

THRU THE GREEN

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A SPARKLING JEWEL IN GOLF - RICH TREASURE CHEST

The Laguna Seca Golf Club is a sparkling jewel sitting in the golf rich treasure chest of the Monterey Bay area. The 18-hole course was a collaboration of two master architects, Robert Trent Jones, Sr. and his son Robert Trent Jones, Jr. the design has melded into its native countryside; a course that weaves through clusters of oaks and winds uphill and downhill. The blend of both architects' style results in a mellow yet challenging layout that assures your playing enjoyment.

Early in 1991, the clubhouse was opened after a \$1.2 million addition and refurbishment. The Pro Shop, operated by Dian Murphy, LPGA, and her staff, is stocked with the latest golf equipment and current fashions. The clubhouse has a commanding view of the first hole as it flows downhill between the oaks on both sides of the fairway. The dining facilities are excellent and the menu and food preparation make your visit memorable. Plan to have breakfast before your tee time, or have lunch before you leave for home.

Laguna Seca is located between Monterey and Salinas on York Road, just off Highway 68, approximately four miles from Monterey. "Dry Lagoon" is the English translation surrounding the course. The area is rich in history, the property dates back to the Spanish Land Grants. Several of the ranches nearby have been in the same family for centuries. World famous Laguna Seca racetrack is only a mile away, and players can hear the race cars circle the track when the Indy cars are in town.

Number 15, a 542-yard par 5, is the most difficult hole on the course. Water comes into play on the drive and also on

the approach to the green. The long hitter must make sure not to carry the crest of the fairway, or a long downslope could roll the ball into a watery grave. The second shot demands an accurate carry to an elevated peninsula which leaves a third shot of 110 to 180 yards to the green. The 15th green is protected by a large lake and several bunkers. Many stories are overheard in the bar about players taking double digit scores on 15 and how they will get a birdie next time they play.

The first hole is a downhill, 343-yard four par which is framed by oak trees left, right and far behind on the hillside across the valley. The green has several huge sand traps which make rolling a shot on the green impossible. The third hole is a tight, 500-yard, par five, that penalizes any shot sprayed left or right. The uphill fourth has a difficult shot to an elevated green, with the usual bunkers protecting the landing areas and green.

The 6125 yard length from the blue tees and 5711 from the whites is quite moderate. The course has few four pars longer than 380 yards, and so the average player can enjoy his day without having to hit three wood second shots all day. There are five 3 pars and 4 par fives for a par of 71. The course rating is 70.4 / 123 from the championship tees and 68.5 / 119 from the whites.

The back nine starts out with a diabolical four par with out of bounds left and right. The downhill driving area slopes to the right and feeds toward the ob. The second shot must be carried to an elevated green protected by a huge drop-off to the right. From the back tees, it plays 420 yards and is a monster when the wind is blowing.

As you stand on the eleventh tee, you hope that someone has played the hole before so he

can give you an idea of the direction to hit your tee shot. The highly elevated tee reveals a fairway far below but no clue on where the green is located. The long hitters aim over the trees on the right and play to hit the green with the drive. The short 282 yard hole is even shorter by going over the trees, but a weak drive will leave you in a grove of huge oak trees and wishing you would have hit an iron off the tee.

Number 17 is a pretty 3 par with monster bunkers guarding the green. The 18th brings you back up the hillside to the clubhouse, ending your day on a playful yet challenging golf course.

Laguna Seca is one of six public courses owned by the Lombardo Group. Others are Rancho Canada, East and West Course, Pajaro Valley, Fig Garden in Fresno, and Old Brockway in North Lake Tahoe.

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