

Condé Nast Traveler

SPECIAL REPORT
15 PLACES
TO SEE RIGHT
NOW!

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

APRIL 2011

CARIBBEAN'S
SUNNIEST
ISLES

ENGLAND'S
SENSUAL
PLEASURES

WILD WEST
3 EPIC
RANCHES



26 TIPS FOR
STAYING SANE,
SAVING BIG,
ON FAMILY TRIPS

125
TOP GOLF
RESORTS

AFFORDABLE (From under
\$100 a night!)

VILLA
VACATIONS

1,000+ DREAM RENTALS

IN FRANCE, ITALY,
HAWAII, SPAIN, GREECE, BRAZIL,
NEW ZEALAND & MORE



THE VOTES ARE IN!

TOP 125 GOLF RESORTS

TEERING UP WITH a gentle wind at your back, sinking a putt from 25 feet, collapsing into a leather chair after 18 well-played holes. That's what golfing memories are made of, and that's what you can anticipate at the top golf resorts in the United States and beyond as chosen by thousands of readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* in our **fifteenth golf poll**. Stretching from Scottsdale to St. Andrews, the properties on the following pages marry outstanding golf with fantastic lodging, dining, and service. For the avid—or casual—golfer, that's a match made in heaven ▶

“If you wish to hide your character, do not play golf”

—Percy Boomer, celebrated golf teacher



WHATEVER THE WEATHER

Fall in love with a property so much that you want to go back at a different time of year to experience it in a whole new way? The following golf resorts all ranked in our annual list of North America's top ski resorts (December 2010; or go to cntraveler.com/lists/polls), so you're guaranteed sensational swinging in summer and sublime schussing in winter:

- Equinox Golf Resort & Spa, Manchester, Vermont
- Fairmont Banff Springs, Alberta
- Fairmont Chateau Whistler, British Columbia
- Four Seasons Resort, Whistler, British Columbia
- Park Hyatt Beaver Creek Resort and Spa, Colorado
- Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch, Colorado
- Stowe Mountain Lodge, Vermont
- Sun Valley Lodge, Idaho
- Westin Riverfront Resort & Spa, Avon, Colorado



JOIN THE CLUB

TaylorMade's R11 customizable driver might look like something out of a William Gibson novel, but its features are firmly grounded in science, not fiction. The components—from the face angle, to the loft, to the club head's weight—can be adjusted to suit your playing style. The upside: With the turn of a wrench, you can adapt your game through 18 holes by altering the pitch, trajectory, and power produced by the club. The downside: Bad golfers can no longer blame their driver for slices and hooks (taylormadegolf.com).

Top 20 Florida Golf Resorts

	★	🚩	✉	🔑	🍴	📷	🌸	✔	\$	
1 LaPlaya Beach & Golf Resort, Naples	91.4	96.4	89.3	93.4	90.4	87.5	95.5	92.8	88.0	\$\$
2 Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort, Naples	90.8	89.2	95.6	93.5	94.2	89.7	83.3	91.5	91.3	\$\$
3 Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island	90.0	84.3	89.0	93.1	90.5	87.4	90.5	91.1	88.2	\$\$
4 The Breakers, Palm Beach	89.4	71.7	83.0	84.0	89.5	87.1	96.2	93.7	89.6	\$\$\$
5 Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa, Lake Buena Vista	87.4	100	94.6	84.9	85.0	79.0	94.6	90.4	89.3	\$\$\$
6 Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, Ponte Vedra Beach	87.2	81.6	84.2	88.0	89.5	86.0	90.1	86.1	85.9	\$
7 Marco Island Marriott Beach Resort, Golf Club & Spa	86.1	94.7	94.7	86.2	84.5	75.2	92.5	90.1	85.7	\$\$
8 Ritz-Carlton, Sarasota	85.7	94.1	88.2	88.5	92.3	84.4	82.4	84.0	81.7	\$
9 Ritz-Carlton Orlando, Grande Lakes	85.6	83.9	87.1	90.2	91.8	85.6	70.1	88.9	87.0	\$
10 Disney's Wilderness Lodge, Lake Buena Vista	84.9	100	100	80.0	84.3	74.8	89.8	90.7	86.5	\$\$
11 Biltmore Hotel, Coral Gables	84.7	60.0	78.9	83.9	86.5	86.0	81.7	90.5	82.0	\$
12 Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress, Orlando	84.6	97.8	93.3	82.8	84.0	77.5	82.7	87.9	89.6	\$
13 Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa, Destin	83.9	85.0	95.0	82.4	81.2	75.0	95.3	82.4	84.5	\$
14 Disney's BoardWalk Inn, Lake Buena Vista	83.4	100	94.4	81.0	80.2	71.1	91.7	87.7	87.3	\$\$
15 Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, Destin	83.3	96.0	100	82.7	77.8	77.2	88.9	79.0	85.2	\$\$
16 JW Marriott Orlando Grande Lakes	83.2	81.1	86.5	87.6	84.8	75.9	79.2	85.6	85.6	\$
17 Disney's Polynesian Resort, Lake Buena Vista	83.1	100	92.3	77.1	83.8	72.0	93.6	84.8	86.8	\$\$\$
18 Disney's Beach Club Resort, Lake Buena Vista	82.9	95.2	100	80.0	82.8	69.0	88.9	86.8	88.8	\$\$\$
19 Fairmont Turnberry Isle, Aventura	82.2	88.9	88.9	88.5	82.7	79.8	74.4	82.7	81.5	\$
20 Gasparilla Inn & Club, Boca Grande	81.1	80.8	80.8	75.3	82.1	76.6	89.5	78.7	90.9	\$\$
20 Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate	81.1	94.1	94.1	90.5	89.2	73.9	60.8	83.8	82.2	\$

