

# Wanted: adventure seekers!

Art Schaupeter defines the essence of golf course architecture and what makes the best golf

**T**he essence of golf course architecture is in how the architect uses his or her design palette to put golfers in the right emotional state to embrace, engage in and thoroughly enjoy the entire golfing experience. Golf is best when it creates a sense of adventure for the players and allows them to discover a course through their own assertive and heroic play.

Max Behr – a renowned golf course architect from the golden age of golf course design in the US – had it exactly right with his belief that the best golf was created when it was thought of as a sport, not a game. As a sport, golf uses nature in all its interest and undefined randomness, taking the golfer on an adventure that engages the emotions. As a game, golf becomes standardised, with specific, defined design parameters. This minimises the sense of adventure and the emotional engagement for the golfers, especially after a few rounds at the same course.

Further to this point, in 1928 Behr wrote: “The object of golf architecture is to give an intelligent purpose to the striking of a golf ball. To be worthwhile, this purpose must excite and hold interest. If it fails in this, the character of the architecture is at fault.”

I have spent the past 18 years incorporating this design philosophy into my renovation and new design work. In order to get golfers interested, excited and engaged in their golfing experience, I focus on ‘putting the golf in the golfers’ hands at every opportunity. I want players to discover their own lines of play on each and every hole, and to be able to play assertively and heroically from hole to hole.

A key design concept when putting golf in the golfers’ hands is the use of broad width on each hole. While the constant improvement of the golf ball and clubs has put a necessary focus on the length of golf holes, width is



the most critical dimension in the layout and design of each hole. A more diverse variety of player options and angles of approach can be created, allowing all golfers to strategise their own options and discover their own lines of play, engaging them in the golfing experience mentally, emotionally and physically. This variety of playing options will keep the golfing experience fresh through repeated play.

I aim to continue pushing the envelope of variety and uniqueness within each golf course and specifically within each golf hole that I design. By focusing on the golfer experience first and foremost, I aim to ensure that all players will be given the opportunity to get emotionally engaged in the sense of adventure and discovery that makes the golfing experience so rewarding and enjoyable.

*For more on Arthur Schaupeter Golf Course Architects, see [page xx](#)*