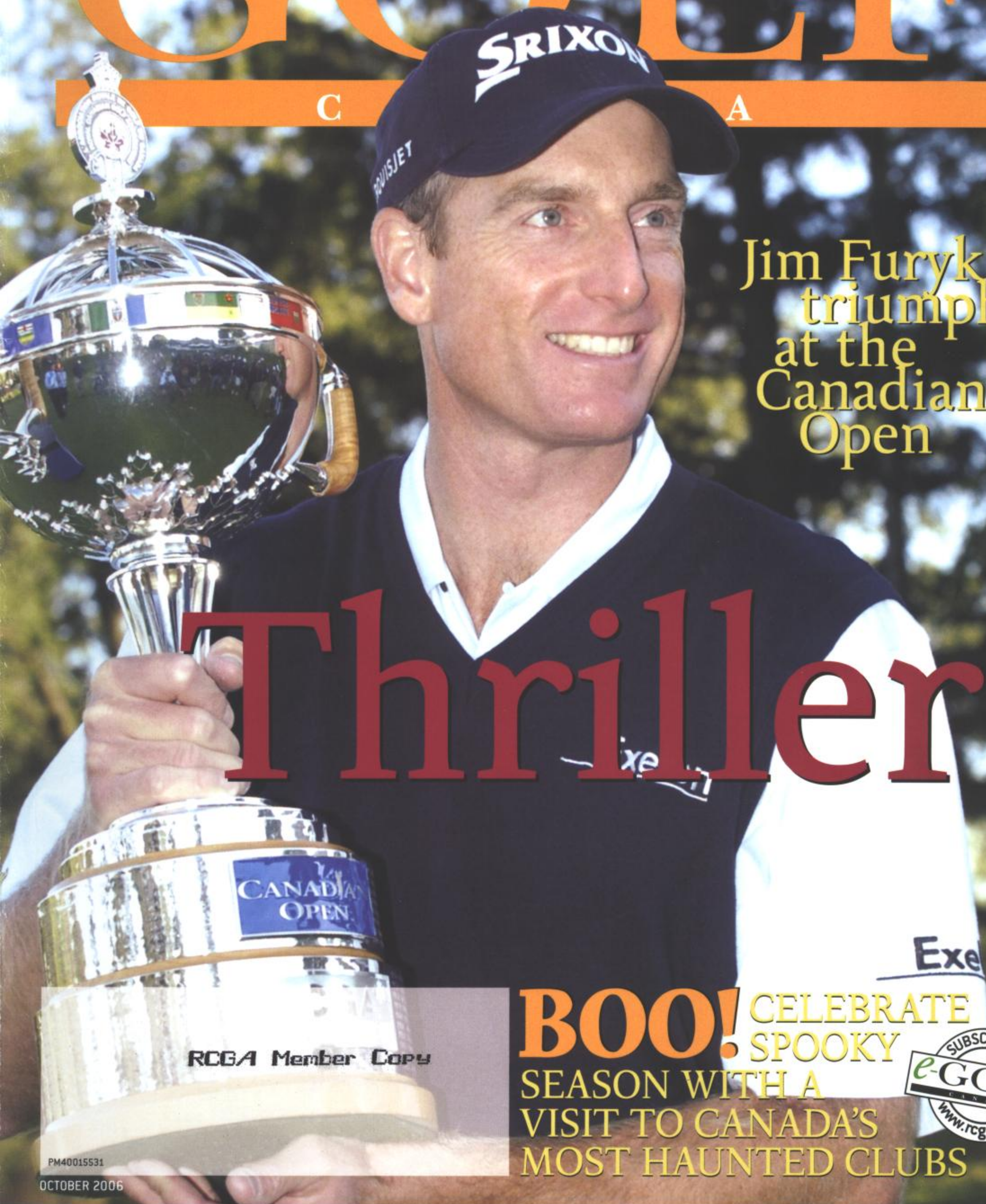


# GOLF

C A



Jim Furyk triumphs at the Canadian Open

# Thriller!

RCGA Member Copy

**BOO!** CELEBRATE SPOOKY SEASON WITH A VISIT TO CANADA'S MOST HAUNTED CLUBS



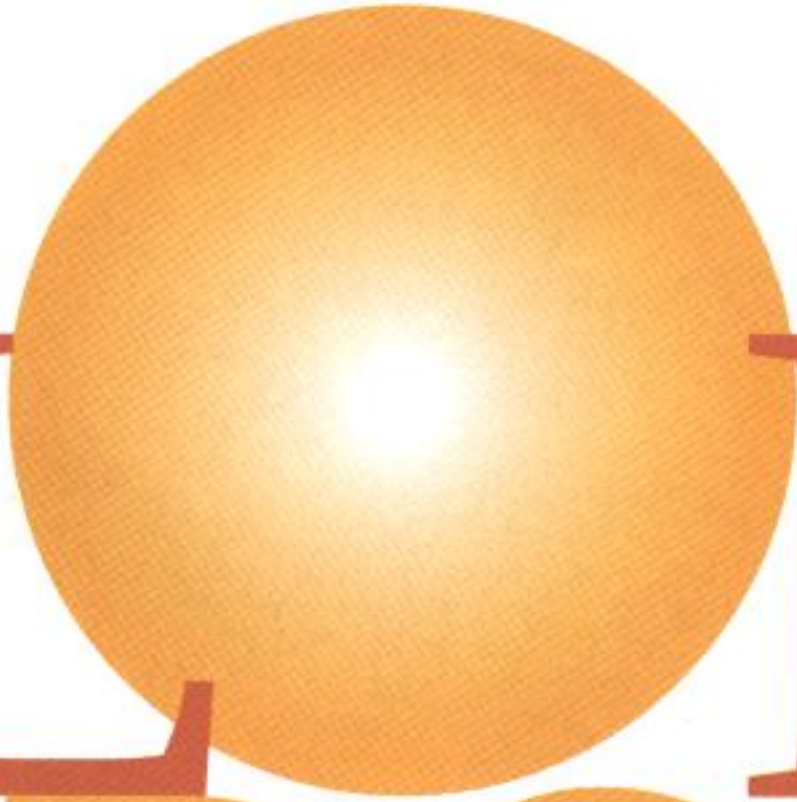
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OCTOBER 2006

**PLUS** The unstoppable Salimah Mussani **AND** Behind the scenes at London Hunt

By Donna Carter

Suffering from  
end-of-season  
withdrawal?  
Florida's First  
Coast of Golf  
has the cure



# FLORIDA BOUNDED

This time of year many Canadian golfers suffer from withdrawal symptoms triggered by the approach of winter and the golf hiatus it inevitably brings for those of us not lucky enough to live in B.C. The standard remedy – albeit a short-term fix – is a golf getaway to a sunny place where fairways and greens never see a flake of snow.

Florida's First Coast of Golf (FFCG), encompassing Amelia Island, Jacksonville, St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra Beach and Palm Coast, more than fits the bill.

Over the last dozen years this region that stretches along the Atlantic coast from just south of the Georgia border to Palm Coast, north of Daytona, has

steadily achieved a reputation for great golf with courses designed by some of the most respected names in the business including Nicklaus, Ross, Dye, Fazio, Player and Palmer.

However, what really shot Florida's First Coast of Golf into the limelight was the 1998 opening of the World Golf Village at St. Augustine. This thriving complex has grown each year and now includes the World Golf Hall of Fame, the first ever PGA Tour Golf Academy, resorts, hotels, restaurants, shopping, entertainment and two premier golf courses, Slammer & Squire and King & Bear, designed by Sam Snead/Gene Sarazen/Bobby Weed and Jack Nicklaus/Arnold Palmer respectively.

"For people with a passion for the game, World Golf Village has become an exciting Mecca for golfers worldwide," said FFCG president David Reese. "It's a must-see complex for anyone who loves golf."

