SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Bruce Burger has been the only superintendent here at the unique layout known as The Quarry Golf Club, rated the top public golf course in Texas in four of the past five years.

Built in 1993, the Keith Foster design gives golfers two radically different looks. Measuring roughly 6,800 yards from the back tees, the course has a links-nine layout, that visually intimidates players. "As far as I know, we're the only golf course that has nine holes entirely in a quarry," he said. "I've got some rock walls that rise over 100 feet above the quarry floor. The native grasses can be punishing to players on the front nine, but the rock features on the back nine can be even more difficult to manage. They definitely encourage accuracy."

Burger's career began in high school, when he worked on the Pinney Woods Country Club in the small east Texas town of Nacogdoches — the same town where he graduated from Stephen F. Austin University with a B.S. in geology. Burger later took an assistant superintendent position with Neil Thraillkill at the Oak Hills Country Club here in San Antonio, where he gathered grooming experience in preparing a course for tournament play. "With the detail work, we had to time everything to peak for a tournament week," said Burger. Oak Hills CC hosted the 1986 Vantage and the 1987 Nabisco tournaments during Burger's stay, as well as the 1988 Texas Open.

As superintendent at the Woodlake Country Club in San Antonio, Burger became acquainted with then-club manager Jack Parker, developer and owner of The Quarry. Parker made him The Quarry's first employee, giving Burger leeway in building up his maintenance staff from scratch.

Assistant Jeff Farley and many of the staff members from the grow-in stages still remain at The Quarry. Greens mowers: 4 Jacobsen Greens King IV Tee mowers: 1 Jacobsen Greens King IV Fairway mowers: 2 Jacobsen LF-128 Rough mowers: 2 Jacobsen Tri-Kings 1900 Riding bunker rake: 1 Toro Sandpro 5000, 1 Smithco bunker rake Turf utility vehicles: 5 Cushman, 2 E-Z-GO Freedom HP, 1 Jacobsen 810 Verte-cut reels: 1 set LF-128, 1 set Greens King

Burger's 14-member staff keep close watch on monitoring wells.

"The links nine has been constructed over the quarry's old clay vaults, where kiln dust from the cement operation was buried. The environmentally sensitive aspect to the front nine requires that Burger's 14-member staff keep close watch on monitoring wells."

But it is the 84-acre back nine layout, nestled in the 100-year-old limestone quarry, that visually intimidates players. "As far as I know, we're the only golf course that has nine holes entirely in a quarry," he said. "I've got some rock walls that rise over 100 feet above the quarry floor. The native grasses can be punishing to players on the front nine, but the rock features on the back nine can be even more difficult to manage. They definitely encourage accuracy."

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