

GOLF
WORLD

TOP 100 COURSES CONTINENTAL EUROPE

DUNAS COURSE, TERRAS
DA COMPORTA, LISBON

THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE
RANKINGS IN THE GAME

NEXT 100
COURSES

For the first time
ranked 101-200

THE CREAM OF MAINLAND EUROPE

Eight new entries and two re-entries in the most
comprehensive continental ranking ever produced

WELCOME

The Continental Top 100 is my favourite ranking to compile and my view has not changed after working on this 2023 update.

I relish it so much because it always feels as if there is more opportunity than in other lists to tell our readers something they might not know. Of course we pore over every position within the GB&I list, and the 100 names that make up that list are obviously important, but as many as 90 courses in it could possibly be named by many golfers.

Continental Europe is a bit different. The size of the area means that getting to the best courses in each country takes a lot of time, money and determination. As a result, far fewer people across the whole of the continent have knowledge of a lot of the names outside those in their own country.

I've been doing this for 10 years now and I've seen 122 of the top 130 and 138 of the top 150. Having this breadth of knowledge is, in my opinion, essential to meld together the various country-by-country rankings we have.

As a result, I have no doubt this list is the most accurate representation of

the best courses in Continental Europe we have produced.

The final 100 shows more change than I expected when I first started pulling this together a few months ago. There are two reasons for that: firstly, we have some very high new entries and when that happens everything below them is affected. Secondly, a few courses I personally played this year have made some significant moves – some have made improvements, but I wouldn't pretend that a couple of others were modestly positioned previously.

I play a more significant role in this ranking than any other courses list but I do also have input from other, similarly well-travelled golfers, namely David Jones, Nigel Butler, Suzanne Butler, Dirk Schaeffer, Borje Laurinsson, Gunnel Laurinsson and David Truman.

They have also helped me compile a 'Next 100' that, for the first time, ranks courses 101-200. That is a huge feat in itself and one that illustrates how competitive the continent's elite golf has become. There are courses that have been in the Top 100 of

previous rankings that are now clinging on to a position in the Top 150.

Indeed, the depth of golf on the continent that I have seen encourages me to think a Top 200 has merit. That's for another day, though.

Chris Bertram, Top 100 Editor

HOW WE RANKED THE COURSES

The criteria used to assess the courses can be found in full on todays-golfer.com, because there is no room for it all here.

In summary, the categories are:

■ **Design** (40 marks), including green complexes and routing

■ **Setting** (15 marks)

■ **Memorability** of holes (15)

■ **Playability** for the majority of golfers (10)

■ **Consistency** of holes (10)

■ **Presentation** of tees, fairways, bunkers and greens (10)

Russian courses Raevo, Gorki and Mill Creek were not considered for this list, for obvious reasons.



Royal Zoute

1 MORFONTAINE (GRAND PARCOURS)

🇫🇷 PARIS, FRANCE

Design **37** Setting **12** Memorability **14** Playability **8**
Consistency **10** Presentation **8** **TOTAL 89**

Another year, another number one spot for the 'Big Course' at Morfontaine. It might not be exciting to have it as the top course on the continent once again, but we are in no doubt that is the case. Carved out of a forest, with an abundance of heather and set down on sandy soil, you feel as if you could be on one of the greats of Surrey or Berkshire when you play this Tom Simpson design. The Englishman routed the 'Big Course' beautifully across this terrain, leaving many of the natural rock outcrops in place, which adds to the atmosphere of this heathland masterpiece. It is far from onerous and yet you will struggle to put a tidy score together because of the nuance, strategy and angles in the long game, and then Simpson's cunning greens. A step back in time that it is a privilege to take.

2 UTRECHT DE PAN

🇳🇱 UTRECHT, NETHERLANDS

Design **35** Setting **12** Memorability **14** Playability **8**
Consistency **10** Presentation **8** **TOTAL 87**

Another course which would sit very comfortably among the elite of Surrey and Berkshire's heathlands, De Pan is well established in our World Top 100. It has holes that lose nothing in comparison with those at Sunningdale, Woking, St George's Hill et al. A wonderful experience between the pines, heather and firm, sandy turf. Another strategic masterpiece, this time from a different Englishman, Harry Colt. "It was a joy to play among the pines and heather of this wonderful undulating course," said one panellist, "the flow of the holes is perfect."



Utrecht de Pan



Fontainebleau

3 FONTAINEBLEAU

🇫🇷 PARIS, FRANCE

Design **33** Setting **12** Memorability **13** Playability **7**
Consistency **9** Presentation **8** **TOTAL 82**

Another Simpson course, albeit here he was engaged to revise the initial design by Julien Chantepie. Fontainebleau, like those above it in the list, winds through an English-feeling forest of pine, oak and beech with rocky outcrops and heather punctuating the holes. Fabulous green complexes, superb variety, memorable holes, sandy, soil and a wonderful finish – this is high-calibre heathland golf.

4 ROYAL HAGUE

🇳🇱 THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS

Design **33** Setting **12** Memorability **12** Playability **7**
Consistency **9** Presentation **9** **TOTAL 82**

The final member of an unchanged top four (rest assured, much change follows later...), Royal Hague was laid out by Colt associate

Charles Allison, restored by Frank Pont and is a seaside course that enjoys magnificent views thanks to a number of notable elevation changes. Hard, fast-running ground and plenty of blind shots, especially if you get out of position, and some enjoyably unique holes.

5 LOFOTEN LINKS

🇳🇴 GIMSOYSAND, NORWAY

Design **30** Setting **15** Memorability **15** Playability **6**
Consistency **8** Presentation **7** **TOTAL 81**

The No.1 course in our X Factor list continues its remarkable rise into the top five of the main continental European list. Yes, Lofoten's position is boosted by its staggering setting, but rest assured, location alone would not secure a top-five slot. There are a handful of holes that would grace anything in this list from a technical point of view and at least half a dozen others that you will never forget. One of the continent's bucket-list experiences.



My favourites in FRANCE

By Alex Levy



OK, I have a few to mention here. I'll start with **Golf National**. It is so tough and I love it because of that. You need to hit every shot properly. I like the design and on every tee you say, "If I make a par here it is a good job!" They changed it a little bit last year and it is now more fair, but they can play it with softer or firmer greens so can change the difficulty. It can also get very windy there, adding to the challenge.

Next, **Chantilly**. It is a lovely place, a two-ball course and it is a famous club for us Frenchmen. When it is prepared properly for a tournament, with high rough and firm, quick greens, it is a serious challenge. Linky almost, when it is firm, but when it is soft it becomes a parkland.

Then there is **Terre Blanche**. I've practised there for the past five years and I really like the quality you have on two different kinds of courses. Le Riou is more about the approach shot, the Chateaux is more about longer shots. I like both.

There is also **Vidauban** – a really good course. It has 27 members! I went at the start of January and it is very, very nice. A bit like **Les Bordes**.

I also really like **Hardelet** and I've heard it is even better now so I look forward to going back. I really liked it anyway, so any improvements they make will make it very special.

I also love **Le Touquet** and **Morfontaine**, and **Fontainebleau** is just beautiful. It hosts amateur tournaments and for us it was a dream to play there in events. It's definitely one of my favourites.

I love **Moliets** – the seaside holes there are amazing. My caddie lives five minutes away and he plays there, so I play there when I go to see him and I always enjoy it.

Seignosse is a tough course – I think everyone says that! That long par-5 18th – wow, so tough. **Hossegor** is an old-style English course with dog-legs, so if you drive well you can score well.

Finally, **Dolce Fregate** is where I learned my golf so it has to be on this list. It is such a beautiful course and has some of the best views you will ever see on a golf course.



Valderrama

6 REAL VALDERRAMA

🇪🇸 SOTOGRANDE, SPAIN

Design **30** Setting **12** Memorability **15** Playability **6**
Consistency **8** Presentation **10** **TOTAL 81**

Here is another bucket-list experience! Valderrama is on the wish list of many for

different reasons, though. It has the prestige, the history, and even the intrigue: just how immaculate can it be, how difficult is it to score well among the cork oaks, and what can you produce on the infamous 17th? Those who revel in a pristine, X Factor experience would have it as the No.1.



Les Bordes (New)

7 CHANTILLY (VINEUIL)

NO
CHANGE

🇫🇷 PARIS, FRANCE

Design **34** Setting **12** Memorability **12** Playability **7**
Consistency **8** Presentation **8** **TOTAL 81**

"One of my favourites," beamed one panellist. "It's an enchanting Tom Simpson course set in gently rolling French countryside with a clubhouse to match. You can imagine the course being just the same as it was 100 years ago." With memorable heathland and a woodland setting, expect a little taste of England in northern Paris.

8 LES BORDES (NEW)

NO
CHANGE

🇫🇷 ORLEANS, FRANCE

Design **33** Setting **12** Memorability **13** Playability **7**
Consistency **8** Presentation **8** **TOTAL 81**

The New entered in this position two years ago and we have seen nothing to suggest that was anything but correct. The Gil Hanse design winds through mature forest on gently undulating land and is packed with strategy and presented superbly.

9 TERRAS DA COMPORTA (DUNAS)

🇵🇹 CARVALHAL, PORTUGAL

Design 33 Setting 12 Memorability 13 Playability 8
Consistency 8 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 81**

NEW
ENTRY

Another continental European top 100 with a new entry in the top 10 is a real statement. Again, though, we have no doubt this new course, just south of Lisbon, thoroughly merits this sensational entry. Indeed, if it had had six more months to settle in, it may well have entered higher. Only its infancy is holding it back; if the Dunas course matures as expected, it will rise even higher. If the team there get it, running firm and fast, it could be top five.

The presentation of the course is the only aspect there is any doubt over. Fescue has been used and that is an exciting prospect. Native vegetation has been incorporated in sandy waste areas as

the club seeks a sustainable, least-disturbance philosophy. Both of these aspects are commendable and exciting, but they require assiduous and even bold maintenance techniques to fully pay off.

The bones are there for a World Top 100 contender. David McLay Kidd was given a wonderful site and he has delivered with it. The scale is epic, the holes are varied, distinctive and memorable, the experience thrilling and playable in equal measure.

This is a modern masterpiece in the making. It will be exciting to watch how it progresses.

10 HAMBURGER

🇩🇪 HAMBURG, GERMANY

Design 33 Setting 12 Memorability 12 Playability 8
Consistency 7 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 80**

▲4

“I fell in love straight away,” said one panellist of Hamburger. “The 2nd, 11th and

17th are awesome par 5s and you really wouldn’t be disappointed if you found them on Sunningdale.”

A first top-10 entry for what is clearly the best course in Germany, a Harry Colt heathland which is being restored by Hendrik Hilgert. If that restoration keeps progressing, higher is possible.

11 KENNEMER (B&C)

🇳🇱 ZANDVOORT, NETHERLANDS

Design 33 Setting 12 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 8 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 80**

▼2

“Although you cannot see the sea, this majestic links would fit wonderfully on the Lancashire, Ayrshire or St Andrews coasts,” said one panellist. At Kennemer you play into valleys between the dunes to tempting, slightly hidden greens, or to wonderful false-fronted and raised targets. Imaginative shot making is required throughout.

