



from the designer's desk

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a game of patience

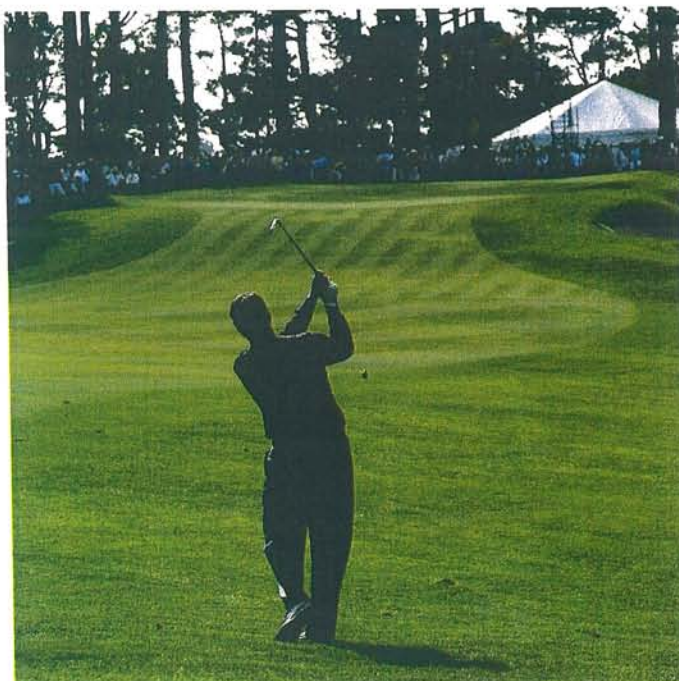
Golf balls don't simply go further these days, they're aerodynamically designed to resist spin and go straight, no matter how poorly they're struck. Still, most people who play golf struggle to play well, so it's astonishing to see how proficient the best professional players are.

In the 2005 AT&T Pro-Am, Phil Mickelson shot 62 on Spyglass Hill, a course known ever since my father designed it as among the most difficult in the world. Mickelson not only set the record by two shots on a course revamped and featuring 71 extra yards, his score was ten shots lower than the average among his competitors, who are merely the planet's best players.

Late last year, Mickelson set the course record on my Poipu Bay course in Hawaii during the Grand Slam with a 59, one of only a handful of times a score so low has been shot in competition. So am I dismayed by these low scores? Do I feel that as a golf course architect we need to install new draconian elements to defend against assaults on the numerical value on Par? In a word, "no." The game has evolved at every level, from the equipment to the courses themselves, but at base it retains the elements that have accounted for its growing popularity over its now centuries' long history: golf is played outdoors, on courses that change with the seasons and the years.

Most golfers are friendly competitors who's wayward shots still today find well-sited hazards on classic golf courses. Millions of golfers celebrate the honor and integrity of the game as they struggle to master it, which of course no one ever does. No game more perfectly mimics life's trajectory of joy mingled with sorrow, without ever becoming a matter of life and death.

Golf inspires devotion, dedication, persistence and patience, and the world can never have too much of these qualities. So we will continue to provide the arenas where human beings can seek measured victories. And we don't need a stimpmeter to measure golf's contribution to the pleasures of life. ■



Phil Mickelson, 62,
Spyglass Hill, AT&T Pro Am

jeu de patience

Donc, Mickelson a joué 62 à Spyglass Hill dessiné par mon père, un parcours des plus difficiles encore rallongé de 60 mètres, et il a pris dix coups à la moyenne des joueurs parmi les plus cotés au monde, et à Poipu Bay (Hawaï) que j'ai dessiné, il a signé un rare 59.

Ses scores me dépriment-ils? Doit-on créer des batteries anti-missile sur nos parcours pour défendre le par? Je ne le crois pas. Certes, le golf a évolué, mais il conserve ce qui en fait le succès depuis des siècles. Il se joue en plein air sur des parcours changeant avec les saisons et les années. La plupart d'entre nous y jouons en dilettante des coups qui finissent par trouver un obstacle. Nous sommes des millions à respecter ce jeu tout autant que nous avons du mal à le dominer. C'est une affaire de constance, de volonté et de patience. On a toujours besoin de ces qualités dans la vie. C'est pour cela que nous, les architectes, continuons à pourvoir les hommes en terrains où ils peuvent avant tout vivre de tels jolis moments.