

# GOLF.com

## The Players Championship

TPC Sawgrass, May 7-10

### Get Mobile!

Golf.com has been optimized for mobile devices. [Learn More](#)



[HOME](#) | [NEWS](#) | [INSTRUCTION](#) | [EQUIPMENT](#) | [COURSES & TRAVEL](#) | [GOLF.COM TV](#)

SEARCH

[Trips Blog](#) | [Course Finder](#) | [Top 100 Public Courses](#) | [More Course & Resort Rankings](#) | [Travelin Joe](#) | [Trip Guides](#) | [Tee Time Specials](#) | [Real Estate](#)



### JOIN THE NATION!

Keep up with your scores, stats and golf buddies with our new game-tracking and social-networking tool.



Michael Clemmer/RTJ Golf Trail

The RTJ Trail stretches 384 miles.

## You won't find better value than the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail

By JOE PASSOV  
SENIOR EDITOR (COURSES/RANKINGS)  
Published: June 01, 2009

Critics sniff that the hilly, long courses of the Robert Trent Jones Trail are too similar in design and too challenging for the typical casual golfer, thanks to the multitude of forced-carry approaches over sand and water to greens that are invariably massive and heavily contoured.

- Share
- E-mail
- Print
- Sign up for free newsletter

So what?

No other destination offers such a complete collection of country-club-for-a-day courses at such bargain-basement prices. The success of the RTJ Trail makes it clear that some destinations are just worth it, whether you're Joe Six-Pack, or Joe Six-Handicap.

These are my picks as the best courses on the Trail's a-la-carte menu.

### Capitol Hill (Judge course)

Prattville, Ala.  
7,794 yards, par 72  
\$55-\$75  
334-285-1114, [rtjgolf.com](#)

North to South, the RTJ Trail stretches 384 miles, but many say its finest course is right in the middle. Located 15 miles north of the state capital in Montgomery is Capitol Hill, which might just be the best three-course complex east of the Mississippi.

But it is the Judge that rules, right from the first tee, which plummets 200 feet to the fairway. Toss in a brutish quartet of par-3s and beefy par-5s (like the 711-yard 10th) and you've got one strong package — and an unbelievable value.

### Grand National (Lake course)

Opelika, Ala.  
7,149 yards, par 72

### Premier Resorts 2008



Go to Special Section

### Course Finder



Search thousands of golf courses for a new place to play.

### Sponsored Links

#### Swing Speed Training

Basic and Advanced Programs From a Long Drive Champion

#### Get Free Golf Clubs Now

Free Brand Name Golf Clubs. Hurry - Limited Time Offer.

[Buy a link here](#)

\$45-\$65  
334-749-9042, [rtjgolf.com](#)

The Grand Old Man of modern architecture — Robert Trent Jones himself — declared Grand National "the most spectacular golf site in the world."

Some would argue it's not even the best in Alabama, but its Lake course is undeniably tough, beautiful and memorable, especially its topsy-turvy greens, sprawling bunkers and the dozen holes that skirt 600-acre Lake Saugahatchee.

Regulars debate whether the best track here is the Lake or its sibling Links course. I vote for the Lake for one reason: with all those lakes, trees and wetlands, the Links resembles a links about as much as I resemble George Clooney.

### Cambrian Ridge (Canyon course)

Greenville, Ala.  
7,427 yards, par 72  
\$45-\$65  
334-382-9787, [rtjgolf.com](#)

Located roughly 40 miles south of Montgomery, this 27-hole facility is the hidden gem of the RTJ Trail and one of the nation's best bargains.

The Canyon nine is a beast, while the Sherling loop offers more drama via its many encounters with Sherling Lake. The cameras come out at the downhill approach to the 428-yard, par-4 3rd, which features a lovely lake backdrop, but you'll have to refocus by the 8th, a 636-yard par-5 with a three-tiered green flanked by water and bunkers. If there's a cardwrecker at Cambrian Ridge, this is it.

### Ross Bridge

Hoover, Ala.

8,191 yards, par 72

\$96-\$136

205-949-3085, [rtjgolf.com](http://rtjgolf.com)

No, that back tee yardage is not a misprint. Ross Bridge really is almost 8,200 yards. But it's not as fearsome as it sounds. Extra-wide fairways, soft green contouring and vast but shallow bunkers result in a manageable backtee slope of 135. But choose your tees wisely: par-3s from the back start at 207 yards, par-4s at 454 yards, and par-5s at 571 yards.

Ross Bridge also boasts the Trail's best lodging, the Renaissance Ross Bridge Resort & Spa (800-593-6419, [rossbridgeresort.com](http://rossbridgeresort.com)), a 2008 GOLF Magazine Premier Resorts Silver Medalist.

### Special Packages

At the RTJ Trail, packages can be golf-only or include lodging. While prices vary, package rates at pre-selected hotels average \$52 per person, per night.

For golf-only, the Summer Unlimited Special lets you play as much golf as you want on three consecutive days at most Trail stops for \$48 per day.

Call 800-949-4444 or visit [rtjgolf.com](http://rtjgolf.com).

You might like:

[Ask Travelin Joe: Tucson, Jacksonville and Savannah \(@Trips\)](#)

[Hawaiian golf vacation with the Mother-in-law \(@Trips\)](#)

[Travelin' Joe's Guide to Myrtle Beach Golf Courses \(@Courses and Travel\)](#)

[Top 100 You Can Play Up Close: Doral Golf Resort & Spa \(@Courses and Travel\)](#)

[The Florida you don't know \(@Courses and Travel\)](#)

#### Sponsored Links

##### I am Happy I Lost my Job

After I got laid off, I was able to make \$8k a month Online!

[ChrisEarnsCashOnline.com](http://ChrisEarnsCashOnline.com)

##### Six Sigma Certification

Villanova Six Sigma Certification. Black Belt Average Salary is \$100K!

[www.VillanovaU.com/SixSigma](http://www.VillanovaU.com/SixSigma)

##### New York Golf

Best golf around New York Metro with 7 award winning golf courses

[www.CrystalGolfResort.com](http://www.CrystalGolfResort.com)

[Buy a link here](#)

## Comments ( 0 )

[Add Your Comment](#)

### Add Your Comment

The rules: Keep it clean, and stay on the subject or we might delete your comment. If you see inappropriate language email us.