

LAKWOOD GOLF CLUB — THE GRANDDADDY OF SOUTHERN COURSES

The year is 1948 and as you drive south from Fairhope, Alabama on scenic Highway 98 along the beaches of Mobile Bay's Eastern Shore, centuries of old oaks draped in Spanish moss guard the point of land known as Point Clear (Punta Clara). What's more you will see a large soaring water tower that looms over a rambling resort hotel simply called the Grand; suitably named, amassed with tradition and charm of the Old South.

At that time the Grand Hotel had only 97 rooms and could boast of a large sand beach and spacious grounds manicured with an assortment of Azalea bushes in abundance. The interior smelled of new cypress and the view of Mobile Bay was captivating. Of special note, all the furniture located in the bedrooms, lobby, dining room and cocktail lounge was manufactured at the Waterman's Foundry on Pier four in Mobile using black gum lumber brought from the Mobile River delta. Mr. Louis Rabbino was the manager of the hotel at that time and with the chef and all the cooks being French, it was no wonder that the food was, shall we say..."magnefique!"

Venture across the highway, meander along a curvy pine laden roadway and you feel the southern breeze stirring the Spanish moss and hear whispers of some of golf's greatest legends—Sammy Snead, Bobby Locke, George Bayer, Tommy Bolt, George Fazio, Billy Casper and Patty Berg. Celebrity golfers, such as Paul "Bear" Bryant and Bob Hope, and President Gerald Ford also played here. Historically rich and overflowing with hospitality, there is no doubt Lakewood is the granddaddy of Southern courses. Although Baldwin County now has over a dozen golf courses, Lakewood was the first professional quality course in the county.