

Premier Resorts 2014-2015

Behold! The best golf destinations in
North America—chosen by you

By Joe Passov

IT'S ONLY FITTING THAT THE BROADMOOR HAS climbed to the top of our biennial resort rankings. Though lofty heights are nothing new for the venerable retreat in the Colorado Rockies, this is the perennial contender's first trip to the summit. In a mild upset, the Broadmoor narrowly edged out the reigning champ, Bandon Dunes.

As always, the quality of the golf was paramount in tabulating the votes. We enjoy puffy pillows and plummy wine as much as you do, but challenging layouts and tee-box panoramas come first in our book. As you cruise through our list of Platinum, Gold and Silver medal winners, warm yourselves with late-winter thoughts of emerald fairways and hot-stone massages. This year, 15 first-time medal winners made the list, including the Grand Del Mar in San Diego, our highest-ranked newcomer.

Oh, and when you call the folks at the reservation desks, ask about special packages—including all-you-can-play deals. You might save a few bucks, or land a bigger room. And during your stay, remember two important things: (1) Never leave a birdie putt short. (2) Never tell your buddies about the mud mask and facial you had at the spa. That's our little secret.

The Broadmoor
Colorado Springs, Colo.
855-634-7711,
broadmoor.com

TOP VOTE
GETTER!

Since legendary entrepreneur Philip Anschutz purchased The Broadmoor in 2011, management has made impressive renovations to the hotel and its restaurants, and also dramatically upgraded the amenity package. The Broadmoor's jump to the top spot in our rankings was powered by a runaway win in the Service category and top-5 showings in both Lodging and Food & Drink. True, the golf (three 18-hole tracks) isn't as spectacular as it is at some iconic resorts. But the East Course—featuring design elements courtesy of Donald Ross and Robert Trent Jones—is strong enough to have hosted both the 2008 U.S. Senior Open and the 2011 U.S. Women's Open. And, well, the Rocky Mountains will just have to suffice as the backdrop for your on-course heroics.

MOUNTAIN MAJESTY
The par-4 18th (East Course) at The
Broadmoor, this year's top-ranked resort.

Your votes are in!

You voted more than 8,000 times on four criteria: *Golf, Lodging, Food & Drink and Service. We apportioned 40 percent of the score to the Golf rating and 20 percent to each of the three other categories. For details on the voting, including which resort topped each category, go to golf.com/resorts.*

↑ Moves up one category

The American Club
Kohler, Wis.
800-344-2838,
americanclubresort.com

Since we introduced the Platinum medal category in 2008, this heartland haven has earned four straight slots in the Top 3. And now the historic hotel has been remodeled, as has the adjacent Carriage House Annex. Good news for beer-and-brat fans: The celebrated Horse & Plow restaurant has reopened. The Golf score is the strong suit at The American Club. The revamped Blackwolf Run course wowed competitors at the 2012 U.S. Women's Open. And the Whistling Straits track, with its countless bunkers and stunning Lake Michigan vistas, is muscular and demanding enough to host both the 2015 PGA Championship and the 2020 Ryder Cup.



Bandon Dunes Golf Resort

Bandon, Ore.
888-345-6008,
bandondunes.com

The Oregon gem didn't take long to become a legend. The oldest of its four full-length courses is only 14, but Bandon Dunes already has a place in our golf psyches. There's something about its mix of earth and sea and sky that thrills. Although Bandon finished No. 2 overall, it won the coveted top spot in the Golf rankings. And this year, reviewers rave about Bandon's new small-ball offerings: Bandon Preserve, a brilliant 13-hole par-3 course courtesy of Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw, and The Punchbowl, America's most entertaining putting course. This 3.5-acre gathering place—or is it a watering hole?—features drink holders at every tee.

