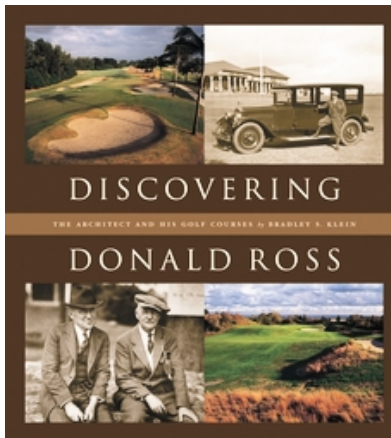


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### **Discovering Donald Ross**

Most golfers can probably point to Pinehurst #2 as Donald Ross's masterpiece and aficionados know that he was the head professional at Royal Dornoch. Continue to scratch the surface and some can recall he designed the incomparable Seminole in Florida, Oakland Hills in Michigan and Oak Hill near Rochester. Dig a little deeper and remember that he also designed championship courses at Aronmink near Philadelphia and at Inverness near Toledo. Jack Nicklaus grew up playing the Donald Ross designed Scioto in his hometown of Columbus, as did Bobby Jones at East Lake in Atlanta. Is there any question that Ross was one of the greatest course designers who ever lived? Most certainly not. Then why did it take until 2001 to have a comprehensive biography of him published? Good question.



This glaring void was filled with the publication of *Discovering Donald Ross: The Architect and His Golf Courses*, published by Clock Tower Press (Donovan & Jerris K7570). The book's thoughtful author, Bradley S. Klein has an eclectic background. Klein has been a PGA tour caddie as well as a university professor and he holds a Ph.D. in political science. Klein has served as editor of *Golfweek* magazine and is currently a senior writer there. He also consults on course design; his most notable work in this regard being the recently completed Old Macdonald in Bandon, Oregon. *Discovering Donald Ross* is so well done it won the 2001 U.S.G.A. Herbert Warren Wind Book Award.

The 367 page book is profusely illustrated with color and black and white images of Ross' courses and other historical events in his life. These are supplemented by individual hole design drawings done by Ross and reproduced with permission from the

various courses and by the Tufts Archives in North Carolina which holds a large body of the Ross legacy. Klein does a masterful job of weaving back and forth between the abundant number of courses Ross designed and the Scotsman's design philosophy, while also providing detailed insight into the man.



*Ross pictured at Pinehurst*

Among the ten chapters, there is one devoted to Pinehurst and its development as a southern resort. Especially interesting are historical pictures of old circular sand greens used at the time at Pinehurst. Another chapter is devoted to Ross's "Life and Character." Klein portrays him as a modest family man.

Pete Dye, writing in the foreword to the book explains why Ross was such a genius, "He was the first designer to make the opening shot play one way, then switch the kind of play needed on the second shot. Whatever he had done on the first hole, he'd flip on the second. He might set up a bunker on the right-hand side and expect you to cut your tee shot. He would then reverse that around the green and expect you to draw your approach." I have been lucky enough to play Seminole, the quintessential Ross course, and Dye's description sums up perfectly what makes a Donald Ross course so much fun (and so much of a challenge) to play. This kind of subtlety in design is what gives Ross courses such a lasting quality and puts a smile on the face of any prospective golfer who learns the course he is about to play was designed by this great architect.

The Ross oeuvre is large. The last section of the book lists over 450 courses to his credit. His biggest concentrations of work were in North Carolina, Florida, Massachusetts and Ohio, although he worked as far away as Cuba, Colorado, California and Banff, Canada. Through the time the book was published Ross courses had hosted 108 major championships including many at fantastic and lesser known courses such as Salem (Massachusetts), Plainfield (New Jersey) and Pine Needles (North Carolina).

10,000 copies of the first edition were published. A newly updated second edition of the book was published in 2011 with 2,160 copies printed. This new edition includes a new chapter highlighting the work Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw have done on Pinehurst #2 in addition to highlighting renovations to Ross courses since the publication of the first edition.