

## The Miura Experience: Part I

By Michael Williams

A number of weeks ago I wrote about Miura, the legendary Japanese club manufacturer with the almost mythical reputation for quality. Miura clubs are recognized for their aesthetic beauty, with pure, flowing lines that evoke the classic shapes of the blades that the all-time greats rode to victory. Miura also offers several sets of irons that incorporate the latest technologies, using perimeter weighting and other techniques to create a superb game improvement clubs. But whether you go neo- or retro-, the combination of look, feel and personal club fitting combine to create what is rightfully known as the Miura Experience. Starting today, I will be writing a series of articles in this space describing that experience...and it is indeed an experience.

Miura clubs are sold only through authorized dealers, and there only a handful of them in the world. The company is not interested in marketing their product through the “big box” retailers that dominate equipment sales in the U.S. Frankly, it would be impossible for me to imagine the finest clubs in the world sitting under fluorescent lights next to the Bugs Bunny head covers.

I began the experience with the appropriately named Mike Fixx, the authorized club fitting specialist for Miura in the Washington DC area. With a background in engineering and an appreciation for fine art, Fixx is the quintessential Miura spokesman. The fitting begins at the golf course, with the pre-requisite stretching followed by Fixx and a teaching professional observing me taking some swings with my current irons. There is one more participant observing me; the Trackman. Not to be confused with the typical video instruction system or launch monitor that can be found at most golf facilities these days, Trackman is a sophisticated radar system that tracks every conceivable part of the swing. Ball speed and spin rate, launch angle, even a computer simulation of how the club head impacts the ball are presented to the user for analysis. Using this information, Fixx begins to suggest club head and shaft options. We began with the CB-301, the newest club head from Miura that combines their meticulous hand-forging process with a cavity back, perimeter weighted shaped that promises a more forgiving club for the amateur player. In a very gradual and methodical way, way went through at least 10 different shaft and head combinations. While this process is something that you could theoretically do at a number of facilities, the knowledge and understanding of both the equipment and the swing that the Miura people bring to the table is exceptional. Fixx uses both the flight of the ball along with the raw data from the Trackman to isolate patterns and tendencies, and he has an almost psychic ability to sort out the origins of a particular occurrence, be it positive or negative. This is key, because so many club fitters are strong in one area or another; Fixx is top-notch in both.

Of course it helps that he has the best golf club head in the world to offer. And eventually, we settled on the right club head for me; the classic muscle back forged blade that is the hallmark of Miura. The club is a stunningly beautiful work. Its lines are pure, and almost intimidating. From the time we are born into golf, we are told that the forged blade is more unforgiving than a wife whose anniversary has been forgotten. And with a game that is difficult for us even in the best of times, the last thing that we need is a club that shines a spotlight on our flaws rather than covers them up. But when Fixx put the blade in

my hand with the shaft that he thought best for me, I was quickly seduced by the beauty and convinced by the results. I hit half a dozen 7-irons that you could throw a blanket over, and I was at least 10 yards longer than my current club. The biggest revelation? The feel. As Fixx explained, forging in the 21<sup>st</sup> century yields a different product than forging in the last one did. The Miura blade, with its thin top line and minimum of distractions, is delightfully simple to set up. And the feel is something that just cannot be replicated in a cavity back club, even Miura's. When you hit the ball on the sweet spot you feel...nothing. There is just a click and a sensation of swatting a 3 day old marshmallow. And the off-center hit feels like the "dead-center" hit on one of the industry's top game improvement clubs. This is the real Miura Experience; hitting the finest club in the world flush. Once you have that, there is no going back.

With our shaft and club head decided, Fixx and I concluded our consultation with a quick grip fitting. He would order my club heads (my Miura's!) and the fully assembled heads would be ready in about 7 days. I looked at my watch; the process had taken about 2 hours, but I knew for a fact that my golf game would never be the same. I made my way home in thick rush hour traffic, but somehow I didn't mind. I was a Miura man now, and Miura men rise above such petty distractions, don't they?

**In the next episode, the Miura's arrive and I hit my custom fitted set for the first time.**