

tee time

LIES, AND TIGERS, AND BEARS! OH, MY!

by TRACEY RAYSON

If your game is not in the same tip-top shape as BC's lush, well-manicured links, we expect you'll be looking for that sweet spot, special tourney, or even a master planned golf community that will give you that edge to help move you up on the leaderboard. If you can relate to Lee Trevino's self deprecating quip, "I'm not saying my golf game went bad, but if I grew tomatoes, they'd come up sliced," then pack your clubs and check out a course that fits your game — we're convinced you'll find one here among this sampling of BC's resort-living hot spots.

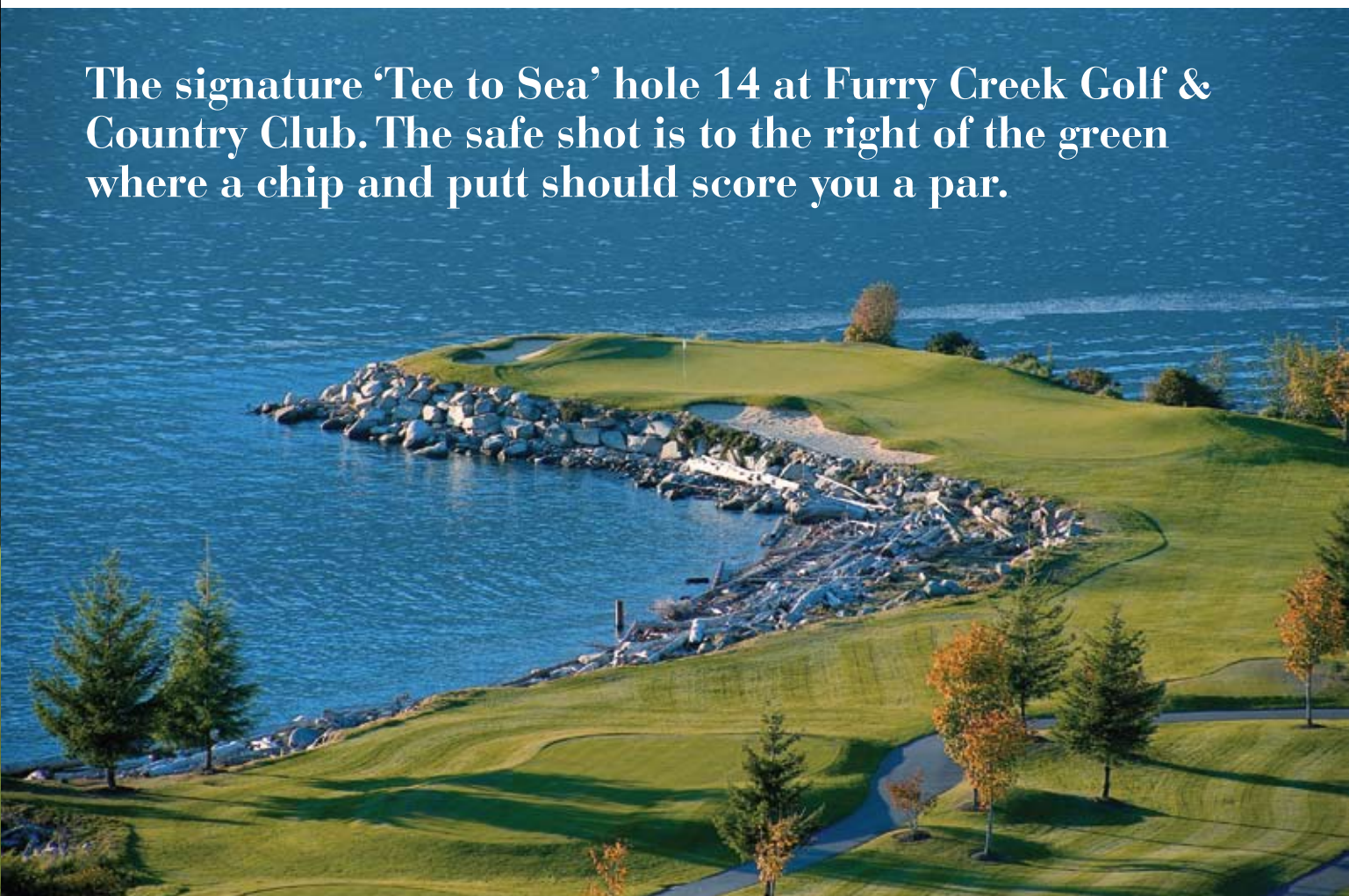
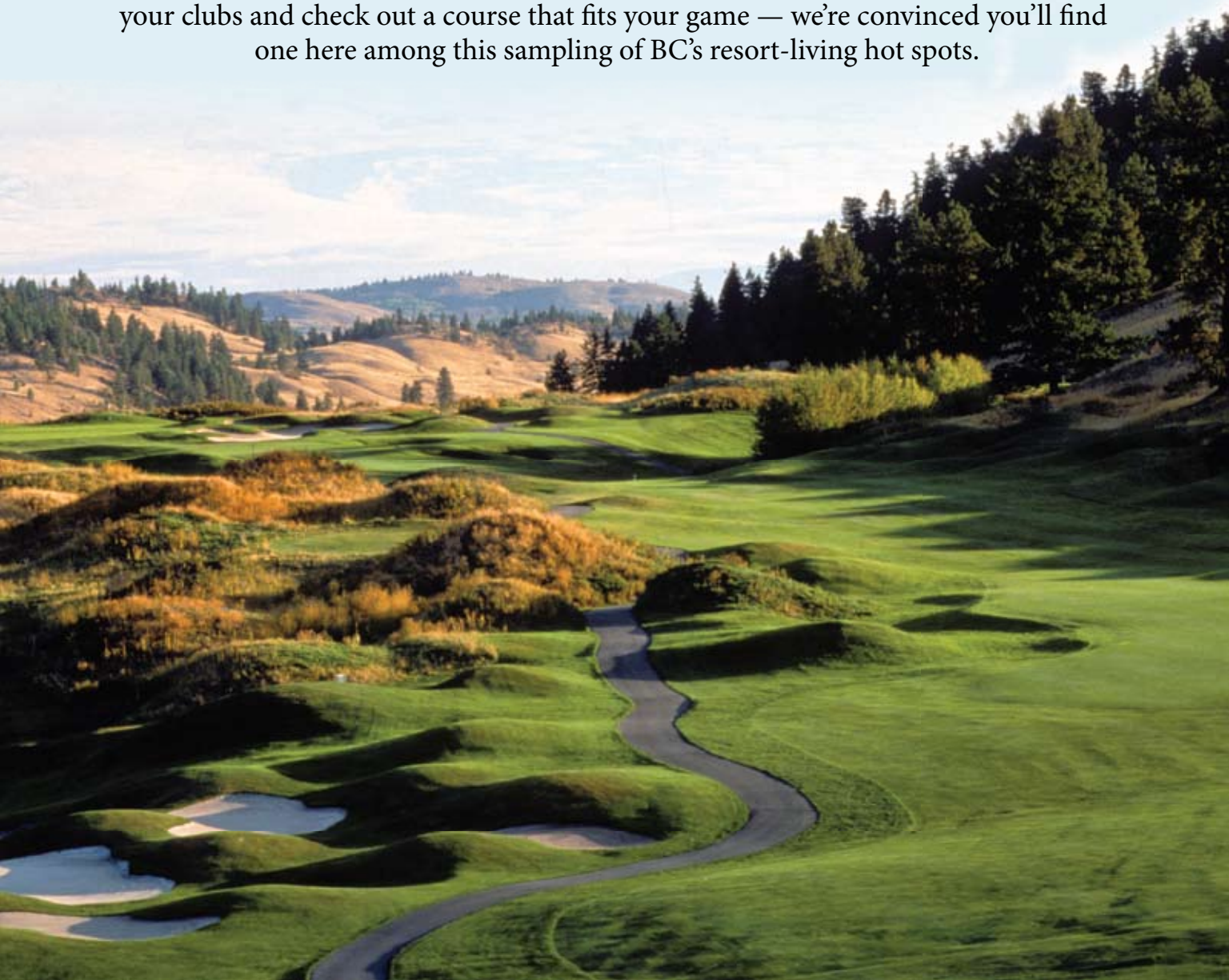
THOMPSON OKANAGAN

