

Marty Jertson makes his living designing golf clubs for PING. But next week, his work is taking on a slightly different, if not exciting, twist. Jertson has earned a chance to prove his expertise as a golfer on the PGA Tour with the clubs he designed from start-to-finish – PING's new Anser forged irons. On Tuesday, the Phoenix resident qualified for the Justin Timberlake Shriners Hospitals for Children Open in Las Vegas.

"I set a goal this year to play in a PGA Tour event," said Jertson, a native of Globe, Arizona, who played collegiate golf at Colorado School of Mines (Division II). "I'm really looking forward to it. Usually when I attend a tour event, I'm there to work with our staff on new equipment. For one week, I'll be inside the ropes. It will be a great experience."

The opportunity to compete in a PGA Tour event is the second significant golf accomplishment in the last month for Jertson. In September, he won the Southwest Section Professional Championships, which qualified him for next year's PGA National Club Pro Championships. The top 20 finishers in that event are eligible for the PGA Championship at Atlanta Athletic Club – the year's final major.

If his playing skills are as successful as his engineering ability, he might have some interesting choices sometime down the road. If an opportunity presented itself to play the Tour on a full time basis, it would be one of the more usual roads that lead to it.

Jertson, 30, began his career at PING as an intern in the company's manufacturing engineering group. A year later, he was hired full time as a design engineer. He applies his engineering expertise to every component of the golf club – head, shaft and grip. Over his seven-year career, he's led the development of numerous products, including the i15 metal woods series. He's designed drivers, fairway woods, hybrids, irons, wedges and putters. Most recently, he created the Anser iron, PING's first forged iron in more than 40 years. It combines 8620 steel with a tungsten sole weight to deliver a forged feel with forgiveness and workability.

In 2007, Jertson became a member of the PGA of America to better understand the golf industry. According to Jertson, the training required to achieve Class A status has been extremely beneficial in his job designing golf clubs. As a member, he's also eligible to participate in PGA Section tournaments, which allows him to keep his game sharp.

"Understanding every aspect of the golf industry makes me smarter as an engineer," said Jertson. "Besides the physics of a golf club, I need to understand industry trends, club fitting, consumer insights and the business of golf. I'm proud to have achieved Class A status. It's been a great experience and it allows me to continue my playing career."

For now, Jertson has no plans to give up his day job. "I'm very fortunate to have a job that lets me apply my skills as an engineer to a game that's been such a big part of my life," he said. "Next week in Las Vegas will be an amazing experience, and one I've dreamed of for a very long time. Hopefully, something incredible will happen, but if not, I'll be back at my computer the following week continuing PING's goal of making the best equipment in the world." If you miss seeing Jertson in action next week in Las Vegas, you can get close to his handiwork on November 1st, when the Anser irons ship to retailers.