

Clip Notes

Links 2001/2003 Course Reviews

As you will probably be aware, I'm gradually re-reviewing my collection (pretty much every significant course available, I think) and changing them into the new v3 format. My focus for re-reviews in this edition has been courses that I think I may have originally under-rated, although I was quite gratified to find myself agreeing with my own verdict a number of times. 'Under-rated' in this case covers quite a wide span, from the ancient, creaky Bunker Highlands which achieved a 12 the first time, to Royal Kenya, to which I gave 38: probably still a low rating by Mike Jones standards!

Plus, of course, there are all the latest, and increasingly outstanding new courses, along with many in the latest trend of course updates. I'm highly in favour of dragging some of the older favourites out of the archive and smartening them up, and my gratitude goes to Matt and Lez who have polished up some of my favourite creations. Just occasionally, as with Cuckmere, some aspects miss the mark a little, but there's still no doubt that they are a distinct improvement, if only because I can sink a few more putts now!

I have had quite a bit of correspondence with Clip Notes fans, many of whom are also designers, since the last release, and I am very grateful for all feedback, positive and constructive. I'm only sorry I can't give all designers 50/50 for their hard work, but I rather think this would be a less comprehensive document if I did! One particular bone of contention of late has been the issue of unavailable courses. After mulling it over, I realised there were so many different reasons why courses were unavailable, and so many reasons why they might become available again one day, that I decided I didn't want to speculate on the (hopefully temporary) disappearance of some tracks in this document. So I've continued to put all courses from my collection on an equal footing, whether they're readily-available or otherwise.

The 'At-A-Glance' section of the Notes has become far too large and unwieldy, so I've edited it down to a Top 150-ish; to fulfil statistics cravings, though, I've included the spreadsheet from which the data is extracted.

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Updates in This Edition

New reviews

Barseback
Bartlett Springs
Billabongs
Black Water Pines
Buena Vista
Carlyon Lakes
Centenary Links Country Club (not a new course)
Claymore
Columbine Country Club (not a new course)
Darwin Point
Doonbeg
Engineers CC
Fullerton Woods
Gentle Hills
Hillhurst Country Club (not a new course)
Huntingdale
Links at Dred Scott

Logan's Mill
Morar Dunes
Mowsbury GC
Mountain Pass GCC
Newbury & Crookham
Pecan Valley
Royal Melbourne (Microsoft review has been replaced)
Sasquatch Crossings
Silver Springs
The General
The Links at Palawan
The North Surface Club
The Whipple Club
Whipping Post
Whistling Straits
Wildflower Terraces
Woodside

Designer-updated courses

Augusta National
Ava's Field
Blue Rain Valley
Box Canyon
Cape Wrath
Coomb's Mill
Crooked Creek
Cuckmere Links
Gooseneck Bay
Hunter's Wood
Indian Flats (Hills)
Indian Flats (Lakes)
Infamous
Innisbrook

Kanaal New
Mornington Peninsula
Muirfield Village
Prestige
Rockwater Resort
Royal Lytham & St Annes
Santa Barbara Canyons
St Andrews Old Course
The Barrens
The Reservoir
The Stonebriar
Tillicum Island
Western Heights

Format changed from v2 to v3 and re-reviewed

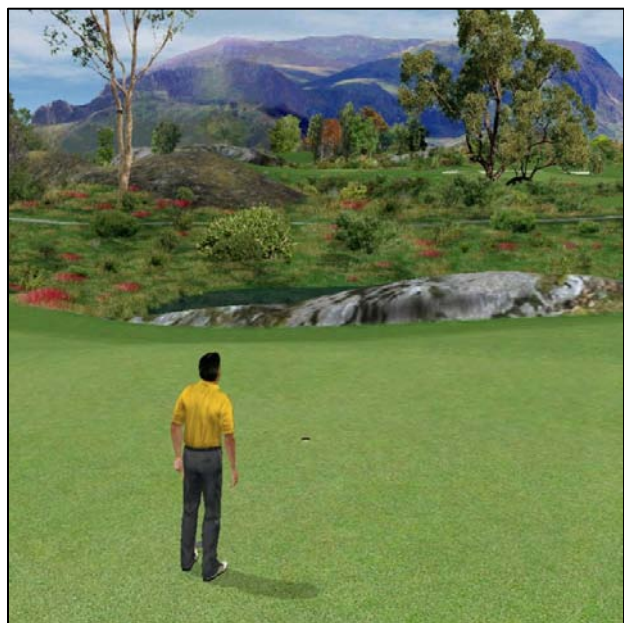
Arrowhead
Atana Hills
Avocet @ Wild Wing
Baltusrol
Buffalo Springs
Bunker Highlands
Bushido Gardens
Cardiff Springs
Carton House Montgomerie
Castle Rock
Centennial – Dunes
Centennial – Forest
Chateau Whistler
Cuan Stuagh
Dove Valley

East Mountain
Edgbaston
Flood Lands
Golf Club Gut Larchenhof
Gut Kaden CB
Hazeltilne
Helm's Head
Hills @ Palmetto Dunes
Kansas National
Koh Samui
New York Memorial
Mansford Waters
Medinah
Merion East
Myrtle Beach (North Carolina)

North Woods
Oakland Hills North
Pine Forest Hills
Pirate Cove
Prairie Dunes
Royal Kenya
Saxon Vale
Scirocco
Scotland's Hidden Gems
Selto Beach
Te Ihi O Te Rangi
Thanksgiving Point
The Country Club
Tribute @ Otsego
Willowgreens

5 Lakes Barrage

Tom Wagner



Description

Imaginary, marshland course.

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 4, on green

Concept

Imagine, if you will, an almost exact cross between Estate Heights and Rivendell. Well, believe it or not, that is the ground that 5 Lakes is trying to tread. To do so as well as it does is a testament to Tom's increasing ambition and assurance at laying out courses that are that little bit different. The closing stretch is a terrific mish-mash of towering rockwork and colourful planting. The course is a little disjointed at parts, but is pulled together well by the unusual red grasses and the constant presence of an

aura that is just that little bit different. 8/10

Appearance

While plenty of ambition has gone into the grand panorama, it does feel excessively stitched together after you've seen cityscape, pastureland and massive rolling mountains. It's that and the overblown rockworks that catapult this course firmly into the 'fantasy' category. Elsewhere, though, there's some assured planting, and the whole course is blended together and into the background surprisingly well. 7/10

Playability

5 Lakes is one of those wonderful 'what happens next' courses that keeps the player second-guessing. There are many opportunities to attack the course, and plenty to see thanks to the ambitious layout and constantly changing elevations. It's a shame there's little by way of ambient sound, but that's really only a minor quibble. 9/10

Challenge

You might expect this type of course to really put the hammer down, but you'll have a pleasant surprise. The fairways might be narrow, but the landing areas are pretty generous, and the greens are tricky but readable. The rocks and water won't snap up too much, but the heavy rough just might. Just the right side of fair. 6/10

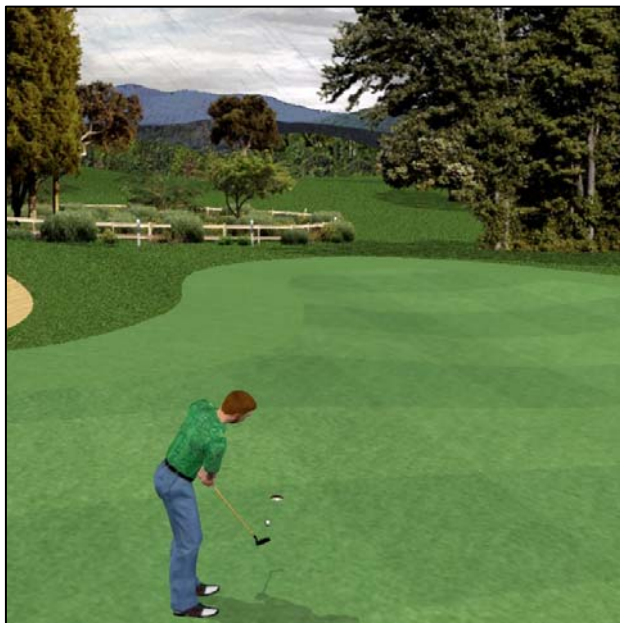
Technical

There are just a few odds and ends that it's easy to pick up around this course. It's too easy to see mesh faces on the rocks, and the stitching of the panorama is uneven. More than once I found a surface with an odd assignation (rock acting like wood, and soforth). Thankfully, the planting is novel and exciting, and the coherence and challenge of the course support it very well. 7/10

Overall	A rollercoaster of ride from a man who is rapidly pioneering great fantasy course design. I, for one, would like to see much more of it.	37/50
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7 Lakes Golf Course

Wayne Kerns



Description

Fictional, lakeside course

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 5, on green.

Concept

A lot of good ideas have clearly gone into 7 Lakes. It's a convincing lowland environment using a variety (perhaps a few too many, it might be said) of APCD techniques, and incorporating well-designed holes that follow the landscape nicely rather than trying to work against it. The eponymous lakes are brought into play subtly rather than forcefully. It's a crying shame, then, that despite all this the course suffers from a lack of attention to presentation, with some poor mesh errors dogging the play

and the hole previews inexplicably vanishing halfway through. 5/10

Appearance

It's possible to find all the extremes here. Certain areas of the course have received much attention – lovely planting with minimal cloning and an eye for unusual object placement that makes the course all the more memorable. But there are also some horrible extrusions and mesh problems – some very crude indeed – and a few scaling errors that take your eyes off the prize. 5/10

Playability

A featureless and rather dull first half opens out into a second half with – if not as much challenge – certainly a great deal more enjoyment. Fairway-shaping and good green complexes are key here, and only a few slightly silly conceits get in the way of a very adequate layout. 6/10

Challenge

For the age of this course, the greens have largely been kept to a puttable standard, and it's the prevalent rough that provides much of the fairway challenge, rather than over-enthusiastic hazarding. Sadly, the second half breaks down on what seemed so convincing at the start, and it's rather too easy to pick up strokes on holes of rapidly-shortening average length. 4/10

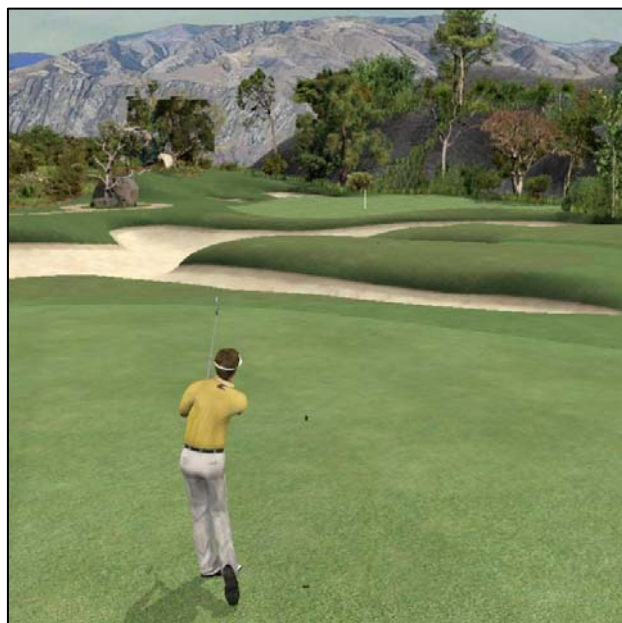
Technical

You'll be a patient golfer to overlook some of the more unsightly problems here at 7 Lakes. There has clearly been a lack of testing; a crying shame in retrospect for a course with plenty to offer. The speckly textures urgently need an overhaul, and this is one of those many courses where we might all benefit if the designer took a second look some eight years on. 4/10

Overall	Some nice golf disguised amid layers of technical competence and inadequate testing.	24/50
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Absarokee Gap GC

Lonnie Lindell



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 4, from fairway

Concept

Despite its Montana location, there's something very alpine about Absarokee Gap. The mountain streams, the pale flowers in the grassland, and even the central brick-walled reservoir are both unusual and evocative. The golf itself is a little more extreme – some very target-friendly holes and golfing puzzles await. It wouldn't cut much ice as a tournament course. 6/10

Appearance

As we have come to expect from Lonnie, the immaculate care taken with the planting is a real selling point for the course. The mix of trees is both varied and natural-looking, and the rocks on both plot and panorama lend the course some real tone. The mass of objects around the clubhouse are a real treat at the end of your round. There's very little wrong elsewhere, a terrific panorama and tidy texture uses, although the mud texture around the streams stood out as being somewhat low-resolution. 9/10

Playability

The layout tends towards the sadistic here. Several tee shots are forced blind, and the water hazards are hardly muted. Those that like a test of hole strategy will get a lot out, but there's likely to be quite a bit of frustration in store until you've learned the course. It's nice to hear some carefully-plotted ambient sound, but there's also a fair bit of sound lag which will demand patience. 4/10

Challenge

You'll need to approach every shot carefully at Absarokee Gap. A fairway wood is almost mandatory from many tees and the course elevations play their part too. Those who play with caution are likely to be rewarded with birdies, and probably an eagle or two from the Par 5s, but the holes just after the turn are a fierce test, as are the excellent closing quartet of Par 4 holes. 8/10

Technical

Lots of good APCD work here, although you get the impression the designer has stretch credibility when it comes to course layout. There are quite a few holes here that are just too extravagant and don't really appeal. Time might be better spent on studying good design. 8/10

Overall	Visually, a treat, but then disappears into over-ambition before halfway round. Sometimes a bit more restraint is a good thing.	<i>35/50</i>
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Ackerton Cross GC

Lez Marwick



Description

Fictional, marshland course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 5

Par

72

Location

The readme suggests Central England – Warwickshire or Leicestershire.

Conditions

Playable on F*/F*, but some difficult slopes make M*/M* a better option.

Concept

With a terrific backstory, and an almost unequalled portrayal of English grassland, Ackerton Cross is a thoroughly realistic and convincing creation. To a point. The fact that it is a bunker-free course is a bit of a gimmick, but one that is carried off reasonably well, although there is a lot of licence taken with water hazards and OBs in the absence of sand traps. But the trappings of an authentic course are present, and very convincing indeed. 7/10

Appearance

Wow. The planting and textures combine perfectly to make this one of the most lifelike environments we have seen in a fictional courses. Things such as fences, pylons and the very British industry-scape on the panorama are all judged to perfection. The watersides are, for the most part, covered up very well, but there were just a few that betrayed a hard edge between the water and bordering grass. 9/10

Playability

It has to be said that it's difficult to notice the absence of bunkers on the first play, such is the variety of challenges and engaging target golf that the course presents you. The designer has done well to put the trademark hole on the halfway point, and just ease up slightly on the challenge throughout the back nine, just when it feels like the course is getting on top of you. Excellent atmospherics and plenty to enjoy in the view are an additional blessing. On later consideration, though, you are very reliant on getting perfect fairway and green position on certain holes, which isn't quite the draw it could be. 8/10

Challenge

With no bunkers, there's a lot put behind the multitude of water features, and frankly the greens are ramped up to silly levels in parts. Playing with strong wind conditions or fast greens is almost certainly going to be a one-track route to a score in the 80s. Thankfully, sensible play and sensible conditions will result in a course that is hard, but not too hard. 6/10

Technical

There's absolutely no doubt, on the basis of Ackerton Cross, that Lez's visual talents are right up there with the very best. But it's also evidence that he needs to 'shoot-or-bust' when it comes to some golfing excesses: either tone down his courses a little, or throw caution to the wind and produce a flat-out imaginary course. 9/10

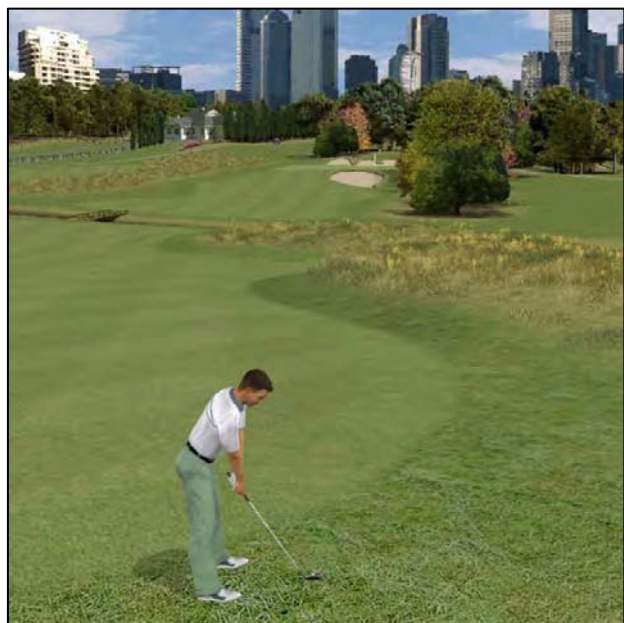
Overall

A beautiful-looking course, but one which almost certainly would have been better without its own gimmick.

39/50

Adam's Tree Golf Club

Paul Seaman



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, from rough

Concept

The underpinning theme behind Adam's Tree is so much more than a golf course. In case anyone doesn't know the story, it's the result of a brilliant rallying around by Links Corner to create a course to raise a little cash for community member Noel Kilner and his son Adam after the latter was seriously injured in a car accident. Regardless of the nobility of this concept, what has been created here is a superb golf course. Paul Seaman is normally better-known for his recreations of Scottish courses,

but here is a totally convincing fictional parkland course set outside Adam's Melbourne hospital. Reminiscent of Bethpage in its layout, the course boasts a spectacular criss-crossing of rivers and fabulous attention to detail, plus contributions from a multitude of friends and well-wishers. Magnificence, indeed. 10/10

Appearance

Adam's Tree has it all! A superb panorama, amazing textures and bunker modelling and an attention to detail that encompasses sprinkler heads and tiny 3D bridges. The planting is terrific and the landscape never less than totally convincing. The real-life basis for the course design is a definite plus in this instance. 10/10

Playability

There's very little in the way of fanciness or gimmicks here, and all the better for it. The hole design is subtle but inspired, there's a good selection of ambient sound, and the environment is completely immersive. I enjoyed myself immensely, without ever feeling I was submitting to the course. 9/10

Challenge

Given the designer's relative lack of experience with fictional courses, you might imagine that the course would either be a pushover or frustratingly hard. But it's pitched perfectly: bad shots are punished by the soggy under-tree terrain, and delimited hazards are used precisely and tactically without being overbearing. Any given hole could yield birdie or bogey depending on pin position and your game. 10/10

Technical

Crowning glory. Immaculate textures and blends, a much-improved terrain on the dry river beds, and 2D and 3D structures galore mark Paul's mastery of the APCD. And all in a good cause too. 10/10

Overall	Everyone's new favourite course. Quite simply the best thing available for Links since Crystal Pines.	49/50
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Aitch Heath Municipal

Mitch Sirk



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Even the most mediocre of courses can be brilliant in the hands of a great artist. And that, frankly, is a good job, because Aitch Heath really can be the most mediocre of courses. The wide-open fairways and unimaginative landscaping mark it out as a very routine British municipal course, although the first hole offers an interesting risk/reward option which – one suspects – is more tempting in Links than in real life. There's something faintly miraculous about the tender transformation into an almost magical course, which earns Aitch Heath

more than it might have been otherwise worth. 6/10

Appearance

From the scrubby planting, to the brilliantly down-at-heel rubber tee mats, to the spectacular panorama, Aitch Heath just oozes authenticity. The Read-me states the course as damp and soggy, and the verdant green textures do a marvellous job of convincingly re-creating this. Perhaps a little more might have been done in the way of long grass, but otherwise it looks extremely professional. 9/10

Playability

Great looks maketh the course, in this case. While it's unlikely that many of the holes will grab you in terms of risk/reward, and while the hole length remains obstinately stubborn, the course is still pretty playable if you're prepared to be immersed in its dank London setting. The lack of good Par 5s (the course is a Par 69) and the same-y feel to several holes count against it, though. 6/10

Challenge

I doubt that Aitch Heath will do much to pressure or further anyone's game. A routine round of 18, even in real life, fairways are too easy to hit, and most greens do not provide much challenging. Hazarding is sparse and almost coincidental to the round. While it's a generous course for people starting out on PS or RTS, the overwhelming impression is that it is just too easy. 4/10

Technical

A brilliant choice of textures in all parts of the course, and a superb panorama all add up to give Aitch Heath a totally immersive experience. A classic of golf it will never be, but a classic in how to make golf designs look unassumingly realistic it most certainly is. 10/10

Overall	Ordinary golf, from an extra-ordinary course designer. You'd be sorry to miss this one.	<i>35/50</i>
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Alta Vista CC

Dave Newman



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, on green.

Concept

The makings of a decent foothill country club are evident here. Alta Vista uses large fairways and greens to tempt the player into a false sense of security, but has a trap or two waiting as well. The layout is excellent in parts, particularly the 12th and 13th holes and the closing pair of Par 5s, but also bereft of ideas in places on the first half and resultantly tending towards the silly. 5/10

Appearance

The stock textures range from the moderately successful to the downright ugly, and the hit-and-hope approach to planting has resulted in quite a few clones. Rockworks are stretched and rushed, and there is a well-overused if pretty panorama in evidence. Thankfully, the course elevations allow for scenic views of several holes and prop the course up sufficiently. 4/10

Playability

Unfortunately, Alta Vista seems to encourage pretty lazy golf. There is only a little pretence at giving choice to the golfer, and for the main part it's all too easy to just blast tee shots and take birdie chances as they are given to you. Things like flat greens and irrelevant hazards help in the pursuit of simple, unthreatening golf. If you're in the mood to just turn your brain off, though, there are not many better places to do it. 5/10

Challenge

After the first couple of holes, there's not really too much by way of threats, and it's all too easy to clock up a rain of birdies from about the 7th hole onwards. 4/10

Technical

It seems to me that many of this course's good points have been happened upon by accident. There are a lot of problems here, from the unacceptable overuse of stock, to the artificially flattened greens, and quite a few holes that are shoe-horned tight up against the plot. The whole thing cries out that there has been a lack of focus and planning on the part of the designer. 2/10

Overall	Certainly not the designer's best-looking course, but one with some surprising appeal in parts.	20/50
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Ammolite at Old Man River

Lonnie Lindell & Tressie Orosz



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, canyon course	9 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Mid-Canada		
Conditions		
I wouldn't venture beyond M*/S*, thanks to some poor pin positioning		

Concept

Ammolite has intriguing and novel views around the course, including all manner of course buildings from the extravagant to the down-at-heel, and there has certainly been an effort to produce something original. The holes that go with this surround are exciting, if somewhat derivative: the influences of Bethpage and Medinah are very apparent, and the general tone does stray away from feasible in places. 8/10

Appearance

There's some really ambitious landscaping here, not least in the towering, atmospheric panorama with its signature canyon bridge. A delightful eye for customisation and planting complements it down on the plot. But there is a lot of blurriness hanging around, some stretched textures around some of the bunkers, and a poor choice of scheme for the running water features makes them look very old-fashioned. 7/10

Playability

Enough good fantasy holes here to have people coming back for more, but there is also quite a lot of subtlety, most of all on the front nine, where good placement and course management very much take precedence over grandstanding and over-the-top hole designs. It's a course good enough to stand on its own merits without slipping into excess later in the round. 8/10

Challenge

Despite some pretty heavy green slopes, I found it reasonably easy to approach pins at Ammolite, and – even on the basis of a couple of rounds – have already had a number of approaches within five feet. It's certainly no breeze: there's plenty of potential to get buried in the woods and darkness, but even then you get a reprieve, as there is playable terrain even in what might be the roughest of hazards on other courses. With a good recovery game, you can expect to rescue par more often than not. 6/10

Technical

There are still some rough edges to this course, but given that it's still in Beta testing at the time of writing, perhaps this should be accounted for. It's certainly easy to overlook the need for some more texture work in favour of the rich imagination and golfing design that has gone into this course. Definitely Lonnie's most exciting work to date. 7/10

Overall	A new and distinctive look does a lot for this course, and it's an intriguing exploration.	36/50
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Ampersand Lake Country Club

Dan Wilson



Description

Fictional, lakeside course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 3, greenside.

Concept

You'd think basing a course on real landscape would be conducive to a natural-feeling and realistic set of holes, wouldn't you? Sadly, that's just not happened at Ampersand Lake. While the landscape has been used to best advantage, the whole thing feels enclosed, tricked-up, and frankly more like a crazy golf course than anything else. The designer has gone unconscionably far to put hazards, planting and fairway elbows exactly where you don't want them, and the whole thing just doesn't add up. 3/10

Appearance

It's nice to see customised textures, but frankly the bright green colour scheme is out of fitting with the panorama, and the mud and rock textures simply look massively out of place. Extrusion marks make an appearance, and the planting is sadly relegated to the stock library. A pointless and intrusive set of paths winds its way around the whole lot. This has the potential to be so much better. 3/10

Playability

Casual golfers will want to steer clear. It's very easy to lose patience with Ampersand Lake, thanks to the sadistic course layout. But, having said that, there occasionally manifests a flash of inspiration and strategy for the golfer. A shame that most won't consider playing through the course in order to find them. 4/10

Challenge

Birdies here will certainly not fall into your lap. The course is long, made longer thanks to the penal hazarding and fairway shapes, and features too much heavy rough and blind or blocked shots. The greens are fair, on the whole, but it'll be difficult enough even to set up that birdie putt, let alone sink it. 5/10

Technical

As it stands, the course feels rushed. Blends are used intermittently, and there should be far more low-level planting. Bunkers and tee boxes feel hurriedly inserted. With a tidy-up and some more customisation, Ampersand Lake could go far. Until then, it's something of a non-entity. 4/10

Overall	A blueprint for what a good golf course might one day become, but not a lot more. Could use a thorough re-plant and re-think of some hole shapes for starters.	19/50
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Amsterdam International Golf Club

GolfGrafix (Peter Beckwith)



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, marshland course	15 th hole, Par 5	73
Location		
Netherlands		
Conditions		
M*/M* seems to be the limit for some of these greens.		

Concept

Deep in the water-logged Polderland, there appears to be a really impressive creation being put together here. With water understandably playing a large part, the course also has a surprising reliance on subtle undulations and gradients, with quite a few plateau greens. Some holes, including the 11th and 16th, are absolutely stand-out, and it looks like a potential Ryder Cup course is being created. The Links work, done under the guise of GolfGrafix by the talented Pete Beckwith, is of a very high standard. 9/10

Appearance

A delightful touch with the planting comes as no surprise, and the clumps of trees are naturally similar without ever being obviously identical. The deft touch extends down to the grasses and the subtly-detailed textures underneath – although some deeper blends wouldn't go amiss. There's a good panorama and detailed bunker work to back it all up. What I did find somewhat jarring, though, was the bumpy elevations in parts. There's no doubt at all that the landscaping needs careful attention to detail here, and that's made for a somewhat uneven reproduction in links. 8/10

Playability

There's an interesting mystique around these as-yet unfinished courses, and you feel privileged to have a sneak glimpse at hole that haven't yet been fully realised. Having said that, there's a feeling that perhaps someone was trying a little bit *too* hard in putting Amsterdam International together: there are a lot of forced carries and a lack of any 'breather' holes around. It's a full-on and breathless round. 8/10

Challenge

I'm sure in real life, then this would be a real toughie, but this is another of the legion of examples that just lose a bit of bite on Links. Being able to negotiate safe approaches from the rough, 190-odd yards out, are that little bit easier with your computer Ani, and some of the carefully-moulded almost links-like bunkers are much easier for the amateurs than was the original intention. It's certainly not too easy, but there's plenty of birdie-space here. 5/10

Technical

Commercial course rendering has come an awful long way over the years, and other than a few hard lines here and there, there's no reason not to be impressed. 9/10

Overall	An impressive new venue with plenty of ambition to be among world-class courses.	39/50
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Anakena Beach

Lez Marwick



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, tropical course	3 rd hole, Par 5	72
Location	South Pacific	
Conditions	Acceptable at F*/F*; designer's recommendation is a notch slower.	

Concept

Featuring, as do all of Lez's courses, a terrific and engaging back-story, Anakena Beach is set on a (nearly) deserted Pacific island and put together strategically without resorting to the gimmickry of some of his earlier courses. The sense of location is awesome, with a bare horizon and beautiful blue sea visible from nearly every hole. It's only the layout that baffles me somewhat – I find it hard to believe that a recreational golf designer felt the need to include a 650-yard Par 5, and why has the difficult trinity been placed in the unlikely run between the 3rd and 5th holes? 9/10

Appearance

The rocky and overgrown bunkers are very fine indeed, as are the different colours of flowers that dot the planting towards the end of the round. The coastline is delightfully done with layers of textures and there's a great line of customisation in the Polynesian heads that dot the course. It should probably be noted that the bare horizons make finding a suitable sky match a difficult prospect. 9/10

Playability

Anakena Beach is much more consistent than previous tropical courses, and indeed previous courses from Lez's *oeuvre*, with few unpleasant surprise and excellent strategic options. The long holes and short holes offer most, with the Par 3s on the back nine being excellent lessons in clever, minimalist design. The sound is crucial in completing the atmosphere, and it doesn't disappoint. This is one to come back to time and time again. 10/10

Challenge

With very little of the course playing OB and some tight landing areas, you can expect to be extracting yourself from the deep grass and the beach. Indeed, the grass could even handle being a bit heavier, thinking about the course's location. Once past the big test near the round's opening, though, there are birdie chances to be picked up, not least from the remaining par 5s. Some tighter green bunkering might help toughen this course up the fraction it needs. 7/10

Technical

A flawless effort, with perfectly-judged customisation in the textures and planting. The improvements in judging accessible golf are the perfect finishing touch. 10/10

Overall	The island course not to be missed. Outdoes its tropical predecessors in nearly every respect.	45/50
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Angland Challenge/Castle of Doom

Michael Savicki



Description

Imaginary, concept course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4(!), teeing off from the castle turret.

Concept

Not content with hitting us with original concept after original concept, Michael Savicki decided to throw two at us in one course. Angland Challenge is allegedly an English parkside course, and Castle Of Doom is played in and around an impressive 'haunted' castle just off the coast. While the second half surpasses anything Savicki has ever done in terms of original golf, the first half – sadly – is a serious drag, and offers very little. The parkland holes do not have the fine touch of the best designers;

there is way too much target golf, and more than one hole appears to be an unconstructed mess. 6/10

Appearance

Generally very average. Even in the castle, textures are blurred and distorted and on occasion it becomes hard to see what you are doing (the 10th and 15th holes being the most notable examples). Stock textures on Angland Challenge make it appear an afterthought. To compensate for this, the terrain structuring (the bridge and castle, especially) are diverting and much better to look at than anything in Wacky World. Custom objects are used much better than in Savicki's other creations, and the 16th is worth looking out for as he thanks all his Beta testers by putting their heads on spikes around the green! 5/10

Playability

The course of two halves sadly plays the same way too. Angland Challenge is dull, dull, dull. There is little risk-reward; the greens are flat and boring and never has nine holes gone so slowly. The castle is a completely different beast, and from the second you tee off from a giant skeletal hand, you know you are in for an utter, utter treat. Wall banks, massive flop shots, and one utter surprise (the inimitable 17th) keep you riveted to the very best in problem-solving golf. Some will turn their noses up, but most people will have a great time. 6/10

Challenge

Again, Angland Challenge lets the course down. There is no excuse for 500-yard Par 4s and 600-yard Par 5s, and these holes present a slog-fest with no discernable challenge. The lack of strategic Par 4s is annoying, and the Par 3s do not present much in the way of originality. To be honest, the Castle is not much better: once you have solved the puzzles, then there is no alternative way to play the holes, and the replayability factor diminishes accordingly. 3/10

Technical

Michael Savicki has done wonders making huge bridges, castle walls, and even Big Ben out of the terrain, but stock textures and the occasional extruded tee box let him down. Some course sounds are poorly placed. Like Wacky World, flat green syndrome rears its ugly head, and makes putting a boring and soulless experience. 5/10

Overall	Pair a poor first half with a stunning conceptual second, and sadly you find that people will only remember the second half. So much more could have been made out of the castle.	25/50
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Anglewood

Ross Anthony



Description

Imaginary, lakeside course

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

A trendsetter in being arguably the first P2P course, Anglewood adheres to its designer's tradition for extravagant design, leaving no stone unturned and frequently stomping back over stones that have been turned once too often. It's certainly more an outlet for the designer's extravagances than for coherent, quality golf, and for that one might wonder exactly what has been done to earn P2P status. The answers are here, buried in some impressive early techniques, but you'd need to be an aficionado to call this

one a favourite. 4/10

Appearance

Oh my. This almost defines 'mixed bag'. Look closely enough, and you'll find some impressive early uses of textures, but it's likely that these will be swamped by the obvious: heavy reliance on stock objects and the Whistler panorama, frequent clones and very little by way of customisation. It's difficult to justify this during the modern quests for photo-realistic perfection, and the regretful conclusion is that it's very disappointing indeed. 5/10

Playability

'A good day out' has frequently been the saviour of many Ross Anthony courses, and the first few holes give some hope for what lies ahead. False hope, as it turns out. By the turn, the hole design is delving into the clichéd, and gets really quite silly around the 13th and 14th. It's surprisingly tedious stuff if you've seen it all before. Not terrible or punishing, but tedious. 6/10

Challenge

Anglewood is reasonably moderate in many areas, notwithstanding one or two greens that verge on the extreme, but the artificiality leaves you wondering whether the challenge is being presented purely on the basis of the designer's whim. Natural-challenge holes could be counted on one hand, even if you were Captain Hook, and birdies may be regarded as even a little unsatisfying given the nature of the shots you are expected to pull off to achieve them. 7/10

Technical

It's very difficult to give credit here. Paying customers would at least expect some originality and customisation, and perhaps a bit less silliness. The creative use of textures is admirable, but so much else doesn't really come up to the mark. 4/10

Overall	Too little freshness and imagination to warrant the purchase. A disappointment from a designer who promised more.	26/50
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An Ocean Bluff Country Club

Jeff Sanders



Description

Imaginary, ocean course.

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Ocean Bluff was an early Links design, presumably aimed at being a Pebble Beach with the weirdness factor turned up to the max. The first half dozen holes feature some unlikely, and improbably hard, ocean-hopping, before a longer back stretch leads you around a larger and heavily forested grassy island. It was disappointing that during this back stretch the designer's ideas appeared to dry up, but the 18th was a little masterwork – a two way hole: either a lengthy dogleg, or a shorter

approach over a very steep hill. 6/10

Appearance

Not exactly impressive. The stony edge to the islands never looked realistic or particularly appealing, and one par 3 is just plain ugly. The stock textures are stretched and edges are sharp. Several plantings were out of scale, particularly noticeable closer to the greens. There was a very nice communications sea vessel that redeemed a little bit of credibility for the designer. 3/10

Playability

What starts as an interesting and fun course quickly becomes tiresome as you are forced to hit straight and accurately (I don't think I used a wooden club all round). The island greens are rapidly becoming a hackneyed idea, and are of course very tough to hit with long-irons, which was wearisome. The back 9, in particular, became very repetitive, and I found my attention wandering well before the end of the round. 5/10

Challenge

The designer has tried to incorporate some element of risk/reward, but it is misjudged. The harder shots tend to the suicidal, and effectively this reduces you to chipping gently around the fairways. As mentioned above, the island greens are inappropriate on many holes, and one dog-leg hole forced me to tee off with an 8-iron! It seems like a straight choice for the player – either trudge round with a steady par, or spend hours perfecting that 3-wood approach to an island green for either 12+ or many many mulligans. Probably the best aspect were the greens, which generally provided a gently-sloping challenge, particularly on mid-length putts. 4/10

Technical

Several extrusions leapt out as being obvious and sharp, and as mentioned above, the planting could use a lot of work. Because this is a very early APCD course, it seems unfair to criticise, but it looks very primitive compared to today's efforts. A tropical course such as this one is a great opportunity to go to town with custom textures, and the designer hasn't really taken this up. 3/10

Overall

An early effort, and as such easy to overlook. Much better island and tropical courses have been created since.

21/50

Antelope Flats

Lonnie Lindell



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Was it wrong of me, I wonder, to expect an imaginative African plains course, given the name and splashscreen? As it is, there's no getting away from the fact that the course is a little disappointing if your expectations run this far. It's not terrible, by any means, and the second half runs to some impressive and fun hole designs, but in so many ways the course does little more than toe the design line. 5/10

Appearance

Very sweet indeed, Antelope Flats ticks all the right boxes. Good texture use and blending, and the forest regions look very nice. Some of the grass and low-level planting, in fact, is superlative; a shame it's let down by some indecision in the rough regions as to whether grass should be planted or not. There are more positives, though, including some well sculpted bunkers and unusual water lining. The main problem with the course is the 'flat' of the title, which means a distinct paucity of spectacles. 8/10

Playability

The front nine, to be honest is almost completely unremarkable. Holes don't particularly stimulate or challenge you. Thankfully, after the turn, there are some entertaining two-route holes and distinctly more to see and do. Overall, though, there's just too much seen-it-before syndrome to this course, and it's something of a disappointment. 4/10

Challenge

A good pitch between tough and simple greens, punishing rough and clever escapes, water hazards and bunkers. 'Nothing to excess' seems to have been the designer's motto, and it pays off brilliantly. You'll never – if ever – feel that Antelope Flats has treated you unfairly, and will probably just score one or two birdies above average. 9/10

Technical

A little bit of hardness in the 3D and waterside textures is one of the few downsides here. I think the designer's priorities with the APCD need to be to make decisions and stick to them, and to possibly incorporate the spectacular element into his courses that will have designers returning time and again. 8/10

Overall

A shame it wasn't the Kenyan game park I was imagining. A competent course without too much to remember it by.

34/50

Apple Mountain Golf Club

Christopher Blanchard



Description

Real, mountain course.

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Every now and then, it's refreshing to see a course where the landscape provides the challenge, rather than a multitude of artificial hazards. There is only one bunker at Apple Mountain: instead the course relies on some devilish uphill approaches and sharp green run-offs to dazzle the punters. Variety it's not, but a different round of golf it most certainly is. 6/10

Appearance

For a recent release, this is disappointing. The designer explicitly says he left out detail in order to keep the filesize down, which seems like a nonsense. There is little in terms of texture use or blending that really stands out, and despite the paucity of forest areas, some clones are apparent. The surface water is, on occasion, far too shallow and poorly blended. 4/10

Playability

Despite the mediocre look to the course, this plays reasonably well. After a while you will tire of your approaches missing the high greens, but the holes around the turn, as well as the excellent 18th, provide some additional stimulus and should keep most golfers happy. It's one of those that you'll come back to every now and then to relive some adrenaline-pumping moment. 6/10

Challenge

I thought, starting off, that Apple Mountain would provide a stern test. The first is easy to birdie, but then you find the true tests of the course, and your score will remain static. Unbelievably then, I birdied seven straight holes around the turn, and it seems that playing this course is a one-trick deal. If you find the way to birdie one hole, the same tricks will help time and time again. 5/10

Technical

So much more could have been done here, and people who deliberately keep file sizes low will win few favours from me. The textures and shapes look old-hat and amateurish and without those tricky bunkers far more time could have been spent on smoothing out the elevations. Credit to the designer in that the course plays well despite these problems, but up to date it's not. 4/10

Overall

Those who hate bunkers will love it here; the rest will soon get to grips with the elevations, and the course will become routine.

25/50

Arbor's Way

Michael Hamilton



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 5, approach.

Concept

Annoyingly difficult to pin down, Arbor's Way almost feels like a mountain course at points, sometimes woodland, and then definitely an ocean course as the dramatic closing hole pops out onto the coastline. The unusual but stylish use of rock textures reinforces something a little different, particularly on the opening few holes.. Broadly speaking, it's not a lot more than a working creation for an aspiring designer to start pinning down some hole ideas, and as that it succeeds very well. But there's no

real coherence or sense of location to the place, and it's difficult to warm to the idea as a whole. 4/10

Appearance

The minty-green textures look lovely in close-up, but very very bland from mid- and long-distance perspectives, and the washed-out flavour really permeates into the course as a whole. Shapes are often a bit hard-edged, with extrusion marks obvious in places, and there are barren areas of the course which are noticeable through planting that isn't quite dense enough. There are a few signs of optimism – some nice use of walls and a good eye for planting, but the overall impression is just a bit lacking. 5/10

Playability

The designer clearly has an eye for intelligent and interesting golf, and you'll find a range of holes here, from those demanding guts, to distance control, to out-and-out precision. The whole thing is varied, interesting and Mod-friendly; set off with enough nice visual touches and sound planting to warrant a return visit. 8/10

Challenge

First creations are often difficult to judge well, particularly when they're aspiring to make good golfing brainteasers at the same time. There's a reasonable attempt to penalise the player with intelligent bunker use and clever green design, but for the most part it's just too easy to extricate yourself from trouble. 5/10

Technical

A real mix, to be honest. There's credit due for picking out some highly-detailed textures and creating some good coherent golf. But the environment is sadly lacking, the blend alphas are all very routine and speckled, and a steel tree or two isn't really helping the play at all. The panorama is too low, which makes you feel you're playing on clifftops at certain points. 5/10

Overall	A well-assembled course, and one which plays very well, but closer inspection will reveal some features lacking.	27/50
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Ardennes Dunes – Links Course

Andrew Jones



Description

Fictional, dunes course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

A stunning interpretation of coastal sand dunes sits centrally to this inspiring and innovative design, and it's easy to see how this became the original, mould-breaking P2P course. The degree of devotion on the part of the designer definitely warrants payment, and that's quite apart from the fact that Ardennes Dunes represents some brilliantly conceived and laid-out holes in a totally immersive setting. Keep an eye out for a surprise on the 15th if you pick the right pin position! One of the greats. 10/10

Appearance

The planting is a delight: the windswept grass on the three-tone dunes textures and spindly trees alike. The course has been made over with new textures and the coastal regions no longer look out of place, nor are the fairways quite so starkly contrasting with the rough. This course has its own, defining look – a rare trait that perhaps only occurs a dozen or twenty times in the entire Links oeuvre. 10/10

Playability

Rough, wild sand dunes do not play happy host to some narrow, twisty holes, but luckily there are few hidden penalties, other than the links-style pot bunkers which litter the place. There are a few blind tee shots, too. Where Ardennes Dunes really excels is in atmosphere: turn the sound and the wind right up and you'll be in a golfer's barren paradise, lost in the wilderness with the boom of the breakers sounding in your ears. 8/10

Challenge

The elevations were long a source of controversy here: the designer's attempts to emulate St Andrews having resulted in some impossible putts. The latest edition has gentled them up slightly, but there are still some immensely tricky situations, although to be honest the slowest green conditions would probably be the most realistic here. If the test was going to be tough, I'd have preferred the dunes to be really ramped up instead. It's a lot more playable than it was, but it just doesn't feel quite right. 8/10

Technical

For the age of course it is, perhaps we had a right to expect a little more from this update. Quite a few holes don't fit easily with the dunes, and the 3D bridges have ceased to become remarkable and instead just look a bit silly. It's still enormously good golf, but if the best courses can have subtle changes appended to them, why can't this? 9/10

Overall	Unique and original, even six years down the line. A very special golfing atmosphere.	45/50
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Arrow Canyon Resort

Art Patscheck



Description

Imaginary, desert course.

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

A convincing locale at the foot of the Rockies, you can almost feel the raucousness of Las Vegas' Strip. Obviously an influence for the later episode of bonkersness that was Rocky Nuts, Arrow Canyon is far more contained, but shares the same fantasy elements and has no more flat ground. Having the desert as playable terrain was a nice touch and adds a lot to the round. 9/10

Appearance

Look closely at the deserts and there are plenty of clones; a pity, because the desert need not be so heavily planted. The surrounding hills play fast and loose with the mesh, and there are some most un-lifelike folds and elevations. The most impressive aspect of the course is a near-complete view of every hole from the tee: there are no blind shots here! 6/10

Playability

Most desert courses are lax at offering strategy or risk/reward: Arrow Canyon is no exception. The holes are narrow, not particularly delimited or shaped, and offer very little other than a precision driving test and the continuous challenge of changing elevations. Thankfully, there's sufficient variety for this never to become a bore: the course as a whole plays rather smoothly. 7/10

Challenge

My biggest bugbear is the deep rough abutting almost directly onto the fairway. With the added inconvenience of the desert surround and constantly changing slopes underfoot, this becomes an unnecessary awkwardness. Because of the fantasy-like environment, you'd be forgiven for taking a few mulligans out on the course with you to help pick up your game. 7/10

Technical

I know a lot was improved in the 2003 P2P version of this course (which I don't own); in the earlier version, flaws with the planting and elevations are easily picked up upon. Consider if you will, though, the age of this course and how well it has dated. Art is one of the true geniuses with the APCD and everyone has to start somewhere. 7/10

Overall

A contender for the best desert course. Admittedly, it is a weak category, but if you only want one sandy paradise, make it this one.

36/50

Arrowhead Country Club

Art Patscheck



Description

Real, woodland course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

South Carolina

Conditions

I'd stick to S*/M* owing to some of the greens after the turn.

Concept

There's a pleasing reclusivity to Arrowhead, isolated as it is among dense forest. The course starts slowly, although with notable and heavy use of water, and becomes a glorious riot of trademark holes from the 11th onwards. It has to be said that modern big-hitters are in the process of negating some of the course's charms, and some holes are less than imaginative, but the test on your driving game is consistent throughout. 8/10

Appearance

While there are signs of the course showing its age – some pretty awful cloning and no texture blends – there are also the hallmarks of a great at work. The water hazards are expertly elevated and the choice of textures is delightful. The enclosure of the course is complete and convincing and it still looks pretty sound several years on. Certainly better than the age, and small filesize, might suggest. 5/10

Playability

The back nine is a veritable treat, calling upon a host of well-known hole types, but giving each one an Arrowhead twist. It's terrific golf, requiring bravery and a working knowledge of the course, and the shaping of nearly all holes demands accuracy and imagination. The course is short, it's true, but the precision required means that length is rarely a factor. Classy stuff. 8/10

Challenge

There are quite a few reachable holes, particularly from the middle tees, and one Par 5 that is short enough to be a Par 4 anywhere else. This has been negated by an undesirable amount of green contouring, rendering several putts all but unmakeable. Put together, this might keep your score in check, but it's hardly the perfect balance. 5/10

Technical

Even as long ago as this course's release date, there couldn't be any excuse for such a huge amount of cloning, and it sadly does detract from play at point. Elsewhere, the designer has very much exhibited the high standards that have we have come to expect, and credit must also be given for the choice of course. 6/10

Overall	Aging but still compulsive and very playable, particularly down the home stretch. Don't pass this one up.	32/50
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Ash Mountain

Zeke Seidel & Curtis Killaly



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Curtis ‘flaz’ Killaly has the unfortunate reputation of being a half-finisher of courses, so it’s nice to see at least one finally come to the fore. Ash Mountain is a relatively flattish and subtle mountain course with a great grasp of strategic golf (although cynics might say it’s a little too well planned) and displays very little clash of personalities in the two stages of construction. The course really does radiate the co-operation and good spirit that has gone into its design, although it does also betray a lack of

confidence in the design when large, bare stretches appear between holes. 7/10

Appearance

There’s a lovely and unexpected degree of customisation on this course: things like tee markers and hole boards all scream the course insignia back at you. The planting and under-planting are right up there with the best, too. I can’t say I’m wild about the bunker lips, which sometimes seem to be mis-mapped, and I can see the good intentions behind the rockwork, but that just seems to be a bit rough also. 8/10

Playability

The custom objects go a long way towards keeping this course memorable, and the clever hole design is a bonus, although more often than not you know you are playing a ‘constructed’ golf course, rather than a natural one. Plenty of Par 3s (the course is a short 70) make for good pin-shots, and the lengths are well mixed up. It’s a great, settling round. 9/10

Challenge

14 pars in my test round tell me that here is a supremely well-judged course. There is little about it that one would consider unfair, excepting perhaps some bunkers irritatingly close to good driving spots. Mountain courses are usually a little harder than the average, though, given their elevation work: could it be that the designers have missed a trick here? 9/10

Technical

With a superbly professional panorama, a convincing colour set and nary a hint of which designer have done what, Ash Mountain is well into the ‘very good’ class of courses. I can’t say that the rockworks drive me wild, nor some of the hazard edges, but these are only little blots on a great landscape. 8/10

Overall	A modest mountain course in an indefinable location. Plays a lot better than it might sound and a candidate for a tournament favourite.	41/50
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Atana Hills

Larry Dale



Description

Fictional, farmland course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 3

Par

72

Location

Hard to place this one, but I'd say NE England if pressed.

Conditions

Despite some very moderate greens, one or two poor choices mean you should stick to S*/S*

Concept

One of those easily-overlooked creations, Atana is a course that has clearly occupied someone's mind for some time and has been carefully realised with the APCD. Some errors are immediately obvious, but to those who aren't looking to nitpick, they should find – at heart – a well-wishing round of golf, perhaps with a slightly over-large error margin in terms of player ability. Individual hole design is cunning without being outwardly challenging, with much of the emphasis on club selection when playing against gradients. 6/10

Appearance

Sadly, for a 'Hills' course, the plot has been managed quite poorly; the sharply-graduated hills contrast badly with the acres of flatness that are a trademark of APCD inexperience. But the planting has been worked carefully, with some apparent effort to avoid clones and create a thick, yellowing undergrowth that is really quite credible. My favourite touches are the strips of fenced farmland that add character and realism at stages throughout. 6/10

Playability

With the explicit conceit behind the course, it's not surprising that you'll grow quickly tired of blind, uphill approaches, and many of the tee shots are also to unseen fairways. But, this niggle aside, there are a variety of interesting little situations and shotmaking challenges around Atana Hill, and there's an underlying strategical challenge that should appeal to many. 6/10

Challenge

The Par 3s here, though pretty, are generally pushovers, and birdies can be frustratingly easy to pick up with the pins in the right place. A handful of driveable Par 4s, and a few completely unprotected greens, don't help matters, and the overall conclusion can only be that this is a rather easy course. 3/10

Technical

It's good to witness a designer thinking closely about location and golf, but for all that there are a fair few rough edges at Atana Hills, not least some very poor plot handling, and rather nondescript and featureless textures. Given its age, it's almost as good as can be expected, but these days we do tend to expect so much more. 5/10

Overall

Interesting strategy on the face of things, but all a bit too pat and easy once you dive in.

26/50

Atlantic Point GC

Mike Jones



Description

Fictional, links course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

From the master of all that is Links (both with and without the capital L) comes Atlantic Point. A game amble around coastal dunes, thankfully not too penal or foreboding, it lacks some of the immediacy of other Jones courses but none of the style, panache or photo-realism. The short stretch of two holes that winds along the coast are simply stunning; perhaps other holes are less ingenious than the traditional MJ hallmark, but that shouldn't put anyone off. 8/10

Appearance

Surely the best planting done to date in Links, Atlantic Point removes anything that was poor or repetitive in Northern Dunes or Pacific Breaks (the other two-thirds of this trilogy) and refines the planting to the point of genius. The textures, as ever, are perfectly matched and it is brilliant to see bunkers that are not over extruded. An example to any other course scoring a ten. 10/10

Playability

Certainly no problems here. The feeling of incipient repetitiveness is cleverly avoided through a great mixture of hole lengths and – with careful restraint - not leaving the tests of skill until the back nine. As a links course it's wrong to expect too much ingenuity to be deployed, but perhaps it would have been nice to see a more open feel to the course rather than the restricted fairways and enclosed greens. 9/10

Challenge

Somewhat easier than the Mike Jones standard, you might expect to complete Atlantic Point comfortably under Par if your game is up to scratch. Mainly to thank for this are the trademark shallow bunkers and, in contrast, some surprisingly unpunishing rough. The lack of penalty stroke hazards is another bonus for the wayward. 7/10

Technical

It might be an overworked phrase, but this really is utterly flawless – a cut above anything else in terms of planting, bunker sculpture and totally believable coastline. Who needs gimmicks when creating courses comes this naturally? 10/10

Overall

Not quite the best Mike Jones course, but effortlessly among the Links elite for all that. Brilliant work from a talented man.

44/50

Augusta National

Andrew Jones et al



Description

Real, estate course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Georgia

Conditions

Playable on F*/F* with care and patience.

Concept

Incredible design and layout complement the austerity and sheer prestige surrounding Augusta, to the extent where very little extra needs to be said about it. The slippery greens are protected effectively by a variety of hazards, the famous Amen Corner is one of the most challenging stretches in golf, but the real test comes from the stiff slopes, particularly on approach. The Links re-creation was so thorough that the 1.06 Mod was designed with this course in mind. A must-have for all golfers. 10/10

Appearance

The delightful planting, customised for the large part, is due for an overhaul but still is very evocative of the rich flora around Augusta. The hand of several designers in making this millimetrically accurate is still very evident though, and it's frequently difficult to believe you're not playing through photos of the real thing. The next release, with trees and plants re-done, promises to be a cracker. 9/10

Playability

For most people, the joy of playing this course is going to be comparing ourselves to Snead, Nicklaus and Woods, re-creating famous shots and trying to prove ourselves better over a course that we are already very familiar with. Even if you've never seen the Masters (and why are you playing a golf sim if you haven't?), this course is immensely replayable, with a multitude of opportunities to practice a sharp draw or a big-breaking putt. Every hole, including the 'easy' start, presents a fresh and original challenge. But the rendering times are lengthy, and – I don't know if it's just me – there's this nagging feeling that you're spoiling Augusta's very special aura by plodding round on a golf sim. 9/10

Challenge

The continual adding of length really pushes Augusta into the hardest class, and it's not difficult – without the distance achieved by the pros – to be hitting wooden clubs off the fairway. The greens are every bit as tantalisingly tough as in real life, and the appreciable amount of still water presents a constant concern. Early Augusta renditions were perhaps a little too easy: the trend has very much swung back towards the challenge presented by its real-life counterpart. 7/10

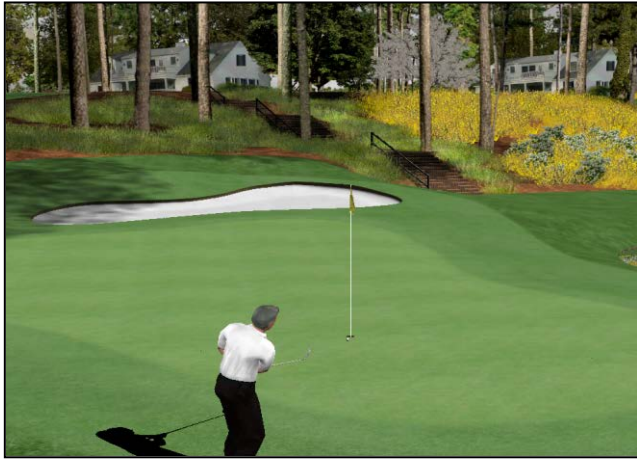
Technical

The wealth of big names that have had creative input into this rendition in the past cannot be denied, and it was the first Links design to take replication to the level of obsession. With a dedicated update schedule, it's still every bit as good. 10/10

Overall	The course everyone needs to own; lives up to its billing perfectly.	45/50
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Augusta National Par 3

Eddie Schmidt et al



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, short course	9 th hole, Par 3	27
Location		
Georgia		
Conditions		
The 7 th green might make you think twice about F*/F*		

Concept

No matter how great the location or the air of austerity that surrounds this course, it is a little disappointing as far as 9-hole Par 3 courses go. The 2nd is clearly under-worked, the central pond is used to excess, and the greens are largely unprotected. The lovely resonance of Augusta is here in spades, and the diligence of the designers is very apparent in that respect, but it's difficult to remove the fact that this is little more than a pitch'n'putt course. 5/10

Appearance

Awesome work in the trademark azaleas, and indeed all the many flowers that dot the course. The course buildings are easily overlooked but worthy of attention too, as is some crazily intimate 3D modelling (see that handrail?). Finally, the course also has the textures it deserves: elsewhere you might criticise them for being close-cropped and neat, but attention to detail like this is only to be expected at Augusta. Incredible. 10/10

Playability

Turn the crowds on full for the proper Augusta Wednesday experience, and – probably uniquely in the Links archive – so much is added to the gameplay. Played in isolation, the course is dull and forgettable, but if you can convince yourself you're actually there, then this is terrifically immersive. It makes a grand little course for settling bets and trialling MoPs too. It wouldn't surprise me if this course has actually clocked up more computer plays worldwide than any other. 8/10

Challenge

The emphasis shouldn't really be on how difficult this course is, but it's no stretch of the imagination to say that people will find it pretty easy. With all the holes coming in at well under 140 yards, there's no need for anything more than a nine-iron here. Sure, the greens are small, but the bunkering is virtually irrelevant and chip-ins are legion. Even on Augusta's preferred slippery settings, you'd expect to be well under par even on nine holes. 3/10

Technical

Pixel-perfect work here, and attention to detail that might never be matched. One look at the flowerbeds will betray exactly how much dedication and love has gone into this little plot. 10/10

Overall	Possibly the most minutely-detailed recreation available for Links. The course isn't really much cop after a dozen plays, but you'd never be without it.	36/50
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Autumn Valley Golf Club

Wayne Hewitt



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, estate course	15 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
It's a guess, but it seems to most often be the forests of New England that inspire these colour schemes.		
Conditions		
Pick your flags carefully and you might get away with M*/M*.		

Concept

Autumn by name and of course very much by nature. The riot of oranges and pinks are real trademarks of this course, and the October look has rarely been carried out as convincingly. It certainly doesn't feel gimmicky – the course layout is far from standard with back-to-back Par 5s and Par 3s, but you wouldn't notice – and the homeliness is helped by a slew of course objects and designer touches which were radical at the time. From a general atmosphere standpoint, Autumn Valley has dated very well indeed. 9/10

Appearance

Well, there are no modern touches in this pre-seam-blend course, but you'd barely notice. With a host of outstanding 3D work (although not on the clubhouse) and excellent use of depth and perspective, the course is presented impeccably. The planting has been the main watchword here, of course, and is excellent at all levels, with variety and depth to the underplanting. 9/10

Playability

A really enjoyable layout here, and I had a blast revisiting this classic. Lots of emphasis on well-placed drives and long-term strategy sits shoulder-to-shoulder with some real chancy holes, and you're helped with clear hole previews and a course length which isn't overbearing. With a good gradient in hole difficulty towards the end, it's virtually impossible not to lose yourself in the course. 9/10

Challenge

While it's likely that scores close to par will be registered, it's all too clear that the greens will be responsible for all gains and losses here. The equation is simple: set slow greens and score low, or set middling greens to score close to par, but you'll feel cheated out of most of the shots that were dropped due to difficult slopes on the lawns. 5/10

Technical

Conceived by a future APCD legend, this exhibited quite marvellous technique at the time – a little dated today, perhaps, with no seam blending or bunker lips. Grass planting has come on a long way too: there's a lack of density and coherence in the undergrowth. But there are courses of the time that have dated far worse than this. 8/10

Overall	A classic. Still looks great and has plenty to keep players coming back for more.	40/50
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Ava's Field

Todd Meyers



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, heathland course	7 th hole, Par 3	70

Location

NSW, Australia

Conditions

Reasonably playable on F*/F*.

Concept

A Par 70 course stretched out to Championship lengths, Ava's Field is set among bushland with a very authentic Australian feel. Not without a vicious set of teeth, the course demands pinpoint accuracy amid the long grasslands, uncannily-placed bunkers and a water trap or two. It's very coherent and well-produced but despite the consistent high quality of design running through the course, it's clear this is a fictional creation. Think none the less of it for that, though. 8/10

Appearance

Beautiful soft textures and planting are to be much admired, although there are a fair few hard edges, particularly around the green fringes, which don't really work. The consistency of appearance and the dried-out planting throughout the course is excellent, though, as is the shack-like clubhouse, and they only add to the believability of this creation. 8/10

Playability

Restrictive courses such as this can often be something of a drag to play, and a player missing their snap won't take kindly to Ava's Field, it's true. Some holes, particularly on the back nine, border on the unfair. The big redeeming features are the luscious course location, and a few unobtrusive Easter Eggs snuck in by the designer, but it's not really balanced enough to be a tournament course. 7/10

Challenge

There's a frustrating inconsistency to Ava's Field. Whereas some holes are very open, easy to tackle and birdie-able, several more are created with less regard to an even slightly wayward golfer. It's hard to get any momentum going, due to the course's unpredictability and a variety of ways of making the rough inescapable. It might not all end in disaster, but there's a strangely anti-climactic feel as you finish the round. 6/10

Technical

I'm impressed with the efficiency behind this course and the look that has resulted from trying to achieve something new. The hard edges and sharp corners remain, in a minority element, and some of the elements of the course don't quite gel, plus there is an ongoing problem with the balance of the golf, but altogether this remains a professional creation. 7/10

Overall	An authentic Down Under course with terrific visuals. Not ideally set up for competitive play due to a short par and some awkward challenges.	36/50
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Avocet at Wild Wing

Art Patscheck



Description

Real, woodland course

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 3

Par

72

Location

South Carolina

Conditions

You might hazard M*/S* with easy pins.

Concept

A clean-cut old-school championship course, Avocet's woodland setting is a natural home for its tight fairways and closely-protected greens. Even if it doesn't really set alight until the back nine, there is plenty here to remind you that you are playing on an elite course, even if it does step into the shadow of Augusta or Pine Valley. The adaptation is aging, but it is still very clearly the work of a Links pioneer, which will continue to give Avocet a home on many hard drives. 7/10

Appearance

The attempts at underplanting are weak by modern standards, but other features still hold up well, notably simple bunker lips and convincing water features. The stretches of featureless rough look weak despite some good textures, though, and there are quite a few clones visible in the treetops. 6/10

Playability

Some penal and uncreative holes on the opening nine can easily leave a golfer frustrated, but luckily there are some world-class strategic holes such as the 14th and 18th later on. It has to be said that there is a lack of options throughout and that this is very much a test of meeting the designer's challenges rather than creativity. 6/10

Challenge

Avocet, like many courses of its era, now presents something of an artificial challenge, not least in greens that make for unrealistic putting. The lack of deep rough is a disappointment, too, and it's difficult to feel properly punished. Having said all that, there is unmistakably a fair and repeatable test here, and there is still tournament potential. 7/10

Technical

Undoubtedly some aspects are dated, but here there are still the hallmarks of the first-class pioneering work that Art Patscheck's courses all brought to us. It is unlikely that many of the great championship courses would have made it to links without the techniques that were honed on tracks such as this and that makes Avocet an important part of Links history. 6/10

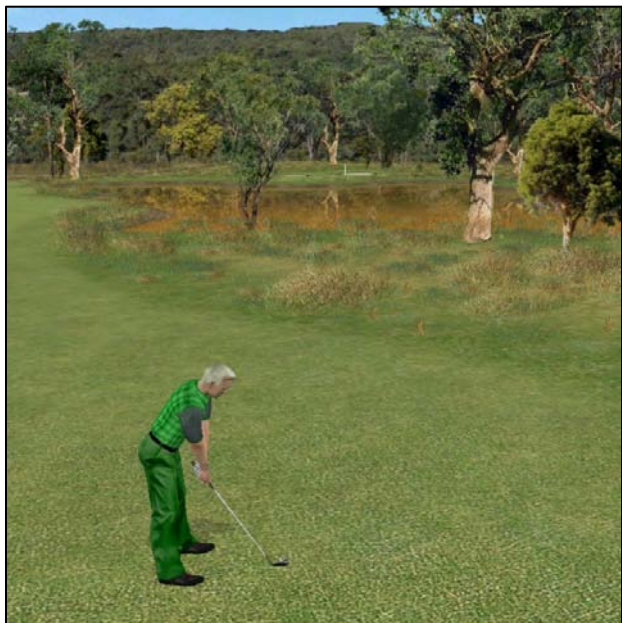
Overall

A great championship course which retains some elements of playability and surprise, much to its credit.

32/50

Awaba Forest Golf Club

Jason Thorpe



Description

Fictional, forest course

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 5, from rough.

Concept

Awaba forest is real; the golf course is emphatically not. Amidst a delicate juxtaposition of trees, 18 fairways wend a treacherous path. The whole forest is drought-stricken and quite fragile for it. Never straightforward; always surprising, Awaba Forest, then, is most definitely is a bolt from the blue from a semi-inexperienced designer. The enclosed woods and lack of civilisation mean that you are playing in relative isolation, though: the most common thought going through the golfer's

mind is that they are getting inexorably lost. 7/10

Appearance

After some of the flaws that marked Jason's previous course, a fantastic attempt has been made to craft a delicate landscape, replete with beautifully soft blends and a massive variety of customisation in the woodlands. It looks fine, although close-to some of the trees are a little pixelated and delimited. 9/10

Playability

Despite some unfortunate flaws, this course plays remarkably well. There's plenty of ingenuity and forethought required, although the lack of vision or ambient sound is alienating at many stations. Even when your game gets bogged down, it's not too frustrating thanks to the visual candy on offer. 8/10

Challenge

The proximity of the forests is difficult for your game, and because of the large amounts of customisation, there are a lot of rebounds from thick tree trunks. But the rough is gentle, and the greens passable. As long as you don't get lost in the trees, there's every chance of a decent score. This does rather depend on the wind conditions and your swing type, and not the course, though. 6/10

Technical

The vast amount of customisation cannot be sniffed at, and the delicate, slightly supernatural construction of the course is novel and impressive. All this needs is perhaps a little work on the environment and some slightly less intrusive forests. Even by forest course standards, this is just too enclosed. 8/10

Overall	Worth a round for the look of the course alone. Something a little different, and entertaining to boot.	38/50
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A Wacky World Of Golf

Michael Savicki



Description

Imaginary, concept course.

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 5, from elevated tee.

Concept

Wacky World is an infamous Links fixture. The designer obviously wanted something original and different, and this course certainly delivers. Many holes are completely different to anything else: driving down tunnels becomes commonplace and the 4th features an excellent vertical bank shot up a half-pipe. Basically, it's Crazy Golf on a mammoth scale, and the windmill hole is perhaps the final giveaway. It's not to everyone's taste, and some holes are unclear in either objective or rendering, but this is a

thoroughly unique experience that doesn't take itself too seriously, and scores accordingly. 9/10

Appearance

Sadly, some beauty has had to be sacrificed in the design of this course. While the concrete monoliths are impressive and rapidly become a landmark of the course, some holes (the odd 8th, particularly) are just downright ugly, and impossible to play without the hole preview. The panorama is taken from Mesa Roja and suits the 'middle-of-the-desert' feel to the course. 4/10

Playability

As a fan of this sort of course, I enjoyed myself hugely the first time round, and the course is surprisingly replayable: once you get the hang of some of the trick shots, it's good fun to impress friends with them. The round is marred on more than one occasion by a rendering behind a wall (I suppose this is almost an inevitability with the degree of surreality in this course), a reliance on bunker shots, and the frustration when a pinpoint shot doesn't come off (although the course is actually more forgiving than most in this last respect). 7/10

Challenge

This course presents an adequate challenge first time round, when you're still finding your way, but becomes frankly too easy on subsequent rounds. The reason for this is simple: flat greens. I can quite understand that Michael Savicki wanted putting to be easy after a difficult slog to the green, but there is no joy whatsoever in sinking a 50-foot (or even 20-foot) putt on a green that's flat as a pancake. I am not a good putter, but was shooting 7 or 8-under on the strength of putting alone and that does not count as a challenge in my book. 5/10

Technical

Mr Savicki has taken the APCD to new heights with this course and the power of his somewhat warped imagination. Producing a stone drainpipe from scratch is alone a feat of ensuring his name lives on. It's a shame more custom textures weren't used, but the multitude of 'just for fun' custom objects littering the course is reasonably impressive. I'm going to dock further marks for the low resolution of some of the objects. 7/10

Overall

A credible attempt at creating something really different. Lacking a little in visual impact, but a fun and impressive round of golf nevertheless.

32/50

A Wacky World of Golf II

Michael Savicki



Description

Imaginary, concept course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 4, from tee

Concept

A successor to the original Wacky World, this time making a better run at representing 3D obstacles and theming each of the 18 holes very clearly. It is, more than ever, just a massive Crazy Golf course, and the hole design is extremely clever, particularly the holes with sunken greens (the basketball Par 3, where you must shoot the ball if you want to hit the green, is a work of genius). Again, it won't be to everyone's taste, but the original ideas and the execution cannot be faulted. 10/10

Appearance

This is much improved on the original Wacky World. Where a stretched stock texture would have looked silly, Michael has imported a custom texture, and all the Wacky 2D custom objects remain in proliferation. I defy you not to laugh out loud at certain holes as they appear, such is the surprise value of being asked to play golf in such a scenario (the Wizard Of Oz hole being a strong contender here). There is definitely a cleaner and more organised look than in Wacky World I, and for that it receives an accordingly higher mark. 8/10

Playability

For some reason that does not immediately grab me, this initially felt a bit of a drag to play. I don't know if it was because the holes were made too discrete (as opposed to the original's, which seemed to blend into each other and follow some sort of natural progression), or whether I was frustrated by a couple of impossible lies, but this just didn't seem to have the get-out-there-and-smack-'em playability of the first course. Later, of course, it has immense return value, and therefore picks up more of a score. 8/10

Challenge

I'm sorry, but the challenge here is minimal. Flat green syndrome rears its ugly head again; many holes are deliberately over-parred to account for the trick-shot nature of solving them, and consequently it is far too easy to shoot a low score. Conversely, I found the 18th hole impossible until about my fourth attempt, when I just managed to bury one in the fringe. It's not easy to set a par for a course like this, of course, but this one errs easily on the pessimistic side. 2/10

Technical

Michael Savicki has necessarily improved and refined the amazing APCD flair he used in Wacky World I to produce a stunning-looking course. Pointing out lack of seam blends, over extrusion and bunker lips would be pointless – it's just not that type of course. Instead, Michael has used the APCD as a way-out CAD tool, and is pulling off finer results with each attempt. I hope there will be more. 8/10

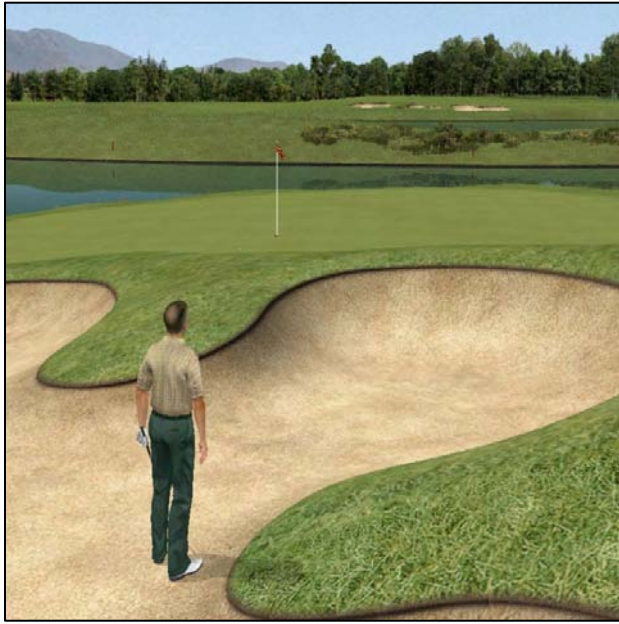
Overall

A worthy follow-up from the wackiest APCD designer around. Just as playable as the original, better to look at and a good giggle to boot.

36/50

Babylon Ridge

Mike Jones



Description

Fictional, estate course

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 4, from greenside bunker

Concept

Mike Jones, here, goes all-out to produce an American championship target course and – as usual – hits the nail pretty much bang on the head. With water used almost to excess, lavishly sculpted bunkers and nary a long blade of grass in sight, it is totally convincing as a Western ex-Open course still lavishly kept manicured by its owners. Many tremendous target holes mark your path, from an outrageous opener that would be a closing hole anywhere else, through to the lavish 15th and right up to the toughest

closing stretch of three you're likely to find anywhere. 10/10

Appearance

What is there left to say? Perhaps some more planting would have broken up the water features some more; perhaps a softer sand texture might be more apt. But these are tiny nitpicks, really: the textures are well up to Mike Jones' normal standards and the Rocky mountain backdrop is sublime and perfectly-matched. 9/10

Playability

Those playing on Champ level may struggle here. Narrow fairways, frightening bunkers and a proliferation of water and nasty, nasty rough make missed snaps a disaster. There are some pretty tough greens thrown into the bargain, too. Luckily, the brilliancy of Mike Jones keeps you plugging on, but never pretend it's an easy ride. 7/10

Challenge

The balance is all wrong here for the most part. There are too many shortcuts, too many hazards, too many adverse elevations. In short, it's overkill. Luckily, with the insight and self-control of this particular designer, the course remains perfectly playable and scores might balance out to something approximating an even-par round. But you don't feel you're being worked for the score: more that it's arriving at your doorstep through chance. 7/10

Technical

It's a Jones. 'Nuff said? 10/10

Overall	A break from the norm for the APCD's number-one man. Scores a resounding hit in places; misses the mark as far as your game goes.	43/50
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Baker's Flat

Jeff Kramer



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 5, on green.

Concept

It's beyond me why anyone would go to the trouble of naming and creating a 'flat' course if they are going to attach it to the ubiquitous Whistler panorama. This oddity, and the strange scattering of tiny hole-in-the-ground bunkers aside, there is a fairly coherent little run in the forest here, held together by an astute use of bunkers and trees as hazards. There's little by the way of standout holes, though: Baker's Flat is just a little too forgettable. 5/10

Appearance

Planting is very much the strength here; the grasses and flowers are more than competent and really add tone to the course. Sadly, it's hard to say the same about the textures, which are a poor and unblended mismatch. A host of 2D pagodas make an appearance and the net upshot is the impression that the stock library has been given a good going-over. 5/10

Playability

It's difficult to get really enthused about this course. There's little to aim for, and not much else to avoid; consequently it's too easy for attentions to wander. Admittedly, each hole has been designed with care and challenge in mind, but it requires a couple of rounds for that to really come out in the play, and many players may well lack the stamina. 4/10

Challenge

Defiantly difficult greens will trip you up and cost you most of your strokes, especially given that there's little else to fear in the green complexes. The wooded areas are very tough; even though they require a fairly severe mishit to ensnare a ball, they won't give it up easily. There's a stretch on the back nine where a few birdies can be picked up, but it will take a lucky stroke or two to be breaking Par on a regular basis. 7/10

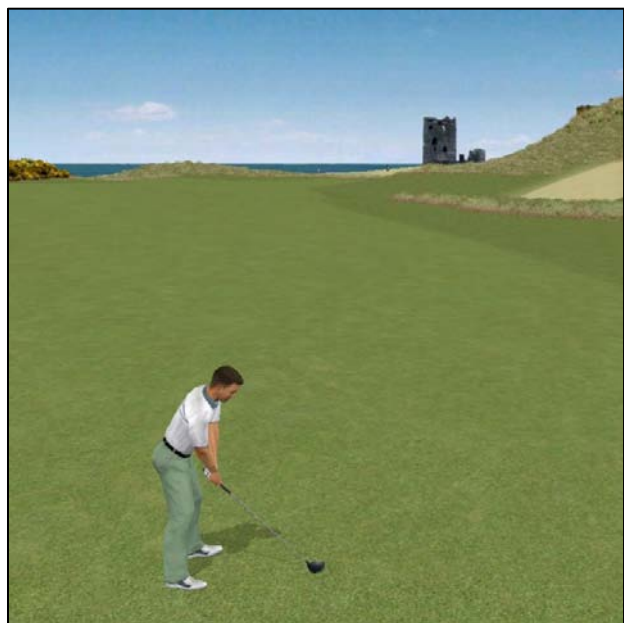
Technical

Definitely more needed on the texture work, and the plot is dispiritingly flat, with no excuse from the course's title! There are a number of steel trees which required attention, and flaws like this which have an impact on the game are sadly the worst. 3/10

Overall	Too dry and too reliant on stock images. Some interesting ideas get lost in the lack of polish.	<i>24/50</i>
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Balmoral Seaside Hotel and Golf Links

Noah Neumann



Description

Fictional, links course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 5, from fairway.

Concept

Not the real Irish course by the same name, Balmoral is squeezed into a narrow stretch of sand dunes along an unspecified, but presumably Scottish coastline. If you can ignore the cramped feeling and a few eccentricities, it works delightfully well, the designer aiming for an average seaside links with a few twists and turns. It appears longer than it actually is, thanks to a little bit of gimmickry (the 11th might just be the best 100-yard hole I've ever seen), the unusual amalgamation of the greens and tee

boxes and a terrific understanding from the designer as to what constitutes good borderline-fantasy golf. The tight space and myriad objects just off the track help you appreciate the atmosphere all the more. 10/10

Appearance

There's a lovely soft feeling to this course: the textures have been admirably chosen and blended, although I do have a reservation about the Tee Area texture, which just looks odd, rather than worn or divoted. The amount of customisation is likewise brilliant (the Balmoral Hotel has been exported wholesale from central Edinburgh!). Lack of planting options have meant a lot of cloning in the gorse, although this isn't really visible from the golfer's perspective. The other flipside is some towering and unrealistic dunes towards the turn. But on the whole, it's a view most definitely worth having. 8/10

Playability

Knockout! Purists might not like Balmoral too much, but anyone who feels able to put their golfing pedanticism on hold will adore the variety of this course. Tee shots tend not to be too strategic, but the use of sand dune elevations and links-like ridges and swales means that every shot thereafter will require thought. It's not the most varied course, to be honest, but it is damn entertaining. 10/10

Challenge

With wide open fairways and a course length under 6500 yards, it's a no-brainer to guess that Balmoral is pretty easy. After the first couple of holes you'd be forgiven for thinking a sub-60 round was on the cards. Thankfully, the whole thing tightens up thereafter by bringing the gorse a bit more into play. The wide open fairways will always guarantee birdies, though. 4/10

Technical

Any course with such a large amount of customisation is worth playing round a couple of times; this one is no exception. It's a great piece of work, not least in the well-handled surface and mesh. I can't say I'm keen on a couple of texture choices – the tees and sod walls most notably. Perhaps it might desirable to have used a little more space, but Noah's talent for innovation is well-grounded here. 8/10

Overall	Links straying toward fantasy land, but a terrifically enjoyable round of golf regardless.	40/50
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Baltusrol Lower

Ross McKenzie



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, estate course	18 th hole, Par 5	70
Location		
New Jersey		
Conditions		
I wouldn't go faster than M*/M*, and a tad slower is safest.		

Concept

You get the impression that an owner of rather too much land has fenced off a large portion of it to form Baltusrol. It's a mammoth, flat and sprawling course, using excessive land to push its length well above 7000 yards. The hole design is clever enough in its use of fairway shape and the scattered planting, and the layout is highly unusual, with the 17th and 18th being the only Par 5s, but – as with so many of the big US courses – there's a lack of soul and warmth. The overall feeling is that Baltusrol would rather scare you away than welcome you in. 5/10

Appearance

The terrain is flat, the textures unblended and there are wide stretches of very little, both in the areas of play and beyond. The designer has shown a tasteful hand with the planting, which looks natural and mostly clone-free, but there is precious little else to see. The lack of atmosphere is only accentuated by the bland textures. 4/10

Playability

It's difficult to imagine anyone playing Baltusrol for fun. It's harrowing and exhausting stuff: the course offers you very little by way of light relief and the holes are largely one-way. The desolate appearance and lack of final polish (the course stalled at the Beta phase) are hardly enticements for the casual player, either. 3/10

Challenge

Ach! Massive hole length, a preponderance of deep rough (although credit to one of the first inclusions of uniform deep rough on a championship course), and tough greening means you won't get away lightly here. Even a perfect drive on many of the Par 4s would still leave you a good 180 yards to the green, and the Par 3s are horrors, every one. In fairness, Baltusrol isn't set up unnecessarily hard, but a birdie free round would be pretty likely; bogies inevitable. 5/10

Technical

What has been done with the course isn't bad. The elevations and locale are represented very fairly, and the planting stands head and shoulders above many a later course. But the delineated hazards are starting to look their age, and even a good choice of textures can't disguise the need for good blending. 5/10

Overall	A rather depressing and soulless course. Long, bland and largely unpalatable. Necessary for Tour completeness, but it's difficult to play for fun.	22/50
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Banff Springs

Microsoft



Description

Real, mountain course

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 4, from tee

Concept

Banff is one of North America's most scenic and beautiful courses. It is accommodating to all players, but still provides a stern test through elegant bunkering and hard-to-read greens. This course is laid out well, although the water only seems to come into play at the Par 3 holes, when it could have served an equally good purpose at the Par 5s, nearly all of which are two-shotters. 7/10

Appearance

On the whole, Banff is re-created well. The custom tee boards are a nice touch, and the water and bunkers are reminiscent of the Canadian mountains. My one big problem was with the panorama, which seemed very pixelated and quite a distraction. 6/10

Playability

Normally, I find endless tree-lined fairways a bit of a drag, but I really enjoyed my round here. There is just enough variation between holes, and just enough shape to the fairways to keep a player thinking. Several of the holes require shot-shaping, and I found myself in a dozen subtly different greenside situations, and had to call on a lot of resource to stick the ball near the flag. It's the sort of course that demands imagination and wit right from the first tee, and doesn't let up until you've hit the 18th green. 9/10

Challenge

The difficulty level has been very well fine-tuned on this course. Par 3s are rarely pushovers, and Par 5s will require advance planning in order to hit the green in two. Letting the side down are the fairways, which have been left too flat in places, and the approach shots, which rarely are more complicated than the up-and-on variety. 7/10

Technical

It's hard to believe this is a commercially released course. It looks rushed and untested. Unconvincing mounds and elevations complement the planar flatness elsewhere, and some objects are poorly planted. Rough areas are stretched and harshly butt onto fairways. The 18th fairway is covered in folds from the Top Cam. Rescuing Microsoft's technical department is some imaginative planting (not easy, given the proliferation of pine trees) and good bunker work, but the course on the whole is of a lesser standard than many produced by amateurs. 4/10

Overall	A reasonable course; it certainly plays well, but there is an inescapable feeling of it cashing in on the paying public.	<i>33/50</i>
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Banyan Bay

Gary Campbell



Description

Fictional, ocean course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

A sumptuous ocean-side environment, Banyan Bay marks yet another terrific and convincing course from the scratchpad of Gary Campbell. Rich with customisation and superb surface work, the course features a wealthy array of clifftop holes. Perhaps a little flaw in the design is that these clifftop holes become a little same-y, and to be honest there's nothing, golf-wise, that hasn't been seen before. But this is still a magnificent, atmospheric creation worthy of an equally great designer. 9/10

Appearance

The gorgeous panorama befits the course, and pretty much everything on the plot is part of one cohesive whole. The texture blending is magnificent, the clifftops comparable only to Mike Jones at his best – see the lovely 12th hole if you don't believe me. Beautiful views are commonplace. Nothing short of perfection. 10/10

Playability

The slightly repetitive nature of some of the holes doesn't dim the pleasure of booming out huge drives over the cliffs, but it has to be admitted that some holes just don't feature the variety that they might have done. This sort of gung-ho golf is great, but only up to a point. 9/10

Challenge

As long as the ocean is avoided, I do find Banyan Bay rather easy. It seems that some of the golfing challenges have been misjudged a fraction. Fairways are accessible, and pins conveniently placed to leave largely uphill and sinkable putts. Some tighter greenside bunkers may well have helped. 5/10

Technical

While a few have commented on the bluish rock textures, these are really only a very, very minor drawback amid the great use of APCD which we have come to associate with Gary. He continues to go from impressive standard to even more impressive standard. Can't wait for the next one! 10/10

Overall	Magnificent clifftop golf, with plenty of emphasis on the cliff. Don't let the course become monotonous and you'll have a riot.	<i>43/50</i>
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Bardgate House Golf Club

Paul Seaman



Description

Fictional, estate course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Central England – the readme suggests Leicestershire

Conditions

Playable on F*/F*, although moving down to M*/M* might spare some sanity.

Concept

The surroundings are certainly typical of a lush country estate and the glorious clubhouse complex stands – like a brooding manor house – intimidatingly over the layout. The whole thing is woven through with Paul's clever design and eye for detail that cleverly fades into a seamless background. The big issue I have with this course is that it just doesn't feel like a British design. The holes are far too fiddly and clever and feel long, especially with the liberal use of ponds as hazards. I can't help feeling it most resembles Riviera – a magnificent course itself, but one that doesn't take well to a transatlantic voyage. 6/10

Appearance

Hard to find anything to fault here – the buildings are a particular highlight, and lord-knows how many hours must have gone into the creation of the expansive clubhouse and the folly seen in the screenshot. The legions of bunkers are very sweet too, with (I think) at least four textures nested well. The long grass and tree planting are restrained and perfectly-fitting, and the course fences – often problematic – fit the estate-land well. Flawless. 10/10

Playability

Although the course presents 18 individualised and unique challenges, with the sweeping elevations and water being particular hazards, it does feel a little disjointed, especially given the variety of hole types that are being crammed in. Something a bit more gentle wouldn't be unreasonable for this environment. If picture-perfect golf is hardly your thing, though, then there's a fine test of targeting and course management; we wouldn't expect anything less! 8/10

Challenge

The Par 4 1st hole is the toughest opener we've seen since Burn's Old Links, and it wouldn't be erroneous to say it even surpasses Burns 1 in terms of sheer difficulty. Despite occasional moments of sadism such as this one, the course plays very close to par as long as you avoid the really thick stuff. But if you drop a handful of strokes at the first, don't expect to negate them in short order! 6/10

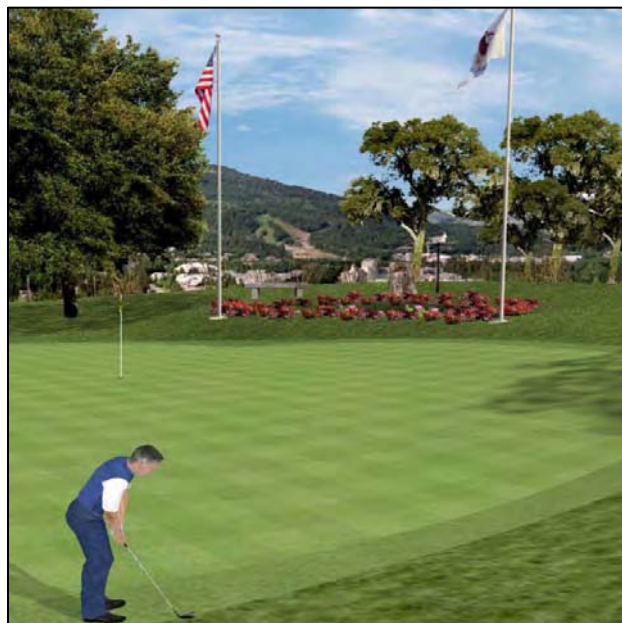
Technical

Another awesome piece of landscaping from Paul, and right up there with his best as far as planting, textures and 3D work go. I'm disappointed in the contrived over-use of water, though: this is a course that really doesn't need it, and perhaps a clearer goal would help. 9/10

Overall	Nice course, wrong location. Or <i>vice versa</i> , if you prefer.	39/50
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Barkcamp Lake Resort

William Kline



Description

Imaginary, lakeside course

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 4, from behind green

Concept

This was one of the first APCD designs to be released to the public. The designer presumably thought a series of islands threading through a large inland lake would make people stand up and take notice. He was wrong. Hole design quickly becomes repetitive and, despite the endless promise of the basic idea, many holes are modelled on the default shape. 3/10

Appearance

It's hard to find much to like visually about this course. The lack of technical know-how is a big contributor. Blind shots proliferate, and the scenery is repetitive and does little to detract from the gameplay. While good elevations should afford a grand view over the lake, they are never used effectively enough. Planting is comical, with a misplaced lighthouse and bizarre-looking bridge. This might be the only course where the Top Cam looks better than the main window. 2/10

Playability

18 holes of making inch-perfect shots over water really, really drags. If I hadn't holed a 28-foot putt at the 9th, I'd have given up halfway round. Without using Mulligans, this would undoubtedly turn off most players, due to the ramped-up difficulty and forced shotmaking. 2/10

Challenge

This is totally mis-pitched. Anyone using the advanced swings will find this course totally impossible. Anyone who misses their snaps will find likewise. Hazards are not just limited to the water: you have to take a penalty drop from most of the flowerbeds too! Greens are too sharply pitched and more than once I found a missed putt coming straight back to rest at my feet. The course as a whole just serves to frustrate and irritate. 1/10

Technical

Quite simply, very poor. Bad extruding abounds, planting is repetitive and uninspired, and there are folds and stretched textures everywhere you look. So much more could be made of this course: the failure of the designer to improve and release a version 2 is unforgivable. 1/10

Overall	A course really starting to show its age and amateur origins. The concept could have made for some really exciting golf in today's hands, and this is crying out for a re-working.	9/50
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Barrington Hills

DeLinda Wood



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 3, from green

Concept

There are some very promising ideas here. Sprawling fairways give a variety of options, greens are steep and well-protected, and the large stones that dot the fairway add a realistic but unusual and different touch. The course as a whole, then, is quite realistic, perhaps something crying out to be a future Open course. 8/10

Appearance

There are certain issues that grate on the visual senses with this course. First is the first-cut rough, which is picked out in a lurid and inappropriate stock texture. Without any seam blends around the fairways, it looks exceedingly artificial and takes the edge off the otherwise visual appeal. My second problem is the gradients. At times the course (not just the playing area, but those 'unused' areas too) seems way too flat, but on other holes, the land is too sharply, and clearly artificially pitched. While the lovely-to-look-at rocks and great planting provide some alternative, they don't fully cover up these flaws. 5/10

Playability

This is a very playable course. Every hole provides alternatives, and most of the Par 5s are reachable in two, with some element of risk. Only the occasional 'easy' approach shot lets the course down, and after the lengthy finishing hole, I'm all ready to tee off again from the first. Great stuff! 8/10

Challenge

Sadly, despite the stiff greens, I found this course a little easy. My score of 8-under was mainly due to easy approach shots and the ability to make most of the Par 5s in two. The water rarely came into play, and the attractive bunkers were shallow and – on the whole – easy to escape. It was a shame that the trademark rocks didn't play a more active part, rather than just being scenery. 5/10

Technical

Considering the age of this course, the technical work isn't too bad. The scenery is carefully grafted and looks excellent; the rocks are of different sizes but all well scaled. What this course lacks is attention to detail on elevations, and some carefully applied texture blends around the edge of fairways. Then it would be something to take genuine pride in. 7/10

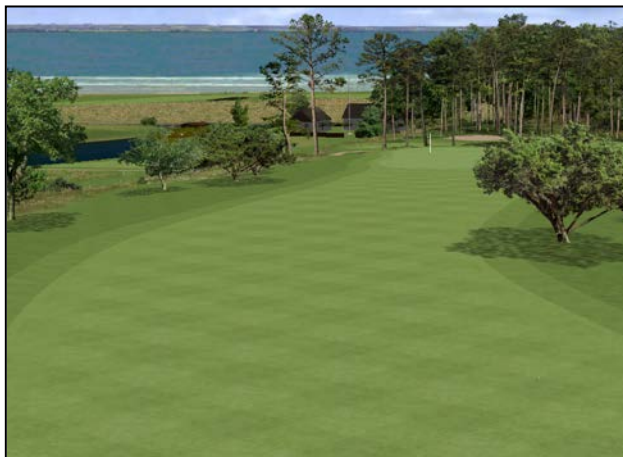
Overall

A very competent effort, with excellent attention to detail and a real grasp of how to create a realistic and beautiful environment. A little too easy and missing some fine tuning with the APCD, but very playable for all that.

33/50

Barsebäck Golf & Country Club

Peter Hansson



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, lakeside course	7 th hole, Par 4	73
Location		
Sweden		
Conditions		
Playable on F*/F* with care.		

Concept

Clean, executive and professional, Barsebäck is a very smooth slice of golf on the shores of the Baltic Sea. The small target-points and surprisingly deep bunkers are laid out with pinpoint precision, and it's no wonder this is frequently regarded as a premium European venue. The stretch leading up to the turn is outstanding, both in terms of fun golf and beautiful – but not overdone – visuals. It has been brought to Links very competently, with the X-factor of playability and addictiveness that marks out many of the lesser-known real courses. 9/10

Appearance

Laid out and textured reasonably well, the planting is very convincing, but the course surroundings just take the edge off a little. The panorama isn't always a great fit, and the buildings that dot the course have had markedly less time spent on them than the holes themselves. For all that, it's not bad, and the look suits the style of the course very well. 7/10

Playability

It may be a championship layout, but there's a warmth and 'local' feeling to Barsebäck, and the unusual location helps immensely with this addition to the increasingly global selection of Links courses. The subtle dog-legs are almost universal around the course and require pinpoint tactics, especially given that there are far more bunkers fairway-side than by the greens. 8/10

Challenge

The back nine is every bit as tough a challenge as a tour stop should be, and it's pretty easy to lose shots to deep sand features or even tie yourself up in the woods. The Par 5s are no pushover, either, and you'll often find the hole tantalisingly out of reach on the second shot. But, for all that, this is a flat and reasonably open course with very little by way of challenging rough, and you'll never really feel in any genuine trouble. 6/10

Technical

An impressive course by debut standards, this has much under-stated but technically good work, and the few oversights remain very much on the fringes. Some better 3D work and environmental sound would be welcome, although the course remains highly playable without them. 8/10

Overall	Great, compulsive golfing in a fresh and interesting location. Barsebäck positively invites the golfer to dive in!	38/50
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Bartlett Springs

Peter Beckwith



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, marshland course	17 th hole, Par 3	71
Location		
Illinois, as stated by the Readme		
Conditions		
I'd be happiest easing this one down to M*/F*, or M*/M* if feeling really cautious.		

Concept

A third intensely-designed and reasoned course from one of the top Links course planners today, Bartlett Springs is perhaps a little more confrontational and hazardous than Casten Acres or Stansbury, but that's not to say it isn't very clever indeed. With a convincing and professional course history in the readme, and a pretty formidable course length, it is a very modern design, built for the player rather than just the whims of the designer. 9/10

Appearance

Delightful wetlands textures and a willingness to push convention by overlaying grasses on water and paths, the deep bluegrass-green palette of Bartlett Springs is certainly among its main draws. As would be expected from this designer, the bunker sculpture and blending is of the highest quality, but the upper-level planting is pretty undistinguished and just occasionally the background draws the eye when it just doesn't quite conform. This occasional glitch does little to stop the course looking great for the most part. 9/10

Playability

While its predecessors showed deep and intuitive sense of how to present a realistic, fair, but engaging golf hole, I can't help think that this course has been somewhat over-thought. The water hazarding is ever-present, and the bunkering marks out the route all too conveniently. The best aspect is the open fairways, and the potential for shot choices from the tee. The par 3 holes are all very credible, though, and present much of the course's best aspects. 7/10

Challenge

A layout very much geared around the modern, tournament golfer, it's hard to really get off the mark here. The course as a whole will produce decent scores: those hoping for intense risk-reward will be disappointed, but the bunkering is a real limitation on many golfers, and the water is virtually omnipresent after the innocuous but beautiful first hole. The greens aren't pushovers, either, with many holes located in the middle of slopes, albeit gentle ones. Expect mid-to-long putts to be rare. 8/10

Technical

We can expect nothing less than the best from Pete Beckwith, and although his target audience tastes aren't quite in line with mine this time, there's no doubting the quality of the creation. 10/10

Overall	A less subtle and more in-your-face effort from this designer, but still retains a massive amount of credibility as a set of holes and a course as a unit.	43/50
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Barton Creek - Fazio

Microsoft



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 5, approach.

Concept

There doesn't seem to be much underpinning concept to this course. It's a fairly routine, get-out-there-and-hit-'em Sunday course. No holes stand out for their excellent design. There is no overriding theme to the course. It's pretty standard, all told. 3/10

Appearance

Unremittingly poor. Extrusions have left ridiculous sharp edges all over the course, the panorama is massively pixelated, the planting is weak and visually confusing. On several holes, the trees and pano just formed a mass of mixed green colours, from which it was impossible to discern shapes. 2/10

Playability

Pretty damn boring was my overall impression. There wasn't enough variety between holes, the scenery was best ignored (I had to wait until the last hole to get a halfway-decent screenshot, and then I forgot to move my cursor – doh!), and it was too easy to avoid the hazards. Despite some interesting greenside situations, this dragged. 3/10

Challenge

Seriously misjudged. The Par 5s were all a breeze to reach in two, the greens offered nothing unusual, and the bunkers were so easy they might as well have not been placed. Most disappointing were the approach shots: the greens were often unguarded and it was easy to pitch to within 10 feet of the flag regularly. I scored 10 under and I was barely trying. 5/10

Technical

It really defies belief that this has been turned out by professionals. Planting was terrible, massive extrusions left sharp edges everywhere, space was wasted and seemingly neglected. Only the textures seemed vaguely in place. 2/10

Overall	A really half-hearted effort from the game's designers. There are very few redeeming features here, and even fewer reasons why I should recommend playing it.	<i>15/50</i>
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Battle Mountain

'Redskin Fan'



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

An interesting conjunction of traditional designs with modern concessions, Battle Mountain is a course firmly rooted in Links 1.07 sensibilities, but oddly one of the very few produced with the original APCD 1.1. It's a broad design, without doubt, carrying no few gimmicks, but also some genuinely interested holes, around the middle of the front nine. Largely speaking, though, it doesn't break any new ground. 4/10

Appearance

An impressive panorama, albeit one lifted from elsewhere, towers over this course, and beneath there are a few moments to treasure with some subtle planting, which certainly isn't 2002 standard. Clones creep in later, though. The texture set is most disappointing of the lot: completely stock, and hackneyed in the extreme. There are straight extrusions visible on all the water, and the moulding of bunkers takes a lot to be desired. 4/10

Playability

There's a good variety here, using all the trappings of mountain holes: uphill holes, uphill holes, streams and lakes. Actually, on reflection, there's probably too heavy a reliance on the water, and each hole is pretty much a one-shot deal; either you play the gimmick or you don't. There's a mild *frisson* of pleasure on each playing, despite the disappointing appearance. 6/10

Challenge

Clever if somewhat unoriginal designs don't give much away. The water is often a threat, even if the bunkers aren't, and the woods are perfectly placed to trap errant drives. Clearly, even though the APCD 1.1 is a limited tool, a fair amount of licence has been given to today's Links golfer. My only real disappointment was with some frankly pushover Par 5 holes. 7/10

Technical

For a course that has obviously been cherished and thought about, there are too many odd anomalies here. The texture and mesh use is far from brilliant, with the exception of some striking rockworks. Particularly worrisome were a scant removal from stock shapes, particularly greenside, and a possible mis-assigned texture in the wood-straw. 3/10

Overall

Proof that the first incarnation of Links is not dead yet. A playable course, if hardly pretty by current standards.

24/50

Battley Peak

Lez Marwick



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, farmland course	8 th hole, Par 4 (fog)	72

Location

Northern England – the Yorkshire Dales seem to fit the bill well.

Conditions

The designer recommends M*/F*; I'd be happier at M*/M*. Playing with the Fog course is an unmissable experience.

Concept

Another delightful back-story comes with this creation – a twisty ride through hills and tight OB regions, culminating with a long climb up the eponymous hill. It's all very in-your-face and demanding, and quite a few holes test both credibility and patience. A lot is rescued, though, by the inspired inclusion of the Fog at Battley Peak course, a design which lives up to its promises by pushing the boundaries of inventiveness and creativity. An awesome inclusion. 9/10

Appearance

Plenty of course extras, after the fashion of Margaret's Bay and Ackerton cross, and there is clearly a high standard of competency here. The elevations have been levelled off perfectly, and the planting is beautiful, especially at the low level, where a riot of flowers decorate the course. It has to be said that the daisies and dandelions have been slightly overdone, and could have had more impact with about half the density. The 'Fog' course is as atmospheric as anything else we've seen, and plays as close to authentic British golf as anything else. 9/10

Playability

Lots of concentration needed here, as wayward shots could wind you up in plenty of trouble. The course theme is more-than-adequate compensation, and the Readme gives you landmarks to keep an eye out for. It's very restraining golf, though, and it's difficult not to feel a little oppressed by the demands made by some holes. At its best, around the turn, Battley Peak is a sheer joy, though. 7/10

Challenge

There's an awful lot of water and OB on this course: certainly more than any player reasonably expects (or needs) to see, and one or two holes are really downright unfair. Making birdies will be a treasured event, and don't count on the Par 5s for strokes – they're more or less the hardest of the lot! Playing with the designer's recommended Windy settings is to court complete disaster. 6/10

Technical

There's no faulting Lez's creativity, imagination, or ability to create terrific atmosphere, and the 'Fog' course is more than adequate proof of this. But I still would place question marks over hole design and his willingness to give the golfer an even break: sometimes less can be a whole lot more. 9/10

Overall	Another glorious idea, married with one absolutely superlative idea, but also another set of holes that don't quite add up.	40/50
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Bay Hill

William Kline



Description

Real, lakeside course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Quite apart from its classic resort feel and the brilliantly testing layout, there's much to be credited to Bay Hill. The rollercoaster difficulty gradient is supremely clever as the lakes test you at the start, but then ominously disappear for a while before coming back with a bang on the final trio – quite possibly the hardest three closing holes on any course, anywhere. It's artificial golf, sure, but artificial in the way that Sawgrass is: all clever tricks and full-on challenge. By being given a new lease of life on the Update project, the course has emerged more daunting but

also more intuitive than ever. Superb. 10/10

Appearance

It feels like there's still work to be done here. Seam blends, especially around bunkers, feel rushed, and the elevations still seem a little lumpy. The texture set doesn't really gel at all. There's some smart customisation on the course, but the whole thing just doesn't feel natural enough. A bit disappointing. 6/10

Playability

The innate replayability of this course is thanks to the mental gymnastics required to play it well. Placement and course knowledge is key, and a four-round tournament – let alone just 18 holes – is over in a trice. It's not one for the casual golfer, though: brain training has nothing on this. 9/10

Challenge

Even with the near absence of deep rough and underplanting, Bay Hill lulls you into an inadequate sense of security, thanks to very clever hole sequencing, some tough greens and a closing stretch as nasty as anything anywhere else. The narrow fairways will probably cost a few strokes too many for those on harder swing difficulties. 5/10

Technical

A vast improvement on the VGA version, but there's still the feeling of hurriedness here. Admittedly, the production is still in Beta, but the presentation at the minute is merely tidy, rather than truly eye-catching. One to watch out for as it develops. 7/10

Overall

One of the most terrific rounds of golf to be had – challenging, deeply strategic and immensely replayable. Presentation – as yet – only of second-tier standards.

37/50

Beau Pre GC

Terry Driver



Description

Real, woodland course.

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

There's the embryo of a good course in here. I like the open, 'young' woodland feel, and there are some interesting and challenging hole designs, particularly on the back nine. Sadly, not enough has been done technically to bring them to life: the course is lacking in finesse and any sense of location whatsoever. 5/10

Appearance

An awful lot of work required here, I'm afraid. Planting is not varied enough, sometimes inappropriate and often cloned. The elevation work is pretty poor; extrusions are careless, and there are several mesh folds evident. Areas such as water and bunker lips are devoid of any close attention, which is pretty much expected as standard these days. But for a decent panorama, this would look pretty terrible. 2/10

Playability

While this plays inoffensively, and has just enough variation in design and hole length to maintain the interest, there's not a lot going on visually to focus a player, and frustratingly there are too many occasions when ones ball gets lodged behind a tree; the only recourse being to chip out sideways. 3/10

Challenge

Because of a few freakishly-long hole lengths and the close impingement of the trees (I particularly like it when they intrude onto the fairway: an effect that isn't seen often enough), this course is easy without being pointlessly so. Sure, you'll get some good breaks from the greens and pick up several shots on the Par 5s, but these hazards will prevent your score from just becoming silly. 5/10

Technical

Plenty needed here, sadly. Although it's nice to see custom textures, they really should be blended together or at least more closely matched. The absence of deep rough in the right places is worrying, too, because large mishits just aren't punished severely enough. Add this to the required improvements on the planting and elevations, and you're left with a course which feels as if it should be still in the Beta testing phase, rather than the finished article. 2/10

Overall	A course with some good ideas, not fully realised. Somewhat basic in feel, it's unlikely to excite today's demanding Links golfer.	17/50
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Bellshill GC

John Wales



Description

Real, woodland course

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Bellshill starts with five really tough holes and opening out into a good, not-too-wild course which makes excellent use of ridges and plateaus even on this modest piece of land. The holes hold together magnificently, even notwithstanding that eight of the (more recent) back nine are Par 4s, but there is a feeling that the course is lacking something – perhaps a bunker or two, or a little more grass planting. Sterling work for the large part, though. 7/10

Appearance

Planting has been well handled, with maybe a little cloning (all planting, disappointingly, appears to be from stock). Elevations, importantly given the course's reliance on them, feel very realistic too. The excellent textures look very apt, and the care that has been taken over the on-course fencing really adds character. In some ways, it's a shame that the designer couldn't stretch himself further along these lines and include all the fences and the railway referred to in the Readme. Now that would really fill the gap. 6/10

Playability

Despite an apparent lack of hazarding, the small greens and elevations keep you guessing at Bellshill, and there are several holes to test your shot-shaping abilities, too. It's certainly not a course for perfectionists, as there's just too much to get right, but well suited to hackers with its gentle rough and recovery shots. 6/10

Challenge

While the greens aren't unfair, they are hastily elevated and very difficult to read on faster settings, which is a shame. The outstanding first five holes – a tight Par 5, three long Par 4s and a well-protected Par 3 – are almost championship standard, but let down when it comes to putting. The rest of the course, although shorter, will produce steady pars thanks to the variety in elevations and drive lengths. 7/10

Technical

A very competent design, but unfortunately one moored in conventionality. With little in the way of customisation, it's hard to be too generous to a designer who could have made this reproduction sparkle with the little touches, but instead played safe. 6/10

Overall	A routine course conversion lacking finishing touches and needing a little toning down on the putting surfaces. Very playable for all that.	<i>32/50</i>
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Belmont Hills

William Kline



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

This is very reminiscent of Autumn Valley in its beautiful golden colours, and the sun-quenched panorama is stunning, although at times a little at odds with the weather conditions. Hole design is consistent, dog-leg Par 4s being a particular favourite, and most holes require you to take a careful route in order to score well. Wild sliced drives are unlikely to register, such is the careful design. 8/10

Appearance

On the whole, this is a very nice course to look at. While there are quite a few technical problems (see below), the designer has done a really nice job of running the landscape together and producing a convincing-looking fictional course. Just occasionally, but just often enough, there is something to divert the eye – a creek, perhaps, or the excellent rock surround of the 11th green. 8/10

Playability

The main draw factor of this course is the potential to score well. Many of the Par 4s are tantalisingly within reach, and the temptation to pull off a crowd-pleaser of a shot in order to Eagle a hole is often overwhelming. For those who prefer a more conservative approach to their golf, this course may disappoint, with several holes looking somewhat 'samey' after you have got used to the premise. 6/10

Challenge

This has been pitched really well. To offset the fact that many of the Par 4s are driveable, and the Par 5s can often be reached in two, the author has pinched in the landing areas, and beefed up the greens to a challenging, but not unplayable, standard. Bunkering is quite minimal, compared to many courses, but the bunkers are intelligently and strategically placed, and the ambitious player can expect to be playing quite a few sand shots during the course of his round. 9/10

Technical

This is an early design, and while the visual style is appealing, there are a few nagging errors that detract from the game. Quite a few of these involve harsh texture clashes (there is no first-cut at the edge of the fairways, for example), and one or two of the hazards have been almost literally buried beneath the landscape. There is a distinct lack of custom objects, but having said this there are custom textures. Although, having also said this, the custom textures do not necessarily fit in with each other. It is pleasing to see the author striding forward with use of the APCD; now a small amount of fine-tuning is required. 5/10

Overall

A convincing fictional course, with a riot of colour and a sure-fire winner in terms of presentation. But don't go for all your shots!

36/50

Belvedere Golf Club

Yves Fortin



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 5, approach

Concept

There doesn't appear to be very much overall course concept at Belvedere. Individual holes show the prototype of good design, but the course as a hole is something of a mish-mash. Water makes an appearance, as do rockworks (somewhat poorly done), fairways are well lined but individually unremarkable. The overall concept is of a dozen and a half holes looking for a common feature. 3/10

Appearance

This is an early APCD course and starting to show its age. The fairways are rough, all objects and textures are from stock, and to be honest there isn't one remarkable feature all the way round. Eye candy it's not. 2/10

Playability

This is mindless golf. Most Links players would go round on autopilot, and there isn't enough variety to make you want to play the course again. I have to admit I balked even at the idea of having to play just 18 holes as a Review test round. Sorry, but this is really, really dull golf. 0/10

Challenge

Part of the playability problem, of course, is the lack of challenge. I scored a 12-under round while eating a pizza, and was frankly not very impressed. The greens lack challenge, the fairways are too open and all the approach shots are easy. Most holes appear at first sight to be well-protected, but the bunkers are not precisely placed enough to present a challenge to anyone. I avoided the sand for 18 holes and, again, without particularly trying hard. 1/10

Technical

Very little to praise here also, I'm afraid. The whole course looks artificial and primitive by modern standards. Bunkers are cheaply extruded, textures are routine and the planting is sparse and unimaginative. Several unlikely folds in the fairway do little to add any credibility; frankly this could do with an awful lot of work. 1/10

Overall	Not a keeper for most people. Mediocre through and through.	7/50
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Bethpage Black

Rob Miller



Description

Real, parkside course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 5, greenside.

Concept

Through inhuman length, punishing rough and some plain nasty hazarding, the Black course at Bethpage has cemented its reputation as golf's sternest test. Capably straddling the boundary between challenging and unfair with tiny fairways and plenty of uphill approaches, it still manages to exude the innocent air of just another country club. The unbelievable work that has been done to bring this Links edition to life has not been in vain: the course is breathtaking and yet again sets a new

benchmark for course re-creation. 10/10

Appearance

Seriously? Anyone really need comment passed here? Immense depth of 3D work (telegraph cables and wire-mesh bins, for heaven's sake), a glorious and detailed texture set, everything is beyond perfect, from the picture-perfect planting to every single sprinkler head on the fairway. Somewhere between genius and insanity. 10/10

Playability

A course like this could easily become monotonous and painful. Thanks in part to the sheer amount of eye candy and the growing mythical status of the course, it's compulsive if hardly varied. The toughened-up rough does become a nuisance in the end as you struggle desperately for birdies, but there's a surprising and happily rewarding replay element, even though many holes don't have a genuine second option. 9/10

Challenge

Well, yes, it's difficult. But it is supposed to be, for heavens' sake! And the game has seen a lot harder than this. In actuality, it's quite clever how par is kept tantalisingly within reach while ensuring that you don't ever get there. But no-one would ever expect an easy ride from The Black. 8/10

Technical

Pixel for pixel, this is not only the most stunning production of a real-life course in Links, but the most incredible thing I've seen in the game, full stop. 10/10

Overall	It's impossible to be disappointed by this. Sit and gawp in awe at the underlying genius behind this legendary course.	47/50
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Big Dawg's Golf Resort

Ken Lambert



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 5, from green

Concept

This initially strikes one as a proper country club; certainly the look is right. Individual holes are tightly wound by trees and present individual problems: two or three Par 4s are really quite beautifully done in terms of risk/reward. Par 5s are generally not designed to be reachable in two – this can be frustrated and prescriptive. 5/10

Appearance

Welcome to the world's flattest course. Flat greens, flat tees, flat woodlands, flat fairways, flat flats, flat space, loads of flat space, flat, flat, flat, flat, flat. Very flat. The few slight elevations look ridiculous and out-of-place, but even then this course has less elevation than those set in Holland or Montana. On top of this, the planting is dire and repetitive, and large acres of land are unused and pointless – particularly obvious from the top view. Bizarrely, in spite of all this, the course occasionally looks quite pretty. Scenes like the screenshot are very much the exception rather than the rule, though. 3/10

Playability

Ye Gods! I nearly gave up on the 13th hole due to boredom and RSI. Knock it down the flat fairway, chip to the flat green (perhaps escaping out of a flat bunker), hole a flat putt. And repeat. My mind nearly melted. 1/10

Challenge

The challenge presented by this course is actually very fair. Breaking par on the tight fairways and punishing tree-deep rough is not at all easy, even with several straightforward putts to fall back on. Several Par 5s and 4s are designed to provoke a choice, and the pitch of the risk/reward on these holes is just right. More holes like this would really have made the round, but sadly a lot of the remainder are mediocre. 7/10

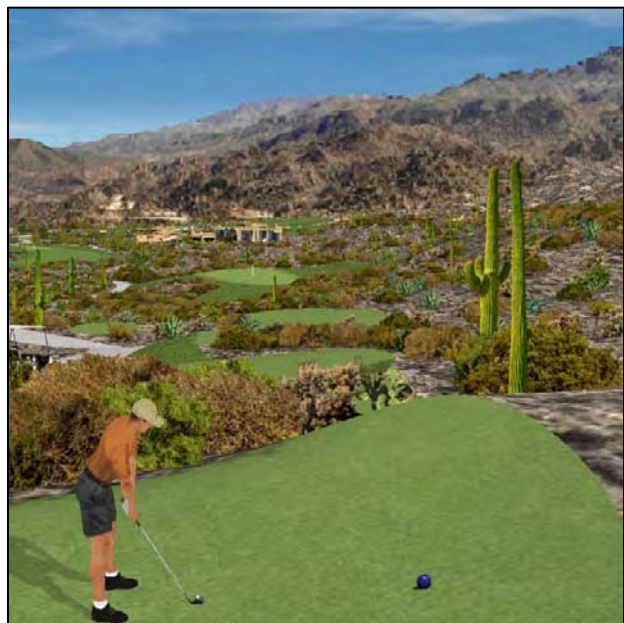
Technical

Another early course, and pretty poor APCD work to go with it. While the placing of objects such as fountains and litter bins adds a bit of interest, the planting of elementary things like trees is unremittingly poor, and textures are used haphazardly at points. The designer clearly lacked the drive to do anything exciting with elevations, and this has to be one of the worst-executed courses residing on my hard drive. 0/10

Overall	In some ways, this course is worth playing through to find the occasional moment of joy. In many other ways, it's not. Flat, flat, flat.	16/50
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Bighorn Golf Club

Microsoft



Description

Real, desert course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 3, from tee

Concept

A nice course, this, with roads of green winding through a rocky outgrowth. Sometimes the bright fairways look a little at odds with the desert surround, but the individual holes are interestingly enough designed to overlook this. Elevation changes, cacti and USA South buildings abound, and the overall perception is of a golf lover who has set up camp in some pretty unwelcoming terrain. 8/10

Appearance

There are some spectacular views on offer here, but – as sometimes happens with Microsoft – they are spoiled by the panorama which is pixelated and coarse. Only in the centre of the plot (as the screenshot) does it look reasonable. On the way round, there are interesting features to steal your attention, buildings in particular, but more could have been made of custom objects, and some tidier planting wouldn't have gone amiss, either. 7/10

Playability

Due to the elevation changes, risk/reward potential, and the opportunity to play exciting trick shots off the rocky outgrowth, this has a generous lifespan. Most players will be keen to see what the next hole has to bring, and keep clicking on regardless. It's worth playing round several times to discover the range of lies and potential for various approach shots on a non-woodland course. 7/10

Challenge

If this is a faithful representation of the original course, then Microsoft aren't to blame (shame!), but I found this course rather easy. Only the testing final stretch prevented me breaking double-minus figures. The greens aren't too testing, and I think more could be made of the risk/reward opportunities. Good Links players, might want to use a skill-based MoP on this course in order to extract the very best from it. 4/10

Technical

This is better than some of Microsoft's variety of LS converts, and the style of the course suits the sharp edges of the fairway, yet more could still be made of it from the alleged professionals. The pano is weak, and the planting seems determinately random. But to create such a variety of rock faces must have taken considerable skill, and the hazard-work is a definite improvement on other commercial courses. 6/10

Overall	One of the better Microsoft courses, with plenty to look at and lots to do. It might prove a bit of a pushover for the better players, though.	32/50
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Billabongs

Mark Pogson & Lez Marwick



Description

Imaginary, farmland course

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

NSW, Australia

Conditions

M*/M* is playable with care

Concept

The ideas and flair behind Billabongs are impressively conveyed, and there's no doubt that the downlands of New South Wales have been imaginatively reconstructed, along with plenty of scene-setting objects and suitable sounds. But the course itself has gone off the rails for something specifically intended to be down-at-heel and local – it's tortuously contrived, features some near-impossible requirements, silly green shapes and over-long Par 5s, and the odd conceit of putting three Par 3s in the middle of the back 9 strikes of desperation. 6/10

Appearance

The yellowing green is a good choice, especially with Lez's hi-res update; certainly the course melds nicely with the panorama and surrounding fields. The planting has been tightened up and there are fewer anachronisms: the remaining vestiges of farmland are a welcome alternative touch. Unfortunately, the general appearance, although improved, is still somewhat washed-out. 7/10

Playability

Well, there's certainly never a dull moment at Billabongs. The hole shapes are intriguing, water a surprisingly constant threat, given the location, and there are plenty of opportunities to take risks. Unfortunately, it's all a bit too cynical and contrived to be taken seriously, there are a lot of blind shots, and the argument that 'simpler is better' has rarely applied more so than here. There are some real standout moments, especially on the back nine, but only really for novelty value. 6/10

Challenge

Less of a hard layout than a sadistic one, you'll spend plenty of time sharing your woes with the water oases, and frequently having to shuffle around to get an acceptable approach into the tiny greens. Putting is certainly no pushover, either, with some old-school green construction adding the final blow. 4/10

Technical

Billabongs is a fairly lofty project on the surface, and now that some fine-tuning has taken place, it's certainly a more playable course that matches up to its designer's ambitions. The hole design never really gets its feet grounded, though, hence the 'Imaginary' categorisation. Some floral hole previews have been sacrificed for functionality, but the ambitious hole design demands more than this. 6/10

Overall

A course with some worthy ambitions as far as location and creativity goes. Unfortunately, the designer's gone overboard in an effort to impress.

29/50

Bishopbriggs Golf Club

Stewart Parker



Description

Real, woodland course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, greenside

Concept

Like a Shih-tzu, Bishopbriggs is a sweet little thing but with a slightly sharp edge. Shorter than average and with a network of ditches providing effective hazarding where the bunkers miss out, it's an atmospheric and understated little venue with some intelligent hole design that is a step above the average Scottish links. The re-vamped version has been tidied up well, but still lacks the nicety or two that will make for really compulsive golf. 7/10

Appearance

The texture set is detailed and highly appropriate, and there is the usual stunning panorama to feast your eyes upon. The planting too, is very natural, both at ground level and above. But the water features look rough, and there are still large areas of flat nothingness if your eyes wander to the background. Bishopbriggs has nothing to complain about, but it wouldn't be unreasonable to expect more. 6/10

Playability

There's a good demand on your range of strokeplay; even the shorter holes force you to be creative, and the recurring threat of the drainage ditches mean that there are few dull holes. Putting is remarkably rich, too: many greens offer makeable possibilities from mid-range. It's a course you'll often come back to, particularly in a matchplay environment, where the course tempts the daring shots that might make eagle. 9/10

Challenge

The underwhelming length of many holes, even from the back tees or the fictional medal tees, is hardly a selling point. The fairways are narrow, but the rough isn't a terminal curse. It's only the water features and two or three close-to-unfair greens that keep scores from becoming silly. 4/10

Technical

It's nice to see an early, and rather poor course, earning this makeover, and the technical improvements are legion and undeniable. It's still lacking fine tuning, and is perhaps not of the involved and customised depths of the best courses, but what has been done, has been done very well indeed. 8/10

Overall	A fun little track, of the kind that makes you want to re-visit time after time. Great for the risk-taker and matchplay aficionado.	34/50
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Bishop's Amble Tournament

Rob Moates



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 4, from rough.

Concept

This is an impressive and realistic-looking course at first, with some excellent pinpoint bunkering and fairway contours that really make you work on your approach. After the first 8 holes or so, however, you get the feeling you're stuck in a bit of a timewarp: an endless succession of ruler-straight Par 4s and 5s interspersed with sharp, dogleg 'Ooh! I could drive this one!' Par 4s. By the time you reach the closing hole (which is admittedly a bit more original), you're left with the inescapable conclusion

that the designer only had two different holes in mind. 5/10

Appearance

This is a very good-looking course and some care has evidently gone into planting and sculpting a realistic-looking landscape. Custom textures help, and the course is refreshingly free of fringe objects such as paths (there is one road) and ballwashers, which enhances the remote feel. 9/10

Playability

The first few holes flew by on the back of some scenery-gawping. Then the difficulty level subtly increased, and the course became somewhat frustrating as I battled in vain for a birdie. The repetitive nature of several holes around the turn didn't help either, and having to keep the straight and narrow between the punishing rough hazards became laborious. 4/10

Challenge

The difficulty is ramped up, big style, and certainly too much for most players. I shot two birdies on the round, both from putts of over 20 feet, and my score was still +5. Most holes are too long to be decently challenging, and the sand is frustratingly easy to hit. Add to this the fact that deep rough hazards frequently lie less than 20 feet off the fairway, some severely ramped greens, and a lot of elevation changes around the greens, and you'd have to be indecently good or lucky to break 70 on this course. 2/10

Technical

The planting wins a lot of points here, and is very worthwhile. Slight let-downs are some sharp edges to the occasional fairway, and the less-than-seamless green sloping. The custom textures look nice, but some seam blending would help the rough look of this course immensely. A very competent piece of work nevertheless. 8/10

Overall	A good looking Links-style course, but not for the amateur or faint-hearted. Play it once to enjoy the views, but don't play it again unless you're a sucker for punishment.	28/50
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Blackclough Forest GC

Alan Toft



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, forest course	14 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
At a guess, I'd say Oregon or Washington state fit the bill		
Conditions		
M*/S* seems to be the reasonable upper limit		

Concept

A straightforward forest layout with the woodland realised very convincingly, given the APCD tools in use at the time. The hole design is particularly plain and gimmick-free, which is refreshing and almost certainly deliberate, although it does get notably tiring towards the end of the round as you endeavour to pick up on the trademark holes. The environment is not helped by the almost complete enclosure of the trees and lack of hole previews or background documentation. 5/10

Appearance

This hasn't aged as well as I'd hoped. The stock textures are very obvious in their lack of features and blending, although the planting shows a sure hand and is pretty clone-free. It's also notable that a lot of the course is very flat and featureless, when a forest course would notably lend itself to humps and hollows. 5/10

Playability

Fun at first, and I won't deny that there's a fair deal of subtlety on these designs, but there's not enough to really challenge your approach and the monotony will sink in at around the 13th or 14th hole. The course has done well to remain playable, though, and that shouldn't be held against it. 6/10

Challenge

Selecting reasonable conditions will show up this course's true strength: the fact that it has maintained a good test, even if the looks are dated. Sure, a few greens are tough, but the bunkers are well-placed and a challenging recovery, and even wild drives into the forest can usually be safely chipped out in one – a trait sadly not shared by later courses. Blackclough is worth keeping for this trait alone. 9/10

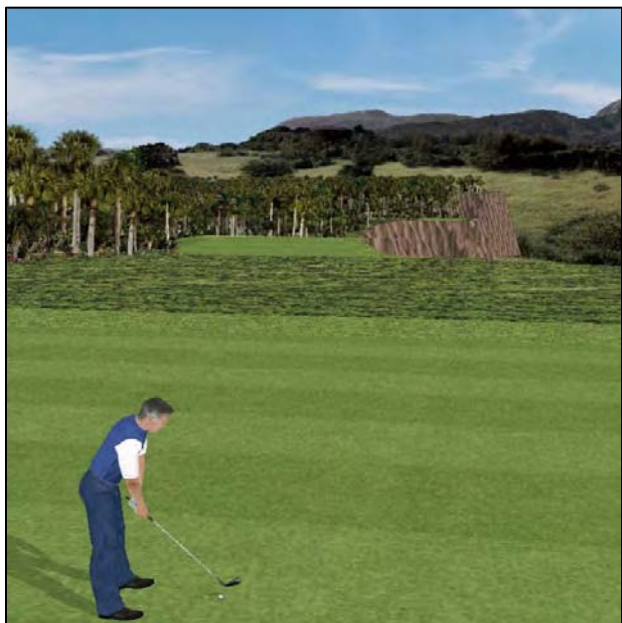
Technical

The attention to planting still holds up very well, and the water and sand are done competently, even with the stock textures. The hole design is old-fashioned but very convincing. At the time, this was excellent work; it would still be considered more than competent now. 6/10

Overall	Looking very hackneyed in parts now, but a carefully designed course which will still provide a decent test.	31/50
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Black Crater Golf Club

James Wood



Description

Imaginary, tropical course.

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 4, approach.

Concept

The theme behind this course seems to be somewhat confused. I think it wants to be a tropical island course, but at times it feels like an American Parkland course, and some holes have an almost Links-like quality. The designer seems to have lots of ambition, but little of the panache, imagination or technical ability required to carry it off. 2/10

Appearance

Anyone claiming they like the look of this course is a liar. Cloned trees, extruded and flattened block textures, little if no attention to detail, stock textures and a completely inappropriate panorama all sum up the ugliness of a course that appears to have been made in a day. 0/10

Playability

The sheer ugliness of the course doesn't entice you to keep playing, and it's all too easy to give up. Most holes offer little or no viable choice of line, and bunting the ball around flat fairways is a real plod. If you're still going strong after six holes, I congratulate you. 0/10

Challenge

Bizarrely, this is one aspect where this course does well. There is little aspect of risk-reward, but the designer has given the trials and tribulations of playing golf some careful thought, and designed the course accordingly, without making the glaring 'step into the trap' errors that plague other courses. There is some room for improvement and I would like to see more careful bunker placement and more options on certain holes. 7/10

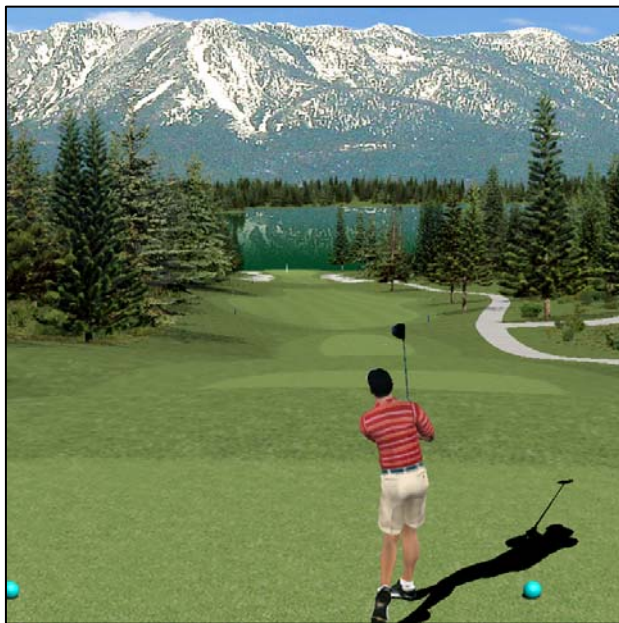
Technical

You might have gathered that there will be nothing worth of praise here. It is clear that very little attention has gone into fine-tuning the detail on any hole. Textures are big and blocky, trees are scattered higgledy-piggledy, and the extruded water hazards look plain awful. Perhaps the sheer cliff walls that reach down to the sea could look good, in another setting. Here, they are just laughable. 0/10

Overall	A course with almost no redeeming features whatsoever. You have been warned!	9/50
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Black Diamond GC

Shawn Kobold



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Shawn's clean-cut course style probably fits the mountain genre as well as any other, and Black Diamond is a well-textured and logical mountain course that ticks a lot of boxes without being unprepossessing. Shawn's design brief is clever without resorting to lots of gimmickry or unrealistic ideas – the use of hazards is remarkably restrained, and the elevations are rightly the primary test. It has to be said that there is some evidence of a loss of imagination around the turn, though: if anyone can come up with a

hole more dreary than the 11th, good luck to them! 6/10

Appearance

Close up, the surface is lovely: detailed and well-blended. Unfortunately, it becomes rapidly blurred and tiling at greater distances. The planting too, is good on the small scale, but there are clones on the tree-line and a lack of density in the undergrowth. The panorama is magnificent and unusually well-fitting for a pano on such a large scale, and despite the flaws the course appearance hangs together in a very inoffensive way. 6/10

Playability

Black Diamond certainly makes for a relaxing round, but perhaps this is an underlying problem with some of Shawn's courses. There is an underlying lack of confrontation: even holes with water in play have easy bail-outs, and too many holes will conclude with a comfortable two putts for par. But there are some tidy compensations in nice ambient sound – too frequently overlooked – and several holes where the elevations provide real club-selection dilemmas. It's nice not to see all the emphasis rested on one's recovery game, too. 7/10

Challenge

Impressively close to the mark, this. The simple hole designs really doesn't convey the clever understanding of golf that has contributed to this, and an inspection of the bunker positioning and green complexes will explain precisely why this course isn't a pushover. The deep rough is pretty extensive, too, and several tiered greens will demand a great deal of accuracy. 8/10

Technical

Several designers have definite visual styles associated with their APCD work, and I believe Shawn can definitely count himself among them. His smart-edged, minty-green and very clever designs are different enough to stand out. Flaws such as clones and distance textures, though, are possibly betraying a lack of testing and perhaps not quite enough hours spent on the detail. 6/10

Overall

Pleasant, playable and verdant: another smartly-designed course from an up-and-coming designer.

33/50

Black Forest

Gary Allen



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

It's not a bad idea to create a fictional course through the Black Forest region of Germany, so due credit there. Unfortunately, there are some rather more pressing problems. This doesn't feel like a forest. There is too much space and no sense of enclosure or atmosphere. More worryingly, this forest seems to be entirely made up of three different trees. Cloned. Lots of times. Lots and lots and lots of times. Sadly, not enough to create the necessary atmosphere. My final gripe is with the eighteenth – the

trademark hole and toughest test of many a good course. The 18th at Black Forest is an insult to the wonderful finishers at Kiawah, at Pebble Beach and at Sawgrass, in that it's something of a cop-out and damp squib. Mind you, the preceding 17 weren't exactly fireworks. 2/10

Appearance

I think this has already been covered, in fairly damning style. This course suffers from excessive flatness and doesn't convey the feel of a forest in any way. One's attention is drawn by the repetitive trees – sorry, 'tree' – and not diverted by the lack of hazards. Paths – concrete ones, mind, not mud - wind everywhere and frankly just get in the way. There are a couple of pretty moments but it's scant consolation. 1/10

Playability

Repetitiveness was the enemy here, and playing this course quickly switched from a novel diversion to a routine slog. Lack of options on nearly every hole didn't help, and there weren't even the challenge of green-front bunkers or water to negotiate. 2/10

Challenge

The course is too easy. I started off with eagle-birdie, which didn't bode well, and the risk/reward element was utterly minimal. Greens were easy to hit, and putts were easy to make in the absence of challenging gradients. There were no elevation changes to throw me off stride, and even the deep rough was pretty easy to escape from. 3/10

Technical

The unforgivably bad planting, combined with sharp textures, poor extrusion techniques (there's one easily visible on the screenshot) and stock textures does nothing to enhance the designer's credibility. Perhaps the saddest aspect is that this was a concept with genuine potential, let down by poor execution. 1/10

Overall

Such a disappointment. A great idea which has not been carried out anywhere near as well as it might.

9/50

Black Rose Valley

Paul Seaman



Description

Fictional, forest course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from rough

Concept

Cutting swathes through woodland made surprisingly claustrophobic by its spindly trees, Black Rose Valley is as sombre a test of golf as it sounds. Magnificent hole design combines the woodland, elevation change and accurate hazarding in just the right amounts, and both the massive planting scheme and the overbearing panorama make you feel simultaneously trapped and at one with the course. The final hole is an absolute gem of a design and caps the round perfectly 8/10

Appearance

Very fine indeed, on the whole, although the 'ditch' problem that bothered Dullatur hasn't quite been rectified here. It would have been nice to see either some variety or more significant underplanting in the forests too. But the panorama is top notch, the clubhouse and environs lovingly created, and a convincing line in slightly-worn textures used to best effect. 9/10

Playability

This immersive course keep you playing by mixing up the hole types and strategies so you never end up playing two consecutive holes the same. Good bunker positioning is thankfully not used to excess, and the combination of links and target golf keeps you on your toes. It's nice to have a clear line of sight off nearly all tees and a lack of hazarding for the rare blind one. Perhaps extracting ones self from the woodlands or the deepest of the bunkers is something of a trial, but this is a course you'd be happy to visit time and time again. 8/10

Challenge

This course tries hard to press you, with annoyingly voracious woods, tough-to-read greens, and a fair old use of deep sand and even deeper water (several of the water hazards are hidden, moreover). But the Par 5s and 3s yield easily and breaking par should be feasible for most. No pushover, but not the big boy that it wants to be. 7/10

Technical

Planting and hole layout are Paul's obvious strengths and this course shows them off very finely indeed. This is complemented by some excellent 3D sculpture and excellent attention to terrain. I still think the downward extrusions – ditch and deep bunkers particularly – are a little sharp, and could use a little 'cover-up' planting in the former case. 9/10

Overall	A fair-minded and stimulating fictional course that has endeared itself to all Links golfers.	41/50
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Blacktooth Foothills

Randal Queen



Description

Fictional, farmland course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 4, from greenside.

Concept

This is a good reworking of British countryside and on the whole looks very effective. The golf is largely Links style, and the course is littered with hundreds of small pot-bunkers to prey on the unwary. The concept as a whole was let down for me by the waterside holes. These were too reminiscent of Belfry-style 'target' golf, and not really in keeping with the rest of the course. 7/10

Appearance

The course looks lovely, on the whole. The advanced APCD techniques make an authentic feel, and custom textures add a little extra. The panorama is understated and works well with the course. Only a couple of minor flaws spoiled this countryside stroll for me: some of the planting looked a little haphazard (particularly the little-tree-under-a-big-tree idea and the trees close-up to the tee box) and the water and wild areas looked perhaps a little more artificial than was ideal. But there are still many great views to be had here. 8/10

Playability

In some ways, actually playing this course is the weakest feature. The fairways and greens are very harsh, and I found myself playing the vast majority of my shots from the rough and the bunkers. The Par 3s are very hard (particularly the 7th – for shame!) and don't create birdie opportunities, almost forcing you to bail out and take the quiet line. I enjoyed the round on the strength of my chipping game (which is good), but found the constant hazard play to be exhausting. 5/10

Challenge

Surprisingly, given the amount of recovery play required, the course is very fair when it comes to scoring. While the lateral elevation changes will always make you think, the course hasn't been stretched out to mammoth proportions and the bunkers are easy to escape from for par. My round came to –3 with an eagle on the last (another 'target' hole), which represents a good mixture of risk and reward. 9/10

Technical

The designer has done pretty well here. He clearly knows the APCD well and has used seam blending to great extent around the fairways and bunkers. The planting could use work, and an inappropriate helicopter at one point rudely interrupted my round. A couple of hard edges were also evident where the lake (a misjudgement, in my opinion) and an area of scrub had been inserted. These minor inkblots could be ironed out simply, but the use of trees needs harder work. 7/10

Overall

A good looking British-style course, which is only spoiled when the designer's ideas start to wander.

36/50

Black Valley

Mat Leclair



Description

Fictional, forest course.

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Consistency is the strong aspect here at Black Valley. From first hole to last, the design and appearance of the woodland and the tidy layout of the holes therein is impeccable. The use of water is well-timed and not excessive, what is much more important is the use of the many undulations which make this forest, quite simply, one of the best ever seen in Links. 9/10

Appearance

Take a glimpse at the yellow-planted undergrowth; you'll gasp with wonder and stay amazed for the rest of the round. From a reasonable distance, it looks quite simply remarkable, despite the fact that the planting overlays a stock texture. Elsewhere much seems to be well in order. The green textures belie the difficulties that they conceal, and the bunkers are expertly sculpted. The only let-downs for me are the harsh transitions (no great shakes with the blending), and the overuse of stone-walled sides to many water features. 9/10

Playability

You'll get around Black Valley very quickly. Time flies among the isolated tree-lined fairways, and every shot is that little bit new and different. There are many stunning views – every stroke I took on the first hole was preceded by a potential screenshot – into the bargain; the whole course is a great tribute to its designer. 9/10

Challenge

Oh, those greens. Oh, that rough. Those wicked, punishing greens and rough! Black Valley is an over-wrought nightmare at certain points, and even those putts less than 5 feet are no guarantee. The rough is little better – there is 'standard' rough in place of first-cut, and some well-disguised heavy rough where one might expect a lighter cut. It's all hard work, and the occasional water hazard does little to make it any easier. 4/10

Technical

In some ways, you have to be impressed with Mat Leclair for achieving what he has with so little. The file size is tiny by today's standards, the textures are nothing special, and the whole thing has been put together metaphorically seamlessly (given that there aren't actually many convincing seam blends). It would have been nice to see at least one or two signs of civilisation, and the water features could certainly use tidying, but the great elevation and bunker work are heavily in the designer's favour. 8/10

Overall	A terrific and surprisingly atmospheric course. Undergrowth to die for.	39/50
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Black Water Pines

Stephen Sullivan



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, heathland course	13 th hole, Par 4	72

Location

The author is claiming Northern England – the Peak District, perhaps?

Conditions

The Readme doesn't recommend F*/F* and I'd be inclined to agree. M*/M* is enough.

Concept

This piece of heathland comes courtesy of the imagination of Stephen Sullivan – already an accomplished designer through the likes of Worksoop and Lindrick Dale – and indeed is very reminiscent of Northern British moorland and forestry plantations. Stephen's first fictional course has allowed him to stretch a little on hole design, and while it's pleasing to see a set of holes which are not overly reliant on water (I don't believe there was any after the opening Par 3), the feeling of being separated from reality is persistent throughout. 6/10

Appearance

Very few complaints here. The heather and bracken are densely planted and – although extremely common in real life – make a refreshing change for Links rough. The yellowing texture set lends the course an old-fashioned feel, although it doesn't always work precisely with the browner panorama. Bunkers and blends are subtle and don't stand out, which is exactly as it should be. 9/10

Playability

Stephen certainly specialises in that X-factor of courses: the subtle combination of surprise and playability that makes a round end all too quickly and makes golfers re-visit simply for relaxation. Black Water Pines is no exception, even if there are few frustrations along the way (notably blind landing areas being rather too prevalent), and the overall experience is a class above. 8/10

Challenge

There has been a licence to cut loose with a fictional creation, and to some extent this has been achieved with pretty plateaued greens, although all too often an unfair shortening of the fairway has been used as a get-out clause. More significantly, this still plays reasonably easy due to the bracken planting being too easy to pass through. It's not really a complaint, but it would make a change to see a course from this designer where breaking 70 is a bit tougher. 5/10

Technical

No problems here, other than a slight predilection to twist fairway shapes to benefit. The visuals and brilliant replayability of this course are enough reason to pay extended visits. 9/10

Overall	A highly enjoyable continuation of Stephen Sullivan's design work into new areas.	37/50
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Blue Heron

James Wood



Description

Fictional, forest course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Widespread opinion is that this is in New Jersey

Conditions

S*/S* is as far as you'd want to go

Concept

A silly name, no doubt, but Blue Heron is deep, dark and mysterious. Wrapped in incredibly dense forest that is remarkably well-planted, there are a selection of great golfing puzzles to be solved here. Perhaps it's a little lacking in coherence, thanks to the designer's insistence on cramming in all sorts of obstacles, and the lustre is definitely removed by the lack of hole previews, but there's enough consistency here to keep you interested. 6/10

Appearance

Showing its age now, there are plenty of mismatched and featureless textures and obvious extrusions around all the bunkers in place of proper lips. The planting is suitably commendable, though, and the elevations are well-handled and appropriate to the environment. Some Easter Egg moments include some nice underplanting and the clever storytelling behind the final green, where the woodland has been swathed aside for a TV tower. It's a little bit too easy to come across parts of the plot that haven't received due care and attention, though. 6/10

Playability

This is where Blue Heron has really held its own over the years. There are still fresh and original ideas in this course, and a lot of pressure to manage the course well, particularly off the tee. There's some good ambient sound planting, but it's not as consistent as it should be. Two or three holes are determinedly difficult to analyse without a Top Cam, though, which continues to be a frustration. 8/10

Challenge

Very much of a muchness. You really need to select slow green conditions to avoid going mad, and under such circumstances, the course is just a fraction too easy. Sensible play – fairways and greens – will inevitably result in birdie putts going down. The flipside, of course, is to increase the green speeds and present yourself with a test that is all out of balance. 5/10

Technical

There are plenty of highlights still here, but the course now has a determinedly quaint look, hardly helped by the old-fashioned textures from stock. Blue Heron has done well enough not to date itself into unplayability. 5/10

Overall

A clever design which probably won't continue to get the outings it deserves.

30/50

Blue Rain Valley

Rand Herron & Lez Marwick



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, lakeside course	4 th hole, Par 5	72

Location

Despite a wide range of planting, the Florida influences are pretty clear.

Conditions

The greens play OK on F*/F*, but the surrounding complexes might put you off. I would settle for a notch slower.

Concept

The original Blue Rain Valley showcased some imaginative golfing design amid some pretty horribly textures and landscaping; thankfully a great deal of this has been levelled out with Lez's affectionate remake, and some of the great golf shines through. It's reminiscent of both Bay Hill and Sawgrass, with lots of water and plenty of creativity required despite some apparently flat landscape, and the multiple flowerbeds break up the visuals very nicely. The 10th, in particular, is a classic and well worth playing through the first half for. 8/10

Appearance

A vastly improved texture set goes with the slightly esoteric planting set, and generally the course looks have been tidied up well. It's not perfect: some texture folds and extrusion marks remain, and there are still quite a few clones. But good textures have made a lot of difference. 8/10

Playability

A love of upturned-dish greens is apparent, and given that many of them are barely bigger than your average dining table, it would be a brave man who played with slick conditions all the way around. There are quite a few forced shot-shaping exercises from the tee, several very tight landing areas, and – alongside the glut of water – this struck me as one gimmick too many. 6/10

Challenge

Although not easy, Blue Rain Valley is open and reasonably accessible and despite the water and some additional 'unplayable' hazards, stands a very reasonable test of getting round in par. A lot may well depend on green conditions, but that's certainly not a negative against the course itself. 8/10

Technical

Huge improvements to both visuals and playability were Lez's aim, and although the original was somewhat coarse, it took great vision to pick out the golfing values contained within. Sure, it's not perfect, but it is most definitely fun, and that's one of a course designer's aims achieved. 7/10

Overall	Lez has scratched away at the surface of a course that was unpalatable before, and revealed some of the beauty within. Commendable.	37/50
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Boat Of Garten GC

Stewart Parker



Description

Real, mountain course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 4, greenside.

Concept

A Scottish course that really shows the Highlands to their full extent, Boat Of Garten's dramatic slopes are the lasting memory of this course. It's narrowly driven between swathes of heather, gorse and thin foresting, low on bunkers but high on shape and strategy. Like many of Stewart's creations, it's determinedly no-nonsense, but there is an optional tournament edition for those that insist on having their courses livened up with crowds and tournament objects. Frankly, I think the course is much

the better without them. 8/10

Appearance

Gorgeous low-level planting, really highlighted by the purple heathers, is the underpinning feature of this course, although there are very few weak links. The texturing is suitable intricate, and the elevations feel sweeping but natural. A towering panorama stands proudly – perhaps a little *too* proudly – over the whole thing. 9/10

Playability

Boat Of Garten is very much a test of accuracy and precision, and the majority of fairways feature pretty sharp direction changes. A player will be heavily tested for his ability to adjust to elevations – never an easy skills at the best of times. A fair few blind shots and some really nasty rough (oftentimes where you'd least expect it) don't exactly help. It's far from the norm for Stewart's 'small' Scottish courses, but that does mean some of the charm and intricacy from the details are lost. 6/10

Challenge

Veterans of Stewart's courses might be forgiven for coming onto Boat Of Garten with no little aggression, and no doubt those same people would be punished. This course is pretty tough, especially in realistically windy conditions, and the rough allows for precious little chance of recovering for par. One or two awkward pins might be a step too much in tournament conditions. 7/10

Technical

No problems here – a set of immaculate visuals and well-chosen colours make this course a treat to look at. The fact that the designer has seen fit to give us two new editions of this course shows real respect for the player. 10/10

Overall	Glorious planting on a perfectly re-worked course. Definitely one for the 'Scottish Collection'.	40/50
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Bogie Lake

Kevin X



Description

Fictional, short course

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 3

Par

54

Location

Too nondescript to pin down

Conditions

Strictly S*/S*

Concept

A pretty soulless Par 3 course, Bogie Lake doesn't really have much by way of redeeming features either in hole design or general technique. Without using the elevations or the 'natural' obstacles in any way, it's really just a case of pitch'n'putt'n'recycle. Disappointing fare. 2/10

Appearance

Stock textures, plenty of folds in the landscape, clones galore, bunkers just painted on. To the semi-anonymous designer's credit, he's managed to keep the look pretty credible throughout, and even provided one or two pretty touches (note the flowers in front of the 17th tee), but it's a course playing very short on good views. 2/10

Playability

With too many Par 3s pushed over 200 yards, and not enough demands greenside due to the inoffensive elevations, there's too little variety here: and variety really has to be the watchword for short courses. With very little incentive to re-visit Bogie Lakes, there's not much reason to believe it will last out time on many hard drives. 3/10

Challenge

Oddly enough, the course comes into its own here, being able to match par surprisingly well. Sure, at least part of this is down to some poor green slopes and near-unplayable pins, but if you're looking to shoot close to 3 on every hole, you could do quite a lot worse. 8/10

Technical

With a lot of shape-placement problems, and some quite tortuous mesh-wrangling, it's clear that there's an awful lot of opportunity for improvement here. The planting certainly isn't convincing, and the mis-scaled course objects are a disappointment too. Finally, and really quite fundamentally, if a designer doesn't produce a coherent and fun set of holes, it's not going to get any play-time. 2/10

Overall

Mediocrity: thy name is Bogie Lake. Unprepossessing, unmemorable and, above all, unnecessary.

17/50

Boondock Way

Eric Lintemuth



Description

Fictional, marshland course.

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

I believe from the name that this course is supposed to be set somewhere in the Southern States. The appearance has great difficulty convincing me of this, due to the wishy-washy themes of many holes, and the variety of unconvincing planting, which see us shift from a sparse forest on one hole to somebody's back garden on the next. The designer has spent too much time creating canny golf holes, and not enough making the course anything like realistic. 2/10

Appearance

There's not a lot to shout about here. A lot of the time, the course looks credible, but on closer inspection, is very clearly artificial. Repetition is an enemy here, as are some poor extrusive work and unrealistic elevations (particularly on and around the greens). Some of the planting is terribly, terribly misjudged and I don't care for the gimmicks such as the rock-lined tee boxes, either. 4/10

Playability

A round at Boondock way passes satisfactorily swiftly, thanks to the variety of challenges served up by the designer. Even if re-creating real life isn't his forte, he certainly knows how to present an exciting round of golf. Several holes (most notably the ninth, which is ridiculously out of place – it should be on Barkcamp Lake) give the user a certain frisson of excitement, and nearly every hole has two distinct lines of play, which is exceedingly gimmicky, but certainly satisfying. 7/10

Challenge

Most Links players won't find this a satisfactory challenge. The difficulty level on the earlier holes is ramped up with some impossible green elevations, but later holes present a plethora of eagle attempts (I had one 5-foot putt, thankfully sunk, for an eagle). Bunkers are well placed, but easily escapable, the fairways are wide, and the rough unpunishing. This is a fairly easy ride, all told. 4/10

Technical

Several problems are worthy of note. The rough is not layered, and even a shot out of the so-called 'woods' is easy. Extrusions, particularly of bunkers, are poorly done (the railway sleeper idea at the ninth was good, and should have been utilised elsewhere; why not for bunkers?). Several greens and green surrounds have clearly been texture-painted and are completely unrealistic. Add this to the lack of theme, and you are left with a course that could still use a couple of hundred hours more work. 3/10

Overall

There's no doubt you'll enjoy playing this course, but it offers little in the way of style or substance

20/50

Botany Bay Golf Club

Ernie Barnes



Description

Fictional, woodland course.

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 3, from bunker in centre of green

Concept

Obviously, this is intended to be a course set around the infamous part of Australia. This is not immediately apparent, though, in what is a pretty standard woodland course. Although none of the holes were badly designed, there was an unshakeable feeling of 'seen it before', which is unfortunate. 5/10

Appearance

This course has been built up well, and looks very convincing as a result. Only the poor extrusions on the tee boxes and some bunker cloning let it down. But the planting is sumptuous, particularly at ground level, and the land rolls nicely and convincingly. The panorama is pretty and fits in very well indeed. This course has obviously seen a lot of care and attention. 7/10

Playability

Due to the aforementioned déjà vu element, a round doesn't exactly fly by. Add this to the frustration of repeatedly not hitting fairways, a lot of enforced bunker work, and the fact that most holes only play one way, and the course isn't a stroll in the park. In fact, playing it became somewhat tedious towards the end. 5/10

Challenge

This course is a tough test because of the fairways, which are ridiculously narrow and almost always bordered by continuous bunkers. The greens are receptive, but hitting them in regulation is a problem, because if you miss your snap even fractionally, you'll be in the sand. As such, this remains a fundamental design flaw, and does nothing to help the playability of the course. Par 5s were tedious and offered little variety; the Par 3s were the best holes on the course by far. 5/10

Technical

The planting on this course is very carefully done, and the forested areas are convincing and have clearly taken a lot of work. The water regions were equally competent. It's a shame that the tee box extrusions were all mis-aligned, and that the bunkers were clearly so unnatural. My final issue came with the greens, which were clearly missing a fringe, making short approach shots much harder and meaning a lot of frustration if the green was missed by inches. I can't see any obvious reason for neglecting to include a fringe. 6/10

Overall	A good-looking course, but a stern test. Be prepared to put in a lot of practice for bunker escapes.	28/50
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Boundary Waters Wildlife Refuge

'Stealth I'



Description

Imaginary, canyon course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 4, from rough.

Concept

It'd be easy not to bother with this course if it weren't for the affectionate gimmick of cramming it with wildlife. It's a gimmick I approve of, always in search of something a little different, but it's also not played out as well as it could be. If you're going to turn a golf course into a nature trail, why not really go to town with customisation and ideas, rather than restrict yourself to the stock library? As for the golfing qualities: well, they're better not dwelt upon. 3/10

Appearance

It's shocking how bad much of the mesh work is here, and it should have been clear to the designer that the course wasn't fit for release. Add that to the stock textures and yet another appearance by an old-favourite panorama, and there's little to love. Unexpectedly, you do sometimes stumble across a nice touch with the planting or course objects that brighten the course above completely awful. 1/10

Playability

You'd be better off just wandering around looking at the nice animals than attempting any golf on this track. The obstructions to making a good fist of this are legion – from mesh faults to trees that obscure your view, to silly hole design and wanton use of water. It's amazing how long it feels to get round. 0/10

Challenge

Boundary Waters has an almost entirely artificial difficulty gradient created by much hazarding and planting and almost unplayable greens. Any birdies would be cause for celebration and no little luck. 1/10

Technical

While the ideas and occasional bit of planting deserve credit, the surface work is so desperately inept that it removes any credibility the designer might have earned. 0/10

Overall	An idea that I like and would have promise if attempted seriously. Otherwise, a no-go zone.	5/50
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Bountiful

Microsoft



Description

Real, mountain/parkland course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 5, 2nd shot

Concept

Nestling in the foothills of a large mountain, Bountiful provides a rolling landscape dotted with shallow bunkers and generous greens. The course re-creation as a whole keeps that pretext very well. Individual hole design is gentle but subtly challenging and no golfer will leave feeling that they've been short-changed. 9/10

Appearance

Generally, this is a very good-looking course. Microsoft's designers have removed any sharp edges, and thrown in a ton of extras – golf carts, wire fences, and a stunning panorama – that hold the attention. Bunkers fit in beautifully with the landscape and look utterly natural. Planting is sparse but looks effective; my only downside is the houses by the course edge, which sometimes lean over perilously and look very amateur close-to. 7/10

Playability

This course whips you round on the basis of open but sloped fairways, generous greens which give you some makeable-looking birdie putts, and a range of subtly different options on every hole. It's one of those rare courses where you can't wait for the next hole to render just to see what's in store for you. I enjoyed my round at Bountiful very much. 8/10

Challenge

The challenge of this course is all in the fairways. Humped, hollowed and laterally sloped, they provide a variety of difficult lies for every approach shot. The greens are easy to hit but hard to read, and it's easy to get putts running away from you. Bunkers are shallow and will counter these last two problems to some extent: indeed, on some fairways it's better to be in the bunkers than on the grass. All put together, this is a very well-pitched golfing test, and will throw up a wide range of scores depending on the conditions. 8/10

Technical

Thankfully, Microsoft's team brought their A-game to this version of Bountiful. Some of the seams are harsh but are well disguised, and the lack of blends (even around the bunkers) doesn't detract from the beauty of the course at all. The course is superbly well contoured and looks utterly natural – not an easy feat on a layout such as this. Only the aforementioned problem with houses lets it down. 8/10

Overall	A lovely and utterly playable course, made all the more refreshing for its lack of gimmicks.	40/50
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Box Canyon Fantasy

Chuck Clark & Matt McIntosh



Description

Imaginary, desert course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

These rock formations – or something vaguely similar – are indicative of Utah or Arizona

Conditions

Playable (and recommended) on F*/F*

Concept

Loosely inspired by Microsoft's rather insipid Mesa Roja course, Box Canyon ups the elevations and craziness while not sparing the gameplay, which is no bad thing, even if the entirety is very in-your face. More than ever, though, in the face of other, more coherent courses, and in the face of a modern update, it does carry the feel of being a designer's scratchpad rather than the basis for a solid course. 5/10

Appearance

The overhaul of the textures is deeply, deeply impressive in places, with the ubiquitous sandstone cliffs and the desert scrub looking outstanding. But the legacy of this course is very mix'n'match, and that still shines through, with planting all over the place, and three different types of sand competing for your attention. The rounded rock formations are more Super Mario than Links. 6/10

Playability

Box Canyon still shines here, perhaps more so since the greens have been eased back. Using the rock walls as sites for both greens and tees, and giving all sorts of target-based madness to consider, it is gung-ho golf at its very best, and much more accessible than 'brother' course Rocky Nuts. The best of it is the fact that the sandy desert is playable, which positively encourages players to hit out and go for the highlight-reel shots. 10/10

Challenge

Oddly enough, this works pretty well. Courses like this generally miss a required par standard by a county mile, so it's kind of refreshing to see a majority of pars being scored on Box Canyon. The refreshed playability of the greens mean that few should be turned off at least trying this sort of crazy golf! 8/10

Technical

Hard to know where to place this, with the 'alternative' design values being further clouded by a modern make-over. Taken at face value, there would be worries about the golfing values, but it has to be admitted that there's little actually and fundamentally wrong. 7/10

Overall	Links purists won't like it, but this course is a wonder to play, and will draw people back time and time again. Particularly good when not played alone, so you can impress your friends with those carefully practised shape shots.	36/50
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Bramshaw Forest Course

John Brooks



Description

Real, heathland course

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Like its brother course, Bramshaw Forest is warm and welcoming. There's something very cosy about the whole atmosphere, from the sparkling splash-screen shots, to the pleasantly pushed-together feeling of the holes. It will be somewhat underwhelming to those with tournament tastes, but hopefully it will be another great representation of British golf in many a

collection. 7/10

Appearance

This looks pretty good, compared to the Manor course. The yellowing texture set is ideal, and objects such as fence posts are laid down with obsessive and loving care. It's not perfect – the elevation work is frustratingly inconsistent, even on the greens, and the planting seems somewhat forced, being simultaneously too random and containing several clones. But, again, it's most certainly a couple of notches above its predecessor. 7/10

Playability

If you like golf – and if you don't, I'm not sure why you're reading this – then you'll like Bramshaw Forest. Although I've no doubt that it's a different proposition in real life, it's an unashamed slugfest for the Links golfer. The course is very receptive to big hitters, although it does dish out the unexpected punishment or two. It's quite easy to get tied up in the undergrowth, but funnily enough, this doesn't make the course any less desirable; only more realistic. 9/10

Challenge

Naturally, you'd have to be very generous to describe this track as 'tricky'. It really is the light relief half of the Bramshaw courses, with birdies and eagles quite embarrassingly available on the front nine, which are largely reachable beneath regulation. Even the hazarding and thick clumps of planting don't really slow up your game. 3/10

Technical

The designer has shown a marked step up from the other Bramshaw course. A much improved texture set, better blends and better, if not perfect, terrain work are all hallmarks of improvement. It's not quite perfect, but time has been well spent bringing a local track to life: if only we could ask that of all designers. 6/10

Overall	An excellent and warm conclusion to the Bramshaw pair of courses. Easy to hit with aggression, but difficult to critique with the same brashness.	32/50
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Bramshaw Manor Course

John Brooks



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 5, on green.

Concept

In many ways, these are the best kind of courses for Links: loving creations of one's local track, without gimmicks or pretensions. There's something very, very real about Bramshaw Manor, and while it hasn't been immaculately put together, it features all those little things that we see out on the real course but rarely in the game. The drainage ditches, the folds in the landscape where the bulldozer has been called into play, and the uncompromising stretches of featureless rough – this is what most of us

expect when we go for a round of golf. 8/10

Appearance

On, the flipside, there are quite a few ways in which this course could be much better. The textures often checkerboard in the wide, barren spaces, and blends seem to be something of a hit and miss affair. The blue water texture is clearly inappropriate when a murky black would have been so much better. Lastly, and most irritatingly, there are many clones, and often great queues of them masquerading as a hedge. This is in stark contrast to some lovely and convincing planting elsewhere. Inconsistency is the inescapable conclusion here. 4/10

Playability

Despite being a fairly routine 'local' course, there's some flashes of inspiration here. Many holes have been subtly tweaked by the designer to bring bunkers into play, and the original design clearly makes the most of requiring pinpoint precision. The demanding final hole is an absolute masterpiece. I would have like to hear more sound planting to bring the course to life, but there's plenty to enjoy here even without. 8/10

Challenge

You might expect the sort of easy pushover we have come to love from 'home' courses, and you'd be in for a pleasant surprise. Bramshaw is no pushover, and it manages to be so through demanding skill and accuracy from the player, not through excessive hazarding. OK, so I doubt you'd ever class it as hard, but this course could certainly hold it's own in moderate conditions, and might worry some in anything more severe. 6/10

Technical

I would nominate a complete overhaul of the planting, and perhaps a bit of work on the elevations, both particularly to tidy up the expanses of rough. Bramshaw Manor is an excellent example of painstaking progress, however, and the designer has clearly gone to pains to continually improve the course. 4/10

Overall	The sort of local course that we all need to see more of. Demanding of your skills and your time.	30/50
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Briarwood

Ross Anthony



Description

Fictional, marshland course.

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 4, from greenside bunker.

Concept

It's a nice idea to set a course in the Southern USA marshlands, and one fully worthy of the designer's reputation. Sadly, it's a course that has been overworked to no small degree, leading to some overly-contrived hole designs and a lack of suitable atmosphere. The course is likely to appeal more to lovers of fantasy courses, because it is not representational of the region it is intended to portray, and this is its biggest failing. 6/10

Appearance

A game of two halves. The planting is superbly varied, although there are several features that look out of place. The fairway and bunker textures are great, but the heavy rough looks out of place and underplanted and really detracts from the tone of the course. The water does likewise. A lot of features, though, bear hallmarks of heavy extrusion, which does not add significantly to the course's air of authenticity. 6/10

Playability

Frankly, this is a bit of a drag. The designer has over-engineered quite a few holes in order to foul up the player, and this unfair feeling penetrates into ones golf. Narrow fairways are another common hazard, and the bunkers will pick up any shots that even slightly stray off line. Birdies are possible, but you don't feel you've been fairly challenged for them. 4/10

Challenge

The test of this course varies widely from hole to hole, and the course is begging for some consistency. Many holes offer subtle risk/reward options and do not threaten the player with 'hidden' hazards and unfair lies. Other holes, sadly, cannot have the same said about them. The handicapping of this course must have been quite an easy task, because it's all too easy to distinguish between the easy holes and the hard ones. Just not adequate, I'm afraid. 6/10

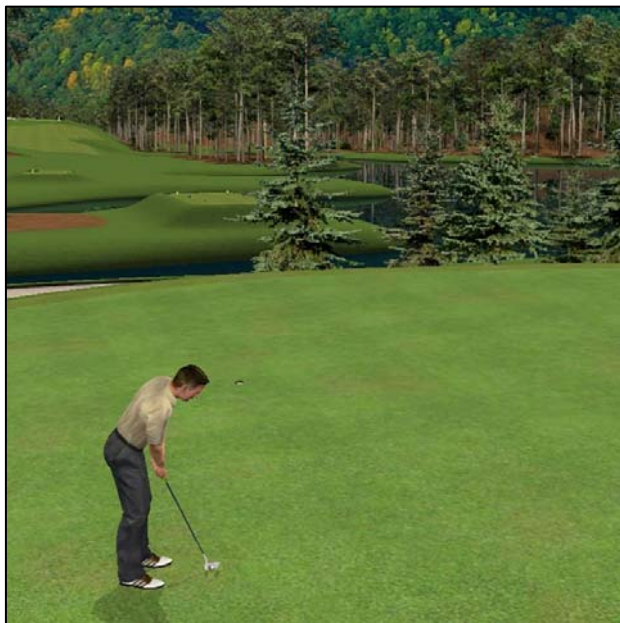
Technical

Despite the generally excellent choice of custom textures, the blends are in need of work. As far as the whole course goes, no insignificant attention must be paid to the course shapes and an attempt to make them more natural. The planting is brilliantly understated but varied and is among the best I've seen. 7/10

Overall	An indecisive tropical-style course, which has clearly had a lot of different influences. Sadly, they don't all gel together and leave some of the fancier hole designs falling flat.	29/50
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Brierwood Hills Golf Club

Noah Neumann



Description

Fictional, forest course

Screenshot

14^h hole, Par 3, on green

Concept

Brierwood is a re-release, and to be honest one which might have been better left alone. There's an uncomfortable feeling all the way round of the course having been mapped out first and elevated later, which indeed has been the case. Although the pine-like spindly forest works well, the water features are very artificial, and almost feel like an afterthought. It's just not as remarkable as Noah's other, much more striking courses, and in many ways I preferred the original. 4/10

Appearance

Very clean-cut, even amid the trees, there has never been too much to feast the eye upon at Brierwood, and the obviousness of the elevations has hardly helped its credibility. There's a lot of quite obvious extrusion going on, and the most convincing part of the course is the woodland, which is relatively clone-free, as these things go. 5/10

Playability

Brierwood was originally a fairly inoffensive course, and it was reasonable to expect the changes to add playability. Oddly, though, this isn't at all what has happened. Sure, a few greens have been ironed out, but the expectation on the approach shots just doesn't seem to work, and the elevations around the water hazards are turning it into more of a crazy golf than anything else. It might add novelty, but it doesn't really do anything for the gameplay. 5/10

Challenge

One of the factors I always look for as far as difficulty is concerned is the degree to which the elevations come into play. Which is why this course is all the more puzzling: despite having the gradients significantly toyed-with, it's somehow considerably easier. The hole design, and the reasonable imagination therein, is all that makes your round worthwhile. 6/10

Technical

Mucking about a bit with the mesh doesn't really count as technical improvement in my book. Not, at least, when there was re-texturing and customisation work which might have taken priority. The lack of underplanting just never convinces us that we're playing a forest course. 5/10

Overall	Not so much an experiment gone wrong as an experiment that might as well have not been executed. A personable but really quite unmemorable course.	25/50
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Broken Arrow Championship Course

Dominique Bois



Description

Fictional, farmland course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 4

Par

71

Location

Not stated in preview, but Broken Arrow is in Oklahoma, and that tallies with the teepee-shaped clubhouse

Conditions

The designer recommends M*/M* and I'd agree

Concept

Dominique's skills as a golfing story-teller are exercised again in Broken Arrow, and as well as convincing us that this course really has been hewn from country estate, even the tarding-up and turning it into a championship course is brought across very believably. The real strength to the course is the feel-right aspect to it, with believable landscaping and course design, without fail, from start to finish. Perhaps it's not the most compulsive of Dom's courses, but then it is up against some pretty stiff competition. 10/10

Appearance

The texture re-working is much of a muchness: I really enjoyed the original wheat-like fields of deep rough and felt they added tone; the new ones are certainly much better in terms of definition, but the colour set chosen has been very bright. The bunker design is highly unusual this time round, with wide angled stony lips. They certainly help create better lies, but they sure as apples don't look right. The planting, most to form a boundary to this open course is fine, and it's worth noting the excellent and ambitious clubhouse. 7/10

Playability

The realism and restraint are very important strengths of this design. It truly would make a championship course, due to some obviously thoroughness when playtesting time has come around. Unusually for Clip Notes, I'd recommend playing one of the older versions of Broken Arrow first, because spotting the changes and contrasts is a very satisfying experience indeed. Ideal for strokeplay, thanks to the lack of very penal hazards. 9/10

Challenge

Original incarnations of Broken Arrow were tough, with steep-walled bunkers, small greens and nasty sloping putts. Unsurprisingly, a lot of this has been eliminated: perhaps too much in that the course has been left somewhat without teeth. The layout is still marvellous and the fairways are tight enough to demand accuracy, but from there on it's perhaps just a little bit too easy to piece together birdies. This does seem to be a recurring problem on Dom's courses. 5/10

Technical

In this re-visit, objectives certainly have been fulfilled and Broken Arrow has deservedly been given a new lease of life, with added atmosphere and sense of location. There are quite a few areas I'm surprised weren't updated, notably some lumpy elevations in the first half, and some proper construction on the bunkers, but for the large part, this has been produced with typical style. 8/10

Overall	Broken Arrow has kept its natural looks but lost some of the panache and challenge that brought it to our attention in the first place.	39/50
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Brokenhurst Manor

John Brooks



Description

Real, forest course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

The acme of John Brooks' set of designs, Brokenhurst Manor features some very intelligent holes in its tree-lined fairways. Starting relatively open, and plunging into deep, deep forest by the time you reach the close, there is a real feel of progression as you get stuck in, helped by clever hole 'echoes' reminiscent of top-class courses. It's a good all-rounder of a course. 8/10

Appearance

A few evident clones notwithstanding, this is an impressive and detailed creation from many angles. The textures work well together, and the subtle elevations that tie the course together are carefully crafted. Only the bunkers betray a lack of deeper work, and that only on closer inspection. 7/10

Playability

Beautiful golf, especially if you play with a short-hitting player. Calculated shots from the tee are the way to win here, and an ability to shot-shape will make for a bonus. The only turn-off for me were greens that were slightly beyond the pale and made putting more of a lagging process than hitting the targets. 8/10

Challenge

Like many of John's courses, the realism at Brokenhurst Manor means the Links golfer would expect to shoot a little under the norm. Be warned, though, those who come at the course too aggressively will likely be punished: this one has the ability to dish out the bogeys quite easily. 5/10

Technical

Good, coherent stuff as usual, and some toning-down of the pass-through properties on the trees has not gone unnoticed. Perhaps it's time for the big step up, though: weeding out the clones and perfecting those bunker lips. 7/10

Overall	Another in a good line of Hampshire courses but needs to be played a little bit more cannily than its brethren.	<i>35/50</i>
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Brookdale Country Club

Stuart Kahle



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, estate course	18 th hole, Par 5	74

Location

Victoria, Australia

Conditions

Probably best to stick to S*/S*. Good in gusty conditions.

