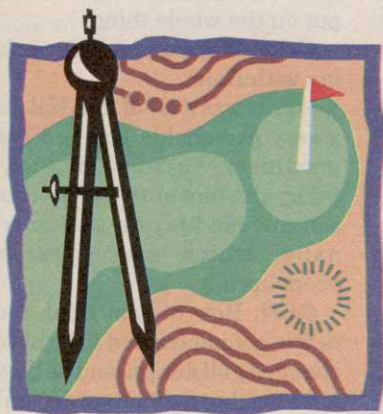


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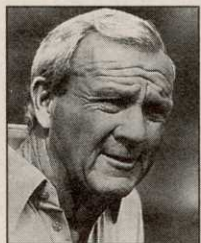


GCBAA BUSTING OUT

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — The Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBAA) grew by more than 25 percent in 1998, adding 46 construction companies and suppliers to bring its total membership to 212. "I think it's a sign that the golf course construction industry is maturing," said Phil Arnold, executive vice president of the 27-year-old organization. "Naturally I'd like to think our association has had a lot to do with fostering that process, but we've also benefited from the explosive growth in the golf industry as a whole. There are some huge general contracting companies that have been building golf courses for years, but as a small part of their overall business. Those companies are now coming to our association."

PALMER INKS MICHIGAN PROJECT

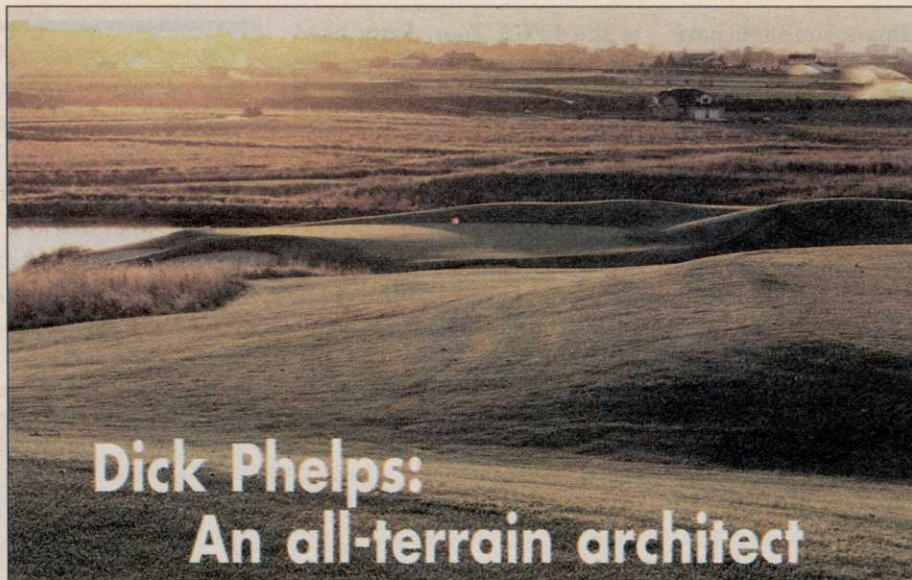
FENTON, Mich. — Arnold Palmer and Palmer Course Design Co. have selected to design the Preserve at Black Bear Resort here. The 18-hole championship course is being developed by the Preserve Corp. The Preserve at Black Bear Resort is scheduled to open during the summer of 2000 and will feature a clubhouse and 72 natural wooded home sites. Lakes and pristine hardwoods pave the way for large ravines that run the entire property. Eagle Golf Construction will be the contractor.



Arnold Palmer

CAL OLSON COURSES PROGRESS

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, Calif. — Cal Olson Golf Architects is busy with two golf courses under construction — Sonoma Ranch in Las Cruces, N.M., and Mountain Falls in Pahrump, Nev. — while Diamond Hill in Fontana is expected to start construction in October. Sierra Star Resort in Mammoth Lakes was completed last year and will open this summer. Olson is also remodeling El Dorado Golf Course in Long Beach, Calif., by adding and improving on the water features and bunkers and extending the yardage.



Dick Phelps:
An all-terrain architect

The 16th green at Saddle Rock Golf Club in Aurora, Colo., invites a clean approach shot. Designed by Dick Phelps, Saddle Rock was voted 8th-best new public course in 1998. It hosts the Colorado Open, the state men's championship whose past winners include Hale Irwin and Dave Hill.

Dick Phelps has been designing golf courses since he graduated from Iowa State University in 1963 with bachelor's and master's degrees in landscape architecture. In 1966 he and land planner Donald Brauer formed a partnership in Minneapolis and a year later Phelps opened his own office in Denver. When they split in 1973, he formed a partnership with Brad



Benz, and in 1981 they added J. Michael Poellot. Benz and Poellot left a year later to form a company in California, and "from 1981 until now I've been master of my own destiny and I enjoy it," Phelps says. In 1990 Phelps and U.S. Open champion Hale Irwin began working together, but Irwin has since started his own design firm.

