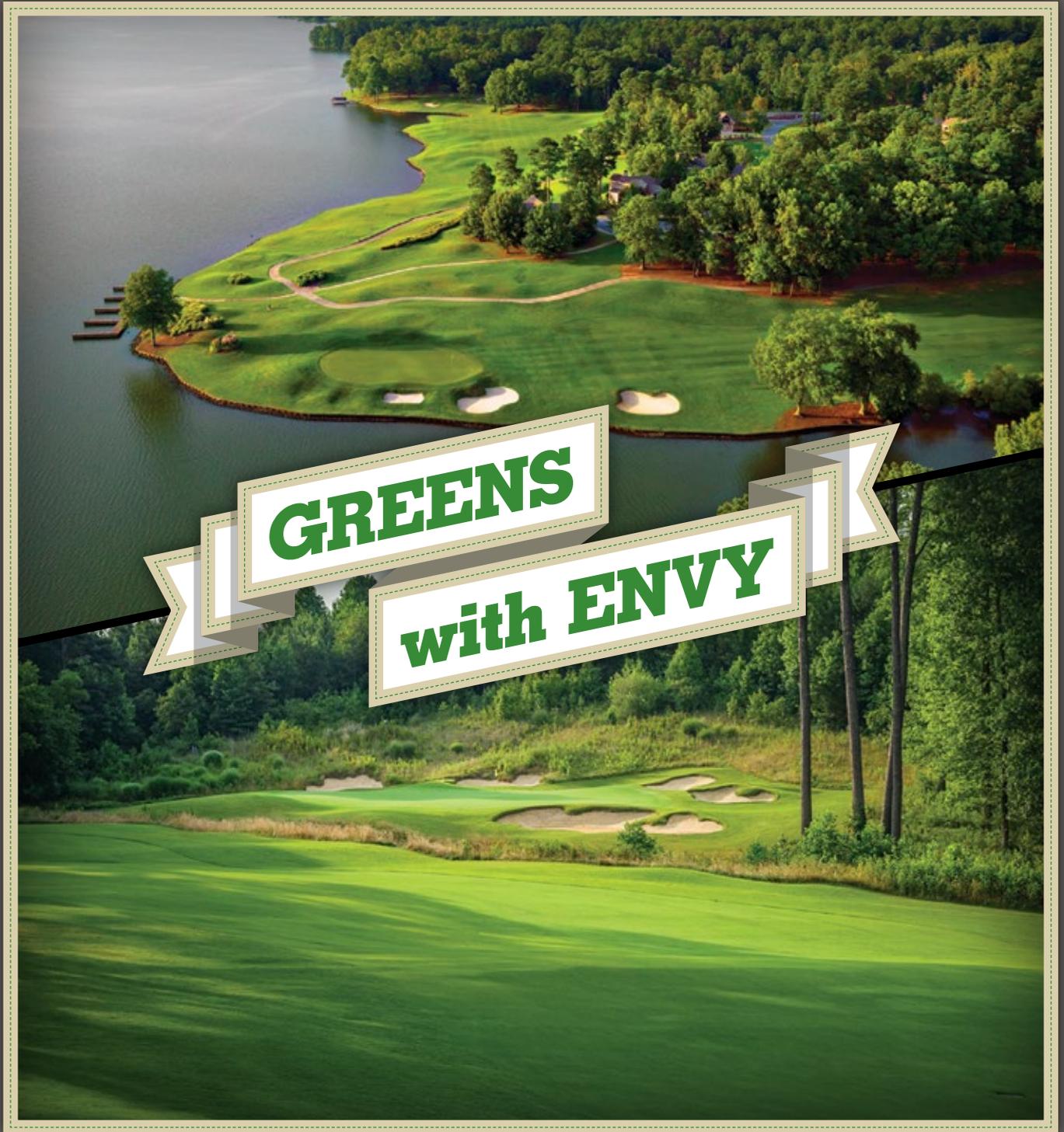


GOLF GEORGIA

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2016



GREENS
with **ENVY**

to a blind putting surface defended by a severe false front. The Raynor-esque green at the par-3 eighth is sectioned into three distinct high-low plateaus. The right-to-left leaning slope to the right of the par-3 15th green kicks balls onto the Redan-style putting surface, and the deep, angled 16th green features a Biarritz depression at the center.

