



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.

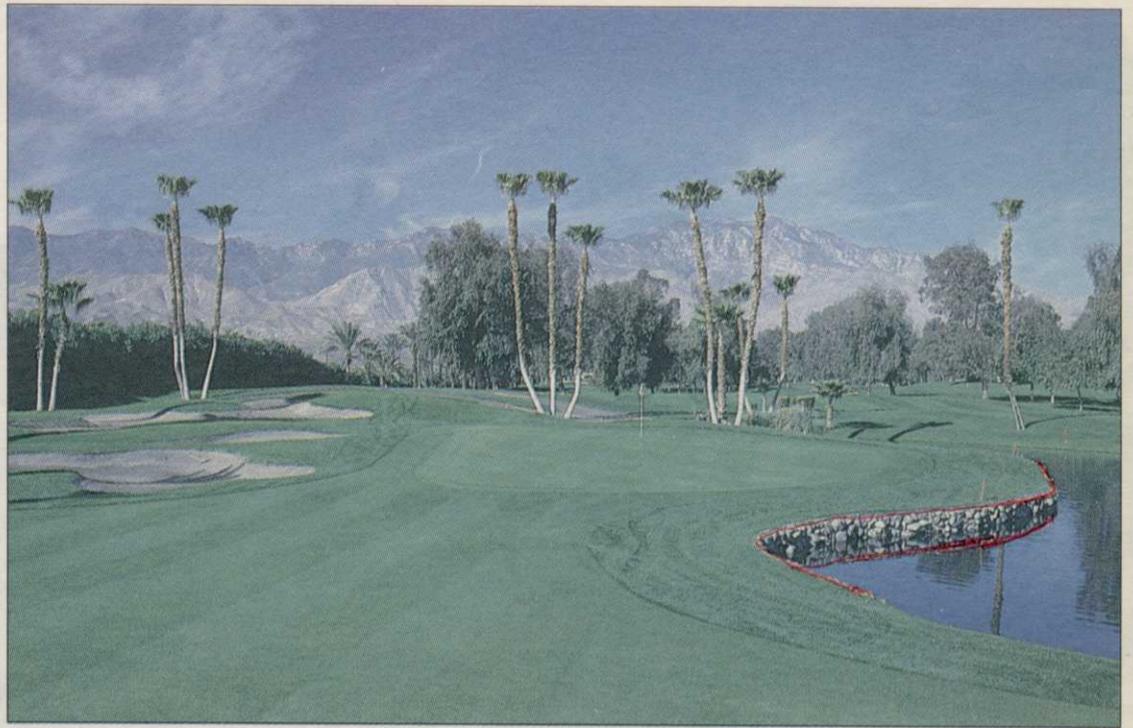
"We try to keep everybody happy," said Director of Maintenance

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.

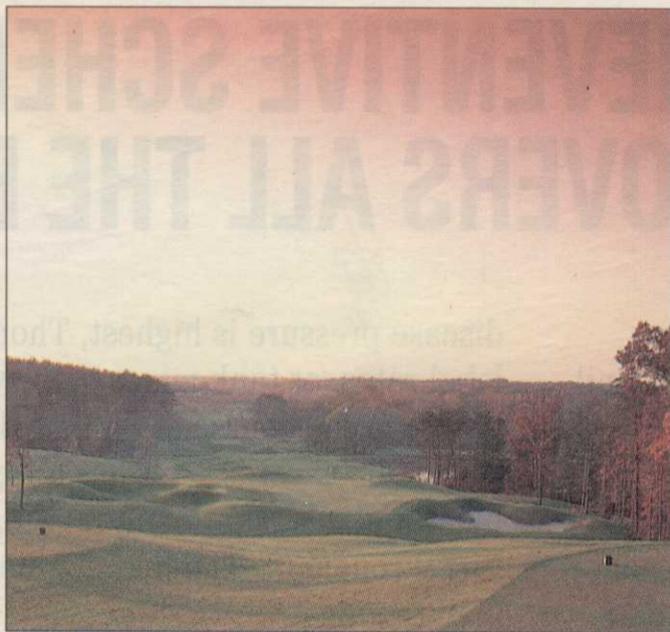
In the competitive world of golf course design, many of the craft's practitioners believe potential clients expect them to be able to stay within a few strokes of Jack Nicklaus. If the truth were known, they fear it might cost them business.

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

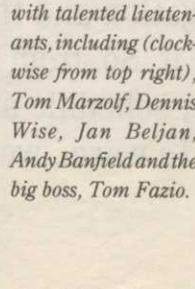
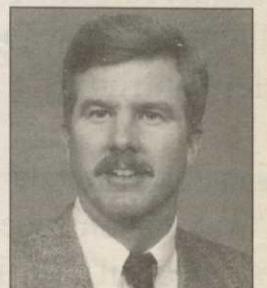
Beljan — all Fazio associates.

