

EXCITING CHANGES AT FERNCROFT COUNTRY CLUB

New Owners Make Improvements, Draw Members

Change can be slow and painful. Think "personal growth." However, occasionally change is swift and pleasant. Such change came to Ferncroft Country Club in Middleton in February 2006, when the club was purchased by Affinity Management, and became independent from the Sheraton Hotel. Affinity manages private clubs, having worked with courses in 21 states since 1997. Affinity has invested \$1 million in renovations at Ferncroft and attracted nearly 300 golf members in what has been called one of the top-five club launches in the US over the last five years.



Just nineteen miles from downtown Boston on Route 1, Ferncroft is known to many for its Robert Trent Jones, Sr. designed golf course that hosted the LPGA Boston Five Classic from 1980-90. Under prior ownership by a series of hotel owners, however, it suffered over a decade of neglect. Affinity began correcting those issues immediately when six trucks showed up the morning after the deal closed to renovate the kitchen, 19th hole, and banquet areas. Drainage work commenced on fourteen holes and superintendent Michael Cassidy received new equipment. Renovations to the pool and tennis courts followed shortly thereafter.

The response from members has been strong. Ferncroft had no members when Affinity bought the property. The new owners hoped for 50 members in the first month. Instead 118 founder members committed within the first six days. Affinity managing director

Damon DeVito explains, "It was a huge vote of confidence accompanied by a responsibility to follow-through. We wake up every day with the goal of making those founders look like geniuses."

Corporate member Dennis Pellecchia of the regional accounting firm Braver PC frequently entertains clients at Ferncroft and also plays golf with his friends and family. He adds, "We host two outings annually for clients and staff members, and the club does a fantastic job. The food is the best I have had at any area club. This is also my favorite golf course in all of New England, and I have played a lot of great courses."

PROJECTS UNDERWAY THIS WINTER

include an expanded driving range and new short game area. The new range has a 40,000 square foot grass hitting-surface and is forty yards longer. The short game area includes a green, bunker and approach area, as well as a second green for short chips. The renovated practice facilities will immediately be considered among the best in the Boston area.

Head PGA Professional Phil Leiss calls the executive course a "gateway to golf" and says, "It is the ideal setting to learn the game or walk a few holes. One fellow earlier this year took his kids out for their first round and aced the first hole. We have a unique facility that made that memory possible."

LPGA Instructor Cathy MacPherson is an immediate beneficiary of the range renovations. Says MacPherson, "Last year my clients loved the service. I can't wait until they see these renovations. Several of them are already considering membership." MacPherson is rated one of the "Top 50 Teachers" in the USA by Golf for Women magazine;

"Top Ten Teachers" in Massachusetts by Golf Digest; and Best Teachers in the Region by Golf Magazine.

FERNCROFT IS NOW A FULL SERVICE CLUB with excellent food, social and children's activities, tennis, and swimming. Chef Stephane Baloy (Charles Hotel, Le Meridien) and F&B director Paul Krisko (Cheesecake Factory) have created a dining experience that founding member Bob Romsavich says, "is a 15 on a scale of 1 to 10." Director of golf Toby Ahern confirms, "There has been more change in twelve months than in the last fourteen years. It is extremely positive, and the team is outstanding."

THE LATEST UPGRADE IS THE ADDITION OF A FITNESS ROOM.

With consultation by former Bruins defensive legend and fitness aficionado Don Sweeney, the former Members Lounge was renovated this winter and fully equipped with cardio and strength machines. Sweeney comments, "Ferncroft was great to work with, first class. They wanted the best machines and the most efficient design to maximize the experience for members. I am proud to have been consulted, and I am thrilled to be a member." Fitness privileges are included with social or golf memberships.



Membership director Craig Berkel notes that interest in membership remains high. "In addition to the remaining golf memberships, we are also seeing interest from social and corporate members. Word has spread that it is a first class experience, in a fun atmosphere rather than being stuffy." **More information is available by calling 978-739-4040 or visiting www.ferncroftcc.com.** 