

PLANET GOLF ISSUE1

INTERVIEW

Kyle Philips talks design, links golf and college sports

THE USPGA CHAMPIONSHIP

Review & betting guide

EQUIPMENT

Reviews of Cleveland, Mizuno, TaylorMade and Wilson's latest releases

TRAVEL

Michigan / South Wales Vietnam / Virginia

HOTEL & SPAS

Royal Palm / Streamsong

WELCOME

To those of you who have been following the plantgolfreview website for the last five years, I hope you have enjoyed the journey so far and I would like to thank you for your continued support and welcome you to our new digital magazine. For those of you who are new, I hope you enjoy the magazine not just for what's inside but also its look and feel. Our aim is to give you great content from around the world in an engaging, user-friendly way.

We see this as more than an extension of the website. Of course we will feature great golf destination reviews, but these will be supplemented with location features that will appeal to the non-golfer. For those who want to just get away, unwind and relax, there's ample opportunity to book your stay in one or both of the beautiful hotel and spas featured in this issue.

We have of course featured our renowned USPGA Championship review and betting guide – this is supplemented with the latest equipment reviews from TaylorMade, Mizuno, Cleveland and Wilson along with the new Adidas Boost golf shoes and Oscar Jacobson apparel reviews.

As you can see, there is plenty to enjoy. But no rush: just like at Streamsong and the Royal Palm, sit back and relax – you can read the magazine on your phone, tablet, laptop or desktop machine. This is the start of our new journey, so hop on board and enjoy the ride.

Meet the team

Editor

James Mason

Art Director

Joe Hetzel

Hotel and Spa Editor

Charmaine Hibbert

Contributing Travel Editor

David Cottrell

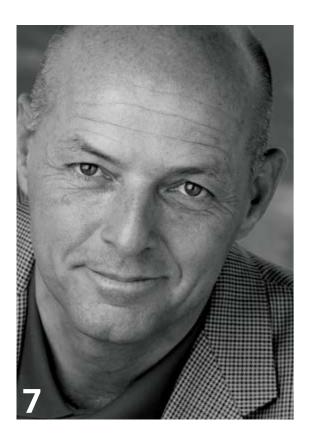
General enquiries and advertising

enquiries@planetgolfreview.com











The USPGA Championship Planetgolfreview's renowned review

and betting guide for this years final major championship.

Kyle Phillips Interview

We take you inside the thought process of one of the most creative golf course designers of the modern era.

p 13 Equipment Reviews

We bring you the latest equipment reviews which have been tested over at least 3 rounds of golf.

- p 14 TaylorMade R15 Driver
- p 16 TaylorMade Aeroburner
- p 18 Mizuno JPX850 Irons
- p 20 Cleveland 588 Wedges
- p 22 Wilson Staff 8802 Putter

p 24 Destination Reviews

Undecided where in the world you want to take your well earned break? Here are four destinations definitely worth considering.

- p 25 Michigan
- p 32 South Wales
- p 37 Vietnam
- *p* 40 Virginia sailing

p 43 Hotel and Spa Reviews

Your guide to some of the best places in the world to relax, unwind and be pampered... you know you deserve it.

- p 44 Royal Palm, Marrakech
- p 46 Streamsong, Florida
- p 49 Apparel Oscar Jacobson
- ρ 51 Apparel Adidas













NEGOTIATING THE FINAL HURDLE

We have done well in the majors this year with Jordan Spieth at the Master and US Open, Louis Oosthuizen at The Open Championship. And so we come to the final major of the year, know doubt both those players will be in contention, but who will be lifting the Wanamaker Trophy at Whistling Straits come Sunday night?

As we come to the last major of the year, it certainly has been a fascinating year in the major championships with the emergence of Jordan Spieth and his incredible attempt at the Grand Slam, coming one shot short of making the play-off to make it three in a row at last months Open Championship. Rory's foot injury and Zach Johnson winning his second major after eight years, to add the claret jug to his green jacket. The other story of course is Dustin Johnson and his inability to get over the winning line, which brings us to the venue of this years PGA Championship, Whistling Straits. Those famous waste areas that cost Dustin Johnson his first major championship win when he grounded his club on the 18th \rightarrow

JORDAN SPIETH

7|1



RORY MCILROY

9 1



BUBBA WATSON

22 1



LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN

35 1



ZACH JOHNSON

60 1



DANNY WILLETT

100 | 1



The 12th hole may only be 143-yards in length, but this par 3 has plenty of teeth

hole, I don't think anybody will be making that mistake again this year.

There are so many stories this to this year's final major, will Dustin redeem himself bring a close to this circle where it all seems to have started - you could argue it started in June 2010 when he threw the lead away at Pebble Beach, but I just think that was just bad golf and lay to rest once and for all that grounded club incident. Will Jordan Spieth hold three of the four major championships or will it be two apiece with Zach Johnson who finished third here in 2010 – missing out on the play-off by a shot - or will Rory be back to claim his world number one spot? There certainly has never been a more exciting and much anticipated build up to a PGA Championship for years, odds on a four way play-off!!

MY TIPS TO WIN

Jordan Spieth 7/1 — with BoyleSport — will be looking to cap his year with a third major championship win, The lad from Texas was so unlucky not to have at least made the play-off at St Andrews with his ball spinning back down to the valley of sin on the 18th. The fact that he had put himself into that position yet again shows that Jordan now sit in that rarefied air that separates good golfers with the greats of the game and I have no doubt that he will be challenging again.

That old adage "be weary of the wounded golfer" will come into play this week when Rory McIlroy 9/1 – with BetVictor – tees it up

having recovered from his foot injury, I expect the Northern Irishman to be in determined mood. McIlroy is also the defending champion and having won two PGA Championships in the last three years it is not a crown that he will relinquish lightly. It could also turn out to be a shot-out for world number one come Sunday if Rory and Jordan are battling it out.

Bubba Watson 22/1 – with ToteSport comes into this week in great form after his runner-up finish at last weeks WGC Bridgestone Invitational – his third runner-up finish of the season and second on the bounce – it is also where Bubba finished the last time the PGA Championship was last held at Whistling Straits when he lost out in a three hole play-off to Martin Kaymer. The lad from Bagdad will certainly be looking to finally get over the line this week.

MY EACH-WAY TIPS

Louis Oosthuizen 35/1 — with BetFred — has been knocking on the door of his second major championship win this year and has two runners up finishes at the Open Championship and US Open and a Top 20 at The Masters. Its taken the South African a while to recover from that hooked wedge shot by Bubba Watson at the 2012 Masters tournament, when he looked odds on to take the green jacket, but the golf he is playing at the moment he is sure to be in contention this week.

Zach Johnson 60/1 – with Bet365 may just float into the Whistling Straits clubhouse this

week and I think after brushing off the cobwebs at last weeks WGC Bridgestone Invitational. Zach will not only come here full of beans but also have some very positive memories from the last time he played in the PGA Championship here missing out on making the play-off by one shot. I must admit I am surprised to see him at these odds but I think he is great value at this price.

MY OUTSIDE TIP

It's a tough call this week as there are two great bets one is Paul Casey 80/1 – with Coral who has been threatening to win but has not quite got over the line but he does have two runners-up finishes and had Top 15 finish here in 2010. And Danny Willett 100/1 – with Ladbrokes – who followed up a great Open Championship with a win and like Casey had a Top 20 finish at last weeks WGC Bridgestone Invitational. I am going to plummet for Danny Willett I think these are great odds and although he hasn't played the course in competition, I think he comes into this week in better form and has more mental strength than Casey to bounce back if things don't go his way.

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!

ODDS SUPPLIED BY CORAL

Jordan Spieth 7/1

Rory McIlroy 10/1 Jason Day 15/1 **Dustin Johnson 16/1 Bubba Watson 16/1** Justin Rose 19/1 Rickie Fowler 22/1 Adam Scott 28/1 Henrik Stenson 28/1 Louis Oosthuizen 35/1 Sergio Garcia 45/1 Brooks Koepka 45/1 Hideki Matsuyama 50/1 Phil Mickelson 55/1 Martin Kaymer 55/1 Tiger Woods 55/1 Zach Johnson 55/1 Matt Kuchar 55/1 Jim Furyk 55/1 Shane Lowry 56/1 Patrick Reed 70/1 Jimmy Walker 90/1 **Brandt Snedeker 90/1** Paul Casey 90/1 Billy Horschel 90/1 Branden Grace 90/1 **Keegan Bradley 90/1** Charl Schwartzel 100/1 Danny Lee 100/1 Robert Streb 100/1 J B Holmes 110/1 Danny Willett 120/1 Marc Leishman 125/1 Kevin Kisner 125/1 Luke Donald 125/1 David Lingmerth 125/1 Bill Haas 125/1 Justin Thomas 125/1 Victor Dubuisson 125/1 Ryan Moore 150/1 Lee Westwood 150/1 Webb Simpson 150/1 Francesco Molinari 150/1 lan Poulter 150/1 Bernd Wiesberger 150/1

lore

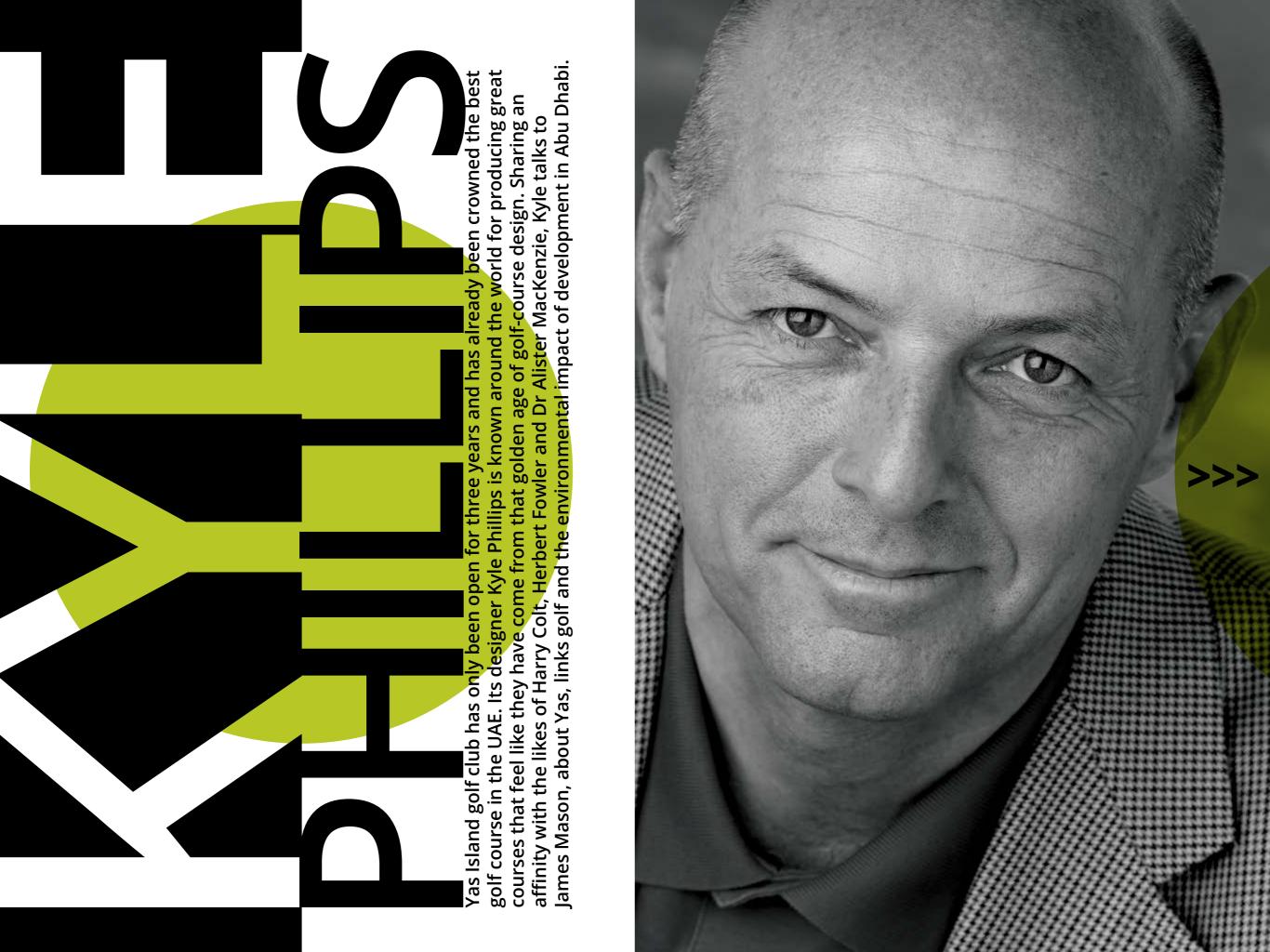




MADE OF GREATNESS



LEARN MORE



How did you enjoy working in Abu Dhabi? Did you find it any different than working in any other part of the world?

