



## Firm, direct management pays

*There are no committees at Carmel G & CC, Calif. While the system is hardly democratic, it does get things done.*

By DON CURLEE

They have constructed more than a magnificent place to enjoy golf at the Carmel Valley Golf and Country Club on California's Monterey Peninsula near Carmel-by-the-Sea; they have built a convincing case for the non-proprietary private golf club.

Everything from the distinctively-styled bunkers to the unique grouping of homesites in the midst of the course's luxuriant greenery has been designed with the golfer in mind, and the no-nonsense management intends to keep it that way.

Although the sales of homesites at Carmel Valley G & CC are an important source of income, golf is the major source of interest and it takes only a few minutes with any member of the management team to confirm that.

Edgar H. Haber, president of Green Meadows, the corporation which operates Carmel Valley said, "We believe golf should be played more like they do in England where it's not uncommon to play 18 holes in 2½ hours. We

think 3½ hours is plenty and we plan to see that our members always have the opportunity to get around the course promptly when they want to."

Management doesn't object to slower players as long as they adhere to the club rule of allowing faster players through, and like all the club rules, they mean it.

If it sounds as if they have a tough attitude, it's a misrepresentation. They have a *firm* attitude, gently and consistently applied—all in favor of the

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*Corporation vice president James May, left, Margaret Pecknold and Edgar Haber making analysis of membership roster.*



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player who enjoys his golf and appreciates a fine course with all the trimmings. They believe rules are made to be followed because they preserve the most desirable golfing atmosphere for everybody.

"We have a consistent management policy, no committees or meetings where important matters can become mired down," Haber says, "and we have a minimum of pressure to buy products or furnishings that our members represent." It adds up to objective direction of the club's affairs, and while it makes no pretense of being democratic, its claim for efficiency is difficult to challenge.

Besides the straight-from-the-shoulder approach to management, Haber says the other major reason for CV's success and appeal has been consolidation of the real estate activities and the golf club in one operation. He feels that it is a mistake to establish separate corporate entities for each.

It may be an exaggeration, but what the non-proprietary operation avoids is the inefficiency that results when one club president decides to fill in the swimming pool, and a subsequent administration orders it dug out again and the water replaced. The manager doesn't need to be edgy because of his choice of drapes for the women's lounge after careful comparison of available materials, even if the club president's wife prefers something else.

Just because these decisions are made by a handful of people at Carmel Valley doesn't mean that they are arbitrary or made without careful consideration. Color harmony for instance on everything from golf carts to carpets and tablecloths to tee markers is one of the responsibilities of Terry Jones. She is a former art teacher at a school in Carmel Valley who occupies one of the comfortable offices in the handsome clubhouse, and among her other duties maintains a constant vigil on everything painted, printed or purchased that has visual significance.

Most of the administrative staff members are experienced golfers. Haber is

a former San Francisco city champ who has competed in the British and French amateurs.

"We're extremely fussy about raking our traps," he says, "replacing divots and repairing ball marks on the greens." Repeated refusal to cooperate is enough for management to terminate a membership, but not without reasonable warnings and special requests for compliance.

Of course, Carmel Valley is worth being fussy about. Course architect Robert Muir Graves of San Francisco brought the natural beauty of the breathtaking landscape into play masterfully, and as if its ruggedness were not enough, incorporated 10 lakes that place further premium on well-placed, firm golf shots.

Challenge is a part of every hole, and so is beauty, imagination and careful planning. Haber, with a 3 handicap, has managed to equal par only twice in a year of playing.

The course was seeded long before the lakes were filled, and grass was planted well below the water line. When they were filled for the first time the plastic-lined lakes gave the impression of having been there indefinitely, "instead of looking like the 'bird bath' you find at some courses," Haber says.

Assuring the kind of upkeep that Haber envisioned for Carmel Valley was not too difficult. "Fortunately, we were able to hire the superintendent of the best kept course in the area," Haber says. That was Corral de Tierra, only a few miles away, and the superintendent is Roy King. Haber's direct approach to management is shared by everybody concerned with the management of Carmel Valley. Manager John Paul Jones, in the same position for many years at the California G & CC in South San Francisco, was hand picked for his experience and objective attitude toward club management.

Also from the California G & CC came Art Bell as head professional. His assistant, Ray Ricketts, is from Del Paso G & CC near Sacramento, Calif. They find that ownership of the shop by the corporation gives them more time for fraternizing and playing golf with the members, and maintaining a shipshape shop

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in keeping with the atmosphere that prevails elsewhere at Carmel Valley.

You might say that Carmel Valley is a tight ship. And if you do you will be talking the language of James May, a retired navy commander, who has been with Haber since the early stages of design as vice president of the corporation. As a former line officer via the Naval Academy he knows how to get things done.

Another key employee who has his "sea legs" is maitre d' Oskar Korn, formerly with North German Lloyds Steamship Co.

Mention of the personalities that have contributed to the elegance and warmth of Carmel Valley is incomplete without including the design specialists. Besides Graves' contribution to the course itself, architects and site planners Hall and Goodhue of Monterey designed the spacious combined clubhouse, offices, dining room, bar, pro-shop and electric cart and club storage.

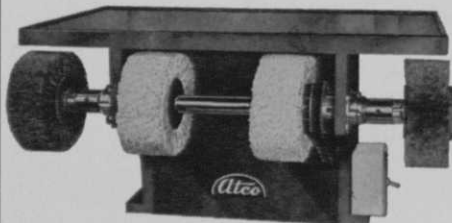
The real estate side of the corpora-

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tion is an important income producer, but it is handled with the same quiet good taste and distinction that characterizes the golfing atmosphere.

