

# Golf Inc.™

## Remodel becomes a rebuild

Safer, more versatile clubhouse also shows **over 20 percent increase in revenues**

By Rebecca Luczycki

How many times have you started a little weekend project around the house, only to see it balloon into something bigger and you end up ripping out the entire bathroom? That's exactly what happened recently to Sunset Ridge Country Club in Northfield, Ill.

The clubhouse, built in 1923, needed some work, and the club's membership had outgrown the original design. So in 2000, club officials started work on a master plan for a renovation. In the midst of examining the building to find out what needed to be done to it, executives got some very bad news: the main section of the clubhouse had a major structural defect and needed to be demolished and rebuilt.

"We had to put up exterior steel cables to keep the walls of the main dining room plumb [until they could be repaired]," said Jim Petersen, Sunset Ridge general manager. "That really kind of forced our hand. We knew a rebuild was necessary."

The changes are paying off both aesthetically and financially, Petersen said.

The \$9.5 million investment in the new building has boosted banquet food and beverage sales by 20 percent over historical sales since it was completed last spring, the general manager said. And a la carte sales are also up by about 30 percent, he said.

"Our new main dining room is really pulling people in," Petersen said.

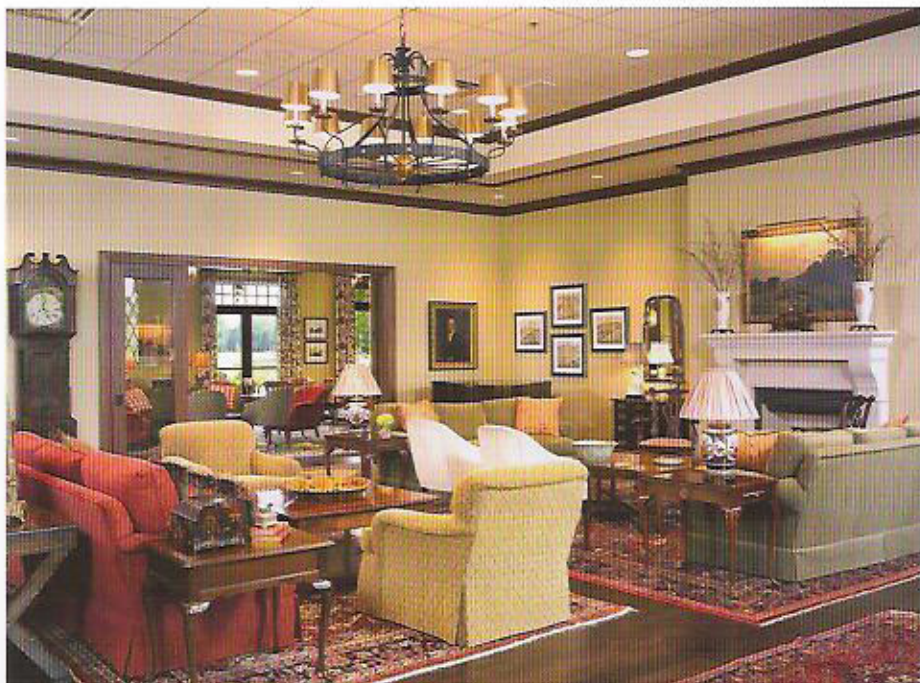
Since the two side wings with the men's and ladies' locker rooms had been renovated fairly recently, the architect hired to oversee the work, CCI, decided to leave them in place and rebuild the main middle section between them, making the new section look as much like it had always been there as possible.

"Doing a totally new clubhouse was not feasible," said Chuck Berberich, vice president of CCI and project manager for the rebuild.

The new main section of the clubhouse had many of the same rooms as the old one—a formal bar, a library and meeting room, a banquet facility and a casual grill—but with more realistic sizes and a better layout, said Ryan Yakel, the architect on the project.

"The existing spaces weren't designed to be used as they were functioning," he said. "The administration offices were in an old dormitory room upstairs."

The plan for the new section included a larger grill with a new pub section.



Sunset Ridge updated its living room (above) and entry (right) as part of a \$9.5 million renovation.



"Casual grills are more popular now, so we enlarged it and added the pub and the two play off each other," Yakel said. "It gives them a nice casual dining area."

The new design also centralized food and beverage operations.

"We put the kitchen in the center with direct access to all dining areas," Yakel said.

And the banquet facilities were redesigned from one large room to an area that can be broken up into several smaller rooms when needed.

"Our old facility couldn't have more than

one event at a time but now we have the freedom to actually hold three functions at once," Petersen said.

While the project turned out to be bigger than expected, the main goal was to make a more useful—and safer—clubhouse for the membership, said Yakel, and the goal has been achieved.

"They are getting a lot more use out of it," he said. "The clubhouse we gave them in the end was what they were looking for and the staff and management got what they were looking for as well."

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