

THE RESULTS

Readers Poll Reveals Expected and Surprising Opinions

BY G.N. COVELLA

The people have spoken. More than 57,000 votes were cast in our 2014 Readers Choice Best of the Best online survey. The poll, which extended through June and July, provided an interesting glimpse at readers' views on golf in our state. And while some of the results were quite expected, such as Pine Valley's position as the best course in The Garden State (and on the face of

the planet), the results also told a story of changing tides on the New Jersey golf scene.

With voting in both private and public golf categories, this popularity contest turned up some big surprise winners and, for some old favorites, a drop in position.

Let's just call it a new era for golf in Jersey.

While Pine Valley continues to set the standard for great golf, it is evident that the gap is shrinking between the venerable George Arthur Crump-designed South Jersey track



and the modern courses that now dot the landscape from the Jersey Shore to the Delaware River.

One course that continues to impress our print and online readers is the Tom Fazio-designed Ridge at Back Brook. As was the case in last year's vote, the Ridge placed second to Pine Valley as the state's top private course. However, in the Favorite Course

Played category, The Ridge placed number one while Pine Valley slipped to seventh on the list.

The Ridge's dominance in the voting was confirmed with a perfect 10-for-10 showing in private course categories, including firsts in Favorite Golf Pro (Clint Deibert), Best Superintendent (Alan Bean), Best Chef (John Zaren), and Friendliest Staff.

Fiddlers Elbow also finished as one of the best private courses in the state, placing in every private course category, including first in Best Bargain voting.

The final tally of voting in the private golf category also revealed standout recognition for Forsgate Country Club (represented in nine of 10 categories including #1 in Best Family Club), Little Mill Golf Club (placing in nine of 10 categories), Galloway National (eight of 10 categories including Mike Killian's selection as Top Teaching Professional) and Basking Ridge (seven of 10 categories).

On the public side, historic Atlantic City Country Club scored a close win over Cape May County's Shore Gate securing 8% more votes. This marked the second consecutive runner-up finish for Shore Gate. Atlantic City also placed first in four other categories: Best Conditions, Best at The Shore, Best Food and Most Scenic.

Meanwhile, last year's second-place finisher Crystal Springs' Ballyowen Golf Club dropped to third in the best public course voting but rebounded to place first in the Favorite Course category. With seven courses, the Crystal Springs operation in Sussex County garnered Top Resort honors in the state.

And, true to form, Ron Jaworski Golf was well represented with all four Jaworski-owned tracks – Running Deer, Blue Heron Pines, Riverwinds and Valleybrook – all represented in the final vote totals.

Now, on to the results of the 2014 GolfStyles' Best of the Best Readers Choice survey.

NEW JERSEY'S TOP PRIVATE COURSE

1. Pine Valley
2. The Ridge at Back Brook
3. Galloway National
4. Baltusrol (Upper)
5. Liberty National
6. Plainfield Country Club
7. Ridgewood Country Club
8. Baltusrol (Lower)
9. Hamilton Farm Golf Club
10. Fiddlers Elbow

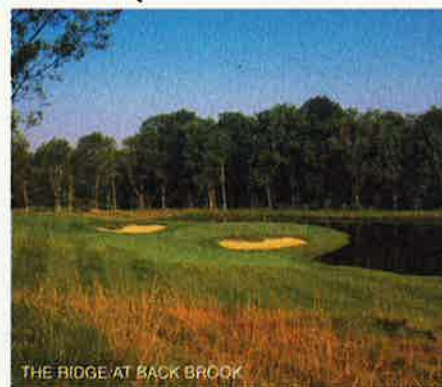


PINE VALLEY

HONORABLE MENTION: Bayonne Golf Club, Somerset Hills, Forsgate (Banks Course), Hidden Creek, Hollywood Golf Club, Little Mill Country Club, Upper Montclair Country Club, Pine Barrens Golf Club, New Jersey National Golf Club, Trump Philadelphia, Trump Bedminster, Hollywood Golf Club, Mountain Ridge Golf Club, TPC at Jasna Polana, Metedeconk National Golf Club.

FAVORITE PRIVATE COURSE

1. The Ridge at Back Brook
2. Little Mill Country Club
3. Fiddlers Elbow Country Club
4. Galloway National Golf Club
5. Forsgate Country Club
6. Hidden Creek Country Club
7. Pine Valley Golf Club
8. Trump Philadelphia Golf Club
9. Hominy Hill
10. Preakness Hills



THE RIDGE AT BACK BROOK

HONORABLE MENTION: Rolling Green Country Club, Shackamaxon Country Club, Riverton, Hackensack, North Jersey Country Club, Wildwood Country Club, New Jersey National Golf Club.