"Well, I think landscape-wise, it was very testing, but as far as infrastructure goes, they have built everything imaginable in the UAE. They have all the technical skills and knowhow at their fingertips, so technically to be able to accomplish things, everything was there and in place, which was nice.

But certainly the site itself, being just flat sand and undefined coastline, meant everything had to be made. We had to dredge to define the coastline and then the entire golf course was built up from scratch."

Can Yas host a European Tour event? Or should the Abu Dhabi Golf Championship be shared between Yas, Abu Dhabi GC (and maybe Saadiyat)?

"Well I don't know, those things are left up to others to decide. As for the course itself, I think everyone's that's played it thinks so. We had a group of professionals play it in a fundraising event, a week before or a week after the Abu Dhabi Championship. Whether it can host an event that is up to the professional challenge?

That's not in doubt.

It would be a great venue as far as tourism goes, It has some spectacular views out over the coast there. They have the F1 track and facilities, which are capable of holding plenty of media and can handle all the traffic and vehicles. To complement all that, the Ferrari theme park is now open. So is it capable of hosting any kind of event that they have in mind there, absolutely.

I thought it would be a great event for something like the Presidents Cup for example. The US team against the rest of the world, they've played that tournament in a lot of exotic locations so this would be a fun location, easy for guys to get in and out. They don't have problems with weather that time of year, but would it be easy to do? Politically or otherwise, do they rotate the Abu Dhabi Championship, and should they ever have it at Yas? It's just one of those things that are left for people like you to probably write and say whether they should or they shouldn't."

Peter Harradine said recently that he felt that Yas was too small to host an event, with regards to the room for spectators etc. You just mentioned all the other facilities that can be used. But what he was saying is he felt that room around the

periphery of the course and along the lines of the holes were too small for spectators. Do you feel he has a point?

"I don't know. I look at all the stuff around other links courses. You guys have the Open Championships. Whether it's the old course at St. Andrew, Turnberry or any of those other links courses that have high rough etc, they easily cope with it and I don't see any real difference between those and Yas. I don't think you're going to have 50,000 spectators show up to the Abu Dhabi Championship, it's normally one or two lines around the ropes.

"I would understand why Peter would want to try to maintain the tournament on his golf course. I have a lot of fun, every time I'm with Peter; I think he's a very good guy.

If they have an event at Yas and they put the ropes up and you have two or three deep at any point on the golf course, its like the Open championship and the links courses you guys play on over there. Yas wouldn't have a problem. Harradine also said there are too many championship courses in the UAE, do you agree with him?

"How does he define championship courses? Is

"The US team against the rest of the world, they've played that tournament in a lot of exotic locations so this would be a fun location."



that the length of course? Because certainly if you look at world-class golf in the UAE, I don't know how many golf courses you would put in the top 100 in the world from the region? They are there because they host a tournament, not because they are spectacular courses. The Emirates is a nice golf course but you could argue that a lot of other courses in the UAE are nice.

When he says there are too many championship golf courses, what is championship anymore? Everyone claims they're a championship course if they're over 6,800 yards long."

How do you feel about the explosion of golf in the UAE, and the environmental impact?

"They are two different things. You mentioned the explosion of golf there and I think that the explosion that was going on — especially in Dubai — has pretty well halted. A lot of that was based on the real estate speculative market that has now evaporated, so new golf projects in Dubai have certainly slowed down.

Abu Dhabi is different to Dubai. It's always been a banking centre up there, you know a real kind of city, whereas Dubai is really a kind of a new town. Dubai has exploded at a pace I think even the most conservative would say wasn't really sustainable. So they're going through an adjustment period.

Abu Dhabi keeps ticking along. It has quite a bit of wealth and only has one golf course, so they've decided to added two more – and three is certainly not too much. I don't know if they will be adding a whole lot more, but they have plans to add more courses in the next five to 10 years.

It's certainly not a golf explosion in the UAE or really anywhere in the Middle East like we're seeing in places like China, where they have a massive population and can justify a huge number of courses.

What is the Middle East? You have to define what the Middle East is. If we just focus on the UAE, it's not a great golfing nation so you're relying largely on expats and the few Emiratis that do play golf to provide players.

You would love to work out there again I presume?

"Yes absolutely. It was a fun atmosphere. There are people from all over the world who are living out there, working out there and it is interesting to be sitting around a table, with all the different people that are involved in making things happen, literally from all corners of the world. It's a very diverse group of people you find yourself working with, and there's some good expertise out there".

Environmentally, did you find the UAE less restrictive than building the course in Sicily or courses anywhere else in Europe? Did you feel that in the UAE, once a planning decision has been made, there's not much protest?

"Well it depends on what you mean when you talk about environmental impacts. When you talk about Sicily versus elsewhere it depends on the region. In the UAE I thought it was pretty sensible to make the decision to develop. They had a landscape on Yas Island that was void of vegetation. it was blowing sand out there on this island – it doesn't do that any more!"

They planned this location not only for golf but for the F1 track and for the hotels, all this development had been planned, it became a matter of how we executed that. Leaving the mangrove areas, they were the only kind of areas that had any kind of vegetation, literally any vegetation whatsoever.

It wasn't like a normal desert you would find in other parts of the world, where you would say that this is a desert but there are plant materials there that have some real value. In this case it was truly void of any vegetation altogether.

What we have been able to create has certainly brought in a vast amount of bird life, it's phenomenal out there now. We have created this vestry out there and maintained the mangroves and with the long grasses it really creates a cover for a lot of bird life.

You could argue that we've changing the natural landscape but man in general, wherever man lives in the world he has an impact on the landscape and so it's a matter of how controlled or uncontrolled that is. A lot of people prefer planned development versus the more historically shotgun approach for people who move in on individual basis and kind of live on the land and end up leaving a lot behind them that's not good for the environment.

Then there is these planned developments, you have a chance to really manage the water because whatever people are going to live in Abu Dhabi, whatever that population will be, their drinking water will come from desalinisation at this point. What are you going to do with this water, now you can use this water on things like landscape, which can be golf, which can be all the landscapes around the roads and so forth which can actually create an oasis in the desert. Historically in Abu Dhabi that's what they done, they've planted many trees, with trip irrigation over the years and really tried

The Grove just on the outskirts of London, where Kyle meet Sir Garfield Sobers and below is the 3rd hole at Yas Links



"They had a landscape on Yas Island that was void of vegetation. It was blowing sand out there on this island – it doesn't do that anymore!





"I think the American way of course set up and even design, takes out a lot of that shot making ability."

to maintain the desert so this is pretty much an extension of that, through golf".

Moving on from Abu Dhabi, how do you find, updating other courses, re-vamps of Harry Colt and Tom Simpson courses, how do you find working with someone else's design and layouts, do you try to compliment them, do you try to keep the aesthetics of the original layout? "It all depends on the course its' self, if they're really well designed, I look at it like polishing the trophy versus going in at it and trying to renovate or remodel that body of work. Each project is really different, you know it maybe a course that doesn't have a rich history or tradition or maybe an impact. We've had courses that have been impacted by roads or other outside influences that have changed the golf course over the years. Then there are some you need to use our creativity and try to seamlessly change the course so that it feels like it did 80-100 years ago, but in fact might have had pretty serious alterations to the golf course.

But, at Golf De Morfontaine (Tom Simpson Design Paris, France) or the Hilversumsche Golf Club course (H.S. Colt Design, Hilversum, the original architecture of the place".

Today's courses have up to six different tee boxes, do you try to design a course strategy from each tee taking into account different handicap categories?

"I generally try to avoid forced carries for the forward tees, whenever you have a body of water or a hazard that needs to be carried from the back tees, I am trying to find an opportunity to give the forward tees a way round that hazard handicap golfer. If they're a scratch player or or give them the choice.

Whatever you call the senior tees or ladies forward tees, there are so many that are close together, a senior tee and a ladies tee maybe only a few metres apart in distance, but they add another tee, for whatever reason they won't combine those tees together and just play

a set-up issue within the club.

Sometimes you have a creek you have to play over or a lake that's set up in a way where Holland) you really try to work too to maintain you have to have a force-carry, but I'm trying to minimise those, but some people find it kind of fun to play over water now and then but usually beginners are just trying to advance the ball and they don't hit it very far off the ground.

> Obviously professionals, that's a whole different game. They hit the ball so far in the air their very accurate with what they are able to do and it's a completely different level, as you well know, than say even a zero club champion you know you put them on the courses that are set up these pro's who play week in and week out, they will finds it's a whole different game.

Part of the design at a professional level is not talked about a whole lot, is designing a course that can have fairways, which are mown a little together from the same box, but that's more of more, they can be mown wider and a little more

friendly on a day-to-day basis for those, let's say, sub 10 handicap players. But being able to be brought in and adjustments made to the set up of the golf course, not just green speed but tee to greens for that one-week a year where you have a big event. I certainly keep in mind when I'm laying out a golf course where the bunkers are so they're all relevant for a professional set up as well as for amateurs".

Do you have a favourite golf course designer like a Colt, Fowler, MacKenzie someone that stands out or things that they bring to a course that you try to model into your designs?

"Well I think you've named a number of the designers that are really significant and have had a great influence on how I see golf. But I think you could take Links courses in general, the traditional courses that you have around Europe that tend to be firmer and faster, you know when the grass tends to be alive. Let's say living, versus growing.

In the U.S there is a fixation of growing grass all the time so you get a much lusher, softer surface, where I think in Europe some of the great old courses, the grass is living, but you end up with firmer, faster surfaces a lot of the fall-offs and spillaways where its not always about having long rough like it often is in the American design.

But a lot of that traditional architecture which stems from heath land or sandy links kind of ground. Those architects whether it's a Donald Ross type of architect or any of those guys that came to America. Eventually guys like MacKenzie who were designing in places like Australia, those are the kind of courses and architects that I tend to really look towards. That's really where I draw my inspiration from whether designing in Abu Dhabi or London, those are the kind of guys I'm looking towards". Obviously you can tell from your work, you love links golf. Was it the sheer enjoyment of when you played links golf, which made you want to recreate those type of course, rather than what we call over here, target courses?

I started work in the mid '80's I would describe links golf as having another dimension. I see American golf courses as 2 dimensional and I think there's a 3rd and 4th dimension to 'base' courses that really add a thrill and excitement to the game and certainly in shot making aspects of the courses, its' a large part of what really drove the game to its height of popularity.

I think the American way of course set up and

even design, takes out a lot of that shot making ability, it has a tendency to have flat fairways and pride of bunkers at around one point of the landing area, rather than having the thrill of rumpled crowns, undulating fairways, the thrill of creating shots, with the ball above your feet, below your feet. Bunkers are sprinkled throughout the golf course, all of that adds a level of excitement to the game. Its what drives the game forward and will drive the game forward.

