



VANCE & ANDY ANTONIOU

GARTH CHAMBERS

RICK POZDOL

KEVIN PALUCH

JOE HAAS

PAMELA CHAMBERS

KATIE ALDER

MICHAEL KEEFE

GARTH "GL" CHAMBERS

CARY KERGER

GROUND BREAKERS

YEARS OF BUILDING A COMMUNITY

25

BY JULIA INGERSOLL

Vance Antoniou, Partner of Anvan and member of the original development team. Vance oversaw initial site plan and construction of the golf courses and amenities.

Andy Antoniou, Partner of Anvan and member of the original development team. Andy headed real estate sales and golf course operations.

Cary Kerger, Anvan general counsel. Carey was involved with initial land acquisition and is presently the managing member of The Abbey Resort in Fontana.

Garth & Pamela Chambers, current owners of Geneva National Golf Club. Garth is the Chairman & CEO of Paloma Resort Properties.

Rick Pozdol, Executive Director of the Home Owners Association and has been involved with GN for 11 years.

Joe Haas, President of Geneva National Home Owners Association.

Mike Keefe, Chairman of the Board, Keefe & Associates, Inc. Member of the Board of Directors and declarant of the GN Trust.

Katie Alder, Membership Director, as well as rental agent and sales associate, over a time period of 24 years.

Kevin S. Paluch, COO for Paloma Resort Properties for over 20 years. Kevin is most proud of his contributions to the culture of Geneva National.

Garth (GL) L. Chambers, President, Paloma Resort Properties. GL has been with GN for 4 years and has contributed to upgrades to the resort and leading Paloma's overall vision.



Travel just about anywhere in the United States and mention you're from Lake Geneva, Wisconsin and people instantly know where it is, as if you had just mentioned a large city like Chicago or Milwaukee

Because of that name recognition, "Geneva" has dominated the marketing and naming of businesses, storefronts, and developments across Walworth County for decades. Thus, 27 years ago when Chicago real estate developer Anthony Antoniou announced his largest real estate development to date, the name came as a surprise to no one: Geneva National (GN). Today, Geneva National is much more than just another real estate development. It's a community. Once fully developed, GN will be larger than most of the county's cities, including Lake Geneva and Delavan, based on the approximately 1,800 housing units (currently 1,000 units) that are to be built within its grand gates. A simple drive through the 25 miles of winding roads in GN and you'll begin to get a sense of why this

place is so special, and why it has been ranked three times as one of America's 100 Best Master-Planned Communities. Geneva National also has a resort component, featuring 54 holes of championship golf (three courses which rotate between member and public use), award-winning restaurants, and six on-site inns designed for groups to stay and play golf or hold corporate meetings. Keefe Real Estate wanted to take a look back at the past 25 years with a focus on the stages of growth that bring us to the present, and to celebrate the people and milestones that have led to the creation of a full-fledged community. This is a story of visionaries, builders, individuals, and organizations who were committed to the creation GN, and who have set the stage for a bright future.

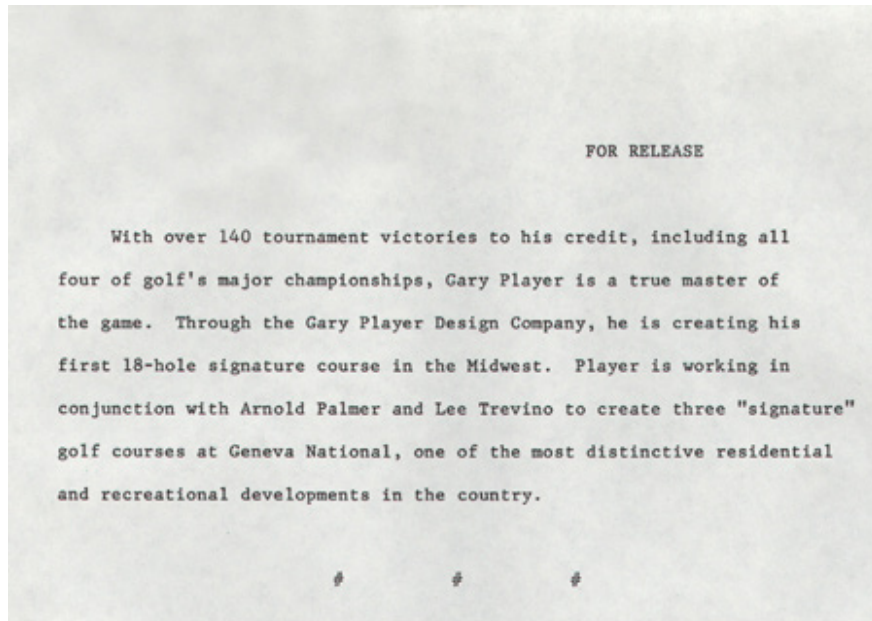


ABOVE: Photo by Andrew Fox. LEFT AND INSIDE: Courtesy of the Geneva National Archives

ED MCMAHON

“Golf courses sell real estate and that’s why they’re built.”

