

STAFFIELD COUNTRY RESORT

# RESURRECTION

Staffield reborn as one of Malaysia's best golfing experiences as its greens spring back to life

BY STANLEY SAW

**S**taffield Country Resort is not just some 'hidden treasure', a politically correct term overly employed to describe golf courses that are off the beaten path.

As a matter of fact, Staffield is an open secret to swingers who flock to her 27 scrumptious holes like a stampede of raging buffalos week in week out. It is not uncommon to see long buggy queues at the starter's box all revving to go like super cars in a grid on racing day.

If I had to analogize this to give a

more accurate depiction of what the picturesque Staffield course is like, I would liken it to the movie *Field of Dreams* starring Kevin Costner. Costner plays a simple farmer who gets the calling to build a baseball diamond where mystical players magically appear out of nowhere just to 'play ball'.

But it wasn't always all bliss for one of Malaysia's best golf courses.

Something went awfully wrong about six months back when the greens, along with all the magic that was Staffield, mysteriously turned black and

dried out! Suddenly, golfers had no choice but to fire at temporary greens while the management toiled to find the elixir that would bring the once true rolling putting surfaces back to life. Word was that the application of a wrong fertiliser had brought about this deplorable condition and the situation quickly turned into one of despair for those of us who had grown to love the course. The number of weekend golfers started fading and members were worried that the course may never regain her full glory.

Weeks turned into months, and





Hole 8, Western Course



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### CARD OF THE COURSE

#### WESTERN COURSE

| HOLE         | BLUE         | WHITE        | RED          | PAR       | INDEX |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|-------|
| 1            | 457          | 440          | 391          | 5         | 13    |
| 2            | 347          | 319          | 290          | 4         | 15    |
| 3            | 395          | 370          | 347          | 4         | 7     |
| 4            | 379          | 365          | 335          | 4         | 1     |
| 5            | 498          | 448          | 389          | 5         | 5     |
| 6            | 192          | 172          | 151          | 3         | 9     |
| 7            | 362          | 340          | 285          | 4         | 11    |
| 8            | 130          | 119          | 108          | 3         | 17    |
| 9            | 348          | 319          | 300          | 4         | 3     |
| <b>OUT</b>   | <b>3,108</b> | <b>2,892</b> | <b>2,596</b> | <b>36</b> |       |
| <b>IN</b>    | <b>3,108</b> | <b>2,895</b> | <b>2,593</b> | <b>36</b> |       |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>6,216</b> | <b>5,787</b> | <b>5,189</b> | <b>72</b> |       |

OUT - WESTERN

IN - SOUTHERN

#### SOUTHERN COURSE

| HOLE         | BLUE         | WHITE        | RED          | PAR       | INDEX |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|-------|
| 1            | 485          | 463          | 426          | 5         | 5     |
| 2            | 162          | 139          | 121          | 3         | 17    |
| 3            | 361          | 329          | 288          | 4         | 9     |
| 4            | 374          | 353          | 329          | 4         | 13    |
| 5            | 348          | 319          | 279          | 4         | 15    |
| 6            | 496          | 483          | 423          | 5         | 7     |
| 7            | 327          | 299          | 266          | 4         | 11    |
| 8            | 164          | 144          | 119          | 3         | 3     |
| 9            | 391          | 366          | 342          | 4         | 1     |
| <b>OUT</b>   | <b>3,108</b> | <b>2,895</b> | <b>2,582</b> | <b>36</b> |       |
| <b>IN</b>    | <b>3,197</b> | <b>3,018</b> | <b>2,700</b> | <b>36</b> |       |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>6,305</b> | <b>5,913</b> | <b>5,282</b> | <b>72</b> |       |

OUT - SOUTHERN

IN - NORTHERN

#### NORTHERN COURSE

| HOLE         | BLUE         | WHITE        | RED          | PAR       | INDEX |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|-------|
| 1            | 375          | 353          | 323          | 4         | 9     |
| 2            | 375          | 364          | 334          | 4         | 3     |
| 3            | 511          | 491          | 431          | 5         | 11    |
| 4            | 180          | 159          | 137          | 3         | 15    |
| 5            | 370          | 349          | 326          | 4         | 5     |
| 6            | 396          | 376          | 346          | 4         | 1     |
| 7            | 160          | 149          | 112          | 3         | 13    |
| 8            | 350          | 332          | 290          | 4         | 7     |
| 9            | 480          | 445          | 401          | 5         | 17    |
| <b>OUT</b>   | <b>3,197</b> | <b>3,018</b> | <b>2,700</b> | <b>36</b> |       |
| <b>IN</b>    | <b>3,108</b> | <b>2,892</b> | <b>2,596</b> | <b>36</b> |       |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>6,305</b> | <b>5,910</b> | <b>5,296</b> | <b>72</b> |       |

OUT - NORTHERN

IN - WESTERN

ALL DISTANCES IN METRES



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# STAFFIELD COUNTRY RESORT



©ParGolf

Hole 5, Western Course



The Tudor-style clubhouse

©ParGolf

Hole 8, Southern Course

**Chasing the last glimpse of the emblazoned sun as we race our buggies up the 18th fairway, all the while, the Tudor-style clubhouse beckons you with the promise of golden ale.**

months turned into agony, along with a surge in cases of Staffield withdrawal symptoms among my weekend golfing mates. Everything had to be painstakingly re-done from scratch. It was by far the most arduous of operations that tested members' and the management's patience to the fullest – a trying time indeed for the club which



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had recently invested heavily in revamping the locker rooms, dining area and purchasing brand new buggies.

