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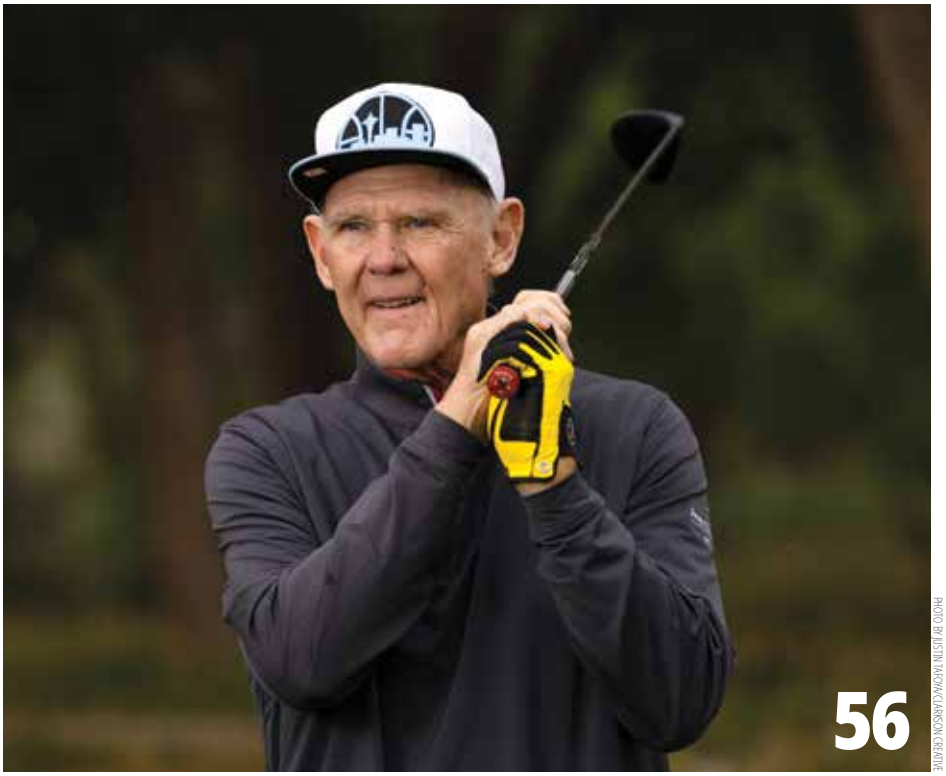


PHOTO BY JUSTIN TAFOYA/CLARKSON CREATIVE

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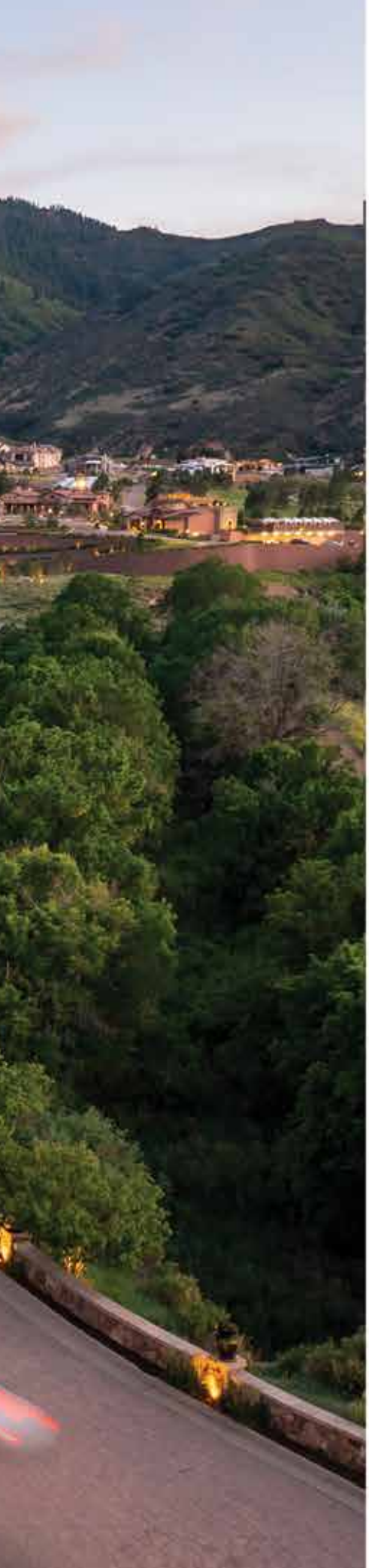
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RAVENNA



The Case of the Missing Scotsman

FLYERS BEARING photographs of lost pets break my heart, especially when they remain stapled or taped to telephone poles for months. Did "Eddie" finally come home? Was one-eyed "Patch" ever found? Or did the hope of their returns fade like the signs their owners never took down?

I'm often tempted to call the numbers posted, but the conversation might turn awkward. We occasionally see foxes and coyotes in the neighborhood.

Living near Willis Case Golf Course, I've also seen my share of strays bounding along Tennyson Street.

For good karma, I usually chuck them towards their original destination—the 11th fairway. For even better karma, I'll toss them on the 11th green.

Before you alert PETA, I was just referring to golf balls, not small furry animals.

We expect to lose balls on a course. It's part of the game. We don't expect to lose clubs, but we occasionally do. I'm still ticked about a 60-degree Vokey wedge that vanished during a solo sunrise round in Utah.

I'd left it by the first green, which I didn't realize until I needed it on the third hole. When I drove back to the green, the wedge was gone, and when guys playing behind me said they hadn't seen it, I *knew* they were lying like dogs—and not the sweet kind that people offer rewards for returning.

The latest item to go missing from my bag is a headcover. Not just any headcover, mind you. This one depicts a character I christened "Angus"—a distinctly Scottish name that sounds like "angry," which his humorous snarl certainly suggests that he is. My wife—who once observed that big fuzzy tiger and bear headcovers "make a grown man's golf bag look like a little girl's bedroom"—purchased him for me during our magical vacation to Scotland in 2018. He became something of a puppet/mascot, and he's accompanied me on every round of golf since.

During a shotgun-start round at the opening of RainDance National—the spectacular course that appeared on the cover of our previous issue—I pulled Angus on and off the 460cc driver head multiple times. At some point I probably didn't slide him on snugly enough. As I rode from the furthest point on the course to the parking lot, I should have noticed more bag chatter than usual. Somewhere out there Angus had hopped off. A drive around the course turned up nothing. I alerted the clubhouse staff and, well…

"Some people turn them in," the empathetic golf professional told me. "And some people act like it's Christmas."

Ironically, this happened during the Open Championship's sesquicentennial festivities at the Old Course at St. Andrews, where I first played with Angus in my bag.

I know it's only a material object and there are far worse things to lose—a wallet, car keys, cell phone, rangefinder. But losing the grimacing kilted, tam o'shantered redhead that my wife gave me feels much different. Short of stapling flyers to the tee markers at RainDance, I hope this column helps bring him back. Thank you for your indulgence. May he who has never left something on a course, in a cart or at a clubhouse cast the first stone.



So, if you happen to be—or happen to know—the person who found the lad pictured here, please email me. He won't bite. And Karma will thank you.





JON RIZZI
Editorial Director

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OFFER DATES are September 13-December 31



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3350 Fox Acres Drive East,
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970-881-2574 | golfclubatfoxacres.com

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2579 Co Rd 894, Granby, CO
970-887-2709 | golfgranbyranch.com

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303-403-2542 | indiantree.apexprd.org

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9808 Sunningdale Blvd, Lone Tree, CO
303-799-9940 | ssprd.org

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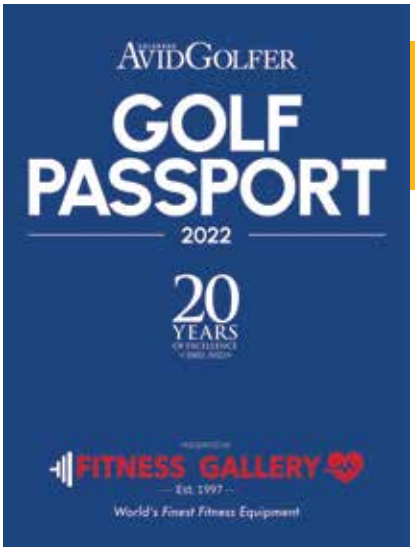
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Honor the Past, Ensure the Future

The inaugural CommonGround Classic will celebrate women's golf through the ages.

On March 4, 1916, eight women representing five Colorado golf clubs formed the Colorado Women's Golf Association (CWGA). The objectives of the association were "to promote and maintain the best interests of the game of golf; to hold golf tournaments and to arrange the dates of amateur tournaments held by its members, and to promote good fellowship among the members of the clubs which may belong to this association."

Mary Hemming of Colorado Springs Golf Club (now Patty Jewett Golf Club) was elected as the first president, and Ella McLaughlin (better known in the records as Mrs. M.A. McLaughlin) won the association's first championship.

From those humble beginnings, women's golf in Colorado has come a long way! In 2018, the CWGA merged with the Colorado Golf Association creating a unified voice for all of golf in Colorado. Today there are more than 17,000 women golfers who belong to the Colorado Golf Association. The CGA now runs nine tournaments for women of all ages and abilities.

To build on this success and further grow women's golf in Colorado, the CGA will host the first annual CommonGround Classic on Wednesday, August 31. Held at the CGA's CommonGround Golf Course, the CommonGround Classic will celebrate women players from the past while ensuring that the next generation of female golfers has access to the resources, opportunities and connections they need to succeed. The tournament is open to all golfers—female and male—who share a desire to celebrate women's golf through the ages.

"The CommonGround Classic will truly be a celebration of women's golf through the ages," said CGA executive director, Ed Mate. "The pioneers of women's golf overcame so much just to be on the course, much less overcome their clothing to shoot such amazing scores! This is a way to honor them while creating opportunities for future girls and young women to achieve their full potential both on and off the course."

Proceeds from the 2022 tournament will benefit the Moffat/McLaughlin Memorial golf scholarship at the Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) and the LPGA*USGA Girls Golf program.

The MSU Denver Moffat/McLaughlin Memorial scholarship was established to recognize two founding members of CWGA—Ella Moffat McLaughlin (1868-1939), who won the first CWGA match play tournament in 1916 (and again in '17 and '21), and Frances M. Moffat (1875-1935), the first CWGA secretary and winner of the 1918 tournament.

The CGA also encourages players to dress in a golf attire "era" of their choosing—including today. To honor Ella and Frances, some may choose to wear the large hats and long dresses of the silhouetted golfer represented in the now-retired Colorado Women's Golf Association logo. Others may opt for the style of great Babe Zaharias or the visor and pleated shorts worn by Annika Sörenstam when she captured her first U.S. Women's Open at The Broadmoor in 1995. Men might opt for a Sixties style Penguin polo or the jacket, tie and flat-cap rocked by M.A. McLaughlin, who was Ella's husband and the first president of the Colorado Golf Association.


ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM

COURTESY OF USGA


BABE ZAHARIAS

COURTESY OF USGA

A SARTORIAL SALUTE: While it's doubtful that you would willingly play in the 1916-style petticoat and floral hat depicted in the retired CWGA logo, consider paying tribute to the Babe's ensemble or Annika's pleats when you tee it up August 31.

Visit *coloradogolf.org/celebrating-womens-golf* for more information.

