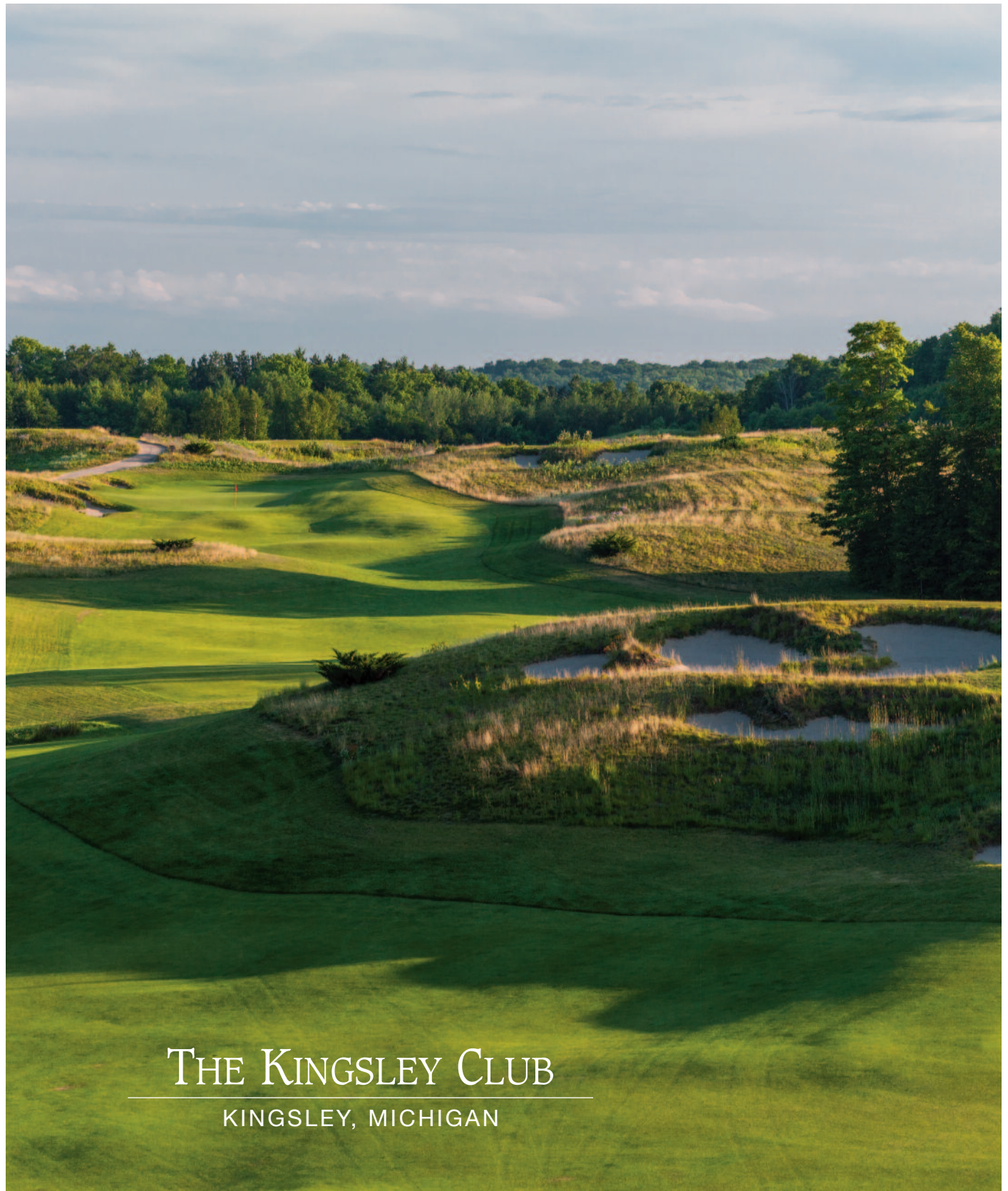


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THE KINGSLEY CLUB

KINGSLEY, MICHIGAN



# THE KINGSLEY CLUB

*“in the spirit of the game”*



By Mark Pazdur, Publisher

KINGSLEY, MICHIGAN: On a cold winter’s day in 1998 in Traverse City, Michigan, Ed Walker was in front of a blazing fireplace reading the newspaper classified ads over a freshly brewed cup of coffee. “I think classified ads give a realistic perspective on the economy and how people are living,” explained Walker.