Concept

Home of a hundred delicate views and screenshots, Brookdale is a real charmer of course with its soft appearance and estate walls lining the course. The hole design is very evocative of a 'proper' golf club, with at least one stunning hole, and a clear irreverence for 'standard' layouts, having just two Par 3s. The subtle strategy, using scattered patches of planting and bunkers focussed largely around missed fairways, befits the very Australian environment perfectly, even if there is a technical flaw or two. 9/10

Appearance

Some very impressive moments are impressive at Brookdale, including the 3D walls and course buildings, and the sparkling turquoise water textures. But, equally, the feather-light grass planting and some excellent texture work shouldn't be ignored. There are perhaps one or two clones in the treeline, but little else is apparent as a flaw. 8/10

Playability

The round is spoiled by one thing only: appalling sound planting. One particular bird is very persistent and monotonous and it really does take the edge off what could be an otherwise superb round of golf. Turn the sound down, however, and you're left with a great selection of risk/reward and hole options. It's clear that the designer has gone to great lengths to emphasise that long drives are not necessarily the best. There is genuine opportunity to try shots from all distances, and the hazarding is an almost perfect blend of sand, water and planting. If only the noise was better. 8/10

Challenge

The good variety of hazards is natural in feel and unobtrusive to the simple tasks of hitting fairways, and the deep rough lying in close proximity to the fairway was undoubtedly a good idea. A shame the course is let down by some immoderate green slopes and pin positioning which create something of an artificial challenge after the wholly natural one which goes before. The fact that it is a Par 74, with the occasional birdie putt to compensate, doesn't really do enough to make up for this. 5/10

Technical

It's a shame to penalise this too harshly for poor sound planting, but providing an accommodating environment always has to be a keynote for a Links designer, and that's where Brookdale has fallen short. Elsewhere, the effort in planting and texturing is more than apparent, and the tantalisingly good hole design showcases the designer's talent very well indeed. 7/10

Overall	A lovely, relaxed course with appeal to the visualist and golfer alike. You'll probably want to turn the sound off, though.	37/50
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Brown Deer Park GC

Chas Demster & Tim Hagen



Description

Real, estate course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 3, on green

Concept

Is this the cleanest, best manicured course available for Links? I'd say: even the deep rough here looks like the greens down at my local. Brown Deer's clean-cut look is a good selling point, as is the subtly clever hole design and a handful of extras, like the eponymous deer, worth looking out for. In the big picture, though, and despite the PGA-standard presentation, it's a fairly standard Par 70 which has to resort to water hazards cutting into the fairway for just about its only variety. 6/10

Appearance

The crispness of the course is helped by minimal – if any – low level planting, and by a delightful set of textures that complement each other perfectly. Sadly, in the quest for neat tree lines, there is a fair bit of cloning, and because the course is very flat good views are at a premium. Certainly the hazards look under-worked and in need of good vertical faces. It's good enough in an unfussy way, and that's what earns the marks here. 6/10

Playability

I'm yet to pin down exactly what it is about an otherwise mediocre course that makes it so exciting and playable. It isn't always length; it isn't always elevation; it isn't even always down to variety. Whatever the mysterious X-factor, Brown Deer Park has it. The openness and accommodative fairways are almost embracing and players are ushered round with a minimum of fuss, a minimum of frustration but still with the need to be creative and intelligent about their golf. 9/10

Challenge

The nature of the course works against it here. Fairways and greens are easy to hit, and even with PGA-Tour-deep-rough just off the fairways, recovery shots are possible. The whole thing is very, very flat which doesn't help with the challenge at all. Expect to do especially well at the Par 5 holes. 5/10

Technical

For a course that has been re-vamped, the whole effect is somewhat disappointing. The bunkers should surely have been toughened up, and some under-planting around the water, if not around the trees, would have helped hide some obvious transitions. The beautiful textures are a thing of joy; the clones a sign of a rushed job. 5/10

Overall

If you're looking for a course manicured to perfection, go no further. An update which has made wonders of one or two features, but still left some blinding errors.

31/50

Brydestone Golf Club

Mitch Sirk



Description

Imaginary, heathland course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

This is a wonderful idea for a course. Speaking as someone who has spent a large proportion of his time in North Yorkshire, playing golf through this region would seem almost impossible. But the course has been carefully carved through dale and valley, and merged into the landscape with perfection. Individual holes are bang on the mark, offering challenge (too much if you don't play with the Top Cam), variety and fun. As a set of 18 holes, I believe this has rarely been bettered. 10/10

Appearance

Without exception, I believe this is the best-looking Links course available, and if I could would give it 11 out of 10. The textures blend seamlessly into one another; the planting of rocks and wild grass is natural and brilliant; the panorama fits like a glove. I could go on, but I scarcely need to. 10/10

Playability

A fantastic course to play. Options off every tee, and opportunities to use every club in the bag. There are only two Par 5s and two Par 3s at Brydestone, which might limit the variety for some people, but most will play this course time and time again, if only to discover new opportunities to make different shots and enjoy visuals that weren't apparent the first time around. 9/10

Challenge

There are a couple of issues with the challenge overall. Without the Top Cam enabled, it's a very hard course – every tee shot is blind, and even some approach shots are harder than they appear from the main view. With the Top Cam, it's a mite too easy, the short length of many holes being a contributing factor. Ideally a good challenge lies somewhere in between, but there is no midway option with the Top Cam. To really make a good challenge of it, the views of middle and long-range need to render more clearly, this then becomes a technical issue...7/10

Technical

Without a doubt, the strong textures and planting hold this course up, but the long-range lack of visibility is a drawback (although perhaps wouldn't be unexpected in this terrain), as are a couple of very minor folds in the mesh that I encountered on the way round. With a little more technical work, this could be the best Links course ever, anywhere. 9/10

Overall	A stunning, original, impressive and beautiful course. Everyone should play it at least once, although once won't be anywhere near enough for most.	45/50
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Buck Creek Country Club

Art Patscheck



Description

Fictional, forest course

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

There's something indefinably quaint about Buck Creek. It's not to say that the APCD workmanship is showing its age, because it barely is. But the forested layout and the glorious greens and browns give the course the tint of a sepia painting, and there's an immediate sense of location from the first tee right up to the glorious clubhouse on stilts. . There's a surprising coherence to these holes, tied together by the creek and its surrounding hillsides. Fabulous stuff. 10/10

Appearance

The look is almost decadent (in a positive way), and slightly unlike anything else we've seen. The running water – a notorious APCD grave – has been executed extremely well, and a range of textures and underplanting add extra dimensions to the forest. The element of surprise is always present: several views are jaw-droppingly good, and that is more than enough reason for full marks. 10/10

Playability

Buck Creek is quite target-oriented. Fairways must be hit if you are to play well, and hence you get throttled back to some extent. But there's a far-from-perverse pleasure in trying to master this course with a combination of pinpoint play and local knowledge, and it's a pleasure you're unlikely to tire of quickly. 7/10

Challenge

Phew! Narrow fairways, lots of deep rough with very little first-cut, some deep and nasty forests and quite a lot of OB! Easy, it certainly isn't, but there's some redemption in an ultra-short Par 5 at the start and a likewise Par 3 on the run-in. 6/10

Technical

Buck Creek is holding up very well, having been on P2P release for more than four years. The 3D work is incredible, from the clubhouse to the multitudinous bridges that span the creek. The course layout is a little flighty, but you can't begrudge the designer a modicum of ambition after his sterling work on real course reproductions. 10/10

Overall	A delightful forest retreat as good-looking as if lifted from a painting. Not a forgiving course by any means, but worth it for the numerous stunning views.	43/50
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Budric's Mountain Valley State Park & Golf Club

Roy Bork



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 4, approach shot.

Concept

This is another of those courses that doesn't quite know what it wants to be. We tee off on the first amid a riot of pink and orange autumn colours, with pitching, rolling landscape and luscious looking greens. Later, the course becomes more American parkland, the tree colours change, and the other flaws of the course start shining through. This is a bit of a mish-mash that got lost halfway through, to tell the truth. 4/10

Appearance

There are some lovely views to be had on this course, but the disjointedness doesn't work in their favour. The views over the lake are gorgeous, and the panorama is highly spectacular, if a little mismatched. Misuse of textures doesn't help the close-up views any. 5/10

Playability

The 18 holes are enjoyable to play, and the variety of challenges on offer is persistent without being wearisome. Par 5s are perfectly gauged to provide a two-shot challenge, and one or two Par 4s are drivable. Combine this with some testing putts, and this becomes a course that, despite its flaws, calls you back for another round. 7/10

Challenge

While the challenge initially appears to be fair (± 2 would appear to be an average score), much of the challenge is artificially created. Greens are open and a fairwayed tee shot will almost inevitably finish close on the approach. However, the greens are fringed with first-cut, which is a monstrous mistake and ruins many short range approach shots. Ugly-looking deep rough lies just off the fairway and is too harsh a challenge. Hence, the too-easies cancel out the too-hards, presenting the illusion of a fair challenge. 5/10

Technical

Quite a few flaws here need attention. The first-cut-ringed greens are foremost, and the monotonous stretches of deep rough are tight behind. Some elevations look stretched and unnatural. The panorama is unsuitable, no matter how good it looks, and bunkers are misplaced and virtually unnecessary. A lot of planting is repetitive and detracts from whatever overall theme the course has. 2/10

Overall	A course with several faults, but if you can overlook the occasional monstrosity, worth a round or two. You don't ever get the impression you're on a real course, though.	23/50
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Buena Vista

Douglas & Karen Montgomery



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 5

Par

72

Location

Nothing given, but the dry grasses and the name hint at somewhere Spanish-speaking

Conditions

Some greens don't really take more than M*/M*

Concept

A vague sense of location doesn't really wrap up this set of holes convincingly enough. The selection here is peculiar: lengthy Par 4s (including some longer than at least one of the 5s, which is always a no-no), some pleasant strategic holes, but also two or three tortuously contrived efforts which really should have been left well alone. The course elevations are certainly intended as a selling point, but they vary between the wobbly and well-handled, and it's just too hard to get a big picture of the course. 4/10

Appearance

The dry textures are individually very nice, and the deep colour of the bunkers is refreshing when at present everything else seems to be brilliant white. But there are problems too: a lot of hasty shaping, a mixture of trees which look bizarre from some angles, and an omnipresent rough which tiles dreadfully from mid-distance outwards. Guest designer Paul Seaman has added a clubhouse which looks like an odd attack-fish, but at least it's a focal point. 5/10

Playability

Pleasant, if stubbornly one-way, golf around the first half gives way to a hefty dose of cynicism on the 3rd and 8th holes, both of which really needed a re-think. But generally, the Montgomerys' strong suit has always been a good eye for golfing values, and the back nine is great tournament fare. 6/10

Challenge

Despite stretching the course out to well over 7000 yards, even from the Mids, and narrowing the fairways so they just look the wrong side of natural, there's little that's very threatening at Buena Vista, unless you're playing with some greatly-reduced swing speeds. The impression is that there have been some desperate, but ultimately unsuccessful, attempts at adjusting the course towards par. 6/10

Technical

The Montgomery course-factory continues to churn them out, but it continues to be disappointing that too few of these courses will be memorable enough to merit their place among others. The golfing design is also left wanting when compared with more subtle, if less attractive, earlier efforts. 5/10

Overall

Hard to get excited about this one. Nothing terribly wrong, but one or two blunders mean Buena Vista has less appeal than some of its predecessors.

26/50

Buffalo Springs

Adriaan Maarschalk



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, marshland course	15 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
South Africa is the intention.		
Conditions		
Reasonably playable at fast conditions; I'd be inclined to ease back to M*/M* as the most realistic		

Concept

Adriaan's brave attempt to merge farmland, wetland and links golfing comes out – almost inevitably – as something of an incoherent and bits-and-pieces effort. While there's undoubtedly some fine visuals on offer, and design tending very much towards the gung-ho, it's consistently difficult to feel any sense of location or conviction that these holes are at all linked together. The overuse of water is probably the nail in the coffin that stops it pressing for a consistent tournament place. 5/10

Appearance

Plenty to feat your eyes upon, from the selection of buildings on and around the course, to some pioneering work in low-level planting, and terrific use of colour on the plot. It's all replete with a host of extras, from tournament crowds to the observatory-cum-restaurant to a paddock full of sheep. Sadly, the ocean pano is really quite garish in comparison, and much of the bunker work seems to be lacking construction. 8/10

Playability

Those who miss their snaps on a regular basis probably won't take kindly to this very unforgiving layout, but this is the classic example of a course that earns its appeal over time. Learning the layout will inevitably pay dividends, even if the water is unfairly punishing on more than one occasion. The short length of the course helps prevent it being a bore, though, and there are plenty of treats to be had on the way around. 7/10

Challenge

The injudicious use of the water is always going to be counted against Buffalo Springs: add to this Adriaan's favoured plateaued greens and you're undeniably in for a stiff test. There are more than a few hints that the course has been artificially balanced against this: some non-standard textures and reduced-length holes most notably. Not really the fair game I was looking for. 6/10

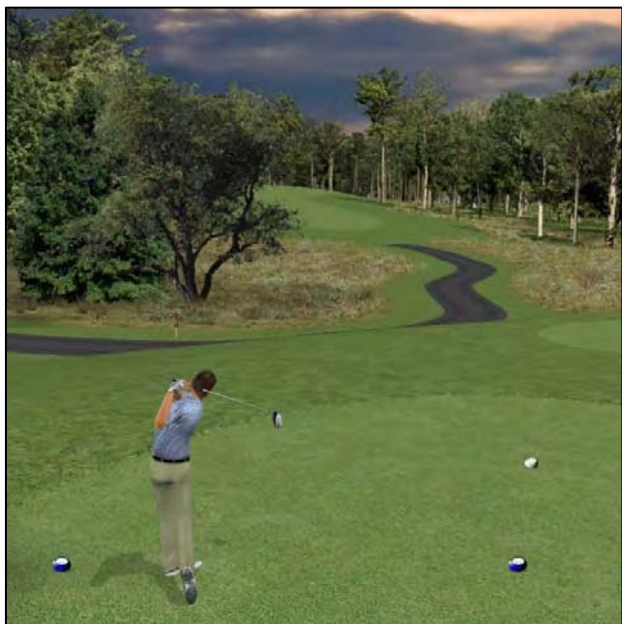
Technical

Visually and artistically, there's little that can compete with work such as this. Unfortunately, the texture-fiddling – while admirable in ambition - hasn't really paid off and comes across as inconsistent more than anything. Which, to be fair, is fairly descriptive of this bits-and-pieces course as a whole. 7/10

Overall	A massively entertaining casual round of golf for those that don't mind losing a ball or two to the lakes. I can't see it being taken seriously for tournament play, though.	33/50
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Bull Run

Eddie Schmidt



Description

Fictional, estate course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

I've never been to Virginia, nor would I have much idea what to expect if I did visit, but somehow Bull Run has managed to transcend this ignorance and deliver a prime slice of Olde America right onto my PC. It's a glorious, lush and green slice of Civil War country, featuring some bang-on-the-money golf, and scenery to die for, including ruins and beautiful 2D and 3D customisations. Truly one for the connoisseur. 10/10

Appearance

Eddie has really brought off a *coup* here. Bull Run is terrifically atmospheric; barely a blade of grass out of place. The icing on the cake are the lovely course buildings – both ruins and holiday homes, and the delicious atmosphere, which is virtually real enough that you can smell it. It's glorious, coherent and utterly convincing. 10/10

Playability

As if drop-dead looks weren't enough, there a range of beautiful golf holes here, too. Ingenious, creative and sometimes quite unique, there are eighteen perfect tests of strategy and bravado. From the gutsy 6th, through the novel 13th, to the audacity of the closing hole, there's a perfect mix of golfing styles and a round will go by before you know it. And you'll be back for more. 10/10

Challenge

Ah. Here the raving must cease. It has to be said that a lot of the strategy isn't quite bang on the money, and it's just too easy to walk all over this short course. With the exception of the Par 3s, the holes come in well under normal length, and even quite moderate players will find themselves with plenty of birdie putts. Birdie putts which the greens and green complexes do little to prevent. 3/10

Technical

As a P2P course, perfection would be expected. And perfection has been duly delivered. It takes considerable skill to produce such an absorbing, glossy environment, and no-one could doubt Eddie's ability to step up to the mark. 10/10

Overall	Home to a thousand great casual rounds, Bull Run will take a very long time to tire of.	<i>43/50</i>
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Bunclody Golf & Fishing Club

John Aherne



Description

Real, estate course

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 4, approach

Concept

Bunclody has every reason for breaking the mould when it comes to the distribution of Links courses. Opening with a terrific trio of tough dogleg holes, the course's slightly unorthodox layout (37 out, 35 in, finishing on a Par 5) is understandable in the large scale as it circles the hilltop clubhouse. The hillside lies are very much played to their strength here, bunkers being for the large part placed below the greens and the course very much rewards the skilled shot-shaper (in the case of the 15th and 16th

by rather uns subtly putting trees directly in the flight path). It's an exhilarating experience very much in the mould of other Irish championship courses. 9/10

Appearance

Lovely high-resolution textures and planting (and underplanting) go hand-in-glove with the fascinating array of 3D work around the course, including a couple of rather unusual buildings. Terrific things have been done in the rough; courses with open swathes of rough often lend themselves to tiling, but there's no trace here. There's also a very clean look to the course: long grasses are reserved purely for the forest regions and riversides. 10/10

Playability

It's difficult to take kindly to the opening half-dozen holes: they're long, half-blind and can be painfully difficult. Thankfully, the course soon gets into swing, mixing some genuine shot-shaping challenges with precise short holes and finishing with a terrific gambling Par 5. It's a course that rewards experience, too: knowing the fairways before going out will prevent those tricky side-hill lies. 9/10

Challenge

The immaculate grooming evident in the presentation means there is little to be concerned about in the rough, and the greens – even at fastest pace – are barely a threat. The landscape and the neat array of bunkers are – from the first tee – most obviously your enemy, although water does come into play moderately along the back nine. I can't imagine it's any picnic in real life, but it should make a terrific championship course for the Links golfer. 7/10

Technical

Perhaps my favourite aspect at Bunclody is the sheer underplaying of the APCD work that has gone into this; many other designers would rely on eye-catching features, but John has just let the course speak for itself. The subtle sound planting is the perfect complement to an unthreatening and distraction-free atmosphere. The net effect is to keep one's mind focussed on the golf, rather than the technicalities of the design process. And I can't think anyone would want otherwise. 10/10

Overall	Delightful subtlety in the design and bold brashness in the golf, this is a course that requires more than one round to fully appreciate.	45/50
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Bunker Highlands

Steve Pope



Description

Fictional, forest course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 3

Par

72

Location

Allegedly Scotland. Don't hold your breath, though.

Conditions

You might risk M*/S*, but no more.

Concept

It's difficult to see this succeeding at either bunkers or highlands, so it can hardly be regarded as a conceptual success. The sand is largely painted on and often not well-positioned. The highlands are lumpy, unrealistic and scarcely reminiscent of the most beautiful parts of Scotland. The whole thing might pass muster as an American parkland course, but it is way, way off-target here. And, to be honest, I see no need for three back-to-back Par 5s, certainly not ones this dull. 1/10

Appearance

Really, really appalling cloning problems dog this from the start, and the stock textures, unclear shapes and noticeable folds don't help either. There's just a tiny bit of originality in the shape of the clubhouse and surrounds; the rest is fundamentally routine. 2/10

Playability

Making sure you can hit the pick-shot will certainly help around here, especially when the lack of hole previews give you very little idea of what to expect. Indeed, many holes are downright frustrating with their lack of obvious direction. Some bagpipe music towards the end of each half is a poor misjudgement. 3/10

Challenge

Perhaps one reason that Bunker Highlands still gets mention in passing is that it's not totally unplayable today. It's not easy, sure, but the lengths are on the money, the bunkers present a range of challenges, and the greens aren't totally unplayable. The landscape looks ironed flat in too many places, though, which just doesn't quite give enough credibility. 5/10

Technical

There's little here to love, especially given the flat nature of the bunkers, and the multitude of uninspired cloning. Sadly, this course – however playable – is dating itself badly. 1/10

Overall	You've seen it all after the first hole. Bunker, tree, another bunker, another bunker, the same tree again. Yawn.	12/50
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Burn's Old Links

Mike Jones



Description

Fictional, links course

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 4, greenside.

Concept

Convincing links design has always been one of the hardest tests put before an APCD designer, thanks to the requirement for a convincing windy wilderness. Mike Jones has helped himself to a handful of St Andrews influences with Burn's, and has naturally come away very well. Part of the sheer genius of the place is very little discrimination between fairways, which means nearly all holes have a viable choice of routes. The odd discrepancy between the pot and plank-faced bunkers is strangely

indicative of evolving architecture, and the sprawling greens certainly offer little concession to the player, even in their updated and flattened format. 10/10

Appearance

Photo-realistic textures and an improved palette help make the important distinction from distance between rough and short stuff. Planting is rightly understated, and it would take very close examination to realise what an incredible array of grasses have been brought to bear. Inch-perfect course buildings are the final flourish. 10/10

Playability

Burn's has become the most-played course for many a Linkster, and the new high-resolution incarnation is unlikely to do anything to change that. In fact, if anything, it extends the play-life by more clearly offering options from every tee, and the few careful hole rearrangements take away much of the perceived unfairness. The extra eye (and ear) candy don't exactly form a hindrance. 10/10

Challenge

The original course suffered from some horrible deep rough hiding in places that was hard to foresee, and some almost unputtable greens. These are problems that have been addressed, but I retain the nagging doubt that perhaps a little over-compensation has taken place. Sure, it's no pushover, but the greens – on all but the fastest setting – just aren't the scary prospect that they used to be. It's a course where you'll hit closer to par, for certain, but you might just do it without thinking about it. 9/10

Technical

Along with Pilgrim Trails, this is one of those courses which might just force me to re-evaluate what is worth ten points. Perhaps there should just be a special 'Mike Jones' category for elite performance...10/10

Overall	Who would have thought you could improve on perfection? A links course possessed of all the charm and wildness you could wish for.	49/50
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Burnt Pine at Sandestin

Lacy Gearhart



Description

Real, lakeside course.

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

This is a delightful und understated little course, revolving nicely around a lake: the majority of the lakeside is used very effectively on several holes. Individual holes offer a consistent challenge; the woods are never too far away, and well-placed bunkers and sharp greens make reaching in regulation a good challenge. 8/10

Appearance

The luscious planting is particularly noticeable by the lakeside, where rocks are very artistically placed. Stray too far off the short stuff, though, and the forests can become a bit haphazard and too random in the planting. The fairways have an odd extruded look in the top view, but look fine in main play, even if the fairway/rough contrast is quite pronounced. Textures are well-chosen and bunkers have a natural and unobtrusive appearance. Tournament object make an appearance, and the overall impression is of a course that is very nice indeed to look at. 8/10

Playability

Keen Links players will hardly notice this round go by, such is the variety of shot options and views that Burnt Pine presents. All shots have to be carefully weighed in the balance, and most players will find a hazard at least once if they take risks. Shot-shaping features heavily, and those who can shape a good draw will enjoy their round far more. 7/10

Challenge

The real courses can often be the toughest, and frankly I thought that Burnt Pine was set up a little bit too harshly. Pin positions were improbable, often in the middle of steep slopes, and many people will be persuaded to back off on their drives and pay the price as a result. There is the danger that, on difficult setting, this round could become a tedious slog, which is something every designer needs to avoid, whether he has designed the course or not. 6/10

Technical

For a 2001 course, this is put together exceedingly well. The planting is generally very good – top notch on the opening holes, certainly – and the elevations and extrusions managed well. Perhaps there's some future in blending the fairway in with rough grass more gently, but this is only a minor problem and certainly doesn't affect the play. I'm going to be harsh and dock another point for some nasty and unlikely pin positions. 7/10

Overall	A solid re-creation of a challenging course. Definitely worth playing once, but steer clear of the toughest settings.	36/50
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Bushido Gardens

Johnny Holland



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Japan is very much in evidence here!

Conditions

Some pin positions will demand slow settings, but you might hazard S*/M* if you select them carefully.

Concept

Bushido Gardens appears to be a misguided attempt to squeeze several course styles into one course. The Japanese Garden theme is foremost, as you might expect, but there are also elements of ocean, parkland, heathland and – most prominently, given the dominance of dense spindly trees – woodland courses. All these different styles do not really sit happily together, and the casual player would be forgiven for thinking that he's ploughing through something of a mess. The course as a whole lacks in memorable holes, and doesn't really do justice to the beauty of many Japanese layouts. 4/10

Appearance

The glorious, Mount Fuji-centric panorama dominates the course, although it's unlikely your gaze will be turned away from the richly coloured flowerbeds, which are easily among the best-planted I've seen - 'Gardens' is certainly the right word! Johnny pushes the boat out too with some stunning 3D customisation, and some objects rarely – if ever – seen before on Links courses, including statues, a mere and the excellent Japanese clubhouse buildings visible from the 18th. It's a visual banquet which only occasionally shows its age through extrusion marks and the odd stretched texture. 8/10

Playability

Bushido Gardens will undoubtedly delight those in search of great design and architecture. For those who actually want to golf on the course, it's a different matter. There's a lot of demand on hitting targets, and quite a few areas of fairway do not afford a good line to the green. Plenty of blind tee shots don't really help matters, either. As great as the course is in the execution, it offers few concessions to the player. 6/10

Challenge

A real mixed bag, with several holes suffering from encroaching woodland and over-hazarding, where others are boringly straightforward, an accusation levelled especially towards the Par 5s. Scores are likely to vary far too much for consistent tournament play, which relegates Bushido Gardens to the level of a novelty. 6/10

Technical

Although not the best-planned course, the execution here is impeccable, with plenty of groundbreaking 3D and an eye for the flamboyant when it comes to flower planting. The greens are often a let-down, though. 9/10

Overall	A classic example of the disparity between outstanding presentation and only mediocre golf. What you make of Bushido Gardens will very much depend on what you go looking for.	33/50
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Bushwood Country Club

Stephen Lasker



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, ocean course	6 th hole, Par 5	72
Location		
On the basis of absolutely no evidence whatsoever, I'm going to say North-East USA		
Conditions		
Stick to S*/S*		

Concept

Self-admittedly no expert with the APCD, the designer is to be congratulated on bringing a coherent course to playable standard. But really, that's about all. It doesn't feel like any Country Club I've ever played – it's cramped, busy and lacking in coherence. The designer's preponderance for messing around with green shapes is cute at first, but rapidly becomes tiring, and the trees are difficult to negotiate well. A Readme and some Hole Previews are sorely needed because it's just not apparent from ground level what this course is trying to get you to do. 3/10

Appearance

Unblended, stock textures don't carry a lot of weight these days, especially given that this selection is so ill-matched. Add this to a proliferation of clones and a real scattergun approach to planting (don't look at the 'flowerbeds'...) and there's not a lot to enjoy, other than some reasonably well-handled elevations. 3/10

Playability

It was difficult to believe the sheer number of blind shots I encountered on this course, down to and including those from 100 yards or less. It makes the omission of hole previews all the less forgivable, especially given that the landing areas are tiny. There are one or two sweetly-designed holes to stay the interest, but it's not enough just to make a difficult course by obstructing the player from what he wants to do. 4/10

Challenge

Don't expect birdies. You'll spend a lot of time in tough lies or hidden water if you strike out, and even fairway shots are no real guarantee of success, such is the level of contrivance. Some unlikely greens and pin positions round out this exercise in sadism. 1/10

Technical

It's difficult to know where to begin with this, as it really feels like an APCD design from eight years ago, and a lot of water has passed under the bridge since then. In 2003 this might have qualified as a reasonable course, but there are just too many problems in both visuals and course design to give it too much credit today. 2/10

Overall	Hard to find too many recommendations for this bits-and-pieces effort.	13/50
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Cadmium Greens

Joe Volk



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Could be in Canada - just a guess, looking at the landscaping and pano.

Conditions

S*/S* is as fast as this one plays

Concept

Somewhat old-fashioned and cursed with the designer's unwillingness to use anything that wasn't APCD stock, Cadmium Greens nevertheless has been made to look reasonably convincing, and there are some excellent strategic holes along the back nine, none of which are over-blown or silly. The lack of hole previews is a sore omission – not least on the likes of the 13th – and the atmosphere is not really helped with another use of the good old Whistler panorama. 6/10

Appearance

Well, no marks for the antiquated textures, but the designer has done his best with the planting, including a mix of rocks, grasses and small plants which add tone. Sadly, the work on the mesh hasn't had the same attention: a lot of bunkers look like an afterthought, and there are some pretty horrible extrusion marks all the way from 1 to 18. 6/10

Playability

Despite being an old creation, there is some still some charm retained here. As long as you play with reasonably benign conditions, there's a lot of opportunity to sit back and enjoy the creativity and style of the designer in presenting this very credible course. There's no ambient sound, though, and it's likely that some of the greens will drive you to distraction. 7/10

Challenge

It's very hard to justify the extremely difficult green slopes and pin positions, and even on the slowest Mod settings, they are just too tough. Elsewhere the course uses the mountain elevations very effectively, and it's clear to see some influence on later and greater designs such as Kylane and even Crystal Pines. But the greens are very artificial in preventing low scores, which undeniably counts against the course. 5/10

Technical

Very much of its time, and there is some very rough APCD work here. But if you can overlook the poor shape insertion and unimaginative textures and panorama, there is a course underneath which has clearly had a lot of time devoted to it. 4/10

Overall

Stymied by technical flaws, but not to the extent where you couldn't go out and enjoy some creative golf.

28/50

Cala Mesquida Pines

Dietmar Kirschner



Description

Fictional, ocean course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from near fairway.

Concept

This is a real rarity that is well worth getting your hands on for a couple of quick rounds. The luscious sand dunes and forest make for a totally absorbing environment, and the golf is big, brash and intimidating, with some layouts that are almost unprecedented. It's a seaside course truly unlike any other and – but for its flaws – would make a perfect host to a Spanish tournament. 9/10

Appearance

There's some drop-dead views to be had from many of the tees, not least the 2nd, and various course objects keep popping up when least expected – sometimes almost directly in the line of play. But every now and then, you run into an absurdity – a poor bit of landscaping frequently – that reminds you that this course just isn't trying hard enough to be real. Technically, the course isn't quite yet finished, so it's unsurprising to see that some of the little things haven't yet been picked upon. 8/10

Playability

At first you'll be pulled round Cala Mesquida on a wave of awe, with plenty to look at, and no end of challenges in your face. Only on repeated visits will you notice the poor sound planting, the endless need to play short recovery and approach shots, and the cynically-placed hazards. It's not dull, by any means, but as a game of golf it might be better. 7/10

Challenge

I certainly wouldn't call this course easy. The back nine, in particular, is quite evil with its mammoth Par 5s and some difficult greens. Birdies are reasonably available, but it's rather too easy to get caught up on a particular hole and score 8 or 9. That just ain't fair, in my book. 3/10

Technical

Again, it should be appreciated that this course isn't technically in a finished state, but it suffers quite appallingly from some glaring technical errors. Two things, in particular, have a major effect on your round: a lot of dodgy texture assignments, and a fair few steel weeds. With all the loving care that's gone into other areas, it's hard to decide on a mark here. 5/10

Overall	Seaside golf to the max! A huge, sprawling, and deliciously inviting course that is almost unique in many of its ideas.	<i>32/50</i>
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Caledonian Forest

Stewart Parker



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

A rarity from Stewart Parker, Caledonian Forest is a fictional course, rather than a celebration of Scotland's finest. It's given the designer an opportunity to go to town with some sumptuous hole designs, the exceptional 12th hole being a particular standout, but sadly it doesn't all quite cohere. The opening holes are fairly typical links, but it descends into a more target-style around the turn as the course loses its way. This is particularly obvious in the over-stretched and silly final hole, which brings water into play for the first time, and is completely atypical

of the 17 holes that have preceded it. 5/10

Appearance

Very soft textures, almost to the point of velvet, mark the lovely surface work. They are complemented by some excellent low-level grass and flower planting which feel very authentic to the region. There's an indefinable feeling, though, that it doesn't all quite fit together, such are the difficulties of having to squeeze a fictional course into real landscape. 9/10

Playability

There are more than a handful of truly excellent holes on this course: those that leave you with a memory and a lasting impression of the course. The variety of challenges are accentuated by the sweeping Highland elevations and the clever golfing puzzles worked into the fabric of the course, but if I'm to be honest, it's still not quite as much fun as playing Spey Valley. 8/10

Challenge

A fascinating test of accuracy and strategy results in a very good challenge indeed. Perhaps the fairways are fractionally too easy to hit and the bunkers fractionally too easy to avoid, but good shot values and sensible planning are treasured by this course, and Par is very much the right number. 9/10

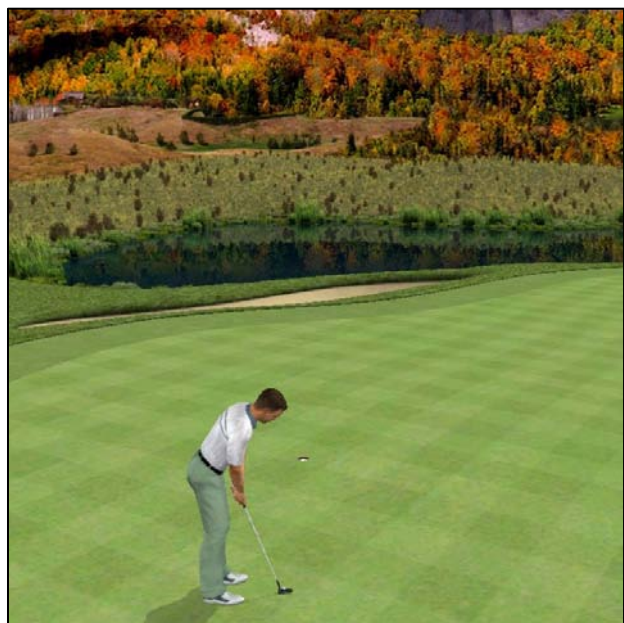
Technical

While Stewart's touch with the visuals is beyond doubt, there's an atmosphere at Caledonian Forest that is a little less than believable. This may not be the fault of the designer, but comparing two similar Scottish courses such as this one and Boat of Garten does illustrate the size of the gulf that can be opened between Real courses and Fictional ones. 8/10

Overall	An interesting and very playable foray into fictional course design. Interestingly, not half as convincing as the designer's Real courses.	39/50
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Callavary

Ross Anthony



Description

Fictional, heathland course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 5, on green.

Concept

Making a big thing out of the autumn colours and the stream that winds through every hole (yup! Every one!), Callavary looks at points like a Select 18, such is the reliance on strategy and target golf. Certainly the over-reliance on water is a bit gimmicky, but at least the stream does have the effect of tying together 18 holes that might otherwise have been disparate and isolated. 6/10

Appearance

A few untidy folds around the bunkers and some dismally plain wild rough planting are problematic. The stream, too, does not look well-mapped on many an occasion. Textures are stock and uninspiring, particularly in the rough. Luckily, the course has an excellent, towering panorama which blends in well with the autumn colours in the foreground, and – as has so often been the case – this goes a surprising way towards making the course look convincing. 4/10

Playability

One major bugbear on this course is off the tee. Too many shots are blind and hard to place. Add this to the frustration of the ever-present water and some testing greens and there's the potential for some exceedingly disappointing golf. Luckily the accuracy and target aspects are a bolster rather than a yoke around your neck. The round is kept ticking over nicely by some interesting sound and some entertaining golf trivia on the hole previews: a clever touch. 6/10

Challenge

The greens would require some work to make them Mod friendly, and several further shots will be lost to water hazards. It's amazing, actually, where Callavary will reach out to penalise you. Thankfully, the designer has compensated with some short Par 4s and reachable Par 5s, but the overall challenge just doesn't feel like a real golf course. 7/10

Technical

I don't believe this is up to Ross' usual high standards. There are too many glaring problems and not enough care taken with some of the uglier aspects of the course. The water, in particular, is tilted in places and has oddly-textured banks. While the panorama is excellent, the rest of the course just comes across as flat and plodding. The planting is generally of a high order and is worth looking at. 5/10

Overall	A countryside wander spoiled by just a little bit too much water and not enough attention to the important things.	28/50
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Cambrian Ridge

Microsoft



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 3

Par

72

Location

Alabama

Conditions

You might go M*/S* if you picked your pins carefully. I'd still prefer something slower.

Concept

Nominally woodland, but it's really too open for that, Cambrian Ridge is probably best known now for the bizarre use of the very pale rough chosen for this pioneer of new-look Links 2003. Which is a bit unfair – this RTJ course has some outstanding holes, including the 4th, 9th and 14th, and still plays pretty well. The visuals, other than the much-maligned rough, aren't too bad either. 7/10

Appearance

Let's focus on the positives: the planting is generally very good by Microsoft standards, particularly as used to cover up the edges of the water features. The blends are functional if hardly eye-catching. The resolution of the course is clearly good and an improvement on anything that came before. But, yes, there is at least one very poor choice of texture, and the bunker sculpture is distinctly rudimentary. 6/10

Playability

You would be well-advised to ignore any visual turn-offs and focus on the excellent golfing tests that have been laid out in front of you. The accommodating fairways are only half the story as there are a range of approach shots required, continued into the lengthy Par 5s and the diverse set of short holes on the course. A high-quality and entertaining round of golf. 8/10

Challenge

The fairways and greens are reasonably open, and the bunkers are shallow. It's a shame that the main test has to come from the dated green slopes and pin positioning, but unlike some other courses the challenge isn't exclusively on the green. Patches of deep rough and water take their turn, and the course is far from a short one. You should expect a few birdies, but you won't be able to run riot. 7/10

Technical

Outstanding at the time, some parts still hold up fairly well, and it was certainly a good choice of course for adaptation. Shame about the rough texture, of course. 6/10

Overall	Still worth a round or two. Don't hold the Microsoft pedigree against it.	34/50
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Camelot

Mark Fyffe



Description

Imaginary, lakeside course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Sadly, it is never quite revealed whether this course is intended to be set within the fictional Camelot (in the same way that Rivendell is): it certainly could be, given the rich colours and slightly antiquated style. It earns its Imaginary tag through the rich use of water, some oddball features (including a very credible waterfall), and heavy emphasis on target golf. The narrow fairways and daunting expanses of tough rough will be a turn-off for many, but those playing on easy setting might be more convincend.

Sadly, it's showing its age a little these days, but that's not to say it's not worthwhile. Just don't expect to be dazzled, that's all. 5/10

Appearance

The read-me has promised 'eye-candy', and the course does its best to deliver, with some spectacular views and a good line in custom objects and dramatic landscaping. Sadly, the low-resolution textures, unblended, have not dated well, and look very rough indeed. There's a scatter-gun approach to the planting in parts, too, with little underplanting or foresting to compensate. 4/10

Playability

If you can suspend a bit of disbelief, then Camelot is pretty entertaining. In true imaginary-course fashion, the course is all about big hits and brazen target-play. Some holes feature a clever twist or two, which at the time must have been almost unprecedented. Others, though, are more like frustrating ball-snares where 7s and 8s might not be uncommon, and the lack of adequate hole previews doesn't help. Fine to dip into occasionally, if you don't find the rather coarse design off-putting. 5/10

Challenge

There's misery waiting in the deep rough, which is abnormally punishing, and around many of the planted areas. Thankfully, the greens are unexpectedly moderate and can afford the luxury of the occasional 1-putt. You still would be very lucky to break Par. 5/10

Technical

Considering some of the difficulties that must have plagued the designer, and the fact that this course is reaching a venerable age, it's easy to incline towards generosity, and some of the features and customisation of this course are indicative of a great imagination and a lot of hard work. In other places, not least the surface, it's all a bit rough and ready. 6/10

Overall	Many will overlook this little bit of whimsy, and the realists will do rightly to. For others, it's good enough as a one-off.	25/50
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Candlestick Blue

Paul Seaman



Description

Fictional, desert course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

With a yawning chasm under the heading of 'good desert courses for Links 2003', Paul Seaman has released this ambitious project. It's full of enormously clever hole design and some landscape that would normally be way off this designer's radar. If truth be told, it's not really much of a desert course at all: it's too enclosed and too heavily reliant on good golfing design rather than the natural terrain. But that's not too say it's not good. It's just not great, that's all. 5/10

Appearance

The impressive array of low-level planting is a major selling point here. Candlestick Blue is a real credit to its designer in avoiding the clones and forced artificiality of other desert courses. But the arrays of rocks seemed forcedly random, the elevations are simply too grandiose to be convincing, and for the life of me, I can't get on board with the desert texture. The whole thing is just a little too green by half. 7/10

Playability

This is where the course earns its spurs. It's doubtful whether any course has featured such an intriguing and outstandingly clever set of holes. Hazards are legion, but you never feel punished by them. Instead, the course is an intriguing exercise in precise shot-play and judgement, with the elevations used as much for hazarding as the desert regions, water or deep bunkers. I doubt whether any other course could boast so many novel and original hole designs, perhaps excluding the Par 3s, and there's an appropriately absorbing round to be had. 10/10

Challenge

It might sound hard, but play Candlestick Blue with appropriate respect and there's a remarkably fair challenge to be had. Conservatively-played holes are more likely to throw up birdie opportunities than penalties, and you're aided by some even-minded greening and an impressive absence of unplayable lies. Marking the desert areas as hazard is not the arduousness that it could have been, and the careful player should come up smelling at least of dahlias, if not roses. 10/10

Technical

The natural exuberance and talent of someone who is already one of the top APCD-men spills all over this creation. OK, so it'll never be authentic desert, and the water hazards look rather hastily inserted, but the texture set and the planting are magnificent, and if you can overlook some of the absurdities, it's still the best in its genre. 9/10

Overall

A big-hitter's grave that is virtually a shoe-in for the most manageable desert course, and hence an automatic part of many players' rotations.

41/50

Canyon Springs

Dave Langdon



Description

Real, canyon course.

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

With the wild, garish colours, statuesque rockwork and fountains you'd be quite forgiven for thinking this was a fantasy course. It might not be the most millimetrically accurate course re-creation, but it's a fascinating round of golf against a stunning canyon backdrop. While the hole design tends towards a dogleg a few times too often, there is a strong sense of location and a truly different course is in the offing. 7/10

Appearance

Some nagging extrusion marks take the edge off what might have been a special and truly-unique appearance. The panorama is towering and constrictive, superbly detailed and really sets the course off. The dark green textures are an acquired taste and really give the impression of a garden of Eden. It's a feast for the eye, but one that might provoke a little indigestion too. 6/10

Playability

Repetitiveness becomes the enemy of good golf after the first half-dozen or so holes. The dog-legs force you to either fade, draw, or throttle back on your tee shots, and you feel you're in for a monotonous round. Thankfully the designs liven up considerably in the back nine, and you're given more playing options from both tee and fairway. It's not a course that you feel dragging you back for another go, though. 4/10

Challenge

Canyon Springs retains much of its challenge in the Links conversion, thanks to some clever but fair hazarding and natural features such as rocks and trees that frequently impinge on play. It's a genuine challenge to break par, such are the green sites and gradients, although it's never unfair. A pretty good test all round. 9/10

Technical

My most urgent attention would focus on the textures and extrusion, because to get this right would mean much better sense of location. Some of the visual extras have a feel of gilding the lily, and I doubt whether they are necessary nor conducive to golf. A definite case in which less might just mean more, and perhaps cause for a little restraint. 6/10

Overall	The least likely real course I've ever seen. Monotonous in parts and occasionally frustrating, but a good and consistent test of golf with plenty to see along the way.	<i>33/50</i>
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Capdepera Golf Resort

Jörg Jobmann



Description

Imaginary, canyon course.

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

This is a course that doesn't really know what it wants to be. My instinct, based on the name and environment, would be a tropical or Southern European course, but it is often reminiscent of North USA parkland courses or on occasion English moorland. Individual holes have a tendency to be over-wrought and heavy on the gimmicks, Par 3s excepted. 3/10

Appearance

There are some great views to be had at Capdepera, but too much is completely unrealistic due to careless elevation work or lumpy greens. There are some exciting features, particularly the rock faces, but the unsuitable panorama and occasional blocked view are too much of a downer. 4/10

Playability

This is too much hard work to be considered as playable. There are no 'up and hit them' shots; everything requires careful thought and preparation. While this is initially enjoyable, it eventually requires too much mental taxing to be enjoyable, more so when your carefully thought-out shots don't pay off. 4/10

Challenge

Far too hard, to put it succinctly. Too often, you will be in water or an unplayable lie. The greens and elevations are ramped way up and are extremely hard. The Par 5s are all but impossible to hit in sub-par and the Par 3s are overlong and one is almost impossible to hit with the drive. Gimmicky hole routes don't add much; more than one fairway feels forced and you can just hear the strokes piling up. 1/10

Technical

The area most in need of work is the elevations. While the rock features are admirable, a couple of poor extrusions stand proud, and unrealistic slopes are rife. The designer has much better courses to his name, which makes this early effort stick out like a sore thumb. A lot of work on both concept and hole design will turn this into a much better course. 3/10

Overall

Sadly a let-down. Too difficult and too forced to hold the attention for long. Despite being a fan of fantasy courses, I did not find this to be my cup of tea.

15/50

Cape Wrath

McCoist



Description

Fictional, links course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4

Par

71

Location

The landscaping marks this firmly in the west of Scotland

Conditions

The greens are playable on F*/F*, but extreme. M*/M* will be fast enough for most.

Concept

A terrific sense of location has been imparted here, with an impressive Scottish panorama, and the heath and heather impressively conveyed. There's a great sense of holes nestling among it all, making use of the elevations for some tempting approach shots. There's still a slight other-worldness to the location and setting, but also a tightness that keeps you wondering what's coming next. 7/10

Appearance

The textures and planting have been tidied up and there's markedly less artificiality to the course than there once was. The upper-level planting has been delightfully customised, although perhaps there's one too many shades at grass level. The textures are also noticeably tiled or stretched in places. But this is offset by a magnificent and well-matched panorama, providing highlights of spectacle all around the course. 8/10

Playability

Not having all the Par 3s stretched out to Championship lengths is refreshing and believable, and there are some really impressive holes, notably the 2nd – an all-time favourite of mine. Unfortunately, though, the constant conceit of 'showboating' approach shots to raised or lowered greens is overdone, quite a few drive landing positions are blind on the back nine, and there are some terrible sound lags which required ambient sound being turned off. 5/10

Challenge

Small greens will put a lot of demand on your chipper, and unsurprisingly a lot of pars will result. The layout is eminently fair, though, and lacks the deep grass and serious trouble much beloved of many links courses. In fact, Cape Wrath feels as if it falls a little short on precisely this basis. 7/10

Technical

Much improved in all areas, the only technical problems still extant on this course are over-large sound files which are causing lag. The designer has proved he's well up to improving visuals and design problems and should be a name to watch for the future. 8/10

Overall	A believable environment with convincing, if slightly one-track, golf.	35/50
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Cara Brae

Mike Jones



Description

Fictional, ocean course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Less of a Links course than a heavily-influenced and almost fantastical clifftop excursion, Cara Brae might not be the most realistic of Mike Jones' creations, but by Gods it isn't half compulsive. From the moment you are presented with three options from the first tee, to the do-or-die final stretch with its tiny greens and perilous bunkering, this is in-your-face challenge golf: ideal for matchplay or skins contests. Although the hole design is staggeringly original, though, it doesn't come across as the effortless

design of other courses from the same designer. 9/10

Appearance

Amazingly-worked coastline and the gorse planting combine to give an utterly remote location the ultra-realistic edge. Perfect textures and blending, particularly in the trademark bunkers, underpin the whole thing. The clarity and precision of the whole thing is remarkable, but then again do we expect anything more from this designer? 10/10

Playability

Utterly addictive course. With the variability in wind conditions and pins taken into account, it's virtually impossible to play this course the same way twice. The slightly bare stretch running up to the ninth doesn't quite have the verve of the rest of the course, but once you hit the cheeky 13th, you're on one huge roller-coaster than will sweep you to the end of the course on holes designed with audacity and a range of spectacular views. 9/10

Challenge

If anything, Cara Brae seems to have become tougher over time. There are one or two approaches that border on the unfair, and the heavy rough is difficult work. It's a surprisingly long course, as well, from something that – frankly – could easily handle being 400 yards shorter. Thankfully the bunkers are of the wasteland variety rather than treacherous pot bunkers, but you've your work cut out if you want to break 70 around here. 7/10

Technical

Technical magnificence is the least we'd expect from Mike Jones. He delivers, as usual. 10/10

Overall	An amazingly contrived semi-links course, but maybe 'contrived' is the idea that takes it too far.	45/50
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Cardiff Springs Golf Club

Jason Thorpe



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, woodland course	6 th hole, Par 4	72

Location

New South Wales

Conditions

Stick to S*/S*

Concept

This Cardiff is in Australia, not Wales. Riddled with water hazard and tight hug-the-corner dog-legs, it's a surprisingly demanding test of golf crammed into a tight spot – it's not unusual to find yourself staring back up the fairway you have just played. Given the lack of Australian championship courses in the repertoire, it makes a surprisingly accommodating venue. 6/10

Appearance

There are some howlers in the texture rings, especially around bunkers, and the number of clones on the course is certainly wearisome. The elevations are not always handled with finesse, but in the big picture there's little badly wrong. A shame the small picture is such a mess. 4/10

Playability

A first-class layout, and there's a surprising amount of fun to be had at Cardiff Springs. Some rough-and-ready ambient sound is noteworthy if hardly subtle, but the hole designs mix things up nicely, and the water is used creatively without being gimmicky. Sure, sometimes there has to be a chip-out and recovery approach, but that hardly dulls the edge. 7/10

Challenge

I doubt it would surprise many people to see that this is a toughie. Strokes will be dropped at many lakes, particularly those on Par 4s, and the greens are cunningly designed, bordering on the excessive at times. The frequent elevation changes, as well as being unexpected, do an awful lot to throw shots off-kilter. It can be a frustratingly tough round, especially for those playing Champ or higher, or under the hardest conditions. 5/10

Technical

A great deal of improvement required here, not least in the elevations and cloning, although the frequent steel trees are – if anything – more frustrating. The course, as it stands, just isn't believable, and that's a big cross against a real track re-creation. 3/10

Overall	A somewhat unconvincing course with a few worthy features, but too many problems to really recommend it.	25/50
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Carlyon Lakes

Paul Seaman



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, woodland course	4 th hole, Par 5	72
Location		
Derbyshire, by the delightful back-story.		
Conditions		
There are some tricky slopes but carefully-placed pins. I'd be tempted to stick with M*/M*		

Concept

Paul's technique has very little to prove after a swathe of outstanding courses, and Carlyon Lakes looks well set to carry on the trend. Relatively orthodox in layout, but with sumptuously plotted and bunkered holes throughout, it has plenty to offer. Location-wise, though, it's not the most convincing of courses, and the eponymous lakes scattered around the halfway mark are just too artificial, which is a little off-putting. 7/10

Appearance

A rich, delightful, mossy colour scheme makes Carlyon the ideal counterpart to Duine Mara, and the woodland planting is rich and varied. The sunken bunkers are best of all, picked out subtly with a longer grass texture. It's nothing less than we would expect, of course. 10/10

Playability

As always with a Seaman course, there's plenty to think about and not a dead hole all the way around. Regardless of the relative shortage of atmosphere, there's still enough stimulating and understated golf to really enjoy Carylton Lakes. The water actually doesn't come into play very much, and the true woodlands test of finding fairways with accuracy dominates. The intricate green complexes enable different pin positions to play very differently, so there's plenty of replayability too. 9/10

Challenge

A course of two halves, judging by the background, there is certainly some apparentness of this in the play. The back nine cranks up the difficulty level a little, and some might find the positioning of the water a little extreme, especially given that this is allegedly an older course. But there's barely a blade of deep rough to compensate, and most approaches will be routine affairs, leaving you with some puzzlesome greens. If I had a criticism, it is that these different areas of challenge don't really gel together well enough. 7/10

Technical

Even in beta-phase, this was very close to perfect, and the finishing touches to the course presentation (including some delightful hole previews and the fictional story behind the course) are – as ever – perfect. 10/10

Overall	A terrific course, not particularly hampered by the lack of location, although that is definitely a sector for improvement.	43/50
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Carnoustie

Peter Monk



Description

Real, links course

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 4, approach

Concept

A classic Open venue makes a belated appearance on Links, and it's well worth catching. The appealing layout, with its symmetric Par 5s, is grassy Scottish links at its very best – wilder than St Andrews, but also more refined, and a stiff golfing challenge with the wind on full blast. For a first-time designer, Peter has done an excellent job catching the course terrain and the relevant wilderness. 9/10

Appearance

The pot bunkers and water edges, particularly the fine detail around the edges, have been handled very nicely, if a little unspectacularly, and generally the course looks in fine shape. I do have a few concerns about the scaling of some planting, particularly the grasses in place, and it has to be said that the course looks a little trim for the wilds of Scotland. A little more finishing might just have been in order. 8/10

Playability

That magical *je ne sais quoi* that hangs over all of the best real courses is certainly present here; from the beautiful 2nd hole to the epic Par 3 16th, Carnoustie really has a huge variety of challenges; all the more surprising when you consider two-thirds of the holes are Par 4s. Turning the wind up and green speeds down will make for an authentic Open experience, but the variety also makes a relatively good warm-up round too. 9/10

Challenge

I'm afraid there's something missing here, and it's on the head of the designer. A great Scottish links needs to be notable for its punishing rough and bunkers, and neither really seem to be present in great degree. Certainly a texture tweak or much more thick grass would be in order to reproduce the startlingly high scores that have featured at Carnoustie Opens. And the bunkers, for reasons I can't quite pick out, seem almost to be an irrelevance: should they be deeper? 6/10

Technical

A very coherent effort, all told, but Carnoustie has come out a little less links-like than perhaps had been intended. A rough-up of the textures seems in order, followed perhaps by better grades on the bunkers and some more photo-real planting. But perhaps this is underplaying a very credible effort at a course which presents innumerable difficulties. 8/10

Overall

A great links, reproduced with lots of love and attention, but just requiring a little push to be up there with the greats.

40/50

Carrie Park

Johnny Holland



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 4, on green.

Concept

Carrie Park is a cute little thing: totally convincing in what could easily have once been a piece of urban wasteland, it's been beautifully carved out. The course is built around a central lake and between bordering roads, both of which were clearly focal points for the designer. Given the small plot, there's an excellent variety of hole lengths, from three-shot 5s, through eagle chances and down to a pitch-and-putt Par 3. The cramped area mean there's often bail-out areas on adjoining fairways, so the

course will appeal to the less straight hitters among us. 9/10

Appearance

As one would expect from the P2P fraternity, this is flawless in appearance. Despite the course being apparently flat, you'll be blessed with numerable exciting views, and all the boxes have been ticked with regards to first-class visuals. It's worth noting the natural, varied but unobtrusive planting and lovely colour scheme as particular high points. 10/10

Playability

You'd always expect a strong and engaging course from Johnny Holland, and Carrie Park is absolutely no exception. A masterpiece of understated gameplay, it's the reality factor that really keeps your game ticking over, plus some excellent fripperies such as the road bridge and the lake providing a visual diversion. 9/10

Challenge

Don't let the large course length fool you; this course can be shortened with some fairly risk-free shortcuts. There's little in the way of unplayable lies, and reaching greens in regulation should be considered the norm. Thankfully, in this age of conservative putting, the greens are quite unpredictable, but even they shouldn't stop you from shooting several under. 6/10

Technical

One major oversight on Carrie Park has been the pin positioning. I caught one nearly unplayable pin and a shared green where the pins appeared nearly adjacent. It's almost inexplicable given the immaculate standards of the rest of the course, and a sad oversight that slightly detracts from the course's appeal. 9/10

Overall	A very downplayed course, by Johnny Holland's standards. Won't really disappoint, but might not be top of everyone's 'To Buy' list.	43/50
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Carton House the Montgomerie Course

John Aherne



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, parkland course	18 th hole, Par 5	72
Location		
Ireland		
Conditions		
Playable on F*/F*		

Concept

Playing around the Montgomerie Course, you do get an impression of how young and perhaps unfinished the course is. The cleverness in the golfing design is clear to see, but the surrounding landscape feels very underdeveloped. True, it is a flat patch of land, and the hedgerows and yellowing grasses of its heritage are portrayed perfectly, but it feels like there's a missing element here somewhere. Not until the last few picturesque holes does the designer's real intent shine through. 6/10

Appearance

The beauty is all in the detail here. Those expecting stunning panoramas and spectacular landscape will be disappointed, but a tight look at the depth in planting and the soft, slightly grainy textures will reveal the excellence in John's craft. I doubt the Montgomerie course will ever make shortlists of great-looking golf courses, and I don't go a lot on the recent fad for two-tone fairways, but you have to give credit to what has been done with the source material. 8/10

Playability

The course starts off well, with intricate fairway shapes and well-placed bunkers, but the sheer flatness of the course becomes a little monotonous towards the end of the outward nine. Things pick up after the turn, with some nicely-constructed and hard-to-hit elevated green complexes, and the round closes with an excellent trio of holes that you'll want to re-visit. Again, it's a course you feel would be at its best after a little maturation. 7/10

Challenge

The wide-open spaces give you an unnatural amount of leeway, and the rough really isn't all that perilous. You'd have to go badly wrong to end up in trees, and the Par 5s are very reachable from the fairway. Only the Par 3s provide a stiff test, particularly those that are well-bunkered, and it's likely that's where most shots will be dropped. 5/10

Technical

Flawless composition here, and some genuine artistry with the APCD in making the most of an otherwise unprepossessing environment. Make sure you take a bucket of practice balls out at some time and observe the real nooks and crannies in this course for the maximum enjoyment. 10/10

Overall	A well-designed if evidently young course, supported by an APCD conversion from one of the best.	36/50
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Carton House the O'Meara Course

GolfGrafix (Peter Beckwith)



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, parkland course	15 th hole, Par 5	72

Location

County Kildare

Conditions

Plays nicely on M*/F* and should be reasonable on the fastest settings

Concept

Mark O'Meara isn't yet well-known as a course architect, but on the basis of this treasure, he's well on the way. An impressive contrast from the understated Montgomerie course, this is deeply strategic and nicely varied. It's a consistently impressive and sometimes surprising set of holes which hugs the natural landscape tightly, and culminates with a stretch of delightful holes along the back nine. Only some slightly disappointing Par 5s taint the round. 9/10

Appearance

Some glorious features we don't see often enough, including the monster clubhouse and a weir, and just as with the Montgomerie course, there's astonishing attention to detail in parts. The textures contrast well, given the course's more leafy surroundings, and certain holes – the 14th and 15th especially – are stunning. My attention was diverted a little by a couple of clones in the planting and a lack of density to the grass planting which made the course look a little dated. 9/10

Playability

The designer (O'Meara, not Beckwith!) has overtly commented that his primary aim was to provide fun for the golfer, and I have no doubt that these 18 holes have fulfilled his aim. It doesn't make unnecessary demands, but is a course that almost uncannily rewards accurate play and strategical thought from the tee onwards. There are very few patterns, which is one of the things that helps the course retain its freshness time after time. 9/10

Challenge

Plenty of acutely-placed bunkering will force you to exercise caution, and there is that little bit extra planting that means nothing is a pushover. One or two cannily setup greens are the final twist, and mid-length putts should not be expected as a given. All these trickeries, though, will not be enough to stop the average player breaking par by a couple of strokes. 8/10

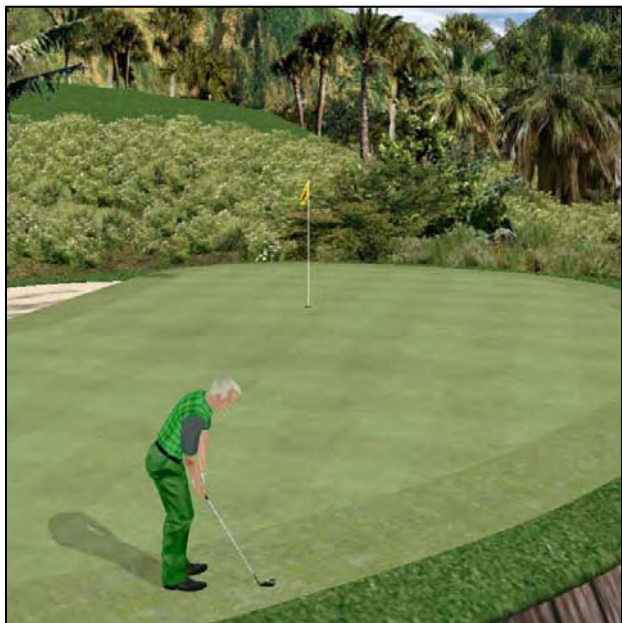
Technical

By John's meticulous standards, this one just felt a little bit rushed. Certainly, it's right up there in the top league of designs, and the fine tuning is brilliant and really adds tone to the course, but the planting – never the easiest or most rewarding of aspects – betrays just a little bit of hurriedness. 9/10

Overall	A delightful first course from O'Meara. More please!	44/50
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Castaway Island Golf Club

Ed Balaun



Description

Fictional, tropical course.

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 4, greenside.

Concept

With an array of jungle animals screeching at you off the first tee, and the roar of the breakers accompanying you along the first few holes, the sound does an important job as anything else in creating a convincing atmosphere. As the title promises, the course is set on a mysterious desert island (there must be dozens of little islands somewhere in the Pacific with golf courses on them), but unlike many of its peers, Castaway Island never fails to be tangible all the way round. Holes are created with

understated moderation, and two or three superb designs are evident, particularly on the holes around the turn. A first-class effort! 9/10

Appearance

Generally OK. There are a nice line in customisation, and the planting of both plant life and rocks is very believable. The first-cut rough is a little odd-looking, though, and there are times when the otherwise impressive panorama just doesn't fit. The whole thing looks just a little bit too well manicured to be tropical, as well. 6/10

Playability

The good, immersive environment is conducive to gameplay, and a wide variety of holes helps to ease you on your way. The course is cleverly mixed-up, scoring 37 out and 34 in, and combining hole designs from heathland, woodland and ocean styles. Just a little too often, though, you're stuck with a near-impossible lie or chip-out. The bunkers are particularly responsible for this, and do not appear to be very well mapped. 6/10

Challenge

This probably plays a little easier than the designer's intention, thanks to some pretty flat fairway lies. The course is very well hazarded, though, and the Par 5s are deliberately no pushover. If you have a good judge of distance, expect to score a few under par. 7/10

Technical

Some of the bunkers and elevations need a gentle tweak to make them less unfair. One or two textures need swapping out, and the beach looks distinctly jagged and straight-edged. On the whole, though, credit has to be given to the designer on combining such a good atmosphere and great golf. 7/10

Overall

On of more believable of the many 'tropical island' courses. Not quite up to Crusoe standards, but far from a modest effort nevertheless.

36/50

Casten Acres

Peter Beckwith



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Casten Acres promises something very special. The sense of location is immediate from the first tee, with the promise of urban grassland never too far away. The course itself is no let-down, with some very special holes nestled away amid the parkland: the 5th being notably great. The positioning of the hazards and green shapes is particularly worthy of mention; the designer's refusal to take refuge in water features giving the course some credibility while not at all lessening the playability. 9/10

Appearance

A luscious deep green palette is the lasting memory here, but the immaculately-trimmed textures work very well, highlighting the course's aspirations to play at championship level. The rough-cuts look excellent, too, blending yellowy textures with good grass planting. There's some odd browns and greys elsewhere, and a tough elevation fold or two, but there's precious little else wrong with the course. 8/10

Playability

Outstanding golf! One of the few courses where a couple of test rounds just wasn't enough – as soon as I had finished, I was teeing up again on the 1st in order to catch more of the course's nuances. The very subtle setup works to perfection, there's absolutely no feeling that the course is 'tricked up', but yet this is clearly much more than your average parkland course. Sumptuous hole previews only add to the experience. 10/10

Challenge

A good length to the course, well-positioned bunkers and rough; this certainly ticks all the right boxes. Hitting the greens and making some easy putts will be key to birdie, but beware the thickest stuff at your peril. This is set up beautifully for tournament play, too, and will respond well to a variety of settings. 8/10

Technical

A remarkable choice of textures and planting belie that this is a debut course. Once the trickier off-course areas are sorted out, this will be a genuine contender. 9/10

Overall	A first-class first course. An excellent and addictive layout which plays to simple strengths.	44/50
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Castle Pines Golf Club

Microsoft



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

I assume the 'castle' of the title refers to the glorious clubhouse, sadly only in 2D. Pines are notably absent, too: this is a fairly standard parkland run-out, from the monster first hole to the trap-laden 18th. The course's selling points are some imaginatively-created fairways and some excellent trademark holes around the turn. Microsoft's version, given its age, is not too bad, although those brought up on an APCD diet would no doubt turn their noses up. 6/10

Appearance

There's some uncomfortable elevation work going on, made all the more obvious by the dull stock textures. Bunkers look carved out, the running water is amateurish, and the course features the most shocking, unmapped brick wall I have ever seen. Plus, I don't really understand why the panorama is completely different from the plot. Keep an eye out for some pretty planting and rockworks to take your mind off the monotony. 4/10

Playability

While the course takes you dramatically up to and around the turn, it's easy to feel tedium set in along the closing stretch. The hole design become noticeably less imaginative and reliant on closing forest areas for their challenge. There's little repeat value to Castle Pines: many holes have a take-it-or-leave-it strategy which doesn't hold up well the second time. 4/10

Challenge

Time has not been kind to the greens, and they would be deemed in urgent need of a makeover. The putting is enough to give you very few opportunities at birdie, and out of odds with the more gentle, rolling elevations elsewhere on the course. Having said this, Par is not an unreasonable score – just get used to making a lot of lag putts, that's all. 7/10

Technical

For its age, Castle Pines is passable if unremarkable. It's easy to see why it was chosen for a Microsoft makeover, and why it has stayed a worthwhile part of many golfers' collections. By modern standards, of course, there's much room for improvement. 5/10

Overall	Not the worst Microsoft course. A good tournament host which – greens aside – still stands up well.	26/50
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Castle Rock

Mat LeClair



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, forest course	3 rd hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Mat's courses are traditionally around the Ohio region.		
Conditions		
Some pin positions mandate S*/S*		

Concept

There are early echoes of the deep forests that were to become something of a trademark for this designer here, but also a great deal of problem with coherency. The dark woodlands envelop every hole, and there are some tortuous excesses where hole design is concerned. This might have been exciting once, but age has shown it up badly. 4/10

Appearance

With the dense planting that these forests demand, clones become almost an inevitability, and certainly less care than usual has been taken to iron out the duplicates. The texture set shows a good deal of promise and ambition, but some poor 3D and edges don't help the authenticity. The overall effect is far from unconvincing, but lacking in glamour or warmth. 5/10

Playability

What starts off as an amiable round of golf too quickly becomes depressing and threatening, as the player is forced to resort to lay-ups from the tee and from fairway bunkers. The designer's predilection for uncomfortable water features and many blind tee shots are responsible. I'm afraid I found this a drag. 3/10

Challenge

Perhaps a test round or two managed to convince some that this course was being made unfairly hard, because several 'easy birdie' holes have been thrown in. As a gimmick designed to keep scores down and maintain interest, it works remarkably well, although the balance of the course is deeply affected. 7/10

Technical

Given that Castle Rock really was among the earliest designs, it still retains some interesting aspects today. But there are some clunky visuals, particularly when it comes to non-grass texture choices, and the hole design is – well – extreme, to put it mildly. 5/10

Overall	Probably one of the first classy designs with the APCD, but pales against the more subtle courses being released today.	24/50
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Celtic Manor Golf Resort

Brian Jameson



Description

Real, farmland course

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Ryder Cup courses are odd things. Frequently playing to the gallery's desires for target golf and high drama, they can be quite artificial creations. There are certainly overtones of The Belfry here at Celtic Manor, where an otherwise uninspiring region of Welsh lowland has been strewn with artificial water hazards and intimidating green complexes; a bit of a shame when this is really prime country club land – as demonstrated by other great courses in the region. It's no fault of Brian Jameson, of course,

whose conversion for Links is playable if hardly inspirational. This is a course that could have used some of the extras and trappings that go with a course in vogue. 5/10

Appearance

This course has certainly run the gauntlet through its various incarnations, with a range of appearances, none of which ever managed to quite capture the soggy charm of Celtic Manor. What we have been left with, though, is a good legacy, if somewhat rushed with the planting and a little sharply-elevated around the water features. 7/10

Playability

Part of the charm of any big-name courses such as these is the opportunity to re-live famous shots and rounds, and that's certainly a growing part of Celtic Manor's appeal. A terrifically diverse range of hole lengths call for consistency at all distances, although the experience is tainted by frustrating green complexes and a lack of pin testing. 7/10

Challenge

It's been intriguing watching this course develop as the 2010 Ryder Cup approaches, but one consistency has always been the scoring: it's a rare round where you'd go a long way over or under par. In retrospect, perhaps this isn't a great thing: shouldn't Ryder Cup courses inspire the brave shots and the Eagle chances? There's a touch of contrivance in the greens as well. 7/10

Technical

It's the nagging things about this course – rows of cloned reeds, lumpiness in the mesh, and even the occasional extrusion mark – that really count against it, and the pins planting really could use an overhaul. It's a shame, when there has been a lot of high-quality patient work done, that these few flaws remain. 7/10

Overall

A proper collectors' course, mainly worth owning because of its newly-found prominence in real life. If only it were perfect...

33/50

Centenary Links Country Club

Stuart Kahle



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Australia is traditional territory for this designer, and the colours and planting hold up that location well.

Conditions

Probably best at S*/S* only

Concept

One of the great forgotten courses, tucked away quietly in the Links Corner Expansion Pack, this is very much worth seeking out and downloading. Stuart Kahle's flair is well used in this semi-oceanside course, but there is also a measure of restraint which makes Centenary Links still accessible and enjoyable today. Keep an eye out for the turfed-green texture which is right up there with anything I've seen. 8/10

Appearance

A great choice of tree, bushes and at least one world-class texture are a great draw, although there's something of a disparity around the water features, and the one-texture bunkers are pretty *passé* these days. But there's an impressive effort at grass planting and very few sharp edges and shapes, something which no doubt endeared this course to the Expansion Pack at the time. 7/10

Playability

Plenty going on here, and a course which positively invites you to stand up and attack it. It's all too easy to cruise through a few rounds here and not notice where the time goes, which is a terrific endorsement. It's a shame about a fair few obstructed shots – even on approach and Par 3s, and the poor view from the first tee is an obstacle that needs to be overcome. 8/10

Challenge

With most greens being quite flat, the fairways open, and water features fairly incidental to the play, it's no surprise to see scores go low, not least on those four or five holes which positively invite eagles. The back nine, in particular, seems to quite poorly judged, and it's quite feasible to pick up half a dozen strokes from the turn. 3/10

Technical

It's easy to overlook the age of this course, given some of the impressive elements, but close examination does betray some weak textures and the consequences of unnecessarily keeping the file-size down. It's a shame, because this is one of many courses that would benefit massively from a modern overhaul. 6/10

Overall	Forgotten by many, but still a worthy bearer of the Links Corner name. Seek this one out.	32/50
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Centennial CC Dunes Course

David Schmelzer



Description

Fictional, dunes course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 5

Par

73

Location

There's something of the California mountains about this, looking at the panorama.

Conditions

M*/M* strikes the best balance.

Concept

Just understanding where Centennial's Dunes course is coming from is a headache. The idea of setting it amid grassy dunes (as opposed to the normal sand dunes) was nice, but why does it appear to be, miles from the ocean? Why has the course been tightened up to restrict the open play one would normally find on this style of links? Where did the unnecessary water features and un-dunelike elevations come from? It's woefully unconvincing and, in this instance, genuinely affects your enjoyment of the course. 3/10

Appearance

The worst visual flaw hits you from the elevated first tee, which throws the course into stark contrast with the panorama, which is completely different in colour and mis-aligned. This removes a lot of the course's credibility, and it is a view that is sadly recurring all the way around. I can't say I'm keen on the mish-mash appearance, and there are some verts clearly showing (particularly in guard rings). The water features feel contrived and artificial. Luckily the planting is assured and carries the course into credible territory. 6/10

Playability

There are a few good holes here, but there are also a number of annoyances, not least huge drive carries and blind shots. It doesn't help that the hole previews are more of a hindrance than a help. If you can overlook this, there is the chance to admire some clever layouts and bunker positioning. 6/10

Challenge

There seems to be no right confluence of conditions for the Dunes course. Sometimes it's near impossible, and other times rather easy. For what it's worth, the greens are set up well, and the mixture of rough and deep rough regions should have been enough to sell the course on its own. But the inconsistency means tournament players will want to steer well clear. 4/10

Technical

Centennial seemed to be a bit rushed after David's previous course – the well-received Spirit Hollow – and really seems to be a question of marking time than anything else. The worst problems are the glaring ones: the panorama and the water features, and are a black mark against a good reputation. 6/10

Overall	A bit of a disappointment from a designer who had promised so much more. Never really convinces as a golf course.	25/50
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Centennial CC Forest Course

David Schmelzer



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, heathland course	5 th hole, Par 4	72

Location

California, if the Dunes Course is to be believed.

Conditions

You might play this on M*/F* - it's a little easier on the putter.

Concept

Presumably, the 'Forest' part of the name is ironic? The other half of the Centennial complex suffers from the same locale problems as the Dunes Course. The mountain-like water features are still out-of-place on the plains, and the greenery of the setting doesn't match the prairie backdrop, which is every bit as out-of-position. The hole design shows some cute touches but quickly becomes gimmicky and unnecessarily daunting, too: who needs a 226-yard over-water Par 3? The Centennial Complex has not been the biggest of successes on my PC. 3/10

Appearance

The panorama is every bit as flawed as with the Dunes Course. The textures are the same (both courses are on the same plot), but the scattered planting is very competent, even if it doesn't exactly scream 'Forest' at you. There are a good number of visual treats here, and the overall look is much more coherent. 7/10

Playability

A lack of ideas on the short holes is apparent; you find yourself playing over water far too often. Blind tee shots don't help your game, and the ambient sound is loud and intrusive. Despite the attempt at target-style holes, I actually found the procession of them somewhat dull. All in all, the course just doesn't make itself as engaging as it should. 4/10

Challenge

The Forest Course isn't quite as demanding as the Dunes Course, but it's certainly no easy ride. The horrific deep rough lies very close to too-narrow fairways, and the greens are well-bunkered, too. Thankfully, most of the long holes are 2-shotters (if you can hit it straight), so there's chance to pick a few shots up. Don't expect miracles, though. 5/10

Technical

The same applies as with the Dunes – this feels rushed, and the problematic panorama is a constant distraction. 6/10

Overall	The other half of an underwhelming duo. No better than its counterpart.	25/50
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Charleton Golf Club

Stewart Parker



Description

Real, parkland course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from rough.

Concept

An unpretentious but yet impressively good-looking course, Charleton runs heavy on the Par 4s (including eight of the back nine) and presents a heavy risk/reward challenge with its many small, drivable greens but punishing deep grass rough. It's a different sort of game on Links to in real life, where doubtless golfers would be more conservative and stick tight to the fairways, but the course conversion – as with Dullatur – has brought what might otherwise be dry golf a new lease of life. 8/10

Appearance

For the most part, this course really looks the business. The panorama is omnipresent and brilliant to look at, and the textures are a good match and blend flawlessly. The planting is totally convincing and adds an extra direction to the play. There are just a few niggles, such as the slightly atypical 2D buildings scattered around the field of play, the directionless road, and the bulldozed hummocks around the green. None of them have major implications for the play of the game, thankfully. 9/10

Playability

A fantastic round of golf, crammed full of risk/reward, driveable Par 4s and tricky, deep bunkers. It scarcely registers that the back nine is lacking in variety, nor that the deep rough will mercilessly gobble up anything slightly off the fairway. 9/10

Challenge

This plays considerably easier than it would in real life, and the driveable greens make parts of the course less than a formality. The greens, although small, don't appear to be anywhere near as challenging as they are supposed to be, and a practised hand will escape even the most difficult of lies for a par. Bogeys are most likely on the testing Par 3s, but there are only two on the course. 4/10

Technical

A very good piece of APCD work, on the whole, although I would like to see a bit more attention granted to the non-playing areas of the course. It would help to tighten up the sense of location and atmosphere: under nice conditions it's almost possible to forget that you're playing in Scotland at all. 9/10

Overall	A loving course re-creation and one of the best Scottish courses available for Links. Should appeal to wide spectrum of golfers thanks to its potential as a target-golf course.	39/50
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Château Bourrache

Mitch Sirk

Description

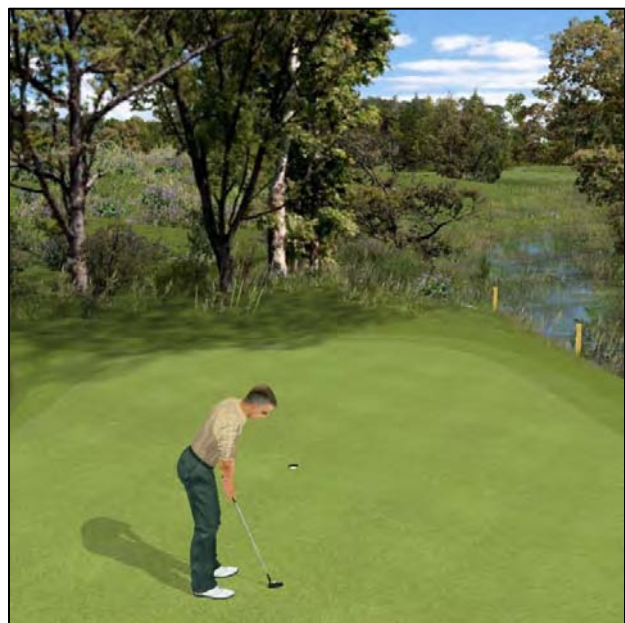
Fictional, estate course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4, from green.

Concept

There are few practitioners of the APCD as skilled at creating new and utterly convincing environments as Mitch Sirk. Château Bourrache is yet another sparkling concept, set in the former vineyards of a French manor house. Arrow-straight rows of trees show the old furrows of the vineyard, and water winds treacherously through the course. Brilliantly, the hole routes pay no heed to these and cut wantonly across the landscape at their own angles. Although the hole design is more restrained than in



many of Mitch's other designs, there are a lot of well-mapped challenges and one or two surprises thrown in. Brilliant. 10/10

Appearance

To be honest, there's not a huge amount to see here compared to other courses. The textures look just a little bit artificial, and one water feature hasn't quite been extruded properly. But there are fantastic views of the Château itself, and the planting – as ever – has been lovingly and amazingly well carried out. 9/10

Playability

A suitable amount of variation in hole design and length, as well as an unexpected twist or two, keep you moving on apace. It's a slow-grower of a course, and you'll find more hidden treasures when you shift the pin positions and conditions. Best of all, what starts out as a stroll in the French countryside has a nasty and unexpected habit of biting back, and you'll be constantly desperate to pull back shots. Perhaps it doesn't have the full-on immediacy of Brydestone or the Kanaal New Course, but there's more than enough to keep you busy. 8/10

Challenge

Brilliantly, the mish-mash of tree files and the spider-like streams all combine to make one hell of a good test. For a country estate, the deep grass is punishing and the planting constantly runs across the line of play, unless you are very accurate. Even on the easiest conditions, this course is no walkover; on the hardest, it's thankfully not unplayable. Perfect stuff. 10/10

Technical

As one would expect, this is nearly flawless and very, very impressive. Nuff said? 10/10

Overall	A stunner of a course. Atmospheric, deceptively playable and consistently testing, no matter how many times you go back.	47/50
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Chateau Whistler Golf Club

Microsoft



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, mountain course	2 nd hole, Par 4	72
Location		
British Columbia		
Conditions		
Probably best to stick to S*/S*		

Concept

Despite its age, Chateau Whistler continues to exude Canadian mountain air. Massively influential, not only in its much-reused panorama, but in the exciting course layout, from the opening tricky holes to longer championship fare later on. The creek that winds its way through the course forms a natural and unobtrusive hazard, and the Par 3 holes are an exceptional selection. There are few Microsoft courses that still get loaded up occasionally these days – Whistler is most definitely one of them. 7/10

Appearance

This might be Microsoft's greatest ever planting achievement. Pine forests are not easy to make unrepitive and beautiful, but some sumptuous planting of both trees and eye-level features. Extra features are natural and easy on the eye, without in anyway appearing visually gratuitous. In short, an absolutely fantastic course to look at. It used to be a perfect score, but inevitably the progress of time has told. 7/10

Playability

After a great set of opening holes, Whistler plays well without ever really exciting you, in the manner of many resort courses. It's easy to hack round for fun without troubling yourself, but not many holes offer any substantial choice, and the Par 5s are too easy to hit in two shots. 6/10

Challenge

The course still plays fairly easily, with only some antiquated hole positioning providing the test. It's not long, but at least there are some suitably tough tee shots, given that the foresting is actually out of play for long stretches. The shallow bunkers are barely much to raise anyone's blood pressure. 3/10

Technical

Despite being some of MS's best work, cracks are definitely showing, especially greenside where the lack of detail counts against it. The planting remains eye-catching, but we shouldn't really be able to see the impossible paths and the edge of the plot. I'm sure it wouldn't have hurt the MS designers to create more than one stock texture either. 6/10

Overall	Nice to look at and very gentle to play. Take your time over your first round and you could break 60. You won't need to go back afterwards.	29/50
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Chelshire Estate CC

Randal Queen



Description

Fictional, estate course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 5, greenside.

Concept

A target-style course, clearly estate-based from the luxurious selection of tree planting, Chelshire almost gives you the impression of playing in midwinter, thanks to the unusual selection of washed-out textures. The golf takes a little more to stand out: hole design is subtly tortuous, and those playing close-up views and without a Top Cam will undoubtedly struggle. Estate courses generally lack the astute tactical finesse that has been applied to these holes, and as a result Chelshire Estate struggles to

fit in. 5/10

Appearance

The incredible variety of colours on display really catches the eye: the pale grasses are a novel touch, and the beautiful selection of trees is both natural and appealing. Some over-stated elevation work helps you catch the best of the view. The texture transitions are looking old hat, however, particularly around the water and, close-to, some of the planting looks artificial and unblended. 7/10

Playability

Too many blind tee shots and unclear holes make this something of a wrench to play. The trees too often provide an extra and unwelcome hazard, and too little is apparent to the player in the head-up view. The layout makes for accurate targeting rather than risk/reward, and the course as a whole – while being surprisingly absorbing – is a frustration rather than an enlightenment. 4/10

Challenge

Frequent water hazards and some tricky lies in the trees will both push scores above par. There are some borderline-awkward gradients on the greens too. But – as mentioned – the course's real difficulty lies in the hidden challenges, unfairly tucked away from the view of the golfer. When you find yourself on most tees wondering whether to hit right or left, you know there's something wrong with the design as a whole. 4/10

Technical

Textures seem to have been the real problem here: as well as some sharp transitions, there is considerable blurring and obvious lines between faces. Some of the texture assignments seem to be very confused as well. While some great quality planting has been executed, it can't rescue some of the many problems here. 5/10

Overall	A course not without its flaws, but problematic in terms of textures and fair play.	25/50
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Chesapeake Valley GC

Steve & Tim Bausch



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

There's a glimmer of the glories that were to come in this early creation from the Bausch Brothers. It's nice to see two halves with distinct styles: the opening nine are carefully delineated between trees, whereas the back nine open up a little more into something closer to heathland golf, with more to see and do. All the way through, whichever style has been chosen, the course is shot through with imaginative but realistic golf. 7/10

Appearance

A texture update is much needed; the rough texture in particular is stretched, blurred and too widespread. There are occasional folds in the mesh that might have been avoided. The course is saved somewhat by a keen eye for spectacular planting, but for the most part it looks distinctly old-fashioned. 4/10

Playability

There's something about Bausch creations that render them compulsively playable, and on close analysis the cleverness of the hole design is very much responsible. The variety is not immediately evident, but it becomes easier to appreciate towards the end of the round, especially when you can employ more bravado in shooting for birdies and eagles. 8/10

Challenge

Without deep rough and anything seriously threatening by way of hazards, Chesapeake Valley is difficult to score bogeys on. Both of my test rounds were bogey-free, with only some tough greens saving a complete birdie-fest. 5/10

Technical

Sadly, the course has dated faster than many others from the same time: a better choice of textures would certainly have helped stay the course's age. Only the planting and the careful eye for variety remains as any great sign of the designers' abilities, but let's not forget the excellent golfing values that lie beneath the somewhat underwhelming surface. 4/10

Overall

A pleasing course of two subtle halves: showing its age a little, but worth playing in light of the designers' reputations.

28/50

Chestonia Hills

Ed Spence



Description

Fictional, short course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 3, from green.

Concept

Make this course a candidate for your next party game! With broad greens, huge elevations, a modicum of in-game music and no small number of Easter Eggs, it really is one of the better Par 3 courses. And despite this, the course never loses its country club charm or its sense of realism. Probably one of the best courses that you have not heard of. 8/10

Appearance

The planting shows a delightful touch, and the nature of the elevations means that great views are afforded in several areas of the course. But, then again, the textures are a mite garish, the transitions virtually non-existent, and you suspect the designer hasn't put his all into the slightly bizarre custom touches. But it's still a pleasure to look upon. 7/10

Playability

Many people might turn against the course when they hear background music on the first tee. Those that don't will be in for a pleasant mix of holes, maximising use of the elevation. Like all Par 3 courses, though, it struggles against becoming same-y. An uphill hole; a downhill hole; and you've pretty much seen it all. The designer does his best by mixing up the hole lengths, but this sort of course is remarkably hard to plug away with. 6/10

Challenge

The capaciousness of the greens, and the unthreatening hazarding (I don't think I was in a bunker all round) hardly makes for a great threat. One or two greens border on the difficult, but mostly this is a course that will allow you to come away with a handful of birdies. 5/10

Technical

Although this construction is by no means perfect, there are no errors that would spoil your round. OK, in retrospect, one would probably call for a lighter touch with the sound planting, some decent texture blends, and a removal of the extrusion marks around the greens, but any inexperience the designer might have is well covered by the nature of the course, which shows off flair to best advantage. 6/10

Overall	A likeable Par 3 course with some rollicking elevations working to its advantage.	32/50
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Chipping Championship

Jim Tresco



Description

Imaginary, short course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

A silly little course, with good humour, this might be better re-titled 'Flopping Championship' (although that sounds a little bit rude), as I don't tend to use my chipper for anything longer than 30 yards. 18 tiny holes, from 60 yards downwards, use a range of terrain for you to chip over. It's a good laugh and utterly not to be taken seriously. 6/10

Appearance

This doesn't look anything like real, although it's not supposed to, of course. It's more crazy golf than anything else, so the appearance is acceptable if not outstanding. 4/10

Playability

Of course it's fun! And anyone who tells you otherwise is a liar. You'll have a storm pitching and flopping your ball over trees and bouncing it off rocks. Plus hole in ones are easy! There's a surprisingly large range of golf skills required, given the nature of the course, so this earns an accordingly high score. 8/10

Challenge

If it was possible to make Par 2 holes with the APCD, then this course would have eighteen of them, and I would have gone around in three over. As it was, a -15 round means this is perhaps just a little easy! Pin positions are either on flat or on an impossible slope, so it's a shame there's no middle ground. But there's nothing here to stimulate the serious golfer into competing for par. 0/10

Technical

Decidedly iffy. With a careful hand, some small beaches, some customisation and some seam blends, this could be made to look quite nice and natural, if still quite improbable. But it's exceedingly rough-and-ready, and obviously hasn't had much time lavished on it, which is a shame. 1/10

Overall	A good laugh, but no more. Serious golfers will want to steer well clear, but for 15 minutes and a quick giggle, it's a decent fix.	19/50
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Classic Club

Matt Henry



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, desert course	10 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Southern California		
Conditions		
Playable on F*/F*		

Concept

This huge, stadium-style course has been a Tour fixture for several years, and the wide use of the artificial lakes while still just about retaining a desert atmosphere have made it a fan favourite. The better holes here are comparable to Sawgrass or Bay Hill at their best, the use of so many do-or-die water drives being somewhat unusual in a desert course. Unfortunately, there is a certain amount of filler which makes the Classic Club at Northstar somewhat second best to its better-known rivals. Disregard it at your peril, though: there are very few desert courses as well-produced and playable as this. 8/10

Appearance

This is a very neat production, with apt textures and a drop-dead gorgeous pano, although the dry grass is a tad brown and boring, but I suppose you can't expect much more in the desert. The course buildings are carried off well, and the water is a big improvement on previous incarnations. The planting is a bit sparse and doesn't really stand out. 7/10

Playability

It's very pleasing to notice that Northstar hasn't succumbed to some of the excesses of its Tour brethren, and a course that isn't entirely centred around length of the tee is a refreshing change. The emphasis on corner-cutting drives over water mean there's plenty to be done with the first shot though, although the bunkering is an intelligent challenge as well. The Par 3 holes come in a great variety and round off the course well. 9/10

Challenge

Like any PGA stop, you'd expect the Classic Club to pull its punches. Holding the greens is no given, especially given that they really should be played on swift settings. You can count on the water and bunkers to do their bit, balancing out some rather tame rough. Counting on the greens and Par 5s to pick up strokes is probably the right way to go. 9/10

Technical

This course has received a lovely final polish and really fits the rotation well. While it would be difficult to find anything totally stand out, there is very little in the way of problems, and perhaps just a little imagination in some of the textures (the greens are nice, though) and planting would be warranted. 8/10

Overall	Excellent desert fare with more than a modicum of course water to keep you on your toes.	41/50
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Claymore

John Brooks



Description

Imaginary, woodland course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Scotland, presumably.

Conditions

S*/S*, and even that will be too much for some.

Concept

A nominal updating of a previously undistinguished course, Claymore hasn't really done much to push the layout into 'distinguished' territory. Notably featureless, using trees largely as a bordering exercise, the course features indiscriminate and cynical hazarding and just feels hugely artificial. With very few courtesies towards the player, it's not one I can say I'd welcome with any sort of affection. 2/10

Appearance

I quite like the mixture of autumn and summer planting, and the treeline is definitely a plus. Elsewhere, it's pretty barren stuff, with drab textures, ill-conceived elevations and hastily-formed hazards. 3/10

Playability

It's difficult to take Claymore seriously as a course, because it's so obvious that the design has started out with a hole shape and contrived hazards to fit. Several technical issues, such as weak bunker moulding and poor pin-positioning impact on play, and there's almost no atmosphere or authenticity to the course. I won't be going back. 3/10

Challenge

Some outrageously bad greening and pin-positioning makes some putts almost unplayable, and that will be enough to convince many that the course isn't even worth downloading in the first place. Certainly the second half descends into drudgery – not through any sort of natural challenge, but purely at the whims of the designer(s). 4/10

Technical

It's difficult to believe this has received a 2012 update when it seems still so firmly rooted in the original days of APCD design. Poor pins that are both mid-slope and too close to the edge of the green are a main flaw, but the big picture is that the course design doesn't count for all that much either. 3/10

Overall	A weak choice for a course update and a poor effort in presenting it convincingly.	15/50
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Clubcito Diablo

Eddie Schmidt



Description

Fictional, tropical course

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 4, from green.

Concept

I'm not sure what this course wants to be. Each hole seems to be designed in isolation, with unrealistic hazard placement and no real coherence to this flat course as a whole. Fairways are not penalised too harshly, the widespread cockleshell bunkers being a bizarre touch that never really comes into play. It's not bad news, the regular sand bunkers being exceedingly well placed, and most holes offering genuine playability, but it's too isolated for my liking. 5/10

Appearance

There's little to look at here bar some unrepitive and decent planting. The course lacks elevations and anything really attractive to rest the eye upon (which, I suppose adds to its realism in many ways), and even the sand and water seem quite soulless as a result. Technically the course is very good, and absolutely no technical problems interfere with the play. It's just that you get a feeling that it could be so much more. 5/10

Playability

I suppose, because of the same-y look to many of the opening holes, and the lack of elevation contrast, this is something of a drag to play. Certainly nothing fired me into life or enthusiasm for the shots I was about to hit. Several holes later in the round offer a genuine choice of playing strategy, but I'd consider you lucky if you hadn't fallen asleep by then. 4/10

Challenge

I found Clubcito a mite too easy, helped by lack of near-fairway hazards and open and (for the most part) gentle greens. The Par 5s were a mite simplified, and I scored three birdies and an eagle on them. While water makes an appearance (often artificially) on most holes, it shouldn't interfere with play if you're careful. The most testing holes are the most natural: gentle doglegs with well-guarded greens and any Par 3s where the wind comes into play. 6/10

Technical

There are no obvious technical flaws here, although I thought a couple of custom textures, particularly for some of the many water hazards and the cockleshell bunkers, wouldn't go amiss. Otherwise, the shapes, elevations and textures appear very natural, if a little flat in places. 8/10

Overall	A worthwhile if not particularly outstanding course. Play through the unremarkable opening six holes, and you'll find a better challenge beyond them.	28/50
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cNote Heights

Lonnie Lindell



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 4, on green.

Concept

There are quite a few unanswered questions about cNote Heights. Why did the designer see the need to name a course after a banknote? Why was such a promising course withdrawn from public availability at the Beta stage? Is there going to be a final release? Sadly, I can't answer any of these. What I can tell you is that cNote Heights is a perfectly reasonable woodland stroll; perhaps lacking a bit of fine-tuning, but perfectly playable, and using water and sand hazards to a good extent without going overboard. It does, however, remain a little soulless, a

trait which is sadly becoming a hallmark of its designer. 5/10

Appearance

The stock panorama doesn't inspire confidence, but there is a pretty good use of matching textures to counteract that. A shame, though that more effort hasn't gone into concealing the many clones in the high-level planting, nor into concealing the paths or lurid blue water features. 5/10

Playability

cNote Heights strives for a good risk/reward challenge, and picks that up on about half a dozen of the holes. The other twelve, unfortunately are somewhat insipid. Playing endlessly over water usually strikes of overkill, but bizarrely it seems to be the best (only?) solution for this course. Make of that what you will. 4/10

Challenge

I would have hoped that a final Beta might iron out some of the problems on the greens. As they stand, they are steep and very, very difficult to read, even at short range. This is tempered to some extent by unpunishing rough and borderline bunkers, but the balance isn't quite right, and this becomes all too noticeable when you're trying to line up yet another seven-foot par putt. 7/10

Technical

The designer has done plenty right thus far into the design, so to leave it eminently unfinished (only one Hole Preview?) is a shame. The course, despite its flaws, *does* hold a great deal of promise, particularly in those holes which play over water, and a change of panorama and a little light landscaping would help no end. 5/10

Overall	Horrible name; decent course. A bit too obviously unfinished, but worth a game for curiosity's sake.	26/50
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Coal Creek Canyon

Frank Coat



Description

Fictional, farmland course.

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 5, from fairway.

Concept

The overwhelming impression from the first tee at Coal Creek Canyon is of colour. Vibrant pinks, oranges and yellows make a mind-blowing visual, and to be honest it's likely to be a bit much for some. But I would urge anyone to at least give the course a test drive. It's formulaic at times, but at others there are some inviting little nooks and hideaways which are just that little bit special. To be honest, the flat terrain tends to undermine the course's aspirations to be a mountain course, but the designer has lent the

landscape sufficient charm to carry things off nicely. 6/10

Appearance

It largely depends on whether you can stand the bright colours in the trees and panorama, and I have to say they're not particularly to my tastes. The panorama does little to help, although some sensitive grass planting belies the age of this design. Elsewhere, although the surface has been handled gently, the green textures are in stark contrast to the top layer, and there are a few extrusion marks visible. 6/10

Playability

There's a nice variety of holes here, without ever giving the impression that they've been tricked up. The challenges are moderately engaging, although to be honest I'm unimpressed by the lack of complexity in the green surrounds – I holed four chip-ins during my test round. With some fairly unimpressive bunkers, it could be argued that the course lacks variety, but it's fun enough once in a while. 6/10

Challenge

Coal Creek Canyon is an odd combination of the easy and the impossible. Some shots will come close, others will be just frustrating. It's far from ideal, sadly, and your score appears to be more reliant on pure luck than on skill for your part. To counterbalance this, there are some open fairways and surprisingly acceptable greens, but it's really all just a big gamble. 4/10

Technical

In its time, Coal Creek Canyon was a top course. There's some impressive 3D work and grass planting which still holds up well today. The impression now, though, is that it's adopted a bit of a scattergun approach, plus of course is pushing its boundaries of taste with the array of colours. 5/10

Overall	Worth playing for an almost Easter-egg-like quality to some of its visuals. Wear sunglasses.	27/50
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Cog Hill - Dubsdread

Tim Hagen



Description

Real, estate course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

What a difference Tim Hagen makes. Whereas Cog Hill was once a fairly uninspiring, short and easy Microsoft course, now it's a lush and sprawling Championship venue. It doesn't come without its drawbacks: the venue remains tough and soulless, and the holes are almost universally of the hit-'em-hard stereotype. Championship golf is very much, it seems, a double-edged blade. 7/10

Appearance

Massively improved, of course. The elevations have been smoothed over, and the planting now offers a divine and varied assortment. The textures are now very typically lush, green and blended – exactly what we have come to expect from the designer. I find it hard to believe, though, that the course couldn't offer more potential for custom objects. 9/10

Playability

Beware the courses that feel like hard work. In its new back-tees-only incarnation, Cog Hill is brutally long for a Par 71. You have to hit fairways, and you have to be accurate. What you don't have to do, evidently, is enjoy yourself. I certainly didn't. 3/10

Challenge

With all the rough toughened up, it comes as no surprise to find that the scoring is significantly higher than on the original Cog Hill. You're made to constantly battle for Par, although as you keep achieving those Pars, the fact dawns on you that this is what the big PGA courses are expected to do. 9/10

Technical

It's difficult to know how to grade the MS update releases. Naturally, the courses have almost been re-done from scratch. Perhaps the key word is 'almost', as the basic MS elevation map is being used as a template. Still, this is a more than competent makeover, and certainly a damn sight better than the original. 9/10

Overall	A big improvement on the original, and a much better test of your golf. Don't expect to enjoy it, though.	<i>37/50</i>
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Cogitara Golf Course

Lars Rudbeck



Description

Imaginary, mountain course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

The name implies that Cogitara is going to be a thinking man's golf course, and indeed the first half-dozen holes really fulfil that promise. You are required to shot-shape and take risks and it's frankly thrilling stuff. The premise dies somewhat in the second half as the holes take on a more ordinary look, but there are still sparks of brilliance on the inward nine. A promising idea, not quite taken to its potential best. 7/10

Appearance

Using the much-heralded Whistler panorama, a lot of this course looks pretty good. Some technical flaws let it down, in the guise of cloned trees and some poor extrusive work. The elevation work often makes it hard to believe that you are playing a real course, but does have the flipside that some impressive views are available. The designer has included plenty to look at, including a wide range of tournament objects, so the course scores pretty well. 7/10

Playability

If you stopped after hole 6, you might conclude this is the most playable course available, such is the array of shotmaking you are called upon to produce. The pace settles a little after this (not necessarily a bad thing) but does not really pick up momentum until the closing holes where some good play options are produced. 6/10

Challenge

Cogitara wouldn't be said by many to be a tough course. I had 3 eagle putts on the opening three holes (it's almost possible to drive the green on the Par 5 opener), 4 eagle putts on the front nine, and 6 on the round as a whole. I finished 11-under, which is far too low. Cogitara's greens are gentle, and bunkers are too easy on the whole to escape. If you can keep your ball dry it's almost embarrassingly easy to score well. 2/10

Technical

This course might be really stunning if some applied technical effort were expended. There are a variety of elevation problems, a lot of cloning, a fair amount of extrusion marks, and quite a few 'floating' trees. The texture work is good, though, and obviously a lot of effort has been put into hole design. Some fine tuning and Beta testing could turn the course into something special. 4/10

Overall	A course with immense promise, certainly on the basis of the opening holes. The enjoyment dies around the turn and never really returns, sadly.	26/50
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Colonial Country Club

Eric Dorsey



Description

Real, estate course

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

The Colonial is rather special, certainly in comparison to other championship courses. It's very cleverly designed to get the best from the player, and I guarantee you'll barely notice the tricky 70 Par or some of the morale-destroying trademark holes on the back nine. There's a very realistic aura about this creation, and some smashing customisation work from the designer which only adds to the course's appeal. You also shouldn't ignore the excellent Readme file. This course really is one to

savour. 10/10

Appearance

The highlights are the lovely brickwork and the clubhouse complex, as well as some luscious water features. The texture use has been improved, and the planting is perfectly judged. The blends are neat; perhaps a little too neat, and there's just a hint of extrusions from time to time. But the package as a whole really shines. 9/10

Playability

Colonial is refreshingly short of gimmicks or long, arduous holes. Instead, it provides a firm, fair but direct challenge to a player's guile and golfing intelligence. There's call for all manner of tee shots, from fades and draws to lay-ups and big boomers, and some inviting greens without continual oppression of guard bunkers. All things considered, it's a great round of golf. 9/10

Challenge

Be grateful that Colonial doesn't feature the player-stunning length or difficulty of the likes of Riviera or Olympia fields. There are few hidden traps, and the course relies on its not inconsiderable strategic challenge to push you into dropping shots. Don't expect birdies to come easy, but then again many holes shouldn't provide excessive punishment. A stern but ultimately interesting test. 8/10

Technical

Colonial is a complete one-off – a course that has been immaculately researched and pieced together. The textures and layout are brilliantly thought through, and the planting and elevations show an experienced hand. Nice work indeed. 10/10

Overall	Something much, much more special than the average tournament course. An equal split between stimulating golf and exciting APCD work.	<i>46/50</i>
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Columbine Country Club

Brian Jameson



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, parkland course	5 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Colorado		
Conditions		
You could get up to M*/M* if you're prepared to take a few risks.		

Concept

One of Brian's rare attempts at a real course, Columbine has the same understated charm as the likes of Stonebridge or King's Walk. Very flat, despite being at the foot of the Rockies, it has a terrific front nine full of shotmaking and signature views, and the 5th, with its lay-up fairway and tiny green, is an instant winner. While it's initially unprepossessing, there's growing power and tournament potential here and it's one of the best from this designer. 8/10

Appearance

This sort of flatness on a fictional course would be heavily criticised, and it has to wondered whether full attention has been paid to the fine detail. The autumn-like planting is creative, though, and there has been attention put in to the course buildings and surrounds, even if the panorama is somewhat blurry and out of place. 6/10

Playability

Once you hit through the terrific 4th and 5th holes, there's something a little mundane and routine here, but then plugging away is a wholesome and realistic part of competitive golf, and it's fitting that Columbine plays host to that. A bit less fitting are the inconsistent hole previews and occasional trivial stroke. The green complexes are fascinating, though; for something so flat, there's a lot of game here. 6/10

Challenge

You'd want to select your pins carefully, for the greens are stiff, but the deep rough here is a great – and suitable – leveller, and Columbine works very well for something so unprepossessing. The opening nine, in particular, will make you sweat to stay level with par – perhaps it's a shame that the closing half is a bit of a let-up. 8/10

Technical

Solid if unremarkable work from this designer has been apparent over his entire range of courses, and Columbine is right up there with them. Perhaps there's little by way of flair, but it's also difficult to identify much wrong. 6/10

Overall	Shorter, flatter and more intricate than your average tournament course, Columbine is a great slice of the Midwest.	34/50
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Commonwealth Golf Club

Stuart Kahle



club. 5/10

Description

Real, woodland course.

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

One of the most austere of Australian clubs, Commonwealth carries echoes of America's Riviera Club and Britain's Sunningdale in its opulence. Unusually enclosed and claustrophobic for a Southern Hemisphere course, it plays strongly on the positioning of bunkers – particularly alongside the fairway – to catch out the player. Sadly, I rather feel that the course has been done short shrift by this version, which doesn't really communicate some of the stand-out features of the real-life

Appearance

I can't say I was enamoured with the stock landscapes, cloned planting or the hastily-extruded bunkers. There really was an absence of much to look at on this course – which is a pity when much could have been made of the clubhouse and its surrounds. 3/10

Playability

The lack of stand-out signature holes made Commonwealth feel very routine. It has held its place in online tour rotations by the simple expedients of being Australian and remaining unthreatening in the years since its release. It's not the worst thing I've played, but it's difficult to find a reason to go back. 3/10

Challenge

Hitting the sand remains a major challenge, particularly with the unpleasant elevations to be found in many bunkers. It's unfortunate, if hardly surprising, to find some problematic putting conditions on a course of this age too. There will be sufficient compensation in the lack of underplanting and some eminently escapable trees. You probably will score close to par, but there is a big question mark over whether this is the course's influence rather than the player's. 6/10

Technical

There's little to commend this – the designer has made a big thing of inventiveness on his fictional courses, and it's a shame that the same flair wasn't applied here. 3/10

Overall	Mediocre fare, not exactly helped by a routine dullness to the construction which is atypical of this designer	20/50
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Congressional Country Club

Andrew Jones



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, estate course	18 th hole, Par 4	71
Location		
Maryland		
Conditions		
Playable on F*/F*, but expect it to be real US Open fast!		

Concept

With a modest opening stretch and some relatively unthreatening conditions, this doesn't immediately strike home as being a US Open staple. Modern championship courses are built more for the challenge than the novelty, but even then you have to be impressed with the outstanding greens and well-protected pins, and the skilful use of the elevations on the course. The closing stretch is exciting and the round culminates with a justifiably famous long Par 4 hole, although you'd struggle to go away and remember highlights from the opening half. 7/10

Appearance

Only the merest hint of cloning in the tops of the treelines spoils the lusciousness that we'd expect from a top APCD-man. The deep green textures are handled superbly and really do emphasise the course's best aspects; the many bunkers are expertly-lipped without a blur. And the clubhouse might just be the single best building you'll see on any course. Incredible. 9/10

Playability

While there's always the pleasure of throwing yourself into a championship course and re-living classic moments and tournaments, it's noticeable that Congressional does drag on the opening nine, not really helped by some lengthy rendering times. It's one you'll break out for plenty of tournaments, but I can't imagine anyone playing four rounds for fun. 6/10

Challenge

I raised a quizzical eyebrow upon noticing there was no compulsory Deep Rough, like on Pebble Beach *et al*, but this course's setup is less about the rough or crazy hole length (although the 11th is notorious) than really clever pin positioning and bunkering. You can expect to get plenty of practice from the sand, and more so on the slippery greens, but the course gives a fair run to players at all times and is – in fact – a very true test of your short game. 9/10

Technical

Given that Congressional was in Beta at the time of testing, the quality of work and the intensity of atmosphere is simply outstanding. If things are to improve, I'm going to need a higher rating. 10/10

Overall	Slightly old-fashioned fare which makes a big thing out of traditional golfing hazards rather than sheer length.	41/50
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Coogans Bluff

Gary Campbell



Description

Fictional, lakeside course.

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

This is picture-perfect golf. A course winding its way around a picturesque lake amid rolling hills (possibly in an Irish setting?) gives an idealistic environment. The individual holes are all carefully crafted and enclosed with some beautiful and natural planting. Several holes stand out with wonderful design – the natural-looking island 15th most notably. This course doesn't stand head-and-shoulders above the rest, but is very, very well designed for all that. 9/10

Appearance

The look of this course can't be faulted. Everything looks natural, there are umpteen stunning views, and the planting is superb. The bunkers are among the best I've ever seen on Links. Textures are immaculately blended into one another (the fairway has not only a first-cut, but a second-cut too) and are customised throughout. Fantastic stuff. 10/10

Playability

This is fun to play on the back of the course look and the number of holes that do not offer a clear-cut route of play. Perhaps a couple of the Par 4s are a bit same-y, but quite a few holes offer a risk-reward choice, and good recovery skills should be taken onto the course as a must. It's gentle rather than riveting stuff, though. 7/10

Challenge

A 7-under round indicates that perhaps this course is a little easy. The fairways are generous and unprotected, and I had many very flat putts. All the Par 5s are reachable in two, and I averaged under 4 shots a hole on the long ones. Ideally, to provide a suitable challenge, the risk/reward element of the 5s should be upped and the greenside shots made a little more challenging. 6/10

Technical

There is a lot to praise here, and nothing to criticise. Immaculate planting; clever and subtle elevation work; immaculate and loving seam blends; and a lot of custom textures and objects. All these combine to make Coogans Bluff a beautiful and enjoyable course. Two thumbs way up! 10/10

Overall	One of the best-looking courses in town. Fun to play, but not particularly challenging. It's worth taking a walk around for the views alone, of course.	42/50
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Coombs Mill

Michael Ballard & Lez Marwick



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, heathland course	1 st hole, Par 4	72

Location

Strongly influenced by the landscape of Maine.

Conditions

I would limit myself to M*/M*, and then only for a challenge.

Concept

A cosy and under-rated course, Coombs Mill has a fantastic quarry-and-heathland setting, and fully makes the most of it with imaginative and fun designs, not least on the opening and closing holes. It has resulted in a fair few oddities, not least the disparity between front-and-back nines mentioned in the README, which strain credibility, but for the large part both the original and Lez's subtle updating are little short of brilliant. 8/10

Appearance

I'm afraid I can't get on with the silly bunker shapes, which could easily have been fixed in the re-release, and the colour scheme is little short of garish in places. Unfortunately the loss of the buildings to the re-make has to be seen as a negative too; one which is only partially compensated by seam blends and hi-res textures. 6/10

Playability

Always a quintessentially playable course, there are a multitude of Eagle opportunities and the views are incredible. Coombs Mill is very much the course for those who like to have a go, and some crafty wasteland hazards wait. There's a reason it's been fondly remembered and chosen for an update. 9/10

Challenge

Lacking in length, and with some less-than-formidable long holes, Coombs Mill will still yield birdies and quite a few Eagles. Incongruously, the greens – if anything - seem steeper than they were originally, and it's surprising they weren't levelled in the update. As fun as it is, this course can't really escape the problem that the course is just too easy. 6/10

Technical

I've mixed feelings about Lez's update. While his technical skills are not in doubt, and the course very much deserves a new lease of life, stripping out the 3D means at least one aspect of the design has been lost. This only serves to make other deficiencies all the more obvious. 6/10

Overall	Coombs Mill has always been terrific golf, with an outstanding layout. The remake is more than adequate but sacrifices a little of the charm.	35/50
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Copperhead at Old Works

Lacy Gearhart



Description

Fictional, parkland course.

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

A wonderful idea, this. A golf course set in an old quarry could be a bizarre and awful idea, but this is made to work really well. The bunkers are filled with jet-black slag rather than sand, and the holes feel as if they run along vehicle tracks, such is the winding shape. It's perhaps not the course that everyone wants to play, but for those that do it provides a unique environment and experience. 9/10

Appearance

The black bunkers really dominate the look of this course. Pretty they ain't, but if you scratch deeper beneath the surface, then some subtle planting and good elevation work (very reminiscent of slag heaps in a quarry) come to light. The panorama is reminiscent of the industrial heart of America and makes an unusual contrast to the usual forest scenes, although it fits the course well. Some of the heavy rough is a bit off-key, but otherwise, this is a surprising treat on the eyes. 9/10

Playability

This course makes you work hard for your pars, and as such is something of a headache to play. The narrow fairways and frequent bunker escapes do become tiring after a while. Nevertheless, for the first couple of rounds the novelty of the environment is enough to pull you through, and if in the unlikely event that you clock a good score, you'll no doubt be straight back out there. 7/10

Challenge

The challenge at Copperhead is perfectly pitched. Reaching the green in regulation is no mean feat (nigh on impossible if you find one of the myriad fairway bunkers). But the approaches are often reasonable, and the greens on the whole are realistically sloped and provide a modest, but not too-easy challenge. The course almost subconsciously steers you towards a Par round, which should be good enough for anyone. 10/10

Technical

The only pick-up I found here is the deep-rough planting, which seemed a bit out of scale with the rest of the course. Barring this little nitpick, then the course has been superbly put together. Blends, even in the 2001 version, are very good, and custom textures are most apt when necessary. The planting will not stand out to many, but on closer observation you realise how subtly clever it really is. A lot of work must have gone into creating the alternative look here, and it's succeeded greatly. 9/10

Overall

A course everyone should play once. It's pretty tough and won't appeal to everyone, but is extremely clever both in concept and execution.

44/50

Country Hills GC

Bob Kraft



Description

Real, farmland course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

Country Hills is another in the growing field of down-at-heel 'normal' courses. It's a pleasant enough amble through converted pasture, with a light sprinkling of water, planting and sand to add variety more than anything else. Sure, it'll never set the world alight, but that's not really the point. The course is unpretentious and there to be enjoyed, and that's precisely what you'll do. 6/10

Appearance

Given that the course is only sparsely furbished, there's a surprisingly large amount to see. The textures are appropriately brown, worn, and blended together with barely a trace. The planting works surprisingly well and doesn't look forced, all bar a couple of clones. This was a pleasant surprise to lay my eyes upon. 9/10

Playability

Impressively swift loading and render times smoothly usher you around Country Hills. Because of its realism and relevance to the everyday golfer, it is almost gratuitously easy to enjoy. Sure, there's not a lot of variety once you see the later holes, and perhaps one gung-ho hole might have livened things up a bit, but I defy anyone not to have a pleasurable half-hour here. 8/10

Challenge

There's very little bunkering, verging on the non-existent, and other hazards are almost laughably easy to avoid. A mis-placed tee shot will rarely result in misery, thanks to the shortage of undergrowth. Only the decision to stretch the Par 5s out to three-shot length means that this course is prevented from being a total pushover. 3/10

Technical

This is a wonderful stride forward from an improving designer. So much has been done in terms of texture and elevation work that deserves credit. There are some excellent 3D creations propping up the golfing environment, and the use of wet sand textures at the bottom of the bunkers is very clever. There's still a bit of angularity around some of the course shapes, but they go virtually undetected as long as you focus on the golf. 8/10

Overall	A terrific, understated little course with much to admire and precious little to hate. Expect to shoot low.	<i>34/50</i>
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Covered Bridge Golf Club

Microsoft



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4, from tee

Concept

Gentle, unassuming and almost totally non-outstanding: that's Covered Bridge. While this course has been well re-created and clearly had some time expended on it, there's not a single hole that causes you to draw breath or work up a modicum of strategy or bravado. It's brainless golf of the highest order. 3/10

Appearance

Now, to be fair, this is one of Microsoft's designers' better attempts. Some iffy elevation work aside, there is real charm in the soft texture set and the stand-out planting. Those with an eye for detail will find a lot to feast upon on the way around. 8/10

Playability

Disengage your brain, heft your driver, and swing: it's really no more complicated than that. There is but one hole of strategic merit – everything else consists merely of getting your ball to the green as easily as possible and putting out. The lack of variety is enough to become disconcerting down the back stretch, and you realise the cleverness that must go into other apparently featureless courses. 2/10

Challenge

Nothing doing here at all, I'm afraid. With easy greens, flat landing areas, barely any bunkers and water hazards located to catch out the amateur, the Links golfer should feel he has a right to shoot under 65. Bogies would be a remarkable occurrence requiring some exceptionally bad golf. 1/10

Technical

For all the good work done elsewhere on this course, it is a real mystery why Microsoft continually neglected to correct the lumpy elevations that dog many of their courses, and it's off-putting on what could be an impressive creation. But the course is worth your time to admire a good creation, even if the golf isn't to your taste. 6/10

Overall	A good spectacle let down by being home to some of the most brain-numbing golf this side of the local pitch'n'putt.	20/50
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Coyote Run

Duane Rucker



Description

Fictional, desert course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

One of the more under-stated and fluent desert courses, Coyote Run offers some surprisingly enjoyable golf, which certainly wouldn't be predicted from the first tee. Many hole routes are nominally one-way, but the open layout does allow variability, and the designer's attempts at creating a convincing atmosphere are credible if a little primitive. This is a course that may be middle-ground enough to have repeat value, too. 6/10

Appearance

Low-res stock textures and plenty of cloned planting grab the eye from the first, and don't really let up, which is a shame as there are a few well-detailed features on this course. The panorama is notably well-fitting and spectacular, and the low-level planting is more hit than miss. But the overall impression is of roughness. 4/10

Playability

Wide open holes with little threat from the desert make for some pleasant, pottering golf. There are several holes which stretch to the level of 'interesting' without threatening to become trademark holes, and certainly a variety of hole lengths. On reflection, we could probably do without the coyote sound effects. 6/10

Challenge

The lack of sophisticated bunkering doesn't hurt, and the rough regions are just too easy to escape. It's pleasing to see some moderate greens, but of course the inevitable conclusion is that it's all too easy to score six or seven under. 4/10

Technical

Bearing in mind that the designer's expertise is minimal, there's a lot to credit in making a realistic, playable and fun course such as coyote run. But it's all a little bit wearying to see yet another set of stock textures, shape placement and wibbly-wobbly extrusions. There's just not enough here to recommend it. 3/10

Overall	A fair enough game of golf, but very thin on the ground when it comes to design necessities.	23/50
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CraggaMoor

Rob Moates



Description

Fictional, parkland course.

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 5, on green.

Concept

If moorland was the designer's intention (as you might suspect from the title), then this is a serious misfire. It looks and feels all wrong: the planting and panorama are misjudged, and there are some seriously severe elevations. That's not to say the course is bad: there's some magnificently designed holes with the emphasis on fairway positioning and a choice of approach shots. The Par 5s are monsters and genuine 3-shotters all the way around. 6/10

Appearance

Sadly, the ups are outnumbered by the downs at CraggaMoor. The customisation of the abbey ruins is nicely done, but elsewhere there are far too many clones in the planting with too much blurriness, an inappropriate coastal panorama and naff stock textures. Very much a disappointment. 3/10

Playability

Rob Moates has a well-deserved reputation as a clever and innovative hole designer and doesn't disappoint here. Hazards are used judiciously in the form of water, sand and trees, and the whole thing emanates strategy without being intimidating. Several scenes on the back nine are certainly worth hanging about for, and only a few blind shots (notably at the unfair final tee) mar your golf. 8/10

Challenge

My test-round stats speak for themselves: one bogey, one birdie and a score of level par. An excellent mixture of green styles, hole types and strategies: not least in the long holes, which demand genuine three-shot strategical thinking: a demand that is all too rare on today's computer golfer. 10/10

Technical

Despite the many visual problems, it is clear there is an excellent golf course architect at work here. Surely this course is prime for a 2003 overhaul, a new panorama and textures and restoration to magnificence. 5/10

Overall	An old design now going begging. The hole design is still magnificent: the appearance is ill-judged.	32/50
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Crandon Park Golf Club

John Andersen



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, tropical course	7 th hole, Par 4	72
Location	Florida	
Conditions	Avoid the difficult pins and you can play this on M*/M*	

Concept

Anyone thinking that public courses were standard, unimaginative fare will be in for a surprise at Crandon Park. Nestled in the Everglades, the luxurious landscape and menacing swamps are really only part of it, for there's a course with plenty of strategy here too. Making a big thing of approach angles and hole shaping, there is good use (but by no means overuse) of the water and the sparse palm trees that dot the course. It's a thoroughly immersive experience helped by a careful APCD conversion, and definitely one of a kind. 9/10

Appearance

The early use of custom textures certainly help, although the suspect dirt texture is possibly not examined too closely. Otherwise, an excellent job has been done of conveying the local wetlands; the bushy planting being dense and not overpowering, and the designer even finding time to throw in a few examples of the native wildlife. A few hard edges here and there on the mesh also betray the course's age. 6/10

Playability

Uniqueness goes a long way towards making a course enjoyable, and it has to be said that there isn't anything else on Links quite like Crandon Park. You'll need a comprehensive recovery game to do well, although one bunker hit too many is a likelihood: it's particularly frustrating halfway down the Par 5s. With only eight Par 4s, though, there's a great variety from hole to hole, and the aura of the course (aided particularly by some well-judged ambient sound) is enough to chivvy you along. 8/10

Challenge

It's notable how easy it is to access the green complexes, and the rough could perhaps use toughening up too. It's not pushover easy, like many a municipal course, given some accurately-placed bunkers but as long as you don't fall foul of one or two poor pins then it's not too hard to pick up strokes from Crandon Park. 6/10

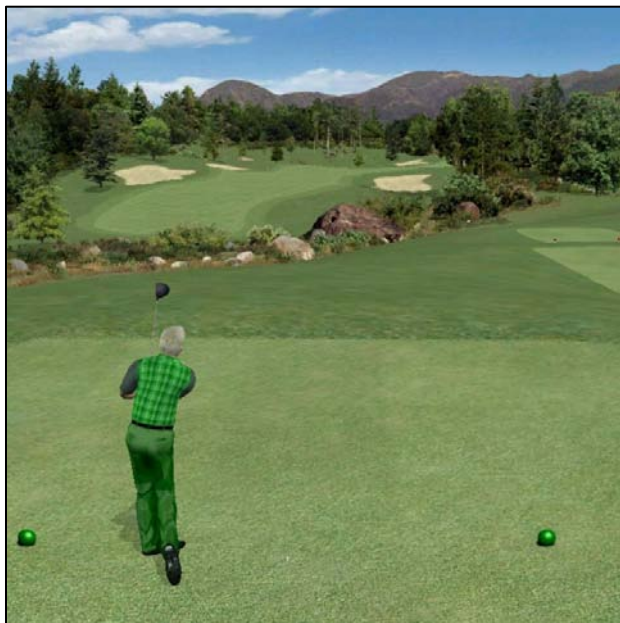
Technical

Some admirable work in bringing this delicious course to Links lovers. The fine detail doesn't really hold up to scrutiny, and there are plenty of extrusions, but there are also some laborious customisations and a fine atmosphere surrounding the course. Outstanding for its time. 6/10

Overall	Not a championship course, but still an absolute must-have for collectors of Real courses. Delightful.	35/50
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Craters Edge

Gary Campbell



Description

Fictional, canyon course.

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Very reminiscent of Kapalua Plantation in its sweeping elevations and unplayable OB rough areas, Craters Edge is a beautiful and engaging golfers' paradise. Other designers might use ravines and gullies as a gimmick; here they are used as natural boundaries to the course and contributors to the view. Every hole is different and unusual, and the course content is brilliantly varied without hardly ever bringing water into play. The best holes are the two Par 5s down the back nine: reachable

with some degree of risk, they could yield any score between Eagle and Double Bogey. 10/10

Appearance

Gary Campbell proved with Coogan's Bluff that he was capable of unbelievably great-looking courses. Here, if anything, he has raised the bar even higher. The textures fit together superbly, the planting is utterly believable and well-observed, the bunkers are abnormally good, and the little extras – from rocks to course buildings – are the icing on the cake. A beauty. 10/10

Playability

There's an almost unprecedented variety among the holes here. Open fairways, narrow fairways, tough greens, easy greens, deep bunkers, shallow bunkers, the list is endless. The constantly changing gradients mean that very few shots are straightforward. And yet, somehow, the whole thing seems to be effortlessly believable. Magic golf. 10/10

Challenge

The many uphill and downhill shots are the main challenge here, and just to make nothing easy, there is a liberal sprinkling of bunkers around all those points of the course where you'd least like to see it. It's certainly not overkill, but for many players it's a little too much. Playing on the most severe conditions would make this a thoroughly miserable round of golf. 8/10

Technical

Almost flawless. It's a shame the designer has seen fit to borrow so many aspects of his course from elsewhere. Regardless of this, Gary Campbell may not be the most prolific of designers, but with this release he has shown himself to be playing firmly in the big league. 9/10

Overall	A sublime course, nearly equal to Mike Jones at his best. A must-have, even for those who 'don't like' fictional courses.	47/50
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Craters of the Moon

Zea Miller



Description

Imaginary, concept course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 3, from moonrock

Concept

In the words of the immortal (UK-centric) TV advert, it does exactly what it says on the tin. A reasonable attempt at something different throws you in among the eponymous craters and a sandy moon surface with a suitably huge, sprawling course. It's been passed off reasonably well, but sadly without much thought to the golf, which is stilted and dull. Extra deductions for putting an apostrophe into the word 'Craters', something which I couldn't bear to repeat. 6/10

Appearance

While the background is suitably awesome, and the 3D structures that dot the course are nicely extra-planetary, there is a lot of disappointment on the plot. Firstly, textures, and surely this is a course – if any – that cries out for a complete absence of grass and a range of greys and browns – not beige bunkers and green fairways! The moulding of the craters is rough in parts, although that is a tolerable fault given the shortage of photo evidence to the contrary...2/10

Playability

It's difficult to overstate the frustration caused by this cause. It's pure one-way golf with no option but to make the under-sized fairways. Missing will cost you a chip-out of the moonrock; there's absolutely no way to hit the green in two from the sand. An impossible lie or two is the final insult – a badly mis-hit shot might cause the end of the round. A credit for the experience, but emphatically not for the golf. 1/10

Challenge

I doubt anyone would ever be minded to play this course competitively: needless to say, anyone would be well-warned not to. If the constant slog of the bunkered regions wasn't bad enough, the poorly-sculpted greens and their slopes certainly are. Plus the not inconsiderable fact that the course is well over 8500 yards, of course. 0/10

Technical

This could have been so much more. A full set of customised textures and perhaps assigning something a bit more playable to the moon's surface would go a long way towards allaying the course's frustrations. The golfing design is shallow and ill-thought-through, and the heavy hand with the plot doesn't do any favours. I'm inclined to be generous for the lovely panorama and the moon buildings. 3/10

Overall	A cracking idea, and one that should have been made more of. With an overhaul, might achieve the rank of a genuine novelty. Apostrophe abuse is unforgivable.	12/50
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Crestifours

Derek Wilson



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 4, from greenside bunker

Concept

On the face of it, a reasonable little parkland course, and there's much at Crestifours to challenge the over-hitting Links golfer. Although not visually striking, there's not much out of place, and the green complexes occasionally show just a little flair. It's nice that the designer hasn't gone out of his way to include unrealistic water hazards, and there is a good municipal feel to much of the course. But, really, I'm clutching at straws – there's just not enough to mark out Crestifours for deeper investigation.

Pleasant, but instantly forgettable. 5/10

Appearance

The planting is terribly sparse – the grasslands don't really convince, there is a tree or two out of place, and a woeful lack of underplanting. But there's also some good, if routine, texture work and a reasonable environment to the course. 5/10

Playability

Although the course is relatively minor, and has a small file size, it has been nicely adjusted for Links play. There are some great long Par 4s, and you'd struggle to reach any of the Par 5s in two. It's quite possible to crank up the green difficulty without punishing yourself. The only flaw is with some of the trees: there is too much steel-tree syndrome, and not enough transparency, particularly with the long approach shots. 7/10

Challenge

The careful tinkering that has taken place has certainly not been in vain. Crestifours presents an admirably challenging round of golf, where Par is a very fair number indeed. With bunkers well, although not harshly, placed and some well-thought-through areas of rough, there is enough here to place the reliance on accuracy, but not enough to make your life a misery. Pretty damn near perfect, surprisingly. 9/10

Technical

There's not much wrong, as such, but the technical work is hardly likely to make you leap out of your chair like a demented David Feherty. The flaws in the trees are a bit of a killer and perhaps the final indication that this could have used one or two more Beta-testers. 4/10

Overall	Distinctly underwhelming, but the low file size disguises a reasonably interesting round of golf. Keep it? Not likely.	30/50
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Crocodile Creeks

Robert Laconis



Description

Fictional, tropical course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 4, on green

Concept

A convincing sub-tropical locale, completely surround by dense forest (although the trees rarely come into play), Crocodile Creeks serves up a realistic and most playable set of 18. With possibly the best undergrowth ever planted and textured on APCD 1.1, and cleverly designed and laid-out holes this is certainly worth a round or two. It all feels a little bit enclosed, though, and it would have been nice to see some rolling tropical landscape, similar to Cheetah Run or Te Ihi. 7/10

Appearance

The planting is very clever and given the massive amount of trees on the course is refreshingly clone-free. Textures are very aptly chosen; the browns and yellow colours really transmit what the course is all about. Bunkers are infrequent but handled with care and the subtle elevation changes are in marked contrast to other courses of this type. Generally very impressive, although the panorama-substitute tree surround doesn't quite convince. 9/10

Playability

The noise! The dreadful, loud, misguided awful noise! A water effect drowns out any commentary that you might have active, and the TV and the rest of your household into the bargain. I was forced to turn my speakers off, and it provided a real downer on my round. Even with the speakers off, the course was somewhat less than stimulating. A lack of hole options and the relative ease of playing round induces sleep rather than excitement. 4/10

Challenge

Massive, easy-to-hit greens, and hazards that rarely (if ever) come into play might look for a fetching course, but prove a bit of a pushover to the golfer. With the lack of elevation changes in play, it is too easy to hit greens in regulation and only some imaginative contouring helps keep the scores above 60. 4/10

Technical

While the time lavished on this course is undeniable, the designer really might have made more of the needs of the golfer. The flaws are all at the basic level: better hazard layout and more testing terrain would be considered a must. But the surface detail is sumptuous: both planting and textures are well up to the highest standards. 7/10

Overall	A golf course built to impress the artist, Crocodile Creeks won't impress the golfer half as much.	<i>31/50</i>
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Crooked Creek

Wayne Hewitt



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, woodland course	1 st hole, Par 4	72

Location

Inspired by the landscape of Queensland, Australia.

Conditions

Playable and recommended on F*/F*

Concept

One of the most significant and talked-about courses of all time, Crooked Creek lives up to the billing in every single way imaginable. The incredible layout has clearly been honed over several years, and the woodland setting works impeccably with quite possibly the 18 most dramatic holes ever pieced together. The subsequent HD edition has – unbelievably – raised the ante further, easing up on a few of the quirks, and adding yet another layer of beauty. 10/10

Appearance

‘Epic’ might be the only way to describe the planting, which genuinely approaches things on the large scale, covering an entire woodland, rather than just the area around each hole. The textures, overhauled, are little short of perfect – just go and check out the pine needles if you don’t believe me. And the clubhouse and 3D buildings, with immaculate surroundings, are as sublime as they come. This, almost definitively, tops the list. 10/10

Playability

Crooked Creek is a heavy round of golf, but very much in a good way. The drama is not just limited to a couple of individual holes, but spreads throughout the course, and that really is unique in my experience. Challenge is created with the minimum of artificiality, and by using the landscape to its greatest extent. The whole thing is wrapped around with a varied soundscript, and given the course’s pedigree you can’t help but have a blast! 10/10

Challenge

With a range of different types of sand, Crooked Creek was never likely to be a pushover. But, surprisingly, there are birdie opportunities for those prepared to go seek, and the woodland is nowhere near as penal as on other courses. You’re always walking a fine tightrope here, but things are never as bad as the intimidating course threatens. 9/10

Technical

Many, many areas of utterly superlative work have brought Crooked Creek to a real head. There is no doubting Wayne’s godlike prowess over minute detail in textures and landscaping. But an unwise adjustment to bunker textures has left the ball rolling around in the sand like a pinball. It both slows the game down and is unrealistic and so, regrettably, a point has to be docked. 9/10

Overall	A true legend of the game, both course and designer. Fully warrants its P2P status.	48/50
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Crookhill Park Golf Club

Stephen Sullivan



Description

Real, estate course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 4

Par

70

Location

South Yorkshire

Conditions

I'd settle for M*/F*

Concept

An intriguing course of many parts: the string of doglegs that make up the front nine; the tiny, often square-shaped greens; the handful of gung-ho Par 4s along the homeward stretch. They all combine to make a memorable experience at Crookhill Park. Whether it can actually be said to be representative of good golf is a moot point: at times you feel less like you're on a golf course than a fairground shooting range. Nevertheless, it's been brought to Links with Stephen's usual consistency and passion, even as something of a side-project while he was working on other things. 6/10

Appearance

Nice planting and textures are only to be expected, and it's worth taking the time to look at the features such as the wall on the 11th and the lovely wheat field adjoining the course. But there are also a number of blurry trees and a panorama that is overstated and inappropriate. 8/10

Playability

One huge issue here was the ambient sound, which was a bit intrusive: in fact I ended up turning my sound down due to one particularly annoying bird. Hopefully, this is a one-off aberration, for the other course extras are present and in suitable order, including some useful hole previews, given the bendy nature of much of the opening nine. Like many shorter 'local' courses of this type, you're bound to get enjoyment out of it one way or another, whether it's for regional authenticity or for the fact that you can have a go at driving most greens you wouldn't stand a chance of hitting in real life. 7/10

Challenge

Stephen's output has been worryingly easy (book me a holiday in Nottinghamshire for my next golf outing!), and Crookhill doesn't do much to steepen things, especially given the rather obvious imbalance between a decent first half and an all-too-easy second half. Even the few holes where I got tangled up in the trees led to pars, and chip-ins were rife given the lack of greenside protection. 1/10

Technical

This one feels just a little bit rushed to release. There are too many minor niggles, not least the overbearing sound, although you could certainly include one or two visual problems which linger throughout – especially the green shaping and some hard blends. It all just feels a little bit less coherent than his other releases. 7/10

Overall	A novel, if unconvincing course, rushed a little to release and still retaining a few annoyances.	29/50
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Crouching Beast

Mark Franzoia



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Interestingly reminiscent of Crooked Creek in the twinning of dense forest and scrubland, Crouching Beast certainly doesn't shy away. The big-impact hole designs are a running feature through this designer's courses, and the stylish landscaping and planting complement this ambitious project very well. Generous helpings of customisation help bring the convincing atmosphere to life. 9/10

Appearance

Reasonably clone free, given the trees are pretty much the same set used at Wyntoon, the course's main let-down are the bright colours and some awkward extrusion marks around most greens. But there are a lot of positives in a track of this age; flair and inventiveness account for a flaw or two sometimes. 8/10

Playability

Edison-levels of inventiveness have resulted in some delightful hole shapes, and once you play through the first six holes there's a world of fascination awaiting. Sadly, it's all a little over-contrived at the same time, and it's a bit easy to feel put down by the stretches of sand and required accuracy. 6/10

Challenge

Mark's designs both suffer from excessive expectations on the golfer in terms of accuracy, along with stretches of sand and OB and some ridiculous green elevations. It's often quite depressing work, and certainly not a course you'd want to take on competitively. 5/10

Technical

The older courses are often the most difficult to assess, particularly when one puts this one alongside Crooked Creek, for which it clearly provided some inspiration. By today's standards, it's old-fashioned in part, but there is still envy to be spared for the golfing brain behind the concept. Nothing forgives those extrusion marks, though. 6/10

Overall	A remarkable twin course to Wyntoon. Own them both and tear your hair out with frustration...	34/50
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Crystal Ball GC

François Cristallo



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

A well-named course indeed. You'll need all your foresight to play Crystal Ball successfully. With a premium on shape and judgement of length from the tee, a missed drive will almost certainly result in a struggle. It's a new and innovative premise amid courses that rely too much on approach shots and putts, and for the large part works exceedingly well.

Consequently, hole shapes tend towards the narrow and fantastical, but you never once feel unfairly pushed. 8/10

Appearance

The lush, almost lurid, green colours take some getting used to, and the planting is somewhat sparse. Old problems like extrusion edges rear their head too. But there's some impressive and lifelike views to be had too, and a good combination of panorama and realistic terrain. 6/10

Playability

With the emphasis on a part of your game that might not usually be tested to the full, this course provides a stimulating round and you'll always be wanting to beat the course's danger spots with a shaped or held-back drive. It's perhaps a little too soulless to be really addictive, but is certainly one of those important courses that helps you workout all aspects of your game. 8/10

Challenge

You've probably got the idea by now that everything depends on your tee shot. Hit smack into the target area, an excellent birdie chance is yours; hit under the trees or into the rough and you'll do well to make par. While this is a decent challenge in itself, it would be nice if the course had the flexibility to put all parts of the game to the test. The putting is sometimes tricky, but shots from the deeper grass are routine, to say the best. 7/10

Technical

The terrain is handled with subtlety, but the planting is lacking this finesse. Also problematic are some hard texture transitions and some off-colour texture assignments, especially in the rough. I would question the choice of colour scheme, too: with the brown overtones to the forest, wouldn't a less verdant colour of grass be more apt? 5/10

Overall

The ultimate test of your driving. At heart, a very interesting and immersive golf experience. Not without its flaws, but provides sufficient novelty to compensate.

34/50

Crystal Pines

Mike Jones



Description

Fictional, mountain course.

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

A remarkably short course, by any standards, Crystal Pines uses sheer effrontery to achieve its goals. Possibly the most fantastical of Mike Jones' oeuvre, it uses postage-stamp sized greens, the swooping mountain elevations, and contour-hugging sand and water to really force the player into difficult decisions. After a few rounds, one does find ones self wondering if it's all a little bit too clever for its own good, but the die cast for the course has been rigidly stuck to: the consistency and atmosphere of

Crystal Pines is second to none. 9/10

Appearance

New HD rendering brings the clean-cut lines of Crystal Pines perfectly to life, and the quality of textures and blending is undeniable. The colour palette is smoother than previous editions and the planting is absolutely perfect for the environment. The work on different bunker types is a notable highlight, and the waterside bunkers on the 3rd and 7th are as good as any we've seen. A number of high-quality 3D buildings are dotted around the course and provide the perfect final touch. Faultless.10/10

Playability

A real test of shot shaping and ball-control, here, which virtually eliminates the need to take a driver out on course. It's refreshing, almost short-course golf, and set off perfectly with typical mountainside sound and necessarily informative hole previews. I found my experience tainted a little by one or two un-negotiable bunker lies, and it's true that the overall gameplay might be making unnecessary demands of the golfer, particularly on Mod conditions. 8/10

Challenge

It's difficult to know how to place this: the relatively tiny course length is balanced out very well by some extreme target golf and very tough greens. Undoubtedly it is thoroughly playtested, and comes from a designer of great renown and skill, so the point should be conceded that it probably is a very fair test: perhaps the most credible aspect is that it will test parts of the short game to a degree that most Linksters are not used to! 9/10

Technical

As ever, there is commendable attention to detail here and rings of texture and blends where other designers just wouldn't conceive of putting them. The course extras – while not as legion as in other Mike Jones courses – are a treat for the eye. 10/10

Overall	Beautiful mountain golf and a genuine test of short-range accuracy to the limit! An outstanding course in many respects.	46/50
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Cuan Stuagh

Alan Portway & Mike Jones



Description

Fictional, links course

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Could be virtually anywhere – I'd come down as the Carolinas, given the planting.

Conditions

You might risk M*/S*

Concept

The obvious comparisons to draw would be with Errislannan Cliffs, given that this course is based on the same plot of land. There are some striking differences nevertheless: Cuan Stuagh being more heavily wooded, and forgoing the subtle layout of Errislannan for more of a golfing story. There are some great creations later on, particularly the sharply-uphill 13th and the following few holes. The plot, created by Mike Jones, works its magic and gives the course a realistic location. 6/10

Appearance

There are some glaring problems in and around this course, not least with the ugly 2D clubhouse, and some ill-advised attempts to extend the coastline. The texture choice and lack of blending in parts are very inconsistent. The whole isn't terrible by any means, but overwhelmingly lacking in anything new. 5/10

Playability

The poor inland holes don't inspire a golfer full of confidence, but things do get markedly better once you hit the clifftops. The efforts to add sound are pleasing, although volume and appropriateness take something to be desired. If you can overlook the flaws, there is a decent enough round here. 6/10

Challenge

Lack of designer experience and failure to use the landscape to best advantage has meant that the challenge isn't always bang on the mark, and the stretches of light rough are definitely out of keeping. Sure, it looks nice, and the designer clearly has a good clue about what constitutes fun golf, but it's difficult to see players hitting par on a regular basis. 5/10

Technical

A difficult rating to make, because Mike Jones' genius hasn't quite been handled sensitively enough, and there are quite a few sharp edges showing, along with some botched landscaping. The planting shows promise, and I like the flowerbeds outside the clubhouse, but these are only minor plusses, to be honest. 5/10

Overall	Not a patch on the subtlety and style of Errislannan Cliffs. Too rough and ready and featuring some unwise adaptations of the existing landscape.	27/50
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Cuckmere Links

Jim Gates & Matt McIntosh



Description

Fictional, links course

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Originally Southern England; now Scotland.

Conditions

Playable on F*/F* although something slower would suit better.

Concept

I'm a little torn up by Cuckmere Links' reappearance. On one hand, it's great to see an old course kept playable and fresh by a modern designer. But, on the other, the original was a raw but tremendously evocative slice of Sussex golf, and re-locating it to a Scottish village hasn't really paid off. Losing the original 3D in the process hasn't really helped either. I hate to say it, but on the whole this has been a step backwards for me. 5/10

Appearance

The heavy gorse remains the threat that it always was, and the coastline still looks fantastic. The course has been given a makeover from the creaky Mk I textures, although the bunker blends are very much one-size-fits-all, and perhaps we'd have been better off without them. 6/10

Playability

The progression and story-telling of Cuckmere have remained thankfully intact, and very few courses have such a great progression as you battle through the gorse down to the lovely closing stretch along the coast. There are a few unwanted blind shots, sure, and the sound is disappointingly absent, but there's enough atmosphere and good layout here to more than account for that. 8/10

Challenge

The original course had some horrendous greens which really did make playing it a turn-off in many competitive settings. Unsurprisingly, they've been eased somewhat, and actually the net result is that the course is too easy – this may also have something to do with allowing much of the thick brush to be easier to pass through. A tightening of the fairway width wouldn't hurt at all here, in order to provide that authentic links-course intimidation. 7/10

Technical

Well, there have been improvements made in some areas, but small steps back in others. Ultimately, though, much of the negative sources from a reviewer who was inordinately fond of the original, and although there's little stunning beyond the panorama here, there's more than enough to give the course a new lease of life. 7/10

Overall	A links course whose greatest asset is its evocativeness and layout. Which is no bad thing.	33/50
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Culbeck Heath Golf Course

Alan Toft



Description

Fictional, heathland course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from greenside rough.

Concept

Culbeck Heath is allegedly an English countryside course, but is more reminiscent of an Australian bush course than perhaps its designer intended. Holes cut their way through long yellow grass and scrubby trees impinge tightly on nearly every hole. A consistent feature, probably a bit too consistent, is that of long, straight holes cut to tight fairways. Hazards are nicely done overall and do not overwhelm the other factors of the play. There's an indefinable spark missing here, though: nothing serious, but it

does keep the course out of the top drawer. 7/10

Appearance

There's actually quite a lot to look at on what might otherwise be a flawed course. Although the textures are largely stock, they are put together well, and the bunkers are carefully sculpted. Extra features such as fences, ballwashers and bins are placed judiciously but noticeably. The panorama is flawed, though, being a complete misfit for the terrain. It might have been best omitted altogether. 8/10

Playability

The course lets itself down when it comes to the play. Nearly all holes are one-route and most are arrow-straight. Thrilling it isn't, and the lack of first-cut becomes even more of a problem when you continually miss the narrow fairways. This course rapidly becomes hard work rather than a fun round of golf. 4/10

Challenge

Shots will always be dropped at Culbeck Heath due to the easiness of losing the ball in the rough and trees. But some gently landscaped greens give you plenty of opportunity to make them up, and birdies are tough but possible. The course is a shade too hard on the whole, especially for those playing at Champ level or with strong wind. 7/10

Technical

Some advanced seam blends would assist the appearance of this course no end. Otherwise, this is a well put together course, with elevations and planting being pretty spot on. It would be a shame if the designer didn't move into custom objects and textures, though; these are currently what holds his designs back. 7/10

Overall	A good-looking course, and a showcase for its designer's skill, but lacking the finesse and excitement of the very best courses.	33/50
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Dakota Desert

Dace Fair



Description

Fictional, desert course.

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 4, from greenside bunker.

Concept

Desert-style courses have proved notoriously difficult to do justice with the APCD due to hefty demands on texture types and blends as well as a hole design that is subtly different to a parkland course. Dakota Desert has suffered from quite a few of this mishaps, but attempted to shoulder them aside by daunting the player with sheer length and unhittable fairways. It doesn't particularly work and is not helped by the lack of atmosphere and isolated hole layouts. 4/10

Appearance

With a few standard blends, the overall appearance is raised to around average, although there is cause for concern in some of the shapes (either contrived or crudely altered from stock) and the unwanted contrast between the green foreground and large-scale panorama. The planting is restrained almost to the point of non-existence, and a few small trees might at least have added some tone. The course is flat or largely uphill and therefore largely lacking in good views. 3/10

Playability

I'm sorry, but this is not my bag at all. Hard-to-hit fairways are just frustrating and the overwhelming hole lengths mean that GIRs are unsatisfactorily low. There is no intent to make the course unfairly hard, but it's all frustrating work rather than uplifting play. 3/10

Challenge

Scoring under par on the 500-yard Par 4s and the 250-yard Par 3s is nigh on impossible and you'll need some excellent golf to hit the Par 5s in two. Punishing hazards are mercifully rare, but the course grinds you up to par with endless rough lies. The greens are over-hazarded for long approaches and short putts are always for par; very rarely for birdie. 5/10

Technical

While there are no obvious flaws, Dakota Desert is lacking in technical finesse and flair, and the design as a whole comes across looking rather bland. Some more creativity in the planting and fine detail in the elevation work would help change the atmosphere, and some realisation about the sacrifices that must be made when designing long holes would also be of immeasurable benefit. 6/10

Overall

An idea that hasn't quite clicked on many levels. Unlikely to grab players' attention; more likely to subdue them into passivity.

21/50

Damaze-Falls

Michael Savicki



Description

Imaginary, lakeside course.

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Michael Savicki's first course is something of a rarity these days and it's got some of the prototype flair that went into later courses. The layout and APCD work take a lot to be desired, and too many holes just haven't had design though applied to them, but the ambition cannot be knocked, and one or two hole designs – even in this early incarnation – stand out a little ahead of the rest. Most notable, perhaps, is the typically oddball Par layout, with just one Par 4 hole on the outward nine. 4/10

Appearance

A bit 'yuk', frankly. There's not been much care taken with the mesh or the application of the stock textures, and there's some absolute howlers on the way around. Far too many flaws, even by generous standards. 0/10

Playability

It's a swift path round any Michael Savicki course, but in this instance it doesn't really gel. Too much silliness with the on-track elevations makes teeing off a lottery, and mesh errors become a problem rather than a tolerable diversion. A tough call. 1/10

Challenge

It's difficult to judge Damaze-Falls by normal standards, such are the Savicki-style expectations. Several holes that haven't really had enough effort expended on them play rather easily; others much too hard. While you might end up with a par score, the balance is all wrong. 2/10

Technical

I think I've said enough. 0/10

Overall	Fans of the Wacky World courses might want to seek out an earlier effort from the designer. I'd advise them not to bother.	7/50
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Damaze's - Jurassic

Michael Savicki



Description

Imaginary, concept course.

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 4, from near vicinity of a triceratops.

Concept

Only the warped mind of Michael Savicki would conceive of a semi-desert, semi-jungle area where the dinosaurs still roamed free, and build a golf course through it. This is one of his earlier designs, and has some technical flaws, but the concept alone is sufficient to carry you through, and several holes have some good elevations and layouts that lift them into a more interesting realm. 7/10

Appearance

It doesn't require me to tell you what the overriding visual features of this course are. The dinosaurs have all been lovingly customised and look as good as 2D objects could look. The course textures themselves are pretty average, and several unconvincing sand dunes have been created, but there's plenty here to divert the attention in the form of prehistoric life. 6/10

Playability

Jurassic (yes, I know it's not the proper spelling) veers between the interesting holes and the trivial. Certainly the Par 3s and Par 5s are a cut above, and require you to exercise some thought. Sadly, a lot of Par 4s are less exciting, particularly as the desert sand usually borders the fairway. Most holes don't offer too much in the way of options so, surprisingly, it doesn't hold up well on repeated plays. 5/10

Challenge

This isn't too hard a course. Even granting a lot of bunker shots, and one or two ricochets off a stray pterodactyl, it was easy to break 70 here, due to some open and flat greens and easy escapes from all but the densest trouble. Greenside shots proved to be some of the hardest and those who are weak chippers might be advised to take a couple of mulligans out on the course with them. 6/10

Technical

There are several nasty mesh folds, particularly around the 'giant foot' bunkers (to be honest the bunkers look pretty unconvincing altogether), and some terrain work with the sand which is crying out for another texture. But the insertion of plenty of 2D dinosaurs looks surprisingly natural. Imagine what it could be with some custom textures...5/10

Overall	A blinding concept for a course, and certainly good fun for those that enjoy that sort of thing. But the novelty is short-lived, and some of the more fundamental flaws in the course design show through quickly.	29/50
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Dark Woods Golf Club

Mat Leclair



Description

Fictional, forest course

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 5, greenside.

Concept

Mat Leclair's forte has always been the woodland course, and Dark Woods certainly lives up to its name. The surrounding forest is as convincing and lifelike as any we've seen in the game, and the holes that thread through are brilliantly conceived for the large part. You feel that credibility and ambition are being stretched a little on certain holes, but for the very large part, this is a brilliant and coherent creation which is utterly believable for the careful planning and work that has gone into it. 9/10

Appearance

The planting in the woodlands is right up there with that at Crooked Creek for ultra-realism, and the course is rounded off with high-quality 3D customisation, not least in the glorious, luscious clubhouse. Just when you think you've seen everything, there are some impressive rockworks awaiting along the back nine. Overblown? Maybe; but you wouldn't miss it for the world. 10/10

Playability

I can't say I was over-enamoured with the lengthy rendering times, although a reduction in graphics detail did help to a large extent. Nor was the presence of steel weeds in some of the deeper and darker parts of the course very helpful. Thankfully, these small flaws were overshadowed by the hugely clever and welcoming hole design, from the subtle on the first half to the heroic on the second half. So many holes remained in the memory afterwards, and this is no easy thing to achieve for a designer. 8/10

Challenge

The woods don't really provide an overshadowing menace as much as an attractive backdrop, and you are left with the clever hole shapes to provide the challenge, right from the first tee. The hazarding is a good mixture between the penal and the foreshadowing, water is used in all the right places, and the greens are receptive without being too easy. Only the Par 5 holes are a misjudgement: they are much too easy to reach under regulation, and afford one birdie too many. 8/10

Technical

Dark Woods, like all of the designer's courses, has received an undivided and (some might say) unnecessary degree of attention. It is extremely difficult to fault on any level. 10/10

Overall	Second only to 'the Creek' in terms of great woodland courses. A picturesque beauty, crafted to near-perfection.	<i>45/50</i>
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Darvington Par 3

Ryan Slosser



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, short course	6 th hole, Par 3	54
Location	None given – the course is nondescript enough to be almost anywhere	
Conditions	One green struggles to play faster than M*/M*	

Concept

Darvington has been through a couple of incarnations, but for all that it still doesn't make the grade as far as Par 3 courses are concerned. It's too flat, rather dull, and there's not really enough variety in the hole lengths to give your bag a good workout. The token holes over water feel artificially inserted rather than a natural part of the course. The lack of presentation – no cameo, no splashscreen, no hole previews – makes it a soulless retreat. 3/10

Appearance

Some halfway-decent tree planting and the insertion of rudimentary seam blends doesn't really compensate for other flaws. The elevations are handled roughly in parts, and the grass planting tends towards the cloned and tiled. The ridiculous 2D bunker rakes are mis-scaled and really shouldn't have been included at all. If you can wipe those horrible blue handles from your memory, there's nothing too offensive about the appearance, but there's also very little to incite you to go back for another go. 4/10

Playability

Making Par 3 holes isn't easy, especially when you attempt 18 of them in one plot. Darvington has pulled up a little short of the mark, and too many holes just don't present any individuality or challenge. If you want a warm-up round, there are half a dozen better short courses out there. 3/10

Challenge

Some iffy putting challenges notwithstanding, you'd expect to get a handful of birdies around here, although some suitable challenge has been inserted, and the bunkers are nicely laid out. But it's all a tad brainless to be regarded as anything of a real stimulating challenge. 5/10

Technical

Perhaps the most credit-worthy aspect is the designer's willingness to stretch himself by inserting some advanced techniques into a fairly basic course. When the visual flaws are tidied up and the ambition stretched to something a bit longer, there's as much potential here as anywhere else. 4/10

Overall	A rather dull and uninspiring Par 3 course.	19/50
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Darwin Point

Shawn Kobold & Lez Marwick



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Based on a real landscape in California.

Conditions

Playable on F*/F*.

Concept

A combination of Shawn's clean-cut visuals and Lez's imaginative course architecture results in a very fine creation here. You can almost taste the pine-fresh air such is the environmental realism, and the course is a delight, with many picture-perfect holes, including a treacherous island green 12th. There is something of an over-bunkering problem, with many sand traps that are unnecessary, and the course would be just as impressive without many of them. 8/10

Appearance

Delightful grass textures, dotted with wildflowers, definitely take the prize here. There are plenty of other visual delights, though, from the sprawling bunkers to a castle-like clubhouse, although the pine trees do feel a bit random in the efforts to minimise clones. The panorama is a huge presence and inevitably feels a little out-of-place at times. 9/10

Playability

An absolute delight, all the way around, and the opportunity to enjoy the views and hit some bold shots overcomes the slightly surreal feel to some holes and regular visits to the sand. Both designers have a track record of delightful and impulsive fictional courses, and this is right up there with the best of them. 10/10

Challenge

Opening with a handful of bogies didn't inspire a lot of confidence, and it's largely the unnecessary presence of the sand that acts as a deterrent – in one case a completely fairway-crossing sand trap which is a bit of a groaner these days. It's never unfairly difficult, but it could still be a great challenge relying wholly on the natural elevations and cleverly-designed greens. 7/10

Technical

No complaints here, and great testament to the whole that is created when designers share work. 10/10

Overall	Outstanding mountain-side atmosphere and plenty of golfing values. A firmer footing in reality would make this an absolute delight.	44/50
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Death Valley

Shawn Kobold



Description

Fictional, desert course

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 5, approach.

Concept

More straightforward than Bill Clinton's crotch, this is quite possibly the simplest, but yet still playable, Links course going. It's almost entirely arrow-straight (and thin) fairways, large greens and a wide, everlasting desert. The few novelties that are thrown in, such as the elevations and the island hole feel very awkward in that context. It could have been stultifyingly dull, but oddly there's some appeal in this very simple premise and the pretention-free golf that goes with it. 3/10

Appearance

Sharp edges, acres and acres of forested desert and a featureless lake. There isn't really much more than this to comment upon. 2/10

Playability

It's certainly all too easy to switch off and play through these almost-identikit holes. Funnily enough, this sort of brain-numbing tedium works pretty fine in small doses. Eighteen holes pass unhurriedly, with perhaps just enough thought required to navigate around the difficult stretches. It's not easy to pretend that it's possible to do so without much – if any – atmosphere to the course, but at least there's the valid claim that here is something a bit different. 5/10

Challenge

Nope. Nothing. No go. Zilch. Zero. Death Valley, being relatively free from such pesky features as dog-legs, trees and deep bunkers, just throws birdies at you. The Par 5s are eminently reachable, and there are at least two Par 4s achievable from the tee. Come here for that elusive albatross attempt. 0/10

Technical

It's hard to believe much time went into this. At the very least, it's clear that attempt has been made to create this very simple theme for the course and stick with it – the bunkers and greens certainly don't conform to the APCD default – but the designer appears to have forgotten to add anything worthy of a signature to the track. 2/10

Overall	One-way golf, in a surprisingly playable way.	<i>12/50</i>
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Deer Track Golf Resort

Dave Newman



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

A busy mountain course where the designer has made no attempt to conceal his focus on providing a stiff challenge, Deer Track's use of elevations has left it somewhat confused. There is a lot that seems to have been just thrown at the plot in the hope it will stick: lakes, streams, paths, waste areas, grasses, bushes...the list goes on. Hole design is often difficult to fathom and nearly impossible to play well. A mess of confusion to which some players will want to offer a wide berth. 3/10

Appearance

Entertaining and rich texture choices have failed to disguise the speckling as they disappear into the middle ground, and the ambitiousness of the planting is not helped by far too many obvious clones. The much-groaned-at Whistler panorama towers over the whole thing. Deer Track's saving grace is that there is enough to catch the eye, though: the oddball aspects to the course are just enough to take your mind off the golf. 4/10

Playability

If Norris McWhirter drops by, tell him I've found a new candidate for the most blind-shots ever on a golf course. The designer's intent to bamboozle the player scales dizzying new peaks as nearly every shot on nearly every hole has obstructed vision, either from the landscape or planting. And you just *know* that there's a bunker (or worse, a lake) waiting to catch your ball over the other side, don't you? Ouch. 2/10

Challenge

Deep rough is fairly ubiquitous here, and it doesn't play easy. Expect to reach less than half the greens in regulation. When you do, you'll be faced with some tiring green layouts which don't go over well. Anything less than millimetric precision on the par 5s, and you can abandon all hope of eagles there, too. Ouch, ouch. 2/10

Technical

For all the criticism I've levelled against it, Deer Track is surprisingly admirable in that it does at least fulfil its designer's intent. There's nothing genuinely awful about the APCD-work, other than a few sharp edges, and this is – remember – harking from pre-blending days. Credit where it is due for sticking to your guns. 5/10

Overall	Very random, and rather difficult. There's just not enough freshness here to keep the course soldiering on.	16/50
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Desert Canyon

Jack Hartt



Description

Real, desert course.

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Rather lush and verdant for a desert course, this pushes the desert areas backwards in the name of good golf. Fairways and rough are fairly spacious and good shots at the greens will be commonplace. Despite the dramatic panorama being taken from the actual course, it's not a good colour fit and hence there is little sense of atmosphere. 6/10

Appearance

Surely these grass textures are too rich for a desert environment? Certainly there is a contrast between the panorama and the course itself, and it does little to help set the scenes. Add this to some pretty poor extrusive work around the tees and some green fringes, and you've got a course that looks average, at best. 5/10

Playability

This is a course that lends itself to experimentation. There is massive variety in the pin placings, and the slope of the greens is such that the pin setting is often the difference between birdie and bogey. There's just enough variety in the holes to keep you moving along, with the trademark 650-yard Par 5 being an unexpected treat. Desert Canyon calls on all your shots, and for that it must be congratulated. 8/10

Challenge

With wide open fairways and greens that will often run an off-course ball close to the pin, Desert Canyon makes a modest challenge, despite its well-placed hazards and constant elevation changes. The lack of planting is unsurprising in a desert environment, but does little to make things harder. Birdies are almost an inevitability on some of the higher-handicapped holes. 5/10

Technical

I would really be impressed by this course if it could be reworked so the texture colours match the panorama. A pano as impressive as this is wasted on a course which otherwise has flaws. Extrusions, small-scale elevation work, and the bunkers are all in need of attention as the course stands currently. 6/10

Overall	Not bad, by desert course standards, but lacking a realistic aura and still requiring some fine-tuning technically.	<i>30/50</i>
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Desert Canyon Championship Putting Course

Jack Hartt



Description

Real, short course.

