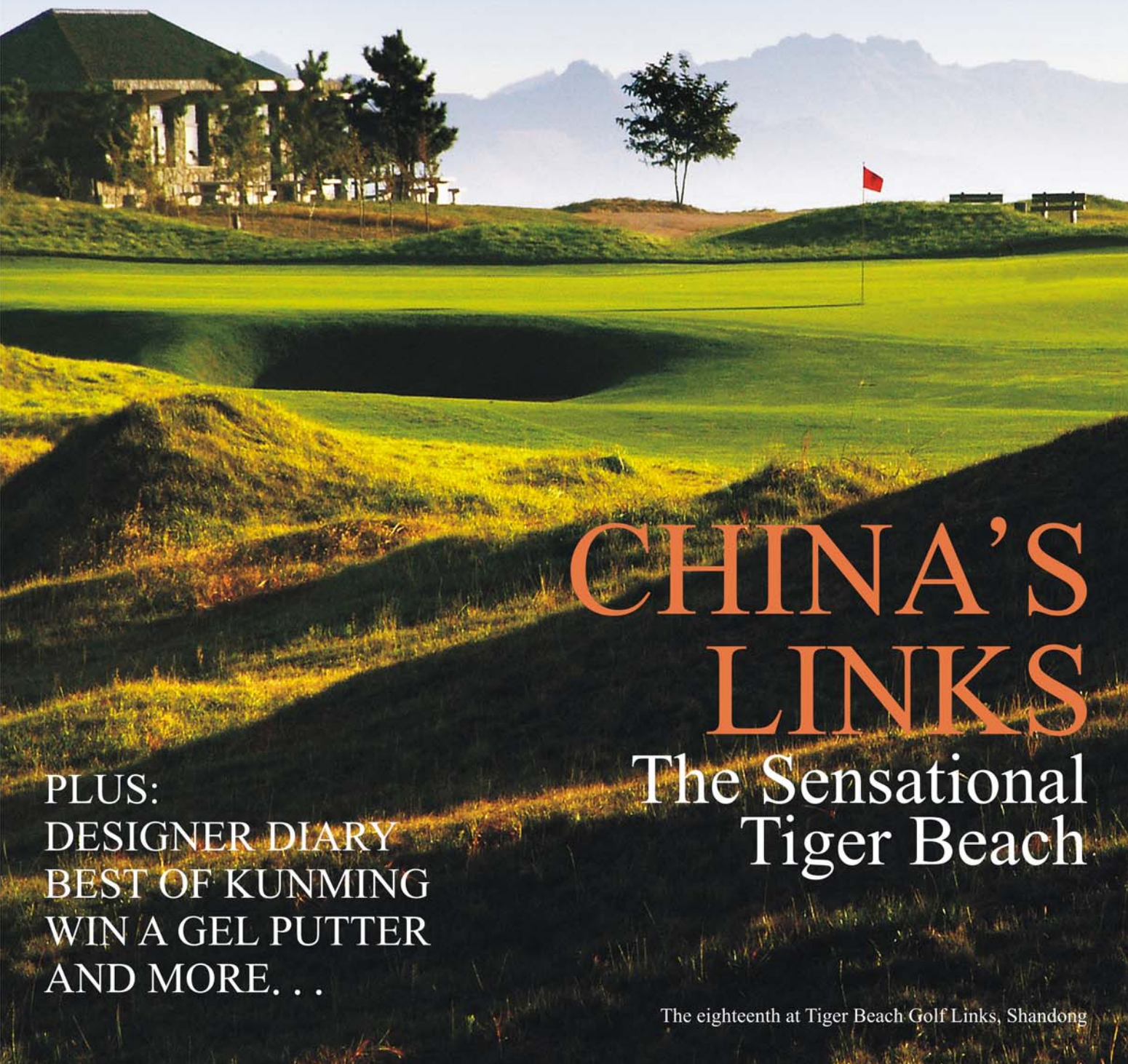


Asian Golf Explorer

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JULY 2007 / THE PREMIER ISSUE

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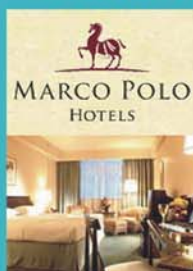


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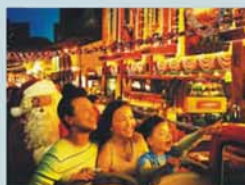


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Asian Golf Explorer

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BRIDGESTONE

HKPGA Official Ball



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THE HONG KONG PROFESSIONAL GOLFERS' ASSOCIATION

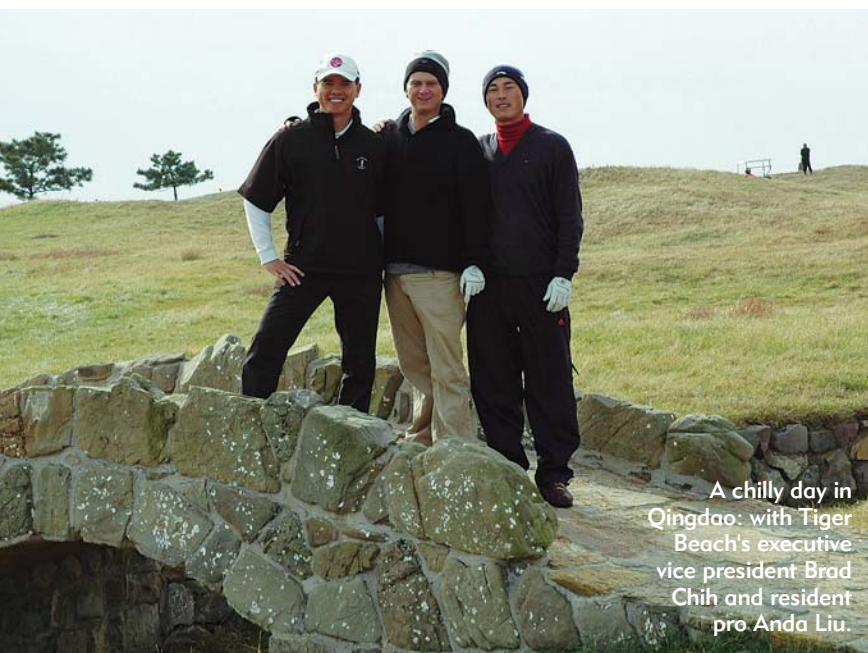


2006 My Favourite Golf Ball 2006 年度我最喜愛高爾夫球



BRIDGESTONE

Go Explore



A chilly day in Qingdao: with Tiger Beach's executive vice president Brad Chih and resident pro Anda Liu.

Is there anything better than travelling to exotic locations and playing great golf courses? Short of striking it lucky on Mark Six (or striking it lucky with Grace Park, for that matter) we don't think so, which is why we've come up with *Asian Golf Explorer* - a magazine dedicated to bringing you the best - and most memorable - courses and golf destinations in the Eastern hemisphere.

But we haven't forgotten our roots. We're a fortunate bunch, us Hong Kongers. OK, so the SAR isn't exactly saturated with places to play, but right on our doorstep lies China - and, luckily for us, there's no shortage of golf in the Middle Kingdom. Despite the game's boom on the mainland, however, it's quite staggering how little information there is on the courses themselves, especially in

English. Sure, everyone's heard of Mission Hills, but what of the other sixty golf clubs in Guangdong province? We travel...correction, we *explore* the region, separating the wheat from the chaff, highlighting the courses worthy of your business. There may not be many more enjoyable things in life than experiencing truly great courses, but there's nothing quite like the disappointment attached to playing a featureless dump with surly members of staff and cockroaches in the locker room to ruin your long-awaited day out.

In this our premier issue we eschew the cockroaches as we travel to the incomparable Tiger Beach Golf Links in Shandong, get giddy in the crisp mountain air of Kunming, visit Macau to review the newest course in the Pearl River Delta and get lost in the natural splendour that is Zhuhai's Pine Valley. Plus we catch up for a quick eighteen with Asian Tour star Adam Groom, delve into the life of a golf course designer, test the hottest equipment on the market and check out the latest deals on golfing travel packages.

There has never been a better time to be a golfer in Asia, so dust off the clubs, find that travel bag and go explore!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Alex Jenkins'.

Alex Jenkins
Editor



Nansha Golf Club

南沙高爾夫球會

Daytrip

Weekday HK\$790 / Weekend HK\$1150
18 holes green fee, caddie, locker, lunch,
pier < club transfer, HK < Nansha ferry
ticket

2 Days:

Weekday HK\$1360 / Weekday + Week-
end HK\$1600 / Weekend HK\$1820
2 x 18 holes green fee, caddie, locker,
breakfast, Club Resort (Twin share),
pier < club transfer, HK < Nansha ferry
ticket



Lotus Hill Golf Club

蓮花山高爾夫球會

Daytrip

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pier < club transfer, HK < Lotus Hill
ferry ticket

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end HK\$1900 / Weekend HK\$2290
2 x 18 holes green fee, caddie, locker,
breakfast, lunch, Club Resort (Twin share),
pier < club transfer, HK < Lotus Hill
ferry ticket



Orient Golf Club, Macau

澳門(東方)高爾夫球會

Weekday HK\$500 / Weekend HK\$980
18 holes green fee, caddie, shared cart,
locker



Orient Golf Club Zhuhai

珠海(東方)高爾夫球會

Weekday HK\$640(Tue) HK\$680 /
Weekend HK\$990
18 holes green fee, caddie, locker, HK
< Zhuhai ferry ticket

* Set lunch included on Tuesday,
Pier < Club roundtrip shuttle available
at HK\$55 per person.



Firestone Golf Club, Shenzhen

光明高爾夫球會

Weekday HK\$560 / Weekend
HK\$920

18 holes green fee, caddie, shared cart
and locker

* Set lunch included on Tuesday &
Wednesday



Golden Gulf Golf Club Zhuhai

金灣高爾夫俱樂部

Weekday HK\$730(Mon) HK\$830 /
Weekend HK\$1160

18 holes green fee, caddie, Shared cart,
free range warm up, Pier < club shuttle,
HK < Zhuhai ferry ticket



Green Bay Golf Club, Shenzhen

碧海灣高爾夫俱樂部

Weekday HK\$640 / Weekend HK\$1110

18 holes green fee, caddie, locker fee

* Cart included on weekend.

No single cart surcharge



Lakewood Golf Club Zhuhai

翠湖高爾夫球會

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18 holes green fee, caddie, lunch,

HK < Zhuhai ferry ticket

* Pier < Club roundtrip shuttle
available at HK\$55 per person.



Yinli Foreign Investor Golf Club

銀利外商高爾夫球俱樂部

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Shuttle

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HK < Zhongshan ferry ticket



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東莞長安高爾夫球會

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Lake Front Golf Resort, Huizhou

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Natural high: Pine Valley's beauty is unsurpassed in Guangdong.

TWO DAYS IN

Put simply, the audaciously named Pine Valley is the most picturesque inland course in Guangdong. Be warned though, it also happens to be one of the province's toughest tests so don't think a visit here will be a good way of getting your handicap down: marvel at the scenery, enjoy the golf and if you play within a handful of your allotted strokes, celebrate by firing off a few rounds at the attached hunting club. You might not get any birdies out on the course, but if you're

better with a twelve-bore than you are with a 7-iron then you might be able to bag a few ducks during an organized excursion into the surrounding countryside. Gentler souls may prefer to go fishing at the edge of a reservoir that forms an intimidating hazard on many of the holes; the best spot, according to those in the know, is by the eighteenth green where hefty Carp and smaller Talapia can be nabbed in the greeny-blue depths.