“If you (have) really good green sites it’s easier to build greens that fit your aesthetic,” Love says. “I think that’s why at Kinderlou the greens all feel like they fit their setting. We were able to take a big, nice piece of land and build the holes where we wanted with almost no restrictions.”

Frederica Golf Club on St. Simons Island is also situated on a large parcel of land that was once used for harvesting pine. To develop a lake system for the residential development’s master plan, **Tom Fazio** and crew excavated roughly two million cubic yards of earth and used the dirt to create 20- to 40-foot elevation changes throughout the site. Like Kinderlou, the center section of the course gives the impression of being on eastern Long Island, not south Georgia, with the rise and fall of the land, massive fairways with minimal tree cover and prairie grass borders.

“These big spaces gave us the opportunity to create big features,” Fazio says. “It was the perfect site for big greens, but what do you do with them elevation-wise? To make them interesting, you shape and form them, and yes, they may be severe in some cases but, more important, it’s about variety and pin placements.”

Frederica’s greens are epic in scale, many over 10,000 square feet, so Fazio could push the movements to the maximum. The contours are almost unbelievable, with huge swells, ridges and depressions that crest four, five or six feet in places. One can almost get lost in the swales of putting surfaces like the par-4 third and the long par-3 eighth. The par-3 fifth green is nearly 13,000 square feet though it plays considerably smaller due to its sloped Pinehurst-like shoulders and internal plateaus. Others like the second, 10th, 15th and 17th have too many slopes and folds to accurately innumerate. Playing Frederica requires imagination and the ability to envision the ball landing in one place and ending up in another.

“They’re on the high end of the spectrum of all the courses I’ve done in terms of boldness,” Fazio says. “Frederica is a unique and special golf course.”



FREDERICA GOLF CLUB

THE BIGGEST SINGLE INFLUENCE ON HOW GREENS ARE SHAPED MIGHT BE THE TEMPERAMENT OF THE ARCHITECT. GIVEN A SIMILAR SET OF CRITERIA, ONE DESIGNER MAY OPT FOR MORE ASSERTIVE CONTOURS IN ORDER TO GET THE BALL ROLLING IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS WHILE ANOTHER MIGHT BE INCLINED TO WORK IN A MORE LINEAR, TEMPERATE VERNACULAR.

Fazio’s greens at Sea Island’s Seaside Course, 8.5 miles south, take on a different but no less artistic form. To play up the “seaside” theme during his 1999 overhaul of the historic property, Fazio’s team created sand and dune structures surrounding the holes near the water. The exposed greens are rounded and sensuously shaped with sides that fall off into tight chipping areas.

“We created the type of greens you’d expect to see by the sea on a links style golf course, meaning that they’re almost built into the natural slopes and contours of the land,” Fazio says. “That’s why those greens have the pitch and elevation changes that they have.”

“It’s one of my favorites of all the courses I’ve ever done,” he continues. “It’s a fabulous setting. Seaside, along with Frederica — those two are totally different but fun and exciting golf courses.”

If there’s anything in Georgia that comes close to resembling the 14th at Augusta National, it’s the 13th green at Rivermont Golf Club in Johns Creek, where the entire front half of the green, pitched steeply to the front, is un-pinnable, and shots played to the

high back section tend to flow to the left.

“We were trying to capture the same idea as the fifth or 14th greens at Augusta National, where there aren’t any bunkers and the front of the green is the hazard of the hole, meaning you can’t come up short,” says Riley, who revamped the course’s greens and bunkers in 2006.

The Rivermont renovation was a collaboration between Riley and owner **Chris Cupit**, whose family has owned the old **Joe Lee**-designed course since 1973. Cupit wanted to do something different and unique with the worn down course, and came up with the idea of trying to build greens with Golden Age-inspired slopes and movements. At a time when the industry trend was toward faster greens, Cupit was comfortable with slightly slower, more accentuated putting surfaces. Or as Riley says, “we wanted to be opposite from the norm. So if everyone else was going left, were going to go right.”

“We wanted do to something with exaggerated contour like you’d have seen in 1910 or 1920, shapes you don’t normally see today because of faster green speeds,” Riley says.