

The First One Hundred Years

GOLF IN AMERICA

A full-page photograph of a golfer in mid-swing, wearing a dark shirt, light-colored patterned shorts, and a cap. The golfer is positioned centrally, with the golf club extending from the top left towards the right. The background is a blurred green golf course.

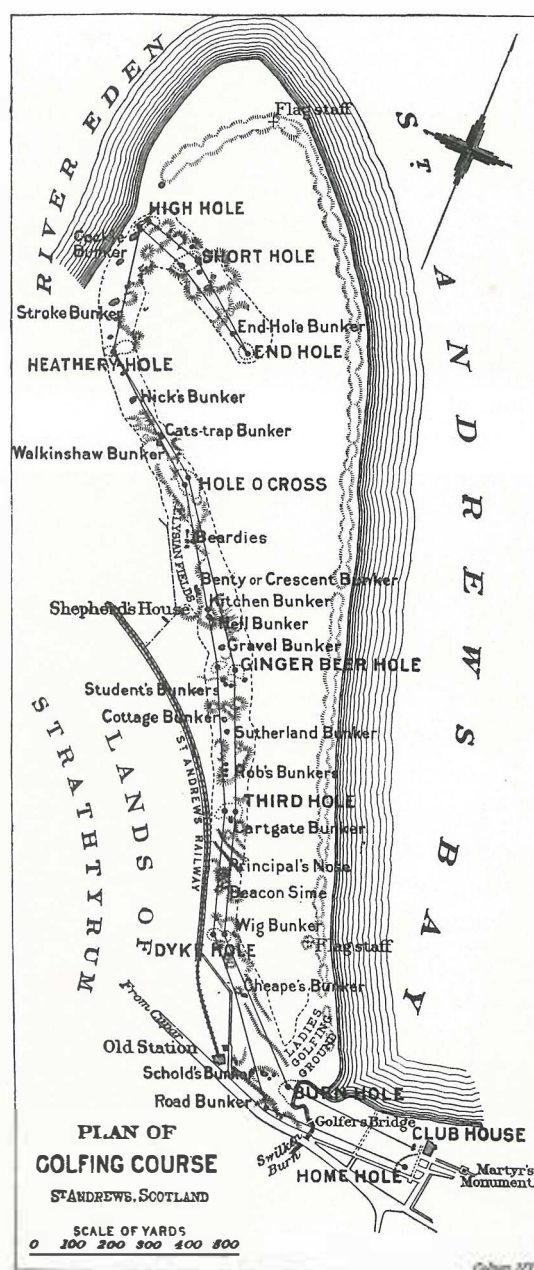
By George Peper and

The Editors of Golf Magazine



Chapter FIVE

The



In Scotland, where the game of golf evolved, natural forces and grazing sheep were the first golf architects, carving hazards from the sandy, links terrain. The early players had only to choose the fairest patches of turf on which to hole out and the most reasonable and interesting route of play between holes. In America, the early courses had to be laid out on land provided not by nature but on sites selected by players. From the beginning, the American version of the game has required some sort of golf course architecture.

Understanding the history of American golf architecture means first appreciating two opposing forces that have guided its development: a yearning for tradition in an environment of changing standards. From that day in 1888 when John Reid and his friends named their golf club St. Andrew's, golf in America has sought to preserve the traditions of the Scottish game, and golf architects have attempted to build holes that possess similar challenges to those of the links. But at the same time, golf architects have struggled to maintain an integrity of design as improvements in golf equipment and course conditioning have made the game easier to play. The first hundred years of American golf course architecture have been marked by a handful of milestone courses of ever-increasing severity.

Whatever John Reid knew of playing golf, he apparently did not much concern himself about modern notions of classic golf architecture—providing a variety of interesting holes of all lengths, routing the course to encounter the wind from all quarters, minimizing blind holes, and adapting the course to the natural terrain. In its early years, the St.

The place where golf began, St. Andrews, Scotland. Designed by nature and maintained largely by grazing sheep, the Old Course remains a classic of thinking man's golf. This map shows the narrow loop design of the course and includes the names of many of its treacherous bunkers.

Course of Architecture

BY
TOM
DOAK

Andrew's club moved from cow pasture to apple orchard to farm; but even in its fourth incarnation, Henry Tallmadge, one of the founding members, recalled years later that "it took the greater part of two days to lay out the new course, but it was well worth the time spent on it." Indeed, the annual upkeep in the budget amounted to \$1,020, including the ground man's salary.

Most of the approximately one thousand courses in turn-of-the-century America were of similar, uninspired design, staked out in a few hours by club members or, more likely, immigrant Scottish golf professionals hired for a design fee of twenty-five dollars. The most prolific of the early architects was Tom Bendelow, who toured the country under the auspices of A. G. Spalding and Bros., which had a secondary interest in the development of golf courses: providing clubs and balls to new players. Despite their rudimentary design, these courses helped popularize golf, and it should be remembered that many future great players (and course designers) learned the game on courses of similar pedigree.

Thankfully, though, a handful of golfers in the United States had higher aspirations: Willie Dunn, who had emigrated from Musselburgh, Scotland, to lay out a twelve-hole course for the Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in Southampton, New York; Charles Blair Macdonald, who laid out the first eighteen-hole course in the United States at the Chicago Golf Club in 1895; and Herbert C. Leeds, an accomplished, self-taught golfer, who laid out probably the best turn-of-the-century course in America, the Myopia Hunt Club in Hamilton, Massachusetts. The strength of the Myopia's layout derived from the placement of its hazards: they presented difficulties for the better players (Leeds often marked the spot where an accomplished visitor's poor drive had come to rest and built a bunker there afterward) while leaving the weaker members an open, if narrow, path to the hole.

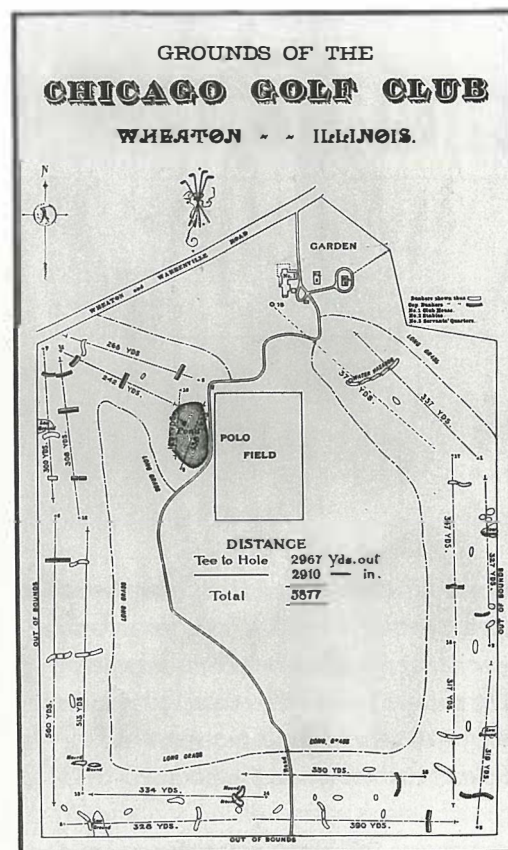
Myopia's dogleg fourth hole, approximately 390 yards long, typifies Leeds's wonderful design. A marsh in the inside corner of the dogleg and the severe tilt of the green create a formidable challenge, but the tilt of the approach to the green around the front bunkers allows weaker players to bounce in even the longest of approaches if the sidehill roll of the fairway is judged correctly. Holes such as this one made Myopia a popular venue of early U.S. Open Championships (four prior to 1910), and have kept the course interesting and enjoyable for the members right to the present with a minimum of adjustments.

Before the turn of the century, American golf still suffered from an inferiority complex in relation to the British version. Around the same time that the landmark victories of Walter Travis and Francis Ouimet made a mark for American players, American golf architecture also began making strides. America's first milestone course was the Oakmont Country Club outside Pittsburgh, founded in 1903 by Henry and William Fownes, whose philosophy of design was stated emphatically: "A poorly played shot . . . should be a shot irrevocably lost." Since William Fownes's standard of what constituted a well-played shot was very high (he was U.S. Amateur champion in 1910), his Oakmont layout was an extreme test of golf. In its heyday, the Oakmont eighteen included narrow fairways, about 220 bunkers (each raked in furrows since the clay subsoil prevented Fownes from digging them very deep), twenty-one drainage ditches, sharply tilted greens maintained at breakneck speed, and more length than any course of its day, because Fownes anticipated the acceptance of the livelier Haskell ball. Oakmont spawned a wave of early courses that imitated its penal philosophy.

