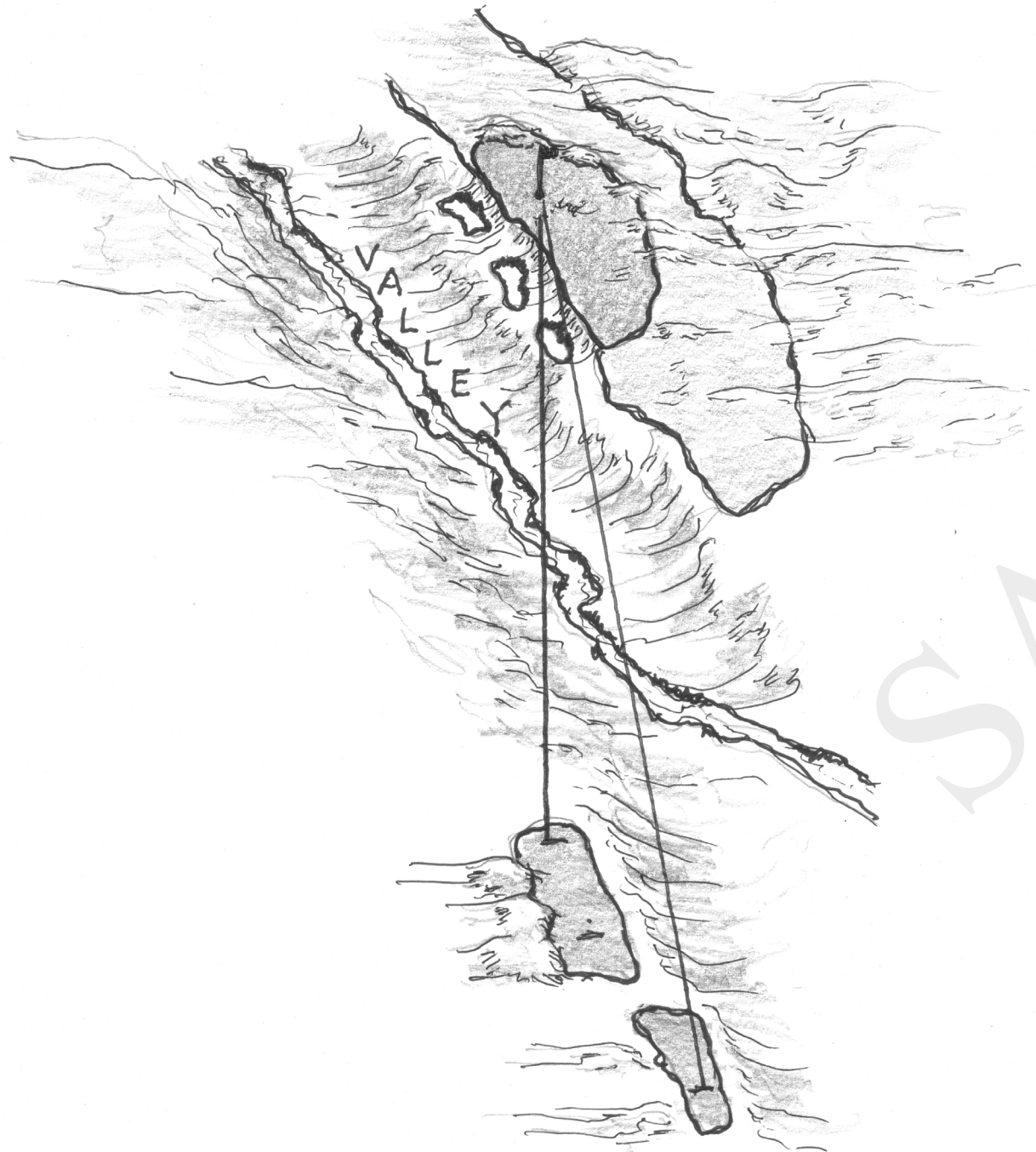




TRINITY FOREST
GOLF CLUB

TRINITY FOREST
HOLE 3, PAR 3, 250 YARDS



THIRD
BARRANCA

PAR THREE
250 YARDS

“It’s a fairly inviting green that gathers in from the right. You want to make sure you hit it the right weight, because the green is so long.”

