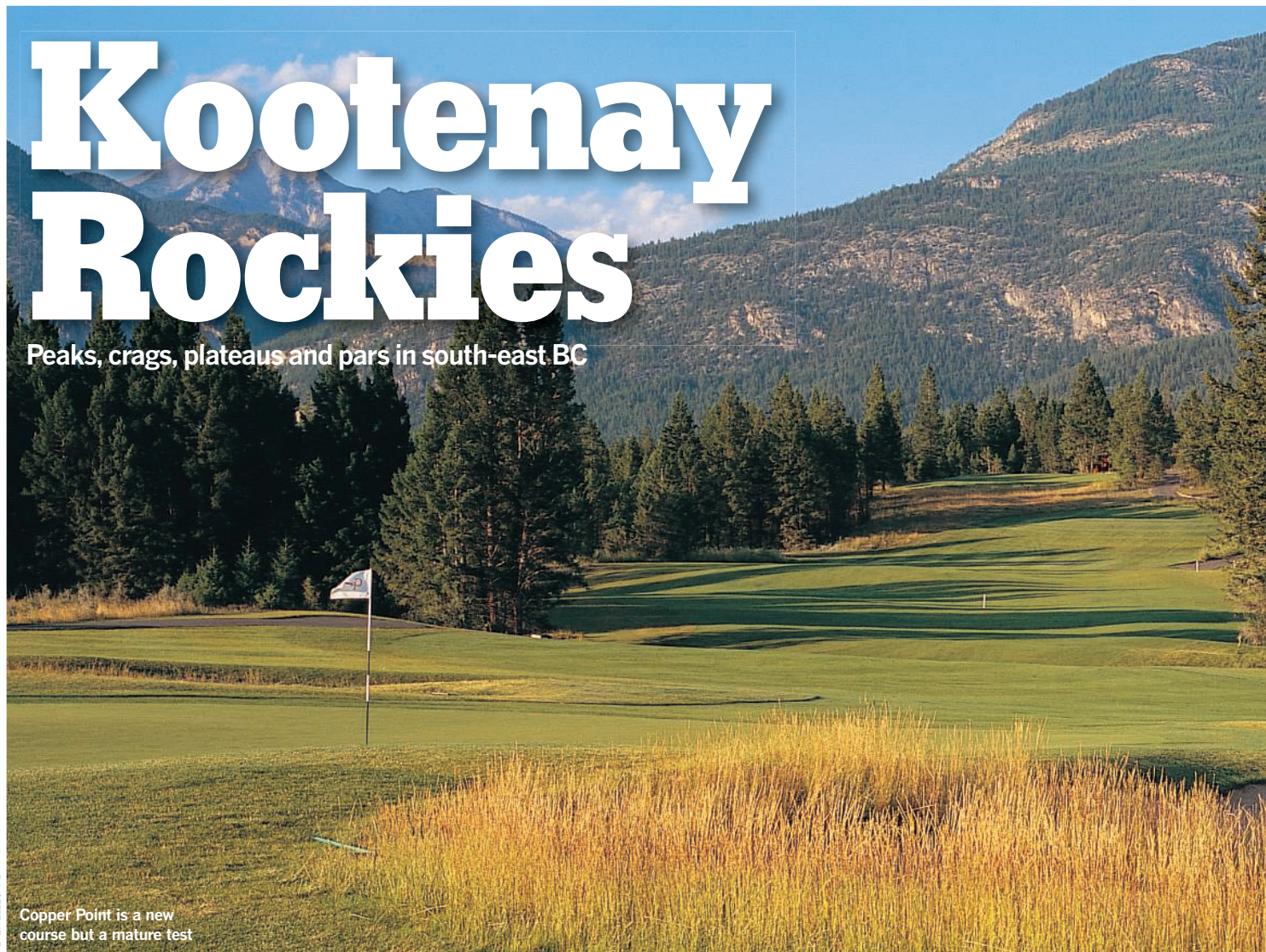




Kootenay Rockies

Peaks, crags, plateaus and pars in south-east BC



PETER ELLEGARD

Copper Point is a new course but a mature test

British Columbia offers golfers mountain highs galore. Nowhere more so than at Panorama, in the Kootenay Rockies towards the south-east corner of the province. A thriving ski resort in the winter, it becomes an all-action activity centre in summer.

