

“WHERE IN THE WORLD IS CORI BRETT?”

March/April 2012

“LA COSTA RESORT & SPA”



Hole #11 Champions Course

I felt a surge of pride watching the LPGA’s best players at the practice range at La Costa. Warming up for the second day of the Kia Classic, they made it look so easy. Coaches and caddies offered advice with every shot. We had plenty of viewing area, as the range had been enlarged with the recent renovations.

La Costa is located north of San Diego in the coastal foothills of Carlsbad. Opened in 1965, La Costa soon achieved celebrity status for its high profile guests and lavish accommodations. The two golf courses have hosted numerous PGA and LPGA Tour events over the years. Both courses were renovated in 2011 as part of a \$50 million resort-wide makeover.

The South Course was devoted to Tournament play all week. Eventual champion Yani Tseng attracted the biggest crowd. We spent most of the day watching the pros battle the challenging finishing holes. Water crosses #15 twice and the hole plays to an uphill green. Drives flew left and right of the tight tree-lined fairway on #16. More accuracy was required on #17, a narrow par-5 with a lake alongside. Players had to avoid two creeks on #18, finally arriving at the smallest green on the course.

If you’ve ever played La Costa, you may recall soggy spots on many of the fairways. Not anymore. A modernized drainage system has been installed on both courses, and huge amounts of sand were brought in to help reshape and raise fairways and greens.

New landscaping and brightly colored flowers were also part of the overall renovation. Four holes (#’s 1, 9, 10 and 18) on the South Course were transformed, with more to follow. But the Champions Course (formerly North) received the bulk of the changes. Greens were replaced, bunkering repositioned and fairway contours refined. It’s a new course.



#15 South Course

The Champions Course expanded to six tee boxes, ranging from 4,356 yards at the new “family” tee to 7,172 yards from the tips. The first hole opened with an elevated tee, and my drive just soared. But the elevated tee box didn’t help much on #6. It’s a dogleg left and uphill to a long and narrow green, where my ball rolled down the false front more than once. It ranks as the #1 handicap hole for everybody, even though it’s the shortest par 5. Water comes into play throughout the course. Two of the par 3’s required carry over a lake. I enjoyed the course immensely. Just try to stay out of the rough. It seemed to grab my club every time.

We had a wonderful dinner at BlueFire Grill. The eclectic menu seemed to me the essence of “California Cuisine.” Ingredients from La Costa’s organic garden and local farmers’ markets, fresh seafood and grain-fed beef – all creatively prepared. The risotto and several other dishes were labeled vegan or vegetarian – not, however, the tasty lobster mac n’ cheese. Or the filet mignon with béarnaise sauce, which I happily devoured. Chef Greg Frey’s passion for his craft was evident from start to finish.

The resort is conveniently laid out. More than 600 guest rooms and suites are spread among Spanish colonial-style buildings, whitewashed with red tile roofs. Restaurants, shops and spa facilities surround a spacious plaza, all within walking distance. The golf shop and first tee are off the main lobby. We loved the brand-new Edge Adult Pool. Pools and waterslides at Splash Landing were full of families having a good time.

The spa was calling my name, especially that thundering waterfall in the outdoor shower. It pounds directly on neck and shoulders, more powerfully than the strongest masseuse. You can’t go wrong with any of the treatments. The spa is 43,000 square feet, with relaxation areas inside and out that contribute to the serenity.

For serenity laced with spirituality, visit the Chopra Center, just across the plaza. It's founded by mind-body healing pioneer Dr. Deepak Chopra. Based on Ayurvedic principles, spa treatments are more intense than the average. Workshops and retreats include the 6- or 10-day "Perfect Health Program" and "Seduction of Silence," a six-day meditation and yoga retreat. Dr. Chopra's book, "Golf for Enlightenment: The Seven Lessons for the Game of Life," is prominently displayed.



Hole #18 Champions Course

One foggy morning, I walked across the plaza to a 7 a.m. yoga class at the Chopra Center. I pulled my fleece close around me to ward off the chill from the morning marine layer. New Age music and a selection of herbal teas welcomed us. This was a serious yoga class with repeated chanting. At the group meditation class afterwards, we were encouraged to ask ourselves three questions: Who am I? What do I want? What is my purpose?

I just want to break 90.

"Escape with Cori" on assignment to exotic and fun golf destinations. First-hand impressions from an experienced golf travel writer and AWGA member. www.coribrett.com. Copyright Cori Brett 2012 – do not copy or cite in whole or in part without permission.