CONFIDENTIAL Guide to Golf Courses

Volume 2 – The Americas (winter destinations)

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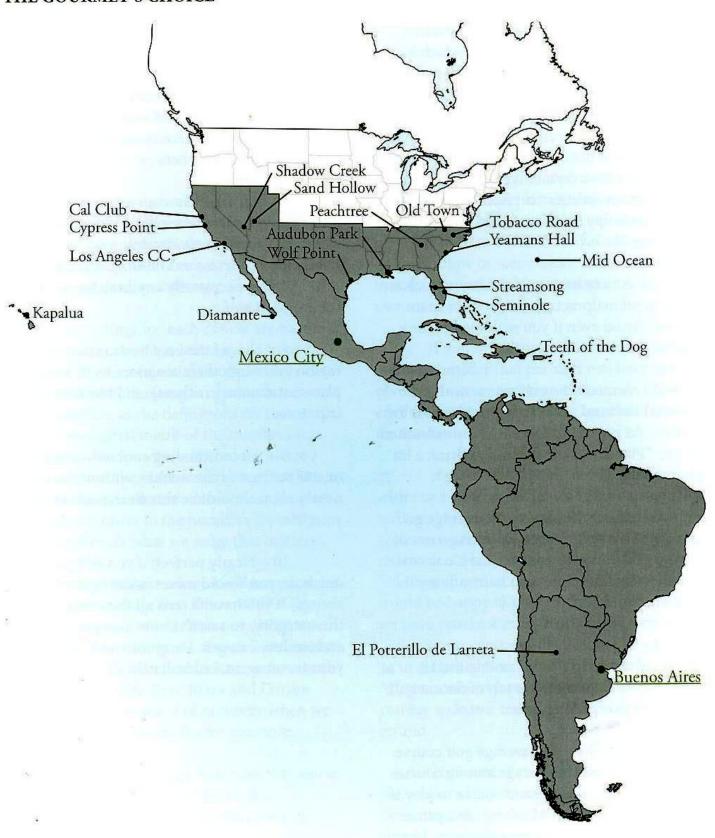
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

TOM DOAK is one of golf 's most critically acclaimed designers, with 35 courses to his credit including Pacific Dunes in Oregon, Cape Kidnappers in New Zealand, and The Renaissance Club in Scotland. His client list includes some of the most exclusive clubs in the world.

While a student at Cornell and then as an apprentice to architect Pete Dye, Tom visited hundreds of the world's best courses to learn his craft, including a year's stint in Great Britain & Ireland immediately after college.

Tom has written three books: The Anatomy of a Golf Course (1991), a detailed description of the art and science of golf course architecture, now in its 15th printing by Burford Books. The Life and Work of Dr. Alister MacKenzie (1998), a biography of the legendary designer Alister MacKenzie and his courses, and The Confidential Guide to Golf Courses, the first version of which was printed for 40 of his friends in 1988, and later published by Sleeping Bear Press in 1996. Copies of the previous edition have been selling online for hundreds of dollars since the book went out of print 15 years ago.

THE GOURMET'S CHOICE



Although we envision this book being used mostly as a quick reference check to decide what courses to see in your travels, we cannot resist the temptation to break out a few of our favorite courses and write a bit more about what makes them special to us.

Instead of producing yet another list of "greatest" courses that includes all the usual suspects, The Gourmet's Choice highlights some of our favorite courses: the places that stir our souls, and will reward the visitor with something out of the ordinary. In the original world-wide edition of The Confidential Guide, there were 31 flavors, in honor of the wisdom of ice cream makers Baskin and Robbins; six of those are included in this volume of the book, though for variety's sake, I have only reprised one review, that of Shadow Creek in Las Vegas.

In choosing our favorites, we've tried to maximize variety, and spread the praise around to all sections of the Americas. There are flat courses and hilly ones; tropical courses and temperate ones; courses opened in 1920 and 2010. There are two PGA Tour venues, and one course that tips out at less than 5,000 yards. Each course is the work of a different architect, to ensure that we don't play favorites, even if we have them.

