

# Golf Digest

The No. 1 Golf Publication

**DISTANCE  
BASICS  
HOW TO  
HIT IT  
2 CLUBS  
LONGER**

**Bubba Watson**

314.1 yards per drive!

**SIMPLE  
SWING  
TIPS**

> BY THE  
50 BEST  
TEACHERS

**LOWER  
SCORES**

> PUTT  
FASTER,  
MAKE  
MORE



**KNOCK IT  
STIFF**  
> YOUR  
COMPLETE  
GUIDE TO  
WEDGES

# BARONA RESORT + CASINO

WINS GOLF DIGEST'S GREEN STAR AWARD FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES



Though the purpose of Golf Digest's Green Star Awards is to raise environmental awareness among golfers, we've learned an important lesson in the three years we've investigated and honored eco-friendly golf resorts: The best don't bludgeon their guests with demands of recognition for their eco-friendly programs. At winning resorts, sustainable practices are just part of the culture, barely noticeable unless a guest searches them out.

That's true at our five previous Green Star resorts: Barton Creek in Texas, Kiawah Island in South Carolina,

Madden's in Minnesota, Pebble Beach in California and Sunriver in Oregon.

It's also apparent at our sole recipient of a Green Star Award for 2011, Barona Resort & Casino, owned and operated by the Barona Band of Mission Indians in Lakeside, Calif., about a half-hour east of San Diego.

Pull up to the hotel and you might glance at the handicap parking stalls at the front of the lot. Look again and you'll realize some of the prime spots are designated just for alternative-fuel vehicles, a subtle way of rewarding the use of green transportation.

A shuttle bus stops nearby, and passengers depart. Some are no doubt gamers headed

for the casino, but many are employees of the resort. The company circulates buses throughout San Diego County to transport employees to and from work. It reduces fuel consumption, air pollution and the resort's carbon footprint.

In your hotel room, you'll give no thought to the small bar of soap you left in the shower, but it isn't just tossed into the trash by the cleaning staff. Instead, all used soap bars are collected and shipped to Global Soap Project in Atlanta, which cleans, reprocesses and distributes the soap for use in impoverished nations like Haiti and Uganda.

The Styrofoam cup you dropped into a trash can won't

end up in a landfill. Barona's crew will collect it and place it in a "foam-densifier" machine, where it's compacted with other foam products into bundles, which are shipped to an industry that converts them into building insulation, plastic lumber, picture frames and flowerpots.

Almost nothing at Barona goes to waste. The resort recycles paper, cardboard, plastic, aluminum, steel, glass, shrink-wrap, batteries, electronics, office furniture, carpeting, uniforms, ink cartridges, tires, cooking oil and motor oil. Even directional signs and trash receptacles on the golf course are made of recycled materials.



In Barona's arid locale, water is the most precious item collected and recycled. Well water serves the hotel and casino, but not the Barona Creek Golf Club. Rainfall and storm water are captured from rooftops, parking lots, storm gutters, drains, even carpaths, then funneled via aqueducts and streams into a series of retention ponds. Condensation from air-conditioning units is also captured and added to the mix. Overall, 30 million gallons of water are collected and stored each year, but that's not enough to fully irrigate the course.

So a decade ago the tribe built a state-of-the-art sewage plant that treats all hotel and casino effluent, processing it through five filtration stages (including one that uses ultraviolet rays as a disinfectant) to remove waste from the water. Microorganisms help break down nitrogen and carbon in the water, which is then blended with the rainwater in the holding ponds and used to irrigate the course.

Even that wasn't a sufficient amount of water, so three years ago Sandy Clark, the certified golf superintendent who has managed Barona Creek since its construction in 2000, began implementing a turf-reduction program that seems so logical it could be adopted by many courses. He transformed some maintained areas between tees and fairways into waste bunkers and naturalized areas. He also decided to eliminate one of the five tee boxes that exist on every hole, converting the abandoned tee boxes back to naturalized areas. (That idea fits nicely with the new "Tee It Forward" movement, as many of the abandoned tees posed long carries for average golfers and were hardly used.)

