

ROCKY MOUNTAIN GOLF MAGAZINE

SPRING 2006

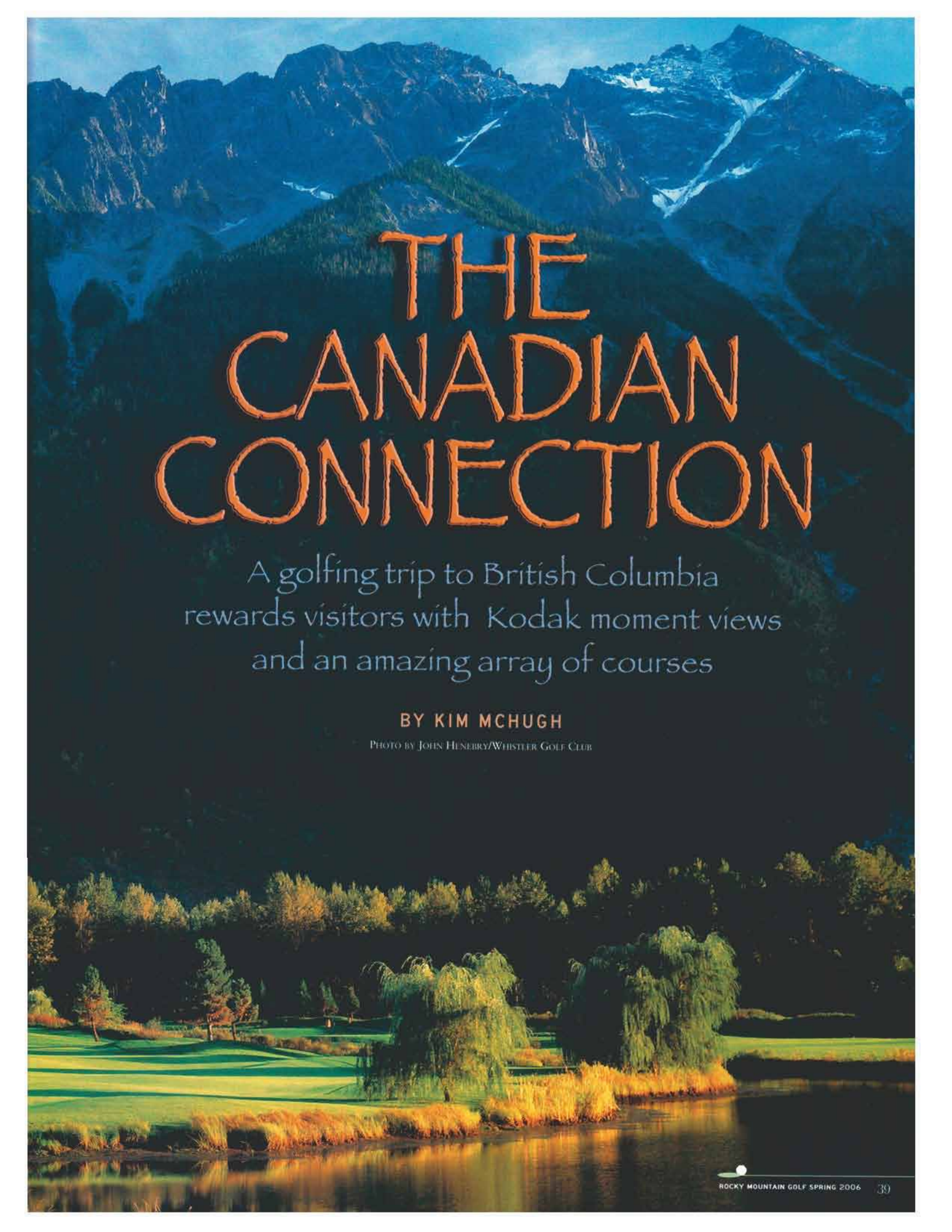
JUBILANT JUSTIN!