I'm not sure which fact is more impressive: that our selection includes five courses built since the publication of the last Confidential Guide [Diamante, El Potrerillo de Larreta, Sand Hollow, Streamsong, and Wolf Point], or that it includes five that weren't that great twenty years ago, but have since been transformed by sensitive restorations [Audubon Park, the Cal Club, L.A. Country Club, Old Town, and Yeamans Hall].

One thing I forgot to mention in the previous edition of the book is that the ! and ? marks on the scorecards are chess notation: ! is a great hole, !! or !!! are among the best holes in the world, ? is an odd or questionable hole, and ?! is an odd hole that turned out brilliant, in our view.

Here, then, are the 18 courses we've selected -- the courses we would take a good friend to play:

Audubon Park, New Orleans, LA California Golf Club of San Francisco, CA Cypress Point, CA

Diamante (Dunes), Cabo San Lucas, Mexico Kapalua (Plantation), Maui, HI Los Angeles CC (North), CA

Mid Ocean, Bermuda Old Town Club, Winston-Salem, NC Peachtree, Atlanta, GA

El Potrerillo de Larretz, Cordoba, Argentina Sand Hollow, Hurricane, UT Seminole, Juno Beach, FL

Shadow Creek, Las Vegas, NV Streamsong (Blue), FL Teeth of the Dog, Dominican Republic

Tobacco Road, Sanford, NC Wolf Point, La Hood, TX Yeamans Hall, Charleston, SC

El Potrerillo de Larreta

Alta Gracia, Cordoba, ARGENTINA

The history of several of our most famous courses (Pine Valley, Merion, Pebble Beach) is of a single-minded individual who found the right property and set out to create a special golf course. In most cases, this narrative has been streamlined; these courses would never have been as great as they are if George Crump, Hugh Wilson and Jack Neville hadn't had a lot of experienced help, either during the process or immediately afterward. It's one thing to envision a great course, but another to get it built to the highest standard.

A new entry in this category is El Potrerillo de Larreta, built by architect Ignacio Zuberbuhler and his sons on their grandfather's estate in the foothills of the Sierras, southwest of the city of Cordoba. Though they did have the help of two Argentine designers, Angel Reartes and Marcos Capdepont, the Zuberbuhlers were instrumental in the routing of the course and even shaped the greens and bunkers themselves. For better and for worse, the course is a family design as much as any I've seen.

The course works because the estancia is an almost perfect piece of land for golf. There are several valleys just wide enough for a fairway to run between the hills, and they merge together as they run to the lower part of the property to provide a good transition from one to another without having to climb up and over the ridges in between. This is one of the most natural routings I've seen.

Indeed, I like the routing of the course so much that I can overlook the fact that the greens shaping and bunkering adds nothing at all to the course ... it is the only course listed among our favorites here that doesn't have an excellent set of greens. If it did, it would be one of the best courses in the world, instead of just one of the best in South America.

The course works, too, because the Zuberbuhlers are very good golfers, and they were excited rather than repelled by all of the forced carries over streams that would be required by the ground ... fourteen times all told! Most architects would have told them to soften this aspect of the course, which makes it quite difficult for the lesser player, but instead the family embraced the challenge and made that part of the course's character. Indeed, the entrance to the property is by a beautiful small waterfall just below the confluence of the two main streams at the bottom end of the property.

The golfer first encounters the water at the long 2nd, where both the drive and the approach must carry a rushing stream; and three other long holes [the 6th, 8th and 11th] follow this same general description, two of them playing downgrade, and two back up. At the difficult par-4 10th, one is asked to carry a stream just in front of the green, or to lay up to a fairway in a small loop of the creek, forming a 100-yard island on the approach.



The 10th is one of many greens defended by small streams through the property.

The streams are also the centerpiece of the two best short holes on the course [of which there are five, to go with five par-5's]. At the 3rd, one climbs up to a tee to play across a stream which then wraps the left side of the green; the 7th is more of an island green, where the dammed stream guards the right front of the green, which is shoved up against the steep bank of the valley at its left. There is a beautiful waterfall where the pond ends, but you appreciate it once you leave the green, en route to the next tee.

