

Golf

BRITISH COLUMBIA

The **GENUINE** Article

What you see is
exactly what you get
at **Arbutus Ridge**

Located in the seaside community of Cobble Hill amongst nine of Vancouver Island's finest wineries and 10 minutes from the cultural city of Duncan, Arbutus Ridge spreads itself before earth and sky unashamedly, as if to say 'Well, what can I say. Here I am'. ▶▶▶

ARBUTUS RIDGE

The terrifically scenic 40 minute drive from Victoria or Nanaimo does a little bit to prepare you for the natural charm of this country setting. Arbutus Ridge is aptly named for the characteristic Arbutus trees that surround the Bill Robinson-designed championship course.

The Arbutus Ridge Golf Club was voted the "Best Destination Golf Course in British Columbia" by in 2006. Etched in your memory, and probably on your scorecard, will be three of the most demanding finishing holes on Vancouver Island, highlighted by the knee-knocking 214-yard par-3 island green on the 17th hole. Signature hole? Well, yes.

After finishing, head straight to the Satellite Bar & Grille and enjoy BC's most scenic patio overlooking the 18th hole. The handsome glass-fronted clubhouse juts over a hill, looking out to the Satellite Channel and offers a combination of mountain and ocean views.

If it's your golf game that you need help with, consider a golf school, golf clinic, or private lesson at the GBC Golf Academy. Arbutus Ridge boasts a full-featured practice facility with five target greens and two short game areas. The instructional team has a long list of awards and distinctions, with Edd Boudreau, the Director of Instruction, winning the 2003 Canadian Assistants Championship and 2006 BCPGA Championship.

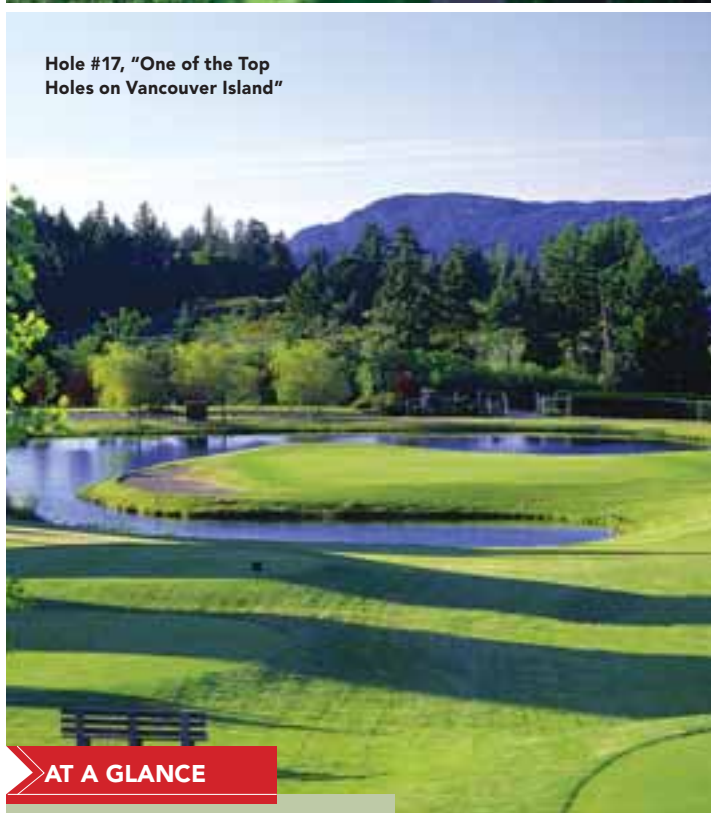
Arbutus Ridge specializes in the players' short game, with one of the short game practice areas being over a 100 yards in length. Golfers of all levels have found our GBC Academy Instructors professional, experienced, friendly and very informative. The GBC Golf Academy has proven to be BC's most advanced teaching facility.

The course is active with the Audubon Society and has formed a Greening Committee to preserve and protect the environment.

Arbutus Ridge is known for offering the best vistas on Vancouver Island and friendly, genuine service. It opened in 1987 and is owned and operated by the GolfBC Group.



Hole #17, "One of the Top Holes on Vancouver Island"



AT A GLANCE

ARBUTUS RIDGE GOLF CLUB

3515 Telegraph Road
Cobble Hill, BC V0R 1L4
800-446-5322, www.golfbc.com

Yardage/Rating/Slope

Blue tees
6,193 yards - 70.3 /125
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5,834 yards- 68.6/124
Red tees
5,535 yards - 72.3/125 (Women)

Green fees
\$45-\$59; Twilight \$32-\$39

HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Host of the Canadian Junior Girls Championship, 2005**
- **Golf Course of the Year, golfcoursereports.com, 2004**
- **Host of the BC Junior Girls Championship, 2003 & 2004**

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Playground to Fairway



Kris Jonasson
BCGA
Executive Director

Strategically, both the BCGA and the RCGA are moving toward a model where the efforts that we make in player development will fall into two categories. The most visible area is the elite programs and one need only look at the PPGA Player of the Year awards to see if there is any impact.

