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This page: At Fiddler's Elbow Country Club in Bedminster Township, N.J., a spectacular display of tulips are a sure sign of spring. In recent years, the club has planted 15,000 tulips (individually, by hand!) each fall, allowing the display to flourish months later. (Photo: Barry Sloan)

DINNER Reservations

The Metropolitan Golf Writers Association's 67th National Awards Dinner—perhaps the country's grandest celebration of the game of golf—features an all-class lineup of honorees that will be recognized on June 18 at the Westchester Marriott in Tarrytown, N.Y.

Three-time major champion Padraig Harrington headlines the distinguished guests as the recipient of the Gold Tee Award, the MGWA's highest honor. The Irishman is no stranger to the Met Area, having competed for the Golfing Union of Ireland in the inaugural Governor Hugh L. Carey Challenge Cup in 1990 at Metedeconk National and having won The Northern Trust in 2005 at Westchester Country Club. In addition to his stellar playing record that includes more than 20 international victories, Harrington extends his influence off the course through his own charitable foundation and by serving as a Global Ambassador for the Special Olympics.

Reigning PGA Championship winner Justin Thomas and his family will be recognized as Family of the Year while longtime sports reporter Hank Gola will receive the Lincoln Werden Golf Journalism Award. For more information on the MGWA's 67th National Awards Dinner and to purchase tickets, visit the MGWA's website.



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Bald Head Island

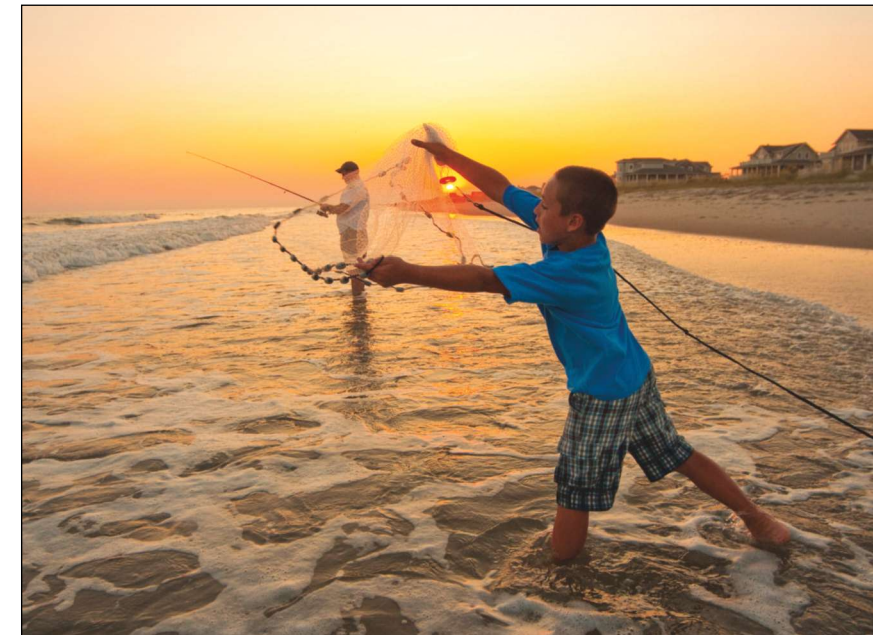
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When planning a getaway, you shouldn't have to choose between great golf and a family-friendly beach resort. Bald Head Island, NC, offers the best of both worlds — world-class golf and miles of uncrowded beaches. You'll arrive here by passenger ferry and travel the island by golf cart, bicycle or on foot, at an easygoing pace locals call "island time."

At the center of the island's recreational life is the Bald Head Island Club. Along with its top-rated golf course, the Club offers swimming, tennis, croquet and activities for all ages. Vacation rentals on the island range from cozy cottages to spacious homes that can accommodate extended family. Be sure to request temporary membership in the Bald Head Island Club when you book your home rental so you can enjoy access to all of the Club's amenities.

