

Course Review: Chinook Winds Golf Resort

Well, where do we start? How about with the name — Chinook Winds Golf *Resort*? Sorry, Chinook Winds in Lincoln City does not qualify as a “resort” course. This was Devil’s Lake Golf Course for most of its history — and it has a history, having first opened in 1926. It was a funky course then, and having the Siletz Indian tribe buy it and add it to their casino property didn’t magically make it better.

Chinook Winds is really sort of a ‘tweener in every possible way. At 4300/4600 yards from the white/blue tees and a par of 65, it’s not a regulation course. With two par 5s and par of 65, it’s not truly an executive course, either. It’s not necessarily an easy course to play. The winter rye fairways aren’t always clipped as low as you’d expect, and the rough is frequently very long. You can hit your ball five yards into the rough on some holes and just flat-out lose it. The course is filled with hundreds of beautiful, mature fir trees, especially on the back nine. Once you get into position to hit an approach shot, you’ll find most of the greens are small. And to top it all off, once you get on one of Chinook Winds’ bent grass dance floors, you’ll soon realize they run slow. These are waltzing greens, if you want to carry on the dance floor analogy.

Chinook Winds is very hilly, so you go up a lot and you come down a lot. Accordingly, you’ll have many shots with the ball above or below your feet. Even at well under 5000 yards, it’s a tough walking course. But if you take a cart, beware! The cart paths frequently end abruptly, leaving you to blaze your own trail forward.

All that said, our biggest issue with Chinook Winds is simply the layout. There’s no rhyme or reason to the hole-routing design. You start with a par 3 (which we never like), then a par 4, then two more 3s and then five consecutive 4s to end the front nine. No. 4 is a “unique” hole, to say the least, that people seem to love or hate. Only 102 from the white tees (111 from the blues), you shoot at a green that’s entirely encircled by a ring-like sand trap, save a narrow footbridge of turf to step onto the green. This is not a “real” golf hole. After No. 4, Don was wondering what came next, an opening-and-closing castle



gate or a clown’s nose? To be fair, No. 4 didn’t irritate Pete as much as it did Don.

As you move on to the back nine, you’re greeted by No. 10, which very much *is* a real golf hole. A 455-yard par 5, you’ve got a lake on the left and trees on the right, forming a narrow chute to launch your tee shot through. It’s Chinook Winds’ best hole, by far. But after you’re encouraged that things may be picking up, the remainder of the back side is pretty pedestrian — enough trees to cause trouble on one par 4 and one more par 5 (a short one at only 395), and another six par 3s. Three consecutive 3s after the challenge of No. 10, and another 3-in-a-row 3s to finish your round.

Chinook Winds is also more spendy than it should be for what you get, probably due to having the word “resort” in the title.

That said the people who work there are great. We had the first twilight tee time of the day, but there wasn’t anybody on the tee sheet in front of us so they let us go 30 minutes early for the twilight rate. And prior to teeing off, we had an excellent and very reasonably priced late lunch at the course restaurant. And an industrious teen that helped us at the golf course also took our order at Gallucci’s Pizza. Gallucci’s is the best pizza place on the coast; the kid was working two jobs, saving money to go to the UO. We admired that and left a generous tip.