



Time to demand good golf trails like the one on Vancouver Island

Golf trails started out as a great idea and before long (like many things in life) turned into a marketing man's gimmick. Now there are so many golf trails out there that any second-rate course that is not trail "certified" somewhere just isn't trying.

Geography and maps are now routinely stretched to such a degree in golf trails that Miss Teen South Carolina would be aghast. *Sure, there's a 10-hour drive between those courses but, sir, do you know how long Lewis and Clark walked?*

Two golf courses in the Okanagan region of British Columbia once marketed themselves as a golf trail. Two courses. It's a trail you can finish in one day. Why stop there, though? How long before an ad man gets the brilliant idea to pimp a course's cart path as a golf trail? *You get 18 whole holes on this trail, you see.*

With all this golf trail deluding and delusion out there, it's now refreshing when you play a golf trail that actually lives up to what a golf trail's supposed to be. [Vancouver Island Golf Trail](#) is such an experience.

For one thing, it's a journey that actually makes sense. The whole trail only stretches about 250 kilometers, less than three hours drive from end to end for even someone who sputters along like a grandmother. Yet there's a huge range in scenery, from the hip harbor scenes of Victoria to the secluded, out-there nature of the Campbell River region.

The golf runs the gamut as well. Vancouver Island's Golf Trail gives you Bear Mountain, one of the most polished resorts you'll ever find, a place with Nicklaus golf and a head professional (Steve MacPherson) who once battled guys like Lee Westwood to try and make it in pro golf and now looks like he always just stepped from the pages of a golf style magazine.

And the trail always gives you Storey Creek, one of the least pretentious, most true nature courses you'll discover anywhere, a place with a head pro (Butch Kelly) who looks like the self-made golf lifer he is, and would be the first to crack a joke about his own laid-back garb.

This range of golf courses and personalities is what any real golf trail needs. One day you're eating fancy, eclectic seafood dishes in a happening downtown restaurant, the next you're out in the middle of the ocean in a tiny boat, trying to catch your own fish.

Sometimes the best trail's not even a trail. [The Alabama Gulf Shores](#) boasts nine good courses, miles of white sugar sand beaches and a bevy of babes from places like Ole Miss (most Miss Americas produced in the country), yet it stays away from any trail mumbo-jumbo.

In golf, it's best to just be authentic - trail and otherwise.