

STRICKER STEALS THUNDER FROM GOYDOS' 59, P38

# GOLF WEEK

JULY 16, 2010

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## GRITTY IN PINK

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**U.S. WOMEN'S OPEN, P12**







No. 15 at Pronghorn's Jack Nicklaus Course

COURTESY OF PRONGHORN

# AROUND THE BEND

## CENTRAL OREGON BLENDS BREWS, BIRDIES AND BEAUTY

By **Martin Kaufmann**

**Bend, Ore.**

The 15th hole at the Pronghorn Club's Jack Nicklaus Course is a 543-yard minefield of knobs, notches and outcroppings that impede players' paths to the green. Nicklaus, who somewhat auspiciously dubbed this course "Pine Valley West," is said to be particularly fond of this par 5, and with good reason. It benefits not just from Nicklaus' acumen as an architect, but also from the setting. The Three Sisters - the distinctive 10,000-foot-plus peaks of the Cascade Range to the west - are framed picture perfectly beyond the green.

It neatly serves as a microcosm of the golf scene in and around this high-desert town, combining dazzling design with an even better setting. Situated at the heart of the 30-course Central Oregon Golf Trail - which stretches from

Sunriver to the south up to Redmond and out to the west beyond Sisters - Bend is a former logging town with a surprisingly cosmopolitan flair.

When it was incorporated 105 years ago, the town was known as Farewell Bend. These days it might be more accurately called "Greetings Bend," owing to the fact that the city's population has mushroomed from 50,000 a decade ago to 81,000 today. In fact, the population of Deschutes County nearly has doubled over the past 15 years, to almost 160,000.

Bend's appeal is manifest. It quickly becomes apparent to visitors that residents have drawn the lucky number in the geography lottery. True, they have no ocean, but that's a minor concession. The menu of destination-quality recreational activities that are available includes biking, **Bend, P46 >>>**



No. 17 at Tetherow

COURTESY OF TETHEROW



No. 9 at Black Butte Ranch's Big Meadow course



COURTESY OF BLACK BUTTE RANCH

«« Bend, P44 hiking, climbing, skiing, fishing and rafting.

As if to flaunt their good fortune, Pronghorn members take part in the Trifecta in April, skiing on Mount Bachelor in the morning, playing golf in the afternoon, then finishing the day fly-fishing.

"People who live here take a pretty big bite out of life," says Alana Audette, CEO of the Central Oregon Visitors Association, or COVA.

It's little wonder that the youngish population – Bend residents' median age is 34.8 – seems unusually fit and preternaturally cheerful. Bend has, in fact, almost a college-town vibe – minus the university and despite being portrayed at times as an ideal place for retirees.

"(There are) a lot of people from a lot of different places," said Todd McViney, a recent transplant from Lake Tahoe, Nev. "Once they come here, they don't leave."

McViney was bartending at the fabulous new 10 Barrel Brewing Co. near Pageant Park, where I was nursing a Pray For Snow, a muscular (7.6 percent alcohol by volume) ale, yet one so silky that it's served in a genteel snifter. Among my list of laments upon leaving Bend was that I barely was able to put a dent in 10 Barrel's extraordinary roster of brews.

Microbrewing is, in fact, something of a religion in Bend. Audette compares it to the coffee craze that originated

in Seattle. Deschutes Brewery & Public House opened in 1988, and it helped give birth to many of the seven other microbreweries on the Bend Ale Trail.

These days, each resident seems to have his or her favorite brewpub and preferred drink. Microbrewing likely appeals to the independent streak in Bend residents, many of whom favor recreational activities that are solitary and often demanding.

There's something inherently rebellious about microbreweries. Their legions stand in defiance of megabrewers, emphatically declaring that no mass-market suds shall pass their lips, no corporate conglomerate's bottom line shall be padded with the sale of watered-down ales. In Bend, it's easier to make a double eagle than to find a Budweiser tap.

While central Oregon appeals to many interests, golf increasingly has become the warm-weather calling card in this four-season destination.

It's impossible to discuss golf in Bend without acknowledging the elephant in the room: Bandon Dunes, a five-hour drive across the Cascades. But central Oregon golf stands on its own; visitors accounted for 60 percent of the 453,347 rounds played here in 2009, according to COVA.

A formidable lineup of courses was further enhanced when Pronghorn recently opened the Nicklaus Course for public play.

