

BRIEFS



SASSER FORMS GDC, PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCY

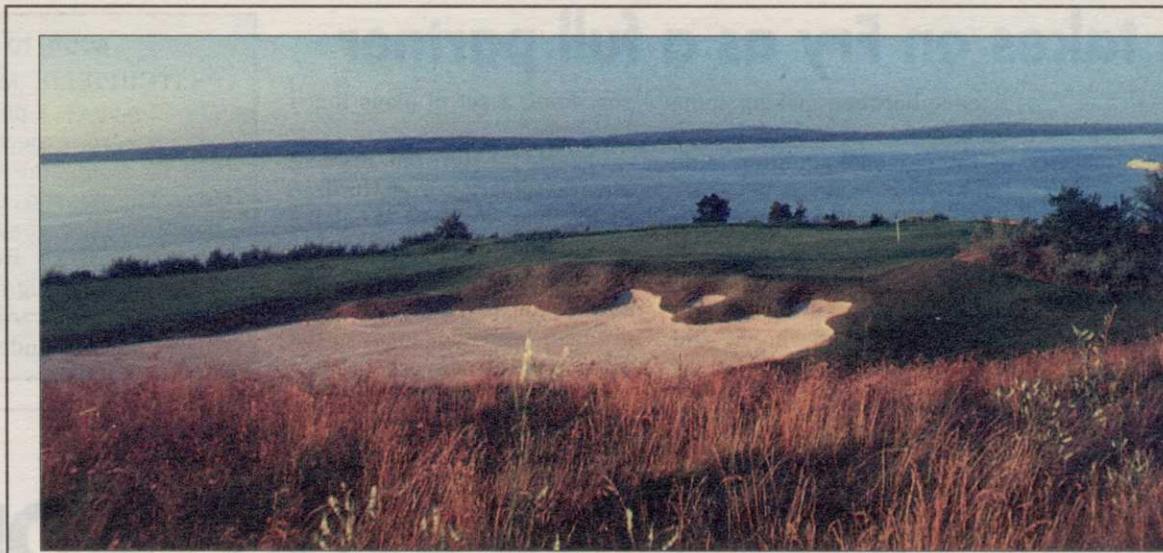
TEQUESTA, Fla.— Tom Sasser has formed Golf Development Consultants (GDC). The company will specialize in pre-development project management and technical service support for golf course construction. “Many developers begin projects without a full understanding of the methodology and costs associated with the development of a golf course,” said Sasser, who has more than two decades of experience in land planning and golf course construction. Sasser retired from the Golden Bear organization after 18 years, and most recently served as president of Paragon Construction. Sasser can be reached by calling 561-748-9052.

CALDWELL JOINS OLSEN TEAM

ANAHEIM, Calif.— Jerry Caldwell, a construction management veteran with more than 30 years experience in hospitality and golf course development, has joined R.D. Olson Construction as senior project manager. Caldwell, who resides in Phoenix, Ariz., served as project manager of hotel development for La Quinta Inns & Suites before joining the R.D. Olson Construction team.

NIEBUR PROMOTES MCGRAW

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.— Niebur Golf, Inc. has promoted Frank McGraw to the position of general superintendent. He will be responsible for the field operations on multiple projects. Niebur Golf provides construction services across the nation. Its current clients include projects ranging from Salt Lake City, Utah, to Southport, N.C.



BAY HARBOR NINE EXPECTS COMPANY IN '97
Bay Harbor Golf Club in Petoskey, Mich., is one of 10 projects Arthur Hills and Associates will open for play during 1997. Nine holes opened at Bay Harbor during '96, but Hills will open another 18 this year. For a rundown of Hills projects, see story page 45.

