

A Fitting Statement



Creative design and construction solutions have helped the **Lost Tree Club** rediscover, and properly express, its unique standing.

By Joe Barks, Editor



The renovated clubhouse now offers a host of new dining venues and seating options, including a new Grille Room (above) that features a popular display kitchen.



For all main-level dining venues in the clubhouse, adjacent covered outdoor patios with seating overlooking the golf course were created for evening enjoyment before and after dinner.

Understated elegance" was set as the theme of the Lost Tree Club from when it was conceived in North Palm Beach, Fla., in 1961. The phrase first reflected the vision and personality of Edwin Llwyd Ecclestone Sr., a Canadian-American with a distinguished British heritage who is credited with pioneering the concept of a high-end gated community when he developed Lost Tree from land that was originally equal parts mangrove swamp and shaded, white-beach oceanfront.

Four years after it opened, the property's identifying theme was further bolstered when the man who came to epitomize "understated elegance" in the golf world, Jack Nicklaus, moved with his wife Barbara and their family to a lot they had purchased in the Lost Tree community. There were only about a dozen existing homes on the property when the Nicklauses moved from Ohio in 1965. But their connection to Lost Tree, as Jack Nicklaus pursued a career distinguished as much by his character as by his on-course accomplishments, helped to quickly put it on the map as one of the nation's most desirable residential golf communities.

Because of the prominence gained through the Nicklaus connection, Lost Tree's golf course, originally designed by Mark Mahannah, received attention through the years to help it keep up with the times; Jack Nicklaus himself donated his expertise to direct a \$6.5 million course restoration/redesign in 2002.

But the statement made by other club facilities over that period began to show a disconnect with Lost Tree's heritage and reputation. After a series of additions and remodelings over the years, the clubhouse, along with separate buildings

PHOTOS COURTESY LOST TREE CLUB AND REAOCK + LEWIS

used for a variety of purposes, began to succumb to age and the stress that came from serving a membership that had grown to over 500.

The club reached the point where it was self-insuring structures that had become out-of-code, with outdated technology that could no longer fully accommodate the needs of a multi-generation membership. Operating costs were increasing, and it was becoming more difficult to accommodate simultaneous events within Lost Tree's clubhouse or elsewhere on its grounds.

As Lost Tree approached its 50th anniversary in 2011, it became clear that a comprehensive upgrade was needed, to create current-day, cost-effective and code-compliant facilities that would retain the visual appeal and charm, and properly restate the distinctive theme that had been the club's foundation.

Three Steps to the Future

The first step for this upgrade was taken with the creation of a new \$6.5 million Beach House that opened at the start of 2008. The third and final step, a new \$5 million, two-level Fitness & Spa Center, was completed this summer.

While those projects created separate new buildings on the property, the biggest piece of Lost Tree's dramatic facilities renewal, a \$21 million clubhouse, brought a much-needed consolidation

of buildings and functions scattered inefficiently throughout the property.

The new clubhouse, which opened last fall on schedule and within budget, not only maximized the available space of the existing site by bringing functions (Clubhouse Social, Golf Operations, Locker Rooms, Administrative and Golf Cart Storage) that had been housed in five separate buildings into one new structure, it did so while decreasing the overall footprint on the site from over 31,000 sq. ft. to 26,000 sq. ft., which also

allowed for the addition of 27 new parking spaces and expansion of the club's driving range and golf practice facilities.

Even with the reduced footprint, Lost Tree gained significantly more useful square footage in its new clubhouse than in its old one. This was accomplished by raising the main level of the new clubhouse building by six feet, to create a multi-level structure that would maximize the views of the golf course from the spaces that members would use, while concealing back-of-the-house

Why "Lost Tree"?

Lost Tree Club takes its name from the gumbo limbo tree that had been planted by surveyors during the early days of development of Florida's North Palm Beach County. The trees were used to mark surveyed properties because it was felt they would offer good wind tolerance that would keep them in place even during hurricane-force storms. But because gumbo limbo trees did not take to soggy soil well, surveyors often returned after extended periods away from properties to find that their markers had been "lost." Lost Tree Club's logo (see pg. 30) shows a pelican perched on a gumbo limbo stump.

Clubs of Distinction









Established 1961
AAC 000020

PEACOCK + LEWIS LLC

www.peacockandlewis.com
brian@peacockandlewis.com

MASTER PLANNING • ARCHITECTURE • INTERIOR DESIGN



The grand opening (above) of the new Lost Tree clubhouse last November kicked off a season of non-stop use that saw F&B revenues jump 60% in the first year.



space on the lower (street) level behind a berm, which would also help the clubhouse maintain a more harmonious scale with surrounding homes. The clubhouse now appears to be a one-story manor, set

on a hill, from both the arrival entrance and the golf course. To further help it blend in unobtrusively with the neighborhood, it was designed, with proportions, detailing and materials, in an “is-

land classical” theme.

The project architect, Peacock + Lewis, LLC, has made a specialty of elevating Florida structures in this way, to take full advantage of what a site has to offer. A similar “levitating act” was undertaken for the new Beach Club at John’s Island Club in Vero Beach, Fla. (“A Full Day at the Beach,” *C&RB*, March 2009). Brian Idle, President of Peacock + Lewis, jokes that it’s been suggested to him by a client that his firm adopt Josh Groban’s “You Raise Me Up” as its theme song, because of its success with the approach.

The managers and members of clubs that have seen their main buildings elevated in this fashion certainly sing the praises of the dramatic change it brings about, both in form and functionality. At the Lost Tree Club, the additional six feet made a huge difference in terms of how the golf course could be presented from both within and outside the new clubhouse. “Now you look down into the course, instead of across it,” says Idle.

