

Course Review: Salishan Golf Links

So we have two minor issues with Salishan Golf Links, located in Gleneden Beach immediately south of Lincoln City. One, it's not an oceanview course, and while it doesn't bill itself as such, it does manage to *imply* it in much of its advertising. But save for a brief glimpse of the Pacific from one hole, No. 15 if memory serves, you don't really see the ocean. Two, it's not a links course. The back nine is "links style," but the front nine isn't remotely close.

As long as you understand that going in, Salishan is one of Oregon's iconic courses. Playing Salishan was the highlight of our first-ever Golf Week in 2007, when we stationed ourselves at Don's in-laws in Newport and toured courses up and down the Central Oregon Coast. We were paired with a delightful retired couple from Georgia. The husband was wearing both an Augusta National golf vest and hat, and upon querying, he had indeed played on that holy ground. Augusta National has one "vendor day" each year when companies that do business with the course can send one foursome each. This guy waited over 20 years for his chance to join three co-workers for that special day, but he made it!

Salishan is, as most readers undoubtedly know, one of Oregon's longtime premier beach resorts. The course had received a fairly recent (2004) make-over from Peter Jacobsen when we played in 2007; the changes included lots of new bunkers and major green renovations (and a modern drainage system). The course was also lengthened by 400 yards (6400 now at the longest), even though par dropped one stroke to 71.

Salishan is really two distinct nines, with the front nine (par 36) on the east side of Highway 101, and the back nine (par 35) on the west side. The first hole hadn't changed a lot (Don had played Salishan one time previously). On No. 1 you tee off in



full view of all the summer vacationers passing by on the highway. Fortunately the first hole is one of Salishan's easiest, with a wide fairway that turns gently left away from the motorized onlookers. Past No. 1, however, you're in for eight tight holes carved out of old growth timber and dotted with numerous sand traps. If you're not straight off the tee you're in the woods or possibly OB, as some of the holes pass closely by resort condos. The rolling terrain will leave you frequent uneven lies on the front, and there's quite a bit of water.

Finish up your first nine holes and you traverse under Highway 101 to start the back nine, which lies entirely west of the road. The back side is considerably more open than the front, and has a much more "coastal" feel. In addition to that one glimpse of the Pacific, you can see Siletz Bay from Nos. 10 and 11. There's a lot of natural (and enhanced) dunes mounding on the back, contributing to the "links style" ambiance of the second nine — though Holes 10-18 include too many trees to be called a true links layout. The back nine is flatter than the front and features different hazards — namely sand and long, coarse natural beach grass off the fairways.

The new greens were near perfect and rolled fast, unusual for a coastal course. You have to pay attention because the break varies greatly from hole to hole. Salishan has some elevation changes, but you can walk it if you wish. Pro shop staffers were friendly and helpful, and the course includes excellent practice and warm-up facilities.

