

Robert Trent Jones

IN the United States today, there are approximately five million golfers, of all degrees of skill, choler, and intelligence. Scattered across the country to fill their needs are forty-nine hundred and twenty-six public and private golf courses, some little more than scythed fields dotted with nine red flags, others the green and glossy product of a collaboration between first-rate money and first-rate minds. A large number of the better courses—including the revised layout of the Oakland Hills Country Club in Detroit, over which the 1951 National Open Championship was played in June—are the work of Robert Trent Jones, the youngest, the busiest, and, according to many people, the most talented practitioner among the fifteen members of the American Society of Golf Course Architects. Jones, a forty-five-year-old, gentle-eyed resident of Montclair, New Jersey, has had something to do with the building of over a hundred and fifty courses in the United States, Canada, the West Indies, and South America during the twenty-one years of his career. With the exception of two courses he is currently hacking out of the wilderness on Jamaica and one in Puerto Rico, Jones's schedule this summer has called for purely domestic activity. Abetted by five assistants, he has been constructing or remodelling courses, or parts of courses, in Florida, Georgia, the two Carolinas, Virginia, Tennessee, Missouri, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Colorado, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Maine—a grand total, with the Jamaica and Puerto Rico courses, of four hundred and six holes. This widespread activity constitutes a record for a golf-course architect. It is also a sign that business conditions are good, for in hard

PROFILES

LINKSLAND AND MEADOWLAND

times one of the first things to go is a golf club's plan for a sporty new nine holes, often followed by the golf club itself.

The extensive ignorance about golf architecture that most non-golfers and some golf authorities reveal is a source of perpetual amazement to Jones. "They seem to have picked up the idea that on the seventh day the Lord rested and created the fairways and the hazards—you know, checked all the pin areas on the Old Course at St. Andrews," he confided last winter to a golfing companion. "I can understand how a carload of non-golfers out for a Sunday drive will pass a golf course and take it for granted, the way I take the automobile and the automobile's radio for granted. But what beats me is the people who have been close to golf all their lives and still think that the only thing the golf architect has to do is carve out the traps and toss some grass seed around." Jones has learned to keep the sub-fairway, or technical, Jones in the background except when he is superintending construction in the field or, in his downtown New York office, devising new methods for making grass grow on a busy fairway. The Jones his clients know is the golf aficionado whose veneration for the game matches their own and who has the knack of designing courses that look natural, are fun to play, judiciously punish bad shots and reward good shots, and, while providing a stiff test for the expert, do not break the back or the spirit of the average golfer.

Nearly all the men who built the country's thousands of courses have been either golfers who branched out as designers or landscape architects who branched out into golf. "Most of them have had one shortcoming or another," a veteran chairman of the green committee of a Westchester club recently commented. "If the fellow's known his golf, he hasn't seemed to know the first thing about drainage and irrigation. Conversely, if he's been grounded in the fundamentals of engineering, he hasn't seemed to have a real feeling for golf." Jones's admirers say that his preëminence is an inevitable result of his being both a real golfer and a far-sighted planner; he is the first and so far the only member of his profession who decided upon his career at an early age and educated himself for it. At Cornell, where he was allowed to im-

provise a special curriculum for himself, he studied surveying, hydraulics, horticulture, agronomy, landscape architecture, and public speaking. Jones is a low-seventy golfer who hits his shots as crisply as most professionals do. "He is by far the best golfer among the architects," Robert Tyre Jones, Jr., the great champion of the twenties, has said of Robert Trent Jones. "When Trent designs a hole, he is able to test every yard of it himself for true shot value." To eliminate the confusion that develops when Robert Tyre Jones, Jr., and Robert Trent Jones get together to make their annual revisions of the Augusta National course, in Augusta, Georgia, or the Peachtree course, near Atlanta—Bobby Jones is the founder of both—Robert Jones the architect becomes Trent Jones the moment he crosses the Mason and Dixon Line.

Jones's prowess as a golfer not only enables him to make an expert appraisal of the results of transferring blueprints to green grass but is his most valuable asset as a salesman, serving as the clincher when his enthusiasm and his course in public speaking have failed to sell a hesitant client on the virtues of his plan for a certain hole. A short while back, when Jones and the building committee of the Rockrimmon Country Club, near Stamford, Connecticut, were walking over the half-finished holes of the course he was constructing there, the committee expressed definite misgivings about the ninth hole, a par 3 played from an elevated tee across a lake to a plateau green—a hundred and seventy yards away, by Jones's computations. "The committee members thought that the hole looked much longer," Frank Duane, one of Jones's assistants, says. "They thought that average golfers like themselves would have to use a brassie or a spoon to get enough distance to reach the green from the tee. They didn't want any part of a hole like that, and they kept shaking their heads when Mr. Jones tried to tell them that the distance was deceiving and that a good four-iron was all that was needed for the shot. We were getting no place fast when Mr. Jones sent me back to the car to get his four-iron and a couple of balls. He tossed a ball onto the tee and then hit one of the prettiest shots you ever saw, right on the pin all the way. The ball landed about three feet short of the pin and stuck there. The

members of the committee were so impressed by the shot that they broke into applause, and some of them pounded Mr. Jones on the back. After that, everyone just walked on to inspect the next hole."

A month later, Jones topped this performance, on the fourth hole, another par 3, of the lower course of the Baltusrol Golf Club, near Springfield, New Jersey, which he was remodelling. Before he got to work on it, the fourth was a rather staid short hole, a hundred-and-twenty-yard pitch over a pond to a bowl-shaped green. To give it more variation and character, Jones lengthened the hole, building a new tee fifty yards long; extended the pond so that it nosed into the front apron of the green; and widened the green and recontoured it so that it would hold a longer iron shot. The membership of Baltusrol includes an unusually high number of accomplished golfers, but the feeling around the club was that the new fourth was perhaps too difficult. This information was conveyed to Jones one Saturday afternoon as he was starting to play a round with the president of Baltusrol, the chairman of the construction committee, and the club pro. "I really can't agree with you," Jones told his critics in his soft treble voice. "If you hit the right shot, that green will take care of it." When it was his turn at the fourth tee, Jones proved his point by punching a low-flying mashie shot that struck the green six feet in front of the pin and hopped into the cup on the first bounce.

ALTHOUGH golf has become increasingly popular in this country, it is still regarded with great affection by the wealthy class, which early in this century had almost exclusive rights to the slice, the hook, the unplayable lie, and the well-turned expletive. Jones's clientele includes such solvent enthusiasts as Thomas J. Watson, of International Business Machines; Lester Norris, of the Texas Company; Richard J. Reynolds, of Reynolds Tobacco; Lowell Thomas; and Doris Duke. Reynolds, a man whom the golf bug has bitten hard, is as enthusiastic as Jones over a joint project they are cur-

rently working on—the building of the country's first all-dune-type links, on the sandy stretches of Sapelo Island, an island Reynolds owns on the Intracoastal Waterway, twenty miles from Brunswick, Georgia. In 1938, Jones constructed nine holes on the Duke preserve near Somerville, New Jersey, the most provocative of them being a short hole with an "island green," a circular plateau in the center of a lake, a hundred and ten yards from the shore. The players travelled to and from the green by rowboat. "You'd be surprised how difficult it is to hit that green," Jones told a critic who had insinuated that the hole had only the superficial attraction of good looks. "You'd think anyone would be able to hit a green area of sixty-three hundred square feet with a niblick pitch, but when you stand on that tee on the edge of the lake and see all that water that you can also hit—

why, I'm telling you, the psychological pressure is terrific. It makes that hole almost as rugged a par 3 as the sixteenth at Cypress Point or the ninth at Yale."

