

# Bear Golf Club's new clubhouse designed by the Hicks Partnership

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**OAKVILLE, ON** – Many outstanding golf clubhouses have been built over the past decade, but then there's the Hicks Partnership masterpiece that opens to Whistle Bear GC members on July 31<sup>st</sup>.

While a handful of newlywed couples have enjoyed a sneak preview of the jaw-dropping clubhouse interior for their wedding receptions over the last two-three weeks, Whistle Bear's 600 golfing members will finally see what all the fuss is about at a special reception of their own highlighted by; great food, speeches, tours of 40,000 square-foot work of art and fireworks on Thursday night.

"The vision for this project has been to create a stately clubhouse modeled after some of the great East Coast clubhouses of America such as Shinnecock Hills in Southampton, The Ocean Course in Kiawah and Maidstone in the East Hamptons, New York," says renowned Canadian architect Bill Hicks. "It's a remarkable multi-purpose facility that now ties majestically into the golf course landscape for members to enjoy, but it also will allow Landmark Group to capitalize on that enchanting setting to develop a picture-perfect atmosphere for its wedding and special event business."

Hicks Partners is Canada's preeminent clubhouse architectural firm, having designed and renovated over 45 clubhouses including projects at; Rosedale, St. George's G&CC, Dundas Valley G&CC, Weston G&CC, Oakville G&CC, Rebel Creek GC, Bond Head GC, King Valley GC, Oakdale G&CC, Rocky Crest, Barrie CC, Beverly G&CC and Emerald Hills GC. Current projects include the recent approval of a 10-year master plan for Credit Valley G&CC that will see many upgrades to its facilities, as well as clubhouse renovations slated

for The Badminton & Racquet Club in Toronto and The Toronto Lawn Tennis Club.

At Whistle Bear they tore down two-thirds of an existing clubhouse in the fall of 2013 and then rebuilt it from the ground up. As members and guests drive through the gates off Dickie Settlement Road in Cambridge, they are now greeted by a relaxed two-storey shingled styled clubhouse tailored after the Arts and Craft movement that started in England in the 1860s and was popular in North America from 1900 into the 1930s. In front of the building there's a wonderful circular grass walkway with finely cut grass filling the interior and a pole with the Canadian flag waving brilliantly in the middle.

Entering through the wooden double-doors, one can only marvel at the stone fireplace in the center of the Grand Lobby, while a split staircase is a stunning backdrop that leads to the second floor. To the right is a reception area and down the hallway are two sales offices and a newly decorated golf shop with counter area at the center. Other main floor highlights include; a fitness center with a yoga/Pilates studio, an intimate boardroom and the members dining lounge with heated floors and a removable wall of windows that opens up to an outdoor terrace and the 18<sup>th</sup> hole. There's also the first of three banquet rooms with interior designs by **Lori Morris Design**. The Grandview Room and Garden accommodates a guest list of up to 220 with a 30-foot mirrored vaulted ceiling, with intricate wood-carved details and a beautiful crystal chandelier, while windows on two sides bring natural light into the room.

On the second floor, there's the Rose Room that seats up to 170 guests and the 4,000-square-foot Forestview Room with 20-foot wood-framed ceilings that can accommodate 400-plus guests. All three areas feature individual private bridal suites, outdoor terraces overlooking different areas of the golf course and high-tech sound and visual systems.

To feed everyone, Hicks Partners designed two 3,500 square foot banquet kitchens, one on top of the other on the first and second floors, as well as a third kitchen area with its own line that opens up to the member dining lounge. "We have taken all of the best aspects of our kitchens in the Landmark Group and incorporated them into these state-of-the-art

facilities,” says executive chef Bryan Gibson. Landmark Group owns; Cambridge Mill, Ancaster Mill, Elora Mill Inn & Spa, Earth to Table Bread Bar, Earth to Table Farm and 50 per cent of Whistle Bear. They will be able to host upwards of six to eight weddings per weekend and feed upwards of 3,000 people including golf members.

Exterior highlights incorporated into the Hicks Partners design include; fire pits, two waterfalls for wedding photos, a magnificent clock tower and a new starters’ hut. The lower level of the clubhouse is home to two small business offices for people who need a private area to get some work done, and well as men’s and ladies’ locker room facilities.

“I think our members are really going to enjoy their facilities, especially the new fitness center and the dining lounge is certainly going to be a focal point,” says General Manager, Brad Duench. “When it comes to weddings, banquets and special events we’re now second to none in Waterloo Region and beyond.”

Hicks Partners is also working with the Landmark Group to restore the Elora Mill and is in the process of developing a long range plan for a spa, meetings areas and a luxury hotel on the site.

Next up, will be the just announced relocation of the LPGA Manulife Classic to Whistle Bear in 2015 and 2016, where they will certainly be able to wine and dine the local golf community and world’s top female golfers at a club with a clubhouse and course that gets better and better with each passing day!

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