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Far *and* Away

A TIMELESS SPORT CONVERGES
WITH NATURE AT PARK HYATT AVIARA
RESORT, GOLF CLUB AND SPA IN CARLSBAD.

BY JENN TANAKA

Golf great Arnold Palmer once said, “Concentration comes out of a combination of confidence and hunger.” When the legend designed the undulating golf course at Park Hyatt Aviara, did he know his creation would leave an indelible mark on coastal Southern California? Did he realize this place would lure people from around the globe to discover the hidden beauty of Carlsbad?

When Palmer envisioned this golf course, how many hours did he spend considering the natural marvel that abuts it: the Batiquitos Lagoon Ecological Reserve?

The protected ecological space is home to nesting areas and mudflats, to salt marshes and southern arroyo willow riparian forest. It’s a place where striped mullet swim and great egrets hunt. It is where nature and mankind converge.

For two decades, Kevin Kienast has spent countless hours maintaining and preserving Palmer’s legacy. Kienast oversees Aviara’s sprawling grounds, working hard to enhance the property. Plant by plant, tree by tree, flower by flower, he slowly transforms the landscape. Yet it is Kienast’s ongoing work at the Batiquitos Lagoon that inspires others.



Golfer Christie Kerr at the LPGA Kia Classic at Park Hyatt Aviara



GOLF TIP SHEET

EAT: A stone's throw from the fairway sits Aviara's award-winning Argyle Steakhouse. Platters of sizzling Japanese wagyu popped up on almost every table. "It's like butter," moaned one woman dining nearby. The A5-grade beef raised in Miyazaki prefecture needed no additional sauces or finishes. But, let me be honest: If you have savored one sublimely fatty slice of wagyu, then you might as well sample something else. Opt instead for another divine cut of American-raised beef by Kuroushi Farms in Oregon. Then, finish it with one of chef William Griggs' incredible accoutrements – a crunchy truffle butter crust, a savory Baja barbecue spice rub, or a rich cognac and green peppercorn sauce. For diners in the know, you must order: the Argyle Potato Tots. Don't let the name fool you; these crunchy bites are no mere Tater Tots. They are comfort food overload in the best way. Pillows of creamy mashed potato and cheese are enveloped in a crispy deep-fried exterior.

