

BRIEFS

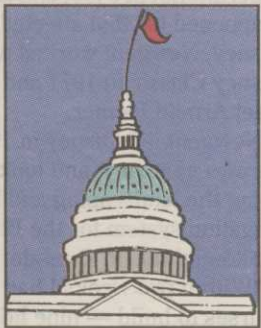

**BARBARON BUILDING NEW 18
AT CYPRESS LAKE**

LAKELAND, Fla. — Barbaron, Inc. of Crystal River has been selected by Cypress Lakes Ventures to construct a new 18-hole additional course at the Cypress Lake Golf and Country Club here. The course has been designed by Powell Golf Design of Bradenton and is scheduled to open in the early fall.

COURSE DESIGNERS EXEMPTED

A Mississippi bill that exempts golf course designers from being licensed as landscape architects has been signed into law by Gov. Kirk Fordice. Landscape architects in some states, including Florida, also have tried to force golf course designers to be licensed.

The bill also allows the state Board of Architecture to run continuing education programs for landscape architects.


GRAVES PICKS UP THE PIECES

Salgados Praia Golf Course, in the West Region of Algarve, Southern Portugal, is nearing completion. Robert Muir Graves, Ltd., of Walnut Creek, Calif., was brought in as course architect when the course was about 70 percent completed. Graves made a number of revisions and generally upgraded the layout to meet international standards for resort play. The completed course will measure 6,560 yards from the back tees. The course is part of a large homesite and hotel development.

NEW CLUBHOUSE FOR ARGYLE

SILVER SPRING, Md. — Argyle CC is renovating and expanding its clubhouse. The \$2.4 million project will expand the clubhouse to 22,000 square feet. BeechTree Golf Co. is coordinating the project for the club. The building architect is Reithlingshoefer-Smith & Associates of Annapolis and the contractor is Coleman & Wood of Rockville.

HELLMAN JOINS JACOBSON DESIGN

LIBERTYVILLE, Ill. — Doug Hellman has joined Jacobson Golf Course Design as director of business development and design associate. He will oversee new business development and marketing activities and be involved in project development. Hellman formerly was director of business development for Dick Nugent Associates.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Europeans coordinate environmental effort

By PETER BLAIS

BRUSSELS, Belgium — With permits and financing firmly in hand, developers of Domain Des Princes Golf Course began building their Jack Nicklaus-designed layout here in late 1989. A local environmental group went to court and succeeded in having the permit revoked. Five years later, the course is no closer to reality than it was in the late 1980s.

This is the type of situation the newly formed European Golf Association Ecology Unit hopes to stop from happening again.

New Ecology Unit to present golf's benefits on pro-active, case-by-case basis

The ecology unit is a joint initiative of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, PGA European Tour and European Golf Association — an umbrella organization representing the 25 European national golf associations.

Launched in January, the program has been funded for the next three years in recognition of the need for Europe's lead-

ing golf associations to present a coordinated approach to environmental issues.

"We [golf industry] haven't handled those problems well in the past," said Executive Director David Stubbs, an experienced ecologist who has specialized in golf-ecology issues the past seven years and gained considerable experience matching golf and conservation interests.

"Basically we've just put out fires wherever they've erupted. We need to take a more pro-active approach and get a dialogue underway with the environmental

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Hurdzan pursues yellowed pages & hickory sticks

By MARK LESLIE

It is like "Christmas and an Easter egg hunt all rolled up in one."

It captivates, excites and enlightens. And it has made Dr. Michael Hurdzan a frequenter of flea markets and dusky old book stores.

It is the hobby (and treasure hunt) of golf collecting. "I just can't describe to you the excitement of finding something you've been searching for for years," said Hurdzan, a golf course architect whose massive collection includes books, clubs, ceramics, glassware, buttons, games, you name it.

"I can almost tell you the time, date and place I found each one of them, and what I paid for them. It's like an Easter egg hunt and Christmas all in one. And every single day is like that. Collecting is the most exciting thing, if you really treasure the things — which I do."

