

# TUNISIA

With a new Faldo course in the pipeline, we bring you our comprehensive guide to golf in Tunisia

## QATAR

The first winter World Cup is being played this year, is Qatar ready for kick off?

## TENERIFE

We bring you the colours and scenery from this beautiful Spanish island

## STAY, PLAY & SPA

Weekend, short or long-stay getaways, we bring you reviews from Greece and Tenerife

## EQUIPMENT & APPAREL REVIEWS

Callaway Rogue ST driver, Ping i525 irons, Titleist Vokey SM9 and Duca Del Cosma

PLANET GOLF

# REVIEW

ISSUE 22

# VIEW

.COM

## THE OPEN

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

## PRO TIPS

Slopes and how to play them; uphill, downhill, ball above, ball below

The punch shot is not just for Christmas; how to execute and control your ball flight



# WELCOME

Summer is finally here and although COVID is still with us and it being a flu virus, the warmer weather gives us all a little breathing space to let loose our two years of pent-up travel frustrations and get back out exploring the world.

With that in mind, Peter revisits Qatar to see how the country is gearing up for the greatest show on earth: this year's first winter World Cup finals. Milly and I bring you a comprehensive guide to golf in Tunisia. We also have our Play, Stay and Spa section featuring Tenerife and Greece.

For golfers, we bring you equipment and apparel reviews

from Callaway, Duca del Cosma, Ping and Titleist and we also have our pro tips from Paul and Shain to help you hone your skills ready for those golf holidays and tours. We also have our world-renowned betting guide and tips to the year's final Major Championship of the year.

On behalf of all of us at PGR Magazine we raise our glasses to you and wish you all an amazing summer, making fantastic memories that will last a lifetime with the people you care about the most.

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# APPAREL TO T ED

# REVIEW

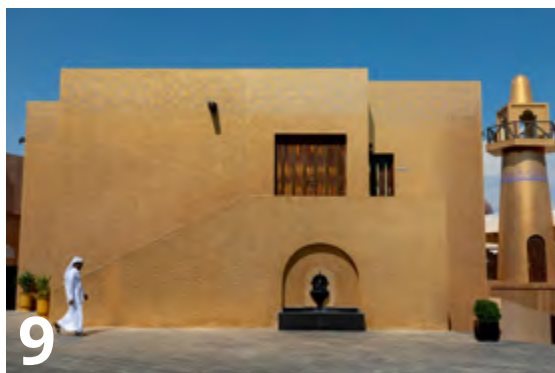


Cover photo: Peter Cordon

## Interactive links

By clicking on the interactive links on the cover headlines, contents headlines or section opening image will take you to the start of each feature and by clicking on the word contents at the bottom of each page this will take you straight back to the contents page.

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



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Our world-renowned guide and tips to this year's final Major Championship
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Peter brings you the colours, scenery, culture and history from one of Spain's iconic islands
- p 9 **Qatar**  
The greatest show on earth arrives in the shape of the 2022 World Cup and Peter revisits the independent emirate to find out if they are ready to host the first-ever winter World Cup
- p 15 **Tunisia**  
Milly and James bring you a comprehensive guide to this wonderful North African country
- p 31 **Equipment & Apparel**  
Summer has finally arrived and with golf becoming increasingly popular, we bring you the latest offerings from Callaway, Duca del Cosma, Ping and Titleist
- p 42 **Ask the pro**  
Paul and Shain show you how to play a controlled punch shot and how to cope with those various sloping lies
- p 45 **Stay, Play & Spa**  
With lockdowns around the world coming to an end over the spring, Peter has certainly been let off his leash and brings you two wonderful Play, Stay and Spa options from Greece and Tenerife

# STENZEN

# REVIEW



# VIEW.COM



MATT FITZPATRICK

18 | 1



Cyrille Bertin

JORDAN SPIETH

28 | 1



Peetlesnumber1

COLLIN MORIKAWA

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TaylorMade



Kevin Murray golf photography

# THREE IS THE MAGIC NUMBER

No golfer has won the Open Championship three times at golf's spiritual home, but one man in the field this week can become the only man to ever achieve that feat. I really don't think there will be a dry eye anywhere in the world if Tiger Woods holds aloft the Claret Jug for a third time at St Andrews

The Home of Golf plays host to the final Major Championship of the year, the 150th Open Championship and to measure how important this anniversary is, Tiger Woods decided not to play in the US Open so his preparations for The Open wouldn't be put in jeopardy for this landmark championship.

Only 24 players have ever won the Open Championship at St Andrews and of that number only Bob Martin, JH Taylor, James Braid, Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods have ever won it twice there and no player has ever won the Claret Jug at the home of golf three times. Now you understand why Tiger is so desperate to get to →



## TYRRELL HATTON

35|1



Ping

## TOMMY FLEETWOOD

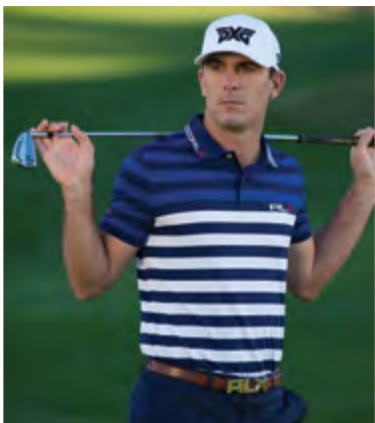
40|1



Asian Tour

## BILLY HORSCHEL

100|1



PXG

tee it up at golf's spiritual home this year.

"There are those who do not like the golf at St Andrews," wrote Bernard Darwin in his 1910 book, *The Golf Courses of the British Isles*, "and they will no doubt deny any charm to the links themselves, but there must surely be none who will deny a charm to the place as a whole. It may be immoral, but it is delightful to see a whole town given up to golf; to see the butcher and the baker and the candlestick maker shouldering his clubs as soon as his day's work is done and making a dash for the links."

### PICKS TO WIN

Back-to-back Major Championships wins beckon for **Matt Fitzpatrick 18/1 – with SportNation** – and a sixth-place finish at the Scottish Open will only add to his growing confidence that he can add The Open Championship to his US Open victory. Matt's best finish at the Dunhill Links Championship has been a Top 15 and a Top 20 at The Open Championship, but I think it will be a very different Fitzpatrick turning up to the Home of Golf this week.

The 146th Open Champion **Jordan Spieth 18/1 – with SpreadEx** – will come into this week in confident mood after his Scottish Open display and also having familiarised himself with links golf again on his tour of some of Irelands

wonderful links courses before the JP McManus ProAm last week. Jordan was one of my picks last week and as I said then even with all his swing changes Jordan has still managed to notch up a victory, a runner-up and three other Top 20 finishes in his last eight starts.

The 149th Open Champion **Collin Morikawa 28/1 – with Bet365** – missed the cut at the Scottish Open last week, but I don't think that is an indicator to how well he will do this week as he also didn't play well here last year. And with Top 5 finishes at both The Masters and US Open I think he now gears his game towards peaking when these events come round and I have no doubt he will be in the mix again come Sunday.

### EACH-WAY TIPS

Another player that plays well at the Dunhill Links Championship and won the event twice is **Tyrrell Hatton 35/1 – with SportNation** – and nearly went three in a row but manage a runner-up finish, he has also had another runner-up finish last year and I think Tyrrell will be in thick of the battle come Sunday afternoon.

A solid Scottish Open under his belt should see **Tommy Fleetwood 40/1 – with Coral** – arrive at St Andrew's in confident mood. Tommy has a good record in the Dunhill Links Championship

and is used to playing the Old Course regularly and with his links up bringing on the links courses of Liverpool, I think these are good odds for the Scouser.

### OUTSIDE TIP

Like Morikawa I wouldn't put too much emphasis on **Billy Horschel 100/1 – with Coral** – missing the cut at the Scottish Open as he will just get more time to practice the shots he needs for next week. Billy won the Memorial tournament recently and has two other runner-up finishes but more importantly he has had Top 30 finish the last time the Open was at St Andrew's and played in the Dunhill Links Championship last year and I feel these are great odds for the Floridian.

### LONGER ODDS

Try **Danny Willett 175/1 – with Bet365**

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

As always good luck and have fun!

Right: St Andrews' famous double greens and pot bunkers



Kevin Murray golf photography

## LATEST FIRST ROUND BETTING ODDS FOR THE OPEN FROM BETFRED

Rory McIlroy 9/1  
Xander Schauffele 14/1  
Jon Rahm 14/1  
Scottie Scheffler 16/1  
Matt Fitzpatrick 16/1  
Jordan Spieth 16/1  
Justin Thomas 16/1  
Shane Lowry 20/1  
Collin Morikawa 22/1  
Patrick Cantlay 25/1  
Cameron Smith 25/1  
Will Zalatoris 25/1  
Brooks Koepka 30/1  
Tyrrell Hatton 30/1  
Dustin Johnson 30/1  
Hideki Matsuyama 33/1  
Sam Burns 40/1  
Tommy Fleetwood 40/1  
Louis Oosthuizen 40/1  
Justin Rose 40/1  
Viktor Hovland 45/1  
Bryson DeChambeau 50/1  
Tony Finau 50/1  
Sung Jae Im 50/1  
Joaquin Niemann 50/1  
Max Homa 55/1  
Corey Connors 60/1  
Keegan Bradley 60/1  
Robert MacIntyre 66/1  
Tiger Woods 66/1  
Marc Leishman 80/1  
Patrick Reed 80/1  
Paul Casey 80/1  
Ryan Fox 80/1  
Seamus Power 80/1  
Abraham Ancer 80/1  
Adam Scott 80/1  
Cameron Young 80/1  
Mito Pereira 90/1  
Aaron Wise 90/1  
Harold Varner 90/1  
Gary Woodland 90/1  
Billy Horschel 90/1  
J.T. Poston 100/1  
Keith Mitchell 100/1  
Thomas Pieters 100/1  
Victor Perez 100/1  
Sergio Garcia 100/1

More



# IMPRESSIONS FROM TENERIFE



Left: Scenery near Masca,  
northwest Tenerife  
Below: Bike tour stop, Icor



Left: Windows,  
Puerto de la  
Cruz  
Below: Hillside  
village, south  
Tenerife



Left: Masca chapel  
Below: Face in  
the window, near  
Fasnia



Left: The  
cliffs at Los  
Gigantes



Below: Fishing from rocks,  
Playa Paraiso  
Right: Exotic flora in  
northwest Tenerife



Above: Sunset from  
Mount Teide  
Right: Aerial view  
of north coast from  
paraglider



# IMPRESSIONS FROM TENERIFE

Above: Sunset through  
the clouds, Mount Teide



Left: Cyclist  
near Guimar





Left: Poppies,  
Teno Rural Park  
Right: Hiking  
to watch the  
setting sun on  
Mount Teide



Right: Banana  
plantation, Finca  
Ecologica La  
Calabacera  
Below: Mount Teide  
peak and Teide  
National Park



Above: Scenery near Fasnia  
Right: Carnival drag queens



Above: Puerto de Santiago marina and Los Gigantes cliffs  
Right: Football in a churchyard, Puerto de la Cruz



# IMPRESSIONS FROM TENERIFE

See more of Peter  
Ellegard's work on  
Instagram  
[@peterellegard](#) or  
[peterellegard.co.uk](#)



A full-page background image featuring the flag of Qatar, which is white with a red vertical stripe and a white serrated border, flying from a tall pole. Below the flag is a large, modern building with a curved, ribbed facade made of light-colored stone or concrete. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

# DESERT ROSE

From Bedouin desert camps, a falcon hospital, historic souqs and pearl-encrusted treasures to modern World Cup stadiums and man-made beaches - Peter Ellegard revisits Qatar to see how it is gearing up for the greatest show on earth



For four weeks in November and December, a peninsula the size of Yorkshire jutting out into the Arabian Gulf with a population just larger than Merseyside's will be the centre of global attention when Qatar hosts football's World Cup.

