



Photo: Karima Mohamed

Campagne returns to the Harradines for renovation

Golf Club de Campagne near Nîmes in southern France has reopened following a renovation by Harradine Golf.

“In 1966, my father Don was asked to alter a previous design at Campagne by another architect,” said Peter Harradine. “Unfortunately, some of the corridors in the woods had already been cut, which made it impossible to change the routing among the oak trees that typify that beautiful region next to the famous Camargue nature park. Despite the constraints, my father managed to redesign the layout into one that is still considered one of the top courses in France.”

In 1968, and working alongside his father, Peter designed the new greens and supervised the construction of the complete course. “It was a year I will never forget, due to the political unrest in the country at the time,” he

said. “Despite the various strikes and difficulties in obtaining machinery, fuel and personnel, we managed a grand opening in September 1970.”

Peter adds that Campagne has since seen 14 club presidents and even more green committees, which have only made very minor changes to the layout without consulting the Harradines. “This is unlike many other clubs that usually add useless bunkers that do not comply with the spirit of the original design,” he said, referencing an article he wrote for the April 2020 issue of *GCA*.

But in 2017, 47 years after the Harradines last worked at the club, Peter was contacted by club president Thierry Penchinat and committee member Eric Daguzon to discuss a renovation.

“The welcome I received during my ensuing visits reflected the bonhomie associated with that part of the country,” said Harradine. “I

asked them, ‘Why me?’ They replied, ‘We want continuity! Your father redesigned the course and you built it, so who else?’”

Peter, now working with his son Michael, developed a masterplan, outlining the scope of work, phases and budget.

“The most difficult task for a golf course architect is upgrading an existing layout,” said Peter. “There are 600 members... and therefore 600 golf course architects! Seeing as my father let me design the greens at Campagne, I asked Michael to design the new ones.”

The brief from Campagne included an instruction not to change the style of the putting surfaces. “The upgrade was to change the push-up greens to 100 per cent sand, in order to ease maintenance and increase putting speeds,” said Peter. “Michael did however add a few new features.”

Temporary greens were prepared on each hole a year before work began, so that the course would not need to close. “The temporary greens were excellent due to timely verticutting, rolling and overseeding,” said Peter. French firm Green Art handled construction, with Spain-based Turfgrass Agronomy & Services overseeing some technical aspects of the renovation project, which was supervised by the club’s head greenkeeper Vincent Pigeyre.

The new greens were opened for member play on 1 September 2023.

“Due to the fact that Michael designed the new greens, Penchinat insisted that he play in the opening competition to test them out,” said Peter. “Furthermore, he declared that Michael would definitely be back in 25 years’ time to supervise the other changes that we suggested in the masterplan!”