



If you don't like these 29 great ones, wait a year

Florida has lots of great golf courses. And if you don't like any of the current crop, just wait a year or two. Within that span, at least a few new courses will make somebody's list of "greats."

Great golf courses can be found all over the world; what distinguishes Florida's collection is its size, variety and, above all, relative youth.

Of the 29 outstanding golf courses depicted on these pages, only 11 were built before 1980, and only three before 1970: the Bay Hill Club and the "Blue Monster" at Doral by Dick Wilson and Seminole, the 60-year-old mystery course which makes everybody's list even though most have never trod its turf or laid eyes upon its classic Donald Ross bunkers.

We chose 29 courses for two reasons:

- That's how many we ended up with after taking the top 20 from three publications which have extensive experience in Florida and adding the nine beauties on *Golf Digest's* list of America's 100 best golf courses.

- We couldn't fit any more around the map.

The latter statement is not entirely facetious. A hundred could have been added with little drop in quality.

Truth be told, the "rank" of a golf course says as much about the quality of its public relations as it does about the quality of the architect, contractor and superintendent.

Two different methods were used by the four publications to select the courses on their lists: *Golfweek*, a national weekly newspaper which began as a Florida publication in 1975, and *The*

Florida Golf Reporter, a monthly magazine, both rely on reader polls. Readers see only a small percentage of the courses they vote on.

Golf Digest and *The Florida Golfer*, on the other hand, have panels of "experts" walk the courses, study the layouts, pore over the blueprints, test the shot values and consult the stars.

They come up with the same courses as the readers, only in a slightly different order.

So take the particular rankings with a dose of skepticism but trust us: these are great golf courses. They represent some of the very best work of 16 different architects, 12 of whom are still signing contracts.

Most are spectacular to behold, difficult to play, and impossible to get on, particularly at this time of year. Many were built in conjunction with real estate developments that are not yet sold out: qualified prospects can get on, if arrangements are made in advance.

A few are open to the first golfers in line, notably Bloomingdale Golfers Club in Valrico and Coral Oaks in Cape Coral. The latter is municipally owned.

Of the resorts, Mission Inn is probably the least known but its dramatic changes in elevation are matched only at The Ravines, Jupiter Hills and Black Diamond Ranch, all of which are veddy, veddy private.

One thing these 29 golf courses have in common with hundreds of Florida layouts: they are exceptionally well maintained. For that reason, we have given the FGCSA superintendent credit for the ranking, along with the architect.

GOLDEN OCALA

Ocala, 1986, Ron Garl. **Development.** *Golfweek* readers 16, *Golf Reporter* readers 18, *Florida Golfer* panel 14

BLACK DIAMOND RANCH

Lecanto, 1987, Tom Fazio. **Carl Jacob**, superintendent. **Private.** *Golfweek* readers 6, *Golf Reporter* readers 2, *Florida Golfer* panel 1

LAKE NONA

Orlando, 1986, Tom Fazio. **John Yancey**, superintendent. **Private.** *Golfweek* readers 19, *Golf Reporter* readers 1, *Florida Golfer* panel 3

DISNEY MAGNOLIA

Orlando, 1970, Joe Lee. **Larry Kamphaus**, CGSC, superintendent. **Resort.** *Golfweek* readers 18, *Florida Golfer* panel 13

ISLEWORTH

Windermere, 1986, Arnold Palmer/Ed Seay. **Joel Jackson**, CGCS, superintendent. **Private.** *Florida Golfer* panel 20

