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BEST OF...



Vancouver Island's Awesome 18

by Andrew Penner

On Vancouver Island, given the rugged beauty of North America's number one island destination for six years running, there are plenty of spectacular holes. Holes that will take your breath away. Holes that will get your spine tingling and your jaw dropping. Here is our list of the top 18 holes on Vancouver Island. (And, for everyone smitten with the idea of "rankings," this is in no particular order!)

1. Bear Mountain #13, 488 yards, par 4

This colossal cruiser epitomizes the tough, demanding nature of this spectacular Nicklaus layout. Sure, the downhill 5th might be a tad more scenic, but this waterside beauty, which screams "power fade" off the tee, is more unique. A rock wall, an aiming bunker, leaning firs, a lake, a wildly contoured green... come on, what more could you want? [Bear Mountain Golf Resort Properties](#)

2. Victoria Golf Club #7, 369 yards, par 4

Skirting the water-worn rocks along the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the 369-yard par-4 7th, which is named

"Mount Baker" in honour of the impressive backdrop, at the famed Victoria Golf Club is simply sublime. Gorgeous, graceful, and potentially lethal, the 7th is capped with a vicious green that Ben Hogan called one of the most difficult he had ever encountered. [Victoria Golf Club](#)

3. Morningstar #7, 464 yards, par 4

Throughout the 1990s this long, nasty par-4 left numerous Canadian Tour players beat up and licking their wounds on their quest to secure a playing card. At 464 yards from the tips, it's got plenty of length. But the trio of bunkers on the left and dense woods on the right is what really knots the knickers. [Morningstar Golf Course](#)

4. Storey Creek #16, 408 yards, par 4

Storey Creek, with its appealing away-from-it-all aura, has many holes that belong on the highlight reel. But perhaps no hole better sums up Storey Creek's many charms than the 16th. Isolated, tree-lined, and extremely ticklish, this downhill 408-yarder, which features a ball-devouring creek protecting the front of the green, is always a treat to play. [Storey Creek Golf Club](#)

5. Storey Creek #17, 183 yards, par 3

Towering fir trees that hang over the green and an intimidating rock wall defending the front and right side of the green give this hole a powerful sense of place. Beautiful, serene, and, ultimately, dangerous, the amphitheatre-like setting at this sweet, 183-yard par-3 makes it the truly great hole that it is. Just hit it on and enjoy the pretty little walk to the green. [Storey Creek Golf Club](#)

6. Olympic View #17, 417 yards, par 4

Famous for the majestic 60-foot waterfall that cascades behind the green, the 17th at Olympic View is more than just a picture-perfect postcard hole. This 400-plus yarder requires a couple of fearless shots to set up a run at birdie. And when that's accomplished, the final gaze at the tumbling water and Japanese Garden is that much sweeter. [Olympic View Golf Club](#)



Story Creek Golf Club

7. Royal Colwood #16, 385 yards, par 4

Dubbed "Cathedral," the par-4 16th at Royal Colwood is a one-of-a-kind hole, something that could not be replicated just anywhere. Massive—and I mean massive—heritage fir trees line a lush but rather claustrophobic playing channel. This is the epitome of "tree-lined." But, trust me, claustrophobia will never feel so good. [Royal Colwood Golf Club](#)

8. Victoria Golf Club #5, 324 yards, par 4

Dubbed "The Bay," you'll have to go a long way to find a par-4 as fun as this one. In fact, this little charmer is undoubtedly one of the greatest short par-4s in North America. The tee shot MUST soar over the bay to set up the dicy approach to the severely sloping perched green. Go for the green off the tee? Only if you're John Daly on steroids. [Victoria Golf Club](#)

9. Royal Colwood #11, 236 yards, par 3

A long, demanding par-3 with a green framed with bunkers and sitting snug in a cauldron of flowers and giant fir trees, the 11th at Colwood is a 93-year-old relic that has brilliantly stood the test of time. When A.V. Macan designed it in 1913 it must have been brutal. Now, even with today's equipment, it's just really tough. The ideal tee shot is a strong draw that skirts the guarding bunkers and one-hops near the stick. But, at 236 yards from the back tee, good luck. [Royal Colwood Golf Club](#)

