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PLANET GOLF

# REVIEW

ISSUE 21



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# LAS COLINAS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Alicante, Spain

By JAMES MASON and CHARMAINE HIBBERT

## WINTER WARMER

No temporary greens, astroturf mats, muddy fairways or casual water, but plenty of blue skies. **James Mason** and **Charmaine Hibbert** discover winter golf, tennis, cycling, gastronomic delights and beautifully designed villas and apartments at Las Colinas





## VILLAS AT LAS COLINAS G&CC

An hour's drive from Alicante airport sees us arriving at Las Colinas Golf and Country Club and after a swift check-in, we are in golf buggies heading to our villa. A press of an electric key fob and the gate to the complex opens and we park in the bay reserved for the residents' car or, in our case, golf buggy.

The stonework on the walls that surround the garden are very impressive and so too is the garden with its single orange tree. The large wooden door swings open and reveals an expansive lounging area with very high ceilings on the left that has sliding doors to a covered patio area with dining set and the garden beyond.

On the left is a fully-fitted kitchen with stainless steel appliances and then two double bedrooms on the right with a shared shower/toilet at the end of the corridor. While on the left is the master en-suite double bedroom with large wardrobe and double doors opening onto the patio. As there are three of us sharing I obviously baggy the en-suite. →



## LAS COLINAS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB



It's early November and I am stepping onto the first tee at Las Colinas in shorts – although I do have a body warmer on. The rain and cold of the UK seem so distant but are only a three-hour flight away. A half decent drive leaves me a 4-iron into the green on this tough opening hole. The good news is there are five teeing options so you don't have to play from the tips where I video from. This dogleg left has a narrow entrance to a raised green and believe me, bogey is a good score here.

As I make my way to the 2nd tee, I already like the feel and sculpturing of the course. The 3rd hole is one of the many show stoppers here; played from an elevated tee I can see →

Top left: 13th and 15th holes. Left: Bunkering surrounding the 17th green. Top right: Dining set up in one of Las Colinas apartments. Right: Living room and views from one of the apartments





*“As we make our way through the seven-course tasting menu my taste buds are dancing in delight and if you are stuck on which dish to go for, then I would highly recommend you go for the tasting menu”*

out over to some of the beautifully designed residences and beyond. The tee shot is played down to the fairway below which doglegs to the left. The large fairway bunker that helps frame the fairway is your aiming point, but you can also bite a large chunk off by going left and trying to gain more distance by using the slope. But it doesn't end there on this risk and reward par 5. Depending on how far you have made it down the hill, you now have to decide if you are going to brave the carry over water to

a green that lies diagonally to you, making your landing area very narrow.

The 5th brings up the first of the par 3s on the front nine and is played over water to a green that has a ridge running through it. The second one comes at the 7th and while it only measures 121 yards from the back tees and plays downhill, it's a tough little hole played through trees.

After a well-deserved hotdog at the halfway hut which sits sheltered in some trees, I head →



Top left: Looking down the 1st hole. Left bunkering on the 9th hole.



Above: The Italian-inspired Il Palco restaurant. Left: Nikkei cuisine at the Umawa restaurant

Of course it's time for the face dive into the pillow test. The smell and feel of crisp cotton pillowcases and sheets fill my senses, and a nice firm mattress is exactly what I had hoped for. The large bathroom has a bath/shower combination with a sink, toilet and bidet and plenty of towels and free toiletries for those who are only bringing a cabin bag for a long weekend.

### Restaurants

Tonight we are dining at Umawa, which offers Nikkei cuisine using locally sourced products from the area under the guidance of Chef Alfonso Lillo. As we make our way through the seven-course tasting menu my taste buds are dancing in delight and if you are stuck

on which dish to go for, then I would highly recommend you go for the tasting menu. The ambience of the restaurant with its low-key lighting and subtle, modern classic furnishings perfectly match the food.

Our third night finds me eating at the Italian-inspired il Palco restaurant. Chef Fabio Morisi produces some wonderful dishes that just leave you looking forward to the next time that you can eat here. The restaurant décor has been designed by Pepe Leal and, like the Umawa restaurant, perfectly complement the chef's wonderful dishes.

### Facilities

Apart from the golf course, the resort has a fully equipped gym where you →

to the back nine, which opens up with a par 3 that again is played through trees to a long narrow green that is 45 yards deep and offers a lot of pin placements. The hole measures 180 yards from the back tees and can play anything from a 7-iron up to hybrid depending on pin position. It really is another well-designed hole to kick-start this half of the course.

