

# Robb Report

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## CAR OF THE YEAR



FEBRUARY 2008



THE WORLD'S BEST CHASE THE 2008 TITLE

ASTON MARTIN | AUDI | BENTLEY | BMW | FERRARI

LAMBORGHINI | MASERATI | MERCEDES-BENZ

PORSCHE | ROLLS-ROYCE | SALEEN & MORE

the country's courses today rival the world's best. But at least one aspect of Chinese golf distinguishes the sport from its equivalents in the British Isles or on the California coast: Chinese caddies—all women, as is common in Asian countries—make golfing in the People's Republic an exotic experience for Westerners. "A very rewarding part of the Chinese golf experience is the caddies," notes Dagleish.

"It's like trying to judge a beauty pageant," says Tenniel Chu, executive director of Mission Hills, of the selection process for the 3,000 caddies employed at the resort. The criteria for hiring a caddie, he explains, include

age, language abilities, height, and level of education. Caddies at Mission Hills cannot be younger than 19 or older than 27; they must speak Mandarin, Cantonese, and basic English; and they must be at least 5-foot-2 and have attended high school.

For aspiring caddies at Mission Hills and most of the other leading golf resorts in China, being selected is only the beginning of a long initiation process. The three-month training course at Mission Hills educates the young women on golf strategies, terms, rules, and etiquette. Upon completing the course, caddies must pass a written and oral test before they can begin

servicing members and guests on the resort's courses.

Yet for all the training, there still exists a knowledge gap between the Western golfer and Chinese caddie, as if some of the sport's finer points remain en route across the Pacific. The fact becomes evident when, halfway through my round on a Nicklaus-designed course at the Spring City Golf and Lake Resort in Kunming, I decide to forgo a traditional pitch shot in favor of a bump-and-run. My request for a 7-iron for a 40-yard shot confuses my caddie, Barbara Li. It seems the 25-year-old Li, who has worked at the resort for four years, has never seen

## GREEN CHINA



Old Town  
in Lijiang

says, 'I'm going with seven pals to China,' and she says, 'Hold on a second; I'm going with you.'

Unlike its original trips to the British Isles, PerryGolf's excursions to China and other destinations pair golf with unique cultural experiences. Gordon points to the city of Lijiang, with its high-quality golf courses and quaint Old Town section, as an ideal stop on a China journey. The company is capable of arranging a trip for as few as two people, and 10- to 12-day itineraries cost approximately \$9,000 per person. The price includes guides and drivers but excludes airfare to and from China. For those who prefer to leave all decisions in the company's hands, PerryGolf is offering a set-itinerary, escorted trip to China from October 12 through 24, 2008. 910.795.1048, [www.perrygolf.com](http://www.perrygolf.com)

GOLFING IN THE People's Republic can be a unique and memorable experience. However, knowing where to go and how to get around once you arrive might be more challenging than sinking that long, treacherous putt for par. Two tour companies—one specializing in international golf excursions, the other in Asian travel—recently began offering customized trips that, like a good caddie on a challenging course, will help you navigate the twists and turns of a golf journey through China.

### PERRYGOLF

Brothers Gordon and Colin Dagleish started PerryGolf in 1984 as a service that offered bespoke golf vacations to the British Isles. Their vision for the company evolved as they included new destinations (they now visit 12 countries), especially China. "Golf trips in the British Isles—in Scotland specifically—it's a fundamentally different buy," says Gordon. "It's the guy who comes home and says, 'Honey, I'm going to go with seven pals to Scotland next August.' And she goes, 'OK, go have a good time.' The same guy comes home and

### REMOTE LANDS

Founded in 2006 by longtime Hong Kong resident Catherine Heald and her partner, Jay Tindall, Remote Lands specializes in bespoke private-jet journeys throughout the continent that include exclusive cultural experiences. In addition to golf, the company's China itineraries may include lunch with artist Ye Fang in his waterfront gardens in Suzhou, a visit to a remote monastery in the Yunnan Province, and a journey over the sand dunes of Dunhuang on camelback. Golf-related stops may include Mission Hills, Spring City, and the Beijing Golf Club, the latter of which offers views of the Great Wall.

The prices for noninclusive golf journeys, with local guides and drivers, begin at \$1,500 per person per day; rates for an all-inclusive private-jet trip (excluding airfare to and from China) start at \$100,000. Heald notes that Remote Lands does not require much advance notice to prepare a trip. "We had somebody call on a Monday, and they left on Thursday," says Heald. "We can act very, very quickly. We just work around the clock." 646.415.8092, [www.remotelands.com](http://www.remotelands.com) —S.T.