

THE WORLD'S MOST EXCITING NEW COURSES

We may be emerging from a global recession but the golf boom shows little sign of slowing. From Brazil to China, here are the shooting stars

WORDS BY CHRIS BERTRAM

Little more than 10 years ago, if you told someone you were going to play golf abroad they would automatically assume you were heading for Iberia.

Inform them your destination was somewhere other than the Algarve or a Costa, and you'd be greeted with a quizzical look. Spain and Portugal utterly dominated the market for the travelling British golfer in those days as resort upon resort opened up to cash in on the sunshine golf boom.

In 2010, nothing could be further from the truth as those traditional favourites must now battle for attention with new courses in every corner of the globe. The recession undoubtedly sparked a reassessment in course construction, but new tracks continue to be built – from Russia to Bahrain and from Middlesbrough to Oregon.

IAGTO was established in 1997 to represent a number of the world's leading golf tour operators. Within 10 years its membership had grown to more than 1,000 companies and that number continues to grow, currently standing at 1,564.

"There has never been a better time to play abroad," IAGTO's Giles Greenwood told us. There are very few countries who don't want to attract visiting golfers – from Iceland to Guatemala. Spain and Portugal used to be the staple diet but now the options are incredible."

Golf World has scoured the planet to bring you details of the most exciting new developments – either open, in planning or in construction – which are continually increasing the choices for the travelling golfer.