Another risk and reward par 5 comes at the 11th and then the beautifully designed par 4, 388-yard 12th hole, where the raised green is framed by three bunkers: two large, short right and left, and a small one to the right of the green. As I stand in the fairway, 8-iron in hand staring up to the green with the blue sky and the bright green colouring of the course, I have to remind myself it's November as I am now playing in just my shorts and polo shirt.

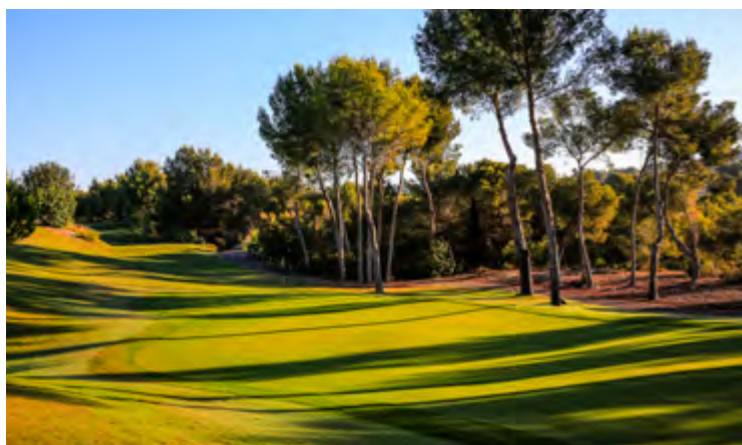
The course comes to the perfect crescendo

with two par 3s and two risk and reward par 5s with another wonderfully designed par 4 sandwich in between them. The par 3 14th is played from an elevated tee over water, while the 17th weighs in at a mighty 246 yards from the tips and is a driver for me. The two par 5s both have water protecting the green, with the 15th having a semi island green for you to aim at if you decide to except the risk.

The par 4 16th that is sandwich in the middle is a great hole measuring 419 yards but the framing of the hole with the bunkers, like the rest of the course before it, looks visually stunning. Making my way off the course and sitting on the patio outside the club house with cold refreshments being consumed and stories swapped, one thing we are all agreed on: we can't wait to get back out there again tomorrow.



Left: Course overview  
Bottom left: Narrow green at the par 3, 10th hole. Below: Aerial view of the 11th and 12th holes



COURSE VIDEO

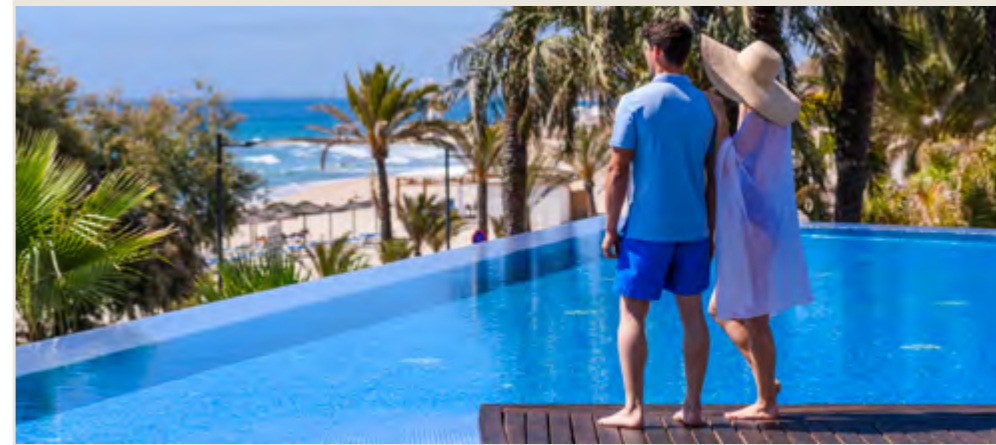
Right: Night view of the swimming pool  
Middle left: Enjoying the cycle trails. Middle right: Tennis academy and multi-sports courts. Bottom right: View from Las Colinas beach bar



can also book a personal trainer for the time you are here. There is a wellness area where you can book massage and beauty treatments and there is also a physiotherapy service. Las Colinas also has an outdoor pool which you can relax by or use for part of your fitness regime. And for those who prefer to hit their ball with a racket there is the Adriano Tavelli Tennis and Paddle Academy, where you can play or take lessons to work on your game. There is also a multi-sports court where you can play football or basketball.

### Beach Club

Las Colinas also has its own beach club which is just a few minutes away from the resort. It sits on La Glea beach and has a restaurant which is open night and day, an infinity pool, Balinese beds, hammocks and there's a massage service available as well. And to top it all off a cocktail bar, for those who's only workout they need is to work on their tan, cheers to that!





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