

NEWS

Architect Ron Garl and Golden Ocala Celebrate 30th Anniversary



By [Leigh MacKay](#)

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GOLDEN OCALA CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF

Golden Ocala Golf & Equestrian Club is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year and wants everyone to know about it. Carved out from 1200 acres in the rolling hills of **Central Florida**, about one hour northwest of Orlando, Golden Ocala is home to championship golf and tennis, an equestrian center, spa and fitness center, a 77,000 square foot clubhouse, fine dining, and luxury living. Golden Ocala is the vision of the Roberts family, owners of the freight shipping and logistics company R+L Carriers.



HONORING THE GOLDEN OCALA ARCHITECT

Dedicating this year to a series of events to commemorate its founding, Golden Ocala recently honored Florida-based architect Ron Garl in its initial anniversary ceremony. General Manager Joe Donnelly and Director of Golf Mike Cooney invited members and guests for a special day to honor Garl. An afternoon shotgun best-ball tournament put the players on the beautifully manicured course—where the immaculate greens stimped at around 11-12. At the dinner that followed, Ron Garl received special recognition for the special course that he created.

With his design philosophy “to make courses enjoyable, traditional, challenging, and memorable,” Garl has fashioned a fascinating 18-hole **championship course** and a superb 10-acre short game area with two practice holes and a driving range. The

course has five sets of tees that play 7063 yards from the tips and 4440 yards from the forward tees.



The Masters famous par-3 16th is Golden Ocala's 6th hole.

MAGAZINE AND LPGA ACCOLADES

What makes Golden Ocala unique is that Garl crafted the first replica course in the world, paying tribute to eight of golf's most memorable holes. *Travel and Leisure* magazine called Golden Ocala "the best replica course anywhere." *Golf Digest* called it one of the "Best in the State of Florida," and *Golfweek* has included the course in its "Best Top 100 Residential Golf Courses."

The LPGA started its domestic season at Golden Ocala in 2015 and 2016 with the Coates Golf Championship. Garl said, "That January event was a smashing success with the women. I heard many great comments and received such positive feedback. The crowds were unbelievable, like being at a major. The golfers, with most of the top 50 women there, loved the entire layout and especially liked the idea of the eight tribute holes.

"When I designed the course in 1986, I paid homage to iconic holes from five major-championship courses—**Augusta National**, Baltusrol, Muirfield, the Old Course at St. Andrews, and Royal Troon."



With his replica of the 4th hole at Baltusrol, Garl paid tribute to his mentor Robert Trent Jones, Sr.

GARL'S EIGHT TRIBUTE HOLES

The tribute holes are remarkable in their accuracy to the real ones. When you stand on the tee of the fourth hole, you would swear that you are in Scotland about to hit an iron to the par-3 "Postage Stamp" green at Troon. Hole five is the par-5 ninth hole from Muirfield. The three tribute holes from Augusta National are the sixth as the par-3 16th, the 11th as the par-3 12th from Amen Corner, and the 12th as the iconic par-5 13th. Garl made his 13th hole the famous "Road Hole" 17th from Saint Andrews and made his 14th the first hole from Saint Andrews, the very first hole in the history of golf.

Garl's final tribute hole is his 15th, a replica of Baltusrol's well-known par-3 4th on the Lower Course. Garl chose this hole to honor his mentor Robert Trent Jones, Sr., under whom Garl worked for five years. Garl said, "I started as a member of his construction crew, and I literally learned architecture from the ground up. And I always thought that his par-3 4th at Baltusrol was one of the greatest holes he ever built."

A Brief List of Garl's Other Designs

A native of the Sunshine State and a University of Florida grad, Garl has designed more than 250 courses and remodels, taking his well-earned reputation throughout the nation and around the world. Garl is an advocate of both classic golf course design and "green" golf course design, believing that "every course should sit softly upon the land." He has been awarded "Golf Designer of the Year" by the International Network of Golf.

Some of Garl's other Florida work includes Las Colinas at Mission Inn in Howey-in-the-Hills, The Dunes at Palm Beach Polo Golf & CC, Indian River Club, Fiddlesticks in Ft. Myers, Longboat Key Club and Resort (remodel), Timacuan in Lake Mary, TPC Prestancia in Sarasota, and Victoria Hills in Deland.



Fiddlesticks, with the water-girt 9th and 18th greens, is another one of Garl's best known Florida designs.

Some of his international endeavors include Rancho Las Colinas in Costa Rica, Bijao Beach Club & Golf Resort in Panama, Alpine Golf & Sports Club and Royal Gems Golf City and Chiangmai-Lamphun GC (remodel) in Thailand, Golf D'Atalayoun in Morocco, Taboo in Ontario, Heritage Point in Calgary, Guaymaral CC in Bogota, The Admirals Club at Nine Dragons Golf Resort in Shanghai, and Ride of the Kings GC in the Czech Republic.