

PLANET GOLF REVIEW

ISSUE 8

ATLANTIC LINKS

We play Six of the Top 100 golf Courses hidden away in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset

STAY, PLAY & SPA

Stoke Park home to villians, gangsters and a certain Mr Darcy

EQUIPMENT REVIEWS

Mizuno, TaylorMade, Oscar Jacobson, ProQuip and Stuburt's new releases just in time for Christmas

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS

Our guide to help you make the right choice for those special people in your life

ALABAMA

We hit the trail to check out the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail and the reasons behind its inception

VIEW.COM

WELCOME

It's November. I love the run up to Christmas. The shorter days, the layering of jackets and scarves and the inevitable grumbling that Christmas marketing brings.

When Christmas finally arrived nothing beats watching the joy on the faces of your family as they sit round the tree and open presents; the childlike anticipation started weeks before the day. The guessing started when the presents were placed under the tree by your parents.

As we get older it also gets harder to buy the right gift and it's never too early to start thinking ahead so with that in mind we have put together 3-pages of Christmas gift ideas to suit every budget.

Once the turkey is finished and you all sit back to watch whatever James Bond or Superman movie they are playing for the hundredth time, the advert breaks are loaded with holiday destinations but you can skip those as we have two great golf holiday ideas for you, The Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail in Alabama

and The Atlantic Links Tour in the UK, both offer stunning golf courses to test your skills on.

We also have our Stay, Play and Spa feature which combines the wonderful history of Stoke Park and three nines of fantastic golf including Harry Colts wonderful design that inspired one of the holes at Augusta National – and is also the golf course that features in the James Bond movie Goldfinger – together with their wonderful spa and leisure facilities.

This is topped off with the latest equipment and apparel reviews from Mizuno, TaylorMade, Oscar Jacobson, ProQuip and Stuburt.

As another year comes to a close and a new year starts with new hopes, dreams and ambitions I wish you each of you a wonderful time with your loved ones; may the new year bring you joy, love and happiness from all of us at planetgolfreview. Cheers

MEET THE TEAM

Editor

James Mason

Art Director

Joe Hetzel

Hotel and Spa Editor

Charmaine Hibbert

Contributing travel writers

Teresa Barnett

Stephanie Mason

General enquiries

enquiries@planetgolfreview.com

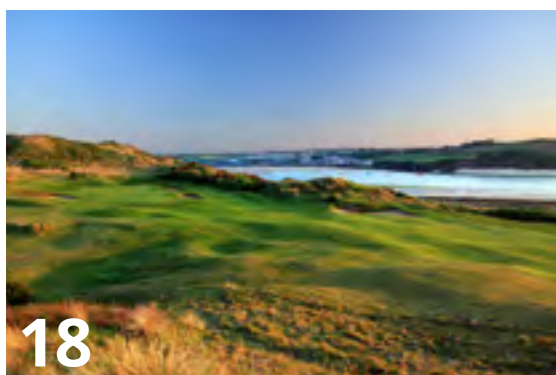
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TRIAL

REVIEW

REVIEW





p 4 Christmas Crackers
No need to spend hours hunting that perfect Christmas present, we have got 3-pages of great ideas for all budgets

p 7 Sweet Home Alabama
A state that has gotten a lot of bad press and some of it deserved, but the state of Alabama are trying to put that right and that was the driving force behind the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail, James Mason investigates

p 18 Atlantic Links
Some of the best Links courses in the world are not where you would expect, we make the journey down to Cornwall, Devon and Somerset

p 35 Equipment
We review all of Mizuno's new equipment releases with the CLK Hybrid, MP-18 SC Irons and their S18 Wedge System, TaylorMades TP Collection Juno putter and Mizuno's new stand bag offering

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p 53 Apparel
Just because it's winter doesn't mean you can't hit the course, you just need to be wearing the right kind of apparell. We test the latest offerings from Oscar Jacobson, ProQuip, golf shoes from Mizuno and Stuburt

STENZON

REVIEW



Stylish Dimples

£145 / €159 / \$187
www.stylish-dimples.eu



TaylorMade TP Red Putter Collection

£239 / €289 / \$312
www.taylormadegolf.eu



Mizuno MPX Golf Balls

£50 / €59 / \$65
www.golf.mizunoeurope.com/



The Bushnell Tour V4 Shift

£339 / €379 / \$442
www.bushnellgolf.co.uk



Bushnell EXCEL GPS Watch

£199 / €225 / \$260
www.bushnellgolf.co.uk



Oscar Jacobson Thorn Golf Hat

£22 / €30 / \$28
www.oscarjacobson.com



Powakaddy Compact C2

£599.99 / €671.99 / \$782.99
www.powakaddy.com



CHRISTMAS

It's a wrap

Searching for the perfect Christmas present? Don't worry we've got you covered



Macgregor CG1900 Half Set

£149.99 / €169.99 / \$199.99
www.macgregor-golf.co.uk

G/FORE Shaka umbrella

£85 / €95 / \$120
www.gfore.com



Mizuno Breath Themo

£70 / €89 / \$91
www.golf.mizuno-europe.com



Mizuno Onboarder

£160 / €170 / \$208
www.golf.mizuno-europe.com



Oscar Jacobson Reid Pin

£70 / €95 / \$90
www.oscarjacobson.com



Chervo MAFI Jacket

£285.90 / €319.99 / \$374.99
www.chervo.com



Macgregor Tourney Plus Stand Bag

£69.99 / €79.99 / \$89.99
www.macgregor-golf.co.uk



Hublot Big Bang Unico Golf Watch

£24,121 / €27,000 / \$31,500
www.hublot.com



MacGregor Heritage Chipper

£29.99 / €34.99 / \$39.99
www.macgregor-golf.co.uk



Oscar Jacobson Arnold Tour
£100 / €150 / \$130
www.oscarjacobson.com



TaylorMade TP5 and TP5x Golf Balls
£49.99 / €58 / \$65.99
www.taylormadegolf.eu



Bioflow Sport Wristband
£25 / €28 / \$32
www.bioflow.co.uk



Stuburt Winter Mitts
£18.99 / €21.99 / \$24.99
www.stuburt.com



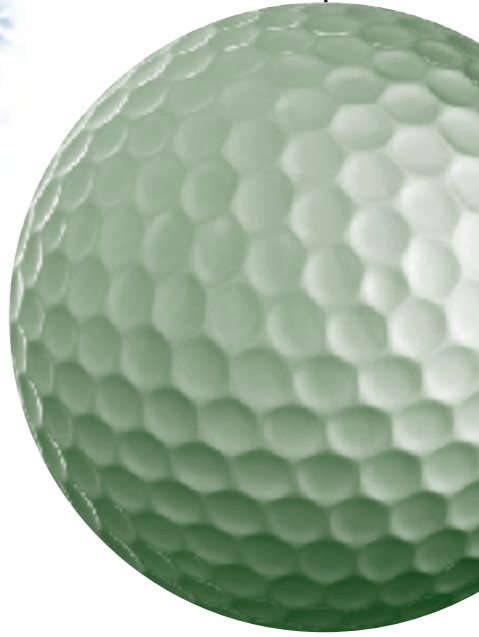
Stuburt Endurance Lite Full Zip Waterproof Jacket
£79.99 / €89.99 / \$103.99
www.stuburt.com



Stuburt Endurance Waterproof Boot
£69.99 / €79.99 / \$89.99
www.stuburt.com



Macgregor VIP Travel Cover
£49.99 / €55.99 / \$65.99
www.macgregor-golf.co.uk



Stuburt Endurance Sport Padded Jacket
£54.99 / €61.99 / \$71.99
www.stuburt.com



TRAIL BLAZING

What happens when you tell one of the best golf course architects in the world, you can have the pick of the land in Alabama? James Mason takes to the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail to find out

AUBURN MARRIOTT: GRAND NATIONAL SHORT COURSE

As I get to the practice ground it's great to see a group of youngsters all learning the game from one of the resident professionals here, the practice facilities are superb and after a few shots to loosen up the muscles we are off to play what is known as the Short course which is basically a par 3 course.

Stepping onto the first tee I can already see this is going to be no ordinary par 3 course with a tee here and a green cut there. This hole could be a signature hole on a lot of 18-hole courses; played from an elevated tee to a sculptured green protected by a deep white-sanded bunker. The 2nd goes a step further with infinity green with the lake as its backdrop, it starts to feel like playing my entire dream par 3s on one course, the greens are fast and true and what you would expect from any top golf course.

The course just keeps on giving with one great par 3 following another, it truly is a wonderful course and my two playing partners agree, we could happily play this course every day, it's everything you want great designed holes that look fantastic but most of all, that are fun to play.

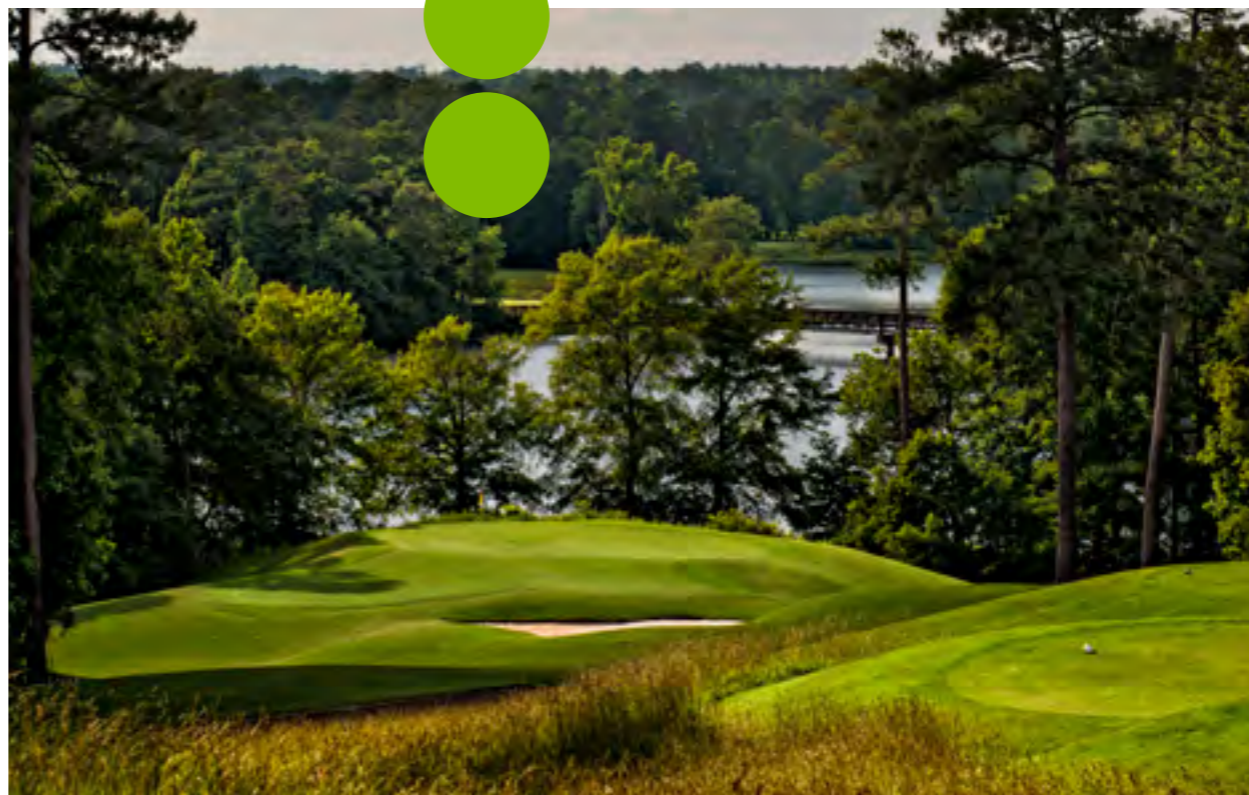
We are playing the 7th and it's another wonderful hole but all eyes are on the 8th this

par 3 plays across the lake and at 185-yards it is jaw dropping, a spectacularly designed golf hole. The thought that Robert Trent Jones has put into this course just shows what can be done with the right piece of land and a great course designer.

All the tees are elevated so you can get a good look at the green which is something I have always been an advocate of, we all want to see our ball roll in the cup if we happen to hole in one.

Unfortunately we have limited time as we are due on the Lakes course but our final hole, the 15th, plays in the opposite direction to the 8th going back across the lake, it is another stunning hole and as we drive past the 16th which runs along the lake, it's with a slightly heavy heart that we didn't get to play the rest.

Believe me you need to play this course and the great thing is they have teeing options for all abilities and if you take your children you will all have a wonderful time. If this is your start to a week's golf on the RTJ Golf Trail, it has to be the best warm up course you will ever play.



LAKES COURSE

I was told as I passed through the professional shop eulogising about the short course that if I thought that was good wait until I played the Lakes and standing on the first tee I am beginning to see why.

Robert Trent Jones said this was the best piece of land he has been given to work with and looking down the first from the elevated tee with the double green below protected by water at the front and the sculptured white sand bunker carved into the fairway I can fully appreciate that comment.

The 2nd only starts to add layers to those words with the lake running the full length of the hole down the left side of the fairway to a wide green that on competition days could see the flag placed feet away from the lake. There are four teeing options on the course from 7,289 to 4,910 or you can do what we are doing and mix and match on what we visually decide are the best tees to play from.

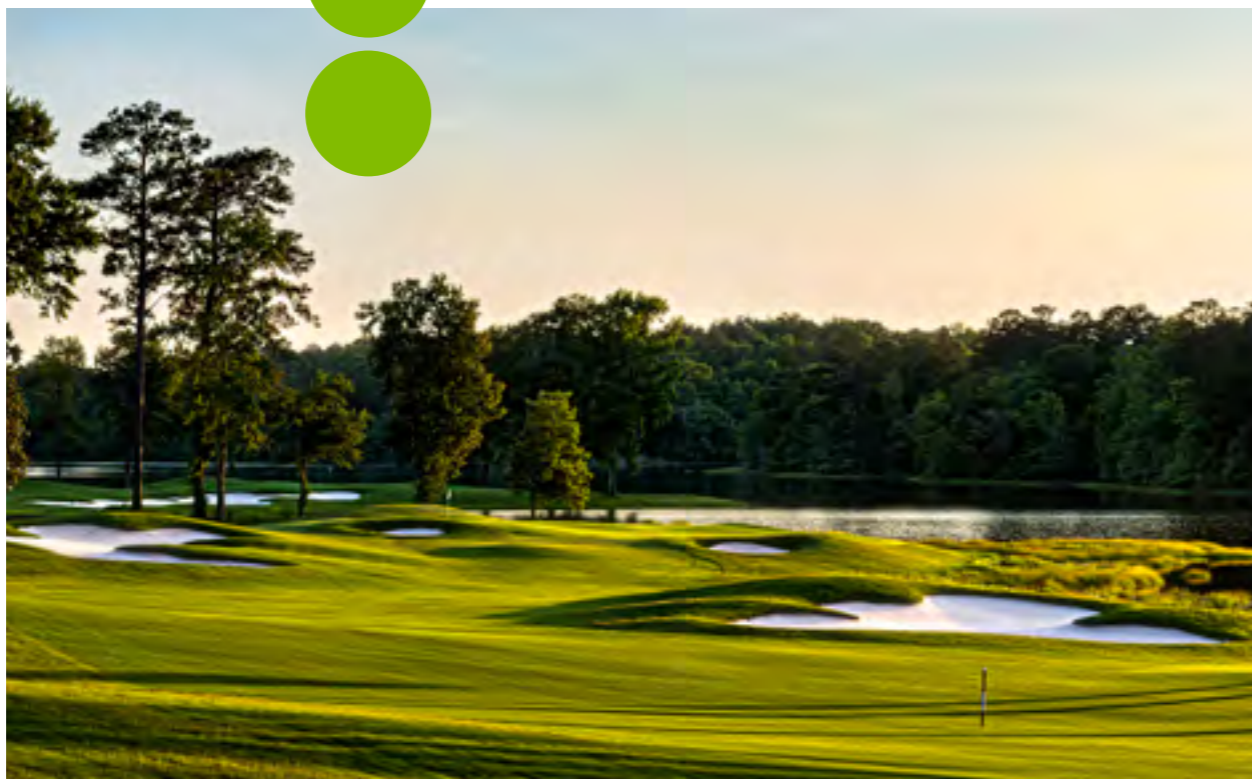
Just like the Short Course it is one great hole after another and when I get to the 6th hole it was the first tee box where I hadn't thought WOW, and I just said "well you can't have eighteen spectacular holes there have to be one or two just to get you to the inspiring holes". →

**"YOU CAN'T HAVE EIGHTEEN SPECTACULAR
HOLES THERE HAVE TO BE ONE OR TWO
JUST TO GET YOU TO THE INSPIRING
HOLES". WELL HOW WRONG COULD I BE**

A par 3 that would grace any course, this is the 12th on Grand Nationals Shorth Course

VIDEO 

Par 3 over water at the Lakes 15th hole



Well how wrong could I be, yes the tee shot may not be inspiring but when you get up to the landing area and see the other part of the double green shared with the first hole and the water on the left, we all laugh, maybe you can have eighteen spectacular holes after all.

