

**ATTENTION GOLFERS:** ARE YOU READY FOR SOME FOOTBALL? • ERNIE ELS' WINNING GEAR

# California **GOLF**

AUGUST 2012

NEWS & TRAVEL

## **SWEET SPOTS**

**7 REASONS YOU'LL LOVE TEEING IT UP IN ORANGE COUNTY**

## **+ POWER PLAY**

**12 WAYS TO GET MORE DISTANCE OFF THE TEE**

## **GREAT EXPECTATIONS**

**WILL TIGER WOODS EVER RETURN TO PRE-SCANDAL FORM?**

# THE **COOL ISSUE**

**DUSTIN JOHNSON LEADS A NEW WAVE OF YOUNG STARS WITH A HIPPER, TRENDIER AND MORE ATHLETIC VIBE  
PLUS! 80 OF THE COOLEST THINGS ABOUT THE GAME**



# HIP CHECK

*Maybe more people would warm to golf if they knew about all the cool things associated with the game.*



By AL PETERSEN

Cool used to get the cold shoulder when it came to golf. Terms such as elitist, boring, frustrating and a good walk spoiled were common, at least among outsiders. But now everyone from corner grocers and rock guitarists to film stars and athletes in other sports are jockeying for position to tee it up. How'd that happen?

Much of the popularity and cool aura surrounding golf these days can be traced to Tiger Woods and a new cast of fitter, hip-looking and talented players. Golf also is full of high-tech equipment, products and gadgets that make the game cooler and more fun to play.

But cool isn't just about physical things and appearances. It's also a state of mind. What you find cool might be unappealing to your neighbor, but that's OK. To each his own. That makes compiling a list of cool things about golf completely subjective and rather difficult. But one of the cool things about publishing a golf magazine is that we can, so we will. Here goes:

## WATERFALLS AT TRUMP NATIONAL ▼

More than \$250 million has been spent to ensure the prominence of Trump National Golf Club Los Angeles, and large chunks of that cash were spent on massive waterfall features on the first and 17th holes. Most opening holes are fairly mundane, but not here. A \$2.5 million rock structure creates a cascading wall of water behind the green (pictured). Golfers then drive through the structure on their way to the second tee. The waterfall on the 17th hole provides an equally stunning backdrop – and provides a unique reminder of a cool day spent on the course.



## ESCENA CLUBHOUSE ▲

Palm Springs used to be the hangout for Hollywood's elite when stars such as Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis Jr. were often seen on the links and in the lounges. Escena Golf Club has preserved some of that aura with a clubhouse design that is equal parts retro, funky, casual and, of course, cool.

## ◀ FRED COUPLES

The commercials for Bridgestone and Mitsubishi featuring Couples are the epitome of cool, but what do you expect from a guy over the age of 50 who still goes by Freddie or Boom Boom? Even on the Champions Tour his swing remains silky smooth, and you've got to give it up for a guy who singlehandedly made it cool to wear nubbie golf shoes.

## STRAIGHT SHOOTERS

Imagine a shortstop telling an umpire that a runner was safe because he missed the tag after an out call was made. Sounds silly, right? But that's what golfers do all the time – to themselves! – when they know they've violated a rule. Honesty, integrity and golf go hand in hand, which is a cool concept to live by on and off the links.



## ARNOLD PALMER

Golf wasn't cool when Arnie started on the PGA Tour but it didn't take long for him to attract an army of fans with his swash-buckling style and go-for-broke swing. Palmer was the first guy to make golf cool in the television era and he set a standard that is tough to beat. And even though he always looked cool in black and white, the King doesn't look too shabby these days either while rockin' a coral sweater.

## TECHNOLOGY

Sweet spots used to be the size of a dime but now they're as big as an apple because of materials used and the design of today's clubs. Balls also go farther, spin less and stop quicker. And no more stepping off yardages from the 150 plate to know how far you are from the green. Simply get out your rangefinder or look at the GPS screen in your cart.

