



Contact: Sandy Bynum, Tourism Division 601.359.3297
sbynum@mississippi.org
Dan Shepherd, Buffalo Communications 703.891.3320
www.buffalocommunications.com

FIVE MISSISSIPPI GOLF COURSES LISTED AS AMERICA'S BEST COURSES YOU CAN PLAY

Jackson, Mississippi (March 16, 2009) – The Mississippi Development Authority's (MDA) Tourism Division today announces that five acclaimed courses in the state have been voted onto *Golfweek's* "America's Best Course You Can Play" by state for 2009.

The courses – with their architects and locations – are:

1. Fallen Oak, Saucier (Tom Fazio)
2. The Preserve, Vancleave (Jerry Pate)
3. Grand Bear, Saucier (Jack Nicklaus)
4. Dancing Rabbit (Azaleas), Philadelphia (Fazio-Pate)
5. Shell Landing, Gautier (Davis Love III)

To determine the nation's most deserving layouts *Golfweek* dispatches hundreds of raters across America to examine courses for their overall strength of routing, feature shaping, natural setting, greens, and variety of holes, conditioning and maintenance, landscape management and other criteria.

"Mississippi is honored to have these great courses saluted for their excellence," says Mississippi Development Authority Tourism Director D. Craig Ray. "We hope golf travelers' worldwide visit Mississippi and discover we have some of the best golf and resorts anywhere."

Four of the five Mississippi courses cited for distinction by *Golfweek* are amenities of casino resorts. Mississippi is the nation's third largest gaming destination and the best golf-and-gaming destination in America. In addition, four of the five courses on this list were ranked best-in-state compilation by *Golfweek in 2008*; The Preserve makes its coveted debut this year. Fallen Oak is an amenity of the Beau Rivage Resort & Casino; The Preserve is of the Palace Casino, Grand Bear of the Harrah's Grand Casino Biloxi, and Dancing Rabbit of the Pearl River Resort.

Located 15 miles north of the Beau Rivage on a 510-acre tract, Fallen Oak unveils itself adjacent to the DeSoto National Forest. Fallen Oak is a "sister" course to Shadow Creek in Las Vegas, both MGM Mirage Resorts properties. Designed by renowned golf course architect Tom Fazio, Fallen Oak opened in November 2006 and it measures 7,480 yards from the tips.

more

Designed by U.S. Open Champion, Jerry Pate, the Preserve Golf Club is an 18-hole, par-71 championship course surrounded by 1,800 acres of nature conservancy preserve. From the first hole to the eighteenth, the native species and surrounding preserve dictate the layout of the 245-acre course. Tall, slender long leaf pines line the fairways, wooden bridges cross the wetlands and majestic live oaks reach over the course. Wild, wiry grasses disperse texture and color against the smooth rolling greens. The Preserve Golf Club is a member of the Audubon International, and was recently recognized as a "Certified Silver Audubon International Signature Sanctuary."

Jack Nicklaus' Grand Bear is peppered with towering pines, natural cypress wetlands, secluded fairways, deep bunkers and impeccably manicured greens. Five different tee levels will test the skills of even the most avid golfer. The course itself measures 7,204 yards from the Grizzly Bear tees and 4,802 from the Teddy Bear's.

Dancing Rabbit's Azaleas Course is one of two at the award-winning golf club (Oaks Course is the other). Both designed by Fazio and Jerry Pate, they roll out over a combined 14,000 breathtaking yards. Nestled quietly among ancient pines and hardwoods, each of these par 72 masterpieces embraces the gently rolling hills and valleys indigenous to this part of the world. Meanwhile, over two miles of spring-fed creeks and streams weave their way through the lush fairways and inspired greens complexes, lending both challenge and beauty to the picturesque environment.

Shell Landing Golf Club in Gautier was designed by PGA Tour star Davis Love III. The championship, 18-hole, par-72 layout features all of the Gulf Coast's stunningly diverse natural resources. The natural beauty and immaculate course conditions combine to create a memorable golf experience. Named for the rare gopher turtles that thrive in the property's extensive, protected habitat, Shell Landing mixes tall pines, marshes, bayous and wetlands with rolling emerald hills to frame an inspired, challenging layout .

For more information about these courses or to schedule a visit to Mississippi, call toll-free to 866-801-8551 or go to www.visitmississippi.org and receive a free Golf Travel Guide and suggested play-and-stay itineraries.

###