Not only do these transition areas look attractive (they were designed by golf architect

Todd Eckenrode, who had designed the original course while employed by Gary Roger Baird), but the elimination of 15 percent (and counting) of maintained turf saves on water, fuel, fertilizers, pesticides and labor, all of which improved the bottom line on Barona Creek's maintenance budget. Clark keeps the remainder of the course—bent-grass greens, Bermuda fairways, ryegrass rough—dry and firm, a bit off-color, providing ideal playing conditions with less concern for diseases and pests. As with most other environmental programs at Barona, the missing tee boxes are hardly noticeable.

Earlier this year, Golf Digest invited more than 300 American golf resorts to apply for a Green Star by filling out an application detailing its comprehensive environmental programs in course and resort operations. Nineteen applications were reviewed by our panel of judges, who selected four finalists. (Our judges were Brent Blackwelder, Friends of the Earth; Jay Feldman, Beyond Pesticides; Dr. Michael Hurdzan, Hurdzan/Fry Environmental Golf Design; Greg Lyman, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Environmental Institute for Golf; Tom Mead, agronomist; Jim Moore and Jim Snow, USGA; Robert Wood, Chesapeake Bay Program; John Barton, Roger Schiffman and Ron Whitten, Golf Digest.) Moore and Whitten then conducted extensive on-site inspections of the final four.

—RON WHITTEN

**T-39**  
**FAIRMONT ORCHID (20)**  
Kohala Coast, Hawaii SCORE 78.33  
CONTACT fairmont.com/orchid,  
866-540-4474 ROOM RATE \$489  
NEW + NOTABLE The 36 holes are anything but goat tracks, but you'll likely see wild goats roaming the North Course. The South Course hosted the Senior Skins Game for 10 years.

**T-39**  
**FARMLINKS GOLF CLUB AT PURSELL FARMS (NR)** Sylacauga, Ala. SCORE 78.33 CONTACT farmlinksclub.com, 877-292-3276 ROOM RATE \$189 NEW + NOTABLE Feel like putting while your coffee's brewing? Five cottages and cabins on Masters Row offer access to practice greens in a courtyard right outside your door, stocked with balls each morning.

**41**  
**LA QUINTA (Calif.) RESORT & CLUB/POA WEST (56)**  
SCORE 78.14 CONTACT laquintaresort.com, 800-598-3828 ROOM RATE \$229  
NEW + NOTABLE In addition to five championship courses, including one among Golf Digest's ranking of America's 100 Greatest Public Courses, the kid-friendly Little Links Mountain nine-hole is scheduled to open Nov. 25.

**42**  
**THE MAUNA LANI BAY HOTEL AND SUNGALOWS RESORT (39)**  
The Big Island, Hawaii SCORE 77.94 CONTACT maunalani.com, 808-885-6622 ROOM RATE \$395  
NEW + NOTABLE The par-3 15th on the South Course is the signature hole, with whales adding a distraction in front of the tee. The nine-hole Keiki Course, designed for juniors, is a new and popular spot.

**43**  
**PRONGHORN (NR)**  
Band, Ok. SCORE 77.78 CONTACT pronghornclub.com, 866-372-1003 ROOM RATE \$299  
NEW + NOTABLE Luxury lodging is available with a view of the 18th hole on the Jack Nicklaus course, No. 23 among America's 100 Greatest Public Courses.

**44**  
**RITZ-CARLTON GOLF RESORT NAPLES (Fla.) (T-32)** SCORE 77.58 CONTACT ritzcarlton.com, 239-593-2000 ROOM RATE \$499  
NEW + NOTABLE The 36-hole Greg Norman layout is home to the Shark Shootout. A 10-minute drive separates it from another Ritz with easy access to the beach and elegant dining.

