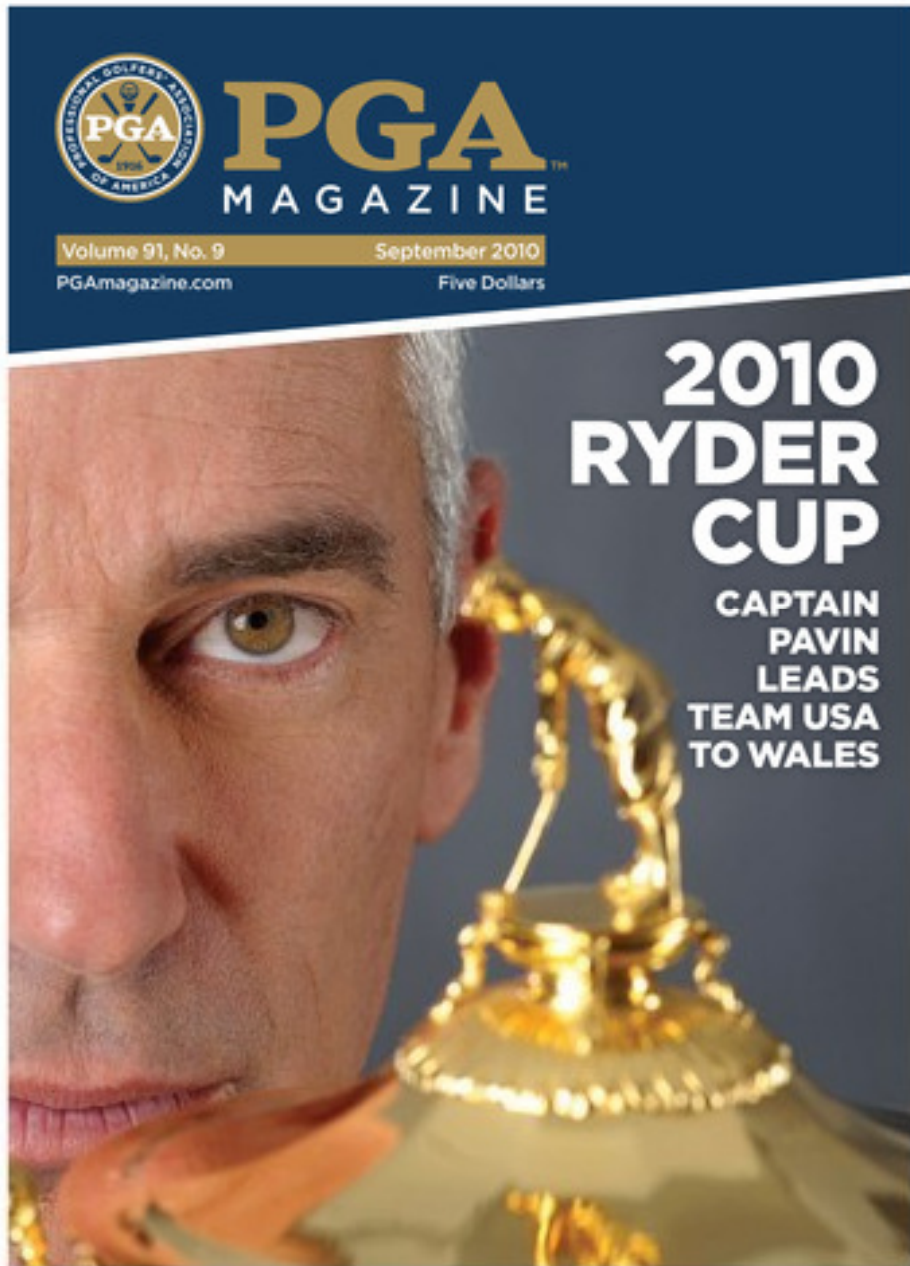


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Focus:

Dazzling in the Dominican

Punta Cana Resort & Club and PGA Professional Jay Overton are introducing travelers to a new level of luxury in the Dominican Republic

By Don Jozwiak, Senior Editor



Punta Cana Resort & Club's Corales Golf Club is quickly becoming a favorite of PGA Professionals and their traveling golfers.

Two years ago, longtime PGA Professional Jay Overton decided to retire after a lengthy career that included a great deal of success on and off the course. With stints at celebrated resorts such as Pinehurst (N.C.) Resort and Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club in Palm Harbor, Fla., and a pair of Senior PGA Professional Player of the Year awards, Overton considered his career complete. His new focus? Fishing.

