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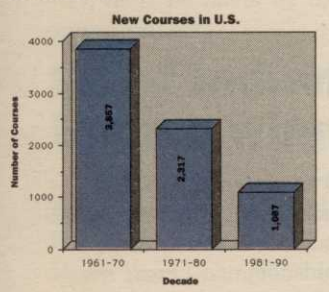

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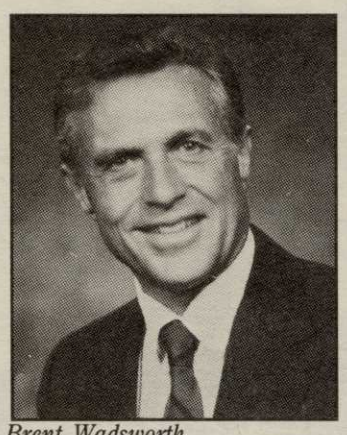
Wadsworth voted No. 1 builder of '89

BY PETER BLAIS

"We've always felt that how well we've done our job depends on how the architects see what we've accomplished. We want to see them get what they want out of their design."

That's how company founder and chairman of the board Brent Wadsworth explains the success of Wadsworth Golf Construction Co., voted 1989 Builder of the Year in *Golf Course News'* survey of architects.



Brent Wadsworth
Voted Best Builder of 1989

Wadsworth received nearly one-fourth of the votes cast, more

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Fazio named top architect of the year

BY PETER BLAIS

This has been a good year for Tom Fazio. But so was last year, and the year before that and the year before that and...

"They all kind of blend together for me," answered the man voted the 1989 Architect of the Year in *Golf Course News* ' first survey of course designers, when asked if this year was special.

"I'm just amazed at the quality of products we (architects)

Tom Fazio
Voted Best Architect of 1989

are able to build today. High quality is what developers and own-

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Subsurface injection project wins raves

BY MARK LESLIE

The success of work on equipment that injects pesticides below the surface of the turf where grubs live should prod researchers to develop a wide range of new products to fight pests.

Ohio State University Professors Harry Niemczyk, an entomologist, and Erdal Ozkan, an agricultural engineer, have completed a season of research on their project and are excited by its prospects.

Niemczyk cited data showing that the "liquid injection subsurface placing system" they are developing can put the product

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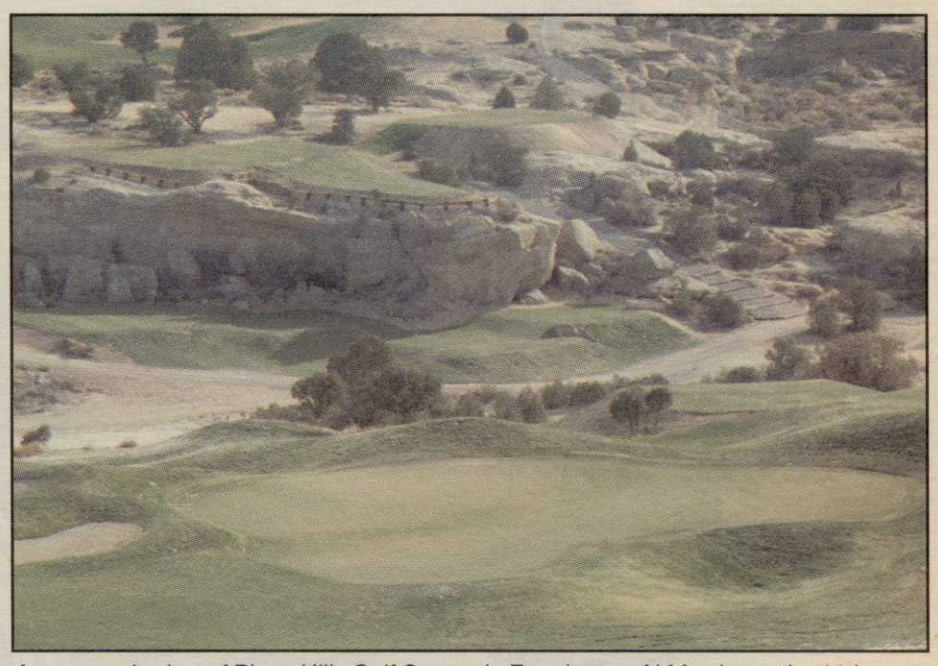

A panoramic view of Pinon Hills Golf Course in Farmington, N.M., shows the 11th green in the foreground and the elevation changes on No. 15 tees in the background. For more information on this course, designed by Finger Dye Spann of Houston , Texas, and others, see pages 10 and 11.

Florida project targets families

BY MARK LESLIE

The family orientation of a proposed golf facility turned it from a loser to a winner in the zoning process and will turn it into a reality this spring in Orlando, Fla.

Golf Unlimited will start construction in January on the Lake Under Hill Golf Center, which will include a fully lighted, nine-hole par 3 course, complete driving range, putting course and miniature golf layout.