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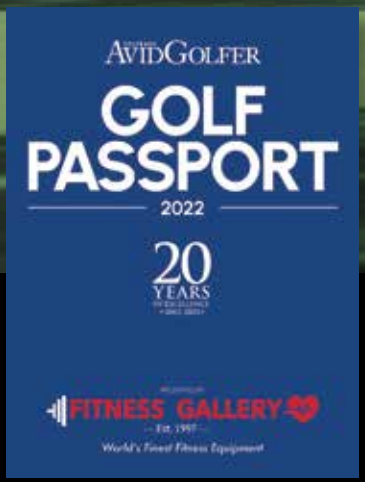
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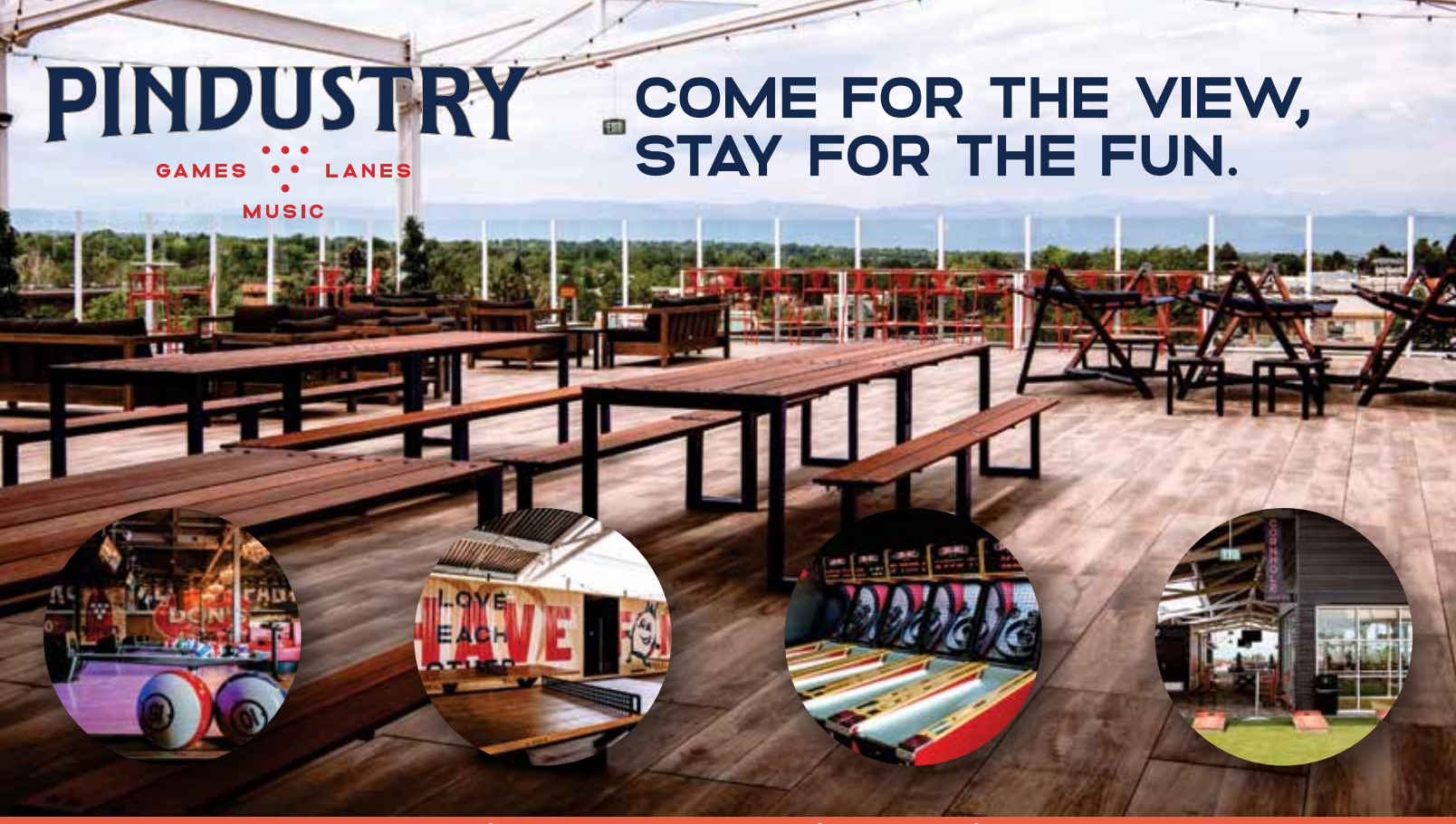
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Go Gentlemanly Into That Good Night

Dale Douglass, Colorado's first homegrown player to compete and win on the PGA TOUR, passed away July 6 in Scottsdale, Ariz., at the age of 86.

Douglass grew up in Fort Morgan. His father, Hal, was the golf professional at Fort Morgan Golf Course (now known as Quail Dunes), where his mother, Phyllis, ran the golf shop. At the University of Colorado, he earned three first-team all-conference honors before graduating in 1959.

After working as an assistant golf professional at Lakewood Country Club, Douglass decided to give the PGA TOUR a shot. He got his card in 1963 and over the course of the next 51 years competed in 531 PGA TOUR tournaments and 600 PGA TOUR Champions events.

His first PGA TOUR wins came in North Carolina in 1969 at the Azalea Open at Cape Fear Country Club, and the Kemper Open at Quail Hollow. That September, at Royal Birkdale in England, he competed in his only Ryder Cup—and the only one ever to end in a tie, with Jack Nicklaus' famous "concession". Four months later, Douglass won the 1970 Phoenix Open by a stroke.



He came close to winning at least three other times, losing in playoffs to the legendary Chi Chi Rodriguez and major winners Don January and Tom Weiskopf.

Turning 50 in March of '86, Douglass edged Gary Player by a stroke in that June's U.S. Senior Open at Scioto. At 50 years, 3 months and 24 days, Douglass remains the youngest winner of the championship. Victories in 10 more senior events, plus 26 runner-up and 151 top-10 finishes, would follow.

Douglass' legacy will be forever linked to **Hale Irwin**, the World Golf Hall of Famer from Boulder whose feats at CU and on the PGA TOUR and PGA TOUR Champions dwarf those of the man he considered a mentor.

"Dale was like my big brother," Irwin said on *CUBuffs.com*, "and I was like his bratty little brother." Nine years his senior, Douglass took Irwin under his wing. Before the days of corporate sponsors, courtesy cars and private jets, "you had to drive yourself to most events, find your own hotel and arrange for a caddie on-site," Irwin said. "It was a lot for a young guy to figure out, but Dale helped me navigate the TOUR."

When Irwin won the 1974 U.S. Open at Winged Foot, he and his wife Nancy celebrated that night with Dale and Joyce Douglass.

The two men's friendship endured for 57 years, which doesn't surprise anyone who had the privilege of knowing Dale Douglass.

"I've never met more of a gentleman," Castle Pines Golf Club PGA General Manager Keith Schneider says. A member of Castle Pines, Douglass and Schneider played weekly rounds with different members. Douglass and his wife, Joyce, often hosted Schneider and his wife, Beth, at their Scottsdale home. "He treated me like the son he never had."

Douglass was also a member at The Broadmoor Golf Club, where he and PGA Director of Golf Russ Miller lockered next to each other. "Dale was the best chipper I've ever seen," Miller says. "He taught me a technique that was different than anything I'd seen before—and now I've taught it a hundred times."

Miller recalls seeing Douglass hole a couple of chips at Sahalee in his final U.S. Senior Open in 2010. "He and Joyce invited me and (my late wife) Linda to join them on a private plane for the Open, which was such an honor."

Sadly, in 2016, Joyce passed away, as would Linda in 2019. "I know how much he loved Joyce, and I was honored when he asked me to be a pallbearer," Miller says. "Then, when Linda died, he called to talk me through it. To hear it from someone who had lived the experience meant the world to me."

Echoing Schneider, Miller calls Douglass "the most gentlemanly human being I've ever known. He had such humility. He never forgot his roots in Fort Morgan and Colorado. If we all had a bit of Dale's humility, if we all treated people the way he treated people, the world would be a much better place."

BUFF FOR LIFE: Dale Douglass starred at CU, where he played for coach Les Fowler (far right) and alongside Ross Eldridge and Dick Mulhauser. Douglass appeared in a record 26 U.S. Senior Opens; and in 2005, at age 69, he finished 37th.


DOU ZECHENG

PHOTO BY JON BUZA

Marty Like It's 2017

Five years ago, Dou Zecheng—known in golf circles as **"Marty" Dou**—became the first Chinese player to earn a PGA TOUR card and an event on the Korn Ferry (née Web.com) Tour. Dou lost his card after the 2018 season, but on July 3, he regained it with a record-setting performance in the fourth edition of The Ascendant presented by Blue at TPC Colorado, the popular Korn Ferry Tour event in Berthoud.

A 25-year-old native of Henan province who now lives in Dallas, Dou entered the final round tied for the lead at 12-under par. He sank six birdies—including four on the back nine—en route to 67, setting a 17-under-par tournament scoring record and earning enough points to vault him onto the PGA TOUR next season.

"The first year I got there, I kind of felt that I wasn't ready," Dou said. "But it's been three years now from that time, and I do feel like all parts of my game are set for the big tour."

He needed all parts of his game to be working to separate himself from the rest of the field at TPC Colorado. At one point late in the round, Dou, compatriot **Carl Yuan**, Argentina's **Augusto Nuñez** and former CU golfer **Jeremy Paul** were tied at 16-under. However, all but Dou, who birdied 16, stumbled during the last three holes, giving Dou a two-shot cushion heading into the 526-yard par-4 18th, which he bogeyed for the win.

For his efforts, Dou received $135,000, the trophy and a set of Adirondack chairs, fashioned from skis, featuring the Colorado and Wyoming State flags. With Dou living in Dallas, the price of shipping them will be a fraction of what it would have cost to send them to China.

That was just another happy outcome for Tournament Director **Drew Blass**, who produced another highly successful tournament. A total of 613 volunteers from 16 states worked this year's edition of The Ascendant, and spectators packed the additional viewing areas and suites. *theascendant.com*


WILLIAM MOUW


CONNOR JONES

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TRANS-MISSISSIPPI GOLF ASSOCIATION

Trans-Miss Bliss

Deuces were wild at Denver Country Club during the 118th Trans-Mississippi Amateur Championship, which concluded July 9. For the second consecutive year, a member of the Pepperdine University golf team won on the second playoff hole, as **William Mouw** replicated the feat of 2021 winner **Derek Hitchner**. Coincidentally, in 2010, the last time Denver Country Club hosted the championship, the playoff to determine the victor also lasted two holes.

Continuing the theme, two players in this year's contest—**David Timmins** of BYU and **Jeffrey Guan** of Australia—set competitive course records with rounds of 7-under 63, and two shots separated the top nine finishers in an intense competition between golfers representing 13 countries.

Fittingly, it took a 22-foot birdie putt from Mouw on the second playoff hole to defeat **Connor Jones**, a rising senior at Colorado State University. Both players, along with Duke's **Luke Sample**, had finished tied for first at 9-under, but Sample's bogey on the first extra hole eliminated him from the playoff.

Unable to match Mouw's birdie on the second playoff hole, Jones nevertheless announced his presence among the country's elite. The Westminster native's stellar 2022 already includes wins in the Mountain West Conference Championship and the State Match Play. In the Trans-Miss, he carded rounds of 65,67, 73 and 66, getting as low as 10-under by the 69th hole. Ranked 549th on the WAGR going into the event, Jones gave the 39th-ranked Mouw all he could handle. (After the event, Mouw's ranking jumped to 27, Jones' to 381.)

The Trans-Miss Amateur dates to 1901 and is one of seven events comprising the Elite Amateur Golf Series. Top players from the series will earn starts in PGA TOUR and Korn Ferry Tour events, as well as exemptions into both the 2023 U.S. Amateur and the finals of U.S. Open qualifying. *trans-miss.org*

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Qualifying Women

In what could be a preview of next year's U.S. Girls' Junior Championship at Eisenhower Golf Club's Blue Course in Colorado Springs, 14-year old **Hadley Ashton** of Erie shot a two-over par 74 to earn medalist honors and qualify for this year's edition of the championship—which finished July 23, too late for inclusion in this month's edition.

Also missing this issue's deadline are the results from the first USGA event ever contested in Alaska—the 2022 U.S. Senior Women's Amateur at Anchorage Golf Course (July 30 – Aug.4). On June 28 at Colorado Springs Country Club, Coloradans **Marilyn Hardy**, **Deborah Pearson**, **Laurie Steenrod** and Colorado Golf Hall of Famers **Janet Moore** and **Christie Austin** all qualified.

When the USGA's third-oldest championship, the U.S. Women's Amateur, begins August 8 at Chambers Bay in Washington, three young Coloradans will be in the field. Qualifying on June 30 at Colorado National Golf Club in Erie were **Charlotte Hillary**, **Leigha Devine** and **Lauren Lehigh**. The 2019 Junior Player of the Year, Hillary carded a 4-under-par 68 to take medalist honors, while Devine, the winner of the CGA's last two Women's Match Play titles, and Lehigh, the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame's 2018 Future Famer, finished second and third. Claire Wright of California also qualified at Colorado National. *usga.org*

GOING NATIONAL: From top: U.S. Senior Women's Am qualifiers Steenrod, Pearson, Hardy, Austin and Moore; U.S. Women's Amateur qualifiers Hillary, Devine, Lehigh and Wright; U.S. Girls' Junior qualifier Ashton.