If that gets lost as I think the Americans are trying hard to do, some of them, not of all of us, there are a number of architects who are working hard to try to provide more traditional courses. But if all of that gets lost I think the game becomes pretty boring. A lot of the courses in the United States have lost that in their design and in their set up and that's why you see, the lack of growth here, not a lot of interest in the game because its become boring. You don't play the old course at St. Andrews and ever play the same shot twice, that's for sure, but you can't say that about American courses".

Its amazing the amount of American golfers who picked it up links golf quickly.

Tom Watson, you know is a good example.

The top image is the 17th at Yas Links and below Kyle inspects some of his handy work





Main photo is the 2nd at Kingsbarns, which host the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship

I think we grew up in the same town in the same part of the country and Lee Trevino would have been in the same situation, even Nicklaus you know, you had a lot of courses in Ohio that didn't have fairway irrigation, you learned to play with the ball running. In those days Nicklaus would have been in the 50's and Watson would have been in the 60's, you didn't have fairway irrigation. I know where Watson grew up and Trevino grew up you had a lot more wind and in that part of the country I think it also affects the way you hit shots the way you see a golf course. Since that time we've kind of agronomically perfected golf here in America or at least tried to through irrigation and high levels of maintenance.

I think there is a point you need to back away from that and understand that some of the conditioning or over conditioning has a negative impact on the game, we need to be able to manage all the tools we have maybe dial down the water, dial down the fertilizer and get that firm, fast condition. American professionals can play golf on any surface, these guys travel the world, but I find the Europeans find it thrilling to play links golf whereas a lot of the Americans still tolerate it, with some of those exceptions". Do you get much time to play and what handicap are you playing too at the moment?

My handicap is lower than I'm playing. My handicap is something like 7.8, but I wouldn't want to gamble with that handicap right now!! I've been travelling a lot, it was difficult to play on this last trip, and I did get to hit some balls. You know to get to play a couple of times a week that would be great, but its pretty inconsistent, then by the end of the week I feel pretty good about myself and then I wont get to play for a few weeks because I'm travelling again. When I'm on the golf course its usually for work by the time its finished, It's time to move on to the next one".

Can you enjoy the game, if you're playing, do you tend to play or start looking around thinking that's a good idea or you see something or your critical of something? Can you step out of being a designer to just be Kyle playing golf?

Yes that tends to be a big problem being distracted, my mind starts to wander and looking at this bunker and that bunker the architecture I start to become uninterested in the game I am playing and just start looking round at the architecture of the course, so yes it is hard to stop analysing when I play.

Do you have any hobbies outside of golf, what other sports do you play or enjoy watching?

"I enjoy American football probably like every American does these days. I played a little bit of baseball growing up and played some American football, but you know golf was the sport I played the most. Now I follow basketball and football, I like sports, I probably like the college

game as well as the pro game because of the heart those kids have towards playing.

I am familiar with your brand of football, my son grew up playing your brand of football and so I went to lots of football games. I took him to a Manchester Utd versus Chelsea game, which ended in typical fashion. Manchester won in the last minutes of the game as they seem to do, every time they play. I appreciate all other sports, Cricket's one I haven't gotten my head around yet. That's one that's a bit tedious for me".

When I was working in Barbados for Robert Trent Jones Jnr and I did get to meet Sir Garfield Sobers, which was a treat. I saw him when they had the World Golf Championship at The Grove in London a few years ago, he was representing Barbados and a group of folks from Barbados and it was fun to see him again. I guess he was the Babe Ruth of cricket and a really nice guy".





#invisible

BORN OF BORON

INNOVATION

DISTINGUISHES LEADERS FROM FOLLOWERS





Innovation explained in 50 seconds

JPX850.com



TAYLORMADE R15















TECHNOLOGY

It has a low and more forward centre of gravity (CG), which gives you a higher launch angle with a low-spinning ball, helping you achieve those extra yards.

The sliding weight system was a big hit in the SLDR drives and this technology has been incorporated into the R15. The two 12.5g weights can be moved into the middle to help you achieve your maximum distance, or to the fade or draw options, either to promote the shape of ball flight or help you fight a slice or hook.

The track system also works as a speed pocket, again helping to reduce the spin you impart on the ball at impact, plus it helps increase the club's sweet spot.

The R15 can be adjusted by four per cent going up or down by two per cent, giving you a driver that can be adjusted down as you become a better player – or when you need to do battle against the elements.



CLUB TESTED **()**

TaylorMade R15 Driver LOFT 10.5° SHAFT Speeder 57 Evolution FLEX Stiff SET UP Std Loft, Draw bias RRP £369 / €479 / \$529







CONCLUSION

The first place for me to start would be the feel and sound at impact. I loved it, because it is so solid on both counts, like every ounce of energy you develop in your coil during your swing is transferred right into the back of the ball – there is no better feeling than seeing it tearing through the air. I liked the look and design of the head and, as most of you know, I prefer black to white – you do have the choice with the R15, but the club I tested was white and I have to say I was totally impressed, right down to the classic head cover design.

The easy-to-understand adjustability places in your hands a driver that grows with you as you get better, because you can adjust the loft down as you become more confident. And better golfers can adapt the loft to the conditions using both the loft and the sliding weight system. It's all things for all people no matter what your handicap, age or ability, and one that I would recommend you put on your testing list. \circ



The image above shows the sliding weight system set in the maximum stability setting, moving the two weights into the middle gives you maximum distance, two weights to the toe for fade and two weights to the heel for the draw position.



RBZ took fairway and rescue clubs to a new level so can the new Aeroburners improve on perfection?

As I unwrapped the new Taylormade Aeroburner 3-wood and rescue just before my trip down to Kent to put them through their paces, I have to say they do have a powerful look about them, but they also have a lot to live up to, as I really rated the RBZ woods and in my mind they would have to go a long way to out perform those clubs.

TECHNOLOGY

TaylorMade have taken the technology from the RBZ, which took fairway and hybrids to a new level and have taken it a step further with its new advanced aerodynamic design. →



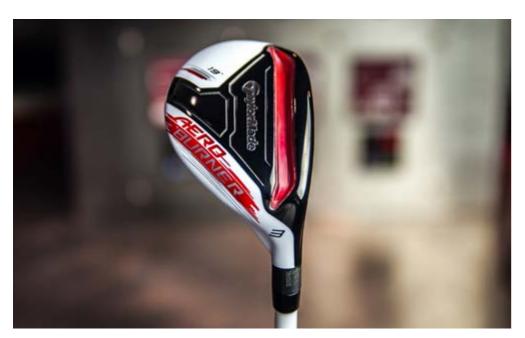
BURNING DESIRE



> I am pleased to say that the guys at Taylormade have taken all what was great about the RBZ and improved on it

CLUB TESTED **()**

TaylorMade Aeroburner Rescue LOFT 19° SHAFT Matrix Speed RUL-Z 70 FLEX Stiff RRP £159 / €199 / \$250



Both the fairway wood and rescue clubs use the new shallow face design, which sits perfectly behind the ball helping inspire confidence. The raised crown and the fin on the hosel, working with the improved speed pocket and larger sweet spot that helps reduce spin – all help the AeroBurner achieve that extra distance.

CONCLUSION

Well after four days of every type of wind and lie the Kent coast could throw at them, the Aeroburners performed perfectly. I am pleased to say that the guys at Taylormade have taken all what was great about the RBZ and improved on it. I loved the feel at impact and the distance I was achieving with the 3-wood. On one par 5 on the Shore course at Princes Golf Club I didn't think I would reach the group in front and promptly put it right through the middle of them, it just bored through the wind.

The rescue club also passed with shining colours, from tight cropped fairways, long par 3s and deep clingy rough the rescue club seemed to take them all in its stride and managed to sit behind the ball perfectly in every situation, giving me a chance to not only make great contact but give me control of what I was doing. If you are looking to upgrade your fairway and rescue clubs, you need to make sure the Aeroburner is one of the clubs you test before you make a decision, I think you will be glad you did. o



> I didn't think I would reach the group in front and promptly put it right through the middle of them, it just bored through the wind

CLUB TESTED ()

TaylorMade Aeroburner Fairway wood LOFT 15° SHAFT Matrix Speed RUL-Z 60 FLEX Stiff RRP £199 / €229 / \$289





MAKING THE CUT:

THE MIZUNO JPX850 FORGED BLADE

Boron Vs the Royals read how the Mizuno's new metal fared against St George, Cinque Ports and a Prince

I am now sitting in my hotel room having played three days of golf with Mizuno's JPX850 Forged blade, and I am smitten. I've been through Mizuno irons since I was a kid, from the TP-9s and 11s to the MP-68s and 54s, and I have to say that for a cavity blade this new boron-forged version is up there with them.

The JPX850 forged coped with three great links courses, including the toughest of them all in Royal St Georges, as well as all the weather conditions that Kent could throw at it. →

TECHNOLOGY

Mizuno have used a new material in the production of its JPX850 forged blade – the steel is 30% stronger, allowing Mizuno to produce one of their thinnest faces to date. This technology has helped increase the speed with which the ball leaves the clubface at impact, giving you extra distance on each club.

By keeping its grain flow and incorporating the thinner boron face, Mizuno have not only kept their trademark feel at impact but have now added ball speeds off the face that we have seen achieved in modern clubmanufacturing techniques.







>It's not only having your cake and eating it, it's having a cake that comes with a cherry, sprinkles and sauce on top!





CONCLUSION

What all this means is that not only are you gaining extra yardage with each club, helping you control the ball better and play your second shots into greens with a lower club, but it also means you don't have to forgo that great feel at impact to achieve it. It's not only having your cake and eating it, it's having a cake that comes with a cherry, sprinkles and sauce on top! \circ

Below is a close-up of the CNC milled pocket on 4-7 irons which helps increase launch angle



JOINING THE DOTS The Cleveland 588 wedges

There is no better testing ground than a links course to put a wedge system through its paces because you need to play so many different shots around the greens with the tight-cropped fairways, pot bunkers and heavy rough. Then of course there are the 100-yard shots in every type of wind imaginable – downwind, into the wind, crosswinds and the many variants in between.

TECHNOLOGY

The technology behind Cleveland's 588 wedge system is there to help you in every situation you could come up against, from 100 yards in and with each type of shot you want to play, and with the dot system they have made it simple for you to understand.

The 3 Dot – which were the 52° and 60° wedges I tested – gives you a high bounce, allowing the club to glide through most surfaces. If your short game is your →





weakest area, these are the wedges I would recommend you use. They are versatile, so you can open the face when playing from bunkers and coming out of rough, but they also give you that consistent sole width that helps you on full shots into the green.

The 2 Dot – the 56° wedge I tested – is your standard bounce, which helps you in most conditions. The combination of having a trailing edge grind and the medium bounce it offers gives you that versatility. If you have a neutral angle of attack – not too steep and not too shallow – into the ball, this would be the option for you.

The 1 Dot option is the low bounce grind that has a trailing edge. This is for players who are more aggressive in their shot making around the green and have a shallow swing plane – it is the perfect wedge if you play on a links-type course with tight lies.

