

This page: Qualicum Beach's Pheasant
Glen Golf Resort features a 20-acre golf
academy that draws attendees from
Japan and India. Opposite top: Bear
Mountain Golf & Country Club — a
Jack Nicklaus design expanding to
37 holes. Bottom: Gorge Vale Golf
Club celebrates its 75th year in 2005.

The Long Drive

Vancouver Island is
golf courses from one
end to the other.

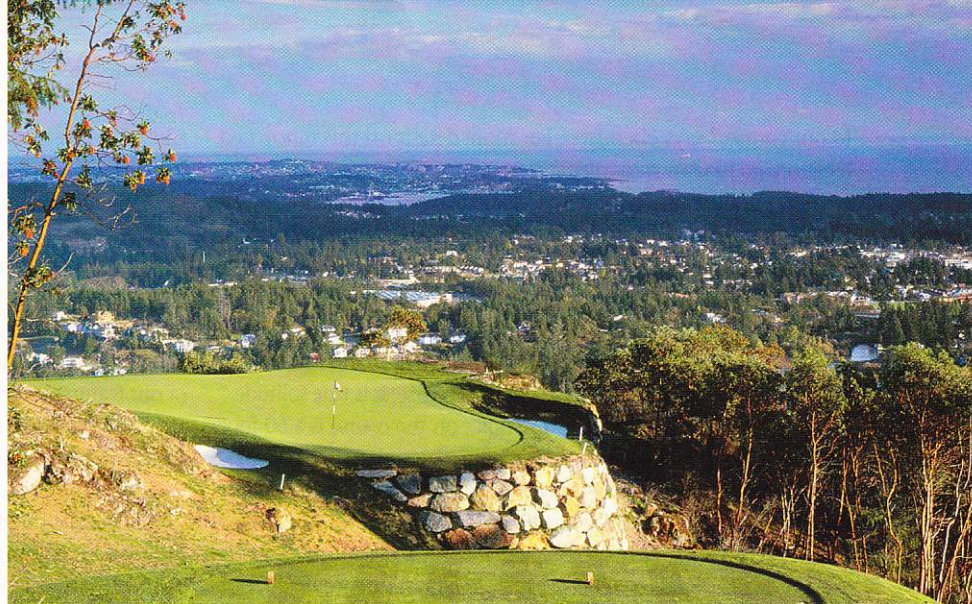
by Laurie Jones

Whether you arrive by ferry or plane, or are privileged to call it home, Vancouver Island is truly a never-ending paradise of often year-round golfing. From Victoria to Campbell River along a 250-kilometre (150 mile) stretch known as the Vancouver Island Golf Trail, avid golfers could play every day for a month and not walk the same fairway twice. Over 40 courses, situated in some of British Columbia's most scenic territory, are available for players at all skill levels — from carded professionals to duffers to absolute beginners.



Jack Nicklaus has put his design touch to two courses at Bear Mountain Golf & Country Club, located near Victoria. A mere 20-minute drive from the legendary Fairmont Empress Hotel, or 35 minutes from the Victoria International Airport, Bear Mountain has many noteworthy offerings.

"Our facility is second to none, in terms of challenge, layout, topography, views and ambient surroundings," says Terry Yacyschen, executive professional and general manager. "It really is a gem in the Pacific Northwest, if



not the Americas, as far as a golf course layout is concerned. There are vistas from many locations with a variety of different elevations throughout the course that will challenge any player, as well as providing magnificent backdrops because of the amphitheatre-type look."

Within two years, when the recently approved second course is complete, Bear Mountain will actually be a 37-hole facility as there are 19 holes on the first course. "When Jack Nicklaus was up doing a site inspection, he noticed a beautiful vista overlooking the entire lower peninsula of Vancouver Island – stretching about 240 degrees from just west of Mount Baker around to the Malahat [stretch on the Island Highway toward Nanaimo]," says Yacyschen. "You can see as far south as Mount Rainier on a clear day, the Olympic mountain range and Victoria's downtown waterfront. Nicklaus took advantage of this view to create a 160-yard, par 3, 19th hole that makes you hit from an elevated tee box where the ball appears to fly over Victoria and land on the green."

What would initially seem intimidating to some golfers is, in reality, a course for everyone. "We offer five sets of tee boxes, ranging from about 5,500 yards to 7,300 yards in length, so Bear Mountain will appeal to a broad section of golfers – from beginners to professionals."

