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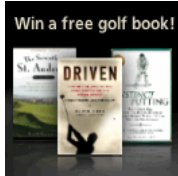
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British Columbia's top golf courses offer jaw-dropping signature holes

By [Andrew Penner](#), Contributor | Monday April 27, 2009

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VICTORIA, B.C. - Take a swing through British Columbia and you'll encounter a host of stunning, photo-friendly golf holes.

In fact, BC's signature holes are some of the best in golf: from dramatic, cliff-top beauties to riverside gems that curl along glacier-fed waters, the province has it covered when "wow" holes are your game. Here's a sampling of BC's best.

No. 8 at Tobiano

Situated high on an exposed bench overlooking Kamloops Lake in the Thompson Okanagan, **Tobiano**, *Golf Digest's* Best New Canadian Course for 2008, is awe-inspiring from start to finish. Here, unrestricted lake and mountain views are yours every second of the round.

There could be a number of candidates for "signature hole" on this Thomas McBroom design. The par-4 fifth, for example, is a creation that careens through a steep, cliff-lined ravine that's the perfect size for a golf hole. However, the eighth, a par-5 that starts with a bang (from the tee, you've got clear a huge chasm) then darts and dives high above the shoreline, takes the cake. The tee shot is certainly a doozy, but surveying the scene from the landing area is simply sublime.

"The eighth at Tobiano is a hole I'm very proud of," McBroom said. "Visually, it's quite a feast. But I'm really happy with how it plays, too. Once you get a feel for it, you realize there are certain angles of attack and strategies that work best on every shot."

No. 8 at Fairmont Chateau Whistler

When it first opened in 1993, the **Fairmont Chateau Whistler Golf Club** turned plenty of heads. Wild elevation changes, spirited mountain streams that flow throughout, the alpine atmosphere, the engaging route; it all made for an edge-of-your-seat mountain golf adventure. Now, over 15 years later, little has changed. People still leave wowed by the experience. And one of the most memorable moments happens on the par-3 eighth.

The slender green on the 184-yard hole sits snug between a rugged wall of rock on the right and a pond and bunker on the left. The perfect shot is squeezed between these dominant features, but given the nature of the hazards, a lot can happen. In spring, when flowers adorn the slopes beside the tee and the mountains high above are draped with fresh snow, it doesn't really matter what you score here.

No. 6 at Greywolf Golf Course



When scouting the terrain for **Greywolf Golf Course** at Panorama Mountain Village in the Kootenay Rockies, architect Doug Carrick's jaw dropped when he first saw the potential green site that would



Courtesy of tobiano.com

"Visually, it's quite a feast," course designer Thomas McBroom says of the eighth hole at Tobiano.

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become the infamous "Cliffhanger" hole.

"I knew instantly I would route the entire golf course around that specific hole," Carrick said. "It was one of those once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to build a golf hole in a setting like that."

The hole, which plays anywhere from 142 to 200 yards long, is made more difficult by the swirling winds that can whip through Toby Creek Valley. Also, while the green is fairly generous, there's no bailout area. Unless you're fortunate enough to catch one of the two bunkers to the right, a poorly struck shot will meet its doom at the bottom of the cliff.

No. 19 at Bear Mountain Resort

Okay, granted, the popular gambling hole at [Vancouver Island's Bear Mountain](#) isn't part of the official route. But all those who partake will tell you this: it's a fun way to tack on a few side bets and absorb one of the finest views in the province; the city of Victoria, the Olympic Mountains, and acres of lush forest. Of course, the hole is pretty darn cool in its own right.

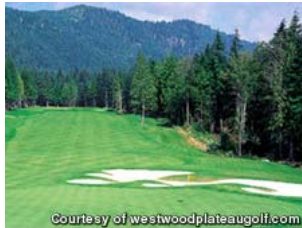
Here, the tiny green clings to the mountainside and only accepts a laser-straight, soft-landing short-iron shot. Right is bye-bye and left needs a miracle. Long or short is instant carnage.

Interestingly, this hole was not originally seen by designer Jack Nicklaus and, consequently, was built as an encore after the fact. Jack, we applaud.



Courtesy Bear Mountain Resort
On the 19th hole at Bear Mountain golf course, right is bye-bye and left needs a miracle.

No. 17 at Westwood Plateau



Courtesy of westwoodplateaugolf.com
To have any hope on the 17th at Westwood Plateau, you've just got to avoid the deep greenside bunker, Michael Hurzdan warns.

The 17th hole at **Westwood Plateau** is one memorable downhill cruiser; a par 5 that epitomizes what golf in British Columbia is all about. For starters, the 501-yard straight-away hole aims you at the snow-domed peak of Mt. Baker. The lush fairway, situated near Vancouver, is lined with towering Douglas Firs and contains numerous natural humps and bumps to negotiate. If you can hit a decent tee shot, you can definitely entertain the idea of going for the green in two.

"You've just got to avoid the deep greenside bunker," architect Michael Hurzdan said. "We wanted to create a lasting memory for golfers coming down the final stretch. Starting with the glorious view of Mt. Baker from the tee, I believe we did that."

Five worth mentioning

The par-4 fifth at Kokanee Springs Golf Resort, Crawford Bay, Kootenay Rockies. Dubbed "Poop Deck," this long and lovely creek-side hole is anything but a stinker.

The par-4 17th at The Rise, Vernon, Thompson Okanagan. Hit a "Boomer" off the tee (designer Fred Couples would be proud) and let the soaring Okanagan view sooth your senses.

The par-3 15th at Talking Rock, Chase, Thompson Okanagan. A downhill par-3 with a classic BC backdrop: lakes, mountains, and unspoiled coniferous forest.

The par-4 17th at Olympic View Golf Club, Victoria. A par 4 with a green framed by a 40-foot waterfall.

The par-3 17th at Nicklaus North, [Whistler](#). Strong par 3 situated on the shores of a picturesque, glacier-fed lake.

Any opinions expressed above are those of the writer and do not necessarily represent the views of the management. The information in this story was accurate at the time of publication. All contact information, directions and prices should be confirmed directly with the golf course or resort before making [reservations](#) and/or travel plans.



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