Their success in their own fields nourishes among Jones's upper-stratum clients a reluctance to recognize any limits to their areas of comprehension. They are inclined to be skeptical about the necessity of engaging a golf architect to design a golf course, since they themselves play golf. But there is a juncture in their relationship with Jones—the time varies, but it is usually reached before the laying of drainage pipes and other unglamorous facets of construction are discussed—when his clients acknowledge that there is more to building a golf course than meets the eye, hand him a cigar, and, urging full speed ahead and damn the poor porosity of the subsoil, give him their private phone number and carte blanche. Before this



"And if I may say so, sir, you've made me very happy, too."

happy stage is reached, Jones's position is likely to call for the most delicate diplomacy; he must frequently disagree without seeming to disagree. In 1942, the International Business Machines Corporation was building a large recreation center for its employees, near Poughkeepsie, and Thomas J. Watson characteristically gave the project the benefit of his personal attention. One day, when Watson, accompanied by ten right-hand men, was walking over the tract selected for the course with Jones, he pointed to a steep upgrade and asked the group if they didn't think that it had the makings of a superlative golf hole. "Let's walk up the hill," Jones answered tentatively. Several minutes later, bushed by the climb, the party arrived at the top of the escarpment. "Well, I think we can forget about *this* hill," Watson said to Jones. Work on the I.B.M. course, which features gentle slopes, thereafter moved along without a hitch.

The cost of constructing the nine holes at the Quaker Hill Golf Club for Lowell Thomas and some of his friends in the Pawling area came to twenty-five thousand dollars—an unusually low figure, as golf courses go—because the terrain chosen for it was natural meadowland that could be converted into fairways with a minimum of disking and harrowing. The only considerable expenses were the tees, greens, and traps, and the watering system. When fairways have to be created on newly cleared land, Jones studies the soil, to decide on the proper grass seed, fertilizer, watering system, and so on. He ascertains whether it is a loam, a clay, or a sand, and determines its "pH value" (its degree of acidity or alkalinity) by a chemical analysis. He also checks with the Weather Bureau on the local rainfall, humidity, and other climatic factors that affect the success of various grasses. He has discovered that you can ordinarily get a nice fairway in a temperate climate by mixing Kentucky bluegrass, bent, fescue, redtop, and rye. He uses bent for his greens wherever it is feasible. Bent has a very short stalk, which flowers near the surface, so that it can be cut extremely close and will still stand up, but it is subject to fungus diseases and insect attacks unless the soil is well drained. In the South, where the clayey soil holds the moisture, a combination of Bermuda grass and rye is the safest bet, Jones feels.

Most of the eighteen-hole courses that Jones has built cost between seventy-five and a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. Peachtree, near Atlanta, however, ran slightly over two

hundred thousand dollars. "We were working with very difficult, very rugged terrain," Jones has remarked. "When you have to cut your fairways through heavily wooded country and push them across swamps, that's when your expenses for equipment and labor mount up. Peachtree was also conceived as a championship course, a super-duper job. No one hesitated to call the bulldozers back to reshape green contours that didn't quite give us the *ne plus ultra* of golf-course design. We were out to make it perfect." The most expensive Jones course is the one he is now working on at West Point, for the Army. It is being financed by the Army Athletic Association, principally out of its profits on football. Already, with only twelve of the eighteen holes finished, the cost has topped three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Jones has often stated that a good architect is an economical architect, and he takes pains to explain that the West Point fairways had to be blasted through solid rock.

A Jones project that will probably cost more than the one at West Point is the twenty-seven-hole course the New York City Department of Parks is building in Marine Park. This is the



THE QUEENS

The solemn whip-poor-will
That sang the dusk away grew still again.
Now from the summer night most still
Moth after moth comes feathery to the pane.

Now we have filled our kitchen with cold fire,
The salamandrine bird of Araby
Refreshed upon his pyre
Had no such incandescence as have we.

Enchanted by that dazzle and driven wild
From the wood, on powdered wings,
So lightly made and of a stuff so mild,
Come the soft beating things.

We see them on the black night, blind with love,
Flutter and cling, wings down.
Each one has ermine or satin robes, and bears above
A wand and crown. —ROBERT FITZGERALD

immense development, conceived by Robert Moses, that is slowly rising out of the swampland adjacent to Floyd Bennett Field. The Department of Parks accepted Jones's plans in 1945 and shortly afterward started erecting a dike made of rock obtained by blasting for the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel. Department of Sanitation fill is being dumped onto the marshes. This is sometimes organic refuse but is usually inorganic material, such as ashes and old hot-water tanks. A heavy layer of sand, pumped from the flanking Dead Horse Inlet, is spread over each layer of organic fill, and a foot of topsoil will be spread over the final hills and dales. This is a long process, and the Marine Park course will not be ready for several years. Jones received his fee when his plans were accepted. His connection with the project now is simply that of consultant, a position he also fills for thirty golf clubs, which pay him a retainer for making small improvements and advising the greenkeeper how to fend off Japanese beetles and other pests. When Jones is responsible for building as well as designing a course, his fee is between ten and fifteen per cent of the construction cost. The smaller the project, the higher the percentage. Except for a few topnotch professional golfers, like Ben Hogan, who has earned close to a hundred thousand dollars a year, Jones's annual income exceeds that of anyone else whose livelihood is derived entirely from golf.

JONES was nineteen when he decided to become a golf-course architect. The only child of Welsh parents—his father was a construction engineer—Jones was born in Ince, Eng-

land, twenty miles from Liverpool and thirty miles from the noted seaside links of Hoylake. When their son was four years old, the Joneses emigrated to East Rochester, New York, then a town of fifteen hundred inhabitants, far enough beyond the rim of Rochester proper to feel like country. Jones and his schoolmates led H. T. Webster boyhoods up to the time they became overstimulated by the dramatic successes of the first two American golf heroes, Francis Ouimet and Walter Hagen. Hagen was a Rochester boy, and after his breakthrough in the 1914 National Open Championship few young men in the district were able to keep a safe distance between themselves and golf. Jones learned the game on a sandy, wind-blown nine-hole course in East Rochester, where he caddied and worked with the greenkeeping crew when extra hands were needed. In 1916, when Jones was ten, the Atlanta Bobby Jones, then a fourteen-year-old golfing prodigy, startled the sports world by winning his first two matches in the National Amateur Championship and giving the defending champion a tremendous battle before being defeated in his third-round match. "There are thousands of Bobby Joneses in the country," Jones the architect recently told a locker-room foursome, "but the mathematics of coincidence never entered my mind. I was just plain overwhelmed by the fact that this sensational young golfer was named Bobby Jones. Boy, I began to work on my golf game after that—you know, I felt that there was supposed to be an affinity between me and golf. I was the Bobby Jones expert in my neighborhood. All the rest of the kids were trying to copy Hagen, but I built my swing, my whole technique, on what I read about Bobby and the pictures I saw of him in the papers."

