

Strikes n' Strokes

Bowling and Golf news

GOLF COURSE REVIEW - May 7, 2013

One for the bucket

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Green Fees: \$495

Caddy fee: \$80

Tip for caddy: \$50

The experience of playing

Pebble Beach: Priceless

Okay, the above saying is much overused. However, Pebble Beach is the Holy Grail of golf; the top of the Bucket list for many golfers - and one for me. Who would have thought back in 1919 when the course opened up, that would it stand to the test of time. And, become the shrine that it has become.

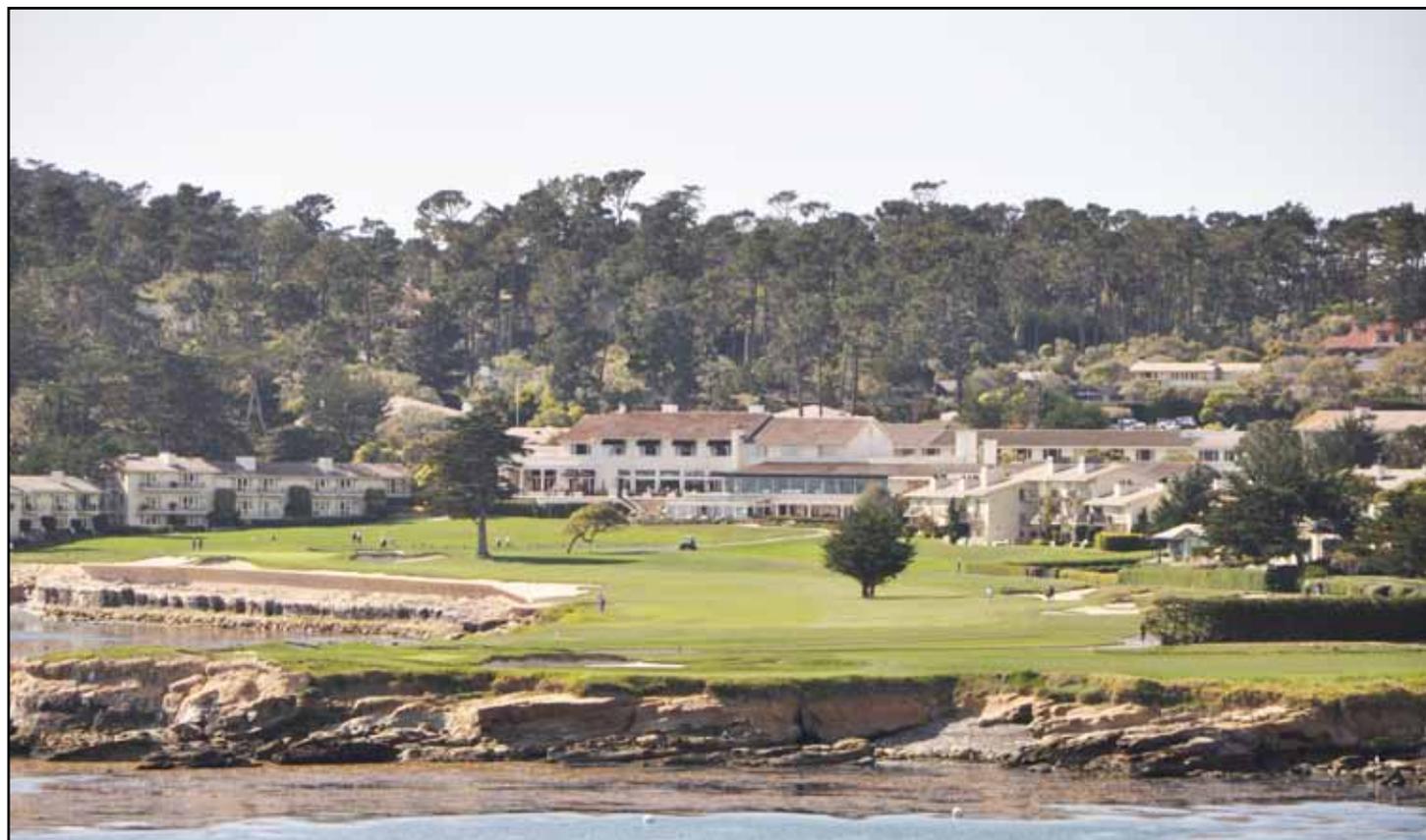
Unfortunately, unless you spend money for a two-night stay at the Pebble Beach, it's hard to get on the course. That's one of the few ways, you can play Pebble Beach with an advance tee time.

And without buying into a package or being a PGA member or to be a member of a couple of California organizations, you have to be flexible and lucky.