Terras Da Comporta (Dunas)





McLay Kidd on site at Comporta.

'It reminded me of Bandon Dunes'

In an essay full of insight and detail, architect David McLay Kidd takes us inside the creation of Europe's new superstar, Comporta (Dunas)

The first time I went to the peninsula, I remember having lunch at a cafe right on the beach then wandering around the sand dunes and thinking, "Holy crap, this could be the best site I've seen in continental Europe by far." White sugar sand, umbrella pine trees, scrub on the floor

and looking out at the Atlantic Ocean – it doesn't get better than that. It reminded me of my first visit to Bandon Dunes. It was a great site and it rolled around; heaved and rolled. It wasn't like little rumbly dunes. It was all so big. I thought, "This is amazing. I'm going to get to do this on the coast of

continental Europe." What I didn't realise was that it was going to be another 15 years before it opened.

The owners at that point were the Espirito Santo family and it was kind of stop-start. We cleared the layout then nothing happened for a while. Then we did the earthworks, then nothing happened for a while. Then we came back and we started to build the course. This was already about six years after my first visit. And we got almost finished. We were literally six weeks from finishing, in 2014. We'd worked for a year and were six weeks from finishing. The front nine was totally dialled in. Perfect. We were mowing the greens, playing golf in the evenings. Perfect. We had the back nine ready to grass, ready to do like the next day. And then the Espirito Santo bank went bust, and the house of cards collapsed.

In the space of 24 hours, I flew everyone out of there, left the equipment behind. The course was six weeks from being finished, but six years passed with no-one doing anything, so it just sat there and rotted.

There was a very messy bankruptcy, but eventually Vanguard bought it, three years ago. They called me and asked if I could come and finish it. I flew over. Some of the original employees were still there.

The only thing that changed with the course between 2014 and now was that we were thinking of doing fescue greens and I decided, for various reasons, that it might be better to use bent grass, mainly because Gamble Sands had fescue and Mammoth Dunes had bent and golfers seem to have a

better experience with it. The greens were a little more spicy in their movement because we were going to use fescue. Once we knew we were going to bent grass, we dialled it back from a 9/10 to a 7/10. We've got bent grass and we're on the coast, so it's a little bit windy. So you can't build wild greens with bent grass in a place that has a prevailing wind – the ball would just move.

I sold the original owner on the idea that we had a site perfectly suited to links golf, so it would be a crying shame if we covered it in Bermuda grass, which would have negated the ground game. We're so close to the ocean, only a kilometre back, and we had the best chance of growing fescue in southern Europe.

There's no reason it shouldn't play like a links. We've got a sea breeze, we've got sand, we've got fescue. You usually simply can't grow fescue in southern Europe. This is such a rare opportunity, because of our proximity to the giant air conditioner called the Atlantic. Aerial golf, which is 99% of golf unfortunately, is binary, two-dimensional, paint-by-numbers. The minute you add the ground game, it's like the bloody Matrix. It turns the game into this amazing, dynamic, creative, imaginative experience.

The stars aligned to give us this rare opportunity. And I, as the creative leader of our little troop, didn't want to miss that opportunity. And we had a client that allowed us to 'go for it'. With tens of thousands of courses in continental Europe, the UK and Ireland, you need something that's unique. Mike Keiser (the Bandon Dunes owner) said something a few years

'AERIAL GOLF IS BINARY, TWO-DIMENSIONAL. THE MINUTE YOU ADD THE GROUND GAME IN, IT'S LIKE THE BLOODY MATRIX'

'WHEN YOU'VE GOT A COMPELLING LANDSCAPE, RESTRAINT IS THE HARDEST THING. HOW DO YOU NOT DO TOO MUCH?'

ago and it stuck with me. He said, "Going through a compelling landscape can't help but be successful."

When you start with a compelling landscape, you know it's yours to lose. But in my 35 years of doing this, the thing I've learned most is restraint. We know how to move dirt, shape things and do all sorts of fancy trickery. But actually, when you've got a compelling landscape, restraint is the hardest thing. How do you not do too much? You've got all this equipment and all this money to spend. A lot of it is restraint, not overworking and not over making it.

So it's golf through a compelling landscape, but that has nothing to do with us. The landscape had been there for thousands of years before we arrived. But I think what we have layered on top is trying to engender a fair degree of confidence in the player. I don't want you to be tense and intimidated. I want you to feel aggressive and feel like you could go for it, feel like you could score. And the holes are set up in such a way that, if you take those aggressive lines and don't quite pull it off, you're not going to lose the ball and make an immediate double. There's a pretty good chance that even if you don't pull off the Tiger line, you're still going to have an opportunity to rescue par or bogey out of it. You're not out of the game yet, especially in matchplay. So I really want the players to feel like it's within their ability to actually play golf, to actually have an opportunity for success and where they feel the failure is not fatal. There are choices an average golfer will have the ability to make. Whereas, you know what, a lot of courses,

even those in Scotland that are viewed as extremely strategic, are only really strategic for low handicappers. Average guys are just trying to keep in play. So at Comporta we're trying to bring that thrill of strategy to the average guy. Because the fairways are big enough to do it.

THE KEY INGREDIENTS

The original route was Donald Steel's. I couldn't change a thing (for government planning reasons). I think it was fairly solid. Could it be better? Maybe. Could it be worse? Oh, absolutely. Some things I might have liked to have different, but I couldn't change them and those were the challenges that Conor Walsh and I had to overcome. Because we finished it during Covid, and it was hard for me to travel from the States, I was incredibly reliant on Conor – but we have worked together for years. He gets it.

Hopefully, because we were trying to overcome something that might not have been perfect, you come up with interesting solutions to fix it. It's almost like *Ready, Steady, Cook*. You don't know the ingredients you're going to be given and if you're a really, really good chef, you use your skill and creativity to come up with an amazing meal. The older I get, the more I realise what we are doing is fundamentally some kind of performance art; it's this interactive art piece that golfers get to play on. These art pieces are really important to me. And I take on projects that I think will be good in that portfolio, not projects that just earn the most money.

The front nine goes through some giant rolling sections and plays up, over and

through them. So you can be teeing off on, say, the 7th hole and your tee shot must be 50 feet downhill, then another 30 or 40 feet down to the green front. So that hole might fall 100 feet. The back nine doesn't have anything like that. The biggest difference is probably the 13th tee, which is 30 or 40 feet down. So the front nine has way more aggressive topography than the back, but

the back nine becomes a little more strategic because we weren't being dictated to by the topography; we could start to open up more sand and create more diagonals than you could on the front nine. The front nine has a more 'amped up' topography because of nature but the back probably has a little stronger strategy because we had softer terrain and we could open up more sand.

Golfers enjoy the game on numerous levels. One that is undeniable is just visual appeal. Golfers love to walk on to a tee and absorb the visuals. So when Conor and I are working, we're talking about strategy, playability and fun. It's a riddle that we're trying to get the golfer to solve, but once that is figured out, almost everything else after that is the composition.

Composition starts with framing, then it moves from backdrop to middle distance, then foreground to layering – all of the things any painter would understand. It doesn't have a hell of a lot to do with the playing of the game, it has to do with the visual enjoyment of it, such as leaving native vegetation in certain areas to accentuate a certain spot.

I've argued many times with my peers about what the measure is of a great course. Is it the rankings in a magazine? Is it the financial success of the real estate? Is it the price of the membership? I mean, all of those things are great to have and any designer worth their salt wants all of those things to happen. But fundamentally, the most important thing has to be the golfer's experience and whether they want to do it again. If I could only have one metric, that's the one I would want and have here.

When you build something new you hope it is really cool. The golf media come look at it and hype it up and say it's the best thing since Moses. Golfers can then have an unrealistic set of expectations – but I would always rather that they come with high expectations and then have them exceeded. So, even if you picked this up and plonked it in Oregon or Washington, next to other high-calibre courses, it would be a 'contender'.

There may be an element of snobbery, where people are thinking of Spain and Portugal and wondering, "Can it really be that good?" I think it is – but we're biased... we've spent 15 years working on it.



At Comporta, the punishment for an errant shot is always fair – it will not wreck your round.



The view back down the 18th.

The ultimate playground

The sandy site at Lisbon's Terras da Comporta is perfect for golf, but it needed patience, perseverance and sensitivity to turn it into the world's new superstar

Terras da Comporta's narrative is already a long and intriguing one despite it only just becoming fully open for play – but its story and its legend are only just beginning.

The tale of Comporta stretches back as far as 2008, when Scottish architect David McLay Kidd was introduced to land which he felt, at first sight, was as good as that on which he built the original and much-revered course at Bandon Dunes.

His client was the Espirito Santo bank,

one of Europe's most well-known business dynasties. It was a seemingly perfect combination: an epic piece of terrain, a client with financial muscle, and a world-class architect.

However, it was not a straightforward development. There were false starts in the initial years, but between 2012 and 2014 there was real progress on the development and it was close to completion. However, Espirito Santo ran into financial difficulties and construction stopped.

It lay dormant for six years, until Vanguard Properties acquired the development and reached out to Oregon-based Kidd.

Yet there were still obstacles to overcome. When construction was fully underway, again, the world had to deal with the small matter of a global pandemic.

Kidd was able to make a trip to Portugal with special dispensation from the government, but he was not able to bring his American-based construction crew.

Fortunately, he had the perfect man for the job of finishing what had been started six years earlier: his former staff shaper Conor Walsh, who now runs his own business, decamped to Portugal with his team.

Now, two and a half years later, the Dunas course is fully open and the wait has been worthwhile.

It has been instantly ranked as the number nine course in Continental Europe. To enter such a competitive ranking in the top 10 is nothing short of sensational and is



MY VISION FOR THE DUNAS COURSE

By David McLay Kidd

I'm a giant fan of the short par, the drivable par 4, which Tom Weiskopf brought back in his design career. So, on the front nine we have the 8th hole and it's eminently drivable. You tee off level with the green but the fairway sits maybe 20 feet below you, but there's a speed slot on the left that is actually higher than the green. So if you're feeling lucky, you can try and catch that speed slot off the tee. That might be a couple of hundred yards' carry, but the ball will scoot another 60-70 yards and make it on to the green if you catch it. The green is absolutely massive. So you've got this giant fairway and a huge green on a relatively short, drivable hole. It gives you all sorts of options. Are you going to go for broke and try and put it on the green, or maybe you lay up with a 6-iron and then hit a wedge? Those are choices that an average golfer will have the ability to make. Whereas a lot of courses, even those in Scotland, are extremely strategic, but only for really low-handicappers. At Comporta, we tried to bring that thrill of strategy to the average guy.

'COMPORTA IS A UNIQUE AND BREATHTAKINGLY BEAUTIFUL ECOSYSTEM AND WE HAVE THE OBLIGATION TO PRESERVE IT'

An artist's impression of the clubhouse.



the perfect illustration of just how special the Dunas course is.