JUSTIN LEONARD SIGNATURES
HIS FIRST COURSE

HOT PLAY AT RED SKY
BRITISH COLUMBIA BECKONS
PARK CITY GOLF EXPLODES

PLUS: INFORMATION-PACKED
COLORADO ROCKIES' GOLF COURSE DIRECTORY

COMPLIMENTARY
COPY

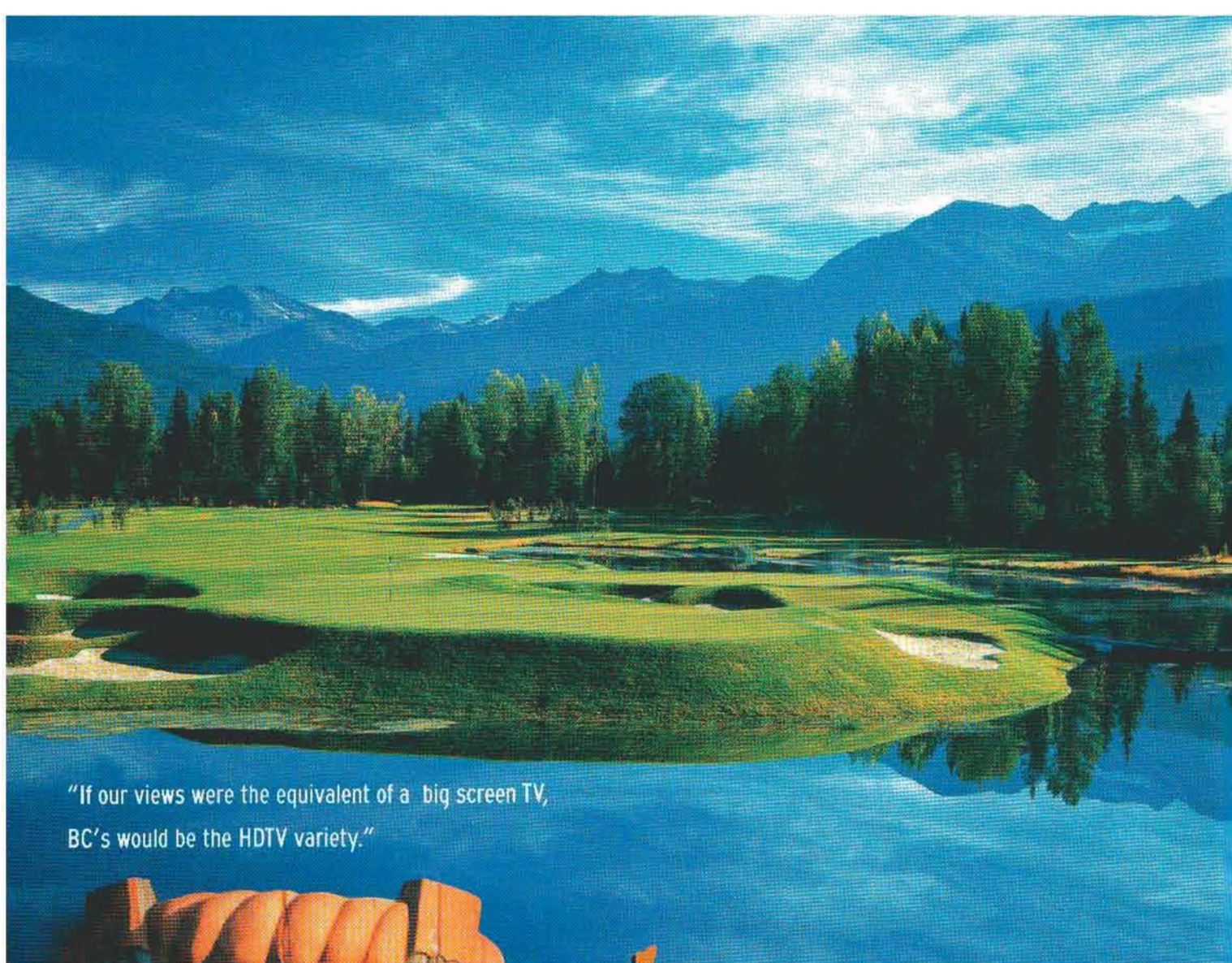


THE CANADIAN CONNECTION

A golfing trip to British Columbia
rewards visitors with Kodak moment views
and an amazing array of courses

BY KIM MCHUGH

PHOTO BY JOHN HENBRY/WHISTLER GOLF CLUB



"If our views were the equivalent of a big screen TV, BC's would be the HDTV variety."

