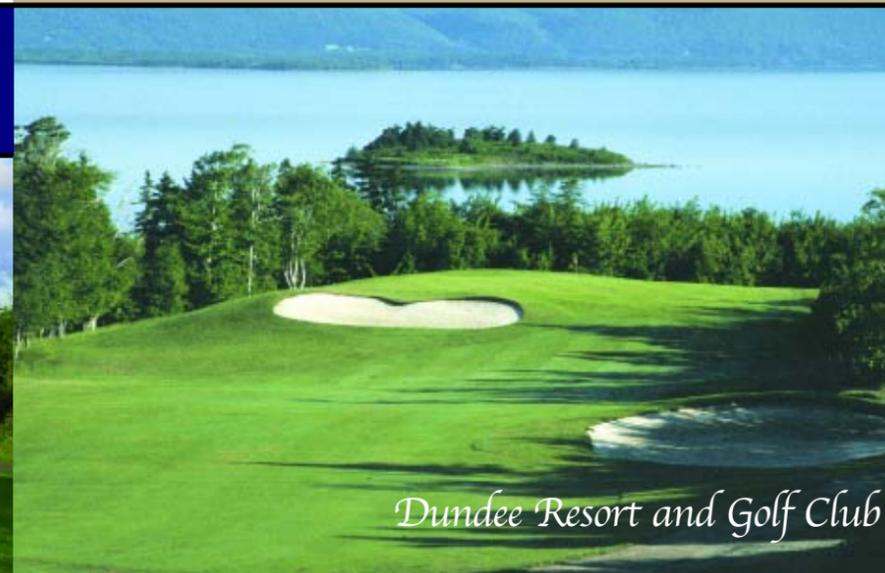


D E S T I N A T I O N D Y N A S T Y

Nova Scotia's 'Fabulous Foursome'*Bell Bay Golf Club**Dundee Resort and Golf Club*

Thinking of Nova Scotia's Cape Breton Island might bring to mind fantastic scenery, foot-stomping Celtic music, or delicious seafood, but for many these days it also means a quality golf destination with a diverse mix of beautiful courses that thrill and challenge golfers of all levels.

Creating a mental link between Cape Breton and the idea of great golf is certainly what the members of the island's 'Fabulous Foursome' hope they've achieved, and in certain regions, the term is now immediately recognized and understood by traveling and avid golfers.

The Fabulous Foursome is made up of four of Cape Breton's top courses that have partnered to promote the region as a golf destination. Comprised of Highlands Links, Bell Bay Golf Club, Le Portage Golf Club, and Dundee Resort and Golf Club, the Fabulous Foursome organization formed in 1996 when management at each of the courses realized they could achieve more by working together than through solo efforts.

"Each individual course's dollars can only go so far when it comes to promotional activities," explains Ted Stonehouse, Fabulous Foursome Chair and General Manager / Head Professional at Bell Bay Golf Club in Baddeck, Cape Breton. "But by working together, we're able to extend our reach. All four of our courses are tourism-driven facilities, and it simply made sense for us to pool our resources to reach the larger markets that we can't reach on our own."

*Highlands Links**Le Portage Golf Club***RESOURCEFUL RESOURCES**

Each of the member courses makes a significant financial contribution to the Fabulous Foursome 'destination society' in order to support a comprehensive suite of marketing and promotional activities. The organization has also received ongoing funding from Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation, an economic development agency based on the island.

"They've been a fantastic partner in this whole initiative," says Stonehouse. "They've been supportive in every way they can and they work very, very well with us. We've appreciated everything they've done."

In addition, the Fabulous Foursome partners with the Province of Nova Scotia on tourism-related initiatives, as well as works on specific promotions with accommodations partners such as Cape Breton Resorts, owner of Dundee Golf Club and the operator of five resort properties on the island.

Using these pooled resources, the group promotes the Cape Breton golf experience by advertising and conducting media relations - the group hosts golf and tourism writers from across the country and around the world every year.

Electronic marketing activities include the Fabulous Foursome website (<http://www.golfcapebreton.com>), which offers links to the individual sites of each of the member courses, and an e-newsletter that's regularly sent out to a growing list of golfers who have signed up to receive information about the latest news in Cape Breton golf. In addition, the four courses are set to launch online booking for their tour and accommodations providers using the Jencess program, and hope to launch this by June 1st.

