

Cover Story



Blueprints

Donald Trump hasn't stopped building luxury high-rises, but his

For A Golf

growing golf empire is every bit as important to his business and his life

Kingdom

BY DAVID GOULD



Just before nine o'clock on a late-July morning, Donald Trump emerges from his black Rolls-Royce and steps through the front entrance of Trump National-Bedminster, the private golf club he founded in 2004 among the equestrian farms of Somerset County, New Jersey.

Trump halts in the doorway, squints down at the latch and summons a nearby employee. Gouges on the strike plate and a scraping sound as the door opened have furrowed his now-famous brow. "This door has never been right," he laments. Within moments, three staff members convene. Trump instructs one of them to have the spring mechanism either adjusted or replaced. Questioned later about such close attention to a door spring, Trump replies, "I'm detail-oriented. You have to be."

The rest of the morning unfolds in a big-picture manner more in keeping with Donald Trump's status in the worlds of real estate, entertainment – and now golf. He leads a tour through the bustling construction site that will become the second 18 at Bedminster; confers with Ashley Cooper, his head of acquisitions and new development; poses for a magazine photographer and reviews maps and photographs of his stunning

linksland acquisition in Aberdeen, Scotland. "We expect to build the No. 1 golf destination in the world there," says Trump.

It did not all unfold from a grand plan, this move by Donald Trump into high-end golf. A prized piece of acreage fronting Summit Boulevard in West Palm Beach, Florida that he acquired in the early 1990s could have – and in years past, would have – been developed into luxury homes. Then it dawned on Trump, a single-digit handicap at Winged Foot, that he had never merged his love of golf with his lust to build spectacular buildings and landscapes. That revelation was how he began his golf-building career, with the 1999 opening of Trump International Golf Club, situated on that otherwise featureless South Florida parcel. The club has since been expanded to 27 holes and has earned national top 100 course ranking honors from *GOLF Magazine*.

The suddenly burgeoning Trump Golf subsidiary includes the aforementioned properties in New Jersey and Florida; a private club in the Westchester County town of Briarcliff Manor; the former Ocean Trails

Dune dreams: Trump plans to build a 54-hole luxury golf resort along this dramatic stretch of linksland bordering the North Sea in Scotland.

Trump Talk

There are few subjects one of the world's most recognizable people won't talk about. But when the subject is developing world-class golf courses, Donald Trump gets a glimmer in his eye and a spring in his step.

Q: When will your new golf development in Scotland get underway?

A: We hope to be permitted in the first quarter of 2007 and start work by mid-year.

Q: What will that property consist of?

A: Three 18-hole courses, a 400-room resort hotel, 650 condos and 100 guest cottages.

Q: What is your prediction for the second 18 at Trump National-Bedminster in New Jersey?

A: I'd rather not predict. Something happens along the way to anything you build that makes it

either fall short or, hopefully, meet or exceed expectations. The first Bedminster course – there was no way it wouldn't be very nice, but as a finished product it's way beyond that. My opinion, but also a consensus among a lot of people



who know what they're talking about.

Q: From what we've heard, the course in the Canouan Islands was quite a challenge to bring about.

A: Jim Fazio said it was the hardest build job he's ever been associated with. By the time Jim was done he had lost two bulldozers. We were working from mountaintop to mountaintop. It was brutal. But we got ourselves a great course.

Q: You've had more than your share of dealings with the Fazio family, correct?

A: Probably more than just about anyone. I told Jim

Fazio's son, Tom, that he ought to stop going by the name Tommy Fazio professionally. I said throw out the letterhead and the business cards you have now, and do them all over as Tom Fazio II. That's who you are.



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course, now rechristened as the high-end daily-fee Trump National-Los Angeles; Trump International Golf Club at Raffles Resort Canouan Island in The Grenadine Islands; and the place that could wind up as the crown jewel of them all – 1,000 acres of dunes along the North Sea near Aberdeen, Scotland.

Trump Golf's standing among golf cognoscenti was upped by last May's announcement that the Bedminster site would host the 2009 U.S. Junior Amateur and U.S. Girls' Junior Championships. The merger of the two events on one site has only happened twice previously in the 50-plus years the two championships have existed. "It's also the first time the USGA has made a site commitment to a golf course not yet built," says Trump, referring to the Tom Fazio II layout due to open in the spring of 2008 (see Q&A with Tom Fazio II, page 38).

