

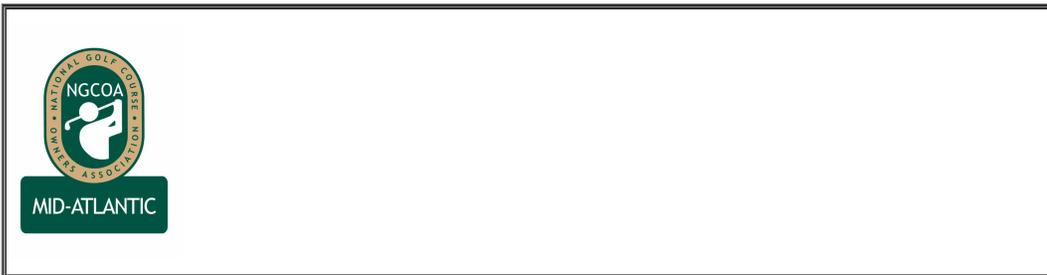


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## News

Last Update :10/20/2017

### **Farmington Country Club Wins Mid-Atlantic Private Golf Leader Award - Honoring the Best in Golf**



#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Dulles, VA - The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual NGCOA Mid-Atlantic Innovation Awards were presented at the Association's annual meeting at 1757 Golf Club on October 18<sup>th</sup>.



*Joe Krenn (L) of Farmington Country Club receives the Private Golf Leader Award from Damon DeVito*

#### **Private Golf Leader Award**

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Farmington Country Club in Charlottesville has been recognized as the

*Private Golf Leader* for 2017 by NCGOA Mid-Atlantic. The club earned the award by its leadership in member service, opening impressive new facilities and offering outstanding programming to its members.

In 2017, Farmington renovated its "East Nine" course into an amazing practice facility with a high-tech indoor teaching center, a new range, numerous short game and putting areas and a transformed golf course, now *ten* holes offering a variety of shot values. Meanwhile, the club did a spectacular renovation of its pub and grill and showed a huge increase in traffic. There were many other new enhancements and programming.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. This all started five years prior, when the club embarked on a process and master plan, also looking at trends in the club world. The plan was labeled "Farmington 2027," indicating the year of the club's upcoming 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. "Many industry publications and experts report golf and private clubs are dying," said GM Joe Krenn, CCM, CCE, "but in reality people are just playing golf and using their clubs differently now."

One key point of recognition in the plan was that people *like* and *need* practice. The club wanted to see some of the best teaching facilities in the country, so they visited numerous places, such as Robert Trent Jones, Caves Valley and David Toms' facility in Louisiana - they already had first-hand experience at Baltimore CC, Atlanta Athletic Club and Cherokee T&CC in Atlanta. When they saw these facilities, they simply knew they needed to improve. At the time, their range was one-dimensional and woefully inadequate.

Early on, they were fortunate to catch the eye of noted golf course architect Bill Coore. They hoped he could plan the renovation. "I'll do the project but you can't tell me how many holes," said Coore, "The land has to tell me what works." That certainly was a novel approach. They hoped their finished product would offer every condition on the golf course to practice (including bunkers, varied lies, rough) and it would be a two hours or less golf experience. It also needed to be fun for three generations (grandparents, parents, and grandchildren) to all enjoy all for different reasons. They got it. The course opened this summer and their play has doubled!

Then just this month, they opened their indoor practice facility featuring five hitting bays, which includes one dedicated teaching bay, featuring TrackMan and other high tech teaching tools. There is also a SAM PuttLab, where analytics help correct errors in a player's stroke.

The combination of all the new facilities has created a new social gathering area, and gone are most of the lonely rounds of singles. "They are meeting different people at the club, and we made it fun again," said Krenn. "There is less of an intimidation factor with our membership."

While the golf enhancements of the club are highly popular, other "Farmington 2027" goals have been realized. They renovated the pub and casual grill restaurant, enhanced pool lockers, tripled size of children's place (sitting service), built two massage rooms, enhanced the spinning room, and opened up a brand new terrace overlooking Blue Ridge Mountains, featuring an adult *Blue Ridge Bar* area with a fire pit. All of these changes contributed to the club's fiscal performance as well, with revenues rising over 40% in just five years.

The *Private Golf Leader Award* also recognizes excellence in membership recruiting. Krenn notes that new programming and facilities certainly create an attraction, but he cites his team of Tom Zimmermann and Adam Brooker for their good work. They emphasize a "friends of friends" approach to engage with prospective members. They want their members to bring guests to the club, and if they are a prospect, the club will credit the guest charges back to the member's account. It doesn't take long to realize the true *value* of a Farmington membership - they are now 99% full.

Some other innovative services include their own club-branded food truck, which is wildly successful for club events and also available for catering member events off-site. The club offers a shuttle service, to not only service out-of-town members but also taking members to off-site events, such as winery tours and concerts. And get this, Farmington even has its own private-branded craft beer, labeled "1927".

Krenn credits a strong team of department heads who excel in what they do. Their chef is Michael Matarazzo, CEC (formerly of The Greenbrier) and he was the captain of the first US Regional Culinary Olympic team to win the world Championship at the 2008 Culinary Olympics in Erfurt, Germany. He completely transformed the food program at the club, now with great offerings for all members and self-proclaimed "foodies."

Krenn knows golf course superintendent Scott Kinnan is an integral team member. He noted that 50-60% of the work on the East Course was directed by Kinnan and his team, while running maintenance of the championship course at the same time. "He is genuine, down to earth and a smart hands-on leader," said Krenn. He recently got his MBA from VCU and is highly respected by the entire family at Farmington.

And what can you say about head golf professional Rob McNamara, PGA, a 24 year veteran at the club? "He is the spirit of our golf program, and he has such a great track record of mentoring - he is always getting assistant pros stolen from him," said Krenn.

Krenn knows that targeted programming can make or break a club. For youth programs, Farmington created a new position three years ago. Some unique offerings include laser tag, a campout, movie night, after-school tutoring, arts and crafts, golf and tennis camps, parent-child events and more.

Some restaurant promotions include \$5 burger night, Cinco de Mayo, oyster roasts and themes on what is going on around town.

Through it all, Farmington still holds true to its traditional role as a leader for amateur golf. It still runs the long-standing Kenridge Invitational, but the event has been rejuvenated as the field was aging. Accomplished college players were invited, and older players now are testing their abilities with some of the best in the region.

And it isn't just NCGOA Mid-Atlantic making note of Farmington's tradition of excellence. The club has been a *Club Leaders Forum* Platinum Club regularly, and they reside in the Top 40 in the U.S.

Krenn reacted to the news of the award, "It's humbling, having your peers recognize our club for the efforts of our team. Clubs don't go out to get recognition; rather, they focus on enhancing the member experience. This award is much appreciated."

*Farmington Country Club is a traditional, family-oriented private club with a proud history, rich traditions and commitment to the customs of southern hospitality and gracious living. As the premier, full-service private Club in Central Virginia, Farmington seeks to provide excellent facilities, programs and services to serve the social, athletic and recreational needs of its members, their families and their guests.*

**About NCGOA Mid-Atlantic**

NGCOA Mid-Atlantic is a chapter of the National Golf Course Owners Association.

Our goals and objectives are to:

- Consider the challenges of operations and management of golf course owners and operators throughout the Mid-Atlantic.
- Encourage the growth and preserve the traditions of the game of golf in the Mid-Atlantic.
- Promote activities designed to increase the efficiency of golf course operations.
- Cooperate with allied golf associations who support the goals of the Association.
- Advance cooperation and the exchange of ideas among Association members.

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