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NUMBER 136 | AUTUMN 2021

Golf Car UK Delivering Excellence And Driving Revenue



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Michael Wells | Chief Executive, Carnoustie Golf Links



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# RAIN BIRD®

# "IF MY EXPERIENCE IS REPEATED ACROSS THE SPORT, WHS HAS GOT LUCKY WITH THE PANDEMIC"

## FAIR COMMENT

It's always amused me that the winners of the USA's Major League Baseball are gifted the moniker of world champions, when only one team in the 30 participants is from outside the USA – and they're in Canada!

Well, it appears England is getting in on the act following the introduction of the World Handicap System (WHS). As I understood it, the premise of the concept was that it would be a universal – well, worldwide anyway – system whereby golfers could enter their scores from wherever they were playing, from Aberdeen to Zanzibar.

But, from my own personal experience, the only scores I can enter outside of my home club are from other English clubs, courtesy of the EGU app. Having been lucky enough to travel recently – to France, Scotland and Spain – I was looking forward to posting my scores. And that's what I might as well have done, posted them, because I had to take a screenshot of my scores, which was then emailed to my home club with the request that somebody there might upload them.

If my experience is repeated across the sport, WHS has got lucky with the pandemic. The lack of travel has signally prevented a golfing hue and cry. But the travel door is starting to creak open again and once people start stepping through in their droves, there will be an expectation that WHS will work correctly.

If it is to fulfil its true potential, surely it needs a portal from where one can enter scores from any club in the world. **END**



### Words

Michael Lenihan  
Publisher

**CONTINUE THE DISCUSSION ONLINE**  
at [golfmanagement.eu.com](https://golfmanagement.eu.com)

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# FEATURING

## AUTUMN 2021



**BILL DONALD**  
LOCH LOMOND

"It's the Loch Lomond experience – that's why people join. That's what they want. The golf course is massively important, but they want service, they want quality. We've made it more of an experience, and that has turned the finances around."

18



**STEPHEN DUNDAS**  
THE SAN ROQUE CLUB

"The whole thing has been completely renovated. I mean we stripped everything back to just the trees, so just the routing basically. We've taken out 29 bunkers, three lakes, two streams and 18 hectares of turf."

24



# JASON O'MALLEY

WOBURN

"I was 34 when I started at Woburn and I sometimes look back and think they must've taken quite a gamble on a young person who might not have had the big names in his portfolio that maybe some of the others applying for the role had."

28



# KEITH PICKARD

QHOTELS

"A lot of my work within the first six months involved putting together a three-year investment plan centred around the golf product, the investment into course machinery and the investment into our golf courses."

36



# ANTHONY TARCHETTI

CHART HILLS

"Inheriting a golf course with almost no grass on the fairways was obviously a massive problem, so we set about creating a full-scale renovation plan to redevelop Chart Hills into the internationally recognised golf venue that it should be."

40

"WE'RE SEEING EVER-INCREASING DEMAND FOR THE MARKET-LEADING  
AND HIGHLY-SUCCESSFUL E-Z-GO RXV ELITE LITHIUM MODEL"



## COVER STORY

GOLFCARUK.COM



Moving into its twelfth year of supplying E-Z-GO Golf Cars and Cushman Utility Vehicles on a rental and outright purchase basis, the continued growth of Golf Car UK Ltd – now the UK's largest single golf buggy dealer – is based around delivering a high level of customer service coupled with the genuine desire to help golf clubs increase their revenue stream and improve the golfer's experience.

Golf Car UK sales director Matthew Patton explains: "Buggy usage has increased year-on-year for many successive years now, and average fleet sizes at golf clubs have almost doubled since we started. This has been driven by golfer demand.

"As is the case with most industries, improving technology means big strides in performance and golf buggies are no exception. The introduction of Lithium battery-powered models and their increasing popularity means lighter, hugely more efficient vehicles which are better for turf and cheaper to run.

"All of these benefits can be passed onto golf clubs and owners," added Patton.

"Our transparent quoting tool lets customers know exactly what is happening from the very first touch point through to vehicle handover, and we have a talented and dedicated team on hand throughout every stage of the rental or purchase process to ensure maximum customer satisfaction."

Golf Car UK's focus is on developing new and innovative solutions to help golf clubs

maximise buggy revenues. As an example, the firm will shortly launch a Loyalty Scheme – free to use – which will allow club managers to encourage repeat rentals whilst rewarding the regular member user. The new loyalty scheme will be further enhanced in 2022.

Golf Car UK is also creating an online portal for club managers, enabling instant access to fleet management tools such as contractual paperwork, vehicle service history, training, "how to" videos and much more.

The fast-rising Wiltshire-based company has outgrown its current locations, and is looking confidently at an even bigger future. A large new purpose-built facility is under construction: it will locate the whole Golf Car UK team under one roof, and is scheduled for completion in early 2022.

Golf Car UK managing director Chris Ivess-Mash said: "Despite the global pandemic, which has affected product supply across most industries, we have enjoyed world-class support from E-Z-GO, the global leader, and have been fortunate to secure a large number of vehicles for 2022.

"We're seeing ever-increasing demand for the market-leading and highly-successful E-Z-GO RXV Elite Lithium model, which already forms the cornerstone of many golf club buggy fleets.

"Therefore, forward planning is essential to secure your new buggy fleet for next season." **END**

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## EXCLUSIVE FEATURES



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"I'M GOING TO SAY IT AGAIN. GOLF SHOULD NOT BE AN OLYMPIC SPORT  
– AT LEAST, NOT IN ITS CURRENT FORMAT"



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GOLF CAR UK



## ON THE FRINGE

I'm getting a feeling of déjà vu. I'm sure I wrote something along these lines five years ago – and probably will again in 2024 – but as a) I'm still adamant I'm right; b) we have many new readers; and c) I can't be bothered to check out our back issues, I'm going to say it again. Golf should not be an Olympic sport – at least, not in its current format.

Even if we ignore the fact that the Olympics was, in theory anyway, for amateur sportsman – that horse has bolted long ago. There are professionals in many of the events now: football, for example – another sport that has no place in the Olympic Games.

Why do I have such a downer on the two sports that have provided me with a stipend for the last 30-odd years? Quite simply, Olympic gold should be the pinnacle of a sportsperson's career. In golf – and football – it's not. Golf has four Majors, annually, the kudos for which far outweighs an Olympic medal. What's more, if you're European or American, you can take part in a far more prestigious team event. In football, the World Cup is the zenith in international competition, closely followed by the European Championships, Copa America, and African Cup of Nations.

To those two sports, you can add tennis and basketball – highly paid professional sports with their own high-profile traditional events.

For those in canoeing, rowing, archery, shooting or track-and-field, the Olympics is the ultimate. Numero uno. But the presence of highly paid and instantly recognisable sports stars competing in other events turns the spotlight elsewhere and those excelling in – and I use the term respectfully – minor sports, fail to get the recognition and TV coverage their achievements deserve. There's even talk of cricket becoming an Olympic event and there are traditionalists in that sport who still believe the ICC World Cup isn't as prestigious as a random Test series or the four-day matches of the old-style County Championship. Lord(s) knows what they'll make of an Olympic competition.

If golf is to remain an Olympic event it should be in a format that is not used seriously anywhere else, such as mixed fourballs or foursomes. A knockout competition is much better suited to the Olympics anyway. And, if you're sitting there reading this thinking I'm merely a grumpy old sod, who's always banging on about how things were much better in my day, then you'd almost be right. I am. But not, I hasten to add, merely.

There are other things that get my goat about the Olympics, primarily, what constitutes a sport? Quite simply I feel that a sport ultimately produces a winner by virtue of a score or some such. Where the competitors themselves determine the outcome. NOT – and I'll say it again, just in case my use of capital letters did not make it sufficiently clear – not where the subjectivity of judges is concerned. **END**

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## GOLFMANAGEMENT.EU.COM/NEWS



### INTERNATIONAL 'THANK A GREENKEEPER DAY' RETURNS ON SEPTEMBER 14

The British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA) is joining other organisations across golf to offer a message of thanks to greenkeepers and sports turf professionals on Tuesday September 14, 2021. For the second year running, BIGGA is working alongside other global greenkeeping and superintendent groups to recognise those who help golf courses enjoyable and sustainable.

