

GOLF COURSE ARCHITECTURE

*The global journal of
golf design and development*

ISSUE **69** JULY 2022



CLAYTON, DEVRIES & PONT

Golf Course Architects

Advising clients in thirteen countries on five continents.

Current Appointments Include:

Bloomfield Hills Country Club, Detroit, USA
Calcot Park Golf Club, Berkshire, England
Frankfurter Golf Club, Frankfurt, Germany
Golf & Country Club Basel, Switzerland
Ha Long Xanh, Quang Ninh, Vietnam
Hallamshire Golf Club, Sheffield, England
Hamburger Golf Club, Falkenstein, Germany
Monifieth Golf Links, Angus, Scotland

Royal Golf Club Oostende, De Haan, Belgium
Royal Hague Golf & CC, The Netherlands
Royal Perth Golf Club, WA, Australia
Seven Mile Beach, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia
Sunningdale Heath Golf Club, Berkshire, England
The Addington Golf Club, Surrey, England
The Royal Dublin Golf Club, Dublin, Ireland
Wallasey Golf Club, Merseyside, England

LONDON

MELBOURNE

TRAVERSE CITY

DEN DOLDER

FRANKFURT

Website:

cdpgolf.com

Twitter:

[@cdpgolf1](https://twitter.com/cdpgolf1)

Instagram & Facebook:

[claytondevriespont](#)

E-mail:

info@cdpgolf.com

Terms and References gladly furnished on request.

About time too



ADAM LAWRENCE

As I write, Sheffield's Matt Fitzpatrick has just been crowned the 122nd US Open champion: naturally, something that makes this Yorkshireman very happy. The championship has been hailed as a classic, and the course at Brookline received plaudits, for its presentation and for the Gil Hanse-led restoration. To be sure, lovers of classical architecture might quibble about the extremely narrow fairways and the hay that lined them, but these are hardly new for a US Open. In short, it was a great event on a great course.

In the long run, though, what happened the week before the Open might be of more importance (except perhaps for Fitzpatrick!). The USGA and R&A joint notice to manufacturers floating the possibility of an equipment rollback, issued on 8 June, signals that golf's governing bodies are potentially intending to be significantly more aggressive in dealing with the distance that elite players now hit the ball than anyone had previously believed possible.

The ball specifications hinted at in the notice would render most of those in use today non-compliant, but it is the suggested limits on club, especially driver, technology at the top end of the game that would be most dramatic.

The notice hints at a severe limit on the spring effect of driver faces, potentially to be implemented by way of a 'model local rule' – which is to say, bifurcation between recreational and top tournament golf, something the authorities have spent many years railing against. According to Mike Stachura in *Golf Digest*, the change discussed in the notice would roll back driver technology to a level not seen since the early 1990s and the introduction of the first titanium drivers. The notice also discusses the possibility of a rollback on the moment of inertia of clubs, or in other words their level of forgiveness of off-centre hits.

We should note that this letter is a long way from being implemented. But if the changes were brought in, they would clearly have a significant impact on the distances achieved by elite pros. The clubs would simply not hit the balls as far, but in addition, the lowering of forgiveness would make it far riskier for players to swing at maximum force every time, as seems to be the case nowadays. Perhaps our classic courses may yet survive?

Adam

BOWMAN

GOLF DESIGN



GOLF DESIGN





WITH A SOUL



THE LINKS COURSE AT
LA HACIENDA ALCAIDESA, SPAIN

REDESIGNED BY BOWMAN GOLF DESIGN
PHOTOGRAPHED BY GARY LISBON

BOWMANGOLFDESIGN@GMAIL.COM



PITCH or POSTCARD?



Golf Course Solutions

Great golf courses lie in the hands that build them.

The Industry has accepted the need for innovation to provide solutions for the many challenges it faces. Our Company leads the charge providing these solutions through our engineered products and 'out of the box' thinking.

Historically, the connection for people between synthetic solutions and beautiful golf courses has been difficult to

make. We face skepticism on a daily basis. We are golf purists too and yet have started our initiative to help preserve and grow the game. We prove that our knowledge and skill coupled by our artistic passion makes it today's reality.

KEVIN HOLINATY

President, Southwest Greens Construction



SOUTHWEST GREENS®
CONSTRUCTION

Mastering the Art of Synthetic Turf Installations

+34 616 582 787 • info@southwestgreens.eu • southwestgreens.eu

SWG Construction, construction arm for SWG International,
a Division of Shaw, a Berkshire Hathaway Company



Designing for sweet
afternoons down South
— and everywhere else



Magnolia Course, The Landings / Georgia



arnoldpalmerdesign.com

+1(407) 876-1068

GOLF COURSE ARCHITECTURE



Golf Course Architecture is published with the support and guidance of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, the European Institute of Golf Course Architects, and GEO Foundation.

ISSN 1745-3585 (print), ISSN 2754-9828 (online).
Printed in Great Britain by Micropress Printers.

© 2022 Tudor Rose Holdings Ltd. All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be stored or transmitted or reproduced in any form or by any means, including whether by photocopying, scanning, downloading onto computer or otherwise without the prior written permission from Tudor Rose Holdings Ltd.

Views expressed in *Golf Course Architecture* are not necessarily those of the publishers. Acceptance of advertisements does not imply official endorsement of the products or services concerned. While every care has been taken to ensure accuracy of content, no responsibility can be taken for any errors and/or omissions. Readers should take appropriate professional advice before acting on any issue raised herein.

The publisher reserves the right to accept or reject advertising material and editorial contributions. The publisher assumes no liability for the return of unsolicited art, photography or manuscripts.

It is assumed that any images taken from sources which are widely distributed, such as on the Web, are in the public domain. It is recognised though that since such images tend to be passed freely between sources it is not always possible to track the original source. If copyrighted material has ended up being treated as public domain due to the original source not being identified please contact the publisher, Tudor Rose.



Adam Lawrence
Editor

Richard Humphreys
News Editor

Mark Wagner
Contributor

Bruce Graham, Libby Sidebotham,
Dhanika Vansia
Design

Chris Jackson
Website Development

AirSwing Media, Albanese & Lutzke, Mark Alexander, Arnold Palmer Design Company, Bandon Dunes Golf Resort, Beacon Hill Country Club, Belleair Country Club, Cabot Highlands, David Cannon, CDP, Cohasse Country Club, EcoBunker, EIGCA, Golfplan, Caspar Grauballe, Kevin Hargrave, International Design Group, Patrick Jantet/Switzerland, Lake Merced, Library of Congress, The Crowley Company, Gary Lisbon, Tim Lobb, David Lussier, Lukas Michel, Millbrook Resort, MontHill Golf & Country Club, Kevin Murray, Muscat Resorts, PGA NovaWorld, Piza Golf, Simon Potter, Drew Rogers, Paul Severn, Scott Macpherson, Stirling & Martin, Streamsong Resort, The Tuxedo Club, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, Brian Walters
Photography

Toby Ingleton
Publisher

Benedict Pask
Publication & Sales Manager

Ritwik Bhattacharjee
Circulation

Stuart Fairbrother
Production Manager

www.golfcoursearchitecture.net/subscribe
Subscribe

 **Tudor Rose**

Tudor House, 6 Friar Lane
Leicester LE1 5RA
Tel: +44 116 222 9900
www.tudor-rose.co.uk
Published by Tudor Rose



Golfplan

Dale & Ramsey
Golf Course Architecture

The Art and Science of Golf Course Architecture



Anvaya Cove Golf and Sports Club - Hole 13 - Morong, Philippines

Golfplan

USA +1-707-526-7190 • golfplan@golfplan.com • www.golfplan.com



SPONSORS

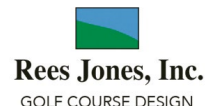


Arthur Schaupeter
GOLF COURSE ARCHITECTS



**CLAYTON,
DEVRIES
& PONT**

Golf Course Architecture
By Caspar



Arnold Palmer Design Company

With a storied history of projects in over 37 states and 25 countries, Arnold Palmer Design Company senior architects Thad Layton and Brandon Johnson bring an unparalleled depth of knowledge, expertise and Mr Palmer's influence to every project.

www.arnoldpalmerdesign.com

Art Schaupeter

Art Schaupeter offers full design services for both newbuilds and renovations of existing courses, working closely with his clients throughout the design and construction process.

www.schaupetergolf.com

Atlas Turf International

Atlas Turf International provides turf on a global scale as a worldwide distributor of the highest quality turfgrasses for golf courses and sports fields.

www.atlasturf.com

Clayton, DeVries & Pont

CDP is a partnership of three of the world's foremost regional architecture practices: Clayton Golf of Australia, DeVries Designs of Michigan, and Infinite Variety Golf Design of the Netherlands.

www.cdpdesign.com

Golf Course Architecture By Caspar

By Caspar is the design firm of golf architect Caspar Bay Grauballe, whose aim is to help improve the beautiful game of golf by creating and refining exciting and spectacular golf courses. By Caspar aims to develop golf courses with a clear and unique signature – a signature that enables clubs to attract more players.

www.bycasper.com

Golfplan

David Dale and Kevin Ramsey have designed over 200 courses across the world, providing clients with market-oriented design solutions through an approach that is innovative, user-friendly, and environmentally and financially sustainable.

www.golfplan.com

Harradine Golf

Donald Harradine founded the family's golfing practice in 1929. Harradine Golf has designed, remodelled, constructed or supervised construction of 200+ courses in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Many have won awards and some host PGA tournaments.

www.harradine-golf.com

Pure Seed

Pure Seed is the global leader in turfgrass genetics. With award-winning plant breeding, Pure Seed is dedicated to developing the world's best turf varieties.

www.pureseed.com

Rain Bird

Since 1933, developing and manufacturing innovative irrigation products has been Rain Bird's sole focus. Rain Bird Service Team's sole focus is irrigation and water conservation. We call it The Intelligent Use of Water.

www.rainbird.eu

Rees Jones, Inc

Rees Jones, Inc is internationally recognised for its customised design and construction supervision of new courses for private clubs, resorts, real estate communities and public facilities, as well as renovating, restoring and updating existing courses for everyday play and major championships.

www.reesjonesinc.com

Robert Trent Jones II

With headquarters in Palo Alto, California, Robert Trent Jones II Golf Course Architects is a global golf design firm that has created more than 275 courses in over 40 countries on six continents..

www.rttj2.com

Southwest Greens Construction

The official construction arm for Southwest Greens International, responsible for all major golf course construction projects. The Southwest Greens product is the preferred putting surface for more than 40 professional golfers on the PGA and LPGA Tours.

www.southwestgreens.eu

Stirling & Martin

Blake Stirling and Marco Martin have successfully designed golf courses for 30 years. With a motto of 'SM-art Golf', the firm provides clients with a complete range of design services, construction supervision and budget control, ensuring high levels of satisfaction.

www.stirlingmartingolf.com

Tee-2-Green

For over 50 years, Tee-2-Green has led the field with game-changing bentgrass like Pennncross, the A's and G's, and Pure bents. We set the standard for quality and purity with groundbreaking varieties bred to improve playability, resist disease and tolerate extreme conditions.

www.tee-2-green.com

Toro

The Toro Company provides innovative, efficient solutions to help homeowners and turf care professionals worldwide enrich the beauty, productivity and sustainability

www.toro.com

Whitman, Axland & Cutten

Whitman, Axland & Cutten (WAC Golf) is an international design-build practice with more than 90 years of collective experience specialising in thoughtful, field-driven solutions.

www.wac.golf



Stirling & Martin

GOLF COURSE
ARCHITECTS

www.stirlingmartingolf.com

Enrique Larreta 9, 1º B. 28036 Madrid (Spain)
T: +(34) 91 063 31 67 • M: +(34) 670 82 59 59
marcomartin@smgolf.es

Stirling &
Martin
GOLF COURSE
ARCHITECTS

25
1993 - 2018
years designing golf


EIGCA
EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF
GOLF COURSE ARCHITECTS

CONTENTS

ON THE COVER

The par-four seventeenth at Vidauban in the south of France.
Read more on page 70

Photographed by:
©Patrick Jantet/Switzerland

14

This issue's Tee Box opens with news of Scott Macpherson and Greg Turner adding nine holes at Millbrook Resort in New Zealand, and includes reports from recent projects from around the globe

48

Par threes are usually perceived to be simple tests of execution rather than requiring a lot of strategy. Adam Lawrence asks, is this view correct?

52

Mark Wagner considers whether the anniversaries of the births of Donald Ross and Frederick Law Olmsted will reignite a discussion about a return to golf's democratic roots

56

Golf course architects share their thoughts on why sand bunkers are such a prominent part of golf and what makes a good bunkerless hole



64

Mike Clayton talks with Toby Ingleton about the Seven Mile Beach project, his design philosophy, his early career in the industry, and his plans for the future

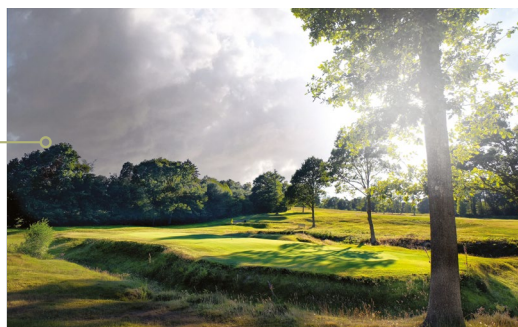
70

Toby Ingleton reports on the major revitalisation project that the Robert Trent Jones II firm has completed at Vidauban in the south of France



78

Kurt Bowman has rebuilt the Links course at Hacienda Alcaidesa on Spain's Costa del Sol, and Adam Lawrence came away extremely surprised



84

We hole out with a look at Kevin Hargrave's short layout at a Kentucky racehorse farm



Creating and Refining Classics of the Game

“Having been brought up and lived most of my life in Denmark I have been influenced by many of the great Danish designers and architects integrating functionality and aesthetics. Combining this with a strong inspiration from the links courses I have worked on creates fun and practical golf courses.

I design with a strong passion for getting the absolute best possible solutions for my clients - fair, fun, and sustainable golf courses.

My mission is to develop golf courses with a clear and unique style that enables the clubs to attract more players”.

Caspar Bay Grauballe

MAIL BOX

Dear Editor

Transformative adaption... it's mid-summer now in Scotland and outside the window the fairways are turning an inimitable shade of golden links brown that gets golf addicts excited. The ground is firm, running... and almost hollow sounding when the ball lands.

For a moment, I think to myself, perhaps if the water gets turned off – or doubles in price – I might even be able to keep hitting the ball 40 yards further until November this year!

The courses (and specifically the grasses) around me are adapting to the changes in climatic conditions, and it's great to see. Nature does this constantly (and increasingly quickly), coping with the natural cycles that happen throughout the year as well as the larger systemic shocks that impact our natural systems.

As humans, we need to understand and learn from nature – genuine adaption to our surroundings demonstrates the greatest creativity and interest. The best golf projects to my mind have not been the ones with the biggest budgets – in these cases creativity can sometimes give way to showmanship and laziness – but it is the ones with stiff constraints that lead to the most creativity.

In the situation of tight budgets, limited resources and time constraints, we need bravery and ingenuity to be able to move away from what is (and has been) comfortable and instead push forward with a new idea and chart uncharted territory together as a team.

The existential constraints on projects are increasing – land, water,

sand are key ingredients in the golf course cake mix and they are all under increasing pressure in most parts of the world. What has been so good to see over the past few years has been the ratcheting up of efforts in good project teams to find creative, and often low-tech and low-input, solutions. The result is golf courses that are not only cheaper to build but are also much better crafted to fit their sites, allowing them to deliver great golfing grounds despite numerous untold compromises.

Perhaps every golf project is like this – I don't know – and that is part of the mystery behind the various ways in which you can go about building a golf course in the 21st century!

Last week I walked a site where the owner has next to no money to create something – the mantra was, “let's do what we *need* to do, not what we *can* do”. Work with what you have and celebrate the moments of quality, character and memorability that your land gives you, and the rest should follow... with a bit of effort!

