Not your normal backyard

One of three greens Carter Morrish designed for Bill O'Connor on an estate overlooking Malibu.

"Seven or eight years ago, when the madness was at its height, many so-called courses were laid out over private grounds..."

— Van Tassel Sutphen in The Outing Magazine, 1906

By MARK LESLIE

The current rage of building putting greens, and entire golf holes, on a person's property is not new, but rather a second coming of sorts. Two decades after Sutphen wrote those words in The Outing Magazine, Donald Ross laid out Overhills Golf Course on the Rockefeller estate at Pinehurst, N.C. But in the ensuing 70 years not much was heard of personal practice greens — until now.

Today's second coming of "estate golf courses" is one of often more modest pretensions and dimensions than their predecessors'... more people have the land for and can afford a single putting green, or a three- or six-hole practice facility.

"There is a big push everywhere to put in golf greens," said Rees Jones, who designed a course for an Atlantic Golf Club member across the road from the club itself in Bridgehampton, Long Island. "The impetus is not prestige, it's the love of the game. They love golf, and if they have enough property and money to do this, they can build their own golf greens."

Others who have designed greens and short "backyard courses" agree. "I think these are people working on their game to develop their skills," said architect Ron Kirby who, when he worked with Denis Griffiths, enjoyed a 1,000-square-foot green and a handful of tees 50 yards away outside their front door.

Continued on page 42

Golf Course News:

What will you be focusing on as president of the ASGCA?

Bob Lohmann: We will keep going with what we've been doing the last couple of years when Denis [Griffiths, 1996 president] talked about affordable and accessible golf and Alice [Dye, 1997 president] picked up on that and added a stress on..."
The first golf boom came during the 1970s. The 1980s were "the most recent heyday," he said, "with golf going crazy from one end of the region to the other. A lot of it was a spin-off of the dramatic success the Japanese were having. I don't think there was a corner of Asia that golf did not infiltrate at that time — from Vietnam to Cambodia, even Burma. "Coupled with a growing environmental debate, this hopefully short-term glitch in the economy has brought a halt to things in Asia."

While Malaysia is considered "the strongest of the Asian Tigers right now," China appears the one country where golf construction is continuing relatively strongly, Poellot said. "We have a dozen projects in China, and six are under contract and proceeding."

Buying the Chinese building wave is competition between provinces to attract foreign businesses. "They feel that to attract foreigners they need amenities like a nice development with a golf course, a place for them to live and feel comfortable," he said. "They are building golf courses in some of the most remote parts of China. As a consequence, the game is picking up development among the Chinese."

He claimed some of the courses being built in China are "as good as anything in America in terms of playability and championship caliber."

Although Poellot has not done business in Australia or New Zealand, he rated other nations:

- Indonesia is "an ugly picture" that could experience a serious civil war, he said. The country has "a serious problem that is more than economic. It is political. There is so much cronynism. President Suharto's sons run the banks, and nieces and nephews run the development companies. Until free enterprise hits that country, it will be a continuing problem."

The situation there is further complicated because its large, indigenous, mainly Christian Chinese population is wealthier and seems to be weathering the storm better than the native, mainly Muslim Indonesians. "They are at each other's throats," Poellot said. "If things don't improve I could see a serious civil war there... It has gotten into an Islamic-Christian confrontation as well, with Muslims attacking Christian churches."

- Thailand is "still seriously depressed."
- The Philippines have slowed down and developers have taken a wait-and-see attitude. "There is every reason to believe that those who weather the storm there will come back well and as strong as they were before," Poellot said. "But I think a lot of people getting financially beat up through this period may never recover."