LARRY LAMBERSCH/USA

The Greenbrier

White Sulphur Springs, W. Va.
855-453-4858,
greenbrier.com

The Greenbrier is an old reliable among our Platinum winners—it just exudes tradition. Yet its golf greatness derives from the fact that it never stands still. Consider the 101-year-old Old White TPC course, one of the few C.B. Macdonald masterworks open to the public. The course was lovingly restored by Lester George in 2006, and more recently it was further toughened up to challenge the big boys on the PGA Tour, in the Greenbrier Classic. Even with its three acclaimed tracks—the Greenbrier Course hosted the 1979 Ryder Cup, Seve's first—it's the resort's top-6 rankings in Lodging, Food & Drink and Service that keep it in rarified air.

ALMOST HEAVEN The par-4 seventh at the Greenbrier's Old White TPC Course.



COURTESY THE GREENBRIER

Kiawah Island Golf Resort

Kiawah Island, S.C.

800-654-2924, kiawahresort.com

When Rory McIlroy lapped the field with his record-setting march to victory at the 2012 PGA Championship at Kiawah's Ocean Course, the world was reminded of the track's character and the resort's beauty. Four other top-notch tracks lift Kiawah to a Top 10 Golf ranking, and the eco-sensitive resort on the Atlantic Ocean grabs top-20 spots in every other category. The pristine beaches are exquisite, the tennis program world-class, and the Sanctuary Hotel (its decor conjuring thoughts of *Gone with the Wind*) is a charmer. The Atlantic is a constant companion at Kiawah. As you sip a Dark & Stormy (spiced rum, ginger beer and lime) at the Ryder Cup Bar while you gaze out at the course and the waves, you'll feel both the energy and serenity of the sea.



STEVE UZZELL

DAWN PATROL Sunrise over the ninth hole at Kiawah Island's Ocean Course.

Ritz-Carlton Lodge, Reynolds Plantation

Greensboro, Ga.

706-467-0600,
ritzcarltonlodge.com

This boutique-sized property with massive golf offerings slipped out of our Top 10 in 2012. Now under new ownership, Reynolds Plantation is back in the Platinum elite. It boasts a lovely lakeside location midway between Atlanta and Augusta—a stay would be the perfect capper to Masters week. The renovated rooms emphasize gracious Southern stylings, and the restaurant, Georgia's Bistro—with timber ceiling beams and a baronial fireplace—has been polished up. And they haven't forgotten the golf. A reworking of the Landing course by original architect Bob Cupp, with former Augusta National superintendent Billy Fuller, has restored The Ritz at Reynolds to its elevated status.

Pebble Beach Resorts

Pebble Beach, Calif.

800-654-9300, pebblebeach.com

We could treat the three resorts—the Lodge at Pebble Beach, the Inn at Spanish Bay and Casa Palmero—as separate properties. But the shuttle system, shared facilities and overall high quality make them feel like one dream-fulfilling package. Always a top-5 scorer in Golf (Those rocks! Those seals! That ocean!), Pebble has upped the ante yet again, this time by tweaking the greens and expanding the practice facility. The biggest upgrade in dining options is The Bench, a new restaurant that overlooks the 18th hole at the Lodge at Pebble Beach. Wood-roasted entrées, relaxed ambience and Instagram-worthy views of the Pacific have already made it wildly popular with both guests and locals. It's no surprise that Pebble...well, rocks.



MONTEREY MAGIC The par-3 seventh at Pebble Beach.

Four Seasons Resort Hualalai at Historic Ka'upulehu

Kailua-Kona, Big Island, Hawaii
808-325-8000,
fourseasons.com/hualalai

As if you needed another reason to visit paradise, this multiple Platinum winner on the dry north Kona coast of Hawaii's Big Island earned the No. 1 ranking in Lodging. Guests rave about the resort's roomy, low-slung bungalows, which melt into the landscape and offer a seamless transition between indoors and out. For good measure, the property scored a third-place finish in Service and a fourth in Food & Drink. There's plenty to tweet home about on the oceanside Jack Nicklaus course; it's friendly, lava-lined and packed with holes demanding enough to test the Champions Tour pros each year in the Mitsubishi Electric Championship.