Punctuated across varying topography, more than 60 courses grace this region from Kamloops (including 11 championship-calibre courses) in the high country to Osoyoos in the southern desert region, (such as NK'MIP Canyon Desert Golf Course, owned and operated by First Nations). Tee up in front of a gallery of ponderosa pine on a canyon edge (Gallagher's Canyon), putt amid a desert-baked colour palette of mocha, tan, and tawny hues (Spirit Ridge), play along multi-tiered fairways with lake and vineyard views (Predator Ridge) or be challenged with the likes of elevated climbs through forested hills overlooking the Okanagan Valley (championship courses The Bear and The Quail at Okanagan G.C.). There's even a course carved from a dry riverbed, once the North Thompson (The Dunes in Kamloops).

"Three championship courses opened in 2007 within an hour's drive from Kamloops," says Miles Prodan, Okanagan's regional media relations specialist. "Tobiano, a Thomas McBroom design, boasts lake views from every hole and will soon flourish with the addition of a lakeside village, equestrian centre, and marina. Talking Rock showcases a mature, sandy forest setting, while Canoe Creek, a first design by Dave Barr features challenging play with a thrilling par three third hole."

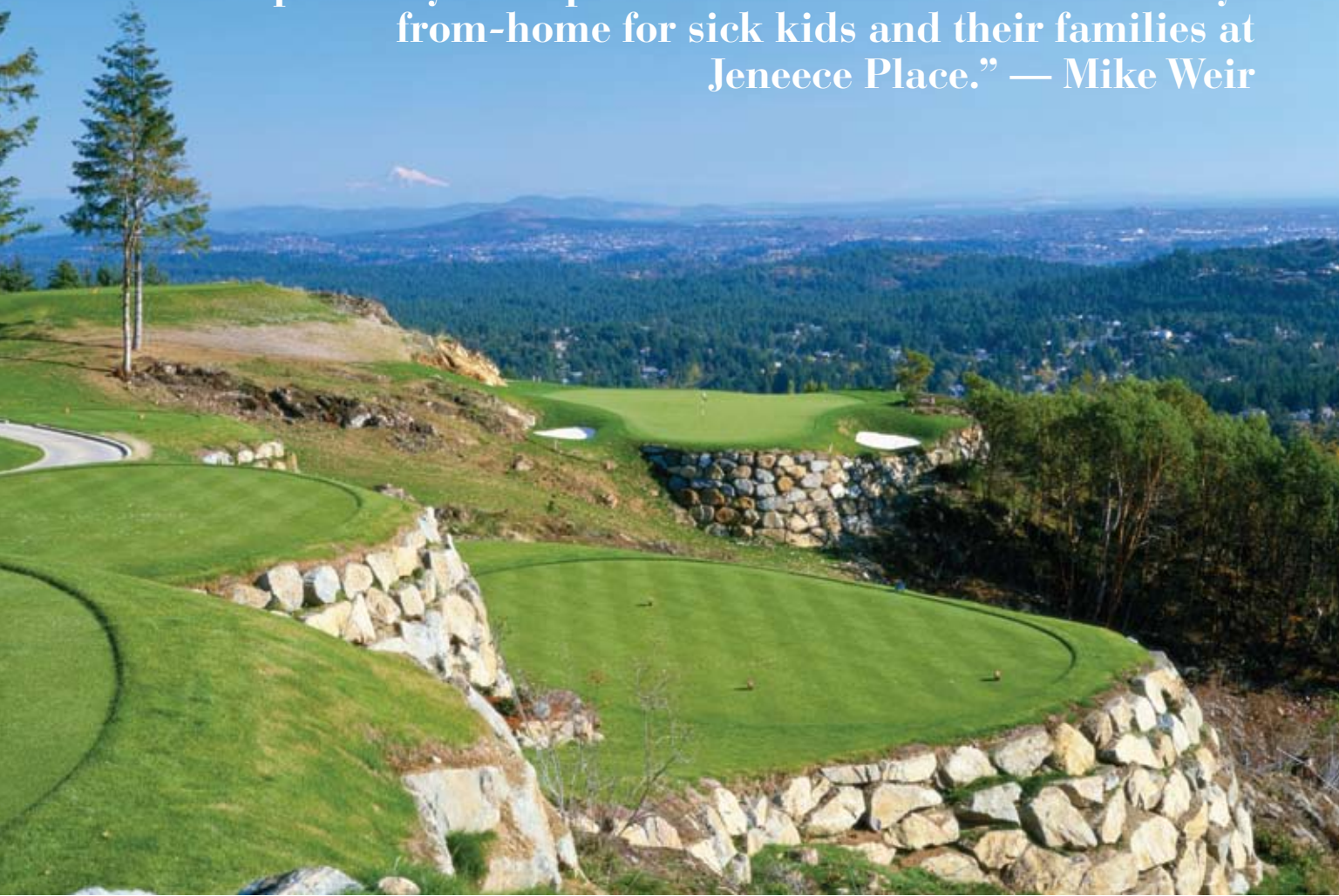
Opened in 2008 is The Club at Tower Ranch, a signature Thomas McBroom

