



ISSUE 61 // SPRING 2023

BY DESIGN

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



STICK OR TWIST?

In times of economic uncertainty, should clubs hold fire on new investments, or forge ahead?

SNYDER IN HAWAII

Mark Wagner reflects on the layouts created by the ASGCA Past President in the Aloha State

ALSO:

- // Duel on the Hill
- // GCSAA Show
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Brit Stenson
President, ASGCA

One direction

The annual GCSAA Conference and Trade Show really kickstarts the year. As the first gathering of the industry and the venue for our ASGCA Winter Meeting, it is a wonderful opportunity for thought-provoking discussion, to learn about people's plans for the year ahead and get a 'direction of travel' for golf.

That direction is definitely forward right now. Golf course architects across the world are reporting a rise in projects as clubs are investing in their courses following the surge in golf participation. There is understandably some caution though, given that the wider economic outlook remains uncertain.

Our cover story for this issue of *By Design* examines how clubs are approaching this paradox – asking the extent to which they should press ahead with new projects or proceed with caution, and considering what type of work is likely to be the most appealing. There are some fascinating perspectives – read more on page 14.

One highlight at GCSAA this year was a golf hole created on the show floor, designed by ASGCA and the centerpiece for our education programming throughout the event. It was great fun and generated a wealth of new ideas. You'll find plenty more innovative work in the following pages – not least the 'Duel on the Hill' concept devised by three ASGCA members. We profile this fascinating design on page 20.

I hope you enjoy the read!

Brit Stenson

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Harrison Lake in Indiana, where ASGCA Fellow Tim Liddy has completed a renovation. Read about this project and more on page 14. Photography courtesy of Griffin Haddad.



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 Agustin Pizá, ASGCA, shares a sketch of The Pit, a multi-purpose golf facility that features a large freeform putting green and sand hazards.

'The Battlefield' at Shangri-La to open in spring

The Battlefield, a par-three course designed by ASGCA Past President Tom Clark at the Shangri-La Resort on Monkey Island, Oklahoma, is set to open in spring.

"I conceived a three-tier design, a course to serve low handicappers with yardages from 130-to-230; the average member and resort guest with yardages from 100-to-210; and a chip and putt, where you can utilize just three clubs, for

members and guests with families or just for sharpening your short game skills," said Clark.

"To help embody the battlefield theme we incorporated a number of railroad tie features, which adds visual interest and definition throughout the course. Each green is unique and allows a constant rotation of pins, to keep the players coming back time and time again."

Clark worked alongside director of golf Rob Yanovitch, executive

chairman Jason Sheffield and construction firm United Golf on the project. While the conceptual layout for The Battlefield was ready in 2020, the pandemic delayed the start of construction until summer 2021, with completion in August 2022.

"Tees were topped with a mixture of Humalpa and sand, fairways and green surrounds were sodded with Tahoma 31 and the greens were built for a SubAir system



Photo: Front nine pic

The Battlefield course at the Shangri-La Resort will open for play this spring

in their internal drainage,” said Clark. “The formal bunkers were lined with Better Billy Bunker and a lovely off-white sand, while the ‘waste bunkers’ received a more brownish colored sand.”

The course is laid out across 80 acres and features rugged terrain with the site having over 100 feet of elevation change.

“Due to the topography that was rather severe in many areas, it became a necessity to install golf

cart paths to accommodate the players, help direct drainage and prevent erosion,” said Clark. “An existing drainage channel that bisected the site was reimagined into a series of waterfalls, pools and a rippling stream, which come into play on several holes.”

Shangri-La is also home to a 27-hole course, which was renovated by Clark in the early 2010s, comprising the Legends, Heritage and Champions nines.

ASGCA holds Winter Meeting at Orlando show



The American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) held its Winter Meeting during the week of the recent GCSAA Conference and Trade Show in Orlando, Florida.

The meeting included a three-hour education session for ASGCA members and its partners. Todd Quitno, ASGCA (pictured), was the moderator and kept proceedings on track, which included a presentation from Landscapes Unlimited’s Jake Riekstins, who discussed the newest technology in relation to using drones and photography effectively at golf facilities. This was shortly followed by a presentation by Scott Fawcette on ‘Modern Strategy’, speaking about his “decade system” of statistical analysis to derive strategy, prompting a lively debate. The session concluded with a panel of Golf Course Builders Association of America experts who discussed how architects and contractors can work together to better benefit facility owners and course managers.

Turn to page 26 for our gallery of images from the GCSAA Show.

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The Cardinal set for spring 2024 opening



Photo: Raymond Hearn Golf Course Design

The par-three third hole at the new Saint John's Resort course in Detroit

Construction is nearing completion of a new eighteen-hole course designed by Raymond Hearn, ASGCA, for the rebranded Saint John's Resort in the Plymouth suburb of Detroit, Michigan.

The layout, to be named The Cardinal, is being built on the site of the resort's previous 27 holes. "Our project has kept nothing of what was originally there, maybe half a dozen corridors, but that's

it," said Hearn. "We have taken a tremendous number of trees out for breadth. This has been crucial in providing more angles and options throughout the course."

Water features throughout the round, a meandering stream bisecting the front nine and lakes in play on holes three, five, fourteen, fifteen and eighteen. Hearn has included a church pew bunker complex on the ninth hole.

Hearn's plan also includes a seven-hole par-three course with variations of famous template greens.

Construction will be completed in late spring, followed by a year-long grow-in, before opening for play in spring 2024.

Tripp Davis begins Ridgewood renovation

Tripp Davis, ASGCA, and his team have started renovations of the golf course at Ridgewood Country Club in Waco, Texas, which includes reworking tees, bunkers and greens.

