

## Austin Golf Hits an Ace

As home to three of golf's biggest legends – Harvey Penick, Ben Crenshaw and Tom Kite – Austin claims a deep-rooted golf heritage. The Legends of Golf, the first senior professional tournament, launched from Onion Creek Country Club. Global retailing giant Golfsmith is based here. A year-round average temperature of 68 degrees accompanies Austin's annual 300 days of sunshine, and a natural landscape of rolling hills and sparkling lakes provides a backdrop for some two dozen public play courses.

**Barton Creek Resort & Spa** offers four of Austin's most famous and exceptional courses. The award-winning championship courses, designed by Tom Fazio, Arnold Palmer and Ben Crenshaw, reflect the natural terrain of the Hill Country. Players find themselves surrounded by verdant hills, lush vegetation and abundant wildlife. A member of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, the resort encourages the preservation and enhancement of wildlife and natural resources on its courses.

Guests enjoy one of the top golf vacation schools at The Chuck Cook Golf Academy. *Golf Digest* named Cook to the top ten of "America's 50 Greatest Teachers." The school offers both group classes and private instruction. Other amenities include an elite caddie program, with which trained caddies assist golfers with reading putts, calculating accurate yardage, spotting and locating balls and maintaining the pace of play.

Just outside of Austin in nearby Bastrop, the Wolfdancer Golf Club at the new **Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort & Spa** has already achieved national acclaim. Created by legendary designer Arthur Hills, the 7,205-yard, par 72 course makes the most of the area's natural beauty by combining the feel of three courses in one. Holes traverse three distinct ecosystems – a sloping prairie, wooded ridgeline and river valley dotted with native pecan trees.

**Lakeway Inn Conference Resort** offers guests access to some of Austin's most exclusive private clubs. The **Hills of Lakeway** is home to two 18-hole championship courses, The Hills and Flintrock Falls, designed by Jack Nicklaus. The newer Flintrock Falls is noted as having two of the most picturesque holes in the country. **Falconhead Golf Club** set a standard as the world's first PGA Tour signature series course designed and operated to meet the tour's standards. **Live Oak Golf Course** is free of sand traps and bunkers, allowing guests to relax among the native trees enveloping the landscape. Lastly, rolling fairways take the game past limestone outcroppings, serene water features and striking vistas at **Yaupon Golf Course**.

**Horseshoe Bay Marriott Resort**, northwest of Austin at Marble Falls, offers more than 20,000 yards of challenging golf on three championship Robert Trent Jones, Sr. golf courses. A 14,000 square-foot clubhouse is located on the Slick Rock course. The Ram Rock course challenges golfers with narrow fairways, sand traps and water hazards on 10 holes. Guests get a great view of the lake from the Apple Rock course. The property also features Whitewater Putting Course, which is billed as one of the most elaborate 18-hole putting courses in America. The lighted holes are surrounded by exotic wildlife, rose gardens, a fitness trail and outdoor pavilion.

In addition to resort golf courses, intermediate and expert players can test their skill on more than 20 public courses. **Lago Vista Golf Course**, a local favorite, features an upscale grill, pro-shop, driving range, pool and tennis court in addition to the 18 holes. At **Teravista**, an exclusive Troon golf facility, players refine their skills on a putting green, chipping green or driving range before playing the challenging 18.

Austin Parks and Recreation department operates five municipal courses, where green fees average around \$17.50. The longtime favorite of those is **Lion's Municipal**, originally constructed in 1929. Former Masters' winner Ben Crenshaw calls Lion's Municipal "a little slice of golf heaven" – he shot his first hole-in-one here. Local legend asserts that the hole retains its good luck for golfers who attempt the same feat.

For those players who need a little more instruction before heading out on the links, the legacy of celebrated instructor Harvey Penick remains strong in Austin. Penick lived in Austin and coached

the University of Texas golf team from 1931-1963. Today, UT's golf program continues as a recognized institution, graduating some of the sport's greatest legends including Tom Kite, Ben Crenshaw, Justin Leonard and Cindy Figgs-Currier. The teams play at the state-of-the-art **University of Texas Golf Club**, designed by Bechtol-Russell and located at Steiner Ranch west of downtown.

Penick's "Little Red Book" continues on as the largest-selling sports book in history. His teaching methods also inspire two instructional facilities: the **Harvey Penick Golf Campus**, a public course that the First Tee of Austin utilizes as a training course for underprivileged children, and **Harvey Penick Golf Academy**, located at Golfsmith's flagship store in north Austin.

Students can practice their swing at **Golfsmith**, or sign up for one- to three-day courses in Penick's method. Professional instructors teach and refine putting skills, driving distance, form and fairway training. As the top specialty golf retailer in the nation, Golfsmith sells everything from clubs to apparel and offers such services as club fitting and swing consultation.

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