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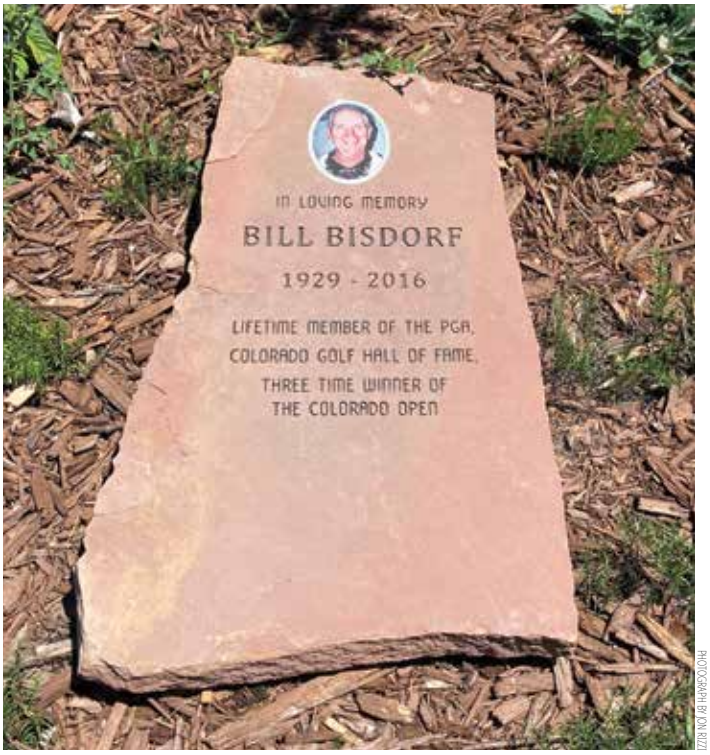
Bill Gets His Due



COURTESY OF COLORADO OPEN GOLF FOUNDATION

He won three of the first four Colorado Opens at Hiwan Golf Club, served eight years as the head PGA Professional at Green Gables Country Club and drove the green on his first professional tee shot (and watched the ball roll between Sam Snead's feet) at a club near his Iowa hometown of Waterloo. But the course with which Colorado Golf Hall of Famer **Bill Bisdorf** will forever be associated is Denver's Overland Park, his home away from home for five decades and where he mentored future PGA TOUR player





PHOTOGRAPH BY TONI KUZZ

Shane Bertsch as a teenager during the 1980s.

"Beltin' Bill" passed away in 2016. His portrait stares from behind glass in a "Legends of Overland" display in the clubhouse lobby, and his widow Norma—who has been president of Overland's popular ladies' club for more than two decades—keeps his memory alive with those he played with and against, and those who only know of him.

Believing that a more enduring memorial was necessary, a few years ago two of Norma's "ladies," **Judy Plock** and **Dixie Lingler**, suggested an outdoor garden memorial. The ladies' and men's clubs took up a collection and enlisted the support of private individuals and Denver Golf.

In May, their work came to fruition, and on July 9, after their Chapman event at Overland, the ladies joined some of Bisdorf's former playing partners to dedicate the memorial—a lovingly engraved sandstone tablet featuring his photograph rests beneath a newly planted white oak surrounded by freshly planted flowers.

Like Bertsch, Bisdorf also aspired to play on the PGA TOUR—and briefly did. But, Norma says, "That life wasn't for him."

"He hated being away from his family," Bisdorf's longtime pro-am playing partner **Rick Norby** shared after the dedication. "Bill was the best ball striker I've ever seen, and I can't recall him ever three-putting a green, but he was an even better person. He never bragged about himself, never took a dime for giving golf advice, and he'd refuse club members who wanted to play him for money. He had such integrity. He was a good man…*damn good*."

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COURTESY OF RED ROCKS COUNTRY CLUB

Rolling on the Red Rocks

Red Rocks Country Club in Morrison has undergone enormous improvements since the turn of the century—opening a pool, renovating and expanding its clubhouse and continually upgrading its golf course. Thanks to the expertise of course architect **Kevin Atkinson**, who joined the club in 2003, the 47-year-old layout has steadily elevated itself to improve the shot values and green complexes on every hole, as well as take full advantage of the location's jaw-dropping sandstone formations and lofty views of downtown Denver. The latest and greatest version of the course reopened in July, and this September Red Rocks will debut its latest amenity: a 38,000-square-foot putting course (above) next to the clubhouse. The as-yet-unnamed green features railway ties, roller-coaster slopes, drink holders and lights for evening play. *redrockscountryclub.org*



HUNTER SWANSON (RIGHT)

COURTESY OF FIRST TEE

Swanson's Junior Swan Song

After a year of waiting, recent Northfield High School graduate **Hunter Swanson** "finished what I started" by winning the boys' division of the First Tee National Championship at the University of Notre Dame's Warren Golf Course. Swanson, who lost last year's inaugural event in a playoff, shot a 1-under-par 212 (70-72-70) to win the Tattersall Cup (Delaware's **Hannah Lydic** won the girls' division). "I wouldn't be anywhere, where I'm at, without the First Tee," the 13-year First Tee-Green Valley Ranch participant said afterwards. The CU Buff-to-be then took low-am honors in the Wyoming Open and won the Colorado Junior PGA Championship. *firsttee.org*



JESSICA MASON

COURTESY OF WWJC

Mason Jars It

By winning the 95th Women's Western Junior Championship at Prestwick Country Club in Frankfort, Ill., **Jessica Mason** of Westminster joined a list of champions that includes LPGA greats **Cristie Kerr**, **Grace Park** and **Nancy Lopez**, whose first of three victories in the event took place at Prestwick 50 years ago. "She obviously was a great player on the LPGA Tour," Mason said of the World Golf Hall of Famer. "It's kind of cool that I could share that with her and have my name on the same trophy as her."

Also cool is that the rising freshman at Pomona College in Claremont, Calif., now also shares space on the trophy with Colorado Golf Hall of Famers **Barbara McIntire**, **Carol Flenniken** and **Lauren Howe**—each of whom triumphed as teenagers in the esteemed match-play event.

The 2021 winner of Class 4A state title and the Colorado Junior PGA Championship, Mason reached the finals by beating stroke-play medalist **Addison Klonowski** 1-up. She then defeated big-hitting 14-year-old **Lisa Copeland** of nearby Naperville in 19 holes by sinking a breaking 30-foot birdie putt—which she later admitted, "I really didn't think I was going to make." *womenswesternjunior.com*

GOLF BY #s



DAVIS BRYANT

3

SHOTS SEPARATED **DAVIS BRYANT** FROM THE LEADERS BEFORE THE LAST ROUND OF June's 107th Southwestern Amateur, but thanks to a 3-under 68, the fifth-year senior from Colorado State University finished with the biggest win of his amateur career. Bryant, who fired a career-best 8-under 63 in the second round at Desert Mountain's Geronimo Course, carded a for a 12-under 272 to win the event by two strokes. *swga.net*

4

MAJOR COLORADO JUNIOR GOLF TROPHIES HAVE NOW GONE TO **MATTHEW WILKINSON** AFTER the recent Arapahoe High graduate won the inaugural 2022 CGA State Junior, defeating high school teammate Will Kates in the match play final. The incoming Colorado State player also won the 2020 Colorado Junior Match Play, 2021 Colorado Junior PGA and 2021 Junior Golf Alliance of Colorado Tour Championship. *coloradogolf.org*









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By Jon Rizzi



SUSIE HELMERICH, SCOTT RETHLAKE, PAMELA SMITH

PHOTO BY JUSTIN TAFOYA/CLARKSON CREATIVE

Be Their Guests

With expanded roles within Denver Golf, Pamela Smith and Susie Helmerich are making the city's seven courses more efficient, playable, welcoming and fun.

Susie Helmerich doesn't use the word *customer*. "I'm a bigger fan of *guest*," the LPGA professional says. "People who spend their time and money with us are our guests, not just wallets, and we should greet and treat them with the same top-notch service and welcoming atmosphere throughout our organization."

Her organization, Denver Golf, comprises seven courses—City Park, Evergreen, Harvard Gulch, Kennedy, Overland Park, Wellshire and Willis Case—as well as the 36-hole Aqua Golf mini-golf facility and driving range. At every one of those courses, the head golf professional has Helmerich as a supervisor as a result of her new position as director of golf shop operations.

"Susie is a great leader and a great pro," says Denver Golf's PGA Director of Golf Scott Rethlake, who created the new position for her because the demands of his job were pulling him away from mentoring and supervising the 15 to 20 golf professionals who reported to him. Helmerich was one of those professionals, most recently as the head pro at City Park since the course reopened in 2020.

"I saw the need to give them more, and Susie has the right interpersonal skills to deal with other pros and create standards of service to keep all the courses on the same playbook," Rethlake explains. "If I'm a guest at a Denver Golf course, I should expect excellent service and an excellent product."

On the product side, Rethlake made a similar decision in 2008 when he hired Director of Agronomy Pamela Smith, a superintendent from Indiana. The two put together a "playbook" to establish course-condition standards for superintendents to follow. "We had to reset the expectations of how things should look, and then help the supers meet them," Smith recalls.

Her hands-on work during the past 15 years has dramatically upgraded all the Denver courses, creating a consistent level of quality between them. This has proved challenging with the dramatic spike in rounds during the pandemic (Willis Case and City Park each hosted more than 60,000 rounds last year) and golf seasons that routinely continue long after the grass goes dormant. Calling them "miracle workers," she credits her staff's success to being "all-in."

"They have gone beyond what I can give them as a mentor," she says proudly. "My job now is providing the resources and advice so they can succeed. They're taking something top-notch and asking how to take it to the next level."

Which Smith knows something about. In addition to being a Class A CGCS, she also holds two law degrees—a J.D. and a LLM (Master of Laws in Energy, Environment, and Natural Resources)—which prove invaluable in reviewing contracts, de-



PHOTOS COURTESY PARKS & RECREATION: GOLF | CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER



ENTERPRISE FUN: The lush layouts at Evergreen (top) and Willis Case are two of Denver Golf's seven self-funded courses.

ciphering water rights and writing technical documents. She insists, however, she came to golf maintenance "not because of my education, but because I fell in love with it."

ON THE JOB

Helmerich touches base with each golf professional at least once a week and does quarterly site visits where she looks at certain standards: "How does the range look? The pro shop? Are you keeping your checkbook updated?" She also gets the seven head professionals on a regular group call to share best practices and build a culture that "kicks down the silos" between the courses.

As an example, she says, "For years we've all been meeting with the same sales reps individually and buying separately. If we went to the same rep as a unit, we could increase our buying power and get better pricing."

With diversity as one of the City of Denver's chief initiatives, Helmerich is pushing courses to hire staff that looks like the surrounding community—something she did successfully at City Park, long a melting pot for people of all ages, lifestyles and ethnicities. "Diversity in staff will propel things," she says. "People feel welcome when they can identify with a person working there. Plus, when a kid who lives near one of our courses starts to look for his or her first job, we want them to look at Denver Golf as their first opportunity."

> "HONESTLY, IT'S A HUGE ADVANTAGE TO BE ONE OF THE FEW WOMEN IN MY FIELD."

Community and sustainability informed Smith's hiring of horticulturalist John Swain, who has started a garden at Harvard Gulch that produced 800 pounds of vegetables last year for the local community. Wellshire donates its pumpkin harvest to Denver Parks and Recreation (DPR) children's social enrichment program, and both Wellshire and Willis Case promote pollination with plantings and on-course honeybee hives that yield 100 pounds of honey a year.

Smith has also promoted organic treatments of fungi, reduced water consumption and beautified the grounds around the clubhouses with flowers and other plantings.

Continued on pg 45

Continued from pg 40


PAMELA SMITH


SUSIE HELMERICH

PHOTOS BY JUSTIN HAYWARD/COURTESY CREATIVE

THE "WOMAN" QUESTION

Together, Helmerich and Smith are exceeding the expectations of municipal golfers by upgrading experiences on the course, in the golf shop and with the staff. In turn, what Smith calls the "incredibly diverse and progressive world" of Denver Golf has enabled these women to excel professionally.

(While not directly related to course service or conditioning, Denver Golf also employs Paula Purifoy, the CEO of First Tee Colorado Rocky Mountains [née First Tee Denver]. The chapter is the third-largest in the nation, serving 10,000 kids, with 91 cents of every dollar going to programming.)

"Unfortunately, the question has to be asked," Smith says when the subject of how gender has influenced her career arises. Early on, she says she was put in certain jobs because she wasn't a man. "But bosses don't care, as long as you work your tail off. Honestly, it's a huge advantage to be one of the few women in my field because when people know you, they know you."

She adds that "the chip fell off my shoulder when I finished a grow-in at the most beautiful course you've ever seen—Blackberry Patch Golf Course in Coldwater, Michigan."

Helmerich—who worked at three public Colorado courses prior to joining Denver Golf—bemoans the fact that "every time I've applied for a job, I've been the only LPGA pro and the only woman."

She's proud of the fact that she was the first LPGA member to graduate with a class A managerial degree, but disappointed the organization eliminated the management school to focus solely on teaching. "Now they produce teachers who don't have skills in management, marketing or budgeting."

She says she'd like to see more women's apparel in golf shops—but not "stuck in a corner—and that the bigger questions center around how to treat guests if they're not wearing appropriate clothing or how to navigate the issue of music in carts.

Ultimately, she and Smith are on the same page of the playbook as Rethlake, who says, "When you play a City and County of Denver golf course, we want you to think you should have paid more because the value of the experience is that good."