AT A GLANCE

Le Portage Golf Club

Designed by renowned architect, Robert Moote, and son, David Moote, the course is located between the sea on one side and the Cape Breton Highlands on the other, and positioned in the French Acadian village of Cheticamp - a community steeped in Acadian culture.

Course opened:	9-holes: 1987, 18-holes: 1997
Facility size:	300 acres
Type of Club:	Daily fee public
Number of Rounds:	23,500 - 27,500/year
Green Fees:	\$56 tax in
Course Design:	Robert & David Moote
Ownership:	Not For Profit (North Inverness Recreation Centre Association)
General Manager:	Terry Burns
Head Professional:	Terry Burns
Superintendent:	Michael Bourgeois
Food & Beverage:	Terry Burns
GOLF CARS:	Yamaha (50) 2006
IRRIGATION:	
Sprinklers:	Greens/Tees: Toro Model 734-02-34 Bear R6851-02 Fairways/Rough: Toro manual quick couplers 1" Controllers: Toro Varitime 4000 Toro Varitime Satellites (5) Pump Station: PLAD TC6-75-3600
MOWERS:	Greens: 2 x Jacobsen GK IV Triplex 1 x Jacobsen GK V Triplex 2 x Toro 216 Triplex 2 x Jacobsen GK 526 Walk Behind 1 x Toro 1000 Walk Behind Rough: 1 x Jacobsen AR-5 5-plex 1 x Jacobsen LF 3810 5-plex 1 x Jacobsen 1900 Triplex 1 x Toro 3100 Triplex Fairways: 1 x Jacobsen LF 3400 5-plex 1 x Jacobsen LF 100 5-plex
TRAPS:	Sand Pro Toro
UTILITY VEHICLES:	3 x Cushman Truckster 1 x Club Car Carryall II 2 x John Deere Gators (6x4)
SPRAYERS:	1 x Broyhill - 150 gallon 1 x Toro Multipro (Hahn) - 150 gallon
AERIFIER:	1 x Toro (greens) 1 x Ryan (reno-rain)
SEED:	Greens: Penncross Tees/Fairways/Rough: Kentucky Blue (70%) / Rye (10%) / Fescue (20%) Mix



"As managers with our respective courses, the members of the Fabulous Foursome committee are so busy on the golf side of things that we work with a marketing company of record," explains Stonehouse. "It allows the partners in the group to sit around the table, make decisions, and then let the marketing company run with it. One of the unique things that makes this structure work is the small number of people around the table and the strong communication that keeps things moving forward."

CONSULTATION & DIVERSITY

Mark Sajatovich, Fabulous Four committee member and Marketing Manager of Highlands Links in Ingonish Beach, Cape Breton, says the benefits of working as a consortium go far beyond marketing.

"There's an added weight and a stronger claim to represent Cape Breton by working as a foursome," he says. "It's more than the leveraging of the marketing dollars. Working together allows us to present the great overall golf product that has evolved from one end of the island to the other."

AT A GLANCE

Bell Bay Golf Club

Built in 1997 by renowned architect, Thomas McBroom, the course overlooks Bras d'Or Lakes and the village of Baddeck. Named for former Baddeck resident Alexander Graham Bell, the 18th tee has a spectacular view of Bell's summer estate. Bell Bay's final four holes are called one of the best finishing sequences in golf, and the course was ranked as #44 in Canada in the 2004 *ScoreGolf Top 100 Courses in Canada* listing and awarded 'Best New Course' in Canada by *Golf Digest* in 1998.