One ad piqued his interest. “I had been searching for land in the greater Traverse City area and, that day, there was an advertisement for a 320-acre parcel just outside of town,” said Walker. “I don’t think I finished my coffee so I could investigate the site.

“My longtime business associate, Art Preston, urged on

by Crystal Downs veteran golf professional, Fred Muller, had committed ourselves to pursue the creation of a ‘monument to the game’ if we could find the right property. My intuition told me this might be the land we were looking for,” recalled Walker.

After a site visit, Walker purchased the land based on its diverse topography, mature hardwoods, and pine forests.

Muller’s recommendation of Mike DeVries as the architect was an unlikely one, but ultimately made sense.

“We were intrigued with the recommendation,” revealed Walker. “Mike cut his teeth with Tom Fazio and Tom Doak. He grew up at Crystal Downs, so he was intimately

## *The Mission Statement*

**“THE KINGSLEY CLUB** is a golf club, nothing more, nothing less. It exists for the enjoyment of its members and guests. A challenging but enjoyable test of golf, coexisting with the environment; a place with few rules and few starting times; where kindred spirits gather to have fun and make friends; a place of courtesy and good manners created for camaraderie, good cheer and good will.”

**“WHAT IS TRUE HAPPINESS?** To some it is material goods. To others, experiences. If you own fine art, odds are it’s safely stored away. I consider The Kingsley Club to be a living, breathing work of art—just something you can’t take home with you.” – ED WALKER, FOUNDER, THE KINGSLEY CLUB



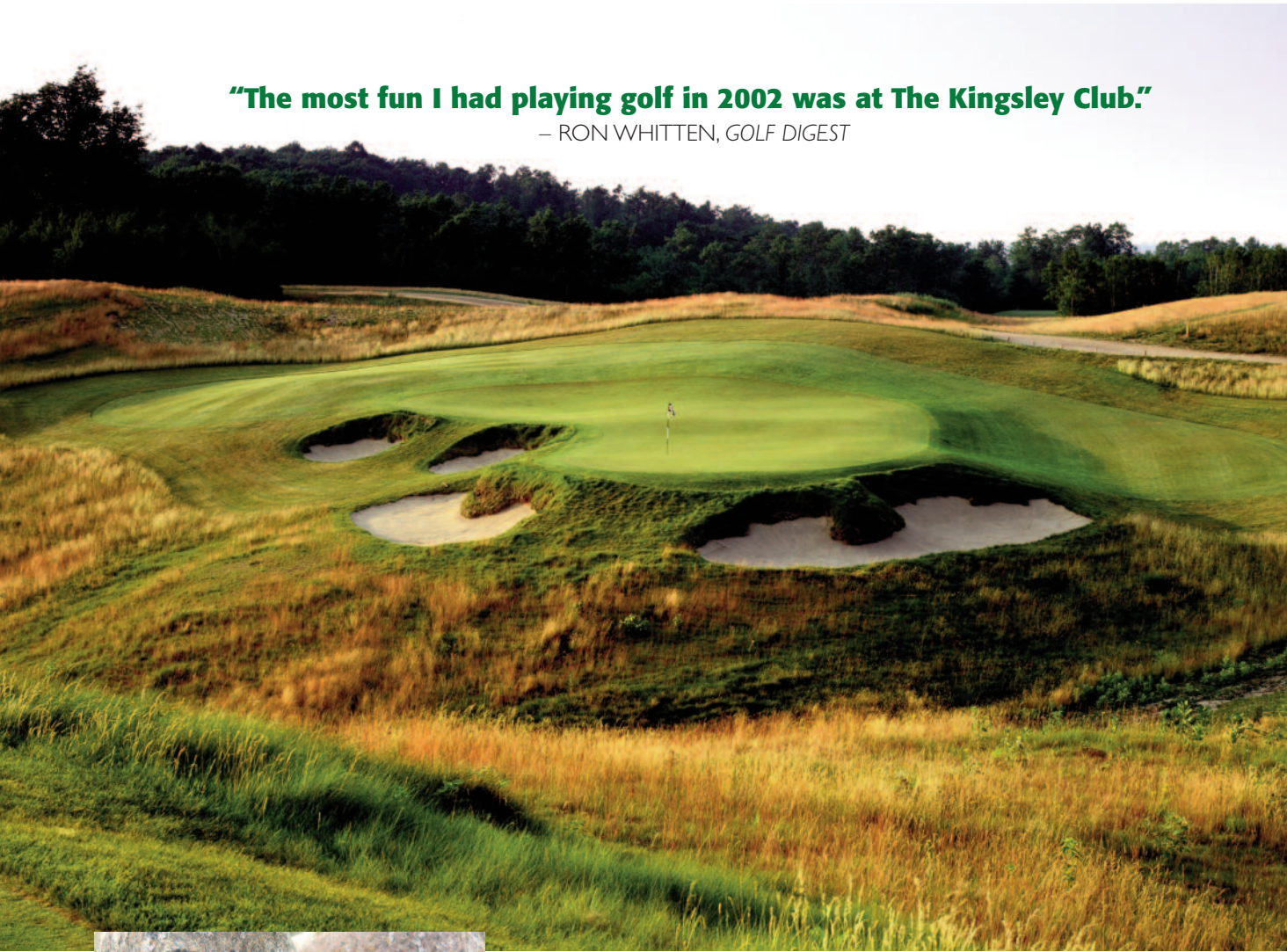
**TRAVERSE CITY** is considered the Cherry Capital of the World. It was named a “10 best places to retire,” by *U.S. News & World Report*. During the 20-minute drive from downtown to The Kingsley Club, you pass through dense forest and river bottom areas.