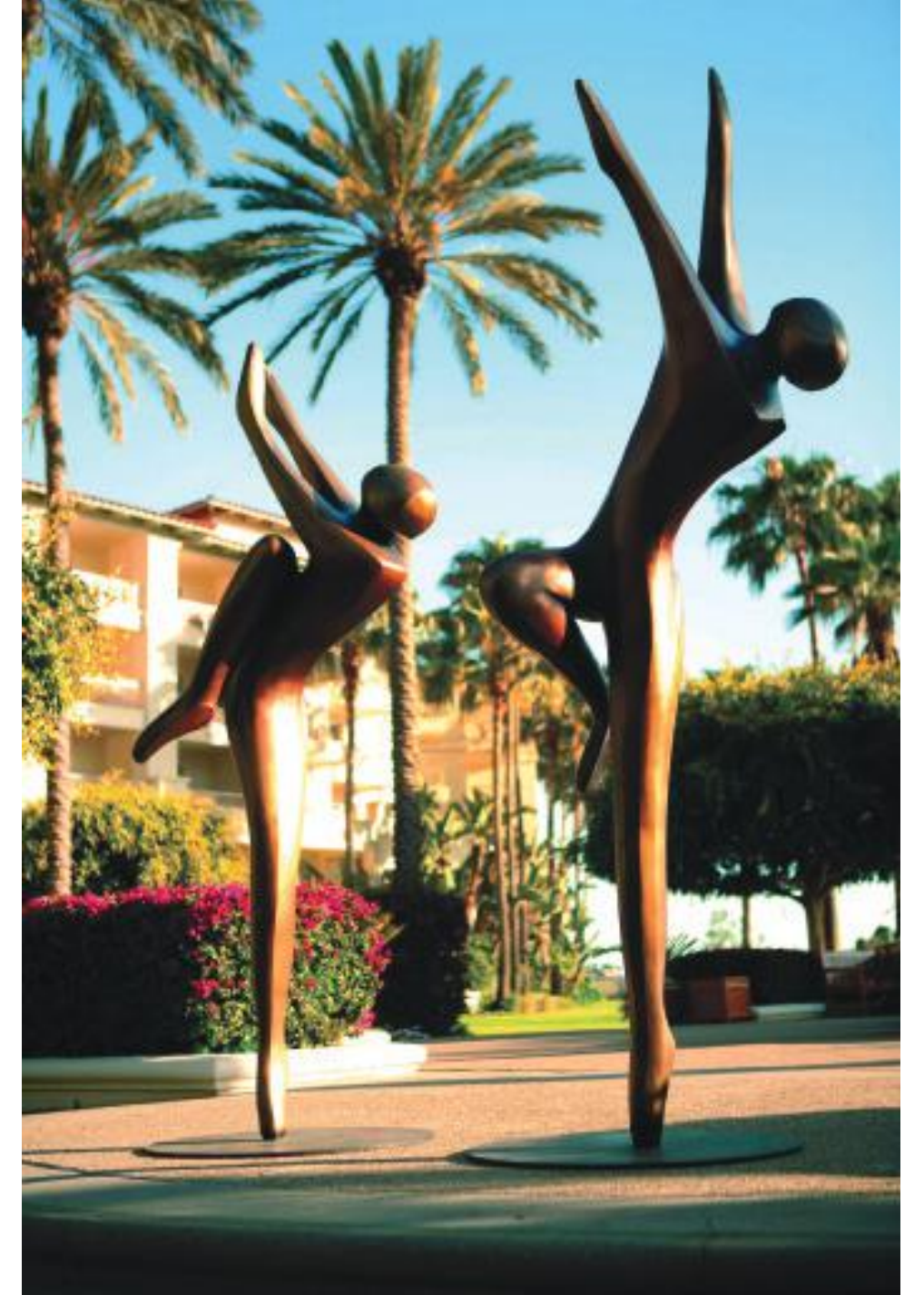
GO: Each March, LPGA, Kia Motors and NBC's Golf Channel swarm Carlsbad to take over the Park Hyatt Aviara Golf Club for the Kia Classic. The resort buzzes with excitement. Film crews and sportscasters mingle with guests at the bar. Late-night fun includes VIP events such as an exclusive wine dinner at Argyle Steakhouse perched on a balcony overlooking the course followed by a raucous round of glow-in-the-dark golf. (Yes, it's as fun and as crazy as it sounds.)

DO: For elite attendees, the invite-only "Inside the Ropes" access is hands down the best way to watch the LPGA tournament. Make your arrangements early since only a few guests are allowed to walk on the green just a few feet behind the pros.

For generations, indigenous wildlife and ocean birds found sanctuary in the lagoon. But decades of development had eroded the waterway's original landscape. Forever altered by the construction of Pacific Coast Highway followed by Interstate 5, the Batiquitos Lagoon became a forgotten wasteland.

By 1983, contamination had left the waterway barely hospitable for wildlife. Then a group of local conservationists urged what's now the Department of Fish and Wildlife to preserve the Batiquitos Lagoon. Cleanup crews stepped in, environmentalists collected water samples, volunteers donated their time. It was a new beginning for the lagoon.

When Palmer unveiled Aviara Golf Club in 1997, the Batiquitos Lagoon was a part of his vision. Now caretakers such as Keinast organize annual cleanups and



The resort's outdoor space provides the ideal locale for afternoon yoga on the lawn.

Nature and wellness combine at Park Hyatt Aviara's spa. A series of treatments are enhanced with dining options intended to rejuvenate the mind and body.

educational tours to keep the preservation efforts alive.

Since Hyatt took over management of the property from Four Seasons in 2010, the resort introduced environmentally friendly experiences such as hosted nature walks and botanical tours. Local wildlife experts and researchers educate the resort's guests and the surrounding community about the Batiquitos living ecosystem. "We just want to be good neighbors," says Kienast. "It's about knowing that we're all doing our part. That we are a part of something much bigger."

As home to the only Arnold Palmer-designed course in San Diego County, Park Hyatt Aviara boasts a unique point of view. Through its fairways and greens, the resort channels Palmer's poetic outlook on the world. The space captures many things – past and present, success and failure, nature's battle with modernity, overcoming our own inner struggles. It all converges here. ■



In March, the LPGA Kia Classic tournament takes over the greens at Park Hyatt Aviara Resort, Golf Club & Spa.

Stay connected. The adult and family pools feature solar-powered charging stations.

