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## If golf is an escape from everyday life, Vancouver Island's Olympic View Golf Club fits the bill



By *Mike Bailey*,  
Senior Staff Writer

VICTORIA, B.C. - The elevated tee of the par-5 13th hole presents a clear picture of the experience at **Olympic View Golf Club**. With mountains and sky that seem to extend forever, Olympic View, on the southern tip of Vancouver Island near Victoria, offers as much scenery as shot value.

The par-4 17th features a 60-foot waterfall behind the green. And while you anticipate the signature hole of this seemingly benign 6,600-yard par 72, there is plenty to navigate before you arrive. The holes wind over hills and around lakes and streams. Olympic View Golf Club demands consideration off the tee, begging weaker players to steer the golf ball en route to high scores.

In addition to the waterfall on 17, the golf course's claim to fame involves a 1994 visit from Tiger Woods, his first round on Vancouver Island. Woods was still a junior player, and pictures in the clubhouse prove it. But to hang the golf course's reputation on that odd fact certainly sells it short.



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Olympic View Golf Club lives up to its name on the tee of the par-5 13th hole. (Mike Bailey/TravelGolf)

### Olympic View Golf Club is no pushover

Owned and operated by the Golf BC Group, Olympic View, a Bill Robinson design, opened in 1990. Set among 550 acres of undeveloped forest land, the golf course fits as one of 11 tracks on the Vancouver Island Golf Trail ([www.golfvancouverisland.ca](http://www.golfvancouverisland.ca)).

The golf course is walker friendly despite the elevation changes. In fact, director of golf Jay Anderson said the majority of players tote their own bags.

Fairly short in overall length, Olympic View Golf Club will challenge top players. Doglegs, hazards and green complexes toughen some of the shorter holes. The 16th, for example, measures only 127 yards, but from the difficult pot bunker in front of the green, it's an extreme challenge to get up and down for par.

There's also another waterfall. The eighth hole, a 420-yard par 4 that snakes around two ponds, features cascading water to the right of the green and ranks as the No. 1 handicap hole on the golf course. It calls for two precise shots to find the green in regulation.

Olympic View Golf Club's 17th hole, by the way, probably presents the biggest difference between the back tees and the next closest set. From the tips, this treacherous par 4 measures 455 yards; it's only 366 one tee forward from the white markers.

Olympic View includes a few other quirky obstacles, like the big rock near the green of the short, par-4 seventh that seems to attract your ball if you try to drive the putting surface. Rock walls and embankments serve as good targets on the way to other greens - as long as you remember to carry them.



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### If you go

**Practice facilities**

Olympic View house as three short-game

Covering 14 acres, the school, by design, simulates every situation on the golf course. Guests can take advantage of individual lessons or sign up for a group clinic. Practice greens are also available for daily fee play.

**Olympic View Golf Club: The verdict**

What's not to love? Olympic View Golf Club offers great views, interesting holes and tranquility for a reasonable green fee. The only qualm one might have involves the inability to simply blast away with the driver. But then again, golf would be pretty boring if you never had to think off the tee.

Vancouver Island, one of the most beautiful settings on earth, provides a bonus. Same goes for nearby Victoria, among the most picturesque and charming cities anywhere. The golf course resembles its surroundings . peaceful, unhurried and unique. Along the way, you'll spy plenty of deer and other wildlife and perhaps catch a glimpse of the Olympic View mascot, the bald eagle, which appears on its official driver head cover.

The clubhouse, with its panoramic views of the first, 10th and 18th holes, is ideal for a late drink or dinner. Forester's Bistro and Bar offers West Coast contemporary cuisine and banquet facilities.

**Staying near Olympic View Golf Club**

Victoria, the capital city of British Columbia, arguably ranks as the most beautiful city in Canada. With its temperate climate, you can actually play golf year-round on Vancouver Island. And Victoria serves as a perfect base for an excursion on the Vancouver Island Golf Trail.

You'll find lots of great hotels in Victoria. One example, the recently renovated Inn at Laurel Point, sits right on the Inner Harbour. If you're lucky enough to land a room with a glass balcony view, watch the seals and herons as well as seaplanes take off and land during the day. It's also great to view spectacular sunsets and sunrises.

The hotel has a modern but elegant, uncluttered feel. Its Japanese Gardens feature a waterfall and sprawling oasis, and the chef at Laurel Point tends his own herb garden for use in the kitchen.

**More photos**



April 15, 2010

*Mike Bailey is a senior staff writer based in the Houston area. Focusing primarily on golf in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean and Latin America, he contributes course reviews, travel stories and features as well as the occasional equipment review. An award-winning writer and past president of Texas Golf Writers Association, he has more than 15 years in the golf industry. Before joining the WorldGolf.com team in 2008, he held positions at PGA Magazine, The Golfweek Group and AvidGolfer Magazine. Read Mike's golf blog here and follow him on Twitter here.*

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