Not your normal backyard

One of three greens Carter Morrish designed for Bill O'Connor on an estate overlooking Malibu.

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— Van Tassel Sutphen in The Outing Magazine, 1906

By MARK LESLIE

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Today's second coming of "estate golf courses" is one of often more modest pretensions and dimensions than their predecessors. More people have the land for and can afford a single putting green, or a three- or six-hole practice facility.

There is a big push everywhere to put in golf greens," said Rees Jones, who designed a course for an Atlantic Golf Club member across the road from the club itself in Bridgwater, Long Island. "The impetus is not prestige. It's the love of the game. They love golf, and if they have enough property and money to do this... People landscape their yards and build patios or gardens. This is just another form of landscaping, but it's usable.

Others who have designed greens and short "backyard courses" agree. "I think these are people working on their game, to develop their skills," said architect Ron Kirby who, when he worked with Denis Griffiths, enjoyed a 1,000-square-foot green and a handful of tees 50 yards away outside their houses.

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