

Home | Travel Gateway

A Bright And Breezy 'Drive' by The Ocean

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**Sea Pine Golf Course** (also known as the Army Golf Club II) is set along the Gulf of Thailand by the spectacular *Suan Son Pradiphat* ('Sea Pine Tree Garden') in Prachuap Khiri Khan's Hua Hin district.

Launched informally in September 2010, the course has been creatively set within a large tract of land, which was originally owned by the Royal Forestry Department before being taken over by the Royal Thai Army under the rule of Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat, who served as prime minister of Thailand during 1957-1963.

Suan Son Pradiphat includes lots of pine trees, providing plenty of natural shade for players and spectators alike. The army originally developed the site as a form of retreat for serving soldiers and veterans and their families.

### **Impressive Debut**

Since its unofficial opening, the course has been receiving rave reviews. Set in a peaceful locale, surrounded by mountainous terrain, the course enjoys an idyllic setting by an impressive stretch of beach, filled with white, powdery sand.

Those who have experienced a few rounds of golf here have suggested that the course design and layout have been developed to provide players with the perfect challenge. Players should note that they might have to make adjustments to their delivery, depending on the strength of the sea breeze. The green fee is 1,000 baht (US\$33.30) per person, Monday through Friday, and 1,500 baht per person on the weekend. This is generally



thought to represent very good value overall.



### Delivery Dilemma

According to my brother, a serious golfer, who helped sponsor this trip, the dogleg, par-5 12th hole is the most remarkable, as the design affords it protection in the form of fairway bunkers and a water hazard along the right-hand side. He pointed out that a small bunker located towards the middle of the fairway, creates a dilemma – go for a driver from the tee, or ‘play it safe’ by opting for a ‘lay up’ approach?

From the back tee, both fairway bunkers and nearby water hazards are in play. Players need to decide whether to cut across the fairway bunker, or hit a ball safely on to the fairway. Two decent shots should be enough to set up a short approach to a heavily

elevated green, protected by bunkers on both sides.

The 17th hole is an apparently simple par-3, which can become far more demanding should the wind come in to play, while the 16th hole features a spectacular view of the ocean. The 16th is also considered to be a ‘risk or reward’ hole, depending on the pin and shot placement, as the player has to decide whether or not to cut over the water and bunker on to the sloping green, or opt for a safer route to the left of the fairway.

### Challenging Finale

The challenging, par-4 18th hole is among the most difficult. From the back tee, a *klong* (‘canal’) creates a major hazard, since players need to hit their shot over a distance of about 220 yards in order to reach the fairway. A safe lay-up approach with a fairway wood is also an option for a solid par.

Since it’s a brand new course, the fairway and greens are in perfect condition, while the impressive club house opened its doors last week (admission: 20 baht).

For further information, call Sea Pine Golf Course on Tel:+66 (0)82 052 9072, or +66 (0)32 515 470-3.



### Transport Connections:

**Car:** Sea Pine Golf Course (Army Sport Center II) is located in the village of Baan Nong Gae in Prachuap Khiri Khan’s Hua Hin district. The course is located about 7 kilometers south of Hua Hin on Phetchkasem Road. If you drive along Highway 4 in the direction of Pran Buri district, the course is located just off Km marker 241.