Golf has been a key ingredient at Panorama Mountain Village since 1999, when 7,140-yard Greywolf opened to immediate acclaim.

Here, 4,000ft up among the mountains, one of golf's most awesome holes and intimidating tee shots awaits. The par-3 6th hole is called Cliffhanger – and for good reason.

The green clings to a plateau edged by vertical rock faces which plunge into a chasm called Hopeful Canyon. Hope coupled with nerves of steel are very much needed for your tee shot. Anything short dives towards the white-water river far below. Long or left and the ball also disappears. Could I make it, I wondered as I lofted my seven iron? Yes! Close to the edge, perhaps, but not down by the river, as the old 70s rock anthem goes.



So struck was architect Doug Carrick when he first saw the plateau, framed by tree-cloaked mountain slopes topped by angular peaks, that he designed the entire course around it.

The views are breathtaking throughout the course and several holes could vie for signature status anywhere else, the fir-lined fairways always drawing the eye to the mountainscape.

Greywolf opens from May until October, but golf is possible in the Kootenay Rockies from as early as March. Although mountains grace the skyline of every course in the region,

many are in sheltered valleys and plains.

The Columbia valley provides excellent golf weather and courses, several of which are recent additions. Eagle Ranch (opened in 2000) is a 6,452-yard course with several holes running along bluffs that give commanding views over Lake Windermere.

Copper Point is the area's latest addition and opened in late 2003. Its undulating layout incorporates a deep ravine yet little earth was moved in its creation to maintain a natural experience. The natural theme is exemplified in the use of long grasses to edge bunkers, giving the course a mature feel.

Fairmont Hot Springs, a spa resort at the headwaters of the Columbia River, has two courses in valley settings lorded over by mighty peaks. Mountainside, which has welcomed golfers since 1963, and Riverside, added 24 years later, both tip the scales at just over 6,500 yards. You can soak away your aches and pains afterwards in the odourless hot pools.

Golf and springs come together again at Radium Resort. Its original par-69 resort



WHERE TO PLAY

Greywolf Golf Course

7,140 yards, par 72
C\$69-C\$119 (approx £33-£57)
Contact: 00-1-250-341-4100
greywolfGolf.com

The wolf bares its teeth on the precipitous Cliffhanger par-3 6th

Copper Point Golf Club

6,807 yards, par 70
C\$84 (approx £40)
Contact: 00-1-250-341-3392
copperpointGolf.com

They didn't need to move mountains for this natural born thriller

Trickle Creek Golf Resort

6,896 yards, par 72
C\$99 (approx £47)
Contact: 00-1-250-427-5171
tricklecreek.com

Manicured fairways amid mountain splendour

St Eugene Mission Resort

7,007 yards, par 72
C\$65-C\$95 (approx £31-£45)
Contact: 00-1-250-417-3417
www.steugene.ca

A finishing hole to leave you praising to the heavens

WHERE TO STAY

Trickle Creek Residence Inn by Marriott

Contact: 00-1-250-427-5175
skikimberley.com/marriott_inn

Panorama Mountain Village

Contact: 00-1-250-342-6941
panoramaresort.com

Drama on high at Eagle Ranch



EAGLE RANCH GOLF CLUB





course has been joined by its bigger and much tougher brother, the Springs Course. At 6,767 yards, this Les Furber layout is set high above the Columbia Valley Wetlands and its finishing holes have greens perched perilously close to the rim.

Two courses in the northern part of the region sit alongside the Columbia River – those of Golden Golf Club and Revelstoke Golf Club. One of the oldest in British Columbia, Revelstoke opened in 1924 and was laid out on the site of a former horse racing track. The clubhouse was the track's HQ. A new all-seasons resort is being developed on nearby Mt MacKenzie. Besides extensive winter sports facilities, including 25 lifts and 100 ski and snowboard trails, it will have an 18-hole course.