Jon Rizzi is *CAG*'s editorial director. For more on Denver Golf, visit *cityofdenvergolf.com.*


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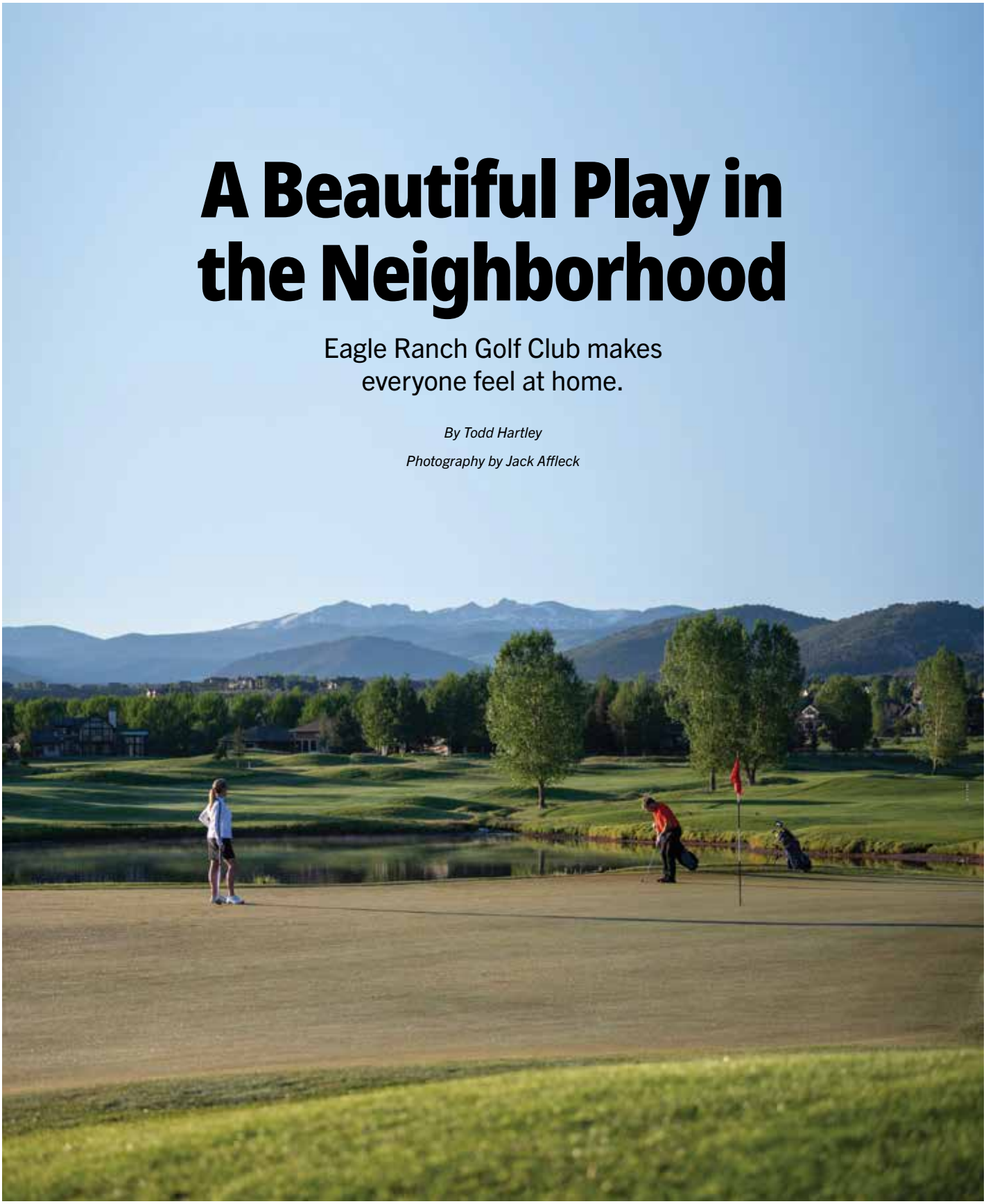
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A Beautiful Play in the Neighborhood

Eagle Ranch Golf Club makes everyone feel at home.

By Todd Hartley

Photography by Jack Affleck







EAGLE-EYED: After the Arnold Palmer layout tests them, golfers can chill at the Eagle Grille, enjoy family time and improve their games.

There are golf courses that claim to be public but really aren't—unless you sleep with them (as a resort guest, that is)—and there are public courses that seem desperately to wish they were private, with the accompanying level of pretention and pricey green fees. Then there are courses like Eagle Ranch Golf Club: unabashedly public and affordable but also entrenched in their surrounding neighborhoods in ways that private clubs and resort courses can't hope to match.

Open for play in 2001 and part of the master-planned Eagle Ranch community south of downtown Eagle, Eagle Ranch boasts an Arnold Palmer signature design that rivals many of Arnie's strongest efforts. It also provides an enviable focal point for its eponymous neighborhood.

The course unfolds across foothills terrain in two nine-hole loops that serve as greenswards between rows of houses, which are set away from the holes and never come into play. Here and there, bike paths and walking trails crisscross the course, making it a de facto park for residents.

"We're very much the centerpiece of the neighborhood," says Jeff Boyer, the only general manager Eagle Ranch has had in its 21-year history. "The recreational paths really show how much we're intertwined; there are so many bikers and walkers with their dogs." Then he laughs. "From my perspective it's not always such a great mix, but from the golfers' and homeowners' perspective, they think it's so cool."

Eagle Ranch's laid-back, neighborhood vibe is evident the minute you pull into the parking lot and see the understated, farm-style cart barn and pro shop and the Eagle Ranch Grille, the patio seating of which abuts a small, four-hole pitch 'n' putt course for youngsters just getting started in the game.

Designed for plastic-ball play, the little course epitomizes Eagle Ranch's commitment to youth golf, a strength that comprises clinics, private lessons, far-forward junior tees and one of the largest driving ranges you'll find anywhere.

"We've always had a big junior golf program," says Boyer. "We've been a First Tee facility since 2006, and I believe our junior program was the catalyst for getting a First Tee program going in Eagle County."

First Tee Colorado Rocky Mountains, which empowers youth across most of the state through the game of golf and its values, now has programming at three other Eagle County courses—EagleVail, Gypsum Creek and Vail Golf Club.

Family-friendliness doesn't mean this isn't a serious golf course. Five sets of tees (six, if you include the junior ones) ensure golfers of all abilities can enjoy play; but stretched to its full length of 7,461 yards and chock full of elevation changes and natural hazards, Eagle Ranch can be a beast. Just ask the players who annually attempt to qualify there for the Colorado Open.

Superb course conditions and a "banana belt" setting that ensures golf into November add to why this off-the-radar gem is the preferred course of locals and a growing number of visitors who are finally figuring out what they've been missing.

Contributor **Todd Hartley** is a Basalt-based writer. Visit *eagleranchgolf.com* for info.



Seaside in Steamboat

The Periodic Table surprises diners with a this-summer-only menu of lobster rolls, chowder and Cape Cod classics.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DESTINATION HOSPITALITY

You expect to see seagulls dive-bombing through muggy salt air as the sun shimmers on the ocean when you are happily slurping clam chowder and sighing over a griddled roll jammed with plump chunks of sweet lobster.

Yet, these true New England classics taste right at home as you gaze toward a panoramic Rocky Mountain sunset from above the 9th hole at Catamount Ranch and Club in Steamboat Springs.

Located at the private club but open to the public, The Periodic Table is not your typical golf course restaurant. You won't find a club sandwich or Cobb salad. In fact, you won't even find a dish you sampled there six months ago. The restaurant throws everything on the menu overboard twice a year.

"Last winter we had an Argentinian Steakhouse menu. This spring we changed everything from appetizers to desserts and cocktails—even the décor," says the restaurant's General Manager Jenny Knickerbocker. Previous themes have showcased European Riviera fare, classic dishes of New Orleans, and cuisine from 1940s Havana and 1920's New York.

As the Director of Training & Development for Destination Hospitality, Knickerbocker helps oversee a group of mountain town eateries that includes Table 79 Foodbar and Aurum restaurants in Steamboat Springs, Aspen and Breckenridge.

This sea change in the standard menu began in 2019 when the restaurant group, under the guidance of Chef Patrick Ayres and Destination founder Phillips Armstrong, started operating The Periodic Table and opened it to the public.

With its floor-to-ceiling windows open for the summer, The Periodic Table's dining room, bar area and wraparound outdoor deck seem like one large open-air eatery with a view.

The veteran serving staff has been aboard for three years at the restaurant, a rarity given the challenges eateries have faced in the past few years.

"The staff know the club members well

By John Lehndorff



PHOTO COURTESY OF DESTINATION HOSPITALITY

CAPE FARE: The star on the menu (opposite) is an authentic creamy chowder packed with fresh clams, potato, leeks and topped with fried clam strips and bacon. The Smoky Clams and Mussels (this page) come simmered in smoked tomato broth with sausage, fresh corn and charred fennel.

"Serving the public provides an opportunity for more people—locals or visitors—to see the club and the course."

and what they like. We can have their favorite Tito's and soda in front of them before they even sit down. They say: 'This is just what I needed after 18 holes of golf,'" Knickerbocker says.

DOWN EAST ... OUT WEST

To prepare a one-off menu steeped in the food culture of Cape Cod and the Eastern Seaboard, Chef de Cuisine Charlie Klein did months of research, reading and experimentation with the help of his Vermont-born sous chef.

"I ran everything by him," Klein explains. "If he said, 'This is how it should be; this tastes like it does at home,' then we added the item."

A seafood company in Steamboat Springs maintains an enormous live lobster tank that the Periodic Table accesses every two days.

"The quality of the main ingredients is what really matters. We focus on getting truly fresh fish flown in from the coast," Klein says.

Whole steamed lobster is served with drawn butter and lobster pieces are tossed in a light dressing with celery, dill and Old Bay seasoning for the lobster rolls. Kids can enjoy their mac and cheese with lobster added.

Another highlight is fresh clams and mussels steamed in smoked tomato broth. "We add sausage, corn and charred fennel to get all the flavors together and married in a big bowl," Klein says with enthusiasm.

FRESH CHOWDER, NOT POWDER

Starters on the restaurant's summer roster will ring some happy bells for anyone who's dined from Maine to New Jersey—such as oysters on the half shell, a beefsteak salad with ripe tomato, a Roquefort dressing and fried shallot, and a spot-on rendition of creamy New England chowder packed with clams, potato, leeks and bacon.

"I'd go toe-to-toe with anyone in the state of Colorado about this chowder," the chef says.

The entrée side dishes maintain the New England theme with corn and butter bean succotash and Gruyère colcannon—a creamy, cheesy cabbage and potato mash.

Klein gets questions about the fried green tomatoes—a dish popularized in a bestselling novel and 1991 film as being traditionally "Southern." But fried green tomato variations are enjoyed wherever summer tomatoes grow in the Northeast. "Ours are based on an old Pennsylvania Dutch recipe that doesn't use cornmeal," he explains. "We use a tempura batter—it's a little airier and crunchier—and serve them with a sauce of crème fraiche, paprika and garlic."

PERIODIC TABLE
Opens to the public at 4:30 p.m. Weds-Sun.
periodicsteamboat.com;
(970) 457-1224

POT ROAST IN AUGUST

Not everything on The Periodic Table's platters was pulled directly from Penobscot Bay—for instance, steak tartare, ribeye steaks to chamomile duck breast. The veal and pork meatballs in tomato sauce with polenta are a welcome nod to New England's large Italian community.

It's surprising to see a hearty fall-apart Yankee pot roast on a hot-weather menu plated with sweet peas and parsnip purée. "I've learned that even on a 90-degree day, if it's a braised piece of beef in sauce, our diners will love it," Klein says.

The Periodic Table's kitchen also did its dessert research, featuring Maine whoopie









PHOTOS COURTESY OF DESTINATION HOSPITALITY

PERIODIC ITEMS: Clockwise from top left: the spacious restaurant leads to a private 14-person dining area; what appear to be scallops are roasted cauliflower with pistachio dandelion pistou and rapini; the cozy bar and lounge; a classic chilled lobster roll with chive butter, dill and Old Bay.

pies and Indian pudding. Chef Klein prepares the traditional pudding with cornmeal sweetened with molasses and Vermont maple syrup and topped with spiced apple "butter," slow-cooked in-house.

HAUTE IS IN

Even with a Tom Weiskopf-designed 7,088-yard championship course and a 550-acre private lake, Catamount, like many private clubs, has found it must upgrade its culinary offerings.

"It's no longer the hamburgers, the hot dogs and the pastrami sandwiches," Catamount PGA General Manager of Ranch and Club Mark Lampe says. "It's Argentinean beef and Wagyu steaks and halibut. The people at Destination Hospitality are pros. The Periodic Table has given us that fine-dining experience that we didn't quite have before."