Critically, the most important area may be the grassroots program started today which will determine how popular golf becomes a decade or more into the future. The key to this long term initiative is the development of a school program that introduces golf at the primary level and then nurtures it through middle and high school. Crucial to the success of this program will be making golf fun and allowing kids



to have immediate success.

The reputation of the sport is a huge selling point to educators, as they are very interested in introducing a sport that not only promotes healthy activities but also teaches the life skills that golf instills. Honesty, respect, perseverance are just a few of these skills, and they are critical skills for children to learn.

The program will use SNAG as the primary teaching aid and this should address the issues of making golf fun and providing immediate success. SNAG is an



Three BCGA staff and six PGA Professionals attended the first ever SNAG workshop of the BCGA School Golf Program, the first of its kind in all of Canada.

acronym for "Start New at Golf", and is both age and developmentally appropriate. Most importantly it is safe, fun and can be used indoors and outdoors.

SNAG also addresses the issue of accessibility, as it provides a method to transition children from playground to fairway by providing a method of skill development that plays like a game, but can be assembled and disassembled in any

type of playing field or gymnasium. This would allow for golf to be transitioned from the school yard, to the local community and recreation center, and finally to the fairways.

The vision is simple. Create a program that moves golf from "Playground to Fairway". That part has been done and we will now be asking our members to help make the vision a reality.



BRITISH COLUMBIA GOLF ASSOCIATION



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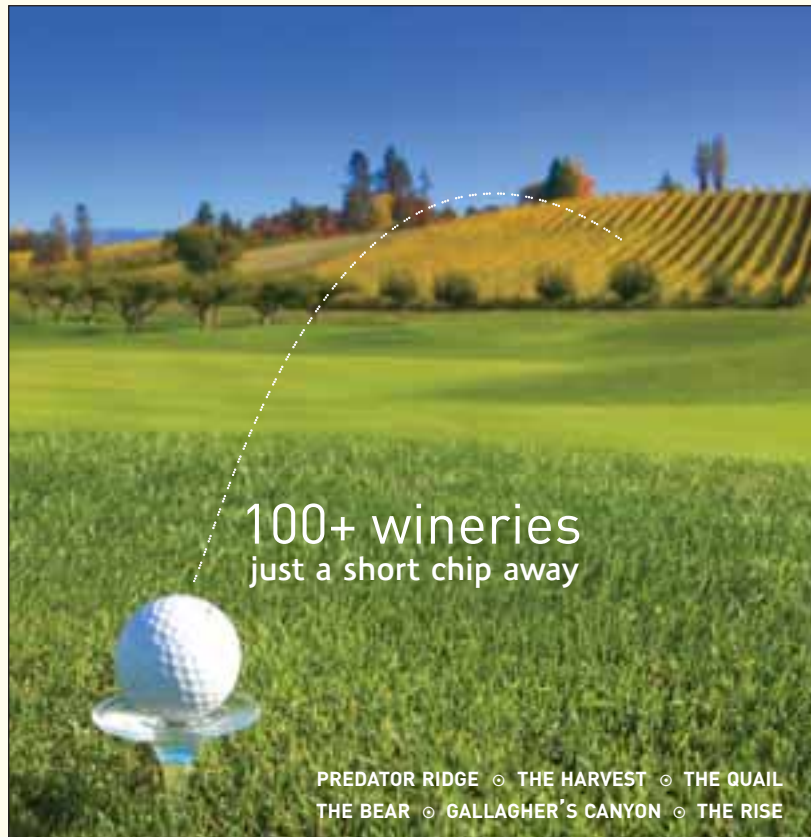
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Cliffs over Maple Bay

Isle of Dreams

Doing it right in the west by Paul Ramsdell

When someone wants to sell a store full of appliances, you'll hear that old sales pitch, "Get 'em while they're HOT! HOT! HOT!"

In the golf travel destination business, the best deals usually are when you find places just before they get too "HOT! HOT! HOT!"

Welcome to Vancouver Island, and more specifically the West Shore region near Victoria and the nearby Cowichan Valley.

"I think people are looking for new, unique experiences rather than something that's been exploited," said Jason Lowe, the general manager at Arbutus Ridge Golf and Country Club, located in the Cowichan Valley town of Cobble Hill. "The Cowichan has not been exploited. It's the up-

and-comer."

