

# Doral Tesoro

**Style, comfort and attention to detail make this North Texas golf resort a worthy destination**

*By Rebecca MacDonald*

**I**f you haven't made the trip to northwest Fort Worth lately, the newly renovated Doral Tesoro Hotel and Golf Club is a well-kept secret that is worth rediscovering. A recent makeover has turned the notoriously difficult golf course into an enjoyable layout that welcomes any level of golfer. The accompanying hotel offers visitors a delightful level of comfort and style, while a deal with nearby Texas Motor Speedway adds full-service spa and fitness options. Add in 18,000 square feet of meeting space, full-service dining and a picturesque outdoor patio, and Doral Tesoro is an equally great place to hold corporate meetings, host a wedding party or stage a romantic getaway for two.



The gazebo, on the patio behind the hotel, is a perfect spot for weddings.

## Creekside Cafe offers Texas favorites with flair

Situated near Alliance Airport at the intersection of I-35 and Route 114, Doral Tesoro is just a 30-minute drive north from downtown Fort Worth. We arrived on a Friday and checked in with no delay, then took the elevator to our room on the third floor, where we unpacked before heading to the hotel restaurant for dinner.

The Creekside Café was empty that night, except for one long table set for a party of fourteen. The waitress told us the number of reservations on any given night vary widely, depending on whether the hotel is hosting a conference or there is an event at the nearby Texas Motor Speedway.

The wine list was brief, offering several standards in each category. We chose the Beringer Cabernet at \$36. From the half dozen or so appetizers, we selected the Grilled Portabello Mushrooms and the Garlic Shrimp Provençale. Salads ranged from the standard iceberg wedge to a Red Caesar that included radicchio along with the usual romaine, and a spinach salad with tangerine dressing. A more interesting choice might have been the Baked 7 Onion Soup, which the menu says are stewed together, then topped with three cheeses.

With two appetizers under our belts, we skipped the salad course altogether and turned to the “signature specialties,” which include grilled breast of chicken with sun-dried cherry sauce, sesame crusted sashimi tuna with Thai chili vinaigrette, and a pasta dish with grilled vegetables in a Chardonnay-roasted garlic sauce. Our choice, the seafood puttanesca, was an enormous plate of spiral pasta in a tomato based sauce, topped with chunks of salmon, tuna and shrimp, although the menu said the shellfish was crab

meat. There was also the usual selection of steaks, served with a choice of maitre d’ butter, bordelaise or Bearnaise sauce.

## The king-sized bed was soft and incredibly plush, and was topped with a pristine, satiny white comforter about four inches thick.

The pasta was tasty, although the seafood could have been a more integral part of the dish. Instead, it was arranged on top. The filet was excellent and cooked perfectly medium rare, as ordered. Topped with the bordelaise, it was delicious. We didn’t find out until later the next day that the restaurant also offers a full breakfast buffet, something we would have taken advantage of before our next morning’s round, had we known.

## Details make the difference in sleek, comfortable rooms

Decorated in a modern design, the hotel rooms at Doral Tesoro are clearly intended to depart from the usual traditional hotel décor. Instead, the rooms are reminiscent of a Crate and Barrel catalogue, with furniture and décor that features clean lines and arresting colors.

Critical details make a big impact. The black mahogany mirror in the bathroom overlooked a sleek granite countertop and modern faucets. The walls were covered with textured, taupe paper that contrasted nicely with the white woodwork, giving the entire room a luxe feel. Complimentary Starbucks coffee waited alongside the

coffeemaker on a matching mahogany tray, promising a much more pleasant morning cup than the usual weak hotel coffee. Even the water glasses were unique, sporting a cool, frosted design.

Most importantly, the king-sized bed was soft and incredibly plush, and was topped with a pristine, satiny white comforter about four inches thick. It was a welcome change from the usual, tacky hotel spread—so often found in even higher-end hotels—that seem designed more to resist stains than to provide comfort. Once we sank into that soft bed and pulled the thick comforter over our heads, sleep came quickly.

## Know your place on the tee box

We rose early the next morning and drove our car over to the clubhouse behind the hotel to check in for our round. The pro shop is large and the staff friendly. We were greeted with a warm hello and pleasant conversation about the course conditions that day.

According to Rocky Papacheck, the course’s general manager, designer Jay Morrish made the course much more playable by removing many trees that previously crowded the fairways. A number of greens and tee boxes have been moved as well. As a result, the grass is still growing in and can be patchy in places, but the course was in surprisingly good shape given the recent renovations. Greens are well-maintained, allowing a true roll on putts. There are signs of the recent construction and earth moving along several holes that need cleaning up, but the fairways themselves are in good condition, probably helped by all the rain we’ve had this year.

Yardage books were not yet available, but when we looked over the scorecard, one detail stood out: on the back, the course prints recom-



Course conditions are surprisingly good after the recent renovation.

mended handicaps for each set of tees. More golf courses should do the same, and more golfers should pay attention. How many times have you been stuck behind a group playing from the championship tees, and been forced to wait while they searched for lost balls?