The best way to go would be a combination of dots to help fill your gap wedge system; 15% sharper grooves and a new micro-milled face are achieved with the new Rotex face pattern, which helps give these wedges the maximum surface roughness allowed by the USGA.

ap and the second secon

>The short game isn't my strongest area – I do like a knife now and again – and I certainly feel I benefited greatly from playing with the Cleveland wedges this week

CLUBS TESTED () Cleveland RTX 588

Wedges tested

3-DOT 52° & 60° **2-DOT** 56° **SHAFT** Golf Dynamic **FLEX** Wedge **RRP** £109 / €129 / \$129.99

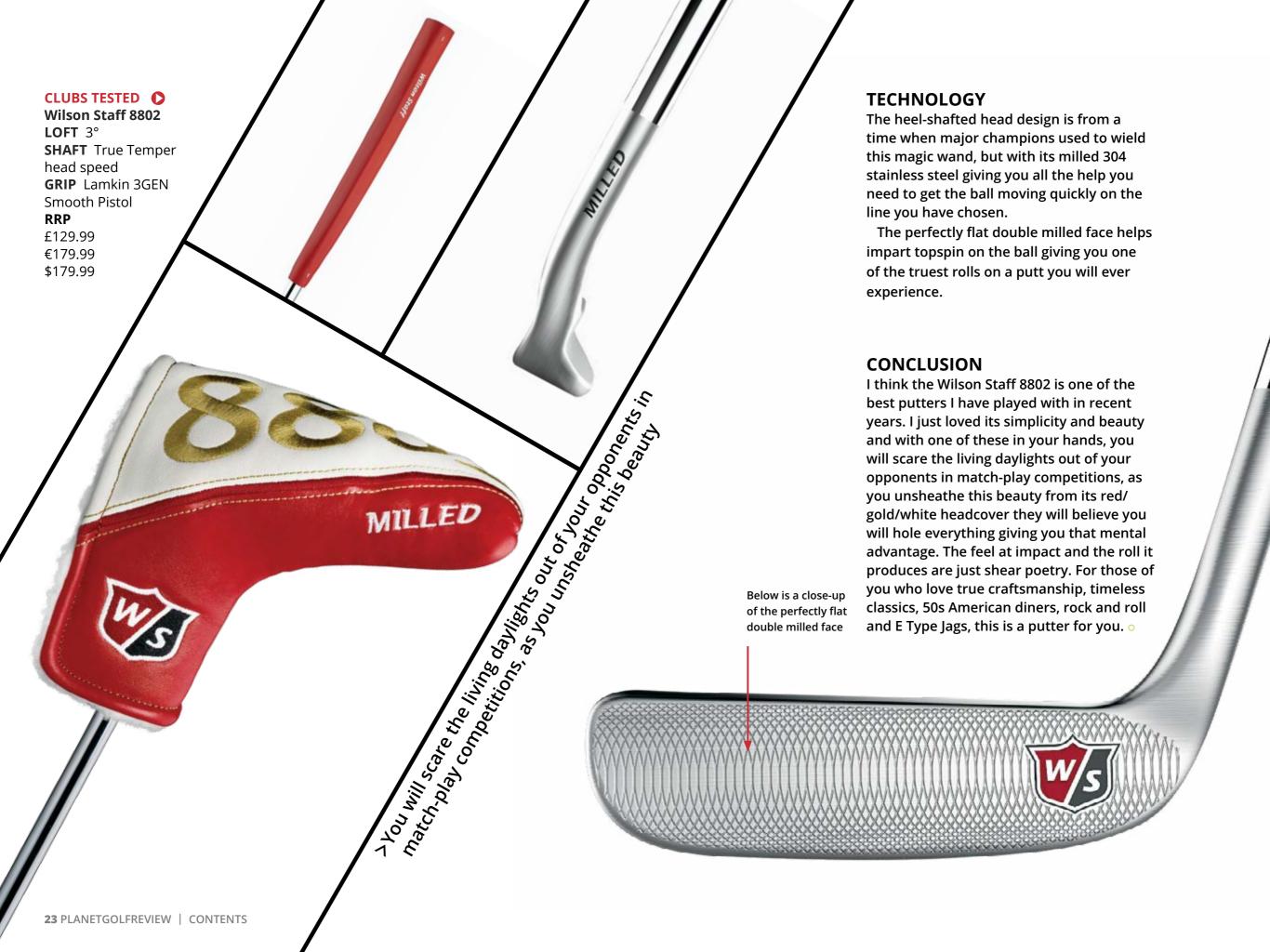


CONCLUSION

If you are looking for a wedge system that can cope with the toughest surfaces, the deepest pot bunkers and tough, tangly lies in deep rough, I would suggest you give the Cleveland 588 2.0 a test.

I loved the feel and the classic teardrop blade design, and boy does that ball stop quickly. Obviously the tight-cropped links fairways helped, but I felt in total control with these wedges in my hand. I have to say the short game isn't my strongest area – I do like a knife now and again – and I certainly feel I benefited greatly from playing with the Cleveland wedges this week. I am sure you will feel the same once you have given them a test run. o











Z











Handsup

Up for a trip to America's awesome Great Lakes? Come with us on a whistle-stop golfing tour of a lovely corner of north central USA bordered largely by water. Michigan's scenic Upper Peninsula is a world away from the state's main centres of population and industry (which are also worth a visit for their musical and automotive heritage) and offers a superb selection of courses, on both natural and reclaimed land, to test and hone your skills. A warm welcome awaits, along with great value for money, too, in this challenging economic climate.



Left is the 4th hole on Arnold Palmer's Legend course, with an aerial view of part of the Shanty Creek Resort in Bellaire Michigan: home of the Motown Sound, the Motor City, Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band, Ted Nugent, Kid Rock and, would you believe, over one thousand golf courses. And so, when I hooked up with the state's tourist experts, the talk was about devising a fact-finding trip from the UK with the emphasis upon this sporting aspect – not least because of the current financial benefits for golfers from Britain and Ireland.

With the strength of the euro against the pound, the annual pilgrimage to Portugal, Spain and recently Turkey has started to become very expensive. With the strength of sterling against the dollar, it's a great chance for UK golfers to look back across the Atlantic to golf in America. →

There are plenty of flights between the UK and Detroit or Chicago, which is only a 90-minute drive to northern Michigan. With over 1,000 tracks to choose from, many of which appear in the Golf Digest Top 100, you'll be in for a real treat. It offers a comfortable summer climate in which to play, breathtaking scenery — especially in the Upper Peninsula region and Great Lakes — as well as friendly, welcoming people.

After a flurry of email activity I'm on my way to play 14 courses in twelve days! We could have included fishing – there is plenty to be had – or even spa resorts. But golf, golf and more golf is just the ticket. Ultimately I play links-inspired courses, parkland courses and heathland courses; venues donated by the famous Dodge family or the Jesuits, built over working gas fields and reclaimed wasteland. Each one has a unique story, and the local people always oblige.

If you haven't decided where to go next year on your annual golf trip, I would strongly recommend you take a look at what Michigan has to offer and at least mark it down as one of your must-play destinations of the future. When you're sitting at the bar with that well-deserved cold drink in your hand, looking out over the 18th green to Lake Michigan at Arcadia Bluffs, you'll be happy that you did.

I land in Detroit, so my first course is The Sharf, just outside the city. Now owned by Oakland University, it was acquired from the Dodge family on the proviso that the large tract of land was not to be used for contact sports – they obviously didn't take into account the mental pain that golf can inflict upon a person! The university built world-class championship golf courses with practice facilities to match, plus a campus that you need a car to get around.

Next up is Robert Trent Jones Junior's The Orchards, built over a gas field and owned by Ron Dalby, a great guy who loves to talk golf and is very proud of his course – rightly so, seeing that it'll be hosting the Michigan Open Championship for the next two years.

The Orchards has a great opening hole with a slightly blind tee shot and a very tough risk-and-reward 18th hole especially if the pin is at the back: you have to decide if you're going at it over the water or playing safe for a long →

Left to right: The Sharf 17th, 5th & 13th holes. The Orchards 6th & 18th. Shepherds Hollow 1st, 3rd & 16th. Eagles eye GC 1st, 17th & 8th.

"I play links-inspired courses, parkland courses and heathland courses; venues donated by the famous Dodge family or the Jesuits, built over working gas fields and reclaimed wasteland. Each one has a unique story."





















two-putt par. It's a course for which you'll probably use every club in the bag, with a great clubhouse where you can talk about it all over some great food.

Shepherd's Hollow sits on land leased from the Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus, a Roman Catholic order of priests, and it truly is a perfect piece of land for a golf course and one that's won many awards. The track meanders through woodlands that have some stunning tall red pines with four varieties of oaks. Throw in 7,236 yards, some valleys and some ridges, a bit of water and great changes in elevation, and you have a track that is worthy of ordination.

Eagle's Eye Golf Club is part of Hawk Hollow and has 45 holes of golf, all designed by Chris Lutzke in collaboration with Pete Dye. When you step onto the 17th you will see why – it's an exact replica of the 17th at Sawgrass right down to the slopes on the green. But don't think that this is a one-trick pony – it's a stunning track right from the off. Dunes frame the holes and you really do feel you are the only ones out on the course – and we tee off on a Sunday morning!

When a course that has just been built is awarded not one but two Seniors Major Championships, it has to be special – and The Golf Club at Harbor Shores, designed by Jack Nicklaus, is a very special track. Standing on the first tee you wouldn't believe this course was built on reclaimed land from an old industrial waste site. It's been replaced by huge dunes with some great views of Lake Michigan.

Point O'Woods is a classic Robert Trent Jones course and is not only one of the best courses in Michigan but regularly makes the Top 100 courses in the entire US. You may have never heard of the Western Amateur that has been held on this track each year since 1971, but here is a list of winners: Andy North, Ben Crenshaw, Curtis Strange, Andy Bean, Hal Sutton, Scott Verplank, Phil Mickelson, Justin Leonard, Tiger Woods and Ryan Moore. I think those names are testimony to how good this track is.

We play Arnold Palmer's Ravines in a downpour and I must admit I'm surprised how firmly it stands up to the deluge. It drains really well, but I only get to play eleven holes as the lightning starts. Gutted: if the rest of the →







Left to right: Harbor Shores 5th, 3rd & 7th. Point O'Woods 1st, 3rd & 13th. Ravines 14th.









"You really do feel you are the only ones out on the course – and we tee off on a Sunday morning!"



holes were anything like the ones I played, it would've put it right up there near the top of the list. Designed through woodland with some majestic red pines, it really does remind me of autumn in Surrey.

John Keats once wrote, 'A thing of beauty is a joy forever'. I wonder if he'd just walked off the 18th at Arcadia Bluffs. Words really don't do this track justice. You can throw in superlatives like 'majestic', 'hallowed', 'wondrous', 'breathtaking', and they would all be in context. If there's one course you should play on your travels, this is it. Warren Henderson and Rick Smith have done a fantastic job: the course drops 225ft from its highest to lowest point and sits 180ft above Lake Michigan. Make sure you stay around to watch the sunset: it's nearly as good as watching your tee shot sail down the eleventh.

On to a double header of the Kingsley Club and Lochenheath Golf Club, two very different courses. Kingsley is very much a course in the heathland Surrey style with superb greens. If you have problems with the flat stick these greens will scare you to death, but they \rightarrow







Left to Right:
Arcadia Bluffs 2nd, 6th & 3rd.
Kingsley Club 16th.
Lochenheath GC putting green & 18th. Golden
Fox 5th.





"John Keats once wrote,
'A thing of beauty is a joy
forever'. I wonder if he'd
just walked off the 18th at
Arcadia Bluffs."



JOURNEY PLANNER

WHERE TO STAY
The Cobblestone Manor

Detroit

tel 001 248 370 8000 www.cobblestonemanor.com

Somerset Inn Hotel

Γrοy

tel 001 248 643 7800 www.somersetinn.com

Holiday Inn Express

Lansing

tel 001 517 333 0300 www.hiexpress.com

The Boulevard Inn

St Joseph

tel 001 296 983 6600 www.theboulevardinn.com

Victoria Resort B&B

South Haven

tel 001 269 637 6414

www.victoriaresort.com

Arcadia Bluffs

Arcadia

tel 001 231 889 3001 www.arcadiabluffs.com

Shanty Creek Resort

Bellaire

tel 001 800 678 4111

www.shantycreek.com

WHERE TO PLAY R&S Sharf Golf Club

Oakland

www.oakland.edu/golf/sharf

do run true. Surrounded by trees, it's a very tranquil setting and needs to be as this is a great test of your golf game and one that you will want to play again.

