to warm up and duly hook my ball into the left hand rough knock it back onto the fairway and wedge into the green, but it's when I look up after the ball has landed and see the stunning backdrop of the sea with one of the massive cruise ships that have docked in the harbour.

As I play my tee shot on the 2nd I turn to Victor and say Pete Dye has a stunning piece of land to work with, he informs me Dye had the choice of where he wanted to put the course including being down by the sea and choose the land that the course is laid out on today and as much as I love links courses and being by the sea, I think he certainly made a wise choice here.

The movement of the terrain certainly make for some great golf holes and there really →



Top: Buzios golf resorts opening hole. Above Par 5, 7th hole.
Below: The 17th island green





2016

BRAZILIAN GOLF COURSES

isn't a weak hole on the course. As I reach the 212-yard par 3 9th which plays over water from the back tee, you certainly know your golf game has been well and truly tested, but I don't feel as though I have been beaten up and with hardly anyone on the course I feel totally relaxed, just loving the design, but believe me the green complexes are tough, there is certainly plenty of movement in them.

The back nine starts with another great hole 420-yards from a slightly elevated tee to a rolling fairway, but it's this hole that really starts a great run of holes culminating with the last four holes running alongside a 25-foot wide water channel that is more like a small river – if you are suffering from a hook like I am at this moment in time, you certainly need to be aiming well up the right side of the fairway!

The last 5 holes – the 15th green is also protected by water – give a special course a stunning finish and of course the Pete Dye signature Sawgrass type 17th hole to an island green and at 169-yards from the back tee that I believe is a tougher hole than its counterpart in Florida.

If you get through that run of holes playing to your handicap you will certainly be a happy soul as you relax in the clubhouse, but if you didn't I am sure like me you will have realised you have just found yourself a stunning Pete Dye gem, add that to the fact its located in the beautiful seaside resort of Buzios and it becomes the perfect get away destination.

W: buziosgolf.com.br
T: +55 22 2629 1240

Right: Surrounded by hills Itanhangá's opening hole



ITANHANGÁ GOLF CLUB

As I pass through the gate of Itanhanga Golf Club in Rio, it's like moving from the city to the country in just a 10-yard roll of the coaches' wheels. The course sits surround by hills and one in particular that the original inhabitants of this land named "Devil's Rock" and it certainly dominates the landscape here.

My first thoughts on the course is that it is very flat and this morning I am just going to fly round in a buggy and take photos, as the Rio de Janeiro State Junior Championship are being played today and they are allowing me to play the course once the tournament has finished.

What is great to see is so many children of all ages both male and female playing the game and the practice ground looks like a mini kindergarten with the kids getting in their final practice sessions before they go out and compete.

But as I make my way round in the buggy,

I can see the course is quite a strategic track with some great par 3s and the way the course nestles in the landscape surrounded by the hills, does give it a unique feeling and I am now itching to get out there and play it myself.

I'm finally on the tee and smashing my 3-wood down the first, a slight mistake as I am only a foot away from the water on the left, but I am able to wedge onto the green, which turns out to be very tricky with some very interesting complexes. Canadian, Stanley Thompson designed the course in 1935 and Robert Trent Jones, Sr completed some remoulding in 1958, the course has held many championships including the Brazil Rio de Janeiro 500 Years Open where Roger Chapman beat Irishman Padraig Harrington in a playoff.

I loved the par 3s and although the course is not long you need to be in the right position to get at the flag and with a lot of the holes running

parallel the mixture of pines and trees help give each hole its own space so golfers don't feel like they are on top of each other.

There are many stand out holes and I loved the 5th and 6th holes where water comes into play on your approach shot to the green on the 5th and the island green on the par 3 6th. The 18th is a tough finishing hole with a reservoir channel running down the left and more water on the right. After playing in the heat of a Brazilian day you will appreciate a nice cold drink in the well-appointed air-conditioned clubhouse. Not only do I feel as though I have earned it, but it also gives me time to reflect on what a great course this turned out to be and once again reminds me never to go by first impressions. →

W: itanhanga.com.br
T: +55 21 3883-8300



BRAZILIAN GOLF COURSES



Left Top: Going through their pre match warm up routines for the Rio de Janeiro State Junior Championship. Middle left: The 5th hole with "Devils Rock" as a backdrop. Bottom: The 16th hole.



Mist rolling off the surrounding hills and São Conrado beach as its backdrop, the 9th tee at Gavea



GAVEA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

From my room at the Royal Tulip hotel I can see the beach and the holes from the Gavea Golf & country club that are being renovated, I am slightly miffed as these holes are right next to the beach and are probably or so I thought some of Gavea GCC most iconic holes.

I jump in my taxi and head to the course and I ask one of the local lads if he wants to play as we both arrive at the first tee at the same time, Daniel doesn't speak any English and I know a little Spanish and no Portuguese, but the international language of golf gets us through.

The first two holes are pleasant holes and Daniel and my caddy Gabriel inform me the next hole is a dog-leg right and I nail my drive down the middle of the fairway, but it's as I arrive at my ball, my eyes and brain start to take in the true beauty of this track. Not only my second shot to a raised green that sits some 230-yards away and a truly great par 5, but I can now see the elevation changes around the rest of the course and with the mist hiding the top of the surrounding hills, it really adds a touch of mystic to the place.

Standing on the green of the 4th you have stunning views in all directions, across to the

beach or looking back at the rest of the course stretching up the hills. And the holes just keep getting better, the 5th is played from a stunning elevated tee to the fairway below and then over a ravine to the green that has several large rocks dotted about.

This is the second course on this trip that sits nestled in the land surrounded by hills and you certainly don't really see how beautiful the place is until you step on the course; in fact driving along the road you really wouldn't know it was here.

There are only 14 holes in play while the renovation of the beach holes are taking place and six of those are par 3s and you really have to see the views from the tees. I could eulogise about every hole on the course, but believe me when I say this is a must play course, you will love every minute of it and for a green fee of less than £35, \$49, €45 it is way more than a bargain. If you are a golfer I would say you have to come to Rio just to play at Gavea GCC it's not long and it's not tough, but it truly is spectacular. →

W: gaveagolfclub.com.br
T: +55 21 3322-7759





IGUASSU GOLF CLUB ▶

As I reach the practice ground at Iguassu Falls Golf Club I am unable to find the ball dispensing machine, only for the professional to come to my rescue – just so you know the machine is in the little hut at the top of the cart path before you head down the range.

After a nice warm up I head to the 426-yard opening hole, there are 5 different teeing options one of them being a beginner's tee, which I really like the idea of. Iguassu isn't about to become a golf destination just yet – there is another course some 30 minutes away just over the boarder in Paraguay – but it is a great option for couples and families coming to see the falls and enjoy some golf while they are here.

The 1st isn't a tough hole and has one bunker up the left hand side to catch any stray balls. Depending on your skill levels the 2nd could turn out to be a very tricky hole with water left

and in front of the green and a stream running between the two that crosses the fairway.

What I am enjoying about Erik Larsen's design is that the fairways are wide and there are not many chances to lose a lot of golf balls, it is what you would call a typical resort course, but laid out very well, over some beautiful terrain with some stunning views.

This course is not a push over, the 5th that is a par 5 has a semi island green and so does the par 3, 6th hole that follows it. One of Iguassu's striking features is the red tinged sand in the traps and I have to say I really like them after seeing everyone plummeting for white-sanded bunkers around the world.

There are some great little par 3s on the course, my favourite being the 158-yard, 15th that is followed by the 16th which I think is probably one of the best par 4s on the course

along with the 423-yard 13th hole.

As I arrive at the 18th it certainly has that crescendo feeling to the round, the fairway gently moves downhill with a slight dog-leg left and after a good solid drive I have 240-yards to go downhill and with a touch of wind behind and the hybrid seems to be the perfect club, which I duly dispatch to the front edge. But it's the backdrop of the beautifully designed clubhouse and hotel that add an extra bit of glamour to the end of the round.

As I said Iguassu Golf Club is a resort course so I know you will enjoy it know matter what your handicap or if you are a beginner, but for the better players among you, it is also a great challenge and one I know you will want to take up several times during your stay here.

W: wishgolfresort.com.br

T: +55 45 3521-3400



Top: The clubhouse.
Left: Looking back
down the Par 3, 5th
hole. Below: The
9th hole with the
clubhouse in the
background





TAPPING THE GOLF MARKET



No extra charge for stop overs in Lisbon and golf clubs go free on flights to Rio what is not to like about TAPs long haul flight

I don't really write many airline reviews mainly because there are not to many where you find the food is great and this trip was no exception, but then maybe it's just my taste. The reason I wanted to write this review on TAP was because if you are a golfer and deciding that you wanted to go and see golf being played in the Olympics for the first time since 1904 – see golf course review here – then you could be on to a winner with TAP.

Firstly I loved the little email I received with a click-through for me to check in to my Rio flight via Lisbon 72 hours before my flight. The good news is the stopover in Lisbon can be extended to a long weekend or a few weeks, at no extra charge.

TAP continues to ply you with extras; you get a baggage allowance of two 32kg cases, one of which can be your golf clubs. Suddenly for a golfer this becomes the perfect flight, as there



are some wonderful golf courses in Lisbon – checkout our guide to Lisbon golf courses in this issue including places to stay – so now you can spend a week in Rio watch the Olympic golf tournament and play some golf and then fly back to Lisbon and have a long weekend/weeks golf at no extra cost added to your flight.

TAP Portugal flies from London Heathrow, Gatwick and Manchester, via Lisbon, to Rio de Janeiro 16 times a week, prices start at £605 return including all taxes and surcharges.

