

Beijing Beauty

Jack Nicklaus' picture-pretty
Pine Valley in Beijing is certainly one of Asia's best

Text and photos by PATRICK LIM

PHOTO FEATURE PINE VALLEY GOLF RESORT & COUNTRY CLUB

Hole 9, Par 4, Pine Valley GR&CC

Wouldn't you know it... Jack and his people have done it once again.

Barely six years old, Pine Valley Golf Resort & Country Club's Jack Nicklaus Signature layout is already regarded as one of Asia's best courses. The superb par 72, 7259-yard has already hosted the 2005 Johnnie Walker Classic, won by Adam Scott, and the 2006 Volkswagen Masters won by India's Rahil Gangjee. More recently it has become the home of The Pine Valley Beijing Open, an Asian Tour event which debuted this year and was won by Indian star Ghaurav Ghei.

With views of sections of the Great Wall of China, the site is a good 90-minute drive from downtown Beijing in the direction of Badaling (one of the sections of the Great Wall that can be visited).

The opening par four is a dogleg left with the green fringing the water's edge. The 2nd

is an inviting par five playing to an elevated green, with the backdrop of the surrounding mountains providing a spectacular setting. The par three 3rd hole plays downhill to a green well-protected by bunkers left.

The 4th is one of my favourite holes, allowing for the use of a driver, as Jack always does! The small green requires an accurate 2nd shot to put oneself in good position for a birdie putt.

The 5th is perhaps the most understated and underrated hole, again with a backdrop of mountains, but with many bunkers (including one in the middle of the fairway) around the elevated green. The 6th is a tricky uphill par three, requiring a precise tee-shot... or your ball will likely roll into one of the surrounding swales!

The long 7th is a par four to a green tucked beyond some mounds and swales. The 8th is a par five that wraps around a pond,

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Set against a backdrop of majestic mountains, the par four fourth is a good driving hole

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requiring two good shots to reach the putting surface. The 9th is a par four that favours a draw shot off the tee, then an accurate approach to the green.

The back nine starts with a downhill par four to a slightly raised green. Then comes a demanding tee shot on 11 with water on the left, with a short approach shot to a green by the water. A short but testy hole where par is a good score – mark that four with pride!

The par three 12th requires a long carry

over water. The 13th is a par five that heads back towards the massive yet elegant clubhouse. The 14th plays downhill but requires two good hits to reach the green. The 15th sweeps to twin fairways and an elevated green complex...par here is a worthy score!

16 is a par five that is long, long, long...

17 is the signature hole, a par three across water to an elevated green, with a waterfall on the left... so don't push it right! The finishing hole is a good par four of

medium length to an elevated green.

Apart from the Nicklaus Signature course, 27 more holes of golf are currently being completed and grown-in, ready for play in the near future. Bearing Jack Jr.'s Signature, this course will have an additional clubhouse.

Facilities at Pine Valley also include an equestrian centre, spa, health centre, 118 guest rooms and even a pet hotel. ■



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The bunker-riddled par four fifth can be a tricky customer



The stylish, 13,000-square metre Pine Valley clubhouse

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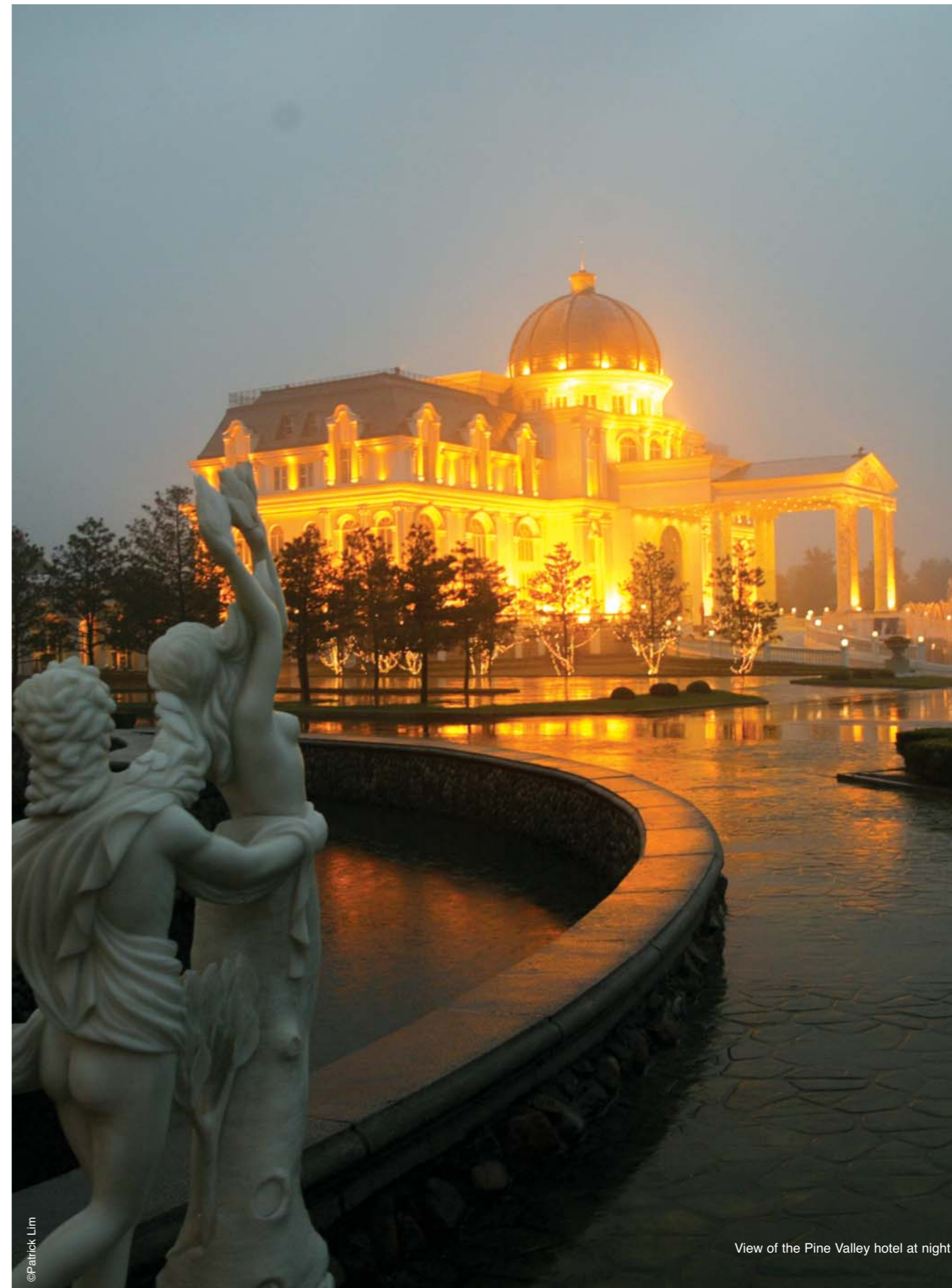
FACT FILE

GOLF COURSE: Jack Nicklaus Signature Course - Par 72, 7259 yards Jack Nicklaus II Links Course – 27 holes (opening soon)
LOCATION: Changping County, Beijing, about 60 kilometres west of the Beijing CBD. The 1,000-acre site is close to the famous Great Wall site at Badaling
WEBSITE: www.pinevalley.com.cn



Luxury housing forms part of the Pine Valley development

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View of the Pine Valley hotel at night

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