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

How good can a course under 900 yards be? Very good, as it turns out. This is Links Lite – and not crazy golf either; the Championship Putting Course is a very real test of line-reading and greenside skills, and a successful golfer will need a meticulous reading of the swing gauge too. It's all good fun, and the holes bring a surprising number of shapes and hazards into play. 7/10

Appearance

The beauty of this putting course is that it has given the designer full freedom to concentrate on planting and 3D objects on a small scale, and consequently, they look really good. Perhaps the one anomaly is the tall, thin flags, which are out of place with the scale of the course, but this can hardly be helped. 9/10

Playability

Surprisingly fun, without being too threatening, many of the playing problems that arise in this course are the game engine's doing, rather than through any flaw of the designers. Having to manually align oneself with the fairway and select the putter on every tee is a little tiresome, and playing out of the rough and bunkers can be maddening. But for all that, this is a fun little course which is a welcome break from rounds of 'proper' golf. 7/10

Challenge

The fact that most of these holes are actually Par 4 in real life probably gives you indication of the problems to expect. Many 'approach' shots will have no makeable line, and you'll often be forced to putt for par from as much as 10 feet out. It's amazing that this could be too hard, but perhaps – again – this is more due to the limitations of the game. 6/10

Technical

Generally, this is a very well sculpted course, although the elevations at times look somewhat extreme, particular with regards to the side-slopes. The lovely planting and work around the rocks and water give a genuine impression of low-scale conviviality in a way that the only comparable course – Tillicum Island – does not. 8/10

Overall	About as much fun as putting can be. A delightfully laid-out little course, brilliant to play with friends, and almost as good on your own.	37/50
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Desert Lake Golfers Club

Steve Mihelarakis



Description

Fictional, desert course

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Desert Lake is huge and sprawling and slightly extravagant in everything it does. The terrific holes try hard to defy stereotypes, and for the large part succeed: the blow-away 18th isn't exactly credible but does provide a truly riveting conclusion to the round. Some of the course's little conceits, such as the wooden tee structures and the large rocks, really help its originality. The lack of location is somewhat unnerving, though; it's difficult to really place yourself among the wide, monotonous stretches of desert. 7/10

Appearance

The desert planting is among the best that I have seen, at odds somewhat with the extrusion marks that litter the course. The elevations are subtle enough to give a good view of the course, but there's not a massive amount to be seen outside of the lavish rocks and cacti. 6/10

Playability

Desert courses are notoriously difficult to make diverting, but Desert Lake makes just about the best effort I have seen. There are an impressive collection of designs and hole lengths, and impressive green designs and other uses of elevations to keep a player thinking. There's good ambient sound and great repeat value, too, thanks to the desert regions not being restricted to purely out of bounds. 8/10

Challenge

I don't feel that this course should be as easy as it comes across. It's certainly no mean feat to hit all the greens, although the Par 5 holes are short enough, largely, to try for in two. But the championship-style layouts may just be slightly misjudged, because the birdie putts just keep slipping in. 5/10

Technical

Very much a mixed bag here. There's something quite low-resolution about the course and its surroundings, and the extrusion all looks a bit of a mess. The stock textures don't help. But there is some lovely work with the planting, and enough good ideas to make this course very much worthwhile. 6/10

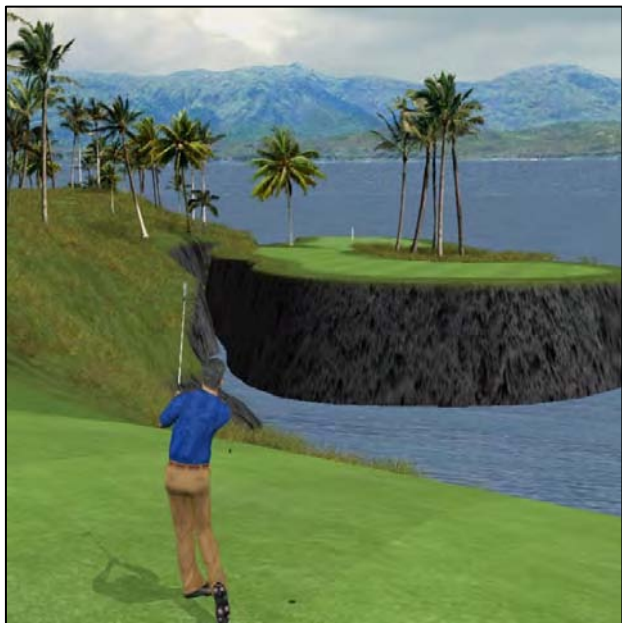
Overall

A solid desert course with pretensions towards bigger things than it can deliver. That's certainly not to say it shouldn't be worth your time.

32/50

Devils Island

Andrew Jones



Description

Imaginary, tropical course

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 4, from fairway

Concept

The infamous Links badboy has received its going-over, and has remained essentially unchanged. All the hallmarks are present: the swathes of deep rough and long grass, the tremendously punishing shot values, and the pirate ship have all made the conversion. It's still as difficult as it ever was, and for that it really cannot garner any more marks than the original. 7/10

Appearance

Certainly, the textures and planting now come a lot closer to our expectations. There's a suitably pacific panorama and the objective on many holes is a little tidier, which helps the gameplay a little. Connoisseurs of this particular haven of sadism may be a little disappointed, though, that many of the course 'extras' – the 2D huts and eye candy – have not made the transition, and the course is just a little bit less fantastical without them. 8/10

Playability

It's still pretty difficult to take Devil's Island seriously, especially if you choose anything other than the easiest of conditions. The heart-wrenching shot values, the frequent need to make cheap recovery shots, and the endless swathes of long grass: they all add up to precious little fun. 4/10

Challenge

Same as it ever was – a total killer from start to finish. Fair play to Andrew for not giving us a sterile and forgettable version, I suppose, but rounds in the nineties still hurt. 0/10

Technical

Devil's Island could have used the final polish to make it a truly worthwhile update. There's a hard edge or two, particularly around the cliffsides, and the absence of the bits-and-pieces is a sore loss. While it's undoubtedly better resolution, even the pirate ship doesn't carry quite as much authenticity as the original. 7/10

Overall	All new landscaping; all old challenge. Don't say you weren't warned.	26/50
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De Zalze Estate

Damian de Villiers



Description

Real, estate course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

A short-ish course (all Par 5s are reachable, and the Par 4s are mostly sub-400 yards) with a lush and appealing vineyard surround, De Zalze Estate is curiously appealing. Each of the Par 3 holes is a little landmark and the course expertly mixes some convincing risk/reward with seemingly straightforward holes. Certain holes, such as the 13th, 14th and 18th are outstanding, and the course as a whole has a welcoming and unthreatening atmosphere. 8/10

Appearance

Notwithstanding an occasional planting clone, this has been pieced together very cleverly. The course buildings are beautifully customised, textures are well-chosen and blended, and the elevations handled skilfully to the benefit of good views and good golf alike. The panorama is sumptuous and generally well-fitting, although I think the mountains might have been toned down a little: they are a bit overbearing. 9/10

Playability

Something indefinable about De Zalze draws you in and just keeps you playing. I don't know whether it's the atmosphere, the elegant mix of hole types, the genuine feeling that you don't know what's coming next, or just the honest-to-goodness presentation of a favourite course, but I find it utterly, utterly absorbing. Top notch! 10/10

Challenge

Of course, one reason for the appeal could be that the course isn't too penal. Accommodating fairways and great depth in the stretches of light rough help you hit greens with ease, and many of the greens are not too tricky to read. The Par 5s give up eagles very easily, and the short length of the course does not work in its favour here. 3/10

Technical

The level of customisation and attention to detail is way ahead of what would otherwise be expected from a first course. All that's required for nigh-on perfection is the attention to planting, at all levels. But the designer should be extremely proud, if only for the reason that he's created something so widely regarded for its appeal and playability. 8/10

Overall	Possesses a 'wow' factor that's not seen often enough. Not quite perfect, but a long long way from being bad.	38/50
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Devils Lake South

Mick Prendergast



Description

Imaginary, mountain course

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

The 'Devil' bit is quite right. Larger than life in every respect (planting, hole lengths, panorama, elevations) and wickedly testing in use of greens, hazards and deep rough, this course serves to punish, and for large swathes of the round it seems to the poor player that might be its only function. It's largely and unsubtly done in terms of scale, because the hole designs (especially along the horrendous back nine) look really quite moderate. Big, but not clever. 3/10

Appearance

There's perhaps a few hard edges, but the planting has been brought together from an enormous variety and cleverly put together. The whole thing merges impeccably with the panorama. Even way off the beaten track, there is impressive variety and visuals with the planting of trees and flowers: perhaps doubly so because of the complete lack of signs of civilisation around the course. 9/10

Playability

This course features a great variety of choices, but sadly all too often the practical choice is to lay up. Being browbeaten by the length of this course rapidly becomes frustrating and does nothing to help endear you to the course. There is some short-term appeal and a masochistic urge to go back, but not enough to life this course into lofty standards. 4/10

Challenge

I think I've made myself very clear on the shortcomings here. However hard this course was intended to be, it has surely been mis-pitched. A proliferation of tough texture properties, blind shots and deadly hazards make yours a round fraught with peril and frustration. The worst by far are the greens with some unplayable slopes and impossible pin positions. Breaking par on any given hole is a godsend: on the course as a whole, it'd be a miracle. 1/10

Technical

Sound as far as planting and panorama are concerned, you cannot uphold a course like this as far as good golf is concerned. Some of the landscaping is ludicrous, and the greens in particular are hugely mis-judged. I don't say it very often, but I would like to see the OB regions closed in, too: a blind lie in the woods can often cost too many strokes. 5/10

Overall	A massive course, easy on the eye, but terribly hard on the golf game. One for the masochists.	22/50
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Dibden Golf Club

John Brooks



Description

Real, woodland course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, approach

Concept

Dibden is sweet, but perhaps with a hidden set of teeth. It comes across as a relatively open and inoffensive home-town course, in the manner of John Brooks' other creations, and there are some unexpectedly tricky holes which set it slightly apart. The back nine will be taken on with gusto by most Linksters which diminishes the course's competitive edge, and the levels of customisation are a welcome sheen of polish on the design. 6/10

Appearance

There appears to have been a significant amount of improvement since the early releases, and the textures particularly have been sharpened up, and much variety instilled in the planting. Probably a little *too* much, in fairness: there are a few trees that stand out like sore thumbs, especially greenside. The elevations do still come across as being rougher than anyone could reasonably expect from a course in this relatively flat part of the country. 6/10

Playability

Dibden doesn't win friends. John has confessed to it being 'toughed up' to some extent, and this has been a grave mistake in my view. Steel trees are never welcomed, and some of the pin locations border on the ridiculous. A lot of strokes at Dibden will be taken with the putter thanks to the designer's misjudgements around the greens. This is undeniably a flaw, but the realism of the course presents a pretty adequate compensation. 4/10

Challenge

Even with the artificial difficulty, this is still a short course with little hazarding, and if pin positions are kept away from the silly ones, then there will be low scores for the taking. You still take a gamble with the trees though, and rather unfairly it is a gamble that has been removed completely from your hands. 6/10

Technical

I find it hard to give too much credit when a course has been artificially adjusted for challenge. Sure, there is plenty of good work here, and scores are likely to be much closer to 72 than 62, but at what cost? With the demand for realism almost being omnipresent for fans of these courses, a decision to sway away from realism has been very much misjudged here. 5/10

Overall	A good course, spoiled by steel trees and over-difficult putting conditions.	27/50
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Digital Hideaway

Unknown



Description

Fictional, concept course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

I've classed Digital Hideaway as a concept course merely because it manages to transect every other course style hitherto thought up. Seriously. Here are parkland holes, woodland holes, ocean holes, farmland holes – you name it. The only problem, of course, is absolutely zero continuity to the whole thing: here we have 18 holes existing in complete isolation, and the whole experience is much worse for it. 2/10

Appearance

An aging design, and there's few favours here. The elevations are used pretty well, but the planting is terribly sparse and un-layered. The textures are mis-matched with some horrific effects from time to time. There's not too much by way of scenery – clearly all the effort has gone into the golfing values and not the visuals. 3/10

Playability

At the time, it could well be believed that this course was a test of strategic and risk/reward golf. Unfortunately, seven years down the line, it's not too much strain to realise that we've seen most of this countless times. It's not to say that Digital Hideaway does not have its moments, but it does bring one to realise that originality is a continually changing idea. 6/10

Challenge

Many of the 'clever' tricks fail to have any impact on the 1.06 golfer, and the rough (playing as first-cut) and the weak planting do little to hinder the big-hitter. Even though the designer must have had challenging intentions at heart, it's hard to realise them on a casual round. 2/10

Technical

While there are no obvious flaws, beyond those we should expect from older designs, there is very little creation of a believable atmosphere, and the course is the worse for it. 3/10

Overall	An insight into what used to be thought novel and challenging and, hence, a view of how difficult it is for today's designers to create something original. Worth owning for that respect alone.	16/50
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Doonbeg

Golfgraffix



Description

Real, dunes course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Ireland

Conditions

M*/M* is probably the sensible and realistic choice.

Concept

With rough and wild golf to the fore, this is a truly atmospheric effort from the Golfgraffix team. Unusually for a course of this type, it is short on Par 4 holes, although many of the Par 5s are barely long enough to be worthy of the name. The short length permeates throughout, with even the tips measuring well under 7,000 yards. Not in the slightest bit commercial, Doonbeg is very authentic Irish links. 9/10

Appearance

The planting and textures are generally fine, but there are some unexpected disappointments lurking around the course, not least a poor horizon over the sea and some sharp edges and folds on the beach. Some of the planted objects don't really jive with the landscape either and look more than a little off-angle. The bunkers are a welcome treat, though, and indeed most of the on-course visuals are absolutely fine. 7/10

Playability

One of those brilliant courses which you can hammer away at with abandon, there is only the occasional blind tee shot to worry about here. Rich, deep ambient sound is a great counterpoint to the course, and the balance between target and strategic golf is a great demonstration of the advantages of modern links courses. 9/10

Challenge

Avoid the deep rough and there's a veritable flurry of birdies to be had. As a representation of real life, the course may be fine, but Links golfers don't play to those rules and low, low scores are almost inevitable. 0/10

Technical

There are a few disappointments around the course, although it has to be said that the focus is on the 18 holes, which have been immaculately re-created, along with their surrounding rough and walls. But one might have cause to expect better from this team than wonky 3D and a panorama with obvious cut-out lines. 8/10

Overall

Very, very easy, but thankfully a lot of fun. Just don't go looking off-course too much.

33/50

Dorado Beach – East Course

Microsoft



Description

Real, tropical course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 5, from fairway

Concept

Very much a tropical resort course, Dorado Beach feels man-made and locked amid its palm trees. The resort buildings form a perennial backdrop to remind you where you are. Hole design is very much geared to the tourist – generous fairways and easy greens – but does still hold some promise for the serious golfer. The Links version is an old creation, and not helped by having a largely flat plot. But some of the atmosphere of the original has been retained, even if the looks are getting tired. 5/10

Appearance

Hard edges, lots and lots of clones, lack of significant buildings or plantings, plain panorama. No doubt this was cutting edge in 1998, but no longer, I'm afraid. 2/10

Playability

Oddly, the resort course ambience does your game a few favours, and Dorado is a relaxed and reasonably charming set of eighteen. No, it's not likely you'll be able to remember any individual holes afterwards. But you might go away from the course with an inexplicably favourable impression, which counts for a lot. 5/10

Challenge

Whatever challenge Dorado may once of had (and, in fairness, I doubt it was a lot) has been negated by this almost kindly release. The greens are almost unprecedented in their relative flatness, the fairways easy to spot, and the hazards few and far between. Expect to score low. 4/10

Technical

It seems almost unfair to knock such an old release, but the truth is that against modern competition, Dorado Beach is struggling to hold its head up. If you're going out to spend money, there are plenty of better options. 2/10

Overall	Old, tired and too easy. Best to steer clear.	<i>18/50</i>
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Double Eagle Golf Course

Timothy Boche



Description

Real, forest course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 5, approach.

Concept

The entertaining little conceit behind Double Eagle is that there are only ten greens: eight being used twice, often from different fairways. Naturally, only set of fairways at a time is used in real life! It's pleasing to see that this doesn't preclude good hole design: with the minimum of hazarding, some intriguing and uncontrived hole shapes have been formulated: the 1st and the 11th are particularly noteworthy in this respect. As an 'experimental' course, often a word to fill people with dread, there is no doubt this has been a success. 8/10

Appearance

The slightly-yellowed textures fit the countryside environment superbly, and there's plenty of visual interest in seeing how the course has been pieced together, never mind the APCD technique. There are clones in the planting, but thankfully very few are glaringly obvious. Course buildings and objects are placed, although you feel something of a rushed approach to the very fine detail. 6/10

Playability

The *déjà vu* aspect is naturally very high, and helps to prop up a round that can suffer from a problem or two. Firstly, there are too many fairways that demand too high levels of precision in the game (it's unlikely that similar problems would arise in real life). Secondly, although a comprehensive set of ambient sound is very welcome, I suffered some fairly severe problems with sound lag. Very much a mixed bag: perhaps the course won't drag you back to play again as it should. 5/10

Challenge

Despite the heavy use of woodland, the lack of hazarding makes for a generally acceptable game. Add this to the facts that many approach shots will be from ironing-board flat, and the greens accommodating (they have to be to make room for two pins on each), and you can see all too many birdie putts rolling in. 2/10

Technical

My impression is that the experimental aspects of this course seem to have taken precedence over the spit and polish that should accompany such a release. There are some lovely touches, but overall Double Eagle hasn't quite matched the standards set by the designer's other courses. 6/10

Overall	An interesting exercise in 'double-greening' that impresses intermittently but tires itself long before the completion of 18 holes	27/50
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Dove Valley Ranch

Art Patscheck



Description

Real, desert course

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Arizona

Conditions

Strictly S*/S*

Concept

There's some great background to Dove Valley. I particularly enjoyed the Old Wild West-style town that acts as a centrepiece to the course, and it's clear from the surrounding landscape that this course gave birth to the inspired craziness that was Arrow Canyon. This transfers nicely to the course, with some knockout Par 5 holes, but at times it's a bit too pat and resort-like to really get the pulse racing. 6/10

Appearance

Even on this early work from one of the APCD masters, there's a lot to be desired here. The excellent buildings work aside, there are clones in the planting, uncharacteristic mesh errors and some odd choices of texture (particularly the beige grass around bunkers). The panorama is quite nice, and the visibility around the course tends to be better than expected, but they're only minor pluses. 4/10

Playability

Perhaps less dull than on first viewing, there are a few original challenges at Dove Valley, even if it does tend towards drive-and-pitch territory, and there's an excellent sound surround too. It's a shame that the hazards aren't tighter, which would up the target aspect of the course. 5/10

Challenge

The desert is an enemy to be taken seriously here, and the planting makes the deep arroyo a nightmare to escape on occasion if you get lost. The greens are worse still, and some would be lucky to pass muster under the Mod. What with the sand everywhere you look, it's a daunting course to say the least. Birdies will be a rarity: scores under 70 not far short of a miracle. 6/10

Technical

In some ways, I've judged this course harshly. It's an early release, and as such was helpful in pioneering new APCD techniques and 3Dobjects. The sad fact remains, though, that today it looks distinctly uninspired, and easily-fixed mesh faults like the water striations and hard edges could be easily fixed. 4/10

Overall	A course that might leave Art's fans cold, and those looking for a desert course retreating to the sillier but far more enjoyable alternatives.	25/50
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Driftwood GC

Mike Jones



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 4, greenside

Concept

A planting dream, Driftwood amalgamates forest and heath styles of planting in a totally natural manner. The oddities of the course, if truth be told, come from some very un-Jones-like use of elevations, particularly on the steeply-plateaued greens. In some ways it harkens back to an older, 2001 style of course construction, and this doesn't necessarily work in its favour. Certain holes, though, are absolute gems, with the standout 16th – a 'Tin Cup' style Par 5 – being an absolute cracker: well judged and

challenging in just the right amounts. 7/10

Appearance

Particularly on a Dynamic camera, there are regions of Driftwood that are showing their age. Texture bands stand out and there are some oddities around the edge of the water features. But the planting has clearly had time lavished on it: the low grasses and heath regions could teach a valuable lesson to many a beginning designer, and the whole course radiates typical MJ style despite its flaws. 9/10

Playability

Driftwood is open and inviting and it's unlikely that it will turn many people away. Many holes are well-judged in terms of challenge, particularly off the tee, and the truly authentic aura does make you push on to see what is coming next. But there's a crucial something lacking, whether it's in visual flair or architectural style, that makes this course almost forgettable, and that's a real shame. 8/10

Challenge

With age goes the difficulty of judging...er...difficulty. If MJ was to release Driftwood today, we'd be up in arms over the Mod-unfriendly greens, the blind tee shots and the pressing hazarding. In truth, the course is somewhat tough thanks to these inconveniences. But – notably on the Par 3s – there are chances to earn shots back. A plus-par final score would certainly not be a surprise, though. 8/10

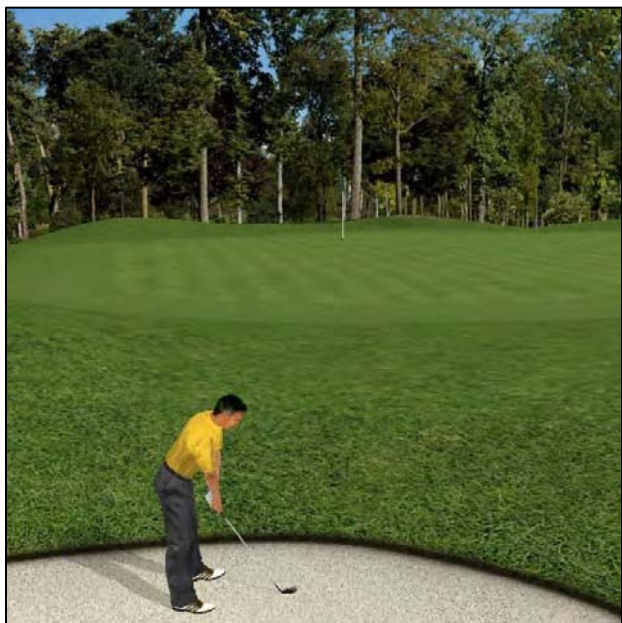
Technical

There are, of course, no major flaws here. I noticed a couple of sharp edges, and a problem with some rock planting, but – by 'eck – I didn't half have to look hard to find them. Of course it's magnificent, and of course it's a brilliant use of the APCD to create a lifelike course and environment. 9/10

Overall	Probably Mike's weakest course. Should this stop you from owning it? Of course not.	41/50
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Druids Glen

Anders Bessermann & Lars Rudbeck



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 5, from greenside bunker.

Concept

Some courses don't need an artificial 'theme'. In the re-creation of Druids Glen we get a larger-than-life depiction of a lovingly manicured and pieced-together golf course. Despite the alternation between Linksy-type holes, sharp woodland doglegs and stadium-style target golf, the whole course feels real and continuous. The variety of course, provides a good test no matter what your preferred course. 9/10

Appearance

The luscious greens that make up the course are typical of the Irish locale and the choice of colours in this creation is brave but well-matched. One thing that will strike you as beautiful but unconventional is the planting. Druids Glen is a new course, and the small trees appear unthreatening, but come into play quite frequently. The bunker work is sublime, and part of the reason I chose the screenshot above many better-known holes. Textures throughout are very adeptly created and chosen. There is nothing here that you won't want to look at. 10/10

Playability

I swear to God I'd reached the back nine before I'd noticed I was playing, such was the beauty of the environs. Most tee shots will require a choice of target or some shape, and several holes have a lay-up option. You'll want to slice a few shots off into the rough or the bunkers just to enjoy their look. The course always gives you the impression that you're playing well, such is the positive aura that surrounds it. 9/10

Challenge

Maybe a shade too easy, especially the Par 3 holes: I averaged well under par on the short holes. None of the greens feature huge elevation changes, although several on the front nine are tilted. The judiciously-placed hazards keep it from being a pushover, but all but the most advanced options will lead to a rewarding round. 7/10

Technical

The course is sublime technically, with perhaps only some of the flowerbeds and the green fringe blends (they actually need to be more delimited) warranting closer attention. These are almost possible to overlook in light of the brilliant bunker work and the ultra-real textures: the time that has gone into this course is superb. 9/10

Overall

A great representation of a great course. Magic to play and rewarding to score upon. Highly recommended.

44/50

Duine Mara

Paul Seaman



Description

Fictional, dunes course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 4

Par

70

Location

Western Scotland

Conditions

A couple of greens are not particularly friendly at F*/F*

Concept

Reminiscent of Enniscrone in its dependence on the dune, Duine Mara is quite extraordinary in its combination of innovation, visuals, and of course as a heartfelt tribute to a lynchpin of the Links Community. Even aside from the sentimentality, there is a quite simply heart-stopping creation here, using novel layouts and hazarding, ditches and fences for great effect, and water sparingly but in all the right places. There's very little ostentation about the hole design, which is perhaps its most convincing aspect. A fitting way to remember Paul "Big Three" Cirino indeed. 10/10

Appearance

The gorse-covered dunes, dark and dense, look unique and eye-catching from the very first. They are supported by a deep, rich texture set often with multiple layers around bunkers and fairways. The panorama is perfectly-fitting and a real thematic anchor for the course. Best of all are the natural hazards: ditches and marshes which have caused designers so many problems in the past. In Paul's careful hands, they not only look right, but *feel* as they're in the right place, too. 10/10

Playability

Some intriguing challenges await, especially demanding good position from the tee in order to access some quite remote and well-hazarded small greens. There's no doubt a good all-round game will be required, too, although the hard-to-hit fairways do sometimes tend towards the frustrating. But, with the breakers roaring gently in your ears, there are few courses as immersive as this little treat, and the re-visit quotient is very high. 9/10

Challenge

Severe stuff with the suggested realistic Gusty conditions; the greens causing more problems than the wind. Finding, avoiding and recovering from the rough will be an over-riding concern here, more so than the bunkers, which are not particularly links-like and often afford a reasonable escape. But there are opportunities to nail greens and some sympathetic lies in the fairway which you will need to take full advantage to score under par. 8/10

Technical

Delightful, faultless and innovative. It's amazing how Paul continues to turn out these quality courses with such regularity. 10/10

Overall

A glorious tribute course with its own unique layout and style of hazarding. Unmissable.

47/50

Dullatur Antonine

Paul Seaman



Description

Real, links course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4, from green.

Concept

This is a brilliant, rolling links course which rewards shotmakers and punishes those who miss the fairways. Most holes deliberately provoke an attempt at breaking par, but are well guarded. Several par 4s and all the Par 5s are reachable under regulation, but miss and you will be left with a testing putt or a deep extraction from one of the course's fabulous bunkers. In many ways, it's a target course disguised as a links. 9/10

Appearance

The best thing about this course is the bunkers, which have been beautifully blended in using a muddy texture which looks wholly, beautifully natural. Close behind are the smashing balding textures used for fairways and greens. This course doesn't have computer-game presentation, it genuinely looks played. On the flipside, the planting of the deep rough looks a bit careless, and the ditches are over-extruded and look unnatural. But it's still a very good-looking course. 9/10

Playability

I found Antonine quite fun to play, due to its intellectual demands. With tough conditions, it would be completely unenjoyable, and you'd be well-advised to play it while the sun is shining and you can go for your shots. Whatever the conditions, you are forced to think all the way round and it's not a course which you can play with one eye on the TV. 7/10

Challenge

Antonine has a lot of greens reachable under regulation, and without severe hazarding players will want to go for the eagles when possible. It's too easy unless played off the back tees; even the greens are forgiving and playable. My test round of -8 (B/F/M) was testimony to this. 5/10

Technical

There is a lot of very good technical work on this course, marred by only one or two errors in presentation. If a second version is released, I would expect the planting to be tidied up, and the creek and mud tracks to look more natural (perhaps a better seam blend). There's not a lot wrong with this course, but it's still a step away from being really great. 8/10

Overall	A good course, good fun to play, but still requiring some final polishing to make it into the top tier.	38/50
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Dullatur Carrickstone

Stewart Parker



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 4, from rough.

Concept

The partner to the Antonine course, Carrickstone is a little wilder and carries a rough plantation-like feel. Typically for a traditional Scottish course, it pays little heed to what we now acknowledge as a 'standard' layout with the only Par 5s being on the 8th and 9th holes. The holes are largely straight and uncomplicated, but there are quite a few little treasures which will draw any player in. As ever with Stewart Parker, it has received a loving makeover for Links, replete with delightful atmospheric touches

that are an effective transport to the Scottish heart of this course. 8/10

Appearance

The terrific planting really captures the varying ages around the course, from the freshly-planted young trees to the impenetrable swathes of heather. There's a tasteful texture set to accompany them, and – as with the designer's accompanying courses – a lack of civilised distractions. The only jarring moment was the very sharp and blurred banks to the water features. 9/10

Playability

In some ways, Carrickstone plays very better when you can pick-and-choose a best nine holes. There are some very impressive designs here – the 9th, 11th and all the Par 3s included, but there are also a few holes that come across as a bit of an afterthought, being open and relatively unchallenging. 7/10

Challenge

...and speaking of unchallenging, it's not exactly difficult to score well down into the sixties at the Carrickstone course. Very few bunkers and a lack of links rough make for a less-than-harsh environment, and the green complexes are generous in the extreme. 2/10

Technical

Very few problems here. As an evolution of an earlier course, many technical problems have been ironed out, and the dedication to improvement and attention to detail are obvious and very much appreciated. Yes, even the self-portraiture by the final green again! 9/10

Overall	Yet another beautiful and very naturalistic Scottish course. The authentic and uncomplicated touch that we've come to expect.	35/50
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Dwan Golf Club

Timothy Boche



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 4, from greenside bunker

Concept

Dwan is very much somebody's local course, and happily makes no pretensions of it. The fairways are narrow, the rough is deep, but everything else is laid before you with a refreshing 'take it or leave it' flavour. It's certainly not long or designed with much cunning, and makes for an inoffensive but unmemorable round of golf. 4/10

Appearance

There's been much done to improve and fine-tune the presentation of their course. It's been given a better sense of location from the buildings planted around the course, and the textures have been newly blended. But I don't care for the bright green course colours, and the lack of underplanting betrays the supposed homely origins of the course. 6/10

Playability

There are much worse things than a swift round around Dwan. Players will enjoy trying to hit the many nearly-reachable greens, even though the hole lengths don't really vary enough. It's possible to nail some satisfyingly close approaches, and yet there's still call to play a variety of greenside shots, thanks to the layout of the planting and bunkers. Definitely the course's strong point. 7/10

Challenge

Dwan has been toughened up a little over its many incarnations, but still remains rather too easy. This is probably because it measures only a tad over 6000 yards, but scores of anything up to 10-under are realistic, even commonplace. Perhaps this course would be best for those who wish, or need, to work on their recovery game. 2/10

Technical

A better set of textures is definitely called for, and perhaps a little more gradienting and widening of the fairways. But the planting has been improved and de-cloned to some extent; all that remains would be to see if the course can be made a reasonable challenge. 6/10

Overall	A good, if under-stimulating, game of golf. Possibly best for a competition with 'first-on-the-green' rewards.	25/50
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Eagle Canyon Country Club

Ross Anthony



Description

Imaginary, woodland course

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

A somewhat basic course, Eagle Canyon is a pure exercise in target golf. While the holes have been set up reasonably well, there is a distinct lack of polish, with many errors being made too obvious. There's precious little coherence or credibility to the whole thing: the course is best approached purely from a golfing puzzle point of view. 3/10

Appearance

The first indicator that something isn't quite right is the presence of too many APCD default shapes, which isn't right. Other shapes have been toyed with in an amateur and frankly irritating way. The stock panorama, textures and planting all create the impression of a hasty release, and there's precious little other than neat mesh-work to commend the visuals. 2/10

Playability

Despite what should be entertaining 'strategy golf', the course is little more than routine drive-and-pitch play. There is precious little variety, nor any replayability value in these depressing one-way holes. Stick with it for a gem or two on the back nine, but there's really not all that much to be going back for. 2/10

Challenge

It's nice to see some reasonably moderate greens in such an early release, but it's also nice to be able to hit them. Greens in Regulation will be second nature, and therefore so will the birdie putts. You could reasonably expect to shoot well down into the mid-60s here. 3/10

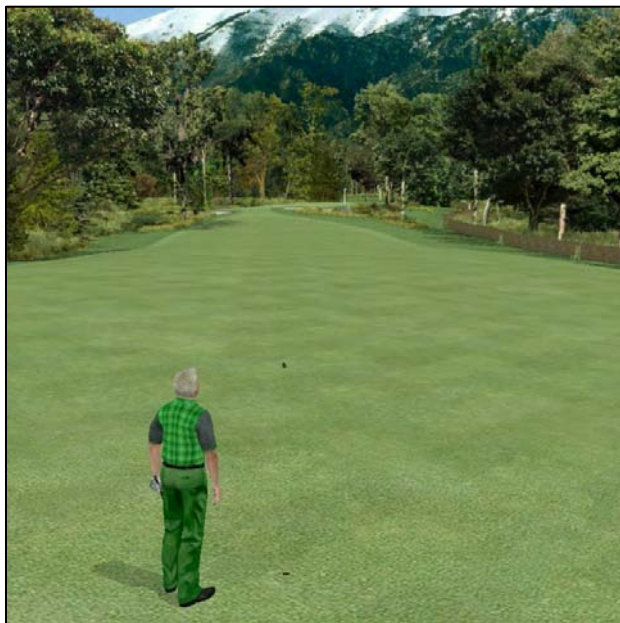
Technical

The unforgivability of not finishing a course properly ranks among the worst designer crimes, and stock shapes and token adjustments stand out like a sore thumb. Regrettably, though the designer would go on to much better things, Eagle Canyon really stocks out on good value. 1/10

Overall	Too primitive and too dot-to-dot to appeal to many.	11/50
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Eagle Crest Forest Preserve

David Schmelzer



Description

Fictional, parkland course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Luscious meadow, tightly enclosed dense woodland, and a magnificent mountain backdrop all give the indications of a good course and a rapidly improving designer. The conceit of having the trees enclosed by brick walls, in country estate style, works extremely well, and there's a massive variety of planting to feast your eyes upon. For some reason, there's a slightly fantastical and ethereal edge to the course: whether this is caused by the larger-than-life planting and underplanting or by the majesty of the

surroundings is uncertain. Fortunately, the hole design fits well: fairways are bendy but open and just, and hazarding is utilised well without resorting to overkill. 9/10

Appearance

An almost unbelievable array of planting is true evidence of the designer's efforts, although it has to be said that it becomes blurry in parts and the low-level planting is somewhat excessive and unsubtle. There are a few times when the course's 3D creations show some odd mapping, too. But, as long as you don't expect a photo-real environment, this is a beauty both to look at and play golf through. 8/10

Playability

Hole design has clearly been carefully considered, and the course mixes things up well with consecutive Par 5s on the back nine.

There's a bewildering, but thankfully not too intrusive, selection of sound effects to guide you round as well. The holes are rarely straight and so there's not too much strategy beyond hitting the fairways, and your round might become marred towards the end by some over-intimate planting. Probably not one for the Real course enthusiasts. 8/10

Challenge

Problematically, while Eagle Crest is a voyage of wonder, you might also wonder how you shot such a low round by the time you get to the clubhouse. The problem is mostly with some generous landing areas, usually flat, and the fact that while the planting is very pretty, it doesn't always come into play at the right time. Thankfully, the greens have bite, although the hazarding around them fails to swallow up many balls. 3/10

Technical

A few problems with scale, some bunker work needed around certain lips, and I noticed that the walls were not assigned the correct properties, but other advanced APCD techniques are well in place, and this is the mark of a designer willing to improve with every release. Pleasingly competent. 7/10

Overall

Impressively other-worldly and yet believable at the same time. Good fun to boot and a decent alternative to a mountain course if you can't deal with the elevations.

35/50

Eagle Mountain

Fred Briggson & **Randy McMin**n



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, mountain course	5 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Tennessee, according to the readme.		
Conditions		
There are reasonable pin placements, but a couple of greens struggle faster than M*/S*. You might risk F*/S* if you're confident.		

Concept

Eagle Mountain is a delightful course that represents the culmination of several iterations of improvement and redevelopment. Making heavy use of water hazards and tiered greens, it has obvious design influences from several top US courses – perhaps the cynics might say it's a bit *too* closely influenced. The presentation is outstanding, though, with strategically open hole previews which are very necessary on fantasy courses such as this. 8/10

Appearance

Released in the early days of blending, the inconsistent seams are the weakest area here, along with the stock panorama. The textures still look excellent close-up, though, and the planting at all heights befits the forested mountain surround. The work disguising the water features is ahead of its time. I'd be happier without the stock tournament scoreboards that litter the course. 7/10

Playability

Full of excitement, Eagle Mountain will test tee positioning, shot shaping and will reward accurate approaches. With an impressive variety of hole lengths, the Par 3s are universal tests of accuracy, and the longer holes straddle the 2-shot and 3-shot strategies very well. It's not difficult to see why this is still a popular tournament choice. 9/10

Challenge

You'll need to carefully review pin positioning, but if you do then there's a supremely well-balanced game here, with a subtle gradient as you round the turn and climaxing to a superb risk/reward final hole. Although there's a lot of water on the course, it acts more as a distant warning than an in-your-face threat. 9/10

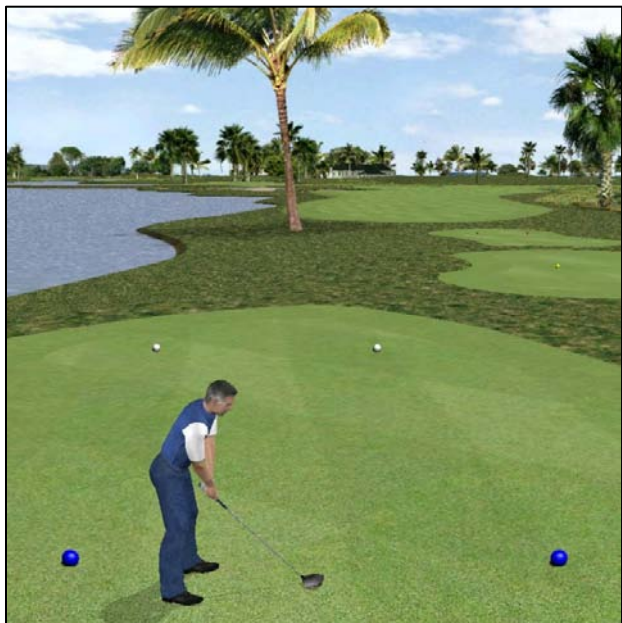
Technical

Ongoing collaboration and improvement is always admirable, and the APCD work on Eagle Mountain has held up well other than a couple of little flaws which don't impact on play. The original flair for hole design has been well tempered by sure hands with planting and texture work as well as the subtle adjustments to the greens which have kept this playable. 8/10

Overall	Still a must-own for any lover of fictional courses. Great in both conception and presentation.	41/50
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Eagle's Landing

Dace Fair



Description

Fictional, tropical course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

It has to be said that Dace's output is becoming more and more disappointing. Let's identify some Links clichés.... 'Eagle' name-checking? Check. Tropical island course? Check. Lack of bunker and water lips? Check. Even the obligatory short Par 4 is designed back to front. This course shows little grasp of the fundamentals of design, nor the creation of a believable environment. 2/10

Appearance

Tropical course views have never been at so much of a premium. Eagle's Landing is unrelentingly flat, given the style, and the work on the elevations has left obviously mesh folds on the terrain. The scenic work seems to be cursory to say the best, and the panorama doesn't give much away. The colour scheme is a dreadful mish-mash of greens and yellows and looks horrendous right from the off. Every now and then, you see a patch of cleverly-contrived planting that lends the course credibility, but frankly it's just not enough. 2/10

Playability

I thought I'd played nearly a full round here until I looked up and saw I was still on the 8th. It's often hard to see where your drive needs to be placed, and mediocrity and lack of imagination really are the killers here as far as any enjoyment is concerned. Very hard work indeed. 1/10

Challenge

Ah, yes. Hitting Par – the great leveller. As most of this designer's courses are designed for tournament play, they do treat the player fairly well. Eagle's landing mixes things up nicely: nothing is over-threatening, yet you can be sure that loose shots will cost you a bogey or worse. In the unlikely event that you want to be competitive without worrying about appearances, then this is your course. 7/10

Technical

It's unusual to see people's APCD skills go backwards, but that appears to be what I've got here. Very poor mesh and texture work makes the surface look laughable, and it seems that only a minimum of time has been spent on making the course look presentable, such is the absence of hole previews, read-me's, and other such fripperies to entice the golfer. 2/10

Overall	Possibly the worst case of speed over substance that I've seen. Dace should spend more time on his courses and worry about quality over quantity.	14/50
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Eaglestook GC

Kennet Larsson



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, greenside.

Concept

A fresh mountain course, so rarefied you can almost taste the pine-scented air: that at least is Eaglestook's intention. With due credit to the designer, it succeeds in the large part, thanks to some impressive rockworks and holes that feel as if they actually follow mountain paths. Despite this good premise, there's not quite enough to hold a player's attention; perhaps the extra dimension of a mountain stream or another in-play hazard might just fulfil that promise. 7/10

Appearance

Some decent seam blending and a good choice of 'dirty' sand for the bunkers go a long way towards impressing. Some excellent views and a well-fitting panorama mean that the overall course can't fail to impress. However, I suspect that the rocks would benefit from not being quite so 'humpy' and that the low-level grass planting needs tidying to look that little bit more convincing. 8/10

Playability

Eaglestook throws up an excellent variety of shot requirements and certainly doesn't leave you bored. The greens are surprisingly hard to hit with accuracy and the bunkers do not come into play too often. Best of all, there is an efficient learning curve which subtly ups the difficulty as you progress through the round. Again, though, it's that undefinable 'spark' which is missing: given the impressive atmosphere it's likely that perhaps the golf isn't quite stimulating enough. 7/10

Challenge

The mixed challenge on offer is more likely to frustrate than be accommodating. It's way too easy to pick up strokes on the Par 5s, but on other holes the greensides are utterly defeating to good play and the many blind tee shots won't result in many hit fairways. The net effect is to leave you struggling to break Par: with some Par 5 gifts, this must be the consequence of a serious misjudgement. 6/10

Technical

It looks good, but for reasons I cannot quite put my finger on, it doesn't quite look right. It's partly a heavy hand with elevations and grasses; partly a problem with the layout, which feels disjointed; and partly the fact that the needs of the golfer (such as clear views and bunkers that accept a backswing) have sometimes been overlooked. Still, it's a decent effort, from an improving designer, and improvement should not be sniffed at. 5/10

Overall	A good aura and convincing location, up to a point. Past that point, you're left thinking 'so what?' Worth a few rounds and then may be ignored thereafter.	33/50
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Eagle Trace Golf Club

Bob Hankla



Description

Fictional, lakeside course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Based purely on the EMGA's history, I'd say Tennessee, as per Eagle Mountain

Conditions

Generally plays well on M*/M*

Concept

Built to complement Eagle Mountain, this in many ways is a similar sort of course in its forest setting and thrilling, water-driven rollercoaster of golf. But it's noticeably a more cynical course than its predecessor as well: very insistent on shape and drive placement even from the very first, and the tightness of the water is a bit of a joke if you're playing a tough skill level. It's an incredibly short course from anything but the tips, and it wouldn't have been unreasonable to expect at least another 500 yards and to cut out the swathe of short Par 4s. Reasonable in small doses, but really quite artificial with it. 5/10

Appearance

Very strong planting, elevation and texture work are all marks of this designer, and there's very little at Eagle Trace to disappoint; indeed perhaps the biggest complement is that very little stands out as being poor work. The yellowy colour set is pleasant, and although the course is a little blocky and low-resolution in places, its fresh looks complement the course's outlandish structure well. 8/10

Playability

For all its artificiality, there really is no beating this course when it comes to flat out target golf. With only a handful of holes where Driver is a reasonable option off the tee, this is less a round of golf than an outright puzzle. With first-class demands on shot-shaping and placement, it's thrilling golf right from the beginning. 10/10

Challenge

A very artificial challenge from the almost continual water features is balanced by an equally artificial challenge stemming from the course's short length and relatively easy greens. Ironically, given that the course was designed for tournament play, these two factors remove most of the traditional challenges of tournament golf. It makes for a frustratingly inconsistent round where you are rewarded for mediocre shots and punished for reasonably good ones. 5/10

Technical

There's very little to draw the eye away from a gung-ho course, save perhaps the old-fashioned work around the blends and bunker lips, and this is definitely a course that has aged well, not least from the point of view of difficulty and the Mod settings. 8/10

Overall

Extremely unusual in its length and and target-driven style, this is an exciting round of golf, if perhaps a little too clever for its own good.

36/50

East Lothian GC

Jim McGhee



Description

Fictional, links course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 3, from tee

Concept

An undeniably wild and rough Scottish links, East Lothian is set largely among heather-coated seaside dunes, with a handful of challenging seaside holes thrown in for good measure. It starts off very convincingly in its Carnoustie-style design, and there are some smashing Par 3 holes on the route, but the finish is a little antiseptic and flat which to some extent destroys an otherwise very convincing illusion. 6/10

Appearance

Clearly, great effort has been expended with planting the dense heather, and the rough regions of this course look magnificently menacing and wild. The coastline is brilliant too, and uses a brilliant selection of textures, albeit ones a bit blue. But there's something not quite right at East Lothian: perhaps it's a bit neat around the edges; perhaps it's cut somewhat too tight around the fairways. Perhaps it's the odd combination of colours, but it's not quite right. 7/10

Playability

A long as you've got a decent recovery game and a fairly open mind, there are 18 holes of fair entertainment here. The course does its best to look natural and relies on very few gimmicks. Many will find the lack of options restricting, though; perhaps nine holes is better than eighteen in this instance. 7/10

Challenge

Take your best game out with you, or you'll end up against a wall. The fairways are unconscionably narrow, and plenty of deep rough will take distance off your approach. Some well-placed hazarding means that GIRs really are a treat to be savoured. Add this to the constantly rolling elevations, and it's quite feasible that you could score upwards of 75. 5/10

Technical

A very sound technical achievement, if only to keep the wild dunes looking natural and uncloned. I would suggest that perhaps a little more research into the distinctive features of links courses might be in order, as would a gentler hand with some of the gradients, but there is clearly plenty of work committed here, and not in vain. 6/10

Overall

An under-rated and oft-overlooked course. Not easy, by any means, and occasionally some way short of totally convincing, but an enjoyable round nevertheless.

31/50

East Mountain GC

Benjamin Mumma



Description	Screenshot	Par
Imaginary, mountain course	8 th hole, Par 4	72

Location

‘Somewhere in Montana’ is the slightly sarcastic location given in the Readme

Conditions

The steep elevations would be really interesting on something like F*/S*

Concept

East Mountain falls into the ‘larger than life’ category inhabited by Devils’ Lake and Wolves Lair. There, however, the resemblance stops. It’s a surprisingly welcoming and unintimidating course, naturally featuring the towering elevations to best advantage, but also some country club sensibilities in its open fairways and grassland underplanting. Well backed up by a daft back-story and the evidence of plenty of years of tenderness, it makes a surprisingly accommodating host. 7/10

Appearance

Despite the monster file size, there’s not a huge amount on display here. Sure, the use of elevations affords some impressive views. But the planting varies from the forced to the cloned, and there’s a disappointing lack of customisation. The rockwork is acceptable, but that’s really all that can be said of the course as a whole. 6/10

Playability

Inexplicably long render times will affect your game, which is a shame, because you really should be having a whale of a time around this course. The greens are beautifully inviting and the course gives you every opportunity to make some really gutsy plays. The towering elevations, when played with conditions that present plenty of roll, are an absolute blast! 7/10

Challenge

Despite being the best part of 8000 yards, East Mountain is inexplicably easy. GIRs are a cinch to make, and the hazarding is more marginal than threatening. The final hole, while a terrific trademark, never really delivers on the threat that it promises. I wouldn’t say it’s disappointing, but this ain’t no Pine Forest Hills. 4/10

Technical

A course designed for plenty of fun, and there’s no doubt that the designer has hit his objective. The visuals are a mixed bag, with quite a lot of hard edges and clones requiring polish, but there’s a little impressiveness in this large and lavish creation. 6/10

Overall	A huge creation, designed almost explicitly to take your most ripping shots	30/50
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East Neuk Golf Club

James Baker



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, links course	7 th hole, Par 5	72
Location		
Fife, Scotland		
Conditions		
One or two misjudgements make M*/S* the safest option. Gusty or Windy conditions would be very viable		

Concept

This course comes hot on the heels of the barking-mad East Point course, and could well be easily confused, given that it seems to use a similar plot and panorama. It starts in much more authentic links fashion, with some cramped holes which use pot bunkering and the surrounding gorse excellently, but it becomes very hard work after the turn, with long demanding Par 4s which are tough and demoralising. It's certainly a course with its place in the Links *oeuvre*, but it's a shame that the designer's links ideals didn't stretch to making holes that felt like they had suitable history. 5/10

Appearance

A great mix of planting really suits this course, and the shrubbery – even in close up – looks every bit the real deal. The textures are handled well, even around the bunkers and especially on the stone regions, and there's none of the blurriness and impossibility that was found on East Point. The panorama is striking, but doesn't really fit the course, and the sea regions are rushed and sharp-edged, but they're really two minor faults on a course that shows distinct improvement. 8/10

Playability

The plethora of blind shots and hacking-out lies aren't exactly soothing for a golfer, although there's a lot of compensation in the curious little lies and shots around nearly every green complex. But this is also a course sorely lacking in such niceties in hole previews or some sort of guidance for the player, which is just frustrating because of the designer's ambition in creating complex holes. 6/10

Challenge

You'd be happy getting to the turn in level par, but don't expect it to continue. The back nine is filled with tight landing areas, twisty fairways and rough that will just not be escaped easily. While there's some nice ambition with the design of quite a few green complexes, quite a few of the cross the boundary into insanity, and really provide a downer for the course as a whole. 3/10

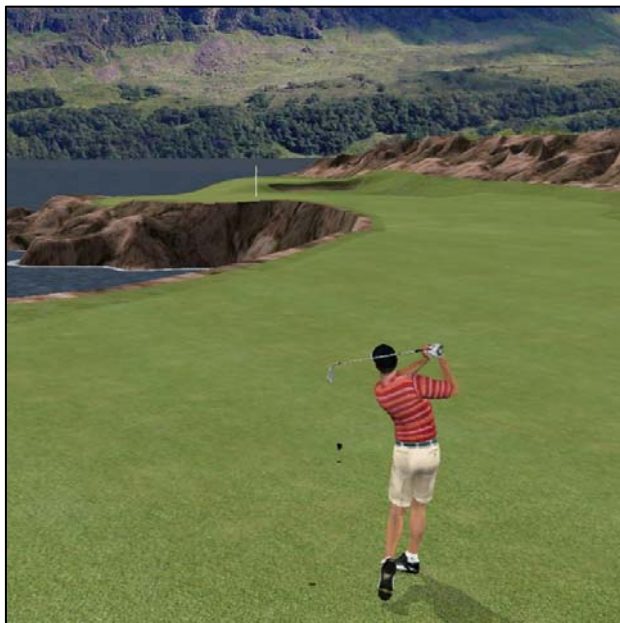
Technical

The designer's visual style has improved brilliantly since his first course, and there are signs that his course management has done likewise. But it all gets very contrived towards the end in an effort to be challenging, when a more modest layout would have been equally – if not more – effective. 6/10

Overall	Another amazingly creative set of holes from a flamboyant designer – not always conducive to good golf, but worth seeing at least once.	28/50
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East Point Golf Club

James Baker



Description

Imaginary, links course

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 5, approach.

Concept

A truly ambitious idea for a first course, there is a wealth of influences from the best fictional links designs here at East Point. It's crammed full of big 'signature' holes, which doesn't do much for its authenticity, but does wonders for some exciting golf. The whole thing is presented very modestly (perhaps a little too modestly, given that hole previews are much-needed but lacking), even if it doesn't quite fit the intended Fife location. East Point will never make its way into the tournament rotations,

but has plenty of charms for the occasional round. 6/10

Appearance

Given the relatively tiny file size, the course comes complete with texture blends and decent, if forested, planting. A majestic panorama tops the whole thing off nicely. Unfortunately, there are a few eyesores along the way, not least the sharp edges to the cliff-side rocks and a rather horrible road which doesn't reflect well on the designer. 5/10

Playability

The outstanding hole designs mean you'll never be short of an option or two here, even if many holes are unnecessarily complicated by blind drives and the aforementioned lack of previews. Because of a lack of testing, there are too many unplayable lies as well. A shame, because this could have been a real gung-ho round of golf with a little more subtlety. 7/10

Challenge

One thing that hasn't been skimped on is the greens, which are mercifully playable. And, actually, when you get down to it, a lot of the presence of the ocean is there for impact value rather than a genuine test. Careful players will negotiate the hazards with maybe just a little too much ease. 6/10

Technical

There's a lot of good work at East Point, and with some committed effort to ironing out the poor lies and rough edges it could be a really brilliant creation. For now, it wins points for the imagination that has gone into the hole design and being able to craft some (but not all, mark you) excellent pieces of landscape. 5/10

Overall	Excellent golf if somewhat rusty; hopefully a course that will really shine when it comes to a final release.	29/50
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Eberhart-Petro Municipal GC

Douglas & Karen Montgomery



Description

Real, lakeside course

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 4, from fairway

Concept

Riverside, rather than lakeside, but nevertheless bringing a prominent body of water into play, Eberhart-Petro is indeed very Municipal in feel, and admittedly not always in the best way. There's a lot of difference between the distinctly uninspired – and older – front nine, and the slightly more creative and attractive later holes, but on the whole it's too easy to tire of the unprotected greens, and some APCD workmanship which has failed to put across the fine details of the course. 4/10

Appearance

The first tee appearance counts for so much, and I have to say I very nearly deleted this course based on that alone: too tight a fairway with cloned trees and straight edges: yuk! Thankfully, things improve a great deal, although there is a distinct lack of grass planting and the textures are far too finely trimmed for this type of course. Too little work on the texture transitions and the array of cloned buildings are black marks against a local course that could have been so much more. 4/10

Playability

I have to say, that – despite being initially turned off – I rather enjoyed this unthreatening and open challenge. The trees proved a major problem, being rather too tight to the fairway and distinctly impenetrable when trapped behind them, but the unprotected greens are something of an open invitation, and there were quite a few holes demanding some clever shot shaping. Whatever the course's flaws, there's a good game to be had here. 7/10

Challenge

Eberhart-Petro suffers the same problems as so many 'local' courses: short hole lengths, easy greens and unpunishing rough and bunkers. There's a bit of bite from the hazards, but nothing that will prevent you picking up strokes like a gift from the gods. 3/10

Technical

There's always a big step between fictional and real course design, and while the Montgomerys have turned out some fine and playable courses, I doubt they would ever claim to be in the big league. This step has been a trial, and a moderately successful one in parts, but it's all too easy to find problems with this course. 5/10

Overall	Fun...but flawed.	23/50
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Edgbaston Golf Club

Curt Simms



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, estate course	12 th hole, Par 4	69

Location

Birmingham, UK

Conditions

One or two greens would be hard work faster than M*/M*

Concept

Edgbaston is the only APCD course I have played in real life, and Curt has done a really good job with it. Having said this, perhaps this section might be best to do justification to that in saying that the hole lengths do not vary enough, that there are 13 Par 4s on the course and only one Par 5, and that most holes are depressingly straightforward. It doesn't strike one as being a well-planned course; more one that fits the space. 4/10

Appearance

The texture use is fantastic here, particularly in the bunkers and some terrific planting and underplanting. Blends are done smartly and the 3D clubhouse is a work of art. Just now and then, you catch sight of something a bit silly: an odd elevation or inappropriate planting, which sadly detracts from the overall environment, but the landmarks of Birmingham on the panorama are very authentic and work well. 9/10

Playability

It's surprisingly addictive for me, but that could be because I know the course. Common sense suggests that, even with the subtle variety from hole to hole, this could prove a little bit dull. There's not much to challenge you in terms of approach or recovery, and only the surprisingly dramatic elevations really put their stamp on the course. 7/10

Challenge

Edgbaston is surprisingly well judged on the first half, with some championship-length Par 4s and plenty of woods to get snarled up in.. A lot will depend on conditions and pin positions later on, with a clear shot to the green being more common. It's possible to clock a wide range of scores here, but a large part of this might be down to the player, not the course. 6/10

Technical

Certain areas are carried off with terrific style and panache, notably the 3D work, but there are a few minor surface problems – in and around bunkers, most notably – that do unfortunately detract from the round. The pin positioning seems exaggerated and too close to the fringe: I ended up playing too many chips from under 20 feet. 9/10

Overall	A cute and good-looking course, and one close to my own heart. The unusual layout might not make it a good choice on all occasions, though.	35/50
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Eight Points Resort

Douglas and Karen Montgomery



Description

Fictional, ocean course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 5, from fairway

Concept

Eight Points has marked a real achievement for its designers in being the first of their courses to have genuine location. Set on almost-links land, with the ocean constantly on the horizon but rarely threatening the play, it is the perfect setting for a resort course. The hole design is for the most part excellent, although it is perhaps more in keeping with an inland park course than one running along shoreline – there are definite influences from Bay Hill and Prairie Dunes in its design, as well as lesser-known

courses. A course in close touch with its heritage, even a fictional one such as this, deserves recognition. 7/10

Appearance

The neat and tidy fairways bely a fair amount of rushedness in terms of panorama, course peripherals (such as paths) and particularly the beach and ocean. It is possible to blinker yourself enough that these don't make a difference, but I suspect the overall consensus will be that there is an underlying roughness to this course that won't be easily ignored. 6/10

Playability

By far the most compulsive of the Montgomeries' courses, Eight Points is a terrific exercise in positioning, concentration and elevation-based recovery with barely a hazard in sight. Sure, there are bunkers, but often they are there on a decorative basis, leaving you with just a lot of great terrain and some great course management to battle with. Despite other unprepossessing creations, the designers have rarely been better than this. 8/10

Challenge

A sensible player will comfortably undercut par here. There's really too little for this environment in terms of punishing rough, and – as previously intimated – the hazard count does little to help either. In fairness, both of these seem to be deliberate decisions, but they really do very little to set a decent bar. 6/10

Technical

Sadly, there's still quite a lot of polish and perfection absent here. The plot runs out inconveniently when you don't want to see the panorama, and there are still some inexcusable messy mesh moments. The textures are excellent in parts, but less well looked after on the bits that matter, such as fairways and the deeper elements of rough, those that there are. It still looks uncontroversially a little bit weak. 5/10

Overall	A nice location with a novel and authentic atmosphere, but still yet to provide that critical step up.	32/50
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El Diablo

Kent Perrins



Description

Real, forest course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 5

Par

72

Location

Florida

Conditions

M*/S* is probably the limit. The course doesn't exactly call for fast conditions.

Concept

Typically Florida, although not necessarily in the way you might imagine of golf courses, this is packed tight into dense forest and wetland. Constricted fairways and tight landing spots are very much the order of the day here, and the APCD conversion has done justice to the original by including some of the off-beat touches that help us familiarise with the course (not just the alligator, although I'm not complaining!). Although it's great to see the designer back in action after several years away, El Diablo is perhaps just a little more close and difficult than perhaps it should be. 6/10

Appearance

Good textures and views, and the inclusion of the course buildings and objects such as stakes, even in 2D, are a nice touch. However there is a reliance on one-size-fits-all texture blends, which are notably blurry around the bunkers and lead to inconsistent texture assignments in many places. The forest must have taken hours of labour, but there are also quite a lot of practical impossibilities easily spotted in the depths of the trees. 7/10

Playability

It's all a little one-way golf this, and a lot of time will be spent hacking and simply trying to make the greens. It doesn't help that a few flaws in the design process, and no end of blind shots, have hampered the path to doing this. Without memorable signature holes, there's not enough there to make you want to go back time after time, although there is a little charm in the designer's customised little touches. 5/10

Challenge

The greens have been eased up during beta-testing, although it's frustrating that the care with slopes and pin positions seems to peter out on the back nine. It also just too easy to get into an inextricable tangle in the trees, as could be easily foreseen from the first tee. The net feeling – again – is that it's set up all wrong. 6/10

Technical

It seems harsh to knock a designer returning to the art for the first time in many years and working hard to get to grips with APCD 1.3 techniques. But the fact remains that the blends look blurry, there are plenty of extrusion marks knocking around and there are one or two technical problems that impact directly on your score. Plenty more work required here, I'm afraid. 5/10

Overall

A swampy and claustrophobic course without a definite selling point. Likely to arouse mixed feelings.

29/50

El Escorpion

Mike Jones



Description

Fictional, heathland course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from green.

Concept

With a name like this you'd expect a dry, desert course, but Mike Jones never fails to surprise. This is quite richly planted and features a jungle-like heavy rough which lies close to many a fairway. Most hole designs are good, although they do tend to the very straight and lack the inventiveness of the designer's other courses. I'm not 100% convinced that the landscape is 100% Spanish, though: this could easily be set in a dozen other locations. 8/10

Appearance

This is generally a good-looking course, although I spotted a rare hard edge which barely tarnishes the designer's reputation. The heavy rough is a delight and is planted with various but natural-looking foliage. The panorama is understated and rarely spoils the view. There are better-looking courses around, but this was designed for playing, not looking at. 8/10

Playability

I could barely believe how fast 18 holes passed. Constantly trying to get around and on top of this course is a full-time occupation, and you will be made to work with every shot. Every par feels like an achievement; a birdie little short of a miracle. The Par 5s are particularly testing and offer a variety of ways to play them. You'll never be stuck for a challenge at El Escorpion. 10/10

Challenge

This course is tricky without being too penal. The rough lies very close to the fairway, and there is very little leeway for those who do not hit their snaps. Bad lies will almost invariably cost you a shot at the green, so you need to take a variety of approach and recovery shots. At Champ level it's very testing indeed. 7/10

Technical

As one would expect from this designer, the APCD has been worked to its full potential. Elevations and textures are a perfect fit and the planting is a joy. The tee boxes – notoriously a problem – are carried off with aplomb and look wonderful. The occasional hard edge, one would assume, is something of a clerical error. 9/10

Overall	A brilliant creation. Perhaps not the archetypal Mike Jones visual course, but a subtle and challenging test of golf which is easy on the eye too.	42/50
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Engineers CC

Rob Miller



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, estate course	16 th hole, Par 4	71
Location		
New York		
Conditions		
F*/F* feels a little extreme, and I'd be tempted to go with M*/M*		

Concept

A delightfully eccentric club course, Engineers starts off on the flat and builds up towards an awesome finish clinging to the sides of a hill with all sorts of slippery approaches. Perhaps it's a little pat and predictable at times, and the length is nothing to shout about, but as always, the delight of a Rob Miller adaptation is in the attention to detail, and the structures surrounding the course are simply extraordinary for features that rarely impact upon play. 9/10

Appearance

No flaws here, and really who was expecting any? Delightful textures all round; the slightly yellowing grasses are a warm and effective touch. Bunkers, as ever, are individual and painstaking works of art. And the 3D, including electricity pylons and overhead cables? Beyond reproach. 10/10

Playability

Rob Miller has an unerring knack for selecting and converting courses that offer strategic depth and replayability, and Engineers is certainly no exception. Options off the tee are rarely obvious, and the unexpected elevations open up shots that are just begging to be hit. The added charms of a parallel autumn course are utterly delightful. 10/10

Challenge

Perhaps it was inevitable that this course worked out a mite too easy, thanks to a relatively trouble-free layout and accommodating rough. Don't get me wrong, it's no pushover, and the greens are positioned cleverly enough that many an errant shot will trickle off into the undergrowth, but at well under 7000 yards from the middles, most holes don't push far past drive-and-chip-on territory. There's one virtually pitch'n'putt Par 3, and possibly one of the shortest Par 4s I've ever seen. 7/10

Technical

You don't need me to tell you what Rob's technical work is like. If you've never played and adored his designs, then you wouldn't be reading this. The release of two parallel styles is commitment above and beyond. 10/10

Overall	A delightful, and perhaps a little less-known, addition to the Rob Miller canon. Well up to standard.	46/50
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Enniscrone – “The Dunes”

Stewart Parker



Description

Real, dunes course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

I applaud the man who found a deserted patch of mountainous sand-dune wasteland on the Irish coast and thought “I could build a golf course here”. Even in the varietal world of links courses, Enniscrone is a dramatic departure from the norm. Massive dunes, tiny fairways and greens almost hidden in the landscape do not exactly sound like inviting appeal, but the atmosphere of the place is recaptured so beautifully that you just want to play again and again. 10/10

Appearance

Dan ‘The Pano Man’ Watson really should be co-credited with the design of some courses. The luxurious, yet never less than convincing, backdrop that he has created for Enniscrone is really the finishing touch. The planting of the dune grass is plain (as it should be, I supposed), but leaves no doubt that it has had pains taken over it. A word, too, for the scrubby, patchy textures: they do more to make the course than many players might realise. 8/10

Playability

Expect to spend a lot of time in the rough. An awful lot of your shots will come from the long stuff, but the designer has pulled off quite a neat coup by making sure that these shots are far from impossible. Indeed, in suitably slick conditions, you can play some almost freakishly long punch-and-run shots. The lack of fairway play might not be for everyone, though, and quite a few might exhale in relief on the final tee. 7/10

Challenge

Again, Stewart has pulled off a neat masterstroke by making sure that the all-encompassing rough doesn’t cost too many strokes. Sure, you will drop a shot or two from the really inextricable stuff, but it’s easy enough to pick up score on the short-ish Par 5s. Even the bunkers allow some leeway, unusually for a Links course. 9/10

Technical

Re-creating wilderness has never been the easiest of tasks, and a few tell-tale hard edges and odd elevations are evidence that Enniscrone might be among the hardest of the lot. I can’t say I was blown over by the choice of reedy yellow grass for the dunes, either: When you see shots of the actual course, it’s easy to see why. 8/10

Overall	The links like no other. A morass of dunes and shotmaking golf. Worth more than just one try.	42/50
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Entrada at Snow Canyon

Microsoft



Description

Real, desert course.

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4, approach shot.

Concept

No snow, but a lot of desert sand and even some lava on the closing stretch. An odd course because, while it is patently based on a real design, it doesn't feel genuine, not helped by a mish-mash of technical work. There are several standout holes which make up for this, not least the excellent 18th, but one feels the designer ran out of ideas on the 6th which features an arrow-straight fairway and no bunkers. 5/10

Appearance

This is looking old hat by modern standards. Although the panorama is impressive, convincing and a decent fit for the course, bad edges abound, particularly between the stock grass textures, the path and the desert, which look eye-clashingly bad in close proximity. Several of the extrusions and elevations look mounded and cheaply done and overall the course just lacks that air of authenticity. The lava around the close is not terribly convincing, and some better texture work would be considered a must here and elsewhere. 5/10

Playability

A couple of holes offer you a decent playing option, but that isn't really enough to make up for the majority which are straightforward drive-and-pitch holes with little variety. Given the nice desert surroundings, it's surprisingly easy to grow bored at Entrada, but stick with it until the closing lava holes for a change of scenery. 4/10

Challenge

Like a lot of real course re-creations, this turns out a bit easy. The fairways are narrow, but largely unguarded and the rough is generous. A lot of layups will finish close and most players will score well under 70 even with average putting. From the 15th onwards, the difficulty level is upped, but something sterner really should be in place earlier in the round. 6/10

Technical

This is an LS course conversion and shows in the harsh lines and bumpy terrain. Compared to the real course, it would seem that a lot of features have been distorted and the textures could use a lot of work, particularly the ugly lava. 3/10

Overall	Worth playing, but not the most realistic course conversion. There are hidden treasures at Entrada, but there's an awful lot of mediocrity that you'll have to wade through in order to get to it.	23/50
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Errislannan Cliffs

Tim Hagen & Mike Jones



Description

Fictional, links course.

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 4, from rough.

Concept

It's hard to know how to rate a course if the basis for it has been commercially available. Much of the visual splendour of this course is down to Links legend Mike Jones, and anyone can create a course around this coastal region. At first, it appears that most of the credit has to go to Mike, but on closer inspection, some very appealing and challenging links holes have been created. As long as you put the commercial aspect to the back of your mind, there is a lot to love here: and, let's face it, many courses

these days are co-operative productions. 7/10

Appearance

The long grass planting is simply stunning. No clones are visible, and yet the little grassy hummocks are omnipresent. The sea textures are out of this world, and have not been matched for realism by anyone else in the Links community. Thankfully, the post-commercial work has not spoiled the visual splendour one bit: this is picture-perfect links. 10/10

Playability

There are subtle options off every tee, and – thankfully – the easiest bunkers to hit are reasonably easy to escape (the deep pot bunkers are saved for wayward or thoughtless tee shots). With an un-links-esque wide variety of hole lengths, this is very playable. Some might complain that hole designs are a little same-y after a while and that the deep rough is frustratingly hard, but they've really missed the point of proper links golf. 9/10

Challenge

Play a hole perfectly and be rewarded with a birdie. You'd have to play terribly badly (or hit the sea) to get a double bogey. In other words, this course is perfectly pitched and a credit to its second designer. Perhaps the greatest appeal is that the course seems to be an appropriate test on all difficulty levels and green conditions, whereas others drift into pointlessness or ridiculous difficulty. 10/10

Technical

The off-course technical work is of course brilliant, although occasionally the hummocks appear a little painted or lined-up. On the course, it's a few textures that need looking at: the bunker sod walls are extremely dark, and at one point (on the edge of the cliffs) I found my ball sitting on 'None' texture. These niggles aside, it's a fine piece of work and shouldn't be sniffed at because of its commercial availability. 9/10

Overall	A successful and inspiring completion of a unique Links experiment. The designer should not get full credit, because of the genius input of Mike Jones, but nor should he be short-changed for creating a challenging and thoughtful links.	45/50
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Esker Field...

John Aherne



Description

Fictional, farmland course.

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from greenside bunker

Concept

A delightful and very British course, this is about the nearest you could get to popping down to your local club for a quick 18. The creation of a very realistic environment with meticulous planting and a stunning panorama is excellent. Pot-bunkers litter the fairways, giving a linksy feel to most holes. No individual hole is a particular stand-out but the course holds together excellently nevertheless. 8/10

Appearance

Several aspects of Esker Field will draw the eye and pull you deep into the course. The deep grass rough is luscious and the planting as a whole is among the best I've seen. Blends are nice and tight throughout. The occasional technical error takes very little away from the course, its beauty and the immersion you feel in a totally realistic environment. 10/10

Playability

As you spend time admiring the scenery, it's unlikely that you'll notice the time slip by. Most holes guide you gently to a par, despite the potential for finding one of the many pot-bunkers, due to some very gentle – almost flat – greens. The Par 5s are easy enough and encourage you to play on rather than allowing you to get complacent. The gameplay at Esker Field is very understated, which could be a lot of the reason for its charm. 9/10

Challenge

This course pretty much plays itself. Par will be the overwhelming score for most holes, thanks to wide but angled fairways and flat greens. A smattering of birdies will be easy on most of the Par 5s, and bogeys are not at all easy to achieve. The challenge of Esker Field is its weak spot, and more could have been made of making this fictional course a tougher test, perhaps with more careful hazard placement and greater OB areas. 5/10

Technical

This is a very impressive course technically, marred only by one too many straight edges, particularly around the multitude of bunkers. The planting is top-notch and the panorama one of the best I've seen. Custom textures are well-chosen and blended expertly. Elevations appear totally natural. There is no doubt that the designer is an APCD artist, but a question mark over whether he has the course design to match. 9/10

Overall	Quite simply one of the best looking courses available. It doesn't reach out and slap you when it comes to gameplay, though, and you leave the course having not apparently applied any thought to the round.	41/50
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Estate Heights

Dominique Bois



Description

Fictional, canyon course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, from rough

Concept

A fascinating course, fictional yet never unbelievable, Estate Heights plunders some great hole designs and almost outlandish course architecture in order to create a country club course with a hard 'edge'. Inspiring use of water, rockwork and elevations helps to create something sufficiently exotic and out of the ordinary to stand up: several holes are very clever, although certain APCD gimmicks (crossing fairways, shared greens) crop up from time to time when they really need not. 7/10

Appearance

Very smart, particularly in the brave use of very lush green textures, although the designer has admitted that some of the fine detail had been rushed for release. It's sad, because it's occasionally just a little bit too obvious that more care could have been taken with edges: those of the 3D features, those of bunkers, and those along side water. With a little smoothing and some good 'cover up' planting, this could really be special. As it is, the rush job is just a little too obvious. 8/10

Playability

Estate Heights really plays on its novelties and the mix of straightforward holes with something a little bit more exciting. It's a fabulous blend and holds up surprisingly well on repeated rounds. Many holes feature a viable alternative route of play and there are endless ways to explore this course. 9/10

Challenge

The Par 5s are perhaps the biggest problem, yielding eagles and birdies too easily, and the easy-to-read greens will give up further shots. I personally found the wooded regions too forgiving as well. The ability to miss the water should result in a comfortable several strokes under par. 5/10

Technical

Barring the corrections listed above, this has been smoothly done. It's a convert of an older course, so the course design has been refined, and the planting tidied up. It does make one wonder, though, whether this sort of fictional course would gain credibility if released as new: features such as straight-extruded bunkers in flat land and the over-reliance on artificial water features might just be gimmicky today. This shouldn't detract from the very creditable work on display, though. 9/10

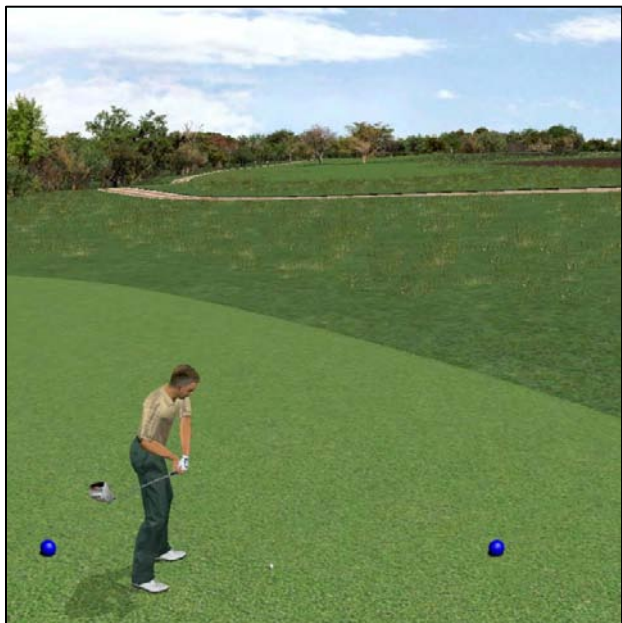
Overall

Something a little out of the ordinary, without being freakish or unbelievable, and all the more refreshing for that.

38/50

EtherLinks @ Crozon Peninsula

François Cristallo



Description

Fictional, ocean course.

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Creating an imagined course on a plot of real land is the aim of many an APCD designer, and it's all the more interesting in this case when the plot is surrounded by water on three sides. More than a little reminiscent of Pebble Beach with its dirt cliffs, EtherLinks is convincing and inspiring. It's an excellent all-round test of golf, using the clifftops for maximum yet realistic impact. A lot better than it might first appear. 9/10

Appearance

The scrubby, sparse planting works to the favour of the course in this instance: the landscape is genuinely reminiscent of many patches of wasteland. Sadly, I can't say the same about the odd 'stripy' paths or the dirt cliffs, which tend towards the angular at some points. Despite the lack of good views, there's a sense of realism present to this course: one that is rarely found in courses from this designer! 6/10

Playability

I found EtherLinks to be thoroughly absorbing and involving golf. I don't know if it was due to the involvement of risk-reward shotmaking almost from the off, or because of the amenable nature of the fairways, but the front half really is classy. It gets a bit dafter on the second half, demanding accurate club selection and several blind tee shots, but this can again be cleared up with repeat playing. Good golf! 8/10

Challenge

It's easy to hit fairways here, and the bunkers are relegated to something of a side issue. However, you'll need to play safe several times if you miss your snap, and that might cost strokes. Some, not all, of the greens might bear examination before playing with Mod settings. There's also the slight problem that the back nine – sensibly played – is markedly easier than the outward holes. A mixed bag, in every sense. 7/10

Technical

There appears to be a running problem with texture assignments around this course. The fringes of fairway and green are much deeper than they should be, and might well have a nasty effect on your game. While the ambience is excellent, I would have liked to have seen (heard?) some ambient sound as the final touch to creating an immersive environment. 6/10

Overall	Not a visual knockout, but a very worthwhile round of golf. A big surprise for those who think they've seen it all from LeWaw.	36/50
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Europe 2006

Tom Wagner



Description

Imaginary, concept course.

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

There should be more courses like this. Lifting an idea straight from the Crazy Golf world, Tom Wagner sends you on a golfing tour of a virtual map of Europe. There are impressive little touches, not least the change in planting as you proceed around the continent, and some enterprising hole design which can only be done on a course with this sort of terrain limitations. While there may be flaws, this is the type of idea that I'm only happy to see more of. Long may the innovation continue! 10/10

Appearance

There's a bit of a cartoon-like feel, which is appropriate and only to be expected, and a fair number of course objects to add atmosphere. The choice of water texture is delightful, but perhaps the biggest problem is with the gradienting, which has suffered from a lack of attention to fine detail. Sometimes it's too much; other times it just doesn't provide enough variety. Plus you can't shake off the feel of artificiality about the course. 6/10

Playability

It really depends how engaged you can get with this conceit. Fantasy course addicts, as one of which I am in the minority, will lap it up. Other golfers just won't see the appeal, and might just see it as a set of slightly odd and disjointed golf holes. If you can immerse yourself in the idea, perhaps with a special MoP and windless conditions, this might prove to be a winner: give it a go! 7/10

Challenge

Your score is down to the individual holes and the manner in which they are pitched. Some are frustratingly hard – especially in terms of the green gradients and some quick-and-dirty bunker sculpture. Others may well prove to be an insufficient challenge. Again, it's an issue of continuity, and perhaps there is too much difference from hole to hole, even though the course as a whole plays closely to par, 4/10

Technical

This represents a step up on Tom's previous course, and the levels of customisation and imagination are to be congratulated. Judgement of difficult is tough on fantasy courses such as this, and he would also be well advised to check pin positioning. The terrain work is still lacking, as are some seam blends, but this is a hallmark of an improving and ingenious designer. 5/10

Overall	A brilliant idea, carried off with some degree of panache. Not quite perfect, but a refreshing break from the norm	32/50
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Excelsior Golf Estate

Adriaan Maarschalk



Description

Fictional, heathland course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 4, on green

Concept

A glorious veldt course set amid rolling grasslands with absorbing mountain panoramas, Excelsior serves up a test of golf every bit as absorbing as its visuals. There's some very subtle risk-reward and excellent use of elevation on the fairways, making every approach shot absolutely crucial. Amazingly realistic, I was fooled for a long time by the subtle small touches that made this appear like a real course. 9/10

Appearance

Adriaan has proved to be a master of grass planting in the past, and he has served up a masterclass here in varying the low level planting superbly while keeping it realistic yet surprisingly sparse. Nor is this restricted to the lower levels: the trees are fairly incidental to play but are every bit as varied and precise. The water features and some functional pot bunkers round off the look perfectly. There's nothing to fault here. 10/10

Playability

Again, looking at the variety of hole types and options here, it's a wonder that this is a fictional course. It seems to have evolved into the landscape, and the custom course settings match the dried-out environment perfectly. It's far from a traditional grasslands layout: the fairways are relatively accommodating and there are two ways into most greens for added replayability. 9/10

Challenge

Par is the only score here at Excelsior. Certainly anyone would be happy with nine pars on the opening half, but crucially they wouldn't be too unhappy either. The difficulty gradient slowly increases towards the end of the round – as indeed it should – but there is a superb risk-reward Par 5 to close and possibly pick up the missing stroke. Three test rounds have not seen me deviate from an Even Par score for more than a couple of holes at a time: they don't come much better. 10/10

Technical

I've always added technical credibility for creating a realistic environment, and there's none better than this, even from Mike Jones himself. A few scrubby, and tiling, textures aside, there's very little to fault here and the designer's embrace of custom textures is the perfect icing on a near-perfect cake. 9/10

Overall	Right up there in the big time in my opinion. A terrific course which avoids some of the designer's previous excesses and ranks right up there with the best.	47/50
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Faerne The Ancient Course

Tim Radl



Description

Fictional, links course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 4, approach

Concept

Faerne joins the list of links courses that have been slightly over-produced, not that that's any bad thing in this case. Taking some obvious influences from St Andrews, Enniscrone and indeed Brydestone, the hole design is a million miles away from the eponymous 'Ancient', but it certainly is enjoyable. The countryside is entertainingly littered with ruins, pillboxes, sheep and other such esoterica of the British countryside; hyper-realistic it isn't, but in terms of diversion and things to see, Faerne certainly takes the

prize. 8/10

Appearance

Rather lush and green, the course is well enough planted from distance, but the low-level planting looks a little too random up close. The 3D work is impressive, but again possible not best viewed from point-blank range, when the textures get all stretchy and blurred. The dune-like elevations and the panorama are best and imbue the course with solid identity and location. 8/10

Playability

Enjoy Brydestone and you'd have a ball here. Many, many standout holes, through the 3rd, 4th, and impressively-playable short 12th will actually remain in the memory, and there are fewer higher compliments. Plus, there's a whole bunch to see and hear on your way round, several challenges balanced with birdie opportunities, and the chance to solve a golfing puzzle or two: smashing! 10/10

Challenge

Shots don't come cheap here: the rough and deep grass are punishing, and the bunkers – despite being used sparingly – are well-positioned. The greens make for tricky reading, too, and with windy conditions breaking par would be some achievement. It's not all bad news thanks to a few relative pushovers, but easy it isn't. 7/10

Technical

There's plenty to appreciate here, from the 3D and 2D customisation to an insidious understanding of what constitutes links golf, even if the practice has distorted that somewhat. Perhaps a more understated set of colour choices would be called for in this environment and a little more attention to the very small details where they impinge on the lines of play, but they are only small nitpicks in what is a very fine first course. 8/10

Overall	Not a hyper-realistic links course, but a terrific semi-fantasy round nevertheless.	41/50
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Fagen's Forest

François Cristallo



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

The woodland environment runs the risk of becoming repetitive, and this is a trap that Fagen's Forest – somewhat uniquely – seems to have both circumvented and fallen right into. The hole design sways slightly too often towards the stereotypical, or at least heavily-influenced, but this is moderated somewhat by some very atypical touches, including the monstrous brick-walled water feature and some large, sprawling green complexes which make 40-yard bunker escapes commonplace. The little touches; the flags and tee markers add to the realism of the

course: something that, in fairness, has never been a strong suit for the designer. 6/10

Appearance

The unorthodox texture choices are really quite joyful. The matted, dark greens won't be to everyone's tastes, but in my opinion, this is a damn sight closer to what greens actually look like on the majority of courses. I also enjoyed the brashness of the central water feature, and the estate-style fences housing playable woodland. It's unconventional, but certainly not unappealing to the eye. 7/10

Playability

The peculiar *melange* of sound includes barrages of frogs and crickets at some potentially very off-putting times around the greens and tees, which has to be a mark against. Elsewhere, the blind tee-shots and a slightly old-hat use of hole shapes and designs is unlikely to hold the course in the memory for too long, although there is some repeat value in going back once you are familiar with the layout. Better for tournament than casual play, this one. 5/10

Challenge

The course plays way longer than its intended yardage, and making par will frequently be a struggle. The huge greenside bunkers will swallow many an approach shot, and putting – while far from impossible – is often a challenge. You'll find scores tend well into the seventies here. 7/10

Technical

Largely, as one of Cristallo's most coherent and plausible courses, this earns its spurs. There's intelligent all-round use of the APCD to be seen, and the focus has been on producing effective golf, rather than furnishing the surroundings. I'm unconvinced whether the texture assignments are spot on, but there's very little to grab the eye in a negative way otherwise. I'm inclined to be generous. 8/10

Overall

Distinctive use of textures is the key here. Without them we'd be looking at some very peculiar forest golf. There's just enough here to keep the course alive.

33/50

Fairclnnis

Chuck Clark



Description

Imaginary, links course.

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

This is a consistently impressive links course characterised by open fairways, protected by rough mounds and pot-bunkers, and some very testing greens. There's an aura of artificiality about it, though, which accounts for the 'fantasy' rather than 'fictional' description, and just occasionally the hole design sways away from the links standard. A couple of holes have narrower fairways and water hazards in direct play, which forces you to play target golf, and this reduces the wide-open links-style

feel of the course. 8/10

Appearance

My main problem is with the dirt cliffs, which simply do not look right. Otherwise, there is plenty to draw the eye: some excellent low-level planting, several bonus objects to look at (I love the lighthouse and the windsurfer) and some brilliantly smooth blending, covered over with deep grass (ironically this is best at the cliff tops). Those that hate links golf will still be bowled over by the appearance of this course. 9/10

Playability

Tee shots are very permitting for the Champ and Elite players, which encourages you to go for some big shots. You have to be more selective along the coastline, of course. Putting is hard on the punishing greens, but the beauty of this course is the large number of ways available to tackle every hole. No two rounds are the same at Fairclnnis, and it will keep you coming back for more and more. And more. 9/10

Challenge

The difficulty level is well-pitched, although some of the challenge comes artificially from the ramped-up greens. The deep rough hazards are punishing and of course there's the constant threat of the ocean. These are negated to some extent by the open, wide fairways: if you hit them an approach shot should be pretty easy. My test round came in at -3, which represents a fair challenge overall. 8/10

Technical

Chuck Clark is a whiz with the APCD, but his courses do tend to have an artificial look about them. Certainly, although the grass textures look good here, the cliffs don't look natural and the greens could use some fine tuning. But there is some immaculate seam blending here, and the planting as a whole is superb. 8/10

Overall	A very good-looking and playable course. Don't expect realistic links, but play it for the shotmaking thrill and some stunning views.	42/50
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Fallow Fields

Mike Hornak



Description

Fictional, farmland course.

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

This course has some excellent qualities: wide fairways, penal bunkers and some wild-looking rough. Most holes are designed to traverse a narrow path between one or more of these, which is what links golf should be all about. Several hole designs are excellent and really make you work for position. Sadly, there is more than a touch of 'shape placement' about the course which – especially in the Top View – detracts from these otherwise good features. 7/10

Appearance

Certain areas of this course are wild, rough and very links-like in feel. Unfortunately, other parts, especially the rough in general, are just too fresh-hewn and clean-cut to be convincing. While the technical presentation is excellent (certainly by 2001 standards), this just isn't wild enough to really gain the top marks. 7/10

Playability

Fallow Fields is very playable for many reasons, not least the accommodating fairways and the need to avoid (at all costs) the deep bunkers. The Road Hole at St Andrews could take some lessons from the nasty bunkers here, and while they are perhaps not the most realistic, they are well placed and designed to genuinely cost you strokes. If you miss said bunkers, though, the course play honestly and fairly, which is all you need ask for. 8/10

Challenge

Part of the appeal of playing this course is the consistent risk/reward challenges it puts up for you. Strokes in the bunker or wild rough will be harshly punished; this is often compensated for by the easy greens. But this is precisely what links golf challenges are all about, and as such this course excels. 9/10

Technical

This is mostly made from stock, and some of the flaws are very obvious from the top. Certainly the many bunkers could require more attention, and the lack of blends is starting to look old-fashioned. But the likes of extrusions and planting are done extremely competently, and the course appeals as a result. 7/10

Overall	A playable course, but apparently designed using a painting-by-numbers scheme, which creates an artificiality that never makes you believe that you are playing links golf.	38/50
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Fantasy Hills 2

Niklas Oscarsson



Description

Imaginary, mountain course

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 4, approach

Concept

Fantasy Hills takes some obvious influences from Kylane, but is an impressive piece of work in its own right. With it's wide open and strategic holes, impressively-scaled rock faces and lavish, sweeping elevations, there is no doubt that this is a real, wild mountain. It's very absorbing, well set out, and a convincing atmosphere to boot. A most enjoyable round of golf. 8/10

Appearance

There's some entertaining visuals on offer, and it's nice – on a course with such gradients – to have a clear view of nearly every hole. The planting has gone to some extent to be clone-free, but at low levels, the grass is somewhat clumpy and sparse, which detracts slightly. The textures are underwhelming too. Despite the fantasy tag, though, this course is never unbelievable, thanks to a realistic view of what constitutes landscaping. 6/10

Playability

This is highly entertaining golf. All holes have a variety of options, thanks to split fairways, and sometimes greens. There's lots of eye candy and some passable ambient sound. One downer is that the greenside shots are made extremely difficult by the elevations, visibility and green slope. Approach shots that miss might well be heavily punished. 7/10

Challenge

I had to play this course several times to reassure myself that it wasn't as hard as one might think. This is certainly no Pine Forest Hills, and if you hit the snaps you could score particularly well. Sensible play will yield more pars than bogeys, and even if your score is over 72, it certainly won't be a disaster. 7/10

Technical

Planting and textures hallmark this as an early course, and inevitably set it back by today's standards. Other than that, this is a smashing one-off course from an otherwise unheard-of designer and fully deserves credit for the understanding of course layout and sophisticated challenge. 6/10

Overall	A fantasy mountain course that hasn't become carried away. Fun to play and a winner in its off-beat appeal.	34/50
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Faribault Golf Club

Timothy Boche



Description

Real, estate course

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 4, approach

Concept

A plum little country club, Faribault won't – I think it's fair to say – knock anyone's socks off, but there is room to admire what has been done with the space. Good hole sequencing allows a comfortable start to build into steadily more challenging golf, and the final hole is a clever piece of understated design. The course has been given a loving lease of life in Links, and the designer has injected a few little extra touches to ensure that it's not just 'another course'. 6/10

Appearance

The clubhouse complex has had time lavished over it, and has 3D construction to compare to many bigger names. The course itself is tidily blended, although the textures do feel a bit too pristine for this setting. Cloned trees are fairly rife, and the planting does suffer from appearing to be something of an afterthought. 7/10

Playability

Like Tim's other creations, part of the charm of playing Faribault is knowing that you are sharing a course that is very important to a Links designer. This just doesn't happen with the big tournament venues, and this track captures much of the charm that a Medinah or Olympia Fields never could. Sure, there's a bit to be desired in the narrow fairways and the one-route nature of most holes, but in some ways this isn't so much about the golf as just being there. 6/10

Challenge

There's been a clever realisation that many 'local' courses don't exactly present much challenge in links, and the texture properties of the rough have been cleverly adjusted to represent this. The tiny, heavily gradiented greens are not exactly player-friendly either, but so many shots will be played off a flat lie that setting up birdie after birdie is really no more than routine. 4/10

Technical

Credit has to be given to the designer for going the extra step or two when it would have been easy to release a course without frills. The 3D work and the texture work are proof enough of this. If only something similar was done about the planting! 7/10

Overall	A creditable effort to give that little something extra to one's local course. A pleasing little piece of whimsy.	<i>30/50</i>
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Fescue Hollow Golf Links

Mike Hornak



Description

Fictional, heathland course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

This is a moorland links course, not a seaside one, and as such minimises gimmicks such as water hazards and custom objects (bar the clubhouse). That's not to say it's a stern test: bunkers are adroitly placed (there are – bizarrely – two distinct sorts of bunker on the course) and tee shots to the wide open fairways are far from guaranteed safety. No holes stand out as particularly great, and there is a lingering 'constructed' feel to the course,

which should ideally be absent on the best links courses. 6/10

Appearance

From a head-up view, this is largely a convincing-looking course (the same cannot be said of the Top View, where the obvious shape placement is glaring). More could have been made of the textures, which look to me to be at odds with the course setting. The fescue grass rough looks lovely, and only serves to accentuate how out-of-place the manicured green fairways are. The panorama is understated but utterly fitting and is perhaps the best visual aspect of this course. 7/10

Playability

I found Fescue Fields to be quite a frustration to play, because the hazards were actually too well placed, thereby forcing me to play the course the way the designer wanted. Risking a shot and landing in the bunkers quickly became a no-no: they are deep and challenging enough to almost invariably cost a stroke. If you like sand saves, and are good at them, the Fescue Hollow might be your cup of tea. But you'll be in the minority. 5/10

Challenge

This is a tough course. Not least because of the devilish bunker placement, but the deep rough is cut close in to the fairway and will punish errant tee shots. Birdies are a rarity, thanks to bunkering, a variety of long grass, and some tough greens. Those playing anything harder than Pro Click will struggle. 6/10

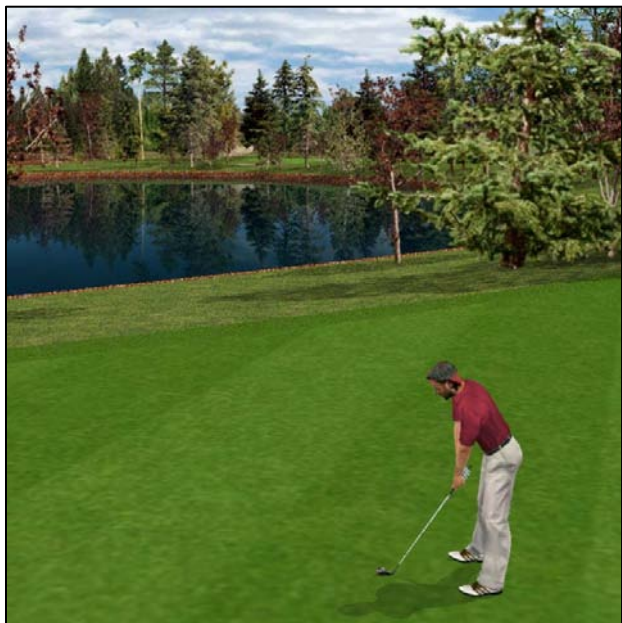
Technical

I don't want to knock the technical achievement here, because a lot of hard work has clearly gone into the course, but there are aspects that just don't look right. The fairways are clearly scythed out of the fescue grass, and some of the textures seem out of place. Some fairway textures are quite clearly 'painted', which spoils what should be a rolling links countryside. Mike Hornak turns out some superb courses, but I think this is just short of his best. 7/10

Overall	A tough ride, and a somewhat unconvincing attempt to recreate a moorland locale. This course isn't without its strong points, but be prepared to get to know it the hard way.	31/50
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FiddleStyx CC

Mike Nicely



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

I really don't understand FiddleStyx. It's by turns wild and well trimmed, fantastical and down-to-earth, subtle yet garish. The course is marked by some tough, almost sadistic shots, a wild mix of trees and rocks, and plenty of water. There's very little cohesion and certainly a fair amount of confusion. 3/10

Appearance

A somewhat difficult use of textures has led to an odd appearance. The deep rough, while admirably customised, is too obviously chequered, and making it undroppable is ultimately very frustrating with the proliferation of water hazards on the course. Some odd choices of surface are deployed on occasion, particularly the brick texture surrounding some of the water. There's also a lack of subtlety in the planting, especially at low levels, and the elevations are generally a bit too sharp in general. 3/10

Playability

Fiddlestyx is a bit of a jigsaw in that it succeeds where courses such as Cogitara fail, in making you puzzle out the right shots at every juncture. There's a good amount of judgement required and surprisingly few frustrating holes, which points to a distinct cleverness on the designer's part. It's not perfect, by any means, but it's devilishly good when it wants to be. 7/10

Challenge

Cripes! There aren't many courses with greens this awful. Massive plateaus and gradients make putting a nightmare. Add these to some intrusive planting, an almost certainty of finding the water twice or three times, and some awful cunning bunkering, and scores are bound to rocket. In many ways, though, the worst aspect are the frequent blind tee shots, often into trouble, which makes you feel rather hard done by. 3/10

Technical

A more judicious use of textures springs quickly to mind here. It's all very well producing impressive customisations, but the properties are all to pot here, and the mappings highlight the course's age more than anything else. The elevations need a practised eye to prevent this course wandering into the fantastical. But the planting, largely, shows a sure hand and the layout is of good order. Old but competent. 4/10

Overall	A bit of an oddball course, borderline fantasy, somewhat tricky to play, and starting to show its age.	20/50
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Firestone CC – North Course

Ed Balaun



Description

Real, lakeside course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

The North Course is very reminiscent of an alpine course in its rolling terrain and use of drop-offs as hazards, and it wouldn't be a surprise to find that the designer has modelled the appearance of the course to accentuate this aspect of the course. Once you dig a bit deeper, of course, there are quite a few course design trademarks being thrown into the mix, which – if it weren't for the fabulously confrontational Par 5s – might spoil the ambience somewhat. Happily, Firestone carries off this meshwork of styles reasonably well. 6/10

Appearance

With the famous Firestone giant golf ball as a reassuring customised presence, there is little doubt about the hard work that has gone into parts of this course. The textures are a break from the norm, the planting deftly carried out (with maybe just a hint of a clone or two), and the elevations smoothly handled. There are suspicions that the hole widths have been slimmed down a little, which is a distraction from something that could have been very, very good. 6/10

Playability

There's an effortless enjoyability about this track which isn't found too often in the tougher Real courses. The use of water keeps the golfing brain constantly in gear, and the hazards feature in quirky, if not completely unexpected, fashion. The variety of challenges playing on different conditions gives the course legs in a tournament, too. 7/10

Challenge

The greens are a bugbear. They appear to be tilted rather than moulded, and are consequently rather frustrating. The fairway narrowness has been mentioned, but there's not too much to worry the golfer by missing them. Careful hitting will take the majority of hazards out of play too. A reasonable balance, even if not quite the overall package. 7/10

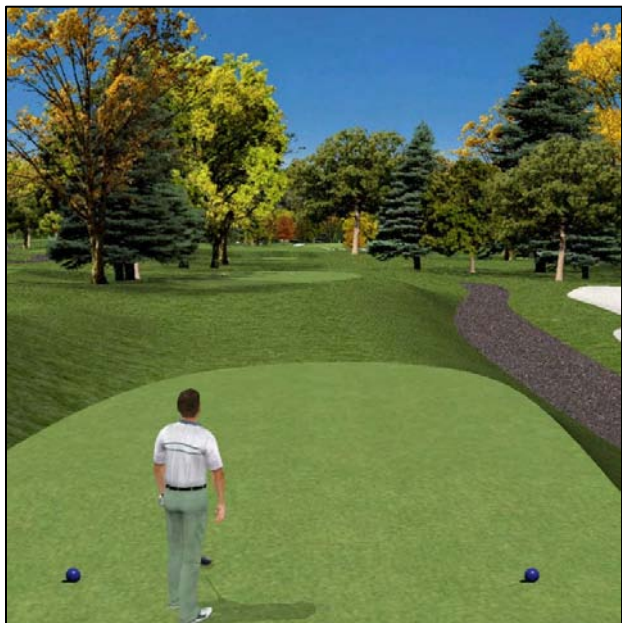
Technical

The large amount of customisation is worthy of appreciation and generosity, as are the imaginative approaches towards textures and the panorama. For all that, Firestone North still hasn't quite escaped the 2001 disillusionment which several other courses of the period seem to have elevated themselves beyond. 6/10

Overall	Unusually, an APCD partner to an MS course. Better than the South Course almost by default, but that shouldn't mean it isn't worthy of the golfer's attention.	<i>32/50</i>
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Firestone CC – South Course

Microsoft



Description

Real, parkland course.

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

The things that strike you most about Firestone are the eclectic and exciting planting, and some really tough and ramped-up greens. They swallow some otherwise very straight and ordinary holes and transform what might have been dull into a course with a modicum of interest. But it's a typical American tournament course, reliant on the long and straight, without many fripperies, and suffers as a consequence. 4/10

Appearance

For an old, tired VGA Tour course, this isn't too bad. Yes, it's reliant on stock textures and seams are terrible. Yes, there's a lack of clear views and the mesh work is dire, especially around bunkers. But the use of colours and inventiveness in the planting is ahead of anything from its time, and for that alone the course holds up. 5/10

Playability

Given the lack of variety in the hole designs, this is a decent round of golf, providing you can adjust to the American-tournament-golfer mentality. One fairly major annoyance is the prevalence of hard, wide paths; while they don't always adversely affect your score, it is irritating to watch them bounce stray shots all over the course. That one thing aside, this course passes the time relatively well for one of its age. 7/10

Challenge

Firestone is one that has been pitched well. Certainly, the greens are tough, and may be fractionally beyond the pale for Mod players. But there's nothing in the way of deep rough, and approach shots will require forethought and precision. The Par 4s might not give up many strokes: save your game for the long 'uns. 9/10

Technical

By the standards of its time, this is a cut above. Only slightly above, mind you: there's some poor surface work and a lack of low-level planting. But the customisation looks great, and you can tell the designers have pushed the boat out (somewhat!) to model features that might otherwise have been overlooked. 5/10

Overall	A course with some appeal, despite the sinking reputation of older MS tracks. Requires a little more flair than on first appearance, and will present a tough challenge to the best putters.	30/50
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Flood Lands GC

Chuck Clark



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

There are no clues in the Readme - the flood plains like this might be at home in Louisiana or the Deep South.

Conditions

Some pins need a slower setting and I wouldn't go past M*/S*

Concept

The concept and location behind Flood Lands is cute and has been well conveyed using some pretty simple techniques. Underneath, though, it feels very much like a case of golf-design-by-numbers: all the standard hole variations and a strategic challenge that is common to too many of Chuck's courses. 5/10

Appearance

The off-track 'Dry Grass' texture is the unique selling point, and it has to be said that the trees have been well picked to suit the idea of a region that is frequently flooded. The paths abut harshly onto other course features and there is an odd choice of flower planting which doesn't really fit with the rest of the course. Most frustrating is the lack of attention to elevations and the grittiness of textures in mid-to-long range. 5/10

Playability

Anyone with a history of playing fictional courses will recognise some of this course only too well, and there's really not much to fire the imagination, despite the designer's pretences to jazzing it up with a number of water hazards. The net result, of course, is that the course actually depletes the imagination required, as most holes have their common-sense route. 4/10

Challenge

Whatever the course's flaws, it has to be said that the designer knows how to present a good challenge, and Par is very much the right number around the less extravagant holes. Some of the forced water carries take the edge off a bit, but it's a well-balanced course for at least 14 holes! 8/10

Technical

Chuck has done reasonably well within a limited brief, but the continuing impression is that he hasn't really stretched himself to produce this course. Textures are something of a problem, as is the lack of blends and uninspired bunker lips. The elevations need serious looking at because at certain points the course becomes inordinately dull. This could – and should – have been more. 4/10

Overall	Not the designer's most convincing effort. This is rushed and stereotyped.	26/50
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Fontana GC

Thomas Wagner



Description

Real, heathland course

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Fontana is quite unexpected in straight-laced Austria. It is carefully constructed to take advantage of hazards, rather than elevations, and has a large amount of viewer-friendly risk/reward golf. The Links version is somewhat cartoonish, in the designer's normal style, but has moments of beauty along the way. Overall, it's an impressive and almost over-awing creation, as well as being a vital European tour stop. 9/10

Appearance

Certain features, such as the detail in the grass planting, and the incredible rockworks, are mould-breaking and the most photo-realistic that we've seen. Sadly, there are a few flaws elsewhere. There's some obvious shaping of the textures around many transitions, and the waterside in particular is unfortunately delimited. There are quite a few clones visible in the planting too. Despite good customisation, there is something about the designer's style which will not quite appeal to all eyes. 8/10

Playability

Fontana is very immersive, compulsive and daring, and very difficult to ignore. There's a lot of choice, a great deal of risk/reward and that key feature of being pulled onwards to the next tee to see what is facing you. The holes become steadily more tasty as you approach the clubhouse; the 18th being a terrific Par 5 to rival the closer at Pebble Beach. 10/10

Challenge

With deep rough perfectly placed to catch the errant tee shot, and hazarding designed to pick out the unwary without being intrusive, there is a lot to be cautious about at Fontana. For those that can pick out their shots, though, a few birdie opportunities will present themselves: don't expect legions of them or easy low scores by any means. 8/10

Technical

Some of the techniques here mark another great stride forward for the designer, and the delicate planting and custom textures are on a Par with any. There's not quite enough consistency around the course to garner full marks, though: nearly every great bit of work is undone by a neighbouring view that suffers from shape placement or an inadequate texture. 8/10

Overall	Despite the occasional flaw, one of the best – and most exciting – stops on the virtual European tour.	<i>43/50</i>
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Forest Akers - West

Brian Kangas



Description

Real, woodland course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from rough.

Concept

This is quite special for a college course. Although it can't be said that every hole is designed with stunning originality, there are several nice twists in the tale and a genuinely good locational feel to the course. Bunkers are charmingly underused, and yet some clever fairway shapes and greens mean that Forest Akers remains absolutely no pushover. This is a course that doesn't get the recognition it is due – time for that to change. 7/10

Appearance

This re-creation has generally been very capably carried out, although there are a few areas worthy of attention in order to make it truly good-looking. While the use of multiple textures is admirable, they do contrast somewhat, with several hard edges quite apparent. Perhaps some custom textures would be more appropriate. The planting, too, seems a bit too careful and keen to avoid clones, with the result that it's a bit lurid. Lastly, the old extruded edges make their appearance: particularly around tee boxes. It's admirable that the course still looks good despite these. 6/10

Playability

With hole shapes tending towards the straight, there might not be enough interest for some. But for those who persevere, there is an excellent opportunity to mix things up later on, and a suprising lack of short pitch shots, plus an Easter Egg or too later in the round. It'll never be a premium tournament course, but for a quiet half hour, Forest Akers is a good choice. 6/10

Challenge

This course has lost none of its challenge. With narrow fairways and a close woodland surround, stray shots will be punished. The Par 3s are lengthy and you'll do well to hit the greens off the tee. But, thankfully, there are opportunities to pick up strokes on the longer holes and most players will finish a couple under par. A good test, all told. 8/10

Technical

Definite priorities would be the hard texture edges and the somewhat odd planting. The tee boxes are poorly extruded and oddly shaped for reasons best known to the designer. A little bit of fine elevation work might pay off too: with a lot of uphill approaches, I found that the caddy was often landing me short of the pin by 10 yards or so. Lastly, some pin positions are very close to the edges of greens (admittedly, said greens are small), and could use a little re-thought. 5/10

Overall	A very under-rated course and a very enjoyable one. Perhaps looking a little dated, but that's no reason not to play it.	32/50
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Forest Legend @ KISS Tours

Bob Hankla



Description	Screenshot	Par
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Fictional, forest course	17 th hole, Par 4	72
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Location

This has a Mid-west feel to me, but it's only a guess.

Conditions

Plays at F*/F*, probably safest a notch slower.

Concept

Immaculately conceived amid dense forest, this is a real treat from an experienced designer and still retains a lot of credibility some seven years after the release of the latest version. Water plays parts both decorative and challenging, and the course takes a lot of inspiration from the likes of Riviera, Augusta and Medinah. The overall presentation is let down slightly by hasty hole previews and no real sense of location, but there's enough golf here that you can overlook that. 7/10

Appearance

Age has been kind to the textures, which still look great even in this high-res age. The bunkers are well sculpted and blended, although you get the sense that the more extreme elevation changes were a quickly-added afterthought. The woods are deep, dense and underplanted, with genuine mystery, although there has necessarily been some cloning. The reeds and suchlike by the waterside have stood the test of time very well too. 8/10

Playability

An excellent gradient to this course gives you the benefit of several open and honest holes to start, before slyly adding in the water as you pass the turn. It's never done to excess, and there's plenty of replayability with subtle line changes and green approaches all the way around – pin positioning can be a huge bearing on your round here. This is still holding up strong after some time. 9/10

Challenge

The greens are extremely accommodating here, and even though the forest looks menacing, you'll have to be a pretty wild hitter to get lost in the trees. Forest Legend relies principally on its water hazards for a stern test, and even good golfers will probably have to concede a penalty stroke or two. But, by then, they might be six or seven ahead of the game, thanks to an inoffensive front nine and plenty of reachable Par 5s. 6/10

Technical

Some lumpiness in the extrusions and one or two sections which haven't received any work are still apparent, but it's a huge compliment to this course to say it remains credible after all the developments and advancements which superseded it. If anything, it's perhaps improved slightly over time. 7/10

Overall	A cut above the average sterile woodland course. Planned in detail and plenty of fun to play.	37/50
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Four Seasons Resort Aviara

Microsoft



Description

Real, parkland course.

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

The resort aspect of this course certainly plays its part. The holes thread their way in between chalets and park roads. These features do a great job of setting the location without becoming intrusive and gimmicky. Hole design is varied, although there's little that really stands out, other than the beautiful 11th hole. It's a decent course on the whole, but if you're going to incorporate a course into a golf game, why not go for something spectacular? 6/10

Appearance

The good, the bad and the ugly. At its best (above), Four Seasons is stunning. At its worst, the planting looks cheap, sparse and lined-up; the ugliness derives from the awful unnatural terrain work – surely these elevations don't look like this in real life. There are a few hard edges, particularly around the paths, which would be better omitted. 5/10

Playability

This is a great course for shot-shapers and shot-makers. There are plenty of rolling elevations to test your approaches and often you tee off almost at right angles to the fairway. Water features (although sadly not bunkers, which are almost non-existent) add an appropriate amount of interest and variety. The one downside is trying to putt on the ridiculous greens, which feature improbable slopes, and even more improbable pin positions. 8/10

Challenge

Despite the challenge presented on the smooth parts, this is an easy course to score on, mostly thanks to the lack of fairway protection. Even if you mis-hit your drive, there's a good chance you'll wind up on some smooth, flattish ground for an easy approach. The course plays easily, as one would expect of a resort course, and your chance of wanting to going back to improve is minimal. 5/10

Technical

This should have been better. The elevation work is woefully poor, and some of the textures clash. While the planting is good in places, it looks uncared for in others. My impression is that a lot of work has gone into creating the resort features, and not enough into the aspects that make a golf course playable and enjoyable. 5/10

Overall	Just as if you were on holiday there: play it once, relax, and then pack up your clubs and move on.	29/50
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Fox Cove Forest Golf Club

Paul Dalglish



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Paul Dalglish has eased quietly into the reputation of producing competent, enjoyable, but unremarkable courses for Links, and Fox Cove pretty much fulfils that brief. It's a sterile but coherent environment featuring a country-club set of holes on a largely flat plot. In fact, for competitive golf it makes a decent host, but it's hardly memorable or striking enough to pay repeat visits to on your own. 5/10

Appearance

A tasteful texture and planting set and a suitably subdued panorama are low-key winners, but the bunker work is rudimentary, and the blending work is wildly inconsistent. There's not much at all in the way of exciting, dynamic views, and this is the real disappointment. It almost feels like the designer is covering up. 5/10

Playability

For some reason, this possesses a fair amount of stimulation on the first round. Perhaps because many holes are long without being arduous, there's a high price placed on your accuracy with both tee shot and approach shot. There's not much by way of repeat value, but Fox Cove does have the happy knack of at least providing a one-off form of entertainment. Some good sound planting would have improved the experience so much more. 6/10

Challenge

Unexpectedly tough, this is a lengthy course with deeply punishing thickets of rough which are guaranteed to cost at least one stroke. Throwing in the odd 'easy' hole does little to improve the balance, and it almost feels prescriptive when the designer is throwing the player a bone as an incentive to keep playing. Regardless of whether you take the bait or not, the net result will most likely be a round in the high seventies. 5/10

Technical

It's all about the refinements. Although there's good planting and underplanting, it's nearly all from stock, and there's very little elsewhere helping to make the course memorable. The texture blending is inconsistent, messy at points (if the desired effect was for scattered sand around the paths, then it hasn't really come off), and too little has been done with the elevations to convince me that the designer really had his heart in it. 4/10

Overall	A singularly average course, with an unsingularly average rating. Worth a round or two with a friend, but might be left out to dry after that.	25/50
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Foxfire Country Club - Spring

Lacy Gearhart



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

There's a very quaint, austere style associated with Lacy's courses, and Foxfire is certainly no exception. The rich (albeit dated) textures, and some well-observed planting do an awful lot in terms of the overall course ambience. Hole design tends towards the ungenerous and narrow, which is a shame, although clearly the difficulty gradient has occupied a significant amount of time. As ever with a Gearhart course, you can be assured of a break from the norm. 6/10

Appearance

The attention to detail could still teach course designers a thing or two today. Flowerbeds, rocks and upper-level planting are of very high quality, with very few clones. The texture colour set is brave but effective (more so at closer range than longer), but the terrain does suffer from signs of shape-placement and the occasional extrusion mark. The stock panorama does little to lift the course. 6/10

Playability

The sound detail is charming and something that many more designers should take to heart in realising how well ambient sound lifts a course. The golfing values are an odd mix – the opening holes are terrifically engaging, but later on it becomes arduous more than anything: the Par 5 holes in particular, being soul-less, over-long and unappealing. 5/10

Challenge

I'm in two minds about how to rate this. Certainly, Par is very much the right number here. But you will find yourself on some near-unplayable greens and some difficult target areas even on route to a good score. At the end of the day, it's clear the designer has taken the crucial extra time to difficulty-adjust this course, which is an area too often missed. And the age of the course is fair excuse for some over-the-top putting. 8/10

Technical

For its time, there's nothing poor with the work at Foxfire. It would have been nice to see more of a stretch in terms of panorama, and a continuation of the impact golf offered by the opening holes would have ensured a truly excellent round. 7/10

Overall	Standout in terms of Gearhart artwork, but perhaps less so when the enjoyment values start to devalue around the turn.	32/50
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Frankfurter Golf Club

Microsoft



Description

Real, forest course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from greenside bunker.

Concept

Narrow fairways wind their way in between thick, dense forest. It's nothing we haven't seen before. Although the tee shots generally keep you thinking, in terms of the shape required, the approach shots and greens are monotonous and really drag the course down. The fact that it's as flat as a pancake doesn't help either. 4/10

Appearance

There's not much to look at here, and its stunning that Microsoft are palming something this primitive off as a 2003 course. A lack of seam blends and elevations (even on the small scale) stands out. Custom objects are few and far between and the whole course lacks charm or eye candy. 2/10

Playability

I didn't enjoy playing this, due to the ease of missing the fairway off the tee, and the fact that it is too easy to score par or better on every hole. There is no concept of risk/reward and no optional ways of playing any hole. After 12 holes without once being in serious trouble, I was ready to give up, and only the prospects of eagles on the closing Par 5s kept me going. 2/10

Challenge

There's something seriously wrong with a course when you can slice your tee shot into deep woods and still comfortably par the hole after a chip shot onto the fairway. It's all very well the fairways being narrow, but there is a serious lack of anything to punish you if you don't hit them. Bunkers are ill-thought-out and rarely come into play. The rough is easily escapable. A score close to 60 should be quite easy. 2/10

Technical

There's not much to praise here. The flatness of the course is worrying – surely even the real course cannot be this horizontal. Shapes are not blended, and the look is artificial, despite being based on a real course. A few custom objects liven up the round, but there's not nearly enough customisation, in terms of appearance or challenge. 4/10

Overall	Microsoft at its worst. Uninspiring, ugly and unsuitable for the Links golfer. Surely there must have been a better option for conversion than this.	14/50
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Friday Lake

Jon Burnett



Description

Fictional, lakeside course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 3

Par

72

Location

Based on a bit of guesswork and the readme, this seems to be in Hertfordshire.

Conditions

Inconsistent pin placements mean you wouldn't want to push this past M*/M*

Concept

This delightful first-time effort is based on real landscape with a fictional, and rather daring, golf course threaded around it. Indeed, at times it all gets a bit overwhelming, with a lot of shaped holes and one or two silly carries. But there has been enough done with the landscape and presentation here to sell the design, and there are one or two moments of charm even if the sum of the parts doesn't always quite add up. 6/10

Appearance

In the absence of civilisation, bright almost lime-green textures have taken the foreground, although they are not as bright as the eye-searing hole previews! Generally, things have been done well, although the bunkers lack the hallmarks of time and the panorama is definitely not at the right height. But stick around, for there are a couple of really classy moments, including the small dock on the lake and the dramatic approach to the 11th hole. 7/10

Playability

There's real pleasure to be had in these offbeat designs, and making the most of this course provides most of the course's continuing appeal. OK, so without much ambient sound and unhelpful hole previews it can sometimes be a lonely experience, but it's a course I find myself turning to time and time again. 8/10

Challenge

At times way too accessible, Friday Lake also has real costs in the over-reliance in water (admittedly only on a handful of holes) and dense woodland with impenetrable trees. Rather than scoring bogey for erring, you'll often suffer a double or treble, and it's this that puts the balance really out of kilter. But, with reasonable putting, rough and bunkers, you'll hit plenty of birdies too. Perhaps a course that scores so few pars needs a bit of a closer examination...6/10

Technical

Some of the underplanting and bunker work is beginning to look dated here, although there is plenty to still enjoy, not least the designer's ambition to use real landscape and some careful planting at all levels. Perhaps a bit less insistence on inaccessible and fanciful holes would have helped the course be more coherent. 7/10

Overall

A delightful amble with some scenic if unbalanced golf.

34/50

Fullerton Woods GC

McCoist



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, parkland course	2 nd hole, Par 4	71

Location

Based heavily around courses and landscape in Scotland.

Conditions

There are a few greens which would keep me at M*/M*

Concept

A very credible effort at reproducing a more standardised British club course, Fullerton is largely flat and grassy, and there are clever indications that it sets out to trap the average hacker in the easily-driven brooks and bunkers. There are plenty of moments of subtle beauty and charm in the subtly-planted and laid-out holes. Definitely a more mature and thoughtful course from this designer, it doesn't aim to blow your socks off and is all the better in that respect. 8/10

Appearance

Some stunning texture work is evident around the bunkers, both sod-walled and grass-surrounded, and the planting has been carefully observed and feels slightly wild without letting go the pretensions of a carefully-manicured course. The panorama is a perfect fit to the region, and the atmosphere is aided with a minimum of course extras. It's a shame that the mid-textures tend towards tiling. 8/10

Playability

I thoroughly enjoyed my test rounds at Fullerton Woods, and it was due in no small part to the realism and the sort of challenges I'd expect to encounter at my local club. There is very little done to excess, other than the ambient sound which caused some quite problematic lag on my machine. 8/10

Challenge

It's often the case that sub-7000 yard courses such as these play far too easily; thankfully, this is not the case here, owing to a sprinkling of deep rough, and the nasty pot bunkers dotted round most greens. Hole shaping is used well, too, with the natural instinct to hit a 5-wood off most tees making for a tougher approach. In all likelihood, a few strokes under par is realistic, but there's no walkover to be had here. 7/10

Technical

McCoist is slowly building his reputation with courses that have some stunning views, and with the clever, realistic designs here he has definitely been able to add another string to his bow. Water features and mid-range textures are still work in progress, so it's not quite yet perfect, but it's damn good nevertheless. 8/10

Overall	A rare successful attempt to convey the more average standard of British course. This has realism by the bucket-load.	39/50
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Gales Croft Golf Club

Brian Jameson



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Inspired by, if not set in, Liverpool

Conditions

S*/S* only

Concept

Despite the alleged English locale, the sheer length and demands of this course make it very reminiscent of an American Championship course. It's short of subtlety and, to be honest, pretty short on convincing location too. But Brian's consistency with the APCD has resulted in yet another playable course, and one which could well be kept around for a stiff test. 4/10

Appearance

There are a lot of things done passably well. Underplanting, bunker lips and blends have all received their due attention, even if graphically the whole experience doesn't stand up and grab you. But there's a disconcerting cartoony feel to what should otherwise be a gritty course, particularly around the running water, a lack of interesting natural elevation work, and a noticeable lack of course extras. 5/10

Playability

There's difficulty in engaging yourself with this course. It's long, often very difficult (occasionally unacceptably) and quite sterile. The hazards are pretty obviously presented, even if they have for the large part been well-placed. I can't really say I enjoyed my round very much. 3/10

Challenge

Really problematic greening, particularly by today's standards, has resulted in some unmakeable putts due to slope, or pin position, or both. I also found a number of lies which – while not impossible – were certainly hard enough to prevent par. At least one hole made tree escapes an unwelcome proposition too. It's not going to win many favours in the modern links community. 3/10

Technical

There has been a lot done very well here, but the course hasn't really come out to match. There's definitely problems in the elevation work and a lack of playtesting, but much of Gales Croft's problems stem from it just being very long and hard to play with enthusiasm, not through any design work. 6/10

Overall

Not the best of this designer's courses. You'd do well to pass.

21/50

GC3D – The Virtual Plantation

François Cristallo



Description

Imaginary, marshland course

Screenshot

2nd, hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Odd. One of the few courses that it is virtually impossible to pin down to a firm location, GC3D is an odd mish-mash of trees of many colours, grassy desert and water features, all surrounded by a rocky terrain panorama. It wins no points for credibility: thankfully the golfing design is suitably imaginative, if not necessarily realistic. As a concept goes, it's sadly firmly below average. 3/10

Appearance

Despite the oddball concept, the course is not bad looking on the whole, with the sandy texture blends around the bunkers being both bold and good-looking at the same time. The planting suffers close-up and is lacking around the water, but the texture choices are good, and you could always believe you are hacking around a golfing tranquillity. 7/10

Playability

You'd be liar to call any course of Cristallo's a washout. Strong emphasis on the accuracy of every shot, while still leaving plenty of room for invention, is the hallmark here. To some extent it works, although it's not inconceivable that people would tire of incessantly being pushed by the course. 7/10

Challenge

Birdies are very much at a premium at The Virtual Plantation. The Par 5s are monsters, and the deep rough pushes hard up to the fairway. Pretty much the only ways to make or break par are to keep it in the short grass, which is a bit too stringent, even for the best golfer. Several over will be your likely round. 5/10

Technical

Too many nagging errors such as: inappropriate texture assignments; wild choices and heavy handedness with the planting; and the rock terrain surround are all detractors from a decent round of golf. While overblown ostentation with the APCD is necessary in some situations, here it just means a massive and unwarranted file size. 5/10

Overall	An almost indefinable oddity of a course. Simultaneously fun, frustrating and vulnerable. Definitely one of a kind.	27/50
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Gentle Hills

Richard Latanville & John Brooks



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 4

Par

74

Location

The designer isn't inclined to provide Readme files; I'd guess the landscape at Virginia, based on previous designs.

Conditions

It's ill-advised to go past S*/S*

Concept

The title being apparently an excuse for plenty of elevated tees, this is somewhat nondescript, despite drawing inspiration from a fair few classic holes. The uncomfortable mixture of tournament-grade and homespun golf holes doesn't sit easily on this unusual Par 74, and it's hard to fathom the designer's intentions at times: wildly disparate hole lengths, green difficulties and tee positions make for uncomfortable bed-fellows. 4/10

Appearance

Despite an overhaul, there are plenty of stretched, blurry textures here, along with some obviously delineated planting and stretched shapes. The water hazards deserve more attention, too. Having said that, the whole thing works well against the panorama, and there's a nice line in bunkers with effective grassy lips. 4/10

Playability

Golf that is stimulating for golf's sake is often a difficult thing to create, and there is more than a little of the routine and obvious around Gentle Hills. Certainly, the 'hills' aspect doesn't make itself felt as often as it could, and the hazarding doesn't present much by the way of thought. Although there are pretensions to creative golf, playing each hole carefully in the manner prescribed by the hole preview inevitably leads to success. Yawn. 3/10

Challenge

A Mod-friendly remake should surely have toned down the greens, and the landing areas generally are absurdly generous, especially with the woods never being more than a tangential threat. At least one hole is an obvious eagle target, and you can expect birdies even on the low handicap numbers. 4/10

Technical

The obvious peculiarities aren't enough to give this course a name, and there are some real clunkers such as apparently unfinished bunkers, massive and unnecessary aiming markers, and in one case a tree blocking the tee shot. John's updates must have made significant improvements; I'm only glad I never played the original, in that case. 4/10

Overall	A largely unsuccessful attempt at stimulating risk-reward golf.	19/50
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Ghost Horse Pass

Jörg Dommermuth



Description

Fictional, heathland course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

This is something a bit different. Set amid dry, ravaged wilderness, and surrounded by dead trees (possible victims of forest fire?), Ghost Horse Pass is a raw, but potentially exciting selection of tight fairways and heroic golf. The whole holds together surprisingly well, given the inappropriate stock textures and panorama, and – although hole designs tend towards the navigate-through-the-forest variety – there's just about enough novelty to hold one's interest. 5/10

Appearance

Despite some lovely efforts in foresting the low grasses and care with the trees above, there are just too many glaring problems here. The water and bunker sculpture is very rough, and the terrain hasn't been handled with enough care, being obviously extruded in some places and pancake flat in others. The panorama doesn't work with the expectations of the course, and the less said about the textures and blending the better. 3/10

Playability

If you can overlook some of the problems that dog your round, there's a likelihood you'll quite enjoy trying to get the most out of this course. A lot of shots will be played blind from under 150 yards, and although sometimes it can be frustrating to be caught up in the deep grass, there are few occasions when you are genuinely inextricable, no matter how bad your slice. Mod and Elite players will want to steer clear, though. 5/10

Challenge

Really tough stuff. A missed fairway will almost inevitably result in a dropped stroke or two, and the greens are tricky, bordering on the unfair. The trees are used as extra hazarding, and to be honest the designer has exerted far more thought on how to punish the golfer than how to reward him. 3/10

Technical

It's easy to keep nitpicking at Ghost Horse Pass. There's only one pin position per hole, there's inadequate use of elevation tools, there's no blends in this 2004 design, the list goes on. Fair credit to the designer for persevering, but more fine attention really needs to be applied to his courses. 2/10

Overall	A little bit different, and a little bit unusual, but quite a large bit flawed.	18/50
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Glen Abbey (Fall)

Len Kroese



Description

Real, parkland course.

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

It's hard to know what to make of this course. No matter how realistic this representation, it does present the feel of being somewhat randomly scattered across the landscape. Only on a handful of holes does it gain a real coherence. Having said this, several additional holes have a typically-Nicklaus cunning design which isn't always apparent until too late. 5/10

Appearance

I have issues with the tree colours, which are not always consistent with the intended time of year, and with some pretty poor extrusion edges left around nearly all the objects. Custom textures are used throughout, but make the course look inexplicably dark. You have to look closely to find the real bonuses in terms of appearance: the sand 'splashes' next to bunkers, the handsome road bridge, and the custom objects off the line of play are excellent. Sadly there are too many flaws for them to hold the course up. 5/10

Playability

Generally, Glen Abbey plays quite smoothly, due to a variety of options on most holes, and the unusual arrangement of pars on the back nine. The frustration sets in when you miss the fairway, as the first-cut is very penal, and some woodland lies require a punch shot escape, which is generally quite unpredictable. It's the sort of course that plays better on repeated rounds, as you discover new lines and objects, so make sure you go for it more than once. 7/10

Challenge

Glen Abbey is a reasonable challenge, thanks to a multitude of risk/reward holes, and an excellent variety of Par 3s. The greens are tough without being unrealistic, and hazards are well placed. Perhaps, to make it a more realistic imposition on the golfer, some of the rough needs to be toned down, but then that might just make it too easy! 8/10

Technical

Several aspects need work here. The extrusions look poor, and the greens occasionally look painted up rather than artfully constructed. The custom textures are carefully used, but could do with being a lighter shade overall. The planting at certain points looks random and unrealistic. It's a shame, but a course with so much good customisation still needs more work. 4/10

Overall

Certainly a different course, in terms of visual appeal and playability. It might take some time to get to grips with, and occasionally looks a bit amateurish, but it presents some good gameplay if you persevere.

29/50

Glendevon

Gordon Martin



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Glendevon is allegedly set among the Scottish Highlands, but you'd have difficulty believing it. A riot of colour and some altogether un-Links-like golf do not exactly smack true of the home of golf. While the course is reasonably diverting in itself, it doesn't feel well planned, and the riotous overkill of rocks, water and custom course objects fail to disguise that here is course that has probably lost its way somewhat in the design process. 3/10

Appearance

The course is almost cartoon-like with the vivid texture choices, and masses of planted rocks and flowers. Further up, there's a fair amount of cloning, and while the panorama is decently impressive and apt, there's just nothing holding the various elements of the course together. It's not terribly pleasant on the eye, and certainly not believable. 4/10

Playability

There's some good golfing values to be had here, if fitfully, but the lack of coherence to the course and some tight target areas take their toll eventually and the closing stretch just eventually feels like it's trying to hard. Unsympathetic pin positions and an odd approach to texture assignments mean that it's hard to come back to this one. 4/10

Challenge

It's probably a bit too easy to pick up strokes, especially on the shorter holes and some pretty easy Par 5s. Some tighter hazarding would have helped, as would time focused on making the rough areas unplayable, not just appealing. 4/10

Technical

OK, every designer has to start somewhere, and we've got Gordon to thank for bringing us the gorgeous Sarazen Links. But this would be better credited as a fantasy course, such is the imbalance in attention between superficial gloss and actual, entertaining golf. One of those courses which gets knocked down very easy and never really recovers. 4/10

Overall	Bright, garish and entertaining for only a hole or two at a time.	<i>19/50</i>
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Glenmuir Golf & Country Club

Andy Muir



Description

Fictional, woodland course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, on green.

Concept

An old adage about books and their covers might prove appropriate here. Glenmuir comes in a tiny filesize and has many surface flaws, but is – for the large part – intelligently and fairly constructed, using the pine trees to best advantage. Unfortunately, there's also a fair amount of laziness, too, evident most painfully in some stock shapes from the APCD. It takes a hefty edge off what is otherwise a much better course than you'd have any right to expect. 6/10

Appearance

Masses of issues here, from the use of only about three trees, to yet another Whistler pano, to some obvious and painful extrusion and the use of stock textures. There are *some* elevations, but they are very inconsistent and the course is very flat in points. But there is credit due for the use of a few niceties: course buildings and ballwashers are very welcome, as is the fence planting that makes an appearance towards the close. 3/10

Playability

With an impressive range of holes, reachable Par 5s, and one clever and very short Par 4, Glenmuir – for the large part – really engages the golfer. The use of the trees is great in lieu of fairway bunkers, and the greens have mostly stood the test of time. Unfortunately, the biggest detractors to the game – other than the lack of much-needed hole previews – are the obvious technical errors that dog the course. 5/10

Challenge

Glenmuir has aged very respectably compared to its peers. With sensible pin positioning, there are no Mod-unfriendly putts, and the tight foresting will often necessitate a chip-out to get yourself back on track. The Par 5s generally require a cleverly-shaped second shot to hit the green: the weakest link is a run of holes near the end that are just a little too simple. 6/10

Technical

Far too many problems here, not least the reliance on APCD defaults and lack of patience – not that this is unsurprising – with planting. More than anything, though, I'd like to see the uneven elevations given a going-over and really fine-tuning the golfing challenge. 2/10

Overall	Very, very old-hat as far as basic design goes, but delve a bit deeper and there's an intelligent golf design under the façade.	22/50
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Golf Club des Volcans

Dominique Bois



Description

Real, parkland course.

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

Not the crazy tropical isle that you might be expecting, Des Volcans is a real course nestling amid several extinct volcanoes in the heart of France. It's an engaging course with several subtly understated holes – the Par 3s in particular use the forest hazards very entertainingly – and a real atmosphere and sense of environment. Just when you think you've seen it all, the course hits you with a great closing stretch, and what might have been mediocre becomes a memorable round. 7/10

Appearance

The yellow-green, almost lurid, textures are a novel touch and work surprisingly well. The laid-back planting isn't quite as good: there are a number of clones and too many huge expanses of nothing. The occasional mapping problem and some hard lines aren't beneficial either. The weak link is here. 4/10

Playability

Part of the appeal of Des Volcans is that each hole offers a straightforward challenge: there are few hidden traps, no inconvenient water hazards, and you are very much at the mercy of your own game. No, it'll never be on a par with the famous courses or the great fantasy courses, but it's a round that will never drive you to boredom; there's a surprising amount going on here. 7/10

Challenge

Suffers from real-course syndrome in that it's just too easy. We should be grateful for the reasonable greens; perhaps less so for some extensive flat regions that don't really press your approach shots. The hazarding is restrained, with a reliance on the course's natural features providing the obstacle to your game; perhaps there are not quite enough of said features. 5/10

Technical

Hints of the things to come from Dominique Bois are present here. The brave custom textures work well, although some of the extrusion and elevation work shows signs of ham-handedness. Today's Beta testers would help clear out the planting clones and bunker problems and we'd be left with an original and different course re-creation. 6/10

Overall	Not good-looking, although you suspect the full-size model is the same. Plays enthusiastically and is worth sticking with for the oddball Par 3s.	29/50
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Golf Club Enzesfeld

Thomas Teuber



Description

Real, mountain course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Wow! Over-exaggerated though they almost certainly are in this conversion, Enzesfeld relies heavily on massive elevations and spectacular Alpine scenery for its livelihood. It's a cracking good shake up of unorthodox course design and compulsive gung-ho golf which more than makes up for the shortfalls of the design. A shame about the wimpy closing hole – surely we deserved a better finish than this? 8/10

Appearance

An incredible mash-up of textures, both good and bad, marks the layout from the start. You can't deny that this course is decidedly different, in its slightly surreal style, from anything else to look at. Surreal, in this case, doesn't always mean good. The elevations are decidedly lumpy, and the forests are full of obvious clones. You just can't believe in the whole thing. 5/10

Playability

There's no messing about here. You'll be smashing balls down the accommodating fairways all day, helped by the favourable elevation changes and the hole previews with a personal touch. The skill factor is fairly minimal, to be honest, but that won't stop you belting round this absorbing layout. 8/10

Challenge

Some seriously unplayable greens have attracted the main complaints, and it's sadly far too easy for them to spoil a round. Elsewhere, there's some impenetrable woodlands, along the lines of Pine Forest Hills, but also some easily reachable greens, which just doesn't add up, given the elevations on the course. 4/10

Technical

Despite this being a first release, there's just too much at fault here. The poor elevation work impacts directly on the play; the lack of texture choice looks garish and bizarre; the planting is heavy-handed; I could go on. Subtlety has not come within a Woods drive of this design, and the course is all the worse for it. 3/10

Overall

Despite some technical ineptitude, this is not such a bad course. There's certainly a lot of fun to be had with the layout and crazy, exaggerated use of elevations.

28/50

Golf Club Gut Lärchenhof

Guenter Kujat



Description

Real, farmland course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 5

Par

72

Location

Germany

Conditions

I don't think anything beyond S*/M* is feasible.

Concept

From the yellowing grass to the impressive barn-like clubhouse, this is very much a young course on converted farmland. It plays very naturally, with the finest of cares clearly having been taken on the like of elevation work and the water features, and there's a great sense of realism conveyed by the designer's trademark attention to detail. A handful of great approaches over water make the course a great choice for matchplay. 8/10

Appearance

The fantastic, sunlit clubhouse is an undoubted high point, and the water features are nicely presented too. I have to say I don't care much for the textures on the whole, the lack of blending sticks out, and the planting is scrubby and old-fashioned. The general patchy look dates the course somewhat. 5/10

Playability

One major, major annoyance here is the sound. A cacophony of bizarre bird, cricket and frog noises assault the ears on the first tee, and don't let up all the way round. It's overkill of the worst kind. On top of this, Gut Lärchenhof has had technical problems that cause the game to stall. Thankfully, with the sound turned off, it's a fascinating round of golf, with every fairway covered in gentle ridges and the rough providing a genuine deterrent in the absence of many trees. 6/10

Challenge

The fairways are extremely accommodating and there is a short approach into most greens. Although water is used to good effect, a sensible player should be able to steer clear. Even the intimidating Par 5 holes do little to affect your score and a round in the mid-60s is most certainly possible. 4/10

Technical

The sound urgently needs sorting out, and the nagging crash problem inevitably costs marks and suggests that the course shouldn't have been released as a final edition. Although the clubhouse is pretty, it is only 2D and that leads to a couple of absurd angles. It's probably Guenter's least-accomplished course, although there are several highlights which mean it would be a shame to miss out. 5/10

Overall	Gut Lärchenhof has a few niggles that means it's not the most welcoming of courses, but it's worth persevering with for some great holes and a luscious view of the clubhouse.	28/50
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Gooseneck Bay

Randall Queen & Matt McIntosh



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, links course	11 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Scotland		
Conditions		
Playable on F*/F*, but M*/M* would be the realistic choice.		

Concept

A classic wild and rough links course, with a barren, bleak and tough first half leading into a grandstanding second-half. The update doesn't do much favours to the first half, which although low on technique, was rich with authentic atmosphere. It does, however, come into its own for the brilliant closing stretch from the 11th, and the remnants of WW2 shelters scattered around are a believable focal point. On the whole, though, the course doesn't quite fit its environment enough, and suffers from the production-line uniformity of recent revamps. 6/10

Appearance

The cliff textures and coastline have undergone a great transformation and look much nicer, as do the HD grasses. The planting is great at points, but also becomes somewhat routine and unvaried, and there are times when it just doesn't feel right in conjunction with the environment and panorama. It's a difficult criticism to make, but perhaps the rough looks of the original were better reflective of the type of course. 6/10

Playability

Plenty of clifftop fun retained here, and the target aspects of the original have been fine-tuned, and in quite a few cases improved, through better visibility and aiming. The sound is still spot on as you near the ocean turn, and the course is still quite capable of throwing up surprises. With suitably gusty wind, this remains an outstanding round of golf. 10/10

Challenge

The toughening up of the dune-like rough has been the masterstroke of this update, and it keeps Gooseneck Bay competitive even though the greens have received a much-needed levelling. With some agonisingly small target areas, it's not always a totally realistic challenge, but the bottom line here is that shots are there to be sacrificed for the unwary, which is the mark of a great links test. 9/10

Technical

With the old version of Gooseneck Bay becoming virtually unplayable under modern tournament competitions, this is another breath of life into an older course, although veterans may lament the loss of earthiness of the original. 7/10

Overall	A smoother look for one of the rough-and-ready classics. Loses a little in some areas, but a big gain as far as balanced golf is concerned.	38/50
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Great Southern Aurora

Stuart Kahle



Description

Fictional, links course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

The idea of transposing a links course to the Australian coast is an odd one, but one which pays off to some extent. Great Southern Aurora plays up its old-fashioned credentials, and would – I imagine – play quite nicely in all-sepia. Sadly, the ideas run out later on with a succession of over-worked holes, and I've certainly never seen any links course with a 5-3-5-3-5-3 finishing stretch. A little more coherence wouldn't have gone amiss. 6/10

Appearance

Clones aplenty and some rather peculiar planting choices – from the game birds and flamingos to the geyser of the title, the designer hasn't exactly gone all out for realism. The huge flat stretches of the stock deep rough texture are an unpleasant shock into the bargain. The highlights are fairly few, but the fences look pretty nice and the rockworks do at least add some variety to a very plain landscape. 2/10

Playability

Even those who are unaffected by links golf may find something to enjoy here. Although two or three holes succumb to guesswork and silliness, there is much of the original links spirit at Southern Aurora in the requirements to find a safe passage between deeply hazardous rough. Shot selection and the need to throttle back are part of the game here, and in that respect the course is very cleverly pieced together. 8/10

Challenge

Clever golfers and those that know the course will pitch up against a very fair challenge here. The greens are similar in elevation to much of the rest of the course, and the bunkers easy to escape, and the challenge is purely about avoiding the deep stuff. Isn't that the oldest and best challenge there is, though? 9/10

Technical

Textures from stock, bunkers without depth. A planting selection that is cloned beyond credibility. Despite all this, Stuart Kahle shows us that he can design passable and often exciting links golf in this one-off and unusual creation. 3/10

Overall	Nothing to look at, but isn't that the hallmark of great links golf? This is still quite a way from a great links, but in its own peculiar way it provides a good round.	28/50
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Great White at Doral

John Andersen



Description

Real, desert course.

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

With the massive regions of seashells, crazy green shapes and massively overblown bunkering, you'd be forgiven for thinking this is a fantasy course. It's real, believe it or not, and part of the same resort that gave us the slightly less insane Blue Monster. Hole design, thankfully, tends not to be too extreme, although pot bunkers on every fairway demand careful shot placement. But it's resort golf in the extreme, there's no sense of location and some really quite ugly aspects to the course rear their head. 5/10

Appearance

Very disappointing. The water looks fake, as does the landscaping of the shells, and the transition from the fairway to the shell waste areas is totally unnatural. There's cloned planting and little to see due to the lack of elevations. The infamous bunkers look like an afterthought and often distort the landscape around them. Very underwhelming. 3/10

Playability

For all its other flaws, Great White keeps you very engaged, due to a tremendous mix of demanding hazard shots (go round without hitting the sand and you're Superman) and risk-reward. The final hole gets my vote for one of the best closers on any course, anywhere. It's undeniably exciting stuff. 8/10

Challenge

Let's be fair to the course: despite all its gadgetry and artificiality, it presents a brilliantly-pitched test of golf. The coquina shells are punishing without being fatal, the bunkers well-positioned without being unfair. Water is often more decorative than hazardous, and the green slopes test without leaving you more than a yard away if you can't putt. Scores will always hover around the 72 mark and it will take great skill and no little luck to break 70. 9/10

Technical

There's obviously been careful work applied: the bunkers alone must represent several weeks of effort, but the course is desperately in need of having the clones thinned out, and the elevations changed, particularly where the waste areas meet another texture. It might help if the course looked even vaguely natural, too. 4/10

Overall	Almost certainly the most bizarre Real course you'll come across. Very contrived, in a way that only Greg Norman could manage, and a fun round of golf to boot. A shame about the visuals.	29/50
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Greene County Country Club

Dave Newman



Description

Real, mountain course

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 4, from long grass.

Concept

A word of advice to those going out to create their local golf club: do not use a panorama and design brief which are commonly associated with fantasy courses! Thanks to some uninspired conversion work, it's very difficult to take Greene County with any credibility, but yet there are quite a few nice moments on this unusual Par 74 course, notably at the 7th and final holes with their rock overhang. The ambitious use of water and elevations provides a fair test and it's easy to see why – in real life – this

course is regarded as a hidden gem. It's unlikely to gain the same status in Links golf, sadly. 4/10

Appearance

Other than the lamented Whistler panorama, the stock textures take a lot to be loved and a rather blunt approach to planting and scaling hasn't really done the course any favours. The elevations seem to hinder good views, rather than facilitating them. There are a few nice moments in the low-level planting, adornments and rocks, but they are really just interesting more than lifelike or impressive. 3/10

Playability

Despite the unusual layout, the high number of Par 5s, and the large, attackable greens, this is bland fare. It's really not helped by a lack of scenery and a hole length that puts a lot of reliance on the accuracy of your long irons (and who's got a lot of that, really?). With one or two greens proving beyond the pale, I can't really see Greene County tying down any long-term fans. 3/10

Challenge

The length of the course means a lot of greens will not be reached, and even those that are might result in three-putts, thanks to some inconsistency in the design. Elevations will also take care of a few shots: thank the golfing gods that there are plenty of Par 5s where birdies can be picked up. 7/10

Technical

No shortage of mistakes here, starting with the overall appearance which just cannot be believed in. The clones in the planting are symptomatic of a lack of attention to detail, and some mountainous elevations in odd places are surely not representative of Pennsylvania. The tiny size to the plot was another unforgivable oversight, with too many holes pushed tight against the boundaries. Given some of the designer's other courses, I found this deeply disappointing. 2/10

Overall	A technical mish-mash which never really convinces you that it is drawn from a real-life design.	19/50
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Grey Silo

Noah Neumann & Jeff Little



Description

Real, marshland course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 5

Par

71

Location

Ontario

Conditions

M*/M* will probably be a safe bet. The geography of the course implies that it plays slower.

Concept

Nestling in a bend of the Grand River, Grey Silo maximises its low-lying landscape and wetland setting with some creative golf layouts and use of water both inside and outside of the line of play. Not particularly long at 6500 yards, it is nevertheless no cinch to beat regulation, thanks to twisty fairways and greens that are never quite on the level (from an elevations viewpoint; not a fairness one!). It's certainly a course that makes a good Links round and has been done reasonable justice with the design job. 8/10

Appearance

The textures have been given an update, although I have to say the colour set is quite vivid and clashing. The bluegrass-like rough works well, but clashes with the mint-green of the short grass and the yellowing surrounds. The rest is functionally carried out, with some nice work on the buildings here and there, but the clones sometimes stand out in the planting. 6/10

Playability

Never mind if it's not the prettiest course – this one is great to play! Nearly-driveable Par 4s are always a hit; here there are three of them. Holes like the 9th and the impressive 4th just ask to be attacked, but there also holes of crafty strategy, using the course's natural drainage system to good effect, particularly on the back nine. It's got the crucial X-factor which means that one round is never quite enough – bet you go back for more! 9/10

Challenge

Grey Silo is by no means a course for the pros, and it's tempting to think you can just steamroll it. You'll probably be in for a shock. There's plenty of water in and around the course, and placement needs to be measured. The greens are nearly all slightly sloped, which means putts are rarely a given. But, at the end of the day, the course is short, the rough is too, and there is many an easy birdie opportunity. 6/10

Technical

Those local courses that are loved enough to be created, and then re-vamped, for Links are always treasures, and it's possible to overlook the lurid palette to some extent because clearly there has been a great deal of local knowledge applied in making this realistic. Just occasionally, there is a sharp elevation which draws the eye as well. 7/10

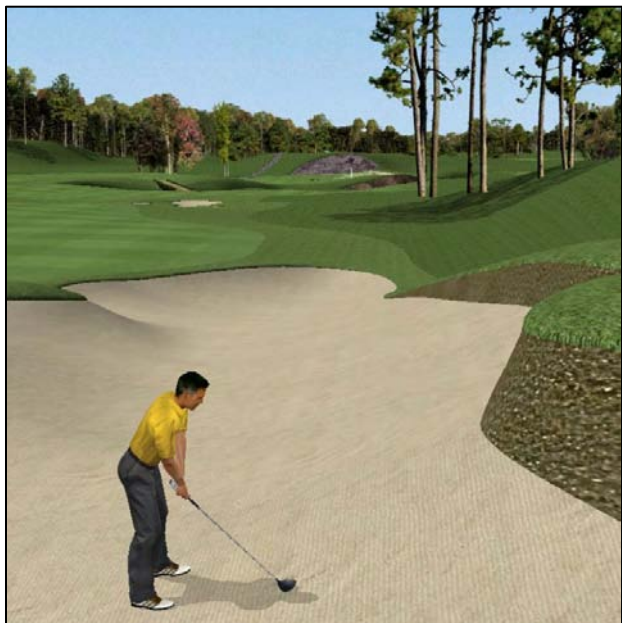
Overall

An excellent course which has made the most of its difficult location.

36/50

Growlinridge

Grant Morrison



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 5, from fairway bunker.

Concept

Growlinridge belies its wild-sounding name by being a well-manicured American-style championship course. You genuinely could picture it full of spectators for a televised event. Every now and then, a mini-abyss or rock protrusion breaks up the style, and the course concludes with some terrific do-or-die holes which bring the water heavily into play. It's generally well-conceived and laid out; with a loving update, it could be terrific. 7/10

Appearance

There's quite a few anomalies to catch the eye here. Wide open areas of nothing are anathema to the course designer and should be avoided at all costs. It doesn't help that most of the rough texture is low-resolution and unmapped, which has resulted in an unpleasant chess-board tiling almost across the course. The frequent course paths also feature an odd, paved texture which is painfully inappropriate. Some imaginative planting and use of extra features help, but there's a lot more that could be done here. 3/10

Playability

The opening holes are dogged by close planting, sometimes with suspiciously steel-like trees, and are something of a drag. As the course opens out after the 6th hole, though, the trees become less invasive and you slowly get drawn into some of the designer's imaginative constructions. Despite the crude appearance, this might well be a course you return to. 8/10

Challenge

As long as you accept the Target Golf intention, Growlinridge plays acceptably although – as is so common with older courses – several greens will cause disgust among Mod players. The widespread heavy rough will provoke frustration amid wayward drivers too. On slower settings, you might find a score acceptably close to Par; otherwise expect to shoot several over. 7/10

Technical

The texture mapping needs to be made a priority: with that and some good seam work, this could become a first-class course. As it is, more work to the elevations would be advisable, as well as weeding out the painful trees that make the opening half-dozen holes so tricky. It's passable, and there's no shortage of flair, but technically, it's a little behind the times. 4/10

Overall	Some entertaining hole designs down the back nine prop this course up magnificently. A surprising candidate for a modern update.	29/50
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Gull Island Links

Don Gooch



Description

Imaginary, tropical course.

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Gull Island has some links attributes in its wide-open style, but really there is too much planting to qualify as such. The island itself must be pretty small, because nearly every hole takes in some coastline, and to be honest it's quite a bit more gimmicky than it needs to be. Despite this, it's reasonably convincing and good fun and the links-type element is a welcome break from the usual tropical style. 6/10

Appearance

In an understated way, this is a good-looking course. Sure, there are a couple of faces that I found under-textured and stretched, and the landscape is often over-done to the extent of mesh folding. But the planting and – especially – underplanting has been carried out well and the coastline looks very credible indeed. The textures blend very well and really help the isolated feeling. 7/10

Playability

The first half-dozen holes at Gull Island are exciting, if not particularly novel. Of course, you soon realise that the hole design isn't quite as varied as it might be – given the initial premise – and your round quickly becomes an exercise in keeping your ball out of the ocean. It's not bad, but it's no Tillicum Island, and you find yourself thinking how much better it could have been. 7/10

Challenge

The difficult, over-complicated elevations make this a difficult course. I appreciate the designer was aiming for a natural look, but even a wild golf course would have some degree of manicuring. Add in the hazards of the coastline and no small amount of deep wild grass, and a score closer to 80 than 70 is a more realistic prospect. 5/10

Technical

Some close inspection is required to pick out the faults in this course. An odd panorama that doesn't quite match and a few mesh problems seem to be the sum total of them, although the tee box textures look quite rough. Let's not forget the levels of preparation and creativity that must go into a course like this, though – no quality fictional course deserves slating. 7/10

Overall	Another tiny island course: a bit too much coastline where some links-type holes were clearly called for. Worth a game.	32/50
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Gut Kaden (A+B)

Guenter Kujat



Description

Real, farmland course.

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

There are three 9-hole 'halves' in the Gut Kaden complex, hence three different 18-hole combinations. If I'm to be brutally honest, I think only owning one is sufficient. They're open and more than competently designed courses, stretched to slightly excessive lengths for a club course. It's hard to get really involved with the course, due to the lack of features and wide open stretches of nothing, but that shouldn't tarnish its designer's excellent reputation. 4/10

Appearance

Generally very sweet, and one would imagine quite faithful to the original. The textures are well-chosen and the buildings are recreated well. There are a few hard edges around the paths which should have been eliminated in the 2003 re-make and a lack of good customised objects and, to be honest, a lack of decent views, though. 6/10

Playability

Although the course drags towards the end, there is just enough here to prevent attentions wandering, thanks mostly to some challenging gradients on both fairways and greens. Because of the straightforward nature of the holes, there is little risk/reward and stray shots are not caught often enough, even around the greens. Just not enough to persevere with, sadly. 6/10

Challenge

Lack of hazarding, some accommodating fairways and a lack of really punishing deep rough will make low scores almost inevitable, although if you get caught up in one of the treacherous greenside bunkers then shots will be dropped, particularly with the hardest pin positions. The closing hole is almost embarrassingly easy to eagle, and the round ends very weakly. 4/10

Technical

Despite the course's flaws, this has been well put together, with the fine attention to elevational work being a particular treat. But it's a crying shame that the designer hasn't seen fit to use seam blending on the textures, and a little more underplanting around the trees might be necessary to improve the challenge. 8/10

Overall	I've read a lot of good things about Gut Kaden; sadly I don't feel able to agree with them. It's a bland and rather unthreatening course with a decent display of APCD-expertise, but no more.	28/50
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Gut Kaden (C+B)

Guenter Kujat



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, farmland course	9 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Germany		
Conditions		
Pick some pins carefully, and M*/M* might be OK.		

Concept

The C&B nine-hole courses form the championship circuit at Gut Kaden, and it's easy to see why. They're long on target-style challenge, including an impressive island green, and –despite the course's flatness and lack of elevations – imaginatively put together. Transferred to the APCD, there is the occasional moment of flatness, but also a lot of evocative moments which are very reminiscent of real golf as it is played. 7/10

Appearance

There really isn't much excuse for not eliminating the sharp edges in an APCD 1.3 release. But what is done, is done very well. The textures blends together perfectly, the water is reasonably well planted, and the trees and ditches are still immaculate, despite the course's age. 7/10

Playability

The innovation on the front half is a good way to grip the interest, and the player reaches the turn raring to grip-and-rip on the back nine, which may prove a mistake. The clever design is allied with beautiful sound design – always this complex's strong point – and there's a lot more to play with than on the A/B course. 7/10

Challenge

I am still concerned that, despite the increased risk/reward, this course is still just too easy. The vast expanses of shallow rough are partially to blame, and most designers would be looking to thicken the grass in some of the bare areas. Elsewhere, the lack of gradients on fairways and (some) greens are reasons why players will just be scoring more birdies than necessary. 4/10

Technical

There's no doubt that, despite a few signs of aging, this is one of the classic designs, and a few silly pin positions aside, there's little to fault, given its age. A modern overhaul would look to start with a revamp of textures, near and far, and the clubhouse looks like a bit of an afterthought, but there's little in the technical work that impacts on a very pleasurable round. 6/10

Overall	Certainly the more exciting of the Gut Kaden combinations; starting to show its age a little.	31/50
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Guyancourt

Georges Tapie



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Very flat and relatively featureless, Guyancourt nevertheless makes an appealing round of golf. In typical European style, there's very little target-style golf, instead allowing players to develop their own strategy. The landscape allows for good coherence between holes, and there are a few unexpected features in the planting and in green design. The links conversion is sadly packed with flaws, but they don't stop the course's merits and French feeling from shining through. 6/10

Appearance

There are all sorts of problems in the mesh, planting and textures with this course, but rather marvellously, none of these stop this course from being rather attractive, albeit in a basic way. There's a serenity and smoothness about the whole affair which comes from underplaying the planting, and the whole thing pulls together very well from distance. Not as bad as it could be, certainly. 4/10

Playability

The subtle strategical aspects to the course shouldn't be lost on first or second playing, but admittedly it does feel like the course has given up all its tricks too easily if it comes to any more than that. Otherwise, there's a good variation of short-ish hole lengths and shapes to maintain the interest and, like many real-life venues, it's the feeling of actually 'being there' that goes a long way towards making the course quite enjoyable. 6/10

Challenge

The flatness of the course isn't really tempered all that it might be, but touches of deep rough add variety, and the hazards are placed with pinpoint accuracy. The greens, in particular, are very moderate, although not so much as to be boring. Despite the course's unprepossessing appearance, there's a good – if not severe – test to be had here. 7/10

Technical

Too many errors; far, far too many, even for a course in beta testing. Stock textures, mesh folds, sharp edges, unrefined hazards, and steel planting all play their part in making Guyancourt a bit of a dog's dinner, to be honest. It's a pleasurable surprise that the course has come out looking as good as it does. 1/10

Overall	A technical disaster, but surprisingly it works. There's a decent round of golf and some fair views running through this course if you can overlook the flaws.	24/50
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Hapuna Golf Course

Microsoft



Description

Real, canyon course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

This is certainly different. You start off playing through rocks and desert grasses, and slowly work your way down to the oceans and palm trees. It could only be Hawaii, of course. The course is short but cleverly designed, and despite being short on hazards, will make you work for your par. 8/10

Appearance

Some clever ground-level planting makes this look very nice indeed. The desert rocks are OK, but repetitive and crying out for some rock planting or alternative textures to break up the monotony. The panorama is very effective and seeing the ocean comes as a real surprise; you just don't get enough of them on most golf courses. Most importantly, this is certainly a different and original set of views and is really worthwhile for those who are sick of green courses. 8/10

Playability

It's hard not to enjoy a round at Hapuna. The course presents a variety of challenges and hole styles, and uses everything from the impinging rock hazards, to water, to steep elevations, in order to present a challenge. Most holes have subtle alternative routes of play which makes the course even more enjoyable the second time around. 8/10

Challenge

A round at Hapuna is a mite too easy, thanks largely in part to some very flat greens. Several holes are slightly too short for their par, but redeem themselves with clever elevation use. The Par 3s are the toughest, each being noticeably distinct and individual. If some more testing cross-slopes and pin positions were used here, then we could be looking at a near-perfect course in terms of difficulty. 7/10

Technical

The biggest letdown is the rock textures, which are clearly repetitive and stretched. Some textures boundaries are harsh too, and a couple of shapes have hard edges. But the planting and custom objects are very good (as we should expect from Microsoft), and if more attention were paid to the desert areas this could be a real stand-out. 7/10

Overall	A stand-out among real courses in terms of unusual visual appeal and playability. Certainly a course to consider if you're in the mood for something different.	38/50
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Harbinger Valley Golf Club

Ernie Barnes



Description

Imaginary, heathland course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 3, greenside.

Concept

Very much a course of two halves, Harbinger Valley makes a big thing on the back nine of original and testing hole design. A very stylised course, holes are surrounded by borders of rocks and flowers; water and bunkers are all too well placed; and, worst, the greens are nigh-on impossible to sink mid-to-longer putts on. It's not all doom and gloom, but it is a course where layout has undoubtedly taken precedence over appearance and location plausibility. 5/10

Appearance

Very sound indeed. The choice of textures and the use of blends complements the course style very well, and the proliferation of bunkers are well inserted into the terrain. The panorama is deliberately overbearing, but sadly a poor match and far too high. A little more moderation might actually pay dividends in this area. 8/10

Playability

Say that Harbinger Valley is predictable and you'd be singled out as a liar. Nearly every hole has a novel twist and the back nine is a gloriously over-wrought set of target golf holes. Sound is conducive to the atmosphere, rather than distracting, and as an enjoyable experience, the whole thing takes some beating. 9/10

Challenge

An odd mixture of excessive water hazarding and borderline-unfair greens, particularly on the back nine, might cause you to view this course with suspicion. Particularly after a front nine on which it is quite possible to shoot 31 or 32, a score of 6-over or more seems unusually harsh. And there's no escaping it: this has been poorly pitched and the designer has clearly not anticipated the effect his imagination will have on the player. 3/10

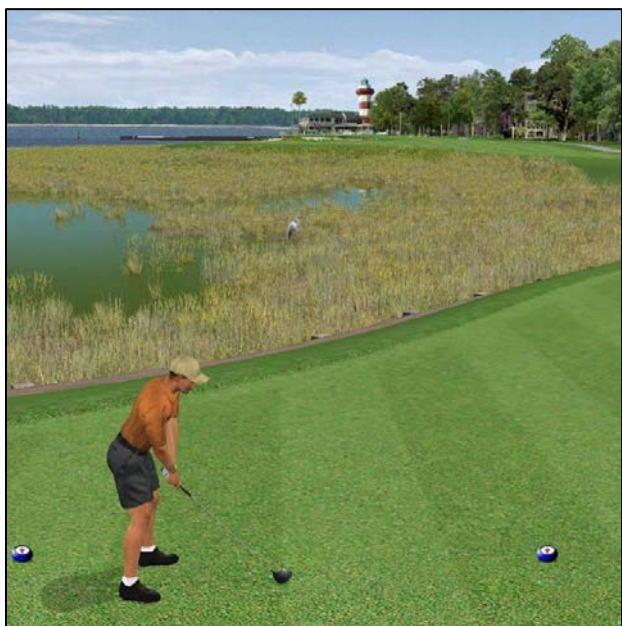
Technical

Some tidy seam blends and texture choices mark this out as a skilled course design, although clearly the designer's tactical nous isn't always on the mark. I'm not sure what was intentioned with the odd rock linings, but they are a little out of synch with one's expectations of a golf course. Generally sound, though, and will appeal to a player looking for something a bit different. 7/10

Overall	Certainly an oddball. Some nifty ideas, not always those conducive to golf. Should be tried once nevertheless.	32/50
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Harbour Town Golf Links

Eddie Schmidt



Description

Real, forest course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from tee

Concept

In this update, it seems as if the course concept has almost been tweaked and improved. Odd, given that they're both supposed to be lifelike re-creations, but I suppose advances in technology will often lead to successes and failures in unequal measure. Some of the old frustrations remain: the blind shots, the impingement of the forests, and the damn artificiality of the place. But this version is cleaner, much more authentic and has a much stronger sense of atmosphere. 7/10

Appearance

Wow. This is barely recognisable as the cartoon parody that Microsoft put together. An amazing level of commitment has gone into collecting accurately detailed trees and customising the many course buildings. Easy to overlook are the fantastic quality (and quantity) of textures, which really show off the course at its best. 10/10

Playability

Probably because of the much improved visuals, this is easier and more fun to play. Even dense forest lies seem to offer realistic lines of relief, and the few genuine risk/reward holes are much more pronounced. With barely an arrow-straight hole all round, this is a course for the planning golfer as well as the risk-taking one. 8/10

Challenge

For me, this is where the update falls down. Mod-friendly greens and easy escapes from the trees have made it just that bit too simple. It doesn't help that the course features very little by way of elevation changes and that fairway shots are almost pathetically easy. There are penalties carefully woven into the course, but a man on form could easily take them all in his stride. 6/10

Technical

It's impossible to critique this. Suffice to say that it is clearly in with the best half-dozen real courses ever made with the APCD, due in no small part to immense technical proficiency. 10/10

Overall	A massive improvement on the MS original. Better looking and far better to play.	41/50
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Hawksmoor Heath

David Meader



Description	Screenshot	Par
Imaginary, heathland course	10 th hole, Par 5	71
Location		
A bit of detective work suggests Northern England, possibly Yorkshire.		
Conditions		
S*/S* is the only practical option		

Concept

From a beautiful opening hole, to the startlingly original closing trio, there’s something quite special about Hawksmoor Heath. With a visual style I can best describe as ‘decadent comic book’, it presents an outstanding range of strategic target holes, and the originality in golfing design has probably never been matched on any other course. No, it’s not really a heathland course: the rock protrusions are far too heavily in play and the visual style is far too clean, but as a delightful golfing treat, there’s little to equal it. 7/10

Appearance

Some outstanding textures make their appearance, not least in the bunkers and on the paths, but the mesh has not been handled too well, showing some obvious signs of shape insertion and a lot of lumpiness around the rocky areas. The planting is good, but all looks a little bit low-resolution and artificial. It’s hard to believe in the course from looks alone, which is why it’s best classified strictly in the Imaginary category, but it’s far from ugly. 7/10

Playability

Outstanding. Driveable Par 4s intermingle with opportunities for great daring and holes which require experience and course knowledge. There’s no end of risk-reward opportunities and plenty of stunning hole design. You’re ushered round by beautiful hole previews and delicate ambient sound to complete the experience. Whatever its shortcomings, and it has a few, Hawksmoor remains one of my go-to courses when I just need something fun. 10/10

Challenge

Horribly old-fashioned greening and a lack of testing on pin positions are big enemies here, but the hazard design has also meant a fair few shots will be lost to the water, which shows up probably on a few too many holes when it didn’t need to. Blind shots are negated by aiming markers and the information on the previews, but even then there’s a scary gambling element to this course, far from the natural challenge you’d expect from moorland courses. 6/10

Technical

A difficult call, this one. Hawksmoor looks distinctly old-fashioned compared to modern courses, but yet the designer’s intent in creating something fantastical has been clearly communicated, as has his excellent choice of some textures. The amount of artificiality to the course can be excused to some extent, but not by those who love their golf realistic. 7/10

Overall	Gung-ho imaginative golf with a distinctly unusual flavour. Too many flaws for serious competitive play, though.	37/50
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Hayling Island

John Brooks



Description

Real, links course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4

Par

71

Location

Hampshire

Conditions

M*/M* or slower is advisable. Gusty or Windy would be good too.

