



The 468-yard par-4 18th hole at Whitetail Club

Photo by Glenn Osley

WHITETAIL GOLF CLUB

Arms wide open for one of America's Top 100

by Chris Wood

Whitetail Golf Club is inviting the golf world inside its formerly exclusive grounds, and the view from inside the McCall course is surprising.

From the outside, Whitetail appears to be typical mountain golf: tree-lined ribbons of fairway with lots of hilly lies and usually plenty of time spent looking for your golf ball.

The reality is much different.

It has some narrow spots, but it also has plenty of wide-open spaces with holes winding through water features and offering sweeping views of the surrounding mountains. The design by architect Roger Packard, with consultation from major champion Andy North, defies the usual golf course labels. One label it did earn was a "Top 100 Best Course in America" distinction by *Golfweek* magazine for 2009.

"I think we have our own unique design," PGA Head Professional Todd Bindner said. "I think it was done with the idea that we didn't want to be labeled as a certain type of golf course."

The first three holes are through forest, but the course opens up with the par-5 4th hole, a unique design that has two greens. The layout then alternates between the forest of Ponderosa pine, open meadows and water features.

"The course definitely gives you a feel for what

McCall itself is really like," Bindner said. "Everyone focuses on Payette Lake and the mountains, but we also have lots of open space."

Like the course itself, Whitetail is embracing a mixture of private and public access. The course will remain primarily for members, but new owners Rich Hormaechea and Joe Scott are pushing stay-and-play packages through their dual ownership of adjacent Shore Lodge.

"Membership is still No. 1 in our plans, but attracting guests is definitely No. 2," Bindner said. "We're not going to go public, but we're definitely more receptive to getting more people up here to play Whitetail and see what it's all about."

What golfers will find is a course that not only offers variety in its design but one that requires a variety of golf shots. Most holes reward working the ball, but no one direction is favored.

"You need to be able to move the ball in both directions," Bindner said. "It's such a fun course to play. It's one of those courses where it's difficult to shoot low numbers unless you really get comfortable with the greens."

Whitetail isn't going to pummel players of lesser skills, however. There are some spots to avoid, but players also have an opportunity to recover from trouble.

Call 208.630.0221 or visit WhitetailClub.com.

MCCALL AREA UPDATES

JUG MOUNTAIN

With Osprey Meadows at Tamarack Resort closed, daily rounds were up for the early season at Jug Mountain despite wetter than normal conditions.

"We've had a number of Tamarack players, which has been very positive," said Glen Ricker, PGA Professional at Jug Mountain. "They are very good customers."

While Tamarack's legal troubles may be a boon for Jug Mountain and other courses in the McCall area in the short term, Jug Mountain owner David Carey believes everyone benefits when all the properties are doing well.

Jug Mountain has matured to the point where most of the activity taking place is cosmetic. The new restaurant is fully operational in the clubhouse, and the course is entering year two of having its original routing in place.

"We're putting the finishing touches on everything, which is nice," Carey said. "We're taking care of the things that bring people to McCall in the first place."

MEADOWCREEK

Names very familiar to the Idaho golf scene have assumed operations at Meadowcreek Resort near New Meadows. Jerry and Susan Breau are managing golf operations, and Clint Travis is taking care of the grounds. This is the same team that runs acclaimed Banbury Golf Club in Eagle.

They've created Raven Golf Services, LLC, to lease Meadowcreek from Carey McNeal and may look at operating other golf courses.

The main building that housed the Meadowcreek pro shop and restaurant has been closed for this season. The golf operation has been moved to a much smaller building near the pool. Course improvements are beginning to take shape, and the team has brought some of its successful strategies at Banbury to golf offerings. Meadowcreek now has a family golf association. Parents and children pay \$6 green fees on weeknights if they join and then play together.

Meadowcreek also has a new web site with a new domain name: www.meadowcreekgolfcourse.net.

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