



ISSUE 51 // WINTER 2020

# BY DESIGN

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



## THE GOLD STANDARD

How the courses and philosophies of Golden Age golf course architects continue to influence design today

## PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

ASGCA President Forest Richardson shares his vision for the future of golf course architecture

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**Forrest Richardson**  
President, ASGCA

## Inspired by our origins

One of the most prolific and admired architects to emerge from the ‘Golden Age’ of golf design in the early twentieth century was Donald Ross. Born in Dornoch, Scotland, he became a greenkeeper at the town’s famous links, then served as an apprentice to Old Tom Morris at St Andrews, before packing his bags and setting sail to the United States.

It was during his time as golf professional at Oakley CC in Massachusetts and shortly after at Pinehurst CC in North Carolina that he found his taste for course design, and the rest – some 400 layouts across the United States and Canada that introduced many thousands to the game – is history.

As he approached the end of his career, Ross banded together with thirteen fellow golf industry professionals to form the American Society of Golf Course Architects, with Ross named Honorary President. This direct lineage to the Golden Age inspired our feature article for this issue, which begins on page 14, where some of our members share insights into how the design philosophies of that era continue to have great relevance and impact on our work today.

It is with immeasurable pride that I accept the gavel to become ASGCA President as we enter our 75th year. I would like to thank ASGCA Past President Jan Bel Jan for her remarkable service as President over the past 18 months, a most unusual and challenging time. To mark the start of my tenure as ASGCA President, I created a short film which outlines my vision for what golf course architecture needs to focus on today and in the future. You can read about that and more in my conversation with Marc Whitney, which begins on page 20.



As always, there is plenty more for you to enjoy in this issue of *By Design*.

I hope you enjoy the read.

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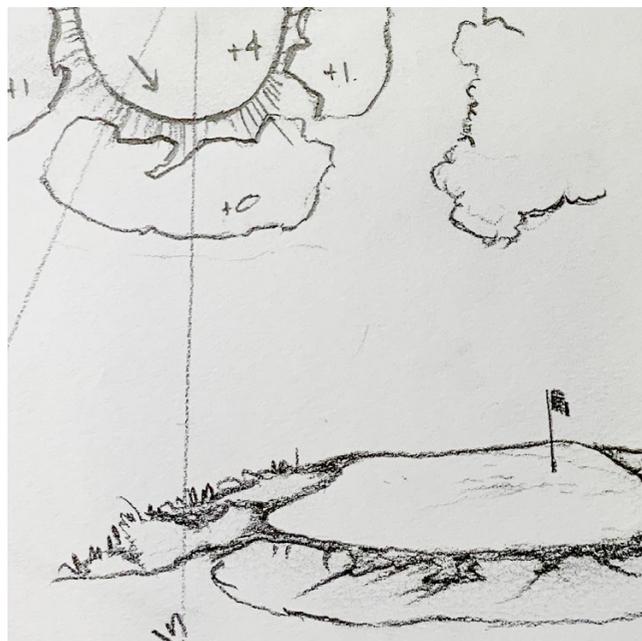
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## DIGEST

# Ponte Vedra Inn & Club opens new-look Ocean course



**P**onte Vedra Inn & Club in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, has reopened its Ocean course following renovation work completed by Bobby Weed, ASGCA.

The project at the resort, which hosted the ASGCA Annual Meeting in 2010, has seen greens rebuilt, the practice facility overhauled, bridges and bulkheads restored, and work on the irrigation system. A coquina-like material has been used to replace 14 acres of rough grass, to help

decrease water usage and strengthen the course's seaside character.

The first tee has been transformed into a 20,000-square-foot bermuda grass space which accommodates an event lawn and the teeing ground.

The ninth hole's island green (pictured) has been altered and lowered to improve visibility from the clubhouse.

By integrating some land at the north of the property into the routing, along with some other

adjustments, space was made to expand the practice area.

The range teeing area has been tripled, with tees at both ends playing to double-sided practice targets, and a new short game area has been added. This expansion led to the par-four tenth hole being replaced by a new Dell-like par-three thirteenth.

"I'd like to thank Herbert Peyton, chairman of Gate Petroleum, for entrusting our team to update this



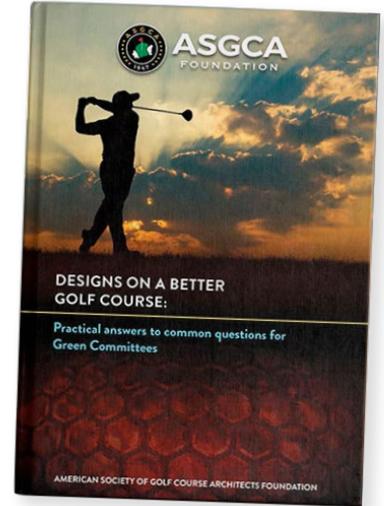
Photo: Ponte Vedra Inn & Club

## New ASGCA book launched to help inform green committees

The ASGCA Foundation has released a new book that provides information on topics that may be raised by green committee members and other golf course decision makers as they consider projects at their facilities.

‘Designs on a Better Golf Course: Practical answers to common questions for Green Committees’ was conceived and edited by ASGCA Past President Jeff Brauer and includes over 50 articles that touch on everything from master planning to bunker repairs.

