

THE OASIS OF THE DESERT

INDIAN WELLS GOLF RESORT

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BY ROSANNE ZINNIGER



The lure of the desert to some may be the gorgeous sunrises and sunsets. It may also be the terrain and landscape, especially in the spring, of blooming wild flowers. Add outstanding golf and accommodation and what you get is Indian Wells.

Tucked away in a cove within the Coachella Valley in Southern California, this quaint oasis dates back to 1823 when Mexican explorer Captain Jose Romero found and coined the area "Indian Wells" after an Indian village that was formed around a hand-built well dug by women of the Cahuilla Tribe.

So magnificent was its beauty that by the 1950's, Hollywood celebrities such as Desi Arnaz, Lucille Ball, Bob Hope, and others settled here and built The Indian Wells Hotel. Bob Hope, as it stands, had been an avid golfer and christened he namesake, "The Bob Hope Desert Classic" at Indian Well Country Club in 1960, and won by non other than "The King" himself - Arnold Palmer.

By the late 1970's, the Coachella Valley became a residential resort magnet and a prosperous spot of luxury and financial affluence. Presently, Indian Wells is considered a premier community that includes the Renaissance Esmeralda, a quality Marriot property located at the base of the picturesque Santa Rosa Mountains just 17 miles from Palm Springs International Airport.

RENAISSANCE ESMERALDA

A stay at the Esmeralda is more than a typical resort vacation. Upon entering, you will be welcomed by a stunning eight-story atrium lobby and a grand staircase leading down to a comfortable sitting area and the hopping Stir Lounge bar, with access to restaurants Cava and Glo Sushi, as well as fine Italian dining at the Zagat top-rated Sirocco.

Here at Sirocco, dishes are prepared with fresh and locally grown ingredients. High on the recommendation list on executive chef Eric Theiss's menu is the Raviolini D'Aragosta, which is a hand-made ravioli with lobster and Dungeness crab

meat drizzled with a most uniquely flavoured shrimp lobster brandy sauce. To complete that Italian culinary experience, stroll down to the Gelato bar, conveniently located on the lobby floor for that sweet taste of ice cream.

A walk outside reveals outdoor seating by fire pits to keep warm on cool nights and enjoy a drink or two. Stroll through the property by day and you will encounter three swimming pools, a sandy beach with volleyball court, lighted fountains and lakes along lush foliage and palm tree-lined paths.

Luxurious accommodations include 80 oversize corner rooms and 22 deluxe suites, all with plush beds, views of pool or mountains, a soothing artistic décor, and upscale in-room amenities. A quick breakfast at the Cava bistro will set you up with the energy you will need for a round of golf on the Celebrity Golf Course at the Indian Wells Golf Resort.

INDIAN WELLS GOLF RESORT

Fantastic dining, spa, tennis, swimming,

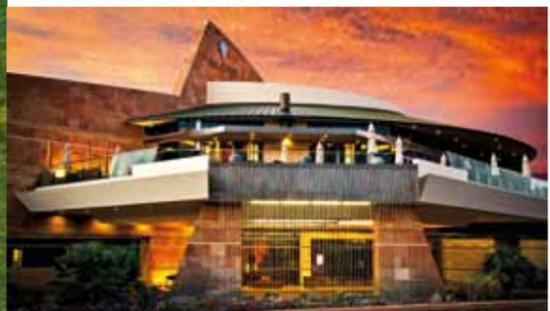
hiking and bike paths can all be had onsite with shopping within a 20-minute or less drive. The Indian Wells Golf Resort, a public course housing two magnificent 18-hole golf courses, The Celebrity Golf Course and the Players Golf Course, is conveniently located right next to the Renaissance Esmeralda a mere cart ride away. This multi-million dollar golf resort is most recently famous for being featured on the 'Big Break, Season 15', which aired May 2011.

Owned by the city and managed by Troon Golf, it is consistently voted among the top 10 best municipal courses in the country. The best time to visit Indian Wells is during the winter-spring months as the flora is in full bloom and the weather is spectacular. Both golf courses are at their peak in terms of scenic beauty and playability.

Guests will be overwhelmed upon entering its spectacular 53,000 square foot clubhouse. The pro shop also houses the Callaway Performance Center with certified specialists who analyses your



OPENING PICTURE: 1st Hole.
BOTTOM RIGHT PAGE:
Celebrity Course 16th hole.



TOP LEFT PAGE: Celebrity Course - Hole 14th. TOP RIGHT PAGE: Exterior Renaissance Esmeralda; BOTTOM: Indian Wells Golf Resort Clubhouse.

swing with hi-tech camera equipment, and then provide you with the custom club specifications to take with you.

Don't want to miss your tee time? Grab a tee time pager and a bucket of balls to practice your swing at the driving range, and the club will "beep" you when you are up to tee off. And then set your GPS on your golf cart as you drive over to the Clive Clark designed Celebrity Course.

Opened in November 2006, the 'Celebrity' is an 18-hole, par-72 golf course measuring 7,050 yards from back and featuring striking views of the Santa Rosa and San Bernadino mountain ranges and majestic Eisenhower Mountain that stands to the south, beautiful floral landscape with water throughout in the form of streams, brooks, waterfalls and split level lakes.