I spent a week there at the end of 2019, my last foreign trip before Covid brought the shutters down on overseas travel, and I was mesmerised by the vibrancy of its capital, Doha, and the country as a whole.

Fast forward to March this year and I am back there once again, on a visit coinciding

with the Qatar Masters golf tournament. The difference from my first experience of this independent emirate to what I find on my return is palpable.

**TRANSFORMATION**

The city's skyline was already impressive then; now it's even more so. Best viewed from a night dhow cruise, the myriad of skyscrapers of all shapes, sizes and heights lining the Corniche in ritzy West Bay is lit up in a kaleidoscope of colours and perfectly reflected in the mirror-calm waters of the bay.

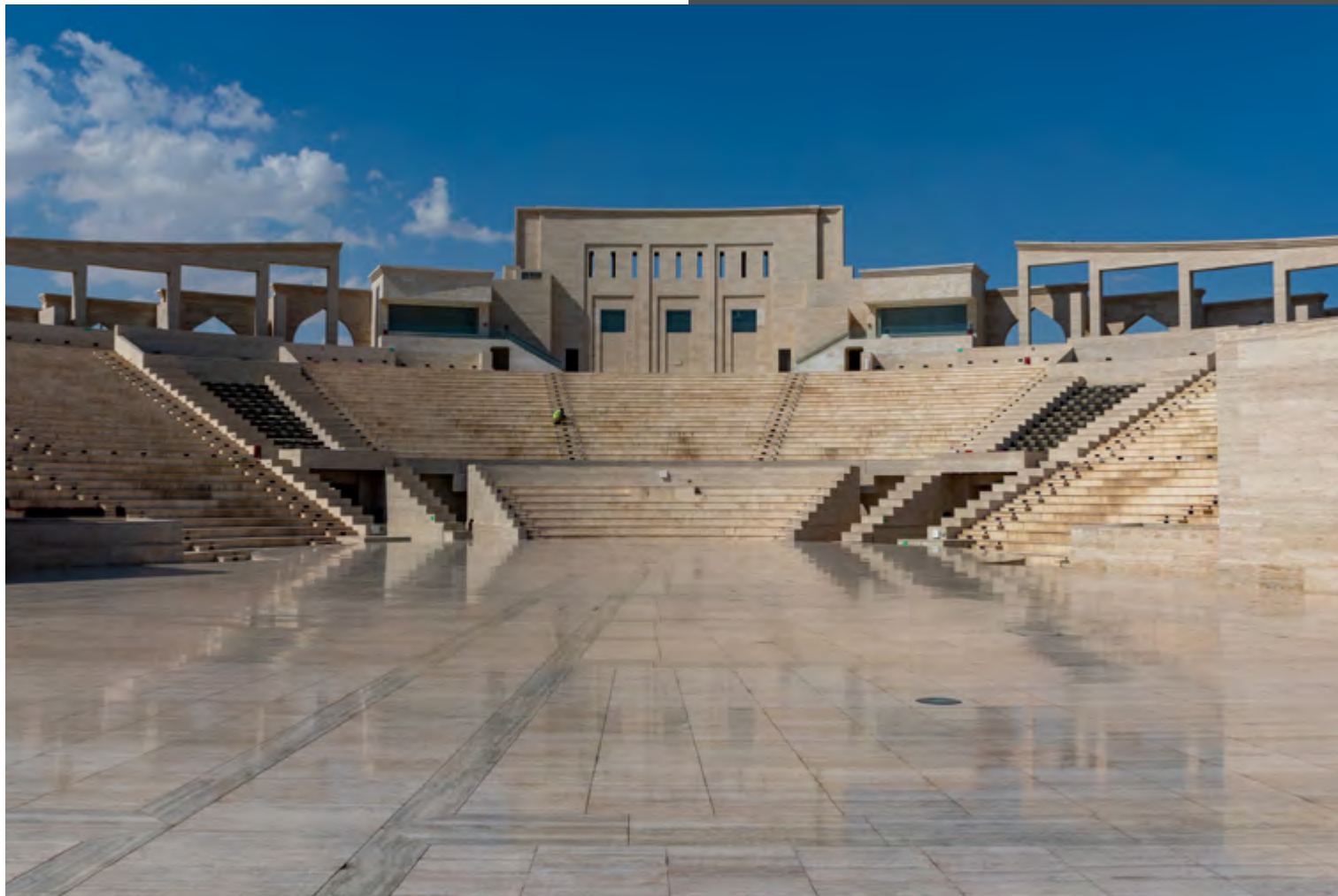
Construction of hotels and infrastructure was at full tilt ahead of the World Cup in 2019, with cranes everywhere. The three lines of the high-tech Doha Metro were only partially open and the eight stadiums staging the football games were still being built then.

Now the stadiums are all but complete and fine-tuning is under way to ensure they are ready for the tournament.

The Education City Stadium, a 40,000 arena that will hold matches up to the quarter final stage, is on the campus of Qatar's leading university and looms large over →

“Best viewed from a night dhow cruise, the myriad of skyscrapers of all shapes, sizes and heights lining the Corniche in ritzy West Bay is lit up in a kaleidoscope of colours and perfectly reflected in the mirror-calm waters of the bay ”

Right: Parisa Souq  
Waqif restaurant  
Far right:  
Amphitheatre at  
Katara Cultural  
Village





“Its dramatic, otherworldly exterior resembles a jumble of crashed flying saucers but was inspired by the intricate patterns of the desert rose crystal formation found in deserts in the Gulf and elsewhere around the world”



Below left: National Museum of Qatar  
Middle: Souq porter  
Below right: Education City Stadium



the Education City Golf Club complex that opened in early 2019 with a trio of Jose Maria Olazabal layouts – an 18-hole championship course, a floodlit nine-hole par 3 course and a championship-standard six-hole course.

Standing tall over several holes of the main course by day, the diamond pattern of its futuristic exterior shimmers iridescently after dark as a backdrop to the floodlit course, all the while with rock music blaring from the stadium in a test of its impressive audio system.

When the World Cup is over, it and six of the other stadiums will have their capacity reduced by half, with the removed seats going to help developing nations expand their own facilities. The eighth stadium, the Ras Abu Aboud Stadium, is built from shipping containers and other repurposed materials. It will be dismantled and its parts reused in stadiums around the world.

Even with the tournament so close, new hotels are still under construction. Dozens more luxury hotels are being added this year. They include two linked hotels, a Raffles and a Fairmont, in the Lusail City area that resemble Qatar’s national emblem of two curved scimitars being thrust upwards to the sky. Where projects have not been finished in time for the World Cup, it is said that they will be draped in giant painted shrouds to make it look as though they are complete.

The most striking building in Doha is the

National Museum of Qatar. I pay a return visit, having previously gone there just months after it had opened at a cost of \$434 million.

Its dramatic, otherworldly exterior resembles a jumble of crashed flying saucers but was inspired by the intricate patterns of the desert rose crystal formation found in deserts in the Gulf and elsewhere around the world. It was designed by award-winning French architect Jean Nouvel, the man behind the Louvre Abu Dhabi and other notable buildings.

## CULTURE AND HISTORY

The museum wows visitors with a journey through the history, people, culture, flora and fauna of Qatar, told via a range of interactive exhibits and immersive video displays. Everything is askew inside – ceilings soar at different angles, walls tilt and jut, and some floors have inclines.

Among the eye-catching exhibits is the 19th-century Pearl Carpet of Baroda, commissioned by an Indian maharajah and embroidered with 1.5 million Gulf pearls as well as diamonds, rubies and emeralds. Seeing it a second time, it is no less impressive.

Pearls were once the lifeblood of Qatar until the Japanese introduced cultured pearls, signing the death warrant for its pearl diving industry. Its fortunes changed when oil was discovered under its sands, with exports beginning in 1949. Today, offshore natural gas production →





provides most of Qatar’s wealth, and it now ranks as the richest country in the world, based on GDP per capita.

While Qatar has traditionally been a business destination, its focus is now firmly on attracting tourists as well. Many of the new hotels and associated developments boast facilities aimed at appealing to tourists, including man-made beaches, shopping centres, spas and lounge bars.

On both my visits, I stay at the swanky Ritz-Carlton Doha, built on its own island with a club lounge and a 235-berth marina, adjacent to the Lagoona luxury shopping mall. Close by is Katara Cultural Village, a modern take on Qatar’s architectural heritage that includes an amphitheatre, opera house, music academy, traditional dovescotes and a gold mosque.

Although it borders Saudi Arabia, with its strict Muslim laws, Qatar is more liberal. You can drink alcohol in hotel bars and restaurants as well as in Doha Golf Club’s clubhouse. However, Education City Golf Club is dry because it is on an educational campus.

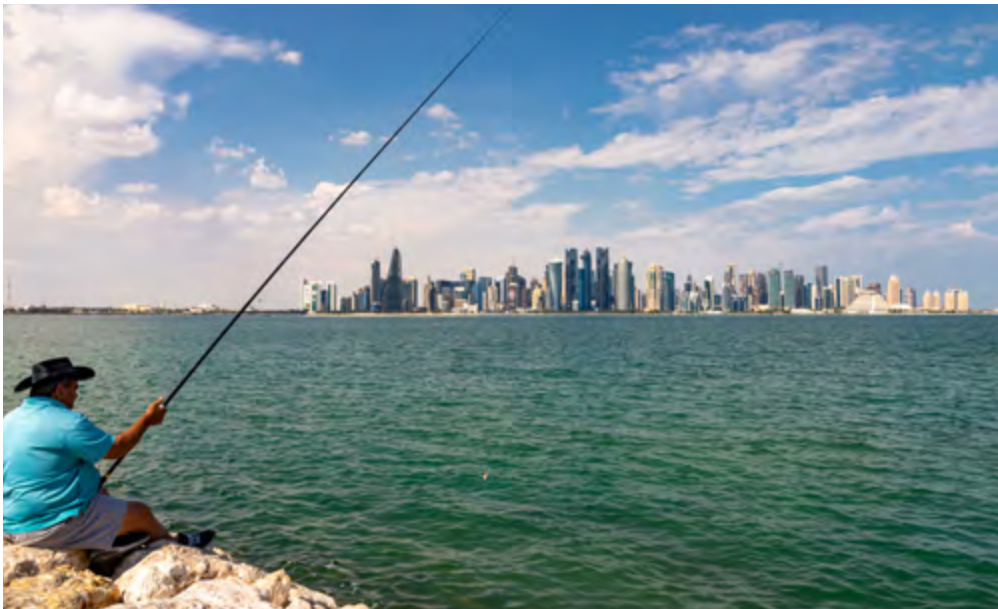
**QATAR LIFE**

One place not to miss is Souq Waqif, a bustling warren of covered and outdoor alleyways housing small shops crammed with everything from spices, perfumes, handicrafts, souvenirs and Arabian coffee pots to gold. There’s also an outdoor camel market and a falcon souq full of shops where hunting birds cost from a few thousand dollars to eye-watering sums – in fact, so prized are they that the souq has the world’s largest falcon hospital, spanning several floors.

Peeking inside, it is like any normal hospital with specialist departments and a drugs dispensing counter. Except here the patients are feathered, and money is no object when it comes to the cost of treatment. I love the touch of humour they have added with a line of bird footprints painted on the ground outside and up the steps and into the hospital, leading to the reception desk. Maybe it’s there to help guide sick falcons visiting on their own...

You can taste the exotic side of Qatar with a meal at one of the restaurants in the souq.

At Persian restaurant Parisa Souq Waqif, where I dined on my first visit, exquisitely-decorated tiles adorn walls, ceilings and the floor, supplemented by copious amounts of →



Above: Gold Mosque, Katara Cultural Village  
Above right: Gardens, pool and beach at the Sheraton Doha  
Middle left: Prized falcon  
Middle right: Souq Waqif Falcon Hospital  
Bottom: Fishing with Doha’s West Bay skyline behind

“At Persian restaurant Parisa Souq Waqif, where I dined on my first visit, exquisitely-decorated tiles adorn walls, ceilings and the floor, supplemented by copious amounts of food brought on a series of platters that fill the table almost to breaking point”



food brought on a series of platters that fill the table almost to breaking point. My favourite is a wonderful dish of water melon, feta cheese and pomegranate seeds.

