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FALL GOLF IN THE CENTRAL & SOUTH OKANAGAN

BY LISA "LONGBALL" VLOOSWYK



The southern interior of BC is well known for its popular golf destinations. The extended golf season often draws

enthusiasts dying to dust off the sticks and play the first round in early spring or hold onto a season well into the late fall.

This region also beckons players looking for an all-in-one vacation experience. A little golf, a little wine, fine dining and perhaps if your arm is twisted, a siesta by the pool. One increasingly popular destination for this is the town Osoyoos.

Osoyoos is at the northern tip of the Sonoran Desert extending from Mexico into Canada. It boasts Canada's lowest annual precipitation, warmest annual temperature, and warmest fresh water lake. Osoyoos is also often named the hot spot in all of Canada, and is located only 2 km from the US border. The golf season typically kick starts in February and runs until the end of November.

If you are looking for a destination resort, look no further than the brand new Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort & Spa on the edge of Osoyoos. It is one of only nine 4-star resorts in British Columbia. Nestled amongst the rolling desert hills, Spirit Ridge is perfectly perched to offer stunning views of Lake Osoyoos and the Nk'Mip Vineyard in its backyard and is only steps away from the Sonora Dunes Golf Course.

The architecture of the resort has a wonderful south western flare giving you the sense you are nestled in a quaint town in New Mexico. There are 94 one and two bedroom Villas and Suites featuring nine foot ceilings, a full gourmet kitchen, living and dining rooms, bedrooms each with their own bathroom, washer and dryer, a balcony with BBQ and an entertainment center complete with DVD players and internet access.

No expense is spared including the self controlled in-floor heating in the bathrooms. What a wonderful way for your tootsies to wake up for an early morning tee time.

For those looking for a unique desert-links style course, Sonora Dunes is located on site a chip shot away from the accommodations. This 9-hole par 35 course is a fun-filled round chalk-full of risk/reward shots. The holes weave through the desert landscape trapping errant shots in rattlesnake country. Incredible elevation drops require appropriate club selection but eagle and birdie opportunities are there for the taking.

If you are looking for 18-hole tracks, there are several wonderful courses located nearby. The Osoyoos Golf and Country Club is a must play. Located in the heart of Osoyoos, this

Continued On Next Page

FALL DEALS IN BC'S INTERIOR

Osoyoos G&CC Fall News... Sept 12-14 is the public event C.D.I. Pro-Am 9:00 am shotgun. The Desert Gold Course is receiving rave reviews. Elevation changes make carts mandatory and are included in the tax inclusive

price of \$85 / 18 holes at prime time. They also offer great twilight and group rates for all three spectacular courses. 1-800-481-6665 / golfosoyoos.com Mantoo Resort is one of Kelowna's finest waterfront resort minutes from championship golf and award-winning estate wineries. They offer a private,

secured complex of villas and suites with services that are unmatched elsewhere in the Okanagan. Special rates are available from Sept. 3 - Sept. 30 with even lower prices from Oct. 1 to close and include one night accommodation, one round of golf with shared cart, range balls and taxes. Rates are per person.

Golf packages available with Harvest, Predator Ridge, Okanagan GC and Gallagher's Canyon. 1-800-445-5255 / mantoo.com

The South Okanagan Golf Trail is a consortium of three facilities including Fairview Mountain, Nk'Mip Canyon

Continued on next page

FALL DEALS CONT'D

Desert, and Osoyoos G&CC. All located in the heart of the Okanagan Wine Country. Visit their website for info. and great deals. southokanagongolf.com
Redstone Resort in Rossland is looking for a soft opening of their new nine in

early September. They have also teamed up some of the finest spas, hotels, country inns, fly fishers, golf courses and ski hills in the region to offer golf and ski vacations of exceptional value and variety. 1-877-362-4555 / redstoneresort.com

Okanagan Paradise Resorts... Located

at the heart of Okanagan wine country, Okanagan Paradise Resorts features uniquely designed luxury and executive vacation condos making you feel right at home. They run web specials as condos unexpectedly free up or for special occasions such as the spring and fall wine festivals. They also

regularly offer South Okanagan golf packages with luxury accommodations as well as tours of various wineries. 2-50-4-97-6099 / OkanaganParadiseResorts.com

Kimberley Vacations with over 15 years as golf reservation specialists has the

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course is home to 36 holes. The Park Meadows course is a favourite amongst members and visitors looking for a relaxing day on the links. It is a walker friendly course with lush emerald

fairways outlined by mature trees and guarded by strategically placed mounding and bunkers.

For those players looking for a challenge, the newly opened Desert Gold course beckons you. Although only 6,500 yards from the tips

this course has bite. There are four distinct tee decks on each hole and selecting the appropriate tees for your ability will lend to a more enjoyable round and fewer lost balls.