Concept

A very typical English links, Hayling Island is barren, low-lying and heavily reliant on the local rough for hazards rather than bunkering, of which there is very little. Despite something of a rushed inception, it has that crucial British countryside feel nailed perfectly, with a sense of loneliness perhaps only matched by Woodbridge. The hole routing, following a traditional out-and-back approach, almost seems a matter of not intruding onto the coastal gorse too much, resulting in something that feels perhaps a little insipid. 6/10

Appearance

I hope there's more to add to the Beta's rather average appearance. With very little variety in the planting, clones in the gorse become almost inevitable, and the beach and sea look completely mismatched to the course. Lumpy elevations in parts round off a course with very little to feast your eyes upon. 4/10

Playability

Playing these small, hometown courses is always a source of great interest, and Hayling Island doesn't disappoint – the designer having gone to great effort with previews and aiming markers to share the course and make it accessible. But there's also a fair bit of monotony, insufficient ambient sound for a busy seaside location, and some steel gorse bushes to contend with. The green complexes, with their absence of bunkers or humps, are perhaps not the most thrilling either. 6/10

Challenge

Like so many courses of this type, you can go ahead and beat up Hayling Island, and you shouldn't be surprised when particularly the front nine is so quick to yield good opportunities. Perhaps the main threat comes from some uneven greens and the potential for getting lost in the gorse, but there's little here that shouldn't induce a good Links golfer to score very well indeed. 3/10

Technical

Barely ready for a Beta. In my opinion, there are a lot of visual problems here which need tidying up. I've always been a fan of John's renditions, but his insistence on only using a handful of pins and some immoderate green slopes is more than a trifle wearing. 4/10

Overall

Links golf as you would expect to find in a dozen British seaside clubs. The designer's challenge is to make it rise above the merely ordinary.

23/50

Hazeltine National Golf Club

Timothy Boche



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, farmland course	10 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Minnesota		
Conditions		
Plays well on F*/F*		

Concept

A venue very much befitting of a Major championship, Hazeltine is perhaps most reminiscent in surroundings and layout of Shinnecock. But it is longer, tighter and more punishing for those who go astray. The signature holes, Par 5s for the most part, are exceptionally well bunkered and protected with deceptively impenetrable planting. The signs of extending many holes belie the course's history, which is a pity, because Hazeltine doesn't need to be long to present the challenge it was designed for. 7/10

Appearance

From the first tee, it's apparent that this course is perhaps a little too meticulous and scrubbed. The minty-green textures are tight-knit and featureless, and the lack of underplanting gives the course an unnaturally 'clean' feel, something that becomes increasingly apparent in the deeper rough regions which just look unfinished. For the large part, the course just looks a little too clean and cartoonish: a trademark of the designer, but perhaps not so apt in this case. 7/10

Playability

While an obvious necessity to 'play along' with the big tournaments, it's difficult to imagine anyone enjoying a casual round at Hazeltine. There's a lot of pressure on accuracy and the golf is quite didactic; by the 14th hole you feel pretty exhausted more than anything. Not a fun course. 5/10

Challenge

With proper PGA slippery settings, this is a tour de force of stiff but never unfair golf. The hazarding particularly is terrific, and there's lots of deep rough to swallow up mis-hit drives. In fact there is something to be said for not taking a driver out on the course with you, such are the perils of missing the short stuff. But that's exactly what we expect from an American Major venue, and to that extent you can say that Hazeltine has been perfectly set. 9/10

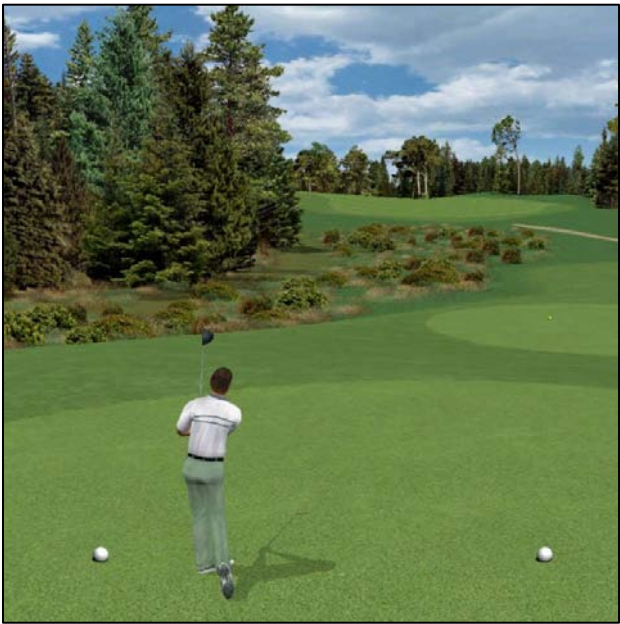
Technical

Tim's previous courses were all small local-type tracks which fitted well with his visual style, but you feel Hazeltine demands something bigger and more imposing. Although glossily finished and presented, certainly there's room to add under-planting and re-evaluate the appearance of the textures from distance. 7/10

Overall	A playable if tough course, but with an acquired taste to the visuals.	35/50
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Hell Fire Golf Club

John Aherne



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Another one of those courses with something of an idiosyncratic name; visitors to Hell Fire might expect something outlandish and impossible. What they're actually presented with is a clean, fresh and rolling mountain environment with an American-style target course cut through the middle. I can't honestly say it feels anything like the Dublin-esque scenario that it presents; as a course in the Appalachians, it would surely cut the mustard with a little more conviction. 6/10

Appearance

Some top-notch pine forest planting is the hallmark of this course. It's one of the most difficult areas for clone avoidance, yet the pine forest seems utterly natural as it hugs you to the landscape. Aside from this, some of the texture seams are either too feathered or a little broad, but the many elevations changes have been carried off with perfect conviction. The overall effect is very, very impressive indeed. 9/10

Playability

There's a lot of deception on this course, and it could justifiably be accused of making the player work hard. Elevations and hidden hazards are on the menu, and several holes offer a distorting perspective, making them seem a different length. It's tough stuff for the mind and the morale, and there aren't too many 'fun' shots to compensate. 4/10

Challenge

Never has one course swung my score around both sides of 72 so much. At various points in my two test rounds I was +7 and -4. Part of your score will depend on being able to read the constantly changing elevations and the odd perspective: the rest seemed to be almost dumb luck. There's an overwhelming fear that you're at the whims of the course, and that at tough conditions (my test rounds were both at relatively gentle settings) you'd be better off packing up and going home. 5/10

Technical

An undeniably solid effort as we should expect from this designer. Some weaknesses in the seams can be attributed to age, but the course management as a whole is highly impressive, with peripheral buildings, water features and especially planting being impressive without being intrusive. 9/10

Overall	Marvellous technically, but you sense Hell Fire has not quite achieved the goal that its designer set out to attain. Worthwhile, but no more.	33/50
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Helms Head

Douglas & Karen Montgomery



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 5

Par

72

Location

Identified in the Readme as the foot of the Rockies.

Conditions

M*/S* is about as fast as you can safely go, and even then you take a gamble on some pins.

Concept

The mountainous golf course can contain many a pitfall for the designer as well as the player: Helm's Head manages to carefully avoid about half of these while plunging headlong into the others. Elevation changes are often key, of course: the ones here are reasonable and conducive to play. There is, however, a continual frustrating difficulty in being able to shoot greens and the creativity peters out well before the end, leaving the closing holes putting forward difficulty for difficulty's sake, and finishing with a monstrosity self-important Par 5. 4/10

Appearance

For promising designers, the Montgomerys have a disappointing habit of letting themselves down. The texture blends are far too deep, and run into pixels nearly everywhere. The planting shows evidence of rushedness and cloning. Several extrusions, particularly of water features, are too obvious. But the panorama is sweet, and surprisingly apt in place, and the course has a clean, fresh appearance reminiscent of Crystal Pines. 6/10

Playability

My main worry with Helm's Head is that it's it doesn't fill the right niche. Sure, it's great fun for a knock around with friends and there's plenty of risk-reward and gambling shots over water. But it's way too penal, inconsistent and unpredictable for tournament play. There are compensations in the nice sound planting and a host of good views, but it doesn't cry out to be played again. 6/10

Challenge

The dense woodlands are more for decoration than hazarding, and there's some unpleasantly awkward bunker work to do the dirty work instead. The greens are mostly raised and extremely difficult to hit, especially with water uncomfortably close on occasion.. Recovery shots therefore frequently become blind and awkward. It's not easy, but in fairness, the challenges are balanced out with some genuine shotmaking opportunities. 7/10

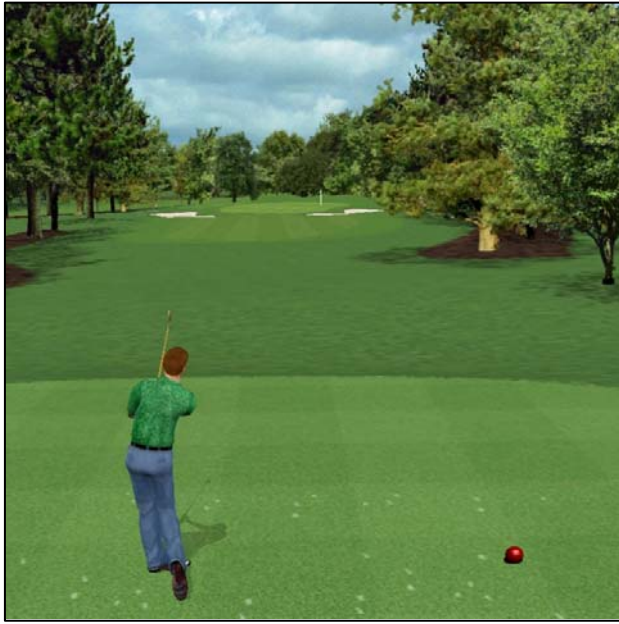
Technical

We would all expect to see progress in designing, but in all honesty Helm's Head represents a step back, if anything. One senses that the designers have taken on something outside their comfort zone, and it's a challenge in representing good mountain golf that has partially defeated them. 5/10

Overall	Tough and too often exaggerated mountain fare with some pompous closing holes.	28/50
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Hermitage Golf Club

John Aherne



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 3, from tee

Concept

Below 6000 yards, and an 'executive'-style course rather than a sprawling country club, Hermitage is tidy, immaculately-cut and one of those courses that just demands to be played. Throwing in a big surprise in the shape of the 10th hole certainly helps, and it leads into a back nine where you have to be ultra-cautious, even from the back tees. It's appealing stuff in parts, and in some ways cut out for computer golf, but you can't help but occasionally get the feeling that there's something missing. 7/10

Appearance

First-class texture work and planting is only to be expected from John, but I found the course to be somewhat lacking in scenery, not least because of the stretch of holes which impair your view from the tee with landscape or trees. I'm surely mistaken, but I thought I caught an odd mesh shape or two as well. Hermitage is photo-realistic in places – which only goes to remind you that photos sometimes have thumbs all over them. 8/10

Playability

Glorious! Hermitage's sly mixture of holes keeps you perennially on your toes; tee shots need to be precise and conservative (I considered teeing off one Par 4 hole with a 5-iron!) and the greens are small and demanding. Devotees of trampling over short courses with their computer-bolstered Ani will also find favour: in short, there's something for everyone! 10/10

Challenge

With a course clocking in this short, it is – I suppose – inevitable that it will be found somewhat easy. The first nine has a few tricks in store, particularly when it comes to putting, but with holes dipping way below regulation length towards the end, eagles are almost to be expected. 3/10

Technical

Beyond criticism. John's work remains of the highest order. 10/10

Overall	A delightful frolic in the park with much to commend it.	38/50
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Hetherington Hills

Derek Wilson



Description

Imaginary, short course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

A Par 3 course that certainly uses the elevations to best advantage, Hetherington Hills is a slightly ludicrous course in its unrealism and enormous slopes which would reduce even the fittest golfer to a staggering, wheezing wreck. If the designer is trying to present something realistic, then he's failed; if he was trying for a fantasy course, then – peculiarly – he's failed again: the real-looking green complexes acting as a betrayal in this case. 3/10

Appearance

Not a massive amount to comment on, but what is here is done pretty well. The textures are OK, the planting is suitably varied, and there's a pretty-near perfect panorama. The bunkers are still lacking in attention, though, and the elevations are unsurprisingly somewhat unconvincing. 6/10

Playability

There's enough variety to make this good enough fun on the first couple of rounds, although the novelty soon gets tired and it's not realistic to propose Hetherington Hills as a proper warm-up course. The frustrating lies are too commonplace and the greens not accessible enough. A novelty it will remain, but no more. 5/10

Challenge

Despite all the frustrations of the huge gullies and bunkers, it's oddly easy to end up in the vicinity of 54 here. But that's really only the case under suitable conditions – only a sadist would turn the wind up to maximum and the greens to finely-cut. And no-one would take it seriously in a competition, under any conditions. 5/10

Technical

I like the ambition and impulsiveness shown here, and there are few technical flaws which really grate on the eye or the golf game. But I don't really feel engaged with the course; it doesn't know whether it wants to be fictional or imaginary and is stuck in an unsatisfying limbo. 5/10

Overall	A bit different, but not different enough to earn a 'novelty' tag, and not playable enough to become a sleeper hit.	24/50
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Hever Castle Golf Club

John Brooks & Mark Austin



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, parkland course	2 nd hole, Par 4	72

Location

Kent

Conditions

M*/M* is probably the limit.

Concept

The castle's not particularly in evidence, but what we do have here is a pleasant, open and occasionally visually excellent course which has been knocked gently into shape over the course of a half-dozen years. There are some surprisingly testing uses of water on the way round which betray Hever Castle's small-club appearance, some picturesque Par 3s and a devilishly long Par 5 penultimate hole. It all hangs together pretty well, complimented by good course presentation. 7/10

Appearance

With the planting tidied up, de-cloned for the most part, and increased in density, there's a lot more coherence to this course than in earlier incarnations. It's supported by a subtle panorama and an intriguing clubhouse design. Unfortunately, there are still niggles: the elevations are lumpy in points, the textures at mid- and long-distances are mismatched, and there are still a few clones lurking around the plot. It's very much worth it for some pretty holes, but the flaws still remain. 6/10

Playability

I found Hever Castle to be an excellent work-out, requiring imagination, guile and good course knowledge, or alternatively good use of the hole previews. The use of streams as hazards mean you often have to feel your way around carefully, and there is a lot of base satisfaction in playing the short Par 3s. 8/10

Challenge

Not as easy a pushover as some of John's courses from the south of England, you will need to play very well to avoid all the water, and mixing with the trees is likely to cause problems, too. A sharp eye for bunkering means a regulation green is no guarantee at all. But, on the flipside, there are some shortish Par 5s which virtually ask to be eagled, and a run of holes around the turn where the imagination seems to have run dry. 5/10

Technical

Congratulations are definitely due to John for taking a previously mediocre and barely-playable course and making it worthy of our attention again. It's not totally perfect, and some work on the plot wouldn't hurt, but it has brought new life to a course that deserves to be seen. 7/10

Overall	A course with a few surprises and a couple of really pretty holes. Very much worth having just for those.	33/50
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Higgi's Park

Douglas & Karen Montgomery



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 4, from greenside bunker

Concept

Higgi's Park is that extra step above 'twin' release, Helm's Head. OK, it's not entirely convincing in its City Park setting (how many cities do you know that can accommodate a golf course this large?), but it does have a credible and exciting set of holes, with an appropriate balance of bravery. Strategy and shot-shaping required. The use of trees as natural hazards is particularly praiseworthy. 7/10

Appearance

The texture use and general ambience of the course is by far the best thing we've seen from these designers. There are a few low-res trees which bother the view, and the city panorama does admittedly feel bolted on. But there's a good line in textures and the use of elevations just helps to lift the visuals above the average. 7/10

Playability

Higgi's Park is an entertaining waste of time more than stimulating golf. There's not a great deal to dislike, apart from the lack of atmosphere around the course, but apart from the occasional 'challenge' sort, it's the kind of course that it's difficult to engage with. I thought the use of water, in particular was pressurising and not in keeping with the holes you'd expect. 6/10

Challenge

Several holes are stretched long – longer than they should be – including several 450-yard Par 4s and the seemingly now-obligatory 600-yard monster. Luckily, the openness of park courses is such that birdies are reasonably obtainable, and it's nice to see a natural progression in difficulty down the back nine. The course is ripe for the attacking player – not great for tournaments, but fine for a Sunday afternoon knock-about. 6/10

Technical

Clearly, Higgi's Park has had some devoted planning, and the golfing aspects of the design are fine. There's still a little bit of planting to be tidied up, and I'd like to see a more thorough sound-set, but the course represents great strides forward and should be applauded. 7/10

Overall	A distinct improvement and a more all-round engaging course. With the elimination of a gimmick or two it could be a winner.	33/50
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Hilina Pali

Greg Purcell



Description

Imaginary, tropical course

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Perhaps best compared to the Crusoe Course or Volcano Island, Hilina Pali is an outlandish track set on a crazy volcanic island. The designer has (rightly, in my opinion) allowed his imagination to run riot and there are some terrific hole ideas and novel prototype landscaping. I say 'prototype' because, sadly, the whole course is a little over-run with technical problems and weak execution. There is less continuity between holes than could be desired, as well. Leave the flaws for another section though; this

course is magnificently conceived. 9/10

Appearance

Many, many problems here. Seam blends are only used sporadically and are not particularly convincing when they are done. There are ghastly extrusion marks around every single green, and the politest thing to say about the planting is that it looks very odd. Very rarely, though, there's something new and special, and the course should be treasured for these moments of innovation. 2/10

Playability

Very blind – to the extent of impossible – tee shots become a nuisance on some of the more obscure holes, and the lack of design experience has led to small unplayable regions of the course. If you let your golfing conscience go to sleep, however, there's a huge amount of fun to be had, and of course you never quite know what's coming next. 6/10

Challenge

The outlandish range of hole designs inevitably leads to a stiff challenge. It's no Devil's Island, thankfully, and frankly could be eased off considerably by making the greens flatter and more receptive. On the 18th green, you'll be breathing a sigh of relief, but on reflection it could be far worse, especially for a fantasy course. 5/10

Technical

It's disappointing to see the lack of APCD know-how in someone with several courses to his name. With such a brilliant set of ideas, it would be magnificent to see this course in fully-textured glory. Sadly, for now, we'll have to make do with sharp edges, mis-assigned textures and a course rich in clones. 2/10

Overall	Possibly the biggest disparity between ambition and talent I have yet encountered.	24/50
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Hillfoot Hey Golf Club

Brian Jameson



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, tropical course	17 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
The surroundings suggest it might be Hawaii, but there's nothing else to go on.		
Conditions		
Wise not to exceed S*/S*		

Concept

Probably Brian's most coherent course, this is an appealing tropical construction, relying heavily on good bunkering. Waste bunkers make their appearance as penalty hazards on the back nine, too, giving the course both structure and an interesting selling point. With enterprising use of elevations and fairway shapes, this is a worthy addition to a genre of courses that receives much bad press. Very impressive. 8/10

Appearance

Despite the occasional nice texture, there's something very blurry and low-res about this course, particularly in close-up. But the colour set is suitably dry, and the trees have been well forested and underplanting, even if the occasional clone shows up due to lack of variety. The blends have been well-handled too, with very few obvious alphas showing up. 7/10

Playability

A blast to play, there has been plenty of variety thrown into this course without stooping to gimmickiness or the silliness that often dogs tropical creations. Carefully shaping for fairways is paramount with difficult, sloping rough ever-present, and the dangerous hazards making more frequent appearance as the round goes on. There's some background ambient sound too. I found the Par 5 holes to be the biggest disappointment, being just a little too easy and obvious throughout. 8/10

Challenge

With the deep jungle being more of a peripheral than directly in play, careful play and the rough-and-ready hole previews will take much of the hazards out of play. The elevations mean that flat lies are a rarity, but the greens are too difficult and add some artificiality to the challenge. Nevertheless, set up the course sensibly and you'll have something playing close to par. 7/10

Technical

Some straight edges are apparent, especially around the water, and the multitude of bunkers has meant some obvious extrusions are visible. Many of the textures are well-coloured but very indistinct. Not least, it would be nice to see some customisation to really add life to a course that plays very well but feels oddly isolated. 6/10

Overall	Certainly among the better tropical courses, and definitely the best from this designer. Playing it through a low-res haze is unnerving.	36/50
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Hillhurst Country Club

Simon Moss



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, woodland course	11 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Allegedly based on a real course in Calgary		
Conditions		
S*/S* only		

Concept

Clearly a course that has inspired someone, Hillhurst is an entertaining layout, although I have trouble believing and researching it to be a real layout. Unfortunately the designers technical skill hasn't really lived up to his aspirations, and the presentation of this course is desperately uneven, lacking previews or documentation and showing up some amateurish APCD work. 5/10

Appearance

The trees manage to be both varied and cloned, thanks to planting in little clumps, and the Whistler panorama is back in play yet again. The mesh has been extremely poorly handled, with extrusions and folds all over the place and a largely flat plot which makes the occasional elevation experiment stick out like a sore thumb. Nothing doing here. 2/10

Playability

It's difficult to get past the stock visuals here, even if some hole designs are nicely contrived, and it's difficult to ascertain what motivation players would have to keep going back for repeat visits. Some unpleasant greening and pin positions limit your options as well. 2/10

Challenge

It's all about the putting surface here. The lack of elevations is little threat, nor are the bunkers, even though they are hard-extruded. With difficult pins, you'll encounter a lot of impossible putting situations. Without the menace elsewhere, it's woefully artificial. 3/10

Technical

Very little of note here. Everyone should have a go with the APCD once, and Hillhurst is a pretty good illustration of why once is often enough. 1/10

Overall	A few holes of note, but there's not much reason to play this.	13/50
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Hills Course at Palmetto Dunes

Kristoffer Selberg & J Sigler



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, ocean course	11 th hole, Par 3	72

Location

South Carolina

Conditions

The 17th green will restrict most people to M*/S* at most.

Concept

Not many hills; not many dunes. Nevertheless, The Hills course is a meaty and brash tropical course, clearly designed for the intimidation of players. It has massive amounts of water, certainly by real course standards, and quite a few of the challenges posed are artificial, rather than a result of the natural shape of the landscape. Dark, bush-like planting and tall sentinel trees dominate the landscape. If you can get past this stern welcome, it's actually a blast to play, with some twisty and surprising hole designs and a stunning closing trio; don't be intimidated! 8/10

Appearance

The bushy and dense planting doesn't always strike one as being authentic to the area, to be honest, and even though some real attention has been paid to those difficult waterside areas and there's some worthy 3D work, there is something wanting in the landscape. Some terrible-looking terrain folds rear their head from time to time, and quite a few extrusion marks are visible into the bargain. 7/10

Playability

I doubt many courses will have you saying "oh – that's clever!" as often as Palmetto. Clever architecture, rather than unfair design, is a hallmark here, from the ridged fairways to the clever and restrained positioning of bunkers. I can honestly say that a round at Palmetto Dunes is slightly unlike one anywhere else. 8/10

Challenge

This can be tough old golf. Dropping one in the lake is almost an inevitability, and there's also some tricky green elevations and lengthy Par 4s to deal with. The Par 5s are manageable, though, and the clever design and use of heavy rough needs a thoughtful head to manage. 6/10

Technical

This is technically better than it might initially appear, and after the re-design, there are very few flaws left out there. Mostly, the player's attention is drawn by the inherent incongruities in the course: the APCD work does very little to detract from this. 7/10

Overall	A thoroughly Carolina experience with some stadium-course pretensions. A mix of the ordinary, the oddball, and the testing. Very worthy.	36/50
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Hobo's Valley

Zeke Seidel



Description

Imaginary, mountain course.

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Hobo's Valley is one of those course that has trouble cohering. It looks more than anything as if 18 holes have been designed in relative isolation and more or less shoehorned together. The hole design is patchy, with an over-reliance on water, although there are flashes of good ideas. Elevations are used well, as befits a mountain course, but a bit extreme in places. The whole thing is a flight of fantasy more than it is a golf course. I'm afraid I couldn't get on board with it at all. 4/10

Appearance

The textures are the best thing about this course. They're tidy, occasionally (not always) well blended, and do a marvellous job of not checkerboarding, even in the bare expanses of rough. Elsewhere, however, it's not quite so good. There's some coarse custom work, a haphazard set of tree planting, and very obvious clones at grass level. The panorama is hackneyed and the elevations unreal, even in a mountain setting. It's better than some first attempts, but sadly not great. 4/10

Playability

This is a course that makes a lot of your greenside game. You will spend a lot of time working on your chipping and bunker play. This is largely because of the contrivances (blind shots, doglegs) that stymie your tee shot. Given the wide expanse of openness visible, there really is no need for the fairways to be this restrictive. Those playing pro swing are likely to find the course unfriendly, and the 18th hole nigh on impossible. It's a disappointing anti-climax to a round that did start with some promise. Conversely, special mention should go to the ambient sound: clearly a cut above the rest, it is well-pitched, well-varied and well-planted. 5/10

Challenge

Bizarrely, the whole thing works a lot better than one might expect. The proliferation of deep rough is unfairly punishing, and you might consider the bunkering and pin positions to be a bit near the knuckle, but if your target hitting is reasonable then this course provides plenty of unexpected opportunities. 9/10

Technical

Zeke has since gone on to show us he can produce courses of real class, so it is clear he has tidied up such hangovers from this course as 'dartboard' planting and inconsistent blends. As a first effort, I suppose Hobo's Valley is good; just about passable on the large scale. 5/10

Overall	A bit messy but a course with some promise. A good warm-up round before attacking something more serious.	27/50
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Hopeman Golf Club

Stewart Parker



Description

Real, links course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 4, from rough.

Concept

In that little region of Scotland where every fishing village has their own course, stranded in a sea of wild grass and heather, is Hopeman. This short Par 68 course takes you down (quite dramatically, when you reach the 12th) to the very edge of the beach before slowly leading you back up to an impressive closing hole. It's exactly what we'd expect from a links course: full of daunting lies, and rough worthy of the name. Once or twice you feel that the course is working against the landscape rather than with

it, but that doesn't affect the sheer feeling of authenticity that supports this links gem. 8/10

Appearance

Gorgeous. The purples and yellows of the undergrowth are picked out perfectly, and notable problem areas such as walls and the drainage channels that pose as water features are an attraction in themselves. It's rounded off with a dramatic and well-matched panorama. Stewart's eye for detail just continues to get better and better. 10/10

Playability

Quirky and never repetitive, this is truly old-fashioned golf – you won't find holes like these on the crisply manicured fairways of tour stops. And all the better for it, too! With small greens perched above the heather, it is wild-country golf at its outstanding best. Not to everyone's taste, for sure, but for aficionados of British countryside, they don't come much better. 9/10

Challenge

Short courses are often something of a pushover, but there are a few teeth at Hopeman. Plenty of elevation changes and difficult rough are only to be expected, but look out for the OB regions lurking in the depths of the course and a fair few water hazards. Putting on these unpredictable greens is far from easy, too. Sure, you'll probably pick up strokes when the Par 4s are under 350 yards, but a sub-par round is certainly no given. 8/10

Technical

Courses such as this and Southernness are almost unmatched in the Links library. With an astonishing feel for environment and a choice selection of courses, Stewart Parker is becoming a veritable laird of design. 10/10

Overall	Small, quirky and eminently replayable, this is yet another first-class Scottish course from the Parker stable.	45/50
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Hopes Nose

Rob Moates



Description

Fictional, parkland course.

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 4, greenside

Concept

Hopes Nose is a tight and coherent course in fairly rough surroundings, and gives a convincing impression of a salt-of-the-Earth English club course. Rob Moates again excels himself with hole design: there's an excellent and realistic set of layouts: the short holes in particular being a strength. Despite its age, this course exudes down-at-heel charm. 7/10

Appearance

While being better than the same designer's CraggaMoor, this course gels well and features some careful planting and more convincing use of elevations. OK, there are too many stretches of repeating rough texture, and some careless transitions in several places, but the course as a whole doesn't stick errors in your face: you have to go looking to find them. 5/10

Playability

Hopes Nose is a round carefully tailored to all abilities: an asset which only adds to its authentic appeal. Thus, it becomes that most rare of events: a British course with a good sense of risk/reward for all golfers. Only some slightly over-severe gradients on the green might turn a player off: the rest of the course is easy-going yet stimulating golf. 8/10

Challenge

Rob Moates does magnificent things with Par 5s. Here, they come out as a mix of genuine three-shotters and reachable holes. In truth the 'reachable' element of many holes is a little underestimated, and the course comes out as a little too easy. I appreciate that the designer did not want to flood the course with hazards, but as a consequence – of both that and some sparsely-planted woodland – a mishit drive becomes nothing to fear. The course is something too easy on the whole. 6/10

Technical

The surface is the major downside: there are too many blurred textures and rather sharp transitions. I noted that a couple of elevation changes had led to floating trees. But this is a well-designed and very authentic-looking course, let us not forget this, and rate it for what it sets out to be: something real. 5/10

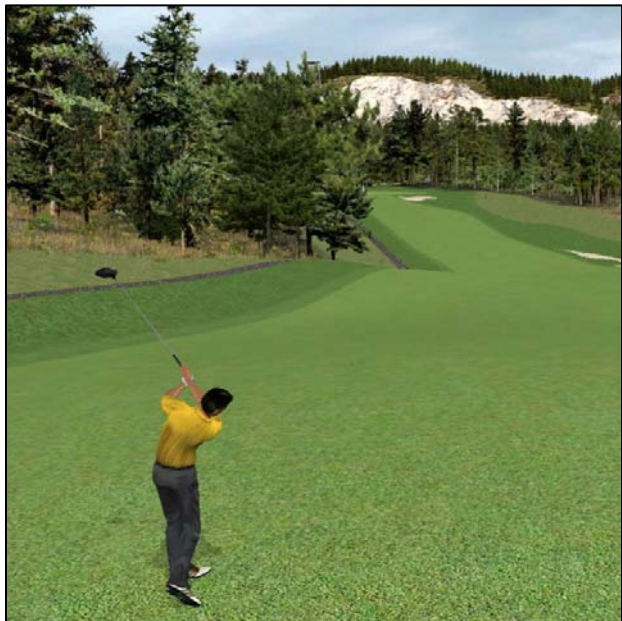
Overall

A rare thing: a down-to-earth and convincing course. Old but enjoyable, and not without a little style and panache along the way.

31/50

Hop Farm GC

John Dudis



Description

Fictional, estate course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 5, from fairway.

Concept

Designated as woodland, but on far too open an environment to qualify as such, Hop Farm winds its way through steep hillside and dense thickets, with babbling brooks always close at hand. Several holes, the closing stretch in particular, are expertly contrived to challenge the player, but woe betide those who approach them too aggressively. I'm not convinced that the elevations are in keeping with the promised Montana locale, but the farmland setting is a fine premise for a course nevertheless. 8/10

Appearance

Smooth textures, thankfully without extrusion marks, have made a much-needed improvement to the course's appearance. The rough, in particular, is much more convincing, although I believe the lines are still a bit too clean-cut for what is basically derelict farmland. The elevations, too, seem contrived rather than naturally occurring. 8/10

Playability

Hop Farm can become rather frustrating to play, particularly for bold players, who will often find themselves with precious few opportunities to lash out. Most holes offer a good risk/reward choice, especially the closing half-dozen, still one of the best finishes to any course available for Links. It does take a good few rounds to discover all the secrets of playing well at this course, and that's the hallmark of good construction. 8/10

Challenge

Attack this course at your peril: it will definitely bite back, often in a nasty way that will cost a stroke or two. The fairways are frequently on a side or uphill gradients, and the greens undulate back and forth, making for a difficult read. It is possible to score well here, but it's much more possible to score very, very badly. 7/10

Technical

The attention to detail means that Hop Farm is now among the must-have fictional courses. The textures, planting and sound have been tightened up to be among the best, and the bunker construction and placement has always been a strong point. I still feel the elevations are somewhat remiss, but being intrinsic to the course, are likely to require a massive work around. 8/10

Overall	A challenging and stylish course, not 100% convincing, but a pleasure to play and explore.	<i>39/50</i>
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Hunter's Wood

Ken Boltz & Lez Marwick



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 5

Par

72

Location

There's a hint in the readme that it might be in Ohio.

Conditions

The greens don't really merit anything faster than M*/S*

Concept

Hunter's Wood made its name by relying heavily on the risk-reward concept and offering subtle lines of play on nearly every hole. The entirety was wrapped in excellent theming and backstory, in a package that always felt right. The 5th hole is widely agreed to be a classic. The course has received a sensitive update from Lez, affectionate and non-overbearing, retaining the rough-and-ready feel of the original while bringing it to a new audience. Outstanding jobs all round. 9/10

Appearance

With some easing-off of the elevations and more variety in the planting, the course definitely looks better, although there's undeniably still an old-school feeling to the surroundings, the yellowing colour set and the panorama. I would have liked to see something a little more fresh in terms of the new texture set. 7/10

Playability

Hunter's Wood continues to be riveting, thanks to the wide range of shots required and some excellently-judged hazarding, even if the fairways do narrow slightly more than seems fair at points. Although a few holes do give the impression of throttling you back from the tee, there are fifteen more that are very pleasurable. The pin positions, although expanded in scope, are not always in the best of locations. 7/10

Challenge

It's unfortunate that the greens haven't been updated for faster Mod speeds, and on anything fast putts become extremely frustrating. Elsewhere, the hazarding and rough do exactly the job required of them, making you work hard for birdies. Birdies will come, almost certainly, but there's a good balance here. 7/10

Technical

The restraint shown in letting this course show its original colours has been very effective in this case and hasn't resulted in another generic makeover. The original layout showed plenty of skill in itself; the update has lifted Hunter's Wood to another plane. 8/10

Overall

A fun course with impressive views and plenty of options for the adventurous player. Well worth anyone's time.

38/50

Huntingdale Golf Club

Jason Thorpe



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, woodland course	12 th hole, Par 3	72
Location		
Melbourne, Australia		
Conditions		
Keep an eye on the pin positions, and something like F*/M* will play fine.		

Concept

One of the premier golfing venues, Huntingdale makes great use of the south Australian sandbelt landscape. The lack of elevation is barely noticed when there are eighteen holes this good placed in front of you, with bunkers and fairway widths at tournament standard and using the surrounding orchard trees as both boundary and obstacle. Impressively, and despite some rather obvious signs of modern alteration, it retains some of the austerity and assuredness even on the PC. 9/10

Appearance

Jason's style has always been impressive visually, and he's conveyed the Australian style outstandingly well through the dry areas, muddy water and attention to detail across the course, down to distance markers and sprinkler heads, as well as the great array of buildings on and around the course. The texture blends are outstanding, and the bunker walls unusual but impeccable. With shots such as the one above being commonplace, it's not easy to find an area to fault. 10/10

Playability

One of those few courses where two test rounds just wasn't enough, Huntingdale has an intriguing range of pin positions and a seemingly unlimited number of ways to go wrong off the tee! In all seriousness, it's addictive stuff, and all too easy to immerse yourself in the outback. One of the most atmospheric Real courses available, full stop. 10/10

Challenge

Although it's apparent that the course has been lengthened over the years, it still plays pretty easy for the Links golfer, even despite some well-guarded greens. That won't worry many people, and nor should it – you'll be here for much more than a stiff challenge. 5/10

Technical

It's difficult to fault something that is self-evidentially proof of so much hard work, thoroughness and creativity. With this release, Jason elevates himself from merely an excellent designer to genuinely part of the elite. 10/10

Overall	Beautifully created and coloured, Huntingdale is not only the best Australian course out there, but one of the best worldwide.	44/50
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Hyland Greens Golf Club

Timothy Boche



Description

Real, short course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Little more than a pitch 'n' putt course, Hyland Greens is nevertheless presented well in an almost country estate setting. Small greens provide a stiff target and hole lengths are mixed from seventy yards up to two hundred. Sure, it will never set the world alight, but there are far worse places to visit for a swift warm-up. 4/10

Appearance

The immaculately trimmed textures are felt all over the course, and little touches such as water planting, flowers, fences and hole boards are not forgotten. The elevations have received careful attention on this small scale. The designer has clearly done the best he can with the limited source material, even though the sight of the course is unlikely to knock many people back. 6/10

Playability

It's unlikely that you'll draw many inferences from actually playing the course! Like many a short track, it is oddly forgettable, and the best that can be said for it is that it is a good warm-up. Perhaps the main appeal will come from the little human touches – the fairways to catch mis-hit or topped shots, the optimistic bunkering, and the crammed feel that has resulted from squeezing eighteen short holes into a small plot. 5/10

Challenge

The tiny greens provide a stern test on their own, and it's likely that many a second shot will be played from the fringe or further afield. Putting is a challenge, too, and it's likely that comfortable pars will be broken up by a bogey or too. Thankfully, it's not overly frustrating, but highlight reel shots will be at a premium. 8/10

Technical

There's little done wrong here, except perhaps for a slightly eccentric choice of course, and time has clearly been expended on the areas of the course that make playing here worthwhile. The 2D and 3D course buildings are adequate evidence of this on their own, even if the course itself is a little perfunctory. 8/10

Overall	While it's nice to see small, local courses making an appearance in Links, it is possible to stretch the idea a little too far. A cute little track, but not offering a host of golfing value.	31/50
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Hyland Hills Gold Course

Neal Parnell



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, parkland course	16 th hole, Par 3	72
Location		
Colorado		
Conditions		
Some poor pin positioning means you should restrict yourself to M*/S*		

Concept

Very extravagant for resort golf, Hyland Hills is a real tester of a course, crammed with blind shots, doglegs, claustrophobic planting and an outstanding final trio of holes to match the close at any course. Sadly, to cynical eyes, it just feels like it's trying just a bit too hard: there's very little let-up on the way around and the repeatability value probably isn't very high. Worth playing the once for a special hole or two, though. 6/10

Appearance

Some nice, if rather garish, texture work fails to disguise some underlying problems, notably some eyesore planting. As well as the garish flowers, the attempts to insert Canada geese and the resort buildings have not exactly gone well. The bunkers are lipless and the blends feathery. A couple of plus-points include the muddy water features (although, oddly, this is not consistent), and an excellent panorama. 5/10

Playability

I got very tired in even my first round of the levels of trickery employed here. The course seems to be punching above its weight when it could easily be something shorter and sweeter. Constantly finding shots obstructed or having to be committed blind is a frustration for players, and the course hasn't received the degree of technical precision it needs to be really enjoyable. 4/10

Challenge

This would be a hard enough course in the proliferation of hazards and narrow landing areas, even without the putting issues that will send scores sky-rocketing. Major green-elevation problems are a big culprit here, and I missed a whole host of short putts on badly-placed pins. 3/10

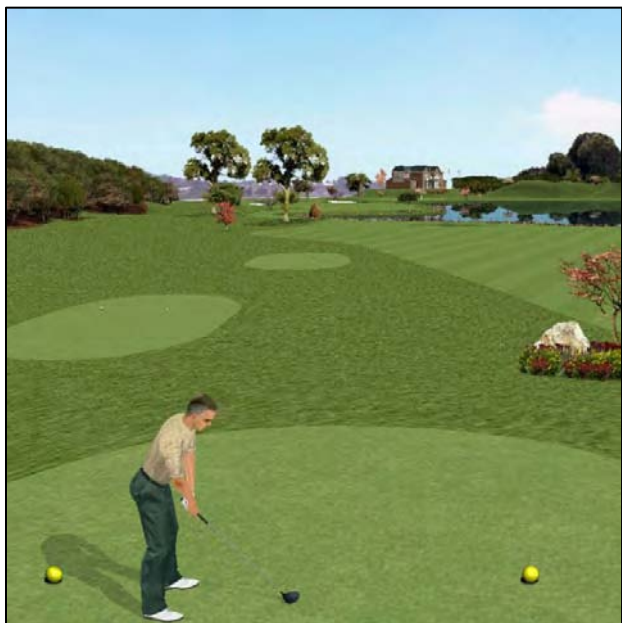
Technical

Technical flaws that impact on your game are difficult to forgive, and the elevation work is a sorry experience, I'm afraid. The course appearance takes a fair amount to be desired, too, and there were one or two poor texture assignments that tripped up another shot. It's an ambitious course to take on at the best of times, and the final result is tolerable but not really a lot more. 3/10

Overall	An unconvincing resort course, presented in a less-than-convincing manner.	21/50
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Ice Castle II GC & CC

Gary Taylor



Description

Imaginary, lakeside course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

Here is a course where all the effort has gone into imaginative and interesting hole design and not much into creating a convincing locality. Nearly every hole is impressive in terms of what it asks you to achieve, and the use of hazards, occasional planting and elevations is superb, if a little unrealistic. Sadly, there is very little underpinning theme or concept holding the course together. 2/10

Appearance

Ice Castle is certainly not a pretty course. The hard edges of textures, cloned planting and wide-open appearance all combine to make a totally unrealistic experience. The panorama is completely unfitting with the terrain in the foreground. The occasional hole looks quite pretty, but on the whole you should concentrate on playing the course, not looking at it. 3/10

Playability

Now, this is where the Castle really picks up. Most holes are ingeniously designed and will require some serious thought. You'll probably want to take a couple of Mulligans out on the course with you the first time round. Shot-shaping is at a premium, and avoiding the devilishly well-placed bunkers is a constant theme. For some, though, the poor look of the course will detract from the playing of it. 8/10

Challenge

Birdies are hard to come by on this course, due to the hazards, good elevation use, and the occasional well-placed tree in your line of sight. The greens are pretty easy to hit, thanks to their size, but feature some challenging (although realistic) contours which make for 10-foot par putts quite often. The frequent risk/reward factor makes this a challenge for many future rounds too. 9/10

Technical

Sadly, this is really sub-standard. The hard edges and lack of texture blends are shocking, as is some bad cloned planting. Some shapes need to be examined for scale, particularly the silly pond by the first green, which looks shockingly out of place. I'm afraid that this could be much better. 2/10

Overall	A joy to play, but terribly primitive. Worth having if you enjoy a challenge, but not if you like spectacles and great visuals.	24/50
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Indian Flats (Hills)

Matt McIntosh



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, mountain course	1 st hole, Par 4	73

Location

The splash screen and hints from the designer say Ohio.

Conditions

Playable on F*/F*, although some green complexes would play tough.

Concept

The Hills course has been through a baffling number of incarnations, although it has probably been worth it in the long run. This grass-covered course fits the billing, using the hills to good extent, and there are one or two neat holes, not least a great twist on the island green at the 14th. But the target-golf aspects have been way overplayed, and there are times when this is more like crazy golf than anything else. 5/10

Appearance

The textures and colour set are finally a good match, and the elevations have been well-handled. The bunkers, though, are lipless with single blends, and the planting in the deep grass has something of a random feel. But it's worth a tour round to see some carefully handled buildings and the almost-perfect match between the plot and panorama. 6/10

Playability

The basic layout of the course has remained virtually untouched, and it's clear the landscape has been used creatively. Having said this, the number of island fairways gets a bit silly towards the end, and some rather cynically-placed bunkers make an effect felt. Plus, it just doesn't have the off-the-wall charm of its brother course. 7/10

Challenge

Something doesn't add up here. Despite the hilliness and the bunkers, the deep rough and elevated greens, it's pretty easy to knock birdies off this course. Perhaps the wideness of the cut fairways doesn't help. Nor does the fact that the designer has opted for a highly target-oriented course but missed the mark by some way. 3/10

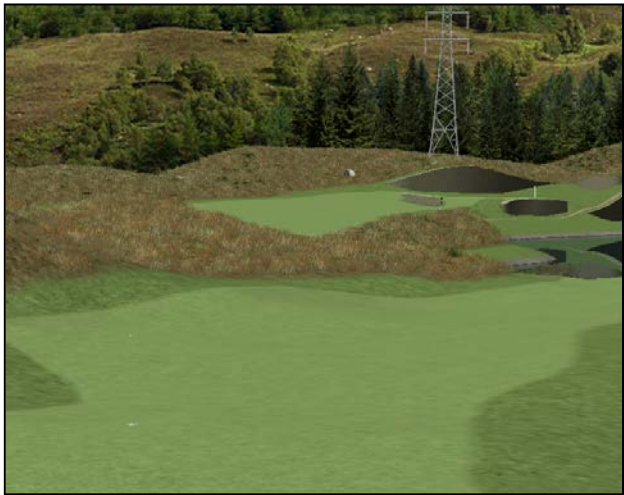
Technical

Steady improvement in a course is always worthy of praise, as is the fact the designer has clearly taken comments on board and acted upon them. The course is credibly presented and has had much done with it, especially in terms of visuals on the largest of scales. 7/10

Overall	Perhaps the weaker of the two Indian Flats courses, but there's no denying it's now had the best brought out of it.	28/50
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Indian Flats (Lakes)

Matt McIntosh



Description	Screenshot	Par
Imaginary, lakeside course	5 th hole, Par 5	71

Location

The splash screen and hints from the designer say Ohio.

Conditions

You'll probably want to stick to M*/F*; perhaps something slower would suit the environment.

Concept

Well-known now for its audacious hole designs and creative use of brick walls and water, the Lakes course has undergone a few incarnations, and actually appears to have lost some of its mystique on the journey. It's very different now than it was when the dunes were forbidding and out of bounds; not necessarily a worse course, but a more coherent one at the very least. Personally, I think I preferred the old industrial style look rather than the sweeping grasslands. 7/10

Appearance

The colour clash has been somewhat tidied up from previous incarnations, and there's some extras in the mix here to break up what could be quite monotonous. To be fair the water and brickworks have been carried out with a little panache. The bunkers are shallower than on the Hills course, so there is less problem with stretched textures, and the few buildings and extras dotted around the place are satisfactory. There are times when the edge of the plot looms ever so close, which robs the course of atmosphere. 6/10

Playability

Having previously described the gameplay as 'knockout', I find myself having to eat my words somewhat. Repeat visits to Indian Flats point out all too obviously the cynical bunker placements and the tortuous lengths that have been gone to in order to artificially protect the greens, including probably one too many island greens. It's still a rollicking ride, though, and it's fun to identify the influences from famous holes at Sawgrass, Bay Hill and others. Perhaps best when left for an occasional treat. 8/10

Challenge

Fun? Certainly. Easy? Well...no. The dunes and water soak up shots pretty easily and make it a bit too easy to get yourself into sixes and sevens (quite literally!). The greens are pretty moderate, but far too difficult to hit, and bunkers are placed such that you'll get plenty of practice with your sand play. Breaking par is a rare and novel event. 6/10

Technical

I have to confess to having quite enjoyed the bleak, almost industrial landscape that this course started on, and it seems a bit homogenised now. Sure, the high-res textures look nice, but the course doesn't really fit together any better than it did, and there is a case for saying it doesn't look as good – certainly not as outstanding. The designer's eye for entertaining hole design and ability to fill a coherent plot is a saving grace. 7/10

Overall	An innovative and brave course, unfortunately with some of its original charm having been lost.	34/50
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Infamous Golf Club

Tim Boche



Description	Screenshot	Par
Imaginary, concept course	14 th hole, Par 4	69
Location		
Definitely fantasy!		
Conditions		
M*/M* might be OK at a real push.		

Concept

A few words of explanation might be necessary here. Loyal H Chapman's 'Infamous' prints portray fictional and fairly way-out golf holes from around the world. In truth, a lot of them wouldn't make particularly exciting golf. Nevertheless, they have caught the imagination of a generation of golfers, and it was only a matter of time before somebody had a go at them with the APCD. The bravery in taking on such a project is undeniable, and those with goodwill will appreciate the many problems facing the designer here. It has not worked 100% of the time, but holes have frequently come out looking – and playing – a great deal better than anyone would have any right to expect. 10/10

Appearance

This has been slowly chipped away upon, and while many of the absurdities remain, the remainder of the course has been tidied up to pretty good standards. High-res textures have made a very effective contribution in this case, but the legacy remains of the fact that you can only do so much with an APCD mesh. At the end of the day, it just doesn't look consistently spectacular, and that's a let-down when it was the primary aim of the prints. 6/10

Playability

This will inevitably be a very personal decision. Some players just won't have any truck with this sort of thing, and even if you're keen you'll need a bagful of Mulligans and quite a lot of patience. Most holes don't exactly offer traditional golf, but the balance is swinging towards this course being a pleasant little amusement. 6/10

Challenge

It's superfluous to complain that comparisons are not at all easy to draw. Credit is due to the designer for at least making the course playable, with some practice, and careful Mulligan use may even result in a sub-Par score, but those hazards take a hefty toll and without recourse to some sort of cheating it's likely that patience will wear thin on some holes. 2/10

Technical

Simply battling away on the refinement of this insane creation earns its recognition. There are plenty of bizarre moments on the way around, but it's also notable that many others have been eradicated through a careful process of testing and improvement. Like so much else on this course, it's really something of a subjective result. 6/10

Overall	An inspired attempt, nowhere near as awful as it could have been, and a must-play for those that like their golf a bit insane.	30/50
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Innisbrook - Copperhead

Glenn Braden



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, woodland course	16 th hole, Par 4	71
Location		
Florida		
Conditions		
Plays well, and recommended, on F*/F*		

Concept

A fair few plays on Innisbrook reveals some of the course's charm: the good use of green complexes and bunkering, the way no particular hazarding is emphasised to the detriment of the others, and the excellent Par 3 holes. There are a lot of very creative challenges here on a course that – in other hands – might be flat and uninteresting. The conversion is somewhat inconsistent, and it's difficult to believe you're really in Florida, but the original course has enough highlights that this won't be an issue to many players. 7/10

Appearance

One aspect that should be highlighted, in case it's otherwise missed, is the excellent tree planting. Ranging from dense to sparse, it immediately feels natural and authentic, and clearly a great deal of effort has been expended on this area. Elsewhere, although the fountains and flowers look rather garish, the course has largely been cleaned of the sharp edges and presented much more believably. The textures are individually nice (particularly the pine straw and the bunkers), but as a whole are very strongly-coloured and artificial. But it's a great stride forward on previous incarnations. 7/10

Playability

This is a course that really takes a couple of rounds to appreciate, but the openness and accessibility is apparent from the very first. Good shot-shaping is offered as a viable, and often preferable, alternative to throttling down off the tee, and the lengthy Par 5s make considering that 2-Wood a very viable option. It might not hit you at first, but there is some clever golf here. Unfortunately, the constant pushing back of hole lengths and boundaries replaces some of the cleverness with brute force. 6/10

Challenge

A little bit of everything: bunkers are well-placed but easily escaped; rough is easy to hit and easy to escape; and the trees are used well, closing down to a worrying thickness on occasions. The greens are accessible and very playable, and they alone might be the reason you'd expect to score in the 60s. 6/10

Technical

Although the colours are a bit overpowering, the course's environments have been lifted above the dull and uninspiring, thanks to excellent layered planting. There are very good aspects to the course environs and just about enough to knit them together into a convincing course. This is a track that could really shine if only it had enough to make players feel at home. 7/10

Overall	A real grower of a course, one which was unfairly overlooked in its Microsoft incarnation. The APCD version isn't perfect, but it is a lot more playable.	33/50
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Inverness Club

Bruce Ditmyer



Description

Real, estate course.

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

In Ohio rather than Scotland, Inverness derives its name from its Scottish designer, and indeed there is a whiff of the links in the way this course brings the elevations into play. Gimmicks are kept to a minimum on this father of American target golf, and the innate stylishness shines through in this loving recreation. 8/10

Appearance

A clean-cut course such as this lends itself very well to the APCD and the designer has responded in kind: making sure blends, bunkers and the diverse planting are neatly done. Several holes sit in natural amphitheatres and are impressively spectacular. Just occasionally you get the impression that either the course or the designer aren't quite selling themselves, and the landscape tends to the bland rather than the dynamic. But, after all, golf courses are for golfers, not photographers. 9/10

Playability

A much shorter contrast to the typical US Championship layout, Inverness ushers you round pretty gently. The lack of variety sometimes hurts: there are 13 Par 4s on this round, although there is thankfully little *déjà vu*. Even then, perhaps the quota of mid-length holes is better suited to a links. The brilliant uphill holes restore a bit of excitement. 7/10

Challenge

Inverness' age is catching up with it. The pros would make mincemeat of this if the Open were staged there tomorrow. The likelihood is that Links golfers will tear into it with the same ferocity. The greens are gentle, the rough is short and bogeys are surprisingly hard to come by. Underwhelming. 4/10

Technical

Sometimes, first-time designers only have an unjust reputation working against them. Conversely, Inverness has had time and pain lavished on it and come out a triumph. 10/10

Overall	A great re-creation places Inverness firmly in the increasingly large group of 'Good' courses.	38/50
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Iron Forest

François Cristallo



Description

Imaginary, tropical course.

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

A luscious tropical isle with the added theme of some brilliant 3D objects made with both custom shots and the terrain. These additional objects could have spoiled the course, but the golfing design remains clever throughout and on many holes the objects add to the appeal rather than detract from it. There are fewer stand-out holes than would perhaps be ideal, with an emphasis on slightly-obstructed Par 4s, hence the loss of a mark. 9/10

Appearance

Sheer brilliance, this. Everything looks lovely, from the custom textures, to the brilliant hard-sand bunkers, to the smooth lagoon. Most of the 3D objects are excellent, and the hot-air balloon is a work of brilliance. Planting is very convincing, and there's so much to look at on every hole, you'd hardly want to play golf. 10/10

Playability

A couple of problems let this down for me. Apart from the lack of variety in the Par 4s, the annoying cricket sound effects and the long rendering times were a bit of a downer. There is some great imagination in terms of shot requirements, though, and players with speedy processors will be playing this again and again. 6/10

Challenge

This course is extremely well-pitched. Birdies are hard to come by, and only the Par 5s offer you a sporting chance. Even then, they are not obvious two-shotters and will require some careful planning and bravery to get a shot at Eagle. If you tangle with the trees on the shorter holes, expect to miss par, especially seeing as the deep rough is exceptionally punishing. Sadly, the interesting bunkers very rarely come into play. 9/10

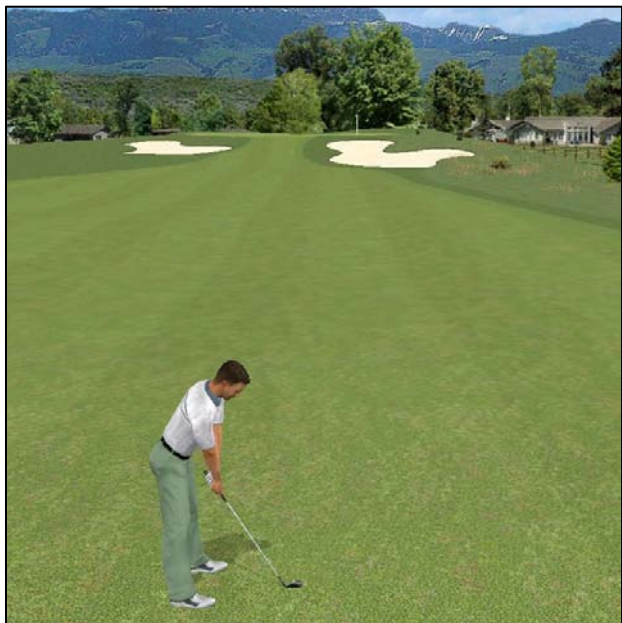
Technical

The technical work that has gone into the object design and the textures is top-notch. Planting is generally very good, and makes the course feel very natural. Custom objects are so frequent that you'll need to go round a few times to spot them all. A bit more in-play elevation work, and perhaps some tidier blends/extrusion combinations, and this would be nigh-on perfect. 9/10

Overall	A lovely and interesting tropical lagoon course, with some impressive and unusual hole designs. If you can look past the annoying sound and long rendering times, this could become a big favourite.	43/50
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Jackson Hole Golf And Tennis Club

John Dudis



Description

Real, farmland course

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 4, from fairway

Concept

A down-at-heel rural dream, Jackson Hole encompasses shacks and prairie. Hole design is mostly benign, although the wicked 11th adds a sadistic twist. Generally, though, players should expect the norm from a public course: lengthy Par 3s, reachable Par 5s, and a gentle, unthreatening round of golf. 5/10

Appearance

The main problem with this course is flatness. There really is a missing element in terms of elevations, and it doesn't do either the appearance or the test any favours. The planting is sparse and could be toughened up too. Holding the presentation up nicely are some brilliantly understated textures and an impressive and well-fitting panorama. Could be a lot worse, on the whole. 6/10

Playability

Most players will enjoy an infrequent ramble around Jackson Hole, although in truth it is a little bit unstimulating. Some shot-shaping is necessary off the tees if you persist in taking your driver, but the pattern of play becomes formulaic well inside the front nine. 5/10

Challenge

The lack of elevations really make approach shots a doddle, and the greens are very gently sloping and easy to read. Additionally, the planting doesn't really come into play, thanks to the large expanses of rough between the fairway and the scattered trees. The bunkers are easy to escape and a mid-60s round should be your target. 3/10

Technical

Apart from the lack of attention to elevational detail, this course has been pieced together very well. The low-level planting adds tone and the hazards look realistic and unforced. Use of textures is authentic and suits the course perfectly. The soundtrack is worthy of mention, too, being atmospheric and unintrusive while being varied and interesting. 8/10

Overall	An understated real course which is pleasant enough but lacking the cutting edge that will stimulate or challenge most Links golfers.	27/50
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Jacob's Creek Golf Club

Jacob Seersholm



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, marshland course	8 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Denmark		
Conditions		
One or two greens will probably force you to limit this to M*/M*. Breezy wind conditions work well.		

Concept

A sumptuous creation, set in a lakeside environment, and making a big think of beautiful grass, planting, Jacob's Creek also features a fair few stand-out holes, not least the excellent 8th, 11th and 14th, which demand careful golfing strategy. In fact, they carry much of the course, with some other holes being either less appetising or a little over-the-top. The whole thing is wrapped up in an excellent parcel which is truly reminiscent of European lowlands. 8/10

Appearance

The view from the first tee is almost the best on the whole course, with delicate scarlet flowers among the weeds and beautifully-planted waterside. It's a theme that recurs around the course, which has also used tiny elevation changes to great effect. The bunkers are suitably lipped, and the panorama fits well, but the clubhouse is perhaps a bit of an eyesore from certain angles, not least when concluding the first half of the course. 8/10

Playability

Excellent golf from the get-go, with a variety of straightforward and very target-oriented holes. Most of the Par 5s are constructed to be proper three-shotters, which makes a refreshing change, and the hazards are used prudently to catch errant shots. The interplay between straightforward holes and those with more flair is entirely natural, which only adds to the course's appeal. 9/10

Challenge

Under benign conditions, Jacob's Creek is very accessible. Greens are relatively unguarded and the rough, despite being populated by the trademark grasses, is not a big threat. As long as you avoid the bunkers, and play the trademark holes with a bit of common sense, you can score low. It's a much more interesting proposition at faster speeds, and plays very close to par. 7/10

Technical

The technical work has held up very well, and there's a distinct feel to the course which helps to set it apart. The golfing design is excellent, too, managing to incorporate some very imaginative holes without coming across as gimmicky. A shame about the clubhouse, which might have been better left out, and some hasty work around some of the bunkers. 8/10

Overall	A terrific mixture of holes, blended skilfully into a believable setting. Definitely worth your time.	40/50
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Jalapeno Canyon Country Club

Doug Quillen



Description

Fictional, desert course.

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 4, from rough

Concept

This purports to be a desert course, but the designer really hasn't got to grips with what desert courses are all about. Lots of identikit dogleg holes, surrounded by a slack handful of various trees and stock-shaped bunkers, doesn't constitute a golf course of any description for me, let alone a desert one. The interim dry land is all rock, planted with the same cactus over and over, and can lead your ball on a merry dance also. Terrible. 0/10

Appearance

Only a couple of bizarre rock formations really catch the eye, otherwise the too-flat terrain has little to offer. There are no elevations or hollows, as one would expect on a natural desert course, and the use of the Mesa Roja panorama is laughably bad. Harsh edges and stretched textures abound, and are ugly in the extreme. 1/10

Playability

Most unenjoyable, dude. In just one round of Jalapeno Canyon, I feel like I've played the same hole a dozen times: a 30 degree dog-leg with a couple of bunkers at the corner and a long final stretch to a green with two more bunkers. Sometimes the dog-leg goes left, sometimes it goes right, it doesn't really make a lot of difference. Two of the Par 3s are virtually identical too. Only the 18th has any variety, and that's what stops this course getting a complete zero. 1/10

Challenge

For some reason, the designer has seen fit to stretch this course out to an unconscionable length, which not only impedes variety, but – combined with some nasty green contours – increases the challenge to an unacceptable extent. About halfway through, I'm guessing, he realised that it was too hard to make par, and made the greens on the rest of the course pancake-flat. It gets you a decent score, but it's just pathetic. 2/10

Technical

Precious little to praise here, either. Cloned planting, harsh edges, some bizarre rock formations which would never happen in real life, computer-generated tee boxes, no green fringe, no OB areas, a suburban house acting as the clubhouse. It all smells of lack of effort and a cheap runout. 1/10

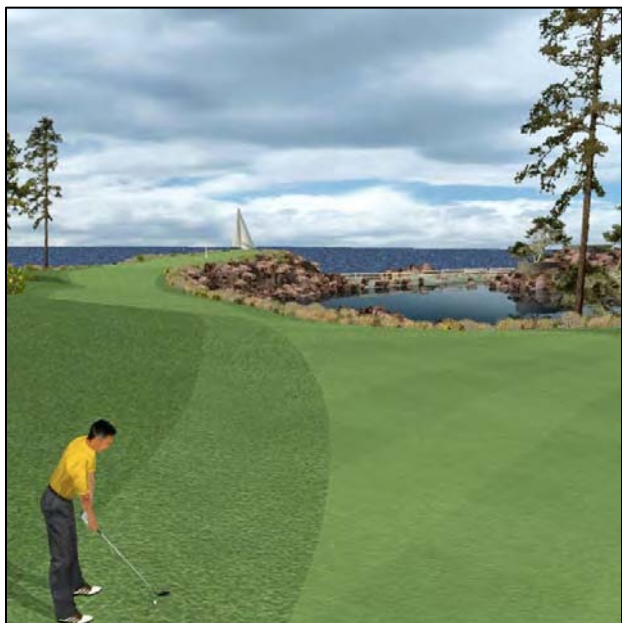
Overall

The most laughably bad course, for far too many reasons. If you own it, you should be ashamed of yourself.

5/50

J Milne's Best

John Milne



Description

Fictional, ocean course.

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 4, from fairway first-cut.

Concept

A little confused, this. It tends to veer between being a forested mountain course and a shoreline Pebble-Beach style. Luckily, individual hole designs hold it up, being fresh, original and challenging. Perhaps the course is too penal in parts, but many players will return again and again to enjoy some imaginative landscaping, particularly that on the closing half-dozen holes. 6/10

Appearance

Often a very good looking course. The planting is sparse but looks effective from a distance, and the elevation changes provide many an impressive view. The designer has gone to town with landscape moulding, creating many impressive effects without straying too far into completely unnatural appearance. The hollows and the harbour (above) are works of art, but more of a misjudgement was the use of Spyglass' beach texture (which has never appealed to me) on the opening holes, making them look poor and artificial. 7/10

Playability

Surprisingly, for such a tough course, these 18 holes are pretty enjoyable. A lot of players will see the potential in this and want to play round several times in order to catch the best views. Although fairways are narrow, several holes offer a convincing choice of play, and avoiding all the hazards will attract those with unusual MoPs. The great elevation changes provide a serious challenge without ever getting you into trouble. 7/10

Challenge

Too steep, I'm afraid. The opening holes are damn tough and you should expect to be over par by the turn. Approach shots to small greens will often roll off into bunkers and the length of the course is also designed to punish. Some ridiculously narrow fairways take a lot of the enjoyment out of what could be a very good round. 5/10

Technical

J Milne's Best is pretty sound technically. I think if an update were to be produced, some more careful texture work and more customisation would be required. Blend this with more organised planting (especially in the sand regions) and we could be looking at a brilliant course. Even as it is, some of the brilliant (if slightly unbelievable) landscaping holds it up really well. 8/10

Overall	A well-sculpted treat of a fantasy course. Even if you don't like them off-the-wall, play this one once just to enjoy the views. Those who like a challenge and something unusual will make this a keeper.	33/50
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Jordan's Creek

Jeff Jordan



Description

Fictional, parkland course.

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Jordan's Creek is a pleasant and warm parkland course with a few surprises thrown in. Choppy undergrowth makes an unwelcome (although not unbefitting) appearance – notably in front of the 17th green, and catches shots as effectively as any bunker. Water is used stringently and is not in-your-face as on many courses. The variety of holes is impressive without having to use elevations or too many gimmicks, and there's a decent sense of location for a course of this age. 7/10

Appearance

Good views are at a premium, thanks to the general flatness of the course. I don't think the course is the visual knockout that it aspires to be, and such things as planting and bunker lips are competent without being particularly impressive. The aspiration to use custom textures is admirable, but the bluey-green putting surface looks a little odd. Little visual oddities all round the course, to be honest, detract from the golf. It's not bad, but it's not good either. 5/10

Playability

A very impressive round of golf on the whole. There are tests, surprises, a great variety of hole types. The main niggle is the number of blind tee shots, but in fairness, they're not too difficult to second-guess. There are quite a few clever touches to the round: not hard enough to be gimmicks, but something a bit unique which helps the course stand out. 9/10

Challenge

This has been nicely judged. The tough turn will undoubtedly cost strokes, and those who miss the tight landing spots may well be bunkered. The deepest rough is used purely as in-play hazarding and is worse than any sand. But the greens are accommodating, free of pre-Mod excessive-gradient-itis, and will often result in good scores. Expect to drop a few but pick several up as well. 10/10

Technical

In some ways, the technical accomplishment is a weak link. There are no glaring errors here, but likewise it's hard to look at the course without seeing a sharp edge, a hard transition, or an area of odd-looking or cloned planting. These sort of intrusions shouldn't detract from a fine round, but sadly they often do. 4/10

Overall	Jordan's Creek gets by on a great layout and a good sense of fun. It's no great shakes visually, but should be worth half an hour of anyone's time.	35/50
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Jubilee Pines

Neil Ogle



Description

Fictional, woodland course.

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

That rare oddity: a flat mountain course! You'd swear these holes were fairly standard parkland if they hadn't been set against sumptuous backdrops, thick alpine forests, and the features of some artful planting and a freehand with the design. Oddly, given the obvious intention to incorporate something different into the course, it pales rather on the second half. Because of so many apparent contradictions it's a course that unfortunately doesn't hang around in the memory for long. 5/10

Appearance

There's a crisp, chilly feel to this course. The pale greens and cleverly-used flowerbeds combine well with the stock panorama (in this case using stock has become an asset) to really give the impression of Rocky foothills. The design ticks all the right boxes with perhaps just a few clones to distract the eye. 9/10

Playability

Somewhat inexplicably, this is a course that becomes something of a drag over 18 holes. It could be the fault of the lack of good elevational work; it might be due to the unappealing and pressurising nature of many of the tee shots. It might simply be due to the unconvincing location. Whatever the cause, perhaps just half a round would suffice, with just the Par 3s holding up the course as a whole. The back nine becomes almost a comical parody of the course's style, and really start to grate. 5/10

Challenge

Ah. I think I have it. Part of the appeal problems stem from the lack of impact this course has upon your game. There's little out there to impress you – to make you want to hit your shots. The course is open and inoffensive, and could use an injection of target-setting or at least creative – rather than peripheral – use of hazards. 5/10

Technical

Smoothly done, although the lack of customisation doesn't work in the course's favour. The background and textures are stock, despite having been used well, and the forest line is spoiled by the occasional clone. The elevations, of course, are what could save this course if carried out more competently. Clones aside, there is some special planting, though, and the APCD work is sufficiently advanced to keep everyone happy. 7/10

Overall	OK in short spells, but a bit of a damp squib when you actually get stuck in. Probably better avoided for tournament play: this course lacks that final bite.	31/50
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Jungle Island

Kristoffer Selberg & Andrew Jones



Description

Imaginary, tropical course.

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 3, from fairway.

Concept

A tiny lost tropical paradise with some wild areas, massive (but not unrealistic) elevation changes, and lovely offbeat touches, especially the rock formations and waterfall, that's Jungle Island. It doesn't have the way-out wackiness of the Crusoe Course or Devil's Island, and each hole stays in touch with reality, while maintaining a stern test. Several hole designs are unique and quite exciting. But, for me, there's something missing – there's a feeling that the course could have been just a little bit more. It's a

damn fine round of golf, nevertheless. 8/10

Appearance

Sheer loveliness, would be anyone's verdict. This is about as good as you can make a course look without using an impressive panorama, and while the rocks might not be 100% authentic, and the mud-bed stream looks a bit unlikely, the rest of the course is not only pretty, but utterly believable as a desert island as well. 9/10

Playability

To be frank, there's several reasons to get frustrated with Jungle Island. The deep rough is almost impossible to play out of, and tee shots are frustratingly hard. You'll play round at least once just to see the custom creations (particularly the ones on hole 7), but there's not much to come back for a third or fourth time. 5/10

Challenge

Obviously, this course was designed to be tough, and the nice surprise is that's it's not Devil's Island tough, but a fair yet firm challenge. You'll struggle to score well, and it would take a combination of conservative play and luck to break par, but its far from impossible as long as you avoid the rough and some of the hideously penal green run-offs. 6/10

Technical

Very few flaws here. The custom creations are stunning; the waterfall head and shoulder above any other Links creation. Textures are well chosen without drawing the eye specifically and blended well. The management of the course as a whole is exceedingly good. Perhaps a little more spit and polish on some of the custom areas is all this needs to be in with the best. 9/10

Overall

A lovely and idealistic creation. Misses out on being the best through lack of final polishing and also the designers' well-publicised belief that it could never be anything more than a drawing board.

37/50

Jungle Utopia

Dave Mackey



Description

Fictional, tropical course.

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 4, approach shot.

Concept

A pristine little course clearly carved out of dense jungle terrain. The course carries this premise off exceedingly well, and the lush planting is a constant and convincing reminder of where you are. Small mud-lined water holes – while a bit unnatural – are a different touch to the more ‘usual’ water features, and several holes bring them into play most annoyingly with use of cunning terrain elevations and layout. This excellent concept easily helps carry off some of the course’s more obvious flaws,

detailed below. 8/10

Appearance

Planting is always going to be tricky with a design such as this, which relies on dense forestation, and indeed there is a lot of obvious cloning. Although the stock textures are relied upon heavily, they fit the environment well. Little touches like the heavy grass planting (often between the fairway and green) were enjoyable. Sometimes good views aren’t apparent, sadly, because the elevation use obscures the view. 7/10

Playability

As nice as this course is, playing it can be hard work and a bit frustrating, thanks to the many OB areas, the pools and tough greens and greensides. It frequently becomes difficult to save par, especially on the back nine, and this doesn’t lead to particularly enjoyable gameplay. Many holes don’t offer you a choice of routes (although the Par 5 10th tries to make up for this by offering you about 8), and what’s the fun in that? 4/10

Challenge

The difficulty has been ramped up with narrow fairways, close OBs, hard greens and highly punishing rough. Anyone playing at Champ level will want to take some Mulligans out with them, otherwise they’ll be looking at a score in the 80s. The back nine is significantly harder than the outward holes, which only makes it all the harder. 3/10

Technical

Some better texture transitions would have been appropriate, as would a better choice of textures greenside. I spotted several mesh folds which looked ugly. The bunkers look a bit ragged and unfinished and there’s some fine points of the planting to sort out. But the layout in general is nicely done, and the position of the clubhouse very close to the 11th green was inspired, I thought. The creation of the water holes could have been twee, but actually look quite effective. 5/10

Overall

A luscious course in a new and different environment. Sometimes a struggle to play well, but there’s plenty to look at on the way around.

27/50

Kalusa Lakes

Gary Turner



Description

Fictional, lakeside course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Subtly tricked-up with hazards and tight landing areas, this is a course that will push you without being overtly unfair. It's a wholesome and utterly believable set of holes and, for something that has grown out of a technical experiment, is remarkably convincing. But there's a spark; a certain charm lacking, which means the course never incites you to play it over and over again. 7/10

Appearance

With the muddy, low-lying lakes immaculately blended in the landscape, this could never fail to impress. The excellent use of textures and planting extends to the deep rough, which is extremely realistic both in appearance and attributes. A suitable variety of planting helps to complete the overall effect. Given the tricky nature of the hole design, views are clean, clear and accessible. 9/10

Playability

You're always being pushed at Kalusa Lakes: whether pushed to land your drive on target; pushed to avoid the awkward hazarding; or pushed to sink some tough putts. It's frustrating to land in the heavy planting, too. But thankfully, it's not depressingly hard in the same way that certain other courses are, and there's a lot of reward to be had in a close recovery or a successful middle-length putt...6/10

Challenge

...But never let it be said that it was easy. Any Mulligans you take out onto the course will inevitably be snapped up on the front nine. Greens are tough to read and feature some nightmarish elevation changes. Bunkers, too, are deceptively sloped and an accurate recovery is surprisingly hard even for the best sand players. Anyone would be pleased with a sub-par round. 5/10

Technical

The only flaw, if flaw it is, on this course is the neglect to provide some recompense to the player. Once in a while at Kalusa, it would be nice not to be forced to hit arrow-straight drives, or make nigh-impossible recoveries to save Par. It detracts from the realism of the course and does it no favours. Elsewhere, such difficulties as planting, texture choices and course elevations have been brilliantly handled: the latter, in particular, a shining example of sufficient model of restraint and prudence. 9/10

Overall	Technically great, but lacking the fizzle and warm embrace of some less daunting courses.	36/50
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Kanaal New Course

Mitch Sirk & Matt McIntosh



Description

Fictional, marshland course

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 4

Par

71

Location

Netherlands

Conditions

It does play faster, but surely this course is cut out for playing on S*/S*? Or even slower?

Concept

What a superb idea for a course. Sitting on Dutch Polderland – the land reclaimed from the sea – this is no links, nor is it a normal park course. The Kanaal exudes a charm all of its own. It genuinely looks green and soggy, although it's far from ugly. Mitch Sirk has used this for a template for some amazing creativity in hole design, with green sizes and pin positions that both border on the preposterous, but also feel about right given the lack of real estate between water hazards. The 1.07 touchup has been carried out tastefully and with restraint. 9/10

Appearance

Kanaal certainly isn't impressive on the large scale, but on the finer scale it's decidedly lovely. Nothing planted on the course is more than a couple of metres tall, but it all fits beautifully, and the water regions are fantastically textured and planted. The textures have been well-chosen, although the 3D work looks a little clunky in a modern light. Importantly for the overall feel of the course, the panorama is unique and appropriate without being overbearing. Despite the fact that it's notionally on very dull landscape, this is a brilliant course to look at. 9/10

Playability

Because of the unique concept, this course takes up a lot of your time trying to find a way to play it, and a way to beat it. On an open terrain, each hole can be played in myriad ways, and those with good recovery skills will realise that trying to stick to the narrow fairways isn't always the easiest way. Greenside play is fascinating; what little elevation is used is done around the greens, and makes chip and flop shots a consistent challenge. Great fun to play, over and over again. 10/10

Challenge

It's difficult to compare Kanaal to other courses, and in fairness, it's very much a matchplay course with some greens deliberately created to be unhittable. To be honest, though, the simple fact remains that – with suitable conditions, Kanaal offers up a sprinkling of both birdies and bogies, and Par is very much the right number at the end of the day. 9/10

Technical

Even in its original incarnation, there was very little to fault about this special and unique little course. The hole design makes the course entirely, and it's unlikely that 18 such intense holes have ever been created for the game. For that alone, Mitch Sirk earns his design credentials. 10/10

Overall	Amazing design in an original and convincing landscape. This joins the elite on the basis of pure playability.	47/50
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Kansas National Golf Club

Paul Woodbury & Kevin Tobin



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, desert course	17 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Kansas, obviously		
Conditions		
Plays OK up to M*/M* and possibly faster		

Concept

Possibly the most lavish course ever created with the APCD, but in all likelihood one of the most frustrating too, Kansas National is isolated, meticulous but also a little bamboozling. Why does the 'dry grass' hazard look like bunker and play like deep grass? Why does such a desert-like course have so many water features? What exactly were the designers thinking? All these, and several more questions remain not fully answered: like so many Paul Woodbury courses, Kansas National is something of an unsatisfying enigma. 4/10

Appearance

Planted with delightful care and almost unbelievable variety, this course is a seller based on its grasses alone. Elsewhere, however, it's not quite so satisfying. The texture transitions are rough, and some of the trees are unclear. There's no sign of civilisation, which barely helps in keeping the course believable. Despite the high-res, some textures look blurry, and you sense that as much time needed to go into the surface as into the planting. 8/10

Playability

Much has been made of Kansas National's inordinate rendering times, and players would be well advised to slide the Graphics Detail down to halfway for acceptable pauses. Even then, it's something of a wrench having to wait that long. The rendering times pale into insignificance, though, by what has been done to the layout. There are too many blind tee shots, and the hole previews are unhelpful. This is little more than a frustration. 3/10

Challenge

Narrow fairways, inescapable hazards, and some surprisingly tough pin positions are a miserable combination. The game of golf has come out second to artistic endeavour, and holes are over-planned and over-elaborately constructed. The deep grass hazards proliferate and yet are almost entirely impossible to escape from. The final hole is the perfect illustration of precisely what is wrong with the course, and makes for a miserable end to a round which may well be pushing 80. 5/10

Technical

Despite the inherent problems for the player, it has to be admitted that the course is immaculately constructed, and probably not a million miles away from the designers' intent. But there are still one or two technical issues readily apparent, including a persistent crash problem, and perhaps it's best that this isn't played too regularly. 6/10

Overall	Great to look at, but almost unplayable. Perhaps if you drop down to Pro Click and adjust the level of graphic detail, it might be worthwhile. But that would be a departure from almost anyone's normal game.	26/50
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Kapa'a Golf Resort and Spa

Paul Woodbury & Kevin Tobin



Description

Fictional, tropical course

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

This is what all tropical resort courses should look like. Using the black rocks and black sand traps that have proved successful elsewhere, Kapa'a is varied, winding, strategic and everything you expect from a tropical ocean course. The designer's style has been refined to a tee here, and many of the excesses of previous releases are thankfully absent. Plus, after having seen the terrific closing hole, I'll retract anything I previously said about the inadvisability of ending rounds with Par 3s. 9/10

Appearance

The lava blacks work surprisingly well on a golf course, and one could never accuse this particular designer of skimping on planting. There's a drop-dead photo-realistic panorama, and the coastline has been impeccably worked. The rough rake-marks in the black sand are spot on the mark. The only weak spot for me are the stadium-course grasses when something more dry and yellow was surely called for. 9/10

Playability

The hole design is top-notch and must be regarded as the course's winning factor. Many holes have dual routes, particularly the Par 5s, and there's a terrific amount of variety at all stages from the fairly tame opening holes to the dramatic ocean sides later on in the round. A mixture of hazards keep you awake, and there's plenty of opportunities to exercise both attacking and defensive games. 9/10

Challenge

One-shot hazards tend to make or break your round here. Once you learn the critical lesson of avoiding the rock hazards, however, it's not too difficult to keep your ball in the short grass and hit a tidy approach, even towards the 200-yard approaches. Flat greens are the extra incentive you need not to attack too much, and the sensible player will score well under par. 5/10

Technical

This is the course where everything clicks for Paul. Hole designs, planting and textures are all impeccably created, and there's very little to knock either visually or stylistically. Avoiding the excesses of Kansas National and San Simeon have helped focus on quality, if still extravagant, golf. 10/10

Overall	Easily the best and most coherent that we have seen from Paul Woodbury. If you're getting any tropical courses you want to start right here.	42/50
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Kapalua Bay

Microsoft



Description

Real, ocean course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

It's nice having the collection of Kapalua courses to play together, but they're all markedly different. The bay course is marked by plenty of blind tee shots, plenty of challenges and some spectacular landscapes. The really outstanding holes are those that provide a spectacular test, but there are no real weak links in the course itself. 6/10

Appearance

Despite being an early design, this has an edge over many of its peers. While the cloned planting is terrible, and texture boundaries look distinctly old-hat, the landscape has been crafted well and realistically, and the panorama is pretty good too. It's not eye candy in the tradition of our best amateur designers, but rarely is it ugly either. 5/10

Playability

This is a very playable course. Easy enough not to put you off early, and with most holes offering two or more routes to the green, most players will cruise round, probably more than once. Refreshingly gimmick-free, too, relying on the terrain and carefully-placed bunkers to do the work. 7/10

Challenge

Kapalua Bay, unlike the Plantation, isn't the sternest test of a golfer. Only the ocean-side holes will prove really expensive, the unassuming greens being tough enough to prevent birdies, but reasonable enough to allow pars. Most golfers should expect to shoot in the high sixties. 6/10

Technical

Even though this course is adequate, appearance-wise, the construction still looks old hat. Cloned planting crops up on many an occasion, which is shameful. The textures are poor and contrast starkly, and many of the shapes show jagged or hard edges. But the elevations and panorama look good and although this is far from the best we've seen from Microsoft, it's a damn long way from the worst, either. 5/10

Overall	A reasonable re-creation. Hard around the edges, but fun to play and works sufficiently as part of the set.	29/50
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Kapalua Plantation

Andrew Jones



Description

Real, canyon course.

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

This is the trademark of the Kapalua collection, and features some stunning golf architecture. Drastic elevations and sloping fairways make no shot easy, and the greens are horrendously treacherous in places. At least six holes are world famous for their beauty and tough test. The Plantation course combines the best of Links terrain with good target golf, and puts the whole lot in an ideal tropical setting. 10/10

Appearance

The upgrade has removed some of the coarseness and pixilation of Microsoft's original, but sadly suffers from flaws of its own. The deep grasses are prime offender; they've been forested and look too linear and board-like. But the bunkers have received their much-needed upgrade, and the rest of the course looks excellent, so no complaints. 9/10

Playability

As always, this is an utter delight to play. There's call for high levels of accuracy and careful reading of slopes all over the course. The Par 5s are the incredible test they always were and the whole 18 just emanates pure class. Plus there's the joy of smacking huge drives and huge swooping putts as ever. Because of the honed visuals and the new, cleaner appearance to the course, it's better than it was. 10/10

Challenge

Somehow, this has got easier in the conversion, although it's absolutely no pushover. Some stinkers of greens and pin positions remain, and the designers would be well-advised to tidy this up. Plus there's the proliferation of 'lost ball' areas and the ever-changing elevations remaining a constant struggle. 6/10

Technical

With one of the APCD elite to its name, you would expect the Plantation to be perfect. But there's a niggling feeling that this update is a little rushed, not least because the planting and pin positions haven't been as thoroughly vetted as you'd expect on a top-class release. I'm sure everyone is grateful for the update to be publicly released for free; it's a shame it's not quite yet the finished article. 9/10

Overall	A great update of an absolute classic of a course, just missing out through one or two slip-ups.	44/50
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Kapalua Village

Microsoft



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Kapalua Village lacks the intimidation of 'older brother' Plantation and plays a more gentle and forgiving round of golf with generous rough and little in the way of immediate hazards. It's a short and unprepossessing course with few holes standing out for particularly good design. 5/10

Appearance

Microsoft clearly didn't spend as much time on this lesser course. The textures are stretched and distorted, bunkers like blots on the landscape, and the planting looks underdone, especially off the immediate line of play. There's not much at all to look at on this course, to be honest. 3/10

Playability

With narrow fairways and frequent doglegs, the sensible player isn't given much choice in the manner of playing a hole. Recovery shots are, on the whole, too simple and it's very easy to chip close to the pin. The elevations don't contribute to the play as much as hinder it: you'll undoubtedly see several approach shots finish short of the green. 5/10

Challenge

The Village starts deceptively easy, but the test stiffens around the turn. Sadly, the final holes are not sufficient as a test, and a score in the mid-60s should be comfortable. Part of the reason is the unchallenging bunkers and the wide open rough areas (there is no heavy rough on the course). The greens are the easiest at Kapalua, and make putting something of a formality. This course is a disappointment after a round on the Plantation. 5/10

Technical

For a 2000 course, this is a hell of a disappointment. Lack of texture use, woefully pointless bunkers, harsh transitions and hasty planting are all traits that Microsoft have avoided elsewhere. Some areas just look like a mistake; others don't bring across any of the course's atmosphere or location. 3/10

Overall	A massive disappointment, and by far the weakest of the three Kapalua courses. It looks distinctly under-polished and unengaging.	21/50
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Kauri Cliffs

Microsoft



Description

Real, canyon course.

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Using an excellent variety of elevations and textures, Kauri Cliffs is an unusual and impressive attempt from Microsoft to produce something Southern Hemispherical and just a little bit different. It succeeds admirably, thanks to an impressive range of hole designs, plenty of spectacular views and a strong sense of location. 8/10

Appearance

The texture choices are out of the norm for Microsoft and are extremely apposite. Views are spectacular and backed up by a strong panorama. Planting is clever and most effective. All in all, a really good-looking course, and something of a bolt from the blue in that respect. 9/10

Playability

Because of constant elevation changes, your attention and skills are constantly being re-focussed and the result is an immensely rewarding round of golf. Proof that commercial courses can be fun without being 'wacky' resides here. 8/10

Challenge

Only a little easy on the whole, thanks to some hittable fairways and gentle greens. Wayward tee shots will be punished, however, by the deep rough, with an almost inevitable loss of strokes. Hazards are very well placed and, despite the lack of water, there is a threat from the mountainous elevations and the tricky long grass. 8/10

Technical

One of Microsoft's most coherent efforts, even if the fine detail of the technical work isn't up to APCD standards. Generally, the course has been put together with much higher standards than other commercial courses, and it shows in the resultant playability. 8/10

Overall	An excellent and ambitious attempt, out of keeping with traditional 'safe' commercial courses. Certainly not to be sniffed at by the APCD snobs.	41/50
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Kill Devil Hills

Eddie Schmidt



Description

Fictional, links course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

A perfectly tangible links, despite being an American course from an American designer, Kill Devil Hills captures the wasteland feel exceptionally well with its intricate yellow planting and isolated, eye-catching features. Hole design is perhaps a little restricted for links golf, although the pot bunkers and green design are very typical of the genre. The atmosphere is well-knitted together and largely very convincing. 8/10

Appearance

I have some serious issues with the bunker design; they are poorly extruded and the choice of texture to surround the sand is questionable. Elsewhere, it's more a case of a lack of things to see than anything else: while the environment is realistic, it doesn't live up to what it could be. 7/10

Playability

It's a bit restricting, this course. Navigating the bunkers is the big challenge – hitting a fairway bunker will make par a distant proposition, and some bushy rough awaits the wayward too. It would be quite feasible for a prudent player to go round entirely with iron clubs. In creating a course this way, in the isolated environment with the rush of the sea constantly in the background, the idea of a classic links course has been thoroughly fulfilled, and that is something we rarely see. OK, links golf has its detractors, but there are far fewer players who dislike it than those who will fully grasp the opportunity that Kill Devil Hills presents. 8/10

Challenge

Surprisingly, if you play this course with a modicum of common sense and caution, it is far from mental punishment. Hit the greens correctly and birdies are viable – the course's relatively short length naturally being a factor here. But it can punish too: the result being a tasty balance between your own bravery and instincts. Very clever. 10/10

Technical

Kill Devil Hills is an early P2P release, and to be honest it is starting to show a little. Some vague texture blends, not helped by the choice of colours, and variable bunker work would provide ammo for detractors. But let's not forget that at the heart of the course, beats some very clever emulation and hole construction. 9/10

Overall	Realistic links in a mould that we don't see too often. Kill Devil Hills isn't quite perfect, but it is almost unmatched.	42/50
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King's Walk

Timothy Boche



Description

Real, farmland course.

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 4, from rough

Concept

There has been a very admirable effort to really convey what King's Walk is all about, and it's been really successful. The impression of a little more than a field, bounded off and carefully swathed into shape works really well, thanks to the restraint of the designer and the well-constructed course environs. It's unusual to be able to see and appreciate such a large area of space in the game and that, even if nothing else, is how King's Walk will be remembered. The use of difficult rough and rough hazards is

very apt for this very real course. 7/10

Appearance

The bluegrass textures work very nicely, and the dense planting really identifies the windswept grass-meadow that was the basis for the course. The subtle elevations convey the course's origins perfectly, with ridges and furrows surely of agricultural origin. There's a wonderful 3D clubhouse overlooking the whole thing. I felt the main weakness was some hurriedness with the bunkers, and possibly a lack of interesting course objects: there's a lot of same-ness when you reach the back nine. 8/10

Playability

Arnold Palmer really knew how to frustrate the golfer when laying this one out. Fairway seems to be pulled out from beneath your feet, and greens have corners cut off where you don't want them (with some heartless pin positions to match). The lack of hole previews doesn't really help, and there are two net effects: the first of being frustrated with the course, but hearteningly also of wanting to return and beat it anew. 6/10

Challenge

No prisoners taken here. Even the standard rough is pretty hard work, and long-missed snaps will find the shaggy grasslands which are marked as hazard. You're rewarded with good makeable putts when you hit the greens, though, which is all you can ask for from any course. 8/10

Technical

There is admittedly some more work required here, but what has been done is clearly Tim's best work. The sense of location, afforded by careful planting and use of DEM is astounding. 8/10

Overall	An unprepossessing grasslands course which makes up for some frustrating golf with an impressive sense of location.	<i>37/50</i>
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Koh Samui Coastal Course

Ola Edbom



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, tropical course	8 th hole, Par 4	73

Location

Thailand

Conditions

You'd probably want to stick to M*/M*, which is a shame, because these greens should play faster.

Concept

Koh Samui will really split the fans. Some will fall in love with its outrageous inventiveness and gimmickry; others might feel that it's just too close to crazy golf (probably 'crazy' as spelled with a 'k' and two 'z's). Double fairways, triple greens, nothing is excused. Inasmuch as very little this way-out has been attempted, it's a good idea. But perhaps a bit more restraint might be in order if the designer wants a convincing course. 8/10

Appearance

Lush and rather lurid, the course is decked out in some very damp green textures. The surface hasn't been handled terribly well: there are rough blends, sharp edges, and plenty of tiling. The planting is hit-and-miss; convincing in places, somewhat dodgy elsewhere. There's nothing offensive to the eye, but the course look is confusing and doesn't really have the beauty to match its design... 5/10

Playability

...On the other hand, people who go only for looks are very shallow indeed. This course plays unbelievably well. It's gimmicky, yes, but there's nothing that makes you want to pack up and go home. Indeed, a ball in the water frequently acts as a spur to go ahead and rescue par. Whether by chance or design, there's a perfect mix of grip-it-and-rip-it holes with target golf too. For all its flaws, Koh Samui is close to being the perfect round. 10/10

Challenge

Gimmicky courses have almost to a man had difficulty pitching their game. Either they go overboard with the hazards and become ridiculously hard, or they allow you some dramatic, but makeable, shots allowing many birdies or eagles. Koh Samui is at least a little unusual in that it appears to be of the first type, but actually plays as the second. Competitiveness just won't work at this course; you just need to cruise and enjoy the game. 4/10

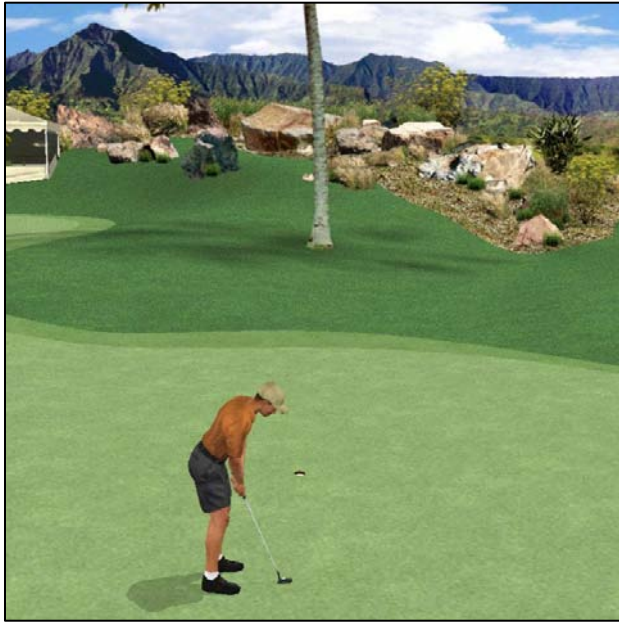
Technical

Full credit must go to the designer for his active imagination and having the ambition to bring it to life. In fairness, although the course looks rough from time to time, there are very few APCD errors, and the big problem is with lack of density and detail on this imposing landscape. 5/10

Overall	A Marmite course (non-Brits: email me if you need to know what Marmite is), with elements of design genius, but missing many of the basics that Links veterans will look for.	32/50
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Kolepa Kai Resort of Maui

Ed Balaun



Description

Fictional, tropical course

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 5, from green.

Concept

A course unsurprisingly reminiscent of Princeville in its supposed Hawaiian setting, Kolepa Kai is extremely authentic for such an early fictional course. Loaded up with water features and tournament objects, there is a cosy 'island' feel to the course and a good mixture of target and links-style golf which suits the environment perfectly, contrary to expectations. 7/10

Appearance

It's clear from the lack of disguise around the lakes that this is an old design, but there are plenty of spectacular views, some apt and attractive planting and an atmospheric panorama to compensate. Funnily, the excess of tournament paraphernalia detracts from the nice, isolated feeling and you get an overwhelming impression of being in a bit of a commercial paradise. 6/10

Playability

There's some big ups for a player here, not least the absence of any really threatening rough (this compensates nicely for the occasional blind tee shot), and some shallow fairway bunkers that play conveniently well. It's good, freestyle golf and there's certainly many ways to attack the course. Even those playing on Elite level should lap it up. 8/10

Challenge

Sound easy? Well...in part. But there are many humps and hollows in the fairway which mean that approach shots are far from guaranteed, and most greens are carefully guarded by either water or sand. Yes, you'll pick up a few strokes. But anyone hoping for a record-breaking round will inevitably go away disappointed. 6/10

Technical

Like so many of Ed's courses, this was designed in the early days of the APCD, and it's smashing to imagine what a modern update could bring. Some good low-level planting would be foremost, and while the custom textures are far from terrible, there are some shocking transitions which require blending. There's the makings of a great course here, just looking for that little bit extra. 6/10

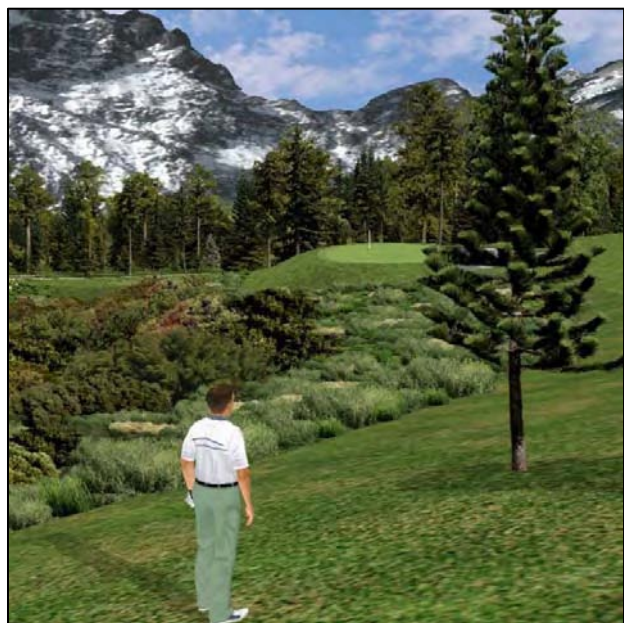
Overall

One of the few genuinely authentic fictional tropical courses, thanks to an overwhelming commercial presence and a neat concept.

33/50

Kylane Country Club

Wayne Hewitt



Description

Fictional, mountain course.

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 4, from rough.

Concept

There is an embryonic hint of the wonders to come in this early course from Wayne Hewitt. An absorbing and realistic mountain course, it makes good use of elevation changes and careful hazarding and you get the impression that holes have been carefully and millimetrically planned for maximum challenge. It's a convincing and likeable course with a good mixture of doglegs, straight holes, greens and hole lengths. 9/10

Appearance

Brilliantly detailed planting combines with the impressively large-scale panorama to create a convincing surround. The elevation changes are often steep but more often than not they are convincing. The only obvious flaws are some hard areas around extrusions, particularly noticeable around bunkers and tee boxes. 8/10

Playability

With such detailed and well-planned risk/reward, this is a daunting but fun course to play, although some of the endless stretches of deep rough and forest might frustrate. Worse is the sound, which although it has been customised is often too loud and inappropriate-sounding. I got the impression I was on a tropical island, more often than not, from the sound effects. 7/10

Challenge

This is a course designed for challenging golf and is certainly harsh in parts. The long holes and the short holes, in particular, are certainly no pushovers. Certain areas of the course are in-bounds but virtually unplayable. It never quite lapses into the unfair, and the green gradients are quite moderate, but, like on so many mountain courses, it's a struggle to break par. 5/10

Technical

Certainly there were already signs in Wayne's first work of the sheer beauty he was to bring to the APCD. The planting is well ahead of its time and the elevation work is superbly natural and never exaggerated. Just a bit more care with extrusions and tidying up those rather weak sound effects would turn this into a really spectacular course. 7/10

Overall	A mountain course that plays fast and loose with water features and elevations without ever seeming unnatural. In that respect, an excellent achievement.	36/50
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Laddleton Lake G & CC Championship Course

Leigh Seaman



Description

Fictional, lakeside course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, greenside

Concept

Lacking a tangible location through the lack of environmental structures, and the all-too-obviously human placement of various course features, Laddleton Lake nevertheless offers a great line in target golf and a course which has clearly been meticulously plotted and graded throughout. The unusual layout of pars (just three Par 4s on the back nine) helps to give the course individuality, and there's no denying the time that's been lavished on the fine detail. A touch more realism, in this instance, would

not go amiss, though. 6/10

Appearance

Some superb texture work and a careful eye for low-level planting can't disguise the fact that this is not a particularly good-looking course. Flattish, on the whole (although the elevations lack very little in fine detail), there is little in the way of spectacular features which one might expect from a fictional course such as this. 7/10

Playability

Although the course is somewhat tricked up and the hazards are altogether too carefully placed, this is a good ride and the trickery is sufficient for you to fight back and not be beaten down. The mix of hole types helps immensely, and the pure target golf gives very little doubt as to the designer's intentions. In this case, it's reasonably rewarding. 7/10

Challenge

The big difficulty with creating target golf is pitching the difficulty level. With water hazards contrived, to say the least, and several pin positions and greens bordering on the impossible, the back nine forces you to struggle. There are birdies available, but the mix of difficulties is all wrong, and it's very much the weak link of this course. 6/10

Technical

Given Leigh Seaman's age, this has been produced to an exceedingly high standard and there are no obvious flaws. On closer observation, there is a certain amount of work required to make the course Mod-friendly, but the proficiency with texture mapping and blends is outstanding and right up there with the best. 9/10

Overall	A very atypical British course. An open target-style set of holes with much to recommend it. An inspiration to young designers everywhere.	35/50
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Lagalochan Bay

Alan Toft



Description

Fictional, links course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

This links course winds its way through constricting deep grass moorland with pine forest forever in the background. Large pot bunkers are perfectly placed throughout and provide a constant dark-lipped menace. The clifftop holes are stunning and the picture-perfect highlight of the course. Away from here, the course loses its way a little, with too many 'seen it before' ideas, and not enough variety in the layout or fine detail. 7/10

Appearance

Generally, a good looking course, although on closer inspection, there are some scale issues with the 3D objects and the bunkers look off-colour, and the path extrusions are occasionally noticeable. The ever-present yellow shrubs have been planted well without too much cloning, although this cannot be said for the long grass, particularly when you see it up close from, say, the greens. 6/10

Playability

Lagalochan makes for something of a frustrating game, due to slow rendering, bad ambient sound and the ease of missing fairways. Certainly the green areas are not accommodating, and you will find your ball ricocheting all over the shop. Even odds says you will reach the 18th green with an big sigh of relief. It's not all bad, but it's hard work to want to come back. 5/10

Challenge

Thankfully, the deep grass rough, which lies awfully close to the fairways, isn't very hard to escape. Tricky, certainly, but decent enough to lay up an easy approach to most holes. The bunkers are not as hard as they should be, either, and you'll find most of your drop shots come with entanglements with the OB areas. The Par 5s are the best holes; each one dares you to hit the green in two, and all four will do their damndest to make sure you don't.. A fair challenge on the whole; perhaps a little too easy. 8/10

Technical

There are quite serious issues here. The bunker lips are in need of direct attention, as is the terrible ambient sound which slows down your hole round amidst a din of unidentifiable noises and flocks of birds (who, I note, don't have terribly many trees to sit on). The shape creation looks a bit formulaic in places. Some of the texture blending is effective, though, and the planting works well as long as you don't pay really close attention to it. 5/10

Overall	An OK links course, but might prove a bit of a trial to play until some technical issues are resolved and possibly a little more imagination applied.	31/50
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Lagoon Links

Alan Portway



Description

Fictional, ocean course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Well, the course name is half-right. It is indeed set around an ocean and inland lagoon, but a links it most certainly isn't. Nevertheless, the general hole design is by far this course's strongest suit: there's a lot of clever, slightly contrived, design and a halfway-decent ambience set off with some well-judged sound. Northern Dunes it most certainly isn't, but there's an innocent beginner's charm about this course. 6/10

Appearance

Despite a decent degree of customisation, this course falls flat mostly because it feels like it has been painted with a large and clumsy brush. Extrusions are not well disguised, the panorama doesn't fit on occasions, and the textures don't quite appear to be mapped properly (most notably on the greens, where the texture gives an alarming optical illusion that you are standing on the side of a hill. Entertaining for all the wrong reasons. 2/10

Playability

The first few holes drag, but once you realise how much thought has been applied to the hole designs, this actually becomes quite good fun. You're unlikely to run yourself into too stiff trouble, even with the wildest of shots, and so the course encourages a devil-may-care attitude, which quite a few higher-quality courses might benefit from. After the first time round, though, it's unlikely that many players would consider going back. 5/10

Challenge

The proliferate water hazards are marginal to say the best, and it's quite possible to complete the round conservatively without ever getting a wet ball. The greens have been treated a bit more sensitively than the rest of the course and make for good putting. The only hazards that should worry anyone are the few clumps of trees over deep rough: even they will be escaped for the loss of one shot at most. Although, with fairways this wide and open, it's often difficult to hit trouble in the first place. 3/10

Technical

Under-work is the main complaint here. Yes, there are a few funny-looking mesh folds, but the whole thing just reeks of hurriedness and lack of subtlety. I would like to see this designer spend more time on the little things, because the basic golf design is really quite pleasing. Lagoon Links, though, has very much missed out a fair bit of finesse. 3/10

Overall	A reasonably good stand-alone idea, but this course could have used a hundred hours more work before release.	19/50
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Lakeside Retreat

Derrick Summers



Description

Imaginary, lakeside course.

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 4, from rough.

Concept

With the masses of colourful planting and some near-insane target golf, Lakeside Retreat certainly makes a lasting impression. It's contrived to be fantastical rather than fictional – you'd never find yourself believing that anyone in their right minds would create something like this in real life – and is about as close as we've got to playing golf in a dreamland. Icy-blue water hazards are used almost to excess, and the strong primary colours are almost other-worldly. Not easy on the eye, not easy on your game, but

somehow it all seems to work. 6/10

Appearance

We've seen few courses with such a lavish and colourful set of plants. Combine this with the bright blue water and some (thankfully!) tasteful textures, and Lakeside Retreat is a visual experience like no other. The white-sand edges around the water hazards strike of artificiality, and it's also noticeable that the bunker lips have had a bit less time spent on them, but the overall effect is striking enough to stick in the memory. 9/10

Playability

I don't know many courses that give you three genuine options off the first tee and then force a shot-shaping second. Highly engaging stuff from the outset, and you'll be called upon for a range of techniques to hit the small greens. Lakeside Retreat won't let you be too aggressive, but as long as you play with a decent amount of restraint, it's a fun experience. 8/10

Challenge

With the extreme target-type golf, you'd expect an artificial difficulty gradient, and you'd not be disappointed. The course isn't ridiculously hard, as might be expected, but it has over-compensated with some very flat greens which make birdie putts a disappointment. Just because you end up closer to par than you might be expecting does not mean the course is well-pitched. 4/10

Technical

Certainly, in terms of visual impact, this course has had all the necessary time spent on it. I would, however, be inclined to look for a neater balance between fairways and greens. Fantasy courses need to be very well judged to get it just right; this is one that needed a little more input at the planning stage. 7/10

Overall

An impressive-looking target course that demands exact shot placement. A hoot in small doses.

34/50

Lake View Country Club

Tony Rome



Description

Fictional, marshland course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

Lake View is a course at odds with itself. It doesn't really conform to its designer's view of the Lake District, nor is it a woodland course, as mentioned in the read-me. Without documentation, it strikes one more than anything as some holes randomly pieced together on unused meadow. It's definitely too higgledy-piggledy, and there's not a lot of continuity between holes; one other nagging problem is that the hole previews don't actually bear much resemblance to the holes they are

trying to describe. The whole package feels pieced together rather than coherent. 4/10

Appearance

The massive file size is brought about by the incredible array of planting on offer. A lot of it looks utterly stunning, it has to be said, and there are many, many views to be had on this course which would rival anything by Mike Jones or Wayne Hewitt. But, then again, there are quite a few disappointments. The low-level planting is prone to cloning, and the bunker sculpture is a disappointment. Some of the course buildings look completely out of place. The course garners very different marks depending on which way you are looking. 8/10

Playability

The number of blind shots on this course, even on Par 3s, clocks up into ridiculous numbers, and the hole previews being inaccurate into the bargain smacks of sadism, if not downright idiocy. There are compensations for the golfer who knows the course: a range of attacks on many greens, and some well-judged risk/reward on the longer holes. But it's just not smooth enough golf to be played for real pleasure. 5/10

Challenge

The front half at Lake View seems to be exceedingly well judged. It demands skill and accuracy from the player, and punishes or rewards accordingly. Sadly, the back nine all turns a bit silly with a lot of water carries and some excessive green contouring. You'll come away with a believable score, but it's difficult to appreciate the way the course gets you there. 6/10

Technical

The designer's eye for planting clearly stands him in good stead, and the elevations and textures have been handled reasonably well. The real targets now must be coherent course design, and attention to little things like hole previews and pin positions that will produce a first-class track. 6/10

Overall

A classic example of a course looking much better than it really is. Don't be taken in by the surface – look deeper and this is a course that could use shaking up.

29/50

Langolier Golf Club

Fred Briggson & Chris Gormley



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Langolier sadly has not aged well. Despite a re-visit and touch-up, it's a big, empty and incoherent course without enough standouts to really shine on its own merits. The mountain styling certainly uses the elevations well enough, and there are one or two good holes – notably the 14th where you tee off over the treetops – but elsewhere the designs are bland and unmemorable. 5/10

Appearance

The much frowned-upon Whistler panorama makes an unwelcome appearance, and the textures seem washed-out and featureless. There is some very tasteful planting around and about the course, but the underplanting is thin. There's just not enough on the course to grab the eye, an accusation that hasn't been levelled at many courses better than this. 5/10

Playability

The ups and downs at Langolier make it worthwhile as a prospect, as do the impressive stretch of holes down the back nine. But up to then it's a very sterile experience; the wide-openness of the place looking like a particular misjudgement. 5/10

Challenge

A distinct avoidance of dangerous hazarding is notable, and the designer's intent to create something risk/reward down the back stretch has actually created a run of easy birdie chances. Working against this in all the wrong ways are some over-sloped greens which will make this course almost unplayable with Mod 1.07. It's a weak link amid weak links. 3/10

Technical

Given the re-workings that this has endured, you'd have every right to expect something more than this. Once, there might have been fine technical work around this course. But by modern eyes, it's vague and has too many obvious areas for improvement. Start with the pano and the greens, please. 4/10

Overall	One or two knockout holes, but they can't justify the download of this overrated course on their own.	22/50
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Las Brisas at Nueva Andalucia

Art Patscheck



Description

Real, tropical/parkland course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 5, from fairway.

Concept

A Spanish classic, Las Brisas is an open parkland course in tropical setting. There are no real surprises among the holes: some hard-to-hit championship greens and a demand on being deadly accurate off the tee. Plenty of (clearly artificial) water on the course keeps a player thinking. It's almost the Spanish version of the Belfry; certainly a course that was crying out to be brought to the small screen. 9/10

Appearance

Even withstanding the course's age, you can't help but notice some very odd shapes on the surface, plus the oddest variety of planting: why exactly are the stock palm trees rubbing shoulders with Scots Pines? The panorama is majestic, but sadly shows its trimmed edges. Even taking into account the rich variety of course buildings, the whole thing looks off-key. 5/10

Playability

This isn't a course you want to load up for a practice round or a casual 18. Las Brisas requires a lot of thought and a great deal of accuracy. The many lateral water hazards can make for misery, thanks to the game's poor dropping system. The demands on positioning are too key: there's not enough opportunity to exercise one's imagination. 5/10

Challenge

Tricky, tricky. As if the all-too-clever water hazards weren't enough, there are some very pre-Mod green elevations and pin positions to deal with. Shots in the rough might well cost you, too: many greens are closely guarded by the sand and virtually unreachable from off the fairway. 5/10

Technical

It's amazing to think that at the time this was considered to be the best that APCD designers had to offer. By today's high standards, the planting looks sparse, the shapes hard-edged, and the panorama really quite coarse. Only the elevations show Art's sure hand and expertise with the mesh. Given its age, I'm inclined to be generous. 6/10

Overall

A great course and a once-great APCD rendition, surely ripe for updating. Play it for the majesty of the best championship golf in Spain, but take it easy.

30/50

Las Joyas

Mike Jones



Description

Fictional, lakeside course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Something more brash and bold from the Mike Jones stable, with plenty of appeal for the thinking golfer, Las Joyas is consistently entertaining with a wide range of challenges – some being quite daunting when you see the greens perched high above all manner of hazards. I still don't see it as being entirely appropriate for the location – a fantasy course rather than a fictional one – but the sheer flamboyance of the holes will draw in those who want a hefty chunk of strategy with their golf. 9/10

Appearance

An outstanding improvement on the original, Las Joyas boasts an amazing texture set and some terrific landscaping. Superb views are legion, thanks to raised tees and greens, and the famed log-cabin clubhouse makes its renowned appearance to unsurprising acclaim. The woodland regions convincingly hit the middle ground between dense woodland and newly planted and really put across the middling age of this course. 10/10

Playability

Regardless of how out-of-place the whole experience feels, there's no denying that this is an exhilarating experience. Thought is required off every tee and there are very few straightforward approaches or greenside shots. The ambient sound has been trimmed a little, which is something of a relief. There is still the nagging feeling that it's all a bit contrived, but there are so many positives that you can sweep any doubts to one side quite easily. 9/10

Challenge

The original Las Joyas was something of a devil. The greens were inaccessible and frequently very hard to hole putts upon. Thankfully, some of these problems have been toned down, and the course remains playable if still rather tough – summit-mounted greens and a legion of bunkers making for tough hazards. The Par 5 holes are still standout 3-shot holes, and a brief gentle stretch along the back nine should at least allow for a few strokes to be picked up. 9/10

Technical

It would be drawing unwarranted assumptions to state that Mike Jones courses are beyond criticism. Thankfully for us all, this one is. 10/10

Overall	The bordering on fantasy is a weakness, but this is still a convincing and always exciting round of golf.	47/50
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Las Sendas Golf Club

Caddytronic (Peter Beckwith)



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, desert course	1 st hole, Par 4	71

Location

Arizona

Conditions

Some iffy pin positioning makes it wise to stick to M*/M*

Concept

Settled in a desert resort environment, Las Sendas is a very civilised desert course, but still bearing all the sand-cut hallmarks of the great courses of the American west. Making great use of the neighbouring hills and some never-too-straight fairways, it's a step above the average resort course, but not stretching itself to the excessive lengths of – say – the tedious Thanksgiving Point. It's still a mystery to me why, like so many other credible desert courses, the last hole has been hazarded heavily and inappropriately with water. Regardless, the whole thing has been converted efficiently, if hardly remarkably, for Links in a course that deserves to get a lot of play time. 8/10

Appearance

Some aspects of the course look very professional, not least some great texture work in the green rings and the bunker lips. The planting is also very convincing at points. The desert texture is stretched and very blurry on more than one occasion, and the massively cloned resort houses probably DO all look the same in real life, but they grate on the eyes in-game. 7/10

Playability

Sometimes an otherwise unprepossessing course is released into the Links community which – for no adequately-explored reason – just feels really natural and easy to play. Perhaps it's swift rendering times, very subtle ambient sound and a very clean design; perhaps it's just the ethos of resort golf in encouraging people to have fun, but Las Sendas certainly hits all the buttons. Only the lack of niceties such as course objects and a bit of advisory text on the hole previews is a downer. 9/10

Challenge

No, it's never going to be a tough course. But, in fairness, simple things such as fairway bottlenecks and doglegs are present in the right places and do at least prevent your round being mindless. Thankfully, the back nine ups the difficulty somewhat with some tighter-guarded greens and tighter target areas. But you'd still expect to finish well under par. 4/10

Technical

It's been acknowledged that this course has had significantly less time spent on it than some of the big-name creations, and in retrospect it's impressive how much has been achieved. Blends and planting are first-rate, and the textures are good in parts (although, it has to be said, somewhat random in others). With a bit more time spent on the course environs, this could be a real classic. 7/10

Overall	Fun to play, and with an interesting difficulty gradient: this is a must-try and among the best desert courses available.	35/50
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Latrobe Country Club

Microsoft



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 4, approach shot.

Concept

Latrobe really know how to cram holes into a small space! This is an incredibly compact little course, which benefits because of the intimate atmosphere and the sense of location which derives from being able to see the holes you've just played. It's allegedly Australian, although you wouldn't know that from the standard-fare hole design and the expansive greenery. 5/10

Appearance

With the exception of the novelty value of looking back up the fairway you've just played, there's little eye candy here. Nothing to take your breath away. Nothing to make you admire the delicate reconstruction. Just a bunch of bizarrely random planting and some unconvincing bunkers. Not for me, I'm afraid. 4/10

Playability

Latrobe is pleasing enough to play round. You won't feel intimidated or threatened at any point, and a couple of tee shots will demand some good shaping, but generally the player is not made to feel he's working particularly hard for his par. A no-brainer, perfectly suited for the Aussies. 5/10

Challenge

Like a lot of its era, this is over-easy. The elevation changes are pretty but don't add a lot of difficulty. The bunkers are an insult, and the greens do not provide anything like enough challenge. You'll be hungry for Eagles on the Par 5s, and most likely will score one or two as well. 4/10

Technical

This is pretty ludicrous for a Microsoft course. The planting is dire – random and seemingly inconsequential. Shapes are hard-edged and textures are stretched and unconvincing. The bunkers and water features look plugged-in and nothing like natural. An insult to the paying public. 3/10

Overall

There's no particular reason to play this course. Let it occupy a few minutes of your time if you're feeling brainless, but don't feel that you must.

21/50

Lava Rock

Bob Hankla



Description

Imaginary, ocean course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Lava Rock somehow manages to squeeze several course styles into one. As if the innovative use of the lava regions wasn't enough, there are desert-style holes, ocean-style holes and at least one hole that is almost concept-like in its layout. Does this mish-mash work? Surprisingly, yes; for the large part, this is far more coherent and believable than it has any right to be, given the somewhat basic design of the course. 7/10

Appearance

Even Bob Hankla had to have a first course, and this is it. Its age shows somewhat in the proliferation of unmapped lava texture, some awkward 2D objects, and some hard transitions and extrusion marks. There are moments of beauty, and some of the oceanside scenes look good compared to other early courses, but the ambition that went into this course does not have the APCD resources to match. Today, of course, it might come away a lot better. 5/10

Playability

Like all Hankla courses, Lava Rock is an unexpected knockout. You don't fall into the clichéd traps of bunker carries and ocean drives, and at the same time the holes look fresh and interesting. The back nine has some smashing and ingenious risk/reward holes too, and I wouldn't be surprised if this course has acted as influence to more than one successor. Perhaps, in this case, an injection of realism would help even more, and elevate Lava Rock to something like The Crusoe Course. 9/10

Challenge

The lava rock is delimited as hazard, and you might feel this is constricting, but in truth it rarely comes into play: only on one or two 'do or die' holes is it a real problem. The course's difficulties stem from some tricky use of rolling elevations on the fairways, and some steep-ish greens (although I'd be at pains to point out that the greens do not reach the unfair extent that we've seen elsewhere). There are birdie opportunities for both the conservative and brave golfer: don't expect a challenge like you'd find on any real course, though! 8/10

Technical

There's glimmerings of what is to come in this course. Bob has a superlative idea of what makes exciting and fun golf, even if his realism quotient isn't particularly high. Yes, there's some work required on a few techniques here and the course might benefit from up to twice as many different textures. But let's not forget this is both an early course and a first design: the in-play textures work well, and the planting shows care and clone-avoidance. 7/10

Overall

Better than you could have any right to expect. An impressive set of 18, let down only by an old-fashioned look to the course. Unjustly slated by the fantasy-course cynics.

36/50

Le Golf National

Max Deschamps



Description

Real, marshland course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Take a look at the screenshot and tell me you wouldn't want to play this. Golf National is clearly the work of some fertile golfing imagination, which has taken some otherwise unremarkable spare land, and bulldozed it into some unusual and definitely mould-breaking golf. It's most un-European in the over-use of water, of the targeted landing zones, and of the do-or-die greens. But then again, it's artificial in the way that only the likes of Sawgrass can be, and that hurts something that could be a lot more

engaging. 7/10

Appearance

While there are quite a few nice views to be had at Golf National, and some smart work has been done to primp up the water features, there is a lot of niggling elsewhere. The textures are old hat, the blends grainy, and there are some painful-looking mesh folds and extrusion marks. It's a bit more rough-looking than you might have right to believe. 4/10

Playability

There's certainly a lot to entertain the golfer at Golf National. It's a little tricked up, sure, but the target golf and risk-reward afforded by the multitude of hole styles and the water features is a constant incitement. After the initial blast of the first round, there is a lot of value in going back time and again to perfect a shot or two. Despite the courses other flaws, this is a brilliant round. 9/10

Challenge

It's not really feasible to strike a sensible balance with the proliferation of water, and some silly green moulding on the back nine don't really do the player any favours. One can't help but cynically wonder if these are devices to help players approach a 'normal' score: if so, they're undesirable and unwanted. Countering this are some almost ridiculously receptive green complexes, so a reasonable balance is at least obtained, if not perhaps in the best way. 6/10

Technical

This is the sort of course that APCD artists lap up, and the presentation is certainly lavish enough, but the whole thing is certainly starting to show its age, not least in the incohesive planting and some worrying mesh errors. It's fine at times, but woefully inconsistent at others. 5/10

Overall	A rollicking rollercoaster of a course that plays a natural host to tournaments. Somewhat dated in the presentation, but fundamentally enjoyable.	31/50
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Le Touessrok Mauritius

John Brooks



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, tropical course	16 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Mauritius, Indian Ocean		
Conditions		
Playable with M*/F*		

Concept

Set on pretty much the entirety of a small island off the coast of Mauritius, Le Touessrok excels at using the landscape, with drop-offs, beach holes, oceanic and man-made water, and some trademark long carries over the mangroves near the end. It’s undeniably interesting and very new territory for this designer, but it also is noticeable that it hasn’t quite been put across as 100% believable: the visuals are just a little bit too down-to-Earth for something this exotic. 8/10

Appearance

The planting at points is really lovely: multi-layered, varied and distinctly different to ‘standard’ golf course planting. It is much more evocative of the course’s location than the textures, which just feel too green and tightly mown. There’s also some pretty hasty work around the water features and the ocean, all of which could be amount to spectacular course features rather than something which looks rushed. 6/10

Playability

Very resort-style golf for the large part, there are a lot of tempters on this course as well as the usual seaside trappings of clifftop and beach holes. The variety extends well into the back nine, aided by some useful hole previews, and the closing stretch, particularly the final hole are reached with a sigh of satisfaction. It’s a shame about the lack of atmosphere, for that was something that just might have set this course apart. 7/10

Challenge

Le Touessrok certainly isn’t set up for the amateur! It’s worryingly easy to get lost among the deep trees and the greens, often upturned in shape, are definitely not easy to hit. Thankfully, the whole thing is tempered by some good pin positioning and judgement when it comes to greening – particularly a relief when you remember this hasn’t always been the designer’s forte. 8/10

Technical

I’m a little disappointed that the boat hasn’t really been pushed out here. A good set of tropical textures could really bring the course to life, and the lack of work around the coastline is worrying when you remember this is an island! The continued lack of variance in pin positioning is likewise an irritant. 5/10

Overall	Inasmuch as we don’t have a great selection of courses from this part of the world, this is pretty much an essential. But it’s not got enough atmosphere or soul.	34/50
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Leven Scoonie Golf Course

Dave Leitch & Stewart Parker



Description

Real, links course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Leven Scoonie is one of the new generation of courses re-vamped in the APCD1.5 and coming out almost completely unrecognisable. It's a cosy little course, under 5500 yards, without a Par 5 to its name, but like all courses this length has that indefinable charm and unthreatening aura to it. Plus, there are a couple of surprises thrown in into the bargain and a neat little read-me by Stewart Parker showing how he'd tidied the course up. Sure, it'd be no good for serious tournament competition, but as a little

municipal course, it's just perfect. 7/10

Appearance

Comparing the before-and-after screenshots in the read-me, you wonder how we ever played Links 2001. Lovely texture use and grass planting make the course infinitely better to look at. There are still a couple of clones in the treeline, however, and the panorama is ill-fitting to say the best. Selling points such as the lumpy, yet natural, elevations and the graveyard do the course proud, however. 7/10

Playability

I've never been sure what it is about these 'executive'-length courses that gives them so much appeal. Presumably, because they are everyman courses that we all might play in real life, it's nice to be able to step up with a Pro-standard Links golfer and batter it like you never could. Leven Scoonie is certainly no exception; with no hole longer than 430 yards, it's a great exercise in short iron play, and remarkably exhilarating golf. Highly recommended. 9/10

Challenge

OK, you could never claim that the course is hard. There'll be many eagle opportunities for the long-hitters, and plenty of chances to sink shots from off the green for the rest of us. The course employs elevations, its main weapon, well, but there's a lack of hazards, deep grass, or pretty much anything else to catch out the wayward hitter. Even on a Par 67, expect to shoot very low. 3/10

Technical

The update really has done a magnificent job of reviving a stale old course. I would take issue with the inappropriate panorama, and perhaps the lack of thought to off-course planting and/or hazards. But, first and foremost, this is a very professional job. 8/10

Overall

One of those delightfully 'alternative' short courses with much to commend it. Plays a lot better than its rating might suggest.

34/50

Le Versant

Lloyd Henchey



Description

Real, woodland course.

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 3, greenside.

Concept

Very European in style, despite being Canadian, due to its idiosyncratic flowerbeds and use of greenside traps, Le Versant is an enclosed but excellent mixture of straight woodland play and careful shotmaking. For a real course, the hole design is impressive and ambitious and the tight but fair holes will test many a player. The closing stretch must be considered to be among the hardest of any real course, anywhere. 8/10

Appearance

Good use – on the whole – of custom textures and some excellent elevations for such a flat course. The old design is showing through a little in the lack of texture blends and the rather primitive way in which the hazards are constructed, but the planting is reasonably well-cared-for, and Le Versant affords some excellent views, given its nature. 6/10

Playability

Le Versant has that indefinable draw to it which incites players to push on out of curiosity and enthrallment. Perhaps it's because of the excellent variation in hole length and design, or perhaps because of the draw of some makeable Par 5s and achievably low scores, but this course could teach some other Real conversions an awful lot. 8/10

Challenge

The woodlands strike the right line between impenetrability and penalty, and the placement of most of the hazards is a deterrent rather than a trap. But the smooth fairways allow just too many easy approaches and the flat greensides often mean a chip-in is a likelihood. Some greens are eminently readable and even Elite players should break par by a stroke or two. 5/10

Technical

There has clearly been a lot of time lavished on this course, and it shows in the fidelity and lifelike appearance. There's a clone or two on view, the flowerbeds look a little garish, and perhaps one or two unfair pin positions, but the understated passion of the designer shows through on every hole. 7/10

Overall	A great round of golf which shows off one of Canada's best courses in a good light.	<i>34/50</i>
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Liberty South

Roger Gallagher



Description

Fictional, lakeside course.

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 4, from first-cut.

Concept

Liberty South is another lagoon course, but it's strangely lacking in ingenuity or impact on the memory. While it's laid out competently enough, and features some interesting designs, there is something of a schoolboy error in making the gimmicky second half a lot easier than the first. Additionally, the rockworks that litter the course smack of overkill: the whole thing just isn't convincing as an ocean-side course. 4/10

Appearance

Extruded bunkers, smooth-moulded rocks and nothing convincing by way of the coastline; all these add up to form an uninspiring impression. I have to say that the lush greens and texture transitions aren't quite up to scratch either, and the planting seems to be somewhat random. There's very little to grab the attention. 3/10

Playability

With so many trans-water target holes, you'd think this course would be a joy to play. It's surprisingly soulless, though; the holes seem overworked and unmemorable. Worst of all is the green complexes: needlessly overbunkered, way too hard, and punishment for the golfer. Hard work rather than good fun. 4/10

Challenge

Many Mod players will delete this course on encountering some of the outrageous green gradients and pin positions. Many target areas are pushed up tight to water or sand, although some generous fairways help to break up the difficulty. It's unlikely you'll score many – if any – single putts, though, and birdies will be limited. 6/10

Technical

It's clear that the designer has aspired to much, and to be fair the construction of the course is pretty much without glaring faults. Sadly, it's all a bit sterile and unconvincing. Certain gimmicks, like the divots on tees and the sculpted rocks, become wearisome. The course hasn't dated well, and it's not as old as some. 5/10

Overall

Shrug your shoulders and say 'so what'. There's nothing here that will knock you out.

22/50

Lindrick Dale

Stephen Sullivan



Description

Real, farmland course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 5

Par

71

Location

Nottinghamshire

Conditions

Good putters will have no problems with F*/F*

Concept

A really cosy course with lots of attendant English charm, Lindrick Dale is possessed of no little character. Its layout is hardly championship standard, with a distinct lack of threatening sand traps and – rather refreshingly – no water at all. But there are enough quirks to the course and realism to this conversion to really let the natural charm of the course shine through. This is one you'll enjoy coming back to time and time again. 7/10

Appearance

The designer has really excelled here, with a wealth of planting at all levels, and colourful course surrounds that are totally authentic (I know, for I have been there!). The yellowing texture set is perfect, and – despite it not being a course jam-packed with features – there is remarkably little wasted space. The one small concern would be the wooden fences which border much of the neighbouring fields: they are a mite blocky and obtrusive. 9/10

Playability

There is certainly the hit-'em-hard factor to enjoy here, but also the attendant charm from playing golf on a small, intimate plot: I played my approach to the 4th from the 3rd green, for instance. Despite having few trademark holes (the cleverly-elevated 2nd is about as close as it gets), Lindrick Dale is undoubtedly possessed of that mysterious X-factor, which simply makes playing there a very pleasurable experience. 9/10

Challenge

Well, no, it's not the hardest course on my hard drive, and nor would anyone expect it to be. There are some very open and flattish greens, and little by way of heavy rough to artificially increase your score. But the course length is no pushover – there are no easily Eagled holes, for example – and in its own way the balance is reasonable. 4/10

Technical

Stephen is a real visual artist, and Lindrick Dale has proved that every bit as much as Worksop. Putting ones efforts into local courses requires far more discipline than fictional creations, and leaving this one until a good clubhouse and high-definition textures could be inserted was definitely a masterstroke. 9/10

Overall

Golf as golf is played, by normal people, on normal courses. Fine-tuned and delivered to very near perfection.

38/50

Links at Dred Scott

Timothy Boche



Description

Real, short course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 3

Par

48*

Location

Minnesota

Conditions

M*/F* seems to be the optimum, although the course is ripe for experimentation and one green doesn't take too much speed well.

Concept

Give golf to a group of otherwise sane men, and eventually they will invent mini-golf. Dred Scott is one of only two real-life putting courses developed for Links, and while it is initially prepossessing, there are quite a few inspired moments, including a water jump, several opportunities to fall into the water and the excellent 'tube' hole. The course manages to be realistic and fun without needing to resort to typical mini-golf gimmicks. 8/10

Appearance

The contrast between the course's 'real grass' and astroturf is delightful, and Tim has typically provided a range of tasty 3D as well. It's a shame the course's surroundings are somewhat flat and featureless, the stone surrounds not quite edged correctly, and the flowerbeds and water could use the little signature planting touches to enhance the course's richness. 7/10

Playability

Say what you like about 'novelty' courses, but with the green speeds turned up, this is a terrific test of putting and course knowledge, although it's frustrating that the bank shots off the walls aren't always reliable. Plus, of course, the fact that it's impossible to properly convert a Par 48 course for Links. 7/10

Challenge

Difficult to measure on any scale, because you'd expect to be scoring in the high 30s on Slow conditions, but that score might go up to around 60 once fast greens bring the water in play. For what the course is, I suppose that makes it fairly well balanced. 6/10

Technical

Although this is a great pet project and Tim's willingness to push boundaries with texture properties and landscaping is admirable, there is still something of a half-finished feel. It doesn't really help that the course's tiny size leaves it feeling exposed. 6/10

Overall

As long as the game doesn't become over-run with mini-golf courses, Dred Scott deserves to remain a pleasant and unique diversion.

34/50

Links at Ingonish

Dan Chisholm



Description

Real, woodland course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

The title says links, but the course is anything but. This is a very woodland course, and the design has made some convincing looking glades and hollows. Individual holes show some nice touches of design, especially in conjunction with the planting: trees do not intrude, but are intrinsic to the play and the shot-shaping. Some of the fine detail lets this down, and it drags in the second half, but the concept as a whole holds the course up nicely. 7/10

Appearance

This is an early APCD design and starting to show its age. The designer has tried hard with the woodland areas, but some clones are apparent. The paths and other accessories look like an afterthought. But there are also genuine moments of beauty, none more so than on the screenshot. 7/10

Playability

A lack of variety and challenge hold back this course to some extent. Few holes offer a genuine playing choice, unlike a genuine Links, and by the turn you can feel the game starting to drag. The second half is more lively, and gives you chance to really rip some tee shots, but Ingonish really doesn't engage you all the way round. 5/10

Challenge

Wide open and unprotected fairways; no serious trouble; shallow bunkers which are easy to escape. The greens are a stern test at Ingonish, and this is the only reason your score will stay realistic. Otherwise a low-60s round would be a given on every play. Too easy by far. 3/10

Technical

Although the planting is careful, it could still use some careful refinement. A lot of shapes have hard edges, and a few are unaltered from stock shapes. The rough is an odd, dark shade and doesn't really feel reminiscent of a Links. The first-cut is also an inappropriate texture. Extrusions are visible, especially on the tee boxes. In short, there's a lot of work that could still be done on this, which is a shame. 4/10

Overall

A course with a few highlights, but a lack of good technical work and challenge shows it up. There's potential here, but courses cannot subsist on potential alone.

26/50

Links at Pinewood

Kevin X



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, short course	5 th hole, Par 3	54
Location		
There's no indication that this has a fixed location		
Conditions		
I wouldn't take it faster than S*/M*		

Concept

Aficionados of short courses will hopefully see something a little different in Pinewood. Clever green shaping and some blind tee shots open up possibilities that might not have been hitherto considered, and a variety of hole ideas have been pleasingly put together without destroying the pleasant – if unmemorable – countryside ambience. But there's no escaping that we're still looking at a pitch'n'putt course, and there's only so much that you really can do with something this scale. 6/10

Appearance

The textures and blends are suitably muted, and the central forest with its bare trees and long grass looks quite impressive, but elsewhere the trees might well have been dropped in random placed and the plot looks bland. The bunkers, close-up, are quite poorly constructed, with some obvious lip problems, and throughout there's just a shortage of things to look at. A disappointment. 4/10

Playability

The blind tee shots provide stimulation rather than hindrance, thanks to the course's length, and there's an entertaining variety in the hole styles, with a subtle gradient building up to the closing stretch, which is gratifying at the very least. Like the other short courses in the collection, Pinewood would be very well suited to a novelty MoP where clearly strokeplay isn't a realistic option. 6/10

Challenge

Despite some uncomfortable green design (both shape and gradient), the course plays disappointingly simply. A lack of carefully-thought-out hazarding means many pins are relatively easy to lay up to, if not pitch directly at., and with sensible course management you expect to shoot closer to 40 than 60. 5/10

Technical

The basics of decent all-round course design are present, but it's a shame that the designer didn't see fit to stretch himself. Some custom work and a more restrained hand with planting and foresting might make the difference between an also-ran and a genuinely good warm-up course. 4/10

Overall	A bit of whimsy that plays well but hasn't got enough highlights to make it worthwhile.	25/50
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Little Gardens

Shawn Kobold



Description

Fictional, short course.

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 3, from tee

Concept

Cute simplicity is the watchword here. Little Gardens is an engaging little pitch'n'putt course which engages the player effectively without resorting to gimmicks. There is, from time to time, the hint of the plot being a designer's scratchpad, with a little bit of everything being tried out and little to excess. But there's a strong golfing strategy set, and all the elements of a good view running through the course, and we've seen a helluva lot worse than that. 6/10

Appearance

Surprisingly attractive, given that there's not a lot to see. The designer has clearly employed photo-like techniques in laying out holes to best effect, because on close up the textures aren't very special, the planting is weak and thin, and at least one bunker has caused quite a few mesh problems. 5/10

Playability

This is probably the perfect warm-up course. It's accommodating to the essential facets of your game without being excessive or overbearing, and there are a range of approaches and greens even, given the Par 3 format. Extremely replayable and a lack of imposition to boot, this makes a thoroughly good warm-up round before getting into the heavy stuff. 8/10

Challenge

Nothing too dire, here. Pleasantly comfortable greens and pin positions, and drives virtually guaranteed to make their mark mean birdies are commonplace and bogies a relative rarity. 3/10

Technical

When placed in line with its importance, Little Gardens has a fitting enough level of design. There are passable, if hardly outstanding, attempts at blending and 3D construction, and the hint that the designer is promising much more in the future. Little Gardens won't make earthquakes, but there has been a very minor ripple in the community that it might just lead to something much bigger and better. 5/10

Overall

A great starter, both for you and the designer. Certainly not averse to being played with regularity.

27/50

Logan's Mill GC

Zea Miller



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, forest course	15 th hole, Par 4	71
Location		
Michigan, at a guess, given the designer's form.		
Conditions		
S*/S* seems to be the safe choice.		

Concept

Logan's Mill does much to be sensible, straight-laced and believable, while at the same time making it annoyingly anonymous and difficult to place. I really wanted to get more feel for the course and the location than I did, but with the all-enclosing tree surround and the lack of landmarks, it's rather difficult to engage with it. Best of it is the set of Par 4s leading up to the final stretch in defiance of golfing tradition, which succeed in mixing up the game rather nicely. 4/10

Appearance

The pale texture set is cute, but there are plenty of tiling problems and the choice of path texture is frankly ludicrous. The planting is suitably dense to as to shield the course, but a mixture of tree resolutions and sizes doesn't help the sense of scale from some angles. I can't say I was keen on the bunkers, with their dark and unfitting lip texture. The elevations, though, are sensitively handled, and worthy of credit. 5/10

Playability

I'm afraid I found it hard to enjoy Logan's Mill. The lack of hole previews did nothing to help the artificial 'lost' feeling of the course, and the endless string of blind tee shots that resulted went from challenging to frustrating very quickly. Approach shots were either trivial or impossible with no in-between ground, and putts were too often impracticable. Leaving well alone, regrettably, is the best way to face this. 3/10

Challenge

The big obstacle is poor greening and pin positioning, and this dwarves any intriguing nascent challenge from the bunkers or plateaus. With a proper standard of short stuff, this could be a brilliantly-balanced test, but the misjudgement of such an important factor holds back the course. 7/10

Technical

Lots of admirable progression here, even given that Zea's previous course was many years previous, and the course design and restraint should be admired in its simplicity. Unfortunately, the greening pretty much kills the round, with some resolution problems being just the icing on that cake. 6/10

Overall	A course disappointing lacking in memorable holes or a location, and therefore carrying the uneasy feeling that it will lose out.	25/50
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Lonestar Country Club

Dace Fair



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

This is the fourth course in quick succession by Dace Fair, and frankly it's starting to become apparent. You get the impression that the designer is taking less time to hone his skills and plan his courses and settling for quantity over quality. Many holes at Lonestar are arrow-straight, and much of the opening half is lacking in too much that is noteworthy. The second half brings the water into play to a great extent, which is no bad thing. Most notable are the entertaining Par 3 holes, all of which feature a large

obstruction between tee and green. It might not be fair golf, but sprinkled between mediocrity it's entertaining enough. 5/10

Appearance

The list is frankly endless at Lonestar. The stock textures are dreadful and scruffily blended. The bunker lips are a joke, there's little by way of customisation or extras. Even the planting, previously Dace's strong suit, looks under-prepared and rushed. Truth is, it's not the worst-looking course, but for the apparent lack of any effort, it deserves low marks. 1/10

Playability

For reasons I can't accurately pinpoint, Lonestar actually plays rather neatly and a round will pass without too many spells of boredom. Sure, if you go out looking for things to criticise, then you'll get your fill within the first few holes, but those looking to mix straightforward golf with a bit of strategy and intelligence could do far worse. 6/10

Challenge

Dace Fair's public anti-Mod stance has won him few favours as a rookie designer, and his choice to trick-up the greens will not be viewed charitably. The green complexes are by far the hardest part of a course with generous fairways and rough: they'll force your score into territories that the rest of your game might not warrant. 5/10

Technical

Building a course entirely from stock, hot on the heels of three prior releases, has rarely been a recipe for success. Dace has a good idea of what holds a course together, but before rushing out subsequent releases, he urgently needs to take some tutorials in bunker lips, 3D modelling, hole previews and custom textures. These are the niceties that today's Links player expects; without any of them, this course just looks extremely rough. 2/10

Overall	Highly disappointing. This could have been worthy of much more of the designer's attention.	19/50
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Loon Lake Lodge - Hillside

Warren Wilson



Description	Screenshot	Par
Imaginary, mountain course	16 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
I'd be inclined to put this in the Canadian Rockies somewhere.		
Conditions		
Slowest settings only.		

Concept

A very ambitious course, Loon Lake Lodge's Hillside makes a brave attempt at living up to its billing with soaring elevations, pretty flowers and lakes, and towering rockworks. It's not come at the expense of good strategic golf, either, with most of the sternest demands off the tee. The extreme nature of the course has come at the expense of some fine detail, though, and the overall presentation needs work, with little by way of accompanying documentation or hole previews. 7/10

Appearance

Sadly very dated. The textures do not fit together at all well, exhibiting messy rings around both fairways and greens, and much of the work looks very blocky, with the mesh being somewhat manhandled into shapes and bunker outlines very much an afterthought. There is some credibility in the planting and several of the novelty features, but the course looks distinctly old-fashioned and mis-formed in too many parts. 3/10

Playability

A short course that demands much of the strokes in the book, the Hillside course has a lot of potential to play in various ways, including links-style creative use of the rough. Long hitters will have plenty to aim at, and the variety of hazarding conditions will hone the recovery game. You'll need to overlook an absurdity or two, but this remains quite playable. 6/10

Challenge

As long as you don't play silly buggers with the green conditions, which are distinctly out-of-date, you'll find the course presents a fair test. Good shots are rewarded; poor ones punished, and this is most true on the Par 4s. The longest and shortest holes lack the correct ambition, and it's perhaps a bit too easy to score par on both. 6/10

Technical

Plenty of credit is due for creating stimulating golf in this highly stimulating environment, with plenty of highlights in the drama of the landscape and a few novel touches that rarely get seen elsewhere. But there is distinctly less credit due for some pretty awful mesh work, and an uncreative choice of textures. 5/10

Overall	An exciting mountain course that is worth a look around despite its age.	27/50
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Loon Lake Lodge - Lakeside

Warren Wilson



Description

Imaginary, lakeside course.

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, from rough

Concept

This is nowhere near the equal of bigger brother Hillside. Hole design is less imaginative, more constricting and more didactic, and the appearance is several notches down the scale. The lake itself is more of a swamp – filled with water grasses it sort of defeats the point of a lakeside course. The course as a whole looks under-prepared, under-planned and most certainly underwhelming. 4/10

Appearance

Far from beautiful, sadly. The texture transitions are horrible, there are large areas without elevation change and planting where you can see texture repetition, and the panorama is completely inappropriate. Nightmares such as the rock wall next to the second tee and the terribly unconvincing stream reoccur with terrible frequency, and really genuinely detract from the round of golf. Very disappointing. 2/10

Playability

Lakeside presents an OK round of golf, but there's little stimulation in the way of shot-shaping or variety. Most holes are strictly one-track only, and the vast expanses of rough are unwelcoming, even if they're not the most penal. I have doubts about the replayability value of this course – it's really only a one-shot deal. 4/10

Challenge

Thankfully, this is well-pitched, and most golfers will be hovering around Par, no matter what the conditions and skill levels. The Par 5s are the best holes on the course, with at least some element of risk/reward, and only the very deepest rough will penalise the wayward. The greens are very severe (probably a bit too much) and are a significant part of the challenge. 8/10

Technical

The course is frankly in a sorry state, and needs much more time expenditure to become halfway good. The sound is misplaced and annoying. Textures and elevations are a priority for work: the planting and shapes are pretty good though, without too much obvious cloning or stockwork, and at least show some imagination and thought on the part of the designer. 4/10

Overall	Rough and ready, without the charm of the Hillside course, the clever design or the innate playability. Much better to plump for just the one LLL course.	23/50
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Los Lagos GC

Gary Campbell



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, mountain course	11 th hole, Par 4	72

Location

One of the Carolinas, according to the readme

Conditions

Plays reasonably well on M*/M*

Concept

This is the first of Gary's excellent portfolio of courses and it set an excellent indication of things to come. Somewhere between a mountain course with overtures of Crystal Pines, and a lakeside course in the mould of Lost Lake Legend, it has rough edges but a solid design concept at its heart, with superb intelligent use of fairway slopes and guarded greens. With just one particular trademark hole (the gutsy, stand-out 13th), this is a course that both rewards aggressive play and appreciates the conservative hitter too. 9/10

Appearance

Some stand-out planting helps the course to retain its rarified atmosphere, but there are some pretty hefty extrusion marks here, and the bunkers have not had as much work done on them as I would have liked, with some obvious terrain marks around and even within them. The colour set doesn't quite add up, either. That being said, there's been much done here with multiple texture rings and good, understated elevation work. 6/10

Playability

Excellent golf, and even more subtle than those courses that came afterwards, Los Lagos mixes up styles and lengths of holes to excellent effect. Plenty of flair is required to get the most out of the course, and the ambience is made complete with good sound planting and informative previews. You'll want to go back more than once to try and better that damnable 13th as well! 8/10

Challenge

The fact that Los Lagos is still playing close to par, even on the Mod, shows the keen eye for design that was present here. The rolling fairways provide an excellent test on all approaches, and you'll do well to better more than about half the greens in regulation. The trees and hazarding are thankfully not too tight, though, and the net impression is of a well-balanced course with natural challenge. 9/10

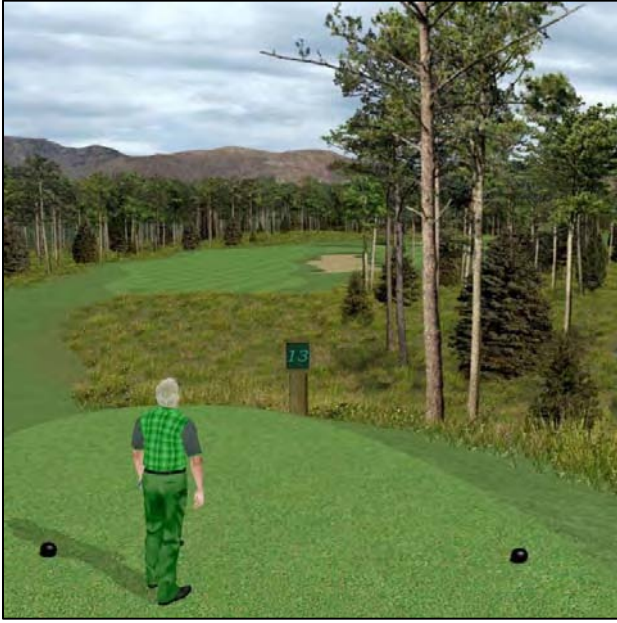
Technical

Near-genius planting, given the fact that this is a first design and an aging course, and there is certainly a firm hand on the tiller when it comes to golfing design. A shame about the rather primitive extrusion methods which have left their mark, and I found a fair few areas where the textures were not well mapped, but there is little to stop you coming back to this course. 7/10

Overall	A beguiling course in the play and difficult to overlook. It does have weaknesses in the design, but they can be attributed to age.	39/50
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Lost Lake Legend

Bob Hankla



Description

Fictional, lakeside course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 4, from tee

Concept

Wow. This is a step ahead of 95% of the courses out there. Not only does have a wonderful and fun fictional background, it plays like a dream. Nearly all holes offer you a challenging option; the water is rarely out of play; and even just one marginally misplaced shot will cost strokes. Certain holes, such as the 11th, 15th and 17th, are out of this world in terms of ingenuity and innovation. First class! 10/10

Appearance

Lost Lake Legend lives up to its Utopian ideal by being absolutely visually flawless. The bunkers blend well, and the heavy woodland regions are immaculately planted. The panorama is understated and complements the course without detracting from it. There are some heavy elevations without at any point being unconvincing. Again, first class! 10/10

Playability

The sheer volume of play options here should keep anyone engaged. It's a very tough course on hard settings, but played conservatively, it should prove to be exceedingly enjoyable. Perhaps the gameplay is ever so slightly tainted by the fact that the greens are easy to hit and will hold your ball, meaning the lovingly-carved bunkers will not come into play very often, and the slower-than-average rendering times. 9/10

Challenge

The course seems to have trouble settling for a happy medium. On hard settings and advanced swing types, it is nigh on impossible. You will need to clear an awful lot of water in order to hit what could be rather small fairway target areas. On easier settings, it might prove a touch too easy: birdies are certainly not out of the question on the back nine. The Par 5 holes are superb and easily the most testing, but still enjoyable that I've seen. 6/10

Technical

Flawless. Custom objects are used prolifically and professionally; the elevation work is done as naturally as possible, given the fantasy nature of the course. Planting is superb and varied and the textures blends are brilliant, especially the awkward ones on the side of slopes. 10/10

Overall	One of the elite group of courses, without a doubt. Stunning to look at, amazing to play and (given you use the right settings) hard to score well on.	45/50
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Lowlands

Mike Hornak



Description

Fictional, marshland course

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

This feels very British in style, perhaps somewhere in the North?

Conditions

Don't go faster than S*/S*

Concept

Deeply green and swampy, Lowlands proves that a course doesn't have to be busy to impress. With very little planting outside of the lakes and some boundary trees which do not come into play, the golf is reliant on smart design and use of the deep pot bunkers that are dotted around the plot. The intriguing progression to the course starts with three really tough holes before gradually easing up towards the end. This does admittedly feel like the wrong way around but it adds a unique selling point which is not easily forgotten. 8/10

Appearance

The clones are there in the planting, although much of it is distant enough not to be immediately noticed. More crucially, the reed planting does an excellent job of covering up the awkward water transitions. The textures have been excellently chosen for the swampy environment and the bunkers are uniformly acceptable. It's the areas of nothing that really draw the eye and detract from the experience, though. 5/10

Playability

The lack of hole previews is a sore loss on more than one occasion with traps lurking unseen in the landscape, and ambient sound is a sore loss given how evocative the atmosphere could be. But, if you're prepared to take your fate with a pinch of salt, then there is some dynamic and intriguing golf, exemplified by the opening trio but continuing right up to the novel closing hole. 7/10

Challenge

No matter how many times I play Lowlands, as long as the settings are realistic (and there's nothing wrong with slow settings, considering the soggy surroundings), I never fail to be amazed with how close the course lands me to par. With the penal bunkers and timely lofted greens, the course starts really tough, but it follows an entirely natural progression, which not coincidentally makes it more fun to play as your game picks up. 10/10

Technical

Mike Hornak has produced some exceptionally-plotted courses, and Lowlands is no exception. The work on the textures is perfectly in tune with the intended environment, although one or two bunker walls appear to be off-line. I like to think that the barrenness of this course is deliberate, rather than an oversight, and it does come off more often than not. 6/10

Overall	An unprepossessing but excellent course which mixes testing hazards and planned shotmaking.	36/50
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Lucia von Rheden

Claus Mandalka



Description

Real, short course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 3, from tee

Concept

Lucia von Rheden is a short Par 60 course set amid some stunningly re-created farmland. It comprises a mixture of tough Par 3s and easy, drivable Par 4s, and utilises planting, bunkers, and water as excellent hazards. It's nearly all planted on a fairway texture, and is refreshingly different for that. Given the constraints of the course length, the individual hole designs are excellent. 8/10

Appearance

Despite the poor tee boxes, this is a really beautiful course. Don't forget to look beyond the obvious though, as some of the best scenes come outside of the course in the shape of farmland and a nice panorama. There is an excellent sprinkling of custom objects, from the tiny (custom stakes in three colours!) to the massive (check out the big blue pylon!), that all add to a genuinely immersive experience. 9/10

Playability

I defy anyone not to enjoy a round at von Rheden. You'll be pumped up to drive the green on the Par 4s, you'll be challenged to putt, chip and flop accurately, and you'll require every shot in the book. And all this despite the absence of Par 5 holes! It's really a fantastic course to play, with a multitude of options (the Par 3 17th has a very realistic proposition of a lay-up), lots to look at, and constant ingenuity at the way it's been fitted together. 10/10

Challenge

This, of course, is where the points drop. The course is much too easy and won't present a significant challenge to most. I birdied 7 straight holes on the back 9 for a round of 51. The lack of rough and the shallow bunkers both count against this course – at least the greens are small and testing, which prevents it being a total walkover. 2/10

Technical

There is an occasional poor extrusion and times when the water features do not look totally realistic, as well as a reliance on an inappropriate fairway texture (surely a custom texture was a must here, seeing as it covers the course). But the planting is good, and the use of custom objects (I particularly liked the rakes) excellent. For a relative unknown (course and designer), this is a damn good effort. 8/10

Overall

A little gem! Innately playable, and a great deal of fun. A good 'leveller' in contests between different swing types, and good-looking to boot!

37/50

Lyme Regis Golf Club

John Brooks



Description

Real, links course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from greenside bunker.

Concept

Lyme Regis is an unusual links course, trimming its rough immaculately and using its hilltop locality and rolling grasslands to provide the majority of the challenge. Several par 5s make excellent use of this, particularly the awesome 15th, and the links rough is hardly missed at all. It does all feel a bit 'transplanted', though – as if this were a golf course lifted wholesale from somewhere else. 6/10

Appearance

While the tree-planting does seem a bit determinedly random, the slopes of the courses are convincing enough, as are the chalky cliffs, at least from a distance. The marker poles are undoubtedly useful, but they are here in proliferation and don't exactly make the place look nice. At various points, the panorama looks disappointingly low-resolution as well. 6/10

Playability

This is good, good links golf. Even the straight holes have just enough going on to keep you engaged, and the Par 5s are excellent risk/reward 2-shotters. Sadly, as has been the case with this designer's other courses, there is a mite too much slope on the greens to really make this a going proposition on the tougher settings, but play with the wind turned up and the greens slowed down and you'll have a blast. 8/10

Challenge

I really think the rough needs toughening up a fair bit here. It's just too easy to make a swift escape from a position that – on any other course – would be a real problem. Even mis-hits may not go totally unpunished, thanks to a relatively small plot and the ease of hitting neighbouring fairways and tee boxes. On a reasonably lengthy course, there could be so much more to challenge you, and so much more to play for. 6/10

Technical

John's courses are starting to feel a bit 'production line' in the manner of some other prolific real-course APCDers. While I have enjoyed pretty much all his creations, there is a nagging feeling that they are starting to lack finish and some personal, memorable touches. It's sound work, but doesn't seem able to quite stick its head above the crowd. 6/10

Overall	A tasteful grassland links, and a real illustration of how well a sloping layout can be used, but lacking the finesse of the best course conversions.	<i>32/50</i>
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Manitou Island, MI

Zea Miller



Description

Fictional, dunes course

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

There's a definite progression to the layout on Manitou Island, starting on clifftop and progressing upward into some towering sand-faced dunes. An unusual layout too, with just one Par 3 hole on each half. The combination of pines and autumn colours work surprisingly well, and for an early course there have been some clever touches added in terms of texture rings and grass banks. Some excellent, but rather gimmicky, hole designs make good use of the non-stop elevation changes and the narrow bands of

fairway are a consistent threat. 6/10

Appearance

There's all sorts to see here, but not all of it great. A terrific, unusual view from the first tee is never really matched all the way around, although the fairway fringe rings and grass planting show an imagination not often equalled in early courses. A big problem is the handling of the mountainous elevations, which is very inconsistent, and a disappointing lack of any texture blends. There are a lot of ugly extrusion marks too. 4/10

Playability

Hitting the fairways is a major part of the challenge here, and one which will quickly grind down the keen player. Because of the difficulties putting mentioned below, some problem lies, and lots of blind shots, it's likely that this course's appeal will be short lived. 3/10

Challenge

The greens are bang out of order. Hugely sloped, frequently unputtable, and with plenty of off-key pin positions, they will lead to an instant deletion of this course, more often than not. As such, it's a totally unfair course and your final score is unlikely to be a just reflection of performance. What a disappointment. 1/10

Technical

There are some good aspirations here in the use of grass planting, custom features, layout and texture assignments. Unfortunately, the whole thing just hasn't had the skill applied to see it through. While the visuals aren't at all bad, some more playtesting would be thoroughly recommended. 4/10

Overall	Nice ideas, but a bombardment of playing problems will put too many golfers off.	18/50
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Mansford Waters GC

Leigh Seaman



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, marshland course	3 rd hole, Par 4	73
Location		
English West Midlands.		
Conditions		
M*/M* seems to strike the right balance between testing and lush greenery.		

Concept

Short approaches and heavily guarded postage-stamp greens are the theme running through Mansford Waters from the glorious first hole to the stunning last, and in fairness it doesn't come across as gimmickry. There's a thoroughly exciting and compact golf course hidden among this lush landscape: incontrovertibly fictional but also rich in atmosphere and wetland authenticity. 9/10

Appearance

The planting is gorgeously detailed but doesn't fit together terribly well from the broad view, and the grasses are planted far too sparsely and randomly. There's also some rather stretched textures here and there, particularly around the bunkers. There's richness here, but also a degree of rather unsatisfying shallowness when everything doesn't quite click into place together. 8/10

Playability

Golly – Leigh Seaman really knows how to make an exciting golf course. Although there's a hint of the excesses in earlier courses and quite a few fairways that wouldn't pass muster for a real greenkeeper, there's a fair old workout for the short irons and a closest-to-pin contest would gravitate to this course like moths to a lamp. There's an odd stretch around the turn where the ideas get slightly lost, but the round finishes on fine form. 8/10

Challenge

With Leigh's courses it's always easy to visualise the shots, but all too frequently it's that bit too easy to make them as well. Drama certainly has its place on Mansford Waters, but it's sadly drama that's just a little bit too easy to overcome. If you can avoid the water, birdies will be legion. 4/10

Technical

In terms of creative design, this is a terrific theme and complementary set of ideas, and the level of customisation in the planting should not be ignored: there's certainly no evidence of a designer marking time here. Perhaps there'd be room for final tidying and few more course goodies to really bring the whole presentation up to scratch – Mansford Waters is the sort of location crying out for a faux-history and a few landmarks. 8/10

Overall	An absolute blast to play, damp and target-driven. Lacking a little subtlety in both the golf and the design.	37/50
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Margaret's Bay

Lez Marwick



Description

Fictional, links course

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 3

Par

71

Location

South of England – easy to see this one along the Kent or Sussex coasts.

Conditions

One or two greens incline me towards a maximum of M*/M*. Windier conditions should be considered a must.

Concept

Oozing theme and links-land authenticity, Margaret's Bay is certainly a memorable creation. The Readme tells tales of woe of a course that is slowly falling into the sea, and the impression is reinforced by the opening and closing holes which really do play fast and loose with the clifftops. In between these heart-stoppers, the course makes dramatic use of elevations and is somewhat over-bunkered: the best holes being those which make use of the natural landscape rather than a glut of sand traps. 9/10

Appearance

Lovely, delicate work with the low-level planting and creation of differing regions of grassland really help the authenticity here. The cliff tops and surf – notable problem areas in Links – are carried out efficiently and the use of a specialist sky is the mark of a designer who really wanted his courses to look good. The excellent little touches such as boundary fences (somewhat collapsing on the 17th!) and the neighbouring farmland, are superb, but the course is still let down by a hard edge or two and a panorama slightly too pale. 9/10

Playability

Threading your way between lurking bunkers, perhaps even deliberately opting for the long grass, and pinpointing the optimum parts of stiff greens: this has always been the hallmark of good links golf, and it is certainly delivered by Margaret's Bay. Perhaps it's a little short on replayability; there are few holes that offer you any valid choice, and most fairways are determinedly one-way. The novelty and scenery are compulsive, though, and there is a terrific, unmissable climax to the round as you return to the clifftops. 8/10

Challenge

A lot of care has gone into the difficulty setup here, to the extent of recommending different green conditions for different circumstances of play. The terrain and bunkering is extremely difficult, though, the clifftop holes are distinctly perilous, and it certainly wouldn't be a surprise to see a difficult birdie-free round with the wind turned up. 7/10

Technical

While much of the APCD-work is admirable, and there is delightful attention to the minutiae of the scenery and ambient sound, this is a course with a primary flaw. The over-reliance on bunkers on about fifty per cent of holes can really only be viewed as a mistake; it makes the course unacceptably hard, slightly unrealistic, and contrived. 8/10

Overall	Home-style links with a terrific backstory and a slightly artificial challenge gradient.	41/50
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Marion Bridge Golf Course

David Schwartz



Description

Fictional, lakeside course

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 4, from fairway

Concept

A course that certainly lives up to its name, Marion Bridge is all about water and 3D bridges. Streams, lakes, parallel water features and islands – they're all here, including a terrific beach hole at the 17th. As a theme, it stands up pretty well (at least as well as Watery Grave, which post-dated it by a fair few years), and the first half is a pretty good round of golf, for the age. Sadly, it all gets a bit silly after the turn, with some pretty silly and unplayable holes which don't gel well with what came before. 4/10

Appearance

The textures are old, old news, and there are some pretty obvious extrusion marks available. The flatness of the course doesn't make for good spectator sport, either. But there has been a reasonable attempt to cover up clones and add an appropriate panorama, and some care has been taken with the 3D objects from stock. 3/10

Playability

What starts off well, with some nicely-shaped holes and greens, becomes horrendously confrontational in the second half. Blind, unfair shots proliferate, and the water becomes less of a theme than a nuisance. Most players won't look at the back nine again, but there are one or two lingering charms from the opening holes. 2/10

Challenge

Whatever score you're carrying at the turn won't last. Expect to finish with more than eighty. 1/10

Technical

Six years on, this course is looking closer to eight years old. There's precious little remaining here to inspire students of the APCD. Without the poor course-planning, this might be passable, but the overblown silliness along the back nine removes any trace of credibility. 2/10

Overall	Probably best left in the archives. A passable idea which soon disappears up its own orifice.	<i>12/50</i>
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Mauna Kea

Microsoft



Description

Real, tropical course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4, approach.

Concept

A nice if unremarkable tropical course, Mauna Kea wends its way through palm forests and along clifftops. Most holes offer you a driving challenge, with one or two even forcing you to shape or drive blind, and there is a lot of 'roll' to the fairways. But it's lacking the panache or thrill of many tropical courses and at times you'd be excused for thinking you weren't in Hawaii at all. 6/10

Appearance

This old design is looking distinctly poor. The textures are stretched and don't transition well, and the panorama is pixelated and unclear. The ocean views are just awash with blue: no detail at all. Perhaps I shouldn't be too harsh, given the course's age and some spectacular views, but it doesn't stand up at all well. 4/10

Playability

With a lack of stand-out holes and something of a prescriptive approach to target golf, this course doesn't stand up and ask to be counted. There is a distinct lack of thrill and you won't need most of your bag as the same shots turn up again and again. Add to this the frustration of the nearly-impossible greens, and you've got one unfulfilling round of golf. 3/10

Challenge

Mostly thanks to the frequent elevation changes and severe greens, Mauna Kea presents a good challenge to all golfers. With clever bunker positioning, a lot of scores will depend on pin positions. But the challenge is the best thing about this course, and you'll be pushed – never unfairly – to break par. 8/10

Technical

The same problems arise as with other course conversions, and the fact remains that these LS conversions are sub-standard. Harsh stock textures and transitions and somewhat unconvincing planting are a complement to the wayward panorama. The elevation work is OK, but this one is only for fans. 4/10

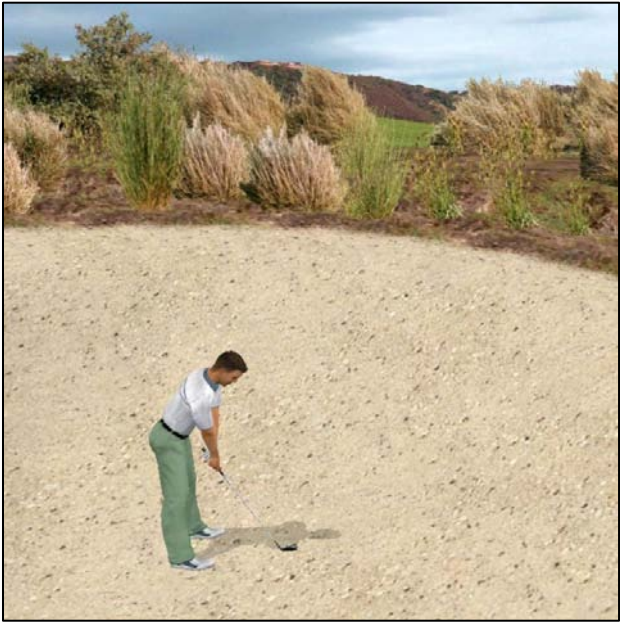
Overall

An OK course, but not done any favours by the conversion. Play it once if you must, but I doubt it'll be a keeper for many.

