

TOP 100

# Golf Resorts

AROUND THE World

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HE RINGING PING OF A GOLF ball against titanium needs no translation. Whatever the country, the sound of the sweet spot crosses all cultural barriers. Which is why, for the second year, we've gone global with our annual Golf Resort Poll, expanding our assessment of top properties to include the

best in Ireland, Scotland, and Mexico, as well as North America and the Caribbean. Although the undertaking is daunting, so is our readers' cumulative golf experience—after all, as a group, their handicap averages an impressive 19.3.

This year, we asked nearly 6,000 readers to scrutinize the best international resorts and the courses affiliated with them. And because deciding to travel for the game involves criteria that extend beyond simply course quality, we asked them to also rate factors such as pro staff and speed of play along with hotel accommodations, the quality of the food, and the activities off the links.

Our results show an appreciation for both the old and the new. The two leading U.S. properties—the Lodge at Koele and the Manele Bay Hotel, sibling resorts on the island of Lanai—have been at or near the top of the poll since its inception. So it's no surprise that they once again make a grand showing in almost every scoring category. Perennial top-scorer The Greenbrier, in West Virginia, has a significant poll presence yet again, clinching the seventh spot overall, in addition to first place for activities, second for pro staff, and fifth for food.

Top honors among the newcomers go to the Lodge at Sea Island, in

Georgia, which makes its poll debut in sixth place domestically—no small feat on a playing field of this caliber. Bandon Dunes, the Oregon layout often compared to Pebble Beach, roundly trounces far more established courses by placing fourth internationally for course design and pro staff and sixth for speed of play. Just one year after opening its doors in Georgia, the Ritz-Carlton Lodge, Reynolds Plantation, debuts at No. 14 in the United States.

Internationally, Scotland maintains its hypnotic hold on aficionados of the game. The Westin Turnberry Resort has the highest overall score outside the United States and ranks sixth for accommodations, fourth for speed of play, and fifth for pro staff, trouncing its hallowed countrymate St. Andrews in all of these categories. With its perfect 100 for course design, Greywalls, which neighbors the Muirfield Golf Course, also bests St. Andrews—as does the Royal County Down in Northern Ireland. Greywalls also earns a surprising second place for speed of play—behind Mexico's Four Seasons Resort, Punta Mita, which nets a perfect 100 in the category.

We offer you 100 reasons to tote a plane ticket along with your Big Kahuna travel bag. Be prepared to speed-dial your travel agent.

—Nichole Bernier Ahern

## THE BEST OF THE best

- 89.8 Lodge at Koele, LANAI
- 89.5 Westin Turnberry Resort, AYRSHIRE, SCOTLAND
- 88.9 Four Seasons Resort, PUNTA MITA, MEXICO
- 88.5 Manele Bay Hotel, LANAI
- 87.8 Four Seasons Resort Hualalai, BIG ISLAND
- 87.3 American Club, KOHLER, WIS.
- 87.2 The Greenbrier, WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, W.VA.
- 86.4 Four Seasons Resort, NEVIS
- 85.1 Lodge at Sea Island, SEA ISLAND, GA.
- 84.9 Fairmont Orchid, BIG ISLAND

## Accommodations

- 100  
Rimrock Resort Hotel  
Banff, Alberta
- 97.2  
Ashford Castle  
County Mayo, Ireland
- 94.4  
Four Seasons Resort Hualalai  
Big Island
- 91.3  
Lodge at Koele  
Lanai
- 90.5  
The Greenbrier  
White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia

United States		Holes of Golf	OVERALL SCORE	Course Design	Speed of Play	Pro Staff	Accommodations	Food	Other Activities	New and Noteworthy
1. Lodge at Koele	Lanai	18	89.8	92.9	92.1	76.2	91.3	88.1	65.9	The course's 17th hole has a 200-foot drop from tee to green.
2. Manele Bay Hotel	Lanai	18	88.5	91.4	87.1	79.3	89.3	82.1	77.9	Every hole has a view of Hulopo'e Bay (trade winds help you on holes 7 and 12).
3. Four Seasons Resort Hualalai	Big Island	18	87.8	84.7	84.7	79.2	94.4	87.5	81.9	The fairways are contoured by the lava fields.
4. American Club	Kohler, Wis.	72	87.3	96.8	77.6	77.6	87.2	76.0	52.0	Straits Course at Whistling Straits was chosen for the 2004 PGA Championship.
5. The Greenbrier	White Sulphur Springs, W.Va.	54	87.2	86.1	80.3	83.2	90.5	90.5	86.1	The Old White has the widest fairways of the resorts' three courses.
6. Lodge at Sea Island	Sea Island, Ga.	54	85.1	87.9	76.5	77.9	89.5	86.8	55.3	The two-year-old lodge offers 24-hour butler service.
7. Fairmont Orchid*	Big Island	36	84.9	87.1	78.0	70.8	87.7	84.0	76.5	This Kohala Coast mainstay is under new management as of January 2003.
8. The Cloister	Sea Island, Ga.	54	84.7	87.9	76.5	77.9	85.6	86.5	74.8	The Mediterranean-style hotel has five miles of private beach.
9. The Homestead	Hot Springs, Va.	54	84.2	91.8	79.4	78.4	79.4	84.5	72.2	The hilly Cascades Course requires golfers to use every club in their bag.
10. Nemaquin Woodlands Resort & Spa	Farmington, Pa.	36	84.1	88.4	72.1	69.8	86.0	76.7	81.4	Tennis, fly-fishing, horseback riding, and paintball are among the activities.
10. Ritz-Carlton Kapalua	Mauai	54	84.1	90.3	71.8	72.1	84.2	83.5	71.9	Thirty PGA professionals staff the three courses.