Carved out of some of the most attractive countryside in Guangdong, Pine Valley Sports and Country Club in Zhuhai makes for an excellent weekend retreat - for golfers and non-golfers alike.

THE VALLEY

Even without the huntin' and fishin' Pine Valley is a must-visit. Routed alongside the reservoir and up and around wooded hillside there isn't a dull hole on the course. Starting with a short dogleg-right par-five (as good a birdie chance as you're likely to find here) the front nine is characterized by huge elevation change, which allows for some splendid vistas and some truly memorable golf. The signature sixth hole is a case in point. This par-four is one of the few straightaway

holes on the course but it's also one of the most formidable. From a teebox perched high in the clouds golfers have to hit to a miserly narrow peninsula of fairway which juts out into the reservoir. Trouble abounds for the wayward, but thankfully the hole doesn't play anywhere near its 427-yards so the percentage play is to leave the big stick in the bag and try your luck with a smaller headed (and hopefully straighter) club. The views here are really quite stunning.

Club Information

CLUB INFORMATION

Pine Valley Sports & Country Club

Sanli Village, Wushan Town, Doumen

District, Zhuhai, Guangdong

Tel: +86 756 5573 888

Fax: +86 756 5573 888

Website: www.pinevalleyclub.com

Par: 72. Yardage:

7,050 / 6,475 / 5,987 / 5,487

Course/Slope Ratings:

74.4/136 71.8/131 69.6/126 72.3/128

Private club; visitors welcome

Carts & caddies are mandatory at PVSCC.

GETTING THERE

Chu Kong Passenger Transport (www.cksp.com.hk) operates eight sailings per day from both the Macau Ferry Terminal in Sheung Wan and the China Ferry Terminal in Tsim Sha Tsui to Zhuhai. (1hr 10mins).

The club operates a shuttle bus from the Zhuhai ferry pier (meets HK sailings; 50mins). Otherwise, a taxi will cost approximately RMB200.

ACCOMMODATION

72 clean and tidy rooms.

COSTS

Day Trip

Mon & Thu \$850

Tue, Wed, Fri \$930

Sat, Sun, Public Holidays \$1,250

18 Holes green fee, shared caddie & cart, locker

Pier transfer

HK <> Zhuhai ferry ticket

Two Days Package

Weekdays \$1650

Fri + Sat \$1,820

Sun + Mon \$1,720

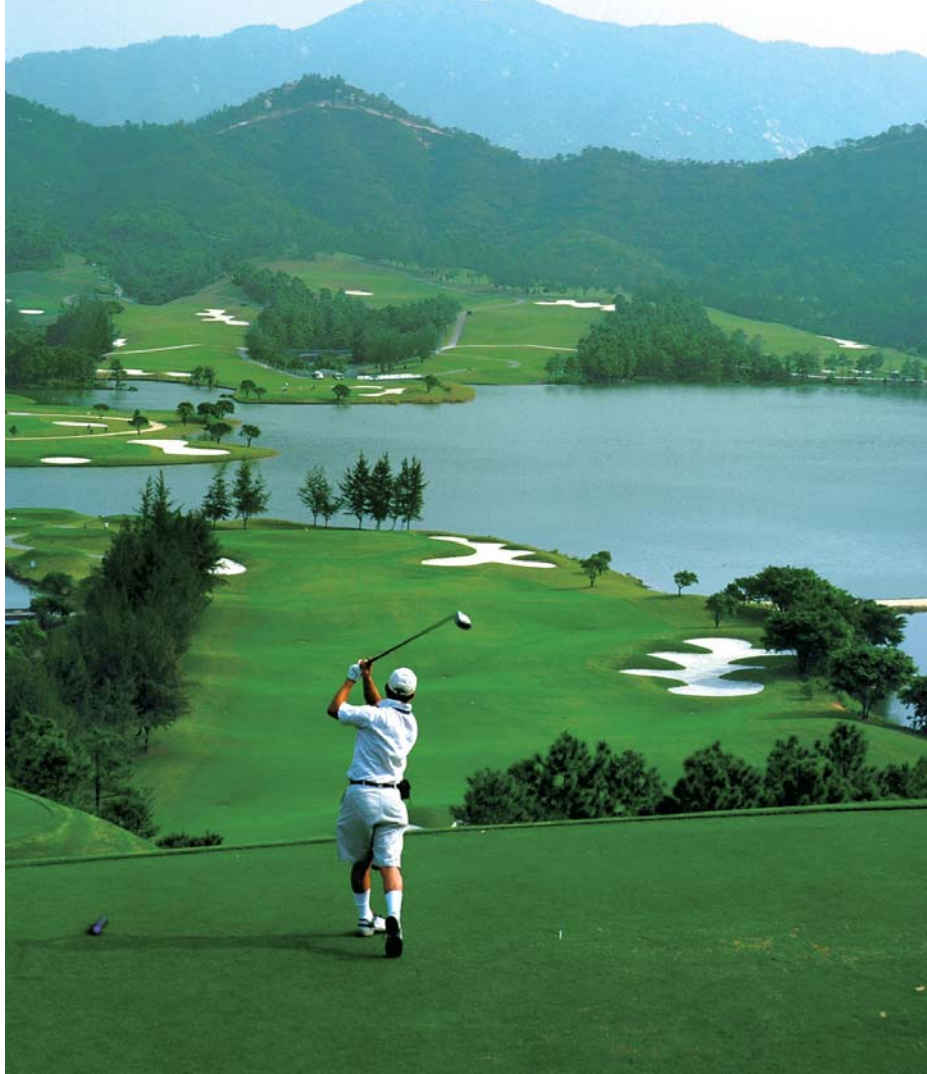
Weekends \$2,390

2 x 18 Holes green fee, shared caddie & cart, locker,

Club Resort (Twin share),

Pier transfer

HK <> Zhuhai ferry ticket



And so Pine Valley continues. The back nine - which is every bit as striking as the first nine holes - is made up of a series of delightful short par-fours, long, dangerous par-threes and exciting par-fives - when it comes to both variety and beauty, this layout stands heads and shoulders above the rest.

Perhaps the most alluring aspect of the place, however, is its feeling of seclusion. Although it's only a fifty-minute shuttle ride in a rather antiquated minivan from the Zhuhai ferry pier, the course overlooks no commercial sprawl and no belching factories; there are none of those half-built residential districts and the accompanying cacophony of endless drilling and swearing workmen. This is about as peaceful as golf gets in Guangdong and long may it continue. **AGE**



Outdoor pursuits (clockwise from top left): a golfer drives at the spectacular sixth; a big grin and an even bigger fish; ducks are a mainstay at Pine Valley; play the nineteenth hole if you're all square after eighteen; you have arrived.

顧名思義，“Pine Valley(松樹谷)”萬盛鄉村俱樂部可說是廣東省內樹林最茂密、風景最迷人的球場。別以為這裡可以輕易打到理想桿數，因為萬盛球場也是區內最具挑戰性的球場之一！你能做的就是好好欣賞風景，享受自己的高球樂。假如你對射擊蠢蠢欲試，可到球會的射擊場一嚐實彈射飛碟，或更進一步，走進球會的狩獵區，捕獵真正走動的動物，你亦可到被球道包圍的水庫旁釣魚，大大小小的魚為數可不少。

就算你對打獵、釣魚都沒興趣，珠海萬盛仍是一個必到之處。球場繞著水庫、依著山林而建，每一個洞都帶給你不同的刺激。從前9的第一洞(Par 5的短右狗腿洞)開始，高低落差極大就是前9的特色，也是令人回味再三之處，標準桿4桿的第6洞於高坡上開球，俯瞰景緻迷人卻又望而生畏，彷彿置身浮雲之間，擊球必須既直且長才能讓球落於狹窄的半島型球道上，不然便是掉入水中或叢林中，這個洞障礙滿佈，幸好其所謂的427碼(藍T)長度，因為發球下山的原因，大大地縮短距離。

後9洞跟前9同樣出色，一系列由短的4桿洞、長的3桿洞和驚險刺激的5桿洞組合而成，同時融入不同挑戰和美景。

最令人著迷的，或者是萬盛鄉村俱樂部那種幽靜、隱蔽的環境。離珠海碼頭50分鐘車程就已經完全隔絕了大城市的煩囂擾攘和空氣污染，沒有高樓大廈，沒有工廠地盤，沒有別墅豪宅，完全地回歸到恬靜的原始大自然。 **AGE**

球場資訊

廣東省珠海市斗門區五山鎮三里村

電話: +86 (0)756 5573 888

傳真: +86 (0)756 5573 888

網址: www.pinevalleyclub.com

標準桿72,碼數:7,050/6,475/5,987/5,487

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Lakefront Golf & Resort, Huizhou



Superbly located within the ancient city of Huizhou, just an hour and ten minutes from the Hong Kong border, Lakefront Golf Club and Resort has established itself as one of the premier golf retreats in the Pearl River Delta thanks to its first-class 18-hole championship golf course and five star accommodation and clubhouse amenities.

Taking advantage of its picturesque setting amid natural woodland, the CJ TAN-designed course features an excellent blend of holes that never fails to interest. Water, constant elevation change and routinely excellent playing surfaces combine to make this 7,013-yard layout a definite must-play.

Off the course Lakefront continues to impress. The extremely well-equipped clubhouse and resort features a plethora of facilities including a luxuriously appointed hotel that ranks among the region's best. Other amenities available on-site include: a spa, fine dining, swimming pool, tennis courts and a well-stocked pro shop.



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The par-three third at the Mountain Course, Spring City.



The Best of Kunming

For those of us living in smog-filled southern China, Kunming(昆明), the ancient capital of Yunnan province (雲南省), is quite literally a breath of fresh air. Situated atop a verdant plateau some 6,000 feet above sea level, the city, just a two and a half hour hop by plane from Hong Kong, has long attracted travellers with its consistently pleasant climate, wealth of historical attractions, excellent cuisine and, more recently, magnificent golf courses.

Asian Golf Explorer highlights the best-plays, the must-eats and the have-to-visits for anyone contemplating a tour of the 'City of Eternal Spring.'

Yardage: 7,453 (Mountain), 7,204 (Lake). **Par:** 72
Architects: Jack Nicklaus (Mountain), Robert Trent Jones II (Lake)
Access: 35mins from downtown



Spring City Golf & Lake Resort

If you're coming to Kunming solely for the purpose of playing golf then Spring City is an absolute must. Of the two courses, we rate Nicklaus's Mountain layout slightly ahead of Trent Jones's Lake but really they're both first-rate. The Mountain Course rises gently through towering glades and uses the natural terrain to its fullest. Fairly generous fairways make this perfectly playable for the recreational golfer, while the ravine-fronted green at the closing hole ensures an exciting finish. Despite being shorter than the Mountain, the Lake course is probably a less forgiving test. Relatively narrow and undulating landing areas place the onus on accuracy, while dramatic greenside bunkering punishes poor sand players. The 486-yard par-five ninth might look like a birdie hole on paper but water all the way down the right side ensures that pars are well-earned. The club's highly knowledgeable green keeping staff ensures that the conditioning of both courses is superb.



