

Great Golf

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100 pages

20 most romantic
golf resorts

Quivira Golf
one of Mexico's best

5

*South of England courses you **MUST**
play this year*



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Great Golf Magazine

30 Eridge Road
Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 8HR
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)1892 544 872
www.greatgolfmagazine.co.uk

MANAGING DIRECTOR
Mike Kaas-Stock
mike@greatgolfmagazine.co.uk

CHAIRMAN
Colin Morrison

EDITOR
Nils Bjornes
nils@greatgolfmagazine.co.uk

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Camilla Kaas-Stock
camilla@greatgolfmagazine.co.uk

ART DIRECTOR
Ketil Plassgaard
ketil@greatgolfmagazine.co.uk

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Karim Ullah
karim@greatgolfmagazine.co.uk

CONSULTANT EDITOR
Peter Ellegard
peter@greatgolfmagazine.co.uk

LUXURY PRODUCTS
Angus Davies
angus@escapement.uk.com

SUB EDITORS
Sophie Morrison
Louise Candy

CONTRIBUTORS IN THIS ISSUE

Angus Davies
Dena Roché
Robert Kaufman
Mark Alexander
Rob Hodgettes
April Todd
Camilla Kaas-Stock
Mike Kaas-Stock

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For advertising enquiries please contact
karim@greatgolfmagazine.co.uk

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Welcome from us at Great Golf Magazine, the only UK Golf Travel & Lifestyle publication. Give us warmth we hear you cry, well, that's what we do in this latest edition. Anything we can to help you plan your next Great Golf/Spa Escape.

But we do also want to give you some alternative options closer to home, and so have included our Top 5 South of England Courses. Agree or disagree, they are all worth a visit.

From sailing the waters off the Canaries, to playing a round of golf on the Baja peninsula in Mexico and trying not to be put off your shot by the sight of humpback whales. Our journalists have been out there forging a path so others may follow. All this and more, including a test drive in the amazing new Audi Allroad Quattro.

Our definitive "Top 20 Golf Resorts" section makes an entrance in these pages, with our first offering, the definitive "Top 20 Romantic Golf Resorts". Now there are no excuses, you will know where to take that special person while still getting your golf fix.

This is the first of our Top 20 lists that will appear throughout the year and culminate in the definitive 100 Greatest Golf Resorts 2016 which will be the sixth and final edition for this year.

With two extra issues per year now, there really is no reason not to have all the information at your fingertips. As well as hardcopy, all articles also appear online via website, online publication and through partners. Please also visit Great Golf Holidays and Great Golf ProShop websites, all accessible from each other and from the main Great Golf Media website www.greatgolftmedia.com



GREAT GOLF MEDIA – IT JUST MAKES SENSE!



Troon North Golf Club



Mexican marvel

Playing a round of golf on the edge of the Baja Peninsula proved to be quite the challenge for Robert Kaufman. It was hard not to be distracted by the humpback whale, stunning views and cliff-top shots...

By Robert Kaufman, photos Pueblo Bonito Golf & Spa Resorts and Robert Kaufman



Clubhouse



View of the arches



Pool Bar and Grill



Cibola & Catering



Humpback Whale

With a breaching humpback whale sprouting out of the Pacific Ocean and Instagram moments appearing from every angle of the panoramic stretch of coastline fronting the turquoise waters of Mexico's stunning Baja Peninsula in Los Cabos, I was finding it hard to concentrate on making a putt. Thanks a lot, Jack!

Yes, that's 'Golden Bear' Jack. The nicknamed sportsman who segued from a career rewarding him as the greatest golfer of all time to one of the most prolific golf course designers, responsible for 380 courses in 36 countries. The same Jack who, admittedly, first visited the arid desert terrain of Los Cabos in the early sixties with a t-shirt, pair of sandals, swimsuit and £14. He stayed for a week and years later was jokingly told by friends that he was the guy who 'ruined' Cabo.

