The shape of things to come: The men behind architects' creations

By MARK LESLIE

The art of shaping a golf course is not just about laying out the course, it involves creating a three-dimensional environment that is both challenging and aesthetically pleasing. The architects and landscape designers who do this work are crucial to the success of a golf course.

Beljan of Fazio Golf Course Designers will tell you, "The men behind architects' creations are critical to us," said Bill Kubly, president of golf course builder Landscapes Unlimited, Inc.

Joneses, Palmers, Hills, Morrishes and Cupps of the design industry.

To those designers, the big names are the Trump Williamses, Sonny McNeils, Don Thomases, Lewis Stones and Lou Cappellis of the shaping world.

These are the men who turn two-dimensional drawings and verbal directions into three-dimensional earth forms.

When the Vintage Club decided to do a renovation, the owner asked architect Tom Fazio to make sure he sent shaper Cappelli, who was instrumental in building the original design.

In Puerto Rico they call Cappelli "Louis the Magnifico," Fazio said. "It shows they like your work and attitude. Workmanship means a lot," said Cappelli, the late George Fazio's personal shaper, who has perhaps worked on more golf courses than any man alive.

"If you do everything right and you don't have shapers capable of doing what you want, the finished product can be entirely ruined," said LaFoy, of Greenville, S.C. "The final six inches is what the golfer sees."

"With several architects, we get projects because we have certain shapers," Kubly said. "The architects try to impress the owners the importance of the shapers. A lot of times the owners will say they can get a local earth mover. 'Why hire shapers?' they ask. It makes a world of difference."

"They can recognize and help you overcome problems, like surface drainage, that you haven't noticed," said architect Ted McAnlis of North Palm Beach, Fla.

California wins 'honors' as Toughest State for Permitting

By MARK LESLIE

California is the runaway sweeps winner, staking claim to the title of Toughest State in Which To Gain Golf Course Permits.

According to a Golf Course News poll of leading course architects and builders, California is in another zone altogether from other states. The Golden State got more votes — perhaps because so few architects sources Inc. in Dallas. "No one else comes close."

"Honolulu is tougher. Over there we're not even allowed to ask." joked builder/architect Perry Dye. He added that already difficult California regulations became even more difficult when the Coastal Commission imposed its power to 10 miles inland because of salt marshes.

"The sitios are running the asylum," Morrish said. "The Sierra Club has a strong hold there. I'm not saying they're bad but they're swaying people's opinions."

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**Toughest states**

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American Society of Golf Course Architects President Arthur Hills of Toledo, Ohio, gave Florida his vote, noting that his concern there is not the difficulty but the "considerable time" it takes to obtain permitting.

Hills said California's coast is important and should be protected, but is very time-consuming. He pointed to one project he is involved in on the Pacific Ocean that has been languishing in the approvals process for 3-1/2 years.

Miller attributed California's attitude to pro-active environmentalists in that state since the 1960s, combined with bad experiences with poorly built homes, and "some things done to the landscape that were un-".

He added that construction practices at some courses built in Florida decades ago brought about environmental regulations today.

Steve Smryns, an architect in Tampa, Fla., said New Jersey is the toughest state and defended Hills. "Florida's attitude is pro-development," he said. "This is a young and growing state. It has rules and regulations. Abide by them and respect the permits. You have to have your act together, so to speak."

Smryns said in Florida all the people reviewing applications are professionals.

That is the opposite of New Jersey. Therein lies the difficulty and in other Northeastern states, he said. "Town selectmen are reviewing projects, and they are not educated or versed in the areas they need to be." Bureaucrats nationwide were singled out as a problem.

For instance, Baltimore County, Maryland, development regulations were "written by a totally non-growth administration — by bureaucrats whose mission in life is to stop development at any cost," said David Locke, a landscape architect and land planner who is vice president of Daft McCune Walker, Inc.

Hills is optimistic things may change. He said he's not sure the permitting process is getting tougher or longer around the nation.

"Maybe the pendulum has swung far enough to the point where now we should organize (permitting) in a rational way so there is a procedure to follow to a reasonable conclusion. I think there is always a concern about the environment on the part of all parties, and golf courses are as well-suited to complement the environment as any form of development," he said.

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**It's time to return to old design/build technique**

By LISA MAKI

Before the 20th century, few men practiced golf course architecture. St. Andrews, Prestwick, and Carnoustie are relics of the natural links. Mother Nature was their creator, with little assistance from a designer or a builder.

Astrounding growth in the game, diminishing ideal terrain, and major technological advances led to the first generation of "golf course architects," practitioners trained in disciplines associated with golf course design, beyond just playing the game. It was a time when brilliant men "designed and built" renowned tributes to golf on both seaside and parkland sites. Golf flourished.

Then came a time when opportune developers and lenders appeared. They preyed upon the game's dramatic settings to attract resort guests and real-estate buyers. Funds were liberally dispersed, and monuments were built.

Architects began to realize they were compromising their futures by designing "additions" to the landscape that were unimportant and should be pruned.

Many architects returned to their roots, to design more traditional courses. This resurgence has caused many golf course architects to dismiss the platitudes set out by office and site, to interact directly with the land as the pioneers of their profession did, to practice Design-Build.

Lisa Maki is president of Golf Design Services of Round Hill, Va. She was a golf course designer/project manager with Links Design, Inc. of Lakeeland, Fla., from 1984-1989.

Robert Trent Jones, dean of modern architecture, practices as his forerathers did. He believes it is necessary to control not only the design, but also the building of a project. Thus, the family owns and operates "Design-Build" companies. Robert Sr. once made the following statement in reference to his Design-Build company, "You have to do that [design and build] or you don't come up with what you are after."

His son Rees concurred, stating that "the hardest part [in designing a golf course] is transferring the idea from the architect to the builder and having it come to the satisfaction of everyone."

Pete Dye is another practitioner of the "Design-Build" approach. He refers to himself as a job foreman, overseeing both design and construction. He is a creator of golf courses, cut straight from the hip—a true innovator and one who is still working on projects.

As Rees Jones and Dye affirmed, no matter how talented a golf course architect is, it is impossible to create a flawless three-dimensional design when working in a two-dimensional medium of pen and paper, or even digitizer and monitor. Inevitably, alterations to the design must be made on site in response to actual conditions. A Design-Build company can implement these changes quickly and economically, virtually eliminating the dreaded Change Order, as this approach allows for flexibility within a fixed budget.

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