Kidd is the first to acknowledge that he struck it lucky with this site. The peninsula on which the course sits is completely sand, populated with only pines and native vegetation. What's more, there is pleasing elevation across the site, giving rise to valleys, which are perfect for all-world golf holes to be built in them.

The site is set back a kilometre from the beach, which is the guidance imposed by the Portuguese government, and travels through a pine forest with a beautiful low heathland dune scrub beneath it and myriad little heathers and short vegetation. So, from Kidd's point of view, he started with an absolutely compelling landscape.

He wanted the course to look and feel weathered and not have an impact on the wider landscape, hence the use of cool-season grasses; rather than using an aggressive Bermuda grass that would creep out into the forest, they used fescues that would be used in Scotland in the summertime. In short, a sand base and grasses that will promote firm, fast golf and a rare ability to use the 'running game' in Continental Europe.

As a champion of sustainable golf, Kidd needed no encouragement or instruction to choose a path of least disturbance on such a wonderful site.

"I would hope that when a golfer finished playing and you ask them what their experience was, they'd talk as much about the landscape they just played through as the golf holes they experienced," he says. "That is exceptionally valuable to us. That is the key to it."

"We embraced all of the native vegetation – we have bunker edges that are wispy, we have bunker bases that have native scrub vegetation growing in them."

"We are using grasses that will limit water use, so everything we've tried to do on the Dunas course is about limiting the inputs and maximising the benefit to the wider landscape."

"The course takes up a very, very small amount of land and will create the resources and impetus to protect a much larger parcel of land."

"That entire coastline is under threat because you've either got non-native pine trees that were planted for timber or paper production, which are obviously not suited, or you have native pine trees that are under threat from a beetle that's killing them. So, infected trees needed to be removed immediately to stop the spread of disease and the trees that are non-native needed to be removed to allow the native trees to thrive – and the course allows those things to happen."

McLay Kidd's ethos was very much in line with that of the whole development. "Comporta is a unique and breathtakingly beautiful ecosystem and we have the obligation to preserve it," says José Cardoso Botelho, CEO of Vanguard Properties. "We are committed to making this project a true example of best practices in the chapter of sustainability, because only by doing that can we ensure a better future for all."

Aware of its responsibilities, Vanguard Properties had no doubts when it came to defining sustainability as the project's founding value. Balance was, therefore,

always emphasised in the development of Terras da Comporta, as environmentally-friendly behaviour and sustainable solutions were adopted.

The characteristics of the local climate and environment and the preservation of biodiversity and nature were guiding principles of an ecological sensibility that is intrinsic to Terras da Comporta.

Two five-star hotels are planned here but will most likely be made of wood. All real estate will be carbon neutral and there will be no concrete in the clubhouse.

The entire real estate will produce solar energy and be able to share it back with the rest of the development, so 80 percent of Comporta's energy needs will be produced in its grounds. Vanguard are also working on a project to recycle water used in the local rice fields for irrigation.

Make no mistake, however, that this commitment to sustainability and environmentally friendly practice during and after construction has not hindered the development of a magnificent golf course. The Dunas course is already world-class.

Imagine hole after hole routed along wide fairways, lined by corridors of mature trees, where playability off the tee is paramount but where there is always a better side of the fairway to approach the green from and sometimes dramatic reward for a bold line. Kidd's design makes you feel aggressive, confident and excited.

There are sporty par 4s, epic par 5s and par 3s that are rarely less than outstanding – the 6th is cut between two dunes, the breathtaking 17th an icon-in-the-making.

Very clearly, Terras da Comporta is the new superstar of European golf.



Real Sotogrande

12 REAL SOTOGRANDE

🇪🇸 SOTOGRANDE, SPAIN

Design **33** Setting **11** Memorability **12** Playability **7**
Consistency **9** Presentation **8** **TOTAL 80**

A notable rise for this fabled name of European golf, as the renovation of the previous decade settles and matures. Wide, inviting fairways lead to more demanding shots as you approach the subtle, breaking greens. A Robert Trent Jones Snr classic that oozes strategy and an examination that is somehow gentle yet exacting. Beautifully presented and a memorable round from the inviting first tee shot. "A classy experience, and I could sit on the clubhouse veranda for hours enjoying the local beverages," chirped one panellist.

13 EL SALER

🇪🇸 VALENCIA, SPAIN

Design **34** Setting **13** Memorability **12** Playability **7**
Consistency **7** Presentation **6** **TOTAL 79**

A wonderful seaside course by the masterful Javier Arana. If El Saler was given a little TLC it would be categorically in the top 10. A fabulous location for the holes that end both nines, and bags of architectural nuance throughout.

14 MONTE REI

🇵🇹 TAVIRA, PORTUGAL

Design **31** Setting **12** Memorability **12** Playability **7**
Consistency **8** Presentation **9** **TOTAL 79**

"I'm not a big fan of Jack Nicklaus courses, but wow, what a gem," said one panellist. Every hole is in its own idyllic, natural

setting, with the back nine especially strong. It falls only because of a slight drop-off in relative presentation.

15 LES BORDES (OLD)

🇫🇷 ORLEANS, FRANCE

Design **30** Setting **12** Memorability **13** Playability **5**
Consistency **9** Presentation **10** **TOTAL 79**

A Robert von Hagge design that is the original course here. Famously exacting, it loses out in the playability category.

16 WEST CLIFFS

🇵🇹 OBIDOS, PORTUGAL

Design **31** Setting **14** Memorability **14** Playability **6**
Consistency **7** Presentation **7** **TOTAL 79**

A spectacular seaside course north of Lisbon that would be a few spots higher if it wasn't quite so demanding for higher handicappers off the tee. "Play off the right tees and hope your driving 'A-game' is with you," warned one panellist. "And avoid the ice plants!"

17 VIDAUBAN

🇫🇷 COTE D'AZUR, FRANCE

Design **30** Setting **12** Memorability **12** Playability **7**
Consistency **7** Presentation **10** **TOTAL 78**

A legendarily private – it has about 30 members – Robert Trent Jones Snr design that makes its debut in the list as we now feel we have enough knowledge of it. Exceptional conditioning and has impressed all who have played it. A high position in which to enter, but expect it to only rise in future lists.

18 TROIA

🇵🇹 SETUBAL, PORTUGAL

Design **32** Setting **13** Memorability **13** Playability **6**
Consistency **8** Presentation **6** **TOTAL 78**

It's hard to criticise this traditional links-style layout – especially its front nine. Small greens add to the challenge and many pine-framed holes with the sand-based turf give you great lies. Even better if you can shape your shots to the narrow fairways. A great and fair test, but it lost points for a slightly tired feel. A little love and affection are required.

19 PARNU BAY

🇪🇪 PARNU, ESTONIA

Design **32** Setting **13** Memorability **8** Playability **9**
Consistency **9** Presentation **7** **TOTAL 78**

Set down on the edge of the Baltic Sea by Finnish architect Lassi Pekka Tilander, Parnu has a majestic and tranquil setting that's complemented by really interesting holes. It has sat very comfortably among the elite now for four rankings.

20 GOLF DU MEDOC (CHATEAUX)

🇫🇷 BORDEAUX, FRANCE

Design **33** Setting **11** Memorability **11** Playability **8**
Consistency **8** Presentation **7** **TOTAL 78**

A feel of Walton Heath to this Bill Coore design, which comprises gently undulating green complexes among the gorse, heather and broom. A fine all-round challenge between Bordeaux and the Atlantic coast.

21 FALSTERBO

🇸🇪 MALMO, SWEDEN

Design 32 Setting 13 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 77**

↓2

One of the few courses on the continent that offers true links holes, the back nine being set down on superb links terrain with the sand hills shaping the play. Like those around it in this section of the ranking, it only falls because of the two very high new entries. We are huge fans of Falsterbo.

22 CAMIRAL (STADIUM)

🇪🇸 GIRONA, SPAIN

Design 29 Setting 12 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 9 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 77**

↓5

The new entries and rise of Sotogrande affect Camiral's position but make no mistake, this is a high-calibre course – and the impressive work being done there at the moment has it in its best-ever shape. A wonderful modern parkland course with memorable risk-reward holes.

23 SAINT-GERMAIN

🇫🇷 PARIS, FRANCE

Design 34 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 77**

↓3

A classic Harry Colt course in the western suburbs of Paris with trademark par 3s and

magnificent green complexes. One of the classiest courses in the list.

24 LE TOUQUET (LA MER)

🇫🇷 LE TOUQUET, FRANCE

Design 31 Setting 13 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 77**

↓2

Another Harry Colt masterpiece among the coastal dunes of the English Channel, characterised by undulating fairways and subtly breaking greens.

25 BRO HOF SLOTT

🇸🇪 STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Design 28 Setting 14 Memorability 13 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 76**

↓5

If you like dramatic holes around water, you'll think Bro Hof should be 20 places higher! This Robert Trent Jones Jnr design does not try to be nuanced – it is a bold, X Factor experience from start to finish.

26 ROYAL ZOUTE

🇮🇪 KNOCKE, BELGIUM

Design 32 Setting 11 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 76**

↓2

A classic seaside course – 'Zoute' means salt in Flemish – that travels over, at times, significantly undulating links terrain. Some wonderful holes and firm, fast-

running turf to enjoy. Expect a pedigree experience in every way.

27 EINDHOVEN

🇳🇱 EINDHOVEN, NETHERLANDS

Design 31 Setting 11 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 8 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 76**

NO
CHANGE

Some of the most intriguing and fun holes in this entire list, Eindhoven is characterised by sporty par 4s and some brilliance in the green complexes.

28 ROYAL BLEĐ

🇸🇮 BLEĐ, SLOVENIA

Design 28 Setting 13 Memorability 11 Playability 9
Consistency 6 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 76**

↓2

A breathtaking setting on the edge of the beautiful Slovenian lake town and a course that has been restored intelligently by English architect Howard Swan. A mountain course with a very rare elegance.

29 PRAIA D'EL REY

🇵🇹 OBIDOS, PORTUGAL

Design 28 Setting 14 Memorability 14 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 76**

↑1

Extremely hard to move up in this section because of the new entries, but this seaside course manages it as a result of its setting, dramatic holes and its wow factor.

Camiral (Stadium)



My favourites in

ITALY

By Guido Migliozi



We have to start with **Frassanelle**, in Padova, not so far from Venice. That's where I grew up. The design is good as it moves into the trees and there is one of the best par 3s in Europe: the 15th, a beautiful hole with water and the trees. I still use a ball marker from the club to this day.

I also like **Asiago**, up in the hills, above Vicenza, and **Marco Simone** is obviously very good.

Of the old courses, I like **Villa D'Este** and especially **Biella**, high above Turin. **Royal Park** and **Torino** are also good in Turin.

The **Verdura** golf resort in Sicily is very beautiful. I haven't been since the courses were changed but I am guessing they are as beautiful as they were because of the land.

Bogogno has two very good new courses – we had the first rounds of qualifying school there, on the Bonora course. Wow – what a challenge.

■ Guido Migliozi has won three times on the DP World Tour.

