

On the Golf Trail

Making the rounds

By KATE ROWLAND
BC is Beckoning

Get your sights this spring and summer on the Vancouver Island Golf Trail.

Beginning in Victoria and ending 400 km later in Campbell River, this trail offers 11 spectacular golfing opportunities, each one decidedly different.

But you might want to think about approaching the trail in four separate weekend get-aways, says Trisha Larson, marketing coordinator for Golf Vancouver Island. "At the tip of the trail is Victoria, a nice combination of city get-away with golf," Larson says.

The three courses here include Bear Mountain, the first golf course in the world to be co-designed by Jack and Steve Nicklaus, along with Olympic View and Arbutus Ridge, both designed by Bill Robinson.

"It's been a great signature for us," says Russ Cowan, executive director of marketing and sales for Bear Mountain Resort.

North along the Trail is the Cowichan Region, what Larson calls the heart of the trail.

Here, Duncan Meadows Golf Club and Cowichan Golf & Coun-

try Club will soon be joined by a third in the spring of 2007. Cliffs Over Maple Bay, designed by "The Shark," Greg Norman, is eagerly anticipated by island golfers.

Plan some extra time in the Oceanside communities of Parksville and Qualicum Beach, where four golf courses offer plenty of play time.

Start at Fairwinds and stay overnight at the Schooner Cove Resort and watch the sunset from the beach.

The next day, try out the Les Furber-designed Morningstar course.

Two other courses complete the Oceanside portion: Eaglecrest, the newest member of the Trail, and Pheasant Glen,

the redesigned Glengarry course, now a full-championship golf course.

Finally, the top of the trail is what Larsen refers to as a fins and skins destination. There are two superb courses here, the Crown Isle Resort and Storey Creek.

"You can spend four or five hours in the a.m. fishing — the fins portion — and be on the golf course in the afternoon, and back in your hotel room by 5 p.m.," she says.



On the 19th hole

Unveiled in 2003, Bear Mountain has a treat for those who want a little something extra at the end of their round.

"The 19th hole was an afterthought brought about by an unexpected visit by Jack and Steve Nicklaus on their way to Alaska," says Russ Cowan, Bear Mountain's executive director of marketing and sales.

The recreational gambling hole proposed by the Nicklaus duo was given the thumbs-up by Bear Mountain president and CEO Len Barrie and vice-president and former Calgary Flames goalie Mike Vernon and has proved popular with golfers ever since.

An island green at the edge of a cliff, the hole is an all-or-nothing proposition.

"You're either on the green, or you lose your ball," Cowan says.

Play grounds

The 11 courses that make up the Vancouver Island Golf Trail include:

- Bear Mountain Golf and Country Club, Victoria. www.bearmountain.com
- Olympic View Golf Club, Victoria. www.golfbc.com
- Arbutus Ridge Golf and Country Club, Cobble Hill. www.golfbc.com
- Duncan Meadows Golf Club, Duncan. www.duncanmeadows.com
- Cowichan Golf & Country Club, Duncan. www.cowichangolfclub.com
- Fairwinds Golf and Resort, Nanoose Bay. www.fairwinds.ca
- Morningstar International Golf Course, Qualicum Beach. www.morningstar.bc.ca
- Eaglecrest Golf Club, Qualicum Beach. www.eaglecrest.bc.ca
- Pheasant Glen Golf Resort, Qualicum Beach. www.pheasantglen.com
- Crown Isle Resort & Golf Community, Courtenay. www.crownisle.com
- Storey Creek Golf Club, Campbell River. www.storeycreek.bc.ca

For more information on the Trail, see www.golfvancouverisland.ca

— photos courtesy Golf Vancouver Island
The perfect way to end a day on the links is the 18th hole at Arbutus Ridge, above. Golfers unwind after a round at the Crown Isle course, left.