NEW FRONTIERS

Domestic golfers make Colombian market viable

By MARK LESLIE

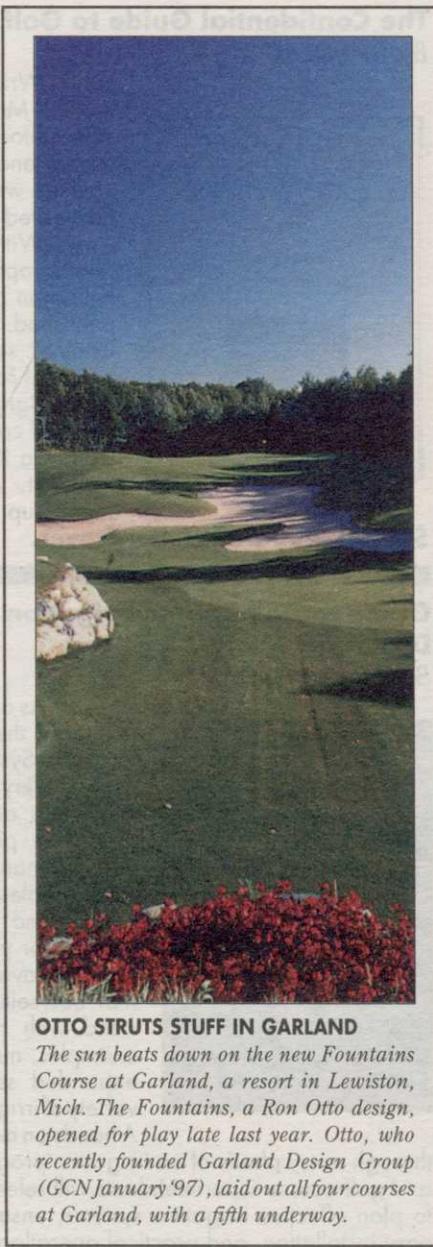
BOGOTA, Colombia — “I think Colombia now is like the U.S. was in the early 1960s when we just discovered golf and found that people could afford it,” said American golf course construction consultant Jerry Pierman.

Pierman, former president of the Golf Course Builders Association of America, is working with Jack Nicklaus and his Golden Bear International golf course design company on a project in Bucaramanga. Other foreign course designers are also busy here as this country awakens to the world of golf and its attraction to tourists. Not only are middle-class Colombians discovering the game of golf, but so are the operators of its resorts, which draw tourists from Europe and Canada to this country where temperatures are inviting year-round.

“It’s ideal,” golf course architect Gary Linn said of Colombia. “It’s Hawaiian. It’s California at its best. Mountainous, but with palm trees, thatched roofs... a special place.”

The mountains here are cool and inviting while the oceanfront is beautiful. American course architect Jeff Myers, who is remodeling Club Compestra of Medellin’s nine-hole city course on the

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OTTO STRUTS STUFF IN GARLAND

The sun beats down on the new Fountains Course at Garland, a resort in Lewiston, Mich. The Fountains, a Ron Otto design, opened for play late last year. Otto, who recently founded Garland Design Group (GCN January '97), laid out all four courses at Garland, with a fifth underway.

ASGCA Directors speak on design



The officers of the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) sat down in February to speak with Golf Course News, for a second time following a November visit, on issues affecting golf course design and maintenance. Taking part were ASGCA President Denis Griffiths, Vice President Alice Dye, Secretary Bob Lohmann and Treasurer John LaFoy. Here are excerpts from that conversation.

Golf Course News: Many courses are billing themselves as “playable for the high-handicapper yet challenging to the better golfer.” Does this inhibit your design style, and are we making cookie cutter courses?

Alice Dye: I don’t think so at all. By changing the angle of your tees, and a few things like that, you can make golf courses that are very challenging for back-tee players and still very playable and manageable for everyday players.

Let’s take one of the hardest golf courses in the world — PGA West [a Pete and Alice Dye design]. From their tees, the ladies play in less time than the men because it is very manageable for them. We gave them a good angle. There may not be an opening to the pin, but there is one to the green, and there are no forced carries except on par-3s... Because of the angle of the back tee, low-handicappers are shooting over the lake, through the fairway, into a bunker, whereas the angle

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Marsh gains U.S. foothold with HNTB

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Golf course designer Graham Marsh, who has long been active in Asia-Pacific, has formed an association with the golf course architect group of HNTB Corporation to offer design services in North and South America.

Graham Marsh Golf Design/HNTB will provide full-service de-

sign of upscale golf courses, as well as related developments — residential communities, resorts, hotels, retail and entertainment facilities.