The original Bedminster course – yes, it will be known as the Old Course and its sister as the New Course – opened for play in 2004. Designed by the elder Tom Fazio, it traipses through hundreds of acres of elegantly contoured farmland that was once the estate of automobile entrepreneur John DeLorean. Lush wetlands and restored farm buildings add to the feeling that you are far out in the country, away from the concrete jungle

The original Bedminster course traipses through elegantly contoured farmland that was once the estate of John DeLorean.

that Trump himself has helped create.

For one of the world's most accomplished residence builders, Trump's decision to forego a plan for houses along the gentle upland above the Old Course was one he says was made without regrets.

"That land was set aside for 18 Bedminster mansions – beautiful estate homes," Trump says, sliding his outstretched hand along the horizon. "But they would have spoiled the whole look of this place. They would have stopped your eye. When you look down that ridgeline now it's a wonderful vista, which is how it will stay."

Competitive as ever, Trump keeps a close eye on other high-profile Met Area golf developments, from the newly opened Sebonack Golf Club in Southampton to the two trophy projects framing New York Harbor, Bayonne Golf Club and Liberty National. Media commentaries on how these courses have turned out seldom escape his glance, particularly if they contain

Ashley Cooper: His Stock Is Rising

Ashley Cooper, President of Trump National-

Bedminster, received a phone call one bleak day in 2002 that sent his fortunes vectoring in a decidedly upward trajectory. Not that Cooper hadn't tasted business success – as a Wisconsin boy turned loose in the wilds of Wall Street, Cooper had made his way nicely. The \$1.2 billion sale of Montgomery Securities, where Cooper had attained a partnership, produced a windfall payout that allowed him to head off and do whatever he wished. High-end real estate beckoned, and the personable Cooper took right to it. But his acquisition of the DeLorean estate with partner Jim



Downs turned from a can't-miss development deal to a post-9/11 albatross.

That telephone call, from Donald Trump, was not completely out of the blue – Trump had long coveted the DeLorean estate.

Instead of simply closing the sale, Trump went one step further once he got to know Cooper and realized how compatible their visions for the property turned out to be. He hired Cooper as a managing partner of the golf division, and now entrusts him to build the Trump Golf brand through acquisitions and special events.

–David Gould

**Trump Golf isn't into cloning.
Each property is tailored
to its surroundings.**



The newly opened clubhouse at Trump National in Westchester sits high on the club property.

criticisms. The positive comments about Bedminster from USGA officials who awarded it the junior championships were a balm to Trump, encouraging visions of other, more illustrious championships in the years to follow.

Trump's golf-building activities in the Met Area may at this point be complete, with future projects to occur in other parts of the globe. Some prime acreage the company owns in

Pound Ridge, New York was once considered for a course but is now slated for residences. "It's too close to the Briarcliff course," Trump says in his staccato Queens baritone. "I'd just be competing with myself." Indeed, it is clear that geographical separation is requisite, since no golf facility bearing the famous five letters would ever be positioned other than at the extreme high end of the market.



facility is closer to the city, and is considerably flashier. The new clubhouse is 65,000 square feet and includes a fitness center and spa.

Though there are no plans to build more golf clubs in the Met Area, rumors are circulating about a possible Trump acquisition of New Jersey's Hamilton Farms Golf Club. Some even speculate that Trump Golf might purchase the club – which is only five minutes from the Bedminster site. However, the number of deals that Trump considers and the number of deals that he actually makes are vastly different numbers. If he's going to spend money, you can bet he will have looked at all the angles first.

Trump, at age 60, is an American monument. He entered the New York Military Academy in Cornwall, N.Y., at age 13 and graduated five years later in 1964. He then earned a bachelor's degree in Economics in 1968 from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. His style of capitalism comes straight off a Monopoly board and bears more resemblance to Hearst, Flagler and Rockefeller than to latter-day titans like Bill Gates or Warren Buffett. In a golf context, he has taken his place among master builders like Mike Keiser of Bandon Dunes, Lyle Anderson of Desert Highlands and Desert Mountain, Herb Kohler of The American Club and Chicago publinx patriarch Joe Jemsek.

During our photo session at Bedminster, Trump's wife Melania calmly rolls a baby carriage into view. Inside is a tangle of blankets obscuring the tiny physique of Barron Trump, the couple's four-month-old son. Melania is a former fashion model born in Sevnica, Slovenia in 1970. The two met at a fashion-industry fundraiser. Trump's appeal to the man in the street, borne out by the consistently high ratings of *The Apprentice*, isn't so hard to explain. Most average people seem to look at him and think: *If I were a global deal-maker with a vast personal fortune, that's how I'd do things, too.*

Trump National-Bedminster is a bastion of extreme wealth, but a warm and lively environment as well. Although Trump owns the place, he and Cooper have it structured like an traditional

Trump Talk (continued)

Q: What can you tell us about working with The Golf Channel on *The Big Break VI*, their reality show's current installment?

