



“No room service, no cable TV, no wi-fi, but talk about a room with a view!”

SETH JONES, *Editor-in-Chief*

This place is The Pit

I have had the good fortune to stay in some pretty nice places in just the few years I’ve been working for *Golfdom*: Trump Towers in Chicago; The Rittenhouse in Philadelphia; The May Fair in London, to name a few that really stand out.

As you might imagine, The Pit is not among the nicest places I’ve stayed.

However, it might be the most memorable.

The Pit isn’t a hotel. It’s a golf course. Well, it was a golf course.

The Pit Golf Links, located in Aberdeen, N.C., was a Dan Maples layout opened in 1985. It was celebrated regionally for its zany design that included blind tee shots, zigzag fairways and an island green.

Sadly, like many courses, The Pit met its demise a few years ago. Since then, Robert Dedman Jr., owner of Pinehurst Resort, bought the property. Rumor had it that this land would become Pinehurst

No. 9. With Pinehurst’s recent acquisition of National GC (see page 10) it is obvious The Pit will not become No. 9.

Whatever becomes of The Pit, I will fondly remember it as the place I called home during the 2014 U.S. Open. No room service, no cable TV, no wi-fi, but talk about a room with a view! And what an experience!

I arrived late on the Sunday night preceding the U.S. Open. I met my new housemates for the week on night one. There was Carlos Sanes, Penn State intern, from Stroudsburg, Pa.; Matthew Jones, senior assistant superintendent from The Landings Club, Savannah, Ga.; and two Iowa State University juniors; Ryan May and Desmond Decker. Jones was back after

interning for two seasons at Pinehurst in 2010 and 2011.

There were five of us calling The Pit home for the week, but not a lot of socializing. Sure, these guys were young, but this was no Animal House. After all, they were working 16-hour days. Sleep was at a premium.

Sanes was my tour guide upon arrival. He advised me that it might be best to enter through the rear — those stairs were safer. Good advice. The front stairs were pretty wobbly, and I’m too heavy to take that risk.

The “master bedroom,” which they allowed me the honor, was elevated from the main floor, with a sunken service area in front of it. Was this where golfers checked

in with the pro shop 20 years ago?

My bathroom was the women’s locker room. Our kitchen was the old kitchen for the grill room. Some of the old signage remained, asking golfers to proceed to No. 10 tee as quickly as possible, or to be careful for lightning.

It was fun, and bittersweet, to look around and imagine what this place must have been like 20 years ago. Golfers milling in and around racks of golf shirts, golf shoes, golf balls and I’m sure nice shiny displays of the newest golf clubs. I wonder how many played their first round of golf at The Pit, or carded their only hole in one?

But life goes on.

And not that I’m speaking from experience, but a word of advice if you find yourself alone in a dark, barren clubhouse visualizing that scene, and if you’re the type (again, not me) who is easily spooked by emptiness: Playing music makes it feel a little less foreboding, a little less like Jack Nicholson might start chopping down a door with an axe, shouting, “Here’s Johnny!”

I was honored that the team at Pinehurst put me up in The Pit, and I thank those guys for all their hospitality. Though it won’t make my list of the all-time nicest places I’ve stayed, it will be an all-time fond memory of a great event, a great week and some great guys.

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