

BRIEFS



GULL LAKE ADDING 5TH COURSE

GULL LAKE VIEW, Mich. — Construction of the newest 18-hole design at Gull Lake View Golf Club has begun. It is expected to open for play by mid-1995. It will have a 3-3-3 format — with holes evenly split between par 3s, par 4s and par 5s. It will average 7,500 square feet of greens, and will measure between 6,800 and 6,900 yards from championship tees and about 6,400 from regular markers. Hazards will include three ponds and 50 sand traps. The new course will be Gull Lake's fifth.

COMMONWEALTH NATIONAL HONORED

HORSHAM, Pa. — Arnold Palmer-designed Commonwealth National Country Club has been given an Outstanding Land Development Award from the Montgomery County Planning Commission for environmentally sensitive design and for protecting and preserving the existing natural features on the property. The award was presented to superintendent Larry Schlipfert. The course opened for play in 1990.

TEXTRON PROMOTES MUNOZ

ATLANTA, Ga. — Ramon Munoz has been promoted to vice president of the Golf Course Finance Division at Textron Financial Corp. (TFC) a subsidiary of Textron, Inc. Munoz will maintain and continue to expand TFC's growing golf course portfolio, now approaching \$200,000,000 in volume. Munoz has been with the Golf Course Finance Division of TFC since shortly after its inception in 1990. Prior to joining TFC, he worked in golf and real estate development in the New England area.

UTAH DEVELOPMENT UNDERWAY

DRAPER, Utah — David Graham and Gary Panks are designing an 18-hole course for the new South Mountain Project here, 18 miles southeast of Salt Lake City. South Mountain has 1,517 acres situated in the foothills of the Wasatch Range. The project is zoned for 1,700 residential units, and construction on the infrastructure began in July. EDAW-HRV, based in Denver, is overseeing the land plan and landscape architecture. The developers are Dee Christiansen and Terry Diehl of South Mountain.

FOSTER GROWS, MOVES

ST. LOUIS — Since opening an office here in the spring, architect Keith Foster has secured four design projects in Colorado, Texas and Kentucky. So the firm is moving into a larger office at 10411 Clayton Road, Suite A-14, St. Louis, Missouri 63131; phone 314-997-7373. Art Schaupter, associate, Midwest projects, and Lee Hetrick, associate public relations and marketing, will be moving from Phoenix to St. Louis.

Hall-of-Famer Mann marks minority market

Golfing great forms female-led turnkey development team

By MARK LESLIE

HOUSTON — Her title was once LPGA Touring Pro. But now Carol Mann is taking aim on a new moniker: Golf Business Entrepreneur.

With one swift step, Hall of Famer Mann has become a pioneer among women, establishing a female-owned, female-operated golf development turnkey business.

Stepping out from its position as a "minority company," Carol Mann Golf Services is on a mission to give ordinary golfers, women, seniors, juniors and the physically disabled "the opportunity to enjoy this game as much as anyone" through design and construction "that addresses the needs of all golfers."

It is offering clients the total development package — from feasibility



Carol Mann can still coax in a putt.

studies to course and facility design and club management.

"I see myself as more than the Tour pro. I am changing my profile," Mann said from her headquarters here. "My goal in forming this company is for it to be for the rest of my life."

The new company is separate from Carol Mann Inc., which has consulting, appearance and publishing divisions.

"The appearances and the consulting sometimes are all dependent upon your profile. And it is a natural waning that happens to everyone unless you have the venue of competitive athletics. I haven't competed in about 13 years," said Mann, who won 38 LPGA tournaments during a remarkable 21-year career.

Mann cited two driving forces to starting her new business — creating playable courses for all players, and competition as a minority business in a relatively "open field."

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Vintage Group takes 'downtown' idea on the road

By MARK LESLIE

CHICAGO — With one downtown golf course and practice center barely under its belt, Vintage Group, USA Ltd. has unveiled plans to take the concept to a half dozen other cities.