W: flytap.com/
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BÚZIOS
PREFEITURA



40 MIZUNO JPX EZ DRIVER



42 JPX EZ 3-WOOD AND HYBRID



REVIEW



44 MIZUNO MP-5 IRONS



46 WILSON STAFF PMP WEDGES

48 MIZUNO MP-X GOLF BALL



EQUIPMENT

VIEW.COM



FORGED IN HIROSHIMA

CUSTOM BUILT IN SCOTLAND

#GRAINFLOWFORGED

Mizuno's iron and wedge heads have been Grain Flow Forged in Hiroshima since 1968 with a time honoured passion for working steel that creates a tight grain structure and the most precise performance imaginable.

Built to your personal specification at our assembly line in Scotland, they could be in your bag within 5-7 working days.

Perhaps that's why committed golfers worldwide tend to agree

#NOTHINGFEELSLIKEAMIZUNO



TAKE THE TOUR
GOLF.MIZUNOEUROPE.COM/
THE-ART-OF-FORGING



THE NEW
MP-25
JPX
EZ FORGED
BORON FUEL INJECTED





MOODY BLUES

James Mason puts the new mean, moody looking Mizuno JPX EZ driver through its paces in Rio de Janeiro and finds out that this driver means business

The first thing I noticed when I pulled the head cover off the new Mizuno JPX EZ was how big the head was compared to the 2014 model that I tested in Tunisia. The further change is the black/blue sole; when I put the club down at address not only was I impressed by the size – which turns out to be right on the limit of the R&A/USGA 5” from front to back and heel to toe rule – but by the moody down to business gunmetal/silver finish. My first thoughts were, this is going to be fun to play with! →

TECHNOLOGY

Mizuno have kept the simple and intuitive adjustable 10gm weight track on the sole of the club from the JPX 850, giving you three options, Neutral, Draw or Fade. This works in conjunction with the one-size-fits-all head that has eight loft/lie settings 8.5, 9.5, 10.5, 11.5 and 12.5 degrees with three upright or draw-biased options at 9.5, 10.5 and 11.5 degrees – believe me it reads harder than it actually is to adjust.

Everything in the design process has been geared to help inspire confidence, with the head mass being redistributed around the perimeter to increase forgiveness while providing a more stable, higher moment of inertia on mishit shots.

*According to Mizuno measurements the JPX-EZ MOI – when the weight is in

the neutral setting – is over 5,000 grams, the design of the club and improved MOI means weight is now positioned low and deep helping to produce a low spinning high forgiving ball flight.

The rounded crown, larger sole helping increase face flex working with the shallower head with the CG placed back and low all help to promote the high-launching ball flight. This also helps create faster ball speeds off the face for those with slower swing speeds and more forgiveness on off centre hits.

* The R&A/USGA regulation on MOI is 4,800 with a tolerance that pushes the upper limit to 6,000. None of the main manufacturer has a driver for sale at above 5,300 MOI.

CLUB TESTED ▶

Name JPX EZ

LOFT 9.5°

SHAFT Fujikura, Orochi 15 CB 60g

FLEX Stiff

SET UP Neutral

RRP £349 / €429 / \$399.99



Above: The large 5" head
Left: Three different weight ports and quick switch loft adjustment access

CONCLUSION

Playing with the new JPX EZ driver over the last two weeks has been great fun, the first thing you are going to notice is how big the club looks sitting behind the ball, but to me I just found that inspiring and when add to the sound at impact I certainly found my confidence growing.

Mizuno have aimed this club at the mid-high handicapped player, but I loved the club, the look the feel and the high-ball flight it was producing. Luke Donald is playing one so the difference between the JPX EZ and the JPX850 comes down to spin and forgiveness and with both clubs being priced the same I would give both a test and see what one works best for you. I have enjoyed playing both models and I know you will love whichever one you finally choose to purchase.

SHALLOWER BY DESIGN

Like the driver, Mizuno's mean and moody JPX EZ 3-wood and hybrid with its shallower face but deeper head design offers forgiveness as well as power

I tested the JPX EZ a couple of years ago so I was looking forward to taking the updated version with me to Brazil and while I loved the black and gold finish of the 2014 model, I have to say on first glance when unwrapping the 2016 version I do love the low profile moody gunmetal/silver finish. It has that feeling of "I'm here to take care of business" look.

TECHNOLOGY

If like me you played the 2014 model the first thing you will notice is that the shape of the head is bigger but it has a shallower face. There are two reasons for this, firstly at address the larger head inspires →





Above: The aerodynamic head design with its shallower face. Below: The Shockwave sole and adjustable loft port



CLUB TESTED ▶

Name JPX EZ Fairway Wood

LOFT 15°

SHAFT Fujikura Orochi 65g

FLEX Stiff

SET UP 13°

RRP £219 / €299 / \$249.99

confidence but by extending the Shockwave sole around the club head it helps add weight to the heel and toe and with the extra mass in the sole lowers the centre of gravity.

The Shockwave sole also helps the head contract and expand at impact and with that additional power impacting on the ball - and in conjunction with the HT 1770 high-strength steel face insert - all help to achieve faster ball speeds off the face, increasing distance, stability and giving you a higher ball flight.

The waffle crown inside the head has given the designers the ability to move that extra weight into the sole, which helps the Shockwave technology produce that higher more forgiving ball flight. The fairway woods use Mizuno's "Quick Switch" hosel feature, allowing you to adjust the club up or down by 2°.

Fairway woods 15°, 18° and 21°

Hybrids 16°, 19°, 22° and 25°

CONCLUSION

Like the driver what I really enjoyed about the 3-wood and hybrid in the EZ range is the solid sound at impact and the ball flight on both clubs was high and strong with some real penetration.

I also loved the gunmetal/silver finish and the shallower head design, both clubs really sit behind the ball well and inspire confidence. Like the driver I believe the choice between going for the JPX EZ model or the JPX850 is going to be down to personal preference, but having tested both no matter what range you go with, you will have made the right choice. ◯



Above: Face, heel and sole perspective
Below: The Shockwave sole design.



CLUB TESTED ▶

Name JPX EZ Hybrid

LOFT 22°

SHAFT Fujikura, Orochi 70g

FLEX Stiff

SET UP Not adjustable

RRP £179 / €249 / \$199.99



FORGED MASTERS

Classic lines, meet traditional design, fused with modern channel back technology, but do Mizuno's new MP-5s perform as good as they look? **James Mason** finds out

No matter what the object great design just shines through and as I take one of the MP-5 irons out of its box they are everything the photos said they would be and more. The classic shape, the beautiful chrome finish and my first close-up look at the new channel back design, it's like running your fingers along the body work of a Ferrari.

I have always had so much respect for the craftsmanship Mizuno produces from when I first purchased my TP-9s and every time they introduce a new iron with technology that helps improve our game and consistency, they still manage to keep those classic lines, but the design somehow fits right within this moment in time. And I once again salute Mizuno's skill and workmanship. →

TECHNOLOGY

Mizuno describe the new “Channel Back” concept as sitting between a blade and a cavity. What is not in question from this 1025E Grain Flow Forged Pure Select Mild Carbon Steel design is the amount of extra forgiveness the “Channel Back” gives you. The MP-5 offers you all the workability you get from a blade with the forgiveness of a compact forged cavity back iron.

The channel back design has helped Mizuno keep plenty of weight behind the sweet spot for that solid feel and strike at impact, while allowing them to relocate more mass to other parts of the head to increase stability, performance and forgiveness on off-centre strikes.

But what has been a clever trick is that it is progressive through the set to give you the best launch angles achievable from each club, with the channel being higher in the shorter irons to offer a more penetrating controllable ball flight while in the long irons there is more weight lower in the head to increase the launch angle.

Classic design meets modern technology, producing a powerful combination

CONCLUSION

Having tested the MP-25 and now the MP-5 I am astounded at how much forgiveness the MP-5 blade has to offer, the new channel back design really works.

Like most Mizuno blades I loved the look and design of the MP-5 range and the sound and feel at impact was meaty with that sweet spot right behind the ball. I really come into the ball from a step angle – well that is what trackman tells me – so I get a high ball flight anyway,

but with the penetration and power you get behind the MP-5s it certainly gives you that knowing smile after impact as it jets through the air.

It looks like a powerful club when it sits behind the ball and with a pleasing top line and the chrome finish, the MP-5s just exude class and precision. It is a club you should definitely test and that extra bit of forgiveness in there now, may just tip your decision. ○



CLUB TESTED ▶

Name Mizuno MP-5
IRONS 4-pw
SHAFT Dynamic Gold S300
FLEX Stiff
LIE -2°
RRP £115 / €179 / per iron
\$999.99 3-pw

CRAFTSMAN INPUT

Although larger than a traditional blade, Mizuno's craftsmen's sense of proportion and shape ensured that the MP-5 looks right at address. The thicker top line was popular amongst Mizuno's panel of professionals in testing – giving 'a more powerful look'

CUSTOM BUILT TO YOUR MIZUNO SWING DNA

Mizuno's Swing DNA system can identify which shaft and set make up will produce the best results from your swing. Your irons can be assembled and dispatched within 5 working days of Mizuno receiving your order (location and parts allowing).

James Mason finds out how Wilson Staff's new milled and etched clubface surface could be the answer to your short game problems

PERFECTLY ETCHED



I enjoyed testing Wilson Staffs FG Tour TC Wedges a few years back so when I was given the chance to test the new FG Tour PMP wedges on my last trip I jumped at the chance and was duly impressed when the box arrived. →



A choice of three sole designs that come in various loft, lie and bounce options

TECHNOLOGY

PMP stands for Precision Milled Performance and the wedges feature a combination of HM grooves, that give spin control on full shots and with eleven laser etched Micro Spin Lines between each groove for increased spin and control on those half shots and chips around the green.

Wilson Staff also state that the milling process has produced a perfectly flat face giving the clubs greater consistency.

