

## GOURMET GOLF

Courses to please  
the palate

By Cori Brett

**FOR MANY GOLFERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE 80 PERCENT WHO NEVER BREAK 100, THE BEST PART OF THE GAME** comes after the last hole is played—in the clubhouse or resort restaurant. Fortunately, course operators are increasingly paying as much attention—and sometimes much, much more—to the 19th hole as they do to the first 18. On those days when the trek from tee to green fits Mark Twain's description of golf as “a good walk spoiled,” that's all the more reason to trade in the cleats for the culinary delights waiting at the end of the round. On a recent trip, I set out to sample some of the best golf—and golf resort food—in the West.

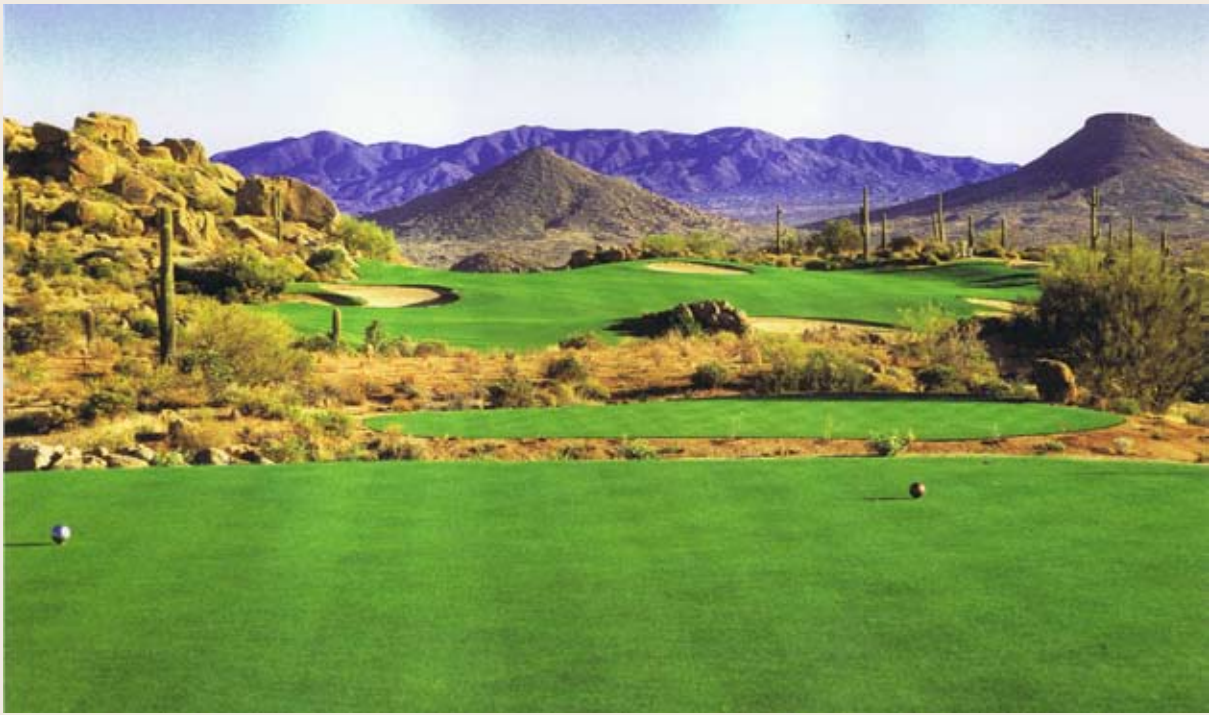
I began my travels at a public course with a reputation for offering a private club experience, Troon North Golf Club in Scottsdale. Troon North was named the Southwest's best golf resort by Travel & Leisure Golf magazine, and it was easy to see why from the moment I arrived. Valets rushed to unload my clubs and direct me to the clubhouse. Inside, a concierge pointed out locker rooms and the shoe repair station, ready to repair broken laces or remove the scuff of the green from those new golf shoes.

