

CANADIAN TRAVEL INDUSTRY GUIDE TO CANADA

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see page 10 for details



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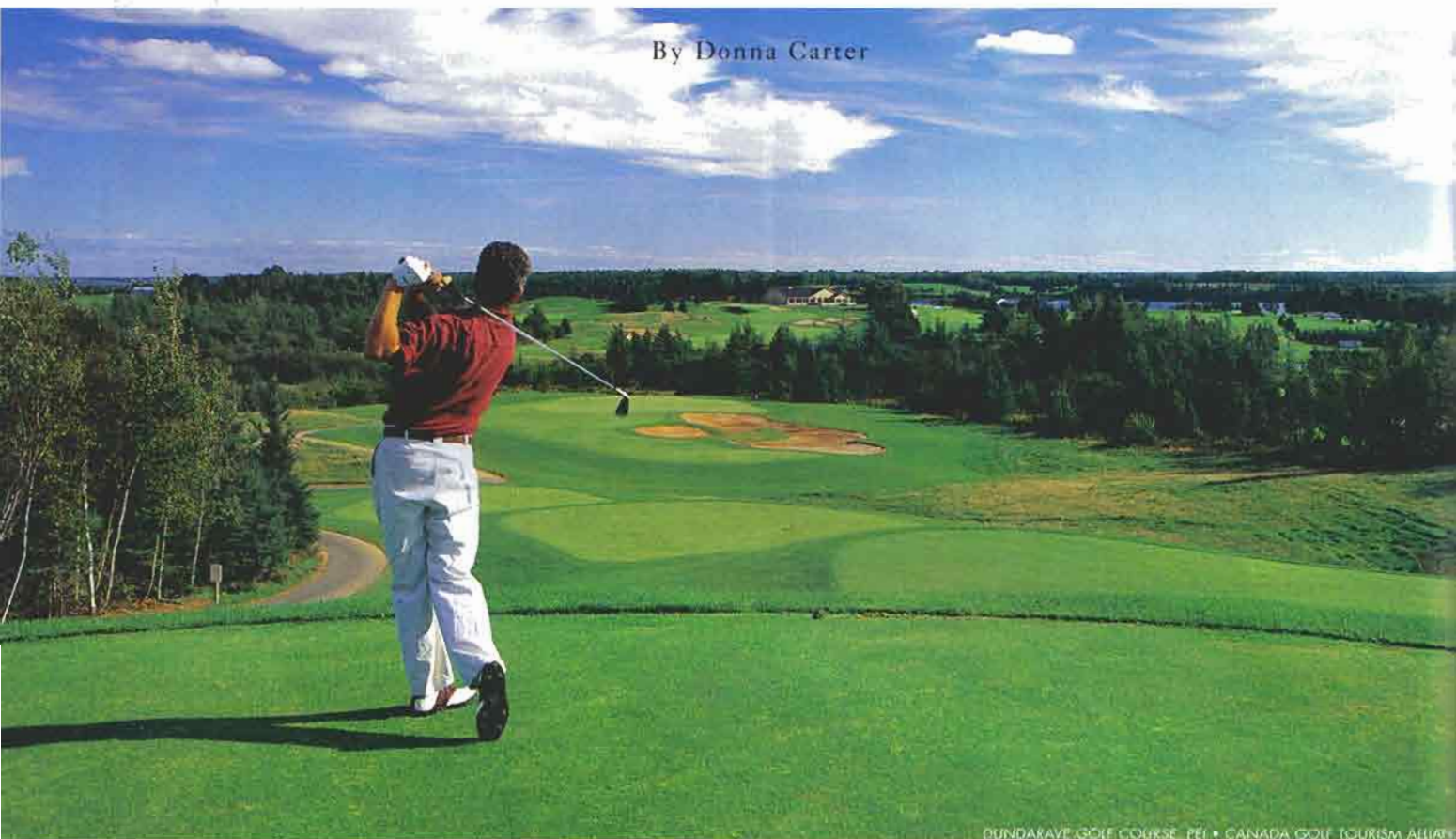
WHISTLER GOLF COURSE • CANADA GOLF TOURISM ALLIANCE

IN THE SWING OF THINGS

CANADA IS THE ULTIMATE GOLF DESTINATION



By Donna Carter



DUINDARAVE GOLF COURSE • PEI • CANADA GOLF TOURISM ALLIANCE

THERE ARE MORE THAN 2,000 REASONS WHY CANADA IS A GOLFER'S PARADISE. THAT'S HOW MANY COURSES ARE SPREAD ACROSS THE COUNTRY'S VAST AND VARIED LANDSCAPE OF IMMENSE MOUNTAIN RANGES, PRISTINE FORESTS, SPARKLING LAKES AND SCENIC OCEAN COASTLINES.

Courses range from 18-hole championship layouts to engaging mid-tier tracks, player-friendly resort courses and plenty of executive nines. In this land of amazing links there are options to suit all skill levels, plus a host of golf/stay packages that offer a selection of great tracks at dollar-wise prices. Known for its pure clean air and friendly people, the Canadian golf tableau is enriched by cosmopolitan cities, charming rural retreats and a cultural cornucopia embodying a glorious mix of stimulating entertainment and world-class cuisine.

ATLANTIC PROVINCES

No place in the Atlantic region is better known for golf than Prince Edward Island where its 170-mile-long (273 km) landscape is dotted with 31 courses all within easy driving distance of one another (www.golfpei.ca). While island tracks range from beginner-friendly layouts to championship courses, among P.E.I.'s most notable are its group of Premier Courses. They include Mill River, Dundarave, Fox Meadow, Eagles Glenn, Brudenell River, Green Gables, Anderson's Creek, Glasgow Hills and perhaps the island's most famous course, the Links at Crowbush Cove where many of its lush fairways are just a tee shot from the ocean. Golfers wanting to brush up on their game will find P.E.I. offers top notch professional instruction at the Canadian Golf Academy, one of the country's most respected teaching facilities.