A: I had a great time. I was so pleased to have the cameras out to Trump National-Los Angeles, and let everyone see how beautiful it is.

Q: Were you as tough on the *Big Break* contestants as you've been on contestants in "The Apprentice"?

A: I suppose I would have been, but then I saw what excellent players they were. I really couldn't get on them too much. They're all veterans of mini-tours and developmental tours. They were great.



Q: Who introduced you to golf?

A: At Wharton, some of my

friends at college were golfers and they got me interested. We would play at Cobbs Creek and several of the other Philadelphia public courses. I enjoyed the challenge and just enjoyed being out there.

Q: What is your favorite non-Trump golf course?

A: Winged Foot. Both 18s. I wish I could get out there more often.

Q: How did you come around to joining Winged Foot?

A: I joined when I was 24. I had two sponsors for membership, Pat Winkler and Carl Gaugin. They've both passed away now but were great people.

Q: What was it like to make a hole-in-one on national television at the 1993 AT&T National Pebble Beach Pro-Am?

A: That was phenomenal. It was with a 5-iron on the 12th hole at Spyglass Hill. I was playing in a group with Payne Stewart, and right before I hit he said, 'Donald, you've got to slow your swing down.' And the funny thing is, I didn't slow my swing down, but once the ball went in Payne was saying that of course I had. When the tournament was over, Brett Ogle, the winner, said to me, 'You got more



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Be that as it may, Trump Golf isn't into cloning. Each property is tailored to its surroundings. Using Bedminster and Briarcliff as examples, the former was kept in the manner of the DeLoean estate, which has an austere identity reminiscent of an English manor. An equestrian stable and riding programs are available to members. The Westchester

Trump Talk (continued)

publicity than I did, and I won the tournament!

Q: Was that your proudest moment on the golf course?

A: Well, that and the two club championships I've won – one at Trump National-Westchester and the other at Trump International in West Palm Beach.

Q: Did you ever meet DeLorean—you two share a similar independent-entrepreneur streak?

A: I did meet John. He was in pretty sad shape. He had lost control of his Bedminster property—it was mortgaged to the hilt. And that was his last asset.

Q: Does dealing in golf pull you away too much from your other business, or does it complement the other development business?

A: It's an amazing thing. I was playing golf at Briarcliff with Louis Cappelli [a prominent Westchester County developer] and we end up doing a deal together for a major project in White Plains. I was playing at Trump International with a man from Korea, and that one round of golf led directly to Trump Tower in South Korea, which is a project that we each made \$100-plus million on. I don't know whether to credit that to the bottom line

of the tower project or the bottom line of the golf course. Because without the golf enterprises it wouldn't have happened.

—David Gould



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private club, with a board, a set of committees and careful membership screening that requires any new inductee to pass muster with those already on the rolls. In that way Trump cedes power. Meanwhile, his larger-than-life presence ends the who-is-cooler contest before it

can even begin. Members are freed from having to play the status game – the best anyone can do is finish second – and the result is a decidedly breezy atmosphere.

Cooper, a former college basketball standout at Division III Ripon College in Wisconsin, scored big on Wall Street while still in his late 30s, and has a personal style that meshes with Trump's. On busy outing days at Bedminster, he is known to emerge from the deal-making den he occupies in a converted 1852 farmhouse to check on the staff and offer encouragement. As one manager of the outdoor crew puts it, "Ashley sees when the guys are slammed, and

he lets them know that what they're doing is appreciated. He'll always say the right thing."

Trump International, designed by Jim Fazio, is one of many fine courses built in the Palm Beach – Jupiter corridor in recent years. As you will not be shocked to hear, its owner considers his the finest of the group.

Trump National-Westchester is a teardown of what Trump calls "a very good small course" in favor of a bigger, brawnier layout covering the original site plus two other adjacent parcels acquired subsequent to the original purchase. Though the routing was done by Jim Fazio, the shaping and site work was mainly handled by Tom Fazio II. It was during the Westchester project's construction that Trump first became impressed with the youngest of the Fazios, and now he never fails to sing his praises.

The project in Aberdeen, Scotland looms as a cosmic storm of Trump achievement and Trump claim-staking. The property is vast, its dunes mountainous, its coastal frontage long,

This elaborate fountain, imported from Italy, sits prominently behind the 10th tee at Bedminster.

lambent and timeless. In preparing to build his first course in the home of golf, Trump queried an acquaintance at the Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews on whether fescue turf was the only acceptable option, and what the Scots would say if he brought in bentgrass instead. The answer was a grim look and a shake of the head. "It's actually cheap to build there," Trump says of Scotland, almost frowning at the thought that his money's-no-object attitude won't be needed in the famously frugal country where his maternal bloodlines originate.

