

BRIEFS



GRAHAM, PANKS SPLIT

Player consultant David Graham and architect Gary Panks are terminating their 10-year association in golf course design. Graham is concentrating on a full PGA Senior Tour schedule, while Panks will continue to focus on course design and share more of the credit with his staff, including senior designers Gary Stephenson and Michael Rhoads. The firm will continue to operate its Phoenix and Dallas offices under the name of Gary Panks Associates.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? ENGH KNOWS

James Engh of Castle Rock, Colo., has changed the name of his golf course design firm and has established a web site on the World Wide Web. The firm previously known as Global Design Group, Inc. has been renamed James J. Engh, Golf Design Group, Inc. The web site can be contacted at www.enghgolf.com.

PARAGON OPENS IN ATLANTA

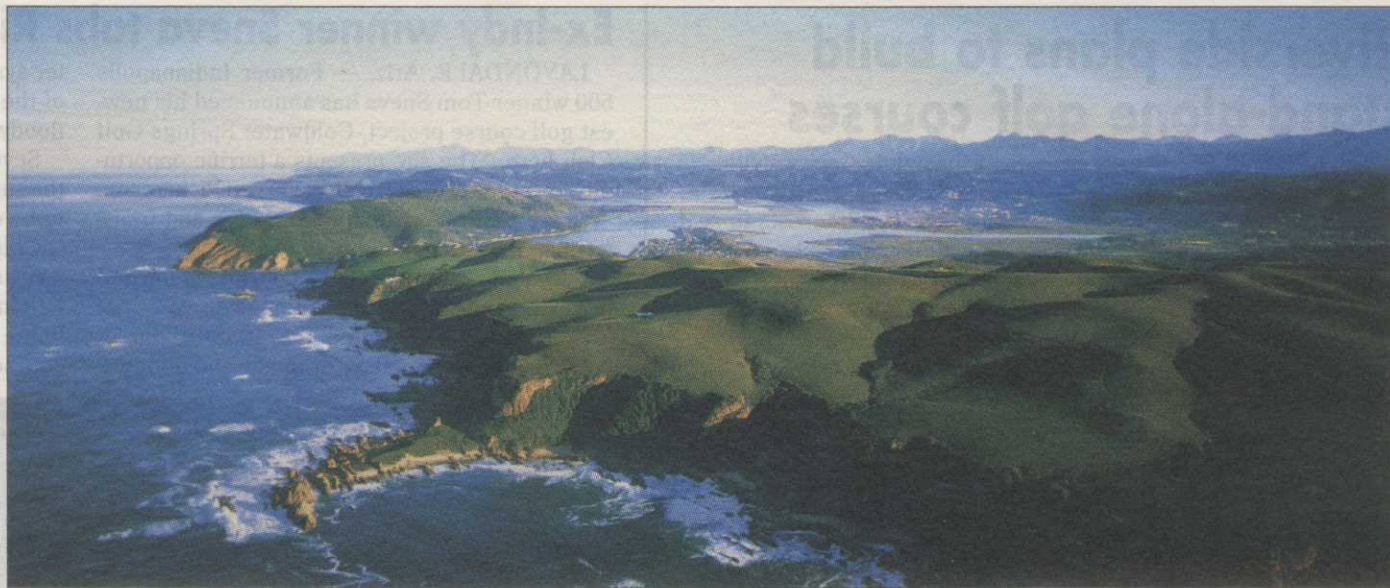
NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla. — Paragon Construction International, Inc., has opened its Eastern Region office in Atlanta. The office will oversee the day-to-day operations on all of Paragon's construction projects located east of the Mississippi River and north of mid-Florida. The Atlanta office is Paragon's fourth corporate office to open in North America. Others are located in North Palm Beach, Fla.; Phoenix, Az.; and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Outside of North America, Paragon has offices in Singapore and the Philippines.

SOCIETY HONORS GOLF DIMENSIONS

WHITTIER, Calif. — GolfDimensions has been honored by the Southern California Chapter of The American Society of Landscape Architects with two 1997 Quality of Life awards. GolfDimensions received both an Honor Award and an Award of Excellence in the Water Reclamation and Conservation Design categories for the Desert Willow Golf Resort located in Palm Desert. The awarding committee stated: "The project reflects a high level of responsibility to the environment while providing an attractive, challenging sports experience. This course will hopefully set a trend to create recreational arenas in which local natural character has aesthetic value."



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Too good to be true? Golfplan will design 18 holes here at the Sparrebosch Clifftop Estate and Country Club in Knysna, South Africa.

South African property an eye-lifter for Fream

KNYSNA, South Africa — Working a site that is "nearly too good to be true," Golfplan has been retained to design 18 holes here at the Sparrebosch Clifftop Estate and Country Club, a US\$100 million residential resort development situated on spectacular headlands overlooking the Indian Ocean.

Groundbreaking is scheduled for March 1 and the course will be the

southernmost on the African continent when it opens with a planned New Year's Eve 1999 celebration. This will provide Golfplan a unique bookend, as the Santa Rosa, California-based firm also designed the continent's northernmost course: the 27-hole Golf de Tabarka Resort in the Tunisian port city of Tabarka.