1	2	3	4	5	6
					
BANDON DUNES OLD MACDONALD, OREGON	ABU DHABI YAS LINKS AND SAADIYAT BEACH	CHINA HAINAN ISLAND	PORTUGAL HERDADE DA COMPORTA	SPAIN LAS COLINAS	ISRAEL CAESAREA GOLF CLUB
CURRENT STATUS: Opened summer 2010	CURRENT STATUS: Both open for play	CURRENT STATUS: Planning	CURRENT STATUS: Planning	CURRENT STATUS: Open for play	CURRENT STATUS: Open for play
DESIGNER: Tom Doak	DESIGNERS: Kyle Phillips and Gary Player	DESIGNER: Tom Doak	DESIGNERS: Tom Fazio/David McLay Kidd	DESIGNER: Cabell B Robinson	DESIGNER: Pete Dye
GREEN FEES: From £60 in January to £170 May-October	GREEN FEES: Yas, £100-£140; Saadiyat £110-£150	GREEN FEES: From £60 in January to £170 May-October	GREEN FEES: -	GREEN FEES: £50-£70	GREEN FEES: From £80
CONTACT: 00 888 345 6008, www.bandondunesgolf.com	CONTACT: www.yaslinks.com ; www.sbgolfclub.ae	CONTACT: 00 888 345 6008, www.herdedadacomporta.pt	CONTACT: 00 351 265 499 900, www.lascollinasgolf.es	CONTACT: +34 965 32 40 04, www.lascollinasgolf.es	CONTACT: 00 972 461 09600, www.caesarea.com
THE LOWDOWN: Bandon Dunes Golf Resort had three fine courses – but they weren't satisfied. So they asked Tom Doak, who sculpted their Pacific Dunes course, to add a fourth layout. It is a tribute to Charles Blair Macdonald, the father of American course design and founder of the USGA. Old Macdonald features the principles Macdonald incorporated into his own courses and is a worthy addition to a resort which already boasts some beauties.	 THE LOWDOWN: Dubai has led the way in Middle East golf – now Abu Dhabi threatens to overtake it. Saadiyat Beach opened in March 2010, Abu Dhabi Golf Club will again host the European Tour in 2011 while Yas Links has just opened this autumn.	THE LOWDOWN: 250 courses are under construction in China with 600 more in various stages of planning. Hainan is at the forefront, a tropical island paradise in the South China Sea which the government want to turn into a tourist destination like Hawaii by 2020. There are 22 courses here at the moment but anywhere between 100 and 300 are planned. Quite simply, China are building courses faster than any other country.	THE LOWDOWN: Herdade da Comporta is a nature reserve on the sandbelt on Portugal's west coast between the Algarve to Setúbal. It is an hour from Lisbon and 90 minutes from the western courses in the Algarve. Two courses are being built, one by American Tom Fazio in association with European Golf Design and one by David McLay Kidd. Portugal want this to be the country's third great golf venue after Lisbon and the Algarve.	 THE LOWDOWN: It's not an exaggeration to say Cabell B Robinson is a Spanish course designing legend. He has sculpted a plethora of layouts in the country including La Reserva in Sotogrande and Finca Cortesin on the Costa del Sol. When the Las Colinas complex wanted a course to run through their 330-hectare development, the American was a wise choice to realise their ambition.	 THE LOWDOWN: Caesarea is on land once owned by the Rothschilds. Passionate golfer James de Rothschild vowed to build a course there and even though he passed away in 1957, his family finished his dream. It was revamped in 2008.
THEY SAY: Bandon Dunes is true to the spirit of Scotland's links. Sweeping, untamed shores stretch for miles. Primeval grassy dunes roll to the sea. Four distinctly different courses have been conceived in harmony with the natural environment.	THEY SAY: Set against dramatic views of the Arabian Gulf, Yas Links is a wonderful layout which is guaranteed to excite and educate. The course at Saadiyat Beach is one of the world's most captivating projects and it is the Gulf's first and only ocean course.	THEY SAY: Well, not a lot. There is a reluctance to speak about golf development on Hainan and even the usually PR-savvy Mission Hills Group are shy. They did however lure Monty, Ochoa and Catherine Zeta Jones to the opening of their new course on Hainan.	THEY SAY: Comporta Links has been chosen as Portugal's bid for the 2018 Ryder Cup. McLay Kidd says of Comporta Dunes: "Using Pine Valley as a source of inspiration, we intend to leave much of the native vegetation 'as is'."	 THEY SAY: "A unique feature is it runs through a valley between hills high enough to isolate it from its surrounding area," says Robinson.	THEY SAY: Caesarea is the only international golf club in Israel and boasts a meticulously-groomed course, holes of great variety and large practice areas. Now Pete Dye's project has been completed, the course is capable of hosting international golf tournaments.
GW VERDICT: Every bit as stunning as its sister courses and if the world now has a finer resort we're yet to see it. You could play twice a day here for a week and never be anything other than exhilarated. These are Major-quality tracks.	GW VERDICT: Within a matter of months Abu Dhabi joined golf's top table. Attention to detail is incredible and cost simply seems not to matter. Phillips and Player have therefore created breathtaking championship courses.	GW VERDICT: China may be being cautious but it's easy to imagine in 10 years' time Hainan being considered one of the world's top golf destinations alongside the likes of Florida, the Algarve and the coasts of Britain and Ireland.	GW VERDICT: The unspoilt coastline will be a phenomenal site for this duo and the other 10 (plus hotels and other amenities) which are planned. It might even be the fast-running Scottish links they fancifully speak of.	GW VERDICT: Las Colinas opened this autumn and has already impressed. Spain isn't short of quality tracks – witness our Top 50 listing last month – but in our next compilation, there is little doubt Las Colinas will feature in it.	GW VERDICT: Caesarea is located in the heart of a high-class tourist resort. Dye's extensive refurbishment job – it is basically a new course – makes it a true championship test, at an affordable price, in a fabulous resort.

7


**BRAZIL
OLYMPIC
COURSE, RIO**
CURRENT STATUS:
Proposal

DESIGNER: Nicklaus
and Sorenstam?

GREEN FEES: -

CONTACT:
www.olympic.org

THE LOWDOWN:

Brazil will host the Olympics in 2016 and golf will be part of the global games for the first time since 1904. The format is going to be a 72-hole strokeplay tournament for men and women, with fields of 60. What isn't known is where it will be held, with just two suitable courses in Rio, Itanhangá and Gávea – neither of which are open to the public. If it happens, Jack Nicklaus and Annika Sorenstam are among those who want to design it.