Hurdzan, then young and far from wealthy, caught the collecting bug unaware on Christmas Day 1967. "Someone gave me *Book of the Links* by Sutton. I had



Dr. Michael Hurdzan relaxes in his Columbus, Ohio, office, which brims with trinkets from golf's past.

no idea these kinds of books even existed — let alone on golf course architecture. I was absolutely captivated by the idea. I read it and reread it. It was a wonderful experience. It became so exciting to me that I started to collect more and more things. I went to book stores and flea markets — and still do."

Hurdzan pulled out an old cigarette dispenser for rolled cigarettes. "Just last week-

end I discovered this. It's probably from the '20s or '30s, but it's a wonderful piece."

Hurdzan's "primary love is books," and, indeed, like beloved family, every one in his cache has a story.

• There's *Scotland's Gift*, written in 1885 by Charles Blair Macdonald, and *Golf in America*, which Hurdzan bought in a book store in 1969 for \$3 and \$5, respectively.

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Von Hagge lays claim to the unbearable lightness of course design

An agricultural engineering degree-holder who played on the PGA Tour a few years and as a club professional before joining Dick Wilson's architectural firm in 1957, Robert von Hagge has established his own design practice around the world. Eighty percent of his work is abroad, "and it doesn't seem to be letting up," he said. Managing editor Mark Leslie caught the 63-year-old von Hagge at his Spring, Texas, headquarters.

Golf Course News: It seems you have your own idea of golf course design. What do you do that says: "This is a von Hagge design?"

Robert von Hagge: Visually, our courses speak profoundly to folks because I think we're the only ones who really work with light. We've studied light for years. The way the light works from morning to evening across this plane of vertical ex-

Q & A



Robert von Hagge

pression you've created, and how it works from season to season allows a very romantic mystique to come forward at all hours of the day.

When you see photographs of great golf holes, or courses, they are always taken at that dramatic time of day when the angle of light is most profound. We've proven significantly that we can bring those dramatic hours into the middle of the day, so that hour after hour you're playing a different-appearing golf hole. It eliminates the repetition and boredom that you find in so many courses.

In earth movement, the only thing you can rely on ad infinitum is the light. It's the only thing permanent. Trees and grasses die and horizons change with cityscapes

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Perry Dye: 'We have redirected'

By HAL PHILLIPS

DENVER, Colo. — To paraphrase Perry O. Dye and quote Mark Twain directly: "Reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated."

However, Dye offers this qualifier: "Not greatly exaggerated, but exaggerated."

Rumors have been flying from here to Singapore concerning the financial condition of Dye Designs, as the Japanese development market — which had supported 87 percent of Dye's business in 1989 and '90, for example — continues its downward slide.

The result for Dye Designs has been diminished work overseas and a new focus on its domestic business plan.

"We have redirected. We're going after some of the smaller projects," said Dye in late-April. "To be frank, it's hard to adjust, but I think we can do it. Getting golf courses built for municipalities will go a long way towards changing our image."

"But frankly, a lot of people don't know what I can do here on the main

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Q&A: von Hagge

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and developments and everything else. But you can rely on light as a dependable partner in your efforts.

GCN: How, in particular, have you eliminated the boredom you refer to?

RvH: About the last 12 years we've come up with 11 basic vertical shapes. Their positioning, size and how they interact with the light allows you to create a kaleidoscope of visual experience all day long. Simultaneously, it allows you to explain the shot presentation. The problem for the golfer to solve is much more easily portrayed with the way we use light. We're not just relying on humps, bumps and trees to do that.

I get a kick out of people talking about great golf holes, like the 18th at Pebble Beach. Put that in the middle of Oklahoma and I defy you to say it's a great golf hole. It's setting. It's the horizon vistas. It's the mood, that special feeling when you stand on the tee. And the sport of golf—you have a foursome, one guy's hitting the golf ball and three are standing around taking it all in. It's got to be total theater, 360 degrees. You can't build it like a stage prop looking forward. Nobody plays golf that way, and certainly the other three folks aren't looking straight ahead.

GCN: When did you start looking into lighting?

RvH: About 1980. Until then, we used the traditional approach—only with our own kind of expression. More and more, I began to see the overpowering importance of visual presentation. You can have a tactically wonderful golf course, but you don't visually present it with pizzazz and excitement and change it up so nothing repeats itself, it's a dud.

