

# LOCH LOMOND . . . . .

"The finest piece of land we have ever been given to build a golf course"

. . . . . say Tom Weiskopf and Jay Morrish



*Looking out across Loch Lomond from Rossdhu House, the stately home, later to become the club-house*

Having played on the Tom Weiskopf/Jay Morrish designed Troon golf course in Scottsdale, Arizona just after it opened in 1985, and finding it to be one of the best courses I have ever seen, I couldn't wait to look at the layout of the new Loch Lomond golf courses being designed by the same pair.

That's how I came to be ploughing through six inches of mud a few weeks later trying my best to avoid the multiple diggers and soil haulers that seemed to be everywhere, on a typical, wet and misty Loch Lomond day.

When I eventually found the historic and impressive 'Rossdhu House', which is to be the clubhouse for the High Road course, I thought right away the journey was going to be very worthwhile. I was met by project manager Alan Wilson who was more than willing to fill me in on the lead up

**Duncan Gray  
takes the High  
Road to Loch  
Lomond, but can't  
wait to return  
along the  
Low Road**

to getting the whole project off the ground, and the construction progress to date.

David Brench, a self confessed golf nut, conceived the idea around five years ago, and spent the next four years in discussion with members of the Clan Calquhoun family, owners

of the land concerned, and the Dunbarton local authority, before eventually negotiating a 128 year lease and gaining planning permission. During this time Mr Brench had been trying to contact Jack Nicklaus, who, I would say luckily, never returned the calls. Through a quirk of fate he then visited Scottsdale on a golfing holiday with good friend Eamon D'Arcy, and after playing Troon, voted best new private course in the States in 1986, Eamon introduced him to Tom Weiskopf. Two hours later Tom had agreed to look at the Loch Lomond site. A decision Tom now says was one of the best he ever made, as he feels it is by far the most beautiful site for a golf course he has seen.

David Brench has certainly put together a strong team to ensure the success of this project. Tom Weiskopf and Jay Morrish as designers, Alex



Looking over an inlet of the Loch towards the 17th green

Hay as management consultant, the late Sir Peter Scott to create a nature preserve, and forestry expert Nigel Hastle to ensure the preservation of the gorgeous woodland abounding on the site.

The Rosisdhu estate, home o' the Chiefs o' the Clan Calquhoun, is steeped in history... (note the chinese drawing room must remain intact through any alterations...) The plan is for two top class golf courses. The High Road and The Low Road, each with their own clubhouse, a centrally situated professionals shop with large practice area, a five star hotel, a boating marina, and traditional Scottish hunting lodges for sale as time-share units. All this is in a landscape covering 1200 acres of pure Scottish grandeur. The thick woodland at the Northern end includes 500 year old hardwoods, huge redwoods which were imported from America over 200 years, as well as lovely Scotspines, and countless rhododendrons and azeleas. This is the area that the first of the courses, The High Road, has been routed through. Everything is more or less shaped and drained ready for top-soiling and seeding in the Spring of 1990. A nice balance has been achieved with six holes through thick woodland, six through lightly wooded grassy areas, and three water holes on each nine. The par is 36-35, SSS 72, and a length off the back tees of 6845 yards.

One of the things I particularly liked was the constant changing of direction, although with so many trees about you would hardly know at times in which direction you were heading.

The construction work is being carried out by Nagolfco Inc. of Las Vegas, to an extremely high spec, especially from the drainage point of view. They have obviously done their home work on the rainfall figures in that area! As if to argue that point though, a full greens, tees and fairways irrigation system is being installed just in case.

All the playing areas were first stripped clean of all top-soil, then thousands of tons of base material carted in to shape and contour greens, tees, fairways, mounds, bunkers etc.

Once this shaping was finished the drainage system was introduced. To aid the drainage, several ponds were dug in the lowlying areas. These yielded large amounts of peat which will be used as part of the top-mix for the

fairways and tees. The greens are constructed to the USGA specification, that is, a base with drainage system, a six inch gravel layer, a 2" blinding sand layer, and 12" of rootzone material consisting of 80% sand and 20% soil. Not pure sand you will notice. Thank goodness for a more sensible approach. Even links greens are not pure sand.

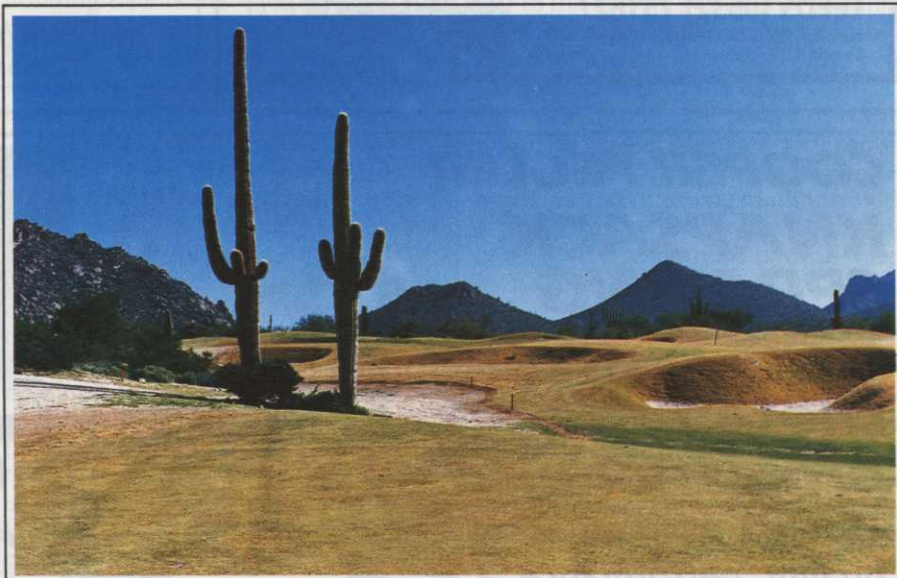
At the time of writing it had not been decided which seed mixtures to use, although the original specification for pencross was certainly being changed, and there would be no rye grass.

One thing I have to get off my chest is that I gather from what was said that an American Superintendent is being engaged to look after this superb new complex, which is a right good slap in the face for the greenkeeping profession in this country. There are a good number of greenkeepers I know of who are perfectly capable of handling a facility like this to international standards, and it is time someone made a stand in this matter with the government.

Back to the purpose of this article however. I have to congratulate David Brench, Tom Weiskopf and Co., on their, so far, brilliant work, making excellent use of the natural lie of the land, existing features, and conservation work.

The second course, The Low Road, will be over more lightly wooded ground, but still very impressive and should prove to be an ideal partner to The High Road. Opening schedules are Spring '91 for the High Road and Spring '93 for The Low Road.

There is no doubt this, is going to be a real gem in Scotland's crown of golf courses, and I for one can't wait to play there.



Weiskopf's major design to date is Troon Golf Club, built in the Arizona Desert to the north of Phoenix