Pinehills GC opens Rees Jones course, Nicklaus design to follow

By JOEL JOYNER
PLYMOUTH, Mass. — New England’s latest golf course facility, Pinehills Golf Club here in historic Plymouth, opened its 18-hole Rees Jones layout last Memorial Day weekend and has exceeded its projected golf rounds for the year. The upscale, daily-fee club is hopeful to follow up on that success this year with a new Nicklaus Design course, drawn up by Jack Nicklaus II, scheduled to open this May.

In its first five weeks of operation, the Jones course averaged 200 players a day. “The course has been well received,” said head pro, John Tuffen. “We're looking forward to opening the Nicklaus course next year. Construction is complete, and they finished seeding Aug. 1. It was playable last fall, but we’re waiting until this year to open it up to the public.”

THE JONES COURSE
The entire design, with the surrounding community developed by The Green Companies, consist of approximately 3,000 acres with 350 acres set aside for golf. There are new tee boxes, cuts that hold a shot in, ramps into greens give the sculptured bunkers and the best real estate went for the housing first and Robinson had to work with some awkward topography for the course. As is the case with many real estate driven properties, how the course could be better. With the final phase of construction and project management will be addressed.

With fees ranging from $475 to $1,285, the one- to three-day courses will take place here in the school’s George Gund Hall. Instructors include golf course designers Brian Silva and Robert Muir Graves; architects Kenneth DeMay and Richard Diedrich; designers and environmentalists William Burbank and Michael Hurdzan; and golf development consultant Barbara Hanley.

All the tees on the Jones course are rectilinear. The eighth hole is pictured above.

Jones had a large piece of property that provided several options. “The soil is really sandy, high-and-dry, and we were able to utilize a lot of the ridges,” Jones said. “The biggest challenge for me was to maximize the terrain.”

The bunkers resemble the old-style A.W. Tillinghast or Alister MacKenzie bunkering. “They’re really sculptured, fairly dramatic, and they’re one of the major characteristics of the golf course. Several of the fairway bunkers are located as protective bunkers,” said the architect.

There are bunkers located on every hole, and many of the fairways are routed along the ridges. “Most of the bunkers are below the fairways or below the targets and actually help keep the ball in play on missed shots,” Jones explained. “They’re not just sticking out of the ground. They’re more recessed and cut into the lower terrain.”

Four sets of tees allow play from 5,388 yards to 7,175 yards. “Basically, we design all our courses over 7,000 yards and add multiple tees,” said Jones. “A course of 7,000 yards is no longer a long course anymore with the shafts now available, the metal head drivers, the Pro V1 and Nike golf balls. The course is long, but there’s opportunity for all caliber players to find a comfortable challenge.”

Grass hollows and pockets, cuts that hold a shot in, sculptured bunkers and ramps into greens give the design character. “It’s not a spartan golf course,” said Jones. “It’s also a course you really need to think yourself around and determine what kind of shot you want to hit or are capable of hitting. It makes the game more enjoyable when a player needs to develop and apply strategy.”

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Matthai unveils second in Md. at Patriot’s Glen

By JOHN TORSIELLO
ELKTON, Md. — Jeff Matthai and Morris and Ritchie Associates, Inc. have addressed the need here for a mid-level public golf course with the opening of The Club at Patriot’s Glen.

“What we wanted to do with Patriot’s Glen was fill a niche,” said Matthai, who is a project manager for Morris and Ritchie Associates, Inc. at Abingdon, Md. The company’s golf division has served as project engineers for several acclaimed courses, including Bulle Rock Golf Course in Havre de Grace, Md., and Beach Tree Golf Course in Aberdeen, Md.

“There have been a lot of upscales, daily-fee courses built in the area [between Baltimore and Philadelphia] with greens in the $25 to $35 range. There are a number of existing municipal courses in the $20 to $30 range. Patriot’s Glen is in the $45 to $55 range. We feel that the course is a bargain for a truly fine public layout,” said Matthai.