"Our game plan," said Vintage Group President Charles Tourtellotte from Illinois Golf Center, "is to either do public or institutional financing for \$25 million, initially. Because we've had such good visibility and success with this project, we will take this concept on the road, so to speak."

Initial target is to finance six projects with \$25M

That \$25 million will finance six facilities like the Illinois Golf Center. The Chicago facility, which opened to the public Aug. 21 — and is bounded by Randolph Street and Lake Shore, Columbus and Wacker drives — features a nine-hole, par-3 track consisting of famous holes by Pete and/or Perry Dye. The McGetrick Hurter Learning Center, a 92-tee practice area, a putting and chipping green, and fully equipped

clubhouse at 221 North Columbus Drive fill out the center. It is open until late evening or midnight every day and provides nearby practice opportunities to tens of thousands of golfers who work in the city.

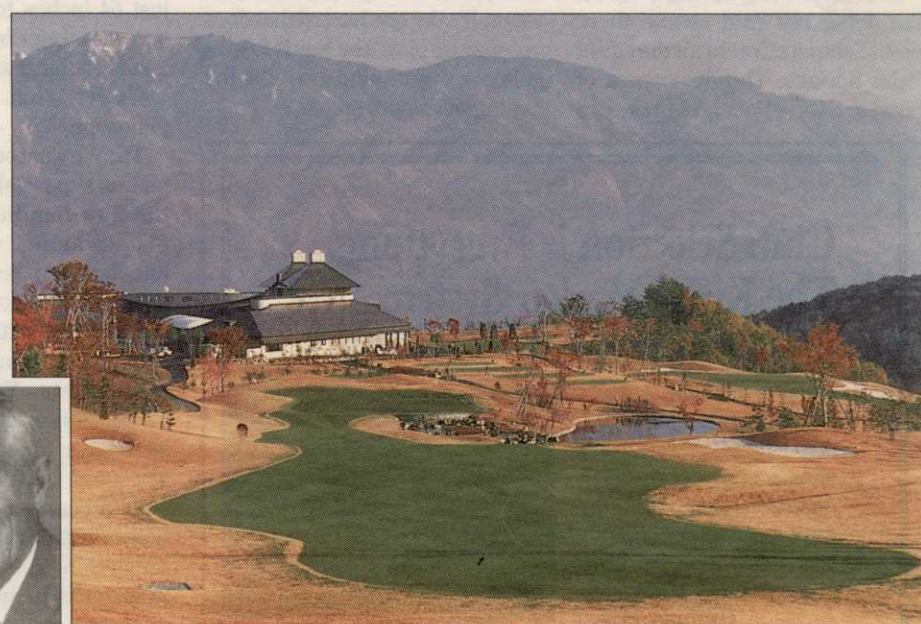
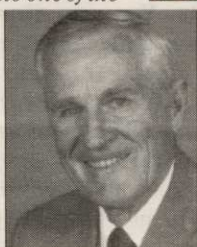
Vintage Group has property in San Diego under contract and is considering sites in New York City, Seattle and San Francisco's East Bay area, Tourtellotte said.

He expects ground to be broken on the San Diego property before the end of the year and the first six facilities to be underway within 24 months.

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Robinson's career a fountain of success

A University of Southern California graduate and a land planner by training, Ted Robinson, 71, has evolved into one of the best-known golf course architects in the country. He began designing nine-hole courses as part of master-planned communities in the 1960s. Vandenberg Country Club (CC) in Lompoc, Calif., was his first 18-hole, regulation-length layout. Over the past 30 years, the California native has designed 140 golf facilities throughout the Western United States and Pacific Basin. He is particularly known for the waterscapes that grace many of his layouts. Robinson is a past president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects and a member of the American Institute of Planners. His son, Ted Jr., joined the Dana Point, Calif.-based firm 2-1/2 years ago.



The 18th hole at Akeno Golf Club in Japan, designed by Ted Robinson, above left.

He won the national seniors championship in the 70-to-80 bracket 30 years ago. He shot his age in the tournament when he was 71. I started as a land planner for residential developers and my father helped lay out golf courses as part of the master plans.

