

tee is for *terrific*

BC'S GOLF COURSES

written by TRACEY RAYSON

Legendary Bob Hope was an avid golfer who had his own view of the sport that some players just love to hate: “If you watch a game, it’s fun; if you play at it, it’s recreation; if you work at it, it’s golf.” The humour he found in the game was infectious and he once remarked that President Dwight D. Eisenhower gave up golf for painting — “fewer strokes you know.” He even played with the greatest golfer of our time in 1978, putting against a then two-year-old Tiger Woods in a TV appearance on The Mike Douglas Show.



LIKE HOPE, YOU MAY NOT BE A GOLF CHAMPION — but rather a great champion of golf. So regardless of your handicap, whether you’re perfecting your swing on the driving range or finding humour in your double bogey, there is a lot to smile about if you’re teeing up this year. We’ve done the leg work for you and uncovered what’s hot on the links throughout BC. If you’re looking for variety and a place to take your game on the road, read on for a slice of some of the finest fairways, new courses, packages and getaways in the Okanagan, Vancouver Island and Kootenay Rockies.

THOMPSON OKANAGAN

The International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO) named the province of BC the “2007 Best Golf Destination in North America” and it’s no secret the Okanagan plays a large role in that distinction. Pocket destinations such as the South Okanagan provide world-class golf experiences for short-term weekend jaunts or longer stays. Neighbouring regions such as the central and north Okanagan allow for exciting golf circuits. “The golf scene in the Thompson Okanagan continues to grow with the recent addition of a number new courses that link to form a unique trail,” says Miles Prodan, executive director of Thompson Okanagan Tourism.

Each course offers its own signature of challenge and reward. With over 50 courses located in vastly different geographical settings in the Okanagan and Shuswap, the extended golf season (consistently March through November but sometimes February) and the reliable sunny climate are only two among many reasons golfers are drawn to this region. The sheer diversity (courses meander through orchards, rolling hills, desert terrain and past expansive canyons and lakes) make for some of the most dramatic natural features course architects take advantage of to enhance their designs. Courses designed by internationally-renowned architects like Les Furber, Michael Hurdzan, Robert Trent Jones Senior and Fred Couples, provide an exceptional golf experience.





MAIN PICTURE ON PG XX
Arbutus Ridge's signature 17th hole, Vancouver Island.
Photo | golfvancouverisland.ca

PICTURED ON PG XX
Predator Ridge hosted 2008 TELUS World Skins Game, Vernon.
Photo | Predator Ridge Golf Course.

PICTURED LEFT
Trickle Creek, Kimberley
Photo | KootenayRockies.com

PICTURED BELOW
First BC course Tiger Woods played as an amateur, Vancouver Island. Photo | Olympic View Golf Club.

PICTURED RIGHT BOTTOM
Tower Ranch, Kelowna.

VANCOUVER ISLAND

For every region on the Island there is a course with an unbeatable combination of challenge and beauty: the North, Central, Pacific, Cowichan and the South Island will lead you to wilderness, sparkling beaches, and seaside villages with many coveted club-swinging, flagstick seeking opportunities concentrated along the 250 kilometre golf trail, a full Island tour from Victoria to Campbell River.

The Vancouver Island Golf Trail can be best explored with the ultimate vacation package — a six-night, six-round golf extravaganza. This amazing golf holiday is priced so affordable that *Golf Magazine* described it as “one of the continent’s best values.” Vancouver Island is ranked repeatedly as the ‘Top North American Island’ by *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine, with picture postcard links worthy of jaw-dropping status. From the exquisiteness of Bear Mountain Resort and Olympic View Golf Club (the first golf course in BC that Tiger Woods played as an amateur in 1994) in the South, to the opulence and luxury of Crown Isle Resort in the North, the grand scenery is matched

only by their playability.

Crown Isle Resort near Courtenay resides at the foot of Vancouver Island’s Beaufort Mountains, home to the Comox Glacier. With challenging water hazards and substantial bunkers, along with an award-winning clubhouse, golfers here are in for a memorable day.

“It is a very exciting year on the Vancouver Island Golf Trail and for golf in British Columbia, with the opening of the new Bear Mountain Resort Valley Course on May 31st, positioning Bear Mountain Resort as the first and only 36-hole Nicklaus designed golf facility in Canada,” says Trisha Larsen, director of marketing, Golf Vancouver Island. Golfers are invited to be one of the first to play the Bear Mountain Valley Course during their grand opening on May 31st, or they can play it in a tournament format at the inaugural Vancouver Island Golf Trail Open Tournament on August 8th.

“Golfers considering a weekend getaway or longer golf vacation need to have Vancouver Island on the radar for 2009,” says Jason Lowe, general manager, Arbutus Ridge Golf Club. “The Westin

“Kelowna has blossomed into a true golfer’s destination in recent years,” says Nancy Cameron CEO of Tourism Kelowna. “People are always surprised to hear that there are now 15 premium golf courses in this area that offer every level of golf from forgiving to worthy of bragging rights. We’re also fortunate to enjoy one of Canada’s longest and driest golf seasons, so golfers are drawn to Kelowna for that reason, too.”

