Desert Horizon Country Club's renovations aim to appeal to active lifestyle community

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When Paula Manoski moved to Desert Horizons Country Club in Indian Wells in 2017, there was one feature of the club she didn't love.

"Clearly, the clubhouse was not the reason you bought here," Manoski said. "The aging structure is not the reason you bought here. Now I think when people are coming in, the building, the clubhouse, the pickleball, everything is selling Desert Horizons."

Manoski, now the president of the board of directors at Desert Horizons, said she is pleased with the renovations of the clubhouse, which was original to the club more than four decades ago. Interior changes, the moving of locker rooms and the pro shop and the construction of a new second floor were all part of the renovation overseen by Irvine-based design firm Melzer Deckert and Ruder Architects.

"For me personally, I have been involved with the long-range planning and I've been on the board and been on the renewal committee," Manoski said. "I pretty much saw the initial plans, the drawings, I saw fabric swatches. When I walked in and it was done, I had tears in my eyes. It was almost beyond expectations. It was so beautiful."

Plans for the renovation began in 2022, when a temporary pro shop was in place. The split-level clubhouse was 32,000 square feet, but the plan was for most of the building to remain the same size. Changes inside included removing walls to allow for brighter areas in the entry to the club that would extend to the back of the building.

Inside the dining room, a new bar was built for both indoor and outdoor service. A balcony near the outdoor component of the bar overlooks the ninth and 10th holes of the golf course and also allows access to two large bocce courts.

The interior also now includes a wellness spa, a card room where the old pro shop was located, a new pro shop where part of the men's locker room was and other smaller changes.

Now and the future

The biggest change is the addition of 8,380 square feet as a second floor. That area is the new fitness center, with new exercise equipment, a Pilates room and a group exercise room that looks out to the golf course.

Another 9,470 square feet was added by enclosing the old lounge patio for the event room and private dining room.

Manoski said there were two main reasons for the renovations, which came a few years after the club had brought in local architect Clive Clark to make changes to the golf course. The first, simply, was about age.

"You look at your own house, a 45-year old house. There are certainly things that need to be taken care of," she said. "I think looking toward the future, we really needed to make it relevant for the new buyer coming it. There are so many places with the aging infrastructure, and for us to keep pace, we absolutely had to do the renovation to meet the desires of the new buyers coming in and to keep the relevance of Desert Horizons."

While future members are an important consideration, current members need to be a focus as well. While the renovations and the funding were approved by a 58 percent yes

vote, Manoski said, the current members will see the importance of the changes in the coming months.

“We need to go from a golf community to an active lifestyle community,” Manoski said. “We want to make sure that we deliver against that active lifestyle. So you see the gym, you look at the pickleball courts, you see the popularity of pickleball, and just making sure that we have a socializing facility around here."

As for branding of the club, the board and members of the club have settled on the idea of Desert Modern Cool as a phrase that encapsulates the club.

“There are elements of mid-century here, there are elements of modern,” Manoski said. “But we call it Desert Modern Cool. That’s who we are.”