"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.

Fazio Golf Designs: Personnel checklist

HENDERSONVILLE, N.C. — A 10-person team that works alongside, not under, one another — that describes Fazio Golf Designers Inc. according to Tom Fazio.

"These 10 people all get along. It doesn't matter who we match, they all work together and get the job done. They all worked at different stages and different levels — alongside rather than under each other," Fazio said.

Fazio Design's sheer numbers as well as talent have allowed the company to grass 5-1/2 golf courses in 1993, including the Canyon Course at Pelican Hill in

Newport Beach, Calif.; Cowboy Golf Course at Oklahoma State University; Glen Oaks in Des Moines, Iowa; Old Overton Club in Birmingham, Ala.; and an addition to Pelican's Nest.

The Fazio Ten are:

Andy Banfield — The man behind award-winning Shadow Creek in Las Vegas, Nev., he was a key player in the design of Pelican Hill and is now involved with The Quarry at La Quinta, Calif.

Jan Beljan — A member of Fazio Design for 12 years and one of two women in the American Society of Golf Course Architects, she's been involved with PGA

National, Pelican's Nest, and Gateway in Ft. Myers.

Blake Bickford — Starting as a shaper a half dozen years ago, he was the key person building the Short Course at Pine Valley in Clementon, N.J., finished the Pine Barrens Course at World Woods in Homasasa Springs, Fla., and is now at Galloway National at Atlantic City.

Lou Cappelli — A shaper since 1962 for George and then Tom Fazio, he has worked on most of the company's courses. "A designer with a bulldozer," Fazio called him.

Charlie Feeley — With the

firm 20 years, in Florida most of that time, he was involved with Pelican's Nest and PGA National.

Tom Griswold — Joined the company about 10 years ago, he has been involved recently on the Old Overton Club with Jerry Pate, on Uwharrie Point in Denton, N.C., along with Marzolf, and on the new course in Atlanta called White Columns Plantation for Fuji Development Group.

Tom Marzolf — With Fazio for 10 years, he was involved with Wade Hampton in Cashiers, N.C., Uwharrie Point, Caves Valley in Baltimore, and Champion Hills in Hendersonville, N.C.

Steve Masiak — With the company since PGA National was built 1980-81, he is a former shaper

who started out as a superintendent and has worked on the Pine Valley Short Course, Hammock Dunes in Palm Coast, Fla., Black Diamond Ranch in Lecanto, Fla., Lake Nona in Orlando, Fla. and John's Island West in Vero Beach, Fla.

Kevin Sutherland — A Wadsworth Golf Course Construction Co. project manager for a decade, this Michigan native joined Fazio four years ago.

Dennis Wise — Along with Sutherland, he was in charge of Treetops in Gaylord, Mich., considered one of the best new courses of 1993. He has been with the company six years and is living in Kansas City.

Fifteen years ago, Mark Cox, former director of the PGA and head of Wilson Sporting Goods, gave Fazio the best advice he's ever received.

"He said, 'You're going to have to hire people and train them to do your job so you can do more and better things,' Fazio recalled. "I didn't accept his thoughts then. But now I thank him all the time."

Fazio, Banfield

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golf course. There's enough influence so we don't have a mold."

The greatness of the team "all goes back to Tom Fazio," said Marzolf, who finished second in the balloting for top associate. "He's such a good teacher. Over the years he's spent a lot of individual time with us and brought us along."

Before dirt is turned, Fazio, Banfield and their colleagues spend a lot of time studying a site to place golf holes where they fit in naturally.

"Our goal is not to move a lot of dirt or regrade. Our goal is to walk the site and find the best 18 holes that exist there. That is a very basic philosophy but it's the main theme of what we're about. And people seem to like our golf courses because they look like they've always been there," said Marzolf. "That's Tom Fazio's design philosophy and it's the one thing that ties all the design associates together as a team. We all believe strongly that this is the way to do the work."

