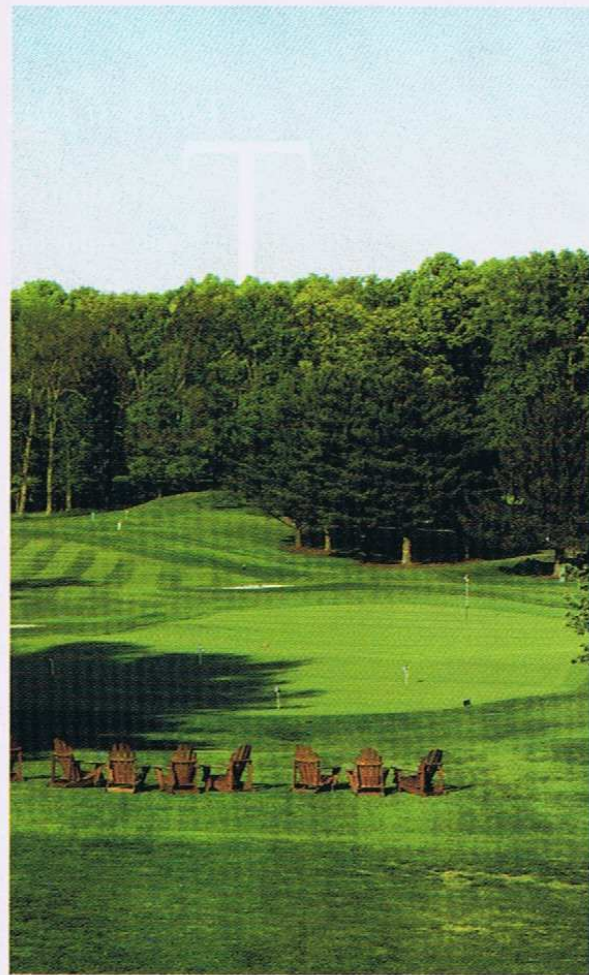


Solstice



MAJOR SUCCESS: TOM WATSON WON EIGHT MAJORS AND HE BRINGS THAT EXPERIENCE TO HIS GOLF COURSE DESIGN BUSINESS. HIS NEWEST COURSE IS THE MANOR GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB IN ALPHARETTA. ABOVE IS THE PAR-4 FIFTH, WATSON'S FAVORITE HOLE. AT RIGHT IS WATSON PLAYING THE FIRST OFFICIAL ROUND ON THE COURSE AND THE PAR-4 18TH AND PUTTING GREEN. ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE IS THE PAR-5 EIGHTH.



MINDING THE NEW MANOR

WATSON'S GEM IN ALPHARETTA

BY PATRICK JONES

Want to play golf through the insightful eyes of an eight-time major champion? If so, pay particular attention to the challenge before you when teeing off on No. 5 at The Manor Golf & Country Club in Alpharetta. Tom Watson, the course architect, calls this downhill, 478-yard par 4 his favorite among the 18 he artfully carved out of the rolling, forested terrain at the convergence of North Fulton, Cherokee and Forsyth counties.

"It's a wonderful panoramic view down the hill," says Watson. "There's a lot of elevation

drop down into the fairway. I love that tee shot and also particularly enjoy the second shot. It requires two very well placed shots to be successful."

Watson's selection of No. 5 as his favorite might be partially attributable to his own subconscious favoritism. Five is a meaningful number for him. Watson won five British Open championships. He also owns two Master titles. Watson is best remembered for his chip-in out of the deep rough on the penultimate hole for his sole U.S. Open championship in 1982 at Pebble Beach.

With 35 years of experience playing professional golf across the globe, Watson draws upon a consummate mental database when envisioning his own designs.

"Being a golf course designer, what you are really doing is just compiling all of those wonderful holes that you played in your life and trying to get some of those same shot values that you love so much when you design a golf course," says Watson. "That is why professional golfers are hired to design golf courses. They have played the great golf courses around the world. The key is being able to translate your experiences from playing these holes and putting them in the dirt. That is the challenge and that is the key. And that is what we are continually trying to do."

Members of the private, gated Manor Golf & Country Club are the beneficiaries of Watson's extensive efforts.

Watson did much more than lend his famous name to the project. He estimates he made a dozen visits during the course construction. He also staged an on-course clinic during the official opening of The Manor Golf & Country Club in November.

"Having Tom Watson as our course architect is a huge item," says Doug Meredith, director of golf and general manager at The Manor. "If you look at a lot of the great clubs and courses throughout Georgia, there are multiple designs by Tom Fazio, Pete Dye, Rees Jones, Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer. This is the only design by Tom Watson in the state. It adds so much more to the overall package of The Manor for the residents and members."

