

THRU THE GREEN



December, 1999

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California

Pete Bibber and Old Del Monte Golf Course Legends of the Monterey Peninsula

by Ken Williams, CGCS

The story of Old Del Monte goes back to 1897 when Charles Maud sat down in a large oak grove (Spanish for Del Monte.) He was joined by two of his best friends from Scotland, a new friend from the old country and a bottle of the finest malt that could be found. By the time they finished the bottle, they had a design for the golf course and a plan.

The course went along largely unchanged from Maud's design until 1974 when the 7th green was rebuilt for agronomic purposes. Four more greens were rebuilt to a sand base to accommodate the 1992 US Open. The turf from the greens was used to

grass four of the new greens at Pebble Beach. This was to insure that all Pebble's greens would match for tournament play. This past March, Mike Oliphant rebuilt and enlarged the first green to California specs.

There is a certain uniqueness about Del Monte. The course is built upon 101 acres that consist of 18 holes and three beautiful native areas. The course has four relatively short par 4's and the overall yardage is consistent with courses from that era. It is not long by today's standards, but it is definitely challenging. The best

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Pine Pitch Canker Inoculum Found in Imported Pine Straw

The California Department of Forestry has discovered an incidental importation of pitch canker disease into California. In September, the CDF routinely inspected imported pine straw bales destined for the Truckee area. They were primarily looking for evidence of the imported fire ant. But needle samples taken from the interior of the unopened bales were found to harbor the Pine Pitch Canker fungus. The needle samples, processed by the Department of Food and Agriculture's plant pathology labs,

were analyzed using sterile media culture. Every sample tested produced the pine pitch canker fungus. The bales also contained pieces of cones, branches and soil – all substrate that probably contain the fungus. According to CDF Pathologist Dave Adams, sales of southeast states' origin pine needles to California locations represents a potentially significant means of disease entry into the State.

The implication is that viable pitch canker fungus has been delivered

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NorCalendar

Dec. 10
Holiday Meeting, Del Monte GC,
Monterey Beach Hotel

Jan. 5, 6, 2000
GCSAA Seminars
Sustainable GC Landscape Design
Lake & Aquatic Plant Management

January 18th
Annual Meeting at
Palo Alto Municipal Golf Course

February 14-20
GCSAA Conference & Show

March 6
Stanford GC - Etonic
"Enhancing Your Job
& Securing Your Future"

March 23
USGA/NCGA at Castlewood CC

April 10
Media Forum at Coyote Creek

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Old Del Monte (Cont'd)

professional score Pete has seen is a 66.

There has been a lot of history developed over the years. Back when the course was attached to Hotel Del Monte, the course would often see notables such as the Rockefellers and Howard Hughes. Probably the most amazing incident was when Ken Venturi went AWOL from Fort Ord, played Del Monte, and set the course record of 62 that still stands today.

Del Monte is owned and operated by the Pebble Beach Company. It still hosts the tour players at the Pebble Beach Invitational in November each year. The California State Amateur, which originated at Del Monte many years ago, is also still being contested over the storied links.

Superintendent Pete Bibber is nearly as legendary. Born in and raised in Harpswell Maine, Pete worked as an offset pressman in the US Army before turning toward golf. Pete was first hired by Roger Larson as a mechanic/greenskeeper at Spyglass Hill. After about eight years, he was made assistant to Bill Spence. In 1976, he was transferred to Del Monte as Superintendent. He has honorably filled that role for 23 years.

Pete enjoys fishing, hunting, the outdoors, and the environment. He and his significant other Brenda, have two mean dogs used for bear hunting (maybe I can get them admitted to the next Cal game!) He does a lot of volunteer work which includes serving on the board of the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History, he is the Parks Commissioner for District 4 of Monterey County Parks, Treasurer for the Parks Foundation of Monterey County, and serves on the board of the Marina Coast Water District. He's also a past president of the GCSANC and served on the GCSAA Conference and Show committee in Anaheim.

Pete was very gracious in hosting the GCSANC for the last event of 1999. Seeing Pete again and all the history he's nurtured at Old Del Monte will be a fitting end to the century. /

Quick Quote

The difference between a genius and a lunatic is that the genius has proof.

—Dominique Bouchard—

In Memory of Al Deschene

By Ken Schwark

The GCSANC and I lost a dear friend on October 4, 1999. Al Deschene and I go back close to 21 years. Al was my neighbor in Richmond up off Hilltop Drive. We spent many afternoons playing golf together after work. He had always mentioned that he would love to get into the golf business, but an entry level position just wouldn't make ends meet for him and his family.

One day I was working at the Tony Lema Golf Course and the pro approached me with the idea of running the whole facility with him. I gladly jumped at the idea and I immediately called Al to see if he would like to be my assistant. He was a manager where he was working and had very good people skills. He was very interested in the position, but knew nothing about agronomy. I told him the deal to take over the course, if it were to happen, would be over a year away. During this time he could come down on weekends and learn how to cut greens, tees, fairways, cups, etc. He could schedule time off when we aerified greens to learn how that procedure was done. I had him take correspondence courses with Purdue University, and read all of the agronomy books I had. The rest of his training would be acquired on the job.

Al faithfully came down to the course to learn on his weekends. He was genuinely inspired to get into the business. He studied everything I could give him. After a year and a half, I learned the pro and I weren't going to get the contract at Tony Lema. I told Al and he was extremely disappointed. Just a few weeks after that, Al suffered a major heart attack. He was laid up for a year recovering. Once he returned to work, he was let go. I helped him find a job with the Envirojet Company. He started injecting greens. Through that job he was put in contact with Mike Farmen from Farmload Distributors, who was the Floratine distributor. Mike hired Al and sent him back to Tennessee where he was given extensive training on all of the Floratine products. Al came back and started from scratch with his own business. His wife was working full time and he worked as much as he could when he felt good.

Al was a warrior. Half of his heart was dead. The muscle on the left side of his heart didn't receive blood

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