Yardage: 7,222. **Par:** 72
Architect: Nick Faldo
Access: 20mins from downtown

« Lakeview Golf Club

To say that this Nick Faldo-designed layout is well-bunkered would be something of an understatement: there are over eighty of the dastardly traps and they're some of the biggest examples in China. Although the course is pancake flat, its stellar condition and exciting use of water encourages a return trip. Be warned, however: even from the member's blue tees it measures a pretty monstrous 6,700-plus yards, so select where you play from with care.



Yardage: 7,217. **Par:** 72
Architect: Robert Trent Jones II
Access: 30mins from downtown

« Sunshine Golf Club

Another beautifully manicured track, Sunshine Golf Club is arguably the most playable of all Kunming's courses - a relief for those who haven't necessarily brought their 'A' game. It's fun too, with the natural rolling land - and some spectacular elevation changes - allowing for some wondrous views across the surrounding rugged pine-clad countryside. For those who like palatial clubhouses, you can't fail to be impressed by Sunshine's mega 19th hole - it's the largest in Yunnan and surely one of the most luxuriously decorated in the Middle Kingdom. **AGE**

Enquiry Hotline : 2180 2963

Also known simply as Yunnan ham, this is a fantastically smoky-flavoured ham, which has been produced in Yunnan since the Qing Dynasty (1727).

The Dew Test

**Mother
Nature
doesn't
lie.**

No Skipping.
No Skidding.
Just true roll.

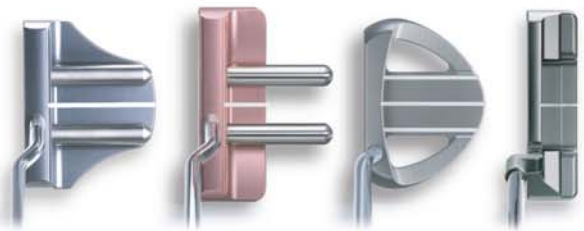
RIFE
putter roll

vs

Standard
putter roll



Only Rife putters feature patented RollGroove Technology, that grips and lifts the ball into an immediate true roll. Other putter companies make claims about improved roll. We let Mother Nature do the talking. Does your putter pass The Dew Test?



RIFE
www.rifeputters.com



Although a relatively new phenomenon in China, luxury golf homes are now beginning to be used as venues for corporate events and family gatherings. We check out one jaw-droppingly impressive home at Mission Hills Golf Club.

King for a Day (& night)



Mega Mansion: Space isn't a concern at Mission Hills In Residence

As anyone who has ever hacked their way around the Jack Nicklaus-designed World Cup Course at Mission Hills can attest, the real estate flanking the fairways is impressive. With their cream-coloured facades and terracotta-tiled roofs, swimming pools and outdoor jacuzzis, these mammoth 'villas' are an attraction in themselves: they're some of the priciest residential properties in the Middle Kingdom, and are owned, as obvious as it may seem, by some of Asia's wealthiest people. In fact, for those of us who live in tiny apartment boxes in Hong Kong, the sheer size of these mega mansions is enough to draw the attention off the challenges that the 18-time major champion has laid out on the course. Many first timers to the club have been known to stand, their heads tilted upward, thinking

to themselves, "I wonder what they're like inside and how do I get my hands on one of them without committing mass fraud?"

Well, after a recent overnight stay at one such property that overlooks the par-five second hole, we can confirm that they're every bit as impressive inside as they are out. And what's more, you don't have to splash out the reputed HK\$60 million asking price to experience it for yourself. Thanks to China Golf Resort, an innovative new Hong Kong-based company specializing in luxury golf homes, one of these exquisitely decorated mansions is available for corporations or individuals to host corporate events, wedding and anniversary ceremonies, product launching parties or even for a well-earned family vacation.

As you might expect, the overriding

feature here is space - the property encompasses over 24,000 square feet of it, meaning the house with its landscaped garden and wonderful pool can comfortably cater for banquets and dinner parties for up to 300 guests. But the aspect that separates this house from its neighbours in this exclusive gated community lies in its furnishings. The owners of the property spent over a year scouring furniture boutiques in Asia and throughout Europe transforming what was essentially an empty shell into a gorgeously decorated home. Combine this with a vast array of amenities (both onsite and in the nearby Mission Hills Resort) and it's hard to imagine a more unique venue to host that special occasion anywhere in the country.



Fine living (clockwise from top): relax in the games room with its well-stocked bar; catch a film in the 6-seat home movie theatre; rack them up; an elegant guest room; the main bedroom of the President's Suite; private banquet in the Chinese dining room.

The Lap of Luxury

Accommodation: The twelve en-suite bedrooms, including the 1,600 sq foot President's Suite - with its walk-in closet, study annex and gigantic wall-mounted LCD screen - are some of the most lavish anywhere and can accommodate up to 35 guests per night.

Dining: With two kitchens, multiple indoor dining areas, a verandah and a poolside patio, the property is perfectly geared up to host dinner parties and drinks evenings. China Golf Resort can pre-order food and beverage on your behalf or you can bring your own chef.

Leisure: 25-metre outdoor swimming pool, jacuzzi, gym and entertainment floor, featuring a full size pool table, 6-seat home movie theatre, karaoke, wine cellar and well-stocked bar.

Business: A spacious conference room with high-speed wireless internet access and other office facilities.

Concierge: China Golf Resort can arrange transport to/from Hong Kong, golf arrangements, laundry valet services, banquet planning, and secretarial and assistant services.

Service: A live-in butler is on call 24 hours a day.

For further information log on to www.chinagolfresort.com.hk or call +852 2326 8000.





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香港航空



Lijiang (Jade Dragon & Ancient City Golf Club) Golf Package

麗江高球行

4 days 3 nights : HK\$4980 (ZH) / HK\$5180 (KA)
HK or Shenzhen <> Lijiang round trip ticket by AK / ZH
3 nights stay at 5 stars Treasure Harbour Hotel (Twin share) with daily breakfast
Jade Dragon 玉龍雪山 GC 18 holes green fee, caddie, shared cart, locker fee.
Ancient City 古城 GC 18 holes green fee, caddie, shared cart, locker fee.
3 x half day local tour admission fee, transport and guide fee.
Airport <> Hotel <> Club transfer



Hainan Boao Golf Vacation

博鳌高爾夫假期

3 days 2 nights HK\$2390
HK <> Haikou Roundtrip Ticket by HX
BFA 亞洲論壇球會 2 x 18 Holes Green Fee
5 Star Sofitel Hotel 索菲特 Accommodation
Daily Breakfast, Welcome drink
Free access to unique Dongyu Island Hot Spring in the hotel.
One session of foot massage in Dongyu Island Hot Spring
"Heaven Town" Karaoke RMB100 coupon & 30% discount of beverage
Free access to swimming pool & gym
Airport <> Hotel <> Club transfer



Hainan Haikou Special Golf Package

海口抵玩高球行

3 days 2 nights : HK\$1590
HK (HX) <> Haikou roundtrip air ticket
2 nights at Haikou Hotel (Twin share)
2 rounds of green fee)Choice of IBL GC 依必朗 / Dongshan GC 東山 / Taidat GC 台達)



Huang Shan Golf Package

黃山高球行

4 days 3 nights : HK\$3690
HK(MU) <> Huangshan roundtrip air ticket
3 nights 5 stars Club Resort New Wing room (Twin share) with breakfast
2 x 18 holes green fee, caddie, shared cart, locker
Airport <> Club transfer
* Local Tours can be arranged



Hainan Haikou Deluxe Golf Package

海口豪華高球行

3 days 2 nights : HK\$2490 up
HK (HX) <> Haikou roundtrip air ticket
2 nights at 5 stars beachside New State Hotel (Twin share) with breakfast
West Coast GC 西海岸 18 holes green fee, caddie, locker
Meishi Mayflower GC 美視 18 holes green fee
Airport <> Hotel <> Club



Guilin Merryland Golf Resort Package

桂林樂滿地高球行

3 days 2 nights : HK\$2880
HK (KA) <> Guilin roundtrip ticket
2 nights at 5 stars Golf Resort (Twin share) with breakfast
2 lunches at club
2 days UNLIMITED green fee
Airport <> Club Transfer



Hainan Sanya Golf Package

三亞高球行

3 days 2 nights : HK\$2280 up
HK (HA) <> Sanya roundtrip ticket
2 nights hotel of your choice (Twin share) with breakfast (Selected hotel only)
Yalong Bay GC 亞龍灣 18 holes green fee
Sun Valley GC 紅峽谷 18 holes green fee
Airport <> Hotel <> club transfer



Shanghai Lake Malaren Golf Resort Package

上海美蘭湖高球行

3 days 2 nights HK\$3280
HK (MU) <> Shanghai roundtrip ticket
2 nightst at 5 stars Club Resort (Twin share) with breakfast
2 x 18 holes green fee, caddie, shared cart, locker
Airport <> Club transfer

For more packages,
please visit **www.golf007.com**
or call 2180 2963

OLD Favourite

Club Information

WuYi Fountain Palm Golf Club

Bei Huan Road, Jiangmen, Guangdong

Tel: +86 (0)750 393 0777

Website: www.wuyigolf.com

Par / Yardage

North Course: Par: 36.

Yardage: 3,434 / 3,180 / 2,669 / 2,276

East Course: Par: 36.

Yardage: 3,442 / 3,176 / 2,770 / 2,458

West Course: Par: 36.

Yardage: 3,456 / 3,244 / 2,817 / 2,488

Course/Slope Rating:

North/East Course:

72.5/125 / 68.3/115 / 65.8/110 / 66.6/108

North/West Course:

72.3/122 / 69.5/116 / 66.1/109 / 67/106

West/East Course:

72.5/128 / 69.4/115 / 66/111 / 67.2/109

Designed by Jack Nicklaus Jr.

Private club; visitors welcome.

Carts & caddies are mandatory.

GETTING THERE

China Ferry Terminal (T.S.T) <> Jiangmen

by ferry (three times daily; 2hrs 20mins)

Club shuttle bus meets HK sailings

(15mins).

ACCOMMODATION

The club's 45-room lodge is comfortable, although short on entertainment. Those who would prefer to stay in Jiangmen (20mins) should try the sizeable 5-star Yucca Hotel (118 Middle Yingbing Road; Tel: +86 (0)750 392 8888; www.yuccahotel.com), which is attached to the Jin Hui Plaza mall and contains a variety of restaurants, massage joints, bars and nightclubs.

COSTS

2 Day Package

Weekday: \$1,470

Fri/Sat & Sun/Mon: \$1,790

Weekend: \$2,090

Includes 2 x 18 holes green fee, shared caddie & cart, locker, club resort (twin share), breakfast coupon (RMB100), Jiangmen port <> Club shuttle and return ferry tickets.

TO BOOK CALL +852 2187 3146.