A boom of new courses in this region continue to set the bar, including the highly-acclaimed Tobiano named “Best New Canadian Course” in 2008 by *Golf Digest*. “From Tobiano just outside Kamloops along Highway #1 through the Shuswap to Vernon and down the Okanagan valley to Osoyoos, there is a course to suit everyone’s game,” admits Prodan. “And for those not as interested in the game as their travel partners, there’s always wine touring, shopping or just sitting by the lake.” In Vernon, test your abilities at The Rise, a recently opened Fred Couples Signature Golf Course overlooking the northwest and northeast arms of Okanagan Lake, with 12 of the 18 holes featuring dramatic lake views. More historic clubs, like the Salmon Arm Golf Club was established in 1928 and its links-style layout — located at the base of an extinct volcano — was ranked among the top 50 courses in Canada by *SCOREGolf* magazine (2008).

Standout premium courses continue to make an impressive scorecard of accolades for the region. “Kelowna’s been named ‘Best Canadian Golf City’ by *SCOREGolf* magazine in 2007; Tower Ranch Golf Club received the only Canadian distinction on *Travel + Leisure*’s top 10 list for ‘Best New Golf Courses for



2008’ and the Telus Skins Game was hosted at Predator Ridge Golf Resort just north of Kelowna last summer,” says Cameron. “These are significant accolades for our golf courses, and they add to the depth and variety of the golf experience here. Not to mention the après-golf activities, which can include water sports, winery or brewery tours, fine dining, hiking, or even the adrenalin of mountain biking.”

In the South-Central Interior, meet for a round at one of three new Kamloops’ courses: Talking Rock, Canoe Creek or Tobiano (named Best New Course in Canada by *SCOREGolf* magazine for 2008). With 2,000 hours of sunshine annually, you’re almost guaranteed a sunny tee time at any one of their 13 remarkable courses.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:

THOMPSON OKANAGAN TOURISM
www.totabc.org

TOURISM KELOWNA
www.tourismkelowna.ca

TOURISM KAMLOOPS
www.tourismkamloops.com

GOLF VANCOUVER ISLAND
www.golfvancouverisland.ca

KOOTENAY ROCKIES TOURISM
www.kootenayrockies.com
and www.kootenaygolftrail.com

GOLF WHISTLER
www.golfwhistler.com

TOURISM BC
www.hellobc.com

Bear Mountain Resort is opening their second 18-hole course this year, the Valley Course. It is a must play and compliments the Mountain course nicely.”

The Jack and Steve Nicklaus co-designed Westin Bear Mountain Victoria Golf Resort is at the top of the leader board as courses go. 360-degree views of the Olympic and Cascade Mountains, and Juan de Fuca Strait greet golfers at the 19th hole. A nod to its outstanding play, the course was voted #63 in *Condé Nast Traveler’s Golf Poll 2008*, which ranks the top 100 courses worldwide.

Voted the Best Destination Golf Course in British Columbia by *Golf Nerve Magazine* in 2006, Arbutus Ridge Golf Club showcases ocean and neighbouring island views, a challenging signature 17th hole (“pop it up...you’re wet; hit it thin...you’re wet; pull it...you’re wetter”) as well as the Cowichan Valley, its fertile, wine country neighbour, making it one among many Island golf hotspots.

“Golfers coming to the island can choose a short getaway in one of the four distinct regions, or better yet combine a few of the regions to complete the Vancouver Island Golf Trail,” says Lowe. “Save some time and money by booking through a central reservations agency that the owners of the golf courses have set up to make travelling easy and check out the new online real-time booking option at www.golfvancouverisland.ca.”

KOOTENAY ROCKIES

World-class golf is no secret in the Kootenay Rockies. Kimberley’s Trickle Creek Golf Resort has been named one of the top 10 courses in Canada providing magnificent views and challenging greens; Kimberley Golf Club is one of the most established golf courses in the BC Rockies and the challenging Les Furber designed Bootleg Gap Golf Course in Balfour has a mix of wide-open driving holes and narrow-cut, tree-lined

fairways; there’s Greywolf Golf Course at Panorama, and in Fernie, the new Greg Norman Signature Course at Blackstone Resort, and currently in design by DMK Golf Design, the Fernie Golf Resort, just to name a few.

“The Kootenay Rockies, home to over 25 championship courses, is poised for another tremendous golf season in 2009,” says Kathy Cooper, manager, travel trade and media relations, Kootenay Rockies Tourism. “This is a true mountain golf destination that is full of hidden gems.”

“The Kootenay Rockies region is anticipating the opening of Shadow Mountain golf course on July 1, 2009,” says Heidi Korven, regional media relations representative for Kootenay Rockies Tourism. “Positioned to attract local and international players, the course is conveniently situated three minutes from the Canadian Rockies International Airport in Cranbrook, BC.”

Wildstone, Cranbrook’s master-planned community, brings 36 holes of world-class golf envisioned and created by Gary Player Design. The Black Knight and Gary Player Designed Golf Courses each measure over 7,000 yards and creates great tournament and event opportunities unavailable anywhere else in the Canadian Rockies; Gary Player Signature Course will push for a completion date for fall 2009 or spring 2010.

Redstone Golf Resort has teamed up with Les Furber to turn the existing historic front nine into a championship 18, which opened in 2008. Redstone is part of the newly formed “Kootenay Golf Trail,” a collection of eight courses located in the West Kootenay region. Together with several of the major accommodators in the region the eight courses that make up the Kootenay Golf Trail have created a Golf Trail Passport.

Stamps on the passport add up to prizes and opportunities for free golf and free stays, as well as golf balls, hats and more.

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