By the time the Rochester Bobby Jones was sixteen, he had made himself into the most promising young golfer in that area. In a thirty-six-hole tournament sponsored by the Rochester *Journal-American*, he ran away from the other amateurs with a 69 on his afternoon round, and he was preparing to enter state and national tournaments when a recurrent stomach ailment flared up. Jones is a soft-talking, slow-walking, almost languid man, who can fall asleep five minutes after he has curled up in a comfortable chair. Knowing his indecent talent for relaxation, Jones's friends find it hard to believe that the misfortune that cut short his career as a tournament golfer was a duodenal ulcer, but it was. He played no competitive golf during the next two

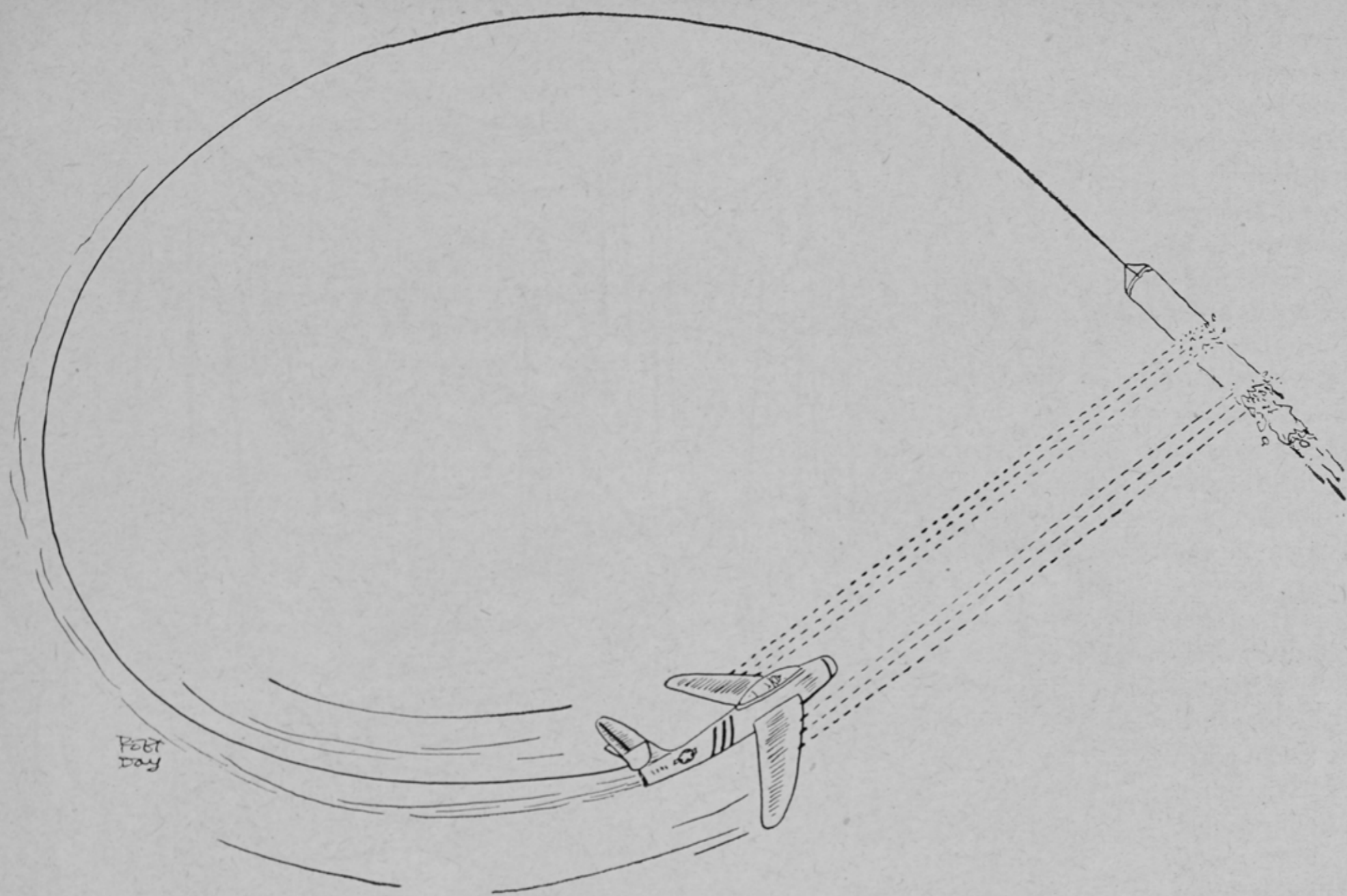


"He's cruel to me—mentally, of course."

years, while his ulcer was being administered to, and during this period he decided he would have to settle for a less strenuous profession. After his graduation from East Rochester High School, he became a draftsman in the Rochester office of Merchants Despatch Transportation, Inc., a subsidiary of the New York Central that maintains and operates railroad refrigerator cars. "I found the work intensely frustrating," Jones has said of his two years at the drafting table. "I didn't think of myself as an artiste or anything like that, but I felt that some creative urge in me was being smothered. And I was still as much in love with golf as I had been as a kid, and I wasn't getting that out of my system, either. I thought that *building* golf courses might be the solution—somebody obviously built them, they weren't born—but I didn't know how anyone went about learning the business. There weren't any technical schools for it, and you couldn't go to Harvard, let's say, and major in golf architecture." One of the men with

whom Jones discussed this problem was Ray Humburg, the head of the engineering department of Merchants Despatch in Rochester and a graduate of the Cornell College of Engineering. "Ray thought Cornell would be the best bet for anyone tackling a profession like golf architecture, which is really a combination of professions," Jones has said. "What I couldn't pick up at one graduate school, I could pick up at another."

After several interviews with Jones had lessened the registrar's mystification at a young fellow who wanted to go to college to learn how to build a better sand trap, Jones was admitted to Cornell as a special student. He was tutored in Rochester during the summer of 1926 in chemistry, mathematics, and free-hand drawing, and entered the university in the fall. For three and a half years, Jones dashed from graduate school to graduate school like a ten-second Renaissance Man, studying surveying and hydraulics in the College of Engineering, landscape architecture in the College of Architecture, horticultural



ture and agronomy in the College of Agriculture. He rested by studying economics, chemistry, and public speaking at the undergraduate college. In the spring of 1930, when Jones was twenty-four, he completed his course of studies, confident that he had everything a golf architect needed except clients. While at Cornell, Jones was elected president of the university chapter of Delta Kappa Epsilon. During his second year, he met Ione Davis, a Montclair girl who was attending nearby Wells College and who became, successively, a May Queen, a moderately ardent golfer, and, in 1934, Mrs. Jones. They have two sons, Robert Trent, Jr., eleven, and Rees Lee, nine.

JONES's first client was the Midvale Golf Club, of Rochester. He designed the course in 1930, in collaboration with Stanley Thompson, a Canadian golf architect noted for his hearty manner, his roast-beef complexion, and his sharply contoured hazards. The members of Midvale, while agreeable to the idea of giving Jones a chance, wanted to be sure that the local boy knew what he was up to, so they also called in Thompson, since he had many excellent Canadian courses to his credit and was then constructing the Banff and Jasper Park courses, for the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian National Railways, respectively. Jones and Thompson, who is considerably older than Jones, discovered that they were congenial and held astonish-

ingly similar opinions on the principles of golf architecture. They formed a partnership, agreeing to split fifty-fifty the fees they received for work on American courses. Thompson returned to his Toronto office after approving Jones's plan for Midvale, and Jones superintended the work, sending periodic reports to Toronto. The job was a month short of being finished when Midvale went broke. Jones and Thompson, who had been promised a fee of nine thousand dollars, settled for the experience. Their next three American clients also filed for bankruptcy before the architects could collect their pay. The partners then turned to Canada, where clients seemed to be still on their feet even when the last fairway was seeded. Jones, who received a junior partner's share of the Canadian fees, routed the holes for the Capilino course, athwart a mountainside near Vancouver—a project of the Guinness family. He worked on five short courses in the gold-mining areas of Ontario and Quebec, and assisted Thompson in finishing the thrilling mountain-walled layout at Banff. Jones's big contribution at Banff was a method of licking winterkill, a fungus that was eating up the greens in the Canadian Rockies.

