



Dye's Point Registers with SC Golf Panel

By Trent Bouts

*The beguiling 4th
at Heron Point.*

Pete Dye's stamp on South Carolina golf could hardly be more emphatic. His Ocean Course at Kiawah Island Resort hosted the Ryder Cup in 1991. Harbour Town Golf Links, crafted in league with Jack Nicklaus, has been a PGA Tour stop since 1969.

In all, there are more than a dozen other Dye creations beguiling and befuddling as they simultaneously bejewel the state from the coast, through the midlands to the Upstate.

One, Heron Point by **Pete Dye** at Sea Pines in Hilton Head, is so new it had yet to register on the old man's own website at press

time. But it has well and truly registered on the radar of the South Carolina Golf Course Ratings Panel, which welcomed Heron Point as one of five newcomers to its latest list of the Best Courses You Can Play in the state.

Joining Heron Point among the fresh faces in the third biennial ranking are the new Founders Club at Pawleys Island, the fully renovated Furman Golf Club in Greenville, the gently refreshed Tournament Players Club at Myrtle Beach and Glen Dornoch, another Grand Strand favorite, hugging the Intracoastal Waterway.

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Michael Whitaker

“It’s one thing to consider the caliber of courses that made the list this year,” says panel executive director, **Michael Whitaker**. “But when you consider the quality of some of those that didn’t quite squeeze in, I think that tells you just as much about how spoiled we are for great golf in South Carolina.”

Heron Point actually opened late 2007 and debuted at No. 25 on the golf panel’s ranking of the 50 best of all courses in the state 12 months ago. The course is an entirely new design on the footprint of the old Sea Marsh course. Characteristically, Dye plays with perception using dips and hollows between landing areas and greens to suggest elevation changes that really don’t exist.

But there is nothing “unreal” about the penalty for getting it wrong. As Sea Pines’ director of sports and golf

operations, **Cary Corbitt** said when the course opened: “Pete doesn’t like it when you miss the green and a mound shoots your ball back toward the green. He believes that if you miss the green you should not be rewarded; some type of challenge should be presented.”

Much the same could be said of architect **Kris Spence’s** work at Furman. Many greens now feature penal false fronts and run-offs to the side. Tough as they might be though, the challenge and excitement that comes with the chip, putt or bump and run is likely to win more friends than not.

Spence specializes in restoring **Donald Ross** courses and while Furman is not one of those, it now boasts some similarities with those false fronts and the premium on hitting to the right portion of a fairway. More often than not, fairway bunkering now points the way from the tee for those brave or good enough to play in that direction.

Spence, whose work made its first appearance on the PGA Tour last year at Sedgefield Country Club in Greensboro, NC, also rewards approach shots that find the right part of the green. Spines and banks on many of the putting surfaces will present a challenge for



The view down the 10th fairway to a wide open green at Furman Golf Course.

those who find themselves on the wrong side of the pin.

PGA Tour and Champions Tour veteran, **Jay Haas**, played the course on opening day last fall and was glowing in his

praise and well he might be. In an economy that has brought new course construction to a virtual standstill, it is easy to see the new “old look” Furman claiming a long-term place on the list of the Best You Can Play.

Another newcomer to the list, TPC at Myrtle Beach, is actually an old hand. The **Tom Fazio** design featured in the first such ranking by the panel but its absence from the second coincided with a change of ownership and course closure while the greens were switched to Mini Verde bermudagrass. The course was the first at the beach with Mini Verde and its return to the Best You Can Play represents a stamp of approval for the grass.

There is also something “old” about another addition to the list, The Founders Club at Pawleys Island, even though it only opened last year. Like Dye’s work at Heron Point, the **Thomas Walker**-design is a clever and resourceful use of the footprint that used to belong

to the Sea Gull course, which opened in 1965 as one of the first in the area. The course boasts some dramatic bunkering and plenty of sanded waste areas which serve to keep some wayward shots in play, while still adding to the test.