For a little après-golf relaxation, the Sunset Patio – Bear Mountain Resort's outside terrace that seats 120 people – or the more intimate 60-seat Copper Rock Grill, are fine spots to enjoy a glass of fine wine, dine and verbally replay that "shot that should have gone in." Stay & Play packages are also available to enjoy all amenities offered at Bear Mountain. For more information go to www.bearmountaingolf.com.

Members of the Gorge Vale Golf Club, located a mere two kilometres outside of downtown Victoria, played their first round on November 1, 1930 and are celebrating their 75th anniversary in 2005. Over the decades, continuous renovations and upgrades have been made to the Les Furber course. "We have some spectacular views now, due to the modifications made between 2000 to 2002," says general manager Brook Phemister. He says the total cost of construction was \$2.8 million. "We rebuilt 16 greens, added seven water features and added over 40 tee boxes, which increased the yardage off the back tees, but took it down to 5,400 yards if you choose to play off the forward tees. It's more golfer-friendly to all levels of players."

Since 1987, Gorge Vale has hosted the *Canadian Tour* seven times, plus the *World Left Handers* tournament. "We are hosting the *B.C. Men's Amateur* again this year. It is an honour to be chosen as host for these events and we look forward to welcoming these top golfers

to our course," says Phemister. For more details on this renowned location, go to www.gorgevalegolf.com.

Also minutes from downtown Victoria is the Olympic View Golf Club, offering pure tranquility to golfers, says Jason Lowe, regional sales manager for Golf B.C.'s Olympic View and Arbutus Ridge Golf & Country Club courses. "The front nine complements the experience of the back nine – the front being more wide open, versus the back nine that features high tree-lined fairways that demand more accuracy. Without housing complexes near the course, it is true solitude." Lowe says that one of the signature holes on the course is a 60-foot Hawaiiansesque waterfall, which originates through natural springs.

Beyond the great golfing at Olympic View, Lowe says that people drive all the way from downtown Victoria just for the club's hamburgers, which have secret spices in the patties that customers can not resist. "I've never been much of a hamburger person, but these really are great," he says. "We have golf and dinner packages seven days a week, where golfers book a twilight green fee and then come in for a two-course meal. For more information on the course and all amenities, go to www.golffbc.com.

The Oak Bay Beach Hotel in Victoria is pleased to announce its new tourism partnership with the exclusive and private Victoria Golf Club. For only \$499, golfers can book a package that includes accommodation for two, continental breakfast, and two rounds of golf at the Victoria Golf

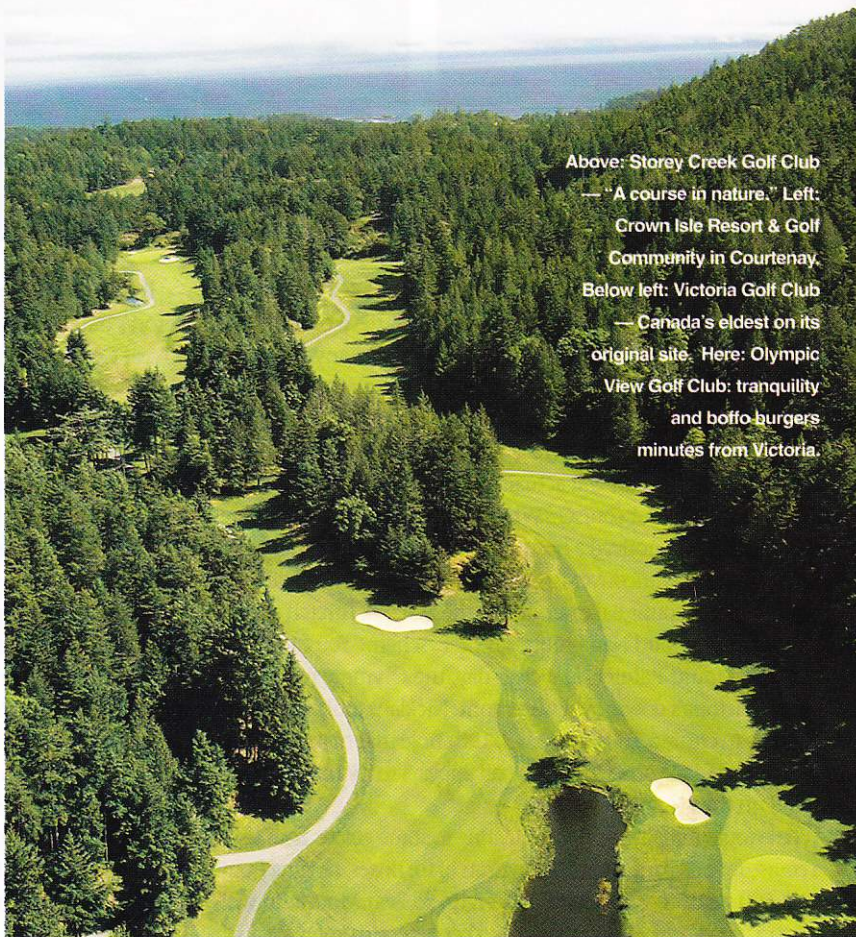
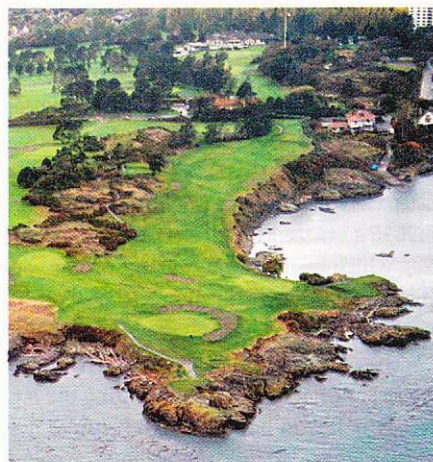
Club. "We are one block, or as I like to say, a three-wood away from the course," says Brian Hobson, general manager of the 50-room historic hotel built in 1927.