A TALE OF TWO BRANDS

Ritz-Carlton and Disney claim 9 of the Top 20 Florida Golf Resorts, led by the Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort, in Naples, and Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa, in Lake Buena Vista.

Top 15 Hawaii Golf Resorts

	★	🚩	✉	🔑	🍴	📷	🌸	✔	\$	
1 Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea	95.1	98.4	96.9	94.1	96.1	94.1	98.9	93.9	94.9	\$\$\$
2 Four Seasons Resort Hualalai, Big Island	94.2	95.3	95.3	96.2	94.0	91.7	94.9	93.4	94.3	\$\$\$
3 Four Seasons Resort Lanai at Manele Bay	93.8	95.5	100	95.2	95.2	84.9	96.0	94.4	94.4	\$\$\$
4 Four Seasons Resort Lanai, The Lodge at Koele	92.0	96.3	92.6	87.4	93.5	90.9	87.0	93.5	88.0	\$
5 Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa	90.8	93.7	93.7	88.4	88.7	83.6	96.4	93.5	93.4	\$\$
6 Fairmont Orchid, Big Island	89.6	96.4	96.4	85.5	88.1	88.4	93.5	90.0	89.9	\$\$
7 Fairmont Kea Lani, Maui	89.5	95.1	92.7	92.8	90.2	81.7	93.9	92.4	84.5	\$\$
8 Grand Wailea, Maui	89.0	93.3	80.0	90.1	84.0	80.8	95.8	90.9	92.6	\$\$
9 Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows, Big Island	88.8	98.0	90.2	87.8	88.7	82.4	94.9	88.7	87.4	\$\$\$
10 JW Marriott Ihilani Resort & Spa, Oahu	88.7	85.7	85.2	91.7	88.9	83.3	85.5	94.2	89.6	\$\$\$
11 Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua, Maui	87.7	98.4	95.1	86.8	90.5	88.4	84.1	86.5	86.2	\$\$\$
12 Hyatt Regency Maui Resort & Spa	87.1	86.4	90.9	83.8	86.0	82.8	94.0	88.5	87.3	\$\$\$
13 Hapuna Beach Prince Hotel, Big Island	85.3	95.6	95.7	84.7	87.9	74.0	92.9	86.3	80.6	\$
14 Hilton Waikoloa Village, Big Island	82.9	93.2	92.2	80.9	78.3	72.8	89.0	85.2	88.4	\$
15 Kona I Marriott Resort	82.8	83.1	88.3	81.4	81.6	72.4	90.3	85.0	85.3	\$

Rates are for the least-expensive double during peak golf season: \$ = \$349 and under; \$\$ = \$350-\$499; \$\$\$ = \$500 or more.

- ★ Overall average
- 🚩 Course Design & Access
- ✉ Golf Staff & Services
- 🔑 Rooms
- 🍴 Service
- 📷 Food/Dining
- 🌸 Location
- ✔ Overall Design
- 🌸 Activities/Facilities
- \$ Double Room

A STATE FOR ALL SEASONS

Four Seasons cleans up in the Aloha State, where its properties secure the top four Hawaiian spots, with highest honors going to the Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea.

