

Golf Digest



The #1 Golf Publication

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LOWER
SCORES
NOW!

WIN
A FANTASY
GOLF VACATION
FOR TWO!
PAGE 181

> TIGER TIPS FOR
DRIVING
DISTANCE

PLUS HOW TO
HIT IT STRAIGHTER
THAN EVER

NEW RANKING
AMERICA'S
100 GREATEST
COURSES

FIX YOUR GAME
TAKE THE
GOLF DIGEST
CHALLENGE

TRUE ROLLS
HI-TECH BALLS
& PUTTERS

FREE
PGA LESSON
COUPON INSIDE
PAGE 273

> A MAP OF THE

WHEN IT COMES TO GOLF, America leads the way. No other country comes close, as can be seen from the map of the world on this page, in which each country has been resized depending on how many golf courses it possesses (also notable are the bulging U.K. and Japan, and some other hideously withered regions of the world). Though about half of the planet's golf courses and golfers are American, the headline news from the National Golf Foundation in January was that in 2006, for the first time in six decades, the U.S. ended the year with fewer golf courses than it had at the start. With plenty of supply—16,000 courses—and too many other pesky demands on our precious time, it's perhaps no surprise that the game is flatlining in these parts.

Elsewhere, however, things are booming. After years of dormancy under communist rule, golf is starting to grow in eastern Europe and the former Soviet states. Russia has doubled its golf course tally since our last Planet Golf survey two years ago (admittedly from a small start—the world's biggest country now has a grand total of six courses); Ukraine, the most populous nation without any courses two years ago, has finally gotten off the tee; and the number of golfers and golf courses in eastern Europe has tripled since the start of the millennium, according to a recent KPMG report. Asia has been extraordinarily busy, too. "If it weren't for



100 BEST COURSES OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

Courses you've played

- **1 Royal County Down G.C.**
Newcastle, N. Ireland
- **2 St. Andrews Links (Old)**
St. Andrews, Scotland
- **3 Royal Dornoch G.C. (Championship)**
Dornoch, Scotland
- **4 Royal Portrush G.C. (Dunluce)**
Portrush, N. Ireland
- **5 Muirfield Gullane, Scotland**
- **6 Royal Melbourne G.C. (Composite)**
Black Rock, Australia
- **7 Ballybunion G.C. (Old)**
Ballybunion, Ireland
- **8 Turnberry Hotel (Ailsa)**
Turnberry, Scotland

- **9 Carnoustie G. Links (Championship)**
Carnoustie, Scotland
- **10 Cape Kidnappers G. Cse.**
Hawke's Bay, New Zealand
- **11 Loch Lomond G.C.**
Luss, Scotland
- **12 Sunningdale G.C. (Old)**
Sunningdale, England
- **13 G. de Morfontaine**
Morfontaine, France
- **14 New South Wales G.C.**
Sydney, Australia
- **15 Kingston Heath G.C.**
Melbourne, Australia
- **16 Royal St. George's G.C.**
Sandwich, England
- **17 Kingsbarns G. Links**
St. Andrews, Scotland

- **18 Royal Birkdale G.C.**
Southport, England
- **19 Hirono G.C.**
Hyogo, Japan
- **20 Casa de Campo (Teeth of the Dog) La Romana,**
Dominican Republic
- **21 Royal Porthcawl G.C.**
Porthcawl, Wales
- **22 Royal Troon G.C. (Old)**
Troon, Scotland
- **23 Lahinch G.C. (Old)**
Lahinch, Ireland
- **24 Portmarnock G.C. (Old)**
Portmarnock, Ireland
- **25 Royal Lytham and St. Annes G.C.**
Lytham St. Annes, England
- **26 St. George's G. & C.C.**
Islington, Ontario, Canada
- **27 The European Club**
Brittas Bay, Ireland
- **28 Cabo del Sol G.C. (Ocean)**
Los Cabos, Mexico