The region is also the host to The Players Championship at the TPC Stadium Course at Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra. Its famous 17th hole – the almost-island green – is arguably one of the most recognized (and copied) holes in the world. Public play on this challenging, Pete Dye-designed layout is restricted to guests of the adjacent Marriott Hotel and an added bonus for visitors who play the course is the chance of see-



Designed by Jack Nicklaus, Ocean Hammock features eight holes bordering the Atlantic Ocean, while the remaining wind through unspoiled wetlands and past sparkling lakes.

The World Golf Village in St. Augustine boasts two premier tracks: King & Bear [pictured here] and Slammer & Squire [below].



#### QUANTITY AND QUALITY

Among the most northerly of the region's 70 courses is a remarkable foursome at the Amelia Island Plantation resort just south of the Georgia border. Scenic Amelia Island has 117 holes in total, including the Plantation's distinguished 18-hole championship courses Long Point, Ocean Links, Oak Marsh and Royal Amelia. Each of the four Plantation courses is different.

Given Florida's flat terrain, the Fazio-designed Long Point course is a bit of a surprise, featuring undulating fairways and 30-foot elevation changes that define a layout incorporating two oceanfront holes, natural marshlands and towering sand dunes.

The Bobby Weed/Pete Dye designed Ocean Links course has five oceanfront holes and weaves through six miles of seaside dunes to offer a more typical Florida golf experience.

Oak Marsh provides challenge with its tight fairways and small greens while the impeccably groomed Royal Amelia is more forgiving with large greens and rolling fairways.

The Plantation is also the headquarters for the Ron Philo School of

ing Vijay Singh on the practice range. The TPC Stadium track is his home course and Reese says that Singh is frequently seen on the range there when not on the road. The course has been closed since the conclusion of the 2006 championship, undergoing a \$26 million renovation, and is scheduled to reopen in November.

Florida's First Coast of Golf embodies everything the typical snowbird seeks in a winter golf getaway: variety and quality of courses, choice of price points, accessibility and post-18th hole attractions.

"With greens fees as low as \$35 we have courses that range from excellent public clubs to trophy tracks and plenty of stay and play packages designed to give golfers the best bang for their bucks. Our weather is warmer than the Carolinas and we are not overly congested," said Reese.



The 17th island green at TPC Sawgrass is one of the most recognized holes in the world.



Golf. Philo, a hands-on instructor, is the father of two well-known names in the field of professional golf: LPGA pro Laura Diaz and Ron Philo Jr., the recent winner of the 2006 PGA Professional National Championship.

Anchoring the FFCG region in the south is the 18-hole Ocean Hammock Golf Club south of St. Augustine. This first-class oceanfront facility is home to some of the finest holes in golf. With a slope rating of 147, the Nicklaus designed par 72 layout measures 7,201 yards from the tips and is particularly memorable for “The Bear’s Claw”, its last four holes which are considered to be among the most outstanding finishing holes anywhere.

With eight of its holes edging the Atlantic, Ocean Hammock is regarded as the first true oceanfront course to open in Florida in more than 70 years.

#### GOOD VALUE

Sandwiched between trophy tracks like Amelia Island Plantation and Ocean Hammock are plenty of choices for every golfer and budget.

At \$50 or less, the region’s great value offerings include the Cimarrone Golf Club, 10 minutes north of the World Golf Village. The course’s name alone (Seminole for “wild one”) is the first clue this layout is no walk in the park. Measuring 6,900 yards from the back blocks, 16 of its 18 holes feature water while the remaining two require forced carries over marshes.

However, Cimarrone’s general manager Mike Rich says the course is exceedingly playable for all skill levels, provided that a solid mental game is employed.

“On most holes players have the chance of making birdie but if they get too aggressive they can easily card an

eight,” he said. “On this track everything depends on course management.”

The Bobby Weed-designed 18-hole Golf Club at Fleming Island is another of the region’s value standouts. When it opened in 2000, *Golf Digest* voted it the 5th new affordable course in the United States and *Golf Magazine* ranked it among the top 50 American courses with greens fees under \$50.

Underscoring the quality of this meticulously maintained track southwest of downtown Jacksonville, the Golf Club at Fleming Island was chosen as the qualifying site for the 2003 U.S. Open.