THEY SAY: Tour de las Americas chief Henrique Lavie said last spring he is committed to making sure the Olympic course open to the public. "I think that's probably mandatory," Lavie said. "A public golf course can make a big difference."

GW VERDICT: A new course isn't a cast-iron certainty, but Lavie's comment suggests it is very likely. Lavie has also revealed nearly a dozen architects are keen to build the course. In other words, they've not been discouraged.

8


**GREECE
COSTA
NAVARINO**
CURRENT STATUS:
One open, one imminent

DESIGNER: B Langer
Robert Trent Jones

GREEN FEES: Three
nights B&B and two
rounds for £345

CONTACT: +30 272
309 6000, www.
costanavarino.com

THE LOWDOWN:

Costa Navarino is a new high-end golf resort in the Mediterranean, stretching over a spectacular sunset-facing seaside area in the Greek region of Messinia in the southwest Peloponnese. Langer's course is open ahead of schedule and 'Trent Jones' is due to open before the end of the year. Langer's incorporates some links-style features in areas closest to the sea, with tall dunes dividing some of the holes adjacent to the beach.

THEY SAY: Situated on a world-class site, Navarino Dunes is set on diverse topography with spectacular sea and river views.



GW VERDICT: Costa Navarino oozes class. The cliff-top golf is world class and the conditioning is great, as is the variety of holes.

9


**JAPAN
ALL FOUR MAIN
ISLANDS**
CURRENT STATE:
Open for play

DESIGNER: Various

GREEN FEES: From
£30 up to £120

CONTACT: www.jrto.
go.jp/eng and www.golf-
in-japan.com

THE LOWDOWN:

It might surprise you to know Japan has the second largest number of courses in the world, with more than 2,400. And now Japan are getting serious about attracting golfers as they were at the International Golf Travel Market for the first time this year. Hokkaido, the Phoenix Seagaia Resort, Taiheiyō, and The Cypress are top tracks.

THEY SAY: Many courses were built in the late 1980s by the likes of Robert Trent Jones Jr, Jack Nicklaus and Robert von Hagge. Japan will be the next unique golf destination with rich tourism resources, cultural experience and hospitality.

GW VERDICT: It's not that there are lots of new courses in Japan, it's the fact Japan now wants to tell everyone about them. They have a powerful collection with which to attract travelling golfers.

10


**SWEDEN
BRO HOF SLOT,
STOCKHOLM**
CURRENT STATUS:
Open for play

DESIGNER: Robert
Trent Jones

GREEN FEES: Stadium
- £120; Castle - £75

CONTACT:
+46 8545 27990,
www.brohofslot.se

THE LOWDOWN:

The Stadium Course opened in 2007 and is one of the finest in Europe. This year, a second, The Castle, also designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr opened as well.

THEY SAY: The Robert Trent Jones Jr-designed complex on the shores of picturesque Lake Mälaren features a castle for the clubhouse, 36 holes with USGA-specification greens, state-of-the-art drainage and a sub-air system like the one used at Augusta National.

GW VERDICT: They want the Ryder Cup and it would be a fantastic venue. Throw in other courses in the area – Kungsängen, Royal Drottningholm Golfklubb, Bro Balsta and Fagelbro – and it's an excellent package.

11


**BAHRAIN
ROYAL GOLF
CLUB**
CURRENT STATUS:
Open for play

DESIGNER: Colin
Montgomerie

GREEN FEES: £100

CONTACT: +973 17
750777, www.
theroyalgolfclub.com

THE LOWDOWN:

The European Tour will break new ground in January when Bahrain hosts the Volvo Golf Champions tournament at the Royal Golf Club from the 27th to the 30th. The new Colin Montgomerie-designed course will host the tournament, which will see past and present winners on the European Tour play with amateurs on the first day of action.

THEY SAY: The new Montgomerie course offers a truly unique blend of links and desert golf, taking advantage of Bahrain's natural rough desert terrain and combining it with vast man-made lakes. The desert feel is retained through use of sandy waste bunkers.

