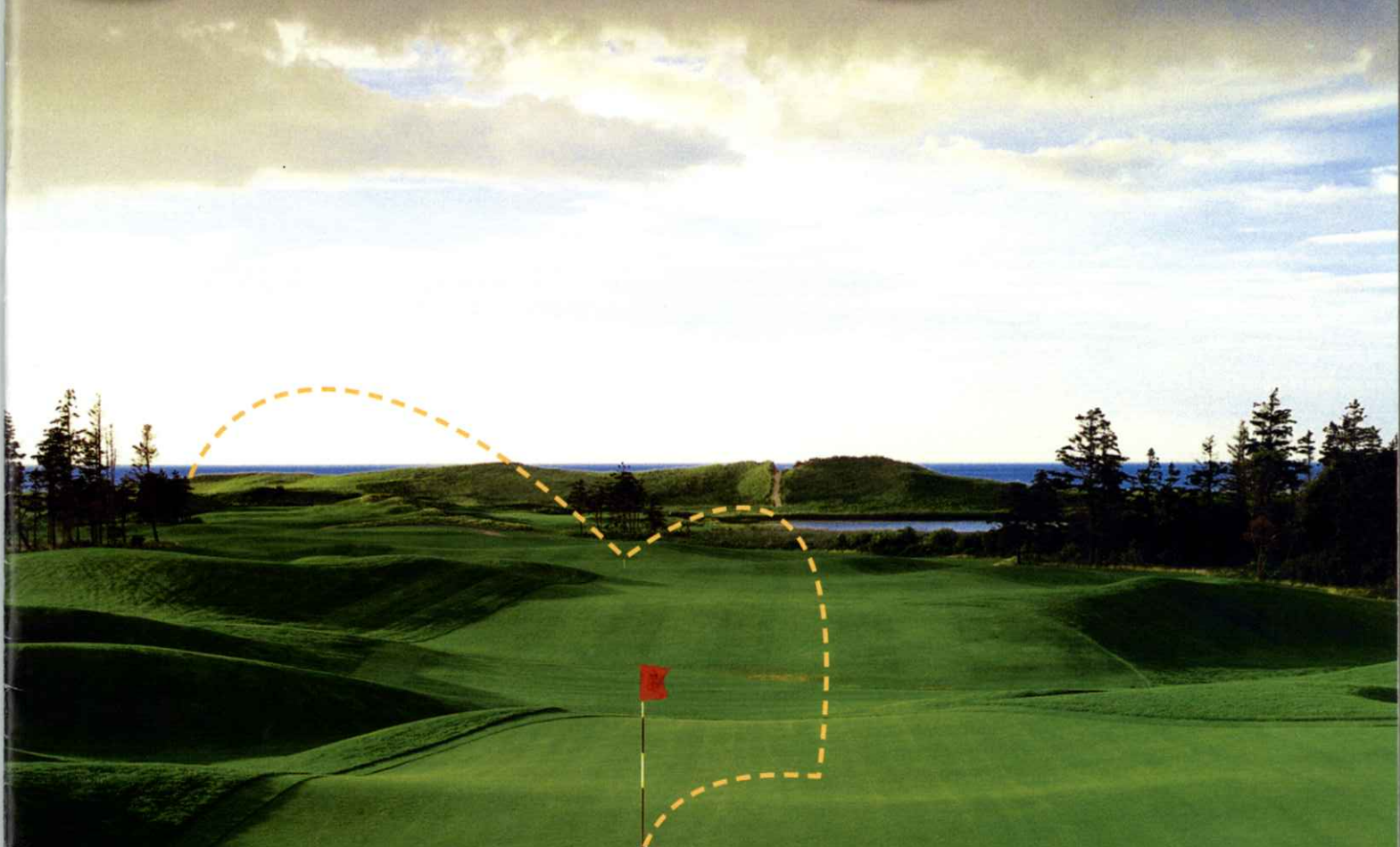


globegolf

THE GLOBE AND MAIL



100

The first-ever ranking of the

**BEST PUBLIC AND
RESORT COURSES
IN CANADA**



A good walk, unspoiled

It's often been said that the golden age of sports occurred during the 1920s, when Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey and Bobby Jones were in their primes. This was also a sparkling age for golf in Canada, with masters such as Donald Ross, Alister MacKenzie, Willie Park, Harry Colt and A.W. Tillinghast having scattered courses like so many pearls from one end of the country to the other.

As for the golden age of golf, well, we're living in the middle of it now. Courses by the classic designers remain, including jewels from Canadian architect Stanley Thompson and fellow charter member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects Robert Trent Jones Sr. But these have been joined by more recent efforts from the likes of Robert Trent Jones Jr., Jack Nicklaus, Tom McBroom, Doug Carrick, Graham Cooke, Les Furber and Rod Whitman. Even more important, the game is no longer the purview of the rich. Most of the best courses being designed today are public layouts.