Other designers turned back to study the great British links. Walter Travis himself became involved in the redesign of the Garden City Golf Club, a Devereux Emmet layout on



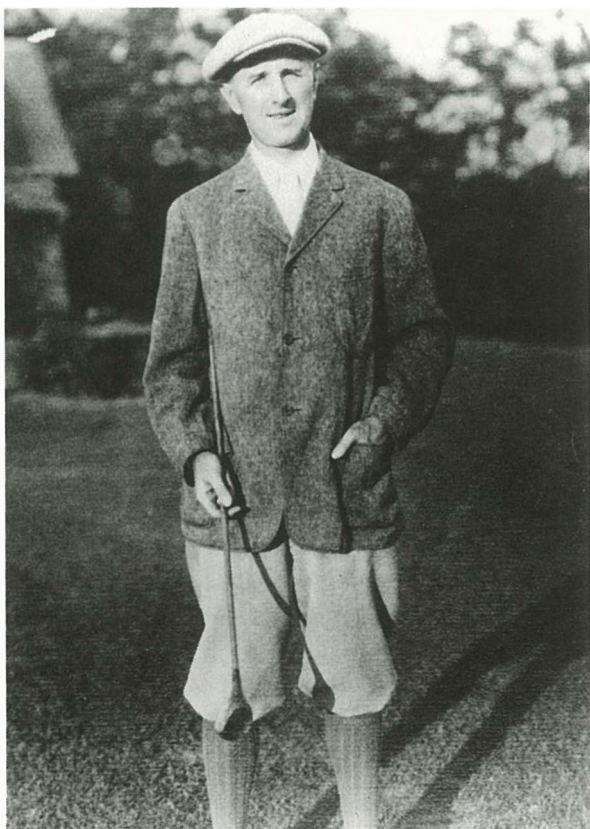
The eighteenth hole at Shinnecock Hills in Southampton, New York. Originally a twelve-hole layout, it was arguably the first top-notch course in America.



The Chicago Golf Club, designed by Charles Blair Macdonald in 1895, was America's first eighteen-hole course.



The fourth hole at Myopia Hunt Club (Hamilton, Massachusetts), a cleverly crafted par four. Although well bunkered, it allows for a bounce-on approach to the right of the green. Myopia was the site of four U.S. Opens before 1910.



William Fownes, 1910 amateur champion and co-designer (with his father Henry) of Oakmont Country Club (near Pittsburgh), America's first revolutionary course.



The original Oakmont course included about 220 bunkers, the most notorious of which were the "church pews."



Oakmont's church pews are as daunting today as they were eighty-five years ago.



The sixteenth hole at Merion East in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, a par four where the approach must be played directly over a quarry. Hugh Wilson designed the course after members of the Merion Cricket Club sent him to study the classic layouts of Scotland.

Long Island, adding fairway pot bunkers and recontouring some greens to closely emulate the challenges of the best British links. In fact, Travis's revised eighteenth hole at Garden City was closely based on the famous eleventh on the Old Course at St. Andrews, Scotland. Meanwhile, the Merion Cricket Club, near Philadelphia, sent young member Hugh Wilson on a six-month trip to study the famous links and gather ideas for the club's new golf course. Though Wilson shied away from direct imitation of the great British holes, his grasp of the concepts of classic golf course design shines in his work. Merion East, virtually from its opening, has been regarded as one of America's premier courses.

The inspiration for the efforts of Travis and Wilson, though, was provided by Charles Blair Macdonald. By the turn of the century, Macdonald's career as a competitive amateur golfer was past, and he began to think more and more of golf architecture as his calling. His experiences at St. Andrews and other courses overseas had convinced him that, although America had a handful of good courses, it still had none to match the best of the links courses. Beginning in the summer of 1902, Macdonald journeyed abroad several times to survey and study the best links holes. At the same time, he began searching the Eastern seaboard for a site on which to build "a classical golf course, one which would eventually compare favorably with the championship links abroad, and serve as an incentive to the elevation of the game in America." By 1911, Macdonald's National Golf Links of America, in Southampton, New York, was complete.

The National received instant acclaim from both American and foreign players as one of the great courses in the

world. Everything about the course was carefully conceived and constructed to the highest standard. The sophistication of the design was rivaled only by the Old Course at St. Andrews, with each hole featuring an impressive array of hazards and contours, but cunningly laid out to offer a safe alternate route to the green for the weak or those lacking confidence in their games. Although a great number of hazards lurked to punish the failed shot, careful, tactical planning could help any player succeed. Indeed, it was Macdonald's goal to create a course without a weak link among the eighteen holes, a standard that even the great British links failed to equal.

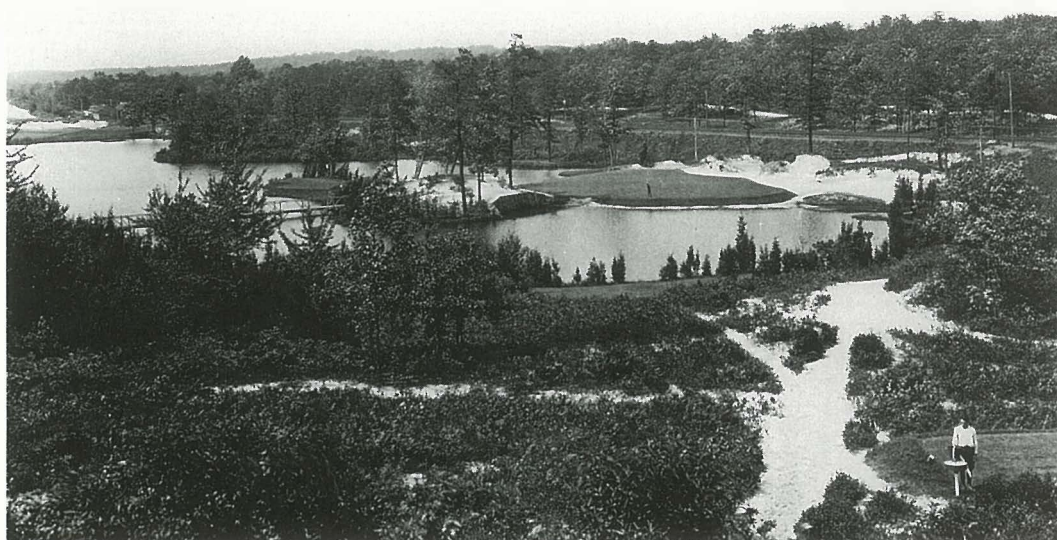
To succeed in his lofty aims, Macdonald also had to elevate the standards of construction of the day. Unlike John Reid's two-day layout in 1894, Macdonald spent two years in the actual construction of The National, moving tons of earth if necessary to adapt the Long Island terrain to his design. Moreover, to ensure that the upkeep of the course remained at the same high standard as the design, he spent a great deal of time cultivating grasses for the fairways, greens, and roughs, and a great deal of money developing an artificial irrigation system for the greens.

To this day, The National remains a wonder for the student of golf architecture, but its "weaknesses" belie the difficulty of maintaining shot values across seventy-five years of technology. Improvements in golf equipment, which have shortened other courses, have been partly balanced out by modern fairway irrigation, which has taken much of the bone out of the ground. Errant tee shots now come lazily to rest on sidehill lies, instead of careening through the wide fairways into the fairway bunkers that Macdonald crafted so patiently. The blind shots that Macdonald incorporated into the second and third holes, which were all the rage in Britain at the turn of the century, are considered outdated in modern architectural thinking. Despite the changes, The National retains the unique character that places it on the upper rung of courses.

No sooner was The National finished, however, than it became overshadowed by another new course east of Philadelphia in the New Jersey pine barrens: Pine Valley Golf Club. Pine Valley was the brainchild of Philadelphia hotel owner George Crump, an avid golfer who became obsessed with the idea of constructing the finest, hardest course in the golfing world. Crump was assisted in routing the course by the English designer H. S. Colt, and in devising strategy for the holes by several friends who were making their first forays into design, including A.W. Tillinghast, William Flynn, and George C. Thomas, Jr. But Crump himself was responsible for the grand scale of the course, which sets it apart from



Two of Pine Valley's earliest assailants pause at the tee of the fifth hole, a 226-yard shot over water to a severely bunkered, heavily contoured, plateau green. Known as the hole where "only God can make a three," it has continued to give golfers pause for three-quarters of a century.



The par-three fourteenth hole at Pine Valley, about 1920. Carved from New Jersey's pine barrens, the course was—and is—the ultimate in target golf. Wayward shots meet with disastrous consequences.



