

The Golf Life | Road Report

"Why does a woman in a leather dress
make a man sweat and think irrationally?
She smells like a **golf bag**."



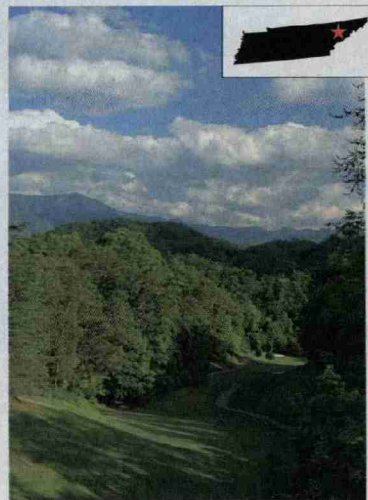
Ups and Downs

These courses specialize in
elevated greens, uneven lies and
tee shots that hang for days

When it
comes to
golf, we
get around. Each
month our editors
share dispatches
on the cool places
they visit.

GATLINBURG, TENN.

2 When a course has nicknames for holes like Hi Ho, Sky Hi, Look Out and Down the Hatch, you expect big elevation changes. Gatlinburg Golf Course, just outside the Tennessee entrances to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, doesn't disappoint. ▶ The course is like a roller coaster on the back nine, which is fitting because these are the holes that run closest to the neighboring Dollywood theme park. (You will hear the whistle from Dollywood's narrow-gauge steam train throughout the back side.) ▶ The most memorable hole is No. 12 (Sky Hi), a par 3 with a hang-time-inducing 200-foot drop from tee to green. A helpful sign explains how to play it. From the 194-yard back tees, for example, you'll want to hit your 165-yard club. ▶ Though the front nine is not quite as dramatic, there is plenty to like. The first tee sends you down a severe incline to a wide fairway, and after that you'll make your way through gently rolling hills and a pleasing mix of long and short holes. Views of the Smoky Mountains abound. ▶ Gatlinburg Golf Course was built in 1955 and was renovated most recently in 2007 by architect Bob Cupp. In 2009, Golf Digest named it the No. 1 municipal course in Tennessee. I haven't played them all, but that seems like a fair assessment to me. The peak-season green fee: \$60, including cart. —PETER FINCH



COURTESY OF THE CLUBS • ILLUSTRATION: AL MURPHY

SNOWMASS VILLAGE, COLO.

1 The name Aspen evokes thoughts of black-diamond ski slopes, hot-tub parties and fur-covered UGG boots. But the popular winter resort area has an alter ego: In the summer it's one of the prettiest, most serene places on Earth, and home to some ear-popping mountain golf. The area's best-kept secret is the private, eco-friendly Snowmass Club, which was meticulously redesigned by Jim Engh in 2004 and offers one of the greatest up-and-down rounds a golfer can face. (The club has limited tee times for the public for \$185, cart included.) Built to reward precision and imagination, the par-72, 7,008-yard layout has 400 feet of elevation changes and is 8,000 feet above sea level at its lowest point. The thin-air distance boost, about 10 to 15 percent for a well-struck shot, comes in handy on holes like the 278-yard sixth, a downhill par 3 with a very large green. The tee shot of the day is on the majestic 18th. No matter the skill level, every player should take a rip from the elevated back tee just to watch the ball descend more than 100 feet into the fairway. The uphill holes, such as the par-3 12th, test your club selection as much as they do your swing (not to mention make you glad you took a cart). Engh's signature deep bunkers with flat bottoms can be found on practically every hole, but the biggest hazard at Snowmass is distraction. Amazing views of the Rocky Mountains and long-range glimpses of elk, moose and the occasional bear provide great excuses for a bad shot. —STINA STERNBERG



SPOKANE, WASH.

3 It seems like every golf course with terrain of any repute has a so-called Cardiac Hill that slope walkers of a certain age dread trudging up typically near the end of the round. Indian Canyon Golf Course doesn't have one of them. It has 18. The jewel of Spokane's municipal golf system has been challenging the glutes, quads and Achilles tendons of amateurs (and professionals) since the 1930s. Hyperbole aside, the 479-yard opening hole descends the face of the eponymous canyon in the course name—it's a 240-foot vertical drop. But then you spend the next four and a half hours hoofing up and down hills until you eventually get back to where you started. It reads 6,255 yards from the back tees, but it seems much longer. Designed by H. Chandler Egan, Indian Canyon has been the site of three U.S. Amateur Public Links championships and has been rated one of the top public courses in the United States by Golf Digest. Even better, it's home to the PGA of America's 2014 National Teacher of the Year, Kathy Gildersleeve-Jensen, and costs only \$29 to play. —MATTHEW RUDY