

# 4E *Tree* A Dominant Landscape Component

British designers of inland course layouts made strategic and aesthetic use of trees. Early American designers C.B. Macdonald and W.J. Travis, although influenced by British course design, avoided the use of trees, being more partial to links type courses where there were no trees. MacDonald said no course could be ideal when it is laid out with trees. He stated that his National Golf Links was the ideal of the highest rank, while his tree-populated course at Yale could only achieve a classic rank. (E1) Macdonald insisted that trees denied the full effect of wind upon play. Walter J. Travis stated that a golf course was no place for a tree.

Tillinghast, a proponent of trees, claimed that he influenced Travis on the question of the use of trees and their importance and that his ideas ultimately prevailed. The trees were spared at the CC of Troy, NY, which was Travis's last project, done in 1927: "*Mr. Travis ... used many of the trees then in existence.*" (E2)

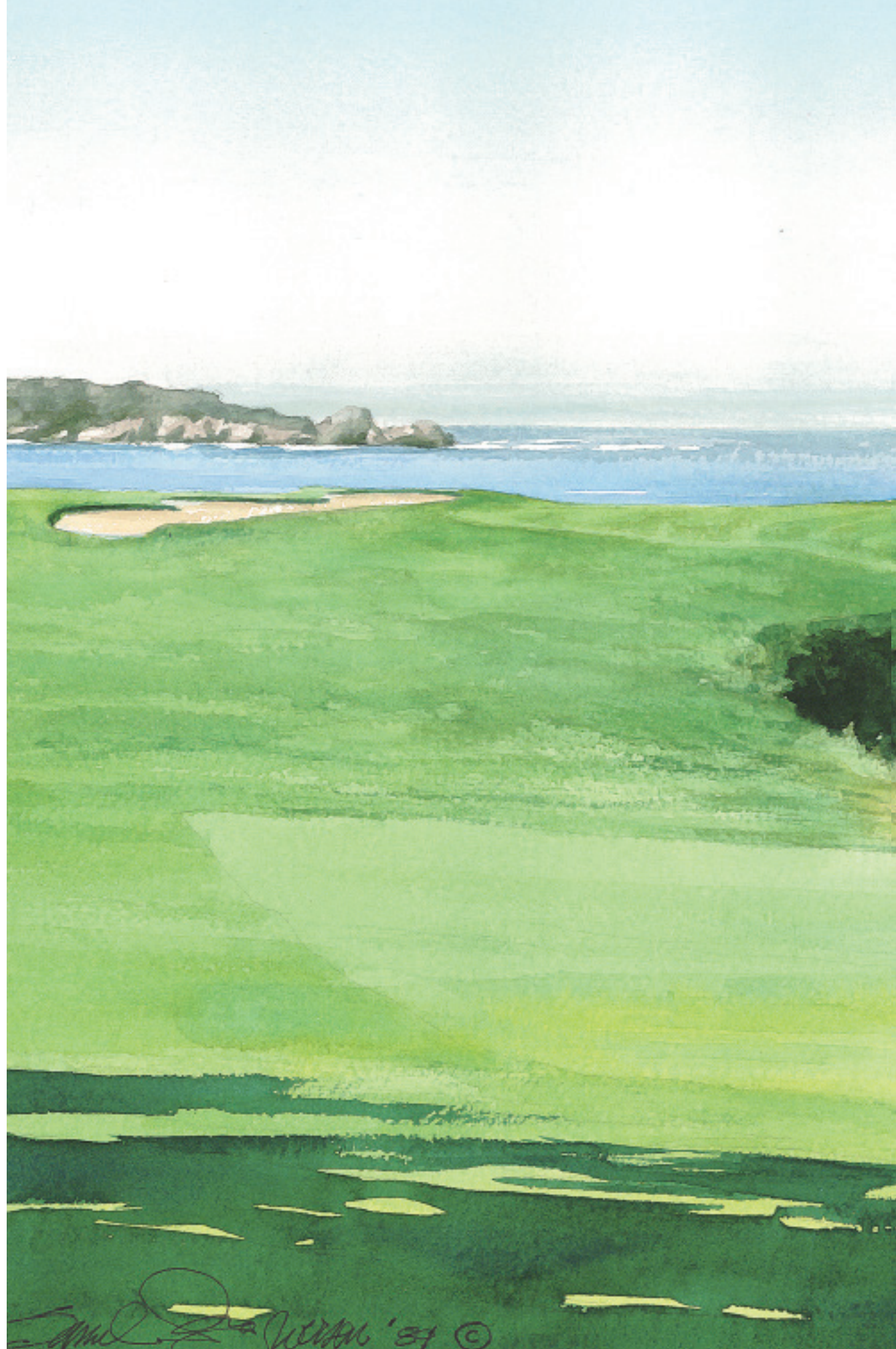
Trees in the line of play are a landscape effect, in the margins iffy and out of play a possibility. The most interesting, scenic trees on a course are often lone trees that are either in the line of play, or in the margins of play. The problem with tree groups on the interior of the course is their obstacle to the enjoyment of the game; the damage to adjacent plant health; difficulties and delay of play; and maintenance costs. See Chap. 5, pgs. 5-3 to 5-4, for an example of a club's improvements by replacing acres of trees with colorful grasses. This was not only an improvement to play and maintenance, but also a delightful scenic improvement.