INNISBROOK COPPERHEAD

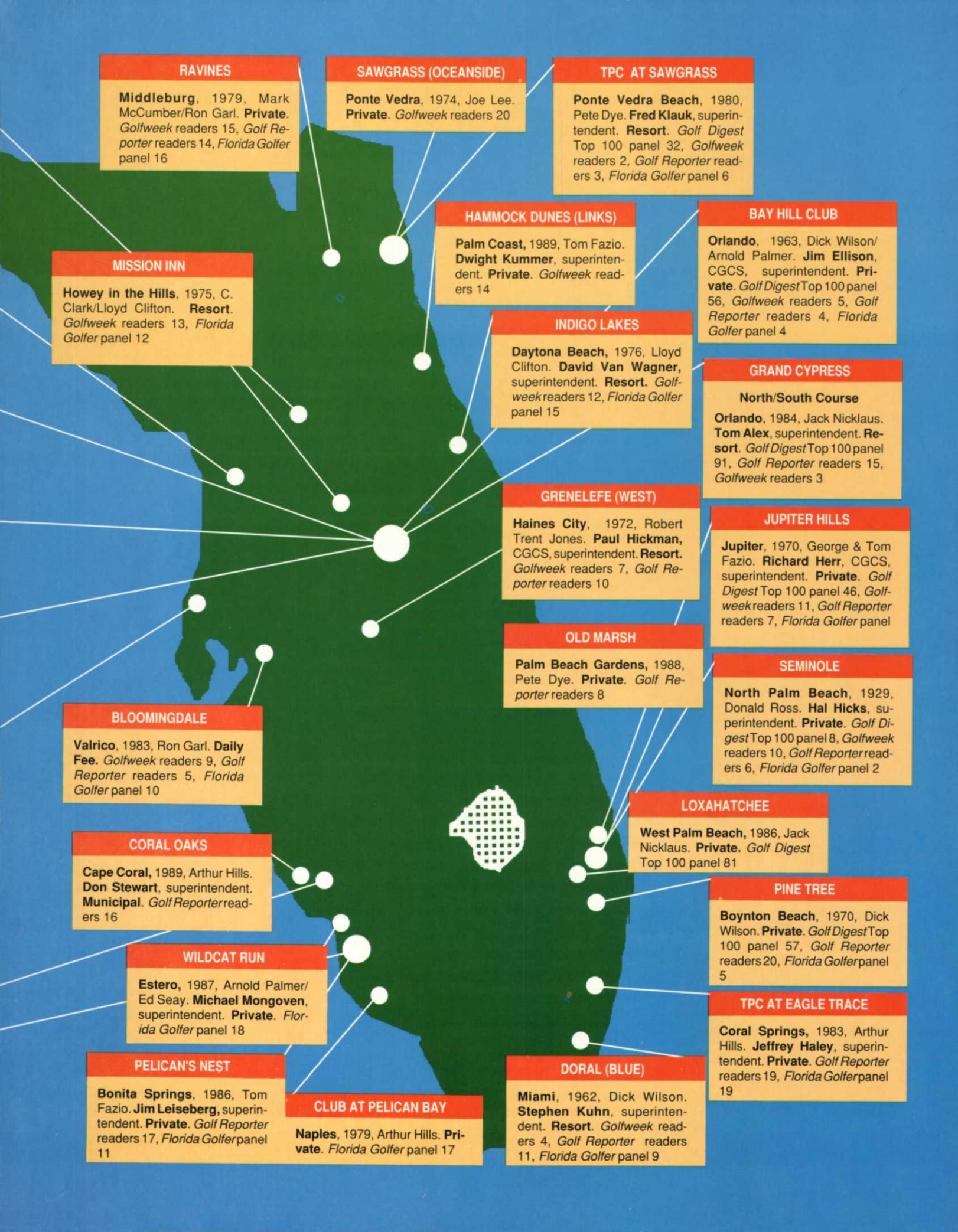
Tarpon Springs, 1983, Larry Packard. **Resort.** *Golf Digest* Top 100 panel 69, *Golfweek* readers 1, *Golf Reporter* readers 12, *Florida Golfer* panel 8

FIDDLESTICKS (LONG MEAN)

Fort Myers, 1983, Ron Garl. **Dale Conzelmann**, CGCS, superintendent. **Private.** *Golfweek* readers 17, *Golf Reporter* readers 13

BONITA BAY CLUB

Bonita Springs, 1985, Arthur Hills. **Mark Black**, superintendent. **Private.** *Golf Digest* Top 100 panel 60, *Golfweek* readers 8, *Golf Reporter* readers 9



RAVINES

Middleburg, 1979, Mark McCumber/Ron Garl. **Private.** *Golfweek* readers 15, *Golf Reporter* readers 14, *Florida Golfer* panel 16