The redesign of the greens and bunkers will be inspired by the style of the course's original architect, ASGCA Past President Ralph Plummer. Davis said: "We renovated and, in part, restored Preston Trail in Dallas 15 years ago, which is also a Plummer original, and I really appreciate his strategic approach and simple but elegant style.

"We're also redesigning the driving range and making significant changes to hole nine.



Photo: Ridgewood Country Club

The redesign of greens and bunkers will be inspired by the style of Ralph Plummer

The course sits on an amazing piece of land, and we will be working hard to keep the natural movement while giving the

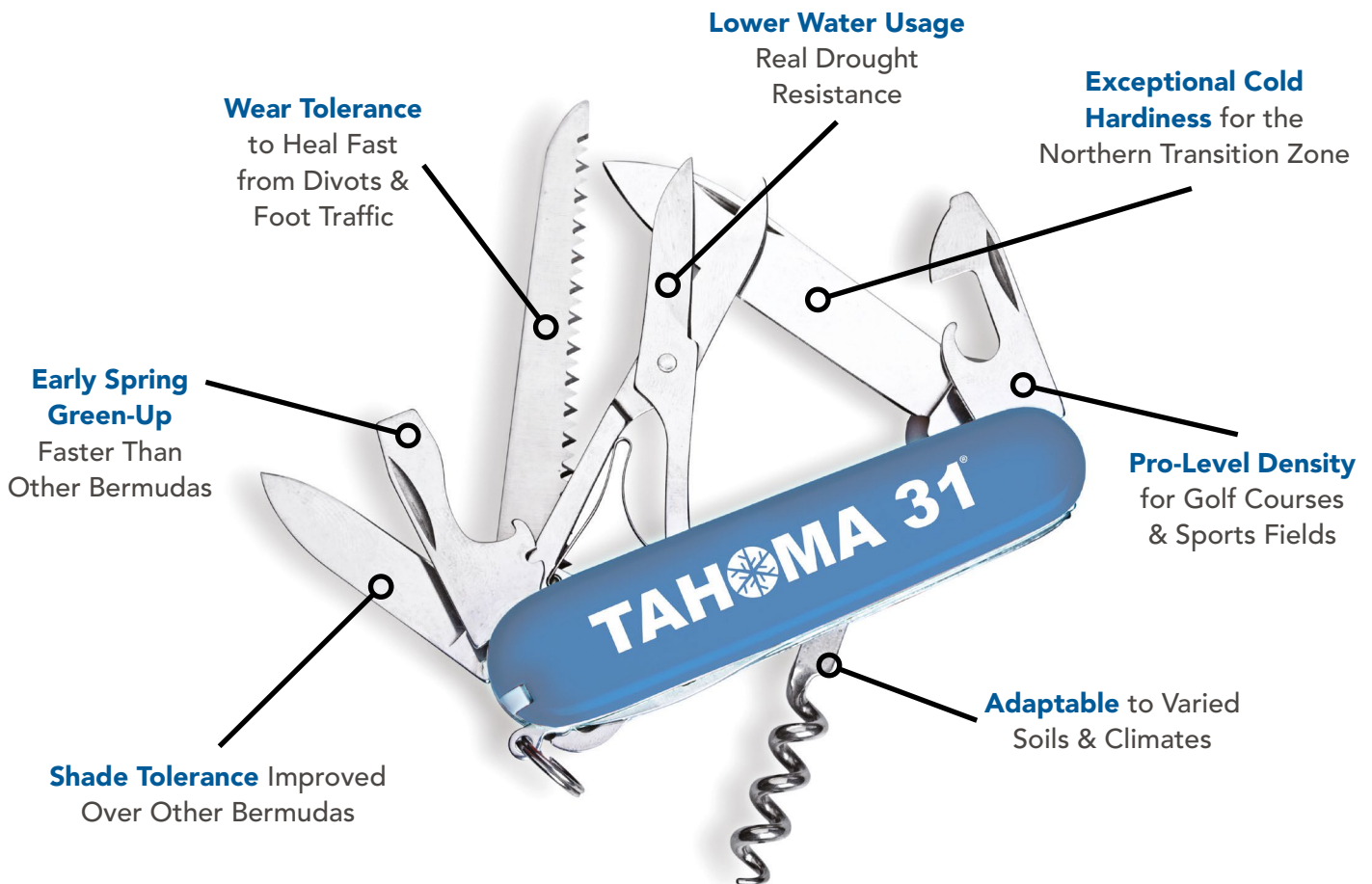
course more of a classic style and strategy."

Ridgewood plans to reopen the course in October 2023.

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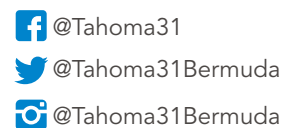
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Raynor and Colt inspire new Windsong Farm course

John Fought, ASGCA, is developing a second course at Windsong Farm Golf Club in Minnesota.

Fought is drawing inspiration from Seth Raynor and Harry Colt's classic layouts for the new course. This includes a Biarritz green at the fourth, a double green shared by the thirteenth and sixteenth, as well as Redan and Eden holes. It will play as a par 70 of 6,477 yards from the back tees, a contrast to the 7,586 yards of the club's first course.

"It's a unique piece of land with lake views and rolling terrain," said Fought. "This is open, rolling land



Fought's design includes a double green, plus Redan, Eden and Cape holes

Photo: John Fought Design

with natural, native areas that are fescue and gives us the opportunity

to integrate several old-style holes into the mix."



"The project needs to focus on improving playability, maintainability and aesthetics"

ASGCA Past President John LaFoy

In the latest podcast from *Golf Course Industry's* "Tartan Talks" series, ASGCA Past President John LaFoy, discusses what his career of renovating golf courses and why he still enjoys designing.

"The golf course belongs to the people that play it," says LaFoy. "Whenever I suggest renovations, I tell them the project needs to focus on improving playability, maintainability and aesthetics.

That's what I call a complete and successful renovation.

