

# EAT PLAY STAY

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## Robert Trent Jones Jr. A True Golf Legacy

Gustafson Family  
Vineyard in the  
Sonoma Wine Country

Bar Hopping at  
Santa Rosa's La Rosa  
Tequileria and Grille

Adventures with Atticus  
Palo Alto's Garden  
Court Hotel



# A True Golf Legacy.....and then some

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
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**G**olf. This great game has many facets and memories ranging from watching hall of fame golfers playing in majors, teeing it up on world class courses, your best round ever, memorable 19th holes... the list is seemingly endless. There is one element to golf that is sort of taken for granted, but is in all probability the key component to this wonderful game - the course design and layout. How often do you hear an announcer or read about an event that includes reference to the course architect? Have you ever considered just what the architect saw when he first visited the site and began envisioning the final product? What about the numerous details that are paramount to designing and developing a world class championship golf course? When you think about the best of the best in golf course architecture, one name really jumps out - JONES!

There is Robert Trent Jones, probably most famous for Alabama's Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail. He has designed or redesigned some 500 courses worldwide including Spyglass, Mauna Kea and Kaanapali. President Dwight Eisenhower had him build a putting green at the White House, and he worked with another Jones, Hall of Famer Bobby Jones Jr., on the design of Peachtree in Atlanta and the redesign of Augusta National. It stands to reason that his son, Robert Trent Jones Jr. would follow in his father's footsteps, which indeed he did, becoming one of the all time best golf course architects in history. Incidentally, he rebuilt the White House putting green for President Bill Clinton.

I was fortunate enough to meet Robert Trent Jones Jr., recently at one of his pride and joy courses, CordeValle in San Martin California, site of the PGA Tour's Frys.com Open. Of course there is much more to CordeValle than just one of Robert Trent Jones Jr.'s world class championship golf courses. Situated in a valley surrounded by rolling hills and meadows on almost 1700 acres, it is an outstanding world class resort. In addition to the 7,169 yard golf course, CordeValle features well above average accommodations, cuisine, hospitality, a full service spa, tennis courts and teaching professional, winery and tasting room, meeting facilities and a truly customer oriented staff. Added to spending time with the architect of almost 300 courses worldwide, in every continent except Antarctica, this was an experience I'll cherish forever!

Robert Trent Jones Jr. became enamored with golf at an early age, competing in many USGA junior events against such stalwarts as a young Jack Nicklaus. His father insisted on Jones Jr. getting a good education.

## Robert Trent Jones Jr.



Robert Trent Jones Jr. admiring the CordeValle Golf Course from the patio outside the resort's Il Vigneto dining room.

He graduated from Yale where he concentrated on geology, history and American Studies, then went on to Stanford Law School for a year. Golf called and he left Stanford to join his father's firm, learning golf course architecture. Among his early projects with Jones Sr. was Spyglass Hill, which became the headquarters' course of the NCGA until Poppy Hills, designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr., was built. While they were working on championship courses such as Hawaii's Princeville, Mauna Kea and Kaanapali, the firm was asked to redesign Napa's Silverado. Feeling that Jones Jr. was ready for the challenge, his father recommended that he handle the redesign. Rather than coming up with a US Open style course, he wanted a golfer friendly course that presented challenges, but would also reward good shot selection and making. The 1967 redesign incorporated many of the features that have become synonymous with his firm's (Robert Trent Jones II) courses. He believes strongly in following the land, leaving it as natural as possible. His concerns for the environment were paramount in the redesign, featuring elevated greens which provide increased drainage, along with playing across nature's hazards rather than filling them in to become part of the fairway. When they had the reopening tournament Jones carded a 5 under 67, and was (jokingly) accused of designing the course to fit his game. When I told him that my favorite Silverado hole was #18 on the South Course he recalled playing for quite a few dollars partnered with the then-head pro against Harvey Ward and John Brodie. The pro's tee shot on 18 went OB, but Jones birdied the hole to break even. Although his redesign wasn't in the 7,000 yard US Open style, the PGA felt that it was a true test, with the North Course becoming host course for the Kaiser International and the Anheuser-Busch Classic, and the South Course hosting the Senior/Champions Tour's TransAmerica Open.

