



Heritage Golf Group

by [David Theoret](#) | Sep 9 2022 | [NEWS](#)

Heritage Golf Group – A Trio of Premier Private Clubs in Southwest Florida

Heritage Golf Group has come a long way since new owners took over the company a couple of years ago. Mark Burnett, Jim Oliver, and Andy Miller have more than 90 years of combined experience in the golf industry, primarily in club acquisition, operations, membership, and redevelopment. Since purchasing Heritage Golf in 2020, they have grown the number of clubs in their portfolio from 6 to 23, with plans to add several more in 2022. Burnett and Miller came over from ClubCorp, Oliver from Arcis Golf, and along the way, they have cherry-picked top personnel from their previous companies to form a “supergroup” of club management and staff. Many of the people I met and spoke with in my tour of their three southwest Florida clubs were from one of the two companies.

Head south along the I-75 corridor in Florida, and you’ll encounter three of Heritage’s top-notch private golf clubs: TPC Prestancia in Sarasota, home to an 18-hole Ron Garl championship golf course and an 18-hole Robert Von Hagge layout, the Chip Powell-

designed Venetian Golf Club in Venice with its generous fairways framed with natural-looking mounds and strategically placed bunkers and another 27-hole Chip Powell layout in Fort Myers at the Club at Pelican Preserve.

TPC Prestancia

TPC Prestancia is part of the legendary Tournament Players Club Network. It's located in Palmer Ranch, one of the most successful master-planned communities on Florida's West Coast, and is the centerpiece of fourteen exclusive residential communities within the gates. Besides 36 holes of championship golf, the community boasts an assortment of recreational facilities that will meet the exercise needs of just about anyone, with several swimming pools and health and fitness facilities.

The Stadium Course was designed by Ron Garl and TOUR Player Mike Souchak. Since opening in 1985, the course has [hosted PGA](#) Senior events including 8 Chrysler Cup Tournaments and 5 American Express Invitational Championships. PGA TOUR greats such as Arnold Palmer, Gary Player, Lee Trevino, and Chi Chi Rodriguez have all played here.

Inspired by TPC Sawgrass, the course allows for gallery viewing along the hills that line the expansive fairways. Even though the back tees measure 6,941 yards from the Black Tees, the course is more about shot-making than "grip it and rip it." The scorecard shows eight different yardages for men and women so everyone can play from a suitable distance and leave with a bit of dignity. The Stadium Course is a favorite of both members and guests.

The 18th hole will put your shot-making abilities to the test. The hole plays 363 yards from the [Blue Tees and most players](#) will hit something less than a driver off the tee. Hit your tee shot too far right and you'll be blocked out by trees. A well-executed tee shot of about 230 yards will leave around 140-150 yards over water into a green that is very wide, not very deep, and fronted by a waste bunker along the water's edge. It's a huge but fair finishing hole.

The 2nd course at TPC Prestancia is The Players Course which was once part of The Country Club of Sarasota. It was designed by legendary golf architect Robert Von Hagge, and [PGA TOUR](#) player Bruce Devlin. You'll find holes lined with giant oaks, doglegs in both directions, and a few forced carries over the wet stuff. During the 2017-2018 season, the course underwent a multi-million-dollar renovation and provided an enjoyable experience for all who play.

The clubhouse is undergoing renovation and is currently in Phase II. The goal is to create a space that combines Florida's sunshine and vibrant color palette with classic architecture, creating a place where members can dine, entertain, and socialize. Upgrades are being made to both the Sandhill Grille and the main dining room. The practice facilities are also getting an overhaul and will feature a full-length driving range, short game areas, and chipping and putting greens. The new putting course will mimic every putt you will encounter during your round.

Venetian Golf Club

A few exits south on I-75 you'll find the Venetian Golf Club. Venetian offers one of the area's most dynamic golf experiences and has by far one of the most interesting greens I have ever played on. The Club opened in 2003 and was designed by native Floridian Chip Powell. According to a few members I spoke with including "The Mayor," the course was in pretty rough shape when the new Heritage Golf Group stepped in and immediately spent more than \$1 million on course improvements. The Mayor remarked that "General Manager Jay Pittman and his staff have done a remarkable job of restoring the club to its former glory."

The course offers generous fairways that are framed with mounds, grassy hollows, and strategically placed bunkers. The TifEagle greens roll firm and true and are a joy to putt on. It's a course that will test all aspects of your game: mental, physical, shot-making, and, of course, putting!

Speaking of putting, I have never encountered a green that rivals the 11th. It's a "Biarritz" green, which I believe is a foreign word for "golf roller coaster!" The hole is a par 3 which plays 178 yards into a long narrow green that looks like someone dug a channel through the middle of it. Don't get me wrong, it's meticulously maintained, but if the pin is in the back and you don't bother to check your yardage before your tee shot, you can end up on the front of the green. From up here, the putt requires almost a full hip turn to make it down the hill and back up the hill to the proper level. It's one of the most enjoyable par 3s I've ever played.

The Club at Pelican Preserve

The Club at Pelican Preserve is a private, gated community that features indoor and outdoor dining areas, a fitness center, and private event spaces. The centerpiece of the community is 27 holes of championship golf designed by Chip Powell. As you play your way around any of the three 9-hole layouts, you'll notice that everything is natural. Whether it's a nature preserve or one of the many water hazards you play around, or one of the many sand and grass hollows you'll see, everything seems like it was meant to be there. Meticulously maintained fairways with generous landing areas lead to TifEagle "Ultradwarf" greens with gentle undulations and contours. Each of the nines will challenge you but not beat you up!

The practice facilities at The Club consist of a full-length aqua range and practice greens with bunkers so that you can work on all facets of your short game. As a Member, you'll enjoy the convenience of golf club storage, club cleaning, and repair.

The Heritage Golf Group

Of course, membership does have its privileges. Heritage Golf Group's portfolio of courses and private clubs extends well beyond Florida and into North and South Carolina, Virginia, Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, New York, and New Jersey. Heritage takes the club

experience to the highest level by offering golf members, experiences at all of their private, resort, and daily fee facilities by upgrading to the Heritage Plus membership, which is currently in pilot at three clubs with plans to roll out to all participating Heritage clubs later this fall. There is an upper-tier category available at the TPC facility in Sarasota or Tampa, where you can also be part of the TPC Passport program with benefits that reach far beyond your home club to such places as TPC Sawgrass and TPC Scottsdale. For a complete list of all of the clubs within the rapidly growing Heritage Golf Group's portfolio or to learn how to become a member, visit their website at www.heritagegolfgroup.com.