How many superlatives can you get in on one course review! The 7th is a par 5 that has the lake running the length of the hole on the right taking you to another green that seems to float on the water and the 8th is played from an elevated tee to another green that has the lake as its backdrop.

You would have thought with the closing hole of the front nine heading back to the clubhouse it wouldn't be such a visually appealing hole but the way the fairway is sculptured through the trees to a raised green that sits right in front of the clubhouse, it really is an aesthetically pleasing hole.

To get to the 10th hole you have to head over the lake on one of the metal bridges and you can see there has been no expense spared in creating this marvellous track. As we get to the tee the heavens open up and I feel like the priest in the Caddyshack movie, nothing is going to stop me finishing this course it's just too good to stop.

Elevated tee after elevated tee to sculptured fairways that raise and fall with the rolling terrain and well-placed perfectly shaped white sand bunkers to negotiate. The 12th brings you back to the lake this time running the full length of this

par 5 down the left and yes you guessed it another infinity green floating on the water.

You are going to be hard pushed to nominate a signature hole here and I am sure when you are all sitting in the clubhouse you may all come up with a different hole. For me the 15th with its island green playing across the lake and 230-yards from the back tee gets my nomination it is spectacular – as if that word hasn't been used enough already!

The 16th and 17th again have the lake running along the fairways to the right, on the 16th and on the other side of the lake on the par 3 17th with both greens again sitting by the water.

The 18th follows the pattern of the 9th taking you back up the hill to the clubhouse, I actually think the 9th is visually the better hole of the two but hey, I am floating on air at the moment. As I walk off the 18th green I have to concede I have just played the most visually appealing golf course I have ever played, it has been an amazing day and one that will live long in the memory and you really need to get out here and play it and see for yourself. What a day. →

The par 5, 7th hole on Grand Nationals Lake course

VIDEO ▶

AS WE GET TO THE TEE THE HEAVENS OPEN UP
AND I FEEL LIKE THE PRIEST IN THE CADDYSHACK
MOVIE, NOTHING IS GOING TO STOP ME FINISHING
THIS COURSE IT'S JUST TOO GOOD TO STOP

CAMBRIAN RIDGE

As we pull up outside the clubhouse and start to unload the bus I ask one of the lads on bag drop about the practice facilities which turn out to be closed today, but the suggestion from the professional is to have a quick warm up on the short course. This turns out to be another dedicated par 3 course of exceptional standard and I am so glad I got to play four of the nine holes, they were truly spectacular and in keeping with the short course at Grand National.

CANYON NINE

The terrain here is perfect and as I smash my ball down the first from the elevated tee to the immaculately manicured fairway below I already know I am in for another fantastic day's golf.

After the par 3 second it's another stunning elevated tee with water on the right, position is all important as it is on the 5th which is played to a fairway that runs right to left. I would suggest a fairway wood/hybrid because if you go too far you will be blocked out by the tall trees and then you would need to clear the tree and the water that protects the green.

Like yesterday this course is on a great piece of land and has been designed using the terrain so that every tee is elevated and you can see all the obstacles in front of you, to me it is a perfectly designed course.

It seems you cannot have a course on the RTJ Golf Trail without an island par 3 and the first one on this track appears at the 8th, it's a big green but not very deep and you need to take enough club to make the carry over the water and stop it before it heads into the lake the other side, it's a great design.

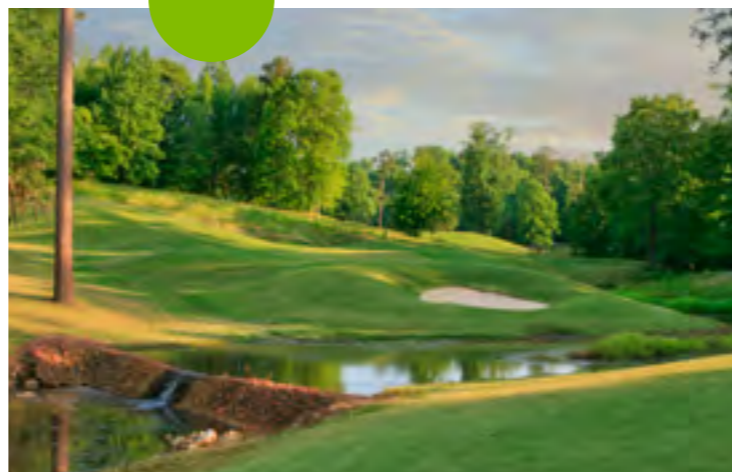
This nine comes to a close with a small ravine to the left on this dogleg left hole and you then play uphill towards the clubhouse. It has been a great morning's golf and the course is in immaculate condition.

LOBLOLLY NINE

The Loblolly nine opens up with a reachable par 5 but with no run on the damp fairways means I end up with a chip and a putt birdie. Strategy is the name of the game on the 2nd with a big lake protecting the front of the green. The 5th brings up a run of holes that I just loved and it's another course where you can really say there isn't a weak hole in the design, but for me the 5th and 7th just edge it for me as they are wonderful driving holes.

Right: Loblollys 2nd green protected by water. Below: The Canyon's 5th hole

VIDEO 



AS I SINK MY PUTT ON THE 9TH HOLE I
THINK TO MYSELF CAN THE STANDARD OF
COURSES REMAIN AT THIS LEVEL FOR THE
WHOLE WEEK?

As I sink my putt on the 9th hole I think to myself can the standard of courses remain at this level for the whole week? But today on the RTJ Golf Trail it has been another spectacular day.

CAPITOL HILL LEGISLATOR COURSE

It's an early start as it's 36-holes today and one of them is the most requested course on the Robert Trent Jones Trail. After looking down the stunning first of the Judge course we head to the first tee on the Legislator track and like all the courses this week, it is perfectly sculptured and the manicuring is perfect.

I am playing with Charlie who is head of marketing here. From the Black tees the course measures a whopping 7,477-yards but fear not there are five teeing options so there is plenty of choice with Teal coming in at 5,253-yards.

The opening hole is a par 5 but this is no easy birdie chance but as I arrive at my ball I really like the way the mounding frames the fairway, but it's when you arrive at the green you begin to see how tough the course can be with the many green complexes and a key ingredient in any RTJ design.

The 2nd is a dogleg right with perfect placing of the fairway bunkers, with their white sand looking like jewels placed in an →

emerald carpet and with the Alabama river as a backdrop it's a great little hole.

Next up is the first of the par 3s which is played from an elevated tee with the river below you to the left, but again it's the green that will test every inch of your touch and feel, if you put your ball in the wrong position here you will be lucky to get away with a 3-putt.

It's a great driving course with rolling terrain and plenty of fairway to aim at and you will love the design of the holes, all aesthetically pleasing on the eye and testing every part of your golf game. There are a great run of holes from the par 3 6th that brings you back to the clubhouse but a special mention for the green on the 8th again with the Alabama river as its backdrop, I miss staying on the top tier by an inch which would have left me a 6-foot putt, I am now standing over a 25-yard putt back up hill with a 3-yard right to left break!

After travelling down what feels and looks like a rollercoaster from Coney Island in our buggy the back nine opens with yet another great driving hole from the elevated back tee. The par 3, 11th is played over a swamp with live oaks to the left and the Alabama river behind, it really is a beautiful hole.

I smash my drive down the fairway on the 14th and when I arrive at my ball a smile

**Capital Hills
Legislator course,
this is the 8th hole**

VIDEO 



**THERE ARE SOME GREAT GOLF HOLES IN
THE WORLD BUT THERE ARE NOT MANY
THAT WHEN YOU STEP ONTO THE FIRST
TEE YOUR JAW HITS THE FLOOR**



breaks across my face, it really is a visually stunning second shot to a green that sits below you protected by three bunkers – two on the right and one on the left – framing the green.

Standing on the tee on the 15th and looking out to the fairway below it must have at least a 100-foot drop, it's a real grip it and rip it hole which is then played to an uphill green. The final hole is a fitting finale to what has been another wonderful course on the RTJ Golf Trail. A slight dogleg right played round some mounding to a raised green which if you get a good drive away will only leave you a wedge in and what better way to end a round than rolling in a birdie putt.

JUDGE COURSE

There are some great golf holes in the world but there are not many that when you step onto the first tee your jaw hits the floor, Portstewart in Ireland comes to mind and for those who have never played there you will see it at this year's Irish Open, but as I step on the tee on the Judge course at Capitol Hill, this is right up there with the best, it is truly stunning.

After a start like that the course has a lot to live up to and the dogleg right 2nd hole with the green sitting next to the lake helps keep that momentum going. The par 5, 4th is another great designed hole with a river running down

the left of the fairway and tall mounding on the right, but it's from the fairway that the risk and reward element comes in, with the green sitting on a peninsula.

The Judge course can be set up extremely tough and that comes into evidence when I stand on the very back tees on the par four 5th and the par three 6th both play over water, the latter to an island green, but with the five teeing options you can choose from 229-yards to 120-yards with each tee offering its own challenge.

The front nine comes to a close with some impressive bunker sculpturing, the tee shot is played to a downhill fairway and then back up to a green that has the sculptured bunkering on both the right and left sides of the fairway starting at around 100-yards out of the green.

Water features on fourteen of the eighteen holes here and comes into play again on the 11th and 12th holes with a river running down the left of the fairway on the par 4, 11th hole and you play over another lake on the par →

**One of the best
opening holes in
world golf, the 1st
on Capitol Hills
Judge course**

3, 12th hole. You can choose from playing 231-yards to 94-yards, but it is another visually appealing hole.

The par 5, 15th where water features twice, first on the risk and reward tee shot – yes I’ve just tried to cut off a bit too much and paid the price – and then again in front of the green, which brings you to another stunning par 3, again played over water. This one is the toughest of them all weighing in at an eye popping 256-yards from the black tees to 126-yards on the teal and remember from the back it’s ALL carry!

The 18th is a fitting finale to what has been a wonderful day’s golf with water again featuring on the left and a babbling brook that runs like a small waterfall from the right over stones and across the fairway just short of the raised green and feeds into the water that runs along the left.

The Judge will test every part of your golf game and every club in your bag, but standing on the first hole and smashing one down the middle will be a life sentence but one that I will happily live with.

Right: Capitol Hills Judge course 9th hole. Below: The 15th hole at Ross Bridge. Bottom: The 17th hole at Ross Bridge

VIDEO 

ROSS BRIDGE

After an hour or so drive we arrive at Ross Bridge, the newest course on the RTJ Golf Trail and depending on what teeing option you choose can measure from a staggering 8,191-yards, the second teeing option is 7,446-yards, yes you get the idea but don’t let your heart sink too much because there are three other teeing options going down to 5,312 from the Teal tees.

As I step onto the 1st the good news is the fairway is very wide so it’s a real grip it and rip it course. For the sake of the video I am playing a lot of holes from the back tees on this tour so you can see the changes in elevation from the tees to the fairways and as I’m standing on the black tee with my playing partners on the whites there is a 109-yard difference in distance. I certainly won’t be playing my second shot from where it lands, as I do not carry a bazooka in my bag – and I am not even sure that will be long enough and I will probably need a SAM!!

Like the fairway on the first the green is enormous and 3-4 putting is definitely on the cards if you don’t hit the right section with your third shot, which is played across water that sits in a valley below the fairway and green.

Water doesn’t come into play on the 2nd which is played from an elevated tee, but it does come

VIDEO 



AS I STAND ON THE TEE IT IS VISUALLY STUNNING AND STRATEGICALLY A BRILLIANT PIECE OF DESIGN WORK. THAT SAME RIVER COMES INTO PLAY ON THE PAR 3, 4TH HOLE

into play on the par 4, 3rd hole which is all risk and reward from the tee. Your tee shot is played across a fairly wide river to the fairway on the other side and the further back you play the safer you are, the more river you cut off the shorter the second shot you will be left with. As I stand on the tee it is visually stunning and strategically a brilliant piece of design work. That same river comes into play on the par 3, 4th hole where it’s all carry to make the wide green.

The 7th hole has a blind tee shot to a rolling downhill fairway, but if you get a long drive away you could be looking at hitting only a mid iron into this par 5 hole giving you a shot at eagle.

Water comes back into play on the final two holes of the front nine with water protecting the left side of the green on the 8th and running along the entire left hand side of the fairway on the 9th with the green sitting on what looks like a peninsula from the tee as the hole gently doglegs left.

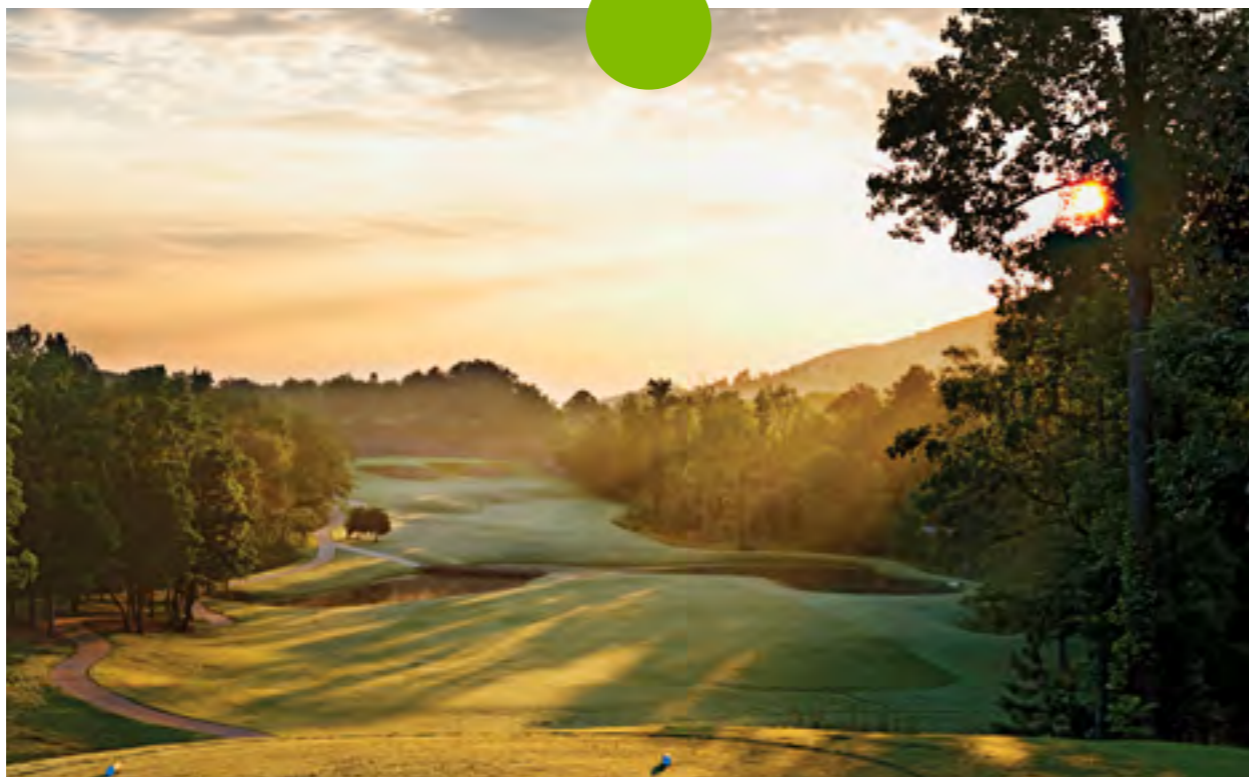
There is a 177-yard difference between the black and white tees and it’s all risk and reward on the tee shot from the back with how much water you want to try and carry!