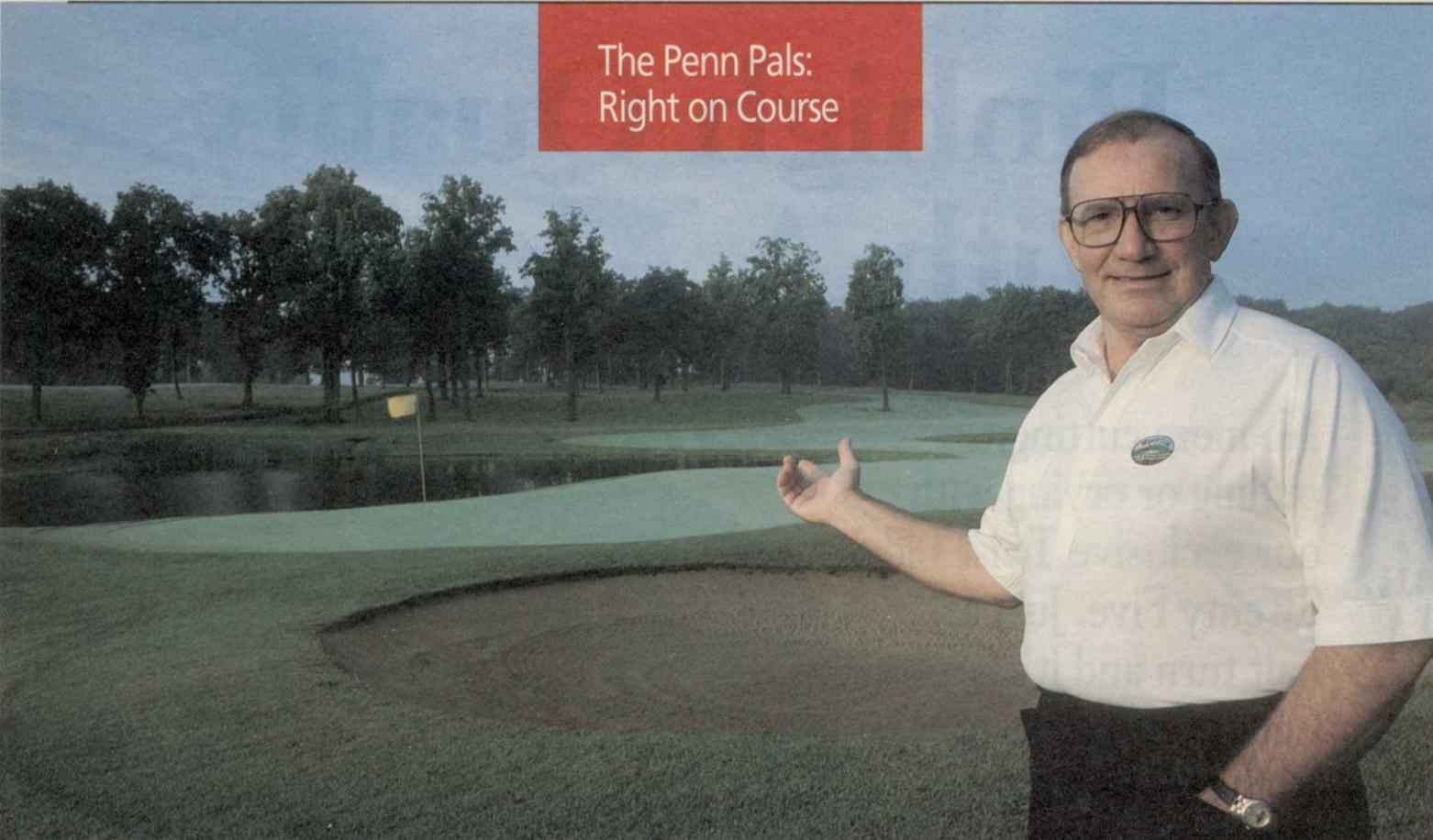
"Tom's a genius. He's the best alive today in routing golf holes. That's the secret to his year-in and year-out success: We're putting holes in the right locations."

For Banfield, his two decades in design fulfill a dream that began when he was a teen-ager caddying and playing junior golf in Connecticut, playing such great courses as Winged Foot, The Stanwich Club and National Golf Links. After earning a degree in mining engineering and being unable to find a job in land reclamation, he decided he could design better courses than the new ones he was seeing. Plus, "I wanted a job I could do as an individual."

Cal Brown of *Golf Digest* in Norwalk, Conn., suggested he contact Robert Trent Jones, Pete Dye or George and Tom Fazio.

Continued on next page

GOLF COURSE NEWS



Oscar Miles, CGCS, overlooks the 6th hole at the Merit Club, Libertyville, Illinois.

PennLinks Greens. Penneagle Fairways. Penncross Tees. The 'Penn Pals' Are Picture Perfect At The Merit Club.

Superintendent Oscar Miles, with Club President Ed Oldfield's affirmation, specified all the grassing of this Robert M. Lohmann designed club. With a clean canvas and open palette, Oscar began with PennLinks greens, Penneagle fairways and Penncross tees, framing them with bluegrass/fine fescue/wildflower and prairiegrass roughs. You couldn't paint a more attractive picture.