Towards the northern end of Myrtle Beach, Glen Dornoch is a product of Hilton Head-based architect **Clyde Johnston** and has had its devoted fans since opening in 1996. Golf panel members were reminded why when they visited the course last August. For some it was a re-acquaintance with an old friend and they were clearly happy to be back in touch.

The South Carolina Golf Panel comprises about 125 members and exists to promote excellence in South Carolina golf course design and operations through competitive rankings, education and public advocacy. ■



The closing hole at The Founders Club.

The 30 Best You Can Play in SC

Midlands

Country Club of South Carolina
Florence (843) 669-0920
www.countryclubsc.com

Mount Vintage Plantation and Golf Club
North Augusta (803) 278-5000
www.mountvintage.com

Upstate

*The Furman Golf Club
Greenville (864) 294-2000
www.furman.edu/golf

The Walker Course at Clemson University
Clemson (864) 656-0236
www.clemson.edu/madren/toc/walker

Charleston

Kiawah Island Resort – The Ocean Course
Kiawah Island (800) 576-1570
www.kiawahresort.com

Kiawah Island Resort – Osprey Point
Kiawah Island (800) 576-1570
www.kiawahresort.com

Kiawah Island Resort - Turtle Point Course
Kiawah Island (800) 576-1570
www.kiawahresort.com

RiverTowne Country Club
Mt Pleasant (866) 216-3777
www.ginnbelvidere.com

Wild Dunes Resort - Links Course
Isle of Palms (888) 778-1876
www.wilddunes.com

Hilton Head

Daufuskie Island Resort - Melrose Course
Daufuskie Island (800) 648-6778
www.daufuskieresort.com

May River Golf Club at Palmetto Bluff
Bluffton (843) 706-6500
www.palmettobluffresort.com

Palmetto Dunes Resort - Arthur Hills Course
Hilton Head Island (800) 827-3006
www.palmettodunes.com

Sea Pines Resort - Harbour Town Golf Links
Hilton Head Island (866) 561-8802
www.seapines.com

*Sea Pines Resort – Heron Point by Pete Dye
Hilton Head Island (866) 561-8802
www.seapines.com

Grand Strand

Barefoot Resort – Love Course
North Myrtle Beach (800) 320-6536
www.barefootgolf.com

Barefoot Resort – Dye Course
North Myrtle Beach (800) 320-6536
www.barefootgolf.com

Barefoot Resort – Fazio Course
North Myrtle Beach (800) 320-6536
www.barefootgolf.com

Caledonia Golf and Fish Club
Pawleys Island (800) 483-6800
www.fishclub.com

*Glen Dornoch Waterway Golf Links
Little River (800) 717-8784
www.glensgolfgroup.com

Grande Dunes - Resort Course
Myrtle Beach (843) 315-0333
www.grandedunes.com

Heathland at Legends Resort
Myrtle Beach (800) 299-6187
www.legendsgolf.com

King’s North at Myrtle Beach National
Myrtle Beach (800) 882-3420
www.mbn.com/courses/kings-north

Pawleys Plantation Golf and Country Club
Pawleys Island (800) 367-9959
www.pawleysplantation.com

Prestwick Golf and Country Club
Myrtle Beach (843) 293-4100
www.prestwickcountryclub.com

The Dunes Golf and Beach Club
Myrtle Beach (843) 449-5236
www.thedunesclub.net

*The Founders Club of Pawleys Island
Pawleys Island (843) 237-2299
www.classicgolfgroup.com

The Heritage Club
Pawleys Island (843) 237-3424
www.legendsgolf.com

Tidewater Golf Club and Plantation
Little River (843) 913-2424
www.tidewatergolf.com

*TPC of Myrtle Beach
Myrtle Beach (843) 357-3399
www.tpcmyrtlebeach.com

True Blue Plantation
Pawleys Island (800) 483-6800
www.truebluegolf.com

Listed alphabetically within region
* New to the list of Best You Can Play