

Issue 41 | Winter 2018

BY DESIGN



Excellence in Golf Design from the American Society of Golf Course Architects

The background of the cover is a photograph of a golf course. In the foreground, there is a green fairway with a stone bridge crossing a small stream. The landscape is desert-themed, with many saguaro cacti and some trees. In the background, there are large, rugged mountains under a clear sky. The overall scene is well-lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Creative freedom

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The golf architect's brain

Golf course design projects can be like a complex puzzle, where the architect is presented with a series of challenges to overcome in order to reach a solution that works for golfers, owners and operators. The left side of our brains shift into gear, as we are required to be meticulous in our approach to planning and details, and pragmatic with what we can achieve when presented with challenges relating to time, budget, environment and more.

It can sometimes feel like a far cry from the right-brain instincts that motivated most of us into this business, focusing on creativity and artistry, sketching countless golf holes that were free of the constraints described above.

This issue of *By Design* explores both sides of our brains. We open our Digest section, on page 4, with news of the eleven golf course projects that have been recognised by the 2018 ASGCA Design Excellence Recognition Program. Now in its seventh year, this initiative was conceived to showcase projects in which ASGCA members have addressed unique design challenges, demonstrating innovation and their problem-solving skills.

And in our feature topic for this issue, which begins on page 12, we investigate the notion of creative freedom, asking members about the extent to which they are given 'free rein' on a project, and how they respond to circumstances that may hinder their ability to fully express their creativity.

I hope you enjoy the issue.



Jeff Blume, ASGCA
President
American Society of Golf Course Architects

BY DESIGN

Editor and Publisher: Toby Ingleton

Editorial contributors: Richard Humphreys, Marc Whitney

Design: Bruce Graham, Libby Sidebotham

ASGCA Staff: Chad Ritterbusch; Mike Sheffy; Aileen Smith; Therese Suslick; Marc Whitney

Photography: The Bausch Collection, Bill Bergin, Arthur Cicconi Golf Shots, Inc., Brian Curley, Cervone Golf Design, Hugh Hargraves, Stephen Kay, Richard Mandell, Old American Golf Club, PGA National Resort & Spa, Drew Rogers, Dave Sansom, Lonna Tucker

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This issue includes details of the honorees for ASGCA's Design Excellence Recognition Program. Also, we report on the collaboration between Richard Mandell, ASGCA, and Robert Trent Jones II Golf Course Architects at Tanglewood Park; the Nicklaus Design renovation of PGA National and more recent ASGCA member projects.

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COVER



The Gallery Golf Club in Arizona, designed by John Fought, ASGCA. Photographed by Lonna Tucker.

ASGCA highlights design excellence

The American Society of Golf Course Architects has released its 2018 list of Design Excellence Recognition Program honorees.

Now in its seventh year, the program highlights projects completed by ASGCA members that address unique design challenges as well as demonstrating innovation and problem-solving skills.

Eleven projects have been selected for 2018, comprising both renovations and new golf courses, including The Nest at Friday Harbour in Ontario, Canada, and the South course at Arcadia Bluffs in Michigan.

"This is an impressive group of golf facilities, and I congratulate them and the architects they worked with on these projects," said ASGCA President Jeff Blume. "Each year,

the Design Excellence Recognition Program illustrates the art and science of golf course architecture that leads to facilities better-serving their communities and golfers. I have so much respect for what is shown in these projects."

As with previous years, the projects were reviewed by representatives of the Club Managers Association of America, Golf Course Builders Association of America and Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

In February 2019, By Design subscribers will receive a special edition devoted to the 2018 Design Excellence Recognition Program and including more information on all of the projects. Subscribe to By Design via www.asgca.org.

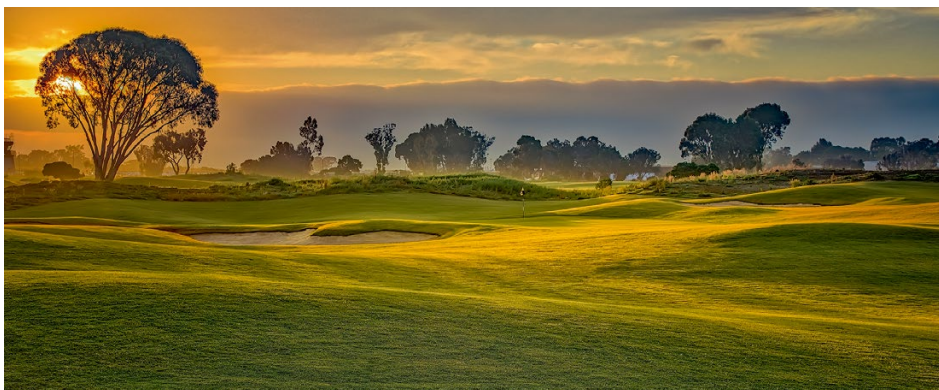


Photo: Dave Sansom



Projects in the 2018 ASGCA Design Excellence Recognition Program include the new Braemar Golf Course in Edina, Minnesota, designed by Richard Mandell, ASGCA, and Baylands Golf Links (top image) in Palo Alto, California, which was completely renovated by Forrest Richardson, ASGCA

Design Excellence Recognition Program: 2018 Honorees

Banyan Cay Resort & Golf
West Palm Beach, Florida
Jack Nicklaus, ASGCA Fellow
Chris Cochran, ASGCA
ASGCA Past President John Sanford

Baylands Golf Links
Palo Alto, California
Forrest Richardson, ASGCA

Boca Lago Country Club
Boca Raton, Florida
Jan Bel Jan, ASGCA

Braemar Golf Course
Edina, Minnesota
Richard Mandell, ASGCA

City Park Golf Course
Denver, Colorado
Todd Schoeder, ASGCA Associate

Golf Learning Facility at Harris Park
Kansas City, Missouri
Todd Clark, ASGCA

The Preserve at Oak Meadows
Addison, Illinois
ASGCA Past President Greg Martin

Sunset Valley Golf Club
Highland Park, Illinois
Rick Jacobson, ASGCA

The Nest at Friday Harbour Resort
Ontario, Canada
ASGCA Past President Doug Carrick

The South Course at Arcadia Bluffs
Arcadia, Michigan
Dana Fry, ASGCA
Jason Straka, ASGCA

Waters Edge Golf Course
Fremont, Michigan
Raymond Hearn, ASGCA

Renovation

Architects collaborate on new Tanglewood layout

The Championship course at the public Tanglewood Park Golf facility in Clemmons, North Carolina, reopened in October following a five-month renovation project master-planned by Robert Trent Jones II Golf Course Architects, and implemented by golf course architect Richard Mandell, ASGCA.

