



The ocean-hugging 4th hole on the Bay course

GRECIAN ODYSSEY

Costa Navarino is home to the two finest courses in Greece and a great deal more. Rob Smith finds out more...

The south-western coastline of mainland Greece is a stunningly beautiful and unspoilt area blessed with a superb climate and spectacular scenery. It is also home to the extensive, multi-award-winning Costa Navarino destination that has the environment and sustainability at its heart, whether in the architecture, the delicious cuisine or its two excellent golf courses.

The first to be completed was the Dunes course, a collaboration between Bernhard Langer and European Golf Design. It opened six years ago and is remarkably mature despite its tender age, offering great variety and a fresh set of challenges at every turn.

The downhill 2nd is one of several standout holes with the ocean as a beautiful, shimmering backdrop, while the 4th is a superb dogleg left with distant mountains on the horizon. There is real variety all the way to a par-5 finale that plays every inch of its length back up the hill to a sloping green overlooked by the stylish and very welcoming clubhouse. There are archaeological sites bordering the course and on some holes, with a real sense of history throughout the round.

The more recent Bay course is, for me, even more photogenic and enjoyable, offering breathtaking views from start to finish. Designed by Robert Trent Jones Jnr on dramatically undulating ground overlooking Gialova Bay, two holes run right along the beach before the course heads up and down through the hills on



The 6th hole on the Dunes course

a thrilling rollercoaster ride. There is risk and reward every inch of the way and the six short holes will each live long in the memory. As a combination of golfing test and scenic delight, the Bay course is hard to beat.

Costa Navarino is about far more than just the golf, though, and there is a story to tell of local and national culture and tradition. This is evident throughout the two superb hotels bordering the Mediterranean. The Westin has more than 400 rooms and suites, with the design inspired by old Messinian mansions. Most enjoy unobstructed ocean views with almost all ground-floor units offering individual infinity pools and a mix of garden, golf and swimming pool views.

The adjacent Romanos is a Luxury Collection Resort with 321 airy rooms, suites and villas. Both hotels open out onto the

Agora, an authentically recreated village centre with many bars, restaurants, entertainment areas and shops.

The Messinian Authenticity Programme encourages all guests to engage with local history and culture via 'philosophy walks', olive and wine harvesting, local cookery lessons or excursions to historical sites. All manner of sports are on offer, too, such as tennis, water and jet skiing, sailing and windsurfing.

The pristine coastline is lined with dreamy, sandy beaches and peaceful lagoons, olive groves and waterfalls. With more golf courses coming, Costa Navarino is a very appealing destination set to grow yet further in terms of what is on offer, and in its worldwide renown.

ESSENTIALS

HOW TO GET THERE

Aegean Airlines offers daily flights from Heathrow to Athens with golf clubs and equipment carried free. BA offers high-season twice-weekly flights to Kalamata.

W: aegeanair.com

W: britishairways.com

WHERE TO STAY

THE ROMANOS RESORT, COSTA NAVARINO

W: romanoscostanavarino.com

THE WESTIN RESORT, COSTA NAVARINO

W: westincostanavarino.com

WHERE TO PLAY

COSTA NAVARINO BAY AND DUNES COURSES

W: costanavarino.com

GF: Bay: €125; Dunes: €115 (discounts for residents)

Glorious ocean views at The Romanos Resort