25/50

Meadowood Golf Club

Dexter Gresh



Description

Fictional, dunes course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4, from waste bunker

Concept

From the outset, it's pretty obvious of the course's prairie background. It's flat, browning and has a wide, open landscape. Inexplicably, though, about halfway around it turns into a semi-mountainous course, using massive elevations and small rockpools as natural hazards. It's a massive misjudgement of style, and really detracts from some otherwise appealing golf. Shame. 4/10

Appearance

A very studious course, with perhaps just a clone or two detracting from the overall atmosphere. I can't for the life of me get into bed with the textures, though: they seem inappropriate and far too lush for the intended setting. The bunker texture is almost entirely smoothed and doesn't look half as rough as you'd expect from a prairie course. But, with the early styling at texture blends, they mesh very well when necessary, and when you're used to the rather odd appearance of the ground, you can pay deserved attention to some of the course's better features. 7/10

Playability

Some outstanding holes, particularly the 15th and 16th, keep you motoring along very nicely. It's only when the course vaguely strays into surreality with its incongruent elevations that you feel under pressure. There's plenty to see and plenty of fine judgement required, given the number of corners you are asked to cut. A good round without being too pushy. 8/10

Challenge

Meadowood does not give up birdies easy. Greens are very difficult to read, and shots off the fairway will often be taken from side-elevations. Several bunkers do not offer a fair escape route, and the hazarding on the whole strikes one as being on the sadistic side. Anything under par, even for just nine holes, would represent an excellent achievement. 5/10

Technical

Extremely well constructed, as one would expect with the designer's reputation. Particularly noteworthy is the texture matching and the attention to the features. But some bunkers are not lipped correctly, and the elevations around the turn border on the unbelievable. It's good, but should it be better? 9/10

Overall	But for one or two errors of judgement, a course that's worthy of half an hour of your time. You never quite believe it as a track, but the golfing potential is of high quality.	33/50
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Medinah CC #3

John Pineda



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, forest course	14 th hole, Par 5	72
Location		
Illinois		
Conditions		
Most greens are pretty acceptable, but I'd play a little safe with F*/M*		

Concept

Unlike some other US Major courses, Medinah has a real story to tell, and the strips of densely-wooded forest separated by a strip of water are something of a God's gift to a designer setting out to create professional-level difficulty golf. Naturally, it's designed to reward those who hit straight and long and reward some imagination from the tee and on the inevitable escape shots – this is one of the first championship courses to use a universal deep rough. The thematics are little tiring and repetitive over multiple rounds of golf, but there's plenty of extra visuals by way of compensation. 9/10

Appearance

There are plenty of stand-out features, including a plethora of carefully-worked 3D and excellent plot textures. The forests must have been extremely difficult to plant convincingly and it's been done reasonably well, with minimal clones, although a fair few trees are less impressive in low-res close-up. That one flaw taken into account, though, Medinah does well to bely its age. 8/10

Playability

Deliciously subtle golf, although I do have to concede that the endless need to strike near-perfect drives continuously, does become tedious. Thankfully, there's lots of room for creativity in avoiding a claustrophobic treeline, and some entertaining and surprisingly under-bunkered green complexes. 7/10

Challenge

Not in the slightest bit as hard as some recent Major venues, Medinah nevertheless provides an imposing challenge with its highly-graded texture setups and (excessive?) demands on you to hit long and straight. Thankfully, you'd never come out of a hole feeling that you'd been unfairly treated, but it's hard to play pretty golf here unless you're millimetrically accurate. A score under 70 would represent a great achievement on anything but light conditions. 9/10

Technical

A few elevation and planting problems aside, this course earns marks because of the impressive effort that has gone into the forests, and the excellent recreation of Medinah's imposing atmosphere. The bunkers are extremely fine, too. 8/10

Overall	Justifiably a favourite among those who like demanding championship golf. Medinah has just a little more soul and storyline than some others.	41/50
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Meresbrook Forest GC

Alan Toft



Description

Fictional, forest course

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

The readme says Central England without further clarifications

Conditions

It's difficult to justify anything faster than S*/M*

Concept

Meresbrook is Alan's best work, a rich and deep forest course with two distinct halves. With a front half stifled by the trees, particularly the greens which are often quite ingeniously protected, the second half opens out significantly, using water to a reasonable extent. Both halves cohere very well and are reminiscent of a genuine layout. It's all backed up by first-class presentation, including beautiful hole previews. 10/10

Appearance

The forest has been very competently planted and under-planted and there is only the merest hint of cloning in the grasses. The textures are sound, even if there are hints of straight edges in some of the shapes. But there are also some lovely little touches in the bunker lips and the objects surrounding the tees, all of which add tone. The design has aged very well, and there are several moments of classiness which stand up to close scrutiny. 9/10

Playability

Erratic swingers might find the opening half something of a trial when they invariably spend time hacking out of the woods. But it's also a measure of the designer's thoroughness to observe that there are no inescapable lies. The first half provides a splendid introduction to the more target-oriented second nine – if the two halves were switched, it would be a much worse round. The whole thing is backed up by excellent sound planting, too. 8/10

Challenge

As long as you don't mind using the slower green conditions, or are an expert putter, this course is set up very effectively. The trees do much of the hazarding and bunkers are effectively placed for the over-ambitious or wayward. The water on the back nine is strategically spot-on without being in-your-face. Much will come down to how fast you want the greens, but really that's a poor reason to hold a grudge against a course. 7/10

Technical

The course planning and APCD work have held up very nicely in this creation, with perhaps only a few texture oddities being a flaw. But I'd be surprised if anyone doesn't think much of this. 8/10

Overall	An excellent 'storyline' course which shows genuine progression and imagination. The designer's finest work.	42/50
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Merion East

Dexter Gresh



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, heathland course	4 th hole, Par 5	70
Location		
Philadelphia		
Conditions		
The fastest settings might be a fraction too extreme: try F*/M*		

Concept

A distinctly old-fashioned championship course, Merion is short and the emphasis is firmly on placement and the elaborately remodelled bunkers. It has the same quaint feel as Riviera and the other historical country clubs and although not particularly memorable there is a pleasant, well-honed procession to the layout and a number of intriguing holes. One of the first millimetrically-worked courses in the game, the conversion has held up delightfully well. 8/10

Appearance

The low-level planting is superb and while the bunkers don't quite replicate the complex edge job done in real life, they are superbly crafted. There are occasional shape problems on the way around, but the clubhouse and its environs are excellent, and little touches like the cart-paths and bunker planting make the experience all the more authentic. 8/10

Playability

I could feel myself being deliberately throttled back here, but there was little frustration, thanks to some sumptuous and inviting approach shots – and, indeed, with a short course like this it is entirely necessary to restrict the landing spots. Certain holes, especially the closing stretch, really have a *frisson* about them, but there's quite a lot of 'careful' golf to be played, which doesn't add up to a lot of repeat visits. 7/10

Challenge

The course represents a good challenge, although almost certainly a little too easy. The bunkers often lead to easy escapes and even the deep rough is surprisingly easy to hack out of. The greens are receptive and make for some assured putts. The difficulty comes from some good hazarding, and clever pin positions that give very little away. Although I can hole 20-foot putts on occasion, I certainly couldn't do it on every hole. 5/10

Technical

Aside from a few odd spots, this is an extremely dextrous creation, and in fact Merion gave birth to an APCD designers' manual, which says a great deal. One of those landmark courses which set new standards with what can be done in the APCD, and earning its rating accordingly. 9/10

Overall	Brilliant craftsmanship, but an odd choice of course with not much to present to the Links golfer.	37/50
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Mesa Roja

Microsoft



Description

Imaginary, desert course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

This is, of course, the track used by Microsoft to show off the APCD and a handful of their sandstone textures. But it's a decent concept in its own right and contains some imaginative, if unpolished, hole designs. The sandstone monoliths are a great idea, but not utilised as well as they might be. If Microsoft can really go to town on the likes of Devil's Island, why didn't they on this? 6/10

Appearance

Generally, there's some impressive views, but later in the eighteen the designers appeared to grow lazy. The cliffs abut straight onto fairway without any transition. Elevation changes spoil some views and some of the most beautiful landscape is therefore not visible. The overall effect isn't half as impressive as one would like. 6/10

Playability

The novelty value of this course is the main reason to play it. There's a decent amount of risk/reward, but again I thought there could have been much more. The course is seriously lacking in replayability values, though: once you've seen it, there's nothing new the second time. Despite the variety of the holes, mystifyingly you'll end up playing many of them the same way. 5/10

Challenge

With wide open fairways and greens and stone walls to knock your ball back into play, it's all too easy to score pars here. Birdies will come with time and patience, rather than skill. In contrast, the final Par 4 is some way over 500 yards and impossible to hit in two. I believe that technical know-how took priority over golfing expertise here. 4/10

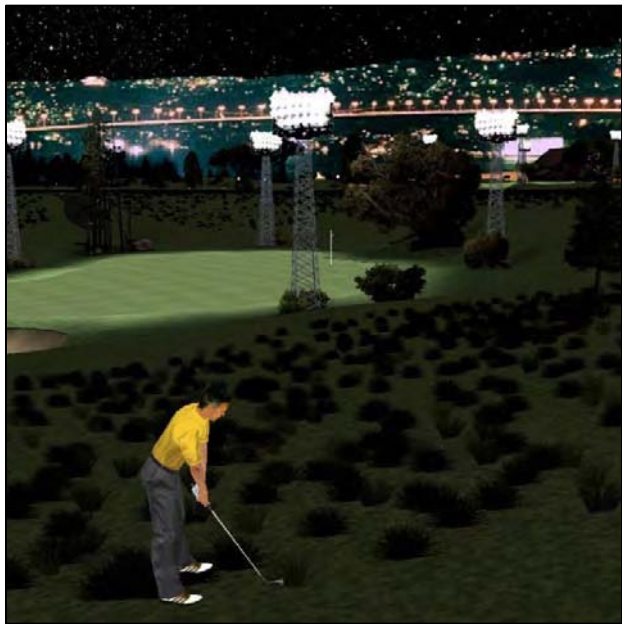
Technical

The panorama's nice, and you can't knock what has been done with the rock formations or the desert sand. Some more work on texture transitions is necessary towards the end, and there's more than a hint of hard-edged shapes, but a decent effort nevertheless. 7/10

Overall	Not as bad as most people make out, but there is still a lot to be desired here. Not a patch on Box Canyon in golfing terms.	28/50
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Midnight GC

Lars Rudbeck



Description

Real, concept course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, from rough.

Concept

Mindblowing stuff. Even if the idea of playing golf at night wasn't clever enough, to put together such a faultless construction on that premise is near genius. Even the easiest holes become more complicated when plunged into darkness (thankfully the serious hazard count is low), and the lighting around the greens is a brilliant idea and very deftly carried out. 10/10

Appearance

Hard to know what to say, here, seeing as it's tricky to see very much! Certainly what we can see is great: the panorama is extremely impressive even if it doesn't quite blend with the night sky; the multitude of objects (mostly floodlights) are well-customised, and the bunkers look extremely professional. There is one nasty moment where the edge of the plot comes into view, but otherwise less to look at definitely means more, in this case. 9/10

Playability

Much of the charm of playing this course comes from not being able to see where you're going, and the many unusual sounds and experiences you will run into at night (again, all deftly customised). It's a good job, because the course as a whole doesn't offer a lot of variety or risk/reward, and having it jazzed up like this certainly builds on the replayability value. 8/10

Challenge

You'd think the darkness would create an artificially hard challenge, wouldn't you? Not so. Even though the fairways are narrow, the rough is forgiving and the greens flat (and, being lit up, very easy to hit!). The only way you'll drop strokes is by finding the little ponds and streams which dot the course, or the big lake on the 17th. Even then, it's all too easy to shoot a low round. 4/10

Technical

There's clearly been a lot of effort expended on this course, and criticism seems harsh, but there were one or two places where the ambient sound wasn't channelled correctly, and the background sky does occasionally clash with the pano. But the customised objects are terrific, the majority of sound entertaining and different, and there's a lot less need to worry about poor texturing! Very soundly done, from a player's point of view. 9/10

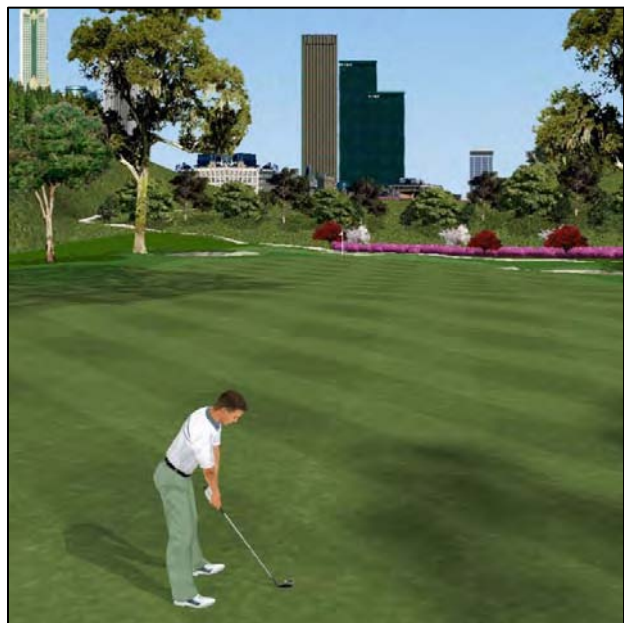
Overall

A brilliant concept brought lovingly and imaginatively to life. This could easily have been mediocre: happily it's turned out a triumph.

40/50

Midtown Municipal

Bill Misener



Description

Imaginary, parkland course.

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 5, approach

Concept

Building a course in a Central Park-like environment, close to the hustle and bustle of a large city, isn't a bad idea. The designer has complemented with some imaginative and testing hole designs, which are intended to lift the course above the ordinary. Sadly, it's a bit let down in terms of the execution, but the ambition and concept are very sound indeed. 8/10

Appearance

Although the first hole looks lovely (don't forget to wave at the man on the right when you're teeing off), the later parts of the course are dogged with bad shape transitions and some mesh folds in the 'difficult' areas (generally where the designer has tried to pull three different shapes together smoothly). The deep rough texture is completely inadequate and gives you a false illusion. But the panorama is good, and vital in setting the scene, and all the way round you can see nice touches that lift this course up from being mundane. 5/10

Playability

This is the sort of course you want to come back to every month or so, when you are looking for something different. Taken on its own, it's a frustrating course, leading to a lot of impossible lies and drops. The sound isn't exactly conducive to gameplay – while the designer has done his best with custom sound, it's loud and monotonous and often poorly sampled. But the course has a strong risk/reward factor, which will encourage you to play on if you can ignore the distractions. 6/10

Challenge

Oh boy. Miss the fairways and you'll land in some very punishing rough. Impossible lies are commonplace, thanks to iffy landscape design. Most worryingly of all, the greens are unrealistic and almost impossible to putt on. Something went seriously wrong when trying to pitch the difficulty of this course and it (and your game) suffers as a result. 3/10

Technical

A lot of work needed here too, unfortunately. While the customisation is good, the sound is terrible and some beta testing would surely have picked up on some of the problems with the landscaping. The textures are inappropriate with hard boundaries and the planting is repetitive. This course has genuine potential if the technical aspects can be picked up upon. 2/10

Overall	A good idea, but let down in the execution and with some overambitiousness. Worth playing to see some of the inventive hole layouts, but best with the sound turned off!	24/50
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Misty Mountain Hop GC

Ed Balaun



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Any course named after a Led Zeppelin song can't be all bad, can it? MMH is certainly not run-of-the-mill as far as mountain courses go. Relatively flat, it relies more on playing around the giant monolithic structures, has a much-trademarked closing stretch with killer Par 5s on 16 and 17, and several holes which bring the rockwork directly into play. It's not always terribly convincing, though, and more hilliness is generally thought a pre-requisite in the average mountain course. 6/10

Appearance

To be honest, the course smacks of artificiality all the way round. The rocks are fine from a distance but the textures are under-resolved when close to. The choice of colouring for the grass textures is certainly unusual but also unconvincing. Only a good selection of tree planting saves the course from being completely mundane. 5/10

Playability

Some excellent gambling holes really provoke the player into lashing out, and the well-placed hazards are challenging without being an overt Stop sign. The holes are long, though, and the greens are frustratingly hard to hit and too many of your shots will be short chips. Thankfully the closing holes do plenty to break up the monotony. 7/10

Challenge

A very tricky course, indeed, MMH does not yield too many birdies, thanks to greens that are hard to hit and even harder to putt upon. Well-placed fairway bunkers catch all too many stray shots, and the most lingering memories of Misty Mountain will be 'blimey – that was hard!' 6/10

Technical

Hard edges and some rather unoriginal ground-level planting give away this course's age. Some better texture mapping and detail on the mountainsides would be considered a priority. The greens, by modern standards, are not particularly friendly, cost altogether too many strokes, and are pretty tiny into the bargain. But the course has conveyed it's designer's ambition and scale and is all the better for it. 5/10

Overall	Not many people's Stairway To Heaven, but nor is it a complete Black Dog. If you Rock And Roll too much off the tee, you could hit Four Sticks and find yourself wishing you were Going To California instead.	29/50
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Moana Palama

Shawn Kobold



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, tropical course	7 th hole, Par 4	71
Location	Hawaii	
Conditions	Plays well under fast conditions.	

Concept

Somewhat reminiscent of Waialae in its flat beach-front setting, Moana Palama continues a trend of solid, if slightly unspectacular courses from this designer. A rather nondescript opening nine doesn't promise much, but thankfully things liven up as the second half moves down to the beachfront, and actually in retrospect the contrast is quite nice. It's easy to see why Shawn's clean-cut style has its fans – no impossible lies or nasty surprises here – but to step up to the big leagues, the courtesy touches such as splash-screen, thumbnail and hole previews really need to be part of the package. 6/10

Appearance

Shawn clearly takes pride in meticulously-manicured courses, and this fits the locale rather well. The minty green textures work well with the blueing panorama, and the planting is largely tasteful and restrained, although some trees don't look terribly native. The 3D clubhouse/hotel is a good effort although perhaps a bit crude close-up. Some hasty work around the lakes and coastline spoils the fresh and clean look. 7/10

Playability

Frankly, I found the first half to be incredibly tedious and lacking. The fairways are open and there rarely seems to be much decision beyond pulling the big club and smacking it down the middle. The second half improves somewhat as it opens out onto the coastline, but I can't really imagine anyone going out and playing this for fun. A tournament staple, certainly, but it's hard to see Moana Palama's place in a casual rotation. 4/10

Challenge

The fairways are almost optional, given the ease of escape, and the bunkering is often only marginally in play, especially from anything other than the back tees. But there's just enough done to stop this course being a pushover – again, another one which will appeal to the tournament types. 6/10

Technical

A difficult one to judge. Clearly, Shawn has the knack of producing clean and believable courses, although it does now feel like there's a bit of a production-line going on, and certainly some customisation and eye-candy wouldn't hurt without detracting from the golf. 6/10

Overall	A pedestrian first half with a slightly more exciting second. Solid, but almost definitely unspectacular.	29/50
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Moosevalley Golf Club

Kennet Larsson



real treat. 9/10

Description

Fictional, canyon course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 3, from tee

Concept

Extremely convincing in its depiction of forested glade, Moosevalley is lush, oddball and thoroughly addictive. With massive, sprawling greens and bendy fairways, it is an almost unique challenge, and there's plenty to look at on the way. The Par 5s are terrific, and the Par 3s correctly cosy – apart from the intimidating final hole. The general design might appear at first glance to be constraining, but the rough and deep grass prove not to be overly arduous, and those who are inventive and creative are in for a

Appearance

There really are some breathtaking views at Moosevalley, although the appearance of the course as a whole is more fantasy than real. Excellent deployment of textures in all areas really makes the course come alive, and the blending is well up to standard. On more than one occasion the view is sadly marred by sharp terrain changes or folds, which is a real pity, because this is a really beautiful setting. 8/10

Playability

A terrific selection of risk/reward, inventive shot-shaping and creativity around the greens will keep even the best and the most cynical player on their toes. The technical problems with the trees (see below) actually work in your favour as far as good golf goes. Ushered on by a terrific atmosphere and no few surprises along the way, this is a treat. 7/10

Challenge

Good putters will pick up a lot of shots around here. The mammoth greens – although often not Mod-appropriate – can hardly fail to pick up your ball, and approach is often possible out of the rough or bunkers. The main issues for the golfer are the constantly changing terrain and navigating your way through some real puzzlers of holes. Nevertheless, a score under 70 isn't too much to be desired. 6/10

Technical

Unfortunately, despite the wonderful gameplay, there are some major issues here, largely with the impenetrable properties of the trees. 'Steel tree' syndrome is a notorious problem all the way around, and can have major effects on the wilder swingers. In addition, some fine detail needs to be paid to the landscaping, particularly in the sharp drop-offs towards water or ditches. 4/10

Overall	A terrific course, held back by an almost unforgivable technical slip-up. Despite this, thoroughly recommended for its immersive environment and terrific hole design.	34/50
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Morar Dunes

McCoist



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, links course	5 th hole, Par 4	71

Location

Very much the right feel for a Scottish links.

Conditions

F*/F* is playable, although links golf probably demands closer to M*/M*. Windy conditions are highly advisable.

Concept

Morar is an authentic slice of village links golf with some outstanding coastal holes sprinkled in between classic old-fashioned fairways and greens. The wild, semi-deserted feel is shared only by classic creations such as Slainte Mhath and Portmarnock and, although the creation is not yet in a completed state, it's already clear that this could easily be the most convincing and natural links course since Burns Old. 9/10

Appearance

The environment is second to none, but there are a handful of problems in shaping and hard edges, a mite too much cloning in the grasses (very obvious when you're in the rough, which is inevitable) and some off-putting banding on the horizon. But the links land looks devastatingly good on the large scale, tightly planted and beautifully coloured. 6/10

Playability

It's a mark of the designer's skill with golf that I was enrapt despite several gameplay problems including severe sound lag and the early-stage lack of hole previews which meant a lot of blind shots and guessing. It's difficult, if not impossible, to be won over by the beach holes and idiosyncrasies like raised green fringes and hidden burns. An utter delight...if the problems are fixed for the final release. 8/10

Challenge

Like all good links courses, much will depend on to what extent you play typically links conditions. With benevolent settings, you'll find it easy to saunter round in the low 60s; but a good dose of gusty wind is a different proposition altogether. Having said that, both the fairways and rough are somewhat generous, so even if it's blowy, good recoveries will be the order of the day. 7/10

Technical

Morar still requires a fair bit of fine-tuning, but there is the core of a stunning course here. After the technical acumen demonstrated with Fullerton, McCoist is expected to bring this up to a Top-50 standard. 7/10

Overall	A traditional and exciting links. A perfect exercise in using simple landscape to best advantage.	37/50
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Mordhel Golf And Country Club

Paul & Leigh Seaman



Description

Fictional, forest course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

The APCD's only (to my knowledge) father and son team have come up with a blinder here. An effective mix of risk/reward, strategy, effective visuals and completely absorbing golf. Sure, it lacks a bit of environment and the endless thin-treed forests make it feel a bit confined, and the short finishing hole is certainly underwhelming, but there's an effective line in hole design and an attention to detail which must be the envy of many other designers. 8/10

Appearance

Nearly flawless. Aside from a couple of visible extrusion edges and some quite sharp bunker lips, this is tranquil and natural woodland with utterly believable lines of play, planting and water features. A joy to behold. 9/10

Playability

The brilliant blend of hole designs and the chance to really attack some greens makes this course thoroughly absorbing and by the time you arrive at the fabulous scenic view off the 18th tee, you'll be almost remorseful that the round is over. The risk/reward options on several holes are perfectly pitched, and the woodland is close enough to catch wayward shots without making you worry about your snap. No wonder this has won a Players' Choice award: it's perfect. 10/10

Challenge

Although the toughest pin positions might cost a few strokes in tricky conditions, on the whole it's too easy to take strokes from this course. The Par 5s, in particular, give away eagles too easily, and a couple of Par holes are also driveable. Good hazarding and the threat of the woodland helps cushion the scores, but most players would be extremely disappointed with a plus par round. 5/10

Technical

The Seamans have done a superb job in improving the APCD standard that some aspire to and the majority of us only dream about. Just a bit of trimming on bunker lips and extrusions would help this course, although it's impressive that clones are not apparent, elevations a subtly crafted, and that so many parts of the course look utterly natural. 9/10

Overall	One of the best woodland courses out there, fictional or otherwise. Often this type of course lacks variety or playability, but no such worries at Mordhel. A must-own.	41/50
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Mornington Peninsula

Joel Geysen & Matt McIntosh



Description

Fictional, ocean course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Inspired heavily by real courses in Australia

Conditions

F*/F* may be a little too fast on some greens. I think M*/M* strikes a good balance with the location.

Concept

Mornington Peninsula was always a classic Links creation – an Australian clifftop links heavily inspired by several other courses in South Australia, with overtones of world-class courses in neighbouring New Zealand. The balance is really key – without overdoing the gimmickry, the coastline or cramming too much into a small space, the designer has created a remarkably lifelike course. Matt's redo is one of his best – letting the beauty of the original speak for itself, while fixing small flaws in the appearance and playability. 9/10

Appearance

With the density of the grasses and gorse increased to much more acceptable standards, and the textures given an overhaul, there is finally a surface appearance to match the realistic elevations and layout that gave Mornington Peninsula its initial credibility. Some tasteful small buildings give it 3D wings as well, even if – broadly speaking – there is little by way of spectacle. 8/10

Playability

The beguiling hole layouts are fun without ever being gimmicky, and a handful of excellent 'trademark' holes are thrown in for good measure: the 11th is deceptively ingenious and a lesson in unpretentious hole design that all architects could learn from, and the 18th is an outstanding finisher. You can't afford to let up for a minute as the terrain is never flat, but it continues to be fantastic stuff. 10/10

Challenge

The original incarnation of Mornington Peninsula was perhaps a mite too easy, and some of the same accusations remain. But Matt has done a great job of stiffening the course by adding extra planting – and the original bunkers, while not always well-placed, are certainly a tough escape. The Par 5s are the weakest, being just a little too easy to beat. 5/10

Technical

The improvement in textures and planting was exactly what this course needed, and the understated work on the buildings is also worthy of note. Viewed from the large scale, there are occasional stretches of land which appear under-used, but a significant improvement is exactly where this was aiming – and it hits the mark. 7/10

Overall

A great, wild course with plenty of outstanding moments along the back nine. Definitely worth a look.

39/50

Mossy Oaks

Douglas & Karen Montgomery



Description

Fictional, parkland course.

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, from green

Concept

Oddly soulless, Mossy Oaks is a thoroughly competent – and in places, imaginative – design and seems to fit together reasonably as it gently descends and climbs a hillside. There are some decent if unthreatening hole designs, but the course follows a fairly regulation layout and seems to be peculiarly forgettable. Not bad, but does little to raise its head above the flock. 6/10

Appearance

The Montgomerys are showing a steady progression with course design, and this new course brings with it a lot more coherence and advanced APCD techniques. There are still some bare areas, and the waterside elevations take something to be desired; otherwise, this is a decent looking release. 7/10

Playability

Not just the course, but each individual hole, fails to really stick in the memory. There are a few unimaginative designs, although I hasten to add that they're not all bad, but there are no particular trademark holes and the course just doesn't do much to stimulate your game. 4/10

Challenge

Undeniably well-pitched, Mossy Oaks draws together a range of hazarding ideas in order to make the most of your journey from tee to green. Thankfully, although water, fairway bunkers, obstructing trees and doglegs are all used, they rarely combine to make a test that is too severe. The greens are generally massive, and you'll need a good judgement of range in order to sink everything in two. Good stuff. 9/10

Technical

Definitely an improvement on any of the predecessors, things such as texture blends and low-level planting all enhance the realism. Yes, there are a few problems that need sorting out, but it's good to see APCD work going in the right direction. What really needs to happen now is for the designers to push the boat out a little: all courses need a little moderation, but Mossy Oaks just has a little too much to be modest about. 6/10

Overall	A good course but one, you sense, that is little more than a filler. Sometimes, even the most conservative of Links players finds themselves crying out for something more innovative.	32/50
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Mountain Creek Golf Club

Normand Gravel



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

For a rookie course, Mountain Creek looks pretty exciting. It does more or less what it says on the tin, but there's some meticulously planned and designed holes, and while obviously fictional there's nothing to offend those who prefer real courses. The Par 5s are most notable: they're genuine, long three-shotters: in fact the whole course is lengthy, although it's all well enough contrived that you won't really notice. 7/10

Appearance

Plenty of care has been lavished on the presentation of this course, the planting of trees, flowers and incidental buildings being particularly notable without taking over the look of the course. Maybe the reliance on stock, the odd choice of colours, and some unconvincing rockwork are a slight downer, but overall this is an impressive first effort. 8/10

Playability

There's something of a restriction on your tee shots here, and long-hitters will be straining at the leash all the way around. Constant long Par 4s and Par 5s nullify some of the strategy and placement too. Despite this, there's a lot of enjoyment to be had: very few unfair tests and a good workout from rough, fairway or bunker. 8/10

Challenge

Despite a long stretch, this course flies by and actually plays rather easy if you hit the snaps. The gentle greens are not too hard to read at all: putts of over 20 feet could be little more than a formality. The planting is actually set a long way back, seeing as we're in woodland, and only the worst of pulled shots will be unrecoverable. 4/10

Technical

At first glance, there's little wrong with Mountain Creek. Repeated plays, though, leave you wanting a bit more. The standard buildings (including *that* same old windmill), panorama and textures are wearisome, and although this is about as good as one can do with stock, it reminds you how much good customisation can do for a course. 7/10

Overall	A great course which almost belies its rating. Don't expect huge amounts of novelty, but you can expect a careful and well-planned design.	34/50
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Mountain Pass G&CC

Pat McGrath



Description

Imaginary, mountain course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Ireland, apparently, although it's hard for the evidence to be convincing.

Conditions

Poor pin placements mean that M^*/M^* is your realistic limit.

Concept

Certainly in touch with the 'Mountain' side of its name, Mountain Pass starts off on virtually sheer rock face before wending down into relative flatlands. It's an extravagant and exciting course, featuring one or two stunning holes (the 10th, 12th and 14th are well worth looking out for). But it's also cluttered, unrealistic and lacks previews, splashscreens and the like. On the whole, it's likely you'll find this more believable than playable. 5/10

Appearance

There have been some sterling efforts made with the grass planting and the course certainly offers more than its fair share of amazing viewpoints. Deep in the nitty-gritty, though, are quite a few problems: some poor edges without blends and a quite ridiculous range of trees, and even then some of them are cloned. A little attention, though, and this could be fabulous. 8/10

Playability

There's some strictly-target golf awaiting you in this environment, and it's certainly worth playing Mountain Pass through at least a couple of times to get the best of all it has to offer. Sometimes, though, it offers little but frustration, with lots of blind and falsified tee shots, and slimline fairways which do not sit happily with all the water carries involved. The amount of hard work, and the long-ish rendering times, do not always incite you to return. 6/10

Challenge

Significant unbalance here, with a visit to the trees often costing two or three strokes, and other holes presenting rather easy birdies. The water is shunted up close to greens, and several bunkers have near-unplayable lies. While I appreciate that this is very much a fantasy course, there is no need for a fantasy scorecard. 6/10

Technical

Mountain Pass does make you wonder if the designer went all out to create something spectacular and exciting without really giving a thought to the need for balanced golf. It would appear that he succeeded on both counts. Several clever techniques are used to great effect, but the result is cluttered and often quite awkward. 6/10

Overall	A claustrophobic and overly heavy-planted course which looks great and has a few standout holes. Often quite hard work, though.	31/50
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Mount Juliet

Jeff Howes Golf Design



Description

Real, woodland course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 4, from fairway

Concept

No, it's not Romeo's favourite pastime. It's actually a heavily-strategic, Jack Nicklaus-designed track in the heart of Ireland. And therein lies the course's biggest weakness: Mount Juliet plays far too artificially to really put across a flavour of the emerald countryside and what great Irish golf could be all about. Sure, it's great championship golf, but it would easily sit happily in the middle of Kentucky, Germany or even the lush parts of Australia. Each and every hole has immaculate design credentials,

particularly the 10th and 16th, but there's just no authenticity: the hallmark of too many Nicklaus creations. 5/10

Appearance

A very clean-cut look to the course should meet with approval, with well-defined textures and planting marking a crystal-clear golfing layout. There's been some great attention to texture rings and the water features, too. But the multitude of bunkers feel like they've been neglected in the polishing status, and there's a lot of inconsistency in the grass planting, particularly in the lack of underplanting. There's a notable absence of course objects, too. 8/10

Playability

Repeated plays will really show up some of the lovely finesses in this design. The use of overhanging, claustrophobic planting is superb, and the open water features play a neatly-balanced counterpoint. It's a shame that the course hangs so heavily on it's bunkering, which – while admittedly well-placed – is overpowering when deep rough and 'dry' bunkers would have had as good an effect. 7/10

Challenge

There's a lot to play for at Mount Juliet. Depending on the surrounding planting, the rough can be anything from direly penal to a mild escape shot, and you'll inevitably play a lot of holes out to par. Expect to pick a couple of shots up at the very beginning and end of the round, but otherwise stick to your guns and a respectable score will result. 8/10

Technical

Team efforts generally tend to bring out the best in links designers, and given the fact that these designers are working professionally, there are a few let-downs here. The lack of environment can certainly be taken as shared blame, but problems with grass planting certainly cannot. 8/10

Overall

A lovely course, and one well worth playing, but you could never claim it does anything to stick its head out from the ranks.

36/50

Mowsbury Golf Club

Lez Marwick



Description

Real, farmland course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Bedfordshire.

Conditions

S*/F* strikes an interesting balance and is recommended by the designer.

Concept

Self-admittedly no more than a small, local course, Mowsbury nevertheless retains much of the charm of Lez's larger-than-life creations, due to the lifelike handling of the mesh and colour scheme, and the extensive background knowledge which makes the course realistic. There are a few nice dogleg Par 4s on the way around, but it's true that to all but the most dedicated fan, much of this course will quickly slip from the memory. 5/10

Appearance

Not much wrong here, and Lez's ability to draw you into a scene remains a big feature. As is often the case, you need to look around to get the very best out of this course: the fences, buildings, ditches and surrounding fields look great. Only a few straight-lined shapes take the edge off. 9/10

Playability

I doubt I'll ever get tired of the 'local' genre of courses – certainly they've almost universally got more charm than your average Tour stop – and when you take the designer's advice of shortening your hitting distance and toughening up the greens, then there is plenty to get excited about at Mowsbury. Sure, it's easy to take the bunkers and dog-legs out of contention, but there's a lot to be said for playing the course the way it was intended. 8/10

Challenge

OK, so even with the limitations above, this isn't a difficult course. I don't generally agree with artificially increasing the greens' difficulty, but in this case, it has been done reasonably sensitively, and it's a designer change that probably is necessary to stop people methodically taking the course to pieces. The woods and ditches provide their own modicum of challenge in any case. 4/10

Technical

Comfortably up to standard from Lez, with much of his hallmark playability. Being able to design innately interesting courses is no mean feat, but Mowsbury has proved that he has the gift, even with raw material that is perhaps less than exciting. 9/10

Overall

Short and municipal, but with life breathed into it by great design, Mowsbury hence makes a realistic choice for competitive play.

35/50

Muirfield Village

Pete Fry drak et al



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, estate course	2 nd hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Ohio		
Conditions		
Plays well on F*/F*		

Concept

Muirfield Village is a classic design, subverting the standard for American country club courses to some extent, and making clever, aggressive use of water in a couple of notable trademark holes. It's been converted for Links over a procedure of steady improvement, and the collaborative aspect to the design is both admirable and rapidly gaining coherence. This is one that no-one has any reason to miss. 10/10

Appearance

Muirfield is displaying a much-improved appearance on previous incarnations: the bluegrass planting has been toned down and properly blended, and the planting is more – but not entirely – free of clones. There are few hard edges around the bunkers, although some of the water features could use more low-level planting and attention, notably on the third hole. There's still an emptiness to the plot which cries out for some extras. 7/10

Playability

Some knockout challenges all the way around set Muirfield Village apart, and there's no denying it's an absolute pleasure to take on the nuances of this course, with delicate shot-shaping requirements and some tricky upturned greens. A few holes, such as the 11th, are worth the price of admission alone, although there is an inconsistent steel-tree problem which dogs others. There are few real courses which offer so many genuine options. 8/10

Challenge

With rough tweaked to be a little harder than you'd find elsewhere, and extensive use of water hazards, there is certainly a sense of foreboding here. Thankfully, it's balanced very well by some excellent balance in the fairways widths and greens that are playable on all settings. It's a course that is set up ideally to punish errant strokes. 8/10

Technical

The continuing efforts to make this a worthwhile course are admirable and are really paying off. The attention to detail, while not perfect, is slowly increasing and the textures and low-level planting are no longer eyesores. The biggest problem, perhaps, is that the course does continue to look very artificial due to the deep colouring and fantastical holes. How this is going to be overcome is not yet clear. 6/10

Overall	A classic course brought to our attention by meticulous refining and improvement.	39/50
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München Nord - Eichenried

Guenter Kujat



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Southern Germany

Conditions

Playable at M*/M*, but only just on some greens.

Concept

This most famous of German courses makes its name with round, target-based fairways, numerous little ponds, and sharply-guarded greens. Not as demanding as some in this genre, thanks to some generous landing areas, it's still out of the norm for parkland courses and the European Tour in generally. It has received a typically thorough and atmospheric conversion from a talented designer, and remains every bit as engaging as the real thing. 9/10

Appearance

The only one of Guenter's courses to receive attention to seam blends, and the resultant effect is clear around the fairways. Unfortunately, the greens haven't been blended, which strikes one as a bit of an afterthought, although in fairness the textures are well enough chosen that it's not a stand-out problem. This theme of inconsistency carries on around the course, with some ponds receiving minute care and attention around the edges and others being left virtually untouched. Given that Munchen is a pretty flat course, though, there's a delightful range of views. 7/10

Playability

I doubt there's another real-life course I enjoy playing so much on a regular basis. The parkland atmosphere is impeccable, and the nature of the golf makes for a thrilling and daring first half, before opening out to a more staid – but no less stimulating – back nine. The hazards, without fault are placed to provoke interesting shot selection, and this applies to the trees – too – which are brought into play on several holes. 9/10

Challenge

The greens can be frustratingly unreadable at times, but they have dated reasonably well, that caveat aside. Elsewhere, the openness of the course means little of a threat, and perhaps I would have liked to see some deep rough rather than the ornamental scattering of grasses. The long holes, particularly, are a bit of a pushover, and it's hardly surprising that this course holds the European Tour record for most Eagles in a round. 6/10

Technical

I'm very pleased with the way this course has aged, and it's not at all obvious that it's some seven years old, given the fresh-looking textures and some sublime attention to small details and 3D work. There are frustrating moments of inconsistency on the part of the designer when a more rounded result could have made this his *piece de resistance*. 7/10

Overall

If you're going to own just one of Guenter's excellent German courses, make it this one. Endlessly replayable, and good-looking in a moody sort of way.

38/50

Murhof GC

Tom Wagner



Description

Real, parkland course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from fairway

Concept

A nice and unassuming conversion of a real course. Credit to the designer for what he's done, but the course itself isn't much cop. It's a pleasant way to pass a few minutes but is seriously lacking in innovative or original hole design. It's on flat parkland with generous fairways and an aura about the course that it's never really going to get you into any serious trouble. It's not impossible to conceive that some people would want more. 4/10

Appearance

For a 2001 design, this looks pretty good, although it suffers as a result of having been built from stock. There are a few harsh texture edges, and a quite a bit of cloned and/or random planting if you look hard enough, which does detract from the play. Tee-box extrusions are another (unsurprising) difficulty. I would also like to have seen more custom objects, such as ballwashers or even a clubhouse. But there are some nice views available, and the designer has kept the course looking natural, so credit there. 4/10

Playability

Murhof makes for pretty brainless gameplay. There's little to challenge you, and even on the hardest difficulty settings you shouldn't need to engage the little grey cells too hard. This is perhaps a course to introduce your mother or girlfriend to the game of Links. They'd probably find it hard. 4/10

Challenge

Sadly, this is much, much too easy. A couple of greens are testing, but the fairways are almost impossible to miss and hazards almost incidental to the line of play. Even on the tough difficulty setting, you should be able to easily beat 70; on the easy ones a 59 wouldn't be off the cards. 1/10

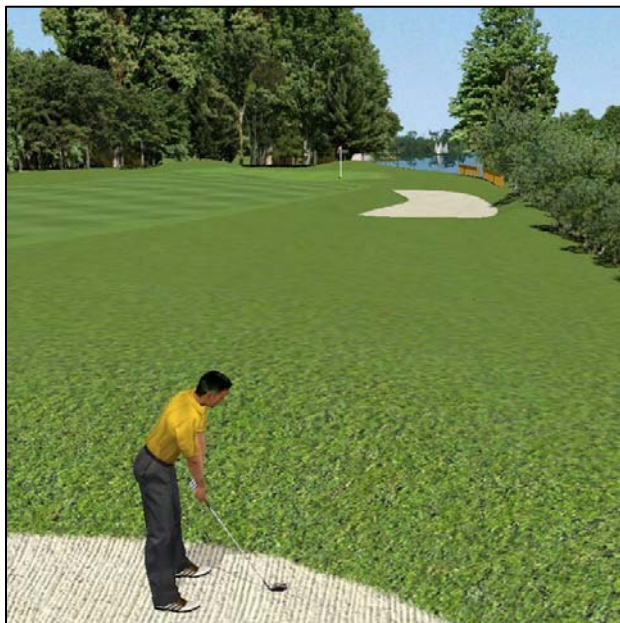
Technical

The designer has all the basics down pat, and what's here look very competent; there's just some refinement to be done now. Some shape changes, some fine-tuning to the planting and easing off the green elevations would come first. And, for heavens' sake, some way (real or imaginary) of making the course harder. 4/10

Overall	OK in the execution, but fails to grab the attention of the player due to lack of challenge and attention to detail.	17/50
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Myrtle Beach Golf Resort (North Course)

Scott Osgood



Description

Real, lakeside compilation course.

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 4, from fairway bunker.

Concept

Now this is more like it! A daring, rollicking, make-or-break compilation course with superb trademark holes all the way through. This set of 18 hold together much more nicely, and indeed you could almost believe that you were playing a fully conjoined course. OK, so it's occasionally a little bit rough around the edges, and the endless target-golf and shotmaking can become wearisome, but there's the extra edge here that perhaps the other Myrtle Beach courses lack. 7/10

Appearance

The designer has brought a hit-and-miss approach to this course. In places it looks quite natural: the planting and terraining are both well done. Elsewhere, though, there's some odd views and hard transitions, the planting is an bizarre mix, and the choice of textures doesn't always suit the idea. Perhaps the saving grace is a sprinkling of slightly offbeat 'extras', including a golfing four-ball, which don't grate on the eye like they have done at so many other courses. 6/10

Playability

Shot-shaping and accuracy enthusiasts will have their fill here, and for all but the links purists this should be great fun. It's addictive, engaging and – most of all – fun golf. Overkill? Well...yes, occasionally, but don't take it too seriously, and you should have a riot. 9/10

Challenge

Only the most aggressive or the most conservative will score well here. Whatever, you do, don't try to toe the line, or you'll inevitably be caught out by crafty hazards or unexpected heavy rough. Scores could vary by some way either side of par, but that's not necessarily any bad thing. 7/10

Technical

In some ways, the weak link. There are just too many errors here – particularly from Dyna Cam angles – which can detract from your game. Water features so prominently that it really should be better cared for, and so many features look too much like a mesh edge to be realistic. I've seen far worse on an APCD course, but I'm not convinced by this one. 5/10

Overall	Some brilliant tactical golf, let down slightly by some unconvincing presentation.	34/50
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Myrtle Beach Golf Resort (North Carolina Course)

Scott Osgood



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, parkland compilation course	16 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
North Carolina, natch.		
Conditions		
The pins aren't badly placed – M*/M* is quite playable.		

Concept

OK, let's make sure our facts are straight. There are three compilation courses in the Myrtle Beach 'complex', including two courses christened 'North', and they're pretty much all worth owning in one way or another. The North Carolina course, in some ways, is the weak link, being – as it is – a wider-spanning compilation course. It suffers from the Compilation Course flaw in that there's precious little continuity, and in addition there are some pretty uninspired holes by the standard of the Ottawa or Alberta compilations. The 18th marshland hole is an absolute cracker, but everything else is distinctly less uninspired. 4/10

Appearance

A decent effort, but the grass planting is sparse, and there's a few odd choices of texture rings and a few extrusion marks remain. Some of the bunkers look a bit steeply sculpted, and there's an unavoidable feeling that the landscape just doesn't fit together very well. 5/10

Playability

This is slow and steady golf, and I was very surprised that it lacks the fizz and sparkle of many compilation courses, including its sisters in the Myrtle Beach canon. While the designer's intentions in not being too outrageous are fully appreciated, the by-the-numbers play from hole to hole is stilted and not helped by a selection of holes that do not offer choice. 5/10

Challenge

Myrtle Beach doesn't take many prisoners, and breaking par would be considered an excellent effort. Despite being relatively flat, the course places hazard after hazard in your path, and follows that up with some determinedly hard-to-read greens. It's not unfair, but it is tough, and it might just be that one factor that keeps you coming back time and time again. 7/10

Technical

The North Carolina course is well constructed enough: planting and gradients are done with a little panache and still look very presentable. Just occasionally does a little ham-handedness show through, when you see slightly outsized objects or grasses with insufficient density. 6/10

Overall	Perhaps the least enjoyable of the Myrtle Beach courses. It should nevertheless be kept for the challenge, the completism, and possibly the appeal of the oddball 18th.	27/50
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Myrtle Beach Golf Resort (South Course)

Scott Osgood



Description

Real, parkland compilation course.

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

A happy intermediary between its brethren, the South Course doesn't quite have the immediacy of the North Course nor the steep challenge of the Carolina course. Instead, it's a lush combination of the two with the emphasis on accuracy from the tee and a convincing lowlands wood environment. Certain aspects are a touch above, and any screenshot such as that on the left are always very special. In terms of an all-round balance, it might well be the best course of the three. It's certainly a fitting

completion to an excellent and varied trilogy. 8/10

Appearance

Many of the problems that dogged the North Course have been cleared up: the planting in particular is smooth, dense and well-varied. The texture choice has been changed (a creditworthy move, when it would have been so easy to keep them the same), although it has to be said that the new selection will not be to everyone's taste. There's also some iffy bunker lip work which doesn't do close-up views any favours. Again, it's not great, but it could be a lot worse. 6/10

Playability

While the strategy is generally more straightforward here at the South Course, there's plenty of opportunities and risk/reward to keep the player involved and the overall game most certainly isn't quite as dull as at the North Carolina Course. The course drags worryingly around the turn, and you reach the final hole without particular highlights in mind. It's probably best to play this one at matchplay or skins to keep interest levels high. 6/10

Challenge

This is the easiest of the Myrtle Beach trilogy, especially the shorter holes, and the generous landing areas and flattish greens will give in to a competent player. Play sensibly and it's no Devil's Island, but thankfully no pushover either. 6/10

Technical

The technical work from Scott Osgood has always been of decent quality without ever being blow-your-head-off terrific. There's room for improvement still in the textures and fine detail, and some more consistency could be gained by designing a set of 18 rather than compiling. That's not to say that it's not good. It is, but not great. 6/10

Overall	A fitting completion to one of the better trilogies available for Links.	32/50
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Nautilus Bay

Adriaan Maarschalk



Description

Fictional, links course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 4, from fairway

Concept

This is a great links course in a very British moorland setting, despite its actual locale of South Africa. Each hole cuts cleverly cuts between mounded and extraordinarily well-planted rough and the landscape acts as a more convincing hazard than the bunkers. Perhaps it's not archetypal links golf, but it's certainly a good round of eighteen. 7/10

Appearance

The look of this course is almost flawless. The low-level grass planting to create the rough is spot on, the textures are well chosen, and the customisation is well-done but doesn't subtract from your enjoyment of the round. For a links course, there's a surprising amount to look at. 9/10

Playability

Because of the constant elevation changes (the whole course lies on the side of a hill), Nautilus Bay calls upon you to bring every shot in the bag. Each hole offers a genuine challenge in the options it presents, and there's a very real feeling of making progress and achievement. The greens are superb: challenging without being unrealistic. Golf is the real focus here, with very few distractions, and it makes for an extremely successful and rewarding round of golf. Replayability guaranteed! 9/10

Challenge

To become a real links, this course needs to deepen the bunkers and toughen the deep rough. Both are too easy, consequently it's too easy to break par. Nautilus Bay isn't a pushover by any means, but some better hazards would make it a course to treasure that would really push you for birdies. 6/10

Technical

The APCD work on this course is brilliant in its understatement. The customisation is apt, and the texture blends superb. The planting is amazing, filling acres of heathland with nary a sign of a clone. Elevation work is utterly convincing. Perhaps there might be the occasional stretched texture around the extruded tee boxes, and you're never quite sure whether you're cliff-top or at sea level, but these are only a very minor quibble. 9/10

Overall

A lovely course. Perhaps not 100% authentic links, and the challenge suffers as a result, but still very much worth a half hour of anyone's time.

40/50

Neptune's Playground

Bill Misener



Description

Fictional, ocean course.

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

The forerunner of many a coastal course, Neptune's Playground is relatively functional and believable in its design. It's not particularly tropical: the granite-coloured cliffs could easily be mainland, and only the palm trees are a clue. Hole design tends to be dominated by carries over the cliffs and coastal inlets rather than any clever constructions, and there's surprisingly little coherence or location to the course as a hole, the latter being enhanced by the disappointing lack of a panorama. 5/10

Appearance

Surprisingly good planting at all levels is both encouraging visually and acts as a decent hazard also. The textures are less inspiring and texture repeats are commonplace. As a whole, the course is lacking in visual candy, which is a shame in a coastline environment when you see what has been done elsewhere. 5/10

Playability

The course can become a bit of a mystery ride thanks to some obscured views and far too many blind shots. It's also annoying that the deepest rough is marked as hazard and swallows up just too many balls. The sound is somewhat too loud and becomes irritating too quickly. This isn't the worst course in the world, but a round here pales in comparison to – say – Atlantic Point or Pebble Beach. And not just because of the lack of visual excitement. 4/10

Challenge

Despite a deduction for the preponderance of blocked views (I can't remember many holes where I had a clear view of the green on my approach), Neptune's Playground is pretty fair. The ocean might swallow up one or two balls, but not too many, and the bunkering is thankfully restrained. Some careful use of elevations ensures a decent opportunity to play your shots, at least. 7/10

Technical

Not too many obvious flaws, but then again there's little to get excited about. I'm not saying this course has been rushed; rather that there is a distinct lack of those moments of APCD cleverness that make you catch your breath and reach for the screenshot button. Even poor courses have their moments; Neptune's Playground doesn't seem too determined to stick its neck out ahead of them. 6/10

Overall

A goodish coastline course, but unlikely to stick around as many people's favourites due to its lack of individuality.

27/50

Newbury & Crookham

John Brooks



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, forest course	7 th hole, Par 4	69

Location

Berkshire

Conditions

Quality control on the greens is mixed, and I'd stick with M*/S*

Concept

A typically cosy and clean course from John Brooks, Newbury is one of England's oldest courses, and the age is evident in the way the holes chart their course over and around the hillside, with few of the modern gimmicks. It works extremely well, and the difficulty gradient has dated very nicely, substituting good fairway shape and trees for out-and-out hazarding. Several raised greens dissipate the need for too many bunkers. 7/10

Appearance

Almost an example of John's stock in trade, the course has a few good aspects (clean textures, no obvious mesh flaws) combined with a few old problems: the panorama being a fraction too low and some low-res planting. The treeline has been very well managed to look both authentic and reasonably clone free, but the course needs something special to lift it above the merely average. 5/10

Playability

Like all John's courses, there is an inestimable sense of locale and intimacy that you just don't get from the fictional creations. A few extras – location-specific sound planting, a good Readme and hole previews, and perhaps even a recognisable landmark or two – would be a perfect finishing touch, but even without them, it's definitely possible to picture the real thing. 7/10

Challenge

A pleasantly stiff test, this one, especially given the shortage of Par 5 holes. The front nine, in particular, use the hillside excellently and rare will be the opportunity to set up a genuine putt for birdie. There are a few more target-driven holes on the inward half, and it's not inconceivable that a shot or two will be picked up, but forget about trying to walk all over this course. 8/10

Technical

A routine but standard technique has allowed John to turn out a succession of enjoyable courses. However, there are continually problems with pin numbers and positioning, and it certainly feels as if the greens receive less attention than the landscaping as a whole. 5/10

Overall	A course where it's possible to appreciate and enjoy the original challenge. With some shine on the Links port, it could be superb.	32/50
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New Stoney Run Golf Club

Ed Balaun



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, from dry river bed.

Concept

Easily the most coherent of the designer's fictional courses, Stoney Run is an authentic, if slightly derivative championship-style course. Reminiscent of Pinehurst and Sawgrass by turns, the designer's ambition is matched with a finely trimmed – even manicured – layout that plays home to convincingly styled holes. The likes of the waste areas and path network are all solid convincers: oddly, though, it doesn't quite all click if you are playing with a big, post-Mod hitter. 7/10

Appearance

The textures are of a very high order and don't tile or clash to a noticeable extent. Planting, too, has been shaken up and customised and is most convincing: the splashes of colour being welcome distraction without screaming to be noticed. Although the edges of the hazards have had attention granted them, they do look significantly older than the course as a whole. 7/10

Playability

It would be fair to say that the course holds a lot of appeal. Shot options are granted on many holes, and there is a subtle strategy to playing the course well rather than a sequence of do-or-die challenges. The course's general demeanour holds up well, despite the lack of any ambient sound. 9/10

Challenge

The main problem is with the Mod. Not only does it allow the player to circumvent some of the course's hazards, it shows up how those elevations were placed to foul the player in the first place. Even disregarding the hazard placement, a course like this really requires tougher rough to be a reasonably testing opponent. 5/10

Technical

Even today, Ed Balaun's work would receive credit for its imagination and attention to detail. Perhaps it's fair, then, to credit New Stoney Run with a high mark. It's missing some of the modern niceties, but the overall work is of a high order for its time. 7/10

Overall	A cute and coherent creation, standing clear of the designer's other fantasy courses in terms of sheer realism.	<i>35/50</i>
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New York Memorial Golf Club

William Kline



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

New York, quite transparently.

Conditions

The greens haven't aged well, and S*/S* is as fast as I'd take them.

Concept

Solidly imbuing itself with the Central Park atmosphere and location, New York Memorial is a cleanly-clipped and competently laid out course with some typical parkland holes – neither too threatening or memorable. While the landscaping is no doubt true-to-life, it doesn't always make for stimulating golf, and the whole course is sadly a little forgettable. 5/10

Appearance

The most immediately outstanding problem is the poor choice of textures, which come in a mixture of colours and pretty much clash universally. The planting is lacking in resolution and attention to detail, and the bunkers are very oddly sculpted: certainly not in a style that would suit this location or type of course. The cityscape panorama, though, is lovely and genuinely contributes to the feel and atmosphere of the course. 5/10

Playability

A refreshingly gimmick-free round certainly suits this flat parkland locale, and the designer has done well not to blow the designs into disproportionality or silliness. Some dated greens aside, there is a pleasant range of sights and sounds here in Central Park, and the golf is peculiarly apt. 8/10

Challenge

With an overly flat terrain, readable greens and some wide open and accommodating fairways, it's easy to shoot low here. The back nine is stiffer than the first, but the overriding feel is that this is a public course rather than a club one: the positioning of hazards and rough areas punishes the wayward rather than challenging the accuracy. 4/10

Technical

A lot of good work has gone into the creation of custom objects and textures. One can't help but feel, though, that it's not nearly enough. Too many sparse regions and too many flat fairways are crying out to have time lavished upon them. Quite a few bunkers look hastily extruded and the lips haven't been carefully sculpted. The sound, too, could be a lot more immersive in a city environment. Luckily, there are no technical flaws that impinge directly on play: this course's overriding strong suit. 6/10

Overall	A modest layout for a tribute course, but there is very much a 'right' feeling here.	28/50
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Nordic Open

Stefan Molz



Description

Real, farmland course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 5, from fairway.

Concept

From the first tee, you can tell Nordic Open is a little bit special. The proliferation of custom tournament objects, the atmospheric farm-style buildings, the scrubby grassland and stubby trees are all truly suggestive of a cold Scandinavian course. Indeed, I can think of few courses with as much of a convincing environment. The hole designs befit; there are decent overtures of European tournament holes, with the emphasis on fairways and greens, and the closing pair of Par 5s are delightfully

reminiscent of Wentworth. A really solid effort. 9/10

Appearance

You could look for quite a long time before finding anything obviously out of setting here. Despite the use of standard, low-res textures, the course has been made to look exceedingly convincing with much customisation, restrained but effective planting, and an excellent panorama. Surprisingly special. 9/10

Playability

‘Fun but unmemorable’ could be the overriding opinion here. While Nordic Open serves up a good atmosphere, there’s simply not enough variety in the holes to maintain your interest, and the round drags a little before the final stretch. There’s little by the way of trademark holes to engage and hold the imagination, which is a shame. 6/10

Challenge

Like many European courses, this hasn’t converted well into Links. The Par 5s are too easily reachable in two; the Par 3s a bit of a cop-out, to be frank. A 4-round tournament might well result in scores of 20-under or less, and I would like to see this beefed up with some tougher tees or narrower fairways. 4/10

Technical

You can’t deny the passion that’s gone into the multifarious 3D customisation. The tournament objects work in the course’s favour, as opposed to – say – The K Club, where they just look like clutter. But, on the flip side, the stock textures are disappointing, and at least once a vast stretch of nothing reveals itself as poor course architecture. 6/10

Overall	Worth having as one of the few Scandinavian courses on the market. A decent if rather forgettable round.	<i>34/50</i>
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Northern Dunes

Mike Jones



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, links course	10 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
The name and readme both hint at Northern England.		
Conditions		
M*/S* is as fast as you realistically need to be going.		

Concept

A brilliant coastal links at its inception, and still fairly impressive now, Northern Dunes probably holds its place in history as the first (and only?) APCD crossover course: that which was created by an amateur and adopted (presumably for some payment) by Microsoft for official releases. The course design still holds up incredibly well today, even if we've seen Mike Jones re-work the theme three or four times. The hazarding and use of rough is absolutely what a links course demands, and the whole package – even if it does become dated – should be regarded as a celebration of how courses can be created. 10/10

Appearance

Well, it doesn't look all it did, that's for sure. The textures are terribly dated, and there are a fair few clones – not in the grasses but in the gorse and bush planting. But there's a lot still to love. The coastline has retained its authenticity, even over many subsequent imitators, and the colour set is awesome – a proper evocation of authentic grassy links. 7/10

Playability

With the emphasis on outstanding course design, as you'd expect from any Mike Jones course, Northern Dunes has lost little of its panache. Certain holes – including nearly the whole stretch from the 9th through to the 14th – are gripping and intense: it's not nicknamed 'the Open' for nothing. Excellent natural sound effects usher you on the way, although I found the hole previews to be somewhat opaque and uninformative. 8/10

Challenge

Regardless of the green speed, this course has retained all its challenging qualities extremely well, which is a sure indication of the skill of the designer. With the rough providing some horrendous lies, and the pot bunkers usually only offering a 100-yard escape at most – this mirrors the links golf that we are used to: a trait which can't be put to many fictional courses.9/10

Technical

It's definitely old-fashioned by the hyper-realistic standards of today's APCD, but there is still enough at Northern Dunes to put it years ahead of all its contemporaries. Ignore the hard-edged textures and somewhat awkward planting if you can, and admire the effortlessly-neat coastline and beautiful compilation that marked it out as something very special. 7/10

Overall	A must-own, despite its age, this is perhaps the course that did more to keep the Links genre alive than any other.	41/50
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North Surface Club

Doug and Karen Montgomery



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, mountain course	11 th hole, Par 4	72

Location

There are no clues from the designers, but the woods and undergrowth have the faint ring of Canadian courses.

Conditions

Stick to M*/M* - a few pins don't like playing faster.

Concept

A somewhat inconsistent course with nothing as really defining as a location, North Surface is definitely at its best when the hole design is simple and effective and the designer's exuberant instincts are restrained. Unfortunately, this doesn't happen often enough, and there are too many holes over unfeasible elevations, long Par 4s (the course clocks in far too lengthy for what it is), and too little attention to the features that really make for a memorable course. 3/10

Appearance

Some of the grass-level planting is very nice, but that's really about the limit of it. The bunkers are often simple extrusions out of flat ground and the textures are unremarkable. The trees have plenty of cloning and the elevations have been handled very poorly for a course that it trying to sell its credentials in that way. In the grand scale, it looks OK, but it does little to show progress from previous courses and may even be a step back. 4/10

Playability

There's too little here to focus the interest on, bar some extreme and quite silly elevations from time to time. The course feels worryingly flat (in every sense) and sterile. Unobjectionable for a couple of rounds, but too little thereafter. 4/10

Challenge

With the hole length stretched back to championship standard lengths, there's a good, stern test here, even if the front half is distinctly more problematic than the rather lacklustre closing nine. Granted, it's artificial, but the challenges are well-presented, and if you want a course where Par feels like a worthwhile number, this one's hard to beat. 8/10

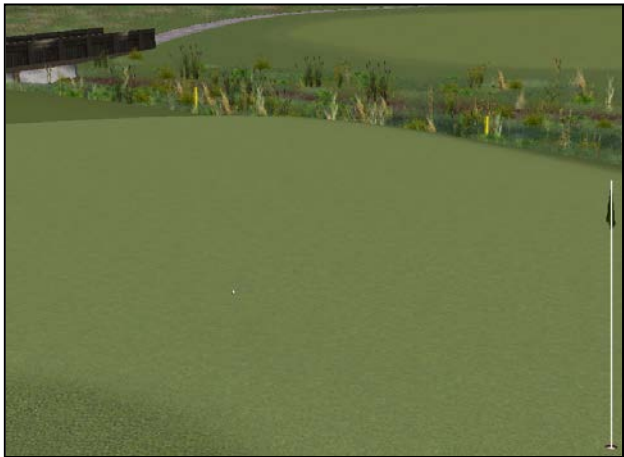
Technical

Too many eccentricities and inconsistencies here, especially since we've seen better work in the past from the same designers. The fact that the Montgomeries' courses are exceedingly well play-tested is definitely a point in favour, and this – among other courses – could be comfortably improved by just keeping things simple. 4/10

Overall	Fairly unremarkable; an elevated course where the elevations are one of its worst features.	23/50
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North Woods GC

Jacob Seersholm



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, woodland course	4 th hole, Par 5	72
Location	It's reasonable to assume Denmark, given the designer's form and home.	
Conditions	M*/M* plays well. Anything faster might be hard work.	

Concept

North Woods takes up the mantle pretty much where Jacob's Creek left off. The aspects of target golf are still present, although this course is more hilly parkland than low wetland. Having said that, it's unremarkably unmemorable and reliant on dogleg golf which doesn't vary enough. The back nine is a good test, but you increasingly get the impression that the designer has tried one novelty too many, especially after playing the disappointing closing hole. I can't for the life of me understand why a Par 3 18th is deemed to be a good idea. 7/10

Appearance

The strengths of this course are the choice of texture set, and a lovely gentle hand with the blends. The low-level planting's great, too; the unusual heather-like grasses help the course to stand out in the memory. More problematic, however, are the unlikely landscaping, which never is believable, and a panorama you may have trouble believing is a good fit. 7/10

Playability

Jacob has generally drawn a careful line between the open European Tour style of course, and an American target style, which should in theory appeal to those on both sides of the Atlantic. But there's a certain amount of indecision about which way to go here: it also brings home some of the worst aspects of both types of course. Several semi-blind tee shots don't really help, either. 6/10

Challenge

Hazards rule the roost here. They've been carefully placed, and frankly it's not difficult to believe that they've been too carefully placed. Between them, some fairly damning rough, and several inconvenient trees, they're bound to cost strokes. This is offset to some extent by generous and flattish fairways, but there's no escaping the fact that this is a pretty tough course. 6/10

Technical

This just doesn't match up to Jacob's Creek, for me. That was a beautiful and delicate course: this seems a little more heavy-handed and landscaping such as the smooth cliff-edges just aren't convincing. The designer's strengths in manipulating the surface are clear, but a little bit more time paid to the golf would not hurt. 6/10

Overall	Suffering a little from 'difficult second course' syndrome. Admittedly, it's not the designer's second course, but it is difficult.	32/50
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Nurubian Nights

'Ahab'



Description

Imaginary, concept course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, from tee

Concept

'Delightfully insane' tends to be the consensus judgement on Nurubian Nights. Straddling the very fine line between extravagance and insanity, it purports to be set at night in crude oil-saturated Indonesian lowlands. The whole thing is floodlit and crammed full of statues, relics, temples and a whole host of oddball locals. And yet, despite the oil-pool hazards and the mosaic-ringed dry-mud greens, there's a reasonably normal course lurking in the background. The purists will steer well clear in the long run, but

everybody will get at least one good roller-coaster ride out of this one. 10/10

Appearance

Impossible to assess by normal standards, naturally: the depth and extent of customisation is unparalleled. Much of it is done surprisingly naturally and with good resolution – the 'green' texture is excellent, even if it certainly isn't green. Some of the panorama is at a slightly nausea-inducing angle, though, and things do tend to be blurry in the depths of the oily rough. Like the course itself, very much a ragbag. 8/10

Playability

Wonderful sound and atmospherics back up the theme to the extent where it's very difficult to have a miserable time, even if you're playing badly. The layout of the course is the main frustration, and to be honest it could have been easily avoided by creating fewer blind shots and even some more target-golf in keeping with the intentions behind the course – wouldn't it be natural to expect a very hit-and-hope approach on a course built on this sort of land? 6/10

Challenge

The deep oily stuff is an absolute killer. Find a bad lie here and a chip-out is frequently the best solution. Bogeys are almost predictable, particularly – and with a distinct lack of irony – on the 13th. Still, this isn't the type of course that a right-thinking player would tackle without a Mulligan or two in tow. 5/10

Technical

This is deserving of full marks if only for the labour of love which has spawned it. It's one of those rare courses that has opened up new dimensions in what could be done with the APCD, given a certain degree of frivolousness. Sadly, it's not yet quite perfect: a little final tweaking and some improved textures might just produce the miracle. 9/10

Overall	A terrific fantasy course held up with lots of imagination, customisation and dedication.	38/50
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Oakland Hills North

Steve Avery



Description

Real, estate course

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 4

Par

70

Location

Michigan

Conditions

M*/M* is playable with care.

Concept

The little brother to the South course, really in every sense, the North course is not without its tricks and turns, but otherwise plays as a fairly standard club course. If the fairways were wider and the deep rough less intimidating then there might be little to redeem this course. The conversion is functional but almost outstandingly plain. It stand as a reasonably convincing round, but no more. 6/10

Appearance

To be honest, the design of the North course looks a little too functional and not refined enough. There are none of the little touches incorporated which make many courses so realistic and a pleasure to look at; the planting for instance, seems hurried and the minimum necessary. The lack of the custom objects found on the South confirms that this course seems to have been rushed out a little too quickly. 4/10

Playability

While the course doesn't exactly go all-out on novelties, there is more than enough to keep the player interested in the form of subtle use of elevations and some realistic demands from the tee. The variety of hole lengths is a definite plus, but the unconvincing locality an undeniable minus. 6/10

Challenge

For a second-choice course, this is tough. The rough areas have been put together without imaginations, and the rough texture has properties assigned to it that will punish your ball when you miss the landing areas. Most greens are raised and heavily bunkered; thankfully the putting gradients are pretty gentle. Despite some underwork, this course can be a bit of a beast. 7/10

Technical

My problem here is not with APCD competence – we know Steve Avery is a first-class designer. It's more with the undeniable aura of hurriedness surrounding the course, which really dispels the joy of playing golf and frankly hasn't dated at all well. More care and attention would turn this into a course worthy of serious attention rather than an occasional round with one eye on the TV. 5/10

Overall	A little too rushed. Perfectly practical but not really any polish.	28/50
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Oakland Hills South

Steve Avery



Description

Real, estate course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from bunker

Concept

Open, austere, immaculately presented and very American, Oakland Hills South is overtly a premier Championship course. The course has many shining features: not least stunning trademark Par 4s on both 8 and 16 and an open playing area without too much deep rough, which inspires creative shotmaking. The massive white clubhouse building looks out over the course and sets a very 'country club' tone. Most satisfactory. 7/10

Appearance

For the most part, a superb reconstruction. Textures are appropriately clipped, and the little terrain changes that help make the challenge are well-handled. Perhaps the trees could use a little under-planting, but otherwise the designer has really gone out of his way to make this distinctive appearance. 8/10

Playability

This is the sort of real-life course which you might think would not translate well to Links. You'd be quite wrong. Despite the lack of variation in the pars and lengths of holes, Oakland Hills is forever throwing up a new challenge. You'll not play the same shot twice, whether it's through clever use of the landscape, off-beat fairway design, or some testing greens, and the round simply flies by. 9/10

Challenge

My test-round statistics speak for themselves. 16 pars, one birdie, one bogey. In short, this course is supremely well judged. I doubt there's another course on the game capable of giving such an apt and well-pitched challenge. For this to be a Real course conversion is testament to Steve Avery's skill. 10/10

Technical

Very fine. Perhaps a little sparse on the planting, as mentioned above, and some bunkers look a bit deeply extruded, but the work that has gone into the 3D clubhouse is impressive. The finely-tuned elevations make the course, and stop it from being the boring open-landed hack that so many similar courses have become. 8/10

Overall

For a course that is sometimes slated as second-rate in real life, this has really excelled and is right up there with the best of them.

42/50

Oakmont CC

Scott Lewin



Description

Real, farmland course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 4, from fairway

Concept

Old-fashioned, austere and enormously testing, Oakmont lost a lot of its bite when fashioned by Microsoft, but this rendition has set a brilliant new standard in many senses. Regaining much of its estate-land charm, deep bunkers and the legendarily difficult greens, this is glorious-looking and one of the most genuinely-testing real-life courses. If it wasn't good before, it most certainly is now! 10/10

Appearance

The striking, almost sepia colour tones are impressive from the first tee and do something special to set the course apart. The bunker-work (as it has to be, on a course where sand is emphasised) is beautiful and evidence of much work. Two minor aspects spoiled an otherwise oil-painting of a course: the washed out panorama and the network of drainage ditches, which looked 'scooped out' and entirely unnatural. 9/10

Playability

It may be tough, but it's almighty fun. The elevations work in every shot, from the blind tee shots, to approaches needing careful adjustment, to greens which are a difficult read and often sloped away from the player. It could have been tough, exhausting stuff, but thankfully, there's much more to keep your eye on than just strenuous golf. 10/10

Challenge

Probably THE toughest real course in Links, without exception (or misdesigns). The bunkers, the heavy rough and – of course – the greens will all do their best to gobble up strokes; birdies are a welcome change, and with only two Par 5s on this 70 course, you shouldn't expect too many of them. 6/10

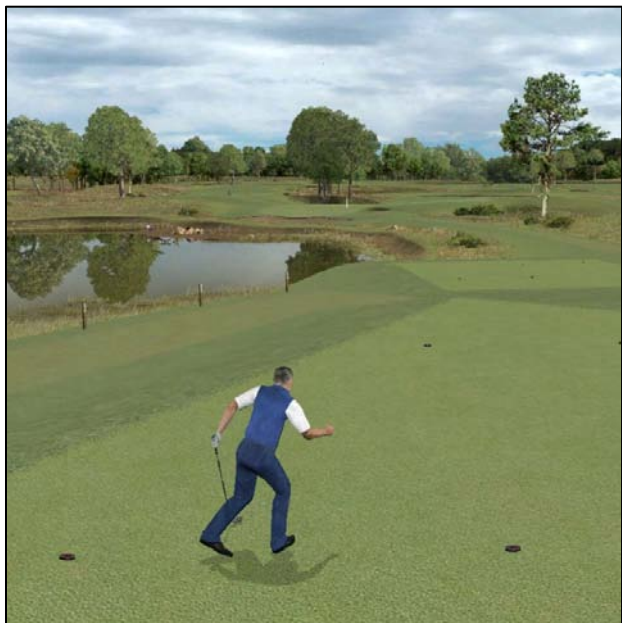
Technical

Very, very close to being top notch and yet another superb first release. The use of colour, textures and high-resolution planting is brilliant; there's a beautiful clubhouse and lots of attention to the small detail in most parts, although some will be touched up for future releases. Oakmont has certainly never been made to feel this real. 9/10

Overall	Definitely among the must-haves as far as championship venues go. The trademarks of Oakmont have been brought strikingly to life.	44/50
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Oklahoma Crossings

Johnny Holland



Description

Fictional, heathland course.

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Golf on an Indian reservation? Well, not quite, but thanks to Johnny Holland's fervent imagination this is as about as close as you'd get. The Native American theme runs closely and passionately on this beautiful track, which is set on apparent wasteland, with the city apparent on the horizon. It's a brave decision to base the course on landscape that is mostly fairway; unplayable lies are few and far between, even with some acutely-placed trees and drying-up mudholes. Most of all, an astute sense

of what constitutes good golf more than makes up for the lack of immediate scenery and the (mis-)perception that the course may be quite easy. 9/10

Appearance

I can't honestly say I'm fond of the speckly textures; the contrast between foreground and middle-ground was far too obvious. But the blends are utterly seamless, and the beauty of the water features and custom planting is up there with the best. 9/10

Playability

You're generally assured of a good, if not very good, round at one of Johnny Holland's creations. Oklahoma Crossings is an understated pinnacle of his art. Every shot will make you think, even if you don't realise that you're having to think. There's a mix of genuinely convincing strategies, and yet the course as a whole is never less than believable. Perfect. 10/10

Challenge

Now, it has to be said that Oklahoma Crossings will never win any difficulty prizes. But don't go getting the ideas that it's a pushover, just because it's mostly fairway and offers you many bail-out areas. This course would still lend itself very easily to matchplay, as bogies are rare and the real winners will be forced to shoot under par. 7/10

Technical

Even given the odd close-up view of some of the textures, the construction of this course cannot be faulted. It's rare indeed that someone can bring such a sense of location to an APCD design, but in this instance Johnny Holland has done just that. Such things as the water features and the few scrubby grasses are done with a precision and sense of style which has not been surpassed. 10/10

Overall	The designer's masterwork. Many Johnny Holland courses are an acquired taste. This one, quite simply, should just be acquired.	45/50
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Old Cypress GC (East Course)

Jon Weinrieb



Description

Fictional, marshland course

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

A stunning creation of a down-at-heel and almost fantastical wasteland-like environment, Old Cypress lacks nothing in terms of ingenuity. Holes are artfully protected by the trademark Cypress trees, as well as swampy water features and carefully used bunkers. Everything from the hole previews to the customised course features radiates sheer class. Quite simply one of the most memorable courses around. 10/10

Appearance

Everything is here, from perfect textures to the little grassy knots that litter the course. So much has been customised in both 2D and 3D and even when you're lost in the undergrowth the surroundings leave you lost for words. So many of the little hallmarks and bugs of the APCD have quite simply been erased in a remarkable achievement of creation. 10/10

Playability

There's so much to do at Old Cypress and every hole in its own way is distinctive and memorable. In some ways, it's preferable to get yourself into trouble in order to get the most out of the course. It's not target golf, and it's not heathland golf, but it's somewhere in between. And, needless to say, it works perfectly. 10/10

Challenge

Old Cypress is a short course. Sometimes, short doesn't necessarily equate to easy. Sadly, here, that is not really the case. Particularly around the turn, it's pretty easy to pick up strokes and the Par 5s are all reasonably reachable. Perhaps some more acute hazarding on the target holes would help just to push the scores up to a satisfactory level. 6/10

Technical

To have the patience and APCD skills required to create a masterpiece such as this takes something very special. Flawless and impeccable at the same time. 10/10

Overall	If only the challenge had been pitched correctly, this could have been a world-beater. Still easily in the all-time top ten, though. A fantastic, unique and off-beat course with immense repeatability.	46/50
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Olympia Fields CC North Course

Ken Boltz



Description

Real, woodland/parkland course.

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 3, on green.

Concept

Ouch! Olympia Fields gives nothing away. Minute fairways and uncompromisingly heavy rough make this a championship course to be feared. It's been put together for Links with a pleasant if unspectacular style, but the overall impression is of impending punishment; it's no easy ride for the poor golfer. The shortage of Par 5s means a lack of variety and the back nine are getting close to sadism in their inadequate target areas. 6/10

Appearance

Passable, if sometimes stretched textures, but only functional (at best) blending make this course look a bit hard edged from the first tee. You've got to really keep your eyes open to spot the course's beauties, and they're mostly off the beaten track. Check out the woodlands and ditches to see some really smart landscaping. 7/10

Playability

The insistence on deep rough is out-of-character for this sort of the course and makes the gameplay really hard and frustrating work. There will be few greens reached in regulation, and even fewer chances at birdie, thanks to the prevalence of long US Open Par 4s. There are quite a few strategic holes of merit, but that can't allay the problem that this course is a real grinder. 4/10

Challenge

Despite the moans, Olympia Fields is playable, but on Champ level (or, God forbid, Elite), you'd be lucky to break Par. Expect to go a Major-esque several over Par for the round. Good luck with a 4-round tournament! 6/10

Technical

The main problems here, as with the same designer's excellent Hunter's Wood, are on the surface. Hard edges and stretched, unconvincing textures draw the eye far too much. This is a shame, really, as the designer has undeniable skill with lifelike planting and an eye for suitable elevations. 7/10

Overall	A really tough championship course, thanks to uncompromising rough and tiny target areas. Take bucketfuls of patience out on the course with you.	<i>30/50</i>
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One South

Michael Hamilton



Description

Fictional, tropical course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Florida

Conditions

M*/F* would be my choice.

Concept

There's some impressively subtle stuff happening at One South. Another of those 'semi-fictional' courses with a course superimposed on an existing patch of land, it's had some meticulous, foot-by-foot golfing design imposed upon it, with all the small elevations and excellently-placed bunkers playing a part. The presentation of the course is straightforward and uncomplicated in the style we have come to expect from the designer. 7/10

Appearance

The two-tone fairways are beautifully graduated – possibly the best I've seen of this particular design, and generally speaking the textures fade nicely into the background, which is really all you can ask of them. The coral-white sand helps recall the location, and generally speaking the surface has been very impressively dealt with. The lack of generally-available tropical planting is betrayed in too much cloning and an awful sparseness which – on this flat terrain – is monotonous and dull. 7/10

Playability

Even on the first round, you'll appreciate some of the cleverness in this very understated design. There are very few in-your-face holes, barring the impressive 11th; the designer instead using clever pin locations and precisely-placed bunkers to provide the challenge. But with the minute attention to detail comes a major downside: the overall impression of the course is just of too much blandness and forgettability – sometimes a little more trademarking is definitely called for. 6/10

Challenge

Many holes have their own challenges, and certainly the water is a threat at more than one point. But the bunkers are really very meek, there's nothing by way of deep rough, and the greens – despite often only having a single gradient (usually the toughest to putt on, in my experience) will yield well. The Par 5s are very reachable, and you'd expect an Eagle chance or two on the way round. 5/10

Technical

The designer clearly has an eye for workable hole layouts, and an excellent talent for texture work, but it's definitely the case in this instance that there could have been a little more to come. Some course buildings or customisation would have made all the difference between playing safe and a course which becomes a real pleasure to play. 6/10

Overall	Clever stuff, but more than a little bland. Still looking for that little bit extra.	31/50
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Oslerbrook

Ivan Levesque



Description

Real, lakeside course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

You have to admire the use of Links as a marketing tool, as Oslerbrook have in this instance, releasing their own APCD version of the course. It's almost in marshland, with the variety of small lakes on the course, and some of the holes feature good design and great risk/reward potential. There's no sense of location or environment, though, so in some respects the course leaves you feeling cold. 7/10

Appearance

As might be expected from marketing, the appearance is really quite rough and ready. Planting is woeful in parts, the texture transitions are harsh, and the bright blue water is unrealistic. There are nice views available, thanks to the careful terrain work, but scarcely any fine detail at all. 5/10

Playability

There is an awful lot of emphasis on shot choices here, which helps the round fly by. You can't shake the impression that you're not on a real course, though, which is a bit of a drag. There's a certain amount of predictability to the course, too, which you can't shake. Oslerbrook is fun, have no doubt, but there are certain problems underpinning the amount of fun you have. 7/10

Challenge

Ah. A small problem here. On Champ Click B/S/M I shot a 58. Yup. 13 under. Now, I didn't use the hardest settings, but really! Ridiculously easy, thanks to some pancake-flat greens, bunkers that never come into play and wide open target areas. Part of the playability value is scoring low. But under this heading – nada. 1/10

Technical

Plenty of work needed here just to improve the environment. Cloned planting, extruded tee boxes and terrible bunkers all need to be removed. And then there's all the work required to make the course a reasonable challenge to the golfer. It's a shame because this course could be great, but there's a lot of work required first. 2/10

Overall	For a commercial release, this won't persuade too many people to come and play. Very rushed presentation and no sense of environment. The golfing aspect is all that makes it worthy.	22/50
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OttawaGolf Great 18

Dan Kilbank



Description

Real, mountain compilation course.

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

The idea of a 'compilation' course is not a new one, but Ottawa really has stretched the limits by choosing eighteen ultra-appealing, amazing-looking, and brilliantly-challenging holes to really set your teeth a-jangle. Every hole, nay – every shot, requires the utmost in concentration and skilfulness, because every one of these is a different course's trademark hole. It will invariably prove too much for some: too strenuous or complicated, but for the devoted target golfer and lover of good views,

Ottawa is a rare gem. Truly a great 18, as the title promises! 9/10

Appearance

I am very impressed with the way these holes look individually, but as a whole they don't really join on from one another and there's little if any continuity. Parts of the design are starting to look old fashioned now; there are some really quite bad hard edges and extrusions that would be considered bad form today. The panorama is stunning, though, and might cause you to overlook some of the little flaws in construction. 7/10

Playability

Because of the nature of this course – in other words, the fact that the designer has specifically picked 18 excellent golf holes – there is a lot to keep you busy here, and in many ways it's a golfing experience like no other. However, and this is a big injunction, it's fairly nerve wracking to have to play at your best for a whole round, so Ottawa demands exclusive concentration. 9/10

Challenge

These holes are chosen not just from an appearance and playability angle, but also because they are a stern test of the golfer. In this sense, the course is too hard: you'll do well to break par (I failed, and I shot a hole in one about 10 seconds after taking this screenshot) because of the acute hazarding and the difficult greens. Anyone playing with fast greens should definitely beware! 6/10

Technical

Obviously, a lot of effort has gone into recreating these holes as accurately as possible, and the designer is to be commended for this, particularly with regard to some excellent planting. In this day of smooth extrusions and texture blends, though, the course has a lot to be desired, and hard edges abound and multiply the more you look for them. Not bad, but not good either. 6/10

Overall	An excellent and fun set of golf holes: best treated as a 'theme' course and not as a round of 18 at all.	37/50
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OutWorld

Johnny Holland



Description

Imaginary, concept course.

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, on green

Concept

Johnny Holland has nothing if not style! OutWorld is a dark-enshrouded, mystery course. It's certainly an oddball and entertaining selection of hole designs, in the style we've come to expect from the designer, but it's a crying shame it couldn't be extended to the full 18 holes. A pity, too, that we don't really have any idea of where OutWorld is. Another planet? Earth at night? A theme park? All these ideas fall a little bit flat when you are presented with the actuality of the course: some distinct fleshing-out is

needed here, I think. 4/10

Appearance

Reminiscent, naturally, of Midnight GC, OutWorld is actually pretty spectacular, given that it's dark. A knockout panorama is the main visual treat, but the surface – that of it that can be seen, leastways – is suitably atmospheric too. A smashing selection of 3D customisation is the final touch, and makes you wonder what this would be like fleshed out to 18 holes. 8/10

Playability

The hole lengths cause me some confusion. Three Par 4s are drivable, yet amid them is a massive 650-yard Par 5. One senses that the designer wanted to go the whole hog and include Par 6 and Par 2 holes. Despite this being not possible, the course simply carries you along on the crest of a wave of things to see and do. It's extravagance of the best kind. 9/10

Challenge

Perhaps it's best that many holes on this course don't play close to par. Perhaps it's best that the hole lengths allow chances at Eagle. Perhaps it's best that the ridiculously easy is alternated with the frustratingly cruel. But, then again, when your golf score is at stake, perhaps it might be best that you played somewhere else. 4/10

Technical

Simply for the extensiveness of the customisation, for having and being able to carry through such an odd idea, and for the knockout panorama, this course must earn high marks. Sure, the texture assignments are suspect, and the computer AI regularly fails to deal with it, but surely this is a sign of innovation, not technical flaw? Well, perhaps... 8/10

Overall	Any fantasy course architect should take heart from this. OK, perhaps it's not the greatest round of golf ever, but it's a wonderful experience.	33/50
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Owelstery White Horse

Mitch Sirk



Description

Fictional, parkland course.

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Another truly unique course from the stables of Mitch Sirk, Owelstery is a large but wholly engaging Par 74 set among the rolling hills of Southern England. The hole designs are terrific without being gimmicky: Par 5s use hazards skilfully to make them genuine 3-shotters and the finishing hole has the only genuine Eagle opportunity, adding some excitement to the end of the round. Moreover, the sense of location and environment is incredible. 9/10

Appearance

Most impressive of many wonderful features is the way the foreground and the panorama merge; it is genuinely impossible to discern the difference at any point in the round. Textures, needless to say, are perfectly chosen and the planting is brilliant, not only around water but on the large scale: the two levels of planting brilliantly realising the appearance of a new course in the designer's intention. 10/10

Playability

A brilliant variety of hole lengths and designs mean that – even with the unorthodox length – this course never even comes close to being dull. Elevation changes are utilised very successfully and even the deepest rough and toughest path is playable. So many holes have a subtle risk/reward option which might not be immediately apparent but is very, very deliberate. A great round. 9/10

Challenge

Thanks to the challenges presented by water and craftily-placed bunkers, this course requires you to work for pars. It's helped somewhat by some unthreatening greens, but hitting the flat stuff in first place is the real challenge. With the lack of Par 3 holes, it plays most naturally into the hands of long hitters, and might put PS players at a disadvantage. All players, though, will be tested by the elevation changes and the deep rough, which can make even a great swinger look quite foolish. 8/10

Technical

As we would expect, this is completely flawless technically. Only Mike Jones has Mitch's genuine flair with the APCD and the ability to make a completely realistic environment. 10/10

Overall	Another stunning effort from Mitch Sirk. A premise that might have fallen somewhat flat is brilliantly and impressively brought to life in his most lifelike re-creation yet.	46/50
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Oxford Valley Golf Club

Eric Lintemuth & Stephen Dalton



Description

Imaginary, marshland course

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

A busy design, featuring all manner of textures, planting colours and elevations, alongside big water features and towering rockworks, Oxford Valley is perhaps just a little overwhelming. There are some impressive golfing ideas in the mix, and no little ambition, but only the most accepting of players would acknowledge that this constitutes a realistic creation. 4/10

Appearance

Where to start? Let's start with some custom textures which look very good, given the age of the course. There's some impressive planting and rock sculpture at points, but the overwhelming effect is just of lots and lots of stuff thrown at the canvas in the vain hope that some will stick. Very in-your-face and only about 10% credible. 4/10

Playability

There are some real gung-ho golfing tests here, including tiny landing spaces on the greens and one terrific huge booming blind drive over water. The hole design is strictly fantastical, with quite a few challenges which you would never see in real life, but it's enjoyable as the occasional one-off. What isn't fun is the aging green complexes, which are very painful going on anything above slow Mod settings. 7/10

Challenge

Lots and lots of water, and lots and lots of putts: this will all add up to lots and lots of dropped shots. With due credit to the course designers, it's not an impossible course by any means: just about all situations are escapable and there are a sprinkling of birdie chances, but for the most part you'll wish you were playing something significantly easier. 3/10

Technical

Bearing in mind that this is an earlier APCD course, without the finesse of texture blending, you have to appreciate what has been done. The custom textures used for the grassy regions are inoffensive (although there are definitely signs of shape-placement from time to time), and the best that can be said for the planting library is that it's been really thoroughly used. The panorama has been well chosen, and really looks very nice behind certain holes – notably the 12th. All things considered, it could be a lot worse. 5/10

Overall

A bit like golfing in a cartoon: busy, fast and frenetic. It's not everybody's brand of golf, but it will stand up to the first round or two.

23/50

Pacifica Point

Jamey Hribal



Description

Fictional, ocean course

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Notable mostly as a forerunner to some classy and visually impressive designs, Pacifica Point is an intelligent and slightly gimmicky ocean layout, ticking many of the boxes for trademark holes, and throwing in one or two intelligent twists of its own. While it's no great visual or technical knockout, it does stand up well among the older courses thanks to a little design flair, something that we would see echoed in the designer's later efforts. 6/10

Appearance

The textures are mostly from stock and unblended, which does give the course an undeniably primitive feel. The broadly tropical planting is broken up with colourful trees in blossom, which is also odd, to say the least. The overall effect is garish if not totally unpleasant, but there's very little eye candy given the potential of such an ocean-side location. 4/10

Playability

The course offers good shot values by not being excessively long and valuing placement of shots without being excessively penal. There's a small sting in the tail, though: the more clever holes – including a very impressive split-fairway Par 4 - all turn up in the first two-thirds of the course, which makes the closing stretch something of an anticlimax. But even despite this and unprepossessing appearance, Pacifica Point might well be a course that you return to. 6/10

Challenge

With a lack of density to the trees and little of the underplanting that Jamey would subsequently do so well, there is little problem escaping the rough. Bunkers are a typical hazard, but let's not forget the crucial role played by the cleverly-placed rock patches. These are a key reason enough to add variety and nous to your shots from tee to green. The putts themselves vary from the completely flat to the slightly silly; this is reason enough that the course might not be viewed altogether fair. 7/10

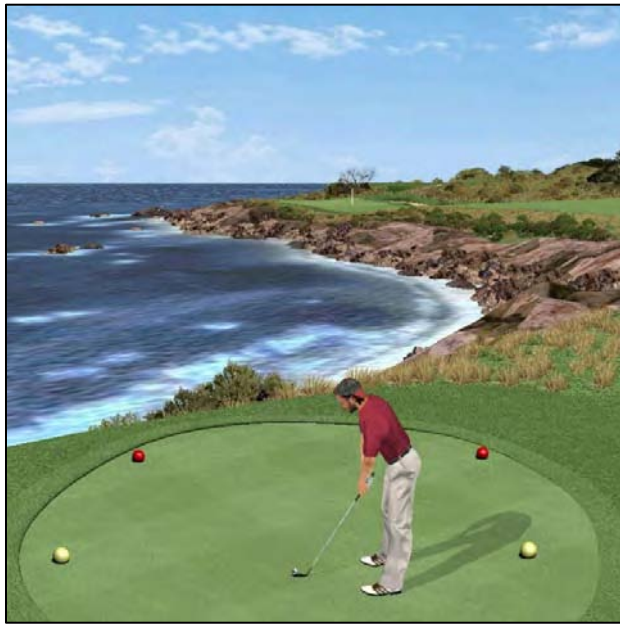
Technical

Clearly the constructive criticism this designer received over this release enabled him to make huge strides forward: witness Rosewood and Pine Dunes if you don't believe me. There you'll find planting, underplanting and textures of the highest quality – suffice to say that Pacifica was a bit too early to feature these innovations. 3/10

Overall	A fair peninsula type course with a standout hole or two. Worth a download.	26/50
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Pacific Breaks

Mike Jones



Description

Fictional, ocean course

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

This brilliant Links-style course takes everything that was great about Northern Dunes, Americanises it (not a bad thing in this case), and refines it to the point of brilliance. The Par 3 holes here are, without exception, wonders to behold, and every hole has been millimetrically thought through and plotted with great golf in mind. An absolute stunner of a course. 10/10

Appearance

Amazing in parts. While the low-level planting is – again – a mite too repetitive, and the occasional extrusion sticks its neck out, the ocean and the rock surround is a thing of wonder, and each hole brings a new delight or view. There's still some fine detail work needed, though. 9/10

Playability

From the first tee, this is a course that sucks you in, challenges you in a seemingly endless variety of ways and, almost inevitably, dumps on you from a great height. You'll undoubtedly have great fun at Pacific Breaks, but you leave it wondering whether the bunker positioning and the nasty greens were maybe just a little bit too calculated. 8/10

Challenge

There is little mercy to be had on this course, although it never strays into completely unfair territory. The greens are nearly all sloped almost to the point of unfairness, and you'll be required to save par from over 10 feet at least once. The rough is punishing and it is a little too easy to hit the sea. Thankfully the fairways are open, receptive and largely flat, which makes birdies somewhat easier. Playing with tough conditions would make this course a definite no-no; even with B/S/S, you'll do well to break par. 7/10

Technical

With Northern Dunes, I knocked a point off for cloned planting. I won't do that here, if only because the technical artistry and architecture that has gone into recreating the sea is magical and leagues ahead of anything else I've seen. Mike Jones has proved he can use the APCD to make a first-class round of golf, and that alone should count for maximum points. 10/10

Overall	Another wonderful Mike Jones course. A brilliant ocean run that at times knocks Pebble Beach into a cocked hat.	44/50
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Pacific Greens

Shawn Kobold



Description

Fictional, short course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Simplicity, thy name is Pacific Greens. A decent little amble around nine short coast-side holes, the landscape is very simple seaside links. Some might find a little too plain and simplistic, but the layout is authentic, there's a suitable variety of hole lengths and even a nice 3D seaside-shelter at the end. Nothing to set the world alight, but a decent warm-up. 4/10

Appearance

There's not much to see, in truth, and the very few large trees that mark the landscape sit midway between convincing and comical. In some ways, it's a brave move to rely on these washed-out textures and stark minimalism, and in some ways it works. You can't deny that the course does look more than a little empty, though. 4/10

Playability

Amiable enough for casual play, there's nothing truly memorable about Pacific Greens, but there's nothing dislikeable, either. Playing with difficult wind conditions is a must, which is when this course will really start to reward accuracy. Some ambient sound in the form of the ocean's roars helps a little. 5/10

Challenge

The hazards are hidden well out of the way for the large part and will only punish the worst strokes. The greens are moderately challenging, but a good uphill lie will solve many problems. The rough doesn't really come into play. You should expect a fair number of 2s on the way around. 3/10

Technical

There's a very 'plain' look to this course which makes it difficult to judge the technical merit. In setting out to achieve a barren seaside links, Pacific Greens has partially succeeded, but there is – even then – something lacking in the featureless landscape and the planting, and not very much to the hole design. 4/10

Overall	Good enough for a warm-up course.	20/50
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Pacific Ridge Golf Club

Greg Stout



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Not the ocean course that you might expect from the name, Pacific Hills is buried in the woodlands of Washington state. The course is trademarked by the large monoliths that play a part in some holes, but are thankfully not over-used. Hole design is very apt, with a little effort to provide some originality, which was not unappreciated. While the course has its flaws and one or two absurdities, the overall impression is of a coherent and thought-through design. 6/10

Appearance

The textures make an odd mix – the deep sand of the bunkers doesn't really feel at home, and the minty grass textures sit uneasily with the rougher areas. The big rocks are smoothly done, though, and the clones in the planting are disguised well enough. There are a few sharp edges in the texture shapes, but it's a decent enough visual impression. 5/10

Playability

Some courses, for reasons it's so hard to place your finger upon, find it difficult to grab your attention. Pacific Ridge, sadly, falls into that category. It's amiable but ultimately disinteresting golf, and the only focus it garners is on the slightly ridiculous holes which have been thrown in along the inward stretch. 4/10

Challenge

A very finely-tuned set of holes, if my practice scores were anything to go by. Par is ultimately a very fair number indeed at Pacific Ridge, although two or three pretty extreme greens won't endear the course to anyone addicted to the faster conditions. But, then again, the aforementioned absurdities might prevent a seriously competitive round in any case. 9/10

Technical

There's good signs of environment creation here, and the planting and landscaping work has played together very effectively. Of course management, it might be fair to say there is a bit less finesse. The course has been touched up in its time, but maybe it could use a complete overhaul of the closing holes to be at its most effective. 5/10

Overall

For an 'only design', an impressive and occasionally well-crafted landscape. Unfortunately, it's holding an inconsistent and occasionally tedious golf course.

29/50

Pagoda Run

James Wood



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4, from tee

Concept

Credit is due to Pagoda Run for going out of its way to be something different. The intention is to create a Japanese course, and this has been pulled off reasonably successfully. The custom 2D buildings, the black bunkers and the wide open holes all lend a certain ambience to the place, and the round passes without too much offence. 6/10

Appearance

The magnificent panorama is a welcome distraction from the golf, and the use of some unusual custom textures – particularly the jet black bunkers - helps to lend this course a distinctive tone. The cypress trees that make up the planting are suitably underplanted, although there is rather too much by way of cloning. It's different; it's unusual; and, frankly, it ain't half bad. 7/10

Playability

There's a subtle but pleasant natural variety to the different holes, and although it won't provoke deep thought, Pagoda Run is open, inviting and generous. Inasmuch as this provides a change to the more arduous designs on the market, the designer's forethought is to be applauded – there simply aren't enough good courses that will allow the player a breather or two. 6/10

Challenge

The fairways are huge – some of the widest and most inviting on the game, but without sacrificing reality. All holes offer pretty good chances at birdie, and some gentle greens – unusual in a course of this age – will let you convert many. While the bunkers are great to look at, I shot through the first seventeen holes without being troubled by them. 4/10

Technical

An impressive amount of customisation, or at least use of objects and textures we don't see very often, goes hand-in-glove with pretty low file size and the designer's credentials are on the up for that alone. Tucked away, though, there's some pretty poor cloning, an amateur bit of elevating and perhaps a lack of coherence to the whole course. 5/10

Overall

We're not exactly overlaid with Japanese courses, and that's a good enough reason to get this. Don't be surprised if – when opening it up – you find a few other good reasons.

28/50

Parrot Landing

Dave Everitt



Description

Imaginary, tropical course.

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Parrot Landing is a claustrophobic, enclosed jungle course with no small amount of ambition. The numerous rock protrusions are a notable feature, and few novel twists on hole ideas are impressive and cause some thought. Despite one or two extremely impressive holes, there's not much in the way of coherence on this course: the feel of disjointedness and the panorama do not at any point combine to really make you feel you are playing the author's intended location. 5/10

Appearance

The overwhelming impression at Parrot Landing is of crowdedness, especially when all the impressive custom objects are added to the mix: I grant that's it's not easy to incorporate customisation into this sort of course. There's certainly a lot to look at, though! The jungle isn't always clone-free, although it's hard to say that it detracts from the round. What *is* a distraction, however, is the odd panorama; impressive in its scale, it doesn't quite gel with the foreground. Some of the textures are likewise problematic: the bunkers in particular looking low-res and unimpressive. 6/10

Playability

Tropical courses need to have plenty of variety and unusual holes to engage casual players. This course provides it only in fits and starts: there's quite a lot of padding between holes of genuine enjoyability. Certainly, jungle environments such as this do not lend themselves easily to holes of strategy or risk. There's a cracking selection of custom sounds and it's certainly worth playing through for the oddball visuals and some hidden gems, but it won't be a permanent addition to many collections. 6/10

Challenge

A tough course, thanks to some penal gradients and the attendant trappings of the jungle. Frequent fairway bunkers make even demands on keeping your drive straight. You'll need a steady hand around the greens, too, with some unexpected elevations and tough flag positions. Take your birdies at the Par 5s and run. 6/10

Technical

A panorama both good and bad, some jerky elevations and bunkers that have not really been cared for. I like the yellowing textures, so why make the tee boxes so green? There's obvious APCD skill lurking beneath the façade, so why is it so easy to pick up areas of neglect? A mystery. 5/10

Overall	A busy jungle course with some impressive visuals that don't quite gel, but exceed the golfing value nevertheless.	28/50
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Pebble Beach

Chuck Clark



Description

Real, ocean course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 3, from behind green.

Concept

I don't think there is any knocking the Pebble Beach concept. The world's most famous course is the very pinnacle of course design and the shoreline holes are all renowned as some of the world's finest. The fact that it has remained at the top of the ladder for over 70 years is doubly remarkable. This re-creation goes to painstaking lengths to render every inch of the course, and does an absolutely stunning job. 10/10

Appearance

Unbelievable. Planting is beautiful, elevations are natural, and the shoreline is from another planet. The bunkers are brilliantly understated and look wonderful. I cannot find a single thing to fault here. 10/10

Playability

As with all real course conversions, the joy is just imagining that you're playing the real thing. But, for some reason, Pebble Beach's legendary charm seems to pall on Links, particularly around the new (and quite nondescript) turn. When the course continually dumps you in the same sort of trouble, it becomes a tad wearisome, a problem that – say – Augusta never suffers. But there's plenty to make up for it, including the heart-stopping final hole, which if I could play just one Links hole for the rest of eternity, I would surely choose. 8/10

Challenge

Respect Pebble Beach and it'll respect you, the locals say. Disrespect it, and you're going to rack up a mammoth score very quickly. Even playing conservatively, the course really pushes you to break par, and with the hazard areas just off line on many holes, some might say the course is a shade too difficult. It's still a brilliant and original test of golf, though. 9/10

Technical

The lengths that went into this course are unbelievable. Real green maps were incorporated, and photographs of the course used in their dozens. And the whole thing has been translated beautifully and flawlessly to the small screen. Worth 11/10, if I would give it. 10/10

Overall	Sheer brilliance from a very talented designer. One of the best re-creations of a real course, ever.	47/50
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Pebble Beach Classic

Les Wellard and David Russell



Description

Real, ocean course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 3, from behind green.

Concept

Never mind golf courses in space, in the dark, and in imaginary lands. Why not try and recreate a course as it was 70 years ago? That's the simple premise behind this course and it actually succeeds in the large part. There is endless entertainment in playing both the 'Old' and 'New' versions of Pebble Beach and spotting the changes (a couple of holes have been moved completely), and strangely you do actually get the impression of being taken back in time. The course doesn't quite have the

refinement, length or challenge that features today, hence it doesn't quite achieve full marks. 9/10

Appearance

Perhaps this hasn't been quite as refined as the modern Pebble Beach. There are still some hard edges remaining, the rock work around the ocean has suffered, and just a couple of less believable changes in the terrain. But there's still some sumptuous planting to look at, and the ambience that comes from the lack of concrete roads and modern resort buildings. 8/10

Playability

Golfers in the 1930s were a pretty undemanding lot, and to some extent this course reflects that. The rough is less demanding; the fairways more receptive, and there'll be less ingenuity required out on the course. There's masses of curiosity value, though, and this course certainly shouldn't be neglected because of that. But perhaps it's not quite as in-your-face exciting as the modern version. 7/10

Challenge

It's incredible how essentially the same course has been developed over the course of years to become so much harder. The rough is only part of it, for in this version the hazard boundaries are pushed back, the greens seem infinitely easier, and of course the trees are quite a bit less intimidating. The course feels much more open and relaxed, and you'll undoubtedly see your score improve as a result. 6/10

Technical

A lot of work has gone into designing and refining here. It's not 100% perfect, there are some elevation problems to iron out, the coastline is still short of the very highest standards, and I don't think the textures are a patch on Chuck Clark's Pebble Beach. But there are big ticks in all the right places, and other than those quibbles this is technically a very fine course. 9/10

Overall

A great idea, and one that needs to be repeated with other courses. It's interesting to see how the course has changed, but even the nostalgia buffs will accede that the present-day course wins hands down.

39/50

Pecan Valley

Dan Taylor



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 4

Par

70

Location

Texas

Conditions

Some poor pins mean you should stick to M*/M* in the Beta.

Concept

One of those delightful little local courses that crop up with regularity, Pecan Valley has plenty of appeal, despite being rather flat and short. Part of this, admittedly is the relative lack of pressure and thinking that needs to go into a round, but there are a smattering of dogleg holes with their own shot-shaping challenge. Some hole previews would really help, especially when water hazards loom out of nowhere! 6/10

Appearance

A few delightful moments, and the grass around the bunkers is a stunning texture in its own right. Unfortunately, it's been too often stretched, and the mesh isn't handled with much subtlety, meaning there's not much on display here. The biggest notable feature, the panorama, is not really massively appropriate to the area. 5/10

Playability

The intimacy and cosiness at Pecan Valley are a great selling point, and the relatively unthreatening layout makes this a breeze as a warm-up course. It's the sort of trouble-free golf that is simply fun to play time after time, perhaps trying out a silly MoP or two. Despite its flaws, I like it a lot. 8/10

Challenge

Not much rough, not many bunkers, and the streams and ditches throughout the course are easily avoided once you've learned where they are. Some pretty easy greening is also a great shortcut to birdies, and with a course par of 70 it's really not out of the question to have one eye on breaking 60. 1/10

Technical

A very convincing first effort, even if there's a lack of variation in the elevations. Some aspects of the course have been convincingly fictionalised, and although there's still work to be done, Pecan Valley remains a convincingly portrayed course. 6/10

Overall

A delightful little course which is better to play than its rating indicates.

26/50

Pelican Hill Golf Club

Microsoft



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, ocean course	4 th hole, Par 3	70
Location		
California		
Conditions		
It's difficult to recommend anything faster than S*/S*. Works well under windy conditions, though.		

Concept

Very reminiscent of the classic Hawaiian courses in the rollicking elevations and steep learning curve, Pelican Hill is an exciting clifftop gem from the same part of the world as Spyglass Hill, Pebble Beach *et al.* A layout that uses the landscape to excellent effect, it has back-to-back Par 3s on the back nine and certainly no intention of being stretched to outrageous lengths. As exhilarating as any other West Coast course you care to name, it has received a workmanlike makeover for Links that ranks among Microsoft's better efforts. 9/10

Appearance

Textures are the main weakness here, with some poor contrasts and lots of stretching where no mapping has taken place on the elevations. Knocked by many, I quite like the planting, although perhaps the best that can be said for it is that it has retained a quaint charm and isn't too pixelated, even close-up. The bunker-work is disappointing and almost looks like an afterthought. 6/10

Playability

Plenty of the thrills in the vein of Kapalua or Princeville here. With virtually no hole tending to the flat, it's all about seeking out the best lies on the fairway. The relatively innocuous greenside bunkers won't be seen as much of an issue, though, and the dreaded steel-tree syndrome rears its head too often. Despite the flaws, it's a course worth re-visiting for the tactical nous required. 8/10

Challenge

With greens verging on the ridiculous, there's no doubt where the main challenge was originally intended to lie. Under the Mod, of course, it becomes a different set of parameters, and the course is virtually unplayable on faster settings. When you take the greens out of factor, Pelican Hill is a bit of a pussycat, with plenty of room for a mis-placed drive, and little to warrant penalty strokes. 4/10

Technical

Pelican Hill has the advantage over many of its contemporaries with sharper visuals and imaging, and the course remains coherent all the way around, thanks to the offbeat environment. While it's not always completely pleasing on the eye, and badly needs a texture makeover, it's still one of Microsoft's better pieces of work. 6/10

Overall	A fine course from the MS stable, and one which you should enjoy on more than one occasion.	33/50
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Phoenix Country Club

Microsoft



Description

Real, woodland course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

There's not much that makes this course stand up and demand to be counted. Thin fairways thread straightish paths between some daunting (and pretty bizarre-looking, it has to be said) forests. There's precious little to tell one hole from the next and the whole course radiates mediocrity. 2/10

Appearance

Pretty poor, on the whole. The planting looks utterly bizarre and unnatural, with several obvious clones. The tee boxes deform the surrounding landscape, and several odd-looking humps and bumps adorn the fairways. Even the views of the greens are unclear, which not only looks ugly, but also impedes the playing of the game. 2/10

Playability

Yawnarama! There is no variety on this course, utterly none. You'll play one soulless Par 4 after another; if one seems a bit longer, it's a Par 5s; and the 3s are completely nondescript. It's possible to play round without using half the shots in your armoury; the bunkers don't come into play at all and the tightness of the fairways is frustrating. I can't see any reason for anybody to enjoy a round here. 0/10

Challenge

Despite the restrictive fairways, the course is too easy, and for one very important reason: the greens. Nearly every green is large and completely flat, and a much too easy way to reward yourself with birdies. Thankfully, the forested areas encroach quite alarmingly, so there's a good chance you'll get tangled up in a tree before the stream of birdies runs to ridiculous levels. 5/10

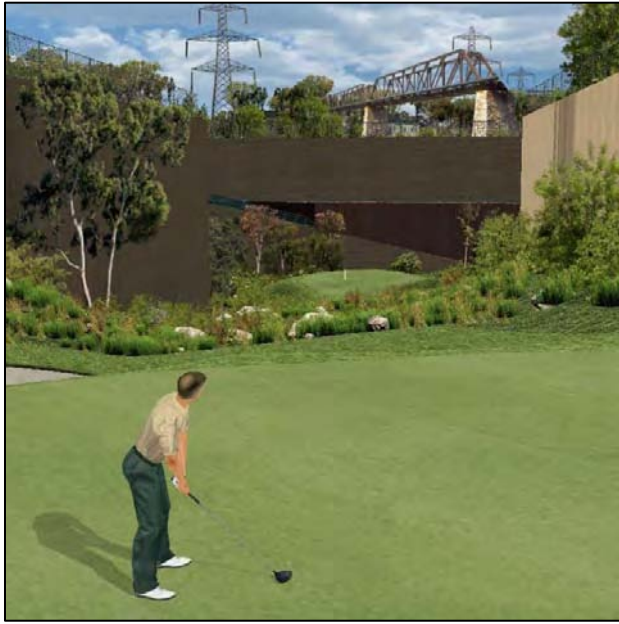
Technical

I honestly thought when playing this course that it had been made by an APCD first-timer. The planting is bizarre, tropical and completely inapt, there are hard edges and unlikely elevations all over the shop, and the greens are a joke. It's scarcely believable that this is alleged to be a commercial course. Shocking. 1/10

Overall	Probably Microsoft's least redeeming moment. An awful mess of a course which doesn't engage or challenge you one bit.	10/50
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Piazza Metallica

Jörg Jobmann



Description

Imaginary, concept course

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

A stunning idea this, in both conception and execution. Piazza Metallica winds its way through some urban badlands, taking in canals, quarries and docks and an abnormal amount of brilliantly customised features along the way. The holes befit the environment nicely – there is a fair amount of out-of-bounds, as you'd expect, but also a few opportunities to play massive bank shots that would make Michael Savicki proud. There is room too for holes of strategic merit, although you'll have to wait until the close of the

round to enjoy them. That's no great shakes, though, because Piazza Metallica is a feast for the eyes and a round passes quickly. 10/10

Appearance

There are a couple of technical errors, but I will save them for the final section. Suffice to say that this course is spectacular in the extreme. Hundreds of custom objects and careful landscaping builds up an extremely convincing and complex environment, and there is tons to look at. Amazing. 10/10

Playability

It would be better for the player if some of the holes were less prescriptive. Quite a few indulge in 'island hopping', or rely on a misjudged and improbable risk/reward shot. Thankfully, there are some very good holes that offer alternative lines (some quite clever and deceptive). The greens are hard to hit, which does become frustrating, and putting can also be a trial. But there's so much to see here, and so many completely unique golf holes, that you'll be back time and time again regardless. 8/10

Challenge

There's no escaping the fact that this is a tough course, particularly with regard to the approach and green play. The greens are borderline unfair in their severity, and I'll wager that many players would be willing to see something a bit flatter. The deep rough is abundant and – of course – hard to escape. Consequently, breaking par (especially on the Par 4s) is something of a trial, and this is a bit of a turn-off. 6/10

Technical

OK, there are one or two slip-ups. A couple of bunker edges look faulty, and there's a fold or two where the sharp elevations come into conjunction. I found myself hard up against the panorama at one point, too. But the designer deserves a lot of credit for making a way-out concept look feasible and real, and not least for the massive amount of high-quality customisation. 8/10

Overall	A brilliant and unusual golf course in one of the most unlikely environments you'll ever come across. Might only appeal as a novelty to some, but as a novelty it takes some beating.	42/50
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Pilgrim Trails Golf Club

Mike Jones



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 5, from fairway bunker.

Concept

Just when we thought he was out of the game, he comes roaring back in! Mike Jones's return to high-definition Links is a huge roaring cross between Bethpage and Crooked Creek, but still with so much of the innate understanding and magic that comes from – well – being Mike Jones. The holes are deliciously set out, hazarded with precise viciousness and are a very, very stern test of golf. The whole thing is tied together by terrific red-flowered gorse planting, a lovely trademark which does a lot to hold the

course together. 9/10

Appearance

Glorious bunker technique is just the start. There are dozens of charming little 3D creations lurking in the woods, and the texture use has really put high-definition on the map. Pat Auge's clubhouse stands proud above the whole lot. Seriously – what more could you want? 10/10

Playability

The course has really been extended – it's a good thousand yards longer than Crystal Pines or Las Joyas, and that certainly carries a different weight to the play. There aren't many courses where the struggle for par is so readily fought, but ultimately such a terrific battle. The fact that my first two test rounds yielded 30 pars out of 36 is testimony to a design genius. But, and it's a big 'but', these battles are hard work in the long term, and perhaps don't give Pilgrim Trails the compulsiveness of other Mike Jones courses. 8/10

Challenge

In terms of hazarding, this sets a new standard. On a sandy landscape, the bunkers are widespread, but they are perfectly placed and in exactly correct volume to make your round a trial but never an unfair challenge. The greens are flat but heavily guarded, and the woodland is in play for the errant tee shots. The difficulty gradient along the closing holes lets up slightly, but it's really nothing less than you deserve after struggling for par over the first two thirds. It's difficult to express how brilliantly judged the whole thing is, despite the huge length. 10/10

Technical

Being released simultaneously with Bethpage Black meant that the Links community was treated to two of the finest ever pieces of APCD work, without argument. 10/10

Overall	Not just visual splendour, but one of the most supremely well-judged rounds of golf we have seen in a long time.	47/50
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Pine Dunes Golf Club

Jamey Hribal



Description

Fictional, dunes course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

A truly magnificent course, Pine Dunes plays in an almost desert-like environment, thanks to the large planted sandy regions (it would be erroneous to call them bunkers as they lay at ground level) and a dry, yellowing feel to the textures and spindly trees. Hole design is excellent, although it does tend towards the 'bendy' a little too much, and there is an unnecessary reliance on water for hazarding. But this is an impressive and believable environment and represents a massive step up in terms of the

designer's ability and strengths. 9/10

Appearance

Amazing. Planting the bunkers covers up the need to use lips and adds a different and unusual appearance. The forests look similarly impressive, and a suitable panorama towers over the whole lot. There is good custom 3D work in the clubhouse, and the water regions are excellently planted and some of the best I've seen. Superb. 10/10

Playability

An excellent variety of hole designs both stimulate and challenge players. The Par 5s are brilliantly judged for the 2-3 shot boundary, and the course as a whole is an excellent illustration of how to provide good golf without stretching to unnecessary length. There's good ambient sound and a certain amount of risk/reward: the course is only let down slightly by a little jerkiness in the rendering times. 9/10

Challenge

The sandy areas gobble up their fair share of balls, but are balanced nicely by the putting surfaces. With the gentle gradients on the greens, a regulation hit will often result in a birdie. Such occasions are relatively rare, because many tee shots will catch the forest or the hazards. I particularly enjoyed the forest escape play: it was challenging without being impossible. 8/10

Technical

A tremendous step up from the designer's previous courses, this features outstanding planting and a genuine sense of how to create a good golf course. Only the occasional texture problem is at fault: the green texture is oddly inappropriate and might look better as a first-cut texture. 9/10

Overall	A brilliant and instantly likeable course. Moderate, fair and exciting by turns and with a closing nine to match any in the game.	45/50
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Pine Forest Hills

Werner Erasmus



Description

Imaginary, forest course

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

I'm going to have a stab at Austria

Conditions

S*/S* might be the only way you will make it around.

Concept

Oh boy. Pine Forest Hills turns the golf course back at you. A mammoth, daunting course, it's a riot of massive elevations, spectacular views and bizarre demands on your game. The designer manages to pull this ambitious conceit off with no little panache; the variety of hole designs just keep on coming, and actually the sheer silliness of the course is becoming something of a cult classic. There's surprisingly good continuity between holes too: a strong – if fantastical – location and strong elevations make it easy to keep your bearing if you wander off the beaten track. 8/10

Appearance

There are quite a few impressive moments, but the treeline is full of clones and fuzziness, and there are quite a few sharp edges visible at ground level. The extreme handling of the elevations is just about within the realms of credibility, but also instigates a double-take or two because it's not always easy to believe WHAT you're facing! 6/10

Playability

The massive length and the unclear objective on many holes makes playing this course a serious drag, and it's a good guess that many players won't get past the first six. The long rendering times are an additional frustration, and nearly every shot is blind – a completely unacceptable practice that is not only gimmicky, but will quickly deter most serious players. There's a little appeal in tackling this monster of a course, but it quickly becomes hard work, to say the least. 3/10

Challenge

Even if I hadn't taken 16 on one hole of my practice round (don't ask), then I still would have scored well into the 80s. It's virtually impossible to get close to par here, such is the difficulty from tee and fairway. Many pin positions are close to ridiculous, being close to the edge of the green or mid-slope. Completely unacceptable. 0/10

Technical

There are no APCD weaknesses here: the designer clearly has a good grasp of the software and has used it to make a striking and original visual plot which most certainly has stuck in the memory! The problem derives from the judgement of the course, the layout that strays away from the realistic and the lack of appreciation of the needs of the player. 5/10

Overall

Traditionally a perennial contender for Links' hardest course. Clearly a labour of love from the designer's point of view, but too much of a labour for the player.

22/50

Pinehurst #2

Rob Miller



Description

Real, woodland course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 4, from rough

Concept

When reviewing the Microsoft version of this course some time ago, I described it as 'the stately old gent of golf courses'. Well, in the supernaturally talented hands of Rob Miller, the course has just become even more statuesque and gentlemanly. Taking into account the tournament re-designs, it is strategically better, too, with the hallmark lengthy Par 4s and upturned-basin greens being thought-provoking and intimidating. But, even then, Pinehurst isn't quite the masterpiece of

design that it should be. Clever, it certainly is, but there's still missing flair somewhere. 8/10

Appearance

Oh my. Even with a comparatively bland landscape such as Pinehurst's, Rob Miller has managed to wring the utmost from the APCD. Immensely clever texture use is the main hallmark, but let's not overlook the minute attention to detail in bunker lips, and the impressive way in which the pine forests are planted without revealing clones or standout colours. And when you get down to the minutiae: the sprinkler heads, the gorgeous clubhouse and cleverness of the green construction, it is dumbfounding how good a relatively simple course can look. 10/10

Playability

Fairway positioning is the key requisite here, but hitting greens will require equal amounts of guile. Since the course has been tightened up, the emphasis is on the player to demonstrate these key attributes, and doing so will absorb you totally. Play with the tournament objects and the sense of location is conducive, overwhelming and simply magnificent. 10/10

Challenge

Down to a Par 70 now, the course makes it much harder to pick up strokes, and the improved use of elevations and extra length have contributed to that extra stiffness. Many of the Par 4s are almost unthinkable as birdie chances. Thankfully, some of the others are, and the lack of deep rough and water should help prevent scores getting too high. 9/10

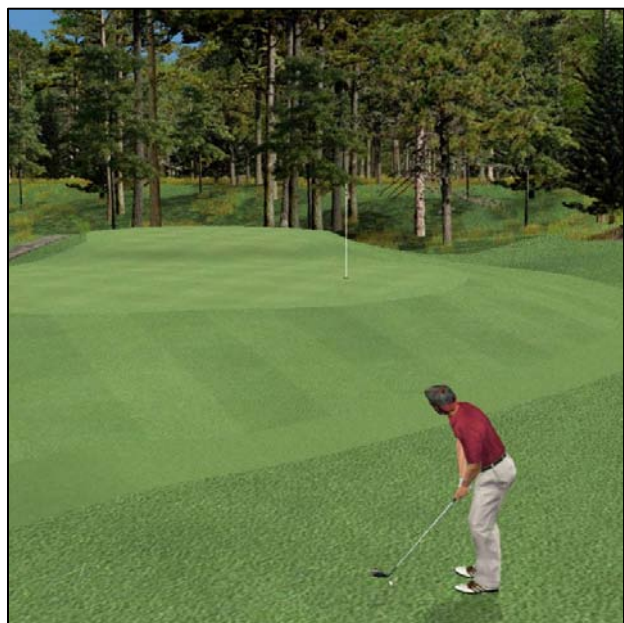
Technical

Rob Miller is rapidly overhauling the very best around as a master and creator of APCD technique. It's hard to call Pinehurst his best yet, because Bethpage and Shinnecock were equally jaw-droppingly awesome. A legend, indeed. 10/10

Overall	Not my favourite course – and I doubt it ever will be – but take nothing away from the designer, this is an immense creation.	47/50
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Pine National

Mat Leclair



Description

Fictional, marshland course

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 5, greenside

Concept

Somewhat disjointed as it wends its way between pine trees and lowland marshes (shouldn't these two be mutually exclusive, by the way?), Pine National is – to all intents and purposes – Pinehurst with an added twist or two. It's not helped by some iffy execution and a seen-it-before type of feeling on quite a few holes. Some shot asks are unfair and the course reduces you to playing safely around the fairways. A bit of a disappointment, all told. 4/10

Appearance

There are quite a few mesh folds visible, and the water features and bunkers are mostly in need of better work. Unsurprisingly, given the planting style, there are quite a few clones visible too. The marshes, surprisingly, are the saving grace, being dense and hinting at trouble, but there's a lot here that could have been done just that bit better. 5/10

Playability

Two identikit Par 3s really put the seal on this round and the promised climax along the back nine never really materialises. There are one or two good trademark holes that bring the water into play, but too much of your round will be spent negotiating poor lies (sometimes caused by technical errors) and correcting for the unconvincing risk/reward. 4/10

Challenge

A pretty tough 'un, this, with long holes and some severe green slopes. One or two pin positions reek of designer naïveté. Par 5s are rarely reachable if you miss the fairway, and the hazards come very close to the field of play on at least a third of the holes. I escaped with a level-par round, thanks to some lucky putts and uncommonly being able to hit a few snaps. Others, you suspect, might not be so lucky. 6/10

Technical

When technical flaws result in an imperfect appearance, that is forgivable. When, like at Pine National, they start interfering with play, it becomes somewhat unacceptable. Lack of good work around the bunkers led me to more than one near-impossible position. Plus, I suspect the appearance of steel weeds might have cost me more than one stroke. When you add this to the mesh folds and clones, there is an awful lot of ironing out that could be done here. 3/10

Overall

Somewhat underwhelming amid the technical problems and lack of continuity. Feels like each hole has been designed in isolation, and some overtly copycat ideas have not been incorporated well enough.

22/50

Pine Valley Golf Club

Rob Miller



Description

Real, forest course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

One of a kind. Linksters have been spoiled with glorious fictitious course interpretations in the past, and Pine Valley might just be the inspiration for most of these. The slick, tiered greens, huge waste-area bunkers and target-golf orientation are very special and no little factor behind this course routinely being voted the best in the world. The Par 3s, particularly, are little gems without exception and reason enough to play the course on their own. The Links version has all the seductive atmosphere of its real-

life counterpart along with every aspect of the playability that gained its fame. 10/10

Appearance

Perfect, slightly grained textures play second place to beautiful planting, and the attention that's gone into the undergrowth – even well off the fairways – is startling. The course buildings have had a frightening amount of time put into them, and the bunkers play to their strengths of being the focal areas of the course with depth in blending and suitable planting. Awesome. 10/10

Playability

Well, would you pass up the opportunity to play the best course in the world? Pine Valley certainly doesn't disappoint. Each and every shot presents its own set of challenges. It is remarkable how short the course is but how natural the target golf element: there are no 'island fairways' here. It's truly addictive and remarkably variable golf. 10/10

Challenge

Pine Valley's greens are notoriously tough, and on faster conditions they make a frightening proposition, particularly those tiered greens which can dump your ball into trouble. The woods are deep, too, and a chip-out is frequently the best you can hope for after a mis-hit drive. But the course length stops it becoming over-burdening, and the gambling element of the reachable holes is irresistible. 9/10

Technical

Continuously pushing the boundaries of what is possible with the APCD, this is another course to demand that I re-evaluate my ratings. 10/10

Overall	The best course in the world, by one of the best designers in the world. What's not to like?	49/50
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Pirate Cove

Mike Nicely



Description

Fictional, tropical course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

The Caribbean is the obvious choice

Conditions

M*/F* is perfect.

Concept

As long as you don't expect out-and-out fantasy, this is a really cute little creation, and there is thematic nicety in the swamps and very shallow sand traps. Some excellent hole designs bookend the course, although it does tend regrettably to the straightforward around the turn. But there's a growing charm to the course and a surprising amount of realism. 7/10

Appearance

A lovely design template and the use of thick bushy planting makes the course surprisingly convincing, although there are weaknesses in a few featureless textures and a bizarre mix of trees. Some lovely 3D in the form of the clubhouse and pirate ship are good compensations, and the water features are convincing. 8/10

Playability

The relatively unguarded greens and surface bunkers give the course an amiable and unthreatening air, and although most holes are decidedly one-way, there is enough charm in the setting to enjoy your first round. But I don't really see it having much repeat value – the lack of variety in the soundscript and custom objects is a significant factor, but also the lack of any drama in the vast majority of holes is also notable. 6/10

Challenge

It would be unfair to say that the only challenge would be to get around without falling asleep, but – beyond one or two tricky escapes from the trees – there isn't too much on the menu. The narrow fairways can be hit regularly with irons, the rough is reasonably escapable, and the course isn't so long as to punish those who take the safe option. 5/10

Technical

The texture choices take something to be desired, and while the course is a fine demonstration of APCD prowess, there just isn't the flamboyance that could be expected. Even a better line in hole design would compensate for a rather weak showing in terms of impact and entertainment. 6/10

Overall	Something of a let-down in the non-realisation of the pirate theme and the lack of ingenuity applied to a great course concept. Most definitely playable, though.	32/50
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Pitchford Hall

Eric Pitchford



Description

Fictional, forest course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 3

Par

72

Location

None given – Rocky mountains at guess

Conditions

Plays reasonably for an old course, but you'd be safest restricting yourself to M*/S*

Concept

A course packed with feature and detail, there will certainly be enough at Pitchford Hall to keep you amused all the way round. The golf is all about tight fairways and acute target golf, but to its credit, it is never quite unfair. Looking off the beaten track will give you all the real treats – there's plenty of eye candy in the form of flowers, brooks and OB areas. But, then again, do we really want to find all our treats elsewhere on a course when we've gone there to play golf? It's the constant second-best paid to the course that knocks this down. 5/10

Appearance

For an old course, there are a few treats to be found here, especially some subtle elevation work and the attention to course buildings. On the flipside, the planting isn't up to much – clones being rife and obvious. The original 2001 textures and Whistler panorama aren't exactly done any favours either. 4/10

Playability

For precision, restrained target golf, it's hard to beat this course. In truth, it's never over-demanding, and a good depth of course knowledge will see you through. There's plenty to look at, lots of shots to be made, and none of the seen-it-all-before *ennui* that goes with older courses. 7/10

Challenge

Getting caught up on this course can be particularly nasty, and it's not too difficult to get caught up, given the infringement of the dense forests. To be fair, the greens are generally moderate, although there is a nasty slope or two, and there is evidence of strong playtesting in the lack of difficult or unplayable lies. But there's no escaping that it's not an easy course. 4/10

Technical

The big problem in this day and age is that halfway-decent old courses are going to become increasingly marginalised. And the big problem with this course is that it is only halfway decent. With the techniques available at the time, it's really not a bad effort, but it just doesn't stand the test of time. 5/10

Overall	A little more than your average 'old' course, a lot of precision and observation should be considered a must.	25/50
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Pont du Gard

Tom Wagner



Description

Imaginary, canyon course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 4, from tee

Concept

The delightfully fertile imagination of Tom Wagner has come up trumps again with Pont du Gard. Using the real landmark and some real(ish) landscape as a basis, he has created a set of outrageously fun holes but ushered them just to the right side of believability. The 7th hole, particularly, is a stand-out trademark hole, but it does seem a shame that many of the best ideas have been used up by the turn. 8/10

Appearance

The viaduct itself takes centre stage, and it is pretty well crafted even if it looks a little less than smooth from a distance. The rocks do look a little more artificial, though, particularly from the first few tees. Elsewhere, the textures are great, if a little speckly, and the elevations very well handled. The big selling point for the course is the multitude of stupendous views, and they do a fair amount to hold it up. 8/10

Playability

You'd have to be a hard-hearted cynic not to get a significant amount of enjoyment from this one. Sure, it's not realistic, but it is superbly contrived, insistent, and requires no short measure of creativity to negotiate well. I was hooked well before halfway through my first round and the pleasure lasted through several more. 10/10

Challenge

Killer hole design doesn't necessarily make for a good challenge, and it's a bit too easy to come away from Pont du Gard feeling that you've not been tested. Deeper rough with more dense planting would have been the answer, but then again perhaps this isn't the sort of course that should concern itself with keeping the player to a reasonable par score. 5/10

Technical

While not quite up there with the elite club of designers, Tom's impressive ideas are resulting in some terrific, off-the-wall golf, and he is rapidly producing visuals to match. It's a little too easy to pick holes here – particularly with the speckly textures and smooth rockwork – but the golfing wildchild in everyone finds plenty to love with this set of holes. 8/10

Overall

A great idea, some knockout holes with spectacular views, and a genuinely playable course. It's hard to ask for more.

39/50

Poppy Hills

Dace Fair



Description

Real, woodland course

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 5, from fairway.

Concept

There are lots of selling points to Poppy Hills. It's open, welcoming and exciting by turns, and it - most rarely - features just eight Par 4 holes (only three on the back nine). It's very target-golf, with most holes being very well-protected by some permutation of bunkers, water and trees, but the enclosed woodland surround does take away much of the sense of location. The real joy is the hole design, with some twisting holes making full use of the terrain and planting. It's a shame, then, that this adaptation

hasn't taken quite as much care as might be necessary. 7/10

Appearance

Sound in parts, there are regions of this course that sadly make themselves noticed for the wrong reasons. Some of the seam blending has resulted in some very strange and unintentional special effects, and several faces are in stark contrast to their surrounds. The planting, as usual from this designer, is very good and the sculpture of the hazards looks natural – not all bunkers need lips, after all. Decent on the whole, but with errors that could have been picked up from Beta testing. 6/10

Playability

Poppy Hills makes no pretensions: it is an out-and-out fun course, and a round will just fly by. Not for no reason has it been included in so many computer golf games over the years. It will never make a championship course, thanks to its unorthodox layout, but the back nine is a fantastic place to pick up and drop shots, and any player will surely be hooked. 9/10

Challenge

Some of the technical problems (below) lead to an artificially-contrived difficulty level. Too many tee shots hit the rough; too many putts and chips become near-impossible. The nature of the course is to offer you chances to break par, but this is ruined by the amateurish compilation. 6/10

Technical

You have to be a very, very good designer to re-create a famous course, and Dace Fair is sadly just not in that league. The real Poppy Hills does not have fairways this narrow, nor this heavy hand with the elevations (particularly on the putting surface). Nor does it have an odd choice of textures under the trees. Things that might be acceptable on a fictional course just don't wash here, hence a low score. 3/10

Overall	An inadequate adaption in many ways. Schmidt, Clark and Jones set the bar very high for Real courses: this doesn't come close to clearing it.	31/50
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Portmarnock Links

John Aherne



Description

Real, links course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

A very modern take on the oldest of course styles, this is a terrific homage to the classic links courses such as Troon or Prestwick, and in many ways it's hard to believe that it's barely fifteen years old. A little slow at first, it is by far at its best when it moves away from the hotel and into comparative isolation. Hundreds of pot bunkers litter the course without being confrontational and the carefully-shaped fairways put strong demands on your tee shot. The whole atmosphere has been brought to PC with

startling conviction by John Aherne. 9/10

Appearance

Gorgeous texture use fits the course perfectly, but for real beauty you have to go and take a close look at the sod walls of the bunkers. Planting is – given the terrain – almost entirely restricted to grasses, but even they are laid out with a careful hand, and even bend with the prevailing wind. I have to confess that I was little put off by the panorama, which seems off-colour, and the identikit houses bordering the hotel, but once you get out by the sea, all is amazing. 9/10

Playability

Within a very limited brief, Bernhard Langer seems to have produced a course that will consistently inspire awe. No, there are no gimmicks or dramatic elevations. There's very little water, and barely a tree on the course. Which makes it all the more unusual that these holes are so addictive, compulsive and brilliantly varied. If your drive fails to hit the fairway, there could be any lie from mild to horrific waiting, and the littering of bunkers are good hazards without being penal. John does more than his bit for the playability with lifelike course reproduction and a terrific soundscrip. 10/10

Challenge

False fronts to quite a few greens are about as tricked-up as the course gets, but the narrow fairways and undulating greens at Portmarnock are always difficult to play, and catching a bunker will almost certainly cost you a stroke. The Links golfer might expect to pick up a stroke or two at the Par 5s, but this is a Real course that – especially on suitably windy conditions – will provide an excellent stiff test. 8/10

Technical

With John's mapping methods, we can expect courses to be accurate to every square foot. And you can't really ask for more than that. There's a lot of square feet to play with here. 10/10

Overall

One of the most lifelike creations you are ever likely to encounter. Lowland, brilliantly created links.

46/50

Possum Park Short Course

Dave Everitt



Description

Fictional, short course

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

The Par 3 course has been the downfall of many a designer, not least whoever thought up Three Canyons. Thankfully, Possum Park does not suffer from delusions of grandeur, of monotonous hole length or from excessive trickery. It uses elevations on a lavish but not extreme scale in order to get the most out of your target golf. Sadly, the same cannot be said about the other hazards: rocks, bunkers and water are not used sufficiently accurately to make the course an ongoing appeal. 6/10

Appearance

A carefully-regimented planting scheme of firs and purple flowerbeds lends the course an almost godly feel. Certainly, there is an unreal touch to the elevations which are the on the edge of believability, despite lending excellent scenic views. Rough textures repeat too frequently and are often stretched. Worst, the stock panorama is tired in its predictability and in this case really detracts from what could be otherwise quite pretty. 5/10

Playability

About as good as eighteen Par 3s can get, Possum Park mixes up the shot types and hole lengths well, and a round is assisted by decent sound and plenty of good views. Sadly, with hazards not coming into play enough, it's easy to get the impression that you're doing the same thing over and over. 6/10

Challenge

Possum Park is refreshingly free from tricks and hidden traps, and the greens are nicely pitched when you consider that putting will be the chief difference between a good and bad score. Dropped shots and birdies arrive in equal measure, and that makes this course undoubtedly the best-pitched Par 3 out there. 9/10

Technical

A little old-looking today, an update would require attention primarily to texture use and mapping, and a new panorama. Ideally, some major changes to the course layout would bring hazards fairly into play also. But the imagination and planting are very sound, as is some very impressive rock work. 6/10

Overall	One of the better short courses out there. Creative with elevations and consistently throwing up a new and original challenge.	32/50
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Prairie Dog GC

Chuck Clark



Description

Fictional, farmland course.

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

I never fail to be impressed with the Links designers who take a patch of scrubby and unattractive land and build a great golf course through it. In many ways, they show the skills of real life course design, and Chuck has acknowledged that with Prairie Dog, he started from the terrain and worked upwards. And what brilliance has resulted! This is knockout, original, absorbing prairie-land golf. The fact that the only scenery worthy of the name is a windmill or two and the occasional water tank makes this

all the better. There are few more realistic, and yet so far-out, courses available for the game. 10/10

Appearance

Virtually the whole course is customised. The texture colours match superbly, and the beautiful array of planting makes the surrounding prairie both realistic and a perfect match for the panorama. Sure, there's not much to see, but what you can see is utterly perfect. 9/10

Playability

There are few that can match Prairie Dog. A realistic array of sound effects, thankfully not overblown, and Chuck's innate ability to make challenging and original golf holes will keep everyone involved. Every hole is a brilliant median line between strategy and straightforward golf, and the landscape will work both for and against you: fittingly, given the naturalistic creation of this course. 10/10

Challenge

With courses that feature wide expanses of treacherous grassy rough, there's a very fine line between too easy and nigh-impossible. Prairie Dog does a creditable job of trying to nail that line. I don't know whether it's a shame or not that the designer didn't see fit to set the prairie to its hardest settings, although surely if he had, we'd be looking at a stinker of a course. As it is, the fairways are just wide enough and the greens sufficiently flat to pick up a few birdies along the way. 7/10

Technical

Chuck Clark has been guilty now and then of turning out a somewhat hurried course. No such worries here. This is crammed with technical perfection and the best of the best – Mike Jones – is on board as a consultant. Marvel at one of the most realistic and technically advanced creations the APCD has seen. 10/10

Overall	Chuck's finest creation. A very clever course with down-at-heel class.	46/50
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Prairie Dunes Country Club

Steve Avery



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, heathland course	14 th hole, Par 4	70

Location

Kansas

Conditions

The greens aren't easy on F*/F*, but they're playable and that's where you should play them.

Concept

With no ill-will towards Steve Avery's immense APCD skill and his devotion in bringing this course up to date, I still find it something of a dry and unmemorable course. Even the trademark 8th and 17th holes, exciting though they look, come out with very little in their favour, and the rest are almost instantly unmemorable. Certainly, in reincarnation, there are a lot more reasons to play a round here, but I can't for the life of me see it having half as much drawing or staying power as Westchester or Oakland Hills. The widespread popularity of sections of this routine layout is frankly baffling. 4/10

Appearance

Beautiful paths, dense gorse and tranquil water features mark the more-than-significant remodelling that has taken place since the lacklustre Microsoft version. In fact, with the tee changes and re-modelling of elevations, it would not be inconceivable that it would have been easier for the designer to start from scratch. The heathland bushes, if anything, are something of a lowlight: they look somewhat blocky and lacking in variety from distance. But they do little on the whole to detract from Steve's wonderful craftsmanship. 9/10

Playability

Although the course is narrow and limiting, a round passes much happier amid these re-sculpted surroundings, and the renewed sense of believability in the grassy dunes surroundings helps set the tone. While the variety will rarely win prizes (nearly every approach is from between 120 and 140 yards), each hole is delightfully clear in terms of objective and lays all its challenges down upfront, making the course more of a cerebral test than a physical one. 7/10

Challenge

The addition of plenty of thick rough has done little to obliterate the opportunities offered by the shorter course length, and there's little in the landscaping to suggest that even really poor shots will be duly punished. The bunkers do come into play, particularly on the Par 3 holes, but they are almost routinely escapable, often with large swathes of green to accommodate the rescue stroke. Expect to be scoring in the 60s rather than 70s. 4/10

Technical

With the designer's reputation firmly cemented, Prairie Dunes does nothing to disappoint, even if the uncharitable opinion might be held that it could scarcely be worse than the original. Everything is much higher resolution, clones have been obliterated (for the large part), 3D buildings have been added and the plot is refined, varied and interesting. 9/10

Overall	Technically, right up there with the designer's best work, but the course itself just doesn't inspire confidence.	33/50
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Prestige Golf Club

Steve Pope & Matt McIntosh



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, mountain course	2 nd hole, Par 4	72

Location

No obvious clues given, but this feels quite Canadian.

Conditions

Plays OK on F*/F*

Concept

One of the most creative and exuberant fictional courses created for links, Prestige's success were very much rooted in the fact that there was still some realistic backing behind the course, and indeed the extravagant alpine lakes and waste areas don't feel particularly out of place, especially not after its recent overhaul, which emphasises the strategy behind the course. It's not likely to be to everyone's taste, but a luxurious creation it certainly is. 8/10

Appearance

With improved textures and bunkers bereft of their ugly black lips, there's no doubt that Prestige has been given a makeover to keep pace with the onset of time. Advancements in design mean flaws are more readily obvious, though, including lazy bunker blending and a proliferation of clones at treetop level. The panorama remains majestic throughout. 7/10

Playability

It really is no exaggeration to suggest that Prestige offers an ever-changing strategy on literally a shot-by-shot basis. Often courses with this sort of tag are full of forced carries and cynically-placed hazards, but other than a few too many split fairways, there's little of that artificiality here. The improved visuals from Matt should usher this course into the realms of a new generation of players. 10/10

Challenge

You'd do well to get round without hitting the water, but the easing up of the greens was just the right tonic for this course. By no means is it easy, though, and the varying types and depth of bunker are testament to many dropped strokes. The planting, too is used very effectively as part of the difficulty gradient and the strategy; many a player will be at risk of clipping tree-tops on their way to the green. 7/10

Technical

There's still very much a lack of finesse around Prestige, and in places an odd choice of course extras (what's with the fans?). The hole previews are a bit amateurish and dated too. But with a modern hand to tidy up the planting, the excellent original elevation work has been allowed to shine through, and if anything make more impact than the original. 7/10

Overall	An unconventional but dynamic and extremely exciting mountain course, which has received the final polish it always deserved.	39/50
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Prestnoch Public Golf Links

Dominique Bois



Description

Fictional, links course.

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, from edge of fairway.

Concept

As tends to be the case in the APCD, this is links golf with the dial turned up a little. The screenshot is the exception rather than the rule, but even then, some of the hole designs don't exactly match the ideal that was created for links golf in the 19th century. Despite this, there are several hallmarks, here: punishing gorse-like rough, short holes (in general), and playing to the landscape rather than the designer's whims. If you can leave a few sensibilities at the clubhouse, it's a great round in Ballylecum

Castle style. 8/10

Appearance

Magnificent planting sets the tone right from the first tee. A well-created combination of gorse and grasses, it really is the hallmark of the course. Add this to a perfect, not-too-neat, texture set, and the superb creation of the surrounding environment with an extended plot and (familiar-looking) panorama, and you're close to perfection. And then, sadly, you come across the coastline. The closing three holes were designed to be dramatic show-stoppers, but they fail because of some hastily designed breakers. 9/10

Playability

Even those who hold a few reservations about links-style golf should be wowed by Prestnoch. It uses all the best features of the classic Scottish links: a demand on the player to use the shape of the landscape, and frequent 'bail-out or shoot' risk-rewards. Every hole presents its own set of challenges, and the Hole Previews are tantalisingly vague, to which extent actually playing the hole is a bit like unwrapping your Christmas presents – you're pretty sure what to expect, but there's always an element of uncertainty. It all makes for enticing and addictive golf. 10/10

Challenge

Hit the generous fairways on the longer holes, and you should be in a very good position for birdie; miss them, and it'll cost you at least a shot. Although the rough, and all its attendant planting, is punishing, you really feel that no less is requisite on a proper links. Things such as bunkers play a fairly marginal part: your real battle is with the landscape. And it should make for an absolutely first-class battle. 10/10

Technical

Prestnoch might be one of the few courses that has been designed (or at least, tweaked) to match an existing panorama, and there have been no items overlooked, save of course some iffy shoreline work. It's unlikely to leave even the most fussy linkster unsatisfied. 9/10

Overall	Right up there alongside Ballylecum Castle, to which it makes the ideal complement. A bright, breezy and (mostly) believable Scottish links.	46/50
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Princeville

Microsoft



Description

Real, canyon course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

People always seem to remember Princeville as being better than it actually is. While it features some of the best and most innovative Par 5 holes in world golf, the majority of it is actually less special. The elevation changes are not as pronounced, nor the tropical shrubbery quite as impinging on play, as you might imagine, and you're left with an average amble in the countryside. Hawaiian countryside, admittedly. 5/10

Appearance

There are quite a lot of disappointing hard edges here, particularly visible around the hastily-added cartpaths. But the course is set in lush tropical settings, with a stunning panorama, and could hardly fail to be good looking. Some largeish elevation changes contribute to some impressive views, and while the technical aspects of the presentation take something to be desired, this is still a feast for the eyes. 7/10

Playability

18 holes will fly by. Every one of the amazing Par 5s will keep you guessing, and most holes offer a subtle potential for risk/reward. You'll need to bring the best in greenside play to do well, and some creative pin positioning requires flair and imagination. The most is made of elevation changes, from the sharp downhill holes to the surprisingly steep uphill approach to the last hole. It's an excellent course to play, let down slightly by some impenetrable rough in places and some less-than-exciting holes around the turn. 9/10

Challenge

One of the biggest disappointments of Princeville for me was its failure to live up to its reputation as a tough and challenging course. Even on difficult pin settings, I found putting way too easy, and the only thing that kept my score up was the occasional unplayable lie. The hazards and the OB didn't come into play at all, and I finished 4-under. Very disappointing. 4/10

Technical

Some hard edges, some shape problems, and some flawed and cloned planting. All problems that are familiar to the old Microsoft courses. But if Kapalua made a good job of avoiding them, why couldn't Princeville? 6/10

Overall	Certainly not the worst Microsoft course, but in light of its reputation a big disappointment. Don't expect any of the challenge or big elevations that you'd been led to believe.	31/50
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Punahalé

Mark Miller



Description

Imaginary, ocean course

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

This could, I suppose, be described as an ambitious cross between a tropical island course and a Pebble Beach resort. But perhaps only by the wildly optimistic and myopic. In reality, it's a bit of a mess with overblown elevations and rockwork, no real sense of location and only the occasional moment of coherence or impressiveness to hold it all up. Despite the fact that it's almost prehistoric by APCD standards, it's just not good enough.

1/10

Appearance

Old-fashioned in the extreme, and largely disappointing, Punahale's few moments of inspired planting do little to detract from the laughably inappropriate panorama, heavy hand with the elevations, and awful bunker extrusions. It doesn't even have the primitive ruggedness of The Island – it just looks a mess. 1/10

Playability

A lot of the overblown courses such as this do offer some basic playability in making a halfway-worthy challenge. Unfortunately, after a few holes it's hard to see much worthwhile in this. It becomes tedious more than frustrating, despite the artificial difficulty level and unfulfilled attempts to produce something novel. 2/10

Challenge

There's little remaining from the early days of APCD design that could be said to fairly test the refined modern golfer, and Punahale certainly doesn't live up to the ideal. You'd expect scores to run riot here, and – while, in fairness, there are harder courses available – it's all too easy to match those expectations. 0/10

Technical

There is some credit to be afforded to the ambition here, but frankly not enough to hold the course in any great standing. The shaping is reasonable enough, but the fine detail is virtually non-existent, and too often the textures run to the pixelated and ugly. The lack of clear hole routing is the final frustration. 2/10

Overall

A relic of the early days of APCD, almost worth having as a collectors' item, but probably not quite.

6/50

Puttenham

John Brooks



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, woodland course	6 th hole, Par 4	71
Location		
Surrey		
Conditions		
Some dodgy greens along the back nine suggest M*/M* is enough		

Concept

One of those slightly shorter 'executive'-length courses that retains a curious appeal when you can wallop it to bits with a computer ani, Puttenham has some very short and tasty holes – including possibly some of the shortest Par 4s seen on the game – and is presented very straight, true to its designer's style. You can always rely on a certain intimacy in a John Brooks creation, and this one is certainly no exception. With crystal clear presentation, including some excellent hole previews, this is as honest as they come. 8/10

Appearance

The planting has been toughened up here, and the elevations are bang on the money, but there are traces of hurriedness in some slightly odd, angular bunker construction and occasional patches where the textures and planting just don't meld together. But there has been effort applied to create suitable course buildings and suchlike, and the flavour of the course is all the richer for it. 7/10

Playability

While undoubtedly it's not the experience you'd get in real life, it's a blast to wallop your opening drive clean over the tree in the centre of the fairway and then continue to shape around the doglegs that make for some very reachable Par 4s. You'd never want to include this set-up in serious competition, but from the seriously shot middle tees, it's terrific to slog around in many, many strokes under par. Tellingly, the variety of hole designs is enough to stop this becoming monotonous. 8/10

Challenge

Unsurprisingly, it's not difficult to shoot very low scores here, particularly from middle tees which have been very generously placed. With most of the major pin-positioning problems taken out of play, much of your approach play is reduced to chip-and-tap-in. Very low scores are almost inevitable. 0/10

Technical

A lot of visuals are nice, although there are points where discernably less attention has been lavished than we might hope. John is rapidly cornering the market in public courses around the South of England, and his creations for the large part are turning out very playable indeed. 7/10

Overall	Cute and fun, but very very easy. Going for grandstand shots is the only way to play this.	30/50
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Quail Hollow Club

Tim Hagen



Description

Real, parkland course.

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 3, from bunker.

Concept

An impressive and understated little course, which belies its appearance and has a turn to match Augusta's in difficulty, Quail Hollow is very much worth anyone's while. Deceptively straightforward, several holes are little classics of design and yet the course steers well clear of gimmicky hole design and asks player purely to play holes on their own merits. It's unselfconsciously 'take it or leave it' golf, and yet has much more appeal than other country club layouts, thanks to finesse in the design and no little

acumen in this loving re-creation. 8/10

Appearance

Textures have been lovingly chosen and used, particularly noticeable around the hazards, although some of the transition are a little unconvincing. The 2D and 3D custom objects around the course add excellent tone, as does a skilful panorama. Best of all are the elevations, carefully handled and always to the advantage of challenging golf; never to the detriment of the golfer. 9/10

Playability

Many courses of this type prove to be unfulfilling and repetitive. Thankfully, Quail Hollow doesn't often stoop to this, although it has to be said that the hole lengths lack variety, and there aren't a huge variety of different hole strategies used. It's never dull, thanks to a sprinkling of clever and good-looking holes, but it lacks sufficient variety to be really engaging. 7/10

Challenge

Anyone playing the first half-dozen holes might be forgiven for thinking they'd be in for an easy ride. Open fairways and flat greens contribute to low scores. Thankfully, the target areas diminish gradually around the turn, the deep rough becomes a definite threat, and making par will often be a long way off. The course eases up towards the end: a fair challenge on average, but consistency certainly isn't the watchword. 7/10

Technical

The improvements that have been gradually made to this course are clear. Unfortunately, that is the main flaw: the fact that new textures and new planting are undeniably inserted into the existing course and not sufficiently blended with the existing landscape. There are still hard edges noticeable in the most unfortunate of spots, and as a consequence the course never experiences that ultra-real feel conveyed by the best 2k3 courses. 7/10

Overall	An entertaining little course: perhaps a bit rough around the edges, technically, but good fun to play and without any 'big name' course pretensions.	38/50
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Qualchan

Jack Hartt



Description

Real, lakeside course.

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Loosely based on a real course, the difficulty level at Qualchan has been pumped up, with small, tough greens and the hazards and deep rough brought heavily into play. There is some entertaining hole design and a strong sense of locality. But you get the feeling occasionally that the course has been built to play you, rather than let you play it. Not bad, but certainly pushy. 7/10

Appearance

There's a lot to look at at Qualchan, particularly in the way of water features. The network of lakes features heavily and is extremely well-constructed and planted. Elevation changes are used to good advantage and the heavily planted areas look genuinely menacing. For an old design, this shines. 9/10

Playability

This course will constantly serve up challenges and find new ways to test you out. It's a bit frazzling having to think over the pluses and minuses of every shot, and you wouldn't want to play a 72-hole tournament here. But the sheer variety keeps you hooked, and the likeable extras, including some decent custom sound, is a touch that helps the course stand out from the rest. 9/10

Challenge

Woah! Slow down. This course is much too hard. The deep rough is inescapable; the water ever present. Nearly all approach shots will flirt with a hazard in some shape or form, and the worst is still to come. The greens are maddeningly, infuriatingly difficult: not steep, but intricately contoured and almost impossible to line up putts upon. I shot a 77 and felt reasonably happy with my round. Not a course for the faint-hearted. 3/10

Technical

Being a 2001 product, this course does lack some of niceties of modern designs. But customisation (sound and visual) is used well throughout, there is a polished finish to most of the visuals, and texture transitions are – for the large part – admirable. A little more work on tidying the planting and elevations might be in order, especially the latter. Several greenside shots are rendered nearly impossible by gradient changes and this does significantly affect the game. 7/10

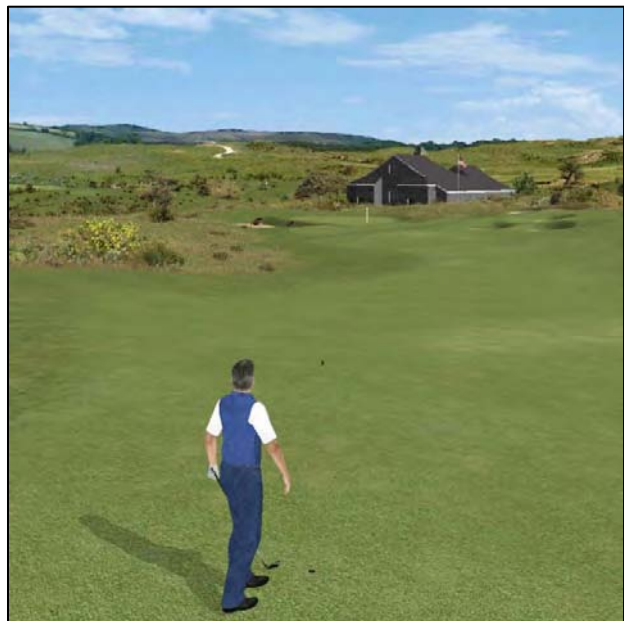
Overall

A real tester of a lakeside course. You'll take to it easily but come away dirty and frustrated. May cause harm to those suffering from stress.

35/50

Quidnet Golf Club

Jon Weinrieb



Description

Fictional, heathland course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

A delightful little course, with some testing and carefully thought-out holes winding their way down some coastal moorland. It's not really a links-style course – the hazards are too tightly placed, and the fairways too narrow – but each hole is well presented and a stiff challenge. 8/10

Appearance

This is an immaculately constructed golf course. Blends and textures look excellent, and the panorama is a beautiful backdrop to some excellent golf. Planting is first class – quite possibly the best I've seen – and the customisation of the buildings is authentic and pretty. The bunkers are a hybrid of sand and hard rock, which looks utterly convincing and menacing at the same time. Despite the read-me, I get the nagging impression that this is a British course, which are of course the best looking! 10/10

Playability

Quidnet requires a great deal of inventiveness if you are to stay out (and get out) of trouble. The varied planting of the deep rough and the rolling, changing elevations will call you to vary your approach shots continuously. Some, however, might get bogged down in constantly missing the too-narrow fairways and find this course a drag. It picks up on the wonderful closing stretch, though, and I defy any golf enthusiast not to be hooked. 8/10

Challenge

Despite the narrow fairways, punishing rough, and somewhat evil water hazards, Quidnet remains a fair course. The greens are easy to hit and easy to putt on, in typical links style. It's the sort of course where you'll gain and lose strokes in proliferation and hit relatively few pars. It's not an idealistic challenge, but it's a very, very good one indeed. 9/10

Technical

Utterly flawless. Seam blends are excellent, custom textures are perfectly chosen and the planting and panorama are utterly beautiful. This is the sort of course that I reserve perfect marks for. 10/10

Overall	A brilliant and exciting links-esque course. Can be frustrating at times, but the genius behind it shines through on repeated plays.	45/50
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Rams Hill

Kent Perrins



Description

Real, desert course.

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 4, from rough.

Concept

An oasis of green amid starkly uncompromising desert, Rams Hill is one of the better, more coherent desert courses out there. It's held together by this loving re-creation (including course notes from a seasoned local!), and course design that builds gradually to a water-packed golfing crescendo. It's all very nicely done, and a satisfactory departure from the Links norm. 8/10

Appearance

The vivid colour scheme hits you from the first tee and is strangely apt, if you're willing to believe the course is that well watered. There's some great Easter Egg-like treats along the way around, so keeping your eyes open is a must. All the way, the washed-out panorama reminds you that you're in a desert course. There are a couple of clones visible in the tree line, due to lack of selection from stock, and perhaps a few hard edges and extrusion marks are all that lets the designer down. 8/10

Playability

Rams Hill plays very nicely without being too threatening. It's a course to play moderately, and save your big guns for the Par 5 holes (particularly near the end, which should afford eagle chances). Your sense of location is helped no end by the personal hole previews, and this intimacy means you're quite happy to overlook the greenery in favour of good, relaxing golf. Precisely the sort of course we need more of. 8/10

Challenge

This is one of those odd courses which actually ease up towards the end. Yes, the last half-dozen holes are where the water hazards come into play. But, if you play conservatively and sensibly, they shouldn't be a major problem. This means that, bizarrely, the opening stretch is much tougher than the closing holes, which does feel somewhat topsy-turvy, if not a total let-down as you finish the round. On the whole, though, we're talking a very adequate challenge: there's a lot of adequate bail-out, and the greens and pin positions are tricky without being unfair. 8/10

Technical

The colour scheme will equally draw groups of people who love it and hate it, and there's certainly something to be said for including low level planting to hide the APCD's drawbacks, even on the type of course that wouldn't really welcome it in real life. Rams Hill has been well put together without a great effort to look sparkling, and that is just enough. 7/10

Overall	Barely a desert course, this is just about the best of that genre available. Expect smooth and playable, but don't expect fireworks.	39/50
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Real Club de Golf Campoamor

Mark Austin & Stephen Sullivan



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, tropical course	18 th hole, Par 5	72
Location		
Southern Spain		
Conditions		
Potentially F*/F*, but watch the pin positioning		

Concept

This a real get-out-and-hit-it course, with sprawling fairways and planting set well back from the target areas. Big hitters will love smacking the ball around Campoamor, and quite rightly, with Par 5s tantalisingly within reach and bunkers largely shallow and unthreatening. It's good touristy golf with one or two excellent holes, although the average Links slogger might find it a little bit wanting in light of good European Tour courses. Still, given the shortage of good Spanish and/or Tropical courses available, no-one's in a position to complain. 6/10

Appearance

The browned textures look very nice in the context of the location, and there's a great panorama to match, although it's important to try and get a matching sky for it. The plot is well handled and very little in the mesh looks out of place. It's a good updated rendition of a rather patchy original with a lot of the clones removed and the elevations smoothed over. 8/10

Playability

In true resort-golf style, there really is only one style of play here: big and vicious wins the day. It's not all bad news, and two or three holes shape nicely, but really the rest isn't demanding enough for the Links player to get much out. Not bad for beginners to work on their snap, I suppose, and good practice course for trying other swing styles or long-driving MoPs. 4/10

Challenge

As long as you don't tangle with the trees, there's little in your way to easy pars and birdies here. The heavy rough is tight up to the fairway, but because most of it is pretty flat, there are easy bail-outs all the way. Big hitters will relish setting up the Eagles, which can happen on nearly half the holes of the course. 2/10

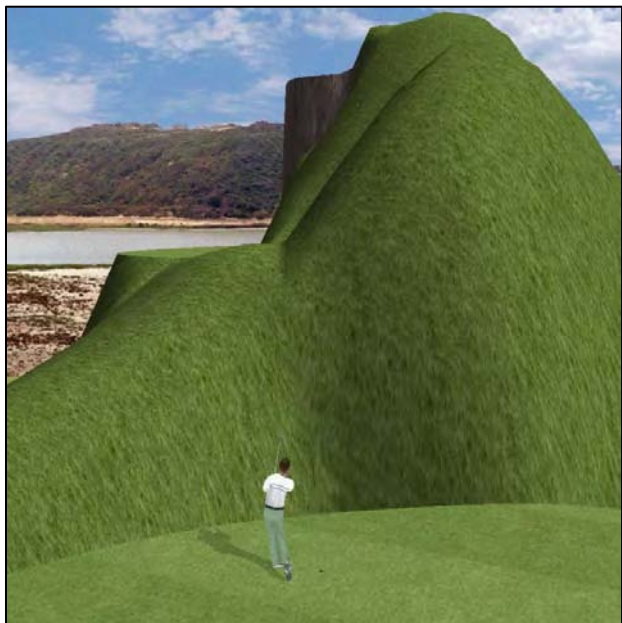
Technical

Stephen Sullivan has produced an excellent update, not least in terms of playability, of a course that was really only just worth downloading in the first place. But there is a little 'update panic' here, as happens quite often, of not really changing enough to give the course the excitement and locality it needs. It would be nice to see a little more of the course buildings and flora to leave more of an impression than the golf does. 7/10

Overall	A good update and a much-needed Spanish course for the collection, but the broad resort golf isn't really all it could be.	27/50
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Real Crazy Golf

JPO



Description

Imaginary, concept course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 4, from fairway on top of a mountain.

Concept

Crazy golf indeed. This mental-bending course tries to push shotmaking to the limit with a series of wackily – and occasionally very cleverly – designed holes. It misses more often than it hits, due to misjudgement of difficulty and landscaping and technical problems, but many people will revisit it for novelty value and to try and perfect a shot or two. 5/10

Appearance

This is not pretty in any way, shape or form. While the designer – creditably – has concentrated on providing a golfing test, he has lavished virtually none on the landscape. Extrusions are exceedingly crude and several bunkers and lakes are not extruded at all. Planting is monotonous, uninspired and awkward. The plot isn't big enough. I could go on, but suffice to say there isn't visually a redeeming feature on this course. 0/10

Playability

This course was designed to engage the player. Unfortunately, it's made a big slip-up in this area, because unless you can hit perfect shots time after time then the course becomes frustrating and annoying. The linear, 'skill'-centred nature of the holes means minimal risk/reward. There is some enjoyability, of course, due to the wackiness of the hole design, but it's not half as much fun as it should be. 5/10

Challenge

If you play this without mulligans, I predict you'll do very well for your patience to survive 18 holes. Several areas of the course are almost impossibly hard; incessant hazarding, tiny greens and massive elevations do not make for simple golf. To provide some sort of concession, the greens are nearly all pancake-flat, but this is just artificial challenge at its worst. 0/10

Technical

Very poor. Stock textures with harsh transitions, repetitive planting and very amateur elevation work all make the designer's lack of experience obvious. The panorama doesn't match, the shapes are distinct and separate, and there is no subtlety in any area of the course. However inspired the idea, the execution is woeful. 0/10

Overall	A wasted idea. Fun to play intermittently, but lacking the real finesse that makes other concept courses play so well.	<i>10/50</i>
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Rebecca's Garden

John Boomer



the design phase. 8/10

Description

Fictional, estate course.

