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Punch Shots: Great remote golf experiences

By [GolfChannel.com Team](#) Nov 8, 2012 11:42 AM ET

If your idea of a great golf trip is one that's in the middle of nowhere, our travel experts name their three favorite remote golf destinations:

Mike Bailey: Black Jack's Crossing in Lajitas near Big Bend National Park, Texas

Everyone knows Texas is big, but to get a real feel for that statement, all you have to do is take a trip out to Lajitas Resort & Spa in Big Bend country.

Under the night desert sky of Lajitas in remote Big Bend National Park in southwest Texas, the stars are glorious. During the day, there's a feeling of the old west, taken advantage of by the resort and enjoyed by the guests. For dining, there's Lajitas fajitas, drinks at the Thirsty Goat and a host of non-golf activities, like skeet shooting, hunting, jeep tours, rafting, mountain biking and fishing.

And then there's golf. The original course was lost four years ago to a devastating flood. In the end, that was probably fortunate, because the course that replaced it, **Black Jack's Crossing** (named for Gen. John Pershing), is far better. Designed by Lanny Wadkins, there are at least seven elevated tees, where you can see 50 miles in almost every direction. The tee shots are exhilarating, looking down on the paspalum fairways and greens set against endless mountains, buttes, mesas and other rock formations ("lajitas" means "flat stones"). Best of all, Wadkins created a golf course where every hole is memorable.

When I took my trip out there late last year, I was fortunate; I got to fly, courtesy of Lajitas' owner, Texas billionaire Kelcy Warren. But even then, the trip is well over an hour from Dallas, and that's straight in without getting into a traffic pattern to a remote runway a few minutes from the resort. Drive in, say, from Dallas or Houston, and you're talking an all-day trip.

But it's well worth it, because there's nothing like it in Texas or the world, for that matter.

Brandon Tucker: Scotland's Kintyre Peninsula

For years, storytellers like Alfred Hitchcock and Paul McCartney have glamorized the **long, winding road along Scotland's Kintyre Peninsula**.

Starting from Loch Lomond, the drive winds through tiny fishing villages and mountain passes before ending on a narrow road overlooking coastal farms and the sea. That said, it's 100-plus-miles interspersed with a few terrifying moments if you're a bit timid behind the wheel. I played chicken (and lost) with a truck on a small bridge near the little village of Inverary. I've met other golfers who have blown tires on the trek, a common and understandable result of hugging the shoulder a little too tight on the left.

At the end of the road are two of the world's purest links courses: Machrihanish Old and **Machrihanish Dunes**. Built over 100 years apart, both are pure links test, albeit very different ones despite their locations beside one another. Making the journey that much more



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alluring, accommodations have improved recently, thanks to a restoration of the 22-room Ugadale Hotel beside the first tee of Machrihanish. If that's not remote enough, also tack on Machrie and Dunaverty to the journey.

Now, you don't have to make the three-hour drive to get here. Machrihanish is also accessible via speed boats from Scotland's west coast, as well as private helicopters or even a commercial light into nearby Campbeltown, a sleepy town that McCartney is spotted in time-to-time to this day. But a good chunk of the fun of Machrihanish is the journey - and rest assured the road has improved a bit since Hitchcock's *39 Steps*.

Jason Deegan: Prairie Club in Nebraska

The **Prairie Club's** founder Paul Schock has proven if you build it right, they will come. In just a short amount of time, Schock has transformed Cleve Trimble's 2,500-acre remote ranch property in the Sandhills near the South Dakota border into a golf pilgrimage of the highest order. Getting here requires persistence - unless you've got a private plane - but the club's commitment to service and the surreal setting combine to deliver the kind of spiritual retreat craved by golfers. Both the Dunes and the Pines courses opened in 2010.

At times, the two par-73 designs share the same wide-open spaces among the dunes. Wild, blowout bunkers and maddening greens define the duo. The Pines, designed by Graham Marsh, dives into the narrower confines of a ponderosa pine forest hugging the Snake River Canyon. The Dunes, routed by Tom Lehman and Chris Brands, ranks No. 78 among the top 100 public courses in the country by *Golf Magazine*. Its fairways stretch 80 yards wide in places with nary a tree in sight. Gil Hanse, arguably today's hottest architect, designed the interesting Horse course, a 10-hole short course that can play an endless array of combinations and lengths. Hanse's course called "Old School" could open within three to five years if membership growth continues.

Thirty-one rooms are spread among several floors of the lodge. Foursomes love the space and privacy of the four cabins overlooking the canyon. The river below is a hotspot for fly-fishing, but only members have access, another of the many reasons to join The Prairie Club.



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