



## Discover Sagebrush- 'How Golf Was Meant To Be Played'



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By [Gayle Moss \(www.golfgal.ca\)](#)

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to play a round of golf the way **Old Tom Morris** did back in the 1800's, long before the constraints imposed by modern golf clubs (e.g. pace of play) were introduced to the game?

Well, you don't need to wonder anymore. Just drive 3 hours north east of Vancouver to **Sagebrush Golf & Sporting Club** nestled in the Nikola Valley and you'll feel like you've been transported back to the Old Course at St. Andrews in the 19th century.

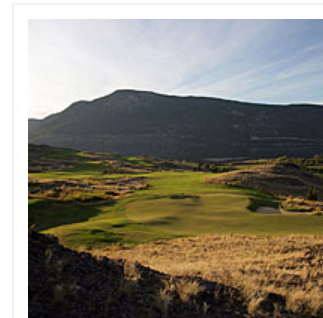
You'll feel like you're at the "home of golf."

Sagebrush Golf & Sporting Club was the vision of Canadian PGA Tour winner Richard Zokol, who together with Rod Whitman and Amen Suny designed a golf course that will take you back to the origins of the game.

Awarded Best New Canadian Course in 2009 by both Golf Digest and ScoreGolf magazines, Sagebrush isn't just a great golf course it's a unique and memorable golf experience.

Its minimalist design is what inspired other award winning courses like Sand Hills, Bandon Dunes, Pacific Dunes and Ballyneal.

But unlike those courses, which still rush people off the first tee to pack in as many rounds a day as they can, Sagebrush gives you the freedom to enjoy 300 acres of links style golf without the pressures imposed by today's modern golf clubs.



*The View Of The 9th Hole At Sagebrush Golf And Sporting Club Gives You An Idea Of What 'Old Tom Morris' Used To Look Out At When He Teed It Up Back In The 1800s In St. Andrews, Scotland - Photo Courtesy Sagebrush*



***Photo Credit Gayle Moss***

Sagebrush maxes out at 60 golfers a day, but 25 is more typical.

You won't have a marshal come up to you on the course asking you to keep up to the group in front of you

You can play as many holes as you like and even take a break in the middle to have a bite to eat and maybe do a little fly-fishing before heading out for a few more holes. How civilized! No wonder women love it.

There's no pressure, no intimidation. Co-founder and President, Terry Donald shared with me a story about a group from Toronto who had flown in to play that day -- 4 men and 2 women.

Terry asked if they wanted to play as a 6-some, which would raise most player's eyebrows. But, I love the woman's answer: "No. The girls are going to play as a two-some. We're not going to be held up by these guys."

Overlooking Nikola River, Sagebrush has a rugged beauty that can take your breath away; it forces you to take a moment, step back at the tee and just look around and listen.



***Photo Credit Gayle Moss***

But what you'll discover is, you can't hear anything except the sounds of nature - no traffic, no construction, no airplanes.

At Sagebrush, 'no' is a good thing.

- No tee markers. Whoever has the honour decides where to tee up the ball on the 4 choices of tee boxes.

As a woman golfer I love the fact that 2 out of the 4 tee boxes are women friendly. The "White Tees" (at 5413yds; Slope 123 & Rating 70.9) and "Red Tees" (at 4872yds; Slope 112 & Rating 67.5) play significantly shorter due to Sagebrush's higher elevation and fast & firm conditions.

I played from the White tees and truly enjoyed the challenges offered on so many holes, my favourite being the risk/reward #11. Take a short cut over trouble or go around to the right; how lucky are you feeling today?



***Photo Credit: Gayle Moss***

I also paid attention to what the Red Tees had to offer and was pleased to see that for newer players, the Red Tees didn't require any long carries, but still offered challenges suited to more of a novice golfer:

- No rakes in bunkers. Sand traps are supposed to be hazards and are treated as such. I spent my fair share in them during our round and you do NOT want to go there.

The fairways are very generous, averaging 80 yards across, so just hit the fairways and avoid the bunkers. Simple! Why didn't I think of that?

- No par: Sagebrush uses Standard Scratch Score (SSS) on the score card rather than 'Par'. It is believed that the term 'Par' typically has a detrimental affect on the psyche of golfer.

- No multi-coloured flags. Every flag is red and there's no pattern to their position of front, centre or back on a series of holes, so don't even try and to figure that out. Par; oops, 'SSS' is a good score here, just like at St. Andrews; so aim for the centre of the very generous, immaculate and fast greens (some are over 20,000 sq ft) and don't get greedy.

I made the mistake of getting a bit cocky on the first hole (my 6th of the day) and decided to go flag hunting. On the par 5, I was on the fringe of the very undulating green after my 3rd shot, feeling pretty good about myself.

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