Guests can relax on the 2.5 acres of manicured grounds located on the ocean's edge, overlooking the Strait of Harrow with Mount Baker standing majestically on the horizon. "Our hotel has many amenities for not only tourists, but also for locals to enjoy, such as the famous Snug Pub, whale-watching eco-tours, dinner theatre and cruises. One of our featured events is crescent-moon kayaking with astronomers, after which we return to shore to dine on Dungeness crab and local wines, then take time to do some star-gazing through high-powered telescopes. We also do cycling winery tours to the Cowichan Valley."

Hobson says that the Oak Bay Beach Hotel is a destination resort, therefore his staff works diligently to provide experiences such as local cuisine. For further information on all packages and hotel amenities, go to www.oakbaybeachhotel.com.

The Victoria Golf Club, Canada's oldest golf club on its original site, played host to the *Canadian Amateur Championship* in 1993 in honour of its 100th anniversary. Set on the most southerly tip of Vancouver Island, facing the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the 103 acres of beautiful seaside property is perfect for a day of luxury golf. "There are very few golf courses in the country that actually touch the ocean," says head professional Mike Parker.

This prestigious club was one of the founding courses of the RCGA in 1895 and



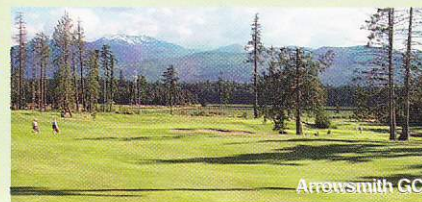
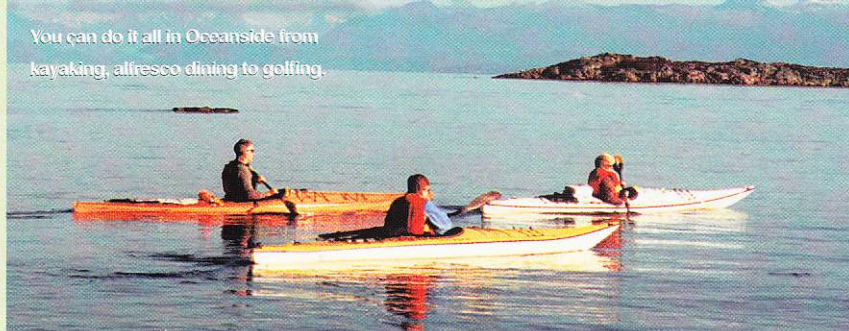
Above: Storey Creek Golf Club
— "A course in nature." Left:
Crown Isle Resort & Golf
Community in Courtenay.
Below left: Victoria Golf Club
— Canada's eldest on its
original site. Here: Olympic
View Golf Club: tranquility
and boffo burgers
minutes from Victoria.

has been the host club for both mens and ladies *Canadian Amateur Championships*, *Provincial Championships*, as well as many successful charity events. Golfers of all levels will enjoy the course, for a variety of reasons. "All players appreciate the beauty of the course, while the better players recognize the value of the course conditioning," says Parker. "One of the challenges is created by the wind, which is a constant factor being by the ocean."

For many years, the Victoria Golf Club was primarily for members and their guests, but with the introduction of the stay-and-play package in cooperation with the Oak Bay Beach Hotel, more people will have the opportunity to experience a piece of Victoria's history. For complete details go to www.victoriagolf.com.