Although there is no such thing as a Canadian design aesthetic, the best courses on the following pages all share a similar sense of being immersed in their physical settings. The Coastal Mountains frame Nicklaus's course in Whistler (No. 25). The Rockies provide the backdrop to Thompson's

alpine masterpieces in Jasper and Banff (No. 1 and No. 4). In Ontario, the Canadian Shield is the leitmotif for some of Tom McBroom's best tracks. He used the granite outcroppings to accent holes at Rocky Crest (No. 5), while at the Links of Crowbush Cove (No. 7), he gave centre stage to the PEI coastline.

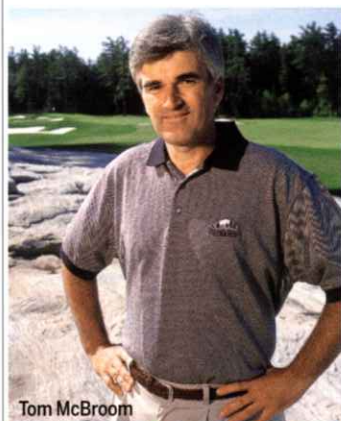
The course architects are not beyond shaping the land themselves. Rod Whitman's Wolf Creek (No. 54), in Ponoka, Alta., lies in a dramatic sea of dunes and windswept grass. He is known in the industry as an architect who likes to get out on the bulldozer and shape the ground almost by hand. At Osprey Valley's Heathlands (No. 35), 45 minutes northwest of Toronto, Doug Carrick has built up landforms to provide a distinctly links-like feel, what with faux dunes sculpted into the massive, open environment.

Much of Nicklaus's Glen Abbey Golf Club in Oakville, Ont., lies among residential developments, but even there, golfers playing the valley nine are more likely to think of the landscape, specifically Sixteen Mile Creek, where salmon sometimes run. It's worth stopping for a moment to remark on the Abbey, which was the all-but-permanent home of the Canadian Open from the course's launch in 1976 through to 2000. It played

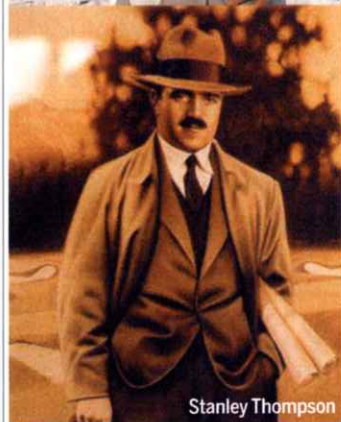
host again last September, when Vijay Singh beat Mike Weir in a playoff. After the tournament, many players said the Abbey still played as tough as it had 27 years earlier, when it was one of the country's pre-eminent layouts. Our panelists ranked it 24th among the country's best, suggesting that many excellent courses have been built since its debut.

Look for more top-notch public courses to open before the next ranking appears two years from now. There is McBroom's Whitewater Golf Club in Thunder Bay, Ont., with three distinct live nines, and another nine holes at Carrick's Humber Valley Golf Resort overlooking Deer Lake in Newfoundland. A decade ago, Bob Rotella, the sports psychologist to many PGA players, wrote a book called *Golf Is Not a Game of Perfect*. The public and resort courses in our Top 100, however, are a game of perfect—or as near as you'll find anywhere.

—Lorne Rubenstein



Tom McBroom



Stanley Thompson

Lorne's top 5 public courses

- » Highlands Links, Cape Breton, N.S.
- » Eagles Nest Golf Club, Toronto
- » Osprey Valley (Heathlands), Alton, Ont.
- » Jasper Park, Jasper, Alta.
- » Chateau Whistler, Whistler, B.C.



Designer Graham Cooke's layout at Fox Harb'r takes full advantage of its seaside setting

Irish links use gigantic shoulders. Taboo is also among the best-conditioned courses in Muskoka year in, year out.
1-800-461-0236.
www.tabooresort.com

7 THE LINKS AT CROWBUSH COVE Lakeside, PEI

A must-play for anyone visiting the island province. Each year, thousands of golfers make the pilgrimage to Crowbush, marvelling at the ocean views and pitting their skills against a layout that can, by turns, greet you with a warm handshake or a cool slap. The Tom McBroom layout—tough but generally fair—is laced with wetlands, sand dunes and pot bunkers. When the wind whips off the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the forced carries call for PGA-like drives, a discouraging (and impossible) prospect for most high-handicappers.
1-902-961-7300.
www.golfinkspei.com

