

PLUS: Inside "Tommy's Honour," Saluting Jay Mottola, a New Column by Tom Doak



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A Day IN THE Life OF Golf

A SPECIAL PHOTO ESSAY





The Links at Spanish Bay (seen here from the seventeenth green) sprawls across a stretch of land on the northwest coast of the Monterey Peninsula, near the Pacific Grove Gate of Seventeen-Mile Drive. (Inset) A bagpiper strolls the Links as sunset approaches, and has done so since the resort opened in 1987.

BEYOND THE BEACH

The area that includes California's Monterey Peninsula is home to Pebble Beach, Spyglass Hill, Cypress Point – and more wallet-friendly options that you ought to know.

BY JEFF NEUMAN





TOP: CARMEL VALLEY RANCH; BELOW AND LEFT: SEEMONTEREY.COM

(Top) Carmel Valley Ranch's course is reason enough to wander inland from the coast. (Above) The first hole at Black Horse displays the course's sculpted bunkers and sinuous contours.

Since 1919, Pebble Beach has represented the artistic, theatrical, and romantic pinnacle of American golf. Jack Neville and Douglas Grant's timeless creation along the coast of the Monterey Peninsula has been the site of so many historic golf shots—Nicklaus's one-iron; Watson's chip-in; Tiger's demolition of the field; Bill Murray—that its significance has almost eclipsed its extraordinary beauty.

Almost.

Every golfer dreams of lashing an iron shot to the eighth green across Stillwater Cove, of pitching into the wind at the tiny seventh, of braving the sea wall along the eighteenth and drawing the admiration of onlookers from the Del Monte Lodge. Every golfer should experience Pebble Beach, and every golfer can, bound only by his or her limits of money and time.

The same can be said for Spyglass Hill, Robert Trent Jones's fearsome masterpiece in the nearby hills. Tamed somewhat by modern equipment, Spyglass still provides plenty of challenge as it wends its way first down to the shore and the ice plant, then back up into the Monterey pines. It too must be experienced, and many partisans consider it a superior eighteen to Pebble itself.

A green fee alone won't get you a round at the very private Cypress Point Golf Club, but it is worth calling in every favor and contact you can to tee it up at Alister MacKenzie's ultimate cathedral. If I have one round remaining in my life, I want it to be at Cypress, where three different great courses await me: An opening six in beautiful parkland; a transitional seventh, then eight through fourteen in the dunes; and then three unforgettable holes along and over the coastline. (About the eighteenth, I'm as mystified as I am when I play at Yale.)



CARMEL VALLEY RANCH

Like a deer in the headlands, a woodland creature pauses amid the lavender fields at Carmel Valley Ranch.

With showstoppers like these in the neighborhood, it's no wonder that the rest of the landscape gets overshadowed. But there are so many options in the Monterey/Salinas area – twenty-six golf courses in all – that even the pickiest connoisseur can amortize a pilgrimage to the costliest shrines on a per-round basis.

Even within the gates of Seventeen Mile Drive, that gilded ribbon of road running through the Del Monte Forest and along the finest meeting of land and sea, there are overlooked treasures. The private Monterey Peninsula Country Club has two courses that have received dramatic makeovers: the Shore Course, which joined the AT&T Pro-Am's rota in 2010, was revitalized by the ever-creative Mike Strantz in the early '00s; and the Dunes Course, which unveiled its significant upgrade by Tim Jackson and David Kahn (working with and directed by Tom Fazio) in April 2016. Monterey native Alan Shipnuck, prolific writer for *Sports Illustrated* and *Golf.com*, believes the two redesigns have vaulted MPCC to the top of the list of great 36-hole golf clubs – ahead of even Tillinghast's Met Area duos at Winged Foot and Baltusrol.

Just north along the coastline sits the Links at Spanish Bay, another of the Pebble Beach Resorts (along with Pebble and Spyglass). Designed by the team of Robert Trent Jones, Jr., Tom Watson, and Sandy Tatum, when the course opened in 1987 it was hailed as the most Scotland-like layout on American soil, anticipating by a decade such

Go Fish

In its thirty-two-year existence, The Monterey Bay Aquarium has established itself as one of the world leaders in conservation awareness and study. Its "Seafood Watch" app, downloaded more than a million and a half times, is an invaluable resource for diners looking to select sustainable and ethical options from the ocean's bounty.

The Aquarium itself, located on Monterey's Cannery Row, is an irresistible attraction full of the wonders of the deep. Its Open Sea exhibit, an unimaginably large tank on permanent display with species swimming intricate patterns in strata of their own, is a showcase for the diversity of aquaculture. An event space with a full-wall window into the tank is available for cocktail parties and sit-down dinners; I felt odd to be eating fish in front of so epic a display of their vitality, until I remembered that that's what they're doing, too.