In the movie *Chocolat*, a beautiful confectionary artist moves to a small town in France, opens a chocolate shop and begins creating her decadent treats.

Throughout the film even the mayor, a man hell bent on closing her down, ultimately succumbs to her irresistible confections.

The golf courses in British Columbia (BC) have the same effect. They are intoxicatingly beautiful and, like a box of chocolates, there are many to choose from in Canada's third largest province.

Of the 2,000 golf courses throughout Canada there are more than 250 in British Columbia. They are located generally in five regions: the British Columbia Rockies (Shuswap, Kelowna and the Okanagan), Kamloops and High Country, Victoria and Vancouver Island, and Vancouver.

British Columbia's climate creates conditions that make many of its courses playable nine months of the year, though the courses in and around Whistler/Blackcomb are covered in snow all winter.

Above: Hole 12 at Nicklaus North Golf Course is considered one of the most memorable and toughest holes in British Columbia. A steep crown has caused many shots to roll back into the water. Left: Signs of the area's colorful history are evident throughout the province. Opposite page (left): Overlooking Howe Sound, the Furry Creek course is as treacherous as it is beautiful; (right) The spectacular Olympic View course incorporates a dozen lakes, two waterfalls and a ton of sand traps into its design.

COURTESY OF TOURISM BRITISH COLUMBIA/ TOP IMAGE COURTESY OF NICKLAUS NORTH

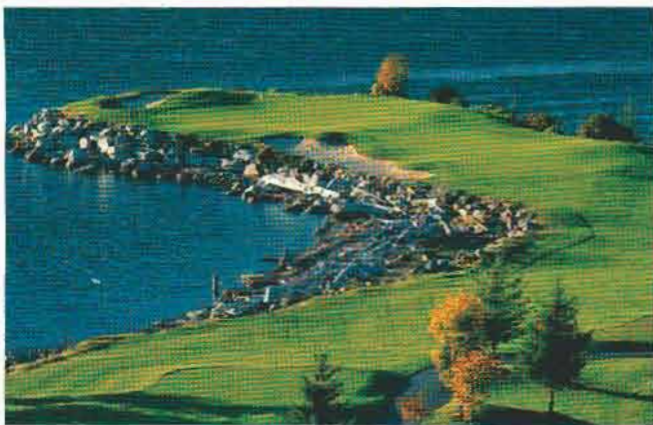
THE APPEAL

So what is the appeal to Colorado golfers? Plenty. Though similar to mountain layouts and weather conditions here at home, the scenery in British Columbia is mind-boggling.

If our views were the equivalent of a big screen TV, BC's would be the HDTV variety. One course, Furry Creek Golf and Country Club, overlooks Howe Sound, a spectacular body of water leading to the Pacific Ocean. Running from Vancouver to Squamish, Howe Sound, North America's southernmost fjord, is peppered with island clusters and mountains that poke out of the water. Another course, Big Sky Golf & Country Club, has a mountain range shooting 7,600 feet above sea level from its fairways.

Then there is the favorable currency exchange with a strong U.S. dollar buying more golf vacation than you can swing a 5-iron at.

There also is the colorful legacy of the Chilcotin, Haida, Nootka, Sekani, Shuswap and Tlingit, the country's First Nations peoples who first occupied BC, which became a province in 1871.



COURTESY OF FURRY CREEK

THE TOUR

Appropriately named the Sea to Sky Highway, this ribbon of road winds 68 miles starting at sea level at Horseshoe Bay just north of Vancouver and ending up at Whistler/Blackcomb, elevation 7,160 feet.

