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NUMBER 130 | SPRING 2020

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"THE COURSE SETUP FOR PROFESSIONAL TOURNAMENTS NEEDS TO BE MORE CHALLENGING TO REWARD ACCURACY AND SKILL"

FAIR COMMENT

The international tyre company Pirelli celebrated 25 years of its 'power is nothing without control' slogan in 2019 – and it seems golf may be picking up the mantle in 2020.

I was delighted to learn both the R&A and USGA were giving serious consideration to curtailing distances for balls and modern equipment, particularly at the professional level. But other steps can be taken, too, to improve the sport as a spectacle at the top level, as some, but not all, golf courses have become far too forgiving for the top players.

I'm not suggesting manufacturers should curtail development completely, because such advantages are welcomed by amateurs. But too many professionals are bombing the ball 400 yards off the tee, to much applause, yet sacrificing accuracy. The course setup for professional tournaments needs to be more challenging to reward accuracy and skill, not just raw power – if they go off-line, they should be punished, as opposed to still having a reasonably comfortable shot back in.

If professionals can thump a ball 375 yards down the middle of a tight fairway to leave a mere wedge into a green, then fair play to them. And that's the choice they should be presented with: go for distance and be penalised for errant shots, or compromise on distance for a second shot off the short stuff.

I hope the R&A and USGA have the courage of their convictions and don't leave this topic where a 400-yard drive should end up... in the long grass. **END**



Words

Michael Lenihan
Publisher

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at golfmanagement.eu.com

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publishing and communications

FEATURING

SPRING 2020



JOSÉ MARÍA OLAZÁBAL

OLAZABAL DESIGN

"My Masters victory in 1999 was even more special to me because of my personal situation. I had been unable to play golf for around two years due to my health, and fought hard to come back to play professionally."

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WAYNE SHEFFIELD

ISLEWORTH

"The one thing we should all realise in any role or any of our clubs is that we go backwards if we stand still. On a daily and weekly basis we try to make lots of small improvements and these all add up to a big uplift."

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SEAN CÔTE-REAL

LA CALA

"Great golf doesn't mean you've got to have the absolute fastest, best greens in the world. All you need is very decent, good playing surfaces that a normal 18 handicapper would enjoy, and that's what we're trying to do."

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PETER BANKS

RUDDING PARK

"Unfortunately for golf, we've now become time poorer. And I blame mobile phones – there's instant gratification. And of course, along came cycling and cycling has absolutely torpedoed that 35 to 50-year-old male golfing market."

36



BRENDAN DWYER

LA FINCA

"The new winery will be able to seat up to 35 people and will facilitate wine tasting presentations from expert sommeliers, which is an ideal addition for a golfing trip or those looking to try a variety of fine wines."

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"WITH RAIN BIRD ICI+, I WAS ABLE TO GET THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY
WITHOUT GOING THROUGH A MAJOR RENOVATION"



COVER STORY

RAINBIRD.COM/ICPLUS



Rain Bird has introduced a new interface that makes it possible for courses with Rain Bird satellite systems to easily upgrade to IC System technology without undergoing a major renovation to their irrigation system.

The new Integrated Control Interface Plus (ICI+) from Rain Bird Golf makes it possible to install Rain Bird satellites and the IC System on the same wire path. As a result, they can renovate or expand existing satellite system in phases, at a lower cost and with less disruption to their golf course.

"The ICI+ truly is a game changer," said Carolyn Maloney, product manager for Rain Bird Golf. "It's ideal for Rain Bird courses that want to update to the latest IC System technology but don't currently have the time or budget to completely overhaul their irrigation systems."

The ICI+ interface is the first in the golf irrigation industry to offer fully integrated course control. That means you can simply splice into the nearest satellite wire path and add Integrated Control Modules (ICMs) without running wire all the way back to the maintenance facility.

"Installing the ICI+ is the easiest, simplest way to upgrade to the IC System and IC CONNECT devices," added Maloney. "From there, courses can enjoy advanced diagnostics, easy expansion, precision watering and the ability to integrate and interact with sensors and other field equipment."

Rain Bird has also developed a new IFX Satellite Board that allows courses to put IC

rotors and Rain Bird satellites on the same wire path. The IFX Board is installed in all new PAR+ES Satellites and is also backwards compatible with MSC+, PAR+ and PAR+ES satellites.

Now courses can connect their current Rain Bird satellite systems to the future-forward technology offered by the IC System and IC CONNECT simply by installing the ICI+ and a simple satellite board at a fraction of the cost.

St. George's Golf & Country Club, host of the 2020 Canadian Open, used the ICI+ to do an IC renovation on their greens. By simply tapping into their existing satellite MAXI™ wire they were able add IC Rotors and get the full benefits of the IC System without a major overhaul.

Assistant superintendent Cory O'Neil said: "If you're not able to overhaul a huge system all at once, ICI+ allows you to do certain areas without tracking wire throughout the entire golf course. No other product on the market could successfully bring so many older pieces of equipment together."

Ian McQueen, golf course and property manager at St. George's Golf & Country Club added: "With Rain Bird ICI+, I was able to get the latest technology without going through a major renovation, saving me considerable time and money."

Rain Bird is the only manufacturer to enable the user to control hybrid functionality and operate satellite, decoder and IC from a single Central Control PC. **END**

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TIME WHEN THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS GOING ON AROUND US –
IN GOLF AND LIFE IN GENERAL"



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ON THE FRINGE

Do people still doff their caps? Do people still wear caps? These are two questions I have been pondering lately. Millennials tend to prefer saying simply “props” – no, I’ve no idea either – or “chapeau!” At least I understand the etymology of the latter. Anyway, if doffing is still a ‘thing’, I metaphorically doffed my headgear to Orchardleigh Golf & Country Club recently, following the news it had launched a membership policy where golfers can join the club for just £1.

The club says that for the pound casual golfers can ‘enjoy all the trappings of membership’ for 12 months, including maintaining an official handicap, being able to attend social functions and entry into competitions – although they will still have to pay affiliation fees to England Golf. But even so ... £1! They do have to pay the full green fee rate for every round they then play – and there is no limit on the number of rounds available to them – but for the £1 they’re entitled to all the other benefits of club membership.

It’s a brave move. But I think it could be enormously successful – and I dearly hope it is. It’s an ideal option for the likes of this correspondent who is unlikely to ever be able to justify the cost of a golf club membership to Vlad the bookkeeper indoors. I just don’t play often enough. I do quite fancy being ‘part’ of a golf club environment, however. And, from Orchardleigh’s perspective, it will obviously be hoping some of its new “pay per round” members get bitten by the bug and decide to become full members further down the line.

Another club whose innovative approach received the metaphorical nod of approval from me recently was Ravenmeadow Golf Centre, in Worcestershire, which has launched a games club to help the ‘elderly’ combat loneliness. The free, weekly, two-hour club welcomes people over the age of 50 to play a variety of board games including chess and Scrabble – I used quote marks because as an over-50 I was hurt by the suggestion I am ‘elderly’.

It’s heartwarming to read such stories, particularly at a time when there are so many things going on around us – in golf and life in general – which arouse completely different, and negative, emotions.

Elsewhere, for example, Oulton Hall, in Leeds, was offering free golf to serving and former service personnel, a philanthropic gesture which I hope will be picked up by other clubs around the UK – and, even, maybe, further afield. After all, every country should look after the members of its armed forces.

With yet another KPMG report highlighting a further drop in membership – and therefore revenue – clubs elsewhere actually closing their doors for good, and more reports citing the health benefits of the sport, any fresh ideas to encourage people to golf or simply visit golf clubs should be welcomed. Props! **END**



NEWS IN BRIEF

GOLFMANAGEMENT.EU.COM/NEWS



JACOBSEN'S INVALUABLE 2020 FUTURE TURF MANAGERS INITIATIVE

Twenty-one turf professionals from across the UK and Ireland have completed the 2020 Future Turf Managers Initiative (FTMI) at Jacobsen's Ipswich headquarters. The intensive three-day event is focused on providing future turf managers with the skills and confidence to manage people and progress their careers, with 33 per cent of candidates moving on to managerial positions over the seven years the initiative has been running. In association with BIGGA, the course uses professional trainers and mentors to provide the practical tools and guidance needed, including communicating a professional image, conflict resolution and building budgets.

