

FEATURED ARTICLE

The Club at Clear Creek Tahoe

Magnificent Setting On “The Ponderosa”

Private Coore & Crenshaw golf surrounded by wilderness and trophy trout fishing and the Lake Tahoe beach house.

BY MARK PAZDUR, PUBLISHER

MINDEN, NEVADA: The Club at Clear Creek Tahoe is virtually unseen on a beautiful mountain saddle just eight miles from Lake Tahoe on the Nevada side of the Sierras. The private club’s golf course, West Walker Fly Fishing Ranch and the Lake House are now open and fully operational. Co-Developers Jim Taylor and Chip Hanly strongly believed that their property imposed an obligation for them to be responsible stewards. Consequently, they have developed a project that is beautiful, sits gently on the land, and also takes advantage of the wide range of activities that make the Lake Tahoe area so desirable.



“Our 1,600-acre community is set on an ancient landform with thousands of Jeffrey and Ponderosa pines that are surrounded by state and federally designated wilderness,” said Taylor. “Clear Creek is on the lee of the Sierras and much of our property is south-facing. This is important because it gives us a longer golf season and considerably less winter snowfall than other clubs in the area. In addition, our vistas are spectacular, especially at sunrise and sunset.”

THE GOLF COURSE

“When I first approached Coore and Crenshaw about designing our golf course,” said Taylor, “Bill Coore cautioned me that our alpine setting might not work for the kind of course he and Ben design; however, he agreed to take a look. We told Bill he could route the course as he saw fit—the entire property was his canvas. He spent over a week walking from dawn to dusk and concluded that he could route a superb and exceptional golf course at Clear Creek. Our routing is not only fun to play but also easily walkable. We are looking forward to inviting friends to join us as members and share this wonderful experience with us,” said Taylor.

“There are so many ways this course could have been laid out that I took time to let the land reveal itself to me,” explained Coore. “I took a topo map and walked, and walked, and walked to get a feel for the land.”



"I spent days exploring, and discovering interesting natural features, like tree formations and rock outcroppings. It was well worth the time. I feel the golf course Ben and I have created will be a memorable and enjoyable experience," said Coore.

Ben Crenshaw summarized his thought on Clear Creek: "Bill and I learned many of our design principles from examples in the British Isles where golf course architects let the land and elements dictate the holes. We were very fortunate at Clear Creek Tahoe to have worked on a piece of beautiful, natural land. That, along with the dramatic backdrops and outstanding climate, gave us the ability to create a mix of challenging and interesting holes."

Mark Sollenberger, president of Clear Creek and an Arizona Hall of Fame golfer, felt the site was a natural for a golf course because of its sandy soil and naturally rolling terrain. "Many of America's greatest courses, like Pine Valley, Pinehurst, Sand Hills, Prairie Dunes and Seminole are built on sandy soil. We have 18 distinctive holes and each green complex is completely different from the next. The aesthetics of each hole, along with the natural beauty surrounding the property, will clearly enhance the golfer's overall experience."

Colin Campbell, who was the director of golf for 13 years at Loch Lomond in Scotland, was hired as director of golf at Clear Creek Tahoe. He flew to Reno from Scotland for the interview and it was love at first sight.

"When I stepped up to the first tee," said Campbell, "I got excited—and this excitement has carried over to the rest of the course and the entire project. I wouldn't move my family from Scotland on a whim. I've been fortunate enough to play many of the top courses in Europe and the United States and believe that Clear Creek has the potential to be considered one of the best. Although each hole is unique, every one fits naturally on the property. Bill and Ben were a perfect choice to design this course."

HISTORIC SWIFT'S STATION

The halfway house is called Swift's Station—named after the historic wagon stop, circa 1865, which was part of the logging operation using horses to haul timber from Glenbrook to the silver mines of Virginia City. Clear Creek's Swift's Station lies between holes 1, 2, 9, 10 and 16 and has a decidedly more relaxed atmosphere today.

THE LAKE HOUSE

The Lake House is in South Lake Tahoe approximately 25 minutes from the golf course. This property is a jewel—a two acre compound with 190 feet of private beach frontage and a truly gorgeous little beach house designed in 1923 and furnished in the Old Tahoe vernacular. There is also a private dock and mooring buoy. What a place! "We wanted to have a lake presence and we could not have imagined a better one," said Sollenberger. "I love this place, especially relaxing in an Adirondack chair with a glass of wine watching the sunset over the opposite shore. I am certain our members will enjoy this magical experience as much as I do."



CLEAR CREEK TAHOE LAKE HOUSE

CLEAR CREEK TAHOE'S LAKE HOUSE, A COMFORTABLE 1923 'OLD TAHOE' CABIN WITH 190 FEET OF PRIVATE BEACHFRONT ON LAKE TAHOE, IS A GATHERING SPOT FOR MEMBERS TO ENJOY THE LAKE IN THE SUMMER AND SKI IN THE WINTER.



FLY-FISHING ON THE WEST WALKER

Clear Creek owns 2,000 acres of the Fairfield Ranch, which contains the first three miles of the West Walker River downstream from Topaz Lake. Fishermen will appreciate the quality of the water and the fact that it is a tailwater fishery. “There is ample cold water year-round to allow large brown, rainbow and Lahontan cutthroat trout to thrive,” said Taylor. “We also have approximately 100 different species of birds that are attracted to the riparian habitat.”

THE ESSENCE OF CLEAR CREEK—QUALITY, SUSTAINABILITY

Quality, to the smallest detail, was evident in the properties and the full range of its outstanding amenities. Having spent time with Chip, Jim and their team, it was clear that they have taken to heart the importance of developing their project in an environmentally responsible manner.



The most obvious examples are: A golf course that follows the natural contours of the property, minimizing grading; the use of on-site materials for construction; and recycled water is used to irrigate the golf course. Ground water is retained and returned to the earth through the use of bio-swales and other naturally engineered systems and commitments to explore solar and geo-thermal options within the club’s common areas. In addition, major portions of Clear Creek’s land have been set aside in permanent conservation easements with The Nature Conservancy.

For those who love to hike, Clear Creek has its own trailhead leading up to the remarkable and world-renowned Tahoe Rim Trail, which encircles the entire lake with a 165 mile fully improved trail system.

GETTING THERE

Clear Creek is located south of Reno and about eight miles from Lake Tahoe. It has its own on/off ramp, Highway 50 - Tahoe Golf Club Drive. The most convenient private airport, just 15 minutes from the Club’s entrance, is Tahoe/Minden (MEV). It has a 7,400 runway with an ILS approach and can accommodate any size of airplane.

For more information, please visit: clearcreektahoe.com.