

PROFILED

# Caribbean dreams

POINT HARDY GOLF CLUB, SAINT LUCIA

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Richard Humphreys looks ahead to the opening of the highly anticipated Coore & Crenshaw design, currently growing in at the new Cabot Saint Lucia resort



*The par-three sixteenth plays over a cove to a green complex positioned on a small peninsula*



*The fifteenth is a spectacular short par four*

Point Hardy Golf Club is the latest collaboration between architects Coore & Crenshaw and golf developer Cabot, the team behind the highly acclaimed Cabot Cliffs course at Cabot Cape Breton in Nova Scotia, Canada.

Their latest project has taken the designers back onto cliffs, this time on the northern tip of the Caribbean island of Saint Lucia, where their design is now growing in ahead of a grand opening at the end of 2023.

“It is a site that is spectacular beyond description,” Bill Coore told GCA after first visiting the property. He and design partner Ben Crenshaw could immediately see the potential for something special, but the extreme elevation changes would require a huge earthmoving effort.

Jim Barger of Oncore Group was hired as the general contractor and construction manager; decades of work in the Caribbean meant he had the experience and connections required to navigate the site’s challenges. Barger would work alongside Trevor

something epic, but we all wondered how we could inject fun,” says Cabot’s Ben Cowan-Dewar. “The coastline moves in and out, so the number of thrilling times the golfer crosses the ocean will provide plenty of challenge, but early feedback has also referenced

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Dormer and Keith Rhebb, Coore & Crenshaw’s lead shapers for the project, to realise the design team’s vision for a breathtaking but playable course.

“We knew Bill and Ben, with nine greens on the ocean, would create

how much fun it is, which is really gratifying. Both nines close with stretches of spectacular coastal golf, but I think the finish of fourteen to eighteen is something that all golfers will be pretty excited to see!”



*The par-four sixth plays downhill towards the coastline, and is followed by a par three that falls away to the sea on three sides*

It has been a long but rewarding journey for Cowan-Dewar, who first visited the property seven years ago. “It was a puzzle to figure out and we had a global pandemic in the middle of construction, but watching the progress of this course has been amazing,” he says. “The routing was such an accomplishment to take advantage of both the coastal holes and find such amazing spots on the non-coastal holes. Our expectations for this site with Coore and Crenshaw were high, and I think what they and their team have given us is one for the ages. “When we did Cabot Cliffs with Bill and Ben, the whole project flew by. Here were two of my favourite people in the world, who I had long admired, and I felt like it was a sprint.



*Bill Coore, Ben Crenshaw, Mike Keiser and Ben Cowan-Dewar have collaborated on a golf course “for the ages”*

## POINT HARDY

*Coore & Crenshaw's routing sees nine holes interact with the coastline*



*Image: Coore & Crenshaw*

I promised myself that if we got another chance, I would stop and smell the roses. A year ago, I called Mike Keiser and said why don't we go down with just Bill and Ben. Those few days of walking around, just the four of us, are one of my favourite memories in nearly two decades of developing. Thankfully, we got a great photo, and it hangs in our office, which will be a great reminder for a long time!"

The round begins with a challenging opener, taking golfers up to the top of the ridge, to access the subsequent holes along a plateau, and unveiling panoramic views of the entire Cabot Saint Lucia property and the Caribbean Sea.

"The visuals of the golf course will definitely not be an issue," says Coore. "That would be an understatement.

There are a number of holes that are immediately adjacent to the cliffs and the ocean. It's not going to be a course without drama!"

The first direct interaction with the sea comes at the par-three seventh green. This is followed by a tee shot over the water's edge to the eighth fairway. Then the par-three ninth plays directly alongside the Caribbean.



*The par-four sixth plays down a steep valley towards the coastline where the more dramatic holes are located*

“Most people would point to the holes alongside the ocean, whether it’s seven, eight, nine or fifteen through to eighteen,” says Coore. “But

I have to say that while those are going to be the holes that people will talk about the most because of their spectacular nature and their proximity to the sea, some of the inland holes are quite interesting. They’ll provide some situations for some very interesting golf and that’s what we look for.”

These holes include the par-four second and par-five third holes, which feature views across the golf course, island and towards the Atlantic Ocean. The fourth is a 213-yard par three that has a Redan-style green which will reward golfers that play to the right side of the putting surface. The fifth and sixth holes, both par fours, then

play down a steep valley towards the coastline where the more dramatic holes are located.

The final ocean stretch begins on the green of the fourteenth, a downhill par five that plays almost 600 yards to the cliff edge. Beyond that, a tee box juts out over the ocean; one of the most dramatic spots on the course. The fifteenth is a short par four; a semi-blind tee shot over water and rock to a fairway that looks deceptively further than it plays, a trick of the eye that Coore and Crenshaw like to employ.

The short par-three sixteenth plays over a cove to a small peninsula and, with echoes of Cypress Point, is followed by a longer one-shotter. The 187-yard seventeenth requires a shot over a rocky inlet to a green that sits above another bay.

The final act is another nod to Monterey; a closing par five that curves along the coastline and invites the bold to take on as much of the beach – in this case ‘Donkey’ rather than ‘Pebble’ – as they dare.

The course is being grassed with Pure Dynasty from Pure Seed and Atlas Turf International. This advanced seeded paspalum was selected for its extreme salt tolerance, ease of import, and ability to provide excellent playing surfaces.

“As with all the golf we have built, I hope that it will stand the test of time, like many of our favourites,” says Cowan-Dewar. “I always remember Mike saying ‘St Andrews has been there for 500 years’. That is humbling and I think as long as people find it as much fun as we do, we will have done what we set out to.” **GCA**