With generous fairways lined with pines and ponds, the front nine allows heavy hitters to go ahead and rip it while the back nine’s tighter fairways, swamps and woodlands call for more controlled shot making. Completing the package, Fleming

## [TRAVEL PLANNER & GREENS FEES]

Amelia Island Plantation Courses

(\$130-\$175) [www.aipfl.com](http://www.aipfl.com)

1-888-261-6161 Slammer &

Squire (\$49-\$150)

[www.slammerandsquire.com](http://www.slammerandsquire.com)

(904) 940-6120 King & Bear

(\$69-\$175) [www.kingandbear.com](http://www.kingandbear.com)

(904) 940-6200

Ocean Hammock (\$215-\$235)

[www.oceanhammock.com](http://www.oceanhammock.com)

1-888-707-6946 TPC Stadium

Course at Sawgrass (\$187-

\$350) [www.sawgrassmarriott.com](http://www.sawgrassmarriott.com)

1-800-457-GOLF

Cimarrone Golf Club (\$45-

\$62) [www.cimarronegolf.com](http://www.cimarronegolf.com)

(904) 287-2000 Golf Club at

Fleming Island (\$30-\$50)

[www.flemingislandgolf.com](http://www.flemingislandgolf.com)

1-888-244-9167 Jacksonville

Beach Golf Club (\$35-\$43)

[www.jacksonvillebeachgolfclub.com](http://www.jacksonvillebeachgolfclub.com)

(904) 247-6184

Note: Greens fees quoted are

in U.S. dollars and in many

instances include cart.

Courses generally offer after-

noon and twilight fees that are

less than those quoted above.

