

Golf THE JOURNAL REPORT

EUROPE

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FABULOUS FAIRWAYS

Ten of the BEST
Places in the WORLD
to play GOLF

Illustration by GARY REDFORD

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Leading Lady

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THE JOURNAL REPORT: GOLF

FABULOUS

Luxury golf holidays have proved resilient through the downturn.



LE TOUESSROK

LE TOUESSROK GOLF COURSE, MAURITIUS, INDIAN OCEAN

◆ **DIFFERENT BECAUSE:** The amazing natural setting of this superb golf course, only accessed by boat or helicopter, is further enhanced by its stunning views and exotic flora. Located on its own island, the "Ile aux Cerfs" (island of deer), the Bernhard Langer-designed golf course is tough, particularly if you can't hit straight and long. The layout is incredible, with a number of holes running alongside the beach. Black volcanic rock outcrops and mangrove swamps come into play on several holes, as do water hazards on 13 holes.

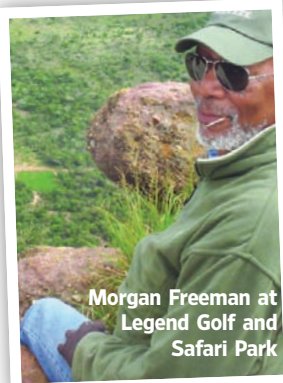
◆ **Stay at:** Le Touessrok Hotel.

◆ **Approximate cost:** Five nights/ presidential suite/golf—€10,500 (€14,800).

◆ **Did you know:** The Ile aux Cerfs, was named by the Dutch who settled in Mauritius in the 16th century. They brought Java deer on to the island in order to sustain their food supply.

◆ **Après-golf:** Head to the open seas for some of the finest big game fishing for tuna, marlin and shark.

◆ **Nearest transport hub:** The Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport.



Morgan Freeman at Legend Golf and Safari Park

LEGEND GOLF AND SAFARI PARK, LIMPOPO, SOUTH AFRICA

◆ **DIFFERENT BECAUSE:**

Eighteen of the world's top golfers have each designed one hole on this unique signature course. The par-three tribute course recreates 10 of the world's most famous holes, such as the 16th-hole at Augusta and the 11th-hole at St. Andrews. Don't miss the challenge of the "Extreme 19th"—A par-three hole set high up the Hanglip Mountain, accessed only by helicopter, and played to an African-shaped green 400 meters below. Only 100 out of 12,000 golfers have hit the green. Lewis Hamilton, Morgan Freeman, Pádraig Harrington, Sergio Garcia, and Ian Woosnam are among many celebrities to take on the challenge.

◆ **Stay at:** The Legend Golf and Safari Park.

◆ **Approximate cost:** Five nights/suite/golf—£3,500.

◆ **Did you know:** The oldest golfer to play the Extreme 19th was 83 and the youngest was three.

◆ **Après-golf:** Take safari game drives to see the "Big Five" (lion, elephant, rhino, buffalo, leopard).

◆ **Nearest transport hub:** Johannesburg or Tambo Airport.

WOLF CREEK GOLF COURSE, MESQUITE, NEVADA, U.S.

◆ **DIFFERENT BECAUSE:** The topography is surreal, so take your camera as well as your clubs. Golf at Wolf Creek is an exciting roller-coaster ride over and through the dramatic Mesquite canyons, just one hour from Las Vegas. If the wind is blowing you can say goodbye to a good score; yardages are difficult to gauge, and wayward shots will not be forgiven. They'll rebound off rocks or vanish into cavernous ravines. Expect awe-inspiring 360 degree views, plenty of elevation changes, and lush green fairways that contrast vividly with the surrounding red rock mountains, steep cliffs and rocky ravines.

◆ **Stay at:** Wynn Encore, Las Vegas.

◆ **Approximate cost:** Five nights/suite/golf—£1,500.

◆ **Did you know:** To protect the natural desert landscape of the



Wolf Creek

Mesquite canyons, helicopters were used to bring in sand to fill the bunkers at Wolf Creek Golf Course.

◆ **Après-golf:** Take a gamble in glitzy Las Vegas along the famous 'Strip', the play-all-day, party-all-night epicenter of fun.

◆ **Nearest transport hub:** Las Vegas McCarran International Airport.



Turnberry Resort

AILSA GOLF COURSE, TURNBERRY RESORT, SCOTLAND, U.K.

