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How Many Strokes Modernises Kytäjä Golf's Visitor Experience



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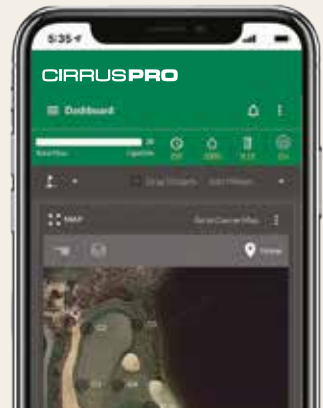
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RAIN BIRD

“THERE ARE MANY IN THE FORMATIVE STAGE OF THEIR GAME WHO WOULD PREFER TO HONE THEIR SKILLS ON A SHORTER SET-UP”

FAIR COMMENT

I can't ever recall being labelled a feminist, but I am a pragmatist, so I'm nailing my colours firmly to the ladies' golfing mast. I do realise, in certain circles, it's de rigueur to show oneself as a supporter of women's golf, but this is not virtue signalling; as I say, I'm a pragmatist, so there's a commercial consideration for the golf industry.

I'm lucky that my wife wishes to learn to play so we can spend time together on the fairways in our dotage. She began a few years ago on the back of the love.golf programme, and her club, like mine, has a dedicated nine-hole course. Yet, while there are many well-intentioned initiatives to encourage more women to play, the lack of dedicated nine-hole courses – particularly in mainland Europe – risks wasting any impetus these programmes generate.

I do realise that many women play 18-holes, but from what I've seen and heard myself, there are many in the formative stage of their game who would prefer to hone their skills on a shorter set-up. I can hear some of you now, saying 'many 18-hole courses are built in two loops of nine', which is true. But you don't think I just write this off the cuff, do you?

I have prepared an argument against that – and it's a perfectly valid one: if either loop is designed with long carries over water, or 575-yard par fives, then you may as well throw your marketing money down the drain, as many ladies simply won't play at your course.

And if that's the case, even well-intentioned programmes will, ultimately, be seen, however harshly, as mere lip service...



Words

Michael Lenihan
Publisher

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

 **portman**
publishing and communications

FEATURING

SUMMER 2022



JAVIER JIMENEZ-CASQUET

LA HACIENDA ALCAIDESA

"With the Solheim Cup being held at Finca Cortesín just up the road next year, we hope that many people will come to visit from the US, Canada and Europe, and stay at La Hacienda Alcaidesa Links."

20



CHRIS LOMAS

WORPLESDON

"It's quite ironic having underperformed in all of my GCSE's and A-levels that I actually realised how important education was, and after becoming a Master Greenkeeper, I thought to myself, 'What else do I do now?'"

26



BLYTH REID

THE HERTFORDSHIRE

"The key is the team around you. The staff need to be enthusiastic about what they do, to be empowered to make their own decisions and to believe in the overall ethos of what you are trying to achieve."

30



CERI MENAI-DAVIS

THE SHIRE LONDON

"We help people to live better lives through sport. The fact that we use golf as the vehicle is less important than the fact that being outdoors promotes health, well-being, community and better family relationships."

38



MARK CHAPLESKI

TROON INTERNATIONAL

"It has been such a rewarding career with Troon, for many reasons, but in a nutshell the main influence in who I am today is that I have been able to experience so many different cultures around the world."

42

“THE HOW MANY STROKES SYSTEM FITS OUR VISION AND IMAGE AT KYTÄJÄ PERFECTLY”



COVER STORY HOWMANYSTROKES.COM



How Many Strokes Digital Conversion Table

Located an hour north of Helsinki in Finland, Kytäjä Golf Club is one of Europe's finest golf clubs, and as a worldclass.golf destination, strives to offer an exceptional visitor experience.

And thanks to a newly-installed Digital Conversion Table provided by How Many Strokes, Kytäjä has enhanced their visitor journey for this season.

“Our goal is to be among the five best golf resorts in Northern Europe by 2025,” said Jukka Koivu, CEO at Kytäjä Golf Club.

And in order to achieve that aim, Koivu has invested heavily in the club over the last couple of years, with all greens renovated in 2020, and the clubhouse and pro shop benefiting from a major face-lift over winter.

“The facilities are very important, but to us, the staff are equally as important in order to create the best possible visitor experience for our members and guests,” Koivu adds.

“Our goal is to be the best and most valuable employer in the golf industry, and by achieving the ‘Great Place to Work’ certificate in 2020 and 2021, we are one of the few golf resorts in Europe that is close to achieving our goal.

“To create the best experience for our members and staff we invest in the best technology, and that is why we chose the Digital Conversion Table from How Many Strokes, which is a modern way to present our conversion table.

“The How Many Strokes system fits our vision and image at Kytäjä perfectly.

“The system allows us to generate and use QR-codes, which is convenient and also means we use less paper,” Koivu added.

Elias Knudsen, director of customer relations at How Many Strokes said: “A big benefit we have seen with the Digital Conversion Table at our existing golf destinations is that visiting golfers are able to see all of their options upon arrival, which makes it much easier to select the best tee box for their handicap and ability.

“Not only does this create a unique user experience for visiting golfers, but perhaps more importantly, adds to their enjoyment of the course, whilst speeding up the pace-of-play.

“Plus it's possible to incorporate a welcome message from the club or even a sponsor, with many destinations choosing to finance the system this way.”

Since How Many Strokes launched their Digital Conversion Table in 2020 to coincide with the introduction of the World Handicap System, the company – which is based in Denmark – has enjoyed huge success in their home market as well as across Europe in France, Germany, Greece and Spain.

And Knudsen now intends to shift focus to the British Isles, as he explains: “We see great potential in the UK market.

“With a solution that gives a high quality experience at an affordable price, we are looking forward to installing many systems in England, Ireland, Wales and of course Scotland, the Home of Golf.” **END**



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NORMAN FEELS THE HEAT IN SAUDI

As a child I possessed the board game Mousetrap. I'd played it regularly on school days when we were breaking up for holidays and really liked it. Yet, when I actually owned it, I could never get it set up correctly and it became a severe irritant, to the extent that I just gave up on it.

That move from adulation to intense frustration came back to me recently when Greg Norman spoke up again. The Great White Shark is my golfing Mousetrap. I admired him enormously (past tense) but now every time he spouts an attempt at legitimacy, I just want to bundle him up in a bag and throw him to the back of the cupboard. In case you've been sunning yourself under the giant halo that currently circles over Riyadh and missed it, Norman succeeded in putting his size nine firmly in his mouth again, forcing the other shoe, which had only been inserted a few weeks previously, tight against his molars. And, yes, I am back on that subject again, because the harder his puppet-masters try to sportswash their regime the more irate I get.

To recap, Norman, as chief executive of LIV Golf, is the front man for the new Saudi-backed golf project, and, when he was asked about the country's human rights record, including the 2018 murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi – an act which US intelligence agencies have attributed to the Saudi regime – his response was both crass and tetchy: "Everybody has owned up to it, right?" He continued: "Look, we have all made mistakes, and you just want to learn from those mistakes and how you can correct them going forward."

Norman tried to distance himself from Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), the Saudi crown prince and deputy prime minister, despite the latter being responsible for the public investment fund financing the LIV Series. "I haven't had one personal connection with MBS," added Norman. "I've never even met the guy. But at the same time, I do read that the Saudi government has made their statements about it, and they want to move forward."

I'm sure that the many people who have fallen foul of the regime would like to be given the chance to move forward, but, sadly, death tends to limit one's ability to move in any direction, except down. And, on the subject of digging holes, Norman forgot the old adage of remembering when to stop. He continued: "I don't look back. I don't look into the politics of things. I know the mission I have as CEO of LIV Golf and that's how we can grow the game globally. I'm not going to get into the quagmire of whatever happens in someone else's world."

Only, it's not 'someone else's world' anymore Greg, it's yours too, from the moment your bank balance swelled for sportswashing services. And, in an attempt to distance himself further from society, when asked if any gay friends had criticised the Saudis for their discrimination against the LGBT community, he simply said: "I'm not sure whether I even have any gay friends."