Clark's fine detail to the contour of the undulating fairways, strategic use of

bunkers and pin placement on the greens earned it the host course for the 2007 and 2008 LG Skins Game, and the Big Break 2011 Season 15. Notable holes are 4, 14, and 18 due to the combination of placement of trouble spots along the fairway and green, and his attention to the use of natural terrain and landscape. The Fourth, a 501-yard par 5 consists of terraced tee boxes among the trees. Aim to drive 194 yards to the left to keep clear of the large bunker and trees to the right, then stay centre as you arrive about 175 yards that will set you before the water and hill to the green. A nice shot to the centre of the green will keep you away from the bunkers on each side and to the back. Most greens on the course are a bit bowled, and this one declines toward the water, so a precise putt to pin is desirable.

Hole 14 is considered to be the Celebrity's signature hole by golfing



director here at the resort, Joe Williams. He applauds the 14th as a true a risk-reward par 5 with beauty all around with breathtaking views of Eisenhower Mountains, as well as the surrounding foothills. The hole is extremely well bunkered, but what gells everything together are the many flower beds and two lakes, including one that fronts the green and is fed by a spectacular waterfall just right of it. The 14th also has a meandering stream that bisects the fairway, making the lay-up shot even more difficult.

Hole 18 is an absolutely gorgeous hole with water along the tee boxes to the left, a dogleg left fairway with bunkers to the right, water on the left, and in front of the green. This par 4 is 388 yards from the tips, so a drive to the right of the fairway short of the bunkers will place you in a nice spot over the water in front of the green

with a pitch left. A split-level lake with waterfall makes this a grand finale.

Spend the afternoon relaxing by one of the Esmeralda's pool, and take in a spa treatment at Spa Esmeralda, a 13,300 square foot facility with 11 indoor treatment rooms, eight outside treatment cabanas, one indoor couple's suite, a lush garden with seating area for relaxation, and his/her steam room and relaxation lounge. Using traditional Western concepts incorporated with Eastern treatments to promote balance and positive energy flow using indigenous ingredients from the area to enhance the senses.

One of the most rejuvenating and refreshing treatments is the Thaiyurveda Herbal Massage. This massage incorporates the Thai methods of balancing the mind, heart, body and energy by incorporating acupressure movements along the energy Zen lines, stretching techniques and herbal compresses massaged into muscles and joints to loosen and relax your whole body. The therapist will begin your treatment with a chime and you will be transformed as she works on every part of your body – legs, feet, arms, hands, back, upper chest, head, and even your torso and digestive area. The compress consists of a combination of tea leaves, citrus, peppermint, and other natural herbs. After 190 blissful minutes, your session will end with a chime and setting up for the next round of golf.

Prepare for another day of an unparalleled golf at the Player Golf Course at Indian Wells Golf Resort. Designer and leading golf architect John Fought created a classic American design with generously wide fairways filled with sculpted bunkers in a style emulating the legendary architect Dr. Alister MacKenzie.

Opened in November 2007, the 18-hole, par 72 course measures 7,376 yards. Visually, there is the right balance of trees, bunkers and water with views of the mountains to create a sense of solitude for the player even if there are others enjoying the golf course.

Prominent holes include the 5th, 6th, and the fun and challenging 17th.

The 469-yard par 4 5th encompasses natural desert terrain that curves to the right. Trees line all along the right side with bunkers and desert to the left. The tee boxes are set next to the desert landscape, so a drive to the left centre of the fairway will keep you out of the trees and a strategically placed bunker some 300 yards away.

The course is hilly and its wide fairways belie danger off it. Shots flaying off to the trees or desert will most definitely mean adding valuable shots to your score card. The signature hole here, according to golfing director Joe Williams, is Hole 6.

He explains, "This hole is a dogleg left with a large lake running down the left side of the fairway. The tee shot offers the golfer a risk of cutting the corner to provide an easier approach shot or they can play it safe and leave for a longer approach. Either way, the golfer will be pleased with the tremendous view of the surrounding Santa Rosa Mountains."

The penultimate Hole 17 is a par 3 at 146 yards. With stunning with floral detail, a lake and large bunkers to the left, and back of green, and more trees lining the back of the green. Another fine finish on 18, and you are off to the clubhouse for refreshments or lunch at the IW Restaurant sampling their delicious fresh Mango Chicken Salad with Carrot Cake for dessert.

In addition to golf, there are a multitude of activities to indulge in, including hot air balloon rides at sunset, shopping at the Westfield mall, a day at the Morongo Indian Reservation Casino and shopping outlet mall in the community of Cabazon, the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway from the desert floor to the top of San Jacinto Mountain where you can dine at one of their restaurants, and the Living Desert Zoo and Botanical Gardens.

For full information on all Indian Wells activities, visit www.indianwells.com

For information on booking your stay and spa with the Renaissance Esmeralda, visit www.renaissancesmeralda.com

For information or to book a tee time at Indian Wells Golf Resort, visit www.indianwellsgolfresort.com