



The Thermes Murrins des Cascades



The Cascades

construction of the Aswan Dam led to the celebrated rescue of the temples of Abu Simbel. There is a certainty however: these two worlds astonish us and affect us in a definitive manner when we discover them simultaneously on going up the Nile aboard the sumptuous yacht *Alexander the Great*. They attach us to Egypt when we venture into the underground depths of one of the temples or descend into the universally famous underwater splendour.

Egypt: golf destination

However, Egypt is not limited to archaeological vestiges and shoals of fish. Golfers are probably unaware of it but they give an air of worship to their sport

and a pilgrimage through this country is felt to be essential. In fact, it is in this part of the world although almost desert that one finds traces of the first game based on the combined use of a stick and a ball, a game which could be connected with golf. Thus let us pay homage to the inspired Pharaoh Tuthmosis III who was the first to practice his drive!

Cairo courses

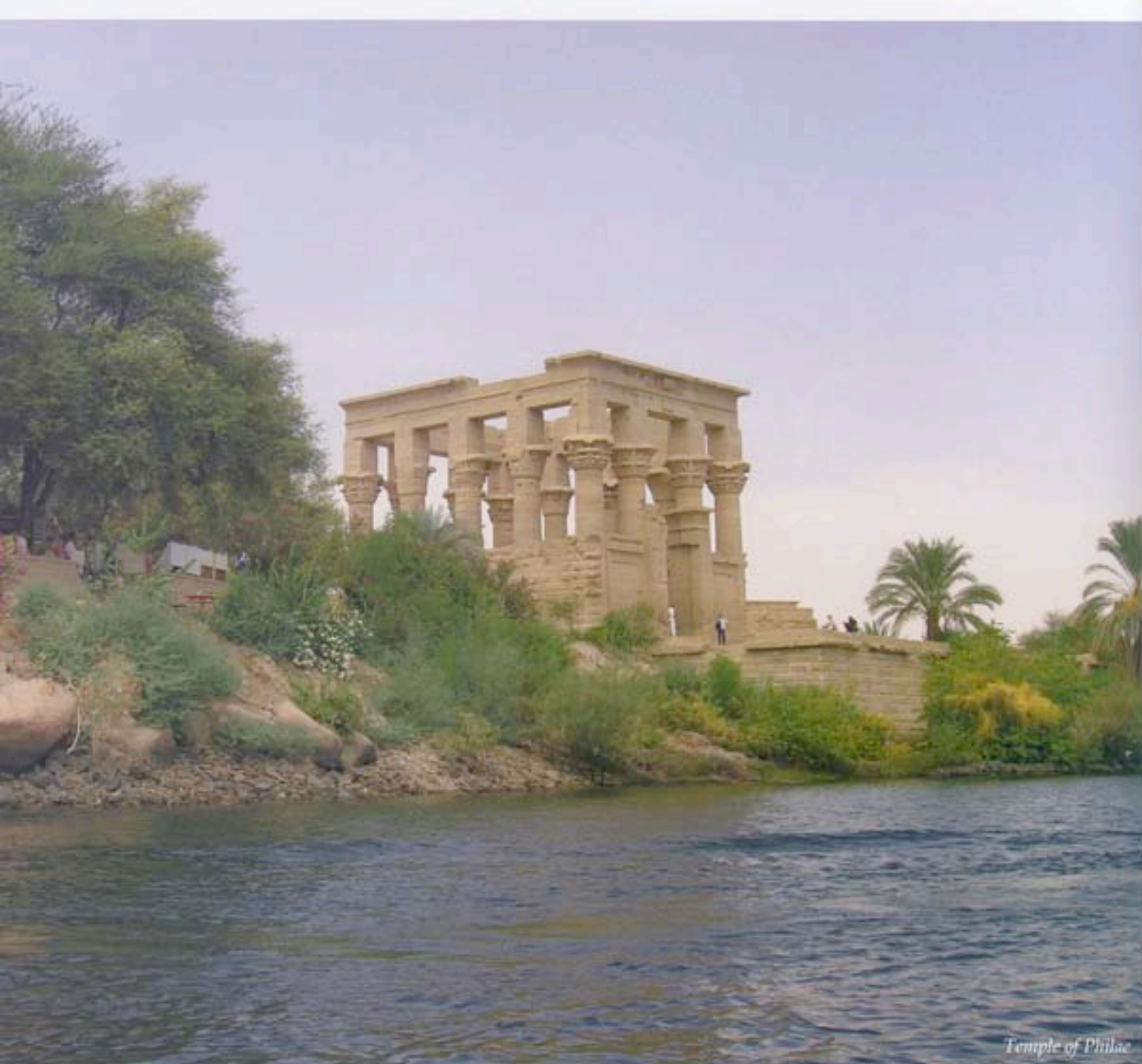
A stay in Egypt can be completely devoted to golf because the country has exceptional courses both in Cairo as at the edge of the Red Sea. It was the English who laid the first golf courses in Egypt in the 19th century, in particular the Gezira Club. Almost abandoned