This time dinner is at a Syrian restaurant, Damasca One, where the concept of the cuisine is “gathering the fragrance of the past and the spirit of the present using fresh ingredients with a combination of oriental taste and heritage.” The concept goes down well with my fellow diners and me, but things take a perplexing turn when the maitre d’ – resplendent in traditional red-and-white striped top and sash, baggy trousers, white skull cap and Hercule Poirot moustache starts twirling a pair of scimitars round his head while dancing to the restaurant musicians, then gives one to a member of our group and has a mock sword fight with him. Thankfully no blood is spilt and they call it an honourable draw.

On the way out of the souq we pass several shisha lounges where locals are relaxing over a traditional board game while smoking on a hubble bubble pipe. Sadly for any fans going to the World Cup and hoping to find a bar there where they can have a beer or two, alcohol is not permitted in the souq, not even in the boutique hotels that have opened in some of its historic buildings.

Besides eating in the souq, we also dine at hotel restaurants including Italian-flavoured La

Spiga in the W Doha.

**DESERT PLAYGROUND**

Qatar is far more than just Doha. The desert to the south-west of the city is an extension of Saudi Arabia’s Empty Quarter and was where Bedouin tribes would set up camps with their camels in former times. The tradition remains embedded in Qatari culture; each winter during the Al Enna camping season, locals head out to the desert at weekends to set up tents and enjoy the outdoors life.

Today, the desert is an adventure playground. Its steep, golden sand dunes are tailor-made for all sorts of activities, whether riding camels, sandboarding down the slopes, parasailing or going dune-bashing in a 4x4, quad bike, ATV or dune buggy.

I go on two exhilarating desert dune-bashing trips an hour’s drive from Doha, thundering up, down and occasionally sideways in powerful Toyota 4x4s. One trip takes in lunch at a tented beachside resort where clients can swim in the warm Gulf waters, while the other one takes me past the spectacular and wildlife-rich Khor Al Adaid, or Inland Sea, almost to the Saudi border.

After my two Qatar visits, I am completely smitten with this gem of a desert rose. As I’m sure will football fans who venture there later this year.



Top: Parisa Souq Waqif restaurant  
Middle: Souq Waqif stalls  
Left: Enticing souvenirs in the souq

“The tradition remains embedded in Qatari culture; each winter during the Al Enna camping season, locals head out to the desert at weekends to set up tents and enjoy the outdoors life”

**JOURNEY PLANNER**

**HOW TO GET THERE**

Direct flights from London take less than seven hours

**WHERE TO STAY**

**The Ritz-Carlton Doha**  
West Bay Lagoon  
Doha, Qatar  
T: +974 4484 8000  
W: ritzcarlton.com

**WHERE TO EAT**

**La Spiga by Paper Moon**  
W Doha  
West Bay, Zone 61  
Doha, Qatar  
T: +974 4453 5135  
W: marriott.co.uk

**Parisa Souq Waqif**

Souq Waqif  
Doha, Qatar  
T: +974 4441 1494  
W: ritzcarlton.com

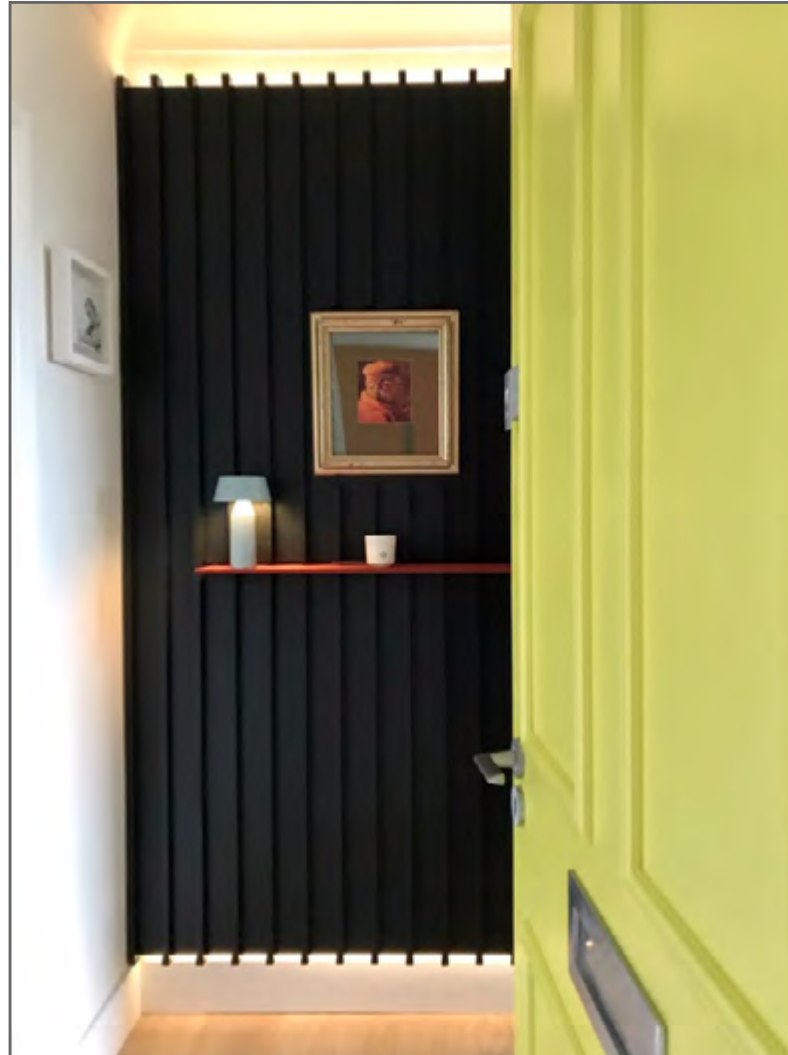
**Damasca One**

Souq Waqif  
Doha, Qatar  
T: +974 4475 9089  
W: damascarestaurant.com

**THINGS TO DO**

**National Museum of Qatar**  
Doha, Qatar  
T: +974 4452 5555  
W: nmoq.org.qa





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# THE FORCE AWAKENS

Like the Star Wars movies that were filmed here, Tunisia is back. And with a rich history and culture it's a destination that offers so much more than just sun, sea and sand, as James Mason and Milly Ndili discover

One of the many cafes in the Sidi Bou Said area of Tunis that has some stunning sea views

Michael Foley





Nadja Varga



Andrew Tijou



Tarek



Michael Foley



Andrew Tijou



Faresbenrayana

Top left: Fort at Hammamet  
Bottom left: Rustic door in Sousse  
Left: Kasbah Square, Tunis. Top right: Bourguiba Mausoleum, Monastir. Right middle: Oyster pots, Tunis. Left: UNESCO listed Old Medina of Tunis



BY MILLY NDILI

Tunisia is a North African country with borders along the Mediterranean Sea and Sahara Desert. Between the 12th to the 16th century, Tunis, the country's capital was considered one of the most important and richest cities in the Islamic world. The Romans and Arabs inhabited and traversed the whole of Tunisia, leaving behind ancient ruins which serve as excellent tourist attraction sites. Its relatively small size and abundance of cultural and historical sites make it an ideal destination for travellers looking for an authentic North African experience.

### TOURISM

Approximately seven million people visit Tunisia each year. Tourism is the country's second biggest economic sector after agriculture. Ethical and responsible tourism means thinking about the consequences of your

actions as a tourist on the environment, local people and local economy. When we travel, it's important to give some thought to where our money ends up. Tunisian people should benefit from the presence of tourists. Is it fair that we use their beaches, their land, their resources and give them very little in return? You can be a more sustainable tourist by thinking carefully about how you spend your money.

Here are a few things you can do to help avoid economic leakage and ensure your money goes directly to the local people:

- Use independently, locally owned accommodations
- Book with a local tour operator
- Use local transport options
- Buy from local shops / Buy local produce
- Don't purchase imported goods

With a little more awareness, tourists can help maximise the economic potential from tourism for local communities and reduce economic leakage. Tunisians are known for their hospitality and warmth. Immerse yourself into local life, the country has so much to offer. Don't shy away from the culture, embrace it and be kind to the environment. There is a mixture of the old and new that makes Tunisia an exciting destination for travellers around the world. Only by meeting the local people will you discover the reality behind the headlines.

Tunisia is a Muslim country, and it's important to respect the local tradition, customs and religion. Buying antiquities, being careless about what you photograph, and carrying Tunisian money out of the country can get you into trouble if you don't follow the local laws. English is not widely spoken. The French →

**Far left:** Amphitheatre of El Jem Tunis. **Top middle:** Carthage Land Yasmine Hammamet. **Top right:** Prayer Hall of the Great Mosque, Sousse. **Bottom middle:** Museum and Medina wall, Sousse. **Bottom right:** Roof top view out to sea, Hammamet

"Tunisians are known for their hospitality and warmth. Immerse yourself into local life, the country has so much to offer. Don't shy away from the culture, embrace it and be kind to the environment"



Cimoi



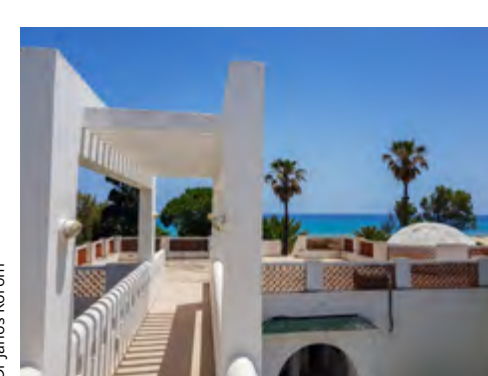
Citizen59



Dennis Jarvis



Dr Janos Korom



North/South Centre Council of Europe



occupied Tunisia for a long time and French is still the country's second language behind Arabic. Learning a little of the local language will go a long way.

### THE SILVER SCREEN

If you're a fan of George Lucas' epic space saga Star Wars, you've probably seen Tunisia on screen many times without realising it. The country doubled as Luke Skywalker's home planet Tatooine across various Star Wars films. Many of the sets used are still standing and numerous tour operators run guided visits across key filming locations in the country.

The North African country can lay a convincing claim to having played a pivotal role in many of cinema's most well-known productions: Star Wars, Monty Python's Life of Brian, The Lost Legion, The English Patient, Raiders of the Lost Ark and Black Gold. Unfortunately, Tunisia's place in film history isn't widely known.

Nearly half of Tunisia's population is under the age of 30. The southern desert areas are quite traditional, but the northern beach resorts are more cosmopolitan, and have a fairly European style, so you can be a little more relaxed with how you dress. However, it's still important to dress modestly, especially if you are a woman.

Travelling to Tunisia from most countries within Europe makes it very reachable for potential visitors, in under three hours. From London it is two and a half hours.

Those who have received two vaccines or have tested positive for Covid-19 at least six weeks before their departure date are exempt from quarantine on arrival and do not have to present a negative PCR test.

**Right: Fishing boats on the sand, Sousse**  
**Bottom right: Sunrise over Sousse**  
**Middle: Place de Gouvernement, Tunis.**  
**Bottom left: Roman ruins of Sufetula**



Andrew Tijou

"If you're a fan of George Lucas' epic space saga Star Wars, you've probably seen Tunisia on screen many times without realising it. The country doubled as Luke Skywalker's home planet Tatooine across various Star Wars films"



David Stanley



Riyadh Al-Balushi



Amine Ghrabi



# NEW KID ON THE BLOCK



With great courses already here plus a new Faldo design in construction all that is needed is added investment in some existing golf courses, for Tunisia to stake its claim as an up-and-coming golf destination

WORDS JAMES MASON PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER CORDEN



## CITRUS GOLF; LA FORÊT

It's been a tough winter in the UK and not just weather wise: government corruption, the cost of living crises and of course Brexit. But stepping on to the first tee with the sun in the sky in a polo shirt and shorts, all that noise disappears and a good drive down the first leaves me a 9 iron into the green. However, it's as I walk onto the putting surface I can already feel as well as see that the pace is going to be quick; they really are in superb condition and the ball rolls perfectly. Just a shame about my choice of line.

