

Disney's Osprey Ridge Course: A Work of Art by Tom Fazio

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Golfers who test their skills on Disney's Osprey Ridge course try to add some "artful strokes" with their golf clubs on a "masterpiece" course from the "palette" of renowned course architect Tom Fazio.

In fact, Osprey Ridge was a picturesque, challenging layout in Fazio's eyes long before golfers began reviewing his creation in 1992. He had studied the hundreds of acres of wilderness in the northeast corner of Walt Disney World Resort and, like an artist who sees the finished painting before the first pigment is applied to the canvas, he saw great things.

"Some of the factors that excited us about the project were the vegetation, the water areas and the wetlands which became part of the background and framing for the holes," he said.

One of the challenges for a resort course designer is to create a layout that would prove an equal challenge for the expert and the player with lesser ability. At Osprey Ridge, playing options produce that versatility — from the positioning of tee boxes to the choices the player can make concerning a route from tee to green on the many holes where water is a factor.

Fazio notes that the design of Osprey Ridge uses the existing land patterns to their fullest while preserving all of the adjacent wetlands and other natural areas. Its positive characteristics include remote areas and high ridges with some tees, greens and viewing areas 20-25 feet above grade.

More than 70 strategically placed bunkers, mounds and a meandering ridge that runs through the course provide interesting obstacles, banking and elevation changes.

According to Robert McCord's *The 479 Best Courses to Play in the U.S., Canada and the Caribbean*, "The links-style layout . . . has an abundance of beautiful and sometimes golf-threatening foliage, including pine, scrub oak, palmetto, bay trees, cypress and other varieties. Wind is another element [to challenge golfers.] Often the winds here are swirling and unpredictable.

"The front nine starts out with some of the easier holes on the course but includes two long par 3s before you reach the 582-yard par-5 seventh, the number-1 handicap hole, largely due to distance. The course gets more difficult on the back nine. The three finishing holes at Osprey Ridge are excellent tests of golf."

Facts and Figures about the Osprey Ridge Course

- Course opened in 1992
- Par is 72
- Course record: 65 (David Young)
- Length ranges from 7,101 (pro yardage) to 5,402 (forward tees); men's yardage: 6,680
- Course rating from the men's tees is 72.3
- Slope index from the men's tees is 129
- Water is a factor on nine holes
- Greens are Tifdwarf
- Fairways are Tifway 419
- Osprey Ridge clubhouse facilities include a pro shop, locker rooms, The Sand Trap restaurant and a function room
- Among the prestigious events that have called the course "home" are the Guess Watches Zinger Stinger Pro-Am benefiting the Leukemia Society of America's Lymphoma Research (1995) and the Bryant Gumbel/Walt Disney World Celebrity Tournament benefiting the United Negro College Fund (1993-)
- Osprey Ridge is part of the Walt Disney World golf resort complex honored as one of America's Gold Medal resorts by *Golf Magazine* (2004 biennial survey)