

Vodka ad shows talent of another kind.

## It's not Desmond, rather Feldman

By Peter Blais

Those who saw the recent Absolut Vodka ad of a golf hole shaped like a liquor bottle can rest assured that it isn't the latest work of golf course architect Desmond Muirhead.

"It's a model," confessed Steve Feldman, art director for TBWA, the advertising company that has orchestrated the Swedish vodka company's advertising campaign the past 10 years.

During that time, Absolut ads have featured swimming pools, jigsaw puzzles and even a 20-acre wheat field shaped like vodka bottles. But molding an actual golf hole to look like a fifth of the clear liquid was a bit much, Feldman said.

"(Copy writer) Harry Woods and I looked through many golf course books before coming up with the layout," Feldman said. "But we really don't know whether it would make a good golf hole or not."

Woods and Feldman hit on the golf-hole idea earlier this year. They hoped the ad would tap into the sports arena and realized golf was a favorite among the upscale

## McRae leaves The Landings for Pine Forest CC

Page McRae, former assistant superintendent at The Landings, has moved to Pine Forest Country Club in Jesup, Ga., as superintendent.

McRae is overseeing construction of the back nine at Pine Forest, which has nine holes open.

clientele Absolut (the top-selling imported vodka in the U.S.) attracts.

The 12-foot model took artist Mark Borow three weeks to make. It was photographed by Steve Bronstein.

The ad has appeared in several national and local publications including Sports Illustrated and the New York Times Sunday supplement.

"Some people have called and asked what course it's on," Feldman said.

## Survey finds developers' credit crunch

LOS ANGELES—Nearly all golf course developers are being hit by the credit crunch, according to a survey release in December.

"Despite the continued boom in the U.S. golf industry, top developers in the field are literally fighting for capital," said Robert E. Davis Jr., director of real estate capital markets for the accounting firm Arthur Andersen, which conducted the survey at a recent Academy of Golf seminar in Hawaii.

Seventy-three percent of the 58

respondents said obtaining financing had been difficult.

Davis noted the number of golfers in the U.S. has nearly doubled since 1980 to about 26 million, with "nowhere near enough golf course being built in the United States to meet the demand," according to Davis.

Instead, course developers will focus on projects in Southeast Asia and Europe.

"Their more vibrant economies and real estate markets make it

easier to develop and finance golf properties abroad than in the U.S.," said Davis.

His survey showed that 37% of the developers considered Southeast Asia—specifically Japan, Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia—as the most attractive locales over the next three years.

He predicted that what little golf course investment occurs in the U.S. will mostly be limited to acquisition of distressed properties.

## Japanese doctors claim poison patients live near golf courses

TOKYO, Japan—A recent report by a group of doctors and dentists showed that nearly 40% of the agricultural poisoning cases they have treated involve people working at or living near golf courses.

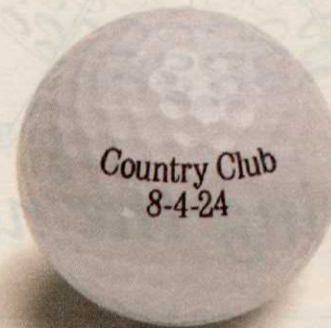
Of the 1,436 patients treated for pesticide poisoning, 536 were employees of golf courses, amateur golfers or people living adjacent to the links.

The rest of the cases involved farmers, and people who ingested the chemicals by mistake or in suicide attempts.

Japan has 1,800 courses and 1,440 more either under construction or being planned. Nearly 15 million people, or more than 12% of Japan's 120 million population, play golf.

Many local governments have moved to restrict construction of golf courses pending safety measures to prevent water contamination and other environmental hazards due to the use of chemicals.

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