

## Three Golf Resorts To Visit In 2017

By **Susan Comolli Davis**

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Golf is the main reason most people visit a certain golf resort, but for a few special spots across America, it's a larger-than-life personality and a genuine welcoming atmosphere that bring visitors back. By staying attuned to every member and guest's whims and needs, by providing personalized amenities and attention that make them feel like V.I.P.s, these golf communities get it right. So be sure to put these club and resort experiences on your must-play-someday list — or better yet, this year's New Year's Resolution list.

### **THE LODGE AT SEA ISLAND, ST. SIMONS, GA.**

Davis Love III, Matt Kuchar, Zach Johnson are among several PGA Tour players who call Sea Island home, living and training at the luxurious coastal Georgia community. But you don't have to be a tour pro, nor a member of the club, to be

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treated like one. Let's start with the men's locker room, dubbed "The Ultimate Man Cave," where Robert Davis has been tending to the needs of members and guests for 56 years. He goes by the name "Mighty Fine" and will make sure your experience is just that, whether you're lounging in an oversized leather chair, sitting by the fire, having a drink, playing cards, watching TV or eating a "Crabsino" sandwich (a BLT with lump crab meat). Even if you don't play golf, it's worth the splurge to spend the night at the clubby 40-room lodge (*pictured above*), where the staff has thought of everything you might want or need before you even get there. A butler escorts you to your room for check-in, where personalized stationery awaits on the desk, and warm cookies and milk are delivered at bedtime. The same butler is at your service 24/7 to pack and unpack your luggage, arrange tee times, book your dining and show you all the other resort activities. In addition, guests of the lodge have complimentary use of a 2016 BMW 750i for up to four hours a day. But when you have everything you need at your fingertips, where would you need to go?



Courtesy: Arnold Palmer's Bay Hill Club & Lodge  
Arnold Palmer's Bay Hill Club & Lodge Hole 17

## **BAY HILL CLUB AND LODGE, ORLANDO, FLA.**

A visit to the Bay Hill Club as a guest at the Lodge is not just any stay-and-play deal but an opportunity to mingle with high-profile members and enjoy the perks of private club membership while soaking in the aura of golf's greatest ambassador,

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the late Arnold Palmer. By many accounts, a stay at Bay Hill is an experience worth repeating. Guests are truly treated like members of the club (the staff will know your name) and have access to all the facilities and amenities, including the men's locker room, where until a year or so ago, Mr. Palmer would regularly retreat for a post-round beer with members. The clubhouse is filled with iconic photographs of Palmer and other golfing greats, and the scale of the place is intimate (there are only 70 rooms) with warm tones and understated décor. Many of the traditions of the club—from the forecaddies to the dress code—are the same ones Mr. Palmer implemented decades ago to "add a personal touch to the country club experience" at his beloved home. Although a visit to Bay Hill isn't quite the same without a chance to glimpse The King on the range or around the clubhouse, it's just as welcoming as ever.



Courtesy, Arnold Palmer's Bay Hill Club & Lodge  
Hole 10 at Arnold Palmer's Bay Hill Club & Lodge.

## **PINE NEEDLES LODGE & GOLF CLUB, SOUTHERN PINES, N.C.**

The golf world said goodbye to 95-year-old golf legend [Peggy Kirk Bell in 2016](#), but her remarkable spirit lives on at the family-owned resort she and her husband bought in 1953 and shaped into the inviting world-class property it is today, with two pristine Donald Ross courses. The couple raised their three children on the resort

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grounds, creating a comfortable, charming and casually elegant destination that draws return guests year after year. Pine Needles has hosted the U.S. Women's Open three times, and is best known for its "Golfari" golf schools for women that revolutionized the genre when they first launched in the 1950s. The accomplished Bell was the schools' featured instructor, and the trophy case in Mid-Pines' lobby pays tribute to her lifetime of excellence. Golfaris continue to this day, with the emphasis on fun, just as Bell designed them, and can be customized for any group. Each Golfari day is a mix of instruction, both on and off the course, and socializing. "Ma Bell," as the matriarch was known to many, participated in the schools well into her 90s, always accentuating that with the correct fundamentals and mental approach, golf is not as intimidating as it seems. As her son-in-law Kelly Miller, the president of the resort, notes, "The goal now is to keep her legacy going and her memory alive." And by keeping the focus on golf as an enjoyable, relaxed game, Pine Needles is doing just that.



Pine Needles Lodge & Golf Club

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