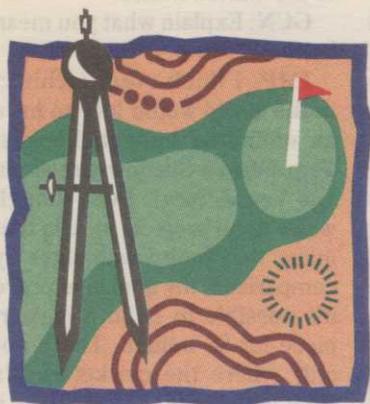


BRIEFS

**GERRISH HIRED AS DESIGN ASSOCIATE**

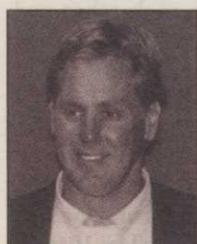
UXBRIDGE, Mass. — Tim Gerrish has joined the golf course architecture firm of Cornish, Silva and Mungam (CSM) as a full-time design associate. Over the past two years, Gerrish has worked part-time for CSM partner Geoffrey Cornish while earning his master's degree in landscape architecture from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst; he graduated in May. A native of Lisbon Falls, Maine, Gerrish earned his undergraduate degree in landscape horticulture from the University of Maine in 1991.

INC. CITES ENVIROTECH GROWTH

ENID, Okla.—Envirotech Services, Inc., an environmental consulting firm serving the golf course industry, based here, has been named one of the fastest-growing businesses in the nation by *Inc.* magazine. Less than 7 years old, Envirotech Services has experienced a 700-percent increase in sales from 1992 to 1996. This has placed the company 385th on the annual profile of America's fastest-growing privately held companies.

PALMER PROMOTES MINCHEW, LARSEN

ORLANDO, Fla.—Arnold Palmer and Ed Seay, chief operating officer of Palmer Course Design, have named Harrison Minchew director of design services and Erik Larsen director of sales. Both men are vice presidents and senior course designers for the firm. Minchew and Larsen are both regular members of the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) and the Urban Land Institute.



Harrison Minchew

ROBBINS HIRES WESTMORELAND

CARY, N.Y. — Robbins & Associates International has hired Jeffrey Westmoreland as design associate. He had previously worked part-time with the firm while completing his master's degree in landscape architecture at Virginia Tech. He earned a bachelor's degree in turfgrass management from North Carolina State University. Upon graduation, he was employed with Jerry Pate's design firm in Pensacola, Fla., as a course designer and was in charge of its turfgrass program.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Beauty from ashes

By MARK LESLIE

SEAFORD, Del. — Fortuitous. That is the operative word here, where Seaford Golf and Country Club opened a second nine holes on May 2. Fortuitous in terms of time and money.

Time: Because Seaford G&CC members had debated adding a second nine to their venerable nine for 15 years, and the government just happened to demand that the neighboring DuPont Corp. nylon plant dispose of acres of a byproduct, coal ash, that it had piled up over 30 years of operation.

Money: Because Seaford G&CC paid a mere \$800,000 for a brand spanning new nine-hole course, while DuPont paid the remaining \$1.2 million and still saved a couple million compared to the cost of disposing of the coal ash in another fashion.

"There is a 25-acre pocket of nylon



DuPont's manufacturing plant is visible in the background on the Seaford Golf and Country Club's par-4, 400-yard 3rd hole.

buried on the site 8 to 10 feet deep," explained golf course architect Rich Mandell of Whole in One Design Group in Durham, N.C., and Easton, Md. "They didn't know what to do with it.

"It was a wasteland. The ash was in a big pile in a field. They had three

holding ponds where it would go directly from the factory, sit for awhile, then be taken out and stored adjacent to the pond."

When the government mandate came down, the plan for a golf course seemed heaven-sent — for both sides. Orig-

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The par-4 4th hole at Long Island Golf and Country Club's North Course in Guangdong Province, China, is an example of J. Michael Poellot's recent work abroad.