“The information included in ‘Designs on a Better Golf Course’ meets the ASGCA Foundation’s mission to ‘support the health of the game of golf by funding and administering programs that grow the game,” said ASGCA Foundation President Lee Schmidt.



*The book is available to purchase for \$24.95 at Amazon.com.*

beloved layout,” said Weed. “As a long-time area resident, I receive great gratification in equipping the Ocean course with a strong foundation for the next generation of members and resort guests.”

Dale Haney, president of Gate Hospitality Group, said: “Bobby’s innovative thinking around maintainability, environmental practices and strategic shot values will endow the Ocean course with exciting attributes for years.”

## Report finds golf boosts life expectancy and mental health

Golf improves life expectancy, physical fitness and mental health, according to research detailed in a new report from The R&A, ‘Golf and Health: 2016-2020.’ The research was conducted alongside universities, golfing bodies and health organizations.

Annika Sorenstam, 10-time Major champion and golf and health project ambassador, said: “Research has shown that golfers live up to five years longer than people who don’t play golf. What is more important than being healthy? Together with the researchers and doctors, we’re trying to tell policy makers, ‘hey, pay attention to golf. It should be part of your programs; golf should be top of your list as it is benefitting health.’”



*Read the ‘Golf and Health’ report here.*

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# Pizá works remotely to complete Colombian renovation

Agustín Pizá, ASGCA, worked remotely to oversee the final phases of a renovation project at Briceño 18 Golf Course in Bogotá, Colombia. A six-month closure of the local El Dorado International Airport saw the golf course architect employing video technology from his office in Mexico. “This is the first time I did not supervise the way I like to,” said Pizá. “But I have to admit that the work done via online visits by my good and reliable construction superintendent Ruben Arenas was superb.” The project involved addressing drainage issues on the course and making additional changes to improve aesthetics, strategy and playability. Bunkers were relocated “to create a wider, safer and friendlier” landing areas for average golfers, while narrowing the target for lower handicap golfers.



Photo: Briceño 18



## “What a thrill it was to stand beside Tom Fazio as we were about to help Augusta National”

**ASGCA Past President Tom Marzolf**

In the latest podcast from *Golf Course Industry's* “Tartan Talks” series, ASGCA Past President Tom Marzolf discusses how he got into the golf course design industry and the experience of working at Augusta National.

When Marzolf graduated from university, he wrote to the ASGCA for advice. “I got a booklet that had names and addresses of every ASGCA architect,” he said. “I

took my drawings and university thesis with me and went to 32 job interviews in six weeks. It was a great experience of seeing how these golf design firms worked and I was lucky that Tom Fazio offered me a job.”

Fazio Design has consulted at Augusta National for more than 30 years. Marzolf recalls one of his first experiences of the property. “The nine-hole par-three course, designed by George Cobb, is the

first one that pops into my head when I think about amazing sites.

“We had a chance to help the club extend the area of the par-three course. We built two new holes for them. What a thrill it was to stand beside Tom Fazio as we were about to help Augusta National Golf Club. I’ll never forget it.”

*Listen to the full “Tartan Talk” at [golfcourseindustry.com](http://golfcourseindustry.com).*

Here are links to other recent “Tartan Talks,” now featuring over 50 episodes:

- Clyde Johnston, ASGCA, talks about designing courses on Hilton Head and the differences in golf along the South Carolina coast.
- Agustín Pizá, ASGCA, explains how he developed from a structural architect to a golf course architect and how golf is evolving in Mexico.

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## PGA National redesign focuses on fun factor

Construction work is continuing at PGA National Resort & Spa in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, where Andy Staples, ASGCA, is overseeing a “reimagining” of The Squire course.

“I intend to take The Squire to another level in terms of strategy, playability, and most importantly, the fun factor,” said Staples. “I’m focusing on the three most innovative trends in the industry: firstly, reducing the time it takes to play; secondly, increasing player enjoyment, and thirdly, instilling classic design principles that spur interest in the game of golf.”

Staples’ plan sees the existing first and eighteenth holes converted into a nine-hole par-three course. The remaining 16 holes will be renovated, and two short holes added to create a new 18-hole layout that plays to 5,744 yards.



Image: Andy Staples, ASGCA

*The new layout is expected to be complete in spring 2021 and renamed in advance of opening*

## Coral Creek Club reopens following Fazio renovation

Coral Creek Club in Placida, Florida, has reopened its course following a renovation by Tom Fazio, ASGCA.

The goal of the renovation was to improve the golf experience, protecting the original design – which Fazio laid out in 2000 – while also preparing it for modern golf.

The project included re-grassing playing surfaces with new bermuda grasses, updating bunker positions and replacing sand, relocating tees, expanding the practice facilities, and adding new drainage. Overgrown vegetation has also been cleared from the property, with native areas restored.



Photo: MDCM Photography

## McNeil restores Ross bunkers at Kernwood



Photo: Courtesy of Northeast Golf Company

Robert McNeil, ASGCA, of Northeast Golf Company has completed a bunker restoration at Kernwood Country Club in Salem, Massachusetts.

McNeil has worked at the club since 2003 on several projects to “recapture the Donald Ross character” of the original design.

