

Mississippi Unveils Magnolia Golf Trail

Highlights State's Growing Renown as Premier Destination

(JACKSON, Mississippi) – **The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) Division of Tourism** today announces the establishment of the **Magnolia Golf Trail**, a collection of 14 premier, critically-acclaimed golf courses designed by many of the game's top architects.

Golf Digest, *Golf Week* and *Golf* magazines have listed Magnolia Golf Trail courses as some of the best in the South, many which have hosted professional golf tour events. Trail courses are geographically located from Robinsonville, in the Tunica gaming hub just outside Memphis, to Bay St. Louis, offering the scenic beauty and relaxing ambiance of the shimmering Gulf of Mexico.

“The Magnolia Golf Trail offers golfers convenient access to a wealth of unique, highly-rated golf venues at affordable prices,” says Robert J. Rohrlack, Jr., MDA Executive Director. “This is a collaborative effort to educate golfers on what Mississippi offers along with incentives to play our outstanding courses. Mississippi is a jewel for golf and other attractions, including new, luxurious casino resorts, world-famous music, delicious cuisine, and our heritage, history and architecture.”

Each Magnolia Golf Trail course had to meet well-defined criteria guaranteeing quality, high standard of course layout, and amenities.

The Magnolia Golf Trail demonstrates why Mississippi was nominated as the only U.S. representative in the category of “Best Emerging Golf Destination” by the International Association of Golf Tour Operators and the Golf Travel Writers Association in 2002.

That distinction was the latest in what has become a trend of achievements and recognition accumulating for the state. Of 314 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, the Mississippi areas of Biloxi-Gulfport-Pascagoula were cited by *Golf Digest* magazine as two of the best U.S. golf areas in the nation, above Honolulu, Tucson, Las Vegas, and Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, for example.

Several Magnolia Golf Trail member courses are located in these areas, including Canebrake (Jerry Pate design) and Timberton (Mark McCumber) in Hattiesburg, and The Bridges (Arnold Palmer) and The Oaks (Landmark) in the Gulf Coast.

Additional information on the Trail can be found at its Web site, www.magnoliagolftrail.com, including a trail map as well as profiles and color photos of all member courses. Plans are to expand the Trail roster this year, with a commitment to offering variety, playability and affordability.

Attractions contributing to Mississippi's growing popularity as the preferred golf-and-travel destination include:

- Great year-round weather and direct flights from major carriers;
- More than 140 courses that offer all price points and design varieties in five distinct regions;
- New and existing courses designed by top golf course architects that garner national recognition;
- More affordable courses than most other comparable U.S. golf destinations;
- World-famous gourmet cuisine, blues music, and luxurious casino resorts offering star-studded shows;
- Family-themed attractions offering everything from parks to beaches;
- Widespread acclaim from the annual PGA Tour golf tournament held in the state capitol, Jackson; and,
- History and architecture, including stunning Antebellum Era mansions turned award-winning B&B venues.

A free Golf Mississippi Travel Guide and more information is available by calling 866.801.8551.