To be honest with you, Greg, I'm surprised you have any friends left at all. **END**

NEWS IN BRIEF

GOLFMANAGEMENT.EU.COM/NEWS



THE ELS CLUB DESARU COAST APPOINTS NEW GENERAL MANAGER

As international travel resumes, the multi-award-winning The Els Club Desaru Coast's new general manager Harris Abdullah is gearing up to welcome golfers from around the world to grace its stunning fairways and abundant wildlife again. A familiar face among regular golfers at The Els Club Desaru Coast, Harris Abdullah, who recently succeeded Steven Thielke, is known for his amicable and hospitable disposition.

SEARCH 'HARRIS ABDULLAH' ONLINE
at golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



MOTOCADDY PARTNERS WITH PGA EUROPRO TOUR FOR 17TH SEASON

Motocaddy, one of the world's leading electric trolley brands, has signed a major deal to become the 'Official Electric Trolley' and 'Official Laser Rangefinder' of the 2022 PGA EuroPro Tour - Europe's foremost development tour - thereby extending the longest-running partnership in the Tour's history to 17 consecutive seasons.

SEARCH 'MOTOCADDY' ONLINE
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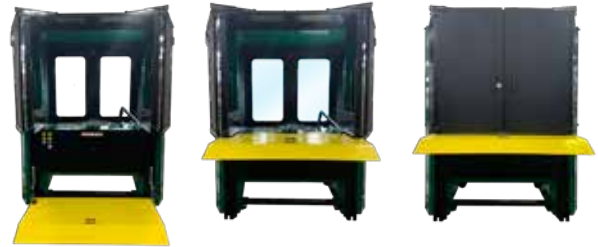
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NEW GALVIN GREEN COLLECTION PUTS PINK IN THE SPOTLIGHT

High-performance apparel brand Galvin Green is introducing a classy limited-edition Pink Collection that offers serious golfers the chance to update their spring season wardrobe with long-lasting garments designed to enhance performance in warmer playing conditions. The Pink Collection features a choice of four distinctly stylish polo shirt options, two versatile sweaters, a lightweight short-sleeve windproof jacket and a pair of fashionable shorts that can complement each and every one of the selected garments.

SEARCH 'GALVIN GREEN' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



RBC JOINS WOMEN'S GOLF DAY AS GLOBAL PARTNER

RBC has announced its new sponsorship as a Global Partner of Women's Golf Day (WGD) and lead sponsor of the inaugural WGD RBC Toronto event, taking place June 7, 2022 at the historic Scarborough Golf and Country Club. The Women's Golf Day movement, recognised each year in June, includes more than 1,000 events in over 80 countries, and celebrates women and girls learning valuable skills that will empower them on and off the golf course.

SEARCH 'RBC' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



LOCH LOMOND WHISKIES UNVEILS MALTS TO MARK 150TH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

Award-winning, independent distiller Loch Lomond Whiskies has unveiled two limited edition single malt whiskies in celebration of The Open. Loch Lomond The Open Course Edition 2022, and Loch Lomond The Open Special Edition 2022, have been created to mark the 150th year of golf's prestigious The Open Championship, of which Loch Lomond Whiskies is the official spirit partner. Each single malt expression has been carefully crafted using Loch Lomond Whiskies' remarkable straight-neck stills, which are entirely unique to the distillery.

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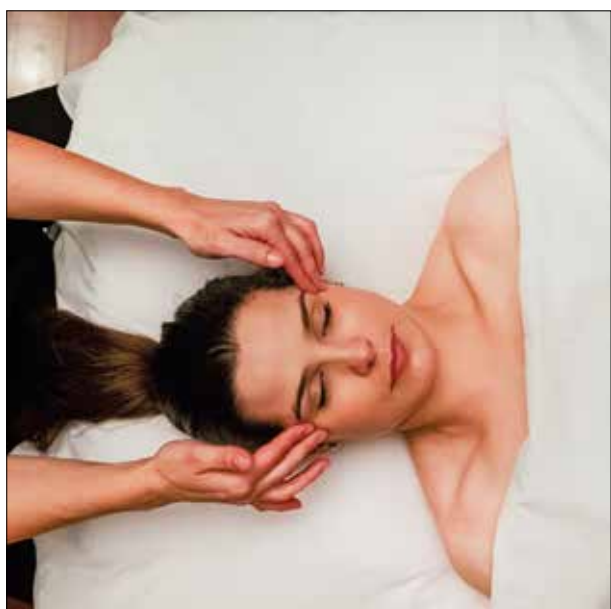


THE GROVE INTRODUCES TRACKMAN TECHNOLOGY

The Grove, London's country escape, today announces an important enhancement to its golf practice facilities with the installation of TrackMan Range, the flexible golf ball tracking solution featuring Tour-proven technology. From June 6, visitors to The Grove's all-grass, pristine practice facilities will be able to access TrackMan Range through their personal mobile devices, revolutionising their warm-up experience before heading onto the Kyle-Phillips designed 18-hole championship golf course.

SEARCH 'THE GROVE' ONLINE

golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



PENHA LONGA THE FIRST PORTUGUESE RESORT TO JOIN WOMEN IN GOLF CHARTER

Penha Longa Resort's pledge to The R&A's Women in Golf Charter shows its commitment to growing the game of golf, with a current female staff representation of 48 per cent, the resort is best placed to help grow the game of golf and maximise the potential of women and girls in Portugal. The resort aims to provide introductions to golf as well as offering resort wide initiatives to grow female representation. As part of the commitment and through supporting the objectives of the charter, Penha Longa Resort will become one of the 900+ signatories, which include National Federations, golf clubs, professional tours and organisations.

SEARCH 'PENHA LONGA' ONLINE

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



INFINITUM BUILDS FOR THE FUTURE WITH SUMMER RENOVATION OF LAKES COURSE

INFINITUM Lakes course, which recently hosted the DP World Tour's ISPS Handa Championship in Spain, is to undergo extensive maintenance work this summer with the layout's fairways upgraded from Rye grass to the more sustainable Bermuda Tifway 419. The planned work - which will see all 18 fairways renovated - is due to last four months with a re-opening date scheduled for mid-September. The changes will be made as INFINITUM prepares to welcome the return of the DP World Tour's Final Stage Qualifying School from November 11-16 following a three-year absence due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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RAIN BIRD APPOINTS TWO NEW GOLF SALES RECRUITS FOR EUROPE

Two new recruits to Rain Bird Europe this spring are Julien Guigny as regional sales manager Southwest Europe and Daniel Sanchez as golf sales specialist Spain and Portugal. Julien Guigny, MBA, has over 15 years' international sales and business development experience in industrial healthcare, pharmaceutical, aeronautical and energy markets across Southern Europe gained during a career at Sontara, Laboratoires Anios – Soluscope, and Berry Plastics Group.

SEARCH 'RAINBIRD' ONLINE

golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



QUARTET OF NEW COACHES GET SET FOR INFLUX OF FEMALE GOLFERS

love.golf the empowering group coaching experience for women, has welcomed four new coaches to its ranks as it gears up to attract women to golf throughout 2022. Karyn Burns from East Kilbride Golf Club near Glasgow, has joined Leicestershire's Amy Taylor and duo Damon Wood and Sam Proctor, both based in Cheshire, in signing up to the program this year. love.golf replaces traditional instruction with the freedom to explore new skills, discover untapped potential and bond with a supportive group of like-minded women.

SEARCH 'LOVE.GOLF ONLINE

at golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



SOUTH AFRICAN GOLF TRIO TURN TO CLUB CAR AS DEMAND SOARS

South Africa's top golf resorts are turning to Club Car, the world's largest manufacturer of small-wheel electric vehicles, to help cope with increasing demand for rounds on courses where golf cars are compulsory. Sun City Resort, known for its two Gary Player designed courses, purchased 50 Tempo cars and two Café Express Utility vehicles in late 2021 while The Els Club Copperleaf, home to the second 'Signature' Ernie Els designed golf course in South Africa, extended its long-standing relationship with Club Car by implementing a fleet of 70 Tempo Lithium-Ion cars with Club Car Connect.

