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- ▶ Travel Menu
 - Canada ▶
 - USA ▶
 - Europe
 - Mexico & Central America
 - Asia
 - South America
 - Australasia
 - Middle East & Africa
- ▶ National Menu
 - What's New
 - What's Hot
 - Equipment Reviews
 - Breaking News
 - Golf Canada News ▶
 - Canadian Press
 - Regular Columns ▶
 - PGA Of Canada ▶
 - Mike Weir
 - Tiger Watch ::NIKEGOLF✓
 - IG Blogger
 - Tours Worldwide ▶

Donald's Ba Na Hills Golf Club Officially Opens

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DANANG, Vietnam — The first golf course ever designed by former world No. 1 Luke Donald opened in Asia's most impressive new golf destination yesterday.



Vietnam's Latest Designer Course Makes for 'Grand Slam' of Golf Options in Danang Area. (Photo/Ba Na Hills Golf Club)

Ba Na Hills Golf Club features 18 tour-caliber holes at the foot of a towering mountain range less than half an hour's drive from Danang, Vietnam's fourth largest city and gateway to three other designer courses built within the past seven years.

Unlike Colin Montgomerie's Montgomerie Links (2009), Greg Norman's Danang Golf Club (2010) and Nick Faldo's Laguna Lang Co (2013), Ba Na Hills GC — which Donald designed in conjunction with IMG — plays away from the coastline, at elevation, in a cooler setting typically void of wind.

"This is an important addition to one of the best new golf destinations in Asia," said Donald, who has competed all over the world since turning pro in 2001 and held the top spot in the rankings between May 2011 and March 2012. "The large rolling hills, stunning mountain backdrop and adjacent river at Ba Na Hills will provide golfers with the ideal complement to the existing courses in the area."

Stretching 7,858 yards from the championship tees — making it the longest layout in Vietnam — and comprising a non-stop succession of undulating and sometimes small greens, Ba Na Hills GC is capable of testing the world's best golfers.

However, with four other sets of tees, generous landing areas and high-density MiniVerde putting surfaces — whose ultra-fine leaf blades enable the truest of rolls — the course is well positioned to attract players of all skill levels.

"I think people are going to really be taken by the diverse mix of natural topography and vegetation out here as well," said Jack Hedges, Ba Na Hills GC's general manager. "From the rose lily trees to the wispy redtop grass, there's an incomparable beauty to the landscape, especially with the Truong Son Mountains always looming."

The most breathtaking view comes at the par-3 12th hole, where an elevated tee box reveals a dense forest stretching as far as the eye can see beyond the bunker-guarded target.

Another distinct aspect of the course is its lighting system, a feature none of its competitors possess. What's more, the arrangement is so comprehensive that golf can begin and end in the dark.

"The entire course can be illuminated, so you can play a full round even after the sun goes down," said Hedges, who like Donald was born and raised in England. "I think that will be a real draw in the warmer months, especially for overseas guests or those who maybe aren't used to golfing in tropical climates. I expect night golf to be a serious advantage for us as the destination continues to grow."

Ba Na Hills GC is managed by IMG and owned by Sun Group, one of the leading investors in Vietnam. Other hospitality projects in its portfolio include InterContinental Danang Sun Peninsula Resort, Novotel Danang Premier Han River and Ba Na Hills Mountain Resort, site of the longest, single-wire cable car system in the world.

"Sun Group is becoming synonymous with modern, high-end hospitality products," said Hedges, who assumed his role in November 2015 after serving as general manager at the IMG-managed Pine Rock Golf Club in Beijing for three years. "Ba Na Hills Golf Club will do nothing but underscore that fact, and give this region a 'grand slam' of great golfing opportunities."

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