

## ARGENTINA

The colours and people from this wonderful part of the world

## ENGLAND

Where to play and stay when The Open comes back to Kent in 2020

## ITALY

A tour through the beautiful regions of Veneto and Venice

## STAY, PLAY & SPA

Weekend or Short Stay getaway? We bring you Hotel & Spa reviews from England, Germany & Spain

PLANET GOLF

# REVIEW

ISSUE 13

# VIEW.COM

**EQUIPMENT &  
APPAREL REVIEWS**

Mizuno  
Odyssey

**THE OPEN**

Review & Betting  
Guide



# WELCOME

As I write this I know many of you will already be soaking up the sun on a beach somewhere; discovering a new destination after reading one of our past features, or playing a new golf course. In fact I know a number of you have already taken weekend breaks after reading our play, stay and spa section by the countless emails that I have received.

In this issue we transport you to Argentina through Peter's camera lens, Jane going off the beaten track in Italy and with The Open a year from returning to Kent Kuku and I bring you a comprehensive where to play and stay feature from the Garden of England. While Bernadette, Charmaine and Stephanie bring you three destinations in our play stay and spa section from England, Germany and Spain.

With the new golf calendar, The Open is now the last Major Championship of the year and we bring you our world-renowned review and betting guide. Last but not least we bring you equipment reviews from Mizuno with their new JPX 919 Hot Metal Pro Irons and ST190 Driver and Fairway woods, Odyssey Stroke Lab Tuttle putter and in the apparel section Mizuno's Wave Cadence GTX Golf Shoes.

Whether you are biking, driving, walking, playing golf, laying on a beach/next to a pool, or relaxing in a spa, I wish each of you great memories, fantastic new experiences and of course a nice hot summer to enjoy it all.

## MEET THE TEAM

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# EDITORIAL

# REVIEW



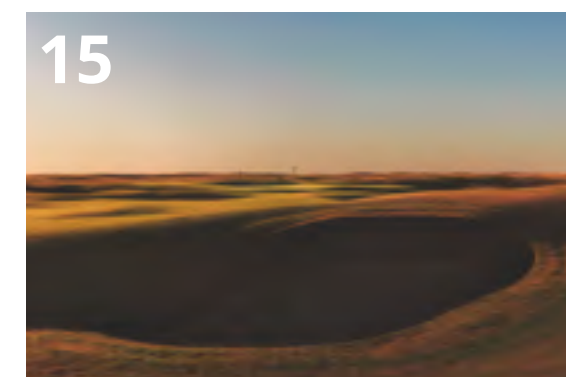
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# REVIEW



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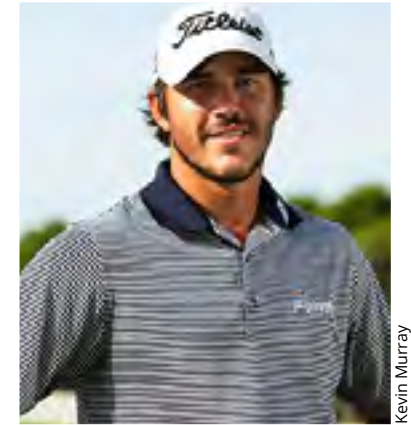


# WILL IRISH EYES BE SMILING

With Northern Ireland holding its first Open Championship since 1951, there's lots of excitement and anticipation going into this week and the last Major of the year. Here are our tips to help add that extra bit of tension, come Sunday afternoon on the back nine.

## BROOKS KOEPKA

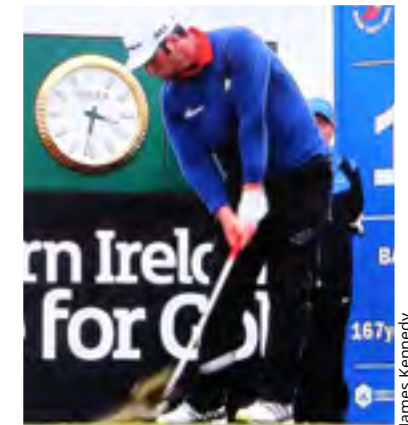
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Kevin Murray

## JON RAHM

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James Kennedy

## XANDER SCHAUFFELE

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TaylorMade

The final major of the year is upon us and I personally feel that the oldest major of them all is a fitting finale. I played Royal Portrush back in May this year and it is in wonderful condition and I am sure the 148th edition of this wonderful championship is going to be one of the best yet.

When I was there you could feel the excitement in the air and that was two months before the players arrived. There are some great new editions to the course that have been woven into the original Harry Colt design for the championship and overseen by golf architect Martin Ebert of Mackenzie and Ebert.

All together there are five new greens, eight new tee boxes, 10 new bunkers and two new holes, being the 7th and 8th on land which was



## HENRIK STENSON

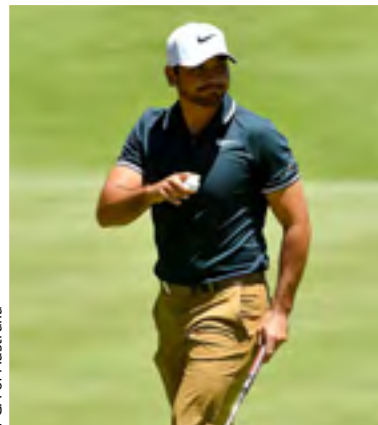
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Volvo China Open/Paul Lakatos/Volvo Event Management

## JASON DAY

35|1



PGA of Australia

## IAN POULTER

70|1



PGA of Australia

once part of the Valley course.

For me the par 4, 17th hole will prove pivotal, my playing partner and myself nearly drove the green from the white tees which measure 426-yards and while the championship tees will measure 473-yards it doesn't play that length as the hole is downhill. There will be a lot of players in the field – depending on the weather of course – who could drive this hole if its dry and still even from the tips. Can you image a player two shots behind holing a tee shot on the 17th on the final day!

### TIPS TO WIN

After just missing out on defending his US Open title to make it three wins in a row, **Brooks Koepka 10/1 – with SportingBet** – will be looking to add to his Major Championship trophy cabinet this week. It's quite a record Brooks has in the Majors over the last couple of years and to defend his PGA Championship title and have runner-up finishes at both the Masters and the US Open this year, he will be the man to beat this week.

With two wins in three years at the Irish Open **Jon Rahm 16/1 – with SportingBet** – will certainly come into this week in buoyant move

after his latest win and his bond with the Irish fans is becoming very special. A final round of 62 see Jon storm up the leaderboard eight-places and coming on the back of his third-place at the US Open I feel he is ready to become the next Spaniard to win a Major Championship.

Like most golf writers I have felt it wouldn't be long before **Xander Schauffele 28/1 – with UniBet** – challenged for a Major Championship and I feel Royal Portrush sets up nicely for the Californian. I am sure Xander will be looking forward to this week after finishing runner-up last year at Carnoustie and with his runner-up finish at the Masters and a third-place at the US Open he will be looking forward this week.

### EACH-WAY TIPS

It seems **Henrik Stenson 30/1 – with Ladbrokes** – is coming into form just at the right time. Henrik opened up with two rounds of 65 at the Scottish Open and finished off with a final round 66 to move into the Top 5. It has been a tough year for the Swede but with Top 10 finishes at both the US and Canadian Opens Stenson is bang in form coming to Royal Portrush.

This pick was between two Aussies but with

Steve Williams on his bag I feel **Jason Day 35/1 – with BetVictor** – will be looking forward to this week and according to reports Williams has already had an input into Jason's practice routine. Day has finished inside the Top 25 in all the Majors so far this year, with his best finish being a Top 5 at The Masters, but he will be looking to be in one of those final pairings come Sunday.

### MY OUTSIDE TIP

Could this finally be the time **Ian Poulter 66/1 – with SportingBet** – takes that step up and win a Major? His game is in great shape and we all know he can hole putts under pressure when it comes to the Ryder Cup but can he take that positive energy into a final round of a Major Championship, I think we are about to find out come Sunday afternoon.

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

As always good luck and have fun!

Right: Risk and reward at the driveable par 4, 5th hole at Royal Portrush



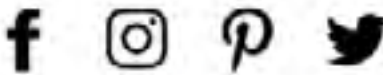
## LATEST FIRST ROUND BETTING ODDS FOR THE OPEN FROM LADBROKES

- Dustin Johnson 5/1
- Jordan Spieth 7/1
- Rory McIlroy 7/1
- Jason Day 16/1
- Hideki Matsuyama 16/1
- Rickie Fowler 20/1
- Jon Rahm 20/1
- Adam Scott 25/1
- Justin Rose 25/1
- Phil Mickelson 25/1
- Henrik Stenson 25/1
- Justin Thomas 33/1
- Bubba Watson 40/1
- Paul Casey 40/1
- Sergio Garcia 40/1
- Louis Oosthuizen 50/1
- Brandt Snedeker 50/1
- Tyrrell Hatton 50/1
- Charl Schwartzel 66/1
- Patrick Reed 66/1
- Brooks Koepka 66/1
- Matt Kuchar 66/1
- Matthew Fitzpatrick 66/1
- Marc Leishman 66/1
- Thomas Pieters 66/1
- Tommy Fleetwood 66/1
- Jimmy Walker 80/1
- Lee Westwood 80/1
- Daniel Berger 80/1
- Alex Noren 80/1
- Gary Woodland 80/1
- Adam Hadwin 80/1
- Russell Henley 80/1
- Danny Willett 100/1
- Branden Grace 100/1
- Zach Johnson 100/1
- JB Holmes 100/1
- Kevin Kisner 100/1
- Shane Lowry 125/1
- Bill Haas 125/1
- Rafael Cabrera-Bello 125/1
- Byeong-Hun An 125/1
- Emiliano Grillo 125/1
- Ross Fisher 125/1
- Jim Furyk 150/1
- Andy Sullivan 150/1
- Jason Dufner 150/1
- Charley Hoffman 150/1

[More](#)

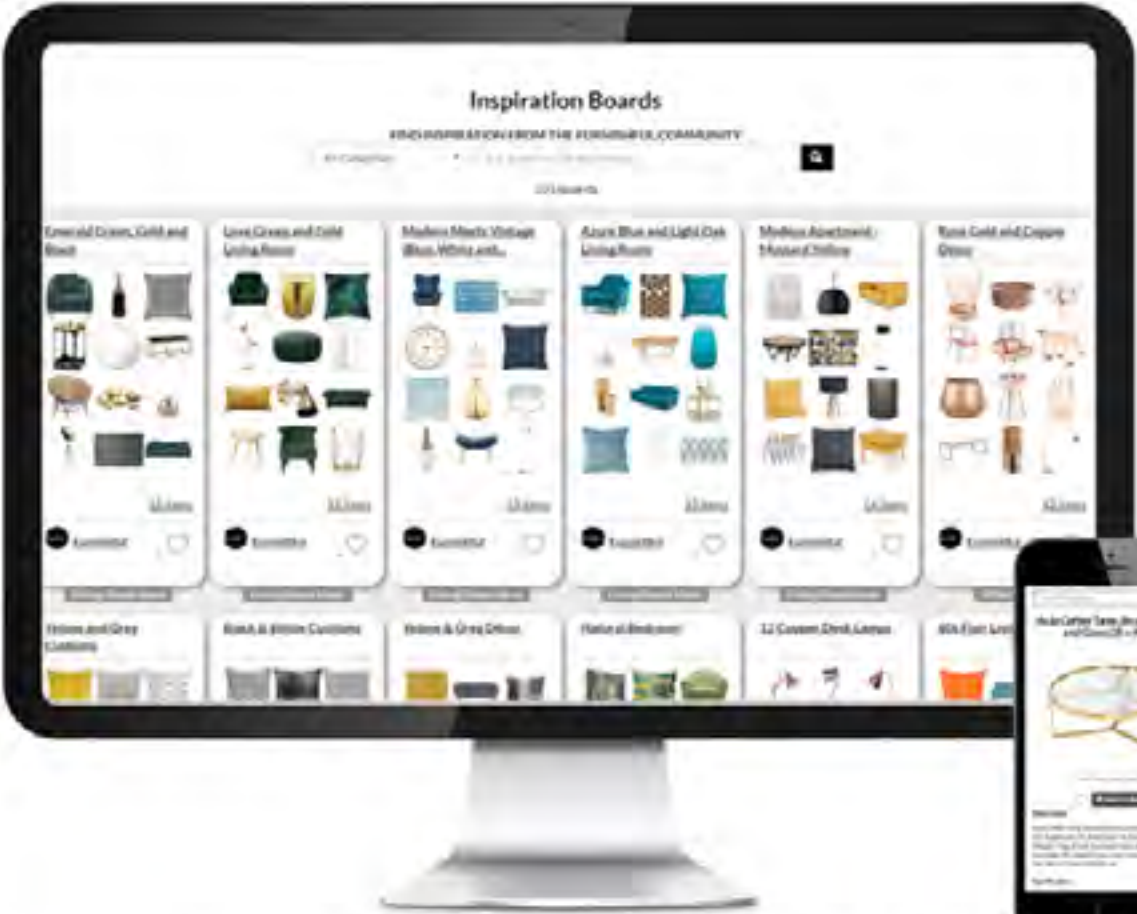


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# IMPRESSIONS FROM ARGENTINA



Left: Eva Peron's tomb in Recoleta Cemetery, Buenos Aires  
Below: The colourful Casa Rosada, Plaza de Mayo, Buenos Aires



Left: Plaza de Mayo, Buenos Aires



Left and right: Caminito street museum in La Boca, Buenos Aires



Left: Tango sign, La Boca, Buenos Aires



Below: Dusk over the Andes,  
Tupungato Winelands  
Right: Wine glass in the sun, Veyrat  
Winery, Cafayate



Above: View of  
Salta from Mount  
San Bernardo  
summit  
Right: Route of  
the Seven Lakes in  
Patagonia



Above: Chili peppers drying in the  
desert sun near Cafayate



Left: Veyrat Winery,  
Cafayate

# IMPRESSIONS FROM ARGENTINA



Right: Tango in the streets, La Boca, Buenos Aires  
Far right: Drinking Malbec at Tupungato Winelands as the sun sets over the Andes



Right: Vinoteca La Escalera wine shop, Cafayate  
Below: Polo players near Mendoza



Above: Street life, Paseo del Tilo, Recoleta, Buenos Aires  
Right: Busker in the desert near Cafayate



Above: Processing grapes at Renacer winery, Mendoza  
Right: Veyrat Winery, Cafayate, Argentina



# IMPRESSIONS FROM ARGENTINA

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



# The many faces of Veneto & Venice

Jane Finn discovers the cities behind the masks





Despite the fact that I studied art history at university, after Rome and Florence, we were on historical and cultural ‘overload.’ We knew that like fine wine and great food, we needed a break to experience ‘la dolce vita’ and not rush our Venice expedition. Firmly believing that the charm of the Veneto community extended well beyond the lagoon, we grabbed a rental car at the Maestro station and headed for the countryside before venturing to Venezia, reportedly the most visited city in the world.

Travelling by car was much easier than I expected since Italians drive on the same side of the road as North Americans and the GPS system made navigating a cinch (well almost!). Gradually the urban landscape gave way to the rolling hills of the Vicenza valley, and 65 km later we were in the heart of the Grappa Mountains and Valdobbiadene wine country. With little effort we soon found ourselves meandering along the Prosecco Road, popping into small local vineyards to sample the region’s specialty before checking in at the Asolo Golf Resort. As we headed to our guesthouse, we couldn’t help but notice the lushness of the golf course on one side of the winding drive and the orderly rows of grapes on the other – ‘nine and wine’ in total harmony. It was at that moment that our decision to temporarily escape the hustle and bustle of the big cities was the right choice.