But it's building up, and a lot of people are starting to come and see it.

"For anyone looking to go to a destination before it gets big, they'll really enjoy the charm of it right now," Lowe said. In the Cowichan Valley, the newcomer will be The Cliffs over Maple Bay, with a course designed by Greg Norman expected to open later this year in Duncan.

In the West Shore area of Victoria, 20 minutes west from downtown, the Valley Course, the second 18-hole layout at the vast Bear Mountain resort community,

is scheduled to be ready this year. Under construction elsewhere in the West Shore area is Highland Pacific, an 18-hole layout in Royal View that's long been the dream of the Plasterer family that has owned the property.

And smack dab in the middle of the West Shore, directly between Bear Mountain and the Olympic View Golf Course, is the new Four Points by Sheraton Victoria Gateway, which is scheduled to open its 119 hotel rooms March 31.

"As a golf destination, we're definitely growing in awareness and stature," Lowe said.

There's one common dominator in all this, according to Steve Howe, the director of business development at Bear Mountain.

"Vancouver Island specifically is a very, very dramatic backdrop, and people fall in love with it when they come here," Howe said.

In the Cowichan Valley, which lies just another 20 minutes past West Shore out of Victoria, the drawing cards beside golf include wine and tremendous

scenery. Arbutus Ridge is surrounded by nine different wineries, and its restaurant, the Satellite Bar and Grille, takes full advantage of being in the middle of the most prolific agricultural area on the Island with its diverse menu.

"The Satellite Bar and Grille is all based on views, because we've got our tag of "BC's most scenic patio", and we overlook Salt Spring Island and the Satellite Channel," Lowe said.

"Arbutus Ridge sits right on this hill and we can see the ocean, the mountains and the countryside all in the background," Lowe said.

But mistreating that situation is the last thing Lowe and his team want to do.

"The one thing which is really important to us, and central to our beliefs, is doing as much as we can for the environment," Lowe said.

Arbutus Ridge and Olympic View, both GolfBC facilities, are both active in the Audubon Society, Lowe said.

Beside that, Lowe's staff at Arbutus Ridge is looking at



Bear Mountain's 14th hole.

"Vancouver Island specifically is a very, very dramatic backdrop, and people fall in love with it when they come here," Howe said.

Greener golf on Vancouver Island



A few courses on the island are teeing up with one of the most influential initiatives in the sport, the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program which, among other things, equips golf courses with the necessary tools to develop effective conservation and wildlife enhancement programs.

Recently, three island courses – Bear Mountain Golf & Country Club, Olympic View Golf Club (both in Victoria), and Crown Isle Golf Club in the Comox Valley – completed various phases in the Audubon program or initiated new steps in following the standards of the earth-friendly cooperative.

Visit www.audubonintl.org for a complete list of cooperating courses.

various "green" projects such as creating alternative energy and water conservation.

"Doing these things directly aligns with the values and beliefs of the younger generation," Lowe said. "And they come to work and it's a more meaningful workplace."

A positive lasting impression also is key at Bear Mountain.

"We're leaving a legacy in the community and we want to make sure that legacy is a quality one and a well-thought one," Howe said of the residential development and resort destination, complete with a Westin hotel property, 156 hotel rooms, five restaurants and a 12,000 square-foot athletic facility. A new golf practice facility and a grocery store are in the works, as well as the finishing touches on a condominium complex.

Vancouver Island doesn't stop with just Victoria and the Cowichan Valley. Farther up the Island out of Victoria is the Oceanside region just past Nanaimo, and then comes the North Country, where golf partnering up with fishing and enjoying the wildlife goes hand-in-hand just as well as wine and golf in the Cowichan Region.

"I went up north recently and on the drive home I saw 12 bears," Lowe said.

A new region will draw additional attention in the future when the course designed by Jack Nicklaus opens at the Wyndansea Resort on the west coast of the island in Ucluelet.

"The reality is people who live on the Island feel very fortunate because it is a beautiful place to live in every way," Howe said.

Paul Ramsdell is a former editor for ESPN.com and past editorial director of PPGA Publications. He currently is on the board of the Northwest Golf Media Association.

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Fear and wonder, ham and egg

Hi-tech meets high handicappers at the PGA Show

by Garth Rhys

The history of science and advanced technology is punctuated by 'eureka' moments, breakthroughs that advance the field of endeavor – through serendipity or mental gymnastics – by quantum leaps. The world of golf has evolved into that realm of high tech and now permanently resides there, however uncomfortably for some.

The game's great leaps forward too have been punctuated by discoveries in workshops and labs – feathery to gutta percha, hickory to steel, persimmon to metal, etc. – far more so than epiphanies dug out of the dirt.

