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HIT PARADE

Top golfers pick their favorite area holes

By TOM MOORE

Perhaps the most famous golf course designer in the world, Alister MacKenzie, settled down in Santa Cruz. He designed Cypress Point, Augusta National and Pasatiempo. He built courses around the world with a reverence for his personal inspiration, the Old Course at St. Andrews in Scotland.

And when he retired, it was to a house off the No. 6 fairway at Santa Cruz's Pasatiempo, his personal favorite of the courses he designed. He also liked that the weather allowed him to practice in his yard in his pajamas, according to the stories.

We asked some of Santa Cruz County's best and best-traveled players to weigh in with an informal survey of their favorites holes. They seemed to share Mackenzie's appreciation for Pasatiempo and the Monterey Bay.

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When it comes to great holes,
Isaac Weintraub picks the 14th at Pasatiempo.

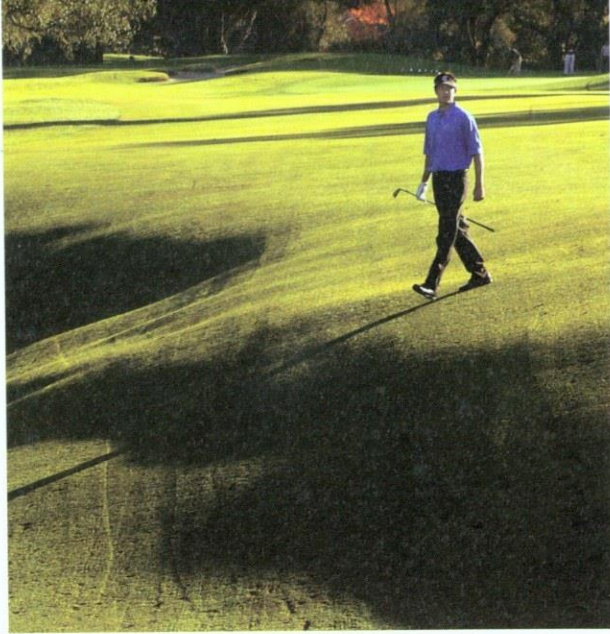
PHOTOGRAPHS DAN COYRO

Santa Cruz Magazine | 43

play}



Eddie Olson picked No. 1 at Pasatiempo for its reminder of the tough play ahead.



Pasatiempo wins nods from golfers as one of the bay's most beautiful and challenging courses.

Isaac Weintraub

Santa Cruz High graduate Isaac Weintraub is trying to make it as a pro. He played in the U.S. Amateur at Oakland Hills in 2002 and is playing on the Canadian Tour, looking to make the next step in his career. Asked if he had a favorite hole in the world, Weintraub thinks of home.

Pasatiempo holds all kinds of riches, but Weintraub's favorite is farthest from the clubhouse, an unassuming 426-yard par 4, the 14th.

"I'm a big fan of No. 14. ... It's kind of off the radar. It looks like it's from somewhere in Europe," Weintraub said.

The hole has out-of-bounds way right, tree trouble left and two deep furrows, almost tunnel-like, running through the fairway. Players seem to appear and disappear as they enter and emerge from the furrows. The second shot is played to a long narrow green, guarded by bunkers on the right.

Out of the county, he likes the first four holes at Spyglass and No. 8 at Pebble Beach Golf Links. He loved the famed No. 18 at Oakland Hills.

Tim Loustalot

DeLaveaga Golf Course head pro Tim Loustalot runs the city's outstanding public course. He played professionally from 1988 to 2000, including 75 events on the PGA Tour. He doesn't have to go far to find his favorites.

Around the world, he'll take the 18th at Pebble Beach Golf Links, the 543-yard par 5 running along Monterey Bay. He ranks No. 7 at Pebble, the 106-yard par 3 as the best short hole in the world. At home, he'll take No. 16 at Pasatiempo for its challenging tee shot and its wonderful approach. That's the hole MacKenzie called the best two-shot hole he ever designed.

Sandy Woodruff

Sandy Woodruff has played golf courses around the world. At last summer's California Women's Championship, she beat the state's collegiate stars — at the age of 57. She played in the U.S. Senior Women's North South Amateur at Pinehurst in North Carolina and at the U.S. Senior Women's Open at Sea Island Golf Club in Georgia, reaching the round of 16. Woodruff has a house on the 11th hole at Pasatiempo.

