

Building Pulpit no frivolous venture for Hurdzan Group

BY MARK LESLIE

There's nothing trivial about Chris Haney's latest pursuit, a majestic 315-acre golf course 35 miles northwest of Toronto.

The co-developer of the popular board game "Trivial Pursuit" has teamed with architect Michael Hurdzan of Columbus, Ohio, to create a course that Hurdzan says elevates him from "plain vanilla" golf course designs to the "take-your-breath-away" variety.

"You kind of gasp when you get to the first tee," said Andy Banfield, a senior designer for architect Tom Fazio, in recreating his visit to the Haney-Hurdzan creation, Devil's Pulpit.

Set on a "spectacular" piece of land and built with Haney's "well, we had a budget in mind when we started" attitude, Devil's Pulpit will open July 1. And the line to play it has already formed — with 400 memberships bought and paid for at prices ranging from the early \$17,000 figure to \$55,000.

"I know golf courses around the world, and I'm hard-pressed to think of a better one," said a proud Haney, whose main partner in the venture is Trivial Pursuit co-inventor Scott Abbott.

And the course was not even complete when he spoke. The \$2-million first hole was nearing the end of its 17-month construction cycle; and No. 13, a "weak sister" in Haney's words, was being rebuilt by three scrapers and four bulldozers in May.

Hurdzan said: "I think Devil's Pulpit probably has 14 unforgettable holes. They have such strong

personalities that you just cannot forget them; and the other four holes pale by comparison simply because they are up against such strong competitors.

"You could take those four holes and put them on another course and they'd be superstars. That's the kind of golf course it is."

Fry said, "It's not as difficult as people might think by looking at it. It's a psychological golf course in that it looks hard, but it has very large landing areas."

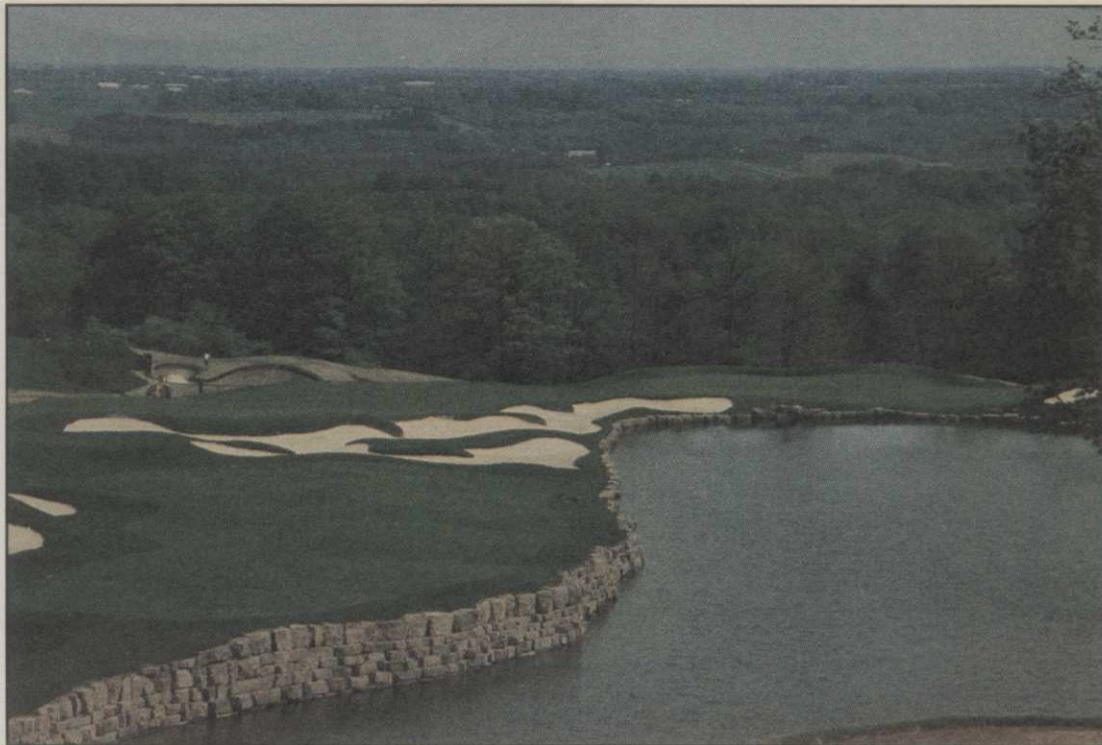
Haney's goal was to build the best golf course in Canada, supplanting No. 1-ranked National Golf Club in Woodbridge, Ontario, designed by George and Tom Fazio. Now the goal is to have the best sister courses, with a second 18 — Devil's Links — under construction on a nearby mountaintop.