Lochenheath has a slightly sad story to it: hit by the recession and mothballed, it's been given a new lease of life by Director and General Manager Mike Husby. It has some great views of the lakes, none more so than to the right of the 310-yard, par-4 sixth hole where the lake runs the length of the hole. By the time you get there next summer, it should be in great shape and you'll love the view from the clubhouse as you sit there with that well-earned cold one.

Another 36 holes follow at the Shanty Creek Resort. Two great courses live side by side: Arnold Palmer's The Legend and Tom Weiskopf's Cedar River. There are two other tracks on this resort and another track right across the road, and two more just down the road. The Legend has some stunning views of the lakes, great changes in elevation, plenty of risk-reward and a course you'll love playing. I really enjoy Tom's course: some fantastic driving holes lined by trees and the holes around the water from six to eight are testament to his great design.

I just have to cram in another 18 before the flight home and I'm not disappointed by the Arthur Hills-designed Golden Fox at Fox Hills. It's perfect, just 30 minutes from Detroit Airport. Fox Hills offers 63 holes of golf and depending on your flight times you could even manage to get in the par-3 course, which is great fun for all the whole family. •

Aerial view of Tom Weiskopf's **Cedar River**



JOURNEY PLANNER

WHERE TO PLAY The Orchards Club

Washington www.orchards.com

Shepherd's Hollow Golf Club

Clarkston

www.shepherdshollow.com

Eagles Eye Golf Club

www.hawkhollow.com

Habor Shores

Benton Habor

www.harborshoreslife.com

Point 'O' Woods Country Club

Benton Habor

www.pointowoods.com

Ravines Golf Club

Saugatuck

www.ravinesgolfclub.com/homepage/ start_page.php

Arcadia Bluffs

Arcadia

www.arcadiabluffs.com

Kingsley Golf Club

Kingsley

www.kingsleyclub.com

Lochen Heath Golf Club

Williamsburg

www.lochenheath.com

Legends Golf Club & **Cedar River Golf Club**

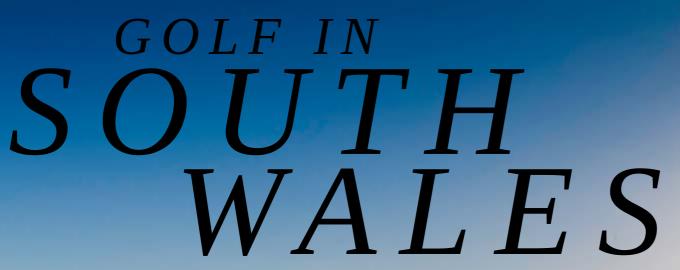
www.shantycreek.com/summer/golf/

Golden Fox

Plymouth

www.foxhills.com





In which we experience nothing short of a golfing epiphany – thanks to a spot of gorgeous weather, a stretch of bays and beaches that are a match for anywhere in the world, an array of links courses with bags of quality and charisma, and a warm and knowledgeable welcome. Sometimes, and only very rarely, it all just comes together like that...

Links golf in Wales sometimes gets lost in the shadows of the great Scottish and Irish venues — and that's something I'm more than happy to address. So here I am on a four-day tour of South Wales taking in some of the region's great links courses. Leading the way is Royal Porthcawl, which sits comfortably in Golf Monthly's Top 100 courses. But there are plenty of other tracks in this beautiful part of the world for you to enjoy — hidden gems like Cardigan, Southerndown and Newport Links plus well-known courses like Pyle & Kenfig, Pennard and Ashburnham.

Add in some stunning hotels, great local produce and jaw-dropping vistas — along with a warm welcome — and it's the destination of any golfer's dreams. The good news is if you go at the right time of year and day, you could be the only golfer/fourball out there, which is great news when you want to stand on the back tee at the 14th of Pennard Golf Club and just take in that view over to Three Cliffs Bay on the Gower Peninsula. It's moments like these that you'll want to share, so make sure you have your camera or i-Phone at the ready for this trip.



Southerndown Day one pm Royal Porthcawl Day two am Pyle and Kenfig Day two pm **Pennard** Day three am **Ashburnham** Day three pm

Cardigan Day four am Newport Links
Day four pm



SOUTHERNDOWN

I arrive on the tee after a three-hour drive from London, and what a view awaits me on the first tee. The sun is out and below me a river runs out to sea reflecting the sunlight like jewels in a diamond ring. To the right is Porthcawl and its beautiful sandy beach. It looks like my four days in South Wales are off to a great start.

With this kind of panorama I'm not sure you could suffer from first-tee nerves, but this first hole is not as gentle as the 366 yards would suggest. There is a wide fairway to hit, but you need to be on the right tier of the green or you could leave yourself with a tricky putt.

The second fairway brings you back to those breathtaking views, but concentration and patience is what's required at Southerndown. I'm here in early June and the fern is down so you can afford to miss the fairways and still find your ball, but come August the fern

is up and Southerndown becomes a totally different and tougher prospect.

Missing the fairways then will no doubt result in a lost ball or three. But no matter how you play, you'll find this track a joy – the rolling fairways and ever-present wind will challenge every part of your shot-making ability, and although the par-3s are not overly long there are not too many courses that have a set tougher than these. The only one that offers a bit of respite is the 10th which shares its green with the 16th, and if you miss the green at both the 5th and 7th making bogey becomes a good score.

Aesthetically both the finishing holes to each nine are beautifully designed. Willie Fernie designed the course with modifications from Herbert Fowler, Willie Park and Harry Colt. There can't be many finer examples of of their collective work.



Top: Looking out to Porthcawl beach from the 2nd. Left: 10th hole looking back to the clubhouse



"Don't take any bets or play any matches – just soak up the air, the history and the great design and enjoy the majesty that is Royal Porthcawl."

> Pot bunkers await for those with a wondering eye

ROYAL PORTHCAWL

I love links golf and that smell when you first get out of your car and breath in that salty sea air. It's day two of my tour and this morning its Royal Porthcawl, a course I've waited so long to play and heard so much about. It certainly lives up to it reputation.

It's another gloriously sunny day and I'm thanking the golfing gods that there's no wind. I normally love playing in a good breeze but today I want to enjoy the course with the sun shining down on this beautiful stretch of coastline. There are five teeing options here from 7,065 yards off the blacks to 5,840 yards off the reds. The SSS off the blacks is 76. I opt for the white which has a SSS 73 and play the par-3s off the blacks.

The first is a gentle opener at 353 yards, but you need to aim at the right side of the fairway as the ball rolls down its slope – and don't go too long as the bunkers will catch you. If there is a hidden hazard here it's the sheer beauty of the view as you look out to the links and listen to the waves crashing on the sandy beach a wedge shot away to your left. Golf is a game where you need to concentrate on so many things, but if I were you I'd forget all that. Don't take any bets or play any matches – just soak up the air, the history and the great design and enjoy the majesty that is Royal Porthcawl.

The Welsh Senior Open and Senior Open Championship have been held here over the last two years, and the course couldn't be in better condition. You can feel the hard running fairways underfoot and the billiard table-like greens. The bunkers are deep and many. Ramsay Hunter, who also designed Royal St Georges, has produced a course that has and will stand the test of any time. Royal Porthcawl is an honour and a privilege to play and there are not many courses in the world that I would say that about. →

PYLE & KENFIG

Pyle & Kenfig must feel like the Championship, which shows the regard forgotten brother of a famous actor or world champion, living in the shadow of the Royal course up the road that's less than a 10-minute drive away.

But this is no ugly duckling of a course. Placed on any other coastline in Wales this track would surely attract all the accolades it deserves, especially the back nine where the holes weave themselves through the sand dunes - the highlights of which are the 13th and 14th with their amphitheatre-like greens. Pyle and Kenfig will be hosted pre-qualifying for the Senior Open

it's held in by the R&A. You can bet the 13th and 14th drew a large amount of spectators because of the wonderful viewing points from the fairway and

The venue offers a hearty welcome and a packed bar - even if it was to watch the Lions play rugby - is always a good sign of how well supported the club is. If you want to enjoy the hospitality even more the club have just built a new Dormy House right on the course which comes with a full Welsh breakfast to start the day.

The course offers four teeing options from 6,860 yards from the blues to 5,464 yards from the reds. It's like playing two different nines, but the front nine still has those hard-running fairways and plenty of gorse for you to either admire those stunning yellow flowers or curse as you try to extract your ball with a wedge. There have probably been a few wrecked scorecards on the finishing run of holes from the 219-yard par-3 15th, but if that fate should befall you - just turn around and look - now that is a view that would stop Dr David Banner turning green.



"There is something lurking but you're never sure what it is, and in true Hammer House of Horror style all is revealed near the end."



Aerial view of Pyle & Kenfig and golf among the dunes at Ashburnham

ASHBURNHAM

I'm standing on the 183-yard par-3 opening hole at Ashburham. There are not many courses I know that start with a par-3. Royal Lytham & St Annes and Southport & Ainsdale are two that come to mind and this JH Taylor-designed course joins that list of great links venues to do so.

I can imagine this hole has broken a few hearts before the round has even got underway. There's an out-of -bounds on the right and the green is protected by five bunkers, two of which sit front-left and right eating into the green. It's times like these that you say a little thank-you to Dr Stableford for inventing that form of scoring.

Ashburnham reminds me of those thriller movies - there is something lurking but you're never sure what it is, and in true Hammer House of Horror style all is revealed near the end - in Ashburnham's case on the tee at the 16th. As I look out to sea, it's something I have been feeling all the way through the round. Of course I knew this was a links course – the hard-running fairways, greens upon which you have to land the ball on the front and let it run up to the pin, the constant wind that brings a taste and smell of sea salt and of course the noise of the seagulls overhead.

Like most traditional links courses, the course runs out and back to the clubhouse and as you play the back nine, making your way back to the clubhouse, the presence of the sea gets stronger. You can hear the waves, but the dunes that separate the course from the sea are large and you never quite get that glimpse you so want to see.

Ashburnham seems to have suffered heavily in the harsh winter we've had, but you can see growth and I'm sure in the next month or so as we get deeper into the summer months Ashburnham will be back to its best.





PENNARD

It seems that this tour of South Wales just gets better and better. It's 8am on another gloriously sunny day and I 'm welcomed by John who used to be a captain of Pennard, and his company and knowledge of the golf course is very much appreciated and enjoyed. If you get the opportunity to join a group of members on your visit I would jump at the chance. As I stated earlier, a course can be summed up by its members and they are a welcoming bunch at Pennard.

Standing on the first tee you look out to the typical hard-running links-type surface and as I watch the dew slowly being burnt off by the rising sun, the fairway has a warm, glistening, beckoning feel. Your tee shot will leave you a second shot to a slightly hidden green and it's here that a bit of local knowledge is given and

gratefully excepted. That inside information from John leaves me just on the side of the green with a very long putt for birdie, which I

But today isn't about building a score. Like I said about Royal Porthcawl, today is all about fun and enjoying a wonderful course that has recovered very well from the harsh winter months. But there's one thing that the weather cannot affect and that's the stunning vistas this track offers. John points out the three Needles and informs me that Catherine Zeta-Jones once called it the most beautiful view in the world. I find it hard to disagree with her assessment.

Words never do justice to these types of views and moments in time. If you are with friends or family these experiences are often acknowledge with a nod and a gesture and eulogised over a tall glass of something cold in the clubhouse. I stand on the back tee of the 14th and just soak up a memory that will live long and (I hope) form part of the frames of my life that flash before me when it's time to go to that other 19th hole and share a glass of the grape with St Peter.

I could list Pennard's worldwide accolades – where the course ranks among the great courses in the world and here in the UK - but I'm sure if you go to their website you can read those for yourself. Let me put it this way: some courses you should play, some courses you need to play, and some courses have a history that you need to go and absorb. Then there are other courses that are a pilgrimage and I would put Pennard in that category. Not because of its history or standing. No, this is a pilgrimage for your soul.