Asked to name a favorite, she went around the bay to Cypress Point, another MacKenzie design, to the 15th hole, a short par 3 framed by cypress trees and the water.

"... Everybody makes a big deal about No. 16. It's a par 3 too, but 16 is really long, the women play it as a par 4. Fifteen is 130-some yards. It's fun; it's beautiful. It goes along the water. You feel good to hit the green there."

At Pasatiempo, Woodruff's favorite is 16, with its narrow landing area and the three-tiered green.

"I've played a lot of courses. ... I've been to a lot of places and still, Pasatiempo holds up to all of them," Woodruff said.

Eddie Olson

Eddie Olson grew up at the Seascapes Golf Club. He won the high school state championship in 2004 and won the Northern California Amateur Championship and reached the second round of the U.S. Amateur in 2005. Now a sophomore at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, he plays tournaments around the nation.

But Olson said that if you could drop him on any tee box in Santa Cruz, he'd take No. 1 at Pasatiempo. The 457-yard par 4 looks out on green expanses, then down the hill to Monterey Bay. At times, it feels like you could hit a ball that might just keep carrying. Then it gets difficult.

Olson says he appreciates the view, but also the challenge ahead. It may look downhill, easy, with a fairly generous fairway and landing area, but it sets you up for what a long day you're going to have on such a demanding golf course.

Olson's favorite hole anywhere is the 416-yard par 4 No. 8 at Pebble Beach: From the blind tee shot, to the second shot over the ocean (and cliff) to the tiny, undulating green. The best part about the hole is not until you finish it, walk up to the No. 9 tee box and look back at the view of the cliff and the shot you just hit. It has, by far, the best second shot in golf in the entire world. It's a surreal hole, with its beauty sometimes getting the best of you.

Beaten by beauty — there are worse ways to lose. 🏌️

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Tim Loustalot and Sandy Woodruff like the challenge of No. 16 at Pasatiempo.

FAVORITE LINKS

RECOMMENDED LOCALLY:

◆ Sandy Woodruff owns Valley Gardens Golf Course in Scotts Valley (nine holes, less than 2,000 yards long, \$14 greens fees). It's a great place to learn, to get in a quick nine, to meet your retired buddies without costing a fortune. Woodruff's favorite: the downhill 160-yard par 3 No. 8.

◆ The city-owned DeLaveaga Golf Course features every shot in a scenic setting. There are no houses on the course, views of Monterey Bay, danger on every narrow hole and excellent practice facilities. Loustalot's favorites: the 350-yard par 4 No. 7 and the beguiling 535-yard par 5 No. 10, where there's OB right, a lateral hazard left, a ravine if you're too long, uneven lies if you're too short. Then the second shot gets challenging.

◆ Seascape Golf Club's gem isn't long (6,034 yards), but every undulating hole is unique. The greens are typically in good condition, and you don't want to be on the high side of the hole. The back nine includes three par 5 scoring opportunities. Eddie Olson's favorites are the course's difficult par 3s, No. 6 (207 yards), No. 14 (192) and No. 16 (192). \$45 weekdays, \$72 weekends.

SANTA CRUZ MAGAZINE RECOMMENDS:

◆ **Pajaro Valley Golf Club.** Just south of Watsonville, the public course offers small, well-protected greens and several elevated tee boxes with panoramic views. The best may be the 183-yard par 3 No. 14, farthest from the clubhouse. The course is 6,662 yards, par 72. \$50 weekdays, \$70 weekends.

◆ **Spring Hills Golf Course.** This privately owned course features an old farmhouse for a clubhouse and unique narrow holes. It measures 6,218 yards, par 71. Our favorite: No. 8, blind tee shot over a ridge sloping steeply left to right. Second shot plays to a tiny green and if you're above the hole, you've got an adventure. Greens fees: \$44 weekdays, \$54 weekends.

◆ **Pacific Grove Municipal** may be Monterey Bay's best bargain. The city-owned course is designed by Jack Neville, who also designed Pebble Beach. The unpretentious holes aren't long, but the back nine along Monterey Bay includes views unmatched anywhere in the world. Greens fees for out-of-towners are \$35 weekdays, \$40 weekends.