Real estate offerings run the gamut in terms of size, setting and price. Located near the golf course, The Hammocks neighborhood offers fractional home ownership that includes four weeks of vacation time each year, along with Club membership. Just a stone's throw from the ocean, the *Southern Living* Inspired Community at Cape Fear Station combines a perfect location with charming low country architecture.

Make plans to visit Bald Head Island this summer to



tour the *Southern Living* Idea House, opening for tours in June. Learn more by visiting www.bhirealestate.com. When you're ready to book a tee time, visit www.bhiclub.net or call 910-457-7310.



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Fun for All

Sarah Relyea of the WMGA speaks with several attendees.

On April 19, the MGA and the Women's Metropolitan Golf Association (WMGA) collaborated with Lexus to offer an Introduction to Women's Golf clinic—an evening event at Golf & Body NYC designed to introduce women professionals to golf. From the grip and basic swing fundamentals to putting and etiquette, the clinic proved insightful for attendees and created a strong foundation for involvement with the game. The approximately 30 women also heard from former LPGA Tour player and WMGA Board member Tara Fleming, who encouraged participation in the game and spoke about golf's impact in her life. Look for more introductory women's golf opportunities in the Met Area through the summer, as the MGA and Lexus continue to partner in this series of clinics.

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CHIPPING in the Dark

BY SCOTT KRAMER

Dark-finished wedges have their advantages — the biggest being that they're designed to cut down on the sun's glare as you stand over a shot. And when you're in a white sand trap, they can provide excellent visual contrast. Plus, they look plain sultry and compact. Many tour pros insist on playing them, for all of the reasons above. Manufacturers have loaded the market with dark wedges this year. Consider several new models, if you're looking to shore up your short game. Cobra's soft carbon steel KING Black Wedge (\$149) is finished in a durable Diamonized Black Metal. Its 100 percent CNC milled grooves and tour-inspired grinds strive to have mass appeal. Titleist's Vokey Design raw Jet Black SM7 (\$195/graphite shaft, \$175/steel) takes the dark look to an extreme, with black paint fill in the logos and graphics. It's offered in six sole grind options. The finish of PING's carbon steel Glide 2.0 Stealth (\$175/graphite, \$150/steel) is applied using a "Quench Polish Quench" process for extra durability and corrosion-resistance. It feels soft at impact. And Callaway's Mack Daddy 4 Matte Black (\$150) with aggressive Groove-in-Groove Technology can be customized with a variety of color accents, for a nominal up-charge.



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—Michele Greenfield, WMGA, and Member, Glen Oaks Country Club

"This is hands down one of the best culinary events, bringing together some of the most talented chefs from around the world. Having the first night dinner cooked by Master Chef Christophe Muller from the 3 Star Michelin restaurant honoring Paul Bocuse was one for the bucket list. Food all four nights was amazing! The wines from Marchesi Antinori were stunning, well balanced and beautiful. Bravo to Met Golfer, CuisinArt Resort and Antinori Wines for the epic four days in paradise."

—Chef Scott Pikey, Executive Chef, Mayacama Country Club

"Joan and I had a great time on the trip. The food was fantastic and the other participants were great. We made a bunch of new friends on this trip and look forward to joining you for a third trip in the future."

—Glenn Carlson, PGA Head Professional, Torrington Country Club



EpicureaGolf.com for information or reservations, or call 610-442-5718.

HANDING OUT HARDWARE

Westchester Golf Association's 2017 Player of the Year Award winners were recognized on April 24 at the WGA's Spring Meeting. Yale University junior James Nicholas accepted the Player of the Year honor fresh off celebrating an Ivy League Championship title with his Bulldog squad and in between final exams. Nicholas once again maintained a busy training schedule through the winter and aims for another successful summer of competition. Senior Player of the Year Jim Romaniello shared how he didn't become serious with the game until the age of 30 and expressed his gratitude of claiming the award. Junior Player of the Year Jud Langille could not attend due to a high school match. However, his mother, Gwen, accepted the award on his behalf, saying Jud is motivated to win the title again so he can accept in person.