The FG Tour PMP comes in three sole design options - Traditional, Tour Grind and Wide - which come in a variety of loft, lie and bounce options giving you 95 different combinations.

The FG Tour PMP wedges are fitted with a KBS Hi-Rev 2.0 wedge shaft that features an active tip section to give a higher ball flight and more spin and accuracy. The wedges come in two finishes Gun Blue PVD or chrome Tour Frosted.



CLUB TESTED ▶

Name Wilson Staff FG Tour PMP Wedge System

LOFT 52°, 56°, 60°

SHAFT KBX Hi-Rev 2.0 125g

FLEX Stiff

RRP

Tour Frosted - £79 / €120 / \$99.99

Gun Blue - £89 / €130 / \$119.99

CONCLUSION

I have to say I am not sure if I preferred the Gun Blue PVD or Tour Frosted finish, both were equally as impressive when they are sat behind the ball and there was no difference with the way they felt at impact or the way the ball reacted on the green, so I think the choice comes down to your own particular taste and style.

What I will say is I was very impressed with the new design, the feel and balance of the club really helped me – as many of you know my short game isn't the strongest –

and when you pull the PMPs out of the bag I felt the weight of the club was perfect; Add in the bounce and loft options that Wilson Staff have designed and the confidence the wedges inspires when you put the club behind the ball at address all help with improving your short game.

One of the things I thought was a great touch by Wilson Staff was the use of Lamkin Performance Plus 3Gen grip with its imprinted dots, I felt this really helped with distance control and consistency. ◯

Mizuno launch a low spinning ball
to complement the MP-S and James
Mason puts it to the test in Brazil

ON A ROLL



After testing the MP-S ball in Tunisia when it was first launched a few years ago I found it to be a strong contender to Titleist Pro V1 and Pro V1x. At the time I hoped they would bring out an X version as I prefer a low spinning ball and when it finally appeared on the market in April 2015 I knew I had to put it through its paces.

TECHNOLOGY

The ball has a 4-piece construction and dual core design that combine to reduce spin from your driver. This is achieved by using its 330-dimple configuration that helps give you a more penetrating ball flight, working with the 0.5mm urethane cover giving you more ball speed off the face gaining you extra distance.

- Refined Urethane Cover: Reduced to 0.5mm thickness for increased initial velocity.
- 330 Dimple pattern: Configured for more stable ball flight.
- 4 piece construction: Adapted for stability at high ball speeds.

CONCLUSION

What I liked about the MPx is that it feels solid off the driver yet retains that softness when you are playing shots around the green and putting. I really enjoyed testing the MPx ball a couple of years ago and hoped they would bring out an X version, as I do tend to put too much spin on the ball with my driver.

The combination of the JPX EZ range and the MP x ball was a winner for me, I certainly was gaining more distance and with the MP-5 irons; they are a match made in heaven. The feel of the ball coming off the blade at impact is one I don't feel you can beat.

I know some players are worried about changing their golf ball and I totally understand where they are coming from I played the same ball for years, but believe me, you really should give the MPx or the MPx - depending on your spin rate readings - a try, I know you won't be sorry you did.

RRP £50 / €58 / \$NA

THE FACE OF GENERATION FLEX

C200
FLX FACE



FLX FACE TECHNOLOGY

Minimizes face contact to only 24% of the perimeter, freeing up 76% for maximum face flex and ball speed upon impact.

ENGINEERED BY WILSON LABS



Wilson Staff



54 LISBON



DESTINATIONS

REVIEW



51 CUBA



VIEW.COM



While the rest of the world can visit Cuba, successive American administrations have stood by the illegal trade and cultural embargo, but President Obama has finally seen the light and American writer Larry Berle gets to sample this wonderful island.

In most people's minds Cuba conjures up visions of vintage cars, cigars, colourful architecture and of course salsa but there is so much more.

I have been interested in visiting Cuba for several years now — and as US-Cuba relations improve, I can just imagine the growth and development that will occur once things are totally normalised between the two countries — I wanted to see the true Cuba as it is now before the inevitable Americanisation.

I've signed up for a People to People trip with Insight Cuba called "Jazz in Havana." The majority of the world can visit Cuba without restriction but this is not the case for US citizens like myself, we are highly restricted and the tours must have specific purposes. Before 2011 even these kinds of tours were not permitted.

My first stop is the small town of Jaimanitas, and the studio of ceramic artist Jose Fuster. Just over 30 years ago Jose began decorating ceramic tiles, mostly in his home. He has now expanded to decorating most of the neighbourhood and most of the neighbour's homes. His work is fabulous, he is a brilliant folk artist who chooses ceramic tile as his medium. I have purchased one of his tiles for \$30 and I am proud to add it to my meagre art collection.

It's 5:30 as I check into the Melia Cohiba hotel on the waterfront in the centre of Havana. For a country that is poor and considered to be third world, the hotel is quite luxurious. I head out to El Temple for dinner that is famous for its traditional Cuban style seafood and as I take my last piece of Braised Pork that I wash down with a beautiful white wine I have to say it was totally scrumptious.

It's the second day of my trip and after breakfast I attended a lecture with Cuban musicologist Alberto Faya. In the context of survival Alberto talks about what we do to preserve our lives and our culture. Conquerors, he told us, not only bring their concepts and culture but they impose them on those whom they conquer. So when the Spanish landed here in the late 1400s they pretty much wiped out the culture of the native Cuban inhabitants, thus came Spanish musical influence to Cuba. Shortly after that came the slave trade with the Africans infusing their culture and music into the Cuban music culture. This was Alberto's first example of what he calls Transculturation.

His second example was Jelly Roll Morton because of the proximity to the United States, →

Left: "The colorful streets of Havana"
Below: Larry poses on the bench in the yard of Jose Fuster



“If you go to Cuba stick a few sets of guitar strings in your suitcase, it won’t be hard to find someone who needs them”

the influences of Cuban and American music became entwined with some American music (mostly Jazz) absorbing Cuban influence and vice versa. As Alberto’s lecture comes to a close I realise I have just been totally captivated and it is a lecture I would highly recommend if you love music and its history.

I head out to our bus with my 24 new friends for a walking tour of Old Havana. This used to be a walled city but as you will see it has now grown beyond its walls that have now nearly all disappeared but some remnants do still remain. Old Havana is pedestrian only and as I walk down the Plaza de Armas we learn about the Captain General’s wife who used to suffer from splitting headaches because of the loudness of the cobblestone streets. So she had the street in front of their house dug up and replaced with

a quieter wooden surface, which still exists to this day.

Plaza de Vieja is a beautiful old plaza with very colourful and beautiful buildings but I can already see stores like United Colours of Benetton and Lacoste staking out locations in preparation for the normalisation of relations with the US. Carnival Cruises are planning to add Cuba as a stop in the next 6 months—things will start to change quickly after that happens.

My lunch at Los Mercaderes is delicious, Cuban jazz accompanied by BBQ chicken and beans – most restaurants here are state owned and operated but this one is private and there is a big difference.

We stopped at the jazz club La Zorra El Cuervo where we heard the contemporary jazz group Jazz En Trance. These musicians are world class and have toured Eastern Europe but are hoping they will soon be able to tour the US and I have put them in contact with a few people who maybe able to make that happen so look out for them.

Our tour is splitting and Maggie and I are heading for a tour of the Abdala recording studios. There are only four recording studios

Below: If you are not riding around in a vintage car you may be getting around by horse and buggy



in Havana, Abdala is where Beuna Vista Social Club recorded and it is the largest and most prestigious. I asked a couple of the musicians what the biggest challenge was to being a musician in Cuba. They talked to me about the problems with the economy, communism and travel restrictions but the guitar player told us there is no place in Cuba where they can buy guitar strings. If you go to Cuba stick a few sets of guitar strings in your suitcase, it won’t be hard to find someone who needs them and make sure you find time to take this tour, I have found it totally fascinating.

Lessons learnt

It’s 8.30 on day three and I am on the bus heading for the town of Matanzas, which is a couple of hours east of Havana. My first stop is at a publishing house where they preserve the culture of publishing handmade books. By handmade, I mean from scratch. They make the paper, stitch the binding, create the artwork – some of which may just be a collage – and make limited editions of only 200 copies of each book.

I head off to the Pastorita Art School and as we enter several of the students are playing a musical recital for our group. The children here can take music as an option and there are 108 students at the Pastorita Art School, which is completely paid for including room and board. The students are issued with musical instruments for training that they return on completion of their studies.

This brings me to the educational system here in Cuba which operates at a very high standard, in fact the country has a literacy rate of 99.8% making it the second highest in the world and it’s all free including University or a trade school, whichever you choose. And yes that could even include medical school of which there are twenty-three.

Time for lunch and I head for Amelia Del Mar where Afrocuba de Mantanzas are performing, they are a dance and Congo drum group. If I didn’t understand the African influence on Cuban music from Dr. Faya’s earlier lecture, I could now certainly see it in this performance.

Day four starts with a visit to the local food coop, I thought I could now understand the difference in lifestyle between Americans and Cubans but my eyes are really opened up here. Food rations are issued to every citizen in Cuba at a cost of about fifty cents a month. For this →



Top: Afro Cuban dancers delight themselves performing for us
Above: “Elvis eat your heart out”, Havana has many caddies just as beautiful as this one
Below: “sitting on the dock of the bay just watching the tide roll away”



Cubans get staples like rice, pasta, sugar, milk, some meat and a few more basics. Next door to the rations store is the local market which to me looked like a farmers market.

Our group divided into 6 teams. We were each given approximately 1CUC and told to go into the market and buy enough food for one meal for a family of four. To my surprise we all were able to accomplish this. We brought our purchases back to the bus and our bus driver Leo chose which team presented the best meal and Leo got to take all the groceries home that we purchased.

