

GOLF
WORLD

TOP 100

COURSES
CONTINENTAL
EUROPE

CROWNWOOD CLUB, SWEDEN

THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE
RANKINGS IN THE GAME

**EUROPE'S
NEW DEPTH**
The Next 100 courses,
ranked from 101-200

THE BEST OF MAINLAND EUROPE

Four new entries - including two courses that have opened in 2025 -
make it into this comprehensive assessment of the continental elite.

WELCOME

The depth and quality of golf on the continent has never been stronger, so compiling this list has never been harder...

I first had input on the Continental Europe ranking in 2011 and since that point, when I had played 23 of that year's Top 100, I have been desperate to have played all of the courses on the list.

I'm happy to say I have achieved that goal this time. Its importance lies not in any personal glory (though it's been very fun completing the task), but solely in the fact that it gives me the ability to compare the courses on the list as well as those just outside it (I've played 142 of the top 150). The eight I've not been to might feel hard done by, and rest assured they are on my radar.

I'm definitely not the only voice on the panel, but this breadth of experience gives me the ability to filter the views of others from a position of some insight and, I believe, produce a list of real authority.

If I'd had more space – and I am extremely grateful to the editor for the

number of pages this Top 100 has received! – I would have printed that Top 100 from 2011, because it shows revolution, not evolution... and I stand by such a radical overhaul of this ranking.

There is nothing 'bad' in that 2011 list but I am certain the 2025 courses are comfortably better as a collective. In fact, I'm sure of it. Even just looking at the top 10, in my opinion it is night and day.

While I believe our ranking process is much more thorough because we've travelled so much more widely now, I also believe we have better courses to choose from these days. There are half a dozen fabulous courses in the 2025 list that didn't exist in 2011, and there are many that have been markedly improved since then.

Just being well known, having hosted a tour event or even just being expensive is definitely not enough to get a course on

the list these days. And that makes life better for you, because the choice of where to play on the continent is now of a higher quality as well as much more varied. Back in 2011, we had no courses in Estonia, the Czech Republic, Norway, Iceland or Sicily. Or near Porto, on the German islands of Sylt and Fohr, or on Gotland or Aland off the coast of Sweden.

The panel helping me compile this list were Nigel and Suzanne Butler, Ralf Schwarzkopf, David BG Jones, Borje and Gunnel Laurinsson, David Truman, Greg Watson, David Jones and Dirk Schaeffer.

I thank them all for their invaluable input and hope you enjoy what I am certain is the most comprehensive and authoritative Continental Top 100 ranking ever produced.

Chris Bertram, Top 100 Editor

Vilamoura (Old Course)

THE CRITERIA

The criteria used to assess the courses can be found in full at todays-golfer.com, but in summary, the categories were:

- **Design** (40 marks) – including green complexes and routing
- **Setting** (15)
- **Memorability** of holes (15)
- **Playability** for the majority of golfers (10)
- **Consistency** of holes (10)
- **Presentation** of tees, fairways, bunkers and greens (10)

Note: Russian courses were not considered for this list.





'WHY MORFONTAINE IS THE BEST IN EUROPE'

By renowned photographer Gary Lisbon, who has shot most of the world's great courses

Do you agree with our top five and their order?

Generally speaking, yes, although I feel Real Club Valderrama is worthy of inclusion. If I had to swap out one course, I would include Valderrama at the expense of Fontainebleau. The two Netherlands courses are worthy of representation within the top five. The clear number one in the panellists' eyes (and also mine) is Morfontaine – a course I have photographed and played multiple times. It ticks all the boxes of what makes an exceptional course.

How special is Morfontaine?

From the time you drive through the tightly controlled entrance and along the internal long and winding driveway, assessing many of the holes you will be playing, through to the time you leave, a day at Morfontaine is one of my top golf experiences anywhere in the world. The course is special – not because it is overly long or difficult, in fact strategy is more important than brute force, but because it blends seamlessly into its setting. Nothing feels artificial. The wooded heathland environment is perfect for a course that was just 'there' prior to Tom Simpson coming in to weave his magic. Natural outcrops of exposed rock, heather, moss, tree-lined corridors and subtle yet distinct changes in elevation are the base ingredients. Simpson combined them into a masterpiece.

Did you like the Valliere too?

I love the Valliere! It is the perfect accompaniment to the Grand Parcour. It's a course you can play under a variety of conditions – after a morning round on the main course, for a quick nine holes at the end of the day, to tune up your short game and to even go around with one of your children for a walk. The main defence is in the green complexes. Such challenge and variety and some scary putts if you're on the wrong part of the green.

Where would Morfontaine sit if placed in a GB&I context?

I see a lot of similarities between

Morfontaine and Sunningdale Old. Both are world-class courses laid out over similar terrain, with firm playing surfaces and challenging greens. Morfontaine would be comfortably in the top 10 if placed in a GB&I setting.

And De Pan?

It feels just like a Surrey heathland. Strategically, it presents beautifully, combining lovely short holes (both 3s and 4s) with a few of the more robust longer holes that test your long game. The setting among the pines and heather combined with the firm, sandy turf allow you to play the 'ground game' to get the ball to the hole. Although not manicured to the same level as some of the other top private courses in Europe, I like it that way.

Finally, Lofoten – have you seen anything more spectacular on your travels?

The sense of excitement and anticipation I had when planning a trip to Lofoten Links was unlike anything else I have felt. And from the opening tee shot, which demands immediate accuracy, to the absolute beauty of the par-3 2nd, Lofoten starts in a spectacular fashion and does not deviate. The holes where the water comes into play are exquisite, yet even when you turn inland to the 'less interesting' holes, you almost have a sensory overload. The only course which comes close visually is Cypress Point – which says a lot. Every golfer should visit Lofoten at least once in their lifetime.



Gary has photographed more than 785 courses in 34 countries and recently published Great Golf Courses of the World, a 288-page book featuring more than 250 spectacular images. Available at greatgolfcoursesoftheworld.com, priced £65.

1 MORFONTAINE (GRAND PARCOURS)

FR PARIS, FRANCE ↔

Design 37 Setting 13 Memorability 14 Playability 8 Consistency 10 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 90**

I am so sure it is the finest course in Continental Europe that I suggest that anyone who does not has not played it.

It is an exquisite journey between pine and heather, with some Tom Simpson dashes of genius around every corner.

Few get the privilege of playing here. I find it hard to believe any of them leave anything but beguiled and entranced by what is once again our No.1.





UTRECHT DE PAN ↔

 UTRECHT,
NETHERLANDS

Design **35** Setting **13** Memorability **14**
Playability **8** Consistency **9**
Presentation **7** **TOTAL 86**

The first of numerous Harry Colt heathland courses in this list is a gorgeous, tranquil experience on the outskirts of Utrecht. A World Top 100 entry that would sit around the likes of Swinley Forest and St George's Hill if we did a Europe-wide list. It's that good. It's had some input from Clayton DeVries & Pont's Frank Pont (a member here), and a little more would reap rewards. Fabulously firm sandy turf as it travels over gently undulating terrain, with the 10th an all-world hole.



3

FONTAINEBLEAU

 PARIS, FRANCE 

Design **33** Setting **12** Memorability **13** Playability **8**
Consistency **9** Presentation **8** **TOTAL 83**

Clayton DeVries & Pont are engaged at another Tom Simpson (he revised Julien Chantepie's initial course) and their initial work is a resounding success. Further woodland management will nudge Fontainebleau closer to No.2 and,

in some people's eyes, even threaten No.1 because it has greater variety thanks to its much more significant elevation change. A majestic mix of pine, heather and rocky outcrops. To me, quite a top three that is distinct from the rest.

Bert Wilson



4

ROYAL HAGUE

 THE HAGUE,
NETHERLANDS 

Design **33** Setting **12** Memorability **12** Playability **7**
Consistency **9** Presentation **9** **TOTAL 82**

Laid out by Harry Colt's associate Charles Alison and restored by Frank Pont, this Dutch seaside course is characterised by tumbling, fast-running terrain and a scattering of blind shots.



5 LOFOTEN LINKS

🇳🇴 GIMSOYSAND, NORWAY ↔

Design 30 Setting 15 Memorability 15 Playability 6
Consistency 8 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 81**

A very difficult course to rank, just as Old Head of Kinsale in Ireland is. I absolutely accept – just as I do with Old Head – that some people will think it should be higher. Possibly even No.1. The setting is simply epic, and I've never been anywhere to match it – not even the incredible scenery in Iceland can quite get to Lofoten's level.

