

The New Wykagyl

Fewer trees, redesigned bunkers and improved conditions are the

BY THE EDITORS

cornerstones of the newly enhanced course at Wykagyl Country Club



The ninth hole, now bathed in sunlight after the removal of several hundred trees, exposes the vast beauty of the Wykagyl property.

Competitors in the Met Amateur, held August 2 through 5 at Wykagyl Country Club, had the good fortune to play what is being heralded as a stunning renovation of the esteemed course in New Rochelle, N.Y. The charming layout, which also hosted last month's HSBC Women's World Match Play Championship, was unveiled this spring after a careful makeover at the hands of Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw — one of only a few renovation projects this team has ever taken on. The most striking visual impact are the newly open vistas, especially on the holes closest to the clubhouse, where thickets of trees had stood in the past. Tree removal, though, is not the only hallmark of the new Wykagyl. Coore and Crenshaw redesigned the bunkers and reshaped several greens, including the notoriously slick surface on the par-three seventh hole. The end result is a course that retains its enduring character while presenting a stern, fair test to pros and amateurs.

L.C. LAMBRECHT

Coore Knows the Classics

Golf architect Bill Coore is a student of golf courses from every era, and he and design partner Ben Crenshaw have become proficient at including classic touches to their modern masterpieces. Here, Coore talks specifically about Wykagyl.

What were your impressions of Wykagyl before you started the work?

I had played the course in the early 1970s, and both Ben and I knew of its illustrious pedigree. We are both enamored with golf in this part of the country. To me, coming originally from North Carolina, Wykagyl had the old-world, classic golf feel that appeals to me.

You don't do many renovation projects. How did this one come about?

Wykagyl was about to undertake a major drainage project that included

the installation of a new irrigation system. With the impact that would have on the course, the club's leadership saw it as a chance to do some work on the bunkers and greens. They approached us, and we agreed that it certainly made sense to do it all at once — if the membership was okay with the large scale of the project.

What was the biggest challenge you faced during the project?

It is a pretty severe piece of property, and had a somewhat irregular feel in the sense that some of the bunker complexes and green contours were very different from others. Our plan was to give a bit more life to the bunkers and make the golf course feel more unified, without changing the overall character of the course. I cannot give enough credit to James Duncan, who headed up the project for us. He is so good at adjusting a

classic course of Wykagyl's caliber and bringing it more into today's era.

What was your impact on the tree removal?

We advised and influenced it in places, sometimes significantly. In other places it had been planned by the club to improve agronomy and also to open up some of the beautiful views. The property had become so choked with trees that lent very little value to the golf course.

What do you think of the finished product?

A job like this becomes a series of judgment calls, and I hesitate to call it a remodeling, but on the other hand, it's not a pure restoration. Hopefully, it's a sympathetic evolutionary adjustment. It sounds like the members appreciate it, which is all we can ask for. ■



The downhill 17th hole always presented a difficult approach shot. It is now made even more challenging by a reshaped green and deeper bunkers.



Before

The eighth hole takes on a completely new look after the massive oak, which obscured the green for years (inset), had to be removed after a lightning strike.

LEFT: JIM KRAJICEK; ABOVE: L.C. LAMBRECHT; INSET: BY FRED VUICH