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Great Golf Courses of America

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From the INTRODUCTION to Great Golf Courses of America

This may be a futile gesture, but I'll make it anyhow, just for the record. Read the next sentence very carefully; maybe read it twice: This book is not a ranking of the best courses in the United States! Ranking courses, as such, seems to have become a necessary evil in the past dozen years or so. And I say that as a ranking panelist for two major magazines, one in Canada and one in the U.S. In fact, I started the ranking trend in Canada when I was managing editor of Score magazine, the national golf publication. Mea culpa. Granted, there are some positive aspects to this phenomenon; not the least of which is that it sells magazines and advertising. One recent publication even goes so far as to differentiate between modern and classical courses. (Give me a break.) But I digress.

This book is a cross section of some of the best layouts in America. You stroll through these pages and visit great courses from coast to coast, enjoying the spectrum of design, history, geography, topography, and so on. Some are private, some public, some resorts. Most of us will never have a chance to play Pine Valley, Seminole, or Augusta National, but isn't it great to dream? On the other hand, anyone can play Kapalua or Harbour Town. And who knows, a golfing acquaintance may have a friend who is a member at Shinnecock Hills or Winged Foot.

Selecting and writing about the courses was just part of the procedure. Photographer Michael French, who has teamed up with me on two previous golf books, spent weeks welded to the seat of his truck, hopscotching across the country to capture the essence of the final choices. He covered almost 20,000 miles, shooting more than 400 rolls of film in the process. (No, he didn't drive to Hawaii.) He packed only the essentials into his vehicle: cameras, lenses, golf clubs, mountain bike, and ... cappuccino maker. That last item stood him in good stead when he was storm-stayed for two days in the mountains of North Carolina. In addition to fancy coffeemakers, our collaboration process also required 500 faxes, \$10,000 in telephone calls, and mounds of books, scorecards, yardage guides, videos, and other resource materials.

Whether or not you agree with the courses we selected is immaterial. These choices are intended to delight the golfer's eye and ignite their imagination. We think we accomplished that goal. We hope you agree.

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Teresa Vanhook:

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Roxanne Harrelson:

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Sherry Nicholson:

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