I think that gave him enough food for almost a week's worth of dinners for his family – so I now see their low earnings in a new light. It did create a wonderful discussion – our standard of living is clearly much higher than the average Cuban, but are we happier because of this? – I don't know, but I can safely say the answer is not as clear-cut as you may think.

It's my final day and there is one final stop on the way to the airport and this definitely falls under the category of saving the best for last. We are stopping off at a neighbourhood dance studio that they just call the Jazz Club, it's in the Santa Amalia neighbourhood with several senior citizen jazz dancers. What a blast!

There were a couple of young dancers but most are in their late 70's and 80's, they not only danced the Rumba and Tango for us but after affecting us with their abundant enthusiasm I am being ushered onto the floor to dance with them. We learn that for several years Fidel Castro banned these dance gatherings but they kept going anyway. The ban has now been lifted and as the joy and laughter gradually fades

“Our standard of living is clearly much higher than the average Cuban, but are we happier because of this?”

as the bus pulls away. It is a memory that I will treasure for a lifetime it was truly inspiring.

Of course no visit to Cuba could pass without taking a ride in one of the classic 40s and 50s cars that catches everyone's attention when they visit and as I slide into an immaculate '57 blue Chevy and head down revolution square – where Pope Frances had held mass just a few weeks ago before heading over to the US – its like stepping back in time.

No doubt about it Cuba is a beautiful country, visiting here is more like a college course in culture and lifestyle and I hope it stays that way, but it may not stay this way for long so I would highly recommend you visit now and see the real Cuba.

Larry Berle

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W: GolfersDreamBook.com

Links

W: insightcuba.com/

Jose Fuster, Ceramic artist

W: havana-cultura.com/en/visual-arts/jose-fuster

Pope Frances visit

W: huffingtonpost.com/entry/pope-mass-havana_55fece9de4b0fde8b0ce9e98



Left: One of the great jazz clubs of Havana – stop in any night to listen to great jazz





LISBON: A GOLFERS DREAM

Empty fairways, great golf course designs, bustling nightlife, fantastic restaurants and as much history and culture you want to soak up. James Mason explains why you need to visit this wonderful city

Portugal is a great place to visit, and if you're a golfer the Algarve has become the home-from-home for the travelling British and Irish player. It may not have the courses that our islands can boast but what Portugal does have is great golf in near-enough guaranteed sunshine – something unfortunately the great links courses in this part of Europe cannot always guarantee.

The downside to this is the five-hour-plus round of golf, but don't worry I have a solution: you can still enjoy Portugal but just go two hours further north to Lisbon. This beautiful city not only offers some superb golf courses but currently receives only a fraction of the traffic that the Algarve gets – perfect for enjoying a game on some great designs in beautiful sunshine without having to wait on every shot or having balls flying at you from all angles.

Lisbon also offers a fantastic nightlife away from the golf course where you can enjoy the many restaurants, bars and clubs, along with two illustrious and hugely successful football clubs in Benfica and Sporting Lisbon. And for those who like a bit of local history on your golf tour, Portugal is steeped in it. The oldest city in

Europe, it predates London, Paris and Rome by hundreds of years, with roots going back to the Neolithic period – check out the standing stones and related sites which still survive on Lisbon's outskirts. Legend has it that Odysseus founded the city after the Trojan War, and around 1200BC the Phoenicians are believed to have established a trading post on one of the seven slopes above the sheltered harbour in the Tagus River estuary, from where they travelled to the so-called Islands of Tin, Scilly and Cornwall.

QUINTA DO PERU

W: quintadoperu.pt

First on my tour is the first of two courses designed by American golf course architect Rocky Roquemore. I must say straight off the bat that my visit takes place at the beginning of May after a particularly harsh winter, so the greens and general look and conditioning of the courses are not how you'll be finding them in the summer →



“There are some particularly beautiful residences around the 12th, 15th and 16th holes where water comes into play”

and autumn months where everything will be in full bloom.

Having said that, you can generally tell how good a course is from the design of the holes and how it plays, and I must say I really enjoy Quinta do Peru. It's a course that gives you a chance, as you can tell with the opening hole being a par-5 that gently eases you into the round. But if you haven't had time to use the fantastic practice facilities, there are three tee options to choose from. The course meanders through some beautiful countryside and you can tell it sits in a prosperous part of the suburbs, judging by the properties that sit in the grounds of the site. Next to some of the lakes there are some particularly beautiful residences around the 12th, 15th and 16th holes where water comes into play.

Stand-out holes: I must admit I prefer the back

nine to the front, but of the holes on the front nine I'd go for the 370-yard par-4 second, where you fire your tee shot through a funnel of trees to a fairway that slopes left to right and the green is framed by bunkers front and back. The sixth, eighth and ninth are all holes I enjoy playing.

The back nine starts off with another par-5 at 526. It does offer another birdie chance, but beware as the green is guarded by no less than five bunkers with two further bunkers to the left of the opening of the green. I really enjoy the 12th, a great driving hole with water on the left. The way the green sits right next to the water, the hole uses the natural elements well. You'll also love the 13th. It looks stunning from the tee. The bunkers you can see in the distance on this par-5 don't really come into play, but as an aesthetic element they make the hole. The 12th

actually starts a run of holes that you'll relish with the highlights being the 15th and 16th where the water comes back into play.

RIBA GOLFE 1

W: Not available

Riba Golfe 1 measures 7,370 yards from the tips, but luckily there are five tee options here and I decided to go with the whites.

You're totally surrounded by nature in this beautifully silent part of the world, which is only 40 minutes away from Lisbon, it's like being in two different worlds. The design sits in an old cork forest and Peter Townsend, of European

golf design, has done a great job. There are some beautiful views, none more so than on the run of holes from 7 to 9 which sees the reservoir come into view; it's a beautiful backdrop and as dusk started to draw the evening light, produces a tranquillity that just makes you want to stop and admire those vistas.

Riba Golfe 1 opens up with a tough dogleg right par-4 of 446 yards, so I would make full use of the practice facilities before you start out. I really rate this track and can imagine how beautiful this spot is in the summer and autumn months. Stand-out holes for me are obviously the seventh with that stunning view, and the par-5 twelfth at 539 yards where water comes into play on your second shot, a classic risk-and-reward hole. The 14th and 15th again have water as a feature and both are well-designed →



QUINTA DO PERU



Above: The 386 yard, 15th hole.
Left: Looking back down the 12th hole.



RIBA GOLFE 1



Above: Looking back down the 2nd hole.
Left: The 13th green with its many cork oak trees



RIBA GOLFE 1

Sunrise at the risk
and reward par 5,
12th hole



RIBA GOLFE 2



I loved Riba Golfe 2, above is the 6th hole with the 7th hole below



holes that you'll enjoy playing. These holes particularly appeal to me and I'm sure they'll appeal to you too.

RIBA GOLFE 2

W: [Not available](#)

I have to say I am so looking forward to playing course no2 at Riba Golfe. If it's half as good as Riba Golfe 1 then I'm in for a treat. I step on to the first tee and it's like being at your own private club – there is not a soul about and I have the course to myself. The sun is shining and the only irritant is the midges that seem to think they have a walking

(well riding – I do have a buggy) smorgasbord to eat for the next 18 holes.

I crack my drive down the middle of the fairway as the echo of the impact rattles round the ancient cork trees. The course is in wonderful condition and is very lush and green.

The course opens up with a par-5 and gives you a nice chance to start your round with a birdie and, for the longer hitters among you, a good chance at an eagle. One of the first things you are going to notice is that the greens are smaller and more undulating than Riba Golfe 1, so being in the right part of the green is very important. The other major difference is the length – Riba Golfe 2 is shorter than Riba Golfe 1 and you will not need to hit driver so many times. Being in the right position to get at the flag on these tricky



GOLDEN EAGLE



Above and below the stunning fairways of Rocky Roquemore's Golden Eagle.



greens is a lot more important than distance.

The second is another great birdie chance and you can get away with hitting iron from the tee on this 361-yard hole to the top of the hill which will give you a great view of this tricky little green protected by an old cork tree on the left and two bunkers on the right. You really need to be on the right side of the fairway to have a go at the flag. The next run of holes has two tough par-3s among them before you get to the 360-yard sixth. Again position is all-important to get at a green that lays across you, presenting a very shallow piece of green to aim at. Oh, and did I say you have to carry some water to get to it...?

The great holes keep on coming, and as the front nine comes to a close I'm reminded of the whispers from one or two people preferring Riba

2 to Riba1, and I have to say as I hit the back nine I am inclined to agree with them. I don't think there is a lot in it and it's going to come down to what suits your eye and how you like a course to be set up.

The back nine on Riba Golfe 2 is just as good as the front with some great par-3s. In fact there is not a weak par-3 on this track, and a great risk-and-reward hole on the par-5 13th where you play your second shot to a green that has water running all along the right hand side of the fairway and green for the second shot.

I putt out on the par-5 18th green that is a great birdie chance. If you get a good drive away you could find yourself over an eagle putt – it'd be a fitting way to end what is another great course in the Lisbon area.

What I would say about Riba Golfe is: make sure you play both courses but if you want a personal recommendation, I would say go for Riba 2. The added bonus would be that most people will be playing Riba 1 and you'll probably have the course to yourself, just like I have today.

GOLDEN EAGLE

W: [goldeneagle.pt](#)

Another Rocky Roquemore-designed track and he was given a beautiful piece of land to work with. I love elevated tees so you can see your ball sail through the air and hopefully land on the manicured fairway below.

This is a course you won't get tired of playing and will want to play again. It's one I look forward to playing again in the future. Your first taste of an elevated tee shot comes very early in your round at the second hole. It's stunning and you will no doubt want to take a couple of photos here. Measuring 531 yards it's a very reachable par-5 from this lofty tee position and you can pick up some extra yards when you get some extra run on the right-to-left sloping fairway.

