

ABTA GOLF 2009

THE GOLF GUIDE FOR THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

THE GLOBAL GAME

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE WORLD'S
BEST COURSES AND GOLF RESORTS

ERNIE ELS

AN INTERVIEW WITH A LEGEND

CABELL'S COSTA

THE MAN BEHIND EUROPE'S
GOLFING MECCA

HIDDEN SCOTLAND

EMERGING FROM OUT OF THE
SHADOW OF ST ANDREWS

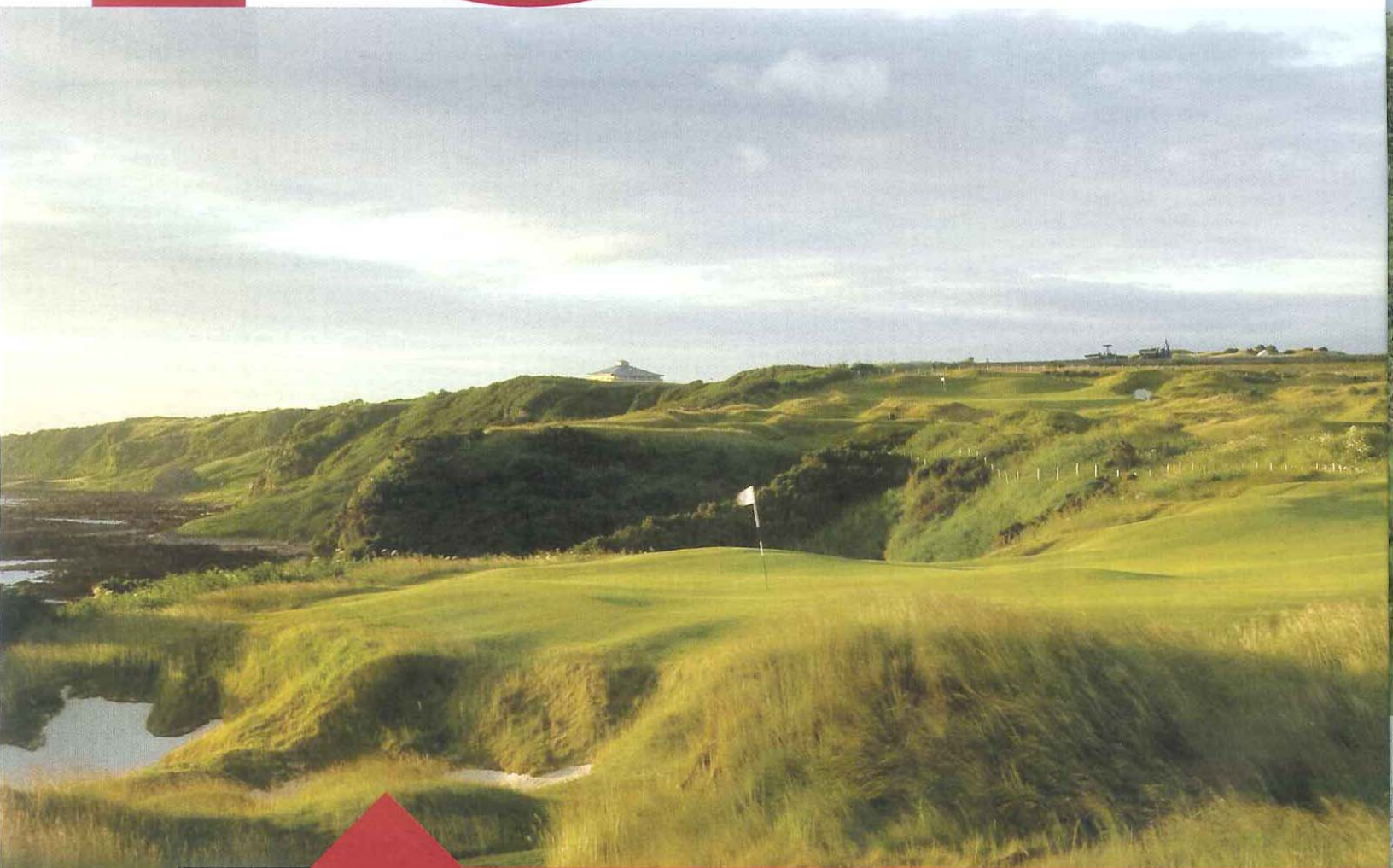
ALSO:

▶ THE TIGER TRAIL



10 overpar

2008 was a big year for new golf developments. **Tony Dear** picks 10 of the best resorts, courses and projects

