

# Tom Doak: From High Point to Sebonack



Photo by Art McCafferty

## Highpoint Hole No. 18

By Art McCafferty

**S**ebonack Golf Club, the Jack Nicklaus and Tom Doak collaboration, was rated as America's Best New Private Course of 2007 by Golf Digest. Ron Whitten in his review, said "Someday, maybe sooner rather than later, Sebonack might join neighbors Shinnecock and the National Golf Links in that pan-

theon of course architecture, America's 100 Greatest."

If there was any doubt of the greatness of Tom Doak as an architect, that announcement should put all the critics to rest.

'Infante Terrible' was the early name they hung on Tom Doak before he started getting covers on

state and national golf publications. Dave Richards was Doak's original public relations representative and made sure that we all knew Doak was someday going to be someone special. He also could become an apologist if Doak went too far with one of his candid comments about other designers' work.



**An Evening With Tom Doak**

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=N1Ef64EjCSs>

Doak has always been very sure of himself, but really, why not? He had gone to Cornell University and went through the same program as Robert Trent Jones. He got a scholarship from the university and studied in the British Isles and Australian for a year. Not only did he study, but he took photographs of what he liked and disliked to compliment his own photographic memory. After that, and we might be rushing his life story a little bit, he spend some time with Pete Dye.

His first course was High Pointe GC in Williamsburg, was followed by Black Forest in Gaylord and then eventually, his final course in Michigan, Lost Dunes Golf Club in Bridgman. Below is listed the body of the work for his Renaissance Golf Design company, which is located in Traverse City.

His reputation began to take off with his work at Pacific Dunes and then got he received international acclaim with his masterpiece in New Zealand, the Cape Kidnappers GC.

During an "Evening With Tom Doak" that took place at High Pointe GC in the summer of 2004, Doak talked about the upcoming collaboration with Nicklaus that was to produce the Sebonack Golf Club. This seemed quite a stretch for Doak, as he had been critical of Nicklaus' early work. However, he indicated a bit of a change on his thinking with the later works of Nicklaus and that he felt that they could work together. Such was the enormity of the project in both the cost and location of the, neither architect wanted to turn down the opportunity. The land itself cost \$44 million. As it turned out,



**Tom Doak**

the collaboration was hugely successful.

As with many of our articles, we have created a video as a companion piece. We ask you to go to <http://youtube.com/watch?v=N1Ef64EjCSs> In the video, Doak talks about his early work at High Pointe and how his nascent golf design philosophy had the chance to express itself with his first course. **MG**

## The Courses of Renaissance Golf Design

### Public

- Apache Stronghold Golf Club - Globe, AZ
- Barnbogle Dunes Golf Links - Bridport, Tasmania, Australia
- Beechtree Golf Club - Aberdeen, MD
- Black Forest at Wilderness Valley - Gaylord, MI
- Cape Kidnappers Resort - Napier New Zealand
- Charlotte Golf Links - Charlotte, NC
- High Pointe Golf Club - Williamsburg, MI
- Pacific Dunes Golf Club - Bandon, OR
- Quail Crossing Golf Club - Evansville, IN
- Riverfront Golf Club - Suffolk, VA
- The Legends Golf Club - Heathlands Course - Myrtle Beach, SC
- The Rawls Course at Texas Tech University - Lubbock, TX

### Private

- Atlantic City Country Club - Northfield, NJ
- Ballyneal, Holyoke, CO
- Lost Dunes Golf Club - Bridgman, MI
- The Golf Club at St. Andrew's Beach - Rye, Victoria, Australia
- Sebonack Golf Club - Southampton, NY
- Stone Eagle Golf Club - Palm Desert, CA
- Stonewall Golf Club - Old Course - Elverson, PA
- Stonewall Golf Club - North Course - Elverson, PA
- The Village Club - Sands Point, NY
- Tumble Creek at SunCadia - Cie Elum, WA

### Michigan Courses and Websites

- High Pointe Golf Club-Williamsburg  
<http://www.highpointegolf.com/course.php>
- Black Forest at Wilderness Valley-Gaylord  
<http://golfospreyonline.com/page/290-12542.htm>
- Lost Dunes Golf Club-Bridgman  
<http://www.lostdunes.com>