

Golfweek's ULTIMATE GUIDE

TO GOLF COURSE LIVING AND GREAT ESCAPES • 2019

11th hole, Pinehurst No. 4



THE SPECIALISTS

WE SEARCHED FOR SOME OF THE MOST INTERESTING JOBS AT GOLF RESORTS. HERE'S WHAT WE FOUND | BY MARTIN KAUFMANN

Visit any golf resort and you'll meet people doing the jobs that you would expect to find at any other resort. There are golf pros, superintendents, chefs, bartenders, hotel staff. The properties vary, but the duties typically don't.

Some resorts, however, have unique needs that require specialists. This may reflect the environment in which the resort sits or a desire to create a special experience that guests won't find elsewhere.

What follows is the story of the most interesting jobs at six resorts – five in the United States and one in Mexico.

Amby became the aviarist four years ago, after Silicon Valley entrepreneur Larry Ellison bought the resort. Amby owns a cockatiel, and when the resort began adopting rescue birds, he was tapped to care for them.

That's a high-maintenance job because these birds are completely dependent on their keeper. They have no survival skills.

"They only know to look in their dish for food," Amby said. And they commonly live 70 years or longer, so there always needs to be a succession plan. "It's like having a child," Amby said. "If you pass away, you need to have someone to take care of your child."

They also tend to be drama queens. The cockatoos, in particular, can become borderline suicidal if they feel they're being ignored. When they're depressed, they'll pluck out their feathers.

"What they're saying is, 'Nobody loves me anymore, so I'd rather die,'" Amby said. "Same thing in the wild. When the mate is gone, they pluck their feathers."

Amby and guests give the birds plenty of attention, but occasionally even the aviarist needs a break. KeO KeO (the name refers to his white coloring) once took umbrage when Amby was away 17 days on vacation.

"When I came back, he disowned me," he said. "He was mad at me. It took him three months to take me back. Each time I went to the cage, he walked away. I told him, 'I had to take a vacation.' He just mumbled. Finally, he took me back."

BIRDMAN OF LANAI

Bruno Amby
Aviarist
Four Seasons Lanai
Lanai, Hawaii

KeO KeO might have the biggest personality on the tiny Hawaiian island of Lanai. The umbrella cockatoo – so named because the plume of feathers on his head flare out when he's excited – likes to spend his afternoons holding court at the resort's pool, chatting with guests and posing for photos.

Wherever KeO KeO is, you can usually find Bruno Amby, the resort's aviarist. Four Seasons Lanai houses seven exotic birds: three cockatoos, including a yellow-crested and a miniature, two African grey parrots, a yellow-naped Amazon parrot and a macaw. They reside in comfortable, oversized cages, though all of them get plenty of face time with guests at the pool or at the resort's kids camp.



COURTESY FOUR SEASONS LANAI

LIVING IN THE CLOUDS

**Lisa Thomassie and Mark Streater
General Managers
Cloud Camp at The Broadmoor
Colorado Springs, Colo.**

“We’re above the clouds today,” Lisa Thomassie recently told a caller.

She wasn’t speaking figuratively; some days the clouds settle beneath Cloud Camp. It never gets old.

Thomassie and her husband, Mark Streater, have lived at 9,200 feet for 25 years, including the past two years managing Cloud Camp, one of the Wilderness Experiences introduced at The Broadmoor in recent years. Prior to that, they managed The Lodge Resort & Spa in Cloudcroft, N.M.

Cloud Camp sits 3,000 feet above the resort’s main campus on the site of Cheyenne Lodge, which the resort’s founder, Spencer Penrose, built in 1926. Guests gather in the South Tower for the winding drive along 17 switchbacks up Cheyenne Mountain Road.

It truly is a camp. There are comfortable cabins and internet service, but no TVs. Guests are there to connect with relatives, old friends and complete strangers.

“Everybody becomes a family,” Streater said. “It becomes almost like going to grandma’s house. That’s what we want guests to feel.”

A daily highlight at Cloud Camp is the evening flag ceremony, when Streater, with Zoey, the camp dog, at his feet, walks out to the flagpole that sits on a rocky point and slowly lowers Old Glory to the playing of “America the Beautiful,” a poem Katharine Lee Bates wrote in 1893 upon scaling nearby Pikes Peak. Guests gather with Thomassie on the main deck to take in the moment.

“I have stood next to grown men with tears rolling down their eyes because of the emotion of that,” Thomassie said.

After the playing, she often asks guests if they are celebrating any special occasions. That sometimes leads to memorable moments, such as the couple who recently shared the news that they were returning to Cloud Camp to celebrate learning the wife was cancer-free.



COURTESY THE BROADMOOR/MIC CLIK PHOTOGRAPHY

“Everybody was teared up,” Thomassie recalled.

There’s also plenty of laughter. Sometimes, while transporting guests on an E-Z-GO cart, Streater will pass guests who are hiking or riding mules.