Other displays are host to sea otters, penguins, crustaceans, and kelp forests. Visitors can marvel at the eerie grace of pulsing jellyfish (below), pet a ray, and sit oceanside at Cindy's Waterfront and enjoy chef Cindy Pawlcyn's dishes like Pacific Rockfish Tacos and the Arctic Char Club Sandwich that draw on the freshest local ingredients. Bring your camera, but don't expect the marine life to pose unless it's sitting on a plate.



JEFF NEUMAN



Out and About in Monterey and Beyond

There is more to life than golf, and there is more to the beauty of the Monterey Peninsula and surrounding areas than their fairways and greensites, no matter how magnificent. A pilgrimage to the famous links should leave room for explorations that will spark the imagination and buoy the soul.

A drive along Highway 1 south from Carmel traces some of the most spectacular coastline in the world. The largely undeveloped region known as Big Sur has been a haven for writers, artists, and seekers of all kinds for more than half a century. There are trails galore where you can lose your cellphone reception and find yourself. If nothing else, a 15-mile drive down to Bixby Bridge presents a vista both familiar (from car commercials) and eternally new.

For an offbeat way to tool around the Monterey-Pacific Grove-Cannery Row area, take a Sea-Car tour. These open three-wheeled vehicles are street-legal, operate on a throttle like a motorcycle, and can go up to 50 miles per hour – though they're restricted to streets with a 45 mph maximum. They come equipped with a GPS-guided tour, but the intrepid traveler can strike out on his own guided by a map and his instincts. They're a great way to turn a beautiful tourist destination into your own personal amusement park.

The town of Carmel-by-the-Sea knows how to put its best foot forward. A stroll along Ocean Street to the aptly named Scenic

Road takes you past shops, galleries, and restaurants down to the beach and along the coast. Or head down Junipero Street to Carmel Mission, the final resting place of Saint Junipero Serra, and take a walk through Mission Trail Park. On the second Saturday of each month from November to May, Carmel Art Walk spotlights the twenty-one artist-owned galleries (among the hundreds in town), giving early-evening visitors the chance to meet and chat with the artists themselves. If you can tear yourself away from the golf course on a Friday or Saturday morning, the "Gimme-A-Breakfast" tour makes six tasty stops for coffee and local goodies. And the Carmel Wine Walk lets you wander at your own pace to a dozen tasting rooms located in a tight area running roughly from Dolores Street to Carmel Plaza.

If you're heading north to San Francisco and must have one last round of golf along the way, make time for Pasatiempo in Santa Cruz. Alister MacKenzie designed some of his most diabolical greens on the site where he lived for the last years of his life. This public facility features what some have described as "the greatest inland par-4 in the world" – the sixteenth hole, with an approach across a small ravine to a remarkable three-tiered putting surface. The lovely finishing par-three puts an exclamation point on one of the master architect's most memorable courses.



Pasatiempo's sixteenth green.



A Sea Car in Pacific Grove.



Gallery Sur in Carmel.

MIDDLE AND FAR LEFT: JEFF NEUMAN; LEFT: COURTESY HUNTER PUBLIC RELATIONS; TOP: SEEMONTEREY.COM

efforts as Sand Hills and the courses at Bandon. A bagpiper still walks the grounds at sunset, providing a Scottish soundtrack to a California dream. The Inn at Spanish Bay has a deserved reputation for exceptional service, and hosts an annual fancy-dress New Year's Eve party that turns the entire hostelry into a series of themed buffets, open bars, dance venues featuring live music and DJs, and roving bands of merrymakers and bubbly-bearers.

Turning inland but still within the Pebble Beach gates, Poppy Hills Golf Course was built and is operated by the Northern California Golf Association. The course winds through the forest with distinct elevation changes in its nine-hole loops. A 2013 renovation replaced acres of rough with native waste areas in a successful effort to reduce the layout's water consumption, a critical concern everywhere in California golf. It's a different experience than the rest of the peninsula's courses, one the NCGA likens to playing in a national park.

The golf courses inside Seventeen Mile Drive are hardly the only games in town. The northern corner of the peninsula offers the sporty municipal Pacific Grove Golf Links, a layout that progresses through Monterey and Cypress pines on its front nine out to the open holes in the dunes for the second side. Totaling just over 5700 yards from its blue tees, the course offers a unique routing that begins with two par-threes, follows with two short par-