**45**  
**THE BREAKERS PALM BEACH (35)** SCORE 77.54 CONTACT thebreakers.com, 888-273-2537 ROOM RATE \$539

NEW + NOTABLE The adjoining Ocean Course is the oldest 18-hole layout in the state. The resort's 540 rooms will benefit from a five-year, \$80-million renovation and redesign to be completed in November.

**46**  
**FOUR SEASONS RESIDENCE CLUB AVIARA (T-38)**  
Carlsbad, Calif. SCORE 77.4 CONTACT fourseasons.com/northandiego, 800-622-4269 ROOM RATE \$350  
NEW + NOTABLE The Residence Club has 132 luxury villas in multiple configurations. All are within easy access of an Arnold Palmer-designed golf course overlooking Batiquitos Lagoon.

**47**  
**THE BOULDERS RESORT (40)**  
Carefree, Ariz. SCORE 77.34 CONTACT theboulders.com, 480-488-9009 ROOM RATE \$359  
NEW + NOTABLE The resort added new tees on the North and South courses, creating the Short course (ideal for new golfers). Its casitas just underwent a multimillion-dollar renovation.

**48**  
**ST. REGIS MONARCH BEACH GOLF LINKS (NR)** Dana Point, Calif. SCORE 77.33 CONTACT monarchbeachgolf.com, 949-234-3200 ROOM RATE \$625  
NEW + NOTABLE Last year the course replaced 180,000 square feet of turf with Bermuda grass. Make sure your approach into the severely undulated No. 3 green is close to the hole: Four-putting is not uncommon.

**49**  
**THE PHOENICIAN (T-36)**  
Scottsdale SCORE 77.25 CONTACT thephoenician.com, 800-888-8234 ROOM RATE \$680  
NEW + NOTABLE The 27 holes of golf have a new closing hole on the Oasis nine, thanks to construction of a new ballroom: Arizona's only sand-island green, a 320-yard par 4 with bunkers surrounding it.

**50**  
**FAIRMONT SCOTTSDALE PRINCESS (47)** SCORE 77.14 CONTACT fairmont.com/scottsdale, 866-540-4495 ROOM RATE \$229  
NEW + NOTABLE Tom Lehman and Natalie Gulbis have given clinics in the past year, so check in advance. Off course: Cactus-gardening or tequila-tasting classes are among many activity choices.

**51**  
**NEMACOLIN WOODLANDS RESORT (37)** Farmington, Pa. SCORE 77.09 CONTACT nemacolin.com, 800-422-2736 ROOM RATE \$329 NEW + NOTABLE Five lodging options offer visitors

multiple choices for golfers playing The Links Course or the Pete Dye-designed Mystic Rock Course.

**52 FAIRMONT CHATEAU WHISTLER (B.C.) (23)** SCORE 77.05 CONTACT fairmont.com/whistler, 800-606-8244 ROOM RATE \$239 NEW + NOTABLE The 550-room resort houses five restaurants and the Vida Spa with 17 treatment rooms. Its Robert Trent Jones Jr. course sits at the foot of the snowcapped Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains.

**53 LOEWS VENTANA CANYON RESORT (34)** Tucson SCORE 76.89 CONTACT loewshotels.com, 800-235-6397 ROOM RATE \$259 NEW + NOTABLE Celebrated for its "green" efforts, the resort created a half-mile trail so guests can get a close look at the Sonoran Desert along its two Tom Fazio courses.

**54 THE ESEOLA LODGE AT LINVILLE G.C. (N.C.) (NR)** SCORE 76.77 CONTACT eseola.com, 800-742-6717 ROOM RATE \$299 NEW + NOTABLE Views of Grandfather Mountain create picturesque golf holes on this Donald Ross design. Bring some bread or fish food to feed the trout at the turn, or when fishing your ball out of the water.

**55 THE INN AT BAY HARBOR (Mich.) (41)** SCORE 76.76 CONTACT innatbayharbor.com, 800-462-6963 ROOM RATE \$250 NEW + NOTABLE Bay Harbor's bunker renovations included adding tour-quality sand throughout the 27-hole property, which lies on the edge of Lake Michigan.

