

*Edgmont continues
its family-owned
and charitable
tradition*



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By Jeff Smith • Staff Writer

It wasn't about hiring a nationally renowned architect, or a professional with a PGA Tour background.

It was about a family vision and developing a parcel of land that was perfect for golf.

Surrounding the scenic Ridley Creek State Park, Edgmont has developed quite a niche for itself.

The course was designed and constructed by Edgmont owners Frank and Nazz Mariani and Tanino "Tiny" Pedone—also the club's first golf professional and the first dirt was moved on the property in 1963.

The search for the site of the course ended when Pedone, who had worked at Overbrook and Kimberton Golf Clubs, discovered the Barrows Estate on West Chester Pike in Edgmont Township. The property contained 183 acres of gentle rolling hillside and was within a few minutes of driving time of the western suburbs of Philadelphia. The property was also generously irrigated by the waters of Ridley Creek.

Today, the club is run by Nazz's daughter Pam Mariani and son Peter Mariani, as it remains one of the few family-owned private clubs around.

The top emphasis for the club, which is located

centrally between Media and West Chester, the past 45 years, is its work with charities.

In 1967, Bob Hope came to the club to host the Hope for the Blind Golf Tournament. After that, the club hosted several fundraisers for the U.S. Blind Golfer's Foundation Inc. The club is also planning a 40th Anniversary celebration of Hope's event in 2007. Over the years, Edgmont hosted tournaments for organizations involved with Parkinson's, Hemophilia and Lukemia research and the Arthritis Foundation. Each year, Edgmont hosts a charity golf tournament and this year's charitable recipient is the Delaware and Chester County Special Olympics.

The club may just a little over 40 years old, but a wealth of history surrounds this course.

The Mariani's have made very few changes to the original clubhouse circa 1791. The main offices are located in the building, and it is home to an intimate dining area and outside porch area where you can watch fellow members play up to the 18th green. You also get a great view of the entire par 3 10th hole.

The Fireplace Room was a quaint family room on this early American estate with exposed beams and can seat 10-24 guests. The 1791 Room is located on the second floor and used to be the family's master bedroom. It sits atop a spiraling staircase and has been decorated to fit the early American era. It now hosts bridal showers and intimate dinner parties complete with a private bar and dance floor. The Porch Room was once the front entrance of the building, and it houses the original cornerstone of the building. The large picture windows lend a nice view of the 18th green, and the backdrop is Ridley Creek State Park. The room can seat 35-60 guests.

For bigger parties, Edgmont built The Roof Top in 1997, which features high cathedral ceilings and large arched windows. It can seat 60 to 200 guests. The building is located adjacent to the pro shop and men's locker rooms, which were formally the horse stables on the original estate.

The first record of Edgmont Township dates back to 1686, when

Joseph Baker was listed as constable of Gilead Township, the original name of Edgmont and a portion of Thornbury Township. The township was incorporated in 1687 and officially settled on the name Edgmont in the 19th century.

In the early 1960's the estate was sold to a group organized by Pedone. He had a vision of a top-notch, affordable private golf club for the average golfer. Beginning in April of 1963, the Nazz Mariani Company became partners in the project and became responsible for the course's construction. Nazz Mariani provided the needed excavation experience to carve out the 18-hole golf course out of the rolling hills and wooded countryside along the picturesque Ridley Creek Valley.

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ClubHistory

Edgmont continues its family oriented and charitable tradition

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He moved over 500,000 cubic yards of earth to execute Tiny's vision of the golf course.

The course opened for limited play on Aug. 21, 1964 and at that same time, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania purchased the land adjacent to the club to create the 2,600-acre state park. The park provides a nice backdrop free of the normal view of housing developments that frequent most golf courses in the area.

Nazz Mariani was a big fan of Ben Hogan, and the three arrows that represent the Edgmont logo represent the free flow swing theme developed by Mariani and inspired by Hogan.

Pedone's vision turned into a solid golf course that stretched 6,485 yards from the back tees. Not the longest course in the area, but it is still a challenging test of golf complete with tight rolling fairways complete with well-protected undulating greens.

Starting in 2004, the course underwent an extensive renovation. The project included the installation of a new irrigation system. With the new system, the fairways and greens stayed in perfect shape during a difficult summer season last year. Also some trees were removed around some of the greens to air them out a little more.

The cart paths were replaced throughout the course, and the final path was finished in April of this year. The pre-existing paths were moved away from play and re-located to the outskirts of each fairway and green to avoid any unnecessary damage to the golf course. All paths were widened to eight feet.

The tee boxes on holes 16 and 17 were expanded and added more than 100 yards to the course. Golf Course superintendent Glen Thomas—a 20-year veteran at the course—moved a lot of dirt to build up and expand the 17th tee box. The par 3 hole used to max out at 165 yards, but now it can reach 206 yards with the new changes. A brand new tee box was added to 16 and it can stretch 75 to 100 yards behind the origi-

nal tees.

The 11th hole that runs alongside Ridley Creek underwent several changes. It was the one hole that regularly incurred flood damage during a heavy rain. There used to be a ditch that ran though the middle of the hole to alleviate the runoff from the creek, but it would flood as well. The club placed a drainage pipe underneath the fairway and extended the fairway over the pipe. A fairway bunker was also added adjacent to the new pipe. Over 3,000 feet of drainage lines were added, and the sand was replaced in all 45 sand traps.

George E. Ley Co., out of Glenmoore, Pa. and John McPhillips & Sons from Havertown placed in the irrigation system.

Edgmont also has worked with Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association and maintain a couple untouched wildlife areas on the course.

The course can now stretch nearly 6,600 yards from the back tees. Members play at 6,062 yards and the layout can easily be walked. Members can also play at any time with no waiting lists.

The course rating from the blue tees is a 71.4 with a slope of 120, and 69.2 and 118 from the white tees. The course features five tee locations, including two sets of tees for the ladies.

Some of the holes that stand out at Edgmont include the par 3, 6th hole. The view from the tee box is the highest point in Delaware County. Golfers are provided a scenic view to a downhill green.

The par 5, 7th hole is a dogleg left. Long hitters can cut over the trees on the left, but danger awaits. Once you turn the corner, the approach is downhill with a pond to the right by the green and large bunkers waiting on the right.

All the par 3's are solid on the course, but the 10th is unique in that members can watch each other play the hole from the clubhouse.

Robert "Skee" Riegel, a local golfing legend, continues to frequent the course, and he said there are no better

five finishing holes in the area than at Edgmont. A pure opinion, but not a lot of arguments have been made. Ed "Doc" Dougherty, a PGA Tour and current Champions Tour player, is a long-time member and he can frequently be seen on the driving range working on his game.

Harry Heagy, formerly of Rolling Green Golf Club, is in his third year as head golf pro. Al Balukis was the golf pro and Director of Golf at the club for nearly 30 years, but he retired six years

ago. He stayed on at the course on a part-time basis as an instructor and membership coordinator.

Edgmont has an active junior program starting with a May clinic each year that is also open to the public. A junior camp is offered and runs June 26-29 and is also open to the public. The club hosts a junior championship in August, and it encourages family outings. Once a month on Friday nights, the course is open for a family foursome. One junior golfer has to be part of the group with a dinner following the round.

Edgmont has maintained a steady membership, but it is always looking for new members. For more information on the club, go to www.edgmont.com.

If you stop by on your way to Ridley Creek State Park, maybe you can catch a glimpse of Dougherty blasting a ball down range at the practice facility.