The 2nd is a fairly short par 5, but if you miss the putting surface the run-offs are severe and getting up and down for birdie or even making par will require all your short game skills.

This is the fourth time I have played the La Forêt course and it never disappoints. The dogleg right 3rd hole is a well-designed hole and the big hitters can really take a chunk out of this hole if they can make the carry.

The 4th hole brings up the first of the par 3s and from the back tee, it's a beast. Not really because of its length as it weighs in at 200 yards, but it has a carry over trees from an elevated tee to a raised green that slopes back to front and anything short on the front of the green with spin is going back down the slope.

The second par 3 on this nine comes at the 6th; again you have to carry the bushes and bracken with the green shallow and wide and guarded by a

Right: The beautifully designed downhill 12th. Below left: A fitting finale the 18th. Below right: Palm tree lined tee shot on the 10th

COURSE  
VIDEO 



## IT'S RAMADAN HERE AT THE MOMENT AND YOU CAN HEAR THE CALL TO PRAYER EMANATING FROM THE MINARETS AND IT GIVES THE WHOLE ATMOSPHERE ACROSS THE COURSE A CALMING FEELING



bunker that nearly runs the full width of the green. Believe me, if you walk away with two pars on those holes you will be in great shape.

The back nine opens up with another great hole and I love the back nine here. The two par threes aren't the strongest, but the rest of the holes are not only well designed but they are fun to play with some great carries, particularly from the back tees. As I play the 13th I am sure they have put in a new back tee; the carry from here has my heart pumping. The views are amazing looking out across Hammarmet, towards the sea or countryside. It's Ramadan here at the moment and you can hear the call to prayer emanating from the minarets and it gives the whole atmosphere across the course a calming feeling.

The par 4, 18th is playing all it's 432 yards today with the wind blowing straight into us, but as I putt out, I am both happy and sad. Happy because I love playing this course and sad because I know it will be a few years before I am playing here again. →





**LES OLIVIERS IS A PERFECT COURSE TO GET YOUR GOLF HOLIDAY OFF TO A GREAT START. THE FAIRWAYS ON THE FRONT NINE ARE WIDE AND THE CHANCES OF LOSING A BALL ARE MINIMAL. BUT IT DOES BARE ITS TEETH ON THE GREENS. THEY ARE VERY FAST, AND WITH THE MANY DIFFERENT COMPLEXES THEY PROVE TO BE VERY TRICKY SO A GOOD LOCAL CADDIE IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**

Left: Looking back up to the tees at the par 3, 11th

### CITRUS GOLF: LES OLIVIERS

Citrus Golf boasts two 18-hole courses, two practice ranges, two chipping greens, two putting greens, a green to practise your bunkers shots, and last but by no means least a spectacularly well-designed par-3 executive course. Everything you could ever want from a golf club.

Les Oliviers certainly makes the most of its position, taking in some beautiful views of the surrounding mountains and sea, and the opening hole is a gentle uphill dogleg left with bunkers either side of the fairway in the landing area to catch any wayward shots.

Les Oliviers is a perfect course to get your golf holiday off to a great start. The fairways on the front nine are wide and the chances of losing a ball are minimal. But it does bare its teeth on the greens. They are very fast, and with the many different complexes they prove to be very tricky so a good local caddie is highly recommended. The front nine closes with a beautiful dogleg right par 4. It's a blind tee shot and I recommend you aim to carry the right-hand bunker, which gives you a great look at the green.

When you get to your ball you can't fail to be

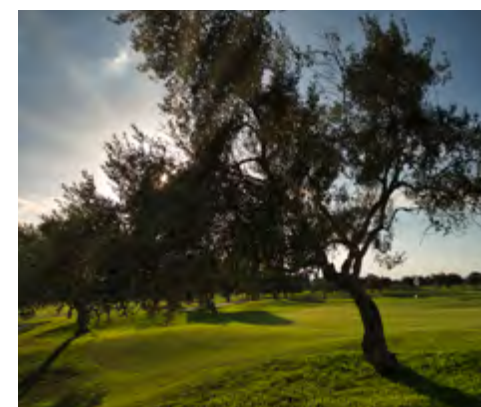
impressed with the view looking down to the green. It's at this point you realise the course is about to pick up pace and come into its own.

The 10th plays from an elevated tee. Then you play back up to a very tricky green. This is the second-hardest hole on the course according to the stroke index. The hardest was the 9th, but you can decide for yourself. I feel this is the tougher of the two.

I could start to go through all the holes one by one on the back nine as I play each one with the sun on my back amid the many beautiful fragrances that seem to gently float by on the warm Tunisian air. The par-3 11th is a tough uphill hole, the tee shot on the 12th, the long par-4 13th that sweeps round to the left, and the elevated tee shot on the par-5 15th are all great golf holes.

As I walk off the 18th I know I'm in for a great week's golf. Sitting in the bar with a cold beer looking at the sun high in the mid-afternoon sky, I give a silent toast to the golfing gods. It's really at times like these that you appreciate how great a game we play. →

### COURSE VIDEO



Top left: The par 4, 5th. Top right: Looking back down the 6th  
Bottom left: Olive tree at the 7th  
Bottom right: The 15th green surrounded by palm trees



## GOLF YASMINE

The sun is shining as we depart the hotel on our way to Golf Yasmine, which is the other side of a main road to Golf Citrus and right by the mothballed Nicklaus course which I do hope gets the investment it needs.

I have played Golf Yasmine several times before and the shaded balcony that sits above the practice putting green. I have always felt that if it secured the right investment, it could be a great golf course and it seems nothing has changed in fact as I walk down the 1st I have to say it is probably the worst condition I have ever seen it in.

The fairway is full of weeds and is more like a meadow than a fairway and I am dreading what the greens are going to look like. The 1st is a wonderfully designed golf hole weighing in at 592 yards, playing downhill from the tee with water on the right and a fairway bunker on the left and as you can imagine with hardly any roll on the fairways, I am placing my ball. The good

news is when I make my way onto the green they are in fantastic condition, I realise slower than they look after leaving my putt short. But walking off the green I am really happy that the owner has prioritised the greens and not let them go.

The front nine is all about strategy from the tee and being in the right position as the fairways meander through the trees, putting your ball in position so you can see the green and not be blocked out particularly on the 2nd, 3rd and 5th holes. The 4th brings up the first of the par 3s on this nine and both play from elevated tees, but don't be short of the pin on the 4th; the green slopes severely back to front and anything short or on that false front will end up back down the hill.

The course used to be known as Yasmine Valley so as you can imagine there are a lot of elevation changes and with some very small greens on this nine, making par is a good score.

As I step onto the tee on the 10th – one of my

favourite holes – I start to remember how much I really enjoy the design of the back nine and the views out across Hammarmet with the sea twinkling away under the sun as a backdrop. The par 3s on this nine at the 12th and 16th aren't as strong as those on the front nine but are tricky, especially the 12th with its raised green. But the finishing holes are wonderfully designed golf holes. The par 5, 17th hole is played to a raised green that has some amazing views and the 18th is a perfect finishing hole, played over a valley to a green that sits in palm trees and the white clubhouse as the backdrop.

It really is sad to see the course in its current condition, but it is a well-designed golf course and worth playing as the greens are in great shape. If you can look past the current conditioning of the fairways and bunkers you will have a great day's golf here, but hopefully with the right investment, one day like Cinderella, Golf Yasmine will be able to showcase her true beauty. →

**HOPEFULLY WITH THE RIGHT INVESTMENT ONE DAY LIKE CINDERELLA, GOLF YASMINE WILL BE ABLE TO SHOWCASE HER TRUE BEAUTY**

COURSE  
VIDEO 

Right: aerial view  
of the 10th fairway  
and green



Above: Looking  
back down the 5th  
hole. Left top and  
bottom: Views over  
Hammarmet from  
the 12th and 17th  
greens. Far left:  
Looking down on  
the 10th hole and  
green



## EL KANTAOUI: PANORAMA

The journey down to Sousse from Hammamet took about 45 minutes and after a hearty breakfast sitting in the sun by the beach in our hotel and a warm up on the fantastic practice facilities at El Kantoui, I am heading to the 1st tee on the Panorama course.

I manage to get a good drive away down the fairway of this 398-yard, par 4 dogleg right that has palms and olive trees lining the fairways, the green has a large bunker guarding the right hand side. Like all the courses so far the greens are in great conditions, but run slower than they look.

As I make my way round the sun is out. The course is a good design, but to be honest nothing screams panoramic to me at the moment. After playing the 5th hole you head through a tunnel under a road and the second of the par 3s on this nine appears, which is played over water, to a

fairly large green with subtle contours.

But, the par 4, 7th suddenly takes on a different look and feel, played from an elevated tee to a dogleg right fairway, I can feel I am about to get into the heart of the course. The 8th starts taking you uphill and my second shot is played uphill to a raised green, but it is on reaching that green that you start to see the amazing views across Sousse and out to sea.

I would make sure you take water with you as there is no half-way hut on the 9th and you're a long way from the clubhouse. The back nine starts with a short dogleg right, par 4 of 319 yards and I am sure some of the longer hitters will fancy their chances of flying it over the olive trees, but bunkers protect both sides of the green and, short left, there is also fairway bunkers both sides so those laying up have to choose their club wisely

to avoid those hazards.

The first of the par 3s arrives at the 12th and is played to a raised saucer-like green that has the ocean as its backdrop and bunkers right and left protecting it and at 182 yards, par is a good score here. The 14th is certainly one of those wow holes, played from an elevated tee to the fairway below with more of those stunning views. What's not to like as you see your ball sailing through the air.

I do feel the 15th missed a chance of using the ocean backdrop similar to the 12th hole and the tee and green should be swapped around instead of having the view behind you. The 17th is another tee. This time it's all risk and reward, depending on how much of the water on the right you want to cut off. It's another one of those holes for the longer hitters who fancy their chances of

clearing the water and driving the green, and at 341 yards no matter what option you choose it's a wonderful golf hole.

The 18th sees you coming back through the tunnel and a beast of a par 5 to finish on. Weighing in at 630 yards with water front left of the green and bunkers right, it really is a tough finishing hole especially when you are hitting 7 iron as your third shot!

This is the first time I have played the Panorama course and sitting down over lunch and running the course through my head, I know you will enjoy the holes on the other side of the road. It really is a great course and doesn't get the recognition it deserves because of the sea course, but with some extra TLC, I feel this course could really give the sea course a good run for its money. →

**IT REALLY IS A GREAT COURSE AND DOESN'T GET THE RECOGNITION IT DESERVES BECAUSE OF THE SEA COURSE, BUT WITH SOME EXTRA TLC, I FEEL THIS COURSE COULD REALLY GIVE THE SEA COURSE A GOOD RUN FOR ITS MONEY**

COURSE  
VIDEO 



Top right: The par 3, 6th hole. Bottom right: Looking down at Sousse from the 13th green. Far right: looking back up the 17th hole





**THE LAST TIME I WAS HERE IT FELT LIKE I WAS PLAYING IN A TOURNAMENT AS PEOPLE WERE STANDING AND WATCHING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE. ALL THAT WAS MISSING WAS THE SHOUTS OF “GET IN THE HOLE” AND “MASH POTATO”**



Above: Looking down the 1st to the sea  
Top right: The 12th hole which takes you towards the sea holes. Bottom right: Par 5, 11th green  
Far right: The raised green at the 14th by the beach



## EL KANTAOU: SEA

After a wonderful lunch I am standing on the first tee of the Sea course and obviously excited as I have played this course before and really enjoyed it, especially as you can imagine the sea holes. The opening hole like the holes on the Panorama course are lined with palm and olive trees and plays slightly uphill; the par 5 weighs in at 492 yards and to be honest it's the perfect hole after a rather large lunch accompanied by a few alcoholic beverages!

