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Husqvarna's Near-Silent Machines Are Making The Loudest Splash



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“WATER MACHINES REDUCE WASTE-MANAGEMENT COSTS, CUT PURCHASING OF BOTTLED STOCK AND — WHISPER IT QUIETLY — CAN EVEN BE BRANDED”

FAIR COMMENT

Golfers are a curious species. They'll spend £600 on a driver that promises an extra four yards, but ask them to carry a reusable water bottle and suddenly it's as if you've suggested they play left-handed. Yet here we are, in 2026, still watching bins overflow with single-use plastic bottles at clubs that pride themselves on immaculate fairways, pristine greens and “environmental stewardship” printed in italics on page three of the annual report.

It's time for golf clubs to install more water machines. Not just one lonely dispenser hidden beside the locker rooms like a shameful secret — but proper, accessible, visible hydration stations across the course. And yes, we can have a laugh about it, but the message is serious: golf can't keep preaching sustainability while fuelling a small mountain range of discarded plastic bottles beside every tee box.

Let's start with the obvious. Golfers drink water. A lot of it. Eighteen holes is essentially a four-hour walk punctuated by emotional turbulence, light swearing and the occasional athletic explosion from a bunker. Hydration is not optional. But the traditional model — buy a bottle in the pro shop, finish it by the 7th, buy another at the halfway house, repeat — is outdated, wasteful and increasingly out of step with what modern members expect.

Water machines solve this, and our partners Bluewater and Water Stations are ideally placed to help. They're simple, clean, cost-effective and, crucially, they stop golfers treating plastic bottles like confetti at a wedding...



Words

Michael Lenihan
Publisher

READ THE FULL COMMENT ONLINE
golfmanagement.online/magazines/summer-2026



FEATURING

SUMMER 2026



SABINE RIEZEBOS

BERNARDUS

"What immediately stood out to me about Bernardus was the ambition. It wasn't about building just another golf course, but about creating a destination that could compete on a European level from day one."

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JOHN GLENDINNING

MARINE DRIVE

"All my friends get sick of me saying how good Vancouver is. But the lifestyle here is so good that people don't want to leave. We have the mountains, the ocean, the wildlife, and the sense of space here still surprises me."

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NICOLAS BARRAUD

AL MAADEN GOLF

"I think for the good of the destination it is really important that people discover and enjoy the other golf courses, too, because at the end of the day we work as a golf destination and it is not me competing with the other golf courses."

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TOM WEST

ROCKLIFFE HALL

"Good clear communication with your team is vital so that everyone is aligned with the tasks of the day, and most importantly so that the customer gets the best experience regardless of where they are on the property."

34



PAUL FILEMAN

BLUEWATER

"I had the opportunity to play golf in some amazing countries. Leaving the Navy was the saddest day of my life. To a certain degree, we're masters of our own fate, but things happen that steer us in certain directions."

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HUSQVARNA'S INVOLVEMENT AT THE BRITISH MASTERS IS PART OF A BROADER SHIFT ALREADY UNDERWAY ACROSS THE SPORT



COVER STORY

HUSQVARNA.COM



The pioneering manufacturer of robotic mowers, Husqvarna, is making its most significant mark yet on the golf industry this year, with a series of developments that span elite tournament sponsorship, new autonomous mowing technology and a long-term commitment to developing the next generation of greenkeeping talent.

The headline move is the company's title partnership of the British Masters on the DP World Tour. The 2026 Husqvarna British Masters will be played on The Belfry's iconic Brabazon Course from August 27-30, and will be hosted by Husqvarna brand ambassador Sir Nick Faldo.

During tournament week, Husqvarna robotic mowers will work alongside The Belfry's greenkeeping team to ensure the famous course is in peak condition when the tour arrives.

Husqvarna's involvement at the British Masters is part of a broader shift already underway across the sport. Autonomous mowing is moving from trial to standard practice, and Husqvarna is at the front of that transition, working directly with tournament venues, greenkeeping teams and tour partners to make it a practical reality rather than a distant prospect.

Already creating a stir with its AI-powered vision technology and near-silent robotic technology that creates no direct carbon emissions during operation, Husqvarna has introduced First Cut functionality across its CEORA and Automower 580L EPOS models.

Available as a free software update, the new feature enables golf course managers to create and maintain transition areas between fairway and rough using their existing autonomous mowing setup, without additional machinery or cost.

Traditionally, maintaining a first cut has required dedicated equipment and extra resource. This update changes that, integrating the function directly into Husqvarna Fleet Services, the company's platform for managing connected equipment.

This enables each first cut zone to be set with its own cutting height and schedule.

For courses already running autonomous systems, it is a practical, low-friction way to improve presentation and course definition as the season intensifies.

Alongside technological advances, Husqvarna has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the greenkeeping profession by becoming the first major industry body to become an official Friend of First Green.

This BIGGA-led initiative introduces young people to careers in greenkeeping through hands-on learning in science, technology, ecology and land management.

Since launching in 2022, First Green has engaged nearly 950 students across the UK and Ireland. Husqvarna's involvement reflects a wider belief that sustaining the future of the industry means investing in it at every level, from the Brabazon fairways to the school visits that might inspire the next generation of course managers. **END**

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LIV AND LET LIVE...

Regular readers of this column – I thank you and fear for you in equal measure – will know that I was no great fan of LIV Golf. However, I am not exactly enjoying its apparent demise, for, if it is unable to survive the loss of funding from the end of this season, there will be people losing their livelihoods and that is never cause for celebration. I merely hope those players – and companies – who were so keen to see their colours nailed firmly to the LIV mast can accept any requisite slices of humble pie and rejoin the Tours that helped give them the lifestyle they enjoy today.

I tend not to be a big advocate of divisive organisations whether they be in sport or politics – and heaven knows we're all suffering as a result of the latter. Human nature dictates that, both as individuals and corporations, we're always on the lookout for something better, but in doing so, we often lose sight of what we already have. As I saw recently on a T-shirt, 'If the grass looks greener over there, it's probably artificial turf...'

Some of our biggest golf tournaments worldwide have suffered as a consequence of the split and, surely, we all want what's best for the sport – even those who were interested in personal short-term gain. And, if they don't, maybe they chose the wrong sport. It has been reported that LIV has mere weeks after its final event of the season to secure alternate funding for 2027, and despite the admirable optimism of the likes of Bryson DeChambeau – who has reaffirmed his support for team golf on the sport's calendar – it remains a huge challenge to garner sufficient financial backing for the Tour to continue in its current form.

More likely is a reduced schedule with a diminished prize fund, and much, I imagine, will depend then on how individual contracts were worded. If the attraction was money initially, players are unlikely to be keen to accept a massive cut... or, maybe, I underestimate their honourable natures. One valid point DeChambeau made in his stoical defence of the project was that team golf may still prove beneficial to golf in the long run.

Most other large sports have their roots firmly planted in passionate partisan support and the Ryder Cup has demonstrated how strong that can be in golf at an inter-continental level. Maybe there's an argument for trying further European inter-country team competitions at professional level. Cricket has had to modernise and adapt its game to attract new support and sponsorship, so maybe golf could learn from other sports who compete internationally?

It would also drive a movement for matches to be played at venues the professional tours eschew; it could also raise the profile of up-and-coming professionals whose national profiles would benefit from the media coverage. And, whisper it quietly, it might also be something the terrestrial TV networks could support.

Free-to-view golf? What a revelation that would be. **END**

NEWS IN BRIEF

GOLFMANAGEMENT.ONLINE/NEWS



APHRODITE HILLS RESORT ACES OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE RACKET CLUB

Aphrodite Hills Resort officially opened the new Racket Club this month, marking a significant next chapter in the resort's continued investment in sport, wellness and premium lifestyle experiences. The official launch event welcomed members, property owners, partners, international media and VIP guests for an exclusive sunset celebration by the courts, introducing the resort's fully renovated racquet sports facilities and new Healthy Bar.

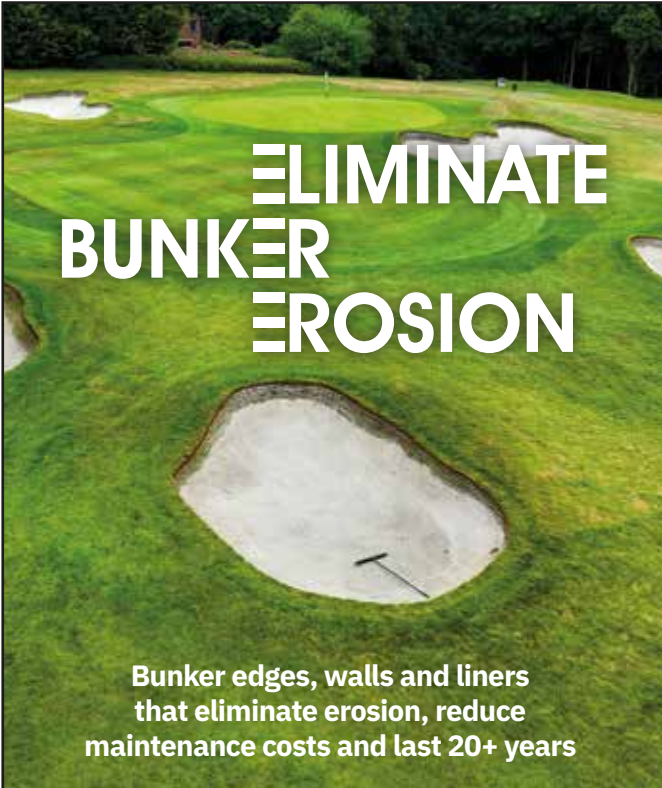
SEARCH 'APHRODITE HILLS' ONLINE
at golfmanagement.online for the full story



THE R&A UPDATES GOLF COURSE 2030 WATER PORTAL TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY

The R&A has provided an update to its Golf Course 2030 Water Portal to offer golf course operators with the latest guidance, data and practical solutions to help address sustainable water management. Water management – including sustainable sourcing, efficient use and the management of extreme weather events – continues to present challenges for golf courses globally.