Also known as Highway 99, it takes driver along Howe Sound, through the small town of Squamish and past Garibaldi Provincial Park, home of the aforementioned mountain resorts.

On day one, golfers could find themselves about 30 minutes north of Whistler/Blackcomb is the Big Sky Golf & Country Club, a gem of a course in Pemberton. Nestled on the valley floor, the par 72 course, designed by Robert Cupp, plays 7,001 yards from the tips and 5,208 yards from the forward tees.

Shortly after it opened in 1994, it was named one of the Top 50 Courses in Canada, and with good reason. "In terms of a club you want to play day after day, this is a great example of that," says Dean Larsen, director of golf. "The subtleties of the design make it so great. It is a superior course for good players, but also a welcoming resort course."

Indeed it is. The layout has its fair share of water hazards and sand traps, but it isn't particularly penalizing. Fairways are generally wide and forgiving, yet the course has plenty of risk-reward holes. If players can stop gazing at Mount Currie long enough, they might just card a favorable score.

Hole 4 (named Purgatory) and Hole 9 (named Cayoosh) are two notable holes on the front nine. Both par 5s, Purgatory brings a stream into play three times, while Cayoosh has a pond running tee to green on the left side.

Number 11 (Cat Tail), is a tricky par 3 bordered by water tee to green on the left and Number 16 (Deep Breath) is a par 4 dogleg right doozy with water all along the right side.

Days two and three may see players teeing off on Whistler/Blackcomb's trio of fabulous courses: Chateau Whistler Golf Club, Nicklaus North Golf and Country Club and Whistler Golf Club.

Opened in 1985, Whistler Golf Club was Canada's first course designed by Arnold Palmer. Playing 6,676 yards from the back tees and 5,348 from the forward tees, it is a very player-friendly course with enough hazards to make a round interesting, but hardly punishing.

Similar to what golfers see playing in Aspen, Telluride and Vail, view corridors on this course include images of ski and



COURTESY OF CHATEAU WHISTLER



Courtesy of Tourism Victoria

When off the fairways, whale watching is one of the region's many popular attractions enjoyed by golfers and others. Opposite page bottom: Paddling through the Queen Charlotte Strait via sea kayak surrounded by spectacular scenery.

watching, float plane trips, zip line canopy tours and sea kayaking."

Two notable holes, 7 and 10, make this a course to remember. Seven, a par 4 playing 363 yards, has a hidden

stream dissecting the fairway about 280 yards away.

Named Bear Island, 10 is a dogleg left that is frequented by black bears. The par 4 plays 326 yards from the white tees and looks directly at Whistler Mountain. Four bunkers around the green make for a precise landing, but a bit of luck will earn a birdie.

When it is time to lay your head on the pillow, check in at the Westin Hotel and Spa Whistler. Its 419 suites provide generous comfort and are decked out with a Sub-Zero fridge, a Jenn-Air oven and Thermador stove.

One bite of the cuisine at the Aubergine Grille, however, and its likely guests won't do much cooking. Ditto if they sample the fare at Quattro, a quaint eatery in the village boasting contemporary Italian delights.

For tight muscles, get thee to the Avello Spa & Health Club. With more than 75 body and skin treatments, spa goers have a relaxing future.

Days four and five of the trip lead you to the Chateau Whistler and Nicklaus North courses.

snowboard trails, namely Whistler and Blackcomb. Forests with cedar and Douglas Firs towering 60 to 80 feet surround the course, and nine lakes join a pair of creeks in keeping players focused on shot making.

