



Transforming a club

A comprehensive renovation of the two courses at Pelican's Nest Golf Club has transformed the golf experience for players of all abilities

The first course at Pelican's Nest Golf Club in Bonita Springs, Florida, opened in 1985. Over the following 10 years, 18 additional holes were built in phases, and rerouting occurred with every new phase.

This approach meant that many inconsistencies had become evident across the two courses. The varying age of greens, along with blocked drainage and inconsistent soil profile, meant each performed differently. Bunker sizes, shapes and depths had changed over 30 years, altering the strategy of the holes.

There were a number of additional issues too: water wells were compromised during drought, meaning salt content in the well water was too high to grow quality turf; fairway turf was contaminated; slopes and drainage were problematic; traffic patterns left areas with extreme wear; trees were creating excessive shade for healthy grass growth; and invasive exotic species had proliferated.

Jan Bel Jan, ASGCA, was hired to conduct a full renovation, to address these problems while giving each course a unique identity, a uniform appearance and consistent maintenance practices.

Greens were rebuilt to their original design, with tweaks to allow for more rounds and Stimpmeter readings of 11-12. Sub-surface drainage for a portable SubAir system was installed, as well as over 1.25 miles of HDPE pipe to take reclaimed water

to an irrigation pump station. A pump blends well water with reclaimed water to manage salts in real time and reduce water use, improving water and power efficiency.

Excavated mix has been used to create additional tees over the two courses and raise elevations of fairways that were too close to the water table, and holes with severe slopes and/or compromised drainage have been regraded.

Fairways have been re-grassed using a contemporary turf and long-term maintenance costs have been reduced by eliminating bunkers that did not contribute to strategy or aesthetics, while a new bunker lining system reduces erosion during intense rain events.

The amount of irrigated maintained turf has been reduced and replaced with appropriate, attractive, low-maintenance plants and/or crushed shell highlighted by native pollinator plants. Invasive plants and other trees causing shade on greens and tees have been removed, with areas re-landscaped with native plants.

The renovation program has achieved its desired results. The courses have retained their strong 'test for the best' ratings from the back tees, while gaining new ratings suited to shorter hitters from the new forward tees. The high 'fun factor' has translated to measurable increased satisfaction, leading to improved handicaps for members and more rounds, guest play and revenue.



Pelican's Nest

Location: Bonita Springs, Florida

Golf course architect:
Jan Bel Jan, ASGCA
Jan Bel Jan Golf Course Design
www.janbeljan.com

Project summary: The two golf courses at Pelican's Nest Golf Club in Bonita Springs, Florida, have been completely overhauled by Jan Bel Jan, ASGCA, resulting in a vastly improved player experience and increased revenue for the club.

Partners: Watertronics (pump);
SubAir Systems (aeration);
Better Billy Bunker (bunker lining)