SEARCH '2030 WATER PORTAL' ONLINE
at golfmanagement.online for the full story



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CABOT REVELSTOKE ANNOUNCES UPDATES AHEAD OF ITS HIGHLY ANTICIPATED DEBUT

Cabot, a leading developer and operator of luxury resort and residential golf destinations, announces expansion plans for Cabot Revelstoke, its four-season mountain destination in development in British Columbia. Highlights include a new 155-room hotel, Cabot Revelstoke Mountain Lodge; limited preview play of its jaw-dropping 18-hole public golf course in fall 2026; and continued momentum across an exclusive collection of luxury residences.

SEARCH 'REVELSTOKE' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.online for the full story



VISION TECHNOLOGY ACCESSORY NOW AVAILABLE FOR HUSQVARNA RANGE

Husqvarna has introduced a new AI-powered Vision Technology accessory for its professional Automower range, further strengthening the brand's position at the cutting edge of autonomous turf care technology. Designed to help robotic mowers detect and avoid obstacles more intelligently, the new accessory supports improved operational efficiency and a more seamless mowing experience across golf courses and other professional turf environments.

SEARCH 'HUSQVARNA' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.online for the full story



SYNLAWN UK AND BASINGSTOKE GOLF CLUB DELIVER ADVANCED GOLF FACILITIES

The 1907 Academy at Basingstoke Golf Club has raised the bar among the most environmentally progressive golf academy buildings ever delivered, combining carbon-sequestering natural materials, advanced sports performance technology and low-impact construction methods in a pioneering project designed to challenge conventional thinking around golf facility development.

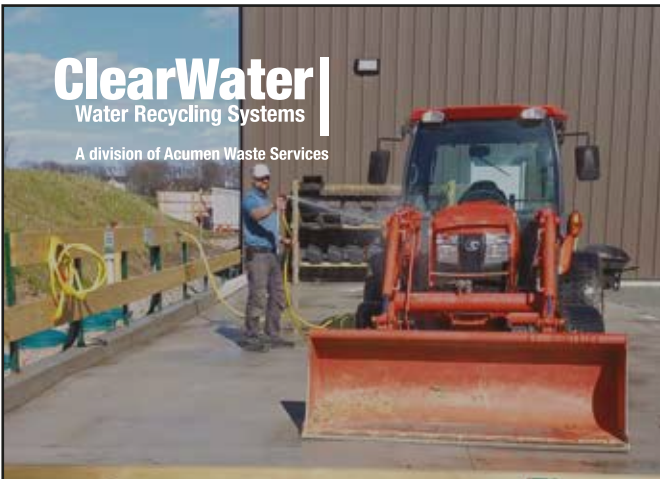
SEARCH '1907 ACADEMY' ONLINE

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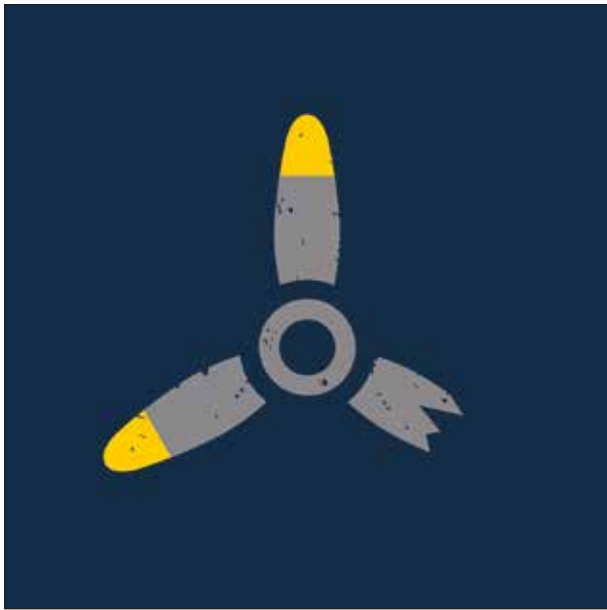
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PRINCE'S GOLF CLUB ANNOUNCES "THE LADDIE"

Prince's Golf Club, host of the 1932 Open Championship and 2030 Walker Cup, has announced a new 18-hole championship composite course, The Laddie, created in collaboration with The R&A and architects Mackenzie & Ebert. The layout brings together the best holes from the existing nines – The Himalayas, Shore and Dunes.

SEARCH 'THE LADDIE' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.online for the full story



GALVIN GREEN RAISES THE BAR WITH NEW EMBROIDERY OFFERING

Premium high-tech golf apparel brand Galvin Green, has bolstered its embroidery offering for retail partners purchasing crested garments by adding the new 'Stitch Print' option to its best-in-class embroidery capability. Exclusive to Galvin Green, the state-of-the-art 'Stitch Print' service is a top-quality heat printing option that delivers intricate detail on logos of all shapes and sizes, while maintaining the premium look of traditional embroidery.

SEARCH 'STITCH PRINT' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.online for the full story



ATPI APPOINTS DAMIEN CONNOLLY AS GENERAL MANAGER

The Association of Turfgrass Professionals Ireland (ATPI) has announced the appointment of Damien Connolly CCM as its new General Manager, effective from May 2026. Connolly brings more than 20 years of experience within the golf industry, having worked across club operations, management, consultancy and industry education throughout Ireland.

SEARCH 'DAMIEN CONNOLLY' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.online for the full story



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DETAILS EXPANDS GOLF PORTFOLIO WITH ADDITION OF FIRST INTERNATIONAL VENUE

DETAILS – Hospitality, Sports, Leisure, Portugal's largest golf course operator, has broken new ground and expanded its presence in the international marketplace after assuming the management of the resort previously called Donnafugata Golf Resort & Spa in Italy – the company's first project outside of Portugal. DETAILS will be responsible for the day-to-day management and development of the 36-hole venue, including strategy, repositioning, marketing, sales and communications expertise.

SEARCH 'DONNAFUGATA' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.online for the full story



MOTOCADDY ANNOUNCES STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH CENTURION CLUB

Motocaddy, the world's best-selling electric trolley brand, has announced a strategic partnership with Centurion Club, one of the UK's most progressive and prestigious private members' clubs. As part of the exclusive agreement, Motocaddy will supply Centurion Club with a fleet of its cutting-edge M15 GPS DHC rental electric trolleys to enhance the golfing experience for members and guests. In return, the brand will have access to the club's world-renowned facilities for product showcases, customer and media meetings, and on-course content shoots at the premium venue.

SEARCH 'MOTOCADDY' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.online for the full story



MOOR PARK REAPS BENEFITS AFTER SWITCHING TO CLUB CAR

Moor Park Golf Club in Hertfordshire, UK has praised the impact of its new Club Car golf fleet, describing the innovative vehicles as a game-changer. The prestigious venue, boasting two Harry Colt-designed championship courses, has installed 30 Tempos – Club Car's industry-leading golf vehicle – complete with Bluetooth speakers and Club Car Connect technology with Visage Fleet Management.

SEARCH 'MOOR PARK' ONLINE

at golfmanagement.online for the full story



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THE HAWTHORN BY GALWAY BAY APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR OF GOLF SALES

Excitement continues to mount ahead of the opening of the first five-star property in Galway in more than two decades with the appointment of Brendan Mackey as director of golf sales at The Hawthorn by Galway Bay. Mackey took up his new position last month and is the latest addition to the team as The Hawthorn by Galway Bay nears completion ahead of its eagerly anticipated launch next month.

SEARCH 'THE HAWTHORN BY GALWAY' ONLINE
at golfmanagement.online for the full story



GOLF IT! AND TORO MAKE GOLF MORE ACCESSIBLE

Community-focused golf facility Golf It! in Scotland has reinforced its long-standing relationship with The Toro Company following a recent investment in two Vista passenger vehicles and further enhancing its commitment to accessibility and inclusion. The newly acquired Vista vehicles will play a key role in the facility's Golfers with a Disability Programme, enabling groups of disabled, blind and partially sighted golfers to navigate the course comfortably alongside a coach.