SEARCH 'FTMI' ONLINE

at golfsmanagement.eu.com for the full story



OCEAN TEE ANNOUNCES FIRST OVERSEAS DISTRIBUTION DEAL

Ocean Tee has announced its first distribution agreement which will see Belgium's The Golf Company become the first company outside of the UK to retail and distribute Ocean Tee products. Under the agreement, Ocean Tee's sustainable, bamboo golf tees will be sold direct to consumers online and at The Golf Company's five physical stores, which include Royal Hainaut Golf Club and Royal Antwerp Golf Club. The Golf Company will also be handling distribution, sales and marketing of the brand's products across the Benelux region.

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HARTPURY UNIVERSITY TO FUND MASTERS DEGREE GOLF STUDENTSHIPS

Hartpury University has launched new studentships to help aspiring elite golfers fulfil their potential on and off the golf course. The specialist institution is offering to fully fund masters degrees in the areas of Sports Science (Strength and conditioning, nutrition, coaching), Sport Business Management (MRes, MPhil) or an Applied Research Pathway (MRes, MPhil or PhD). The three students who successfully apply for the two-year part-time courses will also assume roles within Hartpury's successful college golf programme and therefore have an opportunity to develop core work-based skills.

SEARCH 'HARTPURY' ONLINE

golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



THE TRACK BECOMES FIRST VENUE TO ADOPT NEW CLUB CAR SYSTEM IN UAE

With the goal of creating a fun, modern entertainment experience, The Track, Meydan Golf in Dubai has implemented Club Car's latest Visage touchscreen system with integrated Bluetooth speakers to its new fleet of Precedent golf cars. The Troon-managed venue is the first outside of America to adopt the new technology, which allows golfers to listen to their personal music playlists, podcasts or even the radio while out on the course, without disturbing other golfers. Club Car tailored the ground-breaking system specifically to the golf industry's needs, using directional speakers to keep the sound within the car.

SEARCH 'THE TRACK' ONLINE

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



FOXHILLS FOUNDATION BUILDS ON ITS CORE VALUES

Talented young golfers will get the chance to reap the rewards from one of the UK's top youth development programmes, thanks to the scholarship initiative at Foxhills Club & Resort in Surrey. The Foxhills Foundation, which set both Paul Casey and Anthony Wall on their way to stellar careers on the European Tour and beyond, is inviting talented applicants to join the scheme to benefit from the exceptional coaching and support available at Foxhills.

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QUINTA DO LAGO LAUNCHES INTENSIVE TUITION BREAKS

The start of the golf season is fast approaching, and players can get their games in shape by booking an intensive tuition break at Quinta do Lago in Portugal this month. Golfers of all levels have the exclusive opportunity to learn to play like the best players in the world at the Algarve resort's Paul McGinley Golf Academy, with prices starting from €562 per person. The eye-catching four-night spring breaks feature expert tuition in all aspects of the game as well as access to the facilities at Quinta do Lago's state-of-the-art sports performance centre The Campus.

SEARCH 'QUINTA DO LAGO' ONLINE

golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



GLENMUIR TO DRESS INTERNATIONAL KING'S CUP TEAMS

Glenmuir, the Scottish golf clothing brand, will dress Team Ireland and Team USA for the 5th International King's Cup to be played at Castlerock Golf Club May 27-29 in Northern Ireland. The International King's Cup is an annual Team Matchplay competition between an Irish National team and an American National team. The King's Cup is played in honour one of golf's greatest ambassador – Arnold Palmer – whose honesty, integrity, sportsmanship and commitment to excellence represent the ideals for which the game of golf is known.

SEARCH 'GLENMUIR' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



TREVOSE WINS BIG AT BTME THANKS TO CLEARWATER

Trevoze Golf Club in Cornwall are celebrating after winning a brand new ClearWater water recycling system courtesy of Acumen Waste. As part of ClearWater's presence at BTME in January, general manager Matthew Mears again ran a free prize draw to win a complete system, commenting: "This was a record breaking year for us with ClearWater enquiries and the new location in the red zone seems to be paying off. It was also a great opportunity to showcase all the new branding and ClearWater logo as well as familiarising customers with the Acumen brand."

SEARCH 'TREVOSE' ONLINE

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WENTWORTH POSTS BETTER THAN EXPECTED £2M LOSS

Wentworth, the exclusive private golf and country club in Surrey, has posted better than expected financial results in 2019 as it pushes forward with plans to become a Debenture-only Members Club. Pointing to strong interest in its Debenture Membership program, and more efficient operational processes in cash management and purchasing, for the year to December 31, 2019 the Club's operating losses narrowed to £2m, from a loss of £5.8m in 2018.

SEARCH 'WENTWORTH' ONLINE

golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



ALL 19 HOLES INTRODUCES A GOLF SHIRT MADE FROM RECYCLED PLASTIC BOTTLES

All 19 Holes, a golf and lifestyle apparel brand that celebrates the tradition of golf's most fun hole, the nineteenth, has announced the release of its innovative ECO-Polo, a shirt made entirely from the recycled plastic bottles. All 19 Holes developed the ECO-Polo to meet its goal of environmental sustainability, style, and performance, and each shirt – which is made from recycled polyester – performs at the highest level possible, looks impeccable, and helps remove a small but important portion of the plastic pollution from the environment.

SEARCH '19 HOLES' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



MOTOCADDY LAUNCHES WORLD'S FIRST TOUCH SCREEN ELECTRIC TROLLEY

Motocaddy is introducing the world's first touch screen-enabled electric trolley as the flagship model of its transformed new range for 2020. The pioneering M5 GPS trolley features an ultra-responsive hi-res 3.5" LCD display that can easily be controlled in all weather conditions – even when wearing a glove. The super-intelligent M5 GPS and its Downhill Control equivalent – the M5 GPS DHC – incorporate a fully integrated GPS system with processing power similar to a modern-day smartphone that provides golfers with access to golf course mapping across the world.

SEARCH 'MOTOCADDY' ONLINE

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JOSÉ MARÍA OLAZÁBAL

FOUNDER, OLAZABAL DESIGN

OLAZABAL

D E S I G N

Affectionately known as 'Chema' by his friends and family, José María Olazábal has had an illustrious career both on-and-off the golf course, and is gaining global recognition for his work as a golf course designer.

With two Masters victories to his credit, Olazábal was captain to one of the most incredible final days in Ryder Cup and golf history, when in 2012, his team staged one of the greatest ever final-day comebacks at Medinah Country Club, Illinois.

Facing a 10-6 deficit, Europe won 8½ points from 12 singles matches on Sunday to win the Cup by 14½ to 13½, a victory Olazábal later dedicated to his long-term friend, and mentor, Seve Ballesteros who had passed away the previous year.

Olazábal was born in Fuenterrabia, a town in the Basque autonomous region of Spain, and as he explains, has his parents to thank for introducing him to golf: "We lived on a golf course and I was born the day after the golf course opened.

"My family worked in different areas at the golf club and my mother literally put the flags into the first nine holes the day before my birth."

Growing up on a golf course clearly benefited the young Spaniard, and he burst onto the golf scene in 1984 as a junior, winning the British Amateur Championship aged 18.

"I had a successful amateur career as a junior golfer and turned professional right after my 18th birthday," recalls Olazábal. "I was able to win the Qualifying School and to move right onto the European Tour in my very first season as a professional and went on to win a tournament on Tour as a rookie.

"That was the European Masters in Crans Montana, Switzerland."

He made his debut in the Ryder Cup in 1987 at the age of 21 and played a vital role, notably in partnership with Ballesteros, and following a string of European Tour victories, won his first Major in 1994.