#### **SEARCH 'BIGGA' ONLINE**

at [golfsmanagement.eu.com](https://golfsmanagement.eu.com) for the full story



### LONDON GOLF CLUB HAS THE CODE FOR SUCCESS WITH LAUNCH OF NEW WEBSITE

London Golf Club is using its recent return to the European Tour calendar as a platform to launch a new website and further raise its profile. The highly-regarded Kent club has created a modern, slick and user-friendly design to attract visitors and prospective members, as well as revolutionising the private members' area of the site – making it easier than ever before to access club events, competitions and tee time bookings.

#### **SEARCH 'LONDON GOLF CLUB' ONLINE**

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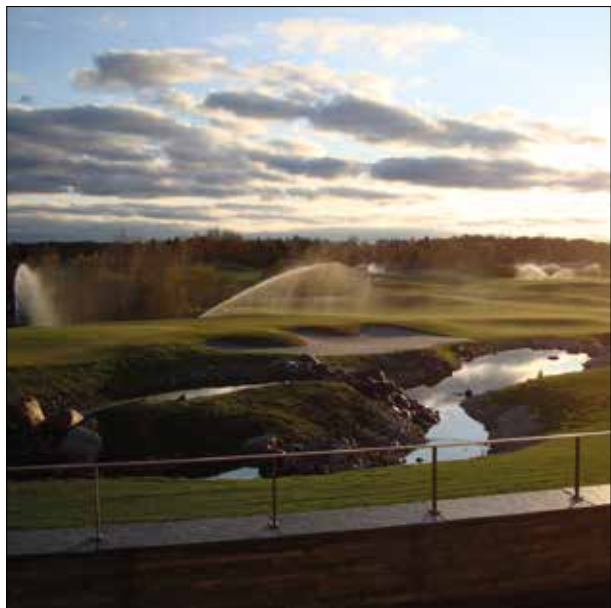
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## THE SCANDINAVIAN TAKES ACTION TO ENHANCE SUSTAINABLE IRRIGATION

The Scandinavian is a golf club where both sustainability and respect for nature and the environment are a key part of its values. When irrigating the courses, only recycled rainwater collected from the areas surface is used avoiding the need for groundwater extraction that could strain the area's natural water levels. Like many others, however, The Scandinavian is impacted by climate change, meaning significantly less rainfall in certain periods and difficult conditions for storing enough rainwater.

**SEARCH 'THE SCANDINAVIAN' ONLINE**  
at [golfmanagement.eu.com](http://golfmanagement.eu.com) for the full story



## GOLFGRAFFIX LAUNCHES CLUBNET SYSTEMS IN THE UK

ClubNet Systems, a club management software company owned by Irish technology company Golfgraffix, has now launched their business in the United Kingdom, and have today revealed their new website; [www.clubnetsystems.com](http://www.clubnetsystems.com). Since 2011 Golfgraffix have been supplying numerous areas of the worldwide golf industry with innovative technology solutions for all facets of the game and have worked with over 1,000 golf clubs worldwide.

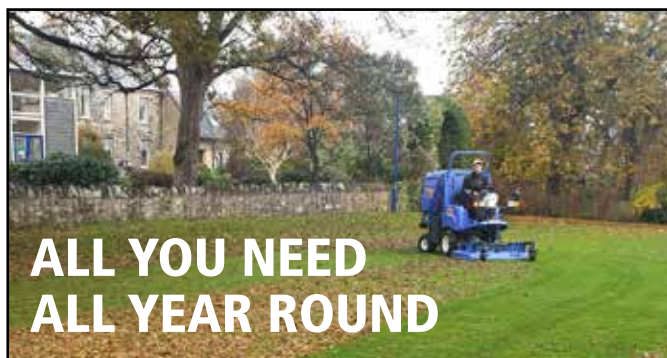
**SEARCH 'CLUBNET SYSTEMS' ONLINE**  
at [golfmanagement.eu.com](http://golfmanagement.eu.com) for the full story



## CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP AHEAD FOR REESINK UK

David Cole is to leave his role as Reesink UK's managing director in April 2022. Cole has passionately and successfully overseen the company's turfcare, agriculture, used machinery and electric vehicles business since 2014, and had previously worked for the former Lely business between 1990-1999. The reasons for his departure are personal; he says: "There are no business reasons attached to this, only personal. The unexpected loss of my wife last year was a huge blow."

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## YOUNG GOLFERS TO COME TOGETHER FOR THE OCEAN

This time last week, OCEANTEE delivered their first sustainability series workshop and beach clean with The Marine Conservation Society at the Trust Golf Women's Scottish Open where a group of young golfers from The Fife Golf Trust, St Regulus and Lundin Links golf clubs were taught about plastic pollution, marine wildlife and given ideas to take back to their own clubs before heading to the beach.

### SEARCH 'OCEANTEE' ONLINE

[golfmanagement.eu.com](http://golfmanagement.eu.com) for the full story



## NEW LOVE.GOLF WEBSITE INCREASES FEMALE PARTICIPATION

love.golf, the empowering group coaching experience for women, has launched a new website to accelerate its mission to appeal to the untapped potential in female golf participation. The website portrays the diverse nature of love.golf participants with an array of new images, videos and customer stories, plus additional features such as health and wellness content, all designed to enhance and deepen the sense of community amongst love.golfers. New and existing golfers can also search for their nearest love.golf coach and register for upcoming events and get-togethers.

### SEARCH 'LOVE.GOLF' ONLINE

at [golfmanagement.eu.com](http://golfmanagement.eu.com) for the full story



## FRANCISCO DE LANCASTRE DAVID HEADS BACK TO FINCA CORTESIN

Finca Cortesin Hotel, Golf & Spa has turned to an old friend to help prepare for hosting the biggest event in its history after appointing Francisco de Lancaster David as the new general manager of golf and leisure operations at the exclusive Spanish venue. Francisco, who was director of golf at Finca Cortesin for two years from 2015 to 2017, has taken up his new position in Andalusia at the start of August as the build-up starts to the resort hosting the 2023 Solheim Cup.

### SEARCH 'FRANCISCO DE LANCASTRE DAVID' ONLINE

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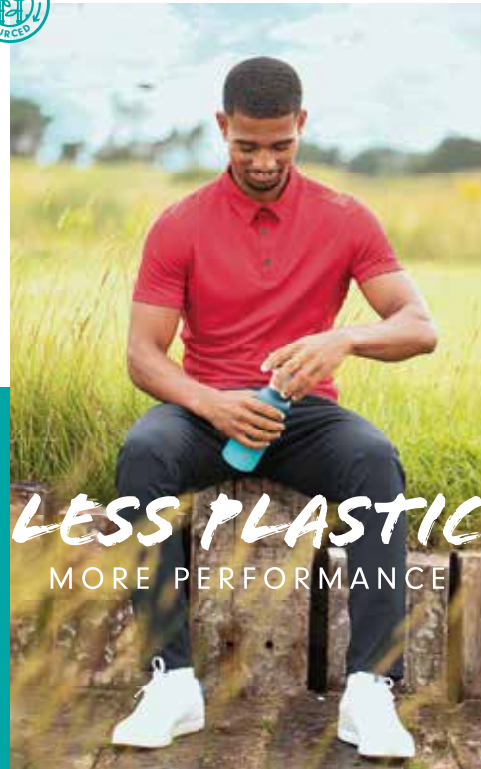
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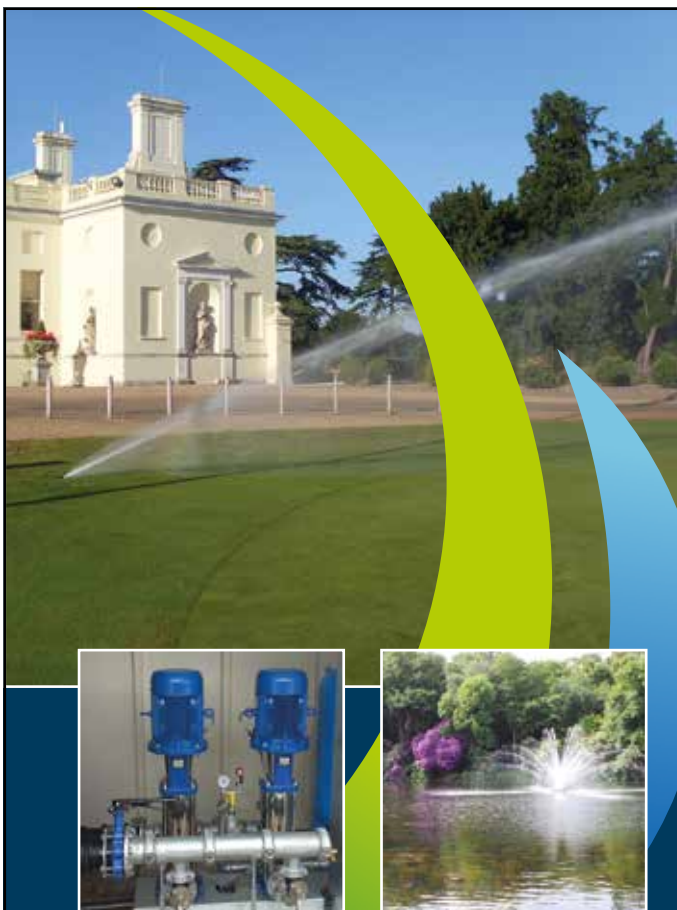
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## ORIZONTE NEW INVESTMENT ELEVATES AROEIRA GOLFING EXPERIENCE