"When we opened Tabarka in 1992, people called it the Cypress Point of the

Mediterranean," said Ron Fream, Golfplan founder and principal. "So it's fitting that our first South African project will be Sparrebosch, because the site couldn't be more suggestive of Pebble Beach."

Developed by PK Developments Ltd. of Bangkok and Cape Town, the Sparrebosch project will feature a 150-room hotel and more than 400 holiday/

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Permitting planner Dianna Almini consults with Neal Meagher, senior architect with Graves and Pascuzzo Golf Course Design.

Designers offer permitting services

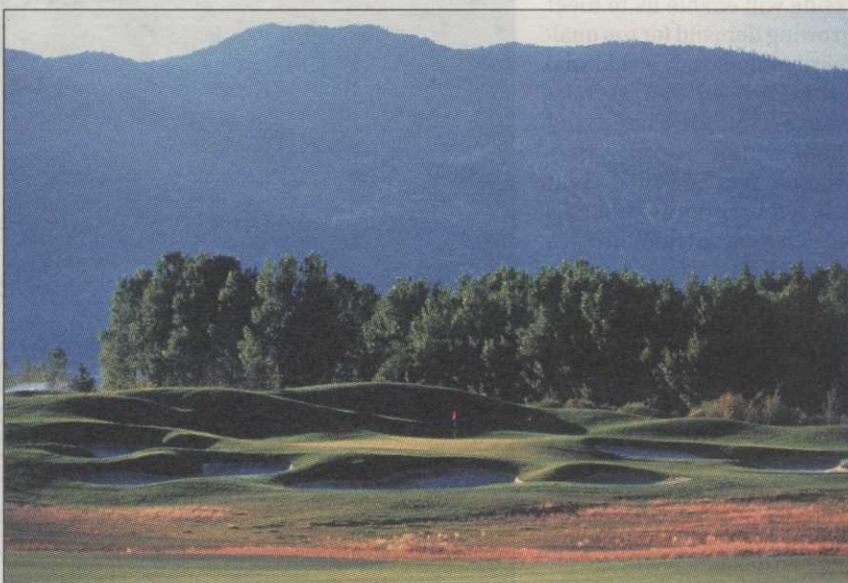
By MICHAEL LEVANS

WALNUT CREEK, Calif. — Looking for a way to stick out in the growing crowd of golf course designers, Robert Muir Graves & Damian Pascuzzo Limited have decided to bring development services in-house to help clients get past what is often the toughest obstacle for any golf development, permitting.

To head this effort, Graves and Pascuzzo hired Dianna Almini as director of development services. Almini is charged with the task of weaving clients through the maze public agencies often assemble, a job she had been doing as an independent consultant for the past 12 years in California.

Almini sees her new position becoming a chief selling point for the design firm. "For the most part, we believe that everybody who is in this market can de-

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The 5th hole at Lightning 'W' Ranch Golf Club displays the beauty of the Pascuzzo-Graves design.

QA Pascuzzo turns a break into a successful career

Damian Pascuzzo is managing partner of Graves and Pascuzzo Golf Course Design & Development. Pascuzzo oversees the firm's Walnut Creek, Calif., office, where his duties include establishing design standards, overseeing office production work, site qualification, project management, construction inspection and design. Pascuzzo earned a bachelor of science degree from California State Polytechnic University in 1981 and a year later joined Robert Muir Graves, who, since 1955, has participated in more than 650 golf course architectural projects worldwide.



Damian Pascuzzo

Golf Course News: How did you and Bob Graves team up?

Damian Pascuzzo: I was getting out of college and looking for a job. So I called him up and he was gracious enough to invite me to come talk with him. What I thought would be an hour interview turned out to virtually be all day. We talked about golf for a third of

the day, jazz for a third and aviation for a third. It was evident we got along beautifully, but he just didn't have any openings at the time.

Bob called me about a year later, said he had an opening and asked if I was still interested. I said, 'How about Monday morning?' We've

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Q&A Pascuzzo

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been together ever since.

GCN: What had you been doing at the time?

DP: I had worked at Disneyland summers during college and had gone back to work there after I graduated. The funny thing is that the day before he called I rejected an offer to go into Disney's management-training program. I was

thinking that I really wanted to stick it out and try to get into this golf course architecture thing. And sure enough, Bob calls me the next afternoon. That's karma or kismet or one of those things.

GCN: What was the first project you worked on with Bob?

DP: The first from the beginning was Santa Clara Golf & Tennis Club. Within a month of doing that, we were commissioned to do La Purisima. From there it just

blossomed through the 1980s.

GCN: Bob had a very successful practice dating back to the mid-1950s. How did you fit into the business?

DP: Bob's business had been quite successful through the 1960s and the early 1970s. There was a recession in the mid-1970s when he downsized a little bit. I was pretty much his first associate type of hire after that. But he's had some wonderful people work for

him—John Steidel, Robin Nelson.

Our staff grew dramatically in the 1980s. It grew from Bob and me to 11 or 12 people by 1990. We were doing projects all over the world—Asia, Guam, Canada and the Western United States, which has always been kind of a home base for us.

