



**YOU
LITTLE
BEAUTY...**

much tougher test of golf. The front nine used to be a parkland layout surrounded by bluegum trees, but it's more open now – actually much more in keeping with the local landscape.

"The new fairway bunkers have made it an extremely challenging experience, so you need discipline off the tee. We've got elevated greens now too, so it's less of a friendly course and you don't get lucky on it.

"But I've not heard any complaints from the members, though I expected a few. It seems they're scoring well and enjoying themselves out there."

One of the charming things about the revamped facility is that it has retained something of its old-world feel. Although they've built a shiny new clubhouse, you couldn't accuse it of being over the top. It's got everything you need without some of the ridiculous frills you find at the more-luxurious-than-thou estates. Rather refreshing, actually...although there is a spa resort on the way.

Now is the time to go to Silverstrand, as house construction hasn't really got going yet and the place has still got the feel of an inland links. The views of the surrounding Langeberge are as grand as they're going to get. Aside from those gazillions of bunkers, Obermeyer hasn't designed this course to be a monster. It's of reasonable length and you shouldn't lose a lot of balls – although if you have issues with island greens you might want to give the seventh a miss. **1**

Silverstrand

Once upon a time, Robertson Golf Club was just another humble country nine-holer. But now you can get a full round in – and pick up a violin too. **Words: Richard Asher**

Don't be thrown by the name. It might conjure up images of a moonlit beach, but the truth is that Silverstrand Golf and River Estate is miles away from the sea, in a sun-baked Boland valley. Good: we all like Route 62, don't we?

The strand actually refers to a stretch of the Breede River, which meanders along not far from this redeveloped golf course in Robertson. A golf course which has got the members of Robertson Golf Club – who, we were delighted to discover, count the Karoo's only violin-maker in their number – doing backflips of delight.

The venerable Robertson GC has basically morphed into Silverstrand, though the club still exists within the new structure. The new name, though, essentially means one thing: houses. Nothing new in the South African golf industry, certainly, but a novelty for this pretty corner of the Western Cape.

There's no doubt the Robertson members are getting some payback for the necessary evils that a housing estate brings. Most obviously, the fact that their straightforward nine-holer has been given a facelift by Danie Obermeyer. Oh, and he's also added another nine just across the site's omnipresent aqueduct.

GP's new favourite golfing fiddler, Phil Ewens, is just the man to ask about the developments. A Robertson GC committee member, he joined Golf Punk's fourball at the recent launch of the new nine.

Phil, who left the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra a couple of decades ago to pursue a violin-making apprenticeship out in Robertson, is a cultured man of music (he makes violas too) and an ultra-solid four-handicapper. He knew the original nine inside out, so what were his impressions of the revamped course?

"It's changed a lot, and become a

COURSE YOU CAN

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Green fees: R200 for non-affiliated visitors; R150 for affiliated visitors.