Views of the Gower Peninsula and Cardigan Bay and ruins on the 7th hole at Pennard



CARDIGAN

sojourn and it's become the tour that just keeps giving. Next up is Cardigan and as you pull into the car park and get out, you know you're in for a memorable day's golf. The view across the course to Cardigan Bay and the clear blue skies on the horizon are jaw-dropping, and if you've been following each course in order you will know I have seen some stunning views on this tour.

We've had a horrible winter in Britain and a lot of courses have suffered. But it seems that Cardigan has not only survived but truly blossomed. The gorse is in full bloom and frames the holes beautifully. I'm standing on the back tee at the par-5 ninth hole, with Cardigan Bay below and the stretch of beach that reaches another bay below in the distance. The sun is high in the deep blue sky. When they advertised for this course's designer, it must have read something like: 'Ability to create views that can stop an ogre in his tracks and make him smile, a prerequisite'.

Actually, a Tenby golf professional named JE Grant designed the course in the 1920s. It's not a long course at 6,455 yards from the white tees and is a mixture of parkland/links and sits on the side of a hill above Cardigan Bay. I'm playing the course on yet another beautiful day and I know how lucky I am

Well, it's the final day of my South Wales to have caught this week of blue skies and temperatures in the low 20s. Some holes are still playing 2/3 club difference because of the 'gentle' breeze and I can imagine how tough this course can be when the wind really does blow.

> The third and fourth are probably my two favourite holes. I just love the way the gorse frames the holes. The green at the fourth is raised and surrounded by the bright yellow flowering gorse bushes and anything short will be rolling off into one of the bunkers waiting to collect your ball. Looking down the fairway from the tee of the fourth is a beautiful and frightening sight at the same time - the fairway slopes from right-to-left and the gorse bushes line the fairway waiting to collect a stray tee shot, and of course the front nine comes to a close with those aforementioned views.

> The highlight of the back nine has to be the par-3 16th with the illusion of the green seemingly perched on a precipice with only the sea and bay behind. The green is long and thin, feeding into a raised round portion at the back. Anything long, you are looking at bogey. Anything short, you're looking at least three-putting. And miss it left or right and you're in a bunker. If I was you, I'd soak up the views from the tee and throw your card in the bin on your way past!

NEWPORT LINKS

In the bar, course owner Julian runs through some changes he wants to make to the front nine, which was added to the Old Links back in 2008. I think sometimes we can be too harsh on holes that are added to a traditional nine-hole links and try to compare them. I also think the run of holes from sixth to eighth 8th are great, especially the par-4 eighth which is a dog-leg left. Depending on the wind you can hit a long iron up to a driver off the tee, but it's the second shot to an infinity green that takes your breath away. If I was playing in a competition, that second shot would scare (as my Irish grandparents would say) the living be-Jesus out of me! It looks like there is nothing there – miss the green and its goodnight Vienna.

The front nine comes to a close with a hole that some players will love and others will hate – and all probably depending on their score. It's a hole where you have to lay up. It's s an iron to the top of the hill and, depending on the







"Its oranges and yellows mixing with the blue azaleas of the skies. I don't think there are many better moments in golf than these."



wind, a wedge to a 9-iron to the green that sits some hundred or so feet below. Don't be long or you'll be over the road, and don't be short or you'll be in bushes and gorse up to your armpits. No problem then!

The back nine is James Braid's original nine holes and has a completely different feel about it. The way the holes play may have altered but nothing has changed the beauty of this stretch of links. The sea is always in sight and like most links course when the wind blows it will be a tough proposition. But luck has been with me on this trip and I'm hitting the back nine at about 6.30pm on a beautiful Welsh evening with the sun just starting to take a bow on the horizon, its oranges and yellows mixing with the blue azaleas of the skies. I don't think there are many better moments in golf than these.

The many views of Newport links, sunsets are optional.

Look out for the back-to-back par-3s on the back nine – they turn up at the 15th and 16th. I can see club championships being decided on these very greens. Walk away with par or better and you're on your way – but a lot easier said than done and with an exposed green at 15 with the wind blowing in, just making the green some 190 yards away will be only the start of your obstacles to overcome.

I'm fortunate to be staying in one of the four-star Dormy Rooms that sit just by the 10th tee looking out to sea. As I sit watching the sun go down, I think James Braid would be proud of what Julian is trying to achieve here. If he can create a stunning par-3 on the front nine, I think the next golf writer to come along in 100 years' time, once the new nine have bedded down, will no doubt praise the vision to not only bring Braid's nine-hole course up to 18 but embrace the difference between the two nines. I hope you do too. It's well worth the journey to find out. \circ

JOURNEY PLANNER

WHERE TO PLAY
Southerndown Golf Club
www.southerndowngolfclub.com

Royal Porthcawl Golf Club www.royalporthcawl.com

Pyle and Kenfig Golf Club www.pandkgolfclub.co.uk

Pennard Golf Club www.pennardgolfclub.com

Ashburnham Golf Club

Cardigan Golf Club www.cardigangolf.co.uk

Newport Links Golf Club www.newportlinks.co.uk

WHERE TO STAY
The Great House
www.great-house-laleston.co.uk

Morgans www.morganshotel.co.uk

St Brides Spa Hotel www.stbridesspahotel.com

Newport Links Golf Club www.newportlinks.co.uk

WHERE TO EAT Leicester's Restaurant www.great-house-laleston.co.uk

Morgans Restaurant www.morganshotel.co.uk

The Cliff Restaurant www.stbrideshotel.com

The Links Restaurant www.newportlinks.co.uk



GOOD MORNING VIETNAM Colin Montgomerie's and Greg Norman's apply and this is reflected in their two contrasting their at 69 pence a pint it certainly is "Goods"

Colin Montgomerie's and Greg Norman's approach to the game of golf was very different and this is reflected in their two contrasting courses in Danang. Throw in great food and beer at 69 pence a pint it certainly is "Gooooood Mornnnning Vietnammmm"

I couldn't get the sound of Robin Williams waking up the US troops with his "Gooooood Mornnnning Vietnammmm" in the film depicting DJ Adrian Cronauer's time there, when I was told I would be going on a press trip to Danang in Vietnam. I was to play two tracks, one designed by Greg Norman, who is now as well known for his golf course designs as he is for winning two Open Championships. The other was designed by winning Ryder Cup captain Colin Montgomerie, who is also making a name for himself around the globe with some impressive tracks under his belt.

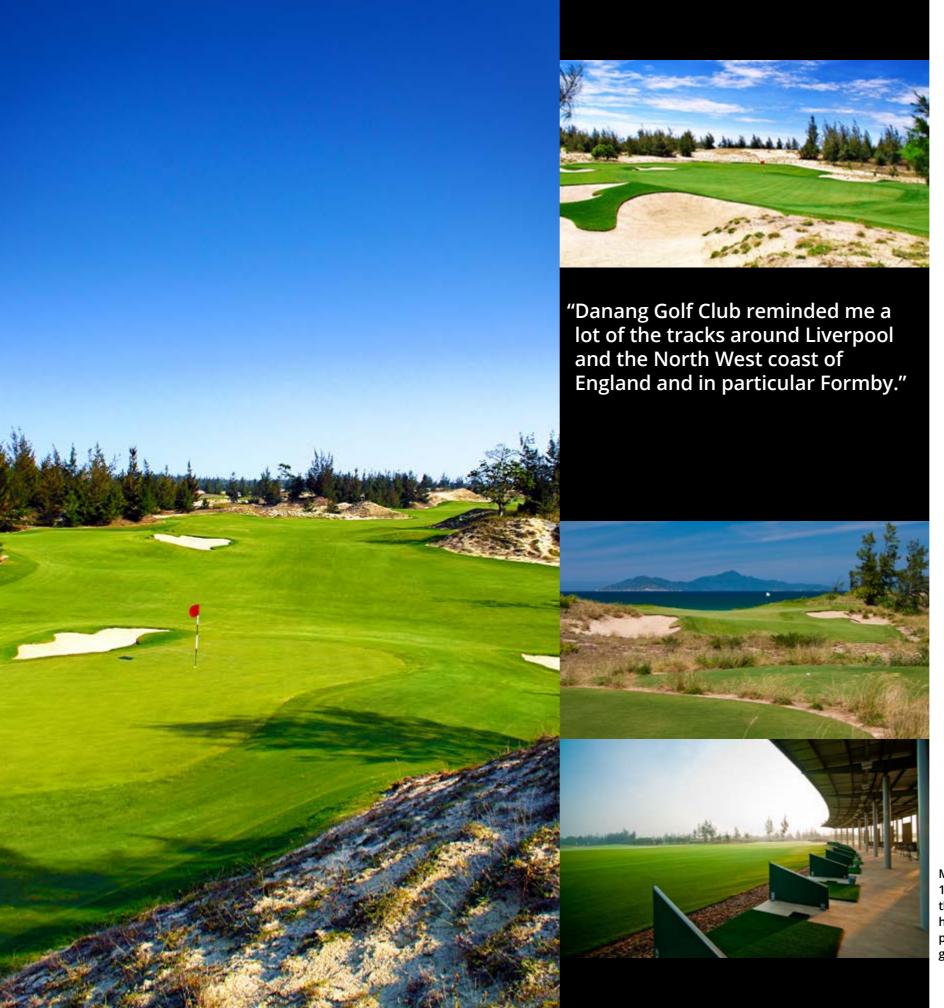
I arrived at the Nam Hai, one of the two impressive hotels I would be staying in, as well as the Lifestyle resort. The Nam Hai is a villabased resort, while the Lifestyle resort is roombased with a couple of villas. I am writing this section of my review in the Nam Hai from a desk behind the raised bed looking out of the opened french doors of my villa, as the waves crash on the shore. I have not long come back from a yoga session followed by breakfast taken on the terrace beside the pool.

I have an outside shower in my villa's enclosed garden, (there's an inside shower if you want, but where is the fun in that?). Showering outside is a very liberating experience and one I would truly recommend. I would also recommend staying at least one night in the Nam Hai or the Lifestyle resort; they are both worth the money for the breakfast alone. They have local chefs that you can watch produce some stunning dishes in a beautiful environment, or treat yourself to a relaxing massage and spa after a tough day at the course, in tranquil surroundings. What a great way to unwind after a three putt!!!

Danang Golf Club

Back to the golf, the first course I played was the Greg Norman-designed Danang Golf Club. I was welcomed by Phil Wright, the head professional, an Aussie lad from Melbourne, which gave me a chance to get a dig in about the Ashes; and Howie Roberts, a Welsh lad - both quality guys. Phil showed me around the course both days I played. Phil caddied for Ian Baker Finch while he was on tour and was his bagman at Augusta, but missed out on carrying his clubs when he won the Open at Royal Birkdale. He is training the caddies here, so by the time you decided to make the trip, you know they will be well worth the recommended tip.

You have a choice of four different tees to \rightarrow



Main image is the 10th hole and from the top 8th and 16th holes along with the practice range and golf academy play from ranging from 7,160 yards from the Shark tees, to 5,684 yards from the Reds. The first is a nice gentle opener, a slight dogleg right of 407 yards from the Shark tees, the tee shot is played over a ridge and if you catch the down slope you will have little more than a wedge in. This is where the fun starts, the most important shot is your shot into the green, if you are on the wrong side of some of the ridges that run through the green, you will have little chance of two-putting.

All the greens here are tough and if you put your ball in the wrong position you are looking at three putting if not more, that's why a lot of emphasis is placed on the pin position card that you are given at the beginning of your round. I would recommend you take a lot of notice of it before you play your second shot, some greens are 40 yards deep, which depending on pin position, could be the difference between playing an 8-iron and a 4-iron into the green.

