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NUMBER 141 | WINTER 2022

Club Car Launches Road Legal Utility Vehicle Fit For The Future



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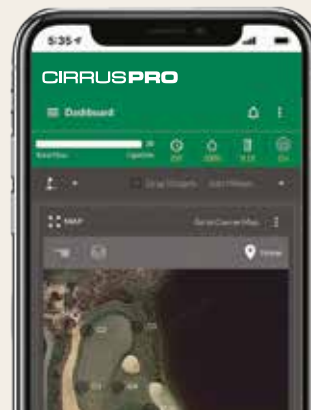
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"I IMAGINE ALL OF US ASSUMED THE INTRODUCTION OF WHS WOULD MEAN EVERYONE, WORLDWIDE, WOULD BE USING THE SAME SYSTEM"

FAIR COMMENT

Riddle me this. When is a handicap not a handicap? Answer: when it's calculated under the World Handicap System (WHS). Confused? Yes, me too. But bear with me.

I imagine all of us assumed the introduction of WHS would mean everyone, worldwide, would be using the same system. That, after all, was the basis on which it was sold to golfers. But, picture the scene: on a visit to Greece, my WHS of 12.2 would translate to 13 shots on the slope index. So, in theory, I could play against a German, a Swede and an American and we would all know how many shots we receive.

However, imagine my surprise when, having sent my cards back to my UK-based club, I discovered my 13 shots should, actually, have been 16. Naturally, my first reaction was that this was erroneous. But, having checked with my club's general manager, he confirmed it was correct. According to the EGU, which follows the old CONGU rules, I receive THREE extra shots.

And this is where the issue lies – with the old CONGU members of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Following discussions with The R&A I've been able to establish there are two ways to calculate course handicaps and which may lead to anomalies.

Within the WHS national associations can choose between different procedural options, to support their local golfing cultures. In Rule 6.1a of the Rules of Handicapping, there is a discretionary option of whether to include the 'course rating – par' adjustment within the course handicap calculation, or not...



Words

Michael Lenihan
Publisher

READ THE FULL COMMENT ONLINE
golfmanagement.eu.com/winter

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FEATURING

WINTER 2022



CLÉMENT ROUSSEAU

MICHLIFEN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

"We are working closely together to help grow the game of golf in this part of Morocco, and we're actually running two school projects with the local community offering kids from Ifrane and Bensmim the opportunity to try golf."

20



GARY SILCOCK

MURRAYSHALL

"What surprised me most about management roles in the UK is how poorly paid they are, because I've not been poorly paid. So, I have an aspiration for a higher salary because I do a higher return."

26



JODY ADDISON

APES HILL BARBADOS

"If you have never been to Barbados and you want to play golf, then Apes Hill is a must-play layout. There are unique views over the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean. It is a fantastic piece of land – and the course is so well-rounded."

30



FERNANDO PADRÓN

PGA RIVERIA MAYA

"When I first came to Mexico, I knew that the visitor experience needed to be elevated as the entire business model here is based around world-class golf, with luxury hotels and high-end real estate."

34



ARTURO FERREIRO

LAS RAMBLAS

"If you are a commercial course, you can have a lot of members that reduce the capacity to sell green fees. But it's also true that 90, 80 or 75 members gives you a good atmosphere every day on the golf course, as well as guaranteed income."

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"THE LAUNCH OF OUR NEW CLUB CAR URBAN N1 IS AN EXCITING
STEP FORWARD IN THE EUROPEAN UTILITY MARKET"



COVER STORY

CLUBCARURBAN.COM



Club Car, a world-leading manufacturer of small-wheel, zero-emissions electric vehicles, has unveiled its new homologated vehicle, the Club Car Urban N1.

The new Urban N1 expands Club Car's leading electric vehicle portfolio, which has been prominent in commercial markets for decades. Featuring an ergonomic design, superior handling, one-ton load capacity and quick acceleration with a top speed of 55kph, the new Club Car Urban N1 is the perfect utility vehicle solution.

"The launch of our new Club Car Urban N1 is an exciting step forward in the European utility market where demand for sustainable transportation has been growing," said Mark Wagner, president of Club Car.

"The Urban N1 is ideally suited to satisfy the large municipal and commercial demand for a wide range of uses and applications. With Club Car's more than 60 years of innovation and reputation for high-quality vehicles, our customers will benefit from a safe, 100 per cent electric and low-cost solution to industrial and commercial on-road transportation."

In addition to the versatility of configurations available, one of the many benefits of the Club Car Urban is the low operational costs. The innovative lithium battery technology enables fast and efficient charging, reducing operating expenses. On top of operational savings, the N1 may be eligible for further cost savings through electric vehicle tax rebates.

The vehicle also sets the standard for safety in its class, with customers benefiting from its automotive-grade safety features and extensive testing process.

Marco Natale, vice-president of EMEA at Club Car, said: "Our new Club Car Urban N1 will be transformational in destinations across the EMEA region. The compact cargo design offers easy access to tight spaces, narrow roads, and the ability to drive in and around landmarks, parks and hotels.

"Our customers in Europe and beyond can now take advantage of the many benefits of operating a street-legal, zero-emission, low-cost fleet."

Visitors to the 2022 Salonvert in Saint-Chéron, France, were given a preview of the Club Car Urban N1 that was on display during the country's leading fair for green spaces and landscapes.

Following the acquisition of Garia and Melix in early 2022, Club Car has been steadily growing its line of compact vehicles for utility applications, including public sector, facility management, leisure and outdoor and last-mile delivery.

The Club Car Urban N1 will be available across the EU through Club Car's broad commercial dealer network, providing customers with an exceptional Club Car experience. While the Club Car Urban N1 will primarily be focused on European markets, Club Car will communicate plans for additional market introductions in the immediate future. **END**



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"THE FACT JON RAHM FINISHED SECOND, FIRST, FOURTH AND FIRST,
IN HIS LAST FOUR EVENTS, YET FAILED TO MAKE A MOVE IN THE
RANKINGS IS INDICATIVE OF A MAJOR ISSUE"



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TV INSPIRED ME TO GOLF AGAIN

As delighted as I was to see Rory McIlroy finish the season top of the Official World Golf Ranking, I'm falling in line with those golf commentators – and many Tour pros – who feel the system is flawed. The fact Jon Rahm finished second, first, fourth and first, in his last four events, yet failed to make a move in the rankings is indicative of a major issue.

I'm a mere hack, so I'm not in any position to offer solutions, but I know a problem when I see one. I can't fly a plane but if mine was hurtling towards the ground I think I could spot something was wrong. Unusually for me, I was able to watch the conclusion of the DP World Tour Championship – where eventual winner Rahm described the ranking system as 'laughable' – as I am recovering from a mild heart attack and, therefore, had time on my hands. And it demonstrated to me the power of TV coverage. I haven't played golf for more than a year – and I wasn't missing it.

We've moved to a picture postcard English village, have been busy with the house and occupied by getting to know our fellow villagers. The village does not have a golf club, although I have joined the local bowls and skittles teams, and the village wine circle. But watching TV coverage of Rahm's success left me longing again to get out on the old sward swinging a club. And, with walking a prerequisite of making a good long-term recovery from my cardiac shock, I thought I should dig out the clubs for when I'm given the OK to start playing again.

My nearest golf club is more than 15 minutes away, but I can't afford to join that, so I'm looking at a nice little nine-holer, just under 25 minutes from my village. Disappointingly the club doesn't offer lessons and, as I wasn't a good golfer before my hiatus, I will certainly need some to get back in the swing... and to get the swing in my back.

