

THE WEEKENDER

CASINO ESTORIL

ESTORIL, PORTUGAL

Beaches, Casinos, outstanding dining, and of course.... beautiful golf, what more could you want from your weekender away? Cascais & Estoril lie just north of Lisbon, and whilst the city offers the hubbub of any major capital the Estoril & Cascais coast is where you can really feel the heart and culture of the region. Its abundance of superb golf courses can be reached in under 2.5 hours from most UK airports and then just a short 30 minute drive from the arrival gates at Lisbon Portela airport.

There is vast amount of plush accommodation on offer throughout the region but one certainly not to miss is the hotel Palácio Estoril. Royalty and celebrities alike have frequented the stylish establishment since it opened its doors in 1930, but although it has plenty of history and stories of past stardom to boast, it has not been left behind in modern times.

The hotel sits metres away from one

of the main attractions of the area, Casino Estoril. The Casino frontage energises the landscape with its bold lighting, and once inside the story doesn't change. Live bands, nightly shows, funky bars and of course roulette table galore are all on offer, to help you party the night away. The casino leaves such an impression on its clientele that it's rumoured when staying in the area Ian Flemming based the setting for his Casino Royale novel on the Estoril.

Away from the luxurious hotels and vibrant casino lies the country park region of Sintra, a perfect place to spend some down when recovering from your evening's exertions or your time on one of the many areas courses.

PESTANA BELOURA GOLF

The newest course on the Estoril coast is situated in one of the most

prestigious parts of the region and is one of several conceptions in Portugal by the American architect Rocky Roquemore.

The architect has utilised the landscape to great effect, a beautiful mixture of 40,000 eucalyptus, oak, pine, palm trees and plants have been planted on this gently undulating Par 72, 18 hole course that measures 5,573 metres from the Men's Tees.

Water comes into play on many of the holes as they meander between the various lakes and streams that border the fairways. One of key holes on the course that makes the most of the unsettling hazards is the 7th, the lake eats into the hole pinching the fairway from your drive. If you manage to stay calm, straight and you carry the first obstacle the next immediately comes in to play. Most will lay up short of the stream crossing the fairway 100 meters from the green as it will take a confident and long player to place

well on the putting surface, which is protected by bunkers both left and right and to the rear.

Pestana is an enjoyable round for all handicappers, it is a course that is set up perfectly for groups and societies that are looking to host competition days. The accessible greens followed by waters holes and inviting putts make for a battle against the course or your opponent.

The test continuous right through to the final holes, the shot from the 17th tee demands accuracy to find the fairway which threads its way between the lake on the left and the out of bounds on the right. Whilst accuracy is at a premium, the tee shot should be of sufficient length to enable the putting surface to be reached with a probing long iron.

Back in the clubhouse the welcoming atmosphere, great food and stunning roof terrace makes for a great way to finish your day.



ESTORIL GOLF CLUB

The Estoril Championship Course was founded in 1929 and was redesigned in 1936 by Mackenzie Ross. It is known as one of the oldest and most symbolic clubs in Portugal. Over the years, Estoril Golf Club has applied continuous improvements and renovations to keep up with modern standards of excellence, and due to their endeavours it is a highly interesting golf course with a traditional flair.

Overlooking the surrounding beauty of Estoril, the 5313 meters long course is set amongst eucalyptus, pine and mimosa trees, giving it a uniquely colourful touch. The course architects have made excellent use of the various flora which, together with the uneven and sometimes tight terrain, make the Estoril Golf Course a great golf challenge in terms of accuracy rather than distance.

The course is literally split in two by the A5 motorway but do not let that take away from what is a wonderful track. If anything, this quirk is one of the key features as the front and back nine build their way up to the crossing before they fall away in to the surrounding valley.

Although a short course in comparison to other in the area the golf at Estoril is thoroughly enjoyable, reachable par fours mixed with visually stunning par threes bring a new challenge from every tee. The Estoril course is a must play and great value for money.