“The third hole’s got distinct elements of the Redan.”

—BEN CRENSHAW

You Trinity Foresters probably win bar bets—I know I do—by knowing that the Redan is one of golf’s prototype holes, first occurring as the fifteenth at North Berwick, an ancient Open venue in Scotland, in 1858. The name is derived, probably, from the French word for reinforcement—*renfort*—which implied a V-shaped barrier pointed at the expected direction of attack. In golf architecture, it’s a par three with an offset green that’s guarded—*renforted*—in the front left, and slopes front to back.

Hole three has *elements* of the Redan, Ben says. Coore and Crenshaw are not champions of the template hole *à la* C. B. Macdonald and Seth Raynor. They

salute the old designs and their revered old designers from time to time, but only if the lay of the land calls for it.

Because your architects ratchet up the drama whenever possible, if the pin is up front, the third is the only par three on the course on which you can usually see your ball stop—so enjoy it. It's also your first chance to see the entire flagstick, which is often partially obscured by hills on the first two holes. Nothing is obscured on this one, especially not the wild country to the left. There's an airy, chasm-like barranca that probably has fossils in it and that you don't want any part of. So, beware of the orientation of the teeing ground, and of the prevailing breeze, both of which gently push you precisely where you don't want to go. Surveying the challenge of number three can be a little like looking into the void at the Grand Canyon or peeking over the edge of a high roof, when a perverse part of you is somehow drawn to the abyss. Don't go left, don't go left, you say to yourself on three and then you plunge down and to the left into double-bogey country.

It's funny though: although *à gauche* on the third should be deadlier than dead, for some reason, many fantastic shots are played from the high zoysia grass on that steep bank. Nor are the bunkers in the bank particularly onerous; the shot is uphill, the green holds, and the lips are not too high.