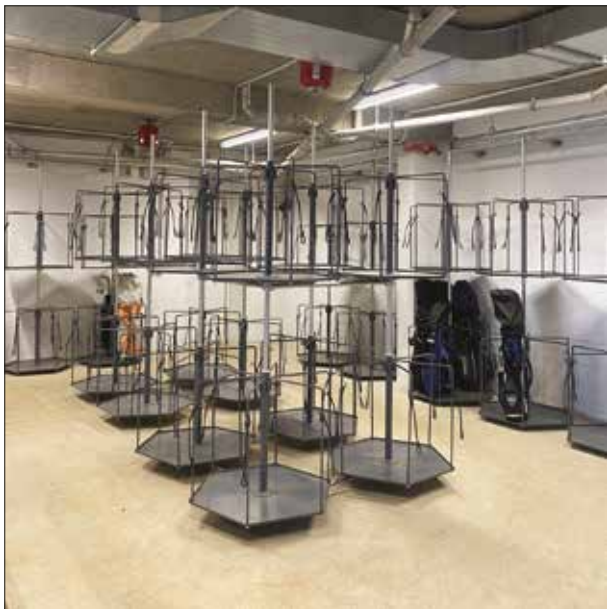
Looking around at the cost of lessons at other clubs in the area, I was surprised at how high the charges are still, particularly as the sport is supposedly looking for more people to take it up. Even at my employment 'peak' – and I use the term ill-advisedly – I wasn't earning £50 an hour, but that seems to be the going rate for a lesson. As I approach retirement age I'm not sure I can justify that expense. My wife, I'm sure, would concur.

What's more, how can youngsters just starting out in their careers be expected to afford that amount of money on a new hobby? Again, I'm no troubleshooter, just a hack, but surely there is a way to get people into the sport in a less expensive manner?

I don't want to curtail a club pro's earning potential, but golf will always need new blood; and, while there are myriad excellent junior programmes out there, not everybody wants to play golf as a junior, so there should be an affordable pathway into the sport as an adult beginner. I'd be interested to learn of any such initiatives or to hear why clubs don't look to conceive and implement them. **END**

NEWS IN BRIEF

GOLFMANAGEMENT.EU.COM/NEWS



COSTA NAVARINO TURN TO CAROUSEL GOLFING FOR INCREASED BAG STORAGE

Greek Tourist Enterprises have invested heavily into promoting Costa Navarino as a world-class golfing destination in recent years, and with four spectacular golf courses now in operation it is fast becoming a golfing mecca. With four hotels on-site, and an array of residences too, Costa Navarino cater for visitors flying in from all parts of the world, with buggy fleets and rental sets being made available to cater for their needs. This, of course, requires large storage areas to complement the free flow of bag and buggy movements.

SEARCH 'CAROUSEL GOLFING' ONLINE
at golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



THE GROVE INVESTMENTS AHEAD OF 20TH ANNIVERSARY NEXT YEAR

The Grove has announced a host of important investments to its award-winning golf experience ahead of its 20th anniversary celebrations next year. The five-star luxury retreat already boasts one of the finest golf experiences in the UK thanks to its Kyle Phillips-designed 18-hole championship golf course and impeccable customer service. Work is already under way to extend The Stables Bar and enhance the outdoor terrace and courtyard areas to further elevate the food and beverage offering. The Locker Rooms, Stables Toilets and Halfway House are also undergoing significant renovations.

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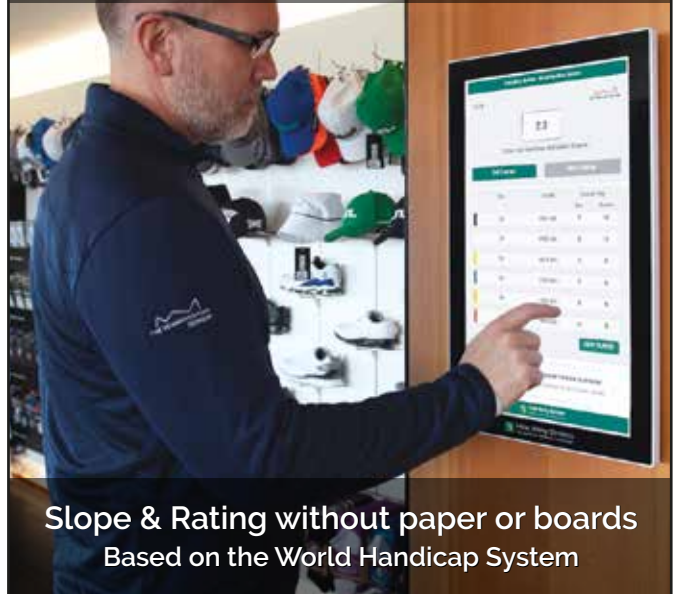
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THE MANOR HOUSE GOLF CLUB PLANS FOR THE FUTURE WITH COURSE UPGRADE

Members and guests can look forward to an enhanced golfing experience at The Manor House Golf Club in 2023 with the acclaimed Wiltshire venue making a number of upgrades to its championship course this winter. Already renowned for its quality and outstanding year-round condition thanks to the exceptional drainage of the par-72 layout, officials at the club have announced a further period of course investment, with a major sustainable bunker renovation project among the improvements being made.

SEARCH 'THE MANOR HOUSE' ONLINE
at golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



INVESTMENT ENABLES PGA CATALUNYA TO REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION BY HALF

PGA Catalunya Golf and Wellness has reduced its energy consumption by 50 per cent with a number of new, sustainable energy measures, which will help the Spanish golf resort cut more than 362 tonnes of CO² emissions each year. The 36-hole venue near Girona, Spain, has invested 300,000€ in state-of-the-art air conditioning units at its five-star hotel Camiral and award-winning Wellness Centre, and an on-site, 900m² photovoltaic power station with 316 solar panels has also been installed on the hotel's roof, enabling the resort to generate 210,772 KW of green energy to power both its hotel and Wellness Centre.

SEARCH 'PGA CATALUNYA' ONLINE
at golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



TOPTRACER RANGE TRANSFORMS ST ANDREWS PRACTICE FACILITY

In just two short months, St Andrews Links has seen dramatic results at its range facility through the new installation of Toptracer Range — a move which has led to higher usage from golfers of all ages thanks to the innovative, experiential offering now available at The Home of Golf. As part of a long-term partnership, Toptracer Range has completely transformed the practice facilities on-site.

SEARCH 'TOPTRACER RANGE' ONLINE
at golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story

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BALLYBUNION TURNS TO OBBI GOLF FOR HEALTH & SAFETY SUPPORT

Major players across the golf industry, including Ballybunion Golf Club, are endorsing a Safety and Compliance platform which helps ensure the safety, compliance and training standards at golf clubs are up to date literally at the click of a button. Golf clubs, golf course management organisations, insurance companies, health & safety and legal experts have all sung the praises of Obbi Golf, an award-winning solution which is simple to install and operate and saves golf clubs time and money and ensure compliance in an ever more-strict regulatory world.

SEARCH 'OBBI GOLF' ONLINE

golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



AMBITIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMME AT NEW GOLF FACILITY IN GLASGOW

A new community-based golf and entertainment facility has successfully launched an ambitious education and community programme that will see golf lessons delivered to 42,500 pupils across Glasgow over the next five years. Golf It!, a unique golf concept being developed by The R&A located on the new south bank of Hogganfield Loch, is set to open next summer and is already working with three schools across the North East of Glasgow to inspire the next generation of golfers.

SEARCH 'GOLF IT!' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



MORE COURSES TURN TO MOTOCADDY FOR RELIABLE TROLLEY RENTAL FLEETS

More golf courses have turned to Motocaddy for their rental fleets than ever before this year, with many prestigious clubs and resorts choosing the innovative brand's products for their proven reliability, game-enhancing features and profitable margins. The world's biggest-selling electric trolley brand offers an award-winning selection of rental fleet options — from the easy-to-use M1 and M1 DHC compact-folding models, to the pioneering M5 GPS and M5 GPS DHC touchscreen trolleys with 40,000 pre-loaded courses.

