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Golf Inc.™

SUMMER 2021

San Vicente Golf Resort
Ramona, Calif.



RealFood's Ed Doyle

2021 RENOVATION OF THE YEAR

RESTORING HISTORICAL DESIGN

Diablo Country Club and San Vicente Resort take top honors in this year's competition.

Golf Inc.™

Summer 2021 | Volume No. 30 | Issue No. 3



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Golf Inc. magazine (USPS 009-747, ISSN 1074-9276) is published four times a year by Cypress Magazines Inc., 7670 Opportunity Road, Suite 105, San Diego, CA 92111. Periodical postage paid at San Diego, CA and at additional mailing offices. Entire contents copyright 2021 Cypress Magazines Inc. All rights reserved. Material in this publication may not be reproduced without written permission from the publisher. Golf Inc. grants permission only for educational purposes. Golf Inc. is a trademark of Cypress Magazines.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Golf Inc., 7670 Opportunity Road, Suite 105, San Diego, CA 92111

COVER PHOTO BY MICHAEL GAINNEY

2021 RENOVATION OF THE YEAR

Restoring HISTORICAL design

Diablo Country Club and San Vicente Resort take top honors
in this year's competition.

by Michelle Weyenberg

It's not out of the ordinary for clubs and courses rich in history to undergo renovations to restore their original appeal while also modernizing playability for today's golfer. What can be out of the ordinary is the scope and brilliance of such projects.

Several have reached that lofty goal and are winners in Golf Inc.'s 2021 Renovation of the Year competition.

The course at member-owned Diablo Country Club near Danville, Calif., took the top award in the Private Club category. The goal of the project was to restore the feeling of the 100-plus-year-old golf course and pay homage to its original design.

"I couldn't be more thrilled with the dramatic improvements that have evolved in this massive renovation and restoration project," said golf course architect Todd Eckenrode, ASGCA.

The other winners in the Private Club

category were The Ocean Course at Ponte Vedra Inn & Club in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla., second place; and Fox Chapel Golf Club in Pittsburgh, third place.

Capturing honorable mention were: Shadow Wood Country Club's Preserve Course in Estero, Fla.; the Lower Course at Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, N.J.; and Kenwood Country Club in Cincinnati.

San Vicente Golf Resort in Ramona, Calif., is the Public Course winner. The goal of its renovation was to create a unique and interesting design that improved playability and sustainability.

In the Public Course category, The Refuge in Flowood, Miss., was second, and The Yards in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla., was third.

Judging for all Renovation of the Year entries was based on achievement of goals, improved playability, maintainability and course aesthetics. Winners were chosen through blind judging.



PRIVATE CLUBS

First Place

Diablo Country Club

Diablo, Calif.

Owner: Member owned

Architect: Todd Eckenrode, Origins Golf Design

Contractor: Landscapes Unlimited

Cost: \$10 million

This once proud classic, which opened in 1914, is now a reflection of its glory days after 10 months of renovation. Extensive historical research paid big dividends, as all aspects, including tees, bunkers, greens and surrounds, are back to the original design, but with minor modifications for ease of maintenance.

Large areas of native habitat and natural waterways were restored, and an original natural hazard was re-created, all while taking steps to improve water quality and runoff issues.

Approximately 30 acres of turf was converted to native grass meadows, providing natural habitat corridors and significantly reducing maintenance costs.

Tees were redesigned into free-form shapes and combined in many instances.



PUBLIC

3 AFTER

1ST

First Place

San Vicente Golf Resort

Ramona, Calif.

Owner: San Diego Country Estates Association

Architect: Staples Golf Design

Contractor: Heritage Links

Cost: \$2.9 million



3 BEFORE

What the judges said:

"A fantastic realization of the overall vision for the project. The effort to increase sustainability and reduce their environmental footprint was successfully implemented, while also creating a stunning visual enhancement to the course."

— *Jenene Miller*

"Wonderful to see a project achieve all the goals of improved infrastructure and ease of maintenance but still deliver on the aesthetic appeal and strategic interest. It has the feel of golden age Thomas or Mackenzie in 1930s California."

— *Matthew Dusenberry*

"Improvements to infrastructure, playability and aesthetics are impressive."

— *Martin Elgison*

San Vicente Golf Resort celebrated the grand opening of its newly renovated course in May, nearly 50 years after its original opening in 1973. For the first time in its history, San Diego Country Estates Association took significant steps to fix green consistency, turf quality, drainage and overall agronomic health of the entire golf facility.

"In 2019, we hired one of the best architects in the United States, Andy Staples," said Mario Trejo, general manager of San Vicente Golf Resort. "His vision and passion for doing things right are very impressive."

