

British Columbia Golf Member Newsletter

September 2010

Fins and Skins in Campbell River

A unique name for an experience that is also unique.

Fins, of course, refers to catching fish, in this case large salmon. Golfers will know that skins refers to a type of golf competition, but in this case, it's a more generic term to describe a very good golf experience. Combine the two – golfing and fishing – along with a different type of accommodation, and you have the recipe for something different than most golfers have experienced.

Campbell River, on Vancouver Island, calls itself the salmon capital of the world. Now, I'm not much of a fisherman, so I can't attest to it, but after trying my hand at fishing I can tell you that it is something that is very exciting and interesting. I was with a small group of golfers recently who got together at Painters Lodge in Campbell River, none of whom had fished for salmon in small boats. Painters Lodge, part of the Oak Bay Marine Group, was built in the image of the previous lodge that burned down in the mid 80's. It retains much of the look, and certainly much of the ambiance of the historic lodge built on the site in 1929. Wander through the lobby, up the stairs and into the upper gallery and you'll find photos of famous guests and lots of big fish.

Painters Lodge is best known for its Tye fishing. These are very large salmon waiting to swim up Campbell River to spawn, and they gather in a pool just outside the estuary waiting for the right conditions. To become a member of the prestigious Tye Club, you need to fish in a rowboat using oars. Now you can use a guide to row for you, but you must land a Chinook or Spring salmon in excess of 30 pounds using a special rod and light line by yourself. Many Tye are in excess of 50 pounds, and when you see them mounted on the wall of the Lodge, you'll have a better understanding of what this takes.

We were too late in the season to fish for Tye, but we did head out in the 17' Boston Whalers that Painters Lodge uses. These are handled by very knowledgeable, and very entertaining guides, who will take you to where the fish, hopefully, are. As a non-fisherman (and some would say non-golfer) I was very pleased that the guides let you do as much as you wanted. In my case, I was happy to have them handle all of the difficult parts.

We left the dock at about noon to catch the mid-day tide, and headed north up Discovery Chanel to a location where tidal currents cause fish schools to linger. Here we, and about a dozen other boats, settled down for a bit of lunch while the guide got everything set up. With just two of us, plus the guide, in the boat we enjoyed the sun while trolling with the lures out below us. This is the way to fish.

Suddenly my fishing partner had several large tugs on his line. Russ, the guide, quickly realized it was a substantial size fish, and began to bring in the other lines. I did my part by scrambling to the front of the boat, desperately trying to keep out of the way and not fall overboard. Guy took about 10 minutes to land it, fighting against the salmon which was fighting back by taking vigorous runs around the boat. Russ got out the net, while Guy kept the tension on, also trying not to fall out.

Finally, it was brought on board. A nice looking 15 lb. Chum salmon. Russ quickly dispatched it to the ice locker, but not before I managed to get a picture. Shortly after, we headed back to the Lodge, still excited about the adventure. Drinks and dinner in the Lodge later that evening were a perfect ending to the day.

The Skins part of the event took place the next day at Storey Creek Golf Course in Campbell River. It had rained overnight and early that morning so the course was damp, but in just perfect condition. Fairways and greens were in great shape, and that brilliant emerald green that really sets off a course. Storey Creek was designed by Les Furber, and the course certainly lives up to its brand – “A Course in Nature”. They back this up with an Audubon certification, one of the few courses in BC to reach this level. The course is cut through a magnificent forest with towering fir trees mixed in with poplars and other deciduous species.

The course is exceptionally well laid out. You will rarely see other groups, with the trees separating the fairways. However, the minimal distances from green to tee mean the course is very walkable. It's also relatively flat, with almost no elevation changes. There is no housing near the course and the main highway is at least a mile away. The only sounds were the birds in the trees and the occasional rustle of leaves. Occasionally a “fore” echoed through the trees. Even the numerous deer seemed to enjoy the quiet, ignoring human presence.

The course makes extensive use of wetlands, creeks and ponds to define fairways and lure the wayward shot. Bunkers are in the right spots and are always visible. While there are several dog-legs, you know at all times exactly where you have to hit the ball. Storey Creek has earned its reputation.