"If I need to convince people, I tell them it's important for them to leave the golf course in a better place than when they first joined."

LaFoy is currently working on the Walker course at Clemson University. "I'm working on greens at the moment, and sometimes you have to walk away from the drafting table and let it sink in and

then come back to it later. That's how you design good greens. You keep coming back to it. I do almost everything by hand - when you do it by hand, you never quit designing. Even when it is put in the ground, you are still designing and making subtle changes, the process is never ending.

Listen to the full "Tartan Talk" at golfcourseindustry.com.

Here are links to other recent "Tartan Talk," which is now up to 80 episodes:

- [Greg Muirhead, ASGCA, provides insight on planning, selling and executing projects, and his 40-year career with Rees Jones, Inc.](#)
- [ASGCA Past Presidents Jeff Blume and Greg Martin talk about the role drainage plays in getting a golf course to play as intended](#)



Photo: Omni La Costa Resort & Spa

Omni La Costa breaks ground on Hanse renovation

Construction work has started on the renovation of the Champions course at Omni La Costa Resort & Spa in Carlsbad, California.

The goals of the project, which is led by Gil Hanse, ASGCA, include the introduction of more risk-reward elements, ahead of the course hosting the NCAA Championships from 2024-to-2026,

and a new aesthetic inspired by classic Southern California layouts.

Specific hole changes include the creation of drivable par-four eleventh, a repositioned green on the par-three sixteenth, reminiscent of the twelfth at Augusta National, and bringing the putting surface closer to the existing creek on the par-five eighteenth.



Photo: Dave Smith - Golf Graphics

New public course to be built on Colorado dairy farm

Bella Ridge, a new 18-hole public golf course, designed by Art Schaupeter, ASGCA, is to be built in Johnstown, Colorado, that was recently home to a working dairy farm.

“The site is wonderfully set up for a golf course,” said Schaupeter.

“There is about 150 feet of elevation change from the south of the property to the north. A deep valley and creek run the length of the site, with the creek acting as a conduit for the delivery of ditch water that will be used to irrigate the course.

“The golf course routing is set up

so that players can play multiple loops and different lengths. The opening six holes play out and back to the clubhouse. After passing the clubhouse, players reach a neat three-hole loop which brings them back, ready to begin the back nine.”



Photo: BallenIsles Country Club

BallenIsles East course renovation complete

BallenIsles Country Club in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, has reopened its East course following a renovation by Nicklaus Design.

The project was led by Chris Cochran, ASGCA, and Chad Goetz, ASGCA. Their aim has been to modernize the course and practice areas whilst paying homage to the original Dick Wilson design features.

Cochran and Goetz have updated bunkers and greens as well as regrassing the entire course. The East has also been lengthened from 7,189-to-7,474 yards. Cochran and Goetz also

aimed to make the course more accessible for players of different abilities so some of the deeper bunkers were shallowed and run-off areas were added around fairways and greens, with natural humps and hollows providing more recovery options.

The practice area now includes a 65-bay two-sided range with Toptracer technology and targets, a putting green, practice bunkers and a wedge range with targets from 30-to-105 yards. The four-acre short-game area features a putting course, plus five pitching and chipping greens.

Applications now open for Wadsworth scholarship


Wadsworth Golf Construction and Wadsworth Golf Charities Foundation have opened the application process for those interested in becoming a Wadsworth Scholar. The program is open to students (junior year in college standing or higher) or recent graduates who are interested in a career in golf course architecture to attend the ASGCA Annual Meeting in Milwaukee later

this year. Expenses are paid for attendance, and Wadsworth Scholars benefit from sitting in on in-person education, playing a round of golf with ASGCA members and other opportunities to learn from and network with established golf course architects.

To apply to become a potential Wadsworth Scholar, contact Marc Whitney at ASGCA: marc@asgca.org


SOCIAL UPDATE



 LinkedIn
@Dave Heatwole

Recently I caught up with Johnny Morris at the GCSAA Show, who was this year's recipient of the Old Tom Morris Award. I designed Johnny's first course, the Top of the Rock nine-hole layout, as lead designer for Nicklaus Design.



 Instagram
@nathance

"We are happy to announce @watermarkgolf has been commissioned to oversee a targeted redesign project/long range master planning at Scenic Hills CC in Pensacola - site of the 1969 US Womens Open



 Twitter
@ASGCA

"ASGCA Insights" podcast with Davis Love III, recounts his "incredible adventure" as Ryder Cup player and captain. And when it comes to golf course design, "designing 'hard' is easy, interesting and memorable is a much better goal."

Search ASGCA on the below channels for more posts:



Stick or twist?

Golf may have boomed, but the wider economic outlook remains uncertain. Richard Humphreys considers whether clubs should proceed with caution or press ahead with new investments.

The well-documented boom in golf provided most clubs with a boost in fortunes. As the ‘waiting list’ made its return to the industry’s vocabulary, bank balances swelled, and a renewed sense of confidence emerged. Thoughts quickly turned to how the money could be spent and, after years of deferred maintenance, course projects have been high on the agenda.

Meanwhile, the wider global economy is exhibiting more hesitation. As nations were counting the cost of the pandemic, war began in Ukraine, energy prices rocketed, and supply chains faltered. Even in the US, which is faring better than many golfing nations, growth has slowed, and inflation persisted.

“With the growth in rounds played in recent years, golf facilities are



Bill Shonk, general manager at Princess Anne CC, examines plans with Jordan Spitler, the club’s director of golf course maintenance and club grounds



Photo: Wee Burn CC

ASGCA Past President Tom Marzolf has overseen “steady improvement” at Wee Burn over the past two decades

experiencing economic stability,” says ASGCA Past President Tom Marzolf of Fazio Design. “In the US, roughly 50 percent of clubs have a full membership and a waiting list.”

