



BRIEFS

GCBA GRANTS QUALITY GRASSING CHARTER MEMBER STATUS

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Golf Course Builders Association of America has granted Charter Member status to Quality Grassing & Services, Inc., a Florida-based general contractor specializing in golf course and athletic field construction, irrigation and renovation. Quality Grassing was founded in 1982 and became known for quality installation and production of hybrid Bermudagrass strains. The company, which is headed by president P. Howard Barnes, quickly expanded the scope of its business to include complete construction services and was named Small Golf Course Builder of the Year by *Golf Course News* in 1997. The company's current projects include Harmony Golf Course in St. Cloud, Fla.; Highland Walk Golf Course in Royston, Ga.; Lamington Farm Golf Club in Bedminster, N.Y.; and Coosa Bend Golf Course in Gadsden, Ala.

JACOBSEN HARDY HIRES VANHOOSE

BEAVERTON, Ore. — Jacobsen Hardy Golf Course Designs has hired Rex VanHoose as its director of business development. VanHoose will be responsible for design, marketing and business development. Prior to joining Jacobsen Hardy, VanHoose worked for Keith Foster Golf Design and Lohmann Golf Designs. Throughout his career, he has been involved in all aspects of golf course design including conceptual planning and development of construction specifications, budgets and schedules.



TUSCANY GC SET TO OPEN IN SPRING

HENDERSON, Nev. — Development is continuing on schedule here at the Ted Robinson-designed Tuscan Golf Course. When completed, the 1,900-home golf course community will offer views of the Las Vegas strip. The 530-acre project will include an 18-hole golf course, a 31,000-square-foot clubhouse and a trail system linking individual neighborhoods with parks and recreational facilities. The golf course will be open to the public in early spring and home sales will commence this summer.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

RTJ II restructures to create legacy company

By ANDREW OVERBECK

PALO ALTO, Calif. — Golf course design firm Robert Trent Jones II, L.L.C., has undergone an internal restructuring over the last year and a half in a move to create a legacy company. New CEO John Strawn and president and chief designer Bruce Charlton have both bought into the company to protect the long-term brand identity of RTJ II design.

"We are looking long-term," said Strawn. "The history of design firms is that when the founder is gone, the company is essentially gone. We wanted to create a legacy company."



John Strawn



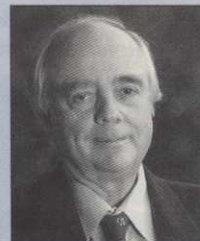
Bruce Charlton

"Mr. Jones is the inspiration and the master architect and his thinking is a part of the overall design approach," he continued. "The young architects are learning that history and that approach and as they mature they will be able to apply it."

Charlton likens the new company to Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin Design which carries on in the tradition of its founder.

"Mr. Jones wanted to develop an organization that would live beyond

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Robert Trent Jones, Jr.

Adding length to combat technology is a costly proposition

By LAURENCE HIRSH

The impact of golf ball and club technology has been a hot topic of debate in the golf industry lately — and for good reason. In many ways, it has changed the way golf is played.

The ability of professional players to hit longer drives has made some of the game's greatest venues inadequate for major professional and amateur events. Tom Fazio added nearly 400 yards to Augusta National this year to ensure a "proper" challenge for the game's greatest players.

Many players, including designer/players Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer, have called for modifications to the golf ball, while others have suggested a variety of equipment changes. The American Society of Golf Course Architects suggested that "a line be drawn in the sand soon" to avoid technol-

ogy rendering some courses obsolete. The society said future courses could exceed 8,000 yards if nothing is done to contain technology.

While many courses have undergone or considered renovations, there are many more with no opportunity to do so

AN 8,000 YARD COURSE WOULD INCREASE LAND COSTS BY AN AVERAGE OF 14 PERCENT

because of limited land resources, cost considerations, and political or environmental issues. The need for larger golf courses will lead to significantly increased construction and maintenance costs and will likely make the game more expensive to play. All of this would be detrimental to the growth of golf.

On average, the site for a 7,000-plus-yard, 18-hole

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The ninth hole at Von Hagge's Torreon Golf and Country Club

Von Hagge sheds light on Torreon Golf and Country Club

By DAVID HUBBARD

SHOW LOW, Ariz. — It is by careful design that the natural sunlight is especially vibrant at Torreon Golf and Country Club, Desert Troon Properties' 1,387-acre master planned community here. Architect Robert von Hagge has allowed his artistic sensibilities to dictate his vision of the three closely connected nine-hole courses.

Stretching through natural canyons and pine forests, Torreon is von Hagge's first full-fledged design in the Southwest. In collaboration with his design partners, Mike Smelek and Rick Baril, their layout plays as a "natural light palette" where the strategic options are further enhanced by sheer visual impact.

On hand this summer for the opening of the third nine, von Hagge explained his design philosophies that seem to go hand-in-hand with his life as an artist and his penchant for show business.

Golf Course News: How did you come to visualize golf courses such as Torreon as fine art?

Von Hagge: As a young man, I intended to pursue a career in art. However, my father was a golf course architect, and the scope of his projects

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BCG set to break ground at Oxford Greens in May

OXFORD, Conn. — Billy Casper Golf (BCG) has signed a multi-year management agreement to provide turnkey planning, construction and management services for The Golf Club at Oxford Greens. To be developed by Timberlake Development Partners (TDP), the new, semi-private golf club is currently in the planning stages with groundbreaking scheduled for May 2002.



Peter Hill

The par-72 layout will feature five sets of tees that range in length from 4,982 yards to 7,147 yards, and will serve as the centerpiece of the 630-acre Oxford Greens development. BCG will manage all aspects of the operation, from accounting and food and beverage to marketing and golf course maintenance. The grand opening is scheduled for July 2003.