Sam Thomas
North Berwick, Scotland

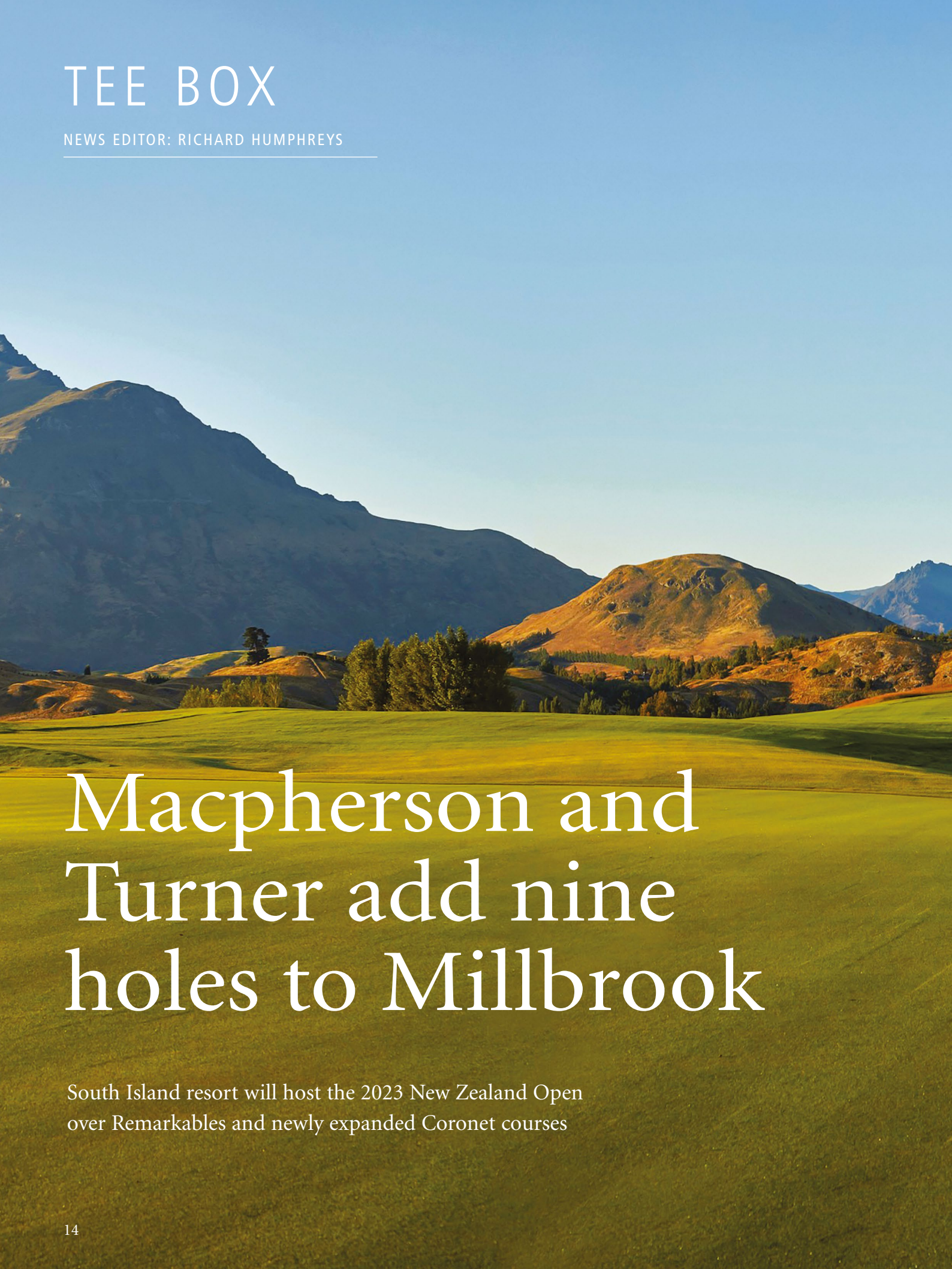
We are delighted to receive letters from readers, and the best in each issue will be rewarded with a golf shirt. Send to 6 Friar Lane, Leicester, LE1 5RA, UK, or email us at letters@golfcoursearchitecture.net

GOPHER WATCH



Sandy was in California for April's competition, on the 'Duel Hole', the par-three seventh at the ultra-exclusive San Francisco Golf Club (back here at GCA Towers we are racking our brains to figure out how he got on), so named because it was the venue for the last legal duel in the US state in 1859, when senator David Broderick fought California Supreme Court justice David Terry. A (fairly) local reader, Merrill Hiserman of the Alister MacKenzie-designed Meadow Club, the other side of the Golden Gate bridge, was the first correct answer drawn, and wins the prized golf shirt.

Another very highly rated venue for Sandy this month, a course created rather more recently than some of its famous neighbours. Reckon you know where he is? Send your entry to gopher@golfcoursearchitecture.net.



Macpherson and Turner add nine holes to Millbrook

South Island resort will host the 2023 New Zealand Open over Remarkables and newly expanded Coronet courses

Millbrook Resort near Queenstown, New Zealand, has opened nine new holes to extend its Coronet layout to a full 18.

The South Island resort opened its first 18 holes, designed by John Darby and major winner Bob Charles and now named the Remarkables course, in 1992. Scott Macpherson and former professional Greg Turner added a nine-hole Coronet layout in

2010 and revamped four holes of the original course.

In 2014 Millbrook purchased the former Dagleish Farm on its western boundary, allowing it to move forward with the \$50 million Mill Farm development: two residential developments and another nine holes.

Millbrook returned to Macpherson and Turner for the new holes, now the Coronet's stretch from six to

14, which Macpherson describes as "amongst the most scenic and challenging in the country".

"The routing deliberately gives golfers a tour of all the best features of the wonderful landscape, including the rocky canyons, babbling streams and wetlands, whilst offering incredible 360-degree views of the surrounding mountains and lakes," said Macpherson. "While moving between



The new ninth hole on the Coronet course, which sits below the Remarkables mountain range



IF ONLY EVERY DECISION WAS THIS SIMPLE.

The difference between getting the job done and getting it done right usually comes down to something simple: Like adding a Tee-2-Green interseeding program to your aerification routine. It's fast, cost-effective—and it can be worked in each time you aerate without any downtime.

Increasing playability and sustainability with less stress has never been simpler.

Learn more at [Tee-2-Green.com/interseeding](https://www.tee-2-green.com/interseeding)



BENTGRASS. IT'S ALL WE DO.

www.tee-2-green.com | bentinfo@tee-2-green.com

Macpherson and Turner's new nine holes, which will play as six to fourteen on the extended Coronet layout

rocky outcrops, the fairways have been designed with the resort golfer in mind – receptive and open, to allow golfers of all abilities to enjoy the course.

“Around the greens, the vision is to cut the turf at a low height, so golfers have the option to chip or putt. The green surfaces are generally orientated on an angle to the line of play to add strategic interest, and have a range of pin positions.”

The new par-three sixth plays slightly uphill over a small stream to a two-tiered green – defended by two bunkers – angling from left to right. “It has become an immediate favourite,” said Macpherson. “It opens the new sequence with a bang. The hole is made more memorable by the view up behind the green to the Crown Range, and the rocky cliffs immediately to the right of the green, which create the feeling of an amphitheatre. It’s a deeply atmospheric hole.”

Turner said: “The new seventh plays up a valley and between rocky outcrops, while the eighth has a gentle dogleg left and is defined by a strategically placed central bunker

the mountains to irrigate the course.

“One particularly noteworthy charm of the ninth hole is its infinity green which sits above a rocky outcrop and looks out towards the popular and historic gold mining village of Arrowtown,” said Macpherson.

“Amongst the large swathes of Browntop grass that sway in the fields around the course is the par-five eleventh, which plays from an elevated

“The routing deliberately gives golfers a tour of all the best features of this wonderful landscape”

and a wetland to the left of the green. It appears the best tee shot is to the wider right-side of the fairway, but that leaves golfers with a less receptive approach shot to a green angling toward the wetland.”

Holes nine and ten are both par fours that play in opposite directions around a large lake, which collects water from

tee down into a large fairway basin. From here the fairway snakes around an ominous rocky outcrop before climbing back up to the green – this time with a rocky cliff face on its left. Longer hitters will try to get to the green in two, but danger lurks all around. The club professional recommends playing to the front of the green!”



Image: Millbrook Resort

The twelfth is a short par three that plays downhill to a large green. The back tee provides panoramic views across the course and out to the parachutists that are often seen leaping from nearby Coronet Peak.

“Having taken the winding path down from the twelfth green, for many golfers, the thirteenth is a keenly memorable hole – a short par four where golfers are tempted to try and drive the green from the elevated tee,” said Turner. “However, a wetland guards the putting surface so it’s a risk and reward hole, where a par can be made with little strain for those laying up, but disaster lurks for those letting their ego off the leash. On top of that, it may have the most interesting

Arthur Schaupeter

GOLF COURSE ARCHITECTS

Photo: Russell Kirk



Creating unique adventures for golfers



Photo: Devin Sena

Maximizing value for our clients

TPC Colorado ranked #89 on America's 100 Greatest Public Courses – *Golf Digest* 2021



www.schaupetergolf.com

+1 314 443 9029

art@schaupetergolf.com



Photo: Scott Macpherson

The par-five eleventh (also pictured below, being eyed by a herd of hungry sheep) plays from an elevated tee

putting surface of the new holes with rolls and plateaus that separate intriguing areas for a hole to be cut.”

The last of the new holes is the slightly downhill fourteenth, a long par four that gives golfers two primary options off the tee: either play for the narrow speed slot on the left side of the fairway or to the wider area right of the central bunker that leaves a shot around Mill Stream and over a greenside bunker. “Part of the players’ decision may be determined by the hole position, and the rest by the wind direction,” said Macpherson. “Sometimes the better play may be to the right side of the fairway to get a better angle into the green. It will be interesting to see how the professionals play it in the New Zealand Open.

“The new nine is a game changer for New Zealand golf. The 36-hole offering allows for two dramatically diverse experiences and allows members to have exclusive use of 18 holes on any given day while guests



Photo: Millbrook Resort

enjoy the other course. In this way, the year-round golf opportunities remain dynamic and diverse.”

“Despite the interruptions of Covid, the new holes at Mill Farm have been extremely well received by both our members and fee-paying guests,” said Millbrook director Ben O’Malley. “We were extremely excited about the

prospect of hosting the New Zealand Open over both of our courses for the first time this year, however due to the impacts of Covid, we will have to wait until 2023 for this opportunity.”

Read more about the Mill Farm development and Coronet course on www.golfcoursearchitecture.net

LIFE IS BETTER WITH **HUNTER**

Next-Generation Solutions to Simplify Irrigation



KEEP IRRIGATION IN CHECK TO FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS MOST: *PLAYABILITY.*

As a superintendent, irrigation is just one of the countless tasks you face every day. We're proud to provide best-in-class systems to keep irrigation running smoothly in the background where it belongs. With top performance and maximum reliability built into every product, choose a new approach to golf irrigation designed to improve your life on the course and beyond.



TTS-800 Series | Pilot® Integrated Hub | Pilot Command Center Software



Contact us today to learn how Hunter solutions
simplify watering to ensure healthy, playable turf.

<https://hunter.info/lifeisbetter>

Hunter®



Photo: AirSwing Media

Portstewart appoints European Golf Design to develop master plan

Portstewart Golf Club, located on Northern Ireland's Causeway Coast, has appointed European Golf Design (EGD) to develop a master plan for its three 18-hole courses and practice facilities.

The initial focus for EGD is holes 16-18 of the Strand course (pictured), which was originally designed by Willie Park and later updated with seven new holes built in the late 1980s by Des Griffin. The Strand hosted the 2017 Irish Open, which was won by Jon Rahm, who said: "The golf course is amazing. It's probably one of the most beautiful golf courses I've ever seen, if not the most."

"Working with a company of European Golf Design's international

renown will help cement and enhance our championship Strand course as one of the world's truly great links courses," said David Lamont, captain and trustee at Portstewart. "Their input will also assist us in continuing the development and improvement of our other two courses and in providing a first-class practice facility for the benefit of our members and international visitors."

General manager David MacLaren added: "We know that European Golf Design's proven skill at improving already great golf courses will enable us to further refine the Strand course. We also have ambitions to build on our already rich tournament heritage,

across both the professional and amateur ranks."

EGD's managing director Jeremy Slessor said: "We are thrilled to have been given the opportunity to work with Portstewart to look at its three distinctive golf courses and practice facilities. To have the chance to elevate the Strand course's reputation to even greater heights is a genuine privilege. There's enormous potential to add value to the Riverside course, too, by giving it even more of its own identity and character and we hope that the Old course, with its dramatic, sea-edge location in town, can also benefit from a fresh, modern eye."



Jones fashions new look for Tuxedo

Rees Jones has completed a renovation project at the historic Tuxedo Club close to New York City.

The club was founded in 1886 and, legend has it, gave its name to the jacket in the same year, after member James Potter visited England and found the style to be de rigueur for a dinner with the Prince of Wales. On Potter's return to America with new tailoring that was soon adopted across the club, the members' jackets became eponymous as 'tuxedos'.

Tuxedo hosted America's first interclub match in 1894, with Shinnecock Hills, and another later in the same year where teams from The Country Club and St Andrew's also competed. More recently it was the proving ground for David Fay and Jay Mottola, both of whom served as caddies and on the grounds crew and would go on, in their time as executive directors of the USGA

and Metropolitan Golf Association respectively, to be instrumental in bringing the US Open to New York's publicly owned Bethpage Black.

Tuxedo's present golf course opened in 1957, laid out by Robert Trent Jones after construction of the New York Thruway forced a move from the previous site close to the main clubhouse. "It was a very exciting project for my father because it was such a high-end established club and he was able to select this wonderful, pristine piece of property within this natural area, where you really feel like you are away from the travails of life in the city, while also being so close to a major population base," said Rees Jones.

Set between mountains, Trent Jones's routing on the valley floor, and his green complexes, have survived to this day. The hazards, though, needed attention. Casey Klossner, the club's director of agronomy, said: "The

bunkers were very old, they hadn't been touched in at least 25 years in some cases. That was affecting conditions, aesthetics and playability, so we really felt like it was time to reinvest in the property."

Jones was hired by the club – "the connection between him and his father with our property is definitely very important to our membership," said Klossner – and, with his design associate Bryce Swanson, analysed every bunker for its effectiveness, playability and accessibility.

A plan was devised to improve the performance of the hazards and in some cases adjust their size and placement to make them relevant to the modern game; "not just for the strong player, but for everybody," noted Swanson.

The most significant changes to bunker placement come at the par fives. "From my father's time to my



Short grass now wraps all the way around the front bunker of the par-three fifteenth

time the par fives have really become par fours, so they have to be adapted to today's play a bit more" said Jones. "In particular we wanted to make the second shot more thought-provoking and place more demand on the drive, so it wasn't just an automatic bomb."

Throughout the course, sand is now flashed lower on bunker faces, with the upper part grassed to restore the bunkers to the original style. The sand line is somewhat jagged, with Jones noting that many of his father's courses began that way but become more oval-shaped over time. There are now fewer downhill slopes on the bunker floors, so they are more playable and accessible for members.

The new design, combined with improved drainage infrastructure, makes a significant difference for Klossner and his crew. "I can recall times as recently as last fall, before the project, we'd have torrential rain events and it would take us an entire day just to repair the greenside bunkers, and at least half the following

day for the fairway bunkers," said Klossner. "Now, we've had rain events of four inches and come out in the morning and they've all drained properly. It's what the place deserves."

Fairway lines have been adjusted too. "The fairways had narrowed a lot and bunkers were surrounded by rough, so shots that were heading towards a bunker would often get caught in the long grass," said Jones. "We spent a lot of time looking at the fairway lines to tie them back into both bunkers and the green complexes," added Swanson. The team has also introduced more greenside chipping areas, to provide options for recovery shots.

Another major driving force for the project was the desire to improve practice facilities. Jones and Swanson have completely redesigned the ninth hole, with new tees, bunkers and green, to accommodate a new short-game area in the location of the original ninth green, close to the golf clubhouse.

The new ninth is almost as long as before, the designers having

identified space to push the teeing area back. "The length of the hole has only changed by about 17 yards," said Klossner. "We've made the right changes within the fairway landing area and the new green complex is very unique and protects the hole very well."

"We drew off the old green contours as a guide, and just changed the bunker orientation to make it fit," said Swanson. "The end result is a new ninth hole that looks and feels just like the rest of the golf course."

Work had originally been scheduled to take place over two winters, but favourable weather conditions allowed the team to complete the project in one, ahead of the 2022 season. Members, many of whom spend the winter in Florida, are returning to a revitalised Tuxedo. "The membership excitement has been tremendous," said Klossner. "As I drive around the property people flag me down – they are just blown away by the changes we've made."

THE BIG PICTURE

The fourteenth (foreground) and seventh greens at Cherry Hills Country Club in Denver, Colorado, photographed by Brian Walters.

A project completed over the last 14 years by Renaissance Golf Design has included the restoration of many features that were part of William Flynn's original design. Strategic bunker work has been undertaken on several holes, including those pictured, which have also had their greens restored closer to their original forms.

"The recent phase that we have just completed focused on restoring Little Dry Creek, which winds through the inward nine, undoing the engineered 'channelling' favoured by flood control districts of that era," said Eric Iverson, project lead for Renaissance. "Today, a more natural presentation is preferred, providing greater capacity, less erosion and greatly improved wildlife habitat. It just so happens that the golf is vastly improved as well."

The creek has been returned to its original orientation closer to the greens on holes seven, fourteen and fifteen as well as the sixteenth's fairway. By doing this, many of Flynn's strategic shot values have been reinstated.

Read more about both Renaissance's restoration of Cherry Hills on www.golfcoursearchitecture.net





Caspar's Poznań newbuild opens for play

Caspar Grauballe's new Black Water Links layout design in Poland is now open for play. It is the first 18-hole golf course near the city of Poznań in the northeast of the country.

Grauballe has taken inspiration from classic links and heathland courses with "a modern twist". His design makes use of visual deception, such as on the seventeenth, where bunkers appear to stretch the length of the fairway to the green, but there is in fact ample landing area.

The clubhouse is located on the highest point of the site. "This has given me the opportunity to create a course where play on a large portion of the property can be viewed from the clubhouse," said Grauballe. "The

layout is split into two loops of nine holes, although the back nine can also be split into a three-hole and a six-hole loop in case players want a quick game.

"The course finishes with two par fives, a feature I really like as it makes it very interesting for both match and stroke play."

Construction of Black Water Links was handled by contractor All Golf Services, with work beginning in

autumn 2019. "The cooperation with All Golf Services has led to some very fine details especially around the greens – I have tried to introduce some of the ground game that is found on links courses into the greens and surrounds," said Grauballe. "This will be one of the features that players will appreciate as it will demand a lot of imagination around greens."

The driving range and practice facilities, including a six-hole academy course, have been open for over a year. Grauballe hopes the combination of these facilities and the new course can attract new players to the sport, especially women and children.

"It has been an exciting project as it brings golf to a new area in Poland and I have been lucky enough to have a passionate client who wants to grow golf not only in Poznań, but also in Poland," said Grauballe. "The ambition for the course and the practice facilities have been set very high and it has ensured that the club is already successful."



The back nine comprises a three- and six-hole loop



Images: Caspar Grauballe



Golfplan completes renovation of greenside bunkers at Brookside

Golfplan has completed work on greenside bunkers at Brookside Country Club in Stockton, California.

“The club was happy with the look and style of the course but wanted to upgrade and modernise the bunkers so they were more playable and easier to maintain,” said Kevin Ramsey of Golfplan. “Years of deferred maintenance had taken its toll and there were very few bunker edges remaining, and what little sand remained was contaminated long ago and did not drain.”

Golfplan also decided to remove, or reduce the size of, some bunkers that were no longer in a location fit for the modern game or had become

irrelevant since the course first opened in 1991. Reconstruction work introduced liners from Better Billy Bunker and new sand.