Next is the par-3 third hole at 169 yards and I have to say you won't be disappointed with all the par-3s here, especially the 12th which is one of those sawgrass-island green holes measuring 161 yards. I always find these great fun to play. You can just imagine what it is like at the Players Championship each year. Make sure you take a look at the fifth hole from the back tee. It's a beautiful driving hole, you can let fly over the tree tops on the right of the fairway and let the slope take your ball back into the middle of the fairway – just be aware of the bunker on that side waiting to catch any errant tee shots.

The sixth is another elevated tee shot, this time a par-3 at 214 yards, the type where I would love to get a hole-in-one. You can watch the ball sail through the air, land on the green and roll perfectly into the cup. That to me would be heaven. The back nine offers some great driving holes, none more so than the two that follow the sawgrass-inspired 12th. The 13th measures 403 yards and the 14th is 367 yards. Both have those beautiful elevated tees that inspire you to hit a good tee shot. The 12th plays to a raised green, while the 14th has water on the left hand side of the fairway, strategically placed in the landing →

area. This is all topped off with a risk-and-reward dogleg right 18th hole. You can cut off as much as you dare but beware, there are bunkers to catch you and you could get left up on the hill.

I've already described this course's stand-out holes. You will love this track. It's a really enjoyable, a tough but fun golf course. In those immortal words from the Rocky films, 'Yo Rock, you done good!'

QUINTA DA MARINHA

W: quintadamarinha.com

This is a tight tree-lined course with fast greens and no pushover – it will test every part of your

game. My one criticism would be those times that you have to cross other fairways to get to your tee. I' can't be certain about the original layout of this Robert Trent Jones Snr venue, but because of the new hotels additions I think the course may have been periodically re-routed. This is a minor criticism but one you should be aware of.

There are four teeing options and you can choose to play from between 6,420 and 5,203 yards. The course eases you in with a gentle start – the opening hole of 539 yards has a fairly wide landing area and you can go for the green in two. But this is where the course can bite you as the raised green is surrounded by trees and has a deep bunker protecting it on the left which leaves you about 15 yards of opening to aim at. I'd suggest hitting it down the right-hand side,



QUINTA DA MARINHA

Above: Quinta da Marinha's par 3, 2nd hole. Left: The avenue of trees that funnels you to the 4th green.



"I'd love to hear the roar of an F1 car or 500cc bike from the 'viewing platforms' of the 11th green or 12th tee"

setting up a wedge-in and giving you a safe par and a shot at a birdie start.

The second is a short par-3 with water on the left and two deep bunkers on the right. I should state here that all the par-3s on this course are great holes, especially the 5th over water to another raised green surrounded by bunkers. Actually when I say all of them, maybe not the 14th!! You play over a ravine with the wind whipping in off the Atlantic from your left to a green that probably measures no more than 15 yards from front to back and 35 yards wide. 'Testing' is a term you could use. 'Card-wrecker' could be another!

I do feel the back nine is stronger than the front nine, not only thanks to the stunning views of the Atlantic Ocean but also the tight landing areas and, especially from the back tees, I just

love that sound of the contact between a driver and the ball at impact and the way it echoes around the trees here. It's a course I am sure you're going to enjoy. It will set you up nicely for the rest of your stay.

PENHA LONGA

W: penhalonga.com

This course is nestled in the magnificent seclusion of the Sintra Hills. Secluded, that is, on non-race days – it backs onto the famous Estoril motorsport track and I must admit I'd love to hear the roar of an F1 car or 500cc bike from the 'viewing platforms' of the 11th green or 12th tee.

The resort sits in a 500-acre estate that was once the reserve of kings and noblemen who came here to relax. Trent Jones Jnr has managed to recapture that mind-set on some of the elevated tees. Whether you're new to this great game or been playing for years, standing on some of the tees before the beautiful hills can only inspire your game. The words 'magnificent' and 'mystical' both come up in the stroke-saver history guide and I have to say they are not used out of context.

The Penha Longa hotel spa and golf resort has 27 holes and I'm standing on the elevated first tee looking down at the fairway of this 366-yard opening hole. There are five teeing options here ranging from 6,904 to 5,569 yards so you can enjoy a course that suits your game. It's a hilly one, but I'd recommend you take a trolley rather than a buggy as you have to stick to the cart path in a buggy. With no GPS in the carts and no yardages on the path, you'll be taking three or four clubs with you every time you go to your ball.

I'm not going to describe the course hole-by-hole as there are no weak ones here, and as I mentioned earlier there are magnificent views from each. All the par-3s are strong but a special mention goes to a couple of holes – first the par-5 498-yard 6th with the remains of a centuries-old aqueduct running to the right of the green, and the 18th whose back tee looks across to the bright pink hotel with its terracotta tiling.

You can see why kings and nobleman would travel here. I'm sure James I, who brought golf down from Scotland to England, would've approved of what Robert Trent Jones Jnr has done with the land here. →



PENHA LONGA

Above: Bunkering at Penha Longa's 3rd hole. Left: The carry over water from the back tee on the 15th hole



MONTADO HOTEL & GOLF RESORT

W: montadoresort.com

The course at the Montado Hotel & Golf Resort was originally designed in 1992 by Duarte Sottomayor and was completely redesigned by Jorge Santana da Silva in 2005, culminating in an island green at the 18th. The course has many highlights before you get to that point, but it also has some very average holes. What you have to bear in mind when you stay at the Montado Hotel & Golf Resort is that it is exactly that – a resort course.

But having said that, when you stand on the first you are welcomed by a great-looking hole. It's not that long at 392 yards and has a wide fairway and a large green to aim at and sits on the eye very well. You'll need to play over water to reach the greens at both the par-5 second and par-3 third, but the highlight of the front nine is the par-4 ninth played round a lake. You really need to be in the right position from the tee if you're going to go for the green as the trees can block you out.

I do feel the back nine was the better of the two halves, offering more variety. Again the back nine starts off with a nice-looking hole that doglegs to the right, and with only a nine iron or wedge into the green it should give you a good start before you hit the hardest hole on the course which is the par-4 eleventh that measures some 465 yards and runs along side a vineyard. If like me you hit your drive down the right, you have the chance to taste some of those wonderfully juicy grapes as you look for your ball!

For me the 12th marks the start of some wonderful holes starting with the 164-yard par-3 that plays slightly downhill to a shallow green that runs across you. A stream runs all the way along the par-4 13th so make sure you stay on the left side of the fairway and don't over-shoot the green or go right as you will find stream.

The next three holes include two par-5s that give you a chance to gather some birdies before you stand on the 18th to the aforementioned island green. It's a deep green so don't be scared of going long – it's the signature hole and one that can wreck your card. While I am sitting enjoying a cold beer I watch several people find a watery grave. Hopefully you won't!



MONTADO HOTEL & GOLF RESORT

Above: Water protects Montado's 9th green with the hotel as its backdrop. Left: The 17th green with the 8th green in the background.



BELAS CLUBE DE CAMPO

W: belasclubedecampo.pt

This is going to be the third Rocky Roquemore-designed course I have played in the Lisbon area, the first two being the Quinta Do Peru and Golden Eagle. If this track turns out to be anywhere near as good as Golden Eagle, I know I am going to be in for a treat – the design of the well-appointed clubhouse is a great start.

The first is a long par 4 and nothing really spectacular. It's a well-designed hole, one where you really need to be in the left side of the fairway to have a good look at the green, but there is a

well-placed bunker 250 yards out on the left to contend with. It's not until you get to the second and the run of holes right through to the turn that this course comes into its own, and I have to say this track is right up there with Golden Eagle. I hereby declare myself a Rocky Roquemore fan.

Yes, he's been given a great piece of land to work with. But he's certainly made full use of the terrain here. If like me you are a fan of elevated tees, well-placed bunkers, risk-and-reward shots and great green complexes, you will enjoy every moment on this course. As my ball sails through the air at the second to the fairway below, with the sun shining and its warmth uplifting my soul along with that lovely aroma of freshly-cut grass, it's moments like these that make this game so special. Rocky Roquemore seems to capture in his golf course designs these exquisite →

"This track is right up there with Golden Eagle, I hereby declare myself a Rocky Roquemore fan"



BELAS CLUBE DE CAMPO

Water comes into play on both the 9th hole above and the 18th, which is a wonderful finishing hole, left.



experiences that golfers like me and you cherish and talk about in clubhouses the world over.

The original design had the two nines reversed and I can see the logic in that with the practice ground being next to the first tee. At the moment it's next to the 10th, but I have to say I like the current 18th where you only need an iron off the tee to be just short of the water. It's a great finishing hole and there is talk of finding a way of using the original tees on that hole (just adjacent to the 17th green) which would make it one very tough finishing hole. But no matter what way round they decide to play the course in the future, I know when you sit down in that beautifully-designed clubhouse and you are chatting over that well-deserved cold drink of choice, this track is going to be right up there in your must-play courses.

“Once you get to your ball and see the green below from your elevated position surrounded by high dunes, it just looks so inviting and is a visually stunning hole.”

over 220 yards with a very narrow entrance protected by bunkers either side. If you manage to get through those three holes without dropping too many shots – there is a birdie chance at the second – the 4th gives you another birdie chance to get your score back on track. The fifth is the start of a very open section of the course and this is the only criticism that I have. I do feel these holes could do with more definition – some added sand dunes between them would help add that much-needed definition. But this is my own personal preference and you may like the idea that you can smash away with not too many worries about losing your ball.

My favourite section of the course is from the 8th. It starts with a truly majestic par-5. The tee shot is slightly blind as you don't get to see the green – you are just aiming at the fairway. But

once you get to your ball and see the green below from your elevated position surrounded by high dunes, it just looks so inviting and is a visually stunning hole. So is the par-3 that follows it from its elevated tee to the green below, with the sea and pines as its backdrop.