Course Opened:	1998 1 st full season
Facility size:	240 acres
Type of Club:	Resort style with small membership
Number of rounds:	21,000
Green Fees:	\$79 + tax <i>peak times</i>
Course Design:	Thomas McBroom
Driving Range:	Large, full service range
Ownership:	Partnership - five partners
General Manager:	Ted Stonehouse
Head Professional:	Ted Stonehouse
Superintendent:	Ray Pineau
GOLF CARS	60 Club Car Precedent
IRRIGATION:	Toro Osmac with Sitepro Control
MOWERS	Greens: 6 x 22" Jacobsen Flex Head Mowers Tees: 4 x Jacobsen 522's Surrounds: 2 x Toro GM 3500 Fairways: 2 x Toro RM 5400 1 x Jacobsen LF 128 Rough: 1 x Jacobsen AR5
TRAPS	1 x Jacobsen Grooms Master
UTILITY VEHICLES	2 x Cushman Turf-truckster 3 x Jacobsen 1110 3 x Jacobsen Haulers
SPRAYERS	1 x Truckster Mounted 160 Gallon Sprayer
AERIFIERS	1 x Ryan GA30 1 x Ryan GA60 Fairways
SEED	Greens: Penncross Bent Grass Tees: Penncross Bent Grass Fairways: Providence, Procup & Penncross Bent Grass Blend Rough: Kentucky Blue Grass
EQUIPMENT FINANCING	National Leasing -Maxium Leasing

Four different course management structures are represented around the table when members of the Fabulous Foursome meet, meaning there is a diverse range of perspectives when it comes to how best to run - and promote - a golf course.

Highlands Links is a federal government-owned course operated by Parks Canada, Bell Bay Golf Club is owned by a group of private partners, Le Portage Golf Club is operated by a non-profit community society, and Dundee Golf Club is owned by a Cape Breton-based resort company.

But, despite these differences, Terry Burns, Fabulous Foursome committee member and General Manager / Head Professional with Le Portage Golf Club, believes the Fabulous Foursome works.

"Between the four of us, we have a good mix of product," he says, "We all contribute and represent our courses. We're four different groups working together to accomplish the same goal, and I would say it's a win-win."



AT A GLANCE

Dundee Resort and Golf Club

Nestled on the side of South Mountain, Dundee overlooks Bras d'Or Lakes with lake views on almost every hole. Located in West Bay, Cape Breton, the course is a part of a resort complex with appeal for family vacations and corporate meetings markets.

Course opened:	July 1977
Facility size:	190 acres
Type of Club:	Resort/ Public
Number of Rounds:	approx. 18000/year
Green Fees:	High Season: Monday- Thursday: \$49 + tax Friday/Weekends & Holidays: \$54 + tax Shoulder: 7 days/week: \$42 + tax
Club Rentals:	\$20-\$40 + tax
Course Design:	Robert Moote & Associates
Ownership:	Terri MacAulay
Resort GM:	Richard MacNeil
Director of Golf Operations:	Paul Innes
Course Foreman:	Roger MacKinnon
Food & Beverage:	Cathy Moulard (main lodge)
GOLF CARS:	Club Car (70): (50) 1997 (20) 2000
IRRIGATION: Sprinklers:	Greens: Rain Bird Model 41 (55) Rain Bird Eagle 70 (19) Toro Model 640 (4) Tees: Rain Bird Model 41 (27) Toro Model 640 (29) Fairway: Rain Bird Turndown (116) Controllers: Rain Bird (37) Pump Station: Firetrol Control Centre
MOWERS:	Greens/Surrounds: Jacobsen Greens King V Ransome 51 Super Certes walk behind Jacobsen Greens King IV Tees: Jacobsen Green King V Toro 216 Fairway: Jacobsen LF3810 Rough: National I-trim Pro Flex 120 National HT-8400 Jacobsen 5 Gang
TRAPS:	John Deere 1200A
UTILITY VEHICLES:	John Deere Pro Gator (1) John Deere Gator 6x4 (1) Cushman Truckster (1) EZ-GO Power Carts (1)
FERTILIZING:	Cushman Spraytek JB&D Sprayer Vicon Broadcast Spreader
SEED:	Greens: L93 bent grass, Providence bent grass, Poa Annua Tees/Fairways/Rough: 80% Bluegrasses, 20% Rye

