

Tools of the Trade...at George Brown's Westin Turnberry Resort

AYRSHIRE, Scotland — "I like to keep it lean and mean rather than soft and green," said golf course and estate manager George Brown of his maintenance practices here at the Westin Turnberry Resort.

While he admits that there are differences between what the golfing public has come to expect from the conditioning on a true links-style course and a modern layout, Brown insists that his cultural practices make for healthier turf.



George Brown

"I don't care if it goes a little brown here and there, it is especially nice to see it on a links course," he said. "I like to see the greens firm up and get a wee bit fiery. And I think traditionalists like Tom Watson and Lee Trevino would go along with that.

"Now if superintendents elsewhere let their greens dry out or get a little bit undernourished, they would probably wind up losing their jobs. Everyone wants the ball to stop dead when it hits the green whether they are hitting a wedge or a one-iron," Brown continued. "But you don't get your true native grasses when you start putting on too many nutrients and too much water."

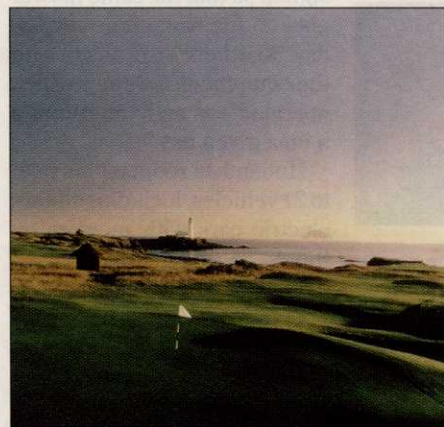
Brown, who is on the Royal and Ancient advisory panel and has been at Turnberry for 16 years, points out that even in Britain native grasses are disappearing from the greens.

"On some greens you have more than 80 percent poa because of close mowing and over fertilizing and over watering," he explained. "Water is becoming a premium and new projects are put-

ting in USGA-spec greens that need lots of water. That's crazy. When you over water and over fertilize that encourages the wrong grasses, encourages disease and leads to the use of more chemicals. All of this costs a fortune, pollutes soils and is very labor intensive. And you finish up with not a very good quality green."

At Turnberry, Brown oversees the management of the famous Ailsa course that has hosted three British Opens, the newly opened Kintyre Course that was designed by Donald Steel, the new nine-hole Arran Academy Course, the golf academy and pitch and putt areas, and the resort's gardens.

The courses all feature a mixture of browntop bentgrass, fescues and other native turfgrasses. Brown does have



The Ailsa Course hosted the British Open in 1977, 1986 and 1994. The 11th hole is pictured above.

about 15 percent poa in his greens, which he attributes to wet summers and dark, damp winters.

Brown has a double row irrigation system that is used "just to keep the turf alive", and uses a fertilizer derived

BROWN'S TOOLS

GREENS MOWERS: 3 Toro Triplex,

2 Jacobsen Triplex, 6 Toro pedestrian

TEE MOWERS: 2 Toro Triplex, 1 Jacobsen Triplex, 3 Ransomes pedestrian

FAIRWAY MOWERS: 1 Toro 6500,

1 Jacobsen Tri-King,

1 Ransomes Hydraulic 5

ROUGH MOWERS:

1 Ransomes Magna, 3

Jacobsen Tri-King, 2

Toro Reel Master, 2

Toro Rotary

TURF UTILITY VEHICLES: 4 Kawasaki

Mule, 3 Cushman

VERTI-CUT REELS: 2

Toro greens units

AERIFIERS: 1 Toro

Greensmaster, 1 Toro

Fairway Aerator, 1 SISIS Slitter (fairway), 1 SISIS (greens)

TOPDRESSERS: 1 Cushman (greens),

1 Charterhouse (fairways)

GROOMING REELS: 1 for Toro Triplex,

6 for Toro pedestrian

REEL GRINDER: Eric Hunter Jupiter

BEDKNIFE GRINDER: Eric Hunter Jupiter

IRRIGATION PUMP STATION:

Watermation 888 gpm

IRRIGATION SYSTEM: Toro Site Pro

FLAGSTICKS: Pattison

COMPUTER & ACCESSORIES: 1

Compaq, 1 Hewlett Packard

PRIMARY HERBICIDE: New Estermone

PRIMARY INSECTICIDE: Maraud



A view of Brown's maintenance facility

PRIMARY FUNGICIDE: Rovral

PRIMARY SLOW-RELEASE FERTILIZER: Superturf SSD 8-0-0

CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT: Golfers

OLDEST PIECE OF EQUIPMENT ON COURSE: Me!

TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE OF MAINTENANCE BUILDING: 10,000

sq. ft.

ANNUAL ROUNDS OF GOLF:

Ailsa: 37,000; Kintyre: 23,000

NORMAL GREEN SPEED: 8', but

depends on wind

from chicken manure on the greens. The fairways only get fertilized once every two or three years. He also gets an occasional attack of fusarium on his greens which he has to treat with a fungicide. At the peak of the year-round playing season, his staff mows the

greens once a day and the fairways twice a week.

Brown, who at 65 is starting to "wind down his career," is assisted at Turnberry by three head greenskeepers: Martin Lothian, Jimmy Johnson and Tom Cuthill.

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