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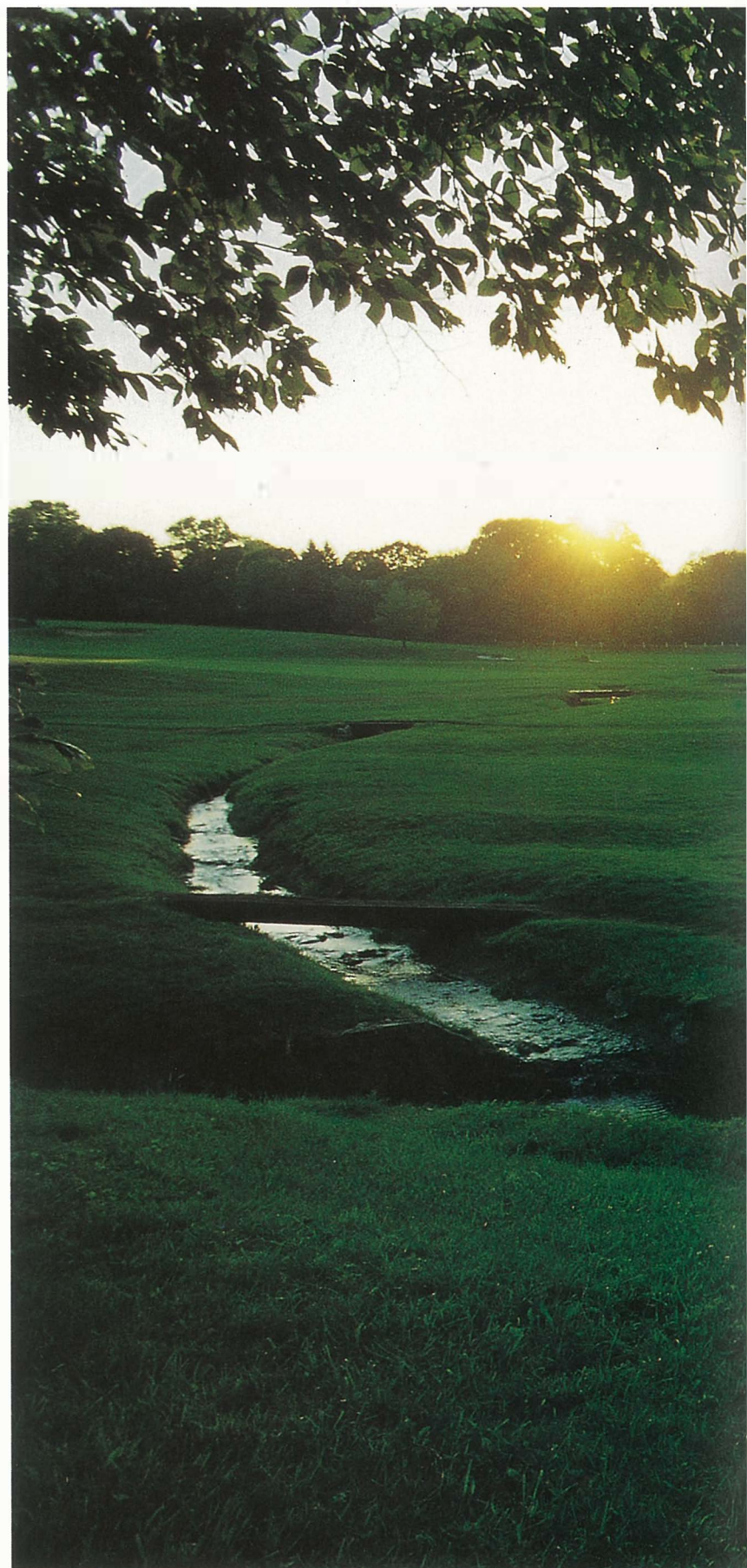
The National Golf Links of America, C. B. Macdonald's homage to the links courses of Scotland, met with instant acclaim when it opened in 1911. Although short by today's standards, it still puts a premium on careful shot-planning. This is the view from the fifteenth tee.

Above:

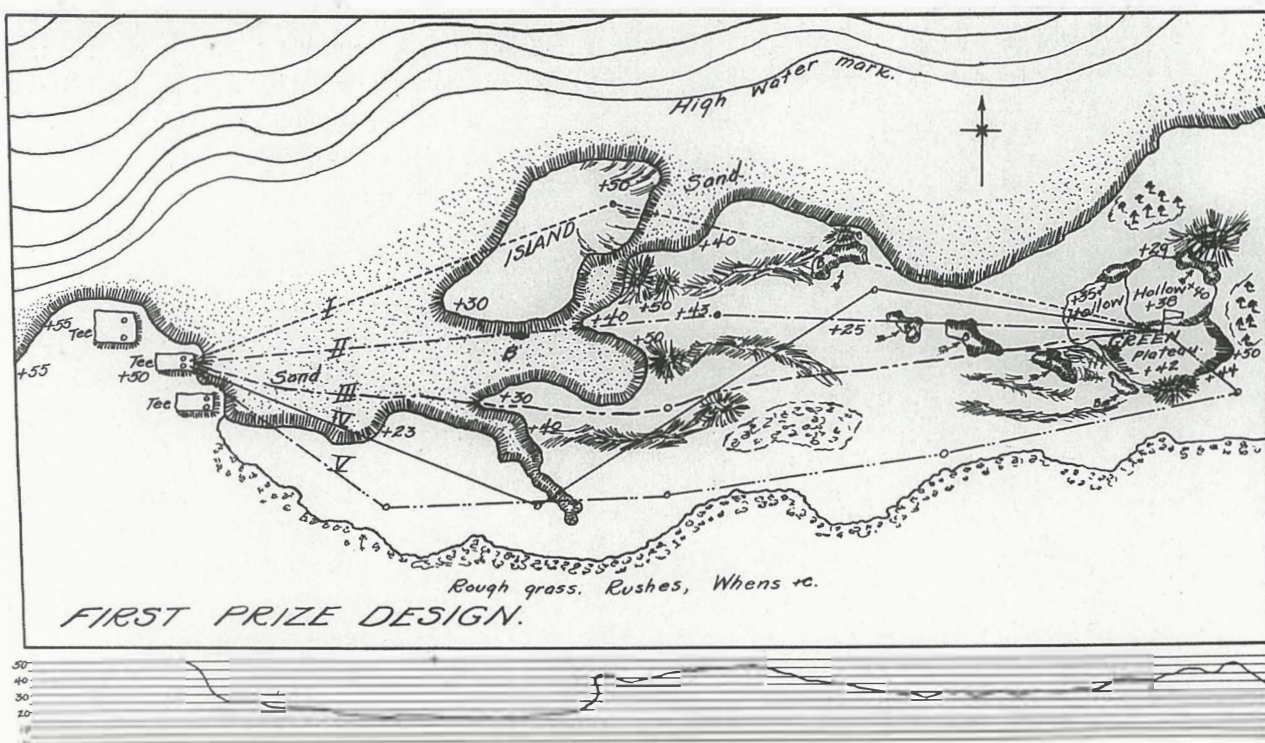
Number ten at Pine Valley is a short iron on a calm day, but the serenity ends quickly if the tee shot should catch the cavernous right-front bunker.

Right:

Careful placement is important on the tee shot to Merion's short ninth hole, where the smallish green is protected by both water and sand.







When C. B. Macdonald undertook the design of the Lido Golf Club on the south shore of Long Island in 1914, a British magazine ran a contest to design the eighteenth hole. This is the winning entry, which came from a doctor named Alister Mackenzie. In the 1920s, Mackenzie would achieve architectural fame of his own. By 1950, however, the Lido, hailed widely after its completion, would run into financial trouble and be forced out of existence.

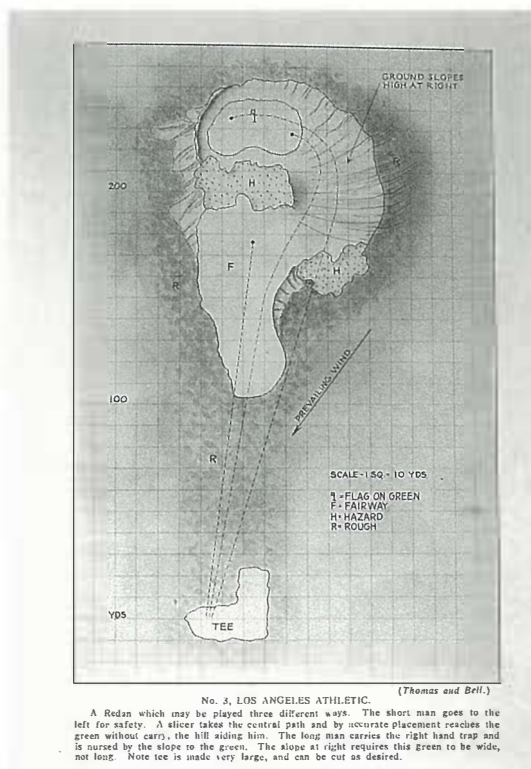
any other in the world. Every target area (fairway or green) is set off by the sand and scrub that characterizes the region, effectively forcing players to proceed around the course from one island to the next, with disastrous consequences for the wayward shot. This concept severely penalized the beginning player. For the better player, each hole retained an intense, strategic interest, with the landing areas and greens carefully positioned and proportioned to the shots required. Other designers, including Donald Ross and Macdonald, declared Pine Valley to be unquestionably the finest in America, and astoundingly, it has remained that way. The 1987 edition of *GOLF Magazine's* "100 Greatest Courses in the World" placed Pine Valley in the No. 1 position.