ORIZONTE – Lisbon Golf has taken its investment to new heights by unveiling an array of new facilities at Aroeira Golf Resort – a two-time host of the Portuguese Open. Fresh from the rebranding this spring of its two 18-hole championship courses – Aroeira Pines Classic and Aroeira Challenge – Portugal's leading golf management company has continued its spending by upgrading the golf leisure facilities at the resort.

### SEARCH 'ORIZONTE' ONLINE

[golfmanagement.eu.com](http://golfmanagement.eu.com) for the full story



## WOMEN'S GOLF TAKES CENTRAL STAGE AT FARLEIGH

Farleigh Golf Club is reinforcing its commitment to women's golf with a busy year of events and coaching sessions to tap into a new generation of female golfers of all ages and abilities. With a central focus of attracting more women into the sport from a young age and breaking down any barriers to participation, Farleigh has been officially named a Girls Golf Rocks venue through England Golf.

### SEARCH 'FARLEIGH GOLF' ONLINE

at [golfmanagement.eu.com](http://golfmanagement.eu.com) for the full story



## MOTOCADDY ACQUIRES B+M GOLF TO SUPPORT GERMAN GROWTH

Motocaddy, the electric golf trolley brand, is set to further enhance its business in Germany by acquiring the well-known distribution and service agency B+M Golf Vertriebs GmbH, as well as opening a brand-new warehouse, workshop and office space. The acquisition of B+M Golf Vertriebs GmbH which completed on July 31, sees Motocaddy retain all the sales agents and managerial experience within the business, some of whom have worked alongside the British brand for more than 15 years.

### SEARCH 'MOTOCADDY' ONLINE

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## GENERAL MANAGER, LOCH LOMOND



Set in over 600 acres of spectacular Scottish countryside, Loch Lomond Golf Club is one of the world's foremost private golf clubs and arguably, also one of the most exclusive too.

Steeped in history, the site at Loch Lomond dates to Mary Queen of Scots who is alleged to have written love letters in RosSDhu Castle, the remnants of which overlook the 18th green. RosSDhu House, which was built in 1773, is now the clubhouse for the 600 members privileged enough to call Loch Lomond 'home'.

The Tom Weiskopf-designed course was opened for play in 1993, with Weiskopf often referring to his creation on the shores of Loch Lomond as his "lasting memorial to golf."

Every attention to detail is meticulously catered-for, so when the club – under the stewardship of general manager, Bill Donald – decided in 2017 to invest £7.5m on improving the course, some could have been forgiven for questioning where the money could be spent.

But it was Donald's previous experience at Lough Erne in Enniskillen, Ireland, that convinced him, together with his course superintendent, David Cole, that the course needed some urgent remedial work.

"It was quite a strange thing," admits Donald. "People were joining the club, but the course was deteriorating quite rapidly. We had particularly poor weather in 2017, and the course started to hold water which wouldn't disperse.

"We were also beginning to close, so it wasn't a good experience.

"It was clear talking to David and looking at the course, that in order to move the club forward we were going to have to invest heavily in the sand capping process. The course at Lough Erne was sand capped, and I knew through that process that [this] was probably the only answer, but it's bloody expensive.

"Thankfully we were cash positive at the time, so we made a proposal to the board which they agreed to, and work was completed at the beginning of this season. All credit to David and [contractors] Sol Golf as it's revolutionised the club."

Part of the £7.5m was raised from the sale of Dundonald Links – which Loch Lomond sold in 2019 for £4.5m – and part, in thanks, to the shrewd management changes that Donald has implemented since being recruited for the role of GM in 2011.

Donald, 55, hails from Northern Ireland and his family who have a hospitality background, were quite keen for him to avoid following in their footsteps. "To Mum and Dad's absolute delight, I did a teacher training course at the University of Greenwich and was offered a job at a college, lecturing leisure management," he recalled fondly.

"I was a young guy in my mid-twenties when I met a marketing specialist who was earning an awful lot of money and who suggested marketing was something I should look at. I ended up studying for an MA in marketing management at the University of Westminster, while teaching.

"Completely out-of-the-blue, I got a phone call from a friend of mine saying that Clondeboyne Golf Club, which I knew, very,





## "WE'VE MADE IT MORE OF AN EXPERIENCE, AND THAT HAS TURNED THE FINANCES AROUND"

very well, was looking for a general manager, and much to Mum and Dad's absolute horror, I applied and was offered the job.

"I had to decide what I wanted to do and questioned if going back to Ireland was the right move. I had a flat in Buckinghamshire and played cricket every Saturday. I loved golf, but was more into cricket, football and rugby, but recall saying to myself at the time: 'You know, I think there's an opportunity... I think it's a huge opportunity in golf management.'"

Much to the antipathy of his parents, Donald returned to his native Northern Ireland and set about transforming Clondeboyne Golf Club which at the time, had lost its way and was losing money.

"They wanted to build a new clubhouse and they wanted to turn around their fortunes, so I started to look at how the club could present itself to the membership, so that [members] could use the club the way they wanted to."

Restrictions such as dress codes were discarded, and barriers to entry were overcome and the club rapidly started to evolve. "It took a year before it started to change," he recalls, "but the club started to become very, very popular, and that is how I got into golf."

"I took the view that you start with the membership because they're the ones that have bought into the club. They're the easy wins, the low-hanging fruit, so you've got to track them first."

A spell at Lough Erne followed, where Donald was involved in pre-opening membership sales before an opportunity to join the K Club beckoned.

"Before I left Lough Erne the hotel hadn't opened, and the golf course wasn't quite complete. Jim Treacy, the owner, wanted me to stay but I couldn't turn down the K Club. I just couldn't."

Donald spent four years at the iconic Ryder Cup venue between 2007-2011, and working as director of golf, sales and marketing bore the brunt of the financial crash with him recalling: "Ireland suffered, and the K Club suffered with it. It couldn't realise its potential."

But as the K Club faltered, Donald was set to fulfil his own potential when he was invited to apply for the vacant general manager's position at Loch Lomond.

"I fancied the role, and although an iconic venue, it had had its issues so I thought it could be an interesting project. What I learned about Loch Lomond was that I felt that a lot of things maybe hadn't been tried because it was restricted or constricted by the ethos [of the club], and I'd seen that before."

"The club had gone through tough times, and it wasn't a preferred employer and people had been made redundant. It was really grim times."