GW VERDICT: This is the centre of the Riffa Views development and while the claim of an 'authentic links experience' might be a little exaggerated, there's no doubt it has fast-running fairways and firm greens.

12


**BULGARIA
CAPE KALIAKRA**
CURRENT STATE:
Open for play

DESIGNERS: G Player
and Ian Woosnam

GREEN FEES: BSR -
£45; Lighthouse - £40;
Thracian TBC

CONTACT: www.
capekaliakra.com has
links to all three courses

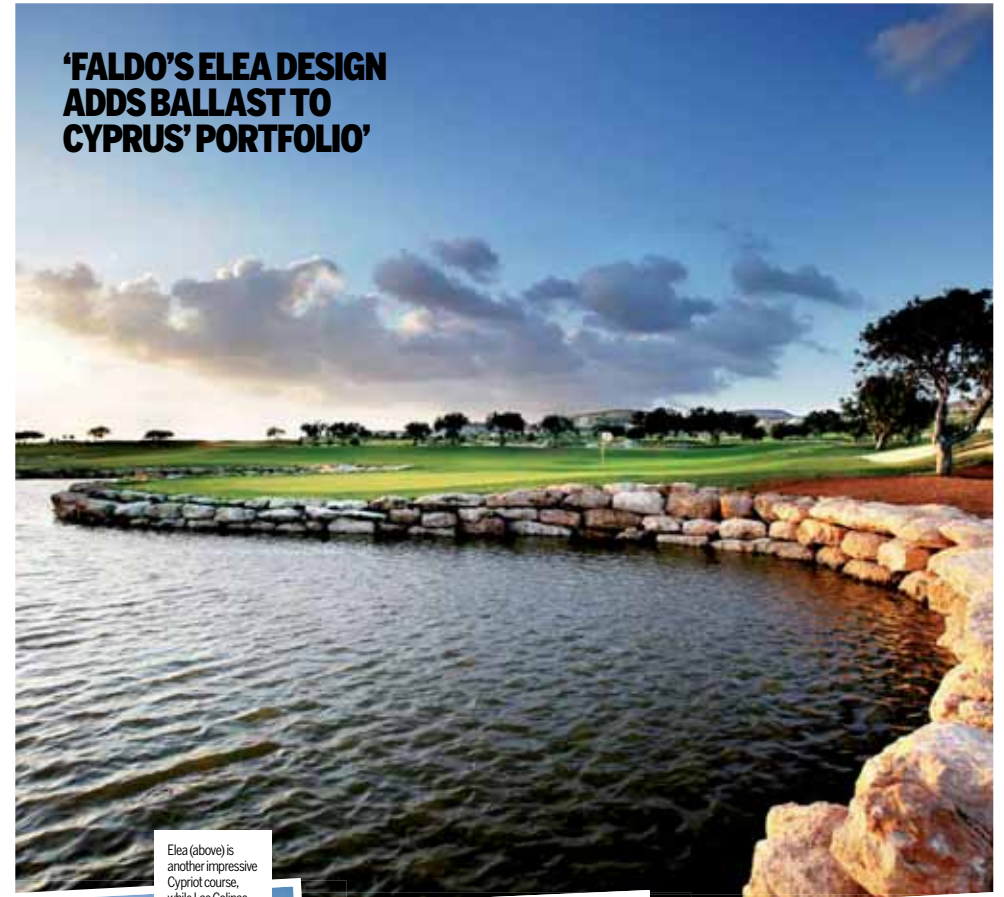
THE LOWDOWN:

Cape Kaliakra is a beautiful spot on the Black Sea, 500km east of Sofia. It's the third biggest Bulgarian port, and it's now home to three terrific new courses: the links-style Lighthouse (September 2008), the exacting Black Sea Rama (May 2008) and the soon-to-open Thracian Cliffs. The courses are blessed with endless, magnificent sea views from the height of 200m from Cape Kaliakra to Cape Galata on the Black Sea.

