

The Perfect Approach

*Celebrated course architects working on outstanding new sites worldwide are putting seriously enjoyable golf back on the map, writes **Larry Olmsted***



GREECE IS THE WORD

The Dunes (pictured) and sister course, The Bay, in Costa Navarino, are being joined next year by a new pair of 18-holers by legendary player José María Olazábal

The last time golf experienced a big development boom, investors stressed quantity over quality, and the market quickly became glutted with mediocrity. After a retrenchment, golf is back and surging in popularity around the globe, but this time developers are moving more selectively, locating exceptional sites and hiring the world's most renowned architects. The result is a new wave of top-quality courses by superstar designers that will woo even the most jaded golf travellers for years to come.

New Zealand has long been a hotbed of dream coastal courses, from Kauri Cliffs to Cape Kidnappers to the ultra-private Tom Doak-designed Tara Iti. Now the North Island is getting two more stunners, public courses within the Tara Iti resort community. Te Arai Links (tearai.com) will feature two coastal links-style layouts, the South Course by Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw, opening in 2022, followed shortly by the Tom Doak-designed North in 2023. Both are among the world's most revered design firms, and both also have other notable new projects. Coore & Crenshaw was given one of the most beautiful sites in the Caribbean, with rocky sea-level peninsulas that would make Pebble Beach envious, for its Cabot Saint Lucia

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(cabotsaintlucia.com) project, a sister resort from the team behind Canada's number-one golf destination, Cabot Cape Breton (cabotcapebreton.com). The first new high-profile Caribbean course in years should also be one of the first to open in 2022. The in-demand design duo has also been complementing the Brambles (brambler.wixsite.com/club), a new 'unpretentious' private course in Northern California wine country. The club is uniquely based on the British Isles model, with lots of competitions between members, different formats, encouraging unaccompanied guests, potentially with some non-member access. The course is essentially finished, but a poor growing season delayed the 2021 opening, now slated to be in late 2022.

Doak is also staying busy by building a historically accurate tribute to The Lido, a famed Golden Age design on New York's Long Island by CB Macdonald that was razed around the Second World War and is considered the Holy Grail of lost courses – “the greatest course you'll never play,” according to Golf Channel. This follows another Lido homage by another star designer, Gil Hanse's Ballyshear (brc.co.th), which opened last year in Thailand. But Doak has the advantage of a sandy links-style site, very similar to the original, at Sand Valley (sandvalley.com)

NEW HORIZONS

The South Course, opening in 2022, will be the first of two new public courses at Te Arai Links in New Zealand



in Wisconsin, a resort that is already home to two Top 50 in the US courses by David McLay Kidd of Bandon Dunes fame, and Coore & Crenshaw. The Lido (thelido.com) will be a private membership course with access for resort guests.

Both Hanse and Kidd are also debuting high-profile courses in 2022. Kidd designed and mostly built Portugal's Comporta Dunes (comporta.com/en) several years back, but the developers went broke, and the course never opened. Now he has gone back with new owners to finish the job, on a coastal site just south of Lisbon that he calls, "the best site I have ever worked on in mainland Europe. Huge rolling sand dunes set against the mighty Atlantic Ocean ensure a constant cooling breeze that allowed us to grow the same grass you'll find at St Andrews: fescue. The native vegetation of shore pines and sparse scrub makes the landscape even more perfect for golf, it's like heathland meets linksland, all about the fun, less about the punishment."

Ever since he won the design contest for the Rio Olympics, Hanse has been jetting around the globe finishing high-profile projects, but none as high as the 46 holes at PGA Frisco (omnihotels.com/hotels/pga-frisco), the new Texas headquarters of the PGA of America. This will be a repeat Major venue, hosting future PGA

