

Chart Hills

Biddenden, Kent, England

Architects: Steve Smyers

Player Consultant: Nick Faldo

“At Chart Hills, Steve Smyers doesn’t just reveal his understanding of the fundamental principles of classic architecture, he illuminates his mastery of them.”

—Joseph Passov,
Senior Editor
LINKS Magazine



This private 7,086-yard, par-72 golf course was built on the Kent Downs about 35 miles southeast of London. In its first year, Chart Hills was named the Best New Course in England by *Golf Magazine* (UK). Three years later, it was ranked the No. 1 inland course in the British Isles by *Following the Fairways*—ahead of such great courses as Sunningdale, Woodhall Spa and Loch Lomond.

The site for Chart Hills—nestled among the quaint boroughs of south-east England—offered gently-rolling countryside scattered with majestic century-old English oaks. The golf course molded from this land is a model of strategic design, variety, balance, and fusion with the natural topography.

At Chart Hills, architect Steve Smyers emulated the strategic design genius of Alister Mackenzie and Henry Colt. A variety of options are offered to the skilled player, while still accommodating the high handicapper with open greens and very few penal features.

Every hole runs in a different direction than the previous hole. Every green but one can be approached with a high shot or a run-up. And great care was taken to give the entire course a natural look so that, despite its youth, it would look as if it had been there forever.

Spectacular bunkering throughout the course provides direction, defini-

tion and depth, while stacked-sod bunkers and pot bunkers give many of the green complexes something of the feel of classic linksland.

While a few holes at Chart Hills are reminiscent of other famous golf holes, the architects had the good sense not to copy the famous models foot for foot or slope for slope. Instead, classic designs were adapted to the natural terrain.

The 183-yard third at Chart Hills is an adaptation of the Redan Hole at North Berwick with a deep bunker fronting the green and a put-ting surface that slopes from right to left.

The 365-yard ninth hole was inspired by the seventh at Augusta, and though the two holes share a common flavor, they look nothing alike.

On the tenth at Chart Hills, a 453-yard dogleg left, the second shot is reminiscent of the perilous approach to the Road Hole at St. Andrews where a deep pot bunker guards the front left of the green.

Chart Hills' 402-yard fourteenth is a classic example of strategic design. A creek bisects the fairway, creating two distinct landing areas. The safer drive to the left fairway will force the player to fly a sea of bunkers to reach the green, while the more challenging drive to the right fairway provides a far easier approach shot.

Steve Smyers Golf Course Architects also assembled and managed the entire construction team which built the course. 