But the 26-acre facility was a wipeout in June when heavy opposition from neighbors contributed to an Orange County Commission denial of zoning approval on the grounds the project was too commercial for the mainly residential area.

"We got an extension of the request," said Golf Unlimited's Jack Irwin, "and met with homeowners and told them the facility would enhance, not hurt, their neighborhood. We went back to the commission with neighborhood support and got unanimous (5-0) approval."

The turning point, Irwin believes, came when neighbors realized the project will stress the family.

"We planned it with the family in mind," he said. "Dad can bring the kids out and teach them or let them play miniature golf while he and his wife are playing."

It is a concept Irwin expects to continue working with. He already plans a second family golf center in Orlando and may look for other opportunities working out of his Orlando and Knoxville, Tenn., offices.

The idea of lighting a course has been successful at two facilities in Myrtle Beach, N.C., and another in Daytona, Fla.

But the Orlando project is believed the first with its particular amenities.

"We'll give the average player — who can't afford to belong to a country club and works all day — and the beginner a chance to play in the winter and summer. It will be great for seniors," Irwin said.

The longest of the nine holes will be 160 yards, and Irwin said: "The lights will be very high-quality; you'll be able to follow the flight of the ball all the way. It will be a first-class course with wall-to-wall irrigation...

Continued on page 8

Wadsworth

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than doubling their closest competition — Golf Course Consultants and Landscapes Unlimited.

Getting the job done right and on time was mentioned again and again by architects selecting Wadsworth.

"I've done a number of courses with them and they've been the best to work with," said Gary A. Panks of Graham/Panks International, who most recently worked with Wadsworth on Sedona Golf Resort in Arizona, which opened in October 1988. "They have a reputation for doing things right. And when there's a problem, they get in quickly and make it right."

"They just do a super job and are a pleasure to work with. They're the kind of company that gets in and gets the job done with very few problems. That's very important to an architect," added Thomas E. Clark of Ault, Clark & Associates, Ltd. The Wheaton, Md., firm designed Wadsworth-built Emerald River Country Club in Laughlin, Nev., scheduled to open this month.

Wadsworth and current vice chairman of the board John Cotter started the company as a two-man operation in 1958 in Plainfield, Ill. The firm did one or two courses annually in those early years.

"Things really took off in the late 1960s and early 1970s when the golf boom started," said Paul Eldredge, president of the Midwest office. "We moved into Florida in the late 1960s, did Innisbrook GC in Tarpon Springs and opened an office in Oldsmar."

Construction slowed during the recession of the late 1970s. Wadsworth expanded into the Southwest in search of new jobs, opening a third office in Buckeye, Ariz., just outside Phoenix four years ago.

Wadsworth has kept pace with the latest boom. The company is building between 15 and 20 courses a year. It has grown to about 200 full-time employees. Annual revenues run from $40 million to $50 million.

Wadsworth has done several courses in Hawaii and will soon open a Pacific office there. That would seem a natural jumping-off spot for getting into the lucrative Japanese market. But that isn't in the cards, according to the company chairman.

"We've done some work in Australia, but we don't have any big plans beyond the United States," said Wadsworth. "It's easier for an architect who can just take his pencil and go to another country. We have all our own equipment, facilities and manpower right there. Moving that stuff overseas creates all sorts of problems."

The 60-year-old founder has seen a number of changes in his 30-plus years in the business.

"The biggest thing is the cost of building a course," he said. "It's 1,000 percent more than it was when we started. We used to be able to build a nice course for $200,000. Today you start at $2 million and go up from there."

Automatic irrigation systems, fairway watering, a variety of grass types, sodding and extra features like stone walls, elaborate bridges, lake edging and drainage structures were rarely used options that have become standard equip-

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Wadsworth

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ment on today's courses, according to Wadsworth.

"The other major difference is the number of courses being built," he said.

"You could almost count the number of new courses on two hands in the mid-1950s. Now you've got well over 200 courses a year in this country and we've been as high as 350. We've tried to keep pace with that increase."

Among the courses Wadsworth has worked on this year are Tom Fazio's Shadow Creek in Las Vegas; Michael Hurdzan's Cobblestone Creek in Rochester, N.Y.; Arthur Hills' Green Ridge Country Club in Grand Rapids, Mich.; Jack Nicklaus' Kiele-Westin in Hawaii; Denis Griffith's Chi Chi Rodriguez Youth Foundation GC in Clearwater, Fla.; Robert Trent Jones Jr.'s Southern Palms Ranch in Desert Springs, Calif.; and Rees Jones' Greenbriar Country Club in New Bern, N.C.

Increased building has turned golf course construction into a very competitive business with many new contractors having been attracted to the field.

"You've got a lot of contractors who have been successful in other areas who are jumping into golf course work," noted Eldredge.