For stay/play packages and

other pertinent information

about FFCG golf getaways,

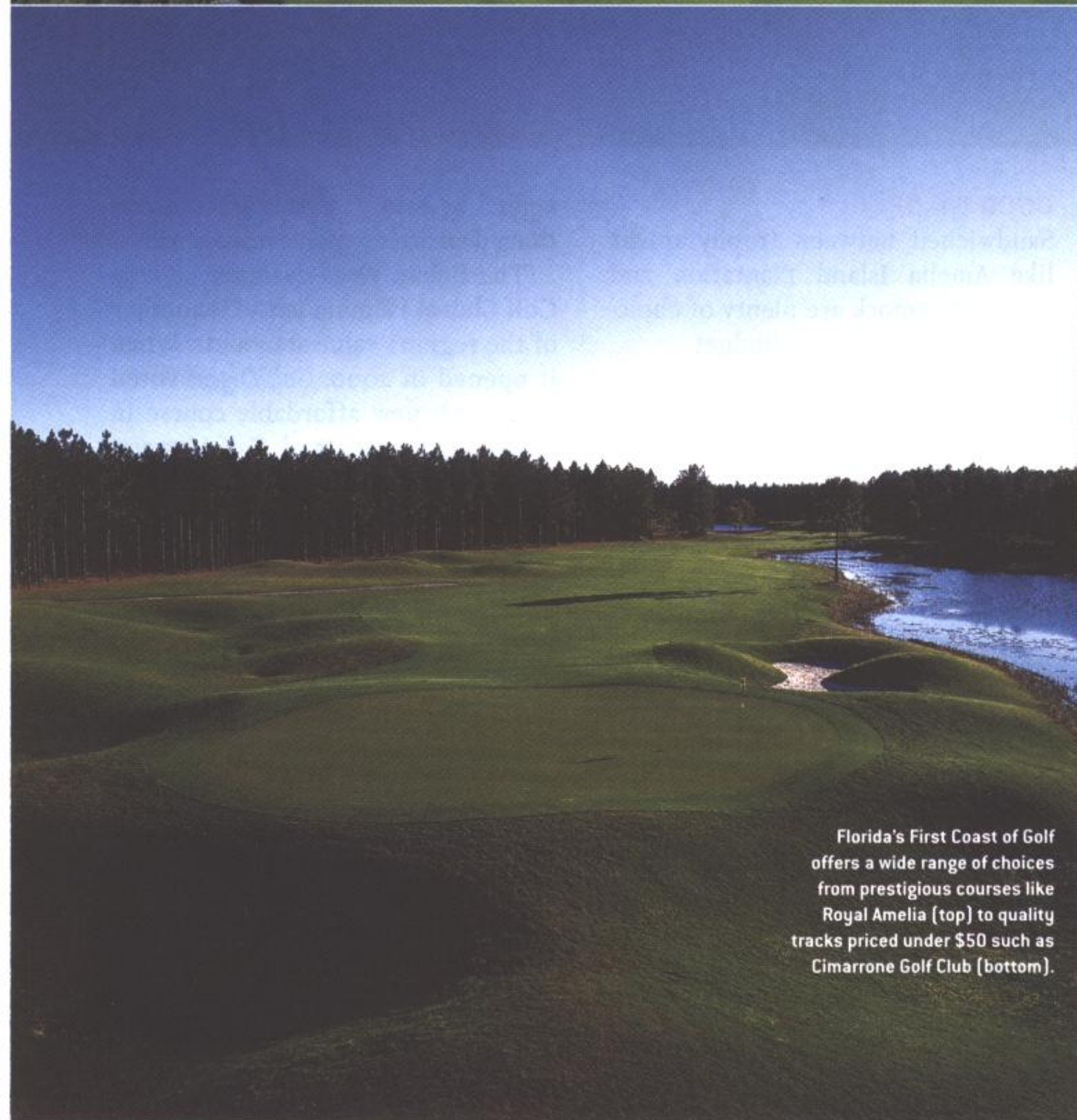

visit [www.florida-golf.org](http://www.florida-golf.org) or

call 1-888-859-8334.

Island boasts one of the finest practice facilities in the area.

"You won't find a better value course than this anywhere," said Reese.

Also priced at under \$50, Jacksonville Beach Golf Club has been a mainstay of Jacksonville's golf scene for more than 40 years. Recent renovations to this championship, public-



Florida's First Coast of Golf offers a wide range of choices from prestigious courses like Royal Amelia (top) to quality tracks priced under \$50 such as Cimarrone Golf Club (bottom).

access course include improved greens, added bunkers and a new man-made lake.

The 18-hole, 6,510 yard course sits a mile back from the ocean yet is almost always subject to wind.

"Wind makes the course play a lot tougher than it looks," said head pro Boots Farley. "We get all levels of golfers here from resort guests to players gearing up to get on a pro tour."

#### BEYOND THE FAIRWAYS

The biggest off-course attraction for golfers may well be the World Golf Village Hall of Fame, a facility dedicated to the celebration of the game of golf, its history and recognition of its greatest players.

At very least, visitors should set aside a minimum of two hours to tour it and try their hand at using a hickory-shafted putter, hitting a gutta-percha ball and having a keepsake picture taken while crossing a replica of Scotland's famous Swilcan Burn Bridge with the Old Course at St. Andrews in the background.

Don't miss the Hall of Fame Members Locker Room where lockers are filled with 800 pieces of personal memorabilia belonging to golf legends like Palmer, Player, Woods, Hogan, Snead Canadian Marlene Streit.

