



GUANGZHOU

Peter Swain takes aim on the contoured greens of the Chinese city

1 DRAGON LAKE

WHERE IS IT? 50km north of the centre of Guangzhou – about a 45-minute drive – and only 20 minutes from Baiyun international airport.

WHAT'S IT LIKE? The 27 holes of the new King course at this hilly resort are stunning – something like a mountainous willow pattern on steroids. The tortuous cart path that winds up through the extravagantly sculpted scenery – 220 metres from lakeside bottom to mountain top – would challenge Tour de France riders. With towering, elevated tee shots, long forced carries over rocky chasms, doglegs around banyan trees, and fast contoured greens, the three loops of nine – designed by IMG's Steve Shepherdson – are demanding even for low handicappers. The gradients are so steep that angled lies are the norm, and carts and caddies are compulsory.

This is a true championship set-up that will probably hold international events in the future. There are another 27 holes, flatter and also in immaculate shape, on the Asian Games course lower down the mountain, but unless you're staying in the resort's Princess hotel on a golf package, they are reserved for members only.

CONTACT Huadong Town, Huada District; tel +86 203 690 8000; dragonlakegolf.com.cn

PRICE King course: weekdays 880 yuan (£88), weekends

1,580 yuan (£158), includes caddie and cart. Asian Games course can only be played as part of an overnight package.

CLUB HIRE 450 yuan (£45), various makes.

CLUB HOURS 6.30am-6.30pm, last tee time 3.30pm.

MINIMUM HANDICAP None, although players who play off more than 18 may struggle on the King course.

FACILITIES King has three loops of nine holes: 3,606 yds,



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3,397 yds and 3655 yds, each par-36. The nine "B" holes are floodlit. Asian Games also has three loops of nine: 3,554 yds, 3,562 yds and 3,700 yds, all par-36. Driving range, practice greens.

AFTER THE GOLF The modest clubhouse café is open 6.30am-7.30pm. The Dragon Lake Princess hotel just down the road has five restaurants serving European, Cantonese and Asian fare. Hotel packages start at 2,800 yuan (£280) for one night/one round.

2 LOTUS HILL GOLF CLUB

WHERE IS IT? 43km south-east of the city.

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

Meandering through gentle parkland, around lakes and dramatic rocky outcrops left over from its days as a quarry, this Bernard Langer-designed course opened in 1994. It can easily be walked, and the 1,000 members ensure the set-up is in pristine condition, with all 18 greens recently re-laid. The landscaping, palm trees and lakes make an attractive backdrop for what is a serious golf course only a half-hour drive from downtown. The signature par-three 17th over water is a peach, while the risk-reward tee shot on the 18th, requiring

a 200-yard carry across a lake, commands respect.

CONTACT 18 Lifeng Road, Shilou Town, Panyu District; tel +86 208 486 6666.

PRICE Weekdays 770 yuan (£77), weekends 1,320 yuan (£132). Cart and caddie 200 yuan (£20).

CLUB HIRE 150 yuan (£15), Wilson.

CLUB HOURS Open 6am-7.30pm, last five holes floodlit.

MINIMUM HANDICAP None.



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FACILITIES The 18-hole, par-72 course measures 6,820 yards. 25-bay driving range, practice short game area.

AFTER THE GOLF The restaurant (6am-9pm) serves Western, Thai and Cantonese food. A spa, indoor and outdoor pools, tennis courts and snooker room complete the country club picture.

3 NANSHA GOLF CLUB

WHERE IS IT? 60km south-east of city centre.

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

Opened in 1997, the two pleasantly rural 18-hole resort courses overlooking the Pearl River were designed by John Jacobs. An hour's drive from the city, and 75 minutes by ferry to Hong Kong, Nansha

is a friendly public set-up with nine floodlit holes, ideal for afternoon or evening play. The walkable Valley course is wide open with plenty of water, while the wooded, hillier Mountain is more challenging. Large, flat greens invite attack, making Nansha accessible for mid and high handicappers.

