

# Looking for Quality, Affordable Golf?

## The Bandit Delivers

*By Rebecca MacDonald*

**R**ecreational golfers who play daily fee courses on a regular basis face a choice. They can save money (and play more often) by frequenting less expensive courses, often braving crowds and less than desirable conditions. Or, they can pay a premium to play courses that offer better conditions and service. The Bandit Golf Course in New Braunfels offers a different option. While nearby resort courses will set you back \$100 and up per round, The Bandit offers impressive course conditions and a gorgeous layout for under \$50—on a weekend, no less.

One of a trio of courses owned by Foresight Golf—including The Republic in San Antonio and The Buckhorn in Comfort—The Bandit is pure Texas Hill Country golf at its finest. The rolling terrain, carefully maintained conditions and peaceful country setting offer something for everyone, at a price that beckons players to come back often. Designed by Keith Foster, who also designed The Quarry in San Antonio, The Bandit is maintained by agronomist Edward J. Miller, who has a distinguished background that includes a stint at the famed Pebble Beach golf links in California.



The Bandit's 333 yard par 4 eighth hole rewards thoughtful play.

## Engaging design

The Bandit has a reputation for being difficult, but that depends on your point of view. The mischievous raccoon logo personifies the experience. From the front (Copper) tees, the course measures a manageable 5,253 yards. Wide fairways beckon on most holes, so it's not difficult to get off the tee box. However, the course is situated on Lake McQueeney and Long Creek, so water comes into play on 13 of the holes, and a "go for it" mentality can quickly land you in trouble. But for golfers willing to proceed carefully, The Bandit engages and rewards thoughtful play.

The hilly terrain provides welcome relief for Texans used to playing the flatlands, which may explain why golfers come from as far away as Houston and Dallas to play The Bandit. After all, there is nothing quite like the thrill of smashing a drive from an elevated tee box down to the fairway below, unless it's the excitement of executing an approach shot uphill to an elevated green and hitting your mark.

For example, number five is a 326 yard par 4, with a fairway that slopes steeply from right to left toward Long Creek. Tee shots hit far to the right will roll back to center, if not further, while anything hit to the center will wind up left of the cart path, if you're lucky. The approach shot uphill to the elevated green is guarded by bunkers on the left, but again you can play your shot off the hill to the right and wind up in the center of the green.

## Country charm puts you at ease

While The Bandit is officially part of a housing subdivision, homes along the course are scarce. You're more likely to see deer meandering beside Long Creek or a hawk swooping along the fairway than an oversized Texas man-

sion. This quiet, secluded atmosphere permeates the course, providing a true escape from the city. As you wind your way through hills and valleys, the only sound you'll hear is the creek burbling as it runs alongside the fairways and crisscrosses in front of the greens.

Number 12 is a beautiful hole that starts with a downhill shot off the tee. As on many holes, the wide fairway makes this first shot uneventful. It's the approach that challenges: another downhill shot to a green surrounded on three sides by Bandit Bay. A small marina sits just offshore, but don't be distracted by the view, an overzealous approach can easily bounce off the green and into the water. Hit it short and you face a tricky chip that can also skid off the back.

Providing welcome relief, number 17 is a short but pretty par three, measuring 89 yards from the Copper tees. It does require a carry over the creek, but there is room behind the green if you hit it long. Number 18 is often called the best par 5 in the hill country. At 437 yards, it's not overly long, but challenges golfers with a design that requires careful play.

The hole is a dogleg right, and trees guard the fairway closely on the left, while the creek runs along the right before crossing the fairway. A split fairway offers several different options in approaching the elevated green. This is no time to let down your guard, you need to really think through the hole.



Number 18 is often called the best par 5 in the hill country.

## Attentive service a nice touch

The service at The Bandit includes nice touches that you often find at higher end courses. When you arrive at the course, a staffer greets you at your car to take your bags. As you finish up on the 18th green, another staffer is already there to clean your clubs and take you back to your car. Along with the terrific design, it's these little touches that make The Bandit stand out from similarly priced courses. You'll find yourself checking your receipt to make sure you didn't pay more. Then you'll head to the pro shop to book your next round. 

### Course Facts

#### From the Copper Tees:

Par: 71      Rating: 70.3  
Length: 5,253      Slope: 126

#### Rates

Mon. - Thurs.: \$37 +tax  
Fri. - Sun.: \$47 +tax

#### Twilight:

Mon. - Thurs.: \$28 +tax  
Fri. - Sun.: \$38 +tax

*Special rates available for Seniors,  
Juniors and Military*

#### Reservations:

6019 FM 725, New Braunfels  
**888.923.7846**  
[www.foresightgolf.com/bandit](http://www.foresightgolf.com/bandit)