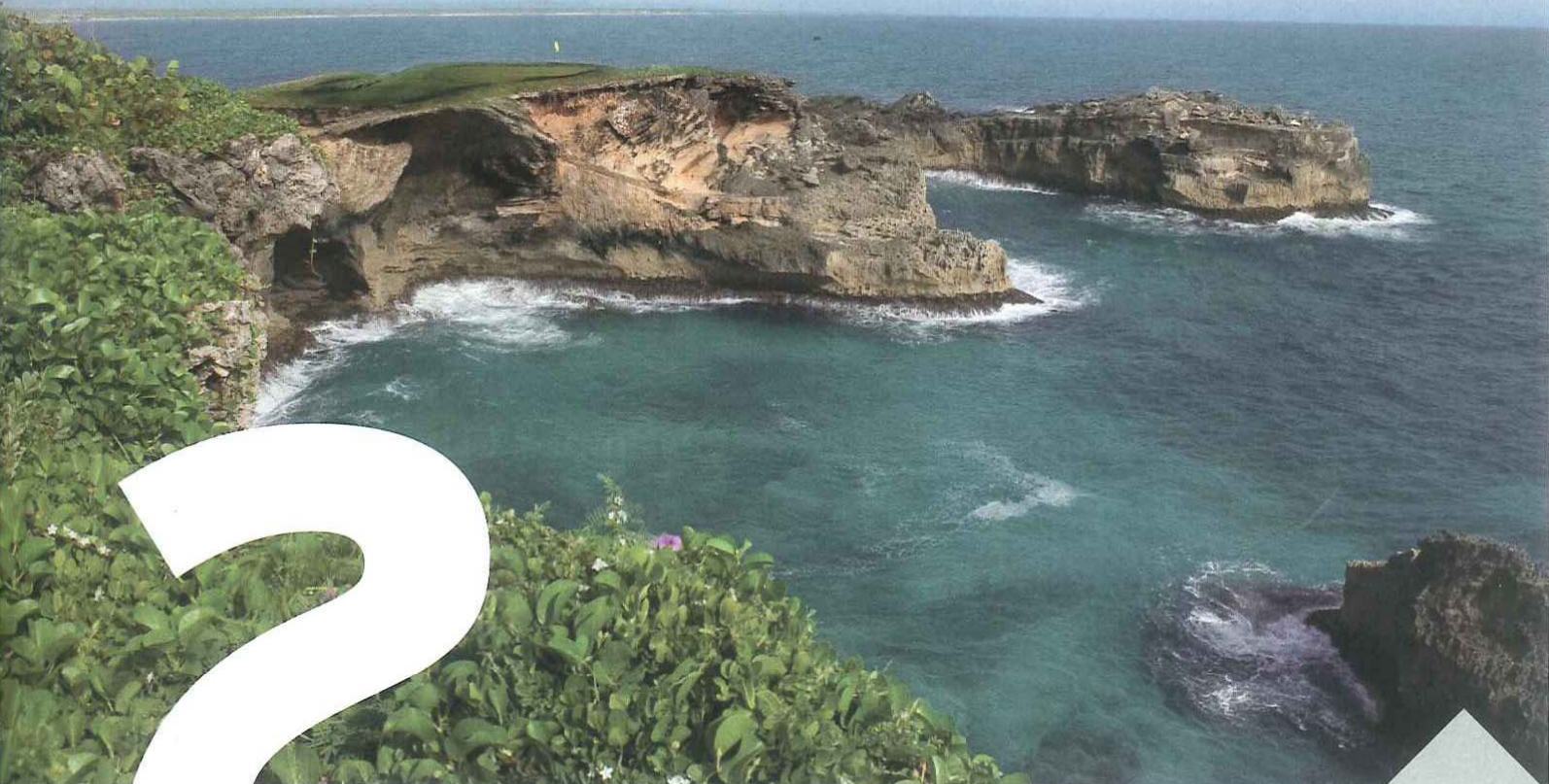


Castle Course, St Andrews, Scotland

For years, the most eagerly anticipated golf development in Britain, if not the world, The Castle Course eventually opened to the public on 28 June 2008, three years after construction began. Designed by Scotland's own David McLay Kidd and his assistant Paul Kimber, the course is spread out over 220 acres of fairly flat and featureless farmland on which Pictish kings once hunted boar. It's named after Kinkell Castle, which occupied a headland called Kinkell Ness where the rotunda clubhouse now stands. Although not the genuine article in the strictest sense, The Castle Course certainly bears most of the characteristics of a links course with sandy lies (the course was plated with thousands of tons of sand), several hidden landing areas, dramatically contoured greens, holes bordered by tall, golden fescue and, of course, fantastic views of the sea.

With five tees on every hole, the course ranges in length from 5,319-7,188 yards and visitors are strongly advised to resist the temptation to take on more than they can handle, especially in any sort of wind, which can turn The Castle into something of a beast. The course is currently closed and will re-open on 1 April 2009. T: 01334 466666. www.standrews.org.uk (or www.linksnet.co.uk to book tee times)

► **Average green fees:** From 1-19 April, the green fee is £84. It rises to £120 on 20 April



Roco Ki, Dominican Republic

Neither the Westin Roco Ki Beach and Golf Resort nor Fairmont Roco Ki are operating yet, but the Faldo Legacy Course is, having opened in December last year to worldwide acclaim. The six-time major champion has more than justified his commission, with a number of thrilling holes on the 7,075-yard spread that starts near the ocean, moves into a mangrove forest, continues over a sawgrass plain and returns to the cliffs at the short, but scary, par 3 17th which, from the back tees, plays across an ocean inlet. Many will see a similarity between it and the tiny 7th at Pebble Beach, but Roco Ki's version is considerably more exciting. The 18th is pretty action-packed too, calling for two carries over the raging surf.

Roco Ki means honouring the land, in the language of the Taino Indians who settled on the island long before Columbus arrived in 1492. Starwood Hotels (Westin) is doing its bit with 32 fantastic jungle bungalows among its accommodation options, while Fairmont also plans lodgings that will blend harmoniously into their surroundings. And Faldo has certainly honored not only the land but also the game with an awesome layout. Very limited outside play is available until spring 2009 when the Westin is scheduled to open (the Fairmont hotel will arrive some time in 2010). From this point onwards, only resort guests will have access.

T: 00 1 809 731 2800. www.rocoki.com

► Average green fees: £126-£224 ►