**BCG set to break ground at Oxford Greens in May**

**By Laurence Hirsh**

The impact of golf ball and club technology has been a hot topic of debate in the golf industry lately – and for good reason. In many ways, it has changed the way golf is played.

The ability of professional players to hit longer drives has made some of the game’s greatest venues inadequate for major professional and amateur events. Tom Fazio added nearly 400 yards to Augusta National this year to ensure a “proper” challenge for the game’s greatest players.

Many players, including designers/players Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer, have called for modifications to the golf ball, while others have suggested a variety of equipment changes. The American Society of Golf Course Architects suggested that “a line be drawn in the sand” to avoid technology rendering some courses obsolete. The society said future courses could exceed $8,000 yards if nothing is done to contain technology.

While many courses have undergone or considered renovations, there are many more with no opportunity to do so because of limited land resources, cost considerations, and political or environmental issues. The need for larger golf courses will lead significantly increased construction and maintenance costs and will likely make the game more expensive to play. All of this would be detrimental to the growth of golf.

On average, the site for a 7,000-plus-yard, 18-hole course...
intrigued me to the point I had no choice but to follow in his footsteps. But I feel fortunate to be able to pursue my career from both the technical and the artistic sides of the equation. That’s just who I am.

Thanks to modern real estate development, the quantum leap in the golf industry has been to make golf courses more visually inviting. We not only are allowed to do more aesthetically, we’re practically mandated to create works of beauty. That’s just who I am. The visual presentations must constantly change hole by hole, shot by shot, through the daylight hours.

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At Torreon, those elements were already in place, created by the forests, glades, and canyons. We didn’t have to work nearly as hard to create an interesting play of light against the terrain.

GCN: Do you always shape the golf course in accordance with the natural play of light?

Von Hagge: Yes. I use the permanent theatre. This means that four people are experiencing the course immersed in a 360-degree visual experience, either consciously or subconsciously for four to five hours.

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