FAR RIGHT: View of property from Clubhouse vantage point during construction of first homes. TOP: Press release informing the public of exciting additions for Geneva National Golf Course. RIGHT: Gary Player laying out plans for the first nine holes in 1989.



In the late 1980’s, the Geneva Lakes area had seen its fair share of resort and entertainment development, much of which was owned by the Anvan Development Corporation, Mr. Antoniou’s development company. Certainly, Chicagoans had long embraced the lakes area for recreation and weekend trips, filling thousands of hotel rooms each summer. But would they embrace a golf community for their second homes, making Lake Geneva and the surrounding communities a more permanent part of their lives? Mr. Antoniou (Tony) and his two sons, Vance and Andy, the three original principals of Geneva National, bet that they would.

As remembered by Andy Antoniou,

“The project initially was conceived when Vance, Tony and I were having dinner at the Interlaken (now *Crafted Americana* at the Geneva Ridge). Looking across the lake at this gorgeous sloping property, we said, ‘What a beautiful piece of land, what should we do with it?’ We looked at each other: ‘golf course!’ and that was the birth of Geneva National.” In May of 1989, Anvan announced that they would develop a 1,600 acre recreational/residential community featuring three signature golf courses designed by some of the most well-known names in golf: Palmer, Player & Trevino. Much of the land was also protected in conservancy, with miles of nature trails traversing through GN Today.



ARNOLD PALMER

“The most rewarding things you do in life are often the ones that look like they cannot be done.”

Taking a page from Arnold Palmer’s playbook of life, the Antonious saw past the obstacles and set their dream into motion. It was a bold plan that required swift action, and so the Antonious, along with Anvan General Counsel, Cary Kerger, set out to acquire the property and create the legal frame work for the community. For a project of such scale and complexity, their ability to finish the job in 18 months was truly remarkable. On February 7, 1990, with nothing more than four black & white maps on a wall and a 3-D model, the Geneva National sales center opened its doors for real estate and membership sales. “It was a selling frenzy those first few weeks,” remembers Katie Alder, Membership Director for GN at that time. “The sales center was full every weekend with prospects vy-

ing for condominium or lot sales, and agents racing to the maps to pin their sale...it was an exciting time!”

During the first five months, over \$60 million of real estate was sold in GN, including condominiums and single family home sites. The original condo projects were the Club Cottages, the Lakelands, the Woodlands and the Highlands, ranging in price from \$89,000 to \$289,000. Alder explained, “The majority of buyers were from the Chicago area...no question. Most where buying a condo and a vacant land parcel; one to enjoy now and the other to build on later,” Andy Antoniou remembers, “We sold so many lots so quickly that we actually paid off a five year construction loan in six months. There were times we were there for 20 hours a day.”

BEN HOGAN

“The most important shot in golf is the next one.”



GARY PLAYER

“A good golfer has the determination to win and the patience to wait for the breaks.”

LEFT: Palmer 17. BELOW: Gary Player playing his own course after its construction.



Around the same time, club membership sales became popular. In the first year, 100 memberships to Geneva National’s two private clubs (the Hunt Club and the Golf Club) were sold with the anticipation of the Palmer and Trevino courses opening late summer of 1991. At the time, non-resident memberships were restricted to just 25 members, making membership at Geneva National. The Hunt Club was the first of the three clubs at GN to open in October of 1990, featuring 375 acres of upland game bird shooting, a 10-station sporting clay course and private dining. Although now closed, according to Esquire magazine in 1992, GN’s Hunt Club was named one of the country’s top 25 shooting clubs.

Memorial Day weekend in 1991 marked the inaugural member golf tournament at Geneva National, making 2016 the 25th anniversary of Geneva National Golf Club (GNGC). Neither the Trevino nor the Palmer course was complete, so the most mature nine holes were selected from each to make a complete 18-hole tournament, with

tee boxes being accessed by sheets of plywood. With the 56,000 sq. ft. clubhouse also under construction, the opening luncheon was held under a tent. Just a few short weeks later on June 20th, the GN Clubhouse officially opened for business.

