

A Shore Thing

Atlantic City is a Golfer's Playground

By Dave Silbar

So it appears the place that made Snooky a household name isn't so bad after all. And come to think of it, if the opportunity is ever offered, I can even be persuaded to tee it up with Pauly D for golf on the Shore.


You'll need to excuse the giddiness, but a spring golf trip to Atlantic City seemed a unique way to start the season after our Polar Vortex of a winter. And for all the glitz and glimmer of the high-rise gambling casinos that light up the night across this unique Atlantic Ocean-side destination, there's another side to Atlantic City — a daylight version beyond the reimagined world-famous boardwalk and beaches.

Sprawled across its tranquil surroundings are no less than 20 artfully-crafted and well-maintained golf courses of all makes and varieties. These layouts range from links style to parkland style to classic gems to out-of-control modern marvels. You can start your journey by visiting www.PlayACGolf.com.

Earlier this year, United Airlines added daily non-stop service from O'Hare to the destination referred to by locals simply as AC, making it a snap to get to the Jersey Shore. Once there, a 20-minute ride will get you from AC International Airport to the famed boardwalk and its towering casinos. It also takes roughly the same amount of time to get to as many as 20 area golf courses.

My five rounds in four days provided great golf, fine accommodations via Caesar's Resort and Casino, and food worthy of a return trip. Add in some local haunts a bit off the boardwalk, and there's plenty of reason to put Atlantic City on your list of 'must hit' golf trips.





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Shore Gate Golf Hole 9

Among the best at the AC, Shore Gate Golf Club (www.Shoregategolf.com) is an impressive championship 18-hole layout that is well-bunkered and beautifully tree-lined. Incredible views are in abundance, and it was difficult to find a hole that I didn't want to play again.

This beauty is located in the heart of Cape May County, about a 30-minute drive from Atlantic City. Shore Gate opened in 2002 to rave reviews and has maintained its first-rate standards ever since. It is the only golf course at the Jersey Shore to have been named to both *Golf Digest* and *Golf* magazine's list of best new public golf courses nationally. In addition, it is repeatedly ranked by *Golf Digest* among the top 20 public courses in New Jersey. *GOLFChicago* whole-heartedly agrees.

Moving along, as host of the LPGA's Shop Rite Classic, SeaView Golf Resort offers 36 holes, including the Donald Ross-designed Bay Course and more traditional Pines course. The Bay plays along the ocean with sweeping views of Atlantic City and plenty of wind. Celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2014, SeaView's Bay Course is a sporty resort layout where the greens are boss. In true Ross style, precise approach shots are required in order to keeping the ball near the pin and oftentimes on the putting surface, period.

Our first taste of AC golf, Atlantic City Country Club, drips with history and more than 120 bunkers. The once private-turned-public Atlantic City CC was built in 1897 and is famous for being where the term "birdie" first originated. The original bell, which would ring to remind golfers that the last trolley was about to leave for Atlantic City in the early 1900s, is one of the first things you see when pulling up to the bag drop.

Everything about ACCC brings you back to golf's golden age, from the various stately dining rooms to its legendary locker room with historic golf artwork lining the walls (our favorite was the photo of Jackie Gleason riding in a three-wheeled golf car with a 30-year-old Sam Snead).

One of our favorite and more unique AC golf offerings is Renault Winery Resort and Golf Club (www.thevineyardsnj.com), with a scenic (and fun) 18-hole championship course, which features a selection of signature holes playing alongside (and oftentimes over) its vineyards. From both a playability and drinkability standpoint, we give this club a hearty thumbs up.

