

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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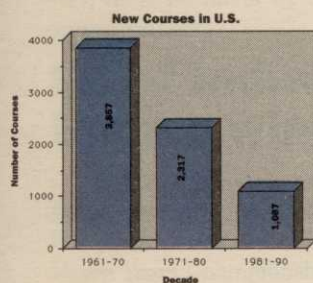
The Best of 1989!

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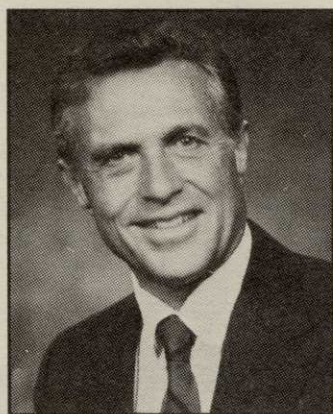
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Wadsworth voted No. 1 builder of '89

BY PETER BLAIS
"We've always felt that how well we've done our job depends on how the architects see what we've accomplished. We want to see them get what they want out of their design."

That's how company founder and chairman of the board Brent Wadsworth explains the success of Wadsworth Golf Construction Co., voted 1989 Builder of the Year in *Golf Course News*' survey of architects.



Brent Wadsworth
Voted Best Builder of 1989

Wadsworth received nearly one-fourth of the votes cast, more
Continued on page 29

Fazio named top architect of the year

BY PETER BLAIS
This has been a good year for Tom Fazio. But so was last year, and the year before that and the year before that and... "They all kind of blend together for me," answered the man voted the 1989 Architect of the Year in *Golf Course News* 'first survey of course designers, when asked if this year was special.

"I'm just amazed at the quality of products we (architects)



Tom Fazio
Voted Best Architect of 1989

are able to build today. High quality is what developers and owners
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Subsurface injection project wins raves

BY MARK LESLIE
The success of work on equipment that injects pesticides below the surface of the turf where grubs live should prod researchers to develop a wide range of new products to fight pests.

Ohio State University Professors Harry Niemczyk, an entomologist, and Erdal Ozkan, an agricultural engineer, have completed a season of research on their project and are excited by its prospects.

Niemczyk cited data showing that the "liquid injection subsurface placing system" they are developing can put the product
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A panoramic view of Pinon Hills Golf Course in Farmington, N.M., shows the 11th green in the foreground and the elevation changes on No. 15 tees in the background. For more information on this course, designed by Finger Dye Spann of Houston, Texas, and others, see pages 10 and 11.

Florida project targets families

BY MARK LESLIE
The family orientation of a proposed golf facility turned it from a loser to a winner in the zoning process and will turn it into a reality this spring in Orlando, Fla.

Golf Unlimited will start construction in January on the Lake Under Hill Golf Center, which will include a fully lighted, nine-hole par 3 course, complete driving range, putting course and miniature golf layout.

But the 26-acre facility was a wipeout in June when heavy opposition from neighbors contributed to an Orange County Commission denial of zoning approval on the grounds the project was too commercial for the mainly residential area.

"We got an extension of the request," said

Golf Unlimited's Jack Irwin, "and met with homeowners and told them the facility would enhance, not hurt, their neighborhood. We went back to the commission with neighborhood support and got unanimous (5-0) approval."

The turning point, Irwin believes, came when neighbors realized the project will stress the family.

"We planned it with the family in mind," he said. "Dad can bring the kids out and teach them or let them play miniature golf while he and his wife are playing."

It is a concept Irwin expects to continue working with. He already plans a second family golf center in Orlando and may look for other opportunities working out of his

Orlando and Knoxville, Tenn., offices. The idea of lighting a course has been successful at two facilities in Myrtle Beach, N.C., and another in Daytona, Fla.

But the Orlando project is believed the first with its particular amenities.

"We'll give the average player — who can't afford to belong to a country club and works all day — and the beginner a chance to play in the winter and summer. It will be great for seniors," Irwin said.

