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Golf on – Pinehurst Resort delivers tradition, premium golf, and style

8–10 minutes

Ever evolving, the Cradle of American golf continues to add amenities to delight holiday goers and golfers of all abilities.

Upon my first visit to [Pinehurst Resort](#) more than a decade ago, I came to learn of resort's ethos, "Always Pinehurst, yet always better." I discovered that while hospitality, classic North Carolina Sandhills golf, southern charm, and superb dining anchor the Pinehurst Resort holiday, it's the continuous evolution, enhancements, and guest first focus that define Pinehurst as a venerable golf paragon.



Thistle Dhu is the resort's 18-hole putting course fronting the main clubhouse

So great a fixture is Pinehurst to the history, legacy, and future of the game, the United States Golf Association (USGA), golf's governing body, is in process of relocating its headquarters here from Florida.

Pinehurst No. 2 is the only course to have hosted all five of the USGA's most important events: The U.S. Open (1999, 2005, 2014), U.S. Women's Open (2014), U.S. Amateur (1962, 2008, 2019), U.S. Women's Amateur (1989) and U.S. Senior Open (1994). Additionally, Pinehurst has held the PGA Championship, the Ryder Cup and PGA TOUR Championship, making it the most frequented championship venue in North America.



1999 U.S. Open Champion Payne Stewart stands watch over the 18th hole at Pinehurst No. 2

Several new amenities and property enhancements welcomed me on my visit here earlier this summer including a hint of what's to come in the months ahead as Pinehurst readies itself for the 2024 U.S. Open – the fourth time this hallowed major has been contested here.

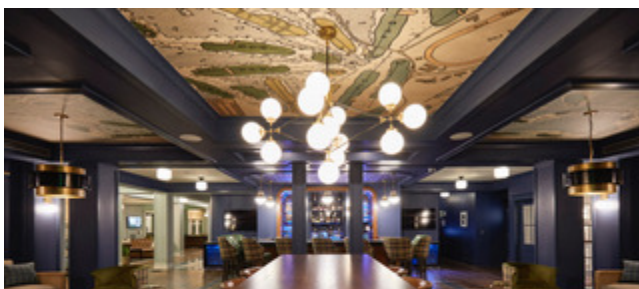
Here's what I found:

Accommodations

Pinehurst Resort's signature property is the [Carolina Hotel](#) and there is no finer way to experience the grace and hospitality than to make this Grand Dame headquarters for your stay. All the public spaces and guest rooms have recently undergone renovation and while the historic feel and character nod to the past, contemporary comfort reigns.

A driver and 9 iron's distance from the main clubhouse, this stately southern belle has a sweeping lobby filled with more than a century of golf memorabilia, photos, period posters and remembrances from days gone by.

Sip an icy cooler on the back porch in one of the lazy whitewashed rocking chairs or try your hand at the 1000-piece jigsaw puzzle in the lobby, the pace slows here for all who enter. Folks know they're in golf-heaven upon check-in as the clocks behind registration reflect the hour at both Pinehurst and St. Andrews – the other home of golf.





The ceiling at the North & South Bar in The Manor features Donald Ross course designs

For this visit, I stayed at [The Manor](#), the 43-room fully renovated inn celebrating it's 100-year anniversary. Reimagined in 1923 from its 1899 origins as the Lexington, a guest house for staff that accompanied their wealthy northeastern U.S. patrons who traveled to Pinehurst for the season at the turn of the 20th century, The Manor has come to be the one of the resorts most sought after lodgings.

“The Manor was Arnold Palmer’s favorite,” says Kathy Capel, front desk manager at The Manor, “He stayed here on each of his visits.” Capel is a fixture at The Manor and my (and everyone else’s) official greeter. After she informs me that his room is occupied for the duration of my stay, she offers some of his golf juju and has me rub the head of a small Palmer statuette situated atop the front desk. I do just that, after all, hope springs eternal.

Other stylish digs at the resort include [The Holly Inn](#), the Queen Anne revival was the resort’s very first hotel and dates to 1895, [The Magnolia Inn](#), an intimate property ideal for small groups or family reunions, or one of the villas or condos in and around the historic Village of Pinehurst.