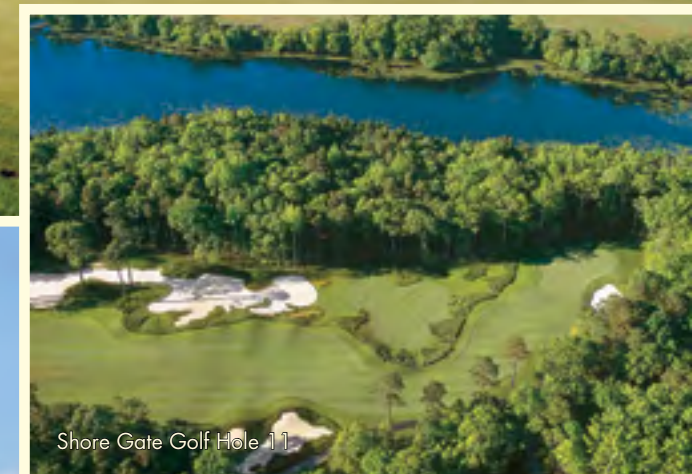
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Shore Gate Golf Hole 2



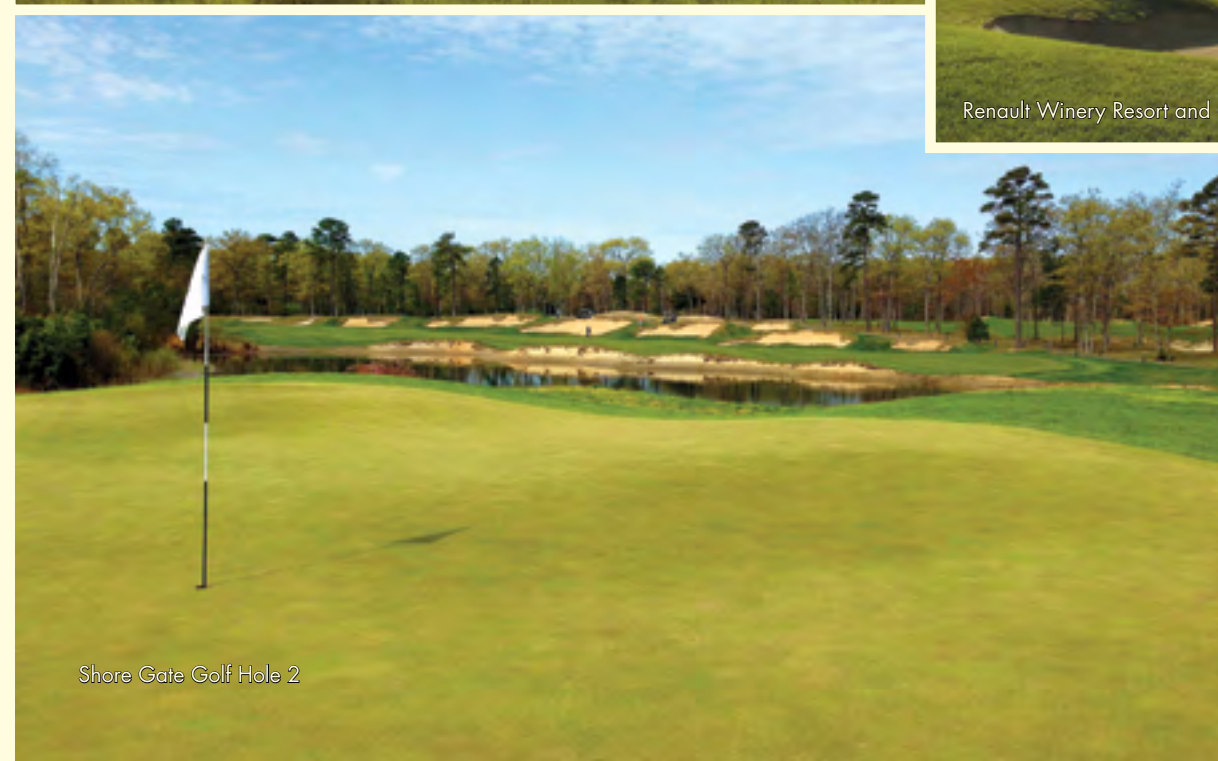
Seaview Golf Resort



Shore Gate Golf Hole 11



Renault Winery Resort and Golf Club



Shore Gate Golf Hole 2

Stop Hitting It Fat

A ‘fat shot’ occurs when the club head hits the ground behind the golf ball; in other words, the lowest part of the swing circle is bottoming out in the wrong place. Hitting the ball fat is usually a product of changing height during your swing. You’re getting shorter through impact, leading to a deep, fat divot. Changing height through the downswing can be hard to feel because it usually comes from the right shoulder dipping, lowering excessively

