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ing segment of the industry. Profit in this area is no longer a dirty word.

"With many firms today, design/build is looked upon as a fad," said Brickman. "Some contractors have looked to it to avoid the bidding process." At Brickman, design/build is hardly a fad.

"We look on design/build as a sculpturing process," said Brickman. "The execution is as much a part of the project as it is at the conceptual stage. We want to control the sculpturing process," said Brickman.

Because maintenance was a stroke of genius," Brickman continued, "because it provides us with an insurance for a project. If properly designed and maintained, a project can be an asset that really grows."

Because of the quality of its work, the company has won many awards, and, according to Brickman, these are the company's best calling cards.

"The area we've really been deficient in is marketing and strategic planning," Brickman said. "We've had some very successful residential projects," he said. That lack of strategic planning, though, hasn't seemed to hobble the company's growth.

In the beginning

Theodore W. Brickman, Dick's father, is the founder of the Brickman group. At 77, he is chairman of the board and still keeps abreast of the company's business. It's Dick, though, who runs the day-to-day affairs. Brickman Sr. was drawn into the horticultural business in Texas. Later he was in charge of the gardens at the Century of Progress International Exposition in Chicago in the 30s.

In 1939, after working with the Chicago Park System as a horticulturist, he started his own landscape business in Glenview, IL. His business was interrupted in 1941 with the start of World War II and gas rationing. In 1945, Brickman reopened his business. It wasn't until 1957 that Dick Brickman, after getting his degree in landscape architecture from the University of Illinois, joined his father. In 1959, Theodore Brickman Co. was incorporated and moved to Long Grove. Bob Brickman became active in the firm in 1961. With Dick's arrival and that of Bruce Hunt in 1961 (Hunt is currently operations manager of design/build), the company started to evolve away from its "grass cutting" image and into landscaping. "When we first started out in the business, we were mainly in residential," recalls Brickman. "I got sick of dealing with housewives. We went through a transitional period where we didn't do any residential work."

A project for Standard Oil was their first major design/build job. "We got the contract for landscaping all the Oasis gas stops along the Illinois Toll Road," recalled Brickman. "That one job was worth more than we made all year. It scared the hell out of Dad. As it turned out, we did the project, but on a smaller scale."

Now, most of the company's contracts are in the commercial and institutional areas, although if a major client needs something residential done, Brickman will usually do it.

"We've had some very successful residential projects," he said. With the company's continued growth, branch offices continue to be a necessity; operations in Langhorne were set up in 1977, in the Washington area in 1980.

"We create branches where it's necessary within the limits of our resources - mainly people resources," said Brickman. Brickman says he has no plans continued on page 98
When you need to replace a broken part, you want results. Not excuses. That's why your Toro distributor goes to great lengths to keep the vast majority of the parts you need in stock. So you can pick up the part on the day you need it.

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Riding the Tide

Bill Orr is young and ambitious. His landscape contracting business, Houston Landscape Associates, is steadily growing while many area landscape contracting businesses are falling by the wayside.

by Maureen Hrehocik, managing editor

Bill Orr, a Houston landscape contractor, was returning home from work one day a few years ago, when he saw Spot, his Dalmatian, in the middle of the road, licking the hand of a complete stranger.

He stopped to talk to the man Spot had befriended. As it turned out, the stranger, a developer, had stopped to admire a piece of landscaping Orr had done and Spot had stopped to check-out the stranger.

From that purely chance meeting, Orr and the developer began a business relationship that resulted in about nine projects for the then-aspiring landscape contractor.

That type of business relationship was important to Bill Orr back in those leaner days.

After quitting a secure position with a Houston landscape design/build firm, Landscape Design Associates, Orr started his own company, Houston Landscape Associates in 1974.

At first, he was partner with two principals from LDA. The plan was that Orr would supply the ideas and brain power and LDA would provide work for Orr from an already-established client list. After six months, though, Orr thought he could handle the business — and the profits — better on his own.

He worked out of his one-bedroom apartment; his drafting table tucked away in a corner. Business-wise, he found that he wasn’t an established-enough name to command the type of contracts he needed to stay afloat. That’s why any type of help was appreciated, even from his dog. While his profits diminished, his ambition didn’t.