So how do you combine Fins and Skins? We played a fun event where for every pound of fish you catch, you deduct it from your net score on the course. It turned out though, that only two of our group caught fish, so it made the golf a little less competitive, but just as much fun.

For more information visit <http://www.golfvancouverisland.ca/packages/finskins/index.asp>

BC Golf Course Architects

I recently wrote an article about who, from either a designer's perspective, or as a competitor, defined golf in BC. I couldn't come to a conclusion, but I did receive an email back saying that I'd missed out on Graham Cooke, who has designed several courses and was also a Canadian amateur champion several times. This was a valid point, but it made me want to do some research to find out who had designed the most courses in BC, and at what level were these courses.

Following is the list I've come up with of course designers who have created more than one course in the Province.

Graham Cooke

Black Mountain, Crown Isle, The Dunes, Harvest Golf Club, Shadow Mountain, Talking Rock, Sun Rivers

Thomas McBroom

Tobiano, Tower Ranch, Langara, Morgan Creek, Fraserview

Les Furber

Belmont, Bootleg Gap, Balfour, Christina Lake, Fairwinds, Fairview Mountain, Garibaldi Springs, Golden, Hyde

Mountain, Kelowna Springs, Mayfair Lakes, Meadow Gardens, Myrtle Point, Morningstar, Northlands, Predator Ridge, Riverway, Salmon Arm, St. Eugene, Springs at Radium, Trickle Creek

Nicklaus

Sydney Island, Bear Mountain – Valley, Bear Mountain – Mountain, Nicklaus North, Okanagan Bear

Doug Carrick

Greywolf, Predator Ridge

A V Macan

Capilano, Royal Colwood, Shaugnessy, Marine Drive, Richmond, Qualicum, University, Gorge Vale, Kelowna, Nanaimo, McLeery, Penticton, Cowichan

Stanley Thompson

Langara, Alderwood

Arnold Palmer

Northview Ridge, Whistler Golf Club

Les Furber has clearly designed more courses in BC than any other architect, with good courses in all regions of the province and several of these are highly rated. Both McBroom and Cooke, based in Ontario have completed a number of courses, with a couple of these exceptional courses. I had also forgotten that Jack Nicklaus had designed the very private course on Sidney Island, and with the Bear Mountain courses, has also created some good courses.

I was most surprised by the work of A. V. Macan. A Google search quickly brought up a brief biography and listing of his courses. As I'm from Vancouver Island, I was aware of his work at Royal Colwood, but you then add some of the best courses in Canada at Capilano, Shaugnessy and Marine Drive. These courses have all ranked in the top 100 in Canada. His designs are prevalent throughout the Pacific Northwest, including the Seattle and Everett Golf Clubs. He was also a scratch golfer, winning BC and Pacific Coast championships.

For those interested, this is a link to a brief article on Macan.

<http://www.igolfsoftware.com/richmond/files/File/AV%20Macan.pdf>

Sun Peaks Culinary Festival

Fine foods, promising young vintages and ice-cold brews are set to take centre stage during the *Autumn Bounty Culinary Festival*, October 8 – 10. This celebration gathers foragers at the Delta Sun Peaks Resort hotel for a weekend of festivities that includes an opportunity to breakfast at a local ranch, catch an Iron Chef competition at the Farmers' Market, and indulge in a multi-course Gala dinner highlighting top producers from the region. And that's not all. Alongside distinctly BC cuisine, paired with local wines plucked from the region, guests can crash the *Okanagan Springs House Party*, which marries beer samples and a few savoury snacks, or take a seat at the *The Winemaker and The Farmer*, a lunch featuring exclusively organic products supplied by local and regional farmers and producers. (Tip: for the latter perennial favourite, be sure to snag advance tickets.)

If you decide to visit Sun Peaks, make sure you take your clubs. The course at Sun Peaks is a real gem, set amongst the forests at the base of the ski hill. Nearby in Kamloops are both Sun River and the Dunes while Tobiano and Rivershore are only slightly more distant.

For more information on the Festival, [click here](#).