A Wander Round WuYi

Occupying gently rolling terrain just outside the port of Jiangmen, WuYi was, until very recently, part of casino mogul Stanley Ho's sprawling commercial empire and, as one might expect, is home to a lot more than just golf. Supplementing the 27-hole track is a smart, functional clubhouse, a tastefully decorated hotel lodge, some expensive-looking apartments and, of course, the ubiquitous massage centre, tennis courts and swimming pool. Unlike many similar projects, however, WuYi hasn't neglected the golf in pursuit of off-course monetary gains, and it's good to see that the new owners have ensured that the club's reputation for stellar maintenance remains intact: the playing surfaces of their three palm-fringed nines are among the region's best. Shame, then, that getting to the club from Hong Kong takes almost three hours and the irregularity of the ferry service means that this is definitely one of those places that requires an overnight stay.

Aside from its nicely manicured fairways and greens, WuYi attracts golfers because it manages to hold interest without being overly taxing for the recreational player. From the blue tee all three nines are relatively short and, in typical Nicklaus family fashion

(this is the work of the Golden Bear's oldest son, not the 18-time major winner), the landing areas are generous enough to encourage even sporadic drivers to let fly with the big stick. While there are large fairway bunkers to contend with, they're not ridiculously deep and where water does come into play (more so on the East course) it's less of an obstacle than on many of the region's courses. Moreover, there's none of that unforgiving jungle that borders so many layouts, meaning it's genuinely possible for weekend players to finish their round with the same ball they started out with.

What makes WuYi particularly interesting is its green complexes and the trouble surrounding them. The putting surfaces, while generally flat, are enormous and guarded by great swathes of sand (another Nicklaus family trait). Stay here for a couple of days and you'll discover - miracles upon miracles - that your short game will have improved enormously.

The three nines offer a good mix of holes and all three are as playable as each other. In short, if you're looking for an enjoyable - and generally forgiving - test set in a nicely landscaped environment, then WuYi is a sound choice if you're willing to go the extra mile.



Wet, but not wild:
Despite the presence of
water, WuYi is one of
the region's most
playable courses



五邑蒲葵高爾夫球會原為賭王何鴻燊旗下集團所擁有，位於江門港口，坐落於微微起伏的優美地形之上，球場分為3個9洞東、西、北場，會所走平實不浮誇的路線，卻又設備整全，而且保養極佳，離會所不遠的澳門賽馬會客房，寬綽舒適，還有一幢幢看似價值不菲的別墅、還有網球場、游泳池等等，組成整個球會。雖然球會已經被澳門財神酒店集團收購，球場狀態未被人事的變動而影響，整體27洞的草坪仍然保持優良的狀態，是區內非常出色之球場，從香港乘船前往大概2.5小時船程，如果打算在五邑蒲葵享受揮桿之樂，最理想是逗留一晚打兩天。

球場非常的受到歡迎，主要是對業餘球手來說，設計上並不算太苛刻，不會令人太沮喪，設計是出自Jack Nicklaus 家族中長子的手筆，從藍發球區計算，球道距離都不算長，球道落球區寬闊，稍有偏差亦不礙事，大可抽出袋中心愛的一號木，盡情地揮擊，球道沙坑面積大，還好不會太深，水障數量適中，不太多也不太少(東場較多)。這裡亦沒有那些給人極大壓力，將小白球吞噬得無影無蹤的森林，整體來說，球手們可從容享受地完成18洞。

球場最大特色為果嶺與週遭的組合，果嶺大而平坦，然而卻被巨大的沙坑巧妙地包圍，隱藏不少殺機。如果可以逗留幾天，相信你會馬上察覺到，你的短桿技術會因此而大大提升。

3個9洞的組合都能給予你打球樂趣。如想好好享受怡人的景色和悠閒自在的揮桿樂趣，五邑蒲葵是不錯的選擇。附近的順德均安碧桂園球場距離這裡僅35分鐘車程，可以計畫在同一趟旅程玩盡這兩個球會。

五邑蒲葵高爾夫球會

廣東省江門市北環路

電話: +86 (0)750 393 0777

傳真: +86 (0)750 393 0999

網址: www.wuyigolf.com

球場資訊

北球場: 標準桿36, 全長3,434碼

東球場: 標準桿36, 全長3,442碼

西球場: 標準桿36, 全長3,456碼

坡度難度值:

北/東場: 72.5/125

北/西場: 72.3/123

西/東場: 72.5/128

球場設計: 尼克勞斯二世

如何前往

搭船:

中港碼頭至江門: 08:30, 13:30, 17:00

江門至中港碼頭: 09:00, 14:00, 17:00

航程: 2小時20分鐘

江門碼頭至球會: 球會穿梭巴士, 車程

15分鐘, 車班配合香港船班

住宿服務

球會備有45間客房, 舒適方便, 獨缺晚間娛樂項目。許多球友喜歡到江門市區(20分鐘車程)留宿, 五星級的逸豪酒店(江門市迎賓大道中118號, 電話: +86 (0)750 392 8888; www.yuccahotel.com), 座落於以大型CITYMALL經營模式的金臺國際廣場內, 有餐廳、按摩中心、酒吧、夜總會。

TIGER BEACH THRILLER

An hour outside the former German concession of Qingdao in Shandong Province lies Tiger Beach Golf Links - arguably the most unique course in Asia.

Story by **Alex Jenkins** / Photography by **James Liu**



On the tee: the view from the first gives a great sense of what's in store.

I'm standing on the first tee at Tiger Beach Golf Links and I can scarcely believe my eyes. Brad Chih, the club's amiable executive vice president, wanders over, puts an arm around my shoulder, and jovially says: "Just like Scotland, right?" I survey the scene again. Laid out in front of us is a pure links course: rough sand dunes covered in wild fescue,

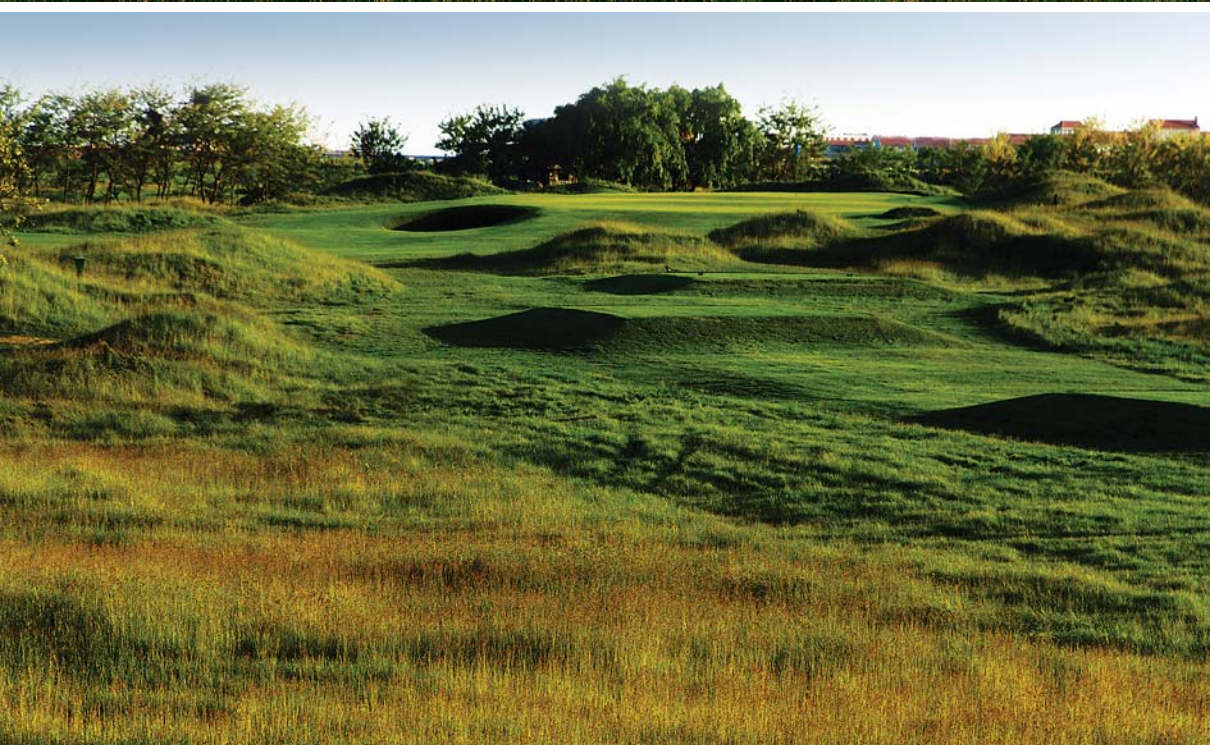
rumpled fairways punctuated by seemingly inescapable pot bunkers, ocean waves crashing over a sandy stretch of beach in the distance. Then there's the wind: it's hammering off the sea; the flags on the greens are fighting a losing battle to remain vertical. And there's the temperature: the nifty thermometer function on my new-fangled wristwatch

Middle Kingdom from the Korean peninsula. I challenge even gruff hipflask-toting Aberdonians to tell the difference. It's astonishing.

What's even more astonishing, though, is that Tiger Beach, so called in honour of Tiger Woods' historic triple-major winning season in 2000, was designed, not by a Jack Nicklaus or a Tom Watson,

reads 5 degrees Celsius. "It's more Scottish than Scotland," I reply in all seriousness, before scuttling a weak drive down the fairway.

Except that this isn't Scotland. This is China. Or, to be exact, we're in China's northerly Shandong province playing a golf course that looks two hundred years old, but is in fact only six. The crashing waves in the distance belong not to the North Sea but the Yellow Sea - an unforgiving sand-coloured froth that separates the



Pesky fescue: you don't want to be too wayward with your approach to the ninth.

Help needed: the 210-yard sixteenth normally plays into the teeth of a howling gale.



Seventh heaven: wedged between sand and surf, the seventh green occupies one of the most dramatic spots in Asian golf.

ies of Qingdao and Yantai lies the small town of Feng Cheng, and it was here, on a large plot of sandy terrain adjacent to the coast, that Soong decided to build. Most of today's golf course architects would scoff at routing a course over such land, but Soong was insistent: the scraggy, windswept site would be perfect for his dream project.

Before construction started, however, Soong took a tour of the classic links courses of Scotland and Ireland where he collected literally "thousands of photographs" from St. Andrews, Royal

BEERS, GOATS & BRIDGES

To single out just one particularly memorable (or signature) hole would be unfair on this mesmerizing links - the place is so different in the grand scheme of Asian golf that it's far too easy to get lost in the uniqueness of it all. Having said that, there are a few features that tend to dominate post round discussion - normally over a bottle (or five) of locally brewed Tsingtao beer (the Tsingtao here tastes a whole lot better than the stuff we get in Hong Kong). At the par-five fifth, for instance, Tiger Beach have erected their own tribute to St. Andrews: an exact replica of the famous Swilcan Bridge. Traditionalists might dismiss it as a tacky gimmick, which indeed it probably is, but it's certainly unforgettable and it has become almost a local rule to stand atop the bridge with your playing partners and pose for a photograph.

At Royal North Devon Golf Club - England's oldest links course - sheep roam the course chewing on the rough grasses that frame the fairways. Tiger Beach, meanwhile, allows goats to do likewise, and it's not uncommon to see thirty or more of the animals grazing by the side of the green as you line up your putt. Not that a Tiger Beach goat has a particularly long life expectancy. In the spring and summer months the club puts on a nightly barbecue for its members - and there's no prizes for guessing what's on the menu.

but by Beta Soong, the club's Taiwanese owner.