This was in reference to Nicklaus' introduction of golf in this region, with his creation of Pamela in 1992. He ignited the boom that has turned Los Cabos into a world-class golf destination over the last couple decades and, as such, resulted in a blanket of real estate developments, vacation homes, posh hotels and a boost in tourism. Well, be prepared to fling a bit more blame on the 76-year old, 18-time major championship winner, due to his sixth and arguably best yet design in Los Cabos. Welcome to Quivira, 10 minutes from the town of Cabo San Lucas with its world-class marina and dining.

SPECTACULAR TERRAIN. If any golfer ever needed justification for a trip to Los Cabos, Quivira should prove to be the tipping point. It was for me. And those who set eyes on this prime oceanfront resort, where the Sea of Cortez meets the Pacific



Fachada Alberca



Mexican Theme Night



Family Room



Copala Casa Muestra



Pool and Beach



Executive Suite

With the Nicklaus brand linked to Quivira and the rejuvenated popularity of Los Cabos, this property has blossomed into a dream enterprise for developer Ernesto Coppel Kelly. It is part of 728-hectare gated community, with a collection of vacation ownership villas, condos and homes, along with the all-inclusive, adult-only Pueblo Bonito Pacifica Golf & Spa Resort, overlooking a 4km long private beach.

Ocean, will immediately question how anyone, golfer or not, could possibly blame Jack for enhancing his Cabo portfolio after casting more bait to continue luring golfers. Of course, it didn't hurt with Nicklaus' penchant for deep-sea fishing and that the course is a mere chip shot away from one of the best fishing aquariums in the world.

"We had to help the golf course emerge from the natural terrain we had to work with," explains Nicklaus. "I thought it was a very challenging, yet spectacular, piece of property. Much of it is located on the side of a hill and although there were numerous opportunities to place golf holes, we had to find them. Even though we found them, they still required an awful lot of effort to make certain that they work and that they remain stable."

Ever since the man struck the inaugural tee shot to christen Quivira in December 2014, Nicklaus' masterpiece has not only

proven to work but it sky-rocketed to the top of the charts when Golf Magazine selected Quivira as the Best New International Course of 2014 and voted Nicklaus as the Architect of the Year.

"Quivira is loaded with really, really good golf holes unlike anything else in Cabo or many other places," says Nicklaus. "I've never seen any place that has three holes hanging out over the ocean like this golf course does. They are unbelievable. This is a diverse golf course with inland settings; it's got desert, it's got ocean, it's got rocks, it has a little bit of everything."

The final putt at the £28 million Quivira, with full views of the Pacific from all 18 holes, finishes where the first drive takes place, at the edge of the ocean. In between, you will be treated to an eye-popping rollercoaster round of golf.

PLAYER-FRIENDLY. Preparing to smack my first drive of the day



and embark on my joyride through the sand dunes and desert foothills that characterise the player-friendly Quivira layout, I caught sight of an apparently harmless, yet sinister-looking hawk. It was eyeballing me from its perch atop a 15-foot tall prickly Saguaro cactus. Not the least bit phased by the soaring flight of my golf ball off the tee, the feathered prey stayed its position while I continued on a quest to find my own comfort zone.

The first fairway at the 355-metre, par-4, moves away from the ocean to lead golfers into a quartet of rather ordinary looking holes by Quivira's standards. But then, hang onto your sombrero... After departing the fourth green, sit back and savour the 1km cart ride past arroyos and a cliff-hanging, switchback ascent up the mountain over a stone bridge to a one-of-a-kind, oceanfront par-4, situated 85 metres above sea level.

Following a seemingly never-ending ride to the top and just

before turning the corner to feast your eyes on a stunning vista, Quivira offers the first of three hosted comfort stations bearing no resemblance to any drive-thru Taco Bell I've ever encountered. With a quick recess between swings, golfers can indulge with beverages, snacks and hot food items ranging from hamburger sliders to quesadillas to the popular 'Crunchy David', which is prepared with three flour tortillas, Arrachera (flank steak), Monterey Jack and cheddar cheeses, lettuce, tomato, red onion, olive oil, Cajun seasoning, and salt and pepper!

JAW-DROPPING HOLE. If you don't take much pause at the comfort station, the next two holes will be cause to slow the pace. Whether judged controversial or gimmicky, it is undeniable that Nicklaus crafted one of the most jaw-dropping holes on the planet at the 283-meter, par-4, fifth. And though you may record a visual memory to



share the beauty, that will not even come close to personally experiencing the edge-of-the-world tee shot towards a slanted fairway as it tumbles downhill to a transition zone before dropping to a rock-walled, cliff-hanging green 106 feet below the tee box.