The old homestead, built in 1924, has recently been converted to a boutique hotel. Sitting above a bend of the stream valley overlooking the green of the par-3 7th, the estancia has a variety of courtyards, cozy corners, and outdoor sitting areas, plus its

own small chapel. It is one of the most comfortable retreats one could hope to find, and it would likely be the first place I'd take my wife if I go back to Argentina someday, secure in the knowledge that the golf course wouldn't be too hard for her ... because she doesn't play the game. - TD

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1. 437	7.141!	13.519
2.488!	8. 566!	14. 195
3. 168!	9. 423	15. 453 !
4. 587	10.443!	16. 228
5. 213!	11. 454	17.649!
6.416!	12.338?	18. 425

7163 Yards - Par 72



When you reach the gate house at Yeamans Hall, you know you've arrived someplace special.

Best Lunch

Los Leones Kapalua (Plantation) Sherwood Lima CC

Country Club of Birmingham

Dorado Beach The Bear's Club

The Bear's Club

Stone Eagle

Los Angeles CC

Shadow Creek

Best Halfway House

The Olympic Club Cabo del Sol (Ocean) Mid Ocean

The Valley Club of Montecito

San Andres

Vaquero

Pinehurst #2

Best Entrance Drive

Yeamans Hall

La Paz

Augusta National

Desert Mountain (Cochise)

Potrerillo de Larreta

Haig Point

Shadow Creek

The Preserve at Santa Lucia

Peninsula Papagayo

Tobacco Road

Best Club Accommodations

The Honors Course Augusta National

Riviera

Claremont

Mountain Lake

The Valley Club of Montecito

Mid Ocean

RESORTS

Best Golf Resort - Accommodations

Manele Bay Hotel Four Seasons Peninsula Papagayo

Mauna Lani Royal Isabela

El Potrerillo de Larreta

The Boulders

The Lodge at Sea Island

Streamsong Mauna Kea

The Sanctuary at Kiawah

Best Resorts for Golf

Pebble Beach Streamsong Casa de Campo Cabo del Sol Kiawah Island Kapalua Sea Island

Pinehurst Resort

Sea Pines Plantation, Hilton Head

Best Casino and Golf Resorts

The Mirage / Shadow Creek
Baha Mar Resort
We-Ko-Pa Resort
Atlantis Hotel / The Ocean Club
MGM Grand Resort / Cascata
Talking Stick Resort
Apache Stronghold

Favorite Places to Stay and Play

Butterfly Trees Inn, Pacific Grove

The Mirage, Las Vegas / Shadow Creek

El Potrerillo de Larreta

Pink Beach Club / Mid Ocean

Streamsong Resort Casa de Campo Cabo del Sol La Quinta Hotel

The Abaco Club at Winding Bay

Pine Crest Inn, Pinehurst

Best Golf and Beach Combination

Kiawah Island Resort

Pink Beach Club / Mid Ocean

Mauna Kea

Manele Bay Hotel

Punta Cana Resort

Sea Island

Princeville Resort

Inn at Torrey Pines

Hapuna Beach

Buzios

Best Golf Resorts with a Young Family

Atlantis Hotel, Bahamas / The Ocean Club

Walt Disney World Myrtle Beach, S.C. Poipu Bay Resort

Wawona Hotel



The small hotel at El Potrerillo de Larreta is an expansion of an old private home.

