

Course Review: Lost Tracks Golf Club

Lost Tracks Golf Club in Bend is a course that brings out somewhat different responses from Don and Pete. While Lost Tracks is one of Don's favorite courses in Oregon, it doesn't rank nearly that high for Pete. That's not to say Pete thinks it's a *bad* course, he simply doesn't esteem it to the degree that Don does.

We *do* agree that Lost Tracks is typically one of the best-groomed courses you'll find anywhere in Oregon. Flower beds abound throughout the layout, which sits just south of Bend proper. Lost Tracks, which opened in 1996, was carved out of a stand of Central Oregon pine trees — mostly Ponderosas. You'll also see some lava outcroppings on the course, a good bit of water and lots of bunkers.

Lost Tracks features an "old style" course design, which among other things means that even though it measures 6400 yards from the white tees and over 7000 from the blues, it's compact. You don't have long traverses from greens to next tees. It's also flat, making the course easy to walk. If you do walk, however, you'll miss out on really nice golf cars that feature audio GPS units. As you approach each tee box, the unit automatically begins to give you a brief preview and outline of the hole ahead. You can also use its electronic scorecard and then print it out at the clubhouse. It's fun to do at least once.

Hole No. 1 is a great introduction to the course. It's 377 from the whites, dogleg right, and for your first approach shot of the day you're staring down a good-size lake on the left short of the green, and bunkers short left and long right. No. 2 is a short par 4 but ringed with bunkers. You can then sort of settle in. There are lots of bends on the front side, including No. 9, the No. 1 handicap hole. While it's



long (a 563-yard par 5 that doglegs left), it's relatively trouble-free other than a couple of bunkers at the green.

No. 12 is a challenging par 5 that goes right, then left, then straight to a heavily bunkered hole. Otherwise the back side is pretty straight-forward, plus, again, you've sort of settled into your round.

You can't talk about Lost Tracks with talking about No. 16. It's a fairly short par 3 that features an island green (see photo above). The sideboards alongside the hole boundaries are reminiscent of a TPC course. But the most distinctive feature is the 1940s-era railroad car you walk through to and from the putting surface. At some point, people starting leaving bag tags inside car, which now features hundreds of them from courses literally all over the world. It's a fun hole and bring your camera, it's photo worthy. It is the proverbial "signature hole," and one of Don's favorites in all of Oregon. And you can't run out of steam at Lost Tracks (train pun intended), as you finish the day with a 500-plus yard par 5 on No. 18. But it's a beautiful course and a fair golf challenge; you should enjoy your round.

A word here about customer service and overall course "ambiance," for lack of a better term. There are several Internet reviews of Lost Tracks complaining of staff "arrogance" and poor customer service — too many to ignore. That wasn't the case during our visit. We had a great experience; everyone was perfectly friendly, including the wait staff in the excellent restaurant adjacent to the pro shop.