From the tee on the par 5, 13th you can’t see the green until you hit the top part of the hill and if you get a good drive away hopefully you →



Above: The 9th and 18th holes at Ross Bridge. Below: The 3rd hole on Oxmoor Valley's Ridge course

VIDEO ▶



IT'S YET ANOTHER GREAT COURSE ON THE
RTJ GOLF TRAIL AND IF YOU CHOOSE YOUR
TEEING OPTIONS WISELY YOU WILL HAVE A
LOT OF FUN AND ENJOYMENT

can hit the hill and pick up some much needed yardage for your second shot, but it's when you hit the top of the hill and see the green below you that you start to see what a beautiful hole this is with the green sitting between two sculptured white sanded bunkers, with the river running to your right – which is not in play – it really is a beautiful hole.

The par 3, 14th hole is played to a semi island green with water short and left. No matter what tees you choose to play from on the 15th you need to go and take a look from the tips. The fairway sits some 200ft below you with three sculptured white-sanded bunkers in the fairway and a lake to carry which then runs along the left of the fairway and the green, it's another wonderful design and the vistas from the tee are breath taking.

The 18th is a fitting end to a wonderful course there is only a 130-yard difference in distance between the black and white tees that again takes you back across the lake. The design of the hole that doglegs right means it's another risk and reward hole and depending on pin position and how brave/stupid you are will dictate how much water you are going to take on.

It's yet another great course on the RTJ Golf Trail and if you choose your teeing options wisely you will have a lot of fun and enjoyment.

Choose to go from the tips and you will walk off thinking you have just been 18 rounds with Mike Tyson the choice is all yours!

OXMOOR VALLEY RIDGE COURSE

It's my last day on the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail and it's an early start before heading off to the airport. Oxmoor Valley was the first course to be designed on the RTJGT and as I step onto the first tee you can see that it's matured well, with the fairway nestled in the trees.

The one common theme that has run through all the courses on the RTJGT is the land that has been used and the elevated tees, they certainly give each course the wow factor and as I look down the fairway from my lofty position with the sun casting early morning shadows on the dew soaked fairways it's a beautiful sight for any golfer.

The sound of my drive cracks and echoes through the trees and the ball comes to rest on the plateaued fairway below, giving me a nice 7-iron across a small valley to a green that sits →

JOURNEY PLANNER

GETTING THERE:

Delta Airlines Direct to Atlanta

W: delta.com

WHERE TO STAY

Marriott Grand National, Auburn, Opelika

W: marriott.com/hotels/travel/csgab-auburn-marriott-opelika-hotel-and-conference-center-at-grand-national/
T: +1 334-741-9292

Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa

W: marriott.com/hotels/travel/mgmbr-renaissance-montgomery-hotel-and-spa-at-the-convention-center
T: +1 334-481-5000

Montgomery Marriott Prattville Hotel & Conference Center at Capitol Hill

W: marriott.com/hotels/travel/mgmmm-montgomery-marriott-prattville-hotel-and-conference-center-at-capitol-hill
T: +1 334-290-1235

Ross Bridge Golf Resort and Spa

W: marriott.com/hotels/travel/bhmhv-renaissance-birmingham-ross-bridge-golf-resort-and-spa
T: +1 205-916-7677

A GREAT HOLE TO FINISH ANY COURSE,
A FANTASTIC HOLE TO FINISH WHAT
HAS BEEN AN INCREDIBLE WEEK'S GOLF

below me but is raised so anything short will be rolling back down the hill.

The second brings up another elevated tee to a rolling fairway that moves slowly downhill on this 528-yard par 5 – depending on which one of the five teeing option you will choose from – but if you catch the right slopes and with less dew on the ground you could leave yourself no more than a mid iron into another green that is raised above the undulating downhill fairway.

Water sits right in the landing area on the second of these back-to-back par 5s so I would keep your driver in your bag, I've hit 3-wood from the back tee and I'm only a couple of yards from the water and I've hit the largest section land as the water is shaped like a lower case n around the fairway. Only the longest hitters will reach the green in two here as the raised green sits in an amphitheatre of grey/brown rocks that really does give it a fantastic visual aesthetic.

The back tee from the 4th hole sits on those same rocks which supplies yet another elevated tee. The par 3 5th hole is followed by a fantastic

risk and reward hole at the 6th where you can not only choose what tee to play from but also how much fairway you are going to cut off as you fire your ball across the deep ravine.

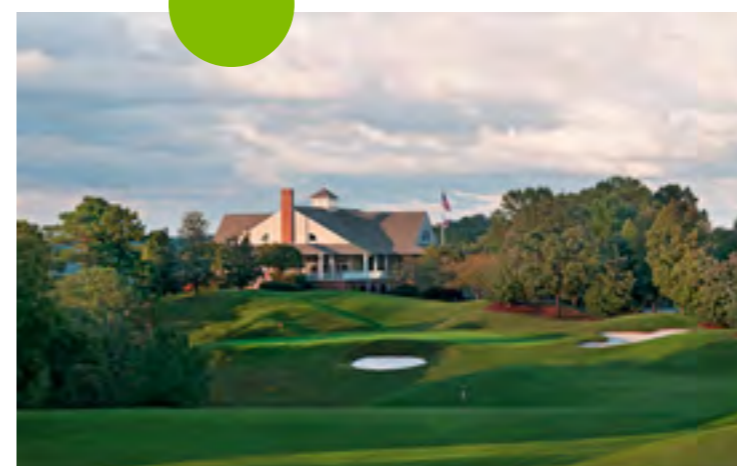
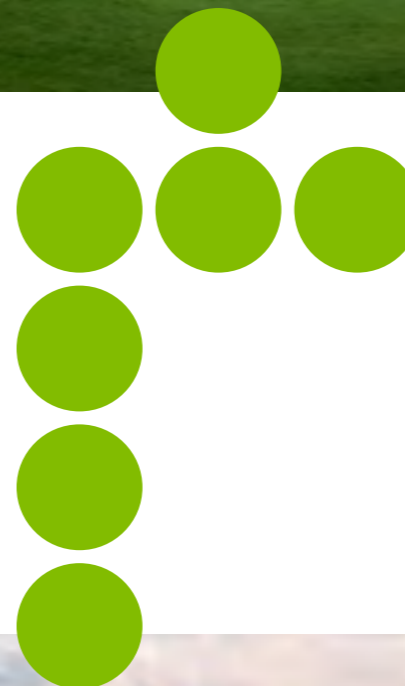
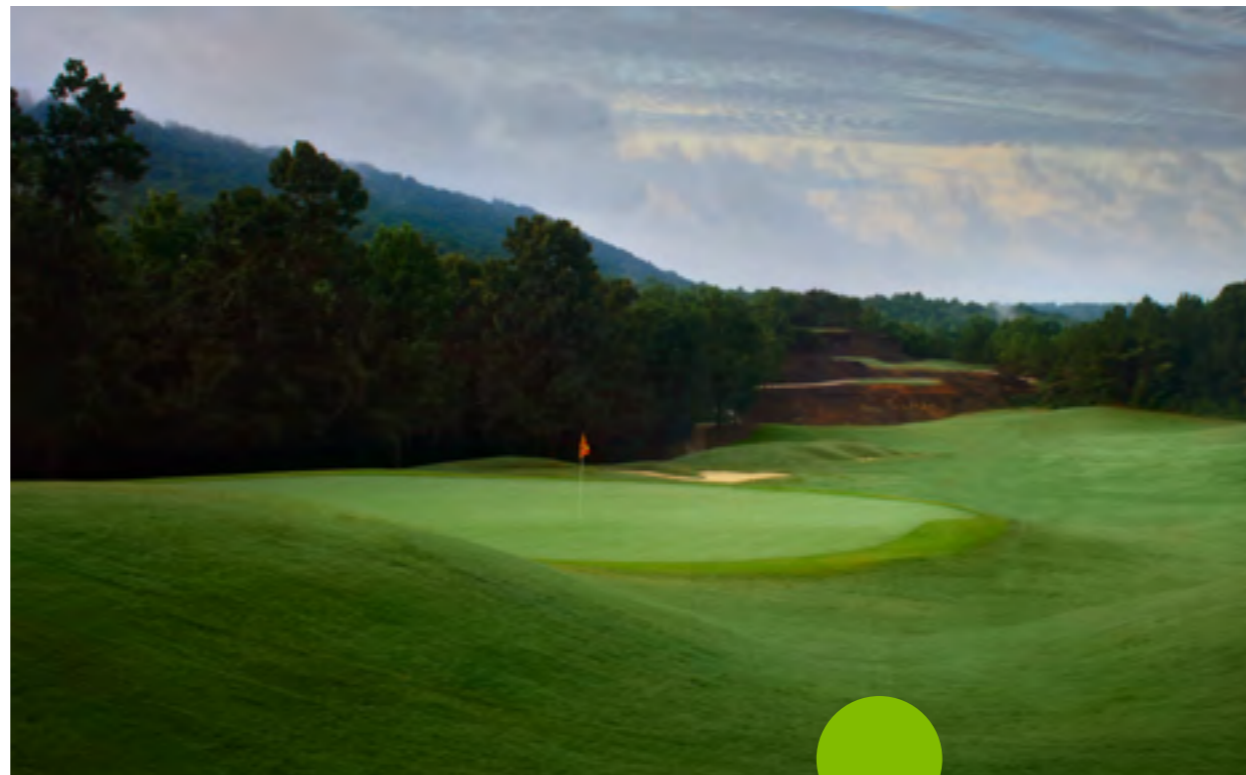
There are so many options for a signature hole here but the par 3 8th hole has to be in with a big shout. Again played from an elevated tee with over a 200ft drop to the green below that is surrounded by water apart from back left. Watching my ball fly through the air to the green below is a real buzz.

You have guessed it the back nine starts with another elevated tee and as I make my way round I am hard pressed to find a weak hole on the whole course, it's just one well designed hole after another and the design is that good that the elevated tees mean you can see all before you.

As I get to the 18th hole I have to smile as it's a fitting finale to a wonderful course manicured to perfection and presented beautifully, but there is a sting in the tail on this par 5, finishing hole. It really is a 3-shot hole and could give you a chance to walk off with birdie, but for bigger hitters who go for the green in two there is trouble short and left as the fairway slopes left and descends steeply into the trees below leaving you very few options.

A great hole to finish any course, a fantastic hole to finish what has been an incredible week's golf.

Above: Looking back down the 4th hole. Right: A fitting finale, the 18th green and clubhouse



JOURNEY PLANNER

WHERE TO PLAY

Grand National, Lakes Course

W: rtjgolf.com/grandnational
T: +1 334-749-9042

Cambrian Ridge

W: rtjgolf.com/cambrianridge
T: +1 334-382-9787

Capitol Hill, Judge and Legislator Courses

W: rtjgolf.com/capitolhill
T: +1 334-285-1114

Ross Bridge

W: rtjgolf.com/rossbridge
T: +1 205-949-3085

Oxmoor Valley

W: rtjgolf.com/oxmoorvalley
T: 205-942-1177

WHERE TO EAT

Dreamland BBQ

W: dreamlandbbq.com
T: +1 205-933-2133

Acre Restaurant

W: acreauburn.com
T: +1 334-246-3763

Brock's Restaurant at Ross Bridge Resort

W: marriott.com/hotels/hotel-information/restaurant/bhmhv-renaissance-birmingham-ross-bridge-golf-resort-and-spa
T: +1-205-949-3051



ROSS BRIDGE HOTEL & SPA

Birmingham Alabama, USA

By CHARMAINE HIBBERT

The foyer at Ross Bridge is spacious and welcoming and check-in is quick and simple, it's within minutes of leaving the bus that I am wheeling my case slightly excitedly towards my room.

The excitement is due to my impending spa treatment but also because I have spotted a lounge by the pool with my name on it and a waiter to keep me hydrated with some nice rum cocktails – I did spot a well equipped gym but I am due a day in the sun – well several really but that's for another time.