SEARCH 'GOLF IT!' ONLINE
at golfmanagement.online for the full story



APES HILL TAKES BARBADOS LEGENDS TO A HIGHER LEVEL

Apes Hill Barbados once again provided a dramatic stage for the 2026 Barbados Legends, hosted by Ian Woosnam, as players from across the world returned to one of the most distinctive venues on the tour. Greg Owen closed the event with a composed, bogey-free 64 to secure a two-shot victory. His move came through the heart of the back nine, with three consecutive birdies on a stretch that rarely yields.

SEARCH 'APES HILL' ONLINE
at golfmanagement.online for the full story

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SABINE RIEZEBOS

GENERAL MANAGER, BERNARDUS GOLF



B E R N A R D U S

As general manager of Bernardus, the future host venue of the 2026 Solheim Cup, Sabine Riezebos is helping shape one of Europe's most distinctive modern golf destinations, one where golf, hospitality and lifestyle are not separate pillars, but part of a single and highly intentional experience.

In European golf, there are increasing numbers of venues with strong architecture, immaculate conditioning and high-quality facilities. Far fewer, however, manage to create a genuine sense of identity, one that extends beyond the course itself and is felt consistently across every touchpoint of the guest journey.

Bernardus has carved out its own space, and since opening in 2018, the Kyle Phillips-designed venue has quickly established itself as one of the most compelling modern golf and lifestyle destinations in Europe.

Its rise has been driven not only by the quality of its course and growing championship pedigree, but by a broader proposition: a destination where golf, gastronomy, design, stay and service are conceived as part of a complete experience.

From the Bernardus Lodge and the club's distinctive culinary offer to Bernardus wines, which add another layer to the destination's sense of taste and personality, every element contributes to a brand that was never intended to be simply a place to play golf.

At the centre of that evolution is general manager Sabine Riezebos, whose professional background spans hospitality, tourism and premium experiences. It is a background that helps explain much about the way Bernardus operates today.

Riezebos does not approach golf through a narrow operational lens. Instead, she brings a broader leadership perspective shaped by environments where experience, service standards and brand perception are inseparable.

Looking back on her career, Riezebos identifies the most defining moments as those where she was responsible not only for operations, but also for shaping a brand and the story around it.

Working in high-end, guest-focused environments taught her that leadership is rooted in clarity, consistency and the ability to empower teams to deliver beyond expectation. Just as importantly, it taught her that the smallest details often define how a place is remembered.

That combination of commercial understanding and guest experience ownership seems to sit at the heart of her leadership style. She talks not only about quality, but about trust, accountability and a shared sense of pride. Strong teams, in her view, are built when people understand what they are creating together and why it matters.

That mindset found a natural home at Bernardus.

"What immediately stood out to me about Bernardus was the ambition. It wasn't about building just another golf course, but about creating a destination that could compete on a European level from day one."

From the beginning, Bernardus was conceived as a destination capable of competing on a European level, one that would pair world-class course conditions with a level of hospitality more readily associated with pre-



“WHAT’S IMPORTANT IS THAT WE DON’T LOSE SIGHT OF WHAT MAKES BERNARDUS UNIQUE”

mium hotels and resorts. The blank canvas made that ambition even more powerful, allowing the team to make decisions intentionally and to build a brand that could feel distinctive and coherent from the outset.

Ask Riezebos what makes Bernardus feel different from other top-tier venues, and her answer is: precision and atmosphere.

Those two ideas perhaps best capture both the venue’s personality and her own management approach. Precision is visible in the presentation of the course, the consistency of standards and the careful choreography of the guest journey.

Atmosphere is found in the calmness of the setting, the tone of the welcome and the way the experience feels intuitive rather than over-staged.

What Bernardus seems to understand particularly well is that modern luxury in golf is rarely about formality. It is about ease. It is about anticipation. It is about making quality feel natural.

Riezebos is clear that what truly sets the club apart is the integration of hospitality into every touchpoint.

“At Bernardus, nothing is accidental. From course presentation to service flow, everything is designed to feel seamless. It is not just about playing golf, but about how guests are welcomed, how service is delivered, and how consistently the experience is maintained across the entire day.”

The result, she suggests, is not something flashy or overly formal, but a quieter, more confident form of refinement, one built on calm execution and attention to detail.

That is an important distinction. At many venues, hospitality still operates as a complement to the golf offer, something layered around the core sporting product.

At Bernardus, it appears far more embedded than that. Hospitality is not an accessory; it is part of the operating philosophy. It informs how the club positions itself, how the team behaves, and how members and visitors are expected to feel from the moment they arrive.

“For me, it starts with a simple principle: every guest should feel equally valued, whether they are a long-standing member or a first-time visitor.”

Bernardus will enter a new chapter of visibility in September 2026, when it hosts the Solheim Cup, with the event taking place from September 11–13, and the PING

Junior Solheim Cup also being staged at Bernardus earlier that week. For Dutch golf, it is a landmark moment. For Bernardus, it is both a validation of what has already been built and a significant opportunity to strengthen its international profile.

Riezebos is careful, however, not to frame the event as a one-off moment of prestige. Her perspective is more strategic than that. Bernardus has already shown its capabilities through hosting the Dutch Open on multiple occasions, but the Solheim Cup offers a much broader global platform.

More importantly, it gives Bernardus and the Netherlands an opportunity to challenge lingering assumptions about the country’s place within European golf travel.

The Netherlands is still not always thought of instinctively as a golf destination, yet its accessibility, climate and position within Europe make it increasingly relevant, particularly as travel habits evolve and golfers begin to look beyond the most established southern markets. Bernardus wants to be part of changing that conversation.

Preparation for the Solheim Cup reflects the dual nature of the Bernardus brand. On the course side, the team is focused on meeting the highest international standards, with particular emphasis on consistency and playability under championship pressure. Off the course, equal attention is being given to logistics, hospitality, flow and atmosphere.

“What’s important is that we don’t lose sight of what makes Bernardus unique. While the scale of the event is different, the ambition remains the same.”

What matters most to Riezebos is that the scale of the event does not compromise the identity of the venue. The ambition remains the same: to deliver an experience that is refined, well-organised and unmistakably Bernardus.

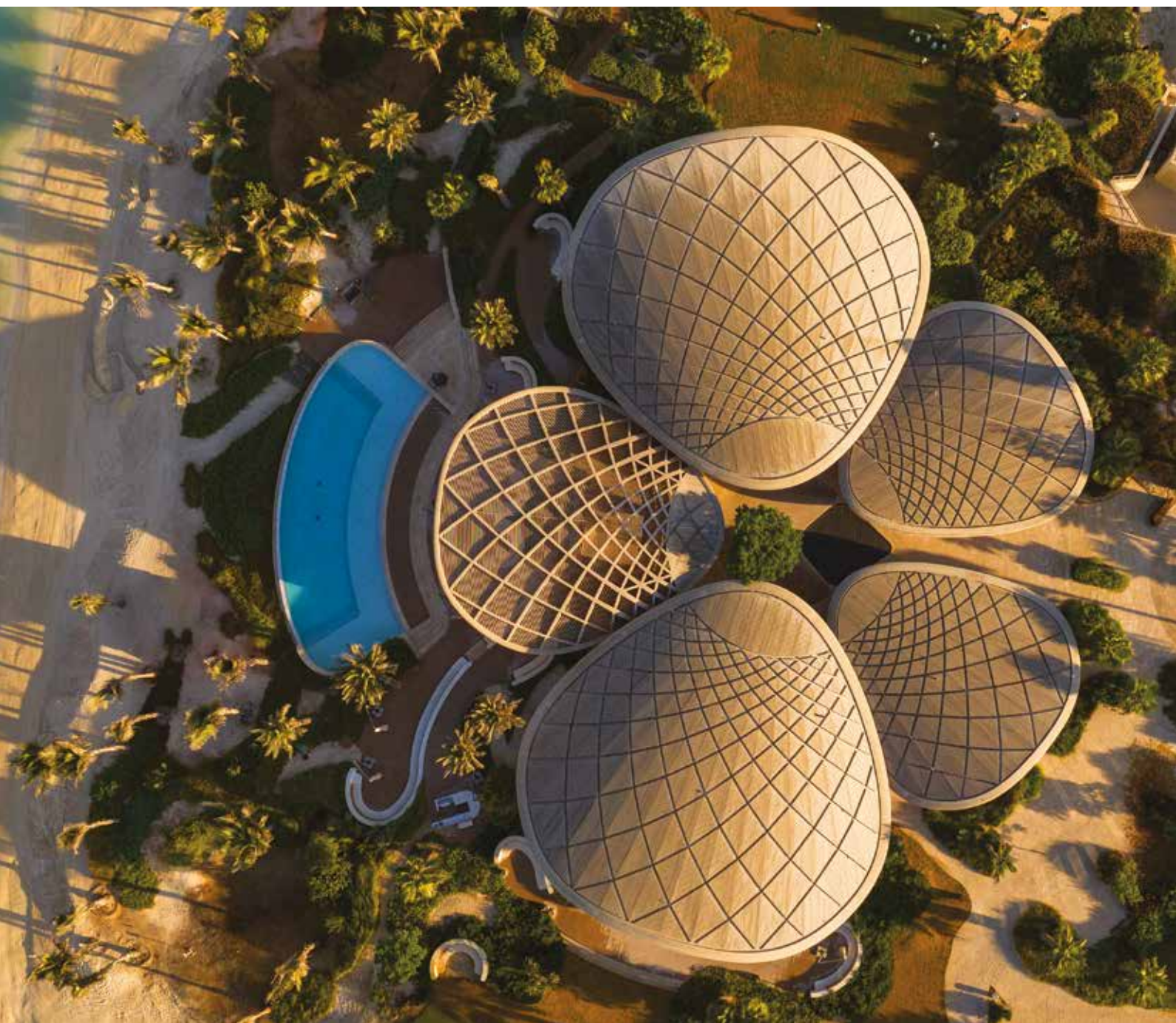
In an industry often drawn to spectacle, Riezebos appears more interested in substance: the calibre of the welcome, the confidence of the operation, the coherence of the brand and the memory a guest takes away.

