

A full-page photograph of PGA golfer Nick Price in a field of tall, dry grass. He is wearing a light-colored short-sleeved button-down shirt with a 'Pine Creek Sporting Club' logo, khaki pants, an orange baseball cap, sunglasses, and large black earplugs. He is holding a shotgun diagonally across his body. The background shows a line of trees under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

# SHOOTING A ROUND WITH NICK PRICE

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PGA golfer Nick Price is at home on the shooting grounds, especially at Pine Creek Sporting Club.

BY ROGER CATCHPOLE  
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**W**e meet for lunch at Pine Creek Sporting Club, the exclusive hunting-and-shooting destination located in central Florida, equidistant to Orlando and south to Palm Beach. Professional-golf icon Nick Price offers a sincere welcome that instantly puts me at ease.

As I admire the immaculately appointed members' lodge, I'm impressed by this residential community built exclusively around hunters and shooting sports. Conceived by cable television magnate Stephen Myers with the support of founding members, including golfers Nick Price and Jack Nicklaus, former NFL running back Tucker Frederickson, and famed gunmaker Tullio Fabbri, Pine Creek provides a charming oasis for shooting sportsmen.

Naturally, I am keen to learn how Nick, a celebrated PGA professional and three-time major champion, got into wing-shooting. Over lunch, Nick delivers an amusing and heartfelt account of his family history and upbringing. Indeed, though he was born in South Africa to British parents, Nick grew up in Zimbabwe, then known as Rhodesia. And it was there Nick began his hunting career—shooting guinea fowl on the farms of his childhood friends. However, Nick's progression as a golfer hampered his hunting ambitions during those early years. In fact, not until 1994, after his second major triumph in The Open Championship held at Turnberry in Scotland, did Nick get back into wingshooting by enjoying a day's pheasant hunting with a friend in the United Kingdom.

By that time, Nick had immigrated to the United States, living first in Orlando before finally moving to Jupiter to further work on his golf swing with his good friend and coach, David Leadbetter. Having burst onto the professional golf scene at the 1983 World Series of Golf tournament in Akron, Ohio, where he beat Jack Nicklaus by four strokes, Nick reached a crossroads in his game when his form began to prove frustratingly erratic. With a wry smile, Nick tells me he was 25 years old before he took his first golf lesson. In fact, Nick credits his work with Leadbetter in Florida with bringing the consistency to his game that enabled Price to ascend to the pinnacle of his sport. Indeed, he rose to be the world's Number One golfer and held that position for 43 weeks during the mid 1990s.

Between PGA events, and while relaxing back in Florida, Price began his quail hunting career and even experienced dove shooting for the first time. He enjoyed his dove experiences so much he subsequently traveled to Argentina to pursue more of that sport. In fact, during the past decade, Price has returned annually to South America to partake in dove shoots.

Although Price was beginning to enjoy more hunting at this time, his opportunities were still somewhat limited by tour commitments. That's when Price met Pine Creek's founder, Stephen Myers, at Greg Norman's Medalist Golf Club. When the pair reconnected in 2005, through their mutual friend Tucker Frederickson, Price became involved with the Pine Creek project. Having learned of the ambitious plans, Price was keen to sup-







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port Myers' vision for the club. "One point I will make about Stephen Myers is that he does things right," Price says. "Pine Creek members are proud of their sporting club and consider it a privilege to be a part of this community."

I probe Price further on his interest in Pine Creek. "What I like is that Pine Creek offers a bit of everything to the hunter. And whether you are a professional sportsman, a CEO, or a celebrity, when you hunt at Pine Creek it is a level playing field," he explains. Price is clearly comfortable in this sporting environment, and he appears to love nothing more than to hunt quail with friends at Pine Creek.

Indeed, he recently hosted a hunt at the club for fellow golf professionals and close friends, Louis Oosthuizen and Charl Schwartzel, both men achieving major golf victories in their own right.

Our conversation turns to hunting adventures, near and far, and I ask Price for his favorite wingshooting experience. "I'm really not sure," he says. "I enjoy driven pheasant, dove shooting, and quail hunting. Recently, I shot wild quail in Georgia. Wow, now that is tough. Man those birds fly hard!" He continues, "But for me it is about the sport—challenging wing-shooting, not bag limits."