## **Pebble Beach Golf Links, No. 6 Pebble Beach, CA**

The scene of the No.6 hole is an example of an enjoyable tree presence. They have been scheduled for removal. Look for more than a few seconds. The scene evokes nature's awesome beauty.

Trees can be a lovely landscape effect, as long as they are out of play. Poetry is the most beautiful of literary expressions, but no matter how poetry describes a lovely tree, words fail to capture their beauty. Joyce Kilmer (1886-1918), poet, expressed a similar thought in his poetry: "*I hope that I shall never see a poem as lovely as a tree.*" The painting of No. 6 may come close, creating an illusion just as lovely, but never lovelier than the tree.

My choice of landscape effect, and every straight course is entitled to one, is a tree because of its beauty and its effect of luck that may add fun to the game.









## Cypress Point Club, No. 16 Pebble Beach, CA

Hole No.16, Cypress Point Club, shown, is one of the most photographed holes in the world. My attention was mostly drawn to the lone cypress tree leaning on a crutch. Its sight and its saga stir one's emotions. The tree had given years of pleasure. Without a replacement the scene would be lacking. To test my proposition, place one hand over the lone cypress as you view the painting. Remove your hand and a pleasant feeling is restored. The colorful ice plant is another delightful experience. The powerful ocean does not escape one's attention either, but it is lacking the presence of the majestic tree, for the ocean's moods are separated by the peninsula.

Alister MacKenzie considered Cypress Point his masterpiece. He claimed that it was the most difficult and most beautiful of all his courses: “. . . *It is the only course I know where one literally gasps with astonishment at its beauty.*” Until MacKenzie's time, few writers or designers wrote about “*borrowed scenic*,” off-site beauty; fewer yet about on- site beauty. Hunter and MacKenzie wrote not only about the aesthetic beauty, but also about the fitness of purpose for the golf courses that they designed. MacKenzie was so fond of Lord Balfour's (the former English Prime Minister) phrase “*pleasurable excitement*,” depicting the purpose and fun of the game, that he quoted it often in his writings. Lord Balfour, was the first to make such definitions of the game: “*The wit of man has never invented a pastime equal to golf for its pleasurable excitement.*”



*Cypress Point Club, No. 16, The Stag Shielding its Offspring*

The lone cypress was past its glory the last time I saw it, above, viewed from the left side of the fairway. At its base a slatted wood crate covers a new cypress shoot, a substitute for a protective grove of trees. It is a touching expression.

