



Tom Fazio

Architect of the Year

Like clockwork: Fazio wins fourth straight

By MARK LESLIE

Tom Fazio kept the "fun meter" turned up in 1992, riding the crest of a continuing abundance of gorgeous properties, talented staff, and his own extraordinary skill to a fourth consecutive *Golf Course News* Architect of the Year selection.

Since *GCN* began the annual voting in 1989, Fazio has won the honor each year, designing such award-winning courses as Black Diamond and Emerald Dunes — voted, in a *GCN* poll, the best private and public golf courses, re-

spectively, to open in the last five years. Pelican Hill was named this month by *Golf Digest* as the best new resort course for 1992 and Shadow Creek was *Golf Digest*'s best new private course in 1990.

Roger Rulewich, Robert Trent Jones Sr.'s architect in charge of designing the 17 planned courses on the Jones Trail in Alabama, finished second in the nationwide balloting of golf course architects and builders. Art Hills of Toledo, Ohio, tied for third with the team of Jay Morrish and Tom Weiskopf.

Reflecting on winning his fourth

annual award, Fazio said: "My staff and I all work hard. What we've done in the past keeps us going. We know we can do it better, and that's the new challenge — that's exciting."

Fazio lauded his "golf-fanatic" staff, including senior designers Andy Banfield, Dennis Wise, Tom Marzolf, Jan Beljan and Tom Griswold and construction coordinator Blake Bickford.

"Limiting our amount of work [about five courses open each year] and creating these individual, unique experiences on



Best of the Best

each golf course, keeps us going and keeps it fun and exciting," he said. "It's never boring because no two courses or pieces of land are the same.

"Probably the most difficult part of these awards are that it's embarrassing to some degree because the focus is on me," Fazio said. "But, obviously, there are so many people involved. My associates have the hands-on, day-to-day effort and involvement. Then there are our clients, landscape and clubhouse architects, land planners — many people."

The Fazio design team — working out of Hendersonville, N.C., and Jupiter, Fla. — had five courses open in 1992: Pelican Hill's Ocean Course in Newport Beach, Fla.; Walt Disney's Osprey Ridge in Orlando, Fla.; Uwharrie Point in Denton, N.C.; Treetops in Gaylord, Mich.; Two Rivers Club at Governor's Land in Williamsburg, Va; and the front nine of Black Diamond's Ranch Course in Lecanto, Fla.

Osprey Point, in Disney's Bonnet Creek golf complex, and Pelican Hill on the Pacific Ocean both opened early in the year to critical acclaim. Of Uwharrie Point, he said its "variety, character and setting are world-class all the way."

Part of a golf community built along a large lake on a peninsula, Uwharrie Point is blessed with a ridge running through its center.

Fazio said this allowed the course to "traverse on one side, along this spectacular long-range view of this magnificent lake. Over the ridge to the other side of the peninsula, its holes go parallel with great views of this lake but with a totally different style and land form. We moved holes to give variety in length and form, doglegs, shadows, sun angles, and contour variation."

He also gave high ranks to Treetops. "I always thought Pinehurst [N.C.] was maybe one of the easiest places to build great golf in terms of actual construction techniques. When you have rolling terrain, tree cover and sandy soils, you have the basis for quality golf without an expensive construction program and it's pretty easy to do."

In all of these projects, money is the key player, Fazio said.

"You always have to be concerned about budgets," he said. "Despite ideal conditions, there's always the dollar standpoint. You try not to compromise. But the real world is that it has to be done in a realistic program. And dollars are the guiding light."

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