SEARCH 'MOTOCADDY' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



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THE R&A MAKES CHANGE IN SENIOR LEADERSHIP FOR GOVERNANCE OF GOLF

The R&A has confirmed that Grant Moir is to become its executive director — Governance, effective from January 1, 2023. He will lead the organisation's governance responsibilities, including the Rules of Golf, Rules of Amateur Status and handicapping, succeeding David Rickman, who has held the role since 1996. He will also liaise closely with The R&A's equipment standards team, led by Professor Steve Otto.

SEARCH 'THE R&A' ONLINE

golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



GLENMUIR GO GREEN (AND LILAC) IN BRAND NEW SS23 COLLECTION

Glenmuir, whose purpose is to craft the world's most loved golf clothing, has launched its Spring Summer 2023 collection (SS23) with on trend colours Amethyst and Marine Green as well as classic colours Tahiti and Candy. The focus remains strongly on sustainable performance fabrics as well as luxurious but sustainable natural fibres combined with contemporary styling and an emphasis on brand new prints.

SEARCH 'GLENMUIR' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



GEO FOUNDATION CERTIFIES FOUR SAUDI GOLF COURSES

Golf Saudi has shown its commitment to sustainability, by announcing during this week's Aramco Team Series-Jeddah that three of its golf clubs have successfully achieved certification by GEO Foundation for Sustainable Golf, the international non-profit entirely dedicated to helping accelerate sustainability in and through golf. Three golf clubs in Riyadh and Jeddah respectively: Dirab Golf & Country Club; Riyadh Golf Club and Royal Greens Golf & Country Club have been recognised for meeting the international standard for sustainability in golf and agreeing to further improvement over the next three years.

SEARCH 'GOLF SAUDI' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



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MOTOCADDY JOINS THE TGI GOLF PARTNERSHIP AS A PARTNER SUPPLIER

Motocaddy has joined the TGI Golf Partnership as a Partner Supplier for the first time in a deal that will see its award-winning product range made available to more high-quality golf retailers. "We're delighted to get this partnership agreed and we're very much looking forward to working closely with the TGI Golf team and their retail partners to help grow their businesses and support their customers," said Motocaddy sales director, Steve Morris.

SEARCH 'MOTOCADDY' ONLINE

golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



NEW GLOBAL DIGITAL MARKETING AGENCY INFLUX.GOLF LAUNCHES

A new specialist digital marketing agency INFLUX.GOLF has launched, helping global golf brands, destinations and events increase direct-to-customer sales. With an experienced team of digital marketers and brand content creators in London, Edinburgh and Cape Town, the new agency combines incisive data, decades of digital expertise and compelling content to drive sales to new and loyal customers.

SEARCH 'INFLUX.GOLF' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



CELTIC MANOR RESORT GOES ELECTRIC WITH CLUB CAR

Celtic Manor Resort has installed a new fleet of state-of-the-art electric Club Car golf vehicles as part of its sustainability mission. The five-star South Wales venue, host of the 2010 Ryder Cup, has purchased 135 Tempo Lithium-Ion golf cars, complete with Club Car's long-lasting, fast-charging battery, to minimise energy consumption and adhere to the resort's sustainability drive.

SEARCH 'CLUB CAR' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



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CLÉMENT ROUSSEAU

DIRECTOR OF GOLF, MICHLIFEN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB



Born in France, Clément Rousseau director of golf at Michlifen Golf & Country Club in Morocco feels very much at home in the French-speaking North African country.

With 15 years of experience working in the golf industry as a PGA professional and as a director of golf, Rousseau relocated to Morocco from his role as golf operations manager at Vattanac Golf Resort in Phnom Penh, Cambodia earlier in the summer.

And he has quickly acquainted himself with his new role at the unique mountain course.

Forming part of the iconic Michlifen Resort & Golf – recognised as one of the region's finest and most exclusive spa and alpine retreats – Michlifen Golf & Country Club opened for play in 2018 and is located in the historic mountain town of Ifrane, a 45-minute drive from the historic city of Fez and often referred to as 'Little Switzerland' due to its Alpine architecture.

Set at an altitude of 1,650 metres, the 18-hole championship golf course is the first Jack Nicklaus signature design in North Africa and is set on a stunning natural site in the ecologically recognised Ifrane National Park, overlooking the Atlas Mountains and expansive forests of cedar and oak trees.

The views are spectacular and the variety of holes make for an incredible golf experience.

"The golf course at Michlifen plays at a high elevation – over 5,400 feet or almost 1,650 meters – so it will be comfortably cool during the peak summer months, when much of the golf will be played," commented Nicklaus.

"I just think once you take this very special mountain setting at Ifrane, and combine it with what we believe we have accomplished at Michlifen from a design perspective, it makes for a very unique, exciting and fun golf course to play.

"I am one who does not single out holes, and I certainly don't believe in a signature hole when I have been given the mandate to create 18 equally spectacular holes," Nicklaus added.

"But when assessing these breath-taking views at Michlifen, they are truly taken into full breadth at holes 9, 17 and 18."

Since moving to Morocco in June, Rousseau has been tasked with managing the golf course in partnership with IMG. And a quick glance at his CV indicates that he is more than qualified for the role.

Fluent in English, Spanish and his native French, Rousseau studied International Golf Business at the University of Poitiers and then went onto study at the PGA School Creps De Vichy earning a Golf Instructor Degree.

He landed his first director of golf role at Sofitel Malabo Sipopo Le Golf in Equatorial Guinea in 2015, and four years later spent a brief period back in his homeland at Golf de Margaux before, in October 2020, moving to the Troon-managed Vattanac Golf Resort in Cambodia.

Responsible for the day-to-day management at the Faldo-designed 36-hole golf destination, Rousseau was managing a team of over 200 (including 150 caddies and 25 staff members) but never really settled in the Far East.





"MOROCCO IS FAMOUS FOR BEING ONE OF THE MOST WELCOMING COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD AND OUR TEAM IS JUST PROOF OF THAT"

After restructuring the golf operations department, in his own words he was "seeking career advancement and was keen to share [his] experience to face a new professional challenge."

And for the ambitious 36-year-old, that new challenge came in North Africa.

"I am absolutely in love with Michlifen and am very impressed with the course and how Jack Nicklaus designed it in the middle of the incredible Atlas Mountains," he said.

"After four years of opening, the playing conditions are excellent and the whole team and IMG have done a great job."

Michlifen provides guests with a unique natural experience where you can see the most incredible array of wildlife while walking through the course, and Rousseau states that golfers who visit Michlifen come for an experience that goes beyond the golf course.

"To be able to play a Jack Nicklaus Signature course on top of the mountains with all the spectacular vistas is something simply unforgettable. Not to mention the amazing hospitality and culinary on offer.

"In Cambodia, golfers have very high expectations in terms of golf course maintenance and are very detailed orientated, and always looking for personalised service," he said, recalling his time at Vattanac.

"This is an experience that will be very valuable here at Michlifen in that it matches what we are trying to achieve as we aim to continue improving our service standards and amaze our members and guests every time they visit us.

"The majestic clubhouse with the view from the terrace overlooking the 18th green and the Atlas Mountains is definitely one of the most impressive features and helps contribute to a simply unique experience.

"The clubhouse was built using the finest materials and interiors, providing a comfortable place to relax before or after the round of golf in the company of family, friends and business colleagues.

"Morocco is famous for being one of the most welcoming countries in the world and our team is just proof of that. Whether a member, visitor or hotel guest, we can ensure golfers will have a great time with us, on and off course."

