Annual rainfall is less than two inches. Summer temperatures rise daily to 110 degrees or more. So the primary concern building the PGA West courses has been using heat- and drought-tolerant trees, shrubs, grasses and other vegetation that will also resist the wear and tear of tens of thousands of rounds of golf.

Dynamic innovations punctuate courses in La Quinta's unique desert environment

By Frank Pollard

The four-course PGA West golf complex built in the last six years is not only the envy of many in the industry for its design, it has become a model for planners facing the formidable chore of building a course in the parched and heat-scorched desert.

The research of developer Landmark Land Co. can stand as a tool for others to work with in building courses in a harsh climate like the 2,010-acre PGA West recreational/resort and golf community in La Quinta, Calif.

Though the sun-drenched and arid Coachella Valley, running from Palm Springs to Indio, is parqueted with a smorgasbord of lush and verdant golf courses, PGA West's environment is unlike any other desert in the Southwest or California.

The creation of beautiful and challenging golf courses at the complex has worked creative architectural approaches and comprehensive research into all facets of the local environment.

Since the annual rainfall is less than two inches and summer temperatures rise daily to 110 degrees or more, the primary concern building the courses has been the use of heat- and drought-tolerant trees, shrubs, grasses and other vegetation that will save water, hold up under searing heat, and resist the wear and tear of many thousands of rounds of golf.

"The major priority was to assure long-range savings in energy and water usage, so we started to look at what plants would meet those requirements," said Lee Schmidt, Landmark's vice president of golf course design. "We did a huge amount of research on plants that were indigenous to the area by visiting various botanical gardens, desert golf developments, desert horticultural experts, and other sources of information before we came up with what we wanted."

Continued on page 23

The Nicklaus Resort Course features palm trees.

MAKE THIS YOUR 'OFFICE'

See a golf career management position in your future? Anoka Technical College can help make it happen.

ATC now has three par excellence majors for your choice:

• TURF & LANDSCAPE IRRIGATION TECHNOLOGY
• GOLF FACILITIES MANAGEMENT
• GOLF COURSE & GROUNDS MANAGEMENT

We're perfectly located on the northeast edge of Minneapolis-St. Paul. Enjoying the advantages of a metro area, we also are blessed with nearby country woodland, lakes and varied terrain.

Give us a call at 612/427-1880 or complete and return the coupon today!

Yes, I want more information on Anoka (MN) Technical College's golf-related career majors:

☐ TURF & LANDSCAPE IRRIGATION, 96 credits in length
☐ GOLF FACILITIES MANAGEMENT, 96 credits in length
☐ GOLF COURSE & GROUNDS MANAGEMENT, 101 credits in length

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY STATE ZIP
PHONE BEST TIME TO CALL
Mail to: Anoka Technical College, 1355 W. Hwy. 10, Anoka, MN 55303

GOLF COURSE NEWS
Landmark started the overall land plan five years ago with "virtually nothing but flat sandy terrain to work with and only the knowledge that within that acreage we would eventually have to design five golf courses," said Schmidt. "The fifth course is under construction and will open later this year.

"The company wanted to create courses that weren't just walk-to-wall-grass parklands like so many courses are, but were distinctly different, aesthetically beautiful, yet a challenge to the capabilities of all levels of play from the professional to the low handicap as well as the average enthusiast," he said. "As things developed, we decided to select different architects for the different courses."

Indeed, Landmark hired famous architects. The complex encompasses the 7,261-yard, Pete Dye-designed Tournament Players Club (TPC) Stadium Course, which opened in January 1986; the 7,126-yard Jack Nicklaus Resort Course; the 7,035-yard Jack Nicklaus Private Course, the 6,961-yard Arnold Palmer Course; and the under-construction Pete Dye Resort Course. The TPC and Nicklaus Private courses are listed in Golf Magazine's "100 Greatest Courses in the World," and the four courses host major professional and amateur tournaments.

**EACH COURSE UNIQUE**

"The first and stage-setting course developed was the Stadium course and the architect chosen was Pete Dye," Schmidt said. "The Stadium layout was planned as a Scottish-style course — a Scottish look in the desert, if you like — and we didn't want a hodgepodge of vegetation, but rather basic plants that would give some dramatic visual contrasts and color."