◆ **DIFFERENT BECAUSE:** The Ailsa course is one of the most famous in the world. It offers breathtaking coastal views of the Irish Sea, the Isle of Arran, and Ailsa Craig (a volcanic plug in the sea): There are no big protective dunes so when the wind blows many holes can be really tough.

Holes four to 11 enjoy particularly breathtaking scenery and 'Bruce's Castle', the signature 9th-hole, warrants a drive over the rugged shoreline to a blind fairway taking you past the famous Ailsa Craig lighthouse and Robert the Bruce's castle.

◆ **Stay at:** Turnberry Resort.

◆ **Approximate cost:** Five nights/suite/golf—£4,100.

◆ **Did you know:** During the Second World War a number of holes at Turnberry were flattened and turned into runways.

◆ **Après-golf:** Experience the thrill of falconry with an introductory lesson in handling and flying a Harris hawk, casting the bird into woodland and calling it back. Or you can opt to fly barn owls and snowy owls.

◆ **Nearest transport hub:** Glasgow Prestwick Airport or Glasgow International Airport.

PEBBLE BEACH GOLF LINKS, CALIFORNIA, U.S.

◆ **DIFFERENT BECAUSE:** Considered to be the toughest golf course in the world, and the greatest public golf course in America. Set on the Monterey Peninsula, hugging the rugged coastline, Pebble Beach Golf Links features wide-open vistas, cliff-side fairways, and small, sloping greens. The seventh green at the end of the peninsula, surf pounding the rocks, is world famous. Don't use a golf cart, take a caddy, it will be well worth it.

◆ **Stay at:** The Lodge at Pebble Beach.

◆ **Approximate cost:** 5 nights/suite/golf—£8,100.

◆ **Did you know:** In 1962 snow delayed the final round of the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am: That was the first time in 40 years it had snowed on the Monterey Peninsula.

◆ **Après-golf:** For a lot of laughs take an educational five-hour guided Wine Trolley Tour (a bright red tram) and sample wine at five different wineries: It's a fun and casual way to experience the sights and flavors of Carmel Valley.

◆ **Nearest transport hub:** Monterey Peninsula Airport, San Jose International Airport, and San Francisco International Airport.

BY LINDA JACKSON

Demand for golf holidays has proved fickle through the global economic downturn. While the lower and more mid-tier end of the market has suffered, the high-end has thrived. Wealthy golf tourists are showing a substantial interest in big money holidays to increasingly exotic locations. High-net-worth individuals are ever more willing to travel the world to play what has become known as "extreme golf", and countries like Turkey and China are benefiting from a surge in golf-inspired interest. Morgan Clarke is managing director of three golf travel agencies: Bond Street Golf, French Golf Holidays and GolfPlanet Holidays. He says that the real

growth is in ultra-high-end individuals from Europe, the U.S. and Asia who want access to the very best of everything, including tee-times on "impossible-to-play" golf courses. "Discerning clients want great golf, courses you can't normally play, tip-top accommodation and great 'après-golf' experiences," he says.

One resort that claims to offer all these attractions is Legend Lodges in the Limpopo province of South Africa. Its chief executive, Peet Cilliers, says the resort is experiencing a surge in visitors looking for a combination of golf and African safari experiences. The type of client is changing too. According to Mr. Cilliers, the resort has experienced an uptick in visitors

from Asia, Australia and America, plus India and even Iran, with fewer visitors from Ireland and Italy. The top end of the golf holiday market

is buoyant despite the economic downturn. Canada and Australia are exporting golf travelers at record levels, while demand for golf holidays from Latin Americans and Asians is at an all-time high. On the down side, packaged golf holidays to several European destinations have had to be discounted to stimulate demand, while demand for corporate golf has landed in a bunker and is struggling to get out. One high-end resort that has suffered as a result of the downturn in corporate demand is Turnberry in Scotland, U.K.



Golf ahoy!

The iconic club, which was host to the British Open in 2009 and is home to the renowned "Ailsa course", experienced a sharp fall in memberships during the downturn. "In 2008 we had 40 corporate members, many from the financial community: In 2011 we have only seven," says Stephen Walker, director of sales and marketing at Turnberry.