So I planned our getaway around Pebble Beach. That's because, in order to get a tee time without the lodging, you have to call in the day before, at 8 a.m. and ask if there were any times available.

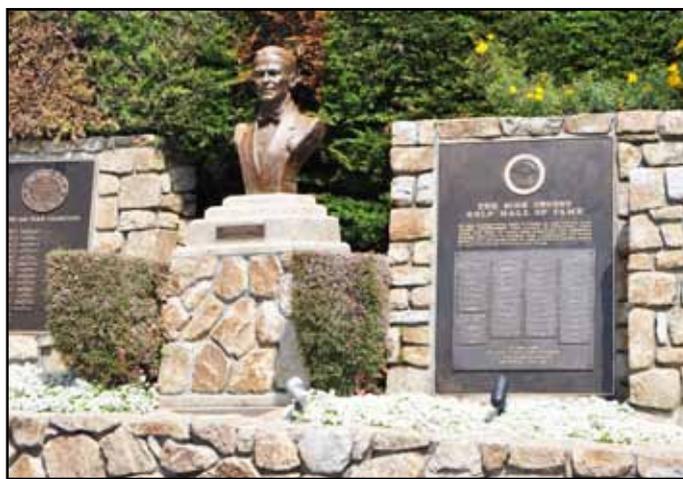
Two weeks before leaving for California, I called Pebble Beach to get the

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Mike Godard/Strikes n' Strokes

Looking back from the No. 6 fairway, you can see the outline of one of the most famous holes in all of golf - No. 18 at Pebble Beach.



Left, just behind the first tee area and fronting the putting green is several monuments showing the history of the Pebble Beach Pro-Am.

Right, the entrance is nothing elaborate. But that was the only thing plain about the course.



exact information on numbers to call for tee times. When talking with the sale representative she asked me what days we were going to be in the area. Right away, she told me our first full day was booked but there were a couple of possible tee times available on the second day, and the third day it was wide open. But things could change during the time frame and I would have to call at 8 a.m. the day before.

I had trouble sleeping the night before because I wanted to make sure I got up in time for that phone call.

Once the time rolled to 8 a.m., I made the call and was pleasantly surprised that she had one tee time available for a single golfer at 2:20 p.m. on the next day. I was informed it was a GTF (guaranteed to finish)

I'm going to play Pebble Beach.

We spent the day before sightseeing in the San Jose area. The day couldn't get over quick enough.

Finally, Pebble Day is here.

We started our one hour and half trip down from San Jose to the Monterrey Peninsula and left us plenty of time for getting lost time, traffic and time to enjoy the driving range and putting green.

Arriving at the Pebble Beach

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Top photo is the view from the left side of the tee box on No.1 with a slight dog leg right to the green. Below left, is the view from the No. 4 tee box. This short par-4 has a variety of shaped sand traps that come into play. Below, Tom Moffett, one of my playing partners for the day, just misses this putt on the No. 4 green.



entrance, I was surprised to see the sign above the entrance. I was expecting something much more elaborate.

That was the only non-elaborate item, I would find the rest of the day.

There is a city within Pebble Beach. Surrounding the putting green are several shops. There are living quarters within the area also.

Need to spend time on the range; they will shuttle you back and forth. The putting green is near the first tee.

My caddy came up to me 10 minutes prior to our tee time. He introduced himself and promise that we will have a good time. I had read that using a caddy really helps your experience and it does (that's another story). Then I met the three other players in my foursome. All of them were friends from Northern California.

The starter greeted us and welcomed us to Pebble Beach. Then, it was our turn.

I was the third player to tee off. Feeling very nervous, I laced my tee shot about 200 yards to the left hand rough. Whew, I got the ball off the tee.

But, that good feeling didn't last long, as I underestimated the rough. My next shot jerked left hit a tree and nestled behind it. Now, on my third shot, I have to

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Caddy Dan Mersons, top photo, walks down to the par-3, No. 7 green that is flanked by rocks and water. Above, shows the back side of the cliff that separates the fairway on the eighth hole. Right, looking at the tree that portraits the No. 6 green.



punch out to the fairway.

After accomplishing that successfully, I promptly put my fourth shot on the green.

My caddy told me my putt would break about two cups out and it was uphill. "Up hill," I questioned him. He said, "yes, give the ball a little steam."

I just didn't see it that way (that was like that all day). So taking that advice, I sank the putt for a five and I was on my way.

The rest of the day went the same way. I had some great shots, some not so great and, when listening to my caddy, had some great putts.

At the same time, I also took in some of the most beautiful scenery that I have ever seen on a golf course.

The play was a little slower than normal, my caddy said. But, for me it was perfect as the times we had to wait, I was enjoying the view, taking many pictures (more than 300). I found there were even more beautiful shots as you looked behind you.

