

2004 TEN BEST NEW INTERNATIONAL COURSES

BARNBOUGLE DUNES GOLF LINKS, BRIDPORT, TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA

Tucked away on Tasmania's north coast, Barnbougale may be the course that proves a great track can thrive anywhere, even behind God's back. The front nine, parted through forty-foot sand dunes, eventually gives way to holes among lower, wrinkled dunes beside the Bass Strait. The 120-yard seventh, "Little Devil," is destined to become iconic.

ARCHITECTS: Tom Doak and Michael Clayton. YARDAGE: 6,755. GREENS FEE: \$113. TEE TIMES: 011-61/363-560-094, barnbougledunes.com.

BUSHMAN SANDS CLUB, ALICEDALE, EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

Alicedale—a once-forgotten and decaying railway town—is now a trendy getaway with a four-star hotel, a fully stocked game reserve and a course cut through the bushveld along a mountain ridge, with several holes routed near the apex of the New Years and Bushmans Rivers. Ten holes are now open, with the final eight scheduled for completion in March. Like all Gary Player courses, it is fair but exacting.

ARCHITECT: Gary Player Design. YARDAGE: 6,616. GREENS FEE: \$58. TEE TIMES: 011-27/42-231-8054, bushmansands.com.

DUNDONALD, IRVINE, SCOTLAND

On sandy ground set back from the Firth of Clyde in Ayrshire, a stone's throw from Royal Troon, Kyle Phillips has given birth to a classic links on the site of an old course abandoned to military use in World War II. Low dunes frame rippled fairways trimmed by heather, gorse and tall bulrushes that mark wetlands. Deep, revetted bunkers defend the large, subtly contoured greens. On a typically windy day, it's a challenge to rival the finest courses in the neighborhood—which is saying something.

ARCHITECT: Kyle Phillips. YARDAGE: 7,300. GREENS FEES: \$130–\$176. TEE TIMES: 011-44/1294-314-000, lochlomond.com.

EAGLES NEST GOLF CLUB, MAPLE, ONTARIO, CANADA

An old sand and gravel extraction site, Eagles Nest has been transformed by the accomplished Canadian architect Doug Carrick into a compelling links-style track, its sand scars shaped to resemble eroded dunes. Thirty minutes north of downtown Toronto, it's marked by huge plateau greens, fescue-covered hills and sandy wastelands dotted with grass islands. This strategic gem's ninety-one sod-walled bunkers are a tip of the hat to the Auld Sod.

ARCHITECT: Doug Carrick. YARDAGE: 7,476. SLOPE: 141. GREENS FEE: \$146. TEE TIMES: 905-417-2300, eaglesnestgolf.com.

FOUR SEASONS RESORT AT PENINSULA PAPAGAYO, COSTA RICA

Squ coasted away in northwest Costa Rica's Guanacaste province, this new Four Seasons resort presents golf as a rain forest-canopy tour. It is also, instantly, Central America's finest course. The layout is nestled in the hills at the tip of a peninsula, and Papagayo's cliff-top tees offer sweeping views of lush hillsides, golden beaches and the cobalt-blue sea. Rounds here are soundtracked by the chorus of howler monkeys that reside in the dense jungle. There are, admittedly, a few funky holes in the mix, but the beauty factor more than compensates.

ARCHITECT: Arnold Palmer Course Design. YARDAGE: 6,788. SLOPE: 141. GREENS FEES: \$185 (resort); \$215 (nonresort). TEE TIMES: 011-50/6696-0000, fourseasons.com.

THE GREEN MONKEY AT SANDY LANE, ST. JAMES, BARBADOS, WEST INDIES

Nearly five years in the making, this is Tom Fazio's most inspired (and expensive) creation since Shadow Creek. A spectacular bit of stagecraft, it transitions in and out of a former quarry high above the sea, the holes tiered and slotted at different heights. Sheer 100-foot-high rock walls rise behind several greens. Hundreds of transplanted trees beautify the grounds. The Green Monkey may be playable from the whites, but it's a gorilla from the tips.

ARCHITECT: Tom Fazio. YARDAGE: 7,389. GREENS FEE: \$300 (resort guests only). TEE TIMES: 246-444-2000.

GUNNAMATTA COURSE, THE GOLF CLUB ST. ANDREWS BEACH, RYE, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

"The easiest golf course I've ever built," says Tom Doak of this genuine links ninety minutes south of Melbourne. Its holes, set in large hollows below sandy ridges, offer no water views, but this brilliant layout offsets that shortcoming with natural blowouts, elevated tees and punch-bowl greens. Doak moved roughly 10,000 cubic yards of earth, an absolute pittance, in creating the course that Alister MacKenzie, Doak's patron saint, would have built here were he still alive.

ARCHITECTS: Tom Doak and Michael Clayton. YARDAGE: 6,660. GREENS FEE: \$151. TEE TIMES: 011-61/398-225-909.

NORMAN COURSE, MISSION HILLS GOLF CLUB, SHENZHEN, GUANGDONG, CHINA

Dubbed the "Tournament Course," the tenth layout to open at what is now the world's largest golf complex is already acclaimed as one of the most challenging in Asia. Its front nine meanders through a series of small valleys; the back nine is walled in by steep slopes. Dense forest and eighty-five yawning bunkers swallow stray shots. Located an hour north of Hong Kong.

