

Valuable Book Group, LLC
Specialists in Rare and Antiquarian Golf Books
Newsletter and Book Review for the Serious Collector

Members Only



It's a good day if you're driving past the sign pictured above, particularly if you are about to hit over the row of hedges from atop the first tee.

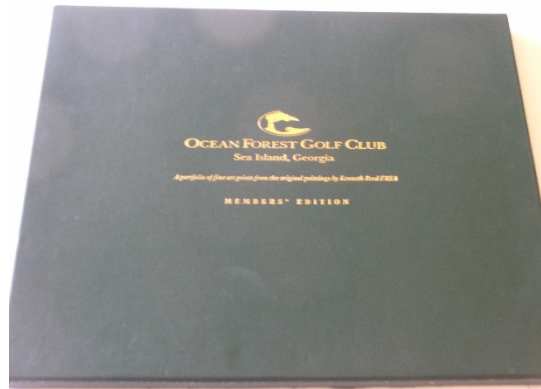
Like the sign at the elite club on the Monterey Peninsula says, this month's subject touches on some of the rarest of golfing books: those issued for members only. Most golf clubs issue their club histories for the enjoyment of members only, although non-members can often buy a copy in the pro shop if they visit the club. Thus, histories have always been difficult to obtain for exclusive clubs with small memberships. A recent trend that has made collecting histories even more difficult are clubs that won't sell a copy to non-members. Case in point the San Francisco Golf Club, which issued a new history recently, but it cannot be purchased in the pro shop; it is strictly for members and its distribution tightly controlled. Likewise, we understand that the new history forthcoming from the National Golf Links of America will take the same approach.

Let's take a quick review of the trend?

Ocean Forest Golf Club

The Ocean Forest Golf Club is another club that issued a members only edition. The club has a Rees Jones—designed course in Sea Island, Georgia, and in 2001 issued a "Members' Edition" titled *A portfolio of fine art prints from the original paintings* of Kenneth Reed FRSA, written by Reg Murphy. As Bill Jones III, the chairman and founder of the club writes in the opening paragraph, "The goal for Ocean Forest was to provide members with the finest golf club experience possible," and the book was part of the experience. Published by Old Troon Sports, the large format

book, issued with a slipcase, was done in a limited edition of an unknown limitation number. The hardcover book is not found in Donovan & Jerris bibliography.

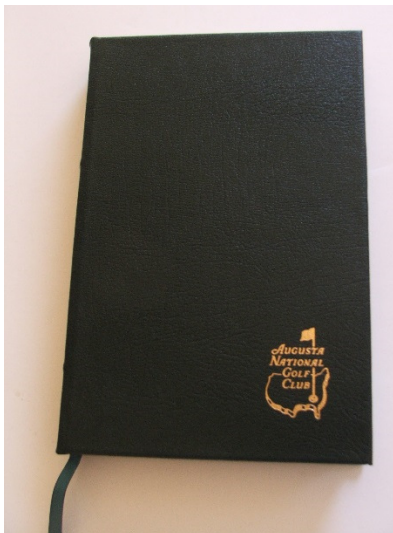


The Members' Edition of the Ocean Forest Golf Club

Reed is a well-known painter of golf courses and has been commissioned by the USGA and R & A; his work here is in keeping with his high standards.

