



Augustine Golf Club ~ Resurrection

Nick Ciattei



Hole 6 Par 3

For many of the golf courses in the mid-Atlantic region, unforeseen changes and transitions commonly occur. It's just a part of the business. I cannot think of one course in our area that has gone through as many highs and lows as Augustine Golf Club in Stafford, Virginia. Augustine's timeline begins with a nearly flawless opening in 1995.

Crafted by Rick Jacobson, a

Jack Nicklaus design protégé, Augustine garnered numerous awards right out of the box. *Golf Digest* pinned a "Best New Upscale Course" ribbon on it, and *Golf Magazine* tabbed it as one of the "Top 100 Courses You Can Play." It was only fitting that Augustine Golf Club, named after George Washington's father, was credited with being the father of the upscale daily fee boom in Northern Virginia. For many years, the course was recognized as one of the premiere facilities in the state. It was one of the "must plays" on my short list each golf season.

Over the past several years, ownership quandaries led to a downward spiral in overall conditions at Augustine. It was truly sad to see the once proud course and clubhouse descend to a level this writer never thought he would see. No matter how hard the staff and management tried to save it, Augustine was heading to its lowest point. Barren fairways, overgrown foliage and a bone dry pro shop were just some of the signs that the course had been "left for dead."

In February of 2011, Augustine Golf Club was acquired by Raspberry Golf Management (RGM) with the intention of restoring the course to its elite status. RGM's Steve Clark knew that "to achieve our ultimate goal, we had to shut the course down for eight months." I was able to tour the course shortly after its reopening in October of last year, and to say the least, I was blown away by the revival. Clark reminded me several times during my junket that the course wasn't yet where they wanted it to be, but they felt they were well on the way to renewing the luster and charm of this classic design. The golf course itself has always been exceptional when in proper condition. RGM's presence and commitment to the rehabilitation of Augustine Golf Club is a welcome sight to any regional player who has played there previously.

What we all remember and now get to experience again is the stunning parkland style par 71 layout carved through magnificent hardwoods and dramatic elevation changes. Where many courses boast signature par 3s and risk-reward par 5s, I've always thought Augustine has been known for their challenging and memorable par 4s. The front nine opens with three of them that leave most golfers breathless upon completion. The first hole plays downhill to a dual fairway

bisected by wetlands. A needed pin placement check should determine which route you prefer on this unique opener.

The 456-yard second carries the "Beauty and the Beast" insignia and is recognized as Augustine's most difficult hole. A lake situated 50 feet below the tee box guards the entire left side of the hole with a large undulating green awaiting those who can make it there high and dry.

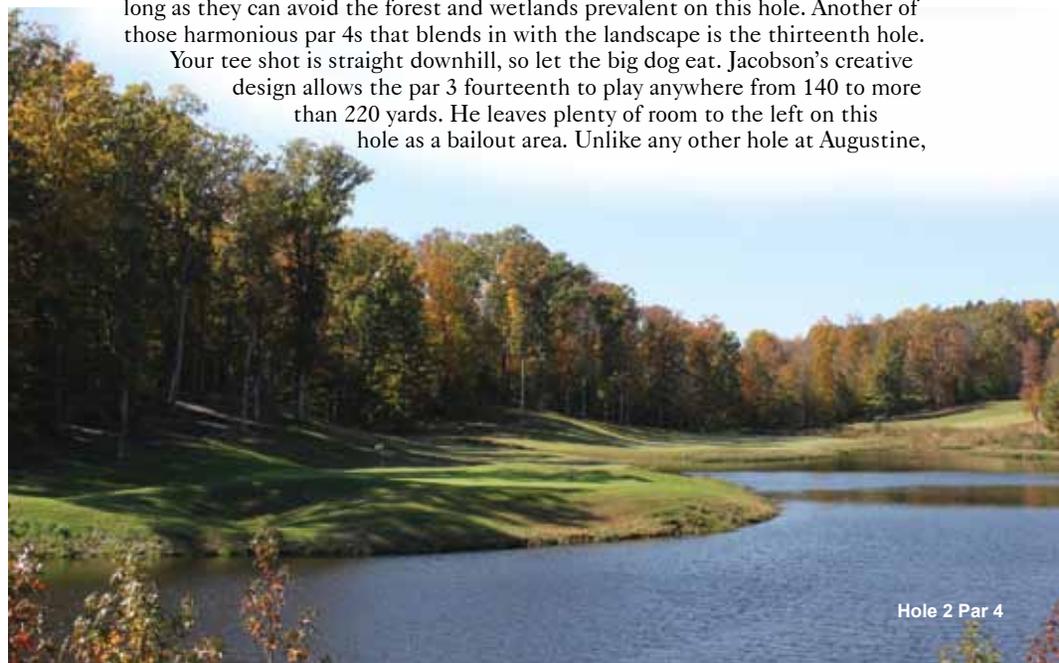
An ideal drive on the third hole is one that comes to rest at the crest of the hill setting up a downhill shot to a picturesque, bunkerless green. The par 5 fourth is a double dogleg, three-shot par 5, where bunkers and wetlands need to be negotiated. Five is a downhill par 4 with an approach shot over a stream to a well protected green. The par 3 sixth plays differently from several tee boxes situated on an elevated tee. Your mission . . . clear the lake and find the large dance floor. The dogleg right seventh hole is one of this writer's favorites. Position your tee shot as far left as possible for your approach, which plays slightly uphill. The short par 3 eighth and the closer to the outward nine are good chances to pick up some shots on the scorecard.