As with most BC courses, this one is hopping during summer, but traffic is light in the shoulder seasons. "After Labor Day, there's a marked difference in how quiet it becomes on the golf courses," says Breton Murphy, a spokesman for Tourism Whistler. "The fall is exceptional for golfers, but what makes British Columbia even more attractive are activities like whale

Where to Stay and Play

LODGING OPTIONS

Westin Resort & Spa/Whistler - 888-634-5577
www.westinwhistler.com

Four Seasons Hotel & Spa Whistler - 888-935-2460
www.fourseasons.com/whistler

Opus Hotel - 866-642-6787
www.opushotel.com

Laurel Point Inn - 800-663-7667
www.laurelpoint.com

The Fairmont Empress Hotel and Spa - 800-257-7544
www.fairmont.com/empress

WHAT TO DO

Flights to Whistler from Vancouver
www.whistlerair.ca

Flyfishing
www.whistlerflyfishing.com

Things to do in Vancouver
www.bcpassport.com



Westin Resort and Spa, Whistler

Courtesy of The Westin Resort & Spa

Designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr., the Chateau Whistler Golf Club plays 6,635 yards from the tips and 5,157 from the red tees. When it opened in 1993, it quickly caught the attention of Links magazine ("...mountain golf at its finest."), and *Golf Digest* gave it four and a half stars.

Of the W/B courses, this one truly has a mountain personality defined by dramatic elevation drops, forced carries and a significant amount of uphill play. "We are a mountain golf course," says Adrian Stoddard, golf operations manager. "We rise up 400 feet from the first hole to the fourth hole alone."

This course is not for the feint of heart, though its Fairmont tees (placed very forward on the tee box) make the course more forgiving for the higher handicapper.

Nicklaus North, designed by the Golden Bear, plays 6,908 yards from the gold tees and 4,732 from the cinnamon tees. Of all the tasty holes on this valley course, 17 is particularly yummy. A par 3, it plays 188 yards towards Green Lake, a glacial body of water that looks like jade.

With the W/B courses checked off the list, it's time to head towards Vancouver, putting the blinker on at Furry Creek about an hour south.

Designer Robert Muir Graves must have read a lot of Edgar Allen Poe growing up to come up with the layout for Furry Creek Golf and Country Club. Like Sharon Stone in Basic In-



THE TALE OF BC GOLF'S BEST HOT DOG

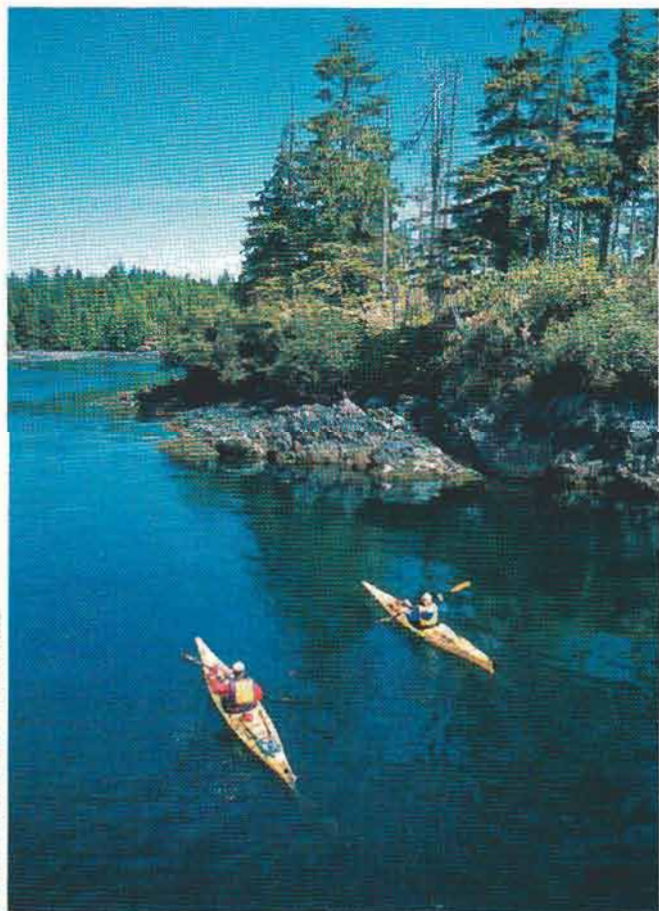
AS GOLF COURSE CUISINE GOES, it's hard to beat a good wiener. In the pursuit of BC's finest hot dog, a writer from Pacific Golf magazine reported in 2002, "...as a connoisseur of one of golf's most essential foods, I found this search for BC's best hot dog to be a grueling task.

