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Sh Of

Clinton Ang of
CornerStone Wines
turned golf into a
lifelong lesson in family,
business, philanthropy and
purpose.

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By any conventional measure, golf was never in the cards for Clinton Ang.

As a teenager, his world revolved around badminton. He represented Singapore at national level, competed internationally and eventually earned a scholarship to Arizona State University, one of America's most respected athletic institutions.

Golf barely registered on his radar.

"I thought it was just people walking around hitting a little white ball into a hole," he recalls with a laugh.

Yet fate has a way of introducing life's most significant influences long before we recognise their importance.

During his freshman year at Arizona State, Ang attended an introductory golf class for student-athletes. The instructor was a young collegiate golfer named Phil Mickelson, years before he would become one of the most successful and recognisable figures in professional golf.

What Ang remembers most vividly was not the lesson itself, but a single shot.

Mickelson opened the face of a wedge and launched a towering flop shot over a person standing behind him. For a teenager whose sporting world centred on badminton courts, it was a glimpse into a level of creativity and skill he had never associated with golf.

The moment stayed with him, although it would be several more years before golf truly entered his life.

That invitation came from his father.



Recently introduced to the game through membership at Laguna National Golf and Country Club, his father hoped one of his children might join him on the course. Ang's siblings showed little interest, but he immediately understood what the invitation represented.

"Everything I did growing up was somehow connected to my father," he says. "When he asked if I wanted to learn golf, I said yes."

It would prove to be one of the most important decisions of his life.

A GIFT BEYOND THE GAME

When Ang returned to Singapore in 1994, father and son began playing regularly at Laguna National. What started as a shared hobby soon became a treasured ritual.

They walked fairways together, discussing family, business, ambitions and life itself. The golf course became a setting for conversations that might never have happened elsewhere.

Looking back, Ang realises those rounds gave him something far more valuable than a sporting

pastime. They gave him uninterrupted time with his father during a period of life when many parent-child relationships naturally drift apart.

From 1994 until the early 2000s, golf became the thread that connected them.

When his father was later diagnosed with cancer and eventually passed away, Ang came to appreciate just how precious those years had been.

"Golf gave me something priceless," he says. "It gave me time with my father."

That realisation would shape not only his relationship with the game, but also the way he approached philanthropy, leadership and community building.

HONOURING A LEGACY

Following his father's passing, Ang and his family searched for meaningful ways to honour his legacy. Golf provided a natural answer.

At the time, charity golf events were beginning to emerge as an important fundraising platform in Singapore. Ang quickly recognised that they offered more than financial support for worthy causes. They created opportunities to bring people together around a shared purpose.

Through CornerStone Wines, where he would eventually become Managing Director, he encouraged the family to channel part of the company's corporate social responsibility efforts into supporting charity golf.

What began as occasional sponsorships gradually evolved into a major commitment. Today, CornerStone Wines supports approximately 50 charity golf tournaments annually, making it one of the most visible supporters of Singapore's charity golf ecosystem.

Over the years, Ang became known not merely as a sponsor, but as someone constantly searching for new ways to increase engagement and fundraising outcomes.

His "Beat the International Pairs Champion" concept is one such example.

Traditional "Beat the Pro" holes often struggle to generate significant revenue because participants are competing against professionals they barely know. Ang reimagined the format by turning it into a social experience. Instead of a single winner, he secured multiple prizes from sponsors and encouraged entire flights to participate together.

The concept proved highly successful. At the inaugural Diabetes Singapore charity golf event, the challenge raised more than \$10,000 from a single hole. More recently, it generated over \$16,000 for Shine Children and Youth Services.

For Ang, however, the most satisfying outcome was not the money raised but the atmosphere created.

"People were cheering each other on," he says. "It became about the experience rather than the competition."

That emphasis on connection would become one of the defining characteristics of his golfing journey.

THE TEAM BUILDER

Although golf is often described as an individual sport, Ang has always been fascinated by team dynamics.

That interest became particularly evident through his involvement in Singapore's corporate golf leagues.

When engineering giant Boustead approached him after several disappointing seasons in the then Business Times Corporate Golf League, they had a simple objective: become competitive.

Ang's solution was anything but conventional.

Rather than focusing solely on recruiting stronger golfers, he concentrated on strategy, team chemistry and understanding the scoring system itself. He believed many players failed to appreciate how formats such as Stableford and System 36 rewarded calculated risk-taking and disciplined course management.

He educated teammates on when to attack, when to play conservatively and how to think strategically across an entire round rather than one shot at a time. Most importantly, he focused on building a culture.

"People think golf is an individual game," he says. "But in team golf, your responsibility is to help your teammates succeed." The results were immediate.

After he joined Team Boustead, they evolved from a social team into two-time Business Times Corporate Golf League champions.

This turnaround was driven by sheer determination, leadership, and team effort.

It was also strikingly similar to the leadership philosophy he would later apply in business.

LESSONS BEYOND THE FAIRWAY

One of the earliest lessons Ang received from his father was that golf reveals character. How a person reacts after a poor shot often says more than how





they behave after a good one. Over the years, that observation evolved into a broader philosophy that extended far beyond the course. “You can’t change a bad shot once it’s happened,” he says. “You can only focus on what comes next.”