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10. Bear Mountain #11, 152 yards, par 3

This awesome replica of the famous island-green 17th at the TPC Sawgrass is Nicklaus' tribute to the diabolical Dye. Pete, that is. Although this is the biggest green on the course, your numb-fingered clunker off the hosel just ain't gonna cut it here. Fish out another ball and try again. [Bear Mountain Golf Resort Properties](#)

11. Bear Mountain #19, 141 yards, par 3

Hanging on a rocky finger of land between the 14th and 15th holes at Bear Mountain, this "extra" hole, "gambling" hole, "tie-breaker" hole, or whatever you want to call it, has the most precarious setting for a hole on the Island. Only a hardened fool would trudge straight to the 15th tee and miss out on the fun. [Bear Mountain Golf Resort Properties](#)



12. Arbutus Ridge #17, 214 yards, par 3

At 214 yards from the back tee, this water-laced terror is about as mean a hole as you'll find on the island. Pop it up... you're wet. Hit it thin... you're wet. Pull it... you're wetter. Slice it... well, we don't want to go there. Close your eyes, say a prayer, and hit a good one. [Arbutus Ridge Golf Club](#)

13. Pheasant Glen #17, 427 yards, par 4

Rising star Pheasant Glen is, to those who play it for the first time, a very "pheasant" surprise. Lame jokes aside, the new holes that comprise the finishing run (par 5, par 4, par 5) make for a memorable dash to the clubhouse on the hill. The 17th, a 427-yard man-maker, has it all. A bold tee shot challenges the bunkers on the right and sets up a tough approach to a peninsula green. If you miss, miss short. [Pheasant Glen Golf Resort](#)

14. Morningstar #9, 538 yards, par 5

Before playing the 9th at Morningstar—a long, sweeping, par-5 with trouble everywhere—you've got to take a look at what's overhead. Suspended on spindly branches 100 feet directly above the tee is an eagle's nest. If you're lucky, you'll catch a glimpse of Mom watching out for the little ones—unless you want to get your eyes pecked out, don't try climbing the tree. A double-dogleg peppered with water hazards and complete with a crazy go-for-broke option from the tee, the 9th is about as memorable as holes get. [Morningstar Golf Course](#)

15. Cordova Bay #17, 183 yards, par 3

Don't let all that wet stuff in front of the green play with your mind. Just pure that mid-iron into the soft, velvety green, sink the putt, and chalk down your deuce. Easier said than done on this, one of the most intimidating holes you'll play on the island. On busy days over 100 balls will go "sploosh" in the giant lake fronting the green. [Cordova Bay Golf Course](#)

16. Gorge Vale #8, 601 yards, par 5

At 601 yards from the back tee, the par-5 8th at Gorge Vale is certainly a three-shotter for mortals. However, in summer big hitters can smash one down the hill and potentially get to the green in two. However, an attempt that's mis-hit can catch the lake short of the green. As pretty as it is intimidating, this par-5 on the popular Gorge Vale layout is definitely one for the postcard. [Gorge Vale Golf Course](#)

17. Duncan Meadows #17, 491 yards, par 5

The 491-yard 17th at Duncan Meadows has ruined many a scorecard. In order to get through it unscathed, all you have to do is avoid the devilish creek and daunting forest off the tee, catch your lay-up on the bolts, hit a laser-straight short-iron into the green, and stroke a couple of nimble-fingered putts. No biggie. [Duncan Meadows Golf & Country Club](#)



18. Crown Isle #18, 423 yards, par 4

Crown Isle's stellar route concludes with a big, mean, dogleg left par-4 that can break your heart with one shaky swat. The courageous will try and blast one over the bunkers on the left to set up a short-iron approach. The meek and mannerly will play safe to the wider right side. If you take an extra club on the approach you've got a chance to get it back to the hole on the massive, undulating green. [Crown Isle Resort & Golf Community](#)

Andrew Penner is a freelance writer based in Calgary, Alberta. Golf Vancouver Island (<http://www.golfvancouverisland.ca>)



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