



18th hole at the South Course

# The Resort at Pelican Hill

By Mike Stansfield

*The shattered water made a misty din.  
Great waves looked over others coming in,  
And thought of doing something to the shore  
That water never did to land before.  
The clouds were low and hairy in the skies,  
Like locks blown forward in the gleam of eyes.*

~ Robert Frost

In Robert Frost's poem, *Once by the Pacific*, Frost creates a feeling of the immense nature of the ocean and the power contained within its cycles. For three glorious October days I had the opportunity to walk in Frost's footsteps and sit on the beach and feel that power. I also had the chance to experience one of the world's great resorts along with 36-holes of outstanding golf designed by Tom Fazio.

The Resort at Pelican Hill in Newport Beach, California, is perched on the hills overlooking the Pacific Ocean, minutes from the Pacific Coast Highway and Crystal Cove Beach. Like their namesake, the golf courses seem to lie over, under and through the beautiful coastal hills that make this part of southern California so special.

Two spectacular courses but each with a character of their own, the South Course is more unique with a resort flare. Water hazards, several holes by the ocean's edge, along with unique design features, add to the feeling of a resort atmosphere.

The North Course is more of a player's course with open canyons and elevated plateaus. It plays longer, is more subtle in its definitions and requires some thought and course knowledge if one is to score well. That course knowledge will come much easier if you take advantage of the caddy program available at both courses. The North course reminded me of Spyglass in Pebble Beach with its challenging distances, ocean views, superior conditioning and oak-covered hills.

Both courses finish strong. The 17th and 18th holes are challenging and require well-placed tee shots. The 18th on the South Course requires shots over two ravines up to a well-protected green. The 17th on the North Course is a 558-yard par 5 downhill shot with a second and third shot up to an elevated green framed by the majestic Pacific. The 18th is a downhill par 4 which provides a birdie opportunity if one is willing to go at the flag across a tree-filled valley.





17th hole at the North Course.

If you get a chance be sure and take a lesson from their Director of Instruction Glenn Deck, a *Golf Magazine* Top 100 Teacher or from one of his staff. Glenn has been at Pelican Hill for 25 years and has an uncanny ability to zero in on the one thought or insight which can help you take your game to another level. Patient and perceptive, my one hour with Glenn Deck has given me some serious insights in how to improve my game

Pelican Hill is more than golf. There is a reason this is a five-star resort. Not

your typical hotel rooms, the resort is comprised of two, three and four bedroom villas with ocean views, butler service and a private clubhouse and pool. The remainder of the resort is comprised of expansive bungalow guest rooms and suites.


Enjoy Pelican Hill's numerous amenities including the spa, restaurants, and swimming pools and as strange as this may sound talking and conversing with the many amazing people that make up the staff. Great care is used in the hiring of "team members" that work at the resort resulting in outstanding service. The care and consideration paid to the resort's guests is truly one of the delights in staying at Pelican Hill.

Not to be missed is the Crystal Cove Beach. The Resort runs a shuttle on the hour to one of the most beautiful beaches on the West Coast. The beach is perfect for strolling along the shore and provides an opportunity to explore the many tide pools that dot the shore. But one thing you don't want to miss is the Crystal Cove Historic District. The district is composed of a unique community of vintage cottages that are being restored to their previous 1950's and 1960's glory. Also not to be missed is the museum at Crystal Cove that highlights the simple beach life of a bygone era.

Along with the incredible restaurants, resort guests may want to visit Ruby's Shake Shack or the Beachcomber and Bootlegger Bar that relive those lazy days of spending time at the beach. Immediately north and south of The Resort at Pelican Hill are a number of other breathtaking beaches available to guests of the resort.

Those who have experienced this remarkable resort always point out certain things which make this such an incredible experience. Frequently mentioned is the accommodating nature of the friendly staff, the amazing views, the luxurious accommodations as well as the sheer size and grandeur of the resort along with the impeccably maintained landscape.

So, once by the Pacific, I watched the rolling waves coming in. Once by the Pacific, I played 36-holes of spectacular golf. Once by the Pacific, I experienced amazing service, accommodations, food and ocean views. So, once by the Pacific, I made memories of a very special place that every golfer should plan to play.

The Resort at Pelican Hill is a special bucket list resort, as are its golf courses, that define a golfer's dream trip. 

*Mike Stansfield is a frequent contributor to Fairways.*



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