Banfield wouldn't concede the Pulpit course is the best, saying, "You have to play a course to judge it." But he added: "It is a tremendous golf course, a great setting. It has spectacular holes from the first tee and a lot of dramatic golf."

"Whatever it takes" became the motto for the project, Fry said. That became obvious when Haney declared the course would fill the entire 315 acres — twice the usual land for a championship 18-hole design.

"We weren't fettered by budget or by the constraint to build houses," Hurdzan said. "I mean, here's a 315-acre piece of ground with zero houses on it. Chris said, 'I don't want houses. I want the best golf course in Canada...'"

"Those guys have tasted suc-



A view of Devil's Pulpit's first hole from one of its seven tees.

Photo by Doug Ball

cess with Trivial Pursuit ... and they recognize that in order to have something successful you have to go that extra bit. They are willing to do that, and if it means digging down into their pockets, by God they'll do it."

"Digging down" started on the first hole, called the Tower Hole because you tee off aiming at the CN Tower in Toronto 35 miles away.

Perhaps the biggest in the world, the first hole covers 25 to 30 acres and is "an engineering marvel."

"Basically the land was on a 45-degree slope and we sort of tilted the slope to 180 degrees," Haney joked.

A 10- to 12-foot-high, 400-yard-long quarried stone wall was built along the entire first fairway, separating the fairway from a lake. A seven-head-wide system irrigates the 160-yard-wide double fairway.

There is no down side to the

figures:

- \$25 million for the project, including \$2 million for the land, \$6 million for the clubhouse, and \$2 million on environmental concerns.

- 1.7 million cubic yards of dirt moved.

- 100 acres of sod including 80 acres of bluegrass in all the playable roughs, and 20 acres of bentgrass on greens, tees and fairways.

- 120 tees covering more than four acres.

- Four acres of greens, which average 8,000 to 8,500 square feet, compared to the normal 5,000 square feet.

- 128 sand traps and 80 grass traps.

- Seven miles of cart paths, which Hurdzan "went to extremes to hide."

- A second, 250-yard-long stone wall that runs one to three feet

above water on a pond between the 15th and 16th greens.

- Fifty-six pieces of earth-moving equipment kept busy at one time.

- Rainbird Maxi 4 Irrigation System, with 1,200 sprinkler heads.

"It's impossible to hit another fairway — even if you tried," Haney said. "You cannot see one hole to the next. It's like the magical mystery tour."

Hurdzan has been known as the master of \$1-million golf courses. The Pulpit has changed that.

"When you work with a low budget, you build something that's functional. But it doesn't show how good you really are," he said. "You're doing plain vanilla. When you have a Devil's Pulpit, where you have a client who says, 'Show me how good you are,' then that's a step up. We've had a lot of good projects. But this is the first time

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Take your pick: Bells & whistles or Scotland reborn

BY MARK LESLIE

When they're completed, Devil's Pulpit and Devil's Links may be the most diverse sister golf courses in the world. And that suits co-developer Chris Haney just fine.

"These are night and day," Haney said of his two championship 18-hole layouts in the hills northwest of Toronto. "You can't compare them. It's like comparing PGA West to Muirfield. The Pulpit's got all the bells and whistles. At the Links, it's like you're in Scotland; it's only missing the North Sea. Plus it's got great views — better views than (the Pulpit)."

"If you're not hitting the ball you've got something to look at, as opposed to a housing development."

Architect Michael Hurdzan of Columbus, Ohio, agreed, describing the Pulpit as an Augusta National type — "very contemporary, high-tech golf course architecture. It would make (architect) Pete

Dye smile. It has awesome vertical cuts."

The 164-acre Links course, he said, is "a Spanish Bay type and our goal is that it look like we never touched it. We're moving minimal dirt, with limited irrigation, using fescues everywhere. It will be absolutely as natural as possible."

Hurdzan was 99-percent through the maze of government approvals for the Pulpit course when Haney called him to say he had found another site. Believing Haney meant to scrap plans for the Pulpit after years in the permitting process, Hurdzan was aghast.

But Haney jumped in: "No, no, no. I have another site for a second course... It will sail right through (the permitting)."

He topped it off thus: "And this one makes Devil's Pulpit look like a mud fence."

Hurdzan couldn't believe any site could outdo the Pul-

'You can't compare them. It's like comparing PGA West to Muirfield.'
— Chris Haney

pit, from which you can see downtown Toronto 35 miles away.

