

Development OF THE Year 2021

This year's competition brings honors to 6 courses in 5 countries — from Scotland to Thailand.

BY JANELLE McPHERSON



Dumbarnie Links, Scotland, Hole 2

What the judges said

Judge Jason Sloan: "A unique project that ticks all the boxes in terms of the golf experience, starting with a beautiful routing of golf holes that provides multiple options from the tee through the created dunescape."

Judge Mike Nuzzo: "By far the best routing of the entrants. The course zigzags through what looks almost like linksland, expertly creating variety and interest throughout the round."

Judge Casey Paulson: "Beautiful seaside golf links with great shaping and routing. Looks like this will be another wonderful course for golf vacationers."

St Andrews is to golf what a diamond is to a wedding ring, but just 10 miles away, another course in Scotland is showing some major sparkle.

Judges selected Dumbarnie Links as the winner of the 2021 Development of the Year competition for its world-class design and its focus on environmental stewardship and long-term sustainability. Designed by renowned course architect Clive Clark and built by contractor Landscapes Unlimited, the golf course is situated along 1 1/2 miles of Scottish coastline on the 5,000-acre Balcarres

Estate owned by Lord Anthony Balniel.

Clark's goal was to create a high-end links course that looked as if it had been there for more than a century, yet with a modern twist.

"This vision aspired to simultaneously showcase sustainable and environmentally friendly development principles, while generating employment opportunities and tremendous economic benefit to the local community," he said.

Each year, the Development of the Year competition seeks to identify the best new golf developments around the globe, and

this year's second place, third place and three honorable mentions also showcase just that.

Davis Love's Birdwood Golf Course at Boar's Head Resort in Charlottesville, Va., placed second. In addition to a new 18-hole course, it has a new practice range, a performance center and a 32,000-square-foot putting course.

Payne's Valley Golf Course at Big Cedar Lodge in Hollister, Mo., took third place. It is the first public-access course designed by Tiger Woods and his design firm, TGR Design. Rock outcroppings and the Ozark

Mountains create a backdrop for the 18-hole course.

All three honorable-mentions winners are outside the U.S. They are: Rancho San Lucas Golf Club in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico; PGA National Czech Republic in Popovičky, Czechia; and Siam Country Club's Rolling Hills course in Pattaya, Thailand.

Judging was based on a combination of how well the project realized the vision of the development team, course aesthetics, environmental and economic sustainability, course routing and land use.

FIRST PLACE Dumbarnie Links

Scotland

Owner: DGL Investors LLC

Developer: DGL Investors LLC

Architect: Clive Clark Design

Contractor: Landscapes Unlimited

Construction Cost: \$7 million



Clubhouse

The original vision of the developer was to create a stand-alone world-class daily-fee links course on the Scottish coastline while simultaneously showcasing sustainable and environmentally friendly development. Dumbarnie Links opened in May 2020 to much fanfare from local players and the media.

Architect Clive Clark's vision differed from the traditional out-and-back style of the old Scottish links. Every hole provides a stunning view of the water, achieving the architect's original bold vision.

"The course is certainly a thinking man's course and is fair and playable for players of all levels," Clark said.

Many holes offer risk-and-reward play, giving golfers the opportunity to gamble and be creative.

"Among these, there are three potentially drivable par-4s where the heroic line involves cutting corners and risking entrapment in gnarly bunkers," Clark said. "The creative routing, where every hole is unique, meanders through the rugged dune land, allowing the golfer to feel like he is alone on each hole and unaware of other golfers on the course."

The total distance of the golf course varies between 5,300 to 6,900 yards. The once barren pastureland is now home to wildlife. The developers worked with local environmental regulatory bodies throughout the construction process.

Dumbarnie Links is scheduled to host the 2021 Ladies Scottish Open this summer.

About the Judges

Mike Nuzzo designed Wolf Point Ranch, which was recently ranked No. 1 in Texas by Golf Magazine. He collaborated with Tom Doak on the redesign of Memorial Park for the 2020 Houston Open. His newest course, Nine + Three Grand, will open in Houston later this year.

Jason Sloan has been involved in golf course construction since 2008 as part of the leadership team of Frontier Golf, handling all phases of course renovation projects. He holds a degree in landscape architecture from Penn State and a degree in golf course architecture from Edinburgh College of Art in Scotland.

Casey Paulson is president of sales and operations at Driftwood Golf and Ranch Club, a Discovery Land Co. development outside Austin, Texas. Prior to joining Driftwood, Casey was the project president of Silo Ridge Field Club, a Discovery Land Co. development in Amenia, N.Y. Casey was also president of Bluejack National Golf Club in Montgomery, Texas, an honoree in the 2015 Development of the Year competition.



Hole 6

SECOND PLACE
Birdwood Golf Course
 Charlottesville, Va.

Owner: University of Virginia Foundation
Developer: University of Virginia Foundation
Architect: Love Golf Design (Davis Love III, Mark Love, Scot Sherman)
Contractor: MacCurrach Golf Construction
Construction Cost: \$13.5 million

Birdwood Golf Course at Boar's Head Resort was worn out and needed to be renovated. The owner wanted to create new, family friendly golf facilities to attract resort guests and members. This would require a whole new look.

Brought to life by Love Golf Design, the new 18-hole course, surrounded by the Blue Ridge Mountains, was intentionally routed to capture the views. The plan was to stick with the natural lay of the land. As the site was cleared, areas of native vegetation were uncovered, which helped drive the natural look of the course and out-of-play areas.

Birdwood, which is home to the University of Virginia men's and women's

golf teams, includes a practice range and a new six-hole, par-3 course to be used by the public and resort guests. And the new tennis stadium, built on the previous third hole, fits seamlessly with the new routing and course design.

