**Lowry ‘builds’ true island green**

By MARK LESLIE

T. OLIVE, ILL. — A real island green will face golfers when the new front nine of Timber Lakes Golf Course opens in May here, halfway between St. Louis and Springfield.

"Yes, the island green is unique," said Bill Lowry, owner of Professional Landscaping, Inc., who built the course and co-designed it with owner Mike Favre. "But it also has three peninsula greens, and I don’t think you’ll find that on any course, anywhere."

To play the peninsula greens, golfers will have to wait until fall, when the back nine opens. But the island green stands ready to test them as they come to the clubhouse to finish the front nine.

The 15,000-square-foot island was not always an island, Lowry said. It was a horseshoe-shaped peninsula with a 6- to 8-foot-wide “moat” until Lowry widened the moat to 50 to 90 yards.

Lowry said the 6-acre lake was drained and then dug out in order to widen the moat. Water was 5 to 6 feet deep and now it is 30, he said.

Now the piece of land sits as an island, complete with trees and an 8,000-square-foot, three-level green for the 275- to 310-yard par-4 9th hole.

The approach shot from the landing area requires a 90-yard carry over the water. A 50-foot bridge takes golfers to and from the green, which can be seen from the clubhouse.

The back nine, Lowry said, is even more challenging than the front.

"The front nine is a 6 on a scale of 10 for difficulty. The back nine will be closer to an 8 or 9," he said. "The front nine is links style, while the back nine is carved out of the woods, uses natural terrain and of course has the distinction of being the toughest hole at Timber Lakes Golf Course opens in May here, halfway between St. Louis and Springfield."

The island hole at Timber Lakes Golf Course presents a tough challenge to finish up the front nine.

Continued on page 42

**Northwest Angle: Golf like nowhere else**

By TIMOTHY LYON

The club scuffs the ground hard before impact and the ball bounces 20 yards down the recently mowed fairway. A soft course registers more amazement than anger. George Risser readily acknowledges that his golf game could be better. In all honesty, if he handled his chainsaw and hunting rifle with the same proficiency that he wields a 5-iron, we'd probably be interviewing a one-armed man facing several involuntary manslaughter charges. Yet George Risser is “Mr. Golf” on the Northwest Angle, where his inability to putt or drive is overshadowed by the fact that he has established a legitimate nine-hole course in the middle of the most stubborn wilderness Minnesota has to offer.

Hacked from the popple groves and cedar swamps that choke the Angle, the course has the distinction of being the most northerly in the contiguous 48 states.

The tranquil air and groomed links belle the true character of what lays ahead. The fairways are narrow and lined with forest so dense that only those with a real affection for their Titleists make any effort to retrieve wayward slices. Tricky lake breezes push even fine shots into unplayable lies. And once you’ve survived the approach, the sand greens are another test. The course is an accurate reflection of the daily lives of the 60 or so Northwest Angle Country Club members.

“A dollar doesn’t come easy up here,” mused Risser as he confidently addressed another shot, “why should a par?”

Risser, a lifelong Angle resident who ran Pine Creek Pub Bar and Restaurant for 16 years and is in his 23rd year as postmaster, said the course was something he had always expected to do. The time, effort and money all lead back to George Risser. Locals helped with sweat...
SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Former Crown Golf Senior Vice President Robert M. Steele is heading a new golf course construction firm, SEMA Golf LLC. Based here, SEMA performs the specialized phases in the golf course construction process — from earthmoving and contour shaping to drainage, irrigation, and feature construction through finish grading and grassing.

Steele has more than 28 years of experience, and is credited for building more than 120 golf courses. Steele will oversee all construction and business relations.

SEMA Golf will focus primarily on work in the Western United States, but has and will entertain projects nationwide and beyond.

Joining Steele in this new endeavor are Vice President of Construction Operations Bob Trueblood, who was employed with Steele for most of the past 13 years; Project Manager Mike Angus, who has worked with Steele on projects for most of this decade; and several of the project superintendents, irrigation supervisors, shapers and operators who track their relationship with Steele back to the Crown and Clute days.

"I'm fortunate in keeping this talented nucleus of individuals," said Steele. "And this business is all about relationships. Relationships with quality employees, relationships with designers and owners. I will continue to demand the highest level of quality in our work and our business relations.

No matter how many world-beater deals you have on your resume, the only project your owner and designer are concerned with is the current one.

SEMA Golf may draw upon resources of sister company SEMA Construction, Inc. of Englewood, Colo. A heavy/highway and earthwork contractor, SEMA Construction provides services from clearing and earthwork through paving and lighting. SEMA Construction has garnered a reputation as a leader in the region, committed to integrity and excellence.

SEMA Golf LLC can be contacted at 602-951-4086. It is located at 7580 Gray Rd., Suite 102, Scottsdale, Ariz. 85260. It has bonding capacity of $100 million.

A WINNING SELECTION FOR TOP PERFORMANCE ON ANY COURSE, ANY SEASON.

What makes Turf Merchants, Inc. the masters in overseeding? The difference is in the grasses we develop specifically for overseeding applications: Popular perennial ryegrasses such as Affinity and Blackhawk, specialty lines such as Cypress Poa Trivialis and Barracuda Redtop, a complete set of grasses to match your conditions. And a service commitment that sets TMI apart. Whatever your overseeding needs, we've got the choice to place you in the green.

PERFECTING TURFGRASS PERFORMANCE

33390 Tangent Loop / Tangent, Oregon 97389
(541) 926-8649 / 1-800-421-1735 / fax (541) 926-4435
email tmi@turfmerchants.com / www.turfmerchants.com

TMI recommends the full labeled rate of Apron-FL for best establishment and performance of your turf.

Island green

Continued from page 35
fers the three peninsula holes. It's an altogether different type of golf course.

Nine ponds, from 5 to 14 acres in size, dot the 215-acre property that previously served as a campground. And Lowry said, "Nine times you cross water. Ten times you're affected by it."

The property was a campground, which featured a replica of the Golden Gate Bridge with span wiring that took campers across the moat to a "putt-putt golf course," Lowry said. But Favre had envisioned the site as a golf course as long as 10 years ago.

"He was 100 percent correct," Lowry said. "In fact, he's got more golf course than he ever thought he would have."

Timber Lakes is the first 18 holes the Penn State graduate and former superintendent has designed, and, he said, "The Lord blessed me with the opportunity to have such a nice layout. It's exciting because it has a lot of character in different areas."

A variety of tees were built for playability for various levels of golfers. • • •

After the 52-year-old Lowry left the superintendent profession, he operated his landscaping for 25 years and just recently decided to concentrate on building golf courses.

"I always played in the dirt," he said, "and there's nothing better than doing what you love."