The Manor is a planned residential community by Brooks Land and the Phoenix Corporation of Georgia that features 450 one-plus acre home sites. Home prices range from the high \$800s up to \$4 million. Along with the Watson-designed course, additional recreational amenities include a tennis facility with 22 courts.

Six of the courts are clay composition. Four courts are indoors. There is a 32,000-square-foot clubhouse with dining, banquet and conference facilities; a sports fitness center; indoor and outdoor pools; and a walking trail.

The Watson course is the centerpiece of the community. The par-72 course has five sets of tees. The back set, dubbed the Watson tees, plays to 7,177 yards. The rating is 74.9 with a slope of 142, which translates to extremely difficult for golfers without the wisdom to select the right set of tees for their own playing ability.

Heady course management is at a premium at

THE MANOR G&CC

Alpharetta, GA 30004
678.867.0222 or
themanorgolfandcountryclub.com

Architect: Tom Watson

Opened: 2006

Amenities: Extravagant English tudor clubhouse overlooking Lake Manor; state-of-the-art fitness center with a full weight and aerobic facility, private exercise training, health and wellness seminars, fitness and yoga instruction, outdoor junior-Olympic pool and indoor heated pool and jacuzzi; childcare and extensive children's programs.

Real Estate: Homes by Atlanta's finest builders. Prices range from the high \$800s to more than \$3 million.



The Manor. Watson and Bob Gibbons, Watson's associate at Tom Watson Design Company, put shot selection and ball control at the top of the list on this layout. Zoysia-ringed bunkers are strategically placed at every turn to gobble up wayward efforts. Swinging out of your shoes with little forethought is a recipe for ballooning scores on this course.

Golfers will also find that proper club selection is a constant challenge at The Manor due to the rolling terrain. This part of the state features many of the relentless foothills still rolling south out of north Georgia's Appalachian Mountains.

Watson admits that routing the course to fit the land was daunting at times. "It was a difficult canvas because of some of the extremes of the elevation changes," he says. "We had to deal with that, in particular, on No. 11 (406-yard par 4). We had to go up and over a steep (elevation) change. That always challenges a designer to get

that done right. We had to get into a lot of rock and frame it correctly. You just don't want to frame something like that where it is a simple 'V' valley. We framed it with one side being straight and with the other side having some contour to break things up. We got the visuals right and I think we have the distances right, but still, it is going to challenge a golfer to get the ball airborne off the tee to get it up the hill."

The blind tee shot on No. 11 necessitates a rapidly ascending shot. Golfers with low-lofted drivers would do best to leave them in the bag.

Overall, the discerning Watson was quite content with his finished product.

"I am most pleased with the conditioning of the golf course," says Watson. "The people who play The Manor are going to find carpet-like

fairways. When people get off the golf course, you want them to say, 'Boy, that was a great-conditioned golf course.' And when they come off, they remember something vividly, or remember a lot of things. But what you try to do is have them come off the golf course and say, 'I want to play that golf course again – right now. I want to play another nine.' Of course, that usually comes after a good round. If you can get a golfer to come off the course after not a particularly good round and have them want to go play it again, you have achieved your goal."

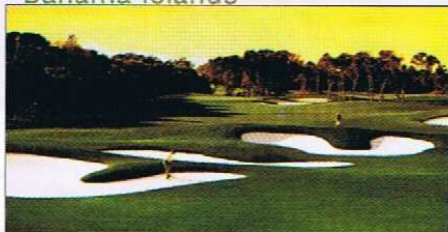
Watson was asked what piece of advice he would give golfers to play their best at The Manor Golf & Country Club.

"Swing easy, let the ball get in the way and enjoy the ride," he says. ♦

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South Carolina



Marina Inn at Grande Dunes

Myrtle Beach, 877.913.1333
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The first Ruth's Chris Steak House in coastal South Carolina will open at the Marina Village at Grande Dunes in Myrtle Beach in winter 2008. The world-famous restaurant will anchor Phase I of the Marina Village at Grande Dunes, which is situated along the Intracoastal Waterway, adjacent to the luxurious Marina Inn at Grande Dunes and the full-service Marina at Grande Dunes. The Marina Village at Grande Dunes is planned as a festive gathering place that will have the feel of a European coastal village. Visitors will be able to immerse themselves in a rich variety of fashionable shops, galleries, entertainment venues and great restaurants. The Marina Village will be open to the general public.

South Carolina



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