

Jackson, WY



Jackson Hole Golf & Tennis Club

Wyoming is the ninth largest state in terms of landmass, but has the smallest population of any state in the Union. Even wide open spaces like Alaska and North Dakota, or tiny pinpricks on the map like Delaware or Rhode Island contain more souls than the Cowboy State. The town of Jackson, in Wyoming's northwest corner, is the single most desirable tourist destination in the state. Rustic and moneyed concurrently, the last three or four decades have seen an influx of wealth that has transformed what was once a hunting-fishing-climbing-skiing paradise located just a short drive from glorious Yellowstone National Park. As the cynics have stated on more than one occasion, "In Jackson, the billionaires are pushing the multi-millionaires out of town."



Mark Bradley

There are few keener observers of the local golf scene than **Mark Bradley**, who is currently the Director of Instruction and Pro Emeritus at the original public facility in the valley, Jackson Hole Golf and Tennis. A professional golfer, skier and fly-fisherman, Bradley first came to the region in 1970, did a decade-long stint from '73 to '83, and has lived there full time since 2005. He's been a first-hand witness to the dramatic increase of high-end private clubs that have sprung into existence in the Teton's shadows. But thankfully there are still a few worthy facilities that welcome the hordes of visitors who make their way to and through town in the fleeting warm-weather months.



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The Jackson Hole Golf and Tennis Club is a straightforward design dating from 1965, with a Robert Trent Jones Jr. redesign some ten years later. The course stretches almost 7,200 yards from the tips, but the slope rating is a tame 123, indicating that most of the trouble is on the periphery of this serpentine course routing. The first few holes offer spot on views of the Grand Teton looming to the north. Then the course turns away from the mountains, and several holes in succession are defined by corridors of Cottonwoods that serve to narrow the landing areas and frame the target. The best hole on the property is the eleventh, a par-5 dogleg left with the Gros Ventre River flanking the left side of the landing area. The course was vastly improved by a fifteen-million dollar renovation completed in 2007,

which enhanced a solid routing in a spectacular location, but one that was fraying around the edges, with marginal conditions and tired bunkering.



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Bear in mind that when the course opened the average income in the area was less than \$10,000, and homes averaged less than \$30,000. Suffice it to say there are many dozens of homeowners today making a monthly mortgage payment for that much or much more.

“The proliferation of high-end private clubs like Shooting Star, 3 Creek Ranch and the Snake River Sporting Club have changed the golf mentality here,” offers Bradley, whose son Keegan is a popular TOUR player whose major victory was the 2011 PGA Championship. “But there are still places for the working man to play, both in Jackson, and across the pass into neighboring Idaho.”



Teton Pines

Teton Pines, in the nearby town of Wilson, is an Arnold Palmer-Ed Seay design dating from 1987. This is an eminently walkable resort layout on the valley floor. The fairways are wide, but because the rough grabs golf clubs like Velcro, you don't want to miss them. It also features warp speed greens, several with comical undulations, ridges and false fronts. Teton Pines additionally offers golfers a majestic alpine panorama that simply isn't available east of the Mississippi, as rare a sight in the flatland as a sighting of bighorn sheep or a quaking aspen.



Teton Pines

The length of the Teton Range flanks the west side of this 7,400-yard, par 72 layout, sloped at 137. To the east is the Sleeping Indian, a massive rock formation. To the south lies the lone triangulation of Wolf Mountain, and to the north, the single defining feature of Jackson Hole. The jaggedly imposing Grand Teton itself, snowcapped even in high summer, northwest Wyoming's essential landmark. Nowhere is the Grand framed more imperially than on the brutal 7th, a par 5 measuring some 600 yards from the penultimate tee box. Players should aim towards the distant peak on all three shots, as the overwhelming majority have no hope of reaching the pond fronted green in two. Wind, water and the insidious rough are just half the battle at Teton Pines. Most visitors will have a hard time keeping their head down long enough to execute solid shots. It's nigh impossible to avert one's gaze from the Grand for very long; the view is far too mesmerizing.

Mesmerizing describes the views, appetizing describes the numerous fine restaurants that have sprung up like so many wildflowers over the last decade or two. Nobody should visit Jackson without mounting a saddle at the [Million Dollar Cowboy Bar](#), an institution if ever there was one. Cowboy paraphernalia abounds, silver dollars are imbedded in the bar, country music plays nightly, and it's a 'must-see' while in town. The food is decent, and as might be expected, steaks, chops, game meats, etc.

A more sophisticated experience is found at [Bin 22](#), which serves a wide range of wines and tapas. The Spanish flair means good octopus, charcuterie plates, house-made mozzarella and lamb skewers are among the favorites. Finally, the [Blue Lion](#) is renowned for its rack of lamb, bison ravioli, halibut and steelhead trout, among other specialties. Dessert lovers rave about the chocolate cheesecake and raspberries with Russian cream.