Amongst the goals of the Robert Trent Jones II firm is bringing together people of many cultures through this great game. A huge step towards achieving this goal is the design and development of courses worldwide. Working with Chief Design Officer Bruce Charlton, Robert Trent Jones II Golf Course Architects has created international courses which have received numerous awards as well as being the sites for many prestigious tournaments. Award winning courses have been designed in just about every conceivable type of terrain that can be found in 44 countries internationally as well as 32 of our states. They can be found in cities, in forests, on lava flows, in mountains, in deserts, even sugar cane fields and an abandoned tin mine. Each hole on every course is designed to reflect the natural aspects of the site, with an emphasis on environmental sensitivity. This approach to design resulted in Smithsonian Magazine describing his designs as a "Case study of how a golf course can have a surprisingly low impact on even a sensitive environmental area."

Listing each of the awards Jones or his firm's designs have achieved would be almost endless! Among the International awards his courses have received is being named in the top 100 outside the U.S. including #1 in the Philippines, France and the Barbados, top 5 in China, top 10 in the British Islands and in European Golf's top 75. Awards in the United States range from the top 100 courses to numerous #1 course



Robert Trent Jones Jr. enjoying a snack on the clubhouse lounge.

awards, with the Links at Spanish Bay named as the "Top Golf Resort in the US" by Conde Nast Traveler. We can't leave out one of Hawaii's top resort courses, the Prince Course at Princeville on Kauai, whose accolades range from the #1 Best New Resort Course to a Golf Digest 5 Star Rating. International tournaments have included the Australian PGA Championship, the World Cup of Golf, Johnny Walker Classic and the Scandinavian Masters. Add to these his individual awards such as a Lifetime Achievement Award, and being named Golf Course Architect of the Year for 3 consecutive years and you'll realize why the "RTJ II" name is looked on as a trademark guar-



Busts of Robert Trent Jones Sr. and Jr. in front of the 3,100 sq. ft. 4-bedroom fairway home named for them at CordeValle A Rosewood Resort in San Martin, CA.

anteeing a well-crafted, environmentally friendly golf course.

When asked about his design philosophy and which architect inspired him, his reply about design gave me a brand new insight, along with increased respect for this truly remarkable individual. As for the architect, he was adamant about Albert "Tillie" Tillinghast whose designs include Bethpage, Baltusrol and Winged Foot.

His design philosophy is many faceted, including balance by melding holes with varying degrees of difficulty in a pleasant order which will have players remembering the holes after their first round on the course. He strives always to present golfers with a series of puzzles on just how to attack each hole. Jones describes his architectural style as "Complex, eclectic, and wide ranging - like a jazz musician - Waller or Gillespie. It's got hints of Tillinghast, MacKenzie, and Ross, but it's still my own." To him golf course architecture is an art. He visualizes the Monterey Peninsula courses as the Vatican, incorporating the art of Michelangelo and Rafael, with Cypress Point the Sistine Chapel, Pebble Beach the Basilica, and Spanish Bay perhaps a canvas for the artists. Most impressive is that, even after years of numerous awards and accolades, he admits that he is still learning new things from other courses.

In talking about design he emphatically said that his basic approach is for golfers to have fun. His designs all are based on the utilization of natural features and following the land, along with incorporating environmentally friendly features. Jones feels that rolling hills are a beautiful woman's body with the natural undulations the shoulders and arms. The land speaks to golfers along with catching their eye when deciding how to play their shot. The natural configuration of the land itself suggests the solution to design details such as bunker placement and style. Most Robert Trent Jones II designed bunkers are in the Tillinghast style, sort of a sweeping flow. He refers to them as sort of an inland lighthouse where you don't want to sail your boat. A great example of utilizing what the land suggests is Brookside in Stockton. This below sea level site presented quite a challenge! Chief Design Officer Bruce Charlton and Jones came up with a truly environmentally friendly solution, building a series of lakes to act as a dewatering system to keep the water table low while providing golfers features that are a great help to both implementing and complimenting shot patterns.

If you were to look up 'impressive' in your Thesaurus, each of the adjectives describes my thoughts after spending time with Trent Jones! He is much more than one of the best golf course architects of all time. His introduction to golf was from Tommy Armour at Tillinghast's Winged Foot Golf Club. An avid reader, his educational background is indicative of his well rounded interests, including poetry, global politics and journalistic endeavors. After Stanford he joined his father's firm, working with him on Spyglass Hill. He soon assumed control of the firm's West Coast operations and then expanded to Asia, designing a course in Bangkok. In 1972 he went out on his own, founding Robert Trent Jones II Golf Course Architects. From his first solo venture, Napa's Silverado, to the political complexities involved during 20 years of dis-