Golf became a practical framework for dealing with adversity. Every golfer experiences mistakes, bad breaks and disappointments. The challenge is not avoiding them but responding to them. That mindset proved invaluable in business.

Under his leadership, CornerStone Wines has grown substantially beyond the scale of the family business he inherited. While many family-owned enterprises struggle with succession planning and changing market conditions, CornerStone Wines continued expanding.

Even during the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, when many businesses were reducing operations, CornerStone Wines pursued opportunities for growth. Today, the company is entering a new phase focused on regional expansion and acquisitions. “We’re moving from good to great,” says Ang.

It is a goal that reflects the same mindset he brings to golf: accept reality, adapt quickly and keep moving forward.

A FIGHTER’S MENTALITY

If there is one theme that runs consistently through Ang’s story, it is resilience. He is quick to reject any suggestion that his achievements stem from natural athletic gifts. At age 12, a doctor informed him that he had severe flat feet and would likely struggle with sports. Running and jumping, he was told, would be difficult. Ang responded with characteristic determination. “The greatest pleasure in life is doing what

people say you cannot do.”

He went on to represent Singapore, compete internationally and earn a collegiate athletic scholarship in the United States. But the journey was far from easy.

Over the years he endured multiple injuries, including torn plantar fascia, surgeries on both knees and chronic shoulder issues that continue to affect his golf game today. Yet Ang views those setbacks not as limitations but as reminders of the

effort required to achieve anything meaningful. “I was never the most talented athlete,” he says. “I just learned how to fight.”

That mentality earned him a reputation as something of a giant killer in both badminton and golf. He often found ways to defeat players with superior credentials through preparation, strategy and mental resilience. “When you’re not the most talented player, you have to become the smartest.”

Ang expectedly understates his abilities on the course. He is “sneaky long” off the tee, and despite using his go-to Callaway mini driver, his driver carries 240m at least, and has a short game to match. He continues to work on his game diligently with his coach Lip Ooi, looking to improve with each game.

THE PARTNERSHIP THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

That philosophy of constant improvement, and using the brain in addition to the brawn, found its purest expression in the International Pairs competition. Unlike traditional tournaments, success depended not only on individual performance but on trust, communication and partnership. In that, he only had one person in mind – Stephen King, an associate he met during a speaking engagement.

The two had gone on to develop a close friendship through golf and shared an easy chemistry on the course. Ang frequently jokes that he is “a better caddie than a player,” often helping the six-handicapped King with strategy, club selection and course management. Their partnership was built on trust and humour.

If one ignored the other’s advice and paid the price, the penalty was simple: drink a beer and move on. “No blaming. No arguments.” The approach worked.

The pair delivered a remarkable performance at Laguna National Golf Resort Club to win the Singapore title and earn the right to represent the country at the world finals in Tenerife, Spain. There, competing against elite amateur teams from around the globe, Ang witnessed a fascinating contrast.

Many partnerships became tense under pressure. Arguments erupted. Frustration surfaced. Some players visibly unravelled. But the Singapore duo remained relaxed. “We were smiling, laughing and enjoying ourselves.”

Competing with a shoulder injury that forced him to rely heavily on a five-wood off the tee, Ang nevertheless helped steer the pair to an impressive seventh-place finish. The experience reinforced a lesson he had spent decades learning.

Talent matters. Partnership matters. But composure under pressure often makes the difference.

REINVENTING AT 53

In recent years, Ang has undertaken another challenge—his own health. A comprehensive medical assessment in Taiwan revealed several warning signs familiar to many busy executives: elevated body fat, early arterial blockage and fatty liver indicators. Rather than viewing the results with alarm, he treated them as another problem to solve.

Through a disciplined programme focused on hydration, nutrition and weight management, he transformed his health. He lost approximately 10 kilograms, significantly reduced his body-fat percentage and improved a range of medical indicators. Today, at 53, he weighs roughly what he did during his secondary school years. “I feel better now than I have in decades,” he says.

His next objective is building strength and muscle mass, but the broader lesson remains the same. Improvement is always possible when approached with consistency and commitment.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES THROUGH GOLF

These days, Ang’s influence extends beyond competition, business and charity.

As a Leonian ambassador, he has become a connector within Singapore’s golf community, creating networking events that combine golf, hospitality and relationship-building. The objective is simple: bring people together.

Whether through charity tournaments, corporate competitions, customer engagement events or international golf experiences, Ang continues to use the game as a platform for building relationships. That may ultimately be his most significant contribution to the sport.

Not the trophies. Not the titles. Not even the fundraising totals. Rather, it is the communities he has helped create and the relationships he has strengthened along the way.

As he reflects on a journey that began on badminton courts and eventually led to golf courses around the world, Ang remains surprisingly grounded. There are still business ambitions to pursue. Regional expansion is underway, and acquisitions will play an increasingly important role in CornerStone Wines’ future growth.

There are personal goals as well. He jokes that he is still trying to persuade his wife that two more children might not be such a bad idea. Yet his priorities have become increasingly clear – health, family, purpose and relationships.

Today, the game sits at the centre of nearly every important chapter of his life. And for Clinton Ang, golf’s greatest gift is the people who walk the fairways besides him. 🍷