



CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN

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## Cheyenne Mountain Resort's Design to Dye For

Cañon Elementary Turns 50  
Barefoot in Monument Valley Park  
Stratton's Lady Liberty

# a design to Dye for

A BOLD VISION TO CHANGE THE CHEYENNE  
MOUNTAIN PLAIN STANDS THE TEST OF TIME

*By Edward Placidi*

In the 1970s, a vision for the future of Cheyenne Mountain Ranch was coming into focus. And one of the recognized masters of his trade was enlisted to create what would be the linchpin of the area's new, and diverse, tomorrow. It would eventually comprise championship golf, The Country Club of Colorado and Cheyenne Mountain Resort.

It would be a project of firsts. For acclaimed golf course architect Pete Dye, it would be his first course west of the Mississippi and his first in the state of Colorado. For Stan Metzger, who would be the golf course superintendent from construction until his retirement more than 30 years later, it would be an opportunity to oversee the development of the first special golf course grass for saline conditions now available nationwide.

It began in 1967 when Charles Gates of the Gates Rubber Company purchased an approximately 3,000-acre parcel in southwest Colorado Springs that was known as Cheyenne Mountain Ranch. Gates'

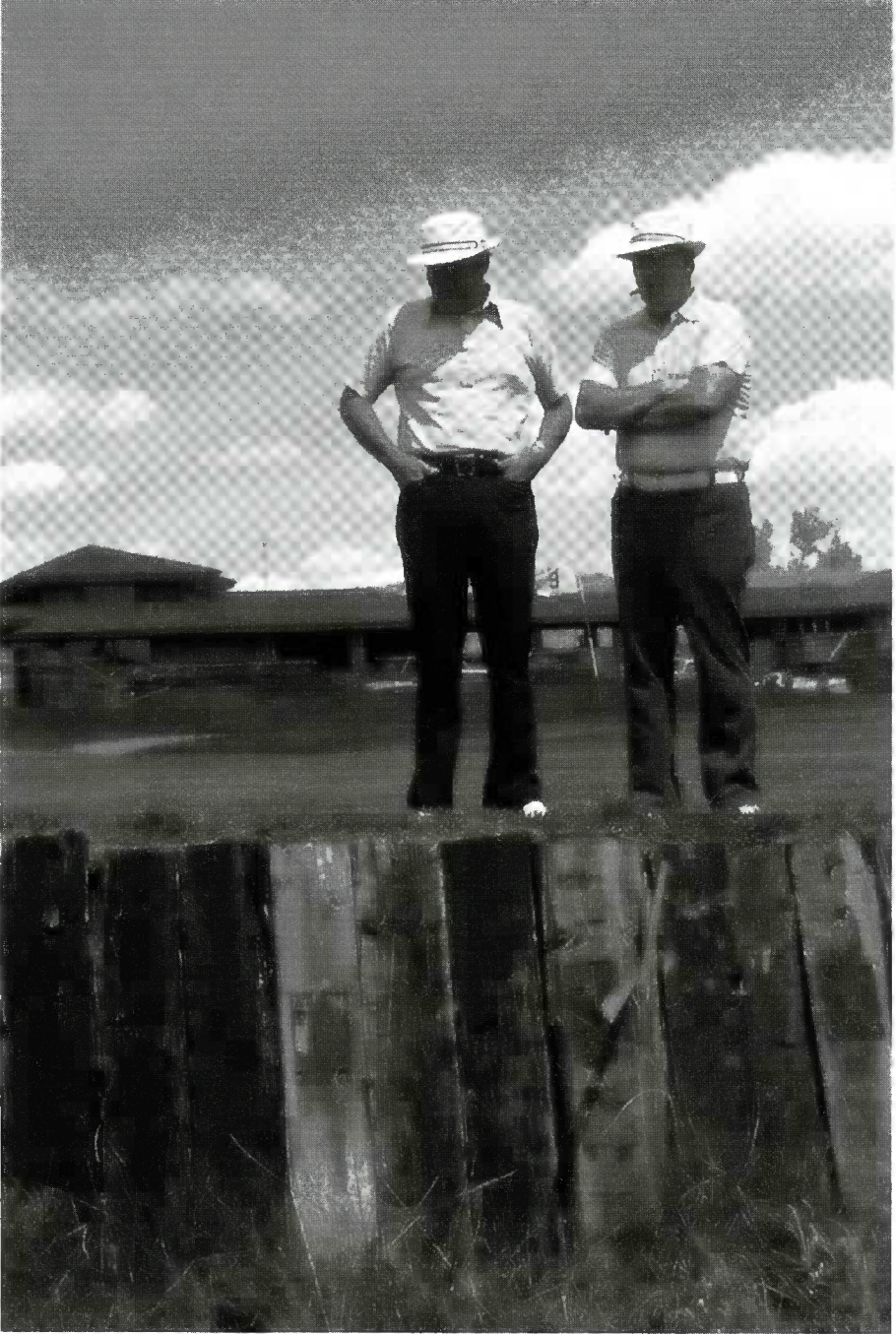
vision was to create a planned, multi-use community that included a shopping center, homes, townhouses and apartments, a golf course, a country club and a conference center and hotel.