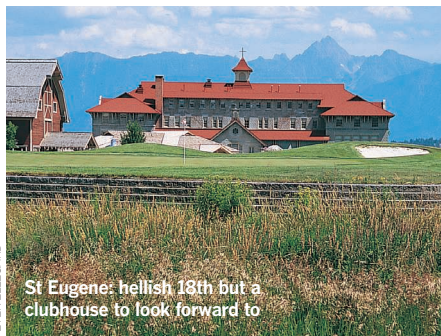
Meanwhile, ski boomtown Fernie is gaining a Greg Norman course in late 2006 to complement its existing veteran, which first opened in 1918.

Golf also abounds at ski resort Kimberley. Trickle Creek, high above Kimberley near the slopes of North Star Mountain, is a 6,896-yard Les Furber design where the rugged mountain surroundings are contrasted by manicured fairways which cross creeks and thread through thick forests of fir trees. Dramatic elevation changes and occasional lakes spice it up further.

Kimberley has another of the region's oldest clubs, in the 80-year-old Kimberley Golf Club, as well as one of its newest. Bootleg Gap, also by Furber, opened in 2002 with 27 holes. Several holes skirt the St Mary River, as do those at yet another nearby Furber creation, St Eugene Mission Resort.

Its par-3 13th drops 75ft from tee to a green next to the rushing St Mary waters, kicking off an 'Amen Corner' of three riverside holes. The course also throws in a mix of links golf and woodland holes through ponderosa pines.

"The two courses are lorded over by mighty peaks and you can soak away your aches and pains afterwards in the odourless hot pools"



St Eugene: hellish 18th but a clubhouse to look forward to

PETER ELLEGARD



Trickle Creek, near the slopes of North Star Mountain at Kimberley ski resort

PETER ELLEGARD

Kootenay Rockies Facts

GETTING THERE

Calgary to Panorama takes about three and a half hours by road. **Air Canada** (aircanada.com, 0871-220-1111) regional and connector service offers daily flights from Vancouver and Calgary into both Cranbrook and Castlegar. **Pacific Coastal Airlines** (pacific-coastal.com, 00-1-604-273-8666) also flies to Cranbrook from Vancouver.

KEY ATTRACTIONS

- **Kicking Horse Mountain Resort**, near Golden, has the world's largest grizzly bear habitat.
- **Kimberley** is a Bavarian city with Canada's largest cuckoo clock and accordion championships each July in its Platzl pedestrian area.
- **The Canadian Museum of Rail Travel** in Cranbrook is home to a collection of antique railway carriages.
- The world's oldest surviving sternwheeler, the 1898-built **SS Moyie**, sits on the shore of Kootenay Lake's Kaslo Bay.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

- Youngsters can let off steam at **Fort Steele Heritage Town**, a restored 1890s pioneer town with steam train and wagon rides.
- The Kootenay Rockies' rivers offer everything from gentle float trips for the whole family to **white-water rapids** for experienced kayakers and rafters.
- Give the kids a taste of the **Wild**

West in a mountain setting with a stay at one of the area's dude ranches.

■ **Fairmont Hot Springs** has a family nine-hole par-three course and activities including horse-riding.

GENERAL INFO

Time difference: GMT -8 for the western part of the region; GMT -7 for the eastern section.

Tourist Information: kootenayrockies.com; www.hellobc.co.uk

Tel: 00-1-250-427-4838; 0906-871-5000 (60p per minute)

Climate: Cold and snowy in winter, but summers are warm and golf is playable from late March or April to October on most courses and from May in mountain resorts.

KOOTENAY ROCKIES FACTS

- This region has the highest concentration of mineral hot springs and health spas in British Columbia.
- Canada's largest odourless mineral hot pools are at **Fairmont Hot Springs**.
- There are **four national parks** (Glacier, Kootenay, Mt Revelstoke and Yoho) plus over 75 provincial parks.
- The world's largest tandem-axle dump truck, **Terex Titan**, is at Sparwood. It is larger than a house and each tyre is 11ft in diameter.
- **Kicking Horse Pass**, east of Golden on the British Columbia-Alberta border, is the highest point on the Canadian Pacific Railway, with an elevation of 5,422ft.



PETER ELLEGARD

Canada's legendary Lost-Ball Rescue Service is popular with golfers