



"Tail of the Whale" is the world's only natural island golf green.



Team "El Tigre"



Team Terravita Country Club



Viva Punta Mita!

Pro-Am competitors make their own tale while playing Tail of the Whale.

By Mark Pazdur, Tournament Director

PUNTA MITA, MEXICO (north of Puerto Vallarta): Punta Mita, a sought-after resort development for vacationers and many second home buyers stretches across several of the most beautiful beaches in Riviera Nayarit. "Over the years, the destination has expanded to include multiple hotels and 17 residential communities," said Carl Emberson, director of operations at Punta Mita. "Our amenities are best in class and our social calendar is packed with activities—from the Punta Mita Gourmet & Golf Classic (with celebrity chefs) to our Pro-Am."

MEXICO'S BENCHMARK OF LUXURY

The 2022 Punta Mita Pro-Am was an opportunity for fellow members and their golf professional to enjoy competition and camaraderie at one of the



"I do not believe in teaching the same swing model to everyone, but rather one that is specialized to each individual based on their current needs. Repeatable performance is a must and your individual biomechanics can't be ignored. Remember, golf is a game—not a death march—so my goal is to give you the tools you need to enjoy it." — Jean Van de Velde



Guest Speaker
Jean van de Velde

A gracious St. Regis butler **welcomed players** upon arrival, setting the tone for meticulous personalized service. Lavish guestrooms are nestled in several buildings, creating a small-village feel.

world's finest golf retreats. Punta Mita has been more than two decades in the making. The Four Seasons and St. Regis resorts, situated on a spear-shaped peninsula, offer 9.5 miles of Pacific coastline, multiple sandy beaches, five beach clubs, and two Jack Nicklaus Signature golf courses. Located on the same latitude as the Hawaiian Islands and boasting more than 340 days of sunshine per year, you are virtually guaranteed sunny skies and balmy temperatures.

"In about the time it takes to watch one movie, we are able to fly from Northern California to Puerto Vallarta," smiled David Jackson, head golf professional at Tehama Golf Club. "I've always found trips south of the border to be ideal. Locals are warm and welcoming. You immediately have the feeling they're glad you're here."

SAND BETWEEN THE TOES

The Pro-Am kicked off in style with a gourmet ocean-front dinner at the Punta Mita Sufito Restaurant & Ocean Club. Guests dined on ceviche, grilled fish, and a warm chocolate brownie with their favorite drink in hand.

As the sun set over the surf break, Jean Van de Velde (Punta Mita ambassador) greeted the group. "Punta Mita



Punta Mita

A diverse ecosystem has fostered a tapestry of **natural wonders** at Punta Mita. Mother Nature's handiwork is visible every day, from colorful marine and wildlife to unusual birds and butterflies to attractive flora and trees.

is a true paradise on earth," detailed Van de Velde. "I have competed around the world—from Biarritz, France, to Punta del Este, Uruguay—and I chose to live here.

"Our two Nicklaus Signature courses aren't push-overs. You need to learn where to place the ball. Strategy is key and the best angle to attack the pin isn't necessarily obvious. Greens hit in regulation don't guarantee a low score. I will go out on a limb and say the greens on the Bahia Course are downright diabolical."

DAY ONE: HORSE RACE SHOOTOUT

Jack Nicklaus's interest in design started in the 1960s when Pete Dye asked for his input on what would become The Golf Club in Columbus, Ohio.



Just before leaving for Pro-Am, I asked The Golden Bear for his advice playing Punta Mita. "A lot has changed in the game when I was playing with wooden woods and balata balls. My advice is don't try shots beyond your capability. Enjoy the tournament and don't let an errant shot weigh you down," advised Jack Nicklaus.

After a practice round on the Pacifico Course, twelve





Complimentary whale watching excursion courtesy of Punta Mita Adventures.

teams joined the \$100 buy-in to compete in an always fun, four-hole Horse Race Shootout with an open beverage cart and soft rock music playing in the background.

Eight teams competed in the sudden death chip-off on the first hole to advance. On the second hole, pars were safe from elimination. At the conclusion of the third hole, team Krugman/Mizier was \$250 richer.

The final hole ended on the famous "Tail of the Whale" par-3. After the remaining two teams hit it greenside, a chip-off was in store. "As I approached the tee, I kept saying to myself, it's breezy, swing easy," said Pete Charleston on Team Terravita Country Club from Scottsdale, Arizona. "I felt an extra club was in order," expressed Ruben Gonzalez on Team Gran Coyote from Nayarit, Mexico.

