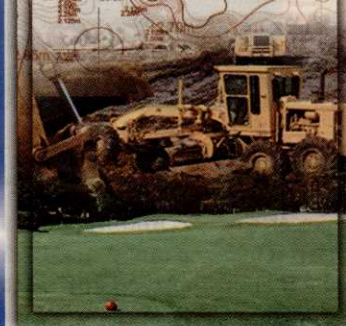


# DEVELOPMENT & RENOVATION



## BRIEFS

### QUALITY GRASSING BREAKS GROUND ON RENOVATION

LITHIA, Fla. — Quality Grassing & Services Inc., winner of the 2002 *Golf Course News* Large Builder of the Year Award, has begun work on a \$1.6 million renovation at Point Mallard Golf Course in Decatur, Ala. The renovation began last month and includes rebuilding all 18 greens and completing extensive tee, irrigation, drainage and car path renovations. Architect John LaFoy is overseeing the work.

### HEARN/ALBANESE HIRES MARKETING FIRM

BLOOMFIELD HILLS, Mich. — Raymond Hearn/Paul Albanese Golf Course Designs Inc. has hired Golf Marketing Services to handle its marketing and public relations efforts. Hearn/Albanese hired Golf Marketing Services to handle promotion of several high-profile projects the firm has coming online in the next few years. Among the firm's current project are Egg Island Golf & Yacht Club in North Eleuthra, Bahamas, and Mill Creek Golf Club in Rochester, New York.

### CUPP-DESIGNED OLD ORANGE UNDERWAY

FORT MEYERS, Fla. — Initial development has begun on Old Orange, an 18-hole Bob Cupp-designed golf course at Verandah, the Bonita Bay Group's master-planned community here. The course is scheduled to open later this year. Work began in mid-December and has involved digging lakes, beginning drainage work and moving dirt. Bonita Bay expects to begin grassing the course in March or April.

### LUMMI DEVELOPMENT CHANGING NAME

ATLANTA — Lummi Development Inc. will change its name to Signature Horizons Group Inc. in mid-March. Signature Horizons acquired a controlling interest in Lummi in October. The company is also moving toward a closing of its acquisition of Sea Trail Plantation and Golf Links in Sunset Beach, N.C.

## Bunker renovation protects Pelican Hill's 'Fazio look'

By ANDREW OVERBECK

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. — Work is underway here at Pelican Hill Golf Club to renovate all 125 bunkers and protect Tom Fazio's original design.

Director of agronomy Steve Thomas is overseeing the renovation, which began in late January.

"Over the last 12 years the bunkers have lost the 'Fazio look,'" said Thomas. "We wanted to maintain the character of the original design and get back the fat bunker lip."

"We will make some architectural changes by expanding some bunkers and making others smaller," he added. "We will also improve drainage and put in a higher-quality sand."

The Irvine Co., which owns and

manages the 36-hole club, decided to shut the South Course down entirely and shift play to the North Course while renovation work took place. When the South Course re-opens in March, work will commence on the North Course.

"That is one of the benefits to being 36 holes," said Thomas. "The Irvine Co. decided it was a good time of year to go ahead and close a course, because it is typically our rainy sea-



A worker excavates a bunker to bring back the fat lip of Fazio's original design.

son when play is lower."

The company brought in two builders, Jessup, Md.-based

McDonald & Sons and La Quinta, Calif.-based Peerless Golf Inc. to

Continued on next page

## Raynor's Mountain Lake reborn



Architect Brian Silva restored bunkers and greens to Seth Raynor's squared-off design of 1916.

By DEREK RICE

LAKE WALES, Fla. — Grow-in is completed and play has resumed on Mountain Lake Golf Course, where architect Brian Silva restored the course to its original 1916 Seth Raynor design.

Over the years, many of the

greens and bunkers, which had been squared, had softened into more rounded or amorphous shapes, said Dorothy Blackwell, director of member relations for Mountain Lake.

"Our members voted last year to restore the course to

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## Developers learn from Dark Horse experience

By DOUG SAUNDERS

AUBURN, Calif. — Last year, the latest entry into the crowded Northern California golf market, Dark Horse Golf Club, opened for play, culminating a 13-year struggle to bring a quality public golf venue to the Sierra foothill region. The developers, Ed Fralick and his son Chad, are heartened to see the tee sheets begin to fill up with players after spending so much time, energy and money wading through permitting meetings, EIRs and mitigations to bring the 7,218-yard Keith Foster-designed layout on line.

