

Troon Managed Properties



The Open Championship returned to Royal Troon for the ninth time in 2016. It's a magical, historical venue, with the tiny 'Postage Stamp' par-3 likely it's most famous hole. Great as the course is, like every course in the Open Rota, it's not easily accessible to busy American golfers. Luckily Troon Management, speaking of Troon, operates some of the finest public-access courses in the U.S. Here's a brief look at several, most all of them 36-hole facilities, in varying corners of the nation:



Kapalua

One still has to fly across the ocean to get Kapalua, on the Hawaiian island of Maui. However, the biggest difference is that lovely weather is a virtual certainty; a guarantee that can never be made in the raw, windy and often rainy weather one encounters in the U.K. Located on Maui's northwest shore, Kapalua stretches 22,000 acres, from mountain peaks to the edge of the glistening Pacific Ocean. The 7,100 yard Plantation Course is the marquee venue, familiar to TV viewers as the host of the PGA Tour Hyundai Tournament of Champions each January, featuring an elite field of the previous year's tournament winners. Designed by two-time Masters champion Ben Crenshaw and partner Bill Coore, the grand scale of the course unfurls across natural geographic formations and pineapple plantation fields. The Bay Course, designed by Arnold Palmer and Francis Duane, represents the first of Kapalua's two championship golf courses. Measuring 6,600 yards long, the layout is an excellent example of resort golf at its best with gently rolling fairways and generous greens.



Troon North

Another fabulous one-two punch is found in Scottsdale, Arizona. Troon North features the Monument and Pinnacle courses, the former dating from 1989, the latter 1995. Giant granite boulders lie strewn across the rugged landscape of the High Sonoran Desert. The courses, artfully designed by Tom Weiskopf and Jay Morrish, cleverly wrap around the northern slopes of landmark Pinnacle Peak. In golf-rich Scottsdale, these dueling beauties are very near the top of the pecking order, on either the public or the private side of the ledger.



Giants Ridge

Biwabik, Minnesota is well off the beaten path, some 200 miles due north of Minneapolis. However Giants Ridge is well worth the three hour drive from “The Cities,” offering a pair of courses designed by Jeffrey Brauer in consultation with former PGA Champion Lanny Wadkins. The Quarry and The Legend are two of the most exceptional golf venues in the Midwest, and in tandem, make for a great weekend getaway. Pristine bent grass fairways, massive lakes, giant boulders and towering trees are all earmarks of The Legend. The Quarry, the younger sibling (opened in 2004) offers dramatic raised tees and deep hazards. The architects routed the playing fields through and around former mine lands, wetlands, forests and a sand quarry to make The Quarry a one-of-a-kind course design. It’s no surprise that Golf Digest named Giants Ridge as the best public-access facility in Minnesota.



Foxwoods

The leafy woodlands of eastern Connecticut are the improbable home of one of the nation's busiest casinos. Foxwoods Resort, within driving distance of multiple millions in the northeast corridor, has much to offer, not the least of which are a pair of Rees Jones-designed beauties at Lake of Isles. The ninety-acre lake provides much of the stunning background, and the rolling terrain, island greens and tees and sublime views have made these courses among the most popular in the entire state. Both the North and South courses opened simultaneously in the spring of 2005, and have been doing brisk business in the ensuing decade-plus. The North Course always welcomes visitors, while the South can be accessed as the guest of a member, or sometime with a letter of introduction from one's home club professional. Despite the rolling nature of the terrain and the elevation changes, architect Jones insured that the fairways are mostly flat, without the confounding side-hill and downhill lies one often encounters on New England courses with greater antiquity.



Old Works

Finally, a 'one-off' (IE— 18 hole facility) that deserves mention on its own standalone merit. The Old Works golf course in Anaconda, Montana, in the southwest area of the state, is a 1997 design by Jack Nicklaus. This is the first-ever golf course developed on a Federal EPA Superfund Site, which in layman's terms means something appalling has morphed into something wonderful. Generous fairways, native grass borders and expansive greens make it one of the most spacious and unique golf courses in the region. There are exceptional views of

the Anaconda Pintler Mountains throughout the property. What makes the facility even more memorable is the fact that the architect cleverly incorporated many significant mining relics to help reflect the region's colorful mining history.