But instead of emulating Pine Valley's penal qualities, other architects recognized that Crump's was a unique project, impossible to surpass for grandeur and unfit for service to the average golfer. Pine Valley discouraged imitations and

emphasized the need for less strenuous layouts. In the historical timeline of golf architecture, several other courses have performed a similar function.

One other course of this generation deserves mention as an example of the advanced ingenuity of early designers and as a solemn reminder of the precarious existence of even the best clubs and courses. In 1914, C.B. Macdonald was commissioned to build on the south shore of Long Island his second masterpiece, the Lido Golf Club. Occupying flat to marshy land on the narrow strand between the Atlantic Ocean and the intracoastal waterway (Reynolds Channel), the Lido was an enormous undertaking because its developer gave Macdonald a free hand to construct whatever ideal contours he conceived by dredging and filling from the channel. An English magazine even held a competition to design an ideal finishing hole for the course. It was won by a doctor and architectural enthusiast named Alister Mackenzie, who would himself leap to the forefront of the design business in the 1920s. By that time, Macdonald's Lido Golf Club was completed and so highly regarded that only Pine Valley and The National were considered in its peer group. But within thirty years, financial trouble among the members forced the Lido out of existence.

With courses such as Pine Valley and The National serving as models of quality design, combined with the economic and



An illustration from George C. Thomas, Jr.,'s treatise, *Golf Architecture in America—Its Strategy and Construction*. Books such as this one helped to spread knowledge and contributed to the Golden Age of course design in the 1920s.



The earliest American courses were built with the help of good old-fashioned horsepower. This was the scene during the construction at Pinehurst in North Carolina.

social boom of the postwar years, the decade of the twenties was perhaps the capstone of golf course architecture in America: more of the highly regarded courses in America today were built between 1920 and 1929 than in any two decades before or since. The contributing factors to this Golden Age include the following:

1. The science of golf course construction had made great strides by the start of the decade, particularly in turfgrass research, because of the foundation of the United States Golf Association (USGA) Green Section in 1920.
2. The architects of the decade were less antagonistic than those in the modern era. Many, in fact, pursued the trade more as an avocation than for profit. Some wrote books detailing their philosophies of design (such as Dr. MacKenzie's *Golf Architecture*, Robert Hunter's *The Links*, and George C. Thomas, Jr.'s *Golf Architecture in America*), and most freely exchanged ideas, not surprising, since many designers had been golf companions in the previous decade.
3. The painstaking methods of course construction compelled designers to ponder every delicate contour. Grading changes for shaping bunkers and contouring putting greens were achieved with the help of old-fashioned horsepower. Teams of horses dragged scraper pans that could be adjusted by an operator to cut and fill to exact specifications. Architect Robert Trent Jones recalls the contouring of a typical green that took seven teams of horses one week.
4. The architects of the twenties had the good fortune to work with some of the finest terrain ever made available to designers, as the popularity of the game and society in general spread from the Eastern seaboard across the country. From Pebble Beach and Cypress Point in the West, to Seminole and the Upper Cascades in the East, the Golden Age advanced because of golden opportunities.
5. Finally, it is possible that, from today's perspective, the courses of the twenties appear particularly alluring because modern improvements in equipment have made the average player the equal of the accomplished twenties player, for whom designers targeted their



The par-three seventh hole at San Francisco, one of A.W. Tillinghast's first courses (1915) and, in the view of many, his finest.



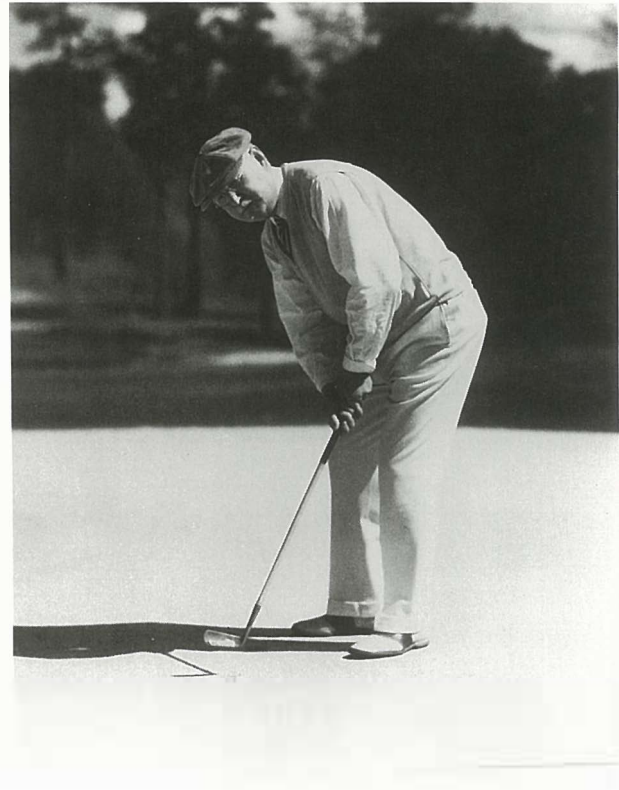
For George C. Thomas, golf architecture was a hobby, but he pursued it with the expertise of a professional. This is the seventeenth green at one of his classics, Riviera in Pacific Palisades, California.



A. W. Tillinghast, designer of Winged Foot (West), Baltusrol (Lower), Quaker Ridge, San Francisco, Baltimore (Five Farms), Brook Hollow, and Somerset Hills, all ranked among "GOLF Magazine's 100 Greatest Courses in the World."

layouts. If golf club and golf ball technology is allowed to continue unchecked for another twenty years, the courses of the 1920s may fall out of favor, and the next generation of courses will be cherished classics.

Six prominent designers were especially busy in the United States during the decade of the twenties. Charles Blair Macdonald still was very active, at St. Louis, Yale, and the revamped Chicago Golf Club (Macdonald's assistant, Seth Raynor, designed fine courses such as Camargo and Shoreacres on the side). A.W. Tillinghast, another American who had learned the game during an extended visit to St. Andrews, turned out a stunning number of championship-quality courses, including the two-course complexes at Winged Foot and Baltusrol, twenty-seven holes at Ridgewood Country Club, and eighteens at Baltimore Country Club, Quaker Ridge, and Brook Hollow. William Flynn, a Philadelphia protégé of Hugh Wilson who carried on his legacy after Wilson's premature death, produced such gems as Cherry Hills, Upper Cascades, the Philadelphia Country



Donald Ross, putting on a sand green near his office in Pinehurst. Ross turned out more than a hundred courses over a ten-year period.

Club, and the revised layouts for The Country Club and Shinnecock Hills with engineer Howard Toomey. George C. Thomas, Jr., another Philadelphian, moved to southern California in 1919, conveniently providing him an open market to practice his new hobby of golf course design at Los Angeles Country Club, Bel Air, and Riviera. In 1927 he published his classic treatise, *Golf Architecture in America—Its Strategy and Construction*.

Donald Ross, an immigrant Scot from Dornoch, was the most prolific architect of all and perhaps the most representative of the style of the times as well. From his office in Pinehurst, North Carolina (the site of his masterpiece, Pinehurst No. 2), Ross turned out more than a hundred courses in the decade. Several of his designs consisted of no more than a course routing, based on topographical maps his clients had submitted, leaving it up to the club in question to find a competent construction supervisor; still, Ross felt that providing the routing was getting the client off to a good start. Some projects, though, received more attention if the client was lucky enough to have one of Ross's close assistants or Ross himself on site during construction. A few of Ross's



Raised, contoured greens and spacious bunkers characterized the Ross courses, as reflected in the sixteenth hole of Pinehurst No. 2.

better-known layouts from this period include The Country Club of Birmingham, Alabama; Seminole Golf Club, North Palm Beach, Florida; Salem Country Club, Peabody, Massachusetts; Northland Country Club, Duluth, Minnesota; Plainfield Country Club, New Jersey; Oak Hill, Rochester, New York; and Wannamoisset Country Club, Rumford, Rhode Island. These courses featured the classic small, raised, contoured greens and carefully placed bunkers that characterize the Ross look and perhaps the entire Golden Age.

