

# Michael Campbell's TOP TEN

*A US Open champion and world traveller on his favourite 10 courses.*

**BY TIMOTHY CONSTANTINE LOW**

Right up until a bespectacled teenager named Lydia Ko came along, the Pacific twin islands known as New Zealand was best known for the All Blacks rugby team, 'Lord Of The Rings' and it's sole golfing Major champion, Michael Campbell. The 2005 US Open Champion has battled injuries, slumps and personal problems during his 22-year career but has always managed to exude class, sportsmanship and an unwavering warrior spirit. Along the way, he's racked up 19 professional wins and a lifetime membership on the European Tour. The 5'10" Kiwi recently announced his retirement from competitive golf to concentrate on raising his two sons and setting up more of his golf academies across the world. I've had the honour of having him as a guest on my show on multiple occasions and his in-depth knowledge of the game has helped turn Fox Sports Asia's coverage of Major championships into something truly world class. He continues to grow the game of golf and is a wonderful ambassador for not only the game but his country as well. Easily one of the most likeable, down to earth people you'll ever meet, I'm proud to call him a friend and mentor. This is Cambo's Top 10.

#### **PEBBLE BEACH, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

"It combines a dramatic coastline, spectacular views and a superb layout. One



DAVID J. WHYTE



PREVIOUS PAGE - OPENING SPREAD: Paraparumu Beach Golf Club, New Zealand.

TOP PAGE - CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Carnoustie Golf Links, Scotland; Victoria Golf Club, Australia; Cape Kidnappers Golf Club, New Zealand; Royal Melbourne Golf Club, Australia.

BOTTOM LEFT FROM TOP: Pebble Beach, United States of America; TPC Sawgrass, United States of America.

of my favourite tournaments to play and definitely a course that deserves to be on this list"

Pebble Beach golf links hosts the annual AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am on the PGA Tour and sits on the gorgeous Monterey Peninsula in sunny California. The ultra posh club boasts a membership of former presidents of the United States of America, Hollywood celebrities and the super wealthy golf enthusiast. An average tee time costs around US\$500.

**VICTORIA GOLF CLUB, AUSTRALIA**

"As an Australian would say - this one's an absolute corker! One of the most underrated tracks around"

Victoria Golf Club is ranked one of the top 100 golf courses in the world and is situated on Melbourne's renowned Sandbelt. It combines a typically treacherous Alister MacKenzie design with the naturally contoured landscape of the region to provide one of the most memorable experiences golfers will ever sample in Australia.

**ROYAL MELBOURNE GOLF CLUB, AUSTRALIA**

"It's the definitive Sandbelt experience, brilliantly designed and always in immaculate condition"

Royal Melbourne is without a doubt the more famous golf course in Australia. It has hosted countless big professional tournaments and even a pair of Presidents Cups. Another gorgeous piece of design work by Alistair MacKenzie on the Sandbelt is definitely not one to be missed on your next trip down under.

**CARNOUSTIE GOLF LINKS, SCOTLAND**

"Its easily one of the toughest courses I've ever played on the Open Championship rota"

Nicknamed "Car-nasty" at a recent

playing of the Open Championship, the 6,900-yard beast has hosted multiple British Opens and produced more than its fair share of heartbreaks. Think Jean Van De Velde in the Barry Burn in 1997 enroute to blowing a three-stroke lead and Sergio Garcia letting the Claret Jug slip into Irish hands in 2007. It is brutal as it is beautiful and definitely has a place on any golf fanatic's bucket list.

**CAPE KIDNAPPERS GOLF CLUB, NEW ZEALAND**

"It's an absolute gem of a course, situated on the East Coast of Hawkes Bay, the views are breathtaking. The layout isn't bad either!"

A Tom Doak design on the cliffs above Hawkes Bay, Cape Kidnappers was completed in 2004 and has hosted several international exhibition matches including the Kiwi Challenge. The likes of PGA Tour stars Hunter Mahan and Anthony Kim have raved about not just the panoramic vistas the course offers, but also the exceptional layout as well. At just under \$200 a round it is well worth the price to play on what many consider one of the hidden golfing gems of the Southern Hemisphere.

**TPC SAWGRASS, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

"A demanding golf course with the best two hole finishing stretch in tournament golf -- The infamous island green 17th and the equally treacherous par 4, 18th"

Sawgrass is truly the jewel in the crown of the golf crazy state that is Florida. The PGA Tour returns annually to the venue for its biggest non-major event of the season, The Players Championship. The American golfing landmark was the first true "stadium" golf course and has certainly seen its fair share of dramatic moments and boasts arguably the most recognised hole in the world - the island green par 3, 17.

**KAURI CLIFFS, NEW ZEALAND**

"One of the most picturesque golf courses I've ever played"

Not far from Cape Kidnappers sits another New Zealand golfing mecca, Kauri Cliffs. The 7,100-yard David Harman layout features plenty of stunning views and a brilliant test of golf to match. It went through some minor design tweaks by renowned golf course architect Rees Jones in the past few years but the course is pretty much the same one that hosted that

# My Top Ten



DAVID J. WHYTE

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Kauri Cliffs, New Zealand; Old Course at St. Andrews, Scotland; Pinehurst No. 2, United States of America.**

famous "Shell's Wonderful World Of Golf" match between 1992 Masters Champion Fred Couples and our dear local hero Michael Campbell in 2003.

## PARAPARAMU BEACH GOLF CLUB, NEW ZEALAND

"A wonderful links course just north of Wellington. It's not the longest course out there but it is a true test of golf especially when the wind starts to blow"

Designed in 1949 by former Australian Open champion Alex Russell, Paraparamu meanders its way through the undulating dunes of the Kapiti Coast just 45 minutes from Wellington. The short but tricky layout is regarded as one of the best links courses

in the Southern hemisphere and even had a Tiger (Woods) prowling it's links back at the 2002 New Zealand Open. Paraparamu is proof that a course doesn't need to be absurdly long to challenge the best in the world.

## OLD COURSE AT ST. ANDREWS, SCOTLAND

"The home of golf and one of those courses that's never the same two days in a row. One of my favorite Open Championship venues and undoubtedly one of the most special places in the history of the game"

It is St. Andrews. More than half a millennium old and the course that sets up the 18-hole format for golf around the world through centuries. It is still the definitive golf experience with its natural rolling links and pot bunkers, large double greens and the serious stare of the Royal and Ancient clubhouse

bearing down as one tees off from the first teebox.

## PINEHURST NO. 2, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

"For obvious reasons, the venue of the highlight of my career and my biggest win - the 2005 US Open. I love this place."

Lovingly known as "The Cradle of American Golf", Pinehurst sits in the heart of the North Carolina Sandhills. The venerated No. 2 course in a series of nine courses is a Donald Ross layout that is world renowned for its complicated green complexes and demanding test during Major championship weeks. No. 2 is simply stunning and tests every aspect of a golfer's arsenal. It was the site of Payne Stewart's stunning victory at the US Open in 1999 just months before his tragic passing in a plane crash and also saw a 37-year-old Kiwi named Michael Campbell lift that same trophy six years later. 🏆