



Gear up for a golf weekend on the practice green behind the Carolina Hotel at Pinehurst Resort.

Summer in the Sandhills

Great dining, shopping, and accommodations round out a couples golf weekend.

By Kathy Grant Westbrook

PHOTOGRAPHY BY WHITEBOX WEDDINGS

Pinehurst is a household word — at least in golfing households. The Moore County resort village, located in our state's Sandhills region, is forever playing host to big-time golf tournaments, including the U.S. Open in 1999, 2005, and (looking to the future) 2014. In addition to being home to world-renowned courses, Pinehurst and neighboring Southern Pines boast many other attractions, including excellent restaurants and unique shops — making this the ideal destination for a golfing couple (or, better yet, a couple of golfing couples) looking to get away for a special weekend.

Friday

Upon arriving in the Sandhills on Friday evening, head straight for the Knollwood House, an English Manor-style bed-and-breakfast located just a mile and a half from downtown Southern Pines and four miles from the heart of Pinehurst. Built as a private residence in 1927, this B&B has three guest rooms in the main house and — perfect for accommodating two couples traveling together — two guest suites in the carriage house. By the time you settle in and tour the premises with innkeepers Joe and Lyndee Radigan, it will probably be time for dinner. Of the many restaurants located close by, start your weekend off with upscale dining at The 1895 Grille at the Holly Inn, which is part of the Pinehurst Resort. Not only is the food fantastic in this four-star restaurant, but you'll also get to check out one of the most historic properties in the area: The Holly Inn, built in

1895, was Pinehurst's first hotel.

As is the case with several area restaurants, advance reservations at The 1895 Grille are advised, but what's nice about lodging at the Knollwood House is that when you call to reserve your room, the Radigans can acquaint you with all the area restaurants and golf courses and will happily book any dinner reservations and tee times you request. Following dinner, return to the Knollwood House for a good night's sleep — a busy day awaits you tomorrow.

Saturday

Saturday morning begins with breakfast — perhaps quiche, French toast, or an omelet soufflé — prepared by Lyndee Radigan and served on fine china and Waterford Crystal.

Now, it's time for a round of golf. If you're hoping to play one of the courses at the Pinehurst Resort, be aware that tee times are made available first to members and resort guests; as a non-member and non-guest, you won't be given the opportunity to try to book a tee time until after 4 p.m. on the day prior to the day on which you wish to play. If it turns out that there's no availability, don't worry; Joe Radigan notes that many nearby courses "are of comparable quality to the Pinehurst Resort courses" and he advises booking a tee time on one of those — just in case.

On this particular morning, you may want to try Pine Needles, designed by the legendary Donald Ross and lauded by many as one of the finest courses in our



Stop in at Cottage Chic (above left) in Southern Pines for beautiful linens and decor items, and consider Chef Warren's bistro (above right) for delicious upscale dining.

state. It was renovated in 2005 to help recapture some of the subtleties that were key to Ross's initial design. Another excellent, Ross-designed course worthy of your time is Mid Pines, whose 15th hole comprises the gorgeous vista directly behind the Knollwood House.

Your afternoon may unfold in either Southern Pines or Pinehurst. If you choose to go to downtown Southern Pines for an afternoon of shopping, you'll find that the town is bisected by a set of tree-lined railroad tracks, with lots of restaurants and shops situated on both sides of the tracks. If you're hungry for lunch (and that's a big "if," considering the size of the breakfast the Radigans served), one of the town's most popular noontime eateries is Sweet Basil, as evidenced by the line of patrons that often forms outside the doorway. Shops selling everything from books to clothing to pottery are independently owned, so they're homey and inviting — the kind of places where you enjoy chatting with the owners.

For your evening meal, Café Iano is a must if

you're in the mood for a salad or sandwich. You won't find a better selection of salads anywhere, and it's the only place around that serves real, honest-to-goodness New England lobster rolls. If the weather's nice — and on a June evening in Southern Pines, it's almost guaranteed to be — look for live acoustic music to begin on the patio around 8 p.m. and continue for a couple of hours.

For a more upscale dining experience, Chef Warren's is a great bistro with an open kitchen, allowing patrons to watch Chef Warren Lewis prepare dishes like herb-crusted rack of lamb or blackened mahimahi. Eating around 6 p.m. will allow plenty of time for a leisurely meal before heading across the street to the Sunrise Theater to catch whatever entertainment happens to be scheduled, be it a concert, play, or movie (shows generally start around 7:30).

If you decide to spend the afternoon in Pinehurst, a natural starting point would be the lobby of The Carolina. Like the Holly Inn, this stately, four-story



When Pinehurst Resort was first built in 1895, a farmer complained of guests hitting little white balls in his pasture and scaring the cows. Now, the golf courses are world-renowned, and tee time availability can be hard to swing.

hotel is part of the Pinehurst Resort. It opened in 1901, and, over the years, its guests have included such luminaries as Warren G. Harding, Theodore Roosevelt, and Will Rogers. Lunching in The Carolina Dining Room will give you a chance to enjoy the ambiance.

