

**THE DRIVE**

A pair of Yamaha golf cars pictured on a course

The Vikings are coming... and they're Driving Yamaha

Immy Barclay talks to Tony Trigell, owner and operator of multiple golf courses in Sweden, about his golf operation, and why when choosing a golf car, he decided to partner with Yamaha.

Across the smörgåsbord of sports in Sweden, golf is the one that seems to dominate. For a population of nearly ten million, we're looking at approximately 500,000 active players registered in the Swedish Golf Federation.

While this official information doesn't even include those under the radar casually going to the range, stats like these start to reveal how the Scandis have really sunk their teeth into the game.

One has to wonder what clubs are doing to satisfy this appetite? And for a sport that is so popular, how can individual businesses in the industry stand out?

We spoke to Tony Trigell, owner and operator of multiple golf courses in Stockholm, who has recently turned to Yamaha as his solution.

Trigell's company, GolfStar, is a Golf subscriptions service company that allows members open access to play at

any of its 20 courses in the country. Its chain of clubs is growing, with also a course just outside Barcelona, available for those keen members who can't wait to play until the snow defrosts on the greens at home in Northern Europe.

With all this expansion, what is GolfStar's appeal that sets them apart and how does Yamaha's involvement help?

Firstly, GolfStar subverts the old expectations of club memberships with their "get more for your money" pricing structure and by revolving everything around the customer. Their primary objective is to create a fun experience for their members.

"It's important that golfers feel free," said Trigell. "Golf is already a hard game as it is, so I want the members to feel that after 18 holes they've had a good time with us no matter what."

"We always have our members on our minds, and to the extent that we've given up all our executive spaces in the parking lots and handed them over to our customers!"

It's a warm-hearted way of operating that challenges the pervading approach where players can often be required to refer to a worn out clubhouse rule book. And it's the rule book that Trigell has happily tossed in the bunker as he builds up his vision for GolfStar.

They are clearly respecting the game but doing so in an innovative way. While the company's goal over previous years has been about fast growth, the aim is now centred on achieving a high quality standard across its courses.

"As a brand we want to develop our courses in a better way, we want to attract attention, offer something new. In a word, we are doing a rebellion."



PLAY YOUR BEST

A four-ball enjoying their Yamaha experience

“We always have our members on our minds, and to the extent that we’ve given up all our executive spaces in the parking lots and handed them over to our customers!”

Following along this line of fresh thinking, it comes as no surprise that GolfStar found a long-term partnership with Yamaha. As a key step to consolidate a quality experience, Golfstar have had to unify the features they offer across all their courses.

This called for a total overhaul of the golf cars and it’s Yamaha who have been chosen to supply and manage the entire fleet at all the locations. “Yamaha makes sense,” explained Trigell. “When we were looking at potential partners, we just asked ourselves: why do what everyone else is doing?”

The intention is to rev up the golf club member’s downtime.

“When you take over a course, you get whatever cars they had in the garage. It’s a mess. Different battery lives, looks, features. I want to help my staff manage these, but most importantly, I want our golfers to know what to expect when they come here.”

It’s these details that impact the customer’s overall impression of the GolfStar brand and it’s Yamaha who elevate this experience.

The focus isn’t only on club management or aesthetic consistency. Paramount is the driving experience of the cars. “What happens when my customers need to charge their phone? Of course, there’s a USB port in the dashboard. There’s even a non-slip pad in the front shelf to stop their things sliding around,” added Trigell.

“Drinks? There’s a huge icebox ready for them. And there’s always something to reliably protect their clubs when it rains. Every time they come, players will know how to use these cars without any guesswork, and they’ll know that they are getting the best.”

Trigell is also pleased to see how Yamaha can appeal to their younger members who are the ones that most regularly request the cars. “Yamaha can speak to these young guys in a way golf hasn’t seen before. As a brand, they are already about having fun, and that complements our vision.”

The decision to team up with Yamaha goes deeper than that on the manufacturing side. “The company is exceptionally technical. We all know that the Japanese are renowned for this, and Yamaha especially, they don’t build anything ordinary.

“So when it came down to it and I looked at the figures around battery efficiency, maintenance and so on, it was not a hard decision to join them and do this in a smart way together. I could see that we were setting ourselves up to be better off.”

Even the retailer Yamaha have decided to work with boosts Trigell’s confidence in the manufacturer. “It’s Hako here in Stockholm, and they are a great dealership, so that shows me that Yamaha know a good thing when they see it.”

Yamaha is now trusted to play a major role in defining the GolfStar facilities. As Trigell establishes the high quality playing experiences across all his golf clubs, the next move will be another round of expansion overseas. In his own words: “The Vikings are coming!”

In selecting partners to collaborate with, Trigell’s final requirement was that they jump on board with the business long-term. This kind of commitment is a unique asset that sits at the core of Yamaha’s company ethos.

So for Trigell, GolfStar and Yamaha, we are clearly looking at a genuine example of a future made together. **GMé**

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