"I had an amazing season in 1994 with four victories on the US and European Tour and it was certainly a crucial time in my career because I won my first Major title that year [The Masters at Augusta]."

However, later that year, the recurring pains in his feet began to intensify, and 12 months later, Olazábal was diagnosed with rheumatoid polyarthritis.

Throughout 1996, the pains grew so intense that he was sometimes reduced to crawling around his house, but in the autumn of 1996, Olazábal visited Dr. Hans-Wilhelm Mueller-Wohlfahrt, in Munich, and began an entirely fresh course of treatment.

Remarkably, by February 1997 he was playing in the Dubai Desert Classic, finishing twelfth, and two years later, won his second Masters, an achievement he ranks as his best ever.

"My Masters victory in 1999 was even more special to me because of my personal situation. I had been unable to play golf for around two years due to my health, and fought hard to come back to play professionally. To then come out on top as the Masters champion was in my own view my biggest achievement as a player."

It's evident from talking with Olazábal that Augusta National holds a very special place in his heart, and when asked what chang-





"GOLF CAN ONLY BE ATTRACTIVE LONG-TERM IF WE MAKE IT MORE FUN, FASTER, AND MORE AFFORDABLE"

es, if any, he would make to the layout, he emphatically says: "Absolutely nothing. Don't change perfection."

And perhaps it is this quest for perfection that led Olazábal into his first design venture in his native country as he explains: "I got started in my early twenties with my first design co-operations at La Sella Golf Club and Barcelona Golf."

"It all became more international in 2000 when I set up Olazábal Design together with my business partners Sergio Gomez and Matthias Nemes and we then started building up our own team. Today it has developed into what you could call a boutique design studio."

"We are small but we have been quite privileged to receive [some] spectacular design opportunities. We look at it as a team effort which I very much enjoy and I certainly plan to continue dedicating time to my golf designs."

"Our largest project currently is at the spectacular Costa Navarino in Greece where we have two new 18-hole courses under construction. Additionally, we are keeping busy with new designs or renovation works in Vietnam, the Middle East, Italy and Spain."

"The next one about to break ground is a modernisation of a 9-hole course at Club de Campo in Madrid which was originally designed by my late friend Seve Ballesteros over 25 years ago. We consider ourselves fortunate; each of the projects has its own personality and special characteristics which makes it so exciting."

When quizzed about some of his best work, Olazábal says: "That is a tough one, but let me highlight Real Sevilla Golf Club and Education City Golf Club. Real Sevilla is a gem; it has been the host venue of many top tournaments and has always received a lot of praise from the pros as well as from the members and guests."

"Education City [in Qatar] is brand new and avant-garde in many respects. We worked on it for seven years; the course

was just opened for play and we are happy about the positive feedback we have already received."

But as much as Olazábal enjoys working with his design team and creating layouts for golfers all over the world to enjoy, how does it compare to winning on Tour? "Nothing beats the thrill of winning. But it is not only a tournament you can win, you also win or lose with a design project. In design, the thrill comes from the feedback of the golfers, be it from my peers, from members or from guests."

And he returns to his admiration for Augusta National when asked who – if anyone – has influenced his design ethos.

"My love for Augusta is no secret but it would be unfair to single out one [architect], as there are so many wonderful designs to admire and learn from. I am surely influenced by all the travels as a professional player and by the opportunity to compete on so many of the world's most sought after golf courses."

"What sticks [out] most is the diversity in golf course design combined with the beauty of the landscapes into which the courses were crafted. I would say that my inspiration comes as much from the golden age legends who gave us so many timeless classics as well as from our contemporary greats that created modern masterpieces across all continents."

In 2009, aged 43, Olazábal was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame, so is ideally placed to share his thoughts on the challenges facing the game in the modern era, and also help shape that future by progressive golf course design.

"I am convinced that the biggest challenge ahead for golf is to bring new people into the game. Golf can only be attractive long-term if we make it more fun, faster, and more affordable."

And be assured that Olazábal will strive for perfection in his quest to ensure that both the game he adores, and the courses he designs, meet that criteria. **END**



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SALES, MARKETING & PR

IMG has been at the forefront of the sport management industry since its inception in 1960, with golf at the heart of its activities. Founder Mark McCormack was the first to recognise the commercial potential of sport and that of its stars, and with the promotion of IMG's first clients – Arnold Palmer, Gary Player and Jack Nicklaus – the sport marketing business was created with IMG considered to be the market leader in the industry.

In 2014, IMG was acquired by WME – a leading entertainment and media agency – and three years later in 2017, became an Endeavor company, further strengthening the breadth of IMG's offering and ability to deliver unparalleled access and scope across the sport. Over the past 25 years IMG Golf Course Services has assisted over 110 clubs with industry leading consulting services, and with professional staff across the globe, utilises broad resources and experience to deliver value added services to create successful clubs.

A few years ago IMG launched IMG Prestige, an elite network of 200+ courses that feature leading golf clubs and partners from across the world. The network provides a unique and valuable benefit to the members of each participating club as well as driving and delivering green fee revenue. Members at each club are entitled to preferred access, special rates, discounts, benefits and privileges. Recently, IMG launched Prestige +, a new service platform focused on delivering sales, marketing & PR support to clubs.

"With our network of contacts and expertise, we are uniquely positioned to offer clubs a range of customised marketing services that will enhance the reputation of the club, provide a competitive advantage, open up new markets and drive additional rounds," said Russell Hannah, senior director, golf. "Our team provide access to expert market knowledge, sharing industry best practices and developing innovative opportunities to maximise sales. The list of benefits includes membership to the IMG Prestige network, access to our network of tour operators and media partners, regular features in our newsletter *The View*, IMG social media platforms and the drafting and distribution of press releases."

IMG also manages some of the world's finest players such as Francesco Molinari, Jordan Spieth & Lydia Ko and can arrange for a top Tour player from their stable to act as a club ambassador; host an exclusive golf day or attend a grand opening. This provides the opportunity to entertain key prospective members, residents and media while generating exposure. IMG also stages some of the biggest professional events across the globe, including the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship; Solheim Cup; Saudi International and the WGC HSBC Champions.

Part of IMG Media, the team at *Golfing World* is on hand to support clients with the production and broadcasting of exclusive destination features. *Golfing World* is the world's only daily golf show, being distributed to over 400 million households. **END**





WAYNE SHEFFIELD

PRESIDENT & GENERAL MANAGER, ISLEWORTH



The maxim good things come to those who wait certainly holds true for Englishman Wayne Sheffield and his employers, Isleworth, one of the foremost golf communities in the USA and worldwide.

In 2011 the Windsor-born businessman was set to take charge at Lake Nona, like Isleworth owned by the Lewis family, but a visa ballot mitigated against him.

However, four years later the then chief executive of The Wisley got a second opportunity to fulfil his ambition of working in the USA at the highest level in golf management – to the subsequent benefit of both Sheffield and Isleworth, situated among the Chain of Lakes in central Florida.

As general manager at Isleworth Golf & Country Club, where he is now also president of Isleworth Realty, 48-year-old Sheffield helped turn it from a loss-making operation to one in profit.

And arguably the biggest testament to his acumen and skills was that the move from red to black figures partially came about not by the oft-followed route of cost-cutting, but by increasing expenditure to reverse what he saw as "some migration and denigration of mystique and pixie dust."

"Over the past 30 years, Isleworth had been a huge commercial success and source of pride for the Tavistock Group," says Sheffield, "home to the Lewis family in the USA and an enduring 'front porch' for the Group with significant historical and mystical brand equity.

"The Isleworth team were challenged to halt owner financial subsidy of operations, improve the value of real estate holdings

and look at everything with fresh eyes, objectivity and focus. This period of assessment included meetings with members and residents and, after consultation with the owners, a candid assessment that there had been some migration and denigration of mystique and pixie dust that maybe [led to] a tired offering.