- In Hong Kong the anticipated fatal fallout from China's takeover hasn't materialized. Indeed, Poellot said Hong Kong residents who haven't had any land, have moved off the island to places, including China, where they can have more space. "They are buying nice land on Continued on next page.
Grand Casino Tunica: From Mississippi Riverbed to 18 holes

Grand Casino Tunica's The Cottonwoods Golf Club, designed by Hale Irwin and Stan Gentry of Hale Irwin Golf Design, opened for play on May 11. Sitting on 200 acres of the resort's 2,200-acre property, Cottonwoods was once riverbed on the Mississippi that has been reshaped to rolling hills and elevated plateaus.

The course measures 7,000 yards. The casino hauled over three million yards of dirt to the area, adding 18 feet to land that was once below the Mississippi River water line. Grand Casino Tunica also added a lake to its existing family of waterways. The fully sodded course includes thousands of trees, bushes, and regional flowers; three lakes; and 80 sand traps.

Over half of Cottonwoods' holes border on water, including an island green. The golf course's drainage system and grassing plan allows for winter play. The course boasts bentgrass greens, Bermudagrass tees and rough and Zoysiagrass fairways.

An island green is indicative of water's role at Cottonwoods.

Rooted In Research.

Toro Multi-Purpose has been put to the test. In a recent university study, this organic soil conditioner, used as a supplement to a standardized N-P-K fertility program, resulted in impressive increases in root mass. Scientists documented increases of more than 27.5% over turf treated with the same nutrient applications without Toro organics.

Results outside of the lab are just as intriguing. Dennis Ingram, CGCS, Forest Oaks Country Club (site of the 60th Annual Greater Greensboro Chrysler Classic), writes:

"Toro BioPro products give me a predictable growth pattern, and an increase in rooting mass. Compared to past years, the rooting mass is 30-40% higher!"

Apply Multi-Purpose through fertigation, conventional spray, or tank mix it with N-P-K nutrient blends as an organic supplement to attain these results for your turf. Call your Toro Distributor for details.

To receive a free summary of the thirteen week study on BioPro products conducted at the University of Minnesota (1996-1997), call Toro at 1-800-448-9011. You'll be glad you did.

The efficient and environmentally responsible solution.

www.toro.com/agronomics

©1998 The Toro Company

Root dry wt. (g)

27.5%

Apply Multi-Purpose through fertigation, conventional spray, or tank mix it with N-P-K nutrient blends as an organic supplement to attain these results for your turf. Call your Toro Distributor for details.

To receive a free summary of the thirteen week study on BioPro products conducted at the University of Minnesota (1996-1997), call Toro at 1-800-448-9011. You'll be glad you did.

The efficient and environmentally responsible solution.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Poellot on Asia

Continued from previous page

golf courses, which they never could have done in Hong Kong," he said.

Japan has "some homework to do yet," he said. "They are certainly better than they were a few months ago. They are taking the right steps, but there are still a lot of cobwebs to clean out of some of the corners: graft and improprieties in economic circles. People keep being discovered as being involved in kickbacks and other inappropriate behavior. They have discovered that the iceberg is a lot deeper than they first thought.

"They are beginning to realize that if they want to get back on-stream, they have to do some purging before too long — more than superficially. They need to cut taxes and they need to get the people fired up."

Regarding the role the International Monetary Fund (IMF) might play, Poellot said he wishes administrators "could even be stronger than they have been."

"In a way it's disheartening to see the IMF throw all this money into a country. There are so many companies in so many countries that are suffering because of the Asian crisis. They ought to be given a little boot-strapping. Let the IMF help the little companies and resolve the problem from the grass roots up, rather than from the upper end, where it inevitably gets mismanaged."

Design 3 starts job


A group of investors led by Richard Kent chose Design 3 of East Lansing to master plan the 18-hole championship course and 54 home sites skirting its perimeter.

The 254-acre site is "very diverse, offering golfers a variety of terrain, orchard and water," said architect W. Bruce Matthews III. The 6,700-yard, par-72 layout has nine holes playing through rolling orchards and six holes adjacent to water.

Domres Construction of Manistee is the general contractor.

CIRCLE #137