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## Golfers should celebrate Jack Nicklaus, the guy who 'ruined' Cabo

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By Jason Scott Deegan  
Senior Staff Writer  
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LOS CABOS, Mexico – Whenever Jack Nicklaus comes back to the tip of the Baja Peninsula, it's a big deal.

It usually means another golf course grand opening and, essentially, another boost for the local economy.

More than 100 dignitaries and media crowded into the cozy beachfront clubhouse at [Quivira Golf Club](#) in December to celebrate the golden touch of the Golden Bear.

Visually, Quivira might be the most spectacular course Nicklaus has ever designed. Holes cling to rocky mountain cliffs, finish on a secluded beach, roam through forests of desert cacti and twist over ever-shifting sand dunes.

Nicklaus discovered Los Cabos in the 1960s, fishing with friends to escape the pressures of the PGA Tour. When he came back to start building golf courses in the 1990s, he brought high-end resorts and pricey golf real estate developments with him, forever changing this once sleepy place.

"We used to be able to come down here in the '60s, we came down here with a tee shirt, swimming suit, a pair of sandals and 20 bucks and stay for a week," Nicklaus recalled at the Dec. 4 grand opening of Quivira. "Now you might be able to get out of the airport (spending that), I'm not sure. My friends call me 'the guy who ruined Cabo.' I think from one standpoint, what we did was really introduce the game of golf to Cabo. ... It's been a great experience to be part of the growth of Cabo and be part of what they have done. It's been fun and hopefully we're not done."

He's certainly not. Nicklaus is scheduled to complete his 18-hole routing at [Puerto Los Cabos](#), another massive residential and resort development centered around a marina and golf. Puerto Los Cabos currently features nine holes by Nicklaus and nine holes by Greg Norman played as one continuous layout.

### Cabo: An ideal climate for golf year-round

Quivira is the sixth Nicklaus design at the tip of the Baja. It all started with the 27-hole [Pamilla Golf Club](#) and the [Ocean Course at Cabo del Sol](#) in the 1990s, followed by [El Dorado Golf & Beach Club](#), [Club Campestre San Jose](#) and Puerto Los Cabos. Today, Cabo -- the name for the corridor of resorts between Cabo San Lucas and San Jose del Cabo -- boasts more than 10 courses in an ideal climate for golf year-round.

"The significance of Jack and Cabo is unparalleled," said Brad Wheatley, the director of golf at Quivira who helped Nicklaus open Palmilla and Cabo del Sol and later did consulting work for Nicklaus Design. "People joke it is Cabo San Nicklaus. He's had a huge impact in Mexico."

### Cabo's best: Quivira or Cabo del Sol's Ocean Course?

With Quivira online, the debate about Jack's best work in Cabo gets more complicated.

El Dorado reigned until the private club sold several beachfront holes for redevelopment. The Ocean Course at Cabo del Sol took the opposite approach to climb to no. 1, recently enhancing several ocean holes by pushing greens closer to the shore. I like his work on [Palmilla's Mountain Course](#) and [Ocean nine](#), too, although the [Arroyo nine](#) isn't far behind. Club Campestre remains the only one that doesn't visit the beach, roaming on higher ground instead.

Picking between Quivira and Cabo del Sol's Ocean Course is a matter of personal preference. Quivira wins, hands down, as the Baja's most scenic course, whereas Cabo del Sol's Ocean Course might be more playable for higher handicaps. In the wind, Quivira gets cranky, transforming a couple of tricky semi-blind shots into slow-play quagmires for players looking for lost balls. Quivira's scenery certainly makes up for any bad rounds. It's simply indescribable.

All-inclusive comfort stations stocked with food and drink propel the Quivira experience over the top. Every golfer who stops into one of these elaborate perches overlooking the ocean should raise a tequila toast to Nicklaus. They owe him a hearty thanks for Cabo's transformation into a golfer's paradise.

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Visually, Quivira might be Jack Nicklaus' most spectacular golf course. (Courtesy of Nicklaus.com)