**56 RENAISSANCE BIRMINGHAM ROSS BRIDGE GOLF RESORT & SPA (NR)** Hoover, Ala. SCORE 76.74 CONTACT rossbridge.resort.com, 888-236-2427 ROOM RATE \$189 NEW + NOTABLE Bunkers were removed on four holes over the last two years to make the course more playable for the average golfer. From the tips, it plays to 8,192 yards. It claims to be the world's second-longest par 72.

**57 JW MARRIOTT IHILANI RESORT & SPA AT KO OLINA (NR)** Oahu SCORE 76.67 CONTACT ihilani.com, 808-679-0079 ROOM RATE \$545 NEW + NOTABLE En route to the 12th hole, golfers enter a tunnel under a waterfall, with Hawaiian floral decorations lining the unique entrance. The course is known for its black swans, too.

**58 FOUR SEASONS RESORT JACKSON HOLE (Wyo.) (NR)** SCORE 76.50 CONTACT fourseasons.com/jacksonhole, 307-732-5000 ROOM RATE \$625 NEW + NOTABLE Jackson Hole Golf & Tennis Club is among the top five in Golf Digest's Best in State ranking. Off-course, consider a wildlife tour, limited to just five people, through scenic routes in the Tetons.

**59 TRUE NORTH GOLF CLUB (NR)** Harbor Springs, Mich. SCORE 76.47 CONTACT truenorthgolf.com, 231-526-3300 ROOM RATE \$840 (for an eight-person cottage) NEW + NOTABLE Plans to add two more cottages will double the rooms on property because of high demand at True North, ranked No. 33 among America's 100 Greatest Public Courses.

**60 FRENCH LICK (Ind.) RESORT (29)** SCORE 76.19 CONTACT frenchlick.com, 888-936-9360 ROOM RATE \$229 NEW + NOTABLE Pete Dye's hilly 18-hole test includes must-see volcano bunkers. The resort, also home to a Donald Ross course, will host the 2012 Big Ten Championships.

**61 OJAI (Calif.) VALLEY INN & SPA (NR)** SCORE 76.14 CONTACT ojairesort.com, 800-422-6524 ROOM RATE \$450 NEW + NOTABLE This Southern California resort's nearly 90-year-old course is not long, at just more than 6,200 yards and a par of 70. But it's no pushover. From the back tees, its Slope Rating is 132.

**62 THE COEUR D'ALENE (Idaho) RESORT (24)** SCORE 75.98 CONTACT cdareort.com, 800-688-5253 ROOM RATE \$263 NEW + NOTABLE The course is most famous for its floating island green on the 14th hole, but there's a lot more to like, including first-rate conditioning and an excellent caddy program.

**63 RITZ-CARLTON, LAGUNA NIGUEL (NR)** Dana Point, Calif. SCORE 75.91 CONTACT ritzcarlton.com, 949-240-2000 ROOM RATE \$495 NEW + NOTABLE This year a \$60 million project was completed that transformed bedrooms, meeting space and restaurants at the resort. The goal: to better reflect its Pacific Coast surroundings.

**64 RITZ-CARLTON AMELIA ISLAND (Fla.) (NR)** SCORE 75.87 CONTACT ritzcarlton.com, 904-277-1100 ROOM RATE \$389 NEW + NOTABLE In addition to a new fitness center, guests have access to the Golf Club of Amelia Island and The Golf Club of North Hampton, an Arnold Palmer design.

**65 HYATT REGENCY TAMAYA RESORT & SPA (NR)** Santa Ana Pueblo, N.M. SCORE 75.77 CONTACT tamaya.hyatt.com, 505-867-1234 ROOM RATE \$159 NEW + NOTABLE Twin Warriors Golf Club, ranked among Golf Digest's best courses in New Mexico, is on the grounds of the Santa Ana Pueblo and includes 20 cultural sites, including an ancient cave dwelling on the 15th hole.

