



Discover Puerto Rico Golf

*Calendar Year 2021 Golf PR Program Report
Dan Shepherd Public Relations*

Overview/Objective

Discover Puerto Rico recognizes that golf is a valuable tourism niche driver and promotes it through the proactive publicity and media relations program managed by Dan Shepherd Public Relations (danshepherdpr.com). The program goal is to get the Island golf destination in the news on a frequent, positive basis in general, and to highlight individual golf and resort stakeholders as news and feature opportunities warrant. The subsequent earned media influences people to choose Puerto Rico for their next golf and vacation getaway.

Activities

Services performed in the program include:

- creating and issuing press releases,
- conducting media familiarization tours (FAMs),
- pitching media on news and evergreen story angles,
- helping promote best-in-kind honors for golf stakeholders,
- posting on social media and/or suggesting potential posts for DMO channels,
- creating blog content for the DMO website,
- securing interviews for key DMO executives and golf stakeholders,
- identifying and spearheading select golf marketing co-op programs, and more.

CY 2021 Re-Cap

Despite working through the pandemic, many successes were achieved through the PR program, as the metrics illuminate below (see next section). Another key performance indicator comes from the golf course managers who by and large report having recorded the best year since before Hurricane Maria.

Earned Media Metrics

519 million+ = total potential reach

\$432,000+ = total value

Publicity Highlights and Excerpts

JANUARY

Golfweek – “50 Best Courses You Can Play in the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America and the Atlantic Islands”

- ***Puerto Rico had four courses on the list including TPC Dorado Beach (East), The St. Regis Bahia Beach, Royal Isabela, and the Championship Course at Grand Reserve***
- DSPR created and disseminated a press release to further amplify the best-of distinction for the Island golf destination overall, and the individual stakeholders specifically

DiscoverPuertoRico.com

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- <https://golfweek.usatoday.com/lists/golfweeks-best-courses-2021-mexico-caribbean-atlantic-islands-and-central-america/>

FEBRUARY

PGATOUR.com – “Rafa Campos Right at Home” – written by a media member who participated in the DMO sponsored media FAM trip during the 2021 Puerto Rico Open tournament week

- *“This tournament, it’s absolutely huge,” said Campos. “We thrive on tourism, and the Puerto Rico Open is a time to showcase the island, one of the biggest opportunities we have. It hopefully makes golfers realize that we have some nice golf courses, and that Puerto Rico is a nice travel destination.”*
- <https://www.pgatour.com/news/2021/02/22/rafael-campos-right-at-home-2021-puerto-rico-open.html>

MARCH

Drift Travel Magazine – “Puerto Rico Golf Shines on World Stage; the Perfect Caribbean Destination”

- *“It was an exceptional week for Puerto Rico on the world golf stage last week. Not only did Island native Rafa Campos play brilliantly during the PGA TOUR’s 13th Puerto Rico Open that concluded on Sunday, but the United States Golf Association announced that the Puerto Rico Golf Association has joined its network of Allied Golf Associations (AGA), becoming the 59th AGA and the first outside of the 50 United States.”*
- <https://drifttravel.com/puerto-rico-golf-on-the-world-stage-the-perfect-caribbean-destination/>

APRIL

LINKS Magazine – “Top 10 Golf Experiences in Puerto Rico”

- *“San Juan is graced by handsome, historic buildings—along with upscale hotels, chic restaurants, and lively casinos where elegantly dressed people reflect the island’s stylish sophistication. Beyond the capital, Puerto Rico’s endless beaches and hilly terrain are perfect for exploring – and make great golf settings.”*
- 14 of Puerto Rico’s 18 courses are included in the article
- https://www.links magazine.com/puerto-rico-top-10-golf-experiences/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=insider4.2.21

MAY

Yahoo! Finance – “Puerto Rico Robust in Tourism Rebound; Golf Niche Follows Trend”

- *“Statistics show that as domestic travel begins its revival Puerto Rico is faring far better than the U.S. average according to the April Travel Recovery Insights Dashboard from the U.S. Travel Association. This holds true for many of the Island’s travel niches, not the least of which is golf.”*
- <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/puerto-rico-robust-tourism-rebound-211100087.html>

JUNE

Sports Illustrated online – “Resilient Puerto Rico Still has Plenty of Game” – written by a DMO sponsored media FAM trip participant

- *“Every time I venture to Puerto Rico to play a little golf, catch a little sun, peer out across the azure blue waters, sample the local plantain mofongo and sip a little rum, without fail, a singular thought always bubbles to the top of my brain: Given the ease of direct travel to the island from my home in Orlando, why don’t I get here more often?”*

- <https://www.si.com/golf/travel/feature-2021-06-07-resilient-puerto-rico-still-has-plenty-of-game>

