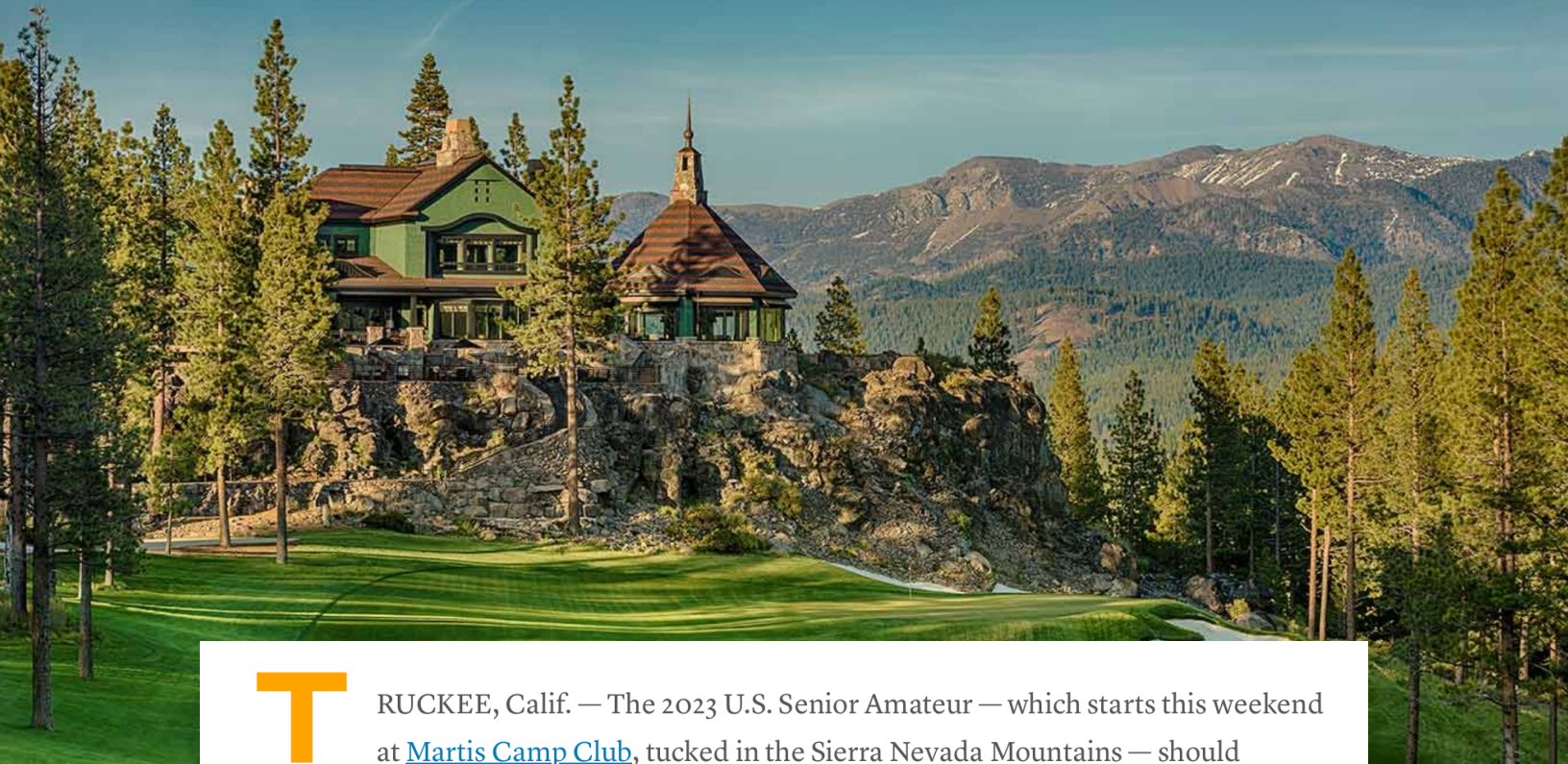


# GOLF

## Dramatic Martis Camp Club readies for U.S. Senior Amateur debut

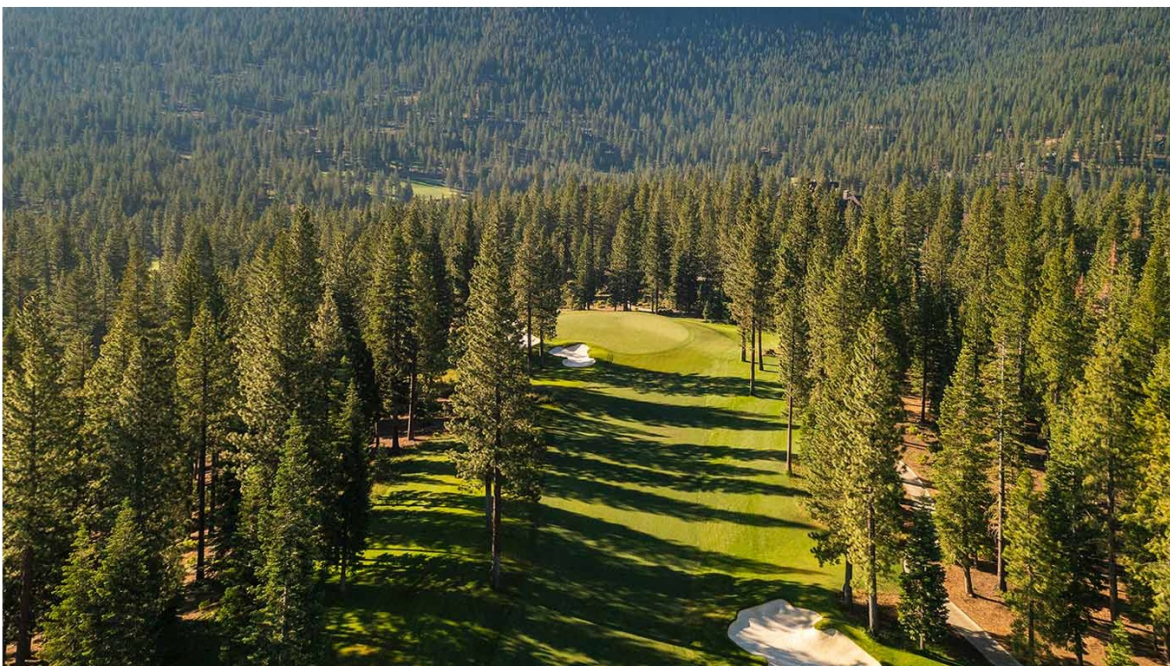
BY: [ART STRICKLIN](#) | AUGUST 25, 2023



**T**RUCKEE, Calif. — The 2023 U.S. Senior Amateur — which starts this weekend at [Martis Camp Club](#), tucked in the Sierra Nevada Mountains — should provide lots of on-course drama, but the scenery here is already plenty dramatic as is.

Combine marvelous mountain views, Tom Fazio’s design artistry, championship pedigree as the site of Scottie Scheffler’s Junior Amateur victory — not to mention the looming 50,000-square-foot clubhouse — and you have a recipe for a special week at the 55-and-over competition.

“Great clubs give back and great clubs host great events,” said Gus Jones, the former head golf professional, now COO of Martis Camp. “The clubs we consider in our peer group host USGA Championships and we want to do the same here. I think anybody can learn from the way the seniors manage their game and play to their strengths.”



The Martis Camp Club plays at an altitude of 6,000 feet.

**COURTESY**

Georgia's Rusty Strawn will be back to defend his title won last year at [The Kittansett Club](#) in Marion, Mass., but he'll face a totally different course challenge with players battling the par-72 layout, which will play from 7,400 yards at an altitude of 6,000 feet.

The course's opening was delayed to June, as it tried to dig out of a record snow fall.

"We're about a month behind where we want to be because of the snow. It was almost just too much, but the USGA saw what we did with the Junior Amateur (in 2013) when Scottie won here and they know we don't need to do much," said superintendent and course manager Scott Bower. "We'll grow the rough to four to six inches in places, and the seniors will find out what the juniors did. This is a great place for match play.

"We have a lot of flexibility to change the tee boxes, plus Fazio offers you a bailout area on most greens, and there is a lot of risk/reward on these holes."

Like the par-4 13th. The hole plays 461 yards from the championship tees, which will be used most of the time. But it can, and might, be moved up nearly 100 yards to encourage the field to drive over a large boulder-strewn ravine and go for the green.