Soong, a fifty-nine year-old entrepreneur who made his millions in electronics, might be a self-confessed hacker when it comes to playing the game, but he knows a thing or two about developing golf courses; he also owns the highly rated Silport Golf Club, a parkland style layout in Shanghai, which has staged the Volvo China Open on six occasions. But is he qualified to design one? In theory, no: on the basis of what he's created at Tiger Beach, though, the answer is a definite yes.

Soong's love of links golf began in the early nineties while in Scotland visiting a newly acquired factory near Glasgow. A few rounds on the Ayrshire coast and his mind was made up: he would return to China and build a course of the kind that Asia had never seen. But first he had to find a site.

It wasn't until 1997 that Soong found the canvas to make his vision a reality. Halfway between the cit-

Troon, Ballybunion, Royal County Down and Carnoustie to help reaffirm his plans for Tiger Beach. Chih, who was construction manager at the time, remembers those early days with fondness.

"I had only ever been involved with constructing parkland courses, and Beta's plans sounded crazy," he grins. "In fact, after we completed the first nine holes it was clear that it wasn't *Scottish* enough. We had very little idea of links golf - the style of bunkering, the mounding.....so, under Beta's instructions, we tore it up and started again. We had to get it right."

And they did. A year after opening, a delegation of local councillors from Angus in Scotland was in Yantai - Angus's sister city - on a cultural exchange trip. Hankering for a game of golf, the Scots were driven down to Tiger Beach where their impressions of the course, like mine, says Chih, verged on the hysterical. "They couldn't believe that such a course could exist in China. They said they felt like they were at home, back in Scotland."



On the links
(clockwise from top):
goats are allowed free reign
at Tiger Beach;
a wrapped-up caddie;
an exact replica of the
famous Swilcan Bridge at
the par-five fifth;
one tough pin position.



Word quickly reached Carnoustie - the venue for this year's British Open - and, after visiting the course to see for themselves, Carnoustie's representatives met with Soong and agreed on a sister-link relationship, the first time in the Scottish club's three hundred year history that it has been 'twinned' with another course. Furthermore, in 2005 Soong was given honorary life membership at Carnoustie for "his vision in establishing a truly Scottish links course at Tiger Beach using his own inspiration and design"

Unique barely begins to describe Tiger Beach. It's just so damned different. Its setting, alongside the sea and red-roofed town of Feng Cheng, is perfect. The clubhouse, with its fireplace and excellent bar, convivial; the golf, as if I have to say, is as good as it gets. Furthermore, their caddies, who are trilingual - speaking Mandarin, Korean and a soupcon of English - are pretty, funny, and, crucially, can read putts. For those of you who need to know, the club's massage service provides a wonderful stress-relieving after-golf rub down.

My lasting memory of the club is not so much of the actual course - although it's undoubtedly one of the most enjoyable tracks in the Middle Kingdom - but more of the spirit in which golf is played there. The vast majority of Chinese clubs are run purely as businesses; their courses, which are usually flanked by ostentatious real estate, are full of less than etiquette savvy members of the country's elite. Tiger Beach is different. A fourball can expect to get round in less than four hours, there is absolutely no on-course housing, and the cosy clubhouse is functional, not grandiose like so many others. This is golf as it was meant to be. **AGE**

Club Information

Tiger Beach Golf Links

Feng Cheng, Haiyang, Yantai, Shandong Province, China

Tel: +86-535-3311808 Fax: +86-535-3312268

Email: silport@tigerbeachgolf.com

Website: www.tigerbeachgolf.com

Par: 72 Yardage: 7,222.

Designed by Beta Soong.

Private club; visitors welcome

TBGL is a walking course; golf carts available for senior golfers. Caddies are mandatory.

GETTING THERE

Dragonair (KA), Hong Kong Airlines (HX) and China Eastern Airlines (MU) operate direct flights from Hong Kong to Qingdao (daily; 3hrs). The club operates a shuttle bus service from Qingdao International Airport (1hr 10mins) for groups; a taxi to the club will cost approximately RMB250.

ACCOMMODATION

Cosy rooms (singles, twins, doubles and suites), with free broadband internet access, can be found in the club's single story accommodation annexe.

COSTS

Tiger Beach + Tian Tai 4 Days 3 Nights HK\$3490 up
HK <> Qing Dao Roundtrip Ticket (Hong Kong Airlines)
Tian Tai 18 Holes Green Fee, Caddie Fee
Tiger Beach 18 Holes Green Fee, Caddie Fee
One Night Stay at Tiger Beach Club Resort
Two Night Stay at Downtown Hotel
Daily Breakfast
Airport <> Hotel <> Club Transfer
TIC Levy



Caddyshack: the local stone buildings at Tiger Beach are in stark contrast to the palace-like clubhouses at most Chinese clubs.



Chiangmai (清邁) 4 Days 3 Nights HK\$3,620 up

HK <> Chiangmai Round Trip Air Ticket by TG
3 Nights Novotel Hotel (Twin share)
Daily Breakfast
Choice of 2 Rounds Weekdays Green Fee
(Green Valley / Highland / Lamphun / Gassan Khuntan / Marina / Lake City Golf Course)
Airport <> Hotel Transfer

Ho Chi Minh (胡志明) 4 Days 3 Nights HK\$3,980 up

HK <> Ho Chi Minh Roundtrip Air Ticket by VN
3 Nights Windsor Plaza Hotel (Twin share)
Daily Breakfast
One Round Weekday Long Thanh Golf Club Green Fee & Caddie Fee
One Round Weekday Vietnam Country Golf Club Green Fee & Caddie Fee
Half Day City Tour & Entrance Fees
English / Cantonese Speaking Tour Guide
Land Transfer

Ria Bintan (民丹島) 4 Days 3 Nights HK\$3,860 up

HK <> Singapore Roundtrip Air Ticket by CX
Singapore <> Bintan Ferry Ticket
3 Nights Nirwana Resort Garden View Room (Twin share)
Daily Breakfast, 2 Dinner vouchers to consume meals at either Nirwana Resort Hotel's
Jeju Restaurant or The Coffee Shop Buffet Restaurant.
Ria Bintan 2 x 18 Holes Green Fee, Caddie & Shared Cart
Bintan Pier <> Resort Transfer

Johor (新山) Sofitel Palm Resort 3 Days 2 Nights HK\$3,080 up

HK <> Singapore Roundtrip Air Ticket by CX
Two nights stay at Sofitel Palm Resort (Twin share)
Daily Breakfast
2 x 18 Holes green fee, caddie or shared cart
Singapore Airport <> Hotel <> Club transfer

Kuala Lumpur (吉隆坡) Deluxe 4 Days 3 Nights HK\$3,750 up

HK <> KL Roundtrip Air Ticket by CX
3 Nights Sunway Lagoon Resort (Twin share)
2 Rounds of Saujana Golf Club Weekday Green Fee
Whole Day Pass for Sunway Lagoon Theme Park & Water Park

Hanoi (河內) 4 Days 3 Nights HK\$3,690 up

HK <> Hanoi Roundtrip Ticket by HX
King's Island 18 Holes Green Fee, Caddie Fee
Chi Linh Star 18 Holes Green fee, Caddie Fee
3 Nights stay at Zephyr Hotel (Twin share)
Water Puppet Show
Half Day City Tour
English / Cantonese Speaking Tour Guide
Airport <> Hotel <> Club <> Tourist Spots transfer

Clark (克拉克) 3 Days 2 Nights HK\$2,880 up

HK <> Clark Roundtrip Air Ticket by HX
2 rounds of Weekday Green Fee at Mimosa Golf Club
2 Nights stay at Holiday Inn
Daily Breakfast
Airport <> Hotel <> Club Transfer

AND THEN THERE WERE TWO

Situated amid the construction frenzy of the Cotai Strip, Macau's newest course isn't exactly over endowed with natural beauty. But despite this, we came away pleasantly surprised.

It's been a long time coming, but finally Macau has a second golf course. For over a decade the only way of teeing it up in the former Portuguese enclave was to splash the cash at the Macau Golf & Country Club. But despite its spectacular clifftop locale, the MGCC has never been an attractive proposition for those on a budget - especially on the weekends when a stay at the adjoining five-star Westin Resort is mandatory for all golf bookings. Losing your shirt on a crazy night in the city's casinos is one thing; losing it on a night's accommodation and a round of golf is quite another.

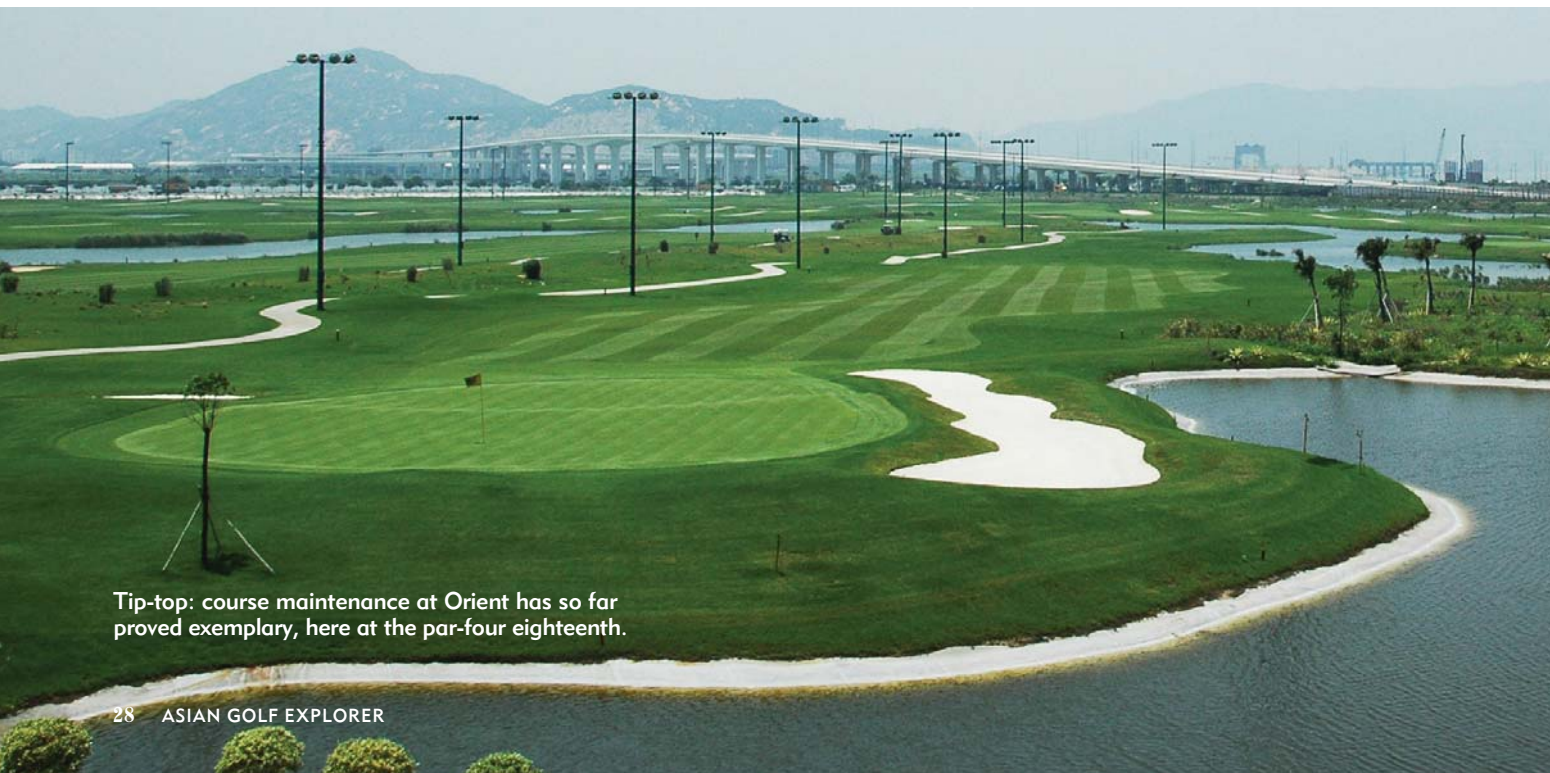
Enter the spanking new Macau Orient

Golf Club. Situated just off the Cotai Strip - that area of reclaimed land earmarked for a multi-billion dollar casino and resort development between the islands of Taipa and Coloane - the 18-hole course at Orient is pretty much the complete antithesis of the MGCC: whereas the MGCC features constant elevation change in an undoubtedly scenic environment, Orient, save for a few engineered humps and hollows, is pancake

flat and jostles for position alongside a sea of cranes, small industrial buildings and the lorry-jammed Lotus Bridge connection to Zhuhai. Okay, so on the face of things it might sound unlovely but Orient throws up some nice surprises along the way.