Pronghorn sits on a one-mile



10 Barrel Brewing Co.

COURTESY OF 10 BARREL BREWING

## Where to stay

**The Oxford Hotel:** 877-440-8436; [oxfordhotelbend.com](http://oxfordhotelbend.com). Guests of this swank new SoHo-style boutique hotel can book tee times at nearby private clubs, such as Broken Top and Awbrey Glen.

**Sunriver Resort:** 800-801-8765; [sunriver-resort.com](http://sunriver-resort.com). Sunriver has three fine 18-hole layouts on site, including the brutish Crosswater. Check your ego at the starter's hut.

## Golf, etc.

**Central Oregon Visitors Association:** 800-800-8334; [visitcentraloregon.com](http://visitcentraloregon.com). Includes a link to the 30-course Central Oregon Golf Trail.

**Visit Bend:** 877-245-8484; [www.visitbend.com](http://www.visitbend.com). Includes a link to the Bend Ale Trail.

checkerboard square in the middle of a large swath of land controlled by the Bureau of Land Management. (It wouldn't hurt the BLM, which hoards 1.65 million acres in central Oregon alone, to share a little more of its inventory.)

Pronghorn was conceived as a private enclave anchored by Tom Fazio and Nicklaus designs. While the former remains private, guests are free to try to master Nicklaus' glassy greens. Groups can rent Pronghorn's Residence Club villas, outfitted with man-cave staples such as Wolf and Sub-Zero appliances, and grind away on their games at the on-site PGA Tour Academy, where director of instruction Joey Pickavance has more cool toys than a 3-year-old at Christmas.

Just east of Pronghorn, at Brasada Ranch, you might find the answer to a question I put to several local residents: Which course offers the best views of the

Bend, P48 »»»



**'There's a peace and beauty here, a sense of inspiration. It's of course better if I play well, but even if I don't, this place still inspires me.'**

— Pat Evoniuk, golfer, on the Bend region

«« Bend, P46 Cascades? Native son Peter Jacobsen and Jim Hardy made good use of the hills and canyons to showcase distractingly appealing mountain vistas. While this resulted in a somewhat disjointed, unwalkable routing, that flaw is offset by an otherwise fine design.

The debate as to which course is the most difficult typically comes down to two tracks: Tetherow in Bend and Crosswater at Sunriver

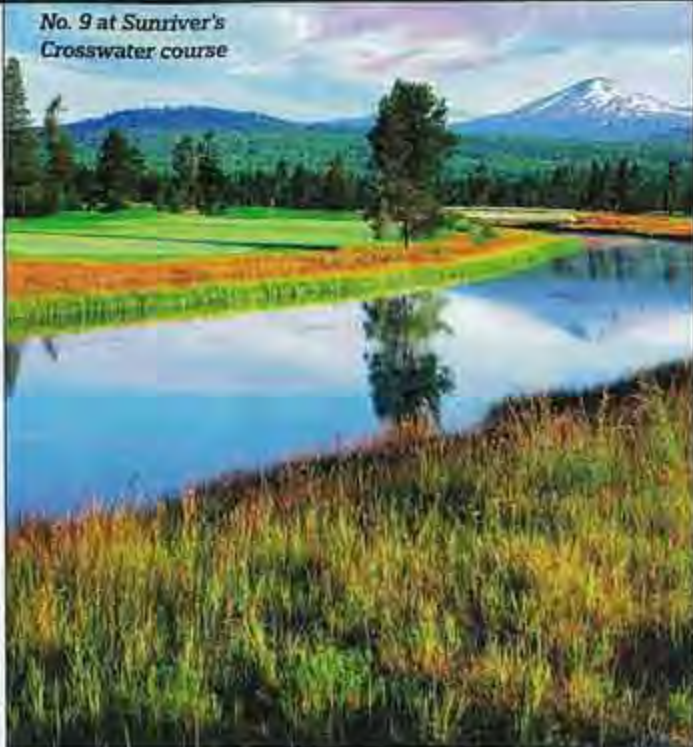
Resort. While Tetherow's idiosyncrasies make it a white-knuckler, Crosswater, which was the longest course in the country when it opened in 1995, will wear you down with its forced carries.

Tetherow, David McLay Kidd's 2008 design, has undergone some massaging to work out the kinks in its fairways and greens. A 1991 fire cleared virtually the entire site, creating a moonscape that Kidd, a Scotsman who now calls Bend home, could shape to suit his singular tastes.

During our round together, Taylor Garbutt, a caddie who is far too gifted a player to be serving as a golfing sherpa for a hapless writer, told me that his many rounds on Tetherow had numbed him to the challenges presented by other tracks.

