

One-hundred-and-one years ago, Pebble Beach Golf Links opened to the public after two outstanding amateur golfers, Jack Neville and Douglas Grant, designed one of the wonders of the golf world. Unlike many other links courses that abut great bodies of water, their layout hovered above a rugged coastline. To maximize the number of holes on the ocean, the links were routed in a figure 8. Ten years after it opened, Pebble Beach hosted the U.S. Amateur. Since then, the now legendary course has hosted six U.S. Opens (with a seventh slated for 2027), a PGA Championship, the perennial AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am – the old Crosby Clambake – and, in 2023, is scheduled to host the U.S. Women's Open. While the competition seems to get stiffer each year, Pebble Beach has been ranked as the No. 1 Greatest Public Golf Course in America by *Golf Digest* since that category was introduced in 2003.

While Pebble Beach Golf Links remains the 17-Mile Drive's premier attraction, the peninsula is also home to three other great championship courses, all of them accessible to the public, along with one of the world's greatest private courses, the ultra-exclusive Cypress Point Club. Indeed, any itinerary to the Monterey Peninsula should incorporate two or more other courses to create lasting memories. Following are summaries of the best beyond Pebble's lure.

Spyglass Hill



Located just a mile away from Pebble Beach Golf Links, the course was designed in the 1960s by Robert Trent Jones Sr. and has a vastly different feel from its sister course. Long considered the toughest golf course in northern California, Spyglass Hill begins with a dogleg left par 5 that opens to sweeping views of Monterey Bay and the Santa Cruz Mountains. The ensuing four holes include ocean views as they wind through, alongside, atop, and over sand dunes. The tee box of the 172-yard third hole includes views of the aforementioned Cypress Point Club along with a backdrop of the Pacific Ocean. While perhaps not as famous as No. 7 on Pebble Beach, this par 3 includes many more obstacles than its counterpart, including waste areas teeming with native grasses. A saving grace is that the green is large and forgiving.

Robert Trent Jones referenced No. 4 as his favorite par 4 of his long and celebrated career. Nicknamed "Blind Pew," the hole ends with a fascinating 55-yard long putting surface that is only 10-yards wide and is sunk between sand dunes. Be careful with

The Drive of a Lifetime

Why the Monterey Peninsula is worth the trip

By Neal Kotlarek and Dave Weretka

Arguably, there are only two iconic pathways leading to a pair of America's greatest golf courses. The first is Magnolia Lane, the stunning 330-yard entryway into Augusta National Golf Club that is protected by 61 towering magnolia trees, most of which date back to the 1850s. Most of us, of course, will never have a chance to perform a test drive, as the driveway is only used by the members and guests of one of the country's most exclusive clubs.

The other iconic pathway is joyously accessible to the public and may arguably be the country's most scenic roadway. It is 17-Mile Drive, which hugs the Pacific Ocean coastline and takes drivers through parts of California's Del Monte Forest, past barking sea lions near Bird Rock, and even past a lone cypress tree that has stood guard over the ocean for 250 years. The painter Frances McComas called Point Lomas, along the two-lane road, "the greatest meeting of land and sea in the world," a quote almost always attributed to the author Robert Louis Stevenson. All avid golfers can echo the sentiment, as the Monterey Peninsula is not only a spectacular drive, it's also home to Pebble Beach, Spyglass Hill, and a host of other stunning championship courses.



shot selection on the approach shot, as a ball on the wrong side of this green could leave a putt almost a half of a football field long.

Following the fifth hole, the course weaves into the mature pine trees of the lush Del Monte Forest. While the fairways are generously wide over this stretch of holes, Jones placed strategic fairway bunkers on every par 4 and par 5. These hazards reduce landing areas significantly to thus bring the trees lining the fairways into play.

The highlight of the back nine is the intimidating No. 14. A double dogleg, this par 5 bends severely right over the final 150 yards. The green is tucked behind a pond and a deep snaking bunker on its right side.

The Links at Spanish Bay



Just as cliffs are the theme of Pebble Beach and the Del Monte Forest dominates Spyglass Hill, sand dunes are the predominant characteristic of Spanish Bay. Designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr. with input from Tom Watson and former USGA president Sandy Tatum, the course has a distinctly Scottish feel as its fairways consist of fescue grass. This feature adds a strategic element to the course with many approach shots calling for a pitch-and-run to the green.