The longest of the nine holes will be 160 yards, and Irwin said: "The lights will be very high-quality; you'll be able to follow the flight of the ball all the way. It will be a first-class course with wall-to-wall irrigation..."

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Fazio

Continued from page 1

ers want. I get six to eight prospects every week. It's incredible the way the industry continues to grow. The prospects just get better and better. So I can't say this has been an unusually good year. They've all been good lately."

The North Carolina architect completed three courses in 1989 — Shadow Creek in Las Vegas; Thorne Blade in Greenville, S.C.; and Emerald Dunes in West Palm Beach, Fla.

Shadow Creek alone might have been enough to earn Fazio the year's best architect designation. A whole-new environment had to be created out of the barren desert site. The \$13-million course required trucking in record amounts of soil (2.5 million cubic yards), sod (110 acres) and trees (7,000).

"Shadow Creek is simply indescribable," said Fazio about the course built by Golden Nugget owner Steve Wynne as a private playground for him and selected friends.

Thorne Blade opened last spring. A 45-minute drive from his home, "it's very special to me," said Fazio. "It's a local course that will be used mainly by those living in the community. It won't be advertised nationally because it's been sold out locally. It was a fun project."

Emerald Dunes reunited Fazio with Ray Finch. Finch was one of the principals in Wild Dunes in South Carolina, a course completed in 1980 that helped launch Fazio into this decade.

Fazio's memories of Wild Dunes, and all his courses, are vivid. Part of the reason is that, partly because of personal beliefs and mainly

because of family commitments (six children), he only takes on six to eight projects a year. Most of those are within a two-hour private jet ride of his home.

"He embodies my philosophy," explained Arthur L. Davis of his vote for Fazio as the year's best. "He does quality work on a few courses. He doesn't do volume like a lot of other architects are doing today. And I just like him personally."

Along with Wild Dunes, some of Fazio's better-known courses are The Vintage Club in California, Barton Creek in Texas, PGA National in Florida and Wade Hampton in North Carolina. But he is equally fond of lesser-known projects like John's Island in Florida. ("The Jupiter Hills of the 1980s" — Fazio); Long Point at Amelia Island, Fla.; Golden Eagle

in Tallahassee, Fla.; Lake Nona in Orlando, Fla.; Golf Club of Oklahoma in Broken Arrow; and Ventana Canyon in Tuscon, Ariz.

"They've all made me feel good," said Fazio.

And most all have received favorable publicity. In fact, Fazio has been one of the darlings of the golf media for some time.

"I voted for him primarily because of all the publicity he's received," said Lindsay Ervin.

"It seems he's received more coverage than anybody in some of the journals," added Edward M. Beidel Jr. of Hassenplug Associates.

Actually, the Fazio name has been in the news for more than 40 years. George Fazio, Tom's uncle and the founder of Fazio Golf Course Designers, Inc., was a top-flight pro golfer in the 1940s and 1950s before getting into course architecture in the early 1960s. Tom joined the company in 1962 at age 17 and took on increasing responsibility until George died in 1986.

"Probably not," responded Tom when asked if publicity might be a major reason for his selection as best architect. "My uncle was very well recognized, so we've always gotten a lot anyway. I don't try to separate the George Fazio name from Tom Fazio. Even though he's passed away, he's still very much here. . . I never think about the publicity. Although it's nice to have because it helps keep the company going."

The company is going strong into the next decade. He is already working on projects in Baltimore, Nashville, Pinehurst, N.C., Naperville, Texas, and Chicago.

"My 1990 calendar is already committed," said Fazio.

With a half-dozen offers coming in every week, and his personal policy of accepting no more than eight projects a year, Fazio should have no problem keeping busy into the next century.

The same can be said of Rees Jones, who finished runner-up to Fazio in the voting.

The son of Robert Trent Jones Sr. has emerged from the shadow of his legendary father to do some first-class work of his own. Among his more famous courses are the seventh course at Pinehurst and his restoration of The Country Club in Brookline, Mass., in preparation for the 1988 U.S. Open.

"It's nice to have friends among your peers. We all have the same common goal — to build the best possible facility within the constraints of the job," said Rees Jones.