Tetherow's par-3 17th hole, surreally situated in a pumice quarry, already ranks as perhaps the most iconic hole in the region. On the par-5 18th, Garbutt shared his secret for making eagle: Blow your drive down the 10th fairway, leaving a mid- or short iron to the green.

Crosswater is Sunriver's bell cow — having hosted various professional and amateur championships — and its heathland design provides a nice counterpoint to the resort's fittingly named Meadows and Woodlands courses. The nines recently were switched on Woodlands,



No. 9 at Sunriver's Crosswater course

COURTESY JO ASHLIND

a 1979 Robert Trent Jones Jr. design, a move that created a fine five-hole closing stretch.

At Meadows, architect John Fought's appreciation for classical design is evident all around. He doesn't jerk golfers' chains the way Kidd does; everything is in front of players. Better golfers will find that there's a score to be had there, but it's no pushover, having been used in U.S. Golf Association and NCAA tournament play.

Fought also is preparing to begin work on Glaze Meadow at Black Butte Ranch, located northwest of Bend off of Route 20.

When the property's 1,251 homeowners recently were asked to green-light a \$3.5 million upgrade to the track, they didn't hesitate. Starting in September, Fought will lengthen the course, make extensive changes to the first four holes, bring the wetlands closer to play and replace the irrigation system.

Glaze Meadow has been "the other course" at Black

Butte for years. But given its compelling topography, it likely will challenge the status of the resort's Big Meadow layout as Black Butte's marquee venue. Big Meadow epitomizes Northwest golf, in part because the entire property is surrounded by Deschutes National Forest and the course is lined with Aspen and Ponderosa pines.

Pat Evoniuk, one of my playing partners at Big Meadow, has been coming to Black Butte Ranch for more than 30 years. I asked Evoniuk, a retired teacher and administrator from Walla Walla, Wash., why he kept coming back. His heartfelt answer captured why central Oregon has become increasingly appealing not just to golfers, but to people looking for a place to settle.

"There's a peace and beauty here, a sense of inspiration," Evoniuk said. "It's of course better if I play well, but even if I don't, this place still inspires me."

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# Mountain

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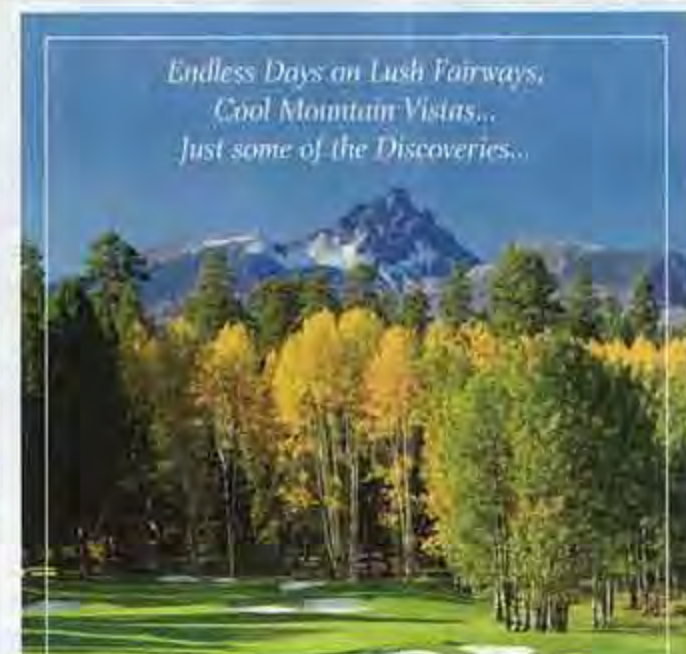
PHOTO © BOB HILLMAN/BLACK BUTTE RANCH

Big Meadow at Black Butte Ranch

## Black Butte Ranch

Standing in the shadow of the extinct volcano for which it was named, **Black Butte Ranch** delivers the ultimate mountain golf lifestyle, complete with two of the area's finest golf experiences. The Ranch's duo of tournament-worthy courses — **Big Meadow** and **Glaze Meadow** — snake gracefully through stands of Ponderosa Pines along the Cascade Mountains, brilliantly capturing Central Oregon's authentic beauty as they present hole after hole of pure golf splendor.

For more information on this premier golf resort community, call 888.364.5519 or visit [www.BlackButteRanch.com](http://www.BlackButteRanch.com).



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