The plan prepared by ASGCA Past President Robert Trent Jones, Jr., ASGCA Fellow, and his chief design officer ASGCA Past President Bruce Charlton for the Forsyth County Parks and Recreation Department called for refinements to all bunkers and tees, tree management, and resurfacing the greens with new turf.

"The bunkers are high, flash sand bunkers and very dramatic," said Mandell.

"We would build the mound first and as in many places we cut the bunker line straight up into the mound. Even though we reduced the bunkering a lot, it still is the highlight of the golf course."



Photo: Richard Mandell

ASGCA news

Passov to receive Ross Award

Golf journalist Joe Passov will receive the 2019 Donald Ross Award, presented by ASGCA to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the game of golf and the profession of golf course architecture.

The award will be presented to Passov in May as part of the 2019 ASGCA Annual Meeting in Phoenix-Scottsdale, Arizona.

"He's the rare journalist who understands the history, culture and strategy of the game and is producing thoughtful pieces that help the golfing public understand what golf course architects do," said ASGCA President Jeff Blume. "Joe's insight and creativity stand out in today's quick-hitting news cycle, and ASGCA wants to recognize his commitment to his craft."

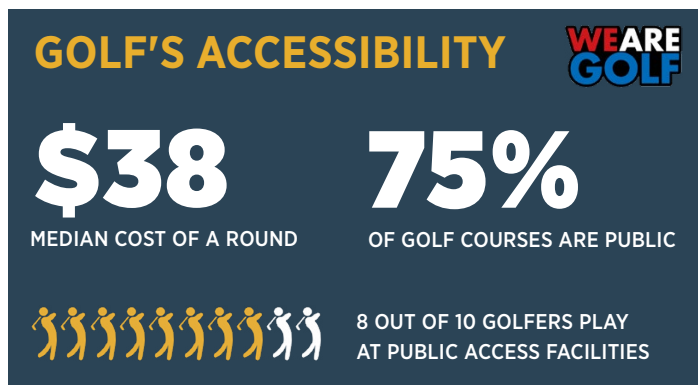


Industry news

Eighty percent play public golf

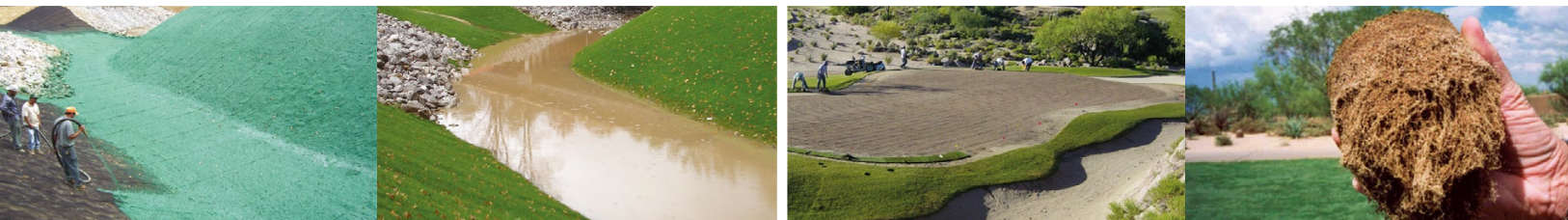
Research from WeAreGolf, a coalition of golf's leading organizations, highlights the accessibility and affordability of U.S. golf courses.

According to the organization, more than 10,000 of the 15,000+ U.S. golf facilities are open to the public; the median fee across America for a round of public golf is US\$38; and eight out of 10 golfers play public golf.



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Renovation

Nicklaus Design renovates Champion course

PGA National Resort & Spa in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, has reopened its Champion course following the completion of a US\$1 million renovation project by Nicklaus Design.

Nicklaus's senior design associate Chris Cochran, ASGCA—working alongside the club's director of agronomy, Brad Nelson—has overseen a number of changes, including the removal of palmetto palms on the right side of the opening hole and the left side of the ninth, giving players more options both from the tee and for approaches into greens. This work will also improve spectator flow during the annual Honda Classic event on the PGA Tour.

Green complexes have been rebuilt, shaped and grassed with TifEagle bermuda. Over 14,000 square feet of putting surface has been recaptured, an average of 800 square feet per



PGA National has reopened its Champion course following renovation work

Photo: PGA National Resort & Spa

green, returning the greens to Nicklaus's original designs that were implemented 16 years ago.

"We are honored to have worked on a course with such a storied history with both Jack Nicklaus, ASGCA Fellow, and his design company," said Cochran. "We took the advice of the best players in the game and made

one of the great layouts in the USA even stronger."

The Champion course was originally designed by by George Fazio and Tom Fazio, ASGCA Fellow, and opened in 1981. Nicklaus redesigned it in 2002 and again in 2014, when the par-four fourteenth was significantly altered.



"To me, golf architecture is an art"

CHRIS WILCZYNSKI, ASGCA

In the latest podcast from *Golf Course Industry's* Tartan Talks series, Chris Wilczynski, ASGCA, discusses the execution of a master plan and starting his own golf course architecture firm.

Wilczynski described his process of master planning a project: "I usually analyse the course; form, meet and give my initial thoughts to the committee; develop concepts and ideas; and then meet with the committee to get feedback and consensus."