"Our job was to come up with a promised action plan and this included a reiteration of the core focus on exclusivity, security and the importance of golf here at Isleworth. We also implemented a plan to improve all facilities, and create new amenities with a greater focus on families, women and children.

"We are on a great upward spiral and improving the golf course and investing in landscaping has seen us attract the next crop of amazing sports stars and golfers [among them Danny Willett and Tommy Fleetwood] with a waiting list for social membership also."

The pixie dust to which he alludes was originally sprinkled by Arnold Palmer, who flew over the area when it was orange groves and earmarked it as a great place to build a golf and residential community, and has since been applied liberally by the likes of Tiger Woods, Payne Stewart and Bubba Watson, and basketball legend Shaquille O'Neal.

Isleworth prides itself on its exclusivity while placing emphasis on its "informal excellence" and the peace of mind it offers was elevated with the installation of a \$2m security system around the perimeters of an estate that includes more than 400 mansions.



"THE ONE THING WE SHOULD ALL REALISE IN ANY ROLE OR ANY OF OUR CLUBS IS THAT WE GO BACKWARDS IF WE STAND STILL"

Sheffield and his family, wife Carey, daughter Alex (17) and son Stuart (15) – his eldest son, James (25), currently lives and works in London ahead of a move to San Francisco – are thriving in the Florida sunshine, but he admits there was a big initial hurdle to overcome in that his visa did not allow Carey to continue her profession as a photographer in the USA.

"The hardest thing about the move was that Carey was well-regarded, had won awards, had lots of front covers, but then couldn't work on my visa," he recalls. "However, we got our green card about a year ago so that meant she could set up a business here, which is better for her."

This reporter naively suggested that his appointment at arguably the foremost golf club in the world outside Augusta National appeared to be similar in level of achievement to a Briton being appointed as coach of an NFL franchise.

"It's a funny but not really fair analogy as us Brits tend to know very little about NFL, having not grown up on it 24/7, yet we have history and some amazingly talented golf club managers and golf industry professionals," gently chides Sheffield.

"I know so many UK managers who would be a huge asset to clubs in the US and throughout the world and saw this in my time appointing managers for world-wide projects whilst at IMG [where he was director of golf operations]. The biggest reason that it is seen as a big achievement is due to the difficulties of getting a visa and why would clubs go through such difficulties when there is also an abundance of very talented US managers available?"

He had been at The Wisley for three years when he was originally coveted by the Tavistock Group and believes the further four years he spent in Surrey, along with his previous experience in the UK, Europe and Asia, played their part in leading to the offer of his current post at Isleworth.

"I think the experience of having worked for some of the bigger groups and around the world was important for the visa process, but also hugely important for me and my ability to do my job," he reflects.

"Different cultures, different experiences, different expectations, varied ways of operations and also factors such as exposure to both warm and cold season grasses are critical.

"The Wisley is an amazing club and the ability to work with Robert Trent Jones II on the Church and Mill nine refurbishment projects and inherit the Garden nine project further added to my skill base and learning.

"Likewise, the club and membership were rightly demanding and wanted to constantly improve and be the best, so to make such improvements over the eight years there was critical for my role as chief executive which, of course, helped me to demonstrate why I could do the same at an amazing club like Isleworth.

"The one thing we should all realise in any role or any of our clubs is that we go backwards if we stand still. On a daily and weekly basis we try to make lots of small improvements and these all add up to a big uplift. My favourite quote that we reiterate and ask the team here to work by is, 'In the race for excellence, there is no finish line.'"

The former two-handicapper says that a career in golf wasn't really planned. Having left university with a business degree he decided against following his father into accountancy and worked in marketing for a catering equipment manufacturer.

The role as sales & marketing manager at The Lambourne Club saw him first dip his toe into golfing waters and led, ultimately, to him spending eight years as the longest-serving CEO at The Wisley before Isleworth.

He confesses to missing friends, family and his beloved Tottenham Hotspur – who are owned by Tavistock – but the pluses of the Florida family lifestyle far outweigh the negatives. As to the future, he says: "I have a great job and much more to do here at Isleworth and have also taken on leadership of the Realty and Home Services businesses.

"The green card has really taken the pressure off in terms of the future, which we all feel lies firmly here and with Tavistock." And he adds with a laugh that maybe he might one day become Tottenham chairman "when Daniel Levy decides to retire." **END**

SEAN CÔRTE-REAL

RESORT DIRECTOR, LA CALA



Nestled in the foothills of the beautiful Mijas Mountains with breath-taking views of the Andalusian countryside, La Cala Golf Hotel & Spa is an idyllic rural retreat for golfers from across Europe.

Featuring three Cabell B. Robinson-designed courses – Campo America, Campo Asia and Campo Europa – the resort is located just ten minutes from the Mediterranean beaches of the Costa del Sol, a region famed for its golf, and widely-regarded in golfing parlance as the 'Costa del Golf'.

Last year marked the 30th anniversary of the opening of La Cala, which is part of the Irish-owned FBD Hotels and Resorts portfolio, and despite the undulating terrain that architect Robinson was faced with three decades ago, he somehow managed to create three distinctly different layouts.

"At first, I thought the terrain was at the limit of what could be turned into golf courses, given the severe changes in altitude," recalls Robinson. "I remember looking at the whole estate and thinking, 'I hope I know what I'm doing'.

"We ended up moving 500,000 cubic metres of earth, almost four times the amount that would be moved in flatter projects. Without wishing to sound arrogant, I'm still very proud of the work at La Cala."

Yet, despite Robinson crafting 54 spectacular holes of golf, La Cala failed to earn the recognition that a three-course resort on the Costa del Sol merited, and post the financial crash of 2008, struggled to make its mark.

Fast forward ten years, and in April 2018, the Irish owners turned to experienced oper-

ator, Sean Côte-Real to re-position La Cala as a premium destination on the famous Spanish coastline.

Recruited from Las Colinas where he spent three-and-a-half years as director of golf, Côte-Real was attracted to the position of general manager for the entire La Cala resort with a mandate to improve facilities and the visitor experience. And the location didn't escape his attention either.

"The position of general manager at one of the largest resorts in Europe, with three golf courses, a hotel, spa, restaurants, and real estate, was very attractive," said Côte-Real. "But one of the biggest things was the challenge of putting La Cala on the map, the European map where it deserves to be. It's a fantastic resort, and there aren't many like it.

"I've always seen [the] Costa del Sol as one of the top golf destinations in the world, and it is – there are so many golf courses around here – and most of us know it as Costa del Golf. We're bang in the middle of Malaga and Marbella, so it was almost a no brainer, really [to come to La Cala]. It was an easy decision."

In 45 year-old Côte-Real, FBD opted for an experienced manager who prior to Las Colinas, spent three years as director of golf and project manager at Igussau Golf Resort in Brazil, where he helped re-brand the former three-star complex into a luxury five-star resort.

And it is this inherent desire to re-position La Cala that drives Côte-Real; and he is clear where he sees his market.

"In the middle really," he states, "because one thing that we're sure of, is [that] we are





"WE'RE NOT DECREASING PRICES OR GOING TO BE DOING ANY STRANGE PRICING STRATEGIES – WE ARE SIMPLIFYING WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE TO IMPROVE THE OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF THE GOLF"

a four-star resort, and I think it's important that as a resort we need to know what we are and what we want. And what we are is a four-star, good quality, good service resort.

"I think one of the dangers that you find [at] several places, especially in tourist areas, is people want to put five-star on the door. And really then they're not giving that expectation to the client. They're not achieving it, because in the end, it's a four-star product."

And with three courses, golf is front and centre of the La Cala offering, but again, Côte-Real is managing expectations.

"Great golf doesn't mean you've got to have the absolute fastest, best greens in the world. All you need is very decent, good playing surfaces that a normal 18 handicapper would enjoy, and that's what we're trying to do. Same with the bunkers, same with the fairways, same with the tees – just trying to offer a good experience for the golfer."