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Garden indeed, albeit a very large and luxurious one. A tasteful array of planting, planked-off 'ponds' and clever use of rockeries means this is about as close as you'll ever come to a real garden course. It features some cleverly styled holes, often using the trees as a means to force the player to shape shots, and has a cosy feel, thanks to the surrounding walls and various contrivances meaning there is no need for a panorama. Rough around the edges it may be, but it's been well thought through at

Appearance

In many ways the course's weak link. The colour set is lurid and almost cartoon-like; there are signs of hastily-contrived elevations and the water hazards look hurried. The planting is almost believable, but a little too 'forced' and with a few clones. Bunkers are lipless. As a first design, it more than passes muster, but the look of the course does not sit well amongst the designer's lofty ambitions. 4/10

Playability

From the first tee, virtually every shot offers you a safe route and a risk. There are no hole previews, so it's often something of a mystery as to which one you'll pick. The mammoth third hole, in particular, seems to change direction each time you play it. Towards the end of a round at Rebecca's Garden, it all seems to get a bit silly and overblown, but for a quick nine holes, it's engaging enough. 7/10

Challenge

Mod players steer clear! The greens are bordering on the ludicrous here, and should definitely only be played with 1.05 or Mod S/S. To be honest, for the first half dozen holes or so, this course seems like little more than a pleasant stroll: it doesn't take a huge amount of work to pick up shots, and the landscape frequently works in your favour. Later on, when the greens start to get really silly, it's more luck than judgement. You'll come out bruised, but with a score fairly close to Par. 7/10

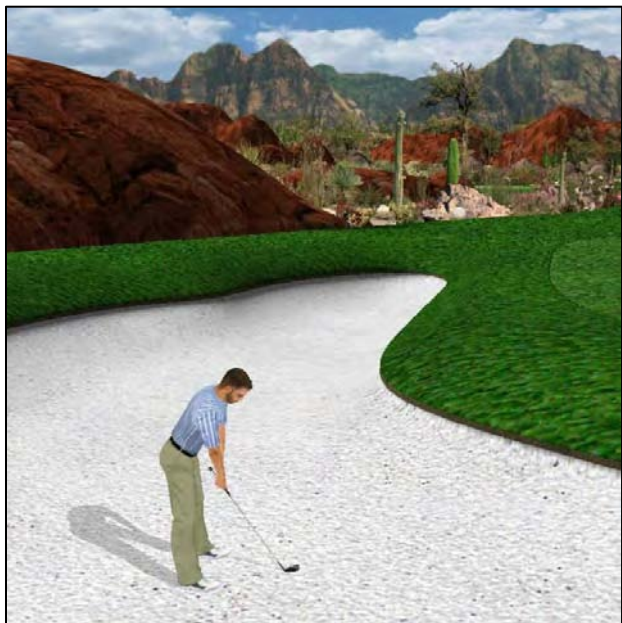
Technical

Time has been well spent in mixing up the planting and creating functional seam blends. There are a few clever uses of 3D that I noticed too. Natural landscaping needs to be this designer's next big focus: there are a host of oddities, even despite the 'garden' theme. 5/10

Overall	An intelligent and unusual first attempt. A shame about the indifferent elevation work: this could have become a cult favourite.	<i>31/50</i>
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Redcastle Desert Golf Club

Kyle Ostermann



Description

Imaginary, desert course.

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 4, from bunker.

Concept

A desert course with added pizzazz would be the most apt way to describe Redcastle. As well as many of the more usual desert features, it brings an oasis heavily into play and features some outlandish and painstakingly impressive bunker design and positioning. The desert is very highly planted, which makes it not very desert-like at all! Hole designs, though, are impressive and distinct, and put Redcastle a cut above the rest. 7/10

Appearance

The dark green used for the grass textures doesn't sit happily with a desert location, in my opinion, and count against the course, as do a few bad extrusion marks. But the rest is impressive. The panorama is convincing, the rockwork a talking point of the course (although I would have liked it to come into play more) and the variety of planting is hugely impressive. For an aging course, this still looks pretty damn good. 8/10

Playability

The exciting and innovative hole designs offer you a variety of options and styles of play (the 10th gave me three completely separate options off the tee), and the open fairways will be well-received by all types of swingers (if you'll excuse the phrase). As long as your hazard play is up to scratch, you'll have a riot here enjoying the views and solving some excellent golfing puzzles. The 18th is a real heart-stopper: a Par 5, with a genuine chance of making Eagle, and is worth waiting for because it turns so many rounds around. 9/10

Challenge

You'll undoubtedly flirt with the water at times, and the fairway bunkers are a constant menace. The desert surface has been made playable (and not too hard), but some of the greens are an utter nightmare, particularly with the Mod. It's just a bit too easy to wreck your round here. 4/10

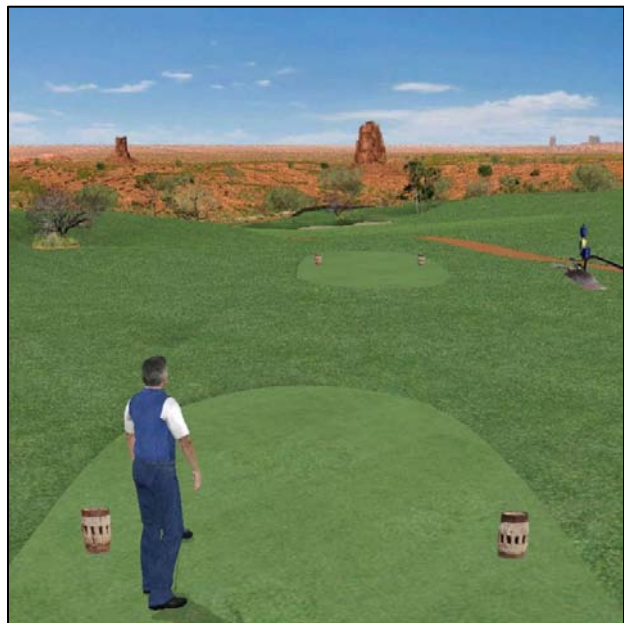
Technical

I think the texture choices could be better inspired, and some extruded edges could use a tidy-up, but on the whole this course ticks all the right boxes. Elevations are mixed without being unrealistic, and the planting and panorama are beautiful. Redcastle has really used the most of the first generation of APCD. 7/10

Overall	Certainly a course that's worth owning. A lot of fun and an awful lot of replayability. It's not ultra-realistic, but it has the golfer's best interests at heart and that counts for a lot	35/50
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Redhawk Ranch At Monument Valley

Jeff Sanders



Description

Fictional, desert course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

A really isolated desert course, Redhawk Ranch would terrify an agoraphobic with its low-planted surrounding and desert panorama stretching out unto infinity. It plays surprisingly links-like, though, and it would have been nice to see the red desert brought into play more. The designer hasn't gone overboard with trickiness until the outrageous final hole, which may or may not be a good thing, depending on your preference. 7/10

Appearance

There's not a huge amount to see here, given the flattish landscaping. Only the monument-studded panorama (sadly the monuments do not come into play) is of real interest. It would have been nice to see some altogether more yellowing grass textures, but the bunkers are inspiredly cast out of gravel-ridden sand, and the sandy paths matching the surrounding desert are a smart touch. 6/10

Playability

Many doglegs call for precision length of drive, and thankfully are not too closely guarded. Approach shots, too, will often need care and judgement. It's not always riveting stuff, but a round passes pretty inoffensively, thanks to some surprisingly good variety around the fairways and the challenges created by the hillocks in the rough. 7/10

Challenge

Disappointingly, given the stern reputation of too many desert courses, Redhawk Ranch is something of a pushover. There are just too many flat lies into open greens, and putts are often quite readable from 20 metres upwards. Gratifyingly, all the Par 5s are reachable with careful and unaggressive play. Birdies should almost be taken for granted. 4/10

Technical

Very sound indeed. A few hard edges mark the edge of shapes, and just a few things seem a bit too taken for stock, but there is a pleasing (and surprising) amount of customisation, and the elevations have been skilfully handled without shooting the course out of type. The atmospheric panorama really is the finishing touch as far as setting the scene goes. 8/10

Overall	One of the better desert courses, thanks to some restraint and cleverness on the part of the designer.	32/50
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Redstone Golf Club

Colin Jones



Description

Real, woodland course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Redstone earns its place as a prime USPGA tour stop with an impressive variety of styles winding through one, still very tangible, course. There are waterside holes, desert-like and forest-like holes, and even a sniff or two at links golf, despite being several hundred miles inland. There are strong influences from many of the classics, notably Augusta, in the fairway shaping and green complexes, and a proliferation of grandstands thrown in. They are 3D objects that you will either love or hate, but at least they

have the effect of lending an otherwise flat course a bit of height and distinctiveness. 8/10

Appearance

The lack of really riveting views is not necessarily the fault of the designer, but it does tend to take ones mind off the course, particularly when out of the woodlands. Otherwise, this is an effective, businesslike piece of design work, particularly in the textures and planting. The unremitting flatness does make you wonder if the elevation work has received short shrift, though. 8/10

Playability

A good deal shorter and more accessible than many of its Tour counterparts, Redstone is consequently open to some variation in tee and pin positions and conditions without hurting the play too much. This perhaps, is a key to its longevity, but it has first-round appeal too despite a lack of anything outstanding upfront. A slow burner of a course, it might not be big on strategy, but there's something compulsive and attractive here that will pull a player back several times. 8/10

Challenge

Naturally in its Texas locale, the course is relying on dry, swift conditions to hurt the player. But even despite that, the course is designed with sufficient moderation that it's not difficult for an accurate player to pick up birdies. With good fairway runs, the Par 5s particularly are a steal. The whole thing is helped by some unpunishing rough, although there's a fair argument to say that stepping it up would be unrepresentative of the real thing. 4/10

Technical

The work that has gone into the 3D sculpture is admirable, although it has to be confessed that the non-optional tournament objects are quite imposing. Elsewhere, all is in order: blends and textures are fine and the planting barely with fault. Fine-tuning the mapping and bunker lips would make all the difference. 8/10

Overall

One of the better Tour courses for everyday play; expect your competitive scores to be very low.

36/50

Ridgewood CC

Peter Beckwith



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Smooth, modern, very American, Ridgewood offers good no-frills golf, although some holes have been stretched close to tolerance. You'll be stretched by the tree-lined fairways and the deep rough, and the country-club aura of the course is easy to discern, but there's not the charm or old-fashioned golfing values of the course's more stately brethren, and the whole thing feels a bit cold. 6/10

Appearance

The textures have been dealt with perfectly, and the clean look of the designer's previous course has been carried across well. There does feel like a lack of depth, though – not much underplanting, and very little by way of course features. The panorama feels like it's set low and is barely discernable at points. It's not a poor looking course, but rather an unremarkable one. 7/10

Playability

While it plays better than similar championship courses, notably the excruciating Cog Hill, Ridgewood does have a habit of wearing down the player. You're rarely presented with a genuine option, other than playing very safe away from trouble, and the importance of hitting the fairways is almost mandatory with the dual threats of hole length and omnipresent deep rough. It's yet another course that is indispensable because of its place on the real tour, but that doesn't always conform with the pleasure you get from playing it. 5/10

Challenge

With bunkers adroitly positioned, and green complexes that are very difficult to attack, you'll always be struggling to obtain par. And on this sort of course, it works remarkably well. Ridgewood will exhaust you, but you'll give yourself a pat on the back for scoring a couple over par. 8/10

Technical

There's still work required here before the final release. The course is desperately in need of some custom objects, and the trees – such a big part of play – are not easy to pass through. Small problems like this are likely to become very major in competitive play. 7/10

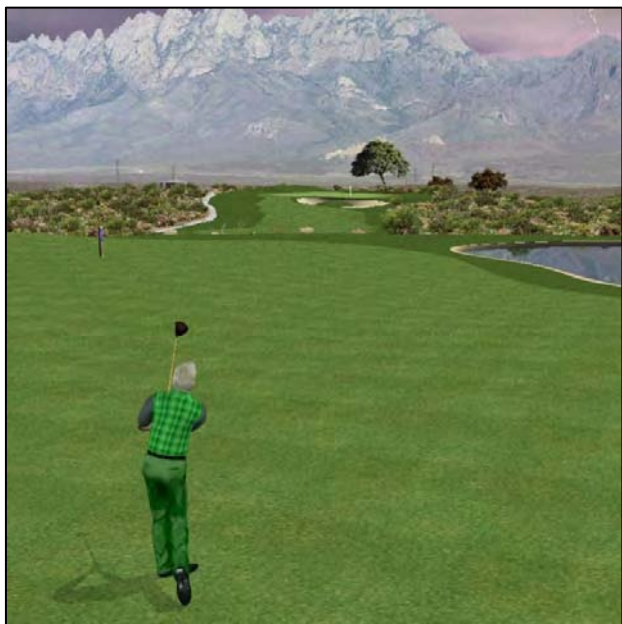
Overall

A fine championship course for playing competitively, but there's nothing here for the game's romantics.

33/50

Rio Grande Oeste

Doug Quillen



Description

Fictional, desert course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 5, from fairway

Concept

Almost other-worldly at times, Rio Grande marks a definite step up for its designer. This desert creation features some impressive ambition and more than a little talent for creating good golf – the impressive 14th hole is more than token evidence of that. More so than courses in a similar genre, this realistically feels like a country club or resort course, with a difficulty gradient to match. Certainly, the idea seems to get a bit tired into the back nine, which is a bit of a disappointment. 4/10

Appearance

Perhaps the worst of the visuals is the odd mix of planting, which puts some slightly inappropriate trees into this desert environment. There are some poor texture choices and mappings too. But on a more superficial level, there's not too much to find fault with, the panorama is great and the elevations feel appropriate to the environment (to whit: flat). 5/10

Playability

Swift, moderately engaging, but ultimately unmemorable golf. The course occasionally presents an interesting play problem, but too many holes just haven't been pitched at a similarly problematic level. It's not easy to become really involved with the course, which is a pity. 4/10

Challenge

The bouncy rock desert hardly makes its present felt, except in a couple of amusing cases. The rest of the course is just too flat, open and featureless, and scores – particularly towards the end of the round – are liable to plummet. 2/10

Technical

Certainly an improvement on bottom-place holder Jalapeno Canyon, although perhaps that in itself isn't saying much. In fairness, the progress made by the designer is clear and the small inconsistencies do not affect the fact that the course is quite playable. You wouldn't blame people for wanting something a little more, though. 4/10

Overall	Not so much Rio Grande as Rio Mediocre. A small impression and a small score from a pretty average course.	19/50
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Rivard

John Brooks



Description

Real, marshland course

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 3, greenside.

Concept

Rivard is a real course with some tweaks in the APCD-process. It's clear that – like so many Florida courses – it depends heavily on its ponds, ditches and streams to provide the challenge and differentiate itself from a British country course (which, in many other respects, it resembles strongly). There's a couple of stimulating hole designs, too, based around split fairways and subtle dog-legs. The tweaks themselves are the real disappointment, though – it's just a bit too obvious where landing-point

fairway bunkers have been placed, and – at the risk of making it a bit too easy – the course really doesn't need them. I would suggest a little bit less fiddling would be in order. 4/10

Appearance

A lack of time spent is sadly evident here; the course surroundings aren't terribly well communicated by blocky, half-finished buildings. The planting is distinctly 'off', too, plenty of clones being evident and several trees that just don't fit in with the semi-tropical climate. Some good high-resolution texture use helps to hold the course up, but it's just a little too easy to find the flaws. 5/10

Playability

This was pleasant to an extent, but there were one or two factors which really tainted the round for me. The odd course ambience was one; the other, most unforgivably, was the mis-labelling of some regions as out of bounds. This was a serious flaw which could have major repercussions and should serve as a warning against the course. 5/10

Challenge

Short enough to really take a hammer at some of the greens, Rivard's easy-going conditions and lack of greenside hazarding will yield short putts and birdies. Only those few holes that require a bit of subtlety and throttling down will provide the opposition. Expect low scores. 3/10

Technical

Some courses are generally sound technically, but lose plenty of marks because of a critical flaw that has an impact on one's game. No matter how pretty a course, flaws such as the OB error here are just unacceptable. Hence, low marks until something gets fixed. 4/10

Overall	Perhaps a little better than its rating might indicate, Rivard still suffers from one or two flaws which you don't need to be eagle-eyed to pick up upon.	21/50
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Rivendell

Eric Hruby



Description

Imaginary, concept course.

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

The premise could have been ghastly. A Middle Earth golf course sounds like a teenage fantasy fiction dream which so, so easily could have been terrible and not golf worthy at all. But, stunningly, Rivendell is not like this. This is a genuine, if testing, round of golf and features some original and exciting hole design. Moreover, if you read the Read Me and hole previews, there is genuine plot and continuity riding through the course. Not just a round of golf, but a work of art. 10/10

Appearance

A course in a fantasy environment give the designer a real excuse to go to town, and that's exactly what's happened here. Stunning use of rock faces, planting, elevation and customisation all combine with a beautiful panorama to make an absolutely mindblowing environment. Amazing views are available at every hole, bar none. As close as a course could come to getting 11. 10/10

Playability

With an emphasis very much on target golf, and several cute play options, Rivendell knows how to grab a player's attention. A host of custom sound effects and objects guide you round. There is a whole heap of joy to be had in the Middle Earth allusions – and I'm not even a LoTR fan. Hate the books, hate the films, and love the golf course. One aspect not to love is the long render times, which can slow down play to a ridiculous extent. 9/10

Challenge

I'm afraid the course slips up here, big time. It's maddeningly, infuriatingly, almost impossibly hard. It's too easy to lose balls in water, out of bounds, or in the gorge. The greens are a nightmare and the fairways tight and unforgiving. Breaking par would be considered an excellent achievement and any birdies should be treasured. 2/10

Technical

Obviously a massive amount of work has gone into this. How else could the rock textures look so real or the custom features grab your attention? All that's held it back for me is more than a touch of 'extrusion' edge, particularly noticeable around tee boxes and fairways, but even that won't deny it full marks. 10/10

Overall	An amazing concept brought brilliantly and skilfully to life. Looks amazing, but plays hard – very hard!	41/50
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River Creek Estates

Steve & Tim Bausch



Description

Fictional, estate course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

The Bausch Brothers' masterwork, River Creek is a secluded golfing heaven. Most holes are thought-provoking, if a little convoluted, and water is a constant menace, meaning that the layout won't appeal to everyone. But those who want to pit their skills in a sublime layout will be perfectly at home: this is an amalgam of the best bits of Eagle Mountain, Lost Lake Legend and Van Zandt Kanaal, all set somewhere totally tranquil and ideal. 8/10

Appearance

A deliberately clean-cut look removes the need for much low-level planting, and it's reserved for the hazards and other off-course areas, where it works all the more brilliantly. Every Par 3 is a dazzling knock-out, there's some good-looking custom 2D and 3D work where required, and elevations are perfectly in keeping with the environment without being having an overt pressure on your game. One of the best. 10/10

Playability

With the small proviso that this design strays towards the fantastical, there's plenty for everyone to adore at River Creek. You're throttled back off some tees, but the short hole length helps it not to matter. The remainder is a feast of ideal target golf, with plenty of room to incorporate strategy, inventiveness and risk taking. 9/10

Challenge

Your round of golf is a major exercise in fending off the water hazards, and they will invariably cost strokes. Thankfully, the greens are gently-bunkered, and hitting the fairway will go a long way towards helping your score. I wouldn't pretend it doesn't need skill: you'll need to have a good, consistent game to beat this course. 8/10

Technical

I can't see many – if any – obvious flaws here. The planting is both lavish and restrained as appropriate; there is some neat small-scale 3D work and customisation. The environment is impeccable and totally believable thanks to the designers' consistency. Great work, boys! 10/10

Overall	A hidden and much under-rated gem, River Creek is a sublime test of golf in a veritable golfing fairyland.	45/50
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Riverside Valley

Peter Gemmill



Description

Fictional, heathland course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Peter's photo-realistic real course creations have been stunners: turning his hand to fictional creation has revealed a few prejudices. There is a lot of gimmickry and few original holes at Riverside Valley, a course which feels contrived and clearly designed for computer golf. While there are plenty of special moments, the overuse of water and design of these discontinuous holes just doesn't feel right at all. 5/10

Appearance

Riverside Valley has been given a few make-overs with increasingly better textures, and while the latest set look fine in isolation, the colour-matching as a whole takes something to be desired. Take your eyes off the plot and there are some odd things going on around the horizon too. Planting, as has always been the case, is a real strong suit here, but the care in the water and bunker lips won't disappoint either. 8/10

Playability

Pulling plenty of old golfing chestnuts out the hat perhaps hasn't made for the most original round, but there's a nice sense of escalation as you pull round the turn and down the back nine. The biggest disappointment is the imbalance of hole lengths: why is one Par 4 on the back nine longer than the neighbouring Par 5s? And for that matter, why are the Par 5 holes such a let-down? 7/10

Challenge

There is a lot of unbalance here. The long holes are frequently quite trite and some too-easy pin positions make approaching unguarded greens little more than a formality. The over-use of water is clearly intended to provide a counterbalance to this, but the ponds only come into play if you're really missing the snap. The whole thing is quite a misjudgement. 4/10

Technical

Nary a flaw here, bar an occasional hard edge and funny-looking path. Clearly the designer has produced exactly what he set out to plan, albeit a course which doesn't quite ring the right chords. 9/10

Overall

Riverside Valley certainly won't disappoint, but it just doesn't offer enough that's new for the golfer.

33/50

Riviera CC

Chuck Clark & Pat Auge



Description

Real, estate course.

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Riviera became a Microsoft favourite because it brought the real world a tricked-up target course under the pretence of being a proper country club and tournament layout. It helps that it was also the desired getaway of many Hollywood glitterati. Tight, big-lipped bunkers, mid-green bunkers, grassy swales, it's all here. To be honest, it always feels artificial and nowhere near as playable as – say – Southern Hills. But, by making every shot a target test, it's a lingering memory. Several holes, the blind 18th

included, are little gems and will stand the test of time on behalf of the rest of the course. 6/10

Appearance

With these two designers on board, you can only expect Riviera to be a stunner. And, thankfully, it's true. From the elevated first tee, affording panoramic views, to the steps leading up to the clubhouse from the eighteenth green, the whole thing radiates class. Best of all is the array of custom trees: they're easy to overlook, but only when you're close up can you see what a magnificent and varied job has been done. 10/10

Playability

The problem with Riviera is that a lot of people will get stuck into the course and think "so what?" It's flawless in terms of atmosphere and course design, but in that same breath it's exceedingly similar to at least a dozen other courses on the market. Gimmicks or no gimmicks, this just doesn't provide enough that's new. But, if you can pretend to be Bing Crosby or Kevin Costner, you'll have a good enough time. 6/10

Challenge

The course has been specifically designed for the golfer, without letting fripperies like the natural landscape get in the way. The rough has been beefed up, and any shots off the (medium-ish) fairways are going to result in a whole heap of misery. There's also some uncannily awful bunker positioning. A decent challenge, then, but not a natural one by any means. 8/10

Technical

Nothing to fault here. This puts the original to shame through magnificent customisation, 3D work and attention to detail. It's nice that Chuck Clark can make courses that don't look like cartoons too! 10/10

Overall	Not the mould-breaking experience that others might claim, if only because the original template is so damned artificial.	40/50
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Robert Trent Jones GT - Judge

Microsoft



Description

Real, marshland course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

The water table is high enough here to make the grass virtually swampland, and the still waters play a terrifying part on many a hole. Up to the turn, there are nine valid opportunities to take a drop and penalty stroke, and good luck avoiding them. Hole design is relatively forgiving, even though it is geared around missing the water. Thankfully, the course comes across as rather multi-dimensional, which can only be held in its favour. The MS version is adequately put together, and carries the

genuine swampy feeling. 9/10

Appearance

There's little to fault here, even though the whole doesn't quite exceed the sum of its parts. It's nice to see efforts at bunker lips, and from a distance the marshland looks really quite impressive. But the deep greens take some getting used to, and to be honest the whole course is just a little rushed. 8/10

Playability

The Judge course makes a big thing of requiring precision and exact shot planning. It's not a course for those who lack focus, and you will quickly find that missing the snap will result in misery. Luckily, that frisson that only comes from playing across the lakes is ever-present, even on the slightly lacklustre turn, and there's plenty of return value in simply coming to make all your shots. 7/10

Challenge

Certainly no pushover, this one. Certain holes are notable for swallowing balls into the water, and to get around with the ball you started with is something of a major achievement. The bunkers, too, take their fair share of captives. When you consider that the majority of the Par 5s are by no means guaranteed birdie holes, you're lucky to escape with a Par. 7/10

Technical

It's a little too blocky to rank alongside the best, but The Judge really does reflect its designers in a positive light. The planting is sometimes a little ordinary, and there's a hard edge or two available, but many of the design weaknesses have been well-camouflaged. 7/10

Overall	A water-filled layout that compares well to some of the best fictional courses, and shows that they're not necessarily all that way out.	38/50
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Robert Trent Jones GT - Links

Microsoft



Description

Real, lakeside course

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

I don't know how the course got the 'Links' moniker. This is very much inland, forest-enclosed and playing around one large lake. Some of the immediacy of The Judge course is lost, leaving this a more casual round, although no less clever in terms of strategic merit. There's plenty to be thought through in your approach to the holes around the turn, and the raised greens only add to the tension. 8/10

Appearance

This doesn't really have the same visual appeal as its brother course, due in the main to some very poor texture choices and lack of efficient blending. Despite some attractive low-level planting, there are times when the course is just jarring on the eye. Why it couldn't be an equal to The Judge is beyond me. 6/10

Playability

There's something smooth, relaxed and unhurried about this course that appeals greatly. Although you're made to play to the designer's whim from time to time, there's very little feeling of being throttled back. Rather, there's more a contentment in being allowed to set up pinpoint approaches, and a satisfaction in sinking the birdie putts. This is laid-back, although not horizontal, golf at its best. 9/10

Challenge

Some of the trickiness of The Judge course has certainly not been translated. The biggest difference is not having the water directly in play nearly as often, although the astute golfer will also realise that penal lies are far less frequent and that the in-play elevations are more apt to hitting the greens. In fact, I seldom required my recovery skills during testing: as good an indicator as any as to the course's difficulty. 6/10

Technical

It does seem peculiar that this couldn't quite reach the same levels as the other RTJ course, but the glaring truth remains that the textures are ill-chosen and that the low-level planting aren't quite in the same class. More could easily have been done, especially given the course is in a less prepossessing location. 6/10

Overall	A dream to play, but not achieving the same pinnacles as some of the other MS2003 courses.	<i>35/50</i>
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Robina Woods

Peter Gemmill



Description

Real, lakeside course

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

As green as Australia gets, Robina Woods makes a big thing of its difficult conditions and water hazards. It's a course that very much feels landscaped from scratch rather than inserted into existing conditions, and one aspiring uselessly to American Championship standards. It doesn't help that most holes, therefore, are either unmemorable or annoyingly hard. It just doesn't feel like a course should. 6/10

Appearance

The largest course file available for Links should hint at something special, and indeed that is the case. The massive variety of planting and buildings that stud the course are little short of miraculous. There's a brilliantly blended-in backdrop to match and numerous views that are – quite simply – just very special. 10/10

Playability

Thankfully, a large file doesn't translate to long render times in this case, and the gameplay is assured if not exactly stimulating. You find yourself playing safe far too often, and those who prefer the 'grip it and rip it' school of thought might end up in some serious trouble. It's a bit like playing poker with Granny: safe and steady will win you money. 6/10

Challenge

I don't know if it was just because I was off-form, but the landing areas seemed nigh-on impossible to hit and every water hazard, stretch of deep rough and bunker cost at least a shot. Thankfully, the green complexes are mostly receptive – all your woes will be from the tee – if only you can reach them in regulation. 5/10

Technical

I can only wonder at the amount of work that must have gone into the importing of custom objects. Sadly, though, planting does not alone make a course. I don't feel the elevations are convincing as natural landscape (where on Earth did the big hill on the 17th come from?), and I found at least one planting error which resulted in an invisible steel object, which spoiled the round for me. Otherwise, Robina Woods has clearly been the recipient of loving care. 8/10

Overall	An inspiring effort, but less a golf course than – say – Wagga Wagga is. Problematic but not disastrous.	35/50
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Rockwater Resort

Joe Cassar



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, canyon course	8 th hole, Par 4	71

Location

The designer states there is no specific Mediterranean influence, but things rings true of Spanish cliff tops.

Conditions

Plays OK on F*/F*

Concept

I doubt there can be many examples of an entire course being conceived merely from the panorama, but when that pano is a Daniel Watson creation, this does become understandable. The course is semi-mountainous, and some extravagant rockworks play a large part in the strategy. Holes are designed according to the ‘maximum fun’ principle; the course in truth straddles the line between fictional and outright imaginary, but some interesting and more subtle bring it back down to Earth. If it wasn't for the feeling of isolation between holes, this would be much better. 6/10

Appearance

The upgraded textures and their deep colours seem a bit damp for a Mediterranean environment, and the rough gets badly stretched in parts. There are some pretty rough extrusion marks in various camera angles, too. Some of this can be overlooked in view of some excellent planting, particularly at low level, that is appropriate and even evocative of Southern Europe, and tasteful customisation and 3D work. 6/10

Playability

Rockwater Resort is more likely to stick in the mind for the good reasons than the bad. The impressive range of doglegs calls for a tight strategy and a variety of shots. Cynical hazard placement is not the concern it was at Zachary O, but some players still might feel browbeaten by the lack of access to the greens – and thankfully there are few escape shots that are too hard. After a while it does start to get a bit too same-y in demanding you hit exactly the right part of fairways. 7/10

Challenge

While no part of this course screams unfairness, it'd be a steadfastly great player who came away with a sub-par score. Length, hole-shape, green shape and slope (not excessive, but there are still few gimmes) and bunkering all combine to make a firm test. Your best bets to pick up shots are on the long holes, but even that is far from guaranteed. Best not to make this one part of your championship rotation for now. 5/10

Technical

The strides taken forward are clear, and certainly I will find myself looking forward to a third or fourth course. Even though there is still room for improvement in the handling of the surface and some aspects of course and hole design could use tightening, Rockwater Resort sounds the optimistic note of a designer heading very much in the right direction. 6/10

Overall	Enjoyable golf with a few great holes in a setting that inspires creativity.	30/50
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Rocky Nuts

Chuck Clark



Description

Imaginary, canyon course.

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

A totally bizarre and warped course from Chuck Clark's equally warped mind. With massive elevation changes, rocky mountains to send your ball on a merry dance, and fairways criss-crossing as they please, it's certainly a unique experience. It's not quite as innovative as it should be, though, relying too heavily on the rocky desert as a gimmick, and I don't see why Chuck shouldn't have really pushed the boat out with a multitude of bank shots, long rolls and other such features. 6/10

Appearance

Given its overwhelming presence, the rocky cliffwork looks pretty good, scrubbily planted and rarely stretched as a texture, although there are several occasions where the elevation changes (with accompanying fairway or path) completely defy belief. I'm not fond of the rock surrounds on the tee boxes, either: because a lot of them drop away sharply off the front, it does look like you're floating more often than not. There are several impressive views to be had, though, so it's certainly not all bad. 6/10

Playability

This should be an absolute hoot to play, assuming that no-one in their right mind is going to take it seriously, and to a large extent that's true. Sadly, though, a little too often you can get caught up trying to make a seemingly-possible but frustratingly difficult shot, and having the desert all play OB does very little to help this. 8/10

Challenge

Thankfully, it is unlikely that this course was designed to shoot low upon. OB penalties will cost you many shots, and some tough greenside bunkering just adds to the challenge. The landscape tips plenty of balls down into the water hazards too. Some big carries might seem prohibitive to those using PS. Birdies are quite possible to come by, but the course is by no means easy if you're going to be honest with the Mulligans. 5/10

Technical

It's hard to rate the technical ability when the outcome is clearly so bizarre. I will limit myself to saying that the elevation work might have been more moderate in places, and that perhaps some more yellowed grass textures might have been apt. 7/10

Overall	A definite Links oddity. Certainly not unplayable, but inevitably frustrating and you get the impression it's not quite fulfilled a crazy potential.	32/50
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Roganstown Golf & Country Club

John Aherne



Description

Real, estate course

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 4, approach.

Concept

Plenty of designers have plumped for a down-to-Earth links version of a local course. John Aherne took the concept a step further and actually made a business of it! This course represents a superb advert for the golf club and, what's more, a superb round of golf. Although unprepossessing, there's some exciting hazard placement at Roganstown, a good variation in green complexes, and the whole thing is topped off by the magnificent 11th hole. This is much, much more than just another home-town course. 9/10

Appearance

At a time when so many designers are putting their efforts into huge, barren, championship courses, this is almost a return to old values. The gorgeous water planting, variety of stakes and 3D bridges and fences don't seem to be replicated as often as they used to. The planting crowns the whole thing, being photo-realistic and varied. 10/10

Playability

Roganstown takes the prize for atmosphere. The sounds – yet another aspect which is too often neglected now – are placed superbly and you really get a lifelike feel for the course's surroundings. The hole types don't disappoint, either – the Par 3s are genuinely inviting and there are 2-shot and 3-shot Par 5s. There's a decent amount of repeatability too: don't get the impression that these holes are one-way only. 9/10

Challenge

While I'm sure the course is a decent challenge for its club golfers, in Links it suffers from the same problem as many others. You'd be pretty desperate to clock up a number of bogeys here, although thankfully the intelligent hole design and some realistically challenging greens prevent silly scores. 3/10

Technical

The minutiae of the course, in this case, are really a credit to its designer. The effort to get things correct is obvious, and this course is the most involving and stimulating yet from John Aherne. 10/10

Overall	A glorious 'little' course which belies its status with some adventurous but realistic hole designs.	<i>41/50</i>
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Rosewood Golf Club

Jamey Hribal



Description

Fictional, woodland course.

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 4, from rough

Concept

Liberally surrounded by grubby rough areas, Rosewood is a clash of styles. Its layout and visuals are convincing enough, but some aspects just don't sit happily on the eye. Was the excess of flowers (particularly by the water's edge) necessary? Why, when there has been so much loving attention paid to custom planting, were so few buildings deemed necessary? What on Earth is going on with the crazy arrows on the hole previews? That which distracts the eye can also, sadly, detract from the

game. Rosewood is half-baked, for half-marks. 5/10

Appearance

The designer, as with all his courses, has incorporated a strong visual style. The blends are pleasantly done, and the low-level grass and heather planting is very easy on the eye. But look a little closer. What on Earth are the paths made of? Why the brown rings in the middle of every bunker double-blend? It's those few little things that prevent the course from being all that it might. 8/10

Playability

Smooth appearances and relatively conventional layouts have clearly been the designer's watchwords here. It might remind people that smoothness and conventionality are two fairly hefty paving stones on the path to boredom. Sure, you'll remember the nice looks of the course, but the holes – even the first few skirting the lake – just all fade into the background. It's unlikely to be a course you'll return to time after time. 5/10

Challenge

Clearly there has been some careful testing done at Rosewood. Nothing, from hazarding to rough to green elevations, is done to excess. Instead, cleverly, each is used carefully to inspire good shot play and not solely to punish. Consequently, what emerges is a nicely-tuned course suitable for all levels of ability and conditions. 9/10

Technical

Jamey is a designer with a strong visual style, and the capabilities and patience with the APCD to bring his dreams to life. In the case of Rosewood, there are just one or two niggling problems and, of course, the question of what is being done to make the course stand out from the others. 8/10

Overall	Competent without being terribly memorable for its golf. Enjoy the visuals, but don't expect Pebble Beach.	35/50
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Rotherly Park Golf Club

Leigh Seaman



Description

Fictional, farmland course

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

An appealing blend of ideas has been brought together here by Leigh. Rotherly Park is a short Par-70 course set amid fields of vivid yellow rapeseed, but paying some homage to Pinehurst in its colourings and plantings, particularly the dry straw-coloured wild grasses. It's certainly no hit-and-run course: these holes demand careful and prudent play, without resorting to silliness in terms of the number of hazards or hole shapes.

The one nagging feature for me was that the majority of these holes seem

to play uphill: a loophole in an otherwise fine fictional creation. 7/10

Appearance

Leigh Seaman continues his excellent visual work here. The textures are detailed to perfection, and the planting of reeds and lilies in the water are gorgeous. Bunkers are superbly moulded and lipped. There is the occasional off-putting view, such as the harsh yellow rapeseed fields, and a few trees which just don't appear properly scaled. 9/10

Playability

A cracking set of holes, this. Plenty of strategy and recovery play is required, despite the course's short length, and you'll reconsider even taking a driver out on the course with you. The green complexes are especially clever and capable of kicking errant approach shots into gullies or dangerous bunkers. Par 5s are at a premium, so you'll get plenty of practice at accurate drive-and-approach play. 8/10

Challenge

I've criticised a few of Leigh's courses in the past for being too easy: Rotherly Park thankfully has a few more teeth to it. The length is more of a pre-requisite for careful play than an easily-overcome obstacle, and there is a shortage of genuine birdie opportunities, thanks to some clever design. I felt as if the course could use another layer of rough, though; there just isn't enough penalty imposed on missing the fairways. 6/10

Technical

Despite a few visually unappealing problems, there's not very much at fault here. The texture work and layout of the course are well up to keeping with the quality we expect from the Seaman family. 9/10

Overall	A terrific, short layout with only the occasional trapping distracting from good, solid golf.	39/50
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Royal County Kilderry

Mike Jones



Description

Fictional, farmland course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

In some ways, Kilderry feels like Mike Jones' spiritual home. It's extraordinarily understated: a links-esque course with generous fairways, hugely punishing deep rough and complete lack of pretension in the hole design. And yet the whole thing is beautifully compulsive: one of the few fictional layouts with no surprises and a contender for the most lifelike course design we've ever seen. 10/10

Appearance

It's hard to believe that this course is suffixed with '2003', for there is real sophistication in the textures, the blends and the understated course surrounds. Possibly the only weak link is a shortage of density in the grass planting, which for the most part looks OK, but does occasionally reveal some sparse artificiality. 9/10

Playability

Magic stuff. Seemingly without having to put any trademark holes in front of you, Kilderry is impulsive and abnormally good at drawing you into its environs. It's difficult to keep coming up with superlatives for the sheer brilliance in Mike Jones' course design, but more so than any great APCD work, you should take a trip out on this course to see what realistic, lifelike golf design is about. It's difficult to believe this has ever been realistically matched. 10/10

Challenge

While it's nice to see a course that isn't stretched beyond reasonability for many of us, the accommodating acreage of this course does mean that some approach shots will tend to the simplistic, and it's really a bit too easy to clock up a round a few strokes beneath par. Leaving the driver in the bag for this one and negotiating the doglegs with common sense will pay off to the tune of a few strokes at least. 7/10

Technical

It's worrisome to look at some of the bumps around the green and think they've been created by a mesh adjustment too many, but it might just be the case that here is a weak link in Kilderry's construction. Harsh it may be, but small flaws stand out a long way on immaculate courses. 9/10

Overall	The acme of underplayed course design. Nothing outstanding to look at, but a dream to play.	45/50
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Royal Dornoch Championship Course

Dominique Bois



Description

Real, links course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 4

Par

70

Location

Scottish Highlands

Conditions

I'd be inclined to stick to M*/M* and some strong wind

Concept

A classic in the purest sense of the word. Here we have one of the oldest Links courses in the country, still bearing the hallmarks of its design nearly a century and a half later. It's truly a seaside course, as authentic and realistic as they come, thanks to a loving re-construction by Dominique Bois. The landscape is utilised perfectly, as is the ubiquitous gorse – as testing a natural obstacle as they come. Above all, though, this is one of the few courses with enough distinct personality to make it unique and standout – a job well done! 10/10

Appearance

There's many awe-inspiring uses of the APCD here – from the integration of the periphery of the course into the panorama, and the multitude of 3D objects that dot the course. The stony seafront is excellently constructed, and there is depth and variety to the planting on a course with barely a single tree. I felt there was a hard texture transition or two, particularly between the heaviest regions of rough, which needed toning down or covering. 9/10

Playability

This is proof that a good course doesn't need signature holes. Simply picturing the fact that this course has played the same way for well over a hundred years should be enough to tempt most golfers onto the links, and the experience is done justice by excellent ambient sound and hole previews. Dornoch's not inconsiderable length prevents it being walked all over by the computerised golfer, and there are almost Easter Egg moments to be found as you negotiate this piece of seafront. I don't think it's feasible to grow bored of this course. 10/10

Challenge

Perhaps it's false expectations built by the modern generation of harder links courses, but I was a little disappointed with the challenge of Dornoch's pot bunkers. They just seemed a little easy to negotiate, and when the fairways are this open, then par is just asking to be broken. The walkover is mitigated to no little extent by tricky greening (only to be expected where all the humps and hollows of the landscape remain) and the knowledge that hitting the gorse will almost certainly need to result in a drop, but it's still a little easy. 5/10

Technical

Delightful execution in so many areas that even the occasional visual erring can be overlooked. I've always thought Dominique's work with the APCD was under-rated: here is more than adequate proof of my convictions. 10/10

Overall	Wild, authentic and natural links golf in one of the most traditional venues. A must-have.	44/50
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Royal Kenya Country Club

Mike Jones



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, heathland course	12 th hole, Par 4	71
Location		
Kenya, or thereabouts, one assumes.		
Conditions		
Playable on F*/F*		

Concept

An unusual inclusion in the canon of Mike Jones course, this is a real-life construction, albeit disguised with a new name and a token giraffe or two, and shorn of the fanciness that hallmarks Mike's imaginative hole design. Indeed, it's a bit out of the mould for African courses as well; many holes could be right at home in the Yorkshire or Northumberland hills. But there are a lot of classy designs on the back nine to elevate Royal Kenya well above the norm, and the inimitable class of Mike Jones helps just a little bit too. 7/10

Appearance

he lovely hi-res textures are this time over-shadowed by shadowy, realistic and extensive grass planting – the one reminder of the veldt in this course. All the usual boxes are ticked, although the creeks do – from certain angles – look somewhat odd, and the construction of the bunkers feels a little routine after a while. 9/10

Playability

A brilliant sense of location underpins Royal Kenya, and the holes cohere very well. The standout holes play very well, but there is a nagging sameness to the extensive straight fairways and bottlenecking fairway bunkers. It's undoubtedly a course that you'll want to come back to, but it might seem just a touch too familiar when you do. 8/10

Challenge

The occasional tricky slope will certainly mean that not all your putts go down, and the use of the elevations to kick your ball into trouble are clever without being excessive. But for the large part, the targets are big, the hazards obvious, and the bunkers shallow and easy to escape. The Par 5s should encourage all big hitters to try and run the course down. They won't always succeed, but birdies are not an unreasonable goal. 6/10

Technical

It's impossible to fault Mike Jones as usual. The extent of his talents is obvious here through the true-to-life grasses and watersides, and his inventiveness with textures is still the best in the game. 10/10

Overall	A rare outing in the real world from the links master. The work is faultless, but it's not a variety of strategic golf that is automatically associated with his name.	40/50
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Royal Kurland GC

Dominique Bois



Description

Fictional, links course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

A brilliantly realised design which combines the best of wild, rolling links courses with exciting ocean-side play, Royal Kurland makes the most of its fictional North Sea setting. Criss-crossed with stone walls, and littered with OB and sod-walled bunkers, it draws a perfect line between wild links and modern target golf, preserving some of the shapes and distinctions of the latter. The location and setting is marvellous, too: you really can believe you're alongside Baltic mountains and fjords. 10/10

Appearance

Utterly impressive, for the large part, with panorama and foreground melding perfectly to make a completely absorbing locale. The texture use is novel and inspiring, and has clearly warranted very close attention. On closer inspection, you might see some hard edges among the terrain sculptures and especially in the bunkers, but there are so many genuinely impressive and stunning views it's very hard to complain. 9/10

Playability

Utterly brilliant. Even some over-penal OB placement and some irritating hidden hazards can't get in the way of the fact that this is a finely planned and addictive golf course. It's likely that it'll take upwards of three or four rounds in order to find the best route round, and the course is still never without a surprise to throw back at you. 9/10

Challenge

Given that the wild grass areas are surprisingly easy to escape and that the greenside bunkers rarely come into play, you might expect a pushover. But there are always surprises that keep the score down, whether they're hidden creeks or sudden elevations that send your approach a-kilter. The Par 5s are generally a good opportunity to strike back and should yield birdies to the careful player. 9/10

Technical

The more you poke Royal Kurland, the worse it gets, which is a shame. Before too long you're noticing poor texture transitions and hard elevation changes all over the place, and the walls and fences look somewhat ropey close-to. The fact that the course doesn't yield statistics is a frustration for those obsessed with such things. While the ocean-sides are sculpted impeccably and there's any number of spectacular views on offer, there's no escaping that the technical prowess is this course's weak link. 7/10

Overall	A superb and immersive course, let down only by a few technical imperfections. Still paradise for most people, though.	44/50
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Royal Lytham & St Annes

Sean Landry & Bill Bunning



Description

Real, links course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 3

Par

70

Location

Liverpool

Conditions

In truth, I wouldn't want to tackle this any faster than S*/S*

Concept

One of the classic Open venues, Lytham certainly makes the most of its unappealing setting, squeezed into a small space between Liverpool's city and a railway line, with narrow fairways, cavernous bunkering, and rough that very much illustrates what links golf should be about. The unusual layout, finishing with six straight Par 4s, is a clue to the age and the dictate imposed on the course by the lumpy links-land, with its drainage channels and hillocks still intact between the tournament objects. This fourth incarnation of Links adaptation very much nails the right location where previous editions missed out. 9/10

Appearance

Some nice texture upgrades are a definite plus, although they're not always fully blended, and there are quite a few oddities. The excess of tournament objects wasn't really necessary, and some of the newly-installed hazards haven't been well-extruded. It's very much worth catching, though, for the way the aura of this very British (and not always in a good way!) has been captured. 6/10

Playability

All the classic courses play well, and Royal Lytham is no exception. The grandstands are off-putting, but much of the coarse and original soundscrip remains – and actually it doesn't sound all that bad. It's a toss-up whether players will feel they're being impeded by the greens, which are part of the list of things that required alteration. 8/10

Challenge

Lytham is tough work – the fairways start off tight, and end up ultra-tight with the fun, showboating 18th hole. The greens in real life are tricky, but not as bad as those on the APCD version, where too many pins lie mid-slope. But, on the flip side, at least the difficulty of the rough was bang on the mark, and it's easy to see why the pros are made to look like hackers by this little beauty. 5/10

Technical

Without intending detriment to the original in any way, there are too many problems here that could have been tightened up in remake, most notably the greens, poorly-meshed bunkers, and the lack of more than a few pins per hole. 6/10

Overall	A great, and difficult, golf course pulls through some middling design on its wide coat-tails.	34/50
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Royal Melbourne Golf Club

Peter Gemmill



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, heathland course	15 th hole, Par 4	73
Location		
Australia		
Conditions		
There are a few awkward pin placements where you should stick to M*/F*		

Concept

A terrific Australian scrubland course, Melbourne is expertly crafted across largely flat terrain. With demanding hole lengths, well-shaped and natural fairways, and excellent bunker placement – not to mention the punishing bushland rough – it lays more than adequate claim to being Australia's premier course and is regularly voted as one of the best in the world. Peter's expertise of Down Under courses has meant that we finally have a Links version to be proud of. 10/10

Appearance

An excellent texture set and Peter's usual delightful touch with the planting are absolutely perfect for the region, and the isolation of the course is really brought across well. Unfortunately, there are still a few extrusion marks remaining on the course, and the bunkers seem to have an inconsistent feel, featuring several uncharacteristic sharp edges and bunker lips which aren't always suitable. 8/10

Playability

A championship-standard layout, Melbourne manages to swerve the dullness of similar courses, with a range of challenges required on all shots. The unusual layout, full of long-iron and mid-wood shots, is ripe for attacking, and the thrill of landing one of these unlikely long shots is a major factor in keeping you going. 9/10

Challenge

It can't be understated what a well-balanced and tiptoe game is to be had at Melbourne, and the combined punishments of the rough and outstanding hole design are a dual threat. Battling through for par is very much the norm, and hence the course achieves its objectives. 10/10

Technical

There are still a few areas on the course with an unfinished feel, which is unfortunate. Having said that, Peter has impressed yet again with some outstanding natural planting and the creation of a perfect environment. 9/10

Overall	One of the world's best courses, made over in exactly the way it deserves.	46/50
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Royal Montreal - Blue

Yves Paquin & Kevin Fraser



Description

Real, estate course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

While a sterling country club course that fully deserves its place amongst the Real APCD courses, Royal Montreal has been somewhat besmeared by this odd and inconsistent adaptation. Its greening is almost notorious in providing problems for casual or tournament golfers, and when combined with the challenges of the back-nine water holes, the course becomes almost unpalatable. It isn't that there's no good work here, because there certainly is some. But eventually the flaws add up to an unsatisfying experience. 4/10

Appearance

Some lovely work here in the planting and the custom touches, and the textures show signs of sophistication, but elsewhere there are some fairly rudimentary bunkers and some poor mesh and shape-placement work. A mixed bag, and in some ways the inconsistency is unhelpful when all one would like is something coherent. 4/10

Playability

Until about the 14th hole, when suddenly water hazards become very much in play and very dangerous, the course is very much down-the-middle. The water holes generate some decent excitement, but they can't rob the course of the large flaw of continual blind tee shots and having to knuckle the dog legs. 3/10

Challenge

The greens, as has been widely commented, are killers. Way too small, and way too sloped, they will exterminate any golfer playing above the softest settings. As if this weren't enough, the deep rough will often prevent you even earning two putts; especially awful on the Par 5s and water holes. The difficulty effectively removes the course's usefulness for tournament purposes, leaving it fairly redundant when you consider only a masochist would pick it for a casual round. 2/10

Technical

The sand-splash textures and some good customisation are worth seeing, just the once. Elsewhere, though, the course runs into the ground with some inconsistent basics and a difficulty level that is no laughing matter. 3/10

Overall	Some technical achievement wiped out in a re-creation that is, if not unplayable, hard enough to make you not to want to bother.	<i>16/50</i>
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Royal Thoroughfare

Kristoffer Selberg



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

This alleges to be a links course, but is in fact no such thing. A lack of continuity between holes, some very contrived course shapes and absolutely zero sense of location are very frustrating. What isn't frustrating is the brilliance of the first and last holes and a fair amount of diverting and interesting design. But as a course, it's still a bit of a mess. 5/10

Appearance

Some poor extrusions marked the round for me, and venturing to some of the far-flung corners of the course, I got the impression it could have been better beta tested, too. But there are scenes of genuine beauty, as best evidenced by the screenshot, which hold the course up. 8/10

Playability

For reasons I cannot identify, this was a bit of a drag to play. It seems repetitive and lacking in genuine shot options. Drives have little threatening them, and perhaps the fact that the course has 12 Par 4s is responsible, especially given that several of these Par 4s are uninspired when it comes to golfing challenge. 4/10

Challenge

The course is well-pitched without at any time giving the impression that it would threaten your par score. Greens are accommodating and will take long putts, but the elevations on the fairway are used effectively to prevent the course being a formality. Probably the biggest disappointment here is that the hazards are rarely in play, making reasonable scores a formality. 5/10

Technical

Apart from the extrusion work, this course has been extremely well put together. The planting is superb, and the attention to detail on the likes of the above cannot be underestimated. Sound is judiciously planted, and the elevation work is solid. This is good without impressing in any particular area. 7/10

Overall	An over-rated course which is a jumble of types with not sufficient challenge for the player. Certainly not essential.	29/50
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Royal Troon

Stewart Parker



Description

Real, links course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4

Par

71

Location

Ayrshire, Scotland

Conditions

Some poor pin positions means that M*/S* is as fast as I'd want to go. But turn the wind right up!

Concept

One of the wildest and purest of links courses, this classic Open venue is the latest in Stewart's prodigious output. Very much a course of two halves – the first relying on pot-bunker-oriented precision, and the second providing a risk-reward test way ahead of its time – it's one of the few courses which absolutely must be played under difficult wind conditions to appreciate its sheer genius. Stewart has let the natural wilderness and strategy do all the talking, but his excellent accompanying documentation is fitting icing on the cake. 10/10

Appearance

Long experienced in planting of the Scottish gorse and heather, the designer hasn't let us down here, and the construction of the cavernous and scary bunkers is spot on too – even from the inconvenient middle distances it's impossible to spot where they've been dropped into the landscape. The whole thing is seamlessly integrated with the panorama, which really adds to the environment. I'm still a little disappointed with the low-res 2D clubhouse, though. 9/10

Playability

Playing on Classic Open venues carries its own prestige, but there's much more to Troon than just the name. Blind tee shots are often a hindrance, but here they are a genuine and valid part of the strategy on a set of holes which reward course knowledge and prudence. The hole previews are perfectly informative without being overbearing and there's good ambient sound with the rush of the ocean in your ears. Even when buried in the bunkers, there's plenty of incentive to press on here and achieve good scores. Many of the pros failed to enjoy Royal Troon – I don't see how the Links golfer could possibly be of the same mind. 10/10

Challenge

Play with the recommended conditions and you'll be sorry! Troon has clocked up some pretty huge Open scores in the past; the tight fairways and demanding pot bunkers invariably take a heavy toll. But, with a bit of respect, the course yields birdies – at least a couple of the shorter Par 5s do. You can't go charging into the course, but play it like the Open winners and a score close to Par might well result. 7/10

Technical

Masterful work on much of the course, and a surer hand with water features than we have seen in the past (compare the sea to Scotland's Finest if you don't believe me). The clubhouse complex is disappointing when it should be a great climax to the round, though, and some pins are located in places no greenkeeper would conceive of. 8/10

Overall

Pure links magic from the hands of the best designer of Scottish courses. Tough stuff, but a fitting tribute to a very clever course.

44/50

Royal Wessex Golf Club

Lacy Gearhart



Description

Fictional, heathland course.

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

There's a quaint charm about Royal Wessex, almost in the manner of a Constable painting. The deep greens and links-like fairways are intended to evoke Britain, although it's almost a cartoon parody at times of the American vision of Britain. The hole design wavers uncertainly throughout, mind you; rather like McDonald's, this is really an inferior British version of a good old American product. 4/10

Appearance

I'm afraid I really can't get on board with the textures used here. They clash in colour, and the texture seams are glaringly obvious. The hazards, too are roughly extruded, and only some strong, consistent planting at all levels helps to keep this course's visuals in the memory. 5/10

Playability

It would be easy to quickly tire of Royal Wessex. The golf has pretences to being strategic, but really it's mostly a cover-up for having landing areas and holes that force you around the safe way. The ambient sound is a ridiculous mish-mash; your game will be the same if the rough has its way. 4/10

Challenge

Lacy Gearhart is a very clever designer, and with his careful guidance, this course has averaged its way to around about an overall par. It certainly could be said that individual aspects of the course are variable – sometimes the planting is directly in play; other times you'd barely notice it, and the same can be said of texture choices – but, through a slightly distorted perspective, this is a decent challenge. 8/10

Technical

Some aspects of this early design are admirable. There's a strong layout, and things like gradients have been handled with care. But, on the flipside, there's far too much reliance on stock (the panorama doesn't even really fit), and even with the best will in the world, you can't imagine this being where it claims to be. 5/10

Overall	Britain through American goggles. Perhaps not the designer's finest hour.	26/50
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Rugged Coast CC

Chuck Clark



Description

Imaginary, ocean course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

A typically oddball and unique course from Mr Clark, Rugged Coast crosses over massive seaside dirt dunes, often segueing unexpectedly into regions of sand or sharp cliffsides. The trademark cartoony style has the joint effect of never quite making the course convincing and – mysteriously – distorting the perspective somewhat. Where else could you see the entirety of a 410-yard hole, and believe the green to be driveable? Still, the back nine are an immense achievement, with massively

impressive target holes and strategic options, and the course as hole leaves a favourable stain on the memory. 8/10

Appearance

For a ‘quick’ course (by Chuck’s words), this is surprisingly complete. The texture choices don’t contrast particularly well, but are blended effectively, and the use of elevations leads to many, many impressive views. I would have liked to see more in the way of scrubby planting in the dirt regions, though, in the manner of El Escorpion. 8/10

Playability

Chuck’s near-genius asset is producing courses that are innately and almost effortlessly enjoyable. This is certainly no exception. You’re called upon for accuracy, without too harsh a penalty; for creativity, but with a safe bail-out; and for judgement, with no little excitement thrown in. It’s supremely done, and round upon round will just soar past. 10/10

Challenge

Surprisingly, given the large region of the course given over to non-grass textures, this doesn’t play too hard. The dirt, in particular, is very forgiving, and the greens will accept putts. The main challenges are in the cliffs and the difficult elevations, but birdies are likely on the first half, and if you can hold your game together on the way home then a good score is likely. 5/10

Technical

A better texture set, more in keeping with the red terrain, would be useful in helping to set the course’s locale, and some attention to the water features and their surrounds might just be the finishing touch. But, in true Chuck Clark style, so much has been done very competently: there are certainly no obvious flaws. 8/10

Overall	As distinctive and impressive as the majority of its stable-mates and a back nine that is virtually unrivalled.	39/50
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Rugged Dune

Mike Jones



Description

Fictional, dunes course

Screenshot

13th hole, par 4, from fairway.

Concept

The most remarkable portrayal of sand dunes available in the game is the template for this course, which unsurprisingly makes a big thing of its surrounding with plenty of sandy hazards and long grass. Not dissimilar to Crystal Pines, in the tight landing areas and short course length, it is a more forgiving course around the greens, which offer more bail-out, but not around the fairway, where the deepest of deep stuff is guaranteed to add strokes to your score. As ever, the golfing design is of the highest quality,

particularly the stretch of holes along the back nine which are never straightforward; always complex. The overall experience is striking but still lifelike. 10/10

Appearance

The texture work is the best on the game, period. The bunkers are amazing detailed works of art, and the textures everywhere – from the heavy rough, to the bald spots on the fairway – are absolutely spot-on. The planting, too, despite never rising above two feet high, is mixed, highly detailed and appropriate in a way that other dunes courses have never quite mastered. The decision to minimise course objects is totally justified in this case and the re-creation of lonely wilderness. 10/10

Playability

Rugged Dunes belies its short length with a lot of uphill approaches, and indeed uphill drives. In fact it's a wonder we don't end up a few hundred feet above sea level, but that can pass. What is important is the impressive combination of target golf and perfect risk/reward – particularly off the back tees, which for one come very much recommended. The final word is left to the intricate green complexes, which often make tight target areas, but offer a range of putting, chipping and recovery positions unmatched within 18 holes. 9/10

Challenge

With the release of the Mod, Rugged Dune has come close to hitting its perfect median point: as long as you have a bunker game up to scratch, you will find the opening nine a very close scramble for par and the second half an opportunity to strike out for birdies. The fact that the course has this amount of structure in the gameplay as well as the visual design is credit to a talented designer. 9/10

Technical

Flawless. Amazing attention to detail: on a course like this, all the detail is on a particularly small scale, which makes the APCD-work all the more remarkable. 10/10

Overall

An incredible creation, presenting some exhilarating golf. Easily among the best from the game's most talented designer.

48/50

Sagebrush Retreat & Golf Club

Steve Rubenkoenig



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

The difficulty with Sagebrush is trying to work out where you are supposed to be. It's clear from the off that the course is set among the eponymous desert-like dry grasses, but there are very few reassurances, either on the course or off, to confirm this. The fact that water comes into play increasingly down the back nine is not particularly desert-like either. Despite this, there's a good comprehension of effective golf here, and the layout looks interesting from the target screen without ever being too

gimmicky. 4/10

Appearance

Sagebrush isn't bad for a first course, but lacks seam blending and some extrusions would be better tidied up. The planting is dreadfully sparse in parts, too. There's bits of pieces of elevational work to tidy up. Despite these problems, however, the course is pretty coherent and good-looking. 4/10

Playability

Whatever the issues with this course, the designer certainly has a well-rounded view of what makes good golf. There's a nice variation in all lengths of hole (alternating between 2-shot and 3-shot Par 5s is an excellent idea) and very little seems contrived or gimmicky. The course is lacking a few of the niceties that players might expect (Hole Previews and the like), but it's ability to engage is an excellent foundation. 7/10

Challenge

Even if you're playing well, birdies aren't easy to come by. The legion of bunkers will swallow up vast numbers of shots, and when water comes into play after the turn then you might as well wave goodbye to any birdies you were hoping to get. The greens occasionally become pancake-flat; usually the indication that a misjudgement has been made. 5/10

Technical

While the designer has clearly played it safe by avoiding some of the more advanced APCD techniques, you can't help but feel that this course is little more than a basic idea with a bit of planting sitting on it. There are quite a few errors with both surface and textures on the way around, and the 'broad sweep' approach seems to have been the main tool here. I would like to see Sagebrush expanded in the future, as it makes an involving round of golf and could be much improved from this frankly rather primitive state. 3/10

Overall	Along with Growlinridge, a definite candidate for future greatness. A bit of an empty shell at present, crying out for some time and fine detail.	23/50
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Saigon Golf & Country Club

Peter Beckwith & John Aherne



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, tropical course	7 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Vietnam		
Conditions		
Plays well on F*/F*		

Concept

You wouldn't really know this is a tropical course, for it looks all the world from the off like a comfortable stretch of European parkland. Only the course environs and the swampy water features betray the location. A very open, flat design, it's perhaps fair to say that it won't test the Links golfer too much, but there is much to enjoy as you go round, from the water features that border on play, to some clever bunkering and beginnings of good green complexes. Unfortunately, 'beginnings' is too much the optimum word – this really does feel (as is the case) like a course in its infancy, and one yet to develop the necessary muscle to really give the golfer something to think about. 5/10

Appearance

Beautiful texture choices, particularly in the bunkers, and unbelievably talented work on the course building and around the clubhouse will stay with you long after you've finished your round here. The small-scale artistry is beyond comparison, and really all the course suffers from is a lack of drama by way of elevations or much exciting to see. 9/10

Playability

While this is a thoroughly amiable saunter through some un-Vietnamese-like countryside, there isn't a massive amount of demand on the golfer. You'll develop a simple routine for playing Saigon, thanks largely to some very accommodating greens and fairways. The render times seem a bit long for what you're facing, but on the plus side there is some excellent ambient sound – the crickets being timely reminder of exactly where you are. 6/10

Challenge

This is a big stumbling block, and probably where the course has got it dead wrong so far. The short stuff is hugely open and accessible, and the lack of anything challenging on the greens means long putts will be going in more often than not. One or two completely flat greens in particular are just asking for the big ones to be holed out. It's hard to justify consistently going round in the low 60s. 1/10

Technical

Whatever the weaknesses in the original course design, there's no doubting the designers' skill and dedication in bringing it to life. The 3D work is simply glorious and probably among the best 5 clubhouses I've seen. The large quantity of newly-imported planting has not gone unnoticed either. 10/10

Overall	A young resort course, necessarily lacking a bit of grown-up 'bite', but there's a kernel of good things here.	31/50
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Saint Kilda Castle Links

Stewart Parker



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, links course	1 st hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Outer Hebrides		
Conditions		
S*/S* would probably be most realistic, but the course plays fine on M*/M*. Select pins carefully if you want to play any faster.		

Concept

It was an inspired idea to drop a golf course layout on the remotest part of the British Isles, and it's also no bad thing to conceive of a tough links that rewards conservative shot-making and course knowledge. Whether the two belong together is something of a moot point. What can be certain is that Saint Kilda is a very tough course, mixing acres of thick rough with some huge holes (notably some Par 5 slogs). The castle (presumably acting as clubhouse) and an offshore runway add a quirky touch. For the large part it's been executed well, but it does feel slightly other-worldly. 7/10

Appearance

Stewart's typical selection of rough has been jazzed up beautifully by incorporating native heathers and gorses, and although the textures are not high-res, you'd hardly notice it. The castle has been ported in well, but I'm not really convinced by the runway, nor by the sea. The former needs more to delineate it, and the latter if anything is too well outlined and needs another texture around the beach. 8/10

Playability

Saint Kilda, above all else, calls for intense amounts of concentration. A misfire or unthinking shot could well result in hefty penalties, and this applies to every single hole. What's required to play this well is a learning process and a lot of course knowledge, because shot selection has to be very precise, with several blind lies increasing the difficulty. It's a worthy conceit, but the average Links golfer probably has a large enough course rotation that he'd rather not devote all the time to this one course. 7/10

Challenge

Tight landing areas, horrible two- or three-shot rough and cavernous bunkers are all contributory factors to what inevitably turns out to be a long scramble for par. Birdie chances need to be seized, which isn't easy with greens that are fair but awkward to read. Play it with suitably windy conditions and you'll be sorry that you did! 2/10

Technical

As long as Stewart doesn't make a habit of giving courses this level of difficulty, there is a lot of credit attached to this course. An inspired location, intrinsic understanding of strategy and links golf, and largely flawless APCD-work all put the convincers on for this course. Given that the difficulty level was always intentional, it's remarkable how that's been achieved without resorting to silliness. If you can blank out the coastline elements, there's plenty here. 9/10

Overall	It's rare to find courses that come this tough but are still believable and put all the test firmly at the golfer's feet.	33/50
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San Bernardino Mountain Golf Club

Matthew McIntosh



Description

Imaginary, short course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 3

Par

54

Location

Up a mountain, in the snow! Canada, maybe?

Conditions

Playable on F*/F* (recommended if you want to pretend the greens are icy hard)

Concept

Carp if you will, but I've always been a firm admirer of pushing the envelope with the APCD, and here's another proof that a slightly silly concept doesn't have to be unplayable. The whole course is quite enchanting in its snowiness, and the use of textures has been manipulated perfectly to achieve a little winter wonderland of golf – the 13th notably being impressive for its 'island' green in a frozen lake. The golf itself is pretty modest, but as an overall environment, it's hard to beat. 8/10

Appearance

Wonderful surface work makes the snow and frozen greens look very convincing, and it's worth noting that the texture work spreads to the excellent rock formations as well. It's good to see the concept has spread to the snow-dusted pine trees and a suitably frosty panorama. Only the occasional low-res tree in close up, and an inevitable surrealist feel, lets the whole thing down. 8/10

Playability

The snow packed around the greens lets you muck around a little with bank shots, and there's as reasonable a variety of Par 3s as anyone could expect from a short course – including a signature hole or two. Unfortunately, as is often the way with these courses, the whole thing becomes just a little too regulation after a while: the greens actually reasonable to hit, and even fast settings won't deter the ball from settling predictably on the icy baize. 6/10

Challenge

Finding the snow is a definite problem: getting up and down out of that lot is no guarantee, as you'd reasonably expect. But this should be a relatively rare occurrence, even despite the tiny (and in one case, minuscule) landing areas. Finding the surface will generally land you a fair putt at birdie, and the net result is likely to be a stroke or two under par. 8/10

Technical

With general course mechanics almost impossible to rate on any given scale, I found my attention turning inevitably to the snow, and whether it reacted and rolled like a real twelve-inch covering of the cold stuff. To some extent – having the snow play like heavy rough – it did, but I wonder if there's more scope to have it play even tougher. The critic in me would also wonder why the designer failed to play really heavily on the winter theme, and at least throw in a snowman or something. For an admittedly hasty knock-up of a course, mind you, there's some very solid work here. 7/10

Overall

Wintry Par-3 fun. Not so much as a warm-up course as a cool down...

37/50

Sanctuary

David Schmelzer



Description

Real, mountain course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

I've knocked a few mountain courses for being too flat: you certainly couldn't level such accusations against Sanctuary. It's an absolute monster of a course, almost impossible to believe in, featuring incredible hole after incredible hole. If the readme is to be believed, it's a fragile and restricted hidden retreat, and the lovely water features and picture-perfect planting certainly go a long way towards helping. It's all quite unique, and what more perfect course could be suited to APCD creation? 10/10

Appearance

The view from the first tee is surreal and unprecedented and the jaw-dropping just carries on all the way around. The panorama is massive, overblown and yet somehow entirely appropriate. These are visuals on a truly grand scale, and all the more impressive for it, bar a couple of stretched textures. Play it on the largest monitor you can find. 9/10

Playability

There's an incredible range expected from you in the completion of just 18 holes. The elevations add their own twist to many shots, and the narrowness of many holes doesn't preclude you from being able to take alternative routes. Indeed, you get a better approach on several holes by deliberately playing from the rough. Two minor flaws – a problem with sound lag, and a few steel grasses – stilt the gameplay a little, but this is certainly a course that many will come back to. 8/10

Challenge

Sanctuary is not a particularly long course, and indeed is considerably shortened by many downhill tee shots. In addition, there are some pretty receptive greens, and one would expect to pick up a few shots on the short Par 4s. Get lost in the deepness, however, and it might cost you a fortune. Bearing in mind that it's not a tournament course, there's a decent challenge awaiting. 7/10

Technical

Sanctuary shows a welcome return to form for a designer of exciting and unusual courses. With the exception of a couple of relatively minor errors, there's plenty to appreciate here, including some artisan-like sculpture in the rockworks, and an impressive hand with low-level planting. 9/10

Overall	An incredible hidden paradise which will provide you with some knockout views and golf to match.	<i>43/50</i>
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Sandlot Shores

Johnny Holland



Description

Imaginary, ocean course.

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

What a bizarre mish-mash Sandlot Shores is! Part ocean, part desert, part out-and-out crazy. Some stunning hole designs are thrown together in a higgledy-piggledy environment where, it seems, just about anything goes. There's great progression to the holes: several can share fairways as alternate routes, and there's an unusual layout with 4 Par 5s on the front nine, but there's not much sense of location and the course feels too packed and bustling. 6/10

Appearance

There are some amazing views to be had here, the ocean work is done very neatly and a large amount of customisation contributes a lot to the course appearance. Possibly the best element is the creation of several visual illusions which will test (although not unfairly) those who play without the Top View. The textures aren't to my taste, though, and there are problems with the elevation work which impinge on the view. 8/10

Playability

The unusual hole layout works wonders here. Three consecutive Par 5s are markedly different and in this instance it is an inspired decision to put them together. Nearly every hole throws up a new challenge, or the opportunity to play in several ways, and you just get dragged round on a wave of enthusiasm. Even the sceptics will adore playing Sandlot Shores: that's a given. 10/10

Challenge

The challenge will largely depend on how conservative a player you are. It's easy to wriggle out of trouble if you're in it, but the 'blasters' will inevitably drop strokes unless they're uncannily accurate. The course veers towards the unfair in points, with tough bunkering at sharply angled greens, and bogeys should be considered an inevitability. As such, it's a contrived challenge and depends a lot more on the player than on the course. 6/10

Technical

Despite the massive amount of excellent customisation, this is a glaring example of designer overkill. Was there any need to use four different sand textures (count them if you don't believe me)? Were the flamboyant sandstone rock formations necessary, when some modest planting or elevation work would have hidden the plot edge better? Is there too much squeezed into a tiny plot? There are technical errors, too, such as bad transitions, elevation work and misaligned tees (all visible in the screenshot); thankfully all these are cosmetic and don't ruin a great round of golf. 5/10

Overall

A curate's egg. Great in parts, but massively over-managed in others. It's a jolly good fantasy course which a lot of people will want to own, but it's also a mass of ideas looking for some sense of order

35/50

San Simeon GC & Resort

Paul Woodbury



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, mountain course	15 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Evidently the Rocky mountains somewhere		
Conditions		
Best to stick to S*/S*		

Concept

Lovely-looking at times, this evolution of The Meadows is probably the designer’s most believable work thanks to the lack of over-blown or blind holes, and the intricate little creations lurking away in the woodland which make for plenty of visual candy on the way around. Paul’s sense of artistry and his willingness to push the boundaries of what makes a believable hole are both present, though, although it’s a little disappointing that one or two holes late in the round appear to be near-clones of earlier ones. 8/10

Appearance

Some great 3D and imaginative landscaping make San Simeon very memorable, and there are plenty of Easter Egg moments hiding in the dense, well-planted woodland. The textures, though, are nothing to shout about, and the ring of first-cut around the fairways is particularly off-putting. The water and bunkers, notorious problem areas of course, are well-sculpted, though. 8/10

Playability

Outstanding hole previews are one of the keys to managing this course well, although there’s no denying it will require patience as your drive is artificially restricted from time to time. There’s plenty of good, believable, shaping here, though, and the variety required of you will be a major factor in coming back for more. Perhaps the prehistoric green construction, and some slightly persistent sound effects, will be less so. 7/10

Challenge

If you can put up with having to play on slow greens, San Simeon is a test that has dated extremely well. Bunkering isn’t such an immediate threat as on other courses, and funnily enough nor is the water – even though there are plenty of lakes out and about on the course. It’s the elevations and the trees that will provide a real, and remarkably pure test here, and one that still stands up as an examination of pure ball-striking. 8/10

Technical

Lots of excellent customisation sets the tone here, and the elevation changes are smooth and natural. But there are issues arising with pin positions and some poor texture choices do not show off the course’s age as well as the intelligent hole design. 7/10

Overall	A great mountainous woodland course with maybe only a couple of niggles but plenty of replayability. Different enough from its predecessor to warrant owning both.	38/50
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Santa Barbara Canyons

Jason Conner & Matt McIntosh



Description

Imaginary, canyon course

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

California in name only.

Conditions

Plays OK on F*/F*

Concept

Like a mad, mutant cross between Victory Grounds and Rivendell, Santa Barbara Canyons is an insane ride through large elevations, crazy rockworks and vast gorges. Although some holes are plotted towards the extreme end of golfing design, and the course is unashamedly lavish, there's an impressive set of golfing puzzles to be solved here. Only the most generous of players would concede that it is balanced and fair, though. 7/10

Appearance

With an improved panorama and better textures, there's definitely more on offer in the visuals department. Some hole improvements have come at the cost of the spectacular views of the original, though, and there's an artificiality about the place, implicit in the hole design to some extent, that's hard to shake. 7/10

Playability

There's plenty to do at the Canyons course, and the first few rounds will be a voyage of discovery. It's not without its annoyances – hidden traps and blind shots aplenty – and the golf is determinedly target-driven only, but the landscape has been crammed with enough to keep one's eyes open and the possibility of outrageous bank shots off the rockworks is always a boon. 6/10

Challenge

Something of an artificial test, for sure, and there's no way this would make it onto anyone's tournament rotation. But as a break from the norm and a chance to hit some outrageous shots, it's at least set up well, even if some of the shotmaking is beginner-standard only. 5/10

Technical

Santa Barbara Canyons has now had the best of both worlds in the original flamboyant and imaginative design, combined with a sensitive overhaul which has taken some of the original absurdities, such as inescapable bunkers, silly planting and drab textures, out of play. It still lacks any real world believability, but that's not necessarily any bad thing. 7/10

Overall	An undeniably fun and extravagant fantasy course. The raw edge has been removed, but plenty of original shotmaking still remains.	32/50
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Santa Barbara's Finest

Jason Conner



Description

Real, heathland compilation course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Compilation courses have always been an interesting, varied and exciting way to sample golf, which is why the Santa Barbara variant is odd. It's not particularly badly put together, for its age, but it is almost completely unmemorable. The opening nine, in particular, are entirely unworthy in being in a 'Finest' compilation, and even the best holes on the closing stretch seem somewhat dull and derivative. Taken on its own merits, though, what we have here is a reasonable if unremarkable set of holes that appear, far more than being located in California

seaside, to be calling the Yorkshire Dales home. 3/10

Appearance

My, Jason Connor loves fences! I don't think in any other designer's oeuvre I've seen such a great length of fencing. And rocks, come to that. To give credit, it rarely looks silly, except when the occasional fantastical conceit creeps into play. The overall heathland appearance is reasonably well elevated and reasonably well textured but still somewhat rough around the edges. Plenty of custom objects reveal the work that has gone in. 6/10

Playability

The Finest is reasonable as it goes, but surprisingly difficult to get into. This may work in its favour, because it's necessary to go back for a second go to remind yourself what some of the holes are like! Even if you find the front nine a drag, it's pretty much worth sticking with for some good risk/reward golf later, but you could hardly call it a feast of golf. 5/10

Challenge

Tricky, but certainly far from impossible, Santa Barbara Finest is certainly one on which to hone a variety of skills. Clever hazard placement and some reasonable but testing greens are good opponents, and the range of hole lengths will keep anyone on their toes. 8/10

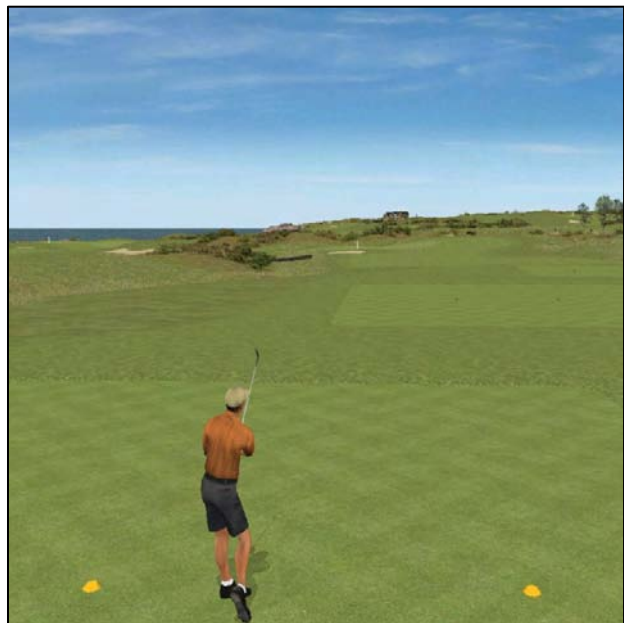
Technical

You still feel that a craft is being slowly honed at this course. The disparity between its intended location and the heathland visuals is peculiar to say the least. And the planting shows an uneven touch; the low-res textures best avoided in places. But it's a step up from its predecessors. 5/10

Overall	If you can ignore the way-out-of-place course environment, then this is a passable if hardly memorable frolic.	27/50
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Sarazen Links

Steve Avery & Gordon Martin



Description

Fictional, links course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

The course that never was. A truly brilliant and inspired use of the APCD, in order to create a course designed by Gene Sarazen shortly before his death, and one which was consequently never built. As near to a real course as you can get, this truly emanates authenticity, and it has to be said that the late Mr Sarazen would be utterly impressed with the efforts that these two boys have gone to in order to bring his course to life. As one would expect from a golf legend, hole design is first-class, being both

accommodating and deceptively difficult at one and the same time. 10/10

Appearance

Suffers a little from Links Course Disease which means that, with all honesty, good views are at a premium. That's not to say that the course hasn't been constructed intelligently and with regards to lifelike landscape, because it most certainly has. Textures and blends are clean and the planting (always difficult for low-level grasses) is an absolute joy. Very well done indeed. 8/10

Playability

With impressive variety for a links-type course and some careful planning required on many holes, Sarazen will certainly eat up much of your time. Particularly impressive are the bunkers which have meticulously designed both for challenge and escape. Not too penal, but hazardous without spoiling your round, the sand is probably the key element to a very enjoyable round. 9/10

Challenge

You'd be forgiven for thinking this was an easy course based on the first half-dozen holes, but the test stiffens up during the round. Nevertheless the greens are pretty easy (although links greens should be), and the Par 5s are obvious birdie opportunities. Even with the recommended difficult settings, you'd expect to go round under Par. 6/10

Technical

Very few flaws here: from the lovely planting, to the interesting and detailed combination of textures, this is a magnificent effort. Moreover, it's a brilliant illustration in co-operation between an APCD rookie and an experienced designer 8,000 miles away. What more could you ask for? 10/10

Overall	Among the best as far as design, playability and co-operation go. I can't imagine anyone who would not enjoy this course.	43/50
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Sasquatch Crossings

Kent Perrins & Zeke Seidel



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, forest course	17 th hole, Par 3	72
Location		
Idaho		
Conditions		
A few pins are poor, but M*/M* is generally reasonable.		

Concept

A beautiful tribute to the late Kent Perrins, designer of Rams Hill and El Diablo, Sasquatch Crossings is located amid the soaring mountains and dense, scary forests of his native Idaho. The layout is impeccable, particularly on the opening half-dozen holes, with greens and fairways framed by trees in trademark fashion (the 3rd being the most impressive example of this), although the hole previews could be clearer. It's a curiously old-fashioned looking course, but creating this sort of nostalgia is possibly even a point in its favour. 8/10

Appearance

Old-fashioned perhaps, but the textures are bang up to date, and the curiously beautiful rocky bunker textures suit the course well, even if they do tile somewhat. Some low-res trees are also a problem on a course where the planting very much takes centre stage. But there's also some attractive and unusual flower planting around the tee boxes, and a towering panorama which gives the course a firm sense of location. 6/10

Playability

Really clever and understated designs were put in place by Kent for his first fictional course, and the hole layouts and elevations used to great advantage to inspire creative shotmaking. Apt justice has been done to the scenic Par 3s and the tantalising long holes with a great environment, and there's plenty to offer on return visits, although I do feel the climax of the round is in the wrong place. 8/10

Challenge

Fourteen pars in both test rounds tells its own tale, and it's very clear that we're looking at a delightfully well-judged course. A range of lies, planting and other clever constructions are used to great effect. Iron out a few greens and this could be a legitimate challenger for hosting a range of tournaments. 9/10

Technical

Zeke has put the finishing touches to this great course in extravagant and unique style, and it makes a fitting and memorable legacy for its designer. It's a little wonky and low-res in places, but otherwise another lasting example of how the work of two designers can be merged to best effect. 7/10

Overall	The perfect tribute to a designer: finishing off his last work with panache.	38/50
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Saxon Vale Golf Club

David Meader



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, parkland course	7 th hole, Par 4	71

Location

English Midlands

Conditions

Pick pins carefully and M*/M* is playable.

Concept

This course bears all the hallmarks of a David Meader course: a variety of intricate shapes and different textures; an off-the-wall approach with walls and rockwork, and some novel ideas in hole design. It is the latter that makes Saxon Vale: this is risk/reward golf at its best, despite the deceptively gentle outward appearance of quite a few hole. It's a little fantastical to be to everyone's tastes, and realistic it certainly isn't, but Saxon Vale proves yet again that David knows an awful lot about putting together a diverse round of golf. 8/10

Appearance

To be honest, it doesn't look as if this has had as much time spent on it as David's other creations. Extrusion marks are glaringly obvious around tee boxes and paths, and there are some elevation problems which led to at least one blocked view. The thicket regions are under-planted and really should be toughened up as the major hazard on the course. The water features – one of the course's selling points – are superbly done, but the stone walls – the other one – just look out of place. 5/10

Playability

Enormous fun at first, and the use of the landscaping along the front nine will leaving you shaking your head in wonder. It calms down a little on the second half, but there's ripe golf for the taking here, and the course still demands advance planning even on the tamer-looking holes. Saxon Vale yields very few pars, which is the ultimate pay-off on a risk-reward course. 9/10

Challenge

I was quite surprised to find myself six-over after eight holes, and it goes to show that, despite this course's open appearance, Saxon Vale is no pushover. It has some devilishly-placed water hazards to trip you up, some horrendous 'Thicket' deep rough and greens that will not concede putts easily. Birdies are possible, particularly on the Par 5s, but by no means a given, thanks to length and yet more water. Course knowledge pays off on future rounds, but it's still not easy. 5/10

Technical

While this has the niceties such as careful texture choices and seam blends, you can't help feeling that it lacks the finesse of some of this designer's other courses. The extrusion marks, for one, look distinctly hurried, and the paths form a bizarre unconnected network that I assume is intentional but doesn't really come off. Planting is artfully, but minimally done. We're used to a bit more in this department, and Saxon Vale – for all its brilliance in layout – looks somewhat rushed. 6/10

Overall	A brilliantly laid-out course, but slightly cartoonish and unconvincing.	33/50
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Schloss Hohenfels

Jörg Jobmann



Description

Fictional, farmland course.

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

After some pretty outlandish fantasy designs, Jörg has turned his hand to a seemingly innocent parkland course, winding in between characteristic farmland (with noises to match!). Of course, nothing is quite as simple as it looks and this course is devilishly tricky: the Par 5s in particular being masterpieces of tough golf. I'm not sure the intention lies happily with the intended environment – I was expecting something much more like Lucia von Rheden – but there is a lot of very fine golf still to be had. 7/10

Appearance

Generally very good, with only some cloned planting in the top regions, and some iffy-looking overhead cables (might have been better not to bother with them) to spoil the view. There's a lot of good rockwork and water features to break up what might have otherwise been a flat and uninspiring landscape. 9/10

Playability

Like all of Jörg's courses, this is eminently, wonderfully enjoyable to play. I doubt anyone could get round without having to pull out every trick in their armoury. There's plenty to look at and plenty more to hear on the way round, some clever conceits to help the atmosphere, and the vast majority of holes offer a viable playing option which provokes thought. Great stuff! 9/10

Challenge

Ooh, a toughie. OB regions abound and threaten very closely at some points. Water is almost unavoidable (strangely, given the landscape) and most greens are heavily bunkered. Bogeys are inevitable and double-bogeys just as much so. My impulse is that the designer needs to lighten up and offer us a Par 3 course! 5/10

Technical

Sadly, given the designer's experience, there are a few problems here. The cloned planting is possible to overlook, but the lack of good seam blending on APCD 1.5 is not. It feels too as if the course is suffering a little from overkill, and the designer has tried to sculpt a little too much out of every hole. But there's some brilliant and apt customisation, and the vast majority of the course is well over satisfactory. 8/10

Overall	It's possible that players of this course might find the designer's unique (in the good sense!) style of hole design a little bit too much for once. It's a good course, no doubt, but sometimes we're itching for something a little bit less testing.	38/50
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Scirocco Golf Club

Paul Woodbury



Description	Screenshot	Par
Imaginary, desert course	13 th hole, Par 5	72
Location	Arizona	
Conditions	S*/S* is the only sane option.	

Concept

An exercise in golfing futility, Scirocco is a punishing desert course, not so much through length nor hazarding as by keeping the golfer in the dark pretty much all the way around. It's difficult to consider this course to be merely fictional, with the packed desert zones and unrelenting target golf, plus some very un-desertlike water hazards thrown in for good measure. One wonders whether the objective of APCD is to provide a good round of golf, or to impose a designer's whims and constrictions onto an unsuspecting golfer. 3/10

Appearance

The extravagant range of shrub and rock planting does indeed look impressive, until you realise its use is to mask the low-res and blurry desert texture. Customisation is widespread and attractive, though; the textures match together superbly without the fairway standing out in sharp relief like so many others, and the washed-out panorama is surprisingly suitable. But it's all a bit of a jumbled mess, to be honest. 5/10

Playability

Woeful. Blind tee shots on virtually every hole, even the shortest of Par 3s, and trees planted smack-bang in the line of play. Some Par 5s have double blind shots, doubly unforgiveable, especially without hole previews. Every thing is there to be avoided, rather than as part of the landscape, and it's painful, painful work. 1/10

Challenge

There will be many shots dropped to the nasty tiered greens and more to the uncharitable water hazards. Thankfully, the desert is all playable – heaven alone knows how many shots would be dropped were it OB. Luckily, with six Par 3s and six Par 5s, many will see an opportunity or two to gain back some of those strokes. You'd never place this course in the category of 'fair', though. 4/10

Technical

Certainly, there are many APCD punches being pulled here. The designer's keen eye for challenging golf and object placement are very much to the fore; probably, though, rather more to the fore than many players would like. There's room for improvement in the texture choices and mapping and the colour set also. 5/10

Overall	In-your-face to the point of insubordination, Scirocco is a desert course not to be tangled with. Literally.	18/50
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Scotland's Hidden Gems

Stewart Parker



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, links compilation course	3 rd hole, Par 4	71
Location		
Scotland, naturally.		
Conditions		
Plays on F*/F*, but something slower would be the realistic option. I suggest M*/M*		

Concept

Compilation courses have been in abeyance for a while since the early days of APCD design; the Hidden Gems have brought the concept back with aplomb in this set of links trademark holes from the unsung public courses of Scotland. The individual holes are stand-out, of course, but the cohesion between holes is, unsurprisingly, a problem, with styles skipping from village-course to moorland. Even though you do occasionally get a sense of place, this amalgamation feels just a little lost and lonely. 6/10

Appearance

While the planting is authentic, well-customised and done to perfection, there's not much else to see on this fairly bland links country, until you get to the stunning panorama, of course. The water features spoil the course to some extent, as well: there's no distinction between ocean and lake, and some streams that look like they were made in the early days of the APCD. I can't really get over the blocky dry-stone wall, as well. It's a shame on a course with some spectacular holes and views. 7/10

Playability

You'd expect no less than 18 original and impressive holes here, and that is pretty much what you get. Links course designers frequently have little to work with, and the uses to which the landscaping has been put really are remarkable. Perhaps there is a little too much reliance on hitting very narrow fairways, but it's also easy to recognise and enjoy some really great holes. 8/10

Challenge

Don't expect an easy ride at Hidden Gems. The course is full of card-wreckers, and you'll be punished by horrendous deep rough and hidden burns. Many of these holes have been chosen primarily for their stiff test, not just their good views, and you should expect scores in the mid-70s. A few, indeed, feel unnecessary penal, which is unexpected in the home of golf. 6/10

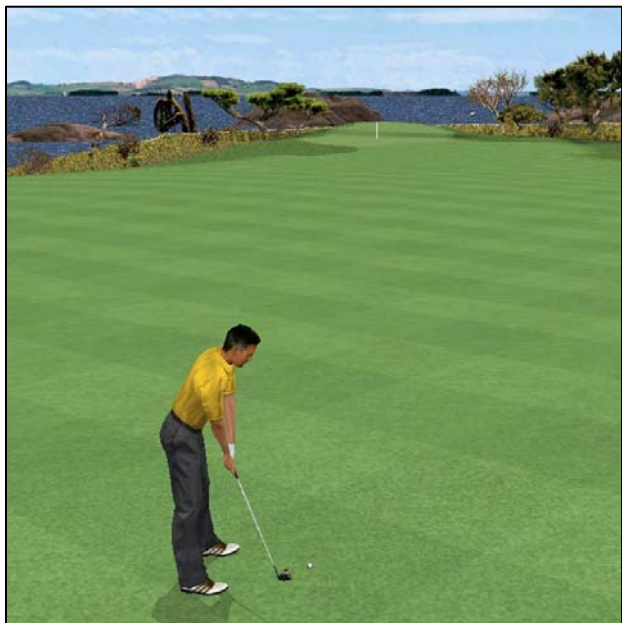
Technical

Stewart Parker has turned out some great creations, but I can't help but feel that this is a flight of fantasy more than a labour of love. While I can certainly see the point in bringing some of these fantastic golf holes to the general public, the presentation feels somewhat rushed, as evidenced by some of the visuals and the oversight of bringing some broad atmosphere to the course. 7/10

Overall	Worth having for some unique Scottish links holes, as long as you can overlook the occasional visual disappointment.	34/50
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Seahawk Golf Club

Jon Weinrieb



Description

Fictional, ocean course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

The ocean course that barely brings the sea into play at all, Seahawk is a moderate and – to be honest – slightly forgettable early effort from JW, in my opinion one of the APCD's best practitioners. It seems that the course basics are down well (the rough dune areas are the best) but there's something very random and slapdash about the course construction as a whole. It's not helped by having hole designs that almost do their best not to imprint themselves on the memory. 4/10

Appearance

Certainly there are hints from the designer of the beautiful look he would bring to courses in the future. But at Seahawk, there are just too many problems that catch the eye. The elevations are lumpy rather than natural, and there's a touch of desperation in the way that the course buildings are scattered around the landscape. The planting, too, lacks finesse, and seems like an effort to use more different trees than are really necessary. 5/10

Playability

I found it really hard to engage with this course, and through no apparent fault of the designer. Certainly the strategy on several holes has been very well considered, and the roar of the breakers is less of an annoyance than an atmospheric setting. There are few golfing gimmicks and not many booby traps. So why is it less than appealing? After much consideration, I can only conclude that there's a fair amount of repeated features, not as much variety or target golf as you'd expect in a target course, and at heart just noticeable for the wrong reasons. A shame. 5/10

Challenge

Seahawk gives very little away and many players will be banjaxed by the hole shapes and maybe too much bravado on their own part. Birdies are not impossible but, contrary to normal golfing fare, they are much more common on the back nine than the tough outward half. I would still expect to score over par, though. 6/10

Technical

For an early design, this shows great competence in APCD use, with only the forced randomness of the planting and the insistence on 'painting' elevations letting it down. Some more customisation wouldn't have hurt, particularly to replace some of the less appropriate trees. A little more coherence between holes wouldn't have hurt either. 7/10

Overall	A good promise of the things to come, but nowhere near the golfing values of Ballylecum or Quidnet.	27/50
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Sea Island Golf Club

Microsoft



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Microsoft's predilection for resort courses becomes clear once again. It's a pretty half-hearted affair, with a few decent hole designs in order to prop the course up. There's little to look at and not a lot to do, though. 3/10

Appearance

Uninspiring would be the best word. Harsh transitions, unconvincing bunkers, cloned planting and a lack of elevation work all emanate mediocrity. It's hard to believe this is a 21st century course. 2/10

Playability

Sea Island is reasonably fun to play: the individual holes offer up a variety of challenges, and for difficulty reasons (see below), you'll keep coming back. There's a distinct lack of decent risk/reward, however, and the tee shots especially do not call on your imagination. 6/10

Challenge

This was the first course I shot under 60 on. In fact I shot a 58, having birdied the first eight holes and the last four. That probably says everything about the difficulty level of this course. Between the flat fairways, the flat greens, the mal-positioned hazards, and the generous areas of rough, Sea Island manages to be utterly, utterly accommodating. But then, perhaps, that's what resort golfers want. 0/10

Technical

Quite a lot of cloned planting at low-level gives away the age of this course. There's no glaring errors, and some nice customisation in the chalets and so forth bordering the course, but this course would not cut the mustard today, and it really shows. 3/10

Overall	The course where you want to be to shoot your all-time low round. As easy as they come, and pretty fun for that very reason	14/50
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Selto Beach

Kristoffer Selberg & Randy McMinn



Description

Imaginary, tropical course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 3

Par

70

Location

Could be any of a range of tropical islands, but there are few clues this might be Caribbean rather than Pacific.

Conditions

You might risk M*/M* – the greens on the whole are quite forgiving.

Concept

There's less a theme to this course than a set of extravagant hole designs wrapped up in some jungle, with the occasional Easter Egg visual. It's strictly love-it or hate-it stuff, and I'm afraid the tiny fairways and dense jungle marked as hazard incline me towards the latter. The fact that some of it has to be seen to be believed is a rare point in its favour. 4/10

Appearance

Despite the fact that this is an updated course, there is too little to enjoy visually. The textures grate and tile really badly, and – beyond the sumptuous central 'Batman' feature – there is little to be impressed by in the elevations. One tee actually has a blocked view, which shows up the lack of beta testing. There are a couple of spectacular moments, which have been carefully crafted and planted, but you've really got to look for them. 5/10

Playability

Despite some real showcase holes, I actually found this course a huge drag to play, mostly thanks to overkill on avoiding the omnipresent jungle and insistence on hitting some narrow fairways. There isn't enough beyond that to fire the imagination and you get the impression you are riding on the designer's fantasy. 3/10

Challenge

You'd be pushed to get around here without Mulligans. OB areas abound, as do water traps and the whole thing is about hitting tiny target areas, some of which are miniscule greens surrounded by hazard. It doesn't really help that the ideas seem to run well short towards the end and the closing holes are much, much too easy when played conservatively. 5/10

Technical

For a 1.5 course this is exceedingly disappointing. The texture matching is totally inadequate, and the elevation problems should have been avoided. The main issue I have is with the untapped potential of this course: why not carve some jungle out to make an alternative fairway, or why not create a more original hazard than the dense jungle planting occasionally? Tropical courses are often prone to lack of variety: this is no exception. 5/10

Overall

Extravagant but over-rated. It's hard to really enjoy Selto Beach thanks to some depressingly monotonous challenge.

22/50

Serenity Hills Golf Club

David Schmelzer



Description

Fictional, farmland course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

Serenity's intention is to be set among lush rolling hills. Sadly, the idea of matching hole design to this landscape is sacrificed to some extent, and the resultant course is stretched long, bunkered rather too heavily, and not particularly fitting in its landscape. Although the ideas have become somewhat mixed, there's no reason not to play: there's some stunning visuals and very impressive shots to be taken in. But there's no denying that it doesn't really all gel together as it should. 5/10

Appearance

The gorgeous, dramatic panorama dominates the course, and the visuals impress through the meticulous 3D clubhouse and custom objects, right down to the planting of the fine brown grasses. The textures are tidy, the bunkers immaculately sculpted, and there's barely a pixel out of place. Stunning. 10/10

Playability

The course has been micro-managed extremely well: there are very few impossible or blocked lies, but yet on this hilly course, you will be unlikely to encounter flat ground between tee and green. Add the impressive risk/reward options and the distinct advantage that stems from knowing the holes well, and many players will make this a 'pet' course. Others, however, might view the unfriendly hazarding with a healthy dose of scepticism. 8/10

Challenge

Serenity Hills is very long, stiffly elevated and distinctly over-hazarded. The Par 3s are enough to want to make you lay up. There's a hint of the unfriendly Centennial courses in the unrelenting demand and pressure on the player, and that frankly is a little too much. It's a little worrying that this is becoming a persistent problem in courses from David. 5/10

Technical

There's nothing to fault in the detail of this course, and a massive amount of work has gone into the lovely 3D sculpture and creating more realistic effects. But it's hard to award full marks when Serenity lets itself down with inconsistent hole design and a lack of coherence. These are the design elements that are all too often forgotten. 9/10

Overall	Eye candy in many ways, but a little disappointing in others. Serenity would be eighteen great holes in isolation, but as a whole is a little short of the mark.	<i>37/50</i>
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Shadowlands

Mike Jones



Description

Fictional, dunes course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

There's nothing in the Links pantheon to quite match Shadowlands. Unparalleled in its ability to effectively communicate an atmosphere, its sandy environs have been manipulated extremely effectively to produce a real golfing test: there's more than a touch of Pine Valley about this course and the way it produces memorable fairways and greens, but yet blends so easily into the landscape. It's probably Mike Jones' most coherent and consistent course, which is high praise indeed. 10/10

Appearance

The texture makeover has done wonders for this course. Previously a little stark and featureless, there's a surprising amount to be seen in a course without many gimmicks or trickery. The sand is an important focal point, of course, and the variety and quality of blending in the traps alone sets this design apart. When you add the lovely colouring and perfect planting, it's a feast for the eyeballs as well as the clubs. 10/10

Playability

Teeing up at Shadowlands is like greeting an old friend – the small details which you've forgotten come flooding back and the impulsive need to press on with your round is undeniable. But, equally, like many old friends, you may well find it somewhat pat and predictable after a while. There isn't the sheer variety of options that you'd find on Mike Jones' other courses, and some frustratingly obscured views make certain holes something of a lottery at times. 8/10

Challenge

Par is sometimes a very easy number to hit here. In a number of practice rounds, I was coming in at around 75% pars, which makes you wonder if playing Shadowlands is just a fraction simplistic. The sand and deep rough certainly provide a stern test, but Linksters should find recovery pretty simple. But then, what are golf courses there for, if not to score par on? 8/10

Technical

Amazing technique is evident in the blends, the planting and the all-round course atmosphere. There is no more convincing creation than this outside of the real courses for Links. It's hard to distinguish which of Mike Jones' courses is the most technically advanced, but Shadowlands is certainly putting forth its candidacy. 10/10

Overall	Glorious atmosphere and a venue which will reward brilliant golf. An unforgettable course with genuine atmosphere.	46/50
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Shadow's Run (Par 3)

Steve & Tim Bausch



Description

Fictional, short course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

While Shadow's Run avoids many of the typical pitfalls of Par 3 courses – namely the lack of variety and the predilection towards gimmicky golf – and has good transition between holes, it does fall into several pitfalls. Most of these are petty and visual, but it should be remembered that Par 3s have always been hard to make, and while the Bausch brothers have done a decent job, it's unlikely to be a course that stays with you. 4/10

Appearance

A big and frankly spoiling flaw is the obviousness of the extrusion marks. They are everywhere: around greens, fairways and tee boxes, and really detract from what is potentially a good-looking course. Also on the fault list are some rather obvious clones, and a lack of good textures. It's pretty plain, all told. 4/10

Playability

Let's be honest...how playable can a Par 3 course be? Even with the good variation in hole lengths here, this is pretty standard fare. You avoid the bunkers, you hit the centre of the greens, and you score par. There's little more to it, to be totally truthful. 3/10

Challenge

As above, it's not too hard, not too easy. Generally well judged and at the very least a good workout for the variety of clubs that you're carrying. Certainly the bunkers don't make excessive demands, but elsewhere, there's some slick elevation changes and inspired use of planting as a hazard. Not at all bad. 8/10

Technical

It's the technical flaws that keep this from being a really good course. It's nearly entirely the visual problems, as the layout of the course is far in advance of many fictional courses out there. But there's that nagging feeling that if you're going to design a Par 3 course, it has to be really, really special. This is good, but special? No. 5/10

Overall	A decent short course, let down by a few APCD problems. Fun for a one-off, but you'll find it lacking on subsequent visits.	24/50
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Shaking Tree Golf Club

Bill Scott



Description

Fictional, farmland course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 5, from fairway.

Concept

Shaking Tree came out of the blue. A first-time course, it is a sumptuous walk through Shinnecock-style grasslands. The golf is superb American links: meticulously planned and challenging without being overtly gimmicky. Only the Par 3s have a whiff of over-complicity about them; the rest of the course is immaculately paced and located. 9/10

Appearance

First class textures, brilliant choice and detail in the planting. The bunkers are little works of art, being pristinely double-blended into the landscape. The clubhouse is a lavish work of art. It's only a shame the same cannot be said about the water features. They are black-edged and harshly transitioned: an area of the landscape that mystifyingly has not had had the attention of the rest. 9/10

Playability

Guaranteed enjoyment. As if Shaking Tree's soft colours and understated visuals aren't enough, then there's a surprisingly diverse set of golfing trials to try out. I cannot emphasise enough how cleverly this course has been set out: it really is worthy of the best of designers, and yet you won't see a gimmick or golf design stereotype anywhere. Magic. 10/10

Challenge

Shaking Tree has been carefully considered with the modern Links 1.06 golfer in mind. The greens are moderate (without being boring, mind), and there are some generous landing areas. Is it a pushover? No, of course not – I think I've made that point. There's some great thought to the hazarding and plenty of natural obstacles. But it's on the easier side of Level Par. 8/10

Technical

For a first-time course, this shows great assuredness with the vagaries of the APCD. The designer has clearly spent time on planning, and has played his first release conservatively, yet with a unique style that should be a lasting testament, sequels or nay. 9/10

Overall	One of the best first courses we have ever seen. A delightful walk in the woods.	45/50
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Shenandoah Ridge

Mike Cropf



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, woodland course	16 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
The readme states Virginia		
Conditions		
M*/M* works well; there are too few pins sitting close to the flat to go much faster		

Concept

A tremendously realised course, Shenandoah Ridge is rife with strategy and has some real standout holes, including the 7th and 16th – the latter of which might well be a candidate for an all-time list. There’s an awful lot of water on the opening half, with several semi-island greens which smack a bit of overkill. Thankfully, this tendency is withheld a little on the later holes, which use an excellent combination of fairway bunkering and plateau greens to achieve their effect. The overall environment, set among pine-needed woodlands, is a great convincer too. 8/10

Appearance

I really enjoyed the planting, which was natural and well-selected, and the scrubby grasses raised the rough beyond the merely ordinary. The biggest problem is with the texture set, which are mostly featureless and blurry, with some stretching around bunkers where a proper lip was really required. The blends, too, look experimental rather than natural, but you have to be pretty close-up to notice the anomalies. Generally speaking, the course looks fine, though. 7/10

Playability

I’ve really enjoyed my re-visits to Shenandoah Ridge; with its subtle sound and exciting target holes opening the round, you feel very much as if you’re part of a stadium-style course. There’s also a pleasing consistency to the design which lasts all the way through and only adds to the environment. 9/10

Challenge

Remarkably well-pitched, as target courses of this type often are not, this round offers plenty of opportunities to gain and drop strokes. Some severe deep rough and liberal use of water hazards will inevitably cost the player, but the greens are not too penal. The Par 5s are splendidly judged – not always an easy feat – to straddle the line between two- and three-shot holes, and level par is a good number for the course. 9/10

Technical

More work on the plot would have put this right up with the best. Some textures with more definition, better blended would have made a big difference in this case. But there’s still a lot of very good work in the hole design and the planting which is hard to overlook. 8/10

Overall	A terrific creation and one of the best-conceived courses outside of the P2P oeuvre. Some slight visual let-downs shouldn’t deter you in the slightest.	41/50
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Shinnecock Hills

Rob Miller



Description

Real, farmland course

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 4

Par

70

Location

New York

Conditions

Possible on F*/F*, although a couple of greens are very unforgiving.

Concept

Shinnecock is a real storytelling course, and it's easy to get wrapped up in the plot as you are whisked away from the clubhouse into thick grasslands fitted with immaculate, winding golf holes. Each half wraps up with a standout Par 4 as you glimpse the clubhouse back on top of the hill. It's a delightfully intimate course, and has been expertly ported to APCD, retaining a surprising old-fashioned atmosphere and austerity. 10/10

Appearance

Rob Miller is, without a doubt, the best visual artist we have seen in the Links community, and the lengths he has gone to in order to re-outfit this course are simply incredible. It's much more than a re-texture job, although first prize goes to these marvellously detailed and seamless textures; each bunker-edge and tee box is its own little portrait. There is a host of new 3D work as well; the clubhouse looks awesome, and the planting at all levels is richer than ever. I can't claim to love the two-tone fairways, but it's a look based on the real course. 9/10

Playability

Subtle angles of attack and brisk recovery both play their part here, and the course is a far cry from several long, soulless US Open hosts. Hazarding, landing areas and rough all dally between being an outright threat and providing wonderful scenery. But, best of all, the authenticity of the design makes Shinnecock evocative and compulsive for people who long to play the real thing. It doesn't get much closer than this. 10/10

Challenge

With an impressive gradient, Shinnecock slowly ups the difficulty level through a relatively unthreatening open half, into the twisty oblique fairways of the back nine. The greens, relatively open at first, slowly constrict towards the end, and the slope means that anything outside 10 feet is no certainty. The US Open Rough is the final challenge, but avoid it and the course offers every chance of a birdie putt, not least on the two generous Par 5s. 9/10

Technical

The original incarnation of this course was close to sublime; for a re-model, this has had an inordinate amount of time spent on it, and just looks absolutely stunning. 10/10

Overall

A course that really defies the superlatives. Almost as good as it gets – for now!

48/50

Shoreline Golf Links

Eric Browne



Description

Real, heathland course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

California

Conditions

Only a couple of greens restrict you to S*/S*

Concept

Something of a nondescript course, this, which belies its exciting West Coast setting by being a modest trot through flattish parkland. A couple of holes stand out for interesting design, but the majority are very routine and dull. There's little to look at and not much more to do; tedium sets in well before the end thanks to the lack of variety in hole lengths. 3/10

Appearance

You'd expect an appearance that reflects and enhances this course's location, but instead get some exceedingly damp and blurry textures, straight-extruded bunkers and lots and lots of cloned and mis-scaled trees. There are few standout features and even the signature amphitheatre floats from some angle. 2/10

Playability

The 'low score' factor is not the only reason to play this course. Several holes, especially around the opening, do offer a genuine risk/reward opportunity and the course is unthreatening and makes for an easy and unthreatening warm-up round. Play this while eating a sandwich or watching TV and it's unlikely you'll be too disappointed. 4/10

Challenge

It's difficult to award too many point, challenge-wise. The fairways are commodious, the rough almost as much so, and very few of the greens have any protection of the name. The Par 5s are almost insulting and are all easy to hit in 2. Playing off the back tees with windy conditions will be the only way to present yourself with a challenge here. 1/10

Technical

I gather this is an advertising release from the club itself, but it's not had a lot of work put into it. Textures are stock and clash badly, customisation is limited to the amphitheatre, and the water areas are unconvincing and underplanted. Elevation changes are jerky and under-used. The bunkers are poor, too shallow and the worst aspect of the course. 2/10

Overall

A commercial release that's easy to ignore, unless you're an aficionado of the real thing or a devotee of shooting low rounds.

12/50

Silver Springs

Jay Eff Harris



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, woodland course	18 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Minnesota		
Conditions		
A few pins are a bit iffy, but you should be fine on M*/M*		

Concept

Resurrecting a lost and demolished course with Links is a wonderful idea, and it has to be wondered why a course with the history of Silver Springs was ever allowed to be flattened. The tall, matured trees are very much a guiding light in the course, which picks its way between them, climaxing in a short Par 4 14th that, either by luck or judgement, has become a quite brilliant test of threading a drive through the woods. 8/10

Appearance

It's not brilliant, I'm afraid. Run-of-the-mill textures and very lumpy elevations are definitely a warning shot, and some of the hazards are straight-extruded and look something of a mess. The fairways look narrow and there are stretches of emptiness beyond, which the majority of the forests aren't dense enough to cover. Even though the trees add tone, there are plenty of visible clones, and the grass planting is sparse. 3/10

Playability

One outstanding hole sadly isn't quite enough to make a course, and even several other good ones (I particularly like the opener) lose their appeal when packaged as they are. At least there is little in terms of absurdities. 4/10

Challenge

The 'carefully-placed' fairway hazards are just a little too easy to negotiate, and most greens, although using the surrounding elevations to advantage, are relatively unguarded. The woods aren't tight in enough to the fairways, nor dense enough to force chip-outs. Bogeys will be uncommon, which is a clue to how the course is pitched. 5/10

Technical

Re-creating a golf course from memory is no mean feat, and credit is due in producing something convincing, believable and playable. The fine-tuning of APCD techniques might need a little more time, though. 4/10

Overall	Very rough on the surface (in more ways than one), but Silver Springs is playable even if it doesn't look great, and the 14 th should be experienced regardless.	24/50
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Sixwood Creek

Pete Frydrak



Description

Fictional, estate course

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 5, from greenside bunker

Concept

A strong feel-right factor is the bonus at Sixwood Creek and one that defies the fact that this course should be better known. Admittedly, it is appallingly flat, but there is a strong atmosphere here that really shouts 'Real Course'. The hole design is nicely underplayed without being too easy: subtle doglegs and carefully guarded pins are the watchword here. Inasmuch that simple, inoffensive courses like this always appreciated, it deserves to be better known. 6/10

Appearance

While there are a couple of difficulties to contend with here in the guise of some naff stock textures and the lack of almost any elevation work on the grid, there are some tasty moments to be had visually. The planting is sparse but apt, there's a nice panorama and the attention to such little features as grass paths, the monogrammed bunkers, and a 'dogleg bell' is credit-worthy. It's good enough that you don't notice the absence of blends and other such modern refinements. 5/10

Playability

There's a certain aura around Sixwood Creek that subtly draws you in. Perhaps it's the sheer uncomplicated presentation and the authentic country-club design. Perhaps it's the occasional visual treat or the nice variety of hole designs. Perhaps it's the inherent balance which can be created by a meticulous designer with the freedom to work on a fictional course. 6/10

Challenge

To all intents and purposes, it would appear that Sixwood would be something of a pushover, but there are a trap or two waiting, and not just in the form of sand. While the bunkers are indeed well placed greenside, you also need to watch out for lurking heavy rough and the dogleg structure common throughout the course won't let you just grip-and-rip. Save your birdie efforts for when you hit the luxurious flat fairways. 6/10

Technical

It's a pity about the stock textures and the flatness of the course (although I'm willing to accept that this could be deliberate), because there has been real care taken here, with design and small touches both graphical and oral. Sixwood Creek is a complete package and doesn't deserve to be ignored for its age. 6/10

Overall	Clearly the work of an experienced golfer, Sixwood has plenty of appeal.	29/50
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Skeleton Coast

Microsoft



Description

Imaginary, tropical course.

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

As an illustration of what Links 2003 is capable of, this fails miserably. The designers appear to have gone to town with some (admittedly impressive) rock work, and left the advanced APCD techniques out in the cold. The course itself starts well, but rapidly becomes unoriginal and derivative (does the screenshot remind anyone else of Pebble Beach?). The course is allegedly set on the African coast, but the design does little to convince me of that. Not a great attempt. 4/10

Appearance

I will certainly concede that the rockwork looks very impressive and the elevations are neatly done, but the course radiates artificiality. The grass is much too bright and too green for these latitudes, and the wide open and sparsely-planted areas do not impress. The ocean mapping has been superseded many times since by part-time designers. Skeleton Coast, in effect, just falls back in amongst the crowd. 6/10

Playability

The novelty value of playing a fantasy course quickly fades, as the designers have really not stretched themselves enough. Because a lot of holes are stretched to unnecessary length, and because – ridiculously – there is only one set of tees, there is insufficient variety here, and it has little repeat playability value other than to take in the nice scenery. 6/10

Challenge

Unusually for a fantasy course, this is pretty easy. Although the hazards are well-placed, the fairways are wide open and it's hard to find deep rough. The elevations often run across fairways and make approach shots tricky, but the greens are not severely sloped and will accept putts. Overall, it's a very fair round of golf. 7/10

Technical

The seam blending is a joke. As this is one of the main selling points of APCD 1.5, much more should have been made of it. Planting is not always typical of the course, and seems to be a jumble of different plants with little reason to them. While the rocks are spectacularly carried out, there are still too many flaws here, and we should be expecting better things. 6/10

Overall

A playable course, and one that offers an un-Microsoft-like very fair challenge, but with little sense of its environment. Misses out on some of the technical importance of its release time too.

29/50

Slainte Mhath

Kjell Johansson



Description

Fictional, links course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 4, from green.

Concept

This amazing wild and windy Scottish links both attracts and repels you, but for all the right reasons. With nary a sign of life on the front nine as you play away from the clubhouse, and the roaring wind and ocean breakers booming in your ears, you feel in touch with nature at its roughest and most brutal. In true links style, there is little regard to par layout, and there are only two Par 5s on the course. The conditions and restrictive hole design make for some testing golf, but the windswept beauty of this course

is such that you keep coming back. 10/10

Appearance

Despite the remote locality, this course is impressive in the design. The planting of the long grass is painstakingly perfect, and the extras such as the coastline, aircraft base and neighbouring croft are brilliantly rendered. There is no seam blending, but the textures used are perfect and almost blend into one another regardless. The whole course is washed in suitably pale green with a decent panorama functioning as the backdrop. 10/10

Playability

Perhaps a third of the holes offer reasonably risk/reward, but this isn't the outstanding feature of links golf in any case. Your round is assisted by the undulating and confusing elevation changes, and some true tests of putting on the greens. The backdrop of noise is impressive at first but does become somewhat wearisome later, sad to say. But this is often a magical course to play around, and will remain so for many people. 8/10

Challenge

A tough round of golf, this, although never unfair. It's very hard to make putts, and shots will inevitably be lost from missing fairways. The bunkers are often inclined to be small and deep, and will need a lofted iron escape in many cases. But the course is short (6600 yards) and good enough approach play might make a few birdies with easy pin placement. 7/10

Technical

Lack of seam blending is a disappointment, although the textures are well enough produced to make this negligible to the visuals of the course. What impresses me most about the technical work is the creation of a complete environment, through sound and visuals, which makes the course utterly, utterly believable. 9/10

Overall	A very real and windswept links course which provides a superlative experience. Comparable with any links course out there.	44/50
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Smokey Hills G & CC

Leigh Seaman



Description

Fictional, mountain course.

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Leigh Seaman is generally the youngest recognised APCD designer, and there's certainly a youthful exuberance running through Smokey Hills. It's debatable whether the Iron Maiden theme adds anything (although it didn't worry me any), but there's some cracking hole design, and the terrific 8th hole made me gasp out loud with its sheer audacity. Elevations are used well on this mountain design, especially on the front half, although the Par 5s are markedly less exciting than the rest of the course, being

consistently short and unthreatening. 7/10

Appearance

The panorama is massive, but does not overshadow the course to any great extent, for which we should be thankful. On the plot itself, all is right, if a little undistinguished. The planting, particularly, is far from clone free and struck me as functional rather than decorative. The use and blending of textures is the best and most natural aspect, and rarely stood out as being artificial. 7/10

Playability

Smokey Hills is an enchanting round of golf. The far-off location and continuity afforded by the thematic to the course means you will come back time after time. There's a good, effective and believable blend of hole types, and a chance to hit your shots without worrying too much about the consequences (the designer is happy to admit to it being a 'grip it and rip it' course). Just the longer holes let the course down, being without sufficient variety. 8/10

Challenge

Problems here. Leigh is a bit of a golfing idealist and I reckon he hopes people should play his courses in a sensible and dictated manner. Sadly, most people tend to favour playing courses in the manner which means they will get a low score, which takes a lot of his bunkering out of play. Even with some dirty play in the green slopes, there isn't really enough here to suggest 'difficulty' to the golfer. 4/10

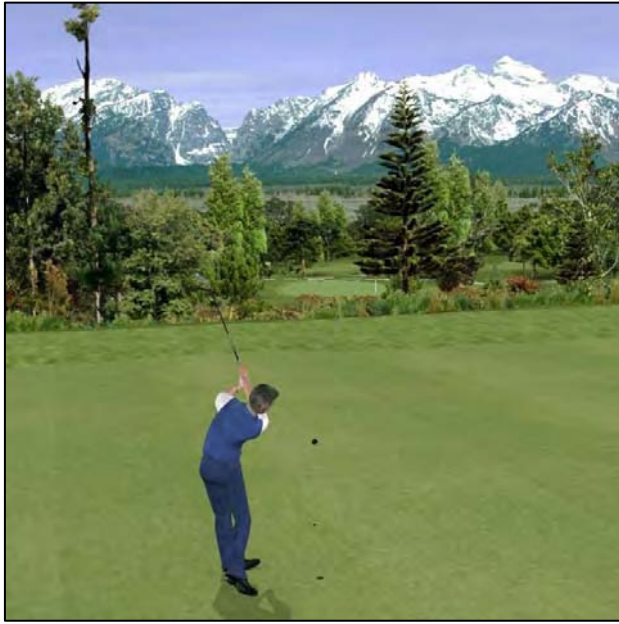
Technical

Again, this course displays a very high standard of technical proficiency. Perhaps it's not got the most natural feel of some courses or some hyper-realistic planting like other recent releases. But the elevational work is bang on the mark, and the texture set is assured. What is most pleasing is the clever proficiency in course design which gives me hope for this designer's future. 8/10

Overall	Great golf from the Seaman family yet again, this time featuring all the exuberance of youth.	34/50
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Sniper's Alley (Mountainview)

Richard Latanville



Description

Fictional, estate course

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

There's a pleasing garden-like feel to this course. You could happily be in an oasis of calm perched incongruously on top of a mountain overlooking the stunning vistas. Tidied into this little green patch are some holes demonstrating ingenuity with course design and frugal hazarding: the 9th, 15th and 18th are all very interesting in that respect, and I've certainly never encountered quicksand on a course before! Yes, the course has flaws elsewhere, but that's not to say it should be dismissed out of hand. 8/10

Appearance

The low-resolution textures are unblended into a peculiar patchwork which occasionally impresses but more often just looks silly. There are also issues with the bunkers, which look jagged and have an unpleasant lip texture applied. Thankfully, the course does have a redeeming feature in some pleasant, largely custom planting. But even this fizzles out into clones as the round pulls towards the end. 3/10

Playability

If you can overlook the poor visuals, there's a very stimulating round of golf to be had here. The myriad textures help, as does some exotic – although not inappropriate – sound planting. There are blind shots and an occasional issue with side-elevations, but they don't impact on your game to a major extent, and you're left with what is still a very worthwhile golfing puzzle. 6/10

Challenge

Sniper's Alley isn't a particularly long course, and the designer's pleasing restraint when it comes to hazarding and deep rough makes for inoffensive but underwhelming golf. Missing the fairways is scarcely a problem, thanks to the accommodating rough, which actually gives a superior approach position from time to time. Birdie putts will be frequent, and only some questionable pin locations hold your scores to 'normal' levels. 5/10

Technical

Perhaps what's most worrying about this course is that many of the good intentions seem to have been left half-finished. There is the potential for this to be a very good course indeed under a watchful eye, but it's depressing that what starts out as visually acceptable has deteriorated badly by the 8th hole. 2/10

Overall	Poor visually, but featuring enough novel and acceptable ideas to at least merit a round or two.	24/50
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Sorento Golf Club

Steve Pope



Description

Imaginary, desert course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

There's very little at Sorento that you could ever credit appearing on a real golf course. Plantings of every type, from boreal to desert to scrub to garden make uneasy bedfellows, and the huge wasteland hazards don't ring true. The holes aren't particularly extravagant, but you do realise that they belong strictly in fantasy world. It's an uneasy and unconvincing selection that doesn't do the course as a whole many favours. 4/10

Appearance

I found the texture set to be overwhelmingly jarring in the broad range of colours and lies that had been created. The flowerbed planting suffers badly from clones – lined-up clones at that – and the planting of rocks and low grasses is inconsistent: excellent in many places, but determinedly random in others. If I'm to be honest, it's not all I've come to expect of a P2P course. 6/10

Playability

Sorento is certainly not without strategic merit, and there's plenty of flexibility to the course, depending on the player's preferences and, of course, the conditions. The pinpoint bunker placement and facility for playable lies coursewide are evidence enough of the amount of planning required to have a course play this smoothly, and some capable ambient sound is the finishing touch. Sometimes, it does feel a little calculated, but it's not difficult to enjoy yourself here. 8/10

Challenge

It's surprisingly easy to hit the greens here, although you will inevitably find sand on the way, and there are some wide-open landing areas segueing into only moderate rough. Scores may be affected somewhat by some tricky putting problems, but there's nothing else to suggest that birdies aren't possible. 6/10

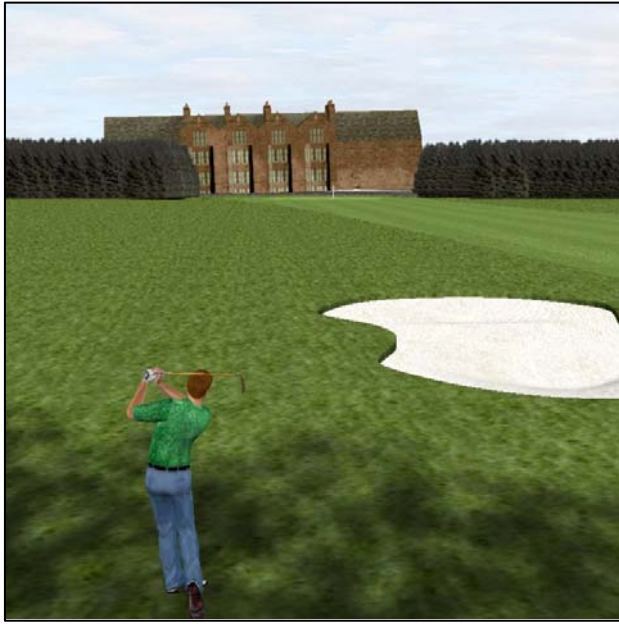
Technical

The main question has to be: to what extent would this be considered overkill? The texture set, in particular, could benefit from being much more conservative, and the planting is just too varied. There's no questioning the visual properties of the course, but some more restraint would probably be in order. 8/10

Overall	An almost grotesque vision of piling as much into eighteen holes as possible. Effective, but not dazzling.	32/50
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South Charnwood

David Baxter



Description

Imaginary, forest course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from rough

Concept

Not much going on here. One tree, copied many, many times, and 18 holes designed in isolation, some with tell-tale remnants of the stock hole design still on them. There are a few traces of intelligent hole design, but they can't account for a very, very ordinary appearance. 2/10

Appearance

Horrible, rushed and tasteless cloning marks the course out from the first tee. There's mesh folds, deep extrusions, poor bunker-sculpture and no great texture use to boot. Yuk, yuk, yuk. 0/10

Playability

I can see, to some extent, why South Charnwood has kept a band of followers. It's long, but not excessively so, highly rewarding when you pull off good shots, and actually – given the frequent mesh errors – rarely unplayable. All creditable features, but you struggle to get past the sheer baseness of the course to find them. 3/10

Challenge

One of those courses where you might end up with a competitive score, but it's all done in the wrong way. Easy putts on flat greens will be counter-balanced by nasty long shots, forced escapes from the trees, and a few very cynically-placed water hazards. Not for me, I'm afraid. 4/10

Technical

The fact that the designer couldn't even be bothered to find a second tree for planting probably indicates how much more time could have gone into this. The lingering bunker and green shapes barely warrant keeping the course, and the plot is too small: you'll find yourself coming hard-up against the panorama too often. 0/10

Overall	A little inspiration in the hole designs, but not enough to warrant finding this rarity.	9/50
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Southern Breeze

Billy Sheehan



Description

Imaginary, parkland course.

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

I'm not sure what the concept behind this course is. It seems to be flat and sprawling and a lot of holes don't differ significantly from the stock design. It's inadequately landscaped and averagely planted. You could stick a pin in the map to determine the intended location. Thankfully, a few holes feature decent design and raise this course above completely mediocre. 1/10

Appearance

Some ultra-obscure rock features tower over this course, there's some horrible texture transitions, some very apparent mesh folds, and the lack of elevation work is close to distressing. Hazards are not extruded and lie flat on the ground. There's nothing that looks even one-tenth as good as the feature hole, aside perhaps from the mammoth APCD billboard along the 14th fairway. 1/10

Playability

Two or three good holes are an enjoyable golfing test, but the majority are dull, stock and not fine-tuned well enough to provide you with variety. The green shapes, in particular, are almost boringly monotonous. 2/10

Challenge

There's little challenge at Southern Breeze. The land is frequently too flat, and the surface-level bunkers are just ridiculous. Putting provides a decent challenge, but even then you shouldn't be surprised to shoot 65. 3/10

Technical

Atrocious, generally. Underworked, under-elevated and only planted with mediocrity. It hasn't even excited me enough to write much about it. 0/10

Overall	90% rubbish. Worthy of a look for a couple of holes, but not even close to demanding a second look.	7/50
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Southernness

Stewart Parker



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, links course	14 th hole, Par 4	69
Location		
Dumfries & Galloway, Scotland		
Conditions		
I'd prefer M*/F* to F*/F*		

Concept

The seaside wilderness, tight fairways and dense rough all scream Scottish links, right from the first tee, and this is a course with an amazing economy of presentation. The old-fashioned layout is something we don't see enough of, and the barren landscape is an expression of some of the poorer aspects of links golf, as well as the better ones. As far as authenticity goes, though, there are few to match this most careful and precise of Stewart's creations. 7/10

Appearance

The luscious heather and grass planting look awesome from all perspectives, but the prize here is for the economic but perfectly-placed tree planting. There is a strong 'feel-right' appearance to the trees and shrubs, particularly as the round draws to a close. The textures have been chosen excellently, and the yellowing colour set is a good complement to the location. There are still a few hard lines about, and the mid-textures are really quite sharp, but it would be difficult to claim that spoiled the view! 9/10

Playability

Good, traditional links courses are still fairly thin on the ground, despite a recent flurry of excellent Scottish designs (not least from Mr Parker!). The over-riding goals of hitting the fairway and coping from the rough stuff don't taint the course at all, and the visibility and open-ness in all hole designs is an aim which other courses could learn from. I suppose my real problem with the course is the monotony of the challenge: the vast majority of holes are simply all about staying out of the heather. 7/10

Challenge

Southernness has quite a bit of length for a course below regulation par, and the rough is the omnipresent hazard that it absolutely should be. Even with a strong recovery game, you'll scramble a lot of strokes in – there are very few pushovers here, setting the course apart from its peers. Dropped shots are a likelihood, and with only two long holes, it's not too easy to pick them back up again. Unfair? Never. But demanding? Certainly. 8/10

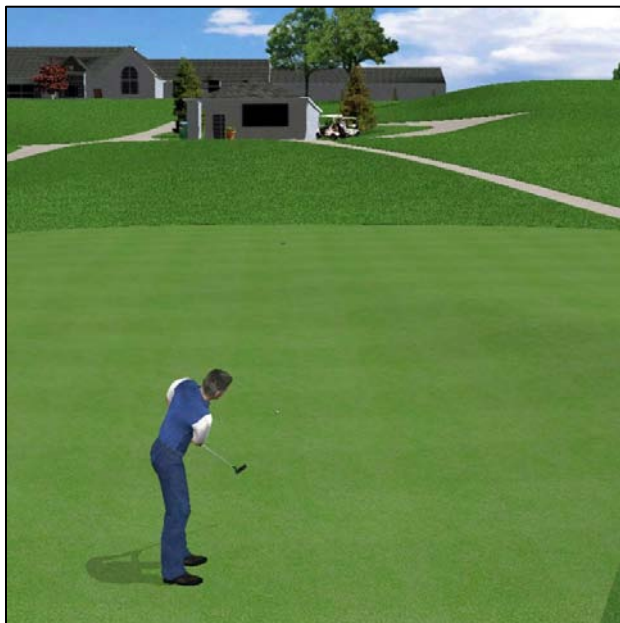
Technical

Constant improvement has been the watchword at Southernness, and the fine-tuning that has gone into the course over its many incarnations is evident. In terms of sheer perfectionism alone, this is Stewart Parker's most awesome creation. 10/10

Overall	Beautiful, playable and punishing Scottish links. A deceptively simple-looking course.	41/50
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Southern Hills Country Club

Ross Mackenzie



Description

Real, parkland course.

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, on green.

Concept

Lush and impeccably manicured, Southern Hills is very austere in its clipped presentation and rich landscape. It's first and foremost a real tournament course, and is naturally best played in tournament mode. Long, testing holes bring both woodland and bunkers heavily into play, and there is the additional peril of water coming into play on the closing holes. The lack of good trademark holes is a disappointment, though, as is the general lack of strategic options. The whole thing has been ported to

APCD very well, and makes for compelling golf. 7/10

Appearance

This is an APCD 1.1 design, although you'd barely believe it. The texture choices are such that transitions are never overtly noticeable, although there are quite a few extrusion marks visible in many points. The main draw, though, is the excellent use of 3D and textures to create buildings, flowerbeds and other course structures. It's the little things like these that keep the round interesting. 8/10

Playability

Southern Hills is a decent course, although the closeness of the heavy rough is likely to irritate those playing with difficult swing types, and send scores rocketing accordingly. There's a lack of risk/reward and heroic shots, though; conservative golf is the way to go here, and that inevitably won't appeal to everyone. 5/10

Challenge

The heavy rough will inevitably cost strokes, and the trees are brought into play often. Thankfully, most of the fairways are accommodately flat, although the same can't always be said for the greens. You'd be lucky to break par here. 5/10

Technical

On the large scale, this is a great technical effort using inferior design software. Sadly, close-to, just too many flaws start to appear. There's a distinct lack of grass planting, which should be a must for disguising some untidy tree planting and water features. There's quite a few hard edges to the 3D sculpture. The course's greatest achievement is the use of good textures in the early incarnation of APCD; something quite a few predecessors found themselves unable to do. 6/10

Overall

Southern Hills should be a front-runner for anybody's golf tournament. It's got the challenge; it's got the lavishness; it's got the tenacity and consistency. Sadly, what it doesn't have, is long-term playability.

31/50

Southern Pines

Eddie Schmidt



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

I have to confess that this was a course that shied off my radar for far too long. It's a beautifully coherent forest run-out; utterly convincing in the blend of styles and the meticulously created environment. The beauty of the design is the complete lack of awkwardness or inconvenience to the golfer – this really is stimulating golf at its most fluid best. There might certainly be room for alterations; one too many clichés among the design, but I doubt too many players would be looking for an improvement. 9/10

Appearance

Impeccable planting at all levels makes this one of the best 2001 designs, and it's difficult to harp on at the design problems that came inherent with APCD 1.1. The colour set is inspired and features such as the hazards show promise way ahead of their time. The isolated woodland is the perfect excuse to focus on the beauty of natural features but there's a wealth of interesting customisation to go alongside them, including particularly the Civil War objects that have become Eddie's hallmark . 9/10

Playability

This is effortless golf in the best way imaginable. Hole after hole flies by but – beautifully – isn't immediately lost to the mind's eye afterwards. By turns, it's reminiscent of your local municipal, a championship venue, and a luxurious fantasy creation, without shoving any of these down our throats. The overall experience could be a pinnacle from which the game has yet to descend. 10/10

Challenge

It would be slightly unfair to level accusations of easiness against Southern Pines. Certainly it does its best with some lengthy Par 5s and some awkward (to say the least) greening. It just doesn't all pull together, though – there's a shortage of genuinely strategic hazarding, and the strokes are all too easy to pick up. 3/10

Technical

This is easily among that great, and too-often overlooked, group of courses that set new limits for their time, and Southern Pines has barely aged at all. In some ways, it doesn't even cry out for an update in the fear that the atmosphere may be spoiled. 8/10

Overall	Probably one of the best 'straight' courses out there. A joyful round of golf and an interesting precursor to the equally-appealing Bull Run.	39/50
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South Shore GC

Bob Kraft



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 5, from fairway.

Concept

South Shore is a typical little local course which has been neatly knocked into shape with the APCD. It won't win many originality awards – most of the fairways are arrow straight – and doesn't feature much by the way of course landmarks. The lack of bunkers is particularly noticeable; there can't be more than ten on the entire course. Yet, with a caring hand, the course has been made presentable and moderately entertaining. 4/10

Appearance

The course seriously lacks underplanting, but many of the other features have been presented reasonably well. The texture use and blending is sound if unimpressive, and there is very little by way of cloning. The biggest problem is that there simply isn't much to look at; everything is done competently but not eye-catchingly well. 4/10

Playability

There's a decent ambience at South Shore, helped by some subtle ambient sound and tactical restraint from the designer. It makes for pleasant, inoffensive golf, but even the most tolerant of players will tire of having to hit some narrow and boringly straight fairways. Best not to plan a four-round tournament here. 6/10

Challenge

Even though the fairways are narrow; the rough beefed up; and the greens quite Mod-unfriendly at times, the lack of decent hazarding means that South Shore really is just too easy. The Par 5s, especially, afford genuine eagle chances, and it would be no surprise if you averaged less than 4 on the long holes. The overall flatness of the course, although no doubt realistic, does little to help. 2/10

Technical

The course has been through patient re-constructive processes; the planting has been weeded out, and the textures touched up. There are very few glaring problems (although perhaps some better water textures would be nice), but then again, the course is hardly a candidate for APCD excellence, either. For the work and patience that the designer has put in, I'm inclined to be generous. 7/10

Overall

A decent and playable real course, although 'decent' is about as good as it gets. It was lacking a little something at stage one of the design.

23/50

Space Adventure

Michael Savicki



Description

Imaginary, concept course.

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

In the words of the immortal Sam Beckett: 'Oh boy.' A space themed golf course will knock your brains out. Not just every hole, but the entire course is customised to death, and you can expect cameo appearances from most of the best-known sci-fi characters. Massively elevated tees (presumably to give the illusion of low gravity) mean you can boom out enormous drives (450 yards is my personal best). OK, so the hole design isn't always bang on the money. But there's more than enough here to

keep all but the most die-hard cynic busy and amused for hours. 10/10

Appearance

A case of the good, the bad and the ugly. The good is the massive amount of customisation that has gone on. There are literally hundreds of custom objects, each rendered beautifully and reasonably convincingly (in as much as it's possible to be convinced by this course). The bad is the close attention (or lack thereof) that has gone into the regulation golfing features. There are plenty of hard texture edges, one or two elevation changes that are calling out for another ring of verts, and the bunker extrusions are pretty awful. The ugly is the almost inevitable fact that your line of view will dip beneath the panorama occasionally, and you'll see Links backdrop. On a superficial level it's a very good looking course, but after you've seen everything, you'll demand more. 7/10

Playability

To be honest, you've seen all there is to see after 18 holes, and you'll tire of being demanded to hit the snap time after time (the depths of space is OB, naturally). On a course of massive length, there's little play option beyond hitting hard and long, and so this doesn't play as well as Michael's other courses. 5/10

Challenge

Unrealistic course, unrealistic challenge. The demands to hit your snap are too high (especially on Champ level or above), and plenty of strokes will be lost to OB penalties. Despite the freakish course length (8100 yards, somewhat negated by the elevated tees), it's possible to make birdies thanks to some gentle greens, but this course will still prove too much challenge for those that don't take mulligans out on the course. 5/10

Technical

A mixed bag. While the skill and patience that has gone into the customisation is undeniable, it would be nice if more attention had been paid to the golf beneath the façade. Some custom sounds, too, are crying out to be added, and it's a real shame they have not been. 6/10

Overall

A course unlike any other. In turns brilliant, annoying and downright silly. Make of it what you will.

33/50

Spey Valley Golf & Country Club

Stewart Parker



Description

Real, heathland course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, from rough.

Concept

This is why Scotland is the home of golf. Spey Valley starts innocently, but opens out into glorious heather-soaked loch-side heath. The holes are mostly archetypal links strategy, with intricate fairway shapes and challenging, morale-destroying rough. Brilliantly, the best is yet to come, as you head back lowland for a classic, unforgettable closing hole. The whole thing is brilliantly held together, and an unusual attraction for the casual golfer. 9/10

Appearance

The glorious purple heather is an undeniable selling point, and it's backed up by some sensitive and mixed-up high-level planting. The bunker lips have received extra attention, and the textures throughout – as would be expected from this designer – are faultless. There's nothing to knock here. 10/10

Playability

Spey Valley has plenty for you to look at and no small demands placed on all the different areas of your game. At least at first. Further into the round, you get the impression that it's a bit of a one-shot deal – you're being forced to play with restraint into narrow fairways and your only real objective on too many holes is avoiding the rough. It's worth sticking with for the excellent close, but the round loses its way a bit in the middle. 7/10

Challenge

Count on the Par 5s to pick up shots, because there will be precious little opportunity elsewhere. Spey Valley isn't overtly punishing, but the difficulty is noticeably cranked up on the way back in, and you'll play many 3rd shots from off the green. Needless to say, the heather needs to be avoided at all costs, particularly to cost of a likely double bogey. 7/10

Technical

This represents the latest in a very fine series of courses for its designer, and a novel visual twist to boot. It's flawless as far as I'm concerned. 10/10

Overall	A special course awash in a sea of purple heather. Evocative, atmospheric and a course that demands perfection.	<i>43/50</i>
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Spirit Hollow GC

David Schmelzer



Description

Fictional, heathland course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, from pine needles.

Concept

I have no doubt that David Schmelzer is *the* up-and-coming APCD architect. Spirit Hollow is an excellent showcase for his talents, being hilly, scenic and packed full of magnificent and memorable holes. The scenario is of outback upland, with holes carefully tailored to make the most of the exciting elevation changes. It's beguiling, unexpectedly realistic, and utterly addictive. 10/10

Appearance

Some of the brilliances of Eagle Crest are carried over to this successor. The massive use of customised trees and the semi-in-play fences are notable, but the planting of the undergrowth has undergone a development, and the little things like 3D steps help you become absorbed. Every now and then, there's an out-of-focus tree or odd-looking bunker that detracts slightly, but for the large part this is a feast for the eye. 9/10

Playability

While the holes themselves are both absorbing and challenging, there are a couple of problems that dog the gameplay. 'Sound lag' is a severe problem, especially seeing as the ambient sounds are not always audible, and the over-enthusiastic bunkering is something of a downer. Luckily, there's a whopping amount of variety out and about on the course, and the patient golfers will be in for a great round. 7/10

Challenge

This one takes no prisoners. There's a lot of heavy rough and foresting in inconvenient places, and players without a good sand game are bound to struggle. Many fairway bunkers are quite steep, which means inevitable dropped shots. The elevations and some hideous pin positions are the *coup de gras* and make any birdies something to savour. It's not too tough, but it certainly will test your stamina. 5/10

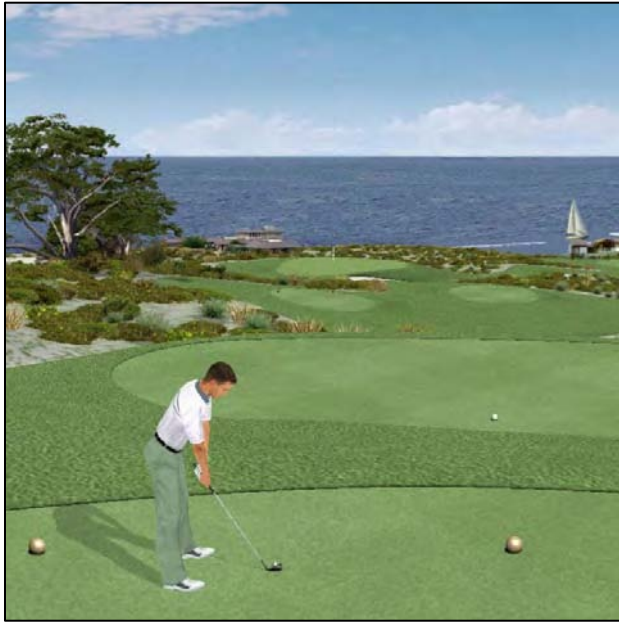
Technical

David's courses have shown a marked improvement each time, and this is the best yet. The planting is exquisite, and not over-varied as might be expected. There's lots of neat touches, such as the fencing and careful use of peripheral objects, and the terrain work is complemented by an outstanding panorama. The sound needs work, and maybe a more realistic course should be next in the pipeline, but Spirit Hollow is approaching a very high standard. 8/10

Overall	Another steady improvement and every indication that David is ready to jump into the big league.	39/50
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Spyglass Hill

Eddie Schmidt



Description

Real, ocean course.

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

This is a fantastic re-creation of a fantastic course. After an amazing first six holes which literally play across the beach, the course enters dense coastal forest and the style of golf is perceptibly altered. The level of detail in this course is excellent and it really assists in giving a genuine sense of atmosphere and location. The hole design becomes a little hackneyed towards the end of the round and the 18th finishes with a whimper rather than a bang. 8/10

Appearance

The textures at Spyglass are unique and, although the seaweed-strewn beach takes some getting used to, very appropriate. The ocean looks amazing and the woodland is faithfully planting with clones hard to spot. Only a few hard transitions spoil the look of the course as a whole. 9/10

Playability

Spyglass starts off on a wave of fun, and the opening beach holes are rich in risk/reward options, but sadly, the thrill palls later on in the course as the woodland holes become a bit same-y. Still, there's the brilliant potential acquired by playing a real course, the forest holes require some thought and shot-shaping off the tee, and that makes it a little easier to ignore some of the course's (not the designer's, I hasten to add) shortcomings. 6/10

Challenge

Unlike a lot of real course conversions, this brilliantly maintains the challenge present by the real-life versions. OB is a constant threat, and the longer holes are brilliantly laid out in order not to be a pushover. The green gradients are just sufficient to be challenging, without being unrealistic. This is a brilliant challenge for golfers of any skill level on any settings. 10/10

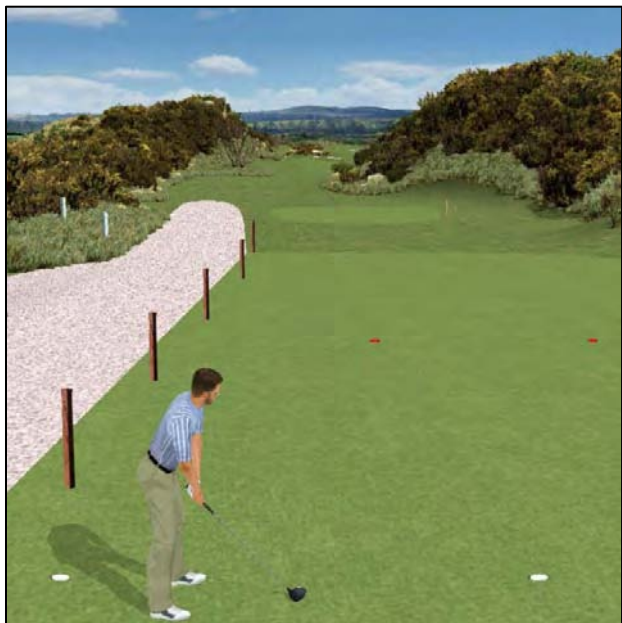
Technical

Although the texture blends are sometimes harsh, this is an immaculate piece of work in so many ways. The re-creation of a fine course is as near perfect as makes no difference, textures are brilliantly worked, and elevations are totally natural. Making the planting of the forests so natural is a work of art, no less. 9/10

Overall	Easily among the best as far as real courses re-created for Links goes. Perhaps the course itself isn't as vibrant as we've been led to believe, but the designer certainly shouldn't be faulted.	42/50
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St Andrews Links Jubilee Course

Microsoft



Description

Real, links course.

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

The inferior of the St Andrews collection is less exciting, both visually and golfing, than its more recognised older brothers. Although it's got a different, seaside-links feel, there has been much less effort expended on the Jubilee course, with the result that it looks under prepared and unimposing. The majority of holes are straight and little in the way of hazards comes into play. 4/10

Appearance

There certainly hasn't been much time lavished on this. The texture transitions are straight and hard, and the course – for rough moorland – looks distinctly under-planted. The bunkers are horrendous, and most are just straight-extruded leaving a horrible hard edge which not only looks poor but affects play too. The panorama is nice, but the course urgently needs attention. 3/10

Playability

Because of the restricted nature of many holes, there is little choice after most tee shots, and you'll find yourself playing hole after hole in a very similar manner. There is limited playability factor through the eminent location and the thrill of playing at St Andrews (albeit on a minor course), but for the most part it's nowhere near as good as the Old Course. 4/10

Challenge

Now this is where Jubilee scores points of its 19th Century cousins. A more modern links, stretched out in length (although certainly not excessively), with subtle green breaks will always be harder than the Old Course's drivable Par 4s and flat greens. I think the rough here at the jubilee course should certainly have been more punishing, but the course is still a good test regardless. 7/10

Technical

It's appalling that anyone thought this course was in a fit state to put out with the terrible bunkers and almost non-existent low-level grass planting. The moorland location of St Andrews is not done justice at all, and the result is just cheap and tacky. 3/10

Overall	If you can overlook the glaring visual errors, this is a reasonable re-creation of a real course. But it's well below standard for a commercial release.	21/50
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St Andrews Links New Course

Microsoft



Description

Real, links course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

The New Course certainly lives up to its name. There is a viable, planned golf course in modern design set out on this patch of land, unlike the neighbouring, sprawling Old Course. But therein lies its flaws: even more so than the Jubilee Course, this style does not fit comfortably onto links land, and the use of 19th Century hole lengths with 20th Century designs just doesn't add up. Only that indefinable aura of St Andrews, with the glimpses of the famous buildings, keeps the New Course afloat. 4/10

Appearance

There's just nothing to see! Some scrubby planting is well enough rendered, but the textures look old, clashing and inappropriate to the wild terrain. The bunkers are undeservingly poor, and there's...well...there's nothing to see! 2/10

Playability

Magically, somehow, the aura of St Andrews penetrates even this, the most mundane of courses. There's nowhere near the strategic merit of big brother Old here, but the gift of a location makes it work. A round will pass fleetingly, if uneventfully, and you might even come back for more. 7/10

Challenge

Of course, wanting to shoot fifty-nine again might be the reason to come back. Most holes will be a driver-wedge-putt affair, helped by no inescapable hazards in play and some surprisingly generous greens. Even a misplaced pin or too won't dampen the flow of birdies. 0/10

Technical

After the success of the Kapalua trilogy, it's easy to see why MS repeated the trick with St Andrews. Sadly, though, it's clear than neither the New nor the Jubilee course got the time they deserved and was instead lavished on the Old. Admittedly, a bleak landscape is not easy to replicate, but there have been many better attempts than this. 3/10

Overall	A piece of whimsy with low scores guaranteed. Inevitably suffers from being the lesser half of a pair and has been justifiably overlooked by both designers and players.	16/50
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St Andrews Links Old Course - Backwards

apcd-courses.com



Description

Real, concept course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

What's the first thing you do when getting hold of Microsoft's blueprints for one of the world's most famous courses? Er...that's right: turn it all backwards. Is there any point in this exercise? Precious little, as it happens. All the mysticism and stately aura of St Andrews is lost: many areas are unrecognisable, and a lot of the original challenge is nullified. A woeful and self-serving conceit. 2/10

Appearance

The original course was no great shakes in the visuals department, and this reverse version is even worse. Of course, it all stems down to the problem that most of the course was designed specifically to be seen from the perspective of a golfer playing the correct way around. From the other side, more faults that would otherwise have been picked up are glaringly apparent. 4/10

Playability

Even though Microsoft's rendition had its flaws, it still managed to communicate the magic of one of the world's most famous championships courses. Bizarrely, there is very little of that here. There are few of the landmarks that made the course really special, and little of the drama and unpredictability to match. It doesn't help, of course, that the course was never designed to be played backwards and any elements of strategy built in to the original hole design are effectively nullified. 5/10

Challenge

St Andrews was never a difficult course and, deprived of carefully-placed fairway hazards, it approaches the level of 'pushover' here. Only the trademark rolling hummocks that make the links famous are an obstacle to scoring well: the landscape is easy to attack and the greens easy to read. You should be closer to 60 than 70. 2/10

Technical

Bizarrely, the nice recreations of the course buildings and various course highlights have been removed, and with them goes any last vestige of credibility this course may have possessed. The result is unremarkable, under-polished and most certainly under-whelming. 4/10

Overall	An utter waste of space. Only worth obtaining if your intention is to open it up with the APCD and route all the holes the way they should be.	17/50
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St Andrews The Himalayas Putting Course

Stewart Parker



Description

Real, short course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

The hilliest, nastiest practice green in existence! Certainly the way to sharpen up before taking on the real St Andrews, although its playability on the faster settings is debatable. Shorter than the other putting courses on the market, and more a bit of fun than anything else; it's still nice to have another short course for the files. 5/10

Appearance

With the lush surroundings of St Andrews giving plenty of background, there's a surprising amount of visuals on The Himalayas. Various course monuments stand out, and the gorse surrounding the green is fine. The contrast shift from tee to green could be more gentle in this case. 6/10

Playability

Putting courses need to work hard to maintain a rather limited appeal through eighteen holes. And that's a fact rather working against The Himalayas. There's just not the variety in doglegs or shaped-putts that can be found on other courses of this type, although there is some limited appeal in trying a chipper from the tee. The elevations are everything they promise to be. 5/10

Challenge

You're over-whelmingly dependent on the green speed here. Played as a set of Par 3 holes, you could comfortably break par on slow settings and go somewhere up to 30-over on the fast ones. As such, it's a difficult parameter to judge, but suffice to say you won't be taking on anything unexpected, which I suppose is all you can ask. 7/10

Technical

As something of an afterthought, the visual work stands up well enough, but I'm very disappointed that the holes have not been re-routed, and the consequent presentation let-down. 4/10

Overall	Putting. So simple, and yet so complicated.	27/50
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St Andrews The Old Course

Stewart Parker



Description

Real, links course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Scotland

Conditions

To be honest, some pins don't merit faster than M*/S*. Windy conditions are advisable, though.

Concept

There's little point in trying to knock St Andrews in terms of concept and design – it is pretty much the oldest and best-established course in the entire collection. Quite simply, it's a design that has spanned ages and still holds firm as the veritable home of golf. Stewart's re-planted and re-textured design looks immensely superior to the original, aided by the full package of extras – from a comprehensive Readme to authentic hole previews and even a few familiar faces in the crowds! 10/10

Appearance

As with many of Stewart's links courses, the rough has taken on a genuinely threatening air with its new-found density, and the tarting-up of the course surrounds with good, detailed textures and 3D – even if it is a little routine – has undeniably added atmosphere. The wilderness aspect of the Old Course has very much been enhanced over the clean-cut appearance of the MS version, and the bunkers and streams are – thankfully – unrecognisable from the original. The attention to detail is superb. 9/10

Playability

Classic courses need very little incentive to get you out and playing them, and St Andrews is certainly no different. Trying to hit the famous Road Hole (or the bunker, if you're masochistically inclined) alone could happily engage a golfer for half an hour. With nigh-on 150 years of history behind the Old Course, it's surprising to find how much authenticity you can find carried over onto a computer rendition. 10/10

Challenge

It has to be admitted that, if you can hit the generously-sized fairways, then the Old Course has lost some of its bite over the years. The major obstacles of mountainous greens and dense gorse are still rather frightening, but they are mitigated to no small extent by short hole length and some potential eagle chances. Good, gusty conditions are the key to keeping it real. 7/10

Technical

It's unlikely that Microsoft's original will retain many fans with this comprehensive overhaul. However, a couple of nitpicks remain, not least in the pin-planting: a couple would never pass muster in real life and may well upset those who want an unnaturally slippery St Andrews. 9/10

Overall	Finally, justice has been done to the Old Course. I can't think why anyone would not want to own this.	45/50
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Stanley Park Golf Club

Brian Jameson



Description

Fictional, parkland course.

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Stanley Park is largely an authentic and conventionally laid out course, that only occasionally suffers from visual problems or a gimmicky hole design. It's a shame, because there's a genuine atmosphere in the open and inviting location and it's clear that plenty of hard work has been applied. Perhaps just a little more study in the field of course architecture would be to the benefit of designer and player alike. 6/10

Appearance

A variety of superb texture choices are blended expertly and planted with a gentle hand, making the surface look as good as any on links. Sadly, on upper levels, there is less to praise. The trees planted are an odd mixture, occasionally clone, and the panorama is expertly done but doesn't quite match the foreground. A couple of water features look totally unnatural and out of place. For all this, the course is reasonably good looking, but you get the impression it might have benefited from a more thorough Beta test. 7/10

Playability

This purports to be a strategic course, but is much more closely akin to the target golf ideal. It's fun in short bouts, but too often you'll find yourself playing a gentle flop-shot approach with little other thought to the alternatives. The risk/reward aspects to the Par 5s have not been realistically assessed and they may as well be lengthy Par 4s. 6/10

Challenge

With wide-open areas of undemanding rough, ineffective hazarding (except on the Par 3s) and surprisingly easy to read greens, Stanley Park shouldn't confront many players too harshly. Eagle opportunities are commonplace and bogeys are really quite difficult to obtain. While this is a course that has clearly been built for accessibility, it hasn't had the demands and constraints upon the Links golfer taken into account, and you will find it all too easy as a result. 3/10

Technical

The designer has shown a good range of artistic and APCD skills, although to be honest there are areas of this course that need a complete overhaul if it is to make it into the elite group of courses. Nevertheless, what has been done is praiseworthy and shows a flair for the APCD which rightly should be extended to other new and exciting courses. 7/10

Overall

An open and unthreatening course with a lot going for it in terms of interesting golf. Becomes problematic on some holes where the designer was clearly a bit stuck for ideas but, creditably, never becomes unbelievable.

29/50

Stansbury CC

Peter Beckwith



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, estate course	12 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
None stated as yet – I'd hazard a guess at California, in the manner of Riviera CC		
Conditions		
One or two greens incline me towards F*/M*, but should be OK on F*/F*		

Concept

Pete Beckwith brings us another masterclass in fine hole design with Stansbury. Taking its influences clearly from the Tour, it is a pretty long course, and ends with a punishing Par 4. But it's the creativity when it comes to the greens and green complexes that set designer apart: it's difficult to appreciate how hard it is to consistently create this sort of subtle challenge and still feel totally authentic. The brick-lined ponds are an intriguing trademark for the course, although it's a little difficult to believe that a real life club would subscribe to that sort of extravagance. 9/10

Appearance

The deep green colours are retained from Casten Acres, and although they're a little overwhelming at first, they fit nicely with the intended 'old-style' of course. The planting is expertly varied, particularly in the rough and where it overlaps the blends into fairway bunkers. There are treats in the form of the burgeoning 3D clubhouse and some off-course features. The only real question mark is over a fair few sharp edges around the course. 9/10

Playability

The design credentials really are beyond reproach. It's impossible to think so much ingenuity could be squeezed into such straightforward holes, but the subtleties and small variations are endless. Target areas and bunker positioning are judged to perfection, and it's difficult to get bored – even despite the course's relative flatness. Remarkably clever. 10/10

Challenge

I never understood the fuss behind Casten Acres being too easy, nor do I really see why Stansbury should be particularly harder. Length aside, the greens make tempting targets, and the relative flatness of the plot is a boon also. With high winds, I can see how the encroaching trees might present some challenge, but you don't feel this is particularly a course that would commonly present windy conditions. At the end of the day, it's just too easy not to score bogeys. 5/10

Technical

I've raved enough about Peter Beckwith's wonderful hole design. It would certainly appear his visual style is very nearly up to the same standard. The course is only in Beta phase, and is in need of good Hole Previews and a little toning down, but even as it stands it's a terrific achievement. 9/10

Overall	Old-style golf given an outstanding treatment which is both subtle and precise.	42/50
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St Christopher's Bay

Kristoffer Selberg



Description

Fictional, links course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

There's proper links golf to be had here. The atmosphere is tangible, very real, and the course uses the landscape to the maximum and pays very little heed to 'traditional' hole sequencing. There are five Par 5s and five Par 3s, including two consecutive on the inward nine. The course carries a genuine feeling of history, and the punishing rough and pot bunker placement make it all too easy to believe you are playing a real Scottish links. Outstanding. 10/10

Appearance

The attention to detail on the inland background is stunning: the buildings are naturally grouped, and even the old favourite windmill looks totally in place. The ocean on the other side is just as impressive, until the 18th, where it looks a little rushed. Best of all, though, were the glorious grass textures and the dirt-lipped bunkers which presented a different and convincing view. 9/10

Playability

You'll have to be a links golf fan. The rough is a very potent and punishing part of this course, and the fairway more of a prize, as should be the case on this style of course. The lumpiness of the course certainly doesn't make lining up your approaches a cinch, and the roar of the ocean constantly in your ears doesn't always help. It's gloriously realistic, but that doesn't mean it's easy to enjoy. 8/10

Challenge

As perfect as it could get. Every hole makes you work for Par – and you'll breath a sigh of relief every time you hit it. Birdies are to be treasured; bogies loathed. You certainly get the impression that this is why par scores were invented in the first place. 10/10

Technical

St Christopher's Bay is by far the most realistic and concrete thing we have seen from this designer, who has fully justified a commercial release with some outstanding customisation. There is a tiny flaw or two: the stock windmill, the unhelpful hole previews, some hurriedness around the coastline; that does virtually nothing to diminish the hard work that has otherwise been put in. 9/10

Overall	A tremendous and authentic setting for a natural links course. Plays exactly how links golf should.	46/50
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Steelheads Country Club

Graham Hardy



Description

Fictional, canyon course.

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 5, approach.

Concept

A lively course, wending its way in between gargantuan and impressive rock formations, Steelheads uses a considerable amount of imagination on the part of the designer. Water is used to considerable effect (the 15th and 18th are masterpieces of design in this respect) and the hazarding is harsh, going on unfair. There's a stylish and creative set of designs within the course, though. 7/10

Appearance

While time has clearly been lavished on the impressive rock formations, there are a lot of hard edges remaining elsewhere, and quite a few extrusions are notable in the Top View. The water and deep rough are crying out for better texture transitions and perhaps some subtle low-level planting. This is surprising because elsewhere the planting is luxurious and plentiful, only spoiled by a few clones. The course is passable, therefore, but pretty hard around the edges. 6/10

Playability

You get the feeling sometimes that Steelheads is grinding you down, never more so than when trying to make an impossible tee shot from the 12th. The course will draw on all your reserves of skill and patience, never more so than on the greens, where – inexplicably – you always seem to be presented with a putt of over 10 yards. 7/10

Challenge

This course is no pushover, no matter what your playing preferences. Water or bunkers are in play on nearly every shot, let alone every hole, and you'll lose strokes if you end up in the well-planted undergrowth of the heavy rough. Green gradients are nearly always sharp and some pin positions border on the unfair. With at least one unmakeable tee shot, my impulse is that this course should have been toned down somewhat before release. 4/10

Technical

Hard edges and texture blends are the worry here, especially given the use of custom textures throughout. The fairway first-cut is a fringe texture, too, which doesn't help the fairways retain the ball. Attention needs to be paid to the edges of the water features and to some of the planting. The elevation work is pulled off surprisingly well, given some of the massive height changes, and the bunkers look good. It all makes for a playable golf course if you're willing to overlook the marginal errors. 6/10

Overall	A course designed with flair and imagination, albeit to the detriment of your round of golf. A few technical flaws are apparent, but your focus is too strongly on scoring well for them to affect the game.	30/50
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Stonebridge

Dan Kilbank



Description

Real, parkland course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 5, approach

Concept

Stonebridge is an open and accessible course, which has been loving re-created by one of the APCD's best exponents. While it hardly has the stand-out features of a championship course, it radiates loving care and attention, from the distance markers in the fairways to the ring of houses overlooking the course. It's an immersive environment even if the course is unlikely to remain in your memory. 7/10

Appearance

Although Stonebridge isn't a course of stunning views and spectacular extras it does look very special. Textures are immaculately blended together and the low-level planting, especially around the water, is both comprehensive and immaculate. Those customised extras that do exist are marginal to the play but lovingly created all the same. Not a visually stunning course, by any means, but a very very competent one for all that. 8/10

Playability

Stonebridge is unlikely to be a course that sticks in the memory. It's quite easy to cruise round without being particularly challenged. Few holes offer you a genuine alternative line of play, but there are Eagle chances to keep you interested and keep the adrenalin flowing. When you find all the Par 5s are easily reachable in two, though, the thrill fades a little and you find yourself hungry for something a little more. 6/10

Challenge

With wide open fairways and little to challenge you in the deep rough, most of the challenge comes from the testing green shapes. Although several holes bring water into play, it's easy to avoid with prudent golf, and bunkers are almost marginal on quite a few holes. The course is largely flat parkland, so club alterations for elevation are not often required. None of this helps the course become memorable, and frankly it's more than a touch too easy. 4/10

Technical

The course is technically flawless, and more than makes up for the disappointments elsewhere. The seam blends are neat and not overdone, and the bunkers are little works of art. The planting is brilliant and a tribute to the designer's meticulousness. 10/10

Overall	Stonebridge lacks nothing in the design and execution, but it's sadly all too easy to overlook as an insufficient test of golf.	<i>35/50</i>
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Stoneham

John Brooks



Description

Real, forest course

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Very much in line with the precedent set by Bramshaw and Dibden, but yet a significant step up on either of those. Stoneham is a charming small Hampshire course surrounded by dense New Forest trees and is every bit as playable as the designer's other courses. The extras such as aiming poles, the practice green, and some assorted course objects are all very welcome and add to the course's typical hometown charm. Several holes are excellent in their demands on the player, notably the 17th. It's probably

fair to say that demanding golfers would expect something extra from Stoneham, but for most of us it's a terrific little course in its own right. 7/10

Appearance

Lovely views are commonplace from the first tee, and the forest has been planted with aplomb, even if there is a clone or two visible. The trees prevent many long views, but when you can see a long way, the textures at middle- and long-distance are somewhat at odds with the close-up views. The other weak spot is the hazarding: the bunkers are lacking finesse around the lips, and the texture used for the streams is something of an afterthought. 6/10

Playability

It's very easy to tee up at Stoneham and immediately feel right at home. The fairways – even when semi-hidden – are inviting, and the open green complexes really invite you to have a go. There's a good sprinkling of cogitative holes, too: blasting away with the driver without thinking certainly isn't going to work here. An excellent experience. 9/10

Challenge

Perhaps one of the reasons that it's so easy to enjoy this course is the ease of getting on a birdie roll. Because the tees are faithful to the original positions, there are a number of reachable Par 4s, and all the Par 5s come in at close to 500 yards. Rather than breaking 70, a more realistic goal might be to break 60! 1/10

Technical

There's very little to fault here, and only the fine detail is holding the course back. It's good to see a designer with unwavering priorities, and John's efforts to bring some superb local courses to life are resulting in some very fine creations. 7/10

Overall	An excellent hometown course, ideally suited to a warm-up round or a moralising low score.	<i>30/50</i>
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Sweetlake GC

Ian Wells



Description

Fictional, forest course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 3, from tee

Concept

An excellent first course, Sweetlake has a totally believable layout winding through some dense and intimidating forest, with the lake providing a climax at the end of each half. The hole layout is bang on the money, providing an authentic woodland test, and the glorious 3rd hole is an unexpected highlight so early in the round. There are very few gimmicks here, just a course good enough to be real. 9/10

Appearance

While it is entirely possible to find moments of beauty at Sweetlake, there are just a few too many nagging problems. There are quite a few clones visible, the bright green textures do absolutely nothing for me, and the ubiquitous underplanting just doesn't really work at all. The lack of trimming on the panorama is a problem for those few minutes you get out of the forest. It's not to say that there isn't good craftsmanship here, but it does tend to be undermined by the errors. 6/10

Playability

A terrific round of golf, and very much designed with the player in mind. There are very few – if any – unplayable shots, the occasional blind drive is generous, and the greens are interesting without being unputtable. The elevations are turned to excellent advantage in terms of both scenery and difficulty. 9/10

Challenge

Without having to resort to obvious eagle chances, Sweetlake is a credible course that can be attacked much as you would the average Real course. The greenside hazards are a fair deterrent, and finding the woods will undoubtedly lose you shots, but finding the fairway consistently will set up plenty of birdie chances; perhaps a few too many. 4/10

Technical

Undoubtedly, there is a visual flaw or two waiting to be sorted out here, but Sweetlake has shown that rare thing: an understanding of golf and a restraint in a first design, and for that it deserves immense credit. 7/10

Overall	Hopefully not to become a one-hit wonder, Sweetlake is a terrific woodland course which will hold up to tournament play as well as casual rounds.	<i>35/50</i>
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Swirling Sands GC

Chuck Clark



Description

Imaginary, dunes course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Those complaining that APCD desert-style creations are lacking in natural dryness and desert-like features should be well satiated here. Little oases of green pepper some crazy, rolling sand dunes. In true Chuck Clark style, some relatively normal holes wind through all this chaos, there's some intricate greening, and an enormous panorama to add authenticity. It's a desert course unlike any other, and all the better for it. The realists might want to steer clear. 9/10

Appearance

This could have been pretty monotonous; instead it's been created to look surprisingly good. Judicious use of pools, bridges and scrubby planting break up what might have been plain sand. The combination of green grass and desert dunes doesn't always convince, mind you, and there is an almost inevitable repetition in the sand texture mapping. But the panorama and the course as a whole are largely impressive due to the ambitious scale. 9/10

Playability

The blind tee shot is the primary curse here. Several holes will throttle you back in order to assure a fairway landing. Of course, miss the fairway and you'd better hope your bunker game is in shape: thankfully there is little if any OB on the course. Swirling Sands gives a good scope for improving one's bunker game, and that can't be said for many courses where sand play and fun are virtually mutually exclusive. 8/10

Challenge

It will probably come as a surprise to find that this pick-shot-ridden course is actually somewhat too easy. The greens were specifically developed to counter the lack of planting or OB, but a good putter should find even the most extreme of them inarduous. The reward of scraping a par after playing three bunker shots can't be denied, but really should it be this easy? 4/10

Technical

In some ways, Chuck's slightly outwardly style has found its ideal home at Swirling Sands. We don't expect gorgeous texture transitions or realistic elevation use on a course such as this, and the result doesn't appear out of place. And there are lovely touches amid the delicate planting and the restraint shown as a whole. 9/10

Overall

If you want to own a way-out desert course, make it this one. The 18 holes that make bunker play seem almost worthwhile.