First all of all, this is a very good test of golf. It doesn't look like much from the cab window as you whiz past on the way to Coloane, but underestimate

“It doesn't look like much from the cab window as you whiz past on the way to Coloane, but underestimate this place at your peril.”



Tip-top: course maintenance at Orient has so far proved exemplary, here at the par-four eighteenth.



On the Strip (clockwise from top): Aim at the gigantic Venetian resort for the ideal line off the eighth tee; a lorry passes close to the thirteenth green on its way to Zhuhai; a warm welcome awaits golfers inside Orient's bijou clubhouse.





Under wraps:
Orient's friendly
(and very well-
trained) caddies
don't accept tips.

ORIENT GOLF (MACAU) CLUB

Cotai Strip, Macau
Tel: +853 2888 0123
Fax: +853 2888 1333
Website: www.orientgolf.com

Par: 72. Yardage:
7,183 / 6,513 / 6,083 / 5,542
Course/Slope Rating: N/A
Designed by T.K. Pen
Private club; visitors welcome.
Carts & caddies are mandatory; caddies
DO NOT accept tips.

GETTING THERE

Taxi from Macau Ferry Pier - Club:
Approx MOP/\$70 (15mins).

COSTS

Weekday: \$500 including green fee,
shared cart & caddie and locker.
Weekend/Public Holidays: \$1,090
including green fee, shared cart &
caddie, locker and lunch (set menu).

To book call +852 2187 3146.

this place at your peril. Although there's no real rough to speak of, Orient's defences lie in its water hazards (large and plentiful), its length (over 6,500 yards from the regular blue tees, including three 400-plus yard par-fours and three 530-plus yard par-fives) and the dastardly placement of fairway bunkers. But above all, there's the wind. It really gusts in off the sea from the south, and until the Cotai Strip starts to resemble the Las Vegas Strip with its high rise hotels and monumental gambling joints there's nothing to stop it from taking hold of weekly struck drives and tossing them miles off course.

Secondly, its fun. While it can be penal in places, there are still opportunities to give that latest jumbo-headed driver a thorough workout, most notably on the water-laced ninth - a short par-four that can be reached in one with a

healthy whack off the tee. The par threes, meanwhile, are a delightful set of holes, particularly the sixteenth which requires a well-struck short iron over an imposing lake.

Thirdly, Orient employs caddies, and what's more you're NOT allowed to tip them! This might sound a bit lazy (especially given that it's probably the most walkable course in the region) but for those who are so used to playing in China (and are therefore seemingly incapable of replacing their own divots and raking over their own footprints) their assistance is most welcome. They're

excellent at their craft, too - most can speak very good English and all have undergone extensive training. Kudos to the club - it makes a difference.

Finally, and perhaps most crucially to some, Orient is affordable and ultra-easy to get to. Grab an early morning ferry and you can be back in town after lunch. At only \$500 for a round during the week (a touch over \$1,000 on a weekend), however, you might be encouraged to take advantage of Macau's other pleasures with the money you've saved. Viva Macau! **AGE**



The Dreaded Fried Egg

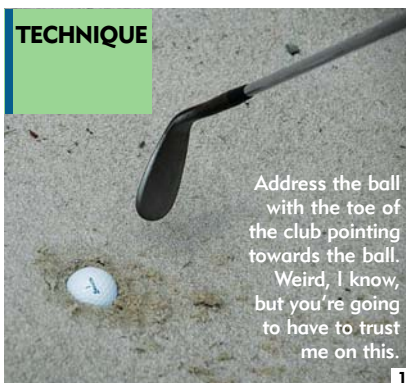
Shay is the Director of Golf at Palm Island Resort and a qualified PGA instructor. To learn more about Shay and the Palm Island Golf Academy visit www.piresort.com.



Don't you just hate it when your approach to the green falls a fraction short and ends up buried in the bunker? This kind of lie is known as the 'Fried Egg' and, understandably, it fills most amateur golfers (and some pros) with dread.

But it really doesn't have to. I'm going to show you a new way to get the ball out on the first attempt. It's not what you'd ever call conventional but it works, giving you at least a chance at that crucial par save. Golf often throws up scenarios where you have to throw the textbook out of the window - this type of shot is all about creativity and imagination.

TECHNIQUE



Address the ball with the toe of the club pointing towards the ball. Weird, I know, but you're going to have to trust me on this.

Light grip pressure is vital. Imagine a wet towel is wrapped around the grip of the club - you want to hold both the club and the towel without squeezing any water out.



1 2



3

Ball position should be in the middle of your stance, with your weight leaning into the slope slightly. This is an excellent starting position.



4 5

Take away position with the toe of the club facing the sand. This is important because the toe of the club has to enter the sand first. With a light grip pressure the clubhead will open as it enters the sand - enabling the ball to pop out from its buried lie.



6

A well-balanced finish. Notice my feet have stayed within my footprints. This indicates minimal lower body movement. Lower body stability is the key here.

SUMMARY

Like everything in golf, practice makes perfect. I warn you that this method is going to feel dramatically different than what you're used to, so it really pays dividends to get the feel of this in the practice bunker before you add it to your repertoire of shots. Not only does it work exceptionally well, but you'll impress your buddies at the same time. **AGE**

Designs for Life

Three weeks. Two countries. Fifteen cities. Endless meetings and countless site visits. Sound like a strain? It's all in the life of a golf course architect. The following are diary entries from **Mark Hollinger**, a partner in the award-winning design firm **JMP**. We join Hollinger, who designed local favourites Long Island Golf & Country Club and the South Course at Agile Golf & Country Club, as he prepares to leave his base in the U.S. for a hectic whistle-stop tour of Japan and China.

Surveying the scene: Mark (and his Cuban) on location in China.



Day One: San Francisco, CA, USA

My trip starts out with a giant thud, as the captain decides to abort takeoff at the very last moment - the nose wheel of the giant 747 comes crashing down on the tarmac in San Francisco, causing no shortage of alarm in the cabin. The resulting eight hour delay, meanwhile, causes no shortage of frustration. Over the years, I've had some really strange things happen flying around the globe, and in the meantime I have accumulated over a million actual travel miles with two airlines and have stockpiled more frequent flyer miles than anyone could possibly use. Nothing quite this scary has ever happened before on one of my flights though. What's more, this delay has created a scheduling nightmare. The timing of the early portion of my trip is already unbelievably tight, so if there are any more delays en-route I may have to skip Japan altogether.

Day Three: Tokyo and Shimoda, Japan

Finally arrived at the hotel at 1 a.m. - cruel, since I have a 7 a.m. meeting and departure to the site with the project owner.

The site visit begins with a quick tour of the portion of the golf course to be remodelled. We are doing three holes this spring and this is the first phase of the work, so there is a huge learning curve to deal with - mainly due to the limited construction knowledge of their in-house people. I am here a few weeks ahead of my earthwork shaping specialist who will be arriving soon to perform most of the work. I am here to get the onsite people organized and make sure all the necessary equipment is on hand for the work. This will be an interesting assignment as we are taking a 1960's-era Japanese resort golf course and attempting to update and improve it, thereby making it more competitive within the already super-competitive Japanese golf market. It

is a great site overlooking the sea but the existing layout doesn't take advantage of the terrain. I am also re-routing a number of holes to improve the strategic value and player shot values of the overall golf experience.

Day Four: Shimoda

Today at Izu-Shimoda Golf Club begins with a golf magazine interview and photo session out on the course with Golf Digest Japan...seems they have heard the story about why I always smoke cigars during my site visit. This all started in the early 90's in northern Japan when I was seeking a little privacy during the walking portions of my site visit. There were twenty or so people following me everywhere I went and writing down everything I would say so, to give myself a bit of time to think, I fired up a huge Cuban cigar. I quickly realized that most Japanese could not

“I’ll never forget the story of the golf pro designer who, on making his first grand opening visit to the project he had just ‘designed’, had to ask someone the direction to the first tee!”

handle the smell of my cigar, and after looking around I found the crowd following me had quickly disappeared...ah, sweet privacy. This was also just revenge for me, due to the fact that everyone dodging my cigar smoke chain-smoked cigarettes, and I often found myself in a windowless meeting room with those same twenty guys and I was the only one sucking in second-hand smoke.

This remodelling project will be at least a 3-4 year endeavour. Remodelling work is a hard, thankless proposition and quite different than constructing a new course from scratch. It is more like surgery than anything else. One of this project’s biggest limitations is the owner’s desire to keep the course open during the process. This factor obviously extends the duration of the renovation work, but it allows the club to carry on with a revenue stream and not discourage or inconvenience their membership to any great degree. It also allows a more gradual acceptance period for the improvements; however it makes my job more difficult. Oh well, I very much enjoy coming back to Japan again to work. During the crazy golf boom years in the early 1990’s, I commonly spent more than a hundred days per year in Japan, and until this project, I haven’t spend a day there since 1996...welcome back to Japan, Mr. Mark!

Day Six: Dalian, China

I’m in Dalian for a site visit to a new 27-hole project with construction frantically underway. This project is proving very tricky: the site, although close to the city centre, is situated on very mountainous terrain, and I’ve long had reservations about squeezing in 27 holes

on the land available. I tried to convince the owner to only do 18 holes on his site, but he wouldn’t listen. We are therefore trying very hard to find a way to make it fit despite the topography and less-than-ideal rocky soil underneath. They have been blasting rock for four months now. I must pay attention as we walk the site for boulders falling out of the sky! It is truly amazing to see 150 pieces of equipment working all over the place at the same time, and hard to believe anyone is in charge of such an armada of earthmoving machinery. I hope someone is looking at the plans. What’s more, the construction schedule is ridiculous - not nearly enough time planned to do this course on this site. No one will listen to me but ultimately they will find out that I know what I am talking about. On top of everything else, the clubhouse architect has ignored the building envelope which I have provided him for his structure, and has encroached in two directions onto my golf course, thus giving me a big headache to deal with and golf holes to revise on the fly. This project will challenge all of my skills as a designer in order to produce a quality layout. I wish owners would listen more to their designers - it would solve an awful lot of problems. Sometimes I

wonder if I am getting too old for this type of thing.

