



The stunning par 3 12th hole at Apes Hill

YG TRAVEL FEATURE

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MY BIBLE studies were never quite as assiduous as a young Catholic church-goer as they might have been. Ditto the catechisms.

As such I really couldn't say with any certainty or not whether there is any Old Testament record of Adam enjoying the odd round of golf before the Almighty went and beggared everything up by using one of his ribs to create a female companion.

Who knows? Perhaps ladies' tees really do date back to the book of Genesis?

What I will venture, is that had Adam possessed the time and inclination to carve a few holes out of the Garden of Eden, I figure they might have looked something like the top of the Apes Hill Club in Barbados, in the lush hills and former sugar plantations that overlook both the emerald Caribbean and the deep blue rollers of the Atlantic.

Apes Hill, which opened in 2009, is still a

Above the Atlantic and Caribbean, Barbados has a major new player

Danny Lockwood reports

magnificent work in progress, and as villas are thoughtfully introduced to its big, handsome layout, they will actually add definition to the golf course which already holds its head high amongst neighbours down the hill at Royal Westmoreland and closer to the beach at Sandy Lane's Green Monkey courses.

On the stretch of holes after the turn however, and especially the 12th to the 16th, it is difficult to imagine anyone or anything improving on what God and nature have already created.

'If not the Garden of Eden', I thought as my son and I bugged our way around and between holes, 'it could have been The Land That Time

Forgot, the Edgar Rice Burroughs classic'.

The name is 'Apes Hill' for a reason. In the trees by the first fairway a family of monkeys, mum, dad and several offspring, perched wide-eyed and watched us curiously. By the time I'd retrieved my camera, they had melted away however, their curiosity satisfied.

Staying with the Eden metaphor, you won't find a tempting serpent hanging from any nearby tree offering you the forbidden fruit – but you will almost certainly see a mongoose, the reason why Barbados is largely a snake-free island after they were introduced by plantation owners.

But you don't have to take my word for it.

This is what Golf World thought about Apes Hill: "Holes 11 to 14 provide an Amen Corner every bit as dramatic and invigorating as the one we all know in Georgia.

"These holes tiptoe over the brow of the island, disappear amongst jungle and rough coral outcrops, to provide the most sensational string of holes that can be found anywhere.

"It's that good!"

At 7150 yards off the tips, Apes Hill has a range of tees to suit your handicap or ambitions. And don't be daunted by the 645 yard 6th hole – it's downhill and downwind, all of it overlooking the glimmering Caribbean.

Similarly the 500-yard 18th is a par 4, but plays significantly shorter.

At the moment work is underway on a brand new clubhouse complex which will be the jewel in an already impressive crown.

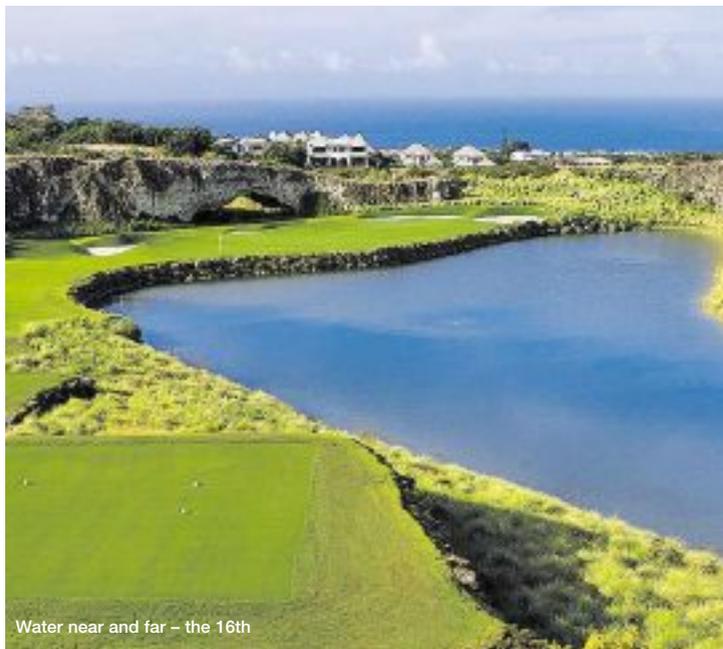
Currently, members and guests use the colonial-style clubhouse overlooking the course's lower holes and with its own stunning views along the west coast.

Golfing in Barbados isn't cheap, with green fees at Apes Hill ranging from \$170 US for a guest with a member, to \$280 (£165) for a walk up.

However between now and the end of October the club is promoting an unbeatable deal, where visitors can stay in a fairway villa for the same £165 a night, or a polo villa for £135 (based on



Beach dining at The House, one of Elegant Hotels' five luxury properties in Barbados



Water near and far – the 16th

currency exchange rates correct at the time of writing).

The offer is for a minimum of three people for three nights, but includes transfers to and from the airport with a VIP airport concierge, a welcome food package, free internet and cable, beach club access down on the coast – and unlimited golf.

You really, really can't beat that with a stick, golfing or otherwise.

I don't know where my teenage son thought he was getting the money from, but he was already talking (ambitiously) about coming back to this piece of paradise before starting university in September.

But then again, Apes Hill – like Barbados itself – really is what dreams are made of.