I have played more than 600 courses in close to 40 countries worldwide and it is the most breathtaking location I have ever experienced. And yes, I've been to Old Head. I've been to Turnberry. I've been to Bandon Dunes. I've been to Nefyn. I've been to Cape Kidnappers. I've been to Kiawah Island. I've been all over Iceland. Lofoten tops them all. And I don't even have to think particularly hard about it.

It is breathtaking no matter which direction you are looking. Of course, the views out to sea – not least as you gaze down the achingly beautiful, rock-framed 2nd (above), on the back of the equally stunning 1st – take the biggest plaudits. But those inland, with brooding mountainous peaks framing the holes, are mesmerising too.

By the time you've played the 1st and 2nd though, you are absolutely entranced. The 2nd is *the icon*, but I loved the dog-leg 1st just as much. It follows the edge of the coast like an inverted C and even with a Strokesaver in your hand, it's hard to work out your line and length. On my first trip there in 2017, when Lofoten was known far, far less than it is now, I decided it wasn't a course to plot using a Strokesaver and was best judged by eye. It's somewhere to be intoxicated by the surroundings and captivated by the fun examinations before you.

I absolutely accept Lofoten will not win awards for architectural excellence – even if Jeremy Turner did a good job in laying out what was a tricky proposition among the rocks – and that design connoisseurs would relish picking holes in it. I'm not pretending it's Muirfield, the Old Course or Morfontaine in that sense.

And would it be ranked in the top five courses of Continental Europe if you put billboards up the sides and ends of the fairways, so the setting was invisible? No.

But is it just a nice setting and not a serious golf course? Indubitably not. And it is worthy of this position and arguably deserves more. Of course, the only way to really know how good it is, is to go to this ultimate bucket list experience yourself.

6 REAL VALDERRAMA

🇪🇸 SOTOGRANDE, SPAIN ↔

Design 30 Setting 12 Memorability 15 Playability 6
Consistency 8 Presentation 10 **TOTAL 81**

The Spanish icon remains at No.6 – level on points with Lofoten – but some would have it as their No.1. It has been before, and it would be deserving of that position. Flawless presentation and memorable holes allied to consistency across the 18. A magnificent challenge for those fortunate enough to take it on.



'THE AURA OF VALDERRAMA'

Valderrama has a mystique very few courses come anywhere near to matching. The Ryder Cup of 1997 – Seve as captain, Tiger's debut, a first continental venue for the event – definitely plays a key part in that.

So, too, does the difficulty in getting a tee time here, and the expense once you have a slot. Let's mark it down as 'reassuringly expensive'. The legend of the charismatic former owner, Jaime Patino, might also be a factor. There are some great stories about him...

These aspects combine to produce such a unique ambience but we don't measure them in our ranking. Just in the same way as the Old Course at St Andrews has something special that is quite impossible to measure, so too does this icon of European golf.

An entirely tangible element to its aura is its presentation, for which it receives full marks. The playing surfaces are sensational. You play on grass that isn't just flawless, but which is so lush yet firm that it helps you play well.

Principally though, there are the holes – holes as famous as any on the continent. Along with, of course, their infamous difficulty. Both these factors are a significant aspect of its allure.

The famous challenges are naturally thrilling to take and it is striking how every hole has something about it. There is nothing vanilla about Valderrama.

It's getting even better, too. A lot of trees have been taken out and more removals are planned. It is a notable improvement – both in terms of playability and the effect on the turf.


I played here in June and can't remember an occasion when a ball landed in the fairway but ran into the legendary cork trees. The 16th was the closest to that scenario – a demanding drive for sure. It happily felt less claustrophobic, and whenever you are battling with overhanging trees from a pushed or pulled tee shot, you must just ensure you are not too ambitious.

Yes, a decent score can be made – but equally, you can blow up at almost any time. Danger lurks on pretty much every hole. Glorious danger, of the type thrilling shots, thrilling matches and thrilling days are made.

That is the mystique of Valderrama.



TERRAS DA COMPORTA (DUNAS) ▲2

 CARVALHAL, PORTUGAL

Design **33** Setting **12** Memorability **13** Playability **7**
Consistency **8** Presentation **8** **TOTAL 81**

To be on the brink of the Continental top five within two years of opening is testament to David McLay Kidd's design and the way its fescue fairways and native vegetation have been nurtured. I have played it twice this year and it was simply outstanding. Portugal's No.1 and a World Top 100 contender. The holes are memorable – I could recall half of them instantly right now – it oozes fun and bravado, and the sandy, pine-lined holes are aesthetically pleasing. To rise two places in the top 10 is difficult, but it could have been even higher.



8

LES BORDES (NEW)

 ORLEANS,
FRANCE ↔

Design **33** Setting **12** Memorability
13 Playability **7** Consistency **8**
Presentation **8** **TOTAL 81**

A beautiful, thought-provoking experience by Gil Hanse at this uber desirable private club. I love how it unfussily challenges your game and your brain. The cleverness of the design and intricacy of the holes are no surprise, but there are also a handful of seriously exacting ones. Outstanding variety across the 18, and I could never tire of playing here.



Courtesy of Les Bordes Estate



9 HAMBURGER

🇩🇪 HAMBURG, GERMANY ▲1

Design 33 Setting 12 Memorability 12 Playability 8
Consistency 7 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 80**

A single place rise for Germany's No.1 as it consolidates its place in the top 10 of our Continental ranking. This Harry Colt heathland opened in 1930 and was recently restored by Hendrik Hilgert. On rolling heathland above the River Elbe, this is a heather-and-pine jewel of a course.



10 REAL SOTOGRANDE

🇪🇸 SOTOGRANDE, SPAIN ▲2

Design 33 Setting 11 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 9 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 80**

A move into the top 10 for this Robert Trent Jones Snr classic that is presented immaculately. One of Continental Europe's enduringly high-calibre experiences, Real Sotogrande manages to test the strong player yet still retain the interest of the higher handicapper.



12 KENNEMER (B&C)

🇳🇱 HAARLEM, NETHERLANDS ▼1

Design 33 Setting 12 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 8 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 80**

Another top-class Dutch seaside course. Here you venture into valleys between the dunes and end on often hidden greens. At other times you fire up to false-fronted, raised targets. It's a fantastically natural experience where the elevation ranges enhance variety.

11 CHANTILLY (VINEUIL)

🇫🇷 CHANTILLY, PARIS ▼4

Design 34 Setting 11 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 8 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 80**

Loses out to some high risers but make no mistake, the Vineuil has great bunkering, sometimes punishing rough, subtle greens and risk-and-reward holes. It's always fair. A parkland-heathland north of Paris by Tom Simpson that oozes class.



13 VIDAUBAN

🇫🇷 COTE D'AZUR, FRANCE ▲4

Design 31 Setting 12 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 8 Presentation 10 **TOTAL 80**

Vidauban entered the list last time because I felt we had sufficient play to rank it accurately - this move indicates its position then was not overly flattering. A Robert Trent Jones Snr and Jnr collaboration with a touch of awe in terms of its conditioning, its compelling journey and its privacy.



14 MONTE REI

🇵🇹 TAVIRA, PORTUGAL ↔

Design 31 Setting 12 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 8 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 79**

No change in the ranking for this Jack Nicklaus design in the Eastern Algarve that is more playable than it is sometimes given credit for - and also much more strategic and thoughtful. It features some wonderful risk-reward decisions and there is rarely a dull moment.



15 LES BORDES (OLD)

🇫🇷 ORLEANS, FRANCE ↔

Design 30 Setting 12 Memorability 13 Playability 6
Consistency 8 Presentation 10 **TOTAL 79**

The older sister at Les Bordes, this Robert von Hagge design has improved its playability in recent years and has some real show-stopping moments as it winds between mature trees and water hazards. More polished than the New - which some will prefer, but not us.

16

CROWNWOOD

HELSINGBORG, SWEDEN **NEW ENTRY**

Design 32 Setting 11 Memorability 13 Playability 8 Consistency 8 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 79**

An instant top-20 slot for a course that only opened for soft play in June tells its own story. This design collaboration between former Open champion Henrik Stenson and architect Christian Lundin is set on sandy soil in a coastal pine forest near Helsingborg in the south-west of Sweden.

The site is aesthetically pleasing, but very flat, with just 3m elevation change across it. As a result, the designers created a second-shot course where the fun and the challenge come around the greens. So, Crownwood is characterised by wide fairways and imaginative greens and surrounds – but do not mistake it for a chipping and putting contest.