Best Public Courses

Pasatiempo
Sand Hollow
Rustic Canyon
World Woods (Pine Barrens)
The Dunes G & Beach Club, S.C.
Tobacco Road
Spyglass Hill
Caledonia, S.C.
Black Mesa
The Rawls Course

Best Municipal Courses

Wilmington GC, N.C. Pinon Hills Brackenridge Park Audubon Park Pacific Grove

Least-Played Courses

Ellerstina
Wolf Point
Shadow Creek
Nanea
Whispering Pines
Ford Plantation
Peninsula Papagayo
Aetna Springs
Abaco Club

Courses You Need a Guide to Play

Tobacco Road Gavea Goat Hill Papudo Bel Air Magallanes Pueblo Nativo Royal Isabela

Longest Courses *

Best Courses of Par Less Than 70

7,873 vds	- Kiawah Island (Ocean)	Gavea
7,714	- Dye Fore	Claremont
7,667	- Royal Isabela	Audubon Park
7,650	- Corales	
7,626	- Las Campanas (Sunrise)	
7,608	- Trump National Doral (Blue)	
7,560	- Shadow Creek	Best Par-3 Courses
7,544	- Isleworth	
7,542	- Quail Hollow	Olympic (Cliffs)
7,524	- Desert Mountain (Renegade)	Bear's Club
	and the second s	Turtle Hill, Bermuda
* dumbe	est fact: most of the above are resort	Augusta National
courses		Austin GC
		Colleton River
		Cane Patch

Hardest Courses

T7. 1	T 1	2000	1/0	Carry War	
Kiawał	ı isi	anc	1 (U	cean	•

Desert Mountain (Geronimo)

The Medalist

The Prince Course

Old Marsh

The Concession

Oak Tree National

Austin CC

Royal Isabela

Spyglass Hill

Most Ammo Required

Old Marsh

Desert Mountain (Geronimo)

La Paloma

Pueblo Nativo

Royal Isabela

Potreril o de Larreta

PGA National (Champions)

Kiawah Island (Ocean)

Abaco Club

Best Use of Small Acreage

Ellerstina Aetna Springs Caledonia Claremont

Peter Hay

La Cumbre [Arg.]

Wilshire Goat Hill Mar del Plata

Shortest Hole

66 yds - 12th La Cumbre [Arg.]

Best Walk

Cypress Point
Seminole
Desert Forest
San Andres
Yeamans Hall
Mid Pines
Secession
Pinehurst #2
Aetna Springs
The Valley Club

Best Cart Courses

Diamante (Dunes)
Kapalua (Plantation)
Stone Eagle
Bulls Bay
El Desafio
The Alotian
The Patriot
Royal Isabela
Mauna Kea

Most Walkable Courses on Hilly Ground

Augusta National
Pasatiempo
Mid Ocean
Bel Air
Los Angeles CC (North)
Southern Hills
Claremont
Twin Hills
Southern Pines
Cal Club

Unwalkable Terrain

El Desafio
Wolf Creek
TPC Stonebrae
Peninsula Papagayo
Cascata
The Alotian
The Prince Course
Bighorn (Mountain)
Carmel Valley Ranch
The Patriot

Most Artistic Routings

Seminole
Cypress Point
Bel Air
Pebble Beach
Mid Ocean
Sand Hollow
El Potrerillo de Larreta
Lookout Mountain

Stone Eagle

Most Disjointed Routing

Eldorado
Dye Fore
Stonebridge
Tidewater
Royal Isabela
Querencia
Amelia Island
Long Point
Mapocho

Best Bunkering

Riviera

Vintage (Desert)

Marriott Shadow Ridge

Diamante

Los Angeles CC (North)

Pacific Grove San Francisco GC

California GC of San Francisco

Streamsong (Red)

Wildest Greens

Augusta National The Concession

Hot Springs (Arlington) The Jockey Club (Red)

Pasatiempo Pinehurst (#2) Santa Martina Stone Eagle

Streamsong (Blue) Sweetens Cove Wolf Point

Best Courses With No Water Hazards

Olympic (Lake) San Francisco GC

Cal Club Mar del Plata

Apache Stronghold Los Angeles CC (North)

Riviera

Lookout Mountain

Best Bridges

Bel Air

El Potrerillo de Larreta

The Bridges at Rancho Santa Fe

Worst Mounds

Loxahatchee *

Grand Cypress (Old)

Long Bay

Karsten GC at ASU Buenos Aires GC White Witch

Dye Fore PGA West (Jack Nicklaus Private)

