

## McBroom and Carrick Team Up at Fox Harb'r

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Doug Carrick and Tom McBroom onsite during construction of the new links-style Ocean Course. (Image: Tim Gallant/Siren Communications)

Long Canada's top golf architects, Tom McBroom and Doug Carrick have joined forces to design two upcoming new courses at Fox Harb'r Resort and Spa, the oceanfront Nova Scotia retreat built on the profits of the Tim Hortons fast-food empire.

Who better than Tom McBroom and Doug Carrick to reimagine the golf course at a resort as all-Canadian as a maple-glazed doughnut?

In 2018, Steven Joyce, the head of the business empire built on the success of the Tim Hortons doughnut and fast-food chain, hired the country's two most esteemed golf architects to collaborate in returning Nova Scotia's *Fox Harb'r Resort and Spa* to the forefront of East Coast golf. Their progress slowed by the pandemic, McBroom and Carrick are now fully engaged in the building of nine new holes (including four on the ocean) and the reshaping of nine existing holes that together will become a links-style course scheduled to open in spring 2025. Phase two of the project, due for unveiling in 2026, will be an inland heathland-style layout composed of nine new holes and nine refined existing holes.

"This is pretty exciting stuff," says McBroom. "The new 18-hole links-style layout, called the Ocean Course, will make dramatic use of the Northumberland Strait coastline. There will be grass hollows, small pot bunkers, and fairways that roll with the natural flow of the land. We're going for a windswept links look—yet refined and kind of elegant. Think Royal Birkdale or Royal St. George's."

Carrick adds: "Probably the most visually striking of the new oceanside holes are the seventh and eighth. The seventh is a par three that tightly hugs the shoreline from tee to green. And on the par-five eighth, the ocean cuts close to the right side of the green, potentially forcing a golfer who is out of position to take a deep breath and fly his approach shot over the water."



Golf Digest named the original parkland-style 18-hole layout at Fox Harb'r the best new Canadian course of 2001. (Image: Fox Harb'r Resort and Spa)

Set on the rocky red cliffs of Nova Scotia's west coast, the 401-hectare gated resort near the town of Wallace has drawn an affluent clientele since opening in 2000. A private jet hangar and runway sit next to the golf course at a property that also includes a marina, private homes, plush lodge-style accommodations, fine-dining restaurants, a vineyard, stables, a pheasant reserve, and walking trails. Activities range from hiking, cycling, kayaking and fishing to skeet-shooting, archery and boat tours.

Fox Harb'r was a pet project of Steven Joyce's father, Ron, who passed away in January 2019. Born in the nearby village of Tatamagouche, the famous co-founder of Tim Hortons lavished untold millions developing the resort following the sale of the iconic fast-food chain in 1995. *Golf Digest* named the original parkland-style course, designed by Quebec-based architect Graham Cooke, the best new Canadian course of 2001, and later ranked Fox Harb'r one of the 20 best golf resorts in North America.

The elder Joyce presided over his luxurious domain from an oceanfront mansion featuring panoramic views across the strait to the province of Prince Edward Island. Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, John Major, Tony Blair and other celebrity guests flew in for private events. In 2009, Tiger Woods, while at Fox Harb'r for a Nike Golf Canada fundraiser, shot a course-record 63.

But from the beginning, critics wondered why Cooke had routed the opening nine holes of his otherwise strong golf course mostly inland, rather than take full advantage of the oceanfront setting. "Doug and I are fixing that by making sure golfers always feel close to the ocean," McBroom says. "The existing holes have been rerouted to play more adjacent to the shoreline. And we're using high ground throughout the course to showcase views of the Northumberland Strait."



A lighthouse guards the entrance to the manmade harbour at Fox Harb'r. Seen in the distance is the Joyce family home. (Image: Brian Kendall)

Both McBroom and Carrick built their reputations by designing courses that are enjoyable for average golfers, while offering risk and reward options for experienced players. "No resort course should be overly penal," Carrick says. "To help compensate for the high winds that often blow in from the strait, we've made our fairways on the Ocean Course wide off the tee to help golfers keep the ball in play."

Longtime rivals, the Canadian architects were taken by surprise when Steven Joyce and his management team

suggested they collaborate as equal partners on the Fox Harb'r redesign. "Really, we couldn't choose between them," says Joyce, laughing. "They both submitted proposals that were head and shoulders above the concepts of the other architects in the running. We were thrilled when they agreed to team up for us."

"The timing was just right," McBroom says. "When we were younger and making our reputations, we both probably would have refused. But now we look upon it as kind of a gift. It's fun to collaborate with someone whose work I admire so much."

"Working with Tom has been virtually seamless," adds Carrick. "Our concepts for Fox Harb'r were quite similar. Any disagreements we've had have been very minor, and very easily resolved."

Perhaps only the legendary Stanley Thompson has left bigger footprints on the Canadian golf landscape than McBroom and Carrick. McBroom's most renowned designs include the *Links at Crowbush Cove* (Prince Edward Island), *Bell Bay* (Nova Scotia), *Rocky Crest* (Ontario), and *Tobiano* (British Columbia). Carrick, meanwhile, has designed *Humber Valley* (Newfoundland), *Muskoka Bay* (Ontario), *Greywolf* and the *Ridge Course at Predator Ridge Resort* (both in British Columbia), as well as other outstanding courses.

In truth, McBroom and Carrick have collaborated before, but not nearly so closely. At *Legends on the Niagara*, they each contributed 18-hole courses to a facility which, when it opened in 2001, was credited with putting Ontario's Niagara Peninsula firmly on the Canadian golf map.

Now Steven Joyce and his team are counting on McBroom and Carrick to return the spotlight to a property that has been at least slightly overshadowed in recent years by the fame of sister courses *Cabot Links* and *Cabot Cliffs* in nearby Cape Breton. With the opening of the Ocean Course, followed a year later by the *Vineyard Course* (named for its proximity to the resort's vineyard), Fox Harb'r will boast 36 holes designed by the country's most acclaimed golf architects. That's an irresistible marketing hook for a resort that has always proudly waved the Canadian flag.

McBroom and Carrick are convinced they're building something exceptional on Nova Scotia's Northumberland Strait.



Fox Harb'r overlooks the Northumberland Strait on Nova Scotia's west coast. (Image: Fox Harb'r)

"Doug and I couldn't be more excited about this amazing opportunity," McBroom says. "We intend to make Fox Harb'r a landmark golf experience in North America."