

GOLF

YOUR LIFE, WELL PLAYED

OCTOBER 2019 / GOLF.COM

Travel Guide 2019

TOP 100 RESORTS

NORTH AMERICA

Sand Valley Course, Sand Valley Golf Resort

Why this place (and 99 other destinations) rise above the rest

\$6.99 US / \$7.99 CAN



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TIME TO PLAY

Golf getaways are like golf swings—there's no one groove. Some people pursue max comfort, some prefer romping with pals or their kids. Ready for 100 adventures? C'mon, take the leap!

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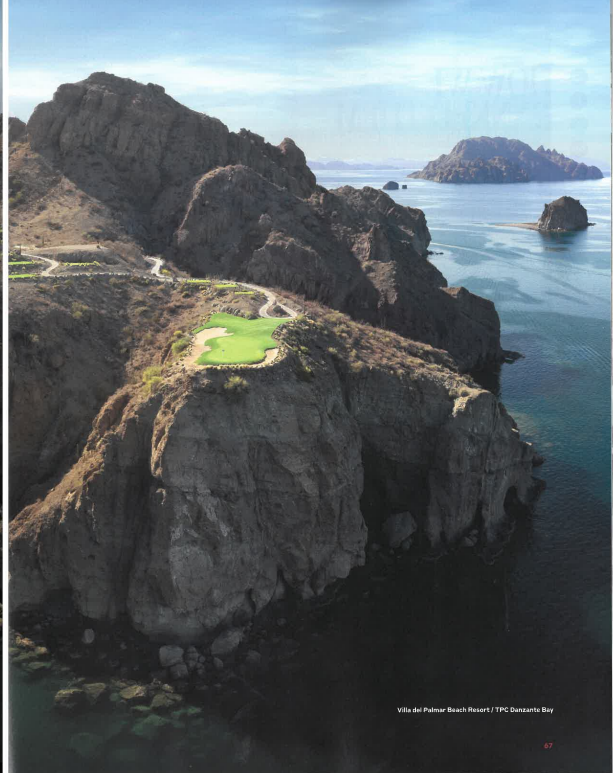
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Villa del Palmer Beach Resort / TPC Dananta Bay

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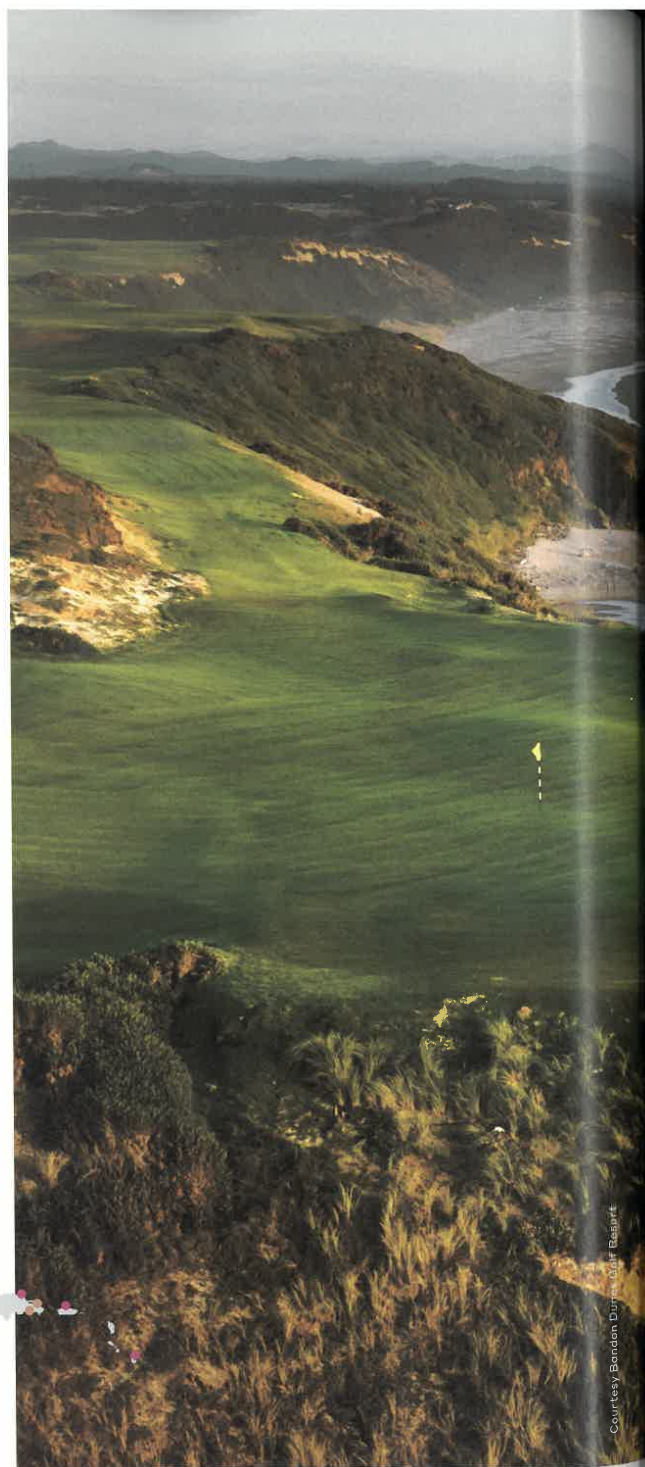
HOW WE RANKED THEM



