


Verdura Spa resort can get even the most inexperienced golfer in the swing

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Metro's Caroline Phillips heads to Sicily's Verdura resort to see if she can be won over by the charms of golf – with a spa and restaurant close by, as a bonus.



The stunning scenery is just one of the Verdura Golf and Spa Resort's attractions (Picture: Getty)

The stuffiest of 'men-only' sports has finally entered the 21st century. Home of the Masters golf tournament, Augusta National has accepted its first two female members.

Granted, one is the former US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice and the other is Darla Moore, one of the US's most powerful businesswomen but still...In Sicily, at the Verdura Golf & Spa Resort, they're positively demanding that women swap their Louboutins for studded shoes. They're whooping about a rise in 'girlie golf' and are planning a ladies' tournament for next year.

From this month, the club is also offering an all-inclusive programme that includes unlimited golf, breakfast and daily drinks. So here I am, the golf virgin, swinging my club at Verdura, which lures jetsetters – many of them Italian and beautifully turned out. The resort has two challenging 18-hole championship courses designed by Kyle Phillips. I'm lucky enough to have a lesson with David Waters, the club's professional, and even a beginner like me realises that he's a tip-top teacher. Golf is as preposterous as it looks, only more difficult. It soon becomes clear that I'll be able to complete nine holes in roughly 99 hours. And who really gives a flying tee what a yardage book or nine-hole par-three course are? But I soon start to improve my swing. It could have something to do with the sea breeze caressing my face – the Med is just a few steps away (the course has bagged more than a mile of private coastline), the gently swaying palms, and the hills covered with olive trees and orange groves. I'm a golf ball's throw from a spa and a restaurant which, at peak season, can unfortunately be a bit Zen and the food a bit hit and miss but if you bag the executive chef, Fulvio Pierangelini, then it's sublime. The golf fairy will need to sprinkle a lot more dust to get me to appreciate the sport but I can almost understand why helicopters drop their rich Roman and Milanese players at Verdura. *The new Endless Privileges all-inclusive golf programme starts at €232 (around £185) pppn for a deluxe double room. Tel: 00 800 7666 6667. <http://www.roccofortehotels.com>*