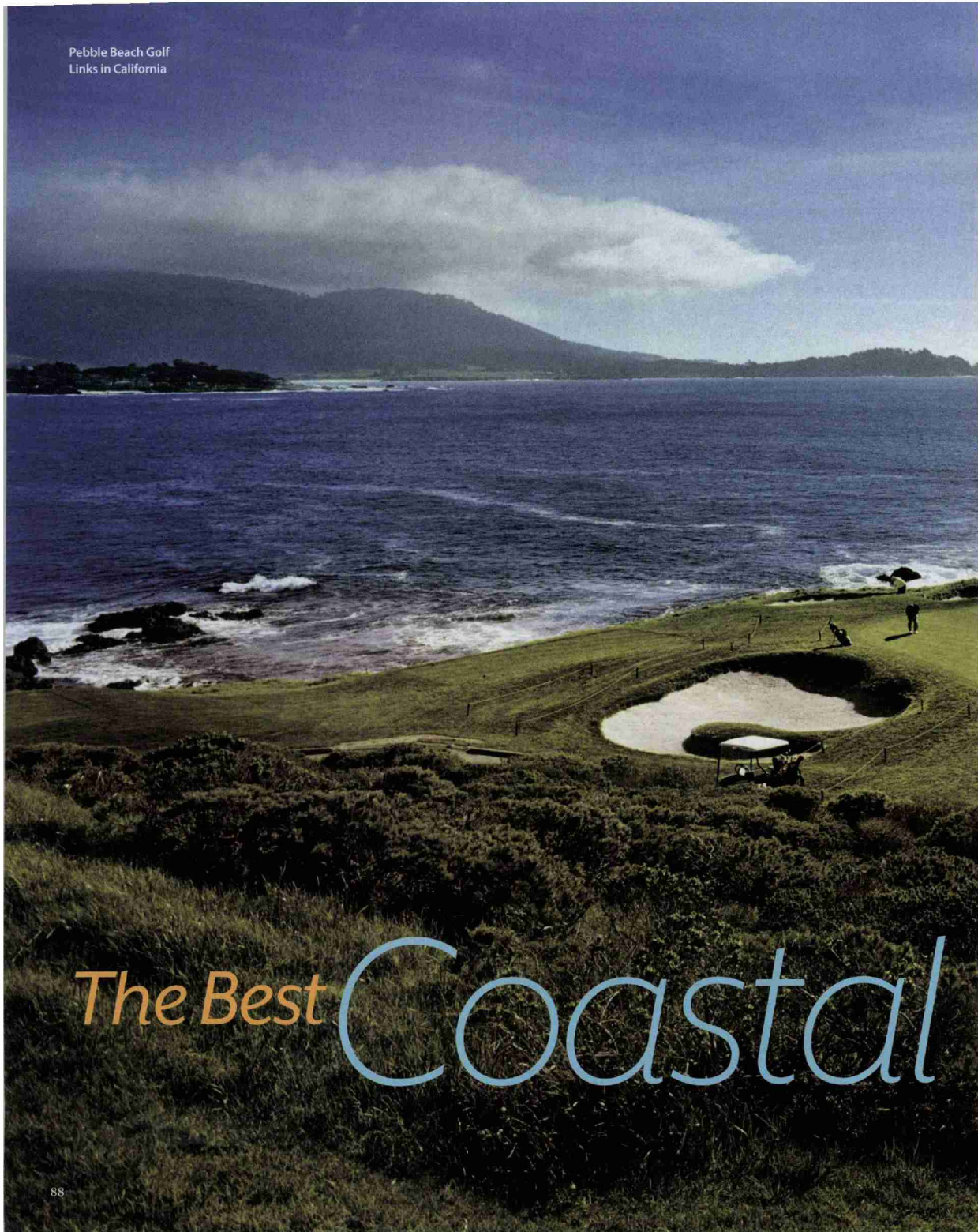
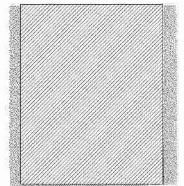