Things have changed. Houston Landscape Associates will do about $1.6 million in business this year and averaged $1.5 million each of the previous two years. Contracts have been signed already with buildings that have yet to start construction. The 35-year-old has branched out as 50 percent partner in another satellite company, HLA Construction, whose success potential Orr describes as “like sitting on a powder keg.”

A thoroughbred

Houston Landscape Associates has carved a unique niche for itself in the competitive Houston landscape contracting scene. While many landscape contractors are languishing at a dead period in the Houston construction boom, Orr’s company, mainly because of the quality of it’s work and attitude toward projects, is moving ahead.

“We’re riding the tide,” Orr says.

“We have a good sense of taste and we’re not a bit bashful about saying to a contractor a change needs to be made,” Orr continued. “We’re best at more elaborate design plans and projects with more frills, because we pay attention to detail. We’re not a mass production-type contractor.

continued on page 60
Mother Nature grows all of my turf. She just needs me to do the dirty work."

Mother Nature calls all the shots in this game. The good ones learn that fact quickly. The rest fall prey to it until they, too, understand. She commands the heavy artillery. She drops the bombs. She sends in the cavalry. She saves the day. The turf manager is her foot soldier. Granted he makes it happen. But he's either mopping up after her, succeeding in spite of her, or taking credit for lush turf she nurtured to life.

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And each concocted by a scientist with whom Mother Nature shared one of her secrets. Like the knowledge a turf manager soaks up over his career, the information all comes from one source.

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Yup. She may be tough to work with. But he knows he couldn't even grow a weed without her.

Pennfine Perennial Ryegrass covers more ground than any other turfgrass variety in the world. This ad pays tribute to the people who've sown that fifty million pounds of certified Pennfine seed.
What makes Ryan turf-care equipment worth the investment:

Core cultivation, dethatching, sod cutting... equipment engineered for more work value.

Maintaining fine turf is part art. Part science. And a lot of hard work.
And because your turf aerification and cultivation equipment has to work so hard...for so long... and come back for more, we've designed a complete system of hard-working equipment that you can match to whatever your jobs demand.

With Ryan turf care equipment, your turf looks great. And your bottom line looks even better.

Here's why Ryan equipment is worth the investment:

A better way to aerate greens.

No where is the quality of your turf so critical as on the greens. But considering the rough treatment they get from most aerators, you may be reluctant to aerate at all.
Not so with the Ryan Greensaire® II or Greensaire® 16 — aerators so precise that even fresh holes won't affect the roll of a putt.

Unlike rolling aerators, the Greensaire tines don't tear into the turf. They penetrate it in a quick up-and-down motion, removing cores up to 3" long.
Greensaire II (pictured at right) covers a 24" swath; takes 36 cores from every square foot; and aerates up to 8,000 square feet per hour.

Add the optional Core Processor and you'll aerate, collect thatch, break up cores and top dress all in one operation.
The Greensaire 16 offers the same thorough aeration, but in a more economical size. You get a 16" swath: 36 cores per square foot; and a speed of up to 4,000 square feet per hour. An optional windrow attachment makes cleanup simple.

Both units are available with revolutionary heat-treated tines that provide self sharpening action and less plugging-up.

Once you've seen either Greensaire at work, you'll never settle for an ordinary aerator again.

The toughest power rakes on turf.

It's no easy matter for a machine to spin a blade 2700 revolutions-per-minute through thousands of square feet of thatch, roots and hard soil.
Hour after hour. Day after day. Year after year.

How long can a power rake take that kind of stress? You'll never know until you've owned a Ryan.

Take our big Mataway®, for instance. It's powered by a mighty 10-hp engine; built around a massive cast iron block; and features a 4-stroke cycle for extra torque and longer life.

If you don't need the muscle of a Mataway, you can still get Ryan ruggedness in the 7-hp Ren-O-Thin® IV or the 5-hp Ren-O-Thin® III.

Interchangeable blades for all 3 models let you adapt your Ryan power rake to a variety of different jobs — from cleaning up surface thatch to deep slicing the soil.

A sod cutter that earns its keep.

The compact size of the Ryan Jr. Sod Cutter makes it the only one economical enough for your golf course to own.