Overton had a line in the water one Thursday morning when his phone rang. On the other end of the line was an acquaintance who was helping a Caribbean resort find a director of golf for a new development. Overton listened to the requirements management of the project had for the potential hire: a PGA Professional over the age of 50 with experience running a major resort, a strong record as a competitive player and name recognition as a leading golf professional. Overton knew he fit the list, and that not many other PGA Professionals did. He told the headhunter he'd think of some possible candidates, then went back to fishing.

"The island lifestyle is a big part of the environment here."

—Jay Overton, PGA Director of Golf, Corales Golf Club at Punta Cana Resort & Club

That's where the story picks up speed. When they first spoke, Overton's acquaintance was under the impression he was still employed at Innisbrook. When he hung up the phone, he resumed his Internet search for qualified golf professionals and discovered that Overton was, in fact, a free agent – and perfect for the job. Overton's fishing was quickly interrupted by another phone call from the headhunter, asking if he could propose Overton as a potential director of golf for the new development. At this point, Overton was told the development was a new ultra-exclusive course called Corales, located on the Pacific Ocean at the Punta Cana Resort & Club in the Dominican Republic. Overton was flattered, but had never heard of Punta Cana and had never been to the Dominican. He agreed to let the headhunter give his name to the resort owners, but didn't expect to hear back from them.

Less than 30 minutes later, Overton's phone rang for a third time. It was the headhunter

what's New

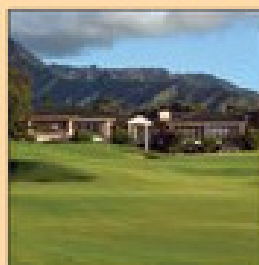


The Shawnee Inn and Golf Resort in Shawnee on Delaware, Pa., is offering midweek specials that include play on the resort's history A.W. Tillinghast-designed course, which hosted the 1938 PGA Championship won by Paul Runyan. The stay-and-play package is \$99 per person, double occupancy, and includes one night's accommodation and a round of golf at the resort's 27-hole championship course. Overnight resort guests can also enjoy a complimentary round on the 9-hole, par-3 Tillinghast Approach Course.

www.shawneeinn.com

Stowe Mountain Lodge is offering some outstanding end-of-season deals in Stowe, Vt. Through the end of the resort's season in mid-October, the resort is offering a Tee It Up package that includes discounted accommodations, unlimited golf at Stowe Country Club, breakfast for two each morning, and two Stowe Points cards worth \$75 each. Also available is the He Said She Said package, which includes golf at Stowe Mountain Golf Club, a 50-minute spa treatment and dinner for two at the Solstice restaurant.

www.stowemountainlodge.com



The Princeville Prince Course in Kauai, Hawaii, has been ranked 22nd on *Golf Magazine's* most recent Top 100 Courses You Can Play list. All five of the courses in the Kauai Garden Isle destination cooperative were ranked among Hawaii's state list for 2010 Best Courses You Can Play in the magazine. That includes Princeville Prince Course, Poipu Bay, Princeville Makai Course, Puakea and Kauai Lagoons. Poipu Bay will reopen in December following a switch to Seashore Paspalum greens.

www.kauaidiscovery.com/activities/golfing

The Canadian Rockies Golf Consortia has created a Fall Hotlist of golf holes in the area that feature great Fall foliage views. The list includes holes at the Fairmont Banff Springs Golf Course, Mt. Kidd at Kananaskis Country Golf Course, Silvertip Golf Course, Stewart Creek Golf and Country Club and Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge. To see the entire list and view stay-and-play packages, log onto the group's website.

www.canadianrockiesgolf.ca



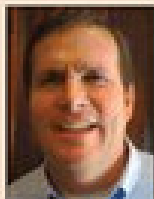
best practices: Travel

Enlist Your Members to Help Shape Trips

One thing that I focus on when planning a trip is fitting my members to a venue. The best way I have found to do this for a four-player trip is to start with one member who really wants to travel to a specific location. Then I allow that person to choose the other two players. This way, he has an idea of who will enjoy the trip – and we know the personalities will click. With all the time you spend together on the flight, in the rental car, playing golf and eating meals, the trip will be unsuccessful if you don't have the right combination of personalities. It is important to keep in mind the types of people you are taking on trips. If you have members that want to go on trips that include a lot of nightlife and are less golf-oriented, you probably won't want to take these players to a destination known for great golf and no nightlife, such as Scotland or Ireland. For these locations, you need to find people who are looking for more of a pure golf experience. The opposite applies to a destination such as Las Vegas or Cabo San Lucas. You should take players to these locations where golf is not the only recreational activity available. At 6 p.m., some people want to know where the cocktail party is and others want to know how long the range is open. The goal should be to fit the player to the golfing destination.