SEARCH 'CLUB CAR' ONLINE

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INVESTMENTS AT THE DUKE'S ST ANDREWS MARK 20 YEAR MILESTONE

One of the most prestigious golf courses in St Andrews is preparing to mark a significant milestone. The recognition surrounds a key member of staff at The Duke's who has spent the last two decades providing a world-class experience at the only heathland course at the Home of Golf. It also accompanies a tranche of investments at the well-regarded venue.

SEARCH 'THE DUKE'S' ONLINE

golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



JUSTIN ROSE AND AMERICAN GOLF LAUNCH NATIONAL GOLF ACADEMY

American Golf and former number one, Major champion and Olympic Gold medal winner, Justin Rose MBE, have joined forces to unveil a new world-class golf academy as they embark on a mission to get more people into golf by connecting five million people with the sport for the first time. The new Justin Rose Academy, powered by American Golf, is part of American Golf's drive to make golf accessible to all, irrespective of age, gender social background and ability.

SEARCH 'JUSTIN ROSE ONLINE

at golfmanagement.eu.com for the full story



THE BUCKET PROS ANNOUNCE FIRST PARTNERSHIP IN MALLORCA

The Bucket Pros have been appointed by Pula Golf Resort to provide their industry-leading expertise and digitalisation strategy. The partnership will mark The Bucket Pros latest assignment in Spain, and the latest addition to its growing list of highly acclaimed facilities in Europe. The appointment comes at an exciting time for both The Bucket Pros and Pula Golf following the opening of several new facilities at the property, including the installation of the first TrackMan driving range in Mallorca.

SEARCH 'THE BUCKET PROS' ONLINE

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Words Michael Lenihan
Photography La Hacienda Alcaidesa

JAVIER JIMENEZ-CASQUET

GENERAL MANAGER, LA HACIENDA ALCAIDESA GOLF LINKS



The past couple of years haven't been the greatest for the golf tourism sector, with the southern European markets of Portugal and Spain bearing the brunt.

With golf in northern Europe booming thanks in-part to government-backed salary handouts during the pandemic, golfers found themselves with plenty of free time, spare cash, but with nowhere to spend it outside of their home countries.

Heavily reliant upon tourism income from visiting golfers from the UK, Scandinavia, and Germany, investing in a golf destination on the Iberian Peninsula during 2020 would have seemed reckless to the extreme.

But as Albert Einstein famously said: "In the midst of every crisis, lies great opportunity," a sentiment echoed by Javier Jimenez-Casquet, general manager of the recently re-branded La Hacienda Alcaidesa Golf Resort in Sotogrande, Spain.

A real estate lawyer by profession, 45-year-old Jimenez-Casquet started working with Alcaidesa Links in 2005, overseeing property transactions at the resort which lays claim to being the only true links course not only on the Costa del Sol but also in southern Europe.

Originally a joint venture between Costain and Banesto, La Alcaidesa is a gated golf community in the Andalusian province of Cádiz, overlooking Gibraltar. Real estate construction at Alcaidesa began in the 1990s and features two courses – the Links which opened in 1992 and the Heathland which followed 15 years later, in 2007.

The resort had always lived in the shadow of its more illustrious neighbours of San

Roque, La Reserva and Valderrama, as Jimenez-Casquet acknowledges: "When I joined the company in 2005, the most important thing for the company was the real estate area.

"But at the same time, we were developing this area because Alcaidesa is situated between La Linea de la Concepción and San Roque.

"At the beginning, it was the intention to have a very nice resort with 36 holes which obviously increased the price of the [real estate] plots."

The same year that the Dave Thomas-designed Heathland Course opened for play, Jimenez-Casquet was promoted to real estate manager, and following the acquisition of La Alcaidesa and the hotels plot by Grupo Millennium in December 2019 for €33.2m, was promoted a month later to director general of Alcaidesa Group in January 2020.

Then covid struck; the world paused, and the new owners of La Alcaidesa were faced with a dilemma... press ahead with their planned renovation of the resort or hold fire until the pandemic had passed.

The decision was taken to carry-on and utilise the lockdown periods to implement changes not only to the Links Course, but also begin construction of a new five-star hotel which will be managed and operated by a high-end brand.

Due to open for business in mid-2023, the hotel will feature 150 rooms all with views across the Mediterranean Sea and the Links Course, helping to elevate the resort to a higher level.



"THIS IS HONESTLY ONE OF THE MOST DRAMATIC AND SPECTACULAR VIEWS I'VE SEEN FROM A GOLF COURSE IN THE ENTIRE WORLD"

"The last two years were very interesting," smiled Jimenez-Casquet, "but the best thing is that we are spending a lot of money this year. We are not recovering; we are investing."

"Regarding the Links Course, the original plan was to improve the Links, but not to do a very huge reform. The plan was to try to develop a very nice resort with a hotel, improve the maintenance of both golf courses and maybe spend not so big an amount on the Links."

"But during 2020, the president of the Grupo Millennium decided to reform the Links Course as he really wanted to improve the Links."

Originally designed by Peter Allis and Clive Clark, the Links Course at Alcaidesa had all the hallmarks to make it a great track, but sadly, never quite fulfilled its potential. With most holes routed along the beach, and with the Rock of Gibraltar as the backdrop, it had all the characteristics to upstage its more illustrious golfing neighbours, yet never featured as a 'bucket-list' course.

That though, could soon all change thanks to Texas-based architect Kurtis Bowman.

A former Nicklaus Design employee, who once had an internship at Augusta National, the Links at Alcaidesa is Bowman's first project in Europe and was appointed to transform the Links into a modern masterpiece of golf course architecture.

Bowman met Javier Illán, the president of Grupo Millennium when he was working on a project in the Dominican Republic, and after the takeover in 2020, flew to Spain to visit the site and discuss the plans.

"I instantly fell in love with the property and saw the potential," said Bowman. "Javier's vision was exactly what I wanted to hear. He was prepared to give us the necessary budget to achieve what we wanted – which was to rework the entire golf course and dramatically improve it."

"It was my first golf course in continental Europe. It was a dream project for a golf-course architect, and I was going to do whatever it took to win that project. This is the type of site that can change the trajectory of one's career."

"I was taken aback by the spectacular ocean views which are some of the best I've ever seen on a golf course globally," added Bowman.

"The fact that you can see the Mediterranean from the entire course, as well as the Rock of Gibraltar, just took my breath away."

Drawing on inspiration from the likes of Pebble Beach and Cypress Point, Bowman has crafted a resort course which will have some of the largest greens in Spain, including three double-greens. And refreshingly, Bowman has designed a course fit for purpose stating: "We didn't aim to make a golf course that could hold a men's major or European Tour event."

"The brief and objective were to create a golf course that resort guests would like to play, have lots of fun and want to return over-and-over again."

"I designed a resort golf course that can host tournaments, rather than a tournament course that resort guests could play. This was a directive agreed by the ownership."

The new design includes new tees, greens and bunkers, with a handful of holes that were totally reinvented, especially in the final stretch heading back towards the clubhouse.

And with a US architect on the payroll, does Jimenez-Casquet believe that this will help attract more North American golfers once the project is complete?

"Absolutely," he states. "With the Solheim Cup being held at Finca Cortesin just up the road next year, we hope that many people will come to visit from the US, Canada and Europe, and stay at La Hacienda Alcaidesa Links as it's important for us to show off our new resort."

And as Bowman adds, the changes on-and-off the course will help elevate La Hacienda Alcaidesa onto the world stage. "There are lots of great golf courses in the Costa del Sol," he said, "but one thing it was missing was a great oceanfront links golf course."

"Now this has been added to the mix – along with the five-star hotel, real estate, clubhouse, practice facilities, beach club and halfway house – this has elevated the entire development."

