

Quite a Splash

A popular new pool facility has sprung to life at Greenbrier G&CC.

By Joe Barks, Editor

For over 40 years, Greenbrier Golf & Country Club, in Lexington, Ky., has stood as a solid example of how business and pleasure *can* mix successfully in the club world. It was founded in 1971 by William Morris Hart Sr., a highway contractor who combined his love of golf with his construction know-how to start a for-profit enterprise that could provide Lexington-area families with a serene, uncrowded place for socializing and pursuing a variety of recreational activities.

Hart was a hands-on owner from the start, doing much of the work himself as the club took shape with a full complement of amenities, including a championship golf course and even a private, 19-acre lake where Greenbrier members enjoy exclusive fishing privileges. He then stayed actively involved, not only to ensure that Greenbrier was a successful business venture, but also to join the fun as an active participant in club activities himself, until his death at age 87 in October 2009.

By then he had brought two sons, William “Morrie” Jr. and Larry, into equally active roles in the family business. They, along with the club’s long-tenured management staff, have maintained the same consistent approach for balancing deci-

sions made in the best interests of Greenbrier’s 450 member families with sound business principles and practices.

Perhaps the most impressive example of this is the recent replacement of the club’s original pool, which was first installed in 1972. “Recent,” in this case, is a relative term. Greenbrier’s management first saw nearly a decade ago that the original pool was nearing the end of its useful life. At the same time, plans were visualized for improving and expanding the pool area, not only to meet members’ requests for things like better heating on early-season days, toddler splash areas, and more seating and shade on the deck, but also to give the club more attractive outdoor options for luring larger catered events.

Greenbrier, however, has never assessed its membership for capital improvements—so doing things right, and completely, would mean finding a way to fund the project through operating proceeds. To help shape the right long-range plan and timetable, the club turned to RenoSys, an Indianapolis-based company that specializes in pool facility solutions. RenoSys suggested a way to immediately stabilize the old pool by employing a PVC pool membrane. That gave the club nearly a decade of time to plan, and budget for, a full \$800,000 upgrade and expansion that was unveiled (after weather-related delays) to the membership on the Fourth of July weekend last year.

For the full pool construction project, RenoSys served as lead contractor for not only a complete design/build reconstruction of the original pool (for photos, see the online version of this



The pool-area improvements are expected to help nearly double the size (and reach the cap) of Greenbrier G&CC’s social membership category, says Club Manager Kelly Williams, PGA.

A new spray-and-play structure, shade provided by a new permanent awning and space for three times more lounge chairs (right) have proved to be the most popular features that were added at the same time Greenbrier G&CC's main pool (opposite page) was fully refurbished.



article at www.clubandresortbusiness.com), but also work that added 50% more deck space, doubled the size of the toddler pool and added "spray and play" features, and built a new permanent shade structure (see photos, below left and above).

RenoSys designed the pool reconstruction around a durable, stainless-steel pool wall system covered with a textured PVC membrane. It also assisted with behind-the-scenes infrastructure improvements for systems to heat the pools, regulate chemical inputs and power-wash the new deck, and supervised subcontractors who re-landscaped surrounding areas and improved the parking lot, as additional parts of the project.

By having the time to plan, and fund, all of this properly, Greenbrier's ownership and management is already "ecstatic" with the results, reports Club Manager Kelly Williams, PGA—even though the major payoffs aren't expected to come until next season, when a full year of benefits can be realized.

Largely because of the pool's previous limitations, Greenbrier had kept a self-imposed cap on its social membership category, holding that group to 80. In 2012, Williams says the club "fully expects" to reach capacity of 150 for that segment, and

has already opened 40 new memberships to the community, in response to buzz created by the pool-area improvements.

Greenbrier also expects a major boost in its catering business, now that the expanded pool deck has been outfitted to take full advantage, day and night, of its surroundings. (The club had completed a snack bar expansion prior to the 2009 pool season opening, in anticipation of being able to serve more people on the larger pool deck.)

"We opened up views to the west, so you can see the sun setting," Williams says. "And after dark, we don't have any of the lighting, sound or setup limitations we had before. We've already seen interest from parties as large as 200 people—and we also saw, in just a half-season, that the bigger pool deck was a huge hit that became 'comfortably busy' when we had 100 members who started to come here regularly on weekends.

"We can't wait for the new [full] season," Williams adds. "We think this will be a major revenue source that will also add to the total value package for members and customers, by providing the finest pool complex of any club in the Lexington area." **C&RB**

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