

25-26 FEBRUARY 2017 | THE BUSINESS TIMES WEEKEND

# Swing

by sphgolf

# Imperial SPRINGS

MAJESTIC SETTINGS,  
AND A TRIP BACK IN TIME

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READY TO TAKE ON THE  
WORLD'S BEST

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editor's  
**letter**

BY  
**S. MURALI**

IN TIME WITH  
  
**ROLEX**



# A WALK THROUGH HISTORY, A THING OF BEAUTY

Sometimes golf courses, clubs and resorts have names that just don't make much sense.

Like the Kissing Camels Golf Club in Colorado, or the Winged Foot Golf Club in New York.

But at the magnificent Imperial Springs in Guangzhou, China, I found a place that truly lived up to its moniker.

The brainchild of wealthy Chinese-Australian businessman Chau Chak Wing, and built at a staggering cost of RMB\$8 billion (\$1.65 billion), the 280-hectare resort is truly a sanctuary befitting the royals.

Step into its grounds and you feel transported back to an ancient era – its architecture reminding me of the Forbidden City in China – but with all the luxurious trappings of a modern six or seven-star hotel.

A group of us got the rare

chance to sample its wonderful 27-hole Colin Montgomerie-designed golf course over the weekend, and to a man, we left wanting more.

To date, only a select group have joined the course as members since it opened in 2011, paying an average of between RMB\$2.8 million and RMB\$3.5 million, said Singapore-born general manager Desmond Tan.

But, he added, with a quick smile, that might be exactly the sort of exclusivity Mr Chau was seeking when he spent a fortune building the amazing resort on the foothills of the Phoenix Mountain in Conghua, famed for its clean air and hot springs.

Also nestled within the grounds is one of the world's most private museums, the Kingold Museum, home to a collection of over 20,000 pieces of Chinese porcelain,

bronze, jade, painting and calligraphy, with some pieces dating back more than 5,000 years.

With world leaders having held major meetings there, Imperial Springs is the sort of place you could host a golf Major, or an international G8 summit, without blinking an eye.

Both the golf course and the surrounding facilities are impeccable, in construction and maintenance, and wow is the most common superlative you will use when taken on a tour of its grounds and accommodation.

Desmond and his staff of 1,000 were also amazing hosts, making us feel like royalty throughout our short stay.

So remember the name, Imperial Springs. It is one of those places you have to visit, if you want to feel like an emperor for a day.



Don't play too much golf. Two rounds a day are plenty.

— GOLF LEGEND  
HARRY VARDON

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