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## **Lake Toxaway To Unveil Spence's Redesign of Golf Course**

**LAKE TOXAWAY, N.C.** – Lake Toxaway Country Club has unveiled the newest golf course in the mountains of North Carolina, a picturesque layout that carries the distinction of being the first original design by noted architect Kris W. Spence.

This \$9 million championship course opened Aug. 20. It was crafted in the footprint of the club's outdated course from the 1960s. Spence, a Donald Ross restoration specialist who has done numerous course remodels, was charged with creating a design to maximize the property's potential and be as special as its setting. Early reviews suggest he was up to the task.

"What Kris has done on this piece of property is nothing short of amazing," says director of golf Lou Biago. "We've always had this beautiful setting, but the course was cramped and never took advantage of the scenery Mother Nature provided. It does now."

Lake Toxaway, with 640 acres of clear blue water, rests high among the Blue Ridge Mountains between the Pisgah National Forest and the Nantahala National Forest.

"I couldn't ask for a better setting to create my first original 18 holes. Everywhere you look there's dramatic scenery, from mountains with rock outcroppings to stunning lake waters," Spence says. "There's even a waterfall halfway up the mountain behind the fifth green."

Spence spent a lot of time walking the hills and valleys of the property, studying land forms and multiple angles of play. He decided upon a plan that reversed direction on nine holes, while repositioning five others. The result is a superb layout that fits naturally in its surroundings.

"My intention was to build a graceful, subtle design that's both strategic and interesting," Spence says. "I tried to create a course more in the mold of an Augusta style of play, where you have a lot of room off the tee and it's very inviting off the tee. The game really begins on your shots into and around the greens."

One of the ways Spence made the course inviting was by opening corridors that were once confined, exposing vistas of the Blue Ridge that hadn't been seen in years.

For owner Reg Heinitsh Jr., the end result validates his hunch that Spence was a rising star in golf course architecture and would be the ideal designer for Lake Toxaway Country Club.

"We really caught Kris at the perfect stage in his career. He's on the cusp of greatness,"

Heinitsh says. “Thanks to his talents, all of our amenities are now in balance. The lake has always been sensational. Now the golf course is sensational too.”

Heinitsh was struck by Spence’s passion for Donald Ross and classic architecture, along with the veracity for which Spence pours over old drawings and field notes of the masters.

Spence certainly included a classic feel to the new course at Lake Toxaway Country Club. The routing is not forced upon the topography, nor is it overly penal. Much like Ross, Spence created challenge around the greens with swales, hollows and grass-faced bunkers.

At first glance, the putting surfaces appear innocuous. But after a few holes, golfers realize there are subtle spines and movements that require putting acumen. Simply reaching the green in regulation is no guarantee of par.

The course measures 6,418 yards from the back tees with a par of 71. Lake Toxaway President David Dew says Spence was careful to create a course that accommodates golfers of various skill levels.

“When I look at the course, I see an excellent layout by all standards,” says Dew. “It’s challenging for low handicap golfers and fun for the medium to high handicap golfers. And it’s placed within a natural setting that may be unsurpassed on the East Coast.”

The front nine stretches longer than the back and is more open. It flows through a valley, surrounded by mountains. The first and ninth holes follow the reverse routing of two former holes, with the ninth incorporating a view of the lake, which didn’t exist in the past.

The back nine features more rises and falls, playing up to a plateau and back down again. The back side is also more secluded, favoring accuracy over distance. After the 17<sup>th</sup> green, there’s a 100-foot climb to the tee at No. 18. From there golfers are exposed to a panoramic view of the mountains and lake, before hitting downhill to a challenging par-5 closing hole.

Heinitsh and Dew expect the redesigned course to increase demand across all areas of the Lake Toxaway Company portfolio, from real estate sales and vacation rentals to resort packages at the Four-Diamond Greystone Inn.

“There is certainly a buzz. We’re fielding a lot of inquiries,” Dew says. “Reg Heinitsh had a vision of what this project would do for Lake Toxaway and that’s coming to fruition. We couldn’t be more pleased with the result.”

For information on golf, real estate offerings, vacation rentals or resort packages, call Lake Toxaway Company at (800) 443-0694, or visit [www.laketoxaway.com](http://www.laketoxaway.com).

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