Golf Course News: When I hear the Phelps name I think mountains. A lot of your reputation was gained by your work in the mountains. Do you feel you have mastered designing courses in the high mountains of America?

Dick Phelps: We certainly have had experience in the high country. But I think more of the golf courses have been out of it now — quite a few in the flat lands of Colorado. And we've been fortunate to have done courses, some of them with Hale Irwin, from Florida to North Carolina to Colorado to Sun Valley, Idaho, to central Illinois. So, we have gotten around to other kinds of sites as well.

GCN: What do you prefer?
DP: The mountain courses I've done have been on difficult sites. However, we

have not had a lot of heavy rock and the kinds of obstacles you often have on the East Coast. So we've been fortunate that we've been able to move dirt without a lot of interference. I think [architects] all like to have a gentler rolling site with some rock, some water, some trees and so forth. I've had the perfect site only twice in my career and I've done close to 70 courses. Probably one of the prettiest was in the Sacramento area called Twelve Bridges. It has beautiful oaks, a couple of streams, wetlands and gorgeous rock — big granite boulders. The other site was Perry Park Country Club between Colorado Springs and Denver. It's back in the Ponderosa pine, with vertical redrock formations similar to the Garden of the Gods.

Continued on page 22

Wildhawk fills void of 'affordable public'

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Aiming to fill the need in Northern California for affordable, public-access golf, Southgate Recreational Park District has opened Wildhawk Golf Club here.

"We believe that Wildhawk will prove to be a prototype golf development concept for local municipalities, county governments and park districts who have the vision and desire to use idle land, and at the same time provide an income-producing, high-quality, affordable golf facility for their constituents," said J. Michael Poellot Golf Design Group senior designer Mark Hollinger.

The course was created on a completely flat piece of farm land "with almost no existing natural features with which to work, not even one tree," said Hollinger. "We had poor, rocky soils ... and a short timetable. The completed project, however, has become a high-



Undulating fairways and creative movement on the greens set Wildhawk apart.

quality, daily-fee recreational golf facility that is now coming into its own with a significant level of play." Builders moved more than 350,000 cubic yards of dirt to mold the 6,695-yard parkland-style course. The course fea-

American Skiing delays projects

By PETER BLAIS

NEWRY, Maine — A disappointing ski season has slowed golf developments at several American Skiing Co. (ASC) properties, according to Peter Webber, special assistant to ASC golf operations.

This past winter's lack of snow in the Northeast and Colorado, the core of American Skiing's holdings, led to a disappointing fiscal second quarter. Consequently, the company decided to sell some non-strategic holdings and cut capital improvements.

In terms of golf, that meant putting construction of the new 18-hole Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed course at Sunday River in Newry on hold for a year and temporarily tabling plans for new courses at Sugarloaf USA in Carrabassett Valley, Maine, and Attitash Bear Peak in Bartlett, N.H., Webber said.

"We cut the trees on all 18 holes and the driving range this winter," said Sunday River Managing Director Chip Seamans. "We've taken some money from our capital budget for the resort to continue working on it this summer, mostly drainage issues and the sort of thing that will put us ahead in the future when we really jump into it again."

"We're not doing as much as we'd like, but it's definitely going to happen in the future."

The original plan was to open the Sunday River layout in 2001. A revised opening date has yet to be determined. BMR Inc. of Vancouver is the builder.

In addition to Sunday River, Sugarloaf and Attitash, ASC operates Killington, Mount Snow and Sugarbush in Vermont; Steamboat in Colorado; The Canyons in Utah; and Heavenly in California and Nevada.

tures four sets of tees, undulating fairways, medium-sized greens, lush landscaping and meandering, strategically placed streams and lakes.

Wildhawk is being managed by Crown Golf Properties.

Q&A: Phelps

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Unfortunately, we didn't have much of a budget when we did the course and it got spread out timewise. So we've never been able to do everything we would like to on that gorgeous piece of ground.

GCN: Mountain construction means difficult construction.

DP: The biggest problem with

the mountains is, you might have 14 or 15 gorgeous golf holes and three or four that hardly work. But you have to get from point A to point B to make the others work. So, of course everybody remembers the funky holes. That's the hard part.

GCN: Have you worked with any other pros besides Hale Irwin?

DP: We've had the opportunity to work with Patty Sheehan

of the LPGA Tour. Patty liked the Twelve Bridges course. The LPGA's been playing it since it opened with an LPGA tournament. Patty has expressed an interest and I'd like to work with her. We just haven't yet had the opportunity.

GCN: What kind of input would she have?

DP: I would bet, everything. I wouldn't want to restrict her strictly to the ladies' end of it.

'One of my greatest fears is that all this competition for highly sculpted, upscale, target golf simply raises the cost to build the golf course, which translates to a higher greens fee to break even or show a profit, and we're pricing the average golfer out of the game.'

She's an accomplished enough golfer that she could give us input on the whole thing.

GCN: What was it like working with Hale?

DP: It was a lot of fun. Hale is a very personable guy and has good ideas. We're not doing anything with him now. He has chosen to build his own staff internally, which makes sense economically.

