

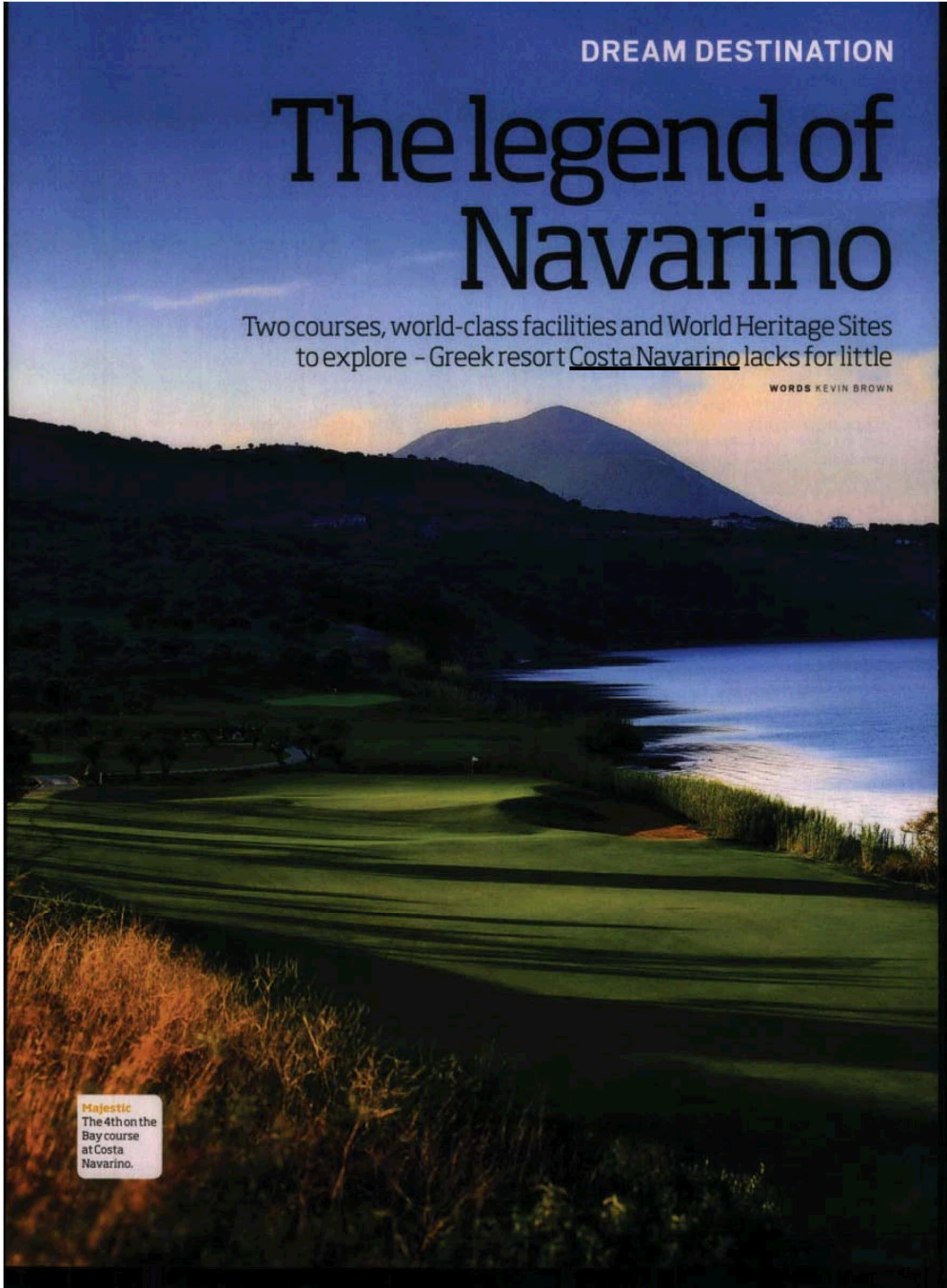
DREAM DESTINATION

The legend of Navarino

Two courses, world-class facilities and World Heritage Sites to explore - Greek resort Costa Navarino lacks for little

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Majestic
The 4th on the Bay course at Costa Navarino.





With just seven courses to its name, Greece is hardly an obvious choice for your next golf break in the sun. However, Costa Navarino, tucked away in the south-west corner on the edge of the Mediterranean, is looking to change all that.

A three-and-a-half-hour flight from London will get you to Kalamata airport, from where Costa Navarino is an hour's drive west.

The journey provides a chance to take in the Peloponnese landscape of Messinia, typified by green valleys, mountains and long beaches while tavernas in villages set into the cliffs provide idyllic spots to sample produce from the local olive and citrus groves.

Once there, you can explore the region's history; Mycenaean palaces, classical temples, Byzantine churches and medieval castles are all within easy reach, while the World Heritage sites of Ancient Olympia, Mystras and the Temple of Apollo Epicurius are close by.

Leaving Costa Navarino – even if only for

half a day – will be tough, though. There is a choice of two five-star hotels – the Westin and the Romanos – that are equally impressive. The extensive leisure and dining choices mean there is something for everyone within these smart, marbled complexes and golfers in particular are well catered for.

There are two 18-hole courses, the first of which, the Dunes, is just a short walk from your room. Laid out in 2010 by Bernhard Langer, there is a links-type feel with large, undulating greens and deep pot bunkers. Wide fairways and plentiful teeing options make it an enjoyable challenge for all, even in a sea breeze. Just a few minutes down the road is the Bay course. This Robert Trent Jones Jnr design is just 6,300 yards from the tips with an emphasis on strategy thanks to narrower fairways and smaller targets. There are panoramic views of the sea and mountains, including several holes that play directly along the coast and overlook historic Navarino bay.

Outstanding practice facilities include a full-size driving range, short-game area and putting green while there's an Academy on site with the latest technology. Off the course there is an award-winning 4,000m² spa and a wide range of sports and leisure activities. Year-round mild temperatures and improved UK flight options make the 21 per cent increase in UK visitors easy to understand.

Getting there

There are nine weekly direct flights from the UK to Kalamata (BA, easyJet and Thomas Cook). From £40 (one way) via easyJet.

Try it yourself

Deal 1: Three nights' B&B and two rounds (Dunes & Bay) costs from €263 per room per day. To book visit costanavarinogolf.com

Deal 2: Five nights' B&B at Westin Resort, flights and three rounds, from £785pp. To book call Chaka Travel on 028 9023 2112.