The golf business is the people business. These trips are all about the members. If you take members on trips that they do not enjoy because the location did not fit their lifestyle, this could hurt the relationship with that member. Taking members on trips they enjoy helps build trust in you and your facility, which will lead to good word of mouth advertising and support of your golf shop. You can't put a price tag on loyalty. Successfully matching a group of members to a destination, great weather and good courses are fabulous, but having a member personally tell you, "Pro, this is the best golf trip I've ever been on," is priceless.

—Roger Mack, PGA director of golf, Barnsley Gardens Resort, Adairsville, Ga.



asking him if he was available for a phone interview that afternoon. Overton got off the boat, went home and did some research. He was intrigued: Corales was to be a world-class golf course and club within one of the hottest resorts in the Caribbean – the golf course was designed by Tom Fazio, and investors included Julio Iglesias and Oscar de la Renta. Overton was intrigued, and his interest grew after a long phone conversation that afternoon with Punta Cana's founder and owner, Don Frank Rainieri. Two days later, Overton and his wife, Sally, were on a plane for their first visit to the

Dominican Republic.

"We were driven around the resort, then I had a chance to look at Corales," Overton remembers. "It was obvious to me that this was going to be one of the great, great golf courses anywhere in the world. Tom Fazio had created an absolute gem.

"The thing that was going through my mind was how fortunate I had been in my career, to have been at Pinehurst and have responsibility for those great courses, then to be at Innisbrook at have courses like Copperhead and the Island Course. If I took on the job at Corales, there wouldn't be many other PGA Professionals who had ever been at such a group of courses – the only other name that came to my mind was Bob Ford (the long-time PGA Professional at Oakmont (Pa.) Golf Club and Seminole Golf Club in Juno Beach, Fla.)."

Overton found himself enchanted by the Dominican Republic and intrigued by the possibilities at Corales – and Corales found itself a PGA director of golf. Overton is now a central part of the golf experience at Punta Cana, which is quickly becoming a favored destination for PGA Professionals and their traveling golfers.

It's easy to see why Punta Cana appealed to Overton, and why it is drawing growing numbers of U.S. golfers to the Dominican Republic. Situated on the country's east coast, Punta Cana Resort & Club's development started in 1971 when Rainieri led a partnership group in creating a resort on the site of the former Punta Cana Club. A native Dominican, Rainieri committed to environmentally sustainable tourism, and has grown to more than 26 square miles. That expansive area includes three residential communities – Corales, Hacienda and Arrecife – to go with a 355-room hotel, the 15 beachfront villas of Tortuga Bay designed by de la Renta, and a pair of golf courses. In

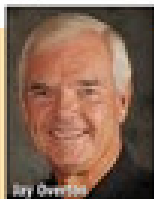
Ask the experts

Talking Travel With PGA Professionals

What should PGA Professionals know about planning trips to the Dominican Republic?

We asked that question of PGA Professionals Jay Overton and Jeff Neal, who are both based in the Dominican Republic. Here's what they told us:

■ Jay Overton, PGA director of golf, Corales Golf Club at Punta Cana Resort & Club, Dominican Republic: "Getting to the Dominican Republic is much easier than people might think. The airport has more direct flights than a lot of U.S. airports, and we make it very accessible and easy to get from the airport to the resort. In the golf packages that we put together for PGA Professionals and their guests, we have VIP car service waiting for



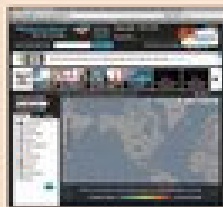
them at the airport. You're walked through customs and taken directly to the resort, which is a five-minute drive. It's the most convenient airport-to-destination setup I've ever seen. Punta Cana also has a private terminal on the resort property, in case someone wants to come in via private plane. We'll bring you in from the hangar on a golf car, which is about as easy as it gets."