The wise decision to go slow with the greens rejuvenation eventually bore fruit. The transformation was nothing short of stunning. Like a blooming flower, the greens took root and came back to life – much to the relief and jubilation of members. Indeed, we are now literally playing on an even better course than before!

My weekend drives to Staffield pass through the ever peaceful town of Semenyih, an experience that can be aptly described as therapeutic. A sense of calm engulfs you as you watch the dense fog relent to the first rays of the morning sun. Although not too far away from the city centre, Semenyih never fails to provide you with the escape needed for at least the next few hours, far from the perils of the real world. In the many pockets along the windy road through town are restaurants and ramshackle coffee shops that serve simple pleasures like a home brewed coffee, *kampung* chicken eggs and toast.

A few clicks down the road past the police station, your heart accelerates as the Staffield layout comes into sight. As you walk into the clubhouse, you can't help but smile as the long-serving staff greet you by name. You can't wait to meet your regular *kakis* to start the pre-game trash-talking and at the same time, drive a hard bargain on your wagers like floor brokers in a trading pit.

Staffield's three nines, namely the Northern, Southern and Western Nines, provide the weekend golfer with a nice balance of difficulty, risk and reward. This is one of the few courses where shooting an eagle is a possibility for the average Joe. A couple of par fives are actually reachable in two if you give your Sunday best on your second shot.

Not a pushover by any means, the course is riddled with the usual custodians of crystal white sand traps, runoff areas and harrowing ponds and optical illusions. The most deceptive of the three nines is the Southern, which I personally christened as the 'ball-eating monster'.

Chasing the last glimpse of the emblazoned sun as we race our buggies up the 18th fairway, all the while, the Tudor-styled clubhouse beckons you with the promise of golden ale. Just for



## A FAIRER PERSPECTIVE IDA FAHANY

There are days when you feel tempted to hone new skills in your golf game, or are keen to try out a new set of irons or driver.

Staffield Country Resort is the place to be with its wide and friendly fairways and true greens that will definitely make your game enjoyable. This 27-hole course is my all-time favourite. I would also call this my all-weather course as just 15 to 20 minutes after rain, it's playable again. The fact that buggies are allowed on the fairways is one of the reasons that golfers should play all 27 holes in a day!

Staffield also boasts friendly-placed forward tee boxes. For advance-skill ladies, the choice is yours – play off the white tee-boxes or challenge yourselves with the back ones. I'm pretty sure either way will have you coming back for more.

My favourite hole is No. 8 on the Western Nine, a par three that requires astute club selection with water bordering the left edge of the green. This hole often dampens a birdie chance even if a good shot is executed, not only due to the water but also the unpredictable winds.

I strongly recommend those who yearn for a good score to have a go at Staffield. I'm not saying that it is all easy as there are holes that need to be carefully thought out, but suffice to say that it will definitely not be your first and last visit.



Hole 8, Western Course

today, we can be anything we want! We can be pirates, scavengers, courtesans, vikings and even PGA Tour players, all in pursuit of Valhalla. This is a place where men escape so they can relearn how to play like boys. This is where we let our imaginations run wild. This is a place I call home. PG

### STAFFIELD COUNTRY RESORT

13th Mile, Seremban-Kuala Lumpur Country Road, 71700 Mantin, Negeri Sembilan

Tel: +6018 222 1919

Fax: +603 8766 7173

Email: [staffield@berjayaclubs.com](mailto:staffield@berjayaclubs.com)

Website: [www.berjayaclubs.com/staffield](http://www.berjayaclubs.com/staffield)

GPS Coordinates: 2.822633°N / 101.89995°E

### FAST FACTS

**Yardage:** Western Nine – 3,108m / Southern Nine – 3,108m / Northern Nine – 3,197m

**Grass:** Fairways and tees – Tifway 419 / Rough – Cowgrass / Greens – Tifdwarf

**Designer:** Graham Marsh and Ross Watson

**Year Opened:** 1994

**Clubhouse facilities:** Changing rooms, function rooms, swimming pool, tennis courts, squash courts, gymnasium, driving range, Golfer's Terrace, Peppers Restaurant

### WHAT IT'LL COST YOU

**Green Fees:** Weekdays – RM127 / Weekends – RM210

**Buggy Fee:** RM90 per buggy

**Caddie Fee:** RM45

**Note:** contact the club for on-going promotions