39/50

Table Rock Golf Club

Kevin Hill



Description

Real, farmland course

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 4, from rough

Concept

Whether intentional or not, there's very much the aura of a newly-opened club here. Some very barren stretches around the first half hint at British coastal links and a course still being created. The critical could say it's lacking in features, and to some extent this is true, but there are still moments of charm – not least the 'surprise' ponds that pop up from time to time to swallow your drive. With a re-design, this could be a work of understated genius. 5/10

Appearance

Any proposed redesign would certainly have to put texturing first and foremost. The naff stock textures really do drag down a course where – with a smoothing out of contrast between fairway and rough – the barrenness could be presented much better, in the manner of Woodbridge. Some of the elevations have been handled a little roughly, too. There's adequate compensation in the attention to course buildings, fences and the surrounding fields, but it's not quite enough. 4/10

Playability

It's unfortunate when you plough straight into a pond from the first tee, and the first criticism is that this course really needs hole previews. To a large extent, the pleasure available from the rest of the course will depend on whether you buy into the idea that this is an open, unmaturing golfing environment. If it works for you, then the golf comes all the easier. I suspect, though, that some people will just find it underwhelming. 5/10

Challenge

While I finished my practice rounds comfortably in the low seventies, there were definitely a few adverse factors at work. Some heavy-handedness on the greening means two or three are almost unplayable (although, oddly, the rest are fine), and the hidden lakes strike of gimmickry, certainly at first. Once you've some experience of the course, though, and are prepared to play it on generous settings, there's a good all-round test, particularly from some unexpectedly lengthy Par 5s. 7/10

Technical

There are two ways to look at this. Either the designer was trying to produce an example of how some golf clubs are relatively featureless, in which case he has succeeded, notwithstanding the poor textures. If not, then Table Rock must surely go down as a half-hearted effort. 5/10

Overall	A course either poorly textured or completely underworked. An interesting experience which belies the simple presentation, but unlikely to hang around for too long.	26/50
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TAD River East (The Dunes Course)

Scott Gavenlock



Description

Imaginary, dunes course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

The readme hints at the California Dunes.

Conditions

Some dodgy pin positions hint that S*/M* should be your limit.

Concept

Highly unusual in appearance, often to a slightly bizarre and fantastical extent, the TAD River East course has heavy reliance on the bleached, almost white dunes that surround it. The fact that this is ostensibly set among coastal dunes makes the presence of casual water, and the complete absence of ocean, something of a puzzle, and the whole thing is somewhat difficult to believe in, putting it firmly into the 'imaginary' bracket. However, the hole design from the 10th onwards is a veritable rollercoaster of fun and the course is worthy on that basis alone. 6/10

Appearance

The grey colours of the dunes are very much an acquired taste, and planting that once looked flashy now looks low-res and cluttered. There are notable mesh folds from time to time, too. But for all that, there's a lovely soft touch to the textures and the bunkers are sculpted with care and suitably lipped. It's difficult to assess on an overall basis because it's so unlike anything else, but generally speaking there's enough here to impress. 7/10

Playability

TAD River definitely is a course of two halves: a reasonably conservative opening nine, marked by tight, twisty fairways and plenty of semi-rough around the dunes' base. This is subsumed by a much more daring and risk-reward second half. Unfortunately, it's not really pitched at the correct level and you find yourself cruising a little bit in Act II. But there are compensations in the form of good informative hole previews and subtle ambient sound. 7/10

Challenge

With unfairly narrow fairways opening the round, you end up being somewhat grateful for the escapability of the semi-dune rough. And then it all gets turned on its head later: ostensible risk-reward instead being very much a case of playing tight irons to the fairways. The Par 5s, as a rule, are not genuine 3-shotters, and the greens provide too stiff a test for the Mod player. Unbalanced and chaotic is the net impression. 5/10

Technical

Oddly, the sum of these somewhat misfit parts is more than the course's whole. Good texturing and blends have been backed up by sound planting and – at the heart of it – good hole design. If you accept the premise that the course is really a bit too odd to be fictional, it looks all the better in that respect. 8/10

Overall

A very unusual creation and perhaps one which didn't have the re-visit element that it initially promised.

33/50

TAD River West (The Lakes Course)

Scott Gavenlock



Description

Fictional, woodland course.

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Although a decent companion to The Dunes Course, TAD River West lacks some of the subtlety and environment which marked the East course out with such promise. The muddy yellow texture for the lakes is a convincing idea, but the network of water traps is very 'placed' and belies the designer's apparent attempts to aim for a natural course. Hazards are just a bit too cleverly placed, and the overall impression is of a bit of overkill, rather than letting a course's natural presence and terrain speak

for itself. 6/10

Appearance

Excellent use of textures, elevations and some Wayne Hewitt-standard planting mean that this course is a feast for the eyes. The lack of civilisation and the wild panorama help give the golf a fantastical feel, and it's nice to see water features that aren't jet-black and boring. Perhaps a couple of textures around bunkers and the occasional sharp drop-off in elevation could be improved, but the look is right up there with the best. 9/10

Playability

As well as lengthy rendering and loading times, TAD River West has the ability to frustrate with some all-too-well-placed hazards, and forest land that might cost you upwards of two strokes just to exit. Those with wayward snaps should expect to become very annoyed with this course: it doesn't play half as easily or naturally as its predecessor and partner, and this is its biggest downfall. 5/10

Challenge

This course specialises in target golf, rather than risk/reward, and those strategic opportunities it does present are so misjudged as to hardly be worth gambling upon. There's a constant feeling that you are being pushed back, and the hazarding and rough cost just too many shots. Birdies are quite possible on the largely gentle greens, but finishing under par with one dry ball will be a major achievement indeed. 6/10

Technical

You can't help but get the feeling that some impressive technical work has gone into creating the landscape, while good golf and gameplay have gone begging. Timely reminder, indeed, that the technically most accomplished courses must also include sensible layout. 8/10

Overall

A passable course, but one that has had markedly less time spent on good gameplay than on artistic credibility. The result is not bad, but it probably won't play as well as you might hope.

34/50

Tall Pines Estate

Wayne Hewitt



Description

Fictional, estate course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Hewi's reputation is beyond reproach. Superb course has followed superb course from his fingertips. Tall Pines Estate is perhaps the most conventional of the lot, although that doesn't make it any less special. It takes its influences from a lot of American championship courses, most notably Augusta, Pinehurst and Bay Hill and strives to combine testing golf with the luxurious aura of a country club. Needless to say, it does this magnificently: every hole is a cracker, and the spit-and-polish aspects of

the design make for absorbing and effortless golf. 10/10

Appearance

All the right boxes are ticked here. The designer did not feel the need to go way overboard on texture sets or customisation, and the understated result is perfect. The planting is of a superlative standard, as one would expect, and the niceties such as paths and houses just look – well – real. I can't say I'm crazy about the 'cauliflower' shape to the bunkers: time after time they spoiled the look of the course for me. 9/10

Playability

This course is a strategist's dream. Every shot has clearly been planned and the set of choices from every tee look equally realistic and appealing. You could quite easily play Tall Pines Estate a dozen times without taking the same route twice, and that's the hallmark of all the best course architects, in real life as well as Links. 10/10

Challenge

Perhaps the best that can be said about the difficulty of this course is that Hewi's a generous chap. The course giveth, but it doesn't taketh much away. The fairways are generally wide and flat, and putts aren't too tricky even on some quite steep greens. Hit the snaps, and the forest won't be too much of a problem; the bunkers seem to be sometimes incidental to the play. I wouldn't have thought it likely that a course influenced by Augusta or Bay Hill could be too easy, but this one certainly is. 4/10

Technical

A magnificent standard, as would be expected. Perhaps it's not the ultra-realism of Wagga Wagga, but the faults in the challenge and bunker sculpture simply cannot be put down to APCD usage. There are very few indeed better than Wayne Hewitt. 10/10

Overall	A course crying out to be 'Tigerfied' (ie. Have all the tees shifted back 40 yards). If it were, it might be a true winner.	43/50
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Talon Course at Grayhawk

John Andersen



Description

Real, desert course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

One of the more accessible and unthreatening of desert courses, the Talon neatly avoids some pitfalls of the genre by incorporating tiered desert sands and having wide open play areas that mean the desert is more scenery than hazard. With this in mind, it's impressive how close you feel to the dryness. Hole design tends towards the conservative: there are no real trademark holes, but the gently rolling fairways will keep you thinking about your approach shots. The only big letdowns for me were the

Par 5s, which are too short and too easy. 6/10

Appearance

With a richly planted desert such as this, clones become almost inevitable unless a large amount of customisation is used. Frankly, I don't mind a clone or two if they keep the game speed ticking over nicely. More problematic, though, are the extrusion marks, the poor choice of texture for lining the bunkers, and the confusing reflections from the few water hazards: both seriously detract from the enjoyment of the round. 5/10

Playability

Unusually for a desert course, this is a gentle, laid-back round. The fairways are easy to hit and approach shots offer the right degree of challenge. There is a moderate amount of strategy, but most holes are one-route only. Something to play when you're down and don't want to be threatened. 6/10

Challenge

While the first couple of shots will rarely become a problem at Grayhawk, the greens are likely to provide palpitations. The gradients are far too extreme: set in the older days of course design and unplayable on any newer conditions. If, by some miracle, you make your flat shots then you'll score really low. Even despite the greens, the approaches are easy enough to pick up a few strokes. 6/10

Technical

A solid effort, with a clear attention obviously paid to the environment and its fringe impact on the game of golf. Nice little touches include the elevations and tiers and lift the course ahead of the disappointing standard where desert courses are concerned. 6/10

Overall

Inoffensiveness in a golf course doesn't always make for an exciting round. Grayhawk drops a little short of the mark without ever being unlikeable.

29/50

Te Ihi O Te Rangi

Kristoffer Selberg



Description	Screenshot	Par
Imaginary, canyon course	15 th hole, Par 3	72
Location		
'A Pacific Island'		
Conditions		
I don't think faster than S*/M* is desirable.		

Concept

Larger than life, Te Ihi O Te Rangi (great name, by the way! It means 'fall from the sky') winds its way down a Pacific island's mountainside. Massive elevation changes mark the terrain, and hole designs tend towards the extraordinary. It's a tremendous idea for a round of golf, undoubtedly influenced by Kapalua among others, but it lacks the coherence between holes that makes you feel that you are really there. 7/10

Appearance

Generally good, but a few views are a bit underwhelming. The water features, in particular, seem underplanted, and when you hit the jungle areas, you realise they too are far too sparse, especially compared to other jungle courses. But the elevations make for some spectacular views, and to a large extent the visuals on offer will carry you around 18 holes. 7/10

Playability

While the environment just tempts you in to play, the golf course itself might invite frustration. Impossible lies are commonplace, thanks to the jungle areas being playable land, and pars are extraordinarily difficult to make on the front nine. In terms of the novelty and its departure from a 'normal' round of golf, though, the course keeps you involved, and two or three holes offer a brilliantly original design. 7/10

Challenge

This has been referred to as something akin to Devils Island, and quite rightly so. It is undeniable brutal, tending towards out-and-out unfair. Unplayable lies and impenetrable rough do little to help your round, and most holes have been stretched out to uncompromising lengths. This course would be far more enticing if it were possible to break 80 on a regular basis. 3/10

Technical

The water features would be a main priority for improvement: they look unnatural and distinctly under-planted. Short of giving the fundamental layout of the course an overhaul, there is not too much else wrong, although I would question the very green textures. Perhaps a better set of custom yellow textures would be more apt to this locale. 8/10

Overall	A course which invites you to play, and may well might make you wish you hadn't bothered. Very punishing and unfair in parts: you'll need a lot of soul to take the course seriously.	32/50
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Templeton Golf Club

Nate Mullins



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Many, many iterations into the making, Templeton is certainly a finely-honed golfing design and the generations of fine-tuning around the course are evident and lend themselves to optimistic big-hitting. An autumn-planted design, hazarded generously enough to give rise to attacking golf, it's reasonably coherent and atmospheric. But there is a strain on credibility when it comes to elevations and I really would have liked to see some graphics on the much-needed hole previews. 6/10

Appearance

The orange planting set will either appeal or annoy (I'm personally ambivalent on it), and there are quite a few obvious extrusions. The blends almost entirely absent, most notably where the bunkers are concerned. A nice panorama, though, and there's little on the course that looks jarringly wrong. 5/10

Playability

Generally, there are plenty of open fairways and greens at Templeton, and attacking the course is positively encouraged. With some eminently rewarding holes along the back nine, and resolutely road-mapped layouts, big hitters will find much to cheer. They might be less vocal about the ambient sound, which is over-exuberant to the point of being intrusive and proves how you can overdo a good thing. 6/10

Challenge

Much of the bunkering is largely irrelevant to play and the extensive rough plays almost fairway like: it seems that much of the elevations are in the wrong place. Only the use of water – bordering on unfair with no decent previews – and some close-planted forest are a threat. But the greens are huge and accommodating and anything other than at least a handful of birdies would be a travesty. 5/10

Technical

Nate deserves a lot of credit for plugging away with Templeton, and there's no doubt that it is an improving course. But there are some extrusions to iron out, and quite a lot of underplanting needed to disguise the transitions. The bunkers could use decent lips, too. 5/10

Overall	Boisterous golf, variably presented.	27/50
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Thanksgiving Point

Microsoft



Description

Real, farmland course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Utah

Conditions

Some greens will top out at about M*/S*

Concept

Huge, sprawling and soulless, this is resort golf par excellence (no pun intended). Dumped unceremoniously in the prairie, Thanksgiving Point makes heavy use of hazards and demands naught but big hitting. The problem is, in the middle of cowboy country, the whole thing just feels manufactured and artificial: the very antithesis of what golf should be about, especially when the setting could have given rise to something more original. 3/10

Appearance

A great panorama dominates the course, and some good planting has been wheeled out, but the textures are poor (particularly the long grass) and nothing really matches or coheres, or feels like part of a living, breathing golf course. Microsoft's designers' heavy hand with elevations makes its presence felt again, and the overall impression is disappointing in light of many of the other 2003 courses. 4/10

Playability

While I understand the logic in stretching courses out over 7,500 yards, I really find it difficult to hack round the extra length. The Par 5s at Thanksgiving Point, in particular, are monstrously bloated slog-fests: Heaven knows how many strokes it would take me to hit the green in real life. Despite some unusual use of the water hazards, the course as a whole is largely devoid of charm and anything that would make you want to play again. 2/10

Challenge

It won't come as a surprise to many big-hitters when they attempt to take on Thanksgiving Point on its merits, and wind up short. At least a bogey or two should be routine for even the best hitters, and you certainly shouldn't bank on any of the long holes to pick up shots. Thankfully, some moderate greens allow putts from medium range to be holed more often than you would expect, and keep your score respectable. 7/10

Technical

Even despite the poor visuals, MS have wheeled out a few new tricks to impose on this course. It's just a shame that the technical staff didn't also find the time to fix the same old problems which are still recurring. 5/10

Overall	A course somewhat depressing in its ordinariness. Could have been a gem with all the prairies to play with, but instead it ends up playing to the whims of an unimaginative designer.	21/50
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The Barrens

Mike Hornak & Matt McIntosh



Description

Fictional, dunes course

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

A strong feel of Northern Britain, possibly continental Europe.

Conditions

F*/F* may prove a fraction too fast. This feels like it should be a slow course, but it will go up to S*/F* with no problem

Concept

The Barrens has always lived up to its name, offering a rather uncompromising wilderness as host to Mike's unique brand of golf – plenty of pot bunkers and split fairways. This is one of the more radical makeovers from Matt, and the white dunes give the course the feeling of an abandoned quarry, which genuinely works in its favour – adding sense to the layout and a firm location which it never had before. 9/10

Appearance

The very soft look, with the pale grasses and spindly trees, still carries the resemblance of a classic landscape painting: the bunkers and ponds are well disguised by the landscape so as not to break up the effect. Sometimes the textures are overpoweringly drab, though, and a few stunning views are counterpointed by areas of nothing. 8/10

Playability

The course has been set up superbly, with interesting choices off every tee, novel green complexes with a variety of demanding situations, and some outstanding well-judged Par 5s which demand to be played over and over again. It's a course you love to fight with, particularly over dropped shots and that's the key to why it won't sit on the hard drive growing stale. 9/10

Challenge

With proper course knowledge and some foresight, it's possible to almost play The Barrens without a Driver in the bag. Good fairway placement is everything. Actually, if you can get it right and avoid the bunkers – which will be the round-killers without a doubt – then there are shots to be picked up, particularly if your putter is in working order on the gigantic greens. 7/10

Technical

The environment of The Barrens has taken a slightly different direction with this incarnation, and it's no bad thing. Some of the creakiness of the original has been removed, and the appearance of the hazards spruced up no end. That's not to overlook the great hole designs from the original designer, which retain their charm without being over the top. 8/10

Overall	One of the best overhauls of a Links hidden gem. To miss this in both of its incarnations would be a travesty.	41/50
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The Bay Of Islands

Scott Gavenlock



Description

Fictional, ocean course.

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Those expecting islands will be disappointed. This is a surprisingly rough-hewn course meandering along coastal scrubland. Large bunkers are judiciously placed and the string of holes along the ocean is very impressive. But there is something missing, whether it be a trademark or a signature hole, that unfortunately means the course is often quite forgettable. 7/10

Appearance

There are some worrying hard edges and poor texture choices, and the panorama is not a fit. But some serious work has gone into the ocean-side holes, which look genuinely lovely. If only there were more. 7/10

Playability

With narrow fairways and some near-impossible greens, Bay Of Islands could prove to be a turn-off for some. Certainly, the lack of genuine play options and the overly penal hazarding do not incite continued play. But there are some wonderful holes, particularly on the closing nine, and as you play your approach to the lovely 18th, you get for the first time a genuine sense of location. A shame it took so long to arrive. 6/10

Challenge

Some serious attention must be paid to the greens, which border on the unfair on many holes. Three-putting won't be uncommon. The bunkering on many fairways is too harsh; the bunkers provide an obstacle rather than a penalty for going offline. Despite this, it's not a completely impossible course, although you'd be pleased to shoot under par. 6/10

Technical

Some of the texture transitions need to be toned down, and I would like to see a more appropriate panorama. Planting, especially at the low level, is excellent, though, and the coastal areas reflect the large amount of work that has been put in. For a relatively flat course, some of the elevations are somewhat jerky, nowhere more so than on and around the greens. There are flashes of technical brilliance, for sure, but a lack of spit-and-polish. 7/10

Overall	An odd and occasionally nondescript course. Punishing and rewarding by turns, it might take several rounds to appreciate the best of these holes.	33/50
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The Belfrey International

Harley Dixon



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, heathland course	16 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
New York state		
Conditions		
Stick to S*/S*		

Concept

It's a great idea to try to resurrect a forgotten and overgrown course with the APCD, and there are definite convincing elements in this creation. The original course was ambitious in design, if not in scale, and there are an excellent opening trio and a suitably grandstanding final hole. Whatever the course's flaws, including a criminal lack of hole previews, this should be a real point of interest for all golfers. 7/10

Appearance

A somewhat cluttered appearance from the first tee resolves itself, but there are really too many problems elsewhere. The panorama is too high and clunky in places, there are pretty awful extrusion marks around the greens, and the seams are inconsistent, with lots of mis-assigned textures around blends. A mesh-fold or two rounds off the whole think. The planting is probably the course's best aspect, but the wild grasses hardly look their best on a poor texture. 4/10

Playability

The shots required on the opening holes give you hope that there is a real dynamic course here, but things tail off after a while, and it's just a bit too easy to lose interest. The designer has done his best with eyecatchers, but he hasn't really communicated enough of the vitality that the course is supposed to have. It's still an entertaining ramble in parts. 5/10

Challenge

Given the ambition of the course's original owner, it's hardly surprising to find the big stadium holes with their hidden water hazards, and some very clever 'I dare you' Par 5s. This style of golf never quite transfers perfectly to Links, and it's possible to score a few under. Just be careful that your round isn't spoiled by some poor green elevations that really won't do the Mod player any favours. 7/10

Technical

The 'just re-opened' pretext is conveyed very nicely indeed, and it's clear that this designer has an acute eye for detail and thematic surroundings. There are more than just one or two flaws on the surface, though, and it is to be hoped that future releases can combine the best of The Belfrey along with improvements in technique. 4/10

Overall	An excellent idea to 're-open' a defunct course, and a fair atmosphere to go with it. Let down by some of those things that really need to be gotten right these days.	27/50
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The Bluffs

Kevin X



Description

Fictional, short course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 3

Par

54

Location

Reminds me of northern England, but I may be completely wrong

Conditions

It may be possible to play as fast as M*/M*, but you run the risk of some poor green construction.

Concept

Holding tight to a vaguely seaside-resort type theme, The Bluffs is an inoffensive, if hardly outstanding, pitch'n'putt course, with water added more appearance's sake than for challenge. While there is a good variety throughout the opening holes, it's easy to see ideas waning over the back nine, and it is unsure whether the boring closing hole is indicative of the author running out of ideas or perhaps a bit of undesirable irony. Either way, it doesn't help the whole thing to gel. 5/10

Appearance

The soft, almost carpet-like, textures work nicely together, and while the planting is a little scattergun, none of it is blatantly out of place. Unfortunately, there are some criminal extrusion marks and elevation problems around the trickier features, and they do leave a lasting impression on your mind. Or worse, on your score. 4/10

Playability

It'd be difficult to make a Par 3 course unplayable; there's always going to be that 'closest to the pin' *frisson* which works for the player. The Bluffs has a bit more going in its favour too: intelligent but not excessive bunkering, and a great variety of situations which positively invite positive stroke-making. 6/10

Challenge

Perhaps of all the short courses, this one might provide the best number of birdies without warning a player off entirely. There's a good balance between open and closed greens, between makeable and difficult putts, and between hole lengths. Again, it might have been better to save a little more for the end – shame you can't play the course backwards...6/10

Technical

There's just one or two more problems than you would want – or expect – to see here. It's all too easy to pick on the horrible extrusions or the bland rough textures, or the lack of texture blends and depth to the hazards. Really, it's not disgraceful, but it certainly could have used a lot more before release. 3/10

Overall	A short course with just enough variety in hole length and design to warrant playing.	24/50
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The Bluffs At Ocean Point

John Andersen



Description

Fictional, ocean course.

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

As you might expect, this course explores a rocky outcrop and the constricted forests nearby. The little touches, like the seagulls and bunker-in-a-green trick, go an awful long way towards disguising some of the course's flaws, such as the nastily penal rough and the feeling that you're always playing 'borrowed' ideas. The closing three holes, though, are genuinely great and it's worth playing just to enjoy these holes. 7/10

Appearance

A lot of attention has clearly been lavished on the rock work, and it rightly looks great. In places. Elsewhere, around the creeks and tee boxes, I'm afraid it looks distinctly amateur, and could have been dispensed with altogether. Textures are also a problem on this course: despite some customisation, they look distorted and inappropriate. 6/10

Playability

It's somewhat depressing forcing your way around this course. You're forced to strain for every shot, recovery shots are commonplace, and unreasonable demands and restrictions are made off most tees. It's not a complete drag, but it's certainly not a course that can be taken lightly. 5/10

Challenge

The woodland holes are almost impossibly hard, with almost impossible fairways and punishing wild grass rough. Along the coast, the ocean comes into play too, just to maintain the difficulty level. It's not a set of hazards that allow you take the course lightly, and you feel that the course is bordering on the unfair at points. 5/10

Technical

The course is executed well, with good customisation and convincing elevation work. The planting is good, with one or two clones just spoiling the view. Perhaps a little more needs to be made of the texture work and low-level planting: in tandem, they could pick this round up and alleviate some of the challenge. 7/10

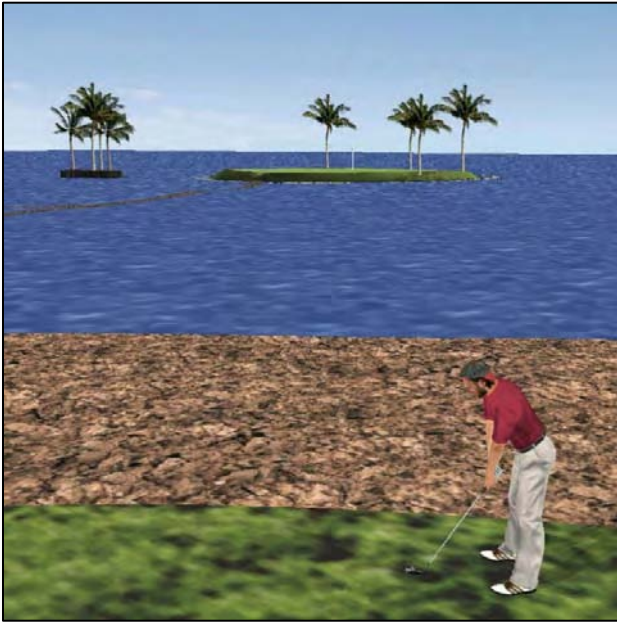
Overall

A course with potential, but most of it is the potential to be annoying. Struggle through for the closing holes, though.

30/50

The Bone Lagoon

Chip Lacorte



Description

Imaginary, ocean course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 5, from rough

Concept

Oh dear. This is a less refined version of Ocean Bluff Country Club. Miniature islands were not designed for playing golf across. It's entertaining for a little bit, but horrendously hard, hurriedly designed, and poorly judged. 0/10

Appearance

I never assumed it was possible to make a golf course look so ugly. The islands are extruded straight upwards, and the ridiculous paths at sea level look asinine. Planting is cloned; panorama absent. Pretty shocking would be most people's verdict. 0/10

Playability

The appeal of playing this course is short-lived, but provides its only redeeming feature. The ultimate in target golf is enjoyably frustrating in short bouts, but woe betide anyone who tries to take it seriously. Several of the more interesting holes offer alternate island-hopping routes, which should make for some spectacular saved shots when you finally pull them off. 6/10

Challenge

Not good. It's a given that you'll end up in the water a few times on each side, and on top of this the mud fringe to most islands is also a hazard. Fairways are narrow and trees frequently obscure the line of play. Impossible lies are commonplace, especially in the poorly-conceived bunkers. It's not as hard as Devil's Island, but it's not far off. 0/10

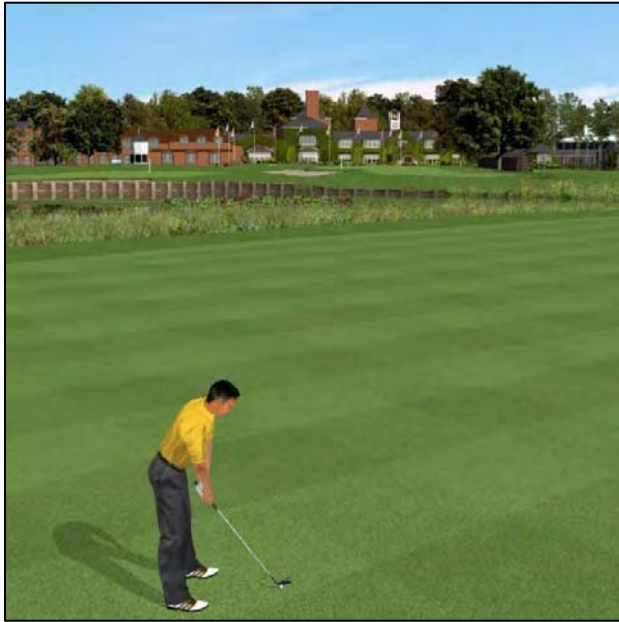
Technical

The outlandish looks show that minimal technical expertise has been applied. Some more realistic texture transitions may have given this course some level of appeal which might have helped us overlook the other glaring faults. 0/10

Overall	An extraordinarily primitive and tough creation. One of a kind. Thankfully.	6/50
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The Brabazon At The Belfry

Dark Horse Group



Description

Real, parkland course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

The Belfry was an oasis of beautifully-manicured target golf amidst a country of scrubby links. An important pioneer in crowd-pleasing golf, it quickly matured into a well-respected course with some course design hitherto not seen in the UK, and acquired a real 'country club' feel as the small trees grew. It's lost none of its punch, and remains a brilliant and sumptuous environment in which to play golf. 10/10

Appearance

While this is generally up to a very high standard, I kept finding nagging flaws. Not major ones, by any means, but some of the creeks seem to drop away from the landscape too sharply (although I love the boarded surrounds). Also, isn't the course a little bit *too* well manicured to be convincing. This is the only APCD re-creation I have played in real life and don't remember it being quite so pristine. There's a lot to enjoy visually, though, including some convincing planting and good (too good?) custom textures. 9/10

Playability

Like some of its famous brethren, all the joy is re-creating Ryder Cups and famous rounds. I defy anyone not to stand on the tenth tee and not try to shoot the green, Ballesteros-style. Risk/reward was a new concept when the Belfry was constructed, and it's embraced the concept all too well. 9/10

Challenge

Sadly, like a lot of real courses, this is a bit of an unexpected pushover to Links golfers. It's a very flat course, with gently rolling greens, and thus yields a lot birdies. The Par 5 holes don't help by being reasonably easy to hit in two. Thankfully, there are some well-disguised green run-offs, and the course is extremely well-hazarded. This helps uphold its honour, but it will be too easy for many Linksters to break 70. 5/10

Technical

There is generally some very fine attention that has gone into this course, not least in the clubhouse and environs, but perhaps one or two features might be worthy of closer attention. The textures make for an awfully clean-looking course, and the streams seem to have something missing around the banks. While I appreciate that it is a very flat course, a little more attention to the elevation on very fine levels wouldn't go amiss, either. 9/10

Overall	Almost as good as playing the real thing, and certainly better if your Links golf is of a higher standard than your Actual golf. Perhaps a little too perfect in appearance, but otherwise great.	42/50
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The Catwalk

John Lopez



golfer. 8/10

Description

Imaginary, canyon course.

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

The Catwalk is an imaginary course set amid some very real rockworks. Plenty of old favourite tactics are brought into play, and at times the course looks more like Wacky World than anything else. Some brilliant Stroke Indexing means you start off gentle and easy, and as the course progresses down the canyon, you hit the difficult holes. It's ambitious, and I love the idea of trying to host a course in such inhospitable terrain; sadly it's a little bit let down in the execution in that it expects a little bit too much of the

Appearance

Definitely fantastical in its creation, The Catwalk looks somewhat hurriedly put together after an immaculate opening trio of holes. There are lots of sharp edges, nasty transitions and cloned planting, mostly thanks to the demands of the landscape. It's a real shame, as the looks will inevitably turn players off an otherwise fun course. 2/10

Playability

There's good playability value contained within the concept itself, but later on in the round you realise that The Catwalk is a one-trick deal. It's very target-golf with little opportunity for risk reward, and a lot of frustration for the player. The novelty of the course won't appeal to the real course fans at all, and will probably only have a limited lifetime for everyone else. 6/10

Challenge

Much too hard. There are some massive water carries, with no drop zones, the rock hazards often trap balls when they shouldn't, and the green gradients border on the obscene. It could be said that a fantasy course can get away with being ridiculously difficult, but one day I'd like to see one that doesn't even try. 3/10

Technical

The technical difficulties are many and fairly obvious: too many sharp edges around the hazards being the worst offender. But the scope of a project like this is worthy of praise, in my opinion; more designers should have this sort of ambition, and show us what the APCD is really capable of. 4/10

Overall	Not as good as it might have been. A worthy idea going partly to waste through some slapdash construction.	23/50
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The Centenary Course at Gleneagles

Microsoft



Description

Real, heathland course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Perthshire

Conditions

Plays surprisingly well up to M*/F* and faster if you choose pins carefully on one or two greens. Windy conditions advisable

Concept

Very full of British charm and landscaping, this is one of the better efforts from the Microsoft design team. They have succeeded in transferring a visual stimulating and varietal course into Links with very few flaws. The course itself is one of the best in the British Isles; traditional links mixed with target-style American values, if fizzling out a little through the final few holes with some 'challenge' holes that have lost much of their difficulty. 8/10

Appearance

A cut above many of the original Links courses, Gleneagles has been pretty well planted and blended, and looks particularly good from middle- and far-distances, aided by a well-matched panorama and a decent variety of planting, given the course is quite sparse. There's some frightfully lumpy elevation work, though, not least around the bunkers, and they are indication enough of how much techniques have progressed. 7/10

Playability

The statuesque nature of this course is enough to see you through at points, and plenty of holes have excellent strategy shifts depending on your approach angles and choice of tees. There are a bundle of excellent trademark holes which you shouldn't miss out upon. The lack of ambient sound is all that is wanting here. 9/10

Challenge

Much of this course plays very tightly to par, only giving up occasional strokes here and there. The rough is spacious, but the greens aren't at all easy to hit, even on the Par 3 holes. Sadly, a lot of this gets thrown away down the closing stretch, all of which seem to play abnormally easy, and a score a few under seems to be the median performance. 7/10

Technical

Certainly lacking by today's standards, but this is certainly better than the majority of Microsoft's output with a good coherence and some very believable aspects to the course. Shame about the extrusion and elevation work, which can be a bit of an eyesore at more than one point. 6/10

Overall

Holds up well as one of the better commercially-available courses. Don't ignore this for your tournament out of sheer snobbery.

37/50

The Complex

Randal Queen



Description

Fictional, short course.

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 3, on green.

Concept

Less a course than a training utility, The Concept uses tee boxes with a variety of textures to aim at a single, central, flat green, followed by a putting-practice green with more of an angle. I can see how, in practice mode, it would be useful: played as a set of 18 it's poor, because you can't play from the various textures and there is but 1 pin position for all but the last hole. It doesn't really take imagination in depth to come up with something like this, and I'm afraid it doesn't float my boat. 2/10

Appearance

There are some nice touches, including grass planting to various depths on the 'deep rough' tee, a hill-fronted panorama and subtle 'target' textures on the green. But there's not much else to look at: something artistic in the background might have helped, or even a scattering of pertinent trees might have broken up the monotony. 5/10

Playability

What's to like? Flat putts, easy shots. Played as a course, it's risible at best. In practice mode, I suppose, there might be sufficient variety in the options off the tee, but I doubt it'd convince anyone to spend more than 5 minutes on the course. 1/10

Challenge

Anyone who can't make par on all of these holes needs to be looking for an easier golf game. Even if playing out of a tough texture means you can't reach the green, there's still an easy enough approach due to nothing greenside and lack of gradient. The real skill here is hitting your snap. 0/10

Technical

Self-proclaimed as couple of days' work, The Complex is essentially flawless, and some neat little additions prevent it being utterly pointless. But it'd never be acclaimed as a work of art and – at best – looks like something that seemed like a good idea for a while, but wasn't necessarily brought to a full and imaginative head. 3/10

Overall	Possibly of use for trialling out your shots. Certainly not compulsory, and leaves you wanting to design something better yourself.	11/50
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The Country Club

Eddie Schmidt



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 4

Par

71

Location

Massachusetts

Conditions

M*/M* will provide a stiff challenge

Concept

A lush and famous championship course should, ideally, make an excellent Links conversion. The Country Club exudes a regal, exclusive air while still maintaining the rural wildness which comes with being one of the oldest courses in the US. As challenging as it is in real life, it falls rather flat on the computer screen: holes look barren rather than intimidating, and frankly the boredom factor sets in early. 6/10

Appearance

One immediate problem which strikes the eye is the garish colours. It's sad to report that one of America's most prestigious courses has turned out looking more than a little like a child's painting. If you can overlook the bizarre texture choices, there's some awesome 3D work and first-class planting to occupy your eye. The elevation work is very sound and adds a lot to the playability of the course. Sadly, on the whole, the bottom line is that the course does look a little artificial. 7/10

Playability

I seem to remember this course had the bore factor when it hosted major championships. It favoured the long hitters mercilessly and shots of genuine strategy were almost unheard of. It seems the same is true in Links, and The Country Club can be really quite hard work to battle around, especially given that deep rough is included universally. Best of it is the range of approaches dictated by fairways that are never anything as obvious as level. 5/10

Challenge

Brookline Country Club is renowned as being a stiff test, and much of that comes across even on the PC. The length is hard work, greens are small, and the rough punishing. Missing the fairway by a foot will invariably result in a deep rough lie and a failure to reach the green in two. But this is a staple for the course, and it's never unfair; birdie opportunities are possible and makeable. 7/10

Technical

Texture choices aside, this course has been immaculately laid down, and genuinely resembles the real thing. The sense of environment is uncannily good, but my opinion is that less time might have been spent on the trimmings and more on the course that is central to them. 8/10

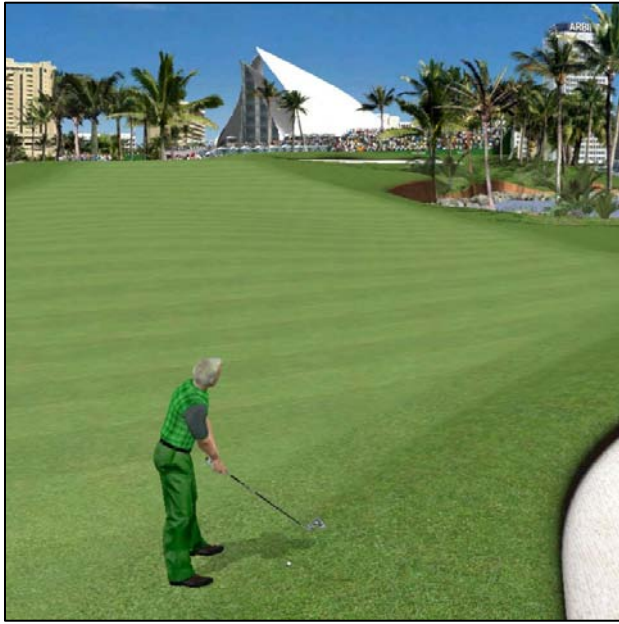
Overall

A good course, and worthy of addition to any collection of real-life famous courses, but lacking that punch and sparkle which marks other big-name releases.

33/50

The Creek At Dubai

Lloyd Henchey



Description

Real, tropical course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, from (near) fairway.

Concept

There are two distinct parts to the concept of this course. The skill and imagination exercised in bringing this – pretty much the only course of its type – into Links is to be congratulated. The course itself is something of an oddity, as I suppose can only be found in a place like Dubai. There's a big thing made of tee shot placement, and hazards of various types: inland water, sea water, mud and – of course – sand trap. In many ways, it's an American dream; an intended home to an Asian Players' Championship.

But it doesn't sit comfortably with the supposed desert home: what would have been wrong with something less green? 7/10

Appearance

It's not often you get a stunning panorama that's a joy to look at but does not detract from the course: Dubai's backdrop is simply a world-beater. Things look pretty good, if a little sparse, on the course too. Something this well manicured doesn't really call out for underplanting or dense grasses. It's not up to the hugely polished standards of the best courses, mind you: the pin occasionally fades into the background (very annoying) and one or two suspiciously vacant flat areas detract from what else is on offer. 8/10

Playability

There's a great sense of luxury in playing at what is rapidly becoming a very desirable course, and the prestige factor ushers you through to a great extent. As for the minutiae of your round? Well, it depends very much on whether you like this style of target golf or not. Personally, I don't like the course to dictate my strategy to me, and this detracted from what might otherwise have been a unique experience. 7/10

Challenge

An odd one this. The course starts off very in-your-face, and you're almost bound to drop shots before the sixth. From that point on, it's more a case of experience than anything. There are a lot of hidden traps and tricky (but fair) pins at Dubai and you need to know the layout well to avoid them. It's unfair on the rookie player, but don't say you weren't warned! 6/10

Technical

Dubai has been pieced together well with suitably lush textures and convincing shapes. It has the slightly ethereal feel that might be out of place on any other Real course, and the panorama's famous buildings are the crowning glory. Up close and personal, though, you can see problems with the bunker lips, bare areas, and even if the lack of underplanting might be realistic, it doesn't convince in this game. 8/10

Overall

A clever and long-overdue rendition of a famous course. Worth a stroll round, although might trip you up in tournament play.

36/50

The Crusoe Course

Ross Anthony



Description

Imaginary, tropical course

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 4, from green.

Concept

While the idea of setting a course in the restricted setting of tropical islands is not a new one, The Crusoe Course takes it to new levels, allowing you to play around a lagoon, over and under a massive stone bridge, and in a variety of styles. Hole design is far-out but never impossible, and you always feel totally immersed in the island environment. This is one course that has not let its designer's fertile imagination stand in the way of good golf. 10/10

Appearance

Certain facets of this course look fantastic, not least the massive piece of stone architecture, and the naked ladies taking a stroll in the surf! The planting has sufficient variety, although I think certain areas could have been more densely planted. Textures are aptly chosen and actually work quite well, given that this environment is often hard to make look real. Perhaps a little more work could have gone into the ocean and one or two hard edges, but on the whole this is great eye candy. 9/10

Playability

Even those who loathe fantasy courses will melt a little. It offers up great golf, and not just with booming 450-yard drives off the second tee. There's a good line in risk-reward; the target aspect doesn't tire, and some well-planted sound effects guide you around. The fact that there is a marked contrast between the two halves helps you to change focus around the turn. Quite simply, this is about as enjoyable as they come. 10/10

Challenge

Although it is likely you will shoot level-par at Crusoe, the challenge is to a large extent artificially created. The front nine yield birdies almost pathetically easily with their flat greens, but the back nine and associated water hazards will screw you over time and again. I'm quite happy to accept that this is deliberate and for the good of the course, but it isn't a meaningful challenge once you realise this. 6/10

Technical

For an early course, this looks pretty good, with a great deal of customisation and attractive scenery. Some of the elevation work strains credibility a little bit, and just occasionally you encounter a dodgy extrusion, but any course with a custom texture called The Spinach can't be all bad. A 2003 re-rendering could elevate this course into truly great realms. 9/10

Overall	A worthy fantasy inclusion in the elite group of courses. A magnificent and spectacular creation that never sacrifices good golf for whimsical design.	44/50
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The Diamond Club

Douglas & Karen Montgomery



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, woodland course	4 th hole, Par 3	72
Location		
No location given – best estimate, based on the designers' previous, would be the North-Central or Midwest states.		
Conditions		
Some inconsistent greening makes S*/M* your safe choice.		

Concept

Another of those courses from the Montgomery team that is slightly hard to pin down, possibly even for the designers. As usual, there's the usual mix of creative but straightforward hole design, with the occasional misjudgement thrown in – the 8th being particularly silly in this case. The Diamond Club at least offers a balanced challenge and some expansive greens which, along with a visually impressive opening stretch, is just enough to pull it above the mediocre. 6/10

Appearance

Possibly the best quality about all the output from these designers is the consistency with which their courses are laid out in a realistic and believable fashion in authentic surroundings. At least, that is, until you start looking too closely. Then it's just a bit too easy to pick up on some hard water lines, some elevation changes which are difficult to credit, textures which are off-colour, and a lot of clones far away trying to fill space. The rockworks take some loving as well. The overall impression, as has sadly often been the case, is that of slight rushedness. 5/10

Playability

Apart from the occasional frustrating hole or blind shot, this is a delightful warm-up course, with a real work-out required of different shots and clubs if you are to attack the course. And, to be fair, it's a course that invites aggressiveness: there has been some really meticulous planning in this layout. 8/10

Challenge

The expansive greens will soak up 2-putts quite nicely, and the sprinkling of suitable hazarding feels well-judged. There's little by way of really heavy rough, when a fairly wild course such as this would clearly benefit from some. It was also a bit disappointing to find the closing stretch was markedly easier than the opening holes. 7/10

Technical

A typically mixed bag – there is some really good-quality basic design applied here, but it's not really supported by the visuals and the designers' insistence on putting in the occasional wacky hole. I still have the nagging problem that there's too much of a 'course factory' going on here, with not enough to distinguish this from earlier releases. 5/10

Overall	More than a handful of good holes nestling in a lot of ambiguity and wooliness.	31/50
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The Dustin Trophy

Lez Marwick



course water to its best and challenging you to do everything possible with a 7-iron. This is the game as she should be played more often! 10/10

Appearance

All the quality of the big brother course remains: the green textures and low-level planting really are among the best we've seen. Plus there's a melange of bonus items which you really should turn on to get the full impact. Sadly, one or two things, on this smaller scale, are betrayed as being a little bit low-res. 9/10

Playability

You'll certainly have to be creative to make it through the Dustin Trophy. With holes ranging from 60 yards right up to close to 200, it's a lot to achieve with one club. You'll have a great storyline and plenty of beer (imaginary, but feel free to provide your own real beer) to help you along. Unfortunately, the game's weakness comes when you are faced with nigh-on impossible situations at greenside and the 7-iron just isn't adequate to deal with them. 6/10

Challenge

The slippery default green setting will take quite a lot of getting used to, and the Ackerton Cross greens are really a bit too tough to be taken seriously. Obviously, if you play the appropriate MoP, you will be forced into some problematic choices that may not have a correct way out, but even with a full bag of clubs, this is a tough prospect, thanks to all the water. 3/10

Technical

Imagination is the key that keeps the APCD alive, and Lez has certainly not proved himself to be short of imagination with this hearty little gem. If only those greens had been tightened up... 9/10

Overall	A barrel of laughs amid several barrels of beer. The best Par 3 course for the game, regardless of some very difficult pins.	37/50
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The Experience At Alberta

Jeff Burkhead



Description

Imaginary, canyon course.

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 3, from tee

Concept

I don't know if Alberta looks anything like this, but if all the golf is this exciting then book me a holiday! Wonderfully imaginative landscaping encompasses brilliant rockworks, low-level planting and a riot of pink trees, not to mention the off-beat use of canyons and fenced-off areas. The ingenuity and innovation that has been put into hole design is stunning: very few holes are unfair or purely target-based, and several genuinely make you think. The back nine contains some of the most challenging and

outrageous Par 4s I have ever seen: but while this course is most definitely fantasy, it never resorts to the unfair or punishing gimmicks we have seen elsewhere. Magnificent! 9/10

Appearance

The Experience's rough edges lie mostly in the fine detail. The shortage of available pink trees has inevitably made for some cloning, and the riot of small rocks and grasses succumb similarly. Many elevations are dodgy, thanks to straight extrusions (most notably of bunkers). Worst of all, though, are the textures: as soon as you leave the short green, they are blurry, stretched, poorly mapped and frequently harshly-boundaried. One can't but think that makeover time is well overdue. 4/10

Playability

Once you get past the relatively ordinary opening six holes, The Experience has plenty to stretch and mould your imagination. The hole previews are chatty and advisory and complement holes perfectly without giving too much away. With plenty to see (despite the flaws listed above), brilliant but believable variety from hole to hole, and some almost unique strategies, this is a golfing paradise. 9/10

Challenge

With quite a few OB regions on top of the water hazards, this is always going to provide a stern test. The lack of a shallow rough texture is a design flaw and would help, although thankfully the deep rough appears to have rather generous properties. None of this excuses the fact that you'll end up a few over par: although the likelihood is that you'll be having such a good time that you won't notice! 6/10

Technical

Some of the technical flaws here are really quite basic and inexcusable for that. Horrendous extrusions and lack of attention to textures are the major culprits and genuinely take the edge off the course. Some clones are marked for removal, and the designer could learn a thing or two about rockwork from the legion of great coastline designers. The brilliance is the thought and care that has clearly gone into the minutiae of hole design: clearly The Experience has been intricately planned and is all the better for it. 5/10

Overall

Some knockout holes which are an absolute blast to play, sadly let down by the overall appearance. Worth a second and third play, though.

33/50

The Fairmont GC

Paul Dalglish



Description

Fictional, tropical course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Paul Dalglish appears to be specializing in creating deserted little oases with something slightly different about them. The Fairmont's 'gimmick', such as it is, is rockiness, and the design incorporates some of the unpredictability of Rocky Nuts while still retaining golf course authenticity. The 'wasteland' areas, in particular, are an intriguing mix of rocks and flowers and are almost worth visiting for some unique recovery shots. Perhaps the final story, though, is that one should beware of a course

whose gimmicks are detrimental to one's game. A little bit of crazy rock-bouncing goes an awfully long way, I'm afraid. 6/10

Appearance

The Fairmont generally ticks the right boxes. The planting is mixed-up sufficiently to disguise clones (no mean feat, with the shortage of tropical trees available), and low-level planting must have taken a fair amount of time, such are its intricacies. The textures are well chosen and inoffensive. Unfortunately, there is just a persistent feel of surrealism about the course: there's little sense of location, and some features appear to have been hastily constructed. It's this inconsistent feel that really works against the course. 7/10

Playability

This designer builds his courses around a strong core of enjoyability, and The Fairmont doesn't disappoint. Although the appeal of a new style of tropical course wears thin before the end of the round, and some of the less well-judged difficulty aspects are wearisome, this course has a lot to be enjoyed, and it's likely you won't notice where the time's gone. 7/10

Challenge

In my view, this is the designer's biggest weakness. Narrow fairways and difficult-to-hit landing areas are an excellent way to visit the wastelands, but become quickly frustrating. Water is cynically placed, and the green elevations and pin positioning is too often beyond the pale. It's an irritating slant on what might have been a better round. 4/10

Technical

In the use of the APCD for artistic effect, there is a lot that people can learn from this layout. Sadly, it also serves to emphasise a few weaknesses. Some areas are obviously delineated, some edges too sharp, and much of the elevation work looks really quite amateurish. There are quite a few small terrain folds visible from hasty extrusion as a testament to this inexperience. 6/10

Overall	It's nice to see new courses with a marketable angle like this, but The Fairmont doesn't quite deliver on all that it promises.	<i>30/50</i>
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The Gallows

John Borycheski



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Making a big thing of its rollicking elevations and hilly layout, The Gallows certainly cannot be accused of shying away. It's in-your-face, determinedly fun, and dramatic. Undoubtedly, it's overblown, though: the course often takes liberties with reality and the elevations for effect without any real consideration of whether such an impact was necessary. Normally, a fantasy course would float my boat, but you can have too much of a good thing. 6/10

Appearance

When The Gallows stays away from the absurdities, it is neatly presented, if hardly outstanding. Some decent textures and planting are helpful: the colour set perhaps less so. In other places, though, there is an awful lot of slope where perhaps it wasn't justified, and your brain has hard work making it all belong together. 6/10

Playability

There are certainly enough thrills to be had here. The hole design is heavily influenced by some of the PGA Tour regulars, and while the underlying subtlety might be missing, the basic premise of many holes is more than enough to have mouths watering. Yet again, though, the pushing of plausibility proves to be a silly addition and one that drags the gameplay down. 7/10

Challenge

Tough stuff, indeed. The fairways are not always easy to hit, and the deeply-sunk bunkers tend towards an unfair test. There is a sense that the designer is throwing tests at you to see what will stick, which makes for some relentless target golf and hard work. 5/10

Technical

The impression is that a course has been inexpertly bent around a pre-existing terrain. While, in the right hands (cf. *Prairie Dog*), such a design can be a joy, in this case it just hasn't all pulled together. There's also the problems of the colour scheme to consider. While, on pure technical merit, The Gallows can easily hold its own, the fundamental principles behind course design have transpired to trip it up. 6/10

Overall	Undoubtedly a great course to play, but equally a course uneasy with its surroundings and drifting once too often towards absurdity.	<i>30/50</i>
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The General

Matt McIntosh



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, woodland course	18 th hole, Par 4	70
Location		
The panorama is reminiscent of the Rockies regions. The course – perhaps not?		
Conditions		
Plays well on M*/M*, but anything faster might find a few unfair landings.		

Concept

A hilly course, almost to the extent of being a mountain course, and Matt has stuck to a theme in keeping the greens elevated – most effectively in the cute closing holes on each half – and spotting plenty of bunkers on a short Par 70 course. The defiance of convention is admirable in part, but it does also make for a slightly confusing course with a dry sandstone panorama but plenty of lush green on the plot. 6/10

Appearance

Very little to fault here, with planting providing both functional and visual effects, and the elevations are handled well. The many bunkers are efficiently presented although nothing special to be honest, but at least a fresh set of textures have been dug out. The course would perhaps work much better in front of a pine forest panorama. 8/10

Playability

Matt’s courses have tended towards the slightly sterile before, but there is plenty of life in The General. Drive placement is often key, although it’s rarely a case of being throttled back, and nearly every hole is set up for visual accessibility so you can put a proper golfing strategy together. The sand is admittedly overdone in parts, but that might just be necessary on a short course like this...9/10

Challenge

...The great reason for the bunkering is that it makes par a good number to hit when you’re in and out of the sand all the time. It has to be said that very few bunkers are unrealistically positioned, and that the elevations and forests also play a major part in the challenge. 9/10

Technical

This is – coherence wise – the best of Matt’s courses, although the general design principles are a little at odds with the surroundings, and perhaps a little more by way of 3D work would help the course stick in the memory. There is a very clear design objective here for the large part, though, and the course pulls through in that respect. 8/10

Overall	Short and pleasing golf driven largely by elevations and avoiding the deepest sand traps.	40/50
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The Golf Club of Oklahoma

Keith Haney



Description

Real, woodland course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 5, from fairway.

Concept

Tight, coherent, and very believable, The Golf Club of Oklahoma is an inspired collection of holes brought together very neatly in the APCD. The variety in the course is simply stunning – from holes that are almost routine, through huge Par 5s, to a veritable handful of trademark holes. This is a course that doesn't need fancy craftsmanship to shine: it is more than capable of becoming both a great casual round and a great tournament venue in its own right. 9/10

Appearance

Lovely underplanting is a hallmark of this course, and some of the texture uses are very apposite. I did, however, find a few odd mesh formations, particularly around the extruded bunkers, and there are too many clones in the planting that make themselves obvious. 6/10

Playability

Like all the best woodland courses, there is an air of mystery about this course and a keen anticipation of what may come up next. The variety of shot options and some subtle risk/reward certainly do not disappoint. The gentle approach to sound planting is a fitting partner to the stimulating golf on display. 8/10

Challenge

This really couldn't be much better. Real courses have often been imperfectly scaled down; Oklahoma is one case where it couldn't really have been much better. Birdies feel like genuine rewards, even on the long holes, and bogeys are just rewards for poor play. The Par 3s are the weak link. They are pretty much golf-ball-killers, and a lot of their dropped shots result from difficult green-side lies. 9/10

Technical

Very good at the time, this would be declared merely passable today, thanks to some grainy and washed-out textures and occasional unmakeable putts. While there is nothing fundamentally wrong with the APCD-work, and indeed an awful lot has been done right, the majority of the course's appeal comes from its real-life counterpart and the excellent design work that was done long before Links golf was heard of. 6/10

Overall	A terrific find and one that hasn't had it's due press over the years. Aging slightly, but then aren't we all?	<i>38/50</i>
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The Henry

Vivian Davies



Description

Fictional, heathland course.

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 5, from fairway.

Concept

The Henry is a wild course. Not wild in the sense of untamed moorland, but wild in the lack of continuity and the massive disjointedness between different holes. The author has ambitiously tried to cover a range of hole styles, with precious little finesse or sense of location, and the overall impression is just of a mess. There's too much going on, and not enough paid to the course's strengths and how they might challenge the golfer. 2/10

Appearance

There's quite a bit done well here. Some of the texture blends are a joy to look at, and the planting is suitably mixed and adds more tone to the place than any other visual feature. These are compromised by downsides including the inexplicable stone edges for the tee boxes (and, unforgivably, one green), some stretched textures and occasionally a sharp edge in the mesh around elevations. On the whole, little better than a mediocre effort. 5/10

Playability

Several arrow-straight holes do not inspire confidence in the variety of play around this course. Indeed, there's precious little attention paid to potential strategies, and the course simply demands straight and accurate shots: very dull. The raised greens eventually get frustrating as too many approach shots come up way short. An annoyance. 4/10

Challenge

The Henry places unnecessary demands on the player, and will not appeal to many. Over-calculated hazarding, and some awful greens add to the difficulties. Although it's possible to pick up strokes on the front half, the overall challenge is lacking in balance and realism. 5/10

Technical

Yet again we see a designer with a good grasp of the APCD who has not really got the hang of what a golf course should be about. Points are lost here for the obvious lack of planning and focus, rather than design skills. 4/10

Overall	A course lacking a solid centre or theme. An oddball collection of holes, only about half of which are playable.	20/50
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The Heritage on SouthBank

Stuart Kahle



Description

Fictional, farmland course

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

It's pretty certain that no-one before or since has thought of locating a golf course on a sheep ranch, but that's just what The Heritage course tries to pull off. I say 'tries' because, sadly, it's only a partial success. The plot is crowded and too small, and the holes feel cramped together, rather than flowing naturally into the space. Full credit to the designer's ambition, though, and to the sheep which turn up all over the place and – well – try their best. 7/10

Appearance

Despite a beautiful, authentic and deep panorama and a good selection of planting and fence-work, there are some glaring problems in the mesh and the textures, which look old-hat and mismatched. The customisation is nice, but it's not really quite enough to account for the course's other flaws. 4/10

Playability

Certainly a difficult call, this one. There are plenty of indicators that one should certainly not go out and play The Heritage. There are blind tee shots aplenty, some almost unplayable greens, and hidden, unmarked hazards. Surprisingly, though, it's easy to accept a lot of this as part of the course's conceit to originality, and there is plenty of enjoyment stemming from novel hole design and the unique location. 8/10

Challenge

In some ways, it's much easier to shunt the course's shortcomings into this section. The ridiculous greening and array of hazarding will inevitably cost strokes, a balance which is little redressed by the occasional short Par 5. Those playing on fast speeds need to steer clear. 5/10

Technical

There are just too many gaps here: poor colours, iffy elevations, and green-work that looks thoroughly untested. I'm sure I'm not the only one who would enjoy a re-working of this great concept; in its original state, though, it looks rather primitive. 4/10

Overall	A lovely idea for a course, and one that makes for an involving and diverting round of golf. An idea not quite brought to fruition, though.	28/50
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The Hill & Dell Club

Paul Nicholson



Description

Fictional, forest course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

A much more restrained effort than the designer's preceding notoriety of The Island. This, in truth, is a good-looking and interesting course, much more believable, and featuring plenty of the elevation changes promised by the name. It's not flawless: there is slightly too much tendency towards blocked and winding fairways and the holes seem to exist in relative isolation to each other, but the environment is a strong example of how the aura of a British forest (I'm thinking the Forest Of Dean particularly) can be

captured with clever planting and landscaping. 7/10

Appearance

Impressively clone-free and authentic, Hill & Dell certainly looks the part from a distance. Close-up, it's a bit weaker, to be honest. Textures are often stretched and blurred and there are some alarming transitions. Some of the bunker work is a bit jerky too. For all that, there's a decent impression to be made here. 7/10

Playability

You really get a sense of pitting your wits against the designer here, such is the cunning placement of bunkers and forest lines. It's actually tremendous fun and there are several subtle lines which can be taken on every hole. If only the course weren't so damn calculated, it'd be a riot. I don't usually make mention of the hole previews: here they are worth looking out for, though! 9/10

Challenge

You'll either pick up a bunch of shots here, or lose loads. Certainly, anything that finds the deep rough will have the player in worlds of pain. The bunkering does you no favours, and several greens are particularly difficult to read, if not testing in the gradient. It would be quite possible to score anywhere between 65 and 85 here. Too vague! 5/10

Technical

Quite a few problems here: by no means elementary ones, but several things could use ironing out. Textures, in particular, are quite weak, and the number of blind shots could be cut down. It wouldn't hurt the course to remove some of the gameplay contrivances for some more natural woodland features either. 5/10

Overall	Fewer holes in isolation and less of the designer's contrivances would be welcome: a greatly improved effort otherwise	33/50
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The Hills at Cheetah Run

Rennie Beaton



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, heathland course	16 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
It's very implicit that this is somewhere in Africa. Kenya, perhaps?		
Conditions		
Really not wise to try this past S*/S*		

Concept

Awesome thematics in this veldt-land course with the hilly bush being convincing, attractive and a genuine hazard. Throughout there is some excellent, twisty hole design with plenty of water, let down on only a couple of occasions by holes that are nearly impossible to navigate thanks to the lack of the previews. The long holes are the best, with the question-mark shaped closing hole being a work of art, but there's plenty of treats to be had on the way there, too. 9/10

Appearance

Offbeat planting and yards and yards of 'boundary' fencing (in actual fact, it's not OB at all) set the tone at Cheetah Run, and the space has been used so effectively that it seems hard to criticise. But there are a few notable problem areas, not least some very obvious extrusions and an inconsistency when it comes to bunker depth – some look OK, a few look great and several look like a painted-on afterthought. 8/10

Playability

With viable options and dares all the way around, Cheetah Run plays like a dream. The part played by the water might be a little excessive for those whose swing type can't tolerate it, but the hillside locale makes for plenty of opportunities, and there's always a surprise or two lurking. 8/10

Challenge

Whichever way you look at it, this is a pretty tough course. The opening is almost painfully difficult, as are a handful of holes along the back, and there's not a lot of fair play when you take into account the lack of previews and the greedy water hazards. The greens really need to be flatter, too, and the pins more equitably planted. Thankfully, the rough bush-land isn't OB, but there are enough problems to encounter elsewhere. 6/10

Technical

A lot of obviously careful work here, not least in the environment, which stands virtually alone in its ambition. The custom textures look good and a lot of the difficult regions around water and sand have been well-disguised. Sadly, there are still one or two areas which look as if they need fine-tuning, not least some fairway bunkers and the pin positioning. 7/10

Overall	A novel, brilliant and semi-unknown course that deserves to be on everyone's hard drive. A little bit old-looking by modern standards, but that certainly shouldn't prevent anyone playing it.	38/50
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The Horizons

Matt Rose



Description

Fictional, desert course

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

A desert design that never quite got off the ground, The Horizons is quite a pleasant surprise. No great shakes technically, it nevertheless displays an excellent working knowledge of the game and throws in one or two surprises along the way. Many holes are doglegs, allowing the potential for Rocky Nuts-style bounces and other such lunacy. The whole thing is neatly packaged in a Bighorn-style desert environment, making it cohesive if not necessarily the most realistic. 8/10

Appearance

The bright green textures are customised but not really fitting with the surrounding desert (why do designers have such a hang-up about brown grasses, for pity's sake?), and there are some really quite ugly extrusions – the tee boxes being the worst offenders. Texture blends are either routine or forgotten entirely. The planting has taken some care to avoid cloning, but such is the large amount of rocks and dry bushes then some replicas have become inevitable. It's by no means terrible-looking, but care would need to be taken to prevent the course showing its age. 5/10

Playability

A very amenable layout for intelligent golf, The Horizons contains a tasty blend of gung-ho and restrained holes. Perhaps the open presentation doesn't quite incite the imagination as often as it should, but such is the way of desert courses. It'd take a mean sombre individual to be bored here, though. 7/10

Challenge

There are few hazards at The Horizons, but don't fall into the trap of thinking it's easy. Clever use of elevations and smallish greens mean that approach shots can easily miss the mark, and a few greens do not favour the putter either. Pick up shots on the Par 5s if you can (they tend to rely on water to keep you away from Eagle), but for most of your round it will be enough to manage Pars. 8/10

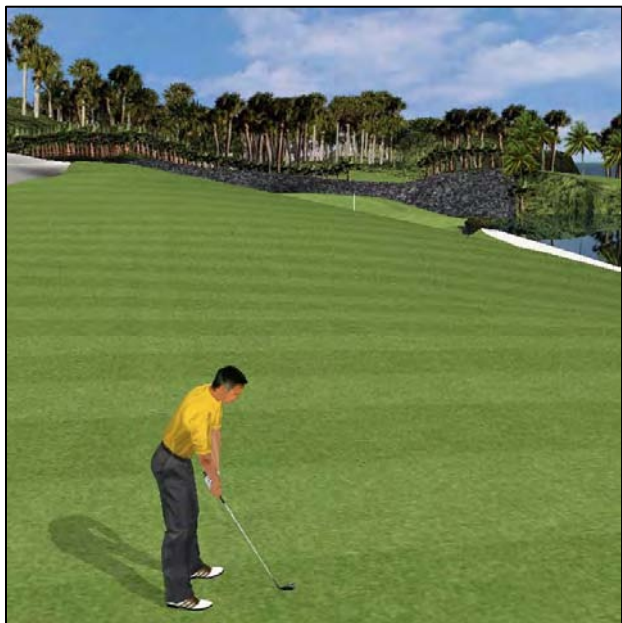
Technical

With talk of this course being moved onwards from Beta phase, there is hope that we could be looking at one of the best desert courses available. For now, there's still a fair bit of work to be done on the visuals, particularly the surface. 5/10

Overall	Some great and imaginative golf holes just needing the final careful touch to bring them together into an impressive package.	<i>33/50</i>
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The Island

Paul Nicholson



Description

Imaginary, tropical course.

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

An extraordinary creation with totally unrealistic use of elevations and planting to create a rough, ready but surprisingly acceptable course. Only those who hit long and straight will bear with it, but there's some remarkable hole ideas hidden in the mangled landscape. Don't take it seriously, that's all. 4/10

Appearance

Massively cloned planting and a lack of subtleness in the elevation changes are most obvious. Players will quickly see that some stretched and expansive textures don't help. Although the designer has done his best with some imaginative shapes, a nice panorama and lovely splashscreen, it's just a bit too primitive to be satisfying. 2/10

Playability

PS swingers will knock ball after ball into completely unplayable places and will inevitably pick up half a dozen times or so. Even Clicking, it's no pushover, and it's easy to get frustrated. But, sporadically, The Island throws up a completely unpredictable situation that positively invites you to hit balls into it. And even some of the best courses don't manage that. 3/10

Challenge

Nothing doing here, I'm afraid. With completely ridiculous elevations, massive carries and universal deep rough, not to mention the ocean as a frequent hazard, you'll be dropping shots faster than a Scottish goalkeeper. Tough stuff, tending towards the unfair. 0/10

Technical

Far too much is required on this. The panorama is often out of fit with the foreground, elevations pay little heed to planting or – on several ludicrous occasions – bunkers, and everything is blown out of scale, with very little finesse. The planting varies very little – three or four palm trees being the limit. Worst of all are the greens, which are unrealistic at the best and utterly unplayable at the worst. 0/10

Overall

A remarkably primitive but somehow exhilarating experience. Comparable to some tropical courses in terms of style, but not even close in terms of appearance.

9/50

The K Club Palmer Course

John Aherne



Description

Real, parkland course.

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

The 'Sunday Morning' release of the K Club has really done wonders in stripping away the intrusive tournament objects and allowing this course to be seen for what it really is. The narrow fairways are much better framed by some tasteful planting, and the course feels less intruded upon and more accessible. There are still the gung-ho target-golf style holes, mind you, and it is really difficult to place them in an Irish setting, but this is through no fault of the designer. 7/10

Appearance

The whole thing has been carefully tidied up over time; the mixture of high-level planting has been carefully pruned, and the waterplanting and the subtle elevations add realism and helps to remind one that even the most manicured course has its rough edges. There's still a little blurriness in some of the trees, mind you, and not enough time paid to some of the off-course aspects, but you'd have to dig hard to find them. 9/10

Playability

Perhaps it's the reduced intimidation from the lack of grandstands, but the Palmer Course has suddenly become a lot more entertaining. The subtle nuances of the Arnold Palmer design are emphasised when hitting the fairways is no longer the be-all, and the use of the water is as natural as it could be. The soundscrip is a bit of a disappointment, mind you, having suspect volume control at times. 8/10

Challenge

Bring yourself off the tournament tees, and this course at least becomes accessible. It's by no means easy, and you'd find it difficult to pick up many shots on the Par 4s, but the greens are reasonably moderate, and the bunkering is reserved only for the most mis-judged of shots. Don't expect any gifts, though. 6/10

Technical

Taking away the excesses has left a much better insight into the craft that has gone into this course. The textures are ideal, and the planting draws the ideal line between being cloned and being forcedly random. The water hazards, despite not really having a place on this type of course, are highly polished and set the whole course off a treat. 9/10

Overall	A delightful presentation of a great championship course. Finely tuned for casual play as well as for the big-hitting experts.	<i>39/50</i>
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The K Club Smurfit Course

John Aherne



Description

Real, heathland course.

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

If Palmer were a city accountant, then Smurfit would be the disgruntled brother who is running a second-hand car lot. It's full of grassy rough and unexpected surprises, such as the grandiose rocks around the water features, and an intriguing blend of links golf with something a little more target-driven, without over-emphasising either. Much more the archetype of an Irish course than many others we have seen, it's an intriguing and

constantly surprising little creation, even on second playing. 9/10

Appearance

The view from the first tee takes your breath away, and the visuals remain top notch all the way around. Whether it's the delicately-forested grasslands, the perfectly-inserted rockworks and pathways, or the tree planting that provides a great backdrop and well-placed hazarding at the same time, the course is simply perfect. 10/10

Playability

Special mention should be made of the lovely hole previews which, while not particularly beneficial to your game, are lovingly rendered (presumably from Google Earth photographs) and every bit as good looking as the course. The golf itself is an absolute joy – a combination of attacking pins, brave water carries and careful hazard play. This is a round to savour and repeat, without doubt. 10/10

Challenge

The Smurfit course is no easier than the Palmer, but at least it gives you the impression that you do not have to work so hard for your scores. The greens are the interesting but fair test – consistently one-putt these and you are either cheating or Brad Faxon. Bunkering is also interesting – small in number but very carefully placed. The accurate and the brave might well break 70 on a good day. 8/10

Technical

Just a couple of small flaws remind you that perhaps this course was rushed out a little. A misplaced hole preview spoiled my round a little, as did the placing of only three pins per hole. Perhaps these are only little niggles, but they do take the polished edge off the course's beauty, and this is a nagging worry when you're looking for perfection. 8/10

Overall	A sumptuous and truly entertaining feast of golf. A much better game than the elitist older brother.	45/50
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The Lavant Course

Paul Dalglish



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Comfortably straddling the line between parkland and woodland, Lavant is a pleasant surprise from a relative unknown of a designer. There's an excellent joined-up feel to the holes as their woodland surrounds being quite thin and some charming but not over-ambitious hole design, from the booby-trap first hole to the gung-ho eighteenth. The fairways are small, and won't appeal to everyone's tastes, mind you, and some of the expected carries are a little ambitious. But we've seen far worse in some

fantasy courses. 7/10

Appearance

Perhaps a little too calculated. It wasn't necessary to use such a massively wide range of trees in order to avoid cloning, nor does every water feature have to be carefully delimited with long grass. I would propose a little more attention to bunkers and the sharp elevations which stretch the surface picture a little, but let's not take anything away from a magnificent and carefully-matched set of textures that genuinely bring the course to life. 8/10

Playability

The Lavant won't win any originality prizes, but there's nothing to hold against it. There's certainly a sufficient range of strategies and a slightly unorthodox set of hole layouts to keep from complacency. Knowing the course well helps, too: blind tee shots make their presence felt a little too often. 6/10

Challenge

A stiff test in the opening, the first six holes might well see you a few over par. Thankfully, any shots in the fairway will inevitably pick up shots later on – the lies are flat and the greens pretty easy – and your game will likely swing the other way. On the whole, a bit on the easy side. 6/10

Technical

A very sound first effort, with the use of a range of good-fitting textures particularly worthy of praise. The course layout is up there with the best of them, too: perhaps a little more appreciation of real-life planting would be advisable for any future courses. Definitely a designer to keep an eye on – in the good sense! 8/10

Overall	Nicely crafted with some realistic stand-out holes that would be at home at any real-life Ryder Cup course.	<i>35/50</i>
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The Legend

Tom Coplis



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

The Legend is clumsy and uncomplicated, and it does take a struggle to get involved. While there is a basis for a good course in here, there is precious little atmosphere, and the holes feel oddly disparate. The long holes in particular are oddly devoid of charm, and the whole thing just leaves the impression of being glued together. 3/10

Appearance

Everywhere you look, there's something to trip the eyes. Despite occasional glimpses of a well-stitched panorama, there are poor extrusions, cloned planting, some odd shape-insertion and horribly tiling textures. Thankfully, with some grip on the fact that golfers like to see pretty landscapes, the designer has turned out a good view or two. 3/10

Playability

Route one golf here, and it takes a lot to engage with the course. There are precious few strategic options, virtually no placement skills required, and an almost continual lack of surprise. Each hole comes as more of a mild disappointment than a new challenge. 1/10

Challenge

The Legend, thankfully, does not completely rely on its blocky construction for challenge. For the most part, the green complexes are an effective and thought-provoking engagement, although some tend towards the Mod-unfriendly. It doesn't make up for the wide-openness of the course at large, though, and scores below seventy will be commonplace. 4/10

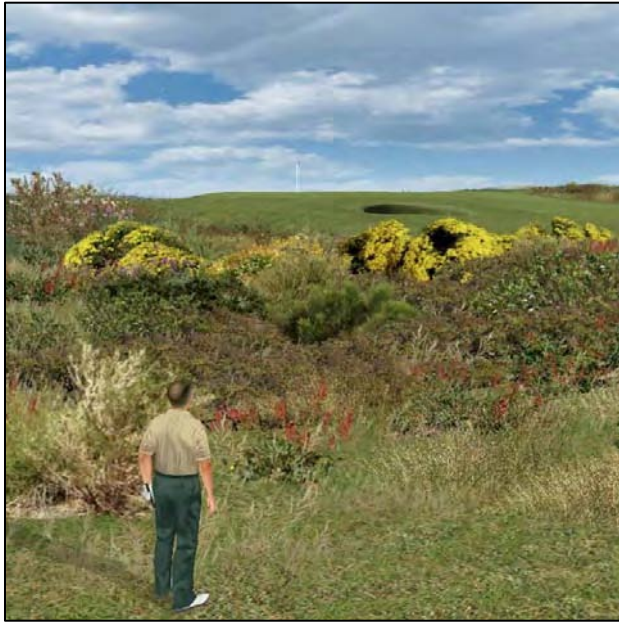
Technical

Just too much left to be done here. The overwhelming impression of the course is that of haphazard clumsiness and lack of polish. The panorama holds glimmerings of good graphical talent; it's a shame that this wasn't manifested elsewhere. 2/10

Overall	Hardly legendary. A course that looks thrown together, and plays scarcely better.	<i>13/50</i>
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The Links At Ballylecum Castle

Jon Weinrieb



Description

Fictional, links course.

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 4, from rough.

Concept

As impossible as it sounds, Ballylecum Castle is an almost perfect cross between Royal Troon and Pebble Beach. Set along a deserted and ramshackle Irish coastline, it features some of the best scenery and sound effects seen on an APCD course. The moorland is brilliantly laid out and the course urges you round, aiming for the next birdie, assisted by some brilliant coastline holes, and the inspiring and beautiful sight of the castle itself. 10/10

Appearance

Wow. You can feel the ocean lap the shores, and the rough is almost as well planted as Kew Gardens. I doubt there has ever been a course of any sort where so much attention has been paid to the non-golfing areas. Not that the in-play areas don't look fantastic too: textures are well chosen and the pot-bunkers are rough and authentic. It's a superb-looking course all round. 10/10

Playability

With a lack of playing alternatives, small greens and some infuriatingly easy-to-hit hazards, it would be easy to believe that Ballylecum is no fun at all. Surprisingly, and thankfully, this isn't true. The hole design is superb and, although you're turfed off the fairway more often than not, you're so keen to play the course that a par score will result. It's not always a satisfying round of golf, and can be downright awful under strong wind, but what could have been disastrous turns out unexpectedly good. 8/10

Challenge

Ballylecum borders on the tough side of fair. With seemingly unhittable fairways, a lurking ocean, and deep pot bunkers, dropped shots seem almost inevitable. But the greens and their surrounds are surprisingly accessible, and the most common score at Ballylecum is 'just scraped a par again'. It'll push you, but at the end of the day, it needn't punish you. 8/10

Technical

Simply immaculate. Any designer who can design the haunting castle, and blend the textures so skilfully is certainly worth his salt. The elevation work keeps the course testing, and the planting is out of this world. All the perfect ingredients for a good-looking, great-playing course. 10/10

Overall	Quite simply one of the best Links courses out there. A brilliant creation which offers a testing but spectacular round of golf.	46/50
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The Links at Palawan

Mike Cropf



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, tropical course	16 th hole, Par 3	72
Location		
Philippines		
Conditions		
Plays OK on F*/F*		

Concept

Nestled beneath the classic towering rock faces so typical of south-east Asia, Palawan is a large and exuberant course, with holes navigating waterfalls and crystal lagoon water. Anywhere else it might seem over the top, but actually the overkill in the hole design feels much more apposite in this exotic location. That said, though, there's an overabundance of water and forced shots, and a little easing off wouldn't have hurt. 7/10

Appearance

Some really delightful touches in the waterfalls, the grasses and the texture set, and the landscaping as a whole is a treat. However, there are some disquieting moments in the thickly-planted forests, which lack variety and interest, and the pale blue ocean water is hard to accept, even in this part of the world. 6/10

Playability

Walking the tightrope between reality and fantasy is a great draw in this case, and there's plenty of enjoyment to be had in experiencing the imagination that has been liberally shared at Palawan. However, it's not all trouble-free and the lack of visual clues off many tees is nothing short of frustrating. It's questionable whether anyone will have the dedication necessary to learn the course well and play it properly. 6/10

Challenge

Avoiding the water is nothing short of impossible, and there'll be plenty of cagey negotiation around fairways – on one hole this might be acceptable, but not all the way round. Add this to the impenetrable foresting, some cavernously deep bunkers, and tough greens on fast settings, and the sum total is of a course that will bite hard. 4/10

Technical

Palawan carries on a trend of solid technical know-how started by Mike's earlier Shenandoah Ridge. Unfortunately, like that earlier course, there are still a few textures and planting conceits that don't quite feel right, and the full-blown in-your-face golf doesn't really have the cosy charm of that earlier course either. Tropical courses are notoriously difficult to make convincing, and Palawan doesn't quite have the coherence to convince. 6/10

Overall	Tough and flamboyant golf in a new and different location. Some stand-out moments but more hard work than you'd like ideally.	29/50
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The Meadows

Paul Woodbury



Description

Fictional, forest course

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Apparently somewhere in the Midwest, based on some intelligent deduction.

Conditions

S*/S* is about all this will take

Concept

The concept of The Meadows is somewhat lost on me, to be honest. If it's a woodland course, why does it have a name implying openness? The location is difficult to pin down due to the course being claustrophobically enclosed, and the designer's predilections for signature holes are wearying when you have to play split fairways on more than half of the 18. It's overkill, to be honest, and was re-worked into something more coherently in San Simeon. 4/10

Appearance

The trees are a tasty riot of colour and well planted for the most part, although some clones creep into view towards the end. They are not really complemented by the panorama, which is too high and gives the impression of playing golf in a big dish. The elevations of the plot itself are far from smooth, too, and result in plenty of odd-looking shapes on the surface. The texture set doesn't really fit together well and is lacking in any interest. 5/10

Playability

The laterally-split fairways are the trademark of this course and, while infuriating, offer a cowardly safe option on many holes. The variety of hole lengths is very good, although with several similar holes on the back nine, you do get the impression that ideas were running somewhat short. The gameplay is supported by good hole previews, making it a round worth returning to. 6/10

Challenge

The greens are a sad let-down, being somewhat unrealistic and out of fitting with their surround. If it's possible to overlook these, then a typically gambling round will still set you back a fair few strokes, thanks to some prescient hazard placements. But there's little by way of deep rough in play, and opportunities to pull out a highlight reel approach are frequently presented. The balance, it has to be conceded, is not bad at all. 8/10

Technical

Tired-looking is perhaps the best way to describe The Meadows. There's little to remark upon in either appearance or game-play, and perhaps it's not unsurprising that this was given the remake treatment. The designer's tendency towards cynical hole designs still needs curbing. 5/10

Overall

You'd probably do best to stick to San Simeon, this course's successor.

28/50

The Mountain Course at Seneca

Ed Balaun



Description

Fictional, mountain course.

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

A good model of restraint in building such a course, Seneca employs many of the mountain course trademarks, but calmly plays some highly decent and uncontrived golf around them. The autumn oranges make a welcome contrast to the pine planting – indeed the course is exceptionally well planted – and the holes are laid out convincingly and utilising a wide variety of ideas. It won't stick in the memory, but it's a very strong and convincing construction. 8/10

Appearance

This is an old course, and the hallmarks of harsh transitions and some odd mapping (particularly on the rock work) stand out. Thankfully, these are only occasionally to your detriment and the beautiful panorama and top-quality planting hold up the appearance beautifully. 7/10

Playability

Thanks to a lack of gimmickry while maintaining an impressive hole design, Seneca plays impressively well. It's open and accommodating while maintaining a stiff challenge through the elevations. There's thankfully little repetition and, although the fairways are a little too easy to land, the approach shots really call on all your ingenuity. 7/10

Challenge

Nigh on perfect, I'd say. Pars are never a given, and the close proximity of bunkers and deep rough will call on plenty of ingenuity. You'll work for birdies, as should be appropriate and – best of all – holes of all lengths provide an apt and equal challenge. A rare thing indeed. 10/10

Technical

A cracking use of textures and panorama helps this course, and little touches such as the bunker walling and planting around the green obviously state the designer's attention to detail. But those damn texture transitions do too much to draw attention to themselves, and there's the nagging feeling that this course could really use an update. 6/10

Overall

On a graph of age against quality, this would surely be among the leaders. A little old hat now in terms of the design, but there's still some magnificently understated golf.

38/50

The Ocean Course At Cabo Del Sol

Microsoft



Description

Real, desert course.

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

Mexican golf courses aren't exactly commonplace, and doubtless Cabo del Sol is the premier available offering. It's not an ocean course in any sense of the word, being swathed in arid, harsh desert. Golfers have not been done any favours by the desert being made Out Of Bounds. Hole design tends towards the long, and bunkers come into play often; perhaps too often. There's just enough variety to prevent you growing bored, thankfully. 6/10

Appearance

With surprisingly rich planting for a desert course, good textures and – at last! – some competent seam blending, Cabo is one of Microsoft's better looking clubhouses. The impressive sight of the clubhouse guides you around the turn, and the ocean side is deftly constructed. It's not Mike Jones, but it's one of the best commercial courses in terms of visuals. 9/10

Playability

Having OB desert is a major turn off. There is little rough bordering the fairways, and slight hooks or slices (especially on Champ mode or higher) are punished too harshly. But the Par 5s provide an excellently-judged degree of tension, and all the Par 3s offer a spectacular view to take your mind off the lurking desert. It's not a bad round, but it could use some more risk/reward to really justify itself. 7/10

Challenge

Obviously, hitting the desert will cost you shots, and swingers without a firm snap will drop strokes. But the softly rolling greens will yield birdie putts as compensation and the most common score will hover around par. It's a frustrating course at times, but you might be pleasantly surprised by your score. 8/10

Technical

Unlike the majority of the commercial courses, this compares pretty favourably with many APCD releases. Perhaps the landscaping looks a little blocky in places, and certainly the OB rules might have been adjusted for the benefit of the game of golf, but the textures look good, the planting excellent, and many up-to-date techniques have been utilised well. 9/10

Overall	A very competent desert course. Where many in the same style have failed, Cabo looks realistic and plays effectively. It's not quite in the top flight, but a nice novelty to have among the wealth of US and European courses.	39/50
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The Ocean Course At Kiawah Island

G D Taylor



Description

Real, marshland course.

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 5, from green.

Concept

Renowned as a stand-out among American courses, Kiawah is almost links-like in the way it threads through a coastal swamp. Holes are refreshingly open and surprisingly tolerant of wayward shots: it's the rolling, hummocked fairways that will really cost you dear. This re-creation has its flaws, but the course should be considered a must-own just because it's not quite like anything else. 9/10

Appearance

It's not a course heavy on spectacular views, and there's a stretched texture or two, but the aura is surprisingly realistic. The swamps are carefully planted – particularly around water – and the extras are thin on the ground but very impressive when they appear. Most of all, the elevation work is deftly carried out and lifts the course above other deliberately-barren courses. 8/10

Playability

Two or three issues might cloud your enjoyment of this course. Sound is a major problem and the incessant cricket noises will become majorly annoying. Additionally, the roar of the ocean is too loud and will probably cause you to play with sound off. There are long rendering times also, which doesn't help matters. But the brilliance of the course negates this to some extent, and plenty of holes will engage and challenge you. With a more professional reworking, this course could be brilliant to play. 6/10

Challenge

It's not impossible to make birdies here: most greens are fair, and the hole design is generous for the large part. Of course, hitting the long grass will cost strokes, and the water might claim one or two more, but for the large part Kiawah shows why it was such a challenge in the Ryder Cup. 8/10

Technical

By all accounts, this is a first-time design, and it has certainly been carried out with panache. While the planting is occasionally inappropriate, and the sound requires some attention, tricky technical aspects such as elevation work and bunkers have been executed nearly flawlessly. A couple of mesh flaws are evident, unfortunately, but it barely detracts from the play. A very good piece of work on a course that might otherwise have been difficult. 7/10

Overall	Worth having, certainly as an example of a unique course idea, more so because the excellent shotmaking values that these eighteen holes offer.	38/50
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The Old Course at Ava's Field

Todd Meyers



Description

Fictional, heathland course

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

A Par 70 course stretched out to Championship lengths, Ava's Field is set among grasslands with a very Australian feel. Softly-spoken but with a few teeth, the course demands pinpoint accuracy amid the long grasslands, uncannily-placed bunkers and a water trap or two. It's very coherent and well-produced but despite the consistent high quality of design running through the course, it's clear this is a fictional creation. Think the none less of it for that, though. 8/10

Appearance

Beautiful soft textures and planting are to be much admired, and the consistency of appearance throughout the course is excellent. The water features are picked out in a very tasteful brown shade and genuinely draw the eye. Only a few hastily-constructed bunkers mar a very impressive first course. 9/10

Playability

Restrictive courses such as this can often be something of a drag to play, and a player missing their snap won't take kindly to Ava's Field, it's true. If you are having a reasonably adept day, though, this course is remarkably welcoming, and you'll find surprisingly spacious landing areas. The hole lengths mean it's certainly not all one-way stuff, and you'll scramble from off the green as often as not. As a representation of how real golf works, it's pretty good. 7/10

Challenge

The rough grass and the fairway bunkers are the main tester, and anything mis-hit will certainly see a shot or two dropped. The water hazards press pretty close to the short stuff in places too, although thankfully this is only the case on a minority of holes. To the large extent, your score will depend more on your form than the course, particularly when it comes to putting on some persistently unreadable greens. 7/10

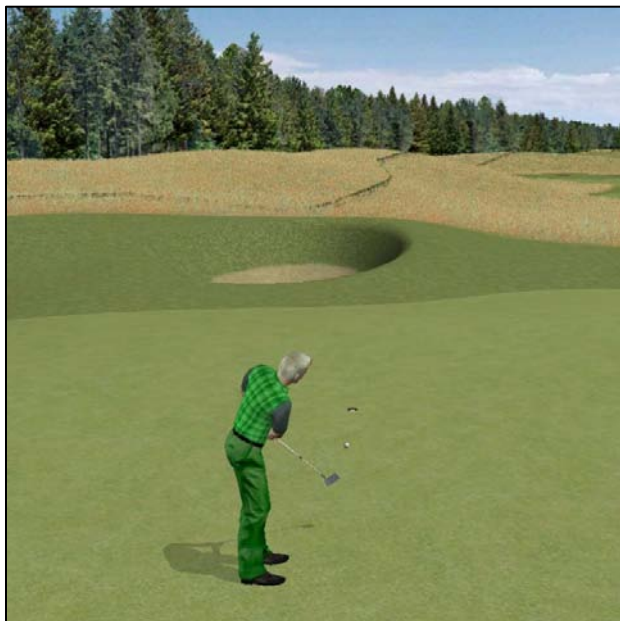
Technical

Despite a hiccup or two, Ava's field comes across as a very efficient, competent and coherent effort. There are a minority of problems with the textures and some rather sharp-cornered bunkers, but they rarely impact upon play. 8/10

Overall	An authentic Down Under course with terrific visuals. Will probably elbow its way into many tournaments despite not being ideally set up for competitive play.	<i>39/50</i>
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The Old Liverpool Links

Anthony Poland



Description

Fictional, dunes course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 3, on green.

Concept

The course makes a passable attempt at being an English version of Shinnecock Hills – the dry grass dunes are somewhat of a different touch, and the course convinces as being on links land, despite there not being a glimpse of the sea. Sadly, it all pales into repetitiveness as we see the same holes time after time: the big ‘gimmick’ of the designer being that the far left of each and every hole is OB. Fair enough; some of the best links courses are of the ‘out and back’ variety, but at least they didn’t have to

resort to a 700+ yard Par 5. 4/10

Appearance

The wheat-like planting must have taken an age, although I don’t find myself able to say the same about the surrounding fences nor the bunkers. The sand traps, in particular are a real oddity: they are almost identikit extrusions, but they don’t look enormously out of place: the pot-bunker style of links courses is one that is actually conveyed quite well here. But the overall impression is of rough edges, rather than refined smoothness. 5/10

Playability

Liverpool Links is pretty one-dimensional. There’s naturally a lot of elevation work to test you, but there’s an over-reliance on hitting tight snaps and avoiding the dunes. It doesn’t have the charm and sense of innovation of Enniscrone – the best, certainly nearest, comparison – and seems to run out of ideas towards the end, although the Par 3s as a set are refreshingly different. 5/10

Challenge

The thickness of the grass makes the deep rough almost inescapable, and you really need to pin some narrow hopes on narrow fairways. The greens are far from charitable, too, and it’s not inconceivable that some players will give up in frustration after the first third. But, if you remember you are playing a rough and treacherous links course, and adjust your game accordingly, then you might struggle round without too much damage. 6/10

Technical

I hate to be petty, but the course presentation lost marks for me here. Mis-spellings and poor use of the English language on the Hole Previews and a complete absence of an explanatory read-me let the designer down. Add to this some of the problems that might well have been picked up in Beta testing, and you feel this course could sorely need a final polish. 6/10

Overall	A sad sufferer from lack of good presentation. It’s an acceptable round of golf, but let down in many ways that could so easily have been avoided.	26/50
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The Pinnacle

Paul Woodbury



Description

Fictional, desert course

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 5, from fairway.

Concept

I don't understand where The Pinnacle is coming from. It's very much a desert course, but has a snowy, mountainous backdrop which is totally unsuited. The desert is over-planted and ill-sculpted as an Out Of Bounds region. A completely inappropriate water feature makes a poorly timed appearance. There is some good hole design on the back nine, but frankly not enough to hold this course up as a coherent concept. 3/10

Appearance

As with the rest of the course, the textures do not sit happily, although they are admittedly blended perfectly. The planting's good too, as is the low-level elevations; it's on the large scale that the course fouls up again. Inexplicably, the 12th tee is elevated miles above the rest of a fairly flat course, which doesn't help an already shaky feel of authenticity. Of all things, though, surely the inapt panorama should be the first to go. 7/10

Playability

Far too much OB causes frustration, and the front nine is lacking in shot choices. Later, you genuinely get chance to give your whole bag a thorough workout, and there are sufficient new challenges and original hole designs to guide you through. As far as playability goes, though, The Pinnacle is flawed, in part, through lack of variety and in part through lack of believability. 6/10

Challenge

The greens provide a stern test at The Pinnacle, as does the ever-present desert. Bunkers are judiciously placed, especially fairway-side. The rough will take distance from approach shots, although thankfully it is not too penal. Whatever its other flaws, this course is a very fine test of your golf game indeed. 9/10

Technical

The Pinnacle has been let down by lack of planning, but not by lack of technical expertise. Textures blend well with each other, and the low-level planting is thorough and mixed. 3D objects around the course have clearly had the bulk of the design time lavished on them. The priorities for attention are fairly clear: better locale and less fanciness. 8/10

Overall	A course suffering from a lack of environment. Plays well, but never for the life of me will I believe that this is a real course.	33/50
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The Pit

Dave Newman



Description

Imaginary, desert course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

The sandstone rocks which promised to bring so many desert courses to the APCD have found another exponent here. The Pit features a terrific eye for hole design, and you'll be faced with something novel right up to the end. That alone is not enough, though, as the designer has clearly found it difficult to maintain the environment, including some particularly odd choices of planting and some deep, marshy grass which looks both low-resolution and completely out of place. It's just about worth putting

your brain on hold to account for this flaw, though. 4/10

Appearance

Some rather amateurish mesh work means the rocks are truly outlandish, and they are hardly thrown into relief by the stock textures and some very odd mis-scaled planting. There's a lot of shape-placement to the course, although at least a good sense of perspective allows you to see most holes in a good view. 3/10

Playability

There's no shortage of interest here, even despite some blind tee shots and lack of atmosphere. Target-golf through and through, it is a peculiarly appealing blend of risk-taking and shot placement: one course where the designer hit the playability factor right on the button. Trademark-type holes are legion, but in such proliferation that they're difficult to remember after the event. 6/10

Challenge

Very artificial courses such as this often tend to be having a bit too much fun with their layout to take sufficient care with the player challenge, and indeed this is the case at The Pit. While the inventiveness is all well and good, there are too many easy escapes, and the occasional nasty green just isn't acceptable any more. Not quite right. 6/10

Technical

There has been considerable effort here to produce something new and different, but sadly the designer hasn't quite had the skill to pull it all together. Full marks for ambition and some cracking hole design, but the little touches (not least the hole previews which are desperately needed on this course) are too far away. 4/10

Overall	Flaws, yes, but you wouldn't want to miss this one. A very far-out desert course.	23/50
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The Plantation

Dominique Bois



Description

Fictional, marshland course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Dominique's project of APCD-updating old Jack Nicklaus Golf courses has proved to be an ambitious and surprising one, and has thrown up some absolute beauties. The Plantation has a grittier style with a lush, slightly other-worldly feel to it. There's an emphasis on placement and control which won't appeal to everyone, an almost excessive use of water, and some rough regions which might just have you trembling at the knees. 6/10

Appearance

A cracking choice of textures – always Dominique's strong suit – and an appropriate variety of planting gives the course that slightly ethereal edge. On the flipside, the water hazards with their green algae aren't always pulled off as well as they might be. There's some visible extrusion marks from time to time, and frankly a shortage of good scenery, thanks to the enclosure of trees and the flatness of the environment. A couple of good custom items keep the interest flowing. 6/10

Playability

The Plantation is no exception to the ideal laid down by Royal Kurland or Estate Heights (both from Dom's Jack Nicklaus series). Every hole is different; every shot is a challenge, often with a visual twist thrown in. The intent is certainly there, but perhaps the execution doesn't quite always match up: sometimes the golf can become unclear or frustrating, and that keeps The Plantation just a step behind. 7/10

Challenge

Certainly unexpected, The Plantation becomes something of a sod to play. One steel tree too many, and some near-inescapable rough, team up with generously-sized water hazards and vanishing landing areas. Sure, the greens are fair. But you've got to be godlike to hit them all at the first time of asking. 3/10

Technical

Re-creating fictional courses might be a little easier than re-creating real courses, but let's not underestimate the dedication required here, particularly when you consider that it's much more possible to compare picture to picture. The lakes cry out for attention, but elsewhere there's an impressive effort in creating a clone-free and coherent environment. 7/10

Overall	A course lacking a solid centre or theme. An oddball collection of holes, only about half of which are playable.	29/50
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The Players 18

Chuck Clark



Description

Fictional, tropical course.

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

While the idea of a compilation course based on the ideas of 18 non-experienced designers is an admirable one, it isn't necessarily easy to pull off. Ostensibly set amongst tropical jungle, The Players 18 is woefully underplanted, repetitive and somewhat flat. Despite all the palm trees, you can never quite believe you are in equatorial surroundings, because of the lush green colour to the course. Hole design is surprisingly dull, given that people have been given the license to do what they will. Marks for good

intentions, but not for much else. 4/10

Appearance

This is starting to look a bit old hat. Hard edges and extrusion marks are commonplace; there is very little to feast your eyes upon (besides Loner's balloon, of course); and the course is lacking in elevation changes, even of the smallest variety. The panorama is somewhat nondescript and the course is crying out for a central focus, something it desperately lacks. 4/10

Playability

To be honest, given the potential imagination that might have gone into this course, this is something of a drag to play. Unbelievably, given the fact that each hole has been designed by someone different, there seems to be an awful lot of repetition. Strategic holes are limited, even among the Par 5s. It's not a complete drag to play, thanks to the requirement to be able to escape the rough, but it could have been so, so much better. 4/10

Challenge

Now clearly, this is where having active players design your holes really pays off. Despite the flat terrain, these holes are consistently challenging without having to resort to gimmicks or severe hazards. It's a superb and fair test of anyone's golfing game, at any skill level, and with any swing type, and for that congratulations are most certainly in order. 10/10

Technical

This is an early course and some of the flaws are most definitely starting to show. The textures are overdue for some work, certainly off the fairways, and there needs to be fewer flat areas. The planting is terribly monotonous, and clones are evident. I'm sure with a good overhaul now, this could become once again part of a few top ten lists. 5/10

Overall	A great idea, but not pulled off quite as well as it might have been. Holes seem to exist in isolation and there is no real continuity to the course.	27/50
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The Reg

Rob Moates



Description

Fictional, short course.

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

This good-humoured little Par 3 course is actually much more realistic than you might expect. The terrain is believable as North Yorkshire, and the presence of the donkeys makes it more so. It's a crying shame that the designers didn't see fit to make this one longer than its nine holes, but it's a fun little bit of fluff nevertheless, complete with oddball 'Local Rules' and a host of good customisation. 7/10

Appearance

The planting is brilliant and very convincing of a heathland local. Perhaps a little more care might have been taken around the extrusion of the water features, and a few bunkers feature sharp edges, but the designer has (rightfully) pushed the boat out by including all manner of obstacles and hazards, and the course looks wonderful as a result. 8/10

Playability

You'll soon realise that the greens at The Reg are not to be messed with. They have been contoured to an extreme level of difficulty and will make for an element of frustration. You might even find that a valid strategy is to play to the fringe and then chip, because three-putts are woefully common. Other than the greens, this course is a hoot to play: rocks, water and deep pot bunkers all make for a diverse yet fulfilling half-round. 8/10

Challenge

Par 3 holes are the hardest to pitch in terms of a fair challenge, and this course – mainly because of unsympathetic greens – has erred on the hard side. It's certainly possible to make birdies, but missed putts are all too common and on more than one occasion I found my ball ending up further away than before I had hit it. It's not quite unfair, but certain holes (notably the 5th) border on it. 5/10

Technical

In many ways, this is a little design showcase where many tricks have been crammed into nine short holes. Rocks are judiciously used, water features throughout the course, and the customisation extends to donkeys and some suspicious-looking onlookers. The planting is superb, wild and natural, and there's a handful of custom sounds (not least the donkeys!) to add an extra dimension. It's not quite perfect, and every now and then you see a feature that hasn't had quite enough attention lavished on it, but it's pretty damn good for all that. 9/10

Overall

A one-off. Quirky, unique and lavish in turns, this hits the spot when you're looking for some light relief.

37/50

The Reserve

Dace Fair



Description

Fictional, estate course.

Screenshot

10th hole, Par 4, from green.

Concept

The Reserve is an open and inoffensive course tracing a path between colourful woodland. The hole design is straightforward, in every sense of the word, with just one or two showing that extra flair and imagination that makes them memorable. Largely, though, it's missing that extra spark which we would expect from Links courses, and is little more than an unthreateningly playable round. 5/10

Appearance

For a modern design, this is missing a few niceties. Most notably, the planting needs attention: the designer's love of unusual trees is hammered home a little too forcefully. The stock panorama, too, needs changing: it's completely at odds with the rest of the course. But there are nice touches, not least the seam blends around water, and some subtly rolling elevation work. The course does exude artificiality in places, though, and this should really be tightened up on what is otherwise a very believable place. 6/10

Playability

Despite what could be some unchallenging hole designs, this course plays reasonably well. You don't feel like it's particularly challenging you, though: this is an undemanding Sunday round of golf, ideal to play at a leisurely pace. There's certainly something missing if you're looking for a course that will assert itself, though. 6/10

Challenge

A flat course, with largely flat greens: this is pretty easy. Although some creative pin position mix it up a bit, it's easier to break par than to exceed it, and scores of 67 or 68 will be commonplace. The course could easily be stiffened up by less accommodating rough and deeper bunkers. It's not a pushover by any means, and a decent length keeps it from being too easy, but – yet again – you get the impression that a little more could be made out of it. 6/10

Technical

This is a mixed bag. Some areas are done very well: the texture blends and water features totally justify the time that has been spent on them. But the planting could be more refined, and some of the texture choices are odd (why, for instance, does green fringe serve as a first-cut of rough?). A custom panorama would set this course off a treat, and I look forward to an improved re-release. 5/10

Overall

A course which promises little and delivers on these promises. It's not bad by any means; an unthreatening round of golf with a few things to commend it.

27/50

The Reservoir

Matt Rose



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, parkland course	5 th hole, Par 5	72

Location

Based on the course's influences, I would place it in the north Central states – Illinois or Indiana maybe?

Conditions

I wouldn't go beyond M*/M*

Concept

Many years in the production, The Reservoir has finally emerged from gestation as an intelligently-thought and lightly-bunkered course, and the hole design is tidily crafted around natural elevations and a few streams, although at times, 'a few' becomes 'a few too many'. Without an array of course objects, some holes – particularly on the back half – tend to wander into isolation, rather than being part of a coherent whole. 6/10

Appearance

Some lovely work is apparent, particularly around the water features, and the depth of texture use and bunker lips hasn't gone unnoticed. However, the central textures feel a bit bright and artificial, and there are quite a few clones apparent in what is too-determinedly random planting. I wanted to like it more than I did, but the attention to detail was unevenly distributed. 6/10

Playability

There's no denying the thought and golfing values in this layout, and the designer has shown excellent restraint not to push things further than he has. However, the lingering memory of the course is of a lot of forced water carries and tidying up from awkward greensides rather than the clever hole design. 6/10

Challenge

You'd do well to clear all the water here. Quite a few holes are built around it, some quite cynically so, and there are an interesting range of elevations to deal with as well, both on fairway and green – the latter won't quite meet everyone's demanding specifications, although to nothing is very extreme. The Reservoir isn't an overly hard course by any means, but you'll have to work hard for pars. 7/10

Technical

The design process has been thorough with The Reservoir, and it's certainly a solid creation which plays well. It's a shame that there are still faults in the planting and a lack of atmosphere, and really a lack of stand-out signature moments in either visuals or hole design. 7/10

Overall	Perhaps a little bit too much water, but this is a very worthwhile creation with occasional stand-out moments.	32/50
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The Scorpion

John Borycheski



Description

Imaginary, desert course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 5, from fairway.

Concept

Rocky desert with some manmade water features, green fairways and some scary water features. A welcome break from the archetypal sand-strewn desert courses. There's little as regards atmosphere, thanks to the barren stretch of landscape and panorama, and the hole design is often a bit of a mess; certainly a departure from the straightaway style normally associated with desert courses. My reckoning is that The Scorpion lacks a distinct focus on the part of the designer, and the result has quite a few

deficiencies. 4/10

Appearance

The lushly-planted desert rocks are a splendour, and it's a crying shame that we couldn't see an equal standard of planting waterside and in the expansive sandy waste areas. There's some odd uses of elevations, though, not least a ridiculous plateau green and some massive and atypical drop-offs. For once, this is a course that might benefit from being a little bit *more* flat. Possibly the daftest visual oddity is the horrendous clash between the grass textures and the thin band of yellowing wild rough, which just makes it look like a road painter has had some spare time on his hands and done a golf course. 4/10

Playability

Some serious problems here. Blind shots profligate, not just off the tee, and because the desert is marked a hazard, there will inevitably be the frustration in losing strokes. Bunkers are altogether too carefully placed, and the course is less risk/reward than an exercise in working out how to keep your ball safe. 3/10

Challenge

The battle to hit the fairways will cost plenty of strokes, and the rough is virtually inescapable without hitting the desert hazard. The greens will cost too with their whopping gradients and horrendous pin positions. There's too many side-elevation shots, and birdies are nigh-on impossible down the back straight. 4/10

Technical

Steel trees dominate the desert and mean stray shots are inevitably punished: there are no lucky bounces here. Texture and elevation use is at times atypical and other times just silly. Some good planting – at least from a distance – is the saving grace, but I'd like to see much more work on the course's gameplay. 3/10

Overall	A seriously over-rated course. Looking old, difficult, Mod-unfriendly, and horrible without a Top Cam. Not the worst by far, but far from the best.	18/50
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The Shrew

John Borycheski



Description

Fictional, dunes course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, from (near) fairway.

Concept

Some designers will build a course anywhere! The Shrew perches on little more than some rough scrubland, and is all the more appealing for it. Reminiscent of The Vintage and Prairie Dog in equal quantity, it packs some well-hazarded, twisty holes among the rolling landscape and deep grass. Individual holes are outstanding, and it's easy – perhaps more so than with any other course – to feel part of cowboy country. Technical problems have held up the full release of this course, but they go un-

noticed, thanks to the absorbing atmosphere and intelligent golf, targeted more at a municipal than a tournament standard of play. 9/10

Appearance

The textures used are well-detailed, but they may prove to be something of an acquired taste, thanks to a fair amount of speckling and an odd colour palette. Likewise, the panorama is impressive, but occasionally doesn't match up with the plot. Elsewhere, there's impressive hazard creation and some sound, if perhaps overblown, planting. The overall effect is favourable rather than off-putting, though; there's no shortage of impressive views, particularly around the clubhouse. 8/10

Playability

Intricate fairway shapes, and several opportunities to 'blast one' off the tee, are sure to keep players involved. The Shrew would be a great matchplay course, particularly with its prudent hazard placement and well-judged risk shots. Perhaps some sound planting would be the final step towards making this a finished article. 8/10

Challenge

The Shrew is short on length, and frankly short on challenge too. One driveable Par 4 would be an acceptable gimmick, but to have two, both easy, is a misjudgement. The greens are reasonably Mod-friendly and while they are never flat, are extremely conducive to sinking putts up to twenty feet. Even the deep rough – which should surely be a hallmark of the course – does not bring itself into play often enough, and when it does it offers an easy escape. 4/10

Technical

There are some ongoing texture issues with this course, which is not helping what should otherwise be a very fine release. Certainly very few flaws are evident from a quick glance or a casual round, and certain areas – texture blending and planting especially – stand up very well even upon close inspection. Certainly more hit than miss. 7/10

Overall	Always nice to see something just that little bit off the radar. The Shrew keeps up a fine tradition of courses with something new and unexpected in the visual department. And the golf's not bad, either.	36/50
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The Springs at Radium Resort

Kyle Ostermann



Description

Real, mountain course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

Radium Resort may well be difficult to credit as a genuine course. The huge elevations and audacious hole design certainly appear to be the stuff of fantasy. But the course really exists, and – even if it is a little less extreme than this version – is very much a mountainous course. The holes run heavily on dog-legs and huge, deep hazards, but fit well together and rarely get repetitive. There is also a refreshing feel of originality in these holes, which are derivative of little and beholden to no other inspiration. 8/10

Appearance

A beautiful panorama heralds great things on this course, and there's plenty of vibrant colour. But they are really minor highlights in course which runs heavy on clones and tiling. Even the dynamic views can't disguise the slightly cartoony nature of the visuals and the hideously inappropriate yellow rough. 4/10

Playability

All courses with elevations such as this offer plenty of thrills, albeit cheap ones (if you'll excuse the expression), but you might have less fun with greens that prove tricky to hold, and the ultimate nightmare awaits in the form of a few unplayable lies – a combination of the landscape and the sheer-walled hazards. 6/10

Challenge

The greens are really beyond the pale, and wouldn't be welcomed by anyone on challenging settings. Thankfully, the course is incredibly short, the Par 5s eminently reachable. The balance of challenges just doesn't add up in any shape or form, though. 4/10

Technical

Apart from the horrible yellows, there's nothing done truly badly here. A few hasty elevations may raise eyebrows as to whether this course has been authentically duplicated, but it's unlikely to hold a place on many tournament rotas, so lack of authenticity should bother too many. 5/10

Overall	A fun and rollicking round of golf. Not always bang-on with the visuals, but sufficiently enjoyable and atmospheric to merit a round.	27/50
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The Stonebriar

Todd Anderson



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, estate course	1 st hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Convincingly part of the Florida location intended.		
Conditions		
S*/S* is probably wise.		

Concept

An impressive, if sometimes imperfect, course, The Stonebriar has been nicely visualised by its designer with a range of target-driven holes, and the influences from the likes of Sawgrass and Bay Hill are very apparent. The occasional silliness or flaw is forgivable down the lovely gargantuan finishing hole, which is a worthy finish. 7/10

Appearance

Adequate planting at tree level does little to disguise the hastiness of the bunkers and water features, and the deep green texture set is perhaps a bit anomalous and amateurishly blended. But the mesh-handling is the worst – very poor at many points with folds and extrusion marks nearly all the way around. 4/10

Playability

Despite the many flaws, I really like playing the Stonebriar – the holes are presented well and with some clear intent from the designer, and there's little by way of blind shots or boredom. Critically, though, when the technical flaws start impacting on your game, it's time to seek out something else. 6/10

Challenge

The greens are most definitely not of a standard that plays quickly, and some of the water is pushed up problematically close to fairways. On the flipside, the rough is escapable, and the short course length gives several shots at birdies, or better. It's a bit of an extreme balance, and you wouldn't want it in your tournament rotation, but it works well enough. 7/10

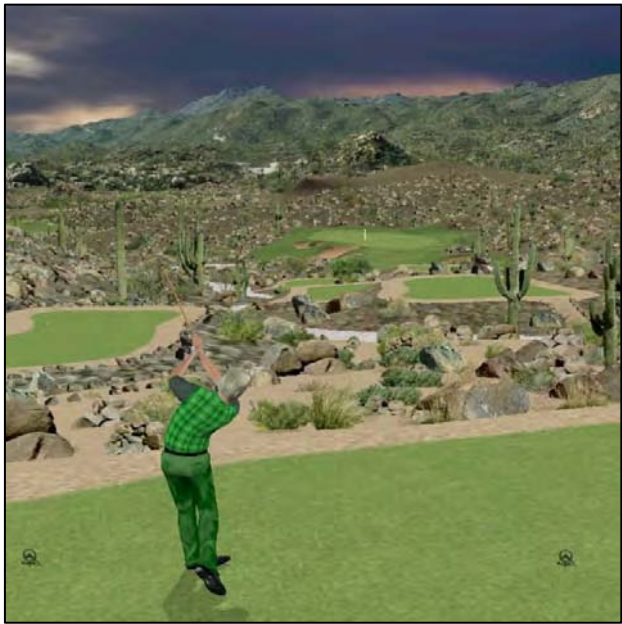
Technical

The big puzzle for me is why, after several incarnations, The Stonebriar still retains such poor flaws in the handling of the surface. Surely, despite all the great intentions and visual acuity, this should have been remedied by now? It's a fairly basic and unforgiveable error, which can only be cause for a low score. 3/10

Overall	Not the best pieced-together course, but the designer has conveyed the imaginings of fun golf well with limited resource.	27/50
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The Stone Canyon Country Club

Microsoft



Description

Real, canyon course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

The rockiest of all desert courses features immaculately designed holes, making maximum, clever use of natural elevations and hazarding. There really is a perfect blend here, from the knockout Par 3s to the lengthy and strategic Par 5s, and everything in between. It's been brought to life effectively, stretching the Microsoft design norms to some extent and retains an offbeat appeal. If you're looking to spend a little cash, you could do far worse than this. 9/10

Appearance

Large numbers of rocks have been used, and although some attempt has clearly been taken to avoid cloning, the occasional duplicate is still visible. Elsewhere, though, there's fine use of elevations to produce some unusual effects, a less glaring than normal texture set, and a dramatic panorama to round off the visuals nicely. 8/10

Playability

There are some subtle but very clever fairway shapes here, and a lot of intelligent merit, unusually for a desert course. When you combine this with the elevations use and the trademark Par 3s, there's a stimulating and constantly engaging round of golf on offer. This is definitely one to add to your tournament rotation. 9/10

Challenge

Suffering heavily from Real Course syndrome, Stone Canyon has not brought much of its challenge to the Links game. The desert is more scenic than penal, and the designer has not relied heavily on hazards. Contrary to appearances, the greens are not at all difficult to hit, and birdie putts will be inevitably forthcoming. 3/10

Technical

I have to say I'm quite impressed with this step up in terms of both vision and visuals. Yes, today's APCD legends would put any Microsoft course to shame, but Stone Canyon is certainly one of the most ambitious and least-flawed releases out there, and deserves a high mark. 9/10

Overall	A very impressive desert-style course, and certainly one of the best of the genre out there. One of the best from MS, too.	38/50
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The Vintage at Hunter Valley

Peter Gemmill



Description

Real, heathland course

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 3, on green.

Concept

Now this is real Aussie golf! Amid uncompromising bushland, The Vintage cuts 18 swaggering and dynamic holes. It's short, without sacrificing length or difficulty, dynamic – changing from bush, to grassy, and back again – and utterly absorbing. The APCD conversion is wonderful, with Peter's typical array of custom planting and picture perfect moments from start through to finish. This is right up there with Wagga Wagga. 10/10

Appearance

I guarantee you'll stand on the first tee and just think "wow". The ambience that has been created is brand new and utterly unique. The combination of a convincing scrubland, arduously-created planting, and realistic use of elevations makes this one of the most panoramic courses available. And speaking of 'panorama'...well, you can see for yourself. Just the fact that one or two textures look pixelated – most notably the dry grass – catches the eye and holds back the course. 9/10

Playability

The other good reason to stand on the first tee is the outstanding introduction to the kind of thinking that is required around this course. It's not restrictive by any means, merely a good reason to be creative and look beyond the usual. There's a nice ambience, helped by good sound (a feature I've noticed lacking in many courses recently), but sadly the slightly-longer-than-you-would-like rendering times don't do the course any favours. But at 180MB, I suppose that's only to be expected. 8/10

Challenge

Despite several unprepossessing holes, this course holds the ability to punish. Clever use of trees and streams limit a player's ambition, and few holes offer an 'easy' birdie. Oddly, the back nine plays much easier than the opening half, featuring as it does two short Par 4s. 9/10

Technical

Peter's courses are the largest file sizes on the market, which is good indication enough of the amount of work put in. The sheer amount of customisation is beautiful: panorama, planting, clubhouse – it's easy to go on. Textures are something of a weak link – there's at least one poor choice here, plus some blends that are either too hazy or too sharp. Nearly, but not quite, the perfection which the designer is seeking to attain. 9/10

Overall	A hugely impressive course with spectacular views and great playability in equal measure. Play this one when you're bored of Sawgrass.	45/50
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The West Banks Golf & Country Club

Dean Remillard



Description

Fictional, lakeside course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

A whopping filesize for one of the earliest APCD courses, The West Banks is a surprisingly civilized creation. It starts erratically with some very overblown holes, but given time the designer's style settles into something more believable. The huge greens make a terrific trademark and remove some of the target-golf emphasis. Out of its depth in today's market for premium courses, this still makes a passable piece of nostalgia. 4/10

Appearance

Despite the designer's clear clone-avoidance in planting an excellent variety of trees, there are far too many rudimentary problems here. The mesh is pulled about too often, and the textures are a ghastly clash. Although they have been covered up to some extent, there are still remnants of hasty extrusions. Sadly, a course aging far quicker than it should. 2/10

Playability

The stiff opening wins absolutely no fans – there's too much cynical use of water, and an unrealistic expectation of any golfer playing on halfway-challenging settings. But, once you settle into it, there's a halfway-decent round of golf to be had here, with some accessible approaches. You're not excessively pushed to gamble, though, and the round finishes as surprisingly unstimulating. 4/10

Challenge

Surprisingly, there's not a bad challenge to be had at West Banks at all. It's all a bit backwards in that it starts tricky and finishes somewhat easier, but the greens are reasonably playable, and there must have been significant playtesting because – despite the elaborate planting and textures – there are very few impossible lies. Sure, it'll never make it as a tournament host, but a casual player might be pleasantly surprised with the course as a warm-up. 6/10

Technical

It's impossible not to give credit for the rich variety that marks this course out, and in terms of meticulousness it must have been among the first to be picked over in such detail. While there are still a few ugly errors, the limited techniques available at the time make this very much the forerunner of many modern creations. 4/10

Overall	A worthwhile course, somewhat underwhelming and lacking in the visuals, but worth a try-out for its authentic playing style.	20/50
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The Whipple Club

Michael Hamilton



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, parkland course	1 st hole, Par 4	71
Location		
Possibly part of Florida, in the mould of the designer's other courses.		
Conditions		
S*/M* is about the limit.		

Concept

Michael Hamilton's previous courses have been clean affairs and generally home to some solid golf, but it appears The Whipple Club has some way to go to match that standard. The overwhelming impression is of squiggly shapes, which are neither convincing nor conducive to realism, and much of the golf before the closing stretch is not sufficiently ordinary to be believable, but not outrageous enough to be memorable. The location is largely a mystery. 3/10

Appearance

There are one or two pleasing features in the planting, but the general detractor is from the over-complex shapes and general rough-and-ready flat appearance to the course. I would like some investment in textures and blends before being able to rate this any more highly. 4/10

Playability

Unremarkable golf on the whole, and all too easy to cruise round these gentle designs without being overly troubled, even by the major hazards of bunkers and rough. The absence of hole previews is of little help when the direction of a few holes is completely unclear. It's unobjectionable for the large part, but would you play it regularly? 5/10

Challenge

With very little standing in between most tees and greens, it's a bit of a birdie-grab at the Whipple Club. The stock rough doesn't vary and the planting lacks sufficient density to trap in more than a few errant drives. With easily-reachable Par 5s, don't be surprised to be shooting in the low 60s. 3/10

Technical

It pains me to describe a course as bland, because a lot of designers put heart and soul into creating something original, but there is little to remember at The Whipple Club beyond some rather silly shaping and the occasional opportunity to make a crowd-pleasing shot. It's really little more than a scratchpad as it stands. 3/10

Overall	Distinctly unfinished – might be worth a bit more time once some more polish has been applied.	18/50
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The World Special Edition

Jens Andersen



Description

Fictional, mountain course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 5, approach.

Concept

This mountainous course threads between dense and unwelcoming forest areas on some frightening-looking elevations. In truth it's a flight of fancy to some extent, but some novel hole designs help to make for an engaging round. The ideas peter out to some extent in the second half, but the course as whole gives a passable impression of being set in the Swiss or Austrian Alps. 6/10

Appearance

To be honest, this is quite crude in points. The elevations haven't been given much attention and are frequently unrealistic; the colours clash to some extent; and the planting looks OK at a distance but shocking close-up. To be fair, planting massive forests like this is an arduous task, but more should have been made of it. The hazards need more careful touch around the edges; some better blends and some planting are crying out to be used. 4/10

Playability

At its simplest level, this is an enjoyable course. A variety of hole designs encourage you to use all the clubs in your bag, and there's a good line in risk/reward on many holes, particularly if you hit the forest. It's possible that the hole length and some tight fairways might turn off those who play with the advanced swing types, and the garishness of the forest floor and the panorama hardly help you enjoy a good round. 6/10

Challenge

Due to a lot of unexpected flat fairway lies, this course comes out rather easy. The Par 5s yield eagles all too effortlessly, and although some greens provide a stiff putting test, others are barely a concern. A lack of hazarding around fairways and greens is another factor, and it should be possible for many players to shoot rounds in the low 60s, even with a couple of splashdowns in the many lakes. 3/10

Technical

Certainly more work is required here. Custom textures and blends are almost a pre-requisite on modern courses, and the planting needs refining. The elevations need smoothing out, and the bunkers need incorporating into the course, both visually and for golfing purposes. Thankfully, not many of these flaws impact directly on play, but they make for an untidy and unappealing course. 2/10

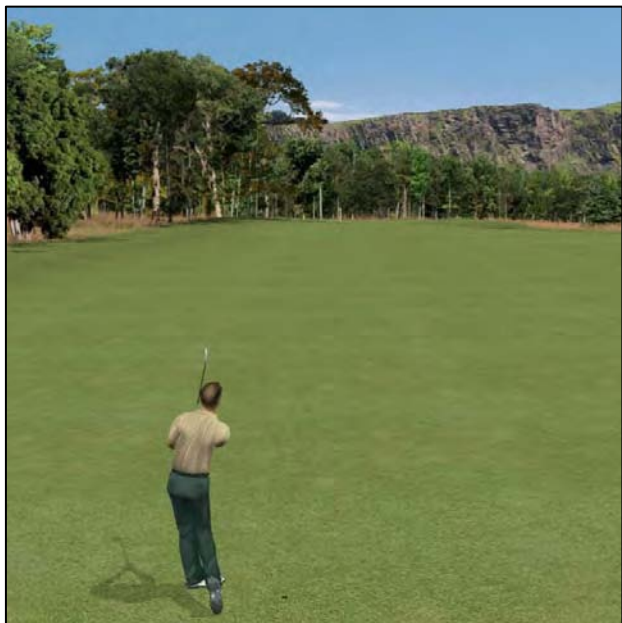
Overall

A passable attempt at playing up and down a forested mountain. Undeniably poor in the execution, but exciting and playable golf nevertheless.

21/50

Thornhill Links

Stewart Parker



wish. 6/10

Description

Real, heathland course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Thornhill defies the Scottish stereotype to a certain extent. Not a links course in any meaningful sense of the word, it sometimes feels more like Shinnecock Hills or Spyglass Hill, such are the demands on accurate play – and the punishments if you don't succeed. It's peculiarly unmemorable and difficult to stick with, despite some reasonable local-course hole lengths, and it could be that the uncompromising heathland grass and overly-tricky bunkers will take their toll more than the casual player would

Appearance

The planting is done particularly well, with some neat customisation, and the flattish landscape is immaculately sculpted and textured. The panorama is impressive, but not completely well-fitted, and some little things – such as the odd-looking water hazards – just didn't fit. It's a functional-looking course more than a pretty one; I do think it unlikely that many people will re-visit to take screenshots. 7/10

Playability

I've been a big fan of many of Stewart's courses; Thornhill, however, just lacked in-depth appeal. The Par 3s lacked almost any distinguishing feature, and too many of the long holes relied on not getting mired down in the ever-present long grass. The whole thing, while not without merit, was a slog up to the interesting closing stretch. 5/10

Challenge

Despite weighing in at well under 7000 yards, Thornhill is really tough. The deep grass and trees are arduous to escape, and OB and water is a menace more often than you might expect. Greens are annoyingly difficult to find, and expect to play a lot of approach from tricky lies. The (fictional) middle tees are sufficiently far back as to make your round a misery. 4/10

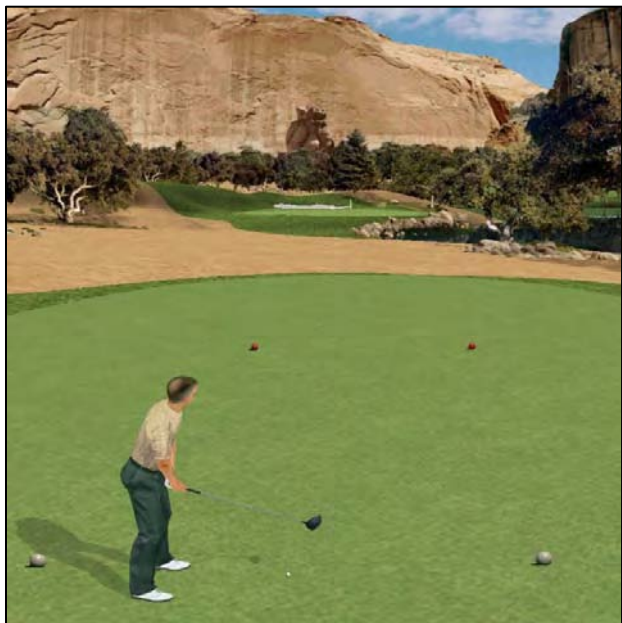
Technical

Thornhill is now on its third generation, and Stewart has done very well to make a good-looking set of 18 from something that, by his own admission, was nearly unplayable. I can't say I see the appeal of the course itself, but that is through no fault of the designer. 9/10

Overall	One of Scotland's least archetypal courses. Flat, target-oriented, merciless, and very tricky indeed.	31/50
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Three Canyons

Microsoft



Description

Fictional, short course.

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Although this is probably Microsoft's most coherent attempt at a non-real course, it throws up many questions: why would a Par 3 course exist in the middle of the desert? What on Earth is all this water doing in the desert? Why would anyone create such an amazing panorama to go with these 18 fairly uninspired holes? It's unenthralling stuff, to say the least, far too repetitive, and needs an injection of excitement in order to pass itself off as a valid player-worthy course. 3/10

Appearance

There is a certain incongruity in seeing the bright green fairways in contrast to the desert sand. Sometimes it works; on this course it certainly doesn't. In addition, the course is surely over planted, some planting – especially of the big rocks – is floating, and at least one water feature has been terribly extruded. The saving grace, and have no doubt it is a big one, is the terrific dramatic panorama. Without it, the course would be terrible. With it, the course is just about playable. Amazing how much difference a background can make. 5/10

Playability

With Par 3 courses, designers really have the license to exercise their imagination and landscaping abilities to an extent which would be unplayable on a full-length course. Why oh why, then, have Microsoft not done this? It's dreadfully monotonous; lacking variety in length and relies almost entirely on the nice Par 4s to rescue you from slumber. Sadly this means that there are only four worthwhile holes on the course. Which isn't enough. 3/10

Challenge

Three Canyons is reasonably well pitched. Most green gradients have been created with a simple tilt, which lacks imagination but makes for a stiff putting test. The hazards do not come into play much, though, which makes birdies possible if unlikely. The Par 4s should help you to pick up strokes in order to challenge par, but it would be nice to have more Par 3s that it was possible to score on. 6/10

Technical

There are one or two very disappointing features, not least the way the water features and elevations have been handled. It would be preferable to have a browner, dryer set of grass textures too. But let's not overlook some good (if over-enthusiastic) planting, of both trees and rocks, and of course that sumptuous panorama. 6/10

Overall

A par 3 course which promises a lot and, for the most part, fails to deliver. A lack of variety and some glaring problems emphasise Microsoft's weakness with fictional courses.

23/50

Three Horseshoes

Robert A Hurst



Description

Fictional, forest course

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 4, from rough.

Concept

This is a delightfully unpretentious little woodland course, nestling in gently rolling terrain. It's immaculately conceived and cleverly designed in places: split fairways and water hazards work in impressive conjunction. From the subtly hard tests that open the course, to the monster Par 5 that closes it, there just needs to be a little more variation in hole lengths in order to make it perfect. 9/10

Appearance

Absolutely flawless. Planting at all levels is heart-stoppingly beautiful and the textures are superbly chosen and blended together. The bunkers have clearly had hours lavished on them, as have the rolling fairways. The water texture is unique, pale blue and very realistic: you get the impression of playing in an unpolluted golfing utopia. 10/10

Playability

Several holes are utterly unique, brilliantly pitched for risk/reward and are worth playing the course for on their own. Others can become a little frustrating, thanks to some hard-to-hit, and even-harder-to-putt-on greens. The average hole length might not be suitable for short hitters, either. You also get the feeling that you're being artificially pushed back from one too many tees. But, for the majority of us, the course is brilliantly engaging and only improves when you come back a second and third time. 7/10

Challenge

Three Horseshoes will push you for par. Bunkers are well placed, greens are tightly sloped, and water hazards are annoyingly easy to hit. There are quite a few restraints on the shots you can play, thanks to the towering trees. To the designer's credit, it never becomes unfair, but it can be a strain trying to shoot par at times, particularly on the longer holes. Thankfully, there are some birdie opportunities along the way – thank heavens for Par 3s! 7/10

Technical

No faults were obvious with this course. The planting puts it firmly into the elite group, the textures are brilliantly chosen and rendered, and the imagination that's gone into the course is plain for all to see. Flawless and brilliant both. 10/10

Overall	A great woodland test, with the emphasis firmly on 'test'. Worth playing for the brilliant views and to admire the low-level planting when you're in the deep rough. Sadly, the latter happens all too frequently.	43/50
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Thunderbird Lakes Golf and Resort

Greg Barano



Description

Fictional, parkland course.

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

This course is really convincing in parts, and exudes a parkland course at altitude very nicely. Sadly, there are just too many deficiencies elsewhere, not least a very forgettable series of holes just after the turn. The trademark 670-yard 9th hole works surprisingly well, but to have two other holes over 600 yards smacks of sadism. Plus the technical problems and apparent lack of planning make for some serious gameplay issues. 3/10

Appearance

Problematic in so many places. While the rough textures are blended well, there is a general absence of subtlety and a lot too much surface contrast elsewhere. Clones crop up all too often, and indeed the planting is of a fairly low standard right across the course. There's little to look at and any views that might approach the impressive are negated by the elevations or – too frequently – hidden behind trees. 2/10

Playability

It unlikely you'll preserve much patience with Thunderbird Lakes. It's frustratingly hard, not least on the greens, and the course length is off-putting. Too much deep rough means a lot of escape shots, and the hazards don't really provoke fear due to some odd placement. Worst, there is little call for strategy: most of the holes are simply straight-ahead. 3/10

Challenge

Damn, damn hard. My birdie-free test round is testament to that. The length, the rough texture properties, and the call for perfect placement off the tee are all contributing factors, but the worst by far is the awful greens. Completely Mod-inappropriate, they ramp up wildly, and many pin positions are not just difficult but nearly impossible. It's a massive dampener because even if you do hit the greens in regulation, there's little chance of birdie. 3/10

Technical

With a scattergun approach to planting, misuse of elevations, some mesh folds and some clumsy 3D work, it's clear there's a lot to be desired here. There are moderate pluses: a nice selection of offbeat objects and a good clubhouse among them, but it wasn't necessary to tinker so much with the rough texture settings, or to use an over-worked stock panorama. Some of the texture work is lovely, but this alone cannot hold up a course. 2/10

Overall	Unfortunately lacking in many departments and looking frankly a bit amateurish. A couple of stand-out moments do not maketh the course	<i>13/50</i>
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Thunder Golf Club

Mike Nicely



Description

Real, marshland course

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

One of those very claustrophobic creations, with trees dense and tight on all sides, Thunder Golf Club ups the ante by throwing in water – often very well-camouflaged water – on every single hole and some damn fine hole design. It's quite a spooky, enclosed creation, very difficult at times, but the inclusion of so much water does make it feel very artificial: the hazards could easily have been eased off or turned into damp, heavy rough to add to the course's variety. The dense tree surround tends to rob it of a bit of

location, too. 7/10

Appearance

Incredibly lush, dark textures really convey the forest-floor setting, and the planting at all levels is dense and varied. The water hazards have been well-textured and blended with plenty of reeds around the edges. It's only a slightly cramped feel that occasionally makes the course look cluttered and confusing; otherwise this is a novel and interesting work of APCD art. 9/10

Playability

Other than a few blind tee shots, you are assured of a rip-roaring round of golf at Thunder GC. It makes constant demands on premium positioning and accuracy, which can be somewhat wearing, but has a legion of challenges of which it's likely you'll not get easily bored. An excellent matchplay venue. 8/10

Challenge

Plenty of water, and lots of oblique lies, don't give you cause for a lot of optimism, and indeed it's likely that the entire round will be one frustrating struggle for Par. In fairness to the designer, it's actually a very accessible course, but seeing potential birdie chances blown up by lying right behind a tree or by hitting water that is literally feet from the green can be very demoralising. Plenty of patience required here. 7/10

Technical

Mike's designs have stood out for each having a distinct location and atmosphere, and I believe he is right up there with the best in the skill of creating a good environment. Thunder GC is no exception and has the added bonus of being a terrific test of pinpoint golf to boot. Only a handful of impenetrable trees got in the way. 9/10

Overall	A marvellously atmospheric course, exuding damp difficult conditions and living up to them with ambitious hole designs.	40/50
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Tiger Cats Forest Preserve

Paul Dalglish



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

It's hard to take fondly to Tiger Cats. It's something of a cynical layout, designed at pushing scores high and rewarding only the clinically accurate. There's nothing obviously to fault from hole to hole, but over the course of a round you get the impression that the course is being very oppressive in its use of punishing rough and hazards. There's no better example of this than the monstrous 17th, which can leave you with anything up to a 250-yard approach to an island green. The designer's

excesses would be best dealt elsewhere. 5/10

Appearance

The yellowing texture set is pleasing, and there's a good variety of planting at both undergrowth and forest canopy levels. The panorama is convincing and doesn't over-shadow the wooded foreground. Just a few of the little things need attention: the barren water features, the blurry bunker lips and the occasional sharp blend gradient. Competent, but you get the feeling that the designer needs to stretch himself as far as visuals are concerned. 7/10

Playability

I found this very hard work. It's difficult to hit fairways and greens and depressing having to constantly rely on your recovery game. The insistent hazarding is demoralising, and very rarely through the entire round do you get the opportunity to hit the shots you really want to hit. 3/10

Challenge

Dropped shots are inevitable, and when you do find yourself with a shot at birdie it might well be at a near-impossible pin. A green in regulation is the only way to guarantee a good chance at par. It's hard work, if you hadn't guessed as much already, probably a bit too much for most. 5/10

Technical

While Paul Dalglish has yet again shown a mastery of using the APCD for effective and novel visuals, I feel he has (not for the first time) let himself down with some cynical and over-bearing course design. I would like to see a steadier hand on the throttle for his next release. 6/10

Overall	Some punishing golf. Satisfactory in passing, but don't try to be competitive unless your snap's perfectly on the money.	26/50
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Tillicum Island Golf Club

Jack Hartt & Matt McIntosh



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, ocean course	3 rd hole, Par 5	72
Location		
Washington State		
Conditions		
Plays OK on F*/F*, but M*/M* + Windy would suit this ocean course better.		

Concept

The classic Tillicum Island design was of glorious invention set on a small island in Puget Sound, and won over hundreds of fans with its creativity, ballsiness and pretty much the best set of Par 3s in the business. Matt's restrained update has restricted itself to easing off a few of the more unplayable greens and inserting a few superlative high-res textures (and, it has to be said, a few ordinary ones too). Tillicum remains very much the treat it always was. 10/10

Appearance

With the extrusion marks replaced by tidy blends, and much of the absurdities around the coast stripped out, Tillicum is much tidier. The central grass textures are unremarkable, but the beaches and rocks look fantastic, and the planting really echoes the sparseness of the island environment. The clashes between update and original are still apparent around the sea and panorama, but the visuals are much improved for all that. 9/10

Playability

This is a course designed specifically to wow the golfer, and it certainly fulfils its objective. Risk/reward opportunities abound, there is a huge degree of careful shotmaking required, and there's a host of brilliant views along the way. It's all held together by excellent and informative hole previews and the deceptive slow start is a brilliant conceit to draw you in to the excellent uses of the island's coast. The gargantuan Par 5s are the only aspect I would be happier without. 9/10

Challenge

With punishing rough cropping up in the unlikeliest of places, and hazards crafted out of whole cloth by using the sea, rocks, and the coastal grasses, Tillicum will most definitely keep you on your feet. Some intricate greening will make a big difference to your score, even in the more gentle update. Disappointingly, there is a notably easier stretch down the back nine. 7/10

Technical

Perhaps the best compliment is that – without a direct reference to the original – the update is virtually unnoticeable. The original Tillicum was masterpiece enough, and Matt has had the restraint to back off and keep alterations and visual changes very subtle. It's a great illustration of the meeting of the old and the new. 8/10

Overall	One of the classic fictional representations; this should be considered a must-try simply for some spectacular short holes. Many go back time and time again, though.	43/50
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Tillicum Island Putting Course

Jack Hartt



Description

Fictional, short course

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Jack Hartt has an excellent mastery of putting courses, and this is not just any putting course. Nope: it's a 1/10 scaled-down model of its older brother. It's mostly been carefully re-landscaped to allow your tee shots to end within fighting distance of the flag, and has included a few new tricks, such as the water-jump on the 14th. Sadly, the graphics haven't quite scaled down as well as the golf, and sometimes look a bit coarse. 8/10

Appearance

As much has been done well with the scaling-down, it's easy to find fault. Some of the trees look blocky and out-of focus, and the water and coastline don't look half as good as in the big version. If you treat it purely as a putting course, though, it's acceptable without being outstanding. 6/10

Playability

While this is an entertaining diversion for a while, it's hardly likely to be a course that you return to time and again. The rough and bunkers are too challenging to escape with a putter, particularly when close to the pin, and the rolling elevations (while designed for your benefit) can sometimes make tee shots a bit of a lottery. It's good stuff, as far as short courses go, but not without its attendant frustrations. 7/10

Challenge

The longer holes (originally Par 5s) are very difficult to do in three, but some of the shorter holes succumb nicely. Obviously the course cannot be judged by the same standards as a full-size track, but as a test of putting it's satisfactory, if perhaps just a little bit over-complex. 6/10

Technical

You have to admire the perseverance that would incite someone to spend additional hours shrinking down one of his own courses. Some areas could use a tidy up, and the planting would ideally be completely revisited to put things in scale. But the design of the elevations is very clever, in the way it facilitates long putts, and the scale of the course is surprisingly good. 8/10

Overall

An entertaining diversion from 'real' golf, and even a place to hone up on reading breaks. It's not perfect but, surprisingly, nor is it fundamentally flawed.

35/50

Timberlands

Peter Gemmill



Description

Imaginary, forest course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Lushly planted and target-oriented, Timberlands ploughs its way through mid-density forest and elevations. There are a whole host of rather daft contrivances which make the golf difficult and help you lose touch with the real world. As a result, the course often gets bogged down amid a confusing set of styles. You often feel that you're playing through a market garden, such is the distracting nature of the flowerbeds. It's not that the course lacks coherence, but it's less a round of golf than a Kenneth

Graeme novel. 6/10

Appearance

Peter Gemmill really knows how to push the boat out with custom planting, and the range of wild flowers planted around just about every tee are nothing short of stunning. The textures are an acquired taste, but actually suit the course environs very neatly. In truth, there's magnificent views to be had on every hole, and very little that could be faulted. 10/10

Playability

The golfing aspects to this course are what really catapults it into fantasy territory. There's very little natural about the way the course winds around the woodland, and the hazarding is calculated to punish. It's very out of character with what is intended to be Australian golf, and while it's not totally frustrating, you find yourself crying out for just one or two straightforward holes. 6/10

Challenge

If the fairways were narrower, the course would be virtually unplayable. Thankfully, they're wide and accommodating, and there's actually little by way of punishing rough. Sadly, the same could not be said of the hazards (sand *and* water), and some nasty pin positions. It's tough golf; definitely not for tournament play. 6/10

Technical

The only APCD flaw you could possibly pick up on here, is the possible need for texture change. The 'speckly' look isn't exactly easy on the eye. It might be argued that the adding of elevations in somewhat unnatural locations and gradients is also a downside, but remembering the beautiful planting and the designer's attention to detail means this course comes out terribly well. 9/10

Overall	A slightly surreal addition to your Links collection. Best not to tackle the course head on: if you do, make sure it's under perfect conditions.	37/50
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Tish Island

Steve Mihelarakis



Description

Fictional, dunes course

Screenshot

13th hole, Par 4, approach.

Concept

A tropical beach course with a network of lakes to trip you up, Tish Island is – first and foremost – a stern golfing challenge. Despite the flatness of the terrain, shots have a tendency to spray off in unexpected directions and you'll be in and out of bunkers all the way up to the brutal 18th. It's not always a convincing environment, but as a tough but fair golf course it succeeds magnificently. 8/10

Appearance

Tish Island has been lavishly put together with neat seam blends and a good choice of textures. The low-level grass planting is widespread and looks immaculate. Sadly, I'm not sure the same can be said of the trees: they're a bit too random in design and too neatly lined up. Good hazard work has its merits. 9/10

Playability

The challenge of this course presents the player with several frustrations. The hazard count is high, and the greens very testing, almost to the point of unfairness. Some of the sound is repetitive, although I've encountered a lot worse. If you can cope with pressure and hazard play, then Tish Island should be a riot. If you're looking for an undemanding round of golf, then there are plenty of good alternatives. 7/10

Challenge

I believe that, barring flukes, the final hole may be entirely impossible to score par on, let alone lower. As you spray balls all around the front nine, I suspect that I might find agreement. Even when you do hit greens, then you're left with a virtually unreadable putt. To the designer's credit, the course is not unfair, but it ain't half hard. Level par would be a cracking score around here. 5/10

Technical

I would be tempted to tidy up the high-level planting and study some more appropriate vegetation for sand dunes, but otherwise there's nary a fault to be found. The textures and blends are immaculate, and the bunkers deserve mention, as they are technical competent despite the large number. 9/10

Overall	A challenging but realistic tropical course. In this respect it's very unusual, so should be on everyone's play-list.	38/50
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Torres Del Paine

Hugh Campbell



Description

Imaginary, mountain course.

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

If you've ever wanted to play golf in a cartoon, then Torres del Paine is the nearest place you'll get! Rounded pinnacles of rock tower over crystal-blue water and masses of colourful flowerbeds. You half-expect Sonic the Hedgehog to roll into view at any point. In truth it's all a bit silly and amateurish and would certainly benefit from a bit more fine-tuning. Some entertaining hole designs make for a surreal and gimmicked-up round of golf: it's likely to divide people into those that love the course and those

that loathe it. 6/10

Appearance

Generally, not good. The landscape is littered with poor extrusions and the bunkers look dreadful. The English-country panorama is laughably unsuitable, and the textures are bizarrely matched (I'm sure I found myself playing off leopard-skin at one point). The planting has clearly been the designer's focus and, to be fair, it is carried off with aplomb and style, saving the course from disgrace. 3/10

Playability

There are quite a few frustrations on this course. Impossible lies are sadly all too common, and you'll find yourself having to play backwards on occasion for a good lie. Blocked views are another gripe and people will have to depend on the Top View on quite a few holes. But you can certainly never say that the course becomes dull or repetitive; there's a decent line in risk/reward; and only the hardest-hearted person wouldn't enjoy booming out drives from the 188-yard high 10th tee! 6/10

Challenge

A lot of the challenge has been artificially created with the many water hazards and the large rock formations which must be negotiated. It's likely that the course's technical flaws will cost you strokes too. The greens are hard work and single putts will be a rarity unless you lay up very close. This is purely target golf, which won't appeal to many golfers in terms of the amount of 'give' in the course (very little). Those playing with advanced swing types might be well advised to steer clear altogether. 4/10

Technical

Lots of work required here, I'm afraid. First job would be to iron out the course and remove any potential for unplayable lies – they are the fastest way to ruin a round. The elevations could do with smartening up and if the designer wants the cartoony look removed, I would suggest some new textures. A new panorama and some more forgiving greens wouldn't hurt, either. 1/10

Overall

A bizarre experience, certainly not to everyone's taste, but possibly worth a visit if you can stand a certain amount of silliness.

20/50

Torrey Pines – South Course

Joe Otto & Chuck Clark



Description

Real, ocean course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

While it has many good points, the overwhelming impression presented by Torrey Pines is of Pebble Beach's little brother. The coastline doesn't have quite the same dramatic impact on the play, nor is the more open style of the course quite as dynamic. That said, there are many easily-engaging holes: the Par 5s in particular are well crafted; and the course's re-working has given the course a brighter feel with more facets of gameplay coming into action. 7/10

Appearance

The re-working of the appearance is a triumph – the layout comes across as a lot less blocky than its prior incarnation, and the course feels lifted by the small changes. The fact remains that the buildings and the low-res textures could easily have been updated, though. 7/10

Playability

This is where the course has really come into its own. The layering of the rough has been superbly done, and the textures edited in a subtle way in which Walnut Grove could only have hoped for. The improved Mod-friendliness gives the course much more shelf life and makes a genuinely viable Open venue. 9/10

Challenge

Length and the lateral elevations as you play across the cliffs make for a stern test still, even despite some impositions being removed. The bunkering is still an effective hazard, and it's easy to see why this course has survived many incarnations of the Links genre, being a genuine challenge in terms of layout and natural environment. 7/10

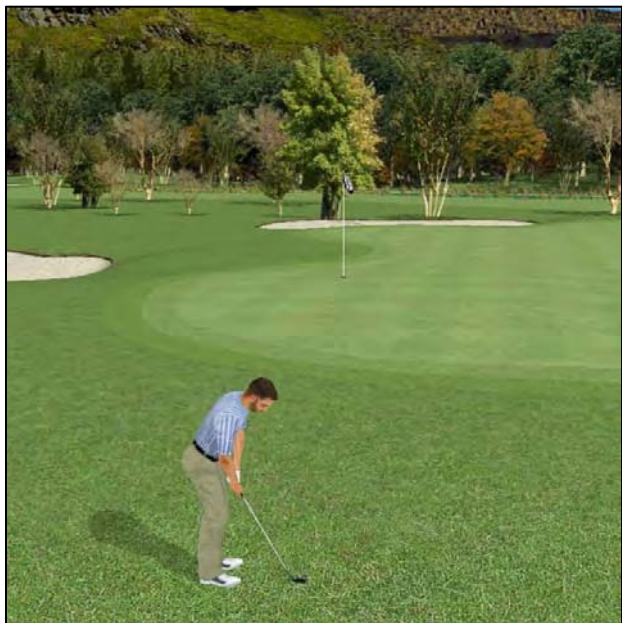
Technical

There's still some age showing in the dull textures and some crammed shapes. But Torrey Pines, thanks to even a subtle upgrading, is holding its own nicely. Best of all is to see the playability and green slopes brought up to modern expectations, affording the course fair game on the harder conditions, as would befit an Open course. 7/10

Overall	An inoffensive and consistently playable round of seaside golf. It might lack drama, but it also lacks any obvious signs of poor quality.	37/50
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Tournament Terrors CC

David Schmelzer



Description

Fictional, woodland course.

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 5, greenside.

Concept

A lost and lonely mesh of ideas, Tournament Terror's biggest problem is the lack of continuity. It takes in a bizarre assortment of styles, and the designer's imagination clearly starts to wilt towards the close. Hole design drifts towards the silly in places, and the designer clearly has had trouble trying to pin down some convincing middle ground. 3/10

Appearance

Planting is decent on the whole, although a few clones are apparent. The shapes are well handled and the textures, thanks to APCD 1.5, look good. Two main flaws, though, are the elevations and the panorama. The elevations have been exceedingly crudely handled upon occasion and really spoil both the look and the playability of the course, whereas the panorama – while luxuriously constructed – is at an overly elevated angle and makes one a bit queasy from some angles. 5/10

Playability

Despite the silly name, Tournament Terrors is surprisingly engaging at points. Target golf is largely the name of the game and strategical options are unfortunately rare, but the combination of good views and an understanding of good golf shot appeal has more or less carried this one through. 5/10

Challenge

With some random hazarding and largely unprotected fairways, Tournament Terrors proves too easy in points. The green elevations are thankfully out of fit with the remainder of the course and are accommodating to putts. Because of the flat fairways, most players will think they can shoot in the mid-60s. This is if they can take on a few ridiculous carries: Pro-Swingers will find the course pretty unfair. 5/10

Technical

The APCD has seen this course through a few hard spots, although the terrain work is urgently in need of some delicate attention. Blends are more or less absent and a good Beta test would remove some clones in planting and approach the issue for low-level planting elsewhere. The overall feeling is of rushed design, particularly given the underwhelming close. 4/10

Overall	Six of one, half a dozen of the other. Not enough special to be really outstanding, too many errors to be really competent.	22/50
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TPC at Deere Run

Gary Allen



Description

Real, woodland course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Remarkably coherent and playable for the small file size, Deere Run has been extensively levelled-off for the Links Mod. It's a slightly rougher and hillier locale than the norm for Championship courses, and – most importantly - it uses those elevations well. The improvements that have been made to the basic layout over the years have turned it into a functional if hardly outstanding tour stop. 5/10

Appearance

There's a reasonable clarity to the textures and planting, although there are quite a few clones in the mix and a woeful lack of low-level grasses and suchlike. The lack of texture blends and the shallow bunkers do not exactly go in the course's favour either, and the panorama looks more British than mid-west American. 4/10

Playability

Peter Jacobsen might have rated Deere Run at 9 out of 10, but for Linksters it might feel a little short. A couple of blind tee shots aside, there's every incentive to be gung-ho with the driver with very little punishment, and the newly-acquired moderation that comes with the course is more overkill than a solution to making the course an effective tournament venue. It's little more than an amiable ramble, and don't be surprised if you find your attention flagging before the final stretch. 5/10

Challenge

Very little deep rough, shallow and escapable bunkers, and ultimately some easy-to-read greens offer very little against the player. Sure, the course is long, but there must be more to it than this. Sensible hitting will take the water out of play, but the waterside hazards may slip up one or two players. 3/10

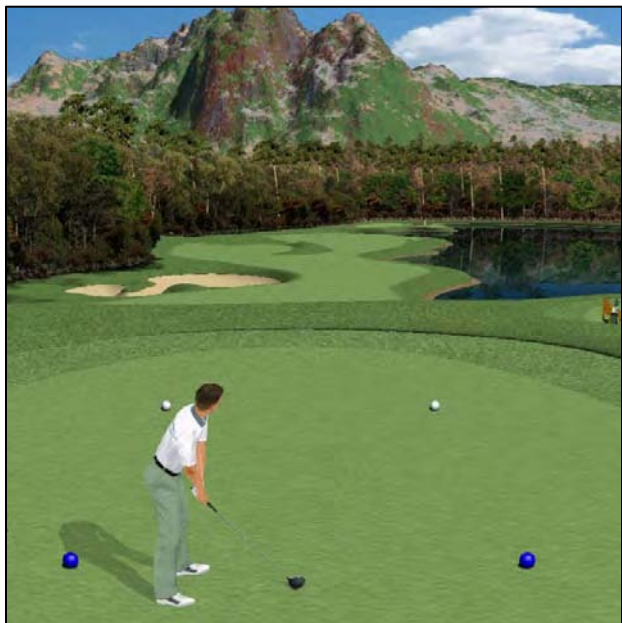
Technical

There's no doubt why this one has received a few work-overs in recent years as Deere Run has established its place on the US Tour. To its designer's credit, it still looks pretty good: the new textures and some sharp planting have stopped it getting too old. But, in the days of hyper-accuracy, it's still a very rough and ready course at heart, 4/10

Overall	A decent course crammed into a fairly tiny filesize. There's only one reason to get it, and non-Season players needn't bother.	21/50
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TPC at Red Forrest Lakes

Gareth Wilkins



Description

Imaginary, lakeside course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

A designers' dream or a players' nightmare? Red Forrest Lakes is a little bit of both as it combines stunning hole concepts with a sadistic line in elevations and hazard positioning. Dense, impenetrable woodland surrounds the course and its surprisingly bare lakes. But you get the feeling you're being pushed rather than pulled in, which is a severe minus against the course. 6/10

Appearance

While elevation work can be used to impress and make spectacular views, used injudiciously it will just irritate. Such is the case at Red Forrest Lakes. The planting is uneven, being too concentrated in the forests and non-existent at ground level. Some poor extrusions mark the tee boxes and some of the textures are somewhat iffy. Only a good panorama saves this from being an average effort, at best. 5/10

Playability

With an emphasis very much on hitting targets, and punishing those that don't, Red Forrest Lakes is not a welcoming course by any means. The thrill of hitting precise targets is more than matched by the frustration of being bundled off fairways and facing gargantuan putts. The Par 5s are enormous, impossible to reach in two, and are frankly quite soulless. As an occasional test of skill this course suffices, but as an enjoyable round of golf it could easily be bettered. 5/10

Challenge

Some of the hazarding is nigh on impossible to escape, and the rough is deceptively harsh on distance. With hole lengths stretched to the point of ridiculousness (the course is over 7600 yards), there is no challenge here for the part time golfer, and nothing but misery for those playing on the advanced swing types. While the effort to create a novel challenge is no unnoticed, a more thorough testing would reveal it to be hardly a fair test. 2/10

Technical

There is something to be desired here. The elevation work is untidy and the bunker extrusions are not polished and have hard edges. There is a touch of desperation in the mangled shapes that the designer feels necessary to use for fairways and greens. But credit must be given for the panorama and at least the attempt to provide us with something original. 5/10

Overall

An impressive course which sometimes belies its rating but won't always be everyone's cup of tea. Bring a strong heart and a steady snap if you want to succeed.

23/50

TPC at River Highlands

Chas Demster



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Surprisingly short and under-hazarded for a championship course, River Highlands has undergone quite a few links incarnations, and there's steady if unspectacular progress being made. With many holes playing across the hillside, there is an emphasis on good lie, and the Par 70 isn't likely to provide too many easy opportunities. There are two wonderful Par 5 holes thrown into the mix. The latest edition improves on the previous, but it still feels a little short of a genuine golfing atmosphere. 7/10

Appearance

The textures are noticeably improved, but the rough suffers badly from tiling, and the upper level planting is much clearer while the flowerbeds founder and – in fact – would be better omitted. Best of all is the ton of extra work that has gone into the course environs: with houses and other extras present, the atmosphere of the course is much, much better. 6/10

Playability

Brilliant fun without suffering the 'long and hard' (stop sniggering at the back!) problems of other PGA Tour mainstays. The variety is much wider than you'd have every right to expect, and only the target-oriented closing stretch demands that you hit the fairways without offering a bail-out. And then you wonder why more courses don't have a set of closing holes like it. The lack of sound is an annoyance, but there's a lot to like. 8/10

Challenge

The deep Major-style rough is a necessity to keep scores at a reasonable level. If you can deal with the elevations at River Highlands, you'll find the hazards mostly out of play and some very makeable approaches and putts. Even the Par 3s, despite all offering a carry of some sort, don't really shape up to be all they could. It will take a low score to win here. 5/10

Technical

Admiration to the designer for his continued efforts to improve this course, but there is still a bit that could use attention. Texture mappings and the low-level planting would be first, and the single-blend no-lip bunkers are starting to look rather primitive. What's important, though, is the progress and improvement shown over the previous River Highlands, and for that alone it's worth downloading. 6/10

Overall	Lacking the brutish edge of its contemporaries, River Highlands is a classy and addictive course which is better than the sum of its parts.	32/50
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TPC at Sawgrass Stadium Course

Anders Besserman



Description

Real, lakeside course

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 3, on green.

Concept

Sawgrass is one of the world's most immaculately crafted and diverse courses. Shot-shaping, target golf, putting challenges and innate creativity are all required in this – one of the best and most addictive golfing challenges. The 17th island green was the first of its kind and is still the best in the business, and at least six further holes are design masterpieces. Anders' pinpoint re-creation has brought the placid and calm stadium environment neatly to life, and allows Sawgrass' class to

shine through. 10/10

Appearance

The overhaul of textures and blends have improved the course no end, although there's one still quite ugly patch of dry grass. The planting looks magnificent, but I still feel there is a lumpy elevation or two. Plus, I still can't work out why the course comes across as distinctly un-picturesque: surely it should be more vibrant than this? 7/10

Playability

Everyone knows the shots and the risk/reward around Sawgrass, thanks to it being included in virtually every golf game since the year dot. Despite this, the course plays joyously well, and a round will simply fly by as you immerse yourself in the great Par 5 challenges and the Par 3 dares. It's a great course for tournaments and skins, too: there's little more anyone could need at Sawgrass, and playing with others seems to magnify the pleasure. 10/10

Challenge

Perhaps it's because I know the course too well; perhaps it's because distances seem a little scaled down; perhaps it's due to ineffective hazarding, but I found a round at Sawgrass to be terribly easy. Consecutive rounds in the mid-60s seem testament to this: I would suggest that the greens need toughening up (even within the bounds of the Mod), and more made of the deep rough. 5/10

Technical

The improvements are legion here, and Sawgrass can rightfully stake a claim among the most technically adept of Real course productions. A few mesh issues still seem to remain, but this will scarcely stop everyone snapping this one off the shelves. 8/10

Overall	Everyone loves Sawgrass, and our thanks go out to the designer for making it such a pleasure to own.	40/50
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TPC U Scottsdale

Jess Gagnon



Description

Real, desert course.

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

An odd course, this. Ostensibly desert, it is instead lush and green and clearly has had care lavished upon it. The actual desert regions seem to have been banished to the background and appear as something of an afterthought. Hole design isn't much to write home about, the impressive 15th apart, and sadly the course leaves you shrugging and saying 'so what'? 4/10

Appearance

I think there's more to be done here. The texture choices are poor, the planting looks overwhelmingly random, water hazards look unnatural and poorly-lined; the panorama is laughable. Only some decent work with the buildings around the course helps hold it up. 5/10

Playability

Most holes offer little option and even the harder pin positions do not give you much to think about. The desert is easy to escape and there's not enough variety in the hole length (far too many mid-length Par 4s, for example). It's mostly a mindless round of golf and surely not half as good as playing the real thing, no matter how bad your game. 4/10

Challenge

Some tricky approach shots and hard-to-read greens are the main difficulties on this course. Fairway shots will often have to carry desert or bunkers and all the Par 5s are very tempting to go for in two. Because of the intrinsic flatness of the course, scores will generally be low, although not so low as to make the course a pushover. 6/10

Technical

A good, detailed panorama would set this course off a treat, as would some time and care taken over texture choices. The planting is crying out to be refined, especially around the water regions, and the whole course could do with being a bit less green. The re-design has taken time and care of the use of multiple grass textures: now more needs to go into applying some advanced APCD-work. 4/10

Overall

A somewhat underwhelming round of golf on an easy and – to be honest – fairly uninspiring real life course. Just about worth a round for a couple of great moments, but that's all.

23/50

TPC at The Woodlands

David Russell & Ross Mackenzie



Description

Real, estate course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

A delicious and unjustly-overlooked tournament course, The Woodlands has received a series of gentle updates over the years and is exceptionally good for it. An excellent all-round test of strategic golf set in an environment richly customised, it requires every club in the bag to play well, and features a fair handful of standout holes, not least the excellent selection of Par 3s. This is one you'll go back to time and time again, not least to catch the nuances of the course. 9/10

Appearance

The custom work is the stand-out here, from the real estate that lines the course, through the excellent flowers and fences to the tee boards. It's the fine detail that really brings life to the course, and is marred only by some uneven elevation work which makes the fairways look like they were designed on a switchback principle. 7/10

Playability

The range of pin positions and some demand for daring shots make this compulsive golf, and the finely-tuned environment is nothing if not helpful. There's plenty of putting practice to be had without worrying about unfair greens, and several holes are pretty bunker-heavy. Overall, then, it's a pretty perfect all-round test of your game. 9/10

Challenge

With Par 5s readily open for eagle opportunities, and a course wide open with opportunities, there are a fair few chances to take the numbers here. It's not all a pushover, and the water holes and the murderous 18th will take its toll, but a competitive score is expected, if not demanded, at The Woodlands. 6/10

Technical

There's plenty of excellent work in the fine detail, which does make one wonder why the larger scale problems, such as the elevations weren't fixed. The bright green colour set can be a bit jarring for a course which lends itself so well to autumnal play, and the jet-black water features do not stand out well. Given the variability in the design, it's perhaps not the easiest to settle on a final score. 5/10

Overall	A very creditable round of golf in one of the best re-created settings we've seen. Shame that the workmanship is starting to look a little dated.	<i>36/50</i>
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TPC Blue Monster at Doral

Glenn Braden



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, tropical course	2nd hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Florida		
Conditions		
Playable at F*/F*		

Concept

Throughout Doral’s previous incarnations, I have found it difficult to really identify with the course, but there is more of the Gulf of Mexico feel to this latest version, and not least the excellent work in creating a course on this very flat and uninspiring landscape. The green complexes and hazards are classic in feel, yet exceedingly testing, and the course taken on its basic merits certainly lives up to the ‘Monster’ aspect of its name. Steadily improving aspects are becoming more and more apparent in the APCD work, not least in finally imbuing this course with a believable atmosphere. 8/10

Appearance

The detail in the texture set is immaculate, but it is a very wet, deep green where some people might prefer something more washed-out (or even a combination of the two might work...). The planting is excellent, and there are plenty of traces of the tournament objects around the course, giving it a big-time atmosphere which in this case is highly apt. The bunker blends continue to disappoint – not wanting to put down what is clearly a huge job, the speckly transitions just don’t fit the bill. 8/10

Playability

Much better than once it was, you really have the opportunity now to feel immersed in Blue Monster’s extravagant tropical presentation and realise the excellent challenges presented by the architect. It actually improves with repetition, and is excellent when played in direct competition. This is definitely a course that works best as it was intended – under full tournament conditions with slippery greens. 8/10

Challenge

With some outstandingly tough Par 3s and signature Par 5s, there’s no escaping the in-your-face brutality of the Blue Monster. It’s unsurprising that the designer has seen fit to ease down on the greening and rough. The greens – fair enough, given the majority of users who want challenging conditions. But the rough is just too simple to escape, and should be heavier like most of the other US Tour courses. It’s still a punishing track, but not as much as it should be. 7/10

Technical

As ever with courses that have received numerous updates, continuously refining and improving, there is great technical merit in the perseverance of the designer. Doubly so for the improved atmosphere which restores so much viability to this course. While the visuals are as good as they’re ever going to be on this artificial and slightly underwhelming layout, there is still a little fine-tuning around the edges which won’t escape the attentions of a smart golfer. 8/10

Overall	Another big step forward for a course which has earned its fame through being one of the toughest Tour stops.	39/50
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TPC Boston

Steve Avery



Description

Real, woodland course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 5, from fairway.

