

Poland Spring Resort

A Historic Stay & Play Destination

By, MYLES MURRAY

Some golf courses feel historic before you even tee off. Poland Spring Resort in Maine is one of them. The Donald Ross course has been part of the landscape for over a century. Babe Ruth blasted drives here. Charles Lindbergh once tried to land a plane on the fairways. That's not some New England folklore - that's just what happened.

My wife and I spent four nights at the resort, and it didn't take long to understand why golfers keep coming back. The historic buildings, wide porches, and classic Ross layout right outside the door all point to the same thing: this place hasn't tried to be anything it's not.



wonderful experiences for the guests, but also honor the history of the resort.

The Donald Ross course is the main draw. It looks friendly from the tee and shows its teeth near the green, which is exactly how Ross designed most of his layouts. Fairways roll with the terrain. Bunkers are exactly where your miss tends to go. The greens have subtle breaks that will make you second-guess every read. It rewards strategy over power. Walking it feels right.

Owner Cyndi Robbins and her husband originally took over the course in 1982, and have worked tirelessly to not only provide

the starter and resort historian Walter gave us a quick rundown. He pointed out a rock pile sitting between



the 16th and 18th fairways - a classic Ross detail. Ross would keep fieldstones from construction on-site in case they were needed later. Walter started caddying here in 1958, so he probably knows what he's talking about.

Playing in mid-August meant firm, dry fairways and plenty of roll off the tee. You had to account for that extra distance on every approach. The layout has a links feel - wide fairways, fescue, and bunkers that do real damage. Like most Ross courses, the greens are where things get serious. Some are small and tight. Others have false fronts that feed balls back into trouble. Miss long and you're in rough or worse.

The signature hole is number 4. It sits high on a hill looking down a narrow, tree-lined fairway with a pond behind the green. The tee box feels a little tight, but the view is worth the pause. It plays just over 400 yards, and the downhill slope makes it feel shorter than it is. The real test is a large bowl-shaped green that collects aggressive tee shots and punishes them accordingly.

The history woven into the course is hard to ignore. Every tee box has a sign with

a story from Poland Spring's past. Hole 10, a short par 4, was reportedly driven by Babe Ruth. Lindbergh landed - or tried to - near the fairways after crossing the Atlantic. Even

outdated way, but in a "these walls have stories" kind of way. You wander through the halls and find old photographs, artifacts, and feel like you are in Maine's version of the "Dirty Dancing" movie.

Of course, no resort experience is complete without good food, and Poland Spring delivers there too. Mel's Hilltop Restaurant serves hearty, satisfying meals that hit the spot after a day on the course. Big portions, classic dishes done right, and a staff that treats you like you've been coming there for years. It's the perfect cap to a day spent golfing, hiking, or playing pickleball.

But honestly, in a fast paced world driven by social media and screens, Poland Springs offers a welcome throwback to a simpler, quieter time. With the exception of the two courses you can play as part of the "Maine Trifecta" (Fox Ridge in Auburn and Spring Meadow in Grey), you would have no reason to leave the resort during your stay. Everything you need is right here. Slow down, play golf, repeat.



Sonny Liston trained here before his fight with Cassius Clay, though whether he ever played a round is still up for debate.

But what really sets Poland Spring apart is the history woven into every corner of the property. The resort dates back to the 1800s, and you can feel it - not in a dusty,