toward the ground, versus moving toward the target. The ideal shoulder position at impact would have the same amount of tilt it had at address. Because your right hand is lower than the left hand when you grip the club, your right shoulder is going to be lower than the left shoulder. Any increase in this shoulder tilt will cause the fat shot. To get the feeling of your shoulders staying more level through impact, use your eyes. If your eyes tilt, and if

the right eye drops toward the ground, then the right shoulder will absolutely follow.

Having awareness of your eyes staying more level (parallel) to the ground on the downswing will help maintain the original amount of shoulder tilt, allowing the club head, the lowest point of the swing, to bottom out ahead of the golf ball. This in turn will help maintain constant height throughout your swing, ensuring solid contact.



INSTRUCTION

THE FULL SWING



Carl Rabito

Tom Watson

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with an 8½” hole. I think that would be fun. I’m not too sure about FootGolf. I don’t think that translates into getting golfers. The thing that we need to understand is that we are now competing with the time that people are taking with their smartphones. We are in communication wherever we go. Do we have enough time to play golf? That’s the question that needs to be addressed. How much time can we spend playing golf? We need to be focusing on shortened versions of the game of golf. People will still enjoy the game.

GC: Your DVD series has helped a lot of golfers; what advice do you have for recreational golfers looking to build a better swing?

TW: I believe that you can learn a lot more about the golf swing from watching from the rear-view point of the golfer than you can from the front end of the golfer. Looking at the footwork- seeing how the left knee collapses toward the ball and the right knee collapses in toward the ball on the downswing. The golf swing starts with the hands and arms and the downswing starts with the feet. If you don’t have your feet in the right position going back, then you can’t have them in the right position going down.

GC: What advice do you have for recreational golfers and their golf clubs?

I don’t think a 60° [wedge] should be in the bag of a lot of amateurs. It takes a lot of skill to hit it the right distance, so I think that is a club that shouldn’t be in their bags. What should be in their bags are hybrids. I have two hybrids in my bag right now and I’m going to be a super senior here pretty quick. I’ll probably have four to five hybrids in there soon. Over the years, I have not seen a consistent problem that they have. I do notice that when they drive the ball that they don’t have enough loft on their driver to allow them to hit the ball up in the air. I always hit the ball really high in the air. My reverse C—it really got me under the ball at impact. It’s a great way to hit a driver. You have to hit the ball on the upswing with the driver. That’s not a question there! It launches the ball with less spin and goes through the air better.

GC: What are your favorite Chicago memories?

TW: The 30th and 40th anniversary of [my] Western Open [victories]. I won’t make it up to the Encompass this year. The courses are too long for me. I’m getting shorter and shorter and the courses are longer and longer. I can’t do that. 40 years ago was my first win up there at Butler National. Everybody remembers their first win. It’s just like your first kiss—it’s an unforgettable moment and I remember it like it was yesterday.

Going Coastal in Carolina

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Nags Head as several of the par 4s can be split between a pair of iron shots. The course also has five par 3s. None of these one-shooters is more challenging than the 221-yard 15th hole, which is one of nine holes that are situated on the waters of the Roanoke Sound. Stop in at the golf shop and purchase a yardage book prior to your round. It will save you some confusion and probably a couple of shiny Pro V1s.