Donald joined Loch Lomond in March 2011, and at the time, the club had 350 members each paying £40,000 to join. Today, membership sits at 600 with a joining fee of £145,000 and annual dues of £7,000.

So, what does Donald put the transformation over the past decade down to?

"It's the Loch Lomond experience — that's why people join. That's what they want," he boasts. "The golf course is massively important, but they want service, they want quality. We've made it more of an experience, and that has turned the finances around."

Dotted around the club's estate are 53 rooms available for members, guests, and family use, with occupancy rates double what they used to be. "At times we're hitting 90 per cent occupancy during the season, and we've built more rooms to try and accommodate [members]. So, you can see that the whole model was built on 800 members, but we only need 600."

According to Donald, the club has a waiting list for membership in "double figures", and in order to join, prospective new members need to be invited by the chairman.

And with future investment — including a new caddy shack and plans for a par three course — it's evident that the board are keen to keep developing the club for the privileged few who can lay claim to being members at one of the world's most private golf clubs.

Little wonder then, that Donald has no desire to leave the shores of Loch Lomond anytime soon. "I want to see it through," he explains. "I'm sure some members will have their own views, but the membership on the whole and the board have been fantastically supportive."

"There are opportunities to move on, but I certainly haven't applied for anything and I'm very happy where I am." **END**



"I CAN HONESTLY SAY THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST MACHINES I HAVE EVER BOUGHT! SUMMED UP IN THREE WORDS, IT'S EXCEPTIONAL, VERSATILE AND ROBUST"



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## VERSATILITY THE KEY FOR VENTRAC

Is the age of one machine per application out on the golf course, over? For Rupert Price, the managing director of Suffolk-based Price Turfcare, the answer is a resounding yes! Obviously, as the importer of the Ventrac 4500 all-terrain compact tractor, he has a vested interest in convincing golf club managers that his innovative equipment is the way forward. But it's a challenge he's relished since taking on the franchise in 2017.

Like the majority of golf course maintenance equipment, the Ventrac 4500 is manufactured in the USA, but unlike 'conventional' machines, which usually have a single purpose on the golf course, it comes with over 30 specially designed attachments. These front-mounted implements can be de-mounted and re-attached in less than a minute, ensuring that the greenkeeping team optimise their use for each application.

There are now seven different mowing decks in the Ventrac portfolio, either rotary or flail, but also a triple-cylinder mowing attachment for fine turf. No other machine is as versatile, but it doesn't stop there. The Ventrac 4500, in its eight-wheel configuration, can operate on slopes up to 30 degrees, which in some cases is twice the angle of conventional mowers.

It can maintain areas on sloping ground that would otherwise consume greenkeeping-hours, with a team using brushcutters.

The other benefit of the dual-wheel configuration is that it generates just six psi, which allows it to function on wet areas leaving minimal marks on the course. During the wet autumn and winter months it is still able to get out on the course. However, it's not just as a versatile mower that it excels. Other attachments include a stump grinder, blowers, trencher, powered brushes, buggy path renovation rake, aerator, overseeder, front loader, soil and snow blades, snow blower and much more.

Peter Pattenden, the golf courses and estates manager at Carden Park, was one of the early adopters to appreciate the benefits of the Ventrac. It was delivered with a selection of accessories including Contour deck, Tough Cut deck, Stump Grinder, Edger, Blower and Power Broom. "I manage a team of 23 staff here and that might sound a large number to many, but we manage over 1,400 acres," he said. "800 acres are at Carden Park including the two championship golf courses and a further 600 acres comprising the owner's property and grounds and the tenant farms dotted around the estate.

"Every piece of equipment we buy has to earn its keep and this machine certainly falls into that category," added Broom. "I've been operating equipment since 1991 and buying machinery since 1996 and I can honestly say this is one of the best machines I have ever bought! Summed up in three words, it's exceptional, versatile and robust." **END**





**Words** Michael Lenihan  
**Photography** Michael Lenihan

# STEPHEN DUNDAS

## PRESIDENT, THE SAN ROQUE CLUB



For 47-year-old Stephen Dundas, golf has afforded him a lifestyle he could never have imagined when growing up in the middle of Glasgow.

In 1992, Dundas was crowned British amateur champion at Carnoustie when aged just 18, with victory earning him an invitation to The Masters at Augusta, and the Open Championship at Royal St George's the following year.

Staying in the Crow's Nest at Augusta National, Dundas recalls waking up the first morning of the tournament and literally laughing for a minute as realisation dawned on the teenager just where he was, and what he had achieved.

Scores of 78 and 83 at Augusta resulted in Dundas not making the cut at The Masters, and although he fared slightly better at The Open – finishing +13 for his opening two rounds – a career away from playing would soon beckon for the affable Scotsman.

"I worked at Loch Lomond for three years in-between trying to play, which never quite worked out," he explained. "So, in 2000, I moved to Qatar to coach the national team and stayed in the Middle-East for three years before returning to the UK to take-up a position at Reigate Hill in Surrey.

"I was the head professional, managing the shop and also taught quite a lot," recalls Dundas, who in 2007, appeared to have a pre-crash epiphany.

"I'm not saying that I predicted the crisis or anything, but I just had a feeling that doing what I was doing, with the mad hours that I was working, I wasn't going to go any further. I couldn't charge any more for lessons, and

in reality, I needed another one or two of me to do what I was doing so I started to look for different positions.

"A few years earlier, the PGA had started to recognise different levels of PGA professionals, so I got into their education programme and became an advanced PGA professional," said Dundas.

And in 2008, just around the time when the global financial crisis struck, Dundas relocated to Russia to take-up the position of director of golf at the newly opened Pestovo Golf and Yacht Club after seeing the role advertised on the PGA website.

Owned by Golf Estate – a Russian company controlled by Viktor Khristenko, a former Russian Minister of Industry and Trade, and his wife Tatyana Golikova – Pestovo is one of three luxury golf resorts owned by the group, all of which have been influenced by Dundas.

"The original idea for the job was to spend two years at Pestovo setting everything up; two years at Forest Hills – which is the other course in Moscow – and then two years in St Petersburg at Petergolf Golf Club. Then the crisis hit, and I stayed much longer at Pestovo.

"It was exciting and [Russia] was a new country for golf. It was a chance for me to go there and stamp my own personality on golf."

Dundas still retains an involvement in Pestovo – albeit from a distance due to Covid travel restrictions – and was tasked with putting "feelers" out when Golf Estate sought to broaden their golf portfolio outside of Russia.



## "IN FACT, FROM DAY ONE WE BANNED THE USE OF THE WORD 'EXCLUSIVE' ABSOLUTELY"

And where better to look than Spain?

"I was tasked with finding the appropriate golf course to buy and looked at probably eight or nine properties throughout Spain, with some in Madrid and some in Barcelona.

"In the beginning it wasn't specific in terms of where [the course] had to be in Spain, and to be honest, there wasn't really any that we looked at that were really of interest. But once we found that San Roque was available, it was a no-brainer just because of the history of the club."

Once the jewel in the crown of golf in Sotogrande, San Roque had fallen on hard times in recent years, and was in desperate need of fresh investment and direction.

Formerly the home of the Domecq sherry family, San Roque is set within 340 acres of Andalusian countryside with cork oaks dominating the landscape. The club opened in 1991 with Dave Thomas designing the original 'Old' course, and a second 'New' course designed by Perry Dye was added in 2002.

And with Seve Ballesteros as a former chairman of the club, at the turn of the millennium, San Roque was arguably the standout golf and real estate destination in Spain.

But in the past decade the club had begun to falter, with the course and the surrounding real estate looking tired and unkempt, prompting the club membership to looking into the possibility of buying the club.

Speaking from the newly-renovated clubhouse, Dundas said: "My first ever meeting here was in December 2018 at the time with the general manager.

"I was told then that the members were trying to buy the club, so I met with the captain of the golf club in January 2019 and one of the guys who was helping with the buyout process.

"With our golf management company from Russia, there was always going to be a degree of scepticism. It's natural," admits Dundas. "But we had a meeting with the members in April 2019 and explained everything that we were going to do, and what the plan was for the club, and we've delivered on every point that we said we'd fix."

