

# Courses of Study

Great resort golf schools that can improve your game

By Jeff Wallach

**One thing I never expected to learn at golf school** was how to really wind up and throw my practice clubs. At Fred Shoemaker's Extraordinary Golf school, we not only practiced flinging 7-irons, but Shoemaker videotaped our efforts and played the videos back to us, right after he played videos of us hitting actual golf shots with the same clubs. Our room full of intermediate and advanced students was amazed to see that while the tapes of our golf shots revealed a huge variety of swing flaws—from reverse pivots to over-the-top moves—the films of our club-throwing displayed fluid, natural swings that we barely recognized, even when they were our own.



**When it comes to education,** some students excel at math while others respond positively to philosophy class. And when it comes to golf education, there are golfers who prefer to learn by pounding balls at the range until their hands grow raw; others who prefer to studiously consult visual images of their swings; and still others who can perfect their games more easily through metaphor.

The good news is that various golf schools have been developed to help you, no matter what your learning style. The even better news is that most of them are located at, or associated with, great resorts that offer not only terrific golf

courses to test your newfound knowledge, but also delightful lodging and dining options.

**Fred Shoemaker's Extraordinary Golf** is a traveling road show of unexpected instructional techniques intended to teach students to coach themselves through development of awareness. The club-throwing exercise is just a single example of how Shoemaker's methods reveal that we each possess a fluid, natural golf swing; we just need to learn to eliminate the interference that comes between us • and that swing. Shoemaker himself is a Zen master of teaching better golf without necessarily focusing primarily on golf. The school's home base is the Carmel Valley Ranch resort in California, but the program travels to Palm Springs, the East Coast, Canada, Japan and elsewhere. Three-day sessions include instruction in the short game, full swing, curving the ball, contact, pre-shot routine and even the time, between shots. Lessons are highly personalized, taking into account how each student best learns.

The newly refurbished Carmel Valley Ranch resort luxuriates across a 400-acre countryside estate in the foothills of the Santa Lucia Mountains near Carmel-by-the-Sea, California, close to wineries, 17-Mile Drive and a few other golf courses you may have heard of, such as Pebble Beach, which hosts the 2010 U.S. Open Championship starting on June 14. The resort's par-70 Pete Dye golf course, which rolls through woods and mountains, recently underwent a major renovation that included the reseeding of the entire layout with bent grass and the enlargement of all the greens. Accommodations are in spacious suites.