Covering all of the angles

From golf course to graphics design, Richardsons do it all

By Mark Leslie

While golfers are trying to hit holes-in-one on the Tom Fazio and Pete Dye-designed golf courses at Disney World, the Disney folks feel they have hit a home run with their graphics package designed by a less-well-known architect.

Richardson or Richardson — translated architect-cum-artiste Forrest and graphics expert Valerie — have received high praise from Disney Development Co., whose accolades are given sparingly.

Tom Sunnarborg, development manager for Disney Development Co., said: "The graphics are a home run. Our criteria was that the signs be durable, readable, functional, but also unique. And they are. There is nothing else like them. From the signs along the entry road to the signs in the clubhouse, tee signs and cart path directional signs, yardage markers, flags, logo, everything is really well done. They have clearly exceeded expectations."

Saying that "part of our challenge is to do projects that are so special they're worthy of our company," Sunnarborg placed the Richardsons in the company of Dye and Fazio in painting a picture of high-caliber success that has enveloped Disney's Bonnet Creek development.

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Zoeller designs 1st in Carolinas

HILTON HEAD, S.C. — Island West Golf Club at Hilton Head, a daily-fee course designed by golf professional Fuzzy Zoeller and Clyde Johnston, opened Dec. 21.

An 18-hole championship course, Island West is Zoeller’s first design in the Carolinas. According to Zoeller, "Island West Golf Club will provide a challenge to the high- and low-handicapper alike. While the course will present several opportunities to 'go for it,' there is also a 'safe' route to the green. There will be no forced carries. Who wants to come to a resort to get beaten up by a golf course?"

Island West is being developed by the Fairways Fund, an investment fund recently introduced to the market by Marion Bass Investment Group, parent company of Bass Golf, Inc. and headquartered in Charlotte, N.C.

Arthur Jeffords, who heads up Bass Golf, said of the course: "Fuzzy and Clyde have given us exactly what we asked for — a golf course that’s fun to play. It will challenge you but not break you."

The course plays from 4,934 yards to 6,803 on three sets of tees. It is located on 150 acres of low country terrain with more than 34 acres of lakes and strategically placed bunkers.

Island West is open to the public, but the whole operation has been designed to elicit the feeling of a private country club.

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The latest ‘word’ in bentgrass is PennLinks.

Paul Latshaw is spreading the word.

Paul Latshaw holds the distinction of being the only superintendent of golf clubs hosting 3 major tournaments. With Paul’s reputation, expertise and candor, he’s a powerful promoter for PennLinks.

“I know PennLinks to be the finest creeping bentgrass available. I know it’s been time-tested on the North Course greens here at Wilmington Country Club since fall of 1984.

“I know PennLinks has an extensive root system, heat tolerance, and requires very little grooming or verticutting because of its upright growth. The upright growth habit convinced me to overseed the fairways at Wilmington. I know time will prove I made the right choice. And I like that, too. "PennLinks. Spread the word.”

Paul Latshaw, Superintendent
Wilmington CC, Montchanin, DE

There’s a lot of conservatism in people who run golf courses,” Richardson said. “I think that’s about to change. We’re starting to get the people who have gone through golf management programs...and they’re starting to get into the jobs. They’re running these places and they have marketing backgrounds. They know — like Stone Creek — that the guest experience is important. It’s not just important that the food is good. Everything has to be nice. It’s a total, holistic approach to the experience on the golf course...

“People are starting to think for themselves. I’m excited by this because it relates to both sides of what we’re doing.”

Richardson continued from page 27

beginning to end. The golf courses at Bonnet Creek are no exception.

“We started working with all the people at Disney in defining the place. Is it a traditional Augusta-like setting or something else? A lot of questions had been answered by the architects. We decided upon a real quiet, simple, elegant, modern approach."

That character was reflected in the final design for the logo and signage—a subdued look centered on the diamond shape. “The diamond expresses the architecture and geometry of the clubhouse. It’s simple, elegant icon that goes with everything,” Richardson said. “The name Bonnet Creek and the nines of the courses were derived from suggestions from Disney. We went from one extreme to another and always came back to the natural theme of the osprey and the eagle.”

The result is one high photo opportunity. "If you look at all the Disney properties and attractions, they center around the concept of photo opportunity," Richardson said.

Sunnarborg said: “A well done golf course graphics program could involve hundreds of signs. You could group them into maybe 10 categories. Each of our categories is probably a different material. The signs in the clubhouse are brushed stainless steel, which are very elegant and nice. The signs on the golf course are one-inch-thick, solid-aluminum plate. It’s thick enough to be durable, but thin enough so that it almost looks two-dimensional.

It’s a full-granite color, but it’s green so that it’s meant to fade into the background of green grass. The top of the sign is a diamond-shaped message carrier that seems to float in mid-air so you don’t see the base of it."

Richardson said: “The main thing was not to call attention to the signs. The diamond helps a great deal. They are recognizable, shiny and bright, and you look for them the rest of the round.”

Mission accomplished.

The mission was also accomplished at Stone Creek.

Henry DeLozier, president of Resort Management of America which operates Stone Creek, said of the Richardson’s: “We see a lot of folks who end up with the same solution to design questions. Perhaps it is a great solution. But when we talk with Forrest or Valerie we come up with new solutions that are ingenious, innovative and give the golfer or potential customer a different message than what we see as a standard in the golf industry.”

DeLozier added: “There’s a capacity to touch a different plane than many of the rest of us are operating on. I can only attribute that to imagination and ingenuity. You look forward to what they’re going to give you (in a project), with full knowledge that you’re going to get some things that are absolutely whacky and off the wall and some things that touch a new sense of understanding for your own project.”

Richardson said that to enhance Stone Creek’s image we developed the overall visual theme, the trademark and the color palette. Then we moved into the huge task of developing the sub-palettes of color for merchandise. Although we weren’t as involved in the design of merchandise, we gave them concepts and ideas and guidelines to follow about how to implement the logo on merchandise. We coordinated the signage (tee markers, tee signs, and signs on the course) and a great deal of work consulting in print graphics — yardage books, signage and websites
doing that.”