GCN: What's the major thing you've learned from Bob?

DP: Honesty and integrity. He's a very unpretentious guy.

He'll go out of his way to help you and never burn bridges... As designers, we all have these really cool ideas about things we really want to do. Sometimes we can't do them and that gets frustrating. But he taught us that the project is the most important thing, not your personal monument.

GCN: Most of your projects have been in the Western United States. Are you looking to expand to other regions?

DP: We have made inroads on the East Coast. We have one project under contract and hope to have a second within 30 days. Our goal is to definitely work throughout the country. As designers, it appeals to us to work with different environmental conditions, with different landscapes, and different market conditions. Upscale, daily-fee golfers are a little different in Ohio than they are in California.

We've never pursued international work very hard. But when it has come our way, it's been fun. We did a couple projects in Canada. We did a major renovation to a course south of Vancouver called Richmond Country Club. We did a renovation near Whistler called Squamish Valley Country Club. We built a course between those two called Furry Creek. In the movie *Happy Gilmore*, the scene where Adam Sandler fights with Bob Barker was filmed at Furry Creek. ... We've done several courses in Malaysia, one in Guam and a lot of planning work in Japan and Korea.

GCN: From a design standpoint, is there anything that you consistently see in a Damian Pascuzzo project?

DP: I hope not. Our clients vary so much that I really try to understand who their market is, what their development objectives are, and then design accordingly. On a very elementary level, Bob has ingrained in me a sensitivity toward maintenance and playability for all levels of golfers. But we try to tailor everything toward the specific client.

We have a client who has 135 acres on a steep site. But there are 2 million golfers within 10 miles. We're going into the project knowing the course will never make the cover of *Golf Digest*, but we're going to build a really fun course that's going to make these guys a lot of money. We're not building a monument. We're looking at it mostly from a business perspective. There's a very specific market niche there that we're trying to fill, and our job is to deliver that product for our client.

Occasionally, you get a project like La Purisima, where the client gives you 300 wonderful acres and says 'Find the best 18

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Q&A: Pascuzzo

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 holes possible.' That's a very different game.

The one thing that has influenced me is something Alister Mackenzie wrote in his book. He said the game should be approached with a "sense of adventure." I love that phrase. Golfers really respond to what they see. We all love standing on an elevated tee and being able to rip a long drive or carry a bunker, tree or chasm. Those little challenges, threats, or taunts that you can incorporate into the course are the sort of things golfers respond to and lend to the enjoyment of the game. That's the one thing that we try to incorporate into all our courses. We'll present you with an opportunity if you are courageous enough to take it.

GCN: Do you have a favorite course of your own?

DP: I don't have one that I wouldn't like to go back and remodel. You always feel that. A year later you say, 'Boy, if I could just go back I'd do this differently.'

But the test for me is whether I could be happy playing the course every week as a member. I could play La Purisima every day of the year and not get tired of it. It's the overall experience. It's a very strong test, especially from the blue tees. The white tees don't beat your brains out too bad. It's 300 acres of rolling hills just north of Santa Barbara, a marvelous setting. There's a real good rhythm to the golf course, the holes are all a little different, and you're not hemmed in by anything, not even other fairways. The overall experience is very enjoyable. You're not distracted by condominiums or freeways. It's a great opportunity to socialize with your friends and concentrate on your game.

GCN: You're regarded as one of the pioneers in the use of CADD systems for golf course architects. Why is that?

DP: When I was coming out of college, we were just getting into the use of computers in landscape architecture. I used to pest-er Bob to no end about getting into computer-aided design. We picked up our first system in 1987, right when the 386 hit the market. We had one of the earliest versions of AutoCADD and have been at it ever since. I know we were one of the first using it in golf course architecture because the ASGCA asked me to give talks on the use of computers in design back in 1986-87. Mike Hurdzan and Clyde Johnston also got involved.

Today so many of the young guys have grown up with computers and couldn't imagine life

without them. I'd bet at least 20 have worked complete CADD systems into their practice.

GCN: Have the costs to build golf courses increased?

DP: Unfortunately, costs continue to rise. When I first started working for Bob, he built a course in Washington for \$800,000. Now I can't even put in an irrigation system for that. It's unfortunate, but there are a number of factors that play into it.

One is the quality of the sites we're given. The premium sites are rare these days. Consequently, there is a lot of earth moving, remediation, landslide fixes. And certainly the environmental scrutiny we come under raises costs. We are protecting things, real and imagined, more than we ever did before.

GCN: How is the difficulty of environmental permitting affecting the industry?

DP: The most frustrating thing is that the permitting process is so difficult, so time-consuming and so financially intensive that only the big boys can play. It's becoming more and more difficult for the smaller developers to get projects off the ground because their pockets just aren't deep enough. And that's bad for everybody.

GCN: Is there anything especially positive about the current

development market?

DP: The one really encouraging thing is the outreach to newcomers to the game. ... If we can find these 10-, 20- and 30-acre parcels in urban areas that we can convert into pitch-and-putts and practice ranges, that bodes well for the game. I hope we can see some get built, then we could be looking at 30 million golfers instead of the 22 or 24 million we're at today.



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