The sixth and final prominent designer of the 1920s was Alister Mackenzie. Mackenzie's output in the United States was limited by his efforts overseas, which in this decade alone included work in Ireland, Uruguay, New Zealand, and Australia (most notably the Royal Melbourne club, currently ranked sixth in the world by *GOLF Magazine*). But in the late twenties, Mackenzie found time to create two California projects, Cypress Point in Carmel and Pasatiempo in Santa Cruz, which vaulted him to prominence in America. Cypress

Point, a dazzling layout through the forest and along the cliff tops of the Monterey Peninsula, is well known as one of this country's classic courses, but in the history of course design, its greatest influence was in attracting the attention of Bobby Jones, who played the layout several times after being upset in the first round of the 1929 U.S. Amateur Championship at Pebble Beach. Jones's admiration for Cypress Point led him to choose Mackenzie to assist with the design of a pet project for his friends, the Augusta National Golf Club.

It was the Augusta National that revolutionized strategic course design in America. Unlike Oakmont, The National, or Pine Valley, which depended heavily on fairway hazards to provide strategic interest, Augusta had few bunkers or other hazards to indicate the correct line of play or trap errant shots. Jones and Mackenzie wanted only to ensure that the poorly planned or executed shot would leave the player in an extremely difficult position from which to reach his or her next objective. This they achieved by carefully conceiving greens and pin positions that could be safely approached from only one angle. The rest of the Augusta National appeared wide open, with nearly eighty acres of fairways and just twenty-two bunkers to begin with.



Yet, in practice, rare is the great course that does not include a considerable overlap of the penal, strategic, and heroic philosophies of design. The most famous stretch of the Augusta National, holes eleven through thirteen (christened the Amen Corner by golf writer Herbert Warren Wind), illustrates the point.

The eleventh, a 445-yard two-shotter, is a classic example of the strategic philosophy. Its key hazard is a modest-size pond to the left of the slick green, compounded by a pronounced right-to-left slope of the ground on the approach. Recovery from it requires an exceedingly difficult downhill chip toward the pond. (This is the shot Larry Mize holed to win the 1987 Masters in sudden death.) Players driving down the left can aim their approaches away from the pond to the fat of the green; from the right side of the fairway, the player can angle past the pond at a tough left-hand pin position.

Left:

Alister Mackenzie during a round at the Old Course at St. Andrews, Scotland. Few architects have had a greater influence on design.

Below:

The short but treacherous par-four ninth hole at Cypress Point, Alister Mackenzie's masterpiece on the Monterey Peninsula.



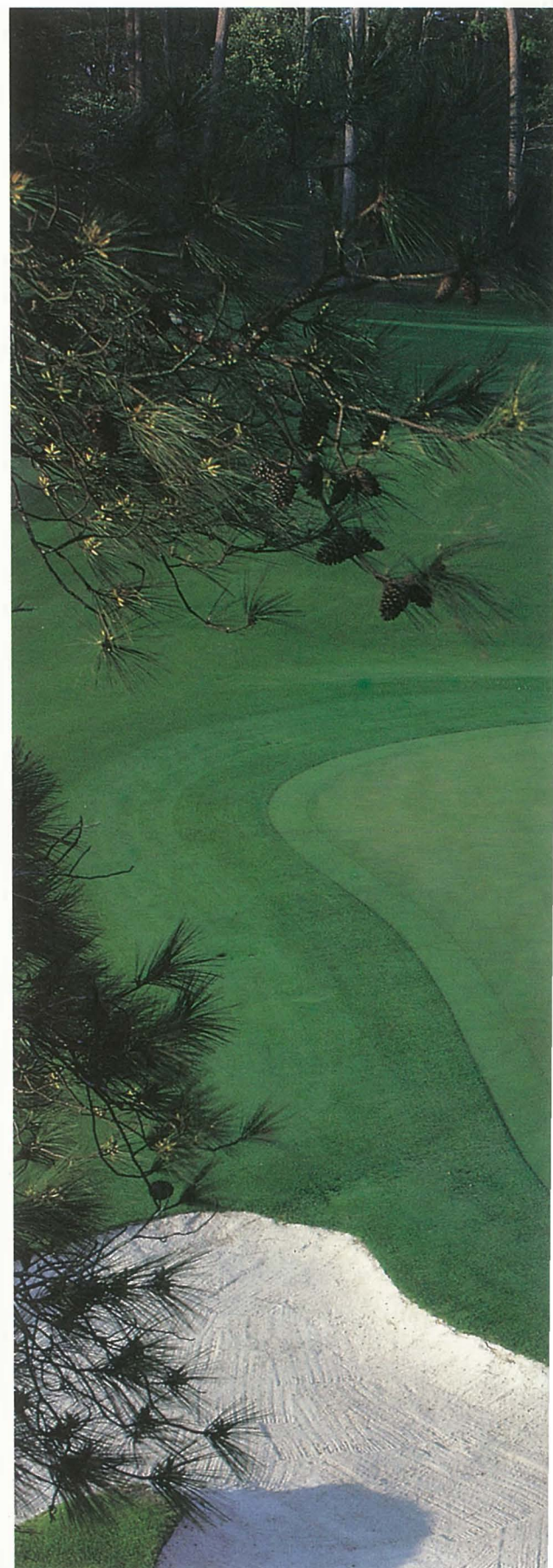


Above:
Bobby Jones in his role as architect, amid dozens of the trees hewn during the clearing stage of construction of the Augusta National Golf Club, Augusta, Georgia.

Right:
The strategic, penal, and heroic schools of architecture merge at Augusta's Amen Corner. At the eleventh hole, a generous fairway but a tightly guarded green reflect the strategic philosophy.

The designers saw no need to bunker the landing area for the drive; each player is given the chance to play the approach as it best suits him, provided he plans and executes his drive accordingly.

Augusta's twelfth hole, at 155 yards, by contrast, gives the player little choice but to confront its difficulties head-on. The short pitch across Rae's Creek to a sliver of green set at an angle to the line of play with bunkers front and rear places the utmost premium on correct judgment of distance. Yet swirling winds in this low corner of the property add an element of chance to club selection. The margin for error is so slight that even the best players in the world prefer to play to the safer







Augusta's twelfth hole, a par three played into swirling winds toward a shallow green, is penal architecture at its best.

left side of the green, regardless of the location of the pin. However, in architectural theory it is generally held that a short hole is the most appropriate place for a penal touch, since every player is given the benefit of a perfect lie for his approach. Even on the shortest two-shotters, some allowance must be made for those who have driven badly.

Finally, the thirteenth hole, a 465-yard par five, represents the third "school" of design—the heroic. A player with the daring and skill to bring off a drawn tee shot around the corner of this dogleg left, guarded by a swift-flowing creek, followed by a long second across the creek as it slashes in front of the green, may gain a stroke over an opponent who opts for the safer three-shot route to the green. It is interesting to note, however, that were this hole called a par four instead of a par five (as the USGA would no doubt insist of a 465-yard hole in an Open Championship), players would condemn it as a penal hole simply because the scorecard would oblige them to attempt the difficult approach.

The year 1935 drew great attention to the contrasting styles of course design. In April, Gene Sarazen's famous double eagle on the fifteenth hole in the final round of The Masters focused nationwide interest on the Augusta National course. Barely two months later, Sam Parks, Jr., won the U.S. Open Championship at Oakmont at the height of its difficulty, being the only player in the field to break three hundred for the four rounds. Competitors, writers, and architects agreed that the Augusta style of design provided more enjoyment for a greater number of players.

The golf world had a long time to ponder its preference. Between the start of the Depression in 1930 and the end of World War II, more clubs went broke and disappeared than new ones were built to replace them. Some architects, prominent among them A.W. Tillinghast, made a living during this period by streamlining courses to reduce maintenance costs—mostly by eliminating extraneous bunkers in keeping with the new, strategic style of architecture. Others, includ-



The par-five thirteenth hole at Augusta beckons a long shot over Rae's Creek from anyone who wants to get home in two. Such is the stuff of the heroic school.

ing a young designer fresh out of Cornell University, Robert Trent Jones, built public courses as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) programs.

Classic architecture did not disappear completely. In fact, several outstanding courses were built in odd corners of the country during the thirties: John Bredemus's Colonial Country Club in Fort Worth, Texas; William Flynn's revised layout at Shinnecock Hills; Alister Mackenzie's Crystal Downs in northern Michigan; and Perry Maxwell's original nine holes at Prairie Dunes in Kansas. Any of these courses might have started a revolution in design. Instead, with the exception of Colonial, they languished in obscurity for decades.