## OPEN DOOR

One of the neat things about the U.S. Open and U.S. Women's Open is the qualification process. This year more than 9,000 wannabes teed it up at regional events and two – Angel Yin, 13, and Andy Zhang, 14 – made it to the first tee at the real deal. The teens weren't able to drive their courtesy cars but they were able to pull drivers from their bags for a couple rounds in a major championship. How cool is that?

## THE 19TH HOLE

Whether it's to celebrate or commiserate, there's nothing like the 19th hole to quench your thirst, replay the round (in your head) and settle some bets. Toss in a great view of





the course, mountains, desert or ocean and it almost feels like home. Maybe better.

### NO AGE LIMIT

A boy or girl can shoot hoops in the driveway or play catch with a baseball when they're 5 years old, but not so much when they're 85. Golf, on the other hand, is a game for a lifetime, meaning that you can take your children and grandchildren to the range or course knowing that they can repeat the cycle when they get older.

### EUROS AND AUSSIES

Maybe it's the way they talk or the way they dress or how they carry themselves on the golf course, but there's something really cool about most foreign-born players. It's easy to picture yourself having a beer or cocktail after – and during – a round with most of these guys. And being part of the Ryder Cup parties? How cool would that be?!

### WEST COAST SWING

It's pretty neat to be able to stand outside the ropes at the Farmers Insurance Open at Torrey Pines and watch Phil Mickelson approach a green you might have rolled putts on a few months before. That's part of the allure of the PGA Tour's West Coast Swing, where Torrey Pines joins the Humana Challenge, Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, Phoenix Open and WGC Match Play Championship as places where you can literally follow in the footsteps of top professionals.

### MONTEREY PENINSULA

Even if there weren't a handful of great golf courses in this beautiful area of the country, it still would be a cool place to visit. The fact that Pebble Beach, Poppy Hills, Spanish Bay, Spyglass Hill, Pacific Grove, Bayonet, Blackhorse, Carmel Valley Ranch, Del Monte, Preserve and Quail Lodge (whew!) are in the vicinity makes it even cooler.

### MAJOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

From the reverence at Augusta and the mental grind of the U.S. Open to the quirkiness of the British Open and the hoisting of the small child-size Wannamaker Trophy, golf's four majors are must-see TV. The major championships are so steeped in tradition and history that all were being played long before TVs were even invented.

### COOL FABRICS

Keeping your cool on the course on extremely hot days was difficult before clothing manufacturers started producing moisture-wicking shirts. The fabric doesn't make the temperature go down but it does keep your shirt from becoming a heavy, sweat-soaked mess. Awkward! Now the fabric also is being used in shorts, slacks, hats, golf gloves and underwear. Will cool ideas ever cease?

### ◀ SWEET 16TH

The 16th hole at TPC Scottsdale is a non-descript par-3 between the 15th green and 17th tee. So why do pros start hyperventilating during the Waste Management Phoenix Open as soon as they appear on the tee box from under the grandstands? It's probably because the grandstands encircle the hole like a small football stadium, with tens of thousands of rowdy fans waiting to boo and hiss a shot that misses the green. There's nothing else like it on tour.



### BILL MURRAY ▲

Golf is a tough game, so a little comic relief now and then is in order. Enter Bill Murray, the clown prince of golf who has brought a chuckle to the masses through his antics in "Caddyshack" and on the course at such iconic places as Pebble Beach. He also has some game, as evidenced by his pro-am victory with D.A. Points at Pebble in 2011.

### GAMBLING GAMES

A friendly wager during a round can make things interesting. And, man, are there a lot of options when it comes to side bets. Popular ones include a Nassau, skins, bingo bongo bongo, sandies, wolf, round robin and barkies. Or perhaps you have 30 to 40 others you like to play with your buddies. But whatever the name of the game or

format, be sure it doesn't get out of hand emotionally or financially. That wouldn't be cool.