Now indoctrinated into the heart of Quivira's seduction, the adventure doesn't let up. The subsequent 165-metre, one-shotter sixth is carved into the base of a massive dune and is perched on cliffs high above a secluded beach. From that point, the layout weaves through the desert soil and past another appetising comfort stop, adjacent to the ninth tee. Eventually, the route returns to the cliffs and the longest hole on the course – a colossal downhill, double-dogleg, 581-metre, par-5, playing into the same Pacific backdrop as was used for the filming of some scenes from the movie *Troy*.

With the putter barely back in the bag, this cinematic location

treats golfers to a spine-tingling sequel at the par-3, 13th hole, which demands a do-or-die shot over an abyss to a challenging and miniscule shelf-like green atop a massive pinnacle of sculptured granite rising 46 metres from the beach.

GONE WITH THE WIND. The remaining golf scenes occur away from the ocean until the classic links-style closer brings you back to sea level by swinging your way down a gently undulating fairway. It is framed on the left by an arroyo and to the right by a grove of mesquite trees, low rolling dunes and a huge bunker.

Depending what time of year Quivira is played, the inescapable winds will assuredly have an affect on the final card number. With five sets of tees ranging from 6,528 to 4,355 metres, it wasn't designed to be a back-breaking test of golf but rather an experience catering to the worldwide 98-plus per cent of average



players. Ultimately, the challenge lies with whoever is setting up the course any given day to make sure certain holes are lengthened or shortened in line with the winds.

“This piece of land can be very hard with the wind and has the potential to just beat you up and we want to do whatever we can to help avoid any negative experience,” says Antonio Reyante Vega, who took over as Quivira’s director of Golf in April 2015. “With the right amount of course knowledge, it’s not tough once you know where the trouble is and on a windy day we always recommend for people to play the forward tees.”

Fortunately, once your round at Quivira is completed and if you’ve managed to eliminate the machismo factor out of the tee selection equation, the only thing you’ll find blowing aside from a humpback spout will be your mind. It’s an experience that keeps beckoning return loops to gain more familiarity to learn how to best play each distinct hole.

GATED COMMUNITY. As is the case with any freshly planted resort course, it ultimately becomes a target for a barrage of reviews. However, with the Nicklaus brand linked to Quivira and the rejuvenated popularity of Los Cabos, this property has blossomed into a dream enterprise for developer Ernesto Coppel Kelly. It is part of 728-hectare gated community, with a collection of vacation ownership villas, condos and homes, along with the all-inclusive, adult-only Pueblo Bonito Pacifica Golf & Spa Resort, overlooking a 4km long private beach. And, only 12 years into this 25-year project, the modern-day Renaissance man is far from finished with plans for another golf course and multiple luxury hotels.

Regardless of whether you’ve been visiting Cabo for many years or it’s a first trek, Quivira grabs you hook, line and sinker – and then you realise how you can never blame a guy for doing what he does best. **GGM**

GOOD TO KNOW

GETTING THERE

Flights to San Jose del Cabo International Airport, plus a 40-minute ride to Quivira

WHERE TO STAY

- Pueblo Bonito Pacifica Golf & Spa Resort (<http://www.pueblobonito.com/resorts/pacifica>)
- Pueblo Bonito Sunset Beach Golf & Spa Resort (<http://www.pueblobonito.com/resorts/sunset-beach>)
- Pueblo Bonito Rosé Resort & Spa (<http://www.pueblobonito.com/resorts/rose>)
- Pueblo Bonito Los Cabos Beach Resort (<http://www.pueblobonito.com/resorts/los-cabos>)

GOLF

- Quivira (<http://www.pueblobonito.com/quivira-golf-club>)

WHERE TO DINE

(<http://www.pueblobonito.com/resorts/pacifica/dining>)

- Siempre
- Escudos Asian Fusion
- Aire Restaurant
- Bocados
- Steakhouse at Quivira

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