"As great as the other venues nearby are, none of them are set in a location even close to La Hacienda. This is honestly one of the most dramatic and spectacular views I've seen from a golf course in the entire world."

It seems as if La Alcaidesa, has finally come of age. **END**



NEW DESTINATIONS

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CHRIS LOMAS

SECRETARY, WORPLESDON



Sometimes in life, the best opportunities come along when you least expect them. And as far as Chris Lomas is concerned, history appears to be repeating itself for the affable Englishman.

A fully qualified master greenkeeper, Lomas moved from the greenkeeping shed to the warmth and comfort of the general managers office in July 2010 when a friend who was on the board at Worplesdon Golf Club in Surrey suggested he put his name forward after the club had failed to find a suitable candidate for the vacant GM role.

At the time, Lomas was course manager at The Berkshire, and thanks in part to the persuasive nature of his boss, John Hunt – who encouraged his young protégé to join the CMAE – Lomas had the requisite skill set needed for a change of course.

And as Lomas explained, from an early age he was always destined for a career of some description in the golf industry, although in quite what capacity remained unclear.

"I grew up living on a golf course," explained the 49-year-old. "Our home was behind the 14th green at Pleasington Golf Club in Blackburn, which is where I was a junior member.

"My dad was a very keen low handicap golfer, so the only time I used to see him was caddying for him at weekends as he'd typically play 36 holes.

"I really got into golf myself from an early age and played a lot... too much probably as my studies suffered as a result," he recalls. "I used to work in the pro shop at Pleasington during the school holidays, which is

where I got quite friendly with the greenkeepers, so I also started helping them out on the golf course as well."

Like most golf-mad teenagers, Lomas fancied his chances as a professional golfer, but after taking a year off to focus on his game, realisation soon dawned that he may not make the grade.

"I realised that I wasn't good enough to become a professional golfer," he recalls, "so I went back [to school] and did my A-levels.

"I planned to go to university to do a sports science degree but saw an HND course advertised at Reaseheath College in golf course management and thought I'd give it a go.

"I absolutely loved it and spent three years there – working at Carden Park in the middle year – and haven't looked back since.

"After I left Reaseheath, I blanketed all the golf courses in Surrey, and Chris Kennedy at Wentworth – who became a good friend – interviewed me and was going to offer me a job."

But, just at the point of accepting the position, Kennedy pointed out that Swinley Forest were looking for a deputy head greenkeeper, and perhaps he might be better served learning his craft just up-the-road.

A day later, in August 1999, Lomas secured his first greenkeeping job, and two-and-a-half years later, was promoted to head greenkeeper.

But it would be in his next role at The Berkshire, that would see Lomas eventually fulfil his potential as a general manager and become uniquely qualified as both a Master Greenkeeper and a Certified Club Manager.





"IT'S QUITE IRONIC HAVING UNDERPERFORMED IN ALL OF MY GCSE'S AND A-LEVELS THAT I ACTUALLY REALISED HOW IMPORTANT EDUCATION WAS"

"My boss at The Berkshire was John Hunt who was instrumental in putting me through my paces and sending me on courses as well as joining the Commercial Managers Association of Europe (CMAE).

"At the time, John was president of the CMAE, so he made sure that I did all the courses and went to world conference and did all the right things, even though I was just a course manager.

"It's quite ironic having underperformed in all of my GCSE's and A-levels that I actually realised how important education was, and after becoming a Master Greenkeeper, I thought to myself, 'What else do I do now?'

"So, I turned to the CMAE as I thought that was the best education package that I could do."

Armed now with the necessarily qualifications to one day move into club management, Lomas was keen to follow in his father's footsteps who at the time, was secretary at Walton Heath a position he filled after retiring as a lawyer.

And although happy in his role as course manager at The Berkshire, Lomas was beginning to consider his long-term future.

"I'd looked at various different roles, but nothing had really got me excited," he recalls. "And I thought to myself, 'Is this what I really want to be doing in 20-30 years' time, and would I still want to be getting up early and out in the cold, wet days?'

"And the answer to that, was that I didn't, so I thought it was time to make the jump."

In the summer of 2010, Lomas landed not too far away at Worplesdon Golf Club in Surrey, a private-members heathland course designed by JF Abercromby in 1908, where the greens and bunkers were constructed by Willie Park Junior.

His first role as GM, Lomas views his greenkeeping heritage as a significant plus-point, despite still missing getting his hands dirty occasionally.

"I think part of the beauty of becoming a GM from being a course manager is the fact that the course is the biggest asset of any golf club, isn't it? And as I understand how it operates, a greenkeeper wouldn't be able to pull the wool over my eyes on costs or anything like that.

"Thankfully that's never been a problem at Worplesdon because when I came the course was in great condition thanks to Brian Turner. Our current head greenkeeper Paul Robinson has carried Brian's work on and taken the course further forward.

"But it is a part of my job that I do miss," admits Lomas. "I don't miss the day-to-day routine as it's not an easy job and can be quite stressful. But I do miss the project work as I used to really enjoy it.

"We're about to start building a short-game area here, so I'm really looking forward to doing that."

Something else which Lomas is looking forward to is his role working with Legacy Golf Advisors (LGA), a relatively new venture founded by former Goodwood Golf general manager, Stuart Gillett; Ian Timberlake, of Timberlake Golf Recruitment; Paul Mould of Material Matters; Mike Ramsay, a finance and investment expert, and Lomas.

A golf advisory and management business, Legacy Golf Advisors aims to offer a wide range of support services to golf clubs, resorts and businesses across Europe, with Lomas one of five founding partners.

"The chairman, board and members of Worplesdon have been very good with me allowing me to look at this venture and allowing me some time to do it," says Lomas.

"I do it all in my own time, and I'm very transparent with the club on everything that I do."

Having spent over a decade in charge at Worplesdon, Lomas appears to be content in his dynamic dual roles as he explains: "I've looked at a number of roles at other clubs and occasionally fallen at the final hurdle, but actually, every time I didn't get the job, I actually thought to myself 'Oh, that's no bad thing'.

"I think I have a great job here. It's a great club; the members are wonderful, and Legacy allows me to be able to stay here, whilst learning new things all the time.

"And I've learned more with Legacy in the last twelve months, than I have in a long time on any course that you sit on, because I'm seeing other clubs and how they operate."

And that can only be for the betterment of Legacy, Lomas, and Worplesdon. **END**







Words Steve Wilson
Photography The Hertfordshire

BLYTH REID

GENERAL MANAGER, THE HERTFORDSHIRE



We've all met them.

There will always be those in positions of power who will shout needlessly, point out problems rather than offering solutions and ignore the successes to focus on the failures.

With an air of superiority, they are overly critical, oppressive to the point of dismissing alternative points of view and they stifle fresh ideas.

When the boss creates a fear factor among the staff and runs the show as a dictator, it can often be passed off as a leadership style and dressed up as a tactic to "gets results quickly".

But it's simply not the way Blyth Reid operates.

With more than 30 years of experience behind him in the hotel resort and golf industry at some of the top clubs – both in the UK and abroad – he's clearly doing something right.

Beginning his career at Turnberry, Reid worked his way up to the position of senior PGA professional but realised at a young age that his hopes of carving out a career in golf would be better served on the business side, rather than swinging a club.

He recalled: "I had a fantastic grounding at Turnberry and I was a good golfer. But ability is one thing – it's the mental approach which is so vital in becoming a successful professional golfer.

"My emotional intelligence has definitely changed over the years and there are times I wish I'd learned some of those things at an earlier age. But I've certainly no regrets and I've enjoyed the challenges and opportunities that have come my way."

After switching his priorities towards the business side of golf, in South Africa he held management roles at Fancourt, Pezula and Erinvale, bookending a four-year stint at Four Seasons Anahita in Mauritius.

And after returning to the UK in 2020 after a spell at The Grove earlier in his career, the affable Scotsman is currently overseeing an ambitious improvement project as general manager at The Hertfordshire Golf & Country Club, taking the resort's facilities to the five-star standard the location and history warrants.