To take full advantage of the new views, in addition to the panoramic windows that were designed into each main-level dining venue within the clubhouse, adjacent covered outdoor patios, with seating overlooking the golf course, were created off each room. Food-and-beverage service can be seamlessly provided to all of the outdoor areas, with a firepit to warm the patio on the club’s casual side.

“Even in Florida, we’re seeing high demand for outdoor dining and bar service that includes the ambiance of an open flame,” says Idle. “We wanted to do all we could to integrate the indoor

PROJECT SUMMARY

Club: Lost Tree Club

Location: North Palm Beach, Fla.

Founded: 1961

Members: 500+

Clubhouse Size: 56,000 sq. ft.

Renovation/Remodel Project Cost: \$21 million

Construction Dates:

May 2011-November 2012

Clubhouse Architect and Interior

Design Firm: Peacock + Lewis

Architects and Planners, LLC

Furniture, Fixtures & Accessories:

Kemble Interiors

Clubhouse Contractor:

The Weitz Company

Project Highlights:

- Five buildings used to house multiple functions (Clubhouse Social, Golf Operations, Locker Rooms, Administrative and Golf Cart Storage) replaced with one new building

- Clubhouse main level raised six feet, to maximize golf course views and conceal back-of-house spaces

- “Island classical” design theme used, with lower (street) level concealed behind a berm, to help clubhouse blend in and maintain harmonious scale with surrounding homes (clubhouse now appears to be one-story building, set on hill, from both entrance and golf course)



The main gallery that connects the clubhouse’s dining venues features hickory floors, custom cypress gallery doors and millwork trim.



The new men's locker room (opposite page) features a central lounge space and bar, and locker bays on the perimeter have end panels designed to accommodate TVs and tournament plaques. The new women's locker room (near left) features custom-painted cypress lockers.

and outdoor environments, while recognizing that the two types of areas would require different service approaches. The new Grille Room, for example, was designed with a direct corridor from the kitchen, to serve the patio while bypassing the indoor seating area.”

The inside of the Grille Room (see

photo, pg. 28) has also proved to be quite popular, featuring a display kitchen with an open-hearth pizza oven, visible from the bar area, and a variety of seating options. “There are stools for the ‘eat-at’ bar, free-standing tables, banquettes, and booths behind partitions that are popular with families,” says Idle. “People

can find their comfort areas, depending on whether they want to be right in the middle of the action, or tucked away in more private settings.”

A proven benefit of display kitchens, Idle notes, is how they help diners and culinary staff connect. “They can be a hard sell at first, but they really lead to improved interaction,” he says. “Especially in clubs with more conservative, higher-average-age memberships, when you integrate the activity and create theater, the members become more patient and appreciative—and bartenders and chefs become the stars of the show.”

All of the dining venues inside Lost Tree’s new clubhouse were redesigned for maximum flexibility that allows staff to better accommodate various-sized groups in comfortable private rooms, with retractable millwork and fabric wall panels providing the ability to cre-

We Work Weekends, Too.

Big problems can't wait until Monday.
Our experienced and friendly support staff are ready to assist you 24/7 - anytime, anywhere.



The Leader In Online Reservations

GOLF • DINING • CADDIE SOFTWARE



CLUB EVENTS • COURTS • WEBSITES

sales@foretees.com

www.foretees.com

ForeTees
LLC

The Lost Tree Project: An Inside Look

An on-site tour of the **Lost Tree Club** property will be provided as part of the agenda for a **one-day Club & Resort Business Design & Renovations Insights** workshop, “Recapturing the Magic at Lost Tree Club,” that will be held at the club in North Palm Beach, Fla., on **Monday, October 14, 2013**. Program details and registration information for the seminar, which will be presented in conjunction with the Florida Chapter CMAA and sponsored by Peacock + Lewis and The Weitz Company, can be found on page 33 of this issue and also at <http://drinsightslost-tree.eventbrite.com>

ate space for larger functions. A private Wine Room, added on the lower level, can be accessed by members from a lobby elevator and serviced from the main kitchen, which was designed to better accommodate simultaneous events, with a banquet line for the main dining rooms and an *a la carte* line for the Grille Room and outdoor patios.

And since the new clubhouse opened, both of those lines have been running



full tilt, reports Lost Tree Chief Operating Officer Rick Bayliss Jr., who came from Oakland Hills Country Club in 2009 to help direct how Lost Tree would recapture its magic.

“It’s all worked out famously,” says Bayliss. “In the first season, we went from \$2.2 million in food-and-beverage revenues to \$3.5 million. With 70% of that coming from *a la carte*, we still have room to grow our banquet business.

“The Wine Room has been huge; in season, it gets used every night,” he adds. “Wine sales have tripled. Our pro shop, which was expanded and modernized, has seen a significant boost in sales.

“Probably the greatest thing has been the Grille Room and how it’s helped with casual dining and our bar business,” Bayliss says. “Overall, we can now offer the full range of dining experiences, inside and out, and that’s led to a seismic shift in the frequency of dining among members. Without any minimums, we now

Chief Operating Officer Rick Bayliss Jr. and staff have enjoyed the efficiencies provided by the new clubhouse and the “seismic shift” in activity it has brought to Lost Tree.



see many members come here three to four nights a week, because we’ve given them so many more reasons to say, ‘Why leave the community?’” **C&RB**



More Online

For drawings and additional photos of the Lost Tree project, see the online version of this article at www.clubandresortbusiness.com