Oh my! As the room opens and the cool air of the air con hits me I hadn't realised how hot I was. The room has a kingsize bed, huge TV, walk-in stone tiled shower, I have to say the room is just wonderfully presented and the face dive onto the bed tells me I have a nice firm bed. →

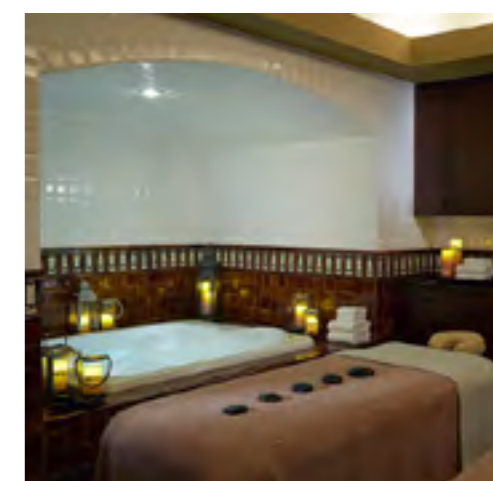
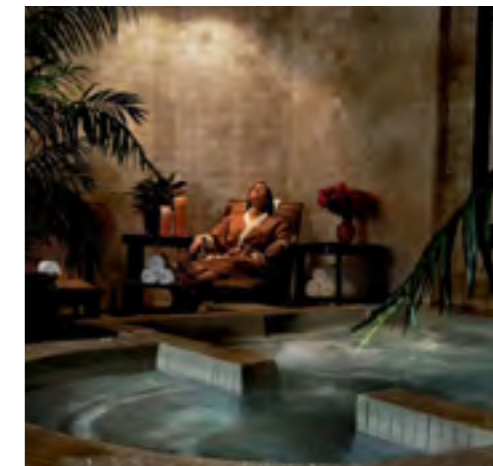
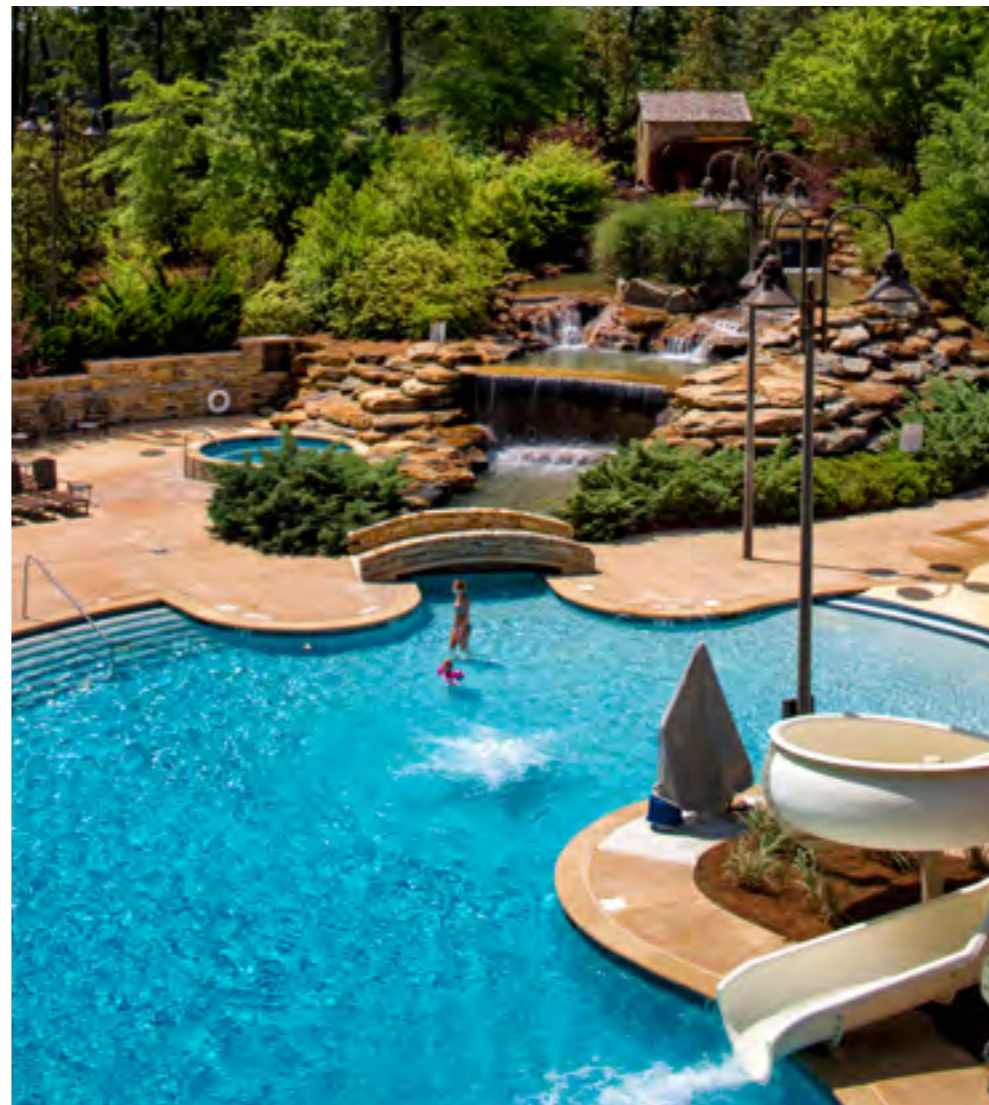
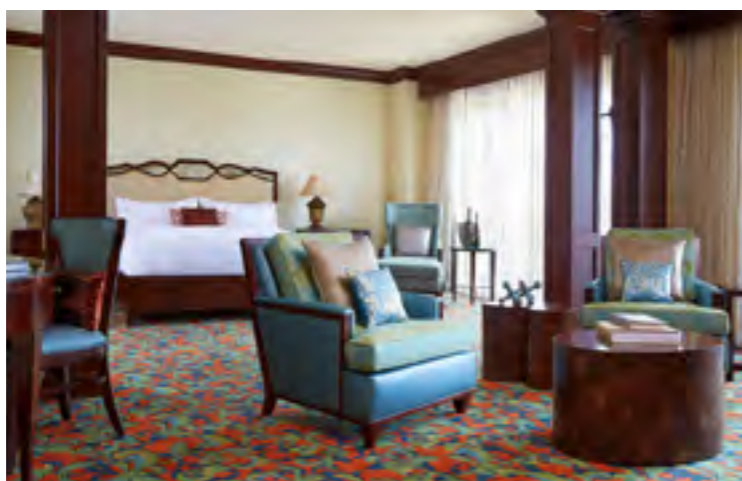
Top: Ross Bridge
hotel at night.

Below: Fire pits



PAMPER PALACE

No matter if it's a holiday or a long weekend, what we all want is a hotel that makes us feel pampered and walking on water by the time we leave. **Charmaine Hibbert** finds the perfect place



Above Top: JT's Bar Above bottom: One of the hotel Rooms. Middle the outdoor pool. Far right top and bottom The Spa at Ross Bridge

A quick shower and change sees me heading for my 4pm appointment with Melissa Justice who is my massage therapist for today. Time is of the essence as I want to soak up that Vitamin D by the pool so I have plummeted for the 25 minute deep tissue massage.

Melissa uses a Biotone revitalising massage oil and I have told her if she hears me squealing to pay no heed and just get in there and get those knots out. To be honest I am not sure she would have stopped anyway, it was intense and my gosh did she get into my back but after 25 minutes of what felt like a wrestling match my time was up. There was Japanese style soothing music but Melissa may as well played some death metal as it was a real body work out. But when she was finished I felt wonderful like I had just taken off a rucksack full of rocks. Now to find that lounge and waiter!

FACILITIES

Apart from the saltwater outside pool that I am lounging next to that has a slide, there is a children's pool and an indoor pool and of course the fitness centre that I mentioned earlier has a selection of free weights and cardiovascular equipment. There is also a biking trail, jogging and fitness trail, tennis and of course the Ross Bridge golf course that is part of the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail.

The dining options are Brock's - and I can testify that they can produce the perfect Pittsburgh Steak. The clubhouse restaurant serves classic American cuisine - there is also a coffee shop and JT's Lounge where you have a choice of local or continental beers and a wide selection of cocktails and they produce a mean dark and stormy, what more from a day could a girl ask for, cheers!

Ross Bridge Golf Resort and Spa
Tel +1 205-916-7677
www.marriott.com


THIS IS
Alabama



Watch
your ball sail through
clear blue skies

TAKE IT ALL IN

Sweet Home
Alabama

A wide-angle photograph of a lush green golf course under a clear blue sky. In the foreground, there are rolling green hills with some sand traps. In the background, a coastal town with many buildings is visible, situated along a harbor with several boats. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

The golfers of Cornwall, Devon and Somerset would rather me not tell you this, but some of the best links courses in the world are not in Scotland, Ireland or Liverpool. You will still receive a warm welcome, and a half-hearted reminder in the bar not to tell your friends!

**CAN YOU KEEP
A SECRET?**

TREVOSE GC

It's an hour and a half's drive from Orestone Manor to Trevoze Golf Club, it has been four years since I last played the Atlantic Links courses and I am certainly chancing my luck as its mid September and autumn is upon us.

Standing on the tee looking down the fairway, memories of my last visit come to mind and the clear blue sky and the sparkle off the calm Atlantic Ocean in the distance tells me I am one lucky man to have caught this weather yet again – it seems the sun always shines when I play the Atlantic Links courses.

The course is in good condition and after reaching the green I have left myself a 40-foot putt for birdie, but I unfortunately miss it high on the right, but the greens are rolling fast, true and are in spectacular condition.

Every time I tee it up at Trevoze the course just seems to grow on me that little bit more and as I manoeuvre my way around I can't help but smile at my good fortune with the weather. I just wish I had worn shorts today. Thankfully I have hit the high side – left – of the green at the par 3, 3rd hole and watch my ball slowly make its way down the slope leaving me a nice uphill putt.

The 4th brings up the first par 5 and after hitting a good drive I am standing in the fairway with a 3-iron in my hand and lining up on the RNLI hut that sits behind the green, it's a stunning looking hole with the Atlantic waves crashing on the

Right: Trevoze's 1st green and out to the Atlantic Ocean. Below left: The 3rd green. Below right: The redesigned 4th hole

VIDEO 



IT'S A STUNNING LOOKING HOLE WITH THE ATLANTIC WAVES CRASHING ON THE BEACH JUST BEHIND THE GREEN AND THE HUT



beach just behind the green and the hut.

The dogleg left 5th takes me back inland and away from the sea, I marvel at the way the green sits above me for my second shot. The 8th is the second of the par 3s on the front nine and looking from the tee I am standing on I can see the club have built several teeing options so the hole can be played at various different angles, but it's the pot bunker just short of the putting surface you need to steer clear of, no matter what teeing option you have chosen or double bogey could end up being a good score.

The back nine comes to a close with a beautiful par 5, standing on the tee the fairway sits below me with bunkers perfectly placed in →



Left: Trevose's 4th green with its Atlantic backdrop

the landing area, but with the wind coming from behind, a good drive and a nice bit of run I am left with a 6-iron in my hand to the uphill green. After knocking my putt slightly long, I tap in for birdie, it's a nice way to head into the back nine.

The par 5, 10th sees me heading back towards the sea with the wind now in my face, I certainly won't be making this green in two, you need to be careful of the stream that runs along the right of the fairway on your tee shot, it could leave you having to drop under penalty.

The first of the par 3s on the back nine arrives at the 11th and with today's wind in my face it's a tough hole. The second of the par 3s arrives at the 16th and standing on the tee of this 240-yard, hole I suddenly remember how tough the finishing holes are here especially the optical illusion of the bunker staring right at me that protects the green, don't be fooled there is room behind that bunker and it's not as close to the

green as it first appears.

I think the second shot into the 17th green has to be one of my favourite shots on the course, I have managed to find the fairway and have a wedge in my hand, the green slopes from back to front and there is a stream just short waiting to catch any miss hit balls. The green also sits just below a heather covered dune, which is framing it perfectly.

The 18th is a great driving hole, I aim my ball up the right hand side of the fairway – it really is grip it and rip it on this hole – once my ball lands the slope gently rolls it back down to the centre of the fairway, leaving me a 7-iron into the final green, that sits above me.

Sitting in the clubhouse at the bay window looking out across this wonderful links course and watching the orange sun slowly slip below the horizon, it certainly has been a great start to my Atlantic Links tour.

Right St Enodoc from left to right, top row: The 1st hole, the 10th. Bottom row: Two par 3s at the 15th and 17th holes

VIDEO 



ST ENODOC GC

After a thirty-five minute drive from Trevose GC I pull into the car park at St Enodoc, as I previously stated it has been over 4-years since my last visit here and I have already spotted a change to the clubhouse. On entering the reception area the changes and decor have really moved the clubhouse into the 21st Century, the new bar and lounge area with its upper deck are certainly a welcome addition.

After checking in with Catherine at reception I head to the first tee. As with yesterday, the sun is high in the sky but disappointingly I am advised that rain is due at around 10am and my tee off time is 8.21am so I should be starting the back nine as it hits.

Unlike my last visit when the emerald carpet fairways were surrounded by brown fescue, the course is looking resplendently autumnal, well apart from the clear blue sky and bright yellow orb.

I crack my ball down the middle of the fairway and I am off, I do love the par 5 start that gives you a chance at birdie and if the ground happens to be hard and dry when you play you will get a lot of roll on the ball.

When I hit the crest of the highest mound in the fairway that is also home to the marker post, St Enodoc comes into its own. I could stand in this spot all day looking out to the Atlantic →



Ocean below and the Camel Estuary that roles into the beautiful town of Rock with its long sandy beaches, you really do feel the stress of city life seep out of your body.

I could start to give you a blow by blow account of each hole, the rolling fairways, dunes and of course the Himalaya bunker at the 6th hole – see photos and video – but for me the highlight of the front nine comes when I walk onto the 7th green, 8th and 9th tees, the view just takes my breath away every time I visit. I can just imagine course architect James Braid – who designed the course in 1907, with golf being played on the land around the church since 1888 – just sitting here watching his creation coming to fruition. He will be happy to know that his foresight has stood the test of time and remains a fantastic golf challenge in a new millennia.

The back nine takes you to the original ground where golf was first played here and the wonderful old St Enodoc church. The sun is still high in the sky as I make my way onto the 10th tee, I play my tee shot to the very narrow fairway which sits below me and unless you feel you can make the green in two, I would suggest taking danger out of the equation and hit hybrid,

going for the chip and putt birdie.

Spectacular views can be seen from every angle, it is worth bringing your camera. The par 5, 16th starts a tough finishing stretch of holes and after reaching my drive on the 16th fairway, I can see straight down the Camel Estuary into Rock – if your golf isn't in great shape at least you can soothe your soul with these views.

Standing on the 17th tee, which weighs in at 206-yards it's a hole that could wreck any scorecard with the green sitting above you between two dunes.

I make my way up the stairs to the 18th tee it's another beautiful view looking across the course from the elevated tee, since my last visit the green staff have worked hard to take all the bracken back. I play my tee shot down to the rolling fairway to the left of the dunes on my right, it really is a fitting finale to any course with the backdrop of the clubhouse ready to welcome me home. It's also a slightly sad occasion as I hole my final putt as it brings another round of golf on this wondrous links to an end, but this is more an au revoir not goodbye as the thought of never playing St Enodoc again makes my soul shudder.

ROYAL NORTH DEVON

It's an early start today. As I walk into the clubhouse I can feel the history ooze out of every crevice. The museum is something to be hold and I spend a few minutes gazing at the great workmanship that went into some of these early golf clubs and balls, the silver spoons are a wonderful collection of a bygone age.

What I also feel is the friendliness at the club, the smiling faces the "good morning" and "how can we help" have already got the day off to a great start as has the blue skies. After signing in with the professional I am on my way to the first tee a few warm up swings and I manage to hit the fairway.

I am finding the fairways very generous, my main problem is finding an object to aim at, the land on the opening few holes is very flat and depending on the wind both offer a tough start to the round.

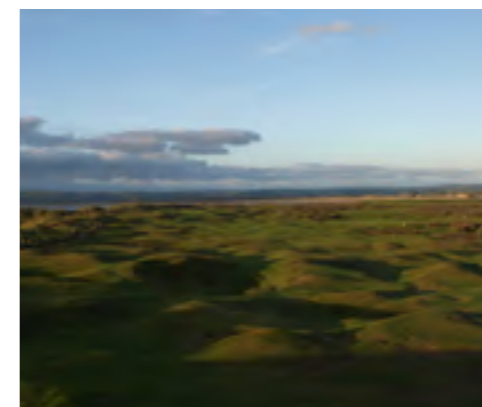
The 4th hole brings you to the original area where golf was first started to be played on these links in 1864, and the large bunker known as the "Cape" certainly gives you something to aim at with its large wooden sleepers and white arrow showing the way. →



Right: The par 5 16th at St Enodoc looking down into Rock



Above: Sheep grazing at the 10th hole at Royal North Devon. Left: New bunkering at the par 3, 5th at RND. Below: The 6th fairway at RND



VIDEO 

The first par 3 comes at the 5th and is aptly named table, I presume this is something to do with the way the green sits above you like a table, I also have a few spectators sitting behind the green. Fortunately I manage to hit the green but just miss out on making the putt.

The 6th gives you your first real look at the beach and standing on the back tee I have the sea wall running down the left of the fairway, it's a classic links hole and where the opening few holes were quite flat, this fairway looks like bubble wrap permeated by deep pot bunkers.

The second par 3 on the front nine comes at the 8th hole and from the back tee measures 223-yards and its all carry over gorse, brambles and heather and with the ocean waves crashing on the shore to your left it is a spectacular hole.

The back nine opens up with a blind tee shot over more gorse, brambles and heather, I take aim at the black/white marker post trust the green staff know what they are doing and smash my drive straight at it, thankfully my ball is sitting in the middle of the fairway when I reach it and my faith has been rewarded.

