

Course Review: Centennial Golf Club

There are three things that immediately come to mind when Don and Pete think of Centennial Golf Club in Medford: heat, achin' backs and a great clubhouse. We played Centennial as part of Golf Week 2008, a trip marked by back issues, especially for Don, who could barely get out of the car and stand up following the 30-minute drive from his cousin's home in Grants Pass, which served as headquarters for the week. Fortunately it loosened up each day as we played — and, for the record, it's typically Pete fighting off back pain.

Of course, you'd hope to loosen up playing in 107-degree heat. That's what it was when we teed off at Centennial on a late August morning. We were the only mad dogs out on the course, except for one Englishman who was a few holes ahead, which is how we like to golf (strictly at our own pace). Hey, it was Golf Week, that's why we were there. We made a point to stay hydrated, thankfully there was a light breeze, and we did fine.

The course is fairly new, built in 2006. It's open, no trees to speak of, though there are other issues. There's water on several holes, 73 bunkers and a few forced carries. The course was designed by former PGA professional John Fought. We played, as per usual, the white tees, which ring in at 6,400 yards; the course measures about 7,300 from the tips.

This is an immaculate course with a medium slope and an excellent layout. The maintenance staff does an excellent job, especially considering 107 isn't all that uncommon in Medford in the summer. The course was built on the former site of a historic pear orchard more than 100 years old. By and large



the greens are big. The biggest is on No. 4, a long par 3 (196 from the white tees), a dance floor that measures just under 10,000 square feet.

Six of Centennial's par 4s measure 386 yards or longer. No. 18 is a monster, a par 4 that measures 442 yards from the white tees (and 472 and 494 from the blues and blacks, respectively). At least there's no water on 18. The par 3s are more pedestrian, clocking in a 138, 161, 172 and 196 from the white tees. We both also loved the Centennial clubhouse. It brings to mind a 50-cent word: synergy. There are basically no interior walls within the clubhouse, at least not full ones. It reminded us of upscale lake lodges — a bright, airy and open-beamed structure with solid building materials, and without any pretentiousness. The check-in area is adjacent to the lunch bar, which next to the dining area right next to the pro shop clothes and equipment venue — again, a great open synergy between all the elements.

Unique and distinctive, there's much there we hope to copy when we build our permanent clubhouse at Chehalem Glenn in Newberg. Medford is lucky to have this course and this clubhouse, and residents appear to understand that. While it was a little warm for golf for most, the Centennial Grille (clubhouse restaurant) was doing a brisk lunch trade amongst the locals.

