

BACKGROUNDS

Palmer, son of a pro/greenskeeper at Latrobe (PA) Country Club, became one of golf's great champions, winning four Masters, two British Opens, one U.S. Open, one U.S. Amateur and the hearts of millions of fans. Generally credited with being a major force in the golf boom of the 1960s through his charismatic appearance and dashing, devil-may-care style of play. Was the first golfer to win a million dollars on the PGA Tour.

Seay graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in Landscape Architecture, then served as an officer in the U. S. Marine Corps. In 1964, became an associate of golf architect Ellis Maples in North Carolina, and was involved in the design and construction of 27 courses. Formed his own practice, based in Florida, in 1972. Three years later, joined forces with Palmer to create Palmer Course Design Company. A year after that, Seay served a term as President of the American Society of Golf Course Architects.

Palmer Course Design was not Palmer's first experience in course architecture. He had teamed with golf architect Frank Duane from 1969 to 1974 on a number of projects.

Content with playing the PGA Tour, and later the Senior Tour, Palmer lined up clients and left most design activities to the professional architects in his firm. Besides Seay, the team included associates Bob Walker, Harrison Minchew and Erik Larsen. Palmer Course Design was a major force in the golf boom of the 1980s, and in 1984 the company built the first modern golf course in Communist China.

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

Like many professional golfers, Palmer empathizes with average players and advocates layouts that can accommodate both high handicappers and Tour players. One solution was broad-but-wildly undulating greens, on the theory that it equalized the game between scratch players and high handicappers. Another solution was multiple tees on risk-and-reward holes, using back tees to bring water hazards into play and forward tees that allow wide berths around them.

IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS

Very bold fairway contours that provide all sorts of lies. Very bold green contours that roll off in several directions. Low, graceful series of mounds along fairways and around greens. Rarely a harsh edged hazard. Often an island green.