



## PUNTA BRAVA THE PREMIER CLUB OF THE AMERICAS

*Tiger's first completed design, nicknamed "Pebble Beach South," is scheduled to open in 2013.*

By Edward F. Pazdur, Chairman & CEO  
Honorary Life Member, PGA of America

ENSENADA, BAJA MEXICO: Life has a way of throwing unexpected twists and turns and the story of Brian Tucker, founder of Punta Brava, is full of them.

From family mission trips through the jungles of Latin America to the persistence that won the heart of a beautiful Venezuelan doctor and earned the trust of her overprotective father, Tucker's story somehow reads like a finishing school for Punta Brava.

As perhaps the most anticipated course in 50 years, news of Punta Brava first leaked to the world when Tiger slipped mention of it during a PGA press conference the night before his historic victory during the 2008 U.S. Open playoff against Rocco Mediate.

Tucker and his partners would not formally unveil Punta Brava to the world for another few

months, but the 'cat was out of the bag.'

Since Tucker first scaled the 1,200-foot mountain at the tip of the stunning peninsula, he has shepherded Punta Brava through permit delays, the collapse of the global economy, and the never-ending media scrutiny that follows his course architect. But, despite it all, Tucker has kept Punta Brava on sound financial footing, created a first of its kind club concept with members from Canada to Argentina, and has it on schedule for completion in 2013.

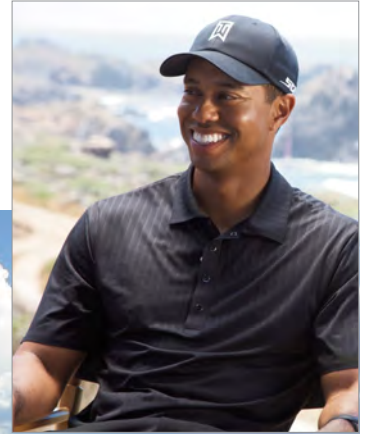
### *FEARLESS TENACITY*

Tucker's father played football at UCLA, but his true calling was as a pastor. Since they were children, Brian and his sister would go on mission trips to Mexico, Guatemala, and Chile. "We learned about faith, humility, and to be grateful



“You really can’t ask for a better piece of land. We are going to have 17 greens or tees on the water with six tee shots played over the water. I don’t know of any other course that can say that.”

— TIGER WOODS, GOLF COURSE ARCHITECT, PUNTA BRAVA



Rendering of the 10th hole at Punta Brava

for what we had,” according to Tucker.

Tucker’s mother was no stranger to hard work, education, and fortitude. While Dr. Tucker kept busy running the ministry, she worked her way through graduate school while teaching and raising two children.

When asked about his upbringing, Tucker confessed, “As a pastor’s family, we grew up in a modest environment. We never had a bunch of shiny toys under the Christmas tree, but we knew who we were and always had lively dinner conversations.”

To this day, family gatherings at the Tuckers still often pits Tucker, who holds a degree from Pepperdine Law School, against his sister, a PhD from Harvard. “Our conversations are always lively and mostly civil, but one thing’s for sure: You better bring your A game,” added Tucker.

In the summer of 2006, Tucker was a star at Charles Schwab specializing in large real estate transactions while managing a one-billion dollar portfolio. He had finally married Sonia, a successful Venezuelan doctor, having spent more than a year, first winning her father’s

trust, before asking permission to court his daughter. Life was good. The Tuckers were living a dream life and planning for their second child.

But Brian had a yearning to control his destiny and enter the golf development business.

“My friends and colleagues thought I was crazy, but with Sonia’s blessing, I resigned, sold all of our real estate, and founded Tucker Development Group with the sole purpose of finding the ultimate piece of land to create a world-class golf club for the next 100 years,” said Tucker.

### *THE QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL*

Although Tucker thought he had surveyed the entire coastline along the Pacific, it wasn’t until he hiked a mountain only 70 miles from his hometown of San Diego where the clouds parted and [his] destiny was revealed.

Before that fateful day, only a few lobster trappers and fishermen knew of the inaccessible and untouched land that would become Punta Brava.