after the abdication of the king (in the fifties) who was an enthusiastic defender of British imperialism, it was only at the beginning of 1990's that the Egyptians decided to exploit the tourist potential of their courses.

The Gezira Club, 18-holes (par 70) played on 9 holes is on an island close to the centre of Cairo. It is part of the Gezira Sporting Club, an imposing infrastructure including restaurants, swimming pools, illuminated tennis courts, equestrian centre, squash courts, basketball and croquet... The golf club has a pro-shop and a driving range. Pros are available to give golf lessons on request. The most popular course in Cairo is Katameya Heights, a 17 holes (a championship par 72 and a par 35) laid on an agreeably undulating terrain offering admirable view points of the Pyramids at Gizeh and with a wide variety of playing situations.

Those who dream of putting at the very foot of the Pyramids prefer to play the 18 holes of Mena House Golf Course, or the very famous par 72 of Dreamland with its N°9 hole, where in clear weather one can use the Pyramid of Cheops for sighting (it is in perfect alignment with the hole). Finally there is a course that is greatly appreciated by highly skilled golfers, the Mirage City Golf Club, designed by Gary Player in 2000. This par 72 is one of the best golfing challenges in the country. But the absolute star of Egyptian golf courses is not located in





Temple of Philae



Cairo. It is at the edge of the Red Sea in the superb resort of Soma Bay.

Soma Bay: Golf course and Residence des Cascades

Here is a resort which was able to preserve its exclusive character in spite of the large scale development of the tourist infrastructures in the region. Only 45 minutes from the airport of Hurghada, Soma Bay is well worth a visit. To reach this course covering the totality of a peninsula, it is necessary to follow a 7 km private road. In Soma Bay, the Red Sea is spread out on all sides as far as the eye can see, while at the heart of the resort, there is the extraordinary championship 18-holes imagined by Gary Player curving in all directions. In addition to this par 72, which delights experienced golfers as well as Sunday golfers, Soma

Bay has a 9 holes also designed by Gary Player and a golf academy offering private lessons and collective courses.

The resort only has three high-class hotels one of which is a member of the Leading Hotels of the World, the "Residence des Cascades", located just beside the golf course. With its 210 ultra-comfortable and very nicely furnished rooms, and its 39 suites (the smallest of which is 740 sq ft in area, and the largest 3660 sq ft!) all of which give onto the golf course or the sea, this establishment is one of the most luxurious and peaceful of Egypt.

Conscious of the exceptional interest in golf, the local architects decided to create at least three restaurant areas allowing one to observe what is happening on the greens: the "Dunes" with its indoor

and outdoor terraces, "Spikes Bar" on the roof of the swimming pool above the green of the 18th, and, of course, the lounge of the clubhouse "The Gallery". But the gastronomical offering goes well beyond this: the Albatross distinguishes itself by its intimate atmosphere and its refined cuisine, "The Eagle's Nest" overhanging the hotel is a very "British" pub offering an unforgettable panoramic sight. As for the "Layali", it welcomes guests who want to prolong the evening until late in the night in warm surroundings.

