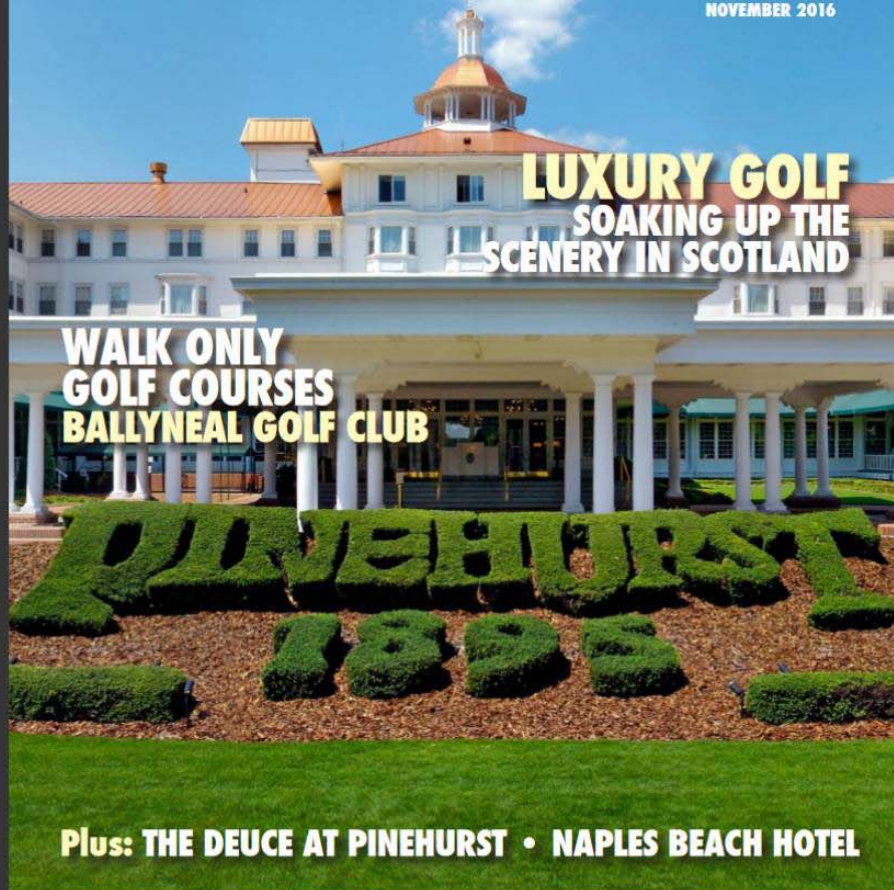


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GOLF VACATIONS

NOVEMBER 2016



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Connoisseurs Scotland Presents a Luxury Golf Experience in the Home of Golf



Turnberry 9th Green

by DAVID R. HOLLAND

Scotland can be exhilarating and exhausting.

Weary from 17,050 steps and five miles a day, walking through a rugged landscape of legendary links golf courses, one must stop from time to time to soak up the scenery, feel cold rain and wind on your face, and observe a history that is ancient.

My lineup, prepared by Connoisseurs Scotland reads like the wish list of avid golfers from across the globe: Royal Aberdeen, Castle Stuart, The Carrick on Loch Lomond, Trump International and Trump Turnberry.

Almost unimaginable, I'm facing a par 3 of 180 yards (can play 248 yards) on Trump Turnberry's redesigned Ailsa Course's ninth hole. But something's different.

Scan the panorama – the iconic Turnberry Lighthouse is in view. Ailsa Craig looms over the left shoulder. Stunning describes the rugged Ayrshire Coastline and the Firth of Clyde. The Irish Sea is emerald.

What's different is there's bright sunshine. There's no wind. And it is shirt-sleeve weather. The air is so clear you can see a distant Northern Ireland and the Isle of Arran. Even Machrihinish Golf Club is on the far horizon.

The last time I played Turnberry 15 years ago it was raining sideways – three layers and a rain suit barely made it bearable. Today is so perfect the locals recited an old saying about calm days at Turnberry – "Scotsmen will be falling down because they are so used to leaning into the wind".

Talk about dreaming. But my foursome didn't wake up. We just kept playing one of the most famous golf courses in the world. After golf we gathered in the famous Turnberry Clubhouse for lunch at the Duel in The Sun Restaurant as singles Sunday began for the 2016 Ryder Cup.

Here's a capsule look at the golf courses we played on our Connoisseurs Scotland holiday:

Royal Aberdeen's Balgownie Links

The sixth oldest golf links in the world, Royal Aberdeen dates back to 1780, and claims to be one of the truest links land layouts in golf.

It is a stern test when the North Sea wind is whipping. Hills, sand and sea frame numerous tight fairways and blind shots on the outward nine where olden day greats Old Tom Morris, Walter Hagen and Henry Cotton have walked along with modern day stars Tony Lema, Tony Jacklin, Jack Nicklaus and Tom Watson. Justin Rose won the 2014 Scottish Open here and it also hosted the 2011 Walker Cup.



Royal Aberdeen GC, 2nd Hole

The first glimpse of this classic's toughness came during the 2005 Senior British Open when Tom Watson won the televised event with four-under-par. The 10th hole turn has been described by many as one of the best in the game. The tee shot is blind over a massive dune, but it is a short 354-yard hole. The fairway features humps and bumps down to the green that is fronted by an offshoot of the River Don.

Trump International Golf Links

Trump International Golf Links just north of Royal Aberdeen and south of Cruden Bay was weaved through the largest sand dunes in the country right on the North Sea. The Great Dunes of Scotland were perfect for a world-class golf course on 600 acres opened in 2012 with the architects listed as Donald Trump and Dr. Martin Hawtree.

