Skin Preparation
Glenn Martin has readied Rancho La Quinta CC for Daly &Woods: The longest Skins Game ever. 21

Design & Liability
Can golf holes be trademarked? Is your course responsible for emergency-vehicle access? 37

JURASSIC GOLF?
Not exactly, but the new nine at Puddicombe-designed Dinosaur Trail Golf & Country Club in Drumheller, Alberta, Canada, is other-worldly. For story, see page 35.

VANDALISM: A COMMUNITY ISSUE
Industry experts believe combating course vandalism requires more community involvement, not higher fences. For the story on this all-too common problem, see page 17.

OF PIPES & PALMS
The PGA Club at The Reserve celebrated its Audubon Signature status with pomp & circumstance. See page 54.

EASY CREDIT DRIVES GATX OUT OF GOLF
By PETER BLAIS
SAN FRANCISCO — In an ironic response to the improving financial climate for golf course development, GATX Capital Corp. will no longer make golf course loans, according to Vice President Roy Powell. GATX has traditionally loaned money in high leverage, high rate-of-return situations that traditional lenders [banks] typically shun, Powell said. GATX and companies like them were one of the few sources of capital during the late 1980s and early 1990s when traditional lenders, scared off by the depressed real-estate market, shied away from making golf-related loans.

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Compost: A top-drawer top-dresser
By MARK LESLIE
GLENVIEW, Ill. — Scientists can’t explain exactly why it works, but it does, and compost is gaining popularity among golf course superintendents as a top-dressing and divot-mix application.

"It definitely works, for whatever reason; it’s being used more widely all the time," said Dr. Eric Nelson of Cornell University. "There is a qualitative change that happens in the soil but what, specifically, is anyone’s guess. That’s what we’re trying to figure out." Attesting to the fact that compost enhances divot

Continued on page 16

Big Fish/Little Fish: Jacobsen absorbs Bunton
By HAL PHILLIPS
LOUISVILLE, Ky. — If you believe consolidation indicates a healthy industry, the golf course business just got healthier.

In a move company officials claim will "increase its leadership role in the turf maintenance industry," Racine, Wis.-based Jacobsen Division of Textron, Inc. has acquired the Bunton Company, a manufacturer of turf equipment based here.

No significant upheaval is expected at Bunton in the near future, according to Bill Robson, interim general manager here at the firm’s Louisville headquarters. For the time being, Jacobsen distributors will handle Jake products and Bunton distributors will handle Bunton products, he said.

“That doesn’t mean that if a Jacobsen distributor wanted to sell Bunton, we wouldn’t look at it," said Robson. "But right at the moment, nothing will change.”

With approximately 100 employees, Bunton’s 1995 sales were $19 million. According to Herb Henkel, Textron president of industrial products, Bunton’s facility and employees will remain in Ken-
Jake/Bunton

Continued from page 1

tucky. Bunton has long been

"iron" totem pole, behind (in no

products are good enough to be used

quality products... Bunton is an

strategies for melding identities.

"The purpose of this acquisi-

"Another example: To ship

by Jacobsen in 1990. Toro has since acquired

"In the U.K., for example,

"In the U.S., we change our

companies supposed to keep up?

"What seems to be happen-

"What appears to be happen-

"The way we look at it, Bunton

gives us a real nice presence in

commercial market. That's the

oblong, and in no particular order) Jacobsen, Toro,

Kubota and National

product line is expected to dove-

tail nicely with Jake's.

"But they've got a follow-

fairway mowers, along with hy-

We view the Jacobsen

and separate," Robson contin-

"However, a significant vol-

of Jacobsen are outside

the United States. We want to

look at enhancing Bunton's
distribution outside North

America with our existing

Jacobsen's distribution." 

Distribution is the key, accord-

gary Shampeny, who left

The Toro Co. to become Bunton's

vice president of sales & mar-
keting in 1992. Shampeny left Bunton

in 1995 to oversee turf sales at

California Turf, a Toro distributor in

Bermuda Dunes, Calif.

"This deal is good for the em-

ployees. The people within the orga-

nization are good people. They're
dedicated to Bunton, dedicated
to the product line."

Prior to the sale, Bunton had

maintained strategic relations-

ships with several overseas com-

panies, including Hayter in the

United Kingdom, and Tsuychia,

the Japanese greens mower

manufacturer.

"The company should grow,

and that will benefit the employ-

ees. The people within the orga-

nization are good people. They're
dedicated to Bunton, dedicated
to the product line." 

"The Andersons' Tee Time with NUTRALENE

formulations incorporate the industry's ideal

turf and golf markets," explained

Jacobsen's Harold Pinto, vice

president of sales and market-

ing worldwide. "Certainly, some

of these affiliations or market-

ing alliances, which Bunton

maintained before the deal, of-

fer us an opportunity to grow

overseas. We're reviewing these relationships and seeing what we can
do together."

"In the U.K., for example, Jacobsen already has some com-

mon distribution with Hayter. So this sort of cooperation is cer-
tainly nothing new to us."

Bunton's acquisition contrib-

utes to a pair of related trends

now evident in the turf industry:

the continued consolidation of turf

equipment manufacturers and the

increasing vulnerability of smaller,

family-owned operations.

In the 1980s, Cushman pur-

chased Brouwer and Steiner,

only to be purchased — along

with Jacobsen — by Ransomes in

1990. Toro has since acquired

Olahle, Lawn Boy, and now

Hardie Irrigation (see story page

45). Deere has consistently ac-

quired and sought alliances with

smaller companies. Now

Jacobsen has absorbed Bunton.

"All this consolidation makes

it very hard for small manufac-

turers, like us, to find distribu-

tion," said Stan Kinkead, owner

of St. Paul, Minn.-based National

Mower, one of the few remain-

ing family-owned "iron" opera-

tions in the golf business. "The

consolidation is scary, and I don't

think it's done."

Shampeny pointed out that

large manufacturers are always

trying to broaden their bases via

internal development or simple

acquisition. However, Jacobsen

and its competitors are increas-

ingly opting for the latter.

"You wonder how the smaller

companies are going to survive

as independents," Shampeny

said. "You need to invest in prod-

uct development and to stay current in

the marketplace and to make sure you're in [emissions] com-

pliance with all the regulatory

agencies. How are smaller com-

panies going to do that?"

Overseas concerns are impor-

tant, but competing effectively in

the U.S. market, by far the world's

largest in terms of golf course and

lawn care, continues to drive indus-

try consolidation.

"What seems to be happen-

ing," Kinkead opined, "is that

manufacturers want it all.

They all want to be full service. On

the golf side, it's driven by new
golf course construction —

the package deals. They all want to

be able to supply everything in

that initial package."