“Our current project has included constructing 44 new bunkers, removing a few and reshaping several into grassy catchment areas and pitch areas,” said McNeil.



## Kendale course reopens following Fry/Straka renovation

Kenwood Country Club in Cincinnati, Ohio, has reopened its Kendale course following a renovation by Fry/Straka.

The project included work on bunkers, removal of 800 large trees, widening of fairways, and the rebuilding of greens.

“The first thing you notice is

that on any hole, every bunker on that hole can be seen,” said Tom Morand, vice-chair of the club’s improvement committee. “The fairway bunkers are characterised by ‘low entry and high exit,’ allowing for enhanced visibility and an increased degree of difficulty in advancing the golf ball. They have

been strategically placed, resulting in many risk-reward situations.”

“The original greens were laser scanned and rebuilt with all the same nuances, but just at softer slopes in critical pin locations,” said Jason Straka, ASGCA. “This results in hole locations not seen on Kendale for 30 or more years.”

## Hills Forrest Smith completes renovation at TPC Treviso Bay

Steve Forrest, ASGCA, of Hills Forrest Smith has overseen a renovation of the golf course at the private TPC Treviso Bay community in Naples, Florida.

The project has included an overhaul of all 18 greens on the Arthur Hills-designed course, plus seven practice greens. Three greens have also been repositioned. Putting surfaces were re-grassed from paspalum to TifEagle, while the collars are now grassed with TifGrand.

Bunkers have been reconstructed with ZLine bunker liners and G-Angle sand. Six were removed from the front nine and seven added to the back nine.

Landscape and mounding work was completed throughout the course to improve the separation of adjacent holes.

“This project has been an exciting upgrade to what has always been considered a world class golf experience,” said general manager Scott Bertrand.



Photo: TPC Treviso Bay

# The Members Club at Grande Dunes reopens



Photo: Grande Dunes

The Members Club at Grande Dunes in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, has reopened its golf course following renovation work by Craig Schreiner, ASGCA.

The club's goal for the renovation was to provide a better golfing experience. Work included rebuilding all bunkers

as well as new drainage to reduce flooding and water retention in high-traffic areas. In a 90-day second phase, the course was re-grassed, transitioning from bentgrass to ultradwarf bermuda.

"Golfers will enjoy a whole new level of play," said Schreiner.

## ASGCA holds first-ever virtual Annual Meeting

For the first time in its history, the ASGCA held its Annual Meeting in a virtual format.

Hosted on YouTube, the meeting included the transfer of the presidential gavel from outgoing ASGCA President Jan Bel Jan to new ASGCA President Forrest Richardson, as well as reports from a range of ASGCA representatives.

The meeting also saw the presentation of the 2020 Donald Ross Award, with footage from Bel Jan's visit to Clearview Golf Club in Ohio, where she handed the award to LPGA star Renee Powell.

*Watch the Annual Meeting on the ASGCA's YouTube channel.*



## SOCIAL UPDATE



 Jon Cavalier | LinksGems  
@LinksGems

The new Pinehurst No. 4 is as amazing as advertised. Inspired by the dramatic success of No. 2, Pinehurst hired Gil Hanse to redesign No. 4 to take advantage of the natural sandy ground and best terrain at Pinehurst, and Hanse delivered another winner.



 Thad Layton, ASGCA  
@thad.layton

Twilight rounds @laspiedras



 Evan Schiller  
@EvanSchiller

Sunrise on the third hole at Sheep Ranch. One of the design elements that enabled Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw to route an 18-hole course on this property was to make the third and sixteenth a double green... and, wow, it's one of the most incredible spots on the golf course.

**Search ASGCA on the below channels for more posts:**



# The gold standard

Golf course architects from the ‘Golden Age’ of the early twentieth century created many of the world’s most admired courses. As Richard Humphreys finds out, their work and philosophies continue to inspire designers today

**T**he economic prosperity of the Roaring Twenties saw a sharp rise in the popularity of golf in the United States. People began to find the time and desire to participate in a sport that had emerged over the previous few decades.

To meet this demand, golf courses were built apace. The profession of ‘golf course architect’

surfaced as men – often from Scotland and England – toured the country helping newly formed clubs identify suitable sites for their golf courses, for which they would create a routing and plans for greens and hazards.

Without the bulldozers and heavy machinery that is available today, these early architects made

the best of what the natural landscape offered.

Designs from this era dominate rankings. Only one course in the top ten of *Golf Digest’s* latest list of America’s 100 Greatest Golf Courses was built after the 1930s. The upper echelon reads as a who’s who of the Golden Age, with work by the likes of Harry Colt, Alister MacKenzie, William Flynn, A.W. Tillinghast, Perry Maxwell, George Thomas, C.B. Macdonald, Seth Raynor and the ASGCA’s own founding father, Donald Ross.

Golden Age design lives on not just through the courses these men left behind, but also the influence they have on today’s golf course architects.