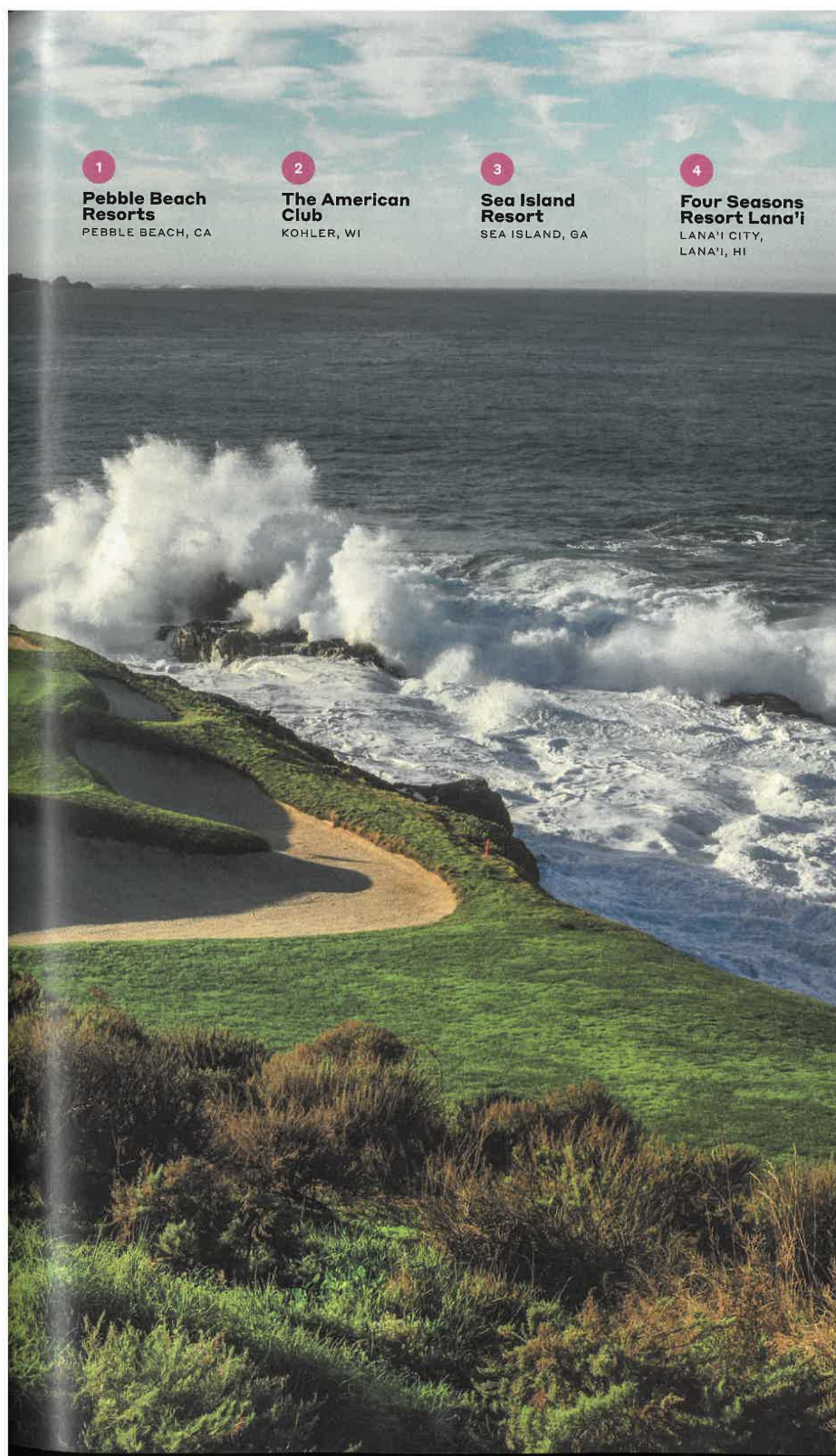
In one of the biggest editorial projects