The event, held at 96th Westchester Open Championship Presented by Callaway host Sunningdale Country Club in Scarsdale, N.Y., also opened with a morning program that featured discussions on current topics relevant to clubs and a Q&A session with representatives for USGA events in the Met Area this summer.



The WGA player of the year awards are named in honor of the late Guido Cribari, a longtime Westchester golf writer, enthusiastic supporter of the game, and charter member of the Westchester Caddie Scholarship Fund.



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"To have this type of technology in a community where kids aren't typically exposed to golf provides them with a great opportunity to learn another important skillset."

- Calvin Lyons, President and CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Los Angeles,

on GOLFZON's donation of a simulator to the Roy W. Roberts II Watts / Willowbrook Boys & Girls Club in August 2016.



- Players have the choice of more than 160 courses, multi-venue online tournaments via the cloud or practicing with every club in their bag, including the putter.
- A popular feature is the ability to realistically putt and the accuracy of the short game. Putts are picked up by the sensors and then react on the screen with the precise break and speed of the particular course.
- The system is server based with all player information stored on GOLFZON's server. Players can analyze the shots any time. The system acts like a caddie and recommends clubs.
- Games can be played in a competitive manner against anyone around the world.
- Short-game practice modes make practice more fun and the new ARCADE software allows for games such as dart-style competition.
- GOLFZON offers a unique, moving swing plate. Uphill, downhill and sidehill lies are accurate as GOLFZON provides this feature not available on other simulators.

LAYOVER ▶ ALABAMA'S GULF COAST

BY TIM HARTIN

Varying landscapes surrounding Alabama's Gulf Coast offer a variety of pleasantly surprising golf experiences. With a string of options from just outside Mobile, south to Gulf Shores, one can test their game in the deep of the woods or just steps away from pristine beaches.

The par-three 8th at the Crossings course perfectly illustrates both the beauty and challenge found at Magnolia Grove.

COURSES:

1 Magnolia Grove Golf Course – One of two stops on the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail near Mobile, Magnolia Grove features two championship courses and a highly regarded short course. The layouts meander through towering trees and among creeks and marshlands for a serene setting. The parkland-like Crossings features unique oyster shell waste areas, while the Falls includes large greens—both elements of recent renovations.

2 Rock Creek Golf Club – Settled just off the eastern shore of Mobile Bay, Rock Creek's highlighting features include several unexpected elevation changes and a strong variety of golf holes that demand a mix of both precision and length. Though tree-lined, its fairways remain welcoming, while approaches are well-received by expansive, gently contouring greens.

3 Kiva Dunes Golf Course – Often noted as Alabama's top course, Kiva Dunes boasts a prime location between the Gulf of Mexico and Bon Secour Bay. The layout melds seamlessly with the natural landscape, providing a links-like feel from the rolling terrain. In addition to the ever-changing wind, sprawling sugar-white bunkers and several lakes prove testing to the players' skill.

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COUNTING DOWN TO Shinnecock



Former professional athletes familiar with the Met Area's bright sports spotlight and passionate about the game of golf helped the USGA officially welcome the 118th U.S. Open Championship at Shinnecock Hills to New York on April 11. The event, held at Konnect Golf in New York City, also kicked off the 2018 U.S. Open Trophy Tour, presented by Lexus, and introduced a new Celebration of Champions event.

"I'm a Long Islander, so I'm pretty bullish on Long Island golf," said former Jets quarterback Boomer Esiason. "We have so many great golf courses. Anytime you have a tournament of this caliber being

played on one of our golf courses, then it's everything—it's fantastic." Former Knicks guard John Starks echoed the pride of having big events in the area, saying, "To be able to have [the U.S. Open] come out here to Shinnecock, it's going to be great for the fans. There's nothing like a New York tournament."

In its fifth year, the Trophy Tour includes stops all across the tri-state area and allows fans to get an up-close look at the historic trophy leading up to the fifth U.S. Open staged at Shinnecock. The MGA will display the trophy May 14 at Bethpage State Park during its annual Day of Golf fundraiser for the MGA Foundation

and May 16 at a U.S. Open local qualifying round at Cherry Valley Club in Garden City, N.Y. A full schedule of stops is available at usopen.com/trophytour.