It is a wonderful all-round test of your game, because there are advantages to be gained off the tee through finding the correct side of fast-running fairways or in boldly cutting corners.

The members of this private club have been gifted a course of numerous highlights and memorable holes, and I especially liked the variety of holes on the front nine.

The 1st is a comforting handshake, the 2nd ends on a green surrounded by sand, the 3rd is a snaking par 5 and the 4th is a gorgeous par 3 that's back beside the clubhouse. The 5th is a stiff two-shotter to an angled green while the 6th is a risk-reward short par 4 to a green hidden by a mound. The 7th is sneakily good, twisting right to left and ending on a green hugged by a dry stream. The short 8th plays to an angled green with the 'stream' guarding its front. The 9th returns you to the clubhouse with a gettable par 5.

That was all written without pausing for thought, so memorable are those holes. And the back nine is hardly tame.

I particularly enjoyed the 10th, where a running shot for the approach is so much fun, and everyone will love the drivable par-4 12th. I thought the equally sporty par-4 15th an even better hole, with a memorable approach from an elevated fairway to a typically funky green. Par 5s at 13 and 16 offer a chance of something glorious. The 17th is a gorgeous par 3 and the semi-blind home hole gives you a chance of a memorable climax if you can get a drive drawing around the dog-leg.

Crownwood will be tweaked by Stenson and Lundin – of that there is no doubt – and course manager Steven Richardson will ensure its condition gets even better (but to be so good so early is a serious achievement). That means it will only rise further in this ranking – don't be surprised if it is in the top 10 next time around.



'IT WAS HARD TO RESIST OVERTHINKING IT'

Architect Christian Lundin on collaborating with Henrik Stenson, the Sandbelt's inspiration, and following the private model



I walked the site in 2011 for the first time and loved it. Pure sand and pine trees. There were four original founders back then, and they had another architect involved. But they came back to me and Henrik in 2016, so I started doing some conceptual designs. But then, in 2018, I bought the property from them. That was a big decision! We wanted to build this at a different level from anything else in Scandinavia. Do it private, not for the sake of being private, but for the sake of delivering high-end golf. There's not many private clubs in Scandinavia. I call Sweden the Ryanair of European golf – we bring you from A to B, but there's nothing extra to it. It's very functional. We wanted to do this on a bigger scale. We thought the site deserved something more.

I'm a member at Hogs Head [in Ireland] and that made Crownwood possible. Without Hogs Head, I would never have seen that type of a private membership model.

I don't think a collaboration will ever be a seamless process! This is probably more Christian than Henrik – I think Henrik would agree with that – because I've been much more on the site than Henrik. Our views on design, shot values and philosophies are aligned, but I think the green complexes are 95% Lundin.

We took early inspiration from Ohoopie Match Club in Georgia and we talked a lot about the Melbourne Sandbelt. The site is flat, so everything is our imagination, and it is a second-shot course, as a lot of modern courses are. We wanted tees to flow into the fairways to future-proof autonomous maintenance. Members love that – they can top a ball and it rolls! But it still demands good shots. You need to find your angles.

It was hard to resist overthinking it and finessing it too much. It still is. Whenever I see it, I ask myself,

"Should I have done this, should I have done that?" But in general, it's, "Holy s**t, what have we created here?" This will be a baby we can tweak. And sand gives us that opportunity to do that for a long time.

Loads of my peers would say, "Oh, it's a dream come true, I would love to build my own golf course." Yes, but it's actually more that it's a sandy site and it's an opportunity to build a course where the client and I know each other quite well... We had the opportunity to do it properly. We're not looking back and saying, "Oh, I needed to do this," or, "That was a constraint." We didn't have any constraints. The only planning constraints were around the hotel we want to build for lodging for our members.

The build was, in general, smooth, but we brought GEO [the Foundation for Sustainable Golf] in to be the first certified GEO-sustainable construction in Scandinavia and that added to the time, but it's worth it.

My three favourite holes? I'd say No.4, a short par 3 that plays to quite a contoured and large [800m²] green. I like the drivable 12th, because you can play that hole in so many different ways. And the long 14th is interesting as well; it's one of the longest par 4s and the green complex gives us so many options to put the pin.

The focus at Crownwood is on creating a community of golfers who share a love for the game.

A place to belong, play, and return to season after season. There is an intimate, international membership inspired by the world's great modern clubs. And to make it accessible to early adopters, we are offering an initiation fee of less than €5,000 [€4,350] for the first few hundred. An annual subscription provides access to the clubhouse, spa, and member accommodation. I'm not saying it's cheap, but it's affordable for those who love golf.

20 VISBY

🇸🇪 GOTLAND, SWEDEN ▲21
Design 31 Setting 14 Memorability 13 Playability 7 Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 78**

Visby rose 39 places last time and 21 two years previously – and the new, improved version is well worthy of this top-20 slot. An overhaul by former Ryder Cup player Pierre Fulke and his design partner Adam Mednick means it makes the most of its coastal setting on the island of Gotland. A handful of epic holes are headlined by those hard to the sea, but there are also excellent moments inland, such as the 9th next to the clubhouse and the fabulous dormy house by the lighthouse.



17 WEST CLIFFS

🇵🇹 OBIDOS, PORTUGAL ▼1
Design 31 Setting 14 Memorability 14 Playability 6 Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 79**

West Cliffs only falls because of Crownwood's spectacular new entry. 'Spectacular' is also a good word for West Cliffs; this seaside course north of Lisbon is exactly that. Playability for higher handicappers off the tee is tricky, otherwise it would be higher.



18 EL SALER

🇪🇸 VALENCIA, SPAIN ▼5
Design 34 Setting 13 Memorability 12 Playability 7 Consistency 7 Presentation 6 **TOTAL 79**

A move that pains me, because I love El Saler – its Javier Arana design is majestic. But with a stunning new entry and others in prime form, its conditioning against those above has to be factored in. Its presentation doesn't unduly worry me, but it is less refined than the top 15.



19 PARNU BAY

🇪🇪 PARNU, ESTONIA ↔
Design 32 Setting 13 Memorability 8 Playability 9 Consistency 9 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 78**

A superb piece of work on the edge of the Baltic Sea by Finnish architect Lassi Pekka Tilander. The setting is terrific and the individual holes excellent, especially the funky, interesting greens and surrounds, which I personally love. I'd love to see it running firm and fast.



21 CABOT BORDEAUX (CHATEAUX)

🇫🇷 BORDEAUX, FRANCE ▼1
Design 33 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 8 Consistency 8 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 78**

Given Crownwood's entry and Visby's leap, the fact it drops just a single place shows how highly we rate this Bill Coore design. I always liken it to Walton Heath because of the way it travels over undulating heathland populated by gorse, heather and broom.



22 CAMIRAL (STADIUM)

🇪🇸 GIRONA, SPAIN ↔
Design 29 Setting 12 Memorability 11 Playability 7 Consistency 9 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 77**

Camiral holding its own in this ranking can be viewed essentially as a rise. The Stadium is in terrific shape and is a strong, modern parkland with several memorable moments – not least the impressive downhill opener. The Stadium is a Ryder Cup venue-in-waiting.



23 SAINT GERMAIN

🇫🇷 PARIS, FRANCE ↔
Design 34 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7 Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 77**

This Harry Colt heathland-parkland in the western suburbs of Paris oozes pedigree and the Englishman's trademark par 3s and green complexes certainly do not disappoint. And with a little woodland management, Saint Germain could definitely threaten the top 20.



24 FALSTERBO

🇸🇪 MALMO, SWEDEN

▼3

Design 32 Setting 13 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 77**

A small fall that pains me as I am a big fan of Falsterbo, but it loses a bit of ground because of its Consistency mark – the result of a somewhat modest start over less linky terrain. There are still plenty of highlights though, and a cerebral restoration would return it to the top 20.



25 LE TOUQUET (LA MER)

🇫🇷 LE TOUQUET, FRANCE

▼1

Design 31 Setting 13 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 77**

This Harry Colt seaside design winds between coastal dunes on the edge of the English Channel. Frank Pont's input has helped this grand old name in European golf maintain its top-25 slot and it is an exhilarating experience with some magnificent greens.



26 BRO HOF SLOTT (STADIUM)

🇸🇪 STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

▼1

Design 28 Setting 14 Memorability 14 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 77**

A top-10 entry in the Continental X Factor ranking because of its thrilling holes set down among water hazards, principally Lake Malaren. The climax is simply one dramatic shot after another, and you'll find it in seriously lush condition.