“I always ask them, ‘Have you seen my golf ball?’” he said. “Some say, ‘Man, you must have a wicked slice.’”

After the flag ceremony, guests gather in the lodge’s great room, at a grand table that seats 32, to enjoy dinner and conversation together. The nights often end around the campfire with guests swapping stories over

S’mores and drinks. It’s an intimate experience for guests and the staff.

“We have the opportunity to get to know the guests on a different level because of the size of the property and we’re doing things with guests all day long,” Thomassie said.

When they’re at Cloud Camp, it’s a 24-7 job for Thomassie and Streater, who just celebrated their 29th wedding anniversary. But they say they draw energy from the setting and the interaction with guests.

“It’s very long hours, but very rewarding,” Streater said.



COURTESY THE SEA PINES RESORT/ROB TIPTON

ANCHORED AT SEA PINES

Nancy Cappelman
Harbor Master
Sea Pines Resort
Hilton Head Island, S.C.

Most golf fans see only the iconic images of the Harbour Town Lighthouse each April, when the PGA Tour visits the week after the Masters. For Nancy Cappelman, the lighthouse and marina have been her office for the past 36 years.

Cappelman always has spent a lot of time near or on the water, having grown up in a family that boated on freshwater lakes in northwest South Carolina. She studied banking and finance in college, but the thought of pursuing those disciplines as a career left her cold.

"I could just never get interested in going out and finding that kind of work," she said.

In the early 1980s she took a summer job as a deckhand at the Harbour Town Yacht Basin, "and just stayed and stayed and stayed." In 1995 she was elevated to harbor master.

Cappelman and her staff manage the marina's 100 slips - 85 of which are individually owned and often available for rent - along with the resort's fleet of 10 charter boats and a wide array of watercraft. There is a constant stream of traffic in and out of the marina, particularly during the hectic spring and fall seasons when boaters are chasing favorable weather up and down the East Coast. Cappelman never tires of the new

people and new ships that visit.

"Boating people are very, very happy," she said. "They're doing what they love. Plus, you get to see some really gorgeous yachts."

That's especially true during tournament week, when the marina is sold out and dozens more boats are bobbing on the sound. Some players, including Greg Norman and Davis Love III, used to arrive on their yachts, though that rarely happens anymore. She misses seeing players arrive by sea, but said it's still "such an exciting time. Everybody is here to have a good time and enjoy the tournament."

Cappelman, who likes to tool around on her 16-foot skiff with her husband when she's not working, said much of the work is routine - fueling vessels, cleaning docks, making sure guests get on the proper charter boat. But every day brings something new.

"I've been very fortunate," she said. "I started this job just to have a summer job, and 36 years later I'm still here. It's never boring."

MEDICINE MAN

Leonardo Ortega
In-house Shaman
Montage Residences Los Cabos
Cabo San Lucas, Mexico

The Montage might be the flashy new resort and residential community in Los Cabos, but Leonardo Ortega's presence ensures that guests can experience healing rituals that date back centuries.

Most mornings you can find Ortega performing healing ceremonies on the lawn overlooking Santa Maria Bay. It's one of the most spectacular settings on the seaside corridor connecting Cabo San Lucas with San Jose del Cabo, but also serves Ortega's purposes.

"When the sun is coming up, it has the best energy to make it a more successful treatment," he said. "We believe in the energy of the sun." (Ortega's comments for this story were translated by his Montage colleague, Alessandro Balestra.)

As a child in Mexico City, Ortega said, he suffered fevers on almost a daily basis. His mother took him to various doctors, none of whom could offer a cure.

Ortega said his condition finally began to improve when his grandmother administered homemade herbal remedies. He'd smell them, drink them and eat them, and the fevers began to disappear.



COURTESY MONTAGE LOS CABOS

Later he began visiting a Temazcal – sort of a sweat lodge, a remnant of Mayan civilization – and learning from the shaman there. As he read and studied more, he began to recognize that many of the herbs used in those ceremonies were identical to those used by his grandmother.

At the Montage, Ortega's morning ceremonies can be tailored for one person or for groups. During the ritual, he will burn copal, creating an aromatic smoke, and he wields a wood stick with a feather in it, which he calls the source of inner power. He seeks permission from the earth and the four cardinal points – north, south, east and west – to help in the healing, and uses the stick and a bouquet of fresh herbs to help “cleanse the energy” of his guests.

“First of all, it's to create harmony of the person connecting with the natural elements,” he said. “And it also helps remove the bad energy around you. That could be anything like sadness, stress, jealousy – energies that can affect your personality.”

The ritual also includes a drum, a flute and a rattle, and singing in Nahuatl, a language common to people of southern Mexico and Central America. But mostly what he needs is buy-in from the guest receiving the treatment.

“The guests need to completely relax and embrace it,” Ortega said. “They need to be willing to change.”