Q & A Poellot's return to America stresses attention to detail

J. Michael Poellot's name is on golf courses from the People's Republic of China (the country's first private country club, Beijing Golf Club) to Japan and Thailand. But the 1966 Iowa State University landscape architecture graduate has done little in America since leaving a partnership with Dick Phelps and Brad Benz in Colorado 10 years ago. That is, until now. A former vice president of the Robert Trent Jones II Group, heading Jones' overseas division, Poellot and JMP Golf Design Group partners Mark Hollinger, Bob Moore and Brian Costello are concentrating heavily on the United States, with a half dozen projects in the works.

Golf Course News: You've undertaken a new relationship with Ernie Els. Can you tell us about it?

J. Michael Poellot: This initial opportunity with Ernie Els was a desire on the part of Kemper Sports and their local partner doing a project in the Washington, D.C., area. It so happened that Ernie had been looking for an architect he could be associated with whose work he would be confident in. We had just had an interview with Ernie at Winged Foot at the

PGA Tournament last fall and we seemed to be on the same page in terms of our philosophy of golf. It was Ernie's intent that he would not get involved, as some other professionals had, in doing a tremendous number of projects. He wanted a limited amount and to do them well and to be intimately involved.

I found him to be very thoughtful, and he listened well, which opened a great insight into our compatibility. We were both able to listen as opposed to dictate, which will result in a better relationship and a better product. We have met a number of times since then. We hiked the whole property in D.C. for hours trying to identify green and tee sites and let our imaginations run wild and see what the site would yield in terms of a great golf experience.

Subsequently, we have gotten together to talk further about bunkering strategy and other aspects of the playability of the course.

GCN: How involved will Els be in your work?

JMP: At this moment the Washington project is the only one we are working on.

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Rapid assessment, national survey on Audubon agenda

By MARK LESLIE

SELKIRK, N.Y. — A nationwide survey on environmental issues and a book enabling "rapid environmental assessment" of property for development appear on the horizon for Audubon International (AI) and may jump-start stalled attempts to build Audubon Golf Courses.

The Audubon courses, thought last fall to be on the verge of reality, still await that moment. Offered land from various private and public sources around the country, AI last fall formed the Audubon International Golf and the Environment Land Trust to develop courses that would also serve as environmental research and demonstration centers. Last September, with \$300 million to \$500 million in pledges from its principles, The Golf Co. was formed to partner with AI and identify and build Audubon Golf Courses.

The two parties expected to have two or three contracts in hand by the end of the year.

Admitting a long "period of frustration" finding the right property and circumstances, AI President Ron Dodson is still waiting for the first.

"We need the first one to be a home run," he said, "but more than that: We need people to know these will be Golf and the Environment 'research facilities' that happen to be golf courses, and they will be built in locations where we can test environmental issues in long-term research."

To that end, Dr. Larry Woolbright, dean of science at Si-

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Q&A: Poellot

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We are discussing a project in the Caribbean. We will work together if the deal is right and there is an interest from both sides in doing it.

GCN: Are your design philosophies in sync?

JMP: Having won the U.S. Open at Congressional last year, Ernie said he would like to see a

course more like the old Donald Ross designs and others of that era — obviously done with contemporary technology but which reflect a history and that looks like it has been there a long, long time. That is in concert with our philosophy. We tend not to be gimmicky or trite, or to come up with something faddish ... but rather try to do something that has classic proportions.

Let's say we're in the business

of creating the classics of tomorrow. We're not just here to satisfy some developer's need to sell real estate next week or next month, but to create a legacy long after the real estate has been sold.

GCN: Has your design philosophy evolved into "classical"?

JMP: I like to think our philosophy is one of emulation with innovation. That's all anybody can do, is emulate. It's all predicated on our experiences — the

same as if we were writing a book, or a song. We are gifted with a certain amount of discernment to be able to pick and choose what's good in an appropriate situation. Emulate does not mean imitate. Emulate by definition is to strive to equal or exceed. Imitate is a repetitive effort. I can only talk about this from my experience of having worked in Asia for such a long time. What I'm trying to do here

domestically is translate that experience into the new venue of the United States.

GCN: Explain what you mean by that.

JMP: I think every architect in the world would love to have an unlimited budget. Look at Tom Fazio's Shadow Creek [in Las Vegas, Nev]. Even though we've done projects in Asia that make that look low-budget by comparison, my goal is to prove it's possible to build a masterpiece for \$5 million. That's not only where the market is, it's what golf needs in order to be a viable and enjoyable pastime.