Diversify to Succeed

He is, however, optimistic for the future and says there has been some recovery in the number of corporate event enquiries. "Two thousand and eleven will finish slightly ahead of last year, and 2012 already looks a better picture," he says. The key to staying ahead in such a difficult economic environment, according to Mr. Walker, will be to diversify what is on offer to

guests and make resorts such as Turnberry more family friendly.

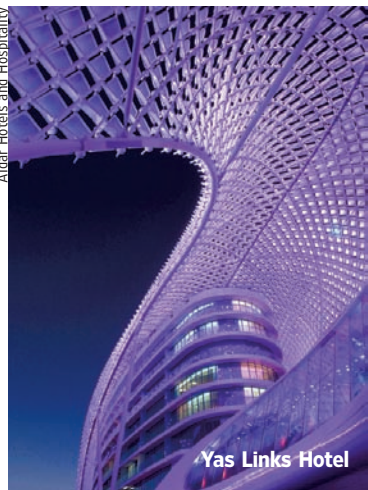
Peter Walton, chief executive of the International Association of Golf Tour Operators, says expectations of service levels have been sharpened by the downturn. "Golf tour operators are at the front line and constantly need to adapt packages they are offering," he says.

Once established, a successful resort benefits from myriad profit-making opportunities. Mr. Walton says that high quality golfing destinations not only attract revenue from traditional golf activities but also "golf facilities attract meetings, incentive travel and real estate sales". "In Spain, for example, a golfer will spend an average 120% more per person per day than a general leisure tourist," according to Mr. Walton. "The U.S. is a great source of high-net-worth golf

THE JOURNAL REPORT: GOLF

FAIRWAYS

Linda Jackson tours 10 of the most desirable resorts in the world



YAS LINKS GOLF COURSE, ABU DHABI, UAE
DIFFERENT BECAUSE: Featuring a unique custom-made coastline, this Kyle Phillips-designed course is akin to the famous Scottish links course of Kingsbarns, which is one of world's oldest clubs and dates back to the eighteenth century. Winding through three kilometers of sandy hillocks along the Arabian Gulf, Yas Links is a tough cookie with uneven fairways, pot bunkers and unpredictable wind conditions. It's a very challenging course which might be frustrating for high handicappers. The course features nine seashore greens, while plenty of water and hidden bunkers can trip up even the most experienced of golfers.
Stay at: Yas Links Hotel.
Approximate cost: Five nights/ presidential suite/golf—£21,000.
Did you know: Yas Island is home to the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. Half the hotel extends over the marina and the other half stretches over the race track.
Après-golf: Visit the world's first Ferrari theme park. The Park offers more than 20 Ferrari-inspired rides and attractions, including a diverse array of rides for adults and children, and advanced racing simulators.
Nearest transport hub: Abu Dhabi International Airport.

THE GRENADINES ESTATE GOLF COURSE, CANOUAN
DIFFERENT BECAUSE: This is possibly the most beautiful golf course in the Caribbean and, because of its remoteness, will never be crowded. The Jim Fazio course features dramatic elevation changes and offers unrivalled panoramic views of the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic. Eleven holes are situated within a natural amphitheater, while the other seven are built around Mount Royal, an extinct volcano. Tricky tee shots and dog-legs are challenges to watch out for at the



start. There's a deep ravine to drive over on the 11th-hole, while the 13th-hole—the highest point on the course—offers views to Mustique and Mayreau.
Stay at: The Canouan Resort.
Approximate cost: Five nights/suite/golf—£7,600.
Did you know: This is the only golf course in the Grenadines.
Après-golf: Snorkel with turtles around Tobago Cays, a cluster of four uninhabited islands and a National Marine Park, or dive around Canouan Island for some of the finest scuba diving in the Southern Grenadines.
Nearest transport hub: Canouan is accessible by air from the U.S., U.K., Canada and Europe through five major gateways: Barbados, Grenada, Martinique, St Lucia and Mainland St Vincent—with connections to Canouan Airport.

