



open page

richard wax

non stop craftsman

Pete Dye's work in golf design needs no introduction. His eighty courses including the TPC at Sawgrass with its 17th infamous island green, the heavily bunkered Whistling Straits and the scenic Casa de Campo layout in the Dominican Republic are legendary. His stamp on the modern generation of architects is firmly established. But how does he go about creating these works of art? I recently had the rare privilege of watching him at close quarters as he devoted himself to the shaping of a new golf course at Caesarea in Israel.

The developer had imagined a schedule for his visit combining tourism and time on site. That was not remotely in the Dye mindset. He dismissed any notions of spending time discovering antiquities to focus on the job in hand – the golf course. Quite literally from dawn to dusk, he walked the entire site with no wish to resort to the comforts of an air-conditioned Land Rover. For five full days, this feisty 82 year old poured himself into the concept of the course and gave detailed instructions to his on-site team.

Dye doesn't work in the normal fashion of precise routings and detailed construction drawings. He seems to conceive the layout of this three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle in his grey cells wherein it comes together like tectonic plates slipping into position. The sandy nature of the land is ideal for such free thinking. The course emerges from this mysterious process hole by hole. The strategy which Dye projects into the layout

becomes increasingly apparent to the beholder. A landscape which bears no resemblance to a golf course with its piles of sand parked seemingly in a random fashion is transformed by light bulldozers into a championship test for generations to come.



Dye's methods recall the very earliest designers who had no more sophisticated earthmoving equipment than horses dragging shovels across the soil to the architect's instructions. The proof as they say is in the pudding and this one-off designer proves his remarkable skills time and again. As Polonius says of Hamlet, "Though this be madness, yet there is method in't".

I'm impatient to play the course but as Pete says, "when you're half of a hundred and sixty four years old, I'm the one who is in a hurry!" ■

stakhanoviste

Pete Dye n'a pas besoin d'être présenté. Ses 80 parcours, dont les fameux TPC Sawgrass, Whistling Straits ou Casa de Campo, sont légendaires. Sa patte est la base de toute architecture moderne. J'ai eu l'occasion de le suivre de près au moment où il se consacrait, entièrement, à la mise en forme du nouveau golf de Césarée en Israël. On lui avait préparé un agenda mêlant tourisme et travail. Peine perdue, l'homme passant littéralement toute sa journée sur le terrain, à pied pendant cinq jours, à 82 ans, débordant d'instructions à l'attention de l'équipe de construction.

Pas de plan, pas de dessin millimétré.

Dye semble ne travailler qu'avec ses neurones, assemblant un vrai puzzle sur place. Le terrain sablonneux l'y aide sans doute, mais mystérieusement les trous apparaissent l'un après l'autre donnant déjà l'idée de ce que sera ce parcours de championnat, un parcours qu'il me tarde de jouer. "A mon âge", disait Dye, "c'est plutôt moi qui suis le plus impatient".