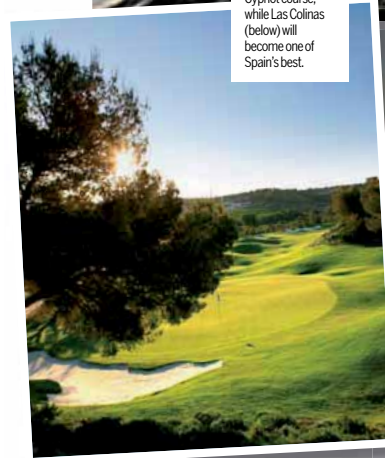
THEY SAY: The Lighthouse is a prestigious links style course and will become the signature feature of one of Europe's premier resorts. In 2009 Black Sea Rama won the 'International Courses' category of the 2009 Development of the Year Awards.

GW VERDICT: This quality of golf would cost you hundreds of pounds if the courses were in Portugal. Player insists Thracian Cliffs, due to open in May 2011, is destined to become one of the world's top three.

'FALDO'S ELEA DESIGN ADDS BALLAST TO CYPRUS' PORTFOLIO'



Elea (above) is another impressive Cypriot course, while Las Colinas (below) will become one of Spain's best.



Yas Links (right) is invariably in excellent condition, while Saadiyat Beach (left) just keeps on raising the bar.

FIVE EXCITING NEW BRITISH COURSES

No need for a plane to play these

MAR HALL

CURRENT STATUS: Open for play
DESIGNER: Dave Thomas

GREEN FEES: £75 (includes lunch)
0141 812 9999 www.marhall.com

Mar Hall is a luxury five-star golf & spa resort set in a tranquil 240-acre woodland estate 10 minutes from Glasgow Airport. It has 53 individual bedrooms, a comprehensive spa and a championship course which benefits from spectacular views of the River Clyde and the Kilpatrick Hills. The Earl of Mar parkland course was designed by Dave Thomas.

ROCKCLIFFE

CURRENT STATUS: Open for play
DESIGNER: Marc Westenborg

GREEN FEES: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for £45 in 2010
01325 729999 www.rockcliffehall.com

Rockcliffe has been built by the owner of nearby football club Middlesbrough, Steve Gibson, and has one of Europe's longest courses, designed by one of Hawtree Ltd's architects Marc Westenborg. It has five different tees, so is playable for all. The River Tees winds its way through this woodland course.

HEYTHROP PARK

CURRENT STATUS: Open for play

DESIGNER: Mackenzie & Ebert

GREEN FEES: Mon-Fri £50, Sat & Sun £70

01608 673488, www.heythropparkgolf.co.uk
Heythrop Park in Oxfordshire is a distinguished new course in the beautiful Cotswolds countryside. It stretches to over 7000 yards off the tips as it meanders through ancient woodland, lakes and streams.

ROWALLAN CASTLE

CURRENT STATUS: Open for play

Designer: Colin Montgomerie

GREEN FEES: Until February, £30 (includes soup)

01563 530 550, www.rowallancastle.com

Rowallan Castle in Ayrshire opened this summer. Rowallan is a 7000-yard championship course which Colin Montgomerie routed through the swathes of 1000-year-old yew trees. Rowallan also has a 19th hole, 'The Decider', a 155-yard par 3.









TRUMP INTERNATIONAL

CURRENT STATUS: In planning

DESIGNER: Martin Hawtree

GREEN FEES: 01358 743 300, www.trumpgolfscotland.com

This contentious development by the American billionaire has enjoyed more green lights than reds recently and Trump's dream looks set to be realised. The land is so exceptional it would be very surprising if Hawtree's expertise doesn't produce a masterpiece.