30 HARDELLOT (LES PINS)

FRANCE

Design 30 Setting 10 Memorability 11 Playability 8 Consistency 7 Presentation 10 TOTAL 76

A classic woodland course given a thorough restoration – including much-needed tree management – by Frank Pont and Patrice Boissonnas that keeps it among Europe's finest.

31 TERRE BLANCHE (CHATEAU)

FRANCE

Design 29 Setting 12 Memorability 11 Playability 7 Consistency 7 Presentation 10 TOTAL 76

Set among idyllic Provencal countryside and manicured to perfection, this Dave Thomas design has plenty of highlights.

32 BUDERSAND

GERMANY

Design 29 Setting 13 Memorability 13 Playability 7 Consistency 6 Presentation 7 TOTAL 75

Some real wow moments on the seaside holes, but also those playing inland to cute green complexes. The fact it goes up in this extraordinarily competitive ranking shows it is still a terrific linksy course.

33 NOORDWIJKSE

NETHERLANDS

Design 32 Setting 12 Memorability 12 Playability 6 Consistency 6 Presentation 7 TOTAL 75

A giant of European golf that is desperate to be woken up with a thorough restoration.

34 HILVERSUMSCHE

NETHERLANDS

Design 33 Setting 11 Memorability 10 Playability 6 Consistency 8 Presentation 7 TOTAL 75

Another Dutch heathland of the highest calibre, this one a little more on the exacting side compared to some of its more gentle and charming compatriots.

35 SAINT EMILLIONAIS

FRANCE

Design 32 Setting 10 Memorability 12 Playability 7 Consistency 7 Presentation 7 TOTAL 75

A Tom Doak design near Bordeaux that starts with a trio of compelling holes that set up a round that is never anything less than gripping.

36 ROSENDAELSCH

NETHERLANDS

Design 31 Setting 11 Memorability 12 Playability 7 Consistency 7 Presentation 7 TOTAL 75

Perhaps less well-known and loved than other Dutch courses, but Rosendaelsche entered the ranking a decade ago and is

now consistently rubbing shoulders with Europe's greats. Super playing surfaces on a stellar heathland – the fall is merely a reflection of the competition.

37 CARYA

TURKEY

Design 30 Setting 11 Memorability 12 Playability 7 Consistency 7 Presentation 7 TOTAL 74

Comfortably the top-ranked course in the Turkish Riviera of Belek, this Peter Thompson original has been nurtured astutely by Tim Lobb. A delight among pines and white-sand bunkers.

38 DOM PEDRO VILAMOURA (OLD)

PORTUGAL

Design 29 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7 Consistency 7 Presentation 9 TOTAL 74

One of the great names of European golf remains one of its very best. Superbly presented by the Dom Pedro group, the Old has a pedigree and elegance among the umbrella pines which few others can match.

39 OITAVOS DUNES

CASCAIS, PORTUGAL

Design 27 Setting 14 Memorability 13 Playability 7 Consistency 6 Presentation 7 TOTAL 74

Views of the Atlantic, epic holes and a fast-running experience. If it was 15 places higher and you visited it, you would not disagree.

40 THE SCANDINAVIAN (NEW)

DENMARK

Design 29 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7 Consistency 7 Presentation 9 TOTAL 74

Another Trent Jones Jnr design, this one on the edge of Copenhagen. We've consistently ranked it just ahead of its neighbour, the Old. The conditioning is frankly astonishing, given its location in northern Europe.

41 VISBY

SWEDEN

Design 29 Setting 13 Memorability 13 Playability 7 Consistency 6 Presentation 6 TOTAL 74

How can a course rise 39 places? It's a good question. In Visby's case, it is because it

underwent a significant overhaul by former Ryder Cup player Pierre Fulke and his design partner and fellow pro Adam Mednick.

We paid a visit this summer and there is no doubt it is in superb shape. There is also no doubt this is one of the outstanding courses in continental Europe, one which now maximises its setting on the island of Gotland.

Right from the very first shot, played down towards the sea, Visby is a mesmerizing experience. There are a couple of weaker holes on the back nine, but those pale into insignificance compared with the high points throughout the rest of the course.

Inevitably, the standouts tend to be those holes set hard to the sea and this is certainly a consistently Instagrammable round. But there is also real interest in the holes themselves, such as the 9th, with a bunker in the middle of the tiered green. It runs beside the clubhouse and the lighthouse, the latter making the most wonderful dormie house.

Visby is an exhilarating course that is now up to Sweden's No.3. Its elevation will not stop here, despite this huge jump.

My favourites in

DENMARK

By Soren Hansen



There were already many good courses in Denmark, then the **Great Northern** came along and elevated everything. It is one of the best in Europe.

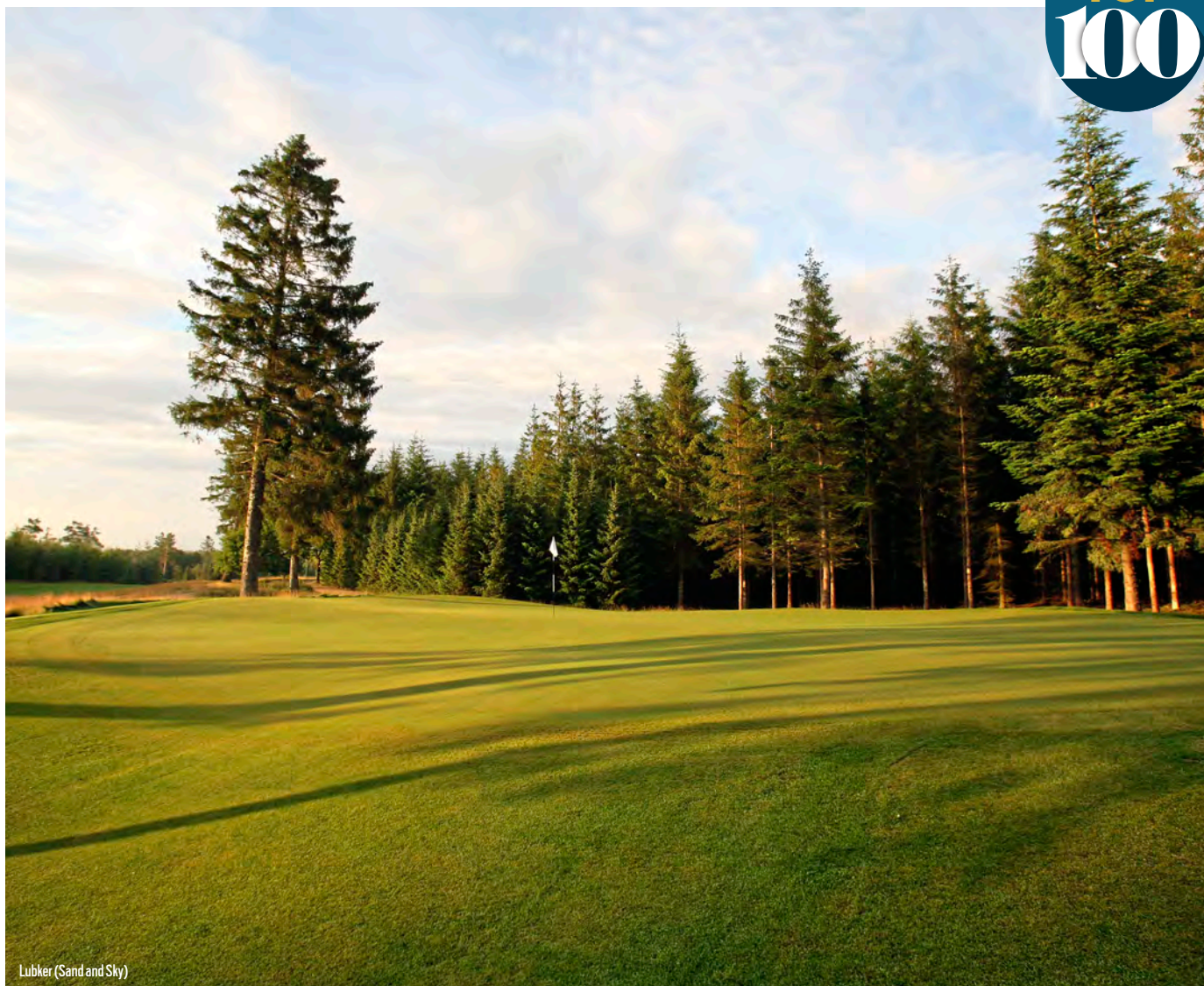
It is a Nicklaus Design and is very well made; it reminds me of Paris National. Because of its closeness to the old fishing village, you get an atmosphere that most modern courses don't have.

You have all the best ones in your list! **Esbjerg** is a traditional course that, when the wind blows, is a good test. **Holstebro** is very good too. Of the ones you don't have, **Royal Copenhagen** is nice and historic. It's played on the old King's hunting ground and is like an inland links. And **Trehoje** is a course I would like to see myself...

■ Soren Hansen is a multiple Tour winner and played in the 2008 Ryder Cup.



GOLF
WORLD
TOP
100



Lubker (Sand and Sky)

42 LE GOLF NATIONAL (ALBATROS)

🇫🇷 PARIS, FRANCE

Design 29 Setting 11 Memorability 13 Playability 6
Consistency 7 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 74**

↓2

The 2018 Ryder Cup host needs little introduction because we all saw on television that it is a course of dramatic holes characterised by water hazards. Lacks a bit of necessary nuance to be higher.

43 MORFONTAINE (VALLIERE)

🇫🇷 PARIS, FRANCE

Design 29 Setting 12 Memorability 14 Playability 6
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 74**

↓2

Nine holes of riotous fun. This is the 'second' course at Morfontaine, but Valliere is packed with memorable holes and the most extraordinary greens in the list. If they were designed today they'd be laughed at!

44 THRACIAN CLIFFS

🇬🇷 CAPE KALIAKRA, BULGARIA

Design 26 Setting 15 Memorability 15 Playability 6
Consistency 6 Presentation 6 **TOTAL 74**

↓2

Location, location, location. And the cliff-edge setting gives rise to some

staggeringly dramatic holes. If that's your bag, you'll love it here.

45 PALMARES (PRAIA/LAGOS)

🇵🇹 ALGARVE, PORTUGAL

Design 31 Setting 12 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 74**

↓7

Redesigned by Robert Trent Jones Jnr, the Algarve favourite has three loops of nine, with the Alvor the one not selected for this. Praia has links holes with sandy scrapes and native vegetation on two par 3s and two par 5s, while the Lagos is highlighted by the long 8th.

46 QUINTA DO LAGO (SOUTH)

🇵🇹 ALMANCIL, PORTUGAL

Design 29 Setting 12 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 74**

↑2

The South deserves its ranking following a much-needed renovation. It winds through the umbrella pines with fairly generous fairways, but with tough approaches to what are often severely breaking greens.

The course builds through some big elevation changes (especially on the excellent 3rd) to a very tough back nine

featuring some striking water features. These particularly play a part in the stand-out 15th and 17th. Albeit not the greatest finishing hole, an enjoyable place to play golf.