27 ROYAL BLEĐ

🇸🇮 BLEĐ, SLOVENIA

↔️

Design 28 Setting 13 Memorability 11 Playability 9
Consistency 6 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 76**

Another course with real X factor, this Slovenian beauty is perched high in the hills overlooking the picturesque town of Bled. A sympathetic restoration by English architect Howard Swan has given this mountain course teeth as well as real charm.



28 EINDHOVEN

🇳🇱 EINDHOVEN, NETHERLANDS

↔️

Design 31 Setting 11 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 8 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 76**

I'm a great fan of this Dutch heathland. It boasts several engaging short par 4s as well as super par 3s. A pretty heathland, it is packed with interesting green complexes and plenty of entertainment, not to mention just the right amount of challenge.



29 PRAIA D'EL REY

🇵🇹 OBIDOS, PORTUGAL

↔️

Design 28 Setting 14 Memorability 14 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 76**

The front nine generally winds through a pine forest and is a nice warm-up for the all-world back nine, which rolls over undulating terrain on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean. It's as spectacular as anything in the list on some of those beachside holes.



30 NOORDWIJKSE

🇳🇱 NOORDWIJK, NETHERLANDS

▲3

Design 32 Setting 12 Memorability 12 Playability 6
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 76**

The restoration of this revered Dutch seaside course is bearing fruit, hence this move upwards. It was much needed, but all reports are that it is as comprehensive as was required – and when the scars from the surgery have healed, expect Noordwijkse to keep moving up.



31 ROYAL ZOUTE

🇧🇪 KNOKKE-HEIST, BELGIUM

▼5

Design 32 Setting 11 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 76**

A significant fall for Zoute – which means salt in Flemish. Even when the Visby and Crownwood positions are factored in, it still drops three, with the panel feeling it doesn't quite pack the punch this seaside course over undulating linky land could and really should.



32 TROIA

🇵🇹 SETUBAL, PORTUGAL

▼14

Design 32 Setting 13 Memorability 12 Playability 6
Consistency 7 Presentation 6 **TOTAL 76**

It's hard to be fully confident in this position, because while I love Troia, it still requires significant work before it can be considered a top-15 course again. That will happen under new owners Arrow Global, but it is too early to affect this ranking. I can't wait for this diamond to be polished.



33 TERRE BLANCHE (CHATEAU)

FRANCE BORDEAUX, FRANCE ▼3
Design 29 Setting 12 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 10 **TOTAL 76**

The Chateau offers a wonderful escape amid the idyllic Provencal countryside. With immaculate presentation, springy, lush turf underfoot, and the clever challenges laid down by Dave Thomas, it's a delight from start to finish.



34 HARDELOT (LES PINS)

FRANCE HARDELOT, FRANCE ▼4
Design 32 Setting 11 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 76**

A restoration by Frank Pont and Patrice Boissonnas has ensured this Tom Simpson design remains among the elite of the continent. It winds through mature woodland but the playing corridors are now happily wide. Super green complexes.



35 BUDERSAND

GERMANY SYLT, GERMANY ▼3
Design 29 Setting 13 Memorability 13 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 75**

Budersand is a genuinely tricky one to rank, in my opinion, because there is so much to like here and I'd be thrilled to play it tomorrow. But also, there is the nagging feeling that it could have been even better than it is. An exhilarating links experience, nonetheless.



36 HILVERSUMSCHE

NETHERLANDS HILVERSUM, NETHERLANDS ▼1
Design 33 Setting 11 Memorability 10 Playability 6
Consistency 8 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 75**

Kyle Phillips tightened up this Dutch heathland, which engenders respect rather than truly enchants as, say, De Pan and Eindhoven do. A high-calibre challenge in every respect though, and well worthy of a spot comfortably inside the top 40 once again.



37 VILAMOURA GOLF (OLD)

PORTUGAL VILAMOURA, PORTUGAL ▲1
Design 29 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 8 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 75**

Now owned by Arrow Global and better than ever – hence a climb when it is very hard to rise in this top 40. The Old is a favourite because of its elegant journey among the umbrella pines, where the playing corridors are welcomingly wide. It oozes class. An essential continental experience.



38 SAINT EMILIONNAIS

FRANCE BORDEAUX, FRANCE ▼2
Design 32 Setting 10 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 75**

This enchanting Tom Doak design near Bordeaux begins in quite sensational fashion, with some serious variety and charm in its opening three holes. And there's more than enough good stuff after that opening trio for it to grace this competitive top 40.



39 ROSENDAELSCHHE

NETHERLANDS ARNHEM, NETHERLANDS ▼3
Design 31 Setting 11 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 75**

Another top-40 slot for probably the least well-known of the traditional Dutch courses. In fact, Rosendaelsche wasn't even in this ranking until 12 years ago – but since entering, this heathland of grand scale has justifiably landed in the top 50. A classy experience.



40 CARYA

TURKEY BELEK, TURKEY ▼3
Design 30 Setting 11 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 74**

A three-place drop looks like a negative, but it's mainly because of the entry of Crownwood and the leap of Visby. Indubitably the best course on the Turkish Riviera of Belek, the Peter Thomson design has been looked after nicely by his former associate, Tim Lobb.



41 MORFONTAINE (VALLIERE)

FRANCE PARIS, FRANCE ▲2
Design 29 Setting 12 Memorability 14 Playability 6
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 74**

A rise of two places in a ranking where it is very hard to move up... for a nine-holer? Yes. What's more, it has more memorable holes and is more fun than several courses above it, but I do acknowledge it is 'only' nine holes. Gorgeous, with fabulously funky greens.



42 OITAVOS DUNES

PORTUGAL CASCAIS, PORTUGAL ▼3
Design 27 Setting 14 Memorability 13 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 74**

I do think the crazy reviews Oitavos received a few years ago (not by us!) colours views of it. Golfers turn up expecting something extraordinary and can be disappointed. I like it, and with views of Atlantic and several majestic holes, I suspect you will too.



43 THE SCANDINAVIAN (NEW)

DENMARK COPENHAGEN, DENMARK ▼3
Design 29 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 74**

A Robert Trent Jones Jnr design on the outskirts of Copenhagen that is superbly conditioned and consistent from 1 to 18. Lacks the all-world moments to be any higher, but there is lots to like about Denmark's No.1.



44 LE GOLF NATIONAL (ALBATROS)

FRANCE PARIS, FRANCE ▼4
Design 29 Setting 11 Memorability 13 Playability 6
Consistency 7 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 74**

I know this was once in the top five in this list, so 44 now probably looks like I hate it, but I don't, and I do think this slot reflects its level. A triumph for creative design and shaping on what was a pancake-flat site. Does not lack for sweaty-palm drama.



45 THRACIAN CLIFFS

BULGARIA CAPE KALIAKRA, BULGARIA ▼1
Design 26 Setting 15 Memorability 15 Playability 6
Consistency 6 Presentation 6 **TOTAL 74**

The easiest course in the list to mark and describe! It's all about the setting here, with this Gary Player design perched on cliffs overlooking the Black Sea. Epic views and some breathtaking holes, but also some less appealing ones and it can be a tough test at times.



46 QUINTA DO LAGO (SOUTH)

PORTUGAL ALMANCIL, PORTUGAL ↔
Design 29 Setting 12 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 74**

I'm not sure the South has ever been out of the top 50 of the continental ranking – and after recent investment, there was no danger of it being outside this time. It stays at No.46 despite the Swedish pair entering the top 20. Elevation change means real variety, and a super back nine.



47 BERNARDUS

NETHERLANDS CROMVOIRT, NETHERLANDS ▲3
Design 31 Setting 10 Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 74**

There's a lot to like about this Kyle Phillips heathland, in the south of the country, and it is in the top five courses for Presentation in this list. It is on the very edge of immaculate. Next year's Solheim Cup host impresses with its variety of greens and deservedly moves up three spots.



48 PALMARES (PRAIA/LAGOS)

PORTUGAL ALGARVE, PORTUGAL ▼3
Design 31 Setting 12 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 74**

This fall of three places is not really reflective of the views on Palmares but due more to the movement of other courses. A Robert Trent Jones Jnr redesign with three loops of nine (Alvor is the other), the Praia has memorable links holes with sandy scrapes and native vegetation.