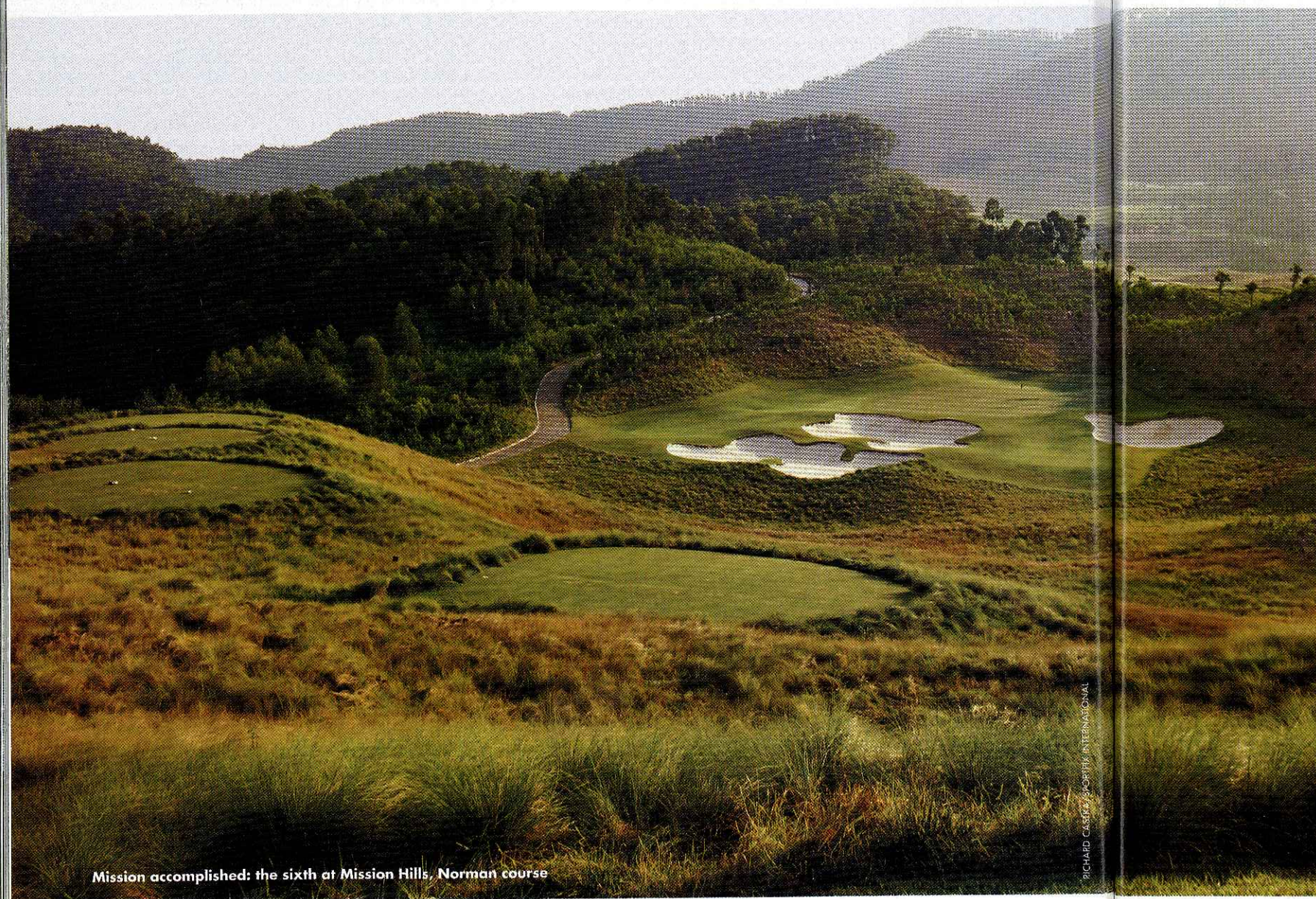
ARCHITECT: Greg Norman. YARDAGE: 7,228. GREENS FEES: \$138–\$206 (resort guests only). TEE TIMES: 011-86/755-2808-0888, missionhillsgroup.com.

NORTH WEST COURSE, KYTAJA GOLF, HELSINKI, FINLAND

On the heels of the triumph of his parkland-style South East course at this 11,000-acre complex built by a Finnish timber and mining baron, Tom McBroom returns with a rugged yet refined layout cut through firs and pines high above the shores of a pristine lake. It's a beautifully sculpted work, with rolling fairways leading to tightly bunkered greens. Kytaja is a mere hour's drive from St. Petersburg—the Russian one.

ARCHITECT: Tom McBroom. YARDAGE: 7,103. SLOPE: 136. GREENS FEE: \$104. TEE TIMES: 011-358/19-4565-700, kytajagolf.fi.

PLUS: **CAPE KIDNAPPERS** (see page 113). •



Mission accomplished: the sixth at Mission Hills, Norman course