

Mootes carry on the Thompson design tradition, and their own

When Robert Mooté went to work for famed golf course architect Stanley Thompson, little did he know he would become an established designer in his own right, and be joined by his own son, David, in the business. Forty years later, Robert and David Mooté are busy designing courses throughout Canada. Robert, who holds a degree in agriculture and horticulture, was a green consultant to the Royal Canadian Golf Association and also designed with C.E. Robinson and his brother David S. Mooté, who in 1964 was president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Bob Mooté's son David, whose drive to a professional hockey career was halted by a knee injury, earned degrees in sports psychology, turf management and landscape design. They work out of Brampton, Ontario, Canada.

Golf Course News: When Dave was born, did you think he might follow in your footsteps in golf course design?

Bob Mooté: I was hoping he might. He worked with me when he was 6, 7 and 8 years of age — just like he himself takes his kids out now.

GCN: Dave, did you have an advantage over other kids?

Dave Mooté: I certainly didn't recognize the advantage at that time because it was matter-of-fact. It's only in recent years — and I'm

43 now — that I've appreciated more and more the heritage and history and tradition that is passed along.

I did not appreciate the art of the work as a child. But I got an appreciation of standards. It is ingrained by tagging along all those years. Then I worked on the golf course as well — not just in construction, but in maintenance and caddying, including caddying in the Canadian Open when Jack Nicklaus played. And I gained appreciation for what the standards are — what is good, bad or indifferent — and what the common person would like in a golf course. That exposure is important. It's experience. And it takes a lifetime. I gain more and more from him [Bob] now — probably because I listen more.

GCN: Did you plan, Dave, to be an architect?

DM: There was a time when I didn't know what I was going to do. There comes a time when you have to decide definitively that you love [this work] because you are taken away from home, the hours are not consistent and regular.

GCN: Do you think about it because your dad taught you?

DM: A lot of it is exposure, and not everybody has the opportunity to get out to all these golf courses. A lot of it is intrinsic, too, no question. Having that "feeling." When you stand on a

Q & A



The 6th hole at Oaks of St. George Golf and Country Club in Paris, Ontario, Canada, a semi-private course designed by Bob and David Mooté.



Father Bob (right) and son David Mooté.

tee, you have to know that that hole feels right, the psychological perception, all the parameters that the average golfer would never begin to think about.

GCN: Dave, do you find you have the same tendencies in design as your father?

DM: Yes. There is a grounding in terms of principles. We are in sync, knowing what the other is thinking.

BM: We have the same philosophy, but I can see Dave now moving in a slightly different direction: more bunkering and waste bunkers.

DM: I'm always trying to build two golf courses in one — meaning, one top-end caliber and also making a conscious effort to make the high-handicapper feel like he is on the best course possible.

GCN: How did your education prepare you for this work, Dave?

DM: You have to wrap those elements [sports psychology, turf management and landscape design] in agronomy. I approached it more from the operational or maintenance perspective. That's very much a good part of my business right now — regenerating golf courses, renovating them to practical, feasible economic operations and taking them back to their natural states as well, so the maintenance costs are not so prohibitive. I've gone from the maintenance side of things and leisure psychology to try to appeal to everybody, get everyone

moving and comfortable, appreciative of what's out there like it's a walk in the park. It's not just a sporting activity. It's all these things wrapped into one. And it's so psychological that that's what I like to aim for. That's a little different from other people. We're as busy as the top guys, but people get an appreciation for what you do and you get your own niche.

GCN: Will your 15-year-old son Jeff follow in your footsteps, Dave?

DM: It's up to him. All our kids sit beside me at the drafting table. I've got sketches from all of them. Jeff is a dedicated individual. He's got probably more creative flair than I do. Maybe not an appreciation, at this stage, for the technical. I'm a technician from the word go. But he and all the kids have a creative flair. They are all good golfers, too.

At least they're aware enough to make an intelligent choice. They won't be in it for the romanticism because Jeff has been

out to his waist in snow for three days at a time staking out a golf course.

GCN: Would the child of an architect have an advantage because of the genes or knowledge that this career path exists?

DM: I think there is an advantage because there are so few opportunities. The entry points are few and far between.

GCN: Bob, what attracted you to design?

BM: When I graduated in agriculture Stanley Thompson offered me a job. He gave me a pick and shovel and sent me to the Maritimes. He asked me what I'd like to do in the coming winter. I said I'd like to take some drafting so I can put more on canvas. I did that and we went to Toronto and got so busy. We never slowed down. We'd work all night and get up early in the morning.

DM: My mother used to say Dad never got creative until 11:30 at night.

BM: But that's the way it is. You've got to go when the spirit moves. To me that's what the allure is: getting lost in a project, deeply entrenched in it. You have to look at so many facets. You're building it for generations, not just for today.

You have to get lost in your projects, completely and without distraction. People may look at you like you're quirky and off the wall, but that's the way it is. I think there is something similar between the best architects and the best superintendents. The best superintendents aren't necessarily at the best courses and don't have the biggest budgets. The guys at mid-range have to use their ingenuity and really best find the level that suits their economic capabilities.

P.B. Dye opens first nine at Heritage

MASON, Ohio — Heritage Club, a year-old residential golf community on the north side of Cincinnati, has opened the first nine holes of its P.B. Dye-designed 18-hole course boasting meadows, woods, lakes and streams.

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Ken Campbell and Bob Rhein of Cincinnati are developers of the community.

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