



Baltusrol

Gil Hanse Hanse Golf Course Design

Gil Hanse is regarded as one of the most influential “minimalist” golf course architects of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. According to his portrait on the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) website, Hanse’s company—Hanse Golf Course Design— is “based on the principles of creating a small firm that takes a personal interest in the design and construction of each project. The company’s courses are simple and elegant in appearance yet sophisticated in strategy and interest.”

Gil Hanse, born in 1963, attended secondary school at Hunter Tannersville High school in Tannersville, New York, before earning an undergraduate degree from the University of Denver. He then earned a master’s degree in landscape architecture from Cornell University in 1989.

At Cornell, Hanse was the recipient of the William Frederick Dreer Award—the same horticultural award that Tom Doak received five years earlier—which allowed him to spend a year overseas with Martin Hawtree’s practice, studying the history of golf course architecture.

He spent a short time working with Tom Doak’s Renaissance Golf Design (Hanse was Doak’s first employee) before founding Hanse Golf Course Design in 1993. Partner Jim Wagner joined the firm two years later. Hanse quickly established himself as a top restoration specialist with a portfolio of work during the 1990s that included reworking William Flynn’s Kittansett in Massachusetts, A. W. Tillinghast’s Ridgewood in New Jersey, Seth Raynor’s Fishers Island in New York, and Donald Ross’s Sakonnet in Rhode Island.

A big break came at the end of the 1990s, when he was appointed to design a new 18-hole layout for Crail Golfing Society in Fife, Scotland. This commission significantly raised his stature as the Home of Golf hasn’t had too many American architects design courses on its hallowed links turf.

Restoration work for Hanse continued into the new millennium at golf clubs in several other American states, such as George Thomas’s North Course at Los Angeles Country Club, H. Chandler Egan’s Waverly in Oregon, Ross’s Oakland Hills in Michigan, Perry Maxwell’s Southern Hills in Oklahoma, and Ross’s Aronimink in Pennsylvania. He also conducted a well-regarded renovation of the course at TPC Boston in 2005.

More recent renovation work includes the upgrading of the three courses – Blue Monster, Golden Palm and Red Tiger – for Donald Trump at Doral in Miami. At Pinehurst in North Carolina, he reworked the No. 4 course (co-host along with No.2 for the 2019 US Amateur Championship), removing more than 25 pot bunkers and replacing them with sprawling, sandy native areas that tie-in seamlessly with their surroundings.

As the original designer of courses, Hanse has had numerous high-profile commissions, notably the golf course for the 2016 Rio Olympics in Brazil. He's also added a third course, the Black, to the highly regarded Streamsong Resort in Florida, created the Ohoopie Match Club in Georgia, and is currently working on the next 18-hole layout at Bandon Dunes Golf Resort in Oregon as well as a new course for the PGA of America's headquarters in Frisco, Texas

Outside America, Hanse has been involved in a number of interesting golf developments. He began an ongoing restoration plan for Tokyo Golf Club in 2008 before teaming up with Mark Parsinen in Scotland the following year to create the highly regarded Castle Stuart course near Inverness. He's since laid out the new course at Trump International Golf Club Dubai in the United Arab Emirates in 2017.

He is due to finish his first Asian course in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2021 and to complete another 18-hole layout at Les Bordes in France – his first course in Continental Europe – late this year. There's also ongoing renovation work at Royal Sydney in Australia and Narin and Portnoo in Ireland.

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