

## Landscapes Unlimited unseats Wadsworth

By MARK LESLIE

"Above and beyond the call of duty." According to clients, that exemplifies the work of Landscapes Unlimited Inc., the Lincoln, Neb.-based firm that has been named Golf Course Builder of the Year for 1992 in a *Golf Course News* poll.

This year GCN followed its annual poll of golf course architects and builders by surveying clients of the firms that had been nominated for the award. Landscapes Unlimited received extraordinarily high marks, as did Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. of Plainfield, Ill.; American Golf Course Construction, Inc., of Plano, Texas; Fairway Construction of Temecula, Calif.; Guettler & Sons, Inc. of Fort Pierce, Fla.; and Kenova Construction Co. of West Palm Beach, Fla. Wadsworth had won the award the first three years.

The award is "something I and my people will be very proud of," said Landscapes Unlimited principal William Kubly. "We work very hard to do quality work — whether it's a \$1 million or \$8



Bill Kubly

million job, and it means a lot to be recognized by the people we work with every day."

Although Kubly created the company in 1976, Landscapes Unlimited's growth has been almost explosive the last several years.

"We had a 23-percent increase in business in 1992 — our best volume ever," Kubly said. "We're doing 80 percent more work now than four years ago."

With that growth has come a larger labor force — ranging from 150 in the winter months to 350 — and an increase from three to five project managers. Traveling the country directing construction are Kirk Kyster, Mike Oliphant, Roy Wilson, Bob Ryan and Roger Hodges.

They oversaw the building of seven golf courses that opened in 1992 and another eight that

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## It's Hammock Dunes & Ocean Course

By KENT R. DAVIES

"Peer recognition is the most gratifying of all. It's a great honor." This summed up Tom Fazio's feelings upon learning that his Hammock Dunes design in Palm Coast, Fla., had been named the Best Seaside Private Course to open in the last five years.

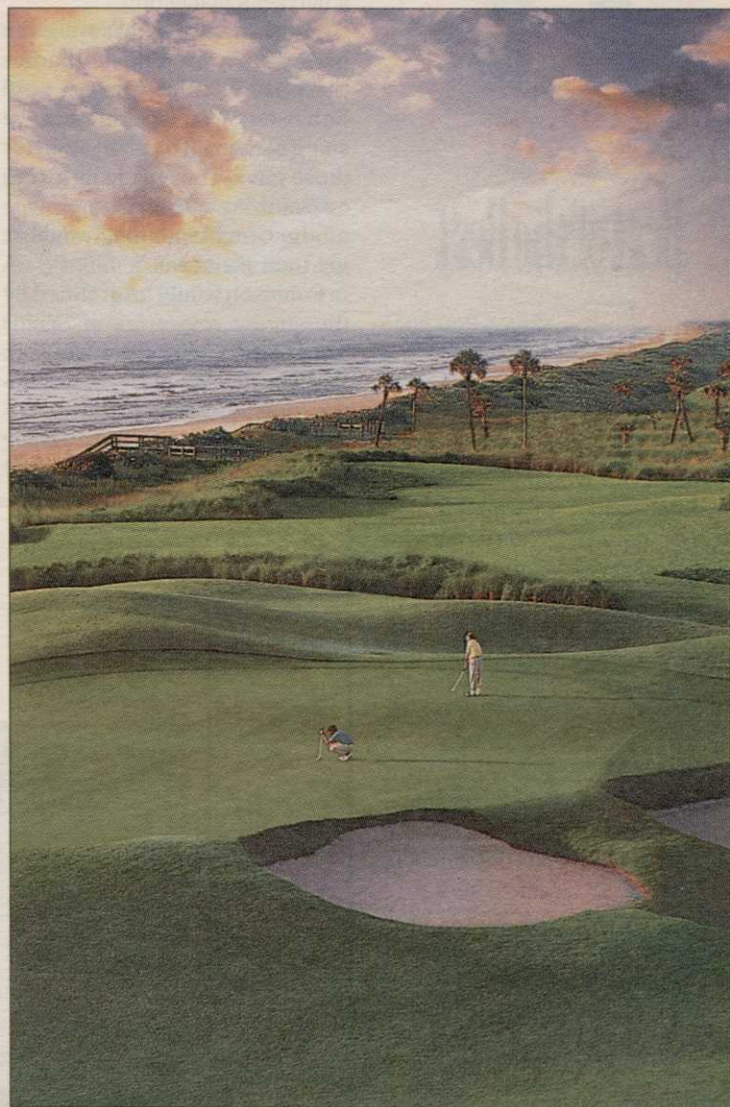
And Pete Dye "loved it" upon learning that his Kiawah Island Ocean Course in South Carolina won top honors as the Best Seaside Resort/Public Course. Both awards were determined by the votes of architects and builders nationwide, as surveyed by *Golf Course News*.