The course offers a stark contrast between the lush green fairways and the desert landscape. Be prepared for some major elevation changes. Whether it is a 50 foot drop to the fairway below or an elevated green, proper club selection is imperative if you plan to shoot anywhere near your handicap. The stunning views of Lake Osoyoos, and the bountiful orchards and vineyards below will keep you coming back time and time again.

Two other courses are merely a short 15 minute drive away in the town of Oliver, B.C., the Wine Capital of Canada. The newest course, NK Mip Canyon Desert Golf Course has expanded from its original 9 hole layout to offer a par 72. There are two distinct nines, the Grove Nine, which is a little more forgiving and a bomber's paradise, and the Canyon Nine which is much more demanding.

The desert style golf holes are set amidst rolling fairways that are lined by vineyards and peppered with Ponderosa Pines. Natural rock outcrops add to the beauty of the layout but are not to be outdone by the picturesque waterfall adorned with a metal Aboriginal statue located behind the 11th hole.

Finally, don't miss Fairview Mountain Golf Club, established in 1925, this course is a hidden gem. It was rated BCPGA 2004 Golf Facility of the Year and visitors from near and far make a point of teeing-it-up here year in and year out.

After your round you can head back to Spirit Ridge to soak in the spacious hot tub or cool off in the pool. Kick back in a lounge and enjoy the phenomenal views of the valley and lake below.

If you are a wine connoisseur you will not want to miss the NK Mip Cellars located on the property. This 18,000 sq ft winery is North America's first Aboriginal-owned and operated

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FALL DEALS CONT'D

experience, established partnerships with courses like Bootleg Gap Golf, Trickle Creek, Kimberley GC, St. Eugene Mission and Cranbrook G&CC (just to name a few) and know-how to create the perfect holiday in the Columbia

Valley. One special gets you 3 rounds of golf - Bootleg Gap Golf, Kimberley Golf Club, Trickle Creek Golf Resort plus 2 night's accommodation - 1 balm (dbl occup) starting at \$335.00 per person, power carts included. 1-800-667-0871 / kimberley.ca

Kelowna Lakeshore Inn offers lakefront

accommodation at reasonable prices, a lakefront swimming pool and hot tub... all within walking distance of downtown. They also offer great Golf Packages with every area course. 1-877-657-LAKE (5253) / lakeshoreinn.com

Centrally located in Kelowna only

minutes from sandy beaches, Chinook Motel offers some of the most reasonably priced golf packages in the Okanagan with Stay & Play golf packages from \$88 per person. They offer "build your own" packages so you choose where & when to golf. 1-888-493-8893

Continued on next page

winery and shares the same spectacular views as the pool area. The wine showroom is an inviting spacious area where knowledgeable staff offer comprehensive tastings sure to help you leave your double bogeys behind.

To cap off your day, enjoy a relaxing, intimate and pampered evening at the contemporary Passatempo bistro-style restaurant located in the main building. This is a dining experience you will not soon forget. An emphasis is placed on fresh quality ingredients and special efforts are made to get regional fare complimented by an extensive wine list featuring local wineries. The calamari, bison and wild salmon are not to be missed.

The Sonora Desert Spa is now open on site at the resort and offers wellness treatments that will be sure to keep you relaxed and rejuvenated. For more information about Spirit Ridge or rates, visit www.spiritridge.ca.

For visitors to the southern interior of B.C. that are looking for an extended stay and a few extra rounds, look no further than Bellasera Tuscan Villas & Piazza, located 5 minutes from the Kelowna airport in the heart of the Okanagan Valley. Bellasera is one of Kelowna's first Resort Residence Clubs, ideal for monthly vacation rentals or snowbirds. This vacation property offers 58 luxury two bedroom, two-storey villas on the 2nd hole of the Championship Quail Course at Okanagan Golf Club.


The accommodations are beautifully appointed with old country elegance style. The warm colors are inviting and it is easy to curl up on the comfy couch or in an oversized chair to watch a movie or the latest highlights on the Golf Channel. The villas are extremely spacious offering over 1,300 sq ft of space. There is a large fully stocked modern kitchen with stainless steel appliances, separate dining area, private sundeck with outdoor patio set and BBQ overlooking the golf course, indoor gas fire place, two full bedrooms and bathrooms, a washer and dryer, a large locker room for storage and access to high speed internet. The ample space is perfect for relaxing or entertaining after your round.