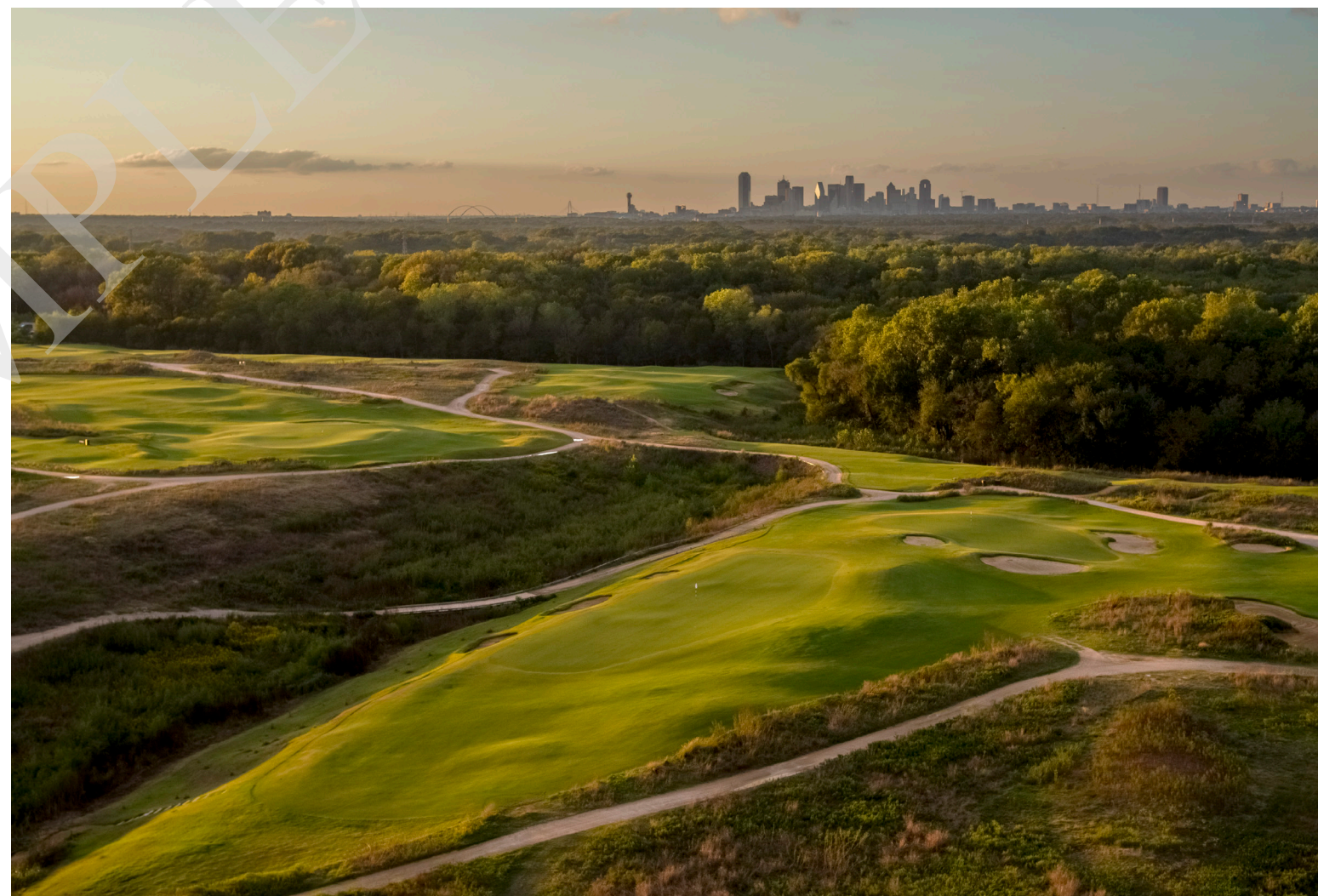
As so often happens at Trinity Forest, the safe shot—here, short and right—leads almost inevitably to a bogey or worse. Front pins aren't a particular problem, but the middle of this green is harder to read than James Joyce, and the rear tier is tiny and slopes away. You might be better off in the barranca or a bunker.

We know of at least one hole-in-one, made a couple of years ago to a front pin. But the ace-maker—former President George W. Bush—seems to have been constrained from talking about it much, because the answer to everyone's first question—"What did you hit?"—is a little embarrassing. Who wants to admit they even *have* an eight-hybrid?

One long-hitting member suggests playing the hole from way, way back, because, he said, "it's not nearly as much fun from up front, because the whole

idea of Trinity Forest is to see the ball on the ground. But if you play from way back, you have to hit a hook and roll it on, and that's a more thrilling shot than just lofting one onto the green."

The hole can be stretched to about 260 yards to the middle of this extraordinarily deep—72 yards!—green. That's enough for even the biggest hitters.



FIFTH AUDUBON

PAR FIVE
630 YARDS

“The bounce and roll which helped make golf such a gift in the first place are some of the qualities missing [in modern golf design]. The elements of randomness and mystery have effectively been removed.”

—GOLF ARCHITECT RICHARD MANDELL

“The scampish finger of luck.”

—GOLF WRITER O.B. KEELER

The hardest hole to build. The hardest aim point to figure. The hardest green to putt...

The monumental fifth at Trinity Forest gets its name from the Trinity River Audubon Center, a bird sanctuary and nature preserve located just beyond the green. John James Audubon's name has come to symbolize ecological and biological responsibility in golf because of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program, in which about 2,300 courses worldwide participate. Trinity Forest does most of

them one better by having an actual sanctuary on its border. You should know that the Trinity River Audubon Center makes a special effort to protect seven “priority birds,” all identified as rare or endangered in Texas, and all of which you can see perched on or moving through the trees on the perimeter of the golf course, if you're looking. Most spectacular of these is the pileated woodpecker, which is huge, with a red topknot and a profile that's echoed in Trinity Forest's logo.



