

On Course

News & Thoughts from Forrest Richardson & Associates, Golf Course Architects

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IN TERMS OF DESIGN, HAS IT ALL BEEN DONE?



PHOTO COURTESY OF WIGWAM RESORT

The Wigwam Resort's Patriot Course No. 15 is a classic island green by Forrest Richardson. The first island green is credited to the original course at the Baltusrol Country Club, New Jersey (late 1890s.) Among the golf architects known for island holes have been A.W. Tillinghast, Hugh Wilson, Robert Trent Jones, Sr. and Pete Dye.

To some purists of the game, the classic holes of golf have all been designed ... there is simply no room for more creativity or breakthrough ideas to define what we accept as "great golf."

That position, to some degree, has endured as a result of Charles Blair Macdonald. First set forth in an 1897 article called the "Ideal Golf Course," and finally put to practice at his design of the National Golf Links of America, it was Macdonald who got us believing that 18 holes patterned after those from the British Isles, with one loner from France, should define all golf.

Of course, it is the act of combining the hallmarks of the classic holes that keeps newness in the game. But the question here is whether there is still room for more interesting designs?

It would seem to be a sad day for golf if we simply agreed that "it has all been done." Today, there are brilliant designers, creative thinking golfers and — for many clubs — an appetite for a distinguishing difference.

In my work it has always been a balance between tradition and innovation. "Classic Values and Innovative Solutions" is the way we articulate this approach.

Whether the assignment is to transform an existing course or begin from scratch, the goal should always be to find some golf holes that can live up to being unique. This not only makes the course a "must play" venue, but it adds to the reputation and attraction that is so vital in the world of running a golf club.

THE "REPLICA" HOLES OF GOLF

Best immortalized by C. B. Macdonald in his seminal book: Scotland's Gift — Golf, the holes Macdonald thought to be "Ideal" were these 16... followed by a few others

BOTTLE ... Sunningdale 12th
PERFECTION ... North Berwick 14th
CARTGATE ... St. Andrews 3rd
REDAN ... North Berwick 15th
ELBOW ... Littlestone 16th
HIMALAYA ... Royal St. George 4th
SHORT ... Brancaster 5th
BOUNDARY ... Leven 9th
SAHARA ... Sandwich 3rd
ROAD ... St. Andrews 17th
EDEN ... St. Andrews 11th
CARDINAL ... Prestwick 3rd
LONG ... St. Andrews 14th
BIARRITZ ... Biarritz, France 12th
LEVEN ... Leven 7th
ALPS ... Prestwick 17th

& Some Others

DOUBLE PLATEAU
NARROWS ... Muirfield 15th
HOG'S BACK
KNOLL ... Scotsraig 4th
CAPE ... Midocean, Bermuda 5th
DELL ... Lahinch, Ireland 5th
PUNCHBOWL ... Cruden Bay 14th
ISLAND ... Baltusrol
GARDEN CITY ... Garden City 5th
POSTAGE STAMP ... Troon 8th
THE PIT ... North Berwick 13th
HELL'S 1/2 ACRE ... Pine Valley 7th
REEF ... Bethpage Yellow 12th

The 16 attributed to Macdonald are those with known examples. The others are famous holes with the best known examples, unless generic.



Pictured above are some golf holes that are unique — Arizona Grand's No. 9 "The Wall," The Links at Las Palomas' No. 11 "Temple" and also its No. 2 "Ánimo," a par-5 where a series of "inverted bunkers" form an obstacle course allowing the hole to be attacked from a variety of angles and routes.

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