GCN: How do you think the newer equipment and balls have changed golf design, and do they threaten the traditions of design?

DP: A lot of people like to point at the clubs or golf balls, and that is the case to some extent. But I can't blame everything on the clubs and balls. We have much, much shorter-cut fairways now than we used to have. Pete Dye said several years ago that if you took a Stimpmeter reading on some of these fairways they would be rolling faster and further than they used to on the greens back in the '50s; and he's right. We are cutting the fairways so short that you get that much roll on your tee shots. And we're rolling the greens faster, too.

I don't think there's any question in the research that's been done that golf balls are going further. How much it is affecting the game is the big debate.

Yes, the pros are hitting it further. You have to assume the average golfer is hitting it a little further and maybe a little straighter. But is it really seriously affecting the game?

I think publicity and marketing are causing changes in design. We get pressure all the time to build a longer golf course than the guy down the street, especially since we're doing so many combination golf course/residential projects. This guy wants to sell his condos or lots or custom homes, so he wants a longer course than the competition. So you're getting over 7,000 yards — 7,300, 7,500. You see all the pretty pictures in magazines of deep roughs and highly sculpted bunker faces and green edges and whatnot. That's all changing the game.

One of my greatest fears is that all this competition for highly sculpted, upscale, target golf simply raises the cost to build the golf course, which translates to a higher greens fee to break even or show a profit, and we're pricing the average golfer out of the game. Everybody complains about people leaving the game, and there is one big reason: Cost. Cost of equipment and cost of greens fees and carts.

Then add the mega-length golf courses that take forever to play. People talk about 4-hour or 4-hour-and-20-minute rounds. Well, it can't be done on some of these long golf courses with difficult roughs and rolls and so forth.

Continued on next page

GOLF COURSE NEWS



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CIRCLE #119

Q&A: Phelps

Continued from previous page

Friends tell me they can't devote a whole day to a round of golf. Add the drive there and back, warming up, the 5-hour round, settling the bets, and it's an 8-hour-plus day for some. A lot of folks trying to get into this game have a young family and other things they have to do.

GCN: What should be done about it, and by whom?

DP: We need to build more affordable courses, first of all, and more player-friendly courses. But that's difficult since many developers don't want that kind of course because they don't think it will sell adjacent lots. The course architects themselves are a little leery of doing that type of course because it won't make the magazines and rankings and so on.

GCN: There used to be a much higher percentage of projects driven by housing. The figures show more courses are stand-alone now. Why isn't that bringing lower-cost courses onto the market?

DP: That's a good question. We still jump for joy when we get a pure golf course — a core course without housing around it. Those are still fairly rare — at least in this part of the country.

GCN: What's it like having your son Rick working with you?

DP: It's been great. As a youngster of 8, he'd be out on the site with me holding the survey rod.

Rick adds a breath of fresh air to the office. I've been doing this 37 years and Rick has some different ideas. And he has brought me into the computer age. I'm still scared to death of them myself.

GCN: Give us an example of what "fresh new ideas" in design would entail.

DP: Let me give you, first, an example of why we want to do it. I have done so many projects in Colorado that on occasion we hear the comment, "We know you have been successful and have done profitable and fun golf courses, but we want a fresh face." That has always been disturbing because they always preface it with the fact that we've done such a great job.

So, Rick for the last several years, has said, "Hey, I'm a fresh face." And we just added Kevin Atkinson, a young man who has been with Tom Clark and Brian Ault. Kevin brings in more fresh ideas and I think he will be an excellent designer.

But with the fresh face, the younger approach, I think we're still going to have to be very cautious on costs. I've worked on golf course crews, so I've always been careful not to create a lot of hand maintenance, steep slopes, and dangerous things. Yet that's what gets the attention.

I was at a golf course in Texas,

touring with the superintendent, when a call came over the radio that one of the guys had slipped on a bank early in the morning and gone underneath the old Flymo and cut off three toes. Things like that caused them to redesign the Flymo.

GCN: Rick just got voted in as an associate member of the ASGCA. Are you proud of him?

DP: Absolutely. It's wonderful to have him in the society. He

will be doing a lot of contributions to the society. He has a strong interest in it and in golf course architecture.

I was president in 1980-81, when we made our first trip to Scotland. Rick's first official meeting will be in Ireland next year.

GCN: Are you personally going to cut back now?

DP: I'm going to stay active. My whole future has changed since I lost my wife a year ago. I

had looked forward to slowing down and traveling with her. But to lose her suddenly... I don't want to give it up... I enjoy it too much.

We're trying to take a bit of a new tack on our design. We want to step up a notch or two and really strike out here in a fresh direction with Rick and Kevin. And what I'm seeing is exciting. We think it will open a new page for us — not just being Rocky Mountain architects.

COLO. HALL INDUCTS PHELPS

Dick Phelps has been inducted into the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame. While most of his 250 golf course designs have been in Colorado, Phelps has designed or remodeled courses in 22 states. Eight are ranked in the respective states' top 10 courses.

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