49 GREAT NORTHERN

DENMARK KERTEMINDE, DENMARK ▲8
Design 29 Setting 11 Memorability 12 Playability 6
Consistency 7 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 74**

A notable jump up the list for this modern course by Nicklaus Design and it now moves into the top 50 for the first time. Superbly conditioned and it throws dramatic hole after dramatic hole at you, often through the use of lakes. It is bold in every sense.



50 VERDURA (EAST)

🇮🇹 SICILY, ITALY ▲8
Design 30 Setting 12 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 74**

Another leap for the East, explained by the fact the two courses here were reconfigured after a freak flood in 2018. The East and West were previously very even, but we think Kyle Phillips has favoured the East in his reorganisation. Some really good holes, led by the 6th.



51 REAL PUERTA DE HIERRO (ARRIBA)

🇪🇸 MADRID, SPAIN ▲1
Design 31 Setting 10 Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 73**

A great old course in Spain's capital, offering a fine collection of par 4s and especially some memorable short holes. Views over the city of Madrid accompany a classy experience at one of the most private clubs in Europe. 'Stellar' is the word for it.



52 LA RESERVA CLUB

🇪🇸 SOTOGRANDE, SPAIN ▲1
Design 28 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 73**

A nudge up the list for a Cabell Robinson design that impressively takes advantage of its hillside terrain. It demands solid ball striking and good course management as well as a silky touch on undulating greens. Presented exceptionally well, it tests strong players but remains playable for all.



54 LUBKER (SAND & SKY)

🇩🇰 NIMTOFTE, DENMARK ▼6
Design 29 Setting 11 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 73**

This is another downward move that looks more negative than I'd like, because I really liked this Robert Trent Jones Jnr track. Laid out in mature woodland, it's presented very nicely with a good balance between fun and challenging holes. A few outstanding short par 4s and pretty 3s.



55 REAL NEGURI

🇪🇸 BILBAO, SPAIN ▼6
Design 30 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 73**

A wonderful Javier Arana design in Getxo, Punta Galea, to the north-west of Bilbao that has benefited from some tree clearance to open up views of the sea. The celebrated Spanish architect was a member here and made the most of a compact site to produce a clever routing.



56 HOLSTEBRO (FOREST)

🇩🇰 BRANDSBJERGVEJ, DENMARK ▲3
Design 29 Setting 12 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 73**

I absolutely loved this Danish heathland, and this is its second notable rise in succession. It looks the part as its firm, fast fairways carve between heather and pines as it throws plenty of adventure and entertainment at you. A relatively quiet finish at least lets you catch your breath.



57 REAL PEDRENA

🇪🇸 PEDRENA, SPAIN ▼3
Design 30 Setting 12 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 6 **TOTAL 73**

The course where Seve grew up mixes some excellent design with wonderful views. Tree clearance has helped the aesthetics as you look out to the bay and there's plenty to engage you in an architectural sense, too. A very fine all-rounder.



53 THE SCANDINAVIAN (OLD)

🇩🇰 COPENHAGEN, DENMARK ▼5

Design 29 Setting 11 Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 73**

There is in truth little to separate the Old and New at this well-heeled Copenhagen club, and this fall looks harsh but is merely a reorganisation as much as it is a reflection on this Robert Trent Jones Jnr design.

GOLF
WORLD
TOP
100



EUROPE'S NEXT TOP COURSE?

There will be a new contender for the Continental Europe list in coming years, after Clayton, DeVries & Pont (CDP) were engaged to design a new course in the Galicia region of Spain.

Val de Rois, south-west of the city of Santiago de Compostela, will be the partnership's first original 18-hole design in Spain and the design team will be led by European Tour winner Gonzalo Fernandez-Castano (above), who joined CDP in 2022.

"With the landscape, the rivers, and the heather, Val de Rois has everything needed to become a spectacular golfing destination. I am really looking forward to us breaking ground next year," Fernandez-Castano told *TG*.

"This represents a milestone for me personally in my development as a golf course architect and marks the beginning of a new chapter for CDP in Spain. I couldn't be more thrilled to be leading it."

Fernandez-Castano will work alongside experienced architects Hendrik Hilgert and Frank Pont as CDP aim to blend technical challenge with aesthetic beauty.

Pont, who works with many of continental Europe's most prominent courses, added, "Spain has become an increasingly important market for us. Since I first began working there more than a decade ago, we've seen remarkable momentum and currently have exciting projects underway. Val de Rois will elevate our presence in Spain to the next level and highlight our commitment to creating world-class golf on the Iberian Peninsula."

Led by the Cortizo Group, which acquired the club's existing facilities earlier this year, the project aims to convert the current layout into a world-class, multi-sport, family-oriented destination.



58 ESTELA

🇵🇹 PORTO, PORTUGAL

▼6

Design 30 Setting 12 Memorability 13 Playability 6
Consistency 6 Presentation 6 **TOTAL 73**

I've got a real soft spot for this true links north of Porto. The coastal erosion it has suffered is such a shame and affects some early holes especially, but there are plenty of exhilarating moments, including on a back nine that tumbles over adventurous seaside terrain.



59 VILLA D'ESTE

🇮🇹 COMO, ITALY

▼4

Design 30 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 72**

This lush parkland-woodland sits in the hills above the picture-postcard town of Como, on the shores of the eponymous lake. It is a pedigree old course that has an elegance few on the continent can match – plus some memorable green complexes. It can be tight at times, so a real test.



60 ROYAL LIMBURG

🇧🇪 HELCHTEREN, BELGIUM

▼4

Design 30 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 72**

Royal Limburg enjoys a heathland-woodland site on a suitably grand scale that earns it this place in the list. A little more nuance, especially in the green complexes, would have pushed it closer to the top 50, but there are some impressively strong holes dotted around its 18.



61 BRAUTARHOLT

🇮🇸 REYKJAVIK, ICELAND

▲5

Design 26 Setting 14 Memorability 13 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 6 **TOTAL 72**

Another healthy rise for this Icelandic course, which came into the list in 2021. It is in the process of revising the original 12 holes after extending to 18 and all accounts so far are that the work has been a great success. Jaw-dropping beauty, but that is very much standard for Iceland!



62 FINCA CORTESIN

🇪🇸 CASARES, SPAIN

▼1

Design 29 Setting 10 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 72**

Cabell Robinson's impressive work on a hilly site gave Finca Cortesin a course of real adventure as it tacks across the slopes, with heroic carries and angles to consider at numerous moments. This fine modern course hosted 2023's Solheim Cup and is presented consistently well.



63 PENHA LONGA (ATLANTICO)

🇵🇹 CASCAIS, PORTUGAL

▼1

Design 29 Setting 10 Memorability 12 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 71**

The significant elevation change on the Atlantico, which is set down on several hillsides, was harnessed superbly by Kyle Phillips while he was working for Robert Trent Jones Jr. So are the rock outcrops and the old Roman aqueduct. Uphill holes are never tedious.



64 KONGSVINGER

🇳🇴 GRANLI, NORWAY

▼1

Design 28 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 71**

This is likely to be one of the least well-known courses in the list, but it absolutely deserves its place among the more noted names. This woodland winds between towering pines on an impressively grand scale. There's a real feeling of seclusion to this elegant Norwegian experience.



65 SAND VALLEY

🇵🇱 GDANSK, POLAND

▲4

Design 30 Setting 10 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 71**

A notable rise for what is, to my mind, the clear No.1 in Poland. Sand Valley enjoys a cerebral routing by Lassi Pekka Tilander as it tours around a heathy, sandy site and stops off at intriguing greens by Tony Ristola which have lots of movement and interest in them.



66 PENATI (HERITAGE)

🇸🇰 BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA

▲4

Design 30 Setting 10 Memorability 9 Playability 8
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 71**

It pleases me that the Heritage has consistently nudged up the list from its entry in 2018, because it is a triumph for creative, original thinking – with admirable restraint – by English architect Jonathan Davison. A highly enjoyable Golden Age experience in a mature woodland.



67 KRISTIANSTADS (EAST)

🇸🇪 AHUS, SWEDEN ▼1

Design 28 Setting 10 Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 71**

The Pierre Fulke-Adam Mednick overhaul of this parkland has been a real success, and allied to seriously good presentation, it keeps the East comfortably inside the top 70 after it entered the ranking last time. A muscular course with some nice touches such as double greens.