Morning came, and we awoke to a stunning sunrise that filled the room with light. Relaxed and rested we were off to explore the walled,

medieval town of Asolo nestled on the hillside in the shadow of the snow-capped Dolomites. An easy 15 minutes from the resort, the car seemed to find its way automatically to Piazza Garibaldi – the town’s main square and free parking. ‘Asolare’ means to pass the time leisurely and the best way to do that is on foot.

Patronised by poets, writers and artists such as Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett, Ernest Hemingway and John Malkovich, Asolo has been dubbed ‘The City of a Hundred Horizons’ and for good reason. A warren of ancient alleyways led us past porticoed walkways, palaces framed by Gothic arcades, mullioned and trefoil windows, ornate balconies laden with flowers and Palladian villas decorated with frescoes that date back to the 15th century. The city’s centre is indeed compact, and the Duomo, Queen’s Palace, Museum, the Bot (an old Roman aqueduct), and Duse Theatre are all within striking distance of the piazza but be sure to give yourself enough time to hike up to La Rocca, the massive fortress that dominates the skyline.

Several well-manicured paths connect the fortress of Asolo to the sanctuary of the Madonna. One of my favourites will lead you to the Chiesetta di San Giorgio where you can enjoy a bit of solitude in a natural setting. The little chapel sits high atop a hill, and its white façade vividly contrasts with the blue sky and verdant green of the sweeping plain that extends from Venice to the Euganean Hills. On a clear day, it is possible to see all the way to the Venetian →



Left: Everyday, these life-long friends connect on the same bench and share their stories with passersby. Below: One of the many hidden spaces we discovered during a walking tour of the fortress walls that surround Asolo.

Below: The Dolomite Mountains provide a stunning background to the Foresteria guesthouses at the Asolo Golf Resort



*Morning came, and we awoke to a stunning sunrise that filled the room with light. Relaxed and rested we were off to explore the walled, medieval town of Asolo*





Right: Vendors display their wares and vie for your business at the popular downtown street market. Far right: Alpine architecture in Asiago



Below: Having winged his way from the summit a paraglider approaches the landing site at the base of Monte Grappa.



“it’s the journey, not the destination”? This is absolutely true when you set out without a preconceived notion of what you will experience and fully engage all your senses.

Our first surprise was Bassano del Grappa, affectionately known as the gateway to the Alps. It was festival time, and as we made our way around the three main squares brimming with people preparing to welcome visitors, we couldn’t help but remark that this had to be the prettiest towns in the Veneto region. No doubt about it, the architecture was amazing, and the quaint shops and cafes beckoned but the view crossing the Brenta River was so stunning and unexpected that it literally took our breath away. In unison, we both exclaimed ‘stop the car’ and jumped out to snap more than a picture or two before grabbing double-scoop gelatos and settling in to really absorb the beauty of the historic wooden bridge and the ambience of this charming and vibrant town.

Heading towards the mountains, we noticed that the sky was filled with what appeared to be a flock of very large, colourful birds. On closer inspection, we realized that these were paragliders winging their way home from the mountaintop. Without hesitation, we made a course correction and found the landing site. For the next hour time stood still as we watched in awe and amazement as unlike Icarus, one by one they safely returned to earth. Note to self, on our next trip I would definitely book a tandem flight so I too can soar like an eagle!

Onwards and upwards, the road via Conco →

Left: A table on the covered terrace at Due Mori’s provides a front row seat to experience the sunset

Below: The Bridge of the Alpini dates back to 1569 and was lovingly restored in 1946 following WWII.

*Our first surprise was Bassano del Grappa, affectionately known as the gateway to the Alps. It was festival time, and as we made our way around the three main squares brimming with people preparing to welcome visitors*

lagoon and the walk is certainly worth the effort!

### WINE AND DINE

Having worked up an appetite, it was time to indulge in some culinary delights, and we soon found ourselves ensconced at a romantic table for two on the covered terrace at the Ristorante Due Mori. While watching the sunset, we sampled the agnolotti alle erbe spontanee (pasta filled with herbs) which was divine and feasted on grilled chicken, the house specialty cooked over a traditional open flame. As we sipped a glass of Due Mori’s excellent and exceptionally well-priced house wine, we agreed that from dusk to dawn, we had enjoyed every moment, far from the madding crowd.

The next morning as the sun peeked out from over the ridge to illuminate the mist that had settled in the valley around the Foresteria,

I caught up on emails and planned what’s next! Many of our adventures start with me proclaiming “it’s only this far on the map” and today’s excursion was no exception. The name Asiago jumped out at me from the map, and after consulting the guidebook, I learned that it was indeed the home of the world-famous cheese as well as a naturalist’s and sports enthusiast’s paradise. If after the peacefulness of Asolo, you find yourself in need of an adrenaline rush, Asiago definitely fills the bill. Here you can leap from the bridge at Val Gardena to conquer Europe’s highest bungee jump, hidrobob, paraglide or ski in winter. The less intrepid can also opt to sit back and sip rich, red Amarone while watching the action. Decision made and we were off before lunch to explore the unknown.

Are you familiar with the expression,





was a steep, a winding section of switchbacks that kept the driver's eye on the road but provided the passenger with panoramic views from all directions. We were starting to wonder how much further it was to Asiago when suddenly the road levelled off and we found ourselves on a plateau dotted with 'malagas' or sheppard huts. Immediately we were struck by the strong Austrian/German influence that dramatically contrasted with anything that we had seen so far on our Italian tour.

The weekly market was in full swing, and we quickly joined in with the locals in the search for the freshest and finest products of the region, in addition to a bargain or two. As we meandered from stall to stall, the vendors were more than patient with my halting Italian and were delighted to help us select fresh and aged cheeses, hand-cured prosciutto, sun-dried tomatoes, olives and fresh bread to dine later, al fresco on our balcony at the resort. We then settled in for a 'grande biera' and waited for the sun to go down.

Asiago is one of those few places where heaven actually meets earth, and it would be

a shame if you left this alpine village without making a stop at the Asiago Observatory. Here you can almost touch the stars, and while I can't do justice in describing how we felt as we found constellation after constellation, I can highly recommend that you take the time to experience the magic yourself.

## VENICE

The next day, rejuvenated and revitalised we were ready for Venice, truly the world's most pedestrian-friendly city. We spent three days exploring every inch within a five-kilometre radius of San Marco Square and soon learned that every 'wrong turn' simply resulted in a new and unplanned adventure. We did some of the things you 'have to do' in Venice like standing under the magnificent dome in the Basilica, making a wish on the Bridge of Sighs or strolling the Canal Grande, but we also climbed the Bell Tower and any other tower we could find so we could drink in the views from above. We opted not to take a ride in a gondola but spent more than a few hours exploring the Venetian islands by water

bus. Our self-guided tour included picnicking at a park in Torcello, Hemingway's beloved island, purchasing a hand-blown glass Christmas ornament in Murano and basking in the golden sun that illuminated the brilliantly painted houses of Burano.

On our last night, as we sipped a perfectly chilled glass of Prosecco from the bottle we had procured at a vineyard on our return from Asolo, I reflected that like the immature champagne that the Italians describe as 'very happy,' we were very happy that we had taken the road less travelled and experienced not only the magic of Venice but also the essence of everyday life in Veneto.

If I could offer one piece of advice, don't restrict yourself to the 'grand tour' of Italy's major cities. Remember: "The best things in life are the people we meet, the places we've been and the memories we create along the way." Italy, done your way, is an invitation to be more spontaneous and discover what makes you happy wherever you roam.

Below: Time to relax and watch the sunset over Venice



## JOURNEY PLANNER

### WHERE TO STAY

#### Asolo Golf Resort

Via Dei Borghi, 1-31034

Cavaso del Tomba (TV)

T: +39 0423 942211

W: asologolf.it

### WHERE TO EAT:

#### Ristorante Due Mori

Piazza Gabriele d'Annunzio 5,

31011 Asolo, Italy

T: +39 0423 950953

W: 2mori.it

### WHAT TO DO:

#### Dolomites Val Gardena

South Tyrol, Italy

T: +39 0471 777777

W: valgardena.it

#### Monte Grappa Tandem Team - Paragliding School

Via Caose, 22

31030 Borso del Grappa (TV)

T: +39 333 664 8808

W: montegrappatandemteam.it

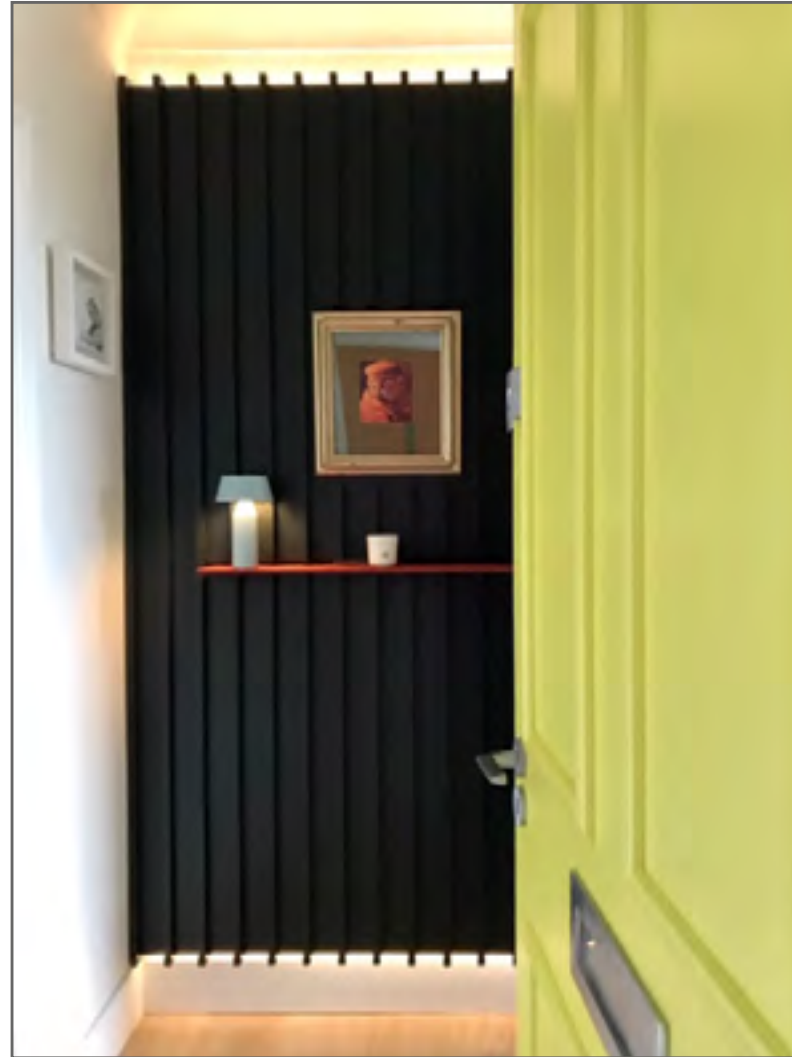
#### Astronomical Observatory of (Padova) Asiago

If you want to stargaze, plan to book ahead.

Via Osservatio 8, 36102 Asiago (VI)

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# THE GARDEN OF ENGLAND

With The Open Championship being played at Royal St George's next year, we bring you our guide of where to play and stay in the beautiful county of Kent.





It's a year away from the Open Championship returning to Royal St George's in Kent and with that in mind here are our reviews of some of the great courses that you can play in that county. This is followed by reviews of some wonderful places to stay during your visit, to help you set up the perfect golf holiday in the Garden of England.

**ROYAL ST GEORGE'S**

I am in my car driving down the A2 towards Sandwich with the excitement building - Ian Flemming used the name Royal St Mark's in his Goldfinger novel and maybe that was to put people off trying to find this Kent jewel and host to the first Open Championship outside of Scotland. Can you guess where I am heading to yet? If you have you can appreciate my obvious excitement.

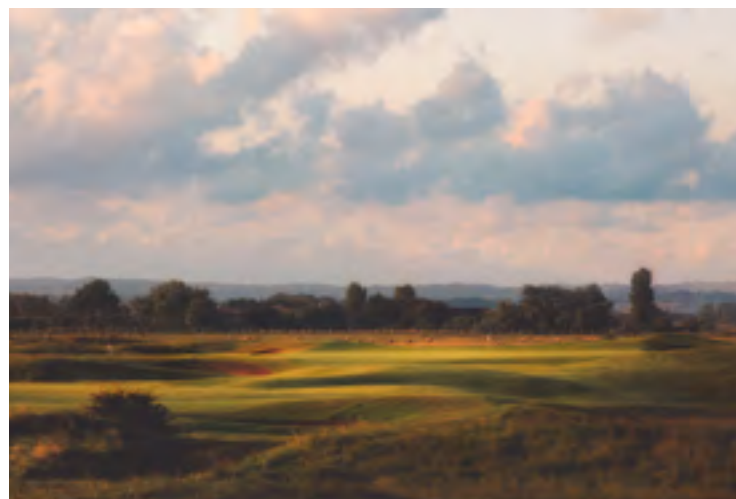
Yes, today I tee it up at Royal St George's Golf Club, host to fourteen Open Championships and one of the toughest courses you are ever likely to play. Jack Nicklaus shot an 83 here in the 1981 Open Championship and Tiger Woods lost a ball on the first hole in 2003 - this is a course that has no respect for reputations and I am not sure you will find a flat lie anywhere on the course and that includes the greens!

I love links golf and the way it makes you think about every shot you play but Royal St

**Left: The sunseting on the 12th green.**  
**Below left: Dunes surrounding the 6th green.**  
**Below right: Royal St George's undulating fairways at the 17th**



**IAN FLEMMING USED THE NAME ROYAL ST MARK'S IN HIS GOLDFINGER NOVEL AND MAYBE THAT WAS TO PUT PEOPLE OFF TRYING TO FIND THIS KENT JEWEL AND HOST TO THE FIRST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP OUTSIDE OF SCOTLAND**



George's is a links course that even on the calmest day still packs a heavyweight punch. When you putt out at the 18th you know you have played one of the best courses you will ever tee it up on.

There isn't a weak hole on the course and even the shortest par 4 which is the 361-yard 12th hole still packs a punch with its five bunkers protecting the front of the green and one at the back, oh and let's not forget the two bunkers right in the landing area that you have to negotiate first.

All the par 3s are great holes and you will love playing every one of them. If you have trouble with your short putts then I suggest →





Left: Looking back down the 239-yard par 3, 3rd hole at RSG. Left bottom: Heading out to sea on the 7th hole at RSG. Below left: The 6th hole on the Dunces course at Princes. Below right: Also, on the Dunes course the 8th hole.



**I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE REMATCH – WELL ONCE MY PSYCHIATRIST SAYS I CAN HAVE A WEEKEND PASS FROM THIS SPECIAL HOSPITAL HE SIGNED ME INTO.**

you book an appointment with a psychiatrist the day after you play Royal St George's, that way you can let him know about the many nightmares you had that night, of three-foot putts that ended up back off the green. And that you last saw a fellow golfer running along the shoreline towards Dover screaming, "I barely touched it!"

Yes it's very tough, yes there are lots of blind tee shots and a few marker posts wouldn't go amiss, but believe me when I say it's a must play course and I can't wait for the rematch – well once my psychiatrist says I can have a weekend pass from this special hospital he signed me into.

### **PRINCE'S GOLF CLUB**

There are not many towns in the world that can say they have hosted a Major Championship but there are very few that can say they have two golf courses that back on to each other and both have held a Major Championship. The 1932 Open Championship was held at Prince's Golf Club and became famous not only for Gene Sarazen winning all three Major Championships at the time – The Masters only came into being in 1934 – but also the secret club he had invented to win that championship which is now known as the Sand wedge.