"Sometimes they make it and sometimes they don't. Those that fail often don't understand what's involved and don't bid high enough on a job. In the end, it's the owner and architect who lose.

"The key always comes back to quality and good business practices that can help you get through the rough times. You must satisfy the architects. They're like artists. We (construction companies) are like a big paint brush. It's up to us to paint what they have in mind."

One innovative approach Wadsworth has taken to assure quality work is employee ownership. Wadsworth is divided into four companies — Wadsworth Midwest, Southeast, Southwest and Pacific. The employees own as much as 50 percent of each firm.

"I wanted to create the same business spirit that I had when I first started," said the company's founder. "I wanted people to feel they were a part of the company and be totally involved in what they were doing. It's proven to be worthwhile and is probably one of the major reasons we have the reputation we do."

Despite a hot course-building market, 1989 was an average year, at best, in terms of profits, according to Eldredge. The reason was the weather.

"We did a lot of work in the Midwest and the weather was just horrible at times. It pushed a lot of projects back that we won't be able to seed until spring. 1990 is looking good," Eldredge said.

"There'll be a little lull over the winter. But it looks like we'll have a lot of activity next year," he added.

OSU

Continued from page 1
exactly where you want it and leave residue of less than one-half a part per million of the insecticide on the grass blade. "You look at those results and then you really begin to think about the implications," he said.

For example, he mentioned the milky disease (a bacterial disease that infects grubs). Each Japanese beetle has one species of this disease that is formulated in a product that is available but it is specific to the Japanese beetle. The masked chaffer has its own basilis; aetenias has its own basilis that's not infectious against the Japanese beetle but only infectious against the aetenias.

"There's no market for these other species of basili right now because there's no efficient way to apply them," Niemczyk said. "But now that we've come up with an efficient way of placing them in narrow bands below the surface three inches apart, it's entirely possible that we may develop the other species of the basilis (milky disease) that is infectious against other species of grubs so that we can use them, too.

"So it opens the door to a possibility that didn't exist before because we had no efficient way (at least theoretically) of putting the material down. A lot of people are interested."

Ringer, the company that has the controlling interest in the milky disease product, is interested in preparing it in such a way that it will stay in suspension or stay better. Plus, the researchers used some granular material in their experiments last summer, and the parasitic nematodes can be placed in liquid suspension.

"That is the most exciting part," Niemczyk said, "because I think we can make these biological control materials work the year they are applied... That remains to be demonstrated research-wise, but I am convinced that we can do it."

Niemczyk said the research "still has a ways to go. We've learned a number of things. We've learned that the material has to be placed correctly — if it's with grubs it has to be placed where the grub is or slightly above that. With the Rain Saver (equipment) we placed it 1/4 to 1/2 inch below that and that didn't work as well as a surface application which told us that the

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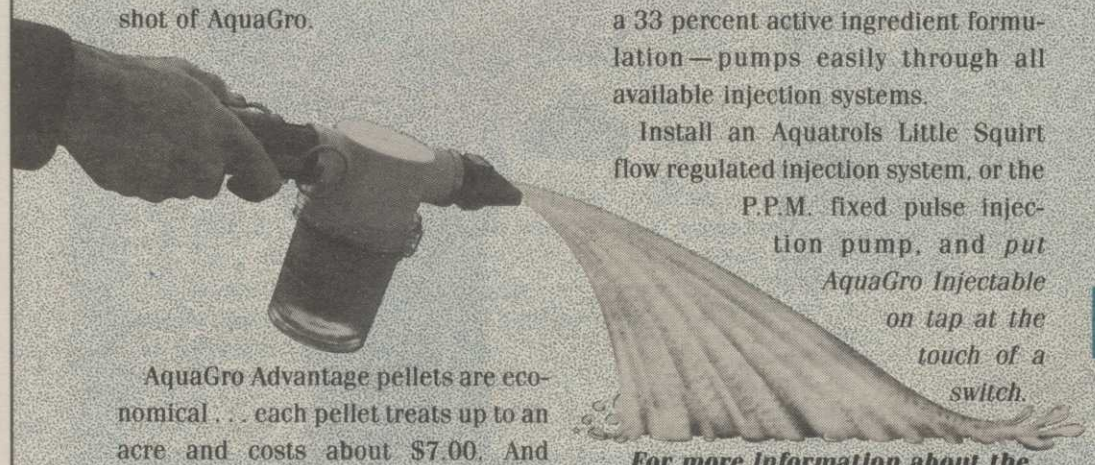

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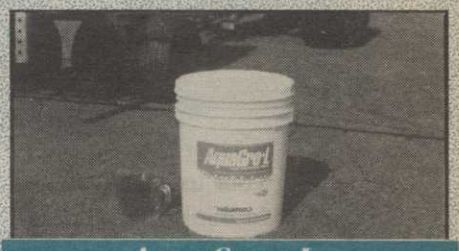

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