

editor's
letter

BY
S. MURALI

IN TIME WITH

ROLEX



LOOKING FOR PEACE OUTSIDE THE BLUSTER

Like all things, golf has to follow the simple law of supply and demand.

As the options to play inside Singapore shrink with the closure of courses, the choices outside seem to be growing and getting more interesting.

Already, there are a range of courses to play in Johor, Batam and Bintan, all within one hour or so of travel time. And the courses in these areas are gearing up for what they expect will be a stronger demand from Singapore golfers.

Over the weekend, I took the short 45-minute ride up to Bintan, which is home to quite a few favourite haunts for pin-seeking Singaporeans.

There are two courses at Bintan Lagoon, three nines at Ria Bintan and one at the recently-refurbished Laguna Bintan.

Of the three, Ria Bintan is probably the most famous, having been ranked as one of Asia's best courses over the years.

While the green speeds have slowed a little from the last time I played Ria, it is still well maintained and provides

some spectacular vistas with holes fronting the ocean.

Assignment No 2 was the Greg Norman-designed Laguna Bintan, which has been recently renovated.

Again, set against the ocean, there are some brilliant holes, and once Laguna sorts out some of its drainage issues, it is set to provide a really strong challenge to golfers.

And to lure golfers to take the trip, Laguna Bintan is coming out with an amazing offer for its term membership.

For just \$510, you can get a one-year term membership to this club, paying just \$30 (all-inclusive) for caddie and buggy fees for a round of golf.

This is way below anything else in the market, and since there are no monthly subscriptions, a great offer for those seeking a regular weekend or weekday game away from the bluster of the city.

As a term member, you also get to stay at the Banyan Tree, Angsana or Cassia hotels at a cheaper rate, which could allow for two rounds with a great beach holiday thrown into the mix.

Over and above this, you get 10 free rounds at Laguna Phuket in Thailand and another 5 free rounds at Laguna Lang Co in Vietnam. Now that is a tough offer to beat.

As Director of Golf Darren Robson said, the club's main motivation behind this deal is to increase usage at the course and to also allow more Singaporeans the opportunity to visit the Laguna properties and hotels at the same time.

"As we continue to work on making the course a better playing proposition, we are sure that Singaporeans will see the value in becoming part of the Laguna Golf family," said Robson, who used to helm the Lang Co facility before coming to Bintan to help in its upgrade.

With my son taking up the game, I do see the value in finding a regular spot to play and a club we can call our own.

With the wife and daughter enjoying the beach and pool at the same time, and at this price point, Bintan could well be the best option for our needs.



he only thing a
golfer needs is
more daylight.

— GOLF LEGEND BEN HOGAN

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