The course has changed a lot since Sarazen's time due to the damage it took during World →



War II which is a shame in a way as Prince's was one of the first golf courses to be designed to take account of the modern golf ball. Charles Hutchings, the 1902 Amateur Champion was given the task of moulding this beautiful stretch of land looking out to the white cliffs of Dover. The new design now has 27 holes split into three loops of nine with the new clubhouse sitting in the middle. I have played Prince's several times now and I have to say I always enjoy playing here. Today the sun is out and it's one of those beautiful sunny winter days where the wind is constant and has that cold biting edge to it – thank you for modern apparel keeping me nice and warm!

Troon Golf have recently become involved with Prince's Golf Club and as I played the Dunes first then the Shore and after a stop for a beer and a very nice ham, egg and chips, the new Himalayas nine. You can see all the green staff beavering away and modernising the course and getting it ready for the summer months. There are enough great holes on this course and the space once all the work is completed to try and get Prince's back on the Open Championship rota, especially with the new Himalayas nine I have been impressed with all the changes that Mackenzie and Ebert have made.

If I was pushed I would say my favourite nines are between the Shore and Himalayas nines, but I would hate that to be a detriment to the Dunes as it also has some great holes on there. It's just a personal preference and I think you will have to head down to Sandwich Bay and decide which one is yours. I am sure it will be a great topic of discussion over a nice few local Kent beers or wines watching the sunset. →



#### COURSE VIDEO

Above: Video link to the Dunes, Shore with the old Himalayas layout.

Below: Video link of when I played the new Himalayas layout.

#### COURSE VIDEO



Above: Sunset over the 4th hole on the Dunes course. Far left: Par 3, 5th hole looking out to sea on the Himalayas. Left: The view from the 2nd tee with bunkers waiting for anything long.



## ROYAL CINQUE PORTS

I used to love playing in the Royal Cinque Ports Borough of Deal Challenge Trophy during my later teen years. It is one of the many competitions held during their open week and if you are looking to play this wonderful links course I would highly recommend taking part in their open week's activities.

So you can imagine my excitement as I head to Deal to once again tee up on this beautiful stretch of coastline. Royal Cinque Ports came into being when a group of golfers found this land and realised they could replicate the classic out and back Scottish links courses. Originally a 9-hole course designed by Henry Hunter, with the help of James Braid, the course soon became a full 18-hole track.

One of the things I love about Royal Cinque Ports is that it gives you a chance with its wide fairways and with the wind blowing off my right I need all the first fairway could offer and a little more! As my tee shot suddenly gets blown from its centre fairway trajectory to leave me just in the semi rough on the left, and

## THE NINTH TAKES YOU UP TO THE HALFWAY HUT WHERE A NICE HOT BOVRIL AND SAUSAGE BAGUETTE AWAITS

as my second shot disappears into the burn – with a hefty splash – that runs in front of the green I realise just how strong that wind is.

The second takes you down to the shoreline and the beautiful third with its basin green starts the run of holes along that shoreline. It's a wonderful stretch of pure links golf with stunning views over to the white cliffs of Dover. There is not one hole you are not going to enjoy and every one is a challenge, from the basin green on the 3rd to the raised green at the 7th, rolling fairways that run in between dunes and par 3s heading straight out towards the sea, your golf game will be challenged on every level no matter the weather.

The ninth takes you up to the halfway hut where a nice hot Bovril and sausage baguette awaits, which I wolf down for some much-needed substance to battle the back nine.

The back nine maintains the high standards of the front with some truly stunning holes with the 10th, 16th and 17th being my personal favourites. Reading the course planner it would seem that none other than Open Champion

Henry Cotton agrees with me and rates the 16th as one of his top eighteen holes in England.

The 18th at Royal Cinque Ports has always baffled me and like the 1st, 6th and the par 3 4th before it, they all have no bunkers to protect them – which would be unheard of in today's golf course design. But take any of them lightly and you will soon understand that they can handle themselves without need of protection - they don't suffer fools gladly and can wreck a card if you don't concentrate. The 18th according to the stroke planner has seen its fair share of drama and as I hack my ball out of the deep rough on the left back on to the fairway I can understand why. A moment's lapse in calculation in how strong the wind is off the right and I am lucky to get away with making five.

The beautiful wood panelled clubhouse awaits you with its assortment of hearty fare and ales and if you get time just check out the trophy display here, especially that Borough of Deal Challenge Trophy. Unfortunately, I never got far enough to get my name engraved →

COURSE VIDEO 



Top left: Looking over the dunes to the 6th green at Royal Cinque Ports. Left: Undulating fairway and raised green at the 17th. Right: Sunrise over the 15th green.





on there. I may just take up the secretary's invitation to give it another go this year. But if you decide to play in the Open Championship week or not make sure you put this Royal on your must play list.

**NORTH FORELAND**

Today I am heading over to Broadstairs to North Foreland, which is perched on top of the cliffs and offers some spectacular views of the English Channel. Originally a 9-hole course it was expanded to 18 holes in 1903 by Fowler & Simpson.

The great Abe Mitchell was once a professional here when the club was in its heyday, but there have also been some turbulent times at the club and none more so than just after the second world war began, when the club went into decline and was wound up.

But as I meet Darren Parris, the club's

present professional who is busy organising lessons and welcoming groups of golfers on a busy Saturday morning, I can see today's North Foreland is in great hands, and with a group lesson of 4-8 year olds taking place on the putting green outside, I think it has a great future, too.

Darren starts me on the 10th tee which as I stand on the tee I can look straight out over the channel and see the off-shore wind farm. They may not be everyone's cup of tea but I think it looks spectacular and with the clear blue Kent skies I can see a long way out.

The skies look like a beautiful sunny day but this is the beginning of March and the wind brings with it a chill that means I am well wrapped up and you need to be up here. The back nine of the course is exposed and although not a typical links – this is more a free running chalk-based surface than sand-based tight

**COURSE VIDEO**



Right: New bunker work at North Foreland. Far right: The beautiful clubhouse. Below left: The 5th green with the fort backdrop. Below right. Looking down the 3rd hole. Top. Looking over to the castle and lighthouse at the 6th tee.



cropped links – the wind will play a big factor in your course management.

There are some great holes here and position is all-important so I would highly recommend the course planner and take notice of what it tells you particularly when it comes to the tiered greens. You really need to be on the right level unless you fancy your putting as five of the greens have three tiers and a further seven greens have two.

The front nine – my back nine today – has a very different feel to it, but still incorporates those spectacular views. You definitely need to make your score on the front nine and it does give you a lot of chances and if you get off to a good start you could be at least 4 or 5 under par for the first four holes.

The members here seem to be a friendly bunch and very welcoming of visitors and as I stand admiring the ruins that are on the 6th tee with its castle backdrop, this has to be the most beautiful part of the course.

**CANTERBURY GOLF CLUB**

I am looking out of the clubhouse window at the greenkeeping staff working on the 18th green enjoying a wonderful freshly made bacon butty and coffee and memories come flooding back of playing in the Canterbury men's Open and shooting a final round 68 to win the scratch prize. It could have been so much better but →



for a 7 on the par 3, 8th hole that was my 17th – I played the back nine first, 64 would have been my lowest round of golf to date and would still be the amateur course record here.

After an interesting chat with YouTube star Danny Maude who is the pro here, I am sending my ball arrowing at the marker post on the first hole, it's a blind tee shot but don't worry there is plenty of fairway to hit. Its mid-March and quite cold so the ball isn't flying so far, so I have a hybrid into the green for my second shot and a chip and putt sees me make par. The 2nd brings up the first of five par 3s and there is not a weak hole among them, they have extended the tee on the 5th which now measures 175-yards from the back tee, but it's the 11th that will take most of the accolades as you play to a raised green through a tunnel of trees, when the trees and flowers are in full

bloom it is a wonderful golf hole.

While the first and third have blind tee shots, it's when I arrive at the elevated tee on the 6th that my memory kicks in, it's a great golf hole that just makes you want to smash driver when I played in that open I was playing with balata balls and a Mizuno persimmon driver, today I am testing the new Callaway Epic Flash and hit one out of the middle leaving me a little wedge in.

Two par 5s sandwich "that par 3!" and give you a great chance to finish the front nine on a high. The 10th is all risk and reward as there is a ditch that is at the bottom of the hill and while I have left my drive just short today, come the summer months with the warmer climate and more run on the ball it is very much in play, do you lay-up or do you try to carry it?

The 12th and 13th holes are again played

**IT'S A WELL DESIGN HOLE THAT BRINGS THIS 6272-YARD HARRY COLT DESIGN TO A CLOSE. DON'T BE FOOLED BY THAT LENGTH IT CERTAINLY PLAYS LONGER THAN THAT AND WILL TEST EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR GOLF GAME.**



**COURSE VIDEO**

from elevated tees and for me the 12th slightly edges it on the aesthetics front with the fairway surrounded by trees that runs from right to left with a stream running along the left-hand side of the fairway in the landing area and come the summer with hard running fairways you really need to aim at the trees on the right.

Miss the green at the par 3, 17th could see you ruin your scorecard, walking away with three will see you gain on the field. The finale is a par 5 that offers a birdie chance but there is also OOB on the right-hand side and the green sits just outside the clubhouse. It's a well-designed hole that brings this 6,272-yard Harry Colt design to a close. Don't be fooled by that length; it certainly plays longer than that and will test every aspect of your golf game.

**WALMER AND KINGSDOWN GC**

It's Sunday afternoon and the course is empty. Not a surprise as the heavens have opened up all morning, but after a coffee the clouds part. A small bucket of balls on the practice ground to warm up sees me standing on the first tee and a ball heading down the fairway.

It's the beginning of March and we have just come out of a very damp winter so I am not expecting the course to be in summer condition, but I am surprised how good the course looks and the chalk base has certainly helped the course drain amazingly well.

As the skies start to become brighter, the →

Left: 18th fairway and clubhouse at Canterbury GC



views of the Straits of Dover start to open up and you can see how busy this part of the channel is, with ferries and boats criss-crossing each other. That is the problem if you are trying to put together a golf score here; there are so many wonderful views you can lose all concentration.

I am falling in love with the square shaped greens and your praise of James Braid can change from hole to hole. One minute the green sits down and the surrounding banks will utilise the terrain to help your ball onto the green, the next they are sending your ball 30-yards away leaving you an awkward pitch back on to the green. To showcase that point the Par 3, 11th hole placement is key. Hit your ball right and the terrain will help your ball onto the green, be straight or slightly left and your hoping you finds one of the two bunkers on the left or you will be down the hill having to pitch up to the green over those bunkers. It's a very strategic course and local knowledge is key. Throw in the wind on this exposed piece of land and you could easily post a score that an opening batsman would be proud of.

W&K is an out and back course although the 12th does head back out again with the 13th bringing you back towards the clubhouse. I feel the run home from the uphill par 3, 14th starts a great run of holes and all too soon I am putting out on the 18th hole with more spectacular views of the Strait of Dover as a backdrop.

I had never heard of Walmer and Kingdown Golf Club before I was asked to go and review the course for this feature and with it being just 7-miles from Royal St George's Golf Club, it's the perfect place to have an enjoyable round of golf on a challenging James Braid course while visiting for the Open Championship next year.

### HEVER CASTLE

It's Castle day and an early start. First up is Hever Castle, a course that I have played several years ago and one I am looking forward to playing again. After a warm up on the range that sits right next to the first tee and after a quick chat with the starter I hit my tee shot that ends up in the second cut of rough on the left of the fairway on this gentle downhill 411-yard opening hole. There is one bunker protecting the green on the left but a 9-iron into the middle of the green sees me safely putt for an opening par.

There are four teeing options to choose →



**THAT IS THE PROBLEM IF YOU ARE TRYING TO PUT TOGETHER A GOLF SCORE HERE. THERE ARE SO MANY WONDERFUL VIEWS YOU CAN LOSE ALL CONCENTRATION**

Above: Aerial view of Walmer and Kingdown. Right: 7th tee looking out to the channel and France on a clear day





from to help you enjoy this course and placement on the second is all important as there is water down the left, you then play up to a slightly elevated green so I would recommend a long iron from tee. The 3rd also has an elevated green but this time you are unable to see the green, just the pin and the green is only 22-yards deep with a front bunker protecting it. It's a great golf hole and at 426-yards playing to that uphill green deserves its stroke index two rating.

The first of two par 3s on the front arrives after two wonderfully designed holes and at 128-yards with the green nestling in the trees and water on the right, it may be the easiest hole on the course but it can jump up and bite you if you are not fully committed to your tee shot. The 8th is played over water to a raised green that has lots of contours and is protected by bunkers left and right, oh and weighs in at 191-yards. Don't worry if you drop a shot there; you could always try and pick it back up with birdie on the 523-yard par 5 closing hole to the front nine that is played uphill.

I would suggest you take a break at the excellent halfway hut that sits by the 10th hole, but today unfortunately I don't have time, but as I have another chance at birdie on the downhill 479-yard 10th hole which plays as a par 5 I am more than happy to carry on with the run I am on.

The 11th to the 13th showcase the beauty of the Championships course, the 11th is an iron off the tee as there is a stream in the landing area and water on the left, you then play to an uphill green. The 12th is the first of the par 3s on the back nine and is a true stunner of a hole played from an elevated tee to a green that is protected by water. The 13th is also played from an elevated tee and has a very narrow landing area with trees down the right and water on the left which also meanders down to protect the front of the green. They are a fantastic run of golf holes.

The course closes with a couple of well designed holes; firstly the 435-yard 16th which is played to a fairly narrow fairway that sits between trees and the second shot is played

through that funnel of trees to a green that sits just beyond in the opening. But as I make my way to the 17th tee I suddenly notice that this is a 627-yard par 5 and is playing all of that and more today into the wind, I am playing with a Golf Monthly colleague and while we both make the green in three he holes his birdie putt to win our match. It's certainly a beast of a hole but it was great fun playing it, but there is no time to rest as we are off to Leeds Castle for our afternoon round.

### LEEDS CASTLE

After around an hour's drive I find myself pulling into the pub car park that is shared with Leeds Castle Golf Club after making the mistake of actually going to Leeds Castle – the course sits on the property but has a different car park and entrance.

We are informed that they have been working on the course this week and have only just sanded and hole-tined the greens. It's a blind tee shot over the white stone to a fairway that dips away from you so you can't see the landing

area. At 294-yards it is driveable so make sure you listen for the bell, which indicates players have left the green.

The green sits downhill but is raised and protected by two bunkers on the left, but I love the feeling of the hole. It has a type of heathland feel to it, which is reinforced when I get to the 3rd hole. You have to cross a road to get to the third but standing on the tee it really is a beautifully designed dogleg left and played to a green that measures 74-yards wide and sits diagonally across you. Strategy is the name of the game here as you can easily run out of room with your tee shot, as you are forced right because of the bunker sitting on the left of the fairway or you could go for the full carry with draw!

The first par 3 arrives at the 4th and is played from an elevated tee, but be careful of that left-to-right wind as the ball comes out above the canopy of the trees. The 5th gives you the first glimpse of Leeds Castle from its elevated tee. The fairway is spit by a road and cars have the right of way and for the longer hitters they →



COURSE VIDEO

Top left: The beautiful par 3 12th at Hever Castle.  
 Left: Looking back down the 11th hole at Hever Castle.  
 Right: Dawn mist around Leeds Castle from the 6th tee.







Left: View from the 6th tee of Leeds Castle. Bottom left: London Golf Club clubhouse. Below: Looking down on the 8th green on the International course. Bottom: Water protecting the 1st green

**COURSE VIDEO**



can certainly carry the road with a chance of getting very close to the green on this 417-yard hole.

The 6th has to be the course's signature hole played again from an elevated tee to a rolling fairway below, playing over the 5th fairway with the castle and its moat running the length of the left hand side. It is spectacular and Sir Guy Campbell and his partners CK Hutchinson and SV Hotchkin, who are the original designers, have certainly made the most of this view and Alan Walker has certainly brought this course back to life with his 2016 update of the course.