Bernardus may soon step onto one of the biggest stages in world golf, but the thinking behind it remains grounded in something more enduring.

Get the details right. Make people feel special. Build a destination worth remembering. **END**



“THE BENEFITS AND GLOBAL RECOGNITION BEING A WORLDCASS.GOLF DESTINATION OFFERS ARE SIGNIFICANT, AND ACTS AS A HALLMARK OF RECOGNITION WHEN IT COMES TO THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE”



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worldclass.golf/shura-links





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SHURA LINKS

Shura Links, one of Saudi Arabia's most ambitious new golf developments, has been officially welcomed into worldclass.golf, the exclusive portfolio of the world's premier golf destinations. The announcement marks another significant milestone in Saudi Arabia's rapid rise as a global hub for elite golf experiences.

Located on the Kingdom's stunning Red Sea coastline, Shura Links forms a centrepiece of the wider Red Sea development – one of the world's most forward-thinking luxury tourism projects. Designed to blend seamlessly with its natural surroundings, the course showcases dramatic coastal views, native landscapes, and a sustainable design philosophy that aligns with Saudi Arabia's broader environmental commitments.

Membership in worldclass.golf is reserved for destinations that demonstrate exceptional standards in course architecture, conditioning, hospitality, and overall visitor experience. Shura Links' inclusion places it alongside some of the most celebrated golf venues across Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas.

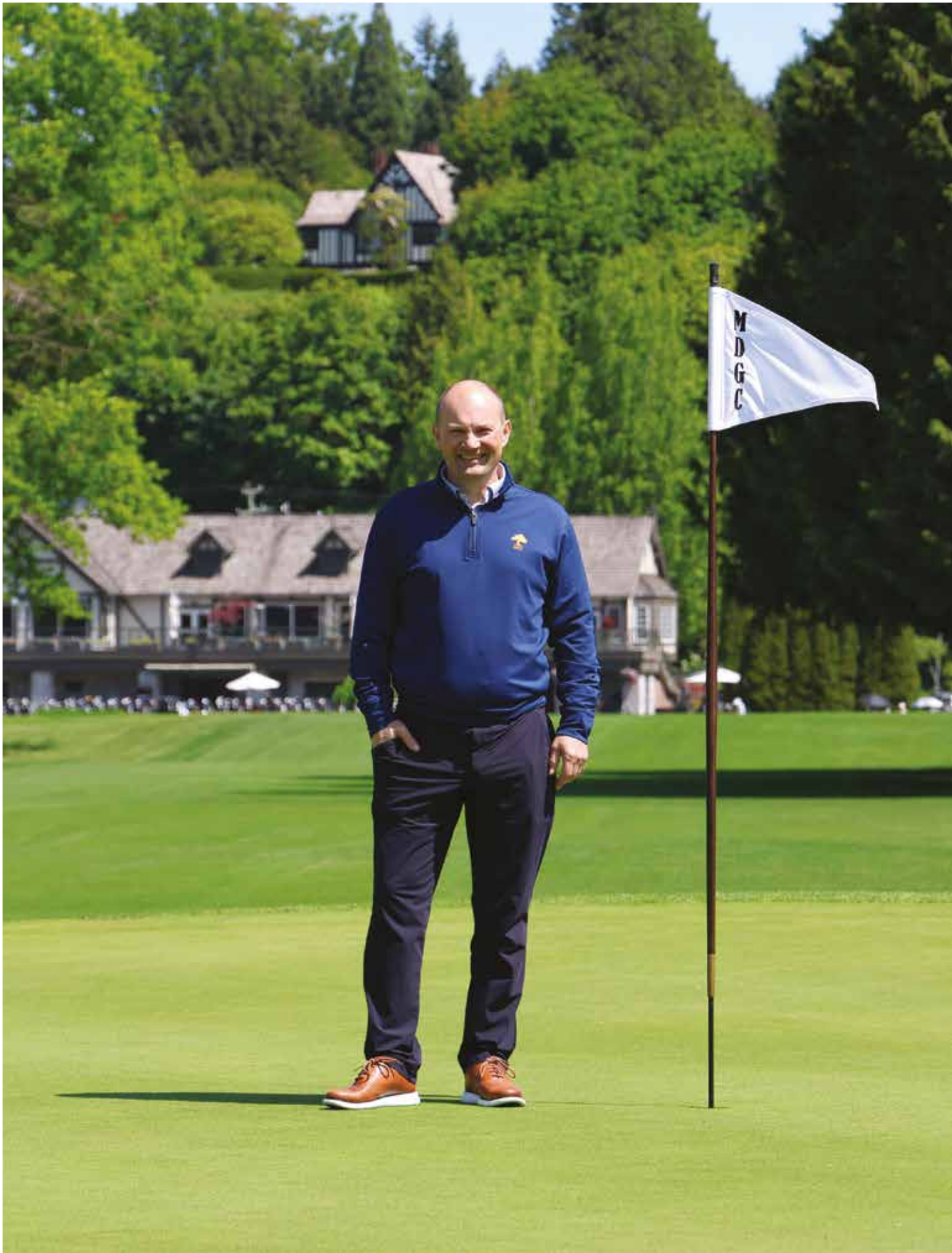
"We are delighted to welcome Shura Links into the worldclass.golf portfolio," said CEO, Michael Lenihan. "The vision behind the project, combined with its breathtaking setting and commitment to excellence, makes it a natural fit for our global collection of golf destinations."

Shura Links is expected to attract golfers from around the world, offering a championship-level experience supported by luxury accommodation, world-class amenities, and seamless access to the Red Sea's growing tourism infrastructure. The course is also set to play a key role in Saudi Arabia's long-term golf strategy, which includes expanding participation, hosting major international events, and developing a network of elite facilities across the Kingdom.

Jon Brook, Shura Links CEO added: "Having worked with worldclass.golf at a previous club in Spain, I knew that as soon as Shura Links was ready to welcome guests, we needed to become a Premium Member. The benefits and global recognition being a worldclass.golf destination offers are significant, and acts as a hallmark of recognition when it comes to the visitor experience we deliver at Shura Links."

With its inclusion in worldclass.golf, Shura Links is poised to become one of the region's most sought-after golf destinations, reinforcing Saudi Arabia's growing influence. **END**







Words Michael Lenihan
Online marine-drive.com

JOHN GLENDINNING

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, MARINE DRIVE



Standing at the peak of Grouse Mountain with John Glendinning and his wife Helen, I am reminded of something he said to me 24 hours earlier whilst we enjoyed a round at Marine Drive in Vancouver, the exclusive club where Glendinning is now COO.

"If I saw my career out here now, I'd say The Wisley was the pinnacle of my career from an experience point of being at a high end club. I think that no matter which club I went to after that – and this was part of my difficulty of deciding on my next move in my career path – it was going to be hard to find somewhere that surpassed The Wisley."

It is a revealing statement, not because it diminishes Marine Drive, but because it captures the crossroads Glendinning found himself at just a few years ago.

After seven years at one of the most exclusive private clubs in Europe, he was not searching for a bigger title or a more prestigious badge. He was searching for something far more elusive: a life that made sense for him, for Helen, and for their two children.

His journey into golf management had never been part of a carefully plotted career plan. He studied geography at the University of St Andrews simply because he loved the subject. "It was my favourite topic at school," he recalls, "and I loved the outdoors." Even then, the seeds of a future in golf were quietly germinating.

As a teenager, he completed a GCSE project that involved re-purposing a disused quarry. "The exercise was to turn it into something, and I turned it into a golf course," he says. "I probably still have the drawing somewhere."

Summer jobs at Slaley Hall introduced him to the operational side of the golf industry. He worked on the beverage cart, behind the bar, and eventually in the golf shop, and by the time he graduated, he had developed a genuine interest in the mechanics of running a club.

That interest led him to Close House in Northumberland, where he joined as the second employee in 2004. "I was in a port-acabin for three years," he laughs, describing the early days of a project that would eventually become one of the UK's most respected golf destinations.

Close House grew rapidly, and Glendinning grew with it. He eventually became Managing Director, overseeing the development and helping to shape the club's identity. But his next move would take him into an entirely different league.

