

Golf tourism

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Simon and Louise Hudson

Contents

Profile of golf tourists worldwide	28
America	29
Canada	30
Europe	30
Asia	32
Understanding golf tourists	35
Women golfers	38
Influences on the demand for golf tourism	39
Spending habits of golf tourists	41
Trends in consumer behaviour influencing golf tourism	43
1. Learning and enrichment	43
2. Environmentally-friendly products	45
3. Nostalgia	46
4. Health-consciousness	47
5. Customization	47
6. Convenience and speed	48
7. Corporate and social responsibility	48
8. Spiritual enlightenment	49
9. Service quality	49
10. Experiences	50
References	54
Index	56



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Design and setting by P.K. McBride

2 The Golf Tourist

Spotlight: Legend Golf and Safari Resort

Miss Worlds promoting Legend Golf and Safari Resort in South Africa, courtesy of Legend Golf and Safari Resort



Legend Golf and Safari Resort is raising the bar in providing five-star accommodation, luxury real estate opportunities, celebrity connections and topnotch activities for golfers and their spouses. While other clubs employ one pro golfer to design and endorse their course, Legend was able to attract 18 golf celebrities to design a hole each, representing the main golfing nations of the world.

The Legend Golf and Safari Resort is in the Waterberg Region of the Limpopo Province of South Africa, encompassing the Entabeni Safari Conservancy within its 22,000 hectares. It opened for golf in March 2009, with a grand opening scheduled for later in the year. The Resort combines the culture and wildlife of the African bushveld lifestyle with championship golf, a golf academy, a driving range, hotel, recreational and conference facilities and a wellness centre. Tourists no longer have to choose between a golfing holiday or a safari – they can do both here in a rarefied enclave designed to minimize the impact on the natural environment.

The Limpopo area was formerly home to the ancient kingdom of Monomatapa at Mapungubwe followed by a second city now known as the Great Zimbabwean Ruins. This heritage is emphasized in Legend's promotional literature as well as the architecture of the resort. The Eugene Marais Museum and Pedi Cultural Village within the grounds pay homage to the myths, legends, history and archaeology of the area's people. The resort's architecture – a modern take on local stone and brick, rounded towers - blends into the environment and the golf course has breathtaking views with the Waterberg Mountains as a backdrop.

As well as the Big Five – lion, leopard, rhinoceros, buffalo and elephant – the area boasts 55 mammal species, 300 plant species, 380 bird species, countless insects, reptiles and amphibians over five diverse eco-systems – grassland, bushveld, forest, mountain and riverbed.

The golf course is an 18-hole championship course, the longest in South Africa at 7748 metres for tournament play and 6534 metres for daily play. Each hole features five different tees to allow for both professionals and amateurs. The designs of the 18 world famous golfers have been brought to reality by David Riddle. Each designer's wishes were moulded from the landscape by Riddle who has now also taken on the mantle of Director of Golf.

The first hole has been designed by local hero, Trevor Immelman. Hole three was designed by Jim Furyk (USA) and the fourth by Germany's Bernhard Langer. Colin Montgomerie (Scotland) planned the par 4 sixth hole and Canada's Mike Weir provided the variety of length and angle for the tee positions at the seventh. In a clever representation of all the chief golfing nations of the world, other notable names include Camilo Villejas, Justin Rose, Vijay Singh, Padraig Harrington, Ian Woosnam and Sergio Garcia.

But the unique 19th hole is Legend's piece de resistance. Conceived by Graham Cooke of the UK and designed by Riddle, the Extreme 19th is the longest, most dramatic par 3 in the world, set high up on the Hanglip Mountain with the tee reached only by helicopter. Measuring 400 metres, it is played from a vertical height of also 400 metres after a short flight up to the escarpment. There are three tee boxes and plans for four separate cameras with tracking equipment to enable players to follow the flight of their ball which takes an incredible 27 seconds to reach the ground. The fairway is contoured to funnel the ball to the green below which is shaped like the map of Africa. Golfers can opt to add this hole onto their 18 or play it as a one-off experience for \$350 with the lure of \$1 million for a hole-in-one. The price tag includes the heli ride, a special certificate plus a range of unique products and of course the six balls you get to launch into infinity!

Legend Golf & Safari Resort also houses a Golf Academy and Family Golf Centre, including a full 400 metre driving range, pitching facility and chipping and putting greens. PGA professionals direct the training programmes with tuition available for all levels and ages. A 10-hole, par 3 Tribute Course is another exceptional feature of this amazing golf facility and has been modelled on the best par 3 holes in the world. No self-respecting golf resort is without a spa these days and the Fountain of Youth Wellness Centre typically offers treatments, relaxation, fitness, yoga, meditation and aromatherapy, with customized programmes for diet, fitness and lifestyle.

Just two hours' drive from Pretoria, accessibility is one of Legend's advantages. The Legend air strip accommodates small fixed wing aircraft and of course there is a helicopter onsite. Johannesburg is just a three-hour drive away.

In addition to Big 5 game drives, guests can visit the Botanical Gardens, the Legend Ranger Training School and the traditional Pedi Village. The Field of Legends is a sports training facility focusing on soccer, rugby, netball, gymnastics, hockey, tennis and cricket. Legend is approaching tennis and swimming stars to endorse these products, too.

Well-heeled guests can even buy their own piece of the legend, with plots from 3500 square feet to 3.5 hectares. Before official golf opening, almost half of the plots had been sold mainly to South African investors. Starting from around

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