“Golden Age creations are the inspiration for almost all of my work,” says Drew Rogers, ASGCA. “During these times where we’re all trying to produce more with less, it’s instructive to call on the works

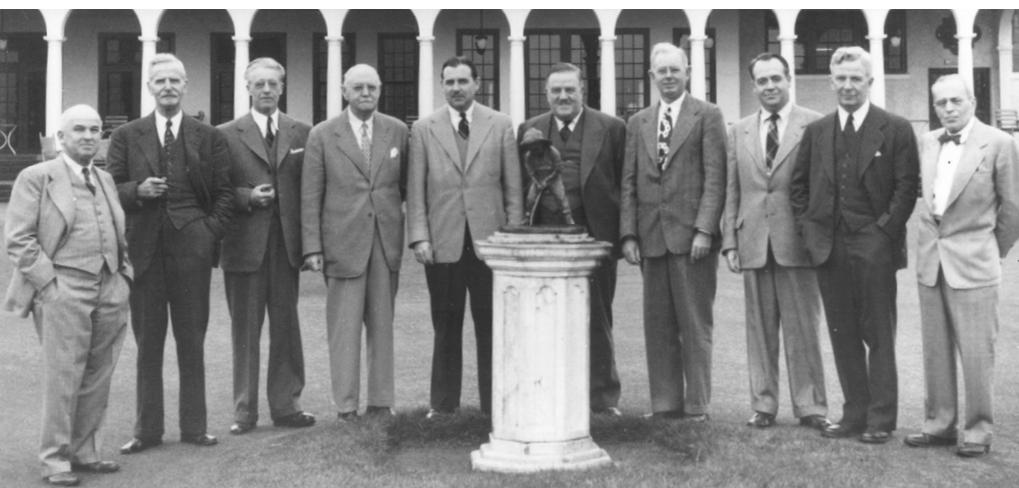


Photo: ASGCA

*ASGCA Founding Fathers at the first ASGCA Annual Meeting at Pinehurst CC, including Honorary President and one of the Golden Age’s most prolific golf course architects Donald Ross (fourth from left)*



Photo: Jon Cavalier @LinksGems

*Alister MacKenzie's layout at Cypress Point in California, one of the game's most revered designs*

from the early years of the twentieth century, when a course was truly arranged or routed for the best 'fit', and so little had to be done to build and maintain it."

Rogers says he is also inspired by the architectural philosophies of the time. "Holes were designed with simple means and purpose, with width in mind, where strategic angles could be employed, where hazards could be placed in a manner where the most direct lines of play were well guarded and optional routes had to be often considered. That is a game that can be enjoyed by everyone.

"I feel it is not only my desire, but also my responsibility, to grasp a

firm understanding of the works and methods of this era as there is not a better time to put them back to work than now."

Thad Layton, ASGCA, of Arnold Palmer Design Company, says:

"The past few generations of golf

their courses and design features just like anyone else, the timeless concepts and ideas they laid down in their various books and missives describing the qualities of a great golf course are still relevant almost a century later.

## **"Golden Age creations are the inspiration for almost all of my work"**

architects have been fortunate to inherit a treasure map from our predecessors practicing in golf course architecture's Golden Age. "While I draw inspiration from

"When I'm wrestling for the right words to communicate a design idea or process, or just looking for moral support from guys who long ago traveled the road I'm trying to



Photo: Mike Klemme

At his Cutalong layout in Virginia, Tom Clark, ASGCA, has included interpretations of many holes from the Golden Age, including (above) a version of James Braid's famous 'Het Girdle' (hot griddle) par-three fifth at Gleneagles, Scotland. Following a successful golf career which included five Open Championship victories, Braid designed more than 200 courses in the UK

navigate, I find myself reaching for anything penned by Tom Simpson, Robert Hunter or MacKenzie.

“I don’t think it’s a coincidence that the writing and the courses of that time were so equally full of character. When one can so clearly articulate their thoughts on design, it implies a deep understanding of their subject. Ultimately the architect needs to communicate his ideas in two important ways: to paint a vision to the client and to convey this vision.”

Layton highlights a quote from Hunter’s 1926 book *The Links*. “Do not let certain standards become an obsession. Quality, not length; interest, not the number of holes; distinction, not the size in the greens – these things are worth striving for.”

Allowing the site to dictate the design was second nature to the architects of the Golden Age, says Tom Clark, ASGCA. “They developed their own design style truly based on what nature gave them. Their routings required imagination as most often there were no topography maps and required good old-fashioned footwork to avoid drainage problems and take advantage of unique features.

“Abrupt slopes were often a byproduct of limited earthmoving, which made for some incredibly difficult recoveries, and green contours would often rely on Mother Nature for grow-in, which made for some very irregular humps and bumps.”

Some of these humps could be substantial enough to obscure the golfer’s target, leading to ‘blind’ holes – the likes of which most modern designers go to great lengths to avoid – where shots would be played over a hill or rise with little idea of their fate.

“Good visibility is indispensable if the holes are to present a problem which needs to be thought out with thoroughness in the matter of attack,” wrote Simpson, in his 1931 book *The Game of Golf*. “But visibility should not be unduly stressed, and blindness of a kind can be a virtue.”

Layton notes that Simpson leaves himself room to break one of the unwritten rules of golf



Photo: David A. Parker Photography

*Thad Layton, ASGCA, employed 'strategic blindness' on the drivable par-four fifteenth at Royal Golf Club near Minneapolis, where the base of the pin can be obscured if tee shots are out of position*

course architecture: “To me this reference to blindness as a virtue implies the concept of what I’d call strategic blindness.