Concept

Thankfully not the stretch-fest that other PGA stops have become, Boston is a much more strategic test of golf, brought to life with a slightly quirker style than Steve Avery's clean-cut norm. There's notable intelligent use of hazarding here, and great fairway shapes: the par 5s are notably outstanding holes, from the dare-you-to-go-for-it 7th to the very tempting closing hole. The entire course comes across as in excess and restrained in design – a rarity in itself these days. 9/10

Appearance

The deep yellowy textures are a brave and memorable touch which works wonderfully, and there has been a typically meticulous hand with the planting and elevations, although the course is slightly bare in places. There has been a real effort here to produce a course which will set itself slightly apart from the other Tour staples, and it really shows. 9/10

Playability

A merciful break from the grip-it and rip-it standard which seems to dog tournament courses, Boston has terrific variety and most holes ask the player to think and plan from the tee. In some ways, with the unique style and selection of outstanding holes, it's a throwback to the classic PC golf games which really had to select the stand-out courses in order to be memorable. Terrific replay value stems from the variable hole lengths and the large number of gambling holes. 9/10

Challenge

Despite some golfing cleverness from the designer, it's a little too easy to take Boston apart. With trees that will rarely impact on missed tee shots, and prolific escapable rough, it's easy to hit the greens, but you will find your path to birdie dogged by some awkward – almost unlikely? – pin positions and greens that stubbornly refuse to be read. The lack of balance here is a source of frustration – maybe it might have been best not to toughen it up at all. 6/10

Technical

A great deal tidier than the early Betas, this is another quality finished product courtesy of a specialist in classy American courses. It might just be that everyone won't find the colouring to their taste, and the green complexes could have more refinement, but it's another terrific course otherwise. 9/10

Overall	One of the better PGA tour stops for a casual round – plenty of holes here to play and enjoy, rather than scramble for par.	42/50
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TPC Louisiana

Glenn Braden



Description

Real, marshland course

Screenshot

8th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Louisiana, obviously

Conditions

Plays well at F*/F* - realistic conditions might be a tad slower

Concept

An impressive, if rather artificial layout, you sense while playing Louisiana that every bunker moulding has been placed with a slide-rule, and the moguls that dot the fairway are precision-placed rather than a natural feature. It's really a stadium-course in wanting, and you could be cynical about the lengths that have clearly been taken to *create* a course rather than rely on terrain. But, on the flip-side, there are some terrific challenges, and the course sticks its nose out ahead of most of the Tour rotation. 8/10

Appearance

I do worry that Glenn Braden's courses are become a little same-y, although this could partly be the fault of the PGA. While good work has been done with the planting, yet again, and there is a decent clubhouse, there are some distinct extrusion marks, a mis-coloured panorama and some stretched textures around the bunkers where a separate lip would have been more appropriate. Overall, it's a bit underwhelming. 6/10

Playability

It's really, really easy to lose yourself in the course here. The work of a magnificent course architect, it constantly teases and challenges you to hit some tempting targets. There's plenty of room to accommodate long drives, and your bunker play will likely get a workout too. Several holes are tantalisingly within under-regulation range. It's enough fun to breeze you around a four-round tournament before you know it. 8/10

Challenge

Louisiana isn't going to hit the heights in terms of course lengths, and it could well be that many greens are hit a little too easily. Add this to modest, escapable rough, and planting that is decorative more than threatening, and there's a course waiting to be eaten up. You should count on at least one Eagle at some point. 5/10

Technical

This one is still a little rough around the edges (no pun intended), but with some work on the colours and horizon, there could be a fantastic tribute to the real thing here. Planting is definitely the strong suit from this designer, though, and that holds a reasonable amount of credibility on its own. 7/10

Overall

An excellent course which has been meticulously constructed with very little regard to its surroundings

34/50

Tribute at the Otsego Club

Microsoft



Description	Screenshot	Par
Real, woodland course	18 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
Michigan		
Conditions		
You'll probably want to stick to S*/M* or slower.		

Concept

18 not-particularly-outstanding holes, some woodland and gentle rough. Not a lot to write home about. The course's main feature is the good elevation work, which causes a continual re-evaluation of club selection. Otherwise, it's a fairly humdrum selection of holes; there's little that stands out and impresses. 4/10

Appearance

Generally passable and not too offensive. The seam blends are OK, although the course is crying out for an original set of textures, and the elevations and custom items are expertly done. The coup de gras (pun not intended) is the planting, which is hugely varied and very authentic. It's topped off with a nice panorama and looks decent, although it's not up to the best APCD standards. 6/10

Playability

Yawn city. Few holes offer a playing choice or any risk/reward, and the constant elevation changes just become frustrating as you search in vain for the right club. A lot of pin positions border on the unfair: either mid-slope or too close to the edge of the green. This is not relaxing, nor particularly fun to play. 3/10

Challenge

Flat greens and desperately short Par 5s make for eagle opportunities, and these will lower the scores. A 65 would certainly not be out of the question around Otsego: those on Pro level might want to be closer to 60. A lot of hazards seem almost marginal to the golf on offer; while I'm sure the re-creation is accurate, it didn't have good golf in mind. 4/10

Technical

As a 2003 release, this is pretty good technically, and fundamentally ticks all the right boxes. The paths distract too much from the play, and there is a distinct lack of customisation (as with all MS courses), but the biggest flaws here are with the golf, not with the design. 6/10

Overall	Another course where you question the wisdom of selecting it for Links conversion. Very little in the way of stand-out features.	23/50
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Tron

Noah Neumann



Description

Imaginary, concept course.

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Every now and then a course comes along that sets a new benchmark. Tron most certainly isn't a new step towards photo-realism, nor a breakthrough in research. But it is an amazing, convincing recreation of the Tron film (allegedly set inside a computer), and a whole new dimension in golf design and gameplay. The course is 100% customised, greens have become Target Areas, bunkers are Static Traps, water is Coolant and Turbo Pads have rock-like attributes which launch your ball all over the

shop. Elevations are sometimes gimmicky but used to good effect when the course might have been all right angles. Hole design, as befits the surrounds, is original, continually changing and challenging. Stunning stuff. 10/10

Appearance

Tron certainly gains marks for novelty value, and the textures work extremely well. There are quite a few blocked views, and the course is very dark on the whole, which counts against it. It's hard of course to compare such a novel look to standard courses, but only a cynic would say that it looks ugly. 8/10

Playability

I understand that there are individuals who just cannot stomach this sort of course, and good luck to them. For the rest of us, this course is a riot. With 100% playable landscape (aside from the coolant) and an entire new set of golfing challenges, there's a lot of fun to be had. The course is only let down by the occasionally unplayable lie and occasional unclearness as to the exact path to be taken. 9/10

Challenge

It'll take quite a few rounds to get things right at Tron. It's a completely different sort of challenge, and you'll do well to break par. Landing on the wrong terrain or elevation might result in an impossible challenge, which borders on the unfair, though, and it would be nice to have an escape route from this that doesn't involve backtracking. 6/10

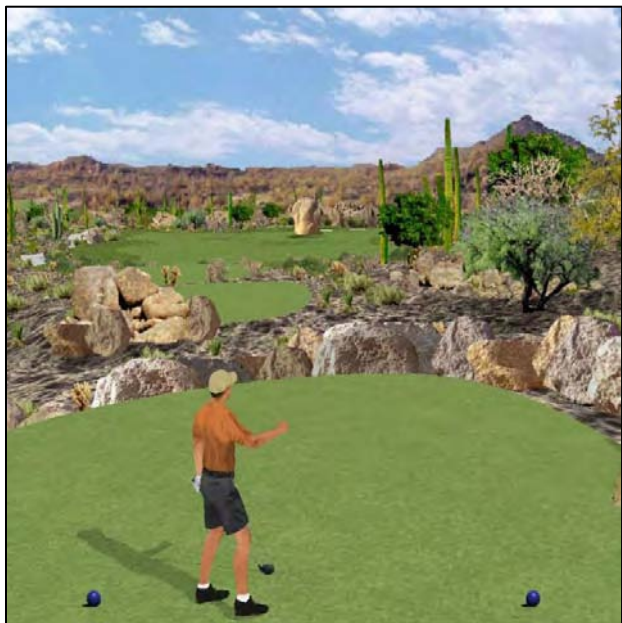
Technical

A 100% customised course cannot be sniffed at and, again, it's difficult to make much of a comparison. The course at the time of writing is still in Beta phase, and I would hope that some of the inflexibilities can be ironed out. Otherwise, you have to give credit simply in terms of imagination and style. 9/10

Overall	A round of golf completely unlike any other. Certainly worth a hack through, even for the Imaginary Course cynics.	42/50
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Troon North

Microsoft



Description

Real, desert course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 5, from tee

Concept

Not to be confused with the home of the Postage Stamp, this Troon is in Arizona. It's a dry desert course, the one that set a template for many average APCD designs and is regularly voted one of the best courses in the USA. It features some impressive hole designs, using the best that the desert has to offer, although it becomes a little repetitive down the back nine, and closes with a whimper rather than a bang. 8/10

Appearance

Considering its age, Troon is looking fine. The panorama is impressive if a little blurry, and the rock planting around the course is natural, good-looking and a good hazard for the golfer. It's a shame there's a little too much cloning when it comes to the arid trees, but the course is surprisingly free of hard edges, and it's clear that no insignificant effort has gone into the presentation. 8/10

Playability

With a good variety of shapes required off the tee and the inspired decision that the desert is playable terrain, then there's plenty to see and do at Troon, and a variety of landscape to get lost in. After about 12 holes, though, you get a 'seen it before' feeling, and the course doesn't present anything new. The course is still better than average, though. 7/10

Challenge

Perhaps part of the course's appeal is its amenity to low scores. The fairways are largely flat, the greens are large and accommodating, and the desert is surprisingly easy to escape. It's one of those courses on which bogeys are nigh on impossible unless you hit the water, and hence is not particularly difficult. 2/10

Technical

There are a couple of mesh folds and abrupt elevation changes that require eradicating, and the tee boxes and fairways could use a first-cut. But the technical work has held up very well, given the course's age. 7/10

Overall	A more solid effort than usual from MS. A great start; shame about the lacklustre finish.	32/50
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Trophy Club

Bob Hankla



Description

Real, farmland course

Screenshot

6th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Trophy Club is set among wide, flat prairie land, sparsely planted and worn. Sounds dull, you think? Not in the slightest. The course has been magnificently created to negate the dull landscape, featuring a surprisingly diverse and accessible range of holes. Clever use of texture properties helps the course play all the more realistically, and the result is a pleasingly surprising and stimulating round of golf. 9/10

Appearance

Bunker sculpture takes all the prizes here. The dirty sand texture adds to the brilliant down-at-heel realness around the greens. Sadly the natural landscape is the enemy elsewhere, and texture repetition and squares take the edge off what could otherwise be very fine. There is the added bonus of some very natural contouring as and when required. 9/10

Playability

A smashing round of golf and with very few of the pretensions that mark other courses. There are some wonderful tests of bravery and creativity and the holes make full and ingenious use of the natural features. The variety is amazing for a course that might have been so dull. 9/10

Challenge

Oh. Finally we find the shortcomings of a largely flat course. Bogeys are pretty tough to come by, and certainly the Par 5s are particularly generous. Flattish greens make long putts conceivable, and a round close to the mid-60s is a likelihood rather than a dream. Even by the standards of easy courses, this is easy. 2/10

Technical

With the utmost in bunker technique, and some brilliant recreational techniques, Bob Hankla is right up there with the best. It's such a pity that the texture mapping repeats are so obvious, otherwise this would be a shoe-in for full marks. 9/10

Overall	Flat doesn't always mean bad. A courageous and exciting course despite the lack of elevations.	<i>38/50</i>
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Trysting Tree GC

Fred Briggs et al



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 4, on green.

Concept

According to my research, a Trysting Tree can either be a meeting place, or a location singled out by certain animals for crapping on. I'll let you ponder that one.

There's not much to Trysting Tree (the course), to be honest. A few arty holes, one too many long water carries, and lots of elevations that were presumably aimed at causing difficulties, but actually look like landscape-

distorting desperation. I can't claim that I was very impressed at all. 3/10

Appearance

Really quite poor. Large stretches of empty, blurred rough texture do little to sell the course, and the use of stock textures elsewhere do the designer few favours. The planting is too thin and frequently cloned, and the water features are much too bland. Heavy hands with the elevations mean that there is little to feast one's eyes upon. 2/10

Playability

Despite the basic appearance, this is a moderately enjoyable round of golf. The holes have clearly been meticulously planned to get the most out of players, there's some excellent risk/reward, and hitting the greens in regulation feels like a genuine achievement. There's some neat sound effects too. But you've seen it all after the first round, and there's not much incentive to go back. 6/10

Challenge

Trysting Tree has a reputation for being horrendously hard, thanks to some ill-judged green gradients and pin positions. It's not all that bad if you can stay out of the final tier of rough, but shots will inevitably be dropped by even the most cautious of players, especially on the water holes. Perhaps the most ill-advised move is the proximity of many greens to a sharp water-bound gradient, which will punish otherwise judicious shots and is quite unfair. 4/10

Technical

An early design, there's frankly an awful lot to pick up upon here. Textures and transitions are poorly thought-through, bunkers are without lips and look very primitive, and the scarcity of good planting is very noticeable. I spotted a couple of floating trees on the way round. Worst of all, though, are the jerky gradients and edges, which give the course a lingering amateurish feel. 2/10

Overall	Not particularly notable or worth your while. A course fading rapidly into APCD obscurity.	17/50
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Turnberry the Ailsa Course

Stewart Parker



Description

Real, links course

Screenshot

9th hole, Par 4

Par

70

Location

Ayrshire, Scotland

Conditions

One or two greens are tough but playable at F*/F*. Turn the wind on.

Concept

Proper, treacherous championship golf at its best, Turnberry has been the downfall of many a Pro golfer. Inextricably linked with the great Tom Watson, it's a course that suits his low punchy drives and bounce-up approaches, particularly when the wind is strong. The small fairways and deep pot bunkers play their part in equal measures, but the star of the course is the natural landscape and long grass that has caused many a frustration. With the strong wind coming off the sea, it's just a glorious place to golf. 10/10

Appearance

With a welcome departure from his standard rough planting, Stewart has very much hit the nail on the head here. The long grasses are complimented by spot-on textures, and a coastline which is striking from all distances. The twin spectacles of the clubhouse and Ailsa Craig on the horizon bring the whole thing to life. I was just a little caught-out by an occasional hard line on the clifftops which needed better covering up. 9/10

Playability

Don't expect to love it straight away – this is very much a Pros' course and takes time to appreciate. But the more you do persevere, the better it gets, particularly if you follow in Watson's footsteps and employ your 4-Wood as often as possible. It'll always come down to a straight choice between hitting the fairways and shooting for birdie, or missing and struggling for par, and in that it features the simplest risk/reward proposal of all: how well can you hit your long clubs. Fascinating. 8/10

Challenge

You can fine-tune Turnberry to play pretty much as hard as you like. With the wind and green speeds right up, you've a horrendous, if hardly realistic, test. Slow the greens down a bit for the most Open-like scores. If the wind drops, though, the sharp player might even find the course a bit easy, especially if hitting the fairways. Mixing with the rough is of course hideous, but most of the greens are very generous in compensation. A fine balance has been well achieved here. 9/10

Technical

With a range of designers working on all aspects of the course, it would be petty to pick up on one or two visual flaws. The masses of work that have gone into this environment are undeniable, and in many ways it is among the most authentic courses we have. 10/10

Overall

Brilliant, remote links golf, elevated to the elite with an HD re-working. Breathtaking.

46/50

Twin Mallard Golf Club

Bill Scott



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Despite a pretty silly name, Twin Mallard represents a fine piece of golf. The grassy parkland plays host to some tight, narrow fairways, amply protected by bunkers and some judicious use of water. Individual holes are clever, prompting thought about placement from the tee, and frequently on lay-ups too. The whole thing has the cohesion which stems from being packed into a tight space, and is reminiscent of Shinnecock Hills in terms of layout and environment. 8/10

Appearance

Bill has built on the successes of his first release with this excellent effort. While nothing stands out in particular, the amalgamation of good bunker creation, realistic planting and carefully-selected textures make for an immersive and near-perfect environment. It looks and feels real, without resorting to the excesses of other fictional courses. It's nice to see improvements made around the water, too. 10/10

Playability

There's perhaps a mite too much expectation on hitting the tight fairways here, and while many holes do have a viable playing option, you do get a 'seen it all' feeling down the back nine. Thankfully, this is more than remedied by some delightful trademark holes – the 5th and 18th being particularly creditworthy. 7/10

Challenge

The legions of bunkers will trap their fair share of tee shots, and hitting one may well cost par. When you factor in the rolling elevations, then Twin Mallard is a fair old test. Birdies are certainly not easy to come by, not even on the long holes, where laying up is frequently the answer. 7/10

Technical

Here is a designer who started very much on the right foot, and Twin Mallard does very little to dispel doubts over his ability. The course, though, does seem to have suffered from a lack of testing – a few steel weeds crept in under the radar, and at least one bunker featured an impossible lie. There's just a suggestion, too, that things are being played a little safe here. 8/10

Overall	A fine grassy course which will pass many an hour. Fine while it lasts, but is it time for a little more flair?	40/50
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Twin Rivers Golf Club

Steve Avery



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, woodland course	8 th hole, Par 4	72
Location		
The readme intimates this is designed to be typical of New England		
Conditions		
You might hazard this at M*/S* or a notch faster if you're feeling brave.		

Concept

A well-worked course with just a hint of the technical proficiencies to come from this designer, Twin Rivers remains a solid creation today. The eponymous water comes into play at all the right times, and the woodland is used very effectively to coerce creative shots out of the golfer. The old-fashioned appearance is a necessary evil, but that shouldn't overshadow the fact that there is a well put together course under the shell. 8/10

Appearance

The dated textures are unfortunate, and the rivers in particular are looking dated. But they fit together reasonably well, without hard edges or extrusion marks. The planting and panorama set some much needed sense of location, although admittedly this is sometimes the case because the plot is unnaturally flat; indeed elevations look to have been something of an afterthought in many cases. There may be a case made for this being a 'classic' look, but to most of us it just looks old. 4/10

Playability

Glorious, shot-shaping, risk-reward challenge throughout, with some excellent long holes which require planning and common sense. The hazarding is clever, because there's always the promise of a good escape and you rarely feel unjustly penalised. Perhaps the more extreme swing types might take issue, but the motto of 'practice makes perfect' might have been designed for this course. 8/10

Challenge

By the standards of courses a similar age, the greens are set up pretty kindly here, although some of them are pretty small, so work on your chipping game would be well-advised! The fairways, conversely, are pretty accommodating and will set up many a good approach. If it weren't for the intrusion of the forest, the course would be considered easy, but part of the genius of the design is in the clever use of trees. 7/10

Technical

I doubt Steve looks back on this with too much fondness. The visuals certainly are past their prime, but at the time this was an outstanding piece of design work. Much of that is still evident today in the innate playability and the fact that the greens aren't out-and-out ridiculous. 6/10

Overall	Still very playable more than nine years on, this is one blast from the past you shouldn't ignore.	33/50
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Valderrama

John Aherne



Description

Real, woodland course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Spain

Conditions

Playable at F*/F*

Concept

Valderrama's somewhat cynical design hasn't always appealed to everyone, with plenty of trees in the line of fire and some really opportune hazarding, not least on the infamous 17th hole. But, it has to be said, as a Ryder Cup candidate, it's pretty fine, if entirely out of setting. John's remake has – of course – immense visual advantage over the creaky and unconvincing Microsoft version: well manicured and much better at bringing out the innate strategy. 8/10

Appearance

The unusual, almost grey, textures are a signature touch from the off, and the course has an excellent panorama to support the sense of location. A few niggles become apparent after a few rounds – inconsistencies in the planting and some rather lumpy elevations. But for the large part this is infinitely clearer and tighter than its Microsoft predecessor. 8/10

Playability

Quite apart from the great strategy options, Valderrama is short enough to enjoy time after time and the emphasis is at both ends of the hole – demanding accuracy off the tee and a careful read on the green. It's certainly untypical for a European layout, which might take the gloss off for some, but I suspect that for most people just being able to re-live those Ryder Cup moments will be more than enough reason to re-visit. 9/10

Challenge

With some full-on shotmaking challenges, you'll expect to be pushed all the way here. The short length of the course might initially seem to count in its favour, but there's a bombastic back nine to be navigated before seeing your way home in level par. Although the greens are playable in fast conditions, they are notoriously difficult to read. 8/10

Technical

I'm afraid there's work here that has directly impacted on the play, including steel trees and some evidence of 'bar coding'. Some of the texture mapping has come out as very blurry and stretched also. There are, of course, many superb moments on the course, not least an good degree of customisation and the bunker work, but critical flaws really need to be ironed out. 6/10

Overall

A fascinating test of both driving and putting, endlessly replayable.

39/50

Valhalla Golf Club

Microsoft



Description

Real, parkland course.

Screenshot

6th hole, par 4, from fairway

Concept

Microsoft have succeeded in taking another well-loved course and making it pretty nondescript. Thankfully, some of the excellent Jack Nicklaus hole structures save it from complete mediocrity. But the Par 5s lack originality and challenge, and the course is held up by some impressive Par 3 designs. But it looks distinctly under-worked, and you get the feeling that far more should have been done with it. 5/10

Appearance

The planting, especially at ground level, is poor, pixelated and obstructive, and the textures have never looked so inappropriate. The panorama isn't exactly fine art. Around the water features, in particular, there are some good, realistic views available, but when you're out of the forested areas it becomes clear how much more work could have been put into this course. 4/10

Playability

The clever Jack Nicklaus designs offer a fair amount of risk/reward, and even the simplest looking Par 4s require you to think your route out carefully. Despite this, the course inexplicably comes across as unstimulating and a round seems to take forever. It goes to show how poor appearance can pervade an otherwise good golf course. 6/10

Challenge

With some easily-reachable Par 5s, this course will hand you opportunities to break par on a plate. The greens are gentle and approach shots are rarely threatened by hazards. It's generally easy to escape trouble: this would never pass muster as a links course. 65 is a realistic score, which means the whole thing is a mite too easy. 4/10

Technical

The grass planting is in urgent needs of repair, and old complaints such as the bunkers and texture transitions re-surface. The deep rough texture, underplanted, looks comically out of place. It wouldn't have been difficult to insert a more convincing panorama, either. 4/10

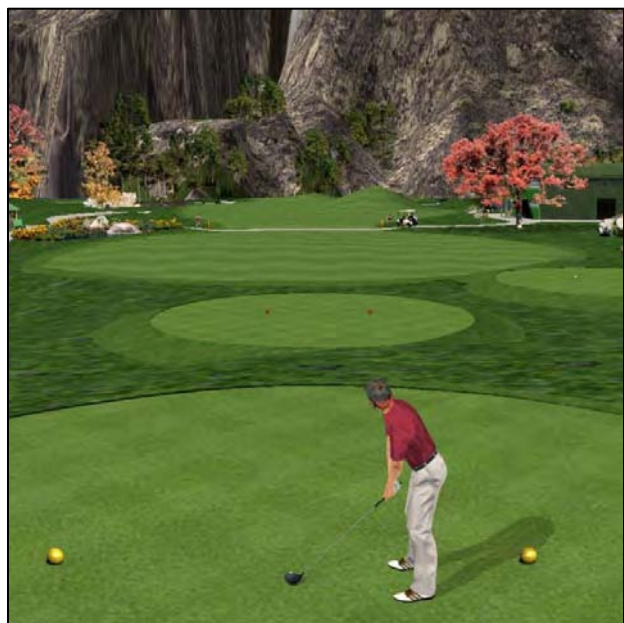
Overall

A good demonstration of how to wreck an interesting and challenging course. Worth having for some impressive hole design, but you might as well play it with your eyes shut.

23/50

Victory Grounds

Johnny Holland



Description

Imaginary, mountain course.

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

The course's slogan is 'Golf Taken To New Levels', and don't take it metaphorically. Victory Grounds plays literally over the top of a mountain, and a steep one at that! It's not an original idea as such, but it has been carried out extremely well with some fittingly novel hole designs and a host of Par 5s on the back nine. Subtle, it isn't, but exciting it most certainly is. 9/10

Appearance

The mountain doesn't look entirely convincing at certain points, and the waterfalls look amateurish at best, but there's a fabulous and appropriate backdrop to distract your attention. The custom textures are very apt, but even they don't disguise some poor extrusion and elevation work. There's some good 3D custom options, but there's also a few 'floaters', if you'll excuse the term. It's a mixed bag, but with the bad slightly outweighing the good. 4/10

Playability

Although there's tremendous fun to be had from playing around this course, a few inconsistencies lead to improbable lies, and obstructed views are annoyingly common. It's not a course to be played with the Top Cam, although the ultra-realists will probably shun this course in any case. If you can get past the irritatingly hard tee-shots, then there's some great sound effects and, of course, the inevitable steep elevation changes to engage you. 7/10

Challenge

All the challenge here is – unsurprisingly – artificially created. Long carries are commonplace and the hazards are frequently in play. The bunkers are steeply graduated and almost impossible to get out of with accuracy. It's a course with little escape room, almost certainly impossible for the advanced swing types, and therefore cannot gain full marks. 5/10

Technical

Full marks for imagination and style, but sadly it hasn't all been carried through. Admittedly, the APCD isn't up to high-tech courses such as this, but there should be no excuse for the poor extrusions, and the waterfalls which look like nothing else I've ever seen. A brave attempt, certainly, but ultimately a flawed one and no better for it. 5/10

Overall	A unique course, and one with its own crazy appeal. It's unlikely to appeal to the golf purists, or those on advanced swing types, though.	30/50
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Vista Verde Golf Resort

David Meader



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, canyon course	1 st hole, Par 5	70
Location		
Palm Springs, California, according to the readme		
Conditions		
Acceptable at M*/M*, although you'd be wise to check a couple of greens.		

Concept

This fantastic area of canyon, rocks and open ground is fertile ground for the imagination of the designer, and has given rise to some impressive, if occasionally outrageous, holes – notably the 2nd, 7th and 18th. It wouldn't be much use in a strokeplay tournament, but is the perfect host to the gambling elements that work so well in matchplay or other risky MoPs. David's emphasis is very much on inventiveness rather than environment, which means this course borders fantasy at times, but it's a magnificent effort for those of us that don't need hyper-realistic courses to keep us playing. 8/10

Appearance

The bright greens work well with the intended environment, and there are some excellent touches in the walls, the rockworks and other 3D creations. Sadly the deserted regions stand out as being pretty awful – forested densely with lots and lots of clones, they might have been better left out altogether. But there's real graft here and an admirable effort to make something different: the central canyon in particular being highly impressive. 7/10

Playability

Absolutely addictive. Knowing the course well is a complete asset in this case, because it plays like a set of old friends. With the designer's reliance on big target golf and near-insane risks, it's one of the few courses in the canon that is outright thrilling to play. It's by no means easy to work out the obvious 'best' route through this course, which is part of the reason for its compulsiveness. 10/10

Challenge

Using deep rough throughout was an excellent decision, and really provokes thought off the tee. The glut of water is a foreboding hazard, but there's a good shy at birdie available for controlled fairway-and-green play. One worrying issue is that it's sometimes easy to shoot a rugby score on some of the worst holes, but for all that it's surprising how close to par you end up. 7/10

Technical

David really stretched himself with this impressive and original location, and for the large part has been rewarded. Some difficult and brave decisions have resulted in a course with an easily-identifiable look, and golf that has plenty going for it. The planting is definitely a weak aspect, being cloned and inconsistent throughout. 7/10

Overall	The quirky hole design and some brilliant opportunities to show off make this a course you'll be happy to return to for sheer fun.	39/50
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Volcano Island

Andrew Jones



Description

Imaginary, tropical course

Screenshot

4th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Even the best designers should let their hair down once in a while. Volcano Island is an old, old Links design, but surprisingly one which Andrew Jones has recently re-vamped with some improved textures. The course does exactly what you might imagine, twisting through the cliffs, lava streams and a – rather perilous – village on the eponymous island. There are a number of interesting ideas, not least the ‘black hole’ bunker on the 6th, but as a whole the course is less than memorable.

Nevertheless, it was a terrific idea that has been copied umpteen times since. 5/10

Appearance

Even with the new high-resolution textures, it is hard to think of this course a work of art. The poor out-of scale 3D objects and some bad hard edges are mostly to blame. The riot of colours and a lot of planting (should there be ANY plants on this course?) are notably out of place. Unlike its newer brethren, this is a course I find very difficult to believe in. 3/10

Playability

This should be all-out fun, by any rights, but there’s just too much about Volcano Island that isn’t. There are a lot of forced shots, hidden hazards and difficult carries. Penalty strokes are inevitable, and with it the sense of dissatisfaction. Using this for competitive play must rank up there as a form of sado-masochism. 3/10

Challenge

It’s not as hard as it used to be, thanks to some toning-down of the greens, but there are still a great deal of challenging shots here and a morass of penalty strokes are inevitable. You frequently are forced to throttle back, and are left with massive carries and greens that are effectively islands. Take plenty of Mulligans out on the course with you, and cross your fingers. 2/10

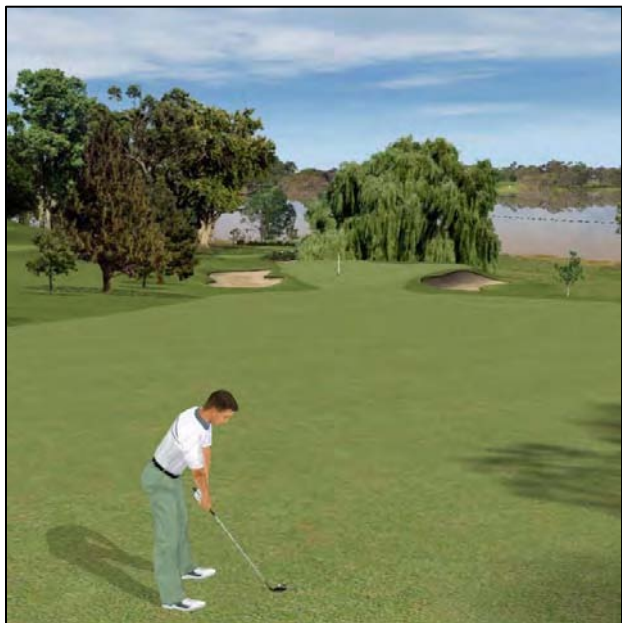
Technical

The texture update has restored a little current credibility to the course, but the lack of overall coherence really counts against it. Just because Volcano Island is an imaginary environment doesn’t mean it has to be an unconvincing one. 3/10

Overall	I’m always delighted to find there’s a still a market for imaginary courses, but Volcano Island just doesn’t have enough good golf to really fit the billing.	<i>16/50</i>
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Wagga Wagga Country Club

Wayne Hewitt



Description

Real, parkland course.

Screenshot

17th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

Perhaps this isn't the most technically advanced course, nor is it the most imaginatively designed. But the sheer *joie de vivre* with which it has been brought to life, every stone, fold and grass brought lovingly to life, is undeniably brilliant. Even a mediocre course, in the hands of a loving wizard, can be superbly done, and this is just the case at Wagga Wagga. Should you encounter many of these tree-lined, bog-standard holes elsewhere, you might catch the whiff of unimaginativeness, but surely

there is nothing else that holds the course back. 8/10

Appearance

Flawless. From the immaculate textures, through the well-crafted bunker lips, to the oh-so-real lake, there is not a moment at Wagga Wagga when you do not believe you are playing a real life course. The planting is diverse, but looks very realistic, and the panorama is beautifully carried off without for a minute taking attention away from the course. A joy to look at...10/10

Playability

...and pretty much a joy to play, too. The photo-realism helps enormously, as do the little touches, such as grass paths and the roadside areas, that help you feel really immersed. Perhaps the course is a little lacking in holes of genuine strategy, but it's only a minor point against something that is (unusually) refreshing to play as a straightforward set of 18. 9/10

Challenge

Despite the hard hours that have evidently gone into the course, it really doesn't present too much of a golfing challenge in Links. A satisfactory handful of holes have cleverly placed hazards and tricky pin positions, but sadly for the rest there is little to really push a competent player. 5/10

Technical

Cannot possibly be faulted. Flawless in everything from some very neat custom sound, to the excellent multitude of textures and blends. Wayne Hewitt is someone who has taken APCD imitation to a new level through careful observation and reproduction, and Wagga Wagga is a stunning technical achievement. 10/10

Overall	A stunning technical and visual achievement. A shame that the golf has to be ordinary, but under this sort of style even ordinary courses achieve the level of greatness.	42/50
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Waialae CC

Tim Hagen



Description

Real, tropical course

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Waialae started the 21st Century being far from the norm in terms of PGA Tour stops. The Hawaiian location excepted, it was short, open and not noted for use of bunkering or water, instead relying on players' good technique and course management. Sadly, as it proceeded to get beaten up by Tour players, it was unconscionably lengthened, and thereby lost a great deal of its charm. The lovely tropical setting is still worthy of note, but the individual holes have sadly lost a great deal of their character. 6/10

Appearance

There's incredible richness in the variety of the course buildings and the planting, and the finely-clipped textures are befitting of a resort course such as this. But there's still a touch of roughness to the texture edges which will presumably be tuned out for the final release – this course was still in Beta at the time of writing. 8/10

Playability

You'll find very quickly that good accuracy and forethought from the tee is the key to unlocking this course, and this in itself at least creates eighteen good challenges. It's a shame, though, that good playing options have been slightly marred by extending the course to above 7000 yards: part of the inevitable charm deconstruction that seems to be taking place on so many tournament venues. 6/10

Challenge

With deep rough settling up close to the fairway, there is some very in-your-face challenge here, and the water hazard central to the front nine will catch more than its fair share of victims. You'd do well to break Par, especially under the course's trademark tough conditions. 7/10

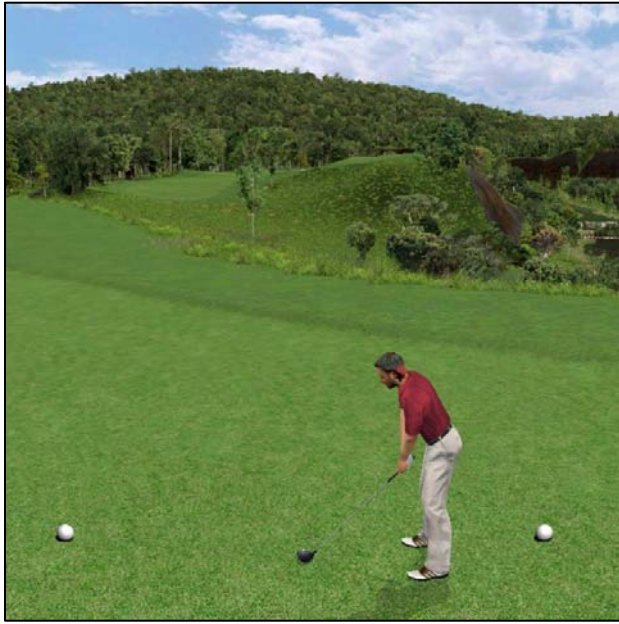
Technical

Tim Hagen's style has tended very much towards the pristine and the manicured, and Waialae has certainly matched that. In fact, it might be argued that the course has gone a little too far in this respect – there's very little of the wildness, long grasses and browning that one might reasonably expect from the location, although in fairness those are hardly hallmarks of this course. 8/10

Overall	A neat rendition, eagerly awaited by many, and doesn't disappoint. Lacks the big-time feel of several other PGA courses, though.	35/50
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Walnut Grove Golf Course

Art Patscheck



Description

Fictional, canyon course

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Walnut Grove is the course that pioneered tampering with texture properties. One of the big selling points of this course was that the deep stuff had been toughened up and it's almost impossible to clear with anything greater than a lob wedge. It's a shame therefore, that it can't equally be sold on it's sense of location (apparently buried in the middle of interminable forest) or rather brash hole design. There's a bizarre and slightly out-of-character moment just over halfway round when you

disappear into a canyon; it just doesn't all fit together. 5/10

Appearance

There's plenty to look at here, as one would expect from the designer. A great variety of textures and 3D objects are brought into play, and the panorama seam is undetectable. The grass planting seems a little sparse and scattered, but the quality as a whole is professional and well-detailed. 9/10

Playability

A lot will depend on how well you react to the play of the deep rough. I've a feeling that a lot of people will find it unnecessarily intolerant; it's certainly a big step from the lighter rough. Regardless of the texture properties, it's undeniable that rendering times edge towards the dull, and that the course doesn't welcome you in the manner of some of its high-class brethren. The whole thing is not as good as one might hope: indeed the front nine isn't far short of being downright boring. Two consecutive driveable Par 4s attest that perhaps this isn't the most realistic round. 6/10

Challenge

Walnut Grove has deliberately been made difficult, but players have reason to be grateful: if you can steer clear of the heavy rough, it plays very well indeed. Hit the bunkers; hit the water; do anything but hit the undergrowth and you'll score acceptably. It'll be an unnecessary risk to use a driver all the way round or attempt a Par 5 in two. Of course, there is the viewpoint that the toughening up is more of a burden, and removes some of the fun from the game; a tough judgement call. 8/10

Technical

The man who literally wrote the APCD book has turned out a very good course yet again; Walnut Grove is starting to age, but the appearance is far from prehistoric. The textures are best, but some of the more ambitious landscape sculpture has been carried off with flair and is incredible to look at. Despite one or two incongruities, the pioneering use of the texture editor is worth full marks. 10/10

Overall

An acquired taste and perhaps not a course that mandates being acquired ahead of other P2P courses.

38/50

War Acres Golf Club

Steve Pope



Description

Fictional, heathland course

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

There's a sad lack of premise behind War Acres. It's a name resonant with the sort of imagery that Bull Run used so well, but there's too little theme to this course. What you get is a wide-open, expansive course with a moorland feel, despite being semi-enclosed with trees. There's very little cohesion between holes: the over-riding impression is of a few disparate ideas looking for something much more than a P2P release to tie them together. 4/10

Appearance

Oddly, I preferred the texture colours in the preview to those on the course itself, which were too vibrantly green. And one piece of flowerbed-lined path was almost insulting. Let's not ignore the superb grass and tree planting, though, and masterful use of elevations: while War Acres isn't quite perfect, there's plenty of mastery to justify the cost. 8/10

Playability

So many holes seem wide open and almost immediately forgettable, which is such a shame. There is a moment or two to be had on the front half, but the lack of an environment and the ability to attune holes to said environment cost dearly towards the end. Some greens which are unplayable at high speeds, and a suspicion of a few steel trees, does very little to help. War Acres just doesn't have that draw factor for me. 4/10

Challenge

Whatever its other flaws, War Acres is perfectly pitched for both casual and serious players. There's very little treachery here, and just about every hole is presented as an open book, which comes as a refreshing change – all that needs to be done is play carefully planned, down-the-line golf. If you don't, expect bogies. If you do, try for birdie. It doesn't come much better, frankly. 10/10

Technical

Even on close inspection, there's not too much to fault here, but there still exists a niggle or two, such as the cloned flowerbeds or the colour scheme, which doesn't quite sit right. 9/10

Overall	Not the most coherent or exciting of pay courses, but worthwhile if you're tiring of tricked-up golf.	35/50
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Warwick Hills

Chas Demster



Description

Real, estate course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

In many ways, Warwick Hills typifies the 'hit the big dog down the chute' school of golf. It's very much of the 'build 'em big' school of American golf architecture, and subtlety and strategy feature significantly lower in the pecking order than the ability to knock out a 300-plus drive and set up an impossible second at the near-600 yard Par 5s. Devotees of British links will want to steer well clear. The APCD interpretation, to be honest, is a bit of a rush job: lacking a lot of the finesse of better designs. 4/10

Appearance

I'm afraid there's quite a lot working against this course, and the fact that it is a recent release just makes it all the more noticeable. Mid-and long-range textures look distinctly low-res, and there's a worrying lack of texture blends. The bunkers are a rush-job, and the planting is partly customised, but also partly cloned. There's just not enough to see. 3/10

Playability

Although Warwick Hills is all bravado, it's actually quite refreshing for all that. There's a lot of pressure off the tee, as you will know even before the second shot whether you will be challenging for birdie or struggling to avoid par. This, at least, encourages you to plod onwards, although there's no denying that it is all very same-y and undemanding. 5/10

Challenge

Regardless of what you think of the course, it can't be denied that it knows exactly how to punish and how to reward. Imprudent shots will be met with the onerous deep rough, and the brave may well land themselves a decent lay-up and shot at birdie. Perhaps the PGA knew what they were doing with their tournament courses after all...10/10

Technical

The whole course feels rushed and pointed directly at many people's course rotations. There's precious little of that special element of customisation that makes a course special, and the many visual errors really could have been avoided with a little more care. This is a designer who we are really looking to make strides forward. 4/10

Overall

No doubt a course that will have earned its place on many hard drives even before release. A bit depressing for all that, because there are far better places to play.

26/50

Waterstone Golf Club

Jason Thorpe



Description

Fictional, lakeside course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

Building and improving on the forest course ideas that were present in Awaba Forest, Waterstone is cleaner-cut, more clearly laid out, and generally a very attractive proposition. There is a preponderance of water to compensate for trimming back the trees, and in itself this is the weak link in the course: while trademark holes such as the 15th certainly are superb, there is perhaps just a little too much reliance on the hazards. That minor quibble aside, though, this is a superb matchplay course. 8/10

Appearance

A definite step up on the beta releases, with beautiful high-res textures almost universal (the scrubby, dry rough being particularly excellent), and some excellent underplanting also to the designer's credit. A commendable amount of 3D work does more than enough to lift this course above the average, although the hilly panorama still doesn't quite fit in with the more lowland course. 9/10

Playability

You can't go far wrong here. Everything has been doubly-well tested and is the perfect balance between risk and reward. Fairways hit the perfect middle-ground (irony not intended), and the green complexes are well-bunkered enough to create a variety of accessibility in the pin positions. I can't fault this on any level. 10/10

Challenge

The big let-down here is the Par 5s. While the short holes are immaculately scenic, and the Par 4s are beautifully thought-out for the second shot, there's something missing on the longest holes. Either they're too short, or the hazards just aren't appropriate enough. Either way, it's certainly a gap in the overall experience. 7/10

Technical

There are perhaps one or two textures that have been overlooked in the upgrade, but on the large scale that's a minor consideration indeed. Waterstone shows off the very best in high-resolution textures, planting and is a distinct step up in terms of gameplay. 9/10

Overall	Almost a terrific fictional course, if it weren't for a slight overuse of water and the artificiality of the longest holes.	43/50
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Watery Grave GC

Chuck Clark



Description

Imaginary, marshland course.

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 4, on green.

Concept

Rarely, if ever, has a course been so aptly named. If you can play this saturated set of 18 without coming to a damp end, then you're less a golfer than a superman. The lakes come into play on every single hole, and part of the testament to the designer's considerable skill is that they do so completely naturally. It's still a gimmick though, and you couldn't ever claim that the course felt realistic. The design has succumbed to an all-encompassing landscape, which does make you feel like you're golfing

in a big hollow. Yes, it has to be low level to be this wet, but did we really have to feel so claustrophobic as a result? 7/10

Appearance

There's not much one would want to fault in Chuck's visual style. Far away from the cartoony overtones of the likes of Fairclinnis or Rocky Nuts, this looks sumptuous in the dense planting of bulrushes and the consistent style to the surrounding forest. The textures look superb, particularly away from the beaten path, and there's a lot of convincing 3D work. One oddity: there appears to be an awful lot of toilet blocks on the course! Is this because of all the running water? 10/10

Playability

The text-only hole previews are a disappointment from a P2P course, as are the painful rendering times. You would be well advised to turn the graphics down a notch to get a smooth, playable game. As for the rest, it depends how well you take to the gimmick: if you find water tiresome, you might be better advised to play elsewhere. 5/10

Challenge

Surprisingly, Watery Grave isn't anywhere near as hard as one might expect. Played conservatively and keeping well away from the water, you'd expect to hit pars on the relatively flat greens. There's a surprising amount of bail-out space too, once you're aware where the hazards are. But you'd still have to be magic not to get wet balls around here. Easy? Never. 8/10

Technical

No problems here. Despite some issues with playability (at least from my point of view), Chuck has completed precisely what he set out to achieve. Particularly worthy are the natural feel, despite and the panache shown with the planting. 10/10

Overall	Water-logged both in the layout and the game speed. Perhaps not the designer's most naturally endearing course.	40/50
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Wellington Point

Gus Green



Description

Fictional, ocean course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

A tight, restricted course set on an ocean peninsular, Wellington Point's focal points are the rocky bays and lighthouse which add a definite ambience to the cosy feel of the course. Hole design is varied, from the straightforward to the downright nasty, and ocean lakes, and a superb variety of rough regions come into play. Surprisingly, given the range of landscapes, there is no feeling of overkill, and the course presents itself as authentic while being undoubtedly fictional. 9/10

Appearance

There's plenty of eye candy here. From rockwork to elevations, from great innovative planting to fantastic custom textures, the whole course looks impressive. My one concern is the bunkers, which strike very obviously of a misplaced imagination. There is no excuse for the recurring S-shaped traps, and they are a part of the course crying out for more work. 9/10

Playability

With a premium on accuracy, mishit shots will often cause frustration, as will the long rendering times. There is little variety in hole lengths and two or three clubs might not even come out of the bag. But there's some excellent strategic content, particularly on the Par 5s, and unless you go seriously wrong it is easy to hit greens in regulation. 7/10

Challenge

Wellington Point will offer you shots and take them away again. Shots off the fairway might well find ocean or lake, or else some deep and impenetrable rough. Bogeys, or worse, could easily result unless you approach the consequences with common sense. If you hit the fairway, there's a genuine chance of birdie, on the gently rolling greens. It's beautifully designed and pitched for good golf. 10/10

Technical

For a first course, this is an inspiring technical achievement. The two flaws, in my view, are the bunker lips and the panorama. The former are underworked, the latter is suspiciously ill-fitting. These two flaws aside, the course radiates technical class. There is stunning attention to detail in the planting and texture changes, and the re-creation of what might be a difficult locale is classily carried off. 9/10

Overall	A great course, cunningly and passionately designed. Its compact style leads to some playability issues, but it's an all-round great.	44/50
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Wentworth West

Curt Simms



Description

Real, woodland course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 5, from fairway.

Concept

Wentworth is one of the most English of courses, and an obvious inspiration to many a fictional course designer. Paying scant notice to the course-design maxims that preceded it, it is well mixed-up, target oriented and constantly surprising. The infamous pair of Par 5s that close the back nine are capable of making or breaking anyone's round of golf, but any of the opening holes are capable of holding their own. The multitude of tournament objects that decorate the course only help to improve the atmosphere. 9/10

Appearance

Superb, unbelievable texture work allows this rough to be as real and convincing as possible. Individual grass clippings and leaves really are perfecting the minutiae of the designers' art. The elevations and water features have been willing recipients of Curt's customary care, and the planting...well the planting is just jaw-droppingly magnificent. Sublime. 10/10

Playability

The subtle mixture of hole types shows why Wentworth is a top matchplay venue. Clever bunker placement invites you to re-consider many greens, and length off the tee is variously a blessing and a curse. Curt's superb customisation means that there is always something to look at. The huge variety in hole lengths makes the strategy dynamic, fluid and constantly intriguing. There are very few better Real courses than this. 10/10

Challenge

The genuine advantage garnered by hitting the fairway, and the dense deep rough make the course's challenge all too clear, and matchplay the overwhelming choice at Wentworth. It's none too easy if your snap isn't true, and the back tees don't help matters any. Breaking 70 would be considered pretty impressive. 7/10

Technical

No question that Wentworth and Curt Simms have joined the legions of design greats. The pioneering visuals here, helped of course by the Mod 1.07 and facility for high-resolution textures, have lifted the bar to yet new heights. 10/10

Overall	Although still technically under development, this greatest of English courses has graduated to one of the greatest of the APCD.	46/50
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Werrington Downs

Vivian Davies



Description

Fictional, farmland course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

These are the oddest 'Downs' I've ever known. The elevations run prominently, and quite cleverly, through the course, but there's little to suggest wilderness, and indeed there is a bizarre contrast between the manicured course with its tidy paths, and the almost-desertlike surroundings. There's an odd mix of hole types, too, the silly 6th being followed by a terrific Par 3 in the 7th: overall, again the feeling of desert permeates the various layouts. While it's not terribly coherent, there's a

glimmer of some talent here. But not enough. 3/10

Appearance

The garish greens are almost painful on the eyes and the bunker sculpture is somewhat rudimentary. But there are heartening signs in the soft ground-level planting, a tasteful panorama and a clever, if somewhat unbefitting, use of the mesh. A small amount of customisation is at least a little heartening. 4/10

Playability

The uphill holes are the most spectacular, and also the most rewarding, and they help put some sorely-missed life into the course. There's an appealing moment or two elsewhere, but largely there's too little to do, and too little reason to come back and do it again. 5/10

Challenge

I had high hopes for the course as an opponent at first, but it founders badly along the back nine, with too many Par 5s short on challenge. Keeping the rough wide open and bunkers easily escapable has barely helped, although the unexaggerated greens are a pleasant surprise. The real blow are the handful of over-contrived holes, not least the sixth, which damage the course's credibility and force a similarly artificial set of tactics. 5/10

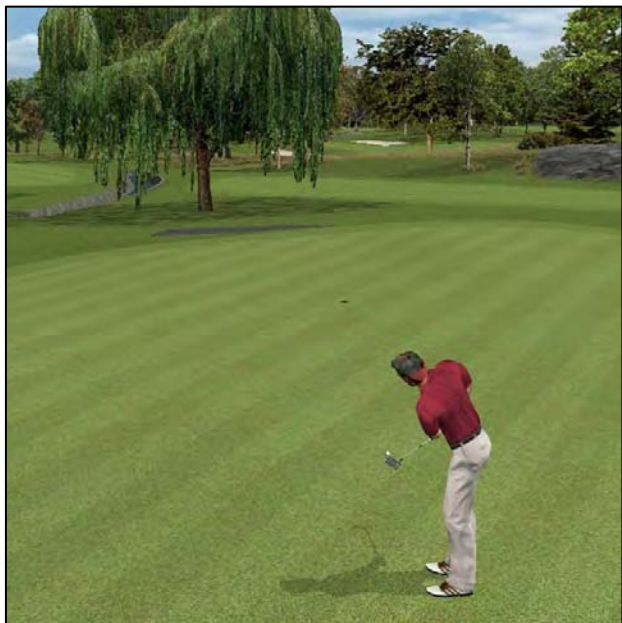
Technical

The designer hasn't exactly built on his past courses, but he seems to be toeing a moderate if undistinguished line. The textures are crying out for work, though, as is the all-round construction of an environment. There's a hint of shape placement about the course that could have so easily been phased out. Plus, how difficult can it really be to type the name of your course correctly? The mind boggles. 4/10

Overall	No more than passable. The 'Downs' idea is only partially carried off and would need much more coherency than this.	21/50
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Westchester CC

Steve Avery



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 3, on green.

Concept

A cut above many of its fellow US Championship courses, Westchester has an unusual and surprising line in the use of rocks, elevations and a generally more weather-beaten style than its stablemates. It drags a little around the first half, but the inwards nine mixes up the designs nicely and provides a great homeward stretch. The Par 3s aren't of the same calibre as the rest of the course, mind you – they seem shoved in, rather than planned as part of the 18. 7/10

Appearance

We are talking here about one of the APCD's most enduring and most talented designers. There is no doubt that much of this course has been pieced together with subtlety; the great texture set feels genuinely mown, and the rockworks feel genuinely part of the landscape, rather than inserted. The bunkers are gentle and soft works of art. It would have been nice to see a little more work on the clubhouse, and perhaps a little underplanting, but there's no denying that this is very finely tuned indeed. 9/10

Playability

The authenticity of the course raises it well above the competitors. There's a good amount to look at, and a decent range of shots required, thanks to some fairly tricky-to-hit greens and pin positions. It bears repeated play well, too: there's a good set of options on many holes and no few strategies to investigate. 8/10

Challenge

Bogies are surprisingly hard to come by at Westchester. It's by no means easy, but conscious tournament play should reap an awful lot of comfortable pars. The shorter holes and the Par 5s are good opportunities to pick up strokes, although they should by no means be taken for granted. 8/10

Technical

You'd expect all the right boxes ticked here, and to the large extent the course produces its share of impressive moments. It sounds harsh to say it, though, but there is just an occasional rough spot: a piece of planting (mostly at lower level) that looks forced, or the up-and-down contours of the clubhouse. 9/10

Overall	Another excellent course from Steve Avery; one for the casual players as well as the tournament aficionados.	41/50
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Western Heights

Matt de Souza and John Brooks



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

16th hole, Par 5

Par

69

Location

There are no clues given to where it's supposed to be, but it feels like Scotland to me.

Conditions

S*/S* only.

Concept

The original Western Heights was one of those courses undistinguished among many other quite coarse efforts of the time. John Brooks has taken the rough product, given it a modern makeover, and the net result is...well, to be honest it's still pretty undistinguished. I can see why the original would hold some appeal, with its rollicking elevations and good storytelling, but the update just looks rough and underfinished. 5/10

Appearance

A few nice blends apart, Western Heights still looks old, with plenty of stock and cloned planting, and too much obvious shape placement. The elevations are supposed to be a big draw, but they are handled poorly, and the remake has done little to iron out the consistency. The small plot and heavy woodlands make the whole thing feel claustrophobic. 4/10

Playability

I found Western Heights hard work, and it's no secret that a lot of that was due to a lack of polish. There are plenty of iffy pass-through properties in the trees, and much of the elevation work is purely penal, rather than a challenge to creativity. Some tiny fairways and lengthy approaches do little to help. The best hole is the 18th, but getting there might just be too much for most. 3/10

Challenge

I can certainly see why a course of this difficulty might be much desired by John Brooks after some of his little pushover Real courses of late, but for most of us it might be a step too far. I felt more like my real-life hacker equivalent, ploughing out of trees and rough all the time. The lack of attention to proper, playable greening is unforgiveable. 5/10

Technical

If courses are going to be updated, it's necessary to give them more polish than Western Heights has received. It remains something of a peculiarity and a fossil, and plenty of old-fashioned technique is still very much in evidence. 4/10

Overall	A peculiarity among the recent trend of course updates: this course was little-heard-of before, and hasn't received quite enough attention to take its place among the other updates.	21/50
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Westfields Golf Club

Microsoft



Description

Real, woodland course

Screenshot

9th hole, par 4

Par

71

Location

Virginia

Conditions

You'd probably want to stick to S*/S*

Concept

Well-planted but otherwise really quite undistinguished, Westfields is almost notable for the lack of gimmicks. In many courses, that might be refreshing, but here it's little more than routine and a bit dull. There are occasional highlights – the holes at the end of each half are very worthy – but otherwise there's not much of interest. The enclosing effect of the forest isolates the plot and there are much more convincing interpretations of courses in Civil War country than this. 5/10

Appearance

The planting is pretty good at tree level, although less so in the serrated grasses, which largely look a bit silly, but this is little more than standard form from Microsoft. At least the woodlands look good, which is more than can be said for the plot. Manhandled and textured shoddily, with bunkers neglected, there is little to look at at ground level. Work off the fairways: paths, bridges and suchlike, provide the only eye candy. 4/10

Playability

Rather repetitive and mediocre, you'll find everything relatively unthreatening at Westfields, and your round amounts to little more than a procession. There are decent touches in the previews and sound, but they're not enough reason to slog around this yawner of a course on their own merits. 4/10

Challenge

The greens are tough, but much of the rest is pretty easy. Especially with unguarded greens, there'll be a lot of chipping close, and approach shots seem to be more an exercise in looking at the view rather than actually attacking the pin. Expect to finish comfortably under. 6/10

Technical

The really poor efforts with the elevations and uncustomised textures are likely to linger in the memory longer than any beauties of the course. Some half-decent planting isn't really enough justification. 4/10

Overall

Unspectacular and unmemorable. A 'routine' course that could have easily been replaced.

23/50

Wexham Park Blue Course

Mark Austin



Description

Real, parkland course.

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

An average English club course, Wexham Park has an open, inviting feel. While hole length is short, and the course is only a Par 68, there is some impressive design and the 6th and 7th in particular are little masterpieces. Where else could you find a Par 4 measuring under 250 yards and almost impossible to drive? In truth, it's a course that's hard to take seriously and might play best in a Bango competition or similar. I'm sure Wexham Park is a daunting concept in real life, but it's a gentle little course on Links and

ideal for passing a half hour without expending too much effort. 6/10

Appearance

With sparse planting and little elevations, Wexham Park naturally is not a visually stunning course. There's been a little craft applied to certain areas, such as the ponds and intimidating wire fence and to be honest the course does not look unattractive. But in today's demanding Links society, are its stock textures and occasional clones acceptable? My money says yes, and it's worth a go, but don't expect visual fireworks. 5/10

Playability

For a course that promises little, this is a good round of golf. There is subtle and carefully-managed risk/reward on many holes and the styles are mixed up well. For reasons that I cannot pinpoint, Westfields is one of those courses that radiates authenticity and welcome: a round here is never cold and impersonal. Perhaps, on occasions, the fairway-to-green play becomes monotonous. But then the tee shots are well contrived and hitting the fairways in the first place is no guarantee. 7/10

Challenge

As might have been expected from a course with no real gradient test, and a lack of difficult greens or hazards, this doesn't play hard. With the average approach shot being something under 80 yards, birdies are expected and only the frequent water hazards keep scores from plummeting. As with a lot of real life course conversions, what might be challenging for the real golfer is a walkover to those with a mouse in their hand. 3/10

Technical

It's not cutting edge, but nor is there anything that players are likely to find out-of-place or ridiculous. The little elevation work there is has been extremely well done, and the planting is sound. Perhaps the textures take something to be desired, but the course feels real, which is a big plus for the designer. 7/10

Overall	An undemanding little club course: often fun, rarely challenging.	28/50
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Whipping Post

McCoist



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, mountain course	18 th hole, Par 4	72

Location

The mountains, the layout and the coldness suggest Canada.

Conditions

M*/M* will be enough for many.

Concept

It would be unfair to refer to Whipping Post as purely a novelty course with winter theming, but it has to be said that underneath the snowy façade is something of an extravagance, with two island holes and plenty of water-cutting dog-legs. It's out of traditional territory for McCoist, too extreme to be genuinely believable, and to be honest you can see why a makeover was deemed necessary. The understated section around the turn, with the design kept a little more in check, is the highlight, but it's not enough to carry the rest. 5/10

Appearance

The minty-coloured short grass is absolutely perfect in this winter surround, and the small detail of the snowy rough is lovely, with grass just peeking through the frost, although it does have a tendency to look odd at mid-range and further. The enormous panorama is evocative and a fitting backdrop. But there are also some unfinished-looking water hazards, and the white bunkers haven't really adapted well to the snow. 7/10

Playability

Nowhere near as impulsive and natural as McCoist's other courses, Whipping Post never quite gives you the push to explore a natural landscape: the feeling of exploration that makes Morar Dunes and Fullerton Woods so compulsive. The golf is largely precision-based, and the snow lacks the necessary bite to punish errant shots. 5/10

Challenge

The consequence of the unpunishing rough is, of course, low scores. Whipping Post belies its Allman Brothers title to be something of a pushover, as is often the case when designers try to manufacture target golf. Playing with reasonable restraint, you can find plenty of accommodating fairways and a surprising lack of elevations for a mountain course, making for some targetable approaches. 5/10

Technical

Despite some average golfing values, McCoist strengthens his design credentials with Whipping Post. The creativity in producing new and unusual textures is awesome – definitely the type of experimentation I like to see in APCD-work – and the planting extends right down to the lowest levels. A few odd-looking mesh stretches and texture transitions around the islands will presumably be caught as the course comes out of Beta. 8/10

Overall	A course hanging uncomfortably in the gap between offering good golf and just being a gimmick.	30/50
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Whirlpool Golf Course

Kevin Fraser



Description

Real, parkland course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

A very acceptable course without anything very offensive, Whirlpool is set in the Niagara Parks, but in reality could be pretty much anywhere, given the easy-rolling landscape and tree-lined surround. Indeed, it wouldn't take a great flight of the imagination to put yourself in the British countryside. The Links conversion feels reassuringly authentic and coherent, and a course that doesn't have to resort to showiness is always appreciated. 6/10

Appearance

Very few obvious problems here – the green textures are convincing and well-coloured. The planting is dense with a minimum of duplicates, and the elevations have been dealt with well. The scale of the whole layout is best: Whirlpool seems to have hit that ideal middle-ground where a course feels natural. 7/10

Playability

For no great reason, a round at Whirlpool is swift, repeatable and fun. There's no great shakes in the layout or the golf skills required, but the course gels well, isn't too hard, and can accommodate any number of golfers, playing any number of styles and Modes of Play. Whirlpool really is Mr Versatile, without being Mr Threatening. 8/10

Challenge

Massive, wide-open fairways and fully escapable rough. Reachable Par 5s and some puttable greens. This is all a pleasant surprise after the beasts of Championship courses, but there is the inevitable downside that birdies are rather easy to come by. Rather *too* easy, I would say. 4/10

Technical

You'd have to go looking in order to pick holes in this one. And part of the beauty of Whirlpool is that very few will actually need to go looking, because they'll be having a fair time playing it. Certainly the designer's visions are spot on, but it may be argued that the bunkers could use some good lips and the planting more consistency by today's standards. 7/10

Overall	Very normal, but reassuringly normal for all that. A great leveller of a course with playability value in a variety of situations.	32/50
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Whistler Lake

Tom Goodrick



Description

Imaginary, lakeside course.

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 5, approach

Concept

This is a course that might surprise you. From the first tee, it looks lacking in elevational subtlety and texture choice, but over the course of a round – although the course never becomes quite believable – you find it's more moderate than at first appearance and actually presents a decent 18. The course hugs close to the sides of a giant and well-tended lake and nearly all holes bring the water into play. Hole design at times is very innovative and, considering that there are seven Par 4s on the back nine, very varied.

It's by no means technically perfect, but the designer clearly has spent a lot of time thinking this course through. 8/10

Appearance

While beautiful moments have their occurrences, there is a lot of slack work at Whistler Lake. The textures are from stock and look poor. The panorama is from stock and admittedly looks OK. The elevations are largely crude and too far exaggerated. There are a lot of clones in the planting. On the whole, the bad outweighs the good: it's not a pretty course and there are too many errors which Beta testing could have cleaned up. 3/10

Playability

The surprise lies here. With dog-leg fairways running across the tee, there is a constant question about how much to bite off. The green areas are surprisingly restrained and playable. There are faults, of course: too many blocked views and having to deal with some hasty extrusions of greens and bunkers, but the course design turns out to be an unexpected bonus. 6/10

Challenge

This could have been a stinker of a course, but there are more surprises in store. Birdies are makeable, thanks to the receptive greens. It's no picnic, given that you're constantly playing off elevations, and it would have been nice for the fairways to incorporate a sweet spot in this respect. Drives often require a lot of carry and sadly the course probably isn't suitable for the users of advanced swing types. The general challenge is manageable if gimmicky, though. 7/10

Technical

With good polishing, this could really be a terrific course. Job one would be to replace the horrible stock textures. Job two would be to level out some of the less believable elevation changes. Then perhaps some seam blends and some close attention to the bunkers and planting would be in order. Despite some nice low-level planting in the lake, there's a lot required to bring the course up to scratch, in short. 2/10

Overall	Deceptive in appearance, there's a good chance that a round at Whistler Lake will prove rewarding. You've got to be tolerant of the course's age and lack of technical proficiency, though.	26/50
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Whistling Straits

Rob Miller



Description

Real, dunes course

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 5

Par

72

Location

Wisconsin

Conditions

Advisable on F*/F*

Concept

If Whistling Straits was a fictional course it would be met with a fair few raised eyebrows. The crazy proliferation of bunkers – some apparently lying in wait for the least conceivable of golf shots – and the incredible lakeside Par 3 holes are just scratching the surface of this course which stands comfortably alongside Pebble Beach and Cypress Point in terms of golfing spectacle. There's only one designer with the capability to bring it to the APCD, in an effort as batty and insane as the course itself. 10/10

Appearance

The amazing variety of grass planting isn't initially obvious, but catch things at the right angle and you'll be blown away by the attention to detail. Every single one of the hundreds of bunkers is painstakingly re-created, including the 3D planking, which is an unparalleled labour of love. Sadly, it seems a little bit of attention has been overlooked on the short stuff, and the fairways suffer from a few hard edges and colours that really don't match the awesome dry-grass dunes. 9/10

Playability

It's impossible not to be dumbfounded when presented with all the Whistling Straits has to offer. Possibly one of the finest designs in the entire world, the use of the natural contours, the lakesides and the many, many bunkers make for incredible variety and a genuine opportunity to use the whole golfer's repertoire. Overbunkering is tedious on many other courses, but not here, where it is almost as much a natural part of the landscape as Lake Michigan. 10/10

Challenge

As one of the longest courses to host the US Open, Whistling Straits certainly presents a stiff challenge, and like all the top tier of US courses, Par is still a great number to break on Links, especially when the wind is on full blast and the greens turned up to a properly slippery setting. Your sand game will play a large part, of course, and the greens are difficult reading. Remarkably, it doesn't feel too penal, thanks to fine-tuning of the rough and the ability to land a few spectacular escapes from the millimetrically-designed landscape. 9/10

Technical

Whatever the problems with the visuals, they are not due to Rob Miller's technical ability, and the groundbreaking work in the bunkers, beaches and lake is more than sufficient evidence of that. It's unlikely that Whistling Straits will be surpassed in terms of pure graft and innate genius. 10/10

Overall

A rightly-heralded classic and another addition to a catalogue of North America's finest courses.

48/50

Whitewebbs.GC

David Meader



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

14th hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

The readme doesn't get any more specific that 'somewhere in England'. I can see this in maybe Warwickshire or Gloucestershire.

Conditions

Some ambitious greens here, and I wouldn't take it faster than M*/S*

Concept

Despite the questionable name, there's a course well worth playing here. Whitewebbs is one of David's more down-played and believable courses, but still has a terrific line in innovative hole design, tempered slightly with some slightly more ordinary designs around the turn. In fact, it's the more normal holes that provide the best advertisement, showing that hole design can be clever but still restrained and convincing. Those who have found David's courses ill-suited for tournament strokeplay might just find solace here. 7/10

Appearance

There's not much to fault, that's for sure. Nice textures, discrete planting and a sure hand with 3D work are all good selling points at Whitewebbs. The few flaws occur around the labyrinth of paths and the distortions where they are bent to the whim of the elevations, which themselves are a little lumpy in places. 8/10

Playability

A hugely enjoyable and extremely well-balanced round, complemented by all the little touches like quality sound and hole previews. Plenty of variety in the hole lengths, and the need for careful planning of approach angles are all indicative of a round with its feet on the ground, as opposed to the wild target golf at the likes of Saxon Vale or Vista Verde. Highly enjoyable. 9/10

Challenge

The greens aren't the greatest or most realistic, with lots of intricate gradients, but there is some tolerance for faster conditions if you're careful. This is unlikely to be a problem given the swathe of Eagle chances you are presented with: most are carefully hazarded, of course, but there's not much tolerance for traditional golfing challenge here. An unusual balance, but oddly it works more often than not. 8/10

Technical

Largely a very coherent effort, even withstanding some mixed elevation work. There's a terrific coherence and atmosphere to this course, aided by first-rate planting and texture use, and even in the days of hi-res it looks as crystal clear as could be wished for. 9/10

Overall

Earns its mantle as David's best course through a touch more realism than the rest of the collection. Still an opportunity to show off tremendous golfing values, though.

41/50

Wildflower Terraces

Don Dutton



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, woodland course	13 th hole, Par 5	73
Location		
Idaho, by the dictates of the Readme		
Conditions		
Most greens should play well on M*/M* or faster, but a few pins aren't well checked.		

Concept

I really quite like the direction and restraint that Wildflower Terraces has taken. Deliberately aimed at the 'hacker' end of the market, it occupies terraced hillside in Idaho (although, I have to confess, I thought Idaho was flatter than this). Contained therein are a selection of holes with influence taken from bigger courses, but eased up with little deep rough and less bunkering. And, of course, the selection of wild flower beds provide a suitable trademark. 8/10

Appearance

Still some more work required here. The grass textures don't fit well alongside each other, and the blends are rather perfunctory. Planting is quite nice, though, with the flowers carried off particularly well, although the rough is scrubby in parts. The plot edge and the panorama give rise to some rather ugly effects at certain points. 5/10

Playability

A different style of golf to most Links courses, thanks to the setup: there'll be less emphasis on hazard avoidance and recovery, and more on dealing with elevations and approaches. There are a few frustrations in hidden hazards, unhelpful visual lines, and some OB where it isn't expected, but on the whole this is a breath of fresh air as a warm-up. 6/10

Challenge

Other than a few awkward greening issues (which really shouldn't be present in the first place), Wildflower Terraces doesn't contain too much that's frightening, and the first half in particular should yield low scores. When you set out to make courses for recreational players, though, expect recreational scores! 4/10

Technical

There's a lot of tweaking needed here, and although most of the technical problems don't directly impact on a conservatively-played round, there are frustrations in some wrongly-assigned textures and the plot edges. The course colouring could really use a total overhaul as well. 4/10

Overall	A well-conceived and meticulously-worked first course with a nice concept underpinning it.	27/50
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Willowgreens

Mike Nicely



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, marshland course	15 th hole, Par 4	72

Location

No real clues, but it seems to have something of the upstate New York courses.

Conditions

M*/S* is probably as fast as you should take it.

Concept

It's difficult to accept Willowgreens, with its confusing blend of mountainous panorama and low, swampy lakes. On the flipside, if you're willing to accept the course as occupying some sort of median plane, then it's reasonably passable. The contrived hole design takes some getting used to, though: the round feels more of a puzzle than anything, and you constantly feel at the mercy of the designer. 4/10

Appearance

While the lowlands have been reasonably well planted and there are a few highlights in the flowerbeds, shale bunkers and marshes, there's a little bit missing elsewhere. A lot of the trees are poorly scaled or resolved, and there's not really too much going for good views on the course either, despite the glamorous panorama. Underwhelming is probably the correct verdict. 6/10

Playability

Willowgreens is rife and over-run with blind tee shots; the reliance on hitting what you can see and avoiding the hidden hazards becomes seriously painstaking. The lack of hole previews do little to help when the water is used so cynically to narrow landing areas out of sight, and this costs the course even dearer. It's a depressing round of golf that shouldn't be found in a fictional course. 5/10

Challenge

Thankfully, there's very little deep rough to punish those occasions when you stray off-line; if there was, then the cynically-placed water hazards would ensure a score above 80. Even if you hit all 18 fairways (which is unlikely in the extreme), then the tricky-to-read (although, admittedly, by no means excessive) greens will convert many makeable putts into a double. Tricky stuff indeed. 6/10

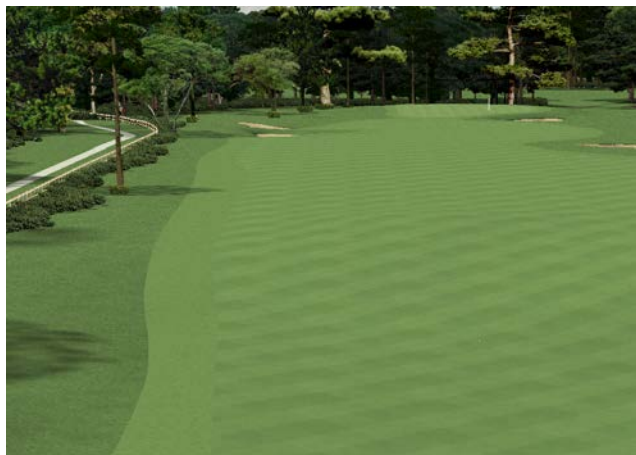
Technical

There's a good line in customisation at Willowgreens, which counts for a bit, particularly when your mind is otherwise distracted by the golfing demands. The lasting impression, though, is that it could all be pieced together a little better than it is. Some fine detail notwithstanding, this hasn't really aged well. 5/10

Overall	A course that might well suit the short-hitters. Strategically designed golf is all well and good in its place, but you can take the idea one step too far.	26/50
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Woburn – The Duke's

Ray Smyth



Description

Real, forest course

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 5

Par

72

Location

Bedfordshire

Conditions

Not really feasible on anything but S*/S*

Concept

One of the most prestigious and austere of British courses, Woburn is dominated by dark and forbidding woodland and features some surprising and challenging elevation changes off the fairway. Emphasis is very much on pinpoint position off the tee, and there are some outstanding short holes. The PC conversion remains impressively fresh and playable - as with other great courses, it's enough just to put yourself in the midst of it. 10/10

Appearance

This looks impressive for a 2001 design, but it's not without its flaws. The cloning in the forest is obvious at points and parts of the custom planting, especially the radio mast, have not been prepared carefully enough. But the elevation changes have been carefully handled, and the forests – despite the clones – look authentically dark and menacing. A pleasant and inoffensive choice of textures is a good final touch. 7/10

Playability

You'd be a fool not to want to play this course. It radiates class and is a treat from start to finish. Nearly all shots will require careful assessment of the potential advantages, and while the course doesn't offer anything as trite and obvious as a definite risk/reward option, there is strategic merit to all holes. Some well-customised and planted sound effects guide you round and help to make a good course all the more immersive. 9/10

Challenge

Part of the reason that this course hosted the British Masters for 20 years is the fact that it's no pushover. It's tough stuff, even with a computer-assisted swing, and missing the fairways will almost certainly cost you strokes. Rolling elevation changes mean there are no formalities, but the greens are pretty poor when viewed through Mod eyes. The Par 5s seem to give up perhaps a bit too easy. But for all that, an impressive test has come from a course with probably less water and sand hazards than virtually any other track. 7/10

Technical

It's a shame about the clones and customisations, because the planting is excellent at all levels: there aren't many of its contemporaries with such solid underplanting. The bunkers are a little flawed, though, and often show signs of insertion. These problems aside, though, it's a credible effort which has done a very solid job of reproducing a famous course. 6/10

Overall

Has aged well: not completely without flaws, but a great enough course to make it easy for you to overlook them.

39/50

Wolves Lair

Graham Hardy



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 5, from fairway.

Concept

Reminiscent of Devil's Lake in terms of panorama, planting and sheer mammoth scale, Wolves Lair (surely an apostrophe missing?) plays fast and loose with elevations and water hazards. Under the guise of a testing and unusual course structure, the designer has pushed his luck a little bit too far; Wolves Lair is just a bit too intimidating to be a welcome environment and too preposterous to be the home of good golf. The 18th is a pushover and, in yielding my only sub-par score of the round (an Eagle,

moreover), left me feeling distinctly underwhelmed. 4/10

Appearance

Big courses generally tend to have big views. Somehow, Wolves Lair seems to have sidestepped these. Sure, the panorama's pretty and looks great from the elevated tees. But the planting is overwrought in the forests and notably underdone where grasses should be. The textures don't particularly fit together. There is a lack of visual candy such as a clubhouse environment or 2D extras. I could go on; suffice to say this doesn't work for me. 4/10

Playability

The course's length is depressing, and many tee shots have difficulties in that they are semi-blind or sharply dog-legged. On one hole, I couldn't see the fairway from the tee, and once I hit the fairway, I couldn't see the green. The rendering times are inordinately long for such an early course, thanks to the landscape being crammed. The main gameplay gimmick at Wolves Lair relies on pinpoint approach shots across water to steep elevations, and after the fifth time you've done – or failed – this, it just becomes naught. 4/10

Challenge

Don't expect birdies. The course is long, steeply elevated at the wrong times, and water hazards both overt and hidden will dog your path. Enormous greens mean that two-putts are not necessarily assured, although the gradients aren't as bad as some others I could mention. The 18th is the only one of the Par 5s that yields a realistic 2-shot approach, and as such isn't the best climax to your round. Very disappointing. 3/10

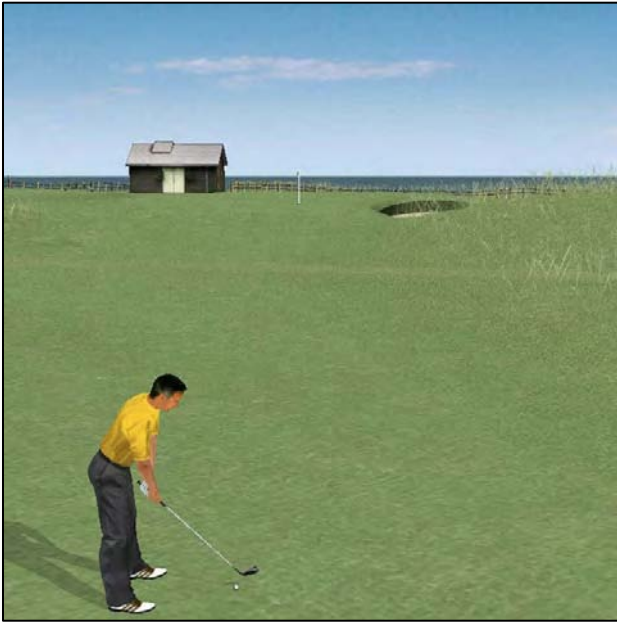
Technical

The course isn't badly put together, and there are no glaring technical errors. What is really at fault here is lack of appreciation of what makes a good golf course, and perhaps a little scale down – literally as well as with the designer's ambitions. 5/10

Overall	A bit like Chuck Norris: big, difficult, cold and unrealistic.	20/50
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Woodbridge

Matthew Woodbridge



Description

Fictional, links course.

Screenshot

5th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

This is real links golf. No spectacular views or fancy landscaping. No gimmicks. No target golf. Just a barren landscape, planted with tall, sparse grass, criss-crossed with pale paths where the grass underfoot has been squashed down, and littered with testing little pot bunkers. It's barely possible to discern fairway from rough but woe betide those not on target. The hole design is nothing special, but nor should it be! This is one of its kind, a very very real British seaside links. 9/10

Appearance

There's not a great deal to look at, to be honest, although the texture selections are immaculately chosen and fit each other perfectly. The few custom 3D objects are very nicely done, particularly the clubhouse. Sadly, I don't find the long grass (also customised particularly effective, or the deeply-extruded bunkers especially gentle in their gradient. 6/10

Playability

The long grass rears its ugly head here. The blades appear to have tree properties, which means that shots from the heavy rough are unpredictable and a major frustration. If you can stick to the short stuff then, despite the lack of eye candy, the course is surprisingly enjoyable, with a route between the pot bunkers being the strategic challenge 8/10

Challenge

I doubt any other course presents such a brilliantly-pitched challenge as Woodbridge. Nearly every hole will give you an opportunity at birdie; equally double-bogeys are more than an outside chance. The deep bunkers are an apt hazard for wayward drives and the greens a natural, rolling putting test. 10/10

Technical

The long grass properties and the bunker edges are the only things urgently in need of attention; the designer deserves massive credit for a stunningly realistic set of textures and putting superb realism ahead of contrived spectacles or gimmicky golf. 9/10

Overall

A unique and uncompromising course. Ultra-realistic and constantly pushing you to play better golf, it's an understated work of art.

42/50

WoodPecker GC

Mike Nicely



Description

Fictional, parkland course.

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 5, from tee.

Concept

With the eponymous bird's rattle ringing in your ears, you tee off around a beautifully crafted and never pretentious set of 18. Nothing is done to excesses at this course: it has water and bunkers in the right measure, and the hazards work extremely well. Undeniably a young course, by the height of the general planting, WoodPecker nevertheless gives the convincing impression that it is well established and open in displaying its wares. 8/10

Appearance

A nice selection of custom textures work well in parts, but less well in others. Firmly in this latter categories are the greens, which look oddly angled, primarily because of the texture mapping. Blends are used well in the bunkers but less well elsewhere. A few hard edges and the occasional string of stretched faces take the edge of the beauty. Best is the planting and panorama: very natural and convincing in creating an ambient atmosphere. 8/10

Playability

A contrasting pair of halves unusually brings most repetition to the front half, which has three Par 3s and two Par 5s. The course does tire around the turn, and to be honest there's not sufficient challenge for many approaches. But the lovely views and ambience do a fantastic job of supporting the round, and some cracking, but subtle, closing holes make for a smashing climax. 7/10

Challenge

The biggest barrier to low scores are the stubborn greens, which often feature but one angle of elevation but are maddeningly hard to read. With flat fairways and open approaches, you'd otherwise score well. The challenge as a whole is a little contrived in this respect, although most scores with hover around the 70-Par mark. 7/10

Technical

Largely sound, and featuring some superb 3D work, the course just requires some mapping improvements to be perfect. All else has pretty much hit the nail on the head. Particularly noteworthy are the excellent variety of planting and the understated panorama, both of which lend the course that *je ne sais quoi* which enhances the atmosphere. 9/10

Overall

A very solid effort. Not outstanding in any particular area, but an excellent round of golf nevertheless.

39/50

Woodside

Gary Turner & John Brooks



Description

Fictional, forest course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 5

Par

73

Location

None given – this could be almost anywhere. My best guess? Possibly the south of England.

Conditions

Definitely no faster than S*/S* and even this will be too much to stomach for some.

Concept

Without much by way of distinguishing features, Woodside is really little more than a scratchpad for some larger-than-life hole designs, a few of which admittedly are pulled off with some panache: the 9th being a real nice example. The huge hole lengths don't work with the course ideas, though, and the greening is frankly stupid. I can see why it was nominated for updating, but it is equally clear that much more work should have gone into an update than just slapping down a few textures and blends. 4/10

Appearance

A lot of the trees – and given the nature of this course, trees are everywhere – are determinedly low-resolution and it's often not clear what you're looking at in middle-to-long distances. The elevations are generally not believable and distinctly oddball in many places: there are also obvious extrusion marks around many greens. The course does unexpectedly throw up good portraits along many hole lengths, but the fine scale takes some desiring. 4/10

Playability

Ugh! With the creativity toned down and some of the treeline taken out of play, Woodside would be tolerable and perhaps even enjoyable. But, even in a new incarnation, it feels cramped, pressuring, and some of the hazard placements are downright cynical. The greens will quickly dispel any acquired amusement, and more than one is virtually unplayable. 2/10

Challenge

Plenty will take shots away from you – the awkwardly-shaped fairway bunkers, dodgy elevations and the somewhat excessive water. But none are as bad as the greens: a veritable no-no for anyone with serious golfing pretensions. 1/10

Technical

I've always reserved my worst criticisms for technical errors that impact directly on the gameplay, and in not ironing out the putting surfaces (or, at the very least, planting some playable pins), John has played his part in making this course miserable. The greens don't even look realistic, far less play it, and any good work which has been put in has been swiftly undone by the impossibility of landing reasonable putts. 3/10

Overall	A few interesting hole designs undone by greens that are beyond ridiculousness.	14/50
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Worksop Gorselands

Stephen Sullivan



Description

Real, heathland course

Screenshot

2nd hole, Par 4

Par

72

Location

Nottinghamshire

Conditions

I would advise against F*/F* in favour of something slightly slower.

Concept

There's not a lot here that stands out from the ordinary, but there's also still a very curious English appeal about Worksop Gorselands, which is partly the result of extensive care and attention from the designer, and partly due to the customisation and homeliness of this short course. There is little in terms of stand-out hole design, but there is oodles and oodles of atmosphere, which is more than enough reason to keep playing this one. 6/10

Appearance

The HD makeover brings a perfect yellowing set of textures to what was already a very fine course. The planting is mixed up superbly and clones are almost impossible to spot. The little things, like the fences and clubhouse are all very conducive to Worsop's involving atmosphere; my only concern is that the panorama seems to have been set a little too high, and towers over the plot at points. 9/10

Playability

I enjoyed Worksop hugely, and I'd expect many others to do the same. There's a premium on accuracy and sensible course management, but there are also some delightfully tiny Par 5s and opportunities to attack the pins. In fact, there are very few angles on this course that won't leave you a decent line into the green which is fun, if hardly a great challenge. 8/10

Challenge

...and speaking of the challenge, well there's not very much to be fair. Plenty of Eagle chances and tap-in birdies to be had, as well as a lack of deep rough, water and general obstruction. There are merits in the well-placed bunkers, and some rather tough putts, but that really isn't enough to deter anyone from shooting a low, low score. 2/10

Technical

There's very little left to correct now that the textures have been overhauled and the few remaining extrusion marks removed. It would still be nice to see the customisation extended to the tee markers and flags, which now stand out a little, and the panorama could do with being somewhat less intrusive, but this is a great culmination of the work on a first course. 9/10

Overall	Very English and very atmospheric. Also very easy.	34/50
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Wraith Canyon

Paul Seaman



Description

Fictional, mountain course

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 4, from fairway

Concept

One of Links' best and most prolific designers continues on his quest to apparently design courses in every genre going. Squatting beneath a gorgeous and towering backdrop, Wraith Canyon is a very clever use of realistic, natural elevations, and run through with some subtly exciting hole design. Perhaps the water features are a little more dominant than they should be, and the paths seem to have an annoying habit of coming into play, but there is otherwise very little to fault. 8/10

Appearance

In this instance, the water can justify taking centre stage. It's perfectly textured and deliciously planted around. The textures strike you as experimental, but almost justified on an experimental course such as this. The panorama is a towering work of genius. However, the forest planting is a little sparser than I feel it should be, and I can't say I'm crazy about the paths. 9/10

Playability

Paul has carefully avoided building too many complex holes into Wraith Canyon, letting his precise elevation work determine the challenge. It's a clever underplay to a round that starts and finishes with a bang, and in the hands of a lesser designer, a course might get boring. Not this time. 8/10

Challenge

Although the water isn't always directly in the line of play, you do get the feeling it has been shoe-horned in a little to support this relatively short course. Certainly the sandy hazards are designed as punishment rather than challenge, and the rough is relatively free. The greens are as rolling as the rest of the course, and tricky putts are guaranteed – in fact I had to four-putt one green. The net result, rightly or wrongly, is that the challenge is the most artificial part of this fictional course, and has taken over the landscape a little bit more than it should. 6/10

Technical

There's no disputing the ability on offer here. Despite some 'alternative' ideas in a track a long way from the designer's home radar, this is effective both visually and playwise. 9/10

Overall	Perhaps not the most coherent of Paul's courses, but that should certainly be no reason to overlook it.	40/50
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Wyntoon Club

Mark Franzoia



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, dunes course	7 th hole, Par 4	73
Location		
Modelled after the Californian coast.		
Conditions		
Slowest greens only, but windy conditions add a <i>frisson</i> of interest.		

Concept

Stunningly beautiful in its use of elevations and colours, Wyntoon traipses across sand dunes and ocean beaches. Hole design is florid (a little too much so in the case of the bunkers, which smack of overkill, particularly on a sand-based course) and the set-up is unashamedly for challenging golf, particularly greenside. The sheer *joie de vivre* with which this totally immersive environment has been brought to life, though, is more than a match for any doubting players. It'll be unlikely that you can play this course with any seriousness, especially given the lack of previews, but it simply must be experienced. 9/10

Appearance

Some amazing views are to be had on virtually every hole, and the majority have elevated tees in order to show off the splendour even better. The coastline and rockwork is extremely skilful, and there is no little attention to detail in the grasses and bunkers. Sadly, on one or two occasions, the view is marred by some obvious clones (with one particular tall tree being noticeably intrusive), and the extrusions spoil more than one hole. 8/10

Playability

Sheer joy, especially when played without the pressure of stiff greens. Each hole is designed for maximum risk-reward: there are often alternative routes, and occasionally alternative greens. The fairways are more open than they first appear, and judicious texture application means that escapes from the rough are possible. The effrontery of the design means you're more likely than not to go right round in a sense of wonder. 10/10

Challenge

Some unfriendly greens will not help many players. Indeed, the elevations have been ramped up to something not short of unfair, and on many greens putts of over 10 feet will be extremely lucky to go in. Combine this with the frequent deep bunkers, massive Par 5s, and testing tee shots, and you really get the impression that this course bites back. With any luck, you'll be having enough fun not to notice your plus-six round. 5/10

Technical

A little construction on the bunker lips is necessary: they fold way too much. Some pruning of the clones would be good, too. And the greens are lacking in elevational subtlety and are distinctly unfriendly to the Mod player. The extrusion marks are a significant obstacle. With so many technical imperfections, it's really quite impressive how amazing this course is! 5/10

Overall	A hugely impressive course with just about as many stunning views as can be crammed into 18 holes. Daunting, but thoroughly immersive.	37/50
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Xanadu

Dave Mackey



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

If prizes were given for the greatest course packed into the smallest file size, surely Xanadu would take the award. It's not a great course by any means, but it's amazing that it's been packed into a 4MB file. It's a course that takes no prisoners, with very hilly lies, impenetrable forest and rough, and hole design that serves to punish, rather than challenge. Miss your snaps, and a large score is guaranteed. 5/10

Appearance

Obviously, in a small file, the look of the course is going to suffer. It's not completely terrible by any means, but the textures are stretched, elevations are improbable, clones are frequent and the water features look laughable. The panorama, too, is out of match with the course, which shows what happens when you use stock. 3/10

Playability

I lost count of the number of times I had to play a 'rescue' chip back onto the fairway during my practice round. The design of this course clearly hasn't factored in for wayward players, and it makes a frustrating and irritating round. There's too much emphasis on target golf at Xanadu, not enough strategy and too much punishment for those who don't play perfect golf. Those on advanced swing types will want to steer clear. 3/10

Challenge

With punishing rough, trees crowding onto the fairway, and near-unreadable greens, scores are likely to rocket. I scored just one birdie 4 in my +7 test round and found the course more of a frustration than a fair test. The elevations were most to blame, and you'd be extremely lucky to get a flat lie in this hilly arena. 3/10

Technical

The technical work is quite coarse, to be honest. The water areas are most in need of attention, closely followed by the bunkers and need to vary the planting some more. A custom mountain panorama would help no end. With some fine tuning to the difficulty levels, this would be a much better course. 2/10

Overall	Rough, ready and very hard, Xanadu might be an acquired taste, a bit like the Olivia Newton-John song.	<i>16/50</i>
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Xilver Hollow

Rick Weathers



Description

Fictional, short course

Screenshot

3rd hole, Par 3, from tee.

Concept

As a practice facility, Xilver Hollow has one or two edges on its nearest rival, The Complex. The huge range of tees allow players to practice virtually any length from 25 yards to 125 yards, and the greens feature a range of slopes, from nearly flat to nearly ridiculous. The whole thing is set amid believable woodland and the occasional small touch on the part of the designer will bring a smile of acknowledgement. Earth-shattering it is not, but it might find an unexpected place in close-to-pin and other 'bet'

competitions as well as for the function it was created. 4/10

Appearance

The hastily-extruded tee boxes look silly, and the textures were clearly a matter of convenience, rather than hard work. The trees blend well with the panorama, although it is slightly disconcerting to gaze upon the infinite numbers of trees stretching into the distance. The occasional bit of planting and the nice clubhouse does not go amiss, but this is still a course that was put together hastily. 3/10

Playability

It would have been better to have greens that were a little missable, or a bunker or two. I know the course isn't supposed to be a dazzling feat of complexity, but a little variety wouldn't have hurt. There's decent fun enough to be had in trying to get close to the pins, particularly from different tees; you'll want an MoP other than strokeplay to get the most out of this course. 4/10

Challenge

Thanks to some tricky green moulding, Xilver Hollow isn't quite a complete pushover, although in many cases you'll be close enough to the pin for gradients to make little difference. The pin positions will inevitably be a major – if not the only – factor in deciding your score. 2/10

Technical

It's not much of a technical exercise, this, but what has been done has been done acceptably. It was nice to see the designer using the clubhouse as an excuse for a bit of flamboyance. 4/10

Overall	A decent practice facility and possible home to a 'bet' game or two.	17/50
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Xilver Lagoon

Rick Weathers



Description

Imaginary, tropical/lakeside course.

Screenshot

1st hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

As the name promises, 18 holes surround an inshore lagoon. Water plays a big part on this course, and you'll need a good game to keep your ball dry, because the hole design tends towards the sadistic. The course doesn't quite ring true for me: perhaps it's the overkill of palm trees, perhaps it's the bizarre assortment of colours. More likely, it's the fact that the course wasn't designed with fair golf in mind and ultimately becomes a frustration. 4/10

Appearance

The garish looks didn't particularly do it for me. The riot of textures used around each tee box was distracting and completely unnecessary, and I don't think the pink planting was in keeping with the tone of the course. Add this to the awful, repetitive lakeside grass planting (looked like a shaving brush!) and some iffy elevation work, and there's not much to see, to be brutally honest. 4/10

Playability

Problems, problems, problems. Not only is landing in the water a continual annoyance, but you're unlikely to get a drop in a decent playable lie. Tee shots are frequently throttled back, artificially, because you're keen not to miss the tight fairways. There is little convincing risk/reward, and the hole lengths do not appear to be sufficiently varied. It's not a total drag, but Xilver Lagoon is not a course that you will enjoy playing a four-round tournament on. 3/10

Challenge

As you can imagine, hitting the water is inevitable, and the unnecessary rolling elevations (shouldn't this be a flattish landscape?) mean a distinct lack of good fairway lies. The greens are similar, many being ramped up to the point of inconvenience, and you should not automatically expect to be able to two-putt. The few birdie opportunities will come with sensible play on the Par 5s, but overall scores will probably tend towards the 80 mark. 4/10

Technical

With some tidier elevations and planting, this would get a high mark. The technical ability holds this course up, to some extent. The track as a whole is pleading for the same design but with better golf. And at the end of the day, it's the round of golf that should count for the most. 6/10

Overall

Something of a disappointment, given the designer's strong reputation. Too difficult, too garish and not enough thought applied to the game of golf.

21/50

Xilver Plaine

Rick Weathers



Description

Fictional, heathland course

Screenshot

15th hole, Par 4, from fairway.

Concept

At the time, Xilver Plaine marked an immense step up for its designer. From the breathtaking view on the 1st tee, to the superb risk/reward options that follow, the course offers you a massive variety of challenges and straddles the fine line between countryside and club golf by twisting through unusual, terraced terrain. It's great golf in good surroundings, and you can't ask for a lot more. 9/10

Appearance

The repeated iterations of this course have led to incredibly realistic standards of planting and a lot of attention applied to the peripheral areas. The bunkers are delightfully sculpted, and the brick terraces look a great deal more natural than they could in the hands of a less experienced designer. Textures are excellent on the whole, and the elevation is convincing, even in these extreme surroundings. 10/10

Playability

The large fairways, and the constant thought that you will need to apply to the risk/reward options, mean that there is an innate set of luxuriousness about Xilver Plaine. Perhaps most gratifyingly, the trademark holes are spread evenly throughout the course, which gives the area a sense of natural balance that is rarely present in fictional creations. 9/10

Challenge

The course is pretty tricky, all told. There's no guarantee of making any greens, and the Par 3s – surprisingly, given their short length and lack of hazards – are pretty tricky. Even when you get there, there will be fairly awkward pin placements and gradients to deal with. If it weren't so much fun to play, I could see a few players giving up in disgust. 6/10

Technical

The course looks absolutely terrific. All the right boxes have been ticked, and the designer's careful hand with unusual but realistic landscape has rarely – if ever – been exceeded. I can't say I'm overly fond of the habit of extruding the rough areas above the tee boxes; it does look artificial, and probably will do until somebody decides to sculpt individual blades of grass. 9/10

Overall	A great course on the boundary between wild country and tame club surroundings, and the best of the Xilver family. A lot of good, original challenges without being overtly gimmicky.	<i>43/50</i>
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Xilver Prairie

Rick Weathers



Description

Fictional, farmland course

Screenshot

11th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

Clearly set amid old farmland, with the stone terracing a constant reminder, Xilver Prairie is a clever battle between a cunning architect and a brave golfer. Artful hole designs, not least the 6th and 16th, keep you on your toes, and the whole course tends to the flamboyant rather than the straightforward. The atmosphere is excellent, complemented by the farm-style touches and the long fescue grass that dominates the planting. Just now and again, not least down the closing stretch, there's a bizarre

landscape feature which makes you think 'was that really necessary', and these excessive touches are a little spoiler. 8/10

Appearance

Some impressive views are to be had over the rolling hills and the water features, and the planting and panorama merge impeccably. For some reason, though the whole course looks distinctly grainy – perhaps due to the dual colours in both planting and textures. The terraced walls are actually less impressive than in previous incarnations, although the texture set is thankfully much improved. 8/10

Playability

The main frustration here is the lack of visibility off the tee. Without a top view, it's difficult to hit many of the winding fairways, and consequently it's harder to accurately calculate approach shots. Let it not be said, though, that this course is incapable of throwing up surprises, novelties and challenges: it is more than packed with its fair share of enticements. 7/10

Challenge

Despite the gimmickry, Xilver Prairie remains a perfect balance between clever hazard placement, challenging but readable greens, a multitude of lies, and some inviting Par 3s. Mis-aligned drives will cost shots in the long run, but play with intelligence, and the course will give you every chance to earn back those dropped shots. 10/10

Technical

The attention that has gone into keeping the course coherent is superb, and the course has gone through successive incarnations to subtly improve its layout and appearance. It is still missing some of the sobriety and realism that mark the best fictional courses, and would not be chosen for many for strictly competitive golf thanks to a reduced player perspective, but it's very, very good for all that. 9/10

Overall	A well-stylised and well-pitched set of 18 holes. Not always wholly believable, but worth checking out for the clever landscaping and some original ideas.	42/50
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Yarra Yarra Golf Club

Stuart Kahle



Description

Real, estate course

Screenshot

18th hole, Par 5, from fairway.

Concept

The genre of sprawling, flat courses just adopted another candidate. It's true that Yarra Yarra isn't exactly standout, but it's homely enough for all that. There's been care taken with the Links conversion, with some customisation thrown in, in order to provide a distinctive look, but nothing can disguise the very ordinary hole design and the fact that most holes don't present anything more than a very straightforward objective and challenge. 4/10

Appearance

Yarra Yarra very much suffers from the endlessly repeating rough textures that have so often dragged down courses of this type. The texture colour choices are unusual, to be polite. There's a decent effort made with the planting, although it does come across as more than a little random and disorganised. Even the course buildings and the sports cars in the car park can't disguise the fact that there isn't really very much to see. 3/10

Playability

Amiable golf, to be sure. The hole design is no great shakes, but there is a little variation and the course presents a reasonable set of challenges without becoming too repetitive. It's easy to dash off a round in short order, and it wouldn't be difficult to go back for another. It's doubtful whether there's too much long-term appeal, though. 5/10

Challenge

There's precious little to stand in your way. No fairway hazards, no deep rough and very little in the way of elevational change. The greenside bunkers universally provide a reasonable escape. The greens are pleasingly moderate and those birdie and eagle putts will just slip in. Expect to score low – very, very low indeed. 1/10

Technical

Reasonable work, as would be expected from the designer. His courses are oldies – and unashamedly showing their age – but goodies, on the whole, and Yarra Yarra has maintained an indefinable appeal many years later. It wouldn't take too much work to give this a modern updating, and that is tribute to the original work. 4/10

Overall	Not particularly outstanding, but far from decrepit. Yarra Yarra is not too different to a host of other courses, but perfectly playable for all that.	17/50
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Zachary O Golf & Country Club

Joe Cassar



Description

Fictional, parkland course

Screenshot

12th hole, Par 5, approach.

Concept

A noble dedication notwithstanding, Zachary O is somewhat disjointed and unreal. It too often substitutes water hazards for intelligent thought, and the amount of gimmickry in previous incarnations stretched credibility to breaking point. Thankfully, the designer has eased back on the throttle and removed some of the worse glaring hazards for the latest incarnation, and it has to be said that the course feels much better as a result. Realistic, definitely not, but at least I don't feel picked-upon while playing it. 3/10

Appearance

The texture set is massively improved (although the milky-white water takes some appreciating), and there are nice touches in terms of the riverbanks and stakes. Planting is still a bit determinedly random when it could easily play a more integral part in the course, and the multitude of extrusion marks are ugly, but for the large part the course looks good without being outstanding. 5/10

Playability

Much, much improved from the previous incarnation. With more eye candy and less feeling of being picked on by the course, this is a much more amenable round of golf. It's still somewhat tricked-up and target oriented, but not to the extent where you can't sit back and enjoy yourself. There seems to be a balance to the hole lengths that wasn't there before, and the whole is brought to life by helpful and informative hole previews. 7/10

Challenge

The big let-down here is the Par 5s. While the short holes are immaculately scenic, and the Par 4s are beautifully thought-out for the second shot, there's something missing on the longest holes. Either they're too short, or the hazards just aren't appropriate enough. Either way, it's certainly a gap in the overall experience. 7/10

Technical

The real key to earning marks is the improvement being shown with experience. The course looks better and feels more natural. There are definitely flaws still: not least the odd appearance of the water and rough regions and some hasty work with the mesh, but for persevering with this horrible job, the designer deserves full credit. 5/10

Overall	Lots of credit to the designer for bringing something not terribly palatable to the verge of credibility.	27/50
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Zanzibar Golf Club

Eric Loft



Description	Screenshot	Par
Fictional, tropical course	1 st hole, Par 4	72

Location

Zanzibar, presumably

Conditions

Plays well on M*/M* and perhaps even a little faster.

Concept

Something of a landmark in course creation, it's impressive how well Zanzibar has held up today. Not as overblown as many a tropical course, it has its fair share of landmark holes (notably the 9th and 18th, which are little masterpieces), but between them is clever and subtle golfing design in a very natural style. It's amazing when you consider the course is now well over ten years old, and still holds up well by many modern standards. The biggest let-down is the sad lack of hole previews and the resultant problem that at times you're not sure where you're going. 8/10

Appearance

There are much newer courses that have dated much worse than this one. The textures are customised, and while the deep rough is somewhat speckly at distance, still hold up reasonably well. The planting is well mixed up, and some underplanting is still present. Hazard creation has clearly taken some thought to avoid the embarrassing hard edges that dog so many courses. Yes, it's still a bit blocky and it's doubtful you'll really believe you are in Zanzibar, but there are far worse things to rest your eyes upon. 7/10

Playability

Above absolutely any other factor, the fact that Zanzibar has retained its ability to be played on fast greens is the most remarkable. The greening is terribly complex at times, with ridges and tiers galore, but the whole experience screams 'good playtesting' as you'll consistently find makeable putts. The pin positions, though, have meant some pretty tough pins close to the edge, which can especially be problematic on the approaches over water. 8/10

Challenge

Given some relatively kind greens, this is still a tough old course. Deep rough crowds the fairways and effective bunkering means regulation greens are few and far between. Even with a good rescue game, there are some hidden water hazards to swallow up a fair few strokes, and without any way to see where your drive is going after the first 150 yards in a many cases, there is definitely an argument that this is bordering on the unfair. 5/10

Technical

With the exception of a few bunker lips, there is scarcely a technical error that impacts directly on the play, which is quite unique among courses of this pedigree. Sure, there are one or two visual issues, but there's little of the ugliness that we've seen blight other courses. No wonder this was a trend-setter. 7/10

Overall	The veteran of all quality Links courses and still remarkably accessible.	35/50
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Zoe Lakes CC

Tim Hagen



Description

Fictional, woodland course

Screenshot

7th hole, Par 4, from tee.

Concept

To be terribly honest, I'm not convinced by Zoe Lakes. It's Augusta-esque in the large open stretches between the woods, but there the resemblance ends. Hole design is clever but convoluted, and there is no defineable sense of location: the flattish layout of the course is in stark contrast to the dramatic backdrop. The whole thing simply doesn't gel as a course and you get the impression that the designer is just using some fancy hole layouts as a fallback. 4/10

Appearance

The blandness of the textures and the many clones in the treeline do little to convince you that you're in real settings, and some parts of the planting (the long grasses and water plants) look like an afterthought. Good views really are difficult to come by, thanks to some barren and blocky architecture. 4/10

Playability

There's certainly a good game to be had at Zoe Lakes, if you can overlook some of the visual problems. A good variety between open and restrictive holes keeps your game moving along well, and a few surprises are thrown up along the way. Sadly, the view off the tee starts to look a bit familiar after a while as the ideas dry up. 7/10

Challenge

A tough course, thanks to narrow landing areas and some really tough greens. The Par 5s, in particular, are over-pitched and will probably lead to dropped shots. Throw in some well-bunkered fairways, and the eponymous lakes, and you'll be lucky to break par here. It's not all bad news, but the overwhelming impression is that you're playing the course, rather than your opponents. 6/10

Technical

I'm not keen on the textures and the blends used for the bunkers look very rough and ready. The planting needs a thorough Beta test, and several areas of the course could be forced into Mod-friendliness. Everything looks outwardly fairly smooth and unruffled, but the overall appearance just doesn't work for me. 5/10

Overall	Quite mediocre. Some nice little designs, but too many visual flaws to compete with the big boys.	26/50
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The Top 150-ish

(All courses scoring 40 or more. Don't miss these ones!)

Course	Designer	Type	Style	Location	Par	Cond	C	A	P	Ch	T	Total
Adam's Tree	Paul Seaman	F	P	Oceania			10	10	9	10	10	49
Burn's Old Links	Mike Jones	F	Li	Scotland			10	10	10	9	10	49
Pine Valley	Rob Miller	R	Fo	USA - NE			10	10	10	9	10	49
Crooked Creek	Wayne Hewitt	F	W	Oceania	72	FF	10	10	10	9	9	48
Rugged Dune	Mike Jones	F	Du	USA - W			10	10	9	9	10	48
Shinnecock	Rob Miller	R	Fa	USA - NE	70	FF	10	9	10	9	10	48
Whistling Straits	Rob Miller	R	Du	USA - C	72	FF	10	9	10	9	10	48
Bethpage Black	Rob Miller	R	P	USA - NE			10	10	9	8	10	47
Château Bourrache	Mitch Sirk	F	E	France			10	9	8	10	10	47
Craters Edge	Gary Campbell	F	Ca	USA - MW			10	10	10	8	9	47
Duine Mara	Paul Seaman	F	Du	Scotland	70	FF	10	10	9	8	10	47
Excelsior	Adriaan Maarschalk	F	H	Africa			9	10	9	10	9	47
Kanaal New	Mitch Sirk	F	Ma	Central Europe	71	SS	9	9	10	9	10	47
Las Joyas	Mike Jones	F	La	Spain			9	10	9	9	10	47
Pebble Beach	Chuck Clark	R	O	USA - W			10	10	8	9	10	47
Pilgrim Trails	Mike Jones	F	W	USA - NE			9	10	8	10	10	47
Pinehurst	Rob Miller	R	W	USA - SE			8	10	10	9	10	47
Ballylecum Castle	Jon Weinrieb	F	Li	Scotland			10	10	8	8	10	46
Colonial	Eric Dorsey	R	E	USA - S			10	9	9	8	10	46
Crystal Pines	Mike Jones	F	Mo	Central Europe			9	10	8	9	10	46
Engineers	Rob Miller	R	E	USE - NE	71	MM	9	10	10	7	10	46
Old Cypress East	Jon Weinrieb	F	Ma	USA - W			10	10	10	6	10	46
Owelstery	Mitch Sirk	F	P	England - S			9	10	9	8	10	46
Portmarnock	John Aherne	R	Li	Ireland			9	9	10	8	10	46
Prairie Dog	Chuck Clark	F	Fa	USA - MW			10	9	10	7	10	46
Prestnoch	Dominique Bois	F	Li	Scotland			8	9	10	10	9	46
Royal Melbourne	Peter Gemmill	R	H	Oceania	73	MF	10	8	9	10	9	46
Shadowlands	Mike Jones	F	Du	USA - NE			10	10	8	8	10	46
St Christophers Bay	Kristoffer Selberg	F	Li	Scotland			10	9	8	10	9	46
Turnberry	Stewart Parker	R	Li	Scotland	70	MF	10	9	8	9	10	46
Wentworth West	Curt Simms	R	W	England - S			9	10	10	7	10	46
Anakena Beach	Lez Marwick	F	T	Pacific	72	MF	9	9	10	7	10	45
Ardennes Dunes	Andrew Jones	F	Du	USA - SE			10	10	8	8	9	45

Augusta	Andrew Jones	R	E	USA - C	72	FF	10	9	9	7	10	45
Brydestone	Mitch Sirk	I	H	England - N			10	10	9	7	9	45
Bunclody	John Aherne	R	E	Ireland			9	10	9	7	10	45
Cara Brae	Mike Jones	F	O	Ireland			9	10	9	7	10	45
Dark Woods	Mat Leclair	F	Fo	USA - MW			9	10	8	8	10	45
Errislannan Cliffs	Tim Hagen	F	Li	Ireland			7	10	9	10	9	45
Hopeman	Stewart Parker	R	Li	Scotland			8	10	9	8	10	45
K Club Smurfit	John Aherne	R	H	Ireland			9	10	10	8	8	45
Lost Lake Legend	Bob Hankla	F	La	USA - MW			10	10	9	6	10	45
Oklahoma Crossings	Johnny Holland	F	H	USA - S			9	9	10	7	10	45
Pine Dunes	Jamey Hribal	F	Du	USA - S			9	10	9	8	9	45
Quidnet	Jon Weinrieb	F	H	USA - NE			8	10	8	9	10	45
RC Kilderry	Mike Jones	F	Fa	Ireland			10	9	10	7	9	45
River Creek	Steve Bausch	F	E	USA - SE			8	10	9	8	10	45
Shaking Tree	Bill Scott	F	Fa	USA - NE			9	9	10	8	9	45
St Andrews Old	Stewart Parker	R	Li	Scotland	72	MS	10	9	10	7	9	45
The Vintage	Peter Gemmill	R	H	Oceania			10	9	8	9	9	45
Atlantic Point	Mike Jones	F	Li	Scotland			8	9	10	7	10	44
Carton House O'Meara	Peter Beckwith	R	P	Ireland	72	MF	9	9	9	8	9	44
Casten Acres	Peter Beckwith	F	P	USA - NE			9	8	10	8	9	44
Copperhead	Lacy Gearhart	F	P	USA - W			9	9	7	10	9	44
Darwin Point	Lez Marwick	F	Mo	USA -W	72	FF	8	9	10	7	10	44
Druids Glen	Anders Bessermann	R	P	Ireland			9	10	9	7	9	44
Huntingdale	Jason Thorpe	R	W	Oceania	72	FM	9	10	10	5	10	44
Kapalua Plantation	Andrew Jones	R	Ca	Pacific			10	9	10	6	9	44
Oakmont	Scott Lewin	R	Fa	USA - NE			10	9	10	6	9	44
Pacific Breaks	Mike Jones	F	O	USA - W			10	9	8	7	10	44
Royal Dornoch	Dominique Bois	R	Li	Scotland	70	MM	10	9	10	5	10	44
Royal Kurland	Dominique Bois	F	Li	Scottish Isles			10	9	9	9	7	44
Royal Troon	Stewart Parker	R	Li	Scotland	71	MS	10	9	10	7	8	44
Slainte Mhath	Kjell Johansson	F	Li	Scotland			10	10	8	7	9	44
The Crusoe Course	Ross Anthony	I	T	Pacific			10	9	10	6	9	44
Wellington Point	Gus Green	F	O	Oceania			9	9	7	10	9	44
Babylon Ridge	Mike Jones	F	E	USA - MW			10	9	7	7	10	43
Banyan Bay	Gary Campbell	F	O	Pacific			9	10	9	5	10	43
Bartlett Springs	Peter Beckwith	F	Ma	USA - C	71	MF	9	9	7	8	10	43
Buck Creek	Art Patscheck	F	Fo	USA - C			10	10	7	6	10	43
Bull Run	Eddie Schmidt	F	E	USA - NE			10	10	10	3	10	43

Carlyon Lakes	Paul Seaman	F	W	England - M	72	MM	7	10	9	7	10	43
Carrie Park	Johnny Holland	F	P	USA - C			9	10	9	6	9	43
Fontana	Tom Wagner	R	H	Central Europe			9	8	10	8	8	43
Iron Forest	François Cristallo	I	T	Central America			9	10	6	9	9	43
Sanctuary	David Schmelzer	R	Mo	USA - MW			10	9	8	7	9	43
Sarazen Links	Gordon Martin	F	Li	Scotland			10	8	9	6	10	43
Spey Valley	Stewart Parker	R	H	Scotland			9	10	7	7	10	43
Tall Pines Estate	Wayne Hewitt	F	E	USA - NE			10	9	10	4	10	43
Three Horseshoes	Robert A Hurst	F	Fo	USA - C			9	10	7	7	10	43
Tillicum Island	Jack Hartt	F	O	USA - W	72	MM	10	9	9	7	8	43
Waterstone	Jason Thorpe	F	La	Oceania			8	9	10	7	9	43
Xilver Plaine	Rick Weathers	F	H	USA - W			9	10	9	6	9	43
Brabazon-Belfry	Dark Horse	R	P	England - M			10	9	9	5	9	42
Coogans Bluff	Gary Campbell	F	La	Ireland			9	10	7	6	10	42
El Escorpion	Mike Jones	F	H	Spain			8	8	10	7	9	42
Enniscrone	Stewart Parker	R	Du	Ireland			10	8	7	9	8	42
FaircInnis	Chuck Clark	I	Li	USA - W			8	9	9	8	8	42
Kapa'a	Paul Woodbury	F	T	Pacific			9	9	9	5	10	42
Kill Devil Hills	Eddie Schmidt	F	Li	USA - SE			8	7	8	10	9	42
Meresbrook Forest	Alan Toft	F	Fo	England - M	72	SM	10	9	8	7	8	42
Oakland Hills S	Steve Avery	R	E	USA - C			7	8	9	10	8	42
Piazza Metallica	Jörg Jobmann	I	Co	Central Europe			10	10	8	6	8	42
Spyglass Hill	Eddie Schmidt	R	O	USA - W			8	9	6	10	9	42
Stansbury	Peter Beckwith	F	E	USA - W	72	FM	9	9	10	5	9	42
TPC Boston	Steve Avery	R	W	USA - NE			9	9	9	6	9	42
Tron	Noah Neumann	I	Co	Fantasy			10	8	9	6	9	42
Wagga Wagga	Wayne Hewitt	R	P	Oceania			8	10	9	5	10	42
Woodbridge	Matthew Woodbridge	F	Li	Scotland			9	6	8	10	9	42
Xilver Prairie	Rick Weathers	F	Fa	USA - MW			8	8	7	10	9	42
Ash Mountain	Zeke Seidel	F	Mo	Canada			7	8	9	9	8	41
Black Rose	Paul Seaman	F	Fo	England - M			8	9	8	7	9	41
Candlestick Blue	Paul Seaman	F	De	USA - MW			5	7	10	10	9	41
Classic Club	Matt Henry	R	De	USA - W	72	FF	8	7	9	9	8	41
Congressional	Andrew Jones	R	E	USA - NE	71	FF	7	9	6	9	10	41
Driftwood	Mike Jones	F	P				7	9	8	8	9	41
Eagle Mountain	Fred Briggson	F	Mo	USA - C	72	FS	8	7	9	9	8	41
Esker Field	John Aherne	F	Fa	Scotland			8	10	9	5	9	41
Faerne	Tim Radl	F	Li	Scottish Isles			8	8	10	7	8	41

Harbour Town	Eddie Schmidt	R	Fo	USA - SE			7	10	8	6	10	41
Kauri Cliffs	Microsoft	R	Ca	Oceania			8	9	8	8	8	41
Medinah	John Pineda	R	Fo	USA - C	72	FM	9	8	7	9	8	41
Mordhel	Leigh Seaman	F	Fo	England - M			8	9	10	5	9	41
Northern Dunes	Mike Jones	F	Li	England - N	72	MS	10	7	8	9	7	41
Roganstown	John Aherne	R	E	Ireland			9	10	9	3	10	41
Shenandoah Ridge	Mike Cropf	F	W	USA - NE	72	MM	8	7	9	9	8	41
Southernness	Stewart Parker	R	Li	Scotland	69	MF	7	9	7	8	10	41
The Barrens	Mike Hornak	F	Du	England - M	72	SF	9	8	9	7	8	41
Westchester	Steve Avery	R	P	USA - C			7	9	8	8	9	41
Whitewebbs	David Meader	F	P	England - M	72	MS	7	8	9	8	9	41
Autumn Valley	Wayne Hewitt	F	P	USA - NE	72	MM	9	9	9	5	8	40
Balmoral	Noah Neumann	F	Li	Scotland			10	8	10	4	8	40
Battley Peak	Lez Marwick	F	Fa	England - N	72	MM	9	9	7	6	9	40
Boat of Garten	Stewart Parker	R	Mo	Scotland			8	9	6	7	10	40
Bountiful	Microsoft	R	Mo	USA - MW			9	7	8	8	8	40
Carnoustie	Peter Monk	R	Li	Scotland			9	8	9	6	8	40
Jacob's Creek	Jacob Seersholm	F	Ma	Scandinavia	72	MM	8	8	9	7	8	40
Margaret's Bay	Lez Marwick	F	Li	England - S	71	MM	9	9	8	6	8	40
Midnight GC	Lars Rudbeck	R	Co	Scandinavia			10	9	8	4	9	40
Nautilus Bay	Adriaan Maarschalk	F	Li	Africa			7	9	9	6	9	40
Rivendell	Eric Hruby	I	Co	Fantasy			10	10	9	1	10	40
Riviera	Chuck Clark	R	E	USA - W			6	10	6	8	10	40
Royal Kenya	Mike Jones	R	H	Africa	71	FF	7	9	8	6	10	40
Sawgrass	Anders Bessermann	R	La	USA -SE			10	7	10	5	8	40
The General	Matt McIntosh	F	W	USA - MW	70	MM	6	8	9	9	8	40
Thunder GC	Mike Nicely	R	Ma	USA - C			7	9	8	7	9	40
Twin Mallard	Bill Scott	F	P				8	10	7	7	8	40
Watery Grave	Chuck Clark	I	Ma	Canada			7	10	5	8	10	40
Wraith Canyon	Paul Seaman	F	Mo	Canada			8	9	8	6	9	40

Courses You Might Have Missed

(A celebration of courses that score high in one category but low in others)

A Good Idea – On Paper

(High concept, low appearance)

- 1) Hilina Pali
- 2) The Catwalk
- 3) The Experience @ Alberta
- 4) Wacky World
- 5) Victory Grounds
- 6) Bay Hill
- 7) Europe 2006
- 8) Infamous
- 9) Whistler Lake
- 10) Silver Springs

Never Mind the Score...

(High concept, low challenge)

- 1) Rivendell
- 2) Doonbeg
- 3) Wacky World II
- 4) Bull Run
- 5) Puttenham
- 6) Trophy Club
- 7) Tall Pines Estate
- 8) Balmoral
- 9) Midnight GC
- 10) Southern Pines

Poor on Paper; Great on Screen

(Low concept, high appearance)

- 1) Devils Lake South
- 2) Serenity
- 3) Augusta Par 3
- 4) Edgbaston
- 5) Prairie Dunes
- 6) Riviera
- 7) Bardgate House
- 8) Timberlands
- 9) Robina Woods
- 10) Covered Bridge

...Never Mind the Course!

(Low concept, high challenge)

- 1) Warwick Hills
- 2) War Acres
- 3) Players 18
- 4) The Pinnacle
- 5) Bogie Lake
- 6) Firestone South
- 7) Hobo's Valley
- 8) Craggamoor
- 9) Santa Barbara's Finest
- 10) North Surface Club

Thought it'd Be Great

(High concept, low playability)

- 1) Space Adventure
- 2) Dustin Trophy
- 3) Nurubian Nights
- 4) Pine Forest Hills
- 5) Las Brisas
- 6) Jungle Utopia
- 7) Buck Creek
- 8) Babylon Ridge
- 9) Spirit Hollow
- 10) Enniscrone

What Did You Want Again?

(High concept, low technical)

- 1) Sniper's Alley
- 2) Midtown Municipal
- 3) Moosevalley
- 4) Muirfield Village
- 5) Woburn
- 6) Enzesfeld
- 7) The Woodlands
- 8) Cala Mesquida Pines
- 9) Wyntoon
- 10) Oslerbrook

A Golfer's Surprise

(Low concept, high playability)

- 1) Eagle Trace
- 2) Candlestick Blue
- 3) Box Canyon
- 4) Ice Castle
- 5) OutWorld
- 6) Sandlot Shores
- 7) Gooseneck Bay
- 8) Harbinger Valley
- 9) Princeville
- 10) The Bone Lagoon

Masters of Detail

(Low concept, high technical)

- 1) Walnut Grove
- 2) Saigon
- 3) Meadowood
- 4) Bushido Gardens
- 5) Carton House Monty
- 6) Aitch Heath Municipal
- 7) Riverside Valley
- 8) Mowsbury
- 9) Hyland Greens
- 10) Sorento

Just Look...

(High appearance, low playability)

- 1) Cog Hill
- 2) Watery Grave
- 3) Hell Fire
- 4) Bishop's Amble
- 5) Absarokee Gap
- 6) Crocodile Creeks
- 7) Iron Forest
- 8) Kansas National
- 9) TAD River West
- 10) Jubilee Pines

Hidden Gems

(Low appearance, high playability)

- 1) Koh Samui
- 2) Great Southern Aurora
- 3) Le Golf National
- 4) Doral Great White
- 5) Growlinridge
- 6) Lava Rock
- 7) Saxon Vale
- 8) Jordan's Creek
- 9) St Andrews New
- 10) Chipping Championship

Artist's Joy

(High appearance, low challenge)

- 1) Roganstown
- 2) Devils Island
- 3) Lucia von Rheden
- 4) Worksop
- 5) Dullatur Carrickstone
- 6) Crookhill Park
- 7) De Zalze Estate
- 8) Qualchan
- 9) Country Hills
- 10) Huntingdale

Par-seekers' Paradise

(Low appearance, high challenge)

- 1) Lowlands
- 2) Black Crater
- 3) Loon Lake Lodge – Lakeside
- 4) Woodbridge
- 5) Crestifours
- 6) Blackclough Forest
- 7) Possum Park
- 8) Pacific Ridge
- 9) Eagle's Landing
- 10) Shadow's Run

Mirror, Mirror

(High appearance, low technical)

- 1) Nordic Open
- 2) Belmont Hills
- 3) Eaglestook
- 4) Cogitara
- 5) Links @ Ingonish
- 6) K Club Smurfit
- 7) Twin Mallard
- 8) Piazza Metallica
- 9) Royal Kurland
- 10) Quail Hollow

APCD All-Stars

(Low appearance, high technical)

- 1) Clubcito Diablo
- 2) South Shore
- 3) Sarazen Links
- 4) Hermitage
- 5) Stonebridge
- 6) Kill Devil Hills
- 7) Laddleton Lake
- 8) Thornhill
- 9) Dakota Desert
- 10) Tillicum Putting

The Entertainers

(High playability, low challenge)

- 1) Stoneham
- 2) Pecan Valley
- 3) Stone Canyon
- 4) Leven Scoonie
- 5) Bramshaw Forest
- 6) Royal Dornoch
- 7) TPC at Sawgrass
- 8) Mordhel
- 9) Stansbury
- 10) Pont du Gard

The Grittiness

(Low playability, high challenge)

- 1) Antelope Flats
- 2) Canyon Springs
- 3) Mossy Oaks
- 4) Big Dawg's
- 5) Spyglass Hill
- 6) Mauna Kea
- 7) Rosewood
- 8) Hazeltine
- 9) Blacktooth Foothills
- 10) Thanksgiving Point

Who Cares if it's Slapdash?

(High playability, low technical)

- 1) Poppy Hills
- 2) Banff Springs
- 3) Myrtle Beach (N)
- 4) Hill & Dell Club
- 5) Brown Deer Park
- 6) Budric's Mountain
- 7) Bramshaw Manor
- 8) Chesapeake Valley
- 9) The Heritage on SouthBank
- 10) Prestige

Strictly for the Designer

(Low playability, high technical)

- 1) Congressional
- 2) Boat of Garten
- 3) Jungle Island
- 4) Southernness
- 5) Bartlett Springs
- 6) Spey Valley
- 7) Three Horseshoes
- 8) Coogans Bluff
- 9) Inverness
- 10) Kalusa Lakes

APCD Wannabes

(High challenge, low technical)

- 1) Guyancourt
- 2) The Mountain @ Seneca
- 3) Greene County
- 4) Flood Lands
- 5) Glen Abbey
- 6) St Andrews Jubilee
- 7) Baker's Flat
- 8) Battle Mountain
- 9) Pacifica Point
- 10) The Stonebriar

Not the Right Pitch?

(Low challenge, high technical)

- 1) Saint Kilda
- 2) Kapa'a Golf Resort
- 3) Wagga Wagga
- 4) Banyan Bay
- 5) Swirling Sands
- 6) Lindrick Dale
- 7) Charleton
- 8) Royal Kenya
- 9) Harbour Town
- 10) Lost Lake Legend

My Favourite Holes

(Less a dream 18 than a dream 131...)

Aitch Heath Municipal	1 st	Hermitage GC	10 th	Saxon Vale	7 th
Alta Vista CC	13 th	Hever Castle	13 th	Schloss Hohenfels	11 th
Amsterdam International	16 th	Hills Course @ Palmetto Dunes	16 th	Shadowlands	12 th
Anakena Beach	11 th	Hunter's Wood	5 th	Shenandoah Ridge	16 th
Ardenne Dunes	15 th	Indian Flats (Lakes)	9 th	Silver Springs	14 th
Arrowhead Country Club	13 th	Infamous Golf Course	6 th	Smokey Hills	8 th
Augusta National	11 th	Iron Forest	2 nd	Sniper's Alley	15 th
A Wacky World Of Golf	4 th	Jacob's Creek	8 th	Spirit Hollow	4 th
Babylon Ridge	15 th	J Milne's Best	14 th	Spyglass Hill	4 th
Balmoral	11 th	Kapa'a Golf Resort	18 th	St Andrews Old	17 th
Banyan Bay	12 th	Kapalua Plantation	5 th	Stansbury	18 th
Bay Hill	16 th	Langolier	14 th	Stoneham	17 th
Black Rose Valley	18 th	Le Touessrok	18 th	Sweetlake GC	3 rd
Blacktooth Foothills	7 th	Los Lagos	13 th	TAD River East	10 th
Black Valley	1 st	Lost Lake Legend	17 th	Tall Pines Estate	5 th
Blue Rain Valley	10 th	Lucia von Rheden	17 th	Te Ihi O Te Rangi	10 th
Bramshaw Forest	3 rd	Lyme Regis GC	15 th	The Barrens	14 th
Brydestone	1 st	Margaret's Bay	1 st	The Brabazon	10 th
Buck Creek	18 th	Meadowood GC	16 th	The Hills at Cheetah Run	18 th
Bull Run	13 th	Meresbrook Forest	11 th	The Links at Ballylecum	4 th
Burns Old Links	12 th	Merion East	16 th	The Ocean at Cabo del Sol	18 th
Caledonian Forest	12 th	Mornington Peninsula	11 th	The Reg	9 th
Cape Wrath	2 nd	Mountain Pass	12 th	The Royal Melbourne GC	14 th
Cara Brae	13 th	Mount Juliet	10 th	The Vintage at Hunter Valley	1 st
Carnoustie	2 nd	Muirfield Village	11 th	Three Horseshoes	2 nd
Carton House O'Meara	14 th	Myrtle Beach (North Carolina)	18 th	Tillicum Island GC	4 th
Casten Acres	5 th	Northern Dunes	13 th	Tillicum Island Putting	14 th
Chateau Bourrache	7 th	Oakland Hills S	8 th	TPC at Sawgrass	16 th
Columbine Country Club	5 th	Oakmont	5 th	Trophy Club	2 nd
Congressional	18 th	Old Cypress East	8 th	Turnberry	10 th
Coogan's Bluff	15 th	Pebble Beach	7 th	Twin Mallard GC	5 th
Craters Edge	18 th	Piazza Metallica	10 th	Valderrama	17 th
De Zalze Estate	14 th	Pont du Gard	16 th	Vista Verde	2 nd
Double Eagle	11 th	Prestige	18 th	Waterstone GC	15 th
Driftwood GC	16 th	Prestnoch Golf Links	6 th	Wellington Point	9 th
Duine Mara	16 th	Redhawk Ranch	18 th	Wentworth West	18 th
Eagle Mountain	18 th	Rivendell	8 th	Wexham Park	7 th
Faerne	12 th	River Creek Estates	3 rd	Whistling Straits	18 th
Firestone North	16 th	Riviera	10 th	Woburn – The Duke's	13 th
Fontana GC	18 th	Roganstown GC	11 th	Woodpecker GC	16 th
Four Seasons Aviara	11 th	Royal Troon	8 th	Wraith Canyon	1 st
Friday Lake	11 th	Rugged Coast	18 th	Xilver Plaine	7 th
Gooseneck Bay	13 th	Rugged Dune	10 th	Xilver Prairie	16 th
Hawksmoor Heath	18 th	Sanctuary	13 th		

Hall of Fame

Top Fifty Real Courses

- 1) Pine Valley
- 2) Whistling Straits
- 3) Shinnecock
- 4) Pebble Beach
- 5) Bethpage Black
- 6) Pinehurst #2
- 7) Wentworth West
- 8) Engineers
- 9) Portmarnock
- 10) Royal Melbourne
- 11) Turnberry
- 12) Colonial
- 13) St Andrews Old
- 14) Augusta
- 15) Hopeman
- 16) K Club Smurfit
- 17) The Vintage
- 18) Bunclody
- 19) Royal Dornoch
- 20) Oakmont
- 21) Druids Glen
- 22) Royal Troon
- 23) Carton House O'Meara
- 24) Kapalua Plantation
- 25) Huntingdale
- 26) Spey Valley
- 27) Fontana
- 28) Sanctuary
- 29) Wagga Wagga
- 30) Brabazon-Belfry
- 31) TPC Boston
- 32) Enniscrone
- 33) Oakland Hills South
- 34) Spyglass Hill
- 35) Congressional
- 36) Roganstown
- 37) Medinah
- 38) Southernness
- 39) Westchester
- 40) Harbour Town
- 41) Kauri Cliffs
- 42) Classic Club
- 43) Riviera
- 44) Royal Kenya
- 45) Carnoustie
- 46) Thunder GC
- 47) TPC Sawgrass
- 48) Boat of Garten
- 49) Midnight GC
- 50) Bountiful

Top Five Compilation Courses

- 1) Ottawa Great 18
- 2) Scotland's Hidden Gems
- 3) Myrtle Beach (N)
- 4) Myrtle Beach (S)
- 5) Santa Barbara's Finest

Top Forty Fictional Courses

(excluding P2P & Mike Jones)

- 1) Duine Mara
- 2) Kanaal New
- 3) Excelsior
- 4) Crater's Edge
- 5) Ballylecum Castle
- 6) Prestnoch
- 7) Dark Woods
- 8) Anakena Beach
- 9) River Creek Estates
- 10) Errislannen Cliffs
- 11) Quidnet
- 12) Lost Lake Legend
- 13) Shaking Tree
- 14) Pine Dunes
- 15) Slainte Mhath
- 16) Wellington Point
- 17) Darwin Point
- 18) Royal Kurland
- 19) Casten Acres
- 20) Copperhead
- 21) Tillicum Island
- 22) Banyan Bay
- 23) Bartlett Springs
- 24) Waterstone
- 25) Carlyon Lakes
- 26) Sarazen Links
- 27) Three Horseshoes
- 28) Coogan's Bluff
- 29) Kapa'a
- 30) Woodbridge
- 31) Stansbury
- 32) Meresbrook Forest
- 33) Kill Devil Hills
- 34) Whitewebbs
- 35) Faerne
- 36) Esker Field
- 37) The Barrens
- 38) Shenandoah Ridge
- 39) Mordhel
- 40) Candlestick Blue

Top Forty Imaginary Courses

(excluding P2P)

- 1) The Crusoe Course
- 2) Iron Forest
- 3) FairInnis
- 4) Tron
- 5) Piazza Metallica
- 6) Rivendell
- 7) Watery Grave
- 8) Rugged Coast
- 9) Pont du Gard
- 10) Swirling Sands
- 11) Nurubian Nights
- 12) Hawksmoor Heath
- 13) Jungle Island
- 14) 5 Lakes Barrage
- 15) Timberlands
- 16) Blue Rain Valley
- 17) San Bernardino
- 18) Box Canyon
- 19) Wacky World II
- 20) Lava Rock
- 21) Redcastle Desert
- 22) Sandlot Shores
- 23) Indian Flats (Lakes)
- 24) Lakeside Retreat
- 25) Fantasy Hills
- 26) OutWorld
- 27) TAD River East
- 28) Space Adventure
- 29) The Experience @ Alberta
- 30) Koh Samui
- 31) Te Ihi O Te Rangi
- 32) Sorento
- 33) Santa Barbara Canyons
- 34) Rocky Nuts
- 35) Gull Island
- 36) Europe 2006
- 37) Wacky World
- 38) Harbinger Valley
- 39) Mountain Pass
- 40) Infamous

Top Twenty Microsoft Courses

- 1) Kauri Cliffs
- 2) Bountiful
- 3) Cabo Del Sol
- 4) Stone Canyon
- 5) RTJ Judge
- 6) Hapuna
- 7) Gleneagles
- 8) RTJ Links
- 9) Cambrian Ridge
- 10) Pelican Hill
- 11) Banff Springs
- 12) Troon North
- 13) Bighorn
- 14) Princeville
- 15) Firestone South
- 16) Chateau Whistler
- 17) Four Seasons
- 18) Kapalua Bay
- 19) Skeleton Coast
- 20) Mesa Roja

Top Ten Mike Jones Courses

- 1) Burn's Old Links
- 2) Rugged Dune
- 3) Las Joyas
- 4) Pilgrim Trails
- 5) Crystal Pines
- 6) Shadowlands
- 7) Cara Brae
- 8) RC Kilderry
- 9) Atlantic Point
- 10) Pacific Breaks

Top Twenty P2P Fictional Courses (excluding MJ)

- 1) Adam's Tree
- 2) Crooked Creek
- 3) Chateau Bourrache
- 4) Old Cypress East
- 5) Prairie Dog
- 6) St Christopher's Bay
- 7) Owelstery White Horse
- 8) Brydestone
- 9) Ardennes Dunes
- 10) Oklahoma Crossings
- 11) Bull Run
- 12) Tall Pines Estate
- 13) Xilver Plaine
- 14) Carrie Park
- 15) Buck Creek
- 16) Xilver Prairie
- 17) Kill Devil Hills
- 18) Watery Grave
- 19) War Acres
- 20) Bushido Gardens

Top Six Real Canyon Courses

- 1) Kapalua Plantation
- 2) Kauri Cliffs
- 3) Stone Canyon
- 4) Hapuna
- 5) Canyon Springs
- 6) Princeville

Top Eight Fictional Canyon Courses

- 1) Craters Edge
- 2) Vista Verde
- 3) Estate Heights
- 4) Walnut Grove
- 5) Ammolite
- 6) Moosevalley
- 7) Rockwater Resort
- 8) Steelheads

Top Eight Imaginary Canyon Courses

- 1) Pont du Gard
- 2) The Experience @ Alberta
- 3) Rocky Nuts
- 4) Te Ihi O Te Rangī
- 5) Santa Barbara Canyons
- 6) The Catwalk
- 7) Capdepera
- 8) Boundary Waters

Top Ten Concept Courses

- 1) TRON
- 2) Piazza Metallica
- 3) Rivendell
- 4) Midnight GC
- 5) Nurubian Nights
- 6) Wacky World II
- 7) OutWorld
- 8) Space Adventure
- 9) Europe 2006
- 10) Wacky World

Top Ten Real Desert Courses

- 1) Classic Club
- 2) Rams Hill
- 3) Cabo del Sol
- 4) Las Sendas
- 5) Troon North
- 6) Bighorn
- 7) Desert Canyon
- 8) Doral Great White
- 9) Talon @ Grayhawk
- 10) Dove Valley

Top Nine Fictional Desert Courses

- 1) Candlestick Blue
- 2) The Horizons
- 3) The Pinnacle
- 4) Redhawk Ranch
- 5) Desert Lake
- 6) Kansas National
- 7) Coyote Run
- 8) Dakota Desert
- 9) Rio Grande Oeste
- 10) Death Valley

Top Nine Imaginary Desert Courses

- 1) Arrow Canyon
- 2) Box Canyon
- 3) Redcastle Desert
- 4) Sorento
- 5) Mesa Roja
- 6) The Pit
- 7) Scirocco
- 8) The Scorpion
- 9) Jalapeno Canyon

Top Ten Dunes Courses

- 1) Whistling Straits
- 2) Rugged Dune
- 3) Duine Mara
- 4) Shadowlands
- 5) Ardennes Dunes
- 6) Pine Dunes
- 7) Enniscrone
- 8) The Barrens
- 9) Tish Island
- 10) Wyntoon

Top Ten Real Estate Courses

- 1) Engineers
- 2) Colonial
- 3) Augusta
- 4) Buncloody
- 5) Oakland Hills South
- 6) Congressional
- 7) Roganstown
- 8) Riviera
- 9) Muirfield Village
- 10) Inverness

Top Ten Fictional Estate Courses

- 1) Chateau Bourrache
- 2) River Creek Estates
- 3) Bull Run
- 4) Tall Pines Estate
- 5) Babylon Ridge
- 6) Stansbury
- 7) Bardgate House
- 8) Eagle Crest
- 9) Rebecca's Garden
- 10) Sixwood Creek

Top Ten Real Farmland Courses

- 1) Shinnecock
- 2) Oakmont
- 3) Trophy Club
- 4) Lindrick Dale
- 5) King's Walk
- 6) Mowsbury
- 7) Hazeltine
- 8) Nordic Open
- 9) Country Hills
- 10) Celtic Manor

Top Ten Fictional Farmland Courses

- 1) Prairie Dog
- 2) Shaking Tree
- 3) Royal County Kilderry
- 4) Xilver Prairie
- 5) Esker Field
- 6) Battley Peak
- 7) Rotherly Park
- 8) Hop Farm
- 9) Broken Arrow
- 10) Schloss Hohenfels

Top Nine Real Forest Courses

- 1) Pine Valley
- 2) Medinah
- 3) Harbour Town
- 4) Woburn
- 5) Brokenhurst Manor
- 6) Newbury & Crookham
- 7) Stoneham
- 8) El Diablo
- 9) Double Eagle
- 10) Frankfurter

Top Ten non-Real Forest Courses

- 1) Dark Woods
- 2) Buck Creek
- 3) Three Horseshoes
- 4) Meresbrook Forest
- 5) Mordhel
- 6) Black Rose Valley
- 7) Black Valley
- 8) Awaba Forest
- 9) Sasquatch Crossings
- 10) Timberlands

Top Ten Real Heathland Courses

- 1) Royal Melbourne
- 2) K Club Smurfit
- 3) The Vintage
- 4) Spey Valley
- 5) Fontana
- 6) Royal Kenya
- 7) Gleneagles
- 8) Worksop
- 9) Prairie Dunes
- 10) Bramshaw Forest

Top Ten non-Real Heathland Courses

- 1) Excelsior
- 2) Brydestone
- 3) Oklahoma Crossings
- 4) Quidnet
- 5) Xilver Plaine
- 6) El Escorpion
- 7) Spirit Hollow
- 8) The Hills @Cheetah Run
- 9) Hawksmoor Heath
- 10) Black Water Pines

Top Ten Real Lakeside Courses

- 1) Sawgrass
- 2) Barseback
- 3) Bay Hill
- 4) Burnt Pine
- 5) Robina Woods
- 6) RTJ Links
- 7) Qualchan
- 8) Myrtle Beach (N)
- 9) Firestone North
- 10) Eberhart-Petro

Top Ten Fictional Lakeside Courses

- 1) Las Joyas
- 2) Lost Lake Legend
- 3) Waterstone
- 4) Coogan's Bluff
- 5) Eagle Trace
- 6) Kalusa Lakes
- 7) Laddleton Lake
- 8) Friday Lake
- 9) Cardiff Springs
- 10) 7 Lakes

Top Ten Imaginary Lakeside Courses

- 1) Blue Rain Valley
- 2) Lakeside Retreat
- 3) Anglewood
- 4) Whistler Lake
- 5) Camelot
- 6) Ice Castle
- 7) Red Forrest Lakes
- 8) Loon Lake Lodge - Lakeside
- 9) Xilver Lagoon
- 10) Barkcamp Lake

Top Ten Real Links Courses

- 1) Portmarnock
- 2) Turnberry
- 3) St Andrews Old
- 4) Hopeman
- 5) Royal Dornoch
- 6) Royal Troon
- 7) Southerness
- 8) Carnoustie
- 9) Dullatur Antonine
- 10) Royal Lytham

Top Twenty non-Real Links Courses

- 1) Burns Old Links
- 2) Ballylecum Castle
- 3) St Christophers Bay
- 4) Prestnoch
- 5) Errislannan Cliffs
- 6) Slainte Mhath
- 7) Atlantic Point
- 8) Royal Kurland
- 9) Sarazen Links
- 10) Kill Devil Hills
- 11) Fairclinnis
- 12) Woodbridge
- 13) Faerne
- 14) Northern Dunes
- 15) Margaret's Bay
- 16) Nautilus Bay
- 17) Balmoral
- 18) Gooseneck Bay

- 19) Morar Dunes
- 20) St Kilda

Top Eight Real Marshland Courses

- 1) Thunder GC
- 2) Amsterdam International
- 3) Kiawah Island
- 4) RTJ Judge
- 5) Grey Silo
- 6) TPC Louisiana
- 7) Le Golf National
- 8) Rivard

Top Ten non-Real Marshland Courses

- 1) Kanaal New
- 2) Old Cypress East
- 3) Bartlett Springs
- 4) Jacob's Creek
- 5) Watery Grave
- 6) Ackerton Cross
- 7) Mansford Waters
- 8) 5 Lakes Barrage
- 9) Lowlands
- 10) Buffalo Springs

Top Ten Real Mountain Courses

- 1) Sanctuary
- 2) Boat of Garten
- 3) Bountiful
- 4) Ottawa Great 18
- 5) Banff Springs
- 6) Chateau Whistler
- 7) Enzesfeld
- 8) Radium Resort
- 9) Apple Mountain
- 10) Greene County

Top Ten Fictional Mountain Courses

- 1) Crystal Pines
- 2) Darwin Point
- 3) Eagle Mountain
- 4) Ash Mountain
- 5) Wraith Canyon
- 6) Los Lagos
- 7) Prestige
- 8) San Simeon
- 9) The Mountain @ Seneca
- 10) Kylan

Top Nine Imaginary Mountain Courses

- 1) Fantasy Hills
- 2) Mountain Pass
- 3) East Mountain
- 4) Victory Grounds
- 5) Loon Lake Lodge - Hillside
- 6) Hobo's Valley
- 7) Cogitara
- 8) Devils Lake South
- 9) Torres Del Paine

Top Six Real Ocean Courses

- 1) Pebble Beach
- 2) Spyglass Hill
- 3) Pebble Beach Classic
- 4) Torrey Pines South
- 5) Pelican Hill
- 6) Kapalua Bay

Top Ten Fictional Ocean Courses

- 1) Cara Brae
- 2) Pacific Breaks
- 3) Wellington Point
- 4) Banyan Bay
- 5) Tillicum Island
- 6) Mornington Peninsula
- 7) EtherLinks
- 8) Bay Of Islands
- 9) J Milne's Best
- 10) Cala Mesquida

Top Six Imaginary Ocean Courses

- 1) Rugged Coast
- 2) Lava Rock
- 3) Sandlot Shores
- 4) An Ocean Bluff
- 5) The Bone Lagoon
- 6) Punahale

Top Twenty Real Parkland Courses

- 1) Bethpage Black
- 2) Carton House O'Meara
- 3) Druid's Glen
- 4) Brabazon-Belfry
- 5) Wagga Wagga
- 6) Westchester
- 7) K Club Palmer
- 8) Charleton
- 9) Munchen Nord
- 10) Hermitage
- 11) Quail Hollow
- 12) Merion East
- 13) Carton House Monty

- 14) Dullatur Carrickstone
- 15) Stonebridge
- 16) Aitch Heath
- 17) Columbine
- 18) Cambrian Ridge
- 19) The Country Club
- 20) Ridgewood

Top Twenty non-Real Parkland Courses

- 1) Adam's Tree
- 2) Owelstery
- 3) Casten Acres
- 4) Copperhead
- 5) Carrie Park
- 6) Driftwood
- 7) Whitewebbs
- 8) Autumn Valley
- 9) Twin Mallard
- 10) Fullerton Woods
- 11) WoodPecker
- 12) Hunter's Wood
- 13) Brookdale
- 14) Belmont Hills
- 15) Jordan's Creek
- 16) Saxon Vale
- 17) Higgi's Park
- 18) Barrington Hills
- 19) Centenary Links
- 20) The Reservoir

Top Six Real Short Courses

- 1) Lucia von Rheden
- 2) Desert Canyon Putting
- 3) Augusta Par 3
- 4) Links at Dred Scott
- 5) Hyland Greens
- 6) St Andrews Himalayas

Top Ten non-Real Short Courses

- 1) Dustin Trophy
- 2) San Bernardino
- 3) The Reg
- 4) Tillicum Putting
- 5) Chestonia Hills
- 6) Possum Park
- 7) Little Gardens
- 8) Links @ Pinewood
- 9) Hetherington Hills
- 10) Shadow's Run

Top Ten Real Tropical Courses

- 1) TPC Blue Monster
- 2) Hills @ Palmetto
- 3) Creek @ Dubai
- 4) Waialae
- 5) Crandon Park
- 6) Le Touessrok
- 7) Saigon
- 8) Las Brisas
- 9) Real Campoamor
- 10) Mauna Kea

Top Ten Fictional Tropical Courses

- 1) Anakena Beach
- 2) Kapa'a Golf Resort
- 3) Hillfoot Hey
- 4) Zanzibar
- 5) Castaway Island
- 6) Kolepa Kai
- 7) Pirate Cove
- 8) One South
- 9) Crocodile Creeks
- 10) The Fairmont

Top Ten Imaginary Tropical Courses

- 1) The Crusoe Course
- 2) Iron Forest
- 3) Jungle Island
- 4) Koh Samui
- 5) Gull Island
- 6) Skeleton Coast
- 7) Parrot Landing
- 8) Devils Island
- 9) Hilina Pali
- 10) Selto Beach

Top Twenty Real Woodland Courses

- 1) Pinehurst #2
- 2) Wentworth West
- 3) Huntingdale
- 4) TPC Boston
- 5) Valderrama
- 6) GC of Oklahoma
- 7) Mount Juliet
- 8) Redstone
- 9) Bishopbriggs
- 10) Le Versant
- 11) Innisbrook Copperhead
- 12) Arrowhead
- 13) Avocet
- 14) Bellshill
- 15) Forest Akers
- 16) Poppy Hills
- 17) Olympia Fields
- 18) Dibden
- 19) Links at Ingonish
- 20) Westfields

Top Twenty non-Real Woodland Courses

- 1) Crooked Creek
- 2) Pilgrim Trails
- 3) Carlyon Lakes
- 4) Shenandoah Ridge
- 5) The General
- 6) Caledonian Forest
- 7) Southern Pines
- 8) Coombs Mill
- 9) Rosewood
- 10) New Stoney Run
- 11) The Lavant
- 12) TAD River West
- 13) Antelope Flats
- 14) Crystal Ball
- 15) Crouching Beast
- 16) Bushido Gardens
- 17) Twin Rivers
- 18) Fagen's Forest
- 19) North Woods
- 20) Diamond Club

Where To Play?

Top Twenty Courses In USA – West

(California, Oregon, Washington)

- 1) Rugged Dune
- 2) Pebble Beach
- 3) Old Cypress East
- 4) Pacific Breaks
- 5) Copperhead
- 6) Tillicum Island
- 7) Silver Plaine
- 8) Stansbury
- 9) Fairclinnis
- 10) Spyglass Hill
- 11) Classic Club
- 12) Riviera
- 13) Rugged Coast
- 14) Vista Verde
- 15) Rams Hill
- 16) Swirling Sands
- 17) Pebble Beach Classic
- 18) Wyntoon
- 19) Torrey Pines South
- 20) Desert Canyon Putting

Top Twenty Courses In USA – Midwest

(Broadly anything covering the Rockies)

- 1) Craters Edge
- 2) Prairie Dog
- 3) Dark Woods
- 4) Lost Lake Legend
- 5) Babylon Ridge
- 6) Sanctuary
- 7) Silver Prairie
- 8) Candlestick Blue
- 9) The General
- 10) Bountiful
- 11) Hop Farm
- 12) Spirit Hollow
- 13) Inverness
- 14) Sasquatch Crossings
- 15) San Simeon
- 16) King's Walk
- 17) Forest Legend
- 18) Blacktooth Foothills
- 19) The Shrew
- 20) Kylan

Top Twenty Courses In USA – South

(Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico)

- 1) Colonial
- 2) Oklahoma Crossings
- 3) Pine Dunes
- 4) Broken Arrow
- 5) GC of Oklahoma
- 6) Stone Canyon
- 7) Redstone
- 8) TPC @ The Woodlands
- 9) Box Canyon
- 10) Las Sendas
- 11) Rosewood
- 12) Redcastle Desert
- 13) TPC Louisiana
- 14) Meadowood
- 15) The Horizons
- 16) Barrington Hills
- 17) Redhawk Ranch
- 18) Troon North
- 19) Canyon Springs
- 20) Talon @ Greyhawk

Top Twenty Courses In USA – Central

(Everything from Illinois to Georgia)

- 1) Whistling Straits
- 2) Augusta
- 3) Carrie Park
- 4) Buck Creek
- 5) Bartlett Springs
- 6) Three Horseshoes
- 7) Oakland Hills South
- 8) Medinah
- 9) Eagle Mountain
- 10) Westchester
- 11) Thunder GC
- 12) Woodpecker
- 13) Muirfield Village
- 14) Walnut Grove
- 15) Hunter's Wood
- 16) Trophy Club
- 17) The Mountain @ Seneca
- 18) RTJ Judge
- 19) Cog Hill
- 20) Eagle Trace

Top Twenty Courses In USA – North East (New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia)

- 1) Pine Valley
- 2) Shinnecock
- 3) Pilgrim Trails
- 4) Bethpage Black
- 5) Shadowlands
- 6) Quidnet
- 7) Shaking Tree
- 8) Oakmont
- 9) Casten Acres
- 10) Bull Run
- 11) TPC Boston
- 12) Congressional
- 13) Shenandoah Ridge
- 14) Autumn Valley
- 15) Black Valley
- 16) Coombs Mill
- 17) War Acres
- 18) The Country Club
- 19) Ridgewood
- 20) Higgi's Park

Top Twenty Courses In USA – South East (mostly the Carolinas and Florida)

- 1) Pinehurst
- 2) Ardennes Dunes
- 3) River Creek Estates
- 4) Kill Devil Hills
- 5) Harbour Town
- 6) Los Lagos
- 7) TPC Blue Monster
- 8) Southern Pines
- 9) Tish Island
- 10) Quail Hollow
- 11) Kiawah Island
- 12) Bay Hill
- 13) Blue Rain Valley
- 14) Hills @ Palmetto
- 15) Crandon Park
- 16) Myrtle Beach (N)
- 17) Innisbrook
- 18) Arrowhead
- 19) Avocet @ Wild Wing
- 20) Myrtle Beach (S)

Top Ten Courses In Canada

- 1) Ash Mountain
- 2) Watery Grave
- 3) Wraith Canyon
- 4) Prestige
- 5) 5 Lakes Barrage
- 6) Ottawa Great 18
- 7) San Bernardino
- 8) Ammolite
- 9) Grey Silo
- 10) Stonebridge

Top Ten Courses In Central and South America

- 1) Iron Forest
- 2) Cabo del Sol
- 3) Cala Mesquida
- 4) Pirate Cove
- 5) Parrot Landing
- 6) Jungle Utopia
- 7) Devils Island
- 8) Selto Beach
- 9) Torres del Paine
- 10) Dorado Beach

Top Ten Courses In Ireland

- 1) Portmarnock
- 2) Bunclody
- 3) Cara Brae
- 4) K Club Smurfit
- 5) RC Kilderry
- 6) Errislannen Cliffs
- 7) Carton House O'Meara
- 8) Druids Glen
- 9) Coogans Bluff
- 10) Enniscrone

Top Twenty Courses In Scotland

- 1) Burn's Old Links
- 2) Duine Mara
- 3) Ballylecum Castle
- 4) St Christopher's Bay
- 5) Turnberry
- 6) Prestnoch
- 7) St Andrew's Old
- 8) Hopeman
- 9) Royal Dornoch
- 10) Slainte Mhath
- 11) Royal Kurland
- 12) Royal Troon
- 13) Atlantic Point
- 14) Spey Valley
- 15) Sarazen Links
- 16) Woodbridge
- 17) Faerne
- 18) Southernness
- 19) Esker Field
- 20) Carnoustie

Top Ten Courses In Northern England

- 1) Brydestone
- 2) Northern Dunes
- 3) Battley Peak
- 4) Ackerton Cross
- 5) Fallow Fields
- 6) Hawksmoor Heath
- 7) Black Water Pines
- 8) The Dustin Trophy
- 9) The Reg
- 10) Lowlands

Top Ten Courses In Midlands England

- 1) Carlyon Lakes
- 2) Brabazon Belfry
- 3) Meresbrook Forest
- 4) Whitewebbs
- 5) Mordhel
- 6) The Barrens
- 7) Black Rose Valley
- 8) Rotherley Park
- 9) Bardgate House
- 10) Lindrick Dale

Top Ten Courses In Southern England and Wales

- 1) Wentworth West
- 2) Owelstery
- 3) Margaret's Bay
- 4) Woburn
- 5) Serenity
- 6) Aitch Heath
- 7) Brokenhurst Manor
- 8) The Lavant
- 9) Friday Lake
- 10) Celtic Manor

Top Seven Courses In France

- 1) Chateau Bourrache
- 2) Pont du Gard
- 3) Etherlinks
- 4) Le Golf National
- 5) The Plantation
- 6) GC des Volcans
- 7) Guyancourt

Top Eight Courses In Germany

- 1) Munchen Nord
- 2) Schloss Hohenfels
- 3) Lucia von Rheden
- 4) Gut Larchenhof
- 5) Gut Kaden AB
- 6) Gut Kaden CB
- 7) Frankfurter
- 8) Black Forest

Top Eight Courses In Scandinavia

- 1) Jacob's Creek
- 2) Midnight GC
- 3) Barseback
- 4) Nordic Open
- 5) Moosevalley
- 6) Eaglestook
- 7) North Woods
- 8) Cogitara

Top Nine Courses In Central Europe

- 1) Kanaal New
- 2) Crystal Pines
- 3) Fontana
- 4) Piazza Metallica
- 5) Amsterdam International
- 6) Smokey Hills
- 7) Enzesfeld
- 8) Pine Forest Hills
- 9) Murhof

Top Eight Courses In Southern Europe (all in Spain)

- 1) Las Joyas
- 2) El Escorpion
- 3) Valderrama
- 4) Rockwater Resort
- 5) Las Brisas
- 6) Real Campoamor
- 7) Buena Vista
- 8) Capdepera

Top Nine Courses In Africa

- 1) Excelsior
- 2) Royal Kenya
- 3) Nautilus Bay
- 4) De Zalze
- 5) Cheetah Run
- 6) Zanzibar
- 7) Le Touessrok
- 8) Buffalo Springs
- 9) Skeleton Coast

Top Ten Courses In Asia

- 1) Nurubian Nights
- 2) Jungle Island
- 3) Creek @ Dubai
- 4) Castaway Island
- 5) Bushido Gardens
- 6) Koh Samui
- 7) Gull Island
- 8) Saigon
- 9) Links @ Palawan
- 10) Pagoda Run

Top Ten Courses In Oceania

- 1) Adam's Tree
- 2) Crooked Creek
- 3) Royal Melbourne
- 4) The Vintage
- 5) Huntingdale
- 6) Wellington Point
- 7) Waterstone
- 8) Wagga Wagga
- 9) Kauri Cliffs
- 10) Awaba Forest

Top Ten Courses In the Pacific (including Hawaii)

- 1) Anakena Beach
- 2) The Crusoe Course
- 3) Kapalua Plantation
- 4) Banyan Bay
- 5) Kapa'a
- 6) Hapuna
- 7) Hillfoot Hey
- 8) Lava Rock
- 9) Waialae
- 10) Kolepa Kai

Top Ten Courses in Fantasy Settings

- 1) TRON
- 2) Rivendell
- 3) Wacky World II
- 4) Outworld
- 5) Space Adventure
- 6) Europe 2006
- 7) Wacky World
- 8) Infamous
- 9) Damazes-Jurassic
- 10) Angland/Castle

One-Hit Wonders

(Top 50 courses whose designer has no other courses in Clip Notes – excluding commercial designs and team efforts)

- 1) Colonial
- 2) Wellington Point
- 3) Oakmont
- 4) Slainte Mhath
- 5) Three Horseshoes
- 6) Woodbridge
- 7) Medinah
- 8) Classic Club
- 9) Faerne
- 10) Rivendell
- 11) Carnoustie
- 12) Mornington Peninsula
- 13) Pebble Beach Classic
- 14) Woburn
- 15) Nurubian Nights
- 16) Inverness
- 17) De Zalze Estate
- 18) Golf Club of Oklahoma
- 19) Barseback
- 20) The Hills at Cheetah Run
- 21) Lucia von Rheden
- 22) Blue Rain Valley
- 23) Redstone
- 24) Ava's Field
- 25) Zanzibar
- 26) Sweetlake
- 27) Jordan's Creek
- 28) Coombs Mill
- 29) Lakeside Retreat
- 30) Friday Lake
- 31) Fantasy Hills
- 32) Mountain Creek
- 33) Royal Lytham
- 34) Nordic Open
- 35) Cuckmere Links
- 36) The Experience @ Alberta
- 37) Barrington Hills
- 38) J Milne's Best
- 39) Forest Akers West
- 40) Canyon Springs
- 41) Cala Mesquida Pines
- 42) Gull Island
- 43) Chestonia Hills
- 44) Bellshill
- 45) Koh Samui
- 46) East Lothian
- 47) Rebecca's Garden
- 48) Le Golf National
- 49) Mountain Pass
- 50) Jubilee Pines

Designer Index

(average ratings of those designing two or more courses)

1. Rob Miller	47.5	58. Lars Rudbeck	33.0
2. Mike Jones	44.5	59. Lonnie Lindell	32.8
3. Mitch Sirk	44.0	60. Mat Leclair	32.5
4. Gary Campbell	42.8	61. Matt Rose	32.5
5. Bill Scott	42.5	62. Bausch Bros	32.3
6. Paul Seaman	42.3	63. David Schmelzer	32.3
7. Anders Bessermann	42.0	64. Mike Nicely	32.2
8. Wayne Hewitt	41.8	65. Rob Moates	32.0
9. Peter Beckwith	41.2	66. Timothy Boche	31.1
10. Jon Weinrieb	41.0	67. Kyle Ostermann	31.0
11. Curt Simms	40.5	68. Scott Osgood	31.0
12. John Aherne	40.3	69. Gordon Martin	31.0
13. Lez Marwick	40.0	70. Gary Taylor	31.0
14. Adriaan Maarschalk	40.0	71. Paul Woodbury	30.8
15. Peter Gemmill	39.2	72. John Andersen	30.8
16. Dominique Bois	38.4	73. Rick Weathers	30.8
17. Bob Hankla	38.4	74. Brian Jameson	30.6
18. Stewart Parker	38.4	75. Guenter Kujat	30.2
19. Eddie Schmidt	38.0	76. Dave Everitt	30.0
20. Chuck Clark	37.6	77. Ernie Barnes	30.0
21. David Meader	37.5	78. Chas Demster	29.7
22. Jason Thorpe	37.5	79. Ross Mackenzie	29.7
23. Leigh Seaman	37.2	80. Jason Conner	29.5
24. Johnny Holland	36.5	81. Steve Pope	29.5
25. Mike Hornak	36.5	82. Jörg Jobmann	29.3
26. Steve Avery	36.5	83. Michael Hamilton	29.0
27. Tim Hagen	36.2	84. Paul Dalglish	29.0
28. Andrew Jones	36.2	85. John Brooks	28.8
29. Jack Hartt	36.0	86. Douglas Montgomery	28.5
30. Jacob Seersholm	36.0	87. James Baker	28.5
31. Dan Kilbank	36.0	88. Bob Kraft	28.5
32. Kristoffer Selberg	36.0	89. Joe Cassar	28.5
33. Noah Neumann	35.8	90. John Borycheski	28.0
34. Mark Franzioia	35.5	91. Ross Anthony	27.6
35. Jamey Hribal	35.3	92. Randal Queen	27.5
36. Glenn Braden	35.3	93. William Kline	27.5
37. Kent Perrins	35.3	94. Microsoft	27.2
38. McCoist	35.3	95. Derek Wilson	27.0
39. Dexter Gresh	35.0	96. Michael Savicki	27.0
40. Lloyd Henchey	35.0	97. Stuart Kahle	27.0
41. Mike Cropf	35.0	98. Fred Briggson	26.7
42. Steve Mihelerakis	35.0	99. Jeff Sanders	26.5
43. Matt McIntosh	34.8	100. Bill Misener	25.5
44. Francois Cristallo	34.6	101. Michael Hamilton	25.3
45. Golfgraffix	34.5	102. Graham Hardy	25.0
46. Lacy Gearhart	34.5	103. Gary Turner	25.0
47. Alan Toft	34.3	104. Warren Wilson	24.5
48. Ken Boltz	34.0	105. Shawn Kobold	24.2
49. Pete Frydrak	34.0	106. Kevin Fraser	24.0
50. Zeke Seidel	34.0	107. Alan Portway	23.0
51. Art Patscheck	33.7	108. Dace Fair	22.6
52. Ed Balaun	33.7	109. James Wood	22.3
53. Tom Wagner	33.6	110. Kevin X	22.0
54. Kennet Larsson	33.5	111. Dave Mackey	21.5
55. Scott Gavenlock	33.3	112. Eric Lintemuth	21.5
56. Steven Sullivan	33.0	113. Richard Latanville	21.5
57. John Dudis	33.0	114. Paul Nicholson	21.0
		115. Vivian Davies	20.5
		116. Dave Newman	19.5
		117. Zea Miller	18.3
		118. Gary Allen	15.0
		119. Doug Quillen	12.0