The five-star resort features 71 rooms and suites, as well as a 3500m² spa, and members and guests at Michlifen receive a lot of other benefits as well as the stunning golf course and clubhouse.

"We are blessed to have one of the most well-equipped Golf Academies not only in Morocco but also in the whole of North Africa.

"The Academy features three IMG Performance Studios offering the latest in custom fitting and teaching technology including TrackMan, Sam Putt Lab and Sam Balance Lab.

"Michlifen also works closely with the Royal Golf Federation of Morocco, whose mission is to develop and promote the practice of golf and organise and manage competitions," he adds.

"We are working closely together to help grow the game of golf in this part of Morocco, and we're actually running two school projects with the local community offering kids from Ifrane and Bensmim the opportunity to try golf and learn more about the game completely free of charge."

The tuition available at Michlifen is also outstanding and the experienced head professional Saddek Bouhlal has a wide range of experience in teaching players of all abilities including juniors, adults, elite players, and beginners.

There is also particular focus on group lessons for hotel guests, companies as well as schools and universities.

"IMG's management team oversees Michlifen Golf & Country Club's development and frequently visit us to support on different areas," added Rousseau. "Having their support is very important not only for me but for the whole golf team."

IMG helped Rousseau host the first edition of the Michlifen Pro-Am this year, with him stating: "After two difficult years with the pandemic, we really wanted to give national and international golfers the opportunity to come back to Michlifen and play a fun and exciting Pro-Am.

"We had a number of international teams and were sponsored by several IMG Prestige venues from around the world. Overall, the event was a huge success and will definitely be repeated in 2023!" **END**





NEW DESTINATION

WORLDCLASS.GOLF



PGA Riviera Maya in Mexico has become the latest destination to join worldclass.golf, a portfolio of the world's premier golf courses, destinations and resorts.

Situated in the north-eastern region of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and on the Caribbean coast, PGA Riviera Maya Golf Club forms part of a community of four world-class residential and real estate resorts, and marks the first PGA of America facility in Latin America, as the Association continues to support the growth of golf outside of the United States.

Designed by Robert Trent Jones II, PGA Riviera Maya comprises an 18-hole, par 72 layout as well as a nine-hole, par 27 executive course — 1,265 yards in length — which is ideal for beginners, or those seeking to hone their skills before venturing out onto the 7,272 yard main championship course.

Open since 2010, the course is carved from a limestone quarry, winding its way through the lush Mayan jungle, and is dotted with natural lakes and cenotes (large sink-holes or caves).

The 27 holes were cut deep into a limestone quarry so that their fairways emerged from the natural contours of a dense jungle combined with mangroves ensuring that the natural wonders of the area were incorporated into the design of the course.

CEO of worldclass.golf, Michael Lenihan, who visited Mexico in October to evaluate the destination commented: "The course at PGA Riviera Maya is exceptional, and I am delighted to welcome the facility into the portfolio.

"The service levels onsite are worthy of the PGA name, and I look forward to working with the resort in the future." **END**



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GARY SILCOCK

GENERAL MANAGER, MURRAYSHALL

MURRAYSHALL

ESTD COUNTRY ESTATE 1664

Gary Silcock is a man with very little to prove to anyone, except perhaps himself.

With a CV that includes roles as director of golf at The Belfry and La Manga Club and more recently, director of general management at The Gleneagles Hotel, Silcock is one of only a handful of golf managers worldwide to have worked at two Ryder Cup venues.

Having recently turned 53, Silcock has embarked on a new chapter in his career, when in September 2020 he took over responsibility for the day-to-day operation of Murrayshall Country House Estate, a 365-acre estate overlooking Scone Palace and the Perth countryside in Scotland.

Responsible for all aspects of the estate – including 27-holes of golf – Murrayshall marks Silcock's first foray into hotel management, a role he appears to be relishing since his departure from Gleneagles.

After helping to host a hugely successful Solheim Cup in September 2019, Silcock found himself surplus to requirements just a few months later when in January 2020, he was advised that his services were no longer required.

When asked the reasons for his sudden departure, Silcock merely states: "I came into work one day and I wasn't meant to be there anymore. There was a change of management, and I don't know anything more than that."

Justifiably proud of his achievements at Gleneagles during his near five-year tenure, Silcock adds: "At Gleneagles, they were sitting with a profit conversion of 40 per cent when I arrived, and one year later they've

were sitting at 52 per cent, giving them a £4 million profit.

"A lot of the changes that you see on the King's Course that were signed with the Senior Open going in there, I did with David MacLaren. So, all the improvements on the golf course.

"When I came into Gleneagles, members were leaving hand over fist because of the condition of the golf course.

"For the Solheim Cup, I was the only point of contact with Visit Scotland and IMG, so I was [the] only person that ran that event. You then had IMG come in with Visit Scotland and Gleneagles were supporting.

"I was in charge of everything outside of the hotel, so the entire estate. I was involved in sales and marketing; I was involved with bringing the Solheim Cup; I was involved in selling bedrooms to the hotel."

When Silcock departed at the beginning of 2020, just a few months before the pandemic struck, he states that he was offered a few roles before opting for what he deems the right role, at the right time, in the right location.

"What surprised me most about management roles in the UK is how poorly paid they are, because I've not been poorly paid. So, I have an aspiration for a higher salary because I do a higher return."

Keen to diversify away from golf management into resort management, Silcock was informed of a role just a few miles away from Gleneagles at Murrayshall, as he explains: "I was made aware of it and then I had to apply with the other 350 people that applied for the role, and that's when you then get



"I'VE ALWAYS HAD A LABEL OF GOLF AND WHEN YOU COME INTO THE HOTELIER'S WORLD, YOU ARE LABELLED AS A GOLFER, BUT I'M NOT A GOLFER"

into the snob factor of hoteliers that don't think a PGA professional can do their role. But there isn't any difference in managing it.

"When I worked at Gleneagles, the general manager wouldn't be that involved in the commercial revenue management of the hotel rooms.

"The general manager at Gleneagles and the general manager at The Belfry were more operations directors, whereas I would sell bedrooms and sell golf and sell food and beverage."

Owned by Stellar Asset Management who purchased Murrayshall Estate in 2016, Silcock has been tasked with upscaling all elements of the resort, including a new golf academy and standalone spa and wellness facility that is currently at the planning stage.

But with a career background in golf, Silcock is quick to dismiss any bias towards his grass roots.

"I'm not golf biased, I just bring a golf knowledge and I've been dealing with F&B all my career," he reiterates. "I've always had a label of golf and when you come into the hotelier's world, you are labelled as a golfer, but I'm not a golfer.

"I think that's where – like the Club Managers Association – they've been able to say they are running a club, and their skill sets are right across the industry.

"The advantage I have here is I've spent five years at Gleneagles so I understand Perthshire. Having worked at the Old Course Hotel, Gleneagles and internationally, I understand the international market very well and have been at that level for a long time."

Silcock clearly has won favour with his employers and is soon to embark on the construction of a new 15-bay driving range which will be located close to the entrance of the estate.

The existing pro shop will be repositioned inside the new range resulting in a re-routing of the 18-hole golf course, with the current 9th hole becoming the first.

When asked about a possible new clubhouse, Silcock is quite insistent that one is not necessary. "A successful resort doesn't have a clubhouse," he said. "It has a casual dining eating area where casual dining,

golfers, leisure guests all work, that's how it works.

"Sam's Bar [at The Belfry] isn't a golf bar, it's a funky place. The Dormy House at Gleneagles is not a clubhouse, it's The Dormy."

Owners Stellar Asset Management have already invested £1m on refurbishing 14 hotel suites, as well as a new fine dining restaurant, Eolas, that opened in April. But plans for a further investment of £30m to include an extension to the hotel, erection of glamping pods and lodges and a new spa and leisure facilities could add 250 jobs quadrupling the size of the current workforce.