68 ROYAL ANTWERP

🇧🇪 ANTWERP, BELGIUM ▲7

Design 31 Setting 10 Memorability 9 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 71**

A notable jump up the list that really shows the value of woodland management. Antwerp was in danger of being overgrown, but some extensive work has brought light, space and air to this classic Tom Simpson design. A unanimous decision for a significant rise.



69 REAL CLUB LA MORALEJA (NO.3)

🇪🇸 MADRID, SPAIN ▼8

Design 28 Setting 10 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 71**

This nicely presented modern parkland is the pick of the four courses at the Spanish super-club. It was created by Nicklaus Design and is a brawny affair that will test strong players but still manages to stay accessible for the higher handicapper.



70 SON GUAL

🇪🇸 MALLORCA, SPAIN ▼5

Design 29 Setting 9 Memorability 10 Playability 6
Consistency 8 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 71**

Another well-presented modern parkland, designed by Thomas Himmel, this time on the island of Mallorca. I've never played Son Gual when it hasn't been immaculately conditioned or ever received contrary feedback. Some elevated tees, water hazards and large greens.



71 PGA NATIONAL TURKEY (SULTAN)

🇹🇷 BELEK, TURKEY ▼5

Design 28 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 5
Consistency 7 Presentation 9 **TOTAL 71**

The third of a trio of big-boned modern parklands that are defined by water hazards and excellent conditioning. There is nothing too subtle about Belek's No.2, but there are some fun risk-reward shots and dramatic hero opportunities.



72 LES AISSES

🇫🇷 ORLEANS, FRANCE ▲11

Design 28 Setting 10 Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 70**

I got to Les Aisses for the first time this year and it really impressed me. It's a breezy journey through heathland, with several memorable holes and very few lower-quality ones. It was running blisteringly fast this summer – and I loved it. I can see it moving up even further.



73 REAL LAS BRISAS

🇪🇸 MARBELLA, SPAIN ▼2

Design 28 Setting 9 Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 8 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 70**

A Robert Trent Jones Snr original that has been restored by Kyle Phillips – and that investment has clearly paid off. There are lots of holes that will live long in the memory at this prestigious Marbella venue, and it is consistently impressive in terms of presentation.



74 SAND

🇸🇪 BANKERYD, SWEDEN ▼6

Design 29 Setting 10 Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 70**

Very few courses in this ranking split the Continental Europe panel – and indeed the Swedish one – quite as much as Sand! The owners asked for an 'inland links' and there is a slightly artificial feel as a result, but many have fallen for its bold shaping and distinctiveness.



75 ROYAL PARK (TRENT JONES)

🇮🇹 TURIN, ITALY ▼2

Design 28 Setting 10 Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 70**

Known as 'I Roveri' – The Oaks – which gives you an accurate idea of the nature of this woodland-parkland laid out by Robert Trent Jones Snr. Add in first-class presentation, strong bunkering and a few water hazards and you have one of Italy's finest.

76

FOHR (RED & BLUE)

FOHR, GERMANY
NEW ENTRY

Design 29 Setting 10
Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7
TOTAL 70

It's not a particularly quick or easy journey to reach Fohr, but my trip there prior to finalising this ranking was worth it.

A flight to Hamburg, a two-hour drive north to Dagebull and a ferry to the eponymous high-end holiday island was unquestionably worth it – as this entry position suggests.

Fohr celebrates its 100th anniversary this year and does so after comprehensive work on its three nines has earned it a place in the Continental Top 100 for the first time.

It began in 1925 with nine holes by the noted German architect Bernhard von Limburger. Those

were lost in the war, but Frank Pennink re-added nine and Donald Harradine made it 18 in the 1990s. The third nine was added by Christian Althaus in 2008, and the club was sufficiently impressed to ask the German to overhaul the previous 18 in 2014.

Althaus' work is so extensive that it is accurate to say there are now essentially 27 new holes at Fohr, broken down into the Red, Blue and Yellow loops.

It has linky, heathland and parkland phases, and all of them tie together very nicely. The shaping that was done here was carried out very effectively and the

routing is impressive; the loops all now return to the clubhouse, green-tee walks are minimal, and to fit 27 holes on this compact site is commendable.

There are some spectacular holes, especially at the far end, where it is linky and heathy and less lush (partly by necessity, as irrigation is less advanced). Greens vary between sedate and boisterous, with the 8th on the Red notably bold.

The Red and Blue are probably the pick of the combinations, but the Yellow is also very worthy and has a number of fine holes and a super double green.



GOLF WORLD
TOP 100



77 SEIGNOSSE

LANDES, FRANCE

▼3

Design 28 Setting 10 Memorability 12 Playability 5
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 TOTAL 69

This famous – or perhaps infamous – Robert von Hagge design is not for the faint hearted in places. Water and tight, tree-lined fairways make it a serious examination of your game. But it is memorable and, if you can put a score together, it can be very satisfying!



78 REAL EL PRAT (ROSA)

TERRASSA, SPAIN

▼2

Design 29 Setting 10 Memorability 10 Playability 6
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 TOTAL 69

This is a really strong Greg Norman design north of Barcelona and the fact it is in the 70s shows the depth of the list these days, because this woodland has so much going for it. It is indubitably exacting and that is reflected in Playability terms, but it's a really solid test of your game.



79 HALMSTAD (NORTH)

HALMSTAD, SWEDEN

▲3

Design 27 Setting 10 Memorability 8 Playability 8
Consistency 8 Presentation 8 TOTAL 69

This former Solheim Cup (2007) host, a couple of hours south of Gothenburg, rises and falls over undulating land and among mature trees. Its lush fairways are a delight to hit from, and the greens are pure. A solid woodland-parkland that is a championship test in every respect.



80 MARCO SIMONE

ROME, ITALY

▲9

Design 28 Setting 9 Memorability 10 Playability 8
Consistency 6 Presentation 8 TOTAL 69

A leap into the top 80 for the 2023 Ryder Cup venue, which is marked by a really good selection of memorable holes and has been in terrific shape this year. It's playable and it's fun to have a go at the plethora of risk-reward holes that were ideal for matchplay for Europe and America's finest.



81 RAVENSTEIN (OLD)

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

▼9

Design 28 Setting 10 Memorability 8 Playability 9
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 TOTAL 69

A fall for this grand old parkland, which will require a thorough restoration if it's to rise back up the list. The nature of the club means that might not happen, however, as they are likely very happy with what they have – a very pleasant parkland on undulating land.



82 DE SWINKELSCHÉ

SOMEREN, NETHERLANDS

▼5

Design 29 Setting 10 Memorability 11 Playability 8
Consistency 6 Presentation 5 TOTAL 69

This looks a harsh fall but is really because of Marco Simone's rise and the Swedish pair. I've got a lot of affection for this Frank Pont course that is packed with cool features. It's not manicured to the nth degree like some others, but rest assured that it's in perfectly good shape.



83 LAS COLINAS

ALICANTE, SPAIN ▼4

Design 27 Setting 10 Memorability 9 Playability 9
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 TOTAL 69

Not for the first time does Las Colinas grace this list, and this is a triumph for Cabell Robinson's ability to work a difficult site. The American tackled this undulating terrain with typical skill to produce an enjoyable, supremely playable parkland that is presented well.



85 AROEIRA (NO.1)

LISBON, PORTUGAL ▼4

Design 29 Setting 10 Memorability 8 Playability 7
Consistency 8 Presentation 7 TOTAL 69

This Frank Pennink design from 1972 wanders through a mature pine forest and those trees mean fairway bunkering is not required. Yet in fact it is the collection of small greens that make another of Arrow Global's acquisitions a significant test.



86 THE NATIONAL (LINKS)

MALMO, SWEDEN ▼6

Design 28 Setting 11 Memorability 8 Playability 8
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 TOTAL 69

Comfortably the No.1 course at this Swedish resort. The links feel to this open course is appealing and while the mounding wouldn't be mistaken for natural, it is very nicely done. Some fun, undulating greens and plenty of memorable moments.

84

TERRAS DA COMPORTA (TORRE)

LISBON, PORTUGAL
NEW ENTRY

Design 28 Setting 10 Memorability 10
Playability 7 Consistency 7 Presentation 7
TOTAL 69

Sergio Garcia's design debut makes an instant splash in the Continental Europe Top 100. It only opened in June but was already superbly conditioned and El Nino - in association with Matthias Nemes' NCM Network, which also has Olazabal Design as part of its portfolio - has produced a course of real character and interest.

It is categorically another success for Terras da Comporta and its owner Vanguard Properties, as well as GM Rodrigo Ulrich and master shaper Conor Walsh - who were both also part of the creation and nurturing of Comporta's Dunas course.