Yet, "I went out and looked at it, and it does, comparatively," he said. "On a clear day you can see from Niagara clear around the edge of Lake Ontario (probably 200 miles). It's at an elevation of 1,200 or 1,300 feet."

Hurdzan said the Links will truly be a links course, with only two trees being cut down, and less earth moved than on the first hole alone at the Pulpit.

Item: To ensure that they would know exactly what he wanted in a "links" course, Haney paid the way for a two-week stay in Scotland by proj-

ect manager Dana Fry, director of golf Doug Ball and superintendent Ken Wright, and a one-week visit by Hurdzan.

Item: A London taxi cab and a Rolls Royce will transport golfers from Devil's Pulpit parking lot the three miles of a dirt road to Devil's Links.

Item: The Links course will boast a thatched-roofed, English-style clubhouse where British beer is served in an Irish pub.

Item: Haney bought a flock of sheep to roam a neighboring pasture alongside the Links' 3rd hole.

Item: Wear knickers to the Links clubhouse and the first beer's free.

Haney's personality as the co-inventor of Trivial Pursuit comes through in a number of ways at the two courses. Every hole at the Pulpit is named after a local historical event or person.

One hole that adds a twist is the 11th, a betting hole. Called Jun's Hole after part-

ner Jun Matsuura, who was killed in a car accident last winter, it has two greens, making it possible to play 19 holes all together.

Teeing off on the 11th, the golfer can drive to a par 3 green to the left or to a par 4 to the right that has a bunker right in the middle of the green.

By playing the hole to the left, you can then play to the green on the right, thus creating an extra, "betting hole."

Haney said 400 golfers from North America, Australia, Great Britain, Japan and the West Indies have signed up as members. He is aiming for a total of 750 for the two courses.

"My research shows my membership is the lightest for 36 holes anywhere," he said. "Most have 900 to 1,500 members."

Said one observer: "The courses are a blast. I can't wait for the game to come out."

NEW COURSES

Mike Young designing three courses

Two golf course projects are underway and a third is scheduled to begin this spring for Mike Young Designs/Turf Mark Golf Services, Inc. of Watkinsville, Ga.

In Covington, about 15 miles southeast of Atlanta, The Oaks Golf Club is scheduled to open for play in July. Owned and operated by Southern Golf, Inc., the 6,700-yard, par 71 course features bentgrass greens. The course was designed to accommodate the average golfer while still challenging the more advanced player and maintaining the strategy of the game.

Scott McDaniel has been hired as the golf course superintendent.

In LaGrange, near the western border of Georgia, The Fields Golf Club plans to open its front nine in May and back nine in August.

Owned by Rosemont Hills Development Corp., the course is being built in conjunction with a residential housing development. Measuring 6,700 yards from the championship tees, the course has a Scottish-type look, bentgrass greens and will play to a par 72.

The third project, now in the planning stages, is a nine-hole addition to Hunter-Pope Country Club in Monticello, Ga., about 30 miles north of Macon.

If it proceeds as scheduled, the new nine at the private club could open as early as September.

Mike Young Designs/Turf Mark Golf Services, Inc. said its goal is "to provide courses combining attractiveness with efficient and economical maintenance, without sacrificing the strategy of the game or the beauty of the natural terrain."

Courses newly approved in the U.S.

This month *Golf Course News* begins a new chart. We will continue to publish the following list of courses that are approved around the country. In addition, the chart on page 13 contains the sites and contacts for new courses and renovations in the preliminary planning stages. When those courses are

ready to begin construction they will be listed again in the "Courses newly approved in the U.S." chart.

We would appreciate your help in updating this new section. To contact us call 207-846-0600 or write *Golf Course News*, P.O. Box 997, 38 Lafayette St., Yarmouth, Maine 04096.