"There's no doubt that golfers want good quality, and that will bring people back always. It's proven that people will come back if things are right, and that's how we're going to increase our number of rounds. We're not decreasing prices or going to be doing any strange pricing strategies – we are simplifying what we already have to improve the overall experience of the golf."

Currently, all three courses have a similar price point, but Côte-Real has plans to differentiate the offering, with Campo America in-line for a more premium feel, following the recent introduction of GPS on the buggies. Bag-tags for visitors are in the pipeline also.

And in summer 2021, every green on Campo America will be reseeded with Bermuda following a successful renovation of Campo Asia last year, and a planned summer refurbishment of Campo Europa this year.

"We have the luxury of closing the golf course every summer," adds Côte-Real. "Up until very recently, we weren't sure if it was the right thing or not, as we wanted to see the results on what happened on Asia. And now having gone through the cold spells, we're absolutely delighted with the results, because the greens are great."

"They're firm; they're very true and they've maintained the green colour because Bermuda goes dormant and it goes brown. We're really happy with the results."

"The results on Asia just pushed us to go ahead with all the other greens, and I think it's a no brainer. Sustainability, water consumption, chemicals, playability, everything, it's just a win-win all around."

With only Campo Asia starting and finishing at the clubhouse, the academy and practice facilities are another area that Côte-Real wants to improve, but with the first tees of Campo America and Campo Europa a good two-minute buggy drive away from the caddiemaster, it can be challenging enticing golfers to use the facilities before heading to the course. But the introduction of a free shuttle service is beginning to change perceptions.

"A lot of people didn't know that there was a driving range in the academy, so we're trying to push the information that this is available."

And this continual investment in the La Cala brand has seen a new fleet of 180 Club Car buggies, plus a remodelled pro shop. "When I arrived, we had 16 different brands, and it [was] way too much – we're down to seven now. The margins for us have grown, which is important, and we're selling better and selling more. So that's worked very well."

When Côte-Real introduced himself to his staff upon arriving on the Costa del Sol almost two years ago, he recalls that he received a spontaneous round of applause when, at his first staff meeting, he stated that his vision for La Cala was predominantly as a golf resort.

"I think from what I saw and what I felt was that we were focusing on things that weren't really that important. The strategy might have been slightly off in where we should be pointing to, but most of our energy should be on golf, and bringing golfers up here, and getting golfers to enjoy their experience on our golf courses."

And that core message of focusing on what really matters will surely keep Côte-Real's Irish paymasters smiling. **END**



ILE AUX CERFS, MAURITIUS

ILEAUXCERFSGOLFCLUB.COM

Words Michael Lenihan

Photography Jacob Sjöman, Jean-Bernard Adoue

Uninhabited and relatively unspoilt, it's not surprising that Ile aux Cerfs is a golfer's dream playground. Surrounded by one of the biggest lagoons in Mauritius, and winding across 38 hectares of natural beauty, there are incredible ocean views from virtually every hole.

White sand bunkers are liberally scattered everywhere, whilst craggy volcanic outcrops, lush tropical vegetation and lakes and mangrove forests flank the fairways, all adding enormously to the aesthetic appeal and challenge of this spectacular golfing island.

But beyond the sun seekers on the private south side of the island – accessible from the mainland by either the exclusive golfing boat shuttle from Pointe Maurice jetty or by a scenic helicopter flight – is home to a golf course as beautiful as one is likely to find anywhere on earth.

Ile aux Cerfs Golf Club is a must-play course, famous for its idyllic tropical surroundings, perfect, manicured greens, exclusive golfer beach, golf academy and the unique feature of having two greens on the 18th hole. Designed by golfing legend Bernhard Langer, the course really is one for the golfing bucket list.

And one of the best things about this island is that it doesn't have expansive areas covered in accommodation marring the island's natural beauty. In fact, the newly introduced 'Bubble Lodges' are the only accommodation on the island which means that staying in one of them is a truly unique and exclusive experience.

What's more, there are only three Bubble Lodges in total, meaning that you will practically have the iconic island of Ile aux Cerfs all to yourself in the evenings.





"WE WANT TO CONNECT LONG BEACH WITH STRONG PASSION POINTS AND UNIQUE EXPERIENCES WHICH WILL CREATE A MEMORABLE AND ENERGETIC GUEST JOURNEY"

Thankfully, with bedrooms on Ile aux Cerfs limited, across the lagoon lies a luxury hotel bordering the east coast of Mauritius that was founded on a single premise: to make your comfort a priority. The five-star Long Beach resort – part of Sun Resorts – is a resort that is as breath-taking as it is unique.

While opportunities for rest and relaxation abound, Long Beach was created for those who thrive on the idea of balance; those who seek equal measures of laid-back luxury and thrilling, novel experiences, activities and adventures. And with sublime golf experiences at its core, it's an exceptional choice for avid golfers.

Long Beach is no ordinary golf resort. It's an extraordinary luxury oasis in Mauritius for active couples and families where the staff constantly goes above and beyond to ensure each stay is memorable. At Long Beach, golfing guests are treated like VIPs and are offered preferred tee-times at Ile aux Cerfs Golf Club, with transfers to and from the resort (by land and boat) included.

Although Long Beach is the quintessential resort for golfing fans and their families – it's a sanctuary where each guest and their interests are well taken care of – it's also a place of unparalleled tranquillity for non-golfers seeking novel experiences and activities to live out their dream holiday in the sun.

One of Long Beach's many highlights is the Cinq Mondes Spa and Wellness Retreat. At this serene haven, nestled amongst jungle-like gardens and overlooking a pond in a secluded area of the resort, guests can indulge in an array of extraordinary treatments, inspired by healing traditions from around the world and carried out using the finest Cinq Mondes products.

Guests can enjoy the sense of tranquillity in one of the relaxation areas, embrace the spa facilities (which include a fantastic hammam), or even partake in a yoga or Qi Gong class—this is the perfect place for post-round relaxation and rejuvenation.

While the treatment list at Long Beach's Cinq Mondes Spa is exhaustive, there is a special treatment created for golfers; the

Golfer's Massage, created to target specific areas golfers commonly struggle with (such as the back, lower back and legs). Each golfer's massage, however, is specifically tailored to the needs and wants of the guest, and the highly skilled therapists will ensure that you leave feeling your best and ready to embrace your next round in paradise.

The beautiful rooms at Long Beach offer modern comforts and stylish design elements that make for a comfortable stay. There are 255 contemporary rooms facing the sea, including Beach Front Senior Suites and Family Suites. Every room at Long Beach enjoys close access to its immediate stretch of beach, garden or pool, and all feature a private balcony or terrace.

From a gastronomic standpoint, guests are spoilt for choice at Long Beach. From exceptional signature cocktails and special evenings with tasting menus created by famous chefs to cooking classes (after a visit to the local market), and an array of on-site restaurants, it's the perfect place for foodies.

From delectable Italian fare to casual beachside dining and world-class Asian dishes, Long Beach is sure to have something for every member of the family, even the little ones, who have exclusive use of their own club which is open for kids aged between 2 and 11, all day, every day.

Furthermore, children aged 12 and under stay for free when sharing a room with their parents.

"Imagine being able to luxuriate on a VIP beach as you are served and pampered, knowing that your little ones are well looked after and having an incredible time enjoying activities perfect for their age," said Jean-Marc Ma-Poon, general manager of Long Beach, whose ambition is to make Long Beach the ultimate tropical playground and one of the best five-star hotels in Mauritius.

"We want to connect Long Beach with strong passion points and unique experiences which will create a memorable and energetic guest journey."

And those memories of both Ile aux Cerfs Golf Club and Long Beach will surely be cherished ones, that will last a lifetime. **END**

PETER BANKS

MANAGING DIRECTOR, RUDDING PARK

RUDDING PARK

HARROGATE

When Peter Banks joined Rudding Park in 1996 a year after the Hawtree-designed golf course opened for play, he intended to stay no longer than three years. With golf at Rudding Park celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, Banks never did quite manage to prise himself away from North Yorkshire.