The green staff have done a remarkable job and the course is in great condition especially the greens and my faith in their marker post placement is rewarded on all the blind tee shot holes which come at the 11th, 12th and 15th.

The 17th and 18th start my journey home and run parallel to the first and second holes – this land was acquired some years after the original course and although the terrain is flatter they represent a tough challenge. The wind is coming from a slightly different direction today and is blowing straight into me, I walk off the 17th green shaking my head in disbelief, I have just hit a driver, 3-wood and still had a full 3-iron into the pin on this 554-yard hole.

The 18th is a great finishing hole and I love the risk and reward element that the stream represents that runs just short of the green. Thinking back to the clubs and balls in the clubhouse museum and the wind I am facing in playing these last few holes, makes my admire and appreciate the skill of 5-times Open champion JH Taylor – who learned the game here – and the players from that era, it has been a privilege to walk in their footsteps, what a great mornings golf it has been.

ITS ALL CARRY OVER GORSE, BRAMBLES AND HEATHER AND WITH THE OCEAN WAVES CRASHING ON THE SHORE TO YOUR LEFT IT IS A SPECTACULAR HOLE.

SAUNTON EAST

After a wonderful lunch at the Royal North Devon GC I am back in the car making my way to Saunton Golf Club which is just around the bay and thirty minutes later I am in the proshop checking in for my second round of the day.

A quick chat with the starter in his hut waiting for a little burst of rain to blow over and I am off down the fairway. Not sure what I have done to deserve this, but the wind is straight into my face again and from the blue tees where I am filming from its 473-yards so I have a 3-wood in my hand for my second shot into this par 4!

The course is looking spectacular and I love the way the course meanders through the dunes and with most of the tees being elevated it gives

you a wonderful view of what is before you. With the wind now behind me on the par 5 2nd, I hole out for eagle managing to get the two shots back I dropped on the first.

The first par 3 on the course arrives at the 5th measuring only 122-yards it's just a wedge in but you certainly have to be in the right place if you want to take advantage or you could easily be walking off with a 3-putt bogey, due to the numerous green complexes.

The 6th is a great hole and from the elevated tee you get to see everything in front of you on this dogleg left, be careful of taking to much club and running out of fairway or trying to cut to much off and ending up in the gorse and brambles.

→

Below: The 18th hole on Saunton Golf Club East Course



The first blind tee shot comes at the 8th hole, but its the second shot into the green I really like the look of, I have wedge in my hand and the green is surrounded by dunes with a teasing little gap so you can see the flag.

The back nine opens up with another stunning view from an elevated tee, the weather is not so great this afternoon and memories come flooding back to the last time I played here when the sun was out, but I am still loving every minute of playing the East course as I put my drive in the fairway. The green sits above you with two pot bunkers on the hill protecting the green, but I have navigated both of them and put my wedge shot to a couple of inches for a tap-in birdie.

A couple of great par 4s brings you to the first par 3 on the back nine and at 158-yards it may not sound that hard, but it's the two pot

bunkers waiting to snatch anything short left or right. Par here is certainly a good score.

I was looking forward to playing the 14th hole again and as I get to the tee it certainly doesn't disappoint. It was my favourite hole on the course last time I was here and I think my feelings haven't changed, I just love the way it sits in the dunes and the elevated tee is like adding sprinkles and strawberry syrup to your 99 ice cream, it's the perfectly designed tough par 4 hole playing tougher than its 455-yards today with the wind coming straight at me again.

The 18th brings this wonderful course to a fitting finale, its getting dark now, but there is no way I am walking in, I can see the clubhouse perched in the distance with its lights on and after good drive arrowing at the marker post I am in the middle of the fairway, that sits like

an emerald carpet between the dunes. I have an 8-iron in my hands playing to the green that sits above me. I make the green but unfortunately I miss the birdie putt, but no matter it's been a fantastic day and I am already looking forward to battling with the West course tomorrow.

SAUNTON WEST

After consuming the best fish and chips in the South West at Squires in Braunton village and a good nights rest I am back on the tee, after some advice from the starter of "Aim at the marker post with a little fade", which I duly oblige I am off down the fairway after my ball. Just looking at the first green and the way it sits in the dunes has got my pulse racing again; it really is a great hole to get you started. The dogleg right on the 2nd like the first is played from an elevated tee.

The first of the new changes on the course

comes at the 3rd and for those who have played this track but have not been for a while – like myself – you may not notice them straight away, but the two bunkers that I am staring at on the right of the fairway off the tee, that look like they have been there for centuries are in fact new additions and sit at the perfect distance to catch your tee shot!!

Another elevated tee greets you on the first of the par 3s at the 4th hole and with the wind coming straight at me I select a 4-iron to navigate the 208-yards giving myself a birdie putt which I manage to hole despite the rain.

I find myself smiling broadly standing on the fairway on the 6th hole and looking at the lone tree that sits behind and to the left of the green, it just seems to deify the elements with its presence. There is a stream just short of the green right and left of the fairway, so make →

Below: Saunton's wonderful clubhouse

ITS GETTING DARK NOW, BUT THERE IS NO WAY I AM WALKING IN, I CAN SEE THE CLUBHOUSE PERCHED IN THE DISTANCE WITH ITS LIGHTS ON



Saunton's East Course, Top left: The 9th green. Top Right: The 12th hole and Right: The 17th green



VIDEO 



sure you take plenty of club and don't come up short.

The 8th hole sees the next set of changes with a new back tee and two bunkers on the left of the fairway, which have given the hole a completely new aesthetic and looking down the fairway I feel the changes have made it a great driving hole.

The front nine comes to a close with the 152-yard par 3, which nestles in trees, it's a lovely looking hole, but it just seems so out of place sitting among trees and not dunes. The 10th hole has been lengthened with new tees and there's an additional bunker on the right hand side of the fairway.

The first of the par 3s on the back nine comes at the 11th where the stream that crossed the fairway short of the green has been slightly rerouted to give higher handicapped players a better chance of carrying the hazard.

There are several changes to the 12th I am playing from the new back tee and I can see two new bunkers down the right hand side of the fairway, with today's wind I have laid up short and can see that they have also rerouted the stream that crossed the top part of the fairway and straightened it, giving you more fairway to lay up into and with the length now being 551-yards all but the longest of hitters will be taking advantage of the extra space.

There is a new tee at the 13th and the 15th tee has been moved to the right, its another great driving hole that doglegs to the left and I just love the way the putting surface sits above you next to that lone tree which sits between the 6th and 15th greens.

The 16th brings up the second par 3 of the back nine and is played from an elevated tee and when the wind blows you can be aiming as much as 50-yards left or right of the flagstick.

The 17th tee has been moved left and back which helps you get a view of the green from the tee on this 503-yard par 5 hole. For those eagle-eyed among you, there was only one par 3 on the front nine, but the 18th brings up the courses fourth, but the third on the back and at 193-yards played from an elevated tee and through a narrow entrance with two greenside bunkers protecting the green it's a tough finish. I have clubbed up and go for the back of the green but as I walk on to the green I know getting down in two isn't going to be easy with all the different green complexes, but I have managed to roll my

ball down and tap in.

Sitting outside the clubhouse with a nice cold drink in the September sun and reflecting back on both the East and West courses, I can certainly say it has been a wonderful couple of days at Saunton Golf Club and the new design additions to the West course have not only improved the layout they are aesthetically pleasing to the eye and look like they were part of the original design.



Top: The 5th hole on Saunton's West Course Left: The West 12th green

VIDEO 

I HAVE TO COME CLEAN AND SAY I AM A BIG BURNHAM AND BERROW GOLF FAN, IT'S A WONDERFUL COURSE AND ONE THAT CERTAINLY NEEDS TO BE ON YOUR BUCKET LIST.

BURNHAM AND BERROW

It's the last day of my Atlantic Links golf tour and after an hour and a half's drive from Saunton Sands Hotel we pull into the car park at Burnham and Berrow Golf Club. I love the clubhouse here and the way the first tee sits right outside the windows.

After a steaming hot cup of coffee I make my way to what turns out to be a refurbished pro shop, it certainly looks the part and offers everything you could need. I head to the practice ground that is right next to the pro shop then make my way to the first tee and have a chat with the starter.

Richard the head green keeper pops over for a chat; he is keen to explain the new tees on the 6th, 9th and 11th holes and I am certainly looking forward to seeing how they improve the course.

I have to come clean and say I am a big Burnham and Berrow golf fan, it's a wonderful course and one that certainly needs to be on your bucket list. The first plays between the dunes and it is a perfect start to the course, I have missed the fairway to the right but I only have a 9-iron and make the green.

The 2nd is one of my favourite holes; the way the rolling fairway sits below you in the dunes from the elevated tee just makes you want to play the hole well. You can't see the 3rd green from the fairway, but the marker post behind it gives you a great line, I am sure you will be captivated by how charming it is when you finally do see it. You may not be so happy as you walk off the green once you get to putt on there! It's a treacherous green with its many complexes.

The first of the par 3s arrives at the 5th hole, don't be short as between you and the putting surface is more creators and pot bunkers than the moon. As I miss my birdie putt – which I am putting down to the excitement of seeing the new tee on the next hole! →



Burnham and Berrow Golf Club looking out to the Bristol Channel

I make my way up to the new tee; it certainly doesn't disappoint, the views are stunning and look out to the Bristol Channel. They give the hole a new wow factor – not that this course needs more of those. The par 3, 9th brings up the next set of changes, it's another of my favourite holes – I would actually be hard pushed to name a hole that I don't like on this course to be honest.

The history behind this hole is amazing and has had input from some of the greatest minds in golf course design. A new elevated tee has been put in and it straightens the hole, which I feel now brings all five pot bunkers into play, the green complexes here still amaze me and reaching the green is only the beginning of the test to your golf game, walking off with par here is a great score.

The final set of changes comes at the 11th hole with the new tee to the right of the 10th green. In today's wind it's playing longer than the 438-yards on the scorecard, I feel from this new position it certainly makes it a very tough hole and with the church now as a backdrop it also

makes it aesthetically pleasing on the eye.

Both par 3s on the back nine are wonderfully designed holes, but you really need to make the putting surface from the green with the amount of craters, pot bunkers and dunes between you and the putting surface, they are both a tough test of your ability.

The back nine today has played into the wind and it has been a tough going, with the waterproofs coming on and off for the last hour and a half, but as I make my way to the 18th tee it's with a heavy heart. Not only is this the last hole of the course and a truly great hole at that, but also this is the last hole of my tour and it will know doubt be a few years before I am back again.

I want to finish on a high but unfortunately I have pulled my tee shot, after a short search I locate my ball and have to punch out to the fairway, leaving myself 117-yards to the hole, I recalculate to take account of the wind and pull 9-iron out of the bag and duly put it to 5-foot; now that is a better way to finish. →

THE HISTORY BEHIND THIS
HOLE IS AMAZING AND HAS
HAD INPUT FROM SOME OF
THE GREATEST MINDS IN GOLF
COURSE DESIGN

JOURNEY PLANNER

WHERE TO PLAY

Trevoze Golf & Country Club

Constantine Bay, Padstow PL28 8JB

T: + 44 (0)1841 520208

W: trevoze-gc.co.uk

St Enodoc Golf Club

Rock, Wadebridge PL27 6LD

T: + 44 (0)1208 863216

W: st-enodoc.co.uk

Royal North Devon Golf Club

Golf Links Road

Westward Ho!

Bideford EX39 1HD

T: +44 (0)1237 473817

W: royalnorthdevongolfclub.co.uk

Saunton Golf Club

Nr Braunton

North Devon EX33 1LG

T: +44 (0)1271 812436

W: sauntongolf.co.uk

Burnham & Berrow Golf Club

St Christopher's Way

Burnham-on-Sea

Somerset TA8 2PE

Tee off at 1202 hrs

T: +44 (0)1278 785760

W: burnhamandberrowgolfclub.co.uk

A smile breaks out across my face as I hole the putt for par, it has been another amazing day on the Atlantic Links golf tour and what a fitting finale Burnham and Berrow is, a spectacular golf course certainly, worthy of its Top 100 ranking in the world and definitely a special place in my heart.

Head Green Keeper Richard Whyman gave me this information about the new changes to the course:

To enhance members and guests experience the club continue to invest in the course, during 2016 work was carried out on new elevated teeing grounds on the Championship Course namely on the sixth, ninth and 11th, where new back tees have been built to extend the holes. These new raised tees have also created some

spectacular views of the course as well as the Somerset & Walsh coastline.

A huge amount of work has been done by the clubs experienced greenkeeping team, with Contractor Mike Smith brought in to translocate the native vegetation around the new 9th tee to prevent any wind blow damage

PHASE II – OCTOBER 2017

Work is about to start on phase two of the 6th hole project that will include extending the fairway area towards the new tees as well as re-contouring the green and surrounds.

The course will now be 30-40 yards longer at 6,988 yards (championship tees), but this small increase perhaps belies the added difficulty of the new tee shots.

The many faces of Burnham & Berrow. Below right: looking back down the 2nd. Right Top to bottom: The 8th hole. The 12th hole with the church. The par 3, 17th hole. The clubhouse from the 1st tee

VIDEO 



**A SPECTACULAR GOLF COURSE CERTAINLY,
WORTHY OF ITS TOP 100 RANKING IN THE WORLD
AND DEFINITELY A SPECIAL PLACE IN MY HEART**

JOURNEY PLANNER

WHERE TO STAY

Trevose Golf & Country Club

T: + 44 (0)1841 520208

W: trevose-gc.co.uk

The Seagate Hotel,

18 The Quay

Appledore EX39 1QS

T: + 44 (0)1237 472589

W: theseagate.co.uk

Saunton Sands Hotel

Nr Braunton

Devon EX33 1LG

T: + 44 (0)1271 890212

W: sauntonsands.co.uk

WHERE TO EAT

Constantine Restaurant

T: + 44 (0)1841 520208

W: trevose-gc.co.uk

Squires Fish Restaurant

T: + 44 (0)1271 815533

W: squiresfishrestaurant.co.uk

Dining at Saunton Sands with Mathias Oberg

T: + 44 (0)1271 890212

W: sauntonsands.co.uk



TREVOSE GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Cornwall, United Kingdom

By TERESA BARNETT

HOME FROM HOME

Teresa Barnett finds the Dormy apartments at Trevose G&CC has everything a group of golfers or a family could need

Trevose Golf and Country Club has something for everyone accommodation wise, Lodges sleeping up to 6 people, apartments, flats, bungalows, a cottage and a club flat. So far, so versatile.

I find myself laying my head in one of the Dormy Flats a short walk from the clubhouse. These split-level apartments overlook the 18th green with Wi-Fi as standard, so you will always be able to stay updated. Every apartment also has a TV, which is perfect after a day out on the course.

The flats are also incredibly spacious; both the living room and →



bedroom offer plenty of room to move around, they also feature fully fitted kitchens with good appliances – ovens/stoves, microwaves, kettles, and fridge/freezers. The Trehuel apartments are offered in 1 or 2 bedrooms with fully fitted kitchens, giving you the convenience of preparing a home-cooked meal for your family members or companions. This makes these apartments ideal for small families or groups.

For larger groups the bungalows, Fairway cottage, Fairway lodge or the Club flat give you several different options, apartments are offered in 1, 2, or 3 bedrooms or duplex. There are several different designs to choose from so I am sure you will find one that suits your taste.

Without a doubt, these apartments will feel like a home away from home, not only are they ideally situated to play golf at Trevoise GCC, but you are not too far away from some beautiful sandy beaches and wonderful walking paths and trails.

