

ACCOLADES CONTINUE. Golfweek has rated Punta Espada the No. 1 golf course in the Caribbean and Mexico for eight consecutive years and Golf Digest rates it No. 63 in the world.

CAP CANA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: The Dominican Republic, about 900 miles southeast of Miami, has long been a vacation haven known for its year-round tropical weather and nearly 1,000 miles of sandy beach. A geographically diverse nation, it's home to both the Caribbean's tallest mountain peak (Pico Duarte) and largest lake (Lake Enriquillo).

The country's first tourist was Christopher Columbus in 1492. Today, with 6.5 million visitors arriving each year, tourism is the economic engine that drives the economy.

Located on the eastern tip of the Dominican Republic, about a 10-minute drive from the Punta Cana Airport (PUJ), Cap Cana is an exclusive address known for its ambitious dimensions. The resort destination, at 46 square miles in size, is equal to the footprint of Walt Disney World or San Francisco. Among its marinas, resorts, adventure park, three-mile white sandy beach, and residential enclaves peppering Cap Cana is Punta Espada Golf Club, a Jack Nicklaus Signature oceanfront course with eight holes that hug along the craggy edges of the Caribbean's blue waters.

## THE GOLDEN BEAR TIMES THREE

When Cap Cana was envisioned 15 years ago, plans called for three Jack Nicklaus courses. To showcase the destination, a Champions Tour event was staged on its Punta Espada course from 2008–2010.

"I was living in Spain when the opportunity presented itself to oversee the Tour event," recalled Efren Garcia, director of golf operations at Punta Espada. "We had all the marquee names of the day compete including Greg Norman, Fred Couples, and Corey Pavin. In short order, Cap Cana was soon referred to as the Pebble Beach of the Caribbean for its ocean influences.

"The Great Recession knocked the wind out of sails, but the Hazoury family [developer of Cap Cana] persevered," said Garcia. "If you haven't been to our resort in recent years, you will leave impressed.

"There are more than 1,000 hotel rooms available with another 3,000 in the pipeline scheduled to open before the end of 2021," continued Garcia. "Top hoteliers, including Secrets Resorts, Eden Roc, The Sanctuary, and TRS Hotels, have built stunning properties within our gates. We are also in the planning stages of finishing our second Jack Nicklaus course named Las Iguanas." >



## THE SENSES OF PUNTA ESPADA

The color *turquoise* is derived from the French word *Turkish*—a rare gemstone imported from Turkey. "It's hard to describe the incredible turquoise water surrounding many of our holes," described Garcia.

"Playing Punta Espada awakens your senses, from the smell of the ocean to the sound of crashing surf. There are times when your game is seemingly secondary. Don't be surprised to experience fine sea spray on several tee boxes and greens that are close to crashing waves against the shore! While our location steals the show, our inland holes are equally compelling with their coral bluffs and

significant elevation changes," said Garcia.

"Nowhere else in the world is there a golf experience like Punta Espada at Cap Cana," exclaimed Jack Nicklaus. "There are a lot of hero shots, but it's still playable for the average golfer. The design takes full advantage of its oceanfront location. My philosophy is: If all available beachfront is packed with development, shielding views of the water, you might as well be playing in Montana."

For more information on seasonal golf packages, please visit PuntaEspadaGolf.com.

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED why Jack Nicklaus is called The Golden Bear? Shortly after turning professional, during a trip to Australia, local newspaper headlines announced "Golden Bear from U.S. to Arrive Today," referring to Jack's high school Golden Bear mascot. Jack turned to his wife Barbara and exclaimed, "Well, I've been a Golden Bear all my life. I might as well continue to be a Golden Bear," and as they say, the rest is history.





