

Redesign is oh, snow good

Engh's magic touch in state is in evidence again at refurbished Snowmass Golf Club

By Steve Trivett, Special To The News
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Pat Cerjan has a problem.

The head golf professional at Snowmass Golf Club knows one of the game's strictest fundamentals will be broken every time he sends a foursome to the first tee.

"It's impossible to keep your head down," Cerjan says with a chuckle. "It's just so pretty here, you want to look at the scenery."

The old Snowmass closed two years ago for a "renovation."

It opened last month after what could have been the biggest renovation in golf course construction.

"We didn't leave a stone unturned, bulldozed, scraped or blown up," Cerjan said. "We moved 600,000 cubic yards of dirt in 100 acres."

Cerjan uses the editorial *we*.

The *we* really is course architect Jim Engh, who has transformed the Colorado landscape more than any event since the Rocky Mountains first poked their heads through the Earth's surface.

Named as the outstanding golf course architect in the country by everyone who names those kinds of things, Engh already had given Colorado the Sanctuary, Red Hawk Ridge, Redlands Mesa, Fossil Trace and Lakota Canyon Ranch before he started rebuilding the Arnold Palmer/Ed Seay Snowmass course that opened in 1980.

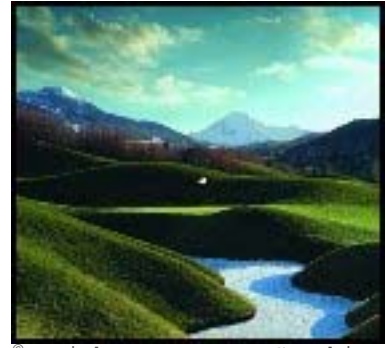
"The old golf course was just that, an old golf course," Cerjan said. "What Jim has given us is fantastic."

If you played Snowmass before Engh arrived, you won't recognize the place.

"Nothing is the same - not even the clubhouse," Cerjan said in reference to the new, ranch-style, 7,000-square-foot building that serves as the hub for the course.

Ah, the golf course. Welcome to Jim Engh golf again.

"It's as good a golf course as I've ever seen," Cerjan said. "I told our members in the last newsletter that we now have one of the best golf courses in the country."



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Architect Jim Engh is at it again, having transformed Snowmass Golf Club into one of the top destination courses in the state. Head golf professional Pat Cerjan said the two-year project on the course that originally opened in 1980 involved the movement of 600,000 cubic yards of dirt in 100 acres and the construction of a 7,000-square-foot clubhouse.

Each of the holes - there are five par 5s, five par 3s and eight par 4s - is a postcard. Engh built five tee boxes on each hole for good reason.

"We tell people to pick their own poison," Cerjan said. "If you don't pick the right one, it could turn into a long day."

Snowmass plays a little less than 5,000 yards from the front tees. It's a long 7,000 yards from the back.

And it gets in your face right away and stays there.

The double-dogleg, par-5 first hole is 595 yards from the tips.

The double-dogleg, par-5 18th is similar.

And in between is a 279-yard par 3.

"It's a 160-yard layup from the back tee to the front tee," Cerjan said with a chuckle about the third hole that drops 50 feet from the back tees to the 10,000- square-foot green. "But elevation is a big factor on nearly every hole. There are some places where it's a 100-foot drop from the tee to the fairway."

There also is plenty of water and sand.

"You need to take your sunglasses when you get into the sand bunkers," Cerjan said. "The sand is so white it will blind you."

But with all the changes, Snowmass did retain one of the most important facets of the game.

The course is walkable, and Cerjan has instituted a caddie program.

"Right now, I would guess that about every other group is walking and playing with caddies," he said. "It's nice to look out across the golf course and see the game being played the way it was originally played."

The playing season is May to October and there are more than a couple of stay-and-play packages available.

"It's a great experience," Cerjan said. "We're now one of the great golf destinations in the country."

For more information on Snowmass Golf Club, call 970-923-5600 or go online at www.snowmassclub.com.

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