Golf revenues are already reported to be 79% above budget projections, and there is a long waiting list for membership.

The total development encompasses about 250 acres.

Judge Mike Nuzzo: *"The vision for the project improved the entire development by better utilizing the land and amenities, all while significantly improving the golf course and adding family friendly play."*

Clubhouse



THIRD PLACE
Payne's Valley Golf Course

Hollister, Mo.

Owner: Johnny Morris
Developer: Johnny Morris
Architect: Tiger Woods and TGR Design
Contractor: N/A
Construction Cost: Undisclosed



Hole 3

Payne's Valley at Big Cedar Lodge in Hollister, Mo., near Branson, was a collaborative vision of Tiger Woods and Johnny Morris, founder of Bass Pro Shops and a noted conservationist. They wanted to create a 19-hole layout that fostered a deep connection between the game of golf and nature.

Named in honor of golf legend Payne Stewart, Payne's Valley opened in September 2020 after more than three

years of construction. Woods and his design firm, TGR Design, created a championship caliber, family friendly golf course that allows individuals of all skill levels to enjoy the game in a beautiful natural setting.

The course runs alongside dramatically exposed rock outcroppings, bold mountain ridges, sweeping valleys, pristine streams and beautiful mature trees, all of which help to create a memorable back-

drop. The walkable course is challenging yet player friendly and includes a one-of-a-kind, mile-long finish where golfers travel through a spring-fed natural cavern system over bridges alongside 250-foot cliffs and through ancient waterfalls before returning to the clubhouse.

The bonus 19th hole, designed by Morris himself, was built to showcase the beauty of the Ozarks while serving as a bet-settling hole for players.

Architects of
COUGAR POINT CLUBHOUSE
West Beach Village, Kiawah Island, SC

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HONORABLE MENTION Rancho San Lucas Golf Club

Cabo San Lucas, Mexico

Owner: Centro Promociones Los Cabos San Lucas S.A. de C.V.
Developer: Francisco Bulnes
Architect: Greg Norman
Contractor: GSR S.A. de S.V.
Construction Cost: \$9 million



Hole 8

Another course along a coastline is the one at Rancho San Lucas Golf Club in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. Set in rolling desert foothills that slope to 1.2 miles of pristine Pacific Ocean beachfront, Rancho San Lucas is 30 minutes from an international airport and 15 minutes from downtown Cabo San Lucas.

This exclusive, gated enclave occupies a privileged location that offers a level of serenity rarely found in Los Cabos. Francisco Bulnes said it had always been his dream to develop the 834-acre parcel

of land on the Pacific Ocean.

More than 100 acres of the development's 834 total have been left untouched. An additional 186 acres are dedicated to the resort's centerpiece, its signature golf course.

Known for his "least disturbance" design approach, Greg Norman created a low-profile, links-style layout with sweeping ocean views from every hole. Along with its dramatic 300-foot elevation change, the layout is known for its revetted pot bunkers. These steep-walled

sandy pits were constructed from recycled artificial turf and are nearly identical to the natural sod-walled bunkers found on British seaside links courses. Resistant to washouts, these distinctive bunkers are a first in Mexico.

Judge Casey Paulson: "Visually beautiful, quality desert golf provides vivid imagery with the changes in color and texture. Golf seems to meander through real estate offerings successfully."

HONORABLE MENTION PGA National Czech Republic

Popovicky, Czechia

Owner: Arendon a.s.
Developer: Arendon a.s.
Architect: Kyle Phillips
Contractor: Engelmann Czech s.r.o.
Construction Cost: Undisclosed

The PGA National Czech Republic course at the Oaks Prague residential village has achieved a balance between nature and residential development with a green community that golfers, residents and guests can all enjoy.

"The opportunity was not only to create a world class golf experience but also to revive and restore the old cha-

teau and its surrounding landscape and forest areas," said golf course architect Kyle Phillips. "Where there were only open farm fields, the golf course design has provided hundreds of thousands of square meters of new nature, including bio corridors, native trees and grasses."

Opened in August 2020, the course creates a golf experience that flows seamlessly through nature. The short-cut turf starts at the first tee and guides you through the 18 holes and back to the cha-teau, a feature found on many links golf courses. The course is maintained using contoured mowing patterns, which call attention to the natural features of the land. Gnarly bunker edges create a feeling that the course was carved out of the original landscape.

Meadows and fish ponds contribute to sustainability and water management, and 100% of the sand and construction materials were sourced locally, reducing the carbon footprint.



Hole 15

HONORABLE MENTION Rolling Hills

Pattaya, Thailand

Owner: Thaworn Country Club & Resort Co. Ltd, Ms. Phornpun Phornprapha
Developer: Thongthaworn Pattana Co. Ltd.
Architect: Brian Curley
Contractor: GolfEast Co. Ltd.
Construction Cost: \$9.8 million

Last but certainly not least deserving of honorable mention is Rolling Hills in Thailand, designed by golf course architect Brian Curley.

The course is the fourth to be built at the project site. Sitting at the bottom of the property, it is able to capture runoff from the other three courses. This, along with a large reservoir system, helps ensure that the property will have adequate water for years to come, Curley said.

In an effort to create a course that stood out, many elements of modern design were incorporated, from strong and obvious angles of attack, to slightly irregular and transitional bunkering, to speed slots in fairways, to punchbowl and fall-away green designs.

There are also some quirks, from a drivable par-4 with alternate greens to a massive, triple overhead, double tie wall,

deep bunker at the par-5 15th hole. Named the Wall of Death, this hole has become a must-play feature for resort visitors.

Curley said the course was designed with a "find your ball" philosophy to ensure play without excessive delays or frustration. There is also less water in play than at the majority of courses in the region. But, he adds, the course does offer plenty of challenge for elite players.



Hole 15



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