Views from atop every tee box climb are breathtaking and the 205-yard, par-3 third hole opens to a view of the sea as you walk down to the green where you can hear the waves crashing on the beach right

Trump International Golf Links, Hole 3



next to the raised green site. The finale, a par 5 of 651 yards has a minefield of 18 bunkers on your way to the green. Almost every hole could be the signature hole.

Trump Turnberry, The Ailsa Course

One of the world's most spectacular resorts, Trump Turnberry has five-star luxury, an updated layout, golf academy, spa, restaurants and new pitch and putt course. The historic views of Ailsa Craig and the Turnberry lighthouse are a bucketlist event.

Set on the ruins of the 13th century Robert the Bruce's Castle, the Turnberry lighthouse has been heralded as a legendary beacon to passing ships and to golfers from across the globe. And the golf

course has hosted four historic British Open championships won by Tom Watson, Greg Norman, Nick Price and Stuart Cink.

Finishing on 18 one can't help but think of Watson, who almost won a second title here in 2009 in a four-hole playoff with Cink. Trying to become the oldest major champion in history, his approach barely leaked over the green forcing a tricky recovery that became a heartbreaking bogey five. For the first time all week his 59-year-old nerves appeared – the putt to save par never had a chance.

Martin Ebert, golf course architect, did Ailsa's redesign – part of a \$500-million makeover of a 149-room luxury property acquired by Trump in 2014.

Castle Stuart Golf Links

Kingsbarns developer and co-designer Mark Parsinen teamed with Gill Hanse to lay out Castle Stuart on land where Mary Queen of Scots returned to Scotland in 1561 after the death of her husband the Dauphin in France. And some 450 years later modern-day golfers are playing the eighth best course in Scotland, opened in 2009 with an outstanding art deco clubhouse.

Five holes stretch along the Moray Firth within sight of Kessock Bridge, Chanarray Lighthouse and Fort George, home of the Black Watch. Heather, marram grass and gorse come in to play along with deep bunkers with wispy grasses on top of the faces – not all



Turnberry Ailsa

The Carrick Golf Club Nos. 15, 16, 17



are rivetted but they mimic the look when sheep used dune faces for shelter from the wind.

Castle Stuart is framed perfectly in the distance on No. 4, a par four of 191 yards. Most mortal golfers land a short shot favoring the high left side hoping for a kick to the pin. Only skilled golfers can aim for the pin with enough spin to stop the tee shot. No spin and your ball rolls over the back of the green creating a tough recovery.

Castle Stuart, just eight miles from Inverness, has hosted three Scottish Opens – the last in 2013 when Phil Mickelson won the tournament a week before he won The Open Championship at Murifield.

The Carrick on Loch Lomond

Grouse and pheasants might meet you in the early morning on the pure nature walk that is known as The Carrick on Loch Lomond. Owned by the nearby Cameron House, the extraordinary new clubhouse also houses a spa and Claret Jug restaurant.

Designed by golf architect Doug Carrick, this golf club opened in 2007, includes a Highlands nine and Lowlands nine, routed through Scotland's first National Park in a heathland style. They tell you this course has "the most beautiful water hazard in world of golf, Loch Lomond! We suggest you play around it." Ben Lomond, a famous Scottish mountain, is in the distance.

The finish along the banks of Loch Lomond are memorable, but Tappit Doon, the par-3, 199-yard, 14th hole is the most fun. An elevated tee provides all the views as you swing for a green way downhill surrounded by five tantalizing and wicked bunkers.

The Halfway House is one of the most unique in golf, too. Named The Highland Laddie, this stop between holes nine and 10 provides refreshments and even a dram of single-malt scotch. Formerly a London River Thames boat the Highland Laddie was installed in 2013 and has proved to be a popular addition to the course.

Connoisseurs Scotland is your gateway to five-star Scottish luxury

Connoisseurs Scotland is not a buddies trip on a budget. This vacation gives you luxury hotels, gourmet dining and golf on some of the best courses Scotland has to offer. It's like the most expensive Glengayne single-malt scotch on the market.

They can also book chauffeured ground travel provided by Little's. Check them out at <http://www.littles.co.uk>.





Cameron House



Castle Stuart



Turnberry 11th Green

Included in this diverse collection are four world-class golf hotels, four city center hotels, three country house hotels, three castles, a country inn, the world's most luxurious railway train and a small luxury cruise liner which explores the waters that lie off the coast of Scotland.

The hotels list includes the Old Course Hotel in St. Andrews and Gleneagles, where I stayed on a previous trip with a round of golf on The Old Course and Gleneagles' PGA Centenary Course, home of the 2014 Ryder Cup.

On this trip we were spoiled by Cameron House, which owns The Carrick Course. Other five-star hotels included Marcliffe House (Royal Aberdeen), MacLeod House (Trump International Golf Links), Rocpool Reserve (Castle Stuart), Trump Turnberry (Ailsa Course) and The Glasshouse in Edinburgh.

Dining included One Devonshire Gardens in Glasgow; Boat House and Cameron Grill at Cameron House; Claret Jug at The Carrick Club; Marcliffe's Conservatory Restaurant; The Brasserie at Trump International Golf Links; Chez Roux at Rocpool Reserve; 1906 Restaurant and Duel in the Sun Restaurant at Trump Turnberry; and The Glasshouse Restaurant (Private Dining Room) in Edinburgh.

Log on to <http://www.luxuryScotland.co.uk> for complete information on Connoisseurs Scotland and how you can book your golf trip to Scotland.

The experience will leave you feeling like the Champion Golfer of The Year.



Halfway House