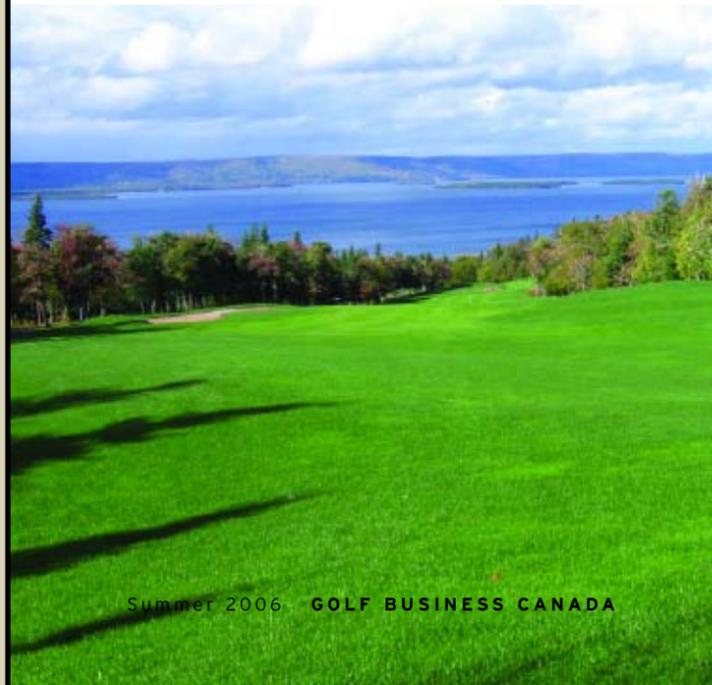
Bell Bay's Stonehouse says part of the reason the group has continued to operate so effectively for the past decade is that members of the Fabulous Foursome haven't forgotten that each member course has its individual objectives, and that sometimes what seems like a great idea won't be successful.

"We're sensitive to the fact that we want to make sure it works for everybody," he says. "If a promotion doesn't work, we drop it. For example, we tried to generate some revenue using a player privilege card where golfers would buy a card and get a discount at all four courses, but it didn't work out.

"Because of the differences in the ownership, it makes some things a bit challenging from an administrative perspective," he adds. "We've overcome a lot of those hurdles and everyone tries really hard to make things work, but if there's something that's not going well we put a quick stop to it."

THE HUMAN QUOTIENT

One initiative that has proven effective is a unique joint training program where staff members from all four courses take part in a full-day of educational sessions hosted by one of the Fabulous Foursome. "We have a day every year where all of our staff go to one of the member courses, and the course presents a training program," says Le Portage's Burns.



Bell Bay's Stonehouse says the sessions are valuable for staff at all four courses.

"We do a tour of the facility where the training is held, along with training and orientation to make sure any new staff members are aware of the partnership and the importance of working together. We're not only learning and growing our services, but also expanding product knowledge."

He says the sessions help to ensure everyone is fully aware of and understands the different courses, the services offered by each course, and any special events taking place during the season – such as the Canadian Club Champions Championship taking place this June at Bell Bay.

Stonehouse adds that as part of the annual session, small groups of golf operations staff divided by department will work together to brainstorm and share ideas about topics related to the area where they work.

EMOTIONAL TIES

The most significant part of what the Fabulous Foursome has achieved, though, has to do with developing a brand for Cape Breton golf. Stonehouse says it was one of the initial areas members of the group focused on, and that it's something they've continued to work on ever since.

Sajatovich of Highlands Links says working together to promote the region simply makes sense.

"We've found through our research and years of experience that traveling golfers are looking for value, for more than one experience or one golf course to play," he says. "In addition, from what our group has seen over the last couple of years, golf marketing has really taken hold in terms of selling different geographic regions, such as the southern US, different parts of Europe, Scotland. To remain competitive in the new world of golf marketing, it's the regions that are coming to the forefront."

Sajatovich also says he's seen results from the efforts of the Fabulous Foursome. "We've seen at tradeshow that a Cape Breton brand has developed strong emotional connections with international golfers," he says. "It's a brand that encompasses our island's

natural beauty, respect for the environment, our phenomenal culture, and the tremendous value for money that our courses offer."

The members of the Fabulous Foursome continue to work to maintain their existing key markets, which include Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic Canada. At the same time, they're looking to expand their reach. They see opportunities in the European market, with a new direct flight from Glasgow to Halifax introduced. They're also exploring possibilities in the southern US, where potential visitors view Cape Breton as a 'cool' destination.

New England is another target market with significant possibilities – in fact, readers of *The Best of Northeast Golf* voted the island their favourite international golf destination in 2005.