Augustine Golf Club's back nine mirrors the front side with a majority of the more difficult holes coming early. Both the tenth and twelfth holes are handsome par 4s that flow naturally through the towering timbers and feature downhill second shots. That is one of the distinguishing features here. A majority of your approaches at Augustine will have you looking down to your target. Sandwiched between these two is the par 5 eleventh, definitely reachable for the big hitters as long as they can avoid the forest and wetlands prevalent on this hole. Another of those harmonious par 4s that blends in with the landscape is the thirteenth hole.

Your tee shot is straight downhill, so let the big dog eat. Jacobson's creative design allows the par 3 fourteenth to play anywhere from 140 to more than 220 yards. He leaves plenty of room to the left on this hole as a bailout area. Unlike any other hole at Augustine,



Hole 7 Par 4



Hole 2 Par 4

fifteen is a short (305 yards from the tips) par 4 that plays uphill all the way. Your approach needs to carry over to the sand bunkers that guard the right front of one of Augustine's most narrow greens. Sixteen wraps up the signature par 4s with a spectacular elevated tee shot. This hole is so natural it looks like all they did was stick a flag in the ground and say "go for it."



Hole 13 Par 4



Hole 15 Par 4

Choose your club wisely on the par 3 seventeenth, which plays to a deep undulating green surrounded by three sand traps. To put a cap on this marvelous layout, the par 5 eighteenth (pictured on the cover) is a gorgeous risk-reward hole. If you pop a good drive between the fairway bunkers, you can get home in two. The green is set brilliantly adjacent to the splendid lodge clubhouse,

which was also regenerated as part of the rebirth. We at *The Golf Guide* think 2012 will surely be a surely be a "second coming" for Augustine.

Raspberry Golf Management's addition of Augustine Golf Club to their golf course portfolio gives the team four of Northern Virginia's premier facilities under one umbrella. They join sister properties Bull Run Golf Club in Haymarket, Old Hickory Golf Club in Woodbridge, and Raspberry Falls Golf & Hunt Club in Leesburg to form one of the strongest foursomes in area golf. RGM also manages the blossoming Raspberry Golf Trail that includes these four along with several of the mid-Atlantic's most recognized golf facilities including Blue Ridge Shadows in Front Royal, VA, Cannon Ridge in Fredericksburg, VA, and Penn National in Mont Alto, PA, and Royal Manchester in York, PA. The full resurrection of Augustine Golf Club can only benefit by standing side by side with these solid properties. As a golfer, I'm just ecstatic to see one of the best courses in the region rescued from the doldrums of lackluster ownership and hard economic times. You just can't keep a good course down.



Hole 17 Par 3

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