You certainly need to have sobered up by the 2nd as there's a fence and road on your left and palm trees and villas to your right. For the longer hitters it's definitely in range at 284 yards and even I was just short of the green, so you could easily start eagle, eagle on this course and if you're here on a golf tour that should earn you a nice bit of money.

I love the dogleg right 3rd hole with its raised

green. The first par 3 arrives at the 4th and if the pin is on the right like it is today, you can't really see it from the back tees. There is another driveable par 4 for the longer hitters at the 5th that measures 302 yards and I start to wonder if anyone has actually eagled three of the first five holes. Now the 6th is another short par 4, but with the position of the trees it's difficult but not impossible to drive at 301 yards and with the par 5 7th my mind starts to boggle at what kind of dream start you could really pull off here!

Don't get me wrong, these are all great holes and it's far from a smash and grab course. If you go wayward you will have some tough lies and the trunks of these palm trees aren't slim if you get stuck behind one.

The 9th is played around water on the left and brings you back to the clubhouse while the 10th goes back out with the same body of water again

on your left. The par 5 11th is followed by the sea holes which are accessed through another tunnel that brings you out to the 12th that takes you towards the sea. This is followed by the first of the par 3s on the back nine. The 14th tee basically sits on the beach and the only thing separating you from the sunbathers is a fence. It's April so the beaches are pretty quiet, but the last time I was here it felt like I was playing in a tournament as people were standing and watching on the other side of the fence, all that was missing was the shouts of “Get in the hole” and “Mash potato”!

At 405 yards from a slightly elevated tee, the hole bends away from the beach and then your second shot is played back towards the beach to a raised green that is guarded by two tall palm trees. It's a great hole and of course those sea views and the wind coming in make the hole. The 15th tee also sits by that same fence, again slightly

elevated, but this time you are heading back inland, with some tall pines lining the fairway either side of the landing area, with the hole doglegging to the left and measuring 570 yards.

You then head back through the tunnel to the last par 3, then the 17th goes up the hill, with the 18th coming back down and weighing in at 434 yards with water just short of the green. It's a really tough finishing hole as there is no bail out; you have to decide if you can carry the water with your second shot or lay up.

Port El Kantaoui offers two great courses. The sea course is in better condition than the Panorama course and I do understand why that gets more attention. But if you have time you should definitely play the Panorama course – you may be hard pushed to decide which is the better design. →

**COURSE VIDEO**



## THE RESIDENCE

After warming up on the wonderful practice facilities that are just outside the clubhouse, I jump in my buggy and head towards the 10th hole. The reason I am starting the course back to front is that there are several groups that have gone out before me and I play pretty quickly and can play, film and video a course in around 2.5 hours with no hold ups. I know the back nine is empty.

The 455-yard, 10th doglegs round to the right with water on the right and has a slightly raised tee, not really elevated but enough to see the fairway. I slightly pull my drive which isn't a bad thing on this hole, but longer hitters can choose a more bold route which will give you a shorter iron in to the green. There are two deep bunkers protecting the left of the green and that water is still on the right. Oh and it's the hardest hole on the course!

Like all the courses so far on reaching the greens they are in fantastic condition and again roll slower than they actually look. On reaching the 11th tee, I can see a hazy outline of mountains as a backdrop in the distance and there are villas to the right and water to the left and bunkers both right and left of the fairway, plus even more bunkers protecting the green. It's a really well designed hole.

Reaching the 12th tee I now see what can only be described as desert. But in reality it is the sand plains that are covered by water when the tide comes in and I'm just standing here transfixed by their beauty. It's at times like this I feel like the luckiest person in the world doing what I do and those mountain backdrops just add to the aura of the place.

Those sand plains run along side the next few holes on the right. The first par 3 arrives at the 14th and is a beast from the back tee, weighing in at 192 yards, played over water to an island green and today it's at least a three-club wind blowing straight off those sand plains into my face. I play a 3-wood that just makes the front edge of the green.

Island greens are a feature here as the par-3 17th is also played to a semi-island green and weighs in at 190 yards. From the back tee it's all carry and with this wind my hybrid just makes it over the water. There are also carries over water on the 15th and 16th holes which are all risk and reward.

The 18th is a wonderful par 5 finishing hole doglegging left around water to a green that looks

like it's on a peninsula and it's another risk and reward on the second shot if you want to go for it. However, it's a fitting finale to the course.

The opening holing hole has a wide fairway, but there isn't much to it and the par 3, 2nd played over water is a well-designed hole, but walking off the 9th green I have to say the front nine apart from the 5th and 6th holes – which is when you first get a glimpse of those sand plains of the back nine – are not that impressive.

They are nice enough golf holes, but I have

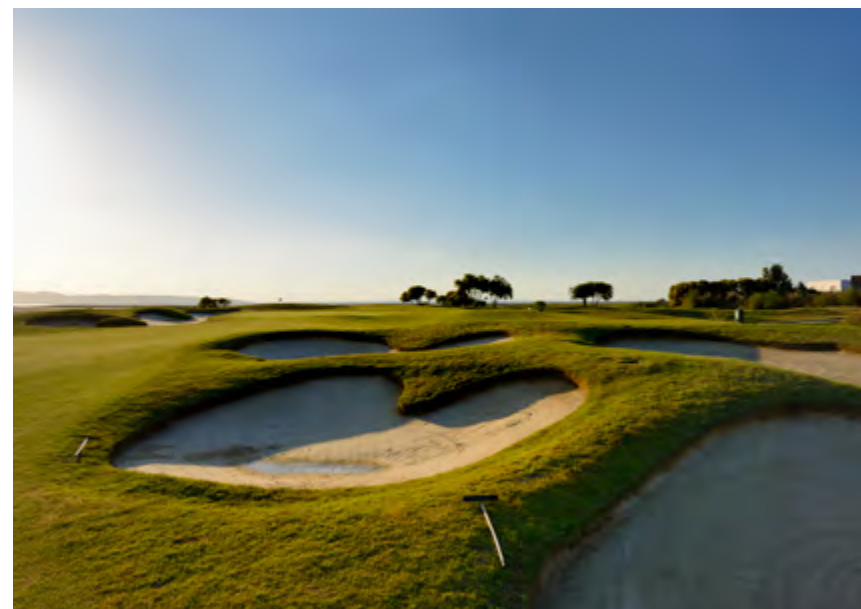
been spoilt by that back nine and I do understand the design of the front nine as that is where most of the villas are that have probably funded this development, and playing the course the wrong way round hasn't helped.

But, this is certainly a must play golf course while you are in Tunisia. Robert Trent Jones Jnr has done a wonderful job here and I think you will appreciate it even more if you play the front nine first! →

**I NOW SEE WHAT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS DESERT. BUT IN REALITY IT IS THE SAND PLAINS THAT ARE COVERED BY WATER WHEN THE TIDE COMES IN AND I'M JUST STANDING HERE TRANSFIXED BY THEIR BEAUTY**



COURSE VIDEO



Top left: The par 3, 14th hole with mountain backdrop  
Top right: Fairway bunkers at the 11th  
Right: The 12th with the sand plains as a backdrop





Sunrise over the 5th with those amazing views to your left

### LA CIGALE TABARKA GOLF

I had heard a lot about La Cigale Tabarka Golf from the owners and MDs of other courses in Tunisia, and calling this the Pebble Beach of Tunisia. Tabarka is a two-and-a-half hour drive north of Tunis and sits on the Mediterranean Sea. A hearty breakfast at the wonderful hotel that we are staying in – read Milly’s review on page 28 – and then a five-minute drive brings us to the amazing clubhouse with its cathedral-like high ceilings.

After a warm up on the range and the fantastic chipping green I am again starting on the back nine, with the 382-yard par 4 playing uphill. But you have to be perfect with your tee shot here as two very tall umbrella-type trees protect each side of the fairway so the shot is a slight fade through the gap down the left which I manage to pull off. The second shot is played downhill to the green that has trees again to the left and bunkers left and right, but the backdrop of the hills and trees lining the fairway really frames the hole beautifully.

You can tell the weather in this region of Tunisia gets more rain with the lush green fairways, but what I am not getting is the feeling of Pebble Beach! The 11th is played slightly downhill and looks like one of those holes you see on the PGA Tour when they play those tree-lined courses, with bunkers surrounding the green.

Standing on the tee of the 14th was when I could sort of see the Pebble Beach connection with the tall umbrella-type pine on the left as you play your tee shot up the hill and it’s when you get to the top of that hill you can see the sea and the town as the backdrop to the green. It’s a great hole and so too is the 15th, which is played back up that hill with more umbrella pines. The run of holes to the 18th has water featuring on all of them, with risk and reward on both the 16th and 18th holes and the par-3 17th is played over water and has two bunkers at the back. The 18th really is a stunning hole played over a rise and then downhill and catching the slope is important as →

**THE 18TH REALLY IS A STUNNING HOLE PLAYED OVER A RISE AND THEN DOWNHILL AND CATCHING THE SLOPE IS IMPORTANT AS YOU HAVE THAT WATER TO CARRY IF YOU’RE GOING FOR THE GREEN**

## JOURNEY PLANNER

### WHERE TO STAY

**Hammamet**

**Magic Manar**

**T:** +216 72 322 333

**W:** [magichotelsandresorts.com](http://magichotelsandresorts.com)

**Sousse**

**Magic Schéhérazade**

**T:** +216 73 241 433

**W:** [tui-blue.com](http://tui-blue.com)

**Gammarth**

**Regency Tunis Hotel**

**T:** +216 71 910 900

**W:** [regencytunis.com](http://regencytunis.com)

**Tabarka**

**La Cigale in Tabarka**

**T:** +216 70 019 000

**W:** [lacigaletabarka.com](http://lacigaletabarka.com)

### WHERE TO PLAY

**Hammamet**

**Citrus Golf**

La Forêt

Les Oliviers

**T:** +216 72 226 500

**W:** [golfcitrus.com](http://golfcitrus.com)

**Golf Yasmine**

**T:** +216 72 227 001

**W:** [golfyasmine.com](http://golfyasmine.com)

**Sousse**

**Port El Kantaoui**

Panorama Course

Sea Course

**T:** +216 73 348 756

**W:** [kantaouigolfcourse.com.tn](http://kantaouigolfcourse.com.tn)

**Tunis**

**The Residence Golf Course**

**T:** +216 70 243 678

**W:** [cenizaro.com/theresidence/tunis/golf](http://cenizaro.com/theresidence/tunis/golf)



you have that water to carry if you're going for the green.

I'm still waiting for that Pebble Beach feeling as I make my way to the 1st tee, which is tree lined and doglegs left. So too does the 2nd, but plays downhill this time with the sea again as a backdrop. I cross the road to get to the 3rd hole and I realise that this is one of the holes I could see from my hotel window. But it's on reaching my drive that the Pebble Beach connection starts to take shape. The green sits below me and looks like an infinity green the way it disappears into the sea, even though we are above it and the right side of the fairway has a couple of those Torrey Pines that you see at the Farmers Insurance Open.

The par-3 4th hole is a stunner with the sea as a backdrop and is another one of those Pines holes; you really need to concentrate here as there are not only bunkers left and right, but there is also a cliff if you go too far left. Just pray your ball lands in the grass before you get to the cliff edge if you see your ball start to draw/hook!

The 5th runs along the top of the cliff, which is

played down a slight hill and back up to a raised green, but it's all about those views on the left. Yes, this is definitely Tunisia's Pebble Beach. The par-5 6th brings me back up the hill with those views now to your right and played to a raised green. The 7th is a tough par 3 with a very skinny green that has three tiers, but is only 12 paces wide.