Views of the castle can also be seen from the 7th which is another iron off the tee, with the second shot being played over water to an uphill green and then again on the 9th hole where an iron off the tee is needed once more. Both holes sandwich the uphill 141-yard par 3 which is another well designed hole.

As we putt out on the 9th a little smile breaks across our faces. Leeds Castle may only be a nine-hole golf course but it certainly packs a mighty punch in those nine holes – a wonderfully designed course with some majestic views. Hats off to Alan Walker and his project to revitalise this course. He has certainly done a wonderful job.

### **LONDON GOLF CLUB INTERNATIONAL COURSE**

As I enter the gates of the London Golf Club estate, my excitement levels start to rise, mainly because it is not the first time I have played here, having teed it up several times, it is always in great condition and the facilities are what every club golfer dreams of.

After a wonderful bacon sandwich, coffee and warm up on the aforementioned practice area I am standing on the first tee – you will notice from the video that there is no video footage of my first two tee shots and that is because it is raining. Yes the wind has picked up and the rain is coming down but nothing is going to stop me playing today

The opening hole is a downhill par 5 and depending on what teeing option you choose to play from – there are four – the hole measures from 568–453-yards, a good tee shot leaves me with 220-yards, now the brave could go for the green in two but with water protecting the green that runs at a diagonal, I am going to the lay-up. I always enjoy par →



5 starts as it gives you a chance to get your round off to a solid start with a possible birdie chance.

The courses at the London Golf Club are all about strategy. The fairways are fairly wide and the first cut of rough isn't that punishing, but go wider and you will be in the wild grasses that give the course its wonderful light brown fescue look that frames the emerald carpets of the fairway. Bunkers are placed in the perfect areas to catch the errant tee shot and have been placed so every teeing option has to face the challenge of avoiding them.

The first of the par 3s on the front nine arrives at the 4th and from the tee it doesn't look too intimidating, but again the green is wide and narrow with three bunkers protecting the right-hand side. The challenge to this hole doesn't stop with the tee shot with the green having several different complexes, with a ridge sitting back and centre giving the option of some very tough pin positions.

As you would imagine with any Jack

Nicklaus designed course water comes into play on several holes – particular the par 3s on the 8th and 12th which are both played over water from elevated tees. Some courses have one signature hole, but the International course can boast several signature holes and while I am loath to name individual holes as I really don't think there is a weak hole on the course – I can certainly name a lot of tough ones though – I think the risk and reward par 5, 13th is an excellent hole with water again protecting the front of the green if you choose to go that route.

While I love a course that opens with a par 5, one that ends with one has to be a golfer's dream. By the time you reach this tee you know you've played a fantastic golf course, even if it's got the better of you. This downhill 542-yard hole may just be the redemption you need. Walking off with a birdie here could just be the icing on the cake, but no matter how well you did or didn't play, I know you will have loved every minute.

**COURSE VIDEO**

**THE HERITAGE**

Day two and yes of course I had to have another bacon sandwich. They're not stingy on the bacon here and the fresh granary bread makes it a perfect start to your day's golf.

Again, I take full advantage of the practice facilities and am raring to go as I hit the first tee. It has been a while since I have played the Heritage course and I am buzzing to get underway. Like yesterday the wind is up again, but thankfully this time no rain. I crash my drive down the fairway and the wind takes it a little leaving me just on the edge of the fairway. Because it has pushed my ball left putting me out of position I miss the green with my approach shot but manage an up and down par.

If you are a player that likes to manoeuvre your ball you will enjoy the Heritage. The 2nd hole sees four bunkers sitting on the right and left of the fairway and your drive needs to be aimed at the far bunkers with a slight draw and with today's wind blowing from right to left it helps me place my ball in the middle of the fairway. →

**Left Top: The par 3, 12th on the International course. Left bottom: The 13th green on the International course. Below: Water protecting the 5th green at the risk and reward par 5 hole on the Heritage course**





The first of the par 3s arrives at the 3rd and at 194-yards – there are four teeing options again on this course – is played from an elevated tee with water protecting the left-hand side with large bunkers at the front and back. The par 3s have a variety of elevations, with the 7th played over water and the 11th played from some wonderful elevated tees.

Water also comes into play on the par 5, 6th that is a fantastic risk and reward hole with the green playing diagonally across you so giving you very little room to stop your ball if you decided to go for the eagle chance.

The front nine closes with a wonderfully designed par 4 measuring 448-yards. The hole is played again from an elevated tee and gives you a chance to cut off as much of the fairway as you dare, if you decide to carry the fairway

bunkers on the left. The green is protected and surrounded by five bunkers two left, two right and one back left, it really is a great golf hole.

If that wasn't enough standing on the 10th tee, which is again played from an elevated tee, there is water on your left and five fairway bunkers on your right for you to negotiate before going back uphill to a raised green. Walking off there with an up and down par certainly got my back nine off to a good start.

I would leave your driver and even your 3-wood in the bag when you get to the 13th, at only 338-yards and water protecting the front of the green, you will be better off going with a long iron and playing a fuller shot into the green that again runs diagonally across you. As I walk off the green I had forgotten how much I love the Heritage course. It's one great hole

after another, the green emerald carpet weaving its way through the wild grasses and whispery fescue.

The back nine has been a tough test and standing on the 18th tee looking down at the fairway from its elevated tee, the hole is certainly a fitting finale, with water on the left. You play down to the fairway below and then back up to the large green that is 28-yards deep and sits in a little amphitheatre. The Heritage is the members' course and you have to be invited to play on it. The London Golf Club is blessed with two fantastic golf courses. All you have to do is decide which one you like the most; that should make for an interesting debate in the bar.

**COURSE VIDEO**

Below: 18th green and clubhouse on the Heritage course



## JOURNEY PLANNER

### WHERE TO STAY

**Dover Marina Hotel & Spa**

T: 01304 203633

W: dovermarinahotel.co.uk

**The Lodge at Prince's**

T: +44 1304 611118

W: princesgolfclub.co.uk

**The Salutation**

T: +44 1304 619919

W: the-salutation.com

### WHERE TO PLAY

**Royal St Georges GC**

T: +44 1304 613090

W: royalstgeorges.com

**Princes Golf Club**

T: +44 1304 611118

W: princesgolfclub.co.uk

**Royal Cinque Ports**

T: +44 1304 374007

W: royalcinqueports.com

**North Foreland GC**

T: +44 1843 862140

W: northforeland.co.uk

**Canterbury GC**

T: +44 1227 453 532

W: canterburygolfclub.co.uk

**Walmer and Kingsdown GC**

T: +44 1304 373256

W: kingsdowngolf.co.uk

**Hever Castle GC**

T: +44 1732 700771

W: hevercastle.co.uk/golf

**Leeds Castle GC**

T: +44 1622 880467.

W: leeds-castle.com/Golf

**London Golf Club**

T: +44 1474 879899

W: londongolf.co.uk



## DOVER MARINA HOTEL & SPA

Dover, Kent, England  
By CHARMAINE HIBBERT



## ROOM WITH A VIEW

The sun sinks below the horizon on the English Channel in this busy port town while **Charmaine Hibbert** finds an oasis of mouth-watering gastronomy and a hidden spa sanctuary

A 20-minute drive from Walmer & Kingsdown Golf Club brings me to the Dover Marina Hotel and a warm smile from the receptionist who quickly checks us in and gives James a free parking permit to park in the car park at the back of the hotel.

Currently the hotel is going through some redecorating ready for the Open Championship next year and when I walk into my room, I can state right now that if you have made a booking you will love the new décor. Modern with neutral colours it has a grey classy vibe, but it's the balcony that takes centre stage, running the width of the suite and deep enough to take a good size table, chairs and lounger. The bathroom keeps the classic theme running with a deep soaker tub with claw feet and of course a good size walk-in shower. My suite also has a very comfortable deep sofa and chairs.

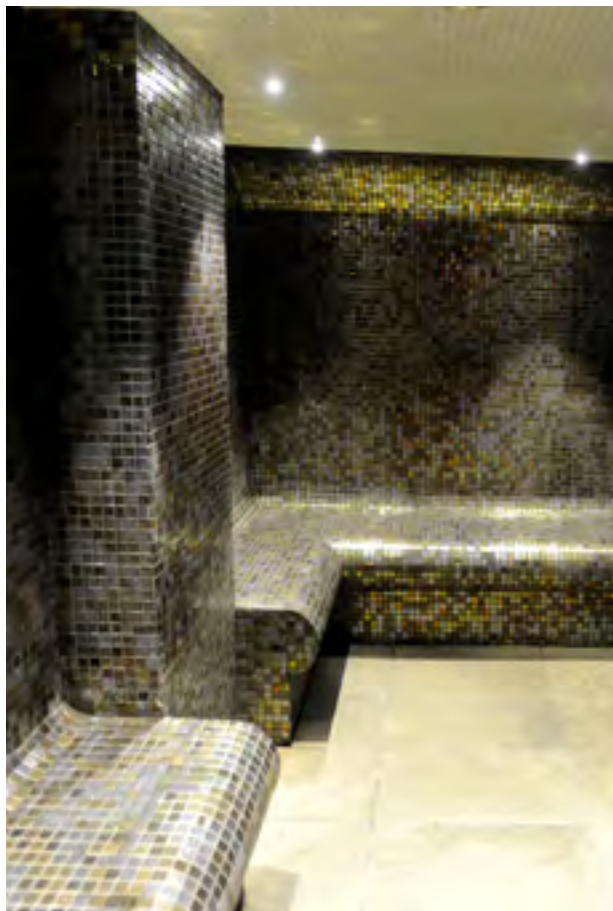
The ultimate test for me as you know is the face dive onto the crisp cotton duvet on this king size double bed, the mattress is just as I like it, which is firm and lots of cushions to give it the perfect finish, so far so perfect. →

Above: My suite for the night. Left: Mr White's Chop House restaurant.





Far Left: Perfect burger from Mr White's Chop House.  
 Left: Colourful seating at Mr White's. Bottom left: Steam room at the Waterfront Spa. Below Top: Jacuzzi time at Waterfront Spa. Bottom right: One of the treatment rooms at the spa.



**MR WHITE'S ENGLISH CHOPHOUSE:**

I had heard a lot about chef Marco Pierre White and I was looking forward to sampling his creations but more importantly could they produce a Pittsburgh steak? – only one restaurant in the UK has managed to do this. We started with the Sticky BBQ baby back ribs which was cooked to perfection, the juicy meat just falling from the bone and the American coleslaw was the perfect accompaniment.

At this stage I have to mention our server Savas who was perfect, never hovering but always seemed to be ready to help when you needed him. The moment of truth arrived with the grilled 35-day aged Sirloin steak. Now for those of you who don't know a Pittsburgh steak is burnt on the outside and rare on the inside, but the secret is all in the rub - a product that is hard to purchase in the UK - and without it the chefs at Mr White's did a great job and produced a very tasty steak, not quite burnt on the outside, but it was rare in the middle.

With the hotel sitting right by the waterfront and our table looking out to the harbour it was the perfect place to just drink wine and watch the sun sinking on the horizon as the ferries came and went, the perfect ending to a wonderful prepared and executed meal.

**WATERFRONT SPA:**

After a perfect night's rest, breakfast consists of fresh fruit, eggs Benedict and relaxing on my balcony looking out to sea, but it is now time for my Abhyanga treatment at the Waterfront spa in the hotel.

After filling out a form I am whisked away by my masseuse. Now the Abhyanga massage is a full body massage that according to the brochure: *"revitalises the tissues, cleans the body, protects from old age and is one of the best remedies for pacifying Vata". It moves excess doshas back into the digestive tract so that they can leave the body essence tissue growth and promotes strength, relaxation and sound sleep. It aids healthy joints and ligaments as well as nourishing the nerves".*

The hour slipped by in a tranquil blur as the hands of my masseuse weaved her magic, my body certainly feels revitalised and rejuvenated which I am wholly grateful for. I am led to the relaxation area and after a couple of minutes I feel myself drifting off to sleep, yet another wonderful benefit from the Abhyanga massage.

**Dover Marina Hotel & Spa**

Dover Waterfront  
 Waterloo Crescent  
 Dover  
 Kent CT17 9BP

T: 01304 203633

W: [dovermarinahotel.co.uk](http://dovermarinahotel.co.uk)

E: [reservations@dovermarinahotel.co.uk](mailto:reservations@dovermarinahotel.co.uk)



## THE LODGE AT PRINCE'S

Sandwich Kent, England

By CHARMAINE HIBBERT

After a short drive from Royal St. George's Golf Club you turn onto Prince's Drive where you have the sea sparkling on one side with views over to Dover and the beautiful white cliffs and views of Royal St. George's on the other. We arrived at The Lodge at Prince's with the warmest of welcomes from the reception staff and was immediately handed an envelope containing a beautiful handwritten card wishing us a wonderful stay. Looking through the glass doors at reception I could hardly wait to get to my room and take in those fabulous views across the Bay.

The Lodge consists of 14 bedrooms including two luxurious Bay and Links suites and all apartments have ensuite facilities. The Lodge has two adjoining Lodge Houses, giving you a further 12 bedroomed apartments in each with up to four people sharing. You will also find that all the apartments contain a lounge area and an area for club storage, as well as battery charging facilities.

I could not believe my eyes once I stepped into my apartment - a large double bed awaited me and a gorgeous bathroom to boot. It took no time at all to feel right at home as I slipped off my shoes and headed for the lounge and curled up on the sofa after an exhausting round of golf. And for anyone who reads my reviews will know I have never played a round of golf in my life but caddying is something I have come to enjoy.

### THE BRASSERIE ON THE BAY

After a much needed rest I headed to the Lounge and Bar for a well earned glass of wine and just savoured each moment of the views from the terrace and watched the sun go down. After the bar I headed back for a soak in the bath (in which you will not want to leave I must add - for it is that →



Above: Views over princes Shore course from the restaurant. Below: One of the lodge suites

## FIT FOR A PRINCESS

Charmaine Hibbert discovers the lodges at Prince's are also the perfect getaway for princesses too







Below: Fireplace in the main lounge and bar. Left and bottom left: Views from the restaurant



lush) but as we booked a table it was time to get ready for dinner and head to The Brasserie on the Bay restaurant. We were greeted upon arrival by a waitress named Pauline. She was so attentive. For me great service is essential and Pauline just added that extra touch to our dining experience.

For starter I opted for loin of hare with a confit truffle leg rilette, carrots with a vinegre de Jerez but minus the pickled walnut due to allergies. To say it was delicious was an understatement just the combination of flavours blew me away. I could easily have had a second plate considering I'm a dessert girl at heart but that starter just left me wanting more. So I was excited to see how the next course would fare. For my main I was torn between the guinea fowl or the wild sea bass but I opted for the latter which was served with crushed new potatoes, razor clams in garlic butter. Again delicious another dish which blew the starter right of the water.

Dessert was a tough one, I never ever give up on a chance to wolf down a yummy sweet dish but because the director of Planet Golf Review could not try a dessert having given up the naughty sugary stuff for lent my heart went out to him so I opted for a cheese board. A top choice! We had Wigmore (soft cheese), Ashmore (hard cheese), Kentish Blue (blue cheese) accompanied by an apple chutney for a bit of sweetness to add just the right balance.

So whatever the reason to try The Brasserie be it lunch, dinner or something a bit more special it is certainly an experience that you will treasure. The tag line for The Brasserie on the Bay is 'a truly unique location' but in fact as a whole it was a truly unique and wonderful experience. Albeit a short stay at The Lodge it was simply perfect from start to finish.