“I think there’s a more subtle implementation of this concept by varying the degree of blindness. A small mound or roll that blocks the bottom half of the flagstick from a suboptimal position off the tee is a great example of this kind of nuanced blindness.”

Layton and the Palmer team implemented this concept on the fifteenth hole at the Royal Golf Club near Minneapolis, where they built a drivable par four with a pond fronting the small green. The hole provides an unobstructed view of the target from the tee, “only

to conceal it should you find your ball out of position,” says Layton. “It’s fun to try to take a crack at the green but not always the most prudent play.”

Not all Golden Age architects are known for their naturalistic designs, however.

“A hallmark of Macdonald and Raynor’s designs, which is likely a reflection of Raynor’s engineering background, is the ‘engineered’ character of their courses which incorporates simple straight lines and square shapes and forms,” said Shawn Smith, ASGCA, of Hills Forrest Smith. “This is most pronounced in the bunker style, which often has a trench-like feel with flat floors and steep straight

grass faces, but it is also apparent in the square green shapes and straight fairway lines.

The duo’s layout at Chicago Golf Club and Macdonald’s National Golf Links of America on Long Island are known for their use of ‘ideal’ holes, templates that were often inspired by an original hole on the links of the United Kingdom and can be seen in some form or other on courses throughout the United States.

“It is quite easy to distinguish a Macdonald and Raynor course as they continued to utilize certain green designs like the Biarritz, Redan and Punchbowl,” says Clark, who is currently working on an 18-hole project in Virginia, where he is

## DESIGN HEROES

integrating architectural elements from famous holes and designers.

“I’ve always found it intriguing how Macdonald and Raynor were able to take the basic strategic principles of Macdonald’s ideal holes and adapt them to a specific site,” says Smith. “Rather than exact replicas, they are unique adaptations. In a way, this is what every architect does. They take ideas and experiences from the different courses they’ve visited and store them in a memory bank to be applied in their own unique way to a design somewhere down the line. Sometimes, that is the incorporation of a template hole, but it can be something as simple as how a swale or ridge drags into a green surface.

“I’ve gained an appreciation for the engineered or squared-up character of Macdonald and Raynor’s designs, finding that it provides a certain simplicity that has a timeless character about it.”

Smith’s recent restoration work at Westmoreland CC in Illinois takes its cue from Macdonald and Raynor’s Chicago Golf Club and nearby Shoreacres.

“By emulating their trench-like bunker style, we were able to create a dramatic transformation at Westmoreland where the bunkers now complement the other Golden Age characteristics of the layout,” said Smith. “The result is a course that gives players a feeling of stepping back in time.”

Macdonald’s quest for the ideal course culminated with his layout for The Lido Golf Club on Long



Island, constructed at a huge cost and described after its 1917 opening by golf writer Bernard Darwin as “the finest course in the world.” But the Great Depression brought about an early demise and the land was sold for development, consigning

“Normally we feel strongly that a golf course should be the product of its surrounds,” said Hanse. “But in the back of our minds, my partner Jim Wagner and I have often wondered what we would do with a completely flat site – what can

**“I’ve gained an appreciation for the engineered or squared-up character of Macdonald and Raynor’s designs”**

the course to the status of golf’s most famous lost design.

The now almost mythical Lido has inspired many, including Gil Hanse, ASGCA, who has completed a recreation of the layout for the Ban Rakat Club in Thailand.

you do to distinguish it? The most famous example of a manufactured golf course from the Golden Age was The Lido. Jim and I had always wanted to do a Macdonald/Raynor, angular grass-faced bunker design. We pitched the idea to the owner at



Photo: Dimpled Rock



Photo: Ty Butler, ASGCA

*Ty Butler, ASGCA drew on his love for Maxwell's designs when laying out the Kaluhyat course at Turning Stone Casino Resort in New York. Left, Westmoreland CC in Illinois, where Shawn Smith, ASGCA, drew on Macdonald and Raynor's trench bunkering for inspiration*

Ballyshear and he loved it.”

Perry Maxwell incorporated template holes into his designs too, but with a more natural style.

“Maxwell’s use of template concepts was always employed within the context of the natural environment,” says Ty Butler, ASGCA, who grew up playing on a nine-hole Maxwell layout in Kansas. “I don’t think you’ll find an instance where Maxwell unnaturally manufactured these concepts outside the lines of what the site had to offer. And when natural features were lacking, Maxwell was an expert at embellishing a site, so it looked and felt natural.

“He adhered to a natural approach to design and used the environment to its fullest. This

creates tremendous strategic value in each hole and maximizes the beauty of his courses. He was a master of using the terrain to form each hole and it is this approach that gives all his courses a distinctive appearance, as well as a high degree of strategic values.

“Maxwell’s incorporation of the natural systems into design and letting site characteristics dictate all aspects of the design is what most appeals to me. I strive to follow this design tenet with all my designs.”

Whether natural or man-made, Rogers says that the courses of these Golden Age architects respected the ground. “Their designs were always well thought out and they had a very good understanding of strategic elements, of balance, and

the greater impact of certain accent holes throughout the intended experience sequence,” he says.

“Those architects had an absolutely superior use of subtlety along the way. They were not shy about a few bold strokes here and there, but the magic of their work was subtle features and their impacts to golfers, especially the mental side.