And fix it he has, starting with the Old Course and the clubhouse.

"The whole thing has been completely renovated," he states. "I mean we stripped everything back to just the trees, so just the routing basically. We've taken out 29 bunkers, three lakes, two streams and 18 hectares of turf and replaced the turf with mulch.

"When you play it, it's not the same golf course. It's the same routing for sure, and you'll probably still recognise the holes, but it's a different golf course.

"This was the first time that I've done this sort of thing, and I was heavily involved in the design as well. We kind of went for a very minimalist look, and now only have 40 bunkers which isn't a lot. But the bunkering is very strategic and from a maintenance perspective, everything we've done on the golf course is about sustainability.

"So, by having less bunkers, less water and less grass to maintain it's much more sustainable to keep the playing surfaces at the right level."

But it's not just the course that has undergone a transformation, it's the entire ethos of the club which Dundas describes as being of "affordable quality" and accessible to all.

"San Roque will always be open," stresses Dundas. "In fact, from day one we banned the use of the word 'exclusive' absolutely.

"It's the great thing about this area as the golf clubs out here are all very different in terms of the people that go to them, and the type of members that they have.

"Our club is very open, and it's not just about golf. Everyone's welcome to come and enjoy the clubhouse and restaurant.

"Ok we have 550-600 members which might allow less availability for green fees, but we'll never get to the stage where we're saying, 'No green fees or no visitors.'

"And by definition our membership is very transient anyway, so you're never going to have 600 of them here all at one time."

And it's this mindset, coupled with the financial investment that will probably see San Roque prosper at the second time of asking. **END**

# JASON O'MALLEY

## MANAGING DIRECTOR, WOBURN



Aspiring tournament players Ian Poulter and Jason O'Malley went in completely different directions when they reached the career crossroads at which they had to decide whether to chase their dream.

But both paths ultimately led to Woburn Golf Club where Ryder Cup legend Poulter has been the Touring Professional for almost two decades and O'Malley has served as its managing director since 2007.

The latter was, on paper, the better of the two golfers when entering the professional ranks, scratch as compared to four, but recalls he realised: "very, very early on that I had next to zero ability for being a tour player – and I would've had every weekend off."

The twin assets of pragmatism and analytical acumen that helped O'Malley cut short any pursuit of playing for a living have also played their part in him mirroring, in many ways, Poulter's against-the-odds success albeit in the field of golf management.

For example, a similar core of self-belief enabled him to go "from the bottom rung at Marriott [Hotels] golf to the top with Hanbury Manor" and then have an open and honest conversation with Woburn's owner, the Duke of Bedford, soon after his appointment in May 2007, on how the relationship would work and what level of autonomy he would be given, in order to achieve the success they both wanted.

"I was 34 when I started at Woburn and I sometimes look back and think they must've taken quite a gamble on a young person who might not have had the big names in his portfolio that maybe some of the others applying for the role had," reflects O'Malley.

What he did have was a track record that, following graduation from Merrist Wood University in Surrey, showed him having improved each of the venues at which he had worked, including Sprowston Manor and Hanbury Manor.

"In the nicest way, Sprowston was a very unimpressive golf venue, but the good thing about moving there was the potential to improve the golf course," he says, "so I saw it as my best chance of gaining as much experience as I could in my first director of golf role."

O'Malley helped oversee a deal with a local farmer that enabled Sprowston to enlarge from a course on around 90 acres of land to one on approximately 140 acres, a track created by Ross McMurray, coincidentally a member of the design team for the Marquess course at Woburn, younger sibling to the Dukes and Duchess courses.

Three years at Hanbury followed before his move to Woburn where obvious signs of improvement and achievement have included a £3.5m clubhouse refurbishment in 2011; the creation of the Tavistock short game area which opened in 2015; the development of the club's own reservoir and the recent partnership agreement with Titleist.

In addition, during this period Woburn has staged events such as the Women's British Open – twice – the British Masters and Travis Perkins Masters.

But he cautions: "I think it is great if you can attract tournament golf, I think it gives the team pride and motivation, it gives you the opportunity to show how good you are in the spotlight.





## "SERVICE, FOR ME, CAN BE QUITE TRANSACTIONAL: WHEREAS HOSPITALITY NEEDS TO BE WARM, WELCOME AND FRIENDLY, WHICH IS CERTAINLY WHAT WE ASPIRE TO AT WOBURN"

"However, the other 51 weeks of the year are the really important ones because that is our day job, that is what gives us success, which means we can reinvest in the club and continue to progress."

Crucial, in his eyes, is the attention paid perpetually to the level of hospitality presented by Woburn's staff to both its members – all 1,500 of them – and its visitors.

"I think there is a significant difference between service and hospitality," he explains. "Service, for me, can be quite transactional: whereas hospitality needs to be warm, welcome and friendly, which is certainly what we aspire to at Woburn."

"An example of hospitality being when a member approaches the bar and their 'usual' is already being poured for them as the member of staff is aware of their preferences and habits."

The recruitment, assessment and encouragement of staff all fall into one of four categories that have been constants in O'Malley's life in golf management.

"I have tried to base every single role that I have done on a wheel which I draw; it is in every single business plan that I have ever done, every single team meeting I have to do," he reveals. "It is about people and it is about product and it is about process and it is about review. There is more to it than that, but that is how I operate, how I have to set up."

The pandemic did put a metaphorical spoke in O'Malley's wheel, as with so many businesses, with staff recruitment and retention proving twin challenges after COVID cast a costly shadow over the hospitality industry.

"So many people wanted to get out of hospitality, retraining through furlough... If you're trying to find a chef at the moment, good luck," he smiles. "The people side is fiercely difficult at the moment."

Woburn's 12-month projections were promising a healthy 2020 prior to the first lockdown, but a stark example of the financial hit they took is in the area of corporate golf day business, where 97 per cent fell away through the year.

"We could have decided to sell a great deal of membership, each linked to a £10,000 joining fee in order to arrest the shortfall of revenue, and the subsequent cash flow challenges that presented," he remarks. "But with membership at capacity, this wouldn't have been the right course of action for the club longer term."

"I am aware how fortunate I am with the owner that I have, and with the integrity that we operate with here, that we can afford to make such decisions."

"We said we will just have to hold fire and have a hell of a nosebleed for 18 months and come out, not as best we can, but we will have to look at what the market will do and what it can sustain and all sorts of things on the other side of it."

Now on 'the other side', Woburn's corporate golf day revenue stream is thriving again although O'Malley stresses they have kept in mind the need to sate members' increased appetite for playing.

"We have been very conscious not to over-subscribe or over-sell corporate golf days because we know that members are playing more rounds than ever," he says. Availability for visiting fourballs have likewise been carefully attributed, and he adds: "We might have two or possibly three dates between now and the first of November."

"The speed of change in the last 18 months has been brutal. I like data and I like KPI's in order to make really good, sound, strategic long-term decisions based upon trend. In the last 18 months a great deal of this information and history has proved worthless when trying to deal with the challenges that COVID has forced upon us."

Nevertheless, Woburn appears in good health and in good hands with O'Malley at the helm. However, now into his 15th year there, he continues to ensure that the entire team are focused and feel motivated to seek innovation and continual improvement.

The former tournament golf wannabe concluding: "I wouldn't want to do anything else for a living, and I still feel I want to be doing the role at Woburn for some time to come." **END**



# AMENDOEIRA, PORTUGAL

## AMENDOEIRARESORT.COM

**Words** Charlotte Ashton  
**Photography** Marcelo Lopes



Can anywhere rival Portugal's Algarve when it comes to golfing beneath the bluest of blue skies? The Algarve's glorious sunshine and stunning coastline, and the warmth of the welcome that visitors receive, have long made the area a mecca for golfers.

Some of the Algarve's resorts have been welcoming golfers to their fairways since the 1970s and continue to do so to this day. However, recent years have seen some outstanding new resorts spring up, with pristine facilities, beautiful settings and, most importantly, world-class golf courses.

One of the finest is Amendoeira Golf Resort. Construction began in 2006, with the golf courses and other facilities spread over 270 hectares in the sun-kissed area of Silves in the Central Algarve.

