

Don't forget your clubs

Whether you're there for business or pleasure, those travelling to Perth, Vienna, Osaka or Riyadh will enjoy an abundance of world-class golf courses and an array of luxury accommodation options, writes **Michael Stoneman**



PERTH

Western Australia is blessed with some of the most stunning coastal scenery in the entire country, and few golf courses take better advantage of it than The Cut, situated in Port Bouvard, approximately an hour south of the state capital, Perth. Set over spectacular rolling dunes, with challenging coastal winds, The Cut provides a true links test akin to the great courses of Ireland and Scotland. The back nine, in particular, offers a visually stunning links experience with amazing coastal views that are incredibly tough to beat – especially when

standing on the elevated tee of the par-four 12th, perched high above the beach below.

The views are no less impressive from the Hyatt Regency, which overlooks the picturesque Swan River in the centre of Perth. Within walking distance of the city's central retail, entertainment and business district – as well as Perth's major sporting venues and tourist attractions – the award-winning hotel offers 367 spacious and luxurious rooms and suites, as well as a 20-metre outdoor heated pool, sauna, fitness centre, floodlit tennis court, and an array of excellent dining options.

WHERE TO STAY AND PLAY

The Cut

Tel: +61 8 9582 4420

www.the-cut.com.au

Hyatt Regency Perth

Tel: +61 8 9225 1234

perth.regency.hyatt.com

VIENNA

The recent exploits of Bernd Wiesberger on the European Tour have put Austrian golf firmly back on the map, and with more than 140 courses to choose from – many of which boast stunning mountain backdrops – the country is well worth considering for a golfing sojourn. The prestigious

Fontana Golf & Country Club, just 30 minutes south of Vienna, is undoubtedly one of Austria's finest courses. The 18-hole layout opened for play in 1996 and has already hosted 12 Austrian Opens, with Spain's Rafael Cabrera-Bello winning the most recent edition to be held there, in 2009. Designed by well-known Canadian course architect Doug Carrick, the challenging layout requires precision golf, with numerous bunkers and water hazards ready to capture any wayward shots. In particular, the huge man-made lake provides plenty of drama over the closing holes, with water hugging the entire left-hand side of the fairway on the dogleg 16th, and the signature par-three 17th requiring a long carry over the lake.

A similarly grand experience awaits those checking in to ➤

Main: Few golf courses can match the stunning views of The Cut's signature 12th hole
Inset: The closing hole of the Western Australian course, a demanding 552-metre par five, also features spectacular vistas from the tee box



the luxurious Grand Hotel Wien, located one block from the State Opera on the buzzing Ringstrasse. The Belle Époque hotel first opened to much fanfare in 1870, drawing the glitterati of Austrian society, and continues to exude traditional Viennese elegance following extensive renovations in 2003. With 205 classically decorated guestrooms and an array of dining options – including the award-winning Le Ciel, which offers panoramic views from its 7th-floor terrace – the Grand Hotel Wien remains one of the finest destinations for discerning visitors to the Austrian capital.

WHERE TO STAY AND PLAY

Fontana Golf & Country Club

Tel: +43 2253 606 2203

www.fontana.at

Grand Hotel Wien

Tel: +43 1515 80 1700

www.grandhotelwien.com

OSAKA

With 24-year-old hotshot Hideki Matsuyama riding high in the world rankings, Japanese golf is in rude health at present and interest in the game has never been higher. The 'Land of the Rising Sun' already boasts several storied layouts, including the revered Hirono Golf Club, near Kobe, and in total there are more than 2,500 courses to choose from throughout the country.

Visitors to Osaka will not be disappointed by the historic Ibaraki Country Club – a 36-hole facility around 30 minutes north of the city centre – which first opened for play in 1923.

The West course, originally laid out in 1960, was completely renovated by acclaimed American course designer Rees Jones in 2011 and is now widely acclaimed as one of the finest courses in the country. Boasting dramatic elevation changes, numerous water features and mature pines lining many of the fairways, the course provides a memorable golfing experience, with Lake Kamiga ready to capture any errant shots on the closing holes.

The Hilton Osaka, in the heart of the city's business district, makes a convenient base for any stay, with the hotel lying adjacent to Umeda Train Station and the Grand Front Osaka shopping mall. The hotel features a swimming pool, fitness centre and five restaurants – including the 35th-floor, Windows on the World – and the spacious rooms all offer excellent city views.

WHERE TO STAY AND PLAY

Ibaraki Country Club

Tel: +81 7 2625 1661

www.ibarakicc.com

Hilton Osaka

Tel: +81 6 6347 7111

www.hilton.com



Top left: The towering, 267-metre-high Al Faisaliah Hotel
Top: Dining at the Globe offers incredible views of Riyadh
Above: The picturesque 10th hole at Ibaraki Country Club

RIYADH

Unlike the neighbouring United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia has yet to fully embrace golf, with only three 18-hole grass courses in the whole of the country. Those keen to test their game in the desert kingdom need not be disappointed, however, with the Dirab Golf & Country Club boasting an 18-hole Championship course, a nine-hole par-3 course and excellent practice facilities.

Set in the picturesque Tuwaiq valley, a 30-minute drive from Riyadh, the Championship layout features lush, tree-lined fairways, perfectly manicured greens and superb views of the surrounding desert and mountains, with nine of the holes even boasting floodlights to enable play in the cooler evenings.

Riyadh itself offers an array of high-end hotels to suit all tastes, including major international chains such as Ritz-Carlton, Four Seasons, Sheraton and Moevenpick. Few of them, however, can match the luxury of the Al Faisaliah Hotel.

Located in the heart of Riyadh's affluent business and commercial district, with easy access to high-end shopping, the Al Faisaliah offers 330 beautifully appointed rooms and suites, as well as exclusive 24-hour butler service, contemporary meeting facilities, a state-of-the-art health club, luxurious spa and six international restaurants, including the signature Globe – spectacularly situated in the golden sphere that tops Al Faisaliah Tower. ■

WHERE TO STAY AND PLAY

Dirab Golf & Country Club

Tel: 966 11 812 6671

www.dirabgolf.com

Al Faisaliah Hotel

Tel: +966 11 273 2000

www.alfaisaliahotels.com