

THE Grand Del Mar

Southern California's
newest resort destination

My forecaddie watches intently as my approach shot drifts left of target, and into the pristine white sand adjacent to the third green at The Grand Del Mar Resort. Before I can pose the question “Cole, what exactly is a forecaddie?” Cole Duncan has cleaned the offending club that put me in the bunker, handed me my sand wedge, and has diplomatically assessed my almost impossible position in the trap. “That’ll be a delicate angle,” he judges, before sprinting up the fairway to read the green for me—that is, in the unlikely event that I’ll be putting soon.

After I hit a decent – and certainly infrequent – long sand shot, the forecaddie reads my line perfectly, and I snake in a twenty footer for par.

Basking in the glow of the winter sun, and my improbable up and down on this beautiful and challenging golf course, three words come to mind.

Savor These Moments.

By Roy Robertson
Photography by Don Kohlbauer

Those are the words inscribed on the first page of the menu at The Grand Del Mar's exceptional new restaurant, Addison. The salutation, attributed to Addison's executive chef William Bradley,



William Bradley
Addison's executive chef

was clearly intended for the diners he entertains each night. However, the phrase also resonates for each of the experiences available to guests of The Grand Del Mar Resort. With its incomparable architecture, 21,000

square foot Renaissance-themed spa, magnificently appointed guest rooms and suites, and recently redesigned golf course, the resort is opulent and extravagant. The staff caters unfailingly to the resort's guests. At The Grand Del Mar, the mantra must be "Savor These Moments."



Discreetly tucked into a natural preserve near the ocean on the northern edge of San Diego, developer

Doug Manchester opened the doors to his 249-room resort hotel complex in October 2007. It complements the stunning golf course, which opened eight years earlier, and completes a transformation which includes a new 50,000 square foot clubhouse, home to the resort's signature restaurant, Addison. With its \$270-million price tag, the cost extrapolates to more than one million dollars spent per guest room.

Prior to the opening of The Grand Del Mar, Carlsbad's La Costa Resort and Spa and Four Seasons Aviara, along with The Lodge at Torrey Pines stood out as San Diego County's three elite golf resorts. An impressive new player now rounds out the foursome.

"We are all very different sorts of players," says Tom Voss, president of Manchester Resorts,



Forecaddie Cole Duncan watches as Course Pro Wyatt Spencer hits a long sand shot.

which owns and operates The Grand Del Mar Resort. "We don't want to imitate anyone out there. We have a niche. We are happy not to be the same as the rest."

Asked to define what distinguishes The Grand Del Mar, Voss hesitates as he struggles to put this magnificent development into words. "It is a resort with amazing architectural design. When you walk into this resort, it feels like an Old World Mediterranean estate. It's like a mansion in Monaco." He then begins to check off The Grand Del Mar's many defining characteristics. "It's the first luxury resort with an Addison Mizner architectural design, located in a nature preserve, with world-class dining, an ornate chapel, a Renaissance-inspired spa, and golf course by Tom Fazio," arguably America's finest course designer.

What was christened in 1999 as The Meadows Del Mar, which was, and still is, the only Fazio-designed course in San Diego County, has evolved to become The Grand Del Mar. The metamorphosis of the facility, with the introduction of the resort, parallels the name change.



The area surrounding the course, bordered by Rancho Santa Fe and Del Mar, was still largely undeveloped nine years ago. Before the completion of State Route 56 in 2004, access from the east necessitated a short trek across a dirt road that cut

through agricultural fields. Today, the resort's gated entrance is just a mile from the completed freeway, yet still maintains a rural feel, with the preserve naturally secluded between canyon rims.

Doug Manchester (of San Diego's Manchester Grand Hyatt), and the Manchester Financial Group, bought the property in 2003, and set forth plans for the development of the resort. Voss says the name change to The Grand Del Mar came as details were taking shape. "When we looked at the design and the entire footprint of the resort...the clubhouse,

golf course, and then the architecture and interior design, we felt it was an appropriate name."