CONTACT 65 Xiawan West Street, Nansha District; tel +86 208 468 1888; nsgolfclub.cn

PRICE Weekdays 520 yuan (£52), weekends 910 yuan (£90), includes caddie. Cart 220 yuan (£22). The 76-room hotel provides packages starting at 1,060 yuan (£105) for one night and one round.

CLUB HIRE 160 yuan (£16), Polo.

CLUB HOURS Weekdays from 6.30am, weekends

6am, last tee time 4.45pm. Mountain floodlit nine playable until 9pm.

MINIMUM HANDICAP None.

FACILITIES Two 18-hole par-72 courses: the 6,668-yd Mountain and 6,629-yd Valley. Driving range, short game area, putting green.

AFTER THE GOLF The buffet restaurant (6.30am-9pm) serves Cantonese and Western cuisine.

4 LUHU GOLF CLUB

WHERE IS IT? 5km north-east of the centre.

WHAT'S IT LIKE? As the only downtown course, and having the benefit of a floodlit back nine, Luhu is popular with European businessmen. The Dave Thomas-designed track, built on the side of White Cloud Mountain, has exciting elevation changes, water hazards and aggressive bunkering. The city's

surrounding high rises are a reminder of modern China, but this is a mature course, now quite heavily wooded, with narrow fairways and tricky doglegs. It lacks bite for good players but is demanding for mid-handicappers.

CONTACT Lujing Road; tel +86 208 350 7777;

luhugolf.com

PRICE Weekdays 840 yuan (£84), weekends 1,290 yuan (£129), includes caddie and cart. Night golf 920 yuan (£92).

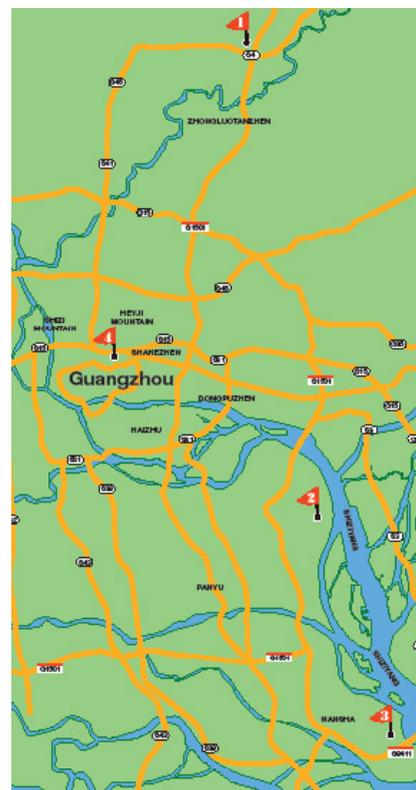
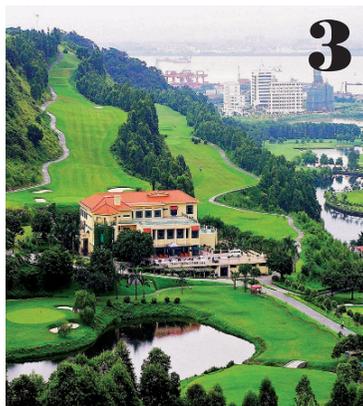
CLUB HIRE 150 yuan (£15), Polo.

CLUB HOURS 6.30am-9pm, using floodlit back nine.

MINIMUM HANDICAP None.

FACILITIES An 18-hole, 6,831-yd, par-72 course. The 75-bay driving range is half a mile down the road.

AFTER THE GOLF The eclectic restaurant menu has a good French wine list. There's also a pool, spa, gym and tennis courts. ■



FACT FILE

Peter Swain stayed at the new Four Seasons Guangzhou, at the top of the 103-storey West Tower, which offers Pearl River views and an excellent concierge service for booking your golf. fourseasons.com/guangzhou