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Twenty-five years after its creation, **Lookaway Golf Club** continues to provide the distinctive golf experience that its founders strived to bring to Bucks County. page 72

A Vision Fulfilled

Twenty-five years after its creation, **Lookaway Golf Club** continues to provide the distinctive golf experience that its founders strived to bring to Bucks County.

by **MATT COSENTINO**

According to legend, it all started with a handshake outside of church between two golf enthusiasts who were seeking a top-notch experience close to home. It didn't take long for their idea to gain traction, and from those humble beginnings arose a club that has remained timeless and stayed true to its commitment to the sport and those who love to play it.

Lookaway Golf Club, a private, equity club nestled among the natural beauty of Buckingham in the heart of Bucks County, celebrates the 25th anniversary of its founding this year. It does so by honoring its roots while looking toward the future and continuously striving to meet the needs of Partners and their guests.

"I am so excited, personally, that Lookaway has now been in Bucks County for 25 years, is recognized as part of the community, and reflects the feel and charm of the area," says Jim Collins, a founding Partner and the outgoing President of the Board of Directors. "It's almost

impossible to duplicate Bucks County, and it's such a unique community to be active in."

Local residents Bruce McKissock and Harry Ferguson both belonged to private clubs almost an hour away when they were introduced in the late 1990s. Hoping to build a new course in the area, they enlisted the support of their fellow founders and purchased an historic property dating back to 1713. The original deed, showing William Penn as the owner, is pictured in Lookaway's clubhouse, which was built in the mid-1700s and is believed to be the oldest building being used as a clubhouse in the United States.

Of course, if the vision of the founders needed to have staying power, it had to provide a fantastic golf experience and not just a beautiful setting. Enter renowned architect Rees Jones, who designed an enjoyable course bursting with variety that can test golfers of all skill levels and keep them coming back for more, no matter how many times they've

attempted to master it. Playing to about 7,000 yards from the back tees, Lookaway has been ranked among the best courses in the state by *Golf Digest*.

"I've had friends who belonged to private clubs and I always wondered if they got tired of playing the same course," says Jim Clark, who was recently elected to succeed Collins as President of Lookaway. "But there's something about the layout of the holes and the course in general that keeps it fresh. It's a beautiful course, it's challenging but fair, and I've never gotten tired of it, not even after playing 80 rounds last year."

In 2014, Clark had just moved to Bucks County when his son was invited by a friend to play Lookaway. Despite living just a short drive away, Clark was not familiar with the club and soon went on a tour himself. He was so blown away that he signed on as a Partner before ever playing a round. He has been there ever since.

He became involved with the board a few years into his membership, and as President his goal is to maintain the impeccable shape of the course, to keep Lookaway financially healthy, and most importantly to keep the culture based on small membership numbers and accessibility to the club's many offerings.

"There are certain things in life in which there isn't a need for big changes, and I believe



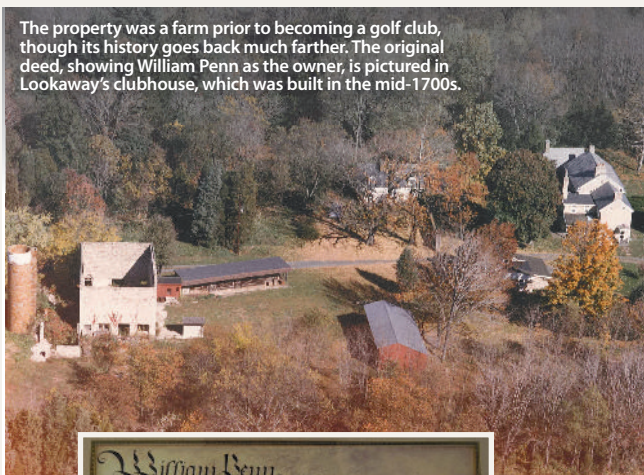
The view from the outdoor deck

this club is one of them,” Clark says. “Some people might call it exclusive, but I like to call it quaint. There are no tee times, most people know each other, you can play with almost anyone you want. I love that part about the club. It has a very laid-back atmosphere and a nice mix of people. We have some young families, we have some people in the middle of their life, and we have some of the original Partners, still here from the beginning.”

General Manager and COO Chad Fleming came to Lookaway in December 2021 after 20 years at a course in Princeton, New Jersey. With a long career in the sport that includes a background as a club professional, he finds it appealing that Lookaway is not driven by profit and remains focused squarely on golf rather than outings, special events, and weddings.

Catering to its Partners means having quality practice facilities and staff who can

The property was a farm prior to becoming a golf club, though its history goes back much farther. The original deed, showing William Penn as the owner, is pictured in Lookaway’s clubhouse, which was built in the mid-1700s.



Hole No. 17

help take their game to the next level.

“We’re fortunate enough to have some great PGA professionals and a great Director of Instruction,” Fleming says. “We try to have the best professionals available to our Partners. When it comes to technology, practice facilities, and our great short-game area, our focus is to improve those areas the best we can to the level that our golfers expect.”

Fleming adds that hospitality is also a priority, which is why the club strives to continually enhance the culinary experience. “From the food and beverage side, we try to offer personalized service, and we try to exceed expectations by anticipating Partners’ needs,” he says. “We know our Partners, we see them every day, so we know what they want. We know their dining preferences, we know how they like their drinks made, and it needs to be made that way every single time because that consistency is important.”

All of those components have added up to Lookaway no longer being a hidden gem, but a course that is drawing interest from all over Bucks County and beyond. To Collins, it’s a pleasure to welcome in a new generation of Partners as the club celebrates the 25-year milestone.

“We’re passing the baton for the next 100 years,” he says. “If you like to have fun and you’re a golfer, you’re one of us. Why do we love golf? It’s a game that can frustrate you or entertain you, but it’s all about bringing people together. That’s what golf is to me and to Lookaway.”

A reception marking the anniversary will take place in May. Even so, Lookaway will honor its tradition and the future for the entire year.

“We have several founders who are still here today, and it’s great to celebrate 25 years with them along with the newer Partners who joined recently,” Fleming says. “We’re continuing to thrive and hopefully we can do that for the next 25 years and beyond.” ■



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