**“The most fun I had playing golf in 2002 was at The Kingsley Club.”**

— RON WHITTEN, *GOLF DIGEST*



A bottle of Jameson Whiskey is hidden inside an old iron bread oven discretely placed in a rock wall next to the 18th tee box. Have a wee nip to celebrate or numb your feelings after a wager has been lost.

familiar with MacKenzie’s design philosophy. We have great respect for MacKenzie architecture. He wanted golfers to think how a shot could be made and if your ball found trouble, he wanted you to have a second shot still demanding a strategic approach. MacKenzie was a camouflage expert in the British Army during the Boer War in the 1890s. His military knowledge is clearly seen in his use of bunkers to mask distances. While subtle, it is very effective.”

#### AFFECTED BY THE EFFECT

“Our 18-month collaborative process worked toward the ultimate goal to establish The Kingsley Club as a top golf club, nothing more, nothing less. We’re not developers,” said Walker. “There was no real estate component to alter the routing and, unlike some of the more recognized golf course architects who design a course for *their* game, here you bring *your* game.”

The course is big and bold, with bent grass greens and fescue fairways. Its features are in proportion with the property’s epic scale and yet offers an intimacy connecting golfers to the natural lay of the land. It is isolated and buffered by state owned lands where development is not allowed and the silence of nature is everywhere.

The land is a haven for wildlife including fox, wild turkey, bobcats, sandhill cranes, ruffed grouse, and water fowl. During season (April–November) the course displays a constantly evolving array of native flowering flora.

“Many great courses unfurl slowly; however, as you stand at the first tee at Kingsley, the first hole engulfs your senses,” remarked Walker.

**THE CLUB’S REGULAR CADDIE STAFF** is supplemented by students enrolled in the Ferris State University PGM Program in Big Rapids, Michigan. One of the club’s caddies has earned a prestigious Evans Scholarship. The Evans Scholars Foundation has helped more than 10,600 caddies attend college since its creation in 1930.

#### THE SIMPLER LIFE

Studying under the wing of Eddie Merrins, the respected director of golf at Bel-Air Country Club in Los Angeles, provided David Plassman knowledge that will last a lifetime.

“My regular foursome at Bel-Air included James Garner [best known for the television show *The Rockford Files*] and Larry Brown [the only basketball coach to win NBA and NCAA Championships],” recalled Plassman.

“As a native of Michigan, I yearned to return to a simpler, less stressful life. When one of our members, who also belonged to Oakland Hills in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, told me about Kingsley Club, I quickly raised an eyebrow. The club had just been ranked a ‘Top-100’ Modern Course by *Golfweek* and the buzz was phenomenal. Since then, it has been ranked as high as 18. Although I had worked at other top clubs, including Muirfield Village in Ohio, and Pinehurst in North Carolina, I was over the moon when I received the job offer as director of golf.”

