

Island Girl

Dana Schmid Helps Bring the Game of Golf to Anguilla
By Tim Cotroneo



Dana Schmid on Temenos' picturesque 10th hole.

For many, the idea of living on an island in the Caribbean is only a dream. When Kingwood, TX, native Dana Schmid was presented with the opportunity to live and work on one of the most beautiful islands on the planet, she didn't hesitate.

Today, Schmid is the General Manager of the Greg Norman designed Temenos Golf Course on the tiny island of Anguilla. Located northeast of the Virgin Islands, Anguilla is just three miles wide and 16 miles long. The island is renowned for its 33 talcum white beaches and the surrounding ultra blue Caribbean Sea. Schmid is well aware that she's been blessed with the dual pleasure of working in a sport she loves and living amidst the splendor of a breathtaking locale.

The seed of Schmid living the island life was planted in 2005. At that time, she was working as the Director of Golf at the Westin Diplomat Resort in Hollywood, FL, while Greg Norman and Flag Luxury Properties were breaking ground on Temenos. Schmid received a call inquiring if she was interested in becoming Temenos Golf Course's first employee. This former TCU collegiate made the move to becoming an island girl.

Schmid made a surprising discovery prior to the Temenos opening in 2006. Many of the native Anguillan employees had barely heard of golf prior to securing jobs at Temenos. “Cricket and boat racing are the big sports here. About a week after our initial training, I had two employees say they watched golf on television for the very first time. That conversation felt like a milestone. Every day we try to build and promote the sport of golf here on the island,” Schmid said.



Temenos, Anguilla’s first golf course, was designed by Greg Norman

The Anguillan people aren’t the only ones who are learning. For Schmid, the hardest part of life on Anguilla is getting used to the relaxed pace. “Phone service didn’t arrive in Anguilla until the mid 70s. Even today, phone lines are shared. That means a credit card purchase at a store can take up to 10 minutes. Also, when golf merchandise needs to be shipped, it’s going to take six to eight weeks, rather than one or two. The main adjustment for me is people rarely show up on

time. With any of our events, we can count on people arriving an hour later than what we've scheduled. That's just life living on island time," Schmid explained.

Adjust also carries over to one's life at home. Native residents and non-belongers like Schmid live without some of the luxuries taken for granted at nearby resorts and hotels. "The home that my boyfriend Brian and I share has a cistern. This tank channels rainwater at our home that we use for showering. It's actually a big deal for us when it rains in Anguilla. It's not only good for the golf course; it also means that our cisterns won't run dry. We have to be careful not to show too much excitement about the rain to vacationers. Tourists are here for our year-round sunshine, and rain is the last thing they want to experience," Schmid said.



Bankie Banx, Jimmy Buffett, and Dana Schmid prior to a concert at the Dune Preserve.

When she's not working, Schmid finds time to do what Anguillans call "limin." This is the native term for relaxing or taking it easy under the shade of a lime tree. One of Schmid's favorite escapes is a rustic beach bar on Rendezvous Bay. MSNBC has called Bankie Banx Dune Preserve the Caribbean's "most artistically eclectic beach bar." "At first, Bankie (Anguilla's most acclaimed reggae singer) was opposed to the building of Temenos. Now he considers us to be friends. I love going to his beach bar, relaxing, and having a drink while listening to his music. Afterward we can take a dip or even snorkel in the Sea," Schmid said.

Schmid's fondness for the Sea, or any body of water, can be traced all the way back to her childhood. "Growing up in Texas, I loved to swim, fish, ski, or go boating. Now I'm fortunate to live in a place where I can see the ocean and hear the waves from almost every vantage point," Schmid said. Ironically, water also played an important part in Schmid's early development as a golfer.

The 1996 TCU grad believes her defining moment probably occurred when she was eight years old. "My Dad and brothers were all avid golfers, so naturally I wanted to go golfing too. My brothers weren't enthusiastic about having their little sister tag along, but one day Dad let me join them. On a par three hole over the water, they let me hit an old golf ball. My shot landed two feet from the hole. I made the putt for a birdie. I didn't realize it at the time, but I guess I was up for the challenge," Schmid recalled.

Challenge in sports, career, or life is rarely something from which Schmid backs away. While many people dream of life in the Caribbean, few actually take the leap. Schmid has an interesting take on what brought her to Anguilla. "I always knew I could come back to Texas. Deep down, Texas is home. But if I didn't take this chance, maybe I would be missing something," Schmid said.

What Schmid is not missing today is a work environment that is short on stimulation. Schmid is thankful for her Caribbean career move each time she gazes at the turquoise Sea, breathes the fresh Anguillan air, and hears the soothing ocean waves. For this island girl, there is nothing quite like *limin* in paradise.

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