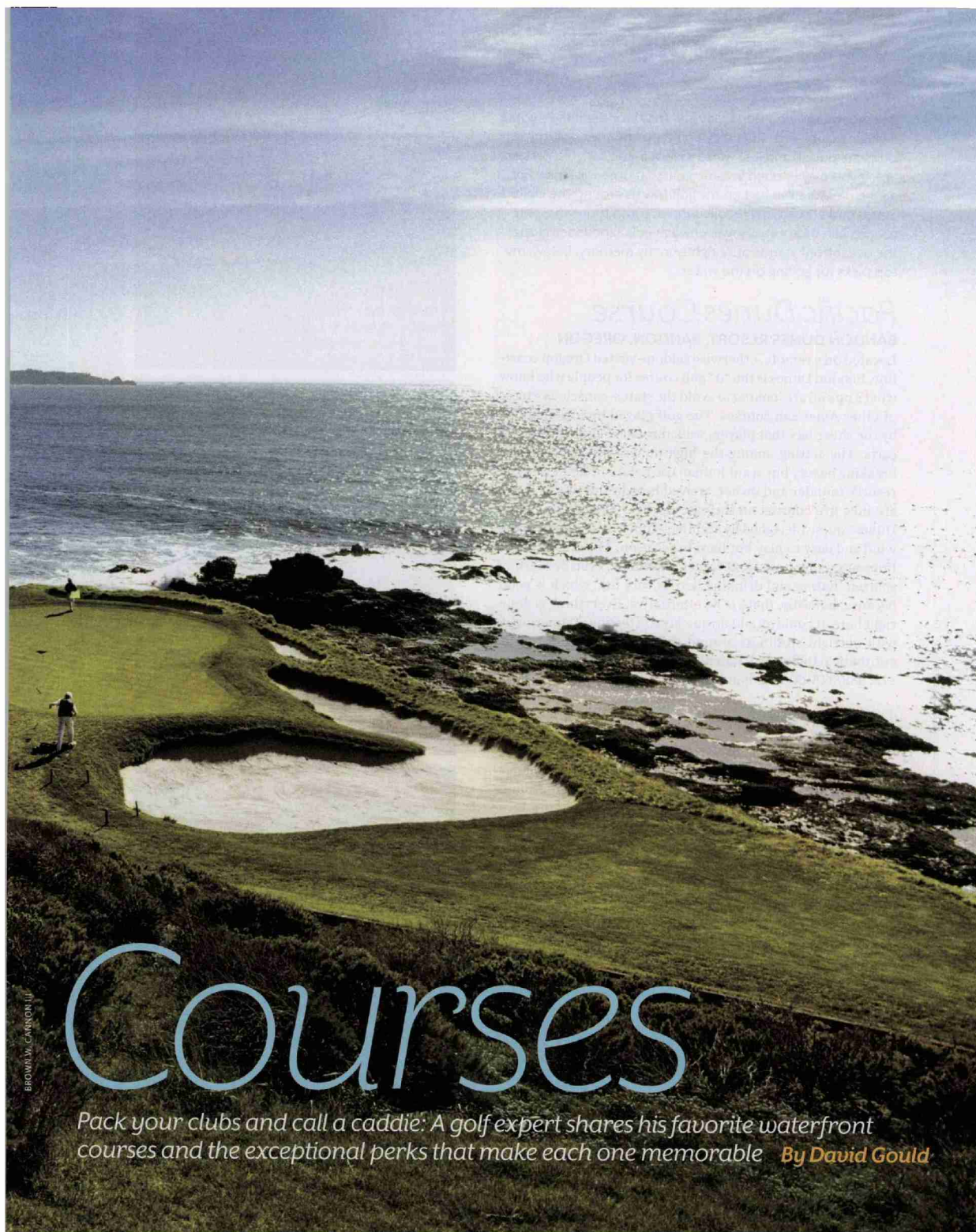
Pebble Beach Golf
Links in California



The Best Coastal

88





Beachcombers who don't play golf may wonder if the people swinging clubs ever wish they could pull off their golf spikes, drop the putter, and just wade a while in the surf. Confession: Yes, if you play enough seaside golf, that urge will strike. For all the pleasure I've had on my golf travels around the United States and abroad, my recollection of those thousand-plus rounds can be spotty. However, each golf experience along the oceanfront stands out brightly in my memory. Below, my top picks for golfing on the water.

