

## “WHERE IN THE WORLD IS CORI BRETT?”

October 2010

### MONTEREY GOLF ON A BUDGET



**The 13<sup>th</sup> Hole at Pacific Grove Golf Links**

How could I avoid hitting the sweet little deer, blissfully munching grass not 20 feet from the first tee, oblivious to imminent destruction? Wildlife abounds at Pacific Grove Golf Links, along with spectacular ocean views. A big slice saved the deer but got me off to a rocky start.

Pacific Grove was my first stop on a quest to find affordable golf on the Monterey Peninsula. What's affordable? For this destination, I consider green fees under \$50 to be affordable. Pacific Grove tops off at \$48.00 on busy summer weekends -pretty reasonable for a beautiful course that's often described as "the poor man's Pebble Beach."

Built in 1932, the course begins with two par threes followed by two part fours, then two par fives. Narrow fairways lined with grand cypress trees lead to old-fashioned small greens. It's scenic, but nothing like the back nine, which was built some 30 years later. Designer Jack Neville of Pebble Beach fame created a links-style nine that opens up to brilliant Pacific Ocean views

and plays down almost to the breaking surf. Being so close to the ocean, the course is vulnerable to dense fog, but we were fortunate to enjoy a bright sunny day. Head Golf Professional Joe Riekema is happy to answer your questions about Pacific Grove Golf Links at [jriekema@pggolfinks.com](mailto:jriekema@pggolfinks.com) or 831-648-5773.



**The 16<sup>th</sup> Hole at Pacific Grove Golf Links**

What made the day especially memorable was a fortunate pairing with John and his elderly mother, Mary, who is a delightful 85 years young. She immediately informed us, "I told the starter not to put me with anybody who's crabby or who's a really good golfer." Safe on both counts. Mary gamely kept the pace, occasionally commenting, "Oh, there I go again!" if she hit a disappointing shot.

There's reasonably priced lodging near the golf course. Try Lighthouse Lodge and Suites for family fun or the Inn at 17-Mile Drive for a romantic escape. Asilomar is a conference center on a beautifully wooded site with boardwalks to the ocean. Enhancing the peaceful, natural setting, guest rooms have no TV's, phones, or Internet.

My next budget golf discovery was Monterey Pines Golf Course, located directly behind the Monterey Fairgrounds. Weekend rates are \$37.00. Monterey Pines underwent extensive renovation in 2009 and is in great shape. Both Pacific Grove Golf Links and Monterey Pines are good walking courses. Back tees measure 5,727 yards and 5,554 yards, respectively.

Savvy locals recommended Monterey's Fish House for fresh seafood and reasonable prices, but they forgot to tell us to call ahead. The line spills out the door onto the front steps of this

unpretentious little corner building. Whatever the boats pulled in that day comes directly to the Fish House. Fresh halibut, sand dabs, shellfish – generous portions and friendly service.

Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey turned out to be a narrow wooden wharf lined with typical tourist shops and some surprisingly good restaurants. Most of them were encouraging passers-by to sample their clam chowder. Big chrome pots of steaming chowder proved irresistible on a cool, foggy evening, and we found ourselves criss-crossing back and forth so as not to miss a one! Some were thick and kind of pasty, others full of more vegetables than clams. My favorite combined rich, chewy clams with a hint of bacon.

Fortified with Monterey's excellent seafood, I went on to check out Rancho Canada Golf Club. It's located inland in Carmel Valley and features two courses, East and West. Mature trees shade gently rolling fairways, and the Carmel River comes into play on both courses. At \$65.00 daily fee, Rancho Canada slightly exceeded my affordability limit, but it's a lovely facility.

Located at the former Fort Ord Army base, Bayonet and Black Horse Golf Courses overlook Monterey Bay and provided affordable golf for many years. The courses fell into disrepair when the base closed in 1994. After a \$13 million renovation, they're not quite the bargain they used to be but worthy of consideration for a splurge.

The Monterey Peninsula retains a considerable military presence, notably the Naval Postgraduate School and the Presidio of Monterey, an active base that is home to the Defense Language Institute. Lodging is available at both facilities for active-duty and retired military who meet the requirements. It's an opportunity for a reasonably-priced stay in one of the most desirable golf areas in the world.

*"Escape with Cori" on assignment to fun and exotic golf destinations. First-hand impressions from an experienced golf travel writer and AWGA member. [www.coribrett.com](http://www.coribrett.com)  
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