Arbutus Ridge Golf & Country Club can be found in picturesque Cobble Hill, approximately 35 minutes north of Victoria, or 40 minutes south of Nanaimo. "The course is often referred to as sublime and can also be highly contemplative. Depending on how you are feeling you can use a variety of clubs," says Jason Lowe, Golf B.C.'s regional sales manager. "If you've got a hunch about your driver, you can use that or if you're in a

You can do it all in Oceanside from kayaking, alfresco dining to golfing.



More Than Just Golf

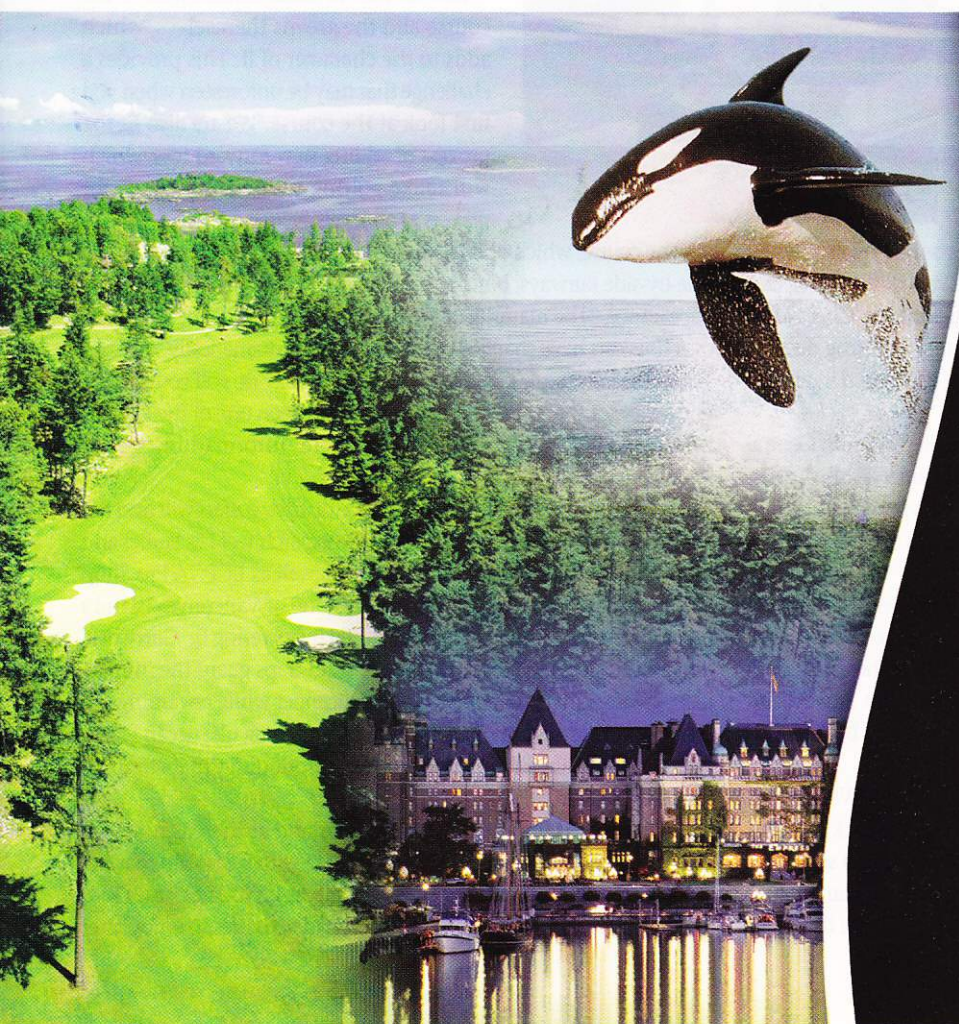
Tourism in general is paramount on Vancouver Island, and the inclusion of golf is a natural extension of leisure travel. "The nice thing with the Island is that it's different in each region," says Geoff Corbett, executive director, Oceanside Tourism Association. "As it happens, virtually every area that has a great golf course also has an excellent spa – from Victoria to Courtenay. It's a nice addition for both golfers and their spouses. In our area, there are also over 30 galleries and studios featuring local artisans, and a short distance away is marine wildlife viewing and fishing."

Corbett notes the multitude of restaurants from

casual to fine dining throughout Vancouver Island, including many within the Oceanside boundaries.

"There are wide choices of other activity options for members of a party who are not golfers, or even for golfers themselves after they've finished a round. Later this spring, our fifth mini-golf course will be open. I don't know if that makes us the mini-golf capital of Western Canada, but we're close."

