

Sand Blasters

High-end courses don't have to mean high scores if you master your wedges

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PLAY ENOUGH HIGH-END coastal and desert courses in places like Cabo and you realize quickly you're not just faced with legions of beautiful but intimidating high-sided white sand bunkers, you'll be hitting from "fairways" that are sometimes against the actual beach. And in the desert, the rough can be rough indeed, a scorpion's delight of mixed sand, sage and cacti.

No matter how proficient you are, there'll be plenty of times when you feel like a kid stuck in the sandbox again. And since the bulk of your golf score comes from under 120 yards, those un-glamorous wedges become especially critical. You don't need to be like modern tour players, who carry up to four wedges,



Left page, (clockwise from top left): Cleveland CG-14, Nike SV Tour, Ping Tour-W, Titleist Vokey, Bob Burns Master Grind

This page: Wilson Tw7, TaylorMade RAC, Callaway X Forged, Miura Forged, Mizuno MP R Series, Touredge Exotics Xtreme Spin



QUICK SAND STRATEGY

Hitting from the sand can be a challenge, but making a clean escape is tremendously satisfying. The most common mistake people make in the greenside bunker is setting up this shot the same as they would a full-swing shot from the fairway. Setting up in this manner tends to cause the club to hit too far behind the ball, and the ball stays in the trap as a result. Determined not to do this again, the next time these players are in the greenside bunker, they try and “help” the ball out of the bunker with their hands and this causes the ball to rocket over the back of the green into the weeds!

Because you are trying to hit the sand first and have it propel the ball out of the bunker, there are a few setup changes to make in order to ensure that this happens consistently:

- The ball should be played around the center of your stance.
- Your spine needs to be centered vertically between your feet, not leaning away from the target as you do in a full-shot.
- Put 60 to 65 percent of your weight on your target-forward foot at address. It should stay there throughout the entire shot.

And remember to follow through! If you do these things at the setup position, I guarantee that your club will tend to hit the sand in a consistent place time after time and this will help you to become a much more consistent bunker player. —Tom F. Stickney II

but you do need to learn which wedge to use, and when, to avoid the feeling of “walking the plank” with your wedge game.

Are you going to hit around that palm tree, or over it? Understanding lofts is critical to playing them well. Utility wedge lofts run 52, 54, 56, 60 and even 64 degrees. Pick a “wedge set” that has between three to four degrees of loft difference between each one. If your pitching wedge is 48 degrees, then you would choose a 52-degree gap wedge, a 56-degree sand wedge, as well as a 60-degree lob wedge. This gets you around the greens without any big yardage gaps between your wedges when hitting full shots. You need simply remember two things: that pitching and gap wedges hit flat, low, running shots, and; sand and lob wedges hit high, soft, stopping shots:

- Pitching and gap wedges should be used when the pin is situated at the back of the green and you are just off the front of the green
- Sand and lob wedges should be used when the pin is close to the edge of the green that is nearest to you
- Use pitching and gap wedges whenever you have a normal lie around the green
- Use sand and lob wedges when you have a poor lie in the rough around the green
- Pitching and gap wedges are never used in a sand trap
- Sand and lob wedges are always used in the sand trap
- Use pitching and gap wedges out of the fairway for pins that are in the back of the green
- Use sand and lob wedges when the flag is close over a bunker, on a slope, or on the edge of the green

To keep your escape shots looking brilliant, there are a few things to bear in mind. For tight lies, sandy lies and hard pan lies it is usually best to use your pitching and gap wedges provided the pin is not too close to you. Sand and lob wedges have a bigger “bottom” area and are best used to knife through weeds, coconuts or to save you in the woods from a snake. When in doubt use your gap wedge. Low flat trajectories (pitching and gap wedges) tend to “run” too much on fast, smooth, sloped greens. Inversely, high soft trajectories (sand and lob wedges) tend to stop too quickly on slow, bumpy, flat greens. 📍

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Fit for Royalty

From King George IV to Woodstock, the Glenlivet Scotch is a timeless wonder

1969. Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, the Boeing 747 took its first test flight, Woodstock rocked a rural New York farm, and 10 select casks from The Glenlivet Distillery were filled with young, single-malt whisky. Now, 37 years later, it's ready to see the bottom of a glass. The Glenlivet Cellar Collection 1969 boasts a deep gold color and a subtle balance of spices, fruit and hazelnut. The water for Glenlivet scotch comes from Josie's Well, an underground spring at the distillery that provides a constant source of ice-cold mineral-rich water that creates its unique flavors. In 1822, King George IV made a visit to Scotland, and at the welcoming ceremony promptly requested a cup of Glenlivet, then illegal to produce in Scotland. He drained it, requested a refill, and declaring it the drink fit for a king, a year later declared the Excise Act heralding the end of illegal distilling. A year after that, George Smith "officially" founded the Glenlivet distillery to legitimize the whiskey he'd made for years. In the years that followed he relied many times on a pair of hair-triggered pistols given him by the Laird of Aberlour to defend himself from smugglers who felt threatened by the quality of the Glenlivet whiskey. So in a sense the Cellar Collection 1969 stretches much further into the past than the vintage implies. Only 800 bottles will be released in the United States. Each one is individually numbered and comes packaged in a solid ash frame adorned with leather and brass, \$750. —Becki Bryant

Glenlivet Cellar Collection 1969. (877) 800-1969, theglenlivet.com

