

MAY/JUNE 2014 \$2.95 www.vsga.org

VIRGINIA GOLFER



Official publication of the Virginia State Golf Association as a service to its nearly 80,000 members and VIP cardholders

U.S. Opens are
PINEHURST-BOUND

Major Stroke Savers to
LOWER YOUR SCORES

Overcome
FIRST TEE FEAR

The Man with Uncommon Morale

» After losing his wife to cancer, Jon Hurst has courageously carried on and is ready to contend at this summer's VSGA Amateur



Roll Renewal

Golf ball massage therapy at Salamander Resort & Spa may be unconventional, but the treatment succeeds in soothing the senses by LEONARD SHAPIRO

I have seen wayward shots whacked into the weeds, smacked into streams and trapped behind tall trees. But until a recent relaxing session in a darkened spa treatment room, I had never before encountered two golf balls being rolled up and down my back, across my shoulders and down my arms. The procedure produced a no-pain, much-gain response from creaky joints and achy muscles from head to toe.

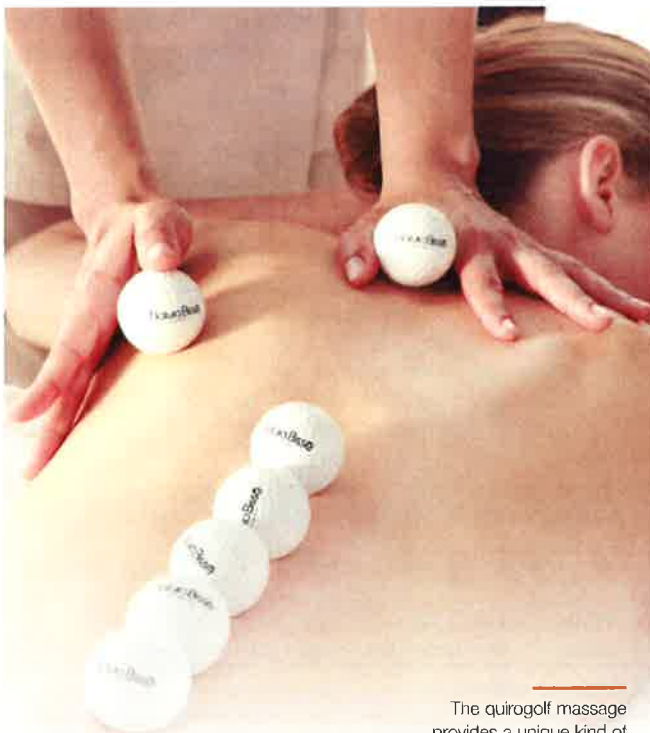
It was pure pleasure, to say the least, for what is known in the modern day rubdown racket as a “quiogolf massage” at the new Salamander Resort & Spa in Middleburg, Va. A 50-minute session costs \$165 (\$265 rate for 80 minutes). A professionally trained masseuse finds more ways to make mesmerizing magic with a golf ball than any touring pro on the range or any trick shot artist on the planet.

No Titleist or Bridgestone is necessary, simply a nondescript standard-sized ball with the logo of Natura Bisse. The Barcelona-based company developed the massage and also specializes in creams and lotions, sold at the 23,000-square-foot Salamander spa.

“Because of the way (the golf balls) are handled, it makes a smooth transition up and down the body,” says Penny Kriel, the spa director. “It’s not the pressure of the ball. It’s the flow of the ball that really applies just enough pressure to break down the lactic acid and provide a very healthy result. It’s also designed to give attention to areas that have to do with the golf swing—the arms, shoulders and back.”

My own massage was administered in the dead of winter, hardly conducive to a follow-up session on the practice tee, let alone a snow-blanketed golf course. Still, when my

time with Marion the masseuse was over, I was far more interested in basking in the glow of a kink-free neck and a much less balky back.



The quiogolf massage provides a unique kind of relaxation away from the links.

PAMPERED RELAXATION

At Salamander, there are plenty of places to bask.

In the luxurious locker room, for example, a vitality pool provides a whirlpool/hot tub experience, complete with waterfall and soothing jet streams of water that can be supplemented by either steam or sauna.

All around are 14 treatment rooms used by a staff of 15. Several are equipped with their own whirlpools, fireplaces and private terraces overlooking the resort’s gorgeous hunt country grounds.

While waiting for an appointment swathed in a soft terry cloth robe found in each locker, guests are ushered into a dimly lit “tranquility room” stocked with healthy trail mix nibbles, ice cold water or hot tea and coffee. Soft chairs and sofas surround a crackling fireplace, and newspapers and magazines are available as well. On the day I showed up, one gentleman was snoozing between sips of champagne, then ordered a room service lunch served right where he sat.

Salamander offers a wide variety of massages and other treatments, and the price also covers the daily use of all the spa facilities, including an outdoor infinity pool heated to 85 degrees in winter.

The quiogolf massage is not the most popular choice on the menu of services, but Marion the masseuse says “it kind of goes in spurts. You’ll hear, ‘Oh, it’s my birthday. I play golf, so why not try it?’ I enjoy doing them. It’s easy to learn, but definitely different. People really seem to like it.”

What’s not to like?

These quiogolf balls don’t hook or slice, plug in the sand or plunk into ponds. Far as I could tell, there were no ball marks on my back, no divots on my derriere. And no pricey Pro V1 was necessary. ♣

A longtime sportswriter for The Washington Post, award-winning journalist Leonard Shapiro is a regular contributor to Virginia Golfer.