

CAPITAL CANYON CLUB

*New Name, New Energy
at a Prescott Mainstay*

By Tom Mackin

CATS MAY HAVE NINE LIVES but golf clubs rarely get more than one. That's not the case at the Capital Canyon Club in Prescott, Arizona. Originally known as Hassayampa Golf Club, it was a nine-hole facility from 1919 until 1969, and then an 18-hole course (designed by Tom Weiskopf) from 1997 until 2011. Nowadays, thanks to a former member, it recently began a new chapter that sets out to prove that the third time really is the charm.

Three years after learning that his beloved Hassayampa Club had closed, Jerre Stead bought the entire facility. The chairman and CEO of IHS (an international information technology company based in Colorado) asked his friend Lee Hoekstra — who now runs Capital Canyon Realty Group — to take a look at the clubhouse, which had received minimal maintenance while it was closed.

"Jerre knew there was a lot of work to do but he really loved the place," said Hoekstra. Renovation work on the clubhouse and course began in late 2014, an effort led by Troon vice president of golf course development Ron Despain and general manager Laura Scrivner.

"There were plenty of long days and nights," says Scrivner, who managed three Troon Privé golf clubs owned by the Freeman Company in Delaware prior to coming to Capital Canyon Club. "It took us some time just to find all the light switches. Our clubhouse furniture arrived two days before the opening in May 2015, and we had a party that day for over 200 people."

Landscaping, new interior paint and other

renovations now make the building look brand new. Both locker rooms were renovated and are now connected to a new fitness center. Members and guests can dine in three areas: the Capital Room (fine dining and weddings/parties), Club Room, and Canyon Room.

A busy social calendar — including bridge groups, cooking classes, and activities connecting members with the Prescott community — has proven quite popular. An enhanced food and beverage program is another popular amenity, with theme nights and a chef's table featuring a four-course meal with wine pairings.

"Our executive chef John Panza (who came from the highly-regarded Different Pointe of View restaurant at the Pointe Hilton Tapatio Cliffs Resort in Phoenix) is incredibly talented and has a great team," says Scrivner. "He has the passion that's needed at a club like this."

■ COURSE TRANSFORMATION

Equally passionate is golf course superintendent Jamie Bushman, a Prescott native and former assistant superintendent at Pinetop Country Club, a Troon Privé club in Arizona. He arrived in October 2014 to breathe life back into the course.

Bushman used Google Earth maps to study what the course used to look like and led an 18-person crew on the project. The routing remained the same, but all bunkers were restored, irrigation issues were fixed, and new



NEW AMENITIES AND A BUSY SOCIAL CALENDAR HAVE BREATHED NEW LIFE INTO THE CLUB, BRINGING MANY FORMER MEMBERS BACK INTO THE FOLD.





sod was installed. “We figured out a lot of things on the fly and just kept our heads down while working hard. I told my crew that we would try to make the place better every day. That was our goal.”

In May 2015, Bushman walked the course with Weiskopf. “It seemed like he really loved the place,” Bushman says. “We weren’t where we wanted to be when he came here, but he had a lot of good input about how holes should play and what the approaches should look like. He even used a paint gun to define rough lines and approaches. That was huge because that gave us a good template to work with.”

Those efforts paid off when the course reopened on July 1, 2015 to rave reviews.

“I exceeded my expectations,” said Bushman. “The rains we had really helped to fill grass in on the fairways and rough. We had the greens rolling almost at 11. Those came a long way in a short amount of time. I was very proud of those.”

Bushman says the transformation the course has gone through has been astounding. “My personal goal,” he says, “is to make this a ranked golf course. I tell my guys that every day is tournament day out here. I don’t care if there is one person playing. Every day should be like the owner or the president is coming out to play. We can’t be content with what we’ve done. We have to keep pressing on.”

The 6,600-yard layout is almost three courses in one. The first through sixth holes

wrap around the higher parts of the property; holes seven through 14 are on the flat portion (stone tables dating back to the club’s early 20th century origins are visible between the 12th and 13th holes); and the final three holes go through a number of canyons with multiple creeks.

■ **NEW NAME, NEW ENERGY**

The well-bunkered course includes a drivable par-4 (the 317-yard seventh) a hallmark of every Weiskopf design. The most scenic hole is No. 16, a 168-yarder that features a beautiful rock formation and a nasty little bunker just short of the green. From the driving range, where instructional programs are now a focus, you can see the San Francisco Peaks almost 75 miles away near Flagstaff, while 360-degree views of the surrounding Prescott area are found throughout the course.

All of the changes have led to an overwhelming response from former members. “They saw the work in progress and were very excited, while others were very hesitant,” says Scrivner. “Once we got the clubhouse open even more came back. And, since then, we’ve also had substantial growth from new members.”