MONTE REI GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB, THE ALGARVE, PORTUGAL
DIFFERENT BECAUSE: This Jack Nicklaus signature golf course is in a unique and tranquil setting in the picturesque foothills of the relatively undeveloped Eastern Algarve, boasting breathtaking views of the Atlantic Ocean and dramatic Serra do Caldeirão mountains. Opened in June 2007, the course features a series of eight par-fours, five par-threes, and five par-fives in a challenging and distinctive layout, with water coming into play on 11 holes. Fairways and greens are bordered by several lakes, indigenous plants, and native grasses and trees. This golf and country club oozes quality. From the grandeur of its entrance all the way to the imposing and luxurious marble-floored clubhouse.
Stay at: Monte Rei Golf and Country Club.
Approximate cost: Five nights/four-bed villa/golf—£9,000.
Did you know: A 1,838 square meter building plot on the Monte Rei golf course was recently valued at €6450,000.
Après-golf: Visit Tavira, a local town which features fine examples of Roman architecture and traditional Portuguese buildings. Also nearby is the scenic fishing port of Vila Real de Santo António, and the Ria Formosa Nature Park.
Nearest transport hub: Faro Airport.



OLAZABAL COURSE, MISSION HILLS, SHENZHEN, CHINA
DIFFERENT BECAUSE: With 12 signature 18-hole golf courses at Mission Hills Resort it's difficult to choose which one to play. For one of the club's strongest tests, play the Olazabal Course: It boasts 155 bunkers. This 20 square-kilometer golf complex is China's highest rated golf and leisure resort and, according to the Guinness World Records, the World's Largest Golf Club.
Stay at: Mission Hills Resort.
Approximate cost: Five nights/suite/golf—£1,700.
Did you know: The Mission Hills' cart paths equate to the distance from New York to Boston.
Après-golf: Shenzhen's "Happy Valley" is split into nine areas with varying themes—designed to appeal to all ages. For tennis enthusiasts, there's also a 51-court tennis academy on-site.
Nearest transport hub: Hong Kong International Airport.

CAPE KIDNAPPERS, HAWKE'S BAY, NEW ZEALAND
DIFFERENT BECAUSE: The links-style golf course is draped over cliff top ridges with dramatic fingers of land that stretch into the ocean. The fairways are generous, but hit a wayward shot and you'll be punished. Tee shots will have to carry some ravines, wind can make play tricky, and some green-side bunkers are deeper than deep. It's a course better suited to moderate to good players but enjoyed by all. Just stand on the cliffs and look at the waves 140 meters below, it's an overwhelming experience.
Stay at: The Farm, Cape Kidnappers.
Approximate cost: Five nights/suite/golf—£4,300.
Did you know: Cape Kidnappers was named after a kidnapping attempt in 1769 when local Māori tried to abduct the Tahitian servant of a crew member on HMS Endeavour, Captain Cook's ship.
Après-golf: Tour the 6,000 acre working sheep and cattle farm by quad bike.
Nearest transport hub: Auckland Airport and Wellington Airport.

travelers and, whilst 12% of the adult population there play golf, these same individuals are responsible for 27% of America's total travel spend." Interest in emerging markets is on the rise. Turkey is one of the fastest emerging golf destinations, southeast Asia golf tourism is predicted to rise notably, and the United Arab Emirates is developing stunning new courses and striking five-star accommodation. Chris White, general manager of Aldar Properties, the developer of Yas Links Golf Club in Abu Dhabi, says: "The golf business in the Middle East is now increasingly competitive, but that's not just because of the economic downturn. It's also related to an increase in supply. There are currently 117 holes of golf in Abu Dhabi and at least two more golf courses are planned." China too is keen to get in on the luxury golf

holiday act. As would be expected of an emerging economic powerhouse, looking to take on the West at its own games, it has not done things by halves. Enter the Dragon The Mission Hills resort in China boasts 12 courses, designed by 12 golfing legends, and has since 2004 been accredited as the world's largest golf club by Guinness World Records. Mission Hills Group's executive vice chairman and chief executive, Dr. Ken Chu, says golf in China is soaring in popularity. The country's golfing population is growing by up to 50% annually and in 2020 the China Golf Association expects it to be around 20 million strong. "In the U.S. there are currently around 18,000 golf courses and 26 million golfers. In Japan

there are 2,500 golf courses and 13 million golfers. In China, where the game was introduced just two decades ago, there are around 300 golf courses and 3 million golfers. There is enormous room for growth," Dr. Chu says. "We think China, and Asia as a whole, present golf's best opportunity for long-term growth." However, those golfers desirous of more variety than just one resort or one country, need look no further