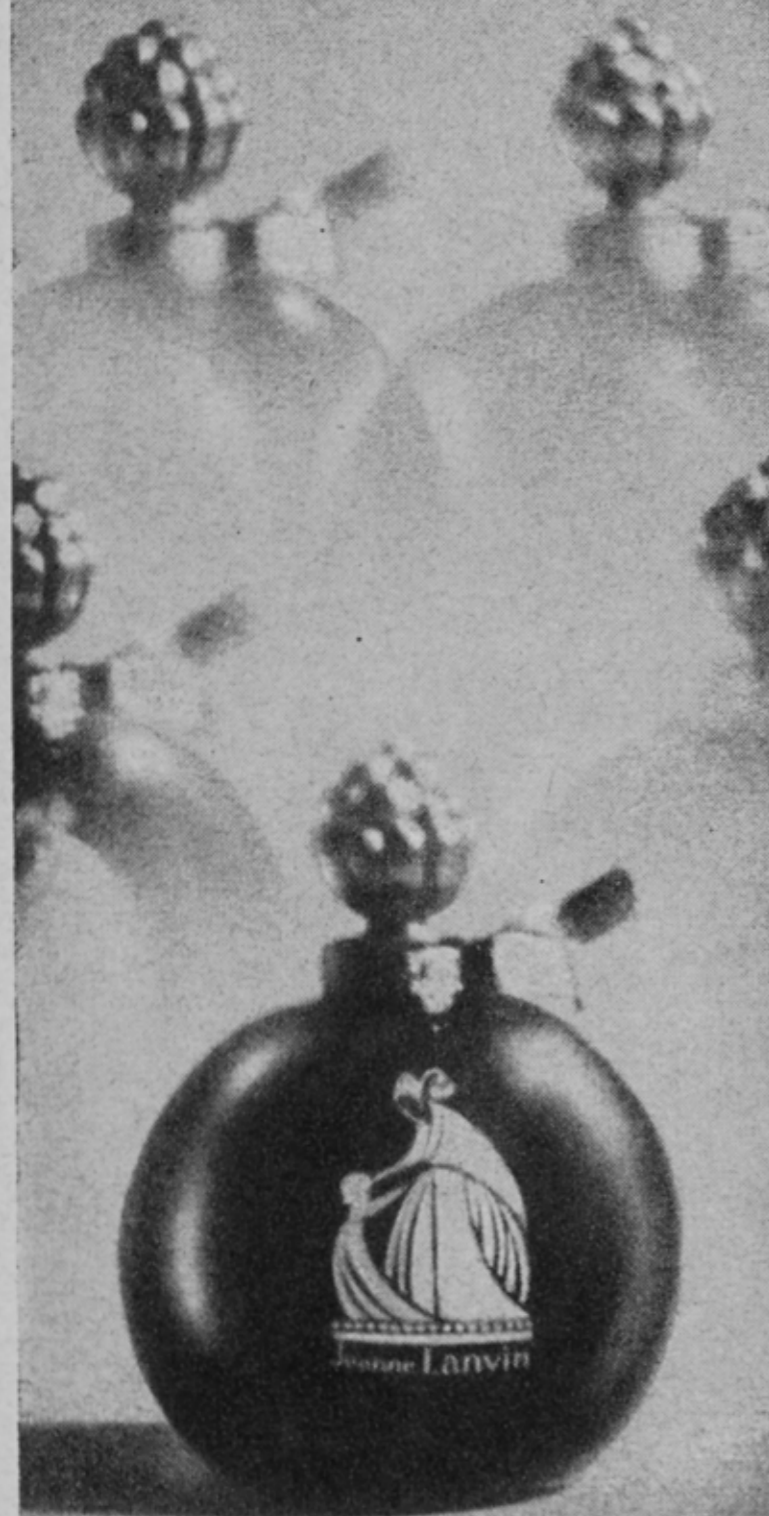
As the work at Banff neared completion, and the depression got worse, Jones and Thompson wondered what to do next, but then the General Electric Company gave them a contract to build two eighteen-hole courses on Carleton Island—the third largest of the Thou-

sand Islands on the American side of the St. Lawrence River—which was to be converted into a camp for its employees. Jones and Thompson had completed fourteen holes when, in 1932, General Electric, caught by the depression, sold the island. Thompson then took off for Rio de Janeiro, where his brother-in-law, a director of the local traction company, had lined up some potential customers—the Gavea, Itanhangá, and Teresopolis Golf Clubs and the São Paulo Country Club. Jones stayed at home in Montclair, studying the topographical maps sent up by Thompson and mailing detailed plans

back to him. In the building of the Gavea course, oxen were used for power. Horses weakened rapidly under the torrid Brazilian sun, and the cost of renting mechanical equipment would have been just the straw to break the back of the young firm.

In 1935, when the Works Progress Administration shifted into high gear, Jones thought he spotted a prospective client. "If the W.P.A. could spend its money to put the unemployed to work raking leaves and cataloguing ancient safety pins," Jones says, "I didn't see why a golf course wasn't a legitimate relief project. A good golf course is self-liquidating. Besides, you have something permanent when you build a golf course and give it the landscaping of a fine park. You've got a beauty spot that everybody in the community is going to enjoy for years to come and be proud of." It took Jones a few months to learn the contours of the political terrain, but after he had mastered them, he spent four years building six public courses—two in St. Charles, Illinois, and four in New York State (Durand-Eastman, in Rochester; Green Lakes, near Syracuse; Valley View, in Utica; and the Amsterdam Municipal Golf Course)—for which the federal government paid the major portion of the bills. These courses have all been profitable and have served other architects as models for a public course, which must handle tremendous traffic and absorb tremendous punishment every weekend and be able to recuperate in

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time for the next weekend invasion. The player congestion on a public course on a pleasant spring Sunday is at its most alarming on the short, par-3 holes, where as many as seven foursomes bunch up on a tee while the foursome ahead of them is trying to get off the green. For the White Course he recently designed, at Westbury, for the Nassau County Department of Public Works, Jones evolved a revolutionary plan for keeping the traffic moving on the course's par 3s. There are two fourth holes, instead of just one, and two eighths, two thirteenths, and two seventeenths, each pair being identical in length, grades, hazards, and greens. The duplicates are adjacent, and Jones is confident that no foursome of Sunday drivers has to wait longer than two minutes before teeing off on one or the other of them.

THOMPSON and Jones opened a New York office in the mid-thirties, at 45 West Forty-fifth Street, sharing a fifth-floor room and a secretary with a magazine called the *Bermudian*. Jones worked in the New York office, Thompson in his old Toronto office. In 1938, when private capital was once again available for the resuscitation of country-club life in both Canada and the United States, the two architects dissolved their partnership, as informally and amicably as they had entered into it eight years earlier. They continue to consult with each other on problems in design or construction, and they are inseparable at the annual two-week convention of the American Society of Golf Course Architects. Thompson and Jones have never set up spheres of special interest, but it appears to be tacitly agreed that Canada is Thompson's area and the United States is Jones's. Each recommends the other as "the best man in the country." Their colleagues say that the startling camaraderie of the ex-partners is a compound of personal affection and professional respect. "Thompson and Jones differ so minutely in their theories of design," the editor of a golf magazine has remarked, "that if I were led blindfold onto a course and the blindfold were then removed, I would know instantly that one of the two, Jones or Thompson, had built the course, but I wouldn't be able to tell you which one until I had studied the green areas. Thompson seems to prefer a steeper wall in his traps, and he goes in for more mounds guarding the entrance to his greens. Jones's mounds are more sweeping, less domelike. Jones

also contours his greens for a larger number of separate pin areas than Thompson. But the spirit of their style is identical."

The primary concern of Jones and Thompson is that each hole be simultaneously a fair test of skill for both the expert and the average golfer. In addition to possessing this versatility, a successful golf hole must have aesthetic appeal. For Jones and Thompson, naturalness is synonymous with beauty. Along with the late Dr. Alister Mackenzie, the Scottish architect who built the splendid Cypress Point and Augusta National courses, they have taken the lead in the effort to keep golf-course design pure, and to preserve the integrity, the strategic challenges, and the natural good looks of the best holes of the best Scottish links.