“I focus much more now on the ground game because there is no value in designing to keep up with the DeChambeaus. My clients are keen to enjoy a much smaller scale version of the game, length has little matter to most, or is at least countered by more subtle treatments and elements, and a big part of that impact occurs on the ground, not in the air.” ●

# Past, present and future

A deep respect for golf course architecture's past with an eye clearly on the future describes ASGCA President Forrest Richardson. He shares his views in a Q&A with Marc Whitney

**You are based in Phoenix, but what is your background?**

**Where did you grow up?**

I was born in Burbank, California. My father founded Richardson Camera Company, which became known for making specialty optical equipment for Hollywood, NASA and observatories around the world. Eventually he got tired of

the hassle of running a business in California, so he moved to Phoenix. My mother was a career educator. She taught secondary education, which is basically teaching teachers how to teach. She received her PhD in the 1970s. I have one brother, who was actually the first person to take me out to a green grass course.

**While growing up, a number of golf course architects were players and/or spent a fair amount of time doodling golf holes on notebook paper. Do either of these describe a young Forrest Richardson?**

Of course, and it's a common trait we have as golf designers. For my eighth birthday I got eight cubic



*An early study of sand for Forrest with his mother, Edna, in 1960; Right, getting a taste for golf*





*Richardson's work has taken him around the globe in pursuit of interesting projects with unique challenges. At the Links at Las Palomas in Mexico, top left, he had 10 million cubic meters of sand to play with; Above, on site during the building of The Short Course at Mountain Shadows Resort in Arizona; Left, traveling in Asiatic Russia with Arthur Jack Snyder in 1989, while working on a major golf resort plan*

yards of topsoil delivered to our home. Over the next few years, I created miniature cities, roads and – yes – golf courses all around the five-foot-high pile of dirt. That led to drawings, make believe golf courses and eventually a realization that there was actually a profession called “Golf Course Architect.” I wrote to ASGCA and got a letter back with a membership application and a list of members, of which Jack Snyder happened to be in our same postal code. I called him up; that led to a long friendship, his mentoring and eventually our work together from 1985 to 2005.

**What was the biggest impact Arthur Jack Snyder, ASGCA, had on you?**

He was a man of principle, and he always gave more than he received. For example, without any contract or agreement, he would travel off

to look at sites and help people who wanted to develop a course. I couldn't understand this sometimes. After all, we should get paid anytime we're asked to weigh in on a project. But the more I saw, the more I appreciated that Jack loved doing the work of a golf course architect, and to him it was worth the time even if he didn't get the final assignment. He also ingrained in me that ‘Golf should be fun,’ and I've never forgotten that.

**To begin your time as ASGCA President, you produced a wonderful film, “Ahead of the Game.” What was the genesis for the film, and what do you hope to achieve by making this available to the public on YouTube and ASGCA.org?**

Because of COVID, many events were cancelled and that left us scrambling to figure out how

to substitute all of the typical activities of our traditional Annual Meeting, including the President's Dinner, where the incoming president is handed the gavel and says a few words. That ‘President's Message’ evolved into the short film which has reached thousands of people, which is far more than me talking away to just my peers in the Society – I hope the message resonates and brings even more creativity to golf design.

**The film highlights three important future directions you see for golf course architects. What are they and may you comment on each?**

1. All across the world we've seen creativity by golf architects to create new types of courses and practice facilities. That needs to continue, and we should ramp up the creativity because I sense that



*The shared green for the third and fifteenth holes at Baylands Golf Links in Silicon Valley, California*

**“Ahead of the Game” film available online**



The film developed by ASGCA President Forrest Richardson is a smart, visually appealing look at the golf industry and state of golf course architecture. It has been praised for its production value, and commented on for the questions it raises about the game as we move (hopefully) toward a post-COVID world.

*“Ahead of the Game” can be found at [youtube.com/watch?v=8s9-qhhT3nQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8s9-qhhT3nQ).*

the owners, management companies and players are hungry for more. Now is the time.

2. “Less is more” is a longstanding phrase, but in golf design it holds an even more important meaning. The USGA, R&A and others have pointed out that golf will not be sustainable unless we rein in the use of water, labor, fertilizer and other resources. The golf course facility established the amount of resources – inputs – which are required. We are golf course architects. When you put these thoughts together, the realization is that it becomes our job – responsibility – to think smaller. We need to appreciate the 7,000-yard regulation course, but also embrace that golf can happen on much smaller footprints, and as

architects of the game, we need to find ways to express our art form in smaller spaces whenever we can.

3. The game has changed a lot in 400-plus years. Jurek Putter, an engraving artist in St. Andrews, once showed me a print of people playing golf in the 1500s. The game back then had no ‘courses’ because ‘holes’ were devised on the spur of the moment. You played across the links [from Scottish: hlinca, meaning the undulating sandy ground along the shore] and there were no set number of holes, or no limit to the length of playing from one spot to a hole or post. One ‘hole’ could be 400 yards or nearly a mile!

This makes me think about the game. My question – challenge



Photo: Dave Sansom

you take time to seriously study the younger generations, we cannot be stagnant in our view of the game itself. Golf needs to get in step with technology, entertainment and a changing society perhaps faster than ever.

