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Upgrades



Pine Lake Country Club

Turning Back the Clock

Renovations at golf courses around Michigan mix the old with the new

/ BY JOHN RETZER

PINE LAKE: A NEW COURSE WITH AN OLD FEEL

When Pine Lake Country Club reopens its golf course in July 2024, members will experience a brand-new course with a classic feel.

Pine Lake's 18 holes — built over the course of four or so years starting in 1917 — claim Willie Park Jr. as their original designer. Over time, though, changes have been made by a bewildering number of architects, including Jerry Matthews, Bruce Matthews, Bill Newcomb, Robert von Hagge, Bruce Devlin, and Craig Schreiner.

"When I saw the course for the first time, I saw a lot of bits and pieces of different styles," says Drew Rogers, an architect based in Toledo, Ohio, who was tapped to undertake the latest renovations. "That's not surprising given all the influences that have taken place through the decades."

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

Pine Lake Country Club, founded by Henry Ford, Ransom Olds, and John Lodge, opened in 1902 as the Automobile Club of Detroit. The name changed to Pine Lake in 1921.

Naturally, then, Rogers's vision was to "modernize the golf course and the infrastructure so it can go on living, while at the same time creating a clean and clear, consistent identity."

Terry Poley, the golf course superintendent at Pine Lake, puts it like this: "The goal for this project was to regain a single vision and have a golf course that is pleasant to the eye, and all of our features match."

During the rebuild of the course, Rogers has worked to restore the angles, shot values, and alternate routes of play that are characteristic of historical courses.

"We have shifted tees and made subtle relocations of greens, but the playing corridors have remained the same," he says. "We peeled away layers and trees, and it opened up the original character of the site."

The result, he says, is "a brand-new course, but it's got an old feel."