The other was Johnny Dawson. He was a well-known golfer and a major developer in Palm Springs. It took me 12 to 13 years to transition from a land planner to a golf course architect and he was very helpful.

GCN: What course legitimized you as a golf course architect?

TR: Sahalee Country Club in Seattle [opened in 1969] put me over the top. It was

a low-budget course, but it's been very well rated and will host the 1998 PGA Championship.

GCN: Do you have a favorite course you designed?

TR: That's like asking if one of your children is your favorite. Sahalee gave me some prestige and recognition. I got to design the equestrian center [site of a 1984 Olympic event] and course at Fairbanks Ranch CC [in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.]. That was a lot of fun. And I got to work with Greg Norman at The Experience at Koele. But they've all been fun.

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Johnson on his own, eyes int'l canvass

By MARK LESLIE

MT. VERNON, Wash. — Despite what he calls a "glut of golf course architects" around the world, Tom Johnson is testing the waters by opening his own design firm here.

The 39-year-old North Carolinian, who has worked the past seven years with Denis Griffiths and Associates in Braselton, Ga., is concerned about the future of his profession.

"Weekly, there's somebody putting up their shingle," he said. "There is a glut of architects, not only in the U.S. but around the world. Is it going to take a golf recession to slow that down? I question whether the business can support all these people. How long it is going to last?"

Johnson already has three projects in planning — one in the Seattle suburb of Conway and two in Japan, where he has worked for most of the past 13 years, first with Gary Player and Ron Kirby from 1981-83. The North Carolina State graduate, with degrees in turfgrass management and landscape architecture, also labored as a job superintendent with Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. from 1983-87 in the Midwest and Texas before joining



Tom Johnson

Griffiths. The member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects has his own ideas on golf design, declaring: "The one problem I have with most designers is that they say they want to build a course everybody can play. I dispute that. The flat statement that everybody is going to enjoy [a certain] course, or that you're going to make it playable for everybody, is a misnomer."

"The difference in capabilities of golfers is so vast," he added. "You play with people who shoot 118 and then you play with one-handicappers the next day. The same golf course just does not work. You've got to decide not only what the site dictates, but what the client wants. Then you have to go after the best golf course. It's not going to work for the entire golfing population."

Johnson, whose favorite architects are Charles Blair Macdonald and Alister Mackenzie, said: "I don't like to cubbyhole myself into the minimal

look, or traditional, or Scottish. The terrain dictates more than the type of player."

He said he uses bunkers "not only as strategy to tell people where to hit the ball, but to hide things. Golf needs to be part mystery. You just can't lay it out on a piece of paper and expect it to work."

The golf courses Johnson doesn't like are what he calls "sod farms."

"The client's trying to save money and the superintendent wants to mow the entire course with a seven-gang mower. You end up with a sod farm. For the 70-year-old, retired crowd in South Florida, that might be the right golf course. But those are very boring to play, very un-eye-appealing," he said.

In contrast, he said his favorite American courses are Shinnecock Hills in Southampton, N.Y., from the old school, and Harbour Town Golf Links in Hilton Head Island, S.C., from the new.

"You have a big gap in the U.S. between the old and the new," he said. "Harbour Town [designed by Pete and Alice Dye] is like the headlight of new American golf course architecture from the '60s to the '80s. They've been



Tom Johnson was the lead designer for Denis Griffiths & Associates on this project — Chiang Mai Green Valley Country Club in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

playing there since '69, and it's a wonderful setting, wonderful golf course and wonderful strategy."

The lead designer for much of Denis Griffiths' Asian courses, Johnson expects to continue to work extensively there, and is now just an eight-hour flight away from Japan.

"I enjoy working in Japan," he said. "The biggest difference [from the United States] is, golf

course architects are more designers in Japan. We're not belabored too much with environmental and engineering problems. The client takes care of those parts of the job. Architects wear more hats inside the U.S. We're the liaison. We're in charge of the budget, in charge of grow-in sometimes...