The designers of the first golf courses, which were laid out in Scotland in the twelfth century, are anonymous—one of history's unkindest cuts, in Jones's opinion, for the pioneers had the bright idea of putting the game on the "linksland" of Scotland, linksland being the stretches of sandy soil deposited here and there along a coast by ocean tides. Grass sprouted readily on the linksland, and the rolling dunes were natural sites for greens and tees, while the sharp convexities that the winds carved in the dunes made ideal bunkers and sand traps. Golf developed as a seaside game. To this day, the courses selected for the British Open Championship are always those built on linksland. Golfers usually call all golf courses links, to the despair of the game's purists. If a course lies on the sandy soil along a coast, it's a golf links. If it's anywhere else, it's a golf course.



Long before the gutta-percha ball replaced the feather ball, in about 1850, providing the impetus for golf's conquest of England, the Continent, and America, the Scots had molded the game into very nearly its present form. The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, founded in 1754, became the sport's ruling body for all British golfers, and it still is. St. Andrews and the other major Scottish links, among them Prestwick, Carnoustie, North Berwick, and Muirfield, supplied hundreds of young men to fill the demand for golf professionals made by the clubs being formed all over the world. The first American champions, around the beginning of the century, were Scottish émigrés—Willie Anderson, Laurie Auchterlonie, Alex Smith, Freddy McLeod, Alex Ross. These transplanted Scots were capable

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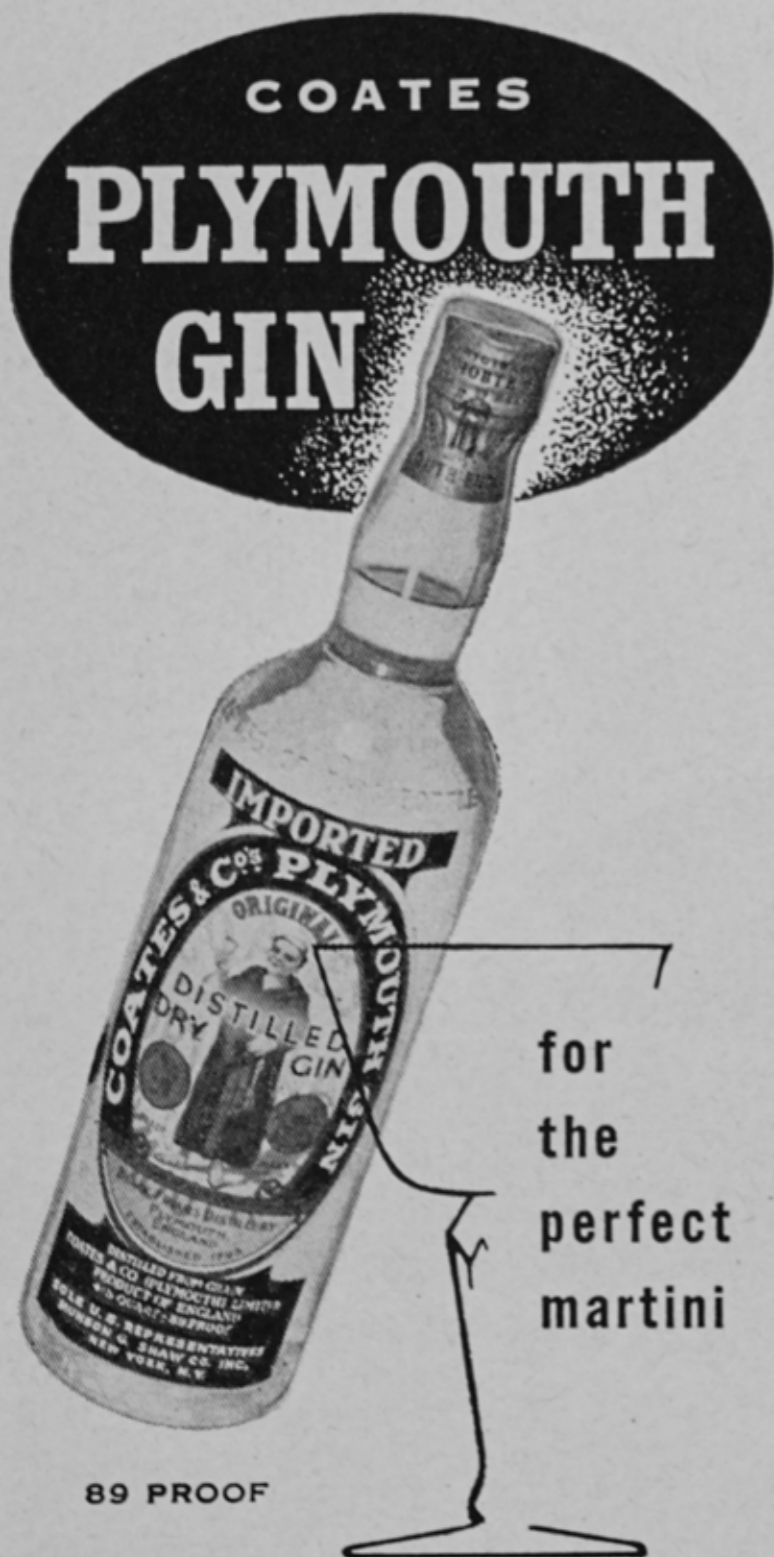
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teachers as well as champions, but when they tried their hand at laying out courses, they were, with the illustrious exception of Donald Ross, of Pinehurst, remarkably incompetent. The amount of linksland in this country is small, compared to Scotland's, and, in any case, there were many would-be golfers who lived nowhere near any coast, so courses had to be built on meadowland. Once separated from dune terrain, and forced to resort to artificial hazards instead of natural ones, the Scots lost their instinct for what was right and what was wrong. Their errors were aggravated by their desire to please their wealthy American employers, most of whom believed that American inventive genius could solve all problems. Thus our early courses were embellished with railroad tracks, stone quarries, stone walls, chicken coops, and grandstands, for the pioneer American golfers had an idea that these synthetic hazards added flavor to the sport and, indeed, had it all over dull natural hazards.

The Scottish pros might have built better courses if they had taken more time. For most of them, architecture was a means of snagging a few extra dollars—say, fifty—on their day off. On a Sunday, in response to a request for "a sporty nine-hole course," they would saunter over a specified property, planting a stake to mark the spot where the first tee should be built, another stake to mark the midpoint of the fairway, and a third to mark the center of the first green. They would repeat this procedure for the eight other holes. Then, after giving the members of the embryonic golf club a few tips on where to stick the traps, they would collect their fee and leave. It took only three or four hours to design a course this way, and some of the more energetic Sunday architects could knock off three in a day. Modern golf architects like Robert Trent Jones, contemplating the weird lacerations of the countryside that passed for golf courses early in the century, believe, however, that the Scottish pros and their American imitators failed primarily because they weren't equipped to handle a job that requires a trained architect.

The man Jones and his colleagues consider the father of modern golf architecture is Charles Blair Macdonald, a rambunctious, egocentric, consciously aristocratic Chicagoan who went to college at St. Andrews, fell in love with golf, returned to America, carried off the first United States Amateur Golf Championship, in 1895, and considered himself the one man qualified to supervise the game's development in



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the United States. "Whatever old Charlie's faults were, and he certainly was off the beam on a lot of things," Jones says, "he deserves all credit for being the first man to lay out a golf course scientifically. He set golf architecture apart from the work of the golf pro. He elevated it to an artistic profession. I hate to think what might have happened to American golf if Macdonald hadn't built the National."