With 50 million Baby Boomers ready to retire in the next 10 years, you have a very discerning group of golfers who know the difference between golf and good golf and great golf. And they are going to demand affordable golf as well.

The fact that we've done some of the most expensive courses in the world with unlimited budgets, puts us in a very unique position because we know precisely what can be accomplished on a \$5 million budget, and we're very capable of doing that. Understanding the game itself is important. And a lot of it has to do with our landscape architecture background. Through creative shaping and integration of the principles of landscape architecture into golf course design, it can be a great success.

It's an art form. It has all those things great works of art have: balance, texture, color, form, etc. It is still extremely possible to create a landmark, unique, attention-getting golf course without getting trendy or gimmicky.

GCN: You believe there is too much gimmickry in the last 10 years?

JMP: I think it was architects trying to outdo each other and come up with something new. When you get right down to it, there is nothing really that new that you can do in golf. Golf has certain parameters and boundaries. I honestly don't think anything unique has happened in course design in the last 10 to 20 years. Using railroad ties is not unique. Sleepers were used on Scottish courses 50 years ago. It was not a new innovation, but it was a new application here in the United States. It was an attention-getting element.

GCN: Do you have a Poellot design trademark?

JMP: No, no physical differentiation. What I'm bringing to this market is a new level of service and attention to detail that we perfected in Asia. They demand detail there. It goes beyond that. The work we've done in Asia in the last 25 years has emphasized the integrity and importance of the golf course as

Continued on next page

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GOLF COURSE NEWS

Q&A: Poellot

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an end in itself. Here in the United States, the emphasis seems to have been that golf is one of any number of amenities required to sell real estate. The more houses you could line up on the fairways, the better. But in Asia, it was golf for golf's sake.

GCN: That has turned around the last several years in the U.S.

JMP: Yes, I think it has — for a couple reasons. There seems to be a subtle shift away from cookie-cutter planning, where you lined up the homes along the fairways. Now they are creating courses that are intended to be great playing experiences in their own right. If that necessitates building a core golf course, then so be it.

Also, I think there is an upsurge in daily-fee courses being built, often with no associated real estate. There has to be a happy balance between the two.

GCN: What is your particular strength?

JMP: It's a commitment to the project. It's being available. We're not playing the "name" game where you're buying a marquee name to put on your sweater. We're selling a product. And the only way to create that product is to be there and do it. That's another shift in our approach. We are not going to do a lot of projects. We will do a very limited, special number in key market areas of the United States.

We are already identifying what those key markets are.

I'm a bit overwhelmed by the interest in our firm. We are being highly selective. When a client comes to us, I want to be sure we're not opening another one up 5 miles down the road that will be competing with him.

We have a high-profile project in New York State, one in the D.C. metro area, one in Florida on a magnificent site on the water, another in the Caribbean and a couple here in California that we're excited about.

That's it right now. We want to get these gems polished and open for people to see and experience.

GCN: With your projects having been in such faraway places, has it been difficult to get back into the American marketplace, seemingly without skipping a beat?

JMP: Golf is an international game. Even though much of my work has been in Asia and the Pacific Rim, I know an owner of one of our Japanese courses has close contacts with Augusta National; he has been here to play and his American friends have traveled there. Golf writers here in the States have seen those courses. A lot of the well-known golf photographers have shot them. The word got out on the street about what we have done. People sooner or later recognize that.

Sometimes when one door closes, another opens. We've been blessed that that

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Poellot's U.S. jobs: excitement mounts

By MARK LESLIE

CARMEL, Calif — The Golf Trail at Santa Lucia here, 10 minutes from the gates of Pebble Beach, will be "a landmark project for the U.S. — a prototype of how to do it right," according to golf course architect J. Michael Poellot.

Here sits 20,000 acres of "the most pristine California landscape you could imagine — like you envision California a couple hundred years ago," Poellot said. "You ride through the gates of this Spanish Land Grant property with big hacienda. It's untouched.

"I call it Jurassic Park. There are bobcats, eagles and wild turkeys running all over the place."