Lots sell from \$12,500 to \$26,500. In that price range the drum beating tactics of the average land hawks drive away more potential buyers than they attract. The sales are directed with suave sophistication by May, assisted by Margaret Pecknold who is also in charge of the membership department.

Sales promotion doesn't exist—not so you can notice it at any rate. Lot sales occur mostly as a result of the golf interest, and Haber wants to keep it that way. Nobody is actually a salesman for the real estate, and those who do handle sales receive no commission since it is considered part of their duties.

In the simplest mathematical terms, Haber envisions the sale of about 210 pieces of property at an average of about \$18,000 each for a total net return of about \$3 million. Roughly, the cost of construction of the golf course, clubhouse

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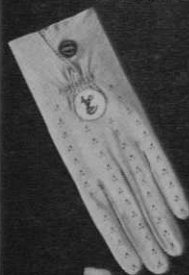
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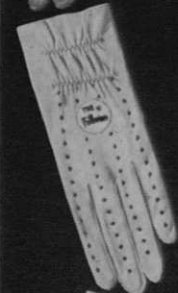
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and equipment was in that neighborhood. When that financial goal is realized, theoretically the corporation will break even.

The golfing half of the venture has been paying its way since its second month, although Haber says they fully expected to take a loss, perhaps for an extended period. If that had occurred, the operating expenditures would have been offset by the income from the homesite sales.

That possibility (actually a probability) was a major reason for both to be included in a single corporation. "When there are separate corporations and the golf course loses money as it is likely to do, especially in the beginning," Haber says, "there are no profits from which the loss can be deducted."

Before Haber and his staff could start fighting the financial battle they had to use a more diplomatic persuasion on the

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planning commission for Monterey County. This body administers a plan for the area based on homesites of no less than one acre. Haber's property included only 245 acres, onto which he proposed placing over 200 residential units and an uncrowded golf course besides.

The strategic move in this encounter was Haber's offer to the county of a "scenic easement" on the property. This declares that the property will never be used for anything except a golf course, and if the course should be abandoned, buildings could not take its place.

In exchange Haber was allowed to cluster the homesites into more conventional  $\frac{1}{4}$ -acre lots. In principal, at least, each lot owner has an acre of unspoiled "greenbelt" to enjoy if not to own. Every lot in the complex is immediately adjacent to some part of the golf course. Many yards will merge with fairways.

Two apartment sites also were carved out, and a location for an inn to house

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100 guests. As at Pauma Valley in Southern California, the inn eventually will be reserved for Carmel Valley's non-resident members and guests, or friends of all classes of members. This is a new concept that makes membership more attractive and restricts play to members and guests. The apartments will be condominiums, each unit to be purchased instead of rented. About 25 of the individual home sites already have homes on them. Haber expects to begin construction of the first 21-unit apartment this year. The second will follow immediately, simultaneously with construction of the inn.

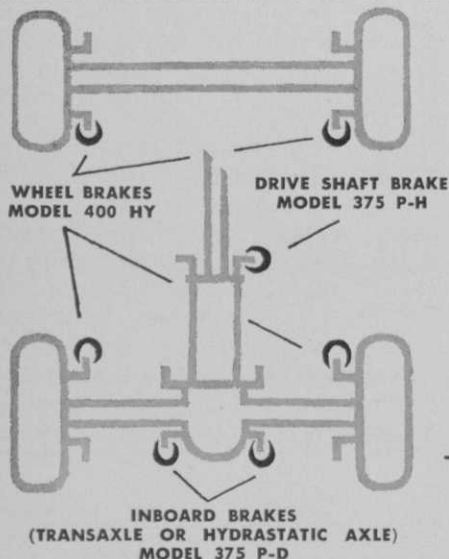
The inherent "fussiness" about golf dictated from the beginning that playing memberships should be limited to 300 to avoid crowding and heavy traffic. Some of the lot and apartment owners will not be golfing members, but most of them will, and the percentage of members outside of property owners will be extremely low.

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Regular playing memberships were priced at \$3,000 to start, in spite of some opinions registered with Haber to the effect that, "nobody will pay that much for a non-proprietary membership." As usual, Haber, not the observer, was right. Monthly dues are \$42.

Haber cites the example of one of the resort courses in Southern California that started selling non-proprietary memberships at \$700, and is selling them today for \$7,000—when they are available. He points out that nothing makes the charter members quite as happy as increasing the fee. Those who join at \$3,000 can take their satisfaction whenever further increases occur.

Full memberships will go hand in hand with ownership of the lots or the apartments. When the lodge is completed its guests will have playing privileges by reservation and upon payment of green fees. Haber is determined that guest play not interfere with member play.

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same careful indoctrination in regard to course rules as guests have since play began. Besides a reminder from the professional or starter about raking sand traps, replacing divots, repairing ball marks and allowing faster players through, each guest receives a cardboard tag attached to his golf bag with these same rules in brief.

Understanding by members is not taken for granted, but is encouraged a little more subtly. To confirm membership approval, the new member receives a copy of Charles Price's "The World of Golf." He is urged to read it as a means of increasing his appreciation, understanding and respect for the game of golf.

"We thought people would come to us," Haber says, "and they have." The attraction has been golf the way discriminating golfers think it should be played.

The best possible golfing environment has been created and is being preserved uncompromisingly at Carmel Valley, so there is a strong desire to play the course and become a member. Because the management is efficient, it has been possible to operate the club on a sound economic basis with only 300 members, leaving it uncrowded with some time available for members of other clubs to play as guests. It is more than a case for the nonproprietary club. It's a case for efficient management, for carefully selected personnel, and most of all, for the undeniable lure of golf. •

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