And all of this under Silcock's guidance.

"Stellar Asset Management, when they saw the business, saw that everything was in place, and saw the potential, they wanted to invest," added Silcock. "The way that they run the business, is that they bring people in that can deliver.

"The brand has changed, it's more appealing now. The website that we had before, there was nothing wrong with it, it just wasn't inspiring. We've now created that and we're on that journey.

"The entry level will be glamping, then it'll be lodges, and then it would be hotel rooms," he explained. "And then the leisure club and spa, which will be a massive asset for Scone and Perth. Gleneagles has 1,500 leisure members, and our plan is to get 1,000 leisure members in here, but at a slightly lower price point.

"So, most of the things that we're doing here will be of five-star physical standard. But our aspiration is not to be five-star in price or certain aspects of it. But it is to give you a five-star product.

"When I was at Gleneagles, I saw people from London buying a second home at Gleneagles, because getting on an airplane and coming up, it's a nice long weekend.

"So, what are we trying to do here? We are trying to be an affordable Gleneagles, and just a little bit smaller.

"Before I came in, Stellar had Murrayshall for four years. What they knew in those four years is they never wanted a hotelier. Because a hotelier works in a box, whereas I work in a resort." **END**

JODY ADDISON

DIRECTOR OF GOLF, APES HILL BARBADOS



There are few people who can rival Jody Addison when it comes to having the best introduction to life as a club professional.

After kick-starting his teaching career at Royal Liverpool – where he would spend six years working his way up to the role of head assistant pro – Addison ventured south to the sacred golfing manor that is Sunningdale. The two clubs may be in stark contrast to one another in terms of their set-up and the golfing test they deliver, but in stature and pedigree, sit side-by-side at the summit of English golf.

But it was at another venue some 10,000 miles away on the famous Melbourne Sandbelt where Addison first experienced the true buzz and lifestyle that comes with a thriving golf resort.

The Sandhurst Club may not have carried the reputation of Royal Liverpool or Sunningdale – despite the venue being home to the Australian PGA – but such was the hive of activity that Addison realised it was the blueprint for how modern lifestyle resorts could thrive alongside the traditional methods of the long-standing members' club.

"It gave me an understanding that unless you were at the very top end of the club ladder, then you had to offer more than just golf," says Addison, a PGA advanced professional in the UK and Australia who also holds PGA Advanced status in Golf Coaching.

"At those clubs where there is so much history, the golf sells itself. People dare not give up their membership for the fear of not getting back in. You pay whatever it is to be a member and that is that.

"But you must be in the very top tier otherwise you will not survive now. Joining fees and waiting lists have their place at these clubs but people won't pay them or wait on them if they know they can get a better experience elsewhere.

"The Sandhurst Club looked to get as many people through the door as they could because they knew they would spend money somewhere; they wanted to get people on the golf courses and with 1,200 members they did just that, but they wanted to get people into the health club and spa; they wanted to sell wedding packages. They did not want to rely on the golf alone."

It is this outlook that Addison has taken with him on the next leg of a career where his eyes are always open to the challenge as director of golf at Apes Hill Barbados.

Having been in the role a little over a year, Addison has enjoyed a front-row seat during one of the most exciting developments with the course having recently reopened to its members following a redesign by acclaimed designer Ron Kirby and heavy investment from Canadian owner and investor Glenn J. Chamandy.

The 18-hole championship layout – with its reputation for being a bucket-list venue – has been turning heads since Kirby first started work on it in 2019 and is set to establish itself as one of the best courses in the Caribbean.

Yet there is so much more to the Apes Hill story. The resort is an ultra-experiential community where a thriving real-estate project is underway with a phased opening throughout 2023.







"BEING EXPOSED TO ALL AREAS OF THE GOLF RESORT, AS I WAS AT SANDHURST, TAUGHT ME SO MUCH AND IT IS WHAT I AM SEEING AND APPRECIATING AT APES HILL"

Nature reigns supreme across 475 acres made up of undulating gullies and tropical vegetation in a community for golf lovers and those seeking an exceptional lifestyle in an inspiring setting.

Recreational facilities include nature hiking trails, fishing, fitness courts and a health club.

The venue is in the process of adding a par-3 layout that will be perfect for both those looking to sharpen up their short games and families who don't want to take on the full 18 holes.

An island-style 19th hole brings another element of fun to your visit while a state-of-the-art performance centre is being hailed as one of the best in the world, with a modern and contemporary clubhouse set to complement the rugged beauty of its natural surroundings.

"If you have never been to Barbados and you want to play golf, then Apes Hill is a must-play layout," Addison says. "There are unique views over the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean. It is a fantastic piece of land – and the course is so well-rounded with not just one unique-selling point.

"But I would say that Apes Hill is a cross-generational venue that can be enjoyed by all. By that I do not think, as good and as exciting as the golf course is, that it is only about that.

"We want people to come and play a fantastic course, but our Performance Centre matches up with anything there is in a global sense and not just the Caribbean, while the par-3 course is a really nice addition for people who don't necessarily want to tackle the main layout."

Another key factor in the vision for Addison and Apes Hill Barbados comes with sustainability. The fairways have been re-laid with drought-tolerant turf Zorro Zoysia and the greens with Bermuda grass, TifEagle, which will help reduce the number of sprinklers needed from 1,800 to 800.

To add to this, the construction of a reservoir that can hold 58 million gallons of rain-water will help fully irrigate the resort, while hundreds of trees, fruits and vegetables have been planted around the property.

"When we started from scratch, we were able to have that conversation as to what you really want to do," Addison says.

"Starting this project in recent years has allowed us to create the course with sustainability at the forefront of our minds. As a result, we are impacting on the environment far less."

Addison says golfers will be beguiled by Kirby's design, claiming the layout has been beautifully crafted thoughtout.

After a gentle opening, the course begins to bare its teeth with some high-drama tee shots adding to the challenge and a run of holes on the inward stretch with jaw-dropping views, especially from the 12th to the 15th, before reaching the layout's signature Cave Hole at 16.

"That hole really does have the DNA of Barbados," Addison laughs. "You have the cave in the background, water in front of the tee, and from the Championship tee you can see the Atlantic Ocean behind you and the Caribbean Sea in front. You have palm trees, monkeys, coral rocks – it covers everything that Barbados is genetically famous for."

Like all new developments, Addison's first year at Apes Hill has not always been smooth with lengthy lead times making stock management difficult.

But overall, it has been a challenge he has been determined to meet head on, utilising the skills honed from 19 years in the industry where he has always kept an eye on the bigger picture with the opportunity to stamp his own mark on matters.

"When I started out in the industry all those years ago at Royal Liverpool, my role was very much all based around golf operations, and although it was different at Sunningdale in terms of the environment I was in, I knew if I was to develop my skillset into a more senior role, I needed to become more rounded.

"Being exposed to all areas of the golf resort, as I was at Sandhurst, taught me so much and it is what I am seeing and appreciating at Apes Hill.

"But what I have really loved and appreciated is having the opportunity to work and be part of a project where you are seeing something develop from a blank canvas. Everything has been thought through in great detail and because of that I think we have something very special on our hands at Apes Hill Barbados." **END**



Words Michael Lenihan
Online pgarivieramaya.com

FERNANDO PADRÓN

GENERAL MANAGER, PGA RIVIERA MAYA



When you've worked at the pinnacle of European golf, the opportunity to develop your career and expand your horizons can often be difficult to achieve.

And for 54-year-old Fernando Padrón, who spent four years working as director of operations at Real Club Valderrama in, Spain, he had to move continents to progress.

"I spent four very happy years working with Javier Reviriego at Valderrama, and throughout that period turned down many job opportunities at clubs across Europe, such as the prestige of working at such an elite club.