During the long lull, the business of golf architecture underwent drastic changes. Heavy earthmoving machinery had evolved dramatically from the prewar era, allowing courses to be constructed faster than previously possible and affording designers the prerogative of moving large volumes of dirt to overcome serious deficiencies in the natural terrain,

eliminating the blind shot as a routing problem. By the early 1950s, automatic irrigation for the entire course created a golf boom in the Southern states that previously had difficulty establishing playable turf. Riding maintenance equipment allowed courses to be maintained more cheaply, but the sizes of greens, tees, and bunkers had to be enlarged to accommodate the wide turning radii of the new machinery. And the burgeoning population brought new demands for golf, much of it integrated with the simultaneous housing boom. The rationale for building a golf course had changed: most projects in the modern generation were built to profit from the surrounding land development rather than because the land was suited for golf.

The most revolutionary change—the development of air and auto travel—allowed designers to move quickly from job to job checking the progress of the work. As most of the leading architects of the Golden Age had died between 1930 and 1948, the field became wide open for several young

designers to corner the market on the design of new courses and the revision of fine prewar layouts. Into the breach stepped two designers who would dominate the profession during the fifties and early sixties, Robert Trent Jones and Dick Wilson.

Trent Jones, whose middle name became common usage to distinguish him from the legendary golfer Robert Tyre ("Bobby") Jones, Jr., had trained himself specifically for the profession of golf architecture in the graduate schools at Cornell University and had served as an apprentice and later a partner to Stanley Thompson, who had designed nearly all of Canada's outstanding courses a generation earlier. Jones's style of design was greatly influenced by Thompson and Mackenzie and particularly by the Augusta National, on which he helped the other Bob Jones with some major modifications after the war.

While Trent Jones designed many prominent resort layouts, his most influential work was on courses that would host major tournaments, getting maximum television exposure. From 1951 to 1956, four of the six courses hosting the U.S. Open (Oakland Hills, Baltusrol, Olympic, and Oak Hill) were revamped by Jones to strengthen them against the improvements in equipment, course conditioning, and play. Trent Jones's solution was to pinch the fairways down to twenty-five to thirty yards in the landing areas, with either stringent fairway bunkers (as at Oakland Hills) or punitive rough (as at Olympic). The results of his work at Oakland Hills were especially dramatic: two rounds under par were returned in the entire seventy-two-hole tournament, and the architect was regarded by many (except the players) as a hero. Trent Jones thus became the first golf architect whose name was a selling point in the marketing of a course, a phenomenon that led to greater recognition and higher fees for those at the top of the profession.

Dick Wilson, an engineer who had apprenticed under William Flynn, was Trent Jones's greatest contemporary rival. His style differed considerably from Trent Jones's, but the basics fit in with the new American mode: long tees for flexibility, fairly big greens, wide fairways, and perhaps a slightly more stringent bunkering around (especially in front of) the greens. Wilson, however, conducted business very differently from Jones. Having been brought up in the construction end of the business, he considered on-site supervision essential, so he worked on only a handful of projects at a time, concentrating them within the same area to reduce his travel schedule. A few of Wilson's early courses are spread across the country, including Meadow Brook on Long Island, Laurel Valley in Pennsylvania, La Costa in California, and Cog Hill outside Chicago. But the bulk of Wilson's best work



Robert Trent Jones, the most prolific designer in history, adapted Augusta National's expansive style to courses around the world.

can be found in southern Florida, where he produced Bay Hill, Doral, J.D.M. Country Club, and arguably his masterpiece, Pine Tree Golf Club, within a four-year period. These courses featured much water, as much out of the necessity of draining the low-lying Florida land as for strategic value. Wilson died in 1965, at the peak of his popularity, leaving his assistants, Joe Lee and Bob Von Hagge, to carry on his practice.

Overall, though, the products of this period of design are considered somewhat disappointing today. Hundreds of new courses were turned out every year, to a fairly high standard of construction, by an increasing number of accomplished professional designers. Most of them lacked individuality, relying too heavily on length to make them challenging. One sometimes wishes that more amateurs had become involved in the business of design: surely there would have been some lunatic layouts, but possibly also one inspired course in the



Stringent fairway bunkering is characteristic of Trent Jones's redesign work, as here at Oakland Hills Country Club, Birmingham, Michigan.

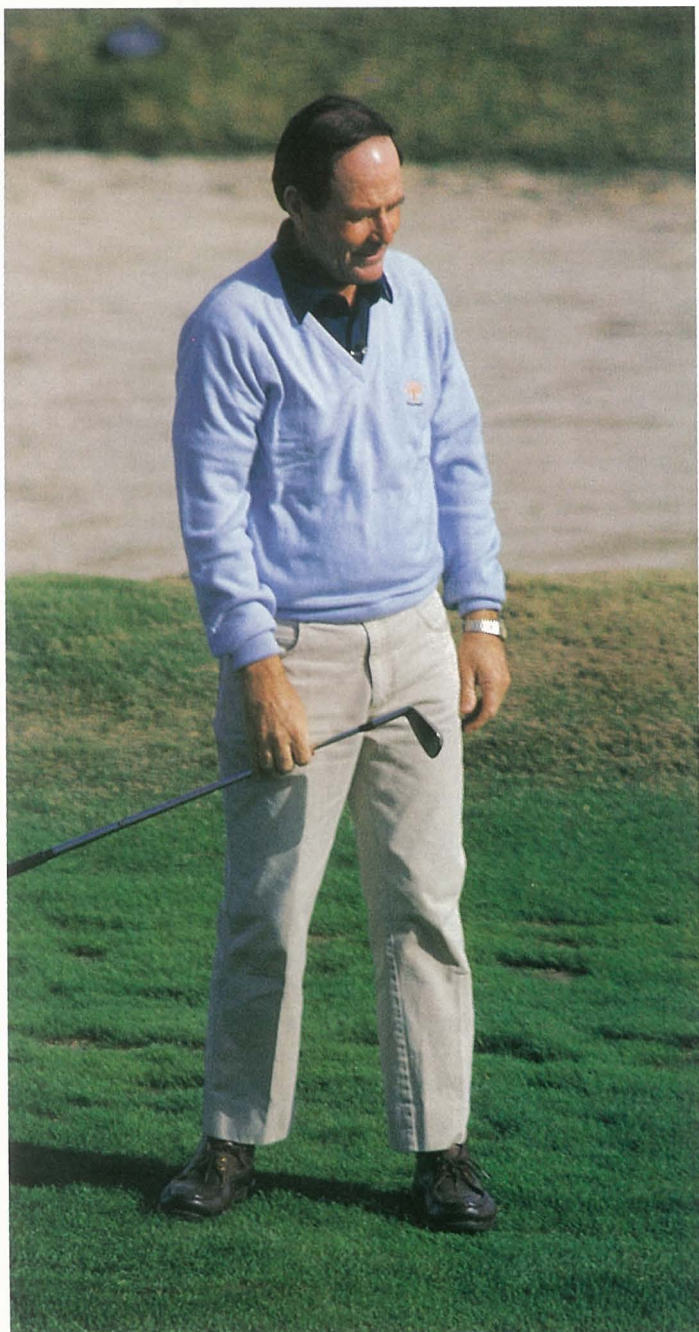
tradition of George Crump's Pine Valley or Jack Neville's Pebble Beach.

The straw that broke the back of the ultralong school of design occurred in the mid-sixties when two American courses, The International Golf Course in Massachusetts and Dub's Dread in Kansas, extended their back tees to eight thousand yards. The necessarily larger fairway areas and bigger greens also entailed ever-greater maintenance costs. The shock of these two courses was enormous. Like Pine Valley two generations before, designers realized that, although these courses provided a championship test, they were not proper models for the majority of courses.

The two men most responsible for changing course design to the style called "modern" in 1988 first worked together in the late 1960s. Pete Dye was an accomplished amateur golfer who dabbled in course design one summer and never went back to his old business; Jack Nicklaus was a young profes-

sional at the top of his game and showing an interest in course design. Their milestone was the Harbour Town Golf Links in South Carolina, a tight layout winding through the live oaks and along a marsh, which measured only 6,600 yards but proved challenging enough for the professionals, including Nicklaus, who had assisted on the design and hit countless balls in the dirt to test the shot values of the layout. Dye used railroad-tie bulkheads to form the boundary between greens and water or to set off bunkers as he had seen on early Scottish courses. A combination of various grasses of different textures demarking fairway, green, bunker face, and rough added the final artistic touch that set the course apart from those of the previous generation.