<p>13</p>  <p>AUSTRALIA LOST FARMS TASMANIA</p> <p>CURRENT STATUS: In construction</p> <p>DESIGNER: Ben Crenshaw/Bill Coore</p> <p>GREEN FEES: -</p> <p>CONTACT: +61-3-6356-0094, www.bambougledunes.com</p> <p>THE LOWDOWN: Tom Doak created the first course at Bamboulge Dunes and it is recognised as one of the finest courses in the world. Now the club is adding a second layout, The Lost Farms. It will be designed by Ben Crenshaw and Bill Coore. Having created the likes of Bandon Trails, it's difficult not to be very excited about Coore & Crenshaw's latest project.</p> <p>THEY SAY: Bamboulge Dunes Golf Club is an experience that strikes all the senses. With the sun on your back, the wind in your hair, the whiff of sea salt and the roar of the ocean you'll be captivated by everything which Mother Nature has to offer.</p> <p>GW VERDICT: This is Coore & Crenshaw's first overseas project since Indonesia in 1995. Their design associate Dave Axland and shaping specialist Keith Riebb are on the site and the initial images look amazing.</p>	<p>14</p>  <p>CYPRUS ELEA GOLF CLUB</p> <p>CURRENT STATUS: Open for play</p> <p>DESIGNER: Nick Faldo</p> <p>GREEN FEES: £65-£100</p> <p>CONTACT: +357 26 202004, www.eleestate.com</p> <p>THE LOWDOWN: Sir Nick Faldo's latest design sits on hills overlooking the Mediterranean. It has been routed through rolling countryside, and features imposing weathered outcrops of limestone and mature carob and olive trees which give definition.</p> <p>THEY SAY: All at Faldo Design are proud of our own achievement here. We have created a course that offers not only strategic golf in a beautiful setting, but is also very sympathetic to its environment. This is a course that sits in harmony with its landscape.</p> <p>GW VERDICT: Cyprus is a wonderful all-year-round golf destination yet is just over four hours from the British winter and Faldo's new track adds welcome ballast to the island's portfolio of courses. It looks terrific already.</p>	<p>15</p>  <p>MOROCCO GOLF DE MOGADOR</p> <p>CURRENT STATUS: Open/in construction</p> <p>DESIGNER: Gary Player</p> <p>GREEN FEES: From £50</p> <p>CONTACT: +212 524 47 92 30, www.golfdemogador.com</p> <p>THE LOWDOWN: Located in the beautiful historic port city of Essaouira on Morocco's Atlantic coastline, Gary Player has just finished the first of two courses at Mogador. The second is due to open before the year is out. Add in Royal Dar Es Salam, El Jadida Royal, Royal Agadir, Royal Mohammedia and Royal Marrakech and Morocco has many options.</p> <p>THEY SAY: "I am blown away by the beauty of what we have created here in Essaouira, and my greatest hope is that the course increases tourism and creates jobs for the warm and gracious people of Morocco," said Player after playing the inaugural round there.</p> <p>GW VERDICT: Player wanted to create a course which was fun as well as challenging. He has used the existing sand dunes and vegetation to the full and, with its scenic ocean views, is a charming prospect.</p>	<p>16</p>  <p>EGYPT THE ALLEGRIA</p> <p>CURRENT STATUS: Open for play</p> <p>DESIGNER: Greg Norman</p> <p>GREEN FEES: £90</p> <p>CONTACT: +202 3857 3939, www.allegriacairo.com</p> <p>THE LOWDOWN: The Allegria opened for play in July this year and is located in a luxury residential development on the outskirts of Cairo.</p> <p>THEY SAY: The Signature Norman designed course features streams, rock features, vegetation and undulating scenery. Norman's team introduced innovative methods to utilise the greatest number of trees on the site rather than eliminate them.</p> <p>GW VERDICT: The course has enhanced the residential development and a five-star hotel and spa will open in 2013. Combined with Egypt's fabulous climate, The Allegria has all the ingredients to be a massive hit.</p>	<p>17</p>  <p>HOLLAND THE DUTCH</p> <p>CURRENT STATUS: Open for play</p> <p>DESIGNER: Colin Montgomerie</p> <p>GREEN FEES: Members and members' guests only.