47 THE SCANDINAVIAN (OLD)

🇩🇰 COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

Design 29 Setting 11 Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 73**

↓4

A little more separation between the Old and New at this Copenhagen club, but that is only because of the intensely competitive nature of the list. There is little to choose between these two Robert Trent Jones Jnr courses and the Old ticks all the boxes.

48 LUBKER (SAND & SKY)

🇩🇰 NIMTOFTE, DENMARK

Design 29 Setting 11 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 73**

↓3

Trent Jones Jnr was prolific in Denmark and here he has produced three loops among the mature woodland of this super resort. There is pleasing strategy to the Sand and Sky nines, with sporty par 4s and cute 3s among the more meaty tests.



La Reserva Club

49 REAL NEGURI

🇪🇸 BILBAO, SPAIN

Design 30 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 TOTAL 73

Some good work in clearing some trees has opened views to the sea. Magnificent Javier Arana routing on a compact site.

50 BERNARDUS

🇳🇱 CROMVOIRT, NETHERLANDS

Design 30 Setting 10 Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 9 TOTAL 73

The 2026 Solheim Cup host is a fine piece of work on flat, heathy ground by Kyle Phillips. An impressive variety of greens and in absolutely wonderful condition. Only going one way in this ranking.

51 ESTELA

🇵🇹 PORTO, PORTUGAL

Design 30 Setting 12 Memorability 13 Playability 6
Consistency 6 Presentation 6 TOTAL 73

Proper links course north of Porto with some tight holes at times because of coastal

erosion but then, especially on the back nine, some impressively expansive ones.

52 REAL PUERTA DE HIERRO (ARRIBA)

🇪🇸 MADRID, SPAIN

Design 31 Setting 10 Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 8 TOTAL 73

A pedigree course for a pedigree club. Oozes class with some stellar short holes, a variety of two-shotters and exhilarating long holes. Enjoys some expansive views over the city of Madrid.

53 LA RESERVA CLUB

🇪🇸 SOTOGRANDE, SPAIN

Design 28 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 9 TOTAL 73

La Reserva moves to the cusp of the top 50 and deserves recognition as more than a resort course. This is totally one of Spain's finest, including being presented to an exceptionally high standard.

A Cabell Robinson design that embraces and indeed takes advantage of a hilly setting

really impressively. Right from the welcoming, downhill, dog-leg opener, you feel you can score well here, but at the same time stronger players will find it a test – witness its hosting of both men's and women's European tours.

"It puts demands on all areas of your game and punishes errant shots so your course management radar needs to be switched on," noted one panellist. "And the green complexes test your putting skills if you are in the wrong quadrant. It's quite simply an excellent course."

As the numbers show, La Reserva scores well across all categories and is heading towards the top 50, where it is likely to overtake some of European golf's traditional superpowers.

54 REAL PEDRENA

🇪🇸 PEDRENA, SPAIN

Design 29 Setting 12 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 6 TOTAL 72

Pedrena can be commended for some much-needed tree clearing in recent years, but if more were removed to aid the views to

the sea, bay and river, as well as improving playability and even conditioning, it would be even better and score even higher. It boasts some fabulous holes and, yes, the 'Seve factor', which you simply cannot escape from – nor will you want to.

55 VILLA D'ESTE

🇮🇹 COMO, ITALY

Design 30 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 TOTAL 72

This wonderful old course in the hills above Lake Como is a lush parkland-woodland with stylish holes and some eccentric green complexes. Some tree management would help it back towards the top 50.

56 ROYAL LIMBURG

🇧🇪 HELCHTEREN, BELGIUM

Design 30 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 TOTAL 72

Didn't quite catch the panel's attention as it has in the previous two lists, but this heathland woodland is on a grand scale and boasts several notable holes.

My favourites in EUROPE

By Manuel Pinero



I have been fortunate to have played many of the great courses in Europe in my life. Of course that includes many of the very best of Spain.

Real Sotogrande is one of my favourites. I might have preferred some aspects – such as the new 8th – of the 'old' course, but I still love it.

Valderrama is a perfect example of a golf course for today's professional golfer. Length is not such an advantage; you really have to hit every shot. But at my age, or for an amateur, if you have to play there every day it is too tricky. For top players, though, it is simply fantastic.

With the cork trees, positioning the ball off the tee for a clear shot to the green is everything. Then, even with a pitching wedge, you have to be so careful and make sure you find the right part of the green. A three-yard miss and you are in trouble.

Villa de Madrid is a fantastic course; a lot of people play on it so its conditioning is not like others, but it is superb. Maybe for today's pros it is too short, but if you put that course as a par 70 it is a fantastic course to compete on.

I won the Madrid Open three times at **Puerta de Hierro** – only Seve also did that – so of course I love the Arriba. It's not a very long course, but is a little bit like Valderrama – it is all about the second shots. Put the pins on edges of greens and it is very, very tricky.

El Saler has incredible potential, but it is a public course run by the government so it doesn't have the conditioning.

La Reserva Club is a fantastic course. It is wide, so is very interesting to all levels of

player, which is a very important characteristic. It's also long and it has a large variety of options depending on the player's level. The design is superb, with a lot of iconic holes. Those holes and the incredible surroundings and views make it a unique proposition. Unlike other courses in the area, La Reserva Club is elevated, which provides great sea views at the same time as being surrounded by the natural park. It's a very privileged setting.

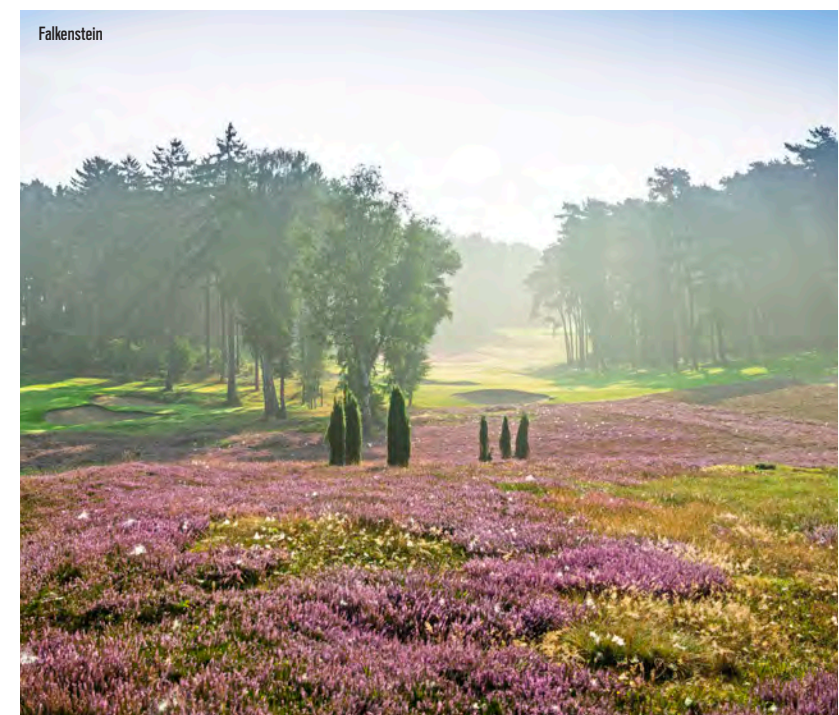
La Reserva's location, within Sotogrande, where the best courses in Spain are, is the ideal place to enjoy our amazing sport due to the climate, natural environment and everything off the course.

In Germany, I loved **Falkenstein**, a fantastic course. It's a Harry Colt design – and I think every course by Colt should be protected. I said that to Sir Michael Bonallack once: "Make a law, they should be protected." They should never, ever change any of those courses, other than to put some tees further back.

Javier Arana is Spain's best architect and when I see his designs I always think of the great architects of the 1920s. Obviously, he must have gone to Britain to see what they did, though I think he is more like Alister MacKenzie and Donald Ross than Harry Colt. Arana was very, very good – he had great vision.

Elsewhere in Europe I really liked the classics: **Royal Hague**, **Kennemer**, **Royal Zoute**, **Chantilly**, **Le Touquet** – a linksy course where I lost the French Open to Seve. In Britain and Ireland? **Sunningdale**, **Portmarnock** and **Muirfield** are all very hard to beat.

■ Manuel Pinero was the top points scorer in the 1985 Ryder Cup, won the World Cup with Seve Ballesteros and had a notable career as an architect after finishing playing.



Falkenstein



57 GREAT NORTHERN

DK KERTEMINDE, DENMARK

Design 28 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 6
Consistency 7 Presentation 9 TOTAL 72

▲19

A huge jump for this modern course by Nicklaus Design, and we don't hide from the fact this jump is largely because it was poorly positioned last time. Of course an extra two years has helped it rise since opening, but this is a course that warrants being at least in the middle of the ranking rather than the bottom quarter. Exceptional conditioning and dramatic, water-framed holes that live long in the memory.

58 VERDURA (EAST)

IT SICILY, ITALY

Design 29 Setting 12 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 TOTAL 72

▲26

This huge jump is easily explained by the fact the resort reconfigured its two courses after a freak flood five years ago. We previously preferred the West, but after Kyle Phillips' reorganisation of his original work, the East is now comfortably the stronger – in every respect. A wonderful course with some great holes, the 6th in particular. The East's greens are very firm, very fast and very true.

59 HOLSTEBRO (FOREST)

DK BRANDSBJERGVEJ, DENMARK

Design 29 Setting 12 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 6 TOTAL 72

▲16

Arguably the best course in Denmark for 16 holes. Playable, fun, good scale, interesting and a great environment. It was firm and fast when we visited, as this heathland

should be. Loses a mark in Consistency as a result of a modest, short 17th and a questionable, redesigned finale.

60 REAL CLUB LA MORALEJA (NO.3)

ES MADRID, SPAIN

Design 29 Setting 10 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 8 TOTAL 72

▼6

The pick of the four courses at the Spanish super-club, No.3 was laid out by Nicklaus Design and is a strong, well put-together parkland that manages to test elite players while also being playable for mere mortals.

61 FINCA CORTESIN

ES CASARES, SPAIN

Design 29 Setting 10 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 9 TOTAL 72

▼6

"Each hole in its own setting, with rugged terrain if you are wayward," noted one panellist. "The hilly aspect adds to the challenge with some of the greens, which are hard to hit. A thoroughly enjoyable 18 holes." Fine work by Cabell Robinson to route Finca on such hilly land. Exceptional conditioning.

62 PENHA LONGA (ATLANTICO)

PT CASCAIS, PORTUGAL

Design 29 Setting 10 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 TOTAL 71

▼2

"Huge elevation change to this hilly course," said one panellist, "while the rock outcrops add to the landscape as you wind along the hill tops or through the tree-lined valleys."

The old Roman aqueduct is an unusual backdrop to the tough 6th.

63 KONGSVINGER

NO GRANLI, NORWAY

Design 28 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 TOTAL 71

NO CHANGE

A superb woodland experience that winds between towering pines and is delivered on a grand scale. Golfers travel across the border from Sweden to play this top 100 fixture. No move, but standing still in this uber-competitive ranking is a great effort.