8 WILDFIRE GOLF CLUB Stoney Lake, Ont.

In 2002, Tom McBroom unveiled a 7,020-yard masterpiece that wanders softly through 210 acres of gently rolling open meadow, mixed bush, spectacular pine forest and magnificent wetland. With a classic low-lying, softly shaped bunker design and generous greens, it seems as

though the course has existed for a 100 years. There's a fresh look at every turn, and the gigantic granite boulders that line the right side of No. 9, a 459-yard dogleg, are one of a kind. Short hikes from tee to green make it one of the best walking courses in the country. Cottagers can boat up to the club's Stoney Lake docks, while limited public access is available to guests of four area resorts.
1-705-877-9453,
www.golfwildfire.com

9 FOX HARB'R GOLF RESORT & SPA Wallace, N.S.

A big-budget course owned by big-wheel Ron Joyce, co-founder of the Tim Hortons chain. Named Best New Canadian Course in 2001 by *Golf Digest*, the strong Graham Cooke design takes full advantage of its seaside setting to give it a links sensibility. The front nine meanders over treed and rolling terrain; the back along the Northumberland Strait. And yes, the conditioning is immaculate. If you can handle the \$250 green fee for non-guests or \$200 for guests, it's worth every penny.
1-866-257-1801, www.foxharbr.com

10 LE MAÎTRE Mont-Tremblant, Que.

In 2001, ClubLink Corp. put its stamp on the Tremblant region when it launched Le Maître on the outskirts of the village of St-Jovite. A

private course that is open to guests staying at affiliated Tremblant hotels and resorts, Le Maître's design reflects the talents of Darrell Huxham and PGA tour favourite Fred Couples. An immaculately groomed layout with all of the usual country-club perks, the handsome course curls up and down the high ground, through a tighter section of woodland, and across a stretch of wetland where shorter hitters will need to crank it long to reach the dry stuff. The green on the 18th hole is a fitting denouement next to an extravagant, two-storey waterfall.
1-800-787-0617, www.clublink.ca

11 PREDATOR RIDGE GOLF RESORT Vernon, B.C.

This resort spreads across the rolling landscape above Kalamalka Lake, about halfway between Kelowna and Vernon in B.C.'s Okanagan Valley. The dark green of the 27 holes contrasts sharply with the waving fescue, the pines on the ridges and the deep blue of the ponds. No golfer could pass by its stone gates. Sergio Garcia was so enamoured with the course when he played here during the Telus Skins Game in 2000 that he bought two cottages, which are part of the master plan to make Predator a true resort. The nines—Red Tail, Osprey and Peregrine—have sharp talons, which are especially evident on their undulating putting surfaces. Hitting the middle of these

Les Furber greens in regulation doesn't guarantee a par.
1-888-578-6688.
www.predatorridge.com

12 FAIRMONT ALGONQUIN GOLF COURSE

St. Andrews by-the-Sea, N.B.

The original Algonquin layout opened for play more than a century ago on the shores of Passamaquoddy Bay. The famed architect Donald Ross tinkered with that design in the 1920s, and five years ago, modern phenom Tom McBroom dragged the course into the new millennium. McBroom incorporated such modern design elements as larger tees and even larger greens while maintaining the course's integrity, routing the back nine to take full advantage of the oceanfront real estate. Consider the par-three 12th, a 154-yard downhill shot: four white-sand bunkers protect the front of the green, while, off the back, the bay will suck in any long balls.
1-506-529-8823.
www.fairmont.com/golfalg

13 WOODEN STICKS Uxbridge, Ont.

Gary Roberts and Joe Nieuwendyk are part owners, hence the hockey-related moniker. Twelve of the 18 holes pay tribute to legendary courses, among them No. 12 at Augusta National (the short par three at Amen Corner) and the Road Hole at St. Andrews, Scotland. Perhaps the most memorable is the faithful recreation of the famed par-three island green at TPC Sawgrass. The other six holes are architect Ron Garl originals. (Some panelists rated these higher than the homage holes.) The course is always busy, with Bay Streeters doing deals between tee shots.
1-905-852-4379.
www.woodensticks.com

14 EAGLES NEST GOLF CLUB Maple, Ont.

Understated course architect Doug Carrick lets his work talk for him, and Eagles Nest makes a loud statement about his talents. Located just north of Toronto, the course resembles a tough Irish links layout, with massive dunes, high-walled pot bunkers and fescue-framed greens. From the back tees, you'll walk nearly 7,500 yards on Carrick's tour de force, which has a slope rating of 141; there are heroic carries, closely mown chipping areas and hazard-lined doglegs and greens. Carrick has used high slopes around greens and in fairways to provide for awkward lies and strange bounces. That said, it's certainly a fair test for players who manage their games and hit the ball solidly.
1-905-653-4653.
www.eaglesnestgolf.com