The rambling track flows over 420 acres of land that are defined by dramatic elevation changes, a series of natural wetlands and thick stands of mature oak trees.

Foster was fortunate to be given free rein of the entire 1,045 acres in order to find the best layout for the course. This was an opportunity that few architects ever get and Foster searched for the best routing to capture the prominent natural features to compliment the course.

This is the Fralicks' first foray into golf course development but they didn't come into the field without some background. Their years as successful custom homebuilders and housing developers in the Sacramento area gave them the confidence to take on the challenge. But they discovered that while there are many similarities in golf construction and home construction, there are also striking

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## Openings decline for second consecutive year

JUPITER, Fla. — For the second consecutive year, golf course openings in the United States slowed, according to the National Golf Foundation's (NGF) *Golf Facilities in the U.S. Report*.

The NGF said the report may signal that construction is coming back in line with demand.

In 2002, approximately 248 golf courses, measured as 18-hole equivalents, opened. This num-

ber is down 13 percent over 2001 and down 38 percent from 2000, which was the 15-year peak.

However, there is some good news to be gleaned from the report. The NGF predicts development will stabilize in 2003, based on the number of courses already under construction that are expected to open this year.

The drop-off in construction

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First-time golf course developers Ed and Chad Fralick cut their teeth on Dark Horse Golf Club in Auburn, Calif.



## Dark Horse experience

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challenges that caught them by surprise.

"I have been through the process for getting permits for housing sites, but I was not prepared for the variety of approvals and difficulties that came about in building a golf course. When I received the initial approval for the master plan in 1989, it just started a 10-year journey through every state and federal agency imaginable. To get through the entitlement process we had to deal with 161 mitiga-

tions that sent us through everything from the Army Corps of Engineers to Fish and Game to the state historical society," Ed Fralick said.

During the years of mitigation Fralick's firm, Dark Horse LLC, was also challenged by changes to the initial master plan by the county planning agencies. The investment group envisioned a traditional real estate-driven golf development that had approval for 1,400 home sites. But after the years of working through mitigations the county agencies decided to cut back on the size of the project and allowed for the develop-

ment of only 275 home sites.

This reduction forced Dark Horse to change plans midstream. This major reduction changed the economics of the entire concept.

"We now had 1,000 acres of prime land and with just 275 home sites we knew the project could not support a golf club on its own. We made the decision to separate the golf course from the housing development so each entity could stand on its own. We now wanted to make the golf course the best possible and do it in-house to keep the costs controlled as best as possible," Chad

Fralick said. "After all the years of going through approval meetings, litigations, and hearings when we finally got to start actually building the golf course in March of 2001, it was a relief to get back to what we did know, namely construction."

The Fralicks had done extensive research into the course construction business by talking to others in the industry and looking at many projects. After interviewing 30 design firms they decided upon Keith Foster to create their course. Dark Horse became Foster's first design on his own in California



The developers gave Keith Foster a lot of latitude in designing Dark Horse.

and he approached the project passionately.

"We let Keith pick where he wanted to put the golf course first and then worked out where to put the home sites, which is a rarity in most projects. We were also fortunate in having such a hands-on approach from Foster, who would come to the site for a few days every three weeks. His numerous visits were vital in creating a good drainage plan and the distinctive hand made bunkers," Chad Fralick said.

In fact, Foster found that the project had changed so much after the original plans were drawn that he completely revamped the design on site. Foster had the time to put into the project and on each visit would produce working sketches for the construction crews to work from.