■ Jeff Neal, PGA director of golf, La Cana and Hacienda courses, Punta Cana Resort &

Club, Dominican Republic: "The challenge any golf professional faces in booking group golf trips is what to do with the non-golfing members of the group. That is not a problem in any way in the Dominican Republic. There's a lot of great stuff to do, and so many excursions we can help you plan. We have mountains – not a lot of people know that about the Dominican Republic – and you can go hiking, zip-lining or take ATV rides. But without a doubt the thing most people want to do is hit the beach. We have some of the best beaches in the world, and Punta Cana has more than three miles of beaches right on the property. Half the group hits the courses in the morning with their clubs, the other half hits the beach with a good book, and everyone's happy at the end of the day." ●

site Seeing

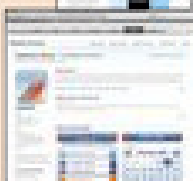
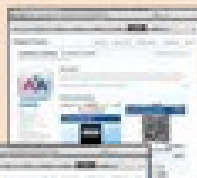
■ Everybody likes to save a little money when traveling, and finding a great deal is practically a sport for some people. Whether you're a coupon-clipper or not, finding savings wherever you travel takes you a lot easier if you use a hot new website called **The Dealmap**. The site collects local deals from a variety of sources, including users of the site, and organizes them by location. So if you're on a trip in an unfamiliar city, type the zip code into The Dealmap and you can find nearby offers on everything from food and beverage to hotel rooms and spa services. The site has also launched a free iPhone app, making it even easier to find savings on the go. www.thedealmap.com



■ Another hot website that straddles the line between social networking, scavenger hunts and travel is **Foursquare**, which is joining Facebook and Twitter in the upper echelon of mobile sites. The idea behind Foursquare is to use a smartphone to "check in" whenever you visit a place of business — anything from golf courses and hotels to restaurants and bars — and earn points and "badges" for accomplishing different goals. Many businesses monitor their Foursquare check-ins and provide discounts to customers who use the service. It's also a fun way for travelers to keep track of where they've been and to share and receive info from other consumers who've visited the same places — members can read or provide tips and to-dos from places they've been. Foursquare has free smartphone apps for the iPhone, BlackBerry and Android phones. www.foursquare.com



■ Speaking of smartphones, a growing number of airlines offer free apps for travelers that help them keep track of their flight status. Both **American Airlines** and **Southwest Airlines** have free iPhone apps available, and Delta plans to have one available by the end of the year. The ingenious apps are surprisingly useful, providing everything from mobile boarding passes at select airports — instead of printing a boarding pass, the gate personnel can scan your phone — and the ability to book and reschedule flights to reminders of where you parked at the airport and games to play while you wait in security lines. If you have a flight in your future, these apps can make your phone act more like a personal travel agent.



<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/american-airlines/id328208060?mt=8>
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addition to the Pazio-designed Corales course, F.B. Dye's La Cava course earns high marks from visitors.

Another PGA Professional with U.S. experience, Jeff Neal, is the director of golf for the La Cava course, and is overseeing the construction of a third course at Punta Cana — the Hacienda course, another F.B. Dye design that is scheduled to open in 2011. Neal, who was previously at Bay Colony Golf Club in Naples, Fla., says the golf courses at Punta Cana are breathtaking.

"The scenery is amazing here, and there are so many holes right on the ocean," Neal says. "People are always pretty happy when

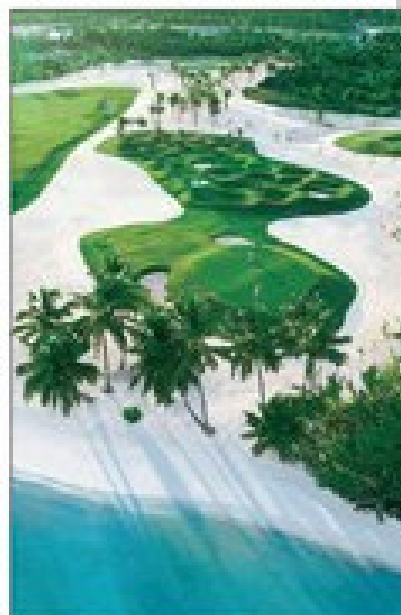
they come off the course, no matter how they play. The Northern Ohio PGA Section has held some events here, and guys are really trying to shoot a score. But even if they don't do too well, it's hard to be unhappy when you look out on the course with a beer in your hand and take in the view."

Neal and Overton both say that the relaxed pace of the Dominican Republic is apparent to visitors — and to the transplanted U.S. PGA Professionals.

"The island lifestyle is a big part of the environment here. It is reflected in the goals set by the ownership — at Corales, we limit play to 40 people a day. That's a big difference from most resorts, where they're trying to get as many people out on the course as possible," Overton says. "The pace is slower, and the owners have the patience to let the word get out by giving players a chance to enjoy the courses.