As we reached No. 9, I thought this really has not flown by. And, by walking with my caddy, I think that really helped with the pace.

During the round, we were pointed out to several of the more famous homes, including one owned by the Golden State Warriors owner and former houses of Bing Crosby and Gene Hackman, that were on the course. When we got to No. 10, we were heading right for Carmel Beach. What a sight that was.

After 10, we started back toward the clubhouse and the famous two holes by the ocean 17 and 18.

Despite, not being oceanic-viewed holes, the 12th through 16th holes had its own character.

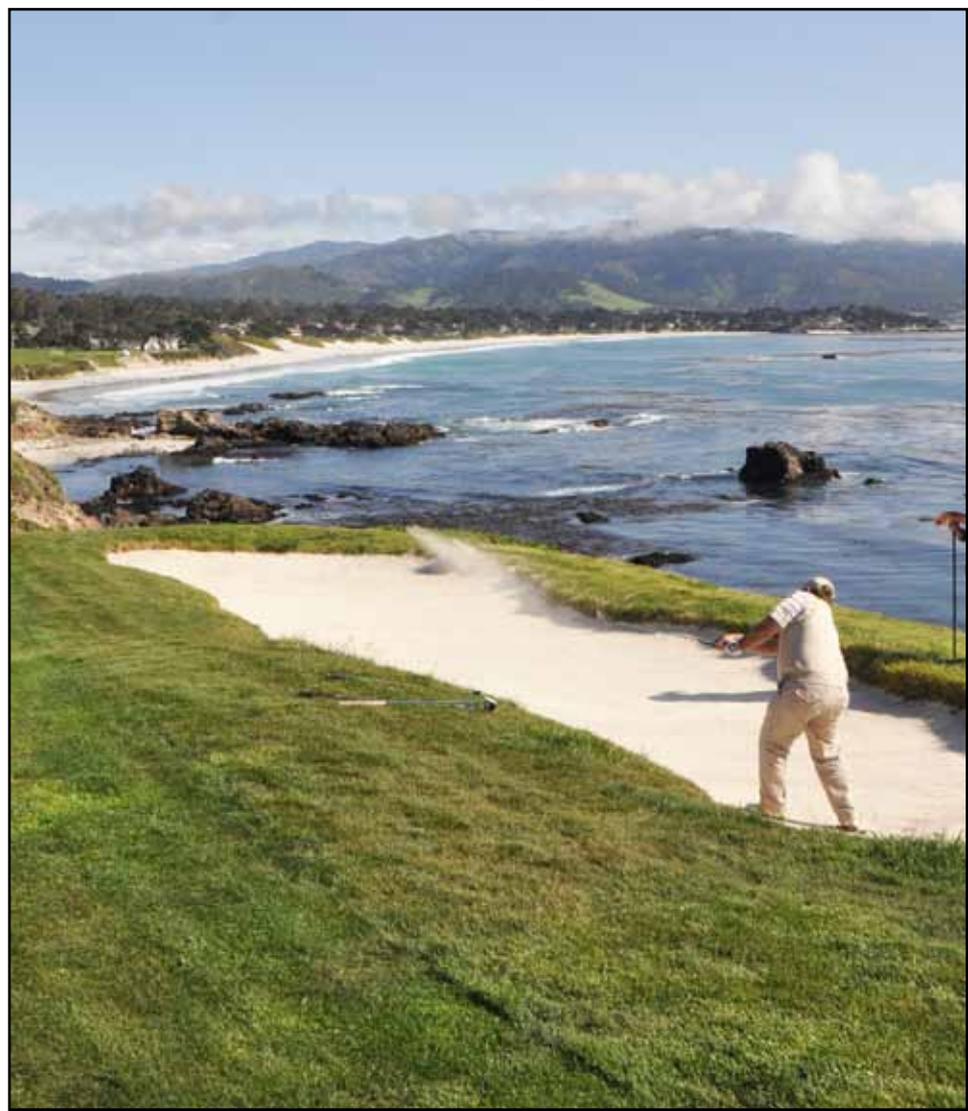
As we were getting closer to the finish, it was starting to get a little darker. But playing the last two holes in the sunset with the water in the background was a great view.