Although there is a natural, calm authority about the 51-year-old Scot, his approach to steering his team to success is not a formula he's stumbled upon through chance.

And while he admits he is still learning new skills, he relishes the task of rising to fresh challenges.

Asked what makes a good manager, Reid said: "I see some managers who create this fear factor among their staff, wrongly thinking that it generates automatic respect. I don't see it that way at all. I'd much rather create a feeling of mutual respect.

"You see certain people with a different approach and it always makes me wonder why staff would stay there for any length of time. The truth is, they probably won't.

"Where I may not agree with other people in my position is that they tend to make it about themselves and they can run into trouble. I believe it impacts on the overall experience for visitors, members and is generally negative.

"Some may disagree, but I guess that's up to them," added Reid.



I'M ALWAYS OPEN TO LEARNING NEW SKILLS AND I'M EXCITED BY DIFFERENT CHALLENGES – I HATE BEING PIGEON-HOLED"

"I like creating experiences to make other people happy – I see that as a win-win. And I'm the sort of person who would much rather use the carrot rather than the stick."

With 550 golf members and a health and fitness membership totalling more than 1,800, it's a thriving venue with high standards to maintain and an even higher level to aspire to – a task Reid views as a collective effort.

He said: "The key is the team around you. The staff need to be enthusiastic about what they do, to be empowered to make their own decisions and to believe in the overall ethos of what you are trying to achieve."

"And if you do it, you do it 100 per cent – in my view, if your heart is not in it, there's no point."

"Yes, as general manager, you need to make some unpopular decisions sometimes. But there is a way of doing it and if you do it the right way, it fuels that feeling of teamwork."

As a venue, The Hertfordshire has found a sympathetic way to strike the balance between its rich history and relatively new golf course.

Value is a key part of the philosophy too with a green fee of £65 and Reid's assertion: "Nobody wants to be ripped off or pay over the odds for a poor product."

The par-70 course, designed by Jack Nicklaus II – who inherited his skills, talent and dedication from his celebrated father Jack Nicklaus – was opened as recently as 1995 and boasts a fabulous closing stretch of holes.

While the course has matured, the venue oozes with its own history on the land which was once owned by The Knights Templar – and most notably the spectacular 18th century Broxbournebury Mansion, which is undergoing continued improvements as part of the bigger project.

Reid said: "It's an old building which presents its own challenges when it comes to modernising the facilities a modern club requires, but it creates that romance and stature which is hard to replicate."

"We like to stay as authentic to the original as we possibly can and the investment needs to be planned carefully."

"There is an art to investing," suggested Reid, "which perhaps means things move a little more slowly than some would like, but we are moving in the right direction and some of the recent improvements are not always visible but are essential to the preservation of the venue."

"In today's world, it's also vital that we all have an ethical responsibility. Sustainability has to be the way to go across the whole of the golf industry and we are very mindful of that in everything we do – even down to the food we sell."

So what will the future bring? Are there enough challenges to remain at the helm of his current venue or is there another overseas adventure calling?

He said: "It's hard to know what the future might bring. The past couple of years have taught us all that it's difficult to predict the future and the huge uncertainty after Covid has probably had an impact on anyone making too many longer-term concrete plans."

"At The Hertfordshire, we've got the location which is not too far from London, and a great golf course with a fantastic design. It's an exciting project to be involved with," Reid added.

"Within a few years there will be a 36-unit residential project, new gym facility and a seven-hole golf course extension."

"There has already been major investment with a view to bringing some life back into the mansion and surrounding areas and there is plenty going on to keep me busy."

"I'm quite pedantic and I like the details of a project. It tends to drive me a bit insane when others aren't like that."

"But I'm always open to learning new skills and I'm excited by different challenges – I hate being pigeon-holed."

Those who have never been in the position themselves may never fully understand what it takes to be successful in management and the reality of the role is perhaps never quite as straightforward as the fantasy.

Meeting multiple demands and coping with so many different pressures on a daily basis is certainly no easy task. But perhaps Reid's approach may just tempt a few more to follow his lead. **END**

PGA RIVIERA MAYA, MEXICO

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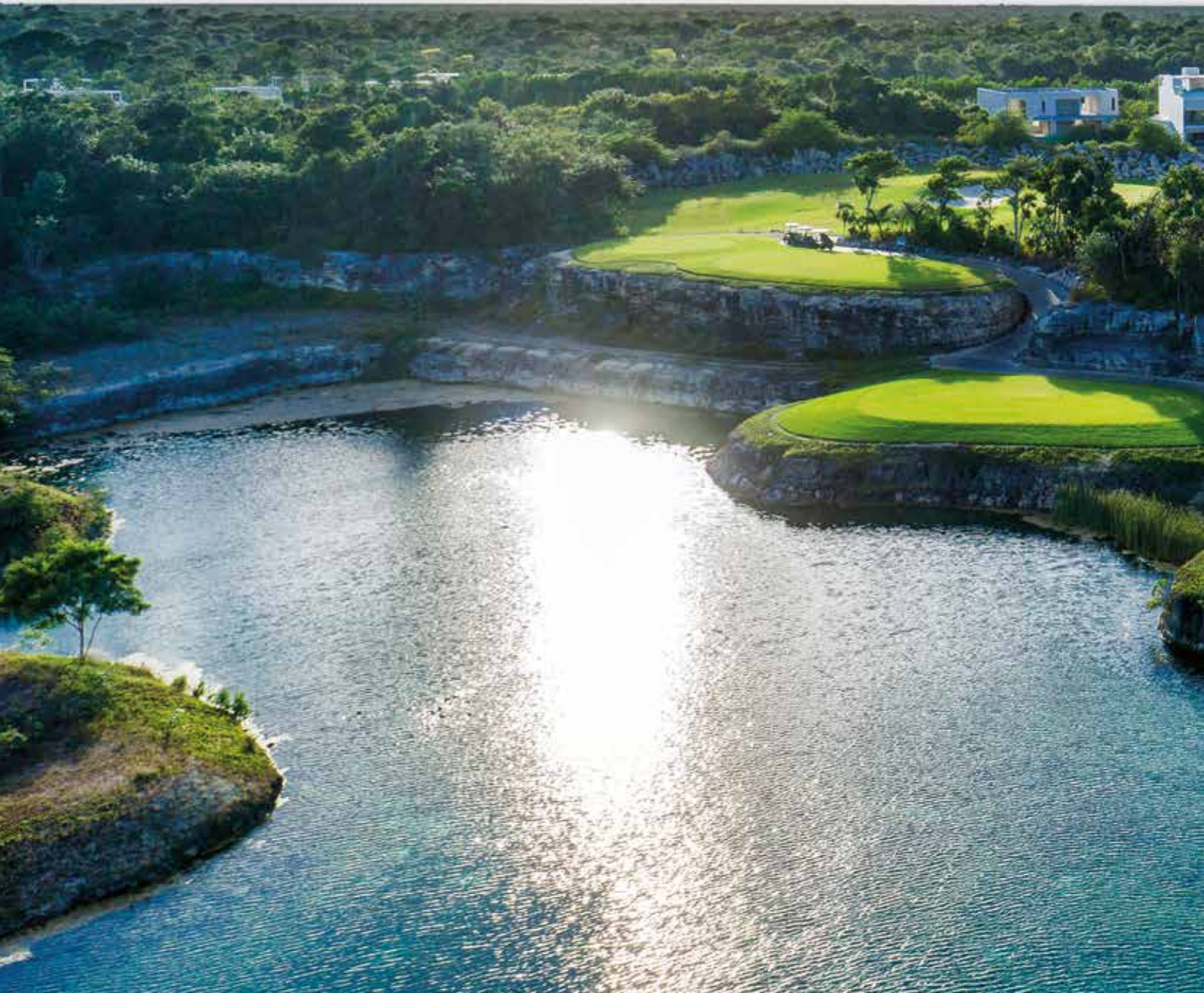
Words Michael Lenihan
Photography Khiabett Ruvalcaba

When, in February 2020, the PGA of America formed a strategic alliance in Mexico with Bahia Principe, a tourism group of golf courses, hotels and residences owned by Grupo Piñero in Spain, the timing really couldn't have been any worse.