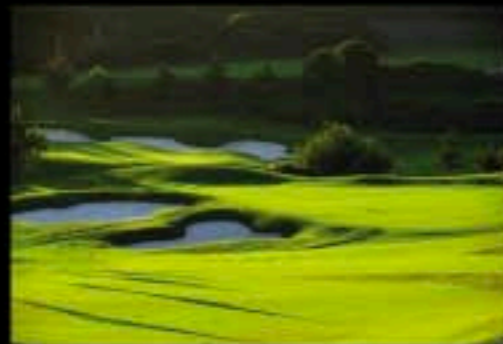
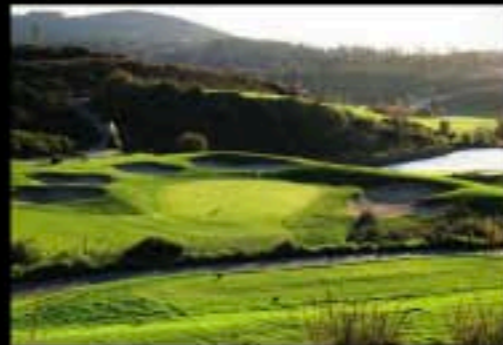


BELAS CLUBE DE CAMPO

Another course designed by the renowned golf architect, William "Rocky" Roquemore, the Belas Golf Course is set in the mountains between Belas and Queluz. Belas is a championship golf course, and the layout is challenging as it uses the natural topography of the landscape with several fairways and greens set in deep valleys.

It affords unforgettable panoramic scenery to its golfers with the course being divided into two very different sections: the first crosses a naturally preserved landscape; the second runs by the immersing architecture that is part of the recent development, this and the planting of one thousand trees, mainly pine brings contrasting views as you move through your round.

At Belas Golf Course, there are two holes notable for their beauty and their challenging qualities: the 2nd hole, a Par 5



called Augusta, was built in homage to the 13th hole of the famous golf course where the Masters tournament takes place; hole 18, a memorable Par 4 finisher, was christened "The Big Hole", because of the second stroke that players must make, some 180 metres from the green, which is well protected by a lake.

PENHA LONGA

With two golf courses on-site and a 5* hotel, Penha Longa Resort offers a stunning option for you to base yourself for your next golf holiday. Located just 20 minutes from Lisbon Airport, you will enjoy 5* luxury and championship golf all-year round.

Before you head to the courses you must try the cuisine on offer at Penha Longa, it is sublime. Six restaurants range from the gastronomic LAB, a 22-seat, tasting menu dinner, created by Sergi Arola, to the B-lounge with American hamburgers. There is sushi at the Midori and traditional Portuguese favourites served at the Aqua poolside restaurant. For a superb breakfast there is Mercato, and finally there is Arola, a popular Sunday lunch destination which serves tapas - don't miss the Arola signature dish of potato bravas.

Ranked in the various top golf courses lists, this former host of the Portuguese Open was designed by

master golf architect Robert Trent Jones Jr who has crafted a real gem in the heart of its lush and matured surroundings.

The championship 18 Hole Atlantico course is regarded as one of the best in the area and a must play. The 18-hole, par 72, championship course of 6,290 meters is a challenging course with breath-taking views over the ocean with Estoril and Cascais to the South and the Sintra hills to the North.

The 9 hole Monastery course shouldn't be under-estimated either as it gives guests a good test of golf as well as the option of a change of courses over the stay.

The Atlantic course takes advantage





of the steeply sloping terrain and excellent views of the surrounding landscape. Six of the holes are situated in the valley, whilst the other holes have been built on a hill offering a technical challenge throughout your round. In the calm weather Penha Longa is enjoyable brute of a course but add the gusts on the hillsides and you'll require all of your golfing nous to shoot a good score, for example the par-3 15 (165 meters over water) is a 6-iron under calm conditions yet becomes a 3/5-wood in the wind!

There isn't a weak hole on the Atlantic course, every one is a test, the par-3s are strong, and there is a good variation on all of the par fours. The signature hole has to be the first the par-5, the 498-yard 6th hole. The fairway winds down hill to a green protected by water, a great risk or reward shot in. The putting surface sits upon the remains of a centuries-old aqueduct which adds beauty and difficulty to a great hole.

Something that the Penha Longa resort clearly focusses on is their attention to detail – the little things which add value and often make a big difference. All the staff are extremely friendly, knowledgeable and helpful; when checking-in you're given a black and white print-out of the green complexes with the pin placements for the day; a buggy bar regularly patrols the course to see if you require any additional sustenance – irrespective of the day or the number of players. They make every effort possible to ensure you enjoy their golf facilities.