- **29 Woodhall Spa G.C. (Hotchkin)**
Woodhall Spa, England
- **30 Kauri Cliffs G.C. & Lodge**
Northland, New Zealand
- **31 Ganton G.C.**
Ganton, England
- **32 Cruden Bay G.C.**
Cruden Bay, Scotland
- **33 Royal Liverpool G.C.**
Hoylake, England
- **34 National G.C.**
Woodbridge, Ontario, Canada
- **35 Kawana Hotel G.C. (Fiji)**
Shizuoka, Japan
- **36 Hamilton G. & C.C.**
Ancaster, Ontario, Canada
- **37 Leopard Creek G. Estate & C.C.**
Malelane, South Africa
- **38 Highlands Links Cape Breton,**
Nova Scotia, Canada
- **39 Ellerston G.C.**
Hunter Valley, Australia

- **40 Tokyo G.C.**
Saitama, Japan
- **41 Gary Player C.C.**
Sun City, South Africa
- **42 Western Gailes G.C.**
Irvine, Scotland
- **43 Carne G. Links**
Belmullet, Ireland
- **44 Macrihanish G.C.**
Macrihanish, Scotland
- **45 The C. at Nine Bridges**
Jeju Island, South Korea
- **46 Valderrama G.C.**
Sotogrande, Spain
- **47 Fancourt Hotel & C.C. Estate (The Links)**
George, South Africa
- **48 Waterville G. Links**
Waterville, Ireland
- **49 Mid Ocean Club**
Tucker's Town, Bermuda
- **50 North Berwick G.C.**
North Berwick, Scotland



GOLF WORLD



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Asia," says one U.S.-based golf course developer, "we'd have nothing to do." Great predictions are being made especially for China, which has an estimated 310 courses compared to 230 two years ago—despite a continuing government ban that officially, theoretically, prevents any new ones from being built.

Below, in our fifth Planet Golf survey, is Golf Digest's ranking of the top-100 courses outside of the United States. Thirty countries are represented (Scotland leads with 14 courses), and we have a new No. 1. The 2005 leader, the Old Course at St. Andrews, has been deposed by the rugged, tough and beautiful Royal County Down, a timeless stretch of pure, Irish linksland first laid out by Old Tom Morris in 1889. At the other end of the timescale, the list includes some terrific new layouts such as Punta Espada in the Dominican Republic (No. 77) and Sand Golf Club in Sweden (No. 82)—these outstanding rookies are sure to make their presence felt in future rankings.

We also rank the best courses in every individual golfing country, territory and dependency around the world—197 of them in all. These lists appear in the booklet with subscriber copies of this issue or can be found online. For this and details of how our surveys were conducted, visit golfdigest.com/planetgolf. And please e-mail any comments, questions or feedback to planetgolf@golfdigest.com.

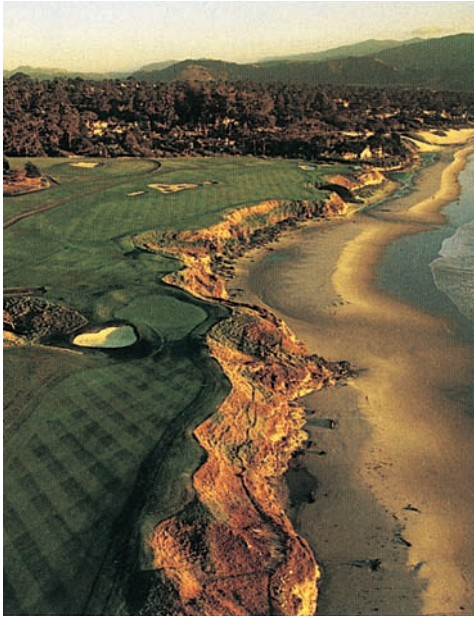
- **51 Royal Adelaide G.C.**
Adelaide, Australia
- **52 Beacon Hall G.C.**
Aurora, Ontario, Canada
- **53 Metropolitan G.C.**
Melbourne, Australia
- **54 Capilano G.C.** West
Vancouver, B.C., Canada
- **55 Old Head G. Links**
Kinsale, Ireland
- **56 Royal Aberdeen G.C.**
(Balgownie)
Aberdeen, Scotland
- **57 Barnbough Links**
Dunes G. Links
Bridport, Tasmania, Australia
- **58 Spring City G. & Lake Resort (Lake)**
Kunming, China
- **59 Olivos G.C.**
Buenos Aires, Argentina
- **60 Arabella Estate & G.C.**
Kleinmond, South Africa

