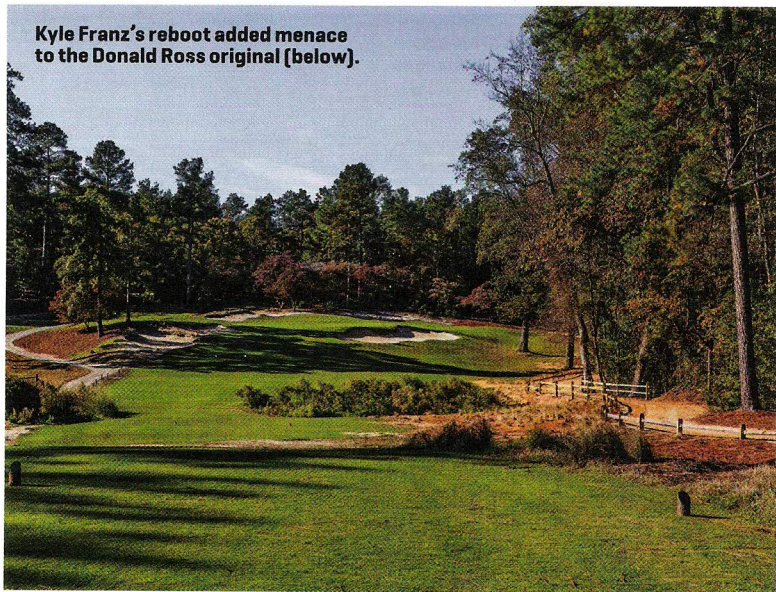


## BEST U.S. RESORT RENOVATION

Kyle Franz's reboot added menace to the Donald Ross original (below).



LEFT: JOHN GESSNER; CENTER: SANDHILLS; INSIDER: DOAK; BEN VAN HOOK

### Mid Pines Inn & Golf Club

SOUTHERN PINES, NORTH CAROLINA; 7,040 YARDS, PAR 72; \$75-\$180; 910-692-2114, [pineneedles-midpines.com](http://pineneedles-midpines.com)



**M**id Pines President Kelly Miller knows from great golf courses. After all, he's won multiple club championships at both Pine Valley and Seminole. Kyle Franz was an itinerant young shaper/architect who pulled stints with Tom Doak, Gil Hanse and Kyle Phillips, among others. When Miller took notice of the field work Franz was doing nearby for Coore and Crenshaw at their masterful

restoration of Pinehurst No. 2, a lightbulb went on, introductions were made and Miller tabbed Franz to rejuvenate Mid Pines, a 1921 Donald Ross creation. The results are brilliant. Roughly 400 pines were yanked out, restoring width, angles and strategies. Green areas and contours were put back to Ross's specs and regrassed with ultra-dwarf Bermuda, which provides firm, consistent surfaces year-round. As he had done at Pinehurst,

Franz replaced fairway rough with hardpan sand speckled with wire grass. Bunkers regained both their menace and their beauty. Fairway corridors remain the same, but otherwise, the course sports a look not seen since our grandfathers were children. While Pinehurst No. 2 will likely always be the region's top attraction, fans in search of authentic Donald Ross should flock to Mid Pines.

## ARCHITECT OF THE YEAR

### TOM DOAK

**A**rchitecture's boy wonder is now the other side of 50, but he still exhibits youthful glee when presented with a wonderful site. Such was the case at Nebraska's Dismal River [see p. 94]. Jealous competitors might say it's easy to build a great course when you start with such a remarkable, sand-based site. But Doak had formidable challenges to conquer, notably the inevitable comparisons to the other minimalist masterpieces of the last 20 years, including his own Pacific Dunes, the top-ranked course you can play in the U.S. Doak has said

that his objective in designing a course is that "it should look like it's been there forever." He adds, "I like to build natural-looking courses and to let the natural contours of the ground generate the interest in the course." Unquestionably, that strategy has helped Doak scoop up scores of awards and accolades over the past 15 years, and we're here to place one more on the pile. For his commitment to cost-effective, walkable designs that tantalize with options rather than frighten with hazards, Tom Doak is our architect of the year for 2013.

Another year, another honor for Tom Doak.

