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Knoxville's Holston Hills Country Club turns 90 years old in style, celebrating its rich history while focusing on the future. Owner McConnell Golf wraps up \$1.4 million in renovations around the clubhouse and golf course.

KNOXVILLE, TENN. (December 2017) — Holston Hills Country Club in East Knoxville has celebrated its 90th anniversary this year with numerous renovations around the clubhouse and golf course.

Located near the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains on 180 open acres of rolling old farmland tucked into a bend in the Holston River, Holston Hills was purchased by McConnell Golf in December 2015. With a nod to the past and an eye on the future, the Raleigh-based company immediately invested \$1.4 million in capital improvements.

Holston Hills features a 1927 Donald Ross-designed golf course that immediately became recognized as the finest course in the state when it opened and started hosting every important regional tournament including a PGA Tour event — and has remained nearly untouched through the years.

The co-founder of the Donald Ross Society, Michael J. Fay, has said that he would rather play Holston Hills on a consistent basis than any other golf course in the South. Acclaimed golf course architect Tom Doak says Holston Hills is the closest golf course around to what Ross originally designed.

“I knew when I saw Holston Hills that it would be a great addition to our golf portfolio,” said McConnell Golf Founder and CEO John McConnell. “It’s a ‘must-play’ for our members.”

Perched on a hill affording breathtaking views, the recently renovated Holston Hills clubhouse overlooks the golf course and showcases bay windows, elegant arched doors, and a central ballroom with large cathedral ceilings and exposed wood trusses. An outdoor terrace on the south side of the ballroom offers members a space to relax and take in the view with its comfortable Tudor architecture.

McConnell said he knew Holston Hills was a special place from the moment he set foot on the property. “It immediately reminded me of Shinnecock Hills,” McConnell recalls, referencing the storied eastern Long Island golf club that was a founding member of the USGA and next year will host its fifth U.S. Open Championship.

Last year, McConnell Golf added a Fitness Center at Holston Hills including state-of-the-art, Torque series equipment — a variety of machines such as leg extension and curl, along with Intenza Entertainment Bikes, treadmills, Octane stride elliptical and Octane XT-One. Rounding out the equipment are exercise mats, medicine and stability balls, resistance cables and foam rollers, all of which promote and support flexibility and non-impact strength routines.

Holston Hills members have enjoyed the key FOB access to the fitness center seven days a week from 5 AM to 11 PM, giving them flexible hours to customize and mix-up their workout routines.

“We have a contract with Performance Training, Inc. that allows for onsite personal training, group fitness classes, and golf fitness clinics and assessments,” said Katelyn Graham, the club’s Activity and Wellness Manager. “Whether you enjoy the stretch-and-strengthen of a yoga class or the heart-pumping energy of circuit training, the group class schedule at Holston Hills has something right up your alley. We make it convenient to stick to your routine, or maybe even try something new, with morning and evening classes throughout the week and a supportive atmosphere.”

Now, the rest of the Holston Hills renovation has been completed.

The former kitchen at Holston Hills was completely gutted and a brand-new kitchen built. McConnell Golf then constructed an entirely new restaurant at Holston Hills called the “Donald Ross Room.” The room includes a bar, high-top tables, booth seating and regular dining table seating.

In addition, a new veranda for outdoor seating overlooks the Smoky Mountains and the golf course. The veranda seats up to 36 people and has quickly become the most popular spot for dining at the club. The restaurant includes two 70-inch TVs and is perfect for watching a ballgame.

The club has also upgraded the Holston Room for private dining or business meetings. This room has maintained the beautiful wood beam arched ceilings from the original design and offers a jaw-dropping view of the golf course.

McConnell Golf has given the Holston Hills men’s locker room a nice facelift as well. One hundred wooden lockers were constructed along with a remodeling of the bathrooms and the card room, including bar service for the members.

The grand ballroom has maintained its original 1920s architecture with masculine wood beam ceilings, but has added new flooring and windows looking over the patio on the golf course side of the club with a great view of the Smoky Mountains. This room seats 250-270 for weddings and large parties.

McConnell Golf also added a new golf shop on the east side of the building along with a club room to house fitting carts and equipment. The golf shop is full service

with the most current and top lines in men's and ladies apparel and also provides offices for the Director of Golf, Assistant Professionals, and the Membership Director.

Members can now enjoy the new portico when arriving at the club. When dining, the portico provides a dry and safe entrance to the Donald Ross room. "It also makes the arrival for golf much more service friendly when using the new bag drop area," said Holston Hills Director of Golf Chris Dibble.

Holston Hills is writing a new chapter to its storied history as a family club with full amenities and a beautiful clubhouse. The old golf shop has been converted to a dedicated Kid's Club area where many enjoyable activities take place. It includes video games, a TV with a Wii, beanbags, board games, and other fun things for kids to do while their parents enjoy other areas of the club.

"Since the end of 2016, we have hosted monthly, staff-led programs with activities that range from outdoor games like 'Messy Mania' to arts and crafts which we like to call 'Kids Night Out' — each with a theme," said Graham. "Kids are quick to make friends and let loose in this just-for-kids environment. It's something they look forward to time and time again. We hope that this space will enhance future kids' events at Holston."

Holston Hills also added its first summer camps this year, allowing kids to take advantage of all the club's facilities — from learning golf and tennis fundamentals, to cooling off at the pool — during the long, fun-filled summer days with friends.

Adjacent to the pool with a view of the golf course, the Holston Hills tennis facility has four Rubico clay courts and two hard courts. The courts are professionally maintained and each enjoyed during peak season from April through November, with hard courts remaining in play during the off-season as well.

Beyond open play, the club's growing tennis program features seasonal clinics led by Tennis Professionals Bart Kennedy and Troy Cash. The multi-day clinics help players of all levels sharpen their skills and master the strategy of the doubles or singles format.

Junior Tennis clinics are also offered to help children learn fundamentals and advance their growing skill sets.

Said McConnell: "Holston Hills enjoys a proud past and we think that it has a great future as well."

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ABOUT MCCONNELL GOLF

McConnell Golf (McConnellGolf.com) memberships include privileges at a dozen 18-hole, private golf courses plus one nine-hole course throughout the Carolinas and

Tennessee. McConnell Golf's stable of prestigious clubs includes Raleigh Country Club and TPC Wakefield Plantation in Raleigh, NC, Sedgefield Country Club Ross Course and Dye Course in Greensboro, NC, Providence Country Club in Charlotte, NC, Old North State Club in New London, NC, Treyburn Country Club in Durham, NC, Brook Valley Country Club in Greenville, NC, Country Club of Asheville (NC), The Reserve Golf Club in Pawleys Island, SC, Musgrove Mill Golf Club in Clinton, SC and Holston Hills Country Club in Knoxville, TN. McConnell Golf also operates the 27-hole public Raleigh Golf Association and manages the Grande Dunes Members Club and Ocean Club in Myrtle Beach for LStar Ventures.

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