Numerous course architects have noted that Punta

Brava is the kind of oceanfront land that doesn't exist anymore, and this is how Alister MacKenzie must have felt when first walking Cypress Point.

### *THE TEAM COMES TOGETHER*

After descending the mountain that hides the Punta Brava peninsula, Tucker and his team eagerly set out to find the landowner.

"We drove directly over to the local title office in Ensenada, where, as fate would have it, we learned the idyllic property was owned by a single landowner, Mr. Ruben Gonzalez, for more than 50 years," explained Tucker. "He was considered the 'Don,' or grandfather of Ensenada, and he happened to live only three blocks away."

There's an old axiom, for some people things fall apart, and for others, things fall into place, and Tucker clearly falls into the latter category.

Not so fresh off a full day exploring the rough landscape and wearing only jeans and a tee shirt, Tucker decided to do what he had always done: Live in the

moment. He walked over to Mr. Gonzalez's residence on the slim chance of an introduction.

"Just as I approached his home, he pulls up, looks me over from head to toe," and said gruffly, 'If you're here for the land, it's not for sale!'

"I responded in Spanish, which caught his attention," said Tucker. "He invited me back that evening for coffee, thus beginning my one-year journey to convince him to sell the property."

Initially, Tucker had many factors working against his efforts to gain the owner's trust. His youth, nationality, and cultural differences all were obstacles he would need to overcome. Over the next 12 months, Tucker spent weekends with the Gonzalez family to earn their trust.

Tucker learned that the family had received more than 50 buyers just in the last 10 years, all presenting handsome offers, and the Gonzalezes rejected every one of them. The epiphany for Tucker came when he realized it wasn't about the money.

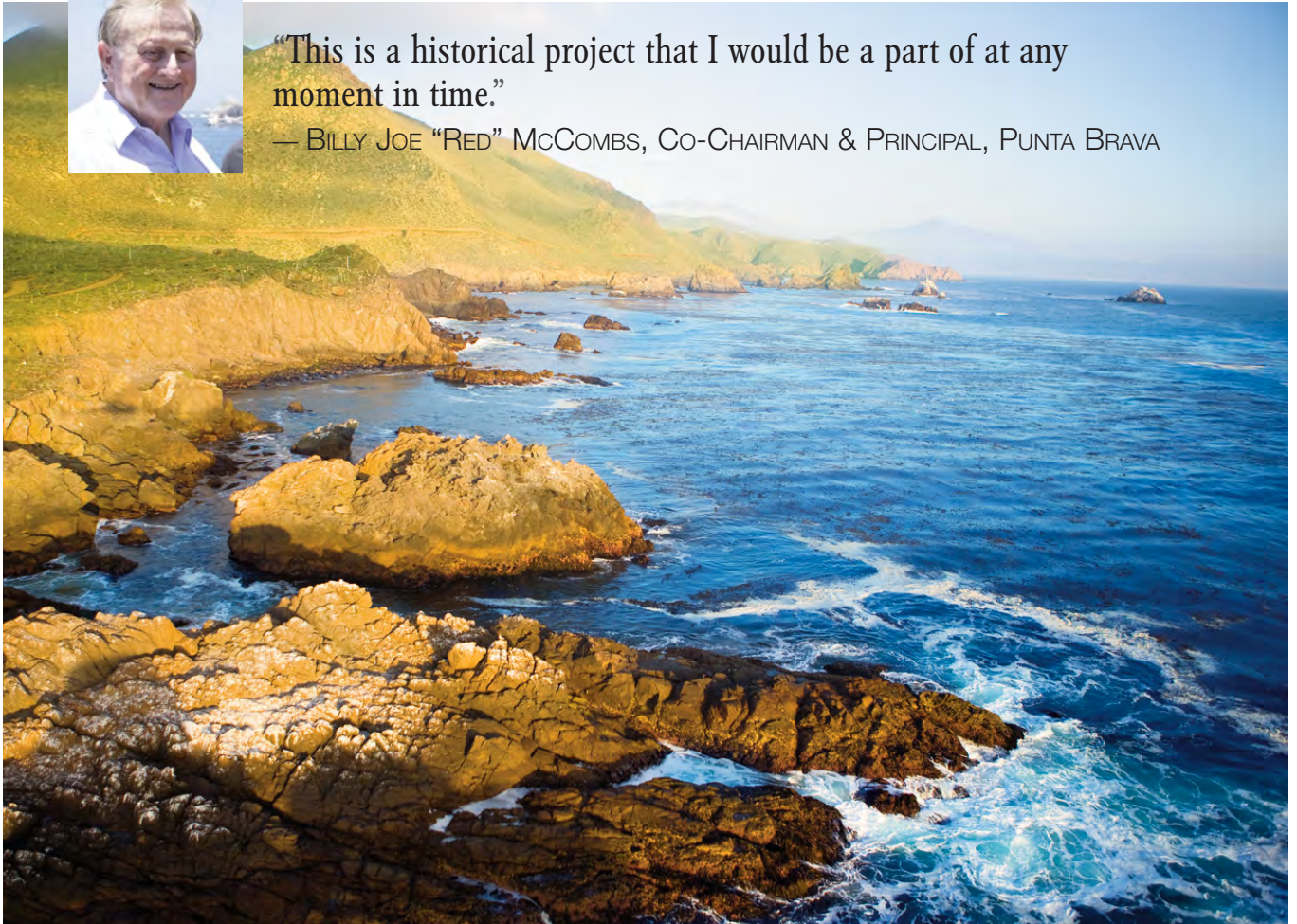
"It was about legacy," Tucker recalled in hindsight. "The