That experience allows the club to compete with restaurants in Steamboat Springs. "If you want your members to come to your club restaurant for dinner," he says, "it has to have great food and service in a great environment."

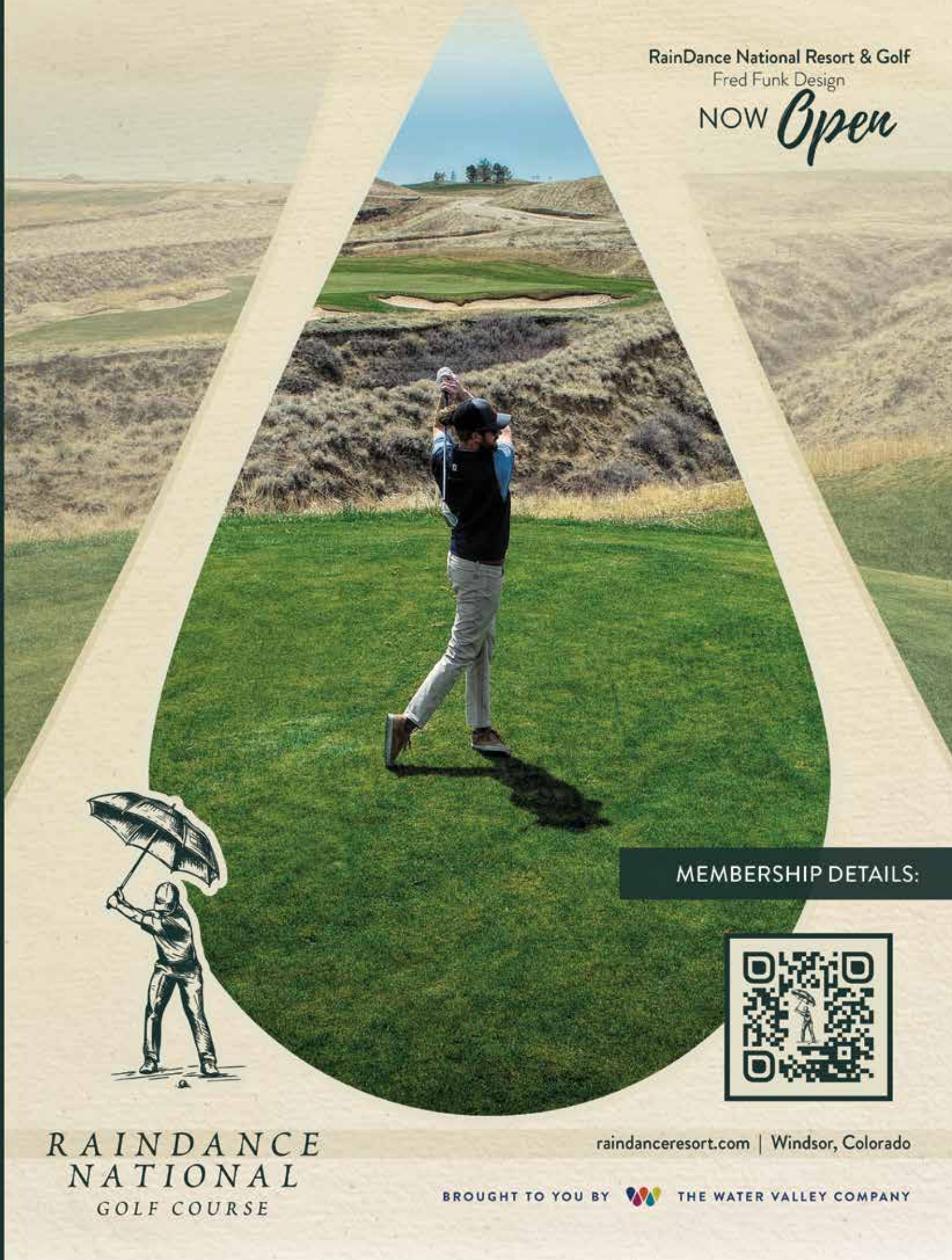
The Periodic Table's last lobster roll will ship out September 25. The cuisine choice for the restaurant's winter season remains a secret. Destination Hospitality's Knickerbocker admits she and club members do have pangs of regret when a menu ends.

"We all miss certain dishes," she says. "But everyone gets excited about tasting the next cuisine. It's like going to a new restaurant."

EXTRA HOLES

Located less than a mile southeast of **Haymaker Golf Course** on U.S. 40, Catamount and the Periodic Table are also connected via cart path to **Alpine Mountain Ranch & Club**, making dining accessible for residents and prospective residents of the exclusive gated development.

Colorado AvidGolfer Food Editor **John Lehndorff** grew up in New England. As a teenager, he helped stage huge clambakes cooked on steaming seaweed and served with chowder and Indian pudding.


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By Isaac Bouchard

X Marks the Spot

The Aston Martin DBX and the BMW X3 are two of this year's guilty pleasures.







2022 ASTON MARTIN DBX

AN SUV IN THE LINEUP is essential to the profitability—hence survival—of a modern car maker. Happily, Aston's DBX is excellent enough to help ensure the future of the fabled British marque.

Its looks are spot-on: voluptuous yet modern, imposing yet just the right size. Its interior is a gorgeous blend of materials and shapes; lovely details abound, such as grab handles that look like vintage luggage straps. Room in both rows is generous and the cargo area holds 22 cubic feet with the rear seats in place; fold them and there are 54 cubes, meaning the DBX has all the practicality one expects in a utility vehicle of its footprint.

EPA RATINGS: 21/28/24mpg
0-60MPH: 6.2sec
MSRP: $192,086

Nits are minor: the front seats' bottom cushions are a little shorter than ideal and the infotainment screen isn't controllable by touch, only a control wheel. But all electronics and driving aids work as they should, and sharing software and tech with AMG has helped ensure there is none of the inconsistent or slow response that Range Rovers and Jaguars exhibit when one uses their interfaces.

The DBX combines the effortless refinement with the athleticism of a Porsche Cayenne in a cocktail that makes it one of the best-driving SUVs yet concocted. The steering is fast in response on curving roads, yet locked-on and sneeze-proof on the highway. The ride is superb for such a machine, yet it controls its 2.5-ton mass well when pressing on.

It is fast enough for the price, with a 542hp, AMG-sourced twin turbo V8 making sub-4-second dashes to 60mph possible. Looking for more shove? The sublime 707 version ($239,086) has 697 ponies that hit 60mph in 3.1 seconds. The DBX remains ever British, despite its Germanic roots. As an Aston Martin that can handle light off-roading and also tow almost 6,000 pounds, it's truly one-stop shopping for those tired of more obvious ultra-high-end SUVs.



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2022 BMW X3

TIMES CHANGE, and the Bavarian's best-seller is no longer the 3-series sedan; the X3 now wears that crown. Updates for 2022 should help it stay there; they include minor fettling to the front and rear fascia and lights, and a bigger grill, to bring the X3's shape more in line with the angular look of the latest BMWs.

The practicality of the boxy X3 body is reflected in the roominess for humans and cargo inside. The interior is well-judged in style and materials, with the biggest change evident in the interfaces, now both 10.2 inches, or, optionally, 12.3 inches in size. Graphics are sharp and clear and the latest iDrive software running them is among the best in the industry.

14/18/15
0-60MPH: **3.9 sec**
PRICE AS TESTED: **$51,390**

BMW continues to rule in engine efficiency and performance. Whether it's the i30's 4-cylinder turbo or M40i's in-line, mild-hybrid six, an X3 leads in acceleration and real-world fuel economy over competitors like the Genesis GV70 or new Lexus RX series. And the X3 reflects the athleticism BMWs are famous for, with quick-witted reflexes and agile handling. The steering is precise if numb and ride quality is firm but controlled. Yet the X3 is also still quiet and refined enough to feel like a premium vehicle. Based on the X3's overall competence, BMW's "Ultimate Driving Machine" ethos is safe.

Isaac Bouchard, Automotive Editor, owns Denver-based Bespoke Autos (*isaac@bespokeautos.com; bespokeautos.com;* 303-475-1462).





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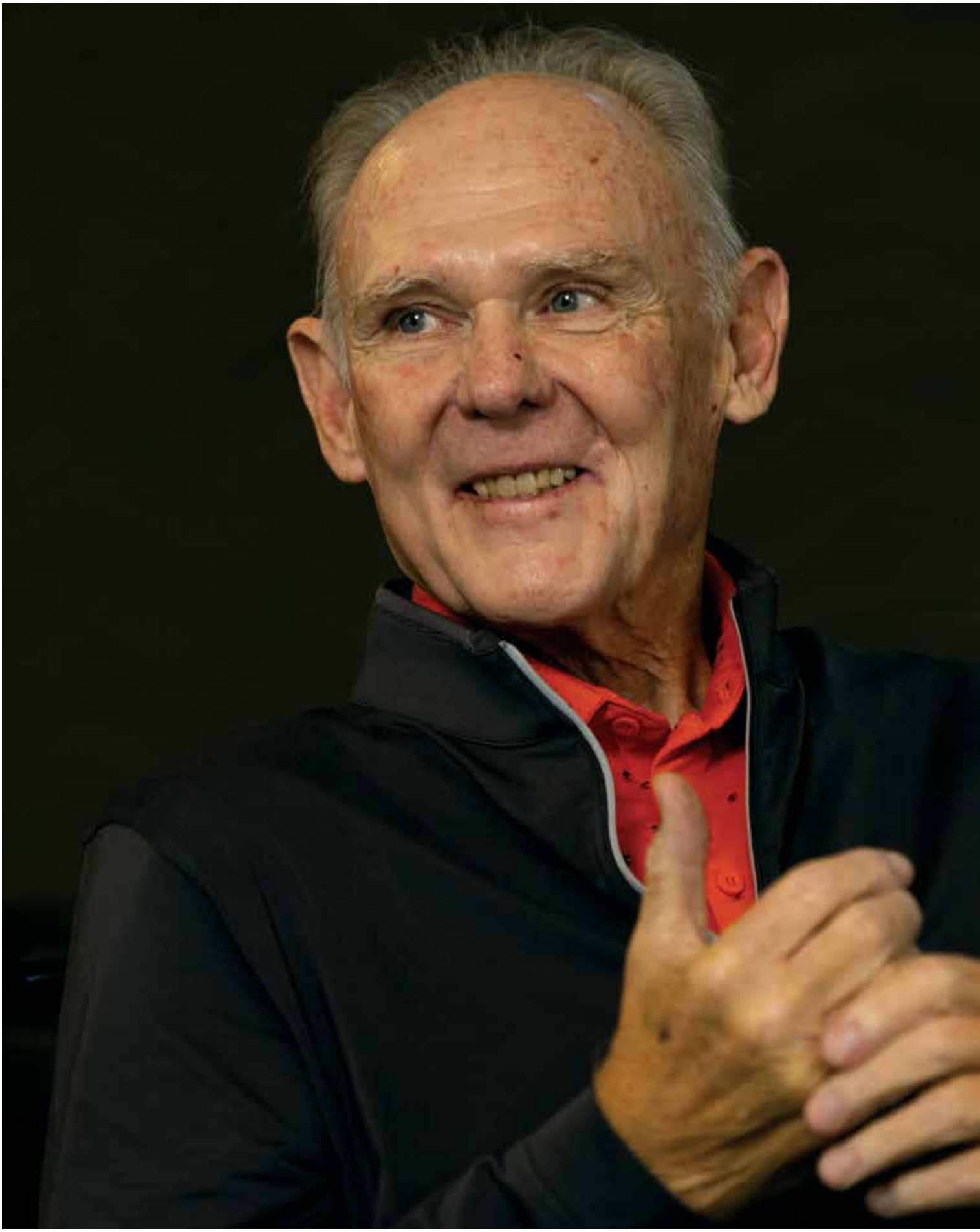


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GEORGE KARL MOVES UP

Age and illness may have changed his game, but the HALL OF FAME COACH remains a competitor.

By Jon Rizzi

As a light rain falls at Green Valley Ranch Golf Club, George Karl enters the golf shop and heads directly to a display of Bad Birdie shirts so bright they might have scared away the sun.

"Top of the pile," the former Nuggets coach says. "That's me."

Given his September induction into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame and a reputation for unguarded commentary, you might think one of the most successful coaches in NBA history was indulging in a moment of self-congratulatory reflection.

"Yeah, top of the pile," he laughs, picking up a particularly bold polo. "When I coached the Bucks, Ray Allen said I dressed like I just grabbed whatever was on top of my pile of clothes. He gave me the name, 'Top-of-the-Pile Guy,' and think I've been that guy most of my life."

LION IN WINTER

Now 71 and retired from coaching, Karl seems less like the bear who stormed the sidelines for six teams over 27 NBA seasons and more like a fit, self-deprecating Everyman who jokes that his employment history "sounds like I got fired a lot."