Day Eight: Beijing

My Asian friends call me the Sunshine King, because everywhere I travel the sun usually follows. Beijing needs a ton of sunshine. Normally the city is wrapped under a thick layer of haze, especially at this time of year. No sunlight spells bad news for golf courses - it results in poor grass growth meaning conditions are rarely great.

Another site visit today, and thankfully the site is more gentle...to the extent that before we began the earth moving process, it was dead-flat. One extreme to the other! This is **Qinghe Bay Golf Club** and it is situated right next to the new 2008 Beijing Olympic stylistic bird’s nest stadium - what a great location for golf. Although it’s directly in the middle of Beijing, the surrounding forest gives the feeling of seclusion. The work here is also going at breakneck speed - each hole has over 100 labourers on it at the same time - and we are planting trees as soon as the rough shaping is finished. In fact there is so much going on that they need traffic cops out on the fairways to keep someone from getting run over. In two months we have finished shaping more than two-thirds of the entire golf course. The big rush is caused because the cool-season turf grass seeding window is very tight in northern China. All this is hard for my construction shaping specialists to believe, because in



Down and dirty: a new JMP course under construction.

Inside the Industry

the US it would take three times as long to build the same kind of course. The good news is that we're using the latest and greatest varieties of Creeping Bentgrass on the tees, fairways and greens; selecting the right type of grass is crucial, and I think we have a winner here. When Qinghe opens it will be a very special place indeed.

Day Ten: Beijing

Lengthy meetings all day with land planners, engineers and the owner regarding a new resort project on Hainan Island. This owner is a fellow with whom I have worked before on my design at **Jian Lake Golf Club**, and through this process we have become very good friends...he has also become a very good player in recent years, and he regularly empties my wallet on the course. This new Hainan Island assignment will be a fantastic project - it's a beautiful piece of waterfront land covered with palm trees and tropical vegetation. As I have worked with this owner before, I know he really understands quality golf design and world-class golf construction. He is also very appreciative of detailed landscaping design, so this will become another showcase opportunity for me. Hainan Island is a great place to build courses because everything grows here - the clear skies make such a difference. While some people get into golf design playing professional golf, my entry into the industry more than twenty five years ago was through my origins as a professionally trained landscape architect. If there is anything that sets my courses apart from my competitor's, it's the level of tree, shrub and groundcover planting integration, and the detail of our golf course landscaping design. This is very consistent with most of my work, provided an adequate landscaping budget and commitment from the owner

is there. It is great to work once again with this kind of enlightened owner - he has read everything he can get his hands on regarding golf design and has travelled extensively throughout the world, seeing for himself what works and what doesn't when it comes to golf development. The exchange of ideas in these meetings is very constructive. This project will be well-conceived from the get-go...that is for sure.

Day Twelve: Lijiang, Yunnan Province

I learned a long time ago that any trip of this length requires an R&R break as well as some non-golf related enjoyment, otherwise the travelling becomes unbearable. Even though my family is used to me being away all the time for my work, it is tough not seeing them, so exploring somewhere new and exciting is a welcome respite for me. I have always wanted to visit the old town

of **Lijiang**, and go up the famous 4506-metre Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, and as I have clients to see in Western China anyhow, this is great place to visit and nice rest for a site-weary golf designer. This place is one of China's little-known World Heritage cultural treasures and I only hope with the new air routes, new train lines and all the highways now being built leading here, that it stays this way in the future. It was pleasing to know that I did not need an oxygen bottle up when I was on top of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain.

Day Sixteen: Zunyi, Guizhou Province

Today I am visiting a brand new site in a new region of China for JMP. I have already completed a preliminary routing based only on the topography and site information assembled by one of my associates. After walking the entire site, it's a amazing to see how well my initial routing plan design fits the land - I guess after 25 years I'm getting pretty good at this! I am also quite pleased that we have a great piece of land with which to work. However this owner has never done anything like this before, and this project's remote location means it's well-off the beaten track for most.

I will have my work cut out making this project something special for the ever-more competitive China resort golf market. The real trick here will be assembling a quality construction team in order to make the project happen on the ground. This is always the real test in working in golf design internationally; the hole design is the easy part - it's the "getting it built" part of the equation which separates the golf design professionals from the rest of the design world. With any project we design in the US, we can always count on at least 5 top companies to bid on the construction process and build a good course with little supervision needed. In Asia, however, we



Rest and relaxation:
Mark in Lijiang.

must carefully put together a top-quality project management and construction shaping team in each instance, in order for each new project to have a good chance to succeed.

Day Eighteen: Chengdu, Sichuan Province

Luxe Hills Golf & Country Club - This landmark project, located in the rapidly developing city of Chengdu, will soon open for play and I believe will begin to set a new standard for residential golf community design in China. Luxe Hills is the result of nearly six years of my time and effort. The end result is a golf course of which I am very proud, as the site had very little to offer from a design standpoint, and more importantly, when we began this project, we didn't know if there would be anyone in this region of China to play the game or for that matter interested in buying residential golf property alongside a golf course.

The entire golf course is fully integrated within a sea of residential housing, but thanks to the efforts of a very talented consultancy team it has been completed in a very attractive and unobtrusive manner. Furthermore, the quality of the detail and extensive use of landscape design as a part of the golf design and overall residential development is some of the best work I have ever been a part of - everything had to be created due to the fact that there was nothing here when we began. During this visit I was pleased to find out that over one-third of the planned 4000 residential properties have already been finished and sold - astonishing, given that the golf course has not yet opened for play.

I think we can already say this has been a hugely successful project. For me, it is a great feeling when a completed golf course meets and in many ways exceeds your initial expectations as a designer, especially when you are working with a developer who has never done anything like this



Getting into the Golf Course Design Biz

When I was in High School (a very long time ago) I entertained the idea of playing golf in college and going on to play professionally. However, two months of heavy duty junior golf competitions during my senior year brought me to my senses. I was usually playing against great players like Gary Koch and Billy Kratzert (former PGA Tour pros and now successful broadcasters), both of whom were clearly on another level. I wisely decided to put away the clubs and went off to the University of Georgia and obtained a Degree in Landscape Architecture in 1976. In the 1980's I got into the profession of golf course architecture and golf hole design while working for a US-based land planner who also designed golf courses throughout the east coast. While my golfing ability is nowhere near that of a playing professional, I have always loved the game and through golf course design I have been able to make a livelihood through golf, and stay close to it without having to play it for a living.

before, and in Sichuan Province where golf was not even on the map until now. This is great stuff.

Day Twenty: Hainan Island

Today's site visit is an add-on to my original travel plans, in order to review the routing concept plan, which I completed while resting in Lijiang and shipped to the land planners in Beijing. I prepared this concept routing plan as a result of the Beijing meetings and now we all need to visit the site and see if everything works on the ground like it does on paper.

The site is truly wonderful and I am certain the golf course will set the golf industry on its ear in a couple of year's time. I heard that some big shot Chinese owner just signed a somewhat old big time American pro to US\$2 million-plus contract to design another golf course on Hainan Island - for a so-called 'signature' course. This silliness hell bent on naive owner's spending huge sums of money for very little return, has never ceased to amaze me. Does this owner actually think this golf pro is going to design his course on paper and make the site visits required to review the work in the field? Does this golf pro know anything at all about the Chinese golfer and what is important to him or her? I seriously doubt it. Regardless, in a few years I will put my new course up against his and we will see if the huge fee difference was justified. To do these projects properly requires a lot of

hands-on involvement - from the routing, through detailed design and onward through the entire construction process... a minimum timeframe of 2 - 3 years and 15-20 site visits! I'll never forget the story of the golf pro designer who, on making his first grand opening visit to the project he had just designed, had to ask someone the direction to the first tee!

Day Twenty Three: Hong Kong

I am now sitting in Hong Kong airport, waiting for my fourteen hour flight back home, and wondering how much mail has piled up in my office while I was away. Yesterday, I squeezed in one last visit to another new confirmed project site two hours west of Guangzhou, and I am completely worn out from walking so many golf courses. Also, I am hoping that my wife and daughters remember what I look like and thinking about how many projects at home require my immediate attention. No worries. I have plenty of time to think about it all during the flight. And since I get to live this day twice, I just hope the pilots remember how to get the plane off the ground this time. Now let me catch my breath and get ready for the next trip. **AGE**

Hollinger is a member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects. Log onto www.jmpgolf.com for more information.

TaylorMade R7 SuperQuad

The newest member of the R7 family, the SuperQuad features an extra large 460cc clubhead, which offers the highest MOI (Moment of Inertia – see sidebar) of any TaylorMade driver ever built. This adds up to tremendous forgiveness and long, straight results on off-center hits. Plus, it has four weight ports, allowing an overwhelming 102 CG (Centre of Gravity) locations; 18 at standard swingweight. Better players will appreciate the vast array of options, while everyone else can admire its stylish black finish. Sergio Garcia and Justin Rose, among others from TaylorMade's huge stable of tour pros, carry the TP version.



TaylorMade Burner

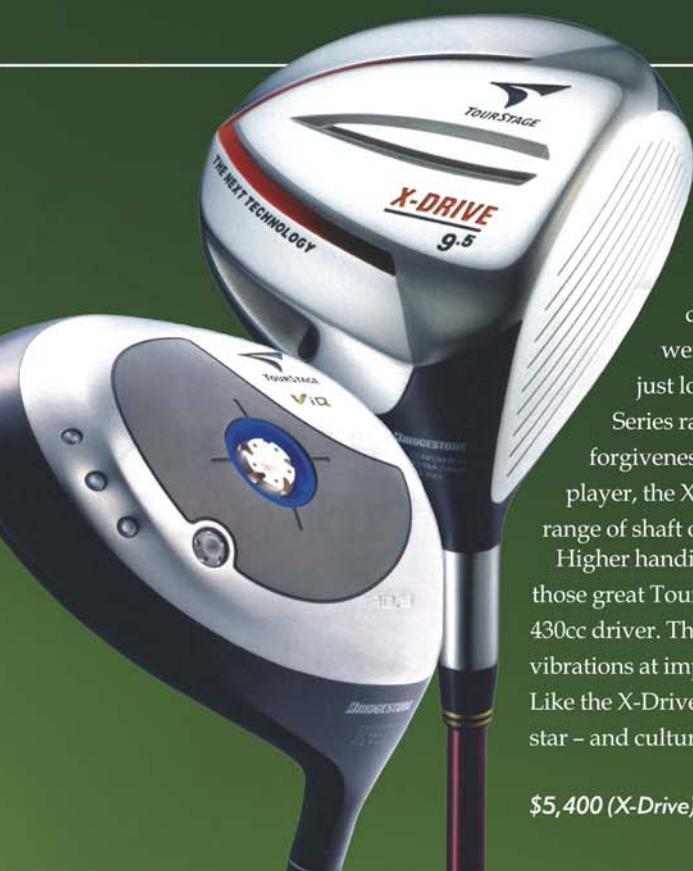
TaylorMade claims that the combination of large head, sleek shape, longer length and lighter weight makes the new Burner their fastest driver ever created in terms of potential clubhead speed and ball speed. The theory being that the lighter the club, the faster you swing, meaning longer drives. The Burner isn't as easy on the eye as the SuperQuad, though, and those who already own an R7 might take time to adjust themselves to the duller thud on impact of the newer (and cheaper) club. Still, who cares about that when you're bombing it further than you have ever done before?