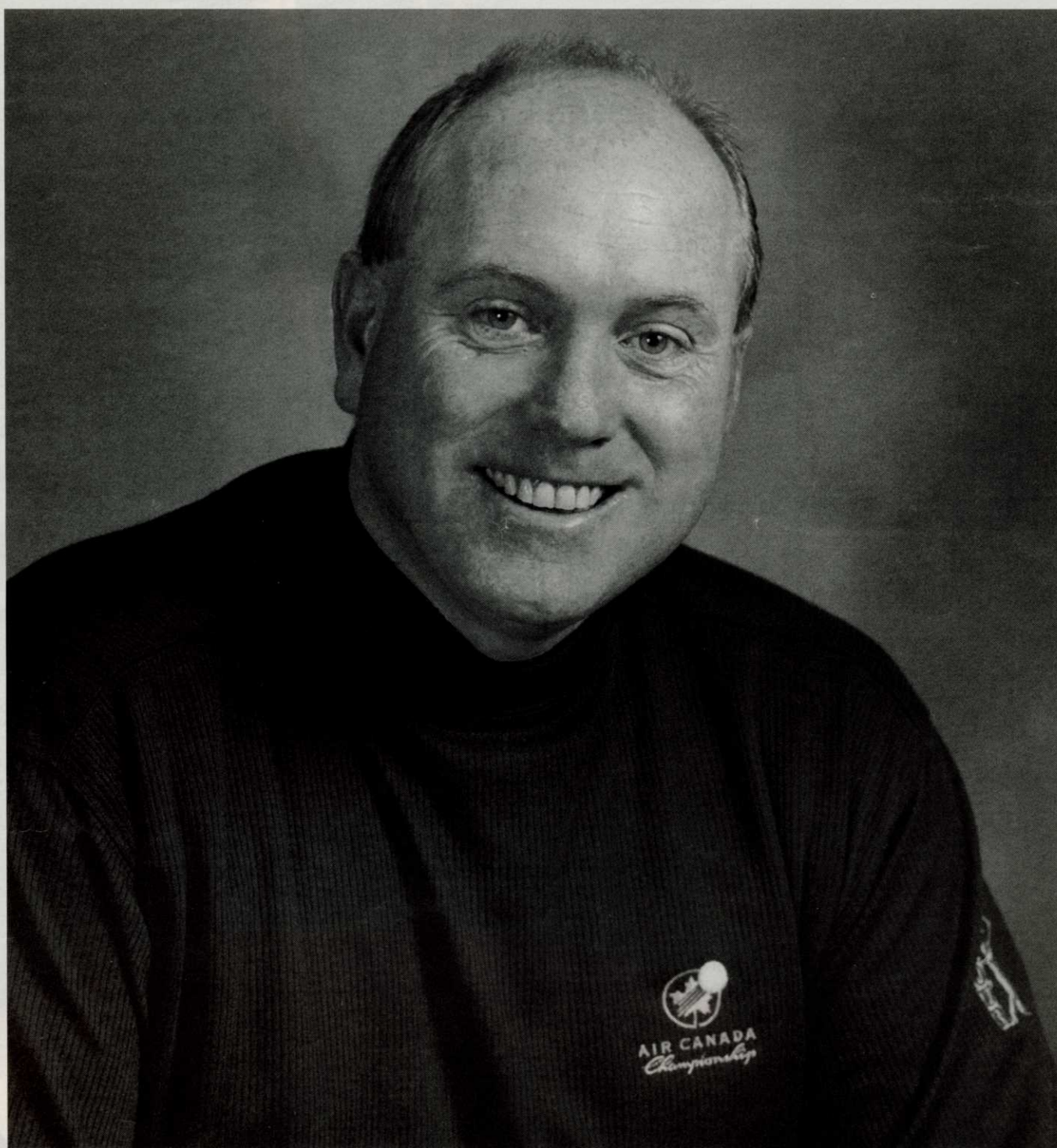
Having continuous input from the designer and the use of O&J Construction for the earthwork helped the developers to control costs. In fact, they managed to build Dark Horse Golf Club for \$5.5 million, considerably less than the average course construction. But it still took two years to build Dark Horse due to a county restriction that prohibited mass excavation work from November through April.

The par-72 course features six sets of tees for all levels of ability and will also include an extensive practice area of three practice holes, practice bunkers and grass tees on the range. The course features ryegrass tees and fairways and A4 bentgrass greens.

"Since we opened in October we have had very steady play and we have been encouraged that during the winter months our surveys show that 50 percent of our play is now repeat players," said director of golf Russell Sylte.

Ed Fralick said his experience in creating Dark Horse Golf Club has given him pause when considering doing another such project.

"I can't say that I won't do something like this again, but I do know that I could be a valuable consultant for anyone that wanted to build a golf course today. Right now I am just happy that those who have come to play Dark Horse Golf Club have been appreciative and responsive to what we have created," he said. ■



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