

#74 - Sketch of a West Pointer – Chris Chatten



Chris Chatten's parents moved from Vancouver to New Denver, BC in 1947, where his father started work as an assayer. Chris joined his brother Chuck and their parents on August 14, 1950. The family lived in New Denver and Silverton until '54 when employment took them to Emerald Mines, a group of three small communities in the mountains above Salmo. They lived in Tungsten, one of 16 families in 8 duplexes and Chris remembers that often the clouds would be below them as they looked down on the surrounding valleys. He also recalls massive amounts of snow! Employment there ended in 1958 and after spending the summer in a tent on Lake Osoyoos, the family moved to Castlegar, where Chris did his schooling.

In 1968 he moved to the coast to attend Simon Fraser University. His plan was to get his teaching certificate and return to Castlegar to teach high school history. As they say, "Life is what happens to you when you are busy making other plans..."

Upon graduation from SFU, Chris decided to travel, hopping on the world hippie trail, first to London, then Ibiza, Spain for six months before catching a freighter from Barcelona to Istanbul. Then travelling on a city bus driven by Afghans from Istanbul to Kabul, on through the Khyber Pass to Lahore and finally arriving in New Delhi. Many adventures later he and a friend landed back in London with \$200 in their pockets, thinking it was enough for the two of them to fly one-way to New York. British Customs had other ideas and felt they didn't have enough money to enter Britain, so they were put in a detention centre for 3 days while their fate was determined. After their experiences in Afghanistan and India, the detention centre was quite luxurious! It was decided that the airline was responsible for them so they were given the choice of flying back to New Delhi or going to New York. They chose New York and flew for free!!

Chris then hitchhiked from New York to Vancouver, arriving very broke and desperately in need of a job. He and a friend applied at a new restaurant about to open, The Hind Quarter. He recalls the owner telling him that he would hire him under two conditions: he had to tie his hair back and get rid of the velvet pants with large patches. He started work two days later and thus began his 50 plus years in the restaurant industry.

The Hind Quarter, The Acropol, Eye Scream and The Cannery (*a favourite for many of us*) summarize his waiter career. He was then approached to be the sweat equity partner in a new restaurant yet to be built at VanDusen Botanical Garden in 1983. They opened on August 12, 1984 and almost 40 years later, he's still at VanDusen Garden, operating the very popular and successful Shaughnessy Restaurant. There was a break in the 90's when he opened a jazz club (Café Django) and a coffee bar concept, Big Joe. This was followed by a stint running the Law Courts Inn in the Court of Appeals Building, but all roads eventually led back to Shaughnessy!

In 1986 Chris married Amandah. He is the earth father to his son Dusty and birth father to their daughter Carlle. Chris and Amandah have three granddaughters who have kept them full of joy and happiness. Amandah and Chris have jointly run Shaughnessy Restaurant since 1998.

It was on a trip to Hawaii that the two of them discovered golf in 2000, the year Chris turned 50. The hotel concierge asked Amandah if she wanted tickets to the Skins game and she told him that they didn't golf. Upon hearing about this offer, Chris asked who was playing. It was Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Fuzzy Zellar and Hale Irwin. Chris said they'd love to attend as he remembered hearing Jack's and Arnie's names

many a time on the Bill Good Sr. CBC sport show every morning when he was going to school in the 60's! The two of them attended the Gold Course in Wailea, Maui and the rest is history. They both got hooked, took lessons that spring at UBC and thus began the golf odyssey. Golf has taken them literally around the world on many adventures: Europe, South America, Southeast Asia, Hawaii, Mexico, USA, Nova Scotia, PEI, and many a Kootenay and Okanagan trip.

Chris started playing golf when he turned 50 in 2000. Tiger Woods was just starting his journey, so Chris has always admired the talent that man possessed. Rory McIlroy is his current favourite and he's still waiting for that 5th Major win.

Chris managed to get his handicap down to 9.8 last year (2022) but it was short-lived; he's now back in the teens. He has had two holes-in-one, one on Fraserview during winter golf, on the 7th hole, a very tricky shot on a winter green! The second was at Oliver's Fairview Mountain, on the 15th hole. It was his and his pal's second 18 of the day after playing the Osoyoos Desert Gold course. Chris provides some background to this story. "On par 3's, we play a game called Steal, which means if your shot isn't on the green you can chip in and win the KP even though your opponent may be on the green. I tee off first and get my hole-in-one, we see the ball bounce twice and roll into the hole. Jubilation all around, high fives, etc. My pal hits his tee shot into a bunker 20 yards from the hole. He takes his second shot from the bunker; the ball goes in the hole and he wins KP!! The odds of those two things happening on the same hole are pretty slim."

When asked to select his favourite golf courses, Chris ponders because there are so many. If he needs to pick only three, he names The Machrie on the stunning Hebridean island of Islay; Mauna Kea on the Big Island; and Royal Dornoch in Scotland. Through his restaurant connections, they were put up at the Bowmore Distillery's Mashman's Cottage with a complimentary bottle of single malt when they played at The Machrie, a wind-swept links course in the Inner Hebrides that opened in 1891. Chris reports that Mauna Kea is a 60's gem with way too many bunkers and a fabulous par 3 over the ocean. He relates the story that when the Big 3 played there in the 1960's one of them couldn't reach the green from the tips so they moved up to the blue tees for the televised event! Chris says that Royal Dornoch is one of the all-time classics and is definitely on his return list.

He gives honorable mentions to Cabot Cliffs, Cape Breton; Black Mesa in Espanola, New Mexico; Machrihanish, Scotland; and Cruden Bay, Scotland, situated on the north coast in Aberdeenshire. *[Check some of these out on the internet; Machrihanish is located near the southern tip of the Kintyre peninsula, approximately 35 miles across the sea from western Scotland and 20 miles across the sea from Northern Ireland, and is a historic Old Tom Morris links, set in natural dunes.]*

Chris says that golf has been a fabulous addition to their lives and they enjoy reconnecting with old pals and meeting new like-minded people who enjoy the game. It is obvious when speaking with Chris how much he loves the game. In addition to playing golf, Chris and Amandah bought e-bikes five years ago and really enjoy riding around the city or going on trips to Tofino and Ucluelet for oceanside rides!

Chris joined West Point in 2016. You can check out some of his achievements on West Point's links by going to Galleries/Members. He says, "West Point Golf Club has been an amazing experience. We are all so fortunate to live where we live, play golf on beautiful local courses and have the many friendships that have emerged from the club."

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