**The Lodge at Prince's**  
Sandwich Bay  
Sandwich  
Kent CT13 9QB

**T:** +44 1304 611118  
**W:** [princesgolfclub.co.uk](http://princesgolfclub.co.uk)  
**E:** [reservations@princesgolfclub.co.uk](mailto:reservations@princesgolfclub.co.uk)



## THE SALUTATION

Sandwich, Kent, England

By KUKUA AKUMANYI

# THE ENCHANTED GARDEN

**Kukua Akumanyi** heads down to Sandwich Kent and finds a hidden gem offering rooms that take you back in time and a chef that makes your palette dance and of course an award winning garden to explore and hide from the world





Entering the town of Sandwich in Kent is like stepping back in time, so it was fitting that as I walked into the reception of the Salutation hotel, it also felt like the history of this wonderful building had been lovingly restored and brought into the twenty-first century.

After my check-in I was shown the drawing room and bar which have been tastefully decorated and in keeping with the period of the house, I was then shown to my room. Now I have visited many hotels and to be honest you do become a bit blasé and it takes something really special to make you go wow, but as I enter the room my eyes just light up.

The light flooding in from the four dual aspect windows danced across the room highlighting the wonderful king size bed that dominates, but not because it sucked up all the space, there was plenty of that to do my early morning yoga stretches without injuring myself. There is a period sofa sitting at the foot of the bed and a large mirrored double wardrobe and two chest of drawers all in keeping with the period themed furnishings.

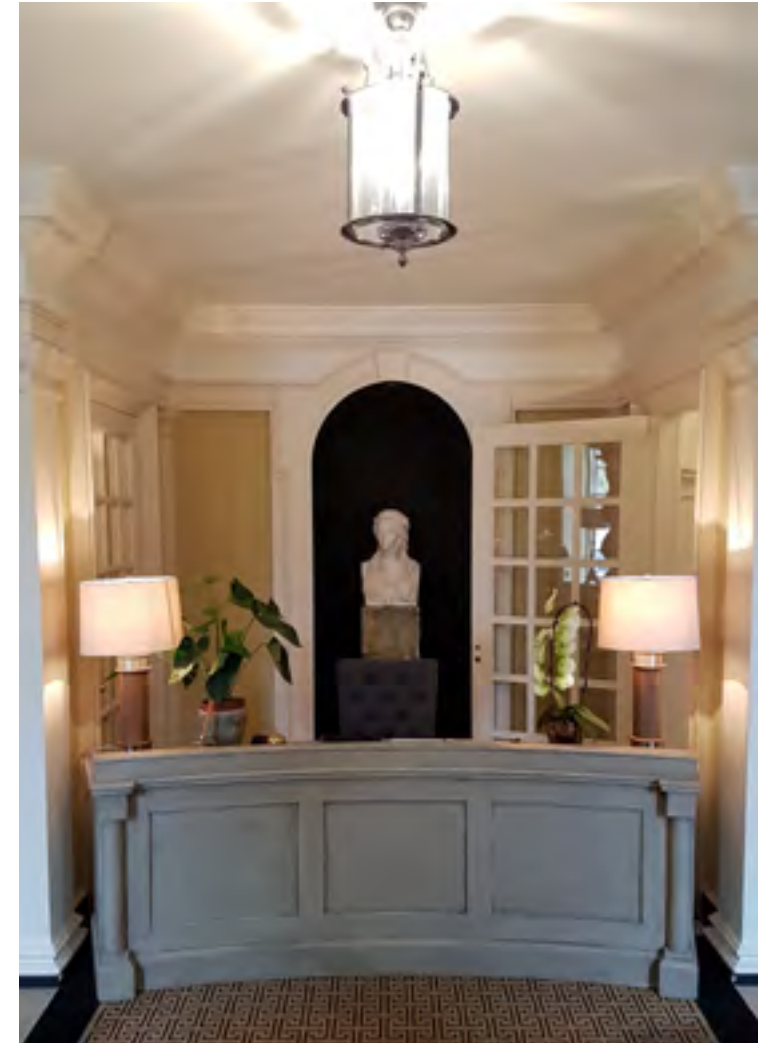
I am shown into the bathroom and again my face just breaks into a smile, the focus is on the double bath that sits in a purpose-built unit with a stunning bronze framed mirror that reflects the light streaming in from another large window.

The house was built in 1911 when banking mogul Henry Farrer – a partner at Barings Bank – commissioned Edwin Lutyens to design a weekend home and country retreat for members of his family. The room I am staying in is Henry’s room and he obviously picked this because it overlooks both the bowling green with St Clements church as its backdrop and the award-winning garden, with its perfectly shaped round hedges that stand like sentries protecting the wonderful variety of flowers with their magnificent colours in full bloom.

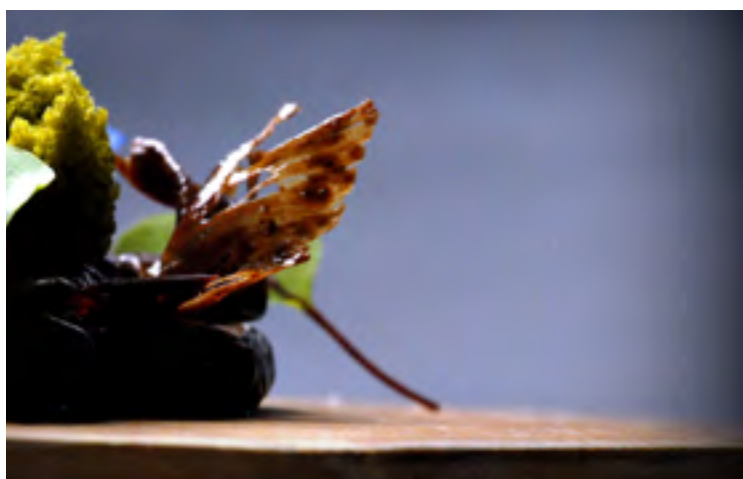
### **THE GARDENS**

Having just won an award at the Chelsea Flower Show and with the sun high in the sky I decide to take a closer look and take a slow stroll and I am so glad I did. These gardens are not just to be looked at and admired from your hotel

Right and below:  
Various views of the hotel, reception, drawing room, suites and gardens







Above: Various dishes produced by the chef. Top right: The glass partition separating the dining room and kitchen.

window they need to be explored, the many beautiful fragrances of mother nature make your senses dance with joy. There are some beautiful hidden parts of the gardens with perfectly placed benches so you can just while away your time with a book or like me just close your eyes and drift off as the church bells chime away.

### **A DINING EXPERIENCE TO REMEMBER**

It takes a distinct level of confidence and talent to cook in front of your clientele, and this was evident with the Michelin-starred, award winning Chef Shane Hughes and his team at the Salutation Hotel in Sandwich.

Maitre d' Jason Parilla led us through the building into what could be considered the heart of The Salutation hotel, an open plan galley style kitchen walled off by large sheets of glass, this

beautiful vision served two functions; a view for us to watch the master at work as well as encasing all the aromas of the kitchen from the diners experience, but my personal joy was the feeling that I am part of the team.

We are seated in a beautiful stone floored space at a large dining table, which would be ideal for large parties. The warm down light shades made the space feel warm, cosy and inviting, I can't help but smile at all the staff through the curtain of glass as they work in their perfectly organised area. I can feel my excitement levels rising and I can't wait to see how each dish would be created.

Jason brings us a flute of Mosaic Brut, a refreshing light bubbly summer drink, so light you could almost forget that you were drinking alcohol!

The taster menu starts with a selection of

the House Breads, a lightly toasted brioche, an aromatic Guinness slice and a seeded poppy slice, served with a soft rolled butter. it's not very often that an establishment considers the diners experience of serving butter that doesn't destroy the bread before you have had the pleasure of tasting it.

The first dishes arrives and its Mac and Cheese croquette with chilli puree and a bean pod filled with marinated (fill in as I can't remember). Perfectly crisp and the mild chilli is an excellent accompaniment.

Next up is a delicate light dish with a trio of flavours and heady palette of a warm moose and a chilled puree of Pea Veloute scented with truffle with a hen's egg and Parmesan galette, what a sensation.

My taste buds are dancing in anticipation as the Seared Scottish Scallops arrive and are



THE TASTING MENU IN IMAGES



accompanied by Asian Spiced Lentils, Pea Veloute and marinated Artichoke, this was paired with a French Sauvignon ‘Val de Loire’.

What looks like a slice of wood arrives and holds an artistic plated poached Quail egg, Foie Gras baked in the lightest melt in your mouth pastry with Morel Mushrooms, and asparagus with a Sauterne jus served with an Italian Montepulciano d’Abruzzo Barrique.

Next is an award-winning dish of perfectly Chargrilled Saddle of lamb, Confit Shoulder served with Moroccan Spices & Asparagus this has been paired with a red Cotes du Rhone Syrah wine. Having never really been a fan of lamb, I wasn’t sure I was going to enjoy its rareness, but it is beautiful, seared to perfection and the meat was light, delicate and beautifully juicy.

A dish that I hadn’t expected but was pleasantly surprised was the lobster Dog, served in a fluffy Chinese Laverbread Bun, with Fermented Fennel & Mustard Vinaigrette. What a great and unexpected combination made even better with the paired Spanish Casal Caeiro wine.

To prepare for dessert a refreshing Raspberry

Jelly & Kumquat Aperitif arrived served with a Sauternes dessert wine, with a fruity, sharp yet sweet flavour, from Bordeaux, France

**LAST MINUTE CHANGE**

When the executive chef decides to make a last-minute switch to the menu who am I to argue, I am sure the Vanilla Panna Cotta with a Chocolate Sponge would have fared just as well. However, to be served with a beautiful light and scrumptious pumpkin soufflé with a Chocolate and pistachios ice-cream was the kind of off-piste thinking I could get very used to.

The menu offered so many delights and took us on a tour of some of the wonderful vineyards of Europe, as well as a global fusion tasting adventure. It’s an award-winning menu that like me will have your taste buds jumping in sheer delight, from your first taste to your last spoonful.

The tasting dish images were taken on the day for illustration purposes only, these are not up to the normal standard of food photography, which is a skilled art

**THE TASTING MENU**

**Selection of Snacks & Our House Breads**

Paired wine: Mosaic Brut, Fox & Fox. Mayfield Vineyard, East Sussex

**Scallops**

Seared Scottish Scallops, Asian Spiced Lentils, Pea Veloute and marinated Artichoke

Paired wine: Sauvignon ‘Val de Loire’. Chateau de la Ragotiere, Loire, France

**Quail**

Poached Quail & Foie Gras baked in Pastry with Morel Mushrooms, Asparagus & Sauterne jus

Paired wine: Montepulciano d’Abruzzo Barrique, Itynera, Abruzzo, Italy

**Lobster**

Lobster Dog, Chinese Laverbread Bun, Fermented Fennel & Mustard Vinaigrette

Paired wine: Casal Caeiro, Albarino ‘Sobre Lias’. Rias Baixas, Spain

**Lamb**

Chargrilled Saddle, Confit Shoulder with Moroccan Spices & Asparagus

Paired wine: Cotes du Rhone Syrah, ‘St Esprit’ Delas. Rhone Valley, France

**Panacotta**

Vanilla Panacotta, Chocolate Sponge Raspberry Jelly & Kumquat

Paired wine: Sauternes, La Fleur d’Or. Bordeaux, France

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MIZUNO  
ST190G DRIVER



**40** MIZUNO JPX919  
HOT METAL  
PRO IRONS



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LAB TUTTLE PUTTER

# EQUIPMENT & APPAREL

# REVIEW



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MIZUNO  
ST190 FAIRWAY WOODS



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MIZUNO WAVE  
CADENCE GTX

# VIEW.COM



# You don't choose your Mizuno irons. They choose you.

THE **JPX919**  
SERIES

There's a Mizuno iron model for every swing type and approach to the game. Our award winning Bluetooth Shaft Optimizer and Swing DNA software will guide you to your best iron model and shaft combination. But in the end – the irons will let you know.



Ask to use the new Bluetooth Mizuno Shaft Optimizer at your local Swing DNA Fitting Centre.



**REACH BEYOND**



Find your nearest Swing DNA Fitting Centre


<https://golf.mizuno-europe.com/fitting-locator/>







# MIZUNO ST190G DRIVER

**CLUB TESTED**  
Mizuno ST190G Driver  
**SHAFT** Fujikura Atmos 65  
**FLEX** Stiff  
**LOFT** 9.0°  
**LOFT SET UP:** High  
**WEIGHT SET UP:** D3 & F3  
**RRP** £449.00 / €499.00 / \$500.00  
**VIDEO REVIEW** 

# ST190 FAIRWAY WOOD



**CLUB TESTED**  
Mizuno ST190 3-Wood  
**SHAFT** Fujikura Atmos 65  
**FLEX** Stiff  
**LOFT** 15°  
**LIE** Standard  
**RRP** £279.00 / €319.00 / \$250.00  
**VIDEO REVIEW** 



Right: Mizuno's crown  
now only weights 12g



## TECHNOLOGY

Mizuno have put all their research and technology into producing a driver with one of the lowest spin rates and a face that enhances ball speed and driving distance, they have achieved this by utilising an ultra-fast forged SP700 Ti face which is now lighter using a CORTECH structure giving higher ball speeds. This works with the large carbon composite crown and the Amplified Wave soleplate.

The Forged SP700 Ti face is over 10% stronger than previous Mizuno driver faces and has a fine grain structure that allows a more complex geometry in the CORTECH face, where re-engineered ribs work with the Quick Switch system.

The crown now weighs just 12g and is made from a carbon composite saving 7g of weight from the last version, which has been redistributed to boost ball speeds and reduce spin.

The Amplified Wave Sole is an advancement on the shockwave system and has a heavily amplified first wave configuration that explodes on impact and working with the SP700 Ti face gives greater balls speeds with reduced off-centre performance drop-off.

You will notice a different sound at impact and this is down to the Harmonic Impact Technology that is a study of vibration and soundwaves, and the R&D guys felt there was a need for internal ribs to create a more solid, powerful impact sound.

There are two versions of the driver the ST190 with its 6g fixed back weight, but I tested the ST190G which has the Fast Track system that uses two 7g weights, which are adjustable and can help reduce spin by a further 200rpm with the added bonus of the player controlling directional spin →

## TECHNOLOGY

Like the new drivers the emphasis is on speed off the face to help increase distance but also enhance forgiveness, utilising a carbon composite crown and the amplified wave soleplate technology, with a high-energy, deeper HT1770 Maraging steel face and the new ultra-lightweight carbon composite crown allows 4g of weight to be moved low within the clubhead.

The Amplified Wave Soleplate's larger first wave creates a balance between stability and sweet spot height, which helps forgiveness on

off-centre strikes without increasing spin rates and this works with the HT1770 Maraging deeper steel face that flexes more like a driver, helping to create maximum ball speed.

Again using the same Harmonic Impact Technology that can be found in the drivers, that generates a powerful, solid sound at impact.

The ST190 fairway woods are available in fixed-hosel 3 and 5 woods along with an adjustable Tour S 3-wood model that offers a stronger ball flight and in which lofts can be adjusted from 13° to 17°. →

Below: GT190 fairway  
wood crown, toe and  
face view







Right: Mizuno's quickswitch system and weight adjustment track

with a fade or draw bias.

The ST190 driver will be available in men's 9.5° and 10.5° models, both adjustable by 2° up or down.

The ST190G driver will be available in men's 9°, adjustable by 2° up or down

A range of shafts including Atmos Blue 5S, Atmos Red 5R, Atmos Red 5R2, Atmos Red 6R and Atmos Black TS 6S at no extra charge

### CONCLUSION:

Its not often a driver goes straight from production into the bags of tour players and while you may expect that of contracted players, its certainly unusual for non contracted players to do that with their livelihoods on the line. Such has been the success and word of mouth

recommendations from one pro to another that the new Mizuno ST190 is going from strength to strength on professional tours around the world.