The front nine comes to a close with a wonderful golf hole played from an elevated tee that I have to thread my ball through the trees from the tee. Length means nothing on this hole; it will only bring you a lot of woe. Placement is all important, so I would play it as a three-shot hole and a nice 7 iron leaves me a nice eight-foot birdie putt that I make.

It really is a wonderful golf club and a fitting finale to my trip. I would recommend that they swap the nines round on this course. I can also see the reasons to keep it this way, but I think the way I played it with the "Pebble Beach" holes as the back nine was the perfect finish to what has been a wonderful week's golf.

Right: The clubhouse over looking the 18th green. Bottom left: 6th green and Torrey-like pine Bottom right: aerial view of the 4th green and 5th and 6th holes

COURSE VIDEO



THE 5TH RUNS ALONG THE TOP OF THE CLIFF, WHICH IS PLAYED DOWN A SLIGHT HILL AND BACK UP TO A RAISED GREEN, BUT IT'S ALL ABOUT THOSE VIEWS ON THE LEFT. YES, THIS IS DEFINITELY TUNISIA'S PEBBLE BEACH



JOURNEY PLANNER

Tabarka  
La Cigale Tabarka Golf  
T: +216 70 029 900  
W: lacigaletabarkagolf.com

WHERE TO EAT  
Hammamet  
Jasmin Restaurant  
Magic Manar  
T: +216 72 322 333  
W: magichotelsandresorts.com

Sousse  
L' Olivier  
Magic Schéhérazade  
T: +216 73 241 433  
W: tui-blue.com

Tabarka  
Le Corail  
La Cigale in Tabarka  
T: +216 70 019 000  
W: lacigaletabarka.com





LA CIGELA

Tabarka, Tunisia

By MILLY NDILI

# A REFUGE FROM THE WORLD

**Milly Ndili** finds herself disconnected from daily stresses and transported to her own personal sanctuary

Tabarka is a coastal town at the foot of the Atlas Mountains with a stunning view over the Mediterranean Sea. It's considered one of the best diving spots in the country with its clear water, colourful coral reefs and rich marine life.

Tunisia has a long-standing relationship with jazz music. The Tabarka Jazz Festival attracts thousands of music lovers and jazz enthusiasts July of each year. Past festivals featured renowned jazz artists such as Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie and Miriam Makeba. As with most Tunisian →





cities, Tabarka's history is a colourful mosaic of Roman, Arabic and Turkish civilisations and it has plenty of archaeological sites and historical monuments to explore.

La Cigale is surrounded by a beautiful forest of pine trees and mimosa shrubs. Stillness and adventure are found in equal measure at this sprawling resort 13km from Tabarka international airport. Eyebrow-arching views greet me as I arrive in the grand lobby. With its soaring ceiling, marble floors and soothing neutral tones, I am immediately calmed, it's a little oasis of its own. As if Tunisia isn't spectacular enough, this hotel makes it even better. The entire property is so polished, it's a high-end yet unpretentious place to immerse yourself in nature.

The warmth and sincerity of the staff are touching. They answered questions before I could even think of them and effortlessly switched languages. I am led to the Executive VIP lounge to check in where an assortment of cakes and beverages await me. Staff are emotionally invested in making sure you love everything about the hotel.

## ROOMS

There are 248 soundproofed guest rooms on offer and my suite is of course spectacular. Dressed in colours that reflect the browns and ambers of the sand, earth and sun outside, the natural palette allows the suite to blend in perfectly with the natural surroundings. The en-suite bathroom contains a bathtub, separate shower cubicle and WC. In-room amenities include a direct dial telephone, hairdryer, WI-FI, satellite TV, air conditioning, fridge, minibar and safety deposit box.

The hotel features daily entertainment and evening shows for adults and children. Sporting activities on offer include aerobics, tennis, table tennis and volleyball. Guests can also work out in the hotel gym.

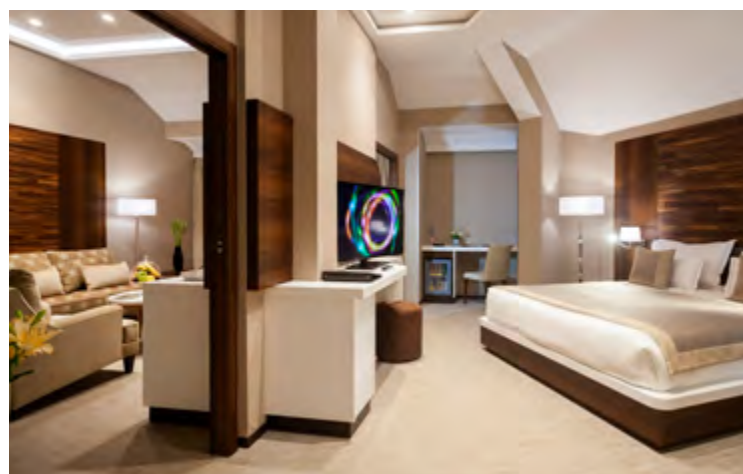
For an extra fee, the hotel offers the opportunity to go horse riding, scuba diving, play pool/snooker or play golf at the nearby course – see James's review on page 26..

## RESTAURANTS

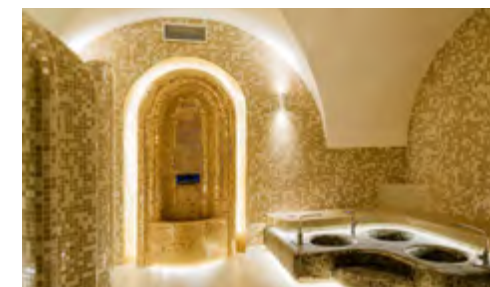
Eateries include a main buffet restaurant with panoramic views of the sea. A buffet breakfast is served each morning, lunch is available in one of the eateries and an international buffet can be enjoyed for dinner. Other hotel facilities include a hairdressing salon, conference facilities, a bridge room, an entertainment room and a casino. →



Top and below left: Room options at La Cigale. Middle: The wonderful Café Maure. Bottom right: The perfect setting for a romantic dinner







Left: Jacuzzi and pool with a view. Right top to bottom: Hammam treatment room. Taking in the views while relaxing. The Oriental treatment room. Winding corridors transport you to the spa

It would be criminal not to block off an entire day to spend at the spa. It's a small paradise within a paradise, a place to truly rest, refuel, and reset. Taking in all of the details will give you whiplash; an architectural masterpiece of palatial proportions, I am completely immersed in luxury in the serene environment.

### THE SPA

I catch glimpses of the ocean as I make my way to the spa, which is hidden away down long, winding corridors and twisting corners. There's a sense of flow from one space to another, a subtle guidance, the curved geometry reflecting the sense of fluidity. I feel like I am passing through a portal into another world.

The sense of indulgence starts in the changing rooms even before I head fluffy-robbed into the centre. I'm saying farewell to stress and hello to spiritual development. Overall, the vibe is pretension-free, courteous yet unstuffy. The knowledgeable staff cater to my every need. The unique facility is set over two floors. There are modern finishes throughout the sprawling spa with high-tech innovative equipment and top of the range facilities. The warm, recessed lighting offers an intimate, meditative experience.

This cocoon for wellbeing even has an on-site doctor to advise on a wide

range of treatments, and there are plenty of treatments to choose from. Twenty-three treatment cabins provide varied and personalised treatments and each of the spa programmes completely rebalances and rejuvenates the mind, body and spirit. From body scrubs to wraps, hammam, thalasso, stone therapy and steam room, this luxury retreat is a true feast for the senses.

After taking a dip in the seawater swimming pool, you can unwind over at the scene-stealing relaxation area overlooking the Mediterranean.

I opt for a full body deep tissue massage in the Oriental-themed treatment room. The treatment soothes out and harmonises any physical and mental tensions. I disconnect from my daily stresses and am transported to my own personal sanctuary. The massage is excellent, naturally invigorating and relaxing. I leave feeling like jelly. If you plan on having a massage, don't make plans for afterwards. You leave deliciously oily but completely unpresentable. Best to head straight to bed, which is what I am about to do.

### La Cigale Tabarka Hotel Spa & Golf

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THE REGENT



**42** UNEVEN LIES



**43** THE PUNCH SHOT



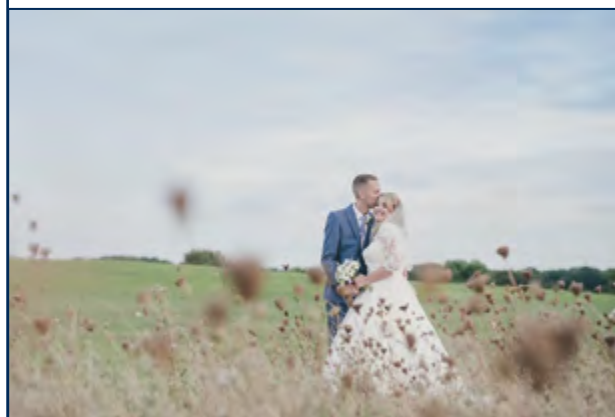




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# ROGUE ELEMENT

James Mason takes the new Callaway Rogue ST Max on a seven-course testing trip to Tunisia and also manages to tee it up in a couple of competitions at his local course in Surrey





## TECHNOLOGY

Callaway have introduced a new Tungsten Speed Cartridge structure which places up to 26 grams low and deep in the driver head. This helps increase speed on off-centre strikes and provides more forgiveness through a higher MOI.

Callaway state that the AI designed Jailbreak Speed Frame provides the Rogue ST with more stability. They have also speed tuned the construction, shaping, and positioning to deliver more speed across the face. The AI designed face lowers spin on the face, allowing for added forgiveness, while also optimising launch and ball speed.

This all works with the titanium unibody construction that increases stability and lowers the centre of gravity, while the Triaxial Carbon crown and sole allows for weight savings that have been redistributed to increase forgiveness with a high launch and a slight draw bias.

## CONCLUSION

As I stated, several years ago when Callaway introduce AI, this was always going to improve each generation as the AI software kept improving itself, to the point where I could just say you need to get this driver in your hands before you make a decision on your next driver.

To say I was blown away would be an understatement. Its' long, forgiving and looks great at address. I could write more, but really just get this club in your hands and you will see for yourself.

Below: Technical illustration of the Rogue ST. Bottom: Rear and weight view. Top right: Flash face view. Right bottom: Sole and weight rear view



### VIDEO REVIEW

Callaway ST Max

LOFT 9°

LOFT SETTING 10°

SHAFT Mitsubishi MMT 60 Graphite

FLEX Stiff 60gm

RRP £479 / €569 / \$569



# iEVOLVE

The long-awaited next generation of the Ping i500 has arrived. James Mason finds out what four years of evolution has produced, and puts the new i525 to the test over seven courses in Tunisia





## TECHNOLOGY

The Ping i525 is the long-awaited next generation of the i500 and uses what Ping call the metal-wood face design. The iron is hollow and allows the face to flex at impact which helps increase ball speed at impact. But, what can happen especially in an iron where you want more feedback at impact is that you lose that feel and that solid sound. To compensate, Ping injected polymer behind the face and state that this

results in a significant improvement in distance, sound and feel.

The face itself is a variable-thickness maraging steel that allows for a thinner design. This helps increase flexing at impact for more ball speed and shots that launch faster and higher.

Ping have also improved the dispersion and increased forgiveness of the i525, starting by increasing the perimeter weighting using tungsten toe

and shaft tip weights combined with their tiered dynamic face structure and the cavity has increased the club's MOI.

As in the i59 irons, the i525 has precision machined MicroMax Grooves which have a tighter spacing allowing on average four extra grooves in each club, which helps reduce fliers in the short irons and helps maintain spin on the longer irons, giving you more control and consistency.

