

THRU THE GREEN

April, 2000

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California



Gaining Experience at Wentle Vineyards

By Michael Souza

This month The Course at Wentle Vineyards hosts the 2nd Annual Media Tournament on April 12th. Normally you would meet the host superintendent, Jeff Shafer through this column. But having just met Jeff in the course of the GCSANC elections, Jeff thought that this would be a good time to profile me, his assistant. My name is Michael Souza and I've worked with Jeff for just over a year now at The Course at Wentle Vineyards.

Before I started at Wentle Vineyards, I attended Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, where I earned a Bachelor's degree in Ornamental Horticulture in 1998. While at Cal Poly I became active in the GCSAA student chapter, and worked at Black Lake Golf Resort in Nipomo, and Arrow Creek Golf Club in Reno. I also

had the opportunity to travel with Pat Gross of the USGA Green Section during an internship. In the three years that I have been involved in the golf course maintenance business, I have met a great deal of talented, hard-working people with an abundance of knowledge. With an open mind and the use of good common sense, I try to learn from those I work with and meet, and find out what works for me, through learning by doing.

My wife Deborah and I reside in Livermore. She also works for Wentle Vineyards, as Director of Human Resources. In our spare time we like to travel and enjoy our two 1968 Mustangs. Currently, I am in the midst of plans to rebuild my GT Fastback for open track events. My long-term plans

include becoming a superintendent in the next few years, achieving my certification, and working on golf courses for the rest of my life. Probably the highlight of my tenure so far at the Course was meeting Greg Norman and watching him play his own design for the first time last November.

Situated in the rolling hills of south Livermore, The Course opened in June of 1998, incorporating three of the most dominating elements of the existing landscape. The 18-hole layout winds through mature, working vineyards, native grasslands, and oak and sycamore woodlands. With 250 feet in elevation changes, spectacular views can be enjoyed from many parts of the course. The challenging layout offers a variety

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The Course at Wentle Vineyards to Host Media Day

By Bob Costa

In his January campaign statement for Secretary Treasurer, Wentle's Jeff Shafer promised to offer his support when needed. Three months later he's making good on that promise as the host of the Media Day April 12th. "I see this event as a great opportunity to further our media efforts" says Shafer. "Our hope is to make the day both educational and fun." The day promises to be just that thanks to Shafer's efforts and the support of the entire Wentle staff.

Unlike last year's Media Day, this year's event will feature a panel of media members. Media Director Greg

Crawford will moderate the panel. "Our objective," says Crawford, "is to develop an interactive discussion between the media and the membership. At the same time, we hope to continue building relationships. I encourage everyone to take a few moments and introduce themselves to our panel."

The panel will consist of the Monterey Herald's feature golf writer Ed Vyeda, Hooked on Golf's Mitch Jurisic and Golf Today's Jack Rosol. "When developing the media panel, our intentions were to invite representatives from several segments of the media," continues Crawford. "We feel as though

we've been successful. Ed's a proven journalist, who will be instrumental in local US Open Coverage, Jack's involvement with Golf today appeals directly to the golfer and Mitch represents both radio and TV. It's a great mix."

Speaking of a great mix, the rest of the day has plenty to offer as well. For starters, those that arrive early can participate in a brief tour of Wentle's wine museum, sparkling wine bottling and cave storage. After the meeting program, we'll offer a first class BBQ lunch followed by a 9-hole putting

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Experience At Wente Vineyards (Cont'd)

of holes that stand on their own merits individually, and together engage you for the entire round.

The layout features approximately 60 acres of mowed turf with Dominant bentgrass greens, ryegrass tees and fairways, and bluegrass roughs. In addition, the maintenance staff at Wente Vineyards manages nearly 30 acres of native grassland. During the last year, we began installation of additional drainage in fairways and roughs, the conversion of native grass tee walk-ons to Kentucky bluegrass, the conversion of rough natives to Kentucky bluegrass, and additional irrigation to accommodate the changes. Future plans include the construction of new tees below existing ones on hole #14, and improving bunker drainage. In addition to managing the golf course maintenance, Jeff and I oversee the grounds maintenance crew for the Wente Vineyards Restaurant and Visitor Center located near the golf course.

One of the challenges we face at The Course includes maintaining a golf course in the middle of a working vineyard. Our relationship with the vineyard crews requires good communication between our departments and coordination of our work activities around each other. We have also partnered with the golf professional staff in a relationship of accountability and coordination of activities. We meet on a regular basis to discuss both sides of golf course operations, which helps us

stay on the same page with each other. Within our own department, we try to let people find their niche on the crew, as we realize that this leads to their personal success and ultimately to that of Wente Vineyards. With all of this in mind, as well as sound reasoning and economics, we have found that when we have a need for labor or a piece of equipment, the Wente's have an open ear. For the rest of my life. /

Wente Vineyards Hosts Media Day

(Continued from page 1)

contest and open use of the range. To climax the day, it's eighteen holes of golf at Wente's premier golf facility designed by Greg Norman. The 1:00 clock shotgun features a four-man best ball with prizes to individual players on the top three teams.

This is a real opportunity to promote our industry," says Shafer with genuine enthusiasm. "I would encourage all of our members to participate and demonstrate their support for our Media Program. I hope that members will consider inviting their managers as well."

One thing's for certain, the day won't be short on entertainment. Shafer and the Wente staff have seen to that. /

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