

4I *Composition*

A Dominant Landscape Component

A composition is a collection of golf course landscape components that may be arranged in no particular pattern. Of landscape scenes, I am most always interested in those scenes of which one prominent landscape component dominates the scene. However, there are attractive scenes that contain several components of which none are dominant. I get a thrill in painting these type scenes, creating a pleasing sense of harmony by adjusting an artistic feature here or there, using my time multi-viewpoint device to produce a desired visual impression clear and distinct as may occur in a memorable musical theme.

There are landscape effects that are present in compositions. By now the viewer should be able to identify them. The viewer will know a landscape effect by the fact that it has been contrived to achieve a dramatic, memorable viewing experience. Some are major landscape effects, but no matter how beautiful, create unnecessary expense, time and difficulty that pose an obstacle to enjoyment of the game, particularly to high handicap players.

There are millions of possible combinations of golf course landscape components combined with artistic features that may be found in landscape scenes as discussed in Chapter 1. One thing is consistently the same, the preferred view of a landscape scene, proven by scientific research, is from an elevated point of view.

The most stunning of any composition is a scene which comes into view by surprise, explained in the following description of Devil's Pulpit DPGA No. 1.

Devil's Pulpit DPGA, No. 1

Caledon Village, Ontario

The painting of Devil's Pulpit No. 1, right, the fairway, bunker, tree, green, and water components make a visually harmonious composition. If each individual landscape component were to be viewed separately the effect would not be as pleasurable a sensation in viewing the entire scene. See for yourself by masking them off in the scene. There is one major landscape effect. The keen observer will pick out the landscape effect at the right of the green. Provision for ample chipping area at greenside would improve enjoyment for 95 percent of golfers and not detract from the compositional beauty. There is no recovery play for a slightly miss-hit shot that misses the green on the right hand side, only a severe penalty.

A delightful surprise that occurred on this course was experienced at the first tee. There is no adequate way to describe the feeling except to say that it was a surprise. The designers calculated the result to provide a surprise for all who would come within its sight.

Hurdzan and Fry used an age-old visual device that has heightened the beauty of many architectural works. The device in this case is a visual screen that blocks one's view until that moment of surprise when the viewer is literally on top of the scene.

This device, used by architects since ancient times, was used in the Egyptian Queen Hatshepsut's temple. This involved a series of screens and terraces that led to a small opening in the temple. Once through the opening, a grand scene was revealed.

As I approached the tee at Devil's Pulpit, I walked around a small mound, an earth screen, then up a rise to the top of the tee. Standing atop the tee, only then was I able to appreciate the entire scene, a pleasing composition of a stunning golf landscape.

The designers have used the screen device in other parts of the course, including a special effect at the second hole. Here players are surprised by a visual experience as they move from a closed thicket of sapling birch trees into an open space where the delightful scene is then revealed. These are the places to experience beauty, not landscape contrivances in the line of play.

Not since A.W. Tillinghast, in the early part of the 20th century, has any course designer addressed the subject of beauty. Not in any in-depth of beauty in sensory experiences of a golf course. Not until Dr. Michael Hurdzan in his 2006 book *Golf Course Architecture* in which he addresses the subject of beauty of golf course architecture. The graphic chart in Chapter 7 of his book is a unique presentation of his text in which he elaborates upon various levels of sensory experiences that may be experienced on a golf course. The hierarchy of visual sensory appreciation in his chart ranges from beautiful to ugly, described under headings Delight, Wonder, Awe, and regressing to Confusing, Monstrous, and Ungovernable.

Dr. Hurdzan's philosophy states that a player's sensory experiences of a course start at the entrance grounds, through the course, into the clubhouse, and then the player's departure. One must acknowledge by playing Dr. Hurdzan's golf courses that his work expresses his design philosophy. Course structure, playability, and visual attributes should offer the player a beautiful experience. These are the artistic and aesthetic qualities of a well-built course.



Devil's Pulpit DPGA, No. 1

Pasatiempo GC, No. 1
Santa Cruz, CA

Pasatiempo No.1, below, is striking for its composition. It is a dramatic scene from its elevated viewpoint, a great way to be introduced to one of Alister MacKenzie's exceptional courses. Research projects have found that the favorite type of landscape paintings, discussed earlier, are of elevated views.

Ridgewood CC, No.6
Paramus, NJ

Several landscape components are contained in this delightful composition. The surface of No.6 green is not visible from the tee, so I added a fourth dimension to this painting, time multi view-points. I combined three images from three different viewpoints while moving from tee to green. Only as one comes near to the green is one able to see the surface as depicted in the painting. This par 4 is a very short fun hole with the exception of two bunkers intruding upon the chipping areas.



Pasatiempo GC, No. 1



Ridgewood CC, No.6