For further information about accommodations, activities and golf courses in the Oceanside Region, go to www.oceansidetourism.com. Tourism Vancouver Island also has a complete Web site for regions at www.islands.bc.ca.



Golf Vancouver Island

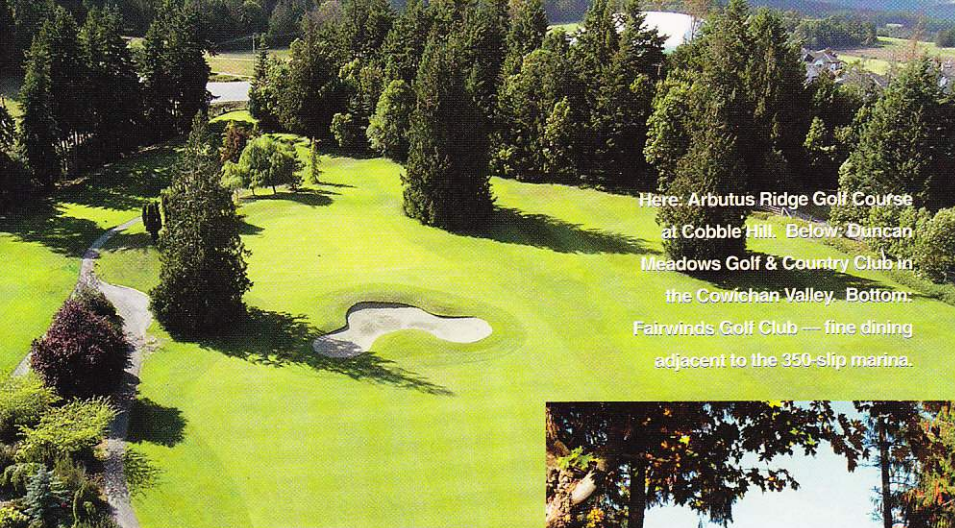
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Here: Arbutus Ridge Golf Course at Cobble Hill. Below: Duncan Meadows Golf & Country Club in the Cowichan Valley. Bottom: Fairwinds Golf Club — fine dining adjacent to the 350-slip marina.

more reserved state of mind, you can hit a four-iron."

The course, which was designed by Bill Robinson, can be deceptive in its beauty. Deemed one of the toughest first holes in the province, the challenging 372-yard par 4 begins with bunkers on either side of the fairway before dropping downhill to the green. The challenge continues throughout the course, with the 17th hole that taunts with a 214-yard, par 3 that plays to a peninsula green that is surrounded on three sides by water and an out-of-bounds marker on the outer edge. Saving the best for last, Robinson's design for the 18th hole is a 426-yard, par 4 that plays up to a landing zone with bunkers on either side of the fairway. The long approach shot is uphill to a three-tiered green that has little room for bailout with a pond on the left and bunkers on the right.

Back at the Clubhouse, the dynamic duo of Arbutus Ridge's Chef Gorde Squire and food-and-beverage manager Dave Wallace have been delivering their tag-team effort for seven years, making Arbutus Ridge one of the busiest clubhouses on Vancouver Island, particularly for Sunday brunch. For cheesecake aficionados, Chef Gorde offers an ever-changing selection of the mouth-watering dessert, among other specialties. For more details on the course and its amenities, go to www.arbutusridgegolf.com.

Located amid the beauty of the Cowichan Valley in South Central Vancouver Island is Duncan Meadows Golf & Country Club. Just on the north side of Duncan, along Highway 18, this semi-private, full-length, 18-hole, par-72 championship golf course is set in a colourful mix of parkland and links style holes.

"Our greens are really challenging in that they have a lot of subtleties, for which the local players have an advantage with course knowledge," says club owner Ming Hui. "For instance, there is an optical illusion on some holes because we are beside Mount Provost and it seems the green should slope away, but in fact, it slopes back toward the mountain.

Although it is the newest course in the Cowichan Valley, Hui believes his is also the most demanding. "Currently the back tees total 6,618 yards, but we are in the process of building a fourth set of tees that should put us at around 7,000 yards," he says. "We maintain our greens to an extremely high level and the players notice that. Our



bunkers have recently been rebuilt and we put in new white silica sand, like the premier courses you see on television." Paved cart paths, enhanced gardens and staging areas at tees are just a few of the latest improvements to the course.

Numerous provincial and national championships, including BCCGA tournaments, have been held at Duncan Meadows, but the highest-profile event held in the past year was the RCGA (the national governing board for amateur golf) tournament, which is the *Canadian Club Champions Championship*. "This year, from June 6 to 10, we are hosting the university/college championships," says Hui.