course with a master planned community of four distinct neighbourhoods; the first phase consists of select single-family homes terraced along the ranch's lower slopes, backing onto the golf course. Additionally, the Kelowna area added Black Mountain, a "Best New Course in Canada" 2010 finalist by SCOREGolf. Two Eagles Golf Course, a Les Furber design, shoulders Westbank's gated neighbourhood Sonoma Pines in phase six with Okanagan Lake views. The much-lauded championship Gallagher's Canyon has been ranked as one of the best in Canada. Resort-style living in The Village is a perfect marriage: fine homes — famous golf.



The signature 'Tee to Sea' hole 14 at Furry Creek Golf & Country Club. The safe shot is to the right of the green where a chip and putt should score you a par.

“I’m looking forward to visiting Victoria this summer to compete in the TELUS World Skins Game, but more importantly to help raise funds to build a home-away-from-home for sick kids and their families at Jeneece Place.” — Mike Weir



In Vernon, three phases of resort community living at The Rise highlights a Fred Couples Signature Course and its own winery. At full build-out it will comprise of 660 resort residential units. Just north of Vernon, four Predator Ridge neighbourhoods offer convenient lock-and-leave townhomes and custom-built residences; the Predator Ridge Golf Resort offers up three diverse nine-hole courses: The Osprey, The Peregrine, and The Red Tail, each defined by undulating fairways, natural lakes and streams, rugged pine-covered ridges and

wheatgrass meadows. It's been said Predator Ridge (former host of TELUS World Skins Game) put the region on the map of Canadian golf. This spring they'll unveil The Ridge Course, 18 holes designed by Doug Carrick.

VANCOUVER ISLAND

There are many fabulous firsts, bragging rights if you will, when it comes to VI golf. The Olympic View Golf Club was the first golf course in BC that Tiger Woods played as an amateur in 1994. In 2004, Bear Mountain Resort-Mountain Course was the first course in the world to be co-designed by Jack Nicklaus and son Steve.