When asked about executing a master plan, he said: "They're a good roadmap that allows for continuity, but I don't think they should be so rigid that you'd have to follow exact. We can put good plans together, but you have to allow for adaptation in the field, for things to change and evolve based on what we see, and what the current conditions are at that time. To create that art, there has to be some flexibility."

Wilczynski spoke about starting his own firm: "I sell the job, service the job, draw, do computer work, invoicing and accounting. I'm not good at all those things. It's a challenge, they're a lot of hats that I have to wear. But it's rewarding knowing I can do it, and I'm responsible for the outcome and success."

Listen to the full Tartan Talk at golfcourseindustry.com.

HERE ARE LINKS TO OTHER RECENT "TARTAN TALKS," NOW FEATURING OVER 20 EPISODES:

- Brandon Johnson, ASGCA, [talks about how he developed a zest for golf.](#)
- Art Schaupeter, ASGCA, [answers questions about the opening of TPC Colorado.](#)



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Renovation

Audubon CC course reopens

Audubon Country Club in Naples, Florida, reopened in October following a three-year renovation project by golf course architect Drew Rogers, ASGCA. Audubon is a private golf community with a course originally designed by Joe Lee and built in 1989. The course has numerous lakes and holes fronting coastal estuaries and mangrove islands.

“The club expressed a strong desire for more inspired contouring and greens that were more interesting but also fitting with their surrounds,” said Rogers. “My challenge in redesigning the greens was to minimize the impact of the work area—to keep the new greens within the original fill pads—while also expanding the surfaces to recapture lost cupping areas and to better integrate the perimeter contours into the greens themselves.”

Contractor Glase Golf Construction rebuilt and recontoured all eighteen greens during the course’s six-month closure this summer.



Photo: Drew Rogers

Restoration

Bergin completes restoration

Golf course architect Bill Bergin, ASGCA, has completed a restoration project at Chickasaw Country Club in Memphis, Tennessee.

Chickasaw opened its 18-hole course, designed by ASGCA Founding Father William Langford, in 1924. According to Bergin, the club wanted the project to return the design to its roots.

Bergin said Langford’s work at Skokie

and Lawsonia provided inspiration for the design—particularly the bunker faces and angular slopes.

“The project included all new greens complexes, bunkers that matched the original style and new forward tees on every hole. Over 150 trees were removed as the canopies on some holes seemed to practically touch from one side of the fairway to the other.”



Photo: Bill Bergin

The restored twelfth hole at Chickasaw Country Club

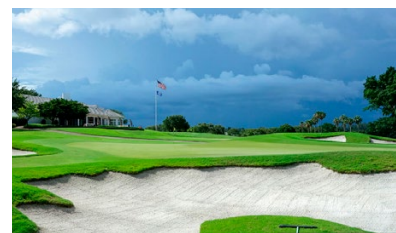


Photo: The Bausch Collection

George upgrades practice facility

The Country Club of Florida near Boynton Beach in Palm Beach County is upgrading its practice facility with the help of golf course architect Lester George, ASGCA. The project will include an expanded driving range, short game practice facility and teaching facility. The upgrade is scheduled to coincide with a renovation of greens and regrassing.



Photo: Cervone Golf Design

Collaboration at Greensburg

Golf course architect James Cervone, ASGCA, is collaborating with professional golfer Rocco Mediate on renovation work at Greensburg Country Club in Pennsylvania, USA. “The work includes addressing the putting surfaces on three greens and re-working a portion of the outside of the green on fifteen ... and some tree clearing on hole five,” said Cervone.

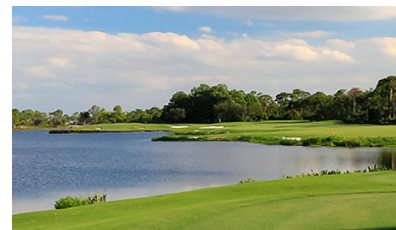


Photo: Arthur Cicconi Golf Shots, Inc.

Weed renovates Golden Marsh

Bobby Weed, ASGCA, has completed a renovation of the Golden Marsh course at the Harbour Ridge Yacht Country Club in Palm City, Florida. “The updated course has more enhanced native features and coquina rock walls, along with greater variety and visual appeal,” said Weed.

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DIFFERENT COUNTRIES



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ON AVERAGE HAVE WORKED
OUTSIDE THE U.S. & CANADA IN

6

COUNTRIES

UNPARALLELED EXPERIENCE

147



AVERAGE PROJECTS
TOUCHED OR CONSULTED

71



AVERAGE MASTER
PLANS CREATED

42



AVERAGE NEW 18-HOLE
COURSES DESIGNED

29



AVERAGE YEARS AS A
GOLF COURSE ARCHITECT

22



AVERAGE 18-HOLE
COURSES REDESIGNED



Social update



Getting a little help today with marking hole locations for preview play and grand opening of Willowcreek.
[@SunCity_AZ](#) [@wadsforth_golf](#)



Gary Brawley, ASGCA
[@gbgolfdesign](#)



Golf Course Architect of the Week: Grant Haserot, ASGCA. A graduate of Cal Poly - San Luis Obispo, Grant has worked w/ASGCA members Jack Nicklaus, Lee Schmidt & Brian Curley, & now operates Haserot Design. Pictured is Goose Creek Golf Club in Calif.
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"This will not feel like a typical residential golf course" Chris Wilczynski of C.W. Golf Architecture to design second course at Florida community Esplanade Golf & Country Club at Lakewood Ranch, Lakewood Ranch, Taylor Morrison, Waldrop Engineering



Golf Course Architecture
[@gcamagazine](#)



Photo: Evan Schiller



Despite some cooler recent nights, highs in the mid-80s have the new TifEagle greens at [@refugegolf](#) perking back up. The new peninsula green on the par-4 2nd hole looks great from this view in the landing area showing the split level fairway and surrounds.