than "The World": A luxury ship that is the largest privately-owned yacht on earth. Home to residents from 19 countries living in 165 luxury berths, The World circumnavigates the globe every two to three years and, since the ship's launch in 2002, residents have played golf in more than 500 countries on over 600 courses. In between stops, golfers have 24-hour access to a state-of-the-art golf simulator, a driving range, putting greens, chipping areas and their very own on-board golf professional to offer advice. One resident of The World is retired advertising executive Geoff Thomson, who spends six to nine months of the year aboard. "I've probably played

in two dozen countries ranging from the world's most northern championship course in Norway, to the southernmost course in Ushuaia, Argentina, where fairways were a centigrade degree or two above permanent...and where the water hazard, Rio Pipo, is a trough of raging glacial runoff." For the truly dedicated golf traveler, global economic downturns are a mere blip and golf has no boundaries.



THE JOURNAL REPORT: GOLF

By LINDA JACKSON

Since 1978, when 18 ambitious women golfers joined forces to create the Women's Professional Golf Association (now the Ladies European Tour), women's golf has had a bumpy ride. In the 1970s, professional golf for women was scorned and gifted female amateurs ruled the day. Christine Langford, a WPGA founder member and now academy director at Abbotsley Golf Academy in the U.K., was surprised by the prejudice she encountered among the golfing community when she tried to go professional 33 years ago. "Word got out in the last amateur tournament I

I was completely ostracized by amateur colleagues. Women I played with at county level cut me dead. Nice girls didn't play golf for money

played that I'd applied for qualifying school. I was completely ostracized by amateur colleagues," she says. "Women I played with at county level cut me dead. Nice girls didn't play golf for money."

Golf is one of the world's biggest participation sports. There are over 32,000 golf courses and an estimated 65 million golfers worldwide, of which about 18 million, or 30%, are women. There are over 1.25 million female golfers in Europe alone and the number of women who play golf in the U.S. has grown from 4.1 million to over 6.2 million in 20 years. And yet when it comes to the professional game, women remain firmly at the bottom of the leaderboard.

Tight Budget

Ladies golf was arguably more popular back in the 1970s. Though prize money was poor, media coverage was higher than it is today and this meant individual sponsorship was lucrative. The U.K.'s Daily Telegraph newspaper covered women's golf on a weekly basis and reporters from the Telegraph and the London Times accompanied the ladies' tour. All players had sponsored cars, balls, clubs, and shoe contracts as a matter of course.

Today, although prize money has improved—the largest Ladies European Tour prize fund, for the Deutsche Bank Ladies Swiss Open, is €525,000 (\$750,000)—media coverage of women's professional golf is scant, and sponsors difficult to find for less successful players. Consequently, players on a tight budget struggle to find the minimum €1,000 expenses needed for each tournament.

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The Queens of Clubs

It's taken over 30 years but women's golf might finally be receiving the recognition its participants have always craved



(Above from left to right)
Women's World Golf Rankings

As of July 12th 2011

Rank	Name	Av Pts
1	Yani Tseng (TPE)	14.53
2	Cristie Kerr (U.S.)	11.95
3	Suzann Pettersen (NOR)	10.92
4	Jiyai Shin (KOR)	9.71
5	Na Yeon Choi (KOR)	8.43

Source: Rolex

Nevertheless, 282 members play on the Ladies European Tour which has 27 tournaments this year in 19 countries. The tour is broadcast to 240 million homes in 80 countries and total prize money is just under €11 million. A far cry from the paltry sums handed out to female winners 30 years ago, that ran into hundreds rather than thousands. When it comes to the 2011 Ladies PGA schedule: The tour comprises 28 events worldwide with prize money of \$43.8 million—although this amount remains a fraction of the men's U.S. PGA Tour 2011, which boasts a purse of \$288 million over 45 tournaments.

Slowly but surely equal rights are creeping into male-dominated golf club bastions like an unwanted weed onto a slick putting green. But, extraordinarily, a high percentage of women don't want total freedom of the fairways now it is within their grasp. Quite content are they with paying reduced membership, albeit with a few 'minor' restriction clauses. For women the grass, it seems, is not necessarily greener on the other side.

Minor restriction clauses for women members at The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews don't exist: There are no women members. Women are verboten. Founded in 1754 and regarded as the world governing authority of golf outside the U.S., the R&A Golf Club, the so called "home of golf", had a major reorganization in 2004 when the club devolved responsibility for the rules, The Open, and golf development, to "The R&A", a newly-formed group of companies.