Take the example of Princess Anne CC in Virginia. General manager Bill Shonk says: “The demand to join Princess Anne has never been higher. We have a waiting list of over 100. And while costs continue to inflate, our membership has supported increases in our initiation fees and dues.”

Clubs are now able to cover their running costs, with money left over for improvements. “They are ready to move forward with deferred maintenance projects and lifecycle component replacements that had been neglected in the past,” says Marzolf.

Shawn Smith, ASGCA, of Hills Forrest Smith, is experiencing the same: “Even with increased material costs and a higher demand for contractors, we continue to see clubs reinvest in their facilities so they can compete with those that have made improvements in recent years.”

“As the world went back to work after Covid, demand for unavailable goods led to very high inflation that continues worldwide and is impacting supply chains,” says Marzolf, adding that labor, deliveries, irrigation systems and sod shipments were all affected. “Inflation makes the current economic situation more expensive to proceed with, in comparison to pre-pandemic pricing. Many clubs have pushed on to spend and complete projects, feeling the need to satisfy the demand for quality

golf in a competitive market, with some contractors now booked out into 2025.”

So, what should clubs do next?

Ready to move

Steve Henke, the owner of Henke Development Group, which has clubs throughout Indiana, says it makes sense to press ahead: “Now and the next 12 months is a good time for clubs to invest, assuming they have funds to do so. Prices will be more competitive, but I always like to do the preparation work in down times, so everything is ready when the good times arrive. Most wait for the good times and then have to pay for higher construction costs.”

Such optimism is driving a change in the way clubs are approaching projects, too.

Photo: Princess Anne CC



Photo: Hills Forrest Smith

Hills Forrest Smith has assisted Bonita Bay Club with its multi-course renovation plan, including on the Marsh layout

“Clubs are scrambling to line up quality builders *first*, and completing plans and permits second,” says Marzolf. “As a golf course architect working in the industry since the early 1980s, this is the first time we have seen this frenzy create a marketplace that favors golf contractors over price-sensitive clubs.”

Smith agrees: “The supply chain issues and increased demand for contractors have necessitated that

more clubs foregoing the bidding process and negotiating directly with one contractor to lock them in earlier. Owners are also purchasing materials directly from the supplier, before selecting a contractor, to shorten lead times and reduce costs.”

Stick to the plan

So how should clubs approach new investments? Marzolf says that preparing a long-range masterplan that clearly identifies lifecycle

which has been working to a masterplan since 2000. “The club has smartly stayed the course and continues to set the standard of excellence in the area,” says Marzolf. Wee Burn’s plan has seen them tick off new maintenance and practice facilities, updated tees, bunkers and greens, irrigation upgrades, and the installation of PrecisionAire units. “The result is perhaps the finest example of steady improvement and commitment to a plan that one could imagine,” says Marzolf. “Wee Burn sets the benchmark on smart governance.”

Both Marzolf and Smith have worked at Florida’s Bonita Bay Club in recent years, with Hills Forrest Smith responsible for work on the club’s Bay Island and Marsh courses, and in planning on the Creekside layout, while Fazio Design has updated the Cypress layout and is working on the Sabal course this year.

“Now and the next 12 months is a good time for clubs to invest, assuming they have funds to do so”

clubs begin their planning process further in advance. Projects that might have been bid out a year in advance are now 18 months-to-two years. We are also seeing

replacements of aging golf course infrastructure is the prudent way to proceed.

He points to the example of Wee Burn CC in Darien, Connecticut,



Photo: Griffin Haddad/@birdwatchersgolf

“For each course, there was a series of meetings with the club’s committee and key individuals to establish goals and objectives as well as review feedback on the proposed improvements,” says Smith. “Despite potential setbacks like Covid and Hurricane Ian, the club is sticking to its ambitious plan, and they are well positioned to be highly competitive in the southwest Florida market.”

Smith says the ‘model’ approach “begins with developing a masterplan to show the club the needs of the golf course, identify opportunities for improvement, and budget accordingly. This can be through a series of projects, or one large-scale project.”

Appealing to all

Bob Haddad, owner of Harrison Lake CC in Columbus, Indiana, gave the green light to golf investment. His course reopened in



Photo: Griffin Haddad/@birdwatchersgolf

The thirteenth green at Harrison Lake in Indiana. Top, ASGCA Fellow Tim Liddy, and club owner Bob Haddad (foreground) oversaw renovation work on the course where playability and interest were central to the masterplan

August 2022 following a renovation by ASGCA Fellow Tim Liddy, which included updating bunkers and a rerouting that involved the creation of five new holes. Haddad emphasizes the importance of

broad appeal, though. “Creating compelling reasons for people to visit and enjoy the club will always be the best plan,” he says.

Henke agrees: “Clubs must have something for everybody,” he



“If we can do courses with more options, we’ll have a healthy game,” says ASGCA Past President Rees Jones, who has recently renovated the Old Course at Broken Sound in Florida

says. “They need to adapt to the changing times.”

Playability is an obvious starting point.

ASGCA Past President Rees Jones says that it will be important for years to come for courses to be more playable for the average golfer.

“When you go in to change a course, there’s a bit of fear from the members,” he says. “There’s fear from the good players that the course will be dumbed down and fear from the average players that it will become too hard.”

The magic formula is to satisfy both. Jones recently completed work on the Old Course at Broken Sound in Boca Raton, Florida, which will host the PGA Champions Tour in early November. “We had to design it for the senior players as well as the

members, so it had to have really good greens, but they also needed to be accessible,” he says. “There are also plenty of different choices – if we can do courses with more options, we’ll have a healthy game.

“In the future we’ll be getting a lot of less proficient golfers coming into the sport. So, we’ll be doing more things around the greens, rather than surrounding them with sand. Chipping areas, grass bunkers and grass pockets. And even if you have a slightly elevated green, we’ll design a ramp.”