Set in 300 acres of landscaped gardens and woodlands, Rudding Park in Harrogate features a boutique hotel with 90 bedrooms and suites; a 14-seat private cinema; a new state-of-the-art spa and two eateries – the Clocktower Restaurant and Bar – and Horto (Latin for kitchen garden) which offers contemporary fine dining and boasts three AA Rosettes.

Home of the 2019 Toro greenkeeper of the year, Jason Norwood, the golf course is evidently in safe hands, with Norwood and head greenkeeper Richard Hollingworth responsible for the 18-hole main Hawtree Course, and the six-hole, par 3, Repton Short Course which features a hole inspired by the world-famous 17th at Sawgrass.

Opened in 2008, the Repton Short Course was a personal triumph for Banks, who had been instrumental in its concept and planning. "I came up with the idea for the Repton Course in 2002 on the touchline of an under-eight's football match when one of my friends said: 'you need a short course'," he recalls.

"We talked about it, went around a few short courses in the country, spoke to Martin [Hawtree] and walked around the land we had in mind. Martin came up and I told him I didn't want it to be a pitch-and-putt and

that we needed this to be our signature, so people go, 'wow' and remember it."

And that attention to detail coupled with a tenacious approach to business, perhaps explains why Banks is now managing director of Rudding Park. Drafted in originally to oversee the opening of the hotel, Banks, 51, is now responsible for the entire operation – including golf – and just spending a few moments in his company, it's evident that this is where his passion lies despite having a background in hotel management.

"I came to open the hotel, as you don't often get a chance to do an opening, especially an opening for a private business that isn't run by a hotelier. It was literally a blank piece of paper for me so I could just come in and do the hotel as I saw it. It was a great opportunity.

"I wanted to get an opening on my CV and came up here, thought I was going to be here for three years and then move on."

During his 24-year tenure, Banks who describes himself as "a golfer by hobby; hotelier by necessity," has shaped Rudding Park in his own image, and spent £10m on building a new spa which opened in May 2017 and a further £1m on improving the golf academy. And there may be future investment on the horizon too.

"Last year we built two new holes," added Banks. "We've got planning permission for an additional nine holes and to crystallize that planning permission, we needed to get cracking and do something. So, we built two holes, but only play them as part of a ten-hole loop, and probably spent a further £150,000 [building them]."





"I'VE LOST QUITE A LOT OF CORPORATE GOLF DAYS BECAUSE THEY NOW DO CORPORATE CYCLING DAYS"

The 'missing' seven holes, to complete a 27-hole layout, may have to wait though, as Banks feels that golf has wider issues to resolve first before he can commit to further investment.

"Golf is really struggling and it's struggling because golf as a game was designed for a different age. It's a fantastic game, it's never ever going to go out of fashion because it pushes the same buttons in our brains, I believe, as gambling does.

"If we got par on every single hole – unlikely as it may sound for me – and we went around and there was no, 'Bloody hell, that's why I play this game' moment, then there's nothing to get you back. And that's why gamblers do it as well. If gamblers win every time, they wouldn't gamble.

"So golf in itself will never lose its allure, but the problem we've got is that it was designed at a time-rich age, and as we all know now, we are time-poor at a certain age so actually as a golf industry, we need to understand that and adapt.

"Twenty years ago, once men had stopped playing football or rugby, they still wanted to compete and so they then gravitated from competitive contact sport at 30, 35 or something, to golf. And so, the golf course was full of 35-year-old blokes having a bat and trying to beat each other, exactly the same way as they used to when they were playing football or rugby.

"Unfortunately for golf, we've now become time poorer. And I blame mobile phones – there's instant gratification.

"And of course, along came cycling and cycling has absolutely torpedoed that 35 to 50-year-old male golfing market. It attracts the same sort of people; it attracts people who want to compete but can't do contact sport. It attracts people who are a little bit geeky about their kit, so instead of carrying a Vokey wedge, they've got carbon fibre gears.

"Unfortunately for golf, what cycling also is, that golf isn't, is an awful lot more approachable and actually accessible.

"By that I don't necessarily mean that part of it is the whole stuffiness issue, but anyone can ride a bike. Once you've got the kit, you just get on your bike and then go for a ride.

"I don't have to ring my mate to have a game with them; I don't have to ring the club to reserve a tee time. None of those barriers are there for cycling. I've lost quite a lot of corporate golf days because they now do corporate cycling days."

Yet despite pressure from the lycra brigade, Banks is of the opinion that golf will always trump cycling when it comes to club membership, especially with the over 50s.

"It's not a fluke that the average age at golf clubs is increasing, because people who've retired have the time to play the game and probably actually don't have the knees or hips to go cycling anymore," he smiles. "And people are retiring earlier now of course."

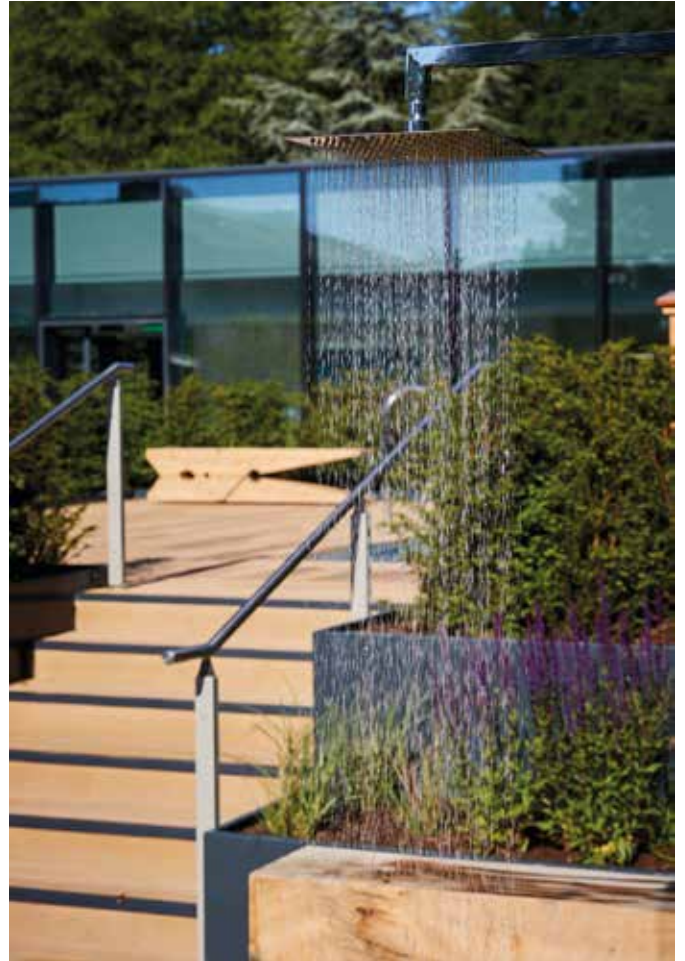
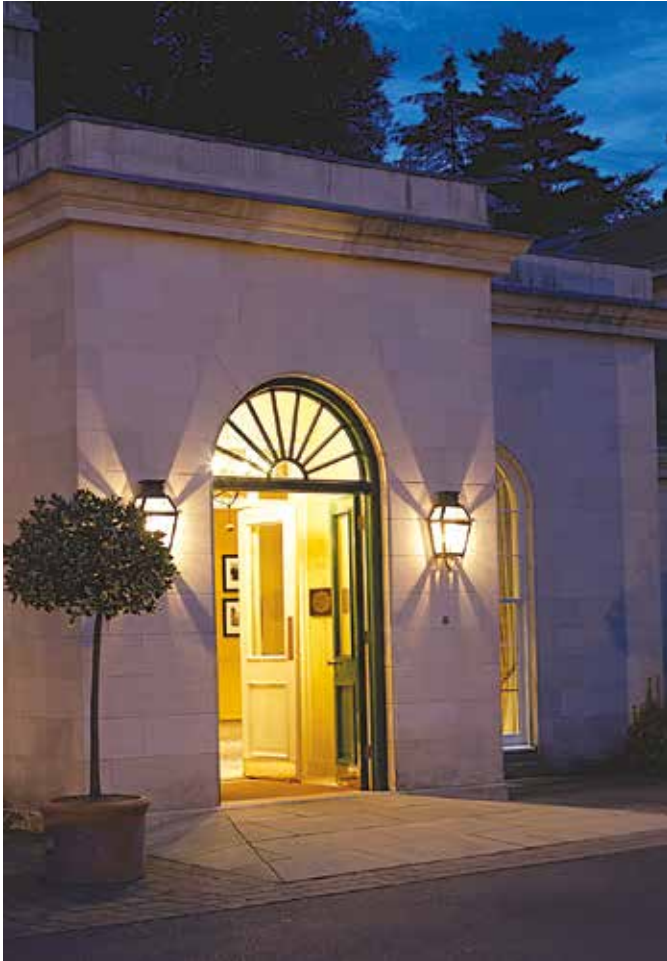
A couple of years back, Banks was quoted as saying that he wanted to develop Rudding Park into the "Gleneagles of the north of England," a statement which he is keen to qualify.