The near 10-month renovation of the course, described as an inland links style course, focused on reconstruction of 19 putting greens, 56 new and updated sand bunkers, re-grassing and a set of family friendly scoring tees on each hole. Some trees were removed to improve air circulation and increase sunlight. Other improvements were made to select cart paths, beautification of surrounding vegetation and increased drainage of fairways.

Owners say they now have the ability to market the course to a wider audience, which in turn will result in increased revenue.

PUBLIC

Second Place

The Refuge

Flowood, Miss.

Owner: City of Flowood

Architect: Nathan Crace, ASGCA

Contractor: Eagle Golf & Athletics

Cost: \$1.9 million

2ND

16 AFTER 16 BEFORE



The Refuge opened in 1998 and has long been a top public course in the Jackson, Miss., area. But because of its tight playing corridors and short distances from the back tees, it has had difficulty attracting new players.

When a developer bought the adjacent property with the intent of building a \$50 million hotel and conference center, the city approved \$2 million to renovate the course.

Architect Nathan Crace said the renovation, which began in July 2017, turned The Refuge's tight, short and awkward layout into one of the top courses in Mississippi.

"In over 26 years, I don't recall a project where we transformed a course so drastically," he said. "In fact, I receive emails and

Twitter direct messages every week from people who can't believe it's the same course as before the renovation."

The renovation was completed in October 2020, despite COVID-19 delays. The course is designed so that golfers can play five, nine or 18 holes and return to the pro shop, located on the first floor of the 10-story, 220-room Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center.

New, 8-foot-wide, concrete cart paths with curbs at tees accounted for a good portion of the renovation budget. Twenty-plus acres of naturalized and fescue areas were also installed to decrease the amount of maintained turf.



8 AFTER



8 BEFORE

What the judges said:

"I'm impressed with the innovative approach. Major improvements at a minimal cost is also impressive."

—Martin Elgison

PUBLIC

Third Place

The Yards

Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.

Owner: Alta Mar Holdings

Architect: Mike Miles

Contractor: MacDurrach Golf Construction

Cost: Undisclosed

3RD

The Yards opened in 1970 as the Arnold Palmer-designed course of Oak Bridge Club.

It was sold in 2016 and redesigned into a 12-hole course to reduce playing time, provide a more casual atmosphere and cater to a diverse customer base. The front 9 of the course was preserved, while holes 10 through 18 were converted to create six par-3 holes.

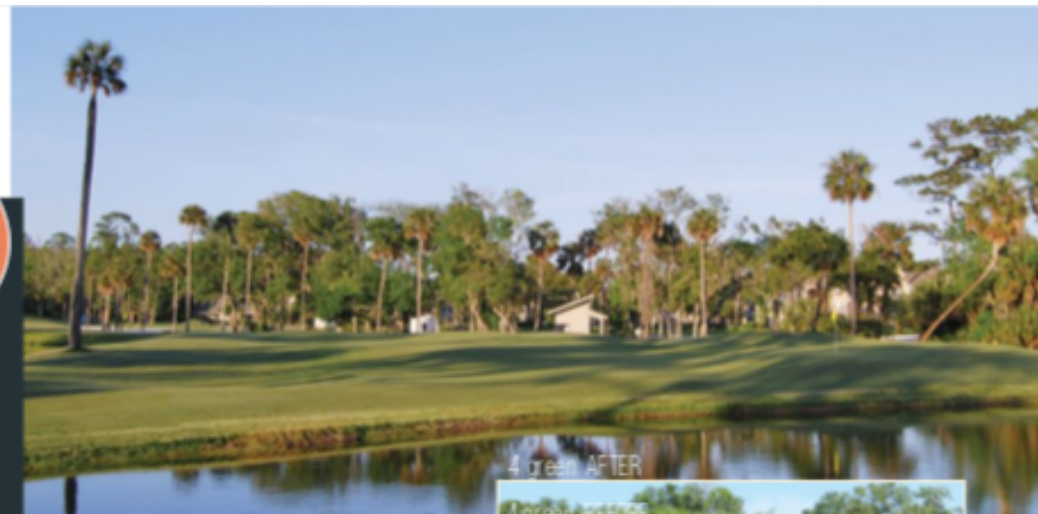
The new footprint includes the nine-hole Front Yard plus six additional holes on The Backyard to allow for a variety of play configurations. There is also a 9,000-square-foot putting green and two practice green/bunker areas.

While the core course routing was maintained, the renovation included a complete redesign of greens and bunkers and relocation of many trees. The project also included replacement of the irrigation system, relocation of the pump station and a new irrigation pond.

"We are already seeing the interest and excitement in our 12-hole concept, Backyard short course and the cultural

change to our operation," said architect Mike Miles. "We hope to become a tem-

plate for other golf properties that find themselves in similar situations."



4 green AFTER

4 green BEFORE



7 green AFTER

7 green BEFORE



What the judges said:

"This project illustrates the kind of innovative thinking that's needed to revitalize public courses."

— Martin Elgison



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