

BIG
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The Legends Golf and Safari Resort's luxuries do not stop with The Extreme 19th; next to it sits the world's only 18-hole signature golf course.

HOLE 1**Trevor Immelman** –

par 5; 586 metres

A double dogleg featuring a dramatic St. Andrews-like swale short of the green.

HOLE 6**Colin Montgomerie** –

par 4; 461 metres

Monty demands clarity of strategy here, and produces a snaking downhill fairway.

HOLE 10**Padraig Harrington** –

par 4; 451 metres.

Inspired by Hogan's Alley at Carnoustie, Harrington's 10th demands a long drive.

HOLE 12**Ian Woosnam** –

par 3; 250 metres

The longest par 3 on the course, Woosie's short hole is already an African classic.

HOLE 16**Sergio Garcia** –

par 4; 463 metres

Exotic terrain and grasslands tempt an aggressive approach to the green.

THE RUB OF AFRICAN GREEN

"How are you going to explain to anybody unless they come here and see how high that tee is? It takes 24 seconds for the ball to hit the ground" – South African golf legend Gary Player reflects on Africa's favourite new golf hole.



King of the Swingers

Words by Mike MacEacheran

BOASTING THE MOST EXTREME GOLF HOLE ON EARTH, the Legends Golf and Safari Resort in Limpopo Province offers the perfect sporting excuse for forgetting about the FIFA World Cup South Africa during the month ahead...

Perched on a cliff, accessible only by helicopter, the tee for the world's hardest golf hole soars 396 metres above me. Towering over a mix of golf greens and grasslands – where lion, buffalo, and antelope laze – this is The Extreme 19th at the Legends Golf and Safari Resort. Located deep in the Entabeni Safari Conservancy, north of Johannesburg, it is as much a marvel of landscape engineering as sporting safari. En route to the lofty green, the helicopter pilot swoops over Hanglip Mountain, climbing almost 500 metres in a few seconds. For someone who knows very little about game – be it either spotting birds or swinging birdies – it is a terrifyingly exciting prospect.

After an exhilarating 20-minute ride, accompanied by course designer and golf director David

Riddle, I balance on the edge and peek down at the sheer, ruby-red cliff face below. "Open champion Padraig Harrington was like a little schoolboy up here," reveals David, handing me a 3-wood golf club. "I couldn't get him to leave, he just kept hitting ball after ball. You should just relax, though – Retief Goosen couldn't hit a straight shot at all." Despite my poise, calm, and pre-swing tips, my arm crumples, knees twist, and I only manage to tickle the white dimpled ball on the tee, as though it was an ostrich egg.

On my third attempt, my ball rises slightly, hooks left, then drops like a stone onto the vast plain below. It falls for 26 seconds. In truth, I had been aiming for the 19th green, audaciously cut into the shape of Africa; in reality, while the end-hole

lies in Ethiopia, my ball lands somewhere off the coast of Madagascar. It vanishes into the undergrowth without a trace. I fail to hit an albatross or even a birdie – hopefully I've also missed any low-flying African eagles.

We return by helicopter to the lower escarpment and – after landing three balls in succession on the green – David is in a jubilant mood. "The best I've managed so far is a par-three," he boasts with justification. "There's nothing else like this in the world – but I've got plenty of time to practice." What will also bring the likes of Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson calling from Augusta to Valderrama is this: the first player to hit a hole in one will pocket US\$1 million in prize money.

As we return to the clubhouse, the dust rises in the wake of our tyre tracks. To the left of me, a kudu springs from the roadside; to the right loll South Africa's most exquisite golf greens. In Africa, it really is all in the game. 🏌️