

Levante Golf Society – Away Trip 3-7 October, 2022

On Monday, 3rd October the 24 eager golfers and some of their spouses headed south for Valle del Este and the anticipation of 3 lovely days of golf, good companionship, good food and the odd alcoholic beverage.

Levante GS had the first Valle del Este away trip last year and then 3 different courses were played but this time, much to my delight, we played the hotel course on Tuesday 4th, then Aguilon on Wednesday and returned to the hotel course for our final golf day. I personally enjoyed both courses, but probably felt more comfortable on Valle del Este.

We arrived to a beautiful day on Monday 3rd October and after unpacking we met all those who had also taken advantage of the extra day by the pool, and a few g & t's were enjoyed before dinner. The food selection was wonderful, I cannot describe it but there were very few complaints, because there was certainly something for everyone. Our golf the next day was quite a late start, so there wasn't any hurry retiring for the night.

The next morning breakfast didn't disappoint. Trouble is with so much choice whatever do you start with? There is a very nice Spa at the hotel, which we didn't have time to explore last year, so as the start time wasn't until 13:30 or so, the Spa it was. If you get the chance next year to take the trip and if Valle del Este is the destination, then take my word for it, the Spa is well worth a visit, plus with the amount of food and drink consumed, there is also a gym with quite a bit of calorie-burning equipment.

It was great to see some old faces for the first time this year and to play golf with them too. There was a lot of excitement as we gathered at Tee 1 on the Tuesday, in brand new buggies!!! The seats were so comfortable like sitting in a fancy car. We were playing a Team Accumulator, 2 scores to count and our team were second to go after Captain Don teed off, playing with (what we imagined would be) the winning team of Don, Fiona Sankey, Dave Collie and newcomer to Levante GS and her first trip away, Monika Payne. My team of Dave Kerr, Roger Jennings and Keith Price all had their moments, but Roger was heard to mention that he was going to try and walk over the lake when he got to the 18th! He played the most amazing golf that first day. It was great fun – golf always is when you are playing well and apart from one member going 'walk about' for a couple of holes, the team played very well.

Unfortunately, one of the brand new buggies that had been unwrapped (supposedly) that morning broke down and a couple of the team members had to push it which wasn't ideal. But Celia who was in that team also had a bit of bad luck on the last day when the buggy she was in with Danny H, had a puncture! I think Celia is going to walk from now on not trusting buggies, but neither course would have been fun to walk, it has a few holes with a good distance from green to the next tee.

After the golf, the ladies who had accompanied their husbands but don't play golf, were waiting for us by the pool and the tables got added one by one as the fourballs came in, and we all sat around discussing our rounds and what a great / terrible round of golf we had, supping a cold bevvy. It was magical. We all gathered back by the pool dressed for dinner to hear the results of the first competition. Roger J. didn't try and walk on water by the way, but our team came in with the winning score beating the expected winners by 15 points! It was a magical game. Well done to the 2nd place team of Don Larner, Fiona, Dave Collie and Monika with 77 points and third place with 76 points, Donna Green, Les Vine, Paul Sankey and Tony Slipper.

Dinner didn't disappoint again, nor did breakfast the next morning and we set off in convoy for Aguilon with great anticipation as the backdrop for this course is quite amazing, just like out of a Spaghetti Western – spectacular! We played a Texas Scramble at Aguilon which was very sensible as it is a difficult course, but the ladies in the group did get an amazing advantage but that was definitely the reason that they were given negative handicap slopes. It was another fabulous day of golf with the scores being so very close, but the winners were Donna Green, Dave Collie, Danny Herron and again our newcomer, Monika Payne. With a score of 62.0 and those coming a very close second was the team of Roger Jennings, Les Vine, Colin Grant and Keith Price with just .3 less, 62.3. In third place with 62.6 (you couldn't write about it!) was Dave Kerr, Fiona Sankey, David Blakeley and Jenny Downes. So amazingly close. Danny wasn't pleased to be left behind by his 'driver' although speed limits were not adhered to on the road or the golf course!!!

The dinner was wonderful again on Wednesday evening and the wine budget was blown we heard! Not surprising, it was another great evening.

Thursday dawned and the weather forecast was very gloomy, even the girls who came with their husbands weren't sure they would get their run in first thing, but the weather was kind..... until we stood on the tee, I was the first to go out and the clouds just to our right were so stormy and in the distance you could see it was pouring with rain. Just as we walked to the tee box there was a clap of thunder and we thought 'oh no', but luck was with us once again and the winds just blew it round us and there were, at most, a dozen spots of rain, but otherwise a glorious day for golf.

Lovely to play the same course again, remembering what to do and what NOT to do. The final team game was a Waltz, 1, 2, 3.... 1, 2, 3 etc. Unfortunately, one of our group had to leave but as luck would have it one of our newest members Howard Payne had driven down to spend the penultimate evening with us and was going to take Monika's place to participate in the last day's golf but due to being one down, they were both able to play which was great.

Apart from the blow out on the buggy tyre of Celia and Danny, everything else went reasonably smoothly and we had a fabulous last day of golf, finished in time to have a quick trip to the Spa. The winners were Me (Penny Barden), Paul Sankey, Roger Miller and Bob Fell, with 82 points, second close behind were Donna, Roger (walk on water) Jennings, Tony Slipper and Monika Payne with 79 points and in third place much to their surprise, Celia Cronin, Danny Herron Howard Payne and Alan Draper with 76 points. Well done to everyone.

The Captain's Charity NTP Challenge raised Euros 350 for the Preventorio Orphanage in Gandia and the winners of the NTP's were on the first day at Valle del Este, Colin Grant, at Aguilon it was David Blakeley and the last day at Valle del Este, it was David Downes. Well done, that wasn't an easy challenge and great to raise so much money.

The trip was absolutely great, we got home in time for a late lunch on Friday having thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. The hotel was wonderful, for me the food was just fabulous and the company..... well the company couldn't have been bettered.