After tinkering with my settings on the range, I then took the driver to Germany and Ireland on two testing trips loved the feel and penetrating ball flight that I was getting but it did take me a while to adjust to the new sound at impact. Its hard to describe but putting it into musical terms it has a more bassie, deeper tone giving a really solid/meaty sound as the ball rockets off the face. To be honest that is in keeping with this driver as it is certainly going to be a heavyweight in the driver category.

### CONCLUSION

Again I put the ST190 3-wood through its paces on testing trips to Germany and Ireland, including this years Open Championship course Royal Portrush where the ball seemed to bore its way through the wind and really crashes off the face and I also love the forgiveness and stability it offered.

Like the driver the sound at impact took a round or so to get used to, but the deep powerful tone certainly matches the results it was producing and for those who prefer a strong 3-wood to a driver so they can get an extra wedge in the bag this club should certainly be on your testing list; it's a weapon I highly recommend.



Right: Amplified first wave sole technology and 17 gram adjustable weight





# FLAG HUNTER

Testing trips to Germany, Ireland and Scotland see James Mason chasing pins with Mizuno's JPX 919 Hot Metal Pro irons.



## TECHNOLOGY

The JPX919 Hot Metal Pro irons share the same stability frame that has made the Tour model so popular on tours throughout the world with contracted and non-contracted players. The open heel portion helps to enhance stability and has a launch angle that helps achieve a soft landing on approach shots, re-engineered sound ribs add that solid strike and feel you

expect from a Mizuno iron.

The irons are designed with a high-strength Chromoly 4140M steel helping Mizuno achieve a multi thickness impact surface that works with the seamless construction one-piece cup face, which gives fantastic ball speeds even on off-centre strikes.

The Hot metal pro have a steeper transition from the longer irons to

the scoring irons and wedges with Mizuno producing set-matching gap, sand and lob wedges which are engineered from a softer X30 steel and have precision-milled grooves for increased spin and control for shots around the green.

## CLUB TESTED

Mizuno JPX919 Hot Metal Pro

SHAFT Project X 6.0

FLEX Stiff

SET 4-Pw

RRP £120.00 / €155 per club

\$1000 set 4-Pw

VIDEO REVIEW 

## CONCLUSION:

After testing the Tour model in Mauritius in December and playing with them ever since I was looking forward to testing this model and I will say straight from the off that they were fantastic, to the point one of the Golf Monthly guys who was on the first part of this testing trip in Germany said

as we walked off the Beckenbuier course our second 18-holes of the day "You were certainly flag chasing today"

And I have to say that is down the forgiveness that has been engineered into these irons with the stability frame and the wider sole giving fantastic turf interaction. Looking down at address the irons have a thicker top line than the Tour model, but it certainly isn't to the detriment

of the beautiful curves the designers have produced.

The Hotel Metal Pro does give you greater distances than the Tour model the ball does really rocket off the face, but you don't lose any of that feel and solid strike acoustic at impact. These are great clubs and if you a looking for a beautifully crafted set of irons with fast ball speeds off the face for added distance that retain feel and give a pure strike at impact, then you need to get the JPX 919 Hot Metal Pros in your hands.





# BUILDING ON PERFECTION

Odyssey have resurrected the Tuttle putter in their new Stroke-Lab range James Mason finds out if this old dog has leant a new trick



## TECHNOLOGY

The biggest innovation in the Stroke lab range is the shaft, all the technology evolves around this. The stroke lab shaft has been made 40 grams lighter, this is because they have used a new multi-material that combines a graphite body and a steel tip. Odyssey have split that 40gms moving 10g into the head via two sole weights and then added 30g to the tip at the grip end of the shaft.

Odyssey state because of the redistribution of weight you now have improved consistency in the backswing of your putting stroke, face-angle at impact, ball speed, and ball direction, when compared with tests against an Odyssey #7 putter.

The shaft is now stiffer and has a lower torque, which gives greater control of the heavier putter head. All this is topped off with Odysseys white hot microhinge face insert, that utilises dozens of microhinges embedded across the face to help promote topspin at impact for a smooth roll and distance control.

## CONCLUSION

I loved the way the shaft moves into your body putting you into the correct position with your head over the ball, something that I need help with, this was picked up on the Quintic putting system when I went for a lesson so any little help in that direction I am sure we can all use.

The compact head made me feel I was in control of my golf ball on the green and really inspired confidence and with the alignment lines on the putter head helping me concentrate at address. I also liked the feel of the heavier head and think the weight saving that Odyssey have produced and the redistribution between the head and the top of the shaft works perfectly.

Like all putters it comes down to feel and I loved the feel of the Turtle as soon as I picked it up and the first few putts confirmed those initial feelings. Before you make a final decision on your next putter purchase make sure you get the Stroke Lab Tuttle putter in your hands, you can thank me later!



### CLUB TESTED

**Odyssey Stroke Lab Tuttle putter**

**SHAFT** Stroke Lab

**LENGTH** 36"

**RRP** £239.00 / €259.00 / \$249.99

**VIDEO REVIEW** 



Left and Below: Address, face and rear views of the Tuttle putter. Right: The new shaft design in the Odyssey Stroke-Lab range.



ODYSSEY STROKE LAB



# RIDING THE WAVE

Three days of 36-holes James Mason decides what better time to put the new Mizuno Wave Cadence GTX golf shoes through their paces





## TECHNOLOGY:

The GTX is the next generation in the Wave Cadence design, Mizuno describe this shoe as the Ultimate long-distance golf shoe and you will read from my conclusion I can certainly vouch for that. The Wave Cadence is based on Mizuno's award winning running shoes that blends comfort and support.

The Wave Cadence gives you plenty of lateral stability and traction which is achieved using a plate that is engineered to handle uneven terrain, that works with the IG Multi Technology (Impact Grip System), giving you extra grip and stability throughout your golf swing. This system helps spread the

force generated during your golf swing more evenly across the foot.

Mizuno have also added durability and traction with the introduction of X10 carbon rubber that allows high-impact areas in the heel to last longer, this works with the U41C that is a light midsole compound engineered for comfort and performance.

The GTX model also comes with the GORE-TEX waterproof system, the world-renowned membrane provides optimum footwear climate comfort due to the marriage of durable waterproofness and optimised breathability that keeps your feet both dry and comfortable.



Top: GORE-TEX waterproof system at work. Left: Available in navy/grey, grey, black, white

## CONCLUSION:

I believe I stated when I reviewed the first version of the Wave Cadence golf shoe that I am a trainer loving person and classic adidas trainers are my footwear of choice, but I do have a very large collection, so I was more than happy when Mizuno released the Wave Cadence golf shoe.

The design is perfect, but design can only go so far when you play golf but I am more than happy to report that these babies stand up to 36-holes of golf, can support your feet when you decided you really are going to go after a drive for a bit of extra distance and when you finally walk off the 18th green for the second time in a day your feet don't feel like you're wearing lead boots.

I played back-to-back 36-holes in two days on my trip to the

Quellness Resort in Germany and then another 36-holes in Ireland playing Galgorm Castle GC in the morning and Portstewart GC in the afternoon, not once did my feet feel tired at the end of the day, no blisters and more importantly no peeling skin. The lightweight but sturdy design makes these the perfect golf shoe for the long summer nights ahead and for those who play 36-hole competitions during the summer.

I always love the look on fellow golfers faces when I put a pair of Mizuno golf shoes in their hands, they really can't believe how light they are and I know once you put a pair on you will know exactly what I mean, please make sure you get a pair of Mizuno golf shoes in your hands before your next purchase, the rest will be history.





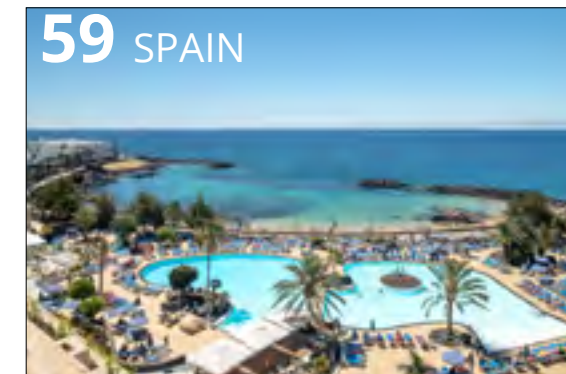
47 ENGLAND



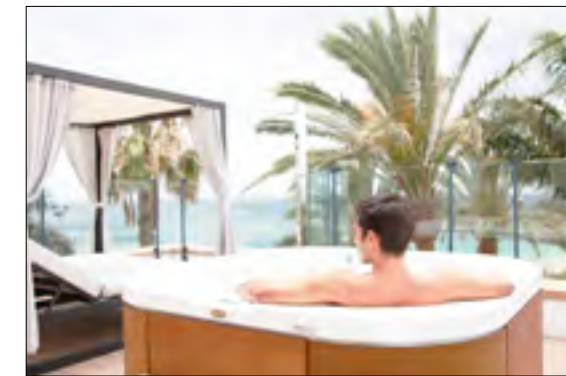
52 GERMANY



REVIEW



59 SPAIN



VIEW.COM

STAY, PLAY & SPA



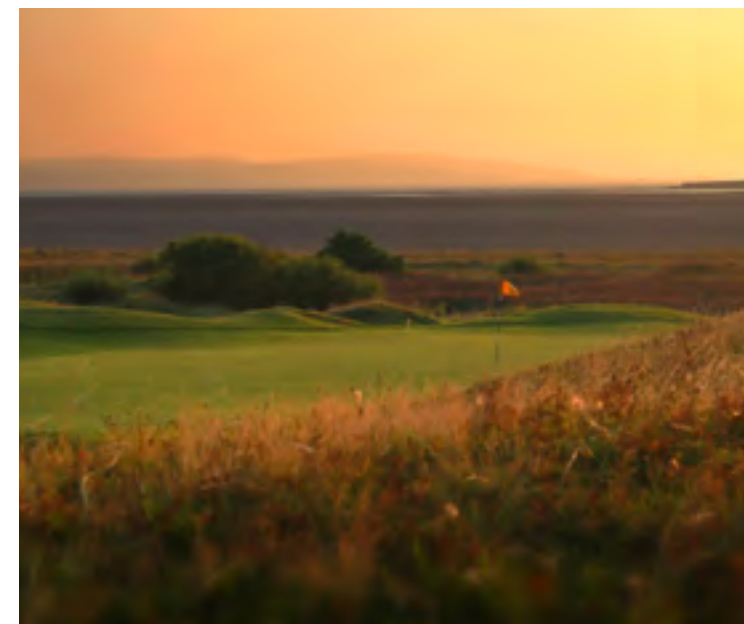
# HILLBARK HOTEL & SPA

Liverpool, England

By BERNADETTE KENNEDY & JAMES MASON

## ROYALLY PLACED

Hillbark hotel and spa is perfectly placed to take advantage of two fantastic Royal Open Championship golf courses, while the hotel offers, elegance, unforgettable dining experience and a spa that can give you a new body!..



kevinmurraygolfphotography.com







Above: Sunset over the beautiful Royal Liverpool Golf Club



## GOLFING ROYALTY

### Royal Liverpool Golf Club

Two royal courses are in easy reach of the Hillbark hotel and I will start with Royal Liverpool also known as Hoylakem it hosted its first Open in 1897 and has held a total of twelve (12) Opens since then. The club was founded in 1869 on what was the racecourse of the Liverpool Hunt Club. Hoylake was awarded its 'Royal' prefix in 1871 due to the patronage of the Duke of Connaught, one of Queen Victoria's sons.

As I drive through the gates, the red-brick clubhouse just oozes history. Once you get inside, however, the facilities have been thoroughly modernised and there is a wonderful display of memorabilia showing the club's rich history.

After checking in at the pro shop I head out to the starter, who gives me a few pointers about the course as I look down the first fairway. On my right is the practice ground, out-of-bounds. On my left, the clubhouse, also out-of-bounds. No pressure then! Lucky I'd warmed up first.

I've managed to hit a good drive and cut the corner off the dogleg right with my second shot giving me a two-putt par.

The course was originally designed by Robert Chambers and George Morris, younger brother of Old Tom. This was extended to 18 holes in 1871. Harry Colt redesigned the course in 1924 and Fred Hawtree had another go in the 1960s. The final redesign was undertaken in 2000/01 in preparation for the Open Championship five years later. →

## HILLBARK HOTEL & SPA

I am in the taxi from Liverpool Lime Street Station with my partner and heading to the Hillbark Hotel, I have to say I am excited and curious at the same time. Originally built in 1891 for soap manufacturer Robert William Hudson by Liverpool architects George Enoch Grayson and Edward A. L. Ould, the now hotel was moved brick by brick, timber by timber from Bidston Hill Birkenhead to its present location at Royden Park on the Wirral.

As we turn off the road onto the pebble stoned drive I set eyes on the wonderful building surrounded by beautiful green scenery, we pull up by the large fountain in the courtyard and the entrance to the hotel, where we are promptly greeted by the concierge staff and it's little details like that which make this is the only 5-star hotel on Merseyside.

Stepping into the hotel feels like walking into history, solid oak beams and woodwork, with leaded windows filling the hotel with light, this hotel just oozes character. Check-in was speedy →



Top right: Relaxing by the pool. Bottom right: The beautiful decor in one of Argentario's guest rooms.







It's been a wonderful summer in England this year and I'm playing the course in similar conditions to when Tiger Woods won the championship here that 2006: light-brown, dry, fast-running fairways with true rolling, quick greens. Perfect summer links conditions.

Highlights to look out: the very deep bunker to the right of the eighth green and the beautiful par-3, eleventh hole known as the 'Alps' which is played from an elevated tee with the River Dee and Hilbre Island to your left. But one of my favourite holes is the 390-yard par-4 ninth. Apart from the great coastal views from the tee, I love the second shot into this punchbowl of a green that just nestles in the dunes.

**Royal Birkdale**

An hour's drive sees me pulling up outside the wonderful white art-deco clubhouse at Royal →

*“light-brown, dry, fast-running fairways with true rolling, quick greens. Perfect summer links conditions.”*



Above and below: Sunsets and fescue at Royal Liverpool



Above: Time to relax after our spa treatments in the Contessa's Bar. Left: The beautiful dark wood panelling in the Great Hall.

and efficient and while our luggage was whisked away to our room we are given the option of refreshments in the Contessa's Bar, which serves hot and cold beverages along with alcoholic drinks. A log fire is crackling away and the chic furnishings compliment the traditional pieces, with the glass and oak bar as the centre piece. We sat by one of the large windows and relaxed gazing out to the wonderful gardens and greenery of Royden Park that seems to stretch for miles.

It was time to see our room and we are escorted up the main staircase, through wooden corridors and then across a balcony which looks out onto the main lounge, with its stained-glass windows, wood panelling with carvings

and another magnificent fireplace. This I am told is where the hotel holds industry events and weddings and a marquee can be added for additional guests.

We have been allocated the bridal suite, the Hillbark hotel has eighteen rooms and range from family, classic and junior suites, with each having its own unique design and furnishings and named after a ship that was docked in Liverpool harbour when the Hillbark was built. Opening the door was like stepping back in time to a luxurious Victorian Master bedroom. The large four poster bed with its dark oak surroundings and warm colours dominates the room and the furnishings accentuate this. Dark wooden beams were juxtaposed against the high white painted ceiling and →





Right: Reception at the Solaia spa



Left: Bunkering at the par 3, 12th hole at Royal Birkdale. Two iconic clubhouses  
Below top: Royal Liverpool with its red brick and Bottom: Royal Birkdale's art deco design

Birkdale, one of the most iconic clubhouses in golf. It opened in 1935 and is unchanged apart from periodic refurbishments, and it stands imperious above the 18th green.