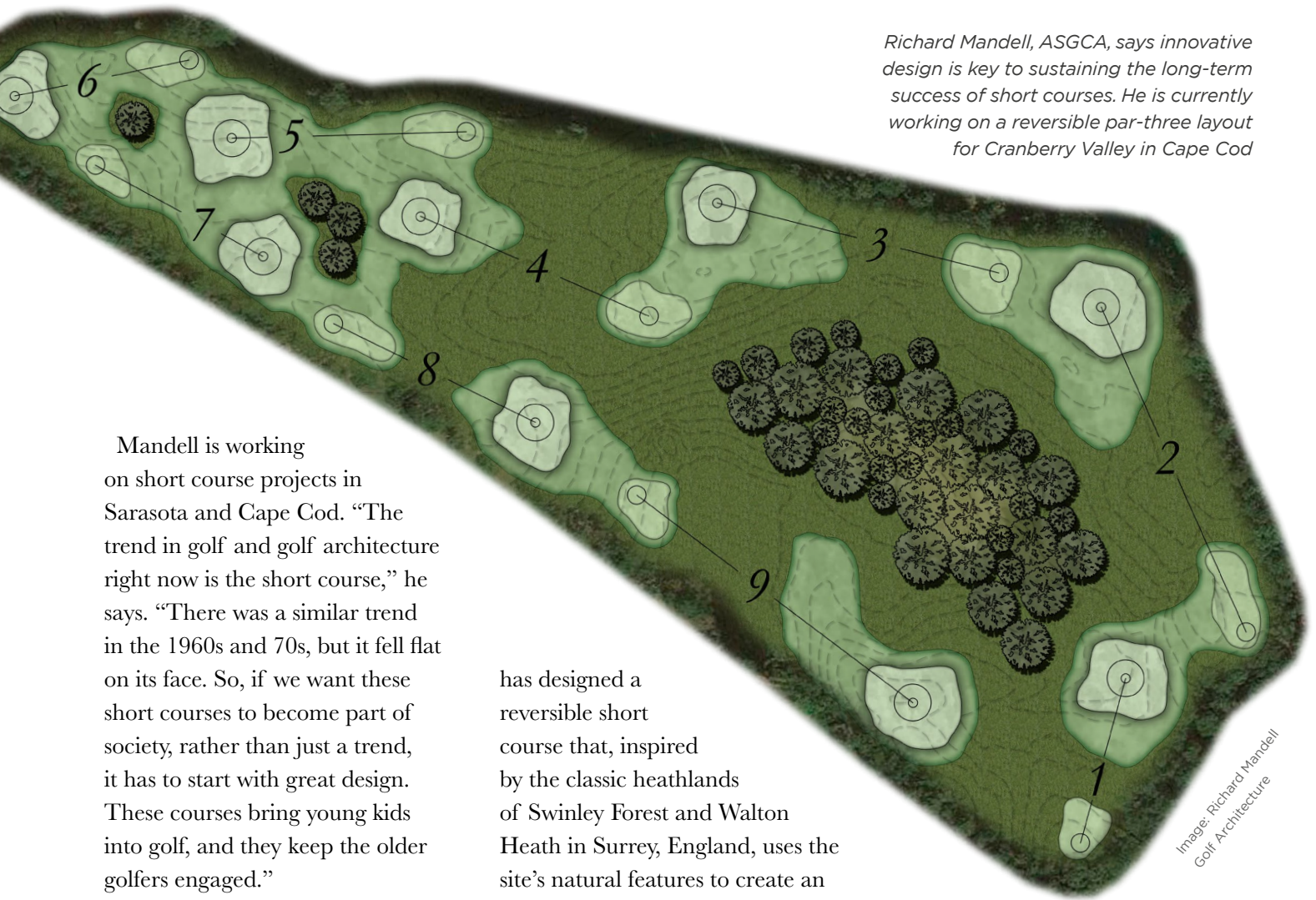
Haddad agrees: “Courses need to be designed for the average golfer. They need to be challenging, yes, but also fun. Investing in the course and in the practice facilities with a ‘family and friend fun’ approach is the best path to future success. Most

clubs are not going to become the next big destination. For most golf courses, their customers come from the local area. The ‘vacation in your own backyard’ will become an attractive family alternative.

“Short courses, short-game areas, ranges and putting greens should be designed to accommodate groups learning and having fun. There are so many ways to take golf and make it interesting, challenging, and attractive for everyone.”

“Great golf architecture transcends all,” says Richard Mandell, ASGCA. “The future of golf is to make sure that it has a lasting appeal to as many people as possible, it doesn’t matter if there’s a pandemic or a recession, we just have to continue to make golf fun and enjoyable.”

Richard Mandell, ASGCA, says innovative design is key to sustaining the long-term success of short courses. He is currently working on a reversible par-three layout for Cranberry Valley in Cape Cod



Mandell is working on short course projects in Sarasota and Cape Cod. “The trend in golf and golf architecture right now is the short course,” he says. “There was a similar trend in the 1960s and 70s, but it fell flat on its face. So, if we want these short courses to become part of society, rather than just a trend, it has to start with great design. These courses bring young kids into golf, and they keep the older golfers engaged.”

Mandell’s Sarasota project is an adjustable layout that has nine greens complexes and a selection of tees that allow it to be played in five or six different ways.

has designed a reversible short course that, inspired by the classic heathlands of Swinley Forest and Walton Heath in Surrey, England, uses the site’s natural features to create an interesting golf experience.

“Short courses are here to stay,” says Tom Smith, former general manager of Falling Rock at Nemaocolin, now a SVP in Wilson,

discovered that by bringing the sport closer to larger cities.