**You also include several of your fellow ASGCA members in the film. What has your ASGCA membership meant to you in your career?**

Others have done such great work in the above examples that it was important to showcase their work and creative output. When I sat down to select images for the project, my business partner – and wife – Valerie loaded our server with thousands of photos taken at ASGCA meetings and our Toro Study Tour with European Institute of Golf Course Architects and Society of Australian Golf Course Architects members. It was amazing to relive the good times and friendships.

– to golf course architects is that we are best equipped as ‘right-brain’ creatives to consider what golf might become as we plow ahead. For example, is playing with clubs and balls to a hole and

## “To think golf will always be the way it has been for the past 50-100 years is a grave mistake”

flagstick really set in stone? I’d like to challenge all my friends to consider what other formats and ways there may be to use golf courses. To think golf will always be the way it has been for the past 50-100 years is a grave mistake. I’m all for some traditions, but when

None of those opportunities would have been possible without being introduced to ASGCA. People sometimes assume ASGCA is simply ‘a club’ or ‘the wearing of the Ross Tartan’. Those are only superficial to the deeper connections. We’re artists working

on an incredible canvas, and each of us has a different voice and a different approach. When we get together to share stories, become friends and learn from one another, everyone benefits – the organization makes that possible.

Being a member is about sharing ideas, learning, absorbing and being a part of the art form. The best math of any group is that multiple viewpoints, when working together, equal more than the sum. We all maintain our individual voices. But the benefit is what we do collectively, and with each other.

**If someone wanted to play a course or two that is really representative of your design work, where would you send them?**

Arizona Grand (Phoenix), because it was my first design. Nothing will ever be built like it, which you can take, I suppose, in multiple ways. The Hideout (Utah), because it was a special project that Jack Snyder and I created. Mountain Shadows (Arizona), because it was a re-make of Jack’s circa 1960 ground-breaking “less is more” 18-hole short course. Baylands Golf Links (Silicon Valley), because it demonstrates how we can get the support of Audubon, environmentalists and biologists when we do things right. I’d also invite you into my mind to look at a few new projects in the concept stage, but that would be scary for both of us, so let’s not go there. ●

# Green stars

Snapshots of the six projects recognized by ASGCA's Environmental Excellence Awards program.

The 2020 Environmental Excellence Awards program, presented by Ewing Irrigation & Landscape Supply, recognizes

innovative work to address the needs of the environment at six golf facilities. We take a look at how the golf course architects

involved have worked with course owners and operators to make a positive impact on the game and local communities. ●



## DIABLO COUNTRY CLUB

Photo: Todd Eckenrode, ASGCA

**Location:** Alexandria, Louisiana  
**Architect:** Nathan Crace, ASGCA

An eight-foot bulkhead wall on the course had started to degrade and fail, creating unsafe conditions for golfers as well as accelerating erosion and lake contamination. A project was completed to remove the wall, reshape the lake banks and line the new slope with fabric and limestone.

**Location:** Diablo, California  
**Architect:** Todd Eckenrode, ASGCA

With the club facing water challenges, a new irrigation system was installed and maintained turf on the course was reduced by nearly 30 acres. Large areas of native habitat were also created with non-native tree removal undertaken to eradicate the non-sustainable species.



## LINKS ON THE BAYOU



## DUXBURY YACHT CLUB



Photo: Duxbury Yacht Club

**Location:** Duxbury, Massachusetts  
**Architect:** ASGCA Past President John Sanford

A renovation of the 120-acre property was undertaken to reduce water consumption, reduce fertilizer and pesticide use, and convert 20 acres of irrigated turf to unirrigated native fescue areas. Maintained turfgrass was reduced by approximately 30 percent.



## ROCKLAND COUNTRY CLUB



Photo: Matt Cepkor

**Location:** Sparkill, New York  
**Architect:** A. John Harvey, ASGCA

While renovating the golf course, measures were introduced to bolster the property's wildlife habitat, pollinator plant species and native areas. A managed Monarch butterfly and pollinator habitat was created in an out-of-play area and fescue grasses were introduced to ease maintenance and enhance playability, while meeting environmental objectives.



Photo: Nathan Crace, ASGCA

## ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS



### SELETAR COUNTRY CLUB

**Location:** Singapore  
**Architect:** Kevin Ramsey, ASGCA

The government assigned five acres of the course for conversion to a new public walking trail, impacting ten golf holes. A complete rebuild was configured to make the club 100 percent water self sufficient, which involved the creation of a new lake, expanding existing lakes, a new irrigation system, new drainage and new grassing. Maintained turf areas were also reduced by 34 percent.



### SHENANDOAH COUNTRY CLUB

**Location:** West Bloomfield Township, Michigan  
**Architect:** Chris Wilczynski, ASGCA

As part of a renovation program, trees on the fourteenth and fifteenth holes were removed to improve turf quality and enhance play, and nearly 20,000 square feet of new wetland was created. New native plantings included 33 native shrub species and 11 tree species within the area of these two holes.

“It’s always  
been part art,  
part science —  
and pure joy.  
I’m a voice of  
the ASGCA.”

