

the music man

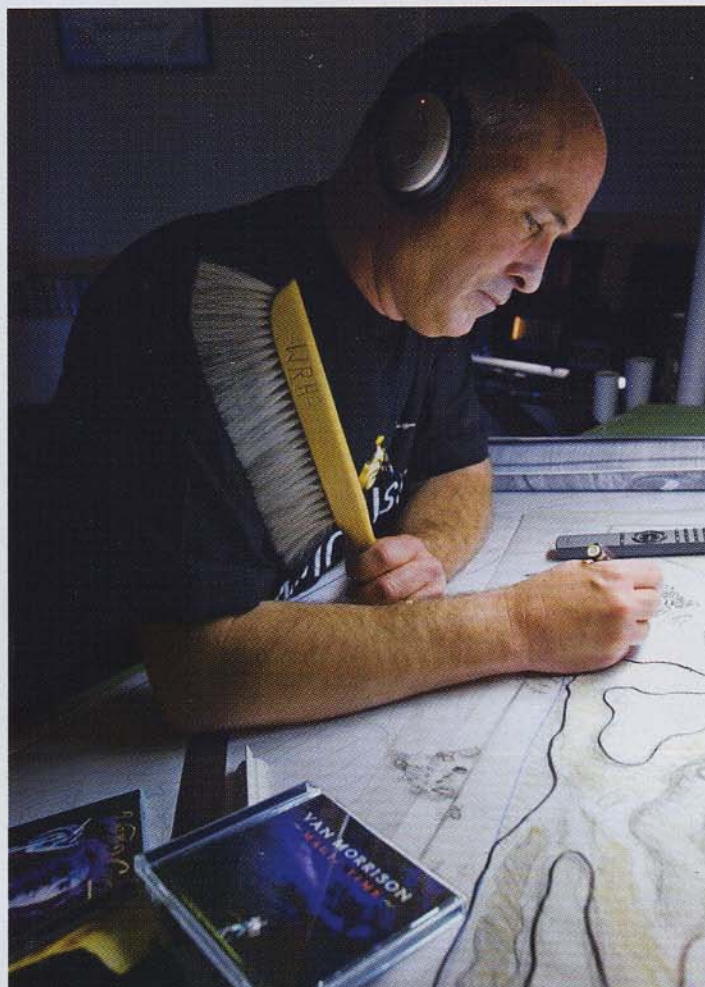
award-winning golf architect jim engh
on the tunes that inspire his designs

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THE MINUTE JIM ENGH cashed his first paycheck as a solo golf course architect in 1991, he bought himself a present. It was a Bang & Olufsen Beo System 2500, a high-end stereo that set him back \$3,500. The reason for the purchase was simple. Some golf architects look to Alistair Mackenzie or Donald Ross for inspiration, but music is the muse for Engh. "I don't think I'd be able to work without it," he says. "It's the stimulus of the creative process for me, getting in there and listening to somebody pour their heart out."

Since his first commission, Dragon Hills in Thailand, Engh has designed 18 courses worldwide and has won numerous awards, including Golf Digest's Architect of the Year in 2003. This year's highest-profile Engh layout is The Creek Club, the fifth and only private course at Reynolds Plantation in Georgia.

Although he enjoys many types of music, there's one artist who sends Engh, 48, into the mystic: Van Morrison. The unwavering thing about the Belfast-born belter is his passion, Engh says. "He's so



inspirational. Everything he does is straight from his heart and his soul. He's never compromised that."

Engh got hooked on Morrison as he was getting started in course design. "It was 1987 in London, and the album 'Poetic Champions Compose' came out, and I played it over and over," he recalls. "That inspired me to go out and buy everything he did."

Engh's Morrison collection numbers 63 CDs, and he attends two or three live performances a year. He figures he has been to 16 Van Morrison concerts.

The main stage Engh uses for listening to Morrison, though, is a small room in the basement of his Parker, Colo., house that he calls

Days like this:
Jim Engh at work
in his "Dungeon."

"the Dungeon." This 14-by-20-foot space looks out on the 14th hole of Pradera, an Engh course. When Engh does his creative work, usually 8:30 p.m. to 3 in the morning, there's nothing but blackness outside. Inside, the room thrums with the sound from his 300 CDs, tapes and albums that range from Bruce Springsteen to Eva Cassidy to Irish bar tunes.

"That's my time," says Engh, a North Dakota native who carries a 2.6 Index. "I'll go down and put the tunes on. It just frees my mind, and you kind of absorb it. It's like Kevin Costner said in 'For Love of the Game': You have to 'engage the mechanism.' I engage the mechanism as soon as I get into the tunes. I block out everything."

Not that it *always* works. "Worst-case scenario, I get to sit and listen to some tunes by myself for a while," Engh says, smiling as he reaches for another disc. 🐾

JIM ENGH'S TOP-10 VAN MORRISON CDS:

- 1 Back on Top (1999)
- 2 The Skiffle Sessions (2000)
- 3 Astral Weeks (1968)
- 4 Enlightenment (1990)
- 5 Too Long in Exile (1993)
- 6 It's Too Late to Stop Now (1974)
- 7 Moondance (1970)
- 8 Poetic Champions Compose (1987)
- 9 The Philosopher's Stone (1998)
- 10 Into the Music (1979)