"They call it golf because all the other four-letter words were taken"

—Raymond Floyd, king of the chip shot

Top 10 Northern U.S. Golf Resorts

		★	▶	✉	🔑	🍴	🏠	🍷	📷	✂️	✔️	💰
1	Stowe Mountain Lodge, Vt.	94.0	100	100	94.7	91.2	90.2	94.7	93.0	96.4	\$	
2	West Baden Springs Hotel, Ind.	88.6	81.0	85.7	92.6	90.2	85.1	78.0	95.4	91.3	\$	
3	American Club, Kohler, Wis.	88.4	99.0	95.1	89.1	93.3	90.1	77.1	87.6	87.5	\$\$	
4	Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island, Mich.	85.7	41.7	91.7	74.9	88.2	80.1	94.7	91.2	88.0	\$\$\$	
5	Inn at Bay Harbor, Mich.	85.4	90.5	85.7	85.4	84.3	76.4	93.3	87.6	83.9	\$\$	
6	Grand View Lodge, Nisswa, Minn.	84.6	96.2	92.3	84.7	86.2	72.4	89.8	79.7	86.0	\$\$	
7	The Sagamore, Lake George, N.Y.	83.4	89.5	84.2	78.4	81.3	80.6	92.4	85.4	81.4	\$	
8	Equinox Golf Resort & Spa, Manchester, Vt.	81.6	80.0	80.0	78.8	83.2	76.2	88.1	83.3	80.3	\$	
9	Otesaga Resort Hotel, Cooperstown, N.Y.	80.1	85.0	90.0	72.0	84.9	79.8	83.9	82.8	73.9	\$\$	
10	Balsams Grand Resort Hotel, Dixville Notch, N.H.	79.3	90.9	90.5	66.7	82.1	82.1	83.7	74.6	82.5	\$\$	

Top 10 Western U.S. Golf Resorts

		★	▶	✉	🔑	🍴	🏠	🍷	📷	✂️	✔️	💰
1	Westin Riverfront Resort & Spa, Avon, Colo.	96.9	100	100	98.5	95.2	94.7	97.6	97.9	97.3	\$	
2	The Broadmoor, Colorado Springs, Colo.	92.6	95.2	92.7	94.0	93.7	89.9	92.1	93.7	91.7	\$\$	
3	Wynn Las Vegas, Nev.	91.3	84.8	93.8	95.9	88.7	91.6	87.7	93.8	90.0	\$	
4	Bellagio, Las Vegas, Nev.	90.9	95.7	91.7	92.1	83.8	91.1	95.3	92.8	86.8	\$	
5	Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch, Avon, Colo.	89.7	92.1	86.8	91.9	89.4	83.2	91.0	91.6	91.5	\$\$	
6	Park Hyatt Beaver Creek Resort and Spa, Colo.	85.7	90.9	100	82.6	82.5	74.9	95.1	87.5	89.7	\$	
7	Coeur d'Alene Resort, Idaho	85.3	96.0	98.0	84.2	82.6	78.8	92.5	83.6	83.8	\$	
8	Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort & Spa, Santa Ana Pueblo, N.M.	84.8	88.2	88.2	89.9	86.0	78.8	78.8	87.9	86.5	\$	
9	Sun Valley Lodge, Idaho	82.6	90.9	90.9	76.5	82.6	75.5	89.9	83.0	85.7	\$	
10	Bandon Dunes Golf Resort, Bandon, Ore.	81.7	97.2	90.3	77.0	75.2	70.7	78.0	81.0	90.8	\$\$	

