

Paradise at **The Lakes**

**Spectacular golf at the Pete Dye-designed course at
Barcelo Bavaro Beach Resort near Punta Cana, Dominican Republic**



**The 18th hole at The Lakes golf course
at Barcelo Bavaro Beach Resort.**



**This view shows the 8th and 9th
holes on the left side of photo and
the 17th green and the 18th hole on
the right side.**



The par 4 10th at The Lakes - a great risk-reward hole.

Photo by Steve Harron

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The 9th hole features an island green as well as railway ties - a signature feature of a Pete Dye design.

Great golf - and a lot more

It's easy to have a good time when all components of a golf trip come together so well

By **STEVE HARRON**
Grey-Bruce Golf

It's safe to say that it's a combination of things that creates a truly memorable golf vacation. And while it's a given that the golf has to be good - or hopefully great - there are other important factors such as the quality of accommodations and the ease of getting to the golf course.

You also need good food and service and some enjoyable apres-golf activities. So you can imagine what would happen if all these components came together beautifully in an all-inclusive package at a gorgeous five-star resort on a Caribbean island.

Yes, that's right - it's a thing of beauty.

And I got to experience it recently at Barcelo Bavaro Beach Resort near Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

What strikes me most about the experience is how easy it was to have a good time.

It was easy waking up in a room that overlooks the ocean and a beautiful sand beach that is rated as one of the top-10 beaches in the world.

It was also pretty darn effortless to take a short walk to a



Water fountain lights up the night at Barcelo Bavaro Beach Resort.

poolside breakfast buffet that is so large you are almost overwhelmed by the choices.

And sitting near the pool sipping coffee and enjoying a delicious breakfast is definitely a great way to start the day. And we haven't even got to the golf yet!

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Beaches in the Punta Cana area are rated in the top-10 in the world.

Resort offers 1,991 rooms with 80% of them providing ocean view

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But before looking at the resort's beautiful Pete Dye-designed golf course, here are some things you should know about the resort.

It has 1,991 rooms and it's actually two resorts in one with an adult-only facility nearby the main family resort. Eighty per cent of the rooms have an ocean view.

They have five pools, including a rooftop infinity pool that overlooks the ocean, a fully-equipped fitness centre and a beautiful spa that includes hydrotherapy and other health and beauty treatments.

Food choices are incredible with 14 on-site restaurants - most of them distinctly different with décor and cuisine from various countries of the world (not be missed is Kyoto - the Japanese restaurant where they will put on quite a show preparing your dinner).

After dinner, you have some other great choices to make - and they're all right on the resort. There's nightly entertainment in a 1,400-seat open-air theatre or you can head to one of the resort's 16 bars including a disco. Other choices include a bowling alley and casino. You can also shop until midnight at the many shops within the resort.

Being bored should never be a problem at this resort. And it definitely won't be at the resort's golf course where the course, with 25 inland lakes and ponds and 122 bunkers, will



The Japanese restaurant Kyoto offers a hot time and an entertaining meal.

demand your full attention.

The legendary Pete Dye is known for his tough golf courses (think Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass, Ocean Course at Kiawah Island) but in this case he has done an excellent job of making the course challenging but also highly playable. And did I mention a whole lot of fun to play?

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An aerial view of the 9th hole. It's only 118 yards from the whites but it's a tricky shot when the wind is blowing.

Choose your tee deck wisely and you'll have a great time

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The key is to choose the right tee deck.

You have five choices and they range from 4,688 to 6,555 yards, giving everyone from the scratch golfer to the high-handicapper a chance at a decent round.

Quick Tip: Having played from both the whites and the blues, I would recommend choosing less yardage than you would back home because you'll get less roll on the soft fairways and you'll have to focus on strategy, not power, to avoid the sand and water.

The meticulously-maintained course starts off with two of its easiest holes - a par 4 with a generous fairway that plays only 285 yards from the whites and a 144-yard par 3 that has a large and inviting green.

Then the real work starts. The third hole is a straight-away par 4 but at 394 yards from the whites and with bush down both sides of the fairway - and a single tree on the right side of the fairway providing an extra obstacle - it requires both power and precision.

The first six holes on the front nine have a real parkland feel to them but the views open up as you tee it up on #7.

The tree-lined fairways are gone and suddenly you're looking at lots of water, sand and palm trees. It's gorgeous - but a little scary at the same time.

The most memorable hole on the front is the 9th - a spectacular par 3 with an island green reminiscent of Dye's most famous par 3 - the 17th at TPC Sawgrass in Ponte Verda,



The par 4 third hole is the toughest on the course.

Florida.

It's only 118 yards from the whites but with any wind at all it's a tricky shot to a two-tiered green that is protected by not only bunkers but also one of Dye's signature features - railway ties (hit one of those and your ball could go anywhere).

Mercifully, the drop areas on the par 3s are right next the green so if you dunk your tee shot you still have a chance at bogey.

Dye is also known for great risk-reward holes and you'll find plenty of them on this course, especially on the back 9 where water comes into play more often.

The 10th is a great example. It's a 308-yard par 4 dogleg left with water all the way down the left side.

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The par 4 15th hole is the ultimate risk-reward hole. It plays only 218 yards from the whites and invites golfers to go for the green.

Course features many great risk-reward holes

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Take it down the left side and you'll have a short shot into the green or you can play it safe to the right and take your chances with a longer iron into a green sitting on the edge of the water.

The ultimate risk-reward hole is the 15th - a par 4 that plays only 218 yards from the whites. How could you not go for it, right? But that's the beauty in the design - if you go for the green there is plenty of trouble to deal with, including a pond along the right side of the fairway and bunkers on both sides of the fairway. And the green is surrounded by trees.

An easy 5-iron and a short pitch should get you in birdie territory but Dye is counting on some players being unable to resist the urge to get on in one.

Whether you botch it or birdie it, one thing is certain: your next three holes will be memorable.

The 16th is a beautiful par 5 dog leg left where you may

catch a glimpse of pink flamingos or other wildlife and the 17th is a dog-leg right par 4 that will test your nerves on your approach to a green surrounded by water.

The final hole is my absolute favourite. It's a 252-yard par 4 dogleg left that requires a tee shot over water then an approach to a green that sits on the edge of an inland lake and is guarded by bunkers and railway ties.

Even if you don't make par or better, it's a memorable hole to finish on.

And once you're done, I think you'll agree that Dye has done a masterful job of creating a resort course that looks great, is challenging but fair and - best of all - it's just a whole lot of fun to play.

For more photos of the course and resort please see the following pages.

For more on the resort, go to:

www.barcelobavarobeachresort.com



The 12th hole is a par 3 that's well protected by water in front and bunkers around it. The good news is the drop area is right beside the green, giving you a chance at bogey if you dunk your tee ball.



The par 5 16th hole is a dog-leg left beauty where you may find pink flamingos enjoying the pond on the left.



This aerial photo provides a great view of the dog-leg left par 5 16th hole.



The impressive entrance to the five-star resort near Punta Cana.



This is what you'll see from an ocean-view room.



Photo above:
One of five
pools at the
resort.



Photo at left:
One of the
resort's 1,991
rooms.



The Kyoto Japanese restaurant offers good food and an entertaining dining experience where chefs will cook your dinner right at your table.