The pampering, however, stops at the first tee. And no amount of country-club conditioning could save me from the third hole on the Monument Course. A stone monolith monopolizes the fairway and I wasted several shots trying get around it. I decided to put the monolith behind me (literally) and look forward to stunning views—rocky desert, tall saguaro cactus, jagged mountains in the distance. Troon North's Monument and Pinnacle courses were reworked recently by Tom Weiskopf, who

switched the front and back nines, lengthened some holes and changed the bunkering.

Back at the clubhouse, I found an expanded cocktail hour that rivaled the best in Scottsdale. Our foursome loved the appetizers—Kobe beef sliders and shrimp tempura; they amped up our appetites for the feast that awaited at Talavera, the new restaurant at the Four Seasons Resort at Troon North.

At Talavera, a tequila sommelier welcomed us with the advice to “forget your previous experiences with tequila,” meaning those wormin-the-bottle evenings back in our college days. We began by tasting raw, unaged blanco and working up to the prized extra anejo, an aged tequila as smooth as cognac. We slid right into dinner. Talavera offers a colorful atmosphere of bright greens and purples and is warmed by an open fire pit framed by the desert landscape and Pinnacle Peak. The food is eclectic and delicious.



### California Bound

I then headed to Southern California, intent on seeing how two years of renovation had improved (although I hardly thought that possible) one of my favorite courses, Pelican Hill Golf Club in Newport Coast. As I discovered, nearly everything had changed, for the better: new clubhouse, revamped courses and a new hotel (under construction). What remained were the glorious ocean views. In fact, the views on the Ocean South course had improved, because shrubs and bushes that once obstructed visibility were replaced with lower-growing plants.

Pelican Hill's new clubhouse features the Pelican Grill, more an upscale restaurant than a golf course grill. Settling into a deep booth, we watched chef Thomas Ryan and his crew work in the open kitchen, flaming a bourbon brined skirt steak that moments later made its way to our table. After dinner, the expansive terrace that runs the length of the restaurant lured us outside for an ocean sunset.

The course and clubhouse makeovers are the first steps toward completion of the Resort at Pelican Hill, scheduled for late 2008. The final phase will consist of 204 bungalow rooms and 128 villas, plus more restaurants and a spa.

### West to Hawaii

After years of Hawaiian family vacations, our family has settled on Oahu as our favorite destination. Its central location gives each of us, including the avid golfers, plenty of opportunity to pursue the leisure pastimes of our choice. We make Hilton Hawaiian Village our headquarters. It's a self-contained resort set

