

answer will almost always be a sofa (on a par with a quality mattress).

If you're concerned about back support, opt for a firmer sofa designed for a corporate environment from manufacturers such as Knoll and Herman Miller for good looks and ergonomic cred. At the top end of the seating sphere is Lorlords Contemporary, a furnishing studio based in the Cotswolds, whose customers are clamouring to snap up 3m-long sofas. Lorlords's bespoke workshop is busy with a number of XL commissions, including a 4.2m-long ten-seater and corner settee measuring 4m by 5m with a 1.6m-deep cushion: big enough for 20.

Lorlords's managing director, Nasia de la Haye, says: "These corner designs offer the ultimate in laid-back lounging... the corner is always the best seat in the house. For a lot of us, oversized sofas bring back memories of how it felt as a child to have a whole gigantic sofa 'island' to yourself - there's something comforting about it that relaxes you, and that is ultimately all that you could want from a sofa, right?"

GOING FOR THE GREEN

Europe's eco-minded golf resorts are driving for a more sustainable approach. By Zoe Dare Hall

As a former golf pro, Jamie Robinson, now the sales director at Quinta Properties in the Algarve, knows the region's fairways like the back of his hand. His favourites are at Quinta do Lago, a resort famous for its world-class courses.

"Quinta do Lago recently redesigned its North and South courses with new irrigation systems that are far more efficient," he says.

While the sustainability credentials of a resort aren't the driving factor for golfers, they are crucial for local homeowners - particularly as droughts and wildfires look increasingly set to become summer fixtures in southern Europe.

"You don't necessarily notice the sustainable measures a golf resort is taking, but it's something we should all care about," says Brigitte Skan, who formerly

owned Hampshire's Chewton Glen hotel with her husband, Martin. Since 2019 the couple, now in their eighties, have owned a two-bedroom penthouse in the Abama resort in Tenerife.

"It's one of the best places we've ever played, and we've played all over the world," says Skan, who loves the way the "challenging" Abama course climbs up and up, with "breathtaking" views across countryside and sea.

Abama, where new properties include the two-bedroom Los Jardines apartments from €1.02 million, has certification from Breeam (a Building Research Establishment code), Emas (European Commission) and the UN-regulated Biosphere programme. And every architect commissioned by the resort must display their commitment to green technology and use local labour and materials.



Above: Ombria resort in the Algarve, Portugal, where two-bedroom apartments, designed with energy-saving "bioclimatic architecture", start at €875,000

More golf resorts are following suit, says Chris Bertram, who has compiled Golf World's latest list of the top 100 sustainable golf courses in Europe. There are no eco rules that golf resorts must adhere to, Bertram says, "but I would estimate that at least three quarters of all clubs are now environmentally aware and a third are deeply committed".

Quinta do Lago makes the top 100. So does Costa Navarino in Greece, which has installed the largest geothermal system in Europe to reduce its energy consumption. Properties for sale there include Westin-

branded residences costing from €770,000 (or about £665,000) for a three-bed apartment, through Greece Sotheby's International Realty.

Camiral in Girona, set among the biodiverse and protected woodland on Spain's Costa Brava, is praised for its aquatic ecosystem. The resort, whose properties include four-bedroom, energy A-rated La Ginesta villas overlooking the Stadium Course from €1.7 million, uses only recycled water to irrigate its golf courses.

As its name suggests, Desert Springs in Spain's arid Almeria region has a specific challenge that has informed its design from the start. But by using low-irrigation paspalum grass and many varieties of cacti, Desert Springs consumes 42 per cent less water than typical southern European resorts.

New properties there include two-bedroom apartments and townhouses from €195,000 and three-bedroom detached villas from €365,000, all with water heated by photovoltaic solar panels and underfloor heating powered by ground source heat pumps.



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