JH Taylor and Frederic George Hawtee were given the commission of creating a tough-but-fair test of golf in 1922, and their philosophy was to lay out holes in the valleys and between the sand-hills of the Birkdale Hills, which gives some fantastic vantage points for spectators during Open Championships.

After checking in, I head down to see the starter and can just tell I'm in for a wonderful afternoons golf. The paths to the tee are all immaculately-placed. Everything is in perfect condition. It's another tough opening tee shot but I do like the way the hole is nestled between the dunes and gently doglegs to the left. A good tee shot leaves me only an 8-iron in, and holing the birdie putt I nearly skip to the second tee.

I have to say at this point, I've played Royal Birkdale several times and it vies as my →

***“Their philosophy was to lay out holes in the valleys and between the sand-hills of the Birkdale Hills, which gives some fantastic vantage points for spectators during Open Championships”***



we also had a long dining table dark oak chairs and a lounge area with two sofas placed perfectly by the attractive fireplace.

As you would imagine the bathroom perfectly complemented the bedroom with black and grey marble interior and a built in jacuzzi bath and a walk-in shower.

### Solaia spa

A tranquil feeling encapsulates you as you walk into the Solaia spa, we are greeted by the lovely Claire who is the manager. The staff are friendly and put us at ease straight away giving us refreshments while informing us about the treatments we had chosen. We were also asked what we would like to gain from our Solaia spa experience. I was certainly impressed that they wanted to fulfil our needs and expectations from our spa experience.

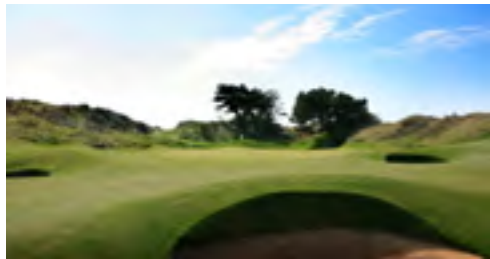
We both had a hydro bath treatment first, for those who are not familiar with this treatment it is a relaxing steamy experience and you can feel the stress, strains and tensions start to ease from your body and of course our glass of champagne added that little luxury and more bubbles to our hydro bath

experience.

We are being escorted to our treatment rooms. I have chosen the Solaia afternoon escape which I would highly recommend to anyone who wants to leave feeling rejuvenated and lifted. The facial treatment I am receiving is out of this world with the different textures, aromas and temperatures from the various oils, creams, scrubs and mask were absolutely astounding – all the products used are from the Carita Paris collection. I then have the full body massage which is outstanding and I leave the room like I am walking on air; my face is glowing and my body feels brand new.

My partner has chosen the sports massage which is perfect for those who have just finished a round of golf, he describes this as a relaxing but firm massage, which relieved the tension in his muscles. The masseuse used an oil which was warm and helped give a depth to the massage and really got deep into his muscles. They started on his back, then progressed to his hamstrings, calves and feet. Then turning over on to his chest, arms and legs, his comments of “I feel like I have been placed in a new body”, did make me smile, but I know →





COURSE VIDEO 



Left top to bottom: Various views from Royal Birkdale. Below: The 17th hole where Padriag Harrington holed an eagle putt on his way to winning the 2008 Open Championship



number one course in the world with Formby. Put simply, Formby becomes my no1 between September and November due to the wonderful colours that come to the fore in the autumn months.

All the par-3s are perfectly-designed holes and the first of them arrives at the fourth, but for me it's the two on the back-nine – the 12th at 181-yards and the 14th at 199-yards – and it's hard to choose a favourite between them.

The highlight is the finishing holes 17 and 18. Who can forget Padraig Harrington's second shot into that long thin green to set up an eagle chance at 17 in 2008 as he went on to win his second Open Championship? Or Tom Watson's second shot to the 18th green in 1983?

In fact, that stroke by Watson is part of Royal Birkdale's unique claim to fame: at the height of his game, it secured Tom's fifth Open Championship. No one believed that he wouldn't go on to equal Harry Vardon's record of six Open Championships, but like Peter Thomson back in 1965 Royal Birkdale proved to be the scene of his last Open Championship victories.



exactly what he meant.

After our massages we were taken to the chill out zone with relaxing music, refreshments and best of all, recliners so we could drift off to complete what has been a wonderful afternoon.

### Dining

All that relaxing has got me famished and I couldn't wait to eat, on entering the restaurant we are greeted by our server for the night, Shani who was very friendly and made sure all our needs were met so we could enjoy our dining experience.

Our table is in the wine cellar and we are sharing this space with over 700 bottles of wine – my Irish ancestors would certainly be proud of the company I keep! – The Hillbark hotel also offers a private dining experience. The bottles are stored in a glass cabinet which surrounds the room and is aesthetically stunning, add to this the candle light setting and Graham the pianist playing classic tunes the setting couldn't be more perfect.

Hats off to the chef the food was spectacular. We ordered two starters, the thinly sliced octopus in lemon oil and the tomato, mozzarella and basil salad.

For the mains we have opted for the

pan roasted rack of lamb – which I would definitely recommend – and the grilled rib of beef with a side order of Lyonnaise potatoes, steamed broccoli and glazed roasted carrots. The meat was cooked to perfection, the different flavours and soft textures left you wanting more.

Of course, we couldn't skip dessert and we went for the Posset Fruit de la Passion aux Fruits Tropicaux but you can certainly spend a lot of time studying the delicious desert options, I think I gained a few pounds just dreaming of what each one tasted like.

How could we not end the perfect day by sitting next to the roaring log fire in the bar, with a few glasses of wine, It has been a wonderful day, from the moment we hit the pebble stoned drive to sitting here next to the fire, the staff have been attentive and looked after our every need. The elegant splendor and history of the hotel and how can I not forget our new bodies courtesy of Clare and her staff at the Spa.

The Hillbark hotel is perfectly placed for all the golf courses on England's Golf Coast and the bustling city of Liverpool, its nightlife and of course its fantastic football team, all you need to do now is book your stay.



# QUELLNESS GOLF RESORT

Bad Griesbach im Rottal, Germany

By JAMES MASON and CHARMAINE HIBBERT

## QUELLE SURPRISE

How can a resort which boasts five championship golf courses, three hotels, each with thermal mineral water pools, spas, steam rooms, saunas, hot stone beds, seven restaurants and seven bars go unnoticed? **James Mason** and **Charmaine Hibbert** travel to Bavaria to discover this hidden gem





## FOR GOLFERS

When you think of golf and spa resorts your mind wanders to America, but when it comes to Europe the only real golf resort that springs to mind would be La Manga with its three courses, teaching facilities, spa and fitness centre, but like me you would be wrong – a thought that had me slightly worried as I am never wrong!

Quellness Golf Resort in Germany sits between Munich and Strasburg has 10 golf courses that are all within 8 minutes' drive from each other, five of which are 18-hole championship golf courses, a nine-hole training course and the best teaching and practice

facilities I have seen anywhere in the world and comes with a PGA Premium Golf School tag.

There are 25-30 teaching professionals during the high season with a mixture of 109 covered bays – 21 of which can be heated in winter – 210 outdoor grass bays, 1 covered bunker, 72-hole outdoor and 18-hole indoor putting greens.

Quellness Golf Resort is the perfect destination for golfers of all abilities from those who have never picked up a golf club and want to learn the basics to tour professional wanting to work on every part of their game and everyone in between those points. →



Left: Looking down the 18th at Allianz Nickolmann. Below left: Aerial view of the 9th on the Beckenbauer course. Below Right: The Penning estate, part of the Quellness resort.



***Finding a culinary delight with your favourite drink to wind down after a fun filled or relaxing day won't be a problem***

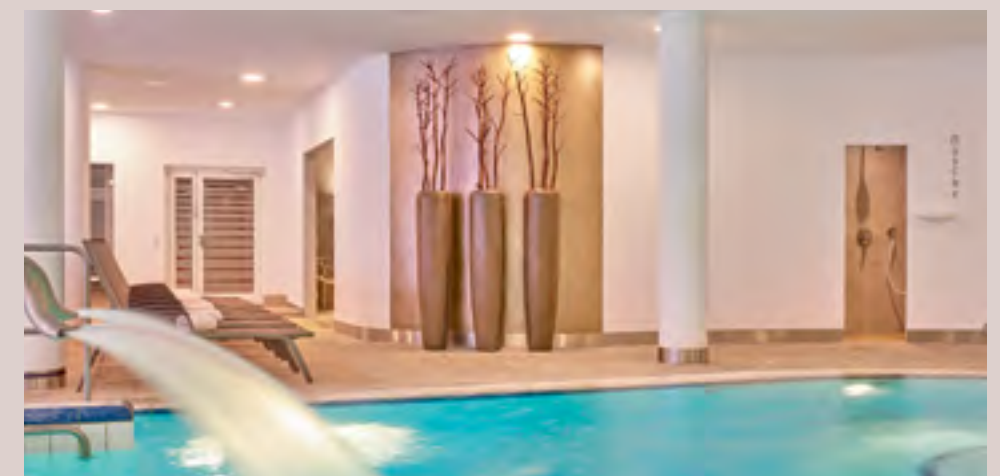
## FOR NON GOLFERS

If you are a non-golfer then don't panic there are spas, massage treatments, thermal spring pools, saunas, whirlpools, hot tubs, steam rooms, hot stone beds and much more to help you relax and take the stress of everyday life and make it all melt away.

There are also day trip destinations, Nordic walking and hiking with 17 marked and signed routes, cycle tours with 12 multi-faceted cycle tours from 17km to 50km and if you don't want to bring your own bike you can hire one at the resort.

The resort is happy to organise guided horse-riding tours for guests with local business for beginners and advanced riders and finally the Flipper swimming school where classes are not only on offer to kids but also adults at the Das Ludwig Hotel.

There are three hotels to choose from, including kid friendly or adult only and with seven restaurants and seven bars, finding a culinary delight with your favourite drink to wind down after a fun filled or relaxing day won't be a problem. →



Top: One of the many saunas on the resort. Right: Relaxation and play time in one of the pools on the resort.





Stunning views at the Allianz Nickolmann course

COURSE  
VIDEO

### ALLIANZ NICKOLMANN COURSE

A hearty breakfast was needed today to set me up for 36-holes of golf and the Maximillian Hotel at the Quellness Golf Resort certainly done that and a quick 10-minute journey in the mini bus sees me warming up on the practice ground and then it off to the first tee, which sits right beside the beautifully designed Bavarian style clubhouse.

The tee is raised but not elevated it takes out the dip in the fairway and puts you level with the landing area in the fairway and it is a gentle opener of 343-yards and for the big hitters out there it can be driveable. I hit a good drive and just leave a 60-yard pitch shot that to my surprise I shank right, but recover for an up and down par.

As I pull up next to the 2nd tee – and yes, I certainly recommend a buggy – I have a little smile to myself, the course suddenly opens up

with some stunning views and I make my way to the elevated tee. Water and two fairway bunkers on the left and water on the right and a 42-yard deep green what's not to like!

The first of three par 3s on the front nine arrives and 210-yards from the tips – there are four teeing options here – it's a tough hole especially as the tees are positioned so they bring the two bunkers on the right into play making it a tight angle with a small opening to come into the green, which then brings the back bunker into play should you go long.

Standing over my ball at the 4th hole looking down at the green with the pond to the left and two bunkers to the right, I contemplate what it will be like once the course is in full bloom. Its early May and the snows here only melted a month ago and yet the course is looking good for only a month's growth and come the summer this view will be stunning.

The back nine opens with a par 5 and another stunning hole, standing on the elevated tee looking down the fairway and yet more wonderful Bavarian views, there's bunkers all the way down the landing area on the left and then water to the right in the landing area for your second shot, it's another wonderfully designed hole.

More stunning elevated tees come at the par 5, 13th hole and the par 3, 14th hole. All the par 3s are well designed holes but for me the 14th just tips it with the elevated tee and the old barn sitting behind the green.

The course comes to a close with a fitting finale, I hit a 3-wood over the bunker on the left of the dogleg, I slightly kick myself when I get to my ball for not taking the driver as I missed out on using the sloop to gain extra yardage. The view down into the green is perfect, the beautiful clubhouse sits as a backdrop, there is →

## MAXIMILIAN HOTEL

*The bar is filled with laughter and conversations taking place and this all adds to the great vibe*

After a two hour scenic journey we arrive at the Maximillian Hotel at the Quellness Golf Resort, but come November that journey time from Munich airport will be halved due to the completion of the new highway. As I walk into the reception I get an instant homely feeling, it's strange but wonderfully welcoming. Beyond the reception desk is a high-ceilinged seating area and the bar is filled with laughter and conversations taking place and this all adds to the great vibe.

As I make my way to my room on the second floor, space is a word that is floating in my mind, the lifts are deep, the corridors are very wide and on entering my room the bathroom is on my left and through a door is my room which is a very large space with a large double bed, a sofa, coffee table and lounging chair. Of course, there is the face dive into the cotton covered pillows and everything →

Below: Lounge area and bar at the Maximillian hotel





water left and two bunkers on the right. Another great golf hole and I have to say Bernard Langer has used the land perfectly and produced a wonderful golf course.

### ST WOLFGANG GOLFPLATZ UTTLAU

After a wonderful dinner and a few beers in the courtyard of the clubhouse at St Wolfgang Golfplatz Uttlau and a special mention and recommendation for the Ox chop what a meal and it certainly set me up for my second 18-holes of the day.

Making our way to the first tee I have to say, I am not a fan of uphill blind shots and as I get to my ball and look down to the green it's certainly a tough second shot as the green maybe 44-yards long but its 14-yards wide and the angle you come into it makes it hard to hold the green. The good news is the hole only measures 311-yards so you will only be going in with a lob wedge.

If you get a solid tee shot away on the 2nd you can make use of the hill on this 587-yard par 5 and a solid 3-wood sees me just short of the green and chip and putt sees me walk off with a birdie. There's another uphill blind tee shot on the 3rd and the 4th brings up the first of five par 3s on the course, which is played downhill from an elevated tee.

The back nine opens up with straight par 4, but the 11th and 12th pick up the pace. The 164-yard hole is played to a raised green from an elevated tee with the green lying across you and at only 16-yards wide with three bunkers carved in to the bank waiting for anything short, par is a good score here.

I make my way to the 12th it's a bit of a buggy ride up the hill but when I get to the tee and look down to the fairway that is some 60 feet below, it's yet more beautiful vistas of the Bavarian countryside. This is a risk and reward par 5 and at 502-yard if you get a good drive away you have to decide do you go for the green that has water protecting it front and back with a green that is designed to take a wedge shot and not a long iron.

The 12th is the first of three par 5s on the back nine and the final one comes at the 18th it's a shame it's a cold day, but I am sure come summer members here must be licking their lips at the opportunity of making several birdies. It's another risk and reward hole for the longer hitters out there at 538-yards and like the 12th there is water protecting the green at the front.

While I wasn't impressed with the start and →



COURSE  
VIDEO 

***It's a bit of a buggy ride up the hill but when I get to the tee and look down to the fairway that is some 60 feet below, it's yet more beautiful vistas of the Bavarian countryside.***

Top left: The stone wall at the risk and reward 12th hole at St Wolfgang Golfplatz Uttlau. Bottom Left: Looking down the par 5, 16th hole.



Above: One of the rooms at Maximillion Hotel. Below: Stuben restaurant one of the seven at the resort.

is perfect, and on closer inspection I have a very large walk-in shower, I find out later that some of the other journalists have baths, but I certainly prefer to have a larger shower.