Nova Scotia is also endowed with an abundance of courses that are both engaging and diverse (www.golfnovascotia.com). The province's Cape Breton Island (connected to the mainland by a causeway) is home to a legendary quartet dubbed the "Fab Four": Highlands Links, Bell Bay, Le Portage and Dundee Golf Club. Highlands Links, in fact, has been voted top course in Canada and 71st best in the world. Together, the Fab Four offer spectacular and challenging layouts that incorporate either breathtaking views of the Atlantic or vistas of the Bras d'Or Lakes, Cape Breton's beautiful inland sea.

New Brunswick likewise boasts a host of premier courses where one of the newest additions is Kingswood Golf at Fredericton, a stunning 18-hole layout featuring 12 ponds and 71 sand traps. Signature tracks also include the Fairmont Algonquin at beautiful St. Andrews-by-the-Sea, one of the most charming seaside towns in Atlantic Canada where the course offers striking views of the Bay of Fundy, famous for the highest tides in the world and huge whale populations in summer. Exciting golf options in N.B. (www.golfnb.com) were further enhanced in 2005 with the debut of Fox Creek, a classic-design course framed by unspoiled woodlands and gently rolling hills.

CENTRAL CANADA

Québec likewise boasts a vibrant golf scene. At the renowned Laurentian Mountains resort village of Mont-Tremblant, Le Géant and Le Diable (the Giant/the Devil), are high on Canada's list of must-play tracks. They are joined nearby by two championship layouts at the *Gray Rocks Resort*, *La Bête* and *La Belle* (the *Beast/the Beauty*).

Likewise notable is the Charlevoix region's Le Manoir Richelieu Golf Club, a track that sits alongside a full-service casino and overlooks the scenic St. Lawrence River. In addition to these and a host of other links, the cultural bonus to golf in *La Belle Province* is its unique French flavour and historic cities that ooze old-world charm.

Ontario is also a mecca for golf with more than 650 publicly accessible golf courses (www.OntGolf.ca) and nowhere in the province has the latter-day growth of premium layouts generated more attention than the beautiful Muskoka Lakes resort region, an hour north of Toronto. Here, golf options include the Muskoka Golf Trail, consisting of five spectacular tracks sculpted from a Canadian Shield terrain of massive rock outcroppings, lakes, rolling hills and pine and birch forests. They are: Rocky Crest, Grandview, Deerhurst Highlands, Lake Joseph Club and The Rock.

Ontario's Niagara Golf Trail similarly links together a collection of courses offering a variety of challenge and maturity. Just beyond the thundering roar of the world's most famous waterfalls, and running along a 9-mile (15 km) stretch of the scenic Niagara Parkway, the Trail consists of 12 member courses. The newest addition is the 45-hole Legends on the Niagara complex which has quickly established an A-list reputation.

Within a 90 minute drive from Toronto there are nearly 200 courses to choose from including highly touted tracks like Glen Abbey, Osprey Valley, Lionhead, Woodbine and Wooden Sticks, a course whose every hole duplicates some of the world's most famous golf holes.

THE WEST

Endowed with a backdrop of awesome Rocky Mountain peaks, clear blue skies, forested valleys and vast wilderness, it's not surprising that many of Alberta's more than 275 courses are among the most scenic in the world (www.golfcandianrockies.com). Blending pristine mountain air, glacier-fed streams and fairways that golfers often share with wild elk, Alberta is a true gem on Canada's golf scene.

Two of the province's highest profile tracks are the 27-hole Fairmont Banff Springs rated among the world's top courses and the Fairmont Jasper Park Course, a superb 18-hole layout continually ranked at the top of Canada's best play list. Alberta's Rockies are also home to notable tracks like Kananaskis, rated among the top 25 public courses in North America while the town of Canmore's Silver Tip offers the ultimate "extreme golf" experience where severe elevation changes provide an unparalleled alpine golf challenge. Canmore's Stewart Creek is also a dramatic mountain beauty that's a feast for the eyes. Surrounded by snow-capped peaks its plush fairways and scenic beauty make an average day on the links a memorable experience.

Neighbouring province, British Columbia, likewise shares a gorgeous Rocky Mountains' landscape together with a Pacific coastline and scenic open spaces, terrain features that are perfect hosts for a profusion of golf courses where, in some locations, a mild climate provides for year-round play. The Whistler region two hours north of Vancouver, ranked North America's number one ski resort, has also earned fame as a golf destination. The area's renowned tracks include the Arnold Palmer-designed Whistler Golf Club, Chateau Whistler, Nicklaus North and a perennial favourite, Big Sky. Whistler is one of the rare places in the world where visitors can achieve a unique daily double, *ski in the morning and play a round of golf in the afternoon*.

Enjoying a Pacific coast vantage, just minutes from vibrant downtown Vancouver, are championship courses like Furry Creek, an ultra challenging track offering unforgettable views on every hole including its signature 14th built on a peninsula jutting into the sea. On Vancouver Island, just north of the charming oceanfront city of Victoria, the hottest golf buzz is the new Nicklaus-designed Bear Mountain course. This superb, two-year-old track is a member of the Vancouver Island Golf Trail, a ten-course group of premium layouts that benefit from the island's balmy, sub-Mediterranean climate. Overall, this island playground where golfers can tee up throughout the year is home to more than 40 courses. www.golfvancouverisland.ca

Whether golfers choose to play some of Canada's signature courses or its multitude of excellent mid-range tracks, the experience is guaranteed to be golf at its very best. ■