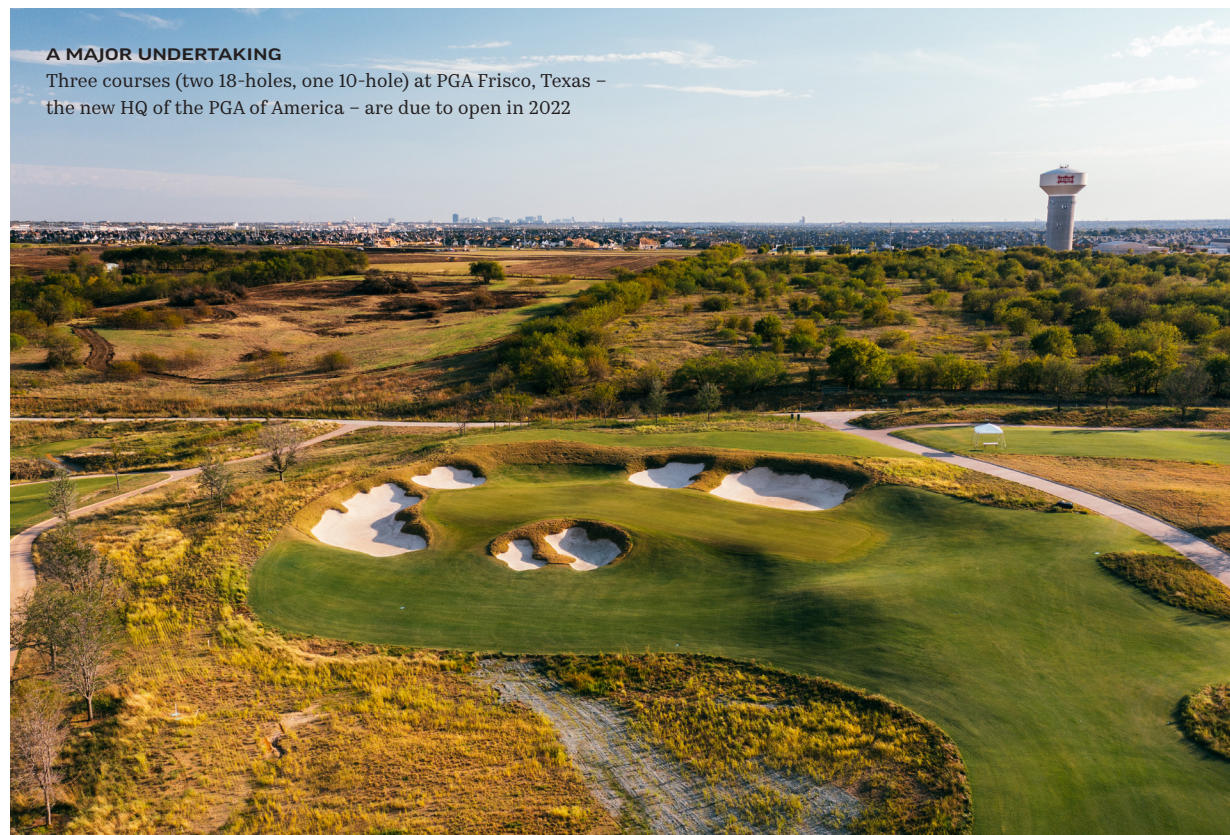
GREENS WITH ENVY

At Navarino Hills in the Peloponnese, two new coastal routings by Olazábal are to join The Bay (pictured below)



Championships, and includes two 18-hole courses, a lighted 10-hole short course, and a lighted two-acre grass putting green. The courses should open next year, followed by a large resort in 2023.

Another new 36-holes by a single architect is coming to the expansive Peloponnese resort of Costa Navarino (costanavarino.com) in the red-hot destination that is Greece. Designed by European playing legend José María Olazábal, the two new coastal routings at Navarino Hills (troon.com/locations/costa-navarino) will debut in early 2022 and complement the other notable pair of eighteens, The Bay and Dunes courses, already on site. With its four courses, it will not only leap up in prominence among Continental Europe's golf offerings but also firmly establish itself on the wider international map as a must-visit destination for au fait golfers everywhere. ■



A MAJOR UNDERTAKING

Three courses (two 18-holes, one 10-hole) at PGA Frisco, Texas – the new HQ of the PGA of America – are due to open in 2022



THE HOLY GRAIL REBORN

At Sand Valley, Wisconsin, Tom Doak is creating an accurate tribute to The Lido, a legendary 'lost' course

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