Stand-out holes for me were all the par threes, I really didn't think there was a weak one among them and the signature 16th hole, at 148 yards from the Shark tees, is truly breath-taking. With the ocean waves crashing on the shore and the Chem mountains as a backdrop, you need to make sure you keep focused, as again position on the green is vital. Make sure you look out for the Viet Cong pillbox between the 16th green and the 17th tee. There are some great par 4s on the course and all the tee shots just inspire you to play well. I really don't want to name just a few holes, because they all deserve a lot more detail than I can give you here.

The Danang Golf Club reminded me a lot of the tracks around Liverpool and the North West coast of England and in particular Formby, but with more sand dunes and bunkers. The tight-cut grass on the fairways and the way the ball sits up, just waiting to be picked off, as well as the whispery grass around the bunkers, will make anyone who loves links golf feel right at home.

Montgomerie Links

Next up was Monty's track, which is just a couple of minutes from Danang Golf Club but is a totally different design. I think the two tracks complement each other very well. Colin has designed more of a resort course which looks a lot greener, but don't be fooled, this can be a beast off the back tees and at the par 5 12th you will have to navigate your way around 14 bunkers on just that one hole. →



"At the par 5 12th you will have to navigate your way around 14 bunkers on just that one hole."

Top: 10th hole on the Montgomerie course. Below and right: Relaxing at Danang GC



What I did enjoy about this track was the opening and closing holes both being par 5s, giving you a great chance to start and finish with a birdie or better. Again there are four different tees to play from and they measure 7,063 yards from the Monty tees to 5,085 from the reds. Both nines have some stunning holes and I really enjoyed the run of holes from the 3rd to the 8th. Make sure you take time out after playing your second shot to the 4th green to go and look at the brightly coloured little prayer pagoda. There is also one behind the 13th green, you never know it may help your score!

The short but tough little par 3 5th hole is only 118 yards off the back tees but is all carry over water. Behind you are paddy fields where you can see the locals working away, a lot of the caddies used to work in those fields before the two golf courses were built here. I really enjoyed the tee shot at the 6th, you aim at the far bunker and carry the first and just let your ball drift right to left so you can pick

up the slope on this well designed par 5.The extra length will help you hit a mid iron into this green where the water cuts in from the left-hand side. Not far from the tee you will again find one of the old Viet Cong pillboxes.

The back nine is longer than the front nine and I really enjoyed the run of holes from the 13th to the 17th and then the birdie chance on the 18th is a really true test, but one you will enjoy.

Danang and the historical city of Hoi Am are only 20 minutes apart and separated by a beautiful stretch of sandy coastline where a number of resorts are being built, the Nam Hai and Lifestyle resort among them. This is set to become a great golf destination with some stunning resorts to stay at. That's not to say there aren't some great cheap hotels as well that cover all budgets, but Danang is somewhere I would recommend. It's got everything you would want for a golf tour, great courses, great food, fantastic night life and at 65p for a beer, great value when you get there. \circ



JOURNEY PLANNER

WHERE TO PLAY
Danang Golf Club

www.dananggolfclub.com

Montgomerie Links www.montgomerielinks.com

WHERE TO STAY

Nam Hai

www.ghmhotels.com/en/nam-hai

Lifestyle Resort

www.lifestyleholidaysvc.com

WHERE TO EAT

Nam Hai

www.ghmhotels.com/en/nam-hai

Lifestyle Resort

www. lifestyleholidaysvc.com

WHERE TO DRINK

Fatties Beach Bar

No website, it's word of mouth, ask in the proshop or a local taxi

The Bamboo bar

www.bamboo2bar.com/

Away from the golf, David Cottrell visits one of America's oldest states and discovers a maritime paradise

VIRGINIA WATER

For the crew of the Dewaruci, balancing 150ft above the waves on the slender crossbeams and rigging of their Indonesian tall ship as she rolls and pitches up the Elizabeth River is all about skill and sheer pluck. Perched in rows of three either side of her towering foremast, what a bird's-eye view they must have: ahead, the stern of the Mexican barque Cuauhtemoc (pronounced 'Kwa-tem-uck') with her own crew on highwire duty; bringing up the rear, the American schooner Appledore V on tour from the Great Lakes; down below and all around, a flotilla of small boats and naval vessels plus the odd lowflying helicopter piloting this magical pageant towards the crowded portside of Norfolk, Virginia, on a blue-sky morning. Talk about making an entrance. Welcome to the Parade of Sail, highlight of Harborfest, the biggest annual shindig this side of Chesapeake Bay.

The open sea is roughly ten miles due east. Here the Elizabeth meets the southernmost fringe of the largest estuary in the United States to provide a deep natural shelter from the Atlantic that first appealed to English settlers in 1619. Named after the home county of an indentured servant made good, Norfolk is now a city of a quarter-million people that styles itself as 'the heart of the Virginia Waterfront'.

Leading the Parade is Eagle, a Coast Guard cutter originally built by the German navy in 1936, followed by Juan Sebastian de Elcano, a 364ft long Spanish schooner that's done six laps around the world. Next is Guayas, distinguishable by a giant condor for a figurehead and an even bigger Ecuadorian flag billowing in silky slowmo from her stern. The river itself first appeared on an English map drawn in 1585, named not for the ruling monarch but a daughter of James I. →





In 1608 it was explored by John Smith and a dozen other colonists from the nearby settlement of Jamestown. A year later Smith was captured by Algonquian Indians but saved from slaughter, the story goes, by the chief's daughter Pocahontas. In turn she married John Rolfe who'd survived a shipwreck on the way to Virginia which was one of the inspirations for Shakespeare's mystical final play The Tempest, so they say.

Harborfest is celebrated as part of a broader national event called OpSail 'to promote goodwill among nations, inspire patriotism and foster interest in American maritime history'. Encouraged by John F Kennedy the first OpSail took place in 1964. It's since been held in 1976 (US Bicentennial), 1986 (restoration of the Statue of Liberty), 1992 (500th anniversary of Columbus' landing), 2000 (millennium), 2007 (tercentennial of Jamestown) and 2012 (bicentennial of the Anglo-American War of 1812).

The Cook Islands barque Picton Castle, redsailed American Rover and Colombian training vessel Gloria glide past in silent succession towards a quayside transformed into a micromanaged festival site. For the next four days the moored ships will invite visitors on board from noon to 8pm and all around there'll be concerts, entertainment and historical re-enactments; a 99ft Ferris wheel and marquees for food and drink and merchandise; water taxis, harbour cruises and a free citywide shuttle service complementing a shiny new light rail system known as The Tide.

One by one the ships dock at close quarters along the western end of Norfolk's waterfront, which in 1994 was anchored by a new National Maritime Center called Nauticus. You start by riding the museum escalator up to its third-floor displays about the modern working port (proudly the only one on the East Coast able to handle super-sized container ships) and neighbouring naval base. Level two documents the history of the wider Hampton Roads region - 'roads' being a nautical term for a water channel and from here visitors can board the adjacent battleship USS Wisconsin, all 887ft and 45,000 tons of her, gifted to Norfolk in 2009.

It took four years for Nauticus to finally get the green light, but it's helped make Norfolk and Virginia's waterfront a proper place to go. Next door is a cruise-ship terminal completed in 2007 and specialising in voyages to the Bahamas. All in all, what's not to like?

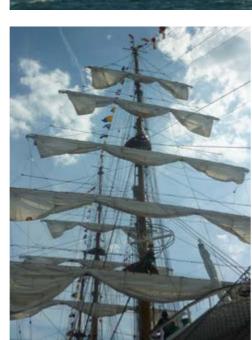
Ships that regularly visit this part of the eastern seaboard

Waterworld: plenty

to see and do when

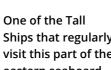
vessels are in port

these majestic











"Here the Elizabeth river

in the United States."

meets the largest estuary

GOLF AT ITS PUREST

Deep in the hinterlands of Florida where nature is untamed and the sheer size and openness of the land is mind-boggling, lies a wilderness only broken by the undulating fairways, towering sand dunes and glistening lakes of two acclaimed golf courses and one extraordinary resort. A resort offering the finest amenities including sporting clays, guided bass fishing, fine dining and spa. This is golf as it should be experienced. This is Streamsong®.

















BY ROYAL DECREE

Protected by a Greek god and with Royal in its name this oasis on the outskirts of the mystical Marrakech once part of The Berber and Almoravid dynasties has a lot to live up to.

ROYAL PALM

Marrakech, Morocco By Charmaine Hibbert

As I sit on the hotel Shuttle Bus that has picked me up from Marrakech Airport I can't wait to see what the guys from Beachcomber have come up with at the Royal Palm Marrakech. This is the newest addition to Beachcomber's luxury hotel collection and their very first hotel outside of the Indian Ocean.

As I pull up outside the entrance, the sun has just set behind the Atlas mountains that protect this wondrous city, and I am greeted by candlelit lanterns that guide me to a wood bridge that leads me over a water feature and into the magnificent entrance.

It truly is stunning and the view out on to what is now the candlelit outside pool, with the golf course beyond, Mauritian architect Jean François Adam has certainly captured the beauty and mystic that Marrakech represents to a lot of us.

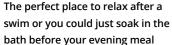
The Royal Palm brand represents the ultimate in luxury and leisure and this stunning hotel does just that. With world-class service, fine dining and a fabulous location to boot. It offers the same service and quality associated with Royal Palm Mauritius.

Built on an exclusive estate the 5 star hotel is situated in the most idyllic setting imaginable with those magnificent views of the Atlas \rightarrow

Above: The view that greets you as you walk through reception.
Below: View from the golf course







Mountains, and just 7 miles from the centre of Marrakech it makes it easier for guests to travel to and experience the charismatic "Red City" and yet still be far enough away to escape the excitement and the hustle and bustle.

Royal Palm Marrakech sits within a vast 231-hectare estate and as I am taken to my room I walk down another candlelit path that glides its way through 50-year-old olive trees, some 5,000 of them have been planted around the complex and they certainly add a refined beauty to this already elegant hotel.

I already knew my room would be stunning, but the proportions are perfect and spacious, with a desk to work on behind the enormous bed that could probably take an entire family. My balcony with its sofa and two very large sunbeds looks out to the golf course and those imposing Atlas Mountains.

The bathroom has a stand-alone double bath and the granite and glass open shower has views out to the course and mountains, and for those on a romantic weekend or looking to capture that seductive mystic of Marrakech, there is a wooden lattice designed opening carved into the wall giving your partner an enticing look at you showering!!

The villas and suites are lavish and intimate, a spa (who could say no to this), a sports centre, an all year round heated pool, four fine-dining restaurants, a complimentary kids club, and an 18-hole golf course as well as a prestigious country club all add to Royal Palms mantra of - if you are going to do something do it right - and with class and subtlety, right down to the hand lit candles that lined my path when I first arrived, nothing is left to chance. So all you have to do is arrive and enjoy, the rest is taken care of for you.

SPA BY CLARINS

For any of you who have read my reviews you will know by now this is one of my favourite pastimes on my holidays and hotel stays, who doesn't enjoy a bit of pampering? For me relaxing is what it's all about. The spa opens from 9am - 8pm and access to the hammam and sauna is free of charge. There are a range of treatment areas for both men and women,





and reserved areas for women only, where specific treatments are tailored to address different needs. I tried the reflexology massage, which was a perfect way to unwind before relaxing by the pool in the sports centre.

With Royal Palms attention to details and excellence, you will be able to treat your body to the Clarins spa treatments or you could take your pick among the Royal Palm signature treatments. The treatment menu is based on a combination of Moroccan culture and the technical knowhow of Clarins for maximum benefit.

