

Road Trippin’

A golf getaway across the Carolinas offers it all: From the beach (Outer Banks) to the best (eight private McConnell Golf clubs), from all golf all the time (Pinehurst/Sandhills and the Talamore Golf Resort) to the best birdie for your buck (Fayetteville). With the fall season upon us, there is no better time to round up your favorite foursome and enjoy a variety of memorable rounds mixed with a heaping helping of southern hospitality.



BY BRAD KING

Road trips, golf getaways, bud-dy excursions. No matter what you call these sporting endeavors they almost always include a couple of important ingredients: Good friends and big fun. Golf trips are built around the entire experience, particularly the bonding with pals and loved ones.

One of the critical decisions for any golf getaway is the destination and in that regard McConnell Golf members and golf aficionados traveling the **McConnell Golf Trail** experiencing the finest private golf clubs in the Carolinas seemingly have the best of both worlds.

With Greg Norman’s gorgeous, award-winning design at **The Reserve** at Pawleys Island, S.C., they enjoy luxurious coastal golf. At the conveniently accessible **Old North State Club** in New London, N.C., hard upon Badin Lake, they enjoy the finest urban retreat with all the amenities. And last but not least, with **Musgrove Mill** and its legendary Arnold Palmer design in Clinton, S.C., they enjoy the quintessential “pure golf” getaway reminiscent

of faraway dream destinations like Pine Valley or Bandon Dunes.

Musgrove Mill and The Reserve are the two McConnell Golf clubs located furthest from the group’s core courses in North Carolina’s Triangle and Triad — which include **Sedgefield Country Club** in Greensboro, N.C., site of the PGA Tour’s Wyndham Championship and **Raleigh Country Club**, the final design of legendary architect Donald Ross.

Other times for a golf trip you might prefer to arrive at your destination, set up camp and enjoy all golf, all the time. And no better place to do just that than the Sandhills of North Carolina, where visitors to the **Talamore Golf Resort** can stay and play two of the area’s finest courses, Talamore Golf Club and its sister resort course Mid South Club, both located just minutes from the historic village of Pinehurst.

Talamore Golf Club has been ranked in the forefront of outstanding courses in the Pinehurst area since opening in 1991. Architect



The Carolina Club(top photo) is one of five courses available to golfers on a road trip to the Outer Banks of North Carolina. A trip to the Pinehurst area should include a round at Mid-South Club, an Arnold Palmer designed golf course.

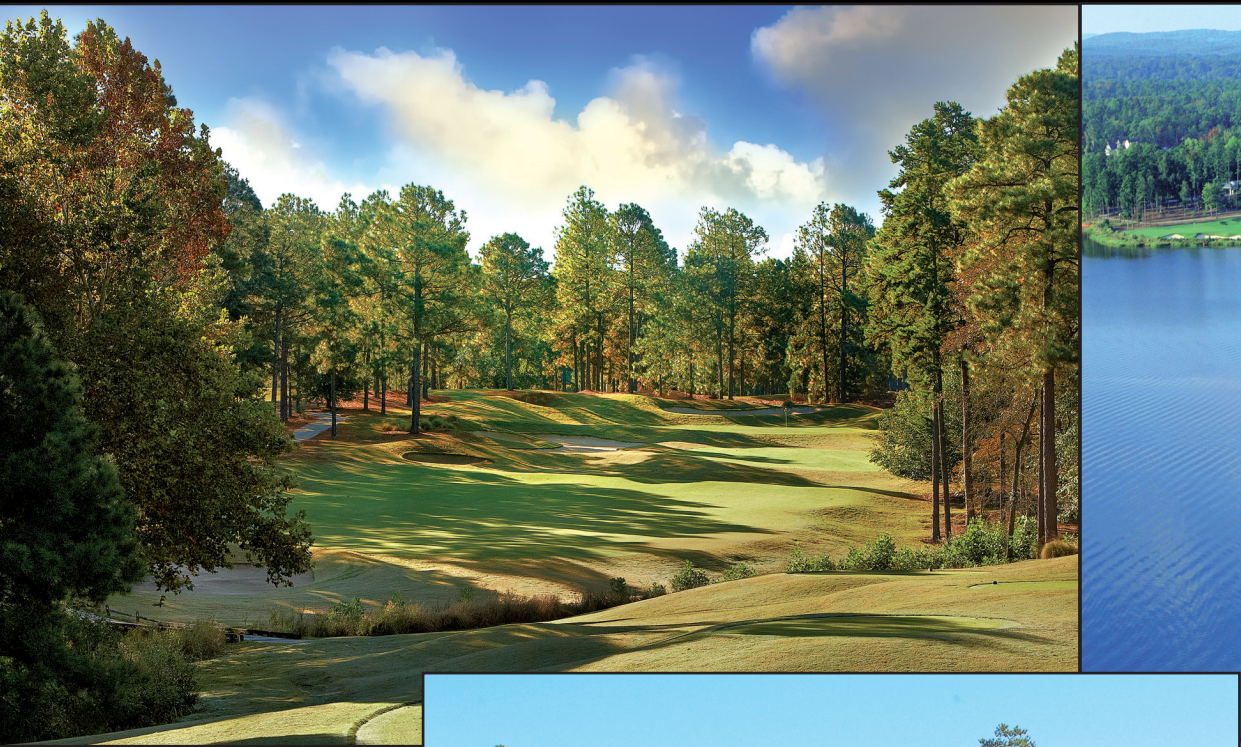
Rees Jones brought his considerable talents back to the area in order to design a course that would be visually striking and exceptionally enjoyable. The result was a 7,020—yard layout that was ranked by Golf Digest among the top five new courses in America. Talamore was also made famous by instituting the first llama caddy program, which makes for an unforgettable day.