Shawn Cox
Director of Golf

Manchester's involvement extended beyond the walls of the lavish hotel, and reached to the course which envelops it. "His biggest quality is his vision," says Shawn Cox,

Director of Golf at the resort. "He definitely wants this to be the top golf resort west of the Mississippi. He sets the standard so high." With Manchester's input, enhancements to the course were planned to coincide with the building of the hotel.

Under the supervision of Fazio's design team, the course was lengthened to play up to 7,160 yards from The Grand tees, which can feel longer when prevailing coastal breezes come into play. Two holes on the front side were significantly lengthened, and the 16th was converted from a par 4 to a par 5 to make the course a full par 72. Perennial flowers and foliage were added to enhance the beauty of the course. "Papa Doug' isn't afraid to plant a few trees," jokes Cox about the cosmetic enhancements Manchester wanted to include.





The Grand Del Mar's 18th hole

A complete bunker renovation was done, with a fine white crushed marble mix now filling the many sand traps positioned along the track. The white sand provides a great contrast to the lush green fairways, and gives the bunkers what Cox says is “an Augusta-type look. ***It's unique to San Diego.***”

Aesthetically, and to provide one final hurdle to finish the round, an 18-foot waterfall has been added to the right side of the 18th green. The waterfall, explains Cox, was Manchester's idea. “He thought it would enhance the view from Addison and the clubhouse, and he felt we could make it a little harder for the last hole, with the lake and stream, and then added the waterfall for beauty.” After a four month construction project, the water began flowing on the Fourth of July.

The 50,000 square foot clubhouse peers over the 18th hole. It houses expansive locker room facilities, as well as the Grill restaurant, its patio perched just above the

closing hole. A separate entrance welcomes guests to Addison, named for Addison Mizner, the early 20th-century architect whose designs inspired the resort.

Consistent with the attentive service and hospitality offered throughout the resort, the amenities extend to the golf course, and include The Grand's forecaddie program. (Here's how Cole Duncan would have defined “forecaddie” if he weren't running up the fairway, anticipating my next shot.) A forecaddie is a player assistant who doesn't carry clubs but rather accompanies each group of resort guests, assisting with yardage and providing course strategy, all the while continuously catering to each golfer's needs.

