



## OJAI VALLEY INN & SPA

### CONTACT:

Veronica Cole

Veronica\_cole@ojairesort.com

(805) 640-2080

### THE CLASSIC GOLF EXPERIENCE AT THE INN'S HISTORIC COURSE Recent Upgrades Enhance the Golf Experience at Ojai

OJAI, CA (January 2009) - Golf at Ojai, an experience enjoyed by players of all levels since 1923, has been enhanced by a \$90 million renovation of the Ojai Valley Inn & Spa. A new pro shop, an improved layout of the classic George Thomas-designed course, expanded instruction and new programs have enhanced players' enjoyment of the historic and treasured course.

"The enhancements won't eliminate the things that players have always cherished most about this classic course," said Mark Greenslit, the resort's Director of Golf. "These long-awaited changes only add to the experience by improving the pace of play, the finish, and the service levels in the shop."

#### **New Layout for the Links**

The front and back nines of the historic course, designed by George C. Thomas in 1923, have been switched, a change that brings the course more into alignment with Thomas' original intent. The first nine holes is less demanding on the player compared to what awaits him further into his round, while the back nine holes build in difficulty to a dramatic finish. At 571 yards, hole #15 is the course's most challenging par 5, and leads the player to the "Lost Holes," #16 and #17, offering the course's most spectacular views and daunting barrancas. Number 18, with its sharp angle, uphill green and bunkers, is the toughest hole of all to par. True to Thomas' goal, the course requires the player to "use every club in his bag."

## CLASSIC GOLF AT OJAI/PAGE 2

### **New Pro Shop and Caddie Program**

The new two-story, 1,645-square-foot pro shop is designed in the Spanish Colonial style of architecture with a red tile roof and white plaster walls, arches and terra cotta floor tiles. New lockers for men and women offer amenities such as chilled or heated aromatherapy towels. A Golf Valet, a service no longer available at most golf shops, offers club rentals, shoe polishing, bag storage, and on-demand club repair to all players.

Other amenities offered include a new Caddie Program that allows players to request caddie services on an advanced reservation basis. A tradition that has been long absent in many areas of the country, this program offers the service of specially trained caddies, an amenity that will enhance the playing experience for players who enjoy this level of service.

### **Golf Instruction Expanded**

The golf instruction program has been expanded to offer two courses that may be taken in succession, or enjoyed separately. The Golf Academy focuses on the fundamentals of the golf swing and the short game, followed by nine holes of play on the course. The Player's Academy emphasizes course strategies and mental techniques. Additionally, resident instructor Dr. Joseph Parent, author of *Zen Golf* and an expert on the mental game of golf, is available for one-on-one or group instruction.

### **A 1923 Course Rich in History**

In the early 1920s, Edward Drummond Libbey, millionaire glass manufacturer and driving force behind the Ojai Valley Inn, commissioned George C. Thomas, Jr. (also architect of the Riviera, Bel Air and Los Angeles Country Club courses) to design one of the country's premier golf courses. Like a sculptor working in marble, Thomas maximized the natural contours of the Inn's 220 acres of softly rolling hills to make a course praised then and now.

## CLASSIC GOLF AT OJAI/PAGE 3

In the eighty years since it opened, the golf course has become legendary. Pros Jimmy Demaret and Doug Sanders represented the links on the tour during the 1950s and '60s. A remodeling of the course by Jay Morrish in 1988 considerably toughened the course and still retained the challenges that have made Ojai golfing guests return year after year.

### **Ojai's "Lost Holes"**

In 1999, the Ojai Valley Inn & Spa delighted golf historians with a renovation of our historic golf course that brought back two signature holes that had been "lost" for over a half-century. During World War II, the U.S. military occupied the grounds for a training base and R&R facility. When the government returned the resort to private ownership, they did not rebuild it according to Thomas' original design. Two holes, including one of Thomas' favorites, were left out of the layout. More than 50 years after these holes were lost, they were rediscovered and restored. The terrain of these two holes is so spectacular that noted golf historian Ben Crenshaw commented, "This is going to be once again one of the best shots in golf."

The Ojai course has hosted seven Senior PGA Tour events, the EMC Golf Skills Challenge televised by NBC Sports, and the Michael Douglas & Friends Celebrity Tournament. It is repeatedly rated a silver medal resort by GOLF Magazine, whose editors also named Ojai's hole #2 among the "World's Greatest Holes."

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