

Shiels: Cabo is a golf haven

Michael Patrick Shiels For the Lansing State Journal 5:02 p.m. EST December 13, 2014



(Photo: Courtesy photo)

Did golf star Jack Nicklaus ruin “Cabo?”

“I think from one standpoint what we did was really introduce the game of golf to Cabo,” said the 74-year-old champion-turned-architect known as the “Golden Bear.” Nicklaus was referring to the six high profile golf courses he’s designed to anchor high end resorts and real estate developments over decades in the Mexican vacation region at the very bottom of Mexico’s Baja Peninsula. “We used to be able to come down here in the 1960s in a T-shirt, a swim suit, and a pair of sandals with 20 bucks and stay for a week. Now you might not get out of the airport for that. So my friends joke that I’m the guy who ruined Cabo.”

Nicklaus’ first visit to Cabo, in 1963, was almost his last.

“I was flying in for a landing on my Aero Commander with a co-pilot and I was getting ready to start throttling back on the runway and all of a sudden I felt a hand on my hand push my hand forward,” Nicklaus recalled. “The runway sits at an angle and I was lining it up like it was a flat runway. It was below the hillside, and we would have gone right into the face of the hill. The little push said, ‘we need more gas here.’ I’ll never forget – it’s like it was yesterday.”

His newest course, Quivira Golf Club, in Los Cabos, is also unforgettable. “It’s got some very unusual, spectacular golf shots on it over obviously great terrain,” said Nicklaus, who has designed 290 courses in 36 countries with his trademark wink and smile intact after all those years, major championships, and miles. “Most of all it’s got some absolutely unbelievable vistas.”

Developer Jose Luis Mogollon hired the legendary Nicklaus and surveyed the course with him as it was taking shape. Mogollon laughed when he recalled once daring to question the wisdom of one aspect of Nicklaus’ routing plan. “Jack looked at me and asked, ‘Okay, “Mr. Golf Course Architect,” remind me exactly how many courses you have designed?’ He made his point.”

Now finished, every hole presents stunningly stark, natural, bird’s-eye views from hundreds of feet above the all-inclusive Pueblo Bonita Pacifica Resort and Spa’s unique ocean-desert-mountain setting at land’s end — where the Pacific and Sea of Cortez meet. The expansive beach, sheer granite cliffs, and huge dunes are also visible from three complimentary “comfort stations” built into the cliffs along the way. Tequila sunrise? Si, amigo. Siesta or fiesta as long as you wish and sample the Baja culinary talents of the resort chef’s regional dishes — tuna sliders, fish tacos, breakfast burritos, and more, ready to go or prepared on the spot to preference. If only you could watch sunset from up here, but the beach is better for that, with a fire pit and private cabana beds; or from the soaring “sky pool” at Pueblo Bonita’s neighboring Sunset Beach resort.

Visit www.PuebloBonito.com or www.QuiviraGolfClub.com or call (800) 990-8250

Michigan-based travel writer Michael Patrick Shiels may be contacted at InviteYourself@aol.com or via www.TravelTattler.com His talk show may be heard weekday mornings in Lansing on 92.1 FM and seen on Fox 47 TV.

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