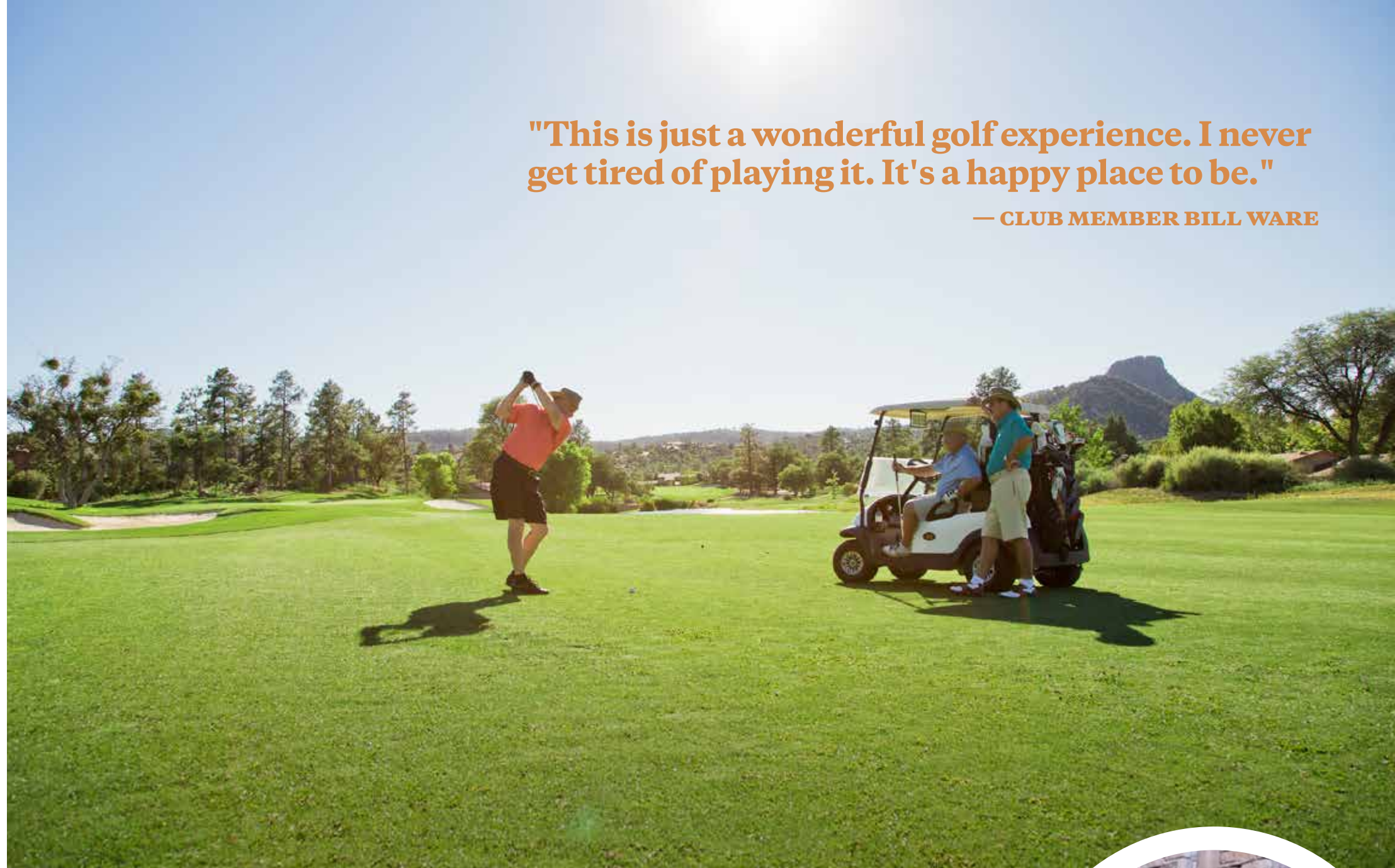
Although membership is rising rapidly, many of the nearly 300 members of Capital Canyon Club were members of the former Club. “To them this is now a different club,” says Scrivner. “It looks and feels different. It’s been great to have their support and they are incredibly proud of the club.”

“We’ve rolled out some creative new membership options geared toward attracting younger families,” Scrivner explains. “Our Pioneer Membership, for example, is designed for families under 45 years old with a tiered rate schedule. We’re really looking to support the next generations of golfers.”

The rebranding effort also included a new name and logo: “Capital” because Prescott was Arizona’s territorial capital twice in the 19th century; and “Canyon” because it’s in the Grand Canyon state. The modern logo features a partial rendering of the 100-year-old Yavapai County courthouse (listed on the National Register of Historic Places) in

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— CLUB MEMBER BILL WARE



Prescott’s town square two miles from the club.

The biggest fan of the club’s transformation may be Bill Ware, a 78-year-old former member who rejoined the club and played the course on opening day. “I saw him in the clubhouse after he finished his first round and asked him what he thought of the course,” says Scrivner. “He said it was unbelievable. And then he went right back out and played it again.”

Ware, who lives in a home overlooking the first tee and played the original nine-hole layout in 1958, has played Capital Canyon Club 167 times since July 2015.

“This is just a wonderful golf experience,” he says. “I never get tired of playing it. The vistas,

the elevation changes, the quality of the course. I was hoping it would come back. Every time I am out on the course I thank Jerre for what he and his team have done. I tell former members that they will not believe their eyes when they see this place now. It’s a happy place to be.”



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