Harbour Town was not Dye's first top-notch course: three years earlier, he had completed The Golf Club outside Nicklaus's hometown of Columbus, Ohio, which opened to outstanding reviews. But the exclusive nature of The Golf Club



Left:

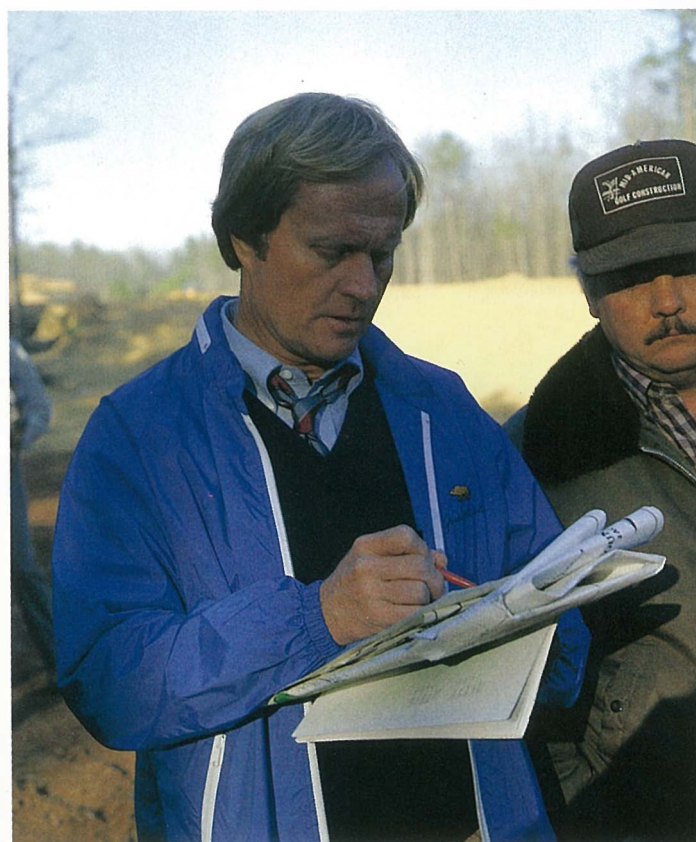
Pete Dye, originally an insurance man, dabbled in course design one summer and never went back to his old business.

Opposite:

The par-three seventeenth hole at Harbour Town Golf Links, Hilton Head, South Carolina, where Pete Dye, assisted by Jack Nicklaus, used a collection of unique architectural gambits to set the golf world on its ear.

Below:

Jack Nicklaus, the world's most successful player, has carved a second career and threatens to become the world's most successful golf architect as well.



prevented it from drawing attention. In the modern era, television has to be involved in any design revolution. When Arnold Palmer won the inaugural Heritage Classic, Harbour Town was almost instantly named one of America's top ten courses.

Jack Nicklaus made the next major breakthrough in 1974 with his Muirfield Village layout. Recruiting British land planner and golf architect Desmond Muirhead to help him with the routing of the golf course in relation to the development, Nicklaus planned his "home" layout in minute detail, with certain holes on the layout suggestive of holes Nicklaus

admired throughout the world, as Bobby Jones had done at Augusta. Since he also hoped to attract a PGA Tour event to his course, Nicklaus included spectator mounds around the greens on many holes. Muirfield Village also met with instant acclaim. Nicklaus was praised as a designer for his perfectionist approach to ensuring that all the hazards on the course were completely visible from the tees and landing areas, even if great volumes of earth had to be moved to do it.

Between them, Nicklaus and Dye came to dominate the golf course design business in the last half of the seventies and in the eighties. Other designers built noteworthy courses—



particularly Robert Trent Jones, the bulk of whose work in this era was confined to Europe; Jones's two sons, Rees and Robert, Jr., who established practices of their own around 1970; and George and Tom Fazio, who did graceful work, from Butler National in Chicago to Jupiter Hills, Florida, to Wild Dunes, South Carolina. (The Fazios also were called on to revise several old championship courses, such as Donald Ross's Oak Hill and Inverness, in preparation for upcoming championship events. Their changes renewed debate over whether the original handiwork of the masters' courses or the shot value of their courses should be preserved.) Nicklaus's

success in the profession also paved the way for other leading players to enter the golf course design business, usually in conjunction with an established designer or construction supervisor. Still, it was the designs of Dye and Nicklaus that attracted the greatest attention, loudest praise, and sharpest criticism, and eventually the most imitation. By the mid-eighties, for better or worse, it was tough to find a designer who did not display a railroad-tie or rock bulkhead along the edge of a water hazard, or who did not require a huge construction budget to complete the design. Even the St. Andrews' Golf Club, which had been at home in Yonkers

since 1897, underwent a \$2-million facelift at the hands of Nicklaus, who incorporated a new condominium development into the design.

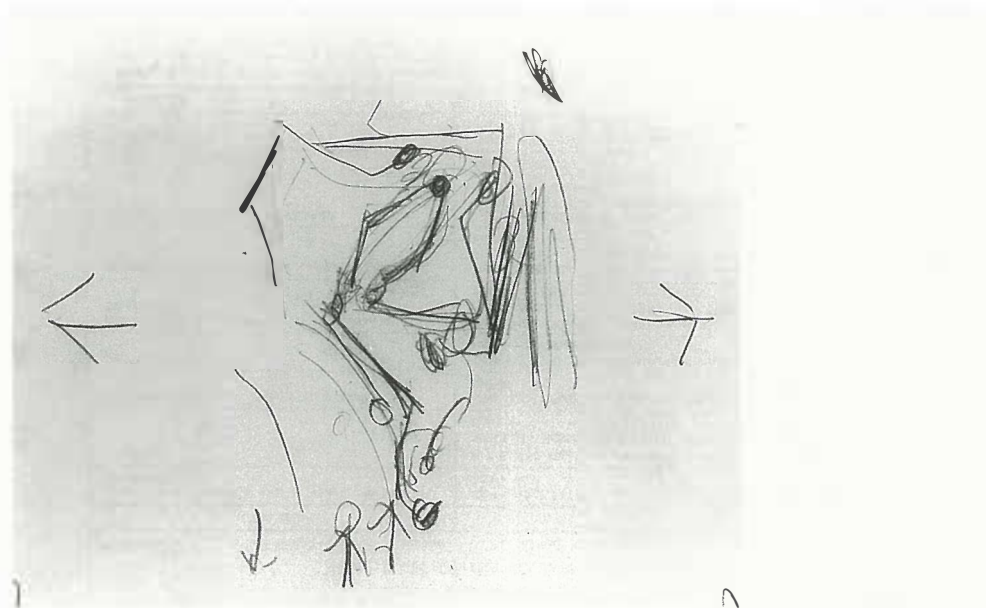
The last milestone course of golf's first hundred years in America, however, belonged to Pete Dye's Tournament Players Club (TPC) at Sawgrass, Florida, founded in 1979 by PGA Tour Commissioner Deane Beman as the new home of the tour and the site of its own championship event. Reclaimed from a swamp south of Jacksonville Beach, Dye's layout tested every facet of the professionals' games, including their patience and response to pressure. In some respects, the TPC resembles an obstacle course, with difficult, "unreceptive" greens and water in play on virtually every hole, most notably at the par-three seventeenth, whose green is an island tethered to shore by a narrow causeway, designed to ensure that even the biggest of leads would not allow a player to limp home. While players criticized the tortuous nature of

the test, galleries marveled at the mammoth spectator mounds dredged from the many lakes and canals, which allowed tremendous views of the action for a larger audience than previously possible.

The success of the Tournament Players Club from the fans' point of view prompted the tour to franchise a chain of similar stadium courses for the sites of a dozen tour events by 1988, amid great controversy from some corners that the courses were not necessarily of tournament quality and that they were all too similar, favoring a certain class of player. More than anything else, though, the courses have suffered from the success of Dye's model at Sawgrass, which led the tour to expand the chain too rapidly, while other designers were still under the influence of Dye's style. The latest model, the stadium course at PGA West in La Quinta, California (opened in 1986 and designed again by Dye), has been so universally criticized for its severity that it is unclear whether



