



Where to go?

There are as many top-10 lists as there are golf resorts. But here are a just a few courses in Atlantic Canada that seem to be mentioned most often:

THE LINKS AT CROWBUSH COVE, P.E.I.

Golf Digest's best new Canadian course in 1994; arguably this stunning seaside course kick-started the now impressive golf industry in P.E.I. (at least 22 courses within a 90-minute drive on the island).

HIGHLANDS LINKS CAPE BRETON, N.S.

Ranked one of the world's top 100 Courses (No. 79, Golf Magazine, 2007) and Canada's No.1 public course (Golf Magazine, 2007). Stunning "mountains and ocean" course designed by Stanley Thompson in 1939.

ALGONQUIN GOLF RESORT, ST. ANDREWS-BY-THE-SEA, N.B.

Deemed best course in New Brunswick by Score Magazine. A forested front nine followed by a back nine on the glorious edge of the Bay of Fundy, historic course completely upgraded in 2000.

FOX HARB'R, WALLACE, N.S.

For privacy and an upscale getaway: spectacular seaside golf course, spa and high-end accommodations. Fox Harb'r boasts its own airstrip. Top-rated Atlantic Canadian golf course in the Globe and Mail's 2004 rankings.

RIVER COURSE, HUMBER VALLEY RESORT, N.L.

Declared Canada's best new course 2007 by SCOREGolf Magazine. Spectacularly carved out of the forest along the Humber River. Great views from all 18 holes (and novice friendly!).

TEE TIME

Does the idea of being trapped on a golf course for hours with someone you're trying to impress terrify you?

Maybe it's not so bad if you love the sport. But for me, someone who's barely stepped beyond the driving range, lighting up the links and "relationship building" at the same time is mighty intimidating. Not that invitations come by very often for a freelance writer. But one did recently, and I had no idea what to do about it.

I asked for some advice from a friend. St. John's-born Cory St. Croix now lives and works in Calgary as a senior originator for TransAlta Corp. He golfs with customers. He's also taken them skiing, fly-fishing and, soon, bobsledding.

"I think that at least being able to negotiate your way around a golf course with a minimum of embarrassment is useful," he says. "At least if you are in any sort of position where you are likely to get asked to golf.

"If you have time to get some lessons and are interested in learning to golf, I would suggest that."

FINE FAIRWAYS

There are over 190 golf courses in Atlantic Canada, many of which are ranked near the top in the country (see sidebar). Top courses often compliment the jaw-dropping scenery with fine seafood and facilities.

Though this sounds intimidating to a novice like me, research shows the majority of resorts do cater to beginners by way of private, semi-private or small-group golf lessons. For \$100 to \$200 you can usually snag three private lessons. "That's a good place to start," says Kirby Carruthers of Lake Loon Golf Academy in Dartmouth, N.S. Carruthers has been teaching golf in the area for 20-plus years.

"Most people come to me with corporate golfing in mind," he says. And more than ever,

women are coming out. "More than a few ... are sick of being stuck in the office and working overtime while the boys are out playing."

His advice for the beginner? Pick public golf courses that are friendly to beginners to start. Practice (this game requires time and patience). Hang out with someone who knows the game. Most importantly, get to know the etiquette and the pace of play.

"Ignore the score. It's more important to know how to carry yourself: where to put your bag, how to set up, how the game works. That is what people who play with you will remember," Carruthers says.

THE DRIVE TO DRIVE

A random (read: Facebook) survey reveals that yes, business does get done on the links. "Relationships are built and maintained, which opens the door for business conversations later," was one response. Another related the story of a fellow who did ALL his business on the golf course. As a result he hated golf but found it useful if not entirely necessary to operate his computer business.

The downside to golfing on the job: explaining that yes, you are working and no, you're not out for an afternoon of beer and balls with your buddies. "You're constantly forced to 'be on' and you are trying to not only make a mental note of what the customer is saying, but you are also thinking about making a good impression and figuring out the right way to bring up work talk without being a bore," Cory St. Croix says. "So it's not all fun and games."

That said, he appreciates those sunny afternoons away from the office — who wouldn't? "Yes," St. Croix agrees. "Being in marketing does have its perks." | **ABM**

Don't see your favourite listed? Let me know: stephaniejporter@gmail.com