



Press Release

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Golf in France

by Bob Koczor

" THOUGH GOLF IN FRANCE is worth the trip itself, there are so many other worthwhile pursuits in this country which leads one to understand why the French are very proud. Justifiably so.

I must admit, however, that my recent "golf trip" to France was a hurried brush stroke experience as I visited castles in the Loire Valley, got a taste of the vine-yards in the Bordeaux Region, overnighed at several chateaux once reserved for aristocracy, and played four rounds of golf at the best France has to offer. My last night spent in Paris merely whet my appetite for more of this city so enriched by history, architecture and its cuisine.

PLENTY OF GOLF IN FRANCE

Tourists to France who bring along their golf clubs will not have to face the challenges of arranging tee times as they typically do when visiting countries like Scotland and Ireland. Though golfers may be able to walk in on their own and, almost impromptu, make their own tee times at courses in France, using the services of experienced golf tour operators assures you of guaranteed tee times when you want them.

An unhurried pace of play results from this opportunity for tee times. There's plenty of "space" in front of you and behind you while playing golf in France. Chances are, you won't find crowds on a course in France. In fact, I won't remember a slow or fast foursome in front of or behind our own threesome during the entire week.

I can't stress enough that one of the primary benefits of playing golf in France is the fact that there are 280,000 registered golfers in France which boasts of 340 courses. That translates into lots of available tee times and, most important, that means you don't have to sell your 17th borne of prime tee times.

GOLF COURSES

Les Bordes, opened in 1984, is a country-style, heavily-wooded golf resort featuring one of Europe's most beautiful and challenging courses. The course, located on more than 350 acres of Baron Bich's former hunting properties, remains fenced in order to keep wild boar away from the club-wielding golfers.

This woodland course is consistently listed among the finest in Europe, a trophy I believe it no doubt well deserves.

Designer is Golf Course Architect Robert Von Hagge from Houston, TX, who prides himself with a portfolio of more than 200 courses and is well-known in France for four other outstanding courses.

Les Bordes Golf Courses features 12 out of 18 holes on which water plays a mighty important factor in play. Seriously into play. According to the 2000 Michelin Golf Book, the records for Les Bordes Golf Course in one under par. Taking extra golf balls along on this round is mandatory, unless you want to end up quitting after 15 holes because you have no more golf balls left.

Honors bestowed on Les Bordes Golf Course are well-deserved. I'm talking about its design, setting, challenge and condition. I would not suggest for any golfer to avoid playing this exciting and challenging course (145 rating!), but I would suggest one do so knowing that you will eat humble pie, for sure, afterwards, no matter what your handicap.

It's common for golfers to visit Les Bordes, play a round of golf in the morning, have a casual lunch, then play another in the afternoon. It's that kind of slow, casual, and very demanding course that requires one's full attention and energy. Europeans come in small and large groupes to Les Bordes, and don't bother going anywhere else for their golf trip.

LODGING

The Les Bordes Clubhouse and its 40 bedroom lodge caters to the rugged individual who may well dream of hunting boar than of other things easily dreamt of.

Accommodations of the 40 bedrooms are individually designed with a combination of simplicity and elegance. Oak beams and handmade furniture inside reflects the outdoor rustic setting of the surrounding woodlands.

FOOD AND WINE

The heart and soul of my trip, as with anyone's trip to France, was the French cuisine or gastronomy, as they call it. More so than in any other country I've ever visited, food plays a major role in the lives of French people and visitors to their country.

At Les Bordes, my first evening's dinner in France started with Foie Gras, an appetizer habit easily acquired after the first time taste. I weighted in at least a thousand calories heavier as I succumbed to generous helpings of fresh French Bread, buttered and then smothered by the smooth and tasty goose liver atop.

A main entrée of duck, followed by a selection of various delicious unpasteurized cheeses chosen off a large board left me no room for dessert. No room or not, I still couldn't say no to the proper ending of this French provincial dining treat.

General Manager Brian Sparkx extended his hospitality to us at dinner with a complimentary bottle of the Baron's own private selection of St EMILION Grand Cru which was graciously received and finished in due course of the meal. "