Tom Fazio's Pelican Hill placed second in the resort/public course category with Robert Trent Jones, Jr. nabbing third for The Links at Spanish Bay.

"Variety" and "a very natural look" are phrases often heard by Dan Malizia, head golf pro at Hammock Dunes, when his members and their guests describe completed rounds. These are just the descriptions Tom Fazio loves to hear, because he wants his courses to be unique. "I want them to look like they've been there a long time," said Fazio. "To appear to fit so well, it must not have been a big job to design — no matter how much dirt had to be moved."

Variety is a major tenet of any

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A striking sky frames no. 18 at Hammock Dunes, a Tom Fazio design.

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## Best of the Best

### Landscapes

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are still under construction.

One of Landscapes Unlimited's clients was Woodbine Development of Dallas, for whom it built Hill Country Golf Club as part of a destination resort in San Antonio.

"We're a very demanding client and expect a 110-percent effort. They [Landscapes] provided that on every front. They were absolutely great in every respect," said Woodbine's Mike Koesling.

George Kirshbaum of East-West Partners in Chapel, N.C., for whom Landscapes Unlimited built a course for the Uwharrie Point development in Denton, N.C., said: "There are a few people you work with in business you know are a cut above in their approach to accomplish their work. I feel Landscapes Unlimited falls into that group. It's more than just 'getting it done' to them. In a corporate culture, you either have it or you don't. They were as much concerned about what ultimately happened on that golf course as we were."

"We have found that the fact we do good quality enables us to stay busy when others not doing that kind of work might not be," Kubly said. "We were low bidder on only two of the projects we're doing now."

Kubly said much golf course construction has "settled back down into the \$3.5 million range. For a time we had \$5 million and \$6 million jobs, but money has gotten a little tighter, and developers are wiser." Design, he said, "went from who could build the most difficult course — and that's what the clients wanted — back to the traditional, classic and playable courses." In his 23 years in the business, the major advance in golf course construction is the U.S. Golf Association's refinement of construction qualifications, Kubly said. "You're getting a lot better golf than 10 years ago."

While also pointing to major advances in irrigation systems, he said earth-moving equipment is nearly the same.

"We do use a lot of smaller, detail equipment today, all the way down to the sandtrap rakes for smoothing our greens," Kubly said. "And we're using backhoes and grade-alls to do the detail bunker work, especially on high-end designs with bigger budgets."

Although he would like to see controlled growth for his firm of five to 10 percent [in total dollars] every year, Kubly said: "We still want it to be fun. And when I get running ragged and my project managers feel run ragged, that's too much."

## Robinson & Co. chosen by Seniors

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a barracks inspection.

"I'd say the general's were the hardest to please, much harder than the senior pros," said Robinson. "You wouldn't believe some of the stuff we had to do for those guys. They made us go out on Saturday mornings and wipe off the benches so they wouldn't get their pants wet."

Robinson would be gratified by the survey responses of Senior Tour players, who chose the Jack Nicklaus-designed Desert Mountain over the second-place winner, The Vintage Club. Bruce Crampton, for example, praised

Cochise by saying "It is a treat to be able to play a golf course as well conditioned as this." Jim Ferree added that Desert Mountain routinely sports "perfect greens and fairways."

Robinson oversees all the maintenance at Desert Mountain's three courses: Cochise, Geronimo and Renegade. Each track has its own superintendent, who answers to Robinson. Ron Ruppert was superintendent at Cochise for the 1992 tourney, but has since moved on to another Nicklaus project underway in Santa Fe, N.M. Scott Krout has taken his place.

"We are well blessed with a

great staff, 60 percent of which is Hispanic," said Robinson. "These people really take maintenance to heart. They take care of it like it was their own lawn."

The staff at Cochise gears the maintenance schedule around the tournament date, which falls annually near the end of March or early April. Unlike many Southwestern tour sites, which must jump-start the growing process to accommodate mid-January tournaments, Cochise is fortunate in the calendar department.

"We're coming out of the non-growth period after the 1st of March, which is good for our ryegrass overseeding," Robinson explained. "In the turf areas, bent and rye are the easiest to main-

tain during that time of year.

"Our basic concern — in fact, our biggest fear — is getting a heavy rainstorm because it can destroy the DC [decomposed granite] areas."

The DC areas at Cochise are essentially desert, waste/transition zones used for drainage. It's important to keep the drainage in prime condition all year around, said Robinson, because you never know when a heavy downpour might occur.

"We really rely on the DC areas for water run-off," he said. "Usually, at that time of the year, we have a pretty major rainstorm within two weeks of the tournament. Hopefully it happens early and you can recover."

## BENTGRASS

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