“Now that golf has experienced a boom, it’s vital to keep the momentum, provide members with what they are seeking and turn those new golfers into fanatics by investing wisely. I believe clubs that focus on great design and a superior on- and off-course experience are going to be successful.”

“Golf is in a good spot right now,” says Mandell. “It’s healthy and innovative from a design standpoint. We’re thinking outside the box more and more, we’re bringing out the genius of the place, marketing the golf course more, and doing inspired design, even if it’s just one bunker. The future looks bright.” ●

“Short courses are here to stay. The model approach should always be to provide what the customer is seeking”

His Cape Cod project is for Cranberry Valley, which already has an eighteen-hole course, but wanted to utilize a nine-acre triangular parcel between the fourteen and eighteenth holes. Mandell

Arkansas, where a six-hole reversible course opens in May “They are fun, functional and inclusive. The model approach should always be to provide what the customer is seeking: Topgolf and others have

Seeing double

By Design takes a look at ‘Duel on the Hill’, an out-of-the-box design that has two sets of nine holes playing alongside each other. The concept is the result of a collaboration between three golf course architects.

When Southmoore Golf Course near Allentown, Pennsylvania, required changes to its eighteen-hole layout (originally designed by ASGCA Fellow James Blaukovitch) due to development plans for a portion of the property, a trio of designers came together to propose a unique and innovative design. ASGCA Past President Forrest Richardson, Jeff Danner, ASGCA, and Mark Fine, ASGCA, had to find a way to incorporate the new development while preserving as much golf as possible.

Conventional solutions weren’t cutting it. So it was time to throw out the rulebook and get very creative. “Mark made extensive studies of the land,” says Richardson, who led the collaboration with Fine. “Together we put on our thinking caps to come up with alternatives that would be fun and engaging. We were looking for a routing concept that was new – something that would be ‘outside the box’ and exciting.”

The trio landed on a completely new concept; each hole would play alongside a ‘twin’. Richardson says:

“They’re definitely not identical twins. In fact, the pairs of holes – each pair referred to as ‘left’ and ‘right’ – are often a ‘Jekyll and Hyde’ of one another.”

An eighteen-hole routing, comprising nine pairs of holes was completed, and ‘Duel on the Hill’ was borne. Both holes in each pair may be nearly identical in length, but with stark contrasts: for example, one may play on a sidehill sloping left, while the other slopes to the right, one may be heavily bunkered while the other has a creek.

The proposed ‘Duel on the Hill’ design is for each nine to be around 2,300 yards and a par of 32





Photo: Richardson | Danner

A rendering of twin drop-shot par-threes

The parallel nine-hole routing gives players the opportunity to select which hole of the two they prefer to play once they have left the green of the previous hole. With simultaneous tee times, the choice whether to play the left or right hole lies with the group that completes play of the previous hole first.

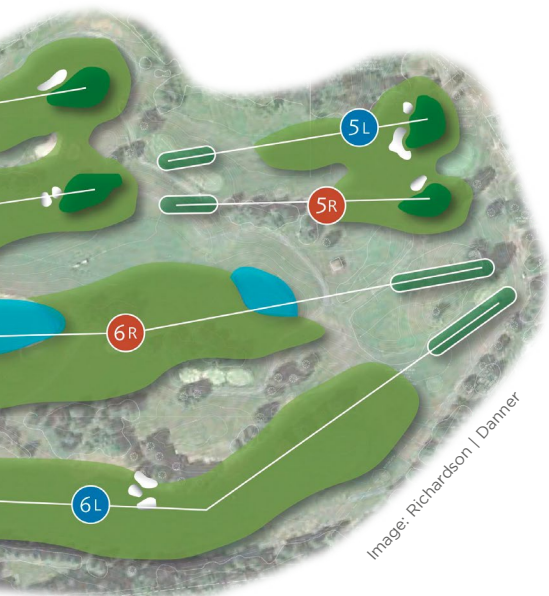


Image: Richardson | Danner

“I suppose you could call it a race,” says Danner. “But more than anything, we’ve engineered it to be fun and engaging. The pace of play benefits are secondary, but let’s not forget them.”

Depending on which holes a group ends up playing, the routing variation becomes exponential, says Richardson. “Even if you just play nine holes, there are 81 unique combinations you can end up playing. It may take a player several rounds, as an example, before they ‘get to play’ what we call ‘eight-left’... and, if you play eighteen holes, the routing combinations exceed 300.”

“We are empowering the golfer to finish quickly, and the reward is getting to decide their own destiny,” adds Fine. “The design is organized so each hole will have the same ‘pace rating’, meaning that each hole of a pair should theoretically take the same time

to complete. What that allows is an even table where groups are envisioned to play as quickly as possible in order to ‘claim’ the next tee of their choice.”

Richardson points out that the format of allowing groups to select from side-by-side holes at the subsequent tee might be reserved for weekends when play may be at its heaviest. “Independent of the concept to allow groups to flip back and forth between left and right holes, we envision two very solid nines where the pairs of holes follow the same general routing from start to finish,” he says. “The left and right paths can even be managed independently – the left being one to nine and the right being ten to eighteen – it’s flexible.

“Perhaps it will even become a solution to the age-old problem of pace of play, which as we all know, has been a ‘duel of its own’ for many decades.” ●

Designing a golf course is a natural high

Golf historian Mark Wagner reflects on the layouts created by ASGCA Past President Arthur Jack Snyder in Hawaii.



Mark Wagner

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

A golf historian visiting Hawaii quickly comes upon the warm shadow of architect and ASGCA Past President Arthur Jack Snyder, known as ‘the man who brought golf to Hawaii.’ Snyder designed seven courses on the islands, including Volcano Golf Course on the ‘Big Island’ and the beloved Grand Lady, otherwise known as Wailea Blue course, on the island of Maui.

