

SCORING TIPS: BREAK 80 THIS YEAR!

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Golf Digest
Playing Editor

BEST NEW PRIVATE

01 THE CONCESSION G.C.
■ Bradenton, Fla. ■ 7,470 yards, par 72. ■ Jack Nicklaus and Tony Jacklin, designers. ■ Initiation fee: \$125,000 (property owner); \$150,000. ■ theconcession.com

02 FOREST CREEK G.C. (NORTH CSE.)
■ Pinehurst, N.C. ■ 7,139 yards, par 72. ■ Tom Fazio. ■ Fee: \$65,000.

03 THE C. AT CARLTON WOODS (FAZIO CSE.)
■ The Woodlands, Tex. ■ 7,358 yards, par 72. ■ Tom Fazio. ■ Fee: \$125,000. ■ theclubatcarltonwoods.com

04 CHAMPIONS RETREAT G.C. (BLUFF & ISLAND NINES)
■ Evans, Ga. ■ 7,265 yards, par 72. ■ Jack Nicklaus/Arnold Palmer, Ed Seay and Harrison Minchew. ■ Fee: \$30,000 (individual); \$35,000 (corporate). ■ championsretreat.net

05 3 CREEK RANCH G.C.
■ Jackson, Wyo. ■ 7,729 yards, par 72. ■ Rees Jones. ■ Fee: \$150,000. ■ 3creekranchgolf.com

06 BALLYNEAL
■ Holyoke, Colo. ■ 7,147 yards, par 71. ■ Tom Doak. ■ Fee: \$50,000. ■ ballyneal.com

07 TUMBLE CREEK G. CSE. AT SUNCADIA
■ Cle Elum, Wash. ■ 7,070 yards, par 71. ■ Tom Doak. ■ Fee: \$60,000. ■ tumblecreek.com

08 DANIEL ISLAND C. (RALSTON CREEK CSE.)
■ Daniel Island, S.C. ■ 7,446 yards, par 72. ■ Rees Jones. ■ Fee: \$65,000 (property owner); \$90,000. ■ danielisland.com

09 STONE EAGLE C.
■ Palm Desert, Calif. ■ 6,840 yards, par 71. ■ Tom Doak. ■ Fee: From \$50,000 (junior) to \$175,000 (full). ■ stoneeagleclub.com

10 TUHAYE G. CSE.
■ Tuhaye, Utah. ■ 7,800 yards, par 72. ■ Mark O'Meara and Brit Stenson. ■ Fee: \$100,000 (property ownership required). ■ taliskerclub.com

IT WAS A SEASON THAT CELEBRATED AUTHENTICITY IN GOLF design. ■ America's Best New Courses of 2006 reflect what pleasures can result when man and money yield to Mother Nature. This time around there were no magicians conjuring up Scotland in the Sonoran Desert, or Carolina on the Kansas plains. The nation's top new courses are faithful to their surroundings, providing golfers with a genuine sense of where they're at, be it the foothills of Idaho or the Everglades of Florida.

That's immediately apparent at the Best New Private Course of 2006, **The Concession Golf Club**, a rare Jack Nicklaus design without surrounding homesites. Positioned in a remote rural setting east of Sarasota, Fla., The Concession provides an old-Florida experience of saw-grass savannas, palmetto thickets and hammocks of massive oaks mantled in Spanish moss, all seemingly untouched since the days of the Seminole. The Concession finished ahead of the **North Course at Forest Creek Golf Club**, whose fairways, edged by pine scrubs, sandy roughs and pine straw, capture the essence of Pinehurst, N.C.

The variety of Virginia's Northern Neck is fully represented at **King Carter Golf Club**, with its open meadows, forested hillsides and working vineyard beside its practice range. On the rugged topography of northeast Ohio, **Blue Heron Golf Club** makes no apologies for its steeplechase design from cliff top to cliff top over deep ravines. These were the top two courses in the category Golf Digest now calls Best New Public Course Under \$75. After a decade of using a \$50 green fee to separate affordable from upscale public courses, we believe an increase to \$75 reflects the economic landscape of the times. Still, it is encouraging to report that winner King Carter has a weekend fee of \$34 walking, \$49 with a cart.

As for Best New Public Course \$75 and Over, the winner was **Osprey Meadows**, a multithemed design in Idaho that rings true to its alpine locale on the western edge of the Bitterroot Mountain range. It won in something of an upset over highly anticipated and highly publicized **Bandon Trails**, the third 18 at Bandon Dunes, the wind-swept coastal Oregon resort that most visiting golfers believe is positioned somewhere just short of heaven.

America's Best Remodel featured authenticity of another sort. Original design concepts were retained and enhanced at

both the winning course, **The Stanwich Club** in Connecticut, and runner-up, **Country Club of Rochester**, in upstate New York.

The Best New Canadian Course of 2006 is **The Ridge at Manitou**, chiseled from the granite outcroppings and dense forests of Ontario's Muskoka Highlands, the fifth such layout in that locale to have won in this category since 1997. The Ridge beat out **the South Course at The Club at Bond Head**, a prairie design that barely disturbs its Ontario prairie heritage.

ANOTHER CONCESSION

The concept began in 2002, when British-golf-hero-turned-Sarasota-resident Tony Jacklin read that developer Kevin Daves was planning a Jack Nicklaus-designed course in the area. Jacklin, champion of the 1969 British Open and 1970 U.S. Open and four-time European Ryder Cup captain, called Daves and said he wanted to be involved. Over a subsequent lunch, Jacklin suggested the club might have a Ryder Cup theme and gave Daves a photo for the clubhouse. It depicted Jacklin and Nicklaus in 1969, moments after Jack had conceded a par putt to Tony that resulted in the first tie in the history of the Ryder Cup.

Daves saw more than a photo. He saw a marketing scheme. He'd call his course The Concession. He'd use a silhouette of the photo as his logo. He'd have Jacklin work with Jack on the project.

Daves and Jacklin met with Nicklaus. Tony said he didn't want to interfere with Jack's design, but Jack replied, "No, if we're going to do this, we're going to do it together," then winked: "I'll concede once again."

So it is that Jack Nicklaus and Tony Jacklin are sharing a trophy once more, this time as co-designers of **The Concession Golf Club**, America's Best New Private

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