

Island of Treasures

Warm up to a travel-goers paradise in Bermuda

BY JOAN TUPPONCE



FOR MANY VISITORS, BERMUDA'S

charm lies in its pristine pink sand beaches and gleaming turquoise waters. The cotton-candy colored island boasts some of the most beautifully scenic views in the world.

Bermuda is the oldest British Colony. The 21-square-mile country sits 650 miles east of Cape Hatteras, N.C., only about two hours from most Eastern gateway cities.

This year Bermuda celebrates its 400th anniversary. The charming country is known, in part, for introducing the world to Bermuda shorts. Made from Irish linen, Bermuda shorts are considered an acceptable part of everyday wardrobe in Bermuda and can be found on most businessmen. The shorts were introduced to Bermuda by the British Army when they came to the island from India.

Over the years, Bermuda has become a golfer's haven. The island's courses are renowned for both their beauty and their challenges. They are characterized by stunning scenery that is highlighted by dramatic ocean vistas.

Bermuda is home to more golf courses per square mile than anywhere in the world. The courses are a mix of private, semiprivate and

public. Private clubs, requiring an introduction by a member, include Mid Ocean Club, Riddell's Bay Golf & Country Club and Tucker's Point Golf Club. Belmont Hills, another golfing option, is a semiprivate club. Even though the courses are private or semiprivate, most hotels can reserve starting times for guests.

GRAND DESTINATION

One of the most celebrated courses on the island is the newly renovated Port Royal Golf Club (441-234-0974, www.portroyalgolf.bm), owned by the Bermuda government. The course hosted the celebrated PGA of America's Grand Slam of Golf in October.

Port Royal's emerald green fairways provide sweeping views of the Atlantic Ocean as well as stunning views from the clubhouse. Abutting Whale Bay, the surrounding sea marries land at the 16th hole, one of the prettiest par 3s you'll ever find.

"The setting is one of the most beautiful in the world of golf," observes Andrew Brooks, Port Royal's director of golf. "The view is mixed with a certain Bermudian charm."

The Robert Trent Jones designed track was redesigned in 2008 by golf course architect



Crystal seas and pristine sand beaches are all a part of the excursion delights at Elbow Beach and The Fairmont Southampton (inset photo).

Roger Rulewich in a \$14.5 million makeover. New features include a state-of-the-art irrigation system and increased yardage. As far as tips to golfers, Brooks says the layout demands accuracy.

"You will find you have to think your way around and play conservatively," he says. "It's a risk-reward course."

The 18-hole layout contains a great mix of holes, including the awe-inspiring appeal of Whitney's Bay.

THE FAIRMONT SOUTHAMPTON, MANDARIN ORIENTAL ©



The spectacular par-3 16th hole at Port Royal Golf Club.

LOOK BERMUDA

Two of Bermuda's most legendary hotels, The Fairmont Southampton and the Fairmont Hamilton Princess, also offer two terrific courses: The Fairmont Southampton Golf Club (441-239-6952, www.fairmont.com/southampton) and Riddell's Bay Golf & Country Club (441-238-1060, www.riddellsbay.com).

The Fairmont Southampton blends old world British charm with new Bermudian sophistication. The hotel features beautiful panoramic views of the ocean thanks to its premiere location atop the highest point on the island.

The Southampton (866-540-4497, www.fairmont.com/southampton) also offers private beachside luxury with lots of recreational opportunities. You'll find tennis, water sports (everything from jet skiing to snorkeling) and a world-class health club featuring Willow Stream Spa with a heated indoor pool surrounded by waterfalls and gardens.

The hotel's nine restaurants include The Waterlot Inn, where you can dine on the dockside terrace and watch the sun set, and The Ocean Club, perched on a coral cliff overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.

Southampton's par-3 course, designed by Theodore Robinson, has 18 fun and challenging holes that can require golfers to pull every club in the bag. The intimate course is very popular with golf enthusiasts.

"It is without question one of the most beautiful par-3 executive courses in the world," says Anthony Mocklow, director of golf for Fairmont Southampton and Riddle's Bay. "Every hole has an ocean view from either tee or green and you don't have to be a tournament-caliber player to enjoy it."

ROYAL TREATMENT

Just a short water taxi ride away is the Fair-

mont Hamilton Princess (866-540-4447, www.fairmont.com/hamilton), known as the "Grande Dame of Bermuda." The circa-1885 hotel overlooks Hamilton Harbor. Visitors, who want a variation from the Victorian-inspired rooms, can opt for one of two themed suites – The Mark Twain or the Sir Winston Churchill.

Legend has it that Mark Twain would smoke cigars on the veranda of the hotel while signing autographs and reciting poetry to fans. Churchill was also a constant island visitor. Both suites feature memorabilia from their famous namesakes.

The Hamilton Princess also has several recreational amenities including a dive shop and on-site putting green. The hotel offers complimentary ferry service to the Fairmont Southampton's golf, beach, spa and tennis facilities. Guests at the hotel also have access to Riddell's Bay Golf & Country Club.

Riddell's Bay, designed by Devereux Emmet, is one of the oldest golf courses in Bermuda. Nine of the holes on the par 69 course have water views; five skirt the water.

"It's one of the toughest tests of golf on the island," Mocklow says.

High-end Elbow Beach (441-236-3535, www.mandarinoriental.com/bermuda) features a luxury resort hotel and secluded cottages as well as 50 acres of landscaped gardens. Situated just five minutes from Hamilton, Bermuda's capital, Elbow Beach offers a range of top-notch leisure facilities, including a world-class spa and captivating views of the turquoise sea.

UNSPOILED BEAUTY

One of the newest properties on the island is Tucker's Point Hotel & Spa, the centerpiece of Tucker's Point Club, Bermuda's first luxury resort, private club and residential community. The 200-acre resort includes the

stately Manor House perched above Castle Harbour and the Spa at Tucker's Point as well as The Dive and Watersports Centre. The Centre offers guided experiential cruises to nearby shipwrecks and 200 square miles of untouched coral reef.

Tucker's Point is also home to the Tucker's Point Golf Club (441-298-6970, www.tuckerspoint.com) with majestic views of Harrington Sound and the Atlantic Ocean. The Roger Rulewich-designed, 18-hole championship course is considered one of the best golf experiences on the island.

Visitors will find golf is also a focus at the Newstead Belmont Hills Golf Resort & Spa (441-236-6400, www.newsteadbelmonthills.com). The 18-hole course, designed by Algie M. Pulley Jr., showcases the beauty of the island with scenic views of Hamilton Harbour and the Great Sound. One of the unique aspects of the course given that the island doesn't have natural creeks or rivers is the fact that it has several holes with water hazards.

Another golfing favorite: Mid Ocean Golf Club (441-293-0330, www.themidoceanclubbermuda.com), located in the upscale Tucker Town area of the island. The picturesque, private course was designed by Charles Blair Macdonald and completed in 1921. In the 1950s, Robert Trent Jones added his flair to the layout and Mid Ocean is undoubtedly one of the best in Bermuda and worth the wiggling necessary to savor this memorable track.

From its premiere Bermuda grass courses to its mild, sub-tropical climate, Bermuda offers an ambience unlike any other in the world.

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