



Poppy Hills Hires Executive Chef from Casanova, Names New Head Golf Pro



Chef Johnny De Vivo and Head Golf Professional Cole Handley

PEBBLE BEACH, CALIF. (Feb. 13, 2014) -- The makeover of [Poppy Hills](#) continues, as the focus shifts from the golf course to the restaurant and clubhouse. Both the restaurant and golf course open to the public April 4.

Porter's, the restaurant in the Poppy Hills' clubhouse, is creating a fun fine-dining experience and has brought in Johnny De Vivo, formerly the executive chef at both Casanova and La Bicyclette in Carmel. De Vivo will take over a beautifully renovated restaurant that includes panoramic views of the golf course, a reimagined menu, unique wine and drink lists, outdoor dining, fire pits, and a new snack shack.

Porter's will be open for breakfast, lunch, and monthly dinner programs.

"We want to take ordinary golf food and spin it upside down," said De Vivo, now the new executive chef and food and beverage director. "We want to make what golfers like to eat, with a twist. Everything will be made with love."

De Vivo brings an impressive culinary background to Poppy Hills, previously running the kitchens at beloved La Bicyclette and Casanova, known as the "Most Romantic Restaurant in Carmel." De Vivo

started his culinary career at Scaldoni's, his family's restaurant in St. George, Utah, where he was also the private chef for Julius "Dr. J" Erving.

"I've never done anything like this before," said De Vivo. "I'm ready for the challenge to create something new, farm-to-table. It's going to be street-style food, but contemporary with reason and thought behind every dish. Casanova and La Bicyclette already had phenomenal names. To come in and create something on my own is very exciting."

Poppy Hills will also have the capacity to host weddings and receptions as large as 140 guests, thanks to a beautiful event lawn next to the 18th hole.

"We want the residents of Pebble Beach to feel like this is their restaurant," said Brad Shupe, general manager at Poppy Hills. "This is their club inside the forest."

Shupe also named Cole Handley the head professional at Poppy Hills. If anyone knows Poppy Hills inside and out, it's Handley, who was part of the Frontier Golf construction team for the renovation, which started in March of 2013.

"I had the opportunity to be exposed to all aspects of golf course construction," said Handley, a PGA Class A Pro. "I was literally building my dream out there."

Handley operated bulldozers and giant dump trucks, surveyed slopes of greens and tees, installed drainage, built bunkers, seeded greens, and much more. He also joined the Poppy Hills maintenance staff in November and helped groom the course to its current specs: firm and fast.

"My favorite part was mowing the greens that I helped create, and seeing the sand and mix turn green," Handley said.

Handley has worked in the golf business since he was a cart boy in Oregon at the age of 15. He helped the Taft High School golf team win the 2000 3A State Championship.

Handley joined Poppy Hills in 2008, but his journey also included traveling to nearly every national park in the U.S., as well as adventures throughout Asia. On the other side of the globe, Handley still gave free lessons to locals in Thailand.

Now Handley is designing the course markers and signage, scorecards, yardage books, and more to fit the theme of the stunning Del Monte Forest around Poppy Hills.

"It's amazing to rebuild a place I love, and help make it the place I've always wanted it to be," Handley said. "It's an unbelievable experience to be able to take a life long dream and make it a reality."

For further information about Poppy Hills, access the web site at www.PoppyHillsGolf.com.

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About Poppy Hills

Poppy Hills underwent an extensive renovation in March of 2013 centered around water conservation, primarily by improving irrigation and drainage. Original architect Robert Trent Jones Jr. returned to Poppy Hills to create a firm, fast and fun course that unfolds seamlessly through the stunning Del Monte Forest in Pebble Beach.

Jones reinvented the course architecturally, restoring each hole to its natural elevation along the forest floor, softening doglegs and contours, rebuilding all 18 greens with bentgrass, eliminating rough and introducing native waste areas that reduce irrigated turf by nearly 25%.

The headquarters of the Northern California Golf Association co-hosted the PGA Tour's AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am from 1991 through 2009, as well as the Spalding Pebble Beach Invitational (1989-1991) and 1991 NCAA

Men's Championships. Poppy Hills is also the tournament home to many of the NCGA's major amateur championships.

Visit PoppyHillsGolf.com for updates on the renovation.

About the Northern California Golf Association

The NCGA is one of the largest regional golf associations in the country, with more than 150,000 members throughout Northern California and into Nevada. The NCGA is the only golf association in the country to own two courses – Poppy Hills in Pebble Beach and Poppy Ridge in Livermore.

Since 1901, it has been the NCGA's mission to support and promote the game of golf in Northern California. The NCGA provides official handicap indexes, conducts more than 50 championships annually, rates courses throughout Northern California, publishes *NCGA Golf* magazine and operates a Foundation to support deserving youth. The NCGA Foundation's Youth on Course program allows juniors to play more than 100 courses in Northern California for just \$5.

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