Conversely, there are a lot of strategically poor golf courses that are magnificent to look at and all of a sudden are in a golf magazine's top 100. And they wouldn't pass a good tactical test as far as design is concerned. There are a number of great, great clubs that aren't in any rating and that nobody will ever see. They are so private they don't want you around.

GCN: Most golf courses are most dra-



The 9th hole at Pelican Marsh/Bay Colony Golf Club in Naples, Fla., is a dramatic par-3, 154-yarder framed by Robert von Hagge's trademark bunkering. The project, designed for the Westinghouse Communities, won von Hagge Design Associates the 1994 Merit Award from the American Society of Landscape Architecture.

matic looking at sunrise or sunset. That's when you see the movement of the light the most.

RvH: Those are the most dramatic hours. After about 11 o'clock, most golf courses are dead meat until 3:30 or 4 o'clock. We take great pride in keeping that kaleidoscope of visual experience through shadow and texture and light changing right through those dead hours. I don't think anybody else is doing it. If so, I think it happens by accident. I think a lot of our architects today are like natural piano players or dancers: They can do it, but they don't know how or why. Or else they're guarding their secrets... That doesn't take away from their talent. We have enormously talented people out there now.

It's also the kinds of grasses you use as texture that either diffuses, absorbs or mutes light.

GCN: The old-time designers didn't have the equipment we have today...

RvH: But they didn't need them. They were physically picking green sites and maybe massaging 500 to 1,000 cubic yards of material. Now you're moving 7,000 or 8,000 for the same green site.

My father worked for Donald Ross and built four or five clubs in Florida for him and some around Chicago. If they would move 70,000 cubic yards of material with mules and slips and what-have-you, that was enormous. And he's got some classic golf courses. They moved 81,000 cubic yards of

material on Pinehurst No. 2, and what would you change about it? I mean, it's there.

In today's world it's different. You can't do anything decent in Florida that doesn't require moving at least 300,000 cubic yards of material—forgetting the fact that you might have to work with negative drainage. You're creating everything. First, if that golf course is any part of Florida and not in the boondocks, you have to create what we call the primary horizons—that's that first mask of green that blends into the long horizon that also simultaneously eliminates all that garbage would visually interfere with that interaction if you didn't put it there. We've done that a lot in the desert courses of California where the sun picks up glass of the desert that reflects during the day. But if you do that green mounding and sloping and blend it into the long mountain background, you're in a visually contained environment.

On every project like that you have to create a sense of arrival that envelops you when you go through the gate.

My wife could have done something at Augusta or Pebble Beach that would have been acceptable and she doesn't even play the game. But more and more, to justify the club as a business investment, the market location takes precedent over anything else. And oftentimes that's a deserted garbage dump, or some piece of terrible wetland that everybody has ignored but it's where people can get to it.

I get a little ornery when people speak of the great work Mackenzie and Ross did. They had the pick of a candy store! They were sent out on a mission by wealthy groups to go find the best site for the new clubs. I'm not saying they didn't do a good job. But the present-day architect seldom gets a shot at something like that. The really great sites are in dramatic settings, but you can't get to them unless you parachute in.

GCN: And they didn't have to do that 30, 60 years ago.

RvH: Not at all. Yet they were truly "country" clubs—considerably out of the urban area.

GCN: What have modern equipment and technology offered to the evolution or advancement of golf course design?

RvH: It's become more sophisticated and versatile. You can do a lot of wonderfully sophisticated nuances on surfaces now that were impossible 20 years ago. That's not only the equipment. It's also the growing talent on the guys on the machines. We have some shapers in America who are truly artists. That's been an enormous improvement.

That works directly with my feelings on the CADD system. You cannot do those sorts of things on a computer. We started with it and we still use computerized construction specifications and some heavy earth-moving drawings. But all the fine shaping and tailoring is done in the communication between the architect and shaper on site—because here again you're working with light and at various times of the day. Sometimes, if you need to create a bit of mystique or sophistication, it's working with three and four inches of dirt that rises and falls and still positively drains water across it. Plus, just three or four inches of dirt can either void out or bring into focus something magnificent on the horizon. That can't be put on a CADD system.