“Our initial study showed that of the 37 existing greenside bunkers, five could be eliminated without any change in character or strategy,” said Ramsey. “By eliminating five bunkers and reducing the size of the rest, we were able to reduce sand areas by 53 per cent, not only saving on construction cost but also reducing maintenance and allowing club staff to be more time efficient. With the cost of labour and maintenance in general increasing every year, this was an important component of the project.

“The reduction in cost also allowed us to add sub-surface irrigation system to keep the south- and southwest-facing slopes moist during the hot summer months. We felt this was critical to the long-term success of the bunkers.”

The work was completed in early 2022. And in 2023, the club will move onto fairway bunkers.

“In the end we kept the bunker style but enhanced the visibility and technical aspects of the bunkers,” said Ramsey. “This may not be as romantic as building a new course in the sand dunes on some long-lost site, but it is the reality many golf course owners are facing now. Addressing it properly is the key to success.”

THE INTERVIEW

with Jon Hunt



“Getting this project off the ground was incredibly hard”

GCA spoke with Jon Hunt of International Design Group about the firm’s comprehensive remodelling of Ingestre Park in Staffordshire, England

How did the project come about?

The work is being done following the routing of the UK’s new HS2 high-speed railway line through Ingestre’s golf course.

The proposed route of HS2 passes close to the clubhouse, cutting through the eighteenth hole and bisecting the course. Safety considerations and HS2 landscape mitigation requirements meant the club would lose 12 holes and would need to reconfigure two within a small area of the course that would remain after the railway was built.

The only option available to the club was to accept two parcels of nearby, open, intensively farmed land on which replacement holes could be built.

What impact has HS2 had on your design?

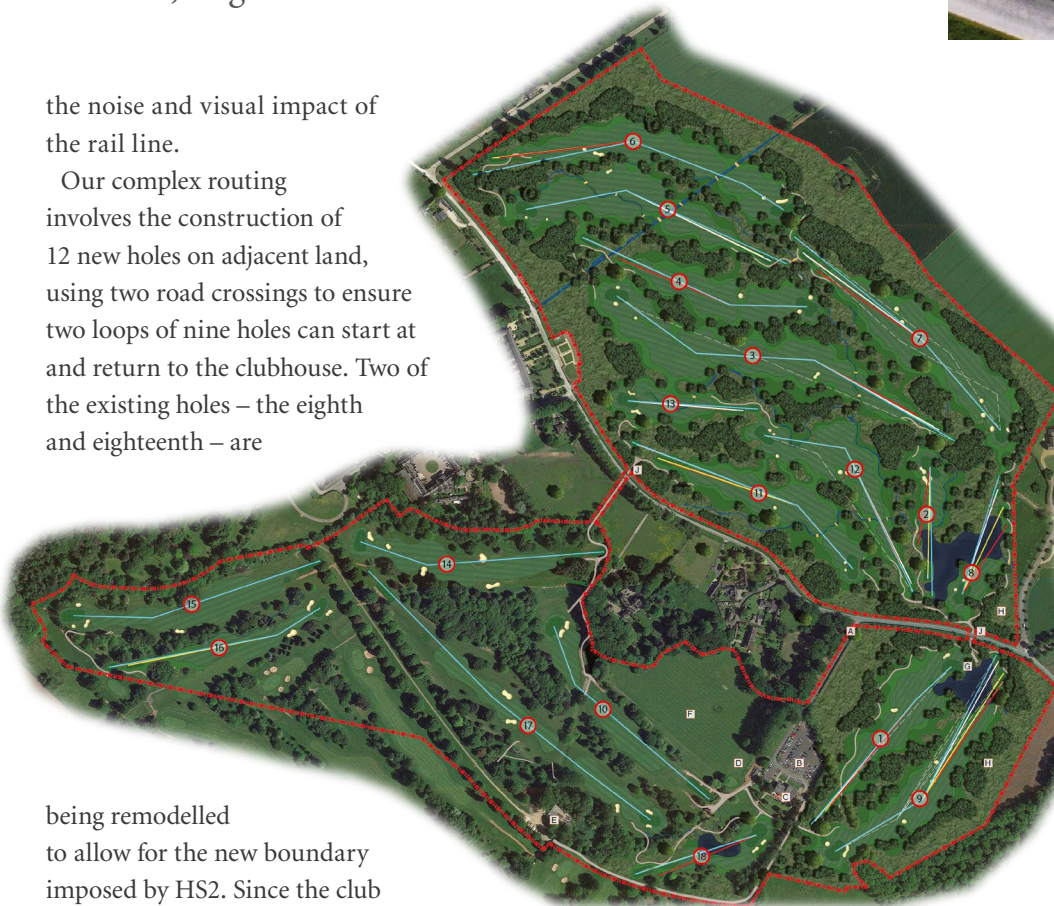
There would only be four holes which were to be left untouched by the train line, which at one point in the course is on a 12-metre-high embankment. Great care would be needed in reconfiguring the course to minimise

the noise and visual impact of the rail line.

Our complex routing involves the construction of 12 new holes on adjacent land, using two road crossings to ensure two loops of nine holes can start at and return to the clubhouse. Two of the existing holes – the eighth and eighteenth – are

being remodelled to allow for the new boundary imposed by HS2. Since the club committee wanted a cohesive and homogenous playing experience on new and old holes, it decided to renovate retained greens, tees and bunkers, and install a new drainage system.

Getting this project off the ground was incredibly hard. Since the



Twelve new holes are being built on new land, with the remainder being reworked in some way

project is government funded, agreeing a budget which did not provide any ‘betterment’ was an arduous affair. After studies were carried out on the



value of the community asset, a final budget emerged which both sides felt was workable.

When work is complete, what will the playing experience at Ingestre be like?

The land for the new holes is much flatter and has virtually no trees or other landscape features compared to the existing historic parkland course. The members have come to expect a certain landscape value when playing at Ingestre Park. When surveyed, the majority of members valued the tranquillity of the site above all other factors.

The mature parkland site is quite an incredible sight on a sunny day, and we tried hard, within the budgetary constraints set by HS2, to provide something of similar interest.

To generate an exciting golf environment and deal with poor quality drainage, the design includes thousands of trees and a complicated series of attenuation ponds and ditches to create a landscape worthy of the original course. Trees are used in the course's strategy, with zones dedicated



A visualisation of the view golfers will have from the ninth tee. Top, MJ Abbott is under way with construction, which is expected to be complete by July 2023

to certain species to create a unique feel to each part of the course.

We have used water and ditches strategically throughout the round. The new fifth hole, for example, gives golfers two options: a long draw to better access the green from the left, or playing it safe to the right of a ditch but leaving a more difficult approach. The new

thirteenth, a medium-length par three, uses the ditch to split the fairway into a lower section in front, and a raised section at the rear of the green.

Gently undulating fairways are surrounded by rolling mounding and copses of new trees to give this course a character worthy of its predecessor, although this will take a few years.

Stirling & Martin designs new course on Mediterranean coast



Construction of a new 18-hole golf course, designed by Stirling & Martin, in Castellon on Spain's Mediterranean coast, will begin in September.

Architects Blake Stirling and Marco Martin were first introduced to the site in 2004. That project, with the working title St Gregory Golf, did not come to fruition, but the architects were contacted about the site again in 2020 by another developer with plans to transform the 300-hectare site into a tourism destination called Los Cálamos. The project includes a golf course plus housing, a football academy, tennis academy, skate park, private park and 20 hectares of land reserved for environmental conservation. Part of the environmental plan is to create

a nature reservoir for native turtles and an overflow channel to evacuate rainwater during heavy storms.

"As a golf architect, it has been an enthralling task to develop a routing that merges with all the

metres, and we are limited with the volume that can be imported.

"The owner wanted great views of the opening holes from the houses that will be built, and during the rainy season, we have to take care of – and

"The final routing is a great example of what a golf course master plan should be when it relates to residential and tourist areas"

environmental, engineering and land use restrictions," said Martin. "We are so close to the beach and our site is extremely flat – there's less than a one-metre difference in any spot. The water level fluctuates from 0.6 to 1.3

circulate around the golf course – more than 24 cubic metres of water per second. With the environmental restrictions and archaeological areas that are to be integrated in the design, it makes for a great cocktail



in developing a fabulous golf course routing!”

Golf course irrigation will utilise wastewater from the nearby town of Burriana.

After several routings, Martin landed on a plan that sees several holes play parallel to housing. “The final routing is a great example of what a golf course master plan should be when it relates to residential and tourist areas,” said Martin. “The first, fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth holes all have excellent views towards the Mediterranean Sea. The golf course plays from 5,000 to 7,000 yards – this will offer golfers many, different ways to play.”



Stirling & Martin’s routing includes some heavily bunkered par threes and several holes that interact with water

ENGINEERED BUNKER SOLUTIONS

Specialists in Sustainable Bunker Construction



Photo Credit, Gabriel Thomas



'Our mission is to promote and facilitate a highly sustainable approach to golf bunker construction by significantly reducing the maintenance burden and demand on increasingly scarce resources, without any compromise to playability or aesthetics'

- **Aesthetics:** Natural and Long lasting
- **Maintenance:** Massive Reductions
- **Investment:** Proven High Returns
- **Resilience:** Unbeatable Patented Technology
- **Assurance:** 20 Year Warranty
- **Playability:** High Level of Golfer Praise

EcoBunker Ltd
Office 15, Moy Road Business Centre,
Moy Road, Taffs Well CF15 7QR
+44 (0)2920 397 472 www.ecobunker.co.uk

EcoBunker USA LLC
Suite 122, 2256 First Street
Fort Myers, Florida FL 33901
US Cell: 863 266 8473 www.ecobunkerusa.com



ECO
BUNKER
build it once

The layout gives options for loops of six, 12 and 18 holes. The first six are designed for any level of golfer

The opening hole is a short walk from the Lodge at Streamsong

Golfers can select any spot on the teeing area, rather than playing from designated markers

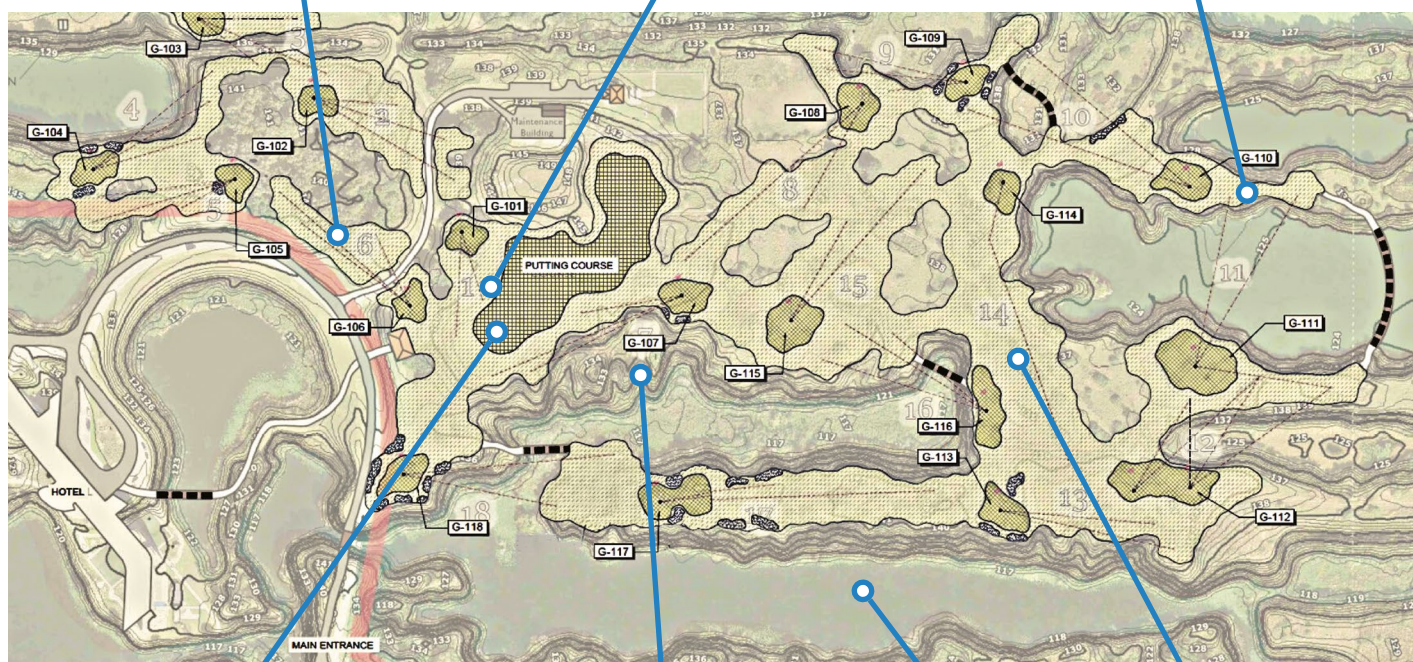


Image: Streamsong Resort

A two-acre putting green called The Bucket will sit alongside the first hole

Built on a site that was used for decades to mine phosphate ore, the course will feature plenty of elevation change

Little Payne Creek is in play on several holes

The fourteenth is the second longest hole on the course at 251 yards

COURSE BLUEPRINT

The Chain at Streamsong

Permitting is under way on a new short course designed by Coore & Crenshaw at the Streamsong Resort in Florida. Measuring a total of 2,925 yards, The Chain will have 16 holes that range from 90 to 201 yards, plus two that are slightly longer, the 251-yard fourteenth and 275-yard seventeenth.

The course can be played in loops of six, 12 and 18 holes. The first six is designed to be playable for any level of golfer, meandering through a grove of native live oaks. The course then

traverses old mining cuts and along the banks of Little Payne Creek – these holes provide more challenge and opportunities for risk and reward. A putting course, ‘The Bucket’, sits between holes one and seven.

“Routed on a highly interesting site, The Chain will feature a variety of holes laid upon a landscape of parkland, live oaks, sand and lakes,” said Bill Coore. “Although diminutive in size, we believe The Chain, when combined with the anything-but-

diminutive Bucket putting course, has the potential to complement, perhaps even enhance, Streamsong’s reputation for must-be-experienced golf.”

Ben Pratt, senior vice president of government and public affairs at Mosaic, said: “We are thrilled to work with Bill and Ben on this new short course, and we are equally thrilled that Streamsong’s unprecedented success in 2021 allows us to fund the project with cash generated by the resort.”



New Norman layout in Vietnam opens for first full season

The new PGA Garden course, designed by Greg Norman Golf Course Design, at PGA NovaWorld Phan Thiet in Vietnam, has opened for its first full season of play.

Construction of the 7,100-yard layout was completed in August 2021 and opened earlier this year. It joined the resort's other 18-hole course, PGA Ocean, also designed by Greg Norman's design firm, which opened in April 2021.

The two-course project is part of a huge development – led by Novaland Group – of a coastal area in the southeast of the country named PGA NovaWorld Phan Thiet. When complete it will include luxury golf villas, sports and wellness complex, an amusement park, hotels and more.

On both layouts, Greg Norman Golf Course Design has worked alongside

the resort, Flagstick Golf Course Construction Management, water feature designer WR RockGroup Construction and Sports Turf Solutions, who supplied, planted and grew in Primo Zoysia on tees and greens, and Zeon Zoysia on fairways and rough.

The Garden course will provide a base for PGA students in Vietnam to play and practice. “Greg and I both commented on how much the property reminded us of Australia the first time we walked the site, so we knew right away that the sandbelt courses would be the inspiration for our design,” said Chris Campbell, senior vice president of Greg Norman's design firm. “We put a lot of emphasis on creating a continuous flow of contours not just on individual golf holes, but throughout the entire property, and

making a similar transition from maintained turf to natural areas. All this factors into the playability and gives golfers a ton of options, especially as you get closer to the greens.”

One of the course's standout features is a winding stream that crosses many of the first nine holes, working on both an aesthetic and strategic level. Construction wrapped up on the Garden course in August 2021, with RockGroup completing work on a stream project for the fifth hole, a 173-yard par three that has a 78-yard carry over a lake.

The Ocean course offers panoramic views over the East Sea, with all 18 holes winding between a mix of parkland- and links-style land, with rugged bunkers lined with native grass and undulating fairways. One of the holes that offers a sea view is the



The fourteenth on the Garden layout is a 132-yard par three that plays over water to a three-tiered green flanked by two sprawling bunkers

par-three fifth, which plays downhill to a small green protected by a front bunker and sharp runoffs.

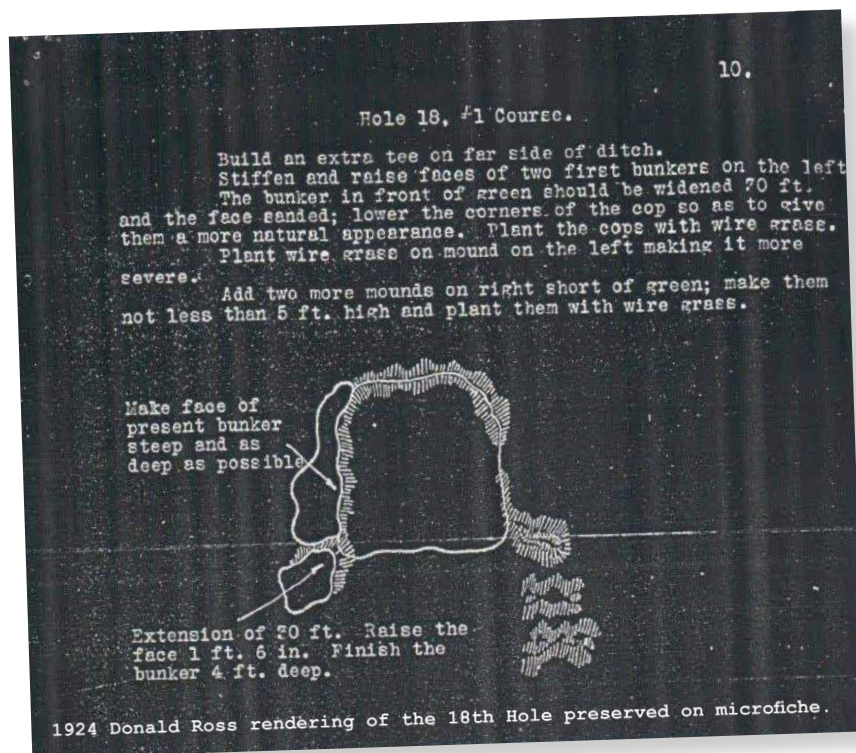
Holes 13 to 15 are collectively known as ‘the Shark Loop’. The thirteenth is a short par five that plays from an elevated tee, the fourteenth is a driveable par four, while the fifteenth is a 660-yard par five that requires players to hit an approach to a two-tiered green defended by a sprawling bunker.