"Before joining Valderrama [in May 2015] I spent the day with Javier who asked prior to offering me the position that I commit to staying in Sotogrande for at least four years, something which I was very happy to do."

The offer of employment at Valderrama may have been seen by many ambitious golf managers as the pinnacle of their career, but for Padrón, his ambition has led him to Mexico and the challenge of managing PGA Riveria Maya in Tulum, located an hour or so from Cancun.

But more of that later.

Unlike many of his peers, Padrón doesn't come from golfing stock, and regards himself as "an average golfer playing off about eight on a good day."

He does however pride himself on his drive and desire to be the very best manager he can be, which perhaps explains why in January 2010, he took the decision to sell several fitness centres that he owned, and re-train as a golf club operator.

"For many years, I had been working in companies related to sports, and in fact, I started as a marketing manager at a Premier League basketball club in Spain.

"I was also a ski instructor and have always had a love of sports. In January 2002 I opened several fitness centres in the Madrid area, but after a time, I decided that I wanted to do something else, but still within the sports sector.

"I have always loved golf and I am a member of the Country Club in Madrid as well as the Real Automóvil Club of Madrid. As an amateur player I was always curious about how a golf club was managed and so I wanted to understand how golf worked from the inside, and not from the outside as a player.

"I love sports and I love management, so I went to the south of Spain to study a Master's degree in golf management in Malaga. They had an agreement with the University of Wales as well," he recalls.

"I continued working in Madrid running the fitness centres, but at the weekends I took a train to Malaga and would spend the weekend there whilst studying."

After finishing his master's degree, Padrón worked briefly as an intern at Parador Golf in Malaga before his first breakthrough into golf management came at Campo de Golf Villamayor in Salamanca which he describes as "a great experience."

He spent four years in Salamanca shortly after the financial crash of 2008/9 recalling: "It was very, very tough sometimes, and we had a lot of financial problems, and difficult situations to deal with.



"I RECALL WHEN I LEFT VALDERRAMA THAT THERE WERE QUESTIONS ASKED OF ME WHY I WOULD WANT TO LEAVE TO MANAGE A RESORT COURSE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ATLANTIC"

"But we got good results, and we made a strong team, who were very committed to the project. I have some very fond memories from that period."

It was whilst Pardón was at Salamanca that he was introduced to the CMAE which he unquestionably believes has benefited his career and helped him secure roles perhaps otherwise unachievable.

Now CCM qualified, Pardón has elevated himself to general manager at the Bahia-owned PGA Riveria Maya golf resort in Mexico, a position he left Valderrama to manage in May 2019.

Spanish-owned, the RTJ2 designed golf course forms the centrepiece of a four-hotel resort, plus the Tulum Country Club which is a residential real estate gated complex close to the course.

PGA accredited since 2020, Bahia intend to reposition one of the four hotels – the Sian Kaan – as an upscale luxury golf hotel and is currently working with both Troon who have an involvement with the destination and the PGA of America as to how best proceed with the rebranding.

"I recall when I left Valderrama that there were questions asked of me why I would want to leave to manage a resort course on the other side of the Atlantic," smiles Pardón.

"But after speaking with the owners who have plans to not only invest heavily in the golf course but also the golf-related infrastructure in the vicinity, the opportunity was simply too good to turn down."

And testament to that, is the level of investment – during a pandemic – that Bahia have spent, including a new fleet of Club Car golf cars; new Toro maintenance and irrigation equipment and a new restaurant located adjacent to the current clubhouse.

"When I first came to Mexico, I knew that the visitor experience needed to be elevated as the entire business model here is based around world-class golf, with luxury hotels and high-end real estate.

"The condition of the golf course wasn't at the level which, in my opinion, it needed to be, and as the entire greenkeeping oper-

ation was sub-contracted to an outside maintenance company, one of the first things I decided was to bring the operation in-house.

"So, I recruited the superintendent from my first golf club in Salamanca back home in Spain, and the transformation on the course really has been exceptional."

Plans are afoot to replace all the bunkers on the golf course over the next 18 months, and to add a further nine-holes to the existing 18-hole championship course.

"We are still in early discussions with RTJ2," said Padrón, "but the plan is to have three loops of nine holes, similar to The Wisley in the UK."

And this in addition to the existing nine-hole, par 3 executive golf course which runs adjacent to the main course.

As with many golf resorts in North and Central America, real estate is an integral part of the master-plan, and although not directly responsible for the running of the property sales or the hotels, Padrón has a role to play. And as he lives onsite with his wife overlooking the fourth hole, he shares more than a passing interest in the development.

"Tulum is an up-and-coming area in Mexico," he says, "and many Mexicans are choosing to leave cities such as Mexico City and Guadalajara to come and live here permanently.

"Yes, there are several American and Canadian second-home owners here also, but the vast majority of people buying property here are Mexicans. Tulum is seen as a safe place to live, and it has a lot to offer.

"Obviously the language and the culture are not too dissimilar to Spain, and although we return to our home in Sotogrande for a few weeks of the year to see family and friends, for now, Mexico is our home," he states.

And one gets the impression, that unless his former boss at Valderrama decides to vacate his position forging a way forward for a potential return to his Sotogrande home, it will take quite some offer to prise Pardón away from his Mexican paradise. **END**

ACAYA GOLF RESORT

ACAYAGOLFRESORT.COM

Words Michael Lenihan

Location Acaya, Italy

Italy is famous for many things including the Renaissance and the incredible artists it has produced. The country is also famous for its culinary expertise, its art, cities and unique scenery.

Italy is also known for its language, its opera, its fashion and its luxury brands. And let us not forget its pizza and its football teams.

So perhaps it's little surprise then that when it comes to golf, Italy has never really featured all that highly on the list of must

visit destinations at least, not from a golfing perspective anyway.

With the Ryder Cup set to take place at Marco Simone Golf & Country Club near Rome in less than a year, Italy has set down a serious marker when it comes to selling itself as a serious golfing destination.

But for now, it remains an emerging market, although the country is becoming very popular for golfing breaks as the mild climate makes play possible all year round.







"A COMPLEX SYSTEM OF LAKES AND STREAMS RESULTS IN WATER FEATURING PROMINENTLY ON THE COURSE"

It's also easily accessible from most European destinations to boot, which brings us nicely to Acaya Golf Resort & Spa, which is situated close to Lecce on the south-eastern Italian Peninsula overlooking the Adriatic Sea.

Nicknamed 'lo Stivale', which is Italian for 'the boot', Lecce is a city in Italy's southern Apulia region, best known for its baroque buildings.

Currently ranked 28th in the Top 100 golf courses of Italy is Acaya Golf Resort & Spa. Construction on the David Mezzacane creation – who coincidentally, was also responsible for the original layout at Marco Simone – began in 1996, and finally opened for play four years later in 2000.

The original layout was described as a simple and traditional design, that was functional, and accessible to everyone.

After being purchased by American owners, architects Michael Hurdzan and Dana Fry were asked to remodel the layout, which reopened for play in 2009, and which has so far, stood the test of time.

Hurdzan and Fry were able to redesign an 18-hole, par 71 course measuring 6,192 metres, in harmony with the surrounding natural resources. Using a variety of terrain that meanders through an area of rare natural beauty surrounded by green Mediterranean vegetation, the course encourages players to use every club in the bag.

The grass on the fairways is a strong and compact American Bermuda variety, which provides an excellent surface to ensure a consistently clean and sharp shot.

Four types of fescue grasses were allowed to grow to their natural height bordering the fairways, while two types of *agrostis stolonifera palustris* – A4 and A1 – were used for the greens: a composition which has about twice the stem density as common Pennecross.