GOLF has ever attempted, we culled the names of 243 rank-worthy resorts spread across North America. Under the expert guidance of resort industry veterans and our stable of well-heeled travel writers, we placed each resort into at least one of four experience categories: Luxury, Buddies, General Excellence and Families. Then, with the help of 3,700-plus golfers just like you, we conducted an online poll, asking GOLF.com readers to rate each resort based on five key variables: golf experience, accommodations, service, food and ambience. The results of this poll were then weighed against the opinions of a select group of GOLF's Top 100 Courses panelists and those of internal travel and editorial teams to list destinations in each category (Nos. 1-5, then alphabetically), generating GOLF's first-ever ranking of the Top 100 Resorts. Yep—we're in need of a vacation, too.

—David DeNunzio, Editor-In-Chief



Courtesy Bandon Dunes Golf Resort



1
**Pebble Beach
Resorts**
PEBBLE BEACH, CA

2
**The American
Club**
KOHLER, WI

3
**Sea Island
Resort**
SEA ISLAND, GA

4
**Four Seasons
Resort Lana'i**
LANA'I CITY,
LANA'I, HI

5
**Dorado Beach,
A Ritz-Carlton
Reserve**
DORADO BEACH,
PUERTO RICO



Luxury, we know, comes at a price, yet the finest such experiences render material considerations moot. Yes, the golf on offer must reside somewhere on the continuum from top-shelf to memory-searing. But the resort's other cornerstones—service, cuisine, aesthetics, off-course experiences—can be no less exemplary. The elegance and sophistication of these five-star stays don't just impress guests, they enrich them, too.

◀ **LUXURY LEADER:**
PEBBLE BEACH

GOLF MAGAZINE'S Top 100 Resorts In North America

Luxury

1. **Pebble Beach Resorts**
Pebble Beach, CA
2. **The American Club**
Kohler, WI
3. **Sea Island Resort**
Sea Island, GA
4. **Four Seasons Resort Lana'i**
Lana'i City, Lana'i, HI
5. **Dorado Beach, A Ritz-Carlton Reserve**
Dorado Beach, Puerto Rico

▼
Albany
Nassau, The Bahamas
Amanera
Rio San Juan, Dominican Republic
Four Seasons Resort Costa Rica at Peninsula Papagayo
Guanacaste, Costa Rica
The Ritz-Carlton Dove Mountain
Marana, AZ
Fairmont Grand Del Mar
San Diego, CA
Four Seasons Resort Hualalai
Kailua-Kona, Big Island, HI
The Inn at Bay Harbor
Bay Harbor, MI
Four Seasons Resort Jackson Hole
Teton Village, WY
The Ritz-Carlton Kapalua
Kapalua, Maui, HI
Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea
Kihei, Maui, HI
Rosewood Mayakoba
Playa del Carmen, Riviera Maya, Mexico
Montage Palmetto Bluff / May River GC
Bluffton, SC
The Ocean Club, A Four Seasons Resort
Nassau, The Bahamas
One & Only Palmilla
Cabo San Lucas, B.C.S., Mexico
The Resort at Pelican Hill
Newport Beach, CA
Primland
Meadows of Dan, VA
Pueblo Bonito Beach Resorts / Quivira
Los Cabos, B.C.S., Mexico
Four Seasons Resort Punta Mita
Punta Mita, Nayarit, Mexico
The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee
Greensboro, GA
Sandy Lane Resort
St. James, Barbados