At the **Mid South Club**, 545 acres of longleaf pine forests, lakes and gently rolling hillsides provide a backdrop for a place of beauty and serenity. Formerly known as Pinehurst Plantation, the Mid

South Club & Lodge was designed by the renowned team of Arnold Palmer and Ed Seay in 1993, and stands as one of the Carolinas’ most attractive private residential golf communities.

Then, there are the times when golf trips are combined with beach trips, and there are few better places to enjoy both than North Carolina’s legendary Outer Banks. Golfers can rent an ocean front beach house or stay on the mainland in one of the best golf cottages you will ever enjoy at **Kilmarlic Golf Club**.

Kilmarlic’s upscale Tom Steele design is more heavily wooded



than the island courses and thus less impacted by coastal breezes. Kilmarlic challenges golfers with substantially more water hazards. In fact, there are only three holes on the entire course devoid of a wetland or water feature, forcing golfers to think their way around the layout that stretches a modest 6,560 yards in length and played host to the 2004 and 2009 North Carolina Opens and an annual college event.

The Pointe, meanwhile, is a traditional design that spreads out across the rural Carolina mainland. Like Kilmarlic, The Pointe’s greatest defense is in the form of water with 15 holes sporting some sort of wet lateral challenge. Further north on the mainland, **The Carolina Club** is a big, brawny layout — particularly in relation to the others in the region — that stretches to within lob wedge distance of 7,000 yards. Designed by popular architects Russell Breeden and Bob Moore, the layout is more open than its mainland brethren making the winds more significant.

Those who prefer beach living and the occasional break for golf might prefer the **Currituck Club** located at the top end of the barrier island. The Rees Jones-designed layout winds through a premier gated Corolla community and features diverse coastal terrain



(including sand dunes, wetlands, maritime forests and sound-side shoreline) and glimpses of the Currituck Sound, particularly on signature holes at the par-5 seventh and par-3 15th. Like all the great links courses abroad, the course can change complexion according to the wind speed and direction.

For a true seaside OBX golf experience, you can do no better than **Nags Head Golf Links**, located on the south end, which challenges golfers with several holes routed right along the Roanoke Sound and winds that seemingly change by the minute. The front nine’s fifth and ninth and the back nine’s 15th and 18th holes actually play right along the water in opposite directions, making club selection more art than science.

Last but certainly not least — particularly during a challenging economy — there are wonderful buddy trips for the value con-

scious. For instance, golfers breaking up a long road trip or seeking a nearer destination where the courses may not be quite as crowded and are definitely more affordable should try a golf trip to Fayetteville, N.C. With the advent of the nation’s longest north-south Interstate Highway, I-95, in the mid 20th century, Fayetteville became more accessible than ever. Golf course expansion soon followed highway construction and eventually nearly a dozen courses within 30 miles of downtown would open their tee sheets to players. Eventually, public-access golf courses extended out from all quadrants of the city. Classic golf course design names like Donald Ross, Willard Byrd and Ellis Maples crept into the region followed by later ones like Dan Maples and Davis Love III.

What makes the Fayetteville golf experience particularly inviting is



Talamore(top left) is another favorite in the Pinehurst area. McConnell Golf Trail includes top private clubs like Old North State Club(above right). Bayonet at Puppy Creek(L) offers quality golf at affordable prices in the Fayetteville area.

the variety you’ll enjoy across its well-manicured fairways. From the thoroughly modern Love III design at **Anderson Creek** on the northwest side of town to the classic routing featuring a lavish panorama of Cypress trees, ponds and natural springs at **Cypress Lakes** to the southeast just off I-95 and the 1967 **Gates Four Golf and Country Club** with winding streams and wooden bridges weaving near the city center, there’s quite a wide range of looks to be found here. Throw in one of the most well-crafted names in golf — **Bayonet at Puppy Creek** (located on the south side) — and you’ll discover a quartet of courses that makes for a memorable three-night, four-day golf extravaganza. For a road-tripper seeking value and quality, Fayetteville provides great hotels and golf, plus history, heroes and a hometown feeling.

For more information visit:
www.McConnellGolfTrail.com
www.TalamoreGolfResort.com
www.PlayOBXGolf.com
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