

FIVE THINGS

PLAYA GRANDE GETS A COMPLETE REMODEL: REES JONES DISCUSSES WORKING ON HIS FATHER'S ORIGINAL DESIGN

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Playa Grande has long elicited intrigue. Just hearing the name "Playa Grande," thoughts of paradise and relaxation permeate. Ten holes sit along the Atlantic Ocean at this Dominican Republic beauty, originally conceived by Robert Trent Jones Sr. in 1979 but not built until 1997, three years before the great designer's death. It is considered by some to be his greatest work, and considering he designed or redesigned more than 500 courses, that's quite the statement.

After seeing photos of Playa Grande, that level of intrigue continues to grow. Over 160 acres of oceanfront property includes water views on all 18 holes, creating a magnificent setting on the northeast shore in Rio San Juan. Multiple property owners have cycled through the past couple of years, but Discovery Land Co. purchased Playa Grande from Dolphin Capital investors over the past year, giving the golf-centric residential development company behind successful clubs such as Madison Club, Gozzer Ranch, Baker's Bay and a dozen more another beautiful escape. Playa Grande is now ready for intrigue to turn into reality. Rees Jones, the famed architect and Trent Jones Sr.'s son, completed a \$10-million redesign of the course to get ready for its grand re-opening, which took place last weekend.

"Everybody's heard about Playa Grande," Rees Jones said, "But everyone's expectations are always exceeded when they actually get here and see it. It's a rare course in that way. The pictures are stunning, but they don't do this place justice."



Gone are some "awkward holes," as Rees put them, and the back nine was re-routed. The result, he calls "perhaps the best oceanside finish in the world." Before fans of Pebble Beach and the courses on the Monterey Peninsula or Scotland become offended, consider the facts. The final five holes conclude on the water, including the postcard-worthy par-3 17th hole, which you might've seen in some fantasy golf calendar.



The 15th hole plays parallel to the ocean to a little peninsula green. The 16th requires golfers to carry the ocean with their approach. And the par-5 18th hole is a thrilling finisher.



Don't discount the strong start, including the thrilling par-3 third and seventh holes, and two Cape template holes on the front nine (Nos. 4 and 9), giving this course serious bones—while still being playable for the average player. "There are challenging angles and shot options on every hole, but there's enough width and help for an every-day player," Rees said.



The seventh green at Playa Grande.



The ninth hole at Playa Grande.

"The great golf courses like Augusta are the ones that really kind of evolve over time. I think that's what happened at Playa Grande. The best courses make you think on every shot. And that's the case here."