

No course, it seems, is complete without an island green, so we offer in this 18 a most unusual one: a natural island green.

It's perhaps the most scenic hole at the very scenic Grand National, the flagship of Alabama's Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail, with 54 holes of incredibly beautiful and challenging golf strung along the shoreline of Lake Saugahatchee. Although the Trail, consisting of seven complexes and 20 courses in all, bears the imprimatur of the elder Jones, its actual execution was handled by Trent's longtime number one designer, Roger Rulewich.

It was Rulewich who, early in the planning stage of The Lake Course, discovered the little thumb of land protruding into the lake and declared it perfect for a dramatic par-3. Except for flattening some spots for tees and softening the island enough to fit in a putting green, the hole remains untouched from when Rulewich found it.

Unless you can hit a high iron 230 yards, don't try it from the back tee. The wide-but-shallow green will not easily accept a wood shot. It's all you can handle from any of the shorter tees, which, because they are strung along the shore, offer very different angles and are all equally fun to play.

If at first you don't succeed, don't despair. There's a reasonable drop zone some 50 yards short of the green to the left.