### THE FIRST TEE OF SAN FRANCISCO

The First Tee initiative has programs in all 50 states, but it's safe to say that few are in places such as the one in San Francisco, which is located in a gang- and drug-infested part of town. Even gang leaders think it's a pretty cool idea because they've told their members to not give the kids any more grief than they already deal with on a daily basis.

### BUDDY TRIPS TO LAS VEGAS

What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas, but first you have to get there. Road trip! With more than 125 golf courses in the Las Vegas area, there are plenty of good reasons to pack your clubs along with your money, credit cards, good luck charms and more money.

### SERVICE WITH A SMILE

Cart girls are almost as big a part of the golf experience as playing out of bunkers and negotiating 60-foot putts. Perhaps one of them is even the reason you play a course as often as you do. Regardless, during what other sporting activity can you get someone to drive up, wave and offer you a snack or beverage? Pretty cool.

### BACK NINE ON SUNDAY

It's about 1 p.m. on a Sunday. Do you know where your favorite golfer is on the leaderboard? The phrase about tournaments not starting until the back nine on Sunday was made popular at the Masters, but it's true for all events. A lot of cool things can happen on that stretch of holes so you might as well pull up a chair and watch.

### SHARP PARK

It wasn't exactly the masses descending on City Hall with pitchforks disguised as wedges, but a grassroots effort in San Francisco to save the beloved Sharp Park Golf Course is picking up steam with city and federal officials. More details need to be ironed out, but the effort shows the importance a public golf course can have in a region.

### A GOOD WALK ... PERIOD

Golf clothing icon and Carlsbad resident John Ashworth walked 108 holes at Oceanside's Centre City Golf Course at Goat Hill one day last month to raise money for the North County Junior Golf Association. His effort was part of a national Hundred Hole Hike fundraising effort. Donations to help junior golf programs are always cool, so visit ncjga.com to find out more.

## COOL STUFF

### >> CLEVELAND GOLF CG CLASSIC DRIVER

Nothing on the market looks cooler than Cleveland Golf's retro-style CG Classic driver bearing a throwback persimmon finish replete with painted brass faceplate and sole. As great as the club looks, it performs even better – the 460cc all-titanium driver hits the ball forever, partly thanks to the premium Miyazaki graphite shaft.



### >> GOLF COURSE MOBILE APPS

Booking tee times is constantly evolving. Maybe someday your brainwaves from thinking about playing a certain course at a certain time will get the job done, but for now an app will have to do. A company called GolfSwitch provides phone apps for courses that allow golfers to book tee times through an iPhone or Droid and include features such as keeping score, GPS and range-finder capabilities.

### >> TAYLORMADE ATV WEDGE

Think of TaylorMade's ATV wedge as your Swiss Army knife for any shot. It has sharp sole relief to let you hold the club open when you want to try a flop shot, and the bounce angle changes with how you position the clubhead and clubface. All you need to worry about is which lofts to buy.



### >> NEXBELT GO-IN! GOLF SERIES

The Nexbelt Go-In! Golf Series is a line of cool and innovative belts that combine fashion and function. The leather belt is designed with no holes and its PreciseFit ratcheting system allows one-quarter-inch adjustments in length. It also features a hidden ball marker placed strategically beneath the buckle.



### >> STANCE SOCKS

Go bold or stay home is kind of the impetus behind Stance socks, a hosiery product line that comes in all lengths, styles and colors. If you want to get noticed, slipping on a pair of these babies might do the trick, no matter how bad your stance is over the ball.



### >> SWINGSMART

NewSpin Golf's SwingSmart revolutionizes how you see your swing. Its featherweight sensor clips to your club shaft and immediately relays a 3-D graphic animation of your swing, along with all pertinent swing data, to the screen of your iPad or iPhone. It archives every swing, so you can compare them and see how you're improving.