When he was encouraged to interview for the General Manager role at The Wisley, he went in with no expectations. "I went down, did the interview, and on my drive back got the call saying they wanted me in the last two straight away," he says. "I was super relaxed because I didn't think I'd get it."

The Wisley is a club that needs no introduction within the industry. Ultra private, meticulously maintained, and home to a membership that expects nothing short of excellence, it is one of the most coveted management roles in European golf.

Glendinning thrived there. He oversaw a major clubhouse renovation, improvements to the golf course, and a complete shift in the club's financial and membership strategy.



"THERE'S A PART OF ME THAT THINKS I'M SELLING MYSELF SHORT BY NOT STRIVING FOR A BIGGER CLUB. BUT THAT'S EGO, NOT HAPPINESS"

When he arrived, ten per cent of the membership was trying to sell their shares. "We went from that to having a waiting list," he says. "I'd say that was my legacy was taking it from a deteriorating facility to a really healthy position."

Yet despite the success, Glendinning and his wife began to consider a potential move abroad. His children were approaching key stages of school, and the couple wanted to make a decision that would benefit the whole family.

"It wasn't a financial move," he explains. "It was about lifestyle for the kids – giving them the best opportunity of seeing through school."

North America – not the Middle East – felt like the right fit. "I only wanted to do it if it felt like the right move to somewhere we wanted to live as a family," he says, and when the Marine Drive role became available, the timing aligned perfectly.

The club's existing GM had handed in his notice, and the board was actively searching for a replacement. The immigration process was long and complex, but the club was willing to wait.

What Glendinning didn't know until he arrived was just how challenging the situation at Marine Drive would be. "The AGM was literally in my first week here, and it wasn't pretty," he recalls. "The club lost like CAD \$400,000 overall."

He even joked to the members: "I have got a return flight back in two weeks and I'm considering taking it." But beneath the tension, he saw potential. "I knew what direction they wanted to go in and where they wanted the club to go," he says. "It was just going to take a bit of time to get support and bring the club forward."

Marine Drive, like many century old clubs, was suffering from ageing infrastructure, deferred capital investment, and years of keeping dues artificially low. "We were ticking every single box for all the mistakes clubs had made over the last ten to 20 years," he recalls.

But with a clear plan and a willingness to make difficult decisions, the turnaround began quickly. Within his first year, the club moved from a CAD \$400,000 loss to a CAD \$500,000 profit. "It was a CAD \$900 grand shift," he says. "A lot of it was efficiencies... food and beverage was a big one."

Membership numbers were deliberately reduced from 1,350 to 1,150 to improve tee access and overall experience. Entrance fees increased to CAD \$75,000, and retention improved dramatically. "We budgeted to have 70 members leave... we've had about ten," he says. "Our retention's gone up and our inquiries have gone up."

Despite the operational challenges, Glendinning found something in Vancouver that he had never experienced before: a genuine work-life balance. The Wisley had been professionally rewarding but all consuming. Marine Drive, by contrast, offered a different rhythm. The club is ambitious but not overwhelming, and the city itself has become a source of joy for the whole family.

"All my friends get sick of me saying how good Vancouver is," he laughs. "But the lifestyle here is so good that people don't want to leave. We have the mountains, the ocean, the wildlife, and the sense of space here still surprises me."

He and Helen have bought a house, sold their UK property, and are applying for citizenship. "This is our future now," he says.

Professionally, he feels more settled than ever. "I'm the most contented I've been in my career," he says. "There's a part of me that thinks I'm selling myself short by not striving for a bigger club. But that's ego, not happiness."

He has long term plans including bunker renovations, irrigation upgrades, course refinements, and a major F&B transformation. "There are going to be some really exciting projects over the next few years that I'm going to want to see through," he says.

Aged 48, for the first time, he can imagine staying somewhere for the long haul. "I've never actually been at a club where it's just operate," he admits. "It might be contentment rather than complacency." When asked whether Marine Drive could be his final role, he answers without hesitation: "It could. If I remain happy and the club remains happy with me, why do we need to leave?"

Glendinning's move from the UK to Canada wasn't about prestige. Marine Drive is not The Wisley, and he is the first to acknowledge that. But what he and his family have found is something far more valuable.

In choosing Vancouver, they chose happiness – and it shows in every word he speaks about the place he now calls home. **END**

NICOLAS BARRAUD

GENERAL MANAGER, AL MAADEN GOLF



Nicolas Barraud – the Cluster GM of Marrakech’s Al Maaden Golf Resort and the recently-opened Akenza Golf Resort – contemplated the approach of May’s final days, and lamented the subsequent lull in visitor numbers that each venue will experience.

It would be natural but wrong to assume that his disappointment was purely a matter of finance, although that is a consideration during an off season running from the end of May to October.

Barraud’s dismay is because the fallow period lessens the impact he can make in extolling not just the delights and attractions of Al Maaden and Akenza as high-class golfing destinations, but also the allure of Morocco, and its culture.

He was born in La Rochelle, France, but his mother was born in Morocco, and his passion for the North African country and its way of life is so deeply embedded in both his DNA and psyche that he sees himself in the supplementary role of ambassador as well as GM to Al Maaden and Akenza.

“I have been here for 15 years, and I have a long history with Morocco because my mother was born here,” said the 47-year-old. “[His family] were like Spanish immigrants in Morocco, so since I was super young I have this Moroccan culture. We would have a tagine or couscous every other Sunday.

“The first job I got in Morocco, when I got the offer my whole family was super happy that I had this opportunity.”

The drop off in green-fee paying tourists does give him a window in which to be more keenly focused on matters other than the courses, and although he initially tried to

share his six-day working week equally between Al Maaden and Akenza, the latter – the “baby” – has demanded more attention since opening last October.

“The season has been amazing,” he enthused, anticipating going back to spreading his time equally between two courses that he believes complement one another perfectly, offering as they do completely different golfing challenges and environments.

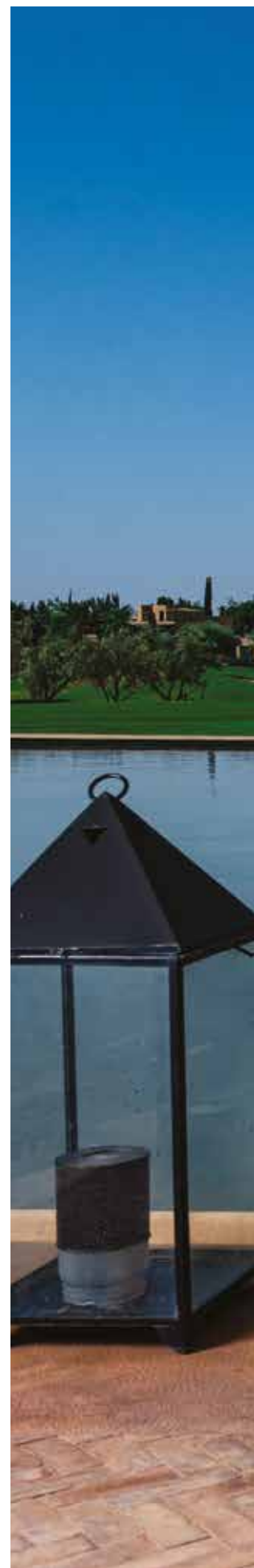
He describes Al Maaden’s layout as a “fun and unique golf course to play.” The fairways are wide, making it accessible for all levels, but it still offers a good challenge for experienced players.

“Akenza is way more tricky and makes you think a lot more. A lot of holes you have to think where to drive in order to have a good second shot. At Al Maaden, I would say you drive, and then you figure it out.”

Al Maaden will intrigue all first-time players with water hazards that are rectangular – “a tribute to the Menara Gardens, which was the first pond used to grab the water from the Atlas mountains to irrigate the whole city” – and its role as an al fresco art gallery, including among its 18 holes a dozen huge sculptures by African artists.

Oakmont-style church pew bunkers at Al Maaden’s 18th provide a visually dramatic finale to a round as well as a historical nod to the seven tombs and seven saints of Marrakech.

“Akenza’s landscaping,” said Barraud, “took a lot of inspiration from Arizona desert courses, but also I went around Marrakech, and checked what sort of trees and bushes were there naturally without irrigation, to







"I'M TRYING TO GET THEM TO EXPLORE A BIT OF THE CITY, TO GO OUT AND DISCOVER RESTAURANTS, BARS, CLUBS, BECAUSE IT IS INSANE. I REALLY WANT THEM TO SEE THIS PART OF MOROCCO"

see also the dry rivers that go through a lot of the Marrakech suburbs, and so all this helped design and shape the landscaping at Akenza."

Those who built the course at Akenza were told that their involvement did not have to conclude when it opened.

"My goal was to make them really involved and to tell them, 'you are not just going to be here to build the course; we will also teach you how to maintain a golf course.

"You are not just here for a year-and-a-half or two years, I want you to be our green-keepers.' Making them feel that it is their baby and they are going to be here to make him walk and grow."

