

GOLF GEORGIA

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Hampton Club

HISTORIC

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Along the Georgia Coast, midway between Savannah and Jacksonville, Fla., lies an area of astonishing beauty, mild weather and a natural radiance that inspires the name "Golden Isles." In this coastal region, each island has its own unique and individual allure. St. Simons Island is the largest and is rich in history and natural landscape. Situated on the north end of the island, its geographic location along salt marshes and tidal creeks, is The Hampton Club. Heralded as one of the top resort courses in the nation, this astoundingly scenic 18-hole course resides on the former site of the 18th century Hampton cotton, indigo and rice plantation. There will never be an endless cache of this type of landscape, just like a fine piece of art, there is limited supply.

AMPTON

BY JARRELL JOHNSON



Hole 15, Par 3, 155 Yards



Hole 12, Par 3, 118 Yards

This superbly-crafted layout is certainly among famed architect **Joe Lee's** finest designs. Lee, who has designed more than 200 championship courses nationwide, unleashed his creative flair while preserving the unique qualities of the land and wildlife sanctuary to create a truly indigenous masterpiece. In fact, the four signature holes, Nos. 12-15, are on islands to themselves.

A boat ferried every piece of equipment to and from during construction. These holes are accessible via 800 feet of marsh-spanning bridges. Majestic ancient oaks, tidal marshlands, lakes and lagoons define this challenging yet very playable tract.

True to Lee's design philosophy, the course was created to be enjoyed by all. Stretching a modest 6,465 yards from the championship tees, the course has an extraordinarily natural feel, free from manufactured mounding and other modern day aesthetic creations. Not long, but indeed a formidable test, every round seems accompanied by gentle to prevailing sea breezes. There are many memorable holes here, and this is indeed a shot-makers delight.

Emerald-green immaculate conditions are the norm, as superintendent **Chuck Moore** and crew provide meticulous attention to detail. Having the pleasure of playing Hampton for many years, it seems to always be in "show-room" condition, with rarely a blade of pine straw out of place. Director of golf and general manager **Rick Mattox** and clubhouse manager **Bruce Taylor** have been serving members and guests with Southern hospitality for 16 and 15 years respectively. This dedicated duo provides a level of professionalism and friendliness that is rarely found in golf.

The Hampton Club caters to year-round and seasonal memberships, as well as resort guests and patrons from all over. The clubhouse features a dining room, lounge, fully-stocked golf shop and locker rooms, and the club offers complete practice facilities, swimming and tennis. It is a welcoming place to gather before or after a round.

For the second-straight year, the Georgia State Golf Association conducted the Georgia Women's Team Championship at The Hampton Club. This year's event, the 21st annual, took place October 17-18. **Marilyn Nolan-Johnson** of Marietta and **Ginette Spinucci** of Stone Mountain successfully defended their title.

The club is offered as a wonderful amenity of the legendary King and Prince Beach and Golf Resort, minutes away on St. Simons Island. For many years, this coastal Georgia landmark, just steps from the Atlantic Ocean, has

beckoned guests to an array of pleasures. The facilities have undergone more than \$15 million in renovations and hosted many notable annual events. Few destinations offer the location, the luxury and the facilities found here.

The King and Prince opened as a hotel in 1941 complete with modern features and magnificent ocean views. The hotel served as a naval facility during World War II, then reopened in 1947 and immediately resumed its position as one of America's top resort destinations. Its Mediterranean-style architecture has never been compromised. Today, the resort enjoys its highest occupancy ever, pleasing leisure, meeting and golf guests year round. Golfers enjoy the resort's many amenities, including one indoor and four outdoor pools, clay tennis courts, biking, sailing, kayaking, nature trails or simply enjoying the beach.

The hotel features well-appointed guest rooms, as well as elaborate two and three-bedroom beach villas. Eight new Cabana rooms are favorites with private parlors, patios and direct oceanfront location. The culinary experience is commendable with fine ocean-view dining found in The Delegal Room and more casual fare in The Tavern. The King and Prince is a member of the prestigious Historic Hotels of America.

A visit to The Hampton Club is a destination trip, providing not only an exceptional golf experience, but the opportunity to explore and enjoy historic St. Simons Island. The island is rich in over 400 years of history and folklore. In 1763, General James Oglethorpe established Georgia's first military outpost at Fort Federica, now a national monument. A visit to the historic 200-year-old lighthouse is a must. One of only five surviving light towers in Georgia, it remains a navigational aid today for traffic entering the St. Simons Island Sound. Also at the southern tip is the site of The Battle of Bloody Marsh, where English troops defeated the Spanish and determined the course of Colonial history. The island is also a recreational paradise, offering a multitude of antiquing, countless shops, restaurants and pristine beauty. Time is precious here, and visitors are advised to use it wisely. The island will leave guests with memories that are indelible.

The Hampton Club is an enjoyable combination of great golf, accommodations, food and other fine amenities. Its storied success is related to the many patrons who return time and time again. ©

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