Albany Royal Isabela

Fastest Fairways

California GC of San Francisco

El Desafio Kapalua Magallanes Mar del Plata The Rawls Course

Streamsong

The Valley Club of Montecito

Most Disputed Hazards

CC of Charleston 11th - height of green Cypress Point 17th - trees in fairway

Dornick Hills 16th - cliff face fronting green

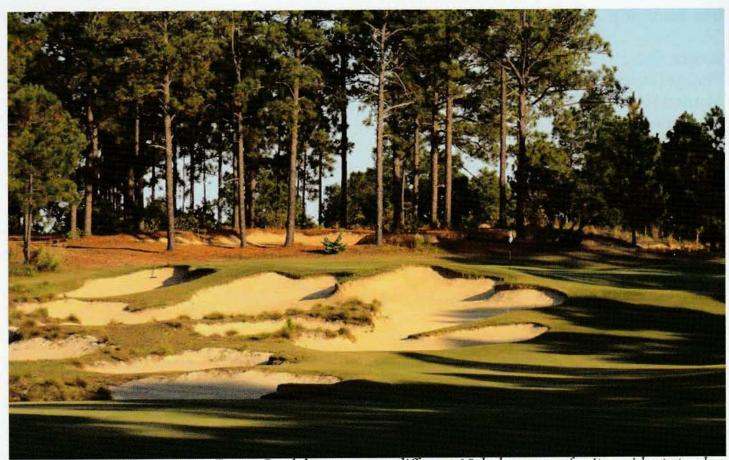
Long Cove 5th - mound blinding green

PGA West (Jack Nicklaus Private) 2nd - rock in

front of green

Riviera 6th - bunker in green Royal Isabela 13th - palm trees Stanford 12th - oak tree in fairway

Streamsong 5th - bowl in right side of green Tobacco Road 13th - mounds around green



Forest Creek has two very different 18-hole courses for its residents to play.

Best Courses to Own a House On [if you don't have to pay the property taxes]

Pebble Beach
Casa de Campo (Teeth of the Dog)
Lyford Cay
Bel Air
Mid Ocean
The Reserve
Riviera
Cypress Point
Corales
Kapalua (Plantation)

Too Many Houses

The Lakes PGA West (Stadium) Morningside Half Moon Bay Stonebridge Best Courses to Own a House On [if you had to pay for it]

Yeamans Hall
Long Cove
Cuscowilla
Sand Hollow
Pacific Grove
Forest Creek
La Cumbre, Arg.
El Potrerillo de Larreta

Best Spectator Courses

TPC at Scottsdale TPC at Sawgrass Augusta National Nordelta Upgrades from the Previous Edition

California GC of San Francisco

The Meadow Club

Old Town Palmetto

Sea Island (Seaside)

Best Restorations

Carolina GC

Claremont

Hot Springs (Arlington) Los Angeles CC (North)

The Meadow Club

Oklahoma City G & CC

Old Town Pasatiempo The Valley Club Yeamans Hall

Best Redesigns

California GC of San Francisco Monterey Peninsula (Shore)

Rivermont

Worst Redesigns

Dornick Hills Lake Merced

Waialae

Bel Air

Best Preserved Golf Courses

Riviera

Cypress Point Mar del Plata Best New Courses Built Since the Previous

Edition (1996)

Diamante (Dunes) Streamsong (Blue) Streamsong (Red)

Cuscowilla Rustic Canyon Wolf Point

Jack Nicklaus GC at Cap Cana

Bulls Bay Baha Mar

El Potrerillo de Larreta

Architects Whose Best Works

Are In Volume 2

Pete Dye Tom Fazio Gil Hanse

Robert Trent Jones Davis Love 3d Alister MacKenzie Perry Maxwell Jack Nicklaus

Mike Strantz

George Thomas

Best Courses That No Longer Exist

Bay of Dreams, Baja, MEXICO (Doak) *
Boca Raton CC (South), FL (Flynn)
El Caballero, Tarzana, CA (Bell)
Ft. George Island, FL (Ross) *

