



King of the Court

Bert Myer's love of croquet has taken him around the world.

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Bert Myer '67 fell in love with croquet in 1958 at an annual Labor Day backyard croquet tournament in Marblehead, Massachusetts. The game looks deceptively simple — use a wooden mallet to whack a ball through a series of metal hoops, better known as wickets. But even though he was 14, Myer saw the endless possibilities inherent in the game.

Almost six decades later, croquet still captures his imagination. “What makes this game fascinating and

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keeps me at it is the strategy,” Myer says. “It’s a difficult game to learn, and to play well.”

Croquet games come in many varieties; Myer’s game of choice is American six-wicket croquet, in which players must knock their ball through

a series of tall, narrow, cast-iron wickets in a circuitous path around the court. Myer’s own life has followed a similar path. At UNH, he majored in English with a minor in creative writing. That set him up for a distinguished career in marketing, first with Polaroid and later with his own business. But it’s croquet that’s guided the course of his life, ever since that fateful summer day in 1958.

“Since my wife, Ann (Ward) Myer ’67 and I discovered this game, it’s been our lives,” he says.

The Myers turned to American six-wicket croquet in the early 1980s. Myer had learned about a long-standing yearly match between Harvard and Yale. He and Ann drove to Cambridge to check it out and were surprised to see the contest—more formal and more complex than a typical backyard game — get coverage on three Boston TV stations.

“It was a whole new dimension to the game. I said, ‘We’ve got to get into this,’” he recalls.

He did, wholeheartedly. Myer joined the U.S. Croquet Association (USCA) in 1982 and became deeply involved in the organization, serving on committees, hosting demonstrations and serving as an unofficial ambassador for the game. Through the 1990s, he put his marketing skills to use for the USCA as the creator, editor and principal photographer behind Croquet Annual, a lavishly illustrated coffee-table style magazine that showcased the

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athletics and art behind croquet, as well as the sport's social side. He also edited the organization's bi-monthly newsletter. Last year, he was inducted into the USCA Hall of Fame, a fitting capstone to his long and distinguished career.

“Every game is different. I've played thousands of games, and none of them are the same.”

Myer is modest about his own skills on the court. “I'm a good player, but I'm not one of the best,” he says. But he loves the boundless opportunities the game presents. He's played on courts around the world, from Arizona all the way to New Zealand, where games go on for so long it's not

uncommon to pause the action and take a lunch break. In the late 1980s, he traveled the country with his croquet partner Dave Hull, and the pair won the New England regional doubles championship three years in a row. Around the same time, Myer built a regulation-sized court at his home in Hampstead — complete with a courtside phone so he could talk to his marketing clients between matches.

“Dave used to come up to my house and bring a friend of his, and we'd play all day and into the night — we wouldn't even stop for cocktails,” he says.

Myer and his wife moved from Hampstead to Stratham four years ago, and now he plays on a lilac-lined backyard court in Rye with the members of the Strawberry Banke Croquet Club. He hits the court in his croquet whites most mornings around 9 a.m., eager to set up shots and solve the puzzles each new game presents.

“Every game is different,” he says. “I've played thousands of games, and none of them are the same.” It's another way that Myer's life is like the game he loves — wholly, colorfully unique.

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