"We also have banquet facilities for up to 200 people, with a balcony that skirts the entire front of the building, overlooking the golf course." For further information on Duncan Meadows and a photo gallery of each hole, go to www.duncanmeadows.com.

The Nanaimo Golf Club, on a ridge above Departure Bay, offers a 6,700-yard relaxing stop on your Island golf tour. "It's definitely a test of golf as you have to pull off long, straight drives to hit the green in regulation," says head pro Kerry Davison. "There are a lot of subtle undulations on the course and the greens themselves, which adds to the character of it. This provides a challenge that may be unforeseen when you first look at the course. We are also in the process of adding new forward tees, which will make golfing more comfortable for players at all levels."

The course, which opened in 1962, was designed with traditional side-by-side fairways, but time and Mother Nature have altered the appearance. "The maturity of the trees and the maturity of the course over the years have changed the character quite dramatically," he says. "Until the last couple of years, there were virtually no golf courses that had a view of the water. Our ocean view has been one of the key features since the beginning." For more information, go to www.nanaimogolfclub.ca.

Travelling up Island to the Oceanside district, golfers will find the Fairwinds Golf Club. Designed by renowned architect Les Furber and voted 1999 BCPGA Facility of the Year as well as BCPGA Pro Shop Facility in 2004, Fairwinds offers golfers one of Vancouver Island's finest courses. Play on lush fairways lined by towering fir, Garry oak, and arbutus trees while more than 70 sand traps guard the immaculate greens. Challenging the low handicapper while rewarding the recreational player, Fairwinds Golf Club has spectacular ocean views, abundant wildlife and pristine natural surroundings that combine for an unforgettable golfing experience.

"Fairwinds is unique on Vancouver Island as there is nowhere else that has an ocean-front hotel complete with a 350-slip marina, golf course and real-estate development, all on 1,350 acres," says Paul Hodges, sales manager. "There are plenty of activities to enjoy after

golf as we have kayaking right off the dock, evening sails or relax at the waterfront pub."

Head pro Ward Stouffer has been at Fairwinds for 13 years. "We pride ourselves on the fact that all levels of golfers find our course interesting, primarily because of the length. You have to 'think' yourself around the course. Even better players who can hit it far usually don't because, in the end, it's smarter not to," he says.

While the course is open to the public, Stouffer says the club has approximately 350 members, many of whom live in the Fairwinds Community where golf memberships are included with a home purchase. "This is one of the reasons why we maintain such a high standard with the maintenance of our course." For more information on the club, recreation packages and surrounding real-estate opportunities go to www.fairwinds.ca.

Two years ago, management at the Les Furber-designed Morningstar Golf Course in Parksville began a revitalization project at the facility, once noted as one of the top golf establishments in Canada. "The layout, the challenge of the course and the natural beauty have always been there, but we are adding touches to make it a little tougher,"

At Tigh-Na-Mara, near to many Parksville-Qualicum courses, you can soak away the aches in the Grotto, enjoy fine dining and accommodation or stroll Rathrevor Beach.



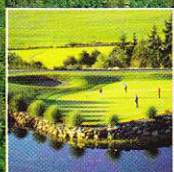
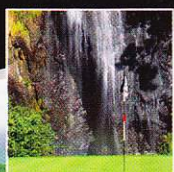
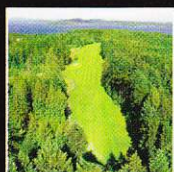
Accommodation with a Golfing Slant

Tigh-Na-Mara Resort & Spa, located five minutes south of Parksville, works closely with many of the local golf courses to put together a variety of packages. Long known as a first-class, relaxing resort on the shores of beautiful Rathrevor Beach, Tigh-Na-Mara offers a variety of getaways for golfers of all levels.

"We are very involved with the golf industry with

packages," says Jayme MacFayden, public relations manager. "One in particular is geared towards women and includes accommodation, spa treatments and playing golf with a female golf pro. We also have a Stay & Play Golf package that is available for anyone, but does not include spa treatments." To see details on all aspects of this internationally renowned resort, go to www.tigh-na-mara.com.

Courtesy Tigh-Na-Mara Resort & Spa



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One feature of Pheasant Glen is the absence of residential housing on the perimeter of the course. Natural topography is another key element to the course's success. "We sit in the shadow of Mount Arrowsmith and the two nines are quite different. One is an open meadow or glen, hence the name, and the other plays through the forest. It's a wonderful test of golf at 6,600 yards, par 72."