A good hot dog starts with a wiener that is not so spicy that has you reaching for the Ro-laid's. Furthermore the bun must totally encompass the wiener, plus have room for all the extras: jalapenos, onions, grated cheese, sauerkraut, horseradish, mayo and the all-important mustard and ketchup.

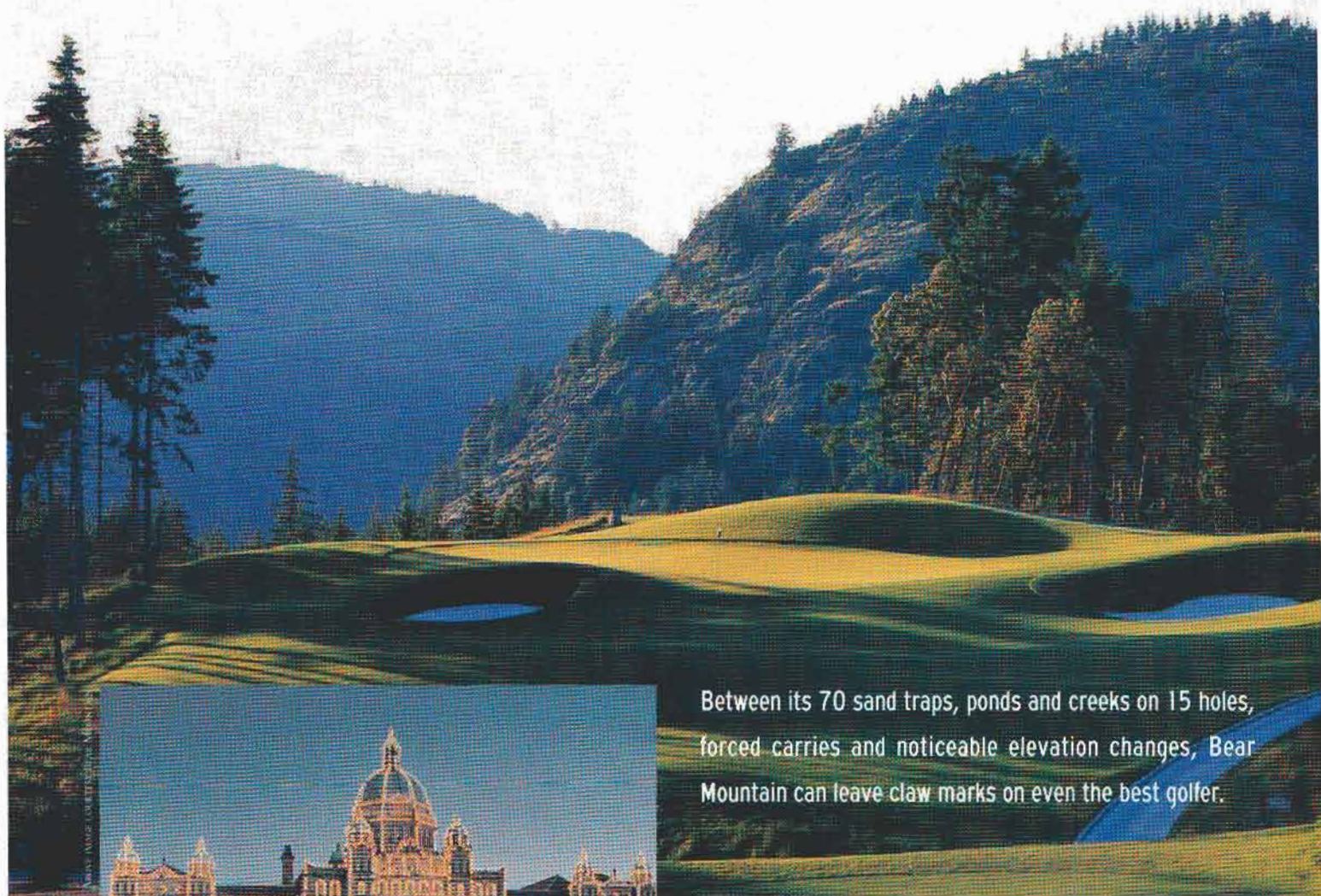
The undisputed best hot dog in BC goes to Furry Creek, where they not only offer all the extras, but they also barbeque the dog."