‘Mini fairway tees’, measuring up to 100 metres in length on some holes, allow for a variety of teeing options. Several holes also have speed slots incorporated in the design to provide further options for players.

Greg Norman said: “With such a stunning piece of property to work with, it is no wonder those who have been out to play the new courses have been taken aback by what they have seen.”



The Ocean's longest hole is the fifteenth, which can play to a length of 660 yards



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Fry/Straka restores Ross design on Belleair's West course

Dana Fry and Jason Straka are progressing with a restoration of the Donald Ross-designed West course at Florida's Belleair Country Club, which celebrates its 125th anniversary this year.

"After a full survey of the members, it was clear they desired and supported no mere run-of-the-mill renovation of the West course, but a restoration that embraced its historic significance and pedigree," said Ed Shaughnessy, chief operating officer at Belleair. "The bunkers and greens definitely required reconstruction. That resolution led to several investigative trips to the Tufts Archives in Pinehurst, where we learned just how important this design

is, historically, and the amount of documentation we have from Donald Ross himself – regarding both his original design effort in 1915, and his redesign in 1924. That information enabled us to make informed decisions culminating in a full and faithful restoration."

Every green is being rebuilt to USGA specification with contours restored according to Ross's 1924 construction drawings.

"A lot of older clubs struggle to show that Donald Ross was on site at all when he laid out their golf courses," said Straka, who is also the president of the American Society of Golf Course

Architects. "To have a course where Ross was on site so many times, for the initial design, and then for the remodel of his own work 10 years later – that's incredibly rare. Then, to have such detailed construction drawings – and notes in the man's own hand. That's rarer still.

"We basically took all the plans from 1915 and 1924 and turned them into modern construction drawings. So, if Ross had a cop bunker seven feet high at 16, we're building it seven feet high. Ross detailed a lot of 'cop' bunkers on this 1924 routing. These are mounds totally in play – that's what we're building, because Ross's own cross-



Clockwise from far left, an original Ross drawing of the eighteenth; Ross, who returned to redesign the West course in 1924; The Belleview hotel was located next to the layout before it was torn down in 2017 (a portion was restored as the Belleview Inn); and the fourth green following the redesign

section drawings and notes tell us exactly how to construct them!”

Straka adds that the work on greens has been akin to an archaeological dig. “Here and elsewhere, we would excavate a green complex and find not one set of old drainage but two or three – all piled on top of each other!” he says. “The inverted-saucer green, such a staple of the so-called ‘Ross style’, is a bit of a fallacy. Those putting surfaces became that way through multiple rebuilds and decades of top-dressing. Ross’s original plans for Belleair make that very clear. They show all but two of these greens were originally designed and built with entries at zero grade.

“It’s a pretty rich irony: Ross returned here in 1924 with the intention to make the West course much more difficult, and I’m sure he succeeded there. However, in restoring that design in 2022, almost to the letter, we are making the course far more user-friendly. Yes, we are re-exposing ravines and streams that had been filled in over the years. However, by following the Ross plans, these greens won’t be playing six feet in the air, and we’ll be expanding all the fairways back to their intended width – a full 50 per cent wider.”

Belleair is planning to reopen the West course by mid-November 2022.

GOOD READ

“Sharing ideas is validating”

The cover story of the latest issue of *By Design* magazine – produced for the American Society of Golf Course Architects by the team responsible for GCA – considers how collaboration has helped to address some of golf’s biggest challenges.

“People are very willing to share – I do, because it’s validating,” says architect Jan Bel Jan. “Sharing ideas makes it a lot easier for club governors to accept a proposal. When you say this was successful at this club and made that club money, the option is definitely more persuasive.”

The Summer issue of *By Design* also includes insight from Jeff Brauer and some of the designs submitted to ‘The Great Junior Golf Design Challenge of 2022’.

To download the latest issue and subscribe to *By Design*, visit www.asgca.org



PERFECTION EXPECTED

ON THE GLOBAL STAGE | MARCO SIMONE, ITALY



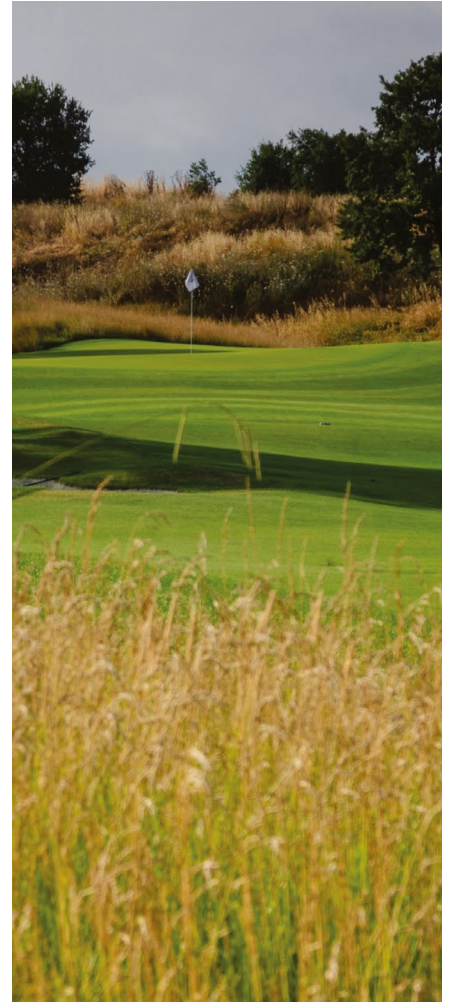
GREENS

*Pure Distinction®
Bentgrass*



FAIRWAYS/TEES

*Pure Dynasty®
Seeded Paspalum*



ROUGHS

*Pure Seed®
Tall & Fine Fescues*



info@atlasturf.com | info@pureseed.com



Scan to learn more

University of Illinois opens revamped golf course

The golf course at Atkins Golf Club in Urbana, Illinois – the home of the University of Illinois (UoI) golf teams – has reopened for play following a renovation by Drew Rogers.

The layout has been rebunkered and fairway lines adjusted, with new tees adding nearly 400 yards to the scorecard total.

“Our focus was on incorporating much more thought-provoking playing strategies into each hole,” said Rogers. “Our design approach promotes a very playable experience for the daily fee golfer, yet the course can be set up very easily to test collegiate players – and that was the goal for the golf programme at UoI: to have a proper home for the golf teams to test their skills and to attract events and recruits to one of the strongest collegiate golf programmes in the country.”

Some bunkers were removed, particularly where they were not in play or only in play for shorter hitters, reducing sand areas by around 80,000 square feet. All bunkers now



Rogers says the updated bunkers and fairways will create more visual interest for players

have Better Billy Bunker lining and ProAngle sand. “The course certainly has more visual appeal now with the new bunkering and fairway alignments,” said Rogers.

On greens, a layer of thatch was removed, and sand mix added to refine the surface before planting a new 007 bentgrass variety. “We also reduced turf through the

establishment of no-mow areas,” said Rogers. “And we balanced difficulty with added bailout areas around greens.”

Rogers worked closely with the University’s team of men’s coach Mike Small, women’s coach Renee Slone, and project lead Jackie Szymoniak. Greg Korneta managed the project for Wadsworth Golf Construction.



WHITMAN, AXLAND & CUTTEN
GOLF COURSE ARCHITECTS



MASTERS OF DESIGN-BUILD

CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO | MESA, ARIZONA | DELTA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

WWW.WAC.GOLF | INFO@WAC.GOLF

Layton focuses on playability for Teton Pines renovation

Thad Layton, senior architect at Arnold Palmer Design Company, is overseeing a renovation of the golf course at Teton Pines Country Club & Resort in Jackson, Wyoming.

Ridgetop Golf Construction completed work on the front nine in 2021. This included a complete renovation of bunkers, a new green complex on the seventh hole, fairway and green expansions, and native area plantings.

Crews returned in April 2022 to focus on the back nine, reworking all bunkers, building new green complexes on holes 10, 12 and 15, to improve playability, and replacing 5.5 acres of maintained rough with low-input fescues. The new greens will be playable in late autumn.

Layton worked with shaper Brett Hochstein to redesign bunkers, replacing failing fabric liners with a new Flexscape liner system. Although some new bunkers have been added to increase strategic and aesthetic interest,

sand areas, overall, have been reduced by 25 per cent. A third of the existing bunker area was replaced with turf.

“With less sand and more fairway, golfers will find countless new routes to play the course,” said Layton. “The new bunker positioning and styling does a better job at signalling how and where to play, which is important for a course

like Teton Pines as it has a high number of first-time visitors.

“The bunker aesthetic will capture the essence of the neighbouring Teton Range with rugged top lines and a myriad of folds that will produce shadows. The fine fescues will also create an ever-changing colour palette throughout the golf season.”



Layton's work on bunkers, as pictured on hole 16 (top), is focused on both playability and aesthetics

Hartsbourne bunker overhaul reduces maintenance burden

Hartsbourne Country Club in northwest London is rebuilding its bunkers using the EcoBunker system. “Hartsbourne knew that the quality of its bunkers, and the excessive maintenance burden, needed to be addressed,” said Richard Allen, founder of EcoBunker. “A bunker audit and preliminary design had been completed a few years ago by a leading architect, and this provided detailed recommendations for improvements.”

In September 2020, the club brought in EcoBunker to deliver the architect’s vision. Representatives from the club visited The Army Golf Club in Hampshire where course manager Phil Wentworth demonstrated the results achieved with EcoBunker’s automatic bunker edge dripline system, which makes it easier to maintain the bunker edges.

“We agreed to do a phase one project on two holes, the eighth and ninth, which together have ten bunkers,” said Darren Clewes, EcoBunker’s head

of sales. “Our team, guided by former Walker Cup player and greenkeeper Llewellyn Matthews, started on site on 30 November, and during the work we added two more bunkers on the second hole.”

Allen said: “After immediately recognising the merits of the bunker designs, and following excellent feedback from golfers, phase two began in spring 2021 when all the front nine was completed. The back nine was then completed in phase three during the winter of 2021-2022.”

EcoBunker was assisted with shaping by regular partner Andy Greenslade of AMG Construction.

“Our solutions delivered sharp cut, distinct edges, varying in height between 100 and 400 millimetres, creating irregular shapes whilst ensuring that close mowing could be easily and safely undertaken right up to the bunker edges,” said Allen. “It was important to maintain that sharp-edge look, especially when

some bunkers were cut in very close to the green edge, creating some very interesting approaches and challenging hole locations.

“From an aesthetic point of view, the sharp edges give the bunkers more impact, helping them to stand out in what is quite an expansive tract of parkland. Furthermore, the shadows cast by the deeper edges create some alluring effects.

“With respect to maintenance, the benefits are significant: sand contamination through the edges – always an underestimated problem in the golf industry – is virtually eliminated,” continued Allen. “The pronounced lips are also designed to deflect surface water around bunkers, reducing washouts, and the sand faces which used to be set at over 30 degrees, requiring regular and time-consuming sand replacement, were reduced slightly, thanks to the deeper edge, creating a far more sustainable sand angle in the region of 25 to 28 degrees.”

Simon Watkins, course manager at Hartsbourne, is already seeing the benefits of EcoBunker's work. "For many years, our regular bunker preparation work was intensive, but I now have clear evidence that the EcoBunkers only require the attention of one man whereas previously we needed four men to deliver the same quality," he said. "The saving in man-hours has been incredible."

Allen says that this inland parkland-style layout was very much in his mind when he first began creating bunker solutions. "Our solutions work so well on parkland courses and with lower edge bunkers because of a combination of factors, and perhaps prominent among those are golfer expectations of what parkland golf should be like, and the local soil conditions and topography which impact heavily on the maintenance burden," he said. "From an aesthetic point of view, most golfers expect a more manicured presentation than say on a links or heathland course where less maintained, more rugged bunkers are more acceptable, and often more desirable too."

"The EcoBunker system is designed to make it easier to maintain the clean-cut edges desired in parkland golf, and to deliver a fully sealed system ideal for combating typical parkland soils which can be heavy, clayey or stony. In the fully sealed system, such as the one delivered at Hartsbourne, the sand remains cleaner for longer, and drainage functions more effectively for longer too. Golfers enjoy better looking, consistent bunkers that last, and are inexpensive to maintain."



Photos: EcoBunker



New bunkering on the par-five thirteenth at Hartsbourne and, top, the short par-four tenth



Lake Merced to reopen restored course in October

Lake Merced Golf Club in San Francisco, California, will reopen its golf course in October following a Alister MacKenzie-inspired renovation by Gil Hanse and his design partner Jim Wagner, with construction by Heritage Links.

Willie Lock is attributed for designing Lake Merced's first course in 1922, with MacKenzie putting his stamp on the layout in the late 1920s. In the 1960s, the construction of Interstate 280

resulted in the club losing land, and relocating its clubhouse from the north of the property to the southeast corner.

A rerouting was completed by Robert Muir Graves that saw the creation of several new holes.

Hanse Golf Design's aim has been to complete a nuanced restoration and renovation by restoring many holes to how MacKenzie designed them, as well as creating several new ones with, as Wagner calls it, a "MacKenzie vibe".

"It's the size, scale, look and placement of the bunkering mainly," said Wagner. "With edging that reminds a lot of people of cloud formations. But it's also the way they sit in the landscape: down into the green, while some float above grade. When you put that look into a landscape with vegetation, like Cypress trees, it just screams MacKenzie. The greens here are sort of simple compared to some others, but they work well in this setting."



Gil Hanse and Jim Wagner restored the par-three thirteenth to Alister MacKenzie's original design

Heritage Links began construction work in October 2021. Seeding of the final four greens was completed in June 2022, with the club on track to reopen in mid-October.

In total, the project has included the rebuild of all eighteen greens, rebunkering, the restoration and expansion of tees, the creation of a 36,000-square-foot Himalayas-style putting course, new short-game practice areas, a turf research nursery,

relocating the practice facility and installing a two-wire irrigation system with HDPE piping.

"This job was a total blow up," said Wagner. "The club wanted a restoration, and we did have great photography from the 1930s. At the first, fourth, fifth, tenth and thirteenth, for example, we were able to put the holes back as MacKenzie created them.

"But we couldn't do that everywhere. Lake Merced's property had undergone

too much radical change through the years."

In addition to the restorative aspects of the project, Hanse and Wagner have substantially rerouted the course. "This is one of the reasons why people hire Gil and Jim: nothing is ever cookie-cutter with them," said Oscar Rodriguez, vice president of Heritage Links. "They exhibit so much creativity in the field.

"We love working with Gil and Jim... we essentially take their vision and build it. We make it functional, from a sustainability standpoint, with the understanding that a superintendent will have to grow grass there and maintain it. The new practice range was moved to the north end of the property so members would always have a place to practice when we're tearing up and growing in their golf course."

Rodriguez reports that around 75,000 cubic yards of earth were moved at Lake Merced, with the total inflated by the creation of two new holes – the par-four tenth and par-three sixteenth.

"The sixteenth was an attempt to achieve that MacKenzie vibe," said Wagner. "It plays over the beginning of a barranca, to a green on this little ridge that sits across the expanse. Very much like you would see at Pasatiempo. At the same time, that green is set right beside the green at thirteen, which is a hole we restored using great old photos that really showed everything, the unique green setting is tucked into that hillside. So, that was daunting, to create a new green in the MacKenzie style that sits beside a restored original."



Global round-up

Image: Pizá Golf

Tijuana appoints Agustin Pizá to develop restoration plan

Tijuana Country Club in Mexico has appointed Augustin Pizá to develop a restoration plan for its golf course, which was originally designed by William P. Bell.

“For me, this extraordinary restoration is like finding buried treasure,” said Pizá. “Beneath the existing golf course lies a golf course that should be, historically speaking, synonymous with Cypress Point and Pasatiempo. Our goal was to interpret Bell’s masterful design concept with the hope of restoring the golf course back to its glory years.”



Photo: MontHill Golf & Country Club



MontHill selects WAC Golf for 27-hole redesign

MontHill Golf & Country Club near Toronto, Canada, has appointed design firm Whitman, Axland & Cutten to develop a master plan for its three nines (Blue, Gold and Red).

“This 27-hole layout sits on a very good site, one that reminds us of Augusta

National,” said Keith Cutten. “With 27 holes currently crammed on a site that used to house 18, things are very tight. We have proposed that a new 18-hole routing would better utilise the site and allow for new practice facilities. The club has also changed its model from public to fully private.”

Stu Bradshaw, golf course superintendent at MontHill, said: “We’re extremely excited to have entered into the first phase of a redesign with WAC Golf. We believe, hidden on our property is a top tier golf course, it just needs to be found.”

Construction is expected to begin in 2024.

Muscat Resorts in Oman to reopen in 2023

Muscat Resorts in Oman will reopen its Paul Thomas-designed golf course in 2023.

The layout had been closed since 2020, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, but is now under the ownership of investment company Ominvest and managed by Troon Golf.

New operations manager Freddie Rexstrew will work alongside superintendent Francisco Blázquez Pacheco to ensure all playing surfaces are in pristine condition, with the resort also adding a TopTrace Range – the first in the country.

“I’m looking forward to working closely with Ominvest,” said Rexstrew. “To build something truly special and unique, not just within the Sultanate but also the Middle East.”

Photo: Muscat Resorts



Photo: Cabot Highlands



Photo: Albanese & Lutzke

Albanese collaborates with KJ Choi for new Vietnam course

Construction of a new golf course at Amber Hills Golf & Resort in Bắc Giang, Vietnam, will begin this October.