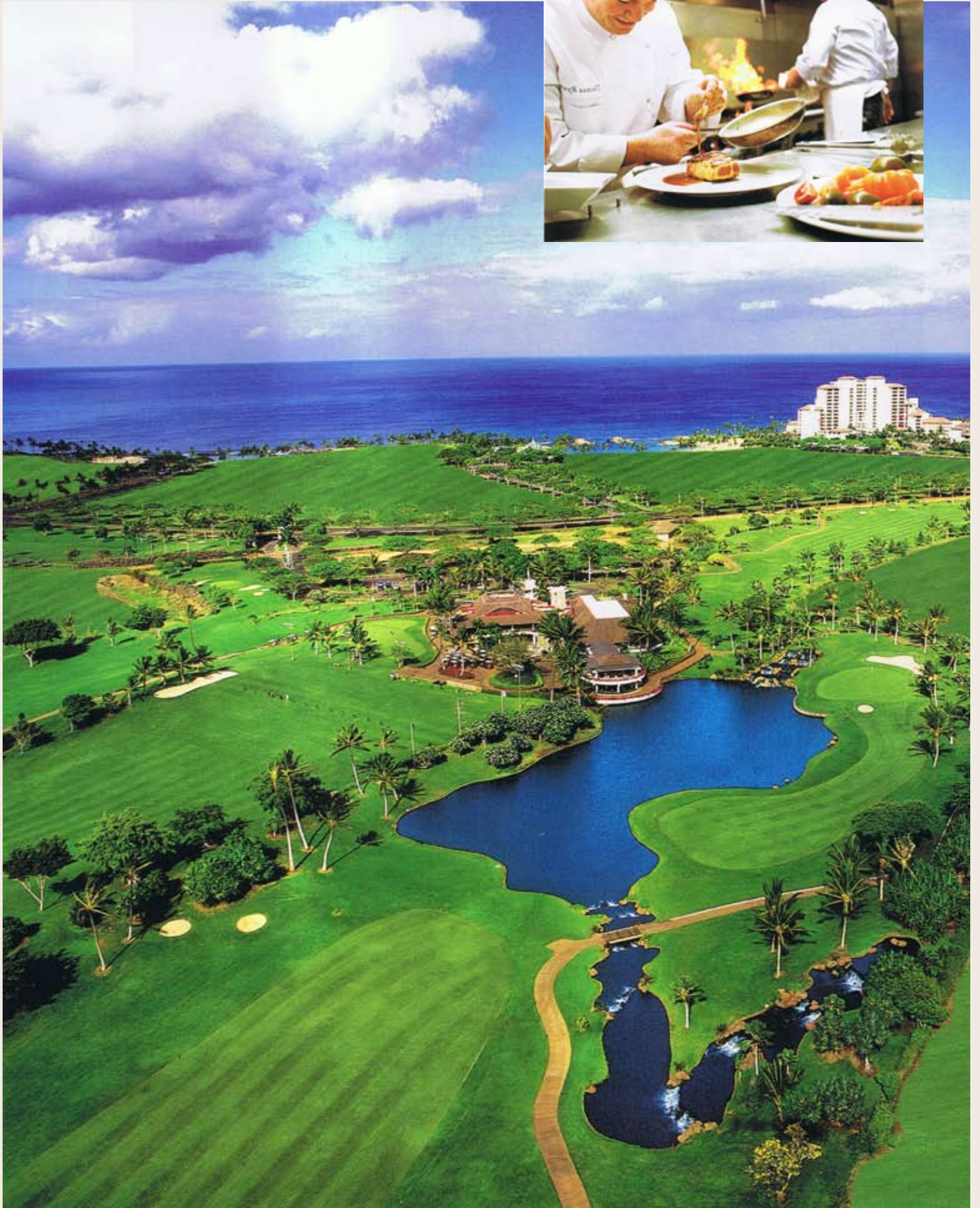
along Waikiki's widest stretch of sand with 22 acres of tropical gardens, exotic birds, koi ponds, waterfalls and six oceanfront towers, including the Rainbow Tower, a 31-story Oahu landmark.

The well-equipped golf shop on the property can book tee times at special rates for hotel guests at some of the island's best courses. Round-trip transportation is provided and you'll be back in time for the sunset cruise. My favorite courses include Ko'Olina Golf Club, Luana Hills Country Club and Ko'Olau Golf Club. The closest course, Ko'Olina, has hosted Senior PGA and LPGA events. Luana Hills was built as a private club in a lush rain forest and is quite challenging, with hilly terrain.

Ko'Olau, located about 10 minutes from Luana Hills on the windward side of the island, is considered the toughest course in the country. The last time I played Ko'Olau, one of my partners became convinced that hundreds of unclaimed golf balls lay hidden in the deep, overgrown ravines. He would disappear periodically and emerge triumphantly grasping fistfuls of golf balls, his hands muddy and leaves in his hair.

If you enjoy sampling local delicacies, try Spam musubi, a traditional Hawaiian snack usually sold on the beverage cart. It consists of sliced Spam covered with rice and wrapped with sushi nori (dry black seaweed). Word to the wise: it's an acquired taste.

For family celebrations, we like the oceanfront Bali by the Sea, Hilton Hawaiian Village's main restaurant, which features regional cuisine made from fresh island ingredients: chilled sashimi, ahi tempura with Molokai purple sweet potato, and orange-and-miso-glazed Kona Kampachi.





Mayacama Golf Club in the foothills of Sonoma

## GOLF AND WINE GETAWAYS

**MOST GOLFERS APPRECIATE GOOD WINE** as much as a championship golf course. Some California courses offer both—the opportunity to play through the vineyards and then taste the wine later.

Being a vintner, Greg Norman would probably approve of the rows of cabernet vines coming into play along the course he designed at Wente Vineyards in Livermore Valley. Tempting as it is, though, players are not supposed to walk in to get their golf balls. Wente is California's oldest family-owned and continuously operated winery and has expanded beyond wine-making with a good restaurant and a summer outdoor concert program.