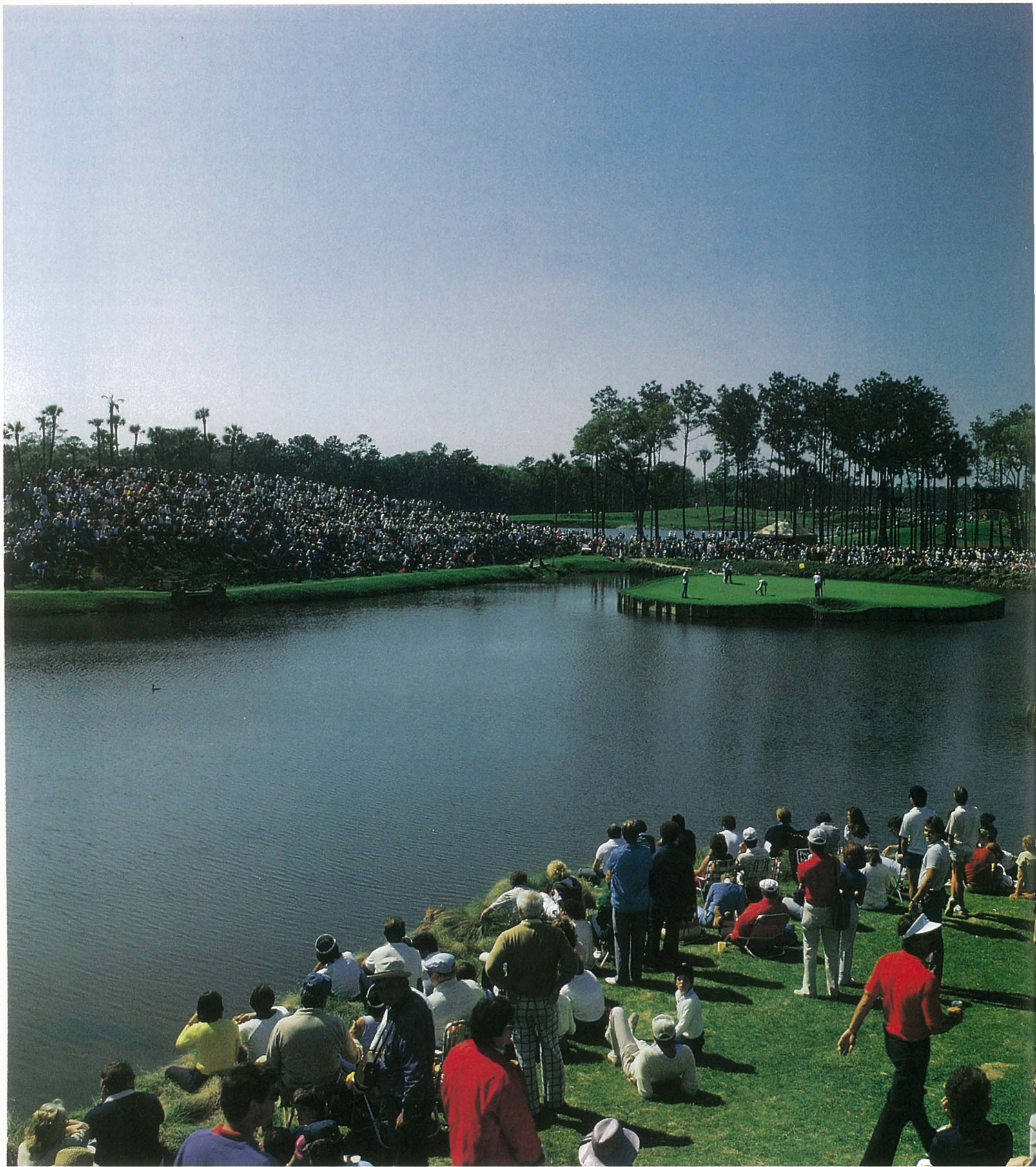
The fourteenth hole at Nicklaus's Muirfield Village (Dublin, Ohio), host to the annual Memorial Tournament and to the 1987 Ryder Cup matches.

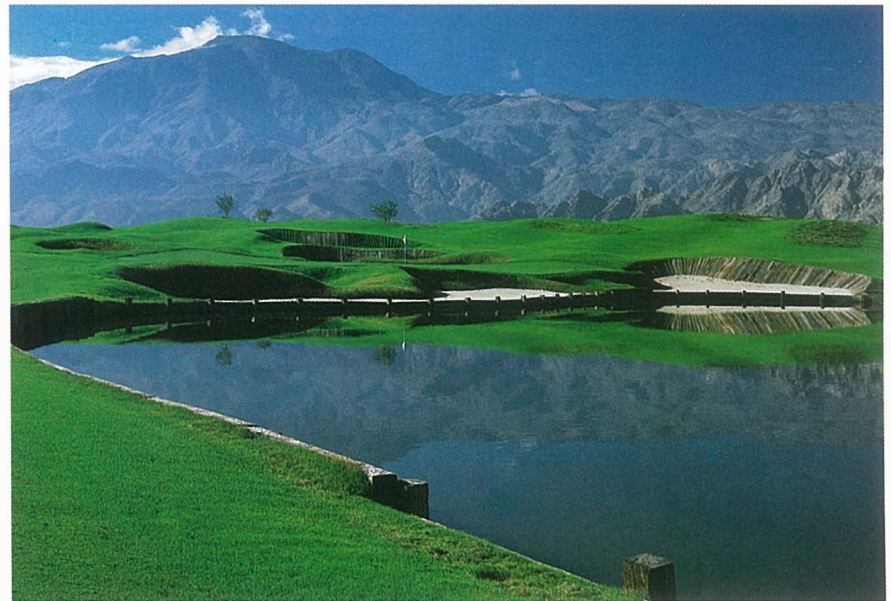
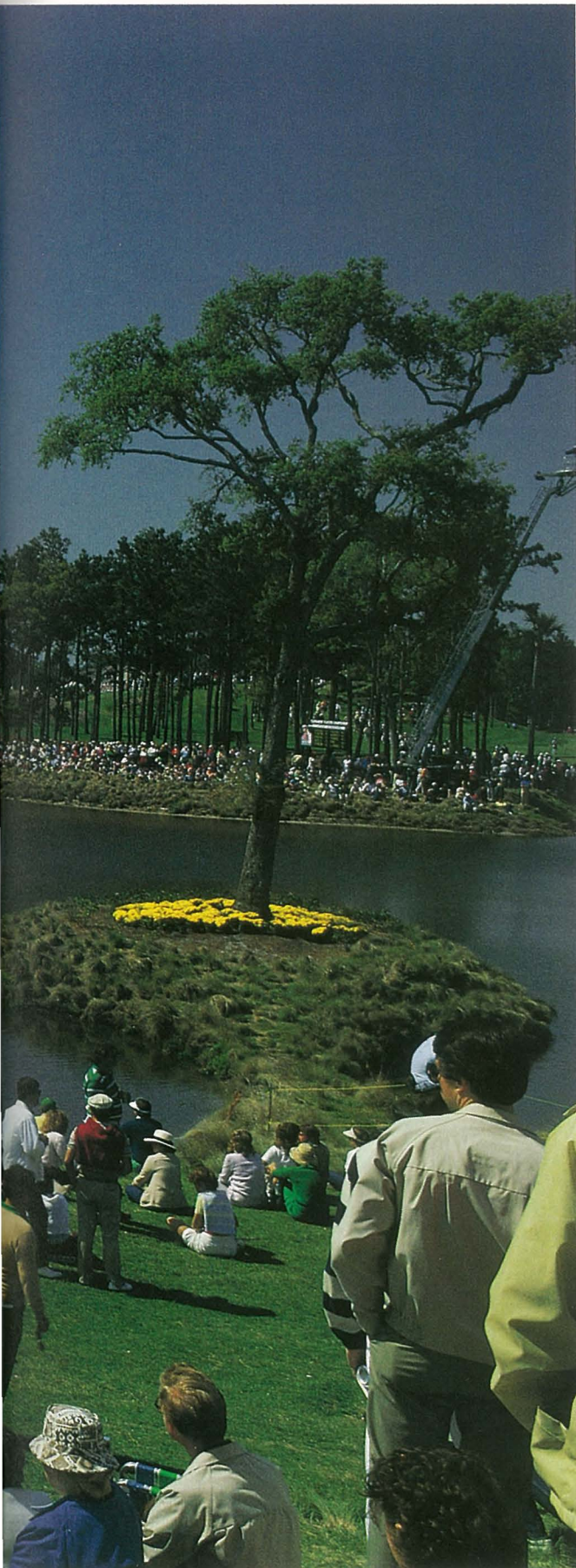


The first “design” of the Tournament Players Course (TPC) at Sawgrass, as sketched on a restaurant placemat by Pete Dye. The original of this sketch hangs in Deane Beman’s home.



Number eleven at the TPC offers an interesting twist—alternative fairways to the left and right of the large waste bunkers that nearly encircle the green.





Above:

The ninth at Pete Dye's PGA West, La Quinta, California. The most severe and innovative of his designs to date, its place in the history of golf architecture is still uncertain.

Left:

The TPC at Sawgrass was designed with gallery viewing in mind, such as here at the island seventeenth, a hole that quickly became one of the most famous in golf.

its place in the history of course design will be as an innovator like TPC/Sawgrass, as a pariah like The International, or as a classic like Pine Valley.

Whatever the case, one can only hope that future advances in the manufacture of golf balls and clubs do not become so overpowering that they destroy the challenges of the great golf courses from the first century of American design, since the great variety of playing fields sets golf apart from other sporting endeavors. Only through their preservation may the history and further development of the art and science that is golf architecture be understood.