BEST PRIVATE BARGAIN

1. Fiddlers Elbow
2. Little Mill Country Club
3. Forsgate Country Club
4. Greate Bay Country Club
5. Basking Ridge Country Club
6. Trump Philadelphia
7. Royce Brook Country Club
8. Wildwood Country Club
9. Shackamaxon Country Club
10. New Jersey National Golf Club



FIDDLERS ELBOW

HONORABLE MENTION: Copper Hill, The Links, Cherry Valley, Springdale Country Club, Panther Valley, Twin Brooks, Old York, Greate Bay, Stone Harbor, The Ridge at Back Brook.

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AT THE SHORE



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GolfStyles
*Best COURSES
of 2014*

BEST SUPERINTENDENT

1. **Alan Bean, The Ridge at Back Brook**
2. Rick Christian, Pine Valley
3. Mark Willigan, Fiddlers Elbow
4. Scott McBane, Galloway National
5. Don McClure, Little Mill
6. Paul Ramina, Hamilton Farm
7. Tom Saunders, Forsgate
8. Mike Brunelle, Upper Monclair Country Club
9. John O'Keefe, Preakness Hills Country Club
10. James Cunningham, Trump Philadelphia

HONORABLE MENTION: Doug Larsen, Wildwood; Scott Carpenter, Brooklake; Craig Mencl, Basking Ridge; Richard Tacconelli, Shackamaxon; Greg James, Liberty National.

BEST PRIVATE CHEF

1. **John Zaren, The Ridge at Back Brook**
2. Michael Weissaupt, Fiddlers Elbow
3. Rickford "Ryan" Foo, Upper Montclair
4. Oliver Filley, New Jersey National Golf Club
5. Jeff De Lawder, Trump Philadelphia
6. Mike Kasperek, Forsgate Country Club
7. Chris Brannon, Little Mill Country Club
8. Neil Mayoros, Trenton Country Club
9. Christopher Ita, Hamilton Farm Golf Club
10. Denis Amaya, Basking Ridge Country Club

HONORABLE MENTION: Pine Valry, Mountain Ridge, Old York, Galloway National, Stone Harbor, Brooklake, Preakness Hills, Navesink, Trump Bedminster.

FRIENDLIEST STAFF

1. **The Ridge at Back Brook**
2. Forsgate Country Club
3. Fiddlers Elbow Country Club
4. Little Mill Country Club
5. Galloway National Golf Club
6. Basking Ridge Country Club
7. Hamilton Farm Golf Club
8. Baltusrol Golf Club
9. New Jersey National Golf Club
10. TPC @ Jasna Polana

FAVORITE PRIVATE PRO

1. **Clint Deibert, The Ridge at Back Brook**
2. Joe Galan, Fiddlers Elbow
3. Mat Kent, Fiddlers Elbow
4. Matt Crowley, Stone Harbor
5. Michael Holiday, Upper Montclair
6. Mike Killian, Galloway National
7. George Frake, Little Mill
8. Sean Toohey, New Jersey National
9. Mark Wood, Fiddlers Elbow
10. Todd Hojnacki, Roxiticus

HONORABLE MENTION: Joe Bush, Shackamaxon, Tom Delany, Basking Ridge, Bob Hennefer, The Links; Mark McCormick, Suburban; Vince Pulinzanno, Hamilton Farm; Jim McGovern, White Beeches.; Kathy Hart Wood, Fiddlers Elbow; Carolyn McKenzie Andrews, Forsgate; Mark Mazzola, Forsgate; Mike Mack, Burlington; Andrew Madsen, Hidden Creek.; John Mascari, Preakness Hills.

FAVORITE TEACHING PRO



MIKE KILLIAN

1. **Mike Killian, Galloway National**
2. Kathy Hart Wood, Fiddlers Elbow
3. Mark Wood, Fiddlers Elbow
4. Dave Quinn, The Links
5. Clint Deibert, The Ridge at Back Brook
6. David Cartwright, Trump Philadelphia
7. Carolyn Andrews, Forsgate Country Club
8. Jim McGovern White Beeches G&CC
9. Mike Adams, Hamilton Farm
10. Jason Birnbaum, Alpine Country Club

HONORABLE MENTION: John Appleget, Wildwood; Travis Deibert, The Ridge at Back Brook; Mat Kent, Fiddlers Elbow.; Wayne Warms, Eagle Oaks; Ryan Fountaine, Arcola; Gia Bocra Liwski, Hamilton Farm; Tom Delaney, Basking Ridge.