"The things I've always enjoyed most about being a PGA Professional are mentoring my assistants and getting to know the golfers. At Punta Cana, we have the time to really do it. I have the chance to talk to every player before their round, spend time with them on the practice tee. I've met as many nice people in the last 11 months as I did in the previous five years — not because there weren't plenty of great people around at Inverloch, but I was always too busy to spend time with them. Now I have that chance, and that's a great thing for a PGA Professional."

Overton is now eager to share Corales and



The La Cava course at Punta Cana has several holes right on the ocean.



Breathtaking views, such as the one seen here from the 140th green, make the Conales course at Punta Cana Resort & Club a must see.

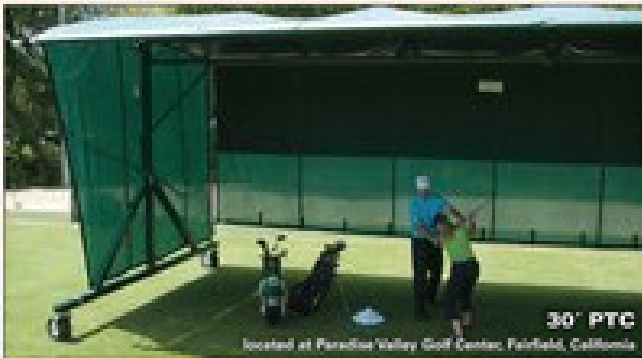
the Punta Cana lifestyle with his fellow PGA Professionals. The resort is hosting a series of pro-ams to familiarize PGA Professionals with the property, and there are incentive programs that reward professionals that bring groups to Punta Cana. PGA Professionals who bring at least seven golfers to Punta Cana on the all-inclusive or basic golf plan will be 100-percent comped for the same package. Overton is also encouraging PGA Professionals to

bring groups to Punta Cana during the winter for instruction-based vacations using Overton's instruction skills and the 20-acre practice facility at Conales.

Overton and Neal are reaching out directly to PGA Professionals in the U.S., and encourage their peers to call them if they want to learn more about Punta Cana. They tout the resort's miles of beaches, world-class spa, outstanding food and luxury accommodations.

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—Brian Whitworth, Past President, The PGA of America

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And, of course, the golf experience. Corales is a private club, but PGA Professionals can bring their members to play on the exclusive course.

"You absolutely have to see Corales to believe it. It is so different from anything else," Overton says. "The property is 700-plus acres, with 200 acres of manicured turf - that's 34,078 sprinkler heads. The course can play all the way up to 7,670 yards, with very large greens.

This is a chance to play a truly unique property, and it isn't a place your members can just walk onto without you.

"As a PGA Professional who travels with his members, you know you have a handful of must-see destinations: St. Andrews, Pebble Beach, Randon Dunes, Pine Valley. Corales is going to be in that group. It's an experience you have to give them, and it belongs on the short list of what I consider 'collectible' courses. We'd like to create a unique experience for your best members, and give you a chance to treat them to an unforgettable experience." ■

research Trends: Golf Travel Industry Survey

As a PGA Professional, I have traveled with members/golfers to the following destinations. Please select all that apply.

	Private Club	Public Course	Private Club	Public Course	
Florida	51.5%	23.1%	Hawaii	9.8%	5.2%
North Carolina	25.9%	14.5%	Bermuda	8.8%	2.9%
South Carolina	25.6%	15.6%	Ireland	27.8%	5.8%
Arizona	29.4%	22.0%	Scotland	23.0%	5.2%
California	34.0%	18.0%	South America	1.5%	0%
Texas	11.1%	9.8%	Spain/Portugal	2.7%	0%
Puerto Rico	6.3%	2.3%	Michigan	8.6%	8.7%
Jamaica	8.6%	4.6%	Canada	5.3%	4.0%
Cabo, Mexico	11.6%	4.0%	Oregon	12.6%	8.1%
Riviera Maya, Mexico	2.0%	1.7%	Other	19.5%	23.2%
Dominican Republic	8.6%	6.3%			

Source: PGA Magazine Golf Travel Industry Survey

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has been a huge success at my club. Over the past 5 years we have used it for our members and many other outings. It is a great program that gives each event a lot of flexibility not to mention added value. As one of my tournament chairpersons said, "It really is a no brainer!"

TOM MELIJO

Head Golf Professional
International Country Club
Fairfax, VA