Away from the course the region

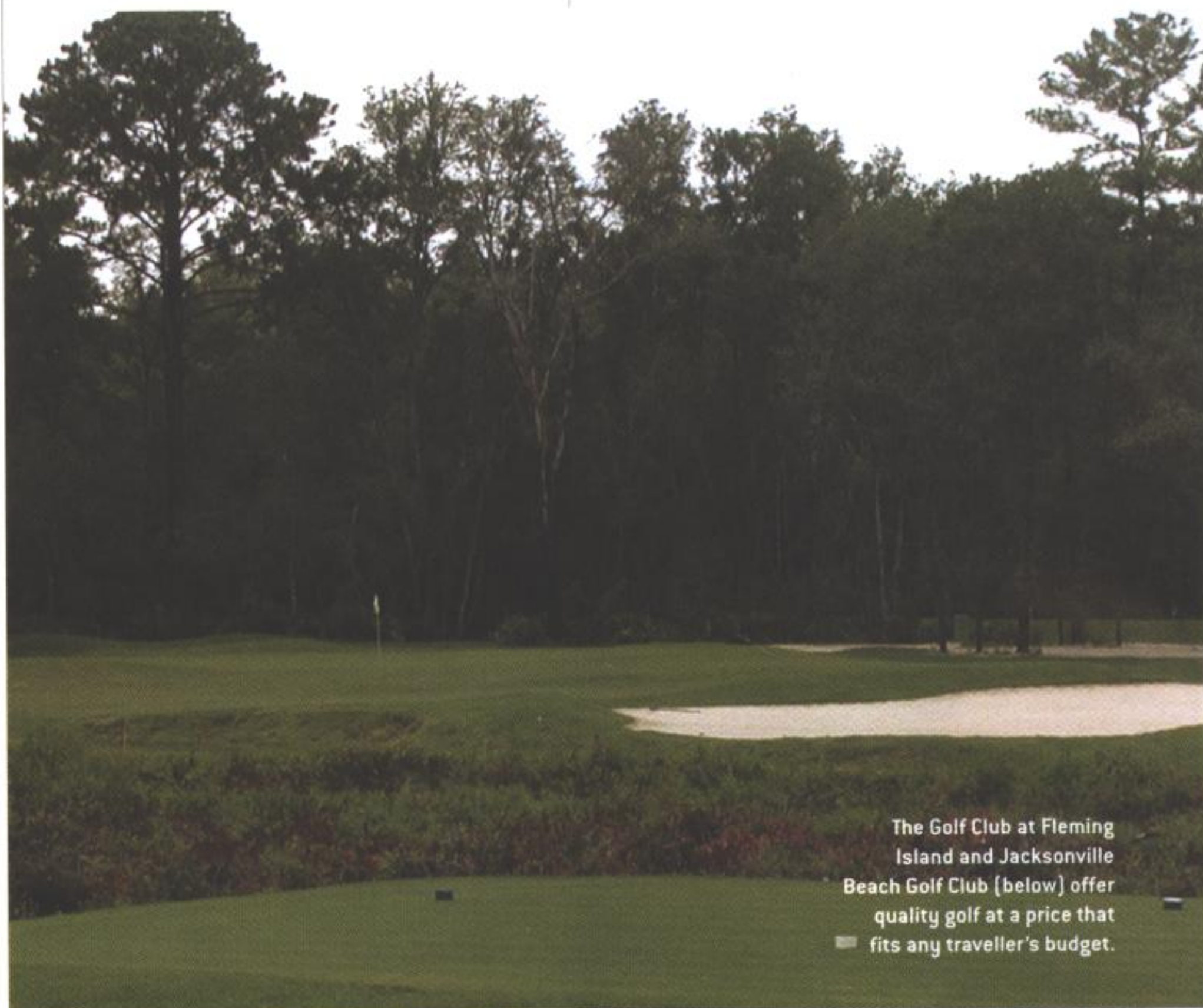
features an exceptional range of entertainment options and natural attractions. Miles of First Coast sand beaches offer all of the sunshine state's typical water-based activities including everything from deep sea fishing to simple sun bathing.

A visit to St. Augustine is well worth the time spent strolling its Old Town Spanish Quarter where ancient

buildings have remained unchanged since the 16th century.

Golfers travelling with children will find the St. Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park a big hit with youngsters while shopping buffs can take advantage of extra special deals at one of the best outlet malls in Florida.

Jacksonville, the region's largest city, is filled with trendy entertainment



The Golf Club at Fleming Island and Jacksonville Beach Golf Club (below) offer quality golf at a price that fits any traveller's budget.



areas, an abundance of nightclubs, a wide variety of eating spots, a zoo, several museums, parks and gardens.

A definite change of pace can be found on tranquil Amelia Island where visitors can explore its unspoiled beauty with a horseback ride on the beach, a sunset sail or a leisurely kayak along miles of pristine beach. In addition, Amelia's Fernandina Beach features a 50-block museum of Victorian buildings interspersed with 20th century shopping and dining.

"Both on and off our courses the Northeast Florida experience is like no other in the U.S.," said Reese. "We're affordable, the sun shines year round and our golf courses are unsurpassed."