SAWGRASS (OCEANSIDE)

Ponte Vedra, 1974, Joe Lee. **Private.** *Golfweek* readers 20

TPC AT SAWGRASS

Ponte Vedra Beach, 1980, Pete Dye. **Fred Klauk**, superintendent. **Resort.** *Golf Digest* Top 100 panel 32, *Golfweek* readers 2, *Golf Reporter* readers 3, *Florida Golfer* panel 6

HAMMOCK DUNES (LINKS)

Palm Coast, 1989, Tom Fazio. **Dwight Kummer**, superintendent. **Private.** *Golfweek* readers 14

BAY HILL CLUB

Orlando, 1963, Dick Wilson/Arnold Palmer. **Jim Ellison**, CGCS, superintendent. **Private.** *Golf Digest* Top 100 panel 56, *Golfweek* readers 5, *Golf Reporter* readers 4, *Florida Golfer* panel 4

MISSION INN

Howey in the Hills, 1975, C. Clark/Lloyd Clifton. **Resort.** *Golfweek* readers 13, *Florida Golfer* panel 12

INDIGO LAKES

Daytona Beach, 1976, Lloyd Clifton. **David Van Wagner**, superintendent. **Resort.** *Golfweek* readers 12, *Florida Golfer* panel 15

GRAND CYPRESS

North/South Course
Orlando, 1984, Jack Nicklaus. **Tom Alex**, superintendent. **Resort.** *Golf Digest* Top 100 panel 91, *Golf Reporter* readers 15, *Golfweek* readers 3

GRENELEFE (WEST)

Haines City, 1972, Robert Trent Jones. **Paul Hickman**, CGCS, superintendent. **Resort.** *Golfweek* readers 7, *Golf Reporter* readers 10

JUPITER HILLS

Jupiter, 1970, George & Tom Fazio. **Richard Herr**, CGCS, superintendent. **Private.** *Golf Digest* Top 100 panel 46, *Golfweek* readers 11, *Golf Reporter* readers 7, *Florida Golfer* panel

OLD MARSH

Palm Beach Gardens, 1988, Pete Dye. **Private.** *Golf Reporter* readers 8

SEMINOLE

North Palm Beach, 1929, Donald Ross. **Hal Hicks**, superintendent. **Private.** *Golf Digest* Top 100 panel 8, *Golfweek* readers 10, *Golf Reporter* readers 6, *Florida Golfer* panel 2

BLOOMINGDALE

Valrico, 1983, Ron Garl. **Daily Fee.** *Golfweek* readers 9, *Golf Reporter* readers 5, *Florida Golfer* panel 10

LOXAHATCHEE

West Palm Beach, 1986, Jack Nicklaus. **Private.** *Golf Digest* Top 100 panel 81

CORAL OAKS

Cape Coral, 1989, Arthur Hills. **Don Stewart**, superintendent. **Municipal.** *Golf Reporter* readers 16

PINE TREE

Boynton Beach, 1970, Dick Wilson. **Private.** *Golf Digest* Top 100 panel 57, *Golf Reporter* readers 20, *Florida Golfer* panel 5

WILDCAT RUN

Estero, 1987, Arnold Palmer/Ed Seay. **Michael Mongoven**, superintendent. **Private.** *Florida Golfer* panel 18

TPC AT EAGLE TRACE

Coral Springs, 1983, Arthur Hills. **Jeffrey Haley**, superintendent. **Private.** *Golf Reporter* readers 19, *Florida Golfer* panel 19

PELICAN'S NEST

Bonita Springs, 1986, Tom Fazio. **Jim Leiseberg**, superintendent. **Private.** *Golf Reporter* readers 17, *Florida Golfer* panel 11

DORAL (BLUE)

Miami, 1962, Dick Wilson. **Stephen Kuhn**, superintendent. **Resort.** *Golfweek* readers 4, *Golf Reporter* readers 11, *Florida Golfer* panel 9

CLUB AT PELICAN BAY

Naples, 1979, Arthur Hills. **Private.** *Florida Golfer* panel 17