A complex system of lakes and streams results in water featuring prominently on the course, which is now a stern test of ability even for mid-handicappers.

On the front nine, three holes including the par four, sixth – the hardest hole on the course – all feature water, and if that's not challenging enough, the Mediterranean rough Scrub can be penal to the point of brutal. Go offline, and you'll be dropping from the fairway.

On the home stretch, five holes feature the wet stuff (10, 11, 12, 14 and 18) all of which meander around lakes overlooking the rolling countryside. Only the tenth hole needs a carry over water, yet Acaya feels as if water is more in play than the layout often suggests.

Tight fairways and the aforementioned Mediterranean scrub certainly focus the mind on the tee, where perhaps keeping the driver in the bag is the most sensible option.

The design is ecologically sustainable, which is particularly interesting since Acaya Golf Resort & Spa is close to a natural oasis of around 380 hectares, offering rare natural landscapes and a refuge to numerous waterflows.

Après golf, a centuries-old farmhouse has been repurposed as the clubhouse, which is immersed in the greenery of the golf course and overlooks the Cesine WWF Nature Reserve.

The restaurant inside the clubhouse offers simple yet high quality cuisine inspired by the local culinary tradition, and is a little piece of paradise, where guests can indulge all their senses and enjoy the natural surroundings and scenery.

Now owned by Mira Hotels, Acaya Golf Resort & Spa is one of three golf resorts owned by the group which also include Riva Toscana nestled in the Tuscan Hills and Borgo Di Luce I Monasteri in Sicily.

An expanse of olive trees and Mediterranean maquis surrounds the elegant four-star resort that embraces the architectural traditions of the region, reminiscent of ancient monasteries within a charming Mediterranean setting.

Aside from golf, the resort features a 1,200m² spa with whirlpool, two outdoor swimming pools, a sauna and a Turkish Bath all ideal for relaxing after a challenging time out on the course.

Set 1.9 miles from the Cesine Nature Reserve, the hotel is a just a five minutes' drive from the Salento seaside which is a haven for sea lovers featuring its golden sand and transparent azure waters.

All told, Acaya Golf Resort & Spa has plenty to offer golfers, and non-golfers alike, and with Italy growing in stature as a golfing destination, is ideally placed to benefit from the uplift in tourism that the Ryder Cup will surely bring to Italy next year. **END**



ARTURO FERREIRO

GENERAL MANAGER, LAS RAMBLAS



Las Ramblas Golf

When you've only been in a job for a matter of months, it can take time to establish yourself and set your own agenda.

But for Arturo Ferreiro, the 164km move south along the Costa Blanca coastline in Spain to Las Ramblas Golf in Dehesa de Campoamor looks like it may work out perfectly.

Ferreiro started playing golf from the age of nine when his father took him to Real Club de Golf Manises which is located next to the airport in Valencia. Rather than sit and watch the planes land and take-off from the adjacent runway, Ferreiro instead got hooked on the sport, and persuaded his father to pay for some lessons so as he could improve his game.

A member throughout his teenage years, and now a qualified coach, Ferreiro began marshalling at Real Club de Golf Manises in December 2004 as a 21-year-old.

"At the end of my first year in Manises, El Bosque called me to give me an offer because they wanted a person like me, so I accepted the offer because it was a big jump from Manises to El Bosque," recalls Ferreiro.

Located west of Valencia, El Bosque is a Robert Trent Jones I design, similar in character to his more famous layout at Valderrama and is where Ferreiro began to learn his trade working in the sales and reservations department.

Ferreiro spent five years at El Bosque, before moving south of Valencia to La Galiana Golf Resort as operations director commenting: "I took La Galiana from zero to what it is now."

After a ten-year tenure at La Galiana, he departed to return to coaching at an indoor golf centre, but it soon became apparent that he was destined to return to golf management and missed working at a course.

"I was working in an indoor area and teaching lessons with TrackMan and GC-Quad," he recalled. "But it's true that when you are inside an office, it's like you are inside a jail – it's completely different.

"So, when I spoke with [the owner of Las Ramblas] Antonio Perez about the possibility to come back to a golf course again, my smile returned, and I immediately accepted his approach."

Formerly part of Quara Golf, Las Ramblas is now solely owned by the Patrimi Group and has plans to reposition itself as one of the stand-out destinations in the region.

And after recruiting Ferreiro in August 2022 as general manager, the owners have already set down a marker in the sand as to their intentions.

With planned on-course investment of 2.25€ million and close to 50,000 rounds per year, the mantra that Ferreiro appears to be adopting is one of quality, and not quantity.

"The goal of Las Ramblas is, year-by-year, [to have] better player service; better quality maintenance [and] better quality in the retention of the staff.

"And if we put that level of player service at a high level, we can [then] start to increase the green fee price. Because we don't want more people than [50,000] because in October we were over 200 players every day, and it's not possible to have more.



"WE WANT TO GIVE ALL PLAYERS THE BEST EXPERIENCE. WE WANT TO SAY 'EXPERIENCE', AND NOT JUST 18 HOLES OF GOLF"

"In my mentality, we want to give all players the best experience. We want to say 'experience', and not just 18 holes of golf," he is keen to emphasise.

One of the first elements of the re-branded Las Ramblas golf experience will be a new starters hut that is due to be constructed over the winter in readiness for the beginning of the 2023 season.

"I think this is one of the things that players feel good about," he added. "Because when the starter receives you on the first tee and says 'Hello, and welcome to Las Ramblas. Is this your first time playing here?' you feel special.

"And depending upon the reply, you can either recommend how to play the first two or three holes, or if it's a client that comes every year, we can speak about other things. In my opinion, it's one of the first things that I want to do to increase the experience of the players."

Ferrerio also has plans to shake-up the way the tees at Las Ramblas are identified and is keen to examine gender-neutral options.

"Another thing we want to do on the course is remove the thinking that yellow markers are for men, and red are for women.

"It should be more about your level of ability, and if you are playing with a handicap less than ten play from the back tees because you'll enjoy a completely different course.

"Likewise, if you play between 28-36, then why not play from the red tees because your experience will be far better.

"I've never understood why golfers play from the white tees when they can't hit a driver more than 100 meters, and if you play ten strokes over your par, your experience is not good.

"But if you play from the red tees, and your score is par or one over, then you have a much better experience."

And whilst still on the subject of a better experience, Ferrerio has plans to introduce an on-course buggy bar for 2023 saying: "On a commercial golf course with 50,000 players per year, if you have a buggy bar, it's easy to get good income."

But in order to offer great service, you need good staff, a point which Ferrerio is all too aware of.

"We need to contract two more employees than we have now," he said. "And we will change the time of work for every employee because now the work time for my employees is really strange.

"Some staff work six hours on a Monday, then seven on a Tuesday as a marshal followed by a day in reception on a Wednesday and Friday in the garage.

"It's impossible to give a good service when you don't watch the same people in the same area. In my opinion, it's important that you have a team for reception, a team for the garage, and a team for the golf course."

Like many courses on the Costa Blanca, Las Ramblas is moving away from the traditional membership route towards green fee packages.

"We have 90 memberships at the moment," said Ferrerio, "but that is the maximum and we don't want more. In the future we will probably reduce that number as we prefer to sell packages of green fees."

But with the pandemic still a recent memory, and the cost-of-living crisis affecting golfers affordability to travel, Ferrerio does accept that the sensible option is to have a mix of both members and green fee players.

"If you are a commercial course, you can have a lot of members that reduce the capacity to sell green fees," he admits. "But it's also true that 90, 80 or 75 members gives you a good atmosphere every day on the golf course, as well as guaranteed income."

Aside from the 2.25€ million investment on the course – which will be spent re-designing some of the holes – there are plans for a small boutique hotel next to the clubhouse.