With Covid-19 beginning to take a stranglehold across the world, and with international borders slamming shut, tourism was put into a state of hibernation for the best part of two years.

But thanks to the global vaccination programme, 2022 has seen a resurgence in international golf travel, with pent-up demand reported to be at record-levels. Never has the desire to travel to new and exciting golf destinations been greater.

And with our new-found freedoms, the newly re-branded PGA Riviera Maya is ideally situated to cater for golfers from around the world who wish to discover all that Mexico has to offer.







“PGA RIVIERA MAYA AND PGA OCEANS 4 ARE BOTH OUTSTANDING PROPERTIES IN POPULAR AND EASY-TO-GET-TO LOCATIONS”

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).

PGA Riviera Maya is also home of the PGA Tour Latinoamerica’s Bupa Championship presented by Volvo, and in order to drive sustainable growth-of-the-game in Mexico, the golf facilities will offer player development and youth programming spearheaded by PGA professionals, as well as utilising marketing opportunities to introduce golf-centric travel packages.

Commenting on the partnership, PGA of America chief innovation officer Arjun Chowdri said: “We’re excited to partner with the Bahia Principe brand in Mexico.

“Their enthusiasm to partner with the PGA of America, not only to enhance golf tourism in Mexico, but support our mission of growing the game and positioning PGA professionals in roles of influence, provides a fantastic opportunity for the PGA to positively affect golf in the region.”

Bahia Principe Residences & Golf managing director Jaime Sitjar added: “We could not imagine a better brand to partner with to continue promoting golf and Bahia Principe’s support on this sport.

“It is a true honour and great privilege for our company to have the PGA of America beside us, supporting and contributing together for the growth of golf in Latin America, and this partnership reinforces our strategy, in order to continue offering our clients exciting experiences.”

PGA Riviera Maya Golf Club is integrated into the Tulum Country Club complex, about 15 miles from the trendy tourist town of Tulum. Four Bahia Principe Riviera Maya Resort partners are located on property all within minutes of PGA Riviera Maya Golf Club, including Luxury Sian Ka’an; Luxury Akumal; the Grand Tulum and the Grand Coba.

And if that wasn’t enough, in August 2021, PGA Riviera Maya announced a strategic partnership with PGA Oceans 4 Golf Club located on the southern coast of the Dominican Republic.

PGA Oceans 4 Golf Club opened for play in 2017 as La Romana Golf Club, later changing its name to the Oceans 4 Club.

The club’s 18-hole, par-72 layout, a Jack Lund design, extends to 7,334 yards and presents golfers with four unique landscapes – tropical forest; lakes and waterfalls amid a parkland-style setting; desert with rocks and sand; and seaside as four holes run along the Caribbean Sea with coconut palms and white sand beaches.

Named after the number of ocean-side holes, PGA Ocean’s 4 is available to guests staying at nearby resorts, including Bahia Principe Luxury Bouganville and Bahia Principe Grand La Romana.

In addition to its 18-hole course, PGA Oceans 4 also offers a nine-hole, par-27 course that is ideal for children, beginners or those looking to work on their short game.

Both properties are managed by Troon, who provide agronomy, operations and sales and marketing support, with Ricardo Catarino, vice-president of operations saying: “PGA Riviera Maya and PGA Oceans 4 are both outstanding properties in popular and easy-to-get-to locations.

“We look forward to further developing the guest experience at each property and implementing Troon service, operations and agronomy standards.”

In that vein, both resorts have recently announced plans to add 170 of the latest-generation Club Car Tempo golf cars to their respective fleets, at a cost of US\$1 million.

“Thanks to this investment,” added Sitjar, “we are making progress in our commitment to improve golf tourism in Mexico and the Dominican Republic.” **END**

CERI MENAI-DAVIS

DIRECTOR, THE SHIRE LONDON



It all started when an old-school north London golf club black-balled the wrong guy.

Two decades later, one man and his family's reaction to that ill-fated interview has spawned five distinctly different golf venues to the north of the UK's capital city, attracted tens of thousands of annual customers, and helped over half a million underprivileged children and people with disabilities to take their first steps into golf.

London businessman Tony Menai-Davis (pictured left) and his wife Anne were those wrong people. Annoyed that their faces didn't fit at the traditional local golf club, he immediately set about building a golf course directly across the road.

In the early 2000s he persuaded his golfing hero, Severiano Ballesteros, to design an unprecedented golf course in what became, ultimately, the charismatic and inspirational Spaniard's only full design in the United Kingdom.

The Shire London opened in July 2007 with a fully-sold membership, and quickly set about establishing itself as a must-play venue with the Ballesteros factor as its main attractor.

Tony Menai-Davis and his family, including two talented golfing sons, shared Seve's passion for non-uniformity so there were no committees, no captains, no dress code and no reserved parking spaces.

London's golfers got it. They loved the affordable luxury, the friendliness of the staff, the open-plan clubhouse which featured a giant teddy bear for the many children and families who embraced what 'The Shire'

had to offer, and the fact that it lacked the snobbery and stand-offishness of some of the UK's other prestige golf clubs.

And of course they were drawn magnetically to Ballesteros's imaginative golf course design, full of life-or-death (and frequently watery) challenges with six Threes, six Fours, six Fives and, on each of the nines, no two consecutive holes the same par.

The Shire London quickly became one of the most successful golf clubs in the south of England. Eldest son Ceri Menai-Davis (pictured right) takes up the story: "The Seve name brought people here, but what kept them repeatedly coming back was the contrast between The Shire way, and the golfing establishment's way.

"When we said no dress code we meant it, and when they visited The Shire people would relax in the clubhouse in their jeans, and talk on their phones, but out on the golf course they dressed like every other golfer.

"People respected that The Shire was a golf club with the spirit of Seve Ballesteros at its heart. He was a man of the people, but he played with respect for the sport and its traditions. We don't force those traditions down your throat with a long list of Club Rules – but happily people respect them anyway.

"We say: 'Enjoy your day – but don't ruin someone else's!'"

The Shire London now enjoys a reputation as being in permanently beautiful condition, and being located just minutes from London's M25 orbital motorway has made it a firm fixture on the society, corporate and celebrity golf circuits.





“THE LEGACY CLUB WILL BE JUST AS WELCOMING AND JUST AS NON-UNIFORM AS THE SHIRE LONDON”

But as the club entered its second decade, tragedy was about to strike.

A photo taken in April 2018 shows Tony, Ceri and Cae Menai-Davis with Pete, Alice and Perry Dye at the Dye family home in Florida, USA.

A year earlier a new golf course called The Dye London was granted planning permission in Edgware, North London: a new sister venue to The Shire London, just five miles to the west. Perry Dye had taken a lead role in designing the new layout, which was to be a 7,000 yard Tour-style track with multiple tees – and the first golf course to bear the Dye name in the UK.

But within three years the golfing community had lost first Alice, then Pete, and finally Perry, and in late summer 2021 fate also struck a cruel blow to the Menai-Davis family when Ceri and Fran Menai-Davis lost their six-year-old boy, Hugh, to cancer.

“To be honest at the time it seemed impossible to survive even a single day, much less think about the future,” said Ceri Menai-Davis. “You can’t make any sense of it. But the example that Hugh set to us, his parents, as to how to behave and be strong when everything seems lost, it simply dwarfed anything we had ever known before. He gave us the courage to take another step forwards by founding It’s Never You.”

The It’s Never You charity was formed in 2022 to help the parents of children with cancer, and the Menai-Davis family decided to rename their Edgware project The Legacy Club, in memory both of Hugh and of the work they had done with the Dye family.

