

Course Review: The Reserve (South Course)

The Reserve Vineyards and Golf Club in Aloha opened in 1997, putting another pair of premier new golf courses into play in the Portland area just five years after Pumpkin Ridge came on-line. The Reserve got an immediate PR boost by hosting Peter Jacobsen's Fred Meyer Challenge from 1998 through 2002, followed by the Champions Tour's JELD-WEN Tradition the next four years.

The 36-hole semi-private complex offers a unique concept, at least for Oregon, in bridging the gap between being a public and private course: the two courses alternate being private-only for "members" two weeks each month. John Fought designed the South Course, which is open to public play from the 1st through the 15th of each month, during which time the Robert Cupp-designed North Course is private, for members only. Beginning the 16th of each month that flip-flops, with public tee times available on the North Course and the South Course becoming private. For the first few years, in fact, the courses were known as the Cupp and Fought courses, before changing to the current, more generic names.

Both courses are meticulously maintained, and The Reserve is a popular place for summer tournaments. It includes good practice facilities and a striking clubhouse that features a well-stocked pro shop and an excellent restaurant. You can walk either course, though they are long and definitely a good hike. The North Course is hillier than the South, plus there are some long transitions from greens to tees adding to the length. Both courses feature real restrooms about midway out, always a welcome feature.

The South Course

Designed by John Fought, a Portland native and former PGA Tour pro whose design credits include four



Top 100 courses, the Reserve's South Course is a traditional American layout with mature stands of Oregon trees, naturally rolling terrain and 114 gleaming white sand bunkers — the sand was imported from Idaho — waiting to swallow errant shots. Par 72 and measuring 6200 from the white tees (which we played) and 7200 from the gold (back) tees.

While the South does have considerably more trees than its North counterpart, most fairways have generous landing areas and you've got to push or pull your tee shot pretty good to get into real trouble. And while boasting those 114 sand traps — including 16 on No. 6 alone — many of them are avoidable. Don knows this first-hand from playing occasionally in a 100-hole charity tournament staged on the South Course, and can attest that you do not spend all day in the beaches. Many of them are as much for aesthetic appeal as they are for actual hazarding.

The South Course greens are, generally speaking, large and fast. There's undulation and break, though somewhat less than the North Course dance floors. The South is longer, and even includes a 605-yard hole (No. 6) if you're playing the back tees. It's a more friendly 549 for mortals playing the whites. No. 17, a long (410 yards from the white tees) par 4 includes a water feature along the left side and a distinctive double green that it shares with No. 11. A big pot bunker separates the two putting surfaces.

You will encounter occasional slow play on the South Course when spring and summer bring out less accomplished golfers. It only takes one or two groups of hackers to start frequenting all those bunkers to quickly slow down play for everyone, even though the course is typically well-marshalled.