The resort includes the challenging Faldo Course, designed by Sir Nick Faldo and the O'Connor Jnr Course, designed by Ireland's Christy O'Connor Jnr. It is also home to Portugal's only illuminated nine-hole golf course, meaning that players can take to the fairways day and night.

Amendoeira Golf Resort is set within an area of outstanding natural beauty. The idyllic setting is criss-crossed with a number of scenic jogging paths, which weave through its exceptional landscaped gardens.

A range of other high-end sports facilities are available including a natural grass football pitch for professional teams and two AstroTurf five-a-side football fields. Those who prefer racket sports can enjoy time on the resorts' six tennis courts and there's a well-equipped gym for all-round fitness.





## "THE ALGARVE IS SOMEWHERE THAT YOU CAN'T JUST VISIT ONCE. IT IS A REGION THAT FOSTERS A SENSE OF DEEP CONNECTION"

Amendoeira is also home to two outdoor swimming pools – perfect for balancing fitness with relaxation and family time.

Under an hour's drive from Faro Airport, Amendoeira is popular with golfers from across Europe, while transatlantic players have a 2.5-hour drive from Lisbon through wonderfully scenic Alentejo, with its rolling grasslands and gnarled cork trees.

The Algarve, of course, is known for its glorious beaches and picturesque, crumbling cliffs, as well as its abundant flora and fauna. The region was recently named the 'World's Leading Beach Destination 2020' in the World Travel Awards.

Sitting in the midst of so much natural beauty, Amendoeira Golf Resort has been designed to deliver a sense of harmony with the Algarve landscape. The low-density construction celebrates local architectural styles, with homes designed to suit a range of preferences and needs.

Two-bedroom apartments are ideal for couples and young families looking for a second home from which to enjoy Amendoeira and the wider Algarve region, as well as suiting investors looking to pick up a rental property. Two plus one bedroom duplex apartments are also available, with many families enjoying the convenience that this arrangement provides.

Amendoeira is also home to family-focused, three-bedroom villas with their own pools, as well as a select number of superior, four-bedroom villas with pools. All properties are provided fully furnished and equipped, making them ideal both for personal holiday use and as an investment. Year-round residents are also welcome and all owners enjoy a 40 per cent discount on the resort's golf facilities.

Each property delivers exceptional interior design and amenities, with owners' every comfort having been considered. The homes have neutral colour palettes and AEG appliances, including dishwashers, washing machines and fridge freezers. There are also Daikin air conditioning units, under-floor heating and central vacuum.

To make life even easier for homeowners at Amendoeira Golf Resort, maid and laundry services are available, along with

24-hour security and a 16-hour reception service. From its services to its amenities, the emphasis at Amendoeira is on providing a relaxed lifestyle and promoting wellbeing, something that so many of us are in need of after the trials of the past year or more.

Visitors to the Algarve can also benefit from its gastronomy. The land is awash with olive, almond and fig trees, as well as rows of citrus fruit that stretch as far as the eye can see (visit in the spring to be seduced by the pervasive scent of orange blossom that blends with the sea breeze!).

Sweet, sticky local honey that's naturally lavender-flavoured is a must, as are the super-sweet cakes and intensely strong bicas (espressos) that are ubiquitous to the region's many, many pastelarias.

The Algarve is, of course, also home to a wealth of fish and shellfish, thanks to its coastal location. These local flavours are celebrated at Amendoeira's on-site restaurant and clubhouse.

Spanish developer Kronos Homes, which owns and operates the resort, has recently overseen an extensive revamp of these facilities, as well as the reception area and the sports bar, where golfers can enjoy well-earned refreshments after spending time on the fairways in the Algarve sunshine.

With over 300 days of sunshine per year, the Algarve is an excellent destination for those who like to play golf in all seasons. The winters are mild, with average temperatures dropping only as low as 12°C in the peak of the cold season.

"The Algarve is somewhere that you can't just visit once," said Kronos Homes' sales and marketing director, Alda Filipe.

"It is a region that fosters a sense of deep connection, from the abundant greenery that delivers peace and relaxation to the soothing sound of the ocean. At the same time, it has all the modern conveniences that families could wish for, from shopping malls to upscale boutiques.

"There's something for everyone here – coastal areas for beach bunnies and water sports enthusiasts, marinas for yachting folk and endless attractions for families looking for a calmer, quieter pace of life with more emphasis on spending time outdoors." **END**

# KEITH PICKARD

## GROUP DIRECTOR OF GOLF, LEISURE & SPA

### THE QHOTELS GROUP

If you were looking for someone to oversee and drive your golf business, you'd struggle to find a person better qualified than Keith Pickard.

For more than three decades, the Scot has devoted himself to the industry, starting out as a golf professional before moving on and forging a hugely successful career in the management side of the game.

Having worked in a variety of senior roles for some of the biggest names in the golf leisure business including De Vere Hotels and Macdonald Hotels & Resorts, Pickard has vast experience of the UK golf resort industry.

So when The QHotels Group – the UK's largest golf resort operator – was looking for a new person to lead their golf, leisure and spa sectors, who better to turn to than a man with such a proven track record and whose knowledge of the industry is second to none.

Pickard was initially brought in on a consultancy basis last October before being offered the position of golf, leisure and spa director seven months later and, with the popularity of golf soaring in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the chance to cement The QHotels Group's status at the forefront of golf in the UK is one that he is clearly relishing.

"I first got involved with The QHotels Group last autumn when I was asked to look at investment around growth strategy opportunities within golf, leisure and spa," said Pickard. "A lot of my work within the first six months involved putting together a three-year investment plan centred around

the golf product, the investment into course machinery and the investment into our golf courses.

"That's what I've also done from a leisure and spa point of view so that we can assess what the growth sections and growth opportunities are for us and how we can maximise the overall growth in terms of revenue and profit for each of those functions.

"The chance then came to join the team on a full-time basis to look after those three functions. It's a brilliant opportunity and I'm thrilled to be taking on this new role with The QHotels Group, who are responsible for some of the most popular venues in the country."

Pickard has certainly been swift to act in his new position. Under his guidance, The QHotels Group announced a new multi-million-pound investment across its golf resorts over the next three years this spring with an initial outlay of £2m at its seven venues over the first 12 months.

The three-year improvement programme will cover all sectors of the group's golf-course business, from investment in the latest greenkeeping equipment and improved bunkers, pathways and drainage systems to upgraded driving range facilities and modernised amenities away from the course.

Investment is also planned across the group's leisure and spa venues, while Pickard is also well aware of the need to put the correct internal structures in place so that the business maximises the opportunities available.

He said: "Within golf, we have created this three-year plan but we're also looking at





## "WE ARE THE UK'S LARGEST GOLF OPERATOR AND THAT IS SOMETHING WE WANT TO HOLD ON TO"

some significant investment as well, particularly into leisure.

"This is a key growth market for us and we have to make sure that, as well as getting our product right, we look at our marketing and regeneration and also look at the people element to make sure that we've got dedicated people who can convert leads into members."

He added: "Investment in our people and our teams will run parallel to this product investment strategy. The development of people is a passion of mine and core focus of the group and we are dedicated in finding and nurturing the next superstars in golf and course management, and the recruiter of choice in the golf industry."

As the UK's largest golf resort operator, residential golf breaks are key for The QHotels Group, and they make up 50 per cent of its overall golf business.

With many golfers preferring to opt for a holiday at home rather than heading overseas, the number of golfers booking holidays has continued to boom this summer, helped by a ground-breaking new online booking platform which helps customers to secure tee times, accommodation and table reservations for lunch and dinner in a single booking attempt.

But, while Pickard is fully aware of its importance, he also realises the need to develop other parts of the group's golf business which are vital for its long-term success – with golf memberships, junior academies and corporate and society golf all targets.

He said: "Our core market for golf – our residential golf breaks – are exceptionally busy just now and we can see that continuing to grow over the next two to four years, especially with the whole staycation marketplace.