Karl's dismissal from the Nuggets came a month after he won the 2012-13 NBA Coach of the Year. He'd led what he has said was his favorite of all the teams he's coached—including the Seattle team that went to the NBA Finals—to a 57-25 record. However, he got sacked after losing in the first round for the eighth time in nine playoff appearances.

A short, tumultuous gig with the Sacramento Kings ended similarly in 2016. Later that year, the controversy surrounding *Furious George*—an autobiography in which he criticized his own shortcomings and those of certain players, owners and general managers—likely ensured he'd never coach his 2,000th NBA game.

Of the 1,999 games Karl did coach, however, he won 1,175. That's more than all but five people in NBA history, including such legendary coaches as Phil Jackson, Larry Brown and Red Auerbach.

"I never got to the top of the mountain, winning a championship," Karl shares as we repair to a quiet area. "I think the Hall of Fame might have helped me accept my failures a little bit more. The way I look at it, Hall of Famers have to take care of the game. We have to serve."

"That sounds like him," relates Jason Nygren, a former video coordinator for the Nuggets who has

PHOTO BY JUSTIN TAFOYA/CLARKSON CREATIVE



AP PHOTO/MATT SLOCUM

A TOUGH READ: Despite a perceived dis in his book, Karl maintains, "When I had Carmelo Anthony on the court, and he was the best player on the court, I always thought we were going to win."

become a friend and golf partner with his ex-boss. "He would tell the players, 'Do not cheat the game.' To him, basketball teaches life—discipline, doing things the right way. I've never been around a coach more spiritual. He got that from Coach Smith at North Carolina. When he talks about Dean Smith, he turns into a kid."

Karl says Smith, who passed in 2015, was the first person he thought of when he learned he'd been voted into the Hall of Fame: "He taught life better than he taught basketball, and I wanted him to be proud of me."

FROM THE HARDWOOD TO 3-WOODS

Originally from suburban Pittsburgh, Karl is a proud UNC Tar Heel, but Denver is home, despite the way his Nuggets tenure ended. He lives with his life partner Kim Van Deraa; this fall, their daughter, Kaci, leaves for Washington University in St. Louis.

During media appearances and on the podcast, "Truth & Basketball with George Karl," he often refers to the Nuggets as "we" and "us" and will praise the play of Nikola Jokić.

"HE NEVER GETS TOO DOWN IF HE PLAYS POORLY. AND HE GETS PURE JOY FROM MAKING A PAR OR BIRDIE. IT'S GREAT TO SEE."

He is also a three-time cancer survivor who most recently battled ocular melanoma. "I got hit with radiation and lost about 60 pounds," he says when asked how he's doing now. "I feel great. When Covid came, I exercised, ate right and decided to get down to my playing weight (of 185 pounds), but when I hit 195, the doctor said I was too skinny." Listed as 6-foot-2, Karl now weighs in at 200-210 pounds.

Golf, which he has played since his ABA days in the 1970s, has replaced hoops as his competitive outlet and his connection to community. But for a golfer who used to play a power game and once shot a 73 at San Antonio's now-extinct Pecan Valley Golf Club, the changes wrought by age and illness have forced him to rely "more on strategy than talent—I just get the ball in the fairway and try not to lose it and throw away strokes."

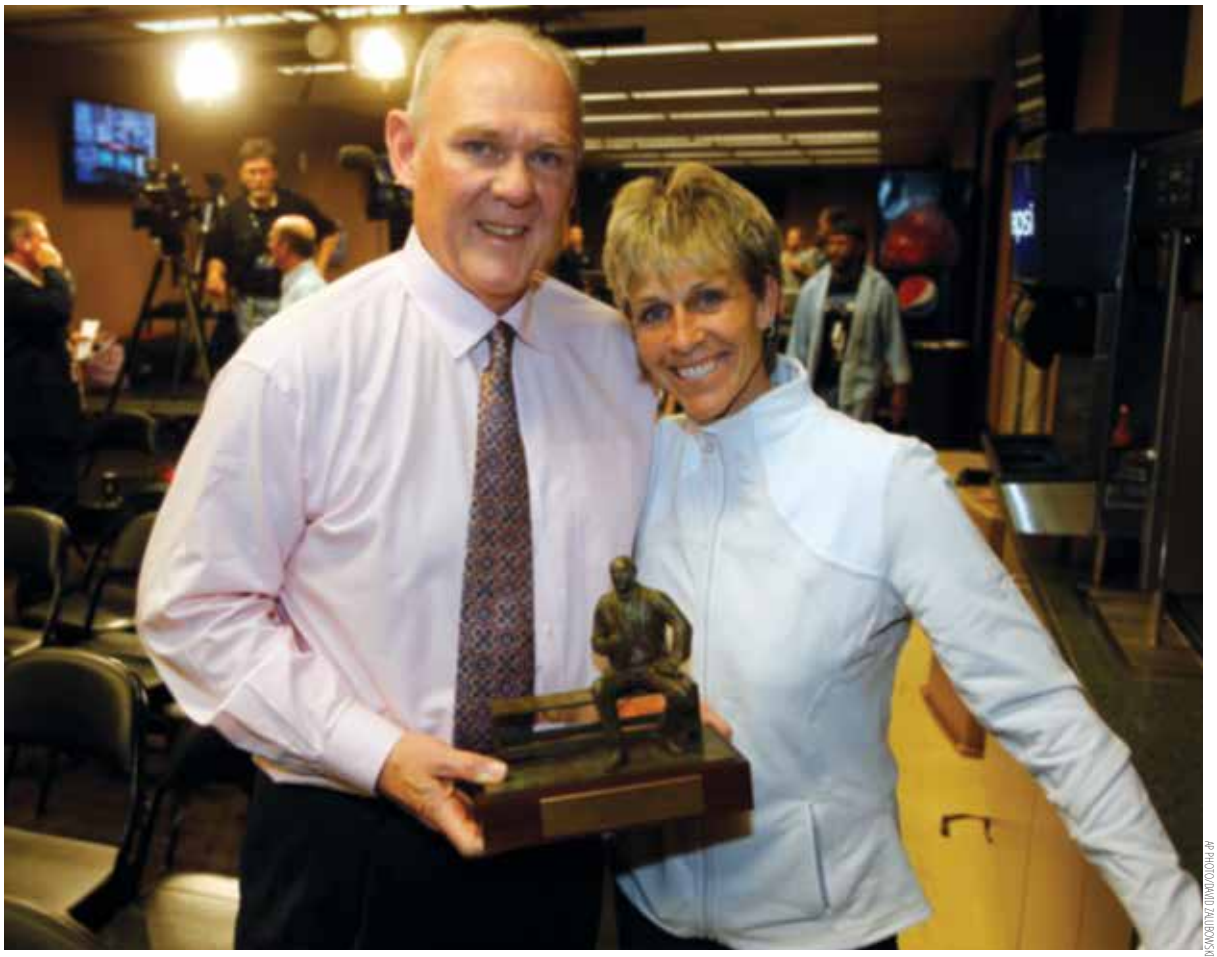
Karl says his handicap's been stuck between 15 and 17 for years. "For me to break 85 now, I've got to be smart. I've got to have a chip-and-one-putt game. I can't usually get home on 400-yard par 4s. I'm chipping and putting to a lot of 4s and 5s. Instead of being around the green, now I'm hitting 8-irons in par 5s. I just don't hit it very far."

That hasn't discouraged him from playing twice a week with Nygren and "a lot of good, fun people." He and Altitude's Vic Lombardi will tee it up at Rolling Hills on occasion, but since resigning his Colorado Golf Club membership in 2016 ("The course became too hard for me," he admits), he has mostly played public golf.

"Denver has a lot of quality courses," he says, citing City Park, Wellshire, Willis Case, CommonGround and Green Valley Ranch. He routinely arrives early so he gets to drive the cart.

"Worst golf-cart driver in the history of mankind!" Andy Mendelsberg, a


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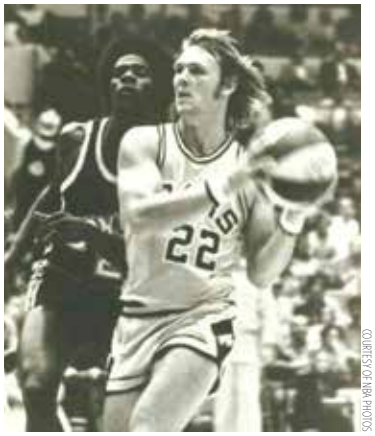
AP PHOTO/DAVID ZALUBOWSKI

PROUD MOMENT: Karl and his life partner Kim Deraa smile with the 2012-2013 NBA Coach of the Year Trophy after the press conference at Pepsi Center. Below: during his ABA days with the Spurs, Karl's energy inspired the nickname "The Kamikaze Kid."

frequent partner, says. "He never takes the shortest route and is only concerned with his own ball. I think he likes to be in control, but I also think he likes messing with me. He's very good at finding people's weaknesses, which makes him a great teammate and tough to play against."

"But if you're his partner, he'll tell you when you suck," Nygren says. "He'll ask, 'You plan to hit a fairway today?'"

"You could be putting for a win, and he might drop a ball on you,"



COURTESY OF NBA PHOTOS

Mendelsberg adds. "Or he'll say something like, 'You're playing well today; that's not your game.'"

In other words, Karl likes some good-natured gamesmanship, especially when there's money—usually five bucks a hole—at stake. "It's always subtle, never mean," Mendelsberg says of the badinage. "I wouldn't have it any other way. Besides, George always makes putts when there's money on the line. He tries to beat people in the most enjoyable way."

"He's a legit 16, and I have to play my ass off to beat him," Nygren, a scratch, says. "We let him play from whatever tees he wants—few forced carries, no par 4s longer than 400 and no 5s longer than 500—and his short game is really dialed in. He never gets too down if he plays poorly. And he gets pure joy from making a par or birdie. It's great to see."

It's also great to see him talk hoops with people he meets on the course or in the clubhouse bar, Mendelsberg says. "He never badmouths any player, just that 'some are coachable, and some aren't.'"

As Nygren puts it, "At the course with George, it's basically *Tuesdays with Morrie*."

GETTING HOME

Back at the clubhouse, the coach opines on pro golfers' swings ("If Ben Hogan saw how much Scottie Schleffler's feet moved, he'd jump out of his grave!") and golf course architecture ("Was the guy drunk who designed the 16th hole here?").

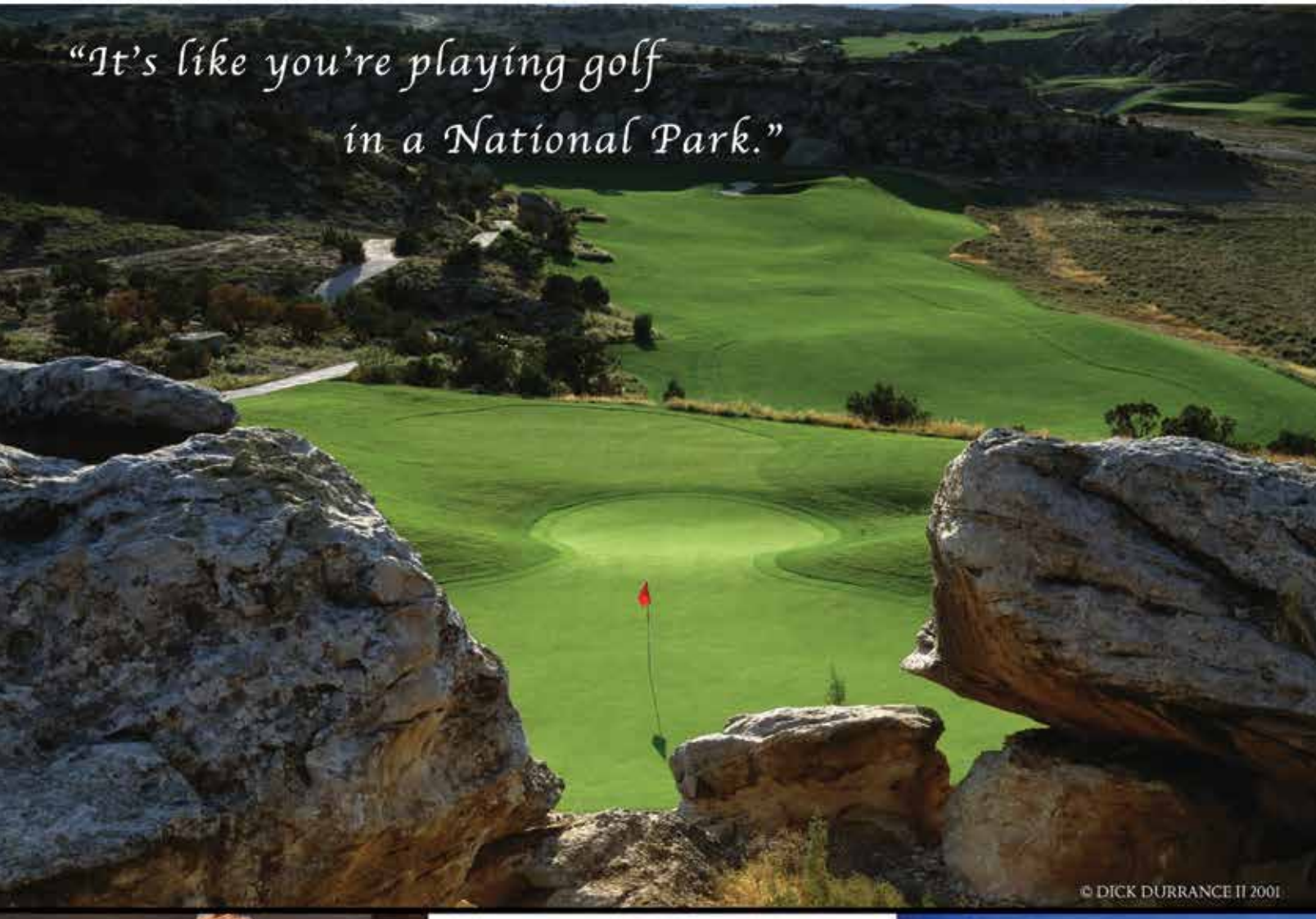
He's also working on some documentary projects, but mostly George Karl is focused on staying healthy, preparing his induction speech and picking from the "top of the pile" of courses on his bucket list. "This year it's Medinah and Merion," he says. "For a guy who doesn't have a job, I'm blessed to have a lot of opportunities to play golf with some fun people. Like basketball, golf is about strategy and skill, but it's mostly about the competition and the camaraderie."