Dining & Libations

Golfers are a hungry – and thirsty – bunch. No worries at [Pinehurst](#).

I fuel-up at the show-no-restraint morning breakfast buffet in the **Carolina Dining Room** and find special treats with the fluffiest southern biscuits, grits, pancakes, house-made pastries, eggs, and omelets to order, fresh fruit, and enough variety to tempt everyone in my foursome.

A short walk from my front door at The Manor is where I find [Pinehurst Brewing Co.](#) The micro-brewery, BBQ smokehouse, and pub operates from a reclaimed steam plant and is the place for casual post-round brews and ‘Q. Smokers smolder all-day long and turn out tender brisket, chicken, ribs, and pork shoulder alongside some true southern sides like hush-puppies, sweet potato fries, baked beans, and slaw.



Pinehurst Brewing Co. delivers micro-batch lagers, pilsners, ales and sours alongside the best BBQ in the Village of Pinehurst

PBC turns out surprisingly good pizzas for those not in the BBQ mood. There’s a classic Margherita pie, a hefty pepperoni and sausage, and make your own options – all thin NYC- style thin crust and extra-cheesy. Lovingly crafted micro-batch lagers, stouts, sours, and ales are on tap daily.





As soon as my draft beer hits my outside patio table at **The Tavern**, the casual lunch and dinner spot at The Holly Inn, so did a basket of house-made extra crispy potato chips. And while I was tempted to spoil dinner with more than a handful, I hold back, and am glad about it.

Pub grub like burgers, pasta, steaks, salads, and handhelds dominate the menu, but don't overlook the specials. The pork chop – golf-commentator Tony Kornheiser's favorite – is worth holding out for. Look for the peach-blueberry cobbler with homemade blueberry ice-cream. After a fun (and bogie-filled) round on No. 4, it was just what I needed to end my day.

As I gaze upon the ceiling at **North & South Bar**, I spy legendary golf architect Donald Ross's early designs and know for certain this is truly a golfer's 19th hole. More than 100 bourbon's and whiskey's await as do summery cocktails and local brews. The vibe here make tallying up the days wagers extra special.

Golf

While the nine 18-hole classic courses are the main draws to Pinehurst, yet it's the scrappy relative newcomer, the short 789-yard nine-hole par 3 course, **The Cradle**, that hosts more daily rounds (up to 300) than any of its elder siblings. Named the “most fun 10 acres in golf” by Golf Digest upon its 2017 opening, the Cradle is a great round for families, kids, buddy groups, and all comers. I started my holiday here with a group of guys where the range of approach clubs included putters, sand irons, wedges, and the occasional 9 iron.



Pinehurst No. 2 16th hole

The Donald Ross masterwork, **Pinehurst No. 2**, is consistently rated in the top-ten accessible courses in the world and is the course to play while at the resort. Don't let the generous fairways fool you, this course is all about the approach shot. The notorious Ross “turtle back” greens have false fronts, plenty of twists and turns, and have made many a golfer ponder whether washing their

car might be time better spent.

Be sure to take a caddy and walk this course if you can, it's truly a special experience of a lifetime. These guys know their stuff and will add another dimension to your game with their insight and course knowledge, making your game a pleasure.

Renowned course architect Gil Hanse's redux at **Pinehurst No. 4** brought back the natural waste areas, native sandscapes, dramatic elevation changes and old-time feel to the way the course played under the original Ross design.



Pinehurst No. 4 is a true test for golfers of all levels

Coming in the spring of 2024 is Pinehurst No. 10. The latest course in their stellar line up. I was able to get a sneak peek at this [Tom Doak](#) design, under construction as part of a 920-acre site. Expect great sight lines, heavy mounding, undulating greens, and a challenging test on the course, built atop the site of a former sand mine.

The track is part of an initial development phase here, think resort within a resort, where there's plans for an additional 18-hole course, a short course, accommodations, dining, and retail.

I'm readying my game is ready to return soon.

Feature photo caption: The Carolina Hotel at Pinehurst Resort has hosted golf royalty for more than 100 years. All images courtesy of Pinehurst Resort.