

# Up Close & Personal

## Celebrating Arnie's Way

By Mark Pazdur, Publisher

GREATER SAVANNAH, GEORGIA: Arnold Palmer was one of golf's heroes. His accomplishments for the sport, charity, and business are substantial. Preparing for my trip to attend the grand opening of The Landings Club's new Marshwood Clubhouse at its Arnold Palmer courses, I pondered why the logo for the Palmer organization is a colorful umbrella. The answer may surprise you.

The story starts at a conference table almost 70 years ago. Plotting the rise of his brand and

business enterprise, Arnie agonized with his team over a logo. Ideas included crossed golf clubs or a nature scene. Frustrated, Arnie adjourned the meeting for a walk to clear his mind—in the rain. It was a fateful decision.

Soon after he stepped outside, a woman popped open a multi-colored umbrella to shield herself from the inclement weather. Arnie rushed back and queried the group about the concept of an umbrella logo, receiving mixed feedback. One of his advisors questioned if another company had already trademarked the image. Surprisingly, the idea was an original, and more than three years since Mr. Palmer's death, it remains a symbol of his achievements on and off the course.



### *RESPECTING HERITAGE*

The Landings Club on Skidway Island (about a 20-minute drive from historic district in Savannah) is a private luxury community with six golf courses, two of which were designed by Arnold Palmer. Members have access to five clubhouses, two marinas, 31 tennis courts, 11 pickleball courts, five swimming pools, and a modern 52,000 square-foot wellness center. More than once I've heard someone refer to the club as a "Disneyland for golfers."

Several years ago, the Board approved a capital plan to renovate, enhance, and expand its amenity offering. "Pitching a \$25 million proposal to the membership required us to roll up our sleeves," recalled

“ I couldn't be more pleased with the final product. Without question, our Marshwood Clubhouse is our 'exclamation point' to our capital plan. We named its signature steakhouse Arnie's Tavern.

Associating with the Palmer brand was a flash of obvious and a tribute to his influence on golf. Menu items include several of Arnie's favorites, including Dutch-style meatloaf, pimento cheese croquettes with tomato jam, and shepherd's pie.” – STEVEN FREUND



Steven Freund, executive director of The Landings Club. “We have fiscally conservative residents so it wasn’t a slam dunk to pass. I knew it was the right decision for us to remain relevant. If we respected our heritage, while planning for the future, success would be at hand. In some ways it’s like being a quarterback in a big game. You need to picture where the ball needs to go before actually throwing it.

“We hold the ‘pole position’ among golf communities and intend on holding that advantage. Continual investments allow us to provide the best amenities at what most would find a reasonable price point. ►



“The Landings Club has a food and beverage operation that in itself is a sizable business with \$12 million in annual sales across its 4 clubhouses. The new Marshwood Clubhouse kitchen has a Mibrasa coal fired and wood burning grill—the only one in the state of Georgia. The grill is able to sear on the outside and cook on the inside a large tomahawk steak in eight minutes.”  
— Sam Brod, executive chef

## In His Own Words With Arnie’s Grandson

“**IF MY GRANDFATHER** were here with me right now for the dedication of the new clubhouse, he would say this is better, way better, and would be excited with The Landings Club’s future. Running a private golf community is similar to working on your swing; there’s a zest to constantly improve. I know he would be extremely proud of what has been accomplished here. I’m proud as well.

“**GROWING UP**, I respected and, I must admit, feared my granddad a bit. He would often remind me that if I don’t stay on the straight and narrow, I might have to drive a tractor for my livelihood. I have fond memories of spending time with him at the back of the range of Latrobe Country Club in Pennsylvania. His knowledge of the game was second to none. One of the highlights of my life was caddying for him during his last Masters. I could fill pages with the emotions experienced.

“**MY FAMILY** never steered me into golf or pressured me to continue the Palmer legacy. They exposed me to all sports, something that I strive to do with my two sons. I guess you could say I fell in love with the game when I was 10 years old. I was playing in a junior golf tournament, had an eagle, and shot 38.

“**I DON’T** beat a lot of balls during practice unless I am working on swing techniques. There aren’t consequences for hitting a bad shot on the range. Players on all the Tours are super athletes. I’m not a big fan of working out in the gym. My exercise routine includes two of my other passions of surfing and mountain biking, allowing me to exercise and have fun at the same time.

“**I ENCOURAGE** all golfers to spend more time on their short games. If you learn to only chip once around the green [avoiding an occasional chili-dip], your handicap will reward you.”

– SAM SAUNDERS

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“ I think the longevity of my brand can be traced to two of my core beliefs. First, I believe in the products I endorse. This resonates with the consumer. Also, I present my message in good taste and often with a sense of humor. I never want to irritate or be obnoxious.”

—ARNOLD PALMER



Steven Freund and Sam Saunders at the Marshwood Clubhouse Grand Opening.

“As an equity club, much of my time was spent explaining the vision. After all, our members are shareholders,” said Freund. “Many club managers have to simply walk out of their office in the clubhouse to be in the middle of activity. Not here. I take the time to add a buffer in my calendar to schedule a 14-mile drive to visit all our facilities and clubhouses.”

### *LOOKING THROUGH A DIFFERENT LENS*

The Landings Club’s six courses, all designated as Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries, are set against a backdrop of stately hardwood forests, unspoiled saltwater marshes, and tranquil tidal creeks. “If you love golf, you will love living here,” praised Freund.

“Last year, we did 160,000 rounds. As a certified sustainable community, our course conditioning and playability have been enhanced and our overall footprint on the environment has been reduced. For example, one of the strict rules we must maintain is a clearly defined flood control program,” continued Freund. “If we fill a hole, we must dig a hole elsewhere to keep runoff channels at a constant. At first, this may seem like a minor issue, but it impacts decisions. During architectural planning meetings for the new Marshwood Clubhouse, the square footage of the building and depth of the pool all had an impact.

“We never lose sight that golf is our core amenity,” concluded Freund. “Six courses provide the bandwidth to supply ample tee time access while closing one course each summer for major maintenance. Unlike other golf communities that wait for issues to arise, we stay ahead of the curve, guaranteeing quality conditioning.” ■

*For membership information, visit [LandingsClub.com](http://LandingsClub.com).*



The Franklin Creek pool, heated to 84 degrees year round, is family-friendly with a zero-entry shallow end, two slides, and a children’s splash pad with a pirate ship water feature.