64 SON GUAL

ES MALLORCA, SPAIN

Design 29 Setting 9 Memorability 10 Playability 6
Consistency 8 Presentation 9 TOTAL 71

▼6

"Nice, elevated tees with different choices for most tee shots," said one panellist, "plus strategic water hazards and large, contoured greens." Add in tour-level presentation and you have Mallorca's No.1.

65 PGA NATIONAL TURKEY (SULTAN)

TR BELEK, TURKEY

Design 28 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 5
Consistency 7 Presentation 9 TOTAL 71

▼3

Belek's No.2 layout. "I'm not keen on the overuse of water hazards, but I thought they were subtle in places and bold in others to focus the mind," remarked one panellist. "I liked the risk-reward nature of some holes and the demanding, memorable finisher," said another. They're both apt descriptions and we would only add that it is impeccably manicured.

66 BRAUTARHOLT

🇮🇸 REYKJAVIK, ICELAND

Design 25 Setting 14 Memorability 13 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 6 **TOTAL 71**

▲12

Debuted in the list last time and this jump up to the mid 60s shows what an astute new entry it was. Just 12 holes, but more fun, spectacular scenery and memorable holes than in most courses in mainland Europe. Its beauty is breathtaking.

67 KRISTIANSTADS

(EAST)

🇸🇪 KAVROVAGEN, SWEDEN

Design 28 Setting 10 Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 71**

NEW
ENTRY

"Not a blade of grass out of place at a course that now receives huge praise from anyone who plays it," said one Sweden-based panellist. The Pierre Fulke-Adam Mednick collab has again worked successfully in overhauling the East and it powered into the top end of our 2022 Sweden list, hence its introduction to the mainland Europe ranking.

68 SAND

🇸🇪 BANKERYD, SWEDEN

Design 29 Setting 10 Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 70**

▼11

An 'inland links', and while some feel it has a slightly artificial feel, others love its bold shapes and original architecture. It splits the European and Swedish panels!

69 SAND VALLEY

🇵🇱 GDANSK, POLAND

Design 29 Setting 10 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 70**

▼1

The routing and most of the architecture were

done by Lassi Pekka Tilander, with the greens sculpted by Tony Ristola, and some will find his surfaces just a little too funky. However, we're big fans of Sand Valley and all feedback of late is of a course in superb shape.

70 PENATI (HERITAGE)

🇸🇰 BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA

Design 29 Setting 10 Memorability 9 Playability 8
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 70**

▲4

The Heritage entered the list in 2018 and has steadily climbed ever since. Impressive, original architecture by Englishman Jonathan Davison on a course that the owner expected to be Penati's number two, but in our view is comfortably the number one. An admirable traditional design in a tranquil woodland setting.

71 REAL LAS BRISAS

🇪🇸 MARBELLA, SPAIN

Design 28 Setting 9 Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 8 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 70**

NO
CHANGE

A Robert Trent Jones Snr original that has been restored by Kyle Phillips, and that investment has clearly paid off. Lots of memorable holes at this prestigious Marbella venue and consistently good in terms of its presentation.

72 RAVENSTEIN (OLD)

🇧🇪 BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

Design 28 Setting 10 Memorability 9 Playability 9
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 70**

▼11

This grand old parkland requires a thorough restoration to return to the middle of the list. As it is, it remains a pleasant and privileged (this is a very private club) experience among mature trees and on undulating ground.

73 ROYAL PARK

(TRENT JONES)

🇮🇹 TURIN, ITALY

Design 27 Setting 10 Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 69**

▼9

A well-rounded parkland in Turin by Robert Trent Jones Snr. Known as 'I Roveri' – the oaks – which gives you a strong idea of what to expect. Strategic bunkering and water hazards add to the challenge.

74 SEIGNOSSE

🇫🇷 LANDES, FRANCE

Design 28 Setting 10 Memorability 12 Playability 5
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 69**

▼8

"A gem of a course that winds through oak, cork and the lofty pines," said one panellist. "Strategic hazards on every hole and water hazards are well placed. The course has a brilliant flow, culminating in one of the best finishing holes in golf."

75 ROYAL ANTWERP

🇧🇪 ANTWERP, BELGIUM

Design 29 Setting 10 Memorability 9 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 69**

▼2

A small drop, but with some big new entries and high risers, falling just two places shows how much we like Antwerp. Tree clearance has made all the difference to this Tom Simpson woodland.



Kristianstads (East)

The father of European golf

English golf architect Harry Colt has had more influence on European golf than anyone else, says Adam Lawrence

The most important person in the history of European golf is an Englishman. Harry Colt, the real founder of the profession of golf architecture, was responsible for bringing great courses to virtually every European country of golfing significance. Without him, many of the most famous names of European golf would have had nowhere to play.

Colt's obvious rival for the title of 'most important person' in European golf is Seve Ballesteros. But Spanish golf could not have existed as it did without the work of the architect: he travelled to Madrid in the spring of 1913 to lay out Puerta de Hierro, the country's first proper golf course, and then, in subsequent years, built courses in Seville, Barcelona and Malaga. And, in the late 1920s, Colt built Pedrena, the course on which the great Seve learned to play the game. If that wasn't enough, at the same time, he met – and presumably helped to inspire – Javier Arana, Spain's first great home-grown designer, in Bilbao, Arana's first known interaction with a leading golf course designer. So Colt can even claim a small amount of responsibility for Spanish courses like El Saler, Neguri and Rio Real.

Some of Colt's influence has not, until now, been known about. In France, for example, he built many fine courses, from Cannes Mougins to Le Touquet's La Mer, but a cursory look at the rankings would suggest that his rival Tom Simpson, designer of Morfontaine, perpetually judged as Europe's best course, is the dominant force. But what might have been Colt's best French course, at the Chateau d'Abbadia, on the border with Spain, ceased to exist during World War II (see page 40). I recently discovered, during the research for my Colt biography, *More Enduring Than Brass*, that at Fontainebleau, number three in this ranking and generally believed to be a Simpson course, that Colt was responsible for extending the course to 18 holes in 1911 – and his routing still essentially exists. So Fontainebleau must in fact be viewed as a Colt and Simpson design. Among other high profile French projects are the Cannes Country Club at



The great Harry Colt was born in 1869 and died in 1951.

Mougins, one of the biggest projects of the era anywhere in Europe, and the almost total rebuild of the historic Biarritz club, one of the oldest in Europe.

Colt's fingerprints, therefore, are on four of the top 10 courses in this ranking, including Utrecht De Pan (which he designed in the late 1920s) in second place, and Fontainebleau, as discussed above, in third. Royal Hague (which this writer would place second in Europe, but there you go...) in fourth was designed by Colt's long-time partner Hugh Alison in the late thirties for the Dutch-Jewish entrepreneur Daniel Wolf. It opened in September 1939, just after war had been declared; in spring 1940 when the German armies raced through the Low Countries, Wolf was able to escape, eventually ending up in New York, where he died in 1943. His widow, Rene, whose family had founded a company that ended up being a key part of the giant Unilever firm, survived Bergen-Belsen concentration camp and returned home after the war, eventually selling the course to the Royal Hague club. Finally in the top 10, Colt, along with his other long-time partner, John Morrison, designed the



In a career spanning more than 50 years, Colt laid out in excess of 300 courses.

'COLT'S FINGERPRINTS ARE VISIBLE ON FOUR OF THE GREAT COURSES IN THE TOP 10 OF THIS LIST'

Hamburger-Falkenstein club (10th in the rankings, and generally regarded as Germany's finest course), which opened in 1930. Morrison, in fact, built more than a dozen courses across Germany during the late 1920s and early '30s, essentially introducing the game to the country. Not all survived the upheavals that followed, but nevertheless, golf in Germany can be said to owe its existence to him and his boss Colt.

Elsewhere in Europe, Colt built the Royal Zoute course in Belgium, for most of its life one of the continent's very top courses, though it has fallen to number 24 in this list. He first went to Zoute in the very early days of his career: he rebuilt the course, originally created in 1899, in 1909, returning in 1912 to create a second course, though this did not survive World War I. Arnaud Massy, the first non-British Open champion, said Zoute was the finest course in Europe, and equal to any in Scotland.

Colt returned to Belgium after the war to create the St Andre course, located just across the border with France, between the French town of Dunkirk and the Belgian one of Koksijde. The course did not long survive, being bankrupt by 1928, but Colt told his friend Bernard Darwin, who visited and reported on it in *The Times* in 1923, that he thought the land was "the best I have ever seen". Elsewhere in the Low Countries, he was responsible for the creation of the Kennemer course at Zandvoort in the Netherlands (No.11 in this ranking), as well as the previous iteration of the Noordwijkse course not far away (Noordwijkse later moved to a course by Frank Pennink, but Colt's course can still be seen in the dunes around the town).

In Sweden, he advised on alterations to Falsterbo, generally regarded as the

country's finest course, and his partner John Morrison visited the club in the late 1920s. Colt and Morrison also designed the Stockholms club at Kevinge, just outside the Swedish capital. The course was recently restored to the original design by Swedish architect Christian Lundin.

In short, then, Colt's design DNA can be found across the European continent and a remarkable number of its best courses bear witness to his influence. It is actually astonishing how many of his courses have not survived: Abbadia and St Andre are the two most obvious, but his course at

Malaga – which he described, in a letter to his friend the Duke of Alba as "far and away the best winter course in the south of Europe" – was abandoned and replaced with the current Parador de Malaga course, which is sadly flat and uninteresting by comparison.

Evidently, no man has had as much influence on the development of golf across Europe as Harry Colt.

■ Adam Lawrence is editor of *Golf Course Architecture* magazine and the author of *More Enduring Than Brass*, a forthcoming biography of Harry Colt, to be issued shortly by the American firm Classics of Golf. To be informed when the book is published, email adam@oxfordgolfconsulting.com

LOST AND FOUND

One of the most dramatic courses ever seen in Europe has not existed since World War II. But there is an enticing possibility that, given a fair wind, it could be put back.

Harry Colt built the course at the Chateau d'Abbadia in Hendaye on the French/Spanish border in 1911. The neo-Gothic chateau was built for the Victorian French explorer Antoine d'Abbadie and left, on his death in 1897, to the French Academie des Sciences.

The property at Abbadia was remarkable. Running along the cliffs and the Atlantic Ocean, it brings to mind Cypress Point, yet it pre-dated that great course by nearly 20 years. Colt, at the time Abbadia was built, said it could be "the best course in the world," and Bernard Darwin, in 1927, said of the par-4 15th, whose approach required the golfer to play across the ocean, "I think that for pure, natural, rugged splendour I have never seen a shot to equal this across



Chateau d'Abbadia, Hendaye

the chasm at Hendaye."

What makes Abbadia so exciting is that the course is still there. It closed when France was occupied by the Germans during World War II, and concrete blockhouses were built on the property. But other than that, the site, part of the park round the chateau, remains untouched. Golf features can still, with care, be discerned.

To any golfer, the thought that a course of this status might possibly be put back into play is alluring indeed.