For example, from the Red tees, the course measures a very manageable 5,097 yards, and is recommended for players with handicaps ranging from 28-36. From the white tees, recommended for 11-27 handicappers, the course offers a bit more challenge, yet is still very playable at 5,821 yards.

### **New course design welcomes golfers of all levels**

Changes to the course start at the number one tee, site of the former tenth hole. A short 239 yard par 4, it requires a carry over the creek to start, but the carry is short and not a difficult test, even for most beginners. A decent tee shot puts you in position for a short iron into the green

and a possible birdie, a great way to start your round. The second hole is listed as the number one handicap hole, and tee shots do tend to find their way into the trees on the right. There is another carry over the creek from the tee box—a bit further this time than on the first hole. A large tree on the right side of the fairway presents some trouble, but the fairway is broad to the left, and shots aimed there will stay safe. Water lurks along the left side of the green, requiring a careful approach.

## **The back nine starts off easier than the front, with a short par 4 and no forced carry. This is a good birdie opportunity.**

Number three is a distinctive, 356 yard par 5 that first runs uphill, with the hotel looming in the background. The wide fairway again welcomes almost any tee shot, but golfers who think ahead will be rewarded here. After cresting the hill, the fairway curves left downhill, and golfers must choose carefully between going for the green on their second shot and laying up in front of the creek that crosses just in front of it.

Another birdie attempt beckons golfers on number four, a 192 yard par 4 that is short, but can be tricky. From

the elevated tee box, there is a carry over the creek down to the fairway below. Trees line both sides of the fairway and it's easy to lose a ball here. The fairway slopes up at the end to an elevated green. Miss and you face a steep chip or pitch shot up to the putting surface, which is not visible from the side.

Arguably more difficult than the number-one rated third hole, number six is a long par 5, 433 yard dogleg left. While it doesn't show up on the score card, the creek lurks under a rock wall on the left side of the fairway. Aim for the tree on the right side, and you'll be well set up for your second shot, but be careful not to go too far or you're out of bounds. Only the longest hitters will reach the green in two, and the fairway narrows as it approaches the green, with a slight tilt that can send balls rolling toward the tall grass out of bounds.

Number nine is a beautiful, scenic, 299 yard par 4 hole with a fairway that slopes downhill from the tee box, then crosses the creek. A well-hit tee shot will roll down and come to rest just in front of that creek, where you face a handsome rock wall and an uphill shot to the elevated green. A large bunker on the left guards the green, while shots too far right will go out of bounds into the trees.

### **Relax and enjoy the back nine**

The back nine starts off easier than the front, with a short par 4 at 277 yards, this time with no forced carry, just a straightaway fairway that leads to a slightly elevated green. The par 5 number 11 is a longer version of the same hole at 501 yards, straightaway and not much trouble. Now that you're regaining your confidence, you're ready to birdie the number 12 hole, a short 101 yard par 3. There is

a trap to the right and another to the front left, but it's a pretty straight shot to the green.

On the 280 yard number 13, the creek crosses the fairway twice, once just in front of the tee box, then again further down the fairway, just before the green. You want to be careful not to drive it too far.

Number 16 offers a welcome respite from the creek. It's a 349 yard, slight dogleg left, with a broad fairway. This is one hole where you can relax and enjoy the sights of the countryside while making your way to the green.

The course offers a break as you finish up on number 18, it's the easiest—or at least the highest handicapped—hole on the course. There

is no water in sight, just a long, straightaway fairway that leads you back to the hotel and the conclusion of your round.

### A shrine to NASCAR legend Dale Earnhardt

Lunch in the clubhouse was the perfect relaxation after the round. The dining room is a shrine to Texas NASCAR champion Dale Earnhart, with autographed hoods from his racing cars and framed photos on the walls.

The clubhouse is spacious and airy, and a patio with overhead ceiling fans overlooks the sizable practice green. While you're there, say hello to Terri Baze, a teaching professional who came to Doral from Sky Creek Ranch in Keller. If, after your round, you find your game needs work, Baze offers friendly, expert instruction. 

### About Doral Tesoro

#### From the Forward Tees:

**Par:** 72      **Length:** 5,097  
**Rating:** 65.8      **Slope:** 111

**Mon-Thurs:** \$45  
After 2:30 p.m.: \$30

**Fri.-Sun.:** \$55  
1:00 - 2:30 pm: \$45  
After 2:30 pm: \$30

**Golf for One Package:** \$164/night. Includes luxury accommodations, breakfast for two in Creekside Cafe, 18 holes of golf for one plus cart.

**Golf for Two Package:** \$219/night luxury accommodations, breakfast for two in Creekside Cafe, 18 holes of golf for two plus cart.

**Weekend Golf Retreat:** \$199/night. Includes luxury accommodations, breakfast for two in Creekside Cafe, 18 holes of golf for two plus cart.

#### Reservations:

15801 Championship Parkway  
Fort Worth, TX 76177  
[www.doraltesoro.com](http://www.doraltesoro.com)  
**817.497.2582**



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