cussions and political delays complicating the opening of the Moscow Country Club, Jones displays an obvious love for the game along with curiosity about practically everything. His story about the Moscow Country Club is unique. In 1974 he traveled to Russia with his father and Dr. Armand Hammer to meet with Leonid Brezhnev and discuss the building of a golf course in Moscow. Among possible sites was one on the Volga River which they visited on a hot summer day. After probably too much vodka and toasts, along with Russian drinking songs, their hosts felt they should relieve their hazes. They went to a steamy banya and were slapped with leaves and branches snapped from birch trees. Then there was a cultural bonding, with all of them jumping in and skinny dipping in the cold Volga. It took another 5 years to decide on the course location, and then 14 years after the start of negotiations Gorbachev put the project back on track. Finally in 1988 President Ronald Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev formally announced that a deal had been made. The course opened in 1994, and was the host of the first Russian Open, although Jones called it the "Russian Closed," as officials decreed that only a Russian could win.

During the most memorable, albeit it too little, time spent with him at CordeValle, Mr. Jones Jr. displayed another of his many talents, poetry! While the photographer was setting up for pictures he spent the time reciting poems that he had written. While not exactly a student of Shakespeare, Browning, Spenser, Shelley or Yeats, I found that Jones has an almost uncanny knack of creating and holding the listener's attention. He was kind enough to let me browse through a number of his poems. I noticed a continuing theme - each was annotated with the date and place it was created, usually relating to the site of a course he was designing or building. Jones was kind enough to allow the magazine to share two of his poems, which are included alongside this article. One was written in 1999 while he was in Taiwan designing the Ta Shee Course, the other also in 1999, although you'll have to use your imagination to determine where, as the subject is Wine.

Other Jones poems have been set to music written for symphony orchestras. Obviously well read, he is able to quote such renowned persons as Odysseus and Gorbachev, yet never loses his main focus - GOLF. He has been published in trade publications numerous times and is the author of a terrific book on golf course architecture, *Golf By Design*, which has a forward by Tom Watson.

Without a doubt, Robert Trent Jones Jr. has been a true ambassador of golf, not only for the outstanding courses he and his firm have designed, but for his dedicated approach to all aspects of this great game. The Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail in Alabama was mentioned earlier. Northern California could also have something similar, playing Robert Trent Jones II courses starting perhaps on the Monterey Peninsula and traveling north to include the Peninsula, North Coast, East Bay, Delta, Sacramento Valley and the Sierra's. Imagine teeing it up on outstanding venues which include The Links at Spanish Bay, Poppy Hills, Laguna Seca, CordeValle, Palo Alto, Shoreline Golf Links, The Links at Bodega Harbour, Brookside Country Club, Dublin Ranch,

Granite Bay, Silverado, Winchester Country Club, Serrano Country Club, Lake Shastina, The Ridge, Forest Meadows and the Resort at Squaw Creek. Plus there are a handful of Northern California courses that his firm renovated. Yes, this multi-talented golf course architect is truly a remarkable person. His wide range of interests is mind boggling, yet he is truly a down to earth individual who can recite poetry, discuss politics, tell endless stories and of course blow his own horn, but when it comes down to it he is primarily an ambassador of the great game of golf. To find out more about Robert Trent Jones Jr. and his firm, Robert Trent Jones II Golf Course Architects, visit their website [www.rtj2.com](http://www.rtj2.com). ●

## Poems

### WINE

Corked sunlight, Dionysus' gift,  
Carmine nectar quenching the gods' thirst.  
Caress the awaiting chalice

With a sensual pop the embedded cork  
reveals his sweet sleek smoothness

The ripe cork slowly expands,  
plump with loving promise.

Breathe the deep ambrosian fragrance  
let the tongue go speechless  
as it tastes immortality

Now, quaff her down.  
Now, while she pleads a virgins breath.  
Now, before mortal air turns her to vinegar.

Robert Trent Jones, Jr.  
July 14, 1999

### GREENS

The gears shift, dust flows free,  
the soil moves, near the sea.

Noise pierces the driver's eardrums,  
rock 'n roll on the dozer 'til they're numb.

Shaping the features from the land  
glazing it with crystal sand.

Designers draw wonders from their pens,  
but builders are my special friends

Golf courses become art  
from their work and from their heart

Arms and legs work the blade with skillful motion,  
sweat crusted backs moving in rotation.

Creating great greenscapes now,  
green lungs against the urban plow.

Robert Trent Jones, Jr.  
Ta Shee, Taiwan  
November 10, 1999