

Best Golf Courses

Machrihanish Dunes

By [Bradley S. Klein](#) - October 1, 2008 – [www.bjtonline.com](#)



Built it and they will come, but only if they can find it.

Suggestion: get a map, get a travel agent, get an airplane. Whatever it takes, plan a trip to Machrihanish Dunes near the bottom of Scotland's Kintyre Peninsula. The course, which opens next May, sits at the southern end of one of the loveliest, most remote places in the entire British Isles. It's a 140-mile drive from Glasgow, or a 40-mile flight to the old, converted Royal Air Force base at Campbeltown Airport, with one of Europe's longest runways.

Native Scotsman David McLay Kidd spent his childhood summers romping on the dunes here—when not playing Machrihanish Golf Club, an Old Tom Morris design from 1876. Now he has had the chance to create the first true links to open in western Scotland in more than a century.

The entire 259-acre parcel for Machrihanish Dunes—including a mile-long stretch alongside the Atlantic Ocean looking out to Northern Ireland—comprises environmentally sensitive real estate. Government officials allowed Kidd and his team to shape only enough land for greens and tees. Fairway bunkers had to be located in natural blowouts. Fairways were just nestled into native, low-lying corridors. No need to cultivate modern, lush-green turfgrasses here. Kidd simply started mowing the native fescues down to playable heights. The job of maturing the course fell to the superintendent. Here's how special the place is: he opted out of the Old Course at St. Andrews to work here.

The par-72 layout is wide and flexible for the winds off of Machrihanish Bay. The course can play from 5,565 to 7,222 yards and offers half a dozen tees and greens right on the shoreline. The most engaging hole, the 181-yard, par-3 fifth, is at the easternmost point of the golf course, away from the clubhouse, and brushes up against old Machrihanish Golf Course.

The daily-fee course will have a green fee of £100 (about \$200). Machrihanish Dunes will ultimately include a modest clubhouse, on-site cottages, and refurbished hotels in both Machrihanish and Campbeltown, five miles to the east.

For more about Machrihanish Dunes, call +44-1-586-554-411, visit [www.thewaygolfbegan.com](#) or send an e-mail to [info\(at\)machdunes.com](mailto:info(at)machdunes.com).

Airport:

Campbeltown (CAL)

Runway: 10,003 ft

FBO: Highlands & Islands,
+44 1 586 553 797