Magnolia blooming at Callawassie Island Club

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BLUFFTON TODAY

For the veteran golfers of Callawassie Island, taking a stroll down the fairways of the club's revamped Magnolia course may inspire flashbacks to the good old days. The Callawassie Island Golf Club reopened its Magno lia course on Saturday, five months after the nine-hole course underwent a massive facelift.

The Magnolia course's reno vations are part of athree-fold, $4 million project aimed at upgrading Callawassie's three private and member-owned courses.

Similar refurbishments are under way for the club's Palmetto course, which will reopen in early October. Its Dogwood course will undergo the same treatment in the spring.

When the construction clears, Callawassie officials believe the course will reclaim some of its retro charm.

"Rather than simply 'clean up, paint up and fix up,' the members overwhelmingly voted to completely restore the course to its original great ness," said Callawassie Island Club General Manager Brian LaSota.

"Our goal was to provide members with a flashback to one of Tom Fazio's youthful, signature masterpieces, com plete with treacherous green slopes and pin placements accompanied by signature flashed green collars, and we've succeeded," he said. The project was created to restore Callawassie's three, nine-hole courses to their origi nal specifications, while adapt ing to the United States Golf Association's putting green construction specifications.

That meant leveling some greens, completely recon structing others and installing ahybrid Mini-Verde grass. A SubAir system was installed on every green to import more oxygen to the roots of the grass.

Tee boxes also have under gone renovating, including the addition of shade-tolerant grasses.

The project's major renova tion, however, was replacing the course's archaic sprinkler system with adual-line water ing system and pump house on every hole. Callawassie offi cials believe the new system can nearly halve their water output from an estimated 80 million gallons a year to 35 million.

More than 20 years of play have taken a toll on the courses. This year's renova tions are the first the three courses have undergone.

Jeff Spencer, Callawassie's head golf professional, said, "Mr. Fazio will be visiting Call awassie in the coming months and he'll see virtually the same course he designed more than two decades ago, just environ mentally better."

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