Its performance makes it the only one worth owning.
The 7-hp engine lets one man cut up to 135 feet per minute, up to 2-1/2" deep.
And whether you choose our 12" or 18" model, you'll be getting a professional, uniform cut with straight edges.

And The Ryan Family of turf-care equipment is only available from your Ryan dealer. He's in business for the long haul, with a proven record of service after the sale and a complete line of turf-care equipment to meet your needs.

A free demonstration.

Of course, the best way for you to learn about Ryan turf-care equipment is to see it in action. Right on your own golf course. To do that, contact your nearest Ryan dealer or call us toll-free at 1-800-228-4444.

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Orr also said he doesn’t believe in bidding low just to get a contract.

“Attitude to me is extremely important,” he explained. “We’re more interested in making a project a success than in making a profit. I try to price my work high enough to accommodate any changes that may have to be made when we get into it.”

That attention to detail and excellence has spawned a very mutually-satisfying relationship with Houston’s largest landscape design company, the SWA Group.

Building clientele

Orr shared a client at an office project called Riverway in Houston with SWA. SWA liked what it saw and has used Orr’s company frequently since then.

Kevin Shanley, a landscape architect with SWA said, “Bill does very high quality work and that’s why we’ve kept up our relationship with him.”

Many local contractors credit SWA with changing the landscape design and contracting face of Houston. Their trademark style is literally everywhere in the city — park-like atmospheres, inviting people to use the landscape, not just look at it; pedestrian bridges interlocking the scores of highrise office and shopping structures; a softening of what was a very sterile and cold downtown Houston area. In other words, sophistication.

Orr’s company has also been involved with Joe Russo, a developer. Together, they have worked on three or four “landmark” projects, according to Orr. He is also responsible and particularly proud of his work at Sage Plaza One, another Houston office complex.

Houston Landscape Associates has done the landscaping for numerous Russo office buildings in downtown Houston, including 7500 San Felipe, 1616 Voss and 6363 Woodway.

“The San Felipe building is the perfect example of what we like to do,” said Orr. “Joe Russo believes strongly in what the landscape can do in attracting tenants to buildings.”

The San Felipe building was also Orr’s first taste of “hardscaping,” fountains, walkways and pedestrian bridge-type constructions and what lead him into a partnership with Joe Schofield, a contractor. HLA Contracting was born.

“We’ve been at it for a little less than a year now and it hasn’t been easy,” Orr commented. “Joe and I have butted heads, but things are falling into place. This company is filling a void in the market.”

Orr explained that void through his own company.

“Most of Houston Landscape Associate’s competitors haven’t figured out how to tackle the hardscape aspect of their work. This left an interesting niche to fill. They usually have to lean on a general contractor to do it. HLA Construction fills that niche. We provide an important convenience to the client.”

Business for HLA Construction is, in Orr’s words, “as good as I want it to be.”

The company did $3/4 million in business in ‘83 and Orr is shooting for $2 to $3 million in ‘84.

“The availability of work in this segment of the industry is unbelievable. But, we’re going to take it one step at a time.”

Orr and Schofield want to get involved in recreation centers, but aren’t known in that market yet.

“Recreation centers are John’s bailiwick,” said Orr.

Orr characterizes himself as a cautious businessman.

“I’m responsible for sales for HLA Construction and I’ve purposely been cautious. I don’t want to move too fast and undermine what we already have accomplished with the company.”

Orr said he and his partner also didn’t realize the time commitment the new company would demand.

“I’m not a workaholic,” Orr admits. “I’ll work 16 hours a day if I need to, but not to the point where my family-life suffers.”

Art in the landscape

Orr got his B.S. degree in park administration with an emphasis on landscape architecture from Texas Tech in August of ‘72.

“I dabbled in business courses for a year and did lousy. I took a year of architecture and did O.K. I took a course in art and did real well and applied it to landscape architecture.”

Orr went into landscape contracting for three reasons: he liked it, he knew he could do it, and it was easy. He admits his business sense was learned by the seat of his pants and from consultants he’s surrounded himself with who understand him and his company.

“With most of the consultants I’ve worked with, we have an almost father-son relationship,” said Orr. “I knew I could do the landscape side if I could just get the business side nailed down.”

It’s people like Warren Purdy and business consultant John Gannon who have congealed the type of people who take a per...