The Rock Valley project is a collaboration between Paul Albanese, the architect that designed the resort’s Hillside layout, and professional golfer KJ Choi.

“The goal for this course is to be very friendly to golfers yet maintain a strategic interest and challenge,” said Albanese. “We will incorporate a set of back tees that will certainly challenge professionals. The fairways on this course will be much wider than on the first layout due to the fact there will not be as many boundaries and slope constraints.”

Cabot reveals plans for new Doak course at Castle Stuart

Development group Cabot has acquired Castle Stuart in Inverness, Scotland, and has hired Tom Doak to design and build a new 18-hole course.

The resort will be renamed Cabot Highlands while the existing eighteen-hole course, a collaboration between Gil Hanse and the late Mark Parsinen, will continue as Castle Stuart.

“We are honoured to be a steward of the land and carry the original vision for the property forward,” said Ben Cowan-Dewar, CEO and co-founder of Cabot.

Doak said: “Our goal is to create a distinctly Scottish golf experience that appeals to players at all levels with an authentic links-style course that puts the golf holes front and centre.”

The new course will enter construction in 2023 and is expected to open in 2024.



Photo: Jon Cavalier @LinksGems

Can a par three be strategic?

Strategy, the core of golf architecture, generally relates to holes requiring at least two shots to reach the green, while par threes are usually perceived to be simple tests of execution. Adam Lawrence asks, is this view correct?

Harry Colt, who surely created more great one-shot holes than any other architect in the game's history, is widely believed to have routed his courses by first finding locations for par threes. While this is, in many ways, a sensible way to go about tackling a site, because holes that do not need a fairway can be routed over broken or otherwise severe ground, and thus enable the architect to get players over the most difficult pieces of land, it is also sensible as far as golfers are concerned: short holes are typically the most memorable and popular on any course.

What short holes are typically not, though, is strategic. Strategy – the

idea that by careful positioning of a shot, the next will be easier – has been at the core of golf design since its initial outlining, principally by

“The strategy of a hole depends on the ability of the individual player”

Colt's great friend John Low at the very beginning of the twentieth century. A par three, though, does not generally (intentionally) require consecutive

shots, other than with a putter. Is it, therefore, the case that par-three holes are inherently not strategic?

If we posit an extreme example, say a par three with an enormous and almost entirely flat green, it is obvious that there is no strategy, and the hole is a pure test of execution: how close to the pin is the golfer capable of hitting his ball?

But we can say upfront that there are a small number of such holes that do have strategy, because it is a legitimate play to miss the green. Consider the famous sixteenth at Cypress Point. With a carry over the Pacific Ocean of more than 200 yards, even from the front tee, there are inevitably a fair proportion of golfers



Calamity Corner, the 236-yard sixteenth at Royal Portrush, features a huge drop-off into dune slacks

who are simply not capable of making the green with their tee shot. Indeed, it is said that architect Alister MacKenzie was reluctant to build the hole for fear it would be impossible until club founder Marion Hollins proved otherwise. MacKenzie did, however, provide an alternative, layup route out to the left, and, although it must be hard for a one-time visitor to Cypress Point not to go for the green on one of the world's

most celebrated holes, it is certainly a legitimate strategy.

At Royal Portrush in Northern Ireland, the par-three sixteenth (formerly the fourteenth, before the course changes that saw the Open return to Portrush), known as Calamity Corner, is another epically long one-shotter. At 236 yards and with huge drop-offs into dune slacks to the right of the green, the hole can

easily justify its name if a player misses the putting surface. When the Open first went to Portrush in 1951, South African Bobby Locke, deliberately missed to the left on every day, to avoid this risk. The small depression he played into has been known as Bobby Locke's Hollow ever since.

But architects say it's not just these extremely long and difficult par threes that can have strategy. English designer

Schmidt-Curley GOLF DESIGN

Critically Acclaimed Designs
World-Wide

The Team Behind Mission Hills-China

Named One of Golf's Most
Influential Architects - GOLF INC., (2018)

Mission Hills Resort Haikou
Lava Fields Course

Members, American Society



of Golf Course Architects

www.schmidt-curley.com




SOL GOLF
EXPERIENCE EXCELLENCE

CREATORS OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST GOLF COURSES

Sol Golf have constructed some of Europe's most prestigious courses which have hosted the Ryder Cup, Rolex Trophy and Open Championship. Our portfolio is continuously growing with brand new courses along with the renovation of existing courses.

Photo shows an overview of the new
Marco Simone Course in Rome
which will host the 2023 Ryder Cup

CALL +353 64 775 1006 EMAIL info@solgolfconst.com



WWW.SOLGOLFCONST.COM



VISION



J. DREW ROGERS
GOLF COURSE ARCHITECT

www.jdrewrogers.com +1 419 787 6786



Jeff Brauer likes template holes, such as North Berwick's Redan green, as they require golfers to hit a certain type of shot

Adrian Stiff says that the strategy of a hole depends on the ability of the individual player. "Strategy exists in different forms for different abilities," he explains. "At a short hole a lesser player is best to play away from extreme trouble, so if there is a pond on the left, try to miss on the right. Strategy at short holes fades almost to zero as players become exceptional

the knowledge of your abilities," says Canadian architect Ian Andrew.

"I'm currently designing fourteen strategic par threes at Cabot Citrus Farms in Florida!" says Texas-based Mike Nuzzo. "My core principle of strategy can be seen on the artificial putting green below my office. The goal is to leave the approach in the right place. On the artificial green,

Society of Golf Course Architects – of which he is a former president – has thought fairly extensively about this subject. "Because there is no shot relationship inherent in par-three holes, I like the template or other shot concept holes where the main thing is to hit a certain type of shot for best results," he says. "The precision shot [to a small green] is great for par threes, with little strategy, because you can control the distance from all tees. The Redan is good, or any hole calling for high backspin, using a kick slope to roll closer to pin, such as the Dell hole. A very large green with several smaller targets is good. With a ball on the tee, and yardage control of par-three holes, a green sitting 45 degrees where you have to combine distance and angle would be good on a medium to long-medium hole. Most architects have felt water or native carries are fairest on par-three holes, iron in hand – as having the ball on a tee minimises the threat of the hazard." **GCA**

"Strategy exists in different forms for different abilities. At a short hole a lesser player is best to play away from extreme trouble"

but there are still isolated holes where it creeps in. Pin locations too at high-level golf can offer similar options where it is best to miss or play away from the direct route."

"I believe playing away from a flag to ensure an uphill putt or using a feeder slope to find a compartment is strategic. Often, it's done based upon

there's a 25-foot putt that, if I stand in the correct spot, I make anywhere between 40 and 80 per cent of the time. If I move one step to my left, I don't make any. That shows how important positioning is."

Veteran designer Jeff Brauer, who recently gave up his practice to become director of outreach for the American

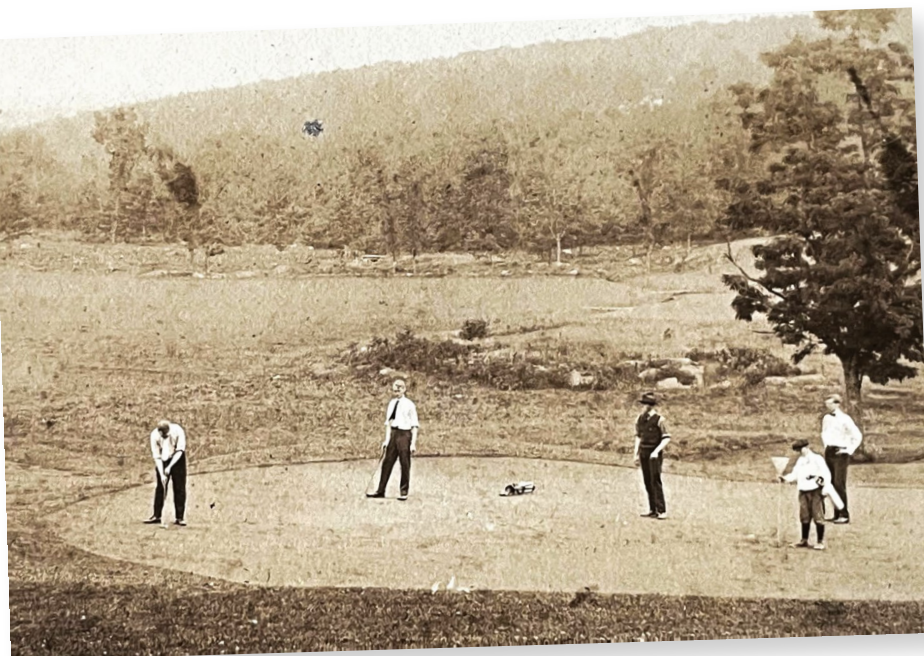


MARK WAGNER

Let us now praise famous men

Mark Wagner considers whether the anniversaries of the births of Donald Ross and Frederick Law Olmsted will reignite a discussion about civic investments and a return to golf's democratic roots and values

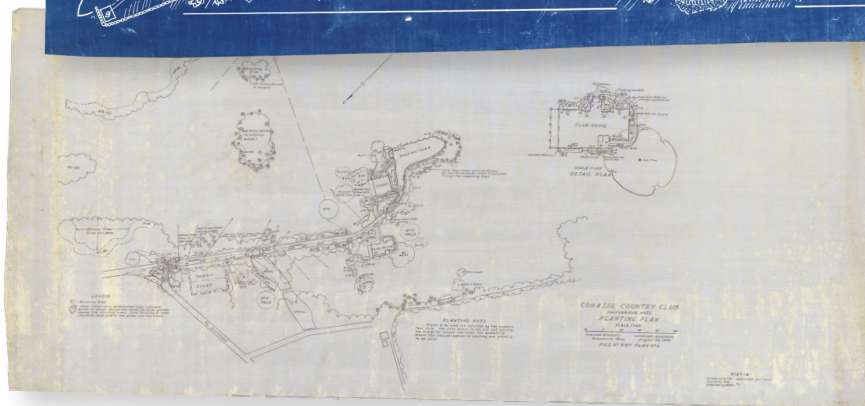
Photo: Cohasse Country Club



Golfers playing Cohasse's Ross course in 1918, the year it opened

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Frederick Law Olmsted and the 150th of Donald Ross and celebrations of the two are planned in tony locations such as Boston, Brookline and Pinehurst. While their concepts of design and open space coalesce in various ways, there are not many examples where they and their associates worked on the same site. One, however, is Cohasse Country Club in Massachusetts.

Cohasse is a private club located two miles south of Southbridge, a town known as the 'Eye of the Commonwealth' for its association



The Olmsted Brothers were engaged to produce a planting plan for Cohassee Country Club in the late 1920s, around the same time Ross returned to create a revised design (top)

with the lens-making industry on the banks of the Quinebaug River that drove the town's wealth in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Wells family, which owned American Optical, at the time the largest manufacturer of optics in the world, hired Ross in 1916 to design a nine-hole golf course for their employees. The course, named Cohassee – a Nipmuc word meaning land of tall pines – was turned over to the membership by the Wells family, an arrangement that exists to this day. It is also listed by Anthony Pioppi as eighth best in *The Finest Nines: The Best Nine-Hole Courses in North*

America and the 37th best nine-hole layout in the world by *Golf Magazine*.

For club president Chris Dono, 37th is good but he is striving to achieve more. "We have invested a lot in infrastructure to keep the course as it was envisioned by Ross more than a hundred years ago," he says.

Dono also notes that the course is maintained with a love of tradition. "We have three full-time employees and during the summer we have about 30 temps. But the course – as it always has been – is run by member volunteers. This might have seemed natural 100 years ago, but it comes with its challenges."

Club historian, Matt Davol, says that the membership is as high as it's been in some time (although some full memberships are available), and sees the upkeep as part of keeping the town's traditions alive. Davol's grandparents were actually some of the club's original members.

There's more than golf at Cohassee. Travelling south out of the neighbourhoods of Southbridge's triple deckers, just past Eastford Road School and Cohassee Brook, you come to rock walls, roadside gardens, natural stands of tall pines and adjacent lines of shaggy bark elms. Golf is backgrounded by the Olmsted Brothers' design, an acreage

that flows around Wells Pond and the ridge rising above Cohasse Brook. And then the clubhouse and hints of a course. The combined designs define a spirit of place as having stepped out of the twenty-first century and into a world where links and open space bring us to consider the values of trees, clean air, open space and civic life.

The club opened in 1918 and after a few years of play, the Wells family hired the Olmsted Brothers to design the landscape around the club and the nearby estates. At the time, the Olmsted Brothers and Ross would have had offices adjacent to each other in Brookline, though it appears they did not consult on the work (the busy Ross was noted for not returning letters or calls). Either way, the result is a sterling country nine surrounded by gardens and rock walls, diverse forests and natural water features that speak of a past when industry,

public space, golf and civic life were interconnected.

Decorated greenkeeper Paul Veshi came to Cohasse from nearby Dudley Hill, another 1920s nine designed by Devereaux Emmet and created by early industrialist Samuel Slater for his employees. Can you imagine Elon Musk or Jeff Bezos building a golf course for their workers?

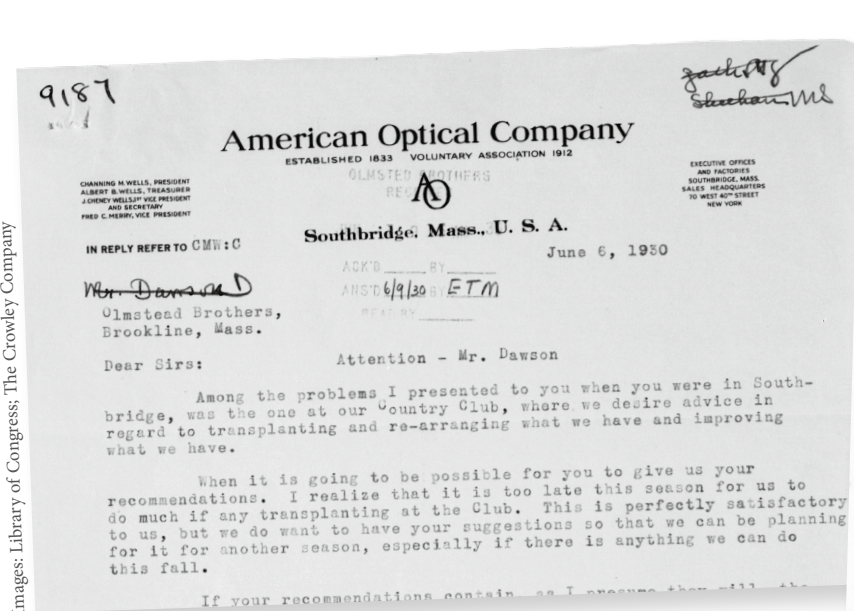
Veshi considers Cohasse an outstanding layout, for a number of reasons. Three of the holes lay across the scenic Eastford Road such that daily commerce might be interrupted by pedestrians and golfers on a walkabout. Veshi doesn't imagine many designers would sound the holes in the way Ross did. There are typical Ross features such as the six elevated greens, lateral hazards, and a need to use every club in the bag. Veshi also notes the back-to-back par threes: one has 190 yards of pure carry and

the follow-on is a 125-yard par three over water.

"You can't rest on this course," Veshi notes, even at a par 35 and 3,000 yards. "As far as a home golf course goes, this one prepares you for golf anywhere."

Sitting on his tractor, Veshi points out another creation of note: tucked behind the pines just off the sixth fairway, George and Ruth Wells built, in 1932, the northeast's first home with an international design. Boston architect Paul Wood created an east-facing steel and glass structure, which won design awards from *House Beautiful* in 1933 and is now on the National Registry of Historic Houses.

Covid has notably brought golfers back. Veshi says that for the first time in a long while there is a waiting list to join Cohasse. This is all to the good, though – for this writer – renewed interest in golf calls for further discussions.



Correspondence between the Wells family, the original owners of Cohasse, and the Olmsted Brothers regarding planting recommendations

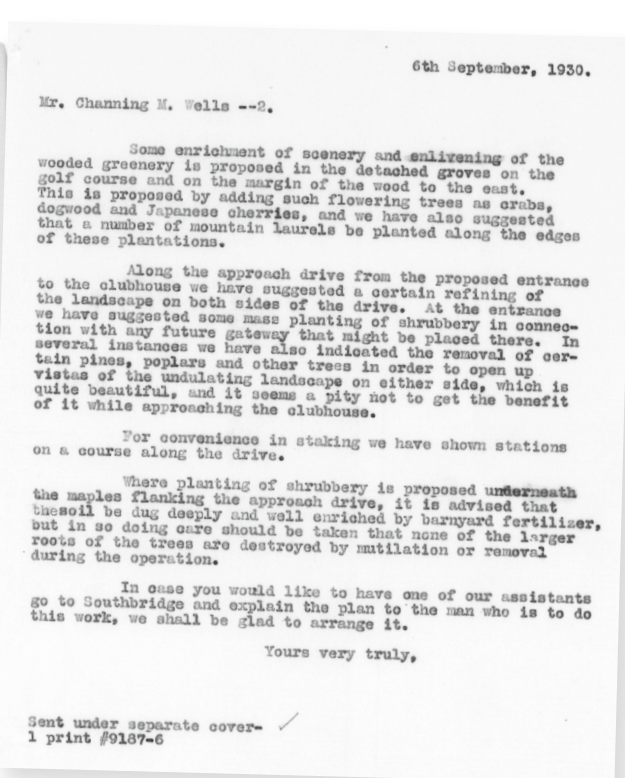




Image illustration by David Lussier

An illustration of Cohasse's third hole by golf artist David Lussier, which was created to celebrate the club's centenary in 2018

As has been well documented, as a young American journalist Olmsted visited Birkenhead Park – known as the People's Garden – in Merseyside in 1850, three years after its opening. He was on a tour of English estates, eager to learn about their gardening practices. But here was Birkenhead, the world's first public park, built and maintained by the town. As would be imitated by Wells and Slater in America, the goal of the 120-acre park was fresh air and a taste of the countryside to industrial workers. This is considered the moment when Olmsted realised recreation and natural beauty were not commodities for the elite, but places where each person is of equal intrinsic value, each having personal dignity. Olmsted observed: "Five minutes of admiration, and a few more spent studying the manner in which art had been employed to obtain from nature so much beauty, and I was ready to admit that in democratic

America there was nothing to be thought of as comparable with this People's Garden." He returned to spark a revolution in egalitarian and democratic design, not to mention laying the foundation for the national parks.