Having sampled hot dogs at all the courses I played, I concur with this writer. Louise, the hot dog queen at Furry Creek, has been serving hot dogs at the turn for five years. Don't settle for anything less than a Schneiders Smoky Dog, first boiled, then grilled on an open flame and served on a baguette-style roll with all the fixins'!

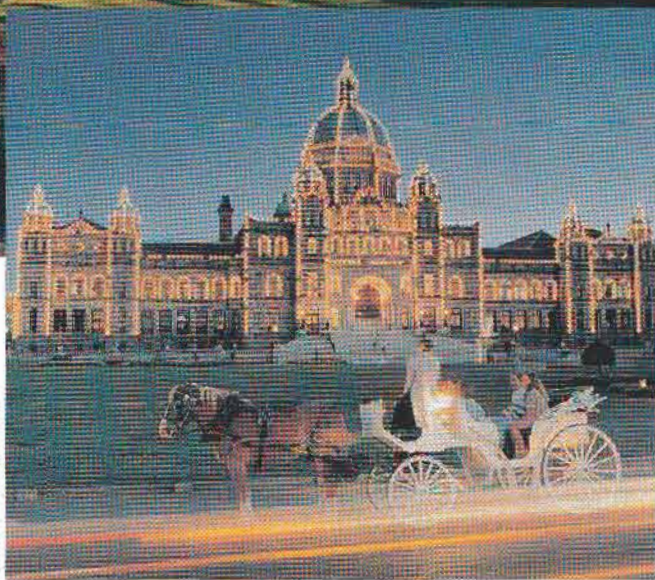
The Schneiders Smoky Dog at Nicklaus North came in a close second.



COURTESY OF TOURISM BRITISH COLUMBIA/TOM REYN



Between its 70 sand traps, ponds and creeks on 15 holes, forced carries and noticeable elevation changes, Bear Mountain can leave claw marks on even the best golfer.



COURTESY OF TOURISM VICTORIA

stinct, this course is as treacherous as it is beautiful. The 6,025-yard (4,749 from the reds) layout starts with a par 4 that drops 165 feet from tee to green.

Number 6, a par 5 playing 425 yards forces players to carry a ravine 300+ yards to a tiny uphill green. Then they have to repeat that ravine-carrying effort on 7, a par 3 playing 200 yards.

Of the many rewards of playing this course, 14 is the richest. A par 3, it plays 184 yards along Howe Sound. Birdie this dogleg left hole and you deserve kudos.

THE CITY

Leaving Furry Creek in the rear view mirror, golfers soon arrive in Vancouver. Visitors would be remiss if they didn't call the Opus Hotel your home in this effervescent city.

Shortly after its debut in September 2002, Opus was touted as Vancouver's most stylish and luxurious boutique hotel. Voted

'Best of the Best' and "One of the World's Top 100 Hotels" by *Condé Nast Traveler*, the 96 room "now and wow" hotel is located in Yaletown, a toney neighborhood near the inner harbor, shopping and financial centers.

Elixir, voted one of the city's best restaurants, makes its home here and both hotel guests and outside patrons flock to the popular French brasserie and its energetic Opus Bar.

Not far from the city are eight terrific courses: Meadow Gardens, Morgan Creek, Northview Golf Club (two courses), Swan-E-Set Bay, Mayfair Lakes, The Redwoods and Westwood Plateau.

THE ISLAND

Depending on vacation length and degree if interested in island golf, vacationers ought to work Vancouver Island into their plans. Without question, one of the most unique ways of traveling to the island is by ferry. A relaxing hour and a half cruise from Vancouver, Vancouver Island is home to Victoria, BC's capital city.