But this legacy was made possible, in part, by ASGCA Founding Member Robert Trent Jones, Sr. whose innovations revolutionized Hawaiian golf. While working on Mauna Kea, in 1964, Jones developed a drainage technique that allowed topsoil to survive on lava rock fields. Up until that point, no Hawaiian golf course had been built on a lava flow. By crushing the soft lava rock, Jones came up with a well-draining base on which topsoil could be deposited and many types of grass could survive.

It would be three short years before Snyder designed and built Volcano Golf Course, a layout that sits on lava flows on the rim of the Kilauea crater.

The 110-year-old Volcano Golf Course, at 4,000 feet above sea level, dips and sways on the edge of the active Kilauea crater. The 160-acre course began as a three-hole attraction beside Volcano House, a tourist spot founded in the 1890s for people traveling to see the earth make more earth. The golf club went through various iterations until 1968/69 when Snyder designed a subtle, enjoyable eighteen-hole layout that dances on a northwest-facing slope in the shadow of the island’s two major, volcanic peaks: Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea.

ASGCA Past President Forrest Richardson, Snyder’s mentee and a principal at Richardson | Danner Golf Course Architects, recalls: “At Volcano, he was always quick



to point out that the two nines had completely different weather patterns. It could pour four inches of rain on one nine, while the other nine had no rain at all.”

The beauty of Snyder’s design at Volcano is both its playability and its subtlety. The course begins and ends on the land’s high point, and the 18 holes are tucked into a slope that has stunning views of the island’s two major volcanos. Snyder uses existing craters and cuts in the land. The natural attributes of the landscape shine forth. The golfer strolls through the newest of living earth, in delicious thin air, looking to capitalize on the reachable fives, and stay close on the long threes. A number of the challenging fours are doglegs tucked in to rippling terrain where Jones’ phrase comes to mind: ‘easy bogies and hard pars.’

Snyder’s history in Hawaii began in 1965, when he was asked to consult with Amfac, Inc. He

A8—Thursday, July 1, 1971 • MAUI NEWS

Grading For Wailea Course Pau

Maui News photos

MOVING AHEAD—All may look quiet at Wailea from Kihei Road, but once inside the reshaped landscape is ample evidence of the progress being made.

Bulldozer (left) churns through the dusty flats that will be lush greens when the period of propagation is completed.

Heavy ground soaking (lower left) furthers the process, while view (lower right) of Lanai awaits duffer on opening day.

The first nine holes of the Wailea golf course should be ready for play in September and the remaining nine by mid-October, according to Ray Schofield, construction manager for Wailea Land Corporation.

Heavy grading by Central Pacific Builders will be completed today, and a period of propagation will take place between now and the scheduled opening.

The clubhouse will probably not be completed, however, by the time the course is ready for play, he added.

Schofield explained that

September is a target date that could be influenced by any number of unforeseen problems.

Central Pacific Builders, the golf course contractor, has carved the often rocky site into the overall course contour.

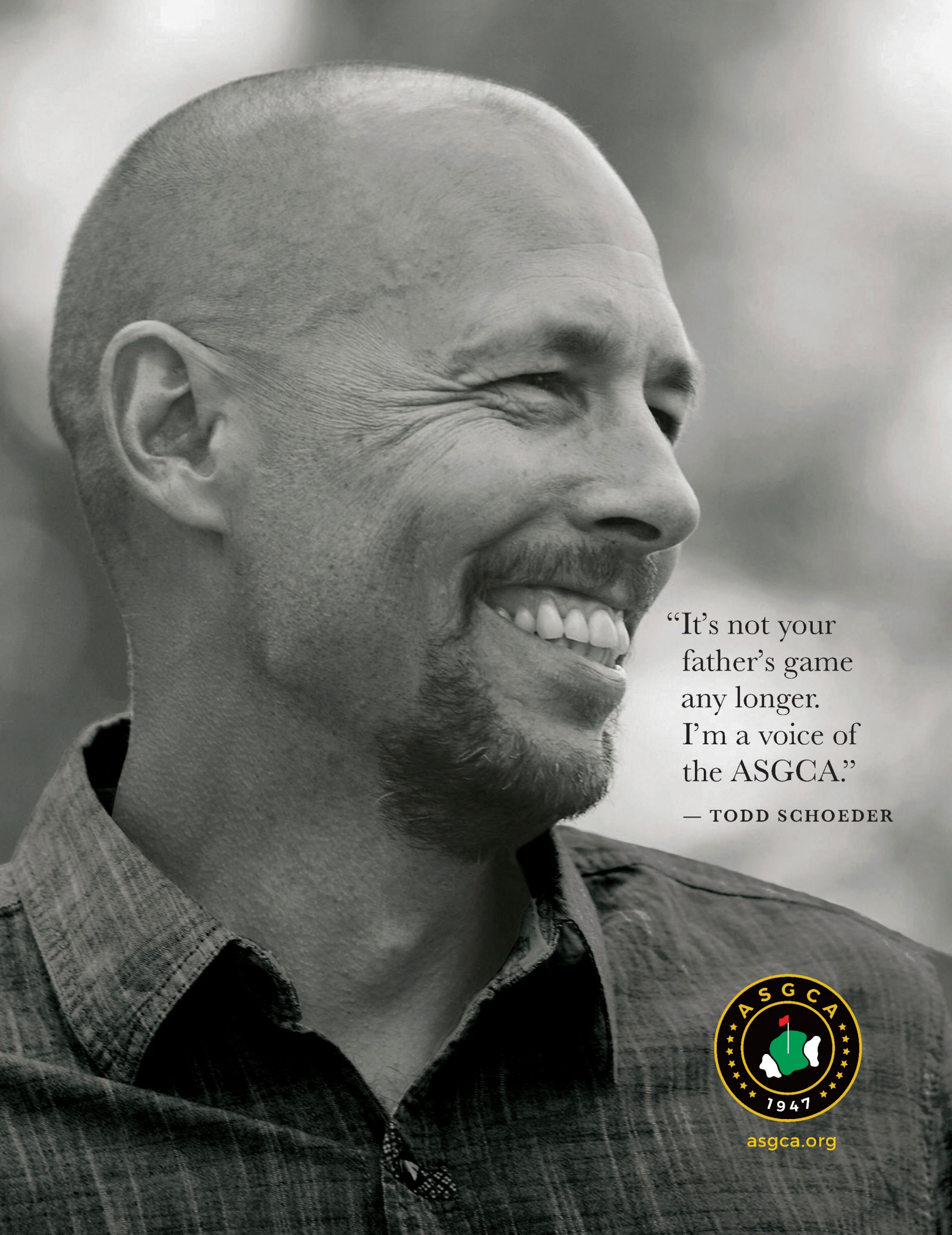
The “propagation” period is the time during which the land is watered and fertilized in preparation for the growth of foliage and greens, Schofield explained.