Top 20 Southern U.S. Golf Resorts

		★	▶	✉	🔑	🍴	🏠	🍷	📷	✂️	✔️	💰
1	Sanctuary at Kiawah Island Golf Resort, S.C.	95.6	95.1	95.1	98.0	95.7	92.3	96.2	96.2	95.6	\$\$	
2	Barnsley Gardens Resort, Adairsville, Ga.	90.3	95.0	93.2	93.7	92.5	88.8	84.6	90.6	89.2	\$\$	
2	The Cloister, Sea Island, Ga.	90.3	97.2	94.4	95.1	90.4	81.6	88.5	91.3	90.9	\$\$	
4	Inn at Palmetto Bluff, Bluffton, S.C.	89.2	95.7	95.7	95.0	88.0	79.6	85.8	93.0	89.4	\$\$	
5	Ritz-Carlton Lodge, Reynolds Plantation, Greensboro, Ga.	88.4	95.5	94.0	89.4	91.9	84.4	78.4	89.9	91.8	\$	
6	The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs, W.Va.	88.3	96.3	91.3	86.8	90.6	87.7	82.2	89.4	90.4	\$\$	
7	Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club, Durham, N.C.	87.4	100	80.0	86.6	89.0	86.1	89.9	89.0	95.7	\$	
8	Inn at Harbour Town, Hilton Head Island, S.C.	86.5	91.7	83.3	91.7	86.8	80.6	89.5	84.2	85.3	\$	
9	Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, Biloxi, Miss.	86.0	92.3	92.3	89.7	83.5	80.8	88.3	88.7	84.3	\$	
10	Williamsburg Inn and Colonial Houses, Va.	85.9	100	90.5	84.5	82.6	80.7	92.6	86.1	86.5	\$\$	
11	Grand Hotel Marriott Resort, Golf Club & Spa, Point Clear, Ala.	85.7	90.0	95.0	85.7	88.7	81.0	86.2	86.5	82.8	\$\$	
12	Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort & Spa, San Antonio, Tex.	84.7	100	100	84.8	84.8	73.4	78.6	88.9	91.2	\$	
13	Lodge at Sea Island Golf Club, St. Simons Island, Ga.	84.6	92.3	84.6	86.2	81.5	79.4	89.2	84.6	83.3	\$\$	
14	Wild Dunes, Isle of Palms, S.C.	84.1	100	100	87.3	75.0	74.6	90.4	84.9	87.1	\$\$	
15	The Homestead, Hot Springs, Va.	83.9	94.9	88.5	78.7	85.4	79.6	82.2	86.1	87.1	\$\$	
16	Four Seasons Resort and Club Dallas at Las Colinas, Tex.	83.8	91.9	94.6	86.3	85.1	82.7	71.4	85.0	87.8	\$	
17	Grove Park Inn Resort & Spa, Asheville, N.C.	83.5	73.4	82.5	77.3	84.2	81.9	89.5	85.2	83.8	\$	
18	Barton Creek Resort & Spa, Austin, Tex.	82.5	93.3	90.4	82.6	82.7	75.6	77.3	83.1	86.3	\$	
19	Tides Inn, Irvington, Va.	81.9	78.1	96.9	79.3	84.1	81.8	83.0	78.2	78.3	\$\$	
20	Pinehurst Resort, N.C.	81.3	92.9	92.0	64.3	83.9	75.4	81.4	80.6	89.7	\$\$	

Rates are for the least-expensive double during peak golf season: \$ = \$349 and under; \$\$ = \$350-\$499; \$\$\$ = \$500 or more.
 ★ Overall average ▶ Course Design & Access ✉ Golf Staff & Services 🔑 Rooms 🍴 Service 🏠 Food/Dining 📷 Location
 ✂️ Overall Design ✔️ Activities/Facilities 💰 Double Room

GREEN GREENS

The Westin Riverfront Resort & Spa debuts on the poll with the top score in every category among Western U.S. Golf Resorts. Opened two years ago, this Silver LEED-certified property generates 50 percent of its electricity from renewable sources.

PRO GOLF

Get a head start on the professionals and see what hazards they'll face at the Sanctuary at Kiawah Island Golf Resort's Ocean Course—it will host the 2012 PGA Championship.

GROUNDWORK

Pinehurst Resort has a staggering eight 18-hole courses. Maintaining them in playing condition is no small feat: More than 200 employees tend the 800 acres of grounds, watered by 8,000 sprinkler heads; more than 200,000 pounds of seed are added in the fall to keep the fairways green in winter; and 5,000 tons of sand are needed annually for upkeep of the sand traps.



TOOLS of the TRADE | PUMA \$75

SURE FOOTING

Rolled out in three different color schemes (the yellow-gray combo is shown here), Puma's Golf Cat Women's NM combines spectacular form with sterling function. The brogue detailing on the toe is a modest contrast to the fun track-star hues, while the rubber-spiked sole and water-resistant full-grain leather upper promise traction and comfort in all conditions. If only your tee shots were this pretty (puma.com).

METHODOLOGY

Condé Nast Traveler's 2011 Golf Poll results were derived from our 2010 Readers' Choice Survey, whose questionnaire was available through a secure Web site. Tabulation of the 25,916 responses was done by Global Market Insight, Inc., of Boston. Golf resorts were rated excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor on eight criteria: Course Design & Access, Golf Staff & Services, Rooms, Service, Food/Dining, Location, Overall Design, and Activities/Facilities. Criterion scores, which represent the percentage of respondents who rated a golf resort excellent or very good, were averaged to determine the overall score. Only resorts that received a required minimum number of responses were included in these rankings.