The back nine starts with another tough hole with high dunes to your left and out-of-bounds to your right. The hole slightly dog-legs to the right to a raised green that slopes back-to-front and is followed by a drivable par-4 for the longer hitters. Or you can use the 13th fairway to play onto and then go for the green from there. If ever there was a green you needed to be in the right position for, this is it. The green has a 3ft step right in the middle of it and if you're in the wrong position you will be putting up or over this step. Good luck!

The next highlight comes at the back-to-back par-3s at the 14th and 15th holes forming part of a very tough finishing stretch of holes. The first plays across a ravine to a green that is open to the elements and is only protected by a couple of small pine trees on the right. If the wind is blowing like it is today from the sea, it's a tough little hole. This is followed by the second par-3 and is played from an elevated tee to a long thin green surrounded by dunes and pines. I have a little twinge of sympathy for the players who have just competed in the competition as I know a few of them would have walked away from these two with their tails between their legs. Two pars here and you have done very well. The 17th and 18th are both over 470 yards long and are a fitting finale to what is a great track.

→

OITAVOS DUNES

W: oitavosdunes.com

I have heard a lot about Oitavos Dunes and like all courses by the sea you are in the lap of the gods when it comes to the weather. Today has seen plenty of rain and we are going just out after a club competition. At least it was a shotgun start so the course is going to be clear, and as I tee my ball up on the stunning looking 415-yard first, I know I'm going to be in for another great day's golf. Hopefully the golfing gods are with me and I don't get too wet.

As I look down the fairway I have sand dunes to my left and pine trees to my right and what looks like a sliver of perfectly-manicured green carpet separating the two. I manage to find the middle of the fairway – the best position to see the green would be on the left of the fairway for today's pin position – but I'm not in bad shape. It's a strange feeling as I make my way to my ball, the course does have a links feel to it and with that taste of salt water in the crisp clean air all the attributes are there. But it's the palm trees and different grass textures that are the tell-tale signs you're not playing a links course in Great Britain or Ireland. Well, that and a howling wind and piercing rain that hits you like pellets from a 12-bore shotgun!

Oitavos Dunes has a tough start. Not only is the opening hole 415 yards with some very tricky green complexes, the third is a par-3 of



OITAVOS DUNES

Pine trees line the tough par 3, 3rd hole .



OITAVOS DUNES

The dunes that
separate the 8th
and 10th holes

THE DOLCE CAMPO REAL

W: dolcecamporeal.com

I am on the coach travelling from Lisbon airport and after a 40-minute journey we pull into The Dolce Campo Real. Judging by the surrounding hills and topography I had a feeling this was going to be an interesting course.

A light lunch and several glasses of the local wine later I hit the first tee after a quick warm up on the practice ground and it is exactly how I expected it to be.

The first tee sits some 40/50 feet above the fairway and gives you a great view of the

surrounding hills and at 520-yards and the extra distance you get from the elevation change, it is a great birdie chance as long as you keep clear of the water on the right hand side, which also comes into play on the 2nd.

The front nine comes to a close with three great holes, especially the 7th hole, there are four teeing options at Campo Real, but make sure you go and take a look from the back tee 7th even if you are not playing from there. It really is a stunning hole and although it's March and the sky overcast I can just imagine what a cracking hole this will be in the height of summer.

The 8th is a very tough par 3 and measures 265-yards from the back and played from an elevated tee and the 287-yard 9th that you play over water to the fairway can be reachable for the big hitters among you.

The back nine keeps the great holes going with another short par 4 that you have to lay up on because of the stream right in the landing area. Once again make sure you go and take a look from the back tees on the 14th and 17th holes not only do they have some stunning vistas, but watching your ball sail through the air and landing over 100 foot below is an amazing feeling.

If there was one downside to the course it would be the landscaping but it is only March and what course looks its best on a grey rainy day. I am sure in the middle of summer it will be in perfect condition. Blue skies with the warm sun on your back, flowers in full bloom. Yes I can just imagine you sitting outside the clubhouse looking out to the 18th green with its big oak tree reflecting on yet another wonderful golf course in the Lisbon area.

“With the wind whipping in off the left you have to play out towards the Atlantic and let the wind slowly drift your ball back onto the fairway”

PRAIA D'EL REY

W: praia-del-rey.com

I have heard a lot about Praia d'el Rey so there is a slight buzz of anticipation on the coach journey this morning and after a good warm up and a bit of chipping I am heading for the 10th tee – the course runs a two tee starting times.

And there it is as I stand on the 10th tee the first glimpse of the sea and it looks wonderful, the wind is up and you know it is going to play havoc with your golf ball and game, but I don't care.

There are five teeing options and from the black tee this hole measures 503-yard and from the elevated tee you get that extra bit of help, but with the wind against I smash my ball straight into the right hand rough, a wedge out and a nailed 4-iron I still have a birdie chance which I duly miss!

The 12th is your first real sea hole and the wind is just getting stronger, you play your tee shot from a set of very narrow trees, the hole doglegs left but hit your drive straight as you don't want to tangle with the out of bounds. When you reach the green you can just watch the waves crashing on the beach and in this weather they certainly are crashing.

The 13th is another great hole and is played right along side the white sandy beach and with the wind whipping in off the left you have to play out towards the Atlantic and let the wind slowly drift your ball back onto the fairway.

If it wasn't for the backdrop of the sea and an old house the 14th would be just an ordinary par 3, but designer Cabell B Robinson has certainly made the most of the land he was given to work with and you are going to enjoy every minute of your time here. The back nine comes to a close with one of the holes that sit among the pine trees, but it is a seamless change and unlike many clubs where the changes from sea to tree can be bad, I think what Robinson has achieved with the tree-lined holes is memorable and I love the way the 18th green nestles in its surroundings.

The front nine like the back starts with a tree-lined hole that doglegs round to the left, the forth has to be one of my favourite holes the way it just sits in the dunes with a very large bunker on the left and at 332-yards it also gives you a great birdie chance.

The 5th takes you back into the pine tree lined holes and as I stated about the front nine they →

THE DOLCE CAMPO REAL

Above: Sunrise on the 11th green at Campo Real. Left: Stunning views from the back tee on the 17th hole.

PRAIA D'EL REY

Above: The stunning open dune that runs down the left of the 4th hole: Left: The Atlantic lapping the fairway at the beautiful 13th hole at Praia d'el Rey

really do add to the overall package that Praia d’el rey has to offer and looking back from the green on the 8th you could suddenly be transported back to Surrey.

The course ends for me on the 9th and again another great hole from the back tees and I like the illusion that you are playing through a tight funnel of trees. No matter what way around you play the course, like me you will be happy with both finishes as these are great golf holes.

BOM SUCESSO

W: bomsucesso.net

Bom Sucesso is a Donald Steel course and sits among Bom Sucesso’s Design Resort, it is late when we arrive and after a bit of a party with some of the wine the resort had left us in our rooms, I wake on my sofa next to the log burner in my living room – the reason I decided not to make the journey down the stairs to my bed is open for debate!

After breakfast and a warm up, I am on the tee launching my ball over the bunker on the corner of this 370-yard opening hole. It’s a nice start and offers you a birdie chance. So does the 2nd if you play it as a three shot par 5, you could go for the green in two, but with water protecting the last 125-yards on the right hand side of the fairway and green that gamble may well cost you the shot you picked up on the first.

The fairways here are wide, with not a lot of trouble. Villas sit back from each hole, giving it that resort course feeling – it certainly isn’t a course that is going to beat you up and one that you will enjoy playing during your stay here.

The most memorable part of the course comes at the end of the round, the 16th is a nice designed hole that nestles in among the mounds, but it is the 17th that you will want to play time and time again. It is a stunning hole sitting on the courses highest point with views out to the Atlantic. It is a par 5 and one that you can reach in two if you concentrate and pick the right gap in the trees – unlike me!

The 18th is another great finishing hole played from an elevated tee, whether you can carry the stream that sits in the landing area is up for debate, for the longer hitters it will be, but on a day like today with the wind blowing straight in my face it definitely wasn’t. I loved the amphitheatre →



BOM SUCESSO



Above: Water runs down the right on the par 5, 2nd hole.
Left: Amazing views from the par 5, 17th green.

JOURNEY PLANNER

GETTING THERE

TAP Portugal

flies from Heathrow, Gatwick and Manchester to Lisbon
W: flytap.com
T: 0345 601 0932.

WHERE TO PLAY

Quinta do Peru

W: quintadoperu.pt
T: +351 212 134 320

Riba Golfe 1 & 2

W: orizontegolf.com
T: +351 263 930 040

Golden Eagle

T: +351 243 940 040

Quinta da Marinha

W: quintadamarinha.com
T: +351 214 860 100

Penha Longa

W: penhalonga.com
T: +35 1 21 924 9011

Montado Hotel & Golf Resort

W: montadoresort.com
T: +351 265 708 150

Belas Clube de Campo

W: belasclubedecampo.pt
T: + 351 21 962 6600

Oitavos Dunes

W: oitavosdunes.com
T: +351 21 486 06 00

Royal Obidos

W: royalobidos.com
T: +351 262 965 220

Campo Real

W: dolcecamporeal.com
T: +351 261 960 900



ROYAL
OBIDOS



Sunset over Seve's
final golf course
design and a
perfect tribute to
the legend he is.

feeling to the green and if there are a group of you, watching from the bar is mandatory as your friends and fellow competitors finish. It is great fun and a perfect way to end a days golf.

ROYAL OBIDOS

W: royalobidosgolf.pt

I am in the car on our way to Royal Obidos and it suddenly feels like a bit of a pilgrimage as this was the last course that the great Severiano Ballesteros ever designed, and memories of the great man doing his fist-pumping salute on the 18th green at St Andrews while winning the 1984 Open Championship spring to mind.

