

Doak's Confidential Guide spills the beans and pops the cork

By MARK LESLIE

So you've spent your wad on staying and playing at Pebble Beach and you find all you can afford to play is Poppy Hills. You pull out your ever-present copy of *The Confidential Guide to Golf Courses* (of course it is in your suitcase; you never go anywhere without it now) to discover if it is worth your while.

"These outsize targets [greens] present more four-putt opportunities than any other course in the world, and they slow down play to a crawl, since golfers take way more time to read a putt than hit a chip," you read. But: "The 1st hole is one of the prettiest I've ever seen, spoiled only by the omission of a landing area for the tee shot. 4"

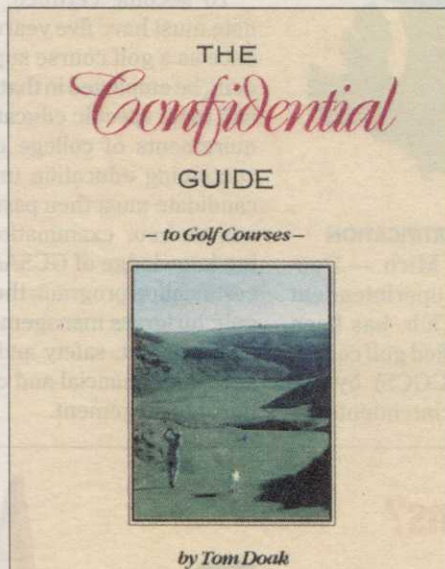
Now you know what to expect, thanks to your new favorite author: Tom Doak.

If you are a golf course architect you might thank God you are not a pin cushion and that Doak is not a seamstress. Actually, you might feel like you are that pin cushion.

But if you are a golfer you will thank God your wife bought you this book for Father's Day. This 361-page, color-filled (and colorful) review and expose of more than 1,000 golf courses around the world is giving you more education, enlightenment—and, yes, entertainment—than you deserve.

First, a suggestion: Try accepting Tom Doak as he is. Don't get mad. Just get ready for a joyride through this book filled with 180 gorgeous Doak photos.

Some may feel Doak is lifting the skirts up over the heads of some folks in this no-



holds-barred discourse. But though his pen is as sharp as his tongue can be, I think he is just espousing his strong feelings about a game, and a profession, he both loves and makes his living in.

Indeed, Doak did not originally write this book for public consumption. It was a labor of love to share his feelings with a mere 40 friends. And it was a gas, especially if you're not an architect. In fact, it became "the most widely circulated golf book never published." Pages, sections, the entire book were photocopied and sent from friend to friend until enough people pressured Doak to get it published. Say hello to Sleeping Bear Press, you golfers of the world.

Another suggestion—no, make this a must: Be aware that Doak's numerical evaluation is tough, if not extreme. Any course ranked 5 (on a 10-point scale) or higher has his approval. Now, I really enjoyed Poppy Hills and would love to play it again. Doak gave it a 4, so I can assume I'd enjoy those tracks with 4s or higher. If you like a 3, you will likely enjoy those he ranks 3. Hey, there are only a few 10s in the world, according to Doak's scale: Pinehurst No. 2, Pine Valley, Cypress Point, Royal Melbourne, St. Andrews Old Course.

No, not Sand Hills? "I can't give it a 10 on the Doak scale, because that's not a judgment that can be made on a single visit, but it's the only course built in a long time that even had a chance to get to that level. I look forward to reserving final judgment for several more trips to come."

"My ratings are designed to quantify how highly I'd recommend traveling to see any course listed, and my scale is skewed to the left because the great majority of courses I've seen are well above average in quality," Doak writes in his introduction. As he adds: "If you're paying \$50 or \$100 to play the course, or \$1,000 to get there, you have a right to know whether the negatives outweigh the positives."

A smattering of quotes to get the golfer's juices flowing:

• About Shadow Creek (Tom Fazio's gem outside Las Vegas): "There isn't any objective way to evaluate the perfection

of a work of art that's entirely manufactured, but Shadow Creek is now the standard by which all other works of this type will be judged."

• PGA West Stadium Course (Pete Dye's "hardest obstacle course in the world"): "The four short holes are collectively, and perhaps individually as well, the worst that Pete has ever built: gimmicky, unimaginative, too dependent upon water hazards, and penal. The 9th, 10th and 16th holes are among Pete's best."

• About Medinah Country Club: "It's not quite as tight as Olympic Club, but at 500 yards longer, it is definitely a maximum-security prison—poor compensation, in my book, for its lack of strategic challenge."

• Loxahatchee Club (Jack Nicklaus' work in Jupiter, Fla.): "I prefer this over-mounded course to Grand Cypress (at least there aren't any double greens), but it's much too conspicuous that Jack tried anything and everything to fight the dull terrain he inherited, and that he lost the war."

I especially like The Doak Gazetteer at the back of the book, a compilation of lists like The 19 Best Holes That No Longer Exist, Eclectic 18s, Best Names for Bunkers, Best Courses Without Water, Best Finishing Hole...

Whatever your taste, check out this Confidential Guide... which isn't so confidential any more.

\$45.00, 400 pages, hardcover.

Human Resource Management for Golf Course Superintendents

By Robert Milligan and Tom Maloney

This practical guide provides basic management principles and techniques which view people as the most important asset in golf course management.

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Turfgrass Management Information Directory

By Dr. Keith Karnok

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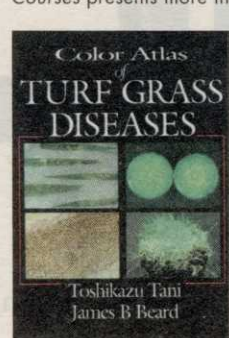
\$19.95, 115 pages, softcover.

Color Atlas of Turfgrass Diseases on Golf Courses

By Dr. Toshikazu Tani

Contributing Author, Dr. James B. Beard

The *Color Atlas of Turfgrass Diseases on Golf Courses* presents more than 540 high-quality color photographs of all the major turfgrass diseases that occur on both warm- and cool-season grasses. It is international in scope. This book will likely become the standard color-guide to disease diagnosis and pathogen identification for golf course superintendents and turfgrass practitioners. No other book contains as many color photographs of this detail and quality. Helpful maps are included to assist in disease identification by providing geographical locations where each disease/pathogen is likely to occur. A unique feature of this easy-to-use field guide is that it also provides color photos of step-by-step guidance on diagnostic techniques for laboratory analysis which can be used by practitioners.



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Guide to Golf Course Irrigation System Design and Drainage

By Edward Pira

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\$59.95, 400 pages, hardcover.

Superintendent's Handbook of Financial Management

By Raymond S. Schmidgall

This self-teaching manual was written specifically for golf course superintendents, managers, and owners. It's designed to make complicated subjects easy-to-understand by using simple demonstrations, useful exercises, and step-by-step instructions.

The *Superintendent's Handbook of Financial Management* is the official certification textbook of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

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