“The Legacy Club will be enjoyable and playable for all golfers, but will also offer a challenge worthy of a Tour venue,” commented Jeremy Slessor, managing director of European Golf Design who have been tasked with completing the project.

Ceri Menai-Davis said: “The Legacy Club will be just as welcoming and just as non-uniform as The Shire London. It will be a place where true golf lovers and newcomers to the sport can rub shoulders together in a relaxed way, with a magnificent golfing challenge waiting out there for those who choose to take it on.

“The Shire London itself was originally inspired by, and is still driven by, the legacy

of one of the true giants of golf, Severiano Ballesteros.

“We have a legacy equally as heartfelt and meaningful driving us forwards at The Legacy Club, and it will be a big contributor to the charitable work we do with It’s Never You and other charities.”

One such other charity, The Golf Trust, was co-founded a decade ago by the family’s youngest son, Cae Menai-Davis.

Since 2012 over 500,000 children and people with disabilities have had their first experience of golf in the UK, Africa and Central America as a result of the Trust’s work.

Over 200 golf coaches in the UK alone have now been trained by Menai-Davis and his team of volunteers to teach the sport to people with a wide range of mental and physical challenges.

“We help people to live better lives through sport,” said Cae Menai-Davis. “The fact that we use golf as the vehicle is less important than the fact that being outdoors promotes health, well-being, community and better family relationships.

“We have many more challenges to overcome, but The Golf Trust is fit and ready to take the sport even further in the next decade.”

The unstoppable Menai-Davis clan also created the 36-hole Lost Jungle London adventure golf course, which is one of Europe’s largest and busiest themed golfing attractions.

And across the road from the family’s busy West London Golf Centre – a bustling nine-holer with a large driving range, golf superstore and adventure golf attraction – yet another golf course is growing in, waiting for its moment to come in 2023.

Currently named the West London Links, more is due to be revealed about the newest Menai-Davis project later in 2022.

“We don’t do job titles, we all get stuck in and do what needs doing, and we do things very much our own way,” said Ceri Menai-Davis.

“We recognise that golf is a family sport which needs more and more accessible facilities, so we are doing everything we can to open it up to a new generation of golfers – no matter what advantages or disadvantages they may have in their lives.” **END**





Words Michael Lenihan
Photography Troon

MARK CHAPLESKI

EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT, TROON INTERNATIONAL



Troon should need little introduction to readers of this publication. When Dana Garmany founded the company in 1990, he never imagined that he would revolutionise the golf business and oversee a management company that would span the globe.

Headquartered in Scottsdale, Arizona, Troon are the self-proclaimed 'leaders in upscale golf management' and have operations associated with the best part of 665 golf venues globally, the majority of which are in North America.

Outside of the US, Troon International – a subsidiary – is headed-up by Mark Chapleski, executive vice-president, who joined the company in 2000 following a career working in and managing facilities.

"I started working at my local golf course [in Michigan] as an occasional caddy in the summers when I was about ten," said Chapleski. "You definitely learn a lot as a young caddy listening to adults, who think you aren't paying any attention, discussing everything from their business to extra-curricular social activities!

"When I was 14, I worked more regularly as a bag boy, and when I was 16, I started working in the golf shop as an assistant.

"My first role in the industry was a PGA assistant professional at Yuma Golf & Country Club in the southern corner of Arizona right on the California-Mexico border.

"After a few years I got the itch to move to a bigger golf market so moved to Palm Springs where I started working at the Marriott Desert Springs Resort and then went to the ultra-exclusive Vintage Club shortly after that.

"It was about a year later when our head pro asked me if I was interested in Hawaii because a friend of his was putting a team together for a new club there, called Ko Olina that was being developed as part of a major resort destination by Japan Airlines and some other Japanese investment groups."

Keen to expand his horizons and progress his career, Chapleski took what he described as the "longest flight of his life" in 1990, and was appointed as an assistant professional at Ko Olina, eventually working his way up to director of golf in 1996.

Three years later in 1999, his career would shift significantly, following the decision by Japan Airlines to sell the course.

"Bruce Glasco (now COO of Troon) was part of the Troon team that came out to undertake due diligence for a client, and I knew Bruce from his days in Michigan.

"From this meeting and then the pending sale to Marriott, I knew it was time to leave Hawaii. So, I sent my cv into Troon's Scottsdale office and ended up in the corporate office in December 1999, 22-and-a-half years ago."

Shortly after joining Troon, Goldman Sachs – one of the original capital partners of Troon along with Starwood Capital – sent Chapleski to Japan to perform due diligence on a portfolio of assets that contained six golf properties.

"This was the beginning of the period when banks in Japan started calling in their bad debts (over US\$300 billion in 2000) that followed the huge bubble of the 1980's and early 90's," recalls Chapleski.



“GROWING THE GAME OF GOLF IN NEW MARKETS AND CREATING JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES IS AT THE TOP OF MY LIST OF WHAT I AM MOST PROUD OF”

“So, I went over there for ten days, visited three of the six golf properties and we compiled the information for Goldman Sachs, and about a month later, they recommended that Troon open an office in Japan, and I was part of that team.

“During my four years in Japan, Troon did due diligence of some sort, on just over ten per cent of the golf courses in Japan, or about 170. We managed several high-profile clubs including the Phoenix Country Club, and also helped to create the Accordia Golf brand for Goldman Sachs using the Troon model of operations.

“Accordia today is the second largest golf management company in the world, behind only Troon,” claimed Chapleski.

With experience working in North America and Asia, perhaps it was no surprise that a move to the Middle East beckoned when, in 2004, he relocated to Dubai which had just opened a Troon regional office.

Reflecting on the past 18 years in the region, Chapleski said: “Some of the projects that we are extremely proud of are The Els Club Dubai where Robin Evans, our recently retired VP of Agronomy, spent 50 per cent of his time at the site when we started back in 2005.

“Saadiyat Beach Golf Club – which was opened by our now senior vice-president, DJ Flanders – had literally nothing on the site except sand when we first visited!

“We recently celebrated our 20th anniversary with Emaar which was our first partner in the region at the Montgomerie Golf Club Dubai. The growth of the United Arab Emirates has been phenomenal.

“When Bruce Glasco, who was our long-time International managing director moved from Switzerland back to the US office in 2012, I was given responsibility to lead this division. In 2014 we formally established the Troon International brand with our head office in Dubai, supported by offices in Switzerland and Australia and our Scottsdale HQ.”

Under Chapleski’s stewardship, Troon International is seeking to expand its portfolio outside of the Middle East as he explains: “In India, they have had golf for over a century with the influence from the British military, and there were a few well managed clubs,

but we really changed the perception of what a golf and country club facility could be in today’s society with Prestige Golfshire in Bangalore.

“Egypt is another one where we have raised the bar completely compared to what was on offer before from a golf course presentation standpoint.

“Malaysia has some very nice golf courses with thousands of members, but I do think what we have done with The Els Club Malaysia does and will continue to set the bar there too.

“The PGA National Czech Republic – which is a stunning Kyle Phillips designed course just outside of Prague – would be one of our most recent examples of setting the standard in a country.”

Aged 61, Chapleski shows no signs of slowing down or contemplating retirement just yet, and remains committed on delivering best practice within the golf industry.

“Our focus as an international division continues to be navigating the unique dynamics and cultural attitudes pertaining to the various regions.

““Dana Garmany’s initial vision was always to be the best, not necessarily the biggest,” he explained.

It’s evident that Chapleski has loved his time working with Troon, saying: “A personal and very emotionally rewarding side of what Troon has been able to bring, is the number of people that we have been able to influence, and help, in a positive way.

“Whether that be Troon associates who started their careers with us, or learned the business at one of our facilities, or a golfer who had never experienced the game before coming to a Troon facility.

“Growing the game of golf in new markets and creating job opportunities in local communities is at the top of my list of what I am most proud of.

“It has been such a rewarding career with Troon, for many reasons, but in a nutshell the main influence in who I am today is that I have been able to experience so many different cultures around the world.