One of Pinehurst's must-see shops is Old Sport and Gallery, which overflows with an unbelievable inventory of golf art and literature, as well as other golf- and sports-related memorabilia. The shop's owner, Tom Stewart, says he started the business from the huge personal collection he amassed over the years while playing golf competitively in more than 30 countries. He's constantly adding to the inventory, explaining, "Most of it finds me now." But golf isn't Old Sport and

Gallery's sole focus: Stewart's wife, Ilana, originally from Russia, makes regular trips to her native country, returning with authentic, traditional Russian artwork that is sold in the shop.

Point to an autographed picture of Mother Teresa, and he'll tell you about a time he worked as an ambulance driver for her for a couple of months.

Half of the fun of shopping here is visiting with Stewart. Ask him about an autographed photo of legendary golfer Payne Stewart, and he says, "He was a great friend of mine. I was with him when he met his wife." Point

to an autographed picture of Mother Teresa, and he'll tell you about the time he worked as an ambulance driver for her for a couple of months. Admire the Russian artwork that fills the front room of the shop, and Stewart will describe artists in remote villages traveling several hours by train to bring Ilana the

One of several accommodations at the Pinehurst Resort, The Carolina is a 220-room National Historic Landmark built in 1901.



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works of art they have so carefully crafted.

Besides golf and shopping, one of the most pleasant ways to spend an afternoon in Pinehurst is to take a walking tour of the village, which is known for its gently curving streets, abundance of greenery (pines, dogwoods, azaleas, and hollies), and historic buildings (including many of the original cottages built here in the late 1800s). You can make the most of your walk by following the wonderfully detailed, walking-tour book available from the Tufts Archives, an organization dedicated to preserving Pinehurst’s history and located in the village’s Givens Memorial Library. Unfortunately, the Archives closes at 12:30 p.m. on Saturdays, so you’ll want to make arrangements to purchase the book ahead of time.

As your day comes to a close, consider dining at the Pine Crest Inn. The inn has been around forever (well, since 1913) and the restaurant is a local favorite, famous for its thick-cut pork chops. A few minutes spent rocking on the inn’s long front porch is the perfect way to say “good night” to Pinehurst.

Sunday

On Sunday morning, expect Lyndee Radigan to surprise you with a breakfast completely different from the one she made on Saturday. “We once had a couple stay here for nine days,” says Joe Radigan. “We never served them the same breakfast twice.”

Naturally, you’ll want to get in another round of golf before leaving the Sandhills. This time, head to the Southern Pines Golf Club, where you’ll enjoy play on yet another Donald Ross course. Among the earliest courses designed by Ross (the first nine holes opened in 1906), this course is a classic that Radigan describes as a “fabulous hidden gem.”

Afterwards, you can grab a sandwich or pizza at the clubhouse grill, or you can choose to check out yet one more of Southern Pines’s finest restaurants, Ironwood Café. “It has a really broad menu,” says Radigan. “There’s something for everyone.”

Finally, if you’ve got time for one last stop before

heading home, make it the Sandhills Horticultural Gardens at Sandhills Community College. Strolling throughout the 32-acre area, you’ll encounter a formal English garden, a stucco-walled courtyard filled with succulents, a wetland trail, a World War II Memorial picnic area, a holly garden with approximately 400 cultivars, and much more. This serene setting invites you to reflect on your weekend and to dream of other Sandhills weekends to come. ➔

Kathy Grant Westbrook lives and writes in Four Oaks.

if you’re going

Pinehurst, Southern Pines, Aberdeen Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
10677 U.S. Highway 15-501
Southern Pines, N.C. 28387
(910) 692-3330

Knollwood House
1495 West Connecticut Avenue
Southern Pines, N.C. 28387
(910) 692-9390

Pinehurst Resort
80 Carolina Vista Drive
Pinehurst, N.C. 28374
(910) 235-8507

For a link to the websites of these businesses, go to www.ourstate.com and click on “This Month’s Issue.”



One more attraction: Tufts Archives



The Tufts Archives in Pinehurst houses thousands of old photographs, documents, and artifacts that tell the story of the village's history. It's open Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. until 5 p.m., and Saturday from 9:30 until 12:30. But it's worth visiting even after hours since the outdoor space, available to the public at any time, includes a flat, sand putting green reminiscent of those found in Pinehurst from 1897 until 1934. Golfers are invited to tee up the old-fashioned way, using a pinch of wet sand, before chipping onto the green. A large rug hangs nearby to be used to smooth the

green following play. During hours, the Archives loans out hickory shaft clubs and golf balls; after hours, you must bring your own.

if you're going

Tufts Archives
150 Cherokee Road
Pinehurst, N.C. 28370
(910) 295-3642
www.tuftsarchives.org