"Billy Casper Golf's CEO, Peter Hill, is a New Haven [Conn.] native, which provides Oxford Greens with a unique combination of local knowledge and national industry perspective," said Andrew Tedford, managing partner of TDP.

Designed by golf course architect Mark Mungeam, based in Uxbridge, Mass., the Oxford Greens course will feature largely wooded holes — none that are parallel — and

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Von Hagge Q&A

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intrigued me to the point I had no choice but to follow in his footsteps. But I feel fortunate to be able to pursue my career from both the technical and the artistic sides of the equation. That's just who I am.

Thanks to modern real estate development, the quantum leap in the golf industry has been to make golf courses more visually inviting. We not only are allowed to do more aesthetically, we're practically mandated to create works of beauty.

GCN: What is the basis of your unique visual presentations?

Von Hagge: It begins with the predictable path of natural sunlight throughout the day. As sunlight passes over the golf course, the shadows shift every moment to create subtle new views from dawn to dusk. Our feeling is the visual presentation must constantly change hole by hole, shot by shot, through the daylight hours.

GCN: How does your philosophy play at Torreon?

Von Hagge: A great looking golf course must provide an evolving kaleidoscope of hues of light, shadow, and texture. At Torreon, those elements were already in place, created by the forests, glades, and canyons. We didn't have to work nearly as hard to create an interesting play of light against the terrain.

GCN: Do you always shape the golf course in accordance with the natural play of light?

Von Hagge: Yes. I use the permanent and dependable path of light to illuminate and cast shadows over 11 basic combinations of vertical land shapes, such as fairway mounding and swales, undulating green complexes, and sharply-defined tee areas. We rely heavily on this philosophy at sites that demand more visual interest. At Torreon, we put more motion along the fairways only to accent what occurs

Length costs

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course is 175 acres. If 14 percent more land is required for an 8,000-yard course, that would calculate to land requirement of approximately 200 acres, or an additional 25 acres. At a cost of \$10,000 per acre (not unusual) this would increase cost by \$250,000. If land were at a premium, this could be as much as \$30,000 per acre (\$750,000).

In addition to land cost, the cost of earth moving and clearing, grassing, irrigation and cart paths will also increase with size. Assuming a one-for-one relationship in increased costs, this could add from \$420,000 (for a \$3 million course) to \$1,400,000 (for a \$10 million course) to the construction budget.

The additional land could also result in an increased exposure to a variety of extra costs including: rock removal, additional environmental issues, wetlands mitigation, bridges, and permitting and legal issues.

If the combined additional costs for these items total only seven percent (one half of the size increase) of the additional land and construction cost, that results in additional costs ranging from \$46,900 (\$420,000 + \$250,000 X 7%) to \$150,500 (\$1,400,000 + \$750,000 X 7%).

The result would be a total development cost increase ranging from \$716,900 (rounded to \$700,000) to \$2,300,500, based on the parameters suggested.

A larger golf course would also require higher maintenance costs. Assuming that these are high-end courses, expenses range from \$3,500 per acre to \$6,000 per acre, resulting in an additional annual expense of \$87,500 (\$3,500 X 25 acres) to \$150,000 (\$6,000 X 25 acres).

naturally in this beautiful area of Arizona.

A great golfing experience also is great theatre. In a foursome of golf, one player is usually executing his shot while the other three people are experiencing the

AFFORDABLE COURSE

LAND COST \$10,000/acre
175 acres = \$1,750,000
200 acres = \$2,000,000
Additional Land Costs \$250,000

CONSTRUCTION COST \$3,000,000
Additional Costs (Hard)=14% \$420,000
Additional Costs (Soft)= 7% \$210,000
Additional Construction Costs \$630,000

Additional Annual Mortgage Payment
8% / 20 years / 70% L/V \$63,235
Additional Maintenance Cost
\$3,500/acre \$87,500

Total Additional Annual Cost \$150,735

of Rounds 35,000
Additional Cost per Round \$4.31

UPSCALE COURSE

LAND COST \$30,000/acre
175 acres = \$5,250,000
200 acres = \$6,000,000
Additional Land Costs \$750,000

CONSTRUCTION COST \$10,000,000
Additional Costs (Hard)=14% \$1,400,000
Additional Costs (Soft)= 7% \$700,000
Additional Construction Costs \$2,100,000

Additional Annual Mortgage Payment
8% / 20 years / 70% L/V \$210,783
Additional Maintenance Cost
\$6,000/acre \$150,000

Total Additional Annual Cost \$360,783

of Rounds 27,000
Additional Cost per Round \$13.36

RECOVERING THE EXTRA COST

As illustrated in the charts (see above), assuming a loan interest rate of eight percent, amortized over 20 years, an affordable course would require an additional green fee revenue of \$4.31 and an upscale course would require \$13.36 of additional green fee revenue to recover the additional investment.

In each case, the additional annual cost is significant, requiring green fee increases of approximately 11 percent in both categories. These increases would likely be resisted by the marketplace and could result in additional reductions in investment return, making the investment picture for golf courses take on an even higher risk perception than the current market would indicate. Value of existing courses could be similarly impacted as those considered no longer of "championship" caliber would either struggle to maintain their customers/members, incur costly renovations or in a worst case scenario, be plowed under in favor of alternative uses.■

theatre. This means that four people spend the majority of the time on the course immersed in a 360-degree visual experience, either consciously or subconsciously for four to five hours.

Considering what and where each player is viewing during a shot gives us more opportunity to enhance their view—even if they're looking back to the tee box.■

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