What's vexing about the visions of both Ross and Olmsted, though conceived in a spirit of beauty and egalitarianism, is that they now define

**"As far as a home
golf course goes, this
one prepares you for
golf anywhere"**

some of the country's most exclusive neighbourhoods and clubs. In an age of rising threats to democracy, not to mention a Saudi-backed challenge to the professional golf tours, might the anniversaries of the births of Ross and Olmsted return us to a discussion

not only on civic investments on behalf of the public good, but also of returning golf to its democratic roots and values?

From Olmsted's birth in 1822 to Ross's death in 1948, the world went through what historians call the first and second waves of democracy. Constitutional democracy spread in Europe and Latin America and independence movements worldwide threw off the mantle of colonialism. While naive to think landscape design and the rise of popular golf were central to these historical movements, at the same time the celebrations of Olmsted and Ross should not underplay the roles public space and recreation play in ideas of democracy and an 'aristocracy for all'. **GCA**

Mark Wagner is a golf historian and the founding director of the Binienda Center for Civic Engagement at Worcester State University

Losing the crutch

Why are sand bunkers such a prominent part of golf, even on sites without a grain of natural sand? And what makes a good bunkerless hole? Adam Lawrence investigates



The green at Royal Ashdown's par-three sixth is protected by a natural gully

and bunkers are the golf architect's crutch. If a hole is lacking, add some bunkers. If a hole is too easy, add some bunkers. If the edge of a hole is too punishing, add some 'saving' bunkers to catch balls before they encounter worse trouble.

Bunkers, like golf, developed on the ancient links of Scotland. Here, they are essentially natural features. Grazing animals would shelter from the weather in low-lying areas, and their hooves would break the turf, exposing the sand underneath. The wind would remove more turf, increasing the size of the 'bunker'. And early golfers, who simply played their game over the natural landscape, had to deal with these sandy blow-outs, which they found harder to play from than the turf that surrounded them. Eventually, as the game formalised and the first sets of rules were drawn up, and bunkers became officially hazards (though there was no mention of bunkers in the first *Rules of Golf*, drawn up by the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers in 1744).

By the time that golf started to move inland, though, in the second half of

and remained so even as courses were built on ground that had nothing much in common with the links, most specifically lacking native sand.

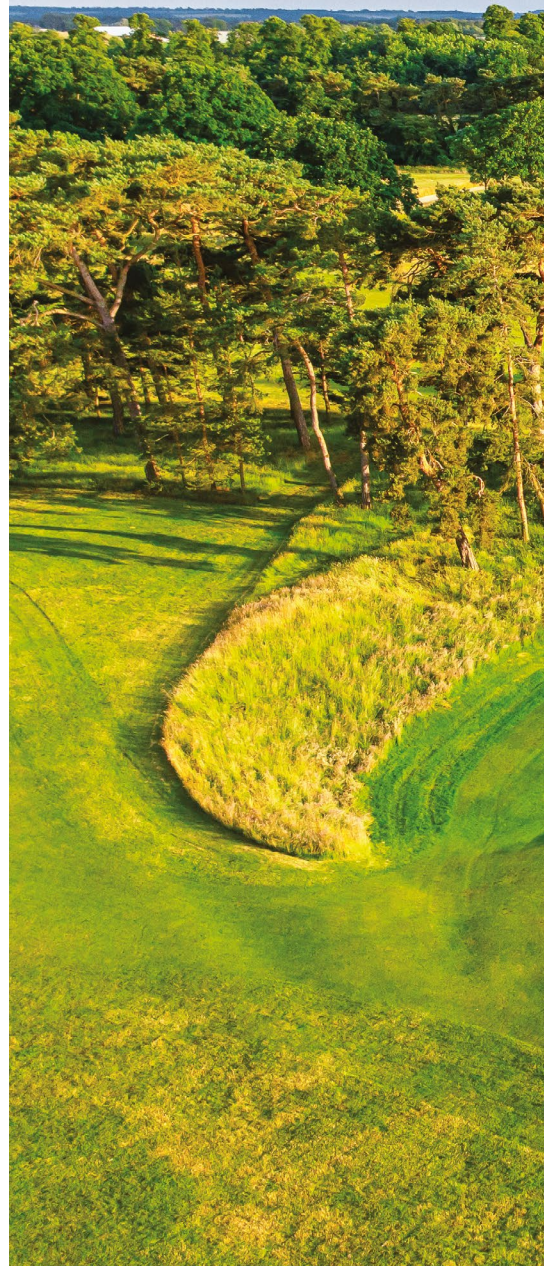
"I wonder if they were the most easily replicable feature of the linksland that helped retain golf's spirit of adventure on less suited ground?" asks English designer Clyde Johnson. "It's not like bunkers would have cost a bunch to build and maintain in the late 1800s/early 1900s. To a much lesser extent, I think they were probably an important tool in formalising golf courses, once they started being located closer to bigger bodies of populations and in shared space. Standardisation seemed a pretty important facet in Victorian-age design."

We should remember that the creators of the earliest inland golf courses had no models to follow, except the links on which they grew up. Englishman Nick Norton says: "I think in early designs they were looking to recreate the links inland, so without them it would not be the same as golf as it was known. One has to make golf interesting and that requires obstacles and hazards.

"The early golf designers figured out that consequences were an interesting and necessary part of the game"

the nineteenth century (the first 'golf boom' was triggered by the invention of the gutty ball in 1848, which made the game more affordable), sand bunkers were established as a fundamental part of its vocabulary,

Sand does, in my opinion, make a good hazard. The ball is not lost, but the shot is difficult, and was more so before the sand wedge was invented. The same thought process probably went on 100+ years ago – dig a hole, chuck some sand



in, job done. Then, once recognised (rightly or wrongly) as an essential hazard, they would have realised that they need to make them look good, and their 'essential' tag may have developed further – a virtuous (or vicious) circle."

"The early golf designers figured out that consequences were an interesting and necessary part of the game," says American architect Kurt Bowman. "To me, golf isn't very much fun without bunkers – they are the best form of hazard, better than out of bounds and better than water."

"The use of bunkers is analogous to something buildings architects have done for thousands of years –



Photo: Paul Severn

The par-three fifth at Royal Worlington & Newmarket features a deep cavern of turf, fondly known as Mug's Hole, next to the green

reinterpret and reintroduce features outside of their original or natural state or intended purpose,” says Brandon Johnson of Arnold Palmer Design. “A good example is the use of the column or arch through architecture history. What, after all, is the purpose of a hollow non-load-bearing column on a building these days beyond pure ornamentation? At least the placement of sand outside a links course retained its purpose as an obstacle within the game. Its inclusion, along with other elements – rock, trees, water, artificial contour – aimed to have a strategic purpose.”

If early inland golf courses were pretty basic, it was when the heathlands of Surrey and Berkshire, south and west of London, were discovered for the game in the 1890s and the very early twentieth century that the game first found a design vocabulary that worked away from the seaside. The heathlands were – mostly – sandy, so bunkers were not fundamentally out of place there as they might have been on clay-based inland courses. Be this as it may, the heathland revolution established the sand bunker, once and for all, as a key part of the course design template. It

also saw what may be the first ever wholly bunkerless course, the Old course at Royal Ashdown Forest in Sussex, England, created in 1888. The par-three sixth at Royal Ashdown, known as The Island, is one of golf’s most famous bunkerless holes – its forty-yard-long green is surrounded by hazards, a stream on two sides, and a gully on the others.

“The heathlands share many of the same characteristics as the links, so it wasn’t difficult to make bunkers look natural there,” says Robin Hiseman of European Golf Design. “When it came to heavier sites it was a case of adapting



The bunkerless seventeenth on the West course at Wentworth has a severe drop to the right of the green

the method to ensure they drained, hence bunkers set more into banks and kops above the general ground level.”

So that is why bunkers became such a fundamental part of the golf architect’s vocabulary. Which makes the rest of this article somewhat hypothetical, or perhaps counterfactual, but no less interesting for that. The question is: how would golf designers deal with an inability to use sand bunkers? This may not ever become a real question – at least on the vast majority of projects – although, as our article from issue 66 (published in October 2021) on the growing global crisis in the supply of sand, shows, there is real pressure on golf to reduce its use of sand. But nevertheless, it is a good way to challenge the creativity of golf architects.

The deepest irony of this question is that it is the courses where sand is most natural – the links – that could best cope with bunkers being forbidden. The kind of random contour that is so common on linksland can provide plenty of challenge and interest for golfers without the excavation of bunkers – but when turf is underpinned by native sand, it is very easy and natural to remove some of that grass to create a hazard.

“If you said we can’t do earthworks then mowing line angles would be the main feature of the design, I think,” says Hiseman. “Actually, I’d like to do a course with no bunkers, just to see how creative I can be without that crutch. I like a number of courses that don’t have them.”

“It is somewhat a shame that natural non-sand hazards didn’t become the norm!” says the veteran Welsh designer David Williams. “It would have made fitting a course into an inland site and laying the course gently on the landscape a much easier and probably more rewarding task! I am not a fan of the inland links’ solution, where the golf course is totally out of character with the surrounding and underlying landscape, so I suppose the best non-bunker solution is using a variety of native grass species, defining differing fairway widths and angles from the tee and to the green, even some subtle grass hollows and swales of different grass heights and types. But without the ‘wow’ factor of dramatic bunkering, it can often be difficult to



Photo: GCA

create the visual and playing interest. I have never had a ‘no sand bunker’ stipulation on a complete course, but occasionally have on a few holes – to protect views of (or from) an important building or from a nearby road. From a golf interest point of view, it is a lot easier to do this on just two or three holes than on a complete course!

“During the 1990s and early 2000s, the boom years of new golf courses, we were told that new courses were in competition for members, often on the basis of the proposed course plan and layout. People argued that, to provide that ‘wow’ factor, courses had to have lots of water and a profusion of sand bunkers just to make the glossy presentation plans look more attractive! A subtle understated design

Considering alternatives

Jim Nagle of Forse Design shares examples of features that can be used instead of sand bunkers



Photo: Beacon Hill Country Club

Prior to joining Ron Forse, I was tasked with creating two different routings over the same land for a course that would not have any bunkers as the client wanted to keep maintenance down. Sadly, the project was never built but given that same commission today, I would certainly feature mounds, depressions, ditches, small creeks, trees, wide fairways with internal contours and short grass around greens. Greens of varying elevations would also be critical, whether they be plateau, punchbowl, crowned with prowls, tiers, ridges, depressions.

Over the last few years, Greg D’Antonio, superintendent at Concord CC outside of Philadelphia, and I have incorporated ditches at his course. Ditches are the perfect solution to improve drainage, increase strategy and provide a visual contrast to the bunkers and mounds. They are a multifaceted feature and I have also incorporated them at Beacon Hill (pictured) in New Jersey.

Wide fairways replete with speed slots, hillocks, depressions and lots of width are something that a bunkerless course should include. The randomness of those features complements the essence of the game. Speed slots become a target to reach and gain extra roll of the tees. Wide corridors allow for enjoyment of the game as well as reinforcing the intended angles of play.

Mounds like those built at Bald Peak Colony Club in New Hampshire have such a dramatic impact on play and are something I enjoy trying to replicate. Tillinghast’s ‘chocolate drops’ from Bedford Springs or the field of mounds at Somerset Hills are inspiring. Short grass around numerous greens is a necessity. The short grass keeps players engaged necessitating creativity in their recovery shots. One option becomes four. How beautiful is that?

In a day and age where trees are coming down by the thousands on some courses, I can’t believe I’m going to say that a bunkerless layout requires trees – a well-placed tree can have a beneficial impact on strategy for this type of course.

One more feature that could be used is a stream. It allows for unique opportunities to create diagonal carries, placement of greens close to water, and risk-reward shots. Some sort of water body like a lake or pond may be needed on such a course, but only if it was already part of the site – they provide interest for players and creativity for designers.

JOSEF PÖTTER GOLF

GOLF COURSE CONSTRUCTION



JOSEF PÖTTER GMBH

Füchtenfeld 22 | 48599 Gronau-Epe | Germany | phone: +49(0)2565-402 98-0 | zentrale@poetter-golf.de | www.poetter-golf.de

PROGOLF

**GOLF COURSE
CONSTRUCTION
AND RENOVATION**

WEST CLIFFS

QUINTA DA OMBRIA

OLYMPIC GOLF COURSE

PROGOLF BRASIL
Antonio.carlos@progolf-group.com

PROGOLF-GROUP.COM

GOLFSCAPE
Benjamin.silva@progolf-group.com



Photo by Evan Schiller

Spring Lake Golf Club
Spring Lake, New Jersey
George Thomas - 1910 / A.W. Tillinghast 1918
Tripp Davis Renovation and Restoration

Tripp Davis and Associates
Golf Architecture
Norman, Oklahoma USA
405-447-5259
tripp@tdagolf.net



Photo: Bandon Dunes Golf Resort

On their Sheep Ranch layout at Bandon Dunes, Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw decided to let the site's natural contours do the talking

might have produced a better course – but not sold as many memberships. Personally I like trees as hazards, which is OK on a wooded or parkland site – but their slow gestation period precludes their use on a wide-open site. It would be an interesting exercise to create a great bunker-free 18 holes – there are plenty of great bunkerless holes, such as the first and eighteenth at the Old Course, the seventeenth on the West course at Wentworth being just a few examples.”

The young American designer Jaeger Kovich cites the fifth at Royal Worlington & Newmarket in England as a classic example of a great sand-free hole. “It might be the best par three in the world,” he says, a view that was shared by John Morrison, the design partner of Harry Colt. “Only the perfectly struck shot has

any hope of leaving the ball on the green; the 90 per cent good shot which is usually good enough to get a three at the majority of short holes, is no good at all at the fifth at Mildenhall,” Morrison wrote.

Sand is, as we have seen, a very basic part of the golf architect’s bag of tools.

“Ground contour can be at least as good a hazard as a bunker”

It can almost be said that sand bunkers define a golf course. No other feature, except perhaps a flag in a green, says ‘golf’ so clearly as does a sand bunker. And, although there is much handwringing about how bunkers are no longer especially frightening to

golfers at the highest level, there is no doubt that, for the vast majority, they still present a real hazard that is worth avoiding, yet at the same time does not spell immediate disaster in the way that water or out of bounds do. So, there is no doubt that, on the overwhelming majority of courses, they are here to stay. Equally there is no doubt that architects can benefit from thinking hard about alternatives to bunkers. Ground contour, as seen on courses like Sheep Ranch at Bandon Dunes, can be at least as good a hazard as a bunker, but where severe ground contour does not exist naturally (which is to say, away from the links), can contouring fill the same role as bunkers, without enormous and costly earthworks? Maybe not. The bunker may be a crutch. But if you cannot walk without it, a crutch is rather useful! **GCA**

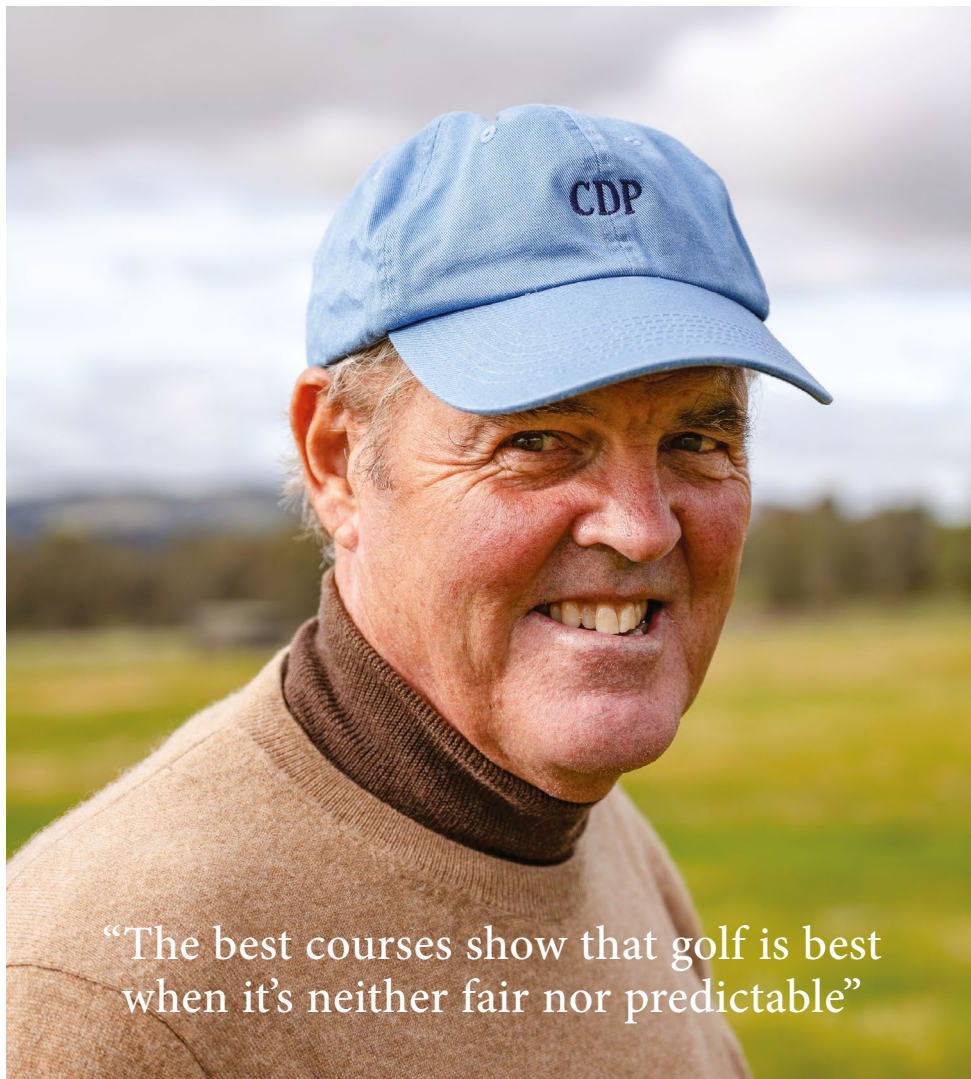
INTERVIEW



Life's a beach

INTERVIEW: MIKE CLAYTON

Australian golf course architect Mike Clayton talks with Toby Ingleton about the Seven Mile Beach build, his design philosophy and more



“The best courses show that golf is best when it’s neither fair nor predictable”

Mike Clayton has been spending a lot of time at the beach. But, while he has recently turned 65, it’s not to enjoy retirement. He’s been working with Mike DeVries on the layout of Seven Mile Beach, just east of Hobart, the capital of Australian island state Tasmania.

