

Travelworld Geelong is the official travel agent of Callaway South Pacific. Callaway ran an incentive program for all of its 'on course' professionals, where each course was set a sales target over 2009/10 and the top 40 qualified for a trip to the USA, incorporating the US Open in Pebble Beach.

I spent many months putting the itinerary together and to ensure there were no problems encountered whilst on tour, I was asked to escort the group. We had a total of 48 in attendance (from all over Australia and N.Z), which included mostly local golf pro's, along with some members from Callaway head office.

We flew into LAX, where we transferred down to Carlsbad (a coastal town approx 15 mins from San Diego). Carlsbad is



the home of Callaway Golf and the group were fortunate to hear presentations from Alan Hocknell, Senior Vice President of Research and Design, and Steve Ogg, Senior Vice President and Development Ball Researcher. These guys provided an extremely interesting insight into how the Callaway clubs and balls are researched and put together. This culminated in a guided tour of the Callaway production plant, where we were able to see the production, both manually and by robot, of Callaway golf clubs.

We also spent time at The Ely Callaway Performance Centre, where players such as Phil Mickelson and Ernie Els spend many hours working with the Callaway Research and Design team fine tuning their equipment to suit their game. The few days spent in Carlsbad were extremely well received by all delegates as it provided a 'money can't buy' insight into Callaway's inner sanctum.

We played a round of golf while in Carlsbad, at Four Seasons Aviara, an extremely picturesque and tough course on the Californian coast. I was paired with 3 golf pros (and a questionable handicap!) and we eventually were the winners of a combined stableford competition, much to the disgust of the other golfers!

We then chartered a bus from Carlsbad to Las Vegas (approx 4 ½ hours), stopping along the way at the Primm factory outlets for some shopping and lunch. This is a fantastic drive from L.A or San Diego to Vegas and well worth doing if you have the chance.



Royal Sydney Golf Pro, Colin Hunt, at Four Seasons Aviara Golf Club

Whilst in Las Vegas, the guys enjoyed an action packed couple of days.

The group were joined by former Aussie cricketer Colin Miller, to play a round of golf at Las Vegas' Bali Hai Golf Club, this is located at the southern end of Las Vegas Boulevard and the back drop of Las Vegas' casinos and hotels makes it a very unique golf course. It was a very challenging course with little room for error, full of water hazards and narrow fairways. The heat of the Nevada desert also added to the challenge, not that this novice needed another challenge! We dined at The Bellagio on our second night at a restaurant called 'Sensi', very tasty food and plenty to drink!



Not a textbook swing, but it got the job done! Bali Hai Golf Club, Las Vegas. Mandalay Bay in the background.

During the little spare time we had, I was able to head to the 'Premium Factory Outlets' in Las Vegas and pick up many bargains. For those who like their shopping, this is a must do as all the well known brands are represented, most at less than half price. Some of the group took a scenic flight over the Grand Canyon, which they all agreed was one of the highlights and something everyone should do!

We then flew to San Francisco, where we attended the final day's play of the US Open at Pebble Beach. Irishman Graeme McDowell was able to hold off the likes Phil, Tiger and Ernie to claim his first major. The course at Pebble Beach is like no other and provided a once in a lifetime opportunity which the tour members will long remember. We then had a free day to explore the sights and sounds of San Francisco, most of us ventured out to Alcatraz, which is a must do, along with Fishermans Wharf and the 'worlds crookedest street'; Lombard St.



Looking back to San Francisco from Alcatraz



Lombard St, the 'Worlds Crookedest St' and the scene of many movies

There has never been a better time to visit the USA, the **Aussie Dollar is averaging the best exchange rate for over 20 years and the cost of airfares have not been this low for over 23 ½ years.** I found everything to be extremely cheap, from general clothes shopping to drinks and food. This was my fourth trip to the States, so for those of you planning a trip, please feel free to call and allow me to assist you customising an itinerary to suit your needs. America is such a diverse country, it has something for everyone!

TIMS TIPS:

*Purchase a USD Cash Passport card and lock in your exchange rate before departing. This is a convenient and secure way to access your spending money whilst overseas. See us for more info.

*Don't forget you need a US Travel Authorisation before departing. You will **not be permitted to travel!** unless you have completed this, we can assist you. **DO IT NOW** if considering travelling to the USA, as there will be a fee for all applications after 8 Sept!

*We flew with Air N.Z, they arrive into terminal 2 at LAX, much quicker and easier to clear customs and immigration.

*Pack light, you will go crazy with the cheap shopping and need room in your case on the return flight!

*Don't leave without travel insurance, did you know the average cost of 1 night in a hospital bed in the US is USD\$1897, each aspirin you ask for will cost USD\$7.....you don't even want to know the cost of doctor, surgeons etc bills!

TIM SHERMAN

Director

Travelworld Geelong

tim@travelworldgeelong.com

PH: (03) 5223 2788

62 Little Malop St

Geelong



Looking out to Alcatraz from Lombard Street