

TRAVEL

# Incredible Golf Destinations: Canada's Flourishing Fox Harb'r Resort

By Adam Stanley | Published on Thursday, October 19, 2023



The signature 16th hole at Fox Harb'r.

A recent visit to Fox Harb'r Resort had already been top-tier in every way, including the arrival on a private jet to the resort's on-site landing strip. It's probably a well-struck driver away from the ninth green.

Turns out, if you sell enough donuts and coffee, this can be your kind of life.

Steven Joyce, whose father Ron – the co-founder of iconic Canadian coffee chain Tim Hortons – built the Fox Harb'r resort originally, in 2000. The 18-hole layout that exists now was designed by Graham Cooke. Tiger Woods has the course record.

Ron Joyce passed away in 2019 and now Steven has the reigns on the golf business, and plenty more.

This trip was to showcase the resort's impressive amenities. Sport shooting, archery, sea kayaking, caught-that-day seafood for lunch and a sunset happy hour on a yacht – to name a few. It was perfectly described in *The Toronto Sun* as "luxurious leisure."



Sunset at Fox Harb'r.

But along for the ride was two of Canada's most prominent golf course architects, Thomas McBroom and Doug Carrick. They were there, because in a dramatic decision made at the end of 2022, the 'frenemies' would be collaborating on a project for the first time after almost three decades in the business.

So between the elegant fare and east-coast hospitality at every turn, there was also a thrilling new golf project underfoot.

### A Canadian collaboration

Carrick, shorter and quieter, and McBroom, his solid silver-fox mane blowing in the Atlantic wind, have had their hands on dozens of Canada's top courses. McBroom was the only one to have an opportunity build an original course on the ocean, however, The Links at Crowbush Cove on Prince Edward Island.



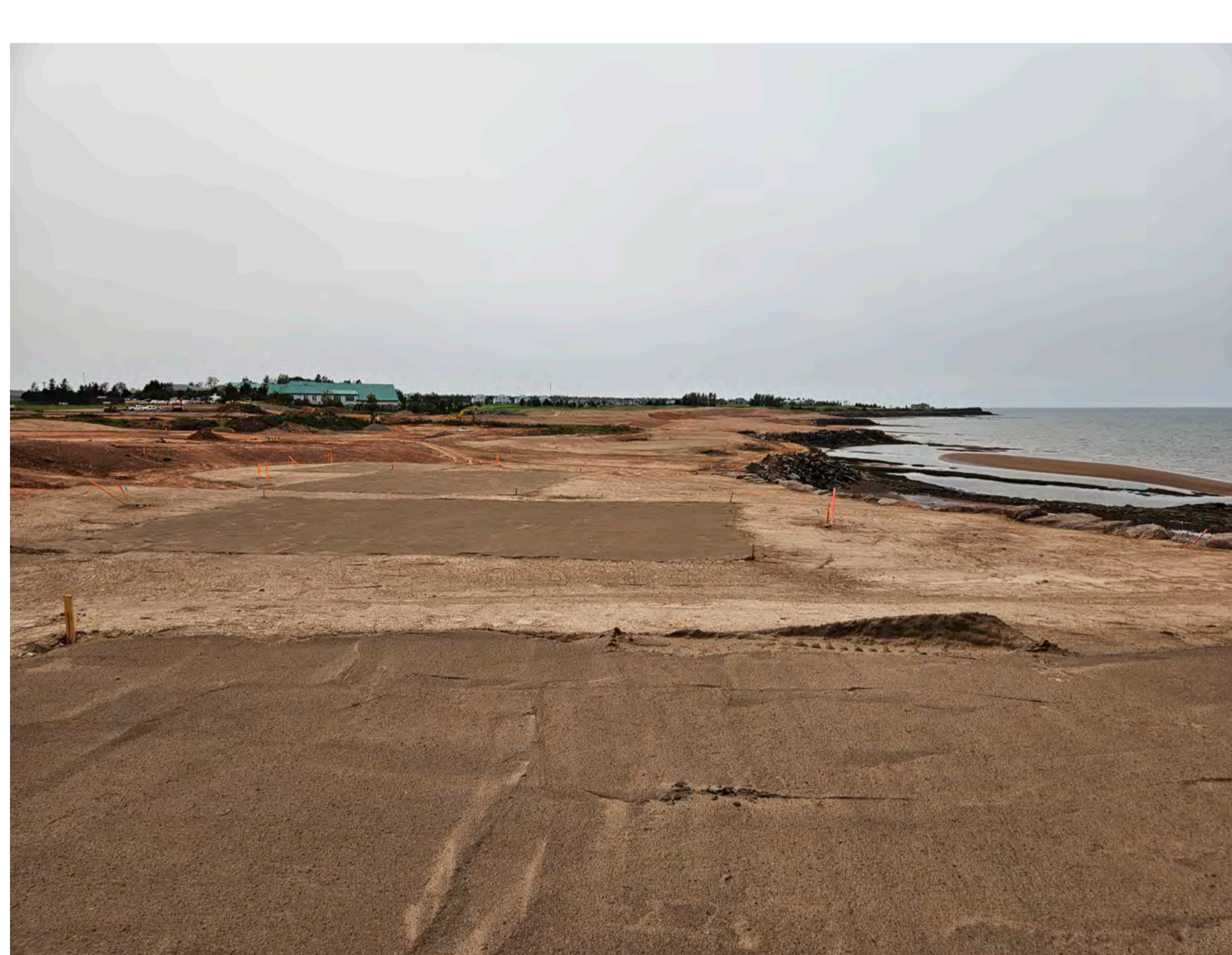
Doug Carrick and Thomas McBroom, architects of the resort's new links course.