Another thought that occurs is the saying: never meet your heroes as they will never live up to expectations. But as I stand on the first tee, that nagging doubt subsides. The course looks fantastic. The first is a tough opening hole, but the second just takes your breath away. Holiday golf should be fun and Seve has given us plenty of risk-and-reward shots here. Once you have played your drive from this lofty elevated tee over a lake to the fairway that sits at least 100ft below, you then have to play over the same lake if you want to go for the green in two. But be warned – there is water back and front of this green.

If you think you escaped there, you'll be mistaken. The 3rd is a long par-3 downhill to a green that is again protected by water front and back. This is followed by two well-designed par-4s and another par-3 over water. The first nine culminates in a long par-3 downhill and a par-4 that gives you a great birdie chance. As I make my way round some of the great practice facilities to the 10th I look back on the front nine and realise that there wasn't one weak hole.

The back nine has a slightly different feel to it and you can see the course is laid-out around a valley and is played around and along it. I crack my drive down the fairway and we are off again, but it's at the par-5, 11th hole's elevated tee that the fun begins again.

You can almost feel Seve's presence as you stand by your ball, having hit the fairway looking down at the green below; his chuckle as you look at a yardage you know you can hit but the doubt is around the water that protects the green. Again risk-and-reward at its best. All I would say is bring plenty of golf balls. There are



ROYAL OBIDOS

The far corner sits right above the 18th green with its carry over water

"I am told the bar is filled with howls of laughter and boos for those who make the carry"

plenty of risk-and-reward shots on this course and you're going to enjoy every one of them. You may lose a few on the way, but you're not playing monthly medal golf – this is holiday golf and whether you're with a group or just with your partner, it's fun golf. So go for it!!

Anyway I'm teeing up on the par-4 12th with a new orange ball! This time the water runs along the right with a large mound to your left. This hole is all about strategy as it's a 35-degree dog-leg right, but you need to place your drive and then be in the right position to attack the flag.

The 18th is truly a stunning finishing hole from an elevated tee. Hopefully you will be staying at the hotel as I am sure you'll want to stand on this tee again, I know I want to come back. The green is out of reach unless you're Bubba Watson, that is, but you'll still have to make the carry over

water with your third to get to the flag.

What also makes this a great finishing hole for touring groups is the fact that it sits right below the clubhouse and you can watch as your friends finish. I am told the bar is filled with howls of laughter and boos for those who make the carry. No matter which way you finish this great track, you will be lifting a glass to the great legend that is Seve and thanking him for a wonderful day's golf full of joyous and probably raucous memories. .

JOURNEY PLANNER

Praia D'el Rey

W: praia-del-rey.com
T: +351 262 099 587

Bom Sucesso

W: bomsucesso.net
T: +351 262 965 300

WHERE TO STAY

The Dolce Campo Real

W: dolce.com/camporeal
T: +351.261.960.900

Bom Sucesso – Design Resort

Óbidos

W: bomsucesso.net
T: +351 262 965 300

Royal Óbidos Spa & Golf Resort

Óbidos

W: royalobidos.com
T: +351 262 965 220

Pousada Castelo

Óbidos

W: pestana.com/uk/hotel/pousada-obidos
T: +44 203 695 0548

Sheraton

Lisbon

W: sheratonlisboa.com
T: +351 21 312 0000

The Oitavos

Cascais

W: theoitavos.com
T: +351 214 829 070

WHERE TO EAT

Hotel Areias do Seixo

W: areiasdoseixofoodbyheart.com
T: +351 261 936 340

Lisboa A Noite

W: lisboanoite.com
T: +351 21 346 85 57



67 THE OITAVOS



VIEW.COM

HOTEL & SPA

REVIEW



69 BOM SUCESSO





THE OITAVOS

CASCAIS, PORTUGAL

By CHARMINE HIBBERT

We are heading out of Lisbon, to the beautiful coastal area of Cascais, which is just a 30 minute drive, it can be done quicker if you know the route but we've been round a couple of roundabouts twice!!

We are heading for the magnificent 5 star luxury Oitavos hotel, which boasts 142 guest rooms, all of which has its own private balcony where you can take in the stunning views of both the Atlantic Ocean and Oitavos Dunes golf course.

As you hit the coastal road and drive up round the hotel to the car park, you will be stunned by the sheer size of the place and for those who like minimalist then you are in for a real treat. The hotel also features two special suites: 'The Atlantic' suite which is located in the Northwest corner of the top floor and 'The Oitavos' which is located at the Southwest end of the top floor. Both these one-bedroom suites are extra spacious and feature a separate living and dining area, as well as independent washrooms.

When you step out on to your balcony you will be blown away by the views. You couldn't ask for more. All guests here have access to the most exclusive amenities available in Portugal, from the Oitavos Dunes golf course to the award winning Verbasco Restaurant (Clubhouse), The Quinta da Marinha Equestrian Centre to my favourite spot The Spa. →

Above: Beautiful sunsets over the Atlantic from the pool. Below Oitavos Dunes 1st fairway with the hotel in the background



SLEEK CHIC

Charmaine Hibbert finds that Minimalist fittings and décor has its own elegance and sumptuous comfort



Top and above: The restaurant and bar



Left and right: Stunning views from your rooms lounge, bedroom and bathroom



THE RESTAURANTS

I would highly recommend The Ipsylon Restaurant, the menu is prepared daily by the French chef and the food can be accompanied by some beautiful wines, again the setting fits in with the minimalist ethos and watching the sun go down with a light fruity pinot noir after the excellently prepared “Le Diner du Chef” was a particular highlight.

My favourite spot in the Ipsylon is the Japanese bar. For all of you who have read my reviews will know I have a weakness for sushi and this bar offers the highest quality sushi around and the best part is watching the chefs prepare the dishes right before your eyes! I love watching chefs at work, it’s such a joy to watch their culinary skills at work, it also makes you appreciate your food so much more.

THE SPA

Reviewing the Spa has been the highlight of my trip. With a range of packages and treatments to choose from you will be spoilt for choice. I opted for the ‘Organic Muslin Massage’ where they use only the finest herbs as well as seaweed and massage deep into your body. It’s purpose is to rejuvenate the skin by exfoliating the surfaces layers whilst nourishing your skin deep within. I enjoyed the detoxifying peppermint, but you could always opt for the calming chamomile or stimulating fennel. Another treatment I would recommend is the ‘Customised Facial’ now this is one is much more personal as it is tailored to your own particular skin needs. Not only was my skin left glowing, it was so soft to the touch. One more I would suggest is the Yoga Class, the duration is 60 minutes and you can choose to do an individual or group session. I choose to do the individual session just because I haven’t done yoga in a number of years but it’s a fantastic way to relax, meditate, boost your willpower and also a great way to help build your core strength. Yoga is not for everyone but if you are a fan of yoga it is definitely worth booking a session.

As we drive away to the next golf course and I look back down the slope to the entrance to the hotel, it’s strange as you can’t begin to realise how much hidden delights this building holds until you actually stay here but I would make sure you put this gem on your weekend away list.

Tel +351 21 486 0020
www.theoitavos.com/

BOM SUCESSO

Obidos, Portugal

By CHARMAINE HIBBERT

23-INTO-1 PERFECT

Ask 23 different designers to produce 23 different villa and townhouse designs on land covering over 1,576,210sqm and what is the result? Charmaine Hibbert takes a sojourn to Obidos to find out

Night has fallen as we pull into the gates of Bom Sucesso and as we pull up outside our villas with their crisp white finish and beach wood doors I already have the feeling that I am going to be happy when I open the door.

What I didn't anticipate is the nice bottle of wine, cheese and crackers and a beautiful wood burner all ready to go, a box of matches just waiting for me to strike one and get the fire crackling – not that there isn't air condition that I could turn up but where is the fun in that!

After a wonderful night's sleep in the extra sized four poster bed – I have to add it's a modern designed four poster – I open my curtains to be greeted by the morning sun and a wonderful view of the resort. After a nice warm shower in the spacious bathroom I take a slow walk to the clubhouse for breakfast. The walk gives me a chance to appreciate the many different types of villa and townhouse designs – by the 23 different architects that have collaborated on this project – and it certainly makes for an idyllic environment. It is the perfect getaway. →

Top: You can choose a villa with its own pool. Right: One of the many beautiful views from the villas to the right of the 16th fairway. Far right: Bed to balcony, the perfect way to start the day.



Breakfast as you would expect is a mixture of fresh fruit, cold meats, pastries and of course how can I resist some freshly cooked to order scrambled eggs and bacon after a nice fresh bowl of fruit. I am perched by the window looking over the lake with a cup of coffee just lapping up the views.

I contemplate what it is that I should do with my day and manage to persuade James to play a round of tennis in the (late) afternoon. As some of you should know by now I am into wellness and fitness but I haven't played any sport properly in a few years, James is very competitive and I should really learn my lesson, but I feel in such good spirits that I could take on the world.

I take a wander around the resort and have a look at what other amenities it offers aside from the four tennis courts, two paddle tennis courts and the 60 hectare 18-hole championship golf course. The resort features a swimming pool as you would expect, a professional football pitch, playground that features a bouncy castle during the summer, multi-games court and to my delight a laser tag playing field, just a shame there isn't a group of us, but maybe on my next visit.

What you will love to know is that Bom Sucesso has teamed up with a network of local partners who offer specialised activities to the resort, activities such as go-karting, kayaking, jet skiing, cycling, trekking, surfing, bird watching – the list goes on, but for a full list please checkout Bom Sucesso's website.