DINING

A kitchen by the sea means fresh quality local seafood and Constantine Restaurant delivers just that. All the seafood classics on one menu, I plumped for the Indonesian curry packed with Cornish seafood it's a delightful mix of tender seafood and mild spice with a hint of coconut cream. James in typical style went for the steak but to be fair the produce here is all locally sourced and he certainly seems to be enjoying his food only occasionally lifting his head to look out to the beautifully setting sun over the Atlantic.

Golf may not be for everyone, but with views such as these staying at Trevoise Golf and Country Club and quality fresh food served at Constantine Restaurant this can be a relaxing break for the entire family.

Trevoise Golf & Country Club

Tel + 44 (0)1841 520208

www.trevoise-gc.co.uk



Top: Breakfast in the sun. Below left: Great views from Constantine Restaurant. Bottom right: Lounge area in one of the dormy apartments



THE QUAY
Devon, United Kingdom
By TERESA BARNETT

THE QUAY TO LIFE!

Well not quite the key to life, but
certainly the Quay to a perfect
nights rest and relaxation

The Seagate is a 17th-century pub situated in the pretty village of Appledore and overlooks the Torridge estuary, an excellent place to escape the crowds. The inn serves real ale and cider alongside an extensive food menu with local seafood specialities. It also offers a well priced quality 4* bed and breakfast accommodation in individually furnished rooms. I did not stay in The Seagate but in their new acquisition a mere 30 seconds down the road sits the contemporary styled 18 The Quay. This extension to The Seagate adds a further 7 rooms to the Seagate's 10 room offering.

The suite is generous in size with a king size bed, a sofa bed and still enough space to host a tea party. The bathroom is a mermaid fantasist's dream, a large power shower that you can lie down in and a bath worthy of a 2 hour soak. The best thing is the gorgeous night's slumber that awaits me on a mattress so comfortable I imagine I'm sinking into giant balls of cotton wool.

The next morning seagulls squawking over left over fish and chips in the litterbins lining the road rudely wake me. Opening the blinds and peering →



Above: Lounge area
in one of the rooms.
Right: Modern decor
and rustic wood
beams



through sash windows I can see the grey blue of the estuary; a deep breath of the sea air reminds me that breakfast really is the most important meal of the day. Second to the bed is the full English breakfast on offer alongside filled omelettes, scrambled eggs, salmon and grilled kippers. There is also fresh fruit, juices, pastries, yoghurt and cereals.

Having decided I was in no rush I sat in the bar and watched the world go by. This bar is relaxing and inviting, just perfect for rainy afternoons on the family sized sofas. Locally caught fresh fish makes up a big part of the Seagate menu which has a daily changing fish specials board.

Despite this being a pub there is a strong – although not extensive – wine list available for purchase by the bottle or the glass and following a glass of wine I step out in the sunshine after a wonderful nights rest with a spring in my step.

The Seagate Hotel

18 The Quay

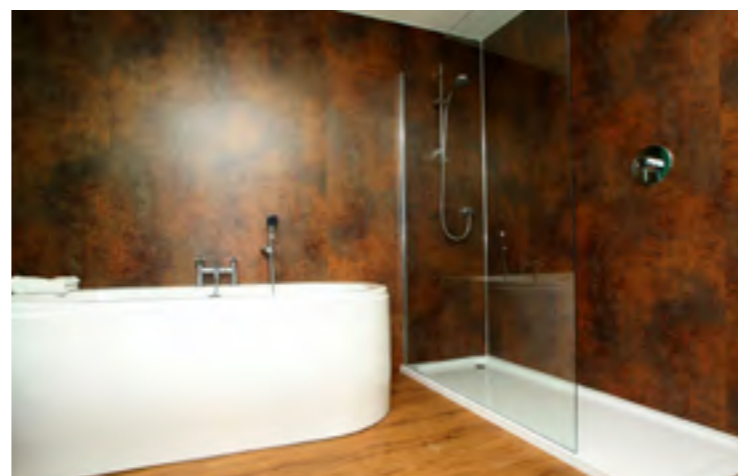
Appledore EX39 1QS

Tel + 44 (0)1237 472589

www.theseagate.co.uk



Above: Rooms with a view out to the Torridge estuary. Below left to right: Breakfast at Seagate. Deep soaker tubs and walkin showers. Twin vanities





SAUNTON SANDS HOTEL

Devon, United Kingdom

By TERESA BARNETT

SITTING PRETTY

With views of the Atlantic Ocean waves crashing on a sandy beach that seems to stretch for miles, the art deco building perched on the cliffs seems to have it all, **Teresa Barnett** takes a closer look



Main: Stunning views from the cliff top position. Left. Multicolored beach huts to rent. Right. Coffee with a view



There is something about Saunton Sands Hotel that reminds me of Titanic, the film starring Kate Winslet, not the ship itself.

This Art Deco design hotel slopes down to one of North Devon's best beaches, the 3.5-mile-long Saunton Sands. The adjacent Braunton Burrows is part of a UNESCO-designated biosphere reserve in the North Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Stunning sea views await and the hotel affords direct access to the beach.

Saunton Sands Hotel is perfect for nature, surf and food lovers. For the nature lover Braunton Burrows, the largest sand-dune system in England, is home to a large number of rare plants and animals but for those wanting a hedonistic time in the sun the facilities, include an indoor and outdoor pool, a health club, squash courts, a shop and most importantly a spa.

Throughout the summer this is a surfer's paradise, with the arrival of surf and music festivals, Gold Coast Oceanfest which is held at Croyde Bay. For the food lover Saunton Sands AA Roset restaurant under the direction of Head chef Mathias Oberg fresh from The Shard, features →

locally sourced delights such as fresh fish, Lundy lobster and pheasant breast with pearl barley and apple risotto.

I dined on the latter and with each morsel of meat you could almost taste the memory of the tree-scented forest from where it came. The staff are attentive despite the size of the hotel, and the number of guests and the dinner is further enhanced by the very good quality traditional English breakfast and the classic Devonshire afternoon tea in the newly refurbished art deco-style dining room.

CROSSHEAD

There is room for everyone at Saunton Sands from the weary solo traveller looking for a luxuriously peaceful place to rest, to the family trying to ensure peace by keeping their children occupied. Yet this is also the perfect place for the older more distinguished guest with spacious sea facing bedrooms and two of the best links golf courses in the UK just a 2-iron shot away. During the summer the hotel runs activities for children leaving parents to enjoy their well-deserved break.

If you're considering a holiday by the sea with a choice of activities, excellent facilities, championship golf and fine dining then Saunton Sands, has everything you could wish for. For nature and beach lovers you need to put this on your must stay list, just looking out of your hotel room window watching the sun set on that wonderful sandy beach, you can feel the stress washing away as it dips below the horizon.

Saunton Sands Hotel

Tel + 44 (0)1271 890212

www.sauntonsands.co.uk



Main: Saunton Sands perfect position.
Bottom left to right:
One of the many room options. Indoor pool.
The spa at Saunton Sands





ORESTONE MANOR

Devon, United Kingdom

By TERESA BARNETT

Travelling by car from London to Cornwall is nothing shy of exhausting, only the beautiful southwest countryside to compensate. To break the up the journey into a more manageable undertaking we have decided to stay at the Orestone Manor. The magnificent Georgian manor house hotel, – an award-winning hidden gem, run by husband and wife chefs, Neil and Catherine D’Allen – is nestled above the pretty South Devon coastal village of Maidencombe, just off the coast road between Teignmouth and Torquay.

The hotel’s history is impressive; Orestone Manor was the scene of Isambard Kingdom Brunel’s National Portrait Gallery painting, created by his brother-in-law, Sir John Calcott Horsley on the Orestone Manor lawn. In the 1850’s, Orestone played host to many Brunel/Horsley family gatherings that took place at the venue, candlelit dinners, music in the parlour, children’s games and perhaps croquet on the lawn. The most interesting fact I learned was that Orestone Manor was the birthplace of the Christmas Card, with Sir Horsley designing the card in 1843. Nowadays there are twenty in existence, one is in the V&A museum and the Royal Mail owns another. The cards fetch £20,000+ at auction.

The hotel has won accolades from luxury traveller’s bible, Condé Nast Johansens, double AA Rosettes for fine dining, as well as continual double gold-wins in the renowned Taste of the West hotel and restaurant awards (their 2017 win has just been awarded). They are also a constant winner of TripAdvisor’s Certificate of Excellence, listed in their Hall of Fame.

If this were not enough to tempt one to visit, the refurbishment of the new coach house suites, your own private hot tub, should tempt those on →

Above: Stunning views out to sea. Below: One of the beautifully appointed rooms.

A CHRISTMAS TALE

On a stop over from London to Cornwall

Teresa Barnett finds a hotel full of wonderful surprises, from hot tubs on the balcony, the first ever Christmas Card, stunning views and locally sourced mouth watering cuisine



the edge. The rooms have a modern décor, with an agreeable combination of wood, glass, white paint and crisp linens, but it's the balcony that has grabbed my attention with its hot tub and stunning view of the now orange tinged sparkling Atlantic Ocean as the sun starts to set.

The manor house is what you would expect with its stone nooks and fireplace, there is a terrace that looks out to those very same sea views and a couple of fantastic old oak trees that stand like sentinels in the garden. The incredible local farming offers the very best from meats such as South Devon beef, Exmoor lamb, local estate wild game, an array of vegetables that accompany dishes.

Orestone prides itself in offering a delectable separate vegetarian menu, or you can choose from their world famous sea food; Brixham Crab, hand-dived Torbay scallops and lobsters, Teign River Mussels and all the fish guests could want from the watery larder that sits on the doorstep.

I start with the Seared Torbay Scallops with crispy bacon, caramelised pearl onions and pea cream, followed by the Haunch steak of Exmoor red Venison with celeriac, pomme fondant, parsnip crisps and bramble berry jus, for desert I decide on the lemon tart with raspberry sorbet. When you realise all the food is sourced from within a 3-mile radius, you can just imagine the natural flavours this produces.

Morning has arrived and the hot tub is in full bubbling flow the sun is out and those views are amazing, it maybe 8am but I can think of no better way to start the day than with a glass of chilled wine in the hot tub.

I am not sure why everyone is sitting inside on such a beautiful morning as we arrive in the restaurant and we ask if we could have breakfast on the terrace, the staffs are extremely attentive without grating and within minutes we are gazing out at the sea. Breakfast is as well prepared and presented by the excellent kitchen staff.

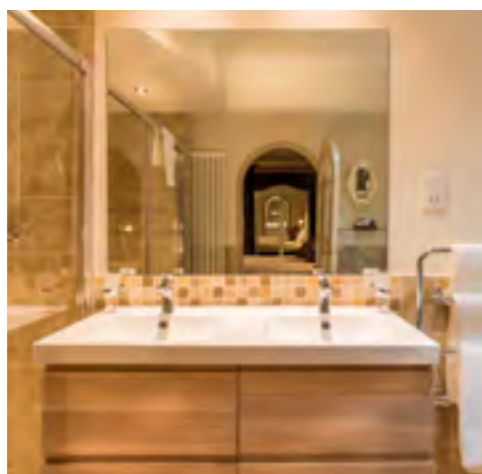
The Orestone Manor while being the perfect place to break the journey down to Cornwall, is also the perfect retreat to spend a few days and totally de stress from life.

Orestone Manor

Tel +44 (0) 1803 897511
www.orestonemanor.com



Above: View from the upstairs lounge in the coach house rooms



Left: Double vanity. Right: Orestone Manor bar. Second and far Right: The restaurant with one of the locally sourced dishes



36 MIZUNO CLK HYBRID



38 MIZUNO M18 IRONS



40 MIZUNO M18 WEDGES



EQUIPMENT

REVIEW



43 TAYLORMADE TP JUNO PUTTER

45 MIZUNO GOLF BAG BRD 45



VIEW.COM

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Mizuno update an historic golf club and James Mason puts it through its paces on some historic links courses.



TECHNOLOGY

Named after the original hybrid known as the Cleeck the CLK uses Mizuno's Wave Technology. This is the third generation of that system and you will see the first channel is a lot more aggressive than previous versions being wider and deeper - this helps enhance that trampoline effect

and works with the two other channels giving it an accordion type system which crushes on impact and then releases all that energy into the back of the ball.

The Wave Technology is married with the ultra thin 1770 steel face, this durable material gives faster ball speeds off the face →

while also offering a more stable club head and helps push the weight lower and forward for a lower spinning ball flight.

Normally Mizuno launch their hybrids as part of a family, but the concept behind this hybrid is to make it more of a stand-alone club sitting between your fairway woods and longer irons. The design gives you a high launching

ball but with a lower spin rate for added distance.

The Quick Switch system allows the four loft options – 16°, 19° 22° and 25° – to be adjusted up or down by 2° giving them a range from 14° to 27°, this means you could carry two hybrids and drop out your 3-wood, giving you a variety of options on par 5s and those longer par 4s, while keeping it as a utility club from the rough.

CONCLUSION

I loved the black finish and the way the club sat behind the ball. The design inspires confidence and I also enjoyed the amount of options this new hybrid offers to a variety of players.

For lower handicapped players you could carry two hybrids and drop your 3-wood. By taking the 16° version down to 14° you could then still carry

a 19° hybrid, this gives you options from the tee offering power and control and you have an added option from the fairway, semi rough and rough.

For higher handicapped players you can carry up to four hybrids helping you drop some of the harder to hit longer irons out of your bag and with the higher launch angle, lower spinning, more

penetrating ball flight that comes from the faster face, you not only gain control and consistency, but more power and distance, now that really is an added bonus.



Left: CLKs ultra thin face.
Bottom: The four loft options. Right: CLKs Wave technology sole



VIDEO REVIEW

Mizuno CLK Hybrid

LOFT 16.0°

SHAFT Fujikura Speeder 75

FLEX Stiff

SET UP -2°

RRP £245.00 / €299 / \$249.99

The forging masters from Japan have played a big part in reviewer James Mason's life from his early TP9s and 11s through to the MP5s. James takes the new MP18 SC – Split Cavity – for a test on some of the best links courses in the world

SPLIT PERSONALITY



TECHNOLOGY

Mizuno have mixed the playability of their muscle back MP 18 design with the forgiveness of a cavity using the grain flow forged higher density (HD) process and this is the process that gives the Mizuno irons that great feel and wonderful sound at impact.

A compact cavity back with a slightly wider, cambered

sole makes this a more playable iron than the muscle back for higher handicap players.

The MP-18 SC offers stability and workability, which is achieved in the forging process, pushing some of the weight out to the perimeters helps give the iron more forgiveness and stability while retaining that →

softness at impact.

The sole is a little wider than the muscle back again helping the higher handicapped player with turf interaction at impact. The irons progressively get more compact as you travel from the playing irons 3-6 to the scoring irons 7-PW, while still maintaining a nice thin topline and can be perfectly matched with the MP18 muscle back if you decide to have a split set.



Left: Mizuno's split cavity. Right: Bevelled sole and bounce



Right: Face and hosel view. Below: Toe and sole view



CONCLUSION

Playing six links courses certainly gives you a chance to play every type of golf shot, from flying a ball high so you can use the wind to gain more distance to playing into the teeth of a four-club wind using a punch type shot to keep the ball low and penetrating.

The MP18 SCs coped with everything thrown at them and what I enjoyed most is the crisp but soft feel at impact, the ball just feels so good off the face you can't help but smile as the sound of the ball fizzes away towards its target.

I was also impressed by the

way the blade of the club got smaller as you went through the set. Visually looking down on the 3-6 irons you felt there was plenty of blade and forgiveness and the scoring irons look so solid and compact which I felt gave me an air of confidence in my ball striking from around 160-yards in.