Augusta National Golf Club

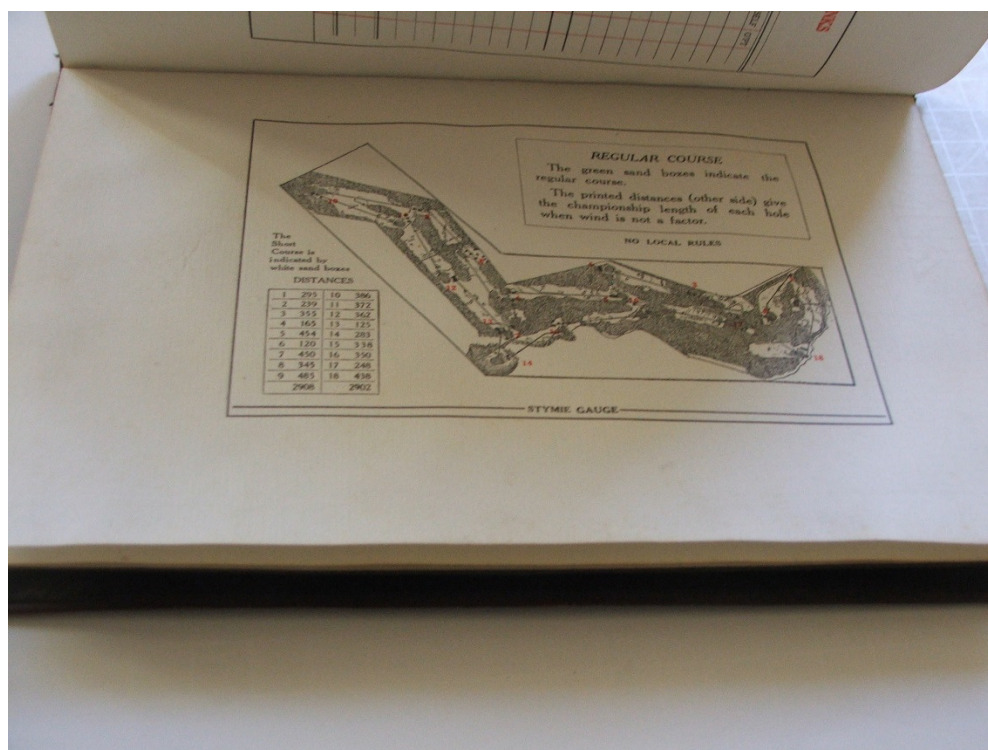
A special edition of David Owen's *The Making of the Masters* was produced for members of Augusta National and this book is listed in Donovan & Jerris (O6880). As with everything Augusta does, it is very high quality, produced in cloth with a slipcase, with a special introduction written for this edition by the then Chairman of the club, Jack Stephens. The book was sanctioned by Augusta National and Owen was given insider's access by the man holding the fourth most powerful position in the United States. In the book's introduction Stephens wrote: "Cliff Roberts was an unusual man. I've never known anybody like him, and I don't think many other people have either. Most of the people who have written about Cliff over the years have missed him by a mile. I am happy to report that David Owen has captured the man I knew and loved as a visionary, a golf partner, and a friend."



National Golf Links of America

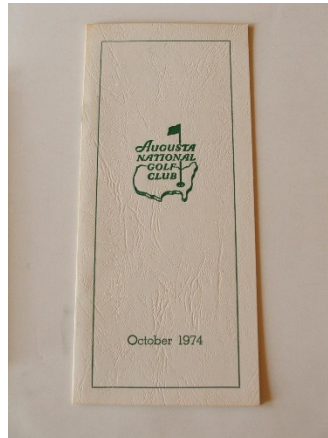
Another jewel in the collector's crown is the *National Golf Links of America Statement of Charles Blair Macdonald*, a limited edition of 100 published by C.B. Macdonald around 1912 in a slipcase and signed by the domineering founder (D & J M1660). It is one of the rarest of books in the collector's library. It includes a copy of the original National scorecard, a sketch of the course, a list of the founders, a copy of the original agreement signed by the founders and a financial report.

From the great man himself: "The course is now completed, the clubhouse erected, and the direction of the Links has passed into the hands of a Board of Directors including your-selves. It occurs to me that this is an appropriate time to make a statement, acting, as I have, practically as a Committee of One." Macdonald then goes on to describe his vision, the club's state of affairs and its finances.



The National Golf Links layout as pictured in Statement of C.B. Macdonald

Membership directories and lists



Other publications which were never meant for the general public are lists of members and club directories. Those issued by storied clubs are collectible, as you would imagine, and the earlier they were issued and the more exclusive the club, the more sought after they are. Particularly noteworthy are those from The National Golf Links, Augusta National, the Links, Piping Rock, the San Francisco Golf Club and the Country Club.

-- John Sabino

Post Script

In case you were wondering, the most powerful people in America are the President, Speaker of the House, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the Chairman of Augusta National.