The resort has three hotels here, Fürstenhof and Das Ludwig are the other two with Das Ludwig being family specific. There are other apartments, hotels and restaurants here run by other companies but the Quellness Resort hotels are based on each having a thermal pool, steam rooms, saunas, gyms and of →







the uphill blind shots, once I had got past the first three hole the course started to improve and Kurt Rossknecht has done a fantastic job on the back nine.

**PORSCHÉ COURSE**

Arriving at the Porsche and Beckenbauer golf courses you could see these were going to be completely different to yesterday's courses. First up was the Porsche course designed by Bernhard Langer & Kurt Rossknecht and unfortunately it is raining hence there is no →



Above: Stone wall partial island green at the 13th on the Porsche course.  
Below: Water to the right of the 6th green.

Below left and right: Sauna, couple massages and treatments.

*The thermal waters of Bad Griesbach and on the Quellness Resort are recognised to be medicinal springs and their legendary healing properties amplify your feelings of wellbeing*

course treatments, but because of our busy schedule I did have time to sample a treatment on this trip, but I did get to relax in the wellness facilities at the Maximillian hotel.

The thermal waters of Bad Griesbach and on the Quellness Resort are recognised to be medicinal springs and their legendary healing properties amplify your feelings of wellbeing and help balance, it can also help with rheumatism, spinal diseases, osteoarthritis and osteoporosis, and many of these ailments are suffered by golfers and I know James made sure he enjoyed the pools after he played golf and couldn't keep off the hot stoned bed in one of the relaxation rooms.

The thermal pool flows from inside to out so has a constant temperature of 28°C so even on a cold Bavarian day the waters outside are still nice and warm, but I spent of my time between the →





video of me playing the course with this review.

Standing on the tee of the 374-yard dogleg right opening hole I realise this is going to be a more American style design, the topography is flatter and my drive makes the left edge of the fairway leaving a wedge in over the little brook that runs front and left of the green.

After taking my buggy over the small stone bridge I make my way to the green and start to see the subtle complexes giving plenty of pin placement opportunities, I could also feel underfoot how much harder the greens were and that the ball would run a lot faster than yesterday. I just miss my birdie putt but I am already impressed by the conditioning of the course even in this weather.

The second brings up the first par 5 and at only 504-yards it's all risk and reward and come the summer and harder fairways you could be hitting a long iron into this green, but with water on the left and bunkers right and back you

may be better off playing it as a three-shot hole, which I am glad I did making my single putt birdie.

The 3rd has a beautiful church spire as a backdrop and the Rott river runs down the left side of the fairway on the dogleg left 4th hole, where unlike me you need to be on the right-hand side of the fairway so you can see the green.

The first of three par 3s on this nine arrives at the 5th hole, measuring 218-yards from the tips but there are four teeing options to choose from. The second par 3 comes at the 7th playing → 171-yards, there are two lots of water here but they don't really come into play and I would be more concerned about the bunkers front and back.

The back nine closes with the third of the par 3s weighing in at 166-yards and has a raised long thin green with run off areas and bunkers left and right.

The back nine opens up with 381-yard dogleg left but it's the closing holes starting from the 16th that I was most impressed with, the hole is more of a sharp right turn than a dogleg and for the longer hitters they can certainly go for the risk and reward option over the trees. Both the par 3s on the back nine have water hazards and the 17th has water right and back with a bunker on the left and measures 187-yards, it does have a decent size green with lots of contours and could certainly be a card wrecker if you're not careful.

The 18th is a beautiful finishing hole and can certainly hold a sting in the tail with water running all the way along the right and then protects the green on the right-hand side and you will be playing your second shot over that water to a very thin green unless you decided to play it as a three shot hole. According to the course planner the green measures 40-yards deep and 18 yards wide, but because of the angle of the →

Below: Church spire at the 3rd hole on the Porsche course

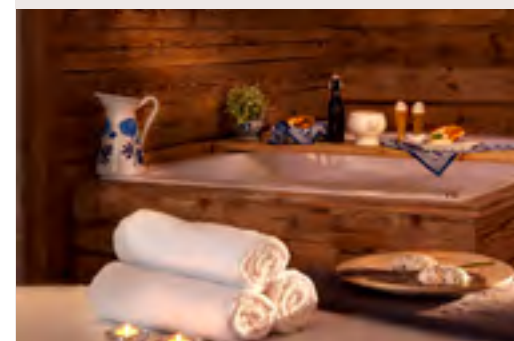


steam room, sauna, hot spring pool and of course those hot stone beds that James wanted me to highlight, the beds are shaped in a curve like a tall S made from stone but heated perfectly, they really do warm the very fibres of your body and for those with back problems they are perfect especially (as I am told) after 36 holes of golf.

### Dining

Fresh fruit, freshly cooked pastisseries, mueslis, cereals or cooked breakfasts or a mixture of everything is all waiting for you to enjoy each morning. There are many restaurants to choose from around the complex but we decided to eat at the hotels main restaurant enjoying a buffet meal with lots of fish and meat to choose from.

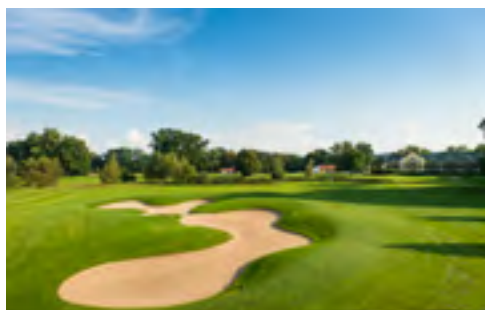
We also sampled a Bavarian night themed restaurant with accordion player and Bavarian music, again this was buffet style with so many succulent dishes to choose from and lots of beer and wine flowing, I ate so much I needed to spend the next day at the well-equipped gym, but the →



Top to bottom: You can relax in your room, hot tub or around one of the many pools







Right top: Fairway bunker at the 9th. Right bottom: Bridge at the 17th, Below: Water protectig the 18th green



COURSE VIDEO

green lying across you coming in with a long iron there really isn't much putting surface to work with and at 469-yards it's a tough finale.

For me the back nine edged it over the front especially with the design of the two par 3s and that tough finish, but it is a wonderfully designed course and one that I know you are going to enjoy as much as I have despite the rain.

### BECKENBAUER COURSE

My second 36-holes in two days, but the steak at lunch and a nice cold beer have set me up nicely and I can't wait to start. The Beckenbauer course is the one they used for the BMW International Open which is normally played after the US Open, before it moved to Hamburg.

The first is a straight gentle opener at 421-yards, there is water to the right of the green but it doesn't really come into play and a bunker on the right of the fairway in the landing area. The second is a beautiful golf hole, a dogleg right of 374-yards is all about placement off the tee and I have managed to place mine perfectly, there is water protecting the right side of the fairway and sitting in front of the green and you will need to carry it with your second shot, the green lies across you and is 43-yards wide and 28-yards deep and has lots of contours.

The first of the par 3s arrives at the 4th and

has water down the left-hand side with a deep bunker short and left and played to a raised green and at 217-yards it's a tough hole, but there are four teeing options for you to choose from.

The church spire in the village is again a backdrop here on the long 470-yard par 4, 5th hole. The 7th brings up the other par 3 on this nine and another tough hole measuring 225-yards to a raised green protected by two bunkers right and one left fortunately my 3-wood lands just short of the putting surface and rolls up onto the green.

The back nine closes with water again making an appearance protecting the green, but it's the tee shot especially from the white tees as my ball lands right next to the OOB on the right, there are also two fairway bunkers in the landing area that pinch into the fairway that make this a really challenging hole.

The first of two par 5s in three holes starts the back nine and at 514-yard it's certainly a very good birdie chance, but there is water down the right and a stream just short of the green to look out for. The 12th brings up the other par 5 and this is all risk and reward if you get a good tee shot away, measuring 566-yards if you position your tee shot you can play your second shot through the gap in the trees on the right but be warned there is water short of the raised green,

fortunately I didn't hit my 3-wood that well just clipping a tree and landing short of the water, but coming into the green at this angle there is a bunker waiting for anything long that doesn't hold the green.

I must say with the sun out I am really enjoying the course, water is again in play if you go too far left on the dogleg left 13th and the 14th brings the first of the par 3s on the back nine, which is protected by two bunkers short left and right. The second par 3 comes at the 17th and has water short and right and two bunkers long with the green laying at an angle from the tee,

The course closes with more water protecting the right of the green with two fairway bunkers right on the corner of the dogleg left hole and with the hole measuring 468-yards it certainly is a tough finishing hole and one that has seen a lot of drama on the European Tour.

It has been a wonderful day's golf and both the Porsche and Beckenbauer courses are in fantastic condition especially for only being a month after the snow has cleared, the manicuring is fantastic and come the summer the greens will be fast and true. Sitting outside the clubhouse with a cold beer all of us agree Bernhard Langer & Kurt Rossknecht have produced two great golf courses.



steam room, hot spring pool, stone beds and relaxation rooms were calling to me and how could I refuse, thermal pools are all about balance after all!

### Contact information

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Top to bottom:  
 Some of the  
 many non golfing  
 activities available.





# HOT ROCKS

Stephanie Mason leaves no hot stone unturned, no cuisine uneaten to bring you her hotel and spa recommendations for your next trip to the wonderful island of Lanzarote





## British Airways

It has taken me less than an hour to arrive from London to Gatwick Airport, but my excitement is because I will be travelling in style with British Airways. A swift passage sees me through security and of course a short excursion around the duty free, but now it's off to the BA premier Lounge, my expectations are high and I am not disappointed. When flying business class, access to the premium lounge is included, which means no charge and no queuing for food, snacks, tea, coffee, soft drinks, fast wifi and for those like me who want to start their holiday early alcoholic beverages!

## Grand Teguisse Playa Hotel

Green vine leaves, water streams and a peaceful tranquility would have you thinking I'm describing Tarzan's lair, but I am stood in the lobby of one of Lanzarote's 4 star hotels.

Grand Teguisse Playa is just a short drive

from Arriçife airport, the design of this hotel is very unique and unlike any other hotel I've reviewed so far. On the lower floor there is bar area surrounded by a carousel of chairs which slowly moves around the bar, giving you an ever-changing view and with this wonderful hotel interior you definitely wouldn't want to stay in one spot. Now how practical that is after a few mojitos I don't know, but I intend to put that to the test later!

The hotel also has a long stream running through the floor and a stage in the middle for the evening's entertainment. I head up to my room for a quick change before dinner and it is certainly in keeping with the hotels theme of paradise, sandy coloured beech floors, with cloud white walls and sheets and a hint of aqua blue. I get a tranquil feeling as I walk into the room which will come in handy after a few glasses of wine with dinner and of course those

Mojitos.

The restaurant has a buffet with a wide selection of gastronomical delights, from fresh salad and fruit to seasoned meat and fish; they also have a chef on hand cooking up a storm. For those of you that love just hanging out at the hotel for your vacation this is the place to be, they have a range of activities such as Billiards, giant chess, Ping-Pong, 2 tennis courts – with optional lessons – and for golfers and non-golfers they have mini golf, where the keener golfers can get a little practice in before hitting the many great golf courses that Lanzarote has to offer. If that all sounds a little too energetic and you just want to relax and soak up some rays and take a dip to cool off, then there are two swimming pools to choose from one of which is specifically for children. →



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



Far left: The pool at night. Above: Bar and reception at Grand Teguisse Playa Hotel. Left: Room with a view of the beach.





### Lanzarote Golf Resort & PY Hotel and Spa

Today is a very exciting day as I am visiting PY hotel and spa for a tour and hot stone treatment, which I've never had before. Walking into the spa I get a very Zen type of vibe with its rustic décor and mood lighting. The masseuse starts off with placing a towel on my back the stones are then placed over the towel so you feel the heat from the stones without causing any damage to your skin, she then starts to work on my arms with the stones in her hands, the warmth and pressure are just perfect.

Moving the stones from my back and putting fresh toasty ones on my arms whilst massaging my back with stones in hand, I can just feel myself slowly drifting away as my whole being starts to relax and enjoy the feeling.

That feeling of relaxing quickly disappears when the new stones are used on my face, unlike the hot stones the ones placed on my face are cold and I am informed this is to help with tightening the muscles where as on the body they use hot ones to loosen the muscles.

Once the massage is over and the masseuse gives me a few minutes to gather myself, I stand up and straight away I could feel the difference who knew I was walking round with such tension in my body. As well as feeling relaxed, my muscles feel rejuvenated, rested and I would definitely recommend not only this treatment but if you are planning to book a hotel with a spa this is the place to be. Now on to the tour of the hotel.

If Grand Teguisse Playa was Tarzans lair then this must be Captain Jack Sparrows, the hotel has a ship theme, white ropes and stairways that make you feel like you're walking the plank, tall green palm trees and straw beehut huts surrounding their six pools. The hotel consists of blocks A-D and depending on which one you stay in you will have a picturesque view of Playa Dorado's white sandy beach which is located a few steps from the hotel. Who doesn't love a bargain, well this hotel comes with a range of deals from all-inclusive to holiday golf packages. →



Top left: Wine display in the restaurant. Left: Hot stone treatment. Below: One of the room options. Right top to bottom: Some of the dishes on offer at the restaurant.







***Hats off to the chefs from the octopus to the steak everything was perfection, and not only was the food spectacular their creative presentation ideas from the volcano like smoke revealing a fishy dish to the hidden treasure in the bottle, it truly was an amazing experience.***

### Lava Hotel

It's time for lunch and we arrive at the 5-star Lava hotel, but first we tour the property which opened in 2018 and is already receiving rave reviews. Modern interiors pay tribute to local artists in the lobby and I'm already impressed, this hotel just oozes luxury. They have 154 rooms ranging from single rooms to junior suites and a variety in between, they will certainly have an option to suit your holiday needs.

In the evenings they have a late-night bar with light music so you can just relax and watch the sunset with your favourite beverage. It's time to head to the hotel's A la Carte restaurant and the menu already has my mouth watering, you pick your main course and the rest is down to the

chef. I was obviously misguided when I was told we were having lunch this was more like a feast, course after course and I keep telling myself I couldn't possibly eat anymore, but then another scrumptious dish would appear and well the pain I put myself through for you guys!

Hats off to the chefs from the octopus to the steak everything was perfection, and not only was the food spectacular their creative presentation ideas from the volcano like smoke revealing a fishy dish to the hidden treasure in the bottle, it truly was an amazing experience. Once the final dish had arrived and been consumed and plates cleared away there's was an impromptu standing ovation for the chefs, need I say more.

Top left: Balcony with a view. Top right: Relaxing by the pool. Right: One of the room options at Lava hotel.







***A great touch was the adult's only area for those staying without children, it feels like you are in a completely different hotel, a quiet zone with not one tantrum in sight or ear shot***



**Sentido Aequora Lanzarote Suites**

Only 5km from the Aricife airport stands Sentido Aequora Lanzarote Suites in keeping with Manrique's vision – for those of you who are not familiar with Cesar Manrique he is a famous artist and architect – the hotel is all white with apartment style buildings. Whether you are travelling with family, a partner or friends, the Sentido Aequora Lanzarote Suites has something to suit your needs. Stylish with modern décor, furnishings and showers, you will certainly not be disappointed when you open the door to your room.

The hotel caters for everyone, a great touch was

the adult's only area for those staying without children, it feels like you are in a completely different hotel, a quiet zone with not one tantrum in sight or ear shot. They also have an adult's only chill out area of course with its own bar for a relaxing drink in the sun.

If you have children with you then no problem they haven't left you out with a range of activities at the kids club, from dance classes to aqua gym in one out of the hotels 5 fresh water pools. The choices don't just stop there you also have four restaurants to dine in and a variety of different entertainment each evening.



Top, left and right: The many facilities and room options on offer at Sentido Aequora Lanzarote Suites.





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