**66 CASA DE CAMPO RESORT (T-32)** La Romana, Dominican Republic SCORE 75.37 CONTACT casadecampo.com, 978-423-7446 ROOM RATE \$295 NEW + NOTABLE A nine-hole addition to the Pete Dye-designed Dye Fore was scheduled to open in September, upping the number of holes along the Caribbean to 63. Teeth of the Dog is the most popular course.

**67 SUN VALLEY (Idaho) RESORT (T-63)** SCORE 75.19 CONTACT sunvalley.com, 800-786-8259 ROOM RATE \$259 NEW + NOTABLE Acquiring Elkhorn Golf Course in July gave Sun Valley 45 total holes. With the Trail Creek and White Cloud courses, visitors can pick from a wide array of holes and environments.

**68 JW MARRIOTT SAN ANTONIO HILL COUNTRY RESORT & SPA (NR)** SCORE 75.15 CONTACT jwsanantonio.com, 866-882-4420 ROOM RATE \$289 NEW + NOTABLE An unlimited golf package runs \$349 a night. TPC San Antonio is one of only three destinations to host two tour events a year, at Greg Norman's Oaks Course and Pete Dye's Canyons course.

**69 BEAVER CREEK (Colo.) RESORT (NR)** SCORE 75 CONTACT beavercreek.com, 800-953-0844 ROOM RATE \$147 NEW + NOTABLE At this family-focused resort, juniors play for free with an adult Monday through Thursday. Players can come across wildlife, including foxes that have been known to swipe golf balls.

**70 THE GRAND DEL MAR RESORT (NR)** San Diego SCORE 74.81 CONTACT thegranddelmar.com, 855-314-2030 ROOM RATE \$270 NEW + NOTABLE There's something for everybody at this resort, whether it's the newly built Equestrian Center, the world-renowned Addison restaurant, or the new Titleist Performance Institute Junior Center.

**71 HAMMOCK BEACH RESORT (NR)** Palm Coast, Fla. SCORE 74.71 CONTACT hammockbeach.com, 866-841-0287 ROOM RATE \$330 NEW + NOTABLE Kids can enjoy the Nicklaus- and Watson-designed courses (Jack's is set by the ocean, Tom's is inland), with reduced green fees in the afternoon, or the nine-hole putting course.

**72 PARK HYATT AVIARA (NR)** Carlsbad, Calif. SCORE 74.67 CONTACT parkhyatt.com, 760-448-1234 ROOM RATE \$350 NEW + NOTABLE Guests won't forget the entertaining starters and the Tootsie Roll Pops given out during the round. With manufacturers minutes away, golf-equipment packages make for a complete experience.

**73 THE LODGE AT VENTANA CANYON (72)** Tucson SCORE 74.47 CONTACT thelodgeatventanacanyon.com, 800-828-5701 ROOM RATE \$249 NEW + NOTABLE Elevation changes and rolling greens are common elements of the Mountain and Canyon courses. The latter is highlighted by its quirky par-3 third through rocks and cacti.

**74 TURNING STONE RESORT & CASINO (T-63),** Verona, N.Y. SCORE 74.32 CONTACT turningstone.com, 800-771-7711 ROOM RATE \$194 NEW + NOTABLE You won't need your car here. The clubhouse, restaurants and casino are within a 5-iron's range of your room. Its third course is a short shuttle away. The resort added a liquor license in 2010.

**75 PUNTACANA (Dominican Republic) RESORT & CLUB (NR)** SCORE 74.29 CONTACT puntacana.com, 888-442-2262 ROOM RATE \$130 NEW + NOTABLE The first nine of the new P.B. Dye-designed Hacienda course should be ready in early 2012, giving guests access to 45 holes. The other 18s were designed by Dye and Tom Fazio.

NEW + NOTABLES WRITTEN BY JEFF PATTERSON AND STEPHEN HENNESSEY