"This is a historical project that I would be a part of at any moment in time."

— BILLY JOE "RED" MCCOMBS, CO-CHAIRMAN & PRINCIPAL, PUNTA BRAVA



"Anything worth doing takes persistence and conviction, and no matter what, one should never compromise." — BRIAN TUCKER, FOUNDER & CEO, PUNTA BRAVA



patriarch of the family was 83 years old at the time and he would never sell because the land represented his legacy."

Finally, at Gonzalez's granddaughter's quinceañera (an important moment in Latin American culture where the family celebrates a girl's coming of age on her 15th birthday), Tucker formally invited Gonzalez to become a partner. After half a century, Gonzalez agreed and signed over the title of the land to Tucker.

"For me, the moral of the story is that true legacies aren't based on how big a check you write," added Tucker.

Once back at the Coronado, California, development office, Tucker continued to assemble his team.

"Through a mutual friend, I met Mr. [Red] McCombs, a longstanding member of *Forbes'* top 400 wealthiest Americans, and invited him to become a partner in Punta Brava," said Tucker. McCombs' legend as a businessman needs little introduction. The billionaire co-founded Clear

Channel Communications and has owned major sports franchises including the Minnesota Vikings and San Antonio Spurs.

"When I explained the vision for Punta Brava, I clearly remember his response: 'I'm all in.' With the land secured, Mr. McCombs commitment, and our investment north of \$20M, we have made Punta Brava a reality," added Tucker.

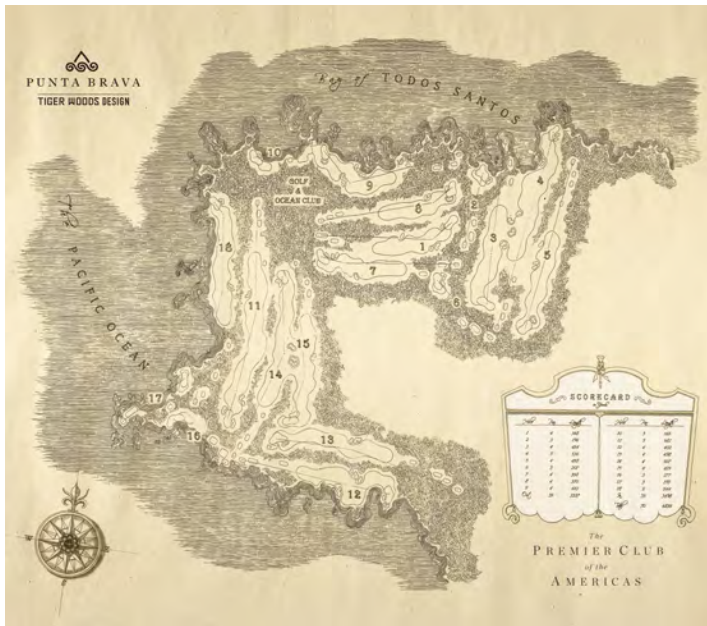
#### *TIGER'S TALE*

The tale of how Woods became the course architect for Punta Brava is a story worth sharing.