During his golf career, Price became known as one of the most personable golfers on tour, and he certainly lives up to this billing during our time together. Over a round of sporting clays on Pine Creek's excellent course, designed by Steve Middle-ditch, we further discuss Price's love of the outdoors. He is shooting well, effectively translating his golfing talents to the world of shooting sports. Renowned for his persistence and tough practice routine, Price swings his 12-gauge Browning



over-and-under smooth and true. Clearly, the composure and coordination that brought Nick such success on the golf course are proving useful on the range, too.

Then our round is over and we sample the quail hunting Pine Creek offers its members. With the late afternoon temperature pushing an unseasonable 85 degrees, we head to the quail courses to witness the club's guides and pointers showcase their talents. A true son of Africa, Price is at home in the heat of central Florida. In fact, he thrives in the sunshine and loathes the cold. He tells me of the tough time he had adjusting to the European Tour when he first started out as a professional golfer.

"When I left Zimbabwe for Europe, I owned just four sweat-ers!" he shares. That soon changed. "Virtually all of the tournaments I won were in the summertime," he continues. The year-round warmth of Florida is clearly to Price's liking.

A large, purpose-built hunting vehicle transports our group comfortably to the hunting fields, located at the northern reaches of the sporting club. Here we disembark and follow in the footsteps of Old Florida hunters of days gone by. Before Stephen Myers purchased Pine Creek, the property was run as a private hunting plantation for more than 70 years. Aside from the bobwhite quail, this traditional palmetto-plains environment is home to Osceola turkey, whitetail deer, mourning

dove, Sandhill cranes, and wild hogs. The biodiversity certainly affords members a variety of hunting opportunities. In fact, each ranch-holding member is entitled to hunt hogs, deer, and turkey on their own land.

As the heat of the day fades, the sky is imbued with a luminescent orange hue that is the signature of Florida. Momentarily I am lost in the beauty of the world around me, but I am abruptly brought back by the sound of a pair of pointers running hard. With guns and a flushing Labrador in tow, we trail the dogs along the first course, traversing tall native grasses interspersed with live oaks and cypress stands. Before long, we make game and the dogs deliver a stylish point, tails held high and handsome. Our guide's Labrador sits obediently by his master's side before bounding into a palmetto thicket. A covey of birds explodes out of the undergrowth and starbursts ahead of Price and his hunting companion, Publisher John Thames. Three birds fall to the report of their guns, which brings cheers and teasing in equal measure. (A fast flying bird(ie) evades Nick's second shot, so we'll call that one a par.)

As the Labrador sets to work retrieving the downed birds, I ask Membership Director John Reynolds about the mission of the club. John tells me that, while the eventual development at Pine Creek has varied somewhat from the original plan, the





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community now covers around 2,400 acres, half of which is managed exclusively for hunting. Eventually, the development will consist of 43 cabins in two discrete settings, known as Lake Cabins and Hammock Cabins, plus 24 ranches, all exceeding 40 acres in size, which is a traditional Florida homestead. The club builds each cabin in one of several tastefully designed styles. However, the club generally sells ranch properties undeveloped, which provides each ranch-owning member the opportunity to develop his or her dream home.

As John explains, “What we hope to attract is 66 families to join the Myers family to become stewards of this land, forever.” With amenities that include a sporting-clays course, a five-stand set up, a trap field, and a rifle and a pistol range, Pine Creek is unquestionably attractive to shooting-sports enthusiasts. Moreover, the addition of horse stables, canoe and kayak docks, nature walks, a zipline, and a fitness center tailors the lifestyle to the entire family.

The members’ lodge and club buildings exhibit first-rate construction, but the property derives its real charm from the influence of the central Florida ranch vernacular. Pine Creek is probably best described as rustic luxury, if such a thing is possible. Indeed, this sporting club enables members to experience the joys of Old Florida—hunting, fishing, and exploring—without compromise.

With the hunt at an end, I say goodbye to Nick Price and the Pine Creek team. Although my visit has been brief, I did get a taste for the camaraderie that makes Pine Creek such an unmatched haven for Price and his fellow members. Price proved a gentleman both on and off the course—quail and sporting clays, rather than golf, on this occasion. And he was a pleasure to shoot and hunt with, although next time I may bring my clubs and ask for a few tips. As we part, Nick Price says he hopes our paths cross again. He is genuine. I hope they do. 🦋