If the Aberdeen project comes in far enough under budget, Trump may go shopping for the ruins of Hadrian's Wall, or some other iconic adornment to the property. At Bedminster, not one but two massive Venetian fountains grace the lawns behind and in front of the

main clubhouse building. Trump came upon them in his travels and had the sculptures prominently placed, hoping members would like the look. "A couple of people thought it was too much," he recalls, "but now people love them. If we tried to move them everyone would go nuts."

To Trump's left as he describes the fountains is a handsome Rolex courtyard clock mounted atop a 15-foot brick column. "That's one of the few clocks Rolex has ever provided to a golf course that has not hosted a U.S. Open," Trump says, nodding his head slowly. "Or in our case, not yet hosted an Open," he adds with a bit of Trump bluster but also a wistful wink. ■

David Gould is the former editor of *LINKS Magazine*. He writes for *The Met Golfer* from his home in Sandy Hook, Connecticut.

Tom Fazio II: The Son Also Rises

Tom Fazio II, the son of course designer Jim Fazio and nephew of Tom Fazio, has spent his whole career in the golf business. After working with his father's company, the 38-year-old started his own design firm in 1995. In addition to his work on the Met Area Trump projects, his work includes Great River Golf Club in Milford, Connecticut.

Q: How did you get started in the golf business?

A: I started helping my father when I was eight years old, picking up sticks on his projects and working on Saturdays and Sundays. I really learned the entire process from the ground up. Then I got into the design area and worked as the on-site designer for my father. I think that's the reason why Mr. Trump and I do what we do together. I don't think that I would be doing the courses for him if I had not gone through that experience and know how to hand-build all my courses.

Q: How did you first get involved with Trump Golf?

A: I had worked with Mr. Trump since 1998 on plans for three other projects (French Hill and Bedford in Westchester and Indian Hill in Putnam County) that ultimately did not get built. Originally I met him when my dad worked on Trump International in Florida. I was working on a project in Miami with Tom Bennisson from Club Corp, and he actually recommended me to Mr. Trump. I'm not even sure my dad did!

Q: How would you assess Mr. Trump's course design skills?

A: He has got a great feel for a lot of things and he has very expensive tastes, which is a good combination. And he's a good player and such an enthusiast. With the original Westchester projects, he started coming out to the sites every weekend and then I would get three phone calls a week. By the time Briarcliff became a reality, he was at the site changing lakes, bunkers and greens. He wants very difficult and hard courses. I'll say let's build a hole this way and make it hard. He'll say well let's do this and make it even harder. Then I'll come back with if you really want to make it hard, let's do this. We're trying to build great golf venues.

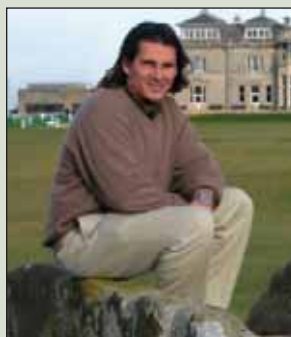
Q: Will the second course at Trump Bedminster be dramatically different from the original?

A: It's the same piece of property so the topography is very similar. The first course really looks like it was built a while ago, like an older style course. We didn't want to copy that, so the second one will be a bit more modern looking with more lakes and water features.

Q: What is your favorite of the Trump courses?

A: I would say Trump International in Florida because it's the one I've played the most.

Q: Where did you go to school, and did you concentrate more on the building or designing of golf courses during your education?



A: I attended Mississippi State for a year but then an opportunity to work with my dad on a course design project in Italy came up. I was 19, left school and lived in Italy for two years. I figured I had a couple of pretty good teachers working for my dad and my uncle, and I never looked back.

There are great schools out there for design and landscape architecture, but those two are probably better professors than any school might have.

Q: Who is a current architect you particularly admire?

A: David McLay Kidd (who designed the first course at Bandon Dunes and is working on the new 7th course at St. Andrews). He really pushes the envelope and doesn't care what the critics think. I like that.

Q: How often do you play and where do you play the most?

A: I probably play 15 times a year if I'm lucky, and my index is 8.5. I play with my dad most of the time, usually at Trump International or Jupiter Hills, and that's just because those are close to my home.

Q: Who wins in an 18-hole match, you or Trump?

A: Most of the time he does.

—Interview by Tom Mackin