

## On Course: Four Architects You'll Be Hearing More About

In a new monthly column, Morning Read's Joe Passov identifies Jeff Danner, Agustin Piza, Jason Straka and Richard Mandell as course designers to put on your radar in 2022, plus other news and reviews.

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In 2019, while speaking to the American Society of Golf Course Architects at their annual meeting, I remarked, "OK, I get that folks love Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw and their courses. Who doesn't love Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw and their courses? I know I do. But there are so many architects out there who do such good work and who simply don't get the positive attention they deserve from print, digital and social media."

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Let me try to right that wrong. I still believe Coore and Crenshaw are terrific. So are Gil Hanse and David McLay Kidd, as well as the old guard of Tom Fazio, Robert Trent Jones Jr. and his brother Rees. Many other architects, however, are making serious noise in the profession. Here are four emerging architects that are poised for a breakthrough in 2022.



Jeff Danner, right, joined forces with noted architect Forrest Richardson in 2021.  
Dave Siegel

### Jeff Danner

Sharing a golf cart with Danner in 2021, while touring one of Forrest Richardson's original routings in Scottsdale, I was struck with the joy that Danner exhibited on seeing one hole after the next unfold before him. He would analyze it, put it in the perspective of what he's seen elsewhere and discuss how its features could be restored or improved. "There's a guy who likes his job," I thought.

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Danner is no stranger to airplanes. Born and educated in Illinois, he ultimately moved to Florida and served as a senior design associate with Greg Norman Golf Course Design. Prior to his five-year stint with Norman, he honed his skills working for Lohmann Golf Designs and Golfplan. In 2021, he relocated to the Bay Area of California, joining Forrest Richardson's firm as senior golf course architect, in the newly renamed firm of Richardson | Danner. He has worked in or traveled to more than 30 countries, contributing to many award-winning new construction and renovation projects. What resonates with him most, however, are the special projects that expand access to more golfers.

In Illinois, he assisted on taking an old driving range plot and transforming it into a five-hole, pitch-and-putt/practice range combo that was handicap-accessible to those in wheelchairs. "Those type of projects are exciting," said Danner, "when you get to work with an organization that's out to serve the greater good."

On the Black Sea in Turkey, Danner helped to create a course by diverting a lot of heavy fill material and muddy soil to reclaim the site, building an interesting, links-landish canvas in the process. The course would go on to host the Deaf Olympics.

"I believe that golf needs to be more inclusive," said Danner. "I've always been excited to be working on public access courses, probably because I grew up around public golf. Sustainable golf is more than environmental stewardship. Without inclusivity and golfer participation, golf isn't a viable business. It all goes hand in hand."

**Why 2022 will be a breakout year:** In joining Forrest Richardson, immediate past president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, Danner pairs with one of the most creative, out-of-the-box thinkers in the business.

One of their first collaborations was a remodel of Alaska's Anchorage Golf Course, which will make history in 2022 when it hosts the U.S. Senior Women's Amateur, as Alaska gets its turn as the 50<sup>th</sup> state to host a USGA national championship. Their work won an ASGCA Environmental Excellence Award in 2021 for utilizing a non-traditional construction plan that resulted in fewer carbon emissions. A bunker renovation program, turf reduction and drainage improvements were designed in compliance with the Anchorage Climate Action Plan.

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