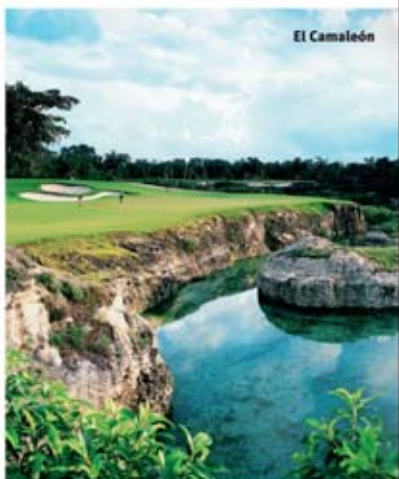


# QUINTESSENTIAL

**GOLF GREATS** CANCUN AND RIVIERA MAYA ARE EARNING PRAISE FOR THEIR DESIGNER GOLF COURSES. HERE ARE A FEW OF THE BEST:

The **Moon Spa & Golf Club** is home to the only Jack Nicklaus Signature course in Cancun. + In 2007, the Greg Norman-designed **El Camaleón**, at the Mayakoba resort in Riviera Maya, was the first course in Mexico to host a PGA Tour. + **The Bahía Príncipe Golf Resort**, designed by Robert Trent Jones Architects, is opening this winter in Riviera Maya. + Scheduled to open in 2010, **Cancun Country Club** will have the first TPC golf courses outside the US and the largest driving range in Latin America. Tom Fazio and Nick Price are designing the two courses.



## Q&A

**WHO:** Rafael Estrada Rodríguez, a shaman at Aventura Spa Palace ([www.palaceresorts.com](http://www.palaceresorts.com)); 800-635-1836 in Riviera Maya

**TOPIC:** The ancient Mayan steam bath ritual in a temazcal (sweat lodge), offered at the resort spa



**WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE TEMAZCAL?** "The name 'temazcal' or 'temazcalli' is made of two Nahuatl words: 'temaz,' which means bath or hot, and 'calli,' which means house. This ingenious form of hygiene not only cleansed the body, but also cleared the mind and revitalized the human spirit. It was also used by the Aztecs as a treatment for many illnesses. The positive effects on the well being of the community were so important that the temazcal developed into a tradition and spiritual custom."

**WHAT DOES A TEMAZCAL LOOK LIKE?** "The structure resembles a dome-shaped igloo made up of mud bricks or stones. The floor is usually made of flattened soil, set in a convex shape. In the middle of this circled interior is a pit where the hot stones are placed, considered the umbilicus of the mother Earth."

**WHAT DOES THE RITUAL ENTAIL?** "The participants sit in a circle around the hot stones. The entrance is closed and cold water is thrown onto the sizzling stones. The result is a thick, dense vapor that heats up the inside of the temazcal, causing body temperatures to increase. The rising body temperature causes the brain to release endorphins, natural painkillers, which create a relaxing and soothing effect."