

Bandon Trails (resort)

BANDON, OR The much-awaited third course at Bandon Dunes has proved to be a successful change of pace from its two seaside siblings. It's a wonderful tour of the ecosystems of the Pacific Northwest coast, as towering sand dunes give way to verdant meadows and evergreen forests, and it has gained more than its share of admirers. One highlight is the love-it-or-hate-it fourteenth—with its launchpad tee, split-level fairway and menacingly tiny green, it is one of the most controversial holes that the team of Ben Crenshaw and Bill Coore have ever built.

ARCHITECTS: Ben Crenshaw and Bill Coore. YARDAGE: 6,765. PAR: 71. GREENS FEES: \$100–\$240. TEE TIMES: 888-345-6008, bandondunesgolf.com.



Dunesy: the semiblind par-three second at Bandon Trails

TOPTEN

Best New Courses of 2005

From Southern California to Scandinavia, the finest openings of the year

Given their far-ranging geographies and inspirations, it's difficult to draw common themes among the best new courses to open worldwide in any one year. But if there's a hallmark to the vintage of 2005, it's that golf architects and developers are increasingly drawn to rugged sites they once would

have deemed too severe. Blast through solid granite? Sure. Stitch together fairways over mountainous terrain? Absolutely. Yet at the same time, instead of trying to tame the land, they're preserving rough-hewn elements of it to exhilarating strategic and artistic effect.

WOOD SARBOLD

3 Creek Ranch (private)

JACKSON HOLE, WY Already home to a first-rate resort course, Teton Pines, this tony ski village now has a private club to match. Given the natural setting, Rees Jones had much to work with here, namely a grassy rangeland dotted with cottonwoods and drained by a trio of creeks (each of which holds cutthroat rainbow trout). There's also a series of small lakes. Despite the thin air at 6,500 feet, the course is long enough to be reckoned with.

ARCHITECT: Rees Jones. YARDAGE: 7,675. PAR: 72. MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES: 888-920-9292, 3creekranch-jh.com.

**With nearly all of the year's noteworthy debuts, the story is the same:
THE MORE DRAMATIC THE SITE, THE BETTER.**

Boston Golf Club (private)

HINGHAM, MA Having spent a year studying the great links of the British Isles and having thoughtfully restored such American classics as Kittansett and Fishers Island, Gil Hanse brought all his knowledge to bear on this thrillingly firm, rolling and pine-studded site near the south shore of Boston. Hanse offers a version of the Principal's Nose at St. Andrews and a pair of fairways on parallel holes that bleed together around fescue-fringed bunkers à la Shinnecock. A "Redan ridge" par four calls for a bump-and-run off the shoulder of a canted green.

ARCHITECT: Gil Hanse. YARDAGE: 7,015. PAR: 71. MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES: rpatterson@bostongolfclub.org.

The Club at Bond Head (public)

BOND HEAD, ONTARIO This high-end daily-fee course forty minutes north of Toronto is largely the work of a young architect, Jason Straka, whose bold vision belies his years. Straka, an associate in the firm of Hurdzan/Fry, has fashioned a whimsical course full of generous fairways, crafty greens and, most striking, bunkers dotted with tufts of fescue. The best holes provide options galore. The 391-yard par-four eleventh, a dogleg right, can be played safely up the left side or daringly over a field of golden fescue, yielding a much shorter approach. A second course, by the same designers, is scheduled to open in July.

ARCHITECTS: Jason Straka and Michael Hurdzan. YARDAGE: 7,496. PAR: 72. GREENS FEES: \$115-\$140. TEE TIMES: 905-778-9400, theclubatbondhead.com.

Greywalls Course, Marquette Golf Club (public)

MARQUETTE, MI This stretch of Michigan's Upper Peninsula is marked by thick forest and exposed rock, yet

somehow Mike DeVries managed to tackle a site that would give most architects the willies. The opening hole alone is worth the journey: a tumbling par five that, on clear days, offers views for fifty miles across Lake Superior to the multicolored sandstone cliffs known as Pictured Rocks. But that's just for starters. Gird yourself for tees perched on granite pinnacles and greens framed by sheer sixty-foot-high walls of native rock.