AQUAMAN OF HUALALAI

David Chai
Director of Natural Resources
Four Seasons Resort Hualalai
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii

When development of the Four Seasons Hualalai began in 1990, David Chai was hired to help tame the ecologically diverse landscape. After doing graduate work at the University of Hawaii in aquatic ecology and resource management, Chai carved out a unique niche as an expert in managing anchialine ponds – inland bodies of water that have a subterranean connection to the sea.

“There wasn't a large understanding



COURTESY FOUR SEASONS HUALALAI

of these systems at the time,” he recalled.

At Hualalai, the anchialine ponds were one of the defining features of the unique landscape, along with the black lava formations that would provide the distinctive framework for Hualalai's Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course when the resort opened in 1996.

The resort's ponds and wetlands were overrun by foreign plants and vegetation. The wetlands along the 18th hole were overgrown with non-native mesquite, mangrove and Louisiana sawgrass, Chai said. It was restored to a working fish pond that provides food for the local community. He helped design King's Pond, a swimming hole for guests.

Chai also gets a hat tip for making better use of Punawai Lake, a manmade, aquifer-fed body of water that fronts Hualalai's fifth green.

“When we decided to build it, I said, ‘Why not have a lake that's not just aesthetic, but we can use it to grow seafood?’” Chai said. The oysters enjoyed by Hualalai's guests are grown and harvested in Punawai.

When the resort opened in 1996, Chai was asked to remain on staff. That reflected the resort's unusual commitment to being “pono,” or at harmony with the environment.

Chai and a team of four marine biologists monitor the ponds and restore them with native flora and fauna. As part of the resort's commitment to a marine-management plan, Chai also worked with locals two years ago to develop a marine reserve that covers 3.5 miles of coastline and extends 120 feet into the sea. The area had been overfished because of commercial harvesting, he said. There will be no fishing in the reserve through 2026, when Chai hopes to have a sustainable fisheries-management program in place.

The responsibilities of Chai's team have mushroomed over time. They prepare lesson plans for local schools and run 16 programs, some of which are free, for resort guests. One of the most popular is the “fish circus,” in which various species – angelfish, puffer fish, filefish – perform tricks for guests. Professor Fish, a milkfish, can identify colors, while others play soccer or swim through hoops.

“We realized training fish was kind of cool, so we made a program out of it,” Chai said. “So now we train our fish for the entertainment for guests.”

GUARDIAN OF HISTORY

Mary Socci, Ph.D.
Archaeologist and historian
Palmetto Bluff
Bluffton, S.C.

Mary Socci has worked at Palmetto Bluff for 14 years, but she's able to share details about the 20,000-acre property that date back to the Ice Age.

“People have been coming to Palmetto Bluff for thousands of years,” Socci said.

It's only recently that those visitors have enjoyed Five Star



COURTESY PALMETTO BLUFFS

accommodations and living in spacious Lowcountry homes. But Socci has Paleo-Indian projectile points and other artifacts dating back more than 12,000 years.

“That’s really cool because the climate was not only very different, but the coastline was very different,” Socci said. “The coast of South Carolina was 50 miles to our east. That’s really interesting because the first people who were coming to this area weren’t coming to this coastal setting. They

were coming to more of savannah grasslands or maybe heading to the coast.”

Before developers start construction on any project, they’ll typically hire an outside firm to survey the site as part of the permitting process. Those records usually get buried in some county or state office building.

Palmetto Bluff took a different approach. A decision was made to chronicle the land’s history and share that information with residents and

guests. In 2003 the nonprofit Palmetto Bluff Conservancy was established and Socci, an archaeologist educated at Princeton and Yale, was hired a year later to serve as the property’s full-time archaeologist and historian.

“It took imagination and vision ... to be willing to make a permanent investment in the history rather than just having people coming and going and not knowing what really happened,” Socci said.

As a practical matter, Palmetto Bluff had to identify archaeological sites that needed to be protected. That included, among other sites, 12 cemeteries (including a pet cemetery) and a portion of the resort’s May River Golf Course, near the short-game area.

The vision of Socci’s role, however, went far beyond that. Palmetto Bluff has a history center in Moreland Village where visitors can learn about the property, and residents often ask Socci for specifics about the land on which their homes sit.

“When I start talking to people about where their house is and what might have been there 100 years ago or 1,000 years ago, they get really excited and want to learn more,” she said.

Aside from Native American artifacts that predate the arrival of Europeans, Socci has collected Plantation-era artifacts. She’s particularly fond of the remnants of an octagonal house built in 1796 by a Scottish immigrant. She has maps and letters that describe the house.

Socci also gives visitors a taste of her profession, taking them on artifact hunts. Inevitably, something will turn up.

“I tell people there’s almost like a background radiation of artifacts,” she said. “So if someone is plowing or putting in a foundation somewhere, I would expect them to find some kind of artifacts.”

Socci said her job “gets better every day” as she continually pieces together the history of the property. It’s a personal passion, but also one she gets to share with visitors.

“They come to Palmetto Bluff and I tell them our story, and they’re completely enamored, and they’d love to have that where they live, but just don’t have it,” Socci said. “I think it really has added value.”