The course was the first component of the community and would become the anchor of The Country Club of Colorado. Townhomes, apartments and the shopping center followed. In 1985, Cheyenne Mountain Resort was opened, offering guests all of the club's amenities including tennis, racquetball, squash, a fitness center and, most importantly, the 18 holes of championship golf. The country club has evolved into a major upscale leisure and recreational facility with a substantial membership, while Cheyenne Mountain Resort has blossomed into an award-winning property popular with both leisure travelers and business groups.

◀ Director of Golf Winston Howe (left) and General Manager Russ Wohlgemuth (right) admire Pete Dye's newly finished design for an 18-hole championship golf course. The course is situated on the grounds of today's Cheyenne Mountain Resort.



Photo courtesy of Ciesenne Mountain Resort.



At right, new ground is broken to accommodate Pete Dye's newest golf course creation. The landscape was crafted to house not only an 18-hole golf course, but also the lake and shoreline that you see today (opposite page). Below, Pete Dye relaxes in a golf cart after the project is completed. In 1922, Dye's father designed and constructed a nine-hole golf course in Urbana, Ohio. This is where Pete Dye grew up and received his early training. The family business has been carried from generation to generation, and all of the Dyes have contributed their unique talents and knowledge to the improvement of the game of golf. The Dye name is now associated with nearly 200 courses around the world.



But back in the late 1960s, the site was just flat grazing land with its most notable feature a small, man-made pond. In 1971, as a necessary prelude to construction of the course, that pond was developed into 35-acre Curr Reservoir under the direction of Roy Dye, Pete Dye's brother and an engineer. The primary function of the lake and dam was to provide flood control to guarantee the integrity of the course and the other components of the community during heavy storms. The beautiful lake, however, would also become the focal point of the golf course as well as a recreational facility with water sports and fishing for the country club and Cheyenne Mountain Resort.

With the lake in place, Dye got to work. "I adapted the design to the natural terrain, giving the course its

own special character, and that original design is still the same," Dye recalls. And according to Metzger, "Pete did an imaginative job, especially considering he had to work with basically a flat valley except for a knob where the 14th hole would go and a creek by the 7th hole." The dirt that remained from the lake construction, however, did make it possible to enhance a number of the greens with mounds.

The course, which opened the first nine holes in 1973 and the second nine in 1974, is celebrating its 30th anniversary. Over the years, the course has garnered a strong following among area golfers and served as the venue for numerous state and regional golf tournaments. Three decades after it opened, in fact, Dye is still getting positive comments from duffers. "I continue to get good reports from people about Cheyenne Mountain," he says. "They tell me it's a great course to play, where you need every club in your bag, and where not only are the holes varied but they have to be played differently on a given day depending on the weather."

Dye's creation set the stage for the bigger things to come. "At the time I designed it, there was nothing there but the golf course," he reminisces, "while today it's a beautiful area with an upscale country club, a resort and homes. It's rewarding to look back and see that I was part of something that got the area going."





In addition to the course being Dye's first west of the Mississippi and first in Colorado, it also racked up another first: the development of a special salt-resistant grass that today is available to golf courses everywhere. Because there was a problem in one area with the salinity of the soil, "I didn't think they could grow grass there," recalls Dye.

Golf Course Superintendent Stan Metzger was undeterred and went searching for a solution. Metzger took the problem to Professor Jess Fults at Colorado State University in Fort Collins who would develop what would be called Fults Alkali Grass. The new product would grow beautifully in those saline areas on the Cheyenne Mountain course, and was then put on the market by the Northrop King Company. The Fults Alkali Grass blended in well with the variety Metzger had chosen with which to seed the course, giving a nod to keeping water usage lower: "Amur Intermediate Wheatgrass survives well in our climate without additional water, and it's also beautiful because it turns blue when dormant in summer," he explains.

Dye was very appreciative that Metzger had gone the extra mile to ensure the entire course looked verdant. "Stan was a true professional, and I thought so much of him that, for the first and only time, I went back to a course to attend a superintendent's retirement party," says Dye.

While the immaculately groomed championship course set the stage for significant changes to the area, the 18 holes themselves have remained virtually unchanged over the years. It continues to be considered one of the more challenging courses in Colorado, known for its fast greens and for rewarding good shots and penalizing bad ones. The border of railroad ties, which was part of Dye's original design, still edges the lake. The pine, ash, honeysuckle and cottonwood trees, which Metzger and Dye placed strategically to accent the design yet not block panoramas of greens and fairways, still grace the course. And golfers — as always, members of The Country Club of Colorado and guests of Cheyenne Mountain Resort — are still inspired by the views from every hole of majestic Cheyenne Mountain. ✱