



Matt Owen
Corporate Director of Public Relations
Salamander Hotels & Resorts
(M) 843-991-0213
mowen@salamanderhotels.com

Ramona Hurley
Public Relations Manager
Innisbrook Resort
(M) 727.967.2487
hurleyramona@gmail.com

Copperhead photos available here: (short registration required):
<http://press.salamanderhospitality.com/innisbrook-resort/image-gallery?id=5022b9c229371a0e6b00001e>

Salamander Hotels & Resorts announces enhancements to the famed Copperhead Course at Innisbrook Resort

*Restorative improvements at the site of the Valspar Championship will honor the guiding principles of Course Architect Larry Packard
Innisbrook Resort's three other layouts headlined by the highly regarded Island Course*

PALM HARBOR, FL (March 12, 2015) – Salamander Hotels & Resorts today announced comprehensive enhancements to its famed Copperhead Course at Innisbrook Resort that will honor the guiding principles of legendary Course Architect Larry Packard.

The six-month restorative work will take place from May through October this year and includes replacing all fairways and rough, rebuilding each green, and reshaping bunkers to stay true to Packard's masterful design. The announcement was made on the first day of the 2015 Valspar Championship presented by BB&T, an official PGA TOUR event, which is held annually at Copperhead. The tree-lined layout features rolling terrain and is rated by many professionals as one of the finest courses they play.

"Our vision is to respect and protect the vision of Larry Packard and his signature design, and continue to elevate the golf experience for our guests, members, partners and playing professionals," said Sheila C. Johnson, Founder & CEO of Salamander Hotels & Resorts, and owner of Innisbrook. "Our exciting restoration will accomplish this goal in an environmentally sensitive fashion and help maintain Innisbrook's reputation as a one of America's top golf destinations for years to come."

Copperhead has hosted a professional golf tournament for the past 25 years and is home to the Snake Pit, which is one of the toughest closing stretches of holes in golf. It opened in 1972 and is one of four layouts at the resort designed by Packard, who passed away last year at the age of 101. An architect of over 600 courses, Packard lived at Innisbrook for more than 40 years while the resort's steakhouse even bears his name. Innisbrook's three other Packard-designed courses: Island, North and South will allow the resort to continue to provide excellent alternatives for its members, groups and guests. In fact, many local residents rank Island as their favorite Innisbrook course and it is often played by professionals tuning up for the Valspar Championship.

"I've always enjoyed playing The Copperhead," said Luke Donald, who won at Innisbrook in 2012. "It is one of my favorite weeks of the year. I'm very glad to hear that Innisbrook is doing so much to make sure that it remains a great test of golf for years to come."

"As players, you judge a tournament by the course, by the facilities and by the people involved," said Stewart Cink, the 2009 Open Championship winner. "The Copperhead is very well-designed. There is a resistance to low scoring, but it is very fair. The course is in great shape with pure greens and uniform fairways. It makes for great golf and with this news, it sounds like Valspar and Innisbrook are doing their part to make sure it stays that way for years to come."

As part of the plan to faithfully restore the intent and characteristics of Packard's timeless design, Wadsworth Golf Construction Company – which was the original course builder – has been engaged to oversee the project work. Each green will be rebuilt to United States Golf Association specifications with TifEagle Bermuda grass, while several will be restored to their original size to allow for additional pin placements. Fairways will be replaced with Celebration Bermuda grass and a number of viewing areas around the greens will be modified to allow for larger tournament galleries in the future.

"This makes a significant statement by Salamander and Sheila Johnson to elevate this event for the Tampa Bay area, and is an important step toward ensuring our long-term commitment to this great event," said Gary Hendrickson, Chairman and CEO of The Valspar Corporation.

The restorative project will also include the reshaping and rebuilding of Copperhead's strategically placed bunkers. All tee boxes will be rebuilt and laser leveled, several will be expanded, and the forward tee length will be shortened to enhance the experience for junior, senior and women golfers. The length of the course for tour professionals, however, will remain at a challenging 7,340 yards.

"The Copperhead Course is a jewel on the schedule and this restoration will only enhance its standing among our players," said Andy Pazder, Executive Vice President and Chief of Operations for the PGA TOUR.

In the spirit of recent sustainability initiatives by the United States Golf Association and the PGA of America, a new state-of-the-art irrigation system will be installed that will save 11 million gallons of water per year – enough to fill 1,100 Olympic-sized swimming pools. Prior to this year's Valspar Championship, Salamander also added new sand to Copperhead's bunkers, extended a number of tee boxes, and conducted multiple course aerifications and fertilizer applications.

Innisbrook is located at 36750 U.S. Highway 19 North, Innisbrook, FL 34684. For more information, visit at www.VisitInnisbrook.com or call (727) 942-2000.

About Innisbrook, a Salamander Golf & Spa Resort

Operated by Salamander Hotels & Resorts and owned by Sheila C. Johnson, Innisbrook is situated on 900 wooded acres of rolling hills in the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area on Florida's Gulf Coast, and is located just 30 minutes from Tampa International Airport. The resort features 72 holes of championship golf, 550 spacious guest suites and rooms, four restaurants and three bars, the Innisbrook Golf Academy, 11 tennis courts, the luxury Indaba Spa with 12 treatment rooms and state-of-the-art Fitness Center, six heated swimming pool complexes, a nature preserve, and three conference halls with 100,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor meeting space. Part of Salamander's [Grand Golf Resorts of Florida](#) portfolio, Innisbrook hosts the annual Valspar Championship presented by BB&T at its famed Copperhead Course. For additional information call 727.942.2000 or visit www.innisbrookgolfresort.com.

About Salamander Hotels & Resorts

Salamander Hotels & Resorts is a privately owned and operated company based in Middleburg, VA, just outside Washington, D.C. Founded by entrepreneur [Sheila C. Johnson](#) in 2005, the company has a portfolio that features a collection of three stellar Florida golf resorts including [Innisbrook Resort](#) near Tampa, [Reunion Resort](#) in Orlando and [Hammock Beach Resort](#) in Palm Coast; the luxurious [Salamander Resort & Spa](#) in Middleburg, a 340-acre equestrian-inspired property near Washington, D.C.; the development and management of [The Henderson](#), a 171-room beachfront resort in Destin, FL; and the new [Tryon Resort](#) in Tryon, NC. For additional information, call (540) 687-3710 or visit www.salamanderhotels.com.