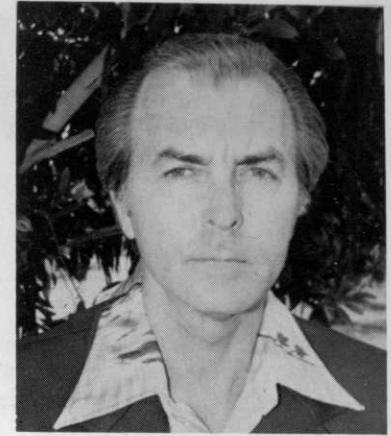


# AN INTERVIEW WITH KARL LITTEN

By HARRY McCARTHA



After years with a noted golf course architectural firm, Karl Litten has formed his own golf course design team located in Boca Raton. He has been closely involved with over 60 golf course projects, lending his talents to design, plans, specifications and field supervision.

*"Karl, do you plan any particular design innovations that other architects are overlooking?"*

"Having a civil engineering background, I have always been a strong advocate of proper drainage design and field implementation. Probably the most innovative design effort that I hope to implement is a total mechanized maintained golf course.

With yearly maintenance budgets flirting at \$300,000 a year and with constant inflation, hand labor will soon be prohibitive. Traps must be designed for the turning radius of the trap rakes; rolls must be graded gentle around traps to eliminate the fly-mows. Greens must be designed slightly oversized to accommodate the tri-plex green mowers and allow for a border wide enough for turning between the putting surface and the traps. I hope to give a lot more consideration to green and trap drainage than is generally accepted. The placement of landscape material is of the utmost importance in eliminating hand labor. All of the above and more can be accomplished without sacrificing the aesthetic or the playability of the golf course.

*(Continued on Page 22)*

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Florida; once the lots around the course are sold the owner generally turns the course over to the members. From that day on the maintenance budget comes under close scrutiny, and if there are any built in areas that require special maintenance attention they are generally eliminated in time. Why build them initially, why build 15 foot high features in this flat South Florida landscape; not only do they look out of place, they block views and breezes and are often built so sharp that the fairway units slide off, not to mention the erosion problems."

*"How many cubic yards of fill do your designs generally require to sculpt the golf course?"*

"I don't have a rule of thumb and never will have because each piece of property is different even in this typical South Florida flat land. The water table varies, the depths of muck varies; some are solidly vegetate, others sparcely and with almost no vegetation at all. All of this information and other criteria is necessary in evaluating the total cubic yards of material needed to generate the movement required for the golf course. I feel if one gets a preconceived figure of cubic yardage required for each course, the design will most likely fall short of what the final result could have been."

*"Some architects don't particularly want the golf course superintendent on site until the course is planted. What is your feeling?"*

"I would prefer the superintendent start at the time irrigation installation commences; not only can he gain the knowledge of where all the lines, gate valves, etc. are placed, but he can inspect the proper installation on a daily basis better than the architect. He can also handle liaison efforts that are becoming very important around this phase of construction. He can be of great help in the planning and the construction of the maintenance barn as well as seeing that all of the equipment is ordered and on hand when needed. There are countless other jobs he can do prior to starting his normal maintenance duties."

*Editor's Note: Karl Litten has 12 years experience as Golf Course Designer, was formerly Vice President and Chief Designer for Von Hagge and Devlin, Inc.*

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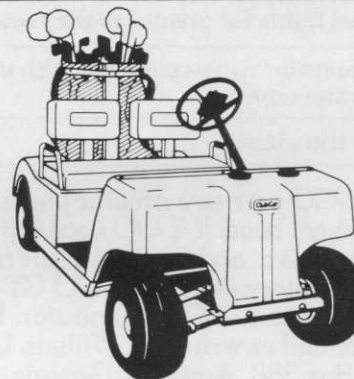
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