76 REAL EL PRAT (ROSA)

🇪🇸 TERRASSA, SPAIN

Design 29 Setting 10 Memorability 10 Playability 6
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 TOTAL 69

↓6

This modern Greg Norman design north of Barcelona has been a fixture on the list since its inception. Although it drops a few places here, it remains a very worthy entry. Some panellists found this adventurous woodland course a little exacting – that lower Playability mark costs it 10 places.

77 DE SWINKELSCHÉ

🇳🇱 SOMEREN, NETHERLANDS

Design 29 Setting 10 Memorability 11 Playability 8
Consistency 6 Presentation 5 TOTAL 69

↓8

An intriguing Frank Pont course full of memorable holes with memorable features. It's modern, hugely playable and hugely fun. The limited greenkeeping budget means that, relative to the well-manicured courses of this list, its Presentation mark costs it several places. It is still nicely conditioned and offers arguably Europe's best-value green fee.

78 GOLF DU MEDOC (VIGNES)

🇫🇷 BORDEAUX, FRANCE

Design 28 Setting 10 Memorability 9 Playability 9
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 TOTAL 69

↓13

"Different to the Chateaux in that instead of gorse and heather there are more towering pines and perhaps more of a parkland feel," noted one panellist, "but it's every bit as strategic." Less affection for the Vignes than in the previous list, but just getting in this 100 is a fine achievement for a 'second' course.

79 LAS COLINAS

🇪🇸 ALICANTE, SPAIN

Design 27 Setting 10 Memorability 9 Playability 9
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 TOTAL 69

↓12

A real triumph to create a course on such undulating terrain that maintains its place in

the Top 100. Cabell Robinson's design is super playable for all levels, with a lot of enjoyable holes and great presentation.

80 THE NATIONAL (LINKS)

🇸🇪 MALMO, SWEDEN

Design 28 Setting 11 Memorability 8 Playability 8
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 TOTAL 69

↓8

"A links feel to this Open-style course, with clever mounding used to create a sandhill vibe," noted one panellist. "I didn't think I would particularly enjoy it, but the focus on run-off areas alongside the undulating greens made it fun to play. Far better than the adjoining 'Lakes'." That view summed up the feelings of the whole panel.

81 AROEIRA (NO.1)

🇵🇹 LISBON, PORTUGAL

Design 28 Setting 10 Memorability 8 Playability 7
Consistency 8 Presentation 7 TOTAL 68

↓4

This Lisbon course, set among towering pines, is now a staple of the Top 100. An enjoyable setting in tranquil woodland and with plenty of holes of grand scale.

82 HALMSTAD (NORTH)

🇸🇪 HALMSTAD, SWEDEN

Design 27 Setting 10 Memorability 8 Playability 8
Consistency 8 Presentation 7 TOTAL 68

NO
CHANGE

Swedish course that appealed to all panel members who have played it. A Solheim Cup host that winds elegantly through mature woodland.

83 LES AISSES

🇫🇷 ORLEANS, FRANCE

Design 28 Setting 9 Memorability 9 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 TOTAL 67

↑5

A strong showing from Les Aisses, which combines a heathy feel with some clever holes. This Martin Hawtree design is gaining increasing favour.

84 DOMAINE IMPERIAL

🇨🇭 GLAND, SWITZERLAND

Design 25 Setting 12 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 6 TOTAL 67

↓2

This Pete Dye layout enjoys a fine setting and is predictably well designed, offering drama and memorability. Switzerland's No.1.

85 VASATORPS (TOUR)

🇸🇪 HELSINGBORG, SWEDEN

Design 27 Setting 9 Memorability 9 Playability 6
Consistency 8 Presentation 8 TOTAL 67

NO
CHANGE

A strong, modern course in the south of Sweden. For it to hold its place in this section of the list is a real achievement and testament to its all-round appeal – led by excellent presentation. It has the ability to test all levels.

86 BARSEBACK (OCEAN)

🇸🇪 LUND, SWEDEN

Design 26 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 5 Presentation 7 TOTAL 67

↓3

This Solheim Cup host is a fine hybrid of woodland and links holes. Didn't receive universal love from our panel, but a strong Swedish course to add to your wish list.

87 CHIBERTA

🇫🇷 BIARRITZ, FRANCE

Design 27 Setting 11 Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 6 TOTAL 67

NO
CHANGE

"A Tom Simpson gem on the Basque coast, a mix of links golf at its best on both nines," said one panellist. "The standout 3rd to 5th section could belong to any of the UK's big names. It blends perfectly with pine-lined holes, especially where elevation changes add to the challenge. The inspired routing will stay long in the memory." It sums up this course perfectly.



Les Aisses

A trip to ponder

Chris Bertram takes a memorable golf break to Northern France, via a less obvious vessel

Many of the courses we have showcased in this supplement have no doubt wetted your appetite for a trip abroad, but the hassle of a flight – not least the ludicrous charges to transport your golf bag – may well have put you off. Happily, we have the answer.

Much travelling was undertaken over many years to put this ranking together. The last trip before the list was finalised took us the short hop across to France.

Because it was on the country's north coast, and with few ideal flight options, the idea of taking the ferry came to mind. What a good decision that was. It turned into one of the best short breaks on the continent I've ever done.

I live in the north of England, so there is a significant drive south to get to Portsmouth, but that was negotiated with a stop off at Wokefield Park, a De Vere resort near Reading that should be on everyone's radar as the place to stay when on a golf break in Berkshire and even north Hampshire or Surrey. It's well placed for all three counties.

A very nice night's stay then a round the following morning set us up for an overnight Brittany Ferries sailing from Portsmouth to St Malo. This was the second overnight ferry I've taken and both times it has impressed me immensely. Firstly, it set off on time! For someone who endures a lot of delayed flights, this is almost a surprise: we set off on time, we arrived on time. The second thing that impressed me was that I had access to anything I had packed in my car for the trip. For someone who is constantly squeezing stuff into flight bags on the brink of making them too heavy, this is an absolute delight. The sailing itself is a real pleasure. By the time you've had your evening meal and perhaps a refreshment, it's time for sleep, given you lose an hour arriving in France and the ferry pulls in at 8am.

Both times on overnight crossings I've slept incredibly well. The cabin was dark and I didn't wake until the music is played over the tannoy to gently wake

everyone and indicate we will arrive in port in 45 minutes.

After disembarking, there was no baggage to pick up or hire car to pick up – it was straight on the road to have a quick look at the funky links of Dinard, a course long on my radar. If you have the chance, do not miss this Tom Dunn design.

From there, it was an hour and a half to the main purpose of the trip, Granville. As you can see, it made it into the Top 100 and that single visit made the whole trip worthwhile. It is a Harry Colt original with some truly eccentric holes, including unforgettable par 3s at 10 and 16.

The longest drive of the trip was to Deauville, a well-heeled town of art deco style where even the dentist's clinic and the butcher's shop are beautifully appointed. Its elegant architecture has to be seen to be believed.

The standards remain high at Hotel du Golf Barriere. It boasts a stylish, characterful and historic hotel and a course designed by Tom Simpson that has been restored and is in wonderful condition. The Ladies French Open was held there at the end of September.

The final stop was Omaha Beach golf, a hybrid of neat parkland holes with several spectacular clifftop holes. Its beauty takes your breath away but there is naturally also reason to contemplate the bravery of the men who landed here in 1944. The golf hotel is on the outskirts of Port-en-Bessin – a lovely town with super restaurants – 10 minutes drive from the town and the beach.

After the last bowl of moules frites, it was off to Cherbourg for the quick ferry (it is pretty much half the distance to Portsmouth compared to St Malo) back. From there, a long drive back north, but one fuelled by very happy memories.

■ Brittany Ferries have numerous sailings (many more options than we realised) from the UK to France and also northern Spain. Visit brittany-ferries.co.uk or call 0330 159 7000 for further details.



Granville

88 VILLA DE MADRID (BLACK)

RE-ENTRY
MADRID, SPAIN
Design 29 Setting 9 Memorability 9 Playability 8 Consistency 6 Presentation 6 TOTAL 67

A welcome return to the list for one of the greats of Spanish golf. This public course is incredibly popular, partly on account of it being part of one of Europe's biggest sports clubs. It's a wonderful design by Javier Arana that is playable to all levels and incorporates memorable holes. Its footfall means it can never score well in 'Presentation' – but that just goes to show how strong the rest of it is.

89 MARCO SIMONE NEW ENTRY

ROME, ITALY
Design 28 Setting 9 Memorability 9 Playability 7 Consistency 6 Presentation 8 TOTAL 67

Needs little introduction after it hosted golf's biggest event a few weeks ago. Staging the Ryder Cup has no bearing on

this ranking though, even if it did show up well there. More or less laid out from scratch (there was a course there originally) by EGD's Dave Sampson, it was designed with the Ryder Cup in mind; from the exciting, dramatic holes to the infrastructure that comes with hosting the event. Those aspects don't always go hand in hand with an appealing course outside of a Ryder Cup week, but Sampson achieved that here. We were there long before the Ryder Cup rolled into town and this is a really entertaining course to play, even if you aren't in a fourball against Patrick Cantlay.

90 KYTAJA (SOUTH EAST)

NO CHANGE
HYVINKAA, FINLAND
Design 25 Setting 13 Memorability 10 Playability 7 Consistency 5 Presentation 7 TOTAL 67

The No.1 in Finland offers a round in a stereotypical Finnish setting of lakes and

forest. Canadian Thomas McBroom did a fine job of bringing out the best of an appealing canvas for golf.

91 THE NATIONAL NO CHANGE

BELEK, TURKEY
Design 25 Setting 9 Memorability 8 Playability 9 Consistency 7 Presentation 8 TOTAL 66

Expect rolling terrain, wickedly sloping greens and mature umbrella pines lining a number of your drives and also on the dog-legs of a number of the challenging holes. Expect to be impressed.

92 ROYAL OBIDOS

OBIDOS, PORTUGAL
Design 25 Setting 11 Memorability 9 Playability 7 Consistency 7 Presentation 7 TOTAL 66

“A very hilly course where some wonderful – but long – holes come before an exacting back nine,” noted one panellist. “The 11th and 12th are standouts before a strategic home hole.”

93 COSTA NAVARINO (DUNES) NO CHANGE

KALAMATA, GREECE
Design 25 Setting 10 Memorability 9 Playability 7 Consistency 7 Presentation 8 TOTAL 66

A fine all-round course, as the marks suggest. Ranking the 1-4 at Costa Navarino is hard enough, never mind within the whole of Continental Europe, but we have the Dunes as the top attraction (see page 49 for the rest). The Ross McMurray and Bernhard Langer design certainly asks questions of your game but it also gives you plenty back, not least in the sporty par 4s.

94 ULLNA

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN
Design 23 Setting 13 Memorability 10 Playability 6 Consistency 6 Presentation 8 TOTAL 66

Rises a spot – no mean achievement in this list – but could easily be a good deal higher. Fabulous lakeside setting and in magnificent condition. A must for the Top 100.