Buddies

1. **Bandon Dunes Golf Resort**
Bandon, OR
 2. **Pinehurst Resort**
Pinehurst, NC
 3. **Cabot Links Golf Resort**
Inverness, Nova Scotia, Canada
 4. **Sand Valley Golf Resort**
Nekoosa, WI
 5. **The Resort at Diamante**
Cabo San Lucas, B.C.S., Mexico
- ▼
Arcadia Bluffs
Arcadia, MI
Barefoot Resort and Golf
North Myrtle Beach, SC
Omni Barton Creek Resort & Spa
Austin, TX
Renaissance Birmingham Ross Bridge Golf Resort & Spa
Birmingham, AL
Boyne Golf
Boyne Falls, MI
Caledonia / True Blue Plantation
Pawleys Island, SC
Erin Hills
Erin, WI
Forest Dunes
Roscommon, MI
Gamble Sands
Brewster, WA
Innisbrook, A Salamander Resort
Palm Harbor, FL
Pine Needles Lodge / Mid Pines Inn
Southern Pines, NC
The Prairie Club
Valentine, NE
Pursell Farms
Sylacauga, AL
Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL
Streamsong Resort
Bowling Green, FL
Sunriver Resort
Sunriver, OR
Talking Stick
Scottsdale, AZ
Trump National Doral Miami
Miami, FL
Turning Stone Resort & Casino
Verona, NY
Villa del Palmar Beach Resort & Spa / TPC Danzante Bay
Loreto, B.C.S., Mexico

General Excellence

1. **The Broadmoor**
Colorado Springs, CO
 2. **The Greenbrier**
White Sulphur Springs, WV
 3. **Fairmont Sonoma Springs**
Banff, Alberta, Canada
 4. **Kiawah Island Golf Resort**
Kiawah Island, SC
 5. **Sea Pines Resort**
Hilton Head Island, SC
- ▼
The Ritz-Carlton Bachelor Gulch / Red Sky
Avon, CO
Baha Mar Resort
Nassau, The Bahamas
Omni Bedford Springs Resort
Bedford, PA
Cabo del Sol Beach & Golf Resort
Cabo San Lucas, B.C.S., Mexico
Cap Cana Resort
Punta Cana, Dominican Republic
Casa de Campo
La Romana, Dominican Republic
Fairmont Chateau Whistler
Whistler, British Columbia, Canada
Rosewood CordeValle
San Martin, CA
Gasparilla Inn & Club
Boca Grande, FL
Grand Wailea
Wailea, Maui, HI
Omni Grove Park Inn
Asheville, NC
The Ritz-Carlton Half Moon Bay
Half Moon Bay, CA
Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge
Jasper, Alberta, Canada
Four Seasons Resort La Quinta Resort & Club
La Quinta, CA
Las Colinas
Irving, TX
Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu
Charlevoix, Quebec, Canada
Nemacolin Woodlands Resort
Farmington, PA
Princeville Resort Kauai
Princeville, Kauai, HI
Pronghorn Resort
Bend, OR
Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North
Scottsdale, AZ

Families

1. **Big Cedar Lodge**
Ridgedale, MO
 2. **Colonial Williamsburg Resort**
Williamsburg, VA
 3. **The Retreat, Links & Spa at Silvis Valley Ranch**
Seneca, OR
 4. **French Lick Resort**
French Lick, IN
 5. **Omni Mount Washington Resort**
Bretton Woods, NH
- ▼
Beaver Creek Resort
Beaver Creek, CO
Rosewood Bermuda
Hamilton, Bermuda
The Coeur d'Alene Resort
Coeur d'Alene, ID
Giants Ridge Golf & Ski Resort
Biwabik, MN
Grand Isla Navidad Resort
Isla Navidad, Mexico
Grand View Lodge
Nisswa, MN
Hammock Beach, A Salamander Resort
Palm Coast, FL
Omni Homestead Resort
Hot Springs, VA
Horseshoe Bay Resort
Horseshoe Bay, TX
The Hotel Hershey / Hershey CC
Hershey, PA
Omni La Costa Resort & Spa
Carlsbad, CA
Ojai Valley Inn & Spa
Ojai, CA
Rodd Crowbush Golf & Beach Resort
Morell, Prince Edward Island, Canada
The Sagamore Resort
Bolton Landing, NY
JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort & Spa / TPC San Antonio
San Antonio, TX
Seaview, A Dolce Resort
Galloway, NJ
Sun Valley Resort
Sun Valley, ID
Taboo Muskoka Resort & Club
Gravenhurst, Ontario, Canada
JW Marriott Tucson Starr Pass Resort & Spa
Tucson, AZ
Walt Disney World Resort
Orlando, FL



LUXURY

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TRAVEL WRITER CONFESSIONAL

THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE AREN'T FREE— SORT OF

BY TOM CHIARELLA



First time I got paid to write about golf travel, it felt like I was stealing something from the air. I mean it. The grand larceny of luck from no more than empty space. 36 holes, 72 holes. Free. 2,000, 2,500 words. Paid. 3,000 miles from home, to boot.