"Corporate golf is definitely a focus area and it's the same for our golf membership proposition. We have around 3,000 members across the portfolio which is excellent, and it's now about how we make sure that we have good proactive retention tools so that we can retain those members, and how we can actually grow that route to market.

"We will always have our traditional membership model but our route to market will undoubtedly be points-based, due to

the price point and also the flexibility of the points-based system, and we want to make strong inroads there over the next six to 12 months.

"We have also got some brilliant academies at the grassroots level, and growing the game is very much a focus for us. We have had some brilliant achievements so far at some of our venues and we're making sure that we engage with local schools and various government initiatives.

"We're in a very fortunate position within The QHotels Group that we can, and should, be investing back into the sport, and that's certainly something that we're actively doing with the academies we have."

With the number of new people taking up golf since the outbreak of Covid – the '2020 Great Britain Golf Participation Report' revealed that the number of adults playing golf in the UK and Ireland last year rose by 2.3m, with 2.1m new people playing on a nine or 18-hole course – Pickard is excited by the unexpected opportunity that golf has been presented with and it is something that he is determined The QHotels Group takes full advantage of, with a number of exciting initiatives to be introduced over the coming months and years.

He added: "We are certainly not going to be complacent and rest on our laurels, and we have got some brilliant people within the business with a lot of experience.

"It's about what we do to entice and attract those new golfers, and I think it's about being creative with the facilities and our offerings as well. Having our academies is brilliant but then we can look at introducing three holes, six holes or nine holes-type golf so that we can get people engrained into golf.

"We are the UK's largest golf operator and that is something we want to hold on to. We want to make sure that we enhance our overall visitor experience and that we become that must-go-to destination or resort, whether that's for a casual round of golf, a golf lesson, for membership or for a resort experience. That's my aim and I know those sentiments are shared by my peers."

With Pickard at the helm, it's hard not to see those aims becoming a reality in the coming years. **END**





# ANTHONY TARCHETTI

## GENERAL MANAGER, CHART HILLS



CHART HILLS

"Since joining Chart Hills Golf Club as director of golf in December 2019, I have been extremely fortunate to have played a central role in what has transpired to be one of the UK's most extensive golf course renovation projects in recent memory," stated Anthony Tarchetti, general manager at Chart Hills Golf Club.

A fully qualified PGA professional, Tarchetti found his way into the golf industry through his ability on the course. After qualifying as a PGA professional at 21 he spent seven years playing on the European Tour, Challenge Tour and EuroPro Tour, competing against some of the world's best players.

Off the course, Tarchetti spent his younger days working at various golf clubs in his home county, Kent, before settling at Prince's Golf Club in Sandwich.

Initially working as a PGA professional, he quickly developed his skills and moved through the ranks to take on more operations-based roles; culminating in a significant tenure as the former Open Championship venue's director of golf.

"In the 12 years I spent working at Prince's, I gained experience in almost every facet of the business. Looking back, this was a massive help for me, as it allowed me to fully understand what was required to run a successful golf club operation.

"I am proud to have developed my career in the way I did and I'm extremely grateful for the guidance that I received from the management and ownership at Prince's throughout my time there."

After several years on the front line at Prince's, it was in December 2019 that Tar-

chetti was made aware by the club's owners, Ramac Holdings, that they would be completing the purchase of nearby Chart Hills Golf Club. It was made clear right from the start, that this was going to be a big project, and that Tarchetti himself would play a huge role in overseeing the redevelopment.

"Being offered the chance to oversee a huge renovation project at a club with the prestige that Chart Hills had was incredible," he recalls. "It was a job that involved a large amount of operations know-how, and it came with significant responsibility.

"Everything that I had learned at Prince's in the 12 years prior stood me in great stead for this opportunity – I grabbed it with both hands! And of course, I had, and continue to have, an amazing support network through the management at both Ramac and Prince's.

"When I first arrived at Chart Hills, I was in complete shock at the conditioning. The Chart Hills that I knew and loved was the magnificent Sir Nick Faldo-design that had played host to numerous European Tour Qualifying Schools – it was revered around the country. There were various factors in play, including a severe leather jacket problem, minimal investment, low staffing levels and no plan set out for the future.

"I was lucky in that when I arrived, the small team that was in place were on-board with our vision. They had been desperate for progressive owners to come in and were committed to the development. Each member of staff shared our passion and desire to return Chart Hills to its former glory. They've been fantastic throughout.



## "WE MADE THE DECISION TO OFFICIALLY CLOSE THE GOLF COURSE IN JULY 2020, WITH NO REOPENING SCHEDULED UNTIL ALL 18 HOLES HAD BEEN COMPLETELY RENOVATED"

"While the task ahead was clearly massive, there was a huge opportunity in front of us at Chart Hills. The club was once regarded as one of the most impressive in-land tracks in the country, so the foundations were there. In simple terms, the course was built in an American style, which just didn't work with the volume of rain that we experience through the winter in the UK.

So, over time, the grass health deteriorated and became infested with leatherjackets, which ultimately killed most of the turf.

"Inheriting a golf course with almost no grass on the fairways was obviously a massive problem, so we set about creating a full-scale renovation plan to redevelop Chart Hills into the internationally recognised golf venue that it should be.

"17 of the 18 holes needed to be totally renovated. Initial planning indicated that a complete redevelopment project would take more than two years to finish, with the hope of a late summer opening in 2022.

"However, the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic and forced closures of the club due to government restrictions, presented an opportunity to dramatically accelerate our time frame.

"We made the decision to officially close the golf course in July 2020, with no reopening scheduled until all 18 holes had been completely renovated. The focus of the project was to completely relay the fairways, to produce carpet-like surfaces that were playable year-round."

After making that decision, Tarchetti and his team then set to work on one of the most significant renovation projects in recent years. The first stage of the process was to completely strip the turf from each fairway around the course, exposing the bare clay.

Once the top layer had been lifted, the greenkeeping team set about installing thousands of metres of irrigation piping, before more than 33,000 tonnes of sand was shaped onto the fairway areas to produce a four-inch capping. The finishing team then came in to spread Creeping-Rye seed across the sanded zones before the watering and fertilisation processes began.

Once the final seed was in the ground, the team were able to turn their attention to the clubhouse, and other exterior areas that were also in need of redevelopment.

"We also made great headway off the course, remodelling the entire venue. We completely redecorated the clubhouse, built a brand-new club shop, modernised the bar area, improved the car park and signage, and upgraded the practice facilities to include a state-of-the-art simulator room.

"The undertaking was massive and spanned over a stretch of 11 months. It was amazing to see the grass begin to grow, having been witness to every single step of the project. It also brought a real air of excitement around the club, knowing that we would soon be able to welcome our members back to the course."

On June 1 this year, Tarchetti and his team officially reopened the doors at Chart Hills, allowing members to enjoy the fruits of the team's labour. The course was in immaculate condition, with the new carpet-like fairways bedding in nicely.

"It was a delight to welcome our members back to the course," said Tarchetti. "We are absolutely determined to deliver a world-class product that will stand the test of time. It's also important to note that this is by no means the end of the development.

"We are very much travelling along a road of continuous improvement at Chart Hills, with numerous additional projects already in the pipeline.

"I never imagined myself overseeing a project of this scale, but to be honest I have loved being a part of it. In some ways we were lucky, because the layout was fantastic, and we had the opportunity to almost start again with the construction, but the amount of hard work that has gone in to getting Chart Hills to where it is today is staggering.

"I'm extremely proud to have overseen this process, and I am looking forward to the future at the club, which is sure to include a number of additional projects and developments. This is by no means the finished product, so it will be a joy to continue working towards the club's full potential." **END**

# BOOST YOUR RANGE

## WITH THE BUCKET PROS



The driving range and practice facilities have long been a staple at near on every golf club around the world. It is utilised in so many ways by members and visitors alike, whether it is to hit a few balls before a round of golf, or dedicated practice to try and improve their game. Yet, these facilities can become a drain on resources and can negatively impact businesses.

Considering the vast potential that driving range and practice facilities have, The Bucket Pros have been a leading force in this sector; creating change, bringing exceptional results and solving this global problem at many sites throughout Scandinavia, and more recently Europe.