ARCHITECT: Mike DeVries. YARDAGE: 6,851. PAR: 70. GREENS FEES: \$85-\$125. TEE TIMES: 906-225-0721, marquettegolfclub.com.

Hills Golf Club (private)

MÖLNDAL, SWEDEN Located on the outskirts of Gothenburg, Sweden's second-largest city, this course is a championship-caliber layout built with the Scandinavian Masters (and, possibly, the Ryder Cup) in mind. At 7,700 yards, it is one of Europe's longest tracks, though each hole has up to seven tees. The club occupies a rolling-to-hilly site dominated by rock, including granite promontories and steep rock faces. Most of the holes are threaded through a mature forest, while a few are wrapped around lakes. Even Annika might be tested to her limits here.

ARCHITECTS: Arthur Hills and Steve Forrest. YARDAGE: 7,700. PAR: 71. MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES: 011-46/3187-3636, hillsgolfclub.se.

Rees Jones Course, Redstone Golf Club (public)

HUMBLE, TX Handed a heavily wooded site, Rees Jones crafted a classic risk-reward course that's part rugged, part refined and sure to create interest when it assumes its role this year as the new site of the Shell Houston Open. The rough-edged bunkers look as if they were carved by hand in the 1920s, while the Tour-spec greens, intricately contoured and impressively smooth, bespeak modern technology. The layout also has good pacing to it—for instance, a drivable par four followed by a pair of hefty nonconsecutive par fives. "There's a lot of variety," says David Toms, who consulted on the design.

ARCHITECT: Rees Jones. YARDAGE: 7,422. PAR: 72. GREENS FEES: \$125-\$140. TEE TIMES: 281-459-7820, redstonegolfclub.com.

Stone Eagle Golf Club (private)

PALM DESERT, CA Tucked away in a cleft of the mountains 1,000 feet above the Coachella Valley, this housing-free site, stark and desolate, has been transformed



Northern stars (from top): terraced tees at Sunday River's par-three sixth; Sunday River's finishing hole in autumn splendor.



by Tom Doak into a grand-scale test of golf. It's marked by sharp drops, brink-of-oblivion ravines and large, topsy-turvy greens. Shots rise against stony peaks or plummet to infinity-edge greens that appear to float above the desert. Pine Valley West? Bill Gates, a founding member, endorses the notion.

ARCHITECT: Tom Doak. YARDAGE: 6,804. PAR: 71. MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES: 760-568-9800, stoneeagleclub.com.

Sunday River Golf Club (resort)

NEWRY, ME It was nearly twenty years ago that Robert Trent Jones Jr. created New England's definitive mountain course at Sugarloaf. With Sunday River, he returned to the ski peaks of Maine, and this time he's fashioned a more playable but no less scenic gem. The broad fairways, carved from a dense forest of hardwood and pine, are remarkably level for a property that has 400 feet of elevation change. Clever doglegs force longer hitters to think about their angles off the tee, while

the views of broad-shouldered peaks in the Mahoosuc Range will satisfy all comers.

ARCHITECT: Robert Trent Jones Jr. YARDAGE: 7,130. PAR: 72. GREENS FEE: \$100. TEE TIMES: 207-824-4653, sundayrivergolf.com.

Wynn Las Vegas Resort and Country Club (resort)

LAS VEGAS Having already proved with Shadow Creek that he could transform an ordinary swath of desert land into an oasis of golf, casino mogul Steve Wynn tapped his buddy Tom Fazio to join him in a second act. The result is a dazzling and eminently playable parkland course just on the other side of a man-made berm—but a world away—from the bustling Vegas strip. The five par threes, two of which feature water in play, rival a Cirque du Soleil show for theatricality. As dramatic as it is, the course is one of many showpieces at Wynn's new 2,716-room, \$2.7 billion resort.

ARCHITECT: Tom Fazio. YARDAGE: 7,042. PAR: 70. GREENS FEE: \$500 (resort guests only). RESORT: 888-320-7123, wynnlasvegas.com. •