95 GRANVILLE

🇫🇷 BREVILLE-SUR-MER, FRANCE

Design 25 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 6
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 66**

This Harry Colt links has some really memorable moments, including short holes at 10 and especially 16 that are pretty much as idiosyncratic as anything you'd find at Cruden Bay or Prestwick. Lush presentation reduces its linky authenticity – it must be magical when burnt.

96 LINNA

🇫🇮 HAMEENLINNA, FINLAND

Design 25 Setting 10 Memorability 9 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 65**

Tim Lobb designed Linna when he was

NEW
ENTRY

working for EGD and it was here that Marco Simone architect Dave Sampson designed his first hole via a *Golf World* competition. A beautiful experience along undulating fairways and among classic Finnish pines.

97 REAL PUERTA DE HIERRO (ABAJO)

🇪🇸 MADRID, SPAIN

Design 26 Setting 9 Memorability 9 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 65**

The second course at Puerta de Hierro... but not by much. It perhaps lacks a touch of the finesse of the Arriba but there's much interest as it travels across rolling terrain, with some fine green complexes. A very classy addition to the list.

NEW
ENTRY

98 ALAND

🇫🇮 ALAND ISLAND, FINLAND

Design 22 Setting 13 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 5 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 65**

A new entry with the X Factor. Aland – on the eponymous, autonomous island – has a lakeside setting that is as idyllic as even the most breathtaking locations in the list. The water's edge holes are predictably the most beautiful and memorable, not least the 10th – one of our Top 100 holes in Continental Europe.

An overhaul by Danish architect Philip Spogard has reaped significant reward, maximising the terrain, its epic location and adding technical merit to the holes. There are still some relatively quiet inland holes in comparison to the outstanding

NEW
ENTRY

nature of the rest, but because the highs are so thrilling they are a nice breather. You'll find Aland in terrific condition too. A welcome addition to the list.

99 HOGE KLEIJ

🇳🇱 UTRECHT, NETHERLANDS

Design 26 Setting 9 Memorability 8 Playability 8
Consistency 6 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 65**

Hoge Kleij demonstrates the value of a rigorous renovation. Theirs was done by Frank Pont and his nous plus the investment from the club have resulted in this debut in among the greats of continental golf. You have to say it was money very well spent. It's going to get even better too. A fine variety of holes, most between tall pines and a few

NEW
ENTRY

deciduous interlopers, all of which are being thinned down and drawn back from playing corridors. A handful of cool greens and plenty of heather add to the aesthetic appeal and challenge.

100 REAL SOCIEDAD HIPICA

🇪🇸 MADRID, SPAIN

Design 25 Setting 9 Memorability 9 Playability 6
Consistency 7 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 65**

A Robert von Hagge design just north of the capital that is eye-catching and always compelling. Baroque fairway composition, with lots of earth moved to create valleys for the holes to travel along. Super conditioning and a round that keeps you engrossed until the very end.

RE-ENTRY



My favourites in PORTUGAL

By Ricardo Santos



Monte Rei is a very challenging course where you need to manage your game shot by shot to reach the green with any birdie chances. Overall a great test.

In my view Troia is the trickiest course in Portugal; very narrow, with small greens, typically very windy as you're by the sea. One has to play very precisely there.

Quinta do Lago South is a challenging course from tee to green. You have to shape the ball consistently and position it well to get an angle onto the greens, which are relatively large and flat. It's a fun and accessible course for all handicap players.

Santo da Serra on Madeira is in a beautiful location, built on a high volcanic island and with stunning views over the ocean. It has small, challenging greens and it's a true test for the short game.

Palmares also has a stunning location with beautiful ocean and river views, a mix between links and parkland, with sloping greens.

Estela is probably the closest to a traditional links in Portugal, played mostly on sand dunes by the beach. It's usually windy (or very windy) and has small greens.

Dom Pedro Pinhal is a narrow course with mature, strategically placed pine trees and very small, testing greens.

Dom Pedro Old is a narrow course with lots of character, featuring many ancient pine trees in play, so it requires some ball shaping skills. It's relatively short, very charming and enjoyable for all players.

And Dom Pedro Victoria is a modern, American-style course, wide with large greens and plenty of water. Its length and the water are its greatest challenges.

Finally, Herdade do Pinheiro is a long, modern course with large fairways bordered by dense vegetation. Large, sloped greens and long par 3s mean you have to be consistent from tee to green.

■ European Tour player Ricardo Santos is attached to Wyndham Grand Algarve. The resort is ideally positioned in Quinta do Lago, one of Europe's best golf destinations. The all-suite resort offers spectacular one-, two- and three-bedroom suites as well as luxury private residences, where golfers can purchase a holiday home just steps from the fairways.

Aland

The Next 100

Ranked for the first time, this century of courses illustrates the depth in the continent's quality



Costa Navarino (Hills)

- | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| 101 Ljunghusens, Sweden | 134 Kytaja (North West), Finland | 167 Lyon, France |
| 102 Esbjerg (Marbaek), Denmark | 135 Costa Navarino (Olympic), Greece | 168 Antalya (Pasha), Turkey |
| 103 Silkeborg, Denmark | 136 Fohr, Germany | 169 La Cala (America), Spain |
| 104 San Lorenzo, Portugal | 137 Amendoeira (Faldo), Portugal | 170 Camiral (Tour), Spain |
| 105 Royal Ostend, Belgium | 138 Dinard, France | 171 Geneva, Switzerland |
| 106 Costa Navarino (Bay), Greece | 139 Royal Fagnes, Belgium | 172 Nordeney, Germany |
| 107 Lykia Links, Turkey | 140 Lage Vuursche, Netherlands | 173 Diamond, Austria |
| 108 Modry Las, Poland | 141 Ribagolfe (No.1), Portugal | 174 Quinta do Peru, Portugal |
| 109 Bro Hof Slott (Castle), Sweden | 142 Links Valley (Purple & Gold), Netherlands | 175 Hvide Klit, Denmark |
| 110 Westman Island, Iceland | 143 Sevilla, Spain | 176 St-Nom-la-Breteche (Red), France |
| 111 Costa Navarino (Hills), Greece | 144 La Manga (West), Spain | 177 Roma Acquasanta, Italy |
| 112 Cologne Refrath, Germany | 145 Emporda (Links), Spain | 178 Antognolla, Italy |
| 113 Adamstal, Austria | 146 Toxandria, Netherlands | 179 Saint-Cloud (Vert), France |
| 114 Quinta do Lago (North), Portugal | 147 Alcanada, Spain | 180 Vallda, Sweden |
| 115 Verdura (West), Italy | 148 Bogogno (Bonora), Italy | 181 Hossegor, France |
| 116 Oaks Prague, Czech Republic | 149 Cornelia (Prince), Turkey | 182 Santo da Serra, Portugal |
| 117 Biella, Italy | 150 Castiglione del Bosco, Italy | 183 Casa Serena, Czech Republic |
| 118 Royal Waterloo (La Marache), Belgium | 151 Torino (Blue), Italy | 184 Estonian G&CC, Estonia |
| 119 Quinta de Cima, Portugal | 152 Santander, Spain | 185 Estoril, Portugal |
| 120 Anfi Tauro, Spain | 153 Infinitum (Hills), Spain | 186 La Moraleja (No.4), Spain |
| 121 Moliets, France | 154 Sperone, France | 187 Evian, France |
| 122 Castelconturbia (Blue & Yellow), Italy | 155 Oslo, Norway | 188 Courson (Vert & Noir), France |
| 123 Kempferhof, France | 156 Aloha, Spain | 189 Bergamo (Blue & Yellow), Italy |
| 124 Crans-sur-Sierre, Switzerland | 157 Olgiata (West), Italy | 190 Barbaroux, France |
| 125 Keilir, Iceland | 158 Joyenval (Marly), France | 191 Bogogno (Del Conte), Italy |
| 126 Taulane, France | 159 Kalakoki, Finland | 192 Schloss Schonborn, Austria |
| 127 Quinta do Lago (Laranjal), Portugal | 160 Montgomerie Maxx, Turkey | 193 GardaGolf (Red & White), Italy |
| 128 Fontana, Austria | 161 Winston Links, Germany | 194 Gloria (New), Turkey |
| 129 San Roque (Old), Spain | 162 Miklagard, Norway | 195 Winston (Open), Germany |
| 130 Dom Pedro (Victoria), Portugal | 163 Frankfurter, Germany | 196 Zala Springs, Hungary |
| 131 Eichenheim, Austria | 164 Penina, Portugal | 197 BlackSeaRama, Bulgaria |
| 132 Oporto, Portugal | 165 Sct Knuds, Denmark | 198 Fano, Denmark |
| 133 Amendoeira (O'Connor), Portugal | 166 La Zagaleta (Old), Spain | 199 Rinkven (Championship), Belgium |
| | | 200 Terre Blanche (Le Riou), France |

MY TRAVEL ESSENTIALS

What items would our Top 100 Editor Chris Bertram never dream of leaving home without? These are his (unsponsored) travel picks...



1. ECCO SHOES

I rate Ecco shoes so highly that I genuinely don't understand why anyone would ever think of buying anything else. They aren't the cheapest around, but they are so well made that they last forever and I can't imagine they are outlasted by any other brand. Buy cheap, buy thrice. However, it's the comfort that is simply peerless; I've played seven rounds in three days on some trips and my feet felt exactly the same as on day one (thighs, hamstrings and calves a different story). They look better than ever, too. I have the Biom C4s.



3. SUN MOUNTAIN KUBE COVER

I used to have Sun Mountain's Club Glider Meridian (where the wheels pop out the bottom and it cruises along at a 45° angle), but by chance noticed the Kube and loved the idea of it packing down into a small box when not in use at home or in my hotel room. The reality was even better. The Club Glider really does glide, but the Kube's normal wheels are also superb and, in my opinion, well worth the pay-off to get the fold-away box – a seriously ingenious bit of design that sees the solid part of the cover that protects your clubheads become the box the rest of it fits in. Brilliant!



2. GALVIN GREEN WATERPROOFS

Galvin are just the best around. It was a day in 2004 that enlightened me, when a colleague wore Galvin Green and I had a top-of-the-range suit from a very well-known manufacturer as we played Lahinch in a storm. He walked off as dry as a bone and I was soaked. I got a suit the following year and am still using it today. Look after it and it'll last you two decades. Breathable yet totally waterproof, and with Scandinavian chic.



4. CAR HIRE INSURANCE

A bit niche? Maybe. But whether you hire cars as often as I do (20+ a year) or once every summer, I couldn't recommend iCarhire Insurance enough. I've had to claim twice (not my fault, I should add!); the first time was a good service, the second truly exceptional. It just means you can wave away the attempts to upsell you extra cover at the rental desk, confident in the knowledge you are very well covered.



5. OTHER BITS

Unless I'm going somewhere guaranteed to be hot, I'll always take a bobble hat – because they are by far the best way to keep your head dry in heavy rain. As well as the usual chargers and adaptors, I pack two power banks and obsess about charging them (a lot of Top 100 entries are written on flights). And I loved my Garmin yardage watch before it mysteriously disappeared on a trip to Belek. All I ever want is a front, centre and back reading – in fact, just a centre yardage is fine. I miss it!