Oscar chose PennLinks greens for its rapid establishment, marvelous root system, a crown and stolons that take topdressing, upright, grainless qualities and good, consistent color ... the best putting surface available.

He selected Penncross for tees because they recover from divot scars more quickly.

And the Penneagle fairways? Oscar chose Penneagle for its upright growth, reduced thatch development, low nitrogen requirement and good drought and dollar spot resistance. He seeded at 80 lbs. per acre for immediate turf development and

erosion control. The fairways were playable in 8 weeks. Oscar's crew usually mows fairways in the evening and leaves the clippings; recycling nutrients while reducing removal and fertilizer costs.

Oscar articulates it best: "The unique coloring of the 'Penn Pals' contrasts beautifully with the grassing around them, defining the target areas. And with the dew on the bents early in the morning, they're a marvelous work of art."

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Best of the Best

Banfield honored

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His first five years with Fazio, he followed famed shaper Lou Cappelli around "like a puppy dog," learning how to box off tees and build fairways, all the while raking bunkers — anything and everything that needed doing.

But the hook, Banfield said, was when he climbed atop a bulldozer after work hours "just to get the experience and to create.

"It was a tool to create art. And when I started doing that, I was hooked," Banfield said. "I gradually got to where I was doing more of it. And, finally, they trusted me to shape Jupiter Hills."

What sets him apart from other lead designers?

"Working for Tom Fazio — no question about it," Banfield said. "That also means the entire organization."

From the Fazios, he learned shot values and how to devise playable courses for all golfers. From Cappelli, he learned the angling of greens and placement of bunkers. Basically, it all means "doing solid golf course design — a blend of playability and challenge," he said.

Banfield's key aim, he said, is "making the project look as natural as possible. We work at producing a golfing environment. Tom always wants us to be aware of the feel of the project. As a designer you can frame holes, use vistas and experiences. We try to create as much peacefulness and solitude as well as excitement as possible on a piece of property."

His favorite courses he has worked on? Shadow Creek in Las Vegas, The Vintage Club in Indian Wells, Calif., and Wild Dunes in Isle of Palms, S.C.

Banfield's strength, Fazio said, is "certainly imagination in all aspects, certainly detail, and a real love for the game of golf. Green shaping and bunkering are only a minor part of it.

"If Andy has one weakness it would be that he is hard-core about quality golf. Whether it is development issues or other constraints, he won't back away from quality golf.

"Working with team members, planners and other architects, Andy may have the reputation of being too hard-nosed and self-centered on golf. Some of the contractors will say they love him and he's talented, but he's always changing his mind.

"I call it the perfectionist looking to get more detail, to get it right."

LPGA Tour players name Mission Hills best kept course

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According to Shirley Furlong, its greens are "always pure as the driven snow." Colleen Walker said, "The fairways are cut close; rough is cut all the same height; and greens are smooth and quick."

Michelle McGann couldn't say enough: "Every part of the course was in excellent shape!"

While Mission Hills is a 54-hole resort, the Old Course — designed by Desmond Muirhead — is exclusive home to the Dinah Shore and handles 50,000 rounds a year.

Johnson oversees mainte-

nance at all three courses, but he credits Old Course Foreman Assistant Pablo Lua with day-to-day upkeep. Johnson also made sure to credit his mechanic, Raul Rodriguez, who keeps the operation running smoothly.

Johnson maintains he doesn't do anything that special to prepare the course for tournament play: Narrow the fairways a bit, speed up the greens, lower the fairways, etc.

"We stripe up the fairways starting about four weeks in advance," he said. "The hardest thing is preparing for the unforeseen: A wind storm, rain

storm or a hydraulic leak on the 18th green.

"We had a hydraulic leak a few years back, but it was on the fourth hole — luckily, not a TV hole. We also have a lot of geese, ducks and mudhens who love to eat ryegrass."

Johnson is something of a *wunderkind*: just 34 years old and director of maintenance at the permanent home of an LPGA Grand Slam event. He's from Sheboygan, Mich., and matriculated to the highly respected turfgrass management program at Michigan State.

After graduating in 1985, he

took an assistant's job at Inverness in Toledo before accepting a similar position at Mission Hills' Palmer course. He was named head superintendent at the Old Course in 1988 and director of maintenance in 1991.

There are still mountains to climb, however.

"I would like to have a U.S. Open someday: men's, women's, senior — I don't care," he explained. "I'd really like to work with the USGA on a tournament. I enjoy the challenge of hosting a regular tournament, though. It makes every year exciting."

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