

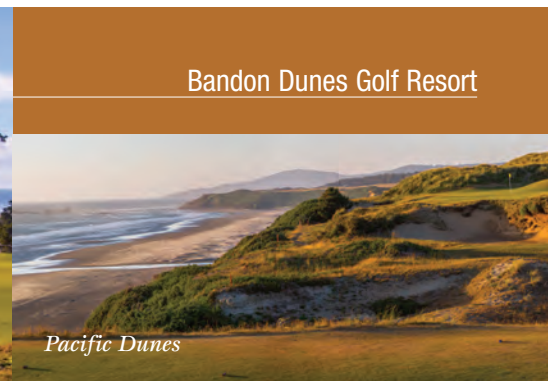
Shoe (left) is an early riser, up by 2 a.m. During a stint in the Coast Guard Reserve, his ship would cruise by what is today's Bandon Dunes. The Wizard (right), has a black belt in Taekwondo and an envious record of six holes-in-one on the Bandon Preserve Course.



Old Macdonald



Bandon Preserve Short Course



Pacific Dunes

BREAKFAST WITH The Wizard & Shoe

Five great golf courses at Bandon Dunes Golf Resort only tells part of the story.

By Mark Pazdur, Publisher



Bandon Trails



Bandon Dunes

BANDON, OREGON: Few destinations elicit a broader smile on a golfer's face than Bandon Dunes. What started as a gutsy decision by owner Mike Keiser to build a David McLay Kidd design among the rural sand dunes of Oregon has grown into a five-course golf mecca.

"The first year was an unknown," explained Jeff Simonds, director of golf operations. "Mr. Keiser loved the Scottish golf experience of playing amid sand dunes, nature without a home in sight, and walking with a caddie. He felt others would share his passion for a similar experience in America.

"We follow the simple philosophy of being genuine. Expectations are high for our guests. We know we need to deliver. If you live and breathe golf, Bandon Dunes is for you," said Simonds.

The resort has an offer only the heartiest of souls attempt. "All four of our regulation length courses have the same guest fee," said Simonds. "Should you be one of the

few each year that attempts to play all four courses in the same day, you pay 100 percent of the first course guest fee, 50 percent for the second, and the third round is on us. After 72 holes of walking about 28 miles, we give you \$100 back for accomplishing this amazing feat."

When asked how many golfers complete the mission each year, Simonds was quick to report, "Very few, which bonds those who have accomplished it even more."

PANCAKES WITH THE WIZARD & SHOE

My trip included an engaging breakfast with Grant "The Wizard" Rogers, director of instruction, and Bob "Shoe" Gaspar, director of outside happiness. Over a stack of blueberry pancakes, I had a spirited conversation with the two outsized personalities who help make Bandon Dunes tick.

"One of my last stops before retiring as a delivery driver was hauling a trailer load of mulch to Bandon Dunes," recalled Shoe. "I remember saying to myself, 'this place is

really going to be something.' It wasn't but a couple of days into retirement that I saw a help wanted ad in the local paper and decided to make the call."

Shoe, a nickname earned for his uncanny resemblance to jockey Willie Shoemaker, has been a fixture greeting arriving golfers for two decades. "I was the first staff member hired," smiled Shoe. "All of our guests arrive giddy with excitement. My job is to make sure we continue to enhance their experience so they leave feeling the same way they arrived."

Most first-time guests don't realize Bandon Dunes has a world-class, 60-acre practice facility, overseen with a watchful eye by The Wizard. "All of our golf courses are true links designs that require a different skill set compared to most American courses," explained The Wizard,

JEFF'S BANDON DUNES PRIMER

- OLD MACDONALD (Tom Doak/Jim Urbina): "Most fun. A wide-open, one-ball round course."
- BANDON TRAILS (Bill Coore/Ben Crenshaw): "Under rated. Shot for shot, strongest design."
- BANDON PRESERVE SHORT COURSE (Bill Coore/Ben Crenshaw): "A 13-hole short course with a mission."
- BANDON DUNES (David McLay Kidd): "Best golfer wins. The most complete test and also my favorite."
- PACIFIC DUNES (Tom Doak): "Stunningly beautiful."

a moniker earned from a *Golf Digest* article.

"Bump-and-run shots and even putting from what typically would be a wedge shot to the flag might be the smartest plan of attack. Our 'links lessons' teach you proper strategy. In some ways, it's like having the answers to questions on a test," winked The Wizard. "Someone in your group is going to have the most fun, it might as well be you!" ■

Getting to Bandon Dunes: United has seasonal service from San Francisco and Denver into North Bend Airport (OTH), about a 35 minute/\$50 shuttle fare from Bandon Dunes. Eugene Airport (EUG), 2½ hours away, and Portland Airport (PDX), a 4½ hour drive, are viable alternatives. Travel tip: If flying into Portland, consider adding an extra day to your trip to visit dozens of wineries along the way. For more, please visit BandonDunesGolf.com.

FUN FACTS ON BANDON DUNES

- Courses are built upon 90 feet of sand, allowing for quick drainage.
- The resort averages 58 inches of rain per year with most falling at night.
- First round guest fees are the same at all four courses with prices stair-stepping from \$100 (winter) to \$275 (summertime).
- Average rounds clock in at a respectable 4:20. During season, up to 300 caddies are available (the town of Bandon has a population of only 3,134).
- Net proceeds from Bandon Preserve help fund their philanthropic arm, the Wild River's Coast Alliance.

BANDON DUNES GOLF RESORT has been awarded the 2019 U.S. Amateur Four Ball Championship and the 2020 U.S. Amateur Championship.