CordeValle is a secluded luxury retreat in the foothills between San Jose and the Monterey Peninsula. It's favored with a challenging golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr. and a unique partnership with Clos La Chance winery and vineyard, which operates a tasting room adjacent to the sixth fairway.

Private clubs celebrate the marriage of golf and wine by bestowing special privileges on their members. Mayacama in the Sonoma foothills offers members a walking-only course designed by Jack Nicklaus and a program with local wineries.



The Course at Wente Vineyards in Livermore Valley

## Gourmet Golf Properties in the West

Upscale clubhouse fare and innovative menu choices are now standard in the highly competitive golf industry. Here's a selection of outstanding properties in the West that pair great golf and great food.

### ARIZONA

**Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North** The new Talavera restaurant is the ideal way to end a day spent on the famous Pinnacle and Monument courses. 480.515.5700, [fourseasons.com/scottsdale](http://fourseasons.com/scottsdale) 480.585.5300, [troonnorthgolf.com](http://troonnorthgolf.com)

**Gainey Ranch Golf Club** A 27-hole private golf club that was once a historic Arabian horse ranch, Gainey allows neighboring Hyatt Regency Scottsdale several daily tee times on its Lakes, Dunes and Arroyo nines and serves wine from Gainey Vineyard. 480.951.0022, [gaineyranchcc.com](http://gaineyranchcc.com)

**Loew's Ventana Canyon Resort** The highly rated Mountain and Canyon courses play through rugged North Tucson desert, while the elegant Ventana Room with its French-inspired menu features majestic views. 800.234.5117, [loewshotels.com](http://loewshotels.com)

**The Mirabel Club** Located in north Scottsdale and home to a Tom Fazio-designed course, Mirabel was once named "the best private club in the nation to have lunch" by American Airlines. Must be the chef grilling to order between number 7 and number 8, or maybe the homemade beef jerky. 866.MIRABL, [mirabel.com](http://mirabel.com)

**The Phoenician** Lush landscaping and luxurious amenities define this glamorous resort at the base of Camelback Mountain with three distinct nines. Windows on the Green serves up guacamole tableside. A new high-end restaurant debuts in late 2008. 800.888.8234, [thephoenician.com](http://thephoenician.com)

**Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort & Spa** Play the Devil's Claw and Cattail Courses at Whirlwind Golf Club, then take the resort boat along the Gila River to dine at Kai, with a Native American-inspired menu. 602.225.0100, wild [horsepassresort.com](http://horsepassresort.com)

## CALIFORNIA

**CordeValle** Located between San Jose and the Monterey Peninsula, this intimate luxury resort features a wonderful Robert Trent Jones Jr. course and the opportunity to experience the Clos La Chance winery. 877.255.2626, [cordevalle.com](http://cordevalle.com)

**Mayacama Golf and Residence Club** In the heart of Sonoma, Mayacama is a private club with a wine cave for members' personal wine [lockers. 866.393.1818.mayacama.com](http://lockers.866.393.1818.mayacama.com)

**Pebble Beach Resorts** The quintessential golf resort. Classic courses are complemented by dining choices that range from the sophisticated Club XIX to Roy's Hawaiian fusion to the comfortable Tap Room, where walls are lined with Pebble Beach golf memorabilia. 800.854.9300, [pebblebeach.com](http://pebblebeach.com)

**The Resort at Pelican Hill** Pelican Grill and the newly renovated Ocean North and Ocean South Courses were the first components of the resort to open. The resort is scheduled for completion in late 2008. 877.735.4226, [pelicanhill.com](http://pelicanhill.com)

**Stone Eagle** Exclusive Stone Eagle sits at a 1,000-foot elevation overlooking Palm Desert and the Coachella Valley. Just Past the 10th green, the Den at Ten is tucked into massive boulders. 760.773.6200, [stoneeagleclub.com](http://stoneeagleclub.com)

**Course at Wente Vineyards** The Restaurant at Wente Vineyards includes wine flights at both lunch and dinner. This is the 10th anniversary of the Greg Norman course, which winds through mature vineyards. 800.999.2885, [wentegolf.com](http://wentegolf.com)