Site of an abandoned sand quarry, Spanish Bay zigzags along the ocean for all but four holes. While some of the fairways are extremely wide, hazards abound across the course. These include pot bunkers, marshlands, waste areas, and deep fescue grass. PGA Champions Tour star Scott McCarron won the 2016 TaylorMade Pebble Beach Invitational and praised the course afterwards. "Spyglass Hill and Pebble Beach are my two favorite courses," he said. "And Spanish Bay probably has the best views of any golf course I've ever seen."

Each evening at Spanish Bay, a lone bagpiper plays a mournful tune and paces across the course to signal the sunset. Few traditions in golf are more inspiring.

Quail Lodge Golf Club

Located seven miles inland from Pebble Beach, Quail Lodge Golf Club is a gently rolling parkland-style course designed by Robert Muir Graves and restored in 2015 by Todd Echenrode. The layout plays to a modest (by today's standards) 6,464 yards, but is plenty challenging due to the presence of 10 lakes, scores of bunkers, and the Carmel River. Nestled in the secluded Carmel Valley, Quail



Lodge serves up great scenic views of the verdant hills surrounding most holes. Impeccable conditioning makes the course a joy to play.

The most interesting hole on the front nine is No. 6, a short par 4 with a candy cane-shaped green fronted by a creek. Make birdie here and you'll feel as if Christmas arrived early. The 17th hole is a terrific par 3 featuring a large green protected by wasteland on the left and three massive bunkers on the right. The entire hole is framed by trees and hills in the distance.

Pasatiempo, Santa Cruz



Even though this course is situated an hour's drive away from Pebble Beach and is not on the Monterey Peninsula, this fabulous and historic course deserves your consideration when scheduling a golf trip to this area. Indeed, if your flight from Chicago takes you into San Jose, I recommend you make this your very first stop. Everything about this semi-private course (with limited tee times available to the public) makes it a must-play. For starters, the layout was the vision of

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Monterey Peninsula

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Marion Hollins – the only American woman who carried a men's polo handicap, and who was a guiding force behind the establishment of Cypress Point.

Pasatiempo was designed in 1929 by the great Alister MacKenzie, with later updating performed by Jim Urbina and Tom Doak. Interestingly, MacKenzie owned a home set just off the sixth fairway and made it his primary residence until he passed away in 1934. Set in the rolling southern hills near Monterey Bay, Pasatiempo might mean "relaxed passage

of time" in Spanish, but the course serves up ample shares of drama from hole to hole to hole.

Considered by many golf critics as a great classic of golf's early Golden Age, the course's features include sprawling bunkers, rolling hills, small ravines, and a large barranca. A joyous romp from start to finish, it seems appropriate that Pasatiempo's signature hole is its last one. While few championship courses end on a par 3, this 169-yard hole can truly make or break one's round. From an elevated tee, the player must weave a long-iron or middle-iron over a barranca teeming

with tall grass and two classic MacKenzie bunkers. Still two more bunkers protect the back side of the large green. If the flagstick is placed on the far left side of the hole, be prepared to hold your breath as the fronting bunkers snuggle up to the green's fringe. The better play here is to aim for the center of the green and hope to sink a long putt to end your round with a bang.

Few golf trips in America can match the exhilaration of a visit to the Monterey area. Great golf, comfortable temperatures and even a great oceanside drive provide travelers with memories that will last a lifetime.

Royal Fox

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has a reciprocity program with the sister club The Grove that allows players to experience a second course." Tulk pointed out that The Grove also has an active tennis program featuring two tennis instructors. "Both properties have amazing social environments that truly make members feel like part of an extended family. We offer lots of diverse programs and events geared toward every member of a family – even those who don't play golf."

Designed by Robert Bruce Harris, The Grove is an impeccably manicured course that stretches to 7,000 yards from the back tees but offers multiple tee options for all handicap levels. Harris is a member of the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame. His acclaimed designs include the Country Club of Florida in the Village of Golf, Illinois State University Golf Course in Normal, and The Brute at Grand Geneva Resort in Lake Geneva, Wis.

Along with outstanding championship golf, The Grove places emphasis on its dining experience. The club's culinary team is anchored by two Chicago legends: Joe Roireau, former corporate chef at Phil Stefan's Signature Restaurants, and Luigi Garcia, former executive chef at Riva seafood restaurant on Chicago's Navy Pier. "We wanted to provide a top-tier food experience for our members and guests," said Tulk. "With two of Chicago's top chefs now on our staff, we are confident that goal has been realized."