If you like an iron that inspires you to play, rewards your great shots but also allows some forgiveness from your longer irons, all while giving you that perfect feel and sound at impact, then I would suggest you put the MP18 SCs to the test.

VIDEO REVIEW

Mizuno MP-18 SC

SET UP -2°

SHAFT KBS Tour

FLEX Stiff

RRP £135 Per Iron / €175 Per Iron / \$1049.99 4 Iron-PW



ACCESS ALL AREAS

Can Mizuno's new moving COG technology on their S18 wedge system put you "In the zone"



The S18 Wedge system comes in a gunmetal black or satin finish

TECHNOLOGY

Because of the design and loft of your wedge you invariably hit the ball on different points of the face – basically the ball wouldn't hit the same spot on the face of your 45° pitching wedge as on your 60° lob wedge because of the angle of the club; this in turn affects the amount of spin you impart on the ball. Mizuno have designed the S18 wedges so the centre of gravity (COG) moves lower in the face as the loft of the club increases – you can see this by the thickness in the topline of the 50° wedge and the 60°; if you hold them together you will see the 60° wedge has a thicker topline than the 50°. →



By moving the COG Mizuno have helped you gain more control over your spin rates giving you more consistency. From that point you can then calculate how your ball is going to react when it hits the putting surface no matter what wedge you are using, this gives you more control of the ball.

Mizuno have also continued using Boron in the grain flow forging process to add strength to the face of the club – your wedges are the most used club in your bag and using normal soft steel would mean you would need to replace your wedges every year as your grooves would start to close up. By using the Boron metal in the forging process the wedges keep their soft feel at impact but give the face added strength, keeping your grooves sharp and consistent for longer. The S18 round teardrop design comes in two finishes, brushed satin and black gunmetal.

CONCLUSION

You may know a player at your club that can hit the ball as long as some of the pros on tour, what sets the tour players apart is how good their short games are and when they miss

a green they rarely make bogey. You will have heard golf commentators talking about “controlling spin” this is what Mizuno with their moving COG have done for you.

I liked the feel and consistency the S18s gave me, I tested the black gunmetal version and just love the look and the way the clubs sits behind the ball and testing them on links course and the various lies you can find around the greens on these courses the S18s certainly showed their adaptability.

The rounded face design allowed me to open up the face be it in a pot bunker or coming out of longer grass to a fast rolling green, with the club still sitting perfectly behind the ball.

By moving the COG Mizuno helped me control my spin irrespective of whether I used the 50° 54° or the 58° wedge giving me more consistency, there by giving me more control. All amateurs should be carrying at least three wedges in their bag and with twenty-nine different loft and lie combinations I would highly recommend you not only put these on your testing list, but talk to your pro to find the best combination for your golf game.

Right and right below
the brushed satin finish.
Below: Sole view. Bottom
Face view



VIDEO REVIEW

Mizuno S18

LOFT 50°, 54°, 58°

SHAFT True Temper Dynamic Gold

FLEX Wedge

RRP £140 / €165 / \$149.99

Irons to touch your soul

THE MP-18 SERIES. REFINED BY OUR YORO MASTER CRAFTSMEN.



#NOTHINGFEELSLIKEAMIZUNO

COLLECTORS ITEM

Tried and tested by some of the best golfers in the world the Juno putter from TaylorMade's TP Collection is the perfect blend of technology and feel

TECHNOLOGY

The Juno is a blade style putter with a pure roll that uses a 6061-aluminium face insert. As with all insert technology the idea is to get the ball rolling with top spin as quickly as possible and reduce skidding on impact – you would really have to slow down any video footage to see the skid of the ball on impact but believe me it's there and anything to reduce that will help get your ball rolling with topspin quicker.


TaylorMade have used a 303 →





Left: 6061-aluminium face insert. Below: The two 10g weights on the sole



VIDEO REVIEW 
TaylorMade TP Juno
LOFT 3.5°
TOE HANG 35°
LENGTH 34"
RRP £219 / €279 / \$219.99



Left: Tapered grip.
 Above: Juno classic putter head cover.
 Top right: Alignment aid at address

stainless steel in their cast process, the putter is then skim milled and given a tour satin finish. The design is crisp with no fuss compact contours.

At the address position you will see TaylorMade have used a single sightline alignment aid on the top line and the shaft moves slowly into you helping you get over the ball more easily. The Juno uses two 10g weights in the sole and these help aid in the putter's stability, it also features a slight toe hang and full shaft offset.

CONCLUSION

I really enjoyed the feel of this putter and it's no nonsense look at address just added to the clubs simplicity. I also like the way

the shaft works its way into you and helps you get over the ball – something that I needed to work on after my putting lesson with James Wood on the Quintic putting system (see issue 6).

I believe putters come down to individual choice and the way it feels in your hands, however if you really want to improve you need to get fitted and find the right style putter for you.

A putting lesson with your pro would be one way to find out, then get a fitting as the putter is the most important club in your bag. I would also recommend you put the Juno on your testing list, I really enjoyed everything about the design, the feel and the results the Juno gave me.

HE AIN'T HEAVY...

Most of us love to carry our clubs but there are times we need to use a buggy or electric trolley. We also want plenty of pockets for balls, phones, keys, waterproofs etc and dividers so we can organise our clubs. With that in mind James Mason takes Mizuno's new stand bag on a six course equipment test.

TECHNOLOGY

For those who enjoy carrying their golf bag the good news is that the new Mizuno BR-D4 only weighs 2.5kg and comes with 4-way full-length dividers for your clubs and double shoulder straps for easy carrying.

There are plenty of pockets with a magnetic pocket for your golf balls and tees, an insulated cooler pocket, two rain gear/apparel pockets on the right hand side, – one running nearly the length of the bag. Then there is another pocket below the magnetic pocket which I used for gloves, sunscreen, driver adjustment tool etc, another larger pocket on the left which has two slide in pockets for drink bottles, it also comes with a matching rain hood and umbrella holder.

For those who travel and play golf courses around the world that are golf buggy only, there is a special slot for the buggy's belt to slide through and secures the bag to the cart perfectly.

TESTED

Mizuno BR-D4
CARRY/STAND BAG
DIVIDERS 4

POCKETS 9

RRP £180 / €199 / \$219.99



CONCLUSION

Once I had filled the bag with my golf clubs, rain gear, balls, tools, tees, sunscreen, hats and half the kitchen sink, there was still plenty of pocket space left. I know some people hate the individual club dividers so for those of you who fall into that bracket you will love the 4-way full length golf club divider.

Apart from the amazing amounts of pockets I really enjoyed the

channel for the cart strap, this has always been a bit of a bugbear when you have to use a buggy but have a stand bag. The new channel lets the belt slip through and secures the bag to the buggy perfectly, while still giving you access to all your pockets.

The other plus was the pocket inside one of the two apparel pockets on the right, where you can put your phone, wallet and car keys.

It's little touches like that I found just made things easier so you don't spend ages searching through your bag once you have completed your round.

If you want a bag that you can carry as well as use on a cart, that offers so many pockets you will be wondering how you can fill them all and weighs only 2.5kg then this is the bag for you.

Right top to bottom:
Terrain matching
stability base.
Magnetic ball pocket.
Four way club divider





47 STOKE PARK GOLF COURSE



STAY, PLAY & SPA

REVIEW



VIEW.COM

STOKE PARK COUNTRY CLUB SPA & HOTEL

Buckinghamshire, United Kingdom

By JAMES MASON and STEPHANIE MASON

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

When entering the grounds of Stoke Park Country Club Spa and Hotel **James Mason** became an actor in his own James Bond movie whilst **Stephanie** was searching for mr.darcy.





Stoke Parks iconic bridge with the hotel as a backdrop

STOKE PARK GOLF COURSE

COLT NINE

Turning off the B416 into the Stoke Park estate and seeing the manicured lawns and as I drive past what turns out to be the 11th green with its fountain and ducks, I know I was going to be in for a great day’s golf.

It’s the first day of September and I couldn’t have picked a more perfect day to play Stoke Park, the sun is out and all that is missing is Goldfinger and Oddjob standing on the first tee – for those of you who don’t know, the golf scenes in the James Bond film Goldfinger were filmed here.

After checking in I’m sitting out on the vast grassed patio that over looks the 15th tee with a

much needed morning coffee in hand. I head to the well-stocked professional shop check in and head to the stunning practice ground which has a statue of Sir Edward Coke – he was a former owner of Stoke Park, and the first Lord Chief Justice of England, he prosecuted Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder plotters and coined the phrase ‘ an Englishman’s home is his castle’ – sitting in the middle of it.

Nick has informed me of the extensive bunker work that has taken place and standing on the first tee looking down the fairway I can see two glimmering examples sitting each side of the fairway waiting to capture any wayward drive. →

STOKE PARK SPA & HOTEL

Home to movie classics such as James bond, Layer cake, Rock and Rolla and my favorite - Bridget Jones, here’s hoping I’ll find my Mr. Darcy

I woke up this morning and I was unable to contain my excitement, today is the day I finally get to stay at Stoke Park Country club spa & hotel. As we turned onto the driveway leading to the hotel I was absolutely gobsmacked!!! It was like something out of a movie, well in this case it literally is.... Home to movie classics such as James bond, Layer cake, Rock and Rolla and my favorite - Bridget Jones, here’s hoping I’ll find my Mr. Darcy during my stay... one can only dream!

After having a latte on the grass terrace that overlooks part of the golf course, we are greeted by Nick who is the Hotel’s head of communications. Nick kindly took the time to show me round the hotel.

Stoke Park estate dates back over nine hundred years but it was the architect James Wyatt who worked on the mansion and monuments from 1790. The tour started off in the Mansion hotel and as we arrive in the beautifully designed conference room Nick informs me that this was the inspiration for the oval office in the White House. There is also a →

Beautiful gardens
to sit and relax





Thankfully I manage to plant my ball between the two in the middle of the fairway. There are four teeing options to choose from measuring 7,017-yards from the tips to 5,898-yards from the red tees and with a par 5 start – for those who have warmed up - you have a great chance at birdie or better for the longer hitters out there.

I hit my drive down the second fairway which slightly doglegs to the right, it's a beautiful little hole but don't be deceived it's a tough green to hold. The first of the par 3s comes next, the new sculptured bunkering on the right looks amazing, you will certainly want to miss those if you can.

A good drive at the par 5, 5th hole will give you a chance to go for the green in two, but the cross bunker just short of the green are visually deceiving but you do need a good second shot to clear them. I am informed by a member – who has just teed off on the 6th hole – “if →

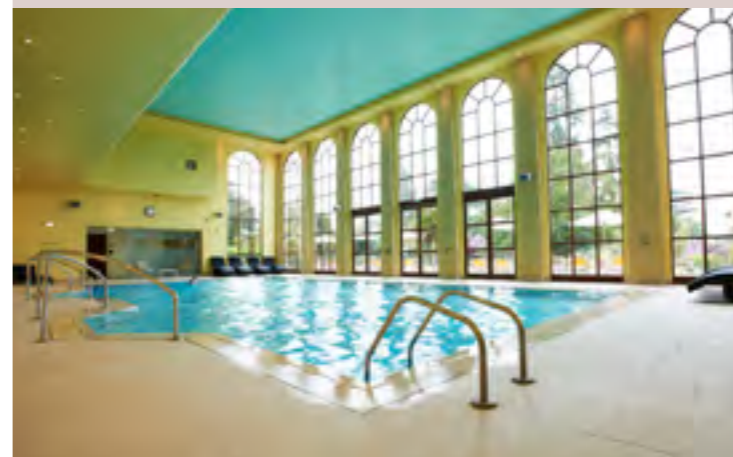
Top: Looking back down the 1st fairway to the hotel. Below: The 7th Dr. Alister MacKenzie inspiration for the 16th at Augusta National



“It’s a beautiful little hole but don’t be deceived it’s a tough green to hold.”



Top: The main stairs with its many chandeliers. Left: The indoor swimming pool



cozy bar with a fireplace, breakfast and restaurant room and Humphry's fine dining restaurant – which I will be eating in later on this evening – which is named after Humphry Repton who was commissioned to update Capability Browns landscaping.

We head over to the second hotel on this 300 acre ground which is named The Pavilion, while the mansion screams luxury from the fine art on the walls to the chandelier hanging over the large staircase, the pavilion has a modern twist on luxury with amazing pop art and contemporary interiors.

They have a gym, kids games room, swimming pools, tennis courts – where a pre Wimbledon tournament called →

you look through the trees you can see Windsor Castle” but with that much bramble and nettles in my way I’ve decided on health and safety grounds not to try and pursue that photographic opportunity.

The 7th is the courses signature hole and the second par 3 on the outward nine. The hole was also Dr Alister MacKenzie’s inspiration for the 16th at Augusta National. As I make my way onto the tee and look down at the green from this elevated position it really is a stunning hole, the sun is beaming down reflecting off the water that protects the green both short and right and I can see why the good Doctor would want to replicate this gem of a hole.

The 9th brings me back to the hotel, it is a fantastically designed building and so far the Harry Colt design is more than worthy of this wonderful setting.

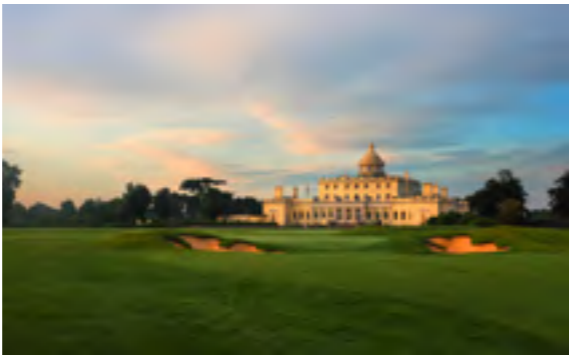
ALLISON NINE

Again, the new bunkering comes to the fore and really frames the 10th hole well. The first of the par 3s on the back nine comes at the 11th hole and I immediately recognise the fountain and ducks from when I drove onto the estate earlier and my first impressions has come to fruition.

I arrive at the 15th tee, the hole just below the grassed patio area where I enjoyed a coffee earlier and another great example of how the new bunkering frames the hole perfectly. Water features on the next two holes running down the left of the fairway at the 16th where you really need to be hitting it wildy to reach it on your tee shot, but it certainly comes into play for your second shot if you manage to get a bit of a hook on your ball. Water also protects the front of the green on the 17th and for the longer hitters I would suggest taking 3-wood, especially in the summer months when the ground is hard.

I reach the famous 18th hole, scene of the switched ball and lost match for Goldfinger. Fortunately the stakes are not that high for me, but after hitting the middle of the fairway with my drive and a wedge shot to 8-foot I have a nice uphill birdie putt. As I hole out and pick the ball out of the hole, I was hoping a slab of gold bullion would land next to the hole!

Unfortunately no such luck, my luck was playing this wonderfully designed Harry Colt course on a beautiful summers day, now it’s off to the bar for a martini, shaken of course! →



Top: 9th green with the hotel. Above: Sitting in the trees the 10th green. Below: Water protecting the par 3, 11th green



“The sun is beaming down reflecting off the water that protects the green both short and right and I can see why the good Doctor would want to replicate this gem of a hole”



Relaxing in the Sauna at Stoke Parks Spa

Boodles is played combining some of the world’s top tennis players and a English garden party – and a spa that I now have to head off to. After thanking Nick for his company and vast knowledge of the estate I am making my way to the spa reception for my Swedish massage, it’s a hard job but someone has to do it.

After jumping into a fluffy dressing gown and locking my goods away in what can only be described as a high tech locker that even James bond would have trouble getting into I head to the waiting room. They have specialty teas and magazines to keep you occupied whilst you wait. My masseuse comes to collect me and we head to the treatment room.