The association’s first project is in Independence, Minn., for Burnet Realty. Graham Marsh Golf Design/HNTB is master planning a 600-acre development to include 60 to 85 residential lots, and 18-hole, high-end daily fee course, a learning center, equestrian facilities and trails, and a 15-

Graham Marsh (2nd from left) surveys a Filipino site with HNTB’s Steve Bauer (left) and a bearded Terry Morgan, representing developer Fil-Estate Group.

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Q&A: ASGCA

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of the forward tee is more-or-less straight-away.

Denis Griffiths: Difficulty relates very strongly to distance. So the 5,000- to 7,000-yard differential on a golf course ... certainly helps to accomplish "challenging for the good player yet playable for the average player." It's a wonderful description of the "strategic" strategy. "Strategic" is laid out to challenge the

good player, but it leaves an alternative route for the average golfer — not necessarily in the same number of strokes. We're all designing courses with 2,000 yards difference, four to five tees, and wonderful "strategic" strategy.

John LaFoy: The interesting part of this business is how each architect interprets what that [challenging and playable] means. Obviously, some courses are terribly difficult for the high-handicapper. If you build a course that the USGA refers to

as "Pleasant Valley," a scratch golfer will shoot 69 to 74, and the 10-handicapper will shoot 81 to 84. As courses get more difficult, the differential between their scores starts to change dramatically. The scratch golfer will shoot 72 to 76 and can still enjoy that course. But the 10-handicapper is going to shoot an 88, a 93, so it's really how we interpret what that means.

GCN: You just said, "As courses get more difficult." So they are getting tougher?

LaFoy: You can put your tees in where you want to and equalize that first shot. But the real problem comes with equalizing the second shot. That's always been the problem with lady golfers.

Bob Lohmann: The challenging thing is to look at the course from each tee. Before we build a course, we sit down and say, "Play the course from each tee like you're going to play it." With four or five designers, we have the opportunity to look at it different ways. So we don't end up

with a cookie-cutter course, but a very challenging one from a different number of tees.

GCN: What about having a shorter ball for tournament players? Is it a must?

Griffiths: I think so, to protect the integrity of our older golf courses.

My concern on equipment is twofold. One is that it is so critical that we don't lose all these old tests of golf. People play them with equipment of today and it's a different course than it was 50 years ago. The other is, distance translates to me as cost. You have more cart paths, more sprinkler heads, more grassing. You have to buy more land. If I can hit it 30 yards longer [ahead] I can hit it 30 yards longer [left or right]. Going from a 150- or 300-foot-wide corridor to 350 feet, you add 30 percent to that acreage.

LaFoy: One of the things we don't have control over is how a course is maintained after it has been grown in and is in play. A good example is some of the old courses that were intended to be played very hard. One of the ultimate examples was three or four years ago when they played the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach. The pros didn't know where their ball was stopping. On a golf course that is completely manicured and soft, they know where it will stop. On Pebble Beach, they played havoc because the ball would hit the green or fairway and roll off. Nicklaus will tell you: If they play Pinehurst #2 in the Open [in 1999] the way it was meant to be played — let the fairways get hard, let the rough stay low — it will be all those guys can handle.

In a way, the hard courses hurt the real good player but help the high-handicapper.

Dye: Golf used to be played on the ground. We didn't have watering systems. The greens were open in front. The ground was firm. There used to be the expression 'short and straight.' You could play the golf course if you were short and straight because the ball would bounce along. If you were long, often you would hit a firm fairway and go bounding off into the trees. Then, our watering systems came and golf suddenly started being played in the air. Short and straight didn't work any more because you couldn't get there. The ball that used to roll 50 yards rolls 10 feet now in the early morning-watered fairways. This is very, very hard on the player of less strength. The average player needs to hit the ball farther. He's got to have better equipment because his 50 yards of roll have been taken away.

Watering less would be great, but it's not going to happen. You're not going to go back to dry, baked-out bluegrass fairways. You've got bentgrass, and bentgrass has to be watered thoroughly and treated with soil medicines that have to be watered in.



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