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Fieldstone: One of six projects completed by Niebur Golf in ‘98

GREENVILLE, Del. — Fieldstone Golf Club, one of six golf courses completed by Niebur Golf, Inc. in 1998, is a spectacular project,” said designer Dr. Michael Hurdzan.

Referring to the “difficult” piece of ground on which Fieldstone was built, Hurdzan said: “Some of the best golf courses come out of the worst sites. That was a difficult site to work because of approximately 300 feet of grade change, lots of rock, streams and wetland areas.

“Niebur started moving dirt in late April 1998 and had the entire course grassed by Oct. 30,” said co-designer Dana Fry. “That is amazing. In fact, I did not believe it could be done. Most important to me was the fact that the quality of the work was outstanding.”

The 18-hole private golf club features a classic design, Hurdzan added. “There are several golf course contractors that are good, but only a few are great — and Niebur Golf is in that category,” said Dana Fry of Hurdzan/Fry Golf Course Design, which has worked with Niebur on several projects. “Joe’s real fast and has some great people working for him. That’s true with all those guys. That’s why Landscapes and Wadsworth [Golf Construction] have been so successful for so many years.

The companies that have the staying power are the ones that have the quality leadership and the workforce behind them to get the work done. Joe’s got that and he continues to get better at it.”

Niebur’s trail to business success may be unique among his colleagues, however. He grew up on a 13,000-acre ranch in Malta, Mont., riding herd with his horse Lester on 300 to 400 head of cattle.

After a year of college and a period of time building waterproof decks in Seattle, Niebur received a life-changing call from his father, Mark.

“Dad inherited some money and said he was going to build a nine-hole golf course, and would I come home to help? The entire family chipped in together, hired course architect John Steidel of Washington and built Merian Hills Golf Club.

“It was awesome and fun,” Niebur recalled. “It was the first time any of us had ever done anything like that.”

Niebur jumped on a dozer for the first time in his life, and brothers John, Tom and Jim laid irrigation pipe, dug this, plowed that and, to date, Merian Hills Golf Club became a reality in 1982.

“Dad has since sold the course, but that golf course is still running and making money — a great little golf course,” Niebur said.

How was shaping?

“It was so much fun I wanted to do it full-time,” Niebur said. And, with some help from his friends — namely, his father, Steidel and John Cotter — he did.

Steidel took the lead for Niebur, continuing on page 48.