## CANADA British Columbia

**Fairmont Chateau Whistler** Golf season runs May to October. The mountainous course is carved out of pine forest, rumored to house bears. It's also home to Canada's first and only David Leadbetter Golf Academy. Fine dining awaits at the resort's Wine

Room. 604.938.8000, [chateauwhistlerresort@fairmont.com](mailto:chateauwhistlerresort@fairmont.com)

## HAWAII, Oahu

### Hilton Hawaiian Village

A golf program arranges tee times at some of the island's best courses. Walking distance to surfing, shopping and top restaurants. 800.HILTONS, [hiltonhawaiianvillage.com](http://hiltonhawaiianvillage.com)

**Ko'Olau Golf Club** A rugged, tropical jungle course, it's considered the toughest in the nation, with a slope rating of 152 from the back tees. Comfortable Honey's restaurant is named after Honey Ho, mother of legendary entertainer Don (of "Tiny Bubbles" fame). 808.247.7088, [koolaugolf.com](http://koolaugolf.com)

**Ko'Olina Golf Club** Located on Oahu's west coast, it's one of the island's best resort courses. It features gourmet 19th-hole dining at Roy's Restaurant. 808.676.5300, [koolinagolf.com](http://koolinagolf.com)

**Luana Hills Country Club** It climbs through lush ravines in the dense tropical rain forest of Maunawili Valley, with blind shots and forced carries over streams. An extensive Sunday brunch is served. 808.262.2139, [luanahills.com](http://luanahills.com)

## IDAHO

**The Coeur d'Alene Golf & Spa Resort** This manicured course pampers players from the minute they arrive at the dock via water taxi. The over-water practice range is just a hint of what awaits at the floating green on number 14. Beverly's restaurant offers Northwest cuisine, an extensive wine list and wine cellar tours. 800.688.5253, [cdaresort.com](http://cdaresort.com)

## MEXICO, Los Cabos

**One & Only Palmilla** Located on the tip of the Baja Peninsula, the remodeled and expanded resort includes Charlie Trotter's "C" restaurant. Palmilla Golf Club has views from every hole of the Arroyo, Mountain and Ocean nines. 866.829.2977, [oneandonlyresorts.com](http://oneandonlyresorts.com), [troongolf.com](http://troongolf.com)

## NEVADA

**Bali Hai Golf Club** A South Pacific-themed golf course with tropical palms and lavish water features on the Las Vegas Strip. It's home to Cili Restaurant & Bar, one of Vegas's most popular power lunch spots. 888.4427.6678, [balihaigolfclub.com](http://balihaigolfclub.com)

**Cascata** In Boulder City, 30 minutes from the Strip, Cascata features a 400-foot manmade waterfall that tumbles through the clubhouse. It's a luxury golf experience created for guests of Harrah's Las Vegas resorts. 707.294.2000, [golfcascata.com](http://golfcascata.com)

**Lake Las Vegas Resort** Away from the glitz, this destination resort includes hotels, challenging golf and a quaint waterfront village. Outstanding cuisine at the Ritz-Carlton Club Floor, on a bridge overlooking the lake. 877.LLV.LAKE, [lakelasvegas.com](http://lakelasvegas.com)

**Wynn Las Vegas** At the north end of the Strip, Steve Wynn has created an over-the-top luxury resort where even the slot machines seem subdued. Only resort guests can play the beautiful Tom Fazio course. 702.770.3575, [wynnlasvegas.com](http://wynnlasvegas.com)

## OREGON

**Salishan Spa and Golf Resort** A resort along the driftwoodstrewn Oregon coast. PGA pro and local legend Peter Jacobsen redesigned the course with a more challenging layout. The Dining Room features fresh seafood and an extensive wine list. 800.452.2300, [salishan.com](http://salishan.com)

**Sunriver Resort** Set in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains south of Bend, Sunriver offers a dry and moderate climate, ideal for tackling its three golf courses: Crosswater, Woodlands and Meadows. Dining is available in the mountain-lodgestyle main building and at Crosswater. 800.5473922, [sunriver-resort.com](http://sunriver-resort.com)