One of those problems is the heavy rock concentrations which have forced contractors to drill and blast to install nearly every main wa-

A news report from 1971, documenting construction progress on the first nine holes at Wailea Blue; and, top, Snyder (center) visits the site in 1969

accepted a position as director of grounds maintenance for, spending three years at the Kaanapali Beach Resort on Maui. His six eighteen-hole courses in Hawaii included the preservation of native Hawaiian

walls and lava outcroppings on Wailea’s courses, integrating these features for interest, intrigue and a visual effect: the many tones of green are framed by the dramatic and jagged coal-black border walls.

A black and white profile photograph of a man with a shaved head and a goatee, smiling broadly. He is wearing a dark, collared shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape.

“It’s not your
father’s game
any longer.
I’m a voice of
the ASGCA.”

— TODD SCHOEDER



asgca.org



Wailea Blue's par-three seventh

The Wailea Blue course is an enduring favorite of players and architects alike; so much so, Snyder requested his ashes be scattered on what was the original eighteenth hole, now the thirteenth, a playful, beautifully symmetrical, downhill par three. A golfer has a sense of possibility and plays into that optimism, but must stay true to the contours of the fairway or risk the beach.

From the tee of what is now the seventh hole, expansive views of the channel between Maui and Lanai come into play. If a golfer is having a bad day, the sight of whales at play in the channel might lessen the pain, but the hole and the course sings with opportunity for all. The staff at the Blue course, to a person, say the seventh is a favorite and note that a 93-year-old female golfer from Japan recently recorded an ace on the hole – her first. Wailea Blue underscores golf's enduring theme: never give up.

Just past its 50th anniversary, Wailea Blue was first built when

the area was 1,500 acres of arid, scrubby terrain. And in that way, the course may be seen as a *genus locus*, as Snyder's design endures and is the centerpiece of some notable changes. What was scrubby and arid terrain is now home to numerous high-end resorts, tasteful shopping areas, and the busy, daily goings on of what the locals call Maui Mode – relaxed and comfortable.

Richardson is quick to note Snyder's attention to what came before as well. "Jack was always keen on preserving Hawaiian culture. His Orange course at Wailea [replaced in the 1990s when Robert Trent Jones II built the Gold and Emerald courses] was a triumph in this regard, where he left several stone walls and heiaus, many as 'hazards' to add strategy and make the player think."

Snyder's work in Hawaii is not the entirety of his portfolio, and consulting Richardson gives a more complete portrait of Arthur Jack Snyder, who was also known for the phrase, "golf should be fun."

On that note, the ASGCA once held its Annual Meeting on Maui, relying on Jack to help organize things. Every year at the Donald Ross Award Dinner, the Society enlists a local bagpiper to play as guests enter the banquet room. Jack found a bagpiper, but he lived on Oahu and would have to fly over to Maui just for the five minutes of playing. Richardson remembers, "as a thrifty Scotsman, Jack would not have that, so instead he bought a vinyl record album of Scottish music and recorded it on his small Sony tape player. He told no one, surprising the whole group of 75 by emerging from a dressing room wearing his Scottish Clan regalia – kilt and all – holding the small portable recorder above his head as he led the procession to the banquet."

Innovation and fun. Playable, maintainable, sustainable, and fun, these were some of Snyder's design principles that endure in the most remote place on earth. ●

Orlando blooms for GCSAA show

Scenes from the 2023 GCSAA Conference & Trade Show, where ASGCA is a Presenting Partner

The annual GCSAA Conference & Trade Show is the foremost event in the golf course development industry with architects, superintendents, builders and vendors from across the world meeting to learn about the latest in golf design, construction and maintenance, and network with their peers.

In February 2023, the event took place in Orlando, Florida, with a sharp upturn in attendance from the 6,500 that made it to San Diego in 2022, to over 11,000, broadly in line with the pre-pandemic numbers of the Orlando 2020 show. A total of 6,300 seminar seats were filled, representing a 70 percent increase on last year, and the highest figure since 2008.



A panel discussion on what a facility learns from hosting a USGA championship; from left, Bubba Wright of Pebble Beach, Dave Johnson of The Country Club, ASGCA Past President Bruce Charlton and Blue Mound's Alex Beson-Crone



Attendees of the ASGCA Winter Meeting were able to watch two presentations and a panel discussion



Nathan Crace, ASGCA, and Todd Clark, ASGCA, hosted a session where over 75 attendees had a chance to design their own golf hole



Members of the ASGCA designed a golf hole on the show floor that was the centerpiece for education programming throughout the event



By Design sponsors Toro, Rain Bird and Tahoma 31 had prime locations on the exhibition floor to showcase their products and services



ASGCA Vice President Mike Benkusky, Hunki Yun of USGA, GCSAA's Rhett Evans and Brian Costello, ASGCA



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www.tahoma31.com



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