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Who made the cut

LM unveils its exclusive list of the 150 largest landscape contractors in the country.

BY DAN JACOBS, BETH GERACI, CASEY PAYTON AND HEATHER GOOCH

FEATURES

26 Clean cut
Green Industry professionals are turning to propane equipment — and not looking back.
BY BRIAN RICHESSON

38 Project portfolio
The LaurelRock Co. creates an upstate New York oasis for busy Manhattanites.

41 The price is right
A contractor uses innovative financing to land a project other companies might have had to take a pass on.
BY CURT HARLER

LM MARKET MATCH We’ve made your life a little easier by supplying icons that direct you to stories targeting your core business.
B – Business, DB – Design/Build, I – Irrigation, LC – Lawn Care, M – Maintenance

COLUMNS

8 Jacobs’ Journal
BY DAN JACOBS

18 The Hall Mark
BY RON HALL

20 The Benchmark
BY KEVIN KEOGE

36 Best Practices
BY BRUCE WILSON

33 LM Reports
Fungicides; turf seed and equipment; controllers and locators

40 Add-on Biz
Water features flow with Weilbacher Landscaping’s other services.
BY CASEY PAYTON

52 A Cut Above
Ruppert Landscape, Laytonsville, MD
BY BETH GERACI

56 My Biggest Mistake
Shedding the nursery allowed Stephen Hillenmeyer to specialize.
BY CASEY PAYTON

IN EVERY ISSUE
54 Classifieds
55 Resources

DEPARTMENTS

10 News & Views
TOCA awards; re-energizing TruGreen; Everris rising

17 Progress
The industry’s national organizations have evolved.
BY BETH GERACI

22 Lawn Care Pro
Brad Johnson, Tulsa, OK
BY RON HALL

24 Weed Watch
Goosegrass; spurge
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Athletic Turf News
See why Jessica Alba, the starlets at the Playboy Mansion and other Hollywood high-rollers are turning to synthetic turf for their landscape needs.

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i-News
Urban landscapes can be as ecologically beneficial as they are beautiful, says Jeffrey Bruce, FASLA, GRP. Hear what needs to be done to make it happen.

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The hardest story I ever had to write came early in my journalism career. Actually, it came before my professional career officially started. I was still studying at the University of Cincinnati that Sunday when I walked into the school’s newsroom. As the news editor it was part of my job to check with the campus information office to review the previous day’s events.

That’s when I came across the campus police report.

Sometime in the wee hours of the morning after a long night of partying, a student visiting from another school woke in the middle of the night, and perhaps confused and unsure of where he was, tumbled from the dorm room window. He crashed through an iron gate to the cement loading dock 11 floors below. The police report indicated his friends identified him by his clothing; he’d suffered too much “facial trauma” to be identified any other way.

It was a difficult story to write for many reasons, not the least of which were the sad nature of the events and the anger and disdain directed at me after the article appeared in print.

That was the day I became a journalist. I learned more about being a writer from that and my subsequent time at the paper than I did in any of my classes. Sure, I learned theory and style in the classroom, but my real teachers were my fellow editors and daily experiences in the newsroom and around campus.

I suspect much of what you know about business comes from the challenges you face running your company. Maybe you took some classes on your way to a degree, but it wasn’t until you started running your own company that the real lessons kicked in.

Little did we know the downturn and recession we’ve suffered the past few years would send us all back to school — and what a harsh headmistress. Consider it a master’s class in business practice.

The recession might have officially ended, but with the housing market (mostly) still suffering, it looks like a long slow haul before we return to more solid footing.

If this is your first recession you’re learning the lessons and strategies that will make your company stronger, leaner and more profitable, strategies that will serve you well when prices stabilize and customers start spending again.

We share some of those lessons as part of LM’s annual Top 150 coverage. It seems some of the biggest companies in the industry are getting some of their mojo back. Not everyone grew, but a significant number did. We talk to them about the lessons they learned during the recession, how this downturn compared with others and how their businesses are forever changed because of it.

Our Top 150 coverage also includes a look at the up and comers — the young guns just off the Top 150 list (and maybe a couple who just found their way on) to find out how they fared against the biggest in the industry.

There’s also a story about the fastest growing companies. When the economy is in turmoil there’s always a shakeout — winners and losers. Even in a recession several companies grew at double-digit rates.

Finally there are the lists. In addition to a listing of the largest Green Industry enterprises, we’ll show you who does the most business in your region of the country. It all begins on page S1.
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Questex Media Group is pleased to announce its brands Landscape Management and Golfdom together earned 21 awards at the annual Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA) awards ceremony. The ceremony took place in May in Asheville, NC. Landscape Management reaped 13 honors, while Golfdom brought home eight awards. The magazines earned accolades for writing, new media, special projects and graphic design.

“Our mission is to provide the best in class information to the landscape and golf industry,” said Patrick Roberts, publisher of Landscape Management and Golfdom. “We place a high value on TOCA as an association and always appreciate being recognized by such an influential group of professionals.”

Landscape Management team members won honors for cover page design (“The Innovation Lab”); writing (Nicole Wisniewski’s feature “Oil & Water”); special projects (“The Industry Pulse Report”); and social media (the LM blog).

The magazines’ staff members also were honored with nine merit awards. Among the recipients were newly promoted Landscape Management editor Dan Jacobs for his “A Cut Above” series; Ron Hall for his “Water Wise” series; Hall, Wisniewski and Jacobs for their story “The Big Give”; Wisniewski for innovative use of social media; and Hall for his editorial “Victims of our own promises?”

Golfdom earned six first-place awards, including one for feature writing (“Giving Thanks”); Web writing (“A Golf Course Uplifts a Community”); writing for commercial publications (“Plant Health Report” and “Water Wise”); and headline writing (“I’ll Take a…Mul-ligan”). Golfdom also won first place for portrait photography with the June 2010 cover photo of Chris Dalhamer. Golfdom also won two merit awards. “The Best of Both Worlds” won for environmental stewardship article, and the 2010 Annual Putting Surface Guide for special projects. Golfdom editor Seth Jones won merits for his work last year at Golf Course Management magazine, for his operations profile of Whistling Straits and his cover story on Nick Price.