

YOU ARE HERE [Golf Destinations](#) / [International](#) / Golf Tourism to Machrihanish Dunes on Scotland's West Coast

Golf Tourism to Machrihanish Dunes on Scotland's West Coast

By **admin** - Posted on **08 September 2008** [GolfBistro.org](#)

In the past 100 years there has not been an addition to the golf landscape on Scotland's west coast. A project has been in the making over the past several years that will be a definite trip of a lifetime for any golfer who loves history, nature and the cultural experience that can only be experienced on the west coast of Scotland. Taking a trip to Machrihanish Dunes is golf tourism by its very definition.



The project that has been years in the making is just a few short months away from being available to the public. This ambitious project took vision, determination and a perfect piece of property on the west coast of Scotland.

I contacted **Brian Keating**, project principal, for more information about Machrihanish Dunes and this is what I discovered.

GolfBistro: How long was Machrihanish Dunes an idea before finally becoming a reality?

Brian Keating: I started working on the project in Sept 2004, having searched Scotland for an appropriate site to build a world-class links course. I knew if I could find the right site, there was two or three architects in the world that could deliver a must-play.

GB: Being the first 18-hole links golf course to be built on the west coast of Scotland in 100 years is very exciting, what memories do you hope a trip to Machrihanish Dunes will leave on its visitors?

BK: Firstly Kintyre is a very old and almost mystical place, its history through the ages involves the Vikings, the Scottish Lords of the Isles, the Kings of Ireland, the more recently the clearances and mass immigrations to the new world, the undisturbed nature of the settlements in Kintyre are a reminder of these bygone days. Secondly, the natural beauty of the area is second to none and thirdly real links golf is the ultimate game for a golfer. The relationship the game has with the environment is never quite as acute as it is on a links course and this will hopefully be the abiding part of the experience for our visitors

GB: David McLay Kidd is the architect of Machrihanish Dunes. Kidd also designed The Castle Course at St. Andrews as well as Bandon Dunes in Oregon. What vision did he bring to this project that earned him the assignment as course designer?

BK: David is one of the few golf architects who understand that a little is often enough. David didn't design Machrihanish Dunes, the design was there. He planned a route through the existing land as laid down by nature. His team built the tees and the greens, but the rest of the course was already there.

GB: Please share with us the significance of Machrihanish Dunes being built on a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

BK: Since 1980 all-important coastal sites in the UK have been protected. SSSI designation is the highest protection category afforded under the law to environmentally sensitive land. Technically it should have been impossible to build a golf course on such land. Over a three-year period we convinced the environmentalists that true links golf (using almost no water and fertilizer) would be a good way to manage this land. A condition of consent was that the fairways had to remain as we found them and that the construction of the tees and greens had to be by hand.

GB: At 7,300 yards and featuring six greens ocean side, the breeze off the Atlantic will definitely influence play. Could you share some local knowledge for visitors planning to play Machrihanish Dunes?

BK: For the most part the course will be different every time it's played. The coastal holes play away from the prevailing wind so we hope that most players will be assisted as they play the holes by the beach toward the end of their round. Of course it will be a different matter if the wind is blowing the other way. We will have a cadre of local caddies to offer professional advice and assistance to golfers.

GB: Is there anything else about Machrihanish Dunes that you would like to share with our readers?

BK: The course is located adjacent to the 'must play' Machrihanish Golf Course, which was designed by Old Tom Morris and opened in 1879. We also have a links course at Southend (Dunaverty), so a trip to Machrihanish Dunes can provide three days of fantastic links golf. Golfers will also be able to enjoy some of the fabulous local seafood, including world-famous langoustine and smoked mussels. They can visit the Old Smokehouse, which offers award-winning smoked mussels, salmon, scallops and cheeses. Campbeltown has a flourishing music scene with folk music, brass bands and pipers (the area has six hundred registered bagpipers.) Visitors can also tour the oldest family-owned distillery in Scotland, Springbank, and of course traverse the 'long and winding road' from the famous Paul McCartney song.

Most importantly, they will enjoy the challenge of golf in its truest and most beautiful form—traditional links.



For additional information about Machrihanish Dunes please visit

<http://www.machrihanishdunes.com/about/>

All photos are property of and copyrighted by Machrihanish Dunes and Brian Keating and can not be used without permission.