All these restaurants prepare dietetic menus on request in accordance with nutritional programmes established by specialists in the "Thermes Marins des Cascades", a splendid thalassotherapy centre and spa integrated into the Residence des Cascades. It offers a vast choice of treatments: aquatonic pool, immersed massages, hydrotherapy, envelopments using algae, exercise programmes... Hammam, saunas and beauty care also form part of the services. The absolute calm which reigns here is found everywhere in Soma Bay. Note, tranquility but not lethargy... Because, on staying at the Residence, there is a complete choice available: idleness or sports, everything is possible. Lovers of idleness are to be found around the fresh water heated swimming pool and its external jacuzzi, or on the immense white sand beach which one reaches over a charming small wood bridge.

But the beach is also a spot popular with enthusiastic free divers, sailboards, kite-sailing, and catamarans. Soma Bay also has a superb diving centre equipped with ultra modern equipment. A 1350 foot long pier leads directly from the hotel to the diving site, the corals of which are world famous. To these nautical activities, one should add the practice of other sports: exercise, tennis, squash, ping-pong... As for those for whom physical activity must always be combined with discovery, there are excursions to Luxor, safaris, and nights in Bedouin camps.

Alexander The Great

230 ft long, this yacht is a true luxury palace hotel on water in the grand tradition of cruising boats. Each of its 30 suites is decorated in a different style so that the guests on *Alexander The Great*, feel as though they are in their own home. Extremely comfortable,

with their floors of teak, their sophisticated furniture and their luxurious bath room, all have air conditioning (adjustable), a television with satellite channel, video and DVD player. For ultimate luxury, two cameras placed at the front of the yacht and directly connected to television screens ensure that one misses nothing of the spectacle of the banks of the Nile even when resting in one's suite...

The *Alexander The Great* offers a multitude of luxurious services. The spa offers marvelous treatments as well as a free Turkish bath. The sun deck "The Club", on the 4th bridge, is a real must-visit with its shaded area, its generously proportioned swimming pool, its jacuzzi, its external gymnasium and its lounge bar where all kinds of drinks, coffees and exotic teas are served. The restaurant "Red Fiesta" on the 3rd bridge allows you to appreciate, from the early hours of the day, the ever-new spectacle of life on the banks of the Nile thanks to the wide picture windows. All the meals are *à la carte*, except the breakfast buffet. At nightfall, the "Gabaleya" *soirée* with evening dress, barbecues and Oriental dances make this cruise a voyage in the middle of the Thousand and One Nights.





Katameya Heights

A permanent spectacle

There is on this yacht, although it is ultra-modern, a small old-fashioned and charming something which recalls the Egypt of Agatha Christie. This feeling becomes almost palpable when one stops in Aswan at the Sofitel Old Cataract, a bewitching hotel (the famous novelist was inspired by it to write "Death on the Nile") built on a granite headland above the river. On embarking on *Alexander The Great* in Cairo, the most famous monuments in Pharaonic Egypt open their arms to you: the Sphinx and the Pyramids of Gizeh, the Necropolis of Bani Hassan esteemed for its paintings in bright colours, the Valley of the Kings, then the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut leaning against rock walls nearly

1000 ft high... Then come the Valley of the Queens and Colossi of Memnon, and on the other bank, to the east, the sites of Karnak and of Luxor. The Ed-fou Temple dedicated to Horus is one of the most beautiful with its mixture of Pharaonic and Greek architecture. The Temple of Kom Ombo, devoted to two divinities (unique) has two gates leading in parallel to two sanctuaries. Still going up the river, the Temple of Philae, built to honour Isis, tells better than anything the eternal fight between stone and water on the Nile: entirely dismantled, it was rebuilt 300 miles from its original site! The last stop before Aswan, perhaps the most "monumental", are the imposing temples of Abu Simbel, a work ordered by Ramses II.

However, one should not imagine that the Nile only offers intimidating "stones". On its banks, here are a thousand and one scenes from everyday life to hold the attention of passengers. No one can remain indifferent to the sight of a caravan of camels skirting the river, of a frail *felucca* crossing in front of the imposing yacht, or of oxen grazing nonchalantly a short distance from some of the most beautiful monuments of this country.

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