Geneva National was originally designed as three signature courses with the Trevino and Palmer courses opening in 1991. But it wasn’t until June 19, 1995 that the third, and probably the most unique of the three courses, opened its first nine holes for play. In 1996, shortly after the opening of The Player course, in 1996, Paloma Resort Properties purchased the Golf Club, three courses, the Hunt Club, and other related amenities. “At the time, Paloma Resort Properties had turned around five properties for Textron, so Anvan gave us the opportunity to come out, take a look and make an offer,” recalls Kevin Paluch, the Vice President of Operations with Paloma Resort Properties. The second nine of the Player course opened 4 years later when the course was under Paloma’s ownership.

Several years later in 2000, after Anvan had moved on, local developers Mike Keefe of Keefe Real Estate, along with Scott Lowell, recognized that a development of this magnitude offered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. “We got involved because we thought the project was phenomenal,” commented Keefe. “It’s a one of a kind product, so naturally, we wanted to be part of making Geneva National successful.”

Paluch attributes a large part of GN’s eventual success not only to Keefe, but also to builder Scott Lowell. “A lot of people...stepped up and did their part to make sure the project moved forward well. Certainly we were doing our part on the golf end; but credit also goes to Scott Lowell as an integral part of making sure that Geneva National would only build a certain quality product. He didn’t allow the standards to be lowered just to sell all the remaining pieces and not carry through the original vision for the property. And because he pushed to hold true to those standards, GN remains a spectacular community that is thriving again,” he explained. Keefe went on to say, “We’re now anticipating a new phase of development in the next two to three years. We’ve had a lot more interest over the past year and both sales and property values have definitely improved.”



GARY PLAYER

“Change is the price of survival.”



With nearly 300 golf courses closing per year over the past three years, it would seem that Geneva National’s Golf Club could get itself into the rough, but with a focus on meeting changing tastes and habits, the Paloma group has managed to stay well in the fairway. “It’s so true,” says Paluch. “If you don’t change with the times, your business will go elsewhere. We’ve been fortunate to adapt to what people are asking for in the properties we own and manage.”

Paluch explains that they’re trying to attract more of the millennials. “Without question, our commitment to the junior (golf) program is huge. It has brought in as many as 1,000 junior players to Geneva National

within the last year...whether it was the Nike tour or the weekly clinics or golf camps we host, or the high schools that compete at GN, we are most definitely committed to getting juniors involved in golf.”

The trend toward catering to social groups rather than corporate groups has also been a key factor in GNGC’s success. “There has been a shift in customers’ thinking, needs and wants. The millennials want to have more fun. We’ve tried to adapt to that by offering music on the range, to different offerings in the grill room and more affiliation with the hotels. These relationships have helped feed each other’s business and it’s working very well,” Paluch explained.



LEE TREVINO

“There is no such thing as natural touch. Touch is something you create by hitting millions of golf balls.”

Both Keefe and Paloma are strengthening their commitments to this community by reinvesting in existing structures and facilities. Keefe, who also serves on the community’s governing board, indicated that GN’s swim and racquet club is set to receive a \$3 million renovation this year, and that a new, on-site maintenance facility with offices will also be built. “As the largest investor in this property, we are committed to making sure that GN remains the premier recreational community in southeastern Wisconsin,” Keefe commented. In addition, Paloma has made significant improvements to its clubhouse over the past year, with complete renovations to its meeting, banquet and member facilities.

As we mark the golf club’s 25th anniversary this year, the sun is shining on the beautiful and bountiful Geneva National community - a true Wisconsin treasure of residential and recreational living gracing the wooded shores of sparkling Lake Como. With a healthy and active golf club, new swim, fitness and racquet amenities for the residents, and a growing population of both primary and second home residents, GN is a thriving community coming fully into its own for present and future generations of golf enthusiasts and nature lovers alike.

Keefe Real Estate’s Geneva National sales center is open 7 days a week, and sits at the entrance of the community, before the security gate. Please feel free to stop by during business hours or call to speak with one of our seasoned GN sales experts to set up a private tour of the community.

ABOVE: Lee Trevino having an autograph session. BELOW: Arnold Palmer, Lee Trevino, and Gary Player hosting a press conference for the announcement of their signature courses.