The two men spent most of this summer re-working nine holes, mostly on the ocean, of the golf course on the resort that was getting an upgrade. Riding in a cart on a no-filter kind of day along the water, the excitement was so thick from the pair that you had to brush it and the red plumes of dirt out of your face.

"Everything revolves around the ocean," McBroom says. "It's a refined links course."

Later that day in an on-site lodge as the first of four dinnertime courses were being prepared and a 20-year-old tawny port was breathing, Joyce took McBroom and Carrick outside for a minute. Turns out, he had changed his mind on the pace of their efforts.

The oceanside holes that were worked on through the summer of 2023 should be ready in about a year's time, by late summer 2024. The rest of the links-style course on the water will be open in 2025. The parkland course near the resort's vineyard (oh, yes, they have that too), Joyce wanted ready by summer 2026. Thirty-six holes in three years. Ready to go.



The new 7th hole on the links course.



Looking back at the new eighth hole.

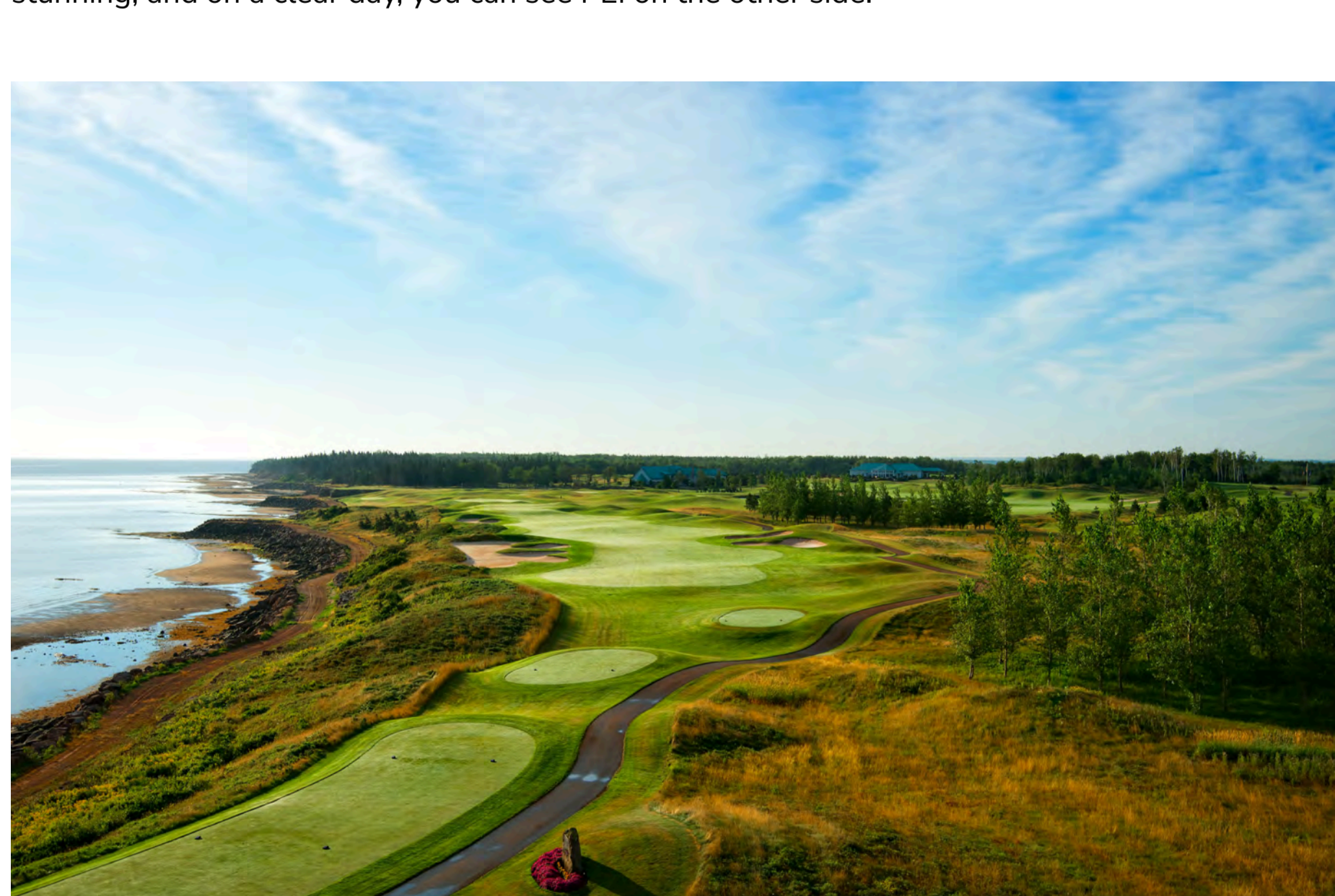
The initial search for architects to tackle Fox Harb'r began four years ago, and while Carrick and McBroom submitted individual bids, the team at the resort recognized a unique opportunity to have them work together. Canadian resort, Canadian success story, Canadian architects.

"Our goal is to expand on our existing course to create the finest golf destination in Canada. We have the land, the ocean and the passion," Joyce says. "With that in mind, we conducted an international search for architects who could see the potential of our spectacular location. The fact that the two best concepts came from Canadians was a bonus. That they were not only willing but excited to work together as a team was the best possible outcome."