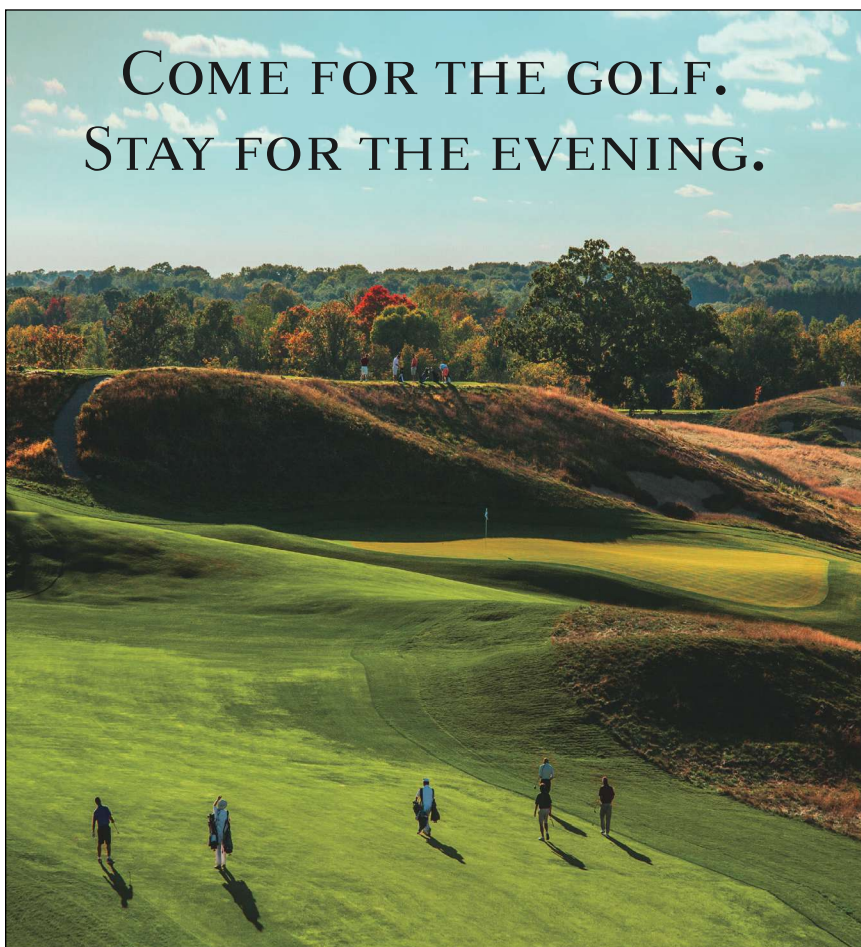


fours, and then two par-fives before settling into a more conventional mix of holes.

A few miles up Route 1 in Seaside are Bayonet and Black Horse, twin courses on the former site of Fort Ord. The brainchild of General Bob McClure, commanding officer at Fort Ord in the 1950s, Bayonet was laid out by McClure and local golf pro Robert Widener, supposedly with the assistance of a soldier stationed at the base – Ken Venturi, later a U.S. Open champion and longtime CBS golf

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analyst. McClure was a left-handed golfer with a distinct slice, and he designed parts of the course—in particular holes 11-15—to accommodate his faults with a series of sharp doglegs left. A decade later, Black Horse was created by a team consisting of McClure, his successor General Edwin Carnes, and course superintendent Merle Russill. Both courses underwent a renovation and revitalization in 2008 under the direction of course architect Gene Bates; both are challenging but playable, lined with mature cypress trees, and offer sweeping views of Point Pinos and Monterey Bay. The courses hosted the national championships for PGA Professionals and Senior Professionals in 2012 and 2015, respectively.

While it may seem foolish to turn your back on the picturesque peninsula that drew you to this area in the first place, Carmel Valley Ranch and Quail Lodge provide two good reasons to do so and have the added advantage of a third. The weather along the coast is predictable only in its unpredictability, with microclimates scattered across the area, while the valley in the Santa Lucia Range boasts more than 300 days of sunshine a year and temperatures that are generally about ten degrees higher than the oft-foggy shoreline.

Carmel Valley Ranch styles itself a 500-acre playground, with hiking and equestrian trails, hilltop yoga, fitness workshops, a full-service spa, on-site apiary, guided walks, and archery classes. It has Northern California's only Pete Dye-designed golf course, with dramatic views from elevated tees and holes that meander through vineyards, lavender fields, and old-growth oak groves. A few miles west, closer to the coast but no less sunny, Quail Lodge & Golf Club features an eighteen-hole layout designed in 1964 by Robert Muir Graves and remodeled in 2015 by Todd Eckenrode, a nine-hole putting course, a sand bocce court, off-road Land Rover driving lessons, and more. Both resorts provide an excellent base of operations for exploring the many wonders of the region: Cannery Row, Big Sur, Point Lobos, Carmel-by-the-Sea, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and so much more.

Whether you're making your first visit to the extraordinary land-and-seascape of the Monterey Peninsula (it won't be your last) or returning to a cherished spot, it's worth your while to explore beyond the most famous destinations. There are a wealth of golf experiences in the surrounding area, and a wide array of less-known gems too often overshadowed by the most brilliant few. You won't get to them all in one go, but they'll be waiting for you whenever you wend your way back. ■