Nathan Crace, ASGCA
[@lipouts](#)



"One of the things I like most about Reserva Conchal is that it has a nice rhythm to it," said Bruce Charlton, president and chief design officer for Robert Trent Jones II Golf Course Architects. "They gave us a very nice canvas to create the best golf holes. We were able to route the course in the way we wanted to."



Robert Trent Jones II
[@RobertTrentJonesII](#)

What a difference a day makes. I captured an image yesterday from a similar perspective but because cool dry air moved into Southern California the scene looked completely different.
[#photography](#) [#social](#) [@OriginsGolf](#) [#ThursdayMotivation](#)



Todd Eckenrode -
Origins Golf Design
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In France for a couple of days but not for the reason the rest of the golf world is here. Working on routing for the New Course at Les Bordes. Couple of shots of the canvas we are working with and a photo of the Von Hagge designed Old Course. Trust me the New will be very different! Such a peaceful and relaxing place!!



Gil Hanse, ASGCA
[@gil_hanse](#)



The 760 yard nine-hole par three course the The Cradle at Pinehurst is spectacular. It doesn't have to be long or hard to be good. [@ASGCA](#) [@JSchmenk](#) [@gcamagazine](#) [#golfdesign](#)



Kevin Norby, ASGCA
[@golfnorby](#)

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Free Rein

Are golf course architects ever allowed to create precisely what they want? Richard Humphreys asks ASGCA members about the extent to which they get free rein, and how they manage creative constraints.

Wannabe golf course architects dream of the possibility of creating their own layouts from scratch, designing holes exactly how they want to create their ideal course.

In reality though, countless factors contrive to burst this bubble. Time, cost, water availability, the site's existing characteristics and the owner's demands are among the day-to-day challenges that a golf course architect has to address.

"Creative freedom rarely happens, as projects usually have very specific goals for the golf course operation, that a specific course design must allow," says ASGCA Past President Tom Marzolf of Tom Fazio Golf Course Design.

"All projects come with constraints; the topography of the land, limited budget or the owners wants and needs," says John Fought, ASGCA. "It is simply part of the process. I enjoy finding solutions to complex problems whatever they might be. And I always respect the owner's desires, keep in mind that there are always multiple ways to design golf courses. I work hard to learn the land; I think about the opportunities



Photo: Lorna Tucker

John Fought, ASGCA, was told 'do what you think is best' when designing the South course at The Gallery Golf Club in Arizona

and problems associated with each project, and then develop the best course of action. For me this process is interesting and keeps you thinking.”

So most course design has some degree of constraint, meaning the golf course architect has to balance creative flair with the practicality required by various factors associated with the given project. But for most architects, there have been occasions where compromise is minimized.

“I have had numerous opportunities where the discussions of what I wanted were met with little resistance from ownership,” says Brian Curley, ASGCA. Curley’s recent work includes the two new courses that form part of the FLC Quang Binh development on the coast of the East Vietnam Sea. “My current efforts in Vietnam have been largely left to our own desires, with little input from ownership.

“The overall concepts have not been a big issue as I have sold the idea of trying to be unique as much as possible. The cost associated with building on sandy sites is not an issue as well. It is rare that the main decision maker is even seen on the construction site and, if so, it lasts a very brief time.”

ASGCA Past President Jeffrey Brauer says: “The best clients are the ones where you get some broad direction to inform your design—for example, ‘it’s a resort, don’t make it too hard,’ or ‘it’s a muni, we need to keep maintenance reasonable’—and they let you handle most of the details.

“My best-received courses have come with about 95 percent freedom—from owner, if not from regulatory bodies. Looking back on a 34-year long career and over 60 major projects, I have generally

been blessed that most fall under that category. Of course, it may be because I instinctively shied away from country club renovations, where it was hard to please over 300 bosses who are golf design experts in their own right. In my public work, there are very few project overseers from the county, state or city that feel expert enough to question too much. We usually submit a routing, then features plan, and get a review, but changes are pretty rare.

“My total redo of Superior National in Lutsen, Minnesota, was a case of no design limitations from the client, other than a fairly strict county budget. That, and substantial subsurface rock, minimized any rerouting we wanted to do.

“Overall, I would say the budget is the biggest limiting factor in most

projects. Even then, I am not sure I want to work with an unlimited budget. As the old saying goes, necessity is the mother of invention, and I fear I would rely on old concepts too much if given enough money to move earth everywhere. Striving for the least building on a site-specific basis always yields the most unique designs and creates the greatest sense of place.”

Welcoming input

“I actually want our clients involved and providing input,” says Tripp Davis, ASGCA. “They are the ones who will have to manage the course after we are done. Their input can help us tailor what we are doing to fit their needs. I consider those needs to be a part of what we have to work with in design, not much different than how we have to work with the land, how we have to consider different turf types, or how we have to consider the local environment.

“If you are creative enough, and committed enough, there are

“I am not sure I want to work with an unlimited budget. As the old saying goes, necessity is the mother of invention

Jeffrey Brauer, ASGCA

solutions to all criteria we have to work with.

“One client we have had who generally left us to do our job without a lot of requests was Matthews Southwest, the developer of The Tribute Golf Club and the Old American Golf Club just north of Dallas. Still, we made sure to understand what they wanted out of the golf course, and how that would fit into their overall business objectives. Both courses have been successes financially and critically.”

“I am in the final stages of construction for a new course for Indiana University, and have just recently opened the new Maridoe course in Dallas,” says ASGCA Past

President Steve Smyers.

“On both projects the client depended on me to guide them through every avenue of the design process and at Indiana I was depended on for the final decision.

“As I commenced work on both projects, I realized immediately the potential and uniqueness of the sites. I also had known many of the key players for some time, having played golf with several of them for many years. Much of our time together was spent playing and competing on some of the most recognized courses in the world. Because of our time together, we had a similar belief of what the great courses had in common.

“I have taken the position that the more I can explain the design process and my vision for their site, the more support I will have throughout the project. This in turn allows me creative freedom.”

