From scenery to grasses, book chronicles courses
Vermont, New Hampshire courses detailed

BY VERN PUTNEY

Bob Labbance and David Cornell mainly are in the food service business. However, to serve up in short order for keen playing appetites far-spanned golf courses in Vermont and New Hampshire, they undertook Cook's Tours that consumed eight summers of Monday strolls. The fruit of their two-state wander- othon is detailed in two books.


It is of little use for the course superintendent to groom a course beautifully, only to have the starved-for-action playing public drive aimlessly around the countryside trying to find links nestled in scenic, hideaway spots.

That was precisely the problem Vermont residents Labbance and Cornell encountered when in 1980 they renewed their college ties (Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, Class of '74) and hit upon golf as their recreational link.

Tremendous void

They found guides on almost every social or sporting activity in the Green Mountain State. Golf courses, however, were conspicuous by their absence.

Six years, 7,500 miles of travel and 54 courses later, Vermont courses and locations had been charted in painstaking detail. The pair plunged into New Hampshire the next summer and, at 3:35 p.m. Monday, Sept. 26, 1988, at Amherst Country Club, completed their 72nd public golf course round—and blanketed their second state.

Total golf holes for the two states was more than 1,700.

"Two Down and One To Go" is their original travel battle cry, but they often had more than a few on their mind during their arduous tour of New England's golf courses.

Grueling schedule

Labbance and Cornell walked every Vermont course and never took a golf car, even when playing 36 holes three days in a row. They placed a high priority on sightseeing and amateur photography. On this tour, the pair beat the heat by staying in friendly college dormitories.

An ordinary day would begin at 7 in the morning and end at mid-evening. Both also write for The Valley News, a Vermont newspaper.

"In every, every, every state we've been to, we've been to at least one college course," said Labbance, who was recruited to rail on his style of play. "We've seen some awfully bad courses in the states, but we've also seen some fantastic ones."

"The trick is to be able to find them. We try to find the best courses in each state, but we're not always successful," said Cornell, who has a passion for the game as well. "But we're always happy to find a good course that we've never played before."

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Photo by Stephanie Wolff/Valley News

Bob Labbance, left, and David Cornell ready for yet another round of golf in their whirlwind tour.

Law School. Cornell, after culinary school in Paris and years of work in high-priced (and high pressure) restaurants, is the head chef at Dartmouth College's Faculty Club.

Even more than appeal to Vermont palates to whom they cater has been their sparkling service to the golf industry in two states.

Instead of frustrating turns and twists and frequent tidying of in travel towels, golfers armed with these informative books can make a bee line for the first tee.

It's been worth it, they say, to have endured in one day 100-degree heat, violent thunderstorms and-ravenous mosquitoes.

offsetting traffic jams and driving around in circles looking for courses hidden in trailer parks or buried in residential neighborhoods have been moments of unsurpassed spectacular scenery.

Stirring settings in New Hampshire surely include The Balsams Grand Resort in the White Mountains and Mount Washington. Among the grand views are Waumbek in Jefferson, Mountain View in Whitefield and Profile Club in Franconia.

Barron, Sugarbush and Equinox country clubs are among Vermont scenic standouts. Venturing from Vermont into the Granite State, Labbance and Cornell cite discovery of architectural gems from course designer of the past.

New Hampshire native Ralph Martin Barton's nine-hole Lisbon Village Golf Club may look fat and boring from the road. However, it is challenging, scenic, well designed and exciting to play. Whip-Whoop-Will CC in Hudson is a nine-hole layout for which Manny Francis rates a salute. Francis designs at his Vesper Velvert at nearby Vesper CC, Tngsboro, Mass. The fine-bladed German bentgrass suitable to mid-New England forms a luxurious carpet that puts true and fast, say Labbance and Cornell.

CC in Walpole is an excellent monument to Wayne Stiles and John Van Kleeck. This team from the 1900s blended esthetics with enjoyable golfing.

Pine Meadow in New Hampton is a reminder of another era, when greens weren't green. Play is on oiled, hard-packed sand that looks like wet clay and puts like polished marble.

Under the physiological aspects are addressed in terms of membrane systems, physiological reaction in seeds and seed inhibition.

Grooming schedule

Labbance and Cornell walked every Vermont course and never took a golf car, even when playing 36 holes three days in a row. There was no daylight recession to curtail their golfing because of photographic and recording equipment which had become as much a part of their round as golf clubs.

An ordinary day would begin at 7 in the morning and end at mid-evening.

Both also write for The Valley News, a Vermont daily with a circulation of 20,000.

Labbance used that connection in mid-March to cover the TPC Pro Tour event at Sawgrass, Ponte Vedra, Fla., play the course and donate 4 balls to the feared water-surfaced 145-yard 17th hole.

Cornell also has covered local and national tournaments for the News. On his way south to cover the 1989 Masters, he stopped at the USGA's Golf House library to probe early Maine golf courses.

He also visited the new site of the Kemper Open, the TPC at Avenel, Potomac, Md., to check the maturation of the course with its unique zoysia lawns, and the Friends of Kemper Open, including legendary golf course superintendent Dave Andersen.

(To obtain either book, write to New England Golf Specialists, Box 17, Stockbridge, Vt. 05772.)

CSSA explores seed moisture

The Crop Science Society of America has published "Seed Moisture" in which 13 international experts explore the facets of biological water in general, and seed moisture in particular.

Seed moisture plays a critical role in all aspects of seed science, technology and commercial trade. The underlying physiological aspects are addressed in terms of membrane systems, physiological reaction in seeds and seed inhibition.

A 24-page manual on aeration and overseeding for lawn maintenance professionals is available from the Cushman Division of Outboard Marine Corp.—the first in a series of educational publications the company plans for the lawn-care industry.

Titled "The Dawn of a New Age in Lawn Care," the publication provides a wealth of reference information. It covers topics from the procedures and benefits of precision core aeration to grass selections and techniques for overseeding, lawn renovation and how to profitably price and market aerating and seed renovation services. Methods used by lawn-care experts in various parts of the country are included.

The manual also covers the newest Ryan equipment available for aeration and overseeding, along with an explanation of the research and design ideas that led to the development of this new equipment.

Robert C. Brophy, manager of lawn-care product sales for Cushman, said, "The educational aspect of meeting today's demands for supplemental lawn-care services is important ...and today's equipment must be more efficient and the people who operate it must be more knowledgeable."