If your significant other prefers shopping bags to golf bags, then there is the Tanger Outlets just down the street from Nags Head Golf Links. Nags Head also has an unforgettable food stop with the Blue Moon Beach Grill. The Shrimp “Not a Burger” just might be the best thing between two slices of ciabatta bread ever.

A golf trip to The Outer Banks is not complete until you’ve teed it up at Kilmarlic Golf Club. A Tom Steele design that opened in 2002, Kilmarlic (www.kilmarlicgolfclub.com) is set on 605 acres of wetlands and forest and is both challenging and visually stunning. The course maxes out at 6,550 yards from the tips and has hosted the North Carolina Open twice. There is just under a 300-yard difference between the front and back nine; this is due to the back nine having a trio of both par 3s and par 5s. The entire course presents obstacles from large oak and pine trees to approach shots heavily guarded by water and deep traps.

There is no better way to enjoy your Kilmarlic Golf Club experience than staying in the course’s golf cottage. Complete with a full kitchen and four private bedrooms, the Clubhouse Cottage sleeps up to eight people. A pool table in the living room along with a large flat-screen television makes this cottage more of a “man cave” than anything else. Except this man cave is only a few steps away from the first tee.

The Outer Banks has many scenic beaches, good eats, and exceptional golf courses. The most notable attraction though can be found in Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, at the Wright Brothers National Memorial. The exact location where Orville and Wilbur taught the word to fly in December of 1903 is on display along with a towering monument. A visit to the memorial will leave you with plenty of memories, even amid all of the golf and food. The Outer Banks of North Carolina provides visitors with so much more than just a great golf experience. It’s a great life experience. A place you can go with your buddies, your wife, your kids, or your clients. Far removed from the “been there, done that.”

Learn more about all OBX golf experiences and fall golf getaways at www.PlayOBXGolf.com or call 800-916-6244.

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Regardless of your performance, a great meal with outstanding wine selections is right across the street from this surprisingly entertaining Edward Shearon layout. The Vineyard course at Renault measures 7,200 yards from the tips with five sets of tees for enjoyment by all. Generous fairways and strategically placed bunkers provide the perfect balance of forgiveness and challenge. Especially memorable is the par-4, 7th hole with a dogleg right where you play your tee shot over the actual vineyards to a well-bunkered green.

With all the glitz and glamour that AC has to offer, there’s one place that is the exact polar opposite and happened to provide one of the best experiences of the entire trip. The Irish Pub and Hotel, located just steps from the Boardwalk, mixes old New Orleans architecture with the feeling of being smack dab in the middle of Dublin. Budd Schulberg, Academy Award winning screenwriter of *On the Waterfront*, summed this place up when he said: “I would like to spend my last hours on earth at the Irish Pub.”

An average, but most affordable-in-AC-menu is flanked by way above average atmosphere and service. Hailed by many as ‘America’s Greatest Pub,’ The Irish Pub features a beautiful Victorian Inn with rooms starting at just \$25 per night. Granted, the rooms are small and not what you’d find at, say, Caesar’s. But then again, this isn’t Caesar’s.

The Pub’s history dates back to the 19th century and the place has survived hurricanes, prohibition, two world wars and everything in between. A speakeasy back in the days of prohibition, this is probably the best taste of the old Atlantic City experience depicted in the popular HBO series Boardwalk Empire. The hotel and lounge was Joe DiMaggio’s hangout following his Yankee playing days, and provides a look back to a bygone era of classic, southern-inspired elegance.

Factoid: situated on St. James Place and the boardwalk, The Irish Pub has been identified with the game of Monopoly, and the red hotels used in the game are based on the Pub’s architecture.

Visit www.PlayACGolf.com for a full list of golf and side action to place your bets. Daily non-stop service from O’Hare to Atlantic City is available on both United Airlines and Spirit Airways. With gaming, the famed boardwalk, and all things Jersey, Atlantic City is one-stop shopping for a great golf experience. There are also plenty of distractions that have made this destination an American institution for respite and excitement.