Both teams felt the jitters and made bogie, resulting in a chip-off. Team Charleston/Peterson took home the spoils with \$600, and team Gonzalez/Eble was runner-up with \$350 in their wallets.



Team "The Club"



Team Fernando Lopez



Team Daniel De Leon



Team David Jackson



Team Ruben Gonzalez



Team Brian Brake



Team Oscar Fraustro



Team Scott Miller



Team Ty Chambers

Punta Mita

DAY TWO: FIRST ROUND OF COMPETITION

Perfect weather conditions greeted teams on the Bahia Course. The format for the Pro-Am was two best balls—one gross, one net—with amateurs playing to 80 percent of their handicap.

At the end of the first round, the stage was set for an exciting finish with three teams separated by four shots and only one shot separating the top four golf professionals (jockeying for a \$6,000 cash purse).

"It was exciting to be in first place on the leaderboard," said Scott Miller, director of golf at North Ranch Country Club in California. "Although we knew early bedtime would prove beneficial, I think we imbibed



more than we should have at Mary Mita—the beachside bar at the St. Regis."

DAY THREE: FINAL ROUND & AWARDS DINNER

"Punta Mita is a definite crowd pleaser," stated Brian Brake, director of golf at Blackhawk Country Club in California. "You can't help but be a little intimidated



Team Carlito's Crew



Team Oscar Fraustro



Team Tehama Golf Club



Team Blackhawk Country Club



Team "The Happy Slappers"

when you approach the famous Tail of the Whale signature par-3 on the Pacifico Course. Both courses play firm and a two-putt isn't a guarantee."

As the teams completed play, many gathered around the leaderboard set up next to the oceanside 18th green on the Pacifico Course. "A fitting end to a terrific couple of days under the warm tropical sun!" grinned Ulf Sandberg, amateur on Team Gran Coyote.

The night concluded with guests and competitors

dining on an expertly prepared dinner and wine pairing prepared by Chef Sergio Chavez at the Pacifico Beach Club while trophies were presented. "Our trophies are a magnificent piece of art made entirely by hand. The design honors the amazing spectacle that we can witness every year, the migration of the humpback whale to the warm waters of Banderas Bay. Francisco Sotres designed the trophies as a symbol of the local Huichol culture," beamed Emberson. ➤



Preparation for the Awards Dinner



Winning Professionals:

First Place: Daniel De Leon from Team Las Misiones Monterrey – 71-71- 142 - \$3,000

Second Place: Patricio Guerra from Team El Tigre – 72-70 – 142 - \$2,000

Third Place: Oscar Fraustro from Team Bigwin Island – 72-72 – 144 - \$1,000

Winning Teams:

- Team Las Misiones Monterrey – 137-128 – 265
- Team North Ranch Country Club – 132-135 – 267
- Team Bigwin Island – 136-134 – 270



Winning Team: Las Misiones Monterrey



Information on the 2023 Punta Mita Pro-Am

Format:

Four-person, 36-hole Pro-Am consisting of three paid amateurs and one professional.

Two best balls: One gross, one net with amateurs playing to full handicap and age appropriate tees.

For the golf professional: Up to a \$10,000 purse, with no buy-in required.

Itinerary:

Wednesday, March 22:

Arrival Day • Airport Transfer • Optional golf on Bahia Course
Beachside Welcome Reception and Dinner

Thursday, March 23:

Breakfast • Practice round on Pacifico Course • Lunch
Horse Race Shootout • Evening at your leisure

Friday, March 24:

Breakfast • Tournament Round #1 on Bahia Course
Lunch • Evening at your leisure

Saturday, March 25:

Breakfast • Tournament Round #2 on Pacifico Course
Lunch • Beachside Awards Reception and Dinner

Sunday, March 26:

Breakfast • Optional golf • Airport Transfer

Non-Golfing Spouses:

Select two activities:

A whale watching excursion, cooking class, tequila tasting, or massage.



Pricing:

Golf Professional:

Complimentary plus up to a \$600 stipend for pro's airfare. Spouse/family member joins the fun for only a \$450 surcharge.

Member

Single: \$4,900

Double/one player: \$6,700

Double/two players: \$7,400

Extra nights: \$850/night plus tax

For package pricing, all taxes, fees, and gratuities included, airfare is not.

Questions or to Register:

Please contact Mark Pazdur, tournament director, at Mark@ExecutiveGolferMagazine.com or 949-933-6478.