— DR. MIKE HURDZAN



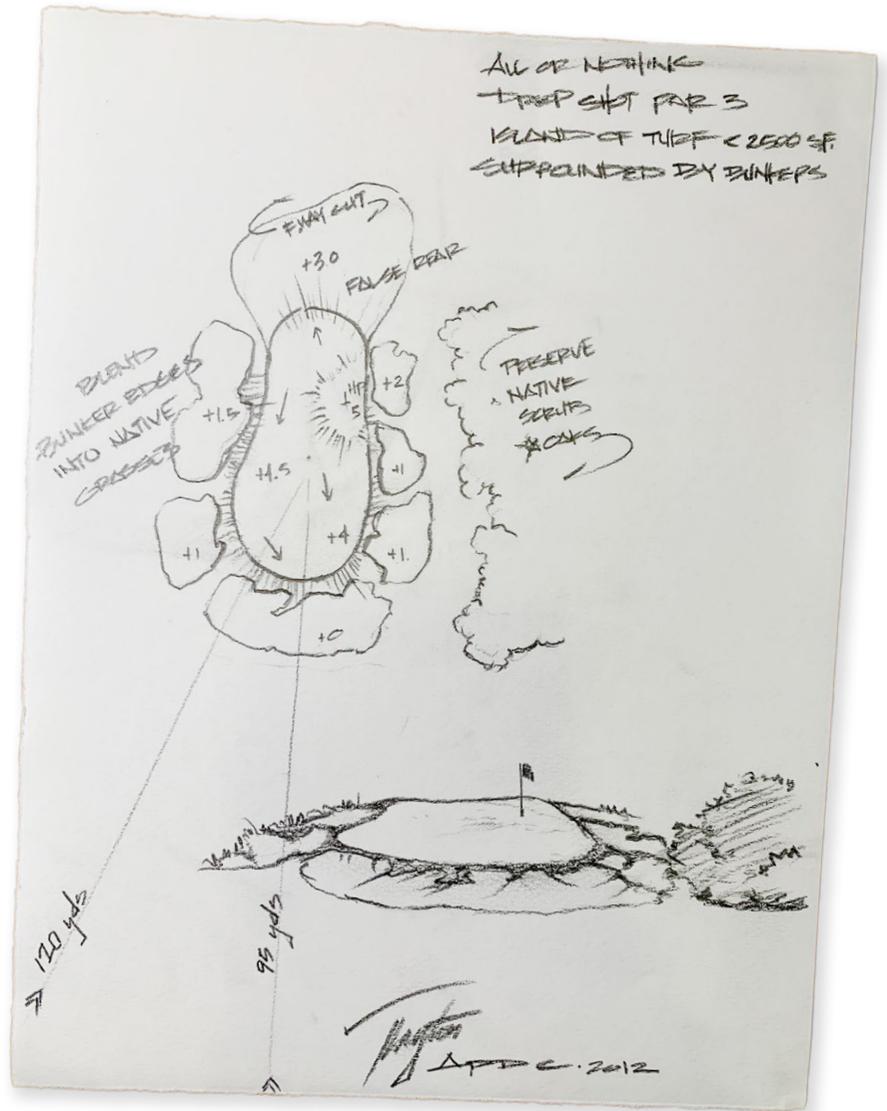
[asgca.org](http://asgca.org)

# Fasano Las Piedras

Thad Layton, ASGCA

Thad Layton, ASGCA, of Arnold Palmer Design Company, is currently working in Uruguay on a project to add a second nine at Fasano Las Piedras. “Every time I checked on the progress of the short par four we were building on the ridgeline, my eyes would drift left toward this sandy little clearing bracketed by brambles and tawny fescues with a backdrop of tidal marshes and the Punta del Este skyline,” he says. “Knowing we could build this additional hole for little more than the cost of a few irrigation heads and the likelihood that I’d forever regret not building it, we convinced the client that this was an opportunity too good to pass up.”

Layton drew inspiration from Royal Troon’s Postage Stamp eighth hole, although for his version at Las Piedras, the green is even smaller! “Our green is surrounded by bunkers, playing essentially as an island,” says Layton. “The only strategy is to knuckle up and hit the shot... if you do, you’ll have a makeable putt – if not, good luck making par!”



“As with any sketch, it was just a starting point – the only deliverables I considered to be concrete were that it had to be a drop shot to a small green surrounded by trouble. One challenge was getting the green to tie in properly from all angles as the ground was sloping away from play. There’s a false rear to the green that collects overly aggressive shots, but this is actually the best place to miss it.

“I’m pretty sure this is the smallest green to ever come out of our office,” continues Layton. “For me this sketch symbolizes so much that’s changed with our firm’s design philosophy and my evolution as an architect: economy of construction, boldness in design, the collaborative nature of design-build, and freeing yourself from regimented construction drawings. It was a fun hole to build and it is by far the membership’s favorite hole to play.” ●





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[Tahoma31Bermudagrass.com](http://Tahoma31Bermudagrass.com)



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In 1919, Toro provided a motorized fairway mower to the Minikahda Club, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to replace horse-drawn equipment. By mounting five individual reel mowers onto the front of a farm tractor, Toro developed the Toro Standard Golf Machine and helped create the motorized golf course equipment industry. Today Toro continues to lead the global market with best-in-class turf maintenance equipment and precision irrigation solutions. Approximately two-thirds of the top 100 courses in the world use Toro irrigation systems. The company also leads the way in environmental innovations, making products safer, cleaner and quieter whenever possible.

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