Bottom left: Face, back, toe and technical illustrations of the new i525 irons

## CONCLUSION

I took these clubs to Tunisia with me and played with them over seven rounds of golf and was really impressed by their forgiveness. I could see the benefit of the perimeter weighting while I was warming up on the practice ground each day and how tight the dispersion was, especially on shots that I didn't strike well.

To me the sound and feel of an iron is always important and the polymer that is used behind the face certainly does its job as I was getting a solid sound and feel at impact. It looks great at address and I certainly liked the thinner top line and the larger hitting area that the new design offers. And to top it off, the hydropearl finish stopped any sudden glares of sun bouncing up from the club into my eyes.

So if you are in the market for a new set of irons that not only look good but offer distance, consistency, control and forgiveness, then I would certainly recommend that you put the Ping i525s on your testing list before you make your final decision.



### VIDEO REVIEW

**Ping** i525

**Irons** 4 iron - PW

**LIE** Orange

**SHAFT** Project X 6.0

**FLEX** Stiff

**RRP 3-PW** £920 / €1,300 / \$999



# BOUNCE THAT BABY

When the number one player on the PGA Tour stats hit 72.34% of greens in regulation, just think what your percentage would be and that should remind you how important your wedge game is to your scoring. Having the right wedges in your hands can make all the difference. James Mason puts the Titleist SM9s to the test over seven rounds of golf





## TECHNOLOGY

Through years of research, design and knowledge, Bob Vokey has pinpointed that the optimum strike is between grooves two and five on the club face. This results in a lower, more consistent ball flight with higher spin. Shots struck above this area tend to launch higher and fly shorter with less spin.

Vokey and Titleist state that the new SM9 wedges are the most versatile, accurate and forgiving wedges they have produced. There are six grind options available and there are a total of 23 different models ranging in lofts from 46° to 62°. The wedges come in three different finishes, which are Tour Chrome, Brushed Steel and Jet Black – with Raw as a custom option.

The SM9 wedges have improved the Progressive Centre of Gravity (CG) design which was introduced on the SM8s. The SM9 maintains the forward CG to produce a solid feeling wedge that squares up at impact for more consistent results.

The CG has been raised vertically by adding weight to the topline design, where a tapered pad at the back of the toe helps align the CG properly without being visible from the playing position. This works with the progressive hosel lengths which helps raise the CG in the higher lofts, particularly the 58°-62° options.

Vokey has also introduced a new Spin Milled cutting process in the SM9 models which tightens

the tolerances producing a more consistent sharper groove resulting in higher, more consistent spin. Micro-grooves are individually cut in between grooves. This helps maximise spin on partial shots and a proprietary heat treatment has been applied to the impact area to double the durability of the grooves without impacting feel.

The grooves in the lower lofts (46°-54°) have been designed with narrower, deeper grooves when you are hitting fuller shots into the green and the higher lofts (56°-62°) have wider, shallower grooves to try and impart as much spin as possible on finesse shots around the green where the swing speed is slower. →





Right: Toe and bounce view  
Middle left to right:  
Jet black finish,  
Tour chrome and  
Brushed Steel  
Far right: Close  
up of the micro  
grooves sitting  
between the main  
grooves

CONCLUSION

Gone are the days of picking up a wedge and just buying it – well, that is if you want to get the most out of the club you are purchasing.

As Bob Vokey himself states: “It is important to fit your wedges to your swing type, style of play and course conditions. That selection process should begin by determining the proper grind for the shots you hit most. The correct grind provides the best turf interaction, contact and shot performance.”

I tested these wedges out in Tunisia on several different grass types. I loved the look and feel of them, but most of all I loved the spin and control

I was getting, especially on those finesse shots around the green where those wider, shallow spin milled grooves really come into their own.

Around the green is where you save shots and with the right tools that have been fitted to how you play the game, the SM9s will definitely give you more control. But if you just pick one up and buy it and don’t get fitted, then don’t be surprised if you watch someone with the same wedge get more spin and control than you do. These are great wedges as long a you have the right one of the 23 in your hands!



VIDEO REVIEW

**CLUB TESTED** Titleist SM9  
**SHAFT** True Temper Dynamic Gold  
**FLEX** S200  
**LOFTS** 50° 54°  
**GRINDS** 50° = F, 54° = D  
**RRP** £150.00 / €164.95 / \$149.99



# FOOTPRINTS FROM THE PAST

After seven rounds of golf in the hot Tunisian sun James Mason finds out if Duca del Cosma design classic “The Regent” performs as well as it looks

## TECHNOLOGY

Duca del Cosma have put sustainability and recycling forefront in their new SS22 range of shoes with the waterproof sock system applied to a number of shoes in the range, which incorporates OnSteam® recyclable microfibre technology, while the breathable ARNEFLEX® insert sole is also manufactured using recycled materials. There is also a recyclable heel and toe-cap that is applied to all golf shoes in the collection.

The Regent is a brogue-style design that uses a lightweight Airplay VIII outsole that gives the shoe a contemporary look for fashion-conscious golfers, but it also provides stability and grip. The shoe also comes with water resistant features and a →







comfortable insole.

"We have carefully selected new models and striking colour combinations that we feel complement our extensive collection of top-quality golf shoes and offer something truly different to anything else on the market," said Sjef van Gastel, CEO at Duca del Cosma. "We fully expect the comfortable new models and latest innovations to be a big hit with golfers able to appreciate premium hand-crafted shoes with exceptional stylish flair," he added.

## CONCLUSION

I was allowed to pick which golf shoe I wanted to review from the new SS22 range and The Regent immediately stuck out. I loved the design and look of the shoe with its modern classic feel.

One of the other features that stuck out to me was the padded heel. My heels tend to shred at the hint of anything that doesn't bend easily and while I love the look of leather shoes, I am a trainer man for a reason.

The good news is over seven courses in the heat of Tunisia where these shoes were tested, my feet felt great, to the point that I was wearing them from my room to breakfast onto the transport to the golf course and then out onto the course itself and back to the hotel.

The Regent looks great and feels even better, feeling solid throughout the golf swing, and the lightweight Airplay VIII sole certainly lived up to its stability and grip mantra. If you want a golf shoe that does what it says on the box but also love golf fashion, then Duca del Cosma's The Regent golf shoe will be right up your Bond Street!



## PRO TIP



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# SLOPE MASTER

The main reason golfers struggle with uneven lies is because they go against it! **Shain Johnson** explains why you should allow your body to adjust to the slope. In uneven lies, the the two key elements are balance and ball strike



**Uphill:** On an uphill slope you are going to hit the ball higher, so make you sure you take more club depending on the severity of the slope. Align your shoulders to the ground. This will make you feel more weight on your trail leg. Ball position is slightly forward in your stance, and aim more to the right. Make sure you focus on using your legs correctly to get your weight transfer to the lead foot, ensuring you don't fall off the ball



**Downhill:** The downhill lie shot is the opposite to the uphill. You want to take less club. Always allow for a lower ball flight. We are now looking at placing the ball further back in the stance. Once again align your shoulders to the ground and aim slightly left as you will generally not release the club face as well



**Ball below feet:** This is the most challenging shot. You want to get low to the ground on this shot. Make your stance wider with your weight in your heels. Lean into the slope. This will be a more arm based swing with your wider stance. Take an extra club and swing nice and smoothly maintaining the flex in the knees during the swing. The ball is going to move away from the slope so make sure you aim left of the target



**Ball above feet:** This will feel like a baseball swing. You need to stand more upright and ensure your weight is towards the toes. Grip down the club as the ball will be closer to the body and aim right of target allowing for the ball to move away from the slope. Remember the club face will close and release faster at impact

**“The key to executing all of these shots successfully is a smooth tempo, balance and concentrating on contact with the ball”**



**Video watch:** Always make sure that you have a few practice swings to get a feel for the shot before you play the ball



## PRO TIP



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**ALGARVE COACHING TRIP  
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**Day 4** - 3 hours coaching (driving range & short game), followed by lunch, then 18 holes and a Farewell dinner in the evening  
**Day 5** - depart

**FULL DETAILS CONTACT:**  
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T: 01342 653093  
W: [front9golf.com](http://front9golf.com)

# KNOCKOUT PUNCH

It doesn't have to be blowing a gale before you use a punch shot. In fact it's a very handy technique to have in your armoury when you are in between distances and want to control the flight of your golf ball. **Paul Babbage** demonstrates how to execute this shot



**Step one:** Normal stance width, ball position opposite right heel, hands level with inside of left leg, make sure eyeline is left of the ball



**Step two:** Turn body through, clearing left side as early as possible on downswing



**Step three:** Swing smooth and not too hard at the ball



**Video watch:** A smooth swing and balance are keys to a solid contact



# LONDON CALLING

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

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

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

Our remaining events for 2022 are as follows:

- 20th August – Boughton GC
- 17th September – Farleigh GC
- October – Le Touquet captains weekend
- 2nd December – Princes GC

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



Website: [kasga.co.uk/#Get-in-touch](https://kasga.co.uk/#Get-in-touch)

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





46 THE WESTIN RESORT



REVIEW



STAY, PLAY & SPA

VIEW.COM



# THE WESTIN RESORT

Costa Navarino, Messinia, Greece

By PETER ELLEGARD

## GREEK ODYSSEY

When does a cancelled flight, a taxi dash across London and three-hour journey across Greek mountains turn into **Peter Ellegard's** seventh heaven? Read on...





... Costa Navarino has been on my wish list ever since it first opened 12 years ago. But when I finally have the opportunity to visit, getting there is like a Greek odyssey.

What should be a straightforward journey with a direct flight of under four hours from London’s Gatwick Airport to Messinia’s capital city, Kalamata, and a 45-minute transfer turns into a 20-hour marathon when my dawn easyJet flight is cancelled as I’m about to check in.

Cue a rushed taxi ride to Heathrow for a flight to Athens with a different airline followed by a three-and-a-half-hour taxi transfer from Greece’s east coast over mountains to the Aegean coast in the far south-west.

Once I arrive, however, any stress immediately evaporates as I join journalist compatriots from across Europe in the restaurant of the Dunes Course clubhouse and tuck into a glorious meat platter washed down by red wine produced from vineyards on the Costa Navarino estate.

And as I slip into the superking-sized bed in my room at the Westin Resort shortly afterwards I’m completely chilled, the day’s travel traumas a distant memory.

The Westin is one of two five-star hotels that formed the initial phase of Costa Navarino in 2010, the other being The Romanos, a Luxury Collection Resort that shares many facilities with its sister property. Two golf courses, by Robert Trent Jones Jr and Bernhard Langer, completed the offering to guests by the following year.

The dream of shipping magnate, industrialist and conservation champion Captain Vassilis Constantakopoulos goes back to the mid 1980s, when he first envisioned a development that would bring international tourists to this quiet corner of Greece, provide employment and prosperity for the local population and create a sustainable vacation destination for golfers and non-golfers alike. He achieved that by buying up plots of land in the area to ensure the dream would become a reality.

Although he died before seeing the realisation of his grand plan, the dream still endures and Costa Navarino continues to grow. Early this year saw the opening of two Jose Maria Olazabal golf courses on a new site on rolling clifftop hills. A third luxury hotel, the first W resort in Greece, opens this summer on



a beachfront location and a fourth, a Mandarin Oriental, will open alongside next spring.

A fifth resort area, called Navarino Blue, is due to be developed in coming years close to Kalamata with three themed leisure hotels. It will bring the total investment in the project to around €1.2 billion spanning 2,500 acres, making it the largest tourism development in the Mediterranean.

## ROOMS

The Westin is the largest of Costa Navarino’s hotels, offering 445 deluxe rooms, family rooms and suites. My home away from home is a capacious suite with a large living room and a huge, open-plan bedroom and marbled →

***“And as I slip into the superking-sized bed in my room at the Westin Resort shortly afterwards I’m completely chilled, the day’s travel traumas a distant memory”***



Far left: Exterior of the Westin

Left: Costa Navarino produces its own wine

Below: The new W Costa Navarino

Bottom: The Westin lounge





bathroom complete with standalone bath. With its own terrace furnished with a table and chairs looking out over the resort's grounds towards the sea, I'm in seventh heaven and wishing my four-day stay could be extended by several weeks.

