

Golf Digest

Best New Courses of 2025: Thousands of ratings from our experts determined the latest winners

BY DEREK DUNCAN | JANUARY 13, 2026

Halfway through a decade of post-Covid golf prosperity, the verdict on 2025 is in: Golf design in the United States is strong and getting stronger.

Judging by the courses that opened this year, developers and architects continue to seek out pieces of land with strong aura, knowing that the innate character of the site is more important than convenience of location. Salvaging also remains a viable path as underperforming and defunct properties are being repurposed with fresh designs set atop the old bones. There's also an uptick in residential developments, a segment of the industry that all but died in 2008. More investment is being made in affordable and municipal public golf, and on the other end of the spectrum, elite, historic private clubs keep spending tens of millions of dollars to upgrade their turf, infrastructure and architecture, often as part of a return to some originalist version of their courses.

To conduct our annual awards for Best New Private and Public, Best Renovation and Best Transformation, Golf Digest's course-ranking panelists visited 47 candidates across the U.S. As good as this year was, the state of golf for 2026 is shaping up to be even busier.



BEST TRANSFORMATION

HONORABLE MENTION

Urbana (Ill.) C.C., Drew Rogers

Awarded to previously existing courses that undergo a major remodel beyond mere renovations that can include new holes, a new routing and a new architectural identity. If you blinked, you wouldn't recognize it.