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10

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We take a close look at the best 10 courses to have opened since May 1996. You can play them all.

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MANY PEOPLE HAVE SAID THAT THE PAR-3S AND PAR-5S MAKE a course, since they are the ones you remember most. If that is true, Linden Hall designed by Jonathan Gaunt, just a few miles north of Morpeth in Northumberland, will be etched on your memory for a long time. Having played this 6,814-yard par 72 course for the first time, we wager that you will remember the four stunning par-3s especially, followed closely by the four long holes that vary in their appeal, and also the par-4 18th – a mind-boggling dog-leg.

You can not help but enjoy the short holes, three of which are set in and around a frame of trees, a couple devilishly guarded by intrusive ponds. The architect has moulded the course around the natural landscape and for such a new course only a few holes look as if they have been fashioned within the last couple of years. The added bonus to this course that meanders around a mature estate is that its focus is a long-established country hotel.

It is a challenge without doubt, and at times a great one. Of course, time will help this course to become a better test, but already it is mature enough to command respect and praise.

● **Green fees** £25 weekdays, £27.50 weekends. £5 discount for residents.

