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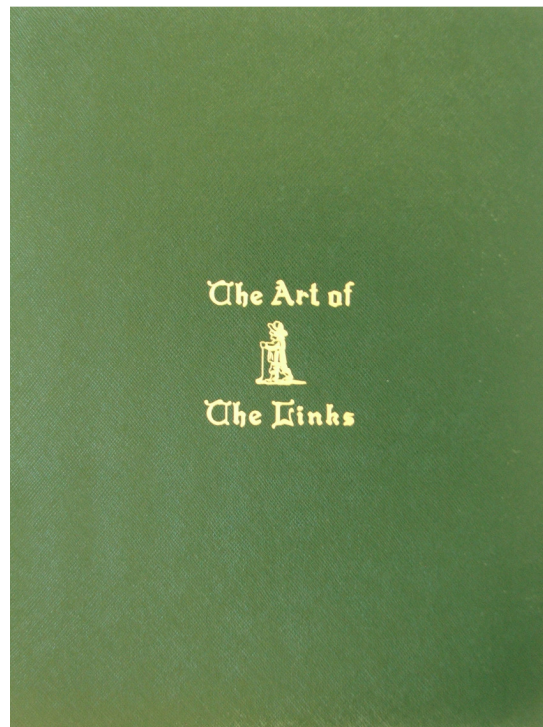
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### **The Art of the Links**

In 1970s New York during the month of August a rather aggressive seller of “audio” products ran television commercials touting his wares. The store owner, Eddie Antar, would yell at the top of his lungs the entire thirty second commercial with fake snow flying all around him, while wearing a Santa Clause hat. These “Crazy Eddie” spots were so memorable they became local lore. They are still remembered as classics because they were so bad.

The reason I bring up Crazy Eddie is that it decidedly felt like Christmas in August when I found a copy of a newly published club history titled *The Art of the Links*. The excitement was palpable for two reasons: First, the book was written by John de St. Jorre, a maestro in the field of writing club histories. And second, because The Links is one of the finest clubs in the world and among my top three personal favorites to visit.

The club previously published a shorter history in 2004 (It was only 57 pages and featured in our October 2012 newsletter). This new version is significantly larger than the previous one, with a total of 202 pages, and it is in a larger format. The book was published for the club’s centennial, which was celebrated this year. It was produced in a limited edition for members.



*The centennial club history for the most powerful club in the world*

While ostensibly a book about the club's spectacular collection of artwork, the book also gives a fuller history than the smaller 2004 book. It begins with the story of how the adjacent townhouse blew up in spectacular fashion in 2006, damaging The Links. While tragic, it was also an opportunity for the club to refurbish. Among other things discovered during the repairs the club undertook were original hardwood floors that had been covered by carpets for decades and bookshelves hidden behind wood panels in the Sir Christopher Wren Room (which serves as the club's library). The history also discusses the creation of a new wine room where members hold intimate private dinners.

Many of the pictures and paintings among the art collection at The Links are not golf related. Many are nautically themed, including those of Commodore Robert Field Stockton and Captain James Lawrence, as well as other important American historical figures including Alexander Hamilton, George Washington, Dwight Eisenhower and Abraham Lincoln.



*The title page of The Art of The Links*

The book is full of two-page spreads of each room in the historic townhouse and the chapters are organized by floor. Since each floor of The Links has a distinct feel and décor, this was a wise choice. The centerpiece of the club is undoubtedly the counter-clockwise green staircase that runs from top to bottom. The staircase it is lined by Mezzotints, which were donated by Henry C. Frick (a one-time chairman of Carnegie Steel Corporation and a friend of the club's founder C.B. Macdonald), who knew a thing or two about art.

Among the most desirable places in the club is the snug second-floor bar which has the original painting *First Meeting of the North Berwick Golf Club* by Sir Francis Grant behind it. The book notes, unsurprisingly, that the bar is an "Unusually private and popular corner in the heart of the club." Having been fortunate to visit The Links a handful of times I count it among my two favorite bars, along with the gracious and inviting one at Myopia Hunt Club in Hamilton, Massachusetts.

In addition to giving an intimate look at the interior of the club room by room, the book is also a catalog of their impressive artwork collection. The artwork is of the highest order and is was captured by the photographer C. J. Walker, who also did a masterful job in terms of quality.

The book also describes how the U.S.G.A. used to hold their annual dinner at the club before they started to move the venue to different locations. The U.S.G.A. has long had an association with The Links and grants the current president of the association an honorary membership during their tenure.



*The Rembrandt Peale fine portrait of George Washington above the fireplace in the Oak Room*

“Crazy Eddie” would end every commercial by screaming about how his prices were “I-N-S-A-N-E!,” which captures my sentiments of this new book perfectly. It is insanely good.

### **Post Script**

Antar’s ethics were not all they should have been. He ended up being arrested and was found guilty of securities fraud and tax evasion and spent six years in prison.