
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 top-notch 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. Since its launch in March 2009, the Resort has combined 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 Vilejas, 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. Starting from around \$300,000 per plot, buyers need another \$300,000 to build the house within an 18-month period, choosing

from four blueprints. Each home will also have four separate guest villas in its domain, all of which can be entered into the rental pool. The low-rise architecture is being blended into the natural surroundings. Legend Golf & Safari resort communications director, Pete Richardson stayed optimistic throughout the 2007-2009 worldwide recession in the hope that it would have a small effect on the project. Fortunately, his hopes held true, the Legend Golf and Safari Resort has risen to the top of the marketplace in golf resorts and real estate in the world..

With its promise to be culturally and environmentally friendly, The Legend Foundation was founded as a non-profitable entity. Its objectives include creating a sustainable financial model focusing on the development of the disadvantaged communities in the area through sport and skill development as well as assisting with the social uplifting of neighbouring populations. The Entabeni Nature Guide Training School, Legend Hospitality School and Legend Wildlife Centre have already been established, with sports academies, arts and crafts centres, nurseries and clinics planned for the future. The well-being of the community is at the very heart of the Legend project and enshrined in the ethos of the development.

The Legend Group (part of the IFA Hotels & Resorts portfolio) has been involved with game and safari lodges, coastal hotels, country lodges, city hotels and cultural villages in four of South Africa's nine provinces since 2000. No stranger to guerrilla marketing tactics and celebrity endorsement, Legend invited 112 Miss World participants to add some female cachet to the Golf and Safari Resort in December 2008. Their six-day programme involved ranger skills, wildlife lessons, cooking seminars, survival training, tree-planting and eco-awareness as well as golf instruction. This was great promotion for the new venture since 112 Miss Worlds gave Legend access to unrivalled media publicity in 112 countries. 'In addition we were able to specifically target the 18 core golfing countries,' said Richardson. 'For example, we photographed Miss Scotland on Colin Montgomerie's hole, right by the plaque with his name and were able to send that out in national press releases.'

Sources

Telephone interview with Legend's Communications Director, Pete Richardson, 20 January, 2009.

'Legend Golf Resort', *Golf Course Architecture*, March 2008, p. 63.

www.legend-resort.com; www.legendlodges.co.za; www.ifahotelsresorts.com.

Profile of golf tourists worldwide

Golfers worldwide are predominately male, middle-aged or in their early retirement years, although this profile is changing slightly with more females entering the sport. Golf tourists also earn well above average incomes and are typically business owners, managers or independent professionals. Golf tourists also tend to be even older and wealthier than the average golfer. However, there are some variations worldwide, so the next section will take a closer look at golf tourists from different countries.

America

From recent research in the USA, the average age for a golf participant is around 37 years (see Table 2.1). Around 75 per cent of US participants are males and 25 per cent females, and participation is directly related to income levels. Participation rates at incomes between \$25,000 and \$60,000 are around 8 per cent and 20 per cent respectively, but when income levels rise to \$150,000, the participation rate increases to around 30 per cent. Table 2.2 outlines golfing participation by category of workers. Participation numbers in the USA have been around the 30 million mark for the last decade. However, regular or avid golfers, playing at least 25 rounds annually, comprise a small segment of participants, but account for 65 per cent of golf-related spending. As a result, regular golfers, rather than occasional golfers, tend to have a greater influence on the industry, as do exogenous factors, such as weather conditions and wealth levels. It is estimated that there are about 13 million of these core golfers in the USA, and half of them regularly take a golfing holiday.

Table 2.1: Golf segmentation by age in the USA (Source: IBISWorld, 2008, 2013)

Age category	Golf participants (%age)
5-11	8
12-17	9
18-29	18
30-39	21
40-49	19
50-59	12
60-64	4
65+	9
Total	100

Table 2.2: Golf segmentation by working category in the USA (Source: IBISWorld, 2008, 2013)

Category	Golf participants (%age)
Professional/management/administration	39
Clerical/sales	15
Blue collar	24
Other	6
Retired	16
Total	100

As golfers grow older, they tend to play more often, with those over 65 averaging more than one round per week. Older core golfers spend more on golf and are more likely to take golf holidays than those under 35 years of age. On average, American golfers who take golf-related trips are older, earn more, spend more on golf-related items, and play almost three times as often as the non-travelling segment. They are also more likely to be retired and to be members of private clubs. Of those working, almost half work in management jobs, where golf is