Overcoming challenges

Where constraints arise, the architect’s brief is to find a solution that doesn’t compromise the quality of the golf course.

“Most lost opportunities result from changes to the boundary, bad site conditions and a reluctance to lower grades in difficult rock,” says Curley. “This is typically driven by the contractor, who talks the owner into change.

“Managing these situations can be very tough when language is an issue. What I found in China is that the owner usually has a ‘golf expert’ who is there to watch over you. Often it is the same guy you dealt with on another project. Most of the time I got along fine, but some of them feel the need to show their importance by taking you on, to justify their existence. I had

Mission Hills Resort Hainan, China

“I have had great experiences on many courses,” says Brian Curley, ASGCA. “For instance, at Mission Hills in China, I found we were paying more for the clay we capped with than straight sand, as we built further to the south and closer to the sand source at the river.

“This prompted me to ask the chairman Ken Chu, ‘why don’t we just build a sand dunes course’ on the lava-based site. The quick-thinking Ken thought about it for about three seconds and replied, ‘good idea, confirmed.’ That was the last we discussed it, and the team and I went straight to it.

“It is one of my favorite courses I have done to date, a blast to play and visually stunning.”



Photo: Brian Curley



Photo: Brian Curley

Brian Curley, ASGCA, was left to his own desires for the design of courses at the FLC Quang Binh resort in Vietnam

plenty of heated discussions in the north of China when this came to be. The chairman, however, usually eventually saw things my way and we moved on.”

“I am not altogether against the general idea of compromise, believing that random input—from project to project—makes each one more unique,” says Brauer. “In fact, I often ask superintendents or pros for ideas, and try to put them in where practical, because it usually gets real buy-in to have one of their ideas in the final product.

“In general, the compromises made in bunker shaping are one of the most typical constraints we face. In the past, we didn’t get a lot of questions about bunker design, but now we do, and we also go back to our courses to reduce sand bunkers by 10-40 percent.”

“The most common constraint that I have faced through the years is environmental,” says Smyers. “After a thorough environmental assessment, most sites are deemed to be distressed environmentally. Understanding that golfers respond favorably to strong landscapes and to a seamless transition between golf and nature, I find a solution that will both create a unique golf experience and a healthier, more viable ecosystem.

“I have made a concerted effort to work with the environmental authorities and embrace their advice on how to make the site healthy

again. I have been an advocate to heal the landscape and I ask the environmental community to assist in delivering a unique golf experience while developing a stronger ecosystem.”

“I try to not consider anything we are faced with to be a constraint, but a part of criteria we address in making sure the design works as we want,”

says Davis. “The best way to work out how to not let anything compromise the design is to get creative with solutions. That creative solution may be pretty simple, or it may require a lot of brainstorming and work.”

Davis references his project at Hickory Hills Country Club in Springfield, Missouri, where the constraint was a maximum square

Tempest Golf Club Gladewater, Texas

“My latest opening, Tempest Golf Club in Gladewater, Texas, probably represents my biggest freedom,” says ASGCA Past President Jeffrey Brauer. “The owner is not a golfer and got excited about the course mostly because of my excitement at what was possible if we explored previously unused parcels of the site. It was nearly total freedom. Even mid-design, he authorized moving the fourth tee up the hill. I had to ask, even though I thought I knew the answer, as it took out a very expensive golf frontage lot. Later, a similar situation occurred on the eighth hole where we moved the green across a creek into land formerly reserved for housing, to turn a short par four into a much better, and somewhat needed, longer par four.”



Photo: Hugh Hargraves

footage of bunkering to ease maintenance. “The simple solution was to make sure every square foot of bunker had a definitive strategic or visual purpose and every unnecessary square foot was value engineered out of the scope of work,” says Davis. “We spent a good bit of time working with the superintendent to get his perspective on what would be most cost effective for them to manage relative to style.”

The balancing act

Clients sometimes make requests that could, in the golf course architect’s opinion, lead to an inferior golf experience. How do they manage these potential difficult situations?

“My process to nearly any design request from a client—we do get them—would be to first try my level best to design a good hole under their criteria,” says Brauer. “If nothing else, I know it will be an original design! Then, if I still feel it needs some other change back towards ‘my way,’ I present it to them using

“I always respect the owner’s desires, keep in mind that there are always multiple ways to design golf courses

John Fought, ASGCA

sketches and 3D and usually we work something out.

“Form follows function, so unless the owner’s requests are totally unrelated to their function, or represent too much of a compromise between one needed function and another—such as a great view over safety—it is usually most beneficial to work them in.”

“Unless an owner has unrealistic expectations,” says Fought, “I try to educate them about the best way to build the golf course. Many years ago, I had an owner who told me I could not use a certain type of bunker sand and that he wanted to limit the irrigation in the rough areas. I asked him to accompany

me to one of my golf courses that I knew he loved. As we toured, I let him tell me how great the bunkers looked, and I simply told him they are great but that his project couldn’t have that type of sand. He quickly changed his mind on the bunker sand. I then let him view the beautiful native-looking rough areas which he also loved. I told him it was a shame he couldn’t have that look with the limited irrigation plan. Obviously, he wanted the rough areas like that on his course and we got that put back into the budget. All I did was show him what he needed, and he then understood and let me help him get what was best.