Since being founded by Andreaz Lindberg, the Scandinavian based enterprise has created a simple and effective strategy that can be adapted to suit each and every partner they work with.

The ethos behind their work focuses on the golfer, and that their first contact with the sport which is typically through the driving range. This makes the driving range and practice facilities the primary platform for training and improving as a golfer.

The significant factor from this understanding is that many driving ranges are severely underdeveloped and often completely empty. As a journey for a new golfer, this doesn't leave the most appealing memory.

The Bucket Pros look to provide golfers with the ability to practice no matter the day, time or weather. This not only brings more revenue to the facility, but also provide golfers with a place to meet new friends and enhance the driving range and practice ex-

perience. In addition to offering new players positive experiences The Bucket Pros also focus on retention of established players and methods to develop facilities offerings.

As part of this process and strategy, The Bucket Pros have created a system called the 'Boost Method', which has been introduced to the golf industry following a series of new partnerships announcements within Europe.

The 'Boost Method' has been developed through a unique set of ideas, concepts and strategies, that has proven time and again that it can significantly increase revenue at a partner facility within 24 months. This process is undoubtedly effective and to date over 60 Scandinavian golf clubs and facilities have benefited since utilising the 'Boost Method'.

Within The Bucket Pros 'Boost Method' a vital area of focus is digitalisation. The opportunity that systems and management bring is significant and can influence the most amount of change at a facility.

The emphasis of digitalisation is to take back control of the facilities through digital platforms. The Bucket Pros range management system, SEVE RMS, provides complete control and overview of the driving range.

The advanced system has been created so that it can be quickly and easily installed, is fully secure through cloud security and provides managers with the ability to get a complete overview of when free balls are being withdrawn – and how many, which can stop potential misuse immediately.

One of the key features is that it allows the user to differentiate price any time





## "WORKING WITH THE BUCKET PROS HAS BEEN A REVELATION TO US HERE AT PGA SWEDEN NATIONAL"

anywhere. Pricing can be reflected by user habits and peak periods. It also provides the ability for payments to be taken via card or phone.

To date, The Bucket Pros have been extremely successful implementing their practices in their home region of Scandinavia. With high numbers of participation in golf, the industry has been developing more and more sites to meet demand.

There are now over 700 facilities across the region and The Bucket Pros have integrated their methods at nearly 100 of these properties. Each property have seen a significant increase in the revenue that their practice facilities are bringing in. The main attribute to the success of these properties has been the implementation of The Buckets Pros 'new age' practices and coveted The Boost Method.

One such facility who has been working with The Bucket Pros since 2020, is PGA Sweden National. Classed as one of Sweden's best training facilities the Academy is fitted with some of the most advanced training equipment. With a 9-hole academy course, analysis studios, driving range and generous practice areas with greens for both putting and chipping, the academy is given as much attention as the two other courses; The Lakes and The Links.

With such fantastic facilities the PGA Sweden National has significantly benefited from utilising The Boost Method, having tripled their turnover within the first six-months and looking at the figures from 2020 to 2021 the turnover has increased by 216 per cent for the period of January 1 – July 31.

"Working with The Bucket Pros has been a revelation to us here at PGA Sweden National, said Jonas Edberg, general manager.

"As a team we have attended The Boost Method training, which showed us how to understand our facility in a different way and gave us valuable insight into new practices and procedures that we can implement here. This has provided us with the opportunity to achieve the huge potential we have here.

"In addition, we have also integrated The Bucket Pros range management system SEVE RMS. By doing so, we have been able to take back control, be more dynamic with our pricing and offer a service to our customers that is easily accessible.

"I am delighted with the results that we have seen from working with The Bucket Pros and look forward to our successful ongoing relationship."

As The Bucket Pros expand their portfolio of facilities this year, they have developed a new team for the European market. Recent appointments include Calle Carlsson as European sales director and Andy Gordon as business developer.

The initial focus within Europe has been the Spanish market and within a matter of weeks The Bucket Pros signed their first contract with Peter Gustafsson, owner of PG Golf and Sports Academy, a welcoming and diverse academy that is home to an extensive driving range, chipping, pitching and putting areas as well as teaching studios.

The Bucket Pros most recent appointment has been with La Cala Resort in Mijas, Costa Del Sol. This is a five-year agreement that will span across six prime objectives; business solutions, digitalisation, machinery, consultation, management and profitability support and training.

The focus will be looking to capitalise on the international golfing and leisure markets putting the facilities at the forefront of the experience at La Cala Resort.

As part of The Bucket Pros ongoing work to change the concept of the driving range, and support driving range owners in achieving the full potential, they have begun scheduling regular workshops and training courses. The workshops are webinar-based and provide an initial insight into how facilities can increase revenue and profitability at their own properties.

The training courses are in-depth dedicated programs that take place onsite at a facility. The four-part course looks at the facility as a whole and builds ideas and concepts for those attending as to how to take advantage of their own offerings.

It is a pivotal time for golf as new concepts, technologies and practice emerge into the market. The Bucket Pros want to take full advantage of these opportunities and change the concept of the driving range among golfers.

The strong focus on new technology, digitalisation and modern design, will enable more and more driving range and practice facilities to benefit from The Bucket Pros one-stop-shop offering in Europe. **END**

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# NEW DESTINATION

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Son Gual in Mallorca has become the latest destination to join worldclass.golf, a portfolio of the world's premier golf courses, destinations and resorts.

Opened in 2007, Son Gual is within easy reach of Mallorca's historic capital, Palma, and offers the highest standards of quality and service throughout the destination.

Whether playing the acclaimed and award-winning golf course or taking advantage of the world-class practice facilities, visiting the pro shop, dining in the restaurant or merely enjoying a cool drink while looking out across the course from the sunshine terrace, Son Gual is a five-star experience from beginning to end.

The resort is a private, family-run members' golf club, set in 156 hectares of beautiful Mediterranean landscape. Guests are welcomed warmly, but are asked to respect

the club's etiquette rules, thereby ensuring the safeguarding of the course's superb all-year-round quality.

Son Gual prides itself on catering for all requirements and providing the highest standards to its members and guests with nothing left to chance. The owners will invite a select number of members to join the 'Son Gual Membership Council', the role of which is to protect the integrity and value of the resort. Membership details are available in person from Son Gual senior management.

Enjoy the spectacular view from the terrace across the golf course and down into the Valley of a Thousand Windmills.

Whether you want to treat yourself to a leisurely breakfast before a round of golf, a tasty bowl of soup halfway round or a splendid dinner, Son Gual's cuisine and service will ensure that your visit is a pleasant one. **END**



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A portfolio of the world's premier golf courses, destinations & resorts

"THE LOGISTICAL OPERATION FOR MARCO SIMONE LOOKS A LITTLE DIFFERENT FROM ALL THOSE YEARS AGO AT VALDERRAMA"



**Words**

Kevin Hart  
Sales Director EMEA  
Club Car

## GUEST BOOK

KEVIN HART



Like most other golf fans around the world, I'll be tuning in for the Ryder Cup at Whistling Straits this month. Club Car has a very close relationship with this fantastic event and was recently announced as an Official Supplier for 2023 in Rome, continuing a relationship with Ryder Cup Europe which dates back to 1997.

The logistical operation for Marco Simone looks a little different from all those years ago at Valderrama. Back then we had around 200 cars on site and two servicemen to make sure they ran smoothly. In 2023, the fleet will be more than 600 cars, with a team of about 35 people looking after it. It's a massive logistical operation and planning begins a year beforehand.

In 1997, the fleet was entirely electric at a time when 95 per cent of most golf vehicles were petrol. We have Mr Patiño, Valderrama's owner at the time, largely to thank for that decision – he knew that green energy was the future.

The iconic Captains' cars are the ones in the spotlight, but there are so many other aspects that Club Car facilitates – such as transporting television crews and their equipment around the course, providing ambulances for the medical operations and assisting reduced-mobility spectators.

It has been amazing to be part of the phenomenal growth of the Ryder Cup and everyone at Club Car hopes the relationship continues for many years to come. **END**



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