JULY

Virginia Golfer – “Paradise Island – Puerto Rico Ready to Deliver Your Dream Rounds” – Virginia State Golf Association member publication

- ***“Finally! Last year’s pent-up daydreams of playing golf in a place with a steady sea breeze, swaying palm trees and bright sunshine casting a golden glow down lush green fairways are coming true. And perhaps there is no place more perfect or welcoming than Puerto Rico.”***
- Pages 32-35: - <https://viewer.joomag.com/virginia-golfer-july-august-2021/0394656001625686951>

AUGUST

USA TODAY – “Extreme Hotel Makeovers COVID Edition”

- ***“Significant investments are bringing the island's El Conquistador Resort back to its former glory with new accommodations, refreshed dining options, and updates to the Arthur Hills-designed golf course and Coqui Water Park all highlights of the renovation.”***
- <https://www.usatoday.com/picture-gallery/travel/hotels/2021/08/15/these-hotels-made-most-covid-stunning-renovations/8058824002/>

SEPTEMBER

Nerdwallet – “Best Hyatt Hotels in the Caribbean”

- ***“Popular with families for its beachfront location and beautiful pool, the Hyatt Regency Grand Reserve Puerto Rico has a variety of dining, including teppanyaki, sushi, a Caribbean option and a steakhouse. The resort’s championship golf course is also the host venue for the annual PGA Tour’s Puerto Rico Open (along with 17 other courses on the island).”***
- <https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/travel/best-hyatt-hotels-caribbean>

OCTOBER

Associated Press – “Puerto Rico Leads Way in Travel Recovery; Island Tourism Thrives”

- ***“Golf is prospering in Puerto Rico during the pandemic, stemming from the inherent safeness and social distancing found in the game and on the Island. Courses range from luxury to municipal, spread across Puerto Rico with several near San Juan. Oceanside views, coconut trees, and rainforest vistas frame their settings. Price points, terrain, layout style, and related amenities are varied and complementary.”***
- <http://apnews.com/press-release/pr%20newswire/coronavirus-pandemic-lifestyle-health-travel-united-states-8952db9660e642bf2acd61c3b469a808>

NOVEMBER

Golfweek/USA TODAY Sports – “It’s Island Time on the PGA Tour”

- ***“There are several other golf courses not far from the Championship Course at Hyatt Regency Grand Reserve. These include the Ocean Course (Tom and George Fazio design) and River Course (Greg Norman) at Rio Mar Country Club, the East and Sugarcane courses at TPC Dorado Beach, and the wonderful Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed course at St. Regis Bahia Beach.”***
- <https://golfweek.usatoday.com/lists/its-island-time-on-the-pga-tour/>

DECEMBER

Golf Vacations Magazine – “Puerto Rico – A Winter Golf Travel Tale” – written by a DMO sponsored media visitor

- ***“For those living in four-season climates, there’s nothing like a winter trip to ‘paradise’ to warm one’s soul and extend the golf season. That was reinforced on a recent trip to Puerto Rico, the U.S. territory and air travel hub of the Caribbean.”***
- <https://www.golfvacationsmag.com/international/a-winter-golf-travel-tale-to-puerto-rico/>

Summary / Looking to 2022

As the publicity excerpts highlighted above demonstrate, Puerto Rico golf and its stakeholders shined in 2021 across a variety of niches – travel, golf, news, lifestyle, etc. – both endemic and non-endemic. These 12 earned media examples (one per month) are representative and indicative of the several hundred media “hits” that were secured and their positive, influential tenor.

Calendar Year 2021 was important for the Island overall as it regained the immense momentum and milestones being achieved prior to the pandemic, and golf mirrored those positive trends. While a couple of planned golf marketing co-op programs had to be cancelled due to the pandemic, they are being resurrected for 2022. These include three golf resorts and the DMO collaborating with Golf America, a golf travel tv program that reaches many millions of households; and several golf courses and resorts working with DMO to join the International Association of Golf Tour Operators. This includes 2022 membership, plus attendance by DSPR on behalf of the DMO and the co-op partners at the North American Conference in June at Reno, Nev. Many 1:1 meetings will take place there with operators who combine to sell more than one-half-billion dollars in golf travel packages during a typical year.

Additionally, there will be two large golf events in Puerto Rico during 2022 – one a United States Golf Association championship – that will shine national and/or global spotlights on the Island. These are in addition to the Puerto Rico Open, a PGA TOUR event. Hence, these will help generate some excellent exposure for the golf destination.

If you have any questions about the Discover Puerto Rico Golf PR Program or have any news or feature-worthy items to share, please contact Dan Shepherd at danshepherdpr@gmail.com or +1 703-403-5317.