



**Written By Architect Ron Garl**  
**CONTINENTAL COUNTRY CLUB**  
**WILDWOOD, FLORIDA**  
**6,461 YARDS, PAR 72**

Pictured at right - Par 3 Signature Hole #17 is one of Continental's many unique holes.



**I**t's hard to believe that it was thirty-two years ago. I've been extremely fortunate to have designed over 200 courses in that time. However, I remember the first time I stepped on the land that is now Continental Country Club like it was yesterday.

I was really excited about the opportunity. It was going to be my first solo design. I knew and understood the challenges of designing a golf course and once I saw the site, I was absolutely thrilled. There aren't many architects who have a site like this for their first design. The only nerves I felt was being anxious to get started.

It was such a great site because of the natural vegetation. We had a tremendous variety of trees and specimen trees. It was really exciting.

We had at least a half dozen of the largest trees of their particular kind in Florida. Some of them were 20 feet tall. We had what was at the time the second largest cypress tree in the state. We made an immediate decision to make use of the trees and make them an integral part of the design. We were constantly making adjustments in our design. We were able to have the trees reflected in the strategy of the course.

The result was a championship course that measures 6,461 yards from the deepest tees. Combined in this design was a golf course that wouldn't over-penalize members and guests of all skill levels and a track that was a staple of the professional mini-tours that were a major part of the central Florida golf scene in the early days of Continental Country Club. It's safe to say that many of the stars of the PGA Tour have competed on the fairways and greens of Continental before they became the better known names of the game.

I realized back then that a golf course has to be both memorable and challenging. I was sure that the trees and natural vegetation of Continental CC would

make a round of golf memorable. We just had to find the way for those trees to provide a good bit of the challenge.

It's an indisputable fact that 32-years ago, equipment harnessed a lot of the power that we now see in golf. We honestly feel that the strategies that we employed have withstood the test of time and equipment advances just by outsmarting the golfer. I think I learned a lot while designing Continental CC and those lessons have stayed with me through the years.

Today, there are actually two ways you can present a challenge. You can do it with length, or you can do it with guile. That's guile as opposed to trickery. I firmly believe that you can design a golf course that will be all the golf course just about anyone could ever want as a test of all their skills and make it 6,300 yards long. It's the job of the architect to make the golfer think along with him. You have to force him to see the same shots, sense the same strategy as you have when you first drew the plan. Then the architect has to make sure that the most memorable part of the round wasn't the fact that the golfer crushed three or four 300-yard drives. Give the golfer something to think about and reward him with the satisfaction of having matched wits with the designer.

That was part of the challenge of designing Continental CC. I look back even now and think about the lessons I learned. It forged my design philosophies and they've stayed with me during all 32 years and they've held true in courses we've designed literally around the world.

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