Poellot's firm, JMP Golf Design Group, has been working with Sandy Tatum on the design for several years. But the developer, Rancho San Carlos Partnership, is bringing in Tom Fazio as the "signature architect" to "polish the gem," he said.

A joint venture between Olympus Real Estate Corp. of Dallas and Westbrook Partners LLC of New York, Rancho San Carlos Partnership hopes to begin construction this year. Of the 20,000 acres, 18,000 will be a permanent open-space nature preserve which the owners will fund in perpetuity. Very

limited housing will be built on site.

"It is the most well-documented, well-conceived, environmentally perfect as any golf course project can be, in a tough situation," Poellot said. "They have spent \$120 million to \$130 million just in land acquisition and permitting costs.

Poellot's intricate double-drainage system and environmentally sound design principles have already won a National Merit Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects. Water running down hillsides is intercepted, piped under the fairways and released on the other side, while irrigation and rain water is collected and contained within a second drainage system, and stored in a lake to be reused on the course.

Other JMP projects stateside are:

- Wild Hawk in Sacramento will hold a grand opening in August. It is a daily-fee course on very flat, barren agricultural land, and Poellot hailed it as "a good example of how to build a great golf course with a reasonable budget."

- Sterling Forest in Tuxedo, N.Y., situated on 2,000 acres, is in planning while the town updates its general plan. The property used to contain

Continued on page 38

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Palmer Design Co. honors Charles Fraser

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — Charles E. Fraser of Hilton Head Island, S.C., has been presented The PCDC Award, the highest honor given by Palmer Course Design Co.

An award for innovative excellence, performance and accomplishment, it is presented to an individual or organization for creative contributions that continue to have a positive impact on the business of golf course development.

Fraser is considered the dean of recreational and golf development. Founder and chairman of

the Sea Pines Co. from 1956-1983, "Charles Fraser has generated a record of excellence that is unmatched in our industry," said Arnold Palmer, president of the Palmer Course Design Co.

"All of us at Palmer Course Design are extremely excited and honored that Charles is the first recipient of our award," said Ed Seay, Palmer Design's chief operating officer.



Charles Fraser

Poellot in U.S.

Continued from page 31
another 15,000 acres which state agencies bought and turned into Sterling Forest State Park.

Much of the site is an old iron mine dating back to Revolutionary War. A low-density housing development for senior citizens is planned, along with limited commercial and office space, with the cornerstone being the 18-hole

course and 9-hole executive track.

• Coyote Creek, a short course in San Jose, which is in the planning stages.

• An unnamed 18-hole high-end municipal course under planning in Pleasanton, Calif.

• Roddy Ranch, a stand-alone 18-hole public facility in Antioch, Calif., developed by Roddy Ranch LLC, is under planning but expected to be fast-tracking through the permitting process.

Q&A: Poellot

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has happened to us. With the Indonesian crisis and other things in Asia slamming the door on projects, opportunities have been coming in as frequently, if not more so, here in the United States.

We are still an international firm. But given the opportunities being given to us in the U.S., we will be much more highly selective in what we will do. We are giving thought to a project in Brazil.

GCN: Do you see a difference in what developers want from one part of the world to another? How about in the States?

JMP: It depends on the country. In developing countries, like Central and South America, golf is relatively new in their marketplace. Just having a golf course in a development is all they need to start selling real estate. They're not at the level where they can differentiate between a cluster of fairways and a truly great golf experience.

There is a big difference. We have a huge legacy of understanding the game in the United States and, here, what sells it is the quality of the product. A developer in Japan, for example, wants a course he can distinguish and differentiate from the one down the street; and there are a lot down the street. It has to be special to market, because historically the membership fees have been astronomical. That is not so true today, but historically it is.

There is a little difference between developers here in the United States. There are certain "name" architects who have been around for quite some time. Pretty much every major area has a few of those already. Perhaps that's why we're getting the response we're getting: People are looking for a new face, for something different, something that has a little marketing edge over one of the old, established labels.

GCN: Do you have a favorite "classical architect"?

JMP: That would have been a very easy answer a month ago. I would have said Alister Mackenzie as most architects would initially respond. But having seen some of George Thomas' work [Riviera, Bel-Aire, and particularly Los Angeles Country Club], I was overwhelmed.

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