This is Matthai's second solo design. His first course, Mountain Ranch Golf Course in Joppa, opened last year. Trent Wright, general manager/director of golf at Patriot’s Glen, said the reception for the new course has put renovation on fast track

By DOUG SAUNDERS
SAN JOSE, Calif. — Architect Mike Strantz has started work on the renovation of Silver Creek Country Club despite the sagging economy that has crippled the nearby Silicon Valley region. The commencement of work on the nine-year-old layout is the culmination of a fast-paced approval process where a committed membership took control to make things happen.

Silver Creek Country Club is a Ted Robinson-designed course built on a hilly site in South San Jose as an anchor to a housing development created by Shea Homes. Club membership was limited to property owners in the gated community and the course proved popular, drawing more than 300 members.

Over the years the membership lodged many opinions of how the course could be better. With the final phase of development completed, Shea Homes offered the club membership the opportunity to take over club operations last...
Patriot’s Glen
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been beyond expectations.
“We had around 3,500 plays in
the first month,” he said. “Of
course, the weather has been
cooperative this fall, but we have
had almost three times the
rounds we thought we would
from the start.”
Matthai said Patriot’s Glen, so
named because of the area’s rich
Revolutionary War history, was
carved out of mature woodlands,
giving it the feel of an estab-
lished course.
The par-72 layout was built by
Chicago-based Wadsworth Golf
Construction Co., and plays
around 6,700 yards from the tips.
“The course rolls through
stands of hardwood trees,
which makes for a traditional
feel. There will ultimately be
400 single family housing units
on the site, but the property
line setbacks are such that the
course stands by itself,” said
Matthai.
While the term “playable” has
become cliche, it does apply to
Patriot’s Glen. Matthai said he
likes giving players of various
skill levels multiple choices off
the tee box.
“For me, the thing that makes
a good hole is having 10 people
play it 10 different ways,” he said.
For example, the third hole at
Patriot’s Glen is loaded with
choices. The dogleg left par 4
plays only 315 yards and big hit-
ters can consider reaching the
green by chipping off the left side,
which is lined with bunkers. A
conservative play calls for an iron
off the tee that will leave the
player a wedge into an angled
green guarded by a bunker on
the right side.
The par 5s are on the modest
side and reachable in two for
long hitters. The 18th is a clas-
sic, shortish hole (515 yards)
that has water running up al-
most the entire right side. A
good tee shot will allow the
player to go for the green in
two, but it’s almost a full carry
across water.
Matthai said the actual course
construction posed few chal-
lenges with very little excava-
tion and shaping needed. It was
built in two years.
“The biggest challenge was
the soil. It’s a clay base and we
had to put in some soil amend-
ments,” he said.
The course has a single row
irrigation system running down
the middle of its fairways, which
are a new three-way blend of
Kentucky bluegrass. The greens
are bentgrass.
“The new bluegrass doesn’t
seem to have the problems as-
sociated with ryegrass. You
don’t need to water it as much
and you get a good lie off,”
said Matthai.

Pinehills
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TWO DIFFERENT GOLF COURSES
The goal at Pinehills was
to have two different golf course
layouts. “On the Jones course,
the fairways are perched having
a push-up type of look,” said
Larry Boudreau, project man-
ger for the Greenwich, Conn.-
based developer and owner Cen-
tennial Golf Properties.
The landing areas are about
40 yards wide with a little bit of
rough before it slopes downward
into a bluegrass/fescue rough area
that has drainage. “On the
Nicklaus layout, the drainage
was in the fairway as opposed to
the rough like on the Jones
course. It didn’t have that
perched look in the fairways,”
Boudreau said.
The greens on the Jones course
averaged around 6,500 square
feet,” he continued. “They have
slope, but it’s generally mild rang-
ing from one to maybe two-and-a-
half percent. They don’t have a lot
of heavy undulation to them, but
there are subtle features. The
Nicklaus greens are smaller but
have a lot of contour.”
The different approaches to
bunkering also was noticeable.
“We used 135,000 square feet of
bunkers on the Jones course and
about 95,000 square feet on the
Nicklaus course,” said
Boudreau. “There are more bun-
kers on the Nicklaus layout, but
they’re smaller.”
Another distinction between
the two courses involves the tees.
“The tees on the Jones course are
more traditional rectilinear. On the
Nicklaus layout they are free-
form,” Boudreau said. “So as soon
you get to the tee box you
already know that you’re on a
different golf course.”

Development