

Course Review: The Resort At The Mountain

The Resort at The Mountain in Welches spawned (along with Charbonneau) a fundamental question in our Quest to play every golf course in Oregon: with three separate nine-hole tracks, does it count as one course or three? Given that when you call the pro shop and set up a tee time for 18 you have no idea which two nines they'll give you, we ultimately landed on the definition that this is simply one course of 27 holes (ditto Charbonneau). So we set out on a long 2008 summer day to conquer all 27, and actually ended up playing 25, as two holes were closed that day for some minor maintenance.

The Resort at The Mountain's course(s) is/are nestled in the Salmon River Valley of the Mt. Hood National Forest, and is/are extremely scenic — though from the course, you can't actually see Mt. Hood. The Resort course (we're going to stick to singular from here on out) is another of Oregon's certified Audubon Sanctuary golf tracks. You'll spend the day in a vibrant ecosystem full of various birds, the Wee Burn stream and wildlife — seeing deer on the course is not a rare occasion.

It's easy to walk the course, as there are few elevation changes and greens and next tees are generally close together. We did take a cart, as we were playing 27 holes on a hot day, plus it was part of the special we took advantage of. The course is set off far enough from Highway 26 that there's no road noise, you're dropped into a quiet, serene atmosphere. The course is very well maintained. The greens are generously sized and roll smoothly. There's a good variety to their contours — some are pretty flat, others have a lot of undulation and break. There are trees on basically every hole. In some instances they are set back far enough to allow a decent landing area, on other holes they'll tightly frame the fairway and offer little relief for errant shots. There are also enough bunkers and water hazards to keep things interesting.

Here's a little snapshot of the three nines ...

Foxglove Nine

Foxglove opened in 1981, and is generally considered the most challenging of the three nines. Measuring 2838 from the white tees, which we played



throughout the day, and a par of 36, No. 1 is probably the entire course's signature hole. Only 265 yards from the whites, you can come close to driving the green *if* you miss the giant, monolithic rock that sits dead center of the fairway. Venture left and you'll be wet; the Salmon River guards that side of the fairway. Nos. 2 and 3 are also relatively short (360 and 301 yards, respectively), but very tight, with the river on the left and forest on the right. The rest of the nine opens up beginning with No. 4.

Pine Cone Nine

Pine Cone is the region's oldest course and the fourth-oldest in Oregon, having been built in 1928 by town founder Billy Welch. Coincidentally, it's also 2838 from the white tees, par 36. The No. 1 tee box is elevated and sits near the pro shop; don't slice or you're over a residential road. Pine Cone winds around the outer perimeter of the property and features the Wee Burn stream.

Thistle Nine

Thistle is billed as "the forgiving nine" by the Resort. Just 2561 yards from the white tees, it includes three par 3s and only one par 5, playing to a par of 34. Thistle was originally constructed in the mid-1960s within the confines of Pine Cone, which basically horseshoes around it.