The National—the National Golf Links of America, near Southampton, Long Island—took five years to build. In 1907, Macdonald decided to educate his errant fellow-countrymen by constructing a proper golf links, on Sebonac Bay, with holes patterned after outstanding British ones, such as the Redan, at North Berwick; the Road Hole and the Eden, at St. Andrews; the Sahara, at Sandwich; and the Alps, at Prestwick. He managed to imbue the holes at the National not only with the natural beauty of these classics but with their strategic spirit as well. Each of them presents the golfer with a strategic challenge; that is, a choice of routes from the tee to the green. On the fourth, a par 3 a hundred and eighty-five yards long, which is modelled on the Redan, the golfer can elect either to shoot directly for the green, built on a traverse behind a long, deep trap, or to play conservatively off to the right, away from the trap. Golfers who take the conservative route are usually able to hole out in four strokes, but seldom in three. Those who go straight for the pin are rewarded, if they make a good shot, with an easy par 3 and sometimes a birdie 2. If they fail to produce the required shot, they end up in the deep trap, and have a hard struggle to hole out in fewer than four strokes. When the National was opened, in 1911, its beauty and its strategic opportunities jolted pilgrims from every corner of the country into a new appreciation of golf-course architecture. Macdonald was asked by several syndicates of millionaires to build courses. With the assistance of Seth Raynor, a construction engineer, Macdonald poured his extensive knowledge and love of golf into such courses as Lido, Piping Rock, Yale, and Mid-Ocean, which is in Bermuda. All these courses are first-class, but none of them approach the enduring charm of Macdonald's original job at Southampton. Today, forty years after its opening, the National is still, in Jones's opinion, the finest seaside course in the country.

The golden age of golf and golf architecture was the twenties, when over three million Americans took up

the game and many more millions embraced the country club as the sublime shrine of the enjoyment of living. A reasonable percentage of the hundreds of new courses that blossomed each spring showed the influence of Macdonald's basic tenets, and a few showed the influence of the majestic Pine Valley course, which George Crump, a retired Philadelphia hotel man, had gouged out of the pine forests of western New Jersey near Camden a few years before. But many architects were still producing, in essence, the same unimaginative botches that the old Sunday architects had turned out in three hours. The



misconception that a golf course should be penal, rather than strategic, had by no means been eradicated. In penal architecture the hazards do not encourage initiative but punish the slightest straying from the straight-and-narrow route to every hole. "I'm not saying that there aren't some fine courses built on the penal principle," Jones once told the construction committee of a Maryland club. "The main trouble with a penal course is there's no alternative route for the average golfer. Another trouble is that when a golfer makes an error, the punishment seldom fits the crime."

As a friend of the common man, Jones has done away with the hazards, real and psychological, that make the average golfer sweat and press off the tee. On Jones's courses, there are no stretches of rough between the tee and the fairway, no traps a hundred and forty yards or so down the fairway to swallow a slice or a hook off the direct line, no arduous carries over water, which paralyze the duffer the way the view from a diving board twenty feet up paralyzes the novice swimmer. Most Jones holes have three sets of markers on the tee, the most distant from the green being for players of championship calibre, the second most distant being for fairly proficient players, and the third being for the not-so-proficient players, who compose eighty-five per cent of the golfing population. Jones frequently makes provision for a fourth set of markers, at the very front of the tee, for women golfers.

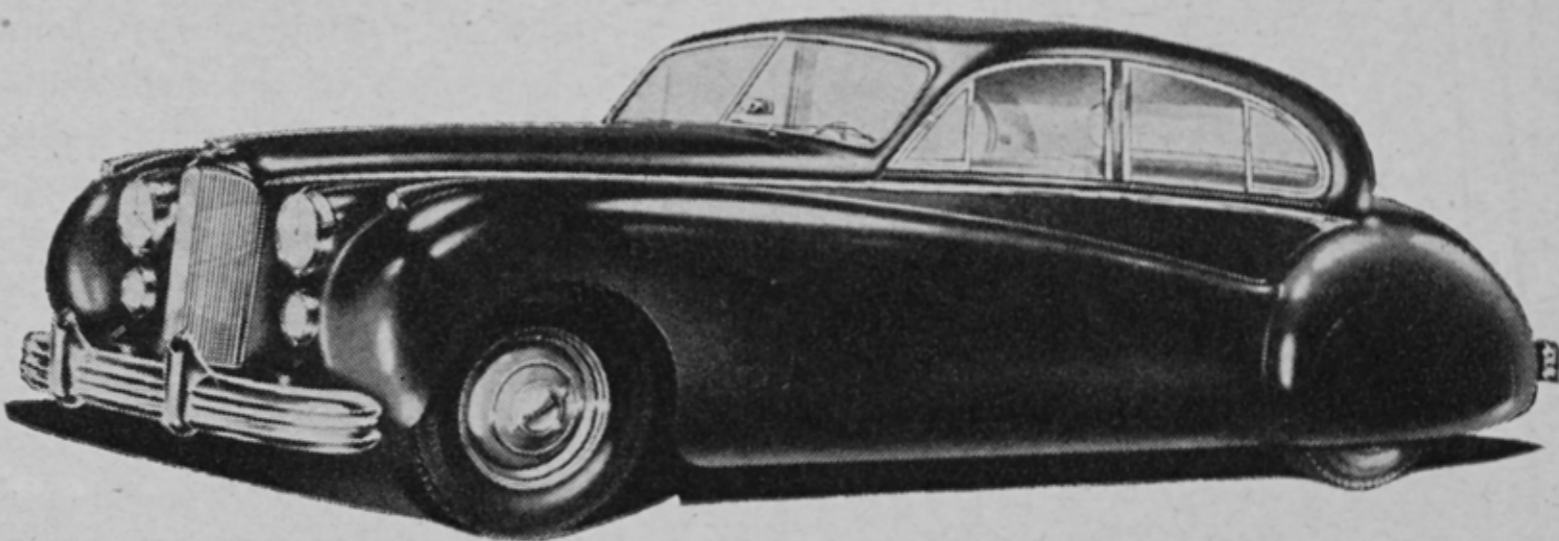
The crack golfers who play some courses that Jones has remodelled don't object to his making respectable scores more easily attainable by the herd, but they think that the hazards he specifically designs to chastise an erratic long hitter are a bit excessive. A short time ago, at the Winged Foot Golf Club, near Mamaroneck, Jones added a new trap to the first hole of the East

course. "It's the worst trap I've ever seen—the lousiest, stupidest, goddam silliest trap that anyone ever built," one of Winged Foot's many low-handicap members told a friend of Jones with the unrestrained Hibernian vigor that makes Winged Foot one of the most colorful clubs in the New York area. "Whoever heard of sticking a trap in the middle of a fairway to catch a perfect drive? I tell you, that Jones is a madman." When Jones was apprised that he had replaced the British Foreign Office as the favorite subject for attack in the Winged Foot locker room, he reached for a pad of paper, as he instinctively does in time of crisis. "Look," he said, calmly sketching the layout of the first hole, "you've got a longish par 4 just about four hundred and twenty yards long, comparatively straight and flat, no undulation to the green, and no trapping to speak of at the green. As it stood, this hole was no test for that gang of low-handicap golfers at Winged Foot. They could drive all over the lot and still come up with their par." Jones added his trap to the sketch. "Now, what I did was tighten up the hole by forcing the low-handicap golfer, the fellow who can drive over two hundred yards, to place his tee shot within a more limited area. That trap isn't in the middle of the fairway. It crooks into the fairway about fifteen yards from the rough on the left, two hundred and ten yards or so from the back-tee markers, and follows the edge of the fairway for twenty or twenty-five yards. We widened the fairway on the right some fifteen yards, so that the long hitter has a fifty-yard width of fairway to shoot at. That's certainly sufficient."