“In the end, no matter where you go in the world or whatever language you speak, a smile is smile and that says it all, especially in hospitality.” **END**

CUSTOMER-DRIVEN EVOLUTION

POWERS GOLF CAR UK EXPANSION



When Chris Ivess-Mash and Matthew Patton identified a gap in the UK golf buggy market over a decade ago, expansion and growth was the dream – like all business entrepreneurs. Heading into the summer of '22 that dream is alive and well, and the Golf Car UK business is about to celebrate another huge step in its evolution.

As this issue goes to print the paint is still drying on a new purpose-built GCUK headquarters, nestled in the heart of Andover in southern England. Green-fingered staff are putting the finishing touches to its lush herbaceous borders. The business is about to, in video games parlance, level up.

Managing director Chris Ivess-Mash explains: "As we have grown, our ever-increasing and loyal customer base has necessitated a rethink of our operating conditions. It's a good problem to have. Our current crop of talented and highly dedicated staff holds our current, extremely modest offices in Amesbury in high affection, but the reality is that we have outgrown them."

Workshops, logistics, storage space and communication have all been tested to breaking point with the current multi-site operation which GCUK currently employs. Something had to give.

Sales director Matthew Patton describes the previous conditions: "The need to centralise our daily operations was becoming glaringly apparent.

"We were renting several large buildings across Wiltshire to house the buggy fleets, but this was proving to be costly and unwieldy as the demand for our products continued to grow.

"Chris and I were also becoming sensitive as regards our carbon footprint, and we became determined to find ways to streamline our day-to-day activities."

With greener, more efficient practices in mind, the new GCUK headquarters were commissioned in late 2021 and are due to be fully operational this summer.

"Among many operational improvements we will now have a water recycling plant to wash our vehicles, and numerous electric charge points will encourage our staff to adopt electric transportation," said Ivess-Mash.

"We will also have a new in-house graphics and marketing department along with a vehicle photo booth, but most importantly our new bespoke workshop facility will streamline our vehicle output whilst at the same time reducing our power consumption.

"Centralising everything under one roof, including the creation of highly efficient office spaces, has many benefits for the business, and we will be passing these benefits directly onto our customers."

With the efficiency bit firmly between their teeth, Ivess-Mash and Patton also looked at the company's all-important after-sales service department.

GCUK employs an in-house team of mobile engineers to service customer breakdowns and repairs. All vehicle warranty and spares claims are handled by a highly skilled team of staff which aims to satisfy customer queries and issues within a single site visit.

GCUK service manager Karen Braund explains: "We will have an improved parts and service department within the new building,





“HAVING THE NEW BUILDING ENABLES US TO FOCUS ON EXPANDING OUR UTILITY VEHICLE BUSINESS”

and we will continue to invest in bespoke computer systems and a blend of the latest technologies. Our upgraded IT system will improve planning for our mobile engineer site visits using the most cost-effective and environmentally friendly routes throughout the UK.”

With the company’s imminent arrival in a new community 13 miles away from its old headquarters, Golf Car UK has made attracting people in the Andover area who would like to work in the golf and leisure industry, one of its major priorities.

“People from the surrounding towns and villages will find the new GCUK building to be a terrific environment in which to work,” said Ivess-Mash. “We are offering a highly attractive employment option for local people who want to learn new skills and develop long-term careers.”

Every business needs inspiring personalities in its management team, and new arrivals at GCUK will find that the company’s two talented regional sales managers, Rob Purvey and Marc McCracken, both fit the bill.

Purvey, a former PGA professional who has been involved in golf since he was a teenager, and McCracken, a former director of golf and USPGA professional, have established themselves as formidable promoters of all that is good about the game.

“I feel that I have a wide skill set on how the industry operates, and this has helped me to assist golf club operators get the most from their buggy and utility vehicle fleets,” said McCracken.

“Understanding the day-to-day running of a golf club helps us empathise, understand and care about what we do. Rob and I are in daily contact to ensure that we discuss the best advice and potential deals for managers, professionals and all of our customers.”

Purvey, with years of account management experience, has a passionate desire to see golf clubs thrive. “I have seen first-hand what it takes to run a successful golf club,” he says. “As well as helping to create the optimum fleet of buggies and other vehicles at any given venue, Marc and I are all about sharing ideas and passing industry knowledge and advice on to our colleagues at golf clubs across the UK.”

Purvey and McCracken help a huge number of UK golf clubs generate more revenue from their buggy rentals and promote a ‘share the knowledge’ ethos.

GCUK has built its enviable reputation on the back of becoming the biggest importer of E-Z-GO golf buggies into the UK, and more recently in Europe, whilst enjoying the benefits that an Authorised UK Dealership brings.

Purvey adds: “E-Z-GO golf buggies are a class above anything else. They are safe to drive, have a high-quality finish and are easy to maintain whilst being cheaper to operate. Less headaches for general managers!

“The game-changer was the E-Z-GO Elite RXV, which incorporates the Samsung Lithium battery. It has a proven track record in the region of over 50 million rounds worldwide, but most importantly golfers love to drive them.”

Golf Car UK supplies vehicles to many of the premier golf clubs throughout the UK and is working closely with more and more local municipal golf courses to see the benefit from fleet buggy rentals, club growth, and golfer retention.

The company is also now deepening its portfolio and expanding its sales team to better promote and sell its range of Cushman Utility Vehicles throughout the UK.

Patten explained: “Rob and Marc have helped to establish our market share in the utility vehicle market, but ultimately, we want the Cushman brand to stand on its own and we aim to appoint a dedicated team of utility vehicle regional sales managers soon.

“We will also be launching the new Cushman Utility Vehicle brand online shortly. It will operate with the same model which has driven golf buggy sales so successfully.

“Having the new building enables us to focus on expanding our utility vehicle business while we also strengthen our share in the golf buggy purchase and rental market.”

Ivess-Mash summarises: “Getting our infrastructure right is vital for us to best service existing and new customers and it is something we are committed to.

“Our business needs to be agile enough to react to the many different market and global forces that all businesses face, coupled with the ever-shifting challenges of the economic situation.

“With Golf Car UK firmly established in the golf and leisure industries, our new premises will galvanise our team and enable us to offer a more relaxed, more efficient service to our important customers in a modern and forward-thinking environment.” **END**

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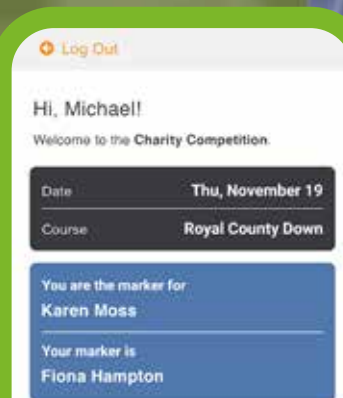
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"AS GOLF COURSE OPERATORS, WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO SILENCE OUR CRITICS WHEN IT COMES TO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES"



Words

Javier Reviriego
CEO
Real Club Valderrama

GUEST BOOK

JAVIER REVIRIEGO



It's no secret that golf courses in Southern Europe have faced many issues related to water in recent years. Winters seem to be drier; wells seem to have lower levels; and local administrations are imposing more restrictions on golf courses. Maintaining the standards and quality that our members and visitors expect with limited resources can often be a challenge.

At Valderrama, we have recently completed a very important project for the future of our club; The Lake - a 600.000€ reservoir on the course that will serve to collect more than 60,000 m³ of rain water during the winter, and provide 'back-up' for the hot summer months.

Furthermore, we have taken measures to reduce our water consumption by installing an advanced irrigation system - which includes humidity sensors - whilst also reducing areas of turf (such as under trees in the rough) that were substituted for mulch, and the seeding of new varieties that have higher tolerances to drought.

As golf course operators, we have an obligation to silence our critics when it comes to environmental issues. We must do this by not only speaking about the issues and carrying the 'flag of environmental awareness'... it is time to embark in capital projects that clearly show our commitment.

Boards and general managers will face challenges in the future, and the best way to overcome them is to study, plan and execute. **END**

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