The tournament starts on Saturday, and after two days of stroke play, the field of 156 (which this year includes Martis Camp member Mark Sear) will be cut down to 64 for four days of match play.



Tom Fazio designed the Martis Camp Club.

“While Martis Camp is a spectacularly beautiful golf course, it challenges the golfer with very subtle breaks and slopes on the greens and fairways,” Sear said. “Course knowledge is paramount and thus my home-court advantage is significant, especially under USGA conditions.”

Former U.S. Amateur champion [Ricky Barnes](#) is also a Martis Camp member, but is neither a senior nor an amateur, but he still may be on hand to watch the action.

“I think the last five holes are some of the most dramatic on the course,” said Brian Hull, who serves as the broker/president for the Martis Camp realty company. “You have a drivable par-4, a long par-5 that can be reached in two, a short par-3 which slopes off on all sides and a great closing par-4 with huge bunkers which ends at the base of the clubhouse.”

Having both the U.S. Junior and Senior Amateur on the same course is a rarity, but Jones said it is a tribute to the architect and the mountain canvas.

“I think it speaks to the quality of a Fazio design,” he said. “He does a lot of really good members courses, then with a few tweaks you can host a national championship. We couldn’t do a U.S. Amateur or a U.S. Open because we don’t have room for all the other things, but this is right in our wheelhouse.”

When Martis Camp isn't hosting elite amateur events, it's a year-round luxe getaway in the Tahoe area. The original 600-plus lots have long been sold and there is a long waiting list for a golf membership. Resale home prices start at \$4 million on the low end and range dramatically upward for the family-friendly sun, snow, ski and golf destination.

“We know a large number of members don't play golf and don't really have an interest in it, but are here for the family friendly activities,” Hull said. “But to have the USGA here for a national championship and represent all that is good about golf is something everyone can embrace.”