Nemes oversaw the development of Torre with Snorri Vilhjalmsjon, his lead architect, while Walsh's company built it. So, what can you expect?

Well, a course with a natural feel, because only on the 2nd and 8th was a lot of earth moved. A course that sits on similarly firm, undulating, sandy terrain - it required piles and piles of sand - to Dunas, but with bent greens and Bermuda tees and fairways, compared to the fescue of Dunas.

A course with holes nurtured out of natural hills and valleys as well as mature pines and colourful native vegetation.

A course that feels a touch tighter than Dunas but with smaller, less undulating greens, and with just 39 bunkers in addition to the sandy waste areas.

A course with standout holes. My favourite was the 12th, which is part of a superb stretch of holes from the 9th; a majestic par 5 that starts with a drive over a lone pine and continues with a decision over whether to go boldly for the green.

A clever mid-length par 4 on sloping land follows and then there's an all-world par 5 at the 11th, which is laid out in the shape of a reverse 'h', meaning you have

two fairways to go for. The left-hand side is the safer option, but the right gives you a much better angle from which to have a go at the elevated green.

Finally, the 12th is a classic, sporty two-shot hole that it is impossible not to fall in love with.

It's as good a stretch as any in the top 50 have, and you're likely to see Torre move in that direction in future lists as it begins to mature further.





87 VASATORP (TOUR)

🇸🇪 HELSINGBORG, SWEDEN ▼2

Design 27 Setting 9 Memorability 9 Playability 6
Consistency 8 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 67**

“Yes, it is a strong course but it does not have enough distinctive holes for me to be any higher – there are too many other modern courses like it.” So said one panellist. Even so, the layout is challenging and the green complexes are superb, with intelligently undulating surfaces.



88 CHIBERTA

🇫🇷 BIARRITZ, FRANCE ▼1

Design 27 Setting 11 Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 6 Presentation 6 **TOTAL 67**

A Tom Simpson gem on the Basque coast. Both nines start inland but are far from weak holes, before then getting out on to the seaside phases, where the real highs unfold. The 3rd to 5th section is splendid, and the elevation change adds to the distinctive nature.



89 VILLA DE MADRID (BLACK)

🇪🇸 MADRID, SPAIN ▼1

Design 29 Setting 9 Memorability 9 Playability 8
Consistency 6 Presentation 6 **TOTAL 67**

One of the great names of Spanish golf and I really love that we have this public course – which is part of one of Europe's biggest sports clubs – in the list. Another design masterclass by Javier Arana, and while it is not as slickly presented as some in the list, its holes more than compensate.

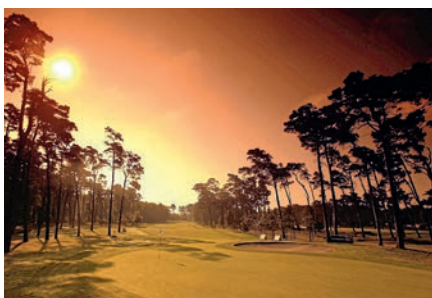


90 KYTAJA (SOUTH EAST)

🇫🇮 HYVINKAA, FINLAND ◀▶

Design 25 Setting 13
Memorability 10 Playability 7
Consistency 5 Presentation 7
TOTAL 67

The lakeside holes on the South East, particularly at the end, are majestic and get most of the credit, but don't underestimate those that tumble through the pine forest. They are also top class, and the Thomas McBroom routing blends the phases together beautifully.



91 BARSEBACK (OCEAN)

🇸🇪 LUND, SWEDEN ▼5

Design 26 Setting 11 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 5 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 67**

“The fastest greens in Sweden and the No.4 in the country behind Bro Hof, Falsterbo and Halmstad,” noted one panellist, “please move it much higher.” Alas, he didn't get his way as others rose higher, but this woodland-links hybrid and Solheim Cup host is top-class.



92 COSTA NAVARINO (DUNES)

🇬🇷 KALAMATA, GREECE ▲1

Design 25 Setting 10 Memorability 9 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 66**

I wouldn't argue with anyone on the 1, 2, 3, 4 order at Costa Navarino, and all four are well within the Top 200, but the Dunes by Ross McMurray and Bernhard Langer just gets the nod for its all-round excellence. Technically superb with some visual highs.



93 ULLNA

🇸🇪 STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN ▲1

Design 23 Setting 13 Memorability 10 Playability 6
Consistency 6 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 66**

Perhaps lacking the consistency to be much higher than this, but absolutely worthy of a third Top 100 in a row in the 90s. Ullna takes advantage of its lakeside setting with several memorable and dramatic holes, and this well-heeled club presents its course in super order.

97

PGA NATIONAL PRAGUE

PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC
NEW ENTRY

Design 25 Setting 10 Memorability 9 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 66**

Oaks Prague, as it is also known, is the Czech Republic's first Top 100 entry and this Kyle Phillips design really impressed me with its variety of holes, conditioning and playability. It is engaging from start to finish and boasts some sporty par 4s that would sit alongside the very best in this list. I think Phillips is a guarantee of something compelling and something that suits the natural site, and Oaks illustrates that perfectly. The short holes at 8 and 11 are also notable and there is a strong run for home. The bunkering is superb throughout and there is an impressive scale to the whole course. It feels as if this was a development with a big budget and that money has been well spent.

This is Oaks Prague's debut, but I only see it nudging up the list from this point.



94 ALAND

ALAND ISLAND, FINLAND ▲4

Design 23 Setting 13 Memorability 11 Playability 7
Consistency 5 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 66**

"A hidden gem, has to be in the 90s at least," said one panellist. Don't underestimate this three-place move for Aland; it is doubling down on its debut last year as we confirm its jaw-dropping lakeside beauty and spellbinding holes. X Factor in spades.



95 THE NATIONAL

BELEK, TURKEY ▼3

Design 25 Setting 9 Memorability 8 Playability 9
Consistency 7 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 66**

This resort course – it is the twin of Carya – is the original in Belek and has lots of interesting holes and features, including undulating greens and umbrella pine-lined dog-legs. You have to be accurate off the tee to prosper here.



96 LINNA

HAMEENLINNA, FINLAND ↔

Design 26 Setting 11 Memorability 8 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 66**

Stays at No.96, which in a list of much change is creditable. Perhaps lacks the standout holes to be too much higher but you won't find any weak ones here – this Tim Lobb-designed course travels classily along undulating fairways and between towering pines.



98 ROYAL OBIDOS

OBIDOS, PORTUGAL ▼6

Design 25 Setting 11 Memorability 9 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 7 **TOTAL 66**

This Seve Ballesteros design darts, dives and climbs over an interesting site and provides some notable moments, although not enough to be higher placed than the 90s. A couple of risk-reward holes stand out and it has a nice variety to it.



99 REAL PUERTA DE HIERRO (ABAJO)

MADRID, SPAIN ▼2

Design 26 Setting 9 Memorability 9 Playability 7
Consistency 7 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 66**

The second course at this legendary Madrid club – and what a club to be a member of, but don't try to enquire; it's by birthright. Like its sister, it is laid out over interesting terrain with intriguing green complexes.



100 HOGE KLEIJ

UTRECHT, NETHERLANDS ▼1

Design 26 Setting 9 Memorability 8 Playability 8
Consistency 6 Presentation 8 **TOTAL 65**

This relatively low-profile Dutch club maintains its place among the elite of Europe thanks to its restoration by Frank Pont, which has left an interesting heathy course with a fine array of greens and some heather-infused aesthetic appeal.