All 30 took up the opportunity to stay on. "They are way more implicated and involved because of this, and some of them know exactly where all the pipes go, what time this grass was planted, how it grew. They saw the rocks before the golf course and they have their history of this place."

Al Maaden and Akenza are located just five miles apart, and are a constant source of pride to Barraud who is equally as happy to brag about Marrakech's other top courses such as Fairmont Royal Palm, Assoufid, and Royal Golf, all destinations that are members of the growing worldclass.golf portfolio.

He is pleased to point Al Maaden's and Akenza's visitors in their direction as additional places to play, and discourages a mindset of cocooning themselves within the resort throughout a stay in Marrakech.

"Especially with UK golfers who are keen to stay in an all-inclusive environment - because they don't want to think about anything else than playing golf, eat and drink - I'm trying to get them to explore a bit of the city, to go out and discover restaurants, bars, clubs, because it is insane. I really want them to see this part of Morocco.

"I think for the good of the destination it is really important that people discover and enjoy the other golf courses, too, because at the end of the day we work as a golf destination and it is not me competing with the other golf courses.

"We are trying to grab the attention of all of Europe and the US, to come to Marrakech."

He added: "I was in the Algarve on a golf trip, maybe ten years ago, and I saw this full plane of golfers arriving, and so many golf bags at the airport, and I thought, 'this is what we want for Morocco.'

"With the help of the tourism board, we really pushed on the UK market. I wouldn't say we have cracked the code, but we are getting there, making sure that every UK golfer knows that Morocco and Marrakech is a great golf destination."

Basketball was, and remains, Barraud's first sporting passion, and he had only superficial knowledge of golf when, in 2003, he applied for the job as director at Pau, France's first golf club and the oldest in Continental Europe.

"I had no clue about golf," he reflected. "I had a sports management masters degree. During my education, I had one semester where we had a one-hour group lesson every Thursday.

"The president of Pau, during the interview, said, 'look, I have the curriculum of 100 scratch golfers who really want to come here, but I'm going to take you because I know you are not going to spend your days playing golf.'"

So why did he leave a job marketing his beloved basketball for a sport with which he had the briefest of dalliances?

"First of all it was the region, Pau, the oldest golf club in Continental Europe, it was near Spain, near Biarritz. They also have a very good basketball team, and it was more to develop my management skills, my operating skills, as it was totally different from what I did in basketball."

He did take up the game, but plays just the occasional nine holes after work in the off season. "I work six days a week, and the last thing I want on my day off is to spend four hours on a golf course. I'm not crazy about golf. I like to play, but I would not want to ruin my family life by playing golf."

He has an eight-year-old daughter, Lily, and Barraud does get to practise his driving - taking Lily to after-school activities such as track and field, yoga, dance, theatre and Thai boxing. "I thought it was a good idea that she tries a little bit of everything, just to open up her mind so she can see which she likes best." **END**



TOM WEST

HEAD OF GOLF, ROCKLIFFE HALL



Fresh from being named Golf Manager of the Year at the 59club Awards, alongside Rockliffe Hall securing Golf Operations Team of the Year for the second consecutive season, Tom West is helping shape an ambitious new era for one of the UK's leading golf resorts.

The recognition reflects years of development and operational refinement at a resort he first joined as an Assistant Golf Professional more than a decade ago.

"It means a great deal to all of us," he says. "We have worked closely with the team at 59club for over a decade now, and to break through in the past few years to win both Manager of the Year and Golf Operations Team of the Year, both for two years in a row against so many fantastic resorts up and down the country, is a testament to all the hard work the team put in each day."

The awards underline the consistency that has become synonymous with the golf operation at Rockliffe Hall. West believes the stability and experience within the team has been central to maintaining standards.

"We have a very strong Operations Management team that have been at Rockliffe Hall for a few years now, along with many returning faces to our seasonal team," he explains.

"This not only allows us to maintain good consistency, but elevates the service to our members and regular guests as the team are already aware of their preferences."

West officially stepped into the Head of Golf role in 2023, although his relationship with Rockliffe stretches back much further. Having first joined the resort in 2013 during

his PGA training, he has progressed through several roles including Membership Manager and Golf Operations Manager before ultimately taking charge of the entire golf department.

That progression has given him a broad understanding of the wider resort business.

"Working throughout various roles at Rockliffe, it's allowed me to see the golf landscape from all angles, along with working alongside multiple other departments across the resort," he says.

"From Spa with memberships, to events and F&B with Golf Sales, this journey has played a large part in getting me to where I am today."

The early stages of his tenure as Head of Golf focused heavily on restructuring operations and retail.

"The first 18 months were heavily involved in the Operations Team as that is the side that I came into the role from," he explains. "It started with changing the full structure within our Retail team and bringing on board a new Operations Management team too."

"Once the Operation and Retail teams were up, running and performing, the focus quickly moved to the greenkeeping team, as we started work on our proposal for our multi-million pound investment projects on the golf course."

Alongside course development work, Rockliffe Hall has also reintroduced coaching internally and reinstated its Golf Academy.

"The last 18 months have been very exciting as we are now putting all our plans for the future into place," says West.



“IT WAS THE RESORT SETTING OF ROCKLIFFE HALL THAT I FOUND MY PASSION, NOT WITHIN COACHING AS I THOUGHT IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN”

At the centre of those plans remains a strong emphasis on team culture.

“My main priority was to build a strong and stable team across the full golf department,” he says.

“We already had a great golf course and service structure in place, but I’m a firm believer in creating a strong team culture and that our team members are what make our service experience extra special.”

That service culture has become part of Rockliffe Hall’s identity over the last decade, with the resort recently securing Gold Flag Resort status for the tenth consecutive year.

“It’s crazy to believe that we have held our Gold Flag status for ten years in a row,” he says.

“Balancing with commerciality has seen our service structure evolve over the years, but as we continue to be recognised with industry awards, we will continue to push the experience for our members and guests.”

Before returning to Rockliffe Hall in 2021, West spent over two years at Close House Golf Club, much of it during Covid.

“I really enjoyed my time at Close House, with multiple challenges along the way,” he says. “Hosting the first DP World Tour event back after lockdown with the British Masters hosted by Lee Westwood was certainly an experience with no crowds.”

Earlier in his career, West also spent time at Gleneagles, an experience he still regards as hugely influential.

“I had some of my best times at Gleneagles, the entire resort is exceptional,” he says.

Managing the golfer experience across 63 holes brought a very different operational challenge.

“You have 12 golfers starting and 12 golfers finishing their round every 10 minutes, so prioritising and working multiple workloads simultaneously is a must,” he explains.

“Good clear communication with your team is vital so that everyone is aligned with the tasks of the day, and most importantly so that the customer gets the best experience regardless of where they are on the property.”

The attention to detail associated with Gleneagles has stayed with him.

“Learning from Gary Silcock and David Blackadder, the importance of focussing on the small details so that the big details take care of themselves,” he says.

“That attention to detail from service delivery to pre-empting and exceeding customer expectations is something that has stayed with me since.”

West has worked in golf since the age of 13 and initially believed coaching would be his long-term direction when he began his PGA training.

“At 20 I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do for a career, and so decided I’d like to do my PGA training,” he says.

“I wanted to do my PGA training to see what part of golf I would like the best, and it was the resort setting of Rockliffe Hall that I found my passion, not within coaching as I thought it might have been.

“I don’t know where I would be today if I hadn’t started my training in a resort environment.”

In fact, the ambition to one day lead the golf operation at Rockliffe Hall emerged early.

“It was early in my PGA training at Rockliffe Hall in 2013 that I thought to myself, ‘I want to be leading the team here at Rockliffe one day,’” he says.

“My journey has taken me to some great golf clubs along the way, and in a nice round circle, I found myself as Head of Golf back at Rockliffe Hall a decade later in 2023.”

Looking ahead, West sees the coming years as an important period for Rockliffe Hall as wider investment across the resort continues.

“We are in a very exciting stage of development on the golf course and across the wider resort,” he says.

“Ultimately we want to bring Rockliffe back onto the stage of nationally recognised top golf resorts, where we know it should be.”

Developing people internally will remain a major part of that strategy.

“Continuing to build our strong team will always be ongoing, with our new Head Greenkeeper appointed from within, and our Operations Manager starting his PGA training,” says West.

“Developing and investing in our team will be a big focus.”

Personally, his own development journey also continues.

“I want to continue my personal learning and my journey through the CMAE development programme,” he says.

“And playing a bit more golf along the way certainly won’t hurt.” **END**

CABOT HIGHLANDS

CABOT.COM/HIGHLANDS

Words Thalita Silva

Location Inverness, Scotland

Few modern links courses have shaped Scotland's contemporary golf conversation like Castle Stuart. Set above the Moray Firth, with its sweeping coastal views, distinctive art-deco inspired clubhouse and routing that makes full use of the Highland landscape and remains the established centre-piece of Cabot Highlands.


Now, with the official opening of Old Petty the destination starts a significant new chapter, becoming a 36-hole golf experi-

ence that brings together contemporary links design, Highland heritage and the global vision of Cabot.