"When I said the Gleneagles of the north of England, I didn't necessarily mean purely from the golf perspective, I meant from the resort perspective. And golf is one offering within that resort – Gleneagles isn't just a golf destination."

And neither is Rudding Park. Voted Hotel of the Year at the annual VisitEngland Awards for Excellence in 2018; Best Fine Dining Restaurant in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* Oliver Awards 2018; and Spa of the Year at the annual AA Hospitality Awards in 2019, Rudding Park has a lot to offer.

"So, in answer to the question, the golf needs to be a good test, and I would say that I think we have the best test of modern golf in the Harrogate area," stated Banks, who has crafted Rudding Park into one of the finest resorts in the north of England, if not the UK.

Not bad for someone who only planned to stay for a few years. **END**







Words Michael Lenihan
Photography Hugo Alcalde

BRENDAN DWYER

GENERAL MANAGER, LA FINCA



In November 2018, Brendan Dwyer was appointed as the new general manager of La Finca – part of Golf Quara – and has plans to turn the Spanish resort into Costa Blanca's leading golf and gastronomy destination.

With a background in hospitality, and a cv that includes spells with Hyatt Hotels and La Manga Club situated just along the coast, Dwyer heads up a team that also includes Luke Murphy and Ana Lopez and is focused on repositioning the resort as he explains.

"My background is in hospitality and marketing so when I arrived at La Finca Resort I quickly realised that the product was essentially dormant.

"The golf facilities were very good but there was no real connection between these and the hotel, which is why I knew that we needed to reposition the product. To do this we needed to reinvest in a new team to radicalise the marketing, along with being tactical in the marketplace to attract a new, diverse clientele.

"The plans that we set in place were ambitious and required financial backing as we set out on a journey to diversify the product offering and make it more international. We also needed to deliver the message that the hotel and facilities at the resort are the very best in the region and cater for many types of client, not just golfers."

La Finca is one of three courses within the Golf Quara group – which includes Villamartín and Las Ramblas – and Dwyer is keen to ensure that the resort in Algorfa, Alicante, sets itself apart with a reputation for fine food and the best of Spanish hospitality.

"La Finca was already very highly regarded and we were keen to ensure that the resort as a whole was reflective of that. As such, we carried out a soft refurbishment of our spa facilities, revamped our five-star hotel and opened Jardines La Finca Restaurant, which serves the very finest in Mediterranean cuisine with a touch of designer style.

"These have all helped to take what we already had here and elevate the visitor experience to the next level, and [we] have seen a very positive response to our hard work, especially from leisure clients.

"The resort now caters for a much wider business mix; it essentially boils down to diversification and this has led to a very positive start to 2020. We have started to work with a range of golf federations and tour operators, and it is very pleasing to see that we are starting to see the results of the implementation of our more focused marketing strategy."

It's evident talking with Dwyer that he sees the future of the resort as a five-star golf hotel & spa, with an emphasis on attracting couples – irrespective if they golf or not.

Given the inland location of La Finca, which forms part of a thriving all-year-round residential urbanisation, the resort is the ideal place to escape and relax in the Spanish sunshine. The surrounding towns of Algorfa and Los Montesinos exude Spanish charm, and are a world apart from the busy town of Villamartín with its vibrant night-life.

"Our focus as a management team was to create a modern and exciting resort that offers the best cuisine in the region – to be enjoyed by golfers and leisure visitors alike



"WE ARE EXCITED BY THE PROSPECT OF WHAT WE CAN ACHIEVE WITH OUR NEW GASTRONOMIC OFFERINGS"

- and that is still very much at the forefront of our plans. We already have an excellent food and beverage offering, and we will be adding to these by opening two new restaurants and a winery later this year as we build on our reputation as a true gastronomic hub.

"Frijolino, a Mexican-Italian hybrid restaurant is set to open in the summer, followed soon afterwards by Misto Grillhouse, while the Bodega La Finca winery will open its doors in the next few months. These additions are all part of our bigger plan to globalise the product, making it more experiential and reaching out to a more diverse audience. People are looking for choice and our offering will be explosive, dynamic and interesting."

And as Dwyer explains, the new gastronomy offerings will differ from traditional golf resort dining experiences: "We know that it is vitally important for our product to be the very best in the region if we are to reach the lofty heights that we set out to achieve.

"That's why we will be going above and beyond to provide our guests with an experience that is truly unique and authentic; for example the new winery will be able to seat up to 35 people and will facilitate wine tasting presentations from expert sommeliers, which is an ideal addition for a golfing trip or those looking to try a variety of fine wines from traditional and New World regions.

"Misto Grillhouse will offer the very best meats from around the world - cooked by great chefs and accompanied by the very best wines - and guests will also have the option of enjoying truly authentic Valencian paellas, cooked over natural woods for a spectacular taste and stunning overall dining experience that reflects our vision of the resort as a whole."

La Finca Resort was named 'Spain's Best Golf Hotel' at the 2019 World Golf Awards which reward excellence in golf tourism around the world, and that is an accolade that Dwyer and his management team are seeking to build upon.

"We are extremely proud to say [that] we have been nominated for the award again this year.

"We also won Spain's Leading Sports Resort at the World Travel Awards in June which again shows that our hard work is paying off, and gives myself and the other members of the management team a lot of confidence going forward..

"We are on a continuous journey to enhance our offering at La Finca Resort and put the venue on the map as the very best golf resort and pinnacle of golfing tourism in Costa Blanca."

On the golf operational side, all three of the courses in the Golf Quara group are in the second year of a three-year enhancement project, with subtle changes at La Finca visible, although not prominent.

La Finca opened its doors in August 2002, and was designed by Spanish designer Pepe Gancedo. Forming two loops of nine returning to the Andalusian-style clubhouse, the course is most famous for its distinctive 7th green, which is square and resembles a bowling green.

Walkable, the course is divided into two parcels of land, with the par-3, 3rd hole through to the dog-leg right par 4, 7th - with the aforementioned green - enclosed by front-line golf villas that form a natural amphitheatre.

The facilities at La Finca Resort include the five-star hotel with 120 guest rooms; an outdoor swimming pool; a conservatory with space for 350 people; a racquet area with both tennis and paddle courts; and the newly renovated, luxury spa with a gym, water circuits, and massage and treatment rooms.

But as Dwyer concludes, he and his team are not resting on their laurels, as there is still much work to be done.

"We are extremely proud of what has been achieved at the resort to date and we will continue to build on that success in 2020 and beyond. It is always encouraging to see tangible improvements from one year to another and we are excited by the prospect of what we can achieve with our new gastronomic offerings.

"Our key goal is to continue to attract a wider mix of clientele alongside our golf business and we are very confident about achieving this." **END**

BURHILL GROUP

LEADS THE WAY WITH STAFF DEVELOPMENT



Burhill Group Ltd (BGL) is leading the way in providing development pathways for employees at its 21 golf and leisure venues across the UK. The group offers a variety of schemes, including apprenticeship training opportunities such as Business Administration, Catering and Hospitality Management and Greenkeeping, and currently has 24 apprentices in place across its portfolio, with a further eight in registration.