Marco Simone, Italy



Continental Europe's Top 100 courses

The countdown of the finest collection of courses in mainland Europe ever assembled

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| 1 Morfontaine (Grand Parcours), France | 29 Praia d'El Rey, Portugal | 52 La Reserva Club, Spain | 77 Seignosse, France |
| 2 Utrecht De Pan, Netherlands | 30 Noordwijkse, Netherlands | 53 The Scandinavian (Old), Denmark | 78 Real El Prat (Rosa), Spain |
| 3 Fontainebleau, France | 31 Royal Zoute, Belgium | 54 Lubker (Sand & Sky), Denmark | 79 Halmstad (North) Sweden |
| 4 Royal Hague, Netherlands | 32 Troia, Portugal | 55 Real Neguri, Spain | 80 Marco Simone, Italy |
| 5 Lofoten Links, Norway | 33 Terre Blanche (Chateau) France | 56 Holstebro (Forest), Denmark | 81 Ravenstein (Old), Belgium |
| 6 Real Valderrama, Spain | 34 Hardelet (Les Pins), France | 57 Real Pedrena, Spain | 82 De Swinkelsche, Netherlands |
| 7 Terras da Comporta (Dunas), Portugal | 35 Budersand, Germany | 58 Estela, Portugal | 83 Las Colinas, Spain |
| 8 Les Bordes (New), France | 36 Hilversumsche, Netherlands | 59 Villa d'Este, Italy | 84 Terras da Comporta (Torre), Portugal |
| 9 Hamburger, Germany | 37 Vilamoura Golf (Old), Portugal | 60 Royal Limburg, Belgium | 85 Aroeira (No.1), Portugal |
| 10 Real Sotogrande, Spain | 38 Saint Emilionnais, France | 61 Brautarholt, Iceland | 86 The National (Links), Sweden |
| 11 Chantilly (Vineuil), France | 39 Rosendaelsche, Netherlands | 62 Finca Cortesin, Spain | 87 Vasatorps (Tour), Sweden |
| 12 Kennemer (B&C), Netherlands | 40 Carya, Turkey | 63 Penha Longa (Atlantico), Portugal | 88 Chiberta, France |
| 13 Vidauban, France | 41 Morfontaine (Valliere), France | 64 Kongsvinger, Norway | 89 Villa de Madrid (Black), Spain |
| 14 Monte Rei, Portugal | 42 Oitavos Dunes, Portugal | 65 Sand Valley, Poland | 90 Kytaja (South East), Finland |
| 15 Les Bordes (Old), France | 43 The Scandinavian (New), Denmark | 66 Penati (Heritage), Slovakia | 91 Barseback (Ocean), Sweden |
| 16 Crownwood, Sweden | 44 Le Golf National (Albatros), France | 67 Kristianstads (East), Sweden | 92 Costa Navarino (Dunes), Greece |
| 17 West Cliffs, Portugal | 45 Thracian Cliffs, Bulgaria | 68 Royal Antwerp, Belgium | 93 Ullna, Sweden |
| 18 El Saler, Spain | 46 Quinta do Lago (South), Portugal | 69 Real Club La Moraleja (No.3), Spain | 94 Aland, Finland |
| 19 Parnu Bay, Estonia | 47 Bernardus, Netherlands | 70 Son Gual, Spain | 95 The National, Turkey |
| 20 Visby, Sweden | 48 Palmares (Praia/Lagos), Portugal | 71 PGA National Turkey (Sultan), Turkey | 96 Linna, Finland |
| 21 Cabot Bordeaux (Chateaux) France | 49 Great Northern, Denmark | 72 Les Aisses, France | 97 PGA National Prague, Czech Republic |
| 22 Camiral (Stadium), Spain | 50 Verdura (East), Italy | 73 Real Las Brisas, Spain | 98 Royal Obidos, Portugal |
| 23 Saint Germain, France | 51 Real Puerta de Hierro (Arriba), Spain | 74 Sand, Sweden | 99 Real Puerta de Hierro (Abajo), Spain |
| 24 Falsterbo, Sweden | | 75 Royal Park (Trent Jones), Italy | 100 Hoge Kleij, Netherlands |
| 25 Le Touquet (La Mer), France | | 76 Fohr (Red & Blue), Germany | |
| 26 Bro Hof Slott (Stadium), Sweden | | | |
| 27 Royal Bled, Slovenia | | | |
| 28 Eindhoven, Netherlands | | | |



The Next 100

Ranked from 101-200, and with a depth that gets stronger with every list

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|--|-----|---|-----|---|
| 101 |  Ljunghusens, Sweden | 124 |  Quinta do Lago (North), Portugal | 148 |  Royal Fagnes, Belgium | 175 |  Sct Knuds, Denmark |
| 102 |  Domaine Imperial, Switzerland | 125 |  Verdura (West), Italy | 149 |  Oporto, Portugal | 176 |  Lyon, France |
| 103 |  Cabot Bordeaux (Vignes), France | 126 |  Royal Waterloo (La Marache), Belgium | 150 |  Amendoeira (Faldo), Portugal | 177 |  Geneva, Switzerland |
| 104 |  Granville, France | 127 |  Anfi Tauro, Spain | 151 |  Links Valley (Purple & Gold), Netherlands | 178 |  Diamond, Austria |
| 105 |  Esbjerg (Marbaek), Denmark | 128 |  Quinta da Cima, Portugal | 152 |  Pinheirinho, Portugal | 179 |  Hvide Klit, Denmark |
| 106 |  Real Sociedad Hipica, Spain | 129 |  Moliets, France | 153 |  Toxandria, Netherlands | 180 |  Saint-Nom-La-Breteche (Red), France |
| 107 |  Vilamoura Golf (Els Club), Portugal | 130 |  Kytaja (North West), Finland | 154 |  La Manga (West), Spain | 181 |  Casa Serena, Czech Republic |
| 108 |  Royal Ostend, Belgium | 131 |  Castiglion del Bosco, Italy | 155 |  Emporda (Links), Spain | 182 |  Estonian G&CC, Estonia |
| 109 |  Costa Navarino (Bay), Greece | 132 |  Costa Navarino (Hills), Greece | 156 |  Alcanada, Spain | 183 |  Ribagolfe (No.1), Portugal |
| 110 |  Bois d'Arlon (Heathland), Belgium | 133 |  Taulane, France | 157 |  Bogogno (Bonora), Italy | 184 |  Penina, Portugal |
| 111 |  Cologne Refrath, Germany | 134 |  Castelconturbia (Blue & Yellow), Italy | 158 |  Aloha (Spain) | 185 |  Roma Acquasanta, Italy |
| 112 |  Silkeborg, Denmark | 135 |  Kempferhof, France | 159 |  Amendoeira (O'Connor), Portugal | 186 |  Quinta do Peru, Portugal |
| 113 |  San Lorenzo, Portugal | 136 |  Frankfurter, Germany | 160 |  Torino (Blue), Italy | 187 |  Hossegor, France |
| 114 |  Modry Las, Poland | 137 |  Crans-sur-Sierre, Switzerland | 161 |  Infinitum (Hills), Spain | 188 |  Santo da Serra, Portugal |
| 115 |  Costa Navarino (Olympic Academy), Greece | 138 |  Quinta do Lago (Laranjal), Portugal | 162 |  Sperone, France | 189 |  Camiral (Tour), Spain |
| 116 |  Westman Islands, Iceland | 139 |  Fontana, Austria | 163 |  Cornelia (Prince), Turkey | 190 |  Estoril, Portugal |
| 117 |  Bro Hof Slott (Castle), Sweden | 140 |  Eichenheim, Austria | 164 |  Oslo, Norway | 191 |  Bergamo (Blue & Yellow), Italy |
| 118 |  Lykia Links, Turkey | 141 |  Dinard, France | 165 |  Osteraker (Oster by Stenson), Sweden | 192 |  Bogogno (Del Conte), Italy |
| 119 |  Adamstal, Austria | 142 |  Lage Vuursche, Netherlands | 166 |  Montgomerie Maxx, Turkey | 193 |  La Moraleja (No.4), Spain |
| 120 |  San Roque (Old), Spain | 143 |  Sevilla, Spain | 167 |  Joyenval (Marly), France | 194 |  Gardagolf (Red & White), Italy |
| 121 |  Keilir, Iceland | 144 |  Vallda, Sweden | 168 |  Santander, Spain | 195 |  Evian, France |
| 122 |  Costa Terre, Portugal | 145 |  Royal Copenhagen, Denmark | 169 |  Miklagard, Norway | 196 |  Hubbelrath (East), Germany |
| 123 |  Biella, Italy | 146 |  Kalajoki, Finland | 170 |  Antognolla, Italy | 197 |  Rinkven (Championship), Belgium |
| | | 147 |  Olgiata (West), Italy | 171 |  La Cala (America), Spain | 198 |  Zala Springs, Hungary |
| | | | | 172 |  Saint Cloud (Green), France | 199 |  Fano, Denmark |
| | | | | 173 |  Hills, Sweden | 200 |  Araslov, Sweden |
| | | | | 174 |  La Hacienda (Links), Spain | | |

Costa Navarino (Olympic Academy)

SHORT CIRCUITS

Two great nine-holers I'd happily have included are **Norderney** in Germany and **Domburgsche** in the Netherlands.