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"They all have similar characteristics," Wadsworth said. "They get along well with the natural trees, the creeks, the streams, the natural outcroppings to enhance the beauty and the challenge of the 6,950-yard, par 72 course. In addition to the course and adjoining clubhouse, the private club will feature four guest cottages. Membership will be limited to 250.

Photos by Nancy Pierce

By Peter Blais

There's a saying that goes something like an army is only as good as its sergeants. That could also be true of Wadsworth Golf Construction Co., runaway winner of Builder magazine's 1990 'architects' ratings' survey. The company credits the presidents of the four regional offices for much of the firm's success.

"They all have similar characteristics," Wadsworth said. "They get along well with their employees. They build loyalty and trust in their work force. We're fortunate to have four such talented people running the various divisions of our company."

Wadsworth's NCOs are:

- Paul Eldredge, Midwest. A Pekin, Ill., native. Eldredge, 49, first joined Wadsworth when the company built the Country Club of Pekin in 1982. Eldredge worked summers before graduating from Southern Illinois University with an engineering degree. He worked full-time as an irrigation specialist until 1983 when he was promoted to president of the Midwest office. He still consults on irrigation matters nationally.

- Jon Shipley, Southeast. The son of a champion, III, course owner, Shipald, 43, worked part-time summers before graduating from the University of Illinois and joining the firm full-time in 1970. He organized and became president of the Oldsmar, Fla., office near St. Petersburg that same year. "He re-

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By Peter Blais

Cypress Point fought off a determined challenge from Pine Valley to retain its title as the best-designed golf course in the United States in Golf Course News' second annual survey of golf course architects and builders.

Cypress Point, Alister Mackenzie's masterpiece along the rugged shore of Northern California's Monterey Peninsula, was listed among the top five courses in the country by 60 percent (27 of 45) of those responding.

Pine Valley, running through the sandbarrens in the Philadelphia suburb of Lower Merion N. A., was mentioned by 56 percent (25 of 45). The George C. Thomas/H.S. Colt collaboration moved past Donald Ross-designed Pinehurst No. 2 (N.C.), last year's runner-up.

Rounding out the top five were Pinehurst, Pebble Beach (Calif.) and Augusta National (Ga.), each listed by 33 percent (15 of 45). "Cypress Point and Pine Valley are what we are returning to as architects," said Gregory Martin, director of golf course design with Ives/Ryan Group, Inc. of Downers Grove, Ill.

"We don't adhere to the designs of a lot of courses built the past few years. We should build maintainable courses that allow us to be stewards of the land rather than artists that use land to paint with. Both Cypress Point and Pine Valley are good examples of that philosophy," Martin said.

While many mentioned Cypress Point and Pine Valley among their top five, others were avid fans of one or the other. Their choices seemed to reflect the current 'playability' versus 'challenging design' debate. "Cypress Point is pleasurable excitement," said Kansas City, Mo., architect Craig Schreiner. "Pine Valley is treacherly at every turn. Pleasure is what golf is all about, more than challenge."

"Cypress breaks all the rules — backto-

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Best architects

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we're doing, 36 holes (Newport Coast) at Newport Beach, then Two Rivers Club at Governor's Landing in Williamsburg (Va.), one east of Charlotte on 17 miles of lakefront property (Unharrie Point on Lake Badin), 36 holes in Wrightsville Beach, N.C., (Porter's Neck Golf Course), and the Disney course next door to Pete Dye's (in Orlando, Fla.), he said.

"All are going to be as good as those we've just been through," he said. "It used to be a Golf Club in Tennessee (which will open this spring in Nashville), or a Caves Valley (under construction in Balti-

more), came along once every five years. When one or two ones were bad but they were either just real-estate development or there wasn't as much total priority given to golf itself... Now there's such a keen golf interest that it's just tremendous," he said.

"It's like with Shadow Creek (which went to Shadow Creek to Pine Valley to retain its title as the best-designed golf course in the United States in Golf Course News' second annual survey of golf course architects and builders.

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"Cypress breaks all the rules — backto-

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We had 1,300 acres to work with the site itself won out Having the ocean right running through it. We could put it anywhere. We had a stream and could put it anywhere. We had a stream running through it. "The course looks like it's been there for 100 years. We sodded the fairways with Zoysia. With the natural trees, the creeks, the streams, the rock walls — you can't help but like it."

The Newport Coast course is on the ocean and "is going to be extremely dramatic and very sensational," he said.

Yet creating a masterpiece, Fazio said, "is no big deal. That's what we're getting paid for... More importantly, that's what they expect. We have to perform."

"And, of course, the golfers go out there and their expectation is so high... If you've gone to Shadow Creek or the Vintage or one of the others and then you came to one of our new courses and it didn't measure up, you'd say, 'What happened here, guys? Did you have to cut back? Didn't you work as hard?'" Fazio said the pressure never eases.

"It's like with Shadow Creek (which opened last year in Las Vegas)," he said. "It's a Wade Hampton type of site, only more dramatic in a lot of different ways — maybe less dramatic in some."

He said of The Golf Club of Tennessee, "is going to be extremely dramatic and very sensational," he said.

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