Paradoxical then that, on one hand, The R&A Golf Club neurotically strives to keep women from

tainting its doorstep, while on the other hand its brother institution, the R&A Golf Development arm, is opening doors for women golfers. The development arm supports women's golf both professional and amateur; supplies funding to support female coaching programs and actively supports bodies such as the Ladies' Golf Union.

"It's a case of letting them see it is not just a game for the men, but for families and everyone. We are a supporter of all types of golf," says Alison White, deputy director of the R&A's Golf Development arm.

Peter Dawson, chief executive of the R&A, however, does not putt along the same line. Neither, it would seem, do the 2,500 members of this men-only golf club. Mr. Dawson, at the 2011 pre-British Open Championship press conference conducted at Royal St. George's in Sandwich, Kent, says: "The issue of single sex clubs is that firstly it is perfectly legal under the new Equality Act [in the U.K.] and, secondly, there are very few of them so I don't see it as an argument that it seri-

ously affects participation in playing golf for either sex." Attitudes like Mr. Dawson's have a tendency to prove controversial among some female professionals. British born ex-professional, Vivien Saunders, a founder member of the WPGA and owner of three golf courses, a golf academy and golf hotel in the U.K., has called the R&A "undemocratic, elitist, discriminatory and secretive". Another debate that gets hackles rising on both sides, is the thorny issue of mixed participation in major events.

Top women professionals who want to qualify in the men's U.S. and European PGA tours have managed to cause consternation in both camps. Although several women in recent years have played in individual events on men's tours, including Annika Sorenstam (Sweden), Laura Davies (England) and Michelle Wie (U.S.), interest is waning. Ms. Wie, currently ranked 11th in the Rolex Women's World Golf Rankings, was the last to try. And she admits that qualifying for men's tournaments is no longer important to her. "My focus right now is being the best player on the LPGA Tour that I can be," she says.

Outside of the professional arena, women's golf at club level is a mixed

bag: In the majority of European countries 25% of golfers are women, while in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Benelux, female participation is over 30%. Asia has seen a meteoric rise in golf and in the U.S. the number of women golfers has grown 54% over 20 years, but ladies sections in U.K. clubs are suffering a declining membership.

Editor of Women & Golf magazine, Alison Root, says: "Without taking away the traditions of the game, golf clubs must create a relaxed and fun environment on and off the golf course if they want to attract and retain a new era of women members."

Tailoring the clubhouse to women and families and offering more family-friendly services are crucial to capitalizing on the potential female golfers provide.

With golf set to feature in the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, interest in the game is expected to increase exponentially. Alexandra Armas, executive director of the Ladies European Tour, says: "Golf being in the Olympic Games will undoubtedly help promote professional women's golf and enhance the game's credentials amongst people from all walks of life, worldwide. The Ladies European Tour is delighted that the sport will be brought to a wider audience as this can only help promote and grow the game at grass roots level. The exposure garnered for the sport will also be a commercial advantage and presents a great opportunity for the ladies' tour." It has been a long road since those doughty 18 women's golfers established what is now the ladies' tour, but all their hard work could be about to pay off.

THE SOLHEIM CUP

The Solheim Cup is the women's equivalent to the Ryder Cup and the most highly-coveted trophy in women's professional golf. Like its male cousin, it is a biennial, trans-Atlantic team match play competition in which top U.S.-born players from the Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour take on the best European members from the Ladies European Tour. It will take place this year at Killeen Castle, County Meath, in Ireland from September 23rd to 25th.

Showdown

The competition was named after Karsten Solheim, the Norwegian-born golf club designer and businessman. The 2011 three-day match play showdown will be captained by Alison Nicholas for Europe, and by Rosie Jones for America. The first two days feature four matches of foursome, and four matches of four-ball on each day; the final day being 12 singles matches. Scoring is based on a points system with 28 points available over the competition. The defending champion needs 14 points to retain the cup while the other team requires 14½ points to win the event. The U.S. currently holds the cup. Selection for the 2011 European Team will be made by taking the top four players from the Ladies European Tour points' standings, followed by the next top four ladies tour members on the Rolex Rankings at the cut-off date, plus four captain's selections. For the American 12-person squad, 10 players will be chosen by the number of points earned for wins and top-20 finishes over a two-year qualifying period.



Laura Davies: 81 professional wins

Tristan Jones/LEA