1989 saw the completion of Charleston National in Mt. Pleasant, S.C.; Southbridge in Savannah, Ga.; Bryan Park in Greensburg, N.C.; a nine-hole restoration at Haig Point on Daufuskie Island, S.C.; Sea Trail Rees Jones course at Sunset Beach, N.C.; remodeling of Congressional Country Club's Blue Course in Bethesda, Md.; and renovation of Hazeltine National in Chaska, Minn., in preparation for the 1991 U.S. Open.

Work under construction or scheduled to begin this year includes The Peninsula Club on Lake Norman in Cornelius, N.C.; Golden Horseshoes No. 2 in Williamsburg, Va.; Cherry Valley in Montgomery Township, N.J.; Atlantic in Bridgehampton, N.Y., on Long Island; Greenspring near Richmond, Va.; and Brant Island in Mattapoisett, Mass.

"I'm a big Rees Jones fan," said Fazio. "We visit each other occasionally and I consider him a personal friend. We're both members of the same club in New Jersey (Pine Valley). His situation is similar to mine in terms of family and the number of courses he'll take on.

"I don't want to take on too many projects at a time," explained Jones. "I'm a hands-on architect. If you take on too many jobs, you just can't get to the job site enough to make the improvements to the course at the proper time, or make changes in time without costing the client more money."

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Wadsworth

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than doubling their closest competition — Golf Course Consultants and Landscapes Unlimited.

Getting the job done right and on time was mentioned again and again by architects selecting Wadsworth.

"I've done a number of courses with them and they've been the best to work with," said Gary A. Panks of Graham/Panks International, who most recently worked with Wadsworth on Sedona Golf Resort in Arizona, which opened in October 1988. "They have a reputation for doing things right. And when there's a problem, they get in quickly and make it right."

"They just do a super job and are a pleasure to work with. They're the kind of company that gets in and gets the job done with very few

problems. That's very important to an architect," added Thomas E. Clark of Ault, Clark & Associates, Ltd. The Wheaton, Md., firm designed Wadsworth-built Emerald River Country Club in Laughlin, Nev., scheduled to open this month.

Wadsworth and current vice chairman of the board John Cotter started the company as a two-man operation in 1958 in Plainfield, Ill. The firm did one or two courses annually in those early years.

"Things really took off in the late 1960s and early 1970s when the golf boom started," said Paul Eldredge, president of the Midwest office. "We moved into Florida in the late 1960s, did Innisbrook GC in Tarpon Springs and opened an office in Oldsmar."

Construction slowed during the recession

of the late 1970s. Wadsworth expanded into the Southwest in search of new jobs, opening a third office in Buckeye, Ariz., just outside Phoenix four years ago.

Wadsworth has kept pace with the latest boom. The company is building between 15 and 20 courses a year. It has grown to about 200 full-time employees. Annual revenues run from \$40 million to \$50 million.

Wadsworth has done several courses in Hawaii and will soon open a Pacific office there. That would seem a natural jumping-off spot for getting into the lucrative Japanese market. But that isn't in the cards, according to the company chairman.

"We've done some work in Australia, but we don't have any big plans beyond the United States," said Wadsworth. "It's easier for an

architect who can just take his pencil and go to another country. We have all our own equipment, facilities and manpower right here. Moving that stuff overseas creates all sorts of problems."

The 60-year-old founder has seen a number of changes in his 30-plus years in the business.

"The biggest thing is the cost of building a course," he said. "It's 1,000 percent more than it was when we started. We used to be able to build a nice course for \$200,000. Today you start at \$2 million and go up from there."

Automatic irrigation systems, fairway watering, a variety of grass types, sodding and extra features like stone walls, elaborate bridges, lake edging and drainage structures were rarely used options that have become standard equip-

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Wadsworth

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ment on today's courses, according to Wadsworth.

"The other major difference is the number of courses being built," he said.

"You could almost count the number of new courses on two hands in the mid-1950s. Now you've got well over 200 courses a year in this country and we've been as high as 350. We've tried to keep pace with that increase."