Gambel Golf Links, Carefree, AZ (Roy Dye) *

Opa Locka, FL (Flynn) Overhills, NC (Ross)

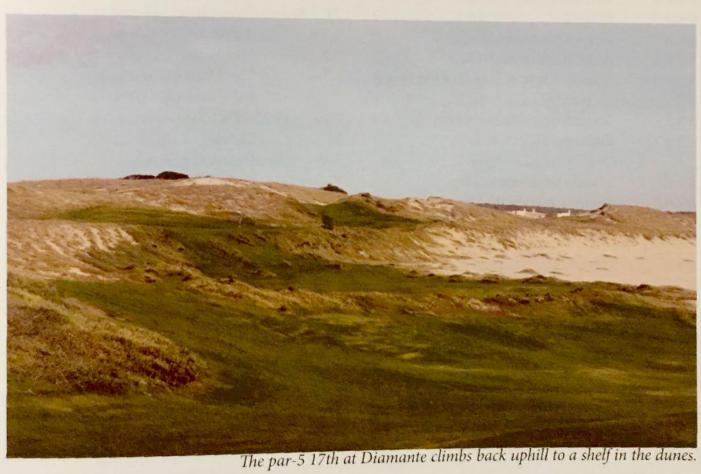
The Pit, Pinehurst, NC (Dan Maples) * Royal Palms, San Pedro, CA (Thomas)

Waterwood National, Huntsville, TX (R. Dye) *

^{*} courses I saw first-hand

Honorable Mention - Par 4 Holes

#1 #1 #1 #2 #2 #3 #4 #6 #8 #9	423 378 401 427 457 507 390 461 416 291 312 332	Long Cove Cuscowilla San Andres Yeamans Hall Rustic Canyon Pinehurst #2 Kiawah Island (Ocean) San Diego CC El Potrerillo de Larreta Calusa Pines Streamsong (Red) Harbour Town	#10 #10 #11 #11 #13 #13 #14 #14 #15 #17 #17 #18	495 495 392 483 320 366 473 392 482 410 403 478 462	Pebble Beach Augusta National Pasatiempo Pinehurst #2 Sand Hollow Cypress Point Pinehurst #2 Whispering Pines Shadow Creek Mar del Plata Streamsong (Red) Streamsong (Blue) TPC at Sawgrass
#9	432	Pablo Creek	#18	462	TPC at Sawgrass



COURSES IN ORDER OF DOAK SCALE RATING

I have included this feature in the book		7876	Harbour Town		
because so	many readers have asked for it. We	7867	Kapalua (Plantation)		
do not intend it as a "ranking" of courses in any		7786	Olympic (Lake)		
way. Courses are listed according to my grade		7876	Southern Hills		
	en according to the average grade	786-	Old Town		
from the fo		-866	We Ko Pa (Saguaro)		
			, , ,		
While th	ne book gives the impression that the	7776	Bel Air		
four of us t	hink alike, you will see below that	7776	Holston Hills		
60% of the	time, my co-authors disagree with	7677	Monterey Peninsula (Shore)		
my rating fe	or a course, but seldom by more	7767	Rustic Canyon		
than one po	oint. In many of those cases, a lower	7767	Tobacco Road		
	tdated after the renovation of a	7767	World Woods (Pine Barrens)		
The state of the s	he rest, just assume they're wrong!	77	Wolf Point		
		776-	Charlotte CC		
		77-6	Desert Forest		
10 10 10 10	Cypress Point	776-	The Dormie Club		
10998	Pinehurst (No. 2)	776-	The Dunes G & Beach C		
	*	7766	The Honors Course		
9899	Augusta National	7 - 76	Peachtree		
9988	Seminole	7676	Stone Eagle		
9988	Pebble Beach	7676	Spyglass Hill		
9987	Riviera	7675	Palmetto		
9987	Los Angeles CC (North)	776-	Austin GC		
9788	San Francisco Golf Club	774-	Mid Pines		
9788	Casa de Campo (Teeth of the Dog)	-7	The Alotian		
		7	Baha Mar		
888-	Streamsong (Blue)	7	Bulls Bay		
8887	Cabo del Sol (Ocean)	7	Corales		
	***	7	Desert Highlands		
878-	Diamante (Dunes), Mex.	7	El Desafio		
8787	Mid Ocean	7	Ellerstina		
8787	TPC at Sawgrass (Stadium)	7	Jack Nicklaus GC at Cap Cana		
8	Sand Hollow	7	John's Island West		
8 - 77	Shadow Creek	7	El Potrerillo de Larreta		
8777	Cuscowilla	76	Nanea		
877-	Streamsong (Red)	-7-6	Whispering Pines		
8676	Long Cove	766-	Caledonia		
	The state of the s	-766	Forest Creek (South)		
7887	Kiawah Island (Ocean)	7665	Sea Island (Seaside)		
7887	Yeamans Hall	7656	Medalist		
7788	Pasatiempo	765-	Indian Creek		
7877	California GC of San Francisco	7 - 5 -	Talking Stick (North)		
7787	Valley C of Montecito	-7-5	Tryall		
	AND THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPER	75	Sage Valley		
246					

