Fazio repeats as best designer

By Mark Leslie

Tom Fazio, whose stock continues to rise, has repeated as Golf Course Architect of the Year for 1990. Fazio, with offices in Hendersonville, N.C., and Jupiter, Fla., received 31 percent of the votes cast in Golf Course News' second annual survey of the nation's architects.

Rees Jones of Montclair, N.J., finished runner-up for the second straight year, with 21 percent of the vote. Jay Morrish of Tubo, Olde, who designs courses with Tour pro Tom Weiskopf, received 19 percent and placed third.

"It's just sensational what's happening in golf, and the kinds of golf courses and products being done," Fazio said. "The competition level in golf is so high. The desire for quality, dramatics, sensational, tremendous golf is out there and it's an exciting time."

Asked if 1990 was his best year, Fazio said: "Maybe in terms of five spectacular sites." Yet he raved about the courses that will be completed this year.

"I have a site in Michigan (Treetops Golf Course) that...

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Cadenelli to be 'Education President'

By Peter Blais

The Education President. It's a title many want, but few deserve. Stephen Cadenelli is one of the few.

The incoming president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America wanted to be a teacher when he graduated with a bachelor's degree in education in 1970.

But teaching jobs were scarce 20 years ago. So when several months spent pounding the pavement of academia led nowhere, Cadenelli followed the alumnus to Greenock Country Club in Lee, Mass.

The head superintendent at Greenock was Peter Solinelli, Cadenelli's fellow co-captain from their days on the local high school football team. Solinelli hired his former teammate as his assistant.

"Initially, I was just filling in," remembered Cadenelli, who was promoted to head

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Muirfield best conditioned, say pros

From staff reports

Muirfield Village Golf Club in Dublin, Ohio edged out Butler National Golf Club of Oak Brook, Ill., as the best-conditioned course on the professional tour in a recent Golf Course News survey of 30 touring PGA and LPGA players.

Muirfield, site of the Memorial Tournament in early May, received 13 first-place votes.

Butler, for years the host of the Western Open, was the choice of 11 players.

Westchester Country Club (Westchester Classic) in Rye, N.Y., garnered two votes.

Polling one apiece were Glen Abbey Golf Club (Canadian Open) in Oakville, Ontario; Champions Golf

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Tax abatement saves clubs thousands

By Peter Blais

The National Club Association claims it saved tax-exempt clubs thousands of dollars in penalties by intervening with the Internal Revenue Service in the U.S. Supreme Court's Portland

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Wadsworth Construction voted #1

"Nobody does it better," say golf course architects in national survey

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 Year End Issue’s annual survey of golf course architects and builders.

"It’s like with Shadow Creek (which Fazio designed, Fazio rates the course a '10')," said James Shapland, 43, course owner, Shapland, 43, St. Ives Country Club in Duluth, Ga., and Hunter’s Green in Tampa Fla.

"Pine Valley is treachery at every hole," Jones said. "It’s a golf club — no housing, no development. We had 1,300 acres to work with 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 creeds, the streams, the rock walls — you can’t help but like it."

"It’s a gorgeous hole."

"It was a year-long thinking process," said Walter, explaining how The Ocean Course came to be. "When it came time to make a final decision, the natural drama of the site itself won out. Having the ocean right there — where you can see it and hear it running through it — is something truly unique in golf.

"It’s like with Shadow Creek (which opened last year in Las Vegas). When I was there that I wouldn’t have said it was a 10. The concept is for a 10, the program, the commitment, but I can’t tell you how good it’s going to be until it’s done. In 1991 these are all 10s in terms of planning.

"The ones that are farther along, like Treetops... I can almost guarantee that people will put it as one of the best I’ve ever done. We had one at Williamsburg in the closing and development stages; and though it’s the desire of everyone to build a 10, you have to work at it. We’re at about a 7 now in the midpart of construction. We’re in the shaping and contouring and we’re going to bring that up to a 10."

"It’s a Wade Hampton type of site, only more dramatic in a lot of different ways — maybe less dramatic in some."

"It’s going to be extremely dramatic and some people are going to think it’s the best golf course we’ve ever done. It’s so tremendous. It’s a golf club — no housing, no development. We had 1,300 acres to work with and could put it anywhere. We had a stream running through it."

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Best architects

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ready had streams, creeks, trees, contour, rocks and waterfalls. "This day and age we have the resources to create that environment. Sometimes—talking about the environmental situations, (Shadow Creek developer Steve) Wynn said, "Tom, I'm giving you a blank canvas here; you don't have any excuses."

Rees in second
-Rees Jones agreed times — and golf sites — are exciting.

Jones is excited about The Peninsula Club, a private, 18-hole course on Lake Norman that opened in Charlotte, N.C.

"It has six holes across or parallel to the lake. It has fantastic vistas as well as holes," he said.

"We've got diversity of length, real good short par 4s, a 155-yard par 3 7th peninsula hole that has 14 tees and all kinds of angles, so wherever they put the marker, it's going to be a different hole every day. It's a gorgeous hole."

"And it has quite a finish because the last two are birdie holes."

Cited by his colleagues as an architect whose courses "will stand the test of time," Jones explained: "I believe in being a hands-on designer. I go to my courses a lot. I must have been at The Peninsula 25 times. The same with this new job (Golden Horseshoe) we're doing for Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

"Before they seed a green I check it and we get the transit out. You've got to have a knowledgeable person going to the job before you finalize it, which is the time you can make change at no cost. You make sure it's going to be playable and popular."