Jon Rizzi is the editorial director of *Colorado AvidGolfer*.

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Napa's New Vintage



The iconic Silverado Resort & Spa undergoes a substantial transformation.

By Tom Mackin



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The annual "Crush" season in Napa Valley—when grapes are harvested to make wine—can last from the early days of August into the waning moments of October. The work is hard and the hours long, and the fruits of that labor won't be tasted for years to come. Golfers visiting the famed Northern California wine region can get more immediate gratification, however—the kind that can be found in ample servings across 36 holes at Silverado Resort & Spa just east of Napa's bustling downtown. Not only can they catch the PGA TOUR there during its annual stop in the middle of the "Crush" (2022 tournament dates are Sept. 14-18), but new resort ownership is making significant investments in a property that provides golfers, guests, and members with a memorable taste of Napa.

After acquiring the resort this past February from a group that included former Silverado resident and World Golf Hall of Famer Johnny Miller—who deftly renovated the North Course in 2011 and enhanced the South Course in recent years—Denver-based KSL Capital Partners LLC and Arcade Capital LLC (with an office in Boulder) are determined to elevate the overall experience to a new level at Silverado, now managed by KSL Resorts.

"Our company has this great history of owning and managing iconic resorts, whether it be La Quinta, La Costa, Doral, or more recently Monarch Beach," says Ian Pullan, KSL Resorts' vice president of asset performance for the West. "Silverado really fits that bill. The Napa Valley location, the significant roles it plays in the Silverado community, the potential for it to go to just whole new heights with a different level of support. It's an exciting new chapter, given our track record of running these types of resorts and particularly with a longstanding partnership with the PGA TOUR. It just makes perfect sense."

...It just makes perfect sense.

Investments already underway include new outdoor furniture, resurfacing of tennis courts, new agronomic equipment, and enhancements of outdoor event spaces. Coming soon is a new golf cart fleet, improved signage throughout the resort and on both golf courses (much needed, especially on the South Course; head left, not right, after playing the fifth green there!), an upgraded practice facility, and enhancement of the spa facility. "A lot of it is really bringing the resort back to its full potential and making investments in the physical infrastructure," Pullan says.

Only fine-tuning is in store for the resort's two stellar courses, where professional golf roots run deep, starting in the 1960s and continuing today with the PGA TOUR's Fortinet Championship. The latter is contested on the North Course, which can extend to more than 7,100 yards for the pros.

"Everything is right out in front of you on the North," say Cody Sherill, the director of club operations. "The South Course is where everyone seems to enjoy the character of the course. There are more unique holes, and you have to think a little bit more on shots, typically. Maybe not use driver off the tee as much. From a distance standpoint, the courses are quite equivalent from the middle tees (6,302 yards for the North and 6,207 yards for the South)." Both are walkable, too, but holes 3 through 8 on the South do involve some pulse-elevating uphill hikes, particularly the par-3 third.

While the South may be overshadowed by the more high-profile North (the latter, where virtually every hole is lined by towering oaks, hosts





CROPPED FROM PHOTO BY TOM MACKIN



approximately 55 percent of the resort's rounds), the gulf in playing conditions between the two has been narrowed considerably in recent years.

"From a turf condition standpoint, we have been able to get the South Course to the point where from tee to green, you're playing off the same grass types and solid conditions as on the North Course," Sherrill says. "Our members have really appreciated the extra efforts we have been putting into the South Course over time. Four years ago, we were doing about 50 percent of the same agronomic practices as on the North Course. In 2021, we did about 95 percent of the same practices, and really the only difference left was work required by the PGA TOUR on the North Course."

In recent years that event at Silverado has kicked off the PGA TOUR's annual wraparound season, but how a return to a calendar season in 2024 might affect the tournament's annual September date remains unknown.

One tradition not likely to change is the famous Burgerdog, available only at stands on both courses (you'll pass the North Course stand twice, at holes 7 and 14, but just once on the South at the 10th tee). The lore of this menu item, which celebrates its 50th anniversary of being served at Silverado next year, is not derived from a fancy presentation: it's simply a hamburger shaped to fit in a hot dog bun. But it's highly exclusive: the official version is only available here and at The Olympic Club in San Francisco (where it first appeared in the 1950s), making it all the more desirable.

Other resort dining options include The Grill in the clubhouse and the Silverado Market & Bakery, just off the main entrance drive, where pizza made in an outdoor wood-fired oven is a popular choice. Off-property, a myriad of dining choices await in the greater Napa region, from the world-famous French Laundry in Yountville (reservations are tougher than an Augusta National tee time) to more casual options in nearby downtown Napa, like the Oxbow Public Market on 1st Street or the roof deck bar at AVOW

DRINK IT IN: Towering oaks and pines border the fairway on Silverado's North course (above and bottom left); the fully loaded Burgerdog remains an on-course tradition at Silverado and Olympic.



on Main Street. Local winegrower and artist Elana Hill, whose family runs the intimate and well-worth-visiting Napa Valley Tasting Barn (appointment-only tastings feature wines from Prime Solum, Expression 38° & Tetra) just down the road from Silverado, also recommends bar seating for dinner in downtown Napa at Angèle, Oenotri or La Taberna.

In addition to members and their guests, both resort courses at Silverado Country Club are open to visitors staying at the resort. Comfortable accommodations are spread out (study the property map closely for the quickest route to your room) in clusters around the historic Mansion, the erstwhile home of prominent resident General John Franklin Miller, which dates to 1870. There, just beyond the lobby check-in area and a bar, is the Mansion Terrace, a perfect site for an outdoor drink or two while taking in an elevated view of the 18th green of the South Course and the Napa hills.

Sherrill is among many excited to see what's now happening at the resort. "We always used the word *potential*, but we never really had the backing of investment into reaching that potential," he says. "Where we are today with KSL, you can just see things happening already. And as we develop a really thorough master plan for the property, with input from associates, members, the local community, past resort guests, and wedding visitors, it will be something that the property has never had. That step in itself will give everyone a sense of what's to come at Silverado for the next 30 to 50 years, not just the next couple of years."

"We consider it a national destination," Pullan says. "If you take all of the pieces, the historic Mansion, the quality of the golf, and the diversity of all the other offerings, it absolutely is national. We will also focus on making sure that internationally it becomes well positioned, too, through our network."



PHOTO BY TOM MACKIN

THE SOUTH WILL RISE AGAIN: A swank deck adjoins the South's 18th. Although it gets less play than the high-profile North, Silverado's hillier South Course has closed the gap, thanks to improved agronomic practices.

Tom Mackin is an Arizona-based contributor. *SilveradoResort.com*; 844-421-6474

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A LITTLE GREEN APPLE: Suggesting the minimalist aesthetic of a prominent computer manufacturer, the PXG's 16th direct-to-consumer retail store opened this summer in Centennial sans a Genius Bar.



COURTESY OF PXG

"HELLO, DENVER"

PXG founder **BOB PARSONS**, the ultimate change agent and the "barking baritone" behind that TV ad blitz, has staked a Colorado claim for his high-flying brand.

By Andy Bigford

PXG admits it might be the "most misunderstood" company in golf. After all, it launched in 2014 with a product line targeting the 1 percenters and now makes its cutting-edge technology affordable to most any golfer—all while maintaining that high-end mystique. Misunderstood or not, the result has been a meteoric ascent, with the company dramatically expanding market share and suddenly finding itself in the uppermost tier of clubmakers in North American sales. To quote the unforgettable "barking baritone" in its TV ads: "Kaboom baby."

Now PXG's spokesman, founder and resident baritone, Bob Parsons has brought his ever-evolving brand to Colorado. "Hello Denver," the serial entrepreneur croons, as he now rides herd on yet another explosive-growth startup.

PXG (Parsons Xtreme Golf) opened a state-of-the-art, 7,200-square-foot brick-and-mortar store earlier this summer in Centennial, recognizing the Front Range's rapid growth and Colorado's position as a top 20 market by golf population. The establishment's layout echoes the clean lines of an Apple Store, but here the products aren't tethered by cables—they are meant to be swung at 100 mph in one of three spacious, state-of-the-art fitting bays. (Or, in the case of the smartly merchandized PXG Apparel, tried on in fitting rooms sans Trackman.)

This is PXG's 16th such outlet in what is planned to be an ambitious, 100-store nationwide footprint in five years. Unlike the competition, PXG from inception has been Direct-to-Consumer (DTC), dealing one-on-one with its customers while eschewing the tried-and-true retail network (along with its middleman markups and pricing constraints).

PXG's robust sales start with research and development but are driven by that ubiquitous TV campaign starring the founder's deep, unforgettable voice; fed by club-fitting demos around the state and country; and then fulfilled mostly through the PXG website or by phone. The fluid website pricing can be chaotic and confusing, but now Colorado golfers can sort it all out at the PXG store—and get a uniquely personalized fitting experience where the staff focuses on just one brand, rather than eight or 10 at competing golf shops.

Since its opening, PXG's busy Centennial store has seen a roughly even split between those happy to fork over the big bucks for the latest Gen 5 technology and those seeking affordability. Released in the spring, Gen 5 is perhaps PXG's most significant iron advancement, with its five-times-forged models longer



COURTESY OF PXG

and more forgiving (both in design and data). Though you can still spend $5,599 on the Gen 5 crown jewel—the full-bag 0311 Black Label Elite—you also can buy an array of PXGs at prices that are comparable, or even less, than the competition. That ranges from clubs used on the professional tours down to an impressive starter kit, the 0211 Z ($795 for a six-iron set; still sleek and sexy, but cast rather than forged; $1,695 for the full bag). With the launch of Gen 5 clubs, prices on the previous generation hardware immediately fell, with Gen 4 initially going to $249 a club and Gen 3 selling for $129.



COURTESY OF PXG

PLAYING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

PXG was riding impressive growth even before Covid, which dramatically boosted most all outdoor gear companies but was absolute rocket fuel for PXG.

In the Covid spring of 2020, while the rest of the corporate world shut down, laid off workers, and stopped ordering supplies, PXG went the opposite way, stockpiling components for assembly in its Scottsdale factory ("Made in the USA"). Parsons smartly doubled down on the belief that outdoor activity would soon boom. If he wasn't the only CEO in the outdoor business who did this (think of all those toys you still can't readily find, from bikes to kayaks and from to skis to flyrods), he was certainly among the few who hit a power draw when everyone else faded. "I'm always an optimist," Parsons explains. Leela Brennan, PXG's vice president for brand communications and engagement, puts it another way: "Isn't that what warehouses are for?"

There's no one less patient than a golfer awaiting the arrival of new, game-changing clubs. That anticipation has been mind-numbingly painful during the pandemic, as delivery times often increased from what used to be 10 or 14 days to two, three or four months—or even longer. Meanwhile, there's this succinct message screaming from the top of PXG's web site: "WE SHIP IN A WEEK OR LESS. Other companies are experiencing massive shipping delays. Not us."

