



from the designer's desk

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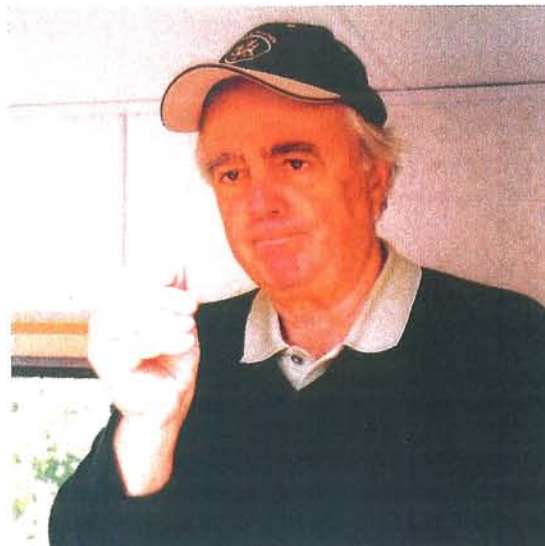
restore integrity

When nature provides the golf course architect with a perfect landscape, very little - other than a focused, well-informed imagination - is required to craft interesting golf holes. We place a bunker here, a mound there, use high ground for greens and tees and finally pause to contemplate what we've done. Even on great sites, we always try to adapt the golfing landscape to technical challenges produced by manufacturers who are constantly improving clubs and balls.

The aerodynamic missiles the ball manufacturers provide these days, screaming off the face of scientifically crafted, large-headed drivers, threaten to turn many classic designs to dust. Now we must find ways to create hazards that will give risk its proper reward. Our goal is to restore integrity to tee shots, so it requires not mere length, but accuracy too. We have employed the innovative idea of "tactical risk" at our new Clear Creek course in Fayetteville (Arkansas) and at Alcañada Golf Club on Mallorca.

It's not only how far players fly the tee ball, it's whether they can stop it within a precise target landing area. An airplane that misjudges a short windswept landing strip does so at its peril. Golfers must understand that they also can fly a tee shot into danger. Alcañada requires subtle judgment in selecting clubs in its ever-changing seaside winds. Now the long and short games will combine on these courses to confront the technical advantage of hi-tech clubs and balls in the age-old evolutionary ballet of predator (the golfer) and prey (the course).

Good designers are always mindful that man and nature make golf endlessly fresh and challenging. The rules of golf regulators have, for the first time, published a unified rulebook for 2004, including the limiting of wooden tees to 4". Why not just drop the ball and play it as it lies off each tee? When the forces of nature suddenly come up, the unexpected elements make golf, well... golf! Play away on fair or foul days and enjoy the endlessly changing, unregulated nature of our game. ■



risque tactique

Sur un terrain parfait, l'architecte a peu à faire. Un bunker là. Une bosse ici. Et on contemple la belle ouvrage. Mais même dans ce cas, il doit s'adapter aux problèmes posés par un matériel sans cesse amélioré. Aujourd'hui, balles et clubs menacent la solidité des parcours classiques. L'architecte doit trouver des pièges récompensant les risques pris et redonner toute sa valeur au drive pour que sa précision soit le facteur le plus important. J'ai mis cette idée en œuvre à Alcañada (Mallorque) en limitant la zone idéale d'atterrissage d'une balle. Comme un avion. Trop court ou trop long, ça casse. L'architecte doit travailler à ce que la conjugaison de l'homme et de la nature permette un golf novateur. Dans des règles enfin uniformisées en 2004, la hauteur des tees est limitée à 10,16 cm. Mais si on droppait plutôt la balle au départ pour la jouer comme elle est... Si la nature prenait ainsi le pas, les situations inattendues feraient alors que le golf redeviendrait vraiment du golf.