- **61 Swinley Forest G.C.**
Ascot, England
- **62 Durban C.C.**
Durban, South Africa
- **63 Shaughnessy G. & C.C.**
Vancouver, B.C., Canada
- **64 Spring City G. & Lake Resort (Mountain)**
Kunming, China
- **65 Paraparaumu Beach G.C.**
Paraparaumu Beach,
New Zealand
- **66 Walton Heath G.C. (Old)**
Walton-on-the-Hill, England
- **67 Halmstad G.C.**
Halmstad, Sweden
- **68 G. de Moliets**
Moliets, France
- **69 Royal Zoute G.C.**
Knokke, Belgium
- **70 Redtail G. Cse.**
St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

- **71 Royal Montreal G.C. (Blue)**
Ile Bizard, Quebec, Canada
- **72 Emirates G.C. (Wadi)**
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- **73 Royal St. David's G.C.**
Harlech, Wales
- **74 Kasumigaseki C.C. (East)**
Saitama, Japan
- **75 Emirates G.C. (Majlis)**
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- **76 Sotogrande G.C.**
Sotogrande, Spain
- **77 Punta Espada G.C.** Cap
Cana, Dominican Republic
- **78 G. de Spérone**
Bonifacio, Corsica, France
- **79 Buenos Aires G.C. Bella Vista**
Buenos Aires, Argentina
- **80 Troia G.**
Setúbal, Lisbon, Portugal
- **81 G.C. du Domaine Impérial**
Gland, Switzerland

- **82 Sand G.C.**
Jönköping, Sweden
- **83 Banff Springs G.C. (Stanley Thompson)**
Banff, Alberta, Canada
- **84 Vilamoura G.C. (Victoria)**
Almancil, Algarve, Portugal
- **85 Sherwood Hills G.C.**
Cavite, Philippines
- **86 Jockey Club (Colorado)**
San Isidro, Buenos Aires,
Argentina
- **87 G.C. Biella Le Betulle**
Magnano, Biella, Italy
- **88 Hamburger G.C.**
Falkenstein, Hamburg, Germany
- **89 G. Les Bordes**
Beaugency, France
- **90 Naruo G.C.** Hyogo, Japan
- **91 Royal Cinque Ports G.C.**
Deal, England
- **92 Blue Canyon G. & C.C. (Canyon)**
Phuket, Thailand

- **93 St. Andrews (New)**
St. Andrews, Scotland
- **94 County Louth G.C.**
Baltray, Ireland
- **95 Nirwana Bali G.C.**
Bali, Indonesia
- **96 Noordwijkse G.C.**
Noordwijk, The Netherlands
- **97 El Dorado G.C.**
Los Cabos, Mexico
- **98 The National G.C. (Moonah)**
Cape Schanck, Australia
- **99 Pinx G.C.** Jeju Island,
South Korea
- **100 Itanhangá G.C.**
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



Pebble Beach

> THE PEBBLE BEACHES OF THE WORLD

OUR GLOBAL SEARCH FOR SURF AND TURF
FINDS A LEADING PRETENDER TO THE THRONE.

BY JOHN BARTON

- 1 Mangilao G.C., Mangilao, Guam
- 2 New South Wales G.C., Sydney
- 3 Playa Grande G.C., Rio San Juan, Dominican Republic
- 4 Old Head G. Links, Kinsale, Ireland
- 5 Kauri Cliffs G.C. and Lodge, Northland, New Zealand
- 6 Pinnacle Point Beach & Golf Resort, Mossel Bay, South Africa
- 7 Ria Bintan G.C., Bintan, Indonesia
- 8 Terravista G. Cse., Trancoso, Bahia, Brazil