Located just five minutes from Inverness Airport, the worldclass.golf destination combines acclaimed golf, refined on-site lodging, dining and a growing real estate offering, while remaining closely connected to the history and character of the land around it.

That connection has become even stronger with the arrival of Old Petty, the





new Tom Doak-designed course that sits alongside Castle Stuart and opens fully to the public following a successful preview play period in 2025.

“Our goal is to create unforgettable memories in magical places, and there are few places in the world more awe-inspiring than the Scottish Highlands,” said Ben Cowan-Dewar, co-founder and CEO of Cabot.

Cabot Highlands occupies a setting that feels inseparable from the identity of the Scottish Highlands. The Moray Firth provides a constant coastal presence, while the surrounding landscape offers open skies, historic landmarks and the natural drama that has long defined this part of Scotland.

The property is designed around golf, but its appeal reaches beyond the scorecard. Guests can stay on site, dine in the clubhouse and use the destination as a base

from which to explore Inverness and the wider Highlands.

This broader sense of experience is central to Cabot's approach. Across its global portfolio, the brand has built its reputation on destinations that combine world-class golf with hospitality and lifestyle, while remaining deeply faithful to the natural landscapes that define them.

Each property is shaped to preserve and highlight its setting, creating golf experiences that feel distinctive, authentic and closely connected to the land.

At Cabot Highlands, that connection is particularly visible. The historic Castle Stuart stands as the centrepiece of the property, while the arrival of Old Petty brings golfers closer to the land's heritage, with sightlines to the castle from 13 of the new course's 18 holes.



“OLD PETTY WAS DESIGNED TO WORK IN HARMONY WITH THIS EXTRAORDINARY LANDSCAPE”

Castle Stuart remains the anchor of Cabot Highlands and has long been recognised as one of Scotland's most distinctive modern links experiences, combining strategic design, generous playing corridors and sweeping views across the water.

Its sense of place is closely tied to the castle that gives the course and wider destination much of its character, and the location, being set above the Moray Firth, make it truly remarkable.

Completed in 1625 by James Stuart, First Earl of Moray, Castle Stuart celebrated its 400th anniversary in 2025, a milestone that reinforced the depth of history surrounding the property.

To mark the anniversary, Cabot Highlands launched its official tartan, created in collaboration with Highlands designer Clare Campbell and woven at the last remaining operating tartan mill in the Highlands.

Inspired by the natural tones of the Scottish Highlands and the legacy of Castle Stuart, the tartan reflects the way Cabot is building a modern destination identity while remaining grounded in local heritage.

“Celebrating the 400th anniversary of Castle Stuart was an incredible milestone and we're honoured to have marked the occasion by unveiling the official tartan of Cabot Highlands,” said Mark Wright, General Manager and Regional VP Cabot Highlands.

Castle Stuart's role within Cabot Highlands is therefore more than architectural. It provides the emotional centre of the destination, linking the modern golf experience with centuries of Highland history.

As the property continues to evolve, Castle Stuart remains the established landmark around which the next phase of Cabot Highlands is being shaped.

The opening of Old Petty marks a defining moment for the destination. Designed by renowned architect Tom Doak alongside associate Clyde Johnson, the new 18-hole course has been created as a natural companion to Castle Stuart rather than a direct imitation of it.

Old Petty takes its name from Old Petty Church, which also sits at the centre of the property and was established in 1839.

The course first opened for preview play during a limited window in August and September 2025, giving golfers an early opportunity to experience the layout before its full public debut.

The response was strongly positive, with visiting golfers praising the course's natural routing, coastal setting and integration with the Highland landscape.

“Old Petty was designed to work in harmony with this extraordinary landscape, and seeing golfers embrace it so enthusiastically is deeply rewarding. This is a special piece of land, and Old Petty brings a fresh perspective that feels authentic and enduring,” added Cowan-Dewar.

The routing is one of Old Petty's defining strengths. The course begins and returns close to the clubhouse, with opening and closing holes that criss-cross to create a distinctive sense of theatre.

The second hole plays past Old Petty Church before the third moves close to Castle Stuart, immediately establishing the course's relationship with the history of the site.

From there, the layout moves through a varied natural landscape. The 10th uses the Moray Firth as a backdrop, the 14th returns towards the tidal estuary, and the short par-three 17th provides a memorable penultimate challenge before the course moves back towards home. Throughout, Old Petty feels designed to reveal the land rather than overpower it.

For golfers, the appeal lies in the contrast between the two courses. Castle Stuart offers the established modern classic, while Old Petty brings a new architectural vision and a fresh interpretation of the same Highland setting. Together, they give the destination greater depth, variety and international appeal.

With two 18-hole courses now available, golfers can build a fuller itinerary around Cabot Highlands, staying on site and playing both Castle Stuart and Old Petty in one memorable visit.

The official opening of Old Petty therefore marks more than the launch of a new course, but reflects the continued development of Cabot Highlands as a complete destination.

As Cabot Highlands moves into this new chapter, Castle Stuart remains the landmark and Old Petty becomes the discovery.

With 36 holes now set against one of Scotland's most atmospheric landscapes, Cabot Highlands has a fuller story to tell and an even stronger reason for golfers to travel to Inverness. **END**





Words David Bowers
Online bluewatergroup.com

PAUL FILEMAN

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE, BLUEWATER



Bluewater

When Paul Fileman signed up to join the Royal Navy, he could not have imagined that in 42 years he would have transitioned from a life on water to selling a purified version of it to golfers.

But, via a somewhat unusual career path, which led to him eventually being employed in the golf industry, that's exactly where Bluewater's account executive finds himself in 2026. And he couldn't be happier...

Born in Grays, Fileman's Essex accent is still there, and he also retains that glint in his eye that he almost certainly had when working as a barrow boy at Romford Market aged just 13. Sales was in his blood, he insists.

His dad was his hero then and he remains so to this day. He explained: "That man could sell anything to anybody. He was just incredible. He had a way with words, and he could win anyone over. He was just one of those characters that you couldn't not like or love.

"I'd say it's rubbed off on me and my brothers. We're all pretty much the same, though I'm the only one that really took to sales like a fish to water. I love the interaction with people.

"But I only ever sell what I believe in. If I don't believe in it, I can't sell it. If I've got no passion about something, I can't sell it. And I'm passionate about this."

However, Fileman admits his life could have turned out quite differently had he not had what he describes as a 'sliding doors' moment and decided to join the Navy at age 16. "Back in the early 80s, the world was not in a great place. The country wasn't in a great place," he recalls.

"Unemployment was rife and I just thought the only way for me is to join up. I was a bit of a rogue growing up. I was always in trouble. If I hadn't joined up, I'd have gone wrong.

"But I got straightened out and changed my ways forever. I like to think it turned me into a fairly fine and upstanding member of society."

He began as a marine engineer, and, much to his delight, he was often seconded to work with the Royal Marines, in Plymouth. And a life on the ocean wave also allowed him to pursue one of his passions: golf, which he began playing at ten years old.

He smiled: "When I joined up, I was given one very important piece of advice: get good at a sport and you get more time off. So, yeah, I got quite good at golf.

"I was really lucky. We'd go to places like Grand Cayman and we'd get an invite to play golf for free. We'd be in Bermuda and I'd play golf. We'd be in the West Indies – Trinidad or Barbados – and I'd play golf. Then we'd go to Florida and I'd play more golf.

"I had the opportunity to play golf in some amazing countries. Leaving the Navy was the saddest day of my life. To a certain degree, we're masters of our own fate, but things happen that steer us in certain directions, which, sometimes, are beyond our control. And I'm a great believer that everything happens for the right reason."

And so it proved. Ever the grafter, Fileman retrained, taught himself and became a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer, working in the City for four years, before being headhunted by a small company working in UPSs (Uninterruptible Power Supply).



"BLUEWATER'S SUSTAINABLE PERMANENT HYDRATION SOLUTIONS ARE TODAY USED AT PEBBLE BEACH AND ROYAL PORTRUSH"

"The owner asked me, 'What do you know about UPSs?' I said, 'Honestly, I know absolutely nothing, but I guarantee you, in six months' time, I'll be your lead engineer'. Six months later, I was his lead engineer.

"But, at the same time, I was on site; I was advising the customer and selling solutions. However, I discovered I had no passion for selling engineering solutions, so I moved into the golfing world."

He was appointed business development executive at Stoke-by-Nayland working under the golf director Karl Hepple – "a lovely guy, a great boss to work for. I loved it there: a great role, great job" – but Covid put paid to that role.

Later, he became assistant general manager at Great Hadham Country Club, but, if he had a 'sliding doors' moment at 16, it was an epiphany last year that saw him take on his current position at Bluewater.

"Last year I became a grandfather for the first time. And it's one of those moments when you look at the world around you and you start thinking, if we don't do something soon, what's going to be left for my grandson? Climate change is real. Look at the temperatures in the UK in late May. The world is warming up.

"If we can eliminate single-use plastics in the sports industry, just one small thing to help the future, I'm all on board. And that's what Bluewater wants to achieve: getting people to refill rather than throw away."

Bluewater was founded in Stockholm, in 2013, with the stated aim of becoming "the world's most planet-friendly water purification and beverage company."

