



The Roomba of Golf

The Club at Ibis Unveils a First in Florida

WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA: Over the past decade, most golf clubs and resorts have upgraded and expanded their practice facilities. A recent study by *Golf Life Navigator* reinforces its importance. Research revealed that 89 percent of the study participants reported a “practice facility” is the *most important* golf amenity and that they would likely decline joining a club based on its conditions.

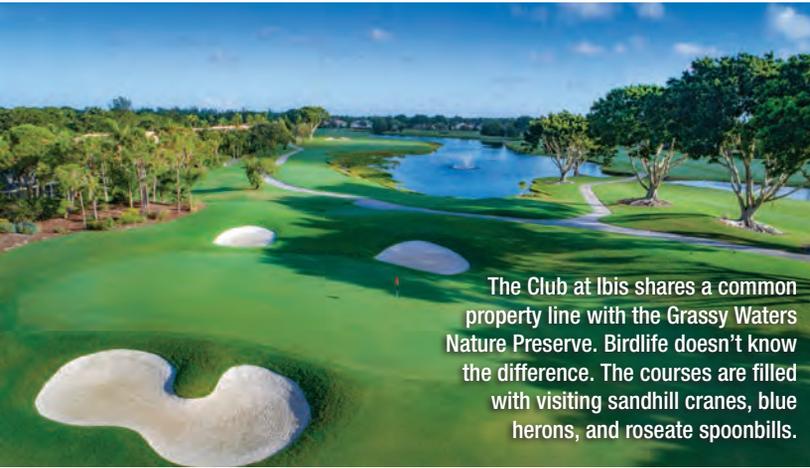
“We are always assessing our community,” said Ben Bauer, director of golf operations. “Over the past decade, more than \$60 million has been invested in new and expanded amenities.

“Our golf practice facilities were in need of basic upgrades, including new irrigation and drainage systems. Not sexy to talk about, but necessary. We knew we had one shot to ‘do it right,’ and make our membership proud. So, much forethought went into planning for a complete reimagination of a state-of-the-art teaching, fitting, and practice range.”

The total investment into the practice facilities exceeded \$2.2 million, including installation of Toptracer Range, a first for a private club in the state of Florida.

“The golf industry is moving away from large, initial





The Club at Ibis shares a common property line with the Grassy Waters Nature Preserve. Birdlife doesn't know the difference. The courses are filled with visiting sandhill cranes, blue herons, and roseate spoonbills.

WITH HUNDREDS of private clubs in the Sunshine State, it's notable that Ibis received the highest cumulative score earning the top spot as "Healthiest Club in America."

THE SOCIAL CALENDAR offers more than 20 cultural associations and an array of guest speakers.

DID YOU KNOW? Martin Hall, one of *Golf Digest's* "America's 50 Best Teachers," is director of instruction at Ibis.

investments to subscription models. As an example, our Toptracer teaching tool required little upfront investment. We pay a monthly fee so our members have the same analytical tools found on the PGA TOUR. After downloading the Toptracer App, you can track your history of ball flight and evaluate exactly how far you hit the ball in real world conditions," explained Bauer. "After all, there is a big difference when you need to hit a shot 165 yards, but must carry the ball 160 yards. We now offer the capability of tracking exact distances. The end result is more confidence on the course when you are debating which club to select."

NEVER A MISSED WORK DAY

The golf industry hasn't been immune from labor shortages that has roiled the economy.

"Two of our more interesting additions to the practice facility are robotic ball pickers and grass mowers," detailed Bauer. "I consider them the Roomba of golf. They never ask for a raise or call in sick. The labor savings to the bottom line was almost immediate and conditions are uniformly excellent. With our unique 'X' shaped range, the electronic mowers are able to keep the cut lines clean and sharp looking."

The Club at Ibis, with over 1,800 homes scattered among 33 lushly landscaped neighborhoods, is the size of a small town. With size comes advantages.

The private community's three Nicklaus family designed golf courses—The Legend, The Heritage, and The Tradition—were created by Jack Nicklaus Sr., Jack Nicklaus Jr., and Steve Nicklaus. "Many private clubs, including ours, have experienced a renaissance in the interest of golf during COVID. Rounds played is up an impressive 20 percent over two years ago," continued Bauer. "Having three excellent Nicklaus designs provides the ultimate in flexibility. In season, we can run a tournament on one course, while providing non-competitive play on



During season, the culinary team has 65 chefs and 25 support staff.



the others. Even during the somewhat slower summer months, while one course is closed for maintenance, two remain open in top condition."

"I think it's kind of special that the three of us designed golf courses in the same community," said Jack Nicklaus. "Each stands on its own."

"I concur with Mr. Nicklaus's thinking," concluded Bauer. "Our Legend Course requires deft second shots to score well, the Tradition Course is all about your short game with undulating green complexes, and the Heritage Course demands proper tee ball management to keep it in play." ■

For more information on membership opportunities, please visit ClubAtIbis.com, or phone (561) 625-8500.

