

One Heck of a Ride

The Pete Dye Course at French Lick Resort reveals a different perspective from one of golf's great architects.

FRENCH LICK, INDIANA: Over the past six decades, Pete Dye has earned a reputation as one of the world's most respected golf course architects.

Nearly every major golf organization has recognized his sizable footprint in the world of golf. Notable honors include the Old Tom Morris Award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, the PGA of America's Distinguished Service Award, and inductee into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 2008.

"I have worked closely with Pete since 1986," fondly recalled Chris Lutzke, who has been Pete Dye's right-hand man for over 20 years and was recently accepted into the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA), the pinnacle to a golf course designers' career.

"The combination of my passion for architecture and the fact I could run a bulldozer bonded us. He paid for my education at Michigan State and I have been working with him ever since. It's been one heck of a ride working for Pete. Golf is a better sport because of his accomplishments."

THE HEART OF HOOSIER COUNTRY

French Lick Resort, with two sister hotels—the West Baden Springs Hotel and the French Lick Springs Hotel—first welcomed guests in 1845. The AAA four diamond property has invested over \$600 million in recent years. Amenities include the largest resort conference center in the Midwest; a full-service casino; two spas; the Kidsfest Lodge; a bowling alley; and 54 holes of golf, including Donald Ross and Pete Dye Signature designs.

"Pete is more of a sculptor than an architect," explained Lutzke. "Usually his routing plans are sketched on a sheet of paper versus a formal blueprint. In fact, one of his initial outlines of French Lick was hand drawn on a cocktail napkin. He prefers 'boots on the ground.' I estimate he made at least 100 site visits to French Lick, often trudging around in mud-caked boots that probably weighed 30 pounds each."

Lutzke's longtime experience with Pete Dye working on hundreds of projects, including highly acclaimed courses like Whistling Straits, Ocean Course, Crooked Stick, and Teeth of the Dog to name a few, came in handy on the scenic but challenging French Lick site.

"Building our course at French Lick Resort was an ambitious project," touted Lutzke. "We had to utilize a Caterpillar D-10 bulldozer to contour rugged terrain. The 230,000-pound monster of a machine has the capability to level a small house in a single pass!

"The course shows a different perspective from other Pete Dye designs you may have played," said Lutzke. "He is convinced that better players consider his signature manicured sandy waste areas as nothing more than a nuisance, not a deterrent to be avoided. So, at French Lick we minimized sand in favor of grass. During normal playing conditions, rough can be cut two inches, allowing resort guests to enjoy the day. But, when the professional tournaments takes place, it can be grown out to 'raise the bar.'" ■

For more information on French Lick Resort and seasonal golf packages, visit FrenchLick.com or call (888) 936-9360.



(Above) Volcano bunkers on the Pete Dye Course at French Lick Resort.



(Left) Pete Dye and Chris Lutzke.



(Right) Cocktail napkin with Pete Dye's routing sketch for the course at French Lick Resort.