Regular membership at Royal Fox Country Club provides unlimited golf and amenities to access to members and their families to both Royal Fox and The Grove. Family membership includes the primary member, spouse, and children under 25. Young Executive memberships (age 40 and under) are available for individuals and families seeking a networking hub and social gathering spaces.

For more information on Royal Fox Country Club, visit www.royalfoxcc.com.

ON THE CORKSCREWS

STEPHEN HAWK

Cabell Coursey is a busy guy these days. In addition to being the winemaker at Lombardi Winery (profiled last issue), he is also consulting winemaker at Flanagan Wines, and winemaker and co-owner, with John Graves, at Coursey Graves Winery in Santa Rosa, California. He began his career in wine in Burgundy, and went on to toil in Oregon's Willamette Valley and New Zealand.

He is committed to constantly improving the wines he makes from vintage to vintage by understanding his vineyards and maximizing their quality. He also feels obligated to mentor young winegrowers by teaching parameters they can use to customize and improve grape farming for better produce.

Although there are plenty of renowned wineries and vineyards throughout Sonoma, of course, the lesser-known vineyards of Bennett Valley quietly yield some of the area's most highly concentrated fruit. This is because the well-drained volcanic soils of the area ensure that the vines grow deep root systems in search of hydration. Ultimately this leads to concentrated, complex wines, as the water-stressed vines will focus their attention on grapes, rather than luxurious foliage. The rocky soils coupled with the cool weather mimic the austere conditions of Bordeaux.

Coursey Graves is located on vineyard sites 800 to 1500 feet above sea level on Bennett Mountain overlooking Sonoma, on the western edge of the ancient, volcanic Mayacamas Range that separates Napa and Sonoma. The winery, estate vineyards, and caves are built into the slope overlooking the Bennett Valley below. Eighteen acres are planted to Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Merlot, Petit Verdot, and Syrah.

In addition to the estate vineyard, Coursey Graves relies on two others as well. Nestled on the sloped edge of an ancient volcano, Coombsville Vineyard is home to sixteen acres of Bordeaux varieties growing between the red and black igneous basalt and the white, ashy volcanic tuff. At two thousand feet above sea level, Cabernet from Howell Mountain Vineyard benefits from much cooler day-

Hey Man, Dig These Coursey Graves

time temperatures and slower ripening.

I have now had the opportunity to try eight of Cabell Coursey's wines. They all have a smooth and silky mouthfeel. Thinking this had to reflect the intervention of the winemaker, I asked him about how he achieves that, and he had this to say, "First is vineyard work. I get up-front and mid-palate concentration through diligent effort in the vineyard, by managing fruit load to the amount of vine canopy, and careful applications of irrigation. I have

some control over berry size, and therefore juice to skin ratio, by controlling how much water-stress the vines have at various times during the growing season. Extra stress at flowering and fruit set limits berry size, while more water increases berry size. I don't have a standard plan each vintage, but rather change according to conditions.

"Second is tannin management during the winemaking process. Certain tannins (phenols) extract from grapes at different ranges in temperature. Also, they bind at different temperatures. I manage the temperatures during fermentation very closely and change to either extract, not extract, or bind, depending on taste and mouthfeel. I do use lab numbers to double check what I taste. However, it's mostly by taste. After working with these vineyards and my cellar for a few years, I've started to learn where the wines' tannins need to be at the end of fermentation to age properly upon the wines' release and subsequent aging."



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Coursey Graves Chardonnay 2018 \$60

The fruit for this wine was sourced from the Durell and Heintz vineyards on the Sonoma coast. It was fermented in oak and stainless-steel barrels. It is light bright lemon yellow in the glass, which is appropriate as it opens with the smell of lemons, paired with a hint of melon and crushed stone. Those flavors continue on the palate, abetted by a zippy acidity and a suggestion of oak. It wraps up in a brisk finish. Only 91 cases were made.

Coursey Graves Syrah 2016 \$65

This 100% Syrah hails from Coursey Graves' estate vineyard in Bennett Valley. It is an opaque but brilliant purple color. It features aromas of dark red fruits. The rather lean palate offers flavors of blackberry and olive, with a bit of pepper at the end. It's all complemented by good tannins and a moderately long finish. Production was limited to 268 cases.

For more about Coursey Graves and many other wine reviews, be sure to visit winervana.com.

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