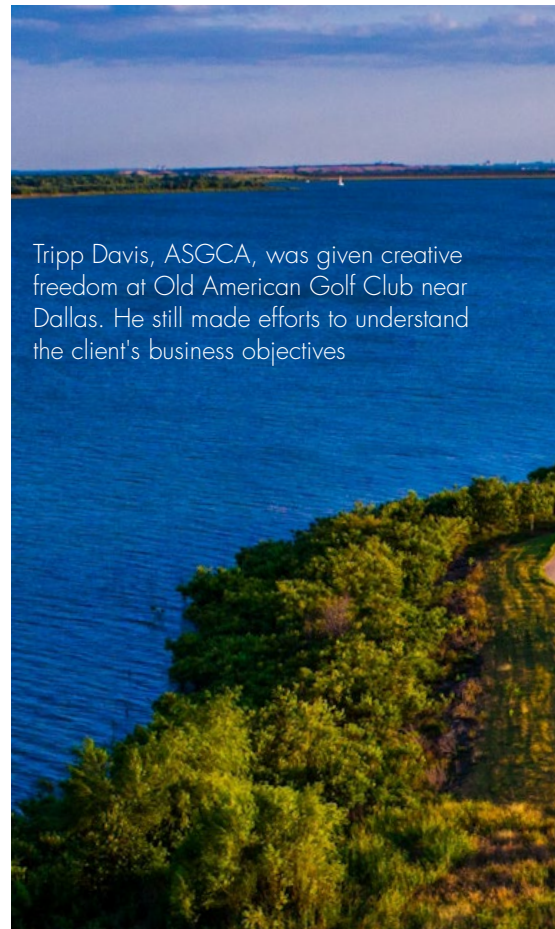
The Gallery Golf Club (South course) Marana, Arizona

“The owner is a friend of mind and he was great to work with,” says Fought. “I took one walk with him over part of the property and I discussed what I thought would work well and he basically said do what you think is best. I never had a design agreement, nor did he interfere in anything we did on the project. He is one in a million!”

“The result of this project was a site that played host to the Accenture World Match Play for two years shortly after it was open. The two winners were Henrik Stenson and Tiger Woods. The PGA Tour could have picked any course in Tucson, but they chose The Gallery South.”



Photo: Lonna Tucker



Tripp Davis, ASGCA, was given creative freedom at Old American Golf Club near Dallas. He still made efforts to understand the client’s business objectives

"No owner wants a bad project, so often you just need to help educate them and they will quickly realize that you as a designer have their best interests at heart. I never get mad but it's my responsibility to help the owner understand the significance of their decisions."

"A talented golf architect would help teach the options for success, and this would lead to smart people making smart decisions," says Marzolf. "No need to fear about inferior golf, as there is no way that would happen."

"You simply have to tell the client what they need to hear," says Davis. "That often starts with getting together with a client in person and going over how all the parts of the design work together, and how one change to that large puzzle can disrupt how it all works. A good client will listen and if we as the golf course architect provide sound reasoning for how we think something should be done, they will let us do our job." ●

Maridoe Golf Club Carrollton, Texas

"The client had envisioned for years of building his dream course," says Smyers. "He explained to me the enjoyment of developing and operating this course would be to participate in every aspect of the design and construction process."



Photo: Old American Golf Club

Giving back

Many ASGCA members share their expertise in golf course design through formal education programs. Richard Humphreys finds out more.

The American Society of Golf Course Architects is committed to the advancement of knowledge of golf course architecture and sharing this knowledge with those involved in creating golf courses. Numerous members help achieve this with roles in formal education programs. We spoke to a few to find out how they got involved and why they do it.

Jason Straka, ASGCA, a former adjunct professor at The Ohio State University, says: “My father was an educator so that’s probably part of the reason I got involved.

“I was attending an evening seminar from Tom Weiskopf and there was a student there from Ohio State University. He came up to me after

ASGCA, and he’s ended up doing a bunch of work for us and has a successful career in his own right.

“In my first year there were five students and then it grew from there. I’ve taught for 10 consecutive years at university—and have had upwards of 20 students at any given time.”

ASGCA Past President Clyde Johnston teaches at The Professional Golfers Career College in Bluffton, South Carolina: “I received a call in the fall of 2008 from the director of the college. The school was new to the area and the instructor who was teaching—a golf course superintendent—was leaving for another job. After touring the facility and talking with the director, I agreed to teach the class. It was a two-hour

“When I was a kid I thought of being a math teacher, there was always a bit of teaching in my mind

Stephen Kay, ASGCA

the seminar and asked if I ever considered teaching. People had certainly helped me in the past—including Tom Doak and Gil Hanse, ASGCA, when I was at university—so I said I’d definitely consider it. That gentleman was Patrick Burton,

class, one day per week for 15 weeks in a semester. My first semester was the spring of 2009 and I’m still teaching the class today.

Chris Wilczynski, ASGCA, who teaches Golf Course Design and Construction at Michigan State



Jason Straka, ASGCA (above, in red shirt) teaching students while on a field trip. Clyde Johnston (right, seated) with a class at The Professional Golfers Career College

University, says: “I started in 2017—I had previously been a guest lecturer at Michigan State University—and I took over a class called Golf Course Design and Construction, which had been taught for thirty years. Bruce Matthews, ASGCA—a Michigan architect—taught it before me and before him were Jerry Matthews, ASGCA Fellow, and Bill Newcomb. It is my second year teaching the class. It is taught to the two-year turf students—It is aimed at students who want to be golf course superintendents.”

Stephen Kay, ASGCA, an adjunct instructor at the Professional Golf Turf Management School in New Jersey, also had his first experience of teaching at Michigan State. He says: “I first got involved in education in the early 1980s—I was working with Bill Newcomb, who also taught at the University of Michigan. He was busy with a project in California at the time,



Photo: courtesy of Jason Straka



Photo: courtesy of Clyde Johnston at The Professional Golfers Career College

so I helped by teaching his classes.

“That’s what got me very interested in education. I really enjoyed it and I thought I was pretty good at it. When I was a kid—before I discovered golf architecture—I thought of being a math teacher, there was always a bit of teaching in my mind.

“When I came back to the New York area where I grew up, I was volunteering to speak whenever I had a chance, at superintendent’s meetings or seminars. I was speaking at a winter seminar and Ned Lipman, director of the Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School, approached

me and asked if I were interested in teaching in the program. I said: ‘Yes, absolutely!’ In 1985, I taught one or two classes that went well, and they said why don’t you teach on a regular basis for the construction class. That’s how it started, and I’ve been teaching at Rutgers ever since.”