OSU

Continued from page 1

exactly where you want it and leave residue of less than one-half a part per million of the insecticide on the grass blade. "You look at those results and then you really begin to think about the implications," he said.

For example, he mentioned the milky disease (a bacterial disease that infects grubs). Each Japanese beetle has one species of this disease that is formulated in a product that is available but it is specific to the Japanese beetle. The masked chaffer has its own basili; aetenias has its own basili that's not infectious against the Japanese beetle but only infectious against the aetenias.

"There's no market for these other species of basili right now because there's no efficient way to apply them," Niemczyk said. "But now that we've come up with an efficient way of placing them in narrow bands below the surface three inches apart, it's entirely possible that we may develop the other species of the basili (milky disease) that is infectious against other species of grubs so that we can use them, too."

"So it opens the door to a possibility that didn't exist before because we had no efficient way (at least theoretically) of putting the material down. A lot of people are interested."

Ringer, the company that has the controlling interest in the milky disease product, is interested in preparing it in such a way that it will stay in suspension or stay better. Plus, the researchers used some granular material in their experiments last summer, and the parasitic nematodes can be placed in liquid suspension.

"That is the most exciting part," Niemczyk said, "because I think we can make these biological control materials work the year they are applied... That remains to be demonstrated research-wise, but I am convinced that we can do it."

Niemczyk said the research "still has a ways to go. We've learned a number of things. We've learned that the material has to be placed correctly — if it's with grubs it has to be placed where the grub is or slightly above that. With the Rain Saver (equipment) we placed it 1/4 to 1/2 inch below that and that didn't work as well as a surface application which told us that the

Among the courses Wadsworth has worked on this year are Tom Fazio's Shadow Creek in Las Vegas; Michael Hurdzan's Cobblestone Creek in Rochester, N.Y.; Arthur Hills' Green Ridge Country Club in Grand Rapids, Mich.; Jack Nicklaus' Kiele-Westin in Hawaii; Denis Griffith's Chi Chi Rodriguez Youth Foundation GC in Clearwater, Fla.; Robert Trent Jones Jr.'s Southern Palms Ranch in Desert Springs, Calif.; and Rees Jones' Greenbriar Country Club in New Bern, N.C.

Increased building has turned golf course construction into a very competitive business with many new

contractors having been attracted to the field.

"You've got a lot of contractors who have been successful in other areas who are jumping into golf course work," noted Eldredge.

"Sometimes they make it and sometimes they don't. Those that fail often don't understand what's involved and don't bid high enough on a job. In the end, it's the owner and architect who lose.

"The key always comes back to quality and good business practices that can help you get through the rough times. You must satisfy the architects. They're like artists. We

(construction companies) are like a big paint brush. It's up to us to paint what they have in mind."

One innovative approach Wadsworth has taken to assure quality work is employee ownership. Wadsworth is divided into four companies — Wadsworth Midwest, Southeast, Southwest and Pacific. The employees own as much as 50 percent of each firm.

"I wanted to create the same business spirit that I had when I first started," said the company's founder. "I wanted people to feel they were a part of the company and be totally involved in what they were doing. It's

proven to be worthwhile and is probably one of the major reasons we have the reputation we do."

Despite a hot course-building market, 1989 was an average year, at best, in terms of profits, according to Eldredge. The reason was the weather.

"We did a lot of work in the Midwest and the weather was just horrible at times. It pushed a lot of projects back that we won't be able to seed until spring. 1990 is looking good," Eldredge said.

"There'll be a little lull over the winter. But it looks like we'll have a lot of activity next year," he added.

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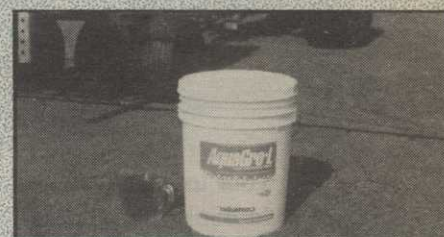
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