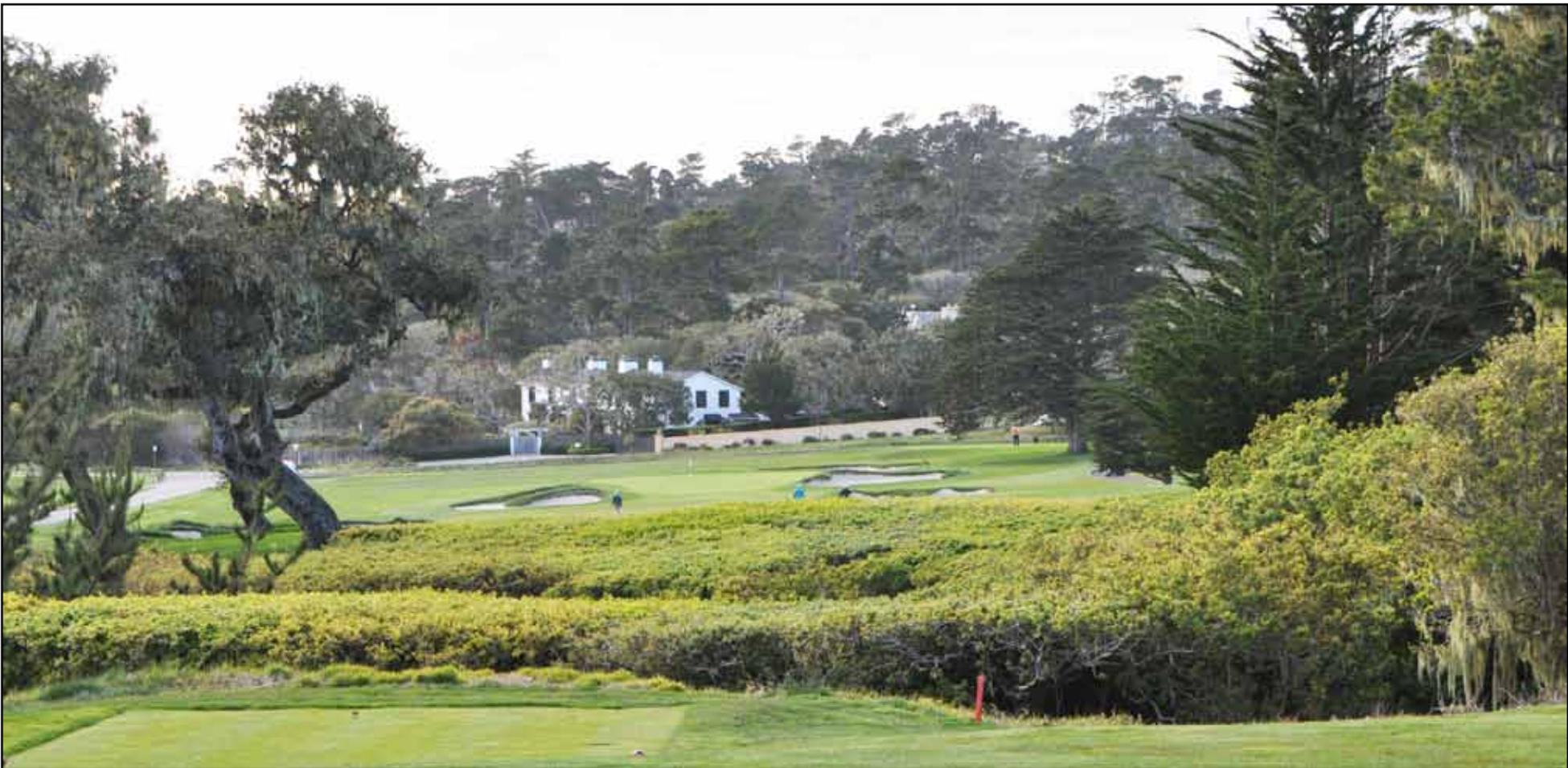
It was a fun time had by all in our group. Even the caddies looked like they were having fun.

As we were walking off the No. 18 green, we were greeted by a cart to take us back along with a medallion celebrating of completing our round.

I finished with a 97. Not bad for my first round of golf in 2013. Especially, since it was on Pebble Beach. That was priceless. ♦

Above, looking down to the No. 9 green. To the right and behind the green is Carmel Beach. Tom Moffett hits one out of the sand on No.8. Look closely, see if you can find the ball in the picture.





Standing on the tee box on No. 15, you have a narrow chute to land your ball safely on the green.

Too far left, you may land in the bunker like Fred Sherwood, lower left. He managed to hit the green with his sand shot. From the tee on No. 17, you can see the ocean in the background.





From just about anywhere, the tree on the peninsula atop of the No. 6 green area can be seen from many vantage points. Above right, I start my down-swing on No. 18. I was able to place safely in the fairway nowhere near the water as Calvin Barlocker looks on. Below, looking back down the fairway on No. 18, I cherished the memories that I had that day.

BLACK: Rating 75.5 / Slope 145; BLUE: Rating 74.7 / Slope 143; GOLD: Rating 72.6 / Slope 136; WHITE: Rating 71.3 / Slope 132; RED: Rating 71.8 / Slope 129. For more information visit www.pebblebeach.com.