"Both Doug and I are excited about this incredible opportunity," McBroom adds. "It has great ownership and at this point in our careers, a project like this is really rewarding."

### 'You're on the ocean the whole time'

Golfers can currently see the progress of the links course while teeing it up on the existing 18 holes – or while you're sipping champagne on a sunset boat cruise – and the new holes will take better advantage of the oceanside land. The views along the Northumberland Strait are stunning, and on a clear day, you can see PEI on the other side.



The 17th at Fox Harb'r.

It was curious, more than 20 years ago, why the coastline originally went unused by Cooke. But Ron Joyce and the architect decided to go with nine holes inland before crossing over and getting the other nine holes with ocean views. The plan for the new golf offering is to let no view go unused.

"The clever part of the design," McBroom says, "is that we're going to make sure you feel like you're on the ocean the whole time."

If a "36-hole world-class golf resort in Nova Scotia" sounds familiar, it's because Cabot Cape Breton (home to Canada's top-ranked golf course, Cabot Cliffs, plus the original Cabot Links, and now a short course called The Nest) is about 180 miles away. Cabot is world renowned and has leaned into an old-world, classic, rugged golfing experience. The new courses at Fox Harb'r will be more in line with a refined resort style.

When everything is finished at Fox Harb'r, a golf trip to Nova Scotia to see both would be, to borrow Canadian coffee parlance, a perfect double-double.



The beauty of Fox Harb'r.

Between the unique collaboration of two of the country's great modern architects, a stunning oceanside setting for golf, and a 360-degree resort offering just about everything you could desire in a relaxing retreat, Fox Harb'r is well on its way to becoming a must-visit Canadian golf destination.