Boosting sales even further was PXG's escalating deployment of a multi-price strategy that seemingly overnight appealed to the entire spectrum of golfer demographics. "That was my intention all along," Parsons tells *Colorado AvidGolfer* (the pandemic just sped things up). When the brand launched, Parsons explains, PXG needed to recoup its massive R&D investment, and the lofty pricing also gave it status as golfdom's Lamborghini. With

BEYOND CLUBS: On both pitching wedges and polos, PXG remains something of a status brand, although the company has made its sticks more affordable.

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COURTESY OF PXG

BAY WATCH:
At one of the store's three spacious bays, golfers can get fit using the latest club and swing technology.

manufacturing volume and economies of scale increasing, prices go down, even in the face of record-setting inflation, fulfilling Parsons' ultimate goal.

"We wanted everyone to experience our technology," he says. This explains how that guy in your foursome—the one who hordes scuffed Top Flites, won't press a $2 Nassau and tips with loose change—suddenly showed up on the first tee with a gleaming set of PXGs.

PARADOXICAL PARSONS

Billionaire founder Parsons is a Harley-riding ex-Marine and inspirational philanthropist with a brilliant knack for turning startups into big paydays; today his parent company Yam Worldwide Inc. oversees some 15 businesses. Parsons' spicy GoDaddy.com TV ads super-sized the domain name provider in the post-dot.com bust of the late 1990s, and his Parsons Technology information services software firm first soared following the stock market crash of the late 1980s (sensing a trend here?). Always a golf gear geek as an ascending tech executive in Iowa, he would beg credentials from his club pro to attend the trade-only PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando each January, ogling the new-fangled goods and dreaming of his next move.

In 2014, he made it happen: Parsons gave his engineering team, led by ex-Ping design wizards Brad Schweigert and Mike Nicolette, a "blank check," instructing them to come back when they had something that was clearly better than the competition. The result was eye-catching for its looks and performance (sleek like a blade, forgiving like a cavity back), and coffee-spitting for its price.

Parsons is a complex leader, intensely patriotic (company Zoom meetings start with the singing of the national anthem) and staunchly conservative on many issues, yet socially progressive and decidedly inclusive. His PXG for Heroes program, offering substantial discounts for active military, veterans and first responders, has been strongly received. (The Purple Heart-wearing Vietnam vet bared his own raw emotions on his decades-long struggle with PTSD in a widely viewed video.) Parsons didn't mandate vaccines for his PXG employees, but encouraged them with $1,000 bonuses, and his brand relentlessly supports women's golf and LGBTQ causes.

He rules his 36-hole, national-membership Scottsdale National Golf Club, which doubles as the flagship fitting hub for PXG, as a benevolent dictator. After spending some $250 million on 200 adjacent acres to create the acclaimed "The Other" course (plus the incomparable Bad Little Nine par 3), and then building a second, sleek clubhouse, he raised the initiation to $500,000, with annual dues running $75,000. Parsons wants Scottsdale National to be the "Augusta of the Southwest," and members say the experience—including practice facilities and a level of service that are arguably unrivaled—is worth every penny.

While Parsons, a CPA by trade, employs dozens of accountants and analysts to track and forecast performance and trends, he loathes budgets. "Rather than work to achieve goals, we work to be better," he says. With PXG privately held, Parsons is usually mum on benchmarks like annual revenue, unit sales and market share. Because it's DTC, PXG's retail sales are not point-of-sale tracked or publicly reported like those of the competition.

But on an SI Podcast, "The 19th Hole with Michael Williams," Parsons recently let slip that in comparing PXG sales to the competitors' reported figures, PXG had moved up into the rarefied air of the top three, just below heavyweights Callaway and TaylorMade (Parsons will say no more on the numbers, and probably regrets the revelation: it could detract from the daily focus of "getting better").

Consider this. Despite being birthed by the world's most valuable sports brand and fronted by Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy, Nike Golf never saw its now-defunct clubs even sniff the top five (the swoosh still sells tons of golf shoes and apparel). Meanwhile, PXG has zoomed past legendary brands like Ping, Titleist,



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Cobra, Cleveland, Mizuno and Srixon.

"Our whole take (at PXG) is absolutely different," explains Mike Sherman, the affable, Denver-based PXG territory leader who toiled for Nike Golf for 15 years before joining PXG in 2019. "We are in front of our customers. Now, people can come to us. That makes us better."

With its expanding retail network, PXG is now less reliant (and focused) on the custom club fitters who helped put it on the map. At the top of that list is Dan Sueltz, whose acclaimed D'Lance Golf in Englewood was an early, vocal supporter of PXG, promoting, fitting and selling thousands of the company's clubs. D'Lance still handles PXG, but the club fitter is far from a priority, which means it gets less fitting inventory and faces longer delivery windows. This has been heartbreaking and frustrating for Sueltz, who is a PXG true believer, but he thinks the clubs are "so darn good" that he plans to ride it out. Meanwhile, PXG is maintaining its robust relationship with the big fish in nationwide fitting, Club Champion.

Another ticklish PXG issue has been assuaging early customers who paid full price for a set, only to see the cost drop when the next generation technology launched. Many of those affected took it in stride, happily buying another, more affordable set for that vacation home. As for the others, PXG's Brennan says, "We always take care of our customers."

Just as Parsons foresaw the pandemic-driven golf boom, back in the spring he was already prepared for the inevitable post-Covid slowdown in outdoor activity. The outlook has only darkened since, with generational inflation and mounting fear of recession.

Perhaps PXG's greatest asset is its ability to pivot quickly, particularly with the DTC model; to be agile and opportunistic. Golf industry veterans dismissed PXG as a flash-in-the-pan folly when it launched, and now they are agog at the enormous investment and risk Parsons is taking on with the five-year, 100-storefront retail expansion plan. But the founder has more than ample financial resources, and it's not really about the money, anyway. It's about "getting better." Which, if the scorecard-to-date is any indicator, tends to take care of the money, too.

CAG Contributor **Andy Bigford** previously wrote about PXG and Scottsdale National in the August/September 2017 issue. He says—only half-jokingly—his greatest accomplishment in golf is having a friend who was a member at Bob Parsons' Scottsdale National and invited him to play there every winter.

THE DEETS

PXG Denver is located near I-25 and C-470, at 9030 E. Phillips Place, Ste. 100, Centennial, CO; 720-907-9784. Visit the website to book a fitting, and look for details on a grand opening celebration planned for August. There's also a 360-square-foot putting lab, a 180-square-foot putting green and a customer lounge.

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TROON GOLF®



PHOTO BY JOHN SHARPOW / COURTESY OF SINCLAIR ROCKY MOUNTAIN OPEN

Milestone in the Junction

Tiara Rado Golf Course, the host of the Sinclair Rocky Mountain Open, turns 50 with a story to tell.

For the 84th consecutive year, the Sinclair Rocky Mountain Open—the longest-running continuous open golf tournament in Colorado—will take place in Grand Junction. What began in 1939 as 60 amateurs and pros competing over 54 holes in two days at the nine-hole Lincoln Park Golf Course is now a 156-player, three-day, 54-hole championship at the visually spectacular 18-hole Tiara Rado Golf Course.

Last year's winner's share of $20,000 went to Jake Staiano, the first Coloradan to win since Nick Mason in 2016. He will attempt to defend his title Aug. 25-27 in a field with players from California to North Carolina.

They'll be taking on a Colorado gem as it celebrates its 50th anniversary. Crouching below the rugged 1,500-foot cliffs of Colorado National Monument, Tiara Rado's par-71, 6,432-yard specs aren't intimidating, but players taking aggressive lines often find themselves punching out of trouble. Mounding, slopes and the real or imagined effect of the monument and Colorado River make the greens a test.

Tiara Rado resulted from the passion of Tom Kolacny, a Boulder insurance salesman. "I love golf so much, instead of spending six hours at a golf course, I'd spend sixteen," his oldest daughter, Kristie Fowler, recalls him telling people.

When a client with land in Grand Junction asked if he'd like to build a course, Kolacny headed west in 1970 with his wife and three children. They lived in the future clubhouse. He befriended neighbors with trucks and tractors, and professionals in irrigation and agronomy.

The course opened in 1972 with six holes, expanding to nine shortly afterward. "All of a sudden all these people were coming into our house to check in or eat or buy balls," Fowler remembers with a laugh.

Kolacny became a PGA Professional, developed a robust junior program (that produced, among others, 1987 RMO winner and Colorado Golf Hall of Famer Paul Brown) and championed golf on the Western Slope. "My father inspired a lot of people to get into golf and the golf business," says Fowler, now the PGA head professional at Tubac Golf Resort south of Tucson.

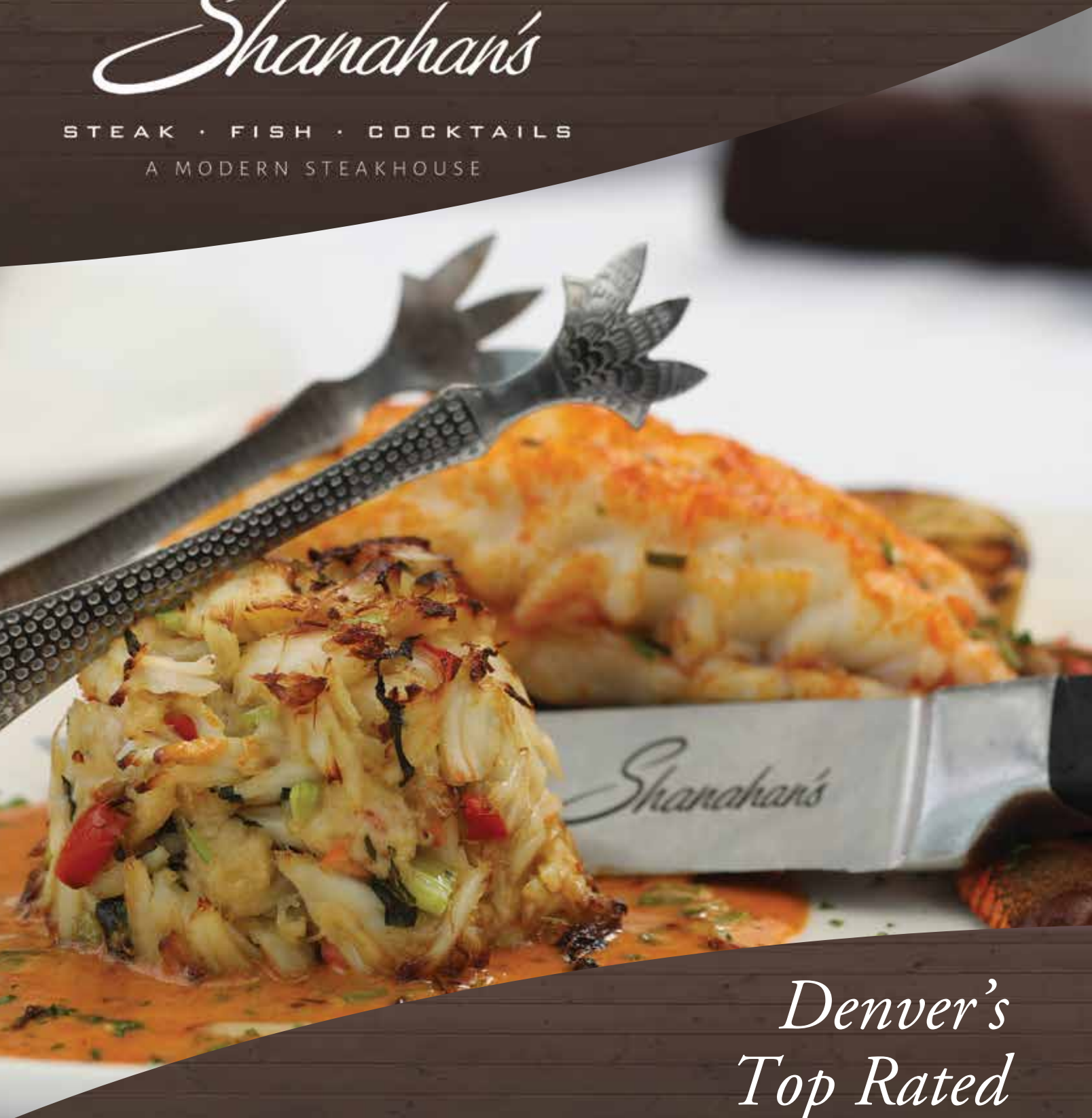
By 1990, architect Dick Phelps had completed Tiara Rado's second nine, the city owned the course, and Tom and Sharon Kolacny were heading to a golf adventure in Arizona. Today, Tiara Rado continues their vision by hosting not only the Sinclair Rocky Mountain Open but also one of the eight chapters of the character-building Solich Caddie and Leadership Academy.
—JON RIZZI

CLIFF NOTES: The Colorado National Monument adjoins—and, some say, affects putts on—Tiara Rado Golf Course, home of this year's Sinclair Rocky Mountain Open, Aug. 25-27.

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