

Palmer to get Ross Award

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Arnold Palmer, whose swashbuckling play and personal charisma helped introduce millions of people to golf, has been selected to receive the 1999 Donald Ross Award, presented annually by the American Society of Golf Course Architects.

Given to an individual who has made significant contributions to the game of golf and the pro-

fession of golf course architecture, the Ross Award will be presented to Palmer at a banquet on March 22, at the Country Club of Charleston during the 1999 ASGCA annual meeting.

"Arnold Palmer has been a driving force behind golf since he came on the scene in the 1950s," said Bob Lohmann, presi-

dent of the ASGCA. "He focused the eyes of millions of people on great golf courses throughout his tremendous career, showcasing great golf course architecture to the rest of the world. He has been a consistent voice for fair and affordable courses for more than five decades."

Starting with the 1955 Cana-

dian Open title, Arnold Palmer has 92 championships in professional competition, including 61 U.S. PGA Tour victories.

The 1960s also marked Palmer's foray into golf course architecture, when he purchased and redesigned Bay Hill Club in Orlando, Fla. He went on to consult on many other projects, and the work blossomed into a firm that has designed more than 200 golf courses around the world.

Q&A Smyers

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friends with Pete Dye. I was very young and hadn't done a project. But he hired me. It became instantly successful from a membership perspective, filling up before it opened. Jack and I became very good friends.

GCN: Who are your favorite classical and contemporary architects? What influence have they had on your work?

Smyers: You can learn something from everybody. Pete Dye is a master at intimidation. I saw him while he was redoing Crooked Stick for the PGA Championship. He was doing things to throw people off balance, that forced them to trust themselves to make a golf shot. I thought that was excellent.

Tom Fazio has a brilliance for bringing out the aesthetics in a piece of property. Bill Coore, Ben Crenshaw and Tom Doak have great ability to work with the land, develop a flow and strategy from the land. Rees Jones can take dramatic sites and make them even more dramatic. Jay Morrish is wonderful at developing rhythmic features that tune into a person's internal beat.

From the classical architects, Alister Mackenzie made the first and biggest impression. I went to Australia in the mid-1980s and toured some of the courses — Royal Melbourne, Kingston Heath, Royal Adelaide, Royal Sydney. He had a hand in all those. I admired how he used the property and wind conditions to develop the strategy. From [A.W.] Tillinghast I learned the true risk-reward criteria. H.S. Colt at Pine Valley did some wonderful things. It's probably the ultimate risk-reward layout, but the course just lays on the land. Then there's Donald Ross at Pinehurst No. 2 and the way it just naturally leads you around. The bunkering and greens are in beat with your internal rhythm. The putting surfaces and surrounds just meld into the surrounding landscape.

GCN: Is the consolidation of the U.S. golf industry (e.g. the growth of management firms and mergers of developers and suppliers) having any effect on the course design business?

Smyers: Golf is a growing industry. A lot of companies are coming into it. They are serving a useful purpose in that they are developing courses for the masses to play golf.

GCN: Are there too many course architects?

Smyers: I don't know. Tom Fazio said there is enough work out there for everyone right now. We're all servicing our clients. If there weren't as many, the game might not have grown as well as it has.

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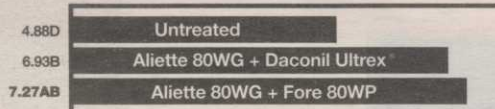
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