

2014 DEVELOPMENT YEAR OF THE

FIRST PLACE: Quivira Golf Club — Cabo San Lucas, Mexico

BRIAN G. OAR - FAIRWAYS PHOTOGRAPHY

The globalization of golf manifests itself in this year's top honorees, which hail from Mexico, South Korea and the Big Apple

BY LAIRA MARTIN



FINALIST: Centurion Club — St Albans, Hertfordshire, United Kingdom

PHOTO BY KEVIN MURRAY

While the number of new golf courses opening each year has slowed worldwide, the quality of the projects — and their costs — continue to climb. That is no more readily apparent than in Golf Inc.'s 2014 Development of the Year competition — which honors projects that cost \$17.5 million, \$30 million and \$250 million.

That trend has boded well for Jack Nicklaus and his Nicklaus Design firm, which is one of the more expensive architectural firms for hire. Three of its projects were chosen in this year's competition, including first place for Quivira Golf Club, a private resort course meticulously carved into the oceanfront cliffs of the Baja Peninsula.

The Golden Bear's banner year continued when he teamed up with John Sanford to design the much-anticipated Trump Golf Links at Ferry Point, a public course in New York City, which came in third. The Nicklaus Club Beijing, a private club in China, was a finalist.

"We had three kinds of courses, all with different purposes," Nicklaus said. "I think they're all, in their own way, very unique, very sustainable, and all three will be very

successful."

Golf Inc. made the first change in 12 years to its judging process — adding economic and environmental sustainability as criteria. This year, project vision accounted for 40 percent of the judging, course routing was 15 percent, aesthetics were 25 percent, and environmental and economic sustainability were 20 percent.

Four industry leaders served as judges: Brian Curley of Schmidt-Curley Design, a past winner and one of Golf Inc.'s most powerful people in Asia; Oscar Rodriguez, vice president of Heritage Links with a background in construction; David Southworth of Southworth Development, a 2012 development honoree; and Mike Nuzzo, founder and principal of Houston-based Nuzzo Golf Design.

Entries came from six countries outside of the United States, including Russia, England, Morocco and South Korea, which is home to second-place winner, South Cape Owners Club. Courses in five states — Washington, New York, Arizona, Florida and South Carolina — were also in the running. Finalists include Gamble Sands in Brewster, Wash., and Centurion Club in St Albans, United Kingdom.

1ST PLACE

Quivira Golf Club

Cabo San Lucas, Baja California Sur, Mexico

Developer: Ernesto Coppel Kelly, Gran Armeé del Cabo SA de CV

Architect: Jack Nicklaus

Contractor: Diamond Golf

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JACK NICKLAUS designed Quivira Golf Club with the elements in mind. All 18 holes have ocean views, with seven holes playing toward, away from or along the ocean. The sand dunes of the rolling desert foothills and gusts of wind from the Pacific Ocean are natural hazards. And the vivid colors and contours of the granite cliffs should challenge and awe golfers.

“We designed it in such a way that allowed the elements to be a part of what’s going on and freely adjust with the course over time,” Nicklaus said.

A game at Quivira starts at sea level, climbs the cliffs and dunes to 300 feet above sea level and drops back down to the beach. Nicklaus used natural changes in pitch in the sides of the hills to carve out tees, fairways and greens. That allowed him to design four holes so that the golfers are looking down on the green as they tee off.

“We did that on the 5th hole, which is a short par 4,” Nicklaus said. “You can stand on the tee and see about 280 yards. The fairway goes down to the right then doglegs down.”

Quivira Golf Club is Nicklaus Design’s sixth course in Los Cabos and its 23rd course in Mexico.

Nicklaus worked with the natural landscape of the property, keeping the land plan fully intact. Prior to development, the site was used as a location for the 2004 film “Troy.”

“Quivira is an ever-changing property,” Nicklaus said. “The sand blows down there, and we designed the bunkers for that, so they will change over time as the wind changes and erodes them. It gives it a more natural look. It changes it a bit, but it’s a nice look.”

He said the site posed design difficulties but ultimately led to an award-winning course.

“If you were asked if you would like to have this as your choice of sites, you would say ‘no,’” he said. “You’d probably say, ‘can we go find something a little easier to work with?’ But sometimes you get a site that says, ‘this is our land.’”

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:

“An audacious project with lofty goals that seems to have been beautifully realized. The routing goes to lengths (literally) to make the most of its oceanfront setting, but the holes that this routing delivers all appear to offer opportunities for very memorable golf.”

— David Southworth

“Spectacular course on a spectacular site, yet still pushes design trends in the details. When you get past the obvious wow factor, architecture enthusiasts will notice and appreciate the innovative treatments that abound.”

— Brian Curley

The course has received overwhelmingly positive reviews and has nearly reached its daily goal of 55 golfers. The projected revenue for 2015 is \$4.75 million and it expects a full roster of 250 private members.

BY THE NUMBERS

Construction cost: \$17.5 million

Development acreage: 1,850

Course acreage: 300

Greens fees: \$295