

Course Review: Eagle Point Golf Club

Eagle Point Golf Club near Medford is one of Oregon's Top 15 courses, according to *Golf Digest*. While we haven't tried to rank every single course we've played, that seems about right. Eagle Point is a very nice course, a semi-private layout with plenty of public play availabilities.

Eagle Point was designed by renowned golf architect Robert Trent Jones Jr. and opened in 1996. The gently rolling terrain is walkable if you'd like; there are hills here and there but nothing you can't conquer. The regular tee options — grey, gold and black at Eagle Point — measure 6100, 6600 and 7100 respectively, so you've got options.

Eagle Point is well maintained and challenging. The course has a private track feel without being pretentious. No one cut any corners in constructing Eagle Point. While that means it looks great on the surface, more importantly it "looks good" in places you can't see. Specifically, the fairways are sand-capped underneath, meaning Eagle Point has great drainage and is an excellent winter play course.

It was hardly winter when we visited during our Golf Week 2008. In fact, it was Aug. 11, and it was about 105 when we teed off. Despite being a hot Thursday afternoon, there were a lot of people on the course — which leads to our first criticism of Eagle Point. We endured a gut-wrenchingly slow round, and there was not a marshal on the course. Perhaps they were caught off-guard that day, but it was just grueling and detracted from what should have been a great round.

For a course that was 12 years old when we played it, everything at Eagle Point sparkled. They obviously take great pride in maintaining the venue. There are water features/hazards about the course that both make the course more attractive and make your round more interesting, which is exactly what water should do. There are great views of 9,500-foot Mt. McLoughlin, perhaps the Cascades' most underrated peak. And there's even a totem pole on the third tee. Don, who took a lot of family vacations to Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia growing up, is big on totem poles, so we had to stop while Don looked and took pictures.



Architect Jones, it seems, had been given the totem as a gift and decided to bestow it to Eagle Point. The pole was delivered by helicopter during course construction; from top to bottom the totem's features include an eagle, wolf, raven, beaver and salmon. It's certainly a unique golf course landmark.

One thing that detracts from your overall Eagle Point experience is the housing that surrounds the course. They're not fairway fronting and they aren't in play, but they're just *there* all the time — which is great, we're sure, if you happen to own one, but takes away from the course's overall ambiance.

The greens were very large, consistent and quick at Eagle Point. In addition to water hazards, the course features lots of bunkers, both in fairways and green-side. The fairway bunkers aren't there to make the course look pretty (though they do), they're placed to gobble up golf balls. That said, if you keep your tee shot within the boundaries of the course's highly maintained fairways, you'll generally have some easy approach shots at Eagle Point— lots of courses work like that, actually. 😊

Eagle Point Golf Club also includes a first-rate practice facility with a grass tee driving range, a large short game area and a practice putting green that putts like the greens on the course, which isn't the case everywhere. And the price is very much right. We don't quote exact numbers in our reviews because obviously they're going to change over time, but we paid considerably less to play Eagle Point than we expected.