		-	Abaco Club at Winding Bay
6 - 77	Quarry at La Quinta	6	
6677	Black Diamond (Quarry)	6 6	Aetna Springs Annandale, MS
6677	The Meadow Club		
6 - 7 -	Barton Creek (Fazio)	6	Apache Stronghold Audubon Park
6 - 7 -	Brook Hollow	6	
67	May River	6	Belfair (West)
67	The Rawls Course	- 6	Black Creek
676-	Black Mesa	6	Capital City
-676	Calusa Pines	- 6	Carolina GC
667-	Colleton River (Nicklaus)	6	Chapelco
6676	Colonial	- 6	Chileno Bay
6-76	Dallas National	6	Cobblestone
6 - 75	East Lake	6	Desert Mountain (Geronimo)
6765	The Jockey Club (Red)	6	Dorado Beach (East)
		6	The Dunes at Seville
6666	Chechessee Creek	6 -	El Rincon
-666	The Concession	6	The Farm
666-	The Legends (Heathland)	6	Ford Plantation
6-66	Troon G & CC	6	Golden Ocala
6665	Jupiter Hills (Hills)	6	Granite Bay
6665	Monterey Peninsula (Dunes)	6	Hot Springs (Arlington)
6665	PGA West (Stadium)	6	Karsten Creek
66	Trump National Doral (Blue)	6	La Paz
6-6-	Lake Nona	6	La Serena
6 - 6 -	Mauna Kea	6	Las Campanas (Sunrise)
66	Mountain Lake	6	Lakeside
6 - 6 -	Oak Tree National GC	6	Laurel CC
6 - 6 -	PGA West (Jack Nicklaus Private)	6	Lyford Cay
66	Pinon Hills	6	CC of Mobile
6 - 6 -	Ventana Canyon (Mountain)	- 6	Musgrove Mill
6 - 6 -	Vintage (Mountain)	6	Oklahoma City G & CC
6 - 6 -	Vintage (Desert)	6	Old Memorial
6 - 6 5	Atlanta Athletic C (Highlands)	- 6	The Patriot
665-	CC of Charleston	6	Punta Mita (Pacifico)
665-	Claremont	6	Naples National
-656	Forest Creek (North)	6	Pine Dunes
656-	Haig Point	6	Reynolds National (Great Waters)
-665	Mayacama	6	Rivermont
665-	Old Marsh	6	Royal Isabela
665-	Pine Tree	6	Saddle Creek
6 - 5 6	The Preserve at Santa Lucia	6	San Andres
6-65	The Prince Course	6 -	Sao Paulo GC
665-	Secession	6	Sun Ridge Canyon
6655	Spanish Bay	- 6	Tanglewood
656-	Wild Dunes (Links)	6 -	Terravista
030-	Tille Dailes (Dillies)		247