When Jones remodelled the Oakland Hills layout outside of Detroit for the 1951 National Open, he faced a somewhat similar problem: how to toughen up a thirty-five-year-old push-over into a suitable examination for the nation's top golfers. Studies he had conducted at previous National Opens had revealed that, with the lone exception of Paul Runyan, all of the entrants regularly drove two hundred and thirty yards or longer in the air. Since drives of this length would have carried all the ancient fairway hazards at Oakland Hills, Jones, in order to restore the premium on accuracy, filled in the obsolete traps and constructed new ones on both sides of the fairway in that area two hundred and thirty to two hundred and sixty yards from the tee. These hazards were visited with disconcerting regularity by the game's star shot-makers, who, after their years of grace, apparently lost their poise when con-



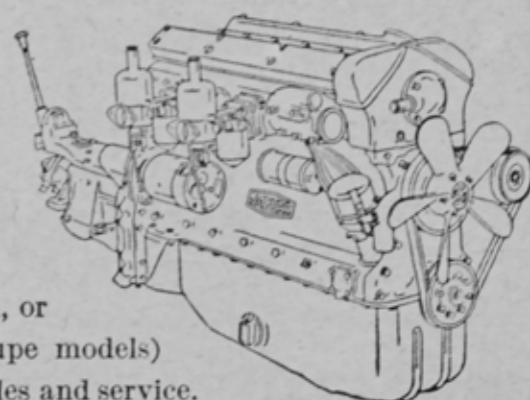
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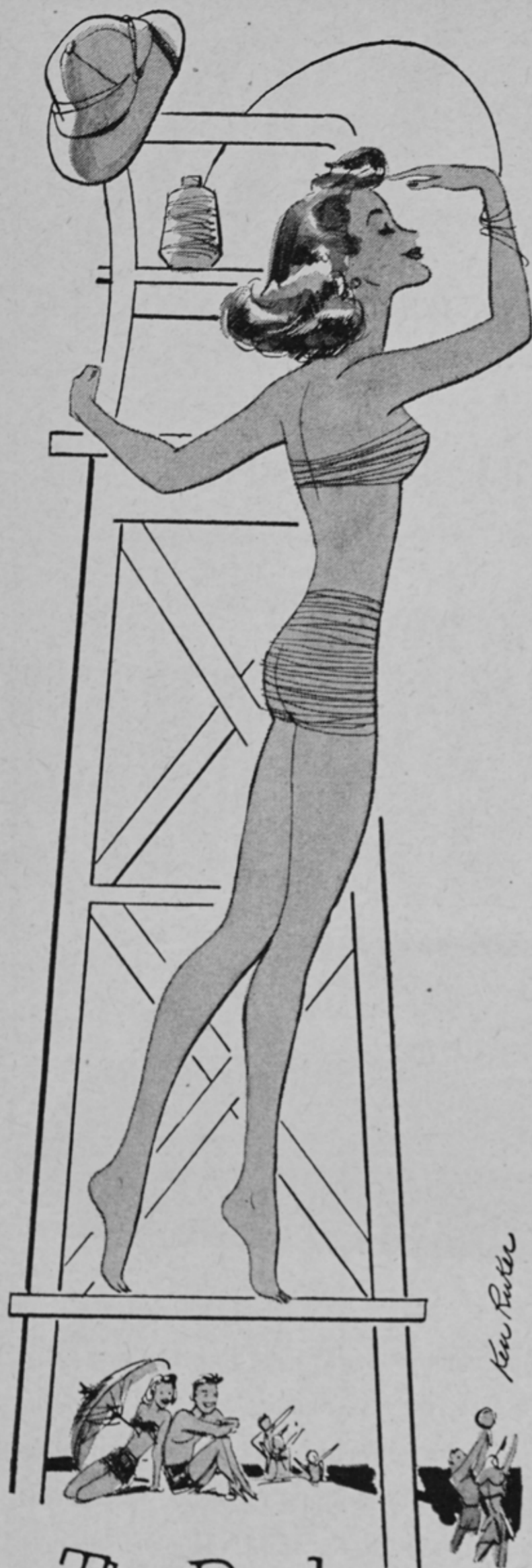
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fronted with the possibility of being penalized for off-line tee shots. During the four rounds of the Open, only two players succeeded in breaking the par of 70 for eighteen holes, Clayton Heafner, the runner-up, scoring a 69 and the winner, Ben Hogan, a brilliant 67, both on the last round. After getting over their first sense of humiliation at their inability to pick up their usual strings of birdies, most of the pros admitted, with decreasing reluctance, that the revised Oakland Hills was not an unfair course and faithfully rewarded them when they played good golf shots. Bobby Locke, the much-travelled South African expert who finished third, declared that the course was the finest test of golfing skill he had ever encountered.

LIKE every true lover of the game, Jones deplores the fact that in the last twenty years par has lost its significance. "Before 1930, the golfer who equalled par for eighteen holes had to hit his shots like a champion," Jones recently said. "Seventy-two was a score that a Jones or a Hagen was proud of. The perfection of the steel shaft, the hopped-up ball, and the sand wedge made possible the lower scores we began to get in the thirties. Those technical innovations in themselves didn't hurt the game. What did was the way tournament promoters, catering to our national infatuation with record breaking, softened up the courses when they should have been stiffening them to keep pace with the improved equipment. They watered the greens until they'd hold even a rotten approach shot. They took all the terror out of the rough by cutting it short—made it as playable as the fairway. Sometimes they allowed tournament golfers to take preferred lies on the fairway. Well, under such conditions, it wasn't surprising that the big boys began shooting in the middle sixties, and the guy who scored a 72 would be inconsolable for days.

But put those par-busters on a real course, like the ones the Open is played on, and you'll get mighty few scores below 72. Par still means something on a course with character. The 67 Hogan shot at Oakland Hills was just as great a round—not any greater, not one iota less great—as Hagen's 67 at Muirfield in the 1929 British Open."

Staggering the tee markers is a big factor in preserving the integrity of par and at the same time extending a helping hand to the average golfer, Jones went on, but the green, in his opinion, is what holds the key to the balanced hole. Jones's greens, unlike

those built by other architects, are intricately molded to provide for at least four distinct areas where the pin can be placed. These pin areas, relatively level decks of the green separated by contoured folds, are not unlike small greens in themselves. By shifting the pin from one green area to another and changing the position of the markers on the tees, a single hole can be transformed into a wide variety of holes. The size and position of the pin areas are calculated to fit the value of the approach shot. For example, the toughest pin areas, situated close by a dangerous hazard, are used only during tournaments involving golfers of championship rank. "A pro or a good amateur should be able to put his approach shot within twenty feet of the cup," Jones recently told one of his low-handicap friends. "That's his target zone, and if he hits the right shot, his ball lands in the correct pin area he has an excellent chance to hole his putt for a birdie. If he doesn't hit his target zone, he's got to play a long and tricky putt over the contours. He has to settle for two putts and his par, which is all he deserves. On the other hand, greens built with more than one pin area don't make scoring any more difficult for the average golfer. The whole green is his target zone." When Jones is working on a course, he supplements his pencil drawings with a model of each green, scaled twenty feet to the inch and made of ordinary green modelling clay. Water hazards around the green are indicated by blue clay, and the traps are painted in with white enamel. Jones usually devotes three days a week to inspection trips over courses in the process of construction. If he discovers that a project superintendent, despite the clay model of a green, has somehow missed his intention, Jones goes to work on the green himself. Standing in his shirtsleeves, he directs his bulldozer operator with hand sig-



nals and vocal exhortations until the green is buffeted into the shape he had in mind.