Its water purification and beverage solutions are designed to break the global reliance on throwaway plastic bottles – most never recycled but, instead, ending up in oceans and landfill, releasing microplastic and nano plastic particles, and toxic chemicals into the environment.

The company was most recently seen in the golf sector at May's CJ Cup Byron Nelson, when the PGA Tour visited TPC Craig Ranch, in Texas. During the tournament, Bluewater was estimated to have dispensed the equivalent of more than 20,000 bottles of water through reusable, refill-focused infrastructure.

Fileman added: "Before I started working for Bluewater, I was a bit of a cynic, because I'm from the generation where water came out of a tap.

"You didn't think about what chemicals were in it, you didn't think about what impurities were in there, you didn't think about heavy metals or pharmaceuticals.

"Back then, we would have microplastics in there, but we knew nothing about them. You got water out of the tap, and you drank it. It tasted different from one area to another, but you didn't really think about it.

"When I started at Bluewater, the first time I tried the water at one of its stations, I became an instant convert, because I realised how bad UK tap water is.

"My aim is to see Bluewater hydration stations in most European golf clubs, like those at St Andrews: our Bluewater Flow Stations 3 Media. Those have TV screens attached to them.

"If I were running a golf club now, I'd have one installed straight away. One: you're eliminating those single-use plastics; two: you're increasing your reusable bottle sales; and three: one sponsor can pay for that system for its entire lifespan."

Fileman's role is to promote the sustainability elements of Bluewater within the sports industry, but the main area of his work, currently, is golf. However, he's also making massive inroads in other sports.

He explained: "We've got some really interesting things going on at the moment. I'm just in final talks with one of the largest football clubs in the UK, and just waiting for paperwork to come back from another big club.

"I've recently visited St Andrews, doing some promotional work up there. And we're on the verge of signing another big deal north of the border. It's rewarding to see our refillable bottles at St Andrews. This shows how more people in golf are recognising the importance of sustainable hydration.

"Bluewater's sustainable permanent hydration solutions are today used at Pebble Beach and Royal Portrush, for example. Our long partnership with the GEO Foundation for Sustainable Golf clearly underlines our commitment to helping events and golf clubs alike reduce single-use plastics and provide great drinking water.

"We're promoting the sustainability message and, hopefully, getting placements of our units within clubs.

"That's one of our major aims. I'm very passionate about what I sell and I'm very passionate about what we're trying to achieve for future generations." **END**

FUTURE-PROOFING THE FAIRWAYS

A NEW ERA OF WATER SECURITY



In the run-up to this year's Earth Day, Frilford Heath Golf Club hosted a Water & Sustainability Summit at its 450-acre, 54-hole heathland Oxfordshire estate recently.

The event brought together leading figures from across the UK golf industry to evaluate and plan a comprehensive water strategy in response to a dramatically changing climate.

With resource management becoming a central operational focus for the sport, the summit served as an opportunity to review current infrastructure, analyse future climate models, and discuss the practical realities of maintaining a prestigious 450-acre golf facility in an increasingly unpredictable environment.

The context for the summit was rooted in concrete data regarding the UK's wider water infrastructure. Water usage and conservation are no longer distant concerns but immediate operational priorities for golf clubs across the country.

Discussions at the summit were framed by recent estimates from the UK government and Water UK, which indicate £60 billion in national reservoir investment is required to prevent significant water shortages by the year 2035.

For the golf industry, which relies heavily on consistent irrigation to maintain playing surfaces, this national deficit presents a substantial operational risk.

According to industry experts who addressed the forum, a concerning number of golf clubs are currently not taking proactive measures to manage these impending climate challenges.

The consensus among the specialists present was that long-term strategic planning is essential to mitigate the risks associated with nationwide water scarcity.

Against this challenging national backdrop, the experts at the summit evaluated the ongoing strategies at Frilford Heath. Following their assessment, they concluded that the club currently operates in the top five per cent of golf clubs in the UK regarding the proactive management of water resources.

This position is the result of focussed strategic planning and significant financial investment. Frilford Heath has recently completed a £2.6 million investment programme across its three championship courses, designed specifically to ensure the estate remains weather-resistant.

The cornerstone of this investment is a transition towards precision resource management. To reduce reliance on external water grids during vulnerable periods, the club has remodelled its on-site reservoir to make it more fit for purpose.

The fundamental mechanics of this system involve capturing and storing rainfall during the wetter winter months, retaining it securely, and utilising it for irrigation during the drier summer months.

This independent water supply is distributed via newly installed, app-controlled Toro irrigation systems on the club's championship Red and Blue Courses.

This cutting-edge technology allows the dedicated greenkeeping staff to continuously monitor turf conditions and apply water with exceptionally high precision, thereby





“WE ARE CONSTANTLY ANALYSING WIDER TRENDS AND DEMOGRAPHICS TO MAINTAIN OUR POSITION AS ONE OF ENGLAND’S GREAT GOLF CLUB EXPERIENCES”

minimising unnecessary waste and ensuring precious resources are deployed only where it is strictly and agronomically necessary.

Kevin Murray, Chairman of Frilford Heath Golf Club, outlined the Board’s approach to these challenges saying: “We are constantly analysing wider trends and demographics to maintain our position as one of England’s great golf club experiences, and being able to present excellent courses on a consistent basis is one of the biggest challenges we face in a climate that often gives you very wet winters and hot, dry summers.

“The experts at our Water and Sustainability Summit offered reassurance that we are on the correct path. They were able to show us that we are well-positioned to manage our own water resources now and in the future.”

Maintaining operational standards at Frilford Heath is a complex process, due in part to the specific ecological protections on the land. The 450-acre estate features naturally beautiful heathland terrain and includes a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Management of the site requires adherence to strict environmental guidelines to protect local biodiversity while simultaneously providing a high-quality sporting venue.

The club’s adherence to sustainable course management has been formally recognised through GEO Certification. Issued by the Golf Environment Organisation, this certification serves as a globally recognised benchmark for sustainable golf operations, requiring facilities to meet strict criteria across environmental, social, and economic metrics.

Paul Sheather, Director of Courses & Estates at Frilford Heath, addressed the daily operational realities of managing the site under these parameters.

“Water conservation and sustainability are top priorities for Frilford Heath. Balancing course conditions with the expectations of members and customers is challenging given the increasing frequency of extreme weather events.

“But, working together, employing best management practices and investing in innovative solutions puts us in the best position possible.”

The ultimate effectiveness of these rigorous management practices has been validated at the highest level by the sport’s primary governing bodies.

Because of these standards, Frilford Heath remains a highly regarded premier destination and was recently selected by The R&A to host this year’s prestigious Women’s and Men’s Senior Amateur Championships.

This selection clearly demonstrates that high-level competitive conditioning can indeed be successfully achieved alongside sustainable land management.

The summit at Frilford Heath was characterised by its collaborative nature, drawing a select group of stakeholders representing different facets of the golf industry.

Attendees included England Golf; The British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association; Independent irrigation consultants, Irritech; Agrovista: Specialists in agronomy and crop protection and The Toro Company.

Andy Brown, Senior Sales Manager and Global Business Development at Toro attended the summit, and as both an industry professional – and a club member – he provided a dual perspective on the proceedings.

“This was an important opportunity to engage on the practical challenges of water security and long-term land management,” he said.

“As a long-standing member, I have a personal interest in seeing the courses maintained to the highest levels; and from a professional standpoint, it is vital to see how clubs can successfully align operational efficiency with environmental responsibility.”

Looking ahead, the administration at Frilford Heath views this initial summit as a starting point for wider industry engagement.

Chairman Kevin Murray confirmed the club is now in discussions regarding the hosting of a larger, industry-wide summit at a future date.

This proposed event would aim to bring together an expanded group of experts and golf club managers to share data, practical solutions, and further the wider golf industry’s ability to manage increasingly challenging water issues. **END**



DETAILS MATTER



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“SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS BENEFIT BOTH SIDES. THEY RELY ON TRUST, ALIGNED VALUES AND CLEAR MUTUAL GOALS”



Words

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GUEST BOOK

PAUL DAVIDSON



Golf has always been built on relationships. While the sport is often viewed through competition and individual performance, the real strength behind successful clubs lies in partnership. Today, clubs face rising costs, shifting member expectations and increasing sustainability demands. Traditional models alone can't meet these challenges, which is why collaboration has become essential.

The strongest partnerships aren't transactional. A logo on a scoreboard has value, but true partnership creates long-term impact. By working with commercial partners, clubs can access skills and resources that would otherwise remain out of reach. Collaboration helps improve environmental performance, enhance facilities and deliver memorable events.

Successful partnerships benefit both sides. They rely on trust, aligned values and clear mutual goals. When clubs and partners take time to understand each other's needs, the result is more resilient and more meaningful than any short-term agreement. Golf naturally brings people together. Conversations on fairways and in clubhouses often spark ideas, opportunities and lasting relationships.

From my years in the energy industry, I've seen how partnership models thrive when shaped around the needs of the club and its members. With shared passion and a clear strategy, the results continue to grow. **END**

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