"In the case of Cape Breton Island, there are obvious ties – not only into New England, but to Europe," says Sajatovich.

DRAWING UPON CULTURE

Knowing that today's generations expect a full and rewarding experience for their time and money, there's also much more than golf alone to draw visitors to Cape Breton Island, and the group makes a concerted effort to include this into their promotional marketing efforts.

"Golfers are looking for quality golf product, but they're also looking for that après golf experience – the chance to learn about the culture of an area. They want to have gotten a sense of place," says Sajatovich, mentioning that all of the Fabulous Foursome courses are either on or near the internationally-renowned Cabot Trail, and referring to the unique aspects of the communities in which the courses are located.

"Many people come here for things like culture and music and discover the golf. Golf as a part of the tourism industry in Cape Breton is integral."

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AT A GLANCE

Highlands Links

Built in 1939 by renowned architect, Stanley Thompson, this "mountains and sea" course on the world famous Cabot Trail starts on a peninsula that juts into the Atlantic Ocean, before winding through a river valley in the Cape Breton Highlands and ending on the same peninsula. Restored to its original design in 1997 by Graham Cooke, Highlands Links was named top-rated Canadian Course (#71 overall) in *GOLF Magazine's* 2005 listing of the top 100 courses in the world.

Course Opened: 1941
Facility size: 68 acres (maintained), 100 acres total
Type of Club: Daily fee public
Number of rounds: 24,000-26,000 annually
Green Fees: \$67.00 - \$85.50
Course Design: Stanley Thompson
Driving Range: Putting and chipping green only
Ownership: Parks Canada operated (Government of Canada)
General Manager: Tim Reynolds
Head Professional: Joe Robinson
Superintendent: Clifford Robinson
Food & Beverage: Lee Buchannan

GOLF CARS Club Car (70 electric)

IRRIGATION Greens/Tees: 140 Toro Model #734-06-34
 Fairways/Rough: 110 Toro Model # 674-06-70
 Controllers: Central OSMAC Site Pro
 Satellites OSMAC (8)
 Radios - Motorola GP350

Pump Station: Flowtronex Compuflo 1000gpm

MOWERS Greens: 4 x John Deere 220B walk behind
 1 x Jacobsen Greens King IV Rider
 Tees: 4 x John Deere 220A walk behind
 1 x Ransome G-plex Rider
 Surrounds: 1 x John Deere 2653 A
 1 x Jacobsen G4X4 with Flail
 Fairways: 2 x John Deere 3225C lightweight mower
 Rough: 1 x John Deere 3235C lightweight mower

TRAPS 1 x John Deere 1200 raker

WASTE AREA Protected

UTILITY VEHICLES 2 x E-Z-GO ST350 Trucksters
 3 x Club Car Carry-All
 2 x Club Car Utility Gas
 1 x Cushman Truckster Gas

SPRAYERS 1 x Cushman Truckster with Broyhill 160 and Tee Jet 844 Control

AERIFIERS 1 x Ryan Tow Behind Fairways
 1 x Ryan Greensaire 24
 1x Toro Hydroject

SEED Greens: L-93 Bent Grass
 Tees: G-2
 Fairways: Kentucky Blue Grass (40% Abbey/ 30% Envicta/ 30% Coventry)
 Rough: Kentucky Blue Grass as above, with 20% Gallery Rye

Outer Roughs: Fescue, Ryegrass blend

TRACTORS 1 x Kubota 3410 4 wheel drive
 1 x John Deere Front loader

A WORD ON CO-OP PROMOTION

"Our group works hard to succeed and to ensure we cooperate on our initiatives," says Stonehouse. "And, while admittedly we have a gorgeous backdrop for our promotions, there is nothing stopping a group of operators in any region from gathering their resources and packaging their uniqueness to generate greater traffic to their courses.

"With a bit of pride in your area's heritage, a strong business plan, a supportive funding partner – and some great, forward-thinking golf course operators – you can cultivate new and valuable business."



STACEY PINEAU

Stacey is an independent public relations consultant based in the village of Baddeck on Nova Scotia's beautiful Cape Breton Island. Her husband, Ray, is the Superintendent of Bell Bay Golf Course. For more information on the Fabulous Foursome, contact Ted Stonehouse at ted@bellbay.ca.

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