I don't remember the assignment. That's appropriate too, because I didn't give a thought to the work of it at the time. I said just yes. They were asking so little, offering so much.

They wanted to send me to an island. "To get your take," the editor said. "You know: Is it worth the trek?" It was a resort I'd heard of. There were people to meet. A culture to assess. He could rent me a car. Or get me a driver. Up to me, he said. Me. I'll just say this: I live in Indiana. You're damn-skippy I was going.

You don't get paid much when you write. Not enough is all I can say. So that first time—free travel, free golf—I have to admit that I allowed myself the feeling that I was finally getting what I was due. It was as if someone handed me a fitted pullover made from the microfiber of greed. I probably lost friends telling them about that trip. All I can remember: lots of free macadamia nuts and excellent golf. Golf played on volcanic ridges, hardscrabble golf played amongst nests of albatross, languid golf played in front of the wide span of the dark blue ocean, humpbacks visible in the distance. And free drinks at the infinity pool.

Since then, I've learned not to get tangled up in the SWAG. Yes, there are sleeves of balls on every cart. And occasionally free shirts. And hats. Lots of hats. I have piles and piles of hats from five different continents in my garage. They're no good to me. I've learned that my head is too big on every continent. SWAG stands for "stuff we all get." We live in a world full of logoed tchotchkes. We all get that junk. The job of a travel writer is something else entirely. Send me to the other side of the planet and my work is to describe the stuff only *we* get. We, the golfers. From our game.

There are a lot of us. I played golf with the wife of a lobster fishermen in Puerto Rico, with a diamond broker and his beautiful wife in South Africa. Early on, I played with a Holocaust survivor who sat in the cart and made club calls for his grandson using a copy of the magazine I was writing for as a megaphone. I played golf in a sandstorm in Morocco. And amongst a herd of goats in Ireland. Places matter in golf—but people matter everywhere you go.

Now I try not to think of the work as a matter of luck, nor a right earned after years in the business. I do remind myself it's a privilege. But most of all, now I understand the assignment. It's all about the distance traveled to get to a place and the people waiting there to play the game. The assignment is to relate and report the details of some wide-open afternoon in a place we do not know and do so through the mechanisms and metaphysical realizations of golf.

The infinity pool doesn't mean a thing. The drinks don't matter. The macadamia nuts. The hats. The only thing that matters is the *stuff we get only from the game*. And the trek that takes us there in the first place.

this being Wisconsin, the cheese selection is world class.

Also good for: Buddies, General Excellence

americclubresort.com
(855) 444-2838

3.

Sea Island Resort
SEA ISLAND, GA

400 total rooms at the Cloister and the uber-intimate Lodge / three golf courses / Golf Performance Center / spa / seven pools / tennis / beach

Best time to go: Fall or spring, with highs in the 70s and low 80s.

Daily stay-and-plays start at: \$800. **Golf experience:** Seaside Course (Colt and Alison, Tom Fazio), Plantation Course (Walter Travis, Rees Jones, Love Golf Design) and Retreat Course (Joe Lee, Love Golf Design). **Best non-golf amenity:** Seven miles of private beach. **While you're there:** Fine-tune your game at the all-new, 17,000-square-foot Golf Performance Center. **Insider tip:** It's the only resort in the world to receive four Forbes Five-Star awards for 11

Sea Island Resort



consecutive years. Soak up the experience.

Travelogue: Davis Love III grew up on Sea Island, one of coastal Georgia's golf-rich Golden Isles. He and brother Mark, of Love Golf Design, recently completed an 18-hole putting course here, and successfully pitched ownership on a full reno of the 1998 Rees Jones redesign of Plantation. It opens this fall, prior to cohosting the RSM Classic. If golf were a stock, Sea Island would be buying. The Lodge recently wrapped a \$30 million upgrade, and the new Golf Performance Center is peerlessly high-tech. Instruction has always been a major focus at Sea Island Resort. Little wonder, with resident Tour players including Zach Johnson, Matt Kuchar, Harris English, Brian Harman and recent winners Keith Mitchell and J.T. Poston.