Jones is regarded as one of golf architecture's more conservative green-area trappers. Whereas Macdonald believed that a trap should "punish pride and egotism" and dug suitably grim pits, Jones's traps possess only a modicum of such moralistic design. Meandering around mounds near the green, Jones's traps are deliberately cut along jagged lines, so that a season of wind and rain will give them a natural, dunelike appearance. The sand on the curved faces of his traps is swept nearly to the top of

the mounds. This "flashing"—white sand against a green mound—not only advises the golfer what to steer clear of, but, in Jones's opinion, also sets a green off and gives it a feeling of receptivity. Jones is not finicky about the sand for his traps. Any reasonably white and reasonably fine sand will do, and almost invariably a beach or a quarry fairly near the course can provide it. He gets the sand for his courses around New York from Northport, Port Washington, and Port Jefferson, all on the North Shore of Long Island. Port Jefferson sand, which is dredged from the bottom of Long Island Sound, is whiter than the Northport and Port Washington varieties, and therefore preferable. Jones experimented with Jones Beach sand, but it was so fine that the wind quickly whipped it out of the traps. He has imported sand only once. "When we started building West Point, we got our sand from Army cargo ships anchored in the Hudson," he says. "The way it worked, those transports would sail in convoy for Europe loaded down with war supplies. After dumping their cargoes, they'd pull in near any convenient beach and take on sand for ballast. Well, one of these convoys was routed to Scotland, and I like to think that some of the bunkers at the Point are filled with the authentic stuff, scraped right off the dunes of the links-land."

JONES's staff of assistants is made up of William Baldwin, whom he is grooming as a greens specialist; Thomas Palazzotto, a draftsman new to the office; Julian Michele, a professional illustrator, employed on a piecework basis, who elaborates on Jones's sketches until they have the explicitness of a photograph; Kingdom Troensegaard, a turf expert; and Frank Duane, a landscape architect, who is in charge of Jones's office, which is now at 20 Vesey Street. The personnel for each project, ranging from civil engineers to laborers, is recruited locally. Jones's work has a tendency to overflow his regular office hours (nine-thirty to five), and two of the rooms of his home, in Montclair, serve as an afterhours and weekend office. He has a small attic workroom, and what used to be the sun parlor has been furnished with two massive desks and cluttered with file cabinets, a library of color photographs of famous golf holes, and tottering piles of *Golf Illustrated*, *Golf*, *American Golfer*, *Professional Golfer*, *Golfdom*, *Golfing*, and *Timely Turf Topics*. Jones takes care of his correspondence and his book-keeping there. The Vesey Street office,



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a large, austere-looking room that he moved into in 1944, contains a photograph file the size of a pool table; a desk; two drafting tables; a washstand, equipped with Synol soap for poison ivy; and a shelf of trade journals dealing with cement, tractors, piping, pumps, sprinklers, hoses, grass seed, and fertilizers. Jones usually meets his clients uptown, which is easier for most of them to get to than Vesey Street.

After Jones has inspected and approved the site a client wants to build on, he returns to Vesey Street to draw up plans. His first step is to get an aerial photograph and a topographical map of the site. A master drawing of the photograph and map combined, including such features as bodies of water, roads, and boundary lines, as well as the actual contours of the terrain, is made. Copies are made of this master drawing, and Jones plots several alternate courses on them, designating the shape and position of each hole with strips of gummed tape. These rudimentary layouts are then traced onto still other copies of the master drawing. He modifies them to eliminate such undesirable elements as steep climbs, long walks between tees and greens, blind approaches, and fairways whose "landing zones" are too close together. Then he makes another inspection of the site to check, point for point, the desirability of the tentative courses. After making whatever further changes he thinks necessary, Jones takes the plans to the client. After the client has accepted one of the suggested layouts and the accompanying estimate of costs, Jones, with the help of Duane or Baldwin, stakes off the rough skeletons of the holes. Jones likes to think of himself as a father who plays no favorites, but the frequency of his inspections is likely to depend upon the degree of fascination a course holds for him. During the past year, he has been unable to stay away for more than three weeks at a time from the eighteen holes he built for the Dunes Golf and Beach Club at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The land there is studded with groves of live oak, and it swells and dips like a natural golf course, but these are the secondary attractions. What entrances Jones is the fact that the course lies where Singleton Swash empties into the Atlantic Ocean. This was Jones's first crack at building a true seaside course. "You've got to see Myrtle Beach," Jones recently told a friend. "I've been able to work the water into six of the holes, and you've never seen a more excited group of members. At lunchtime they drive out from their offices and wander over the

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nine holes we finished in '49 and the new nine we've just opened. Oh, you'll love the way the Swash brings out the character of the holes! And you'll really be enchanted by the sense of movement that comes over you as the fresh water moves out and the tide moves in. In and out, always moving, changing the strategy of the holes as it wells up in the channels and then recedes. There's a wonderful feeling of interrupted tranquillity about the whole thing."

When Jones is at home in Montclair, he makes a commendable effort to segregate his professional interests in the sun-parlor office and the attic workroom. Neighbors who call on Sundays find, at first, no indication that the household deviates in the slightest from the standards of respectable, commutable New Jersey. The LP recording of "The King and I" whirs softly in the background while Jones pours bourbon for his friends, listens to the plans his two young sons have concocted for winning a community scrap-collecting contest, and putters around with smoked-trout spread and crackers. This illusion of conformity is seldom maintained for more than an hour. A friend who spent a Sunday there this summer gave, upon returning to the calm of New York, a résumé of dinner with the family. "During the soup course," he said, "there was nothing unusual except that Jones got a call from the head of the construction committee at Colorado Springs, asking him when he would be sending along a copy of the new plans for the sixteenth green. After that, there wasn't a mention of golf until Mrs. Jones apologized for the spinach, saying it was as sandy as Pine Valley. Halfway through the dessert, Bob, Jr., and Rees left the table and in a few minutes appeared swinging their golf clubs and asking their father to correct their form. When the maid came in with the coffee, Jones told me how lucky they were to get her. After all, she came from Atlanta, and worked for a family that had a home on the East Lake course, the very course where Bobby Jones learned the game. Then we got away from it all. We went out and played eighteen holes." —HERBERT WARREN WIND

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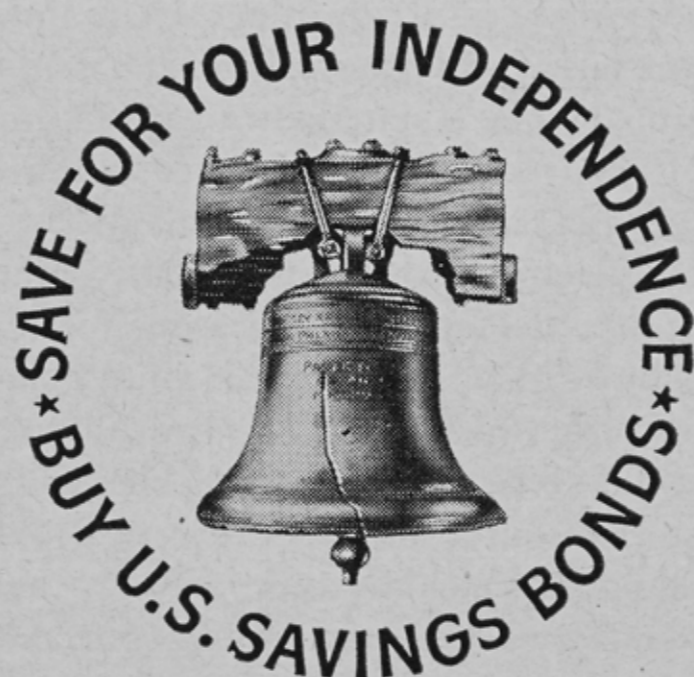
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