Pacific Dunes Course

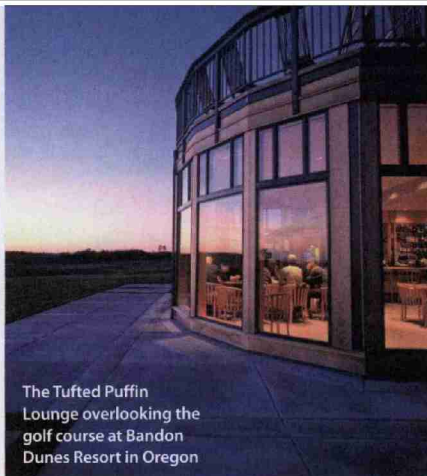
BANDON DUNES RESORT, BANDON, OREGON

Located on a remote, otherwise seldom-visited Oregon coastline, Bandon Dunes is the "it" golf course for people who know what's up and are looking to avoid the status-conscious excess of other American courses. The golf played here is dignified by the sheer fact that players walk instead of shuttling in golf carts. The setting among the high dunes was one of heart-breaking beauty but scant human use before Mike Keiser, the resort's founder and owner, arrived here in the 1990s. There are now five courses on the vast acreage: The quirky Pacific Dunes course (designed by architect Tom Doak) is open to the wind and easy to play but hard to score on. The accommodations are understated and rather masculine, even borderline spartan. Eating and drinking here is very fun, which is good because, honestly, there is no alternative. Everything is done right here. It could all add up quickly to a feeling of superiority with outright stuffiness around the next corner, but that is antithetical to Bandon. Rates start at \$100, 18 holes of golf for \$75; 888/345-6008 or bandondunesgolf.com.

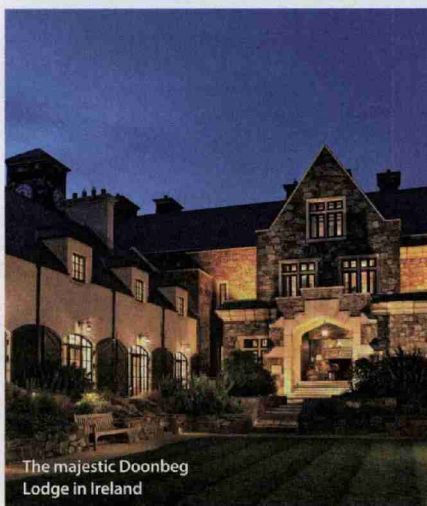
Highland Links Golf Course

NORTH TRURO, MASSACHUSETTS

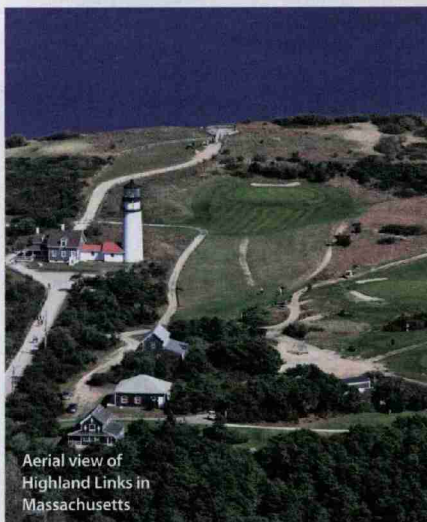
This little-town nine-holer is not exactly golf-intense, but it's pure coastal bliss, with spectacular ocean views all around and a lighthouse right in the middle. Highland Links, a 120-year-old course in the two-traffic-light town of Truro, likes to keep things simple. It traipses along a sandy cliff that was likely the first landmark spotted by *Mayflower* voyagers back in 1612. I've often been paired up with other single golfers on this course and have had the pleasure of watching them discover its charm and its character, shot after wind-curved shot. From various spots along the breezy, firm, fescue-grass course, you can take in 20-mile views of the vast Atlantic, ever aware of the ancient sentry beside the seventh tee: the stout, well-maintained lighthouse depicted in Edward Hopper's 1930 watercolor *Highland Light, North Truro*. On summer days, heat tends to pool in the lower swaths of the fairway along the par-4 second hole, the protected eighth hole, and one deep hollow in front of the fifth green. It's only natural to want to linger in this reassuring warmth as you plan a links-style shot—bounced along the ground instead of flown in the air—up toward the waving flag. Eighteen holes of golf for \$40; 508/487-9201 or trurolinks.com.