Clear of the non-native radiata pines that previously covered the site, the two Mikes (who, with Frank Pont, are the principals of the Clayton, DeVries & Pont partnership) are toiling away among pure rolling dunes that tumble

down towards the ocean, shaping a golf course for developer and former tour pro Mat Goggin.

Does a site with such enormous potential add pressure for an architect? “There’s no pressure, in the sense that there are no members, but there’s pressure in the sense that a lot of people seem to know about it,” says Clayton. “I played golf with a couple of kids who were asking me about it, and I didn’t think would have a clue what was going on down there.

“Mat is really doing something to benefit the game. So I want to do the

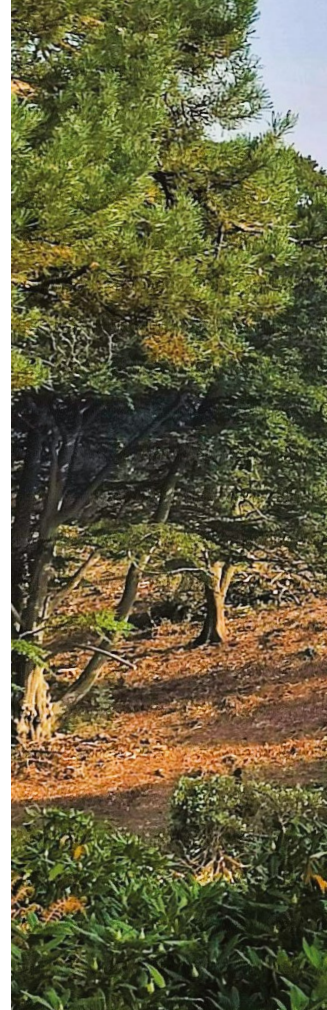
best I can for him because it’s his cash on the line and his dream. We’ve got to make sure that Seven Mile Beach is one of the best two or three courses in Australia, which I think is doable given how good the site is and how good the land is.”

The team is making solid progress. “So far, we’ve kicked into shape the first four holes, most of the eighth, except the tee shot,” says Clayton. “Thirteen, fourteen and eighteen are done and seventeen is pretty much done. We’re getting some irrigation in, but no grassing yet. Of the original 300 piles of



Photo: Lukas Michel

Mike DeVries, left, and Mike Clayton ponder design decisions at Seven Mile Beach



pine trees that littered the site we've got rid of all but about 80 of them.

"We've pretty much settled on the holes. We were debating whether the sixth would finish up as a par four or five. Now that eighteen's a five, six is probably going to be a four, which unfortunately gives a par 72, which is really conventional and boring. We might finish up putting it back. Mike was talking about building architects' tees, that only we know about. It's such a cool second shot into the sixth that if there was a back tee that took the hole from 480 yards to 550 yards, there would be a really awesome par five. We might just smooth off a back tee and if people want to play there, they can. But on the card it's more than likely going to be a par four."

Clayton says golfers can expect something extremely special: "The only two shots that don't have a view of the water, which is pretty spectacular, are the second to the

first hole and from the back tee of the second. On every other shot you can see the water, to a point where you almost start taking it for granted. I go and look at it every morning, when you get in the right light it's beautiful. By the end of the day, it's just there

since. "It stands on the edge of the sea with the same sort of big, rolling dunes. It's much windier at Barnbougle than it is in Hobart, but you've still got to make fairways pretty wide, so you've got to drive the ball well, but you don't have to drive it straight. The test is to

"We've got to make sure that Seven Mile Beach is one of the best two or three courses in Australia, which I think is doable given how good the site is and how good the land is"

and you forget about it. But for golfers seeing it for the first time, it's a pretty awesome experience."

There are some parallels with Clayton's other famous Tasmania newbuild, Barnbougle Dunes, co-designed with Tom Doak, which opened in 2004 and has topped Australia's public access rankings ever

drive it properly through the wind and there are parts of the fairways where the second shots are easier. If you can figure out where to drive it to get the easier approach, that's part of thinking your way around the golf course. There'll be some holes where if you drive to one part of the fairway, you get a clear view to the green. If you don't, you'll be



What a difference a year makes. The par-three thirteenth at The Addington in October 2021 and, inset, the same view a year earlier

playing blind over a mound or a dune. We could do that on every hole so we're trying not to overdo it. But I think we've got the balance pretty right."

Life is not all about playing in the sand though. CDP is a distinctly global practice and Clayton's future will include no small measure of globetrotting. This year has already included spells in the US and Europe, nurturing a growing client base.

Among those is The Addington, the JF Abercromby-Harry Colt layout south of London that has long been regarded as having its true potential stifled by tree ingress.

"It was a good thing that they didn't fiddle much with the golf course, but the playing lines were clearly overgrown with trees," says Clayton. "If they'd been properly managed over time the tree removal wouldn't have been as extensive, but when you

don't touch trees for 50 to 60 years, of course they're going to grow way too far across playing lines and completely dilute or change the way the original architect intended the holes to play, and what he intended you to see.

"Pulling back the curtain has been great. There are so many fun holes to play and it's a bit like North Berwick in that the golf is not really conventional, but it's great fun, interesting and wild – a throwback to a time when architects and golfers and members weren't so hung up on what people now say is conventional golf. All of the original great golf in Britain wasn't particularly conventional. One of the influences of the pro game is that golf should be fair and predictable. The best courses show that golf is best when it's neither fair nor predictable. The Addington is a great example of golf being great, not fair and predictable, but wild and fun."

Clayton is known for his straight-talking opinions on what makes good golf, but does he see himself as having a particular design philosophy?

"I grew up in Melbourne, where [Dr Alister] MacKenzie had such an influence, and Royal Melbourne was the course that I always enjoyed most," he says. "Despite being a pretty straight hitter, I always enjoy wide fairways and holes where shots from one side of the fairway are a lot different to shots from the other side. It's hard to do that if it's narrow, so I enjoy having space to play off the tee.

"Building beautiful green complexes is a hugely important part of good golf. There are some great courses that don't have short grass around the greens, but mostly it's a much more interesting way to make the short game interesting; hitting difficult shots off good lies as opposed to playing what

would otherwise be really easy shots, made difficult because they're in a terrible lie.

"I don't think the principles of great architecture changed among all the great architects over the years. MacKenzie's thirteen principles are pretty close to what a good golf course is. Different length holes – there's a place for great, long par threes, for the short par three, the Melbourne Sandbelt has got the world's best collection of holes around 300 yards that are vexing and perplexing to play."

"I adored watching Seve play golf. He was the only guy ever to win at St Andrews, Augusta and Royal Melbourne. They were the courses that brought out his genius. He had space off the tee to play and if he hit the ball to the wrong part of the hole, he could hit shots that were great enough to recover. He could play to a tight pin from a bad angle, hit that big three iron up over a bunker and stop it and he was genius around the greens. Those places gave

about the best philosophy for building golf courses, which is build something that Seve would enjoy and Seve would play well, because he was the best player to watch."

The most successful modern golf architects have earned their reputations by creating designs that mimic nature. Does Clayton see any place for courses that have a more man-made appearance, like a TPC Sawgrass, for example?

"I thought Pete Dye did a miraculous job in a swamp," he says. "There are a lot of things there that I really think constitute good architecture.

"You look at the original photos when it was much sandier, it was much more difficult and they calmed the greens down, but the original photos of that course look amazing. So I think it's a brilliant golf course, although I don't love the seventeenth hole. There is space off the tee. If you drive it down one side of a hole, you get a different shot than if you drive it down the other side. And if you drive it down the side

"The last thing any of the partners would want is to be running ten projects at once, because you inevitably don't do any of them very well"

him room and space to express his genius. He played some decent US Opens – he played well at Oakmont the year that Larry Nelson won, hitting irons off the tees. That wasn't the way MacKenzie wanted people to play golf. It wasn't the way Seve played his best golf. And it wasn't the way he wanted to play golf.

"The fact that Seve was the master of playing golf like that tells me a lot

that's protected by a hazard, the second shot's likely to be easier.

"Great architects can man-make something, but it doesn't look man-made. If it obviously looks man-made then it probably doesn't look that good. But if you can't tell which part of it was man-made, how the dirt was moved, then that's the genius in making a hole look good on a piece of land that



doesn't necessarily make it easy to make something look good."

Since CDP was established in 2019, the firm has enjoyed an explosive start, with three newbuilds signed (Seven Mile Beach, plus two courses at Ha Long Bay in Vietnam for developer Vingroup) and more on the cards, plus a rapidly growing client list of existing clubs (recent additions including three 'Royals' – Dublin, Perth and Ostend – plus a first Scottish client, Monifieth).

"When I started with John Sloan and Bruce Grant in 1995, I was still playing in Europe," says Clayton. "They asked if I wanted to get involved in a design business. I was 38 and still playing some decent golf, but thought it sounded like fun. It was something I was always interested in but never would have done it on my own instigation."

In that first foray into the design business Clayton says they got lucky with a high-profile first client, Victoria Golf Club, and the work snowballed from there.

"You're never quite sure how it's going to go. Mike and Frank are two



Clayton, DeVries & Pont's first US project was the renovation of Bloomfield Hills in Michigan

guys who I have a lot of respect for and are incredibly talented, and that made it easy for me. John Sloan said to put good people around you. That's how the first business worked and it worked really well for a long time. I've always been lucky to have good people around me, so this is a continuation of that good luck."

So no thoughts about that retirement? "I feel like I'm young. I don't know how long I want to work for, but I see myself doing it for ten years at least. I've always enjoyed it. When people are winding down their business lives at 65, I feel like I'm starting again, which is not in any way daunting. It's challenging and fun and I'm looking forward to it."

For CDP to build on its initial success, "the real trick is to not take on too much work," says Clayton. "The last thing any of the partners would want is to be running ten projects at once, because you inevitably don't do any of them very well. The trick is to pick the right projects and not take on too much work and time it right. That's the tricky part of the business,

how you give the right amount of time and effort and application to a limited number of projects, without running out of work in two years because you haven't signed enough up. It's such a difficult balancing act.

"The best architects – we all know who they are – can afford to say 'I can do your project in 2027' and the club's happy to wait. If we can get into that position, that would be nice. But there aren't many guys that are in that position, where you're sought after and the clubs have the patience to wait for a couple of years."

Clayton looks back on the last 25 years as having been an incredibly positive time for golf. "The era of the famous golf pro dominating the business is certainly over for the foreseeable future, and I think that's a good thing," he says. "Coore, Doak, Hanse, Kidd, DeVries and guys like that really restored the reputation of, not 'proper architects' but, a much different model from what dominated the 80s and 90s, which was famous golf pros building golf courses and, in

truth, not spending that much time on site. They were big conglomerates of teams with a famous name at the top and if the last 20 years has shown anything, it's that there's another way to do it and it's been great for golf.

"People will look back in 50 years on these years as being incredibly productive. A lot of that has been because of guys like Julian Robertson and Richard Sattler and Mike Keiser and owners who have gone down different paths, which has been a good thing. It started with Dick Youngscap at Sand Hills. So much of what's happened, the genesis of all of it, was at Sand Hills. Mike Keiser went out and saw what had happened there. If Bandon Dunes hadn't been built, Barnboughe Dunes wouldn't have been built. And if Barnboughe Dunes hadn't been built, then Seven Mile Beach probably wouldn't have been built." **GCA**

For more of Mike Clayton's views on golf design, visit www.golfcoursearchitecture.net to read the series of articles he wrote for GCA during the lockdown of 2020

Bold and beautiful

VIDAUBAN, PROVENCE, FRANCE

A major revitalisation project has been completed at the enigmatic club in the south of France that emerged from Robert Trent Jones' grand plan. Toby Ingleton reports

With thirty-ish members and their guests each clocking up just a handful of rounds per year, a pair of fourballs constitutes a busy day at Vidauban.

The club is off the beaten track – a long, winding road that connects two small Provence villages – from which the only clue to its existence is the fleeting glimpse through the trees to the tenth hole. By then, you've already passed the simple, signless gate that at any glance seems nothing more than the entrance to a rural home.

Robert Trent Jones hadn't intended for it to be so elusive. In the 1970s, he discovered the site – on the fringes of the Plaine des Maures nature reserve; where rolling hills peppered with umbrella pines are a haven for wildlife, and seams of rock crack

through a landscape with endless vistas of astounding beauty – and was compelled to buy it, making a grand plan for three golf courses and a thousand homes.

But his vision never became reality, with two decades yielding a single course and an abbreviated street of homes before local authorities – thankfully, many would agree – called a halt to further development.

Maybe a fitting legacy is that the course Jones did build at Vidauban would become one of the finest in continental Europe. And that status is now elevated further, following a major revitalisation project.

Jones worked alongside his son Bobby on the original layout of the course in the early 90s and the club – which, following a period of uncertainty and





A snarling hazard protects the green of the par-five third at Viduban



Looking back on the opening hole and out as far as the eye can see over the Plaine des Maures nature reserve

underinvestment, is now owned by members and led by CEO Richard Sorrell – has maintained its relationship with Bobby and his RTJ II firm.

The last major project, in 2014, focused on drainage and irrigation. Under the direction of RTJ II architect Mike Gorman and John Clarkin of golf consultancy Turfgrass – who himself was so enamoured with the region when he first began working with the club in the 2000s that he decided to move there – the white-hot wheel blades of contractor MJ Abbott’s machinery cut through the rocky ground to establish a freely draining foundation for the course and install sophisticated water-efficient irrigation technology from Toro.

Around the same time, the club hired superintendent Stephen Byrne,

whose expertise in major projects while at Fota Island in Ireland and The Wisley in London would complete another piece in the puzzle to bring Vidauban back to glory. Byrne set about specifying a state-of-the-art maintenance facility that would

“We’ve got this spectacular one-of-a-kind landscape that we wanted to respect and make the bunkers a part of”

support the club’s ambitions and gave his input into future priorities. “I really felt that new bunkering could transform the course,” he says. “Not just from a maintenance perspective, also in terms of strategy and the connection with the landscape.”

The original bunkers had lost their shape over the 25 years since the course was laid out, and the large ovals were, as Gorman explains, “disappearing into the landscape”.

The project team – Sorrell, his general manager Cyprien Comoy, Gorman,

Clarkin, Byrne and MJ Abbott’s Steve Briggs and Jim Price – hatched a plan with three prongs: remodel bunkers, restore green perimeters and rework surrounds. They set to work in late 2020.

The pandemic meant travel to and from the site would be challenging. “I



Photos: ©Patrick Jantet/Switzerland



The short par-four second

thought I could stay for about three weeks and then maybe come back at the end of the front nine to tweak things, which would be the more traditional approach, modified to Covid a little bit,” says Gorman. “It became apparent that just wasn’t going to work. We were finishing bunkers quickly and it was a very field-driven process. For me to leave and try to do this remotely wasn’t going to be efficient or meet our satisfaction.”

Gorman took the decision to stay on site for the entire project. “It worked out perfectly,” he says. “From the club’s perspective they were able to work very efficiently with everybody on site, rather than having to do things remotely, by video, and waiting. Everything was immediate. I was able to see everything in person so we

didn’t have to worry about interpreting things through a photograph.”

With the architect on site full time, the design process became much more dynamic. And while this added complexity for MJ Abbott project manager Price, who had to adapt resource planning as decisions were taken in the field, the result is striking. The revitalised course delivers a bold strategy and breathtaking aesthetics.

“We really worked hard to identify strategic bunker positions, based on their original placement but more in line with where shots were being hit with today’s technology,” explains Gorman. “Where we did shift bunkers, we tried to find existing landforms to build into, so they would be highly visible and make sense within the entire golf hole, so you’re thinking

about these bunkers when you’re standing on the tee.”

This wasn’t to be a major earthmoving exercise. “We had minimal limits of disturbance and quite a bit of rock underneath some areas of the site, so we couldn’t move much,” says Gorman. “It’s a beautiful piece of land and you really don’t want to move dirt. We’ve got this spectacular one-of-a-kind landscape that we wanted to respect and make the bunkers a part of.”

The overall sand area has been reduced and there are now fewer bunkers, but they are more impactful, with every hazard playing a clear role in the strategy. The sand-flashed faces, often very steep, are accentuated by fescue eyebrows, which at hole peripheries blend into the surrounding

ROBERT
TRENT JONES II
Golf Course Architects

SentryWorld Golf Course, Wisconsin, USA
HOST SITE OF THE 2023 U.S. SENIOR OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP
June 29–July 2, 2023

A LEGACY OF INNOVATIVE CHAMPIONSHIP DESIGN

Providing challenges for the world's finest competitors and recreational golfers, too.

Par 3, Hole #12 | Photo: Courtesy of SentryWorld (Katie Berdan-Wolden)

of the earth...for the spirit.®

ROBERT TRENT JONES II, LLC

USA +1-650-475-0329 • golfinfo@rtj2.com • www.rtj2.com





Three imposing bunkers on the par-four fifteenth force golfers to plot their route to the green

landscape, while on more central hazards emphasise visibility.

