



# Best of the Best

Golf Course News  
proudly presents its  
maintenance, design  
and construction  
awards for 1993

Best Maintained Course on LPGA Tour

## Mission, accomplished

By HAL PHILLIPS

PALMS SPRINGS, Calif. — Members of the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA), like any touring pros, are choosy about course conditioning. When you play the nation's top tracks week after week, your standards are understandably high.

However, the condition of Mission Hills Country Club — site of the LPGA Dinah Shore Classic — met or exceeded those lofty standards. In an exclusive *Golf Course News* poll of Tour players, Mission Hills was named the Best Maintained Course on the LPGA Tour for 1993.

"We try to keep everybody happy," said Director of Maintenance

David Johnson. "We overseed in October, so by March, the course is in primo condition."

*Golf Course News* surveyed the 100 LPGA Tour players who played at least 22 events during the 1993 season. The Old Course at Mission Hills received 54 percent of the votes cast, while Columbia Edgewater Country Club in Portland, Ore. — home to the Ping-Cellular One LPGA Golf Championship — and Dupont Country Club in Wilmington, Del. — home to the McDonald's LPGA Championship — finished second, in a near dead heat.

The players heaped praise on the condition of Mission Hills.

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LPGA Tour players chose Mission Hills' Old Course, home to the Dinah Shore Classic, as the Tour's best maintained course.

## R.M. Graves turns 18.9 handicap to his advantage

By PETER BLAIS

Few golf course architects would have you know they can't consistently nail the green from 200 yards with an easy 3-iron or drain any putt within 15 feet.

Not so Robert Muir Graves.

The 63-year-old, Walnut Creek, Calif.-based designer is proud of his 18.9 handicap.

"In fact, it's come down three to four strokes in the past year," he said. "I've backed off the business a bit lately and spent more time on the golf course. I've been practicing quite a bit. I'll bet there are three or four guys in the ASGCA [American Society of Golf Course Architects] I could even whip now."

Not that you'd ever get them to admit it.

In the competitive world of golf course design, many of the craft's practitioners believe potential clients expect them to be able to stay within a few strokes of Jack Nicklaus. If the truth were known, they fear it might cost them business.

Graves doesn't buy it. He simply laughed when informed he had received more votes than anyone else from his peers in a recent *Golf Course News* survey asking who was the *worst* golfer among professionally trained golf course architects.

If anything, being an average golfer has been a selling point Graves has used to bolster business.

"Thirty years ago, I graphed

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Glenmore Country Club, a John LaFoy design in Charlottesville Va., was constructed by Landscapes Unlimited and opened in 1992.

## Builder of the Year

### Two in a row for Landscapes

By MARK LESLIE

LINCOLN, Neb. — Dedication to high-quality construction and commitment to pleasing its clients have propelled Landscapes Unlimited, Inc. to its second consecutive distinction as Builder of the Year.

In a poll of architects conducted by *Golf Course News*, Landscapes Unlimited edged out a handful of nominees for the honor, including Wadsworth Golf Construction Co., which won the award the first three years before Landscapes took it last year. Other multiple nominees were Guettler & Sons, Inc. of Fort Pierce, Fla.; Paul Clute & Associates, Inc. of Hartland, Mich.; Central Florida Turf of Avon Park, Fla.; Fairway Construction of Temecula, Calif.; American Golf Course Construction, Inc. of Plano, Texas; and Pavelec Brothers Golf Course Construction of Nutley, N.J.

Selection of the winner was based on surveys of clients, who were asked to rate construction based on quality, budget, deadlines, personnel, and the end result.

"This company is the best in the industry from top to bottom,"

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## Architect of the Year

### Fazio team, led by Banfield, lays claim to architect honors

By MARK LESLIE

One for all and all for one. That's the maxim at Tom Fazio's golf design company, where Fazio himself and Andy Banfield are the architects' and builders' choices as 1993's Best Architect and Best Associate, respectively.

Fazio laid claim to Best Architect for the fifth time in the award's five-year life, winning more than 20 percent of the votes cast in the annual *Golf Course News* poll.

This was the only year the poll has asked who is the best architect who is not a principal in his/her own firm. The strength of Fazio's design team was illustrated by nearly 20 percent of the ballots being cast for Banfield and 40 percent naming Banfield, Tom Marzolf, Dennis Wise or Jan

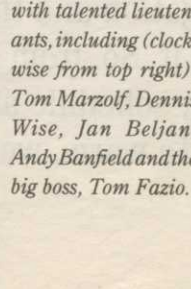
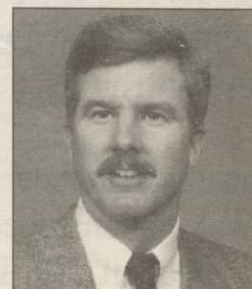
Beljan — all Fazio associates.