No one understood better than Tucker the unusual piece of land jutting seven miles into the Pacific. Equipped with a camcorder and a rickety ultralight glider, Tucker began gathering aerial footage. "Some of those first few trial flights would have made the Wright Brothers

squeamish. That rough footage showcased the raw and natural beauty of the land, catapulting Punta Brava from anonymity into the most sought-after design project in the world," said Tucker.

In late 2006, the Punta Brava development team had received offers to design the course from many of the top course architects and PGA TOUR players in the world. "The only thing better is if Tiger Woods were to start a course design firm," Tucker told his wife. As luck would have it, several months later Tiger Woods announced the creation of his firm, Tiger Woods Design (TWD).



Although Tucker was among hundreds of inquiries from across the world that flooded the TWD office after opening their doors, the Punta Brava footage was undeniable and Tiger enthusiastically responded.

The first time Woods walked the site and expressed his passion for the course, Tucker knew he had found Punta Brava's architect.

In fact, so passionate was Woods about the opportunity to design a course on that site he drafted 23 different course routings before being awarded the course design contract. "You have to walk it, to feel it, to realize how special it is, how beautiful it is, and to understand what you can do with it," said Tiger Woods.

"As soon as I saw the site, I was hooked," recalls Woods.

Punta Brava's Coronado office bears evidence of Woods' perfectionism. The war room is a virtual storyboard, wall-papered with varying TWD course routings that have yielded a core golf course with sweeping, unobstructed ocean views from every tee, fairway and green.

Woods is not alone in his praise for the site. Punta Brava

has been dubbed one of the world's last remaining pure golf properties on the ocean and is accessible via air, land and sea.

### *A BLESSING IN DISGUISE*

After enlisting Woods and McCombs, Punta Brava would suffer a lengthy series of local permit and entitlement delays. Ever the optimist, Tucker now sees these delays as a blessing in disguise considering the tough economic conditions over the last couple of years. During 2009 and 2010, the Punta Brava team worked tirelessly to complete the permitting process, prevent the development from stalling, all the while keeping the project free and clear of any debt.

### *THE PREMIER CLUB OF THE AMERICAS*

Last year, Tucker enlisted golf industry veteran, Tim Ummel, as his chief operating officer. Having studied closely many of the great private clubs of the world, from St. Andrews to Augusta, Ummel's experience is evident in the Club's Membership Plan. "We will offer a limited number of memberships to each of 20 countries throughout the Americas, from Canada to Argentina.

"The key ingredient is our membership foundation. In Europe, there are several international clubs [like Skibo Castle and the Royal & Ancient], attracting members from numerous countries. There really isn't a true international club specific to the Americas," continued Ummel.

While careful not to publicly disclose the Membership Plan or the country allocation throughout the Americas, Ummel did reveal some clues. "Canada, for example, has been allotted 20 Founding Memberships and Argentina has four.

"Punta Brava's amenities will extend far beyond golf. The fishing is dynamic. The Bay of Todos Santos produces the largest yield of yellowtail and blue fin tuna in the world, and 20,000 gray whales hug our coast during their annual migration. With seals and dolphins swimming right off shore, Punta Brava is like having the Monterrey Aquarium in our backyard," added Ummel.

Although Punta Brava's website ([puntabrava.com](http://puntabrava.com)) is largely restricted to members, Tucker's original aerial footage has been upgraded with the help of Hollywood legend Ridley Scott who produced a 3-minute movie, which provides a peak into Punta Brava.

"Our movie really gives you a flavor of what our club experience will be like," commented Tucker. "Anything worth doing takes persistence and conviction, and no matter what, one should never compromise." ■