

DESTINATIONS

GOLF HOLIDAYS | FLORIDA

POSTCARD

The Palm Beaches

The golf courses at PGA National Resort offer as much for beginners as they do for the pros, finds **Natalie Marsh**

I couldn't help but cheer with delight as the golf ball flew, rather than rolled, away from me. It didn't get as close to the hole as I'd ambitiously hoped it would, but practice makes progress. It's my first time on a golf course, if we're not counting crazy golf, and I've picked a good one to make my debut – PGA National Resort in Palm Beach Gardens.

Located on the aptly named Avenue of the Champions, the resort is set across 800 acres and it's recently undergone a \$100 million renovation, with a host of additions to the resort, including new restaurants, an upgraded spa and refurbished rooms.

I'm visiting PGA National Resort just a few weeks before it hosts the Honda Classic golf tournament at the end of February, when the crème de la crème of the golfing world descend on Palm Beach Gardens for a week of games and other festivities, including fireworks and DJ sets.

Out in the Floridian sun, we drive in our buggies en masse to one of the nearby courses – one of six across the resort. It's set up like a driving range, so we can practise our swings and learn some new techniques. Keeping my legs bent and following through with my arms after hitting the ball, plus switching my club from a harder-to-master iron to a thicker driver, helped me hit more of the ball and less of the turf.

There's also a lot for non-golfers here, including a 24-hour gym, a pool and racket sports, as well as kids' clubs to keep the little ones entertained. But for those who want to spend more time on improving their technique, there's the Leadbetter Golf Academy on site, providing extra tuition for all skill levels.

All that golf makes hungry work and new restaurant Honeybelle is the perfect place for a pit stop. Its bright and colourful decor makes for welcoming surroundings, and the menu, which features fried chicken, slaw made with collard greens – a cabbage-like vegetable – and a citrus-flavoured pie, adds to its southern charm. If all golf days end like this, then sign me up. **TW**



BOOK IT

A golf package in the summer costs from £430 per night based on two people sharing, plus 13% tax and \$39 resort fee. Price includes accommodation, breakfast, a round of golf on one of five golf courses (surcharges apply on two), golf buggy, balls and storage. pgaresort.com



FROM ABOVE: Aerial view of The Palm Beaches; view across the resort from a hotel room balcony

PICTURES: Natalie Marsh; PGA National Resort & Spa