Most of the similarity in the courses begins and ends with their use of Bermudagrass fairways and Pemncrew bentgrass greens that are overseeded with ryegrass for the winter.

For the Stadium course, builders moved 2,2 million cubic yards of earth to create undulating fairways, monotonous grass bunkers, uninviting sand pits, moats and ravines, all equaling a golf course many feel is the toughest in the world.

Dye was thinking of the lack of trees and the dramatic landscaping: "With palm trees and the landscaping that is typically used out here (Palm Springs area), I thought it would be very much as it was watering that make this a distinctive course. That's why the desert plants were selected.

"I think it has an individualistic look. Not only because of the watering — because there's mounding on other golf courses, but I think it's the total landscaping that helps make it distinctive."

Schmidt said of the reasons for selecting these basic desert plants for the landscaping: "In addition to the basic landform design of each of our courses, with their rugged mountain backdrop on most holes, we carefully and creatively planted to visually frame the holes and define the landing areas — the turfgrass in concert with the contrasting colors and textures of the indigenous desert shrubs, trees and grasses.

"It worked on the Stadium course as it has on all the courses," he said. "We are still learning as we go, however, and continue to experiment with new approaches."

Schmidt said Landmark investigated many plant species but decided to use Acacia Redolens and Baccharis Centennial for turf use. These are similar to the Nicklaus Private Course that fit in with the stark mountain backdrop.

Opened in October 1987, the Nicklaus Resort Course has a much softer look than the Stadium course and is more like the Palmer Course. It features a soft, rolling design of fairways and bunkers, with greens that slope predominantly toward the golfer to collect the golf shot.

"It sets the stage for all the rest of the courses," Schmidt said. "Working with some of the best architects in the world — each of whom with his own distinctive approaches to course design — was a two-way street," Schmidt said. "We worked in concert and extremely harmoniously with both Nicklaus and Palmer to be certain that while each of the courses was completely different in design, we exclusively (except for turfgrass) maintained the use of plants native to the area."

The Palmer course was opened in October 1986, the second of the PGA West courses. Totally different from the Stadium course, it is noted for its wide-open, rolling fairways and undulating greens. It has little ground cover, rather a mix of many different trees, averaging as many as 110 on some holes.

The trees include Date, Washingtonia Robusta, Washingtonia Filifera and Queen Palms, as well as Jacaranda, California Pepper, Brazilian Pepper and Canary Island Pines.

"Only holes 14 through 17 on the Palmer course use the natural desert type plants that are similar to the Nicklaus Private Course that fit in with the stark mountain backdrop."

Opened in October 1987, the Nicklaus Private Course has a much softer look than the Stadium course and is more like the Palmer Course. It features a soft, rolling design of fairways and bunkers, with greens that slope predominantly toward the golfer to collect the golf shot.

"In addition to the basic landform design of each of our courses, with their rugged mountain backdrop on most holes, we carefully and creatively planted to visually frame the holes and define the landing areas — the turfgrass in concert with the contrasting colors and textures of the indigenous desert shrubs, trees and grasses."

"It worked on the Stadium course as it has on all the courses," he said. "We are still learning as we go, however, and continue to experiment with new approaches."

Schmidt said Landmark investigated many plant species but decided to use Acacia Redolens and Baccharis Centennial for turf use. These are similar to the Nicklaus Private Course that fit in with the stark mountain backdrop.

"We water in zones, essentially using two sprinkler heads per station that come on at

ATTENTION!!

Two of the most respected names in Golf are involved with a New Revolutionary Product that stops Green and Tee Encroachment.

[Image of a product label]

Greg Norman    Paul R. Latshaw

Greens Encroachment Barrier Systems Inc.
Patents Allowed • All Rights Reserved
Great White Shark Enterprises
575 U.S. Highway 1 • Suite 201 • Juno Beach, FL 33408 • (407) 624-4203
Contact, Thomas R. Wait

CIRCLE #116 March 1991