Also good for: General Excellence, Families

seaisland.com
(833) 734-9352

4.

Four Seasons Resort Lana'i
LANA'I CITY, LANA'I, HI

213 rooms / one golf course / nine restaurants and bars / spa / pool / fitness center

Best time to go: Year-round; prioritize fall through spring when heat and humidity are most manageable. **Daily stay-and-plays start at:** \$1,000. **Golf experience:** The Jack Nicklaus Signature Manele Golf Course is considered one of Hawaii's strongest layouts. **Best non-golf amenity:** Nobu Lana'i's delicious Japanese-Hawaiian fusion creations, from sushi to Wagyu beef. **While you're there:** Put your foot down on its incred-

ible walking trails.

Insider tip: Citi Prestige cardholders get a free fourth night when booking three.

Travelogue: To experience Lana'i is to step back in time—and into bliss. The resort's expansive, sanctuary-like entryway is open and breezy and looks out on two lagoon-style pools and Hulopoe Bay. There are a variety of gorgeous trails, including one that leads to Jack Nicklaus's Manele course. While the most distinctive feature of the track is its stunning par-3 12th, which is bisected by a chasm that falls into the bay, the entire course meanders around lava outcroppings and offers beautiful views of the Pacific. The resort recently began hosting yoga experiences near Manele's 18th green, adding to a list of activities that range from snorkeling to off-roading. Nine restaurants and bars are headlined by One Forty, which offers one of the most impressive breakfast buffets you'll ever enjoy; Malibu Farms, a go-to lunch spot between the pool and the bay; and Nobu, which is as premium as you'd expect considering the quality and richness found in every inch of this resort. **Also good for:** Families, General Excellence

fourseasons.com
(808) 565-2000

5.

Dorado Beach, A Ritz-Carlton Reserve
DORADO BEACH, PUERTO RICO

100-plus rooms and suites / two golf courses / two restaurants / spa / pool / beaches

Best time to go: Late fall into winter and early spring. **Daily stay-and-plays start at:** \$804.

Golf experience: Two classic Robert Trent Jones Sr. designs. **Best non-golf amenity:** The private plunge pool outside many rooms. **While you're there:** Take a trip to the walled city of Old San Juan with a local guide. **Insider tip:** An outdoor shower while listening to the pounding ocean surf is a divine experience.

Travelogue: An original Rockefeller resort when it opened in the '50s, Dorado Beach partnered with Ritz-Carlton in 2018 to become the only Ritz-Carlton Reserve in the Western Hemisphere. The RTU-designed tracks—Sugarcane and East—have long been the calling card for golf vacationers in Puerto Rico. The resort takes guest experiences to another level—an elite one. The food is exquisite, thanks to top chef Mario Pagan. And indicative of the resort's one-of-a-kind offerings is the spa's treehouse-like massage setting. Be sure to make time to see the five-bedroom Su Casa, an original, restored 1920s villa on the 50-acre property.

Also good for: Families, General Excellence

ritzcarlton.com
(787) 626-1100



STITCH UGB GARMENT BAG

Genius design allows the UGB to function primarily as an attractive, water-repellent duffel, then, with one magical pull on the zipper, the unit unfurls and transforms into a full garment bag. Throw in traditionally sturdy *Stitch* construction and you have yourself the ultimate travel companion. —Kari Sims Vaughn

\$278;
stitchgolf.com

Nos. 6–25, A–Z

Albany

NASSAU, THE BAHAMAS

Best time to go: Year-round; prioritize fall, winter and spring.

Daily stay-and-plays start at: \$2,500. **Golf experience:** The Ernie Els-designed course combines the best of links and desert features with windswept dunes and water. **Best non-golf amenity:** The two pools, one featuring winding slides and another adult-only option that offers ultimate pampering. **Insider tip:** A studio near the marina is where Justin Timberlake has been laying down tracks. **Also good for:** Families
albanybahamas.com
(242) 676-6000

Amanera

RIO SAN JUAN, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Best time to go: Nov. through Apr. **Daily stay-and-plays start at:** \$1,650. **Golf experience:** A Rees Jones oceanside stunner. **Best non-golf amenity:** Nature walks around the mountains encircling Playa Grande. **While you're there:** Dive into the kitesurfing. **Insider tip:** Take advantage of the hotel transportation. Amanera is more than an hour from the airport, on mountain

Dorado Beach, A Ritz-Carlton Reserve





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Sea Island Resort