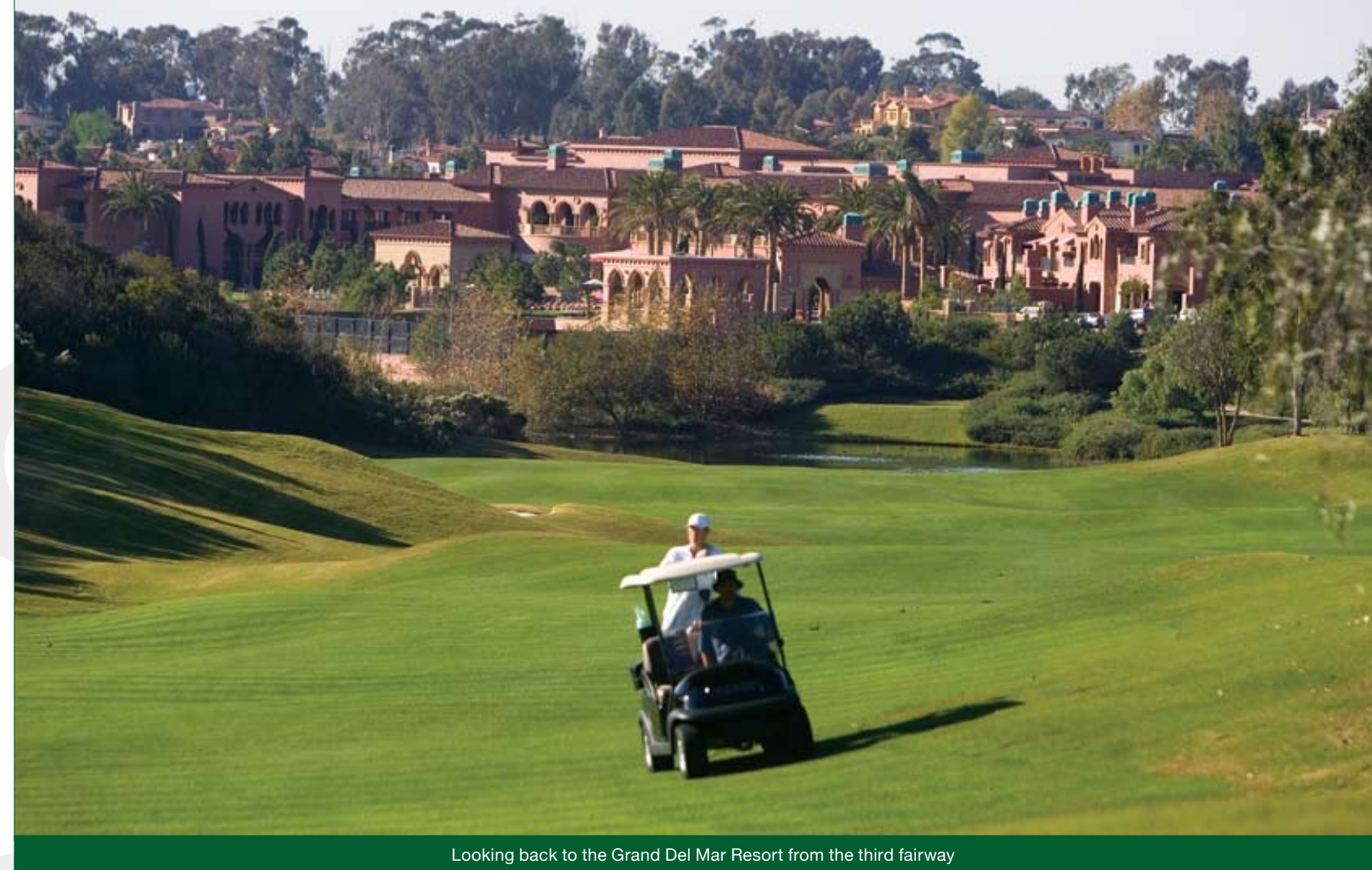


Forecaddie Cole Duncan

“We're trying to create an experience where we don't just tell you where the first

tee is, and then you're on your own. We want to be out there to guide and help you,” says Shawn Cox. The forecaddie is a luxury that, to the uninitiated, takes a little getting used to. Several holes later, you wonder how you can take a forecaddie out every time you play.

The course, once public, is now semi-private, with access available to guests of the resort, as well as to a limited membership base they project will number no more than 150, and to those who have fractional ownership of one of the resort's villas. Green fees for hotel guests are set at \$230 to \$250, including the assistance of a forecaddie.



Looking back to the Grand Del Mar Resort from the third fairway

It seems inconceivable that a Mediterranean edifice set in a California canyon could be considered unobtrusive. But, to the credit of its designers, the resort and the course seem to comfortably coexist within the natural habitat. From the clubhouse above the 18th hole, Cox says, “We can still see the holes around the golf course, and the resort doesn't really obscure any of the views. That's so rare.”

“Savor These Moments,” I think as I tap in on 18, to the calming sounds that flow from Papa Doug's new waterfall, and the church bells that peal gently from the chapel known as Elizabeth Cappella. I shake hands with my playing partner, course pro Wyatt Spencer, and forecaddie Cole Duncan.

“There's another piece that makes it interesting and unique, and that's really what we're trying to be,” says Tom Voss, when I mention the deployment of the

forecaddie for the round. He reiterates that it's just another aspect of the unique treatment The Grand Del Mar affords their guests.

“How unique can you really be?” Voss asks rhetorically, as he sits in his office surrounded by gilded rotundas and grand rooms framed with imported marble, fine tile and hand painted ceilings.

Let that question be debated by hoteliers, architects and designers who attempt to rival the resort Tom Voss runs. Guests and golfers need only recall the phrase emblazoned on Addison's menu to summarize the experience.

Savor These Moments.