You could pick out almost any hole on the updated course to illustrate the success of this strategy. From the tee of the par-five eighth, for example, a pair of bunkers asks to be hugged for the best line. As you approach the landing area, the artistry of their design, each trap cut into a semi-circular ground contour, reveals itself. The eye is then quickly drawn to the challenge that remains, as the hole sweeps left and golfers are dared to broach another imposing trap for a chance of reaching the bunkerless green.

“Some of the best par fives in the world are where you really need to think about your second shot,” says Gorman. “So many times you play a par five and it’s a throwaway, mindless second shot. What we tried to do on number eight is make sure that that you’re really thinking about your second shot, whether different lay-up

choices or, if you hit a good drive and you’re a higher calibre player, going for the green in two and what it means if you miss your shot, what your recovery options are going to be.”

On the par-four fifteenth, three bunkers, all relatively central to the line of play, force you to plot a route to the skyline green. “We found this one subtle valley in the fairway on the left side and felt it was just a perfect bunker landform,” says Gorman. “And not only did it fit in well, but it also fit perfectly for the strategy of the golf hole. There was an original ‘lighthouse’ bunker that was probably about 350 yards off the tee. It looked good but from a strategic standpoint didn’t come into play except maybe for a second shot. So we really wanted to take the same sort of aesthetic approach, but turn it into a more strategic bunker that you’ve really got to think about off the tee.”

The project’s second prong, restoring the greens to their original sizes, has

had a marked impact on the perceived scale of the course. “Over time the green perimeters got really narrow and that’s something that, with Steve, Rich and John, we’ve all worked to get back,” says Gorman.

Sorrell highlights the ninth, a long, rolling uphill par four with a green that he says appears to pitch in the opposite direction now the original edges have been restored, even though there has been no work at all on the internal contour of the putting surface.

Such changes in character are down to green expansion combined with the attention paid to green surrounds.

“There are all these great contours around the greens that were hidden in rough,” says Gorman. “For instance, number two is a short, powerful hole. If you play a forward tee it’s a great drivable par four and has one of the more spectacular rock formations with a natural waterfall during the winter.

MJ ABBOTT

MJ Abbott are the UK's leading golf construction experts. Whether re-shaping a bunker, reconstructing a green, or building a new 18 hole golf course, our expertise, experience and depth of resources is second to none.

Our extensive client portfolio includes the R&A, Wentworth Club, Celtic Manor Resort, hundreds of private and proprietary clubs, and a number of major resort venues.



Golf construction experts

+44 (0) 1722 716361 • enquiries@mjabott.co.uk
mjabott.co.uk



Developing, managing and maintaining excellent golf courses across the globe.



Consultancy / Development / Sustainability

www.turfgrass.ie



@TurfgrassC



@turfgrass_consultancy



Turfgrass®



Huxley Golf All-Weather Greens

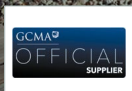
Private All-Weather Practice Facility, Northern Italy.

Huxley® Golf

Premier All-Weather Surfaces for Golf
Proud to be an Employee Ownership Trust since 2020



Official supplier to:



UK and Overseas Enquiries:
Tel + 44 (0) 1730 829608
Email: sales@huxleygolf.co.uk
www.huxleygolf.com



Photo: ©Patrick Jantet/Switzerland

Expansion of greens and work on surrounds has changed the character of many holes, including the par-four seventeenth

That was a great existing complex that we probed out to get back to the original perimeter. But then we also found, looking at early drawings, that there was a wide fairway entrance. With Steve and John, we worked here and in quite a few other places to sandcap those entrances and widen the surrounds.

“Seventeen is another great example, where the green sits in a punchbowl and we were able to expand the fairway surrounds and really open up more dimensions in playability, where you can play a flop, a putt, all sorts of different shots, as opposed to it just being a one-dimensional shot out of the rough.

“It was like an archaeological effort around some of the greens as those were exactly the type of contours we wanted to identify and transform into short grass. There are some great helping contours that if you have a

keen eye you can find and hit, and it’s going to help the shot.

Final tweaks are still in progress. “As the bunkers have now had a chance to grow in, we’re making sure that the fescue doesn’t adversely affect

“There are some great helping contours that if you have a keen eye you can find and hit”

playability,” says Gorman. “One of the things we’re working with Steve on right now is some mowing pattern refinements, especially around greens, where a well-played shot around a green surface isn’t going to get stuck in some of the fine fescue. We’re just detailing some of those areas so if you

hit a shot around a green off by a little bit, you can find it and play it and it’s not too severe a penalty.”

Gorman reflects on the experience as a one-off opportunity. “It was really the first time I had ever been on a renovation 100 per cent of the time, so for me personally it was one of the best experiences I’ve ever had on a project, to see and be a part of that process all the way from shovel to seed in the ground,” he says. “If you look at the team that was involved, from Rich and Cyprien, who deserve all the credit in the world for developing this team, to Steve, John and MJ Abbott and the crew that was out there, they poured their heart and soul into this project.”

There is word that the club might be considering an increase in the size of its membership. Let’s hope it does – the more that get to experience this place, the better. **GCA**

ON SITE

Costa drama

HACIENDA ALCAIDESA, SPAIN

American architect Kurt Bowman has just finished rebuilding the Links course at Hacienda Alcaidesa on Spain's Costa del Sol. Adam Lawrence visited, and was extremely surprised



The par-five fifth on Hacienda Alcaidesa's Links course

European golfers – especially British, Germans and Scandinavians – have been travelling to the Costa del Sol in southern Spain for so long, and in such numbers, that there is little along the coast now that can come as a surprise. The region has been developed so thoroughly that there really are very few plots of land that would make suitable new golf projects; certainly not any that offer land good enough to attract significant international attention (with the notable exception of the ‘second Valderrama’ course that has been mooted for at least fifteen years). Which is why, when I was asked to visit Hacienda Alcaidesa, right at the west of the Costa, near the British enclave of Gibraltar, I was so surprised.

Alcaidesa is not a new development. It is a very large mix of golf, housing and hotels, developed initially in the early 90s by the British construction group Costain. Its two golf courses, called – rather incongruously – Links and Heathland, were designed by the British teams of Clive Clark and Peter Alliss and Dave Thomas respectively. But it is fair to say that, golf-wise, Alcaidesa has never really achieved much of a profile. That, I think, is set to change. With a bang.

The Alcaidesa golf courses were acquired in December 2019 by Javier Illán Plaza, boss of Spanish development company Millenium Hospitality Real Estate. Fairly quickly, he resolved to renovate the Links course, and hired American architect Kurtis Bowman to do the job. Bowman, who is ex-Nicklaus Design, has previously been most active in



The green of the par-four eleventh sits above the beach

Latin America; this is his first foray into Europe (he got the job through a mutual contact with owner Illán from the Dominican Republic, where he has worked extensively). Although the architect would have preferred to do the renovation over two years, nine holes at a time, commercial imperatives meant that the bulk of the work was done in a four-month period during 2021 – with a target opening date of 1 July 2022 – and with Bowman on site for over 100 days during that period.

The most striking thing about Alcaidesa Links is the piece of land it occupies. True seaside golf is very rare (indeed almost unknown) on the Costa del Sol; invariably, coastal land is reserved for hotels or other higher yielding forms of development, with golf relegated to inland sites. Even the Costa's best courses, such

as Valderrama or Sotogrande, do not really touch the sea.

That is emphatically not the case at Alcaidesa. In fact, the course's original clubhouse was situated down by the Mediterranean, though it was moved inland when the Heathland course was added. Now, from the fifth tee to

golfing land – it is pretty much unique for the Costa del Sol. You would have to go two hours further west to Portugal's Algarve, to find golf that has this sort of connection with the sea.

Given the time and other constraints imposed on him, Bowman has not been able to do as comprehensive a

“The course occupies land that is right next to the sea, with nothing except a small amount of seaside vegetation between golf and beach”

the fourteenth green, the golf course occupies land that is right next to the sea, with nothing except a small amount of seaside vegetation between golf and beach. Although, in common with most of the golf sites on the Costa, it is quite severe – in places, perhaps a little too severe to be ideal

renovation as he might have wished. The new hotel – planned, apparently, to be a five-star Fairmont property – has taken a certain amount of land that used to be occupied by golf, and in front of it the gap between hotel and beach is rather narrow; it is a choke point for sure. Because of the



Photos: Gary Lishon

The long par-four seventh and, to the left, the par-three eighth green

clubhouse location, everything from the fourteenth tee (which is located at that choke point) onwards is quite steeply uphill – not ideal for any golf architect, least of all one who trained with Nicklaus, who famously said that if he could build a course with eighteen downhill holes, he would. For all that, though, there is a lot of compelling golf out there.

After the first three holes – a short par five, a brutal 230-yard par three (half-par holes are a major characteristic of the course) and a longish par four with a semi-blind drive but an excellent green site – the real drama begins. The fourth hole is a short four, not really driveable for normal human beings, with a fairway landing zone that appears, from the tee, to slope from left to right at about forty-five degrees. Of course, it doesn't, and the wide fairway landing

zone offers golfers a range of options as to where to place their tee shots. The best line will depend on the pin location, your appetite for risk, and your preferred length of pitched approach. A good hole.

But it is the par-five fifth that is destined to be one of the most photographed holes in Spain. Severely downhill from the tee, the golfer must ensure their tee shot stops before a ravine that crosses the fairway (I don't think this will be a problem for anyone not named DeChambeau). The closer one can get to the ravine, though, the better, because it will give a better chance to get home in two – to a 21,000 square foot double green, extravagantly contoured, that sits just above the beach – Bowman has filled the green site to make it stick out further towards the sea. With the pin set left, close to the beach, it will be an epic approach shot.

A long par four, the seventh hole plays across a rather odd cut-and-cover tunnel used by pedestrians going to the beach; the tucked green is set behind a water hazard. The ninth, high above the water at the top of the beachfront parcel, is one of only a small number of holes that Bowman was able to completely regrade, and it shows – it's a very strong hole.

The uphill run to home is where Bowman's skills have most been tested. The fourteenth is a steep, but for all that compelling, short par four; driving over a pond, golfers will find their wedge game sternly tested by the green, which is closely guarded by sand. Sixteen, a par five, features a substantial 'donut' bunker to the right, separating it from the third, and a very severe, steeply flashed bunker, inspired by the fourteenth at Pebble Beach, protecting the left half of the green.



SINCE 1929

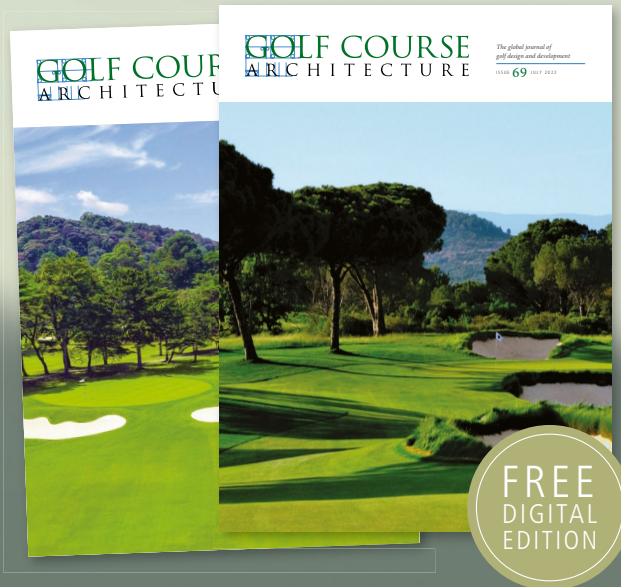
HARRADINE GOLF

CASLANO . DUBAI . BERLIN



www.harradine-golf.com

— SUBSCRIBE —



Sign up to receive the free digital edition at
www.golfcoursearchitecture.net/subscribe

We do Bunkers... *Better.*



www.betterbillybunker.com

 @Billy_Bunker

J D HART 
GOLF COURSE ARCHITECT



jdhartgolfdesign.com



The fifth (foreground) shares its heavily contoured double green with the par-four thirteenth

I suspect this will be controversial, as it completely blinds that part of the green, unless the golfer has hit their second hard to the right side. It is strategic for sure, but I don't think it will be loved. The seventeenth is a short and pretty par three, while the home hole has overtones of the eighth at Pine Valley, because Bowman has chosen to build two greens, separated by an enormous bunker.

It should be said that there is more that could be done at Alcaidesa Links (it's not a links, of course, but given how little Costa golf is on the sea, perhaps we can forgive the name). There are a number of spots on the course where if Bowman is given time and budget for some additional regrading, it would help.

But for all that, there will not be many more compelling golfing experiences on the Costa del Sol.

Bowman's greens are dramatic, but not, in pinnable areas at least, especially severe. There are a number of quite spectacular sucker pins: for example, the area that connects the double green of the fifth and

“There are a number of quite spectacular sucker pins”

thirteenth could easily be used for the fifth pin, and it would be remarkable, if a little brutal on the part of the pinsetter.

I find it remarkable that neither I, nor my fellow guest, Jim McCann of *top100golfcourses.com*, one of the best-travelled of British golf writers, knew anything about Alcaidesa before we visited. It is, without a doubt, the most

dramatic piece of golfing property I have seen on the Costa del Sol, and no matter how good Kurt Bowman's work there, he did not create that drama. Yet drama and severity are two sides of the same coin, and, as with many courses in the area, there is no getting away from the fact that the site is quite severe. It is not, for example, a course that anyone short of a masochistic mountain goat would choose to walk, and I do fervently believe that golf was intended to be a walking game. But it is absolutely to Bowman's credit that he has, within a pretty stringent set of constraints imposed upon him by the circumstances of the development, found a way to tame that severity, at least to the point of making the golf course eminently playable. He – and the rest of the team that has been working at Alcaidesa – should get a lot of credit for that. **GCA**

Horse course

Kevin Hargrave has created a short track at a Kentucky horse farm

It's not every day a golf course architect is asked to visit a thoroughbred horse farm, so when a call came into his office in April 2021 with exactly that request, Kevin Hargrave's interest was immediately piqued.

Kentucky racehorse owner and breeder Terry Green wanted to introduce a small golf facility at Jackpot Farm, and invited Hargrave to take a look around.

Green had originally thought about putting a practice area on a relatively flat piece of land at the farm, but after exploring the site Hargrave felt there was potential for something special, particularly if he could use some of the land that extended further northeast, on more interesting ground. "Terry liked the idea, so I put together a routing," says Hargrave. "He loved the layout and flew in a few days later to walk it with me."

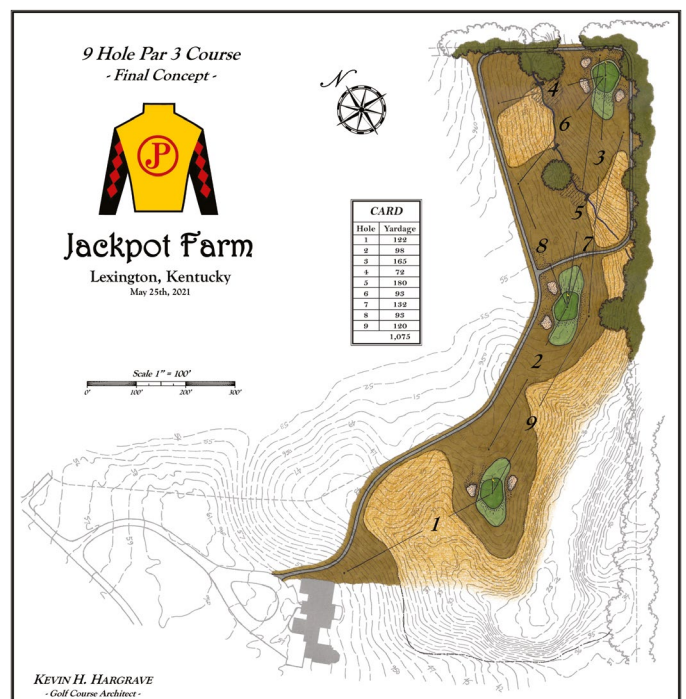
Hargrave's routing comprises three synthetic grass greens, each with two pins, and multiple teeing locations to allow for a nine-hole round of 1,139 yards.

Holes one and nine play to the southernmost green, which is protected by two bunkers. The central green is set on the highest point of the property and is played to four times, for holes two, five, seven and eight. "This green is definitely the most difficult for it is the narrowest of the three and has the most movement on the putting surface," says Hargrave.

The northernmost green is used for holes three, four and six. "This green sits beautifully into the back northeast corner of the farm," says Hargrave. "Minimal shaping was done because everything was already there. All three visits to this green require a shot over a natural creek, but from different angles and varying lengths."

Bespoke tee markers and flagsticks have been created to emphasise the land's connection to horse racing. "We also took one of the small jockey statues that Terry has throughout the farm, which are painted with the farm's racing attire, and replaced the lantern and bracket with a golf club, so it looks like the jockey is leaning against it," says Hargrave. "This will be placed by the first tee, to start the round."

As a final touch, lighting was added so the course can be played at night. Green debuted the course to friends and family during the week of the 2022 Kentucky Derby. **GCA**



BE FLUID.

COMING SOON

CIRRUSPRO

Scan to learn more about
what CirrusPRO from
Rain Bird has to offer.



It goes where you go.

Our revolutionary mobile-first irrigation control system lets you go with the flow while keeping control — whether you're on or off the course.



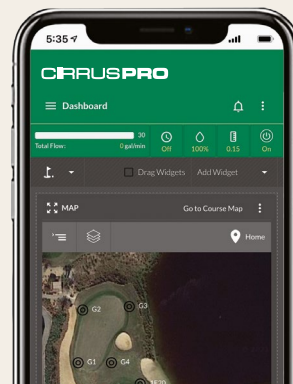
More Freedom –
run your course from
anywhere, on any device.



Complete Control –
programme your
irrigation your way.



Better Data –
feel confident and
irrigate with precision.



RAIN  BIRD®

THE SPRINKLERS **WORLD-CLASS COURSES RELY ON.**



Toro® Irrigation Systems

The greenkeepers of the greatest golf courses on this planet trust in the skills of legendary toolmakers at Toro®. The INFINITY® and FLEX Sprinkler Series are the masters of efficiency and reliability.



Join the conversation
 **@ToroGolf**

Discover more at: www.toro.com