Plus, Ferrerio is currently negotiating for an upgraded irrigation system and new course maintenance equipment, with an order set to be placed soon.

Aged 39, Ferrerio describes himself as still young, and accepts that the challenge at Las Ramblas is his biggest to date.

"Las Ramblas is a big jump in my career and is my first role as general manager," he accepts. "But I think that I have enough knowledge from my previous experiences at Manises and La Galiana.

"To come to manage Las Ramblas is a worthy challenge and a good opportunity for me." **END**

YOU'RE ODDS ON TO WIN BIG IF YOU BACK HORSE BOX HOSPITALITY



You're trudging off the ninth green after your putt has horseshoed, you've had a mare of a front nine but suddenly, you find yourself breaking into a trot at that unmistakable smell of sizzling bacon.

The halfway hut is a luxury many golf clubs simply don't have. Whether you're gasping for a cold beer in the heat of the summer or attempting to regain some feeling in your fingers with a hot coffee on that wintry day, golfers are a thirsty and hungry bunch.

And now for those clubs which don't normally offer such facilities, thanks to some Horse Box Hospitality, there's a chance to start that back-nine fightback with a gallop.

The brainchild of golf professional, Steve Salter – formerly associated with London Golf Club and Bearwood Lakes – the idea is one of those simple solutions. In fact, it begs the question of why all clubs without a halfway hut wouldn't saddle up for a slice of extra revenue and an additional service for its members and guests.

Salter explained: "I've always had this thought that golf clubs which don't have a halfway hut are missing a trick. It's an extra revenue stream and an added service for members and visitors.

"It can sometimes be a little bit difficult for golf clubs to get planning permission on their land, but these horse boxes are on wheels so don't need it.

"So when these horse boxes started coming on to the scene where people had converted them for coffee shops or somewhere to get a snack in street markets, I thought: 'these would be absolutely ideal for a golf club'.

"When the pandemic came around and hospitality shut down, golf clubs were allowed to let people on to the course, but they weren't allowed in the clubhouse.

"So clubs had to find a way to serve customers outside and I thought it was the right time to give it a go. I bought a couple of horse boxes and the first two clubs I spoke to were keen – so I thought I might be on to something."

As many golf club members know, the wheels can turn slowly when it comes to making positive decisions and spending money.

But it needn't be the case. The beauty of the converted horse box is the versatility and mobility without either a huge financial outlay or the perceived cash risk to a club which is already up against extensive financial pressures.

Salter said: "They can either be rented or purchased outright.

"We have five horse boxes that we rent out – usually for a minimum of six months. If a club rents it for a couple of seasons either side of the summer, they get a good idea if it's going to work for them.

"The rental option is £400–£700 per month. Or to purchase, it's about £13,500 – depending on the catering equipment required.

"Verulam Golf Club in St Albans took a rental horse box and I got a phone call from the manager two months later telling me to come and pick it up. I thought 'Oh no, what's gone on here?'

"But he was asking me to pick it up because he wanted to buy one.





"IF A CLUB DOESN'T MAKE THAT MONEY BACK IN THAT TIME, THEY ARE DOING SOMETHING WRONG"

"Within those two months he knew it was a great addition.

"It's actually not a huge commitment – you're talking about maybe £3,000 for a six-month trial period, which is between £100–£150 per week.

"If a club doesn't make that money back in that time, they are doing something wrong."

In terms of the actual horse box – they genuinely have had horses in them at some point and may even retain some of their original battle scars from the odd stray hoof – they are then kitted out in less than five weeks at the workshop in Leicester.

All boxes come with hot and cold hand-washing facilities as standard and the club's specifications are then added with a portable gas supply and griddle for cooking hot food, warming cabinets and even a beer pump or two, if required.

Fridges and freezers can either be powered out on the course through an electricity supply or the horse theme can be extended to suppress any unwanted generator noise if a power supply isn't readily available.

Salter said: "Typically, golf clubs have some power around the course where they can tap into it.

"If that's not possible, you have the option of a generator but that buzz of the generator never goes that well on a golf course. Some have got around that by sinking it into the ground, sticking a couple of hay bales on it and you can't hear it.

"The future is something called a power station. It's a rechargeable lithium battery about the size of a briefcase, which you bring back to the clubhouse and power up by the mains. It then has enough power to keep the fridges running for the next day.

"But we always sit down with the clubs and work out what they want to provide for customers.

"Usually, it's a griddle for bacon and some of those warming cabinets for sausage rolls and pasties, an urn or coffee machine and a fridge or two.

"We put their club logo on it and all of the equipment in, so it turns up, they plug it in and they are ready to go."

Aside from the obvious appeal to thirsty golfers, there's an additional benefit for a club looking to maximise its revenue opportunities or simply improve the experience for members and visitors.

Salter said: "It's mobile so it doesn't have to stay in the same place all the time. Clubs can put it wherever they like or an area where a couple of holes might cross so you can catch people twice.

"If there is a wedding, event, the Pro-Am or Captain's Day, they can use it as an extra bar or roll it out for summer evenings.

"Some clubs have also been able to effectively hire it out to companies who might be sponsoring an event at their club. Add the company logo and it becomes that company's horse box for the day out on the course," Slater said.

"Even if the club doesn't want the hassle of staffing it or stocking it, there are people who would probably love that opportunity for so many customers to walk past them every Saturday or Sunday or those busy midweek days.

"So even if the club decides to "sell" the pitch and isn't looking to make a huge profit from it, they are adding a great extra service to members and guests."

While in Europe or USA, it's part of the golfing culture to stop for refreshments, the race to get round can sometimes be the pressing priority for UK golfers.

But Salter believes even those clubs with members less keen to stop for a drink and a snack will find regular customers who will welcome their new portable café with open arms.

He said: "I play golf six times per year these days in a society. They still make me play off scratch and I can shoot anywhere from 67 to 90.

"But none of my mates or fellow society members would ever go on a golf course and not stop at a halfway hut if there is one. It's a bacon sandwich and a hot cup of coffee when it's cold and perhaps more importantly to some of them, it's a chance for a cold beer when you're a couple of hours away from the clubhouse." **END**

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Hi, Michael!

Welcome to the Charity Competition.

Date: Thu, November 19
Course: Royal County Down

You are the marker for
Karen Moss
Your marker is
Fiona Hampton

Marker • My Score • Results

Hole 18 Refresh

Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6
Yardage	100	433	400	299	403	400
Par	5	4	4	3	4	4

Karen Moss (72)

Score: 4 4 4 4 4 4

Note

Certify as Marker

"ACROSS THE GLOBE, THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT GOLF MARKETS
WORKING IN ISOLATION TRYING TO SOLVE THE SAME PROBLEM"



Words

Craig Higgs
Managing Director
Golf Genius

GUEST BOOK

CRAIG HIGGS



With an international responsibility, travelling has begun again post-covid. Having recently returned from the Middle East, Australia, and Japan with Golf Genius, the one thing I note is that golf faces the same challenge across the world... primarily a new era with technology becoming a key part of the customer offer which clubs, organisations and associations must develop and progress to retain the new golfers attracted into our sport during covid.

This digital age is the future of many industries – including golf – with everyone trying to manoeuvre their way through the market and answer the question themselves: how do we attract and then retain the new 'digital' golfer?

Across the globe, there are many different golf markets working in isolation trying to solve the same problem as they try to transition through the change in focus surrounding technology. As suppliers, we should aspire to offer a blueprint of best practice and guidelines to help navigate the changing market and provide a solution to the technological demands all countries are faced with.

These associations would benefit from greater collusion to mirror and adopt best practice starting with the delivery of WHS worldwide. How can we all offer something collectively in the technology space to attract these new golfers whilst not alienating the existing loyal base? In our experience technology really can meet tradition to drive golf forward. **END**

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