Photo: courtesy of Chris Wilczynski

“I became involved several years ago when I just thought I needed to give something back to the university where I received my education,” says **ASGCA Past President John LaFoy, ASGCA Fellow**, a mentor in the Clemson University School of Landscape Architecture: “I majored in Architecture, and I have a BA from there too. I had worked for the university twice before doing design work on their golf team practice facility. The first work I did there, I did pro bono. I felt like I wanted to do something that would have more of an impact on the department that I had graduated in. I actually donated my plans, my supervision, construction observation of the facility, and later on—about three years ago—I did more work there: we added some more golf features to the facility like an ultradwarf putting green, we expanded the ultradwarf chipping green and a few other things too. I have always supported the university financially, but that

is pretty impersonal, so mentoring a student seemed like an additional way in which I could help.

“I did it to help young college students, especially ones just about to graduate—to teach them a little bit more about the business as much as the design—so many of those kids come out of college and they have a pretty good technical background in landscape architecture but they have no idea how business works.”

Straka says: “I teach because a lot of people have helped me out along the way, and without those people I certainly would not be having as successful of a career as I am. At Scioto Country Club, I walked in with a client one day, and lo and behold there was one of my students as the assistant golf professional. Many of my former students have gone on to their own successful careers to include turf professors, golf course architects, golf professionals and more. It's extremely rewarding for me to give back - their success is my success.”

“It was an honor to be asked,” says Wilczynski. “I love Michigan State, I love giving back to the university—that's where I went to school, and they gave me so much, so for me it's about giving back and sharing my expertise and knowledge that I have developed over the past thirty years. I am helping the young golf course superintendent students to look critically at a golf course and see how it can be improved and help them understand the process of how to improve a golf course and what that requires (the time, the cost). The benefit I get from teaching is from the sharing of my knowledge—doing something that outlasts me, and doing something that has a profound impact on these kids for the rest of their lives.”

For Johnston, the motivation was improving the quality of teaching: “I felt I could do a much better job,” he says. “The materials were some brief handouts plus *Golf by Design* by ASGCA Past President Robert Trent



Photo: courtesy of Stephen Kay

Stephen Kay, ASGCA (above, second left) with students from the Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School. Chris Wilczynski, ASGCA (left) teaches at Michigan State University

Jones, Jr., ASGCA Fellow. In the first semester, we finished the book within about five weeks, so I had to create material for the rest of the semester.

“Today, the class consists of nine lectures—over four-to-five weeks—about the anatomy of a golf course and how designers use different

holes of golf—based on the book by Graves and Cornish, site evaluation, how to read topographic maps and golf course routing—things that designers take into consideration when laying out a golf course.

“Following those lectures, I give the students five weeks to design

designs—I get some really wild stuff from time to time.”

In some cases, ASGCA members’ role in education helps their business too. Kay says: “In the last thirty days I’ve had two ex-students from quite a long time ago contact me. They now oversee municipal golf courses. In the north-east of America we are having record-breaking levels of rainfall—the wet conditions mean that the greens have suffered, so they are trying to convince their management to spend money to redesign and rebuild a couple of greens.

“The program has evolved a lot since I first started teaching it. Ninety percent of students were from New Jersey, New York or Pennsylvania. In the mid-2000s, a magazine rated Rutgers among the best turfgrass programs in the United States. Now just a third to 50 percent of students are from the north-east area, the rest are coming from all over the country.” ●

“Without people helping me I certainly wouldn’t have got to the point where I am now

Jason Straka, ASGCA

elements to create the challenge and strategy—a throwback to the book. After a mid-term exam on that material, I get into the process of golf course design and how a designer takes a project from the ground up through construction.

“My lectures include the history of golf course architecture, the classic

their own golf course routing plan based on two pages of written requirements. Each week they have to meet various completion goals and I review everyone’s progress one-to-one during the class.

“The students really enjoy the hands-on experience of laying out a golf course and the individual hole

Recognizing the return on golf investments

Marc Whitney reports on the ASGCA Foundation's recent event at Pinehurst Resort

Golf industry decision makers from across North America—including architects, golf course owners, operators, managers, professionals and superintendents—recently gathered at Lingle Golf & Family Club and Pinehurst Resort for an ASGCA Foundation event, *From Tees to Green: A Symposium on Forward Tees and Other High-ROI Ideas*. The two-day event included golf at the 'living laboratory' that is Lingle and a day of education highlighted by quality presentations.



Hunki Yun of the United States Golf Association provided data from a USGA survey of golfers, designed to help facilities provide a better experience for their customers.

"Did you know that from the time a golfer drives onto a property until they leave, there are 1,000 touchpoints that impact the experience and their satisfaction? That's far more than other industries experience, including hotels," Yun said.

Lynn Baugher, a member at Rancho Murieta Country Club in California, provided a golfer's perspective. Baugher, who worked with ASGCA **Past President Damian Pascuzzo** to add tees at the club, detailed steps the club has taken to encourage members to move forward and give the new tees a try. Small-group discussions and one-on-one conversations have proven valuable, she said, and the result is the club sees more golfers playing more often.

Hunki Yun of the United States Golf Association presented the results of a survey designed to help facilities provide a better experience for customers

Jan Bel Jan, ASGCA, provided 'A Retrospective on Tees,' including the views of a number of golf course architects, including:

- H.S. Colt promoted a variety of teeing grounds over 100 years ago to account for wind or other aspects of play, and additional tees to adjust for play in winter vs. summer.
- Marion Hollins created a course for women that brought out their best. "Not the same design as men, because women cannot compete with men on equal terms for par or bogey."
- In 1935, A.W. Tillinghast bemoaned the tendency to create greater length: "The fetish of distance is worshipped all too often."

Marty Deangelo of Medinah Country Club reported impressive increases thanks to the new "Golf for Life" program:

- Mixed-couples participation is up 30 percent
- Annual number of golf lessons is up 60 percent
- Junior golf program is up 65 percent
- Senior participation is up 15 percent

"'I finally broke 90!' is what I hear from senior groups," Deangelo said.