As the courts decide just how much of the game-changing development of the Pro-V1 was pure inspiration and how much was patent infringement, the next paradigm shift has already taken place. But oddly, though there are so many truly odd aspects of the game of golf, this one was taken in lock step. It seems that the 'eureka' cry of the 2008 season occurred not in a research lab but in an echo chamber.

No sooner had the USGA and the R&A changed the rules to allow clubs to be adjusted beyond weights – remember the last great buzz over screw-in weights in driver heads -- than Callaway, TaylorMade and Nickent all arrived at the Orlando PGA Merchandise Show with driver heads designed to accommodate a variety of shafts.

Golfers have been changing shafts in their drivers for generations, but the 2008 models can be changed in a matter of minutes, seconds with practice. It is unquestionably golf's next great leap, on a scale of balata to solid core. But like most hi-tech innovations visited upon average players over the past few decades, ability to take advantage of the advancement will rest largely in the bank account.

"Our new I-MIX Technology gives

golfers the same access and ability to experiment and optimize their equipment that tour professionals have," Jeff Colton, Senior Vice President of Research and Development for Callaway Golf, explained.

"No one's swing is the same from day to day; neither are the weather or course conditions. Our I-MIX Technology gives everyone the ability to quickly and easily customize their equipment, every time they play."

Certainly the pros have that advantage, plus one more. Usually their equipment is supplied by a company like Callaway or Nickent. For the average player, the Aldila, Fujikura, and Mitsubishi Rayon shafts designed to fit the receptors in the FT5 and FTi Callaway heads can cost upwards of \$400. Nonetheless, the remarkable technology – the Callaway system uses a wrench-like device, the TaylorMade and Nickent a screw driver-like tool – gives the average player the same

advantage Tour players have long enjoyed.

That seems to be the theme of 2008.

Pros have caddies, so now there are a slew of hand-held yardage devices like SkyCaddie, ProShot, Garmin's Golflogix, SureShot and Sonocaddie, among others. These gadgets will tell players precisely how far their ball traveled before it entered the hazard. The ball they lost is now likely one perfectly fitted to their game, just like the pros. Bridgestone now offers a 'ball fitting' on a portable launch monitor. They have all the top brands on site and let players hit their favorites and then compare launch angle, spin rate, ball speed, trajectory, etc. with a Bridgestone ball.

Now that Titleist has been dinged for \$300 million and \$2 on every dozen Pro-V1s sold for infringement on Bridgestone patents (the Callaway suit should be settled soon), better players should not be surprised if the Tour B330-S Bridgestone ball is ideal for their game.

On the new ball front, the Callaway TOURi (like a reverse play on iPod) could make low handicappers forget all about patents and the Pro-V1. And TopFlite's new FREAK distance ball even tells you when and why to use it: "Tee box intimidation; bombing drives past the long hitters; scrambles- every scramble needs a Freak; reaching the long par-5s in two."

In 2008, that second shot will most likely be struck with a hybrid (or, as Nick Faldo insists on referring to them, a 'rescue club.')

TourEdge has a new line of truly superb clubs, Exotics – the Xtreme Spin wedges with variable (2, 4 and 6 grams) weighting inserts are outstanding – and their XCG Hybrids look as good as they feel and perform. Wilson is back with Open Champion Pdraig Harrington, but their new line of FYbrid clubs, incorporating more of the fairway metal feel and look to hybrids, are good enough to get the iconic brand back in average players' bags. Jesse Ortiz has created beautiful clubs for Bobby Jones and nor surprisingly Adams has hybrids that can change anyone's game. Surprisingly, the new Adams driver and three-metal are outstanding.

And while out on the course, more and more golfers every year are aware of potential sun damage and are protecting their eyes. As a result, the golf market is flooded with sunglass lines including high-enders Oakley, PeakVision and Maui Jim. Relative newcomers Callaway and Tifosi have joined the fray, but the definite star of the Orlando Show was Sundog Eyewear. Star power, combined with a fine product at reasonable prices, matters. Sundog has exclusive lines by Mike Weir and Hunter Mahan, but when Paula Creamer arrived to sign autographs and introduce her latest Sundog Paula Creamer Collection, she stole the show.

It's all great stuff, it's all hi-tech, and none of it explains why handicaps have not gone down appreciably since the days of persimmon and balata. Maybe one day, one of the guys in the lab coat will have a 'eureka' moment on that part of the game of golf.

Garth Rhys is our "man on the street", our "go-to-guy", at the forefront of all things golf, although nobody has ever actually seen the guy – we just get his expense reports.



Paula Creamer, No. 5 in the Women's World Rankings, signs a few autographs at the PGA Show in Orlando.