SPECIAL PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

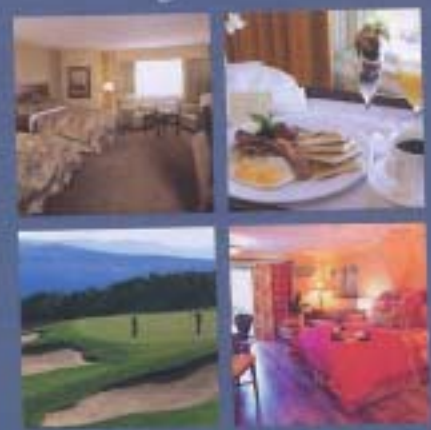
For those guests looking to stay buff and toned or to merely work off your fare from the half-way-house, there is a heated pool and fitness facility on site. If you are just looking to kick back and relax a whirlpool, outdoor

wood burning stove and private putting green are available. In addition to the luxurious accommodations a concierge service is available. The convenience of pre-arrival

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Casa Loma Lakeshore Resort offers 48 individually designed and owned suites that include virtually every amenity imaginable. They offer "Golf Kelowna" packages as low as \$101 per person per night with Kelowna Springs, Shadow Ridge and Shannon Lake, and "Premium Golf" packages start from \$139 per person per night with Gallagher's Canyon, Predator Ridge, Harvest and The Okanagan. 1-800-771-5253 / casaloma.com

The Prestige Inns across BC (Kelowna, Vernon, Salmon Arm, Golden, Radium Hot Springs, Cranbrook, Nelson(2), and Rossland) offer special Golf Packages that include one night accommodation, 18 holes of golf, shared power cart, and all applicable taxes. Prices after October 1st are even lower. 1-87-PRESTIGE / prestigehotelsandresorts.com

Princeton GC... Stay and Play RV packages - RV and 18 holes of golf each person per day range from Weekend Double \$179 to 7 Days Double \$499. 1-888-295-5123 / princetongolfclub.com

princetongolfclub.com

Ponderosa GC- 6 Game Pack- \$222 and 10 Game Pack* + 3 power cart rentals for \$13 each- \$350-valid anytime. 1-250-767-2149 / golfponderosa.com

St Andrews By The Lake is hosting 9 Holes of night golf Sat Sept 29; \$35.00 Per person (\$10.00 Goes to the "Volley Club Sunshine Fund) Format is Two person team alternate shot; Includes dinner. FREE Juniors Golf (16 and under) happens Mon, & Wed after 4:00 PM, with a paid adult golf round. 1-250-

497-5648 / standrewsbythelake.com

Sunset Ranch says to "Phone for last minute booking specials," as they offer deals because of fall aerating

1-877-606-7700 / sunsetranchbc.com

Sonora Dunes have "legendary status" among locals for a deal that offers unlimited golf, a free burger and beverage for \$40 on Fridays

Twin Lakes G&RV has a "Heat Beater" special that includes green fees and cart for \$45 after 1 pm and 9 hole after 4 pm for just \$20 1-866-576-3672

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grocery service, optional housekeeping services, assistance with car rentals, tee-time, event planning and activity assistance are all available to guests.

To make your stay complete, the Okanagan Golf Club is only minutes away. Two championship courses are available and are sure to delight and challenge golfers of all abilities along with a spacious and expansive practice facility.

is for you. The views of Okanagan Valley are fantastic and there are several dramatic elevated tees creating the illusion that your ball is seemingly weightless. Generous landing areas offer players a variety of club selections and you don't have to be afraid to pull out the Big Dog. The greens are undulating and well bunkered requiring precision on your approach shots. A ball on the wrong part of the green can quickly lead to a smooth three jack.

The original course on this property is the Quail Course, designed by renowned course architect Les Furber. The Quail was built in 1994 and is the epitome of target style golf. It would behoove players to know the yardage off the tee to the landing area as driver is not always the best bet. The elevated tees and greens place added pressure on club selection and if you escape many holes with a par you should count your blessings.

Tree-lined, undulating and multi-tiered fairways add to the splendor of the course and unique holes such as the split fairway and massive waste bunker on #14 and a challenging finishing hole in which your drive comes dangerously close to the lake, keep you coming back to make up the lost strokes.

The other course is famed Jack Nicklaus' The Bear, opened in August of 1999. If you are looking for remarkable vistas, this course

Other great courses in the area include Predator Ridge, Gallagher's Canyon, Harvest, Kelowna Springs and Sunset Ranch.

When your round is over don't forget to check out the fun and unique dining options in and around Kelowna, downtown or near the lake. If you are looking for a day off from the links there are dozens of award winning wineries in the region that you can check out. Some must hits include Mission Hill, Gray Monk, CedarCreek and Summerhill Pyramid. Select a bottle of your favourite wine to bring back to your Villa for a taste of Tuscany on your own balcony. For more information on the Bellasera properties go to www.bellasera.ca. **IG**

Lisa is the 5-Time Canadian Long Drive Champion for Women and holds the Canadian Women's Record at 350 yards 2 feet 2 inches. Lisa can be reached through her website www.lisalongball.com

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