The Pheasant's Nest Restaurant, which overlooks the golf course, features a tasty claim to fame – the fish and chips. "Our chef, James Scott, came across a secret recipe for the batter some years ago and now people come from miles away to just treat themselves to his specialty," says McWha. "We have built quite a strong, non-golf food trade and our restaurant has experienced a tremendous growth. It's only a 34-seat room, but we have a 40-seat deck so on nice days, we can accommodate 74 people."

However, the management team is not yet done with renovations. "We're in the process of building a 225-unit resort here, featuring a conference centre and spa," says McWha. For more information on Pheasant Glen's golf, training and hospitality offerings, go to www.pheasantglen.com.

Arrowsmith Golf & Country Club, an executive course voted Business of the Year in 2004 by the Qualicum Beach and Area Chamber of Commerce, is the last of its kind in the central Vancouver Island area. An 18-hole, par-61 executive course, Arrowsmith's 3,700 yards plays out in three-and-a-half hours, which appeals to an enormous number of people. "The only other executive course in our area has recently upgraded to a championship level, so we're on our own," says owner Chris Jiggins.

"We're always packed, and have been like that since February, primarily because we built our course with a massive drainage system, so it is very dry," Jiggins says. Arrowsmith is often referred to as the driest course on Vancouver Island. "Many times that is true because we are the only course open. It's a huge advantage for people when they are phoning around to book a game after a heavy rainfall."

The mixed variety of topography offers challenges and relaxation, with two par-five holes, three par fours and 13 expansive greens. A spectacular view of Mount Arrowsmith can be found at the club's signature hole 12, a 170-yard, par 3, featuring an elevated tee that sits 40 feet above the green. For

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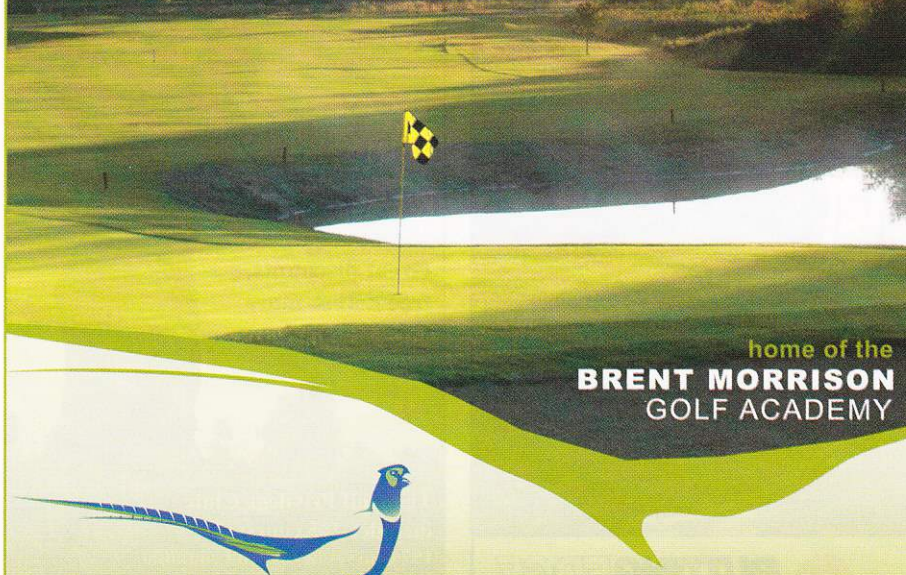


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Parksville's Morningstar Golf Course hosts the B.C. Amateur Championship in 2007.



says general manager Peter Dutton. "The sand will be a little deeper and the rough more of a test. If you come and always beat the course, it gets boring after a while, so we're creating an environment that will sneak up on you. You'll always leave a couple of shots on the course that you'd like to have back. It makes players want to return to try it again."

One aspect of Morningstar's international renown is its former hosting of the Canadian Tour Q-School (Qualifying School), which ran from 1992 to 1997. "During that time, from 1994 to 1996, we hosted a Canadian Tour event with players coming from all around the world," says head professional Dave Cuss.

"Coming up in 2007, we are going to be hosting the B.C. Amateur Championship."

For the average golfer, Morningstar offers a variety of challenges with four sets of tee boxes. "There are ample, placed for people to play from without leaving the course feeling beat up, no matter what level your golf expertise is," he says.