The long views are so important. The first thing we do on a site is inventory the horizons to make sure our primary backgrounds are always on dramatic shots. Eliminate the background at Pebble Beach and how much memory do you have of it? Or, we play away from smokestacks and other ugly things on the horizon, or eliminate it by moving dirt.

GCN: How large is your company's staff?

RvH: Sixteen people. Lead designers are myself and three architects who are partners in the company. All have been with me since they got out of school: Kelly Blake Moran, whose been with me for 11 years; Rick Baril, 13 years; and Mike Smelek, 13 years.

Myself and one of the three architects are common to every project. We make 60 to 75 visits per project. You have to spend time out there. The more you look, the more there is to see. It's usually the developer's lifetime shot and if you don't

Continued on next page

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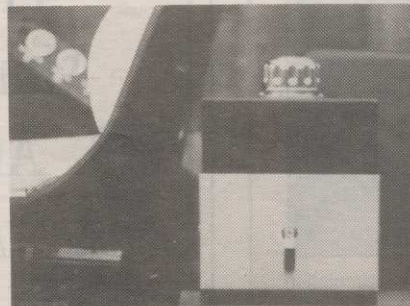


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Q&A: von Hagge

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spend every buck well, you're delinquent.
GCN: Are there von Hagge School of Design graduates who have gone out on their own?

RvH: Yes. We had three with Nicklaus for awhile. Now they're all on their own. Rick Robbins started with us. Mitch Walker, who is now in the Orient. Lamar Bunn in

the Carolinas. Karl Litten in Florida. And three or four others.

GCN: Do you have a favorite golf course that you designed?

RvH: I have many for different reasons. Some for mere accomplishment because they were such a difficult undertaking and came out well. Some because they are visually spectacular, and I can't take a lot of credit for what was there. The last six years has been our best burst of golf courses ever. About 80 percent of our work is out of

the country, so Americans wouldn't be familiar with them.

GCN: What is the easiest country to work in?

RvH: In regulations, it's Mexico. It has none to speak of. But in some ways, it is the most difficult. You can't get anything done. The equipment is not in the country. Until recently, they have discouraged you bringing in any specialized talent from the States. They like to spread the wealth locally. It takes forever to get something done.

GCN: Will NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement] make a difference?

RvH: Yes. We have the tree huggers and Hush Puppies crossing the border in groves. And it should happen, or you'll have the rape of the most gorgeous property in the world. Everybody and their brother is trying to build a golf course down there now. And for every good one there are 20 real bad ones.

GCN: What is the toughest country to work in?

RvH: Sometimes it is the easiest, too: Japan. From a permit standpoint, it's really tough. We're dealing with a course in the Osaka area and there is permit after permit and permit. It's political football as it is in every country. It's a rich man's sport, so the guy who wants to get elected to office will make it difficult for you to get a club together. And still, when it comes to contractors, once you get the project mobilized and on stream, they are the best. They are wonderful.

GCN: You were perhaps the first architect to join with a touring pro [Bruce Devlin] and that dissolved. Would you do it again?

RvH: I was the first to undo it, too. No, never. It's nothing personal, because Bruce is a good guy. I brought him into my company in 1970 at his request. He wanted to learn about the business. Bruce's forte, like most of these players, was in the marketing aspect more than anything else. Bruce was playing a lot of golf and doing a lot of TV. His contribution was more in marketing. But we found for the kind of fees you get that you've got to have an equal division of time and attention if you're going to divide the revenues that way.

I do think for fledgling companies, it's probably a good thing. Like Rick Robbins:

It gives Gary Koch some cushion. He's announcing and trying to develop future sources of revenue. And it's good for Rick, who doesn't have a big identification yet.

GCN: How do you view the evolution of course design?

RvH: For so many years, most golf courses had the tee, the green, the fairway and a row of trees going down either side, with a couple of bunkers now and then.

That was architecture until, I think, when Dick Wilson and Robert Trent Jones began to turn it around in the early '50s. By the early '60s it was in full cry, and then it passed them... Us young pups took it up from there and developed it into a sophisticated presentation. I think very honestly I'm the only who's done anything since then at another level of *why* it [light and movement] should work that way and *how* you can control it.

