

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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### Added length = added costs

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VON HAGGE'S STAGE

Architect Robert von Hagge allowed his artistic sensibilities to dictate his design vision at Torreon Golf and Country Club here in Show Low, Ariz. The first hole is pictured above. See Q&A on page 17.

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### PERIODICAL

## Compost tea slowly gaining golf converts

By ANDREW OVERBECK

With mounting environmental pressures and increasing chemical costs, some superintendents are turning toward sustainable agricultural techniques.

On the forefront of this trend is compost tea, a higher-tech version of a centuries' old technology that "brews" compost to create a concentrated liquid "tea" that delivers beneficial microbes and low levels of nutrients to turfgrass. The brewers, which have been commercially available since 1998, are used most heavily in agricultural settings. While there is no scientific evidence to directly support it, superintendents using compost tea report less disease pressure, less need for fertilization and irrigation and all-around healthier turf.

"Three years ago I was getting dollar spot that was unbelievable," said Charles Clarke, superintendent at Woodbury Country Club in Woodbury, N.J. "I was getting five days of control out of Bayleton and seven days out of Daconil. Two years ago I started spraying with compost tea every seven days and by the end of the summer I saw results. This year I was getting 15



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## Chensoff's Calusa Pines elevates golf in Naples

By A. OVERBECK

NAPLES, Fla. — In order to compete in the ever-expanding Naples golf market, developer Gary Chensoff knew that he had to create something radically different in order to elevate his new project above other area courses.

Chensoff, who was also involved in the development of the Rees Jones-designed Naples Grande Golf Club, has succeeded both literally and figuratively here with the November opening of Calusa Pines Golf Club.

Enlisting the services of Hurdzan, Fry Design, Course Doctors and superintendent Eric von Hofen, Chensoff transformed 550 acres of flat land into an undulating property that has 58 feet of elevation change and features the highest point of land in south Florida.

The eighth hole at Calusa Pines is framed by a 27-foot tall bunker.

## Golf's 'big three' weather slowdown

By ANDREW OVERBECK

It's no secret that 2001 was a tough year for the golf business. With the economy flagging, budgets tightened, new construction slipped and golf rounds were down. The events of Sept. 11 have simply exacerbated the situation.

While many companies are struggling to maintain the status quo, the big three turf equipment manufacturers definitely felt the contracting golf economy land on their bottom lines with a resounding thud.



Steve Keating



William Robson

Textron, which was still computing year-end numbers when *Golf Course News* went to press, posted a net loss of \$330 million in the third quarter alone. John Deere's net losses mounted to \$64 million on the year. Only Toro managed to post positive growth for 2001 with net income up 11.4 percent to \$50.4 million.

While these numbers represent entire corporations of which the golf and turf divisions make up a fraction of the total business, representatives from all

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The eighth hole at Calusa Pines is framed by a 27-foot tall bunker.

In order to reach such heights, Course Doctors, working with local mass excavator LeeMar, blasted through tons of rock to dig 72 acres of 25-foot-deep lakes. Part of

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## NGCOA, Club Car ink partnership deal

By ANDREW OVERBECK

CHARLESTON, S.C. — The National Golf Course Owners Association has signed an exclusive agreement with Club Car, Inc., to form a "premier partnership."

In addition to providing pricing incentives for NGCOA members, Club Car will sponsor golf car fleet management programs and educational seminars and work with the association to grow its membership. The agreement will run for a term of five years and has replaced the NGCOA's previous deal with Yamaha Golf Car Co.

Moving beyond a pricing deal was a key part of the agreement, according to Club Car's vice president of marketing Chris Plummer.

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## Calusa Pines

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the two million cubic yards of fill from the pond excavation was then used to create the 15-acre landmass that encompasses seven holes on the private Calusa Pines layout.

### ONE MILLION IN DYNAMITE

"This is a hard place to build a golf course," said director of agronomy Eric von Hofen who

has worked at Calusa Pines since November of 2000. "You have to blast into coral rock to build ponds. We spent one million dollars on dynamite alone."

Once the blasting was done, the next challenge was forming the landmass.

"On the plans, it was 20 feet lower than the finished product,"



Eric von Hofen

said lead architect Dana Fry. "The height of it was not as difficult as the scale of it. It is 58 feet high, but it goes on for a couple thousand yards in order to make it look natural."

The landmass was tied to the golf course through numerous sand and waste bunkers. There is one waste area that



An aerial view of Calusa Pines Golf Club

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encompasses nine acres and the eighth green features a 27-foot tall bunker.

"Once we built that big earth mass, we had to keep water from washing the features away," said Course Doctors president Jim Sparks. "Our shapers Jeff Carsner and Steve Coe worked closely with Dana to tie in the finish work and bunker construction."

As Course Doctors completed the fine shaping, von Hofen followed behind with landscaping.

"We wanted to make the course look like it had always been there," he said. "We didn't want to build a big mound and leave it all grass." Von Hofen and his team planted 165 large oak trees (some as high as 45-feet tall and weighing 37,000 pounds), 1,200 pine trees and 900 sable palms. The final tab on construction topped out at \$16 million.

Calusa Pines sports TifSport fairways and TifEagle greens, turf that von Hofen said will also set the course apart from the competition.

"We are the first course to open in south Florida with wall to wall TifSport on the fairways," he said. "It is more cold tolerant, more disease resistant and has less thatch build up. I had TifEagle greens at Sailfish Point Golf Club [in Stuart, Fla.] and it continues to exceed my expectations. We are cutting them at one tenth of an inch and have them rolling 11 feet on the Stimpmeter."

### HIGH END EXPECTATIONS

Members at the ultra-exclusive club will expect the best. Membership is by invitation only and will be limited to 275. The initiation fee is \$175,000. For the money, Calusa Pines members will get a golf-only facility, an exclusive clubhouse, and the service of caddies.

Going forward, von Hofen will be working on the construction of the development's semi-private course called The Ridge Golf Club, which will be completely separate from Calusa Pines. The course was also designed by Hurdzan, Fry and construction will get underway this year.

"It will have its own entrance and clubhouse," said von Hofen. "We already have all the drainage pipes in, we just need to bring in some more fill." The course could open in early 2003. ■

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