“There are watershed moments in the development of any region as a golf destination,” says Trish Larsen, Golf Vancouver Island's director of marketing. “The first for Vancouver Island was the opening of the Bear Mountain Resort-Mountain Course in 2004; hosting the TELUS World Skins Game June 21-22 (with headliner Mike Weir) could well be the second, with the golfing eyes of the nation drawn

GOLF DESTINATIONS

coincidentally to this same course, the city of Victoria and Vancouver Island. Other regions have reported increases in both golf tourism and real estate sales after hosting such marquee events, and that is certainly both ours, and Bear Mountain's hope for this event."

"Golf destinations are defined by high-calibre golf courses in close proximity to one another," says Larsen. "The addition of the Bear Mountain Resort-Valley Course last June, and now Highland Pacific Golf in June 2010, to complement the iconic Bear Mountain Resort-Mountain Course, Olympic View Golf

Club and Arbutus Ridge, totals five marquee golf courses for Victoria and 12 for the Vancouver Island Golf Trail — firmly entrenching both as a golf destination of choice."

The Vancouver Island Golf Trail spans from Victoria to Campbell River where you can play in all four regions. Golf Vancouver Island has added trail marker signs to the twelve golf courses of the Trail. "We are building on our established Vancouver Island Golf Trail brand," says Jason Lowe, Golf Vancouver Island's president, "with this further investment designed to increase awareness of the Vancouver Island Golf Trail and plentiful golf opportunities available to both destination and local Vancouver Island golfers."

WHISTLER

It's no surprise the spectacular setting of the fiercely emerald-hued Green Lake inspired Jack Nicklaus to create a course as unique as the Golden Bear himself, a par 71 coined with his signature namesake. "Nicklaus North Golf Course offers breathtaking scenery, exceptional customer service, unmatched course

conditioning and challenging course design — it's no wonder this is one of a few rare courses in the world bearing Jack Nicklaus' name," says Rita Rennie, corporate marketing manager of GolfBC Group.

The GolfBC Group, a Vancouver-based golf and resort management and investment company, is defining a higher standard of quality and consistency among premier golf destinations. Since 1989 GolfBC has been creating premium golf destinations and master planned golf communities in BC and is the owner/operator of eight championship golf courses in the province.

"At GolfBC we not only have been supporting the golf industry's efforts to grow the game of golf by implementing a number of programs from various NGCOA initiatives, but we're also putting a lot of effort into integrating them into our own programs," says Rennie. GolfBC acquired "Beginner Friendly" certification at all their properties, offer various women's programs, participate in "Future Links" and other junior programs, and have launched "Grow-the-Game" initiatives, which include "Kids Play Free at GolfBC" and "Family Golf Day." "Our Grow-the-

Game strategy has not only given us a tremendous opportunity to introduce new golfers and experienced players to our facilities, but has also presented us with the chance to develop and foster the growth of the game of golf," says Andy Hedley, vice president of operations, GolfBC - British Columbia.

"We are passionate about growing the game of golf, and have invested significant effort — as well as advertising and marketing funds — into the various initiatives, and will continue to do so in the coming years," adds Rennie. **H&L**



ON PAGE 16
Predator Ridge, Vernon.
Photo | Henebry.

ON PAGE 17
The 14th at Furry Creek, (near Lions Bay).
Photo | GolfBC Group.

ON PAGE 18
Bear Mountain Resort-Mountain Course will host the 2010 TELUS World Skins Game, Victoria.
Photo | GolfVancouverIsland.ca

ON THIS PAGE
PICTURED TOP
Vancouver Island Golf Trail, Arbutus Ridge Golf & Country Club, Victoria.
Photo | GolfVancouverIsland.ca

PICTURED RIGHT
The signature 17th at Olympic View Golf Course, (near Victoria).
Photo | GolfVancouverIsland.ca

ON PAGE 21
Gallagher's Canyon Golf & Country Club, Kelowna.
Photo | Don Weixl.



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