Meanwhile, the Celebration of Champions, announced by USGA CEO Mike Davis, will pair 2017 USGA champions in two-player mixed teams for a four-hole exhibition in honor of the champions' achievements. It will take place Tuesday, June 12, during the week of the 118th U.S. Open, with Jack Nicklaus serving as the honorary starter and the champions playing holes Nos. 10-13 at famed Shinnecock.

Butch Goring, Clark Gilles, 2017 U.S. Senior Amateur champion Sean Knapp, John Starks, Grant Marshall, Boomer Esiason, Brian Lawton, Mike Davis, and Rod Gilbert surround the historic U.S. Open trophy.

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On the *Right Track*

BY BILL SCHMEDES

Bill Schmedes is the Director of Instruction at Fiddler's Elbow Country Club in Bedminster, N.J.

For those Slicing:

First, address the ball with the clubface square to the intended target. Next, turn the body slightly inward to close the stance (B). If the body is closed, we know that the club is going to work more inside to begin and then there is an opportunity for it to work inside-out through impact. As a drill, exaggerate the closed stance and make some three-quarter swings back and through to feel how in-to-out the club will want to work.

For those Drawing:

Conversely, if a player already consistently draws the golf ball and wants to do so less, turn the body slightly outward to open the stance (C) after initially addressing the ball with the clubface square to the intended target line. This keeps everything more in front of the player going back and coming down and through, allowing the club to exit more on-plane or left, when a typical drawer is typically under-plane, "stuck" and right.

Alignment Check:

Evaluating your alignment should be done not on just one dimension, but several. To make sure your entire body is in harmony, test to see whether your toe line, hip line (D) and shoulders are all relatively parallel to one another.

If you don't like the curvature of the shot you're hitting, your alignment likely needs to be altered in some fashion—once again keeping in mind that the club works on the alignments of your body. Don't be afraid to alter alignments and see how it changes ball flight.

A



B



C



D



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Where Greens Meet Blues

S secluded by 6 miles of luminous white sand beaches and brought to life with remarkable architecture, Four Seasons Caye Chapel, Belize (www.cayechapel.com) defines luxury island experiences that blend with the panoramic views. Being one of the early participants in the Founders Program, opens the first come first serve opportunity to live on the east or west side of the spectacular beaches. This enables the owner to have a hand in building one of the most distinctive island communities for generations to come.

Four Seasons Caye Chapel private estates will feature 1/3 to 1 acre lots, designed for large, luxury, family estates construction. As the first Island Founders offering, these home sites represent an incredible value. Two hundred and eighty acres of selective amenities balanced with a leading-edge sustainable approach make Four Seasons Caye Chapel, Belize a luxury, private island without peer. Featuring the added bonus of a 5-hour direct flight out of New York to the Caye is just another reason to secure your residence.

Included on the island is an 18-hole championship golf course known as the “White Shark Golf Course.” The course stretches from horizon to horizon with its vibrant greens and parallels the shimmering Caribbean Sea.

Enjoy the open water experience at Morter’s Beach Club, a Caribbean take on the Mediterranean Bathing Club. Take in the fresh ocean air with a cool drink from the outdoor bar while relaxing at the extensive private pool. And what’s an island experience without experiencing the Caye’s restaurants, storefronts, and entertainment.

With amenities sure to please anyone, Four Seasons Caye Chapel, Belize is a perfect representation of what high standards Four Seasons Caye Chapel has to offer.



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The crowning of the season's first champion may not come until May 8 in the 91st MGA Senior Amateur at Old Oaks Country Club, but the MGA's annual media day always feels like the official "start" to the season. On May 23, members of the media and representatives from the MGA's valued partners previewed the 2018 season and put their own games to the test at Wykagyl Country Club, host of the 103rd Met Open Championship Presented by Callaway.

The Walker L. Trammell Trophy has been awarded to the Met Open champion since 1949.