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Machrihanish Dunes & Neighbors

At the end of Paul McCartney's famed "Long and Winding Road" on Scotland's Kintyre Peninsula is one of the best-kept secrets in British Isles destination golf – Machrihanish Dunes (18 holes) and its neighboring courses – Machrihanish Golf Club (27 holes), Dunaverty (18 holes) and Carradale (9 holes). All together seventy-two of the most challenging and picturesque golf holes to be found anywhere avid golfers tee it up. Best of all they are not only completely unspoiled but uncrowded and delightfully affordable, allowing you and your partners to play as much golf as you desire – be it 18 or 54 holes a day.

Hard to believe that Machrihanish Dunes is already 10 years old this year and a full slate of activities and special

offers is planned to celebrate the occasion (machrihanishdunes.com).

The David McLay Kidd-designed course is really a collaborative effort with Mother Nature as less than 10 acres of land was altered (greens and tee complexes) in the process of creating this linksland classic. Looking out over the mature dunes that Kidd actually grew up on as a child, the outlines of holes revealed themselves to Kidd and provided a natural canvas to develop. Truly deserving of its tagline "Golf the Way it Began."

The now iconic black sheep logo derived from the fact that as the course was built in an extremely environmentally sensitive area; originally the only maintenance of the fairways was



actually by a herd of black sheep. The course management proved so successful with positive environmental impact that they are now allowed more modern methods of course maintenance and renovation. This has helped to enhance not only the environs but also the enjoyment of golfers and has resulted in the layout climbing the course ratings.

The course isn't the only highly rated aspect of the area. Southworth Development's involvement in restoring two historic hotels – The Ugadale at Machrihanish and The Royal in Campeltown has garnered over 40 awards since reopening to their former glory including The Ugadale Hotel winning the prestigious 2018 Resort Hotel of the Year by The Scottish Hospitality Awards. There are also a number of luxurious two-bedroom self-catering cottages on property, perfect for foursomes or family visits.

The restaurants in the Hotels and the resort's cozy pub feature the freshest of local ingredients from seafood to Angus Beef and they even know how to cook a perfect rare American-style steak. Be sure and wash it down with the local family-owned Springbank of Campeltown whisky.

Directly across the narrow street

Every hole on Machrihanish Dunes offers stunning views



The luxurious Royal Hotel on Campeltown Harbor



from the Ugadale is the Machrihanish Golf Club (www.machgolf.com), known for having the best opening salvo in golf. You are invited on your first tee shot to take on as much of the curving bay as your nerves and skill allow. You'll miss the gentle flat fairway of the opening hole as you cross into a maze of mature dunes that have been challenging golfers since 1876.

Sadly, Machrihanish Golf Club's historic clubhouse was completely destroyed earlier this year by a devastating fire, but not before many of the valuable artifacts were rescued. Thankfully, neither the course nor the pro shop were damaged in the blaze and the Ugadale Hotel and neighboring Pub have stepped up to offer hospitality to members and visitors.

Often overlooked is the short but mighty Dunaverty Golf Club at the very tip of the Kintyre Peninsula. Not even 6,000 yards from the tips it is one not to be missed and don't be misled by its seemingly easy yardage. The wind howls, the views over to Ireland are utterly distracting, there are blind shots, you will use every club in your bag and come away with a refreshed attitude on why you love the game. The club and course are not wealthy and do not maintain a website but it is easy to find and be prepared to pay the modest green fee in cash as often there is an unmanned "honor box." Dunaverty is perhaps best known as the home course of Belle Robertson, Scotland's best loved ama-

teur woman golfer.

Even more overlooked than Dunaverty is Carradale Golf Club (www.carradalegolf.com) a short half hour drive to the other side of the peninsula. Again, too often American visiting golfers see nine holes and dismiss it but shouldn't. The course's hilly terrain gives spectacular vistas to Arran and the mainland over its quirky layout and you won't find a more friendly members welcome.

As a sticky toffee pudding connoisseur be sure and stop in to the neighboring AshBank Hotel (www.Ash-bankhotel.com) for a post round treat. Hands down the best I've ever tasted.

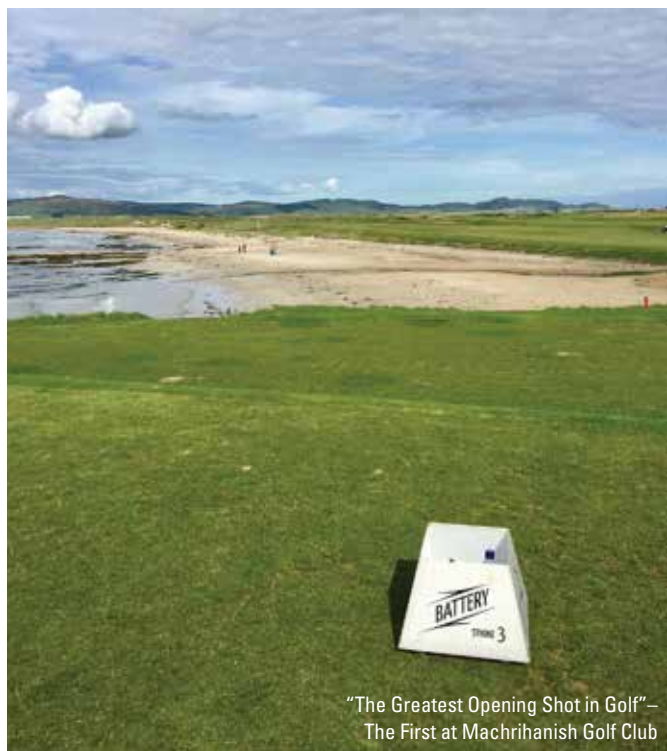
While a bit off the beaten path of the more well known links, the area can easily be reached by one of my favourite if a tad long (3 hours from Glasgow) scenic drives anywhere in the world; by ferry from Ballycastle, Northern Ireland (www.kintyreexpress.com) or Ardrossan, Scotland (www.calmac.co.uk); or by plane (www.loganair.co.uk) from Glasgow airport to Campbeltown, and is definitely worth the journey.

See you on the links!!! 🏌️

The restored Ugadale Hotel & Cottages
"The 2018 Scotland Resort Hotel of the Year"



Lovely Scottish themed decor in every cozy well-appointed Ugadale Hotel room



"The Greatest Opening Shot in Golf" –
The First at Machrihanish Golf Club



Carradale Golf Club offers 9 holes of spectacular vistas