

## WORK SHORTER – AND GO LOWER

The New Year has teed off and your biggest goal is to lower your handicap in 2010. So how do you do this? Quite simply, you listen to the professionals – and the one thing they’ll all tell you is that you need to work on your short game



“I see so many amateurs going to the driving range and just banging balls, with no reasoning behind it,” says Sunshine Tour professional Vaughn Groenewald, who won the 2006 Vodacom Origins of Golf Pretoria by a staggering six shots. “I often tell them to stop wasting their time and go and chip and putt. Working on that part of your game will bring your score down immediately.”



Jake Roos, one of the rising young professionals in South African golf, agrees. “Amateurs should work more on their putting, because it can make a huge difference to their scores. The putter is the club you use most during a round of golf. And considering that most amateurs miss greens, having a good short game is critical to keeping their scores low.”

When it comes to putting, Hendrik Buhrmann – one of the country’s more experienced professionals, whose advice is frequently sought by others on the driving range – says you need to focus on getting the speed right.

“Amateur golfers should do their warm-up on the putting green and start out

putting from 3m, then 6m and finally 9m, all the time just focusing on getting the right speed. I guarantee that if you do this, you’ll save yourself five shots per round,” says Buhrmann.



“The way professionals think about putting is as follows: if you misread a putt by 30cm, but you have the speed right, then you’re only left with a 30cm tap-in putt. But if you misread a putt by 30cm and also get the speed wrong, then you could be faced with a 2m putt-back.”

And professional Darren Fichardt, a multiple tournament-winner in SA and on the European Tour, has one final piece of advice: “Don’t try what you see on TV. When you get around the greens, use just enough club to make sure the ball will land on the green and run to the hole.

“Most amateurs get out a lob wedge or sand wedge and want to see the ball pitch near the hole and stop, because they’ve seen that on TV. They’d do better to start chipping with their eight irons, rather than their wedges. Even if they catch it slightly fat, the ball will still run on.”



## ISLAND STYLE

You know a golf course is pretty exceptional when it takes up its own 38ha tropical island. With views of the ocean from all 18 holes, the Le Touessrok golf course on the east coast of Mauritius is accessible only by boat (or helicopter, if you prefer). Designed by Bernhard Langer, at almost 6 500m, the par-72 championship course is the longest one on the island. It resembles a botanical garden, complete with tropical foliage, volcanic rock outcrops, small bays (at three of the holes you have to drive your ball over the sea), gullies and nine lakes, while magnificent birds and curious squirrels provide an objective audience. It offers a range of holes – playable for recreational golfers, but also challenging for advanced golfers – with the 19<sup>th</sup> hole at the colonial Club House providing the ideal spot for sundowners. Green fees are complimentary for all Le Touessrok hotel guests.

For further information and reservations at Le Touessrok, contact World Leisure Holidays on tel: 011 285 2500 or visit: [www.ihavetogothere.co.za](http://www.ihavetogothere.co.za).

• Ingrid Wood flew courtesy of Air Mauritius and was transported by Avis Chauffeur Drive.

## GOLF CHIRP

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“The biggest lesson I’ve learned is to be patient on the golf course. I’ve been fortunate to play a lot of golf in Scotland, where the weather can get pretty dismal. In situations like these,



it’s best to keep your head or you will start dropping shots. I’ve found the secret to a good round is often not how many birdies you make, but how few bogeys.” **DM**