The Tufted Puffin
Lounge overlooking the
golf course at Bandon
Dunes Resort in Oregon



The majestic Doonbeg
Lodge in Ireland



Aerial view of
Highland Links in
Massachusetts



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: LEFT: SUSAN SEIBERT; MARGOT CHEEL; COURTESY OF DOONBEG GOLF CLUB

Pacific Dunes Course
in Bandon, Oregon

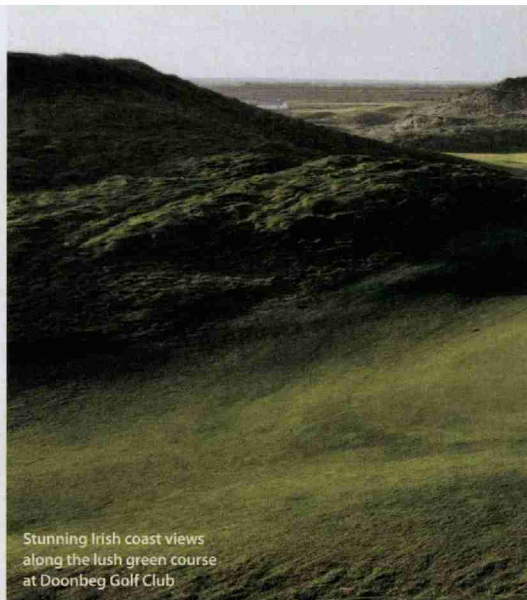


91

Doonbeg Golf Club

COUNTY CLARE, IRELAND

Up and down Ireland's Atlantic coast are jagged cliffs with high dunes, interrupted by open ground that tilts and ripples to form naturally contoured fairways. The more level terrain is covered in close-cropped fescue, while the dunes are topped with thick maram grass that waves hypnotically—especially as you study it in search of an errant golf ball. “We wouldn’t find that one if it were wrapped in bacon and we sent Lassie after it,” says an old Irish caddie. It’s been customary these past few decades for U.S. golfers to fly into Shannon airport and then hurry along the sea-front playing Waterville, Ballybunion, Enniscrone, Lahinch, and a chorus of other Irish links. Designed by Greg Norman, Doonbeg is the late arrival, having opened in 2002. It has matured nicely in the almost 11 years since, while managing to retain a strong sense of place: Surfers still have an easement through the course from the little village. Before Doonbeg Lodge was built in this underpopulated section of County Clare, we golfers idled in pubs and stayed at small hotels after finishing our rounds of golf. Today, the flawless lodge is perfect for Yanks seeking comfort and true-blue golf karma. Rates start at \$210, 18 holes of golf for \$110; 866/366-6234 or doonbeglodge.com.



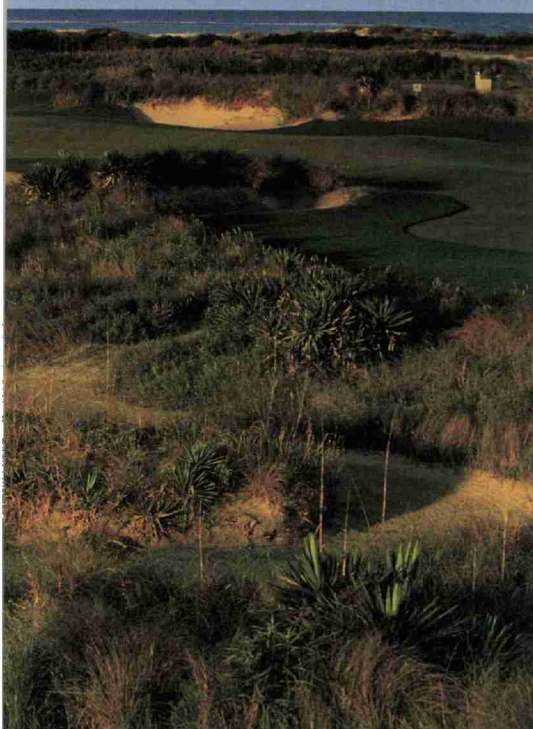
Stunning Irish coast views
along the lush green course
at Doonbeg Golf Club



FROM TOP: COURTESY OF DOONBEG GOLF CLUB; COURTESY OF KIAWAH ISLAND PARTNERS



Panoramic Atlantic Ocean
vistas lining the 18-hole
Ocean Course at Kiawah Island
Resort in South Carolina



The Ocean Course

KIAWAH ISLAND RESORT, KIAWAH ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA

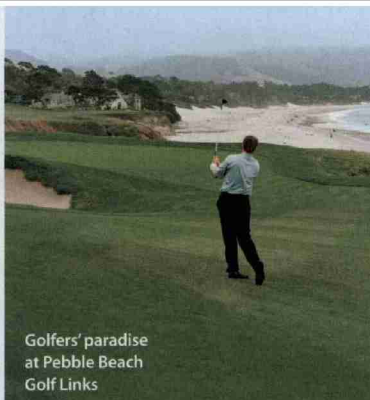
The PGA, one of golf's four majors, was played here in August, cementing Kiawah's position as one of the most respected and legit of all golf communities on the Eastern Seaboard—with an arsenal of award-winning courses by Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player, and Tom Fazio. Pete Dye's starkly pretty Ocean Course is scary-good—stunning, daring, boldly featured, and nearly impossible to play. Luckily, its shock-and-awe factor abates slightly when winds are calm, which does occasionally happen. The world's top pros competed here in 1991 and were not shy about admitting how merciful it was to be playing a Ryder Cup, which is scored by hole, as opposed to a “medal” score—it meant they could avoid the embarrassment of posting a total tally. In 2004, the hotel property opened the hushed, oak-paneled Sanctuary at Kiawah Island Golf Resort, a five-star citadel of comfort with a fine spa and oversize guests rooms. Yes, it's high-toned and baronial, but you get used to it and will keep lacing up your spikes to play the next course. Rates start at \$405; fall golf packages (including 18 holes and one-night accommodations at the Sanctuary) start at \$341 per person, per night; 800/576-1570 or kiawahresort.com.

Pebble Beach Golf Links

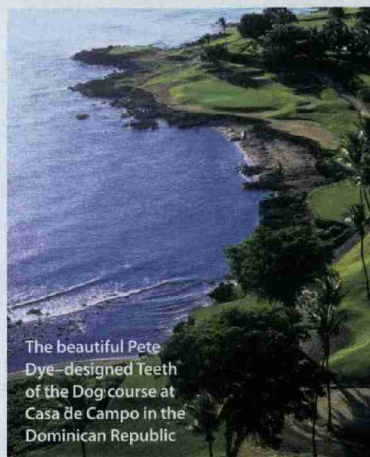
PEBBLE BEACH, CALIFORNIA

You can play golf the world over, but seldom will the sea treat you to as dramatic a performance as the one viewed from the Pebble Beach Golf Links. Rock formations in Carmel Bay and Stillwater

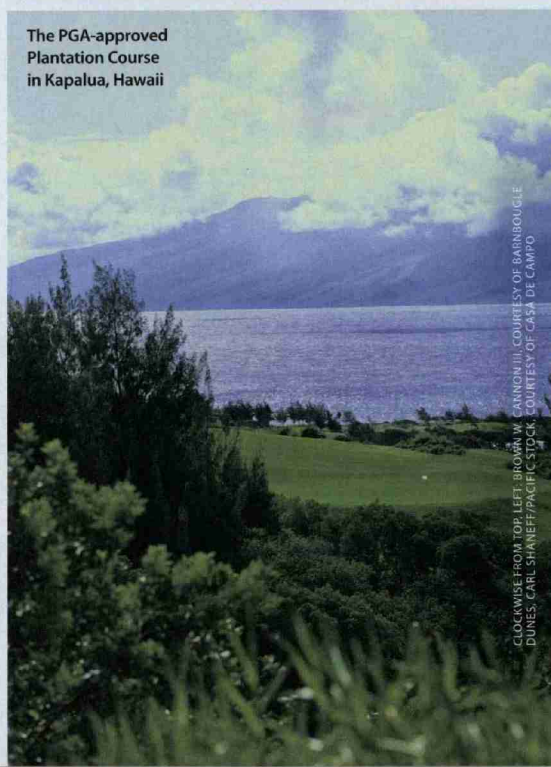
Cove (there's a misnomer!) make for noisy collisions followed by thrilling plumes of white surf. Most of us have impressions of 17-Mile Drive, the toll road into Pebble Beach, before ever actually driving on it. Same with your guest room in the beloved Lodge, or even a first encounter with a cheeseburger at The Tap Room. Arriving at this resort to play the iconic Pebble Beach Golf Links for the first time is like meeting a movie star whose films you've long admired. Today, this course, where five U.S. Opens have been played, is more accessible, but it remains a high-ticket, bucket-list destination. At the same time, there is a down-to-earth vibe and intense sustainability ethic, tilting almost to eco-tourism, that belies the \$900 room rates. (To reserve a tee time more than 24 hours in advance, guests must book a two-night minimum stay.) Greens fees are \$495; 800/654-9300 or pebblebeach.com.