"But in Asia, and especially Japan, we're basically designers: the creative thinkers of the job. I really like that."

Q&A: Robinson's design cup overfloweth

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GCN: How did waterscapes become such an important part of your work?

TR: It started in the Coachella Valley [near Palm Springs, Calif.]. I'm doing my 23rd course there now [Tahquitz Creek] for the city of Palm Springs. The developers of Sunrise CC [in Rancho Mirage] 15

years ago sent out questionnaires to 13,000 golfers. They asked them to pick their nine favorite holes in the area. Eight of them had water. We learned from that. We try to incorporate the sight and sound of water. It's the one hazard that does not slow up play. The key is to give golfers a way around it, to give the high handicapper an out.

GCN: With the water shortages in many parts of the country, is it becoming more difficult to get water features approved?

TR: Lakes actually save water. It takes 104 inches of water annually to keep grass green in the desert. If a lake is properly sealed, it loses just 64 inches to evaporation. So you save water by using lakes and ponds rather than grass.

GCN: What is your design philosophy?

TR: We want our courses to be as natural as possible; challenging for the low-handicapper but not discouraging for the high-handicapper; rewarding for the good shot but not overly penal for the bad one; with greens flexible enough to accommodate many pin placements. You can change average scores on a hole by as much as half a stroke through pin placements. There are two ways to build a course. First, there is the trial-and-error method, where you rough things out, move some dirt, look at it, then move it again if you

want to change something. It's creative, but it can be costly to keep moving things around. We use the second method, working everything out on paper or the computer. It's less expensive because you move things once and that's it.

GCN: How do you view the role of the superintendent?

TR: A good superintendent can take a mediocre design and make it look very good. He can also take a great design and make it look pretty bad. The designer and superintendent are dependent on each other. I like to get the superintendent involved during construction so he can point out maintenance issues we need to consider.

GCN: How involved is Ted Jr. in the business?

TR: He used to be with Wells Fargo Bank, so he's been very helpful from the financing end. In fact, we're looking at financing a course of our own in the LA area. He's also been computerizing everything around here. He's going to be a darn good architect before

long. We'll make sure he has several more courses under his belt before applying for ASGCA membership.

GCN: What is the future of golf development?

TR: It depends on the economy. Things certainly aren't as hectic around here as they were a few years ago. A lot of our courses are pending because of a lack of financing.

GCN: Has the Asian market helped pick up the slack on the domestic side?

TR: Definitely. We have a course going in Jakarta, another one pending in South Korea and one in Tomoika, Japan, that will open this fall. Environmentalists are a threat to Asian development. They're clamping down in some areas. There's a growing feeling that golf courses are detrimental. We have to combat that by bringing in environmental consultants early, publishing research on the safety of properly applied pesticides, and preserving wetlands by incorporating them into the design.

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Vintage Group plans half dozen 'downtown' projects

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"We want to replicate, for the most part, what we've done here, which is a significant practice area," Tourtellotte said. "We want to focus on being a learning center and to promote teaching. We have two nationally recognized instructors — Mike McGetrick and Don Hurter. We've got some very high-tech teaching facilities, with indoor and outdoor video cameras. We will have covered, heated tee stalls this fall." You can practice your long game

on the driving range, your short game on the par-3 course, and your chipping and putting on a 7,000-square-foot green and green-side bunkers.

Dye Designs International of Denver designed the par-3 course here and will be given first consideration for design of the future projects, Tourtellotte said.

"Perry has done a great job here and one of the things he does very well is par-3s, especially on tight sites," he said.

Tourtellotte said future sites need not be large. The Illinois Golf Center covers 30 acres, five of which are a public park. The San Diego property is 24 acres and is not downtown, "but it's urban in the sense that we want 500,000 people in daily-worker density within a 10-mile radius," he said.

"We're the good guys and ride into the cities with the white hats," Tourtellotte said, "because we're creating green open space as opposed to high-rises."