"The secret of my success is my staff. They're all so different and it's not unusual for me to have them all involved in one project," Fazio said. "Our main strength is we have the talent and can spend the time to have detail on each project. They have enthusiasm, energy and desire, and they work hard at it."

"It's important for me to have variety. If you have different opinions and ideas, you get that."

"There are so many good people with our company," said Banfield, who joined the firm 20 years ago when George Fazio was the lead architect. "Tom says we have to do something unique and creative, to try to create memorability on a

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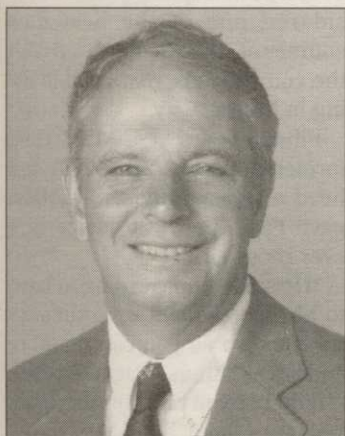


The Tom Fazio team of architects is loaded with talented lieutenants, including (clockwise from top right), Tom Marzolf, Dennis Wise, Jan Beljan, Andy Banfield and the big boss, Tom Fazio.





## Best of the Best



Architect Robert Muir Graves

## Robert M. Graves

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11,865 California golfers by handicap," he said. "The line rose steadily from the scratch golfer end, peaked in the 14-to-15 range, then descended slowly into the 20s. Two-thirds had handicaps 15 or higher.

"Many developers realize the difficulty of taking your own game out of the design process. It's hard for a top golfer not to make design decisions that match his game. The Tour won't be coming to your course every week. Most of the time it's normal guys with average games. That's the way I play. I design courses that fill their needs."

Added fellow architect Geoffrey Cornish: "From the blue tees, a Bob Graves' course is a challenge for a golfer of any ability. And from the regular tees, his courses provide a a relaxing, enjoyable round. That's what 80 percent of the golfers are looking for and Bob understands that."

Has Graves filled the average golfers needs successfully? According to Cornish's book *The Architects of Golf*, Graves has designed, remodeled or consulted on 650 courses since 1959.

Enough said.

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On the opposite end of the spectrum, Dye family patriarch Pete outpolled the opposition as the top architect golfer. Son P.B. also received a vote.

The elder Dye's closest competition came from Dan Maples and Steve Smyers.

Others receiving best golfer votes included Ken Dye (no relation to Pete), Andy Banfield, Dana Fry, James Lipe, Don Knott, Larry Mancour, Harrison Minchew, Andy Raugust, Robert Weed, Bill Robinson, Ted Robinson, Ken Killian, Jeff Myers, Desmond Muirhead, Larry Packard, Tom Pearson, Russell Talley, Phil Wogan and Rodney Wright.

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## Landscapes

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volunteered Roger Watson of Carolinas Golf, for whom Kubly built Glen Laurel Golf Course, which opened last July in Raleigh, N.C.

"Glenmaura National [Golf Club in Scranton, Pa.] was the toughest job to build that I ever have been involved in, and they [Landscapes Unlimited] finished the project on time. The quality of people they have working for them is excellent," said senior designer Dana Fry of Hurdzan Design Group.

Kubly attributed his firm's success to his personnel and to the fact that "we haven't become dependent on any one regional economy."

"My people are devoted. They all like and love what they do. They're committed to quality and to creating the best golf courses they can because they have a love of the game. If they aren't committed that way, they don't stay long with us," he said.

"We're also doing a full range of projects — some public golf courses, some high-end, privately owned publics, as well as 18-hole renovations," he said. "And we're seeing some of the highest end country club projects being done."

Landscapes Unlimited's work is overseen by Kubly and four project managers — Kirk Kyster, Mike Oliphant, Roy Wilson and Roger Hodges. Kyster and Hodges have backgrounds and

degrees in construction management; Wilson has a degree in business; and Oliphant is former greens superintendent.

Working out of the Lincoln office, each is assigned two or three projects and works closely with the on-site superintendents and owners. "A lot of our construction superintendents are past greens superintendents," Kubly said.

Indeed, Oklahoma State University golf coach Mike Holder, who arranged for Kubly to build his new university course, termed that job's supervisor, Jim Barger, "All World."

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Kubly sees two new trends in golf course construction:

- Developers "want us to be

involved in more things like water falls, fancy planting and a lot of sod work."

- And owners are "more and more concerned with getting their courses open faster and having them in terrific condition the day they open."

"They have put a major emphasis on quality," he said. "I think that's a reason why we've been able to stay busy, because we're very quality-oriented."

Kubly noted one project in which 125 acres of sod will be put down, and another on which "we're going to sod greens, tees and fairways — 105 acres — in Aspen. "In areas where there's such a short growing season, it's important to get it open for the membership."

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