Crenshaw—who is, coincidentally, a birder—and Coore spent so much time on this hole. To start with, a great deal of massaging was required to refine the fairway and bunkers on the hilltop—resulting in an intriguing multiple-choice driving hole. Should you go short, left, right, or even over the big center bunker? Mind the wind and consider your level of aggression. If you can fly it 290 yards or so, go for over. “And keep it right,” Coore says. “You’ll have a much better chance of getting on the green.”

“This hole is about the second shot.”

Harry Higgs, the charming, Falstaffian touring pro and Trinity Forest member, adds a caveat: if the wind is against you, OK, and you can't even reach the bunker, stay left on your entire journey to the green.

Up ahead there are still more bunkers, before the land swoops down the mountain to the edge of the wetland, by far the most substantial elevation change on the course. Indecision begins immediately, because your yardage must be extrapolated rather than measured for this blind shot. You examine the numbers on sprinkler heads. Study the pin sheet. And pace. And worry. And consult.

What to aim at is a matter of continual debate: this tongue of that bunker, or that tree on the horizon, or 40 yards right of that strange little silo in the forest and cut it, and where's that pin again? A lot of your calculation depends on the strength and direction of the wind, of course, because it's strongest here on the course's highest point. It's all a bit of a mystery, and luck will have a say, which real golfers love.

The fifth is Higgs's favorite hole because, he says, "Everybody hates it. You've got to trust your eyes but remember that the green is so much farther right than you think. If you're short right—don't worry, you've got the easiest bunker shot on the entire property."

For those attempting to get home in two, "the worst thing you can do is land your ball on the front of the green," says Coore. "Because it can bounce anywhere, and not stop until it finds a bunker or the native grass. It's better to land a few yards back, on the downslope."

We take Bill's word on this, naturally, because he designed said slope.

If your bouncing ball stops hole-high left and the pin is left, you are in one of the scores of locales at Trinity Forest where you are graveyard dead, a last-rites list that includes hole-high left (to a left pin) on the first; hole-high left on the eleventh; over the green on the fourteenth; and hole-high right on the sixteenth, even when your ball sits on perfectly mowed turf. It's possible to get those shots up and down in the same sense that it's possible to thread a needle in the dark or type a limerick while wearing goalie gloves. You can do it, but you probably won't.

One more thing about Audubon: there's a funhouse mirror aspect to the green that causes hilarious misreads. Thirty-footers miss the mark by twenty

and putts roll off the surface and down the sides. If the ball had fingers, it would be extending the middle ones. It's agonizing to watch putts go in slow mo from the green into the back bunker, or even onto the native grass.

The architects have successfully confused you. There isn't always congruence between the green surface and the ground around it; that's part of the reason the green at number five (and others we could name) are so hard to read. When your optic nerve and your caddie have supplied erroneous data, there's not much you can do but try to learn from your mistakes.



PAST AND PRESENT TOURNAMENTS



JACKSON T. STEPHENS CUP

“Trinity Forest Golf Club is a wonderful test of golf,” said Warren Stephens, Chairman of the Stephens Cup. “It’s a links style course on a rolling meadow with tall native grasses and dramatic bunkering and green complexes, Trinity Forest was an ideal setting for one of college golf’s most prestigious events.”



SMU Men’s Invitational • 2017-2021

Bush Cup (Army vs. SMU) • 2018

SMU Women’s Invitational • 2016–2022

Trans-Mississippi Senior and Mid- Master Championships • 2022

Texas State Open • 2017

AJGA Junior Invitationals • 2017-2024³

PGA TOUR

AT&T Byron Nelson • 2018-2019

Scheduled Championships

115th Texas State Amateur • 2024

USGA U.S. Junior Amateur Championship • 2025

USGA – U.S. Girls Junior Amateur Championship • 2031

¹ Not held in 2020 or 2023

² Not held in 2020

³ Not held in 2021