

A crown jewel... ...with an off-the-chart WOW factor

By Rick Young

“Confluence of land and sea” remains an apt description for the world’s finest links courses, but at the Quivira Golf Club in Los Cabos, Mexico, it tends to have a more elevated implication—both literally and figuratively.

Here, the waves of the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Cortez kiss or crash against (depending on the winds) sheer granite cliffs some 100–150 feet beneath the high points of this spectacular Jack Nicklaus Signature Course. The 18-time major champion has infused Quivira with a rare routing combination of mountain, desert and dune holes, each one back-dropped by an ocean view that’s sure to keep your cellphone’s camera on “selfie” mode throughout the round.

Why take selfies? Well, first to show your social media followers that this

magnificent land parcel high atop the Baja Peninsula is one of the most picturesque locations for golf anywhere on the planet, and second to have them answer back with full-on jealousy emojis.

Mountains and dunes

“We tried to create excitement on the mountain and in the dunes, and I believe we’ve created a golf course that plays as spectacular as it looks” said Nicklaus on the occasion of Quivira Golf Club’s opening a few years ago. “This is one of the great pieces of property in the world.”

As a golf experience, few courses are more memorable. In typical Nicklaus fashion, the up to 7,139-yard, par-72 championship layout offers an expanse of shot-making options,



course-management decisions and unique ground-game strategies to go along with green complexes that have subtle to extreme pitch in places, but are more than fair overall.

Providing eye-popping contrast is the Golden Bear’s trademark bunkering. He combines his bunkers seamlessly with the land’s natural dune features to add another stunning visual layer. It’s a course that opens on the beach and climbs up along jagged cliffs and desert landform, before returning beachside—where, if you’re

so inclined, a dip in the Pacific (or another margarita) is waiting.

Picture-worthy

While the short par-five fifth hole will always maintain a place among the most photographed golf holes in the world, it has some limitations in a playing sense: It leaves virtually no margin for error from tee shot to tap-in. But the wow factor? It’s off the chart.

Design purists might better appreciate Nicklaus’ vision for the wonderfully conceived par-five 12th hole, a sweeping downhill dog-leg; the enchanting par-three second hole; and another risk-reward short par-four, the 355-yard 14th.

Fortunately, on an initial lengthy climb from the fourth green to that jaw-dropping fifth tee is a welcome interruption: The first of three on-course “comfort stations” featuring tequila, beer, margaritas, fish tacos, fresh fruit, mini-sliders and nachos. (Baja cuisine might not exactly be standard fare for golfers during play, but it’s one of many unique sidebars to the Quivira experience.)

Top tips

This seems an appropriate time for a word of caution. Golfers who demand a steady pace of play and rounds in four hours might—no, must—put those expectations aside. Figure on five hours plus, with cart rides of up to three-quarters of a mile (sorry, walking this course

is impossible), the requisite comfort station stops and ball-search time-outs and, hey, don’t stress over it. Justify it as an opportunity to savour those rare Los Cabos vistas for a little longer.

Another nugget of advice: Don’t let your score get in the way of the experience. Match play is a perfect format to maintain the fun level.

Pre- or post-round, The Quivira Steakhouse and 19th Hole Bar inside the airy and appealing thatched-roof clubhouse demands a visit, as does the unique double-ended practice facility, part of which rests directly above the beach. Between warm-up shots you might even catch a glimpse of a breaching whale or two. Sunsets from the stylish clubhouse by the way? To die for.

Golf Digest has listed Quivira Golf Club as no. 93 on its most recent “World 100 Greatest Golf Courses.” That distinction and the abundance of superlatives to describe this ocean-side oasis in Los Cabos are warranted. Nowhere is a meeting of land and sea more dazzling. ■

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