Organic Golf
Judge rules Suffolk County, N.Y., must take 'hard look' at building chem-free course

No Mas, No Mess
Border collies have changed the face of golf course geese problems

Ojai reclaims one of world's best par-3s
Ojai, Calif. — An ambitious project to renovate Ojai Valley Inn & Spa's George C. Thomas-designed course will restore two signature holes that have been "lost" for over a half-century, including one which was hailed as one of the world's best par-3s.

"We have an extraordinary opportunity to preserve a piece of history," said the inn's director of golf, Mark Greenslit. "Our classic course is reclaiming two of its most unique and beautiful holes."

The terrain of these two holes is so spectacular that PGA Tour great, historian and course designer Ben Crenshaw said, "This shot is going to be once again one of the best shots in golf."

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SunCor on fire in the Southwest
By Peter Blais
Phoenix — Things are heating up here in the Valley of the Sun for SunCor Resort & Golf Management Inc.

The Phoenix-based subsidiary of SunCor Development Co. is building 45 holes of golf in the Phoenix area, 18 in St. George, Utah, and operating another 108 holes scattered between four greater Phoenix-area properties.

Among the properties under construction are:

• A Hale Irwin-designed 18-hole executive course called The Lakes Course and a nine-hole pitch 'n putt layout across Litchfield Road from the Art Hills-designed Palm Valley Golf Club, which SunCor
Ojai Valley
reclaiming great
Thomas par-3

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Built in 1923 by the legendary Thomas, the Ojai course was immediately hailed as "the cream of Southern California golf courses." During World War II, the U.S. Army took over the resort as a training camp, stationing 1,000 troops here from 1942-44. The U.S. Navy occupied the resort as an "R&R" facility for officers from 1944-45.

Before returning the property to private ownership at the end of the war, the government sold off the last of the Quonset huts and platform tents that had occupied the front nine of the course, and attempted to restore the links.

Unfortunately, it did not rebuild it according to Thomas' original design. Today's holes No. 2 and 5 replaced two holes originally positioned along the edges of the property. One of these holes, the original 3rd, was known to be one of Thomas' favorite par-3's and was built to resemble the famous 3rd hole at Pine Valley Golf Club.

The Ojai hole was featured in three golf course architecture books: Golf Architecture in America by Thomas, The Captain by Geoff Shaddock, and The Links by Thomas Hunter.

Today, more than 50 years since these holes were lost and forgotten, careful research by Greenslit has brought them once again to light. Using old photographs in Thomas' book, he found the precise location of the original 3rd and 4th holes.

Ben Crenshaw and Greenslit agree on the merits of re-introducing the "lost holes."

Reconstruction on the two lost holes (which will become Nos. 7 and 8) has begun, and an opening date is planned for late fall. Ultimately, the front and back nines will be switched, improving the overall balance of the course.

O'Meara excited, searching for personal style

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O'Meara: There is a lot of competition out there. For me, it is not my only form of making a living, it is more of a childhood dream. I'm a golf course architect, more so from the knowledge that I've got from playing courses. Let's face it, I don't have an architectural degree. But people that know me know that I'm an organized person. I know that it is a big business and that it isn't easy. That's why I'm taking it slowly and making sure that the Grandview course will be very special.

GCN: Will there be an "O'Meara" style?

O'Meara: That is something that will develop over time. As a new designer, I have to first look at the site and look at the character of the site. Then I have to make it fit by asking myself, what kind of course could this be? But I haven't gotten to the point where I have one fixed idea of a direction that I want to go in. I'd rather go and work with the land and see how to get the best 18 holes in. When I play golf, I like to play a course that has unique and distinct holes, and is yet still playable. So when I get done playing the holes, they stick in your mind. Golfers are going to spend 4-5 hours out there, so they should be able to take in the aesthetic beauty.

GCN: What are you working with at the Grandview site?

O'Meara: They gave us the option of building on some of the best places on the 850-acre site. You have a lot of foliage, a tremendous amount of rock, some water and dramatic elevation changes. There will be some great waterfalls and other water features.

GCN: What kind of challenges will the site present?

O'Meara: We will be doing some blasting, but we are going to try and work around it. We will also have to work around marshland to keep all that environmentally intact. The site is good, there is no reason to disturb it.

GCN: What kind of design team have you put together?

O'Meara: I'll be working with Britt Stenson, who has been in the business for about 25 years. With his knowledge and my eye we are going to do something good together.

GCN: How will you fit design work in with your playing schedule?

O'Meara: I'll be in Toronto a lot this year playing in different events. I will be up there five to eight times a year. I'll be working with Brit, and I'll still have to work around marshland to keep all that environmentally intact. The site is good, there is no reason to disturb it.

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