The silver coast is steeped in history and culture, so if you fancy more time away from the resort and don't fancy any of the activities I have listed above you should checkout what the Silver Coast has to offer. You could do some sightseeing tours – there are lots of private tours available – there is an array of castles, monuments, palaces and churches to visit, as well as gardens and parks, and you can even checkout the wildlife.

I thought I would take it easy and so decided to venture to Rio Cortiço beach for a couple of hours – it is 3km away from the resort but during the summer shuttle transport is available to take guests to the beach and Óbidos – the beautiful sea views and the cool breeze is just what I need before facing James for a game of tennis. With a shoulder injury from my childhood that still affects me in my adulthood – I am getting my excuses in early! – it will be a challenge but one I am really looking forward too.

Although beaten I am not down and out, a glass of wine or two over dinner will make up for the bruise to my ego if not for the physical pain I feel so I look forward to laughing about it later. Just thinking about the delicious cuisine is already putting a smile on my face.

The Clubhouse restaurant is located in the beautiful clubhouse building that has been divided into different zones, one with a dining room and sitting room, the other with a bar that provides light meals. There is also an enormous terrace where you can sit out and enjoy quality food inspired by national cuisine and the freshest local produce all while soaking up the gorgeous scenery. What more could you ask for?

Tel +351 262 965 300
www.bomsucesso.net

Right and below: Three views from inside the villas or townhouses that offer you space, comfort and crisp white finishes



CENTER OF PORTUGAL IS MY CUP OF TEE!

FIND OUT MORE ON WWW.CENTEROFPORTUGAL.COM

SUNGLASSES THAT MAKE EVERYTHING BRIGHTER – AND DULLER – AT THE SAME TIME? JAMES MASON EXPLAINS WHY YOU NEED THIS TECHNOLOGY IN YOUR LIFE

The eyes have it



Left: I tested the Dialed TrueBlue glasses. Below: Clutch TrueBlue. Below left: Mach TrueBlue. Bottom: Illustion TrueBlue



SUNDOG SUNGLASSES
RRP £69.99 / €89 / \$69.99

When I was asked if I would like to test a pair of golf sunglasses on my trip to Brazil, my reaction was similar, I imagine, to that of most golfers: firstly, what is the difference between sunglasses and golf sunglasses, and secondly, I don't wear sunglasses anyway, let alone when I play golf. Well that's not exactly true, I do wear sunglasses while driving, but that has nothing to do with the sun...

So, I think to myself, let's see what this is all about anyway, and if I don't get on with them or feel they don't do anything to improve my golf game, I can just write them off but at least I tried them.

TECHNOLOGY

The Mela-Lens® technology incorporates synthesised melanin to filter out 98% of 'Blue' light, which creates veiled glare in the eye, as well as fatigue. This is the reason why, once I put the glasses on, everything simultaneously became



brighter and duller.

Sundog states that the "Mela-Lens® has been designed with golfers in mind – it minimises colour distortion and sharpens the definition of details, so players will be able to see more clearly what's in front of them". I can confirm that this is the case: the glare of the sun disappears and the contours become more prevalent, and you will be surprised how handy that is on greens when reading putts during the summer.

The glasses also protect you from Ultraviolet A, B, and C light, which helps avoid any long-term eye damage that golf can cause with those four-to five-hour rounds at weekends.

CONCLUSION

For the uninitiated like myself, they do make a difference. I was not expecting to notice any difference to ordinary sunglasses, but the lens made everything

brighter – and duller – at the same time. As nonsensical as that may sound you will understand as soon as you put them on.

I will, however try to explain. The glasses made everything brighter, but took the edge and glare off the sun, which in turn made the contours stand out more, something I was worried about and one of the reasons why I've never worn sunglasses while playing golf. My fear dissipated once I got to the green and realised I could still read putts with the glasses on, rather than being a hindrance, they actually helped me.

I am sold, and it's really not hard to see why when you put on a pair of the SunDog sunglasses that use the Mela-Lens, especially when you crouch down behind your golf ball to line up a putt. With the various designs available, I am sure you will find a style to suit you, so not only will your game benefit, you will up the fashion stakes next time you take to the green.



WHETHER IT'S THE ANNUAL TOUR
OR WEEKEND AWAY TO PLAY GOLF
JAMES MASON EXPLAINS WHY YOU
NEED SUN MOUNTAIN'S TRAVEL BAG

Easy Glider

As I get out of my cab at Heathrow airport and unload my case and golf bag, which is wrapped up snugly in Sun Mountain's ClubGlider Journey travel bag, I pull out what can only be described as the bag's undercarriage. With a quick pull down and out, I have another set of wheels to help me manoeuvre my golf travel bag, into the lift and into the departure lounge. It's about the simplest, most hassle-free journey I have ever made with any golf flight bag. Case on wheels in one hand, golf flight bag in the other – "simples". And it really was. Judging by the number of looks and enquiries from fellow golfers, I don't think I was the only one impressed with how easy this bad boy was to move around.

TECHNOLOGY

The Sun Mountain ClubGlider not only has standard wheels at the bottom of the bag, it also has extendable legs and pivoting castor wheels, which makes it so much easier to handle and control. This means no golf clubs pulling your arms

out of your shoulder socket – or putting your back out – before you break out the polo shirts and shorts and get to play!

There are also two-way heavy-duty zips that you can padlock together; internal straps to hold your golf bag in place; padding to protect your golf club heads; and two internal pockets to take shoes, balls, sun cap etc.

CONCLUSION

When fellow golfers approach you to ask where you got your golf travel bag from, you know you're on to a winner. It was so easy to load up with my clubs and accessories – and I had my camera tripod in there too. Add to that the ease with which you can manoeuvre it around the airport, into hotel lifts and your room, and it really is hassle-free.

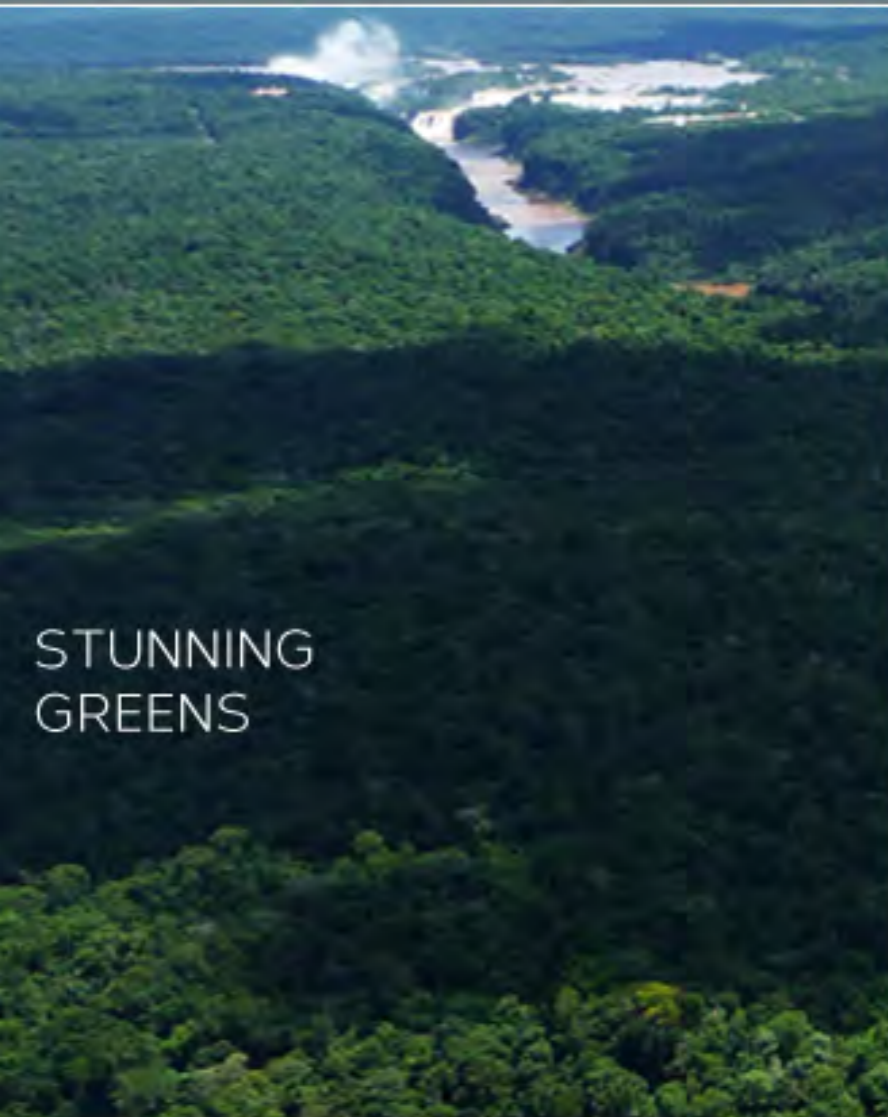
So, if you're looking for a golf travel bag or thinking of updating your existing one, I would highly recommend the Sun Mountain ClubGlider. You will be more than glad you did – it really is a revelation and you will wonder how you travelled without it.



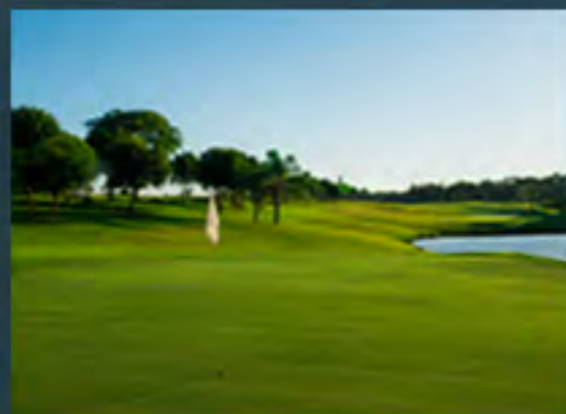
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