This totals up to an impressive £42,000 investment into BGL's apprenticeship training for 2019, with an increased £60,000 forecast in place for 2020.

The significant investment highlights the Group's desire to encourage progression from within, across the portfolio of golf clubs and Adventure Leisure venues. BGL has continued its steady growth in both elements of its business, bucking the trend in the golf industry with increasing participation figures and opening several new adventure golf venues, including bringing new brand, BUNKERS! to market at the end of 2019.

As a result, BGL has developed a number of schemes to further the development of its employees and to build a pool of staff ready to progress internally when the opportunities arise.

"We are committed to developing our own people and providing opportunities for them to rise through the ranks at BGL," commented BGL CEO, Colin Mayes. "It speaks great volumes about the management and support at our venues and the great opportunities to not only find a role, but to develop a career within our group.

"We've seen the success of candidates in our organisation who have come through these programmes and this has only reinforced our desire to continue to grow and expand the schemes in 2020 and beyond."

In response to staff feedback for more training, just over a year ago, the group appointed Janice Moore to the position of learning and development manager.

"My goal is to equip employees with the tools and resources to become agile, self-directed and collaborative learners," commented Moore. "I am steering expectations away from a training mindset, toward a performance mindset.

"Where there is friction in the business, we try to identify where people development is the answer and when I understand what the issues are, and what it's like in the deep end, I'm able to design for that and deliver resources that are going to make a real difference to the performance of our staff."

Among the measures in place to improve, BGL is trialling a replacement for their once-a-year staff survey with a system that will measure employee engagement at regular intervals throughout the year, highlighting the value it places on gauging the mood of its people. "Part of my job is to gather information from the business about issues that are impacting performance and to assess where people development could help," continues Moore.

The group's long-term pledge to advancing the careers of its people includes the successful internal Manager in Training (MIT) programme, which has placed several key fast rising leaders within the BGL Group.





"WE ARE COMMITTED TO DEVELOPING OUR OWN PEOPLE AND PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEM TO RISE THROUGH THE RANKS"

The structured programme provides a framework to assist candidates in developing the skills and knowledge necessary to become a general manager. It's used as a guide to advancement with increasing responsibilities and personal challenges along the way to prepare candidates for the task of overseeing operations at one of BGL's venues.

BGL firmly believes in providing the opportunity for employees to advance within individual venues as well as offering the chance to move across the Group. The program encourages trainee managers to actually undertake the crucial tasks they will encounter in their future roles, giving them the best experience to prepare for the next step. The detailed focus on developing both the technical and practical skills required as well as encouraging leadership qualities to shine through, gives prospective managers a key head start and career boost.

Investing in its leaders of the future, BGL is enrolling two people this year onto a fully funded Masters' degree apprenticeship programme with the University of Surrey.

This programme offers an Internationally recognised postgraduate management degree with an MSc in International Hospitality, Tourism and Events Management Practice. The two-year curriculum provides students with a background education in the following modules; Business Strategy in International Context, Personal & Professional Development, Business Operations & Technology and People in Organisations.

BGL has taken this step to further the development of its high performing individuals, who are either currently in a managerial role or being prepared for senior roles in the future, by providing access to this accelerated career development. By making the investment, BGL is setting itself up for results in three to five years down the line, standing the Group in good stead for sustained success and continuity of managerial direction.

This helps to foster the development of future leaders, giving them beneficial experience whilst they study on and off the job as well as developing and enhancing the application of leadership skills, knowledge and behaviours within top-level organisations.

BGL's commitment to development is not just reserved for up and coming general managers; the group has also created development pathways for its F&B employees, supporting them in their career progression toward executive chef or food and beverage manager.

This applies to both front of house and back of house roles across both divisions of BGL's business. The overarching idea is that staff can come in at entry level, or any level, and see that there are progression opportunities available to them.

The training pathway is good for these employees, helping them cultivate new skills and confidence, gain knowledge and see the opportunities ahead of them in a potential career. In return, the group develops more engaged staff, who provide better service for customers and ultimately increased staff retention, which often plagues the food and beverage industry.

BGL has plans in place to increase buy-in from employees by providing recognition to staff along the way, giving them something that shows they have reached the next level upon completing various training stages.

In addition, a year ago BGL introduced its own Learning Management System – The Academy – which provides access to more than 900 online courses for over 1,000 employees across the group. The enormous open directory of e-learning courses provides courses in every discipline you could imagine and is available 24/7 to BGL employees.

An important development tool for team members, The Academy is utilised for appraisals, monthly one-on-ones and business driven training needs. The range of engaging and interactive courses in the library are used as a job aid as well as a learning path to assist with personal growth. Another added bonus is these courses can be used for assigned compliance training in topics such as fire safety and hygiene safety.

BGL's resolve to providing great opportunities for its employees to achieve their goals and develop their careers has never been stronger, and with a greater focus and further investment on training and apprenticeships, BGL will continue to flourish. **END**

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NEW DESTINATIONS

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CLUB DE GOLF ALCANADA



Las Colinas Golf & Country Club in Spain, and Club de Golf Alcanada in Mallorca have become the latest destinations to join worldclass.golf, a portfolio of the world's premier golf courses, destinations and resorts.

Situated on the Costa Blanca, south of Alicante, Las Colinas Golf & Country Club joined the portfolio in January, with director of golf, Jon Brook stating: "The golf operations team has worked tirelessly to improve the visitor experience at Las Colinas Golf & Country Club in recent years, which is why I was delighted to accept an invitation to join worldclass.golf for the 2020 season.

"Being a member of worldclass.golf is a real endorsement of the quality – both on-and-off the course – of the Las Colinas brand."

Designed by Cabel B. Robinson, the course at Las Colinas has captured many

prestigious awards in its short, but illustrious life, and can be enjoyed all-year-round, thanks to more than 325 days of sunshine per year.

In February, Club de Golf Alcanada in Mallorca joined the portfolio following a €700,000 renovation – completed in 2019 – to replace all 18 greens, upgrade the irrigation, renew all sand in the bunkers and various other improvements including a new halfway house and remodelled pro-shop.

Situated in the northern part of Mallorca, Alcanada is located right by the sea and takes its name from a nearby island just off the shore which, complete with its own lighthouse, can be seen from most of the holes.

The restaurant and its dazzling terrace is an exquisite venue to taste delicious local and international cuisine, while enjoying a magnificent view of the surroundings. **END**



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"IT BECAME APPARENT TO ME THAT I AM MAKING INSTANT DECISIONS
THAT ULTIMATELY COULD PUT MY LIFE AT RISK"



Words

John Glendinning
Chief Executive
The Wisley

GUEST BOOK

JOHN GLENDINNING



I have always enjoyed sport outside of work but had never really thought about the impact this had on my mindset in the workplace until recently.

It's obvious that being fit and eating healthy is always going to help day-to-day, but when I thought about my own mental well-being – which is such a prominent topic currently, and one which has changed over the years – I realised that I performed my best at work when I was spending my spare time participating in activities that required a different level of focus, whilst also giving me an alternative perspective on decision making.

Having become obsessed with rock/ice climbing and ski mountaineering 20 years ago, it became apparent to me that I am making instant decisions that ultimately could put my life at risk, and those I am with, every weekend. As a result, I now view going to the office on a Monday morning and being faced with trivial problems that people perceive to be 'life-or-death' in a far clearer and calmer manner.

During periods when I have had less time to participate in 'extreme sports' I am probably less decisive, and more prone to becoming stressed over trivial challenges as my life perspective alters. More recently being time constrained, I have relied on my wife as my barometer, as she knows best when I need time out to pursue activities in order to recalibrate my perspective. **END**

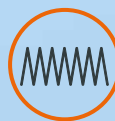
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