</p> <p>CONTACT: + 31 88 33 99 120, www.thedutch.nl</p> <p>THE LOWDOWN: The Dutch is a new 18-hole course at Spijk, near Gorinchem, 40km east of Rotterdam. Construction began in early 2008 and rigorous land shaping was required to change what was flat farmland into a course of undulating fairways, featuring many bumps and hollows. The land is below sea level so many water features - several lakes and many canals - have been incorporated. This member's club opened in October 2010.</p> <p>THEY SAY: "When I saw how fast the course was running it was really impressive. The greenkeeper has done a fantastic job and I am certain it will quickly gain a prominent position in all rankings of top courses. It is a real challenge for everyone," said Monty.</p> <p>GW VERDICT: Monty reckons there is not a bad hole on The Dutch (EGD again involved). It's an inland links which appears not totally unlike Carton House in Ireland. From such a featureless framework, it is an impressive effort.</p>	<p>18</p>  <p>VIETNAM MONTGOMERIE AND DANANG</p> <p>CURRENT STATE: Open for play</p> <p>DESIGNERS: Norman and Montgomerie</p> <p>GREEN FEES: Danang £60, Montgomerie £45</p> <p>CONTACT: www.dananggolfclub.com & montgomerielinks.com</p> <p>THE LOWDOWN: There were already 28 courses in Vietnam when, within a few months this year, two superstar layouts opened. Wind-blown dunes and indigenous vegetation give a heathland-links feel.</p> <p>THEY SAY: When Norman checked in on the progress of his Dunes Course in March this year he said: "The fact is, you'd be doing a very poor job to make a boring course out of a site like this." The Montgomerie Links was also built on first-class golfing terrain.</p> <p>GW VERDICT: Vietnam was vastly underrated before this year - and with these two new tracks it is now one of the best Asian destinations. The natural landscape is perfect for creating stunning courses.</p>	<p>19</p>  <p>USA THE PRAIRIE CLUB, NEBRASKA</p> <p>CURRENT STATUS: Open for play</p> <p>DESIGNERS: T Lehman & G Marsh</p> <p>GREEN FEES: £135</p> <p>CONTACT: 888.402.1101, www.theprairieclub.com</p> <p>THE LOWDOWN: The Prairie Club opened in May and has already been described as "the next frontier in golfing". It is located near Valentine, Nebraska, in the heart of the Sandhills - a region about the size of Scotland that is known for its distinctive sand dunes topography.</p> <p>THEY SAY: The Prairie Club will offer two 18-holes, and a 10-hole, par 3 course. The Dunes was designed by Tom Lehman and it is marked by dramatic elevation changes.</p> <p>GW VERDICT: Simply awesome. Take a minute to check out the website and you'll see why. Oh, and when you play the Horse Course there are no tees - the player with the honour decides the spot from which you tee it up.</p>	<p>20</p>  <p>RUSSIA AGALAROV COUNTRY CLUB</p> <p>CURRENT STATUS: Open for play</p> <p>DESIGNER: Cal Olson</p> <p>GREEN FEES: TBC</p> <p>CONTACT: +7 926 800 14 36, www.agalarovestates.com</p> <p>THE LOWDOWN: Agalarov opened in autumn 2010 and is Moscow's first fully-integrated international golf resort, offering a full range of social, recreational and sport facilities. The course is the brainchild of Araz Agalarov, one of the richest men in Russia. It was designed by American Cal Olson, who has been involved at every stage; and who, unsurprisingly, has created a big, target golf-style course which requires long, accurate hitting.</p> <p>THEY SAY: Set on 320 hectares of rich fertile land, the vast amounts of water on the 18-hole championship course creates both a natural calm feel and provides the golfer with several risk and reward challenges. This is one of the finest developments in Russia.</p> <p>GW VERDICT: This is a seriously well-appointed golf resort with a big American-style course dominated by water. A nice place to base yourself, play some good golf and take in the sights of one of the world's great cities.</p>
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