A short drive up the Old Island Highway (19A) to Qualicum Beach is Morningstar's sister course, Eaglecrest Golf Club. This community-based, semi-private golf course that meanders through the Eaglecrest and Ocean-side waterfront subdivisions is excellent for beginners, says Dutton. "We're investing

more into this course all the time. The clubhouse is a heritage building – a barn that dates back to 1911. We're doing a number of enhancements to take advantage of the historical look. In fact, the administration office is an old chicken coop." For information on these courses, go to www.morningstar.bc.ca or www.eaglecrest.bc.ca.

Since 1997, Glengarry Golf Links in Qualicum Beach has been one of the popular stops on both local and professional golfers' routes. On January 1, 2005, the course was renamed Pheasant Glen Golf Resort. "One of the reasons for the name change is because we've rebuilt the golf course," says Barrie McWha, general manager. "It used to be a short course and within the redevelopment, we've built a 20-acre golf academy. Now, we have the physical environment for learning that is unique in that we can teach 150 people at one time, with six instructors on staff."

McWha says that the world-class golf academy plays host to students from as far away as New Delhi, Japan and all across Canada – all coming to Vancouver Island for Pheasant Glen's 10-month instruction programs.

The ambience of the course is easy to take, no matter why you are out on the links.

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Crown Isle Resort & Golf Community, located in Courtenay, B.C., is a blend of upscale golf course and sought-after residential climate. Located midway up Vancouver Island, Crown Isle is 10 minutes from the Comox International Airport, with daily flights arriving from Calgary. "The bonus for people from Alberta is that they can be on the first tee before noon, and get back that night," says Carla Coulson, marketing and accommodations manager.

Opened in 1992, the 18-hole, par-72,

platinum-awarded course is one of the longest on the Island and it is challenging for golfers at all levels. "We have 11 lakes, a variety of bunkers and sand traps, but we also have beautiful views of the Beaufort Mountain Range including the Comox Glacier," says Colson.

Approximately five minutes from the warmth of the ocean, golfers have the option of skiing in the morning and golfing in the afternoon. "In the summer time, we have several guests that come to golf for two days then go out on a fishing charter, says

Coulson. "One unique thing to Crown Isle Resort is the luxury accommodation that features villas with gas fireplaces and Jacuzzi tubs in the bedrooms. Tourism B.C. has rated us four-and-a-half-stars. *Golf Course Rating Magazine* rated our clubhouse, which has 48,000 square feet, the best in Canada. We also have a cigar room and a classic-car museum, which is very unique to a golf resort." Coming in Crown Isle's next phase of development is a 52-room lodge with a full-service spa. For further information, go to www.crownisle.com.


Playing 18 holes at Storey Creek Golf Club is a virtual step into relaxing solitude, hence their slogan "A course in nature." Located 14 kilometres south of Campbell River, this Les Furber-designed course has been carved out of a dense deciduous and coniferous forest, complete with meandering creeks, eagles, several resident deer and other indigenous wildlife that roam freely.

"When people come here for the first time, they are blown away by the serenity," says head professional Butch Kelly, who has been at the club for 14 years. "They can't put their fingers on it right away, until we point out that there are no houses or roads anywhere near the course."

But, beyond the warm-and-fuzzy (yet true) descriptors, Storey Creek has also consistently earned the prestigious *Golf Digest Places to Play Award* and has played host to many high-profile events. "We have four sets of tees, which makes it challenging for golfers at any level. Sometimes people get intimidated by the fact that they are on this beautiful championship course, but we just recommend they play from the forward tees," says Kelly.

He notes that playing from the back tees is more challenging because of the narrow design of the fairways. "You have to make the shot, because one bad shot will cost you two. This course is literally cut right out of the forest, so it's easy to put it in the trees. When a golfer comes in with a low score, you know they've played good golf."

For more information on Storey Creek – including the Salmon Enhancement project initiated and maintained by greens superintendent, Reg Franklin and staff – go to www.storeycreek.bc.ca.

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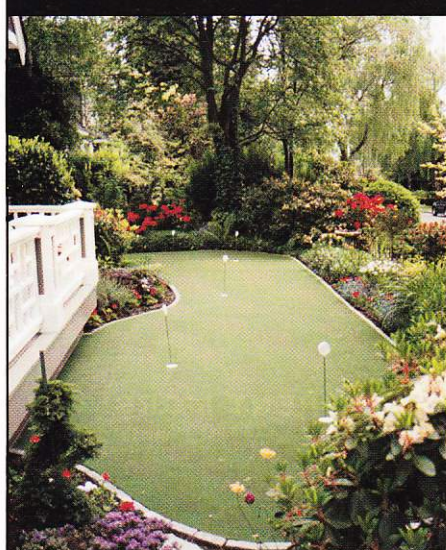
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