There are ten courses on the island, each offering challenging and picturesque experiences. Less than 30 minutes northwest of Victoria, Olympic

Above: The Jack and Steve Nicklaus-designed Bear Mountain golf course is located less than 30 minutes northwest of Victoria. Inset: Lights ablaze, the Parliament buildings at Victoria serve as a beacon on the very popular Victoria Island.

View and Bear Mountain are two of Vancouver Island's best.

Designed by Bill Robinson, **Olympic View** plays 6,530 yards from the tips and 5,502 yards from the reds. Named for its vistas of Washington's Olympic Mountains, the course incorporates a dozen lakes, two waterfalls and a ton of sand traps into its design.

Formerly a farm and fruit tree orchard, the course has a very forgiving front nine, while the back nine is considerably tougher thanks to dense forests and undulating terrain.

Holes 6 and 8 are wily, if only for their water hazards. Number 6, a par 3 playing 238 yards dares players to fly a large pond on your way to a par (or birdie) while number 8 (the number one handicap hole) has four water features and a well-protected green to test player's skills.

Number 12, a par 4 playing 335 also brings water into play while Hole 14, the number two handicap, introduces a tricky dogleg left into the game.

Aptly named **Bear Mountain**, this course can leave golfers with a grizzly score. Designed by Jack and Steve Nicklaus, the unique 19-hole course plays 7,212 yards from the gold tees and 5,014 yards from the cinnamon tees.

Between its 70 sand traps, ponds and creeks on 15 holes, forced carries and noticeable elevation changes, it can leave claw marks on even the best golfer.

On the front nine, holes 2 and 4 get your attention. Number 2 challenges players to drive 190 yards to fly a water hazard before ascending another 130 yards to a fast green.

Number 4, a par 3 playing just 88 yards from the white tees, has an extremely narrow, well-guarded green. A birdie is a gift.

On the back nine, Hole 11 is a nifty par 3 playing 116 yards to a peninsula green. This is target golf at its best.

Eighteen is a glorious finishing hole, playing downhill 603 yards from the golds. Two ponds and five bunkers protect the green, so carding a four would be a stellar move.

While a guest of the island, turn down the sheets at either the Laurel Point Inn or the Fairmont Empress Hotel. Both properties overlook the harbor in Victoria and are within walking distance of the very British city.

No matter which of its 200 guest rooms guests select, the Laurel Point Inn is a lovely spot, especially for its private balconies. The pet-friendly inn has three restaurants, an indoor pool and magnificent Japanese gardens.

A BC landmark since 1908, the Fairmont Empress features 477 luxuriously appointed guest rooms and suites. A stay wouldn't be complete without enjoying afternoon tea while savoring freshly baked raisin scones served with Devon-style double Jersey cream and strawberry preserves.

Its Willow Stream Spa lets guests get right with the world again before they head off for another 18 holes or for dinner in town.

An appetite for amazing golf satisfied, it's time to head home, pleased that our neighbor to the north showed you a whale of a time. ↓

Kim McHugh, a Lowell Thomas award-winning writer, is the associate editor of Rocky Mountain Golf Magazine. He hopes to return one day and finish playing the remaining 244 courses in BC.

WHERE TO GOLF

BIG SKY GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB
800-668-7900
WWW.BIGSKYGOLF.COM

CHATEAU WHISTLER GOLF CLUB
877-938-2092
WWW.FAIRMONT.COM/WHISTLER

NICKLAUS NORTH GOLF COURSE
866-338-4026
WWW.GOLFWHISTLER.COM

WHISTLER GOLF COURSE
800-376-1777
WWW.WHISTLERGOLF.COM

FURRY CREEK GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB
800-I-GOLFBC
WWW.GOLFBC.COM

NORTHVIEW GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB
604-576-4653
WWW.NORTHVIEWGOLF.COM

WESTVIEW PLATEAU GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB
604-552-5160
WWW.WESTWOODPLATEAUGOLF.COM

BEAR MOUNTAIN GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB
866-882-4653
WWW.BEARMOUNTAINGOLF.COM

OLYMPIC VIEW GOLF CLUB
800-I-GOLFBC
WWW.GOLFBC.COM