The Kingsley Club features dramatic movement of land. “Surprisingly, little dirt was moved. The golf course’s characteristics are influenced by links course design

philosophies dating back to the 1700s. The natural terrain provides a variety of looks, shapes, and shots—and your ground game is always in play,” described Plassman. “Often, the best move is not a straight line to the pin. You learn quickly that there are many ways to ‘skin a cat.’

“After 13 years on the job, I still appreciate my association with the club. In late afternoons, it is surreal listening to the wind whistling through the pines on No. 17 tee box. I don’t do yoga, but I imagine this is about as close to a Zen feeling you can experience.

“I have learned firsthand that the fescue rough can cause fits. Don’t go for glory,” advised Plassman. “Be conservative and wedge it out.”

#### AN UNBELIEVABLE PLAYGROUND

At The Kingsley Club, the environment is at the forefront. Management had to compromise with the forestry unit where directional signs point the way to the entranceway.

“I must admit, even though I knew Traverse City like the back of my hand, I missed a turn and was late for my first job interview,” sheepishly admitted Justin Mack, general manager.







**"I HOPE** that 150 years from now, people will enjoy the course the way people do now." – ED WALKER

“My previous experience was at a large club in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where you never leave your post. I was impressed—and a little shocked—when during my interview, the clubhouse phone rang with a member request to deliver sunscreen to his group. We paused our conversation to deliver the sunscreen. The service level stunned me, even with my private club background.”

The Kingsley Club allows you to escape from the hustle and bustle of today’s life.

“I consider it to be your ‘private Idaho.’ We have a no tee time policy, an expert caddie program, and rarely do we have more than 40 members on property,” detailed Mack.

“Our double-sided practice facility is world class. We have music speakers built into the ground [usually playing soft rock or country music]; a practice fairway bunker; bunkered target greens; and a separate short game area with natural, raw-faced bunkers that emulate the hazards on the course,” said Mack. “Our bunkers replicate Scottish hazards where sheep had more influence on shaping than bulldozers.”



Three on-site, four-bedroom cottages are available for member use. Each includes a screened porch, living room with fireplace, and a charging station for your golf cart.

**THE KINGSLEY CLUB** is located 15 minutes from Traverse City—a haven for foodies, great entertainment, and the beautiful waters of Grand Traverse Bay. Club staff member, Brad Crawford, can direct you to one of the nearby Blue Ribbon Trout streams and staff can secure professional guides. With timely notice, upland game hunting guided excursions can be arranged. After a day of play, Chef Lydon’s open-air preparation of salmon, pork loin, and steaks are eagerly awaited.

Accolades

*Golf Digest* ranked The Kingsley Club the “Best Damn Club Around” in 2014  
*Golfweek Magazine* awarded The Kingsley Club “18th Best Modern Course” in 2015  
*Planet Golf World* named The Kingsley Club No. 74 in the World  
LINKS Top 100 named The Kingsley Club No. 63 in “Best Course in America”

IN THE SPIRIT OF THE GAME

*Golf Digest* ranks The Kingsley Club among the “Best Damn Clubs Around.” The magazine reports, “Kingsley is tucked down a dirt road, it’s a taste of the old world with a progressive twist. The course is fortified with untamed native grass and a talented collection of caddies to navigate it.”

“As one of 20 clubs, we are in good company on the *Golf Digest* list,” said Mack. “Others on the exclusive ranking include Sankaty Head Golf Club in Massachusetts, and Whisper Rock Golf Club in Arizona.

“We work hard to encourage player development. A decade ago, we created The Peninsula Cup, a national, two-person, scratch, best-ball invitational. Our goal was to expose our world-class golf club to world-class amateur players,” explained Mack. “The tournament draws together dedicated amateur competitors from coast to coast as well as Canada.” ■

*For more information on membership opportunities, please visit [KingsleyClub.com](http://KingsleyClub.com).*



A STRAIGHTFORWARD NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

The Kingsley Club currently has members from 30 states, Canada, England, and Belgium. Last year, the club added an impressive 34 new members. Membership benefits include the use of three on-site cottages and one off-site cottage with 1,000 feet of private frontage on the Boardman River.