



# *The Beauty of the Ballantyne*

Written by Joel Zuckerman Photography Courtesy of Bissell

Charlotte, North Carolina, just 250 miles north of Bluffton, is known mostly for auto racing and banking. Here's something else you can bank on: The Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge, a member of Starwood's Luxury Collection, is one of the finest full-service resort hotels in The Carolinas, and the only full-fledged golf resort in town.

The showpiece hotel features 214 elegant rooms, including 14 Luxury Suites a 35-room Lodge and a four-bedroom cottage. There are dozens of reasons to hang the "do not disturb" sign on the doorknob, including large flat-screen TVs, plenty of wireless connectivity, Egyptian cotton linens, and spacious marble-accented bathrooms.

Downstairs, the Spa at Ballantyne was recently renovated and features a full complement of services, including a pool, sauna, and whirlpool, the better to counter affect the delights found in the lobby's Gallery Bar, with its comprehensive library of single malt scotch, impressive wine list and cocktail menu. Post-cocktails, many guests head to the superb Gallery Restaurant, with its eco-friendly Earth-to-Table concept, featuring aged steaks and fresh seafood.

However when it's time to head outdoors, many guests enjoy the Golf Club at Ballantyne, a championship course complete with wide-ranging practice facilities, and the Dana Rader Golf School, offering comprehensive

instruction for groups and individuals. Ms. Rader is one of the leading lights in golf instruction, undoubtedly the “golf queen” of the Queen City.

Her golf academy opened in 1997 at the west end of the driving range, preceding the actual opening of the golf course itself. Rader began with four full-time instructors, eventually increased that number to eight, and currently has about 15 total employees including support staff in this million-dollar enterprise.

One of her longtime admirers is LPGA legend Nancy Lopez, who has watched Rader’s business grow through the years. “I have known Dana for a long time, and have worked with her numerous times in Charlotte with my work for the March of Dimes. She is very classy, and you can see right away what a strong businessperson she is. She is very bright, has a great personality, people like her and gravitate towards her. She has a serious side of course, but also a fun-loving side, and people just naturally like her, which isn’t an attribute that everybody has,” explains the Hall of Fame member, who has that very same attribute in abundance.

Rader’s venture flourished owing to the booming business climate in Charlotte. The upscale hotel was consistently booking incentive groups and corporate outings, and what better way to recreate after meetings and seminars than by taking a golf lesson or clinic prior to heading out on the course? In excess of 15,000 students would come through the door on an annual basis, and familiarize themselves with Rader’s three basic tenets to improvement—physical, mental and emotional. “First we evaluate any physical limitations, injuries and flexibility issues. Then we observe ball control from different target lines with different clubs. In order to help with the mental and emotional aspects of the game we must understand what is happening with the mechanical aspects.”

“Second is the mental aspect. We have to empower students to believe that they can make changes in their swing, and teach them how to take the mechanics on the course by providing a productive and effective pre and post shot routine. The most important factor that creates success for our students is a practice program that mirrors their play. This helps with their mental game so that they are better prepared to play the game. They have to hit shots in practice on the range and on the course with a quiet mind. We try to get them to clear the chatter out of their head so they can perform. This takes a lot of practice and mental discipline.”

“Lastly is the emotional aspect, helping them with performance anxiety. We listen to their thoughts and feelings and help them through the change process and through the ups and downs of the game. This emotional aspect is vitally important. The game of golf is very personal and students need to have coaches that care and understand their fear and doubt.”

There is no doubt that the Ballantyne is one of the finest city hotels in the nation, and anyone who wants to improve their golf game would be well served in visiting the Dana Rader Golf School.

For more information visit:  
[www.theballantynehotel.com](http://www.theballantynehotel.com)