Location	Course Name	Type	Holes	Address	Architect/Contact
California					
Palm Desert	N/A	D	18	Cook St. & Portola Ave.	David Phaff
San Jose	Silver Creek	P	18	Hwy. 101	Ted Robinson
Colorado					
Lakewood	N/A	M	9	2200 S. Kipling St.	Richard Phelps
Hawaii					
Maui	Kapalua Resort Village GC	N/A	18	Kapalua Resort Village	Ben Crenshaw
Idaho					
Coeur d'Alene	Coeur d'Alene	D	18	Coeur d'Alene Resort	Scott Miller
Illinois					
Moline	N/A	M	18	Scott County Park	Dan Nagle
Morris	Nettle Creek GC	D	18	Stockdale & Saratoga Rds.	L&J Construction Co., Lemont
Indiana					
Harrodsburg	Hoosier National	D	27	Springville Rd.	George Young
Kansas					
Overland Park	Westlinks of OPGC	M	9	12600 Quivira Rd.	Larry W. Flatt
Louisiana					
Monroe	Katewood GC	P	18	North Monroe	Herb Wilson
Massachusetts					
Plainville	Heather Hill CC	D	18	N/A	Bob LaRoche
Minnesota					
Annandale	Albion Ridges GC	D	18	Rt. 2, Box 211	Todd J. Severud
St. Charles	N/A	N/A	18	N/A	Wayne Idso
Missouri					
Lake Saint Louis	N/A	M	18	Freymuth & Orf Rd.	Larry W. Flatt
New York					
Wallkill	Windy Wes Municipal GC	M	18	Circleville	Hudson Engineering
North Carolina					
Davidson	River Run CC	P	18	N/A	Robert C. Walker
Ohio					
Canton	Emerald Lakes	D	18	Summit County	Brian Huntley
Cincinnati	Wetherington Golf & CC	P	18	Tylersville Rd.	Arthur Hills
Green	N/A	D	18	Wise & Mayfair Rds.	John Rainieri Jr.
Jackson Township	Glenmoor CC	P	18	N/A	Jack Nicklaus
Pennsylvania					
Denver	Fox Chase GC	D	18	59 W. Church St.	Steve Graybill
Lebanon	N/A	D	18	N/A	Ron Forse
Scottsdale	Wyndon Links GC	D	18	N/A	Ron Forse
State College	N/A	D	18	Pennsylvania State Univ.	Arnold Palmer
Virginia					
Fredericksburg	Lee's Hill GC	P	18	10707 Courthouse Rd., Suite C	Ault-Clark
Williamsburg	Governor's Land Club	P	18	220 N. Boundary St.	Tom Fazio
Washington					
Lynnwood	Lynnwood Municipal GC	M	18	City Hall	John Steidel
Wisconsin					
Pewaukee	N/A	N/A	9	N/A	Lohmann Golf Design

From *Golf Course News* sources

Pulpit

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"we're showing people how good we are."

Yet, even with a bountiful budget and special site, Hurdzan faced stiff challenges.

"This was an extremely environmentally sensitive site... and it was a difficult site to work," Hurdzan said.

The developers dealt with eight levels of bureaucracy to get necessary permits.

"We answered all the environmental concerns and did them through good planning and good engineering. No matter how emotional the objection was, we simply defused it with good planning and engineering," he said.

All the lakes were lined. All the drainage went into the lakes. And membrane liners were installed under every green to environmentally isolate them from their surroundings.

Hurdzan said the habitat of a trout stream bordering a green was improved by installing a cedar wall to separate it from the green, then building a bunker inside of the wall around the green. A half-acre membrane liner was installed around the green

so that water has to re-evaporate into the atmosphere.

Then the edge of the stream was riprapped to cut down erosion and landscaped with plants to keep the water cool.

The course's 300-foot contour interval meant it required a great deal of earthmoving. "And really," Hurdzan said, "that is what golf course architecture is: the art and science of modifying a piece of ground to permit the pleasurable playing of golf and facilitate good maintenance.

"Here was a very difficult piece of ground on which we were able to do that manipulation. We've done it in such a way that anybody who sees the course is going to think it looks natural. It does not look contrived."

Hurdzan said a great golf course "needs to be memorable. You play a round of golf and you remember anywhere from one to 18 holes. Anyone who's ever played Cypress Point is never going to forget 15, 16 and 17."

His rating of 14 unforgettable holes at Devil's Pulpit makes it memorable.

Haney and Hurdzan both feel the Pulpit is a perfect site for the Canadian Open.

Hurdzan noted it is close to a large metropolitan area and has "tremendous spectator qualities" with room to handle large crowds on every hole; a lot of room for corporate tents; "a phenomenal practice area"; a club that is "elegant in every appointment"; and is "a very stern test of golf from the back tees."

Hurdzan said each hole has at least five sets of tees, and one has 11.

"The reason is, we wanted to set the golf course up so that no matter what playing ability someone has, if they choose the proper set of tees, they can go out there and play it and enjoy themselves.

"The golf course is beyond no one's ability."

It is, however, beyond many golfers' ability to pay. Greens fees for guests will be \$100.

Profits? There are none. "It's a non-profit corporation," Haney said.

After all, Haney is not involved for money. At latest count, 85 million Trivial Pursuit games had been sold. Haney needn't look beyond the view for his satisfaction.

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