The mood is set with the relaxing soundtrack of a soft musical instrument – and not one peep from a whale, waterfall, sitar or animals from the amazon, perfect. The lighting is low and

I am ready to relax, after 55minutes of perfect pressure falling in and out of consciousness while my masseuse worked out the knots in my muscles from head to toe, I’ve never felt more relaxed and content, it’s a treatment I would highly recommend, especially after a long stressful week at work.

I decide to head up to my room to get ready for dinner, I actually haven’t seen my room yet so I’m excited to see where I’ll be resting my head this evening. As I open the door the first thing I notice is the huge comfy looking bed which I so want to climb into after my amazing massage but I have a dinner date to get to. I step into the bathroom which is very generous in space, it has a stand alone bath with clawed feet to the left of me and a shower to the right, in front is two huge mirrors, perfect for us ladies to do our make up. →

JACKSON LANE NINE

After a fantastic night at the Stoke Park hotel it's a another beautiful morning, I am sitting staring out of the enormous windows of the breakfast room, the sun is out and I have just finished my fresh fruit and eggs benedict and I am looking out to lake and the 15th tee down to the green. My heart is starting to beat a little faster as I start to think about getting out to play.

After checking in at the pro-shop I head down to the practice ground to warm up, I have plenty of time so I have a long session going through the bag and finish up hitting a few wedges before heading to the tee.

Pegging it up and looking down the fairway it looks quite tight with the trees funnelling my vision to the fairway that runs between them. I try to play a little draw but it hasn't turned over enough and I land in the right hand rough. It is only when I get to my ball and you see how the hole opens out to the green below do you appreciate the beauty of the nine you are about to play.

It's the second hole that has got my attention with its tee shot over water and then runs the length of the hole. After a wedge and holed putt I make my way to the tee and look across the water to the fairway and then the iconic bridge that has appeared in many a movie. It's at that moment I realise that this is going to be aesthetically the best nine holes on the course.

The 3rd hole a 168-yard par 3 across water →



Two sides of the iconic bridge. Top: The par 4, 2nd green. Below: The par 3, 3rd green looking back

“It’s the second hole that has got my attention with its tee shot over water and then runs the length of the hole”



Above: Outdoor hot tub. Below: The Spa's attrium



HUMPHRY’S RESTAURANT

After ordering a passion fruit martini in the bar and browsing through the menu James and I are escorted to Humphry's. You have a choice of eating from the A la Carte menu or the tasting menu but no matter which option you choose you really are spoilt for choice.

We decided to go for the a la carte menu, I started off with the Pan-fried Scallops with Mango, Smoked Eel Croquet and Bonito Flakes it was absolutely exquisite and just when I thought that couldn't be topped here comes the Fillet of Brookfield Farm Beef that I ordered for my main...OMG my mouth literally started watering just looking at it. By far one of, if not the best steaks I've ever tasted, it was cooked to perfection and oozed flavors and it came accompanied with Truffle Potato Terrine, Sherry Glazed Onions, Watercress Purée and Red Wine Jus that really complemented the steak.

Then for the finale I had Crème Caramel with Caramelised Apple, Dehydrated Sponge and Granny Smith Sorbet. It was delicious and the perfect end to the most delicious meal, hats →



– depending on what teeing option you choose, there are three teeing options – played from an elevated tee again with that iconic bridge in full view just cements those thoughts.

If you are not playing from the white tees I would make time to take a look from that teeing option, it's all risk and reward playing over the lake giving you the option of how much of the fairway you want to cut off. What I am enjoying about this nine is the main hotel with its architectural beauty is nearly always in view and the way the course sits in the land.

This nine has a very tough finish, you need to get a decent drive away to get a look at the green on the par 5, 8th hole, which would then give you a good chance at birdie or even eagle. Standing on the 9th tee I am looking out to

the fairway and the two tall trees sitting like sentinels guarding the green baize. I decide on a fade from the tee but end up cutting it into the rough on the right, but I do have a shot in and the good news is the trees are behind me.

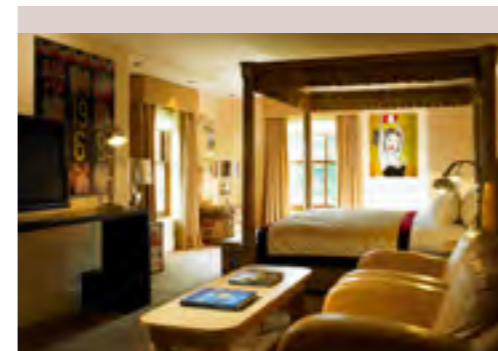
The green has a backdrop of the hotel and it really is a wonderful setting, unfortunately I miss my birdie putt, it would have been a nice way to end not only a beautiful morning but also a fantastic couple of day's golf and wonderful stay in a beautiful hotel.

For those looking for a weekend getaway, or visiting golfers to this country with Heathrow airport just down the road, it's a perfect start or end to your stay here, all with the added bonus of knowing you've walked in the footsteps of James Bond.



Top: 8th hole on the Jackson course and the estates 26th.
Left: Jackson's 9th hole and a wonderful finish to the 27 holes

"As I wake up after a wonderful night's sleep I take a moment and soak in the rich interior of the room"



Above: The rich interior of one of the rooms.
Below: Humphry's restaurant

off to Chris Wheeler, executive chef, and the other chefs and his staff, it was really an amazing meal and wonderful service.

After dinner we decide to head back to the bar, I wanted to try something new so I went for a grapefruit martini which is a must if you like sweet cocktails with a kick. After a bottle of house red wine with our meal and two cocktails it was definitely time for bed.

As I wake up after a wonderful night's sleep I take a moment and soak in the rich interior of the room, I then make myself a coffee that is provided in all the rooms and go and sit on the balcony. The view is stunning and helped by the beaming sunrise, as I sit here taking in the beauty of these 300 acres, it will be sad to leave but I will definitely be coming back with the girls!!

Stoke Park Country Club, Spa & Hotel
T: +00 (0) 1753 717 171
W: stokepark.com



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VIEW.COM

Winter Warmers

JUST BECAUSE IT'S WINTER DOESN'T MEAN WE CAN'T STILL LOOK GOOD WHEN WE TEE IT UP, WE TEST OSCAR JACOBSON'S NEW AUTUMN AND WINTER COLLECTION



CALEB WINDPROOF VEST

This lightweight 100% Polyester sleeveless design incorporates Primaloft padding for comfort and unrestricted movement.

The windproof vest is part of Oscar Jacobson's ZIP IN technology, which allows different garments to be combined to give differing levels of insulation and weather protection.

LAURENT TROUSERS

The Laurent trousers are a slim fit modern design with stretch material and waistband with four pockets – two at the front and two at the back. The trousers have fitted belt loops and are designed to give golfers maximum comfort and performance to help promote natural movement during your golf swing. →



**CALEB
WINDPROOF VEST**
£110 €150 \$109

**LAURENT
TROUSERS**
£75 €100 \$74.99

HERON PIN HALF-ZIP

The lightweight half-zip offers playability and comfort using 12gg Cashwool extra fine Merino wool – gg refers to the number of stitches per inch – and comes with elasticised cuffs and hem.

ARNOLD TOUR JACKET

Manufactured from 100% Polyester the full stretch outer fabric with elasticised sleeves and hem offers shower/wind proofing and all round weather protection, featuring two front pockets that are fully zipped and incorporates a knitted jersey lining that adds warmth and comfort

HUBERT TOUR POLO

For added warmth from the cold the Hubert Tour is a long sleeved functional polo shirt that gives you a comfortable body temperature during your round.

ROCK THEMAL HALF-ZIP

A new addition to the Oscar Jacobson range and made from 92% Polyester/8% Elastane the half zip features thermal properties helping to keep you warm and comfortable during your round.

POCK TOUR HALF-ZIP

Another new addition is the Pock Tour half zip crafted from 100% Polyester featuring a contrasting block panel on the chest. It's a lightweight, durable garment, ideal for use in cooler temperatures.



HERON PIN HALF ZIP
£95 €140 \$94.99



ARNOLD TOUR JACKET
£100 €150 \$99.99



HUBERT TOUR POLO
£55 €80 \$54.99



ROCK THEMAL HALF ZIP
£60 €85 \$94.99



POCK TOUR HALF ZIP
£75 €120 \$74.99

SPARK TOUR POLO

A long sleeved performance golf shirt in a lightweight knit fabric that offers a moisture management technology which actively wickers moisture away from the body, keeping you fresh and dry on the course.



SPARK TOUR POLO
£65 €95 \$64.99

CONCLUSION

Oscar Jacobson use their Weather Protection System (WPS) throughout their range of apparel and this layering system works to protect you from all the elements mother nature can throw at you. Combining base layers, with mid and outer layers.
The colour palette Oscar Jacobson have used is aesthetically pleasing, the blend of blacks, blues, dark greens and browns

marry well together, letting you mix and match to produce several combinations but also enabling you to go straight from the course to a meeting or restaurant.
All the fabrics used not only give you plenty of protection from the elements but also are lightweight and stretchable working with your golf swing and making this apparel range the ideal purchase or gift.



OSCAR
JACOBSON

OSCARJACOBSON.COM

Elementary

BEING BY THE SEA THE WEATHER ON LINKS COURSES CAN CHANGE RAPIDLY, WHAT BETTER PLACE TO TEST PROQUIPS NEW RANGE OF CLOTHING INCORPORATING NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND MATERIALS



**STORMFORCE PX5
JACKET**
£175 €199 \$230

**STORMFORCE PX5
TROUSERS**
£120 €136 \$158

STORMFORCE PX5

This is one of ProQuips most technologically advanced rain suits and comes with a lifetime waterproof guarantee. It features an ultra-lightweight four-way stretchable material with a fine mesh lining for added comfort. The material also offers advanced breathability and ProQuips swing silent technology to limit noise.

The suit features cushioned collars and ProQuips VISLON waterproof zips, side adjustable tabs, Velcro cuffs, front and chest pockets that have waterproof protection, along with a concealed inner pocket. →



PROQUIP PERFORMANCE BASE LAYERS

The base layer acts like a second skin and helps draw moisture away from the body, which aids in regulating your skin temperature. The base layer also compresses your body muscle which in turn helps your blood flow to alleviate muscle fatigue as you get to the later stages of your round.

TOURFLEX CYCLONE PLAYING TOP

This lightweight soft shell outer layer half zip jacket comes in an engineered four-way stretchable fabric, which is windproof and water repellent. It also uses a moisture wicking technology that helps regulate your body temperature and is infused with bamboo fibres to help naturalise odours and bacteria.

The jacket uses swing silent technology, the TourFlex Cyclone material is crease resistant and comes with two pockets that use ProQuips water resistant VISLON zip technology.



TOURFLEX CYCLONE PLAYING TOP
£89 €100 \$150



PROQUIP PERFORMANCE BASE LAYER
£34.99 €39.99 \$70



PROQUIP MITTENS

The mittens use a soft lightweight outer fabric that protects against wind, rain and cold, while the triple wadding helps keep your hands warm and comfortable. There is also an adjustable wristband that helps give you the best fit possible.

£24 €30 \$30



PROQUIP MERINO WOOL WATER REPELLENT BEANIE

Treated with a water repellent finish that is reactivated whenever it is washed, the ProQuip Beanie uses Italian Merino Wool that is breathable, allowing perspiration to escape and has natural anti-odour properties.

Merino wool is a fine, soft fibre and has unique properties that make it perfect for playing in cold weather, while still feeling soft against your skin.

£24 €30 \$30

CONCLUSION

Playing links golf can throw up all sorts of weather conditions in a four hour period, to be honest all courses anywhere in the world can go through several weather conditions in a four hour period in winter and being prepared is your best form of defence, not only to protect you from the elements but so you can continue to enjoy your round.

Being prepared is the name of the game and with weather apps you can, to a point predict your day. A full weather suit is a must, but some days you won't need to carry it. I like to wear the waterproof trousers as they also protect me from the wind and cold. Wearing a base layer and a wind/rain resistant half zip instead of a jumper is I feel the way to go.

The ProQuip apparel I tested over six

links courses in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset stood up to every type of element the weather could throw at them and with constantly putting garments on and taking them off at this time of year the crease resistant material was a godsend.

I must admit some beanies make my forehead itch, but that wasn't the case with the Merino wool beanie and with the mittens fitting perfectly over my playing glove meant my hands as well as my body were nice and toasty, all helping my concentration when I got to my golf ball and working with the different outfits I tested I was able to swing without any restrictions and enjoy my day at the office even if mother nature wasn't enjoying hers.

PLAY

ProQuip - the lightest, quietest, softest...




MORE

playable weatherwear...

GOLF

on course today.

For more on weather beating golf wear and to
find your nearest retailer, visit www.proquipgolf.com

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TECHNOLOGY

Mizuno are renowned for their running shoes, so it is no surprise that they asked their design team to come up with a golf shoe that was lightweight, comfortable and could provide stability to a golfer swinging a club at speeds over 100mph.

The design team outdid themselves coming back with is a shoe that weighs a mere 275 grams and uses Mizuno's patented WAVE platform and corrugated sole plate that gives you long lasting cushioning, stability and helps reduce foot fatigue.

The Sofrina SK upper is used to reduce the total weight of the shoe, whilst remaining breathable and feels like natural leather. The shoe is also waterproof tested to 20,000mm.

The sole utilises an impact grip system to ensure stability throughout your golf swing, giving you that solid base to work from.

CONCLUSION

Sitting in the Clubhouse at Saunton GC I tweeted that the Mizuno NXTLITE was the most comfortable shoe I have ever worn straight out of the box. I played 18-holes at St Enodoc GC the day before where I had picked up the shoes that morning. The next day I played 18-holes at Royal North Devon GC, jumped in the car still wearing them and drove to Saunton GC and then played the East Course.

At no time did my feet feel tired, there were no blisters and they felt as comfortable as my adidas trainers as I drove the car between courses, I do not think I could provide you any better example of how good these golf shoes are than that.

RRP £89 / €99 / \$117.50

NO LIGHTWEIGHTS

WHEN YOU CAN TAKE A PAIR OF BRAND NEW GOLF SHOES STRAIGHT FROM THE BOX PLAY 18-HOLES, JUMP IN THE CAR WITHOUT CHANGING SHOES, DRIVE FOR 30-MINS THEN PLAY ANOTHER 18-HOLES AND NOT A BLISTER IN SIGHT, THEN WE THINK YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THEM



Left and above: The Mizuno shoe comes in Black / Silver, Blue / Black, Red / Black, White / Blue

Solid Investment

QUALITY DOESN'T ALWAYS COME AT A PRICE, JAMES MASON TESTS STUBURT'S NEW SPIKELESS GOLF SHOE

STUBURT
RRP £64.99 / €84.95 / \$85.99

TECHNOLOGY

The Vapour eVent spikeless shoes uses Stuburts lightweight EVA foam midsole combined with the microfiber upper both giving you comfort and cushioning throughout your round

The eVent technology utilises a waterproof technology protecting you from everything the elements can throw at you; this works with the spikeless rubber outsole, with the traction module design offering grip and stability.

CONCLUSION

I have tested several of the Stuburt range of golf shoes over the last couple of years and not once have they let me down on comfort, stability or the ability to keep my feet dry when it is pouring with rain or on early morning due soaked fairways.

I like the design of the shoes, which always come in several colour options, but where Stuburt always win is their price point. If you want a good quality golf shoe that offers all of the above at a great price, then make sure you put a pair of the Vapour eVent spikeless on your feet and you will instantly know what I am talking about.



Right: The traction module sole design. Above and left: Various colour options



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