The Royal Palm is just a three-hour flight from the UK, and in the same time zone. Marrakech has always been a special place to visit, now with Beachcomber opening a Royal Palm it's the perfect way to unwind and indulge after all that hard work - you know you deserve the very best. \circ

tel +212 524 487 800

www.beachcombertours.co.uk/morocco-holidays/morocco-hotels/royal-palm-marrakech

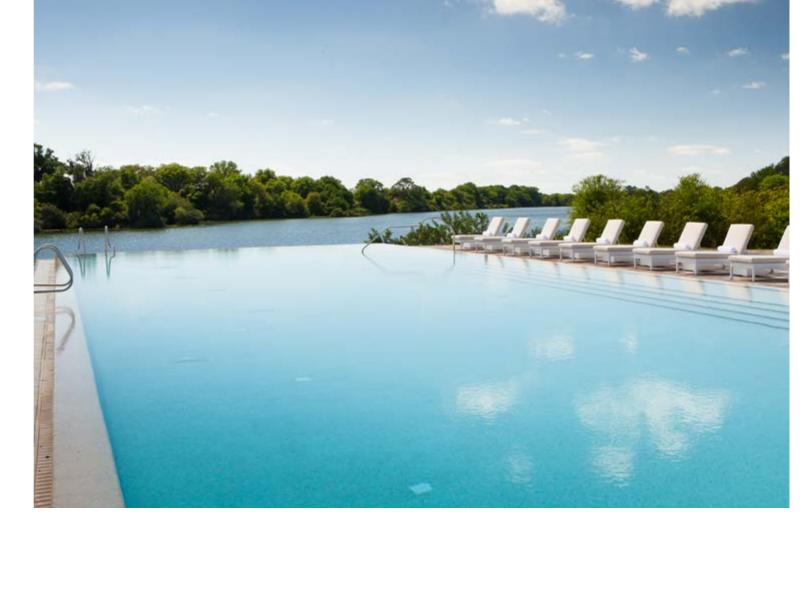
STREAMSONG RESORT

Florida, USA

By Charmaine Hibbert

SWEET SOUL MUSIC

Mickey Mouse, Space Mountain, The Tower of Terror but where do you go in Florida when you just need to unwind and relax? There's a special song whispering in the air





A warm and friendly Floridian welcome awaits you and of course some much needed relaxation



It's always a heart stopping moment when you open the door to your hotel room, it's that air of excitement and trepidation but as I open the solid door to my room I am confronted by the beautiful orange sunset over one of the rivers that flows through the Streamsong resort.

Situated about 50 miles southeast of Tampa, Streamsong is just gorgeous. You just cannot fail to be drawn in by the beauty of nature surrounding this fabulous resort. The lodge features 216 custombuilt guest rooms and suites where you get spectacular views of the surrounding lakes and wildlife. But what I found so inspiring was how Streamsong has redefined the concept of what a resort should be by using the four elements - earth, water, air and fire to create the ultimate in luxury living.

Streamsong is the ultimate getaway, the perfect way of escaping the hustle and bustle of everyday life. It features four casual and fine dining restaurants, bars and even a rooftop lounge. But any regular readers to \rightarrow

my reviews will know that aside from eating, indulging in spa treatments is my favourite part of any trip. Come on, whose going to say no to some much needed pampering?

AcquaPietra - the Spa at Streamsong comprises of no less than eight indoor treatment rooms, six unique pool experiences and a hair and nail salon. Sheer bliss is the only way to describe the experience. In fact you will be left speechless, transported to a world of serenity and oneness.

PACKAGES

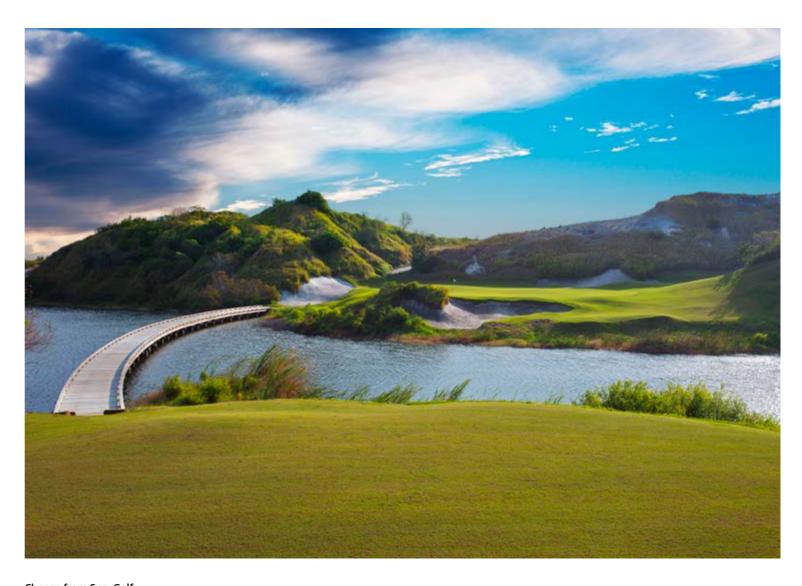
Streamsong offers a range of packages so you can treat yourself or your loved one. Packages also include a bridal package, golf spa packages and couple's spa packages as well. Duration depends on the packages you choose – times very from 80 minutes to 4 hours.

'Endless Love' is my favourite on the couples spa package list. Just such a lovely way to reconnect with your significant other and just let the stresses of everyday life melt away.

You will know by now that I am a huge lover of a massage or two, I think they are a must for your wellbeing! I would recommend the Deep Tissue Massage and the Hot Stone Massage. I get very tense which takes its toll on my body and these two treatments really do help to release tension leaving you feeling relaxed and rejuvenated.

Obviously I cannot speak for you men out there but I hear that when James comes in from playing he loves nothing better than a foot massage. I would also recommend after all that golf you wind down with a good old spa treatment. Trust me it's a must. Women aren't the only ones who need a bit of pampering in their lives. Going by what James has told me — and you can read from his reviews here — Streamsong not only offers fantastic class spa facilities but two great golf courses, now that has to be a winning combination. •

tel +1 863-428-1000 www.streamsongresort.com

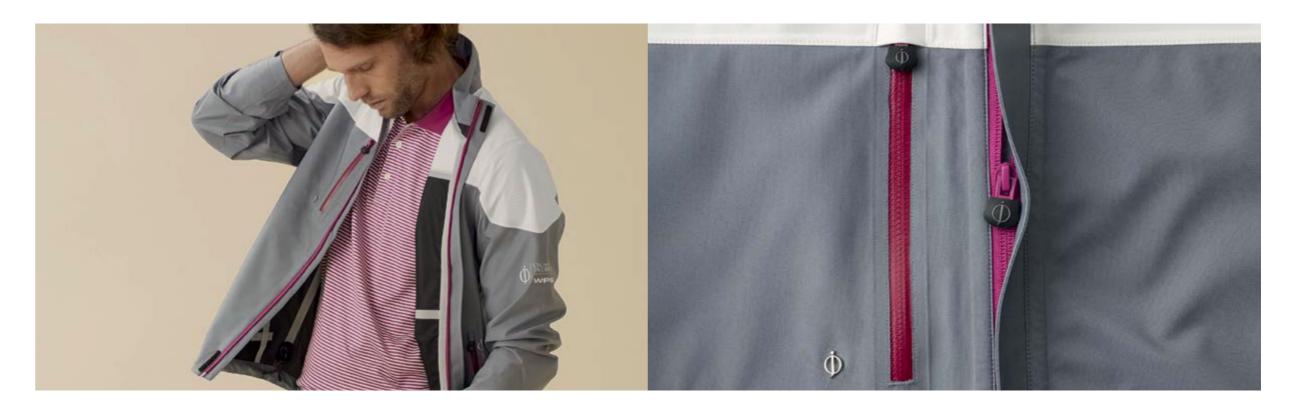


Choose from Spa, Golf, Fishing and beautiful sunsets, what better way to relax and unwind













SWEDISH TAILORING, ON AND OFF THE COURSE.



THE KENT COAST AND ITS MANY FAMOUS LINKS COURSES CAN BE BRUTAL AT TIMES, WHAT BETTER PLACE TO TEST OSCAR JACOBSON'S LAYING THEORIES.

Layered to perfection

Oscar Jacobson has over 111 years of history in the apparel industry and knowing I was going to be spending four days on the Kent coast playing links courses you know you are going to be at the mercy of the elements and all that mother nature can throw at you.

I was glad OJ wanted me to road test their new SS15 collection and I am thankful that they did, we had very little rain, but we certainly had a biting wind with that icy edge that can get right through to your bones and no matter how many hot toddies you down in the clubhouse at the end of your round, its hard to shift that deep set coldness.

But with several different combinations of Greg and Mallard Trousers with the Luka and Anton Polo shirts topped with the Bradley tour half-zip and Milford II Tour, Mulligan or Miller jackets, I was →























not only kept nice and toasty but was able to swing the club without feeling bunched up and restricted. And on a very cold day at North Foreland Golf Club I added the Joe Gillet Tour for good measure just to keep that chill out.

Oscar Jacobson use a 3-layer system in their golf apparel known as Weather Protection System or WPS, the three layers are a base layer which is breathable and wickers moisture away, these are the shirts, shorts and underwear. Then you have the mid Layer these are the garments that keep you warm and helps you retain your body heat. Finally you have the Outer Layer, ultra-light garments using a stretchy fabric which helps keep you warm whilst not restricting your swing. These combinations of outer layers are wind and waterproof and are slightly longer in the back giving you added protection for when you take your stance over the ball.

CONCLUSION

I loved the colours and the cut of all the apparel tested and I think the WPS system certainly works well and as I have stated they kept me nice and warm during some cold windy Kent weather. When you are playing iconic courses the last thing you want to be worried about is being cold. I enjoyed all the courses that I played on my four-day winter trip to Kent in early March and the last thing on my mind was the cold and that was down to how well the Oscar Jacobson apparel protected me from the elements, helping me look good was an added bonus! o

Shoo-in: the new Adidas Boost

18-HOLES TESTING NEW FOOTWEAR FROM THE BOX CAN CAUSE SHIVERS DOWN THE SPINE, SO WE PUT THE NEW ADIDAS BOOST THROUGH 63-HOLES IN FOUR DAYS TEST, TO SEE HOW MUCH "BOOST" THERE REALLY WAS.

Sometimes it's hard to put into words the trepidation you feel when taking a new pair of golf shoes on a trip, because you have no back-up if they damage your feet. And, with 63 holes to play, I knew it could turn out be a very painful experience indeed. But I am happy to report that there was no such blistering with the new Adidas Boost. Straight out of the box and onto the course (via my feet), and they were perfect.

TECHNOLOGY

The FITFOAM® PU sockliner is what you notice when you first slip on the Adidas Boost golf shoe. The fit and feel make things really comfortable, especially the way it holds and supports your feet. Adidas claim that the 'Boost' technology gives you 'energy-returning



properties', and when you first start to walk in them you realise what they mean – it's like walking on air. Believe me, after walking up and down dunes on a links course, I was surprised at how fresh my feet felt after a round of golf.

The BOUNCE foam in the front and the Boost technology in the heel really give your feet the best 18-hole walk you will have – you seem to bounce along the fairway. And with the breathable climaproof® technology, not only are your feet dry from all that the weather can throw at them, they also feel totally comfortable.

In addition, the TPU outsole, with its strategically placed gripmore® traction, gives you a firm base, grip and stability when you are trying to smash your driver down the fairway.



CONCLUSION

The feeling when I first slipped on the Adidas Boost was one of wonder – it was the way they held my feet, really powerful and solid. And when I started to walk it was like floating. When you wear them you just know they will keep you balanced and anchored, no matter how hard you try to hit the ball.

Often in these reviews I try to convey to you the way something works and attempt to unravel the technology that goes behind new equipment, shoes and apparel. But with the new Adidas Boost golf shoes that isn't necessary – when you slip them on your feet you will understand all that I have just said. So what are you waiting for, go and try a pair, you can thank me later. •

