

TRAVEL + LEISURE

Eat

Drink

Explore

The Food Issue

Wait, Golf Is Cool Now?

Spurred by a new generation of golfers seeking a safe outdoor pursuit, destinations are shaking up the rules of the classic sport. **BY KELSEY OGLETREE**



THE WHOLE WORLD, it seems, is getting back onto the links. In fact, pandemic restrictions have given a boost to golf tourism, a market that's forecast to grow by \$5.3 billion through 2024. "People started picking up golf not as a sport, but just as a fun outdoor activity," says Matt Corey, chief marketing officer for the PGA Tour.

Golf courses and resorts have been making changes to attract a younger, more diverse group of players, adding quicker nine-hole options, building more experiences for beginners, and emphasizing the sport as a way to safely hang out with friends. And because walking—rather than riding—a full 18 holes can help you log as much as six miles, the game has attracted many looking to reinvigorate their outdoor exercise routines.

The sport is also diversifying through initiatives like Make Golf Your Thing. Launched this spring by organizations including the PGA Tour, the program aims to make the sport more accessible (and affordable) in hopes of drawing newcomers, including those from underrepresented groups such as women and people of color. "Golf isn't just middle-aged white guys with triple-pleated pants on a perfect fairway," Corey says. "As long as you have a club and a ball, you'll be on your way."

Five Places to Try the New-Look Game

DESTINATION KOHLER **Kohler, Wisconsin**

To complement its four existing championship courses (one of which is hosting the Ryder Cup this month), Destination Kohler opened the Baths of Blackwolf Run in June. The 10-hole, par-3 accommodates all skill levels and includes a two-acre putting course. The luxury suites at the American Club and the restorative Kohler Waters Spa, both a five-minute shuttle ride away, are nice post-round perks. *destinationkohler.com; doubles from \$389.*

OMNI PGA FRISCO RESORT **Frisco, Texas**

PGA of America is moving its HQ to this city north of Dallas, and the organization has partnered with Omni Hotels & Resorts to build a new 501-room resort right next door. While it won't debut until spring 2023, the destination will have numerous courses, including a beginner-friendly 10-hole option lit for night play, plus an adjacent entertainment district. "We want to honor the roots of golf but move the game into the modern day," says Peter Strebel, Omni's president. *omnihotels.com; rates not available at press time.*

PGA NATIONAL RESORT & SPA **Palm Beach Gardens, Florida**

Best known for its four championship courses just outside West Palm Beach,

PGA National has added two new, faster-playing ones to the resort. The Staple, a nine-hole, par-3, has a figure-eight design intended to give groups a chance to meet up mid-round at firepits ringed by Adirondack chairs. The Match is more typical, with 18 holes, but built for match play, in which participants aim to win individual holes rather than the entire course. *pgaresort.com; doubles from \$250.*

CABOT CAPE BRETON **Nova Scotia**

This resort with breathtaking views of the Gulf of St. Lawrence added a third course, the Nest, last summer. The 10-hole, par-3 plays much faster than the two existing 18-hole courses, and the greens fees are considerably lower. Cabot has partnered with Breton Brewing Co. and Nova Scotia Spirits Co.

to serve beer, cocktails, and mocktails on the course. *cabotlinks.com; doubles from \$270.*

FOUR SEASONS RESORT **HUALALAI**

Kailua-Kona, Hawaii
Fresh from a \$100 million renovation, this resort has spruced up the golf program, making it much more welcoming to beginners. Its new Hualalai Golf Hale (lodge) offers laid-back training programs with pros who can coach all aspects of the game, plus a Topgolf Swing Suite where players can hone their technique in a simulated game. Four Seasons even offers glow-in-the-dark balls for night play and can arrange an entertaining night of laid-back putt-putt with a custom food-and-drink spread. *fourseasons.com; doubles from \$1,580.*