Jones said he is also building courses "so that the slightly misplaced shot doesn't get over-penalized. I'm containing a lot of shots in the playing area so much like the old links courses did with the dunes. I'm using a lot of grassy hollows and grass swales around greens, which keep a ball..." We've got a lot of clients, a lot of good sites, and it's a pretty exciting time for us.

— Rees Jones

NGF reveals regions needing courses

JUPITER, Fla. — Warning would-be investors to get additional marketing studies done before starting any project, the National Golf Foundation has reported its annual list of "Hot Spots for Public Golf Course Development in the United States."

"This list is only a beginning, not a conclusion," said NGF President Joe Morrish back in form

Morrish, who with Weiskopf in 1986 designed Golf Digest's top two new private courses — Shadow Glen in Kansas City and Sunbelt states, but exists in many other areas of the nation as well. California, with nine, has the most — reflecting its top status in total numbers of residents and golfers. Next are Florida, Georgia and Virginia, each with five counties listed.

The NGF has expanded its methods of identifying more exactly where courses are likely to be needed. Researchers analyzed income and age demographics, population density, population growth and migration patterns. These factors were compared with golf facilities existing, in planning or under construction.

"Actual investment decisions would require additional study of specific market conditions, site constraints, environmental permitting, land costs, availability of financing and other potential limiting factors," said Rick Norton, who as head of NGF Consulting directed the analysis.

"The NGF is emphasizing public golf course development because golf in the United States is predominantly a public game. More than 70 percent of the nearly 500 million rounds played annually are recorded at public facilities."
Beck architectures

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He saw Troon North, a resort course in Scottsdale, Ariz., open to extraordinary reviews. Touring pros gave it marks that were playing a Shootout there.

Harbor Club in Greensboro, Ga., will open this spring.

Morrish has five others under construction including Loch Lomond in Scotland, Double Eagle in Columbus, Ohio, Bloody Point at Duneside Island, S.C., Northwood in Dallas, and Country Club of St. Albans in St. Albans, Mo.

Morrish and Weiskopf were the first Americans ever selected to design a course in Scotland.

"We're getting better and better," Morrish said. "Contractors understand what we want to do and more. Clients who want something special are coming to us more and more.

Morrish, who worked with the Faios, Desmond Muirhead and Jack Nicklaus before opening his own firm in 1985, said: "People knew me through yesteryear with Tom (Fazio) and Jack (Nicklaus). But they did not know what I could do by myself. Now we have established our credibility."

Morrish and Weiskopf have taken that credibility to some special sites — from Scotland to Cypress Point

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I back par 5s, back-to-back par 3s, I love that."

Countered Tom Johnson, an architect with Denis Griffiths & Associates of Braselton, Ga.: "Cypress Point may have the grandeur and beauty. But as far as layout and design go, you can't beat Pine Valley."

"It doesn't compromise. The design of many of today's courses are dictated by other things than golf, like real estate or the age of the players. There's none of that at Pine Valley. It was designed as a true test of golf that you have to think your way around...Crump couldn't have done a better job with the terrain he was given."

Pinehurst's slip to No. 3 may be the result of the course's age, according to Johnson.

"I'm from North Carolina and I love Pinehurst," he said. "But it's a short course designed in a different era. If they hold another PGA Tour event there, some players could have rounds of 10, 12 or 15 under." 

Pebble Beach (designed by Jack Neville and Douglass S. Grant) along with Augusta National (Alister Mackenzie and Robert Tyre "Bobby" Jones, Jr.) are returnees from last year's Top 5 list.

Other courses mentioned by at least 10 percent of the architects include Shinnecock Hills CC (William F. Davis, William S. Flynn and Howard Toomey) in Southampton, N.Y.; Seminole GC (Ross) in North Palm Beach, Fla.; Merion GC (Hugh Wilson) in Ardmore, Pa.; and Harbour Town Golf Links (Pete and Alice Dye, Jack Nicklaus) on Hilton Head Island, S.C.

Ohio. Bad weather has held back construction at Loch Lomond, but they hope it will be finished next summer.

Being the first Americans, Morrish and Weiskopf have been "looked at through a microscope," Morrish said. "But the British press and players are very impressed with the course so far. The Scottish brought golf course design to America. Now we've taken Scottish work back to Scotland. The course is very traditional. It's got the Winged Foot, Merion and Augusta National feeling to it."

Morrish and Weiskopf have been 'looked at through a microscope' in Scotland.

He said the Loch Lomond site has "a beautiful change of terrain ... and huge, huge trees. It will be something special."

Yet, he said the Double Eagle course in Columbus "may be our standard bearer. It's a knockout."

Developed by John McConnell, owner of Weddington Industries, the course will have just 50 members and no housing other than clubhouse.

"It has a lot of the feeling of (Alister) Mackenzie or (George C. Jr.) Thomas or (Donald) Ross or (A.W.) Tillinghast. It will look like it's been there forever and ever when we're finished. They have all but four greens built and have irrigation in on eight holes and it will definitely be finished next spring."

Double Eagle's rolling terrain is half covered with woods and half with meadows, and winds around several big lakes.

"It does everything a golf course should do. We have a nice mix of reachable par 5s, one unreachable par 6, a couple of driveable par 4s, the 3s go in all different directions and vary in length. We have a nice change of direction, nice change of terrain, nice change of pace. We have water holes, open holes and wooded holes. It just feels nice," Morrish said. "In my mind, it will be at least as good as Shadow Glen."

He said they have "great expectations" for Harbor Club, which sits along Lake Oconee.

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