Golfers' paradise
at Pebble Beach
Golf Links



The beautiful Pete
Dye-designed Teeth
of the Dog course at
Casa de Campo in the
Dominican Republic



The PGA-approved
Plantation Course
in Kapalua, Hawaii

Barnbougles Dunes

TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA

You're touring Australia on vacation—which is a blissful concept unto itself. Next you cross Bass Strait toward Barnbougles Dunes, hunched handsomely on Tasmania's northeast coast. Like much of this largely eco-protected island, the young yet famous golf course laid out here is crisscrossed by heaving land features, their edges softened by a prevailing wind called the "roaring forties." Part of the pilgrimage to this links is recognizing how long the odds were against its emergence. Used for sheep and cattle grazing by a rancher named Richard Sattler, its potential as fairways and greens was glimpsed by an area golfer who urged the farmer to put out the word. The greatest links courses do seem to design themselves, with minimal bulldozing required. That restraint marked architect Tom Doak's design process at Barnbougles, and it carries over to everything here, from simple cottage accommodations all the way to the boundary fences and the tee-side benches, mostly assembled from fallen timber. Seaside golf traditionally includes one compact hole that tests nothing but a player's educated hands and refined "touch"—at Barnbougles the diminutive par-3 seventh plays that role. You stand on the tee, having traveled thousands of miles to a remote, magical destination, and now you need to loft your golf ball 100-something paces to relive that pleasure of safe arrival. Vineyard tours are a second-favorite pursuit of the golfing pilgrim hereabouts. Rates start at \$150, 18 holes of golf for \$99; 61/36/356-0094 or barnbougledunes.com.

Teeth of the Dog

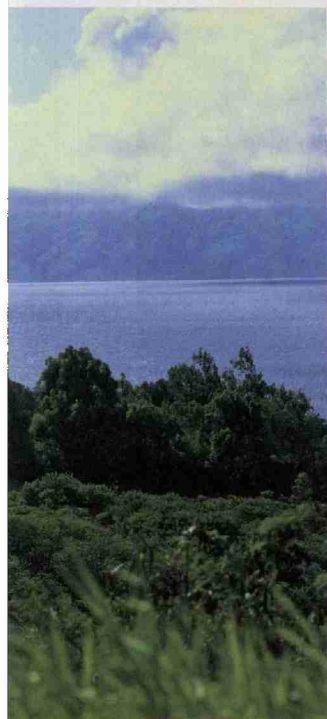
CASA DE CAMPO, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

This resort put the Dominican Republic into the consciousness of the "course collecting" American golfer back in the 1970s, when trailblazing modernist architect Pete Dye designed Teeth of the Dog. The part of the course that quickens heartbeats is a stretch of surfside excitement highlighted by holes five, seven, and 16, where smooth turf grass meets coral, sand, and warm Caribbean waters. Oceanfront golf so reliably adheres to Scottish minimalism and rusticity that the glam enticements of Casa de Campo merit some celebration. With its tiers of spacious villas priced in the millions and eateries such as Beach Club by Le Cirque, this resort lets you play the humbling game of golf by day and stride through the luxe

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: BROWN W. CANNON III/COURTESY OF BARNBOUGLES
DUNES; CARL SHANIFF/PACIFIC STOCK; COURTESY OF CASA DE CAMPO



Top-ranked public course Barnbougle Dunes, on the east coast of Tasmania in Australia



spaces by night, feeling downright jet-set for as long as your vacation budget will allow. Rates start at \$295, 18 holes of golf for \$135; 855/877-3643 or casadecampo.com.do.

Plantation Course

KAPALUA, HAWAII

Every year, golf fans can get a good look at the Plantation Course's oceanfront holes—and catch glimpses of breaching whales in the distance—during the PGA Tour's season-starting, televised event, the Hyundai Tournament of Champions. Hawaii's stunning landscape means that there is plenty of mediocre golf to be had on the islands that can boast beautiful scenery, but this course is truly the real deal, designed in a bold fashion by Coore & Crenshaw, who seem never to build anything less than a terrific golf course. The famed tandem routed Plantation Course on Kapalua along breeze-washed terrain that opens up to soul-stirring middle- and long-distance views of the endless Pacific. The challenges of this unusually long course are unrelenting. If you aren't a long hitter, you can't shoot a good score on it unless you opt to play from the upfront tee markers. The lodging and dining options here are so diverse and idyllic that it generally pays to research and set up reservations with some forethought. Eighteen holes of golf for \$218; 800/545-0018 or kapalua.com. 🌴

David Gould has spent 20-plus years reporting on golf. He is the former executive editor of *Travel + Leisure Golf* and former editor-in-chief of *LINKS* magazine. He has published four books, including *The Golfer's Code*.