RECOMMENDED COURSE YARDAGE			
TEE LOCATION	DRIVER CARRY DISTANCE	TOTAL DISTANCE WITH ROLL	RECOMMENDED 18-HOLE YARDAGE
①	100	125	3000-3200
②	125	150	3600-3800
③	150	175	4200-4400
④	175	200	4800-5000
⑤	200	220	5400-5600
⑥	225	245	6000-6200
⑦	250	270	6600-6800
⑧	275	295	7200-7400

Left: Bill Coore, ASGCA, spoke on the value of alternate courses he has designed, with Ben Crenshaw, for Mike Keiser. Above: Recommended course yardages based on driver carry

Brian Conley, of Bobby Jones Golf Course in Atlanta, updated attendees on several unique aspects of their new “reversible nines” course, designed by **ASGCA Past President Bob Cupp**. “At least three women said to our staff in the first month, ‘I made my first ever birdie today.’”

“The elimination of irrelevant shots.” That was the key point from **Dan Van Horn and Bill Bergin**, **ASGCA**, who shared data on what was developed at Longleaf and key results to date. Today, more than 80 percent of rounds at Longleaf are played at 5,400 yards or less.

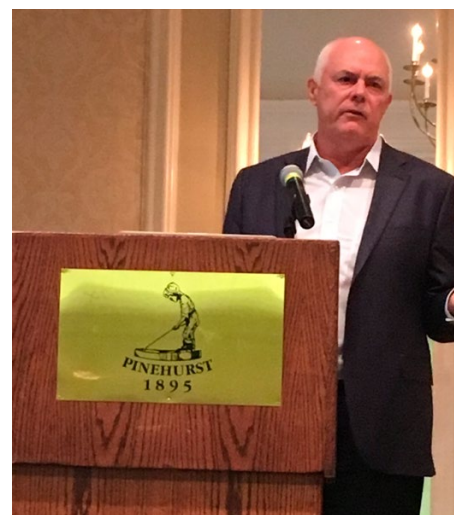
Arthur Little and Jann Leeming, who have spent decades in the golf industry, including time as golf course owners, summarized their presentation by defining Design Fairness as “Courses, properly designed, on which all golfers can reach greens in regulation.” To achieve this:

- Golfers play the set of tees matching their swing speed.
- If golfers play the tees/yardage that fits their swing speed they will have the same or similar clubs for their approach shots.

ASGCA Past President John LaFoy and Scott Brown, **CGCS**, highlighted challenges and opportunities following natural disasters. “Know your insurance policies,” Brown stressed. “Some policies pay for a course ‘interruption.’ But if you keep nine holes open because the damage was not ‘too bad,’ that is not considered an interruption and will not be paid out.” LaFoy noted hurricanes and other storms sometimes allow facilities to rethink some aspects of the course and expedite Master Plan projects.

The symposium featured the release of the latest ASGCA Foundation publication, **Forward Tee: Case Studies in Additional Tees**. The book includes details on more than a dozen golf courses that have seen positive results following the addition of more teeing options for players of all ages, and a look at the history of innovative thinking when it comes to tees and golf course architecture. *Forward Tee* is free to download at <https://tinyurl.com/y8j8o55m>. ●

ASGCA Foundation President Bruce Charlton, ASGCA, (top) welcomed attendees and Dan Van Horn of U.S. Kids Golf spoke about forward tees





// Nearly every client we have brings up the island hole and asks if they can have one

Kevin Ramsey, ASGCA

Kevin Ramsey, ASGCA, is a principal with the golf course architecture firm Golfplan, where he works alongside David Dale, ASGCA. The firm is based in Santa Rosa, California, but perhaps best known for its pioneering work around the globe, with many new courses built in China and South Korea, and a project list that stretches from Argentina to Uganda.

Ramsey, who was introduced to the game by his parents while growing up in Chicago, completed a Landscape Architecture degree from the University of California, Davis, where he competed in the 1987 and 1988 NCAA Division II National Championships.

How is your game?

I think I have played four times this year, so there's not a lot to talk about here. Although I did just play in Uganda at the opening tournament of our Lake Victoria Golf Resort and Spa, which was 10 years in the making. It was great fun to finally tee it up. With all the travel I do, when I am home I try to be home. My wife and I have been travelling a lot with my daughter's volleyball club and getting to follow her with the sport she loves. This has taken us all over the country and has been a blast.

Which three people would make up your dream fourball?

I would have to put Seve Ballesteros at the top of this list. Who would not



want to see the genius shot making in person? David Feherty—golf needs to be more fun and I thoroughly enjoy his wit. And Steph Curry, it would be interesting to see the talent of a professional from another sport.

What is your favorite hole in golf?

I have been fortunate enough to play a lot of golf all over the world and have many favorites, but if I had to pick one that I think triggers a lot of conversation and emotion in golf it would be the seventeenth at TPC Sawgrass. Nothing is more nerve-wracking to play or watch, no matter how good you are. I love watching the pros sweat a bit, especially if there is a bit of wind. Nearly every client we have brings up the island hole and asks if they can have one.

Strategically speaking, I always gravitate to a short par four, and being from northern California I have always admired what Robert Trent Jones did with the fourth hole

at Spyglass, with lots of options and risk-reward choices.

If you could change or add one rule, what would it be?

All water hazards should be lateral. It's always been odd and confusing. It would speed up play.

What project are you currently working on?

We have just completed grassing of our new Tabori Hill Golf Resort in Tbilisi, Georgia. It is set on a very dramatic ridge top above the city that will be connected by gondola from the center of the city for easy access for tourists and hotels guests.

I have a new, highly eco-friendly project starting construction next year in the Philippines and also a dramatic and exciting sand dune and pine forest site we are working on in Turkey. Between these and the Uganda project, you can see how the travel adds up! ●

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