Pinehurst Resort

Pinehurst, N.C.
855-235-8507, pinehurst.com

This June, Pinehurst's fabled No. 2 will make history when it hosts both the men's and women's U.S. Opens in back-to-back weeks. Donald Ross's classic course—and those famed crowned greens—will be ready, having been brilliantly restored by Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw. Many of the resort's other golf venues have been polished up as well. They've converted the bent-grass greens on courses 1, 3 and 8 to the smoother-rolling ultra-dwarf Bermuda. And they've added a new 18-hole putting course, Thistle Dhu, so named because when steamship magnate James Barber first saw the property on which he built his estate—and the first miniature golf course in the country—he is rumored to have said, "This'll do."



SOLID GOLD The Resort at Pelican Hill in Newport Coast, California.

Sea Island Resort

Sea Island, Ga.
888-732-4752, seaisland.com

If you're a charter member of Foodie Nation, take note: Sea Island won the resort Food & Drink crown. That's quite a coup given all the good eats out there. A new dining option, Tavola, merges classic Italian with traditional Lowcountry accents in a casual environment. And Sea Island is also top 5 across the board: No. 3 for Lodging (both for its Lodge and for its historic Cloister), No. 4 for Service, and stellar as to the golf. The Retreat Course was reworked by Davis Love III and his brother Mark in 2000. The Plantation course makes magic of marshes, and the links-style Seaside course, host to the McGladrey Classic, is both beautiful and Tour-tough.

The Boulders Resort

Carefree, Ariz.
480-488-9009,
theboulders.com

Casa de Campo

La Romana,
Dominican Republic
855-877-3643,
casadecampo.com.do

CordeValle, a Rosewood Resort

San Martin, Calif.
408-695-4500,
cordevallegolf.com

Fairmont Banff Springs

Banff, Alberta
866-540-4406,
fairmont.com/banffsprings



O, CANADA Evergreens guard the ninth at Fairmont Banff Springs.

LOWNA TUCKER

The Grand Del Mar

San Diego, Calif.
855-314-2030,
thegranddelmar.com

NEW

The Homestead

Hot Springs, Va.
540-839-1766,
thehomestead.com

JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort & Spa

San Antonio, Tex.
210-276-2500,
jwsanantonio.com

La Costa Resort and Spa

Carlsbad, Calif.
800-854-5000,
lacosta.com

Nemacolin Woodlands Resort

Farmington, Pa.
724-329-8555,
nemacolin.com

Renaissance Birmingham Ross Bridge Golf Resort & Spa

Birmingham, Ala.
205-916-7677,
rossbridgeresort.com

The Resort at Pelican Hill

Newport Coast, Calif.
888-507-6427,
pelicanhill.com

Ritz-Carlton, Half Moon Bay

Half Moon Bay, Calif.
650-712-7000,
ritzcarlton.com/halfmoonbay

Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua

Kapalua, Maui, Hawaii
808-669-6200,
ritzcarlton.com/kapalua

Ritz-Carlton Orlando, Grande Lakes

Orlando, Fla.
407-206-2400,
ritzcarlton.com/orlando

Ritz-Carlton, Naples/ Tiburón

Naples, Fla.
239-598-3300,
ritzcarlton.com/naples

St. Regis Princeville

Princeville, Kauai, Hawaii
808-826-9644,
stregisprinceville.com

Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa

Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.
904-285-7777,
sawgrassmarriott.com

Sea Pines Resort

Hilton Head Island, S.C.
866-561-8802,
seapines.com

Turning Stone Resort & Casino

Verona, N.Y.
800-771-7711,
turningstone.com

Williamsburg Inn

Williamsburg, Va.
757-220-7978,
colonialwilliamsburg.com

Wynn Las Vegas

Las Vegas, Nev.
877-321-9966,
wynnlasvegas.com

Four Seasons Resort Lana'i, Lodge at Koele

Lana'i City, Lana'i, Hawaii
808-565-4000,
fourseasons.com/koele

Four Seasons Resort Lana'i at Manele Bay

Lana'i City, Lana'i, Hawaii
808-565-2000,
fourseasons.com/manelebay

Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea

Wailea, Maui, Hawaii
808-874-8000,
fourseasons.com/maui

Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North

Scottsdale, Ariz.
480-515-5700,
fourseasons.com/scottsdale

PELICAN HILL GOLF CLUB