Long after finishing touches applied, von Hagge stays in touch with clients

By MARK LESLIE

SPRING, Texas — Von Hagge Design Associates has developed a marketing program for its clients that extends six years after course opening and which Robert von Hagge calls "an award-winner."

"Instead of selling a roll of blueprints and showing up now and then, we stay involved," von Hagge said. "It's been a real boon to the guy who's invested his life savings in the project and doesn't know where to go."

With the program, he said, "We've been able to close over 70 percent of the potential members and real-estate buyers in our projects."

The marketing program starts with forming the board of directors, deciding the type of club (equity, non-equity), and forming the charter group. Von Hagge conducts three walking tours with prospective members, speaking on his design philosophy, "so they can become part of that creative effort."

By involving members, he said, "you begin developing the history and heritage of the club, the pride which turns into value which turns into profit."

"The country club is a social statement. The architectural statement is the golf course. But you want them to know you're setting out to create a

premiere, world-class facility that maybe does not exist in their area. We share every bit of it with [prospects] every step of the way."

Von Hagge also hosts two events for the media — one, a preview tournament before the members even get to play the course.

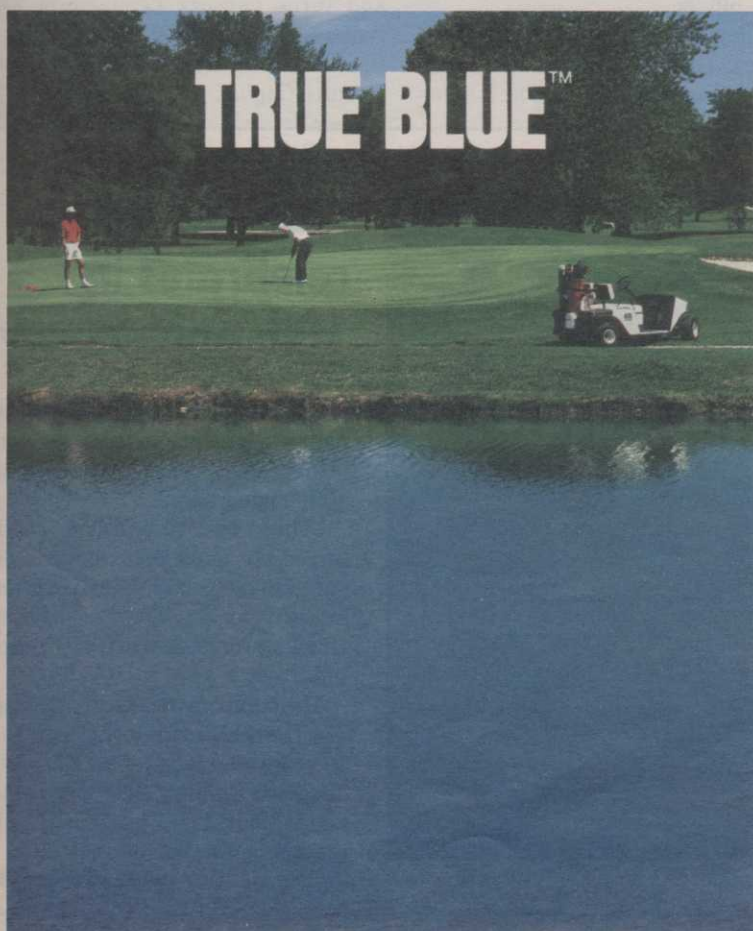
Von Hagge Design Associates trains the superintendent in similar circumstances before he takes the course over. The firm heads up the club's green committee for three years after the course opens.

"We have an arrangement with all our clients that we can do this internship with them," von Hagge said.

Involvement also extends to the landscaping.

"We look at the embellishment of the course because we don't believe you should landscape a course before it opens — rather just prior to or at opening," von Hagge said. "You can't design and construct a home and hang the drapes or pictures with any sense before that happens. It has to be up before you can really feel the mood of what is needed in what area. It's stupid to try."

He added: "We've been polishing this strategy because we feel we have to in order to stay in the strata we're in."



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