Bathrobes and slippers are a welcome touch in the bathroom, and I make good use of the coffee machine in the lounge while lazing back on the comfy sofa.

Once the two hotels currently under construction are finished, Costa Navarino will feature 1,100 rooms, the W having just under 250 rooms, suites and villas while the Mandarin Oriental will have 56 suites and 43 villas, all with seeded roofs.

The Westin is currently open from February to November and The Romanos from March to October. However, the plan is for one of the two hotels to open year-round.

RESTAURANTS AND BAR

Guests have a total of 21 restaurants to choose from, and we dine in several, in the Westin, at the golf clubhouses, in the Agora shopping

and dining square and eating fresh seafood just paces from Navarino Bay's golden sands at the Barbouni beach restaurant.

One of my favourite spots is the terrace of the 1827 Lounge and Bar, sipping pre-dinner local beers in the fading light underneath illuminated olive trees – while the terraces of the Hills Course Clubhouse and the Bay Course Clubhouse offer spectacular sea views as you enjoy a post-round lunch or drinks.

SPA AND WELLNESS

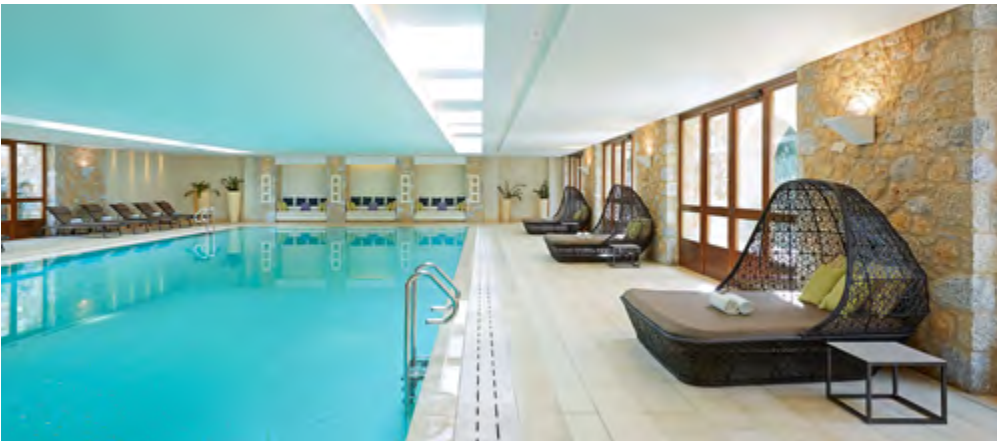
Set between the two existing hotels, the serene Anazoe Spa offers 22 treatment rooms. Its signature treatments are based on the teachings of classical Greek physician Hippocrates, known as the father of Western medicine. Therapists select the most appropriate and beneficial treatments tailored for each guest.

After asking me a series of questions, my masseur Nikos tells me that my season is autumn and selects an appropriate treatment using oils and hot stones. It works a treat and I float out feeling revived and rejuvenated. →

*“My home away from home is a capacious suite with a large living room and a huge, open-plan bedroom and marbled bathroom complete with standalone bath. With its own terrace furnished with a table and chairs looking out over the resort's grounds towards the sea, I'm in seventh heaven and wishing my four-day stay could be extended by several weeks”*



Left: 1827 bar and lounge  
Far right top to bottom: Royal Villa Methoni. Westin Premium Infinity Suite. Guests have a choice of 21 restaurants  
Right top to bottom: Westin lobby. Kooc restaurant  
Bottom right: Indoor pool





ACTIVITIES

The Langer-designed Dunes Course and Robert Trent Jones Jr’s Bay Course helped put Costa Navarino on the map for golf. With the addition of Olazabal’s Hills Course and International Olympic Academy Golf Course, it is now a world-class golf destination that is already winning critical acclaim and awards.

Costa Navarino is far more than just golf, however. It serves up 16 tennis courts, with personalised coaching available at Europe’s first Mouratoglou Tennis Centre. There’s indoor climbing, basketball, an entertainment centre offering indoor games and activities, a fitness studio and two outdoor pools, quite apart from the sweeping sandy beach.

Youngsters are catered for with an aqua park and there’s also a youth hub featuring recreational and educational programmes. Babysitting services are also available.

Venture beyond Costa Navarino and you can immerse yourself in history by visiting nearby ancient sites, enjoy a coffee in picturesque villages and towns, explore the area’s abundant nature or discover stunning beaches such as Voidokilia, ranked as one of the best in Greece.

CONCLUSION

Costa Navarino is a true Greek masterpiece that deserves all the plaudits being showered on it and the Westin Resort makes for a relaxing and comfortable base to enjoy its facilities to the fullest.

Westin Resort  
Navarino Dunes Messinia  
Pilos 240 01  
Greece

T: +30 2723 095000  
W: westincostanavarino.com

Right: Outdoor treatment at Anazoe Spa  
Far right: Westin Premium Suite  
Right below: Anazoe Spa



Right: Voidokilia beach  
Far right top: Tennis tuition  
Far right bottom: Paddle boarding at Navarino Bay



# HOTEL BOTANICO & THE ORIENTAL SPA GARDEN

Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife

By PETER ELLEGARD

## EASTERN PROMISES

An Asian oasis on a Canary Island, **Peter Ellegard** journeys to Tenerife and discovers peace and tranquility





Set in more than six acres of lush, tropical gardens in Puerto de la Cruz on the north coast of Canary Islands holiday favourite Tenerife, the five-star Hotel Botanico is a haven of tranquillity that blends traditional Spanish hospitality with an exotic, Asian-flavoured twist.

The Far East feel begins with two Thai elephant statues standing guard outside the entrance, a theme that continues throughout the hotel and to the serene Oriental Spa Garden.

I'm captivated from the moment I step into the lobby and see the stunning sculpture of 800 glass leaves individually suspended over a huge amethyst geode at the base of the grand, spiralling staircase – which I use throughout my stay to go to and from my third-floor room rather than take the lift. It is one of a number of works by artists from the Canary Islands and Spain spread throughout the hotel.

Gazing out from my balcony only serves to enhance my sense of calm. The view stretches from the pool and gardens below me to the vivid green mountainside dotted with houses and villas as it rises up the lower slopes of Tenerife's imposing volcano, Mount Teide, to a lofty ridge. To the far right, Teide's majestic cone reveals itself intermittently when it peeks through the clouds.

The gardens include a lake that is home to black swans and koi carp, while the vegetation features a bonsai corner and comprises over 200 species of plants and trees. It is just like having your own natural paradise right on your doorstep.

Sustainability and a commitment to nature are central to both parks and to the hotel, earning accolades for them from environmental organisations. Guests get a taste of that in the lobby where a large aquarium lit up by changing colours holds 150 moon jellyfish, mesmerising as they slowly pulse and glide around the tank.

Service is impeccable, as you would expect from the first hotel in Tenerife to become a member of the Leading Hotels of the World, in the late 1990s. Hence why it has played host to stars, nobility and world leaders over the years.

## ROOMS

The 252 rooms include 52 suites and enjoy either a mountain view like mine or look out over the town and Atlantic.

My room is a deluxe double with a king-size

Top right: Penthouse Suite with Atlantic view  
Right: Michael Jackson Suite  
Far right top and bottom: Brunelli's steakhouse

bed and is decorated in pastel shades with rich maroon curtains. The combined lounge and work area has a sturdy desk and comfortable chairs, a flat-screen satellite TV, minibar and safe. Outside, there's a small table and two chairs on the balcony so you can relax and enjoy the view. The bathroom is panelled with Italian marble and equipped with double wash basins plus separate shower and bath, and bathrobe and slippers are provided.

Ambassador Junior Suites are almost twice as big, while Senator Suites are larger still. Both have a balcony or terrace. For those craving the height of indulgence, the Penthouse Floor occupies the fifth floor of the hotel. Three →



***“Service is impeccable, as you would expect from the first hotel in Tenerife to become a member of the Leading Hotels of the World, in the late 1990s. Hence why it has played host to stars, nobility and world leaders over the years”***





***“The Oriental is a richly decorated homage to Asian cultures and food that was opened by Thailand’s Queen Sirikit. It serves up gourmet Thai and Asian dishes amidst precious antiques and exotic plants”***

are named for famous guests who stayed at the Botanico: Michael Jackson, who took over the entire floor; Queen Sirikit of Thailand; and Bill Clinton, after whom the Presidential Suite was created.

## RESTAURANTS AND BAR

The Hotel Botanico has five main restaurants, three of them a la carte, a bar and a specialist restaurant called The Slim that serves healthy gourmet food for guests on a Slim and Wellness programme.

The Oriental is a richly decorated homage to Asian cultures and food that was opened by Thailand’s Queen Sirikit. It serves up gourmet Thai and Asian dishes amidst precious antiques and exotic plants.

Italian restaurant Il Pappagallo offers

diners a menu featuring hand-made pasta and Mediterranean specialities. Guests can enjoy a lunch or light aperitifs of tapas, paella, fish and other local dishes in Palmera Real, shaded by palm trees and with a poolside terrace.

Buffet restaurant the Food Market is where breakfast is served and which holds themed evenings with Canarian, Spanish and Mexican specialities.

Half-board guests get a discount at steakhouse Brunelli’s, at the entrance to Loro Park across the town, besides free transportation.

## SPA AND WELLNESS

The Oriental Spa Garden is an award-winning oasis of serenity set within the hotel’s gardens, its accolades including being named best spa in Europe. Among its facilities are a thermal →

Above: The Oriental  
Top right: Il Pappagallo  
Right: Light breakfast





circuit with climatized pools, a Japanese sauna, a laconium (dry) sauna, Turkish bath, aromatherapy room, ice temple and an indoor hydro massage pool.

It also has a solarium, a relaxation pool, a pool with inbuilt hydro massage beds, and a Thai pagoda for open-air Oriental massages. There are 20 rooms for beauty treatments, massages, body wraps, and ayurvedic, hot volcanic stone and hydro-thermal treatments.

ACTIVITIES

While the Hotel Botanico is perfect for a relaxing break, guests can be more active if they want. For golfers, there is a large putting green, a bunker and a driving net. Two golf courses in the north of Tenerife are less than 40 minutes away, among them the Seve Ballesteros-designed Buenavista.

The hotel has two synthetic grass tennis courts, a swimming pool, table tennis and pool, and a library and reading room.

Restaurants, bars, shops and the town’s waterfront, with its black sand beaches, are an easy stroll away – although walking back is harder as it is uphill. A free minibus shuttle operates to the centre of Puerto de la Cruz.

A trip to Mount Teide National Park is a must, especially for sunset and stargazing. Even if it is raining in Puerto de la Cruz, as it does on the day we are scheduled to go, the peak and surrounding caldera and lava fields are always above the clouds.

The adventurous can also try activities such as paragliding – as I did, despite my fear of heights. Or they can go for nature or bird-watching hikes. All can be done a short distance from the hotel.

CONCLUSION

If the Hotel Botanico is good enough for the likes of Michael Jackson, Bill Clinton and the queen of Thailand, it is more than good enough for me. However long your stay is you will wish you could extend it when you check out. I certainly do.

Hotel Botanico & The Oriental Spa Garden

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Right: Botanico Gardens  
Far right: Mount Teide from the gardens  
Middle: Oriental Spa Garden



*“A trip to Mount Teide National Park is a must, especially for sunset and stargazing. Even if it is raining in Puerto de la Cruz, as it does on the day we are scheduled to go, the peak and surrounding caldera and lava fields are always above the clouds”*



Right: Botanico Gardens  
Far right: Hotel pool





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