\$5,500 (SuperQuad) / \$4,475 (Burner) .
Call 2149-3888 or visit www.taylormadegolf.com.

MOI

The buzz word for this year's drivers is MOI. These three letters stand for "moment of inertia" and the higher a club's "MOI," the less it will twist when a shot is struck off-centre. MOI is measured in two directions: horizontal (heel/toe) and vertical (high and low on the clubface). As a general rule, higher handicap players mis-hit shots on the toe and heel, while better players miss high and low. While it might be tempting to dismiss the term as just another marketing gimmick, there is no doubting the superior forgiveness that comes with a 2007 driver (with an MOI of around 5,000) compared with one that is just a couple of years old (with an MOI of around 3,000). But whether there is a significant difference in forgiveness between a driver with an already very high MOI of 4,800 and one with an MOI of 5,900 (the R&A/USGA imposed limit) has been queried by some equipment experts, who claim that a peak has already been reached.





TourStage: X-Drive and ViQ There's no doubt about it, TourStage make some of the best-looking clubs around. Take their line of classic pear-shaped X-Drive drivers, for instance. With a round, deep-faced profile and smart black appearance, these new Japanese imports – which are available in four different models: 460, 430, 430p and 410 – are a far cry from some of the weird geometric designs currently available on the market. But they don't just look good. TourStage engineers have improved on the previous X Series range by incorporating variable face thickness design for more forgiveness on off-centre hits. Designed specifically for the better amateur player, the X-Drive is available in 8.5, 9.5 and 10.5 degrees of loft and comes with a range of shaft options including the excellent Graphite Design Tour AD. Higher handicappers looking for a bit more forgiveness without sacrificing any of those great TourStage looks should give serious consideration to the improved ViQ 430cc driver. The higher launching ViQ uses Turbo Rubber technology to suppress vibrations at impact, meaning less energy loss and longer, more penetrating drives. Like the X-Drive a wide range of premium shafts and loft options are available. LPGA star – and cultural icon – Ai Miyazato recently switched to the ViQ DEEP version.

\$5,400 (X-Drive) / \$4,950 (VIQ) . Call 2811-4333 or visit www.tourstage.com.

Titleist 907 D1 and D2 Titleist may be considered the most traditional of all the major brands, but that hasn't stopped them putting a distinctly futuristic spin on their two latest drivers – the radical triangular-shaped 907 D1 and the slightly more conservative 907 D2, an evolution of last year's 905R. So, you ask, are they any good? Absolutely yes is the short answer to that. Although its looks take a bit of getting used to, the D1 is arguably the most forgiving driver Titleist have ever made – helped by a very high MOI – and delivers a piercing low ball flight – just perfect for those breezy days. It's not the most workable of clubs, though, but no matter, because players who want to shape their shots more without losing distance just have to pick up the D2. This, as the company's advertising slogan goes, is a serious club for serious players, one that has already found its way into the bags of Luke Donald and Adam Scott among others. Although off-centre hits don't fly as far as the D1, the excellent feel and distance of the more conventional-looking club when you catch it on the button

will persuade many lower handicappers to make the change. Both clubs are available in 8.5/9.5/10.5/11.5 degrees of loft. Stock shafts include the Graphite Design YS-6+ (64g), Titleist Spec Grid 67 (67g), Aldila VS Proto 65 (69g).

\$4,600 (D1 & D2) . Call 3165-1288 or visit www.titleist.com.





Tour 360 II

Powerband



Adidas: Tour 360 II and Powerband

Following hot on the heels of the success of its innovative Tour 360 equipment (Adidas makes equipment, not golf shoes, apparently), the brand with the 3 stripes has launched the Tour 360 II and Powerband series of footwear. With even more colours and styles to choose from (plus a special edition range of funky tri-tone colour options) the hardest decision young golf dudes might have to make this summer is choosing which of these ultra lightweight models to get. It's a tough call: both are supremely comfortable, highly durable and even if you've just sprayed your third consecutive drive OB, you'll still look cool in either pair. Ladies will have an easier decision: only the Powerband is available in women's sizes and styles. Both models are available in wide sizes.

\$1,250 (Tour 360 II) / \$950 (Powerband).
Call 2149-3888 or visit www.adidasgolf.com



Accu-Length At last an equipment manufacturer has solved the time-honoured problem of buying custom fit golf clubs for kids. This US-based company, which is endorsed by Tiger Woods' childhood coach Rudy Duran, has launched a range of expandable junior equipment that 'grows' with your child. The big sell here is Accu-Length's revolutionary shaft spacer system, which allows you to add to the length of the shaft to accommodate increases in your child's height and strength. Not only is this a nifty idea, but because each set can be used for five seasons it manages to save you oodles of cash in the long run. Each set includes a 17 degree wood, 7-iron, pitching wedge, putter and customized stand bag. Additional clubs - including a driver, 5-iron and a line of easy-to-hit hybrids - can be purchased separately.

\$1,250 up for sets; \$260 for individual clubs. Call 2889-1050 or visit www.acculength.com.

Get into the Groove

Groove-faced putters have been around for a while now, which isn't surprising given that they're proven to impart more topspin on the ball, resulting in a smoother and straighter roll on the green. In fact, such has been their success over the past few seasons (among tour pros and ordinary folk alike) that some industry insiders are predicting that within ten years all new putters will feature groove technology in some form or other. Groovy!



Yes! Golf : Pink Tracy and Pink Victoria II The undisputed leader in putter groove technology, Yes! has been churning out their C-Groove putters, under the guidance of putting guru Harold Swash, since the late 1990's. Complimenting their very fine series of men's putters, the Denver-based company has unveiled two new models for the ladies: the Pink Tracy, a face-balanced blade, and the mallet-style Pink Victoria II. Both putters are made using 304 stainless steel and feature 2.5 degrees of loft and rather fetching pink grips.

\$1,350 (Pink Tracy) / \$1,500 (Pink Victoria II). Call 2889-1050 or visit www.yesgolf.com.



GEL Golf The new kid on the groove technology block, Hong Kong-based GEL have already made quite an impact since launching at the beginning of 2007: a successful debut at the PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando where they announced a staggering six putter models – impressive stuff for such a young company. Designed with input from tour professionals, each GEL putter – from the traditional toe-heavy blade Ruby model to the alignment-friendly Emerald (both pictured) – features aluminum face inserts with horizontal grooves for a softer, more responsive feel. Their eye-catching WINN grips (blue and yellow for men; pink and blue for ladies) will appeal to the trendy, but serious golfers should also take note: in a recent independent test to determine which of the major putter brands generates the most forward roll, GEL came out top.

\$1,250. Call 2529-1529 or visit www.gelgolf.com.

For a chance to win a custom-fit GEL putter, turn to page 41.

INTERVIEW

Adam Groom, or Groomy as he's better known on Tour, is one of only a handful of Asian Tour players to have made it into the field at this month's Open Championship. AGE caught up with affable Aussie to get his views on golf, travel, girls and, of course, that fearsome Carnoustie rough.



Make mine
a claret:
you haven't
won it yet,
Adam!

A Quick 18: Adam Groom

AGE: Congratulations on making it into your first major championship. Who's going to win?

AG: Hopefully me of course, but if it's not I'd like to see Adam Scott get his hands on the Claret Jug.

AGE: How's your preparation going? Been practicing hitting out of 4 foot high fescue?

AG: Ha! Yeah, hopefully it's not going to be like 1999 when Paul Lawrie won it - that really was fearsome. I've been playing pretty inconsistently this season but I like links golf - we don't get to play any out here in Asia - so it'll be an awesome experience.

AGE: Okay, a few quickies. What's your favourite course in the world?

AG: I've played a lot of great courses around the world, especially in America. I'd say Congressional.

Adam's Bag

Driver: R7 Taylor Made Quad (Shallow Face). Fujikura Fit On! 11 shaft.

3 wood: Srixon. Fit On! 11 shaft.

Rescue/Utility: Callaway. Mitsubishi Diamana shaft.

3-Pw: Srixon 506. Dynamic Gold S300 shafts

Wedges: Titleist Vokey. 54 and 60 degrees.

Putter: Kramski (a German manufacturer)

Ball: Srixon Z-URS

Glove: Srixon

AGE: Favourite course in Asia?

AG: Pine Valley in Beijing. It's always in great condition.

AGE: Favourite destination in Asia?

AG: I love hanging out in Hong Kong and Singapore, but to relax it's hard to beat the Thai islands.

AGE: Favourite hotel in Asia?

AG: Raffles The Plaza in Singapore.

AGE: Best food on Tour?

AG: South Korea. There's this really great BBQ restaurant near the course. I can't remember what it's called but it's awesome.

AGE: Favourite airline?

AG: I mainly fly Qantas and Cathay Pacific.

AGE: Here's a tough one. Which Asian city has the prettiest girls?

AG: That really is a tough one. Phew! (long pause...) It's a toss-up between Bangkok, Manila and Seoul, but that's a really unfair question.

AGE: How much do you spend on travel each year?

AG: Airfares - between 30 and 40 thousand U.S. dollars. Hotels - maybe another 20 thousand. Believe me, it adds up!

AGE: What's the most difficult aspect of playing golf in Asia?

AG: Off the course - the food. On the course - the humidity.

AGE: What's the most bizarre thing you've seen on a golf course?

AG: Tough one. Probably the greens in Taiwan - they're pretty bizarre!

AGE: What do you most hate to see on the golf course?

AG: Slow play and definitely bad etiquette.

AGE: When did you last break a club in anger?

AG: Probably when I was an amateur. I think I may have bent one once as a pro but it didn't actually break.

AGE: When did you last break a rule?

AG: I never break rules! Not on the golf course, anyway.

AGE: Which would you rather win: the Masters or the (British) Open?

AG: The Open.

AGE: If there's one rule you could change, what would it be?

AG: I think you should be able to get relief from sand-filled divots.

AGE: What's your best moment in golf?

AG: Playing for Australia in the Eisenhower Trophy (World Amateur Team Championship). As a professional it would probably be winning the Asian Tour rookie of the year in 2004. **AGE**

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70 Ting Kok Road, Tai Po
Tel: (852) 2660 9222

Island Golf Club Pro Shop

8 Oi Tak Street, Sai Wan Ho
Tel: (852